Electronic Case Files
CM/ECF

User Manual

Eastern District of Texas

(Revised March, 2009)

Table of Contents

Getting Started 1
Introduction 1
ECF System Capabilities 1
Requirements 2
Hardware and Software Requirements 2
PACER Registration 2

Registering for Access to ECF 3

Preparation 4
Setting Up the Acrobat PDF Reader 4
Portable Document Format (*PDF*) 4
How to View a PDF File 4
How to Convert Documents to PDF Format 4
For WordPerfect: 5
For Microsoft Word 95 or later: 5
Other word processing programs: 6

Basics 7
User Interactions 7
Conventions used in this Manual 7
Documents Filed in Error 7
Viewing Transaction Log 8
User's Manual 8

A Step-By-Step Guide 9
How to Access the System 9
Logging In 10
Selecting ECF Features 12

Civil Events Feature 13
General Rules and Manipulations 13
Manipulating the Screens 13
Correcting a mistake 13
Signatures; Affidavits of Service 13
Filing a Civil Complaint 13
Filing Documents for **Civil Cases**. 14
Select the type of document to file 14
Enter the case number in which the document is to be filed 15
Designate the party(s) filing the document 16
Specify the PDF file name and location for the document to be filed 16
Adding Attachments to Document Being Filed 18
Linking documents 20
Modify docket text 21
Submit the pleading 22
Notice of Electronic Filing 23
Add/Create New Party 24
Submitting a Proposed Order 26
Filing Proposed Documents 26
Filing Other Types of Documents 26
E-Mail Notification when documents are filed 26
Criminal Events Feature 27
Filing Documents for **Criminal Cases** 27
Select the type of document to file 27
Enter the case number in which the document is to be filed 28
Designate the defendant(s) that the filing relates to 29
Verify the case number and caption are correct 29
Designate the party(s) filing the document 29
Select the appropriate motion you are filing 30

Specify the PDF file name and location for the document to be filed 30
Add attachments to the document being filed 33
Modify docket text 34
Submit the pleading 35
Notice of electronic filing 36
E-Mail notification when documents are filed 37
Query Feature 38
Attorney 40
Case Summary 41
Deadlines/Hearings 41
Docket Report 42
History/Documents 43
Other Queries 44
Reports Feature. 45
Docket Sheet 46
Civil/Criminal Cases Filed Report 47
Utilities Feature 49
Maintain Your Account 49
View Your Transaction Log 52
Miscellaneous 53
Logout 53
Known Problems and Troubleshooting. 54
Known Problems 54
Converting documents to PDF 54
Cannot login to the LIVE System 54
Trouble-shooting Hints 54
Technical Failures 54
Notice of Electronic Availability of Case File Information 55
Civil/Criminal Events List
Attorney/Participant Registration Form

Electronic Case Files System
User's Manual

(Last revision: March, 2009)

Getting Started

Introduction

This manual provides instructions on how to use the Electronic Filing System to file documents with the court, or to view and retrieve docket sheets and documents for all cases assigned to this system. Users should have a working knowledge of Netscape and Adobe Acrobat.

ECF System Capabilities

The electronic filing system allows registered participants with Internet accounts and Netscape software to perform the following functions:

- Access the Court's web page
- View or download the most recent version of the User's Manual
- Train personnel on a training system comparable to the official "live" system
- Electronically file pleadings and documents in actual ("live") cases
- View official docket sheets and documents associated with cases
- View various reports (*e.g.*, Cases Filed Report, Calendar)
- Download Netscape Browser and Portable Document Format (PDF) configuration information

Requirements

Hardware and Software Requirements

The hardware and software needed to electronically file, view and retrieve case documents are the following:

- A personal computer running a standard operating system such as Windows 98 (and up), or Macintosh

- An Internet provider using Point to Point Protocol (PPP)

- Netscape Navigator software version 4.6x, 4.7x or Internet Explorer 5.5. (Higher versions of Netscape do not work at this time.) Because of security concerns, a session can only be established using Netscape Navigator 4.6x, 4.7x or Internet Explorer 5.5 or above. **DO NOT USE** America On Line's version of Netscape Navigator, or a version of Netscape Navigator lower than 4.6.

- Software to convert documents from a word processor format to portable document format (PDF)

- A scanner to transmit documents that are not in your word processing system**. (This would only be used for documents that cannot be produced electronically. Scanned documents lessen the level of service we provide by slowing down the entire system. We are moving away from the utilization of scanned documents inside the Court and are asking you to do the same when possible.)**

PACER Registration

ECF users must have a PACER account with the Court in order to use the Query and Report features of the ECF system. If you do not have a PACER login, contact the PACER Service Center to establish an account. You may call the PACER Service Center at **(800) 676-6856** for information or to register for an account. Also, you may register for PACER online at http://pacer.psc.uscourts.gov/register.html A link to PACER's site is provided on the Court's web site.

Registering for Access to ECF

Participants who have never used the system must contact the Court to obtain a registration form for the CM/ECF system. Registration forms can be obtained at our website at www.txed.uscourts.gov .

The completed registration form should be mailed or faxed to the address listed below for processing.

U.S. District Court Clerk's Office
211 W Ferguson
Tyler, TX 75702

Attn: ECF Registration

Once an account has been established, your login and password will be sent to you by the Clerk's office by email.

Registered users can visit a training version of the system on the Internet at www.txed.uscourts.gov to practice ECF activities. It is strongly recommended that participants take advantage of filing documents in the training database before filing documents in the "live" ECF database.

Preparation

Setting Up the PDF Reader

In order to view documents filed on the system, users must install a PDF reader. All pleadings are in PDF format. When installing this product, please review and follow the provider's directions to utilize the PDF reader after installation.

Portable Document Format (PDF)

Only PDF (Portable Document Format) documents may be filed with the court using the court's Electronic Filing System. Before filing the document with the court, users should preview the PDF formatted document to ensure that it appears in its entirety and in the proper format (refer to Technical Notes in *Appendix 1* for known problems and troubleshooting) .

How to View a PDF File

- Start your PDF program.
- Go to the ***File*** menu and choose ***Open.***
- Click on the location and file name of the document to be viewed.
- If the designated location is correct, and the file is in PDF format, your PDF program loads the file and displays it on the screen.
- If the displayed document is larger than the screen or consists of multiple pages, use the scroll bars to move through the document.
- Click on the ***View*** menu for other options for viewing the displayed document. Choose the option that is most appropriate for the document.

How to Convert Documents to PDF Format_____

You must convert all of your documents to PDF format before submitting them to the Court's ECF system.

The conversion process is relatively simple and can be accomplished in one of two ways depending on the word processing program you are using.

For WordPerfect:

Version 6.1, 7 and 8

- Open the document to be converted.
- Select the ***Print*** option and in the dialog box select the option to change the selected printer. A drop down menu with a list of printer choices is displayed.
- Select your ***PDFWriter.***
- "Print" the file. The file should not actually print out; instead the option to save the file as a PDF format file appears.
- Name the file, giving it the extension **.PDF** .
- Accept the option and the file is converted to a PDF document.

Version 9 - 11

- (Use above method, or) Open the document.
- Click on the ***File*** menu and select, ***Publish to***
  then click on ***PDF.***
- Save the file as a PDF file, giving it a **.PDF** extension.
- The file is now in a PDF format under the newly designated name, and the original document remains in its original form under the original name.

Other word processing programs:

You first must install a PDF writer such as Adobe or CutePDF. CutePDF is currently free to download and use. It is available at www.cutepdf.com. Other PDF writers are also commercially available.

- Open the document to be converted.
- Select the ***Print*** option, and in the dialog box select the option to change the selected printer. A drop down menu with a list of printer choices is displayed.
- Select **Adobe PDF** or whatever PDF writer utility you have installed.
- "Print" the file. The file should not actually print out; instead the option to save the file as a PDF format file appears.
- Name the file, giving it the extension ***.PDF*** **.**
- Accept the option, and the file is converted to a PDF document.

Depending on the word processing program being used, it may be necessary to find the printer selection option elsewhere. At that point, change the printer to PDFWriter, and follow the directions above.

Basics

User Interactions

There are three general types of user interactions allowed by the system:

- Entering information in data fields
- Using command buttons to direct system activities
- Clicking on hyperlinks

Command buttons and hyperlinks are used to instruct the system what to do next.

Conventions used in this Manual:

- Data to be entered by the user is shown enclosed in angle brackets: <data to be entered>.
- Command buttons are represented in this manual in **[bracketed boldface type]**.
- Hyperlinks are represented in **underlined boldface type**.

  (Note: the most commonly used hyperlink, **Main Menu**, appears near the top of most screens just below the Netscape menu buttons.)

Documents Filed In Error

A document incorrectly filed in a case may be the result from a) posting the wrong PDF file to a docket entry; b) selecting the wrong document type from the menu; or c) entering the wrong case number and not discovering the error before completing the transaction.

To request a correction, please telephone the clerk's office where your case is filed as soon as possible after an error is discovered. You will need to have the case number and document number for which the correction is being requested. If appropriate, the court will make an entry indicating that the document was filed in error. You will be advised if you need to re-file the document. *The ECF system will not permit you to change the misfiled document(s) or incorrect docket entry after the transaction has been accepted.*

Viewing Transaction Log

This feature, selected from the **Utilities Menu,** allows you to review all transactions ECF has processed with your login and password. If you believe or suspect someone is using your login and password without permission, change your password immediately, then telephone the clerk's office as soon as possible.

User's Manual

You can download or view the most recent version of the ECF User's Manual (in PDF format) at the District Court's website which is available at www.txed.uscourts.gov .

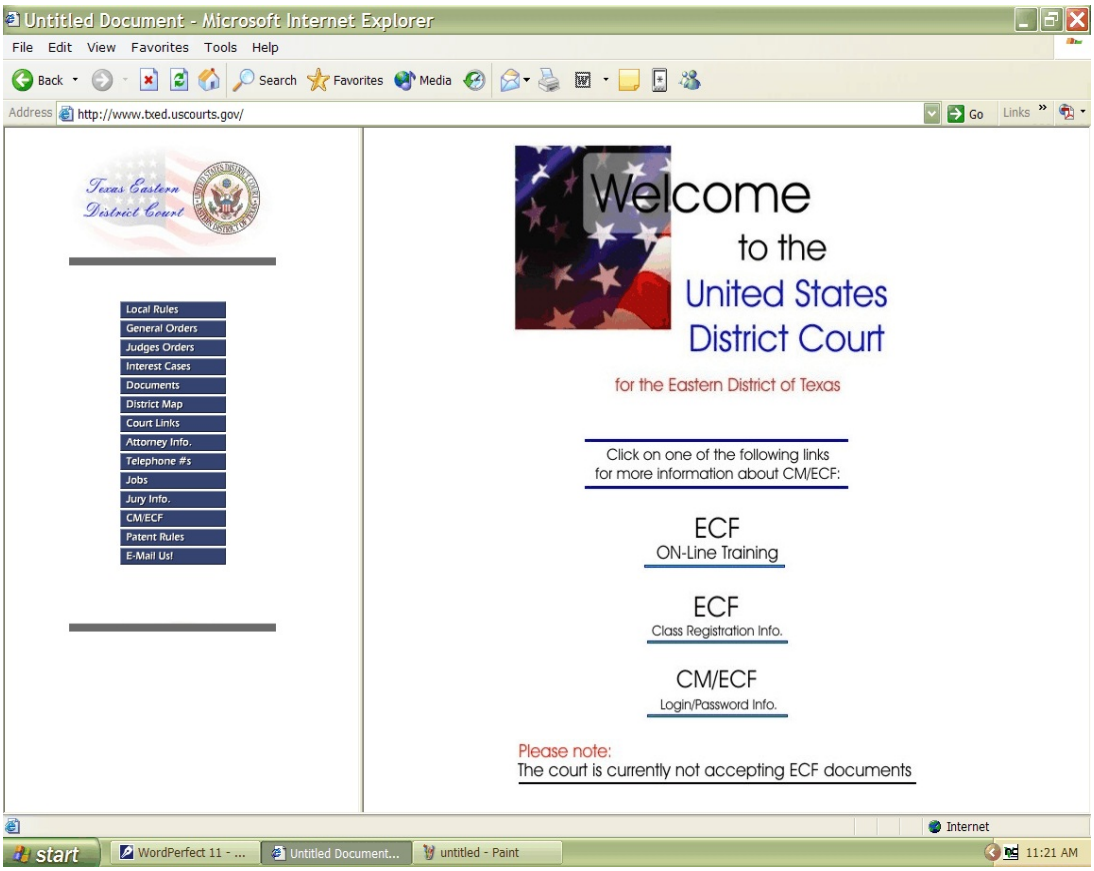
A Step-By-Step Guide

Below is a step-by-step guide for entering the system, preparing a document for filing, filing a motion or application, and displaying a docket sheet. We suggest that you go through the steps on the training data base before trying to actually file a document.

How to Access the System

Users can get into the system via the Internet by going to:

www.txed.uscourt.gov



After arriving at the Eastern District of Texas's web site, click on the CM/ECF link, then click on the link to "Electronic Case Files" under the District Court heading.

A login and password is required to file a document (or train to file a document). Select the ***Document Filing System*.**

Logging In

The next screen is the login screen.

- Enter your ECF Login and User Password in the appropriate data entry fields. Then click on the Login button to transmit the information to the system. If an error is made before you have submitted the screen, the Clear button allows you to clear the Login and Password entries so they may be re-entered.

- If an invalid combination has been submitted, the system responds with an error message. Click on Back, then re-enter your login and password.

- The entry of a valid login and password combination prompts the system to display the **Main Menu.**

Once the Main Menu appears, choose from a list of **hyperlinked** options on the top bar.

The date ***you last logged into the system*** appears at the bottom left corner of this screen. You should review this information each time you login for security reasons. If you believe your last login date and time are incorrect, or suspect an unauthorized party is using your login and password, please telephone the clerk's office as soon as possible.

The following text appears on the above screen:

> ***This facility is for Official Court Business only. Activity to and from this site is logged. Document filings on this system are subject to Federal Rules of Civil Procedure # 11. Evidence of unauthorized or criminal activity will be forwarded to the appropriate law enforcement officials.***
>
> ***Welcome to the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Texas Electronic***

Document Filing System. This page is for the use by attorneys and firms participating in the electronic filing system. The most recent version of the Netscape browser and the Adobe PDF reader can be obtained by selecting the Netscape/PDF Settings option listed below.

You should become familiar with the navigational capabilities of your Netscape browser. Most screen displays in this system are split to provide a small top frame for Netscape. Review Netscape's frame capability for new navigation tips.
Netscape/PDF Settings
Last login: 04-20-2004 09:38
19April 2004

Selecting ECF Features

ECF provides the following features that are accessible from the Blue menu bar at the top of the opening screen.

Civil — Select **Civil** to electronically file all civil case pleadings, motions, and other court documents.

Criminal — Select **Criminal** to electronically file all criminal case pleadings, motions, and other court documents.

Query — You can query ECF by specific case number, party name, or nature of suit to retrieve documents that are relevant to the case. *You must log in to PACER before you can query ECF.*

Reports — Choose **Reports** to retrieve docket sheets and case-filed reports. *You must log in to PACER before you can view an ECF report.*

Utilities — View your personal ECF transaction log and maintain personal ECF account information in the **Utilities** area of ECF.

Logout — This feature allows you to exit from ECF and prevents further filing with your password until the next time you log in.

Civil Events Feature

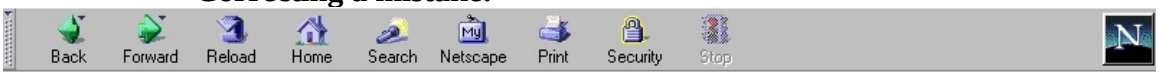
Registered filers will use the Civil Events feature of ECF to electronically self-file and docket with the Court a variety of pleadings and other documents for civil cases. See the list of ECF events attached to the back of this manual. The following portion of this manual describes the basic steps that you will need to follow in order to file a single motion with the Court. The process is consistent regardless of the event.

General Rules and Manipulations

Manipulating the screens
Each screen has the following two buttons:

- Clear clears **all** characters entered in the box(es) on that screen.
- Next accepts the entry just made and displays the next entry screen, if any.

Correcting a mistake:



Use the Back button on the Netscape toolbar to go back and correct an entry made on a previous screen. However, once the document is transmitted to the court, only the court can make changes or corrections.

Signatures

Documents which must contain original signatures or which require either verification or an unsworn declaration under any rule or statue, shall be filed electronically with originally executed copies maintained by the filer. Documents electronically filed shall indicate a signature, e.g., “/s/Jane Doe”. (See Local Rule CV-5(a)(5))

Filing a Civil Complaint

Please refer to our website for "Instructions for Opening a Civil Case" .

Filing Documents for Civil Cases

There are nine basic steps involved in filing a civil document:

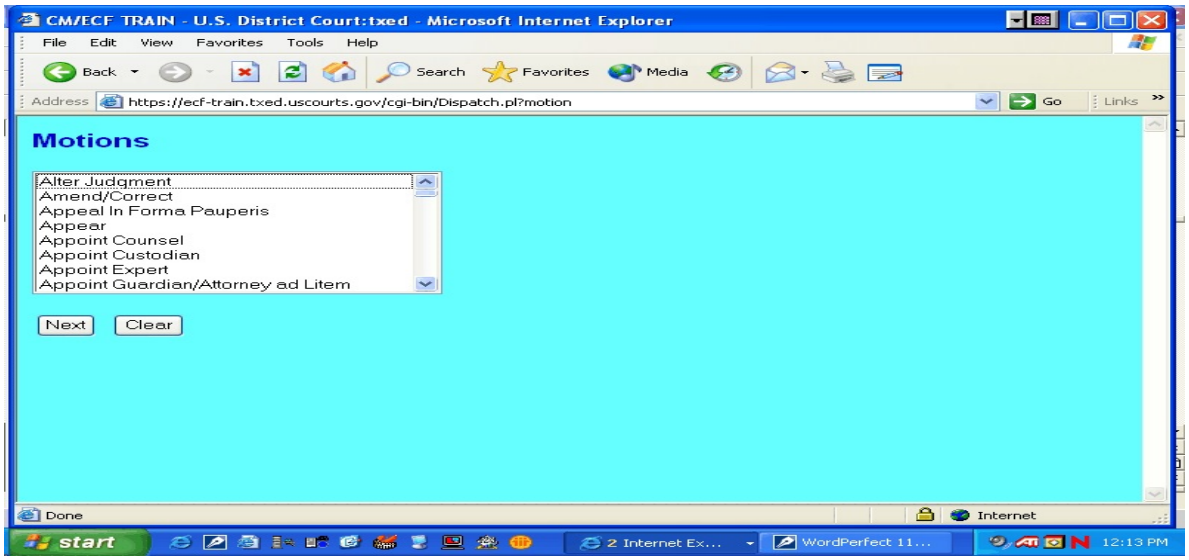
1. Select the type of document to file (see Attorney Event Menu);
2. Enter the case number in which the document is to be filed;
3. Designate the party(or parties) filing the document;
4. Specify the PDF file name and location for the document to be filed;
5. Adding Attachments (and what to do when attachments are in paper format);
6. Linking documents;
7. Modify the docket text as necessary;
8. Submit the pleading to ECF;
9. Receive notification of electronic filing.

After successfully logging into ECF, follow these steps to file a pleading.

1. **Select the type of document to file**

Select Civil from the menu bar at the top of the ECF screen. The Civil Event window opens displaying all of the events from which you may choose for your filing. This section of the User's Manual describes the process for filing a **Motion** in ECF. The process is similar for filing other pleadings in ECF.

