



5 Ways digital justice transformed courtrooms in 2017 and what's next



CONTENTS

Introducing E-Justice 03

The Challenges 04

What Digital Can Offer 05

Four Digital Justice Case Studies from 2017 07

1. Brazil: The State Court of Justice of Sao Paulo Serving Citizens up to 70% Faster 08

2. United Arab Emirates: Streamlining the Commercial Courts of Dubai 10

3. The USA: Moving to Video Testimony in Cook County Circuit Court 12

4. The Republic of Malawi: An Ambitious E-Justice System 14

The Future 16

Next Steps 17



Introducing E-Justice

With powerful mobile devices readily available and the existence of technology like Microsoft Azure Cloud, just about every facet of life has been made faster, easier or more efficient by digital means in recent history. The field of courtroom justice is no exception.

For too long, this industry has laboured under comparatively antiquated working practices. Over-reliance on paper and the lack of transparency were just two of the challenges faced. However, massive transformations are currently being made around the world, in countries ranging from Brazil to Malawi, meaning that the future of e-justice is bright.

The Challenges



The need for a digital justice transformation is clear when we study the difficulties of courts which still operate under the old systems.

1. The Paper Challenge

Courtroom systems around the world have always been paper heavy. In fact, judicial systems in the UK generated a million pages of documents a day before they were moved to a digital platform. It doesn't take much imagination to picture the inefficiencies involved and the huge costs racked up in terms of storage, transportation and management.

2. The People Challenge

More cases are being taken on by prosecutors, clerks, judges and courtroom employees than ever before. With this workload increase it's no surprise that criminal cases in the western world take many weeks and months before going to trial. In developing countries the situation is even more critical, with trials often taking place over a year after the accused is first remanded.

3. The Transparency Challenge

When the first two challenges are combined, there is always the potential for the fairness of a trial to be questioned. Long delays will inevitably mean that the recollection of events are not as clear. Paper based evidence could get lost, documents might be tampered with or in some cases the entire file could simply go missing. The end result in some cases is a lack of transparency, delays and added stress to all parties involved. In surprisingly many instances around the world, justice isn't done in a timely, fair and efficient manner.

What digital can offer

This overview shows just some of the ways in which courtrooms around the world can be transformed.



1. Transparent Court Scheduling

Technology like Microsoft Dynamics365 can offer fully functional, automated and transparent scheduling systems. Among other benefits, this will enable courtroom administrators to easily arrange complex scheduling requirements to ensure a seamless running of the court. When having a physical meeting isn't possible a level of automation can be applied, relying on Skype for Business to setup additional and appropriate options via video conferencing.

2. Cloud-Based Court Records

By digitizing and indexing court files, paperwork can be reduced and cases can be accessed instantly. There is also no need to worry about losing information, especially when these files are stored securely with Microsoft Azure Cloud.

3. Smoother Case Management

When paperwork is digitized cases can be instantly transferred between the appropriate people, departments and even different organisations where the security permissions have been granted. Each time an update occurs, the relevant stakeholders will know about it and in this way cases will move smoothly and seamlessly. This is all possible using easy-to-handle technology like Microsoft Azure Cloud and Microsoft Dynamics CRM Online.

4. The Virtual Court

In the past witnesses and all parties had to appear in person. When a courtroom embraces digital technology this is no longer necessary. Remote testimony from expert witnesses can be delivered using technology like Skype for Business, and the concept has now been pushed even further to allow all parties to participate remotely if more convenient.

5. Advanced Data Analytics

Efficiency can be vastly improved with systems like Cortana Analytics Suite, which can assess how long court cases and procedures will take from beginning to end. Bottlenecks can be identified and individual court houses can be compared. The result is greater consistency across the entire courtroom process.

A World of Possibilities

The courts of the United Kingdom show just what is possible in a short space of time. In fact, in one 12-month period the UK's digital justice platform eradicated the need for more than 18 million paper documents across the court system. Digital enhancements are even being made in the Supreme Court of the United Kingdom, which digitized its processes so that justices can work remotely and staff members can more easily handle their burgeoning caseloads.

