

Electronic Evidence Presentation System

UNITED STATES BANKRUPTCY COURT DISTRICT OF MAINE

The U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the District of Maine offers an electronic evidence presentation system for use during hearings or trials in our Portland courtroom. The system consists of two inputs (HDMI and VGA) at each counsel table and at the podium, which allow a party to display exhibits digitally, permitting the judge, attorneys, witnesses, and jury to view the images simultaneously. A document camera, which allows physical evidence (documents, photographs, objects, x-rays, transparencies, etc.) to be displayed through the same high definition digital system, is also available at the podium.

The parties will use their own equipment (laptops or other electronic devices) for presentation of evidence, utilizing Adobe PDF, PowerPoint or other trial presentation software from their device. Parties **MUST** provide their own technical expertise in preparing the laptop evidence presentation and attend a “practice session” to ensure that devices are compatible. The Court will not troubleshoot compatibility problems for parties attempting to use the evidence presentation system.

RESERVING THE ELECTRONIC EVIDENCE PRESENTATION SYSTEM AND SCHEDULING A PRACTICE SESSION

Reservations for the evidence presentation system should be made at least one week in advance of the date of the proceeding. Should the scheduling of a hearing by the Court not allow a one-week reservation, parties are required to contact the Court as soon as possible to make a reservation in the time available.

Parties who wish to use courtroom audio or visual equipment at a trial or hearing are required to understand and be prepared to operate that equipment in conjunction with the evidence presentation system. Parties who have never used the Court’s system must schedule time in advance of their reservation to practice and to test their electronic equipment’s compatibility with the courtroom’s system. Practice time should be scheduled with the Information Technology (IT) staff listed below. The Court may deny the use of audio/visual equipment during a hearing or trial to parties who have failed to attend a practice session to confirm their equipment’s compatibility with the Court’s system.

TIPS AND TRICKS

- The evidence system on the Court’s end is run by the Electronic Court Recording Operator (ECRO) usually Angie Keith. If you are presenting evidence on a hearing/trial day, please arrive in the courtroom at least fifteen minutes prior to the hearing time to discuss your set-up plans or time needs with the ECRO. During a hearing or trial, “permission” to operate the evidence system must be first given by the touchpad at the ECRO terminal. You must communicate to the ECRO the input you plan to use and the location at which you plan to use it—for example, “Podium/document camera”, or, “Right Counsel Table/Left Input”. At counsel tables, the input chambers are labeled with which table/input you are using. (Please note, the counsel tables and inputs are labeled with the perspective from the bench.)
- Be sure to bring to Court whichever adapter (dongle, etc.) that your device requires.
- Disable all screen savers prior to using your computer in Court, and/or change the “timeout” function on your display.
- When sending your output to the evidence system, “extend” your screen instead of “duplicating”.
- Make sure your text size is easily readable when viewed on the evidence screens.
- The system does not “zoom” on electronic documents (other than use with the document camera). Be sure your presentation software is capable of displaying a magnified view of evidence or prepare magnified versions of evidence on your laptop/tablet/device prior to presenting it in the courtroom.
- Once your evidence presentation is complete, swapping the input source is an easy way to block your device from appearing on the presentation system. For example, if your device is connected to the “HDMI” input, simply tap the “VGA” input on the system’s touchpad, and the materials on your device are blocked from the screen. When you are ready to go back to your evidence, tap the “HDMI” input again.
- Apple devices will interface with the system better through the VGA port. HDMI adapters will function, but results may be inconsistent.
- Practice is the best way to familiarize yourself with the equipment! Be sure to give yourself ample time during your practice/compatibility session.

Important Note: Parties must still provide paper copies of exhibits. The evidence presentation system is a tool used to display exhibits, which we hope will make court proceedings more efficient. It does not take the place of exhibit binders.

To reserve the equipment and/or to schedule a practice session, please contact one of these IT staff members:

Chris Perkins (207) 274-5963

Chris Dodd (207) 274-5957