

“We used to spend many hours each day searching for case files. The RFID FileDetector sees files from more than six feet away, allowing us to sweep courtrooms, chambers and cubicles and find critical case files quickly.”

Nancy Rister
County Clerk
Williamson County, Texas

Williamson County Courts

County Courts save labor with RFID technology

Client Profile

Headquarters: Georgetown, TX

Industry: Justice

Williamson County, Texas, is located north of Austin in central Texas, and has a population of almost 400,000. The Williamson County Courts at Law include four judges and have an annual new caseload approaching 10,000.

FileTrail Implementation: 2008

FileTrail Products Implemented

- **FileTrail Professional** - Complete file tracking and records management automation with RFID technology.
- **RFMobile™** - The portable RFID reader conducts fast audits and hunts for critical files with the FileDetector.
- **FTSynchronize™** - Scheduled synchronization of case and calendar data with the case management system.

FileTrail uses Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) technology to quickly locate case files, conduct audits, and check case files in and out. Clerical staff gain powerful tools that save time and improve services to the organization. PassiveTracking™ allows automatic tracking of files as they move between courtroom clerks, law clerks and chambers.

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<http://www.FileTrail.com>

Background

The population of Williamson County grew by almost 50% between 2000 and 2007¹. During this time, a similar increase in caseload created many operational issues for the courts. With growth, case files became more difficult to find, consuming more labor. As a result, judges and law clerks began keeping files to ensure that they could find them later.

Nancy E. Rister, the County Clerk, is responsible for filing criminal, civil, probate, and mental health cases and collecting all orders and judgments from these courts. She is also responsible for the Records Division, which creates, manages, and processes case files, and Commissioners Court.

As the handling of files became more difficult, an initiative arose in the clerk's office to find a solution. In the summer of 2008 an RFP for a file tracking system that utilized RFID technology was issued.

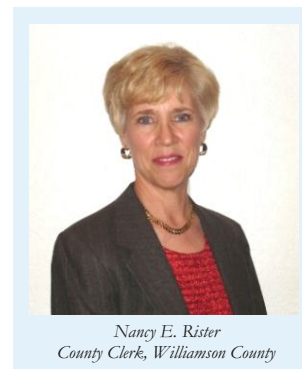
The Solution

FileTrail was selected because of its experience in the Justice Community and leadership in the use of RFID technology in Courts.

“We looked at several other systems but nothing compared to FileTrail,” said Rister. “FileTrail had such good references and it had RFID and tools for searching, label printing, archiving, and a lot more.”

Nancy really liked that FileTrail is completely browser-based. Most other systems are Windows-based, or had a Windows application for the clerks and a browser application for searching. Windows applications must be installed at every PC. Using Windows and browser technologies means two different user interfaces to train, and two sets of things that can go wrong. With FileTrail, all staff use the same single browser interface, with capabilities controlled through security.

“Although the other vendors claimed to be like FileTrail, they were using old technology and we needed a better solution,” said Rister.



Nancy E. Rister
County Clerk, Williamson County

¹State & County QuickFacts, U.S. Census Bureau, <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/48/48491.html>

Application Highlights

- Case Data was pre-loaded into FileTrail, and all 2008 files were quickly tagged with RFID.
- Nightly imports synchronize with the case management system, loading new case data and reflecting updates to case status.
- Nightly imports of the court calendar provide staff with location-based pull lists.
- The unlimited user-defined fields allowed the interface to accommodate the needs of each division perfectly.
- The RFID FileDetector helps staff locate and identify critical files using the long read range of UHF RFID technology.
- FileTrail's browser-based technology provided simple roll-out to all staff without requiring installation at the desktop.

Key Results

- **Time Savings:** Many hours are saved by automating file tracking.
- **Reliable Retrieval of Files:** Finding files is fast and easy, eliminating the panic from pulling for Calendar.
- **Less Hoarding of Files:** Staff no longer hoard files as files can now be reliably found and delivered to them on time.
- **Simplified Audits:** RFID allows audits to be performed quickly and automatically.
- **Simplified Pulling of Files:** Location-based Pull List reports organize the Calendar data base on the current location of files.
- **File Room Automation:** Batch bar code scanning saves time in pulling, checking-out, checking-in, refiling and archiving files.

About FileTrail

FileTrail, Inc., is the leading provider of browser-based file tracking and records management solutions to the Justice Community. FileTrail leverages RFID, bar code, and color-coded labeling technologies to maximize labor savings for clients. Agencies of all sizes turn to FileTrail for its RFID Tracking Kit and PassiveTracking to leverage the latest RFID technology to streamline processes and automate common tasks. Headquartered in San Jose, California, FileTrail has been providing solutions to the Justice Community since 2001.

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Finding Critical Files

When a file went missing, staff would try to retrace its tracks and find clues as to where it might be. Even with that, two or more people would spend all morning searching for the missing file, and often they would end up recreating the file.

“The process of finding a missing file was so cumbersome,” said George Schumann, Criminal Division Supervisor. “We would look at events and activities recorded in our case management system to try and determine where the file might be located.”

“We would physically look in the file room, all around the courthouse, and sometimes the county attorney's office,” added Kevin Kracht, Deputy County Clerk. “If the file still had not turned up we would re-create the file.”

“The FileDetector is the answer to our prayers,” said Nancy Rister. “The FileDetector sees files from more than six feet away. We can sweep courtrooms and cubicles and find the critical case files much more quickly than before.”

Improving Operations with RFID

FileTrail software is more than just RFID technology. Our application software improves many other processes in courts, saving time and ensuring reliability and timeliness. Here are just a few of the key changes that the Williamson County Courts has experienced:

“Checking in and out is much easier with FileTrail,” said Kracht. “We no longer have to manually scan each file. The RFID technology means we can scan a whole stack of files at once.”

“Before FileTrail, lawyers and judges wouldn't give back files they didn't remember they had,” said Rister. “Gaining their trust means the files come back to the file room where they are more secure and reliably retrieved for the next person who wants them.”

“Before FileTrail, we never had time for audits, and our schedule was getting crazier,” said Rister. “FileTrail is already saving us many hours of time and we haven't even had it implemented for very many months.”

“I really like that I can configure my own searches,” said Kracht. “For odd circumstances or reporting I may want different fields on the search or results screens, like the creation date.”

Easy Implementation

Every project carries concerns as to whether the project will turn out to be a good investment. Will the project succeed? Will staff accept changes? Will the technology work? Will new processes actually save time? To meet these concerns, FileTrail focuses on quality, reliability and usability. FileTrail solutions are designed to be easy to use and easy to implement. The results of our efforts show in what our clients have to say about their projects.

“Setting up training and installation was really easy,” said Rister. “Our staff have found it easy to learn FileTrail. The new software quickly became part of the new routine for them.”

“We are excited about the future with FileTrail,” said Rister. “There are so many ways to extend the solution. We can solve remaining problem areas with the passive tracking by alarming doors, tracking assets or any of the other options FileTrail offers.”

Contact FileTrail Today!

For more information about the benefits of automating with FileTrail, contact your local FileTrail representative at:

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