A photograph of two men in business attire. The man on the left is wearing glasses and a dark blue jacket over a dark shirt. The man on the right is wearing a grey blazer over a dark shirt. They are both looking at a laptop screen which displays a data visualization with a bar chart and a pie chart. The background is a blurred office environment.

4 Digital Justice Case Studies from 2017

We've examined the challenges and looked at some solutions, but it's always worth studying real-world examples. This list of e-justice success stories is by no means exhaustive, but it does give a detailed overview of the massive potential of digital.

1

Brazil

The State Court
of Justice of Sao
Paulo Serving
Citizens up to
70% Faster



When it came to paperwork problems, The State Court of Justice of Sao Paulo (TJSP) suffered more than most judiciaries. Its stored files and documents were so heavy that they were causing structural damage to some of the court's buildings. Compounding this issue was the city's traffic problem, which made it almost impossible for the court to operate efficiently. In 2005 it was decided that something needed to be done and Brazil passed a law enabling judicial bodies to receive court processes in digital format. This modernisation continued under Rosely Castilho, CIO of TJSP, who set up the procedures necessary for the court's 50,000 employees to fully embrace a digital transformation. With her court being one of the largest in the world it made sense for her to turn to Microsoft. The goal was to go 100% digital by the end of 2015 and this was achieved with a month to spare. In 2017, the benefits are clear:

Saving Time

Millions of working hours were saved this year alone, because the new digital processes drastically reduce the time it takes to deal with paperwork. Citizens benefit too, as they can now conduct simple court services from their home computers.

Facilitating Communication

The migration of the Official Journal, a bulletin of judges' decisions and rulings, to an online format meant that the court no longer had to print out and distribute up to 10,000 newsletters. Information is now available regularly and quickly – with judgements being posted at 8 am. daily.

Ensuring Continuity

Disaster recovery became a key issue when a flood hit the Forum de Sao Luiz do Paraitinga in 2010. The documents involved in more than 2,100 processes were damaged. To ensure that this never happens again, the process is now almost entirely digital.

Preserving Resources

In the current five-year period, nearly 5 million kilograms of paper will be saved, along with 440,000 cubic meters of water. The digital transformation will also eradicate some 13,507 tons of harmful CO2 emissions. All of this is extremely welcome in Sao Paulo, whose rising population has to contend with droughts, floods, pollution and shortages of resources.

Easier Than You Think

The advancements made in Brazil may seem unattainable, but this is where Microsoft comes in. Using Microsoft products off the shelf or with the help of their [digital advisers](#), you can make your courtroom's digital transformation easier – not to mention quicker.

2

**United
Arab
Emirates**

Streamlining the
Commercial Courts
of Dubai



The Dubai International Financial Centre (DIFC) Courts are a respected English-language common law judiciary for global businesses. Since their inception in 2006 the Courts have been at the forefront of court technology and it therefore comes as no surprise that in 2017 the DIFC Dispute Resolution Authority signed a memorandum of understanding with Microsoft in order to drive the next phase of digital transformation in the sector. The transformations which have already taken place include:

Smart Justice

The Court's Smart Small Claims Tribunal (SmartSCT) allows parties anywhere in the world to attend a virtual court and benefit from globally enforceable judgements. The service has been so successful that in 2017 it was named by an independent body as one of the world's Top 10 Court Technology Solutions.

Digital Filing

An e-filing system has been in effective use by the court and accounts for 90% of all documents filed. Aside from the savings in paper, this makes for easier information retrieval and speeds up the processes of the Courts.