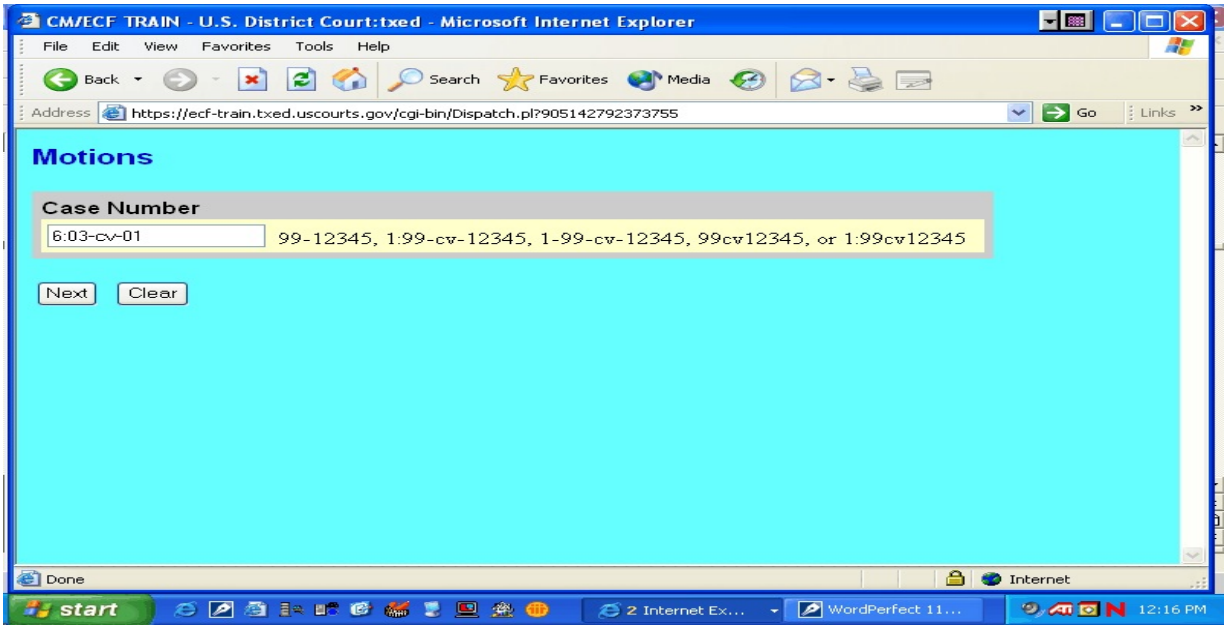
Click on Motions, under the category of **Motions and Related Filings.**



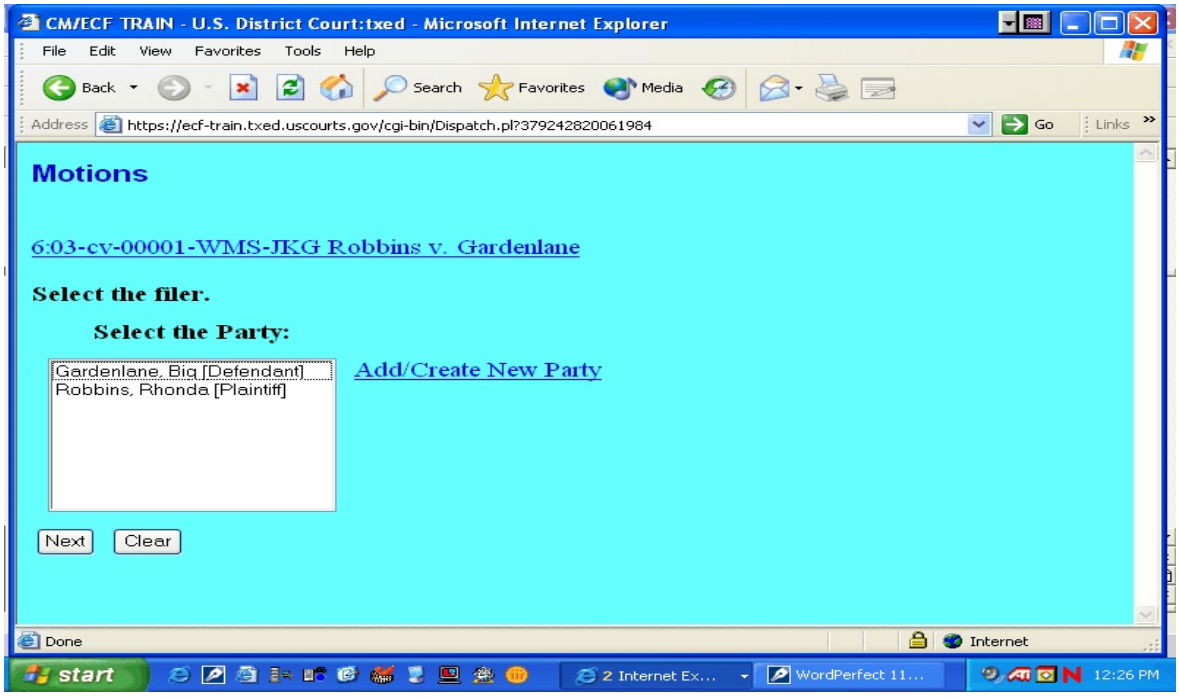
The **Motions** screen appears and displays a motion selection field with a scroll bar next to it. Scroll through the menu until you find the type of motion or application you wish to file. To select multiple motions, press and hold down the Ctrl key, and click on the appropriate motions or applications.

2. **Enter the case number in which the document is to be filed**

If it is correct, scroll to the bottom of the screen and click on Next.

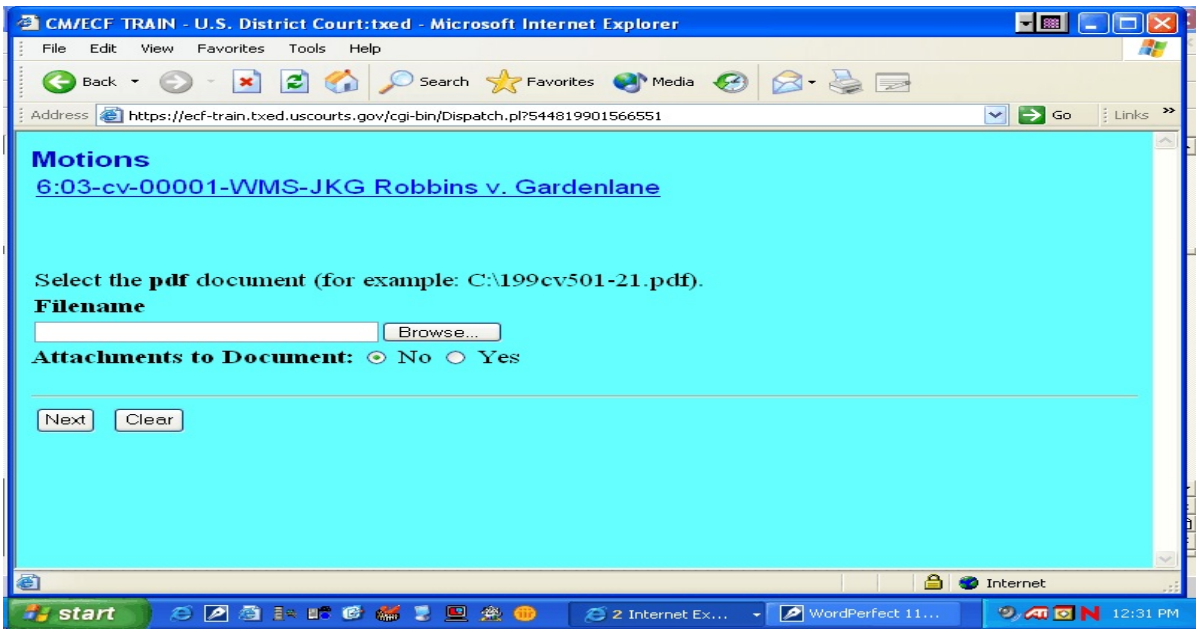


3. Designate the party (or parties) filing the document

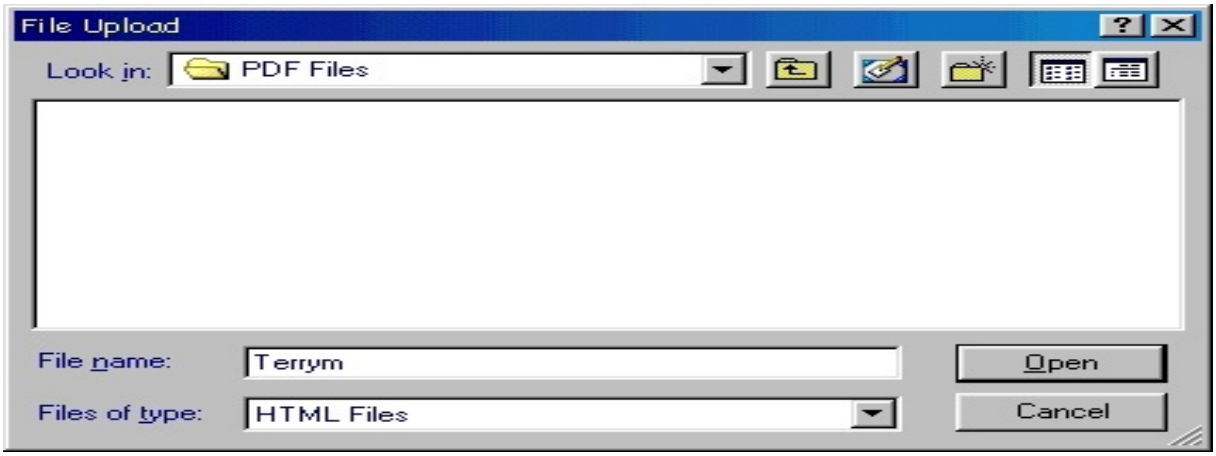


Click on the name of the party for whom you are filing the motion to highlight it, or, if you represent all defendants or all plaintiffs you may select a group by clicking in the circle next to the group.

4. Specify the PDF file name and location for the document to be filed



ECF accepts the party or parties you selected and refreshes the screen and displays a field for locating and entering the PDF file of the document you are filing in ECF. **The file MUST be in a PDF format with a .PDF suffix. Otherwise, it will not be readable by the system.** If an attempt is made to upload a non-PDF file, or make a standard docket entry without also submitting a document, an error message will appear.



Click on the Browse... button to navigate to the appropriate directory and file to select the document. Use the mouse to select the directory in which the PDF version of the file is located.

Navigate to the appropriate directory and file name to select the PDF document you wish to file. Highlight the file to upload to ECF.

Change the files from

to

.

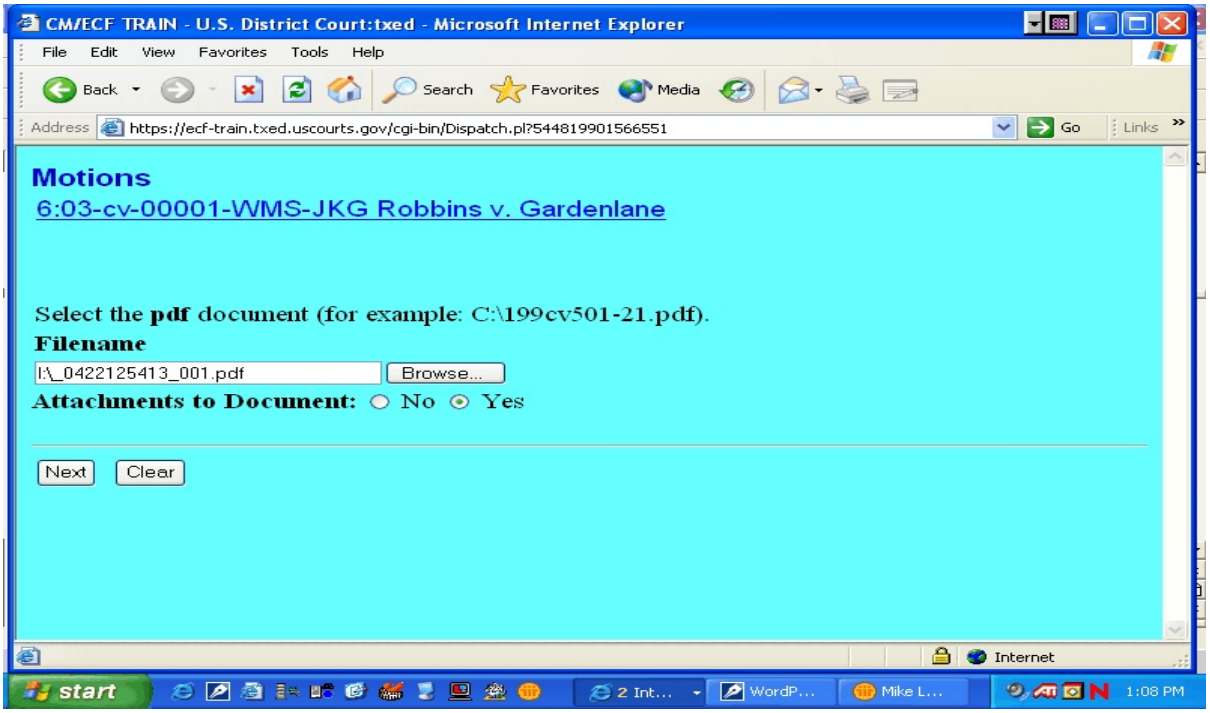
To verify that the document being filed is the correct document, after the file is selected, right click on the file name to bring up a quick menu and left click on open. The pdf document will open and can be viewed to verify that it is the correct document.

Once you have verified the document is correct, close your PDF reader program and click on the Open button. ECF closes the File Upload screen and inserts the PDF file name and location in the Motions screen. If you fail to select a document to file with your pleading, ECF will display an error message. Just click the Back key to choose your PDF document.

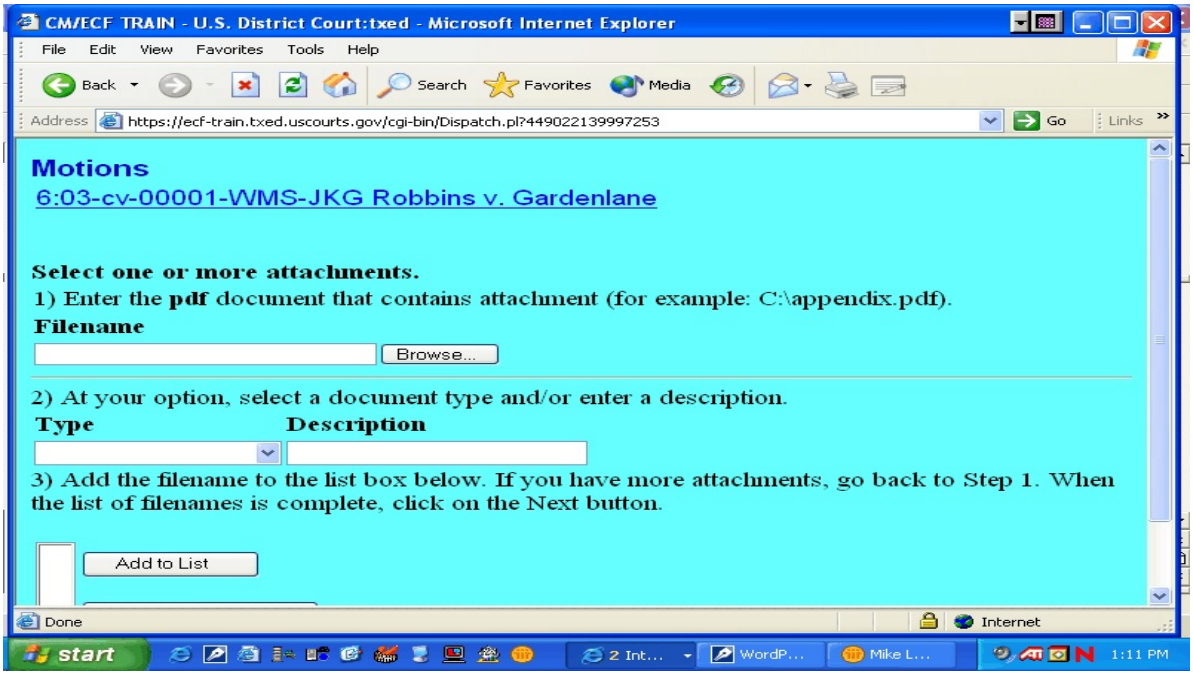
If there are no attachments to the motion, click Next.

5. Adding Attachments to the Document Being Filed

If you have attachments to the motion (*e.g.* an exhibit, appendix, proposed order, *etc.*), you will select the [Yes] button on the screen depicted below. Click on the Next button.

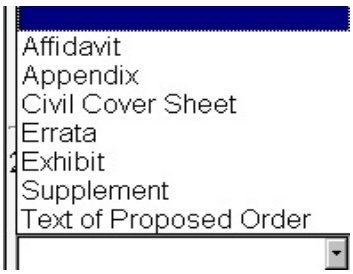


An additional screen is displayed which allows you to attach one or more documents. All exhibits must be attached to the motion, application or document being filed. A proposed order must also be attached to the motion.



- Click on Browse... to search for the document.

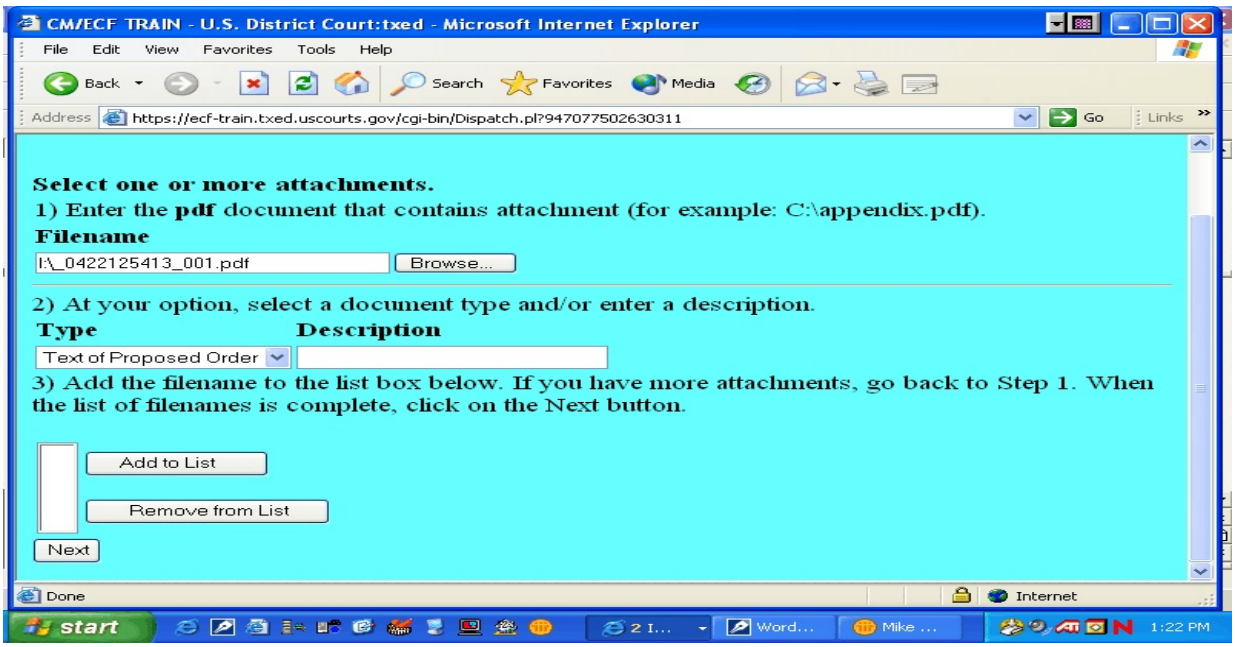
- Under Type of Attachment click the arrow on the type of attachment.



- To describe the attachment more fully, click in the description box and type in the description. (If you choose "Exhibit" in the drop down box, there is no need to type "Exhibit" in the description box.)

- Click on Add to List .

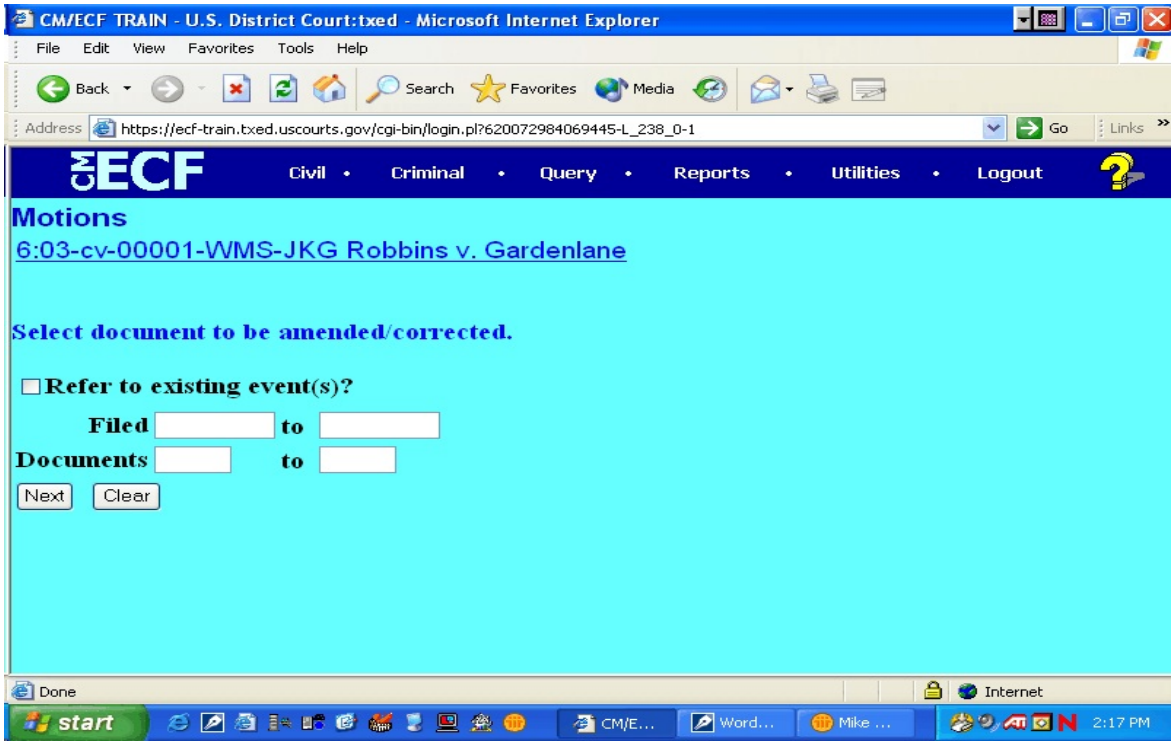
- If there are additional attachments, repeat this sequence for each one.



After adding all .pdf documents for attachments, click on Next .

