

## INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

# Bay State DAs throw book at paper clutter

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**M**assachusetts district attorneys are getting as serious about putting paper away as they are about putting criminals away.

The state's 11 district attorney offices are converting case files from paper to electronic, a step considered cutting-edge in the tradition-bound DA's world. At least one industry expert said less than 5 percent of DA offices nationally have adopted such technology.

The project, which started last July, is designed to reduce paper storage costs, said officials at the **Massachusetts District Attorneys Association**.

Seven of the state's 11 districts are adopting the electronic discovery technology that scans, copies, routes and stores the documents digitally. The software, produced by Andover's **Omtool Ltd.**, merges digitized documents with an existing case management system produced by New York-based **Constellation Justice Systems Inc.**

Omtool CEO **Robert Voelk** said that comparable e-discovery programs in use by law firms cost a minimum of \$25,000. For DA offices, the entry level is about \$10,000, he said.

Case-management systems electronically track the progress of individual cases.

"We're not trying to have a paperless office," said **Joe Geiermann**, MDAA senior applications manager. "We're trying to make it more manageable."

He declined to reveal the exact cost, but said MDAA pays for the software and servers while individual DA offices pay for the \$10,000 multifunction scanning devices at the core of the system.



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**JOE GEIERMANN**, senior applications manager for the Mass. DA's Association.

The remaining four districts are scheduled to adopt the technology by March 2007, Geiermann said.

Converting to digitized documents is producing some unexpected benefits.

Geiermann said appeals courts especially benefit because the technology makes it easier to retrieve documents long after trials conclude.

Constellation's president **Steve Robichaud** said 70 percent to 75 percent of the nation's DA offices use some form of case-management technology, but only 5 percent have adopted e-discovery systems in combination with those.

Robichaud said he expects the adoption of e-discovery to rise to between 50 percent and 75 percent of the DA market within three years.

A recent report from **Gartner Research** estimates revenue from e-discovery software across industries will grow worldwide from \$183.9 million in 2005 to \$847.2 million in 2010.

At the Essex District Attorney's Office, **Maureen Colby**, director of management information systems, said the electronic system for Superior Court cases is being adopted as leases expire on its copier machines.

"For us, I think the timing is perfect," Colby said.

But the office is still keeping the original paper documents, she said.

That's not surprising, said **Sandy Serkes**, CEO of Burlington's document indexer **Valora Technologies Inc.**

Valora, which started in 2000, processes both electronic and paper documents for companies and organizations preparing for litigation.

She expects the portion of paper to eventually plateau at about 40 percent and remain as a backup.

"They're keeping it locked away, in the event (that they need it)," Serkes said. "There's just too much affinity for paper."

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