



MINNESOTA
JUDICIAL
BRANCH

Administrative Order

From the Office of

Jeff Shorba,

State Court Administrator

SCA-AO-24-1

Order Establishing Permitted File Types for the Minnesota Digital Exhibit Systems

The ability to access and review exhibits offered in court proceedings is integral to the function of the Minnesota Judicial Branch (MJB). The State Court Administrator is committed to ensuring that the court record for cases, including exhibits, is accessible during court proceedings, reviewable, and properly preserved.

The Minnesota Digital Exhibit System (MNDES) is a digital application used by external parties, judicial officers, and internal (MJB) staff to upload, manage, and display digital exhibits (documents, photos, audio, and video) for hearings in District Court, and is used by jurors to review trial exhibits during deliberations. MNDES is also used by the appellate courts to review digital hearing exhibits admitted in District Court cases that are on appeal.

MNDES can accept a wide array of file types. However, the MNDES viewer cannot display or play all file types (e.g. proprietary file types created by certain camera systems, zipped files, PDF folders, etc.). When MNDES cannot play an uploaded file type, it directs users to download the file and attempt to play it outside of the MNDES system. However, users are often still unable to view or play the exhibit file.

Permitting users to upload file types that cannot be viewed either when using the MNDES viewer or when downloaded outside of MNDES creates a false impression that all exhibits uploaded to MNDES are available for use in hearings, jury deliberations, and by the appellate courts. This causes confusion, delay, and frustration for external parties, judicial officers, and MJB staff. When the inability to play an exhibit file occurs, parties are required to perform a number of possible actions, including converting the exhibit into a playable file type, uploading a converted file as replacement and requesting deletion of the non-playable exhibit, or providing the digital exhibit on an external device (disc, thumb-drive, etc.) that must be reviewed outside of MNDES on a computer that is not connected to the MJB network. These alternatives create a significant burden on parties, judicial officers, and court staff, and have the potential to lead to a case exhibit record that needs to be corrected during or after hearings, trials, jury deliberations, or appeal.

Additionally, the security of MJB systems, including MNDES, is paramount. Permitting file types that require non-standard software to play or have expandable folders, such as .zip files, or executable files, presents a cyber security threat to MJB systems.

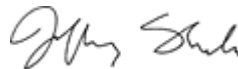
In order to provide digital exhibits that are accessible and reviewable to court staff, judicial officers, deliberating juries, and the appellate courts; to ensure the integrity of and secure access to digital exhibit case records; and in furtherance of Orders of the Supreme Court, (See *In Re The Minnesota Digital Exhibit System Pilot*, N. ADM09-8010 (Minn. filed November 8, 2021, as amended October 5, 2022));

Now, therefore, the State Court Administrator issues the following Order:

1. The upload permissions for MNDES file types must be reviewed and set to permit users to upload only those file types that are playable or reviewable using the MNDES viewer.
2. Staff of the State Court Administrator's Office, after performing a file type analysis of MNDES and in consultation and recommendations of MJB Cybersecurity, shall identify a comprehensive list of acceptable file types that are compatible with the MNDES viewer or media players available on MJB computers and publish on the MJB public website a "MNDES Acceptable File Types List"
3. Staff of the State Court Administrator shall attempt to identify media players that would be available and permitted to be placed onto all MJB computers so that the largest number of file types can be downloaded and played.
4. The MNDES Acceptable File Types List shall be regularly reviewed and updated as technology changes or as more acceptable and unacceptable file types are identified.
5. In advance of the effective date of this Order and in order to assist and educate external users about the requirement to upload only permitted file types, the following information shall be posted on the MJB public website:
 - Notice to external users that MNDES will only permit uploading of acceptable file types and the requirement that an unacceptable file type be converted into an acceptable file type before uploading the exhibit to MNDES;
 - A copy of this Order;
 - The MNDES Acceptable File Types List;
 - Notice that if conversion to an acceptable file type is not possible, the party must request permission to submit the exhibit as a physical exhibit (via disc or external USB accessible drive) to the court; and
 - An FAQ or help document to assist MNDES external users on how to convert existing digital files into allowed file types.

This Order is effective and applies to exhibits uploaded on and after June 1, 2024. This order remains in effect until further direction by the State Court Administrator or order of the Supreme Court.

DATED April 8, 2024



Jeffrey Shorba
State Court Administrator

OFFICE OF
STATE COURT ADMINISTRATOR
FILED April 8, 2024
JEFFREY SHORBA