6. Linking Documents

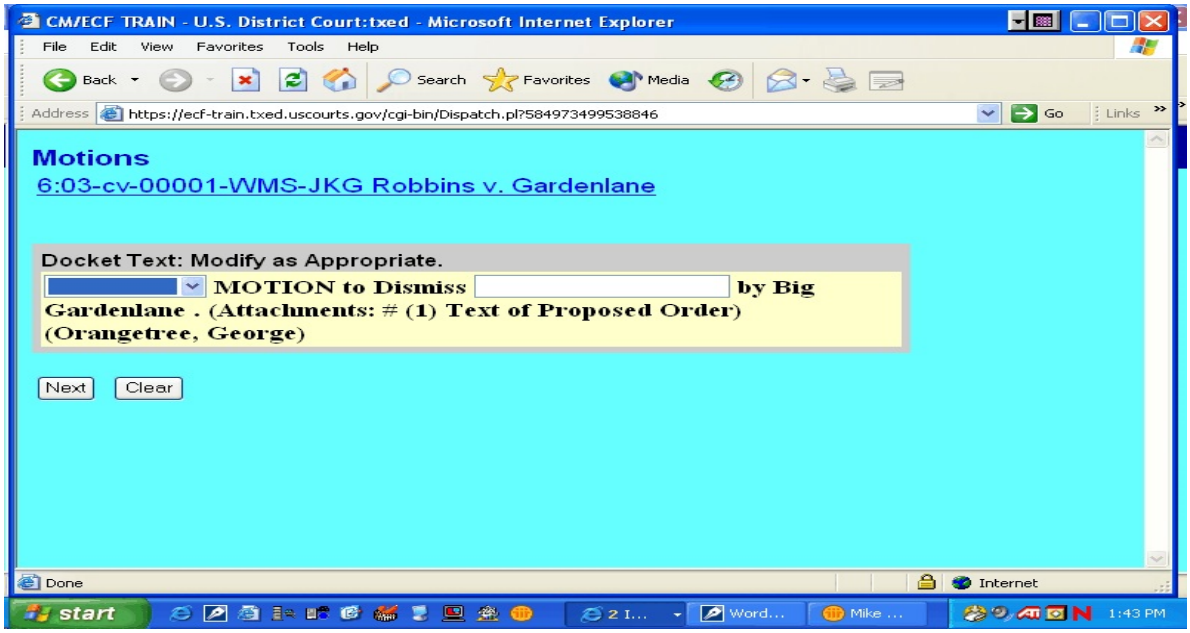
If your document refers to an existing document in the case, click on the box to the left of "Refer to existing event(s)?" and click on Next.



- Scroll through the list of pre-existing documents, and click on each that applies.
- Scroll down and click on Next.

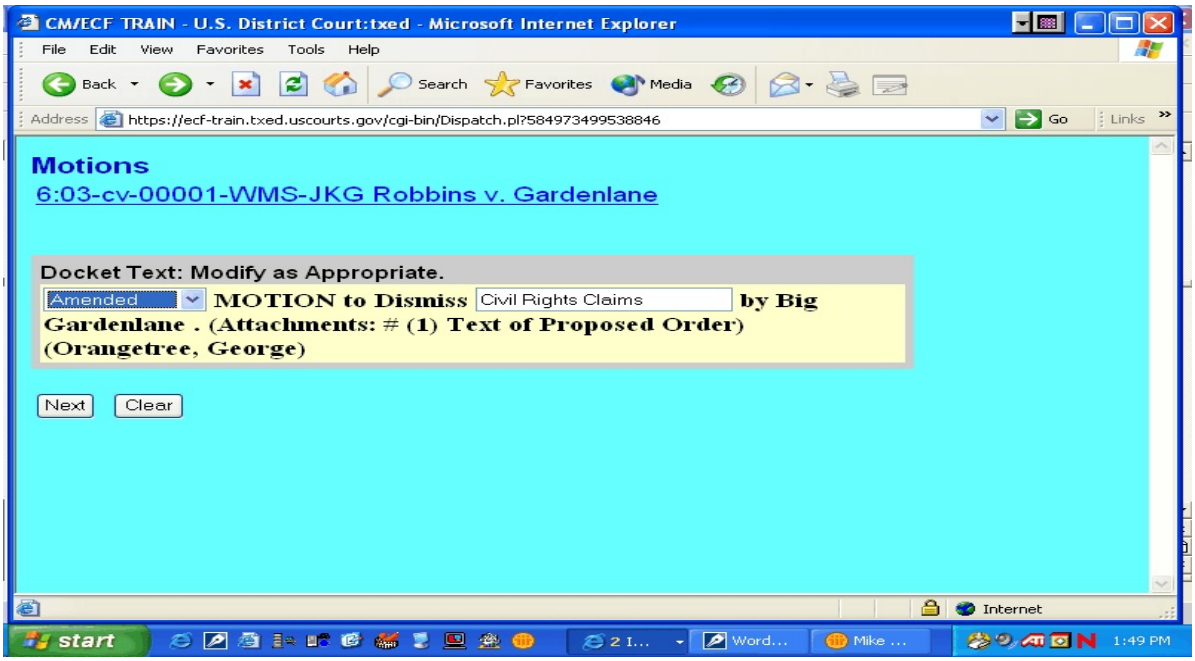
The next screen will automatically reflect the response/suggestions in opposition deadline.

7. Modify docket text



- Click on the drop-down list and select the correct modifier, if necessary:

- Click on the white box (open text area) to the right of the description of the document you are filing and type in any additional description, if appropriate.



- Click on

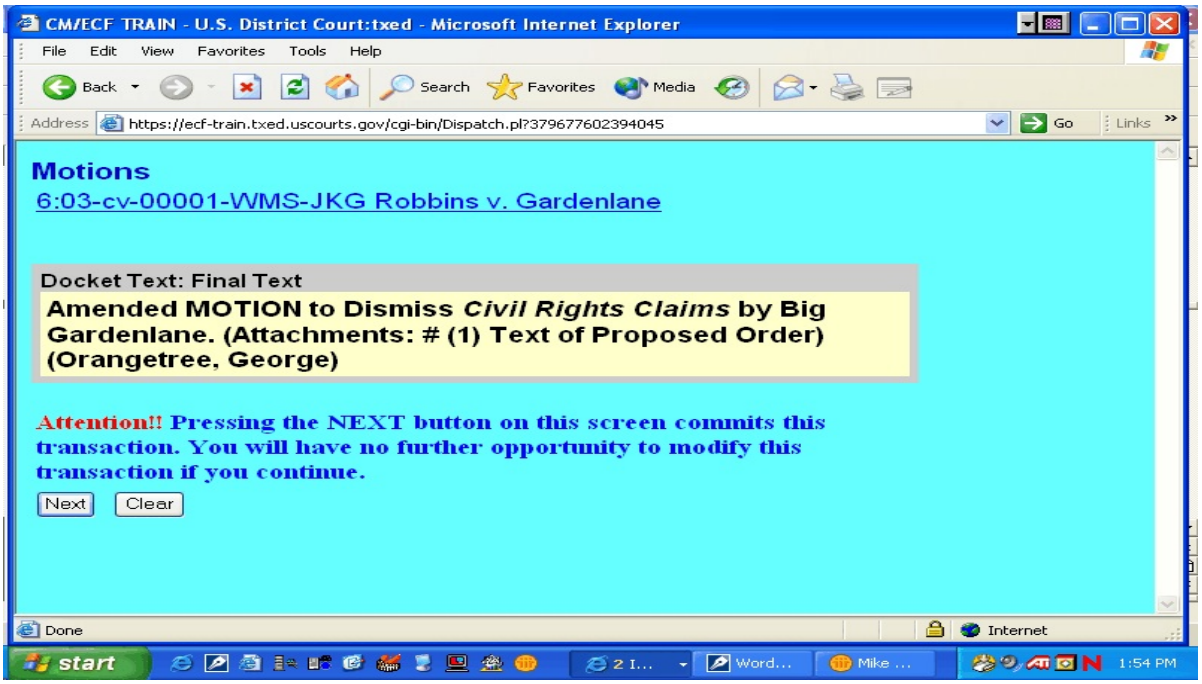
.

8. Submit the Pleading

- When you arrive at the Final Approval screen, if the entry is correct, scroll down and click on

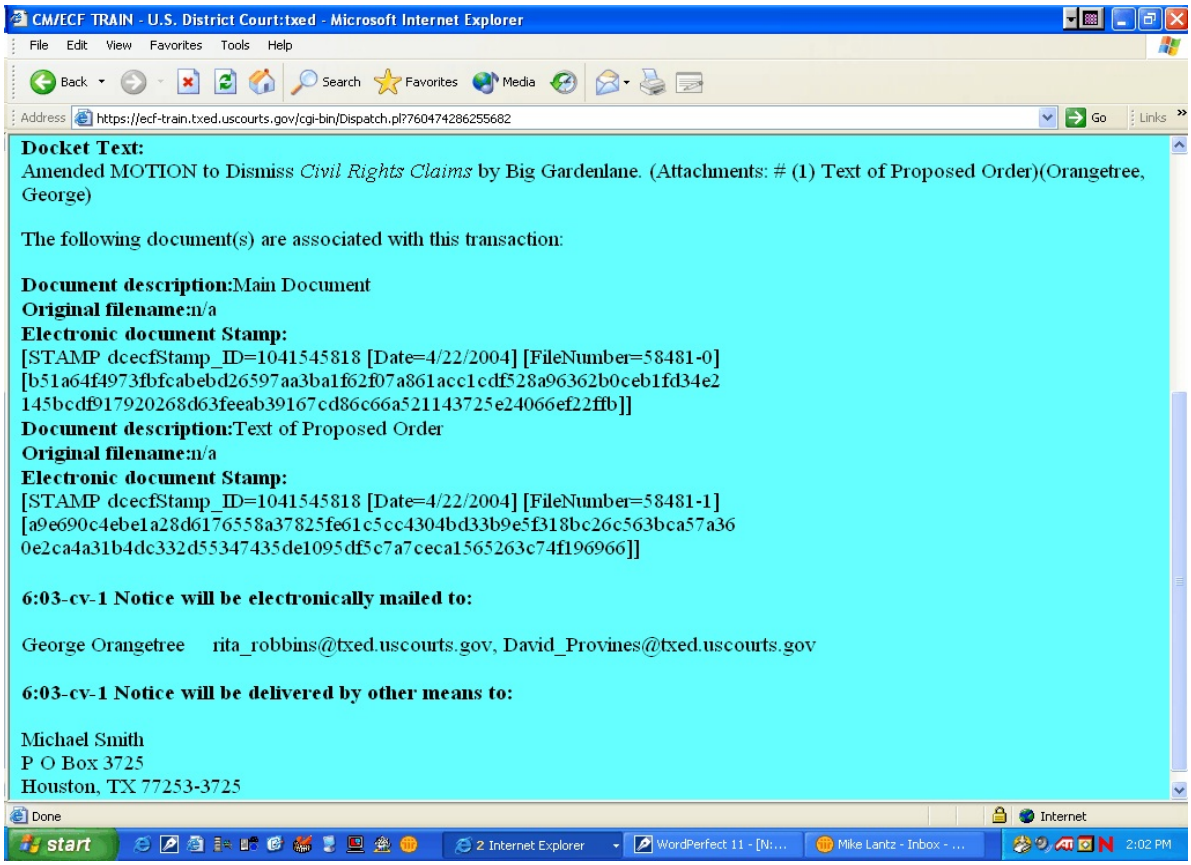
. Otherwise, click on the BACK key to correct the entry.

- To abort the entry**,** click on **Civil** to start over**.**



9. Notice of Electronic Filing

- After final approval is given, the next screen displays the official filing receipt.



This screen gives you confirmation that the system has received the entry, and the document is now an official court document. It also tells you the date and time your transaction was received by the court, and the number assigned to the document. For future reference, please note the document number on the PDF document file. Scroll down to view the entire receipt.

- To print out the receipt, click

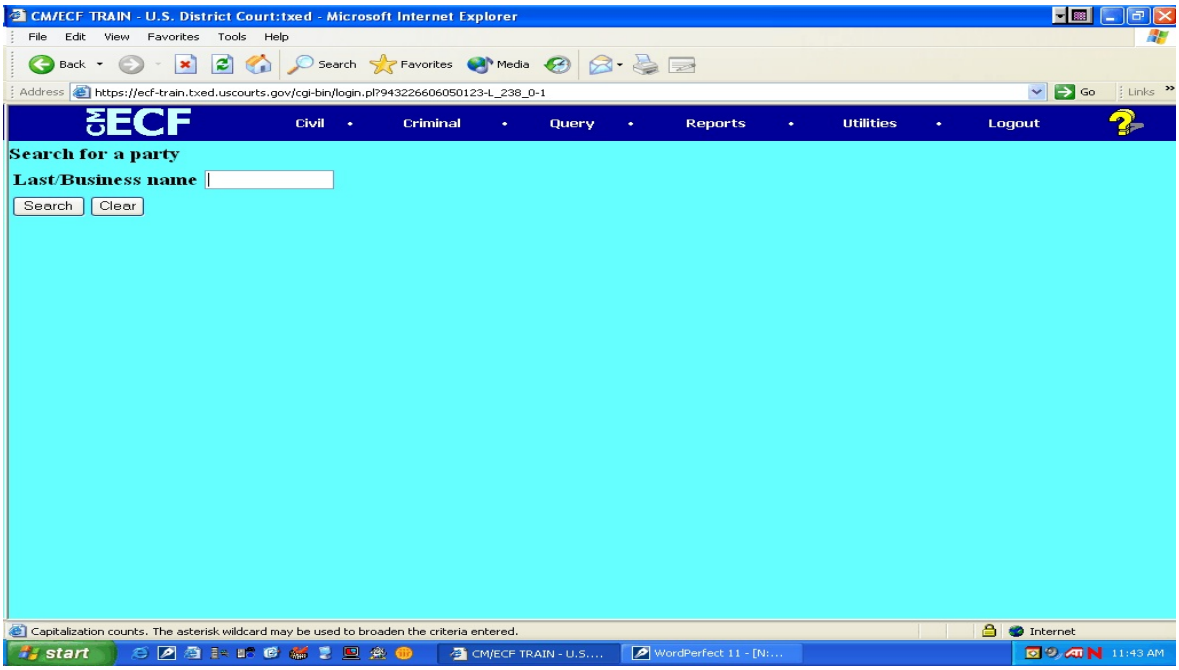
on the Netscape Toolbar.

- To save the receipt, click on File at the top of the Netscape screen, and select "Save Frame As..."

- If parties are not receiving notice electronically, it is your responsibility to serve them with hard copies of all documents and attachments at the address listed under "Notice will be delivered by other means to:"

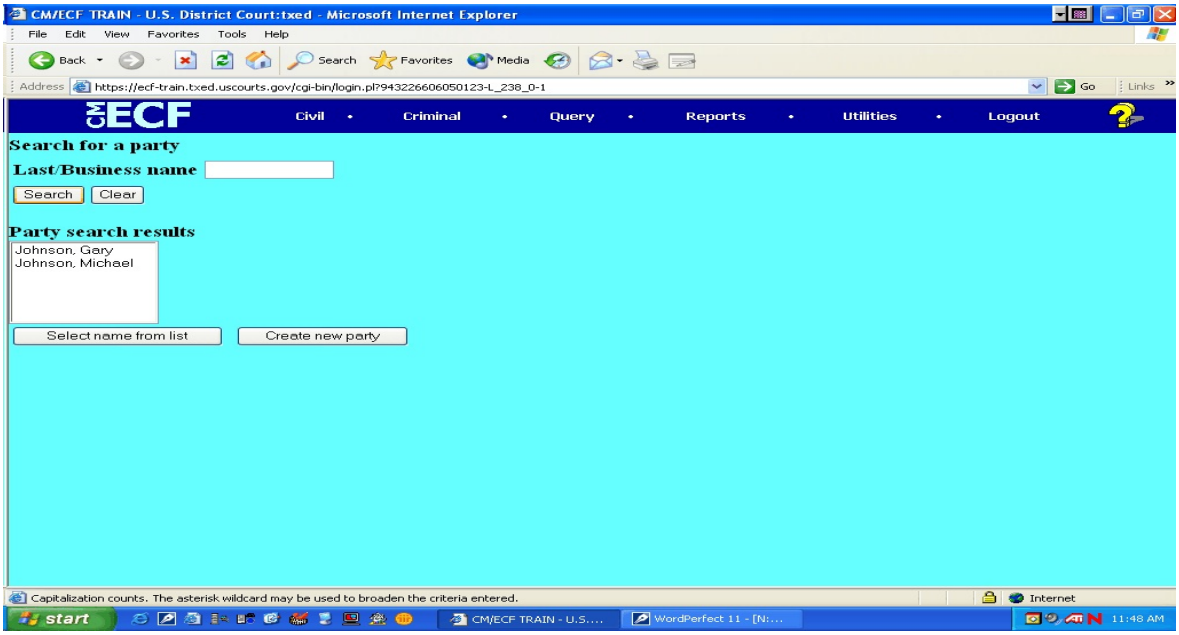
Add/Create a New Party

In rare cases you may need to add a party to the ECF system. If the party you represent is not listed in the "Select a Party" screen, click on Add/Create New Party.



You must first perform a search to see if your party is already entered in the ECF system. Type the first few letters for a company name or, for an individual, the first few letters of the party's last name.

- Click on Search.

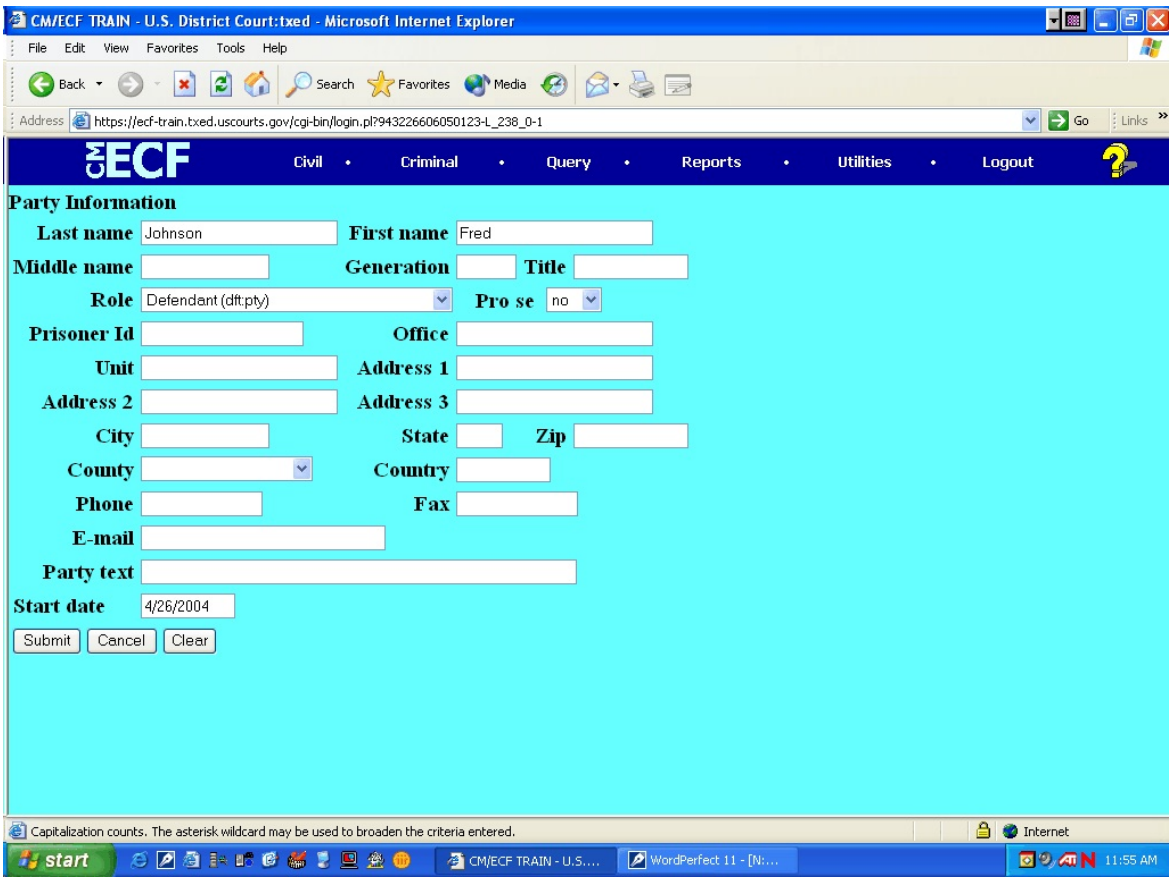


- If a match is found, ECF will display a list of party names. If the name of the party appears, select it from the list and then click the Select Name from List button.

- Review party information and be sure to Select Party's role in this filing and click on the correct role.

- Click Submit .

- If the party search returns No person found, you will click Create new party .



- Add the party information to complete this screen. For a company, enter the entire company name in the Last Name field. For an individual, fill out the Last Name, First Name, Middle Name, Generation and Title fields as appropriate. Choose the appropriate Role from the drop down list. Leave all other fields blank.

- Click Submit .

Submitting Proposed Orders

All motions filed must include a proposed order for the judge's signature. The proposed order should be attached to the motion as a separate attachment and designated as "Proposed Order."

Filing Proposed Documents

If the document you wish to file requires leave of court, such as an amended complaint or a document to be filed out of time, the proposed document shall be attached as an exhibit to the motion. If your motion is granted, the order will direct you to electronically file your document with the court.

Filing Other Types of Documents

To file a document other than a motion or application, make the appropriate selection from the "File A Document" menu. The screens that follow will be very similar to those described above for filing a motion.

E-Mail Notification When Documents are Filed

Attorneys associated with ECF cases will be automatically notified by e-mail and receive the Notice of Electronic Filing when a document is filed in ECF cases, provided they have an Internet e-mail address.

