

# AccuRoute<sup>®</sup> A User's Perspective

## Mass. District Attorneys Association (MDAA)

### Secure Document Routing Coupled with DAMION Prosecutor Case-Management System Enables DAs to Securely Share All Case-Related Documents

#### The Challenge

- Streamlined case management
- Reduce costs of managing paper
- Increase accessibility of documents

#### The Solution

AccuRoute provided:

- Improved legal document workflow
- Increased productivity
- Greater searchability and accessibility of documents



Pursuing a mission to promote public safety, the fair and effective administration of justice, the education of prosecutors, and the safeguarding of victims' rights, the Massachusetts District Attorneys Association (MDAA) is an independent agency that supports the Commonwealth's 11 elected district attorneys and their combined staff of more than 1,600 employees. The MDAA helps more than 600 prosecutors and 250 victim-witness advocates collectively prosecute approximately 300,000 criminal cases each year through a variety of specialized programs and resources, training sessions, conferences, case research, legislative advocacy, publications, and more.

One key area of focus for MDAA is information technology. In fact, while individual DAs have budget authority and accountability for the IT technology that's deployed in their counties, the MDAA operates and manages the computing network on their behalf. Prosecutors and staff in more than 100 locations rely on MDAA, in addition to their own IT staff, to ensure that everything is available and running optimally – everything from servers to software and peripherals.

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Joe Geiermann  
Senior Application Mgr  
MDAA

#### The Challenge for Streamlined Case-Management: Paper

Of course, legal environments are some of the most paper-intensive settings imaginable. According to Joe Geiermann, Senior Application Manager, Massachusetts district attorneys generate or handle millions of pages of documents each year as they manage hundreds of thousands of criminal cases. “Over the coming years, we believe that the use of paper will recede – for obvious reasons,” he said. “Paper simply presents too many issues in terms of costs, delays, accessibility, and storage.”

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### Streamline Processes

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Each of our criminal cases results in a file – and that file has to be shared among a very wide range of people who have different needs and requirements.

“For instance, there are several people internally who need access to these case documents. Administrative assistants and paralegals require access to enter information into our DAMION Prosecutor case-management system. They would either share that paper or copy it; neither solution is attractive from productivity and cost standpoints. And we would often make copies of documents for victim-witness advocates. That meant copying documents many times and delivering them – either through a shipping carrier or by hand.

“Discovery is a huge issue for us, too,” said Geiermann. “When we needed to share documents with defense counsel, we would simply copy them. But that’s wasteful and inefficient, of course. We couldn’t easily track what had been sent, page-stamp the documents, or verify receipt of the documents. If a defendant changed counsel, it often meant repeating the same painful processes.”

Default cases also present challenges. At any given moment there are thousands of defendants who have defaulted, or failed to appear in court, as required by law. When those defendants are eventually apprehended by the police and brought into court – often many years later – the DAs need to access their files immediately. That initiates unenviable (and sometimes unsuccessful) efforts to retrieve case files from a basement.

Finally, accessibility and productivity were issues for DAs. “Our attorneys spend a lot of time at courthouses – away from their offices and files that they might need to access,” Geiermann said. “That means they either haul around huge amounts of paper – or are constantly talking to paralegals and assistants back at their offices. “We knew that we needed a better way to handle the paper volume, improve our productivity, and lower our costs. Scanning these documents sounded like a good idea – in principle. But we wanted a long-term solution that would streamline our processes.”

### Making Case-Management More Efficient

After analyzing – and ultimately rejecting – other solutions that couldn’t integrate with Constellation Justice Systems’ DAMION Prosecutor case-management solution, which they had adopted state-wide, MDAA selected AccuRoute from Omtool to capture, process, and route its paper and electronic documents. The acquisition was supported by Grant #2005-DJ-BX-0392, awarded by the Bureau of Justice Assistance, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice, through the Executive Office of Public Safety (EOPS) Programs Division.





The key to AccuRoute's power is the Embedded Directive – the set of routing instructions that can be read and followed by networked multi-function devices that scan and copy paper documents.

**For Hardcopy Documents** — When routing hardcopy documents, the user places an Intelligent Routing Sheet on top of the document before scanning into the AccuRoute server. The Embedded Directive contained in the Intelligent Routing Sheet is sent to the AccuRoute server which “reads” it to identify the delivery specifications, processes the document, and delivers the content in the required formats based on user choices and delivery preferences.

**For Electronic Documents** — AccuRoute performs these same processing, delivery, archiving, and tracking steps on documents originating in electronic form, as long as the embedded routing instructions are included with the document.

In either instance, those routing instructions can contain several steps for distributing documents simultaneously, such as e-mailing, faxing, or archiving a document into electronic information systems (such as Constellation's DAMION) or translating the scanned information into a PDF, a searchable PDF, or a Microsoft Word file.

Lastly, users can access AccuRoute directly from the front panel of specially-equipped MFP models. Using Java technology, AccuRoute can be engineered to enable users to access pre-configured personal or public distribution rules through the MFP's front panel directly. That eliminates the need for printing a Routing Sheet and is ideal for repeatable processing and distribution on the fly.

### **Complete Integration with DAMION**

“We wanted something that would directly integrate with DAMION,” Geiermann said, “and that's what AccuRoute gives us. We're not planning to go back through our paper archives, but going forward, all new case documents will eventually be scanned into our DAMION system. Any user can walk up to the MFD and, instead of hitting ‘Copy,’ they can hit ‘Scan’ and send the electronic version of the document directly into an associated case file managed by DAMION. There's no need to manually enter case numbers, docket numbers, or other data. It's all captured in AccuRoute's Embedded Directive.

“Now, our people can look up a case with a click of the mouse in DAMION – and see all associated documents that have been captured by AccuRoute and the MFD. They can look at these documents – securely – through a Web browser from any location: office, courthouse, or home. It enables multiple people to simultaneously share these documents – attorneys, paralegals, assistants, victim-witness advocates, and other participants in the justice process. We can also streamline the discovery process by making ‘packages’ of documents and saving them on CDs to send to defense counsel. There's no need to waste time and money making redundant copies. That saves an enormous amount of time that can be devoted to higher-level tasks and greatly improves productivity and efficiency.”

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### Efficient Integration

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With the implementation still underway, MDAA has already seen significant results and benefits. “We’ve already deployed to seven of our 11 counties,” Geiermann said, “and we plan to extend it to the other counties as funding permits. In our first month, we had a great example of the benefits of this solution. There was a criminal case involving 26 defendants and 700 pages of documents. We estimated it might have taken us two man-days to copy, collate, and ship those documents. With AccuRoute, we were able to make electronic version of documents, burn them on CDs immediately and issue discovery-compliance certificates. All of the documents had unique names and page numbers as well.”

Moving forward, MDAA anticipates completing its rollout in 2007. When fully operational, the MDAA anticipates capturing as many as 8 million pages annually. It’s also considering adding interfaces to systems that manage documents for police departments and the Mass. Dept. of Corrections and Parole.

“Omtool AccuRoute is helping us take control of our documents, improve our efficiency, and lower our costs,” said Geiermann.

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