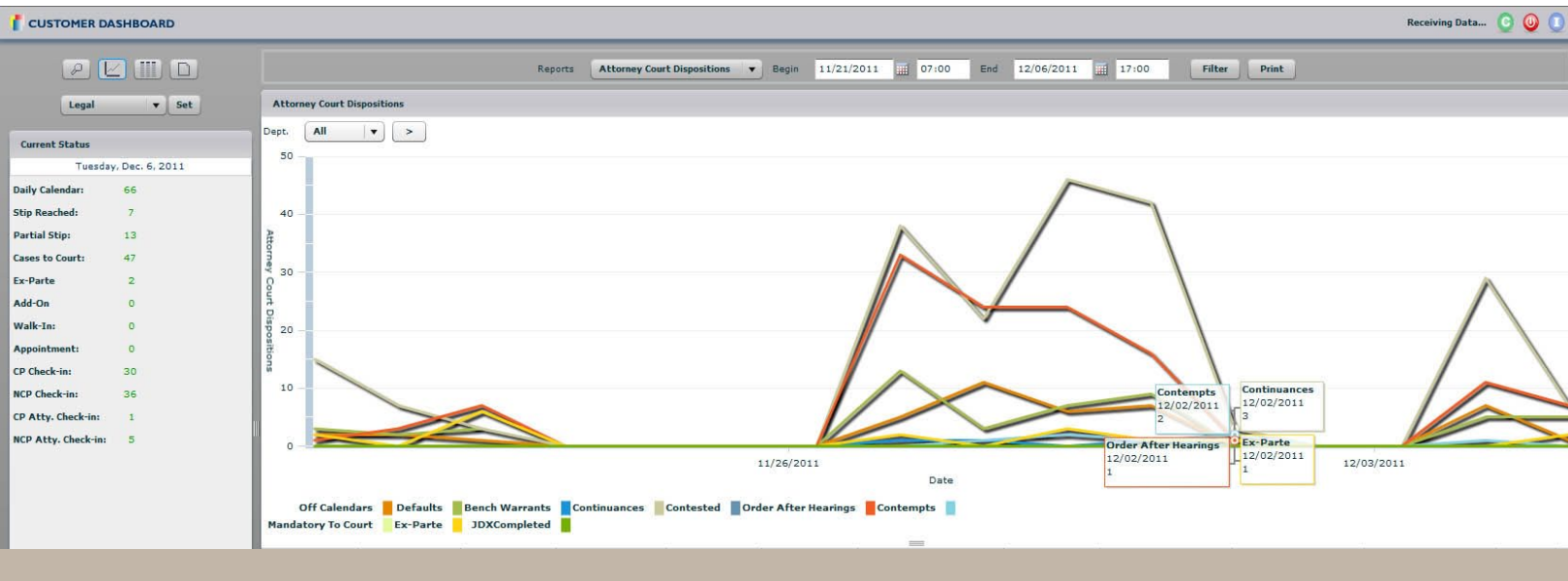San Diego Department of Child Support Services
Improving child support customer service

**San Diego Department
of Child Support Services**
San Diego, California
www.sandiegochildsupport.com

County government agency improves service to citizens and reduces client wait times by 16% with an innovative application developed using Adobe® Flash® Builder® and the Flex® framework
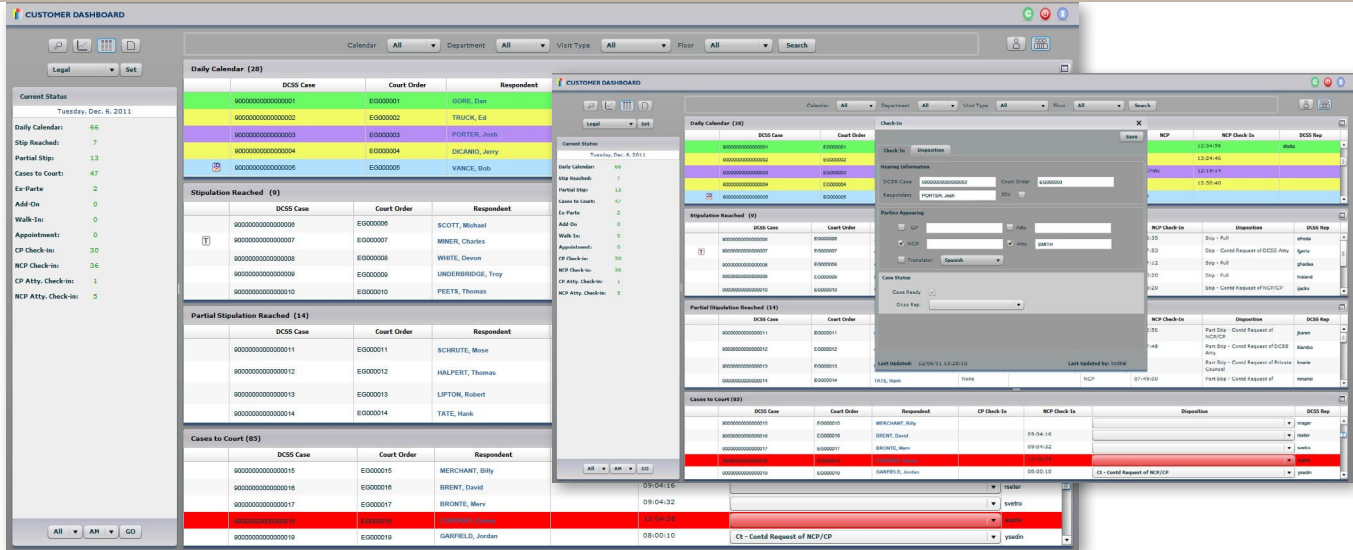
Dealing with issues surrounding child support can be stressful for everyone involved, which is why the San Diego Department of Child Support Services (SDDCSS) is using Adobe solutions to improve the quality of its services and reduce client wait times.

