A BUZZ AROUND COURT ONLINE

Category: Technology Law
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If you are keen to know what the “Court Online” buzz is about, please read on and be on the lookout for my follow up video to learn tips and tricks on how to use it.

Court Online is an online platform that can be used by legal practitioners or litigants to file pleadings online. It is applicable to high court matters only. This means that if you would like to institute a new civil case or would like to issue a summons, you do not have to physically go to court to do so. You can now do it online, from anywhere in the world and in the comfort of your home.

In the past if you wanted to issue a summons or a notice of motion, you would have to physically go to court to have it issued. Although the physical process has not been scrapped, the Judge President issued the Directive dated 8 July 2022 which provides for a summons or an application to be issued on the platform.

The Benefits of Using Court Online

1. It minimises for traffic in court for the purposes of filing court documents.
2. It eradicates lost or misplaced court files and the need to create duplicate files.
3. It provides 24/7 access to an up-to-date record of the filed documents in the matter.
4. It is accessible anywhere in the world. It has the functionality of presenting and directing court to specific evidence.
5. You can invite other parties to the matter electronically.
6. It provides for an automatic index and pagination. So, there is no need to spend hours compiling a hearing bundle.
7. Litigant’s and lawyers can present their case paperlessly in court.
8. It has access to a fully traceable audit trail which tracks which, when and by whom the document was uploaded.
9. You are aware of each step as the matter progresses.
10. You can also initiate urgent matters on the website directly.

How to Register on Court Online?

You first need to register on the Judiciary's website. Once registered, you will receive a link to verify your email address. Once authenticated, you can institute a new civil case on the platform.

If the verification email is not received, you can contact the dedicated help desk for assistance.

There is also an option to register as an individual or as an organisation, i.e., a law firm.

But What About CaseLines?

CaseLines is also an online court system that allows litigants to file and upload their documents online. The purpose of CaseLines is to enable the efficiency and effectiveness of court administration.

Court Online does not do away with CaseLines. Both systems exist independently from each other.

Any new cases (post 18 July 2022) must be initiated via Court Online as stipulated on the latest Directive, for issuing and enrolment. This means that no new cases will be issued in person or on CaseLines.

If the matter was initiated via CaseLines, there is no need to create a new case on Court Online for the same matter as that will result in a duplicate.

Urgent matters can also be created on Court Online.

The Difference and Similarities Between Court Online and CaseLines

Both systems have an automated pre-populated list of documents which sets out the categories of documents that can be uploaded. However, on Court Online, if the document is not in the pre-populated list, then you have to request the helpdesk to add the new category. Whereas on CaseLines, one can simply create a new section for a new document type.

There is no need to invite a registrar to your matter on Court Online since the application for a hearing or trial date is automatically routed to the registrar or clerk responsible for enrolment. On CaseLines, the relevant registrar must be invited.

Court Online requires an estimate of the hearing to be submitted, for example, whether you anticipate that the case may need to be heard over one day or three days.

Court Online also has sub-categories for active and closed cases, whereas CaseLines does not. Both systems allow you to add persons to the case although different terminology is used.

CaseLines allows uploads of documents onto the "sections portal" whereas Court Online permits uploads of documents onto a "document type screen".

One can create a bundle on both systems.

Conclusion

Court Online makes courts more accessible to litigants. I hope that a similar online platform will be rolled out in magistrates courts and other high courts.

Contact us for more good, clear precise advice.