Criminal Events Feature

Filing Documents for Criminal Cases

There are eleven basic steps involved in filing a criminal document:

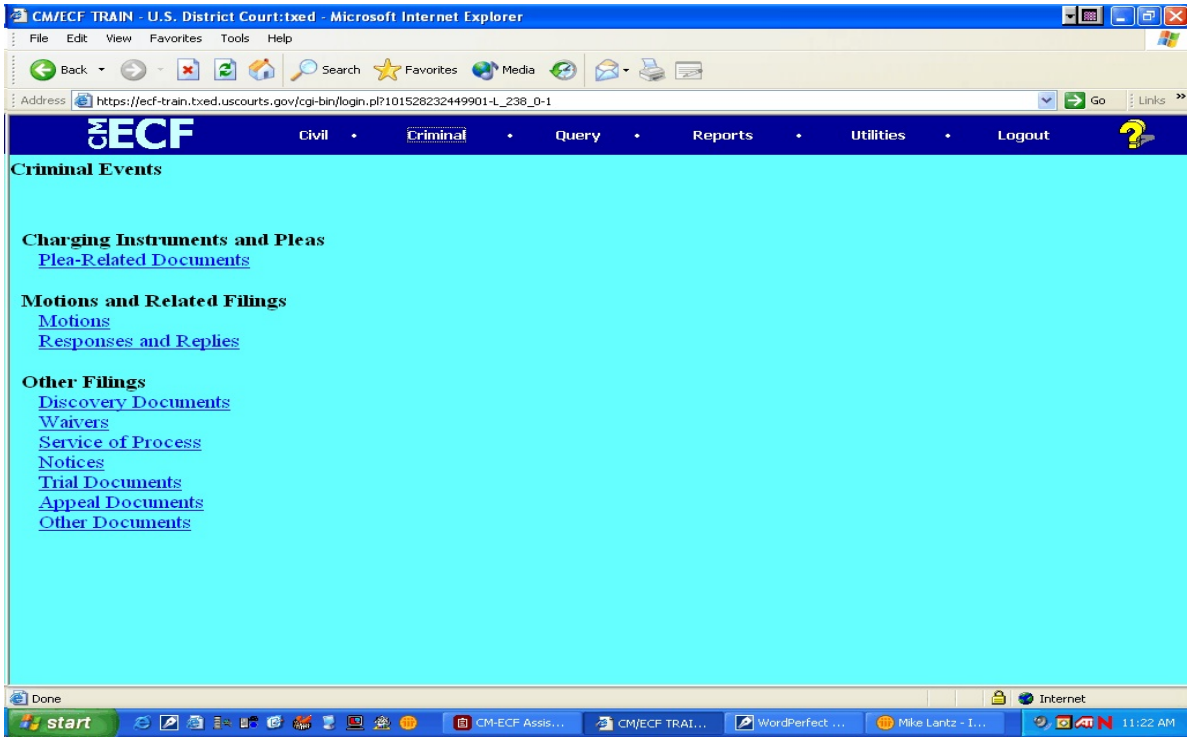
1. Select the type of document to file (see Attorney Events List);
2. Enter the case number in which the document is to be filed;
3. Designate the defendant that the filing relates to;
4. Verify that the case number and caption are correct;
5. Designate the party (or parties) filing the document;
6. Select the appropriate motion you are filing;
7. Specify the PDF file name and location for the document to be filed;
8. Add attachments, if any, to the document being filed;
9. Modify docket text as necessary;
10. Submit the pleading to ECF; and
11. Receive the notification of electronic filing.

After successfully logging into ECF, follow these steps to file a pleading.

1. Select the type of document to file

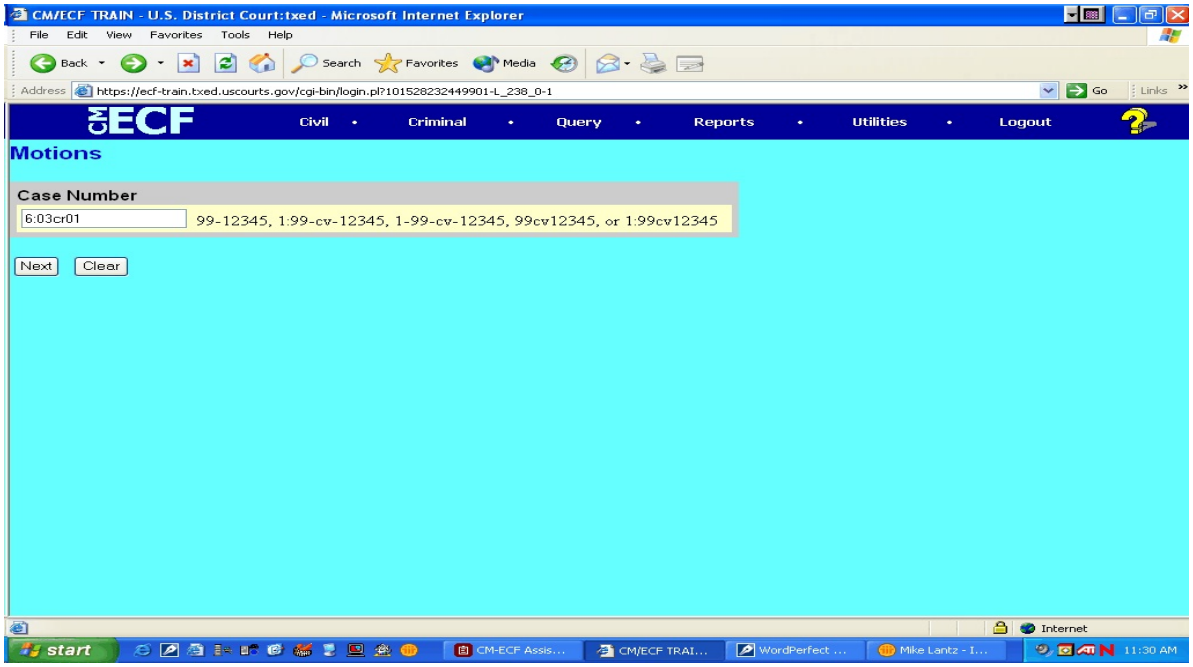
Select Criminal from the blue menu bar at the top of the ECF screen. The Criminal Event window opens displaying all of the events from which you may choose for your filing. This section of the User's Manual describes the process for filing a Motion in ECF. The process is similar for filing other pleadings in ECF.

Click on Motions, under **Motions and Related Filings**



2. Enter the case number in which the document is to be filed

A new Motions screen opens with a Case Number field. Enter the number of the case for which you are filing a motion and click on [Next]. If the number is entered incorrectly, click [Clear] to re-enter. If the computer prompts that you entered an invalid case number, click on [Back] to re-enter.



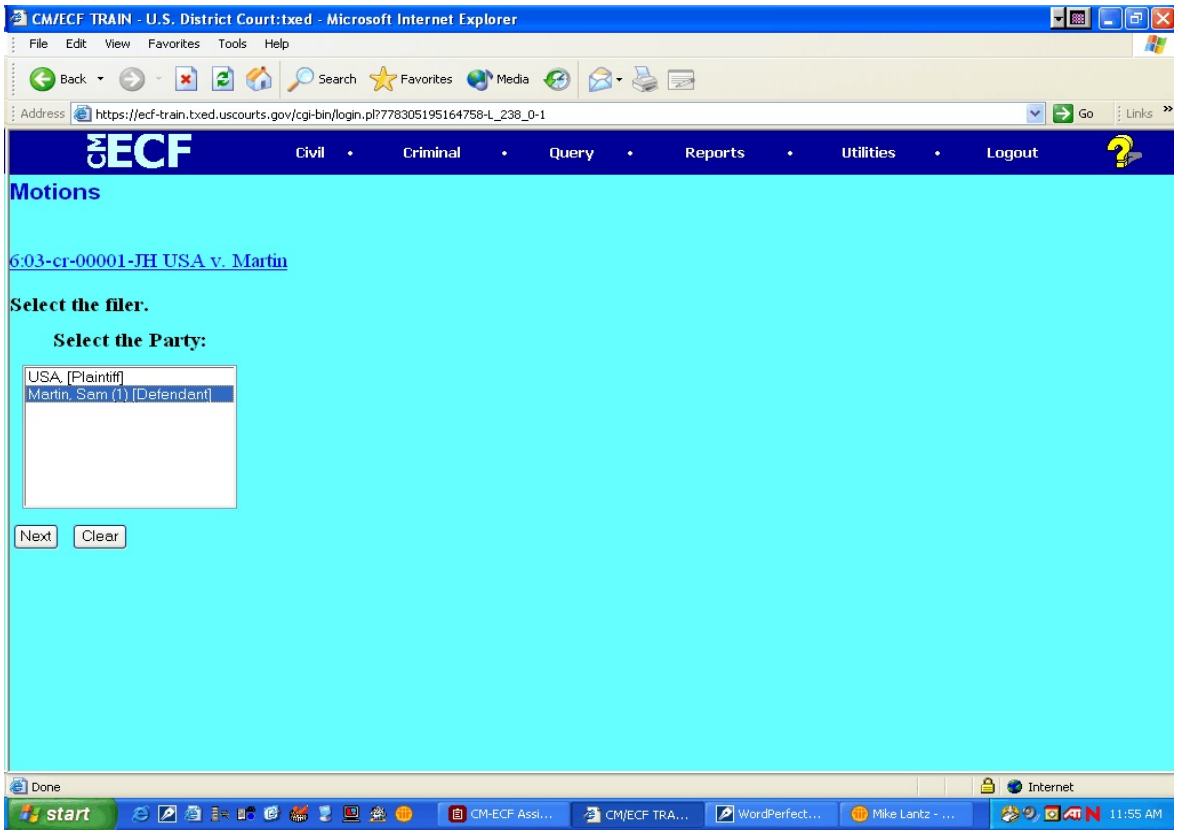
3. Designate the defendant that the filing relates to

Click in the boxes to place a check next to each defendant's name that this filing relates to. If it relates to all defendants in the case, check the box for All Defendants and leave the other boxes unchecked. When finished selecting defendants, click on [Next].

4. Verify the case number and caption are correct

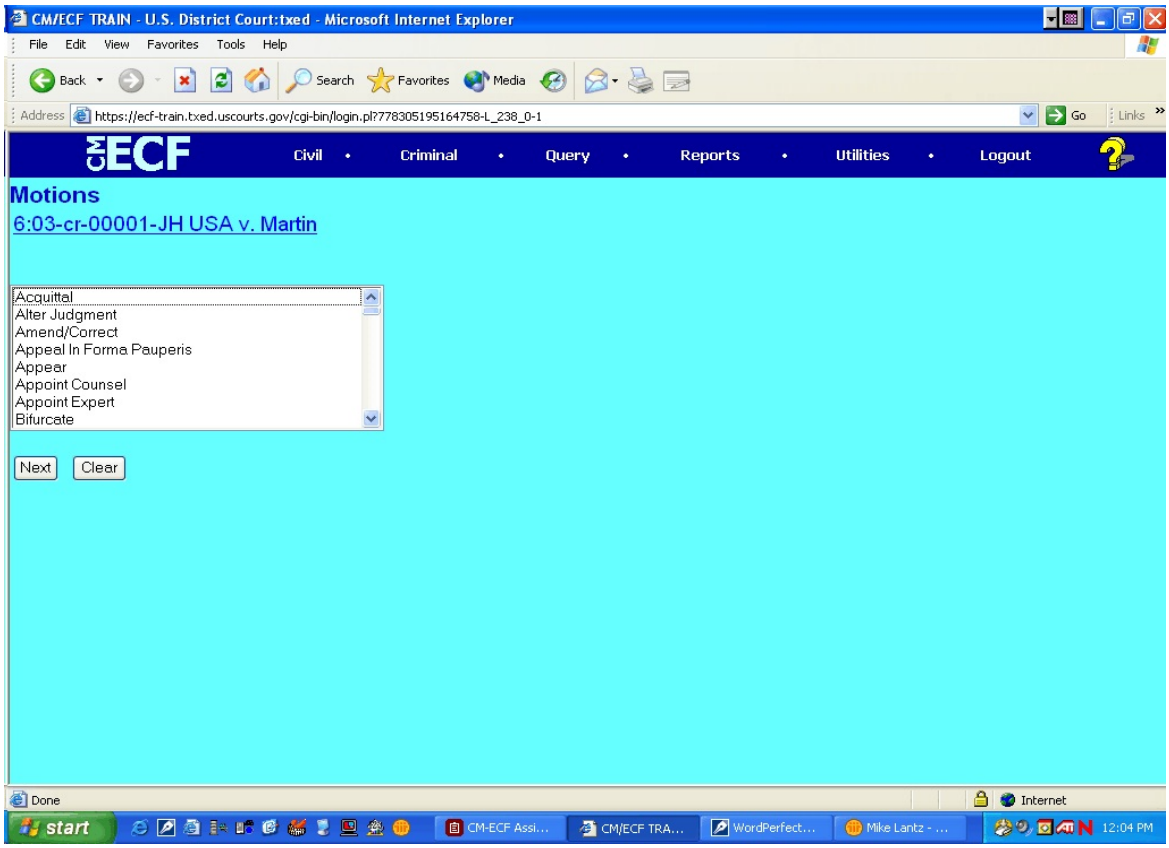
5. Designate the party(s) filing the document

Highlight the name of the party or parties filing the motion. Click on the [Next] button.



6. Select the appropriate motion you are filing

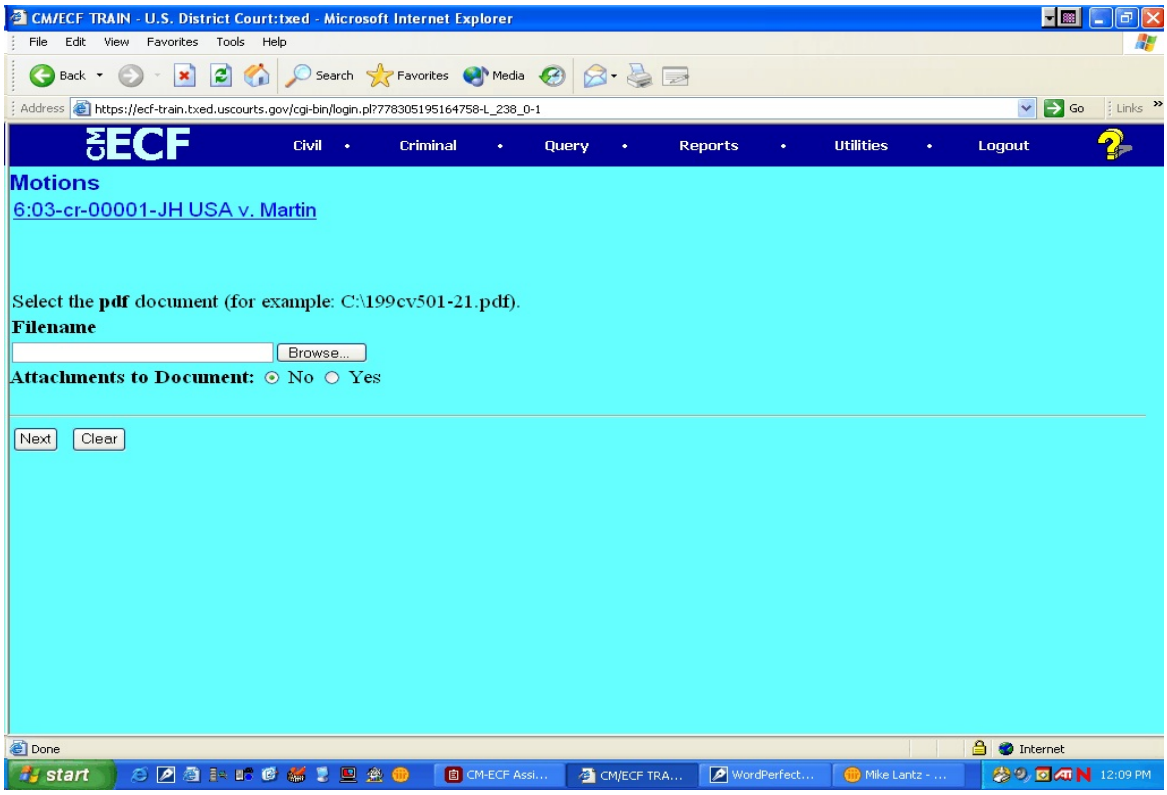
The Motions screen appears and displays a motion selection field with a scroll bar next to it. Scroll through the menu until you find the type of motion or application you wish to file.



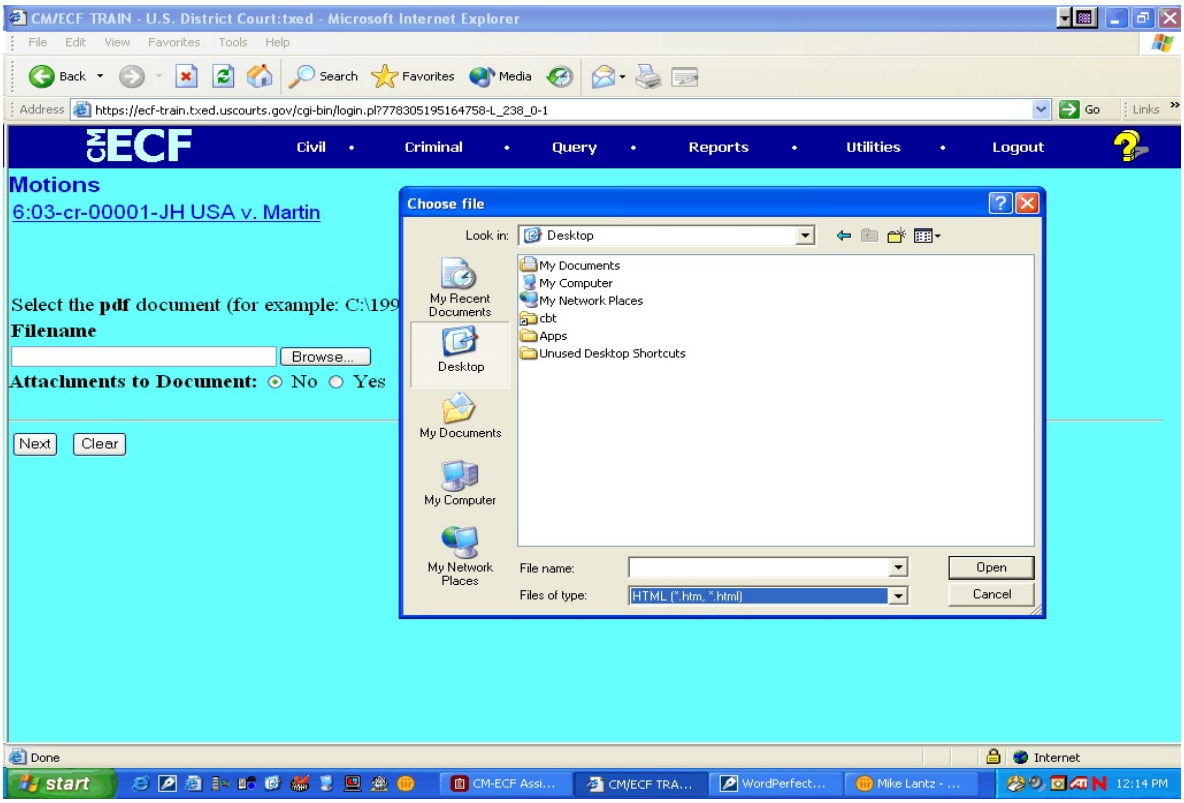
7. Specify the PDF file name and location for the document to be filed

ECF accepts the party or parties you selected and refreshes the screen to display the new Motions screen. ECF displays a field for locating and entering the new PDF file of the document (pleading) you are filing in ECF.

It is **imperative** that you attach an electronic copy of the actual pleading when prompted by the system. All documents that you intend to file in ECF **MUST** reside in PDF format. Otherwise, ECF will not accept the document and users will be unable to retrieve and read your document from within ECF.



- Click on the [Browse] button. ECF opens the following screen:



- Change the Files of type from:

to:

- Navigate to the appropriate directory and file name to select the PDF document you wish to file.

- Highlight the file to upload to ECF.

In order to verify that you have selected the correct document, right mouse click on the highlighted file name to open a quick menu and left mouse click to [open]. Your PDF reader will launch and open the PDF document you selected. You should view your document to verify that it is the correct document.

- Once you have verified that the document is correct, close your PDF reader, and click on the [Open] button in the lower right corner of the File Upload window. ECF closes the File Upload screen and the PDF file name and location in the Motions screen.

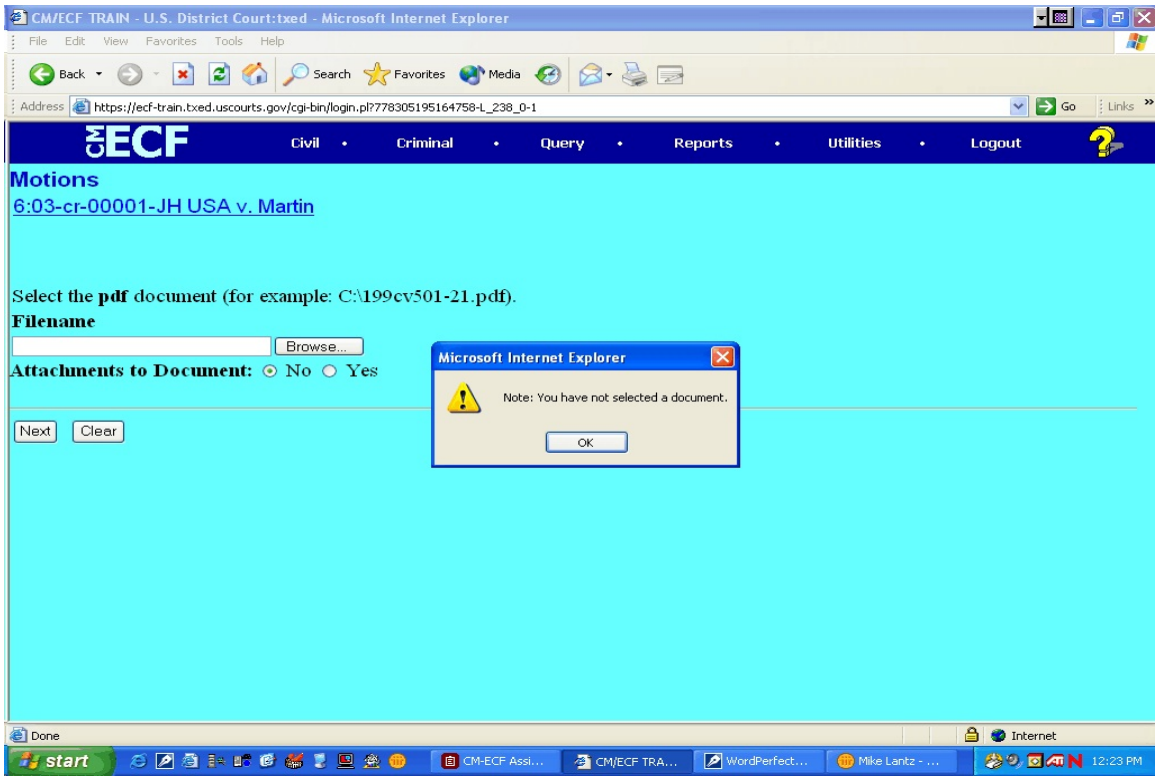
- If there are no attachments to the motion, click on the [Next] button. A new Motions window opens. Go to Section 6, Modifying Docket Text, to proceed with your filing.