SDDCSS is the fourth largest child support agency in California. With a team of more than 500 attorneys, paralegals, and other professional staff, SDDCSS handles thousands of child support enforcement orders that proceed through the court system. From establishing paternity to determining the amount of child support and enforcing court orders, the organization's mission is to provide child support assistance efficiently and effectively. This involves managing over 100 court hearings each day.

The department used the Flex framework and Adobe Flash Builder to create a unique, powerful rich Internet application (RIA) to better manage case workloads, including appointment scheduling, court dates, case files, and other critical business activities. The revamped Customer Dashboard provides case managers and attorneys real-time visibility into pending legal procedures through dynamic visual charting, reports, and public displays.

"Child support cases are often complex and managing the process for so many cases can be quite challenging," says Darius Fattahipour, applications manager for SDDCSS. "Using the Flex framework and Adobe Flash Builder, we were able to develop a highly visible process management platform to seamlessly move cases along faster to be more convenient for citizens and more cost effective for the department."

Challenge

- Increase efficiency of child support case processing on the day of court
- Track client and case worker mandatory interactions
- Enable on-demand reporting for improved resource allocation

Solution

- Use Adobe Flash Builder and Flex to develop a rich Internet application (RIA) to automate the process of handling hundreds of child-support cases each day
- Leverage Adobe ColdFusion to provide real-time, secure data transmission

Benefits

- Reduced wait times by 16% for more than 85,000 cases annually
- Improved management for decision making and policy
- Eliminated delays from manual, paper-based processes
- Automated on-demand reporting capabilities

Toolkit

Adobe Flash Builder

Flex framework

Adobe ColdFusion 9

Harnessing a complex process

Among the biggest challenges for SDDCSS is tracking and managing cases as they move through the court system on the day of court. This highly dynamic process involves numerous parties including non-custodial parents, custodial parents, attorneys, and child support officers. Manually managing the paperwork, as well as tracking appointments across multiple locations, was time consuming and often delayed.

The Customer Dashboard application automates client processing, tracking, and reporting. Each child support case is checked into the system and the tracking process begins—following a case from conferences to court orders—while providing all involved parties with real-time status updates each step of the way.

"With the application, citizens arrive for an appointment at any one of our offices and the staff assigned to the case is automatically notified that the parties have arrived. We're able to make sure that meetings and court appearances occur as scheduled and make the process as smooth as possible," says Fattahipour.

Executive management at SDDCSS must also keep an immediate pulse on wait times, number of cases handled on a daily basis, the disposition of cases, and other factors in order to allocate resources as efficiently as possible. Previously, legal staff spent a significant amount of time manually generating reports in Microsoft Excel. The new dashboard enables employees to generate on-demand reports, helping to easily identify and overcome any bottlenecks in case processing.

The integration of Adobe ColdFusion® and Flex allows the application to automatically pull data from back-end databases to the Flex front end, enabling SDDCSS employees to generate reports to track cases from start to resolution. By tracking the disposition types for appointments, SDDCSS can help better train staff on current procedures and track the immediate results of a project during a collection campaign.

"The reports show us how long it takes for cases in court to be processed and how they're resolved," says Fattahipour. "The Customer Dashboard application helps us make sure customers don't get lost in the system by tracking every aspect of the process and communicating it immediately with all parties involved."

