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Court case management systems can, as we have done many times, be described as the accounting system for cases. Of course this ignores the fact that CCMSs are actual accounting systems for money as well. And this will be discussed in a later article.

But CCMS is now more than just a place to track the actions of cases. The tracking and recording approach function of CCMSs is done performed in the tradition of the docket/registry books. As defined in [Wikipedia for Docket \(court\)](#):

“The term originated in England; it was recorded in the form "doggette" in 1485, and later also as doket, dogget(t), docquett, docquet, and docket.* The derivation and original sense are obscure, although it has been suggested that it derives from the verb "to dock", in the sense of cutting short (e.g. the tail of a dog or horse)*; a long document summarised has been docked, or docket using old spelling. It was long used in England for legal purposes (there was an official called the Clerk of the Dockets in the early nineteenth century), although discontinued in modern English legal usage.” Footnote: Oxford English Dictionary 2nd ed. Definition of "... brief, summarized statement ... abstract, abridgement, digest, minute" described as obsolete and historical. "A memorandum or register of legal judgements". "A list of causes for trial" given as U.S. usage

So the purpose was to summarize the documents and actions that occurred in a court case. But for what purpose is this done? Is it simply for reference? Is it for court work statistics? Is it to avoid fraud or error in the instance when a court document goes missing either by accident or intentionally?

Certainly the integrity of the court case record is paramount. When legal documents are not recorded, they can (as I have personally observed internationally) become hostage of the clerk demanding bribes to perform the recordation, thus hindering movement of moving the case forward. But there are many courts that have operated without this secondary docket/registry. These courts often use the case jacket (file folder) to record the contents, and then move it from place to place as a queuing system to distribute and prioritize work. In a manual system this is very efficient because all the information is literally at hand. In many courts these physical file queues are contained within the judicial chambers. And in those instances the clerk's docket/registry really has no idea what is happening with case processing, let alone the court's caseload statistics.

In many instances we find that only the basic recording function of a traditional paper docket/registry is performed. We often refer to these systems as “black holes”. Data goes in but never comes out.

CCMSs should have automation system which can meet the traditional goals of recordation and, serves as the foundation for all court processes. But the other example above shows that courts

also need a work queuing system as well. And why not be able to connect all manner of information, such as all the cases for a particular attorney or party? How about calendaring and scheduling as well as tracking money? Statistics, reports, and documents too.

If the CCMS does this work, then it helps judges and court staff to accomplish their daily work. And that should be the point of it.

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