



**TO WHOM IT MAY BE CONCERN**

**TESTIMONIAL OF A HAPPY USER**

I am the Chief Judge of the High Court of Sabah and Sarawak, one of the two High Courts' hierarchy in Malaysia. The other is the High Court of Malaya.

I assumed office in July 2006. On my first day in the office I was shocked to discover that almost all processes in the courts of Sabah and Sarawak were done manually. So much time and personnel were required. Productivity was poor and monitoring was non-existence.

For instance these used to be the common problems:

- i. Registration of a new case took about 30 minutes and involved not less than 5 personnel;
- ii. Scheduling of cases to be heard by the Judges and Magistrates was done manually. This caused much delay in the lawyers getting the notices of hearing thus forcing adjournment due to shortage of time in preparing for the hearing;
- iii. File tracking was manual and took days and weeks to retrieve files;
- iv. Returning of documents filed by lawyers and litigants took weeks and months;
- v. There was no monitoring on the movement of cases, their status and disposal;
- vi. Applications filed were not attended to as soon as possible and there was no system to monitor for any overlooked application;
- vii. Decisions and judgments were delayed and there was no check and monitoring in place;
- viii. The updating of the status of cases was done manually and the delay did not reflect the true position of each case at any one time;
- ix. All lawyers had to come to courts on the hearing days at a given time and waited for their turn to be called. This wasted a lot of their time;
- x. Any notice from the courts or information had to be on hard copy and circulated. This caused a lot of delay and expenses;

- xi. The daily, weekly and monthly reports on the productivity of the courts was done manually by inserting figures on given forms which total in more than 20; and
- xii. Judges, Magistrates and lawyers did not have the mean of knowing the latest decisions and judgments of courts in the country.

Due to the above it was not surprising that cases were pending in courts for up to 20 years. The courts were also overstaffed and operation costs were high.

Faced with such problems I sought for assistance of Sarawak Information Systems Sdn. Bhd. (SAINS) the leading IT vendor in Sarawak, if not in Malaysia.

Within a span of three weeks SAINS with their dedicated staff came up with a comprehensive concept and plan of action to overcome the problems we had. We were lucky as SAINS had the experience and expertise in court procedures having successfully completed the e-Syariah project for the Malaysian Government a few years ago.

With the inputs from the Judges and judicial officers the Sarawak Courts Management System as it is today came into being. The next hardest hurdle we had was to train our staff and making them to use it. The lawyers too posed a problem. The mindset had to be changed. It took us about two months to remove these obstacles.

Today I dare say that the productivity of the courts in Sarawak has increased by leaps and bounds. In 2005 the Sarawak courts were at the bottom in the productivity list of the courts in Malaysia. By the middle of 2007 the Sarawak courts have been consistently on top of the list.

As the Chief Judge I would say that almost all of the above problems disappeared with the introduction of the system. Cases are now disposed of within the shortest time possible. This is due to the short time taken to complete the preparation processes. Almost all members of the staff now are computer savvy.

These are some of the benefits gained since the implementation of the system:

- i. Registration of a new case now takes only 2-3 minutes to register and involving only one personnel;
- ii. All scheduling of cases to be heard by the Judges and Magistrates are now computer generated. Through the CAP portal lawyers are now able to access the Schedule Lists not only for the weeks ahead but for the months ahead. On top of that lawyers can now monitor the status of their cases through the system. Under the system lawyers need no longer

have to worry about errors in their recordings of the status of their cases pending in courts. Hardly any reason is now given for adjournment on the ground of not ready for hearings;

- iii. File tracking is in place and retrieval only takes a few minutes. In fact the status of any case can be known without having to get the actual file;
- iv. Returning of documents filed by lawyers and litigants now takes between 3-7 days;
- v. Monitoring on the movement of cases, their status and disposal is in place. Now with a click of the mouse I can check the status of any case in any of the courts in Sarawak. There is no longer the need to write to the respective Judges or officers for them to supply the information;
- vi. Applications filed are dealt with immediately and if they have not been attended to within the specified time the system will trigger an email to me alerting me that no action has been taken on the particular application filed;
- vii. Any delay in the delivery of decision and judgment is now monitored and the system triggers an email to me when the time period for the delivery is breached. I will then send an email to the Judge or officer concerned to alert him or her of the delay;
- viii. The updating of the status of cases is now done real time in that as soon as the hearing of a case is completed the status is immediately updated in the system;
- ix. Lawyers need not come to courts at the same time. The hearing time is staggered and if there is any change in the time SMS will be automatically sent to the affected lawyers. With this time and costs are saved by the lawyers;
- x. Any notice from the courts or information is now available in the system thus saving time and costs in sending the hard copies to all concerned;
- xi. The daily, weekly and monthly reports on the productivity of the courts are now computer generated and can be obtained by a click of the mouse. Staff who used to do the work are now utilized for other duties;

- xii. Relevant latest judgments of the courts are now in the system and Judges, Magistrates and lawyers can view them at any time thus enabling parties to know the latest cases available.

The system is now very well-entrenched in the workplace of the courts in Sarawak. Judges and judicial officers are also very happy with it. For me it has made my work very much lighter and efficient.

I thank SAINS for all the assistances to the Sarawak courts and I wish to congratulate SAINS for the excellent work it has produced.



**Mr. Justice Richard Malanjum**

**Chief Judge, High Court Sabah and Sarawak Malaysia**

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