- If you have Attachments to your motion, you will select [Yes] on the screen depicted on the previous page. Click on the [Next] button and proceed to the first step in Section 7 - Adding Attachments to Documents Being Filed.

- ECF will not permit you to select a file for your pleading that is not in PDF format. If you do select the wrong document, click on the [Back] button and ECF will return to the Motions screen. Select and highlight the PDF file of your pleading and proceed as before.

Failure to Select A Document to File

If you fail to select a document to file with your pleading, ECF will display the error message depicted below.



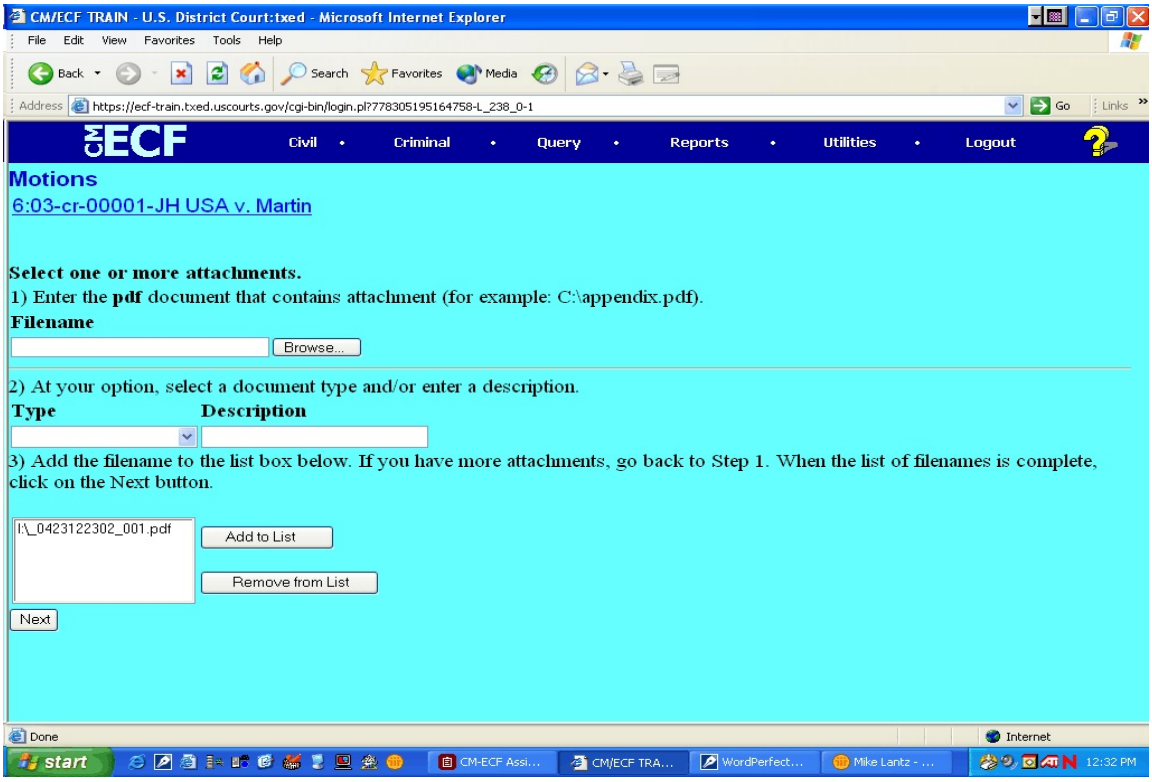
- Click [OK] from the screen depicted above, and ECF will return you to the Motions screen. You cannot proceed without attaching a PDF document.

8. Add attachments to documents being filed

If you acknowledged the need to attach documents to your motion during the previous step, a new Motions screen appears.

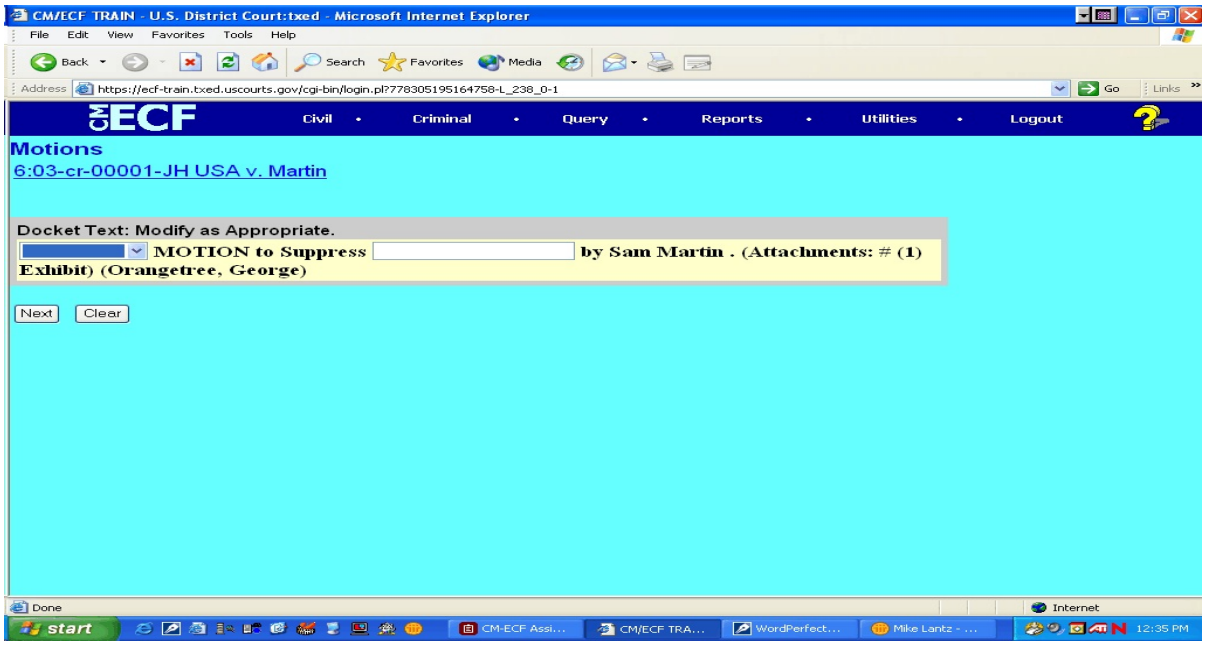
- Click on [Browse] to search for the document file name of the attachment.
- Next to the field for attachment Type, click on the arrow and ECF opens a pull-down screen. Highlight the type of attachment from the displayed selection**.**
- To describe the attachment more fully, click in the Description box and type a clear and concise description of the attachment.
- Click on [Add to List].

ECF adds the selected document as an attachment to the pleading. A new Motions screen opens to display the file name of the newly attached document.



- Repeat the sequence for each additional attachment.
- After adding all the desired PDF documents as attachments, click on the [Next] button.

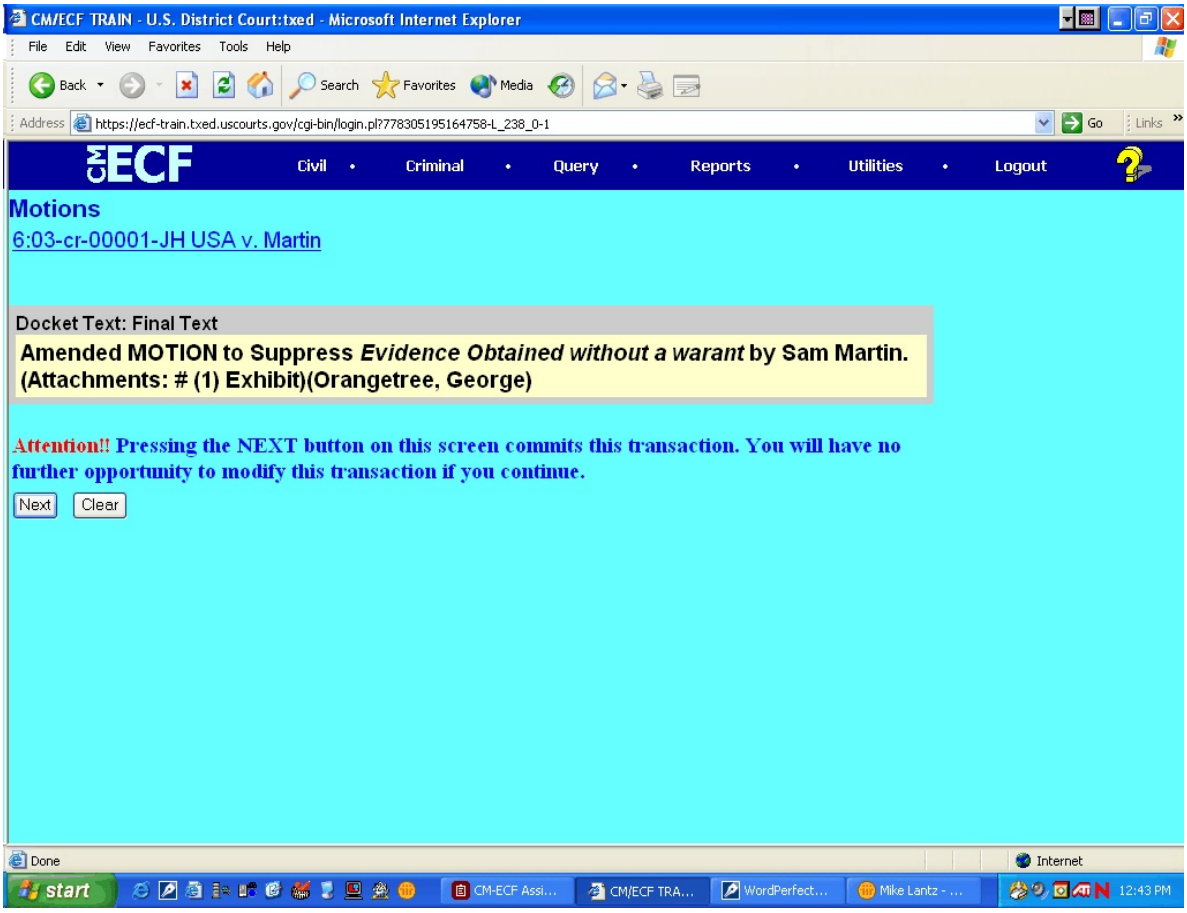
9. Modify the docket text



- Click on the drop down box to open a modifier list. Select a modifier if appropriate**.**

- Click in the open text area to type additional text for the description of the pleading.

- Click on the [Next] button. A new Motions window appears with the complete text for the document entry.



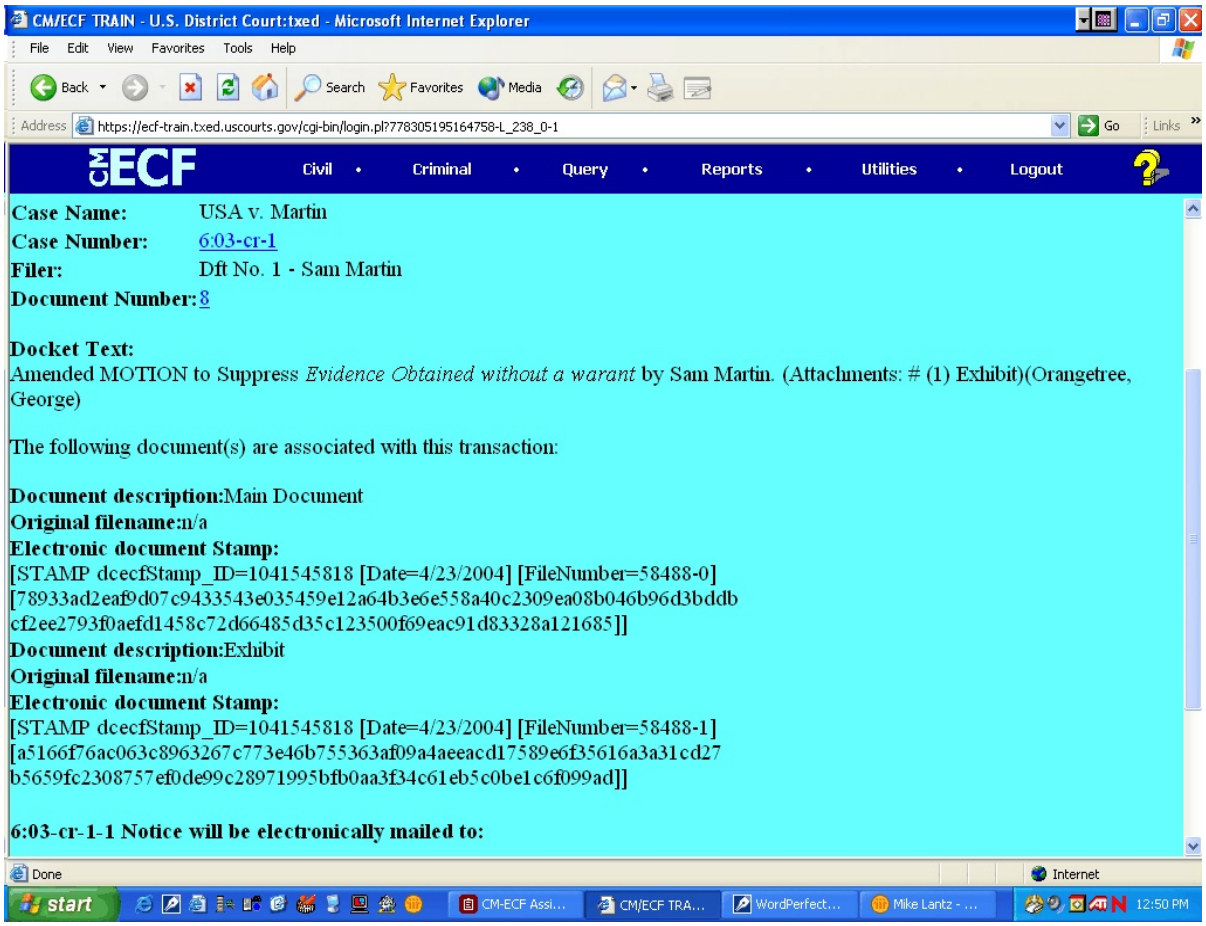
10. Submit the pleading

- Review the docket text and correct any errors. If you need to modify the data on a previous screen, click the [Back] button on the Netscape toolbar to find the screen you wish to alter.

- Click on the [Next] button to file and docket your pleading.

11. Receive Notice of Electronic Filing

ECF opens a new Motions screen displaying an ECF filing receipt.



- The screen depicted above provides confirmation that ECF has registered your transaction and the pleading is now an official court document. It also displays the date and time of your transaction and the number that was assigned to your document. You should note this number on the document's PDF file.

- Select [Print] on the Netscape Toolbar to print the document receipt.

- Select [File] on the Netscape menu bar, and choose **Save Frame As** from the drop-down window to save the receipt to a file on the hard drive of your computer**.**

- The Notice of Electronic Filing represents your Certificate of Service. The Court strongly urges you to copy it to a file on your computer's hard drive, print it, and retain a hard copy in your personal files.

- ECF will electronically transmit the Notice of Electronic Filing to the attorneys and parties to the case who have supplied their E-Mail addresses to the Court. The ECF filing report also displays the name and addresses of individuals who will not be electronically notified of the filing. It is the filer's responsibility to serve hard copies of the pleading and the Notice of Electronic Filing to attorneys and parties who are not set up for electronic notification.

E-Mail Notification of Documents That Were Filed

After a pleading is electronically filed, the ECF System sends a Notice of Electronic Filing to the designated attorneys and parties who have supplied their E-Mail addresses to the Court. Only attorneys of record in the case are able to view pleadings in Criminal cases via the Internet. Attorneys in multi-defendant cases can only view, via the Internet, those filings which relate directly to the party they represent. All other pleadings may be viewed at the courthouse. Individuals who receive electronic notification of the filing are permitted one "free" look at the document by clicking on the associated hyperlinked document number embedded in the Notice of Electronic Filing. The filer is permitted one free look at the document also. **The Court strongly urges you to copy the Notice of Electronic Filing and pleading documents to your hard-drive for future access**. Subsequent retrieval of the case docket sheet and pleading from CM/ECF must be made through your PACER account and is subject to regular PACER fees.

It is the responsibility of the filer to send hard copies of the pleading and Notice of Electronic Filings to attorneys and pro se parties who have indicated they do not have E-Mail accounts established with the Court.

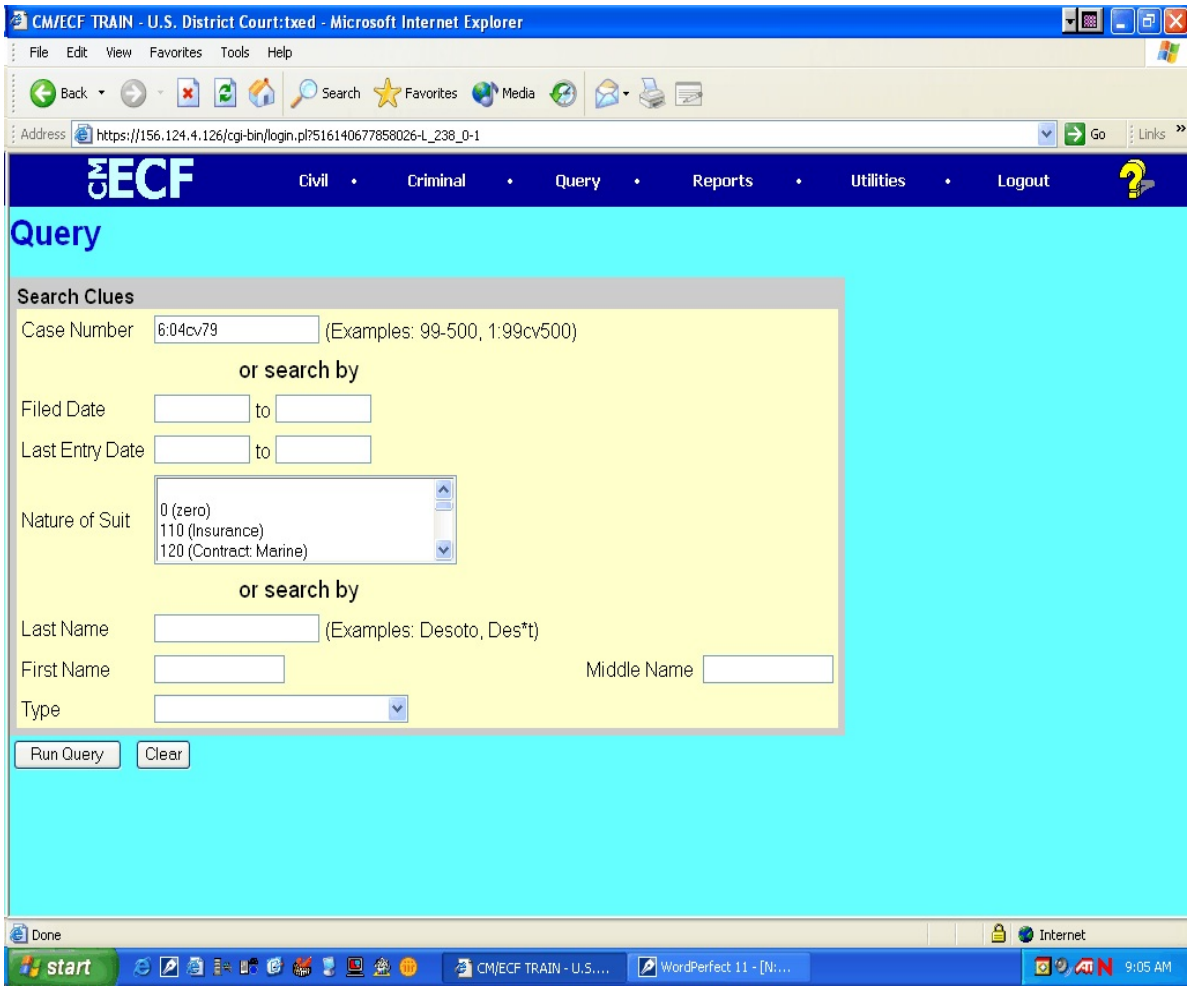
It should be noted that the Notice of Electronic Filing **does not** take the place of a certificate of service. Local Rule CV-5(d) requires a certificate of service which indicates the date and method of service as required by Fed.R.Civ.P. 5(d). An attorney should query his case to determine who will receive a Notice of Electronic Filing before he prepares his certificate of service and indicate the method of service in the certificate of service.

Query Feature

Registered participants should use this feature to query the ECF system for specific case information. To enter the Query mode, click on Query from the menu bar of ECF.

