Determine Specific Case Hardware, Software and IT Personnel Requirements.

At the outset, it is important to determine as concisely as possible the hardware, software and IT personnel requirements for your case. There are many factors that will influence the design of your IT system for a particular case. If you fail to adequately assess your needs, then the project can be a disaster that will not please your client (who may have funded your IT efforts).

Litigation software and hardware is reusable. Once purchased, most software can be used with many cases simultaneously. A $2,000 investment in an integrated document database full text, and imaging software will cost only $200 per case if used for 10 cases and $20 per case if used for 100 cases. The cost actually decreases the more you use it.

In regards to a particular case, the extent and type of automation depends upon the following factors:

- Nature and size of case;
- Time constraints of litigation;
- Number and location of parties involved;
- Client interest;
- Budget;
- Possibility of early settlement;
- Number of witnesses and documents;
- Hardware requirements;
- Software costs;
- Personnel needed on case.

Specific hardware and software descriptions are included in Chapter 2. A beginning checklist to assess your needs would include:

Software:

- Databases;
- Full text search and retrieval;
- Spreadsheet;

- Real-time transcription and video;
- Imaging;
- Outliners;
- Graphics;
- Networked capable applications;
- E-mail;
- Backup software and hardware;
- Telephony;
- WWW Browsers;
- Integrated software suites;
- Group computing software;
- Trial presentation software;
- Case Management or Personal Information Management (PIM) software;
- Document assembly or expert practice systems;
- Document management system for workproduct, pleadings, etc.;
- CD-ROM case law or other legal materials.

Hardware:

- Computer availability - standalone, laptop and network;
- Handheld PC's;
- Operating system - Windows or Apple environment;
- Processor speed of computers;
- RAM in the computer;
- DVD and CD-ROM Players and jukeboxes.
- Speakers and sound card;
- Scanners;
- Digital cameras;
- Optical drives;
- Bernoulli drives;
- Surge protectors;
- Zip and Jaz drives;
- Monitors - size and resolution quality;
- Printers & Plotters;
- Communication modems;
- Video capability;
- Notebook computers and features.

Network:

- Network operating software;
- Network applications;
- Network bandwidth and speed;
- Bandwidth connection to the Internet;
- Intranet;
- ASP's;
- Extranets.

Personnel:

- Lead attorney supervision;
- IT consultant;
- Case IT manager;
- Computer technical specialists;
- In-house trainers and on-call help desk;
- Coders - if coding in being done in-house;
- Attorneys and paralegals to do subjective coding, run reports, etc.;
- Graphic person for visual aids;
- Presentation software specialist.

Determine Existing Hardware, Software and Personnel Resources. Within your organization, check to determine what hardware and software is available to assist you in automating your cases. Many times, software has been purchased and used on a certain case, but now sits unused on the shelf. If it is an older version, an upgrade may be very inexpensive.