

# Accessing Bankruptcy Information with PACER

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## What is PACER?

Public Access to Court Electronic Records (PACER) is an electronic public access service that allows users to obtain case and docket information from Federal Appellate, District and Bankruptcy courts, and from the U.S. Party/Case Index. Currently most courts are available on the Internet. Links to these courts are provided from <http://pacer.psc.uscourts.gov/>.

However, a few systems are not available on the Internet and must be dialed directly using communication software (such as ProComm Plus, pcAnywhere, or Hyperterminal) and a modem. Electronic access is available for most courts by registering with the PACER Service Center, the judiciary's centralized registration, billing, and technical support center.

Each court maintains its own databases with case information. Because PACER database systems are maintained within each court, each jurisdiction will have a different URL or modem number. Accessing and querying information from each service is comparable; however, the format and content of information provided may differ slightly. Links and toll free modem numbers are provided to most jurisdictions.

PACER is a service of United States Judiciary. The PACER Service Center is run by the Administrative Office of the United States Courts.

## Why use PACER?

The PACER System offers an inexpensive, fast, and comprehensive case information service to any individual with a personal computer (PC) and Internet access. The PACER system permits you to request information about a particular individual or case. The data is displayed directly on your PC screen within a few seconds. The system is simple enough that little user training or documentation is required.

## Available Information

The PACER System offers electronic access to case dockets to retrieve information such as:

- A listing of all parties and participants including judges, attorneys, and trustees
- A compilation of case related information such as cause of action, nature of suit, and dollar demand
  
- A chronology of dates of case events entered in the case record
- A claims registry
- A listing of new cases each day
- Appellate court opinions
- Judgments or case status
- Types of documents filed for certain cases
- Many courts offer imaged copies of documents

## U.S. Party/Case Index

The U.S. Party/Case Index is a national index for U.S. district, bankruptcy, and appellate courts. A small subset of information from each case will be transferred to the U.S. Party/Case Index each night. The system serves as a locator index for PACER. You may conduct nationwide searches to determine whether or not a party is involved in federal litigation. For detailed information on cases found while searching the U.S. Party/Case Index, you will need to visit the PACER site for the particular jurisdiction where the case is located.

## Availability

The PACER System is available days, nights, and weekends. You can verify all updates to active and recently closed cases without having to make repeated trips to the court to review paper records. If there have been no updates, this can be confirmed in seconds.

## What You Need to Get Started

- A personal computer
- For Internet PACER:
  - Internet access
  - Javascript enabled web browser
- For Dial-up PACER:
  - A 9600 or higher baud modem
  - Terminal emulation software that supports VT100 emulation Cost

The United States Congress has given the Judicial Conference of the United States, the judicial governing body of the U.S. Federal Courts, authority to impose user fees for electronic access to case information. For a history of the electronic public access fee and a current electronic public access fee schedule, [click here](#).

All registered agencies or individuals will be charged a user fee. Access to web based PACER systems will generate a \$.08 (\$.07 before January 1, 2005) per page charge. The per page charge applies to the number of pages that results from any search, including a search that yields no matches (one page for no matches.) The charge applies whether or not pages are printed, viewed, or downloaded. Access to dial-up PACER systems will generate a \$.60 per minute charge.

Users will NOT incur both per minute and per page charges for a PACER session. You will be billed on a quarterly basis for your transactions. You will be allowed to enter a client code of your choosing each time you login to PACER to help facilitate managing the costs.

A measure was approved by the Judicial Conference of the United States in March 2001 stating that no fee is owed until a user accrues more than \$10 worth of charges in a calendar year. Consequently, if an account does not accrue \$10 worth of usage between January 1st and December 31st each year, all balances will be deleted from our records. This policy change will be effective for the calendar year of 2001, and statements will not be mailed to PACER users whose accounts do not have a balance due of at least \$10.

Once the balance due exceeds \$10, a user will receive a statement by mail which includes the current and previous charges in a calendar year. Please read the announcement detailing this change.

The Judicial Conference, at its September 2003 session, amended the language of Section I of the Electronic Public Access Fee Schedule for the appellate, district, and bankruptcy courts, the United States Court of Federal Claims, and the Judicial Panel on Multidistrict Litigation (adopted by the Judicial Conference pursuant to sections 1913, 1914, 1926, 1930, and 1932 of title 28, United States Code). The previous schedule placed a cap on the eight cents per page charge for Internet access to data obtained electronically from the public records of individual cases in the courts, with a maximum \$2.40 (\$2.10 before January 1, 2005), the equivalent of 30 pages, for electronic access to any single document. The amendment extends this cap to all case documents, including docket sheets and case-specific reports, with the exception of transcripts of federal court proceedings. The cap will apply to all PACER, RACER, or CM/ECF sites.

For example: previously, a 50 page document cost \$4.00 at 8 cents a page. This same document now only costs \$2.40. Users will receive the entire 50 page document but only be charged \$2.40. Each attachment in CM/ECF sites is considered a separate document. Therefore, the cap will apply to each attachment over 30 pages separately.

To register, fill out one of the registration forms available at <http://pacer.psc.uscourts.gov/>. There is no cost for registering.

[Click here](#) for current PACER policies and procedures.

The foregoing has been prepared for informational purposes only and does not constitute legal advice. The information is summary in nature and does not address any particular situation. Readers should not act upon this information but should instead seek professional advice.

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