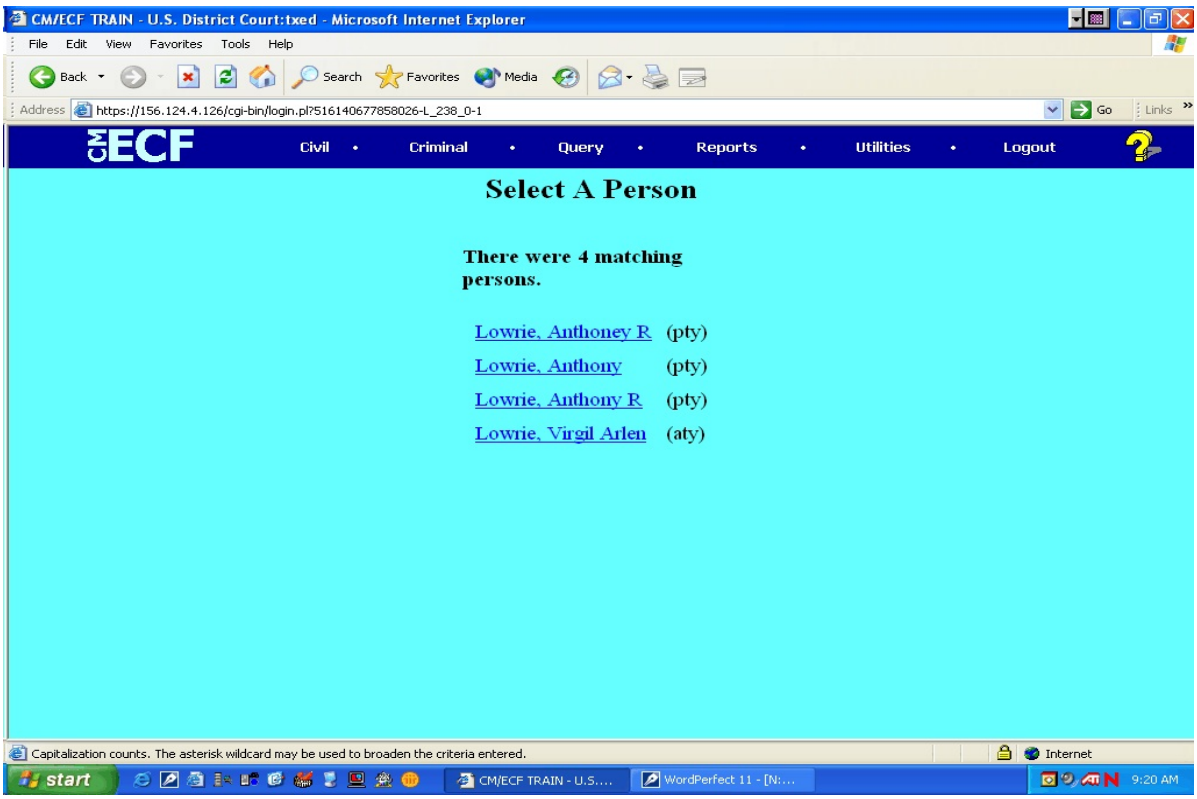
ECF opens the PACER Login screen. You must enter your PACER login and password before ECF will permit you to query the ECF database.

After you enter your PACER login and password, ECF opens a Query data entry screen.

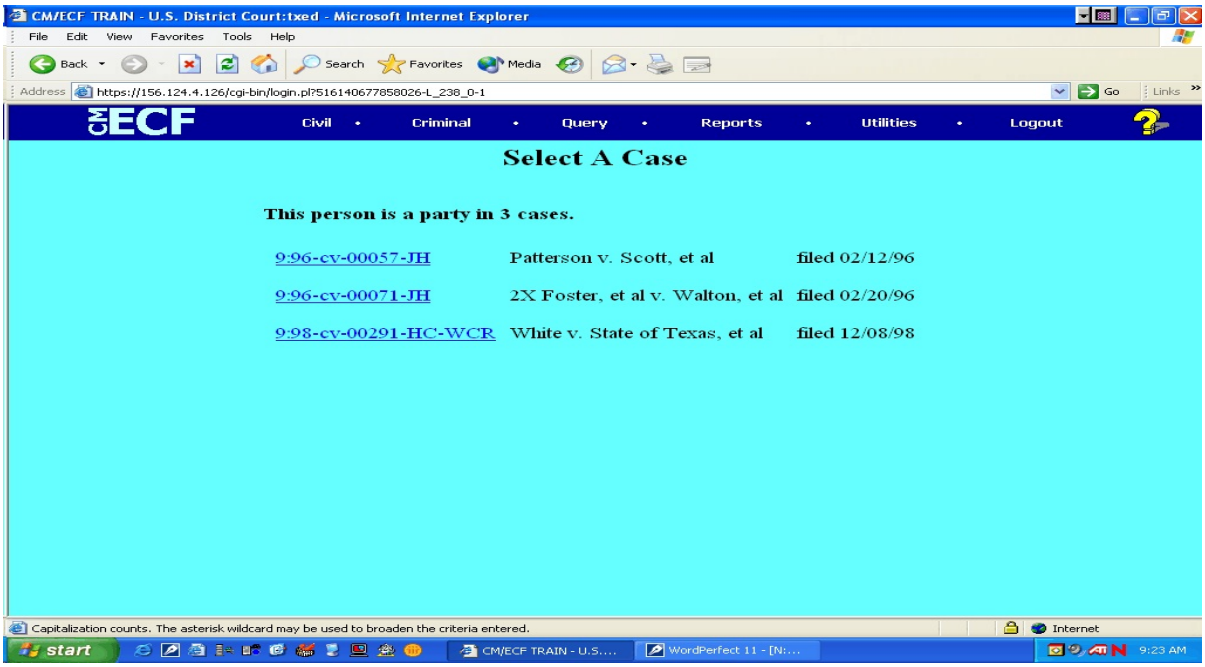


If you know the number that the Court has assigned to the case, enter it in the Case number field, and click on the [Run Query] button.

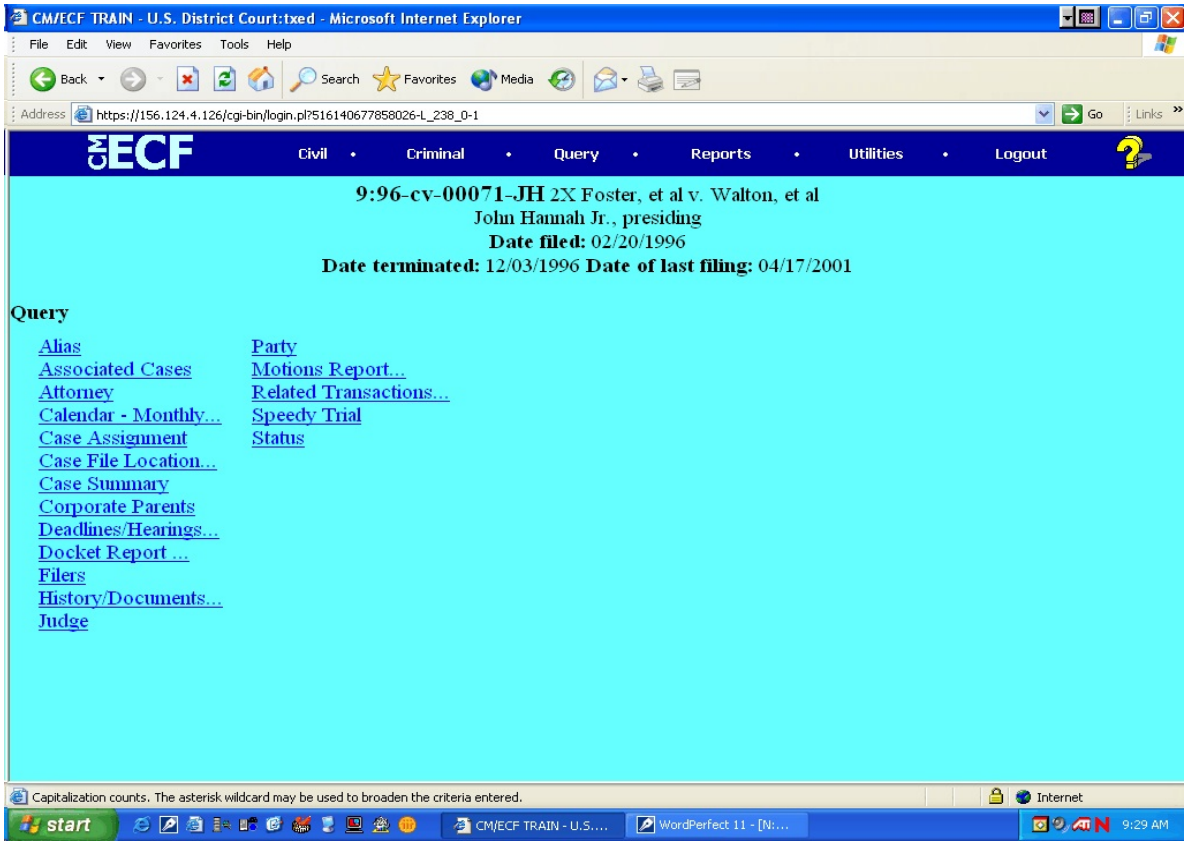
You may also query the ECF database party name or attorney name. Enter the last name of the party in the appropriate field. If more than one person with that name exists in the database, ECF returns a screen from which you may select the correct name.



If you click on the name of the party you want, and if the individual is a party to more than one case, ECF will open a screen listing all of that party's cases.



Click on the appropriate case number hyperlink, and ECF opens the query screen.



You may also query a case by Nature of Suit. You must enter a range for either the filed date or the last entry date in order for the query to run. To search for all cases of a certain type, use the date 1/1/1970 as the "beginning of time." When you run the query, if there is more than one case that meet those criteria, you will get a screen similar to the one above.

After querying the database by case number, name, or nature of suit, ECF opens the Query window for the specific case you selected - as shown on the bottom of the previous page.

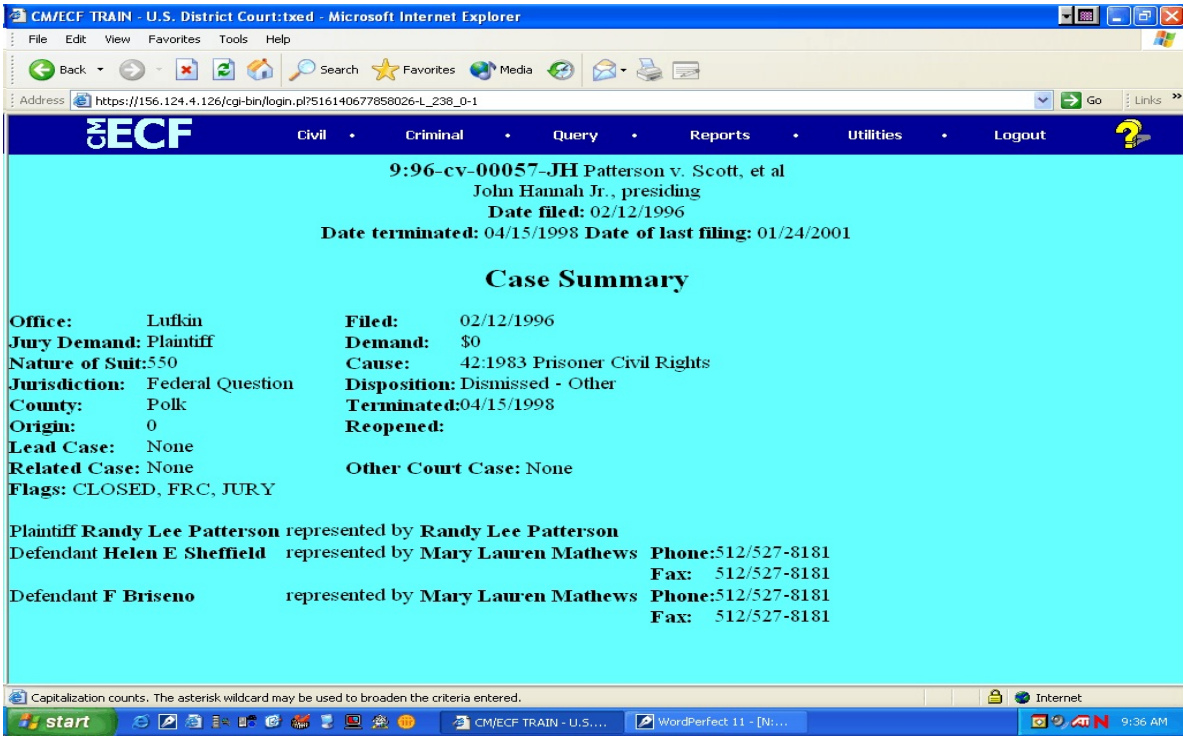
At the top of the window, ECF displays the case number, parties to the case, presiding Judge, date that the initial claim was filed, and date of the last filing for the case. You may choose specific case information from a large list of query options by clicking on the appropriate hyperlinked name on the screen. The following paragraphs describe several of the available case-specific query options.

Attorney

Displays the names, addresses, and telephone numbers of the attorneys who represent each of the parties to the case.

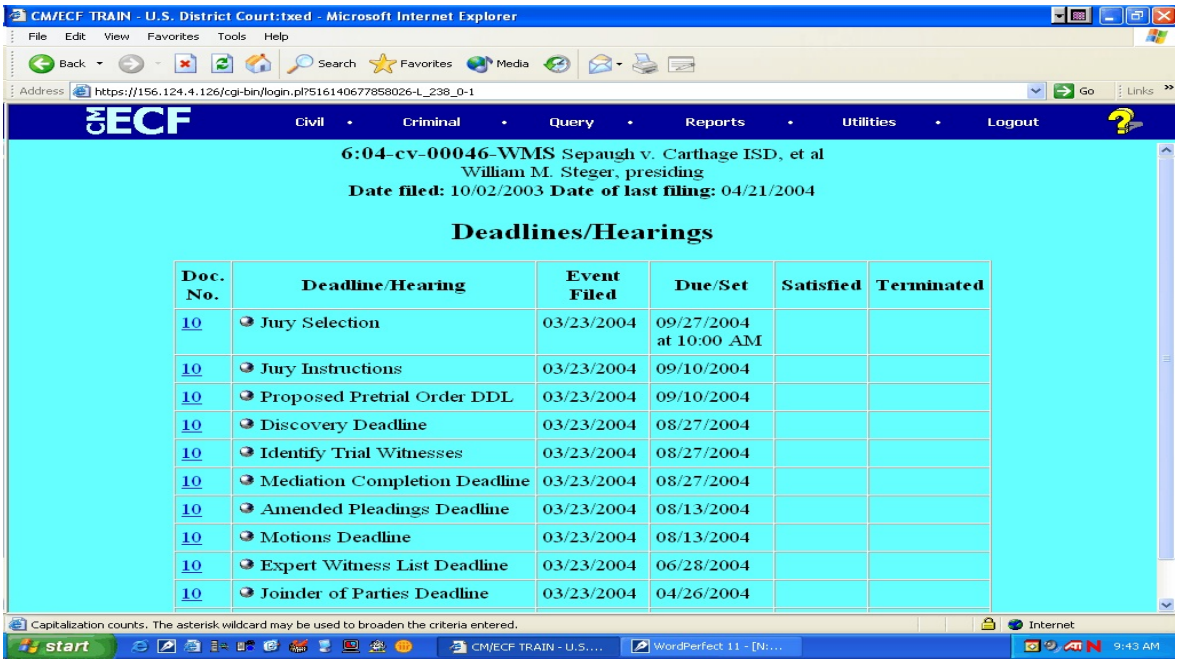
Case Summary

Provides a summary of current case-specific information as represented below.



Deadlines/Hearings

Produces a screen that allows you to query the database by various means to obtain hearing and other schedule deadlines.



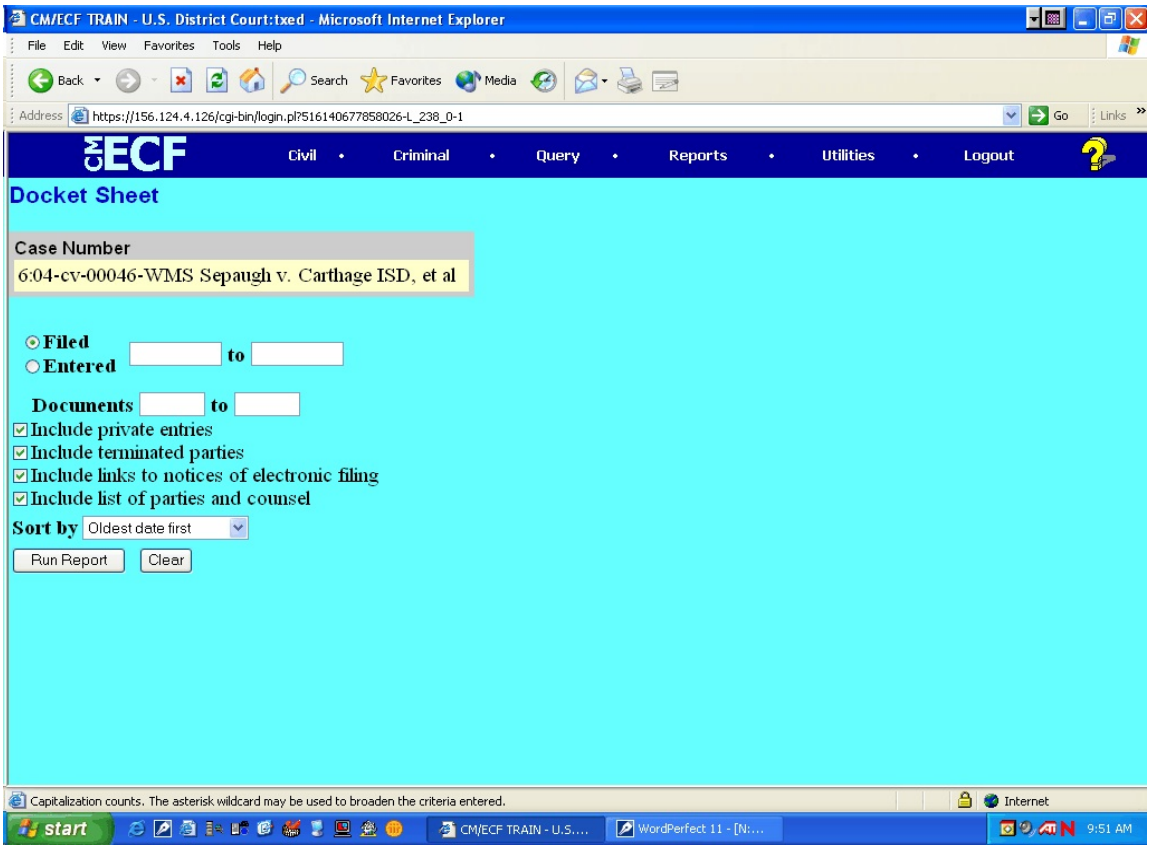
Doc. No.	Deadline/Hearing	Event Filed	Due/Set	Satisfied	Terminated
10	Jury Selection	03/23/2004	09/27/2004 at 10:00 AM		
10	Jury Instructions	03/23/2004	09/10/2004		
10	Proposed Pretrial Order DDL	03/23/2004	09/10/2004		
10	Discovery Deadline	03/23/2004	08/27/2004		
10	Identify Trial Witnesses	03/23/2004	08/27/2004		
10	Mediation Completion Deadline	03/23/2004	08/27/2004		
10	Amended Pleadings Deadline	03/23/2004	08/13/2004		
10	Motions Deadline	03/23/2004	08/13/2004		
10	Expert Witness List Deadline	03/23/2004	06/28/2004		
10	Joinder of Parties Deadline	03/23/2004	04/26/2004		

At the Deadlines/Hearings screen, you can click on a document number to display the actual document that created the deadline.

If you click on the circle to the left of the Deadline/Hearing title, ECF will display the docket information and related docket entries for the deadline you selected.

Docket Report

When you select Docket Report, ECF opens the Docket Sheet screen.

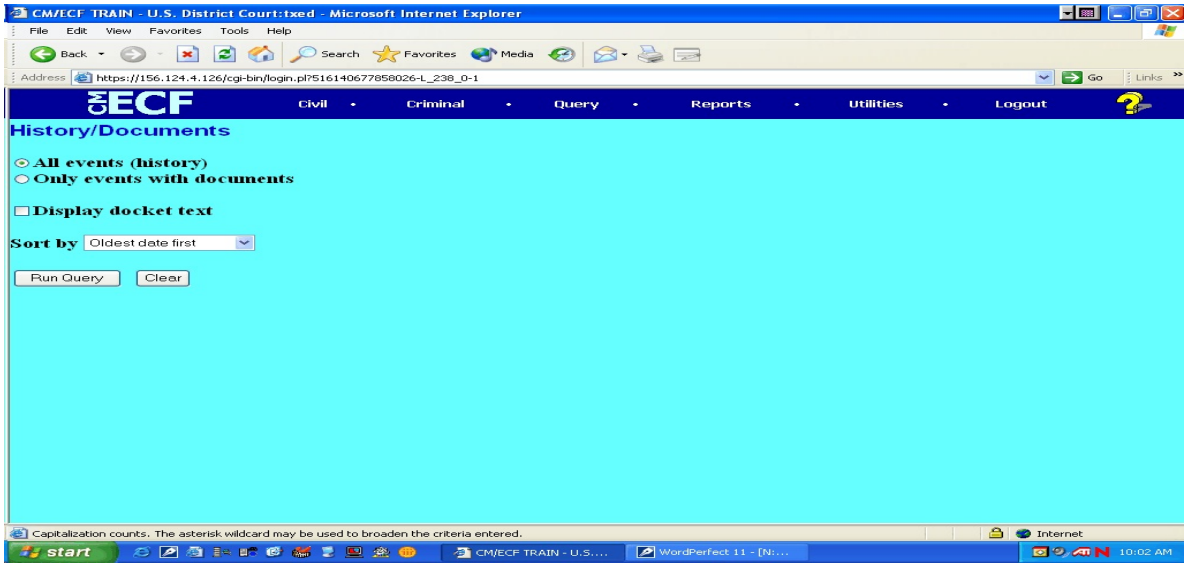


You may select a range for your docket report as well as a range of document numbers. If you leave the range fields blank, ECF will default to display the entire docket report. Place a checkmark in the box to Include links to Notice of Electronic Filing if you wish to view them from the docket sheet. After you have selected the parameters for your report, click on the [Run Report] button. ECF will run your custom docket report.

