MINNESOTA JUDICIAL BRANCH
INTEGRATION SERVICES

Introduction

Notifications and queries provide two different ways for court business partners to receive data from the Minnesota Court Information System (MNCIS). This document provides an overview of the differences between notifications and queries and discusses some factors to consider when deciding to use one or the other. It also provides examples of how some agencies use these services.

It is important to remember that notifications and queries are electronic messages transmitted from one computer system to another. They are designed to be processed by the receiving system so that they can be applied to a database or processed in a way that meets the requirements of the receiving agency.

- **Notifications** offer agencies the ability to receive immediate electronic messages when updates to cases or bonds are made in MNCIS. These updates can be used to keep the receiving system in sync with MNCIS. Notifications are triggered by actions that occur in the court system.
- **Queries** offer agencies the ability to retrieve information about court cases or parties when that information is needed. Queries are initiated by the court business partner. Query requests and the returned information are in the form of electronic transmissions between computer systems.

Considerations

Deciding whether to use notifications or queries involves various considerations. Both have advantages but meet different needs. It is not uncommon for an agency to use both notifications and queries, depending on the process involved.

Where Does the Action Start?

The first question to answer is, how is a business process is initiated? Does the process start because of something happening at the Court or does it start independently of court activity? If a business process is initiated because of something happening at the Court, then a notification can be used to provide the information. If a process is initiated independently of MNCIS, then a query can be used. Here are some examples of the use of notifications and queries:

- The Minnesota Department of Corrections (DOC) needs to prepare to receive an offender when a judge enters a court decision placing the offender under the jurisdiction of the DOC. That is a process triggered by a court action. When that court decision is entered in MNCIS, a notification containing the sentence details is sent to the DOC system alerting them to start preparing for intake.

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- In DOC prisons, inmates have visitors. Inmates are prohibited from being in contact with persons for which a no contact order is in force. When a visitor comes to the facility, before allowing the visit to proceed, corrections officers query MNCIS to see if the inmate has any conditions that prevent contact with the visitor. In this example, the DOC performs a Case Search by Party query to find all the cases involving the prisoner. They then do a Case Get query for each of those cases to check for no contact orders. A query is the appropriate action here because the process was triggered by a request for a visit, not an action that occurred in court.
- In attorney Case Management Systems (CMS), attorney calendars need to be current with court hearing information. When hearings are scheduled, cancelled or rescheduled in MNCIS, the court action triggers a Hearing Trial Setting case notification to the CMS so that the affected attorney calendars can be updated. This process was initiated by entering the hearing details in MNCIS, not by an action in the attorney CMS. This makes a notification the most efficient process for keeping MNCIS and the CMS current with each other.

Benefits of Queries and Notifications

Notifications are timely because they respond directly to MNCIS case and bond activity. If an agency wants to keeps its computer based records in sync with the Court and other agencies, notifications make that possible.

Queries are timely when the process is initiated by something happening in an agency rather than at the Court. A combination of a Case Search by Party query with subsequent Case Get queries can result in a comprehensive collection of court case activity involving a party. This allows an agency to get the information when they need it and not have to collect notifications that are not needed.

What if the Notification does not have the needed Information but a Query does?

The contents of the case notifications were designed to accommodate the most common data needs of agencies. Occasionally, an agency may find that a notification does not have all the data they need for a specific purpose. Should a notification not contain all the data you need, please contact Court Integration Services to see if an enhancement can be made to that notification.

If you would like additional guidance please contact Court Integration Services.