

What Isn't Available Using CM/ECF

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February 1, 2007

As attorneys and other professional researchers continue to grow more comfortable with the improving technology for obtaining court case dockets and filings, they have come to expect instant comprehensive results using the Internet. Since [CM/ECF](#) systems have been successfully implemented throughout the U.S., some researchers incorrectly assume that all case dockets and filings can be located and downloaded using CM/ECF. It's important to recognize that certain court case information is not presently contained within a CM/ECF database. The following are not accessible using CM/ECF.

- *The U.S. Supreme Court, state, county, and local court dockets:* Although this is well known by many, some forget CM/ECF is only used in U.S. Federal District and Bankruptcy Courts, U.S. Courts of Appeals, The U.S. Court of Federal Claims, and The U.S. Court of International Trade. However, The [U.S. Supreme Court](#) and many state, county, and local courts do offer case information online using systems other than CM/ECF.
- *Most U.S. Courts of Appeals:* Presently only the Eighth Circuit and Tenth Circuit BAP uses CM/ECF, however dockets from all other circuit courts can be obtained using their respective web [PACER databases](#). Implementation of CM/ECF in all remaining U.S. circuit courts has been ongoing for many months and will be completed this year.
- *California Central Bankruptcy Court:* Los Angeles Division cases closed January 2001 or prior. These [dockets and filings](#) can be accessed using the Racer system. This is the last Racer database still being used by any court in the country.
- *California Southern Bankruptcy Court:* Cases closed prior to 1997. These [dockets and filings](#) can be accessed by using the web PACER system.
- *Illinois Central Bankruptcy Court:* Most cases filed prior to January 2004. These [dockets](#) can be accessed using the web PACER system.
- *Indiana Southern District Court:* (1) All criminal cases and (2) civil cases opened before July 1, 2002. These [dockets](#) can be obtained for free from the court's online JAMS system.
- *Northern Mariana Islands Bankruptcy Court:* This court used to provide access to [case information](#), but this database now appears to be inactive while the court prepares to implement CM/ECF.
- *Virgin Islands District Court:* These [dockets and documents](#) can be accessed for free using the court's web Pacer system.

- *Wisconsin Western District Court*: [Dockets](#) can be obtained using the web PACER system. This will be the last federal district court in the U.S. to implement CM/ECF.

In addition to these small gaps in CM/ECF data, there are also still a few courts that do not participate in the [PACER U.S. Party/Case Index](#) case listing database. The U.S. Courts of Appeals for the Second, Fifth, Seventh, and Eleventh Circuits, and the New Mexico District Court are presently not included. This is important to keep in mind when conducting nationwide litigation searches using this database.

While attorneys may not regularly need access to case information or dockets, it's important to know what's available online, and how to obtain it. Why waste valuable time and money contracting a document retrieval company to obtain dockets and filings that are available online?

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