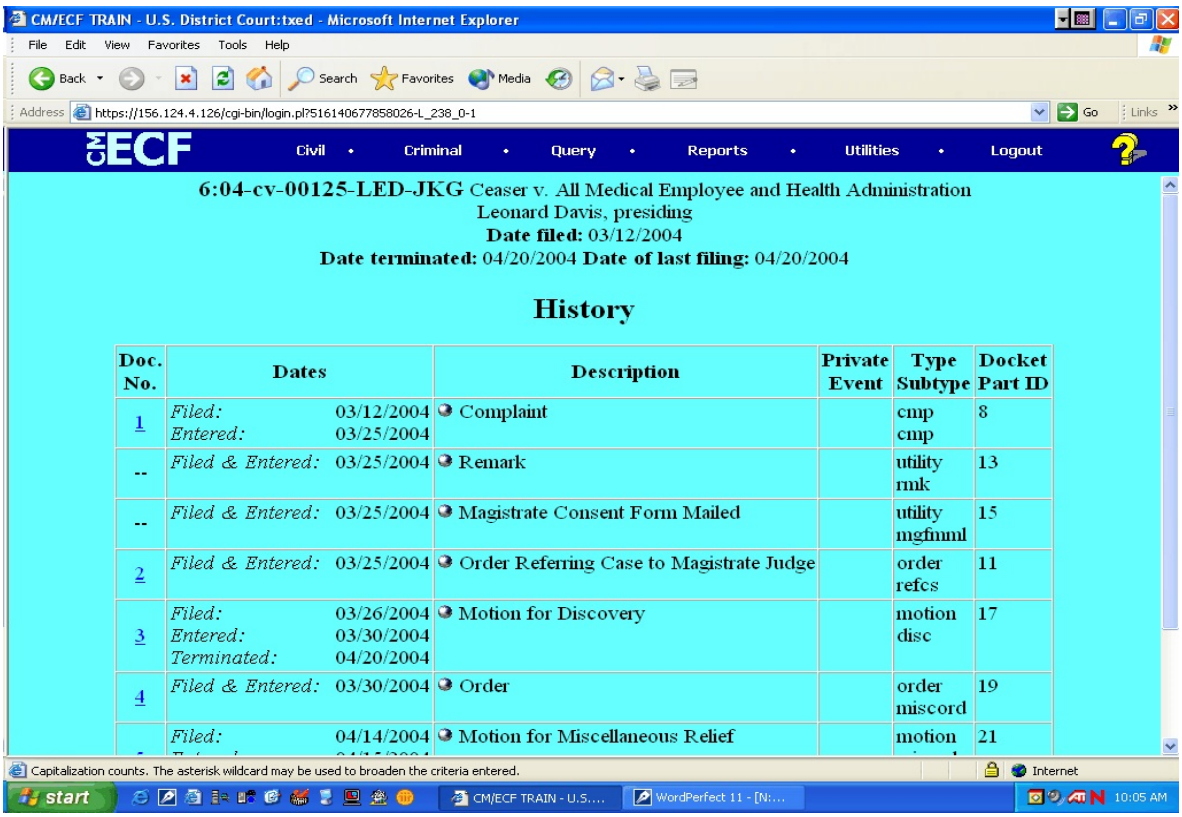
The document numbers listed on the screen are hyperlinks to PDF files of the actual documents. Place the pointer of your mouse on the button next to the document number and click to display the Electronic Notification Report for that particular document.

History/Documents

This selection queries the database for case event history and documents associated with the case.



You may select the sort order for the query report and choose display all events or only those with documents attached. ECF also offers you the option to display the docket text in the report. After making your selections, click on the [Run Query] button. ECF queries the database and builds your report.



This particular report lists all of the events and documents associated with the case in reverse chronological order. It also displays the docketing text for all docketed events.

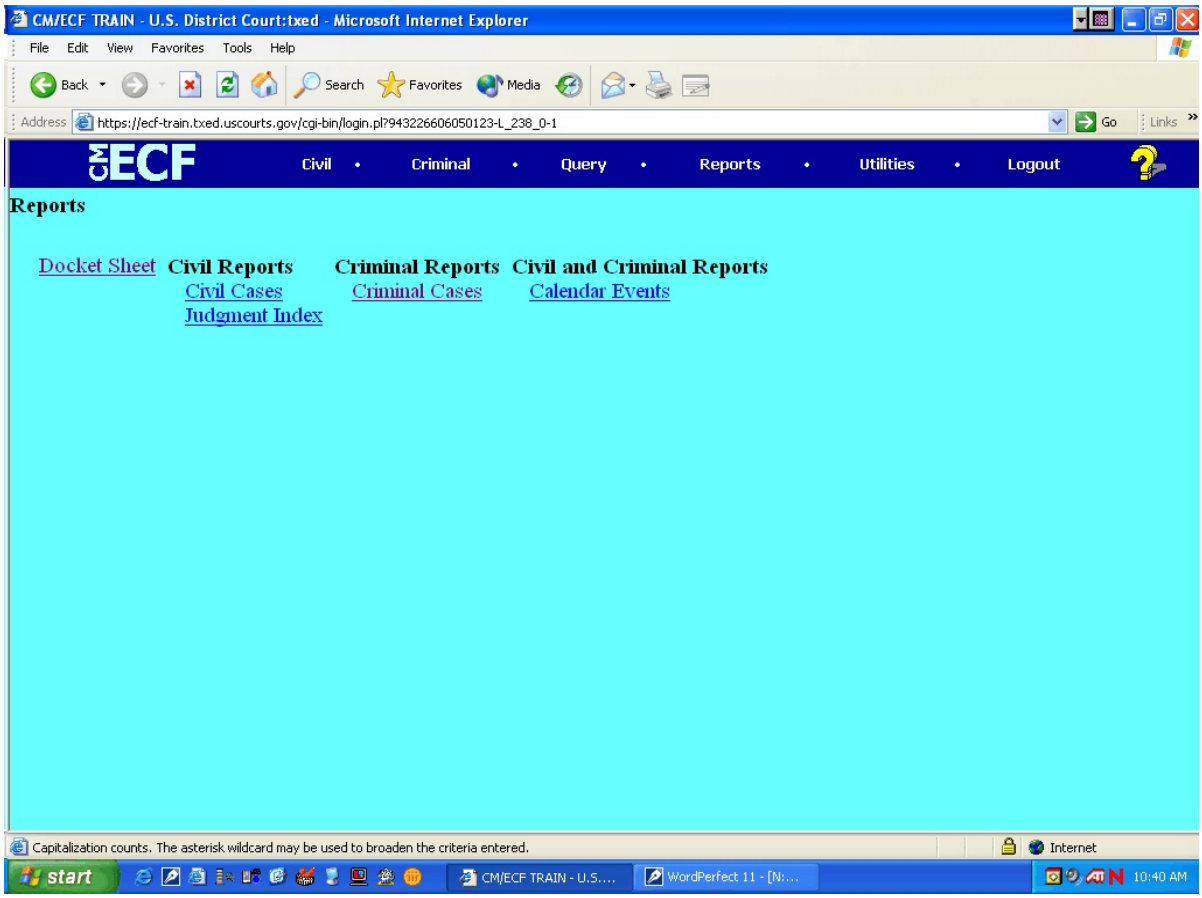
You may view a PDF file of the actual documents by clicking on the document number in the far-left column of the onscreen report.

Other Queries

The process for selecting and running other queries in the Query feature of ECF is similar to what has been described above.

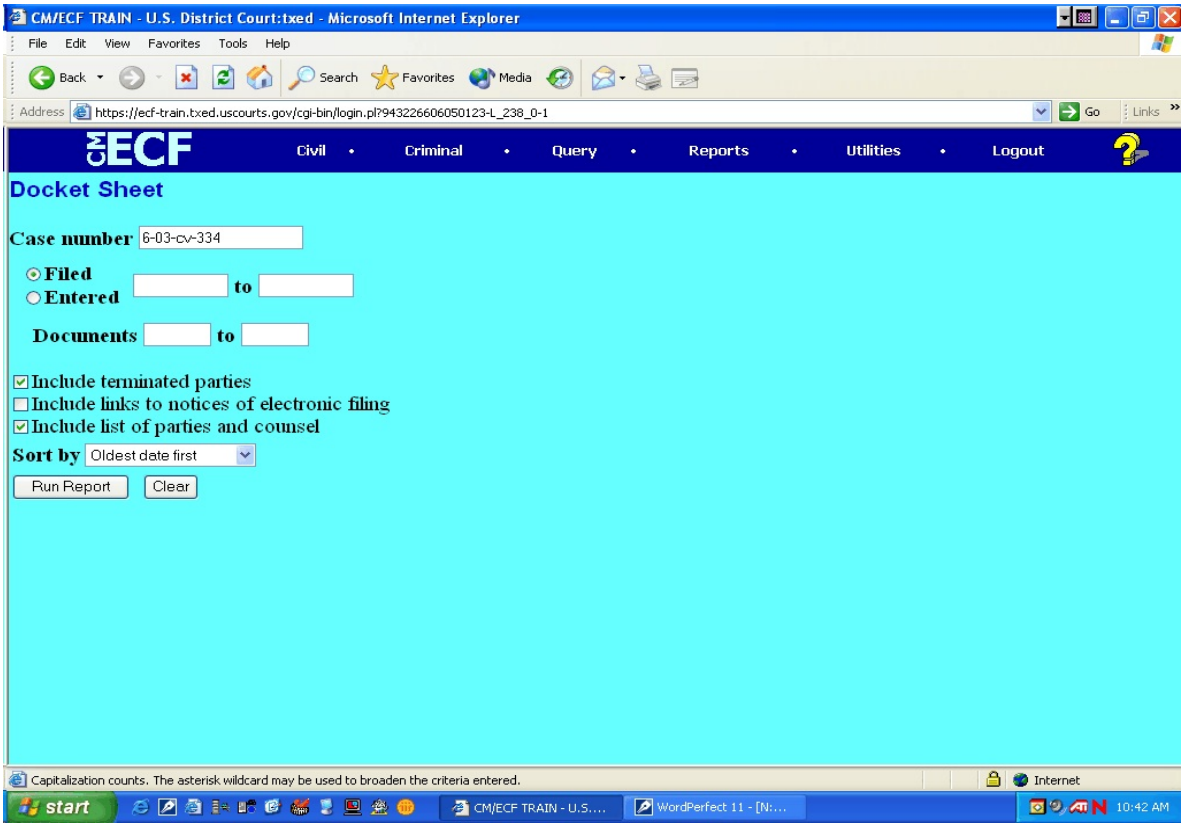
Reports Feature

The Reports feature of ECF provides the user with several report options. If you select Civil/Criminal Cases Filed or Docket Sheet from this screen, ECF will ask you to login to PACER. For criminal cases, you must enter your Court login and password and then your PACER login and password before you can look at a docket sheet. This process is required due to the fact that criminal documents are only viewable by the specific attorneys associated with the case. You may view Court Calendar Events for a case without logging into PACER.



Docket Sheet

Click on the Docket Sheet hyperlink, and ECF will open to a PACER login screen. Enter your PACER login and password. Click on the [Login] button and ECF will open the Docket Sheet report query window.

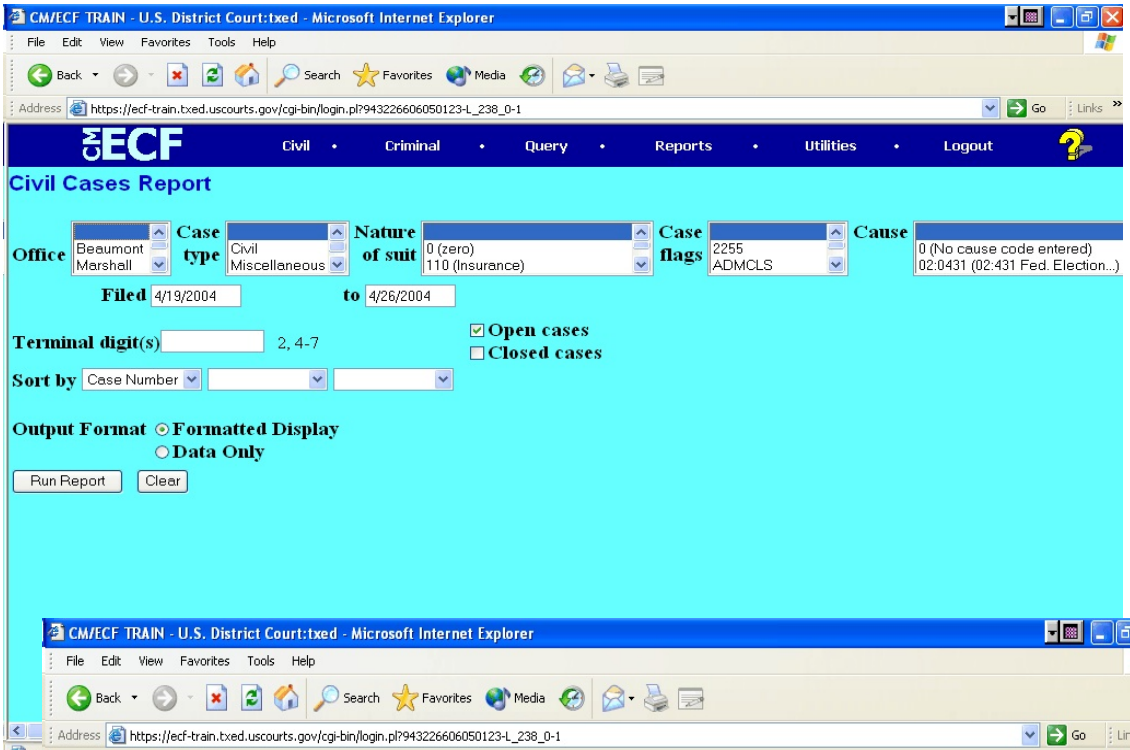


This is the same query window that ECF displayed when you selected Docket Report from the Query feature earlier in this manual. Enter the case number for your docket sheet in the Case Number field. Select parameters for the remainder of the data entry fields and click on the [Run Report] button. ECF will display a full docket sheet for the case you selected. See the Query feature section of this manual for a depiction of a partial docket sheet report. If you do not need a complete docket sheet, you can narrow the query using the date filed/entered fields. ECF also offers various sorting options from the Docket Sheet query screen.

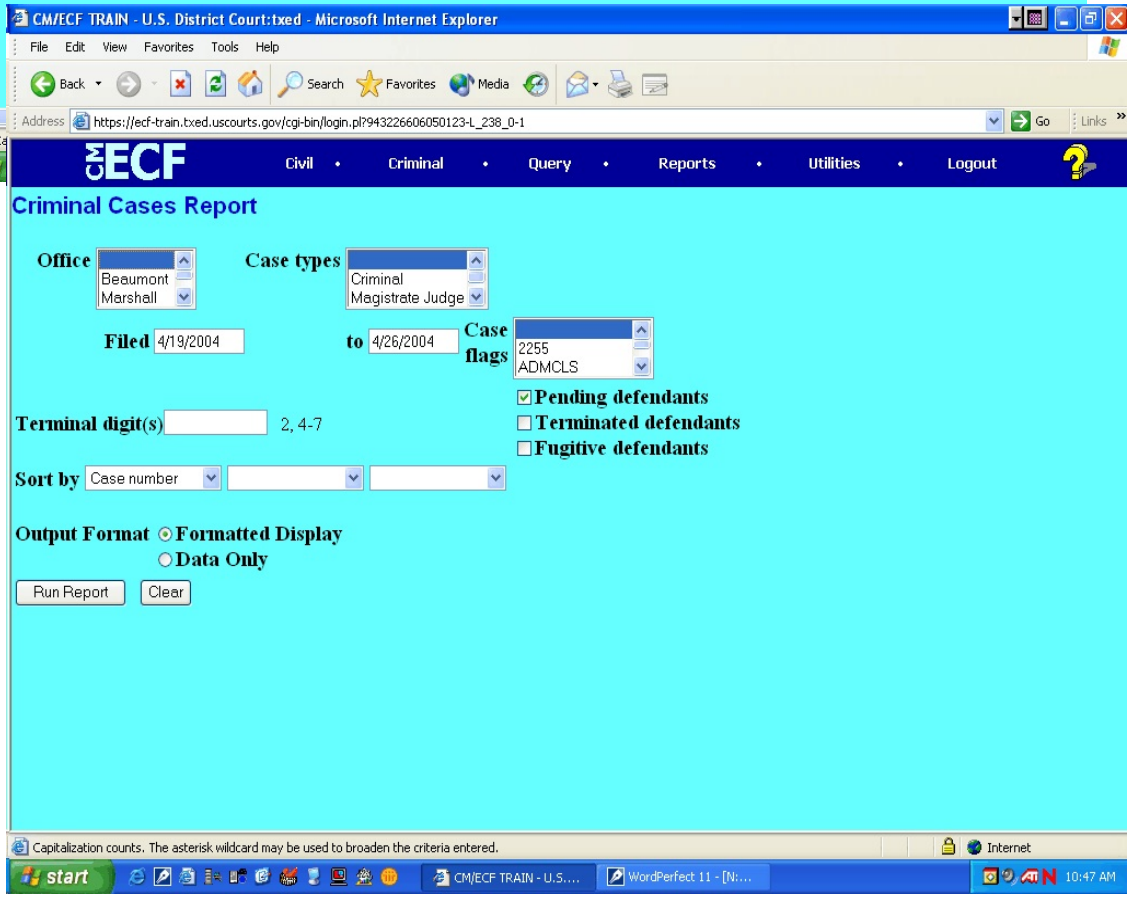
Civil/Criminal Cases Filed Report

The Cases Filed report provides you with the flexibility to query the ECF database to locate cases electronically filed within a specific date range, associated to a particular judge, or both. When you click on the Cases Filed hyperlink, ECF displays the query screens.

Civil Cases



Criminal Cases



If you are not logged into PACER, ECF will display the PACER login screen.

Login to PACER, and ECF will open the Cases Filed Report screen. Remember, for criminal cases you must use your Court login and password, and then also enter your PACER login and password to access a docket sheet or document.

Enter the range of case filing dates for your report and select a presiding judge, if you wish to narrow your search. If you enter a date range and do not select a judge, ECF will display all of the cases filed within your date range for all judges. If you choose a judge and leave the date fields blank, ECF will display all of the cases opened in ECF for the judge that you selected. If you leave all fields blank, ECF will display a report for all cases opened in ECF.

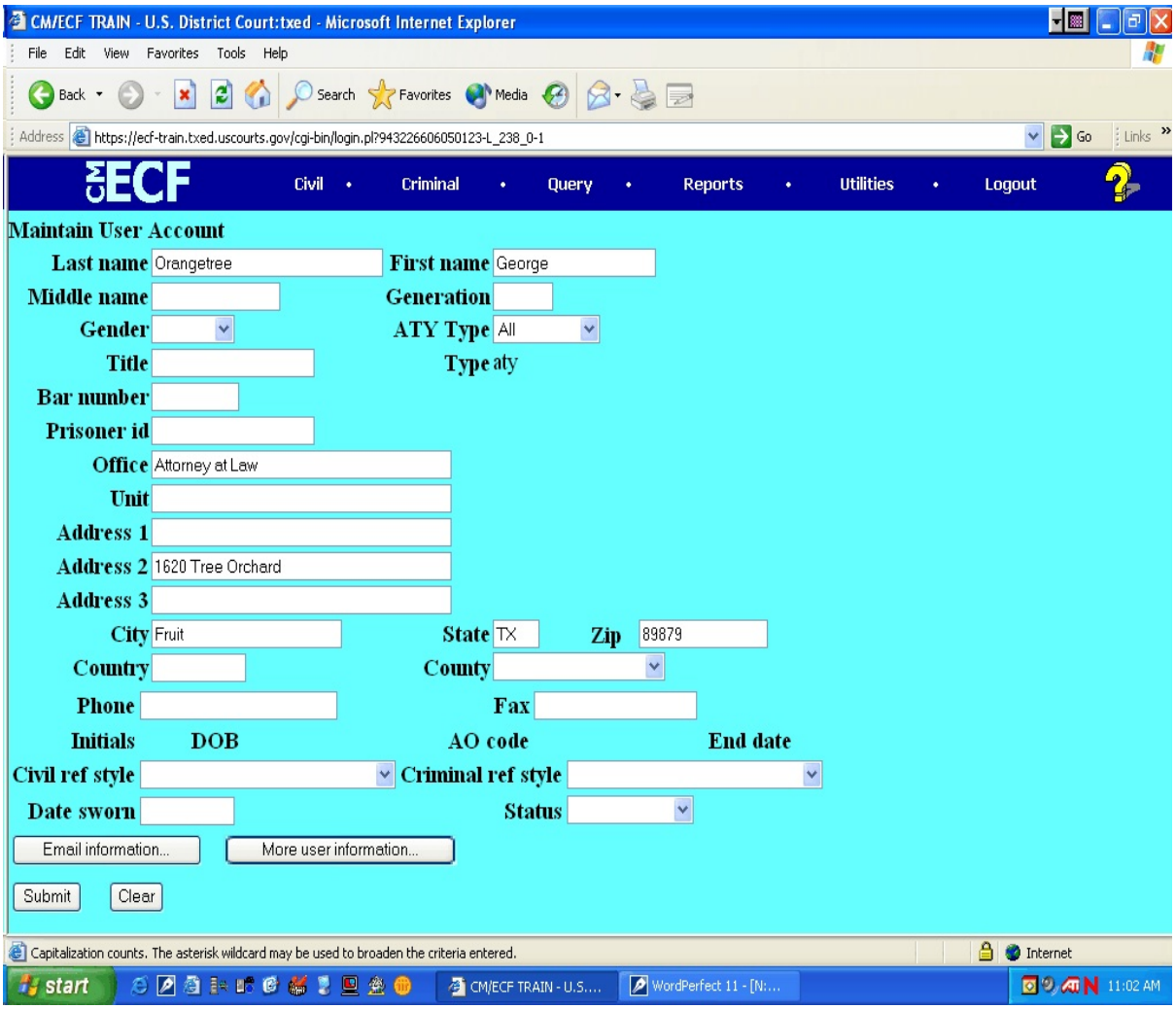
The far-left column of the Cases Filed report contains hyperlinked case numbers. If you click on a particular case number, ECF opens the Docket Sheet report window from which you can retrieve the docket sheet for the selected case. Follow the instructions in the previous section for a Docket Sheet report.

