



## OVERVIEW

### **Industry:**

Circuit and County Courts

### **Organizational Facts:**

38 venues in Orange County and 16 in Osceola County.

### **Environment:**

Centralized with the use of an Avocet KBM switching system, remote bar scanner, CD storage system.

### **Challenge:**

- Integrate “best of breed” solutions
- Replace outdated systems.
- Make court records available throughout organization.
- Create archival and storage process.

### **Return on Investment:**

- Initial Cost of entire project was \$400,000
- Saved \$300,000 in the first year of operation by reducing court reporter staff by 12, which continues on a yearly basis.
- ROI – Fifteen months.

***Ninth Judicial Court of Florida saves \$300,000 in first year of operation, and realizes ROI in 15 months using FTR Gold™ .***

### **Organization Overview**

There are 20 judicial circuits in the state of Florida that cover all of Florida’s 67 Counties. The Ninth Circuit includes Orange and Osceola Counties, an area consisting of approximately one million residents. In 2002, the court handled almost 90,000 circuit filings in its criminal, civil, domestic, juvenile, and probate court, and 390,000 circuit county filings in its criminal, civil and traffic courts.

The Ninth Circuit Court provides court reporting services through its Judges and Court Administration Division for all Circuit and County Criminal Courts in Orange and Osceola counties, as well three satellite courts in Orange County. In addition, court reporting services are currently provided for: Probate and guardianship proceedings, mental health Baker Act hearings at Florida Hospital and Lakeside Alternatives, traffic court; juvenile court; public defender, state attorney and court-appointed attorney depositions, initial appearances, and emergency matters as present themselves.

### **Organizational Challenge**

When the judges and staff of Orange County moved into a new courthouse in 1997-1998, the Court Administration Division and Chief Judge took advantage of the opportunity to modernize the court reporting system by replacing outmoded analog tape recorders in all courts with cutting edge digital recording systems.

The Court’s first priority was to find solutions that easily integrated with each other. It was also important to install a system that was easy for the court staff to implement and learn to operate, that would let court reporters monitor multiple courtrooms simultaneously, and that would give judges and transcribers easy access to court records.

The Court initially installed FTR 3.3.3 to monitor, record, transcribe, and annotate court proceedings. That was subsequently upgraded to FTR Gold because its easy interface meant little staff training was required, and implementation and integration would be easier and less costly since its configuration required no network or database.

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### **Technology Solution**

FTR is part of a centralized court solution in which a total staff of 19 automated (digital) court reporters covers 38 venues in Orange County, plus 8 court reporters covering 16 venues in Osceola County.

The new system includes digital recording and video monitoring in all courtrooms, dynamic docket capability, high tech evidence presentation systems, a court-wide intranet, an Avocet KBM switching system, and remote bar scanning, as well as FTR Gold.

Audio court proceedings are recorded to a bank of centrally-located computers (one computer per courtroom). Court reporters remotely monitor multiple courtrooms and deposition rooms through video feeds from each location, and make annotations using FTR Log Notes™. Each court reporter station has a bank of monitors, a computer flat-screen monitor and keyboard which lets the court reporter see which venues are active. The audio and annotation notes are recorded onto the PC hard drive and also on CD. Judges can easily access the recorded testimony and listen to it in chambers with FTR Player Plus™. When lawyers order CD's of proceedings, the court staff can create them quickly and easily using FTR CD™.

In Osceola County, traditional stenographic court reporters operate the digital court reporting system alongside the electronic/digital court reporters.

### **Operational Results**

The Ninth Judicial Circuit and County Court of Florida spent around \$400,000 in 1997 to deploy the entire integrated system. A year later, the court had saved \$300,000 in court reporter salaries, and had recouped its investment within fifteen months.

Future plans for Court Reporting Services in the Ninth Judicial Circuit include moving the Circuit Criminal Courts into the digital market by utilizing FTR Gold in a centralized environment as it now does in all of the other courts. Osceola County has already completed that move.