The Customer Dashboard automates client processing, tracking, and reporting. The integration of Adobe ColdFusion and Flex allows the application to automatically pull data from backend databases to the Flex front end, enabling employees to generate reports to track cases from start to resolution. Adobe solutions enabled SDDCSS to deliver an application with rich data visualization, powerful reporting, and seamless access in just a few months.
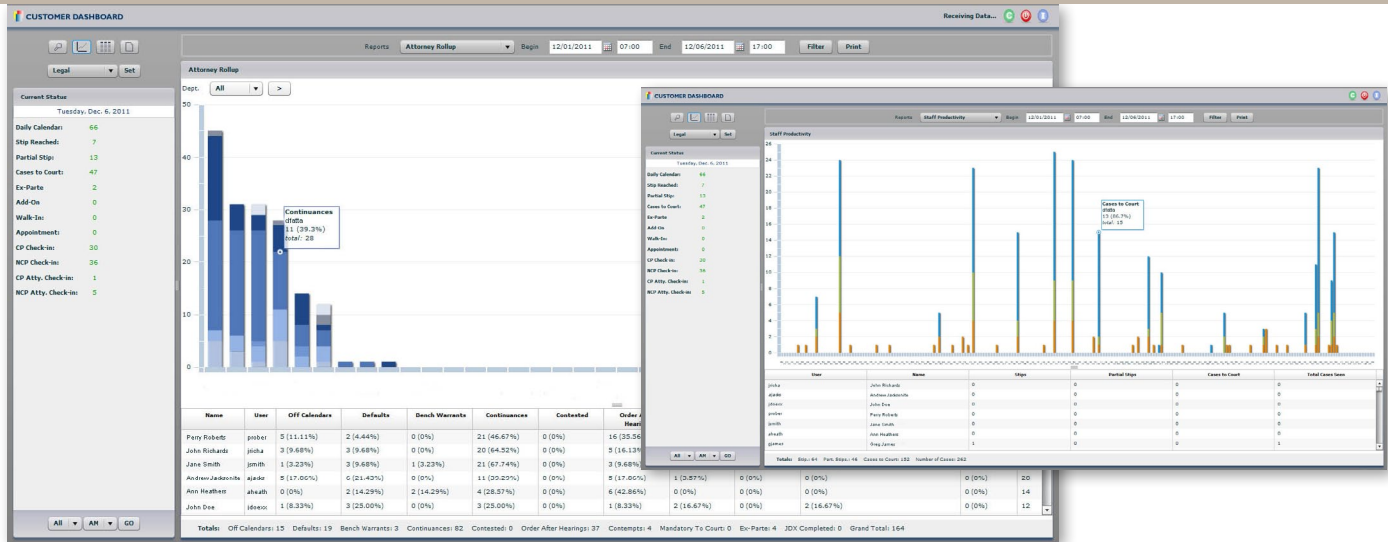
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Darius Fattahipour
Applications manager,
San Diego Department of
Child Support Services

An innovative development platform

SDDCSS chose to develop with Flex and Adobe Flash Builder in order to expand upon its existing Adobe ColdFusion platform. In addition, the department can easily integrate and automate data transmission and archiving, and accelerate development time.

"We evaluated other development solutions and determined that only Flex and Adobe Flash Builder provided the tools we needed to rapidly develop an application that met our exact operational needs," Fattahipour says. "Adobe solutions enabled us to deliver an application with rich data visualization, powerful reporting, and seamless access in just a matter of months."

The new application has positively impacted SDDCSS operations, both financially and in terms of employee productivity. The intuitive application provides case workers and attorneys involved in a child support case instant access to details about the case proceedings. With more than 85,000 cases presented each year, the application has helped SDDCSS streamline its operations to be more cost effective, efficient, and provide superior service to the citizens of San Diego County.

"The Customer Dashboard is a robust system that we can scale as large as needed to accommodate workloads," Fattahipour says. "It's fast, responsive, stable, and able to process as many as 10,000 transactions at a time, which greatly enhances our ability to manage large volumes of cases more efficiently."

For example, each child support officer (CSO) has an average case load in the hundreds. Prior to deploying the Customer Dashboard, CSOs used to spend many hours of their work day simply waiting to help customers instead of executing tasks to move the process along. The reporting capabilities within the dashboard also allow management to evaluate the performance by team and by CSO, to track policy enforcement and accountability of the team. The Customer Dashboard application has virtually eliminated idle time, enabling SDDCSS to repurpose staff for higher-value operations.

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Improved service and operations

Using the Customer Dashboard application has helped the department resolve more cases. In addition to being more effective with collection efforts, case processing is smoother and faster than ever. Automated tracking, real-time reporting, and easy visibility into overall operations have helped the agency decrease wait time by 16%. More importantly, the application has become a best practice that other counties are now looking to adopt—having helped SDDCSS significantly reduce customer wait times and provide better service to citizens, while enabling employees to do more work in less time.

With its initial successes, SDDCSS is poised to expand the Customer Dashboard—looking into new feature additions and bringing it to mobile platforms—to bring further efficiency and effectiveness to its operations. Using Adobe solutions, the agency is currently developing an add-on to the current Customer Dashboard for more paperless operations. "The new Legal Paperless System we're developing will enable attorneys to be completely paperless in the courtroom," Fattahipour says. "Based on the success we've had in developing applications with Adobe solutions, it's the next logical step in the evolution of our operations and we're excited to see how much of an impact it will have on offering better services to the citizens of San Diego."

For more information
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