**ECF5 Spec Considerations - 23 - ECF5 Message and Filing Identifiers**

**Introduction**

An ECF TC task team met telephonically to review a Civil Complaint use case message example set, provided in Working Draft 29 (WD29). Throughout the review there was confusion about the need for, use of, and differences between message identifiers and filing identifiers. It was suggested that there may need to be additional clarifying revisions made to the specification document, particularly section 6.2.4.

This document addresses this confusion by clarifying the purpose of message identifiers and filing identifiers, and makes specific ECF 5 specification revision recommendations.

Finally, this document highlights additional issues and concerns identified during the civil complaint use case review that are not part of the specification revisions recommendation but do warrant further consideration.

**Rationale**

Question: Why do we need both message identifiers and filing identifiers? Can’t we get by with just a filing identifier?

For the simplest e-filing transactions, the use of both message identifiers and filing identifiers may appear to be more than is necessary, such as when there is only a single RecordDocketingRequest, a single RecordDocketingResponse, and a single NotifyDocketingCompleteResponse for an e-filing transaction.

However, not all e-filing transactions are this simple. Below are some scenarios that are more complex:

* Multi-Episode Clerk Review - There may be multiple RecordDocketingRequests for a single ReviewFilingRequest that contains multiple FilingLeadDocuments (referred to as a multi-episode clerk review).
* Cancellation Requests - The e-filing submitter may request cancellation (e.g. CancelFilingMessage) which may be denied by the court. In this circumstance, there will be multiple NotifyFilingReviewCompleteCompleteMessages (e.g. one message for the denial of the cancellation request, and one or more for the completion of docketing/review).

In complex scenarios, such as those above, a message identifier is necessary to disambiguate responses.

For example, consider the first scenario outlined above (multi-episode clerk review). This scenario can arise when there are multiple FilingLeadDocuments in a ReviewFilingRequest. If court operations allow it, each lead document may be clerk reviewed independently and at different times. If there were two lead documents, and each was reviewed separately, then this would result in two separate and independent RecordDocketingRequests. If the docketing operation is responsive to the docketing request, then this would also result in two independent and separate NotifyDocketingCompleteRequests. Since each NotifyDocketingCompleteRequest must identify the specific RecordDocketingRequest to which it is responsive, separate and independent message identifiers are required.

Furthermore, a filing identifier is not always valid and available for all messages. When the ReviewFilingRequest is sent from the FAMDE to the FRMDE, there is no filing identifier yet established, since the filing identifier is assigned by the FRMDE upon receipt of a valid ReviewFilingRequest.

Additionally, there are many messages that either will or may occur prior to the assignment of the filing identifier by the FRMDE (e.g. GetPolicyRequest, ServeFilingRequest) or operate completely outside of an e-filing transaction (e.g. GetDocumentRequest, GetCourtScheduleRequest). Since message identifiers are required for all message exchanges, and since there is not any relevant filing identifier associated with these request/response messages, these exchanges must operate solely using message identifiers.

**Proposed Specification Changes**

For clarification, this proposal recommends separating Message Identifiers from Filing Identifiers, into their own separate sections within the specification document. At present, in WD30, Message Identifiers and Filing Identifiers are both addressed in section 6.2.4.

Specifically, the following revisions are suggested:

6.2.4 Message Identifiers

A message Identifier is a unique value assigned to a message, either as a unique reference to the message, or as a correlation value to reference a prior message. In general, a message identifier is assigned to a request as a unique identifier for the message. This message identifier is then also carried in response messages to the request message to correlate the response to the original request.

Message identifiers are labeled by nc:DocumentIdentification/nc:IdentificationID when present as an immediate child element in a message element derived from ecf:CaseFilingType (e.g., [filing:FilingMessage](file:///C%3A%5CUsers%5Cggraham%5CDocuments%5CECF-5%20Working%20Draft%5Cschema%5Cfiling.xsd),[serviceinformationrequest:GetServiceInformationRequest](file:///C%3A%5CUsers%5Cggraham%5CDocuments%5CECF-5%20Working%20Draft%5Cschema%5Cserviceinformationrequest.xsd), [documentrequest:GetDocumentRequest](file:///C%3A%5CUsers%5Cggraham%5CDocuments%5CECF-5%20Working%20Draft%5Cschema%5Cdocumentrequest.xsd), docketcallback:NotifyDocketingCompleteMessage) or as an immediate child element within ecf:MessageStatusAugmentation. Message identifiers are assigned by the MDE sending each message and MUST be returned to the originating MDE in any synchronous and asynchronous responses to that message. The originating MDE of each message identifier SHOULD be identified with the nc:DocumentIdentification/nc:IdentificationSourceText element conforming to the IdentificationCategoryDescriptionText.gc code list.

Intended usage is described as follows:

* The message identifier is assigned by the MDE sending each message.
* Synchronous and asynchronous response messages MUST return the message identifier for the message to which it is responding.

The following is a non-normative example of a message identifier assigned by the Filing Assembly MDE:

<filing:FilingMessage ... >

 …

 <nc:DocumentIdentification>

 <nc:IdentificationID>cf42805c-5e4d-4ba3-850a-c9c635c255b5</nc:IdentificationID>

 <nc:IdentificationSourceText>FilingAssembly MDE</nc:IdentificationSourceText>

 </nc:DocumentIdentification>

 …

</filing:FilingMessage>

Asynchronous response messages, cbrn:MessageStatus, MUST reference the message to which they respond with the label cbrn:MessageStatus/ecf:MessageStatusAugmentation/nc:DocumentIdentification/nc:IdentificationID. The following is a non-normative example of an asynchronous response to a message with identifier “1”:

<cbrn:MessageStatus

 …

 <ecf:MessageStatusAugmentation>

 …

 <nc:DocumentIdentification>

 <nc:IdentificationID>1</nc:IdentificationID>

 <nc:IdentificationSourceText>FilingReview MDE</nc:IdentificationSourceText>

 </nc:DocumentIdentification>

 </ecf:MessageStatusAugmentation>

</cbrn:MessageStatus>

6.2.5 Filing Identifiers

Filing Identifiers are labeled by nc:DocumentIdentification/nc:IdentificationID when present as an immediate child element in a message element derived from ecf:CaseFilingType (e.g. docket:RecordDocketingMessage,stampinformation:DocumentStampInformationMessage, docketcallback:NotifyDocketingCompleteMessage, and reviewfilingcallback:NotifyFilingReviewCompleteMessage) or as an immediate child element within ecf:MessageStatusAugmentation.

A Filing Identifier is a unique value assigned as a tracking reference for a ‘Filing’ (e.g. an e-filing submission). The purpose of the Filing Identifier is to relate all messages that occur within the e-filing transaction.

The Filing Identifier is initially assigned by the FilingReview MDE in the ReviewFiling operation. The Filing Identifier originating MDE (i.e. FilingReview MDE) SHOULD be identified with the nc:DocumentIdentification/nc:IdentificationSourceText element conforming to the IdentificationCategoryDescriptionText.gc code list.

Following the assignment of the Filing Identifier by the FilingReview MDE, the Filing Identifier MUST then be carried by all subsequent messages that are involved in an e-filing transaction. The e-filing transaction begins with the submittal of a filing:ReviewFiling message to the FilingReview MDE, and culminates with the final NotifyFilingReviewComplete operation call for the original filing:ReviewFiling message.

Upon receipt of the final reviewfilingcallback:NotifyFilingReviewCompleteMessage by the originating FilingAssembly MDE, all filing lead and connected documents in the original filing:ReviewFiling message will have been reviewed (or auto-reviewed) and dispositioned (e.g. accepