



InfoMAP – Frequently Asked Questions

Overview

The following questions were submitted by Public Utility Commission employees and external stakeholders during information sessions. This document and the answers to these questions are submitted in response to and to further the ongoing education of all parties about the Information Management and Access Project. To learn more, see <http://www.puc.state.pa.us/general/infomap.aspx>.

Q. What is InfoMAP?

A. *The Information Management & Access Project, known as InfoMAP, will overhaul the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission's (PUC) existing case management system to improve electronic workflow capability. It will also provide for more efficient access by consumers, utilities and practitioners through the implementation of electronic filing and e-commerce initiatives.*

Q. Has funding been approved?

A. *On July 7, 2005, Governor Edward G. Rendell signed the PUC's budget bill, which was passed by the General Assembly as SB 612 on July 4, 2005. With the Governor's signing of Act 6A of 2005, the PUC can move forward with InfoMAP, since the 2005-06 budget included \$3.85 million for the project. A second installment of funding for InfoMAP will be included in the PUC's 2006-07 budget request.*

Q. How can I submit suggestions for InfoMAP?

A. *Any suggestions related to InfoMAP should be sent to the following email address: ra-infomap@state.pa.us.*

Definitions

Q. What is DOCS?

A. *Docs Open, also known as DOCS, is the document storage and retrieval system that is currently used by the PUC.*

Q. What is Bridge?

A. *Bridge is the software used to access various databases stored on the PUC's mainframe.*

Q. What is CMS?

- A. *CMS is the Case Management System that tracks PUC cases from beginning of a case until it is closed.*

Q. What is FileNet?

- A. *FileNet is a complete integrated suite of modules that includes a new document management system, database architecture and workflow capabilities, as well as providing other needed functionality.*

Q. What is an ALJ?

- A. *The PUC provides conflict resolution by independent administrative law judges (ALJs). Judges preside at formal hearings in contested matters before the PUC, gather all the facts relating to an individual case, prepare written decisions outlining the issues and recommend resolutions to the disputes.*

Q. What is the BCS-CAI Data Exchange?

- A. *CAI (Customer Account Information) allows the Bureau of Consumer Services (BCS) to track information about informal complaints they receive (payment arrangement requests and consumer complaints) and to report information about the complaints to the Commission and utilities.*

Data Exchange is the electronic transfer of data. This allows BCS to electronically send opening and closing case information to utilities. Also, BCS electronically receives reports from the utilities about the informal complaints.

Q. What is an RFP?

- A. *RFP stands for Request for Proposals. An RFP is a document that allows the PUC to request a bid from contractors for a project. The PUC then selects a contractor to complete the project.*

Timing

- Q. What is the timetable for this project? When will we transition from DOCS to new software? When will Bridge be replaced? When will electronic filings be possible? When will the project be completed? Will some aspects of InfoMAP, such as e-payments, be implemented after the “go-live” date?**

- A. *The project is designed to be implemented in three phases over two years. It is anticipated that the project will begin by January 1, 2006, with a completion date of December 31, 2007. The first stage will involve the development of a new database and the transfer of the data in the current case management system to the new database. Additionally, the existing DOCS information will continue to be available through the new application. Finally, workflows will be automated under Phase I. In Phase II, imaging capability will be developed as well as e-filing. Phase III will implement e-commerce functionality. It is anticipated that these systems will come online as they are completed and tested. However, it is also possible that the transition will not take place until the project is completed and tested in its entirety. All stakeholders will be kept apprised as the project develops.*

RFP

Q. When does the PUC expect to issue the Request for Proposal (RFP)?

A. *A draft RFP has been prepared and, with the assistance of a consultant, is undergoing further review and edits before issuance. Simultaneously, staff in various bureaus of the PUC are providing additional information about databases that are in use to ensure that the RFP adequately addresses those which need to be integrated into the new system. Although we have targeted the end of August for the issuance of an RFP, we are not certain whether the current review and edit process will be completed in time for that to occur. If that target is not met, further information will be forthcoming. Within a few weeks after issuance of the RFP, the PUC will hold a pre-bid conference for potential bidders.*

Q. Will the RFP cover all aspects of InfoMAP, including a new document management system to replace DOCS? Or will the successful bidder decide what new document management system will be needed to interface with new case management system?

A. *The RFP will cover all aspects of InfoMAP. As a result of the study completed in 2003, FileNet was identified as the preferred solution for the PUC's needs. In the intervening period since the previous study, FileNet has been adopted by the Commonwealth as the state standard for this type of application. This designation has significant attendant savings to the PUC. However, if the chosen vendor offers a different solution that meets our needs and will cost less, that solution will be given serious consideration.*

Costs

Q. How will the PUC recover the costs of the new system?

A. *The General Assembly has approved recovery of \$3.85 million for InfoMAP through assessments on public utilities. That assessment, along with the rest of the PUC's approved budget, will be allocated among public utilities by Commission order, which is expected to be adopted on Aug. 11, 2005. Due to a surplus remaining from the PUC's 2004-05 budget, including the first year of InfoMAP funding in the amount of \$660,000 which was not spent, we anticipate that the \$3.85 million assessment for InfoMAP will be offset by approximately \$2.8 million. This means that, in the first year, public utilities will be assessed roughly \$1 million for InfoMAP.*

Q. Can the PUC recover some costs of the new system through increased filing fees?

A. *For the remaining costs, the PUC expects to seek approval next year to further assess public utilities. However, the PUC recognizes that the new system will benefit many other users, and is exploring alternative methods of cost sharing, including filing or access fees. We note that fees imposed by the PUC must be established by regulation in accordance with statutory provisions. The fees are authorized by Section 317 of the Public Utility Code, but have to be established by regulation.*

Q. If the bids exceed estimated costs, how will the PUC proceed?

A. *At this time, the PUC's approved funding level is \$3.85 million, and the PUC estimates that the total costs of the project will necessitate additional funding next year. Since our projections are based on reasonable cost estimates, we believe that competitive bids will be submitted to allow implementation at approved and anticipated funding levels. If, however, the bids exceed those levels, further analysis of available options will be performed so that a less costly approach can be pursued.*

Confidentiality of Information

Q. Will a password be required to enter any portion of the Web site or InfoMAP?

A. *Registration and use of a password may be required to enter certain portions of the Web site or InfoMAP, either for making electronic filings or accessing specific types of information. We expect the vendor to propose solutions to address situations where limited access or capabilities may be necessary.*

Q. Will companies be able to electronically file proprietary documents, and, if so, how will the confidentiality of that information be protected?

A. *Yes. The response below about protecting confidentiality of customer information also explains how proprietary documents that are electronically filed by companies will be handled.*

Q. Will the confidentiality of customer information (names, addresses, account numbers) that is supplied during the complaint process be preserved?

A. *We will employ the latest technologies to secure our infrastructure. A number of different methods are or will be employed: encryption, firewalls, intrusion detection, etc. Once a vendor is selected and we review the options available, we will make security decisions. It is our intention to secure all data from any possible threat.*

Electronic Access to Information

Q. Will the public's electronic access to PUC orders be the same as it is now?

A. *The public will still be able to access PUC orders, but they may be accessed through different means.*

Q. Will ALJ decisions be issued electronically?

A. *Copies of ALJ decisions will be available online. However, the official document will be served by U.S. Mail to all parties as is currently done.*

Q. Will hearing transcripts be available electronically?

A. *At this time, it is not known whether the transcripts will be available online. This would depend on PUC's contract with court reporters. This suggestion will be reviewed and considered.*

Q. Will any special software be needed by external users? What minimum operating requirements will a user need to access information electronically?

A. The general public will need a browser with Internet access.

Q. Will licenses be required, and, if so, at what cost to users?

A. User licenses will be required; costs of licenses have been factored in the RFP. No user license fees are contemplated at this time.

Q. How will the PUC ensure that a downloaded document is the accurate version of a final order?

A. We will use the same checks and balances that we have in place right now. However, as it is currently, there will continue to be a disclaimer indicating that all documents available online are merely electronic representations of the officially filed document. The official document will still reside in the Office of the Secretary.

Electronic Filings

Q. Will InfoMAP reduce reliance on manual entries into the Commission's case management system? For instance, if a document is filed electronically, will it automatically appear on the list of docket entries?

A. When a document is initially filed, whether electronic or paper, a "profile" of that document will need to be created so that the system knows what the document is and what to do with it. In the case of electronically filed documents, it is anticipated that the party making the filing will be able to fill out the profile that will then accompany the electronic document. In the case of documents that are not filed electronically, manual entries will still be required, but the data entry process will be streamlined.