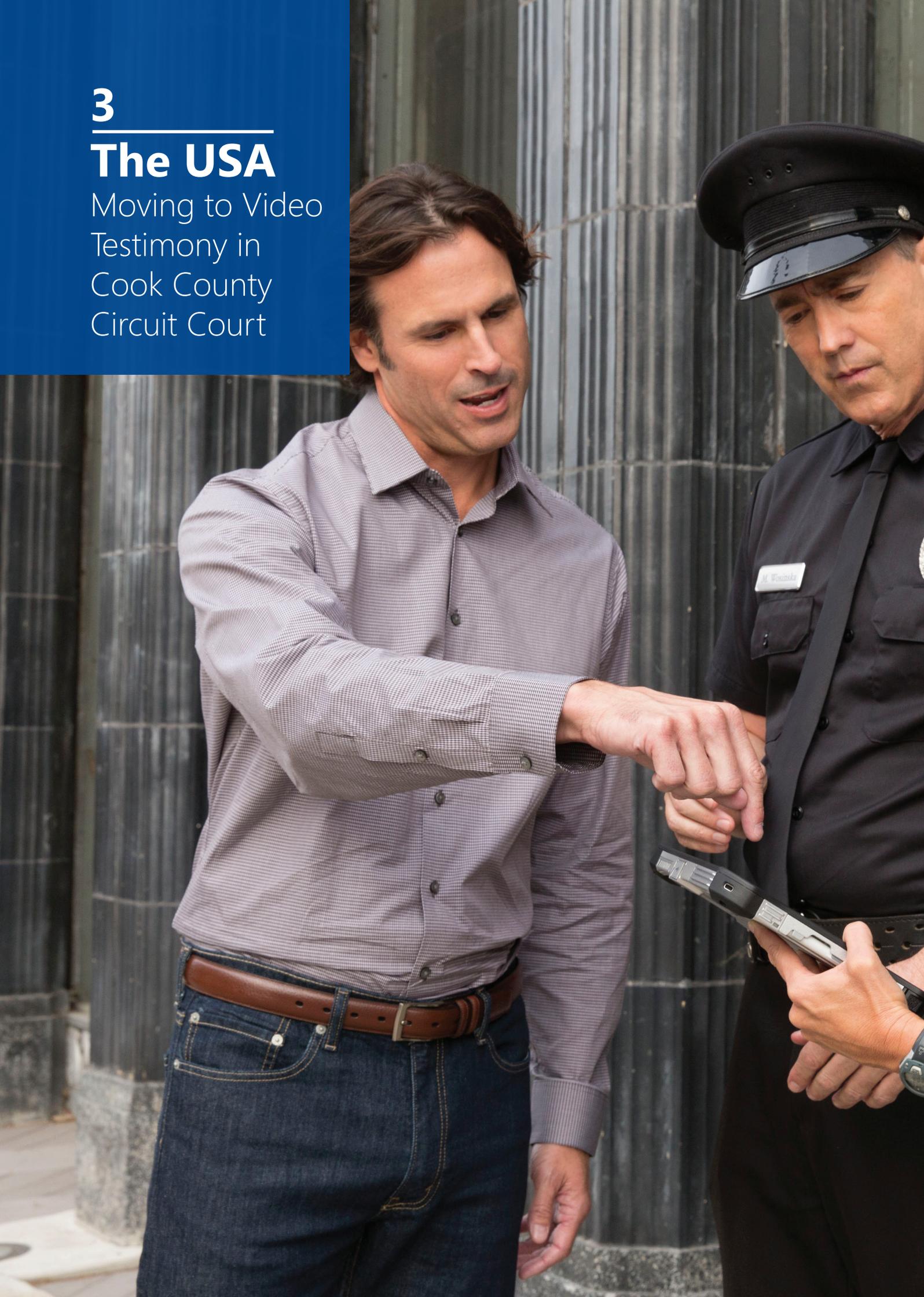
Cloud Collaboration

With the support of technology such as Microsoft Azure Cloud and Microsoft Office 365 the DIFC is looking to make improvements in just about every area of its operations. Flexible scheduling, greater collaboration and the secure storage of documents are just some of the benefits. It's all part of the DIFC's focus on engaging customers, empowering employees, enhancing operations and transforming services.

