

INTEGRATED COURTROOM TECHNOLOGY IN THE FOURTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT OF FLORIDA

SERVING BAY, CALHOUN, GULF, HOLMES, JACKSON AND WASHINGTON COUNTIES

Through the use of technology, citizens have a better understanding of their court system and how decisions are made. By making court activities and events more accessible to the public, technological advances help to build trust in the judicial system. The purpose of this document is to illustrate the sophisticated use of technology in the modern courtrooms of the Fourteenth Judicial Circuit.

The Courtrooms have these and other technological features:

- Touch Panel Control Pad
- Sound Reinforcement System
- Display Monitors
- 4 Pan/Tilt/Zoom Cameras
- Video Conferencing
- Teleconferencing
- VHS / DVD Player
- Computer Input Display Connection
- Composite Audio/Video Inputs
- Audio Input
- Media Plate
- Digital Court Recording
- Remote Technical Support and Control
- ADA Assisted Listening Devices

NOTICE: The courtrooms are equipped with electronic recording systems that may record your conversations.

Please refer to our website for a detailed description of each courtroom and its capabilities.

<http://www.jud14.flcourts.org/Technology/CourtTechnology.htm>

Touch Panel Control Pad: The courtroom technology is controlled by a Crestron Touch Panel. This control pad controls the sound system, the video conference system, the teleconferencing system, four pan/tilt/zoom cameras, the digital recording system, the VHS/DVD player, and the display monitors. Using the control pad, participants can activate the courtroom audio and video system. The system allows the Judge to mute speakers for side-bar conferences, switch visual presentations, turn monitors on or off, and view evidence privately. Much of this technology, while advanced, is quite easy to use.

Sound Reinforcement System: Strategically placed microphones and speakers provide high quality sound throughout the entire courtroom.

Display Monitors: The courtroom is equipped with numerous types of technology components and communications infrastructure. Most of the benches and witness stands are equipped with flat-screen monitors. Large monitors hang from the ceiling to allow the jury, clerk, lawyers, and any members of the public and observers outside the bar also to view the evidence.

Cameras: The courtroom has four high-resolution pan/tilt/zoom cameras. The cameras are controlled using the Crestron Touch Panel. The cameras can be preset for various views. One camera will allow participants to place any document or object at a specified location and transmit the image to the monitors. The camera has a zoom feature, which can be used to focus in on a particular part of a document or simply to limit the amount of the document or item shown. This ensures that jurors are actually able to read the documents they are shown. In addition to traditional business documents, attorneys can use this camera to present fingerprints, x-rays, maps, and even bullets.

Video Conferencing*: In addition to facilitating the presentation of evidence, the courtroom's audio and video conferencing equipment is available for use by out-of-town counsel to participate in hearings without having to travel. As with using video conferencing for taking testimony from witnesses, using the equipment for hearings can result in significant cost savings and can facilitate scheduling. Video conferencing can be used for 1st Appearances, In-Custody Arraignments, Child Witness Testimony, Remote Expert Witness Testimony, and other court hearings. This system eliminates the need to transport some in-custody defendants, reducing the cost of transporting and security risks.

Teleconferencing*: The system also includes an audio conferencing system, which is connected to the courtroom sound system and is capable of adding telephone conferences to the proceedings. Counsels who wish to present audio evidence can do so at the clerk's desk that is wired to the courtroom's high quality sound system, which includes ceiling speakers and surround sound.

***NOTE:** Video Conferencing and Teleconferencing systems in the courtroom allow for sign language interpreters and foreign language interpreters to appear remotely. The audio portion is captured and recorded by the Digital Court Recording (DCR) system as part of the official court record.

VHS / DVD Player: Counsel can use the VHS/DVD player to play portions of videos or even to show a clear single frame. The VHS / DVD player is controlled by either the Crestron Touch Panel or remote. For information about the type of discs that are compatible and other information about the VHS / DVD player, please visit the website <http://www.docs.sony.com/release/SLVD360P-560P.pdf> to review the Operating Instructions.

Computer Input Display Connection: The courtroom is equipped with a computer input to allow counsel to present scanned documents, Power Point presentations or other visual presentations. Since the litigants can have every piece of documentary evidence imaged, there is no longer any need to carry dozens of boxes of documents to court.

Composite Audio / Video Inputs: Inputs are available to connect additional equipment to use in the courtroom if needed. A participant can connect any technological device with composite outputs into the courtroom system.

Audio Input: Participants can connect any audio device with a 1/8" connector to the courtroom's sound system.

Media Plate: This provides the news media the ability to capture the courtroom's audio and video feeds.

Digital Court Recording

Application of digital court recording (DCR) technology in Florida courtrooms began in the early 1990's, when courts began facing court reporting shortages. With digital recording, the electronic court recorder captures the spoken word of court proceedings using a traditional computer. Benefits of the electronic record are immediately realized by playback of the spoken word that can be listened to any time or anywhere. In order to permit the court and the attorneys to make use of digital recording systems, recordings are made available through audio CD's or the court's local area network.

Digital court recording allows the litigants to instantly search and review audio from prior days' testimony, quickly read back questions or testimony to witnesses, annotate their personal copies of the recording with notes or highlighting to assist in preparation for the following day's testimony. Digital recording also simplifies complying with a deliberating jury's request to review particular testimony.

Each courtroom is equipped with a DCR system that is controlled by the Crestron Touch Panel. The Judge and other participants know the system is recording when the Blue Framed Light (BFL) is illuminated. The DCR system is remotely monitored by Digital Court Reporters.

Remote Technical Support and Control: This system allows the technology office to remotely provide support and maintenance on the systems. Staff and/or vendors can remotely troubleshoot and/or make changes to the courtroom technology. This eliminates the cost of vendors traveling to make minor adjustments.

ADA Assisted Listening Devices: These hearing devices allow participants with hearing difficulties the ability to hear the proceedings more clearly.

Contact Information:

If you have questions or comments about the courtroom technology, please contact:

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Disclaimer

The Fourteenth Judicial Circuit provides the use of courtroom technology as a courtesy to the legal profession and court participants. The Court will make every effort to ensure the equipment is working properly. However, the Court does not guarantee the reliability of the equipment. The Court is not responsible for the user's own negligence or lack of knowledge in operation of the equipment. The user agrees to hold the Court harmless for any failure of the equipment and any and all claims, damages, action, causes of action, suits in equity whatever kind or nature as a result of the use of the equipment. The Court advises the users of this equipment that the Court will not be responsible for any delays caused by the failure of the equipment. Users of the equipment should have back-up material suitable for use in the courtroom in the event of equipment failure.