Q. Will paper copies be required in addition to an electronic filing? If paper filings are not typically required to supplement electronic filings, will consideration be given to requiring paper copies of voluminous filings, such as Category 1 rate cases?

A. Yes. It is expected that, for the foreseeable future, one paper copy of an electronically filed document will be required in addition to the electronic copy, to be submitted for the official records of the PUC. We will consider whether more than one paper copy will be necessary for certain types of filings, such as Category 1 rate cases.

Q. Will a party to a proceeding be able to request paper copies when an electronic filing is submitted?

A. The PUC will have to decide whether a party to a proceeding may request paper copies when an electronic filing is submitted.

Q. Would formal complaints filed by consumers be served electronically on companies?

A. Section 702 of the Public Utility Code addresses service of complaints on parties, and the PUC will have to consider whether such service can be accomplished electronically. Even if official notice of the complaint continues to be a paper document sent through the mail, the complaint will be available online. The utility will be notified electronically of the complaint, so the utility can begin their response should they so desire prior to official service.

Q. Does the PUC intend to promulgate regulations to govern the submission of electronic filings?

A. The PUC is reviewing its regulations to determine what changes will be required to accommodate the submission of electronic filings and to consider how to address various issues raised by electronic filings, such as paper copies, service on parties and other rules associated with such filings.

Q. Will documents filed before the “go-live date” be available electronically?

A. Generally, only those documents filed after the implementation of InfoMAP will be available electronically. Electronic availability of documents filed before that date will depend on the public interest and/or the importance of the particular proceeding. It is anticipated that documents may also be made available on request or if an active proceeding requires electronic access to older documents.

Q. What protocols will be used for documents that are electronically filed or produced? For instance, will it be PDF?

A. The format(s) are under consideration. The selected vendor will make a recommendation, which will be reviewed.

Q. Will all internal users have the capability to create PDF documents?

A. That question is not being addressed by this project. If it is determined that documents will be made available to the public in PDF format, the document will be converted to that format at the time it is made available to the public.

Q. Will internal users be able to access orders after they are entered without going through the Web site?

A. Yes.

Q. Will the PUC lose revenues from copying fees, or do those go into the general fund? What is the magnitude of those fees?

A. The PUC’s revenues from copying fees do not go into the general fund, but the revenues are not substantial. Due to the way our budget and assessment process is handled, the loss of those fees will have a revenue neutral effect on available funds.

- Q. If recommended decisions are served electronically, will that affect the due date for exceptions?**
- A. *No. Parties will still be allowed a prescribed amount of time within which to file exceptions. However, they will be available online almost immediately upon being filed.*
- Q. Will documents that are filed electronically be sent via email or submitted through the Web site?**
- A. *It is anticipated that documents will be submitted through the Web site, although it may also be possible to accept them via email. The Web site is the preferred method since it would allow the automatic triggering of defined processes.*
- Q. Will consumers be able to file formal complaints electronically? If so, will complaints filed electronically be docketed immediately.**
- A. *We expect to give consumers the opportunity to file formal complaints electronically. It will be necessary, however, to address various issues related to docketing, verification and other filing requirements.*
- Q. Will electronic filings be accompanied by an electronic signature?**
- A. *The PUC will consider whether this is a necessary feature of electronic filings.*
- Q. Will electronic filing be followed by notices of receipt, acknowledgement and acceptance?**
- A. *The PUC is considering this suggestion and will work with the vendor on such details concerning electronic filings.*
- Q. Will a hotline number be available to check whether filing was received?**
- A. *The PUC is considering this suggestion and will work with the vendor on such details concerning electronic filings.*
- Q. Will utilities be able to access the system to determine the bureau assignment and status relating to a particular filing?**
- A. *It is our expectation that utilities will be able to access the system to obtain this type of information.*
- Q. Has the PUC looked at other state or federal regulatory agencies who have already implemented similar systems?**
- A. *We have looked at successful systems in place at the Missouri and Connecticut PUCs, and at the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. The similar project in Missouri led to a 60 percent reduction in paper-based activity and a 25 percent productivity gain. We will draw on experience gained from those agencies and others who have implemented similar systems. We encourage users of those systems to identify user-friendly models or features.*