3

The USA

Moving to Video
Testimony in
Cook County
Circuit Court



Video is currently relied on in courtrooms around the world as a means of recording proceedings. In the United States this media has been taken one step further and is being used for testimony. One example of this was [the acceptance in Cook County Circuit Court of Skype testimony from a man who had suffered a stroke](#) and was therefore bedridden. Working with video footage isn't always easy in terms of the skills and resources required, but Microsoft has solutions in place:

Secure Video Streaming

Skype for Business has the necessary authentication and encryption features to meet the strict security requirements of even the Criminal Justice Information Services (CJIS) standard introduced by the FBI. For this, and also for its flexibility and ease of use, this technology is being embraced by courtrooms across the United States.

Reliable Storage

Video is notorious for hogging drive space, but Microsoft Azure Storage offers the ability to store or backup vast amounts of footage at low costs. As the system is cloud-based, all data is safe from hardware failure and accessible from anywhere.

Powerful Searching

Through Azure Media Indexer, part of Microsoft Azure Media Services, spoken language is converted via the latest technology into written text. This enables legal professionals to search for any comments made during testimony, giving the exact times when these comments occurred.

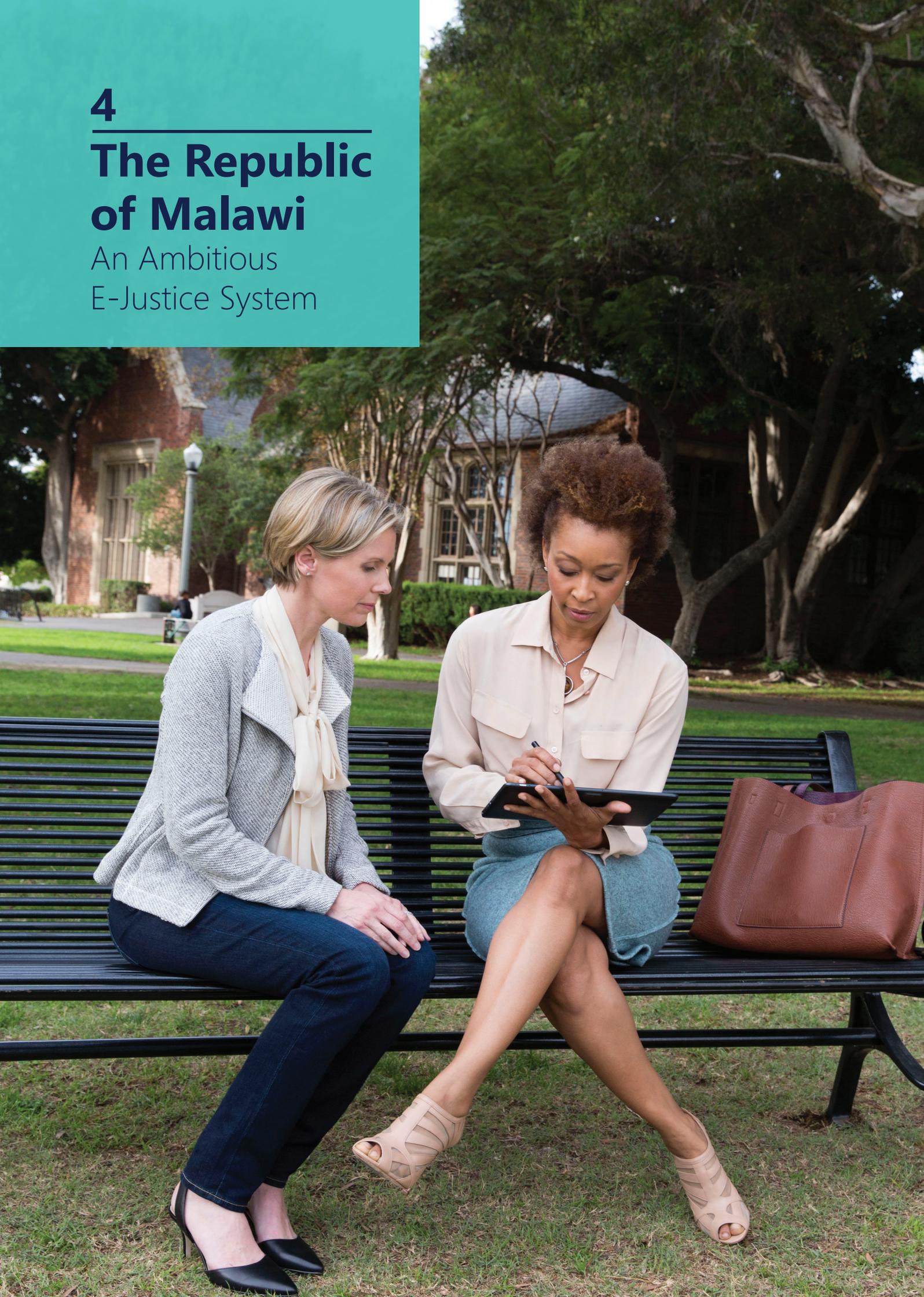
The Windows 10 Difference

With Microsoft Windows 10, it's possible to resolve many of the issues experienced by courtroom staff using older operating systems. Searching is more efficient and starting up and shutting down is much faster when compared to previous systems. This leading-edge operating system also helps with troubleshooting, giving IT professionals the ability to operate computers remotely in order to provide help quickly and effectively. If you haven't made the upgrade, get in touch with a Microsoft [digital adviser](#) to make the process even smoother.

4

The Republic of Malawi

An Ambitious E-Justice System



The judiciary in Malawi suffered for years from delays and backlogs. After a thorough audit, paper was identified as the chief culprit. The proposed solution was to switch to a fully digital case management system. However, this system had to link users securely across a vast geographic area and cater for the needs of stakeholders who often weren't technologically literate. Based on the strength of their proposal, Paraflow Communications Ltd. was appointed to handle the transformation and Malawi now benefits from one of the most advanced paperless justice systems in the world. Microsoft SharePoint forms the backbone of this system, which provides benefits such as:

Improved Security and Reliability

Microsoft products, particularly the features of the Microsoft Active Directory, made it easy to control identity management and tighten security within the system.

Instant Access to Information

Thanks to Microsoft technology, court users can now get immediate access to updates concerning cases. This comes as a welcome change to the previous paper-based system.

Efficient Processing

The new management system was able to process more than 30,000 items of documentation in its first six months alone. Thanks to this paperless system, information is always at hand and cases are processed faster.

The Future



As advanced as digital justice has become, the field still has vast potential. In coming years, we can expect the following:

Virtual Courtrooms

Microsoft's Skype for Business brings people around the world together in a secure and seamless meeting environment. It is possible that it, along with other technology, will be used to bring entire courtrooms together. Teleconferencing can occur between judges, witnesses, juries and legal teams, with evidence being delivered virtually and judgements passed online.

Artificial Intelligence

Moving even further ahead, it isn't difficult to envision a system in which artificial intelligence is relied on for dispute resolution, with AI possibly even taking the place of judge and jury. How effective this will be remains to be seen, but already AI chatbot systems are being used to give legal advice.

Going Mobile

Digital justice has already proved so successful that court employees want more. In countries like Brazil, they're pushing for greater mobile integration, asking for the ability to teleconference, receive court information and even undertake training. This is all possible using existing Microsoft technology, which is geared towards mobile devices.

Next Steps

If you want to benefit from the latest advancements in digital justice it's important to continue reading articles like this one. Knowledge is everything. Microsoft is also there with technology that can really make a difference to your courtroom. Microsoft's [digital advisers](#) are always available to guide you on your way to an e-justice transformation. So get in touch and find out how you can go paperless, improve scheduling and take that quantum leap into the future.

