



# NEWS RELEASE

Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts

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## **Pilot Project Begins: Two Courts Offer Digital Audio Recordings Online**

Two federal courts today became the vanguard of a pilot project to make digital audio recordings of courtroom proceedings publicly available online.

The U.S. District Court in Nebraska and the U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the Eastern District of North Carolina have integrated their recording and Case Management/Electronic Case Files (CM/ECF) systems to make some audio files available the same way written files have long been available on the Internet.

Three other courts – the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania, the U.S. Bankruptcy Court in Maine, and the U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the Northern District of Alabama – plan to join the pilot project later this summer.

The audio files are accessible through the Public Access to Court Electronic Records (PACER) system. More than 700,000 subscribers already use PACER to access docket and case information from federal appellate, district, and bankruptcy courts.

Digital audio recording has been an authorized method of making an official record of court proceedings since 1999, when it was approved by the policy-making Judicial Conference of the United States.

Digital audio recording is used in most bankruptcy and district courts (where magistrate judges account for most of the usage). In addition, digital recording is used by 37 of the 642 active district judges. In courts with digital audio recording, computer disks of hearings have been available for the authorized fee of \$26, but prospective purchasers have had to make a trip to the clerk of court's office.

During the six-to-12-month pilot project, Internet access to the same content will cost 16 cents – eight cents for accessing the docket sheet and another eight cents for selecting the audio file.

The Electronic Public Access Program Office of the Administrative Office of the United States Courts will determine what the appropriate fee should be if such access becomes permanent. The impact on band-width, costs of the required technology, and other factors will be part of that determination..

More information about obtaining audio files from the U.S. District Court in Nebraska and the bankruptcy court for the Eastern District of North Carolina can be found at the courts' respective web sites, [www.nceb.uscourts.gov](http://www.nceb.uscourts.gov) and [www.ned.uscourts.gov](http://www.ned.uscourts.gov).

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