Web Site

- Q. **Will Web site redesign or enhancements be a part of the project?**
- A. *The project envisions an increased availability of public documents and data, as well as the capability to file documents electronically. There will be some Web site enhancements that implement the functionality made available through InfoMAP. However, that does not mean a wholesale redesign of the Web site will occur.*
- Q. **What is the relationship between InfoMAP and the Web site?**
- A. *There is no direct relationship. The Web site will be configured to allow access to all public documents and data available as a result of InfoMAP, and to allow for the electronic filing of documents and the implementation of any e-commerce initiatives that may be developed.*
- Q. **Will the PUC seek input from users as to what Web site enhancements would be beneficial, such as the inclusion of links to other state or federal agencies?**
- A. *Yes. Any input related to the PUC Web site should be directed to ra-pcwebmaster@state.pa.us.*
- Q. **Will the general public's use of the Web site require any additional equipment or technology than is needed now?**
- A. *No, we do not anticipate the general public's use of the Web site to require anything different than is currently needed.*
- Q. **Will documents that are now on the PUC's Web site continue to be available?**
- A. *Yes, the documents will be available, but they may be accessed through different means.*

Search Features

- Q. **Will search engines be easier to use? Will the new document management system have better search tools?**
- A. *We recognize the need for a better search method and will make every effort to provide one, so that it is even easier for users to find documents with limited information. Your suggestions are vital to making a better search engine.*
- Q. **For a case with multiple docket numbers, will the system allow a user to search under any docket number?**
- A. *Yes. This request will be made of the programmers.*
- Q. **Will there be information available about specific companies such as their tariffs or customer service records?**
- A. *We will consider this request.*

Q. Will search techniques currently available in Bridge (such as in the railroad database) continue to be available?

A. The new system will be designed to mirror the way we work today. If a search is available now that makes your life easier, we will certainly request that it be available in the new system.

PUC's Existing Case Management System (CMS)

Q. Will the BCS-CAI Data Exchange for handling informal complaints remain in place?

A. Yes. The Bureau of Consumer Services system for handling informal complaints will not be affected by InfoMAP.

Q. Will there be an interface between the BCS informal complaint database and InfoMAP?

A. This is under discussion. BCS will have access to InfoMAP and be able to access data it needs to perform its duties. However, any interface between the two systems has not been determined at this time. The first priority is to update the existing CMS, now known collectively as InfoMAP.

Q. Will all entries currently in Bridge be transferred into the new system?

A. This question addresses the issue of data conversion. The data currently available in CMS through Bridge is being reviewed to determine which information needs to be converted. Decisions will be made as to what data, and to what extent, will be converted within the InfoMAP project. Generally, the expectation is that existing data routinely relied upon by PUC Staff will continue to be available.

Q. Why does old data need to be converted?

A. Conversion of certain data -- which currently exists in the Commission's case management system, including utility information and docket entries -- is critical to continuation of the PUC's daily operations. It would be inefficient to start with a blank page for entering all relevant data into our new system.

Q. Will the PUC attempt to support two systems during a transition period?

A. No. When the case management system is replaced by InfoMAP, the PUC expects to fully rely on the new system.

Q. Will all bureaus have the ability to input information into the new system? Will it be one or two representatives of the bureaus who have this capability?

A. Yes. The number of bureau representatives involved will vary depending on the bureau, the type of document and the work flows defined.

- Q. Will the PUC have the capability of interfacing or exchanging electronic information with other state agencies?**
- A. *The PUC hopes to be able to exchange electronic information, where appropriate, with other state agencies. The likelihood of that possibility will be enhanced if the FileNet solution is used, since other state agencies are already relying on it.*
- Q. Is FileNet the only solution being considered?**
- A. *No. Although FileNet is the application that the Commonwealth prefers state agencies to use, the PUC is open to other suggestions from vendors if another solution would better address our needs.*

DOCS

- Q. Will documents saved in DOCS still be accessible?**
- A. *Yes. All documents currently stored in DOCS will be available under the new system.*
- Q. Will project folders or groups created in DOCS still be available?**
- A. *We envision the groups still being available in some fashion. When the new system is being designed, we will request a feature similar to project folders.*

Training

- Q. Will training be offered? Also, what type of training is being considered? Will it be available to both internal and external users?**
- A. *Training by the vendor on the use of all features available as a result of InfoMAP is part of the RFP to be issued for this project. It is yet to be determined whether training will be classroom based or online, how long the session will be, or where and when the training will be offered. These types of questions will be answered based on the vendor's recommendations and will be communicated in a timely manner.*