Above:
The Information Systems Unit from left to right: Mr. Ayinde Burgess – Court Systems Administrator, Ms. Carlene Cross-Court Information Systems Manager, Ms. Lavaghnh Agard – Court Information Technology Support Officer and Ms. Sonia Thompson – Court Information Technology Support Officer

The Information Systems Unit

STAFFING

The Unit is staffed as follows:

1 Court Information Systems Manager
1 Court Systems Administrator
2 Court Information Technology Support Officers
1 Court Information Systems Clerk (vacant)*

Ms. Lavaghnh Agard who formerly held the position of Court Information Systems Clerk was promoted to Court Information Technology Support Officer with the departure of Mr. Janak Maraj in December 2006. The position of Court Information Systems Clerk has been advertised regionally with the hope of finding a suitable candidate before the end of 2007.
Court Performance Standards
The Information Systems Unit supports all of the performance standards of the Caribbean Court of Justice which include: Access to Justice; Expedition and timeliness; Equality Fairness and Integrity; Independence and Accountability and Public Trust and Confidence.

As an example, the Court recognizes that its customers are throughout the region and are entitled to access to justice. This performance standard, access to justice, can be supported through the use of technology by video conferencing technology, which enables the customer to take part in proceedings in court while being physically located in another member state. The Court also provides audio and/or video transcripts at the end of the days proceedings on our website www.caribbeanourtofjustice.org.

Above:
Participants at the conference of the Caribbean Association for Court Technology Users (CACTUS), in Ocho Rios, Jamaica.

Continuing Staff Development and Training
The Unit continues to keep abreast of trends in technology. To this end three members of the Information Systems Unit attended the annual Caribbean Court Technology Users Conference held in Ocho Rios Jamaica and hosted by the Ministry of Justice, Jamaica.

The conference, which was held over a three day period, provided a forum for court technology personnel from throughout the region to share their experiences and learn from each other. Exhibitions and presentations on technology initiatives in the region were also featured as part of the event.
Two members of the Unit also attended the bi-annual National Centre for State Courts (NCSC) E-Courts Conference in Las Vegas, Nevada. As provided for by the rules of Court, E-Filing may be used at the Caribbean Court of Justice as a method of filing court documents in the Court Registry. Some areas addressed at the E-Courts Conference include the virtual courthouse, new technology solutions for electronic document filing and how e-filing and electronic documents have changed how courts work.

Standards for Court E-Filing are being continuously being developed and revised and this is extremely important as our customers span the region and required timely access to justice. The Systems Administrator also attended a course introduced by NCSC called Managing IT Projects in Courts. This focused on the unique requirements by courts for automated systems and other forms of technology to support the operations of the Court.

Above:
Carlene Cross, Information Systems Manager (second from right) with Skip Chestire, former President of the National Association for Court Management-NACM, Dr. Hugh Collins, State Court Administrator. Louisiana representing the Conference of State Court Administrators; Mary Mc Queen, President of the National Centre for State Courts; Honourable Robert Bell, Chief Judge, Court of Appeals Maryland representing the Conference of Chief Justices with Dean Geoff Gallas at the podium.

In May 2007 the Information Systems Manager graduated as a Fellow of the Institute for Court Management (ICM) at the Supreme Court in Washington DC. This was the culmination of a four-year period of study with the submission of a research paper on the implementation of court technology at the CCJ.
Court Room Technology
The technology implemented to support the operations of the court continued to meet and surpass the expectations of the users. In the courtroom attorneys were able to use the document presenter, pen presenter and their laptop while making submissions at the multimedia lectern.

A wireless network can also be accessed while in the courtroom and media presentations are made possible through the presence of both a video player and a DVD player.

The trial run for video in the court was done on July 28th 2006. This worked well and we have continued to record all Appeal hearings at the court. We also made history when the judgment in the matter of CV0002/2005 The Attorney General and ors vs. Jeffrey Joseph and Lennox Ricardo Boyce, was broadcast live on television in Trinidad and Tobago from the Court with the option for feeds to regional stations. This was significant because it was the first time in the region that a judgment was broadcast live from a court.

During this period the Danish Interpretation Solution (DIS) was implemented in preparation for matters requiring interpretation. This wireless solution allows speakers of different languages to communicate in the courtroom.

End User Technology- Computer Access Security

The Unit continues to support the operations of the Court by providing tools for use by the end user. One such tool is in library services where the IS Division, together with the library implemented a library management information system (LMIS) whichcatalogues and manages the books, serial, periodicals etc. within the library. It also manages membership and loans to track the distribution of books.

The Unit has also implemented a help-desk system to assist in streamlining IS support and tracking and improving our responses to users. The solution implemented is a database solution with reminders and tracking information so that the status of the issues may be readily seen. It also has an incorporated knowledgebase where users may get help on how to solve common issues themselves.
Projects In Progress

Network Security
In order to enhance the security of the data and information within in the Court the Unit intends to utilize a solution that will address intrusion prevention and detection, firewall protection, Internet security, etc. As an initial step towards physical security a biometric system has been implemented for end users to access their computers. This not only reduced access security risk, but has also reduced help-desk calls for resetting of passwords.

Case Management Information System

The solution provider is currently providing training for key end-users in the Court in the use of the case management information software. This project also includes the implementation of an e-filing solution with an interface to all information about a case including access to the audio/video digital court recording.

Audio Digital Court Recording – Portable Solution

As the court is itinerant and is expected to travel to member states, the IS Unit is currently preparing the portable audio digital court recording solution system. This system will be used in jurisdictions where there are no audio digital court recording systems in place. It will ensure that the Court keeps an accurate record of proceedings.