Utilities Feature

The Utilities feature provides the means for registered users to maintain their account in ECF and to view all of their ECF transactions.

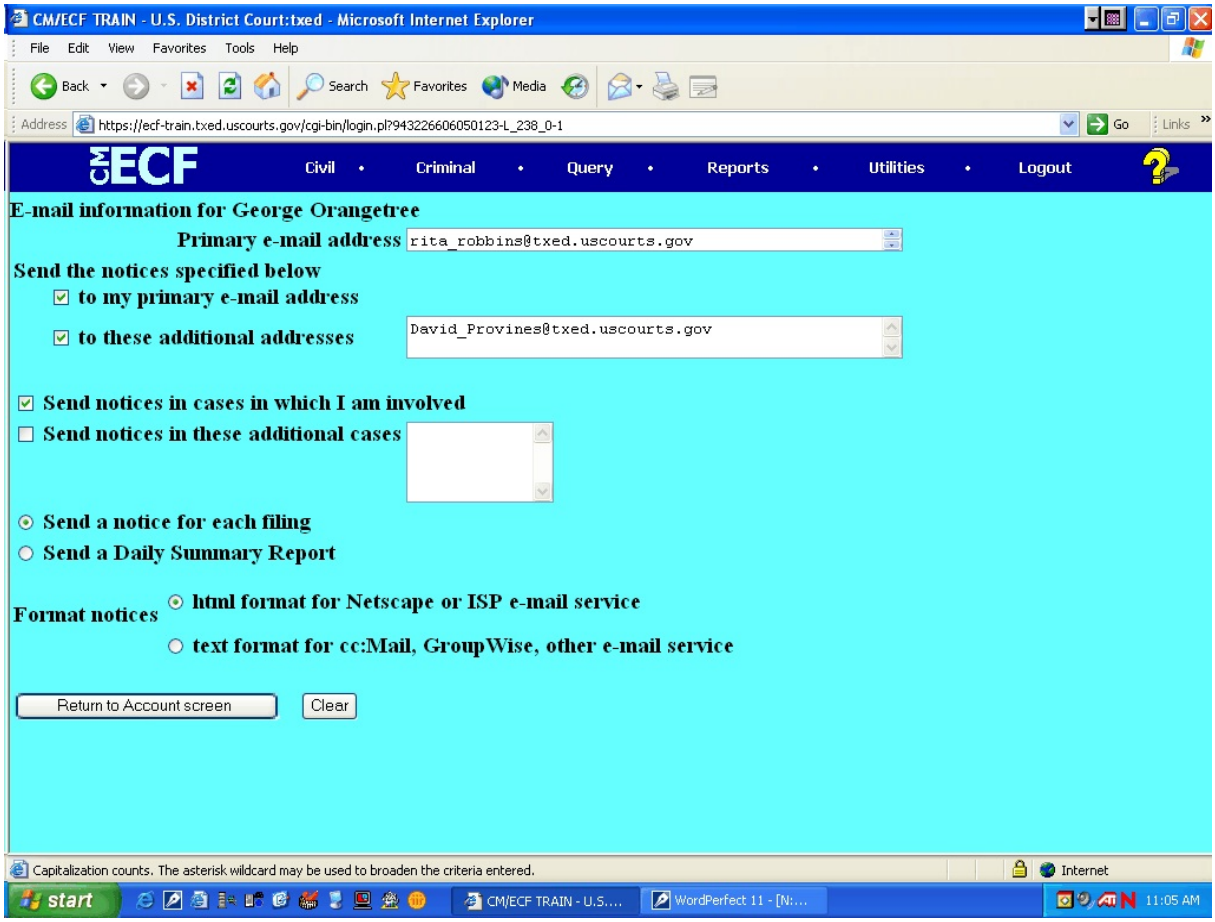
Maintain Your Account

This section of the Utilities feature provides you the capability to maintain certain aspects of your ECF account with the Court and to view a log of all of your transactions within ECF. Click on the Maintain Your Account hyperlink to open the Maintain User Account information screen.



This screen displays all of the registration information that is contained within the ECF database for your account with the Court. This includes Bar Identification and Bar Status.

Clicking on the [E-Mail information] button at the bottom of the previous screen opens the following window.



ECF will E-mail to parties their Notices of Electronic Filing based upon the information entered in this screen. Perform the following steps to enter additional e-mail addresses for individuals that you wish ECF to notify regarding new case pleadings and documents.

- From the screen depicted above, enter a check mark by clicking on the box to the left of the line, which reads “to these additional addresses.”

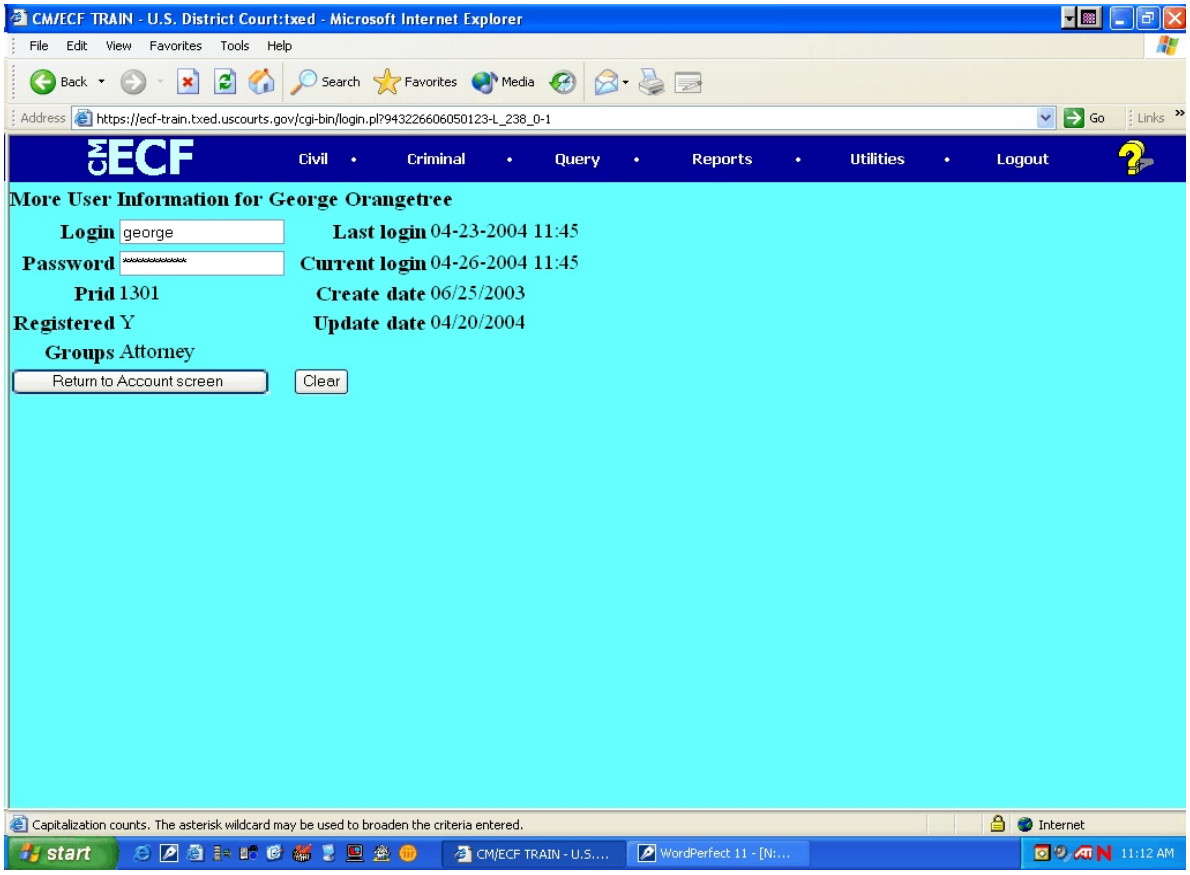
- Enter the E-mail addresses of those individuals you wish to notify concerning ECF activity. This data entry field has a capacity of 250 characters for approximately ten E-mail addresses.

- Stipulate the format of the ECF notices by selecting your choice from the bottom of the screen.

- If you wish to enter completely new information about your account, use the [Clear] button to clear the fields on this screen.

After updating your account information, click on the [Return to Account Screen] button to return to your Maintain User Account screen.

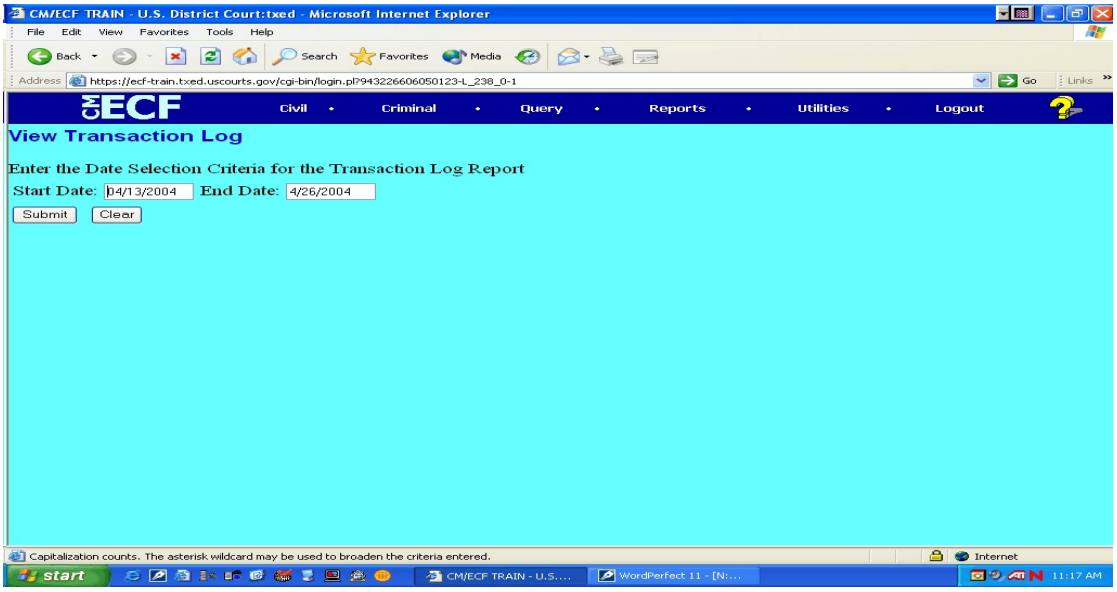
To edit or view login information about your account, select the button labeled More User Information, from the Maintain User Account screen.



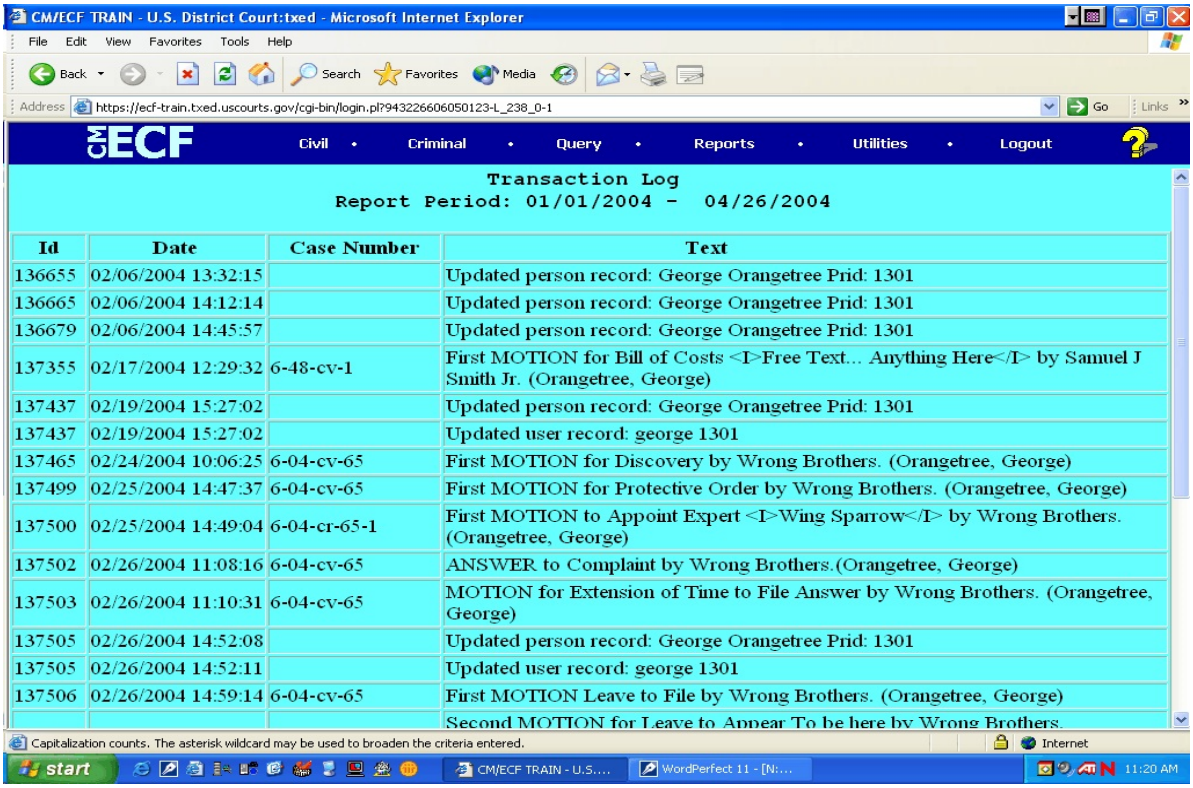
This screen displays user login information and provides the means to change your ECF password. Notice that ECF displays a string of asterisks in the Password field. To change your ECF password, place your cursor in the Password field and delete the asterisks. Type in your new password. ECF displays the actual characters of your new password as you type. When you have completed your interface with ECF from this screen, click on the [Return to Account Screen] button to reopen the Maintain User Account screen. When you are satisfied that all of your account information is accurate and up-to-date, click on the [Submit] button at the bottom of the Maintain User Account screen to submit your changes to ECF. ECF will notify you on-screen that your updates were accepted. If you changed passwords, you may begin using the new password during your next ECF session.

View Your Transaction Log

From the Utilities screen, click on the [View your Transaction Log] button. ECF opens a screen with two fields for entering the Date Selection Criteria for a Transaction Log Report.



Enter the date range for your report and click on the [Submit] button. ECF displays a report of all your transactions in ECF within the date range you specified for Date Selection Criteria. The following is a sample transaction log report.



Id	Date	Case Number	Text
136655	02/06/2004 13:32:15		Updated person record: George Orangetree Prid: 1301
136665	02/06/2004 14:12:14		Updated person record: George Orangetree Prid: 1301
136679	02/06/2004 14:45:57		Updated person record: George Orangetree Prid: 1301
137355	02/17/2004 12:29:32	6-48-cv-1	First MOTION for Bill of Costs <I>Free Text... Anything Here</I> by Samuel J Smith Jr. (Orangetree, George)
137437	02/19/2004 15:27:02		Updated person record: George Orangetree Prid: 1301
137437	02/19/2004 15:27:02		Updated user record: george 1301
137465	02/24/2004 10:06:25	6-04-cv-65	First MOTION for Discovery by Wrong Brothers. (Orangetree, George)
137499	02/25/2004 14:47:37	6-04-cv-65	First MOTION for Protective Order by Wrong Brothers. (Orangetree, George)
137500	02/25/2004 14:49:04	6-04-cr-65-1	First MOTION to Appoint Expert <I>Wing Sparrow</I> by Wrong Brothers. (Orangetree, George)
137502	02/26/2004 11:08:16	6-04-cv-65	ANSWER to Complaint by Wrong Brothers.(Orangetree, George)
137503	02/26/2004 11:10:31	6-04-cv-65	MOTION for Extension of Time to File Answer by Wrong Brothers. (Orangetree, George)
137505	02/26/2004 14:52:08		Updated person record: George Orangetree Prid: 1301
137505	02/26/2004 14:52:11		Updated user record: george 1301
137506	02/26/2004 14:59:14	6-04-cv-65	First MOTION Leave to File by Wrong Brothers. (Orangetree, George)
			Second MOTION for Leave to Appear To be here by Wrong Brothers.

Use this feature of ECF to review your transactions and to verify that:

- all of the transactions you entered are reflected in the Transaction Log; and
- no unauthorized individuals have entered transactions into ECF using your login name and password.

Miscellaneous

ECF provides three Miscellaneous functions within the Utilities feature of the system.

- Legal Research
- Mailings
- Verify a Document

When you click on the Legal Research hyperlink from the Miscellaneous screen, ECF opens a new screen that contains hyperlinks to a Law Dictionary, a Medical Dictionary, and Westlaw via the Internet.

Select the Verify a Document hyperlink to open a query screen and enter data in the screen fields to locate a particular document attached to a specific case number.

The Mailings hyperlink opens a new screen for making or requesting mailings from ECF.

Logout

After you have completed all of your transactions for a particular session in ECF, you should exit from the system. Click on the Logout hyperlink from the ECF menu bar. ECF will log you out of the system and return you to the ECF login screen.

Known Problems and Troubleshooting

Known Problems

Converting documents to PDF

If WordPerfect 5.1 or 7.0 is used to write the document, and the document is more than three pages, Adobe Acrobat will not convert all pages to the PDF format. The converted document will have missing pages. Use Adobe Exchange to ensure the integrity of the converted PDF document.

Cannot login to the LIVE System

A session can only be established using Netscape Navigator 4.6x, 4.7x or Internet Explorer 5.5.

If you are using Netscape Navigator 4.6x, 4.7x or Internet Explorer 5.5 and your password and login have both been correctly typed, and you still cannot login to the system, please call the clerk's office.

To ensure the documents transmitted have arrived in their entirety, it is important to read the document after it is received by the court. This can be done by viewing the docket sheet for the case and selecting the transmitted document. The number of the transmitted document appears on your electronic filing receipt.

Trouble-shooting Hints

If your login or password is not accepted, please ensure that they are typed correctly. The logins and passwords are case-sensitive.

Technical Failures

The Clerk shall deem the TXED Public Web site to be subject to a technical failure on a given day if the Site is unable to accept filings continuously or intermittently over the course of any period of time greater than one hour after 12:00 noon that day, in which case filings due that day which were not filed due solely to such technical failures shall become due the next business day. Such delayed filings shall be rejected unless accompanied by a declaration or affidavit attesting to the filing person's failed attempts to file electronically at least two times after 12:00 p.m. separated by at least one hour on each day of delay due to such technical failure. If you have questions about ECF, please call the clerk's office.

Notice of Electronic Availability of Case File Information

The United States District Court for the Eastern District of Texas is an electronic case management court (CM/ECF) which has been accepting electronically filed pleadings and making the content of these pleadings available on the court's Internet website. Any subscriber to CM/ECF and/or PACER will be able to read, download, store and print the full content of electronically filed documents with the exception of exhibit attachments to documents in excess of 10-15 pages. Exhibit attachments are being maintained in paper only and will be available in the clerk's office. The clerk's office will not make electronically available documents that have been sealed or otherwise restricted by court order. Attorneys of record in a case are given one free access. For additional access opportunities and for other interested viewers there are minimal charges associated with case access and the requirement of a PACER password. *(See Administrative Procedures Guide).*

You should not include certain types of sensitive information in any document filed with the court unless such inclusion is necessary and relevant to the case. **You must remember that any other personal information will be made available over the Internet via CM/ECF and/or PACER.** If sensitive information must be included, certain personal and identifying information, i.e., Social Security numbers, financial account numbers, dates of birth and the names of minor children, must be redacted from the pleading, whether it is filed traditionally or electronically. In addition, exercise caution when filing documents that contain the following:

1. Personal identifying number, such as driver's license number;
2. Medical records, treatment and diagnosis;
3. Employment history;
4. Individual financial information; and
5. Proprietary or trade secret information.

Counsel is strongly urged to share this notice with all clients so that an informed decision about the inclusion, redaction and/or exclusion of certain materials may be made. It is the sole responsibility of counsel and the parties to ensure that redaction of personal identifiers is done. The clerk will not review each pleading for redaction. Counsel and the parties are cautioned that failure to redact personal identifiers and/or the inclusion of irrelevant personal information in a pleading or exhibit filed electronically with the court may subject them to the full disciplinary and remedial power of the court, including sanctions pursuant to Fed.R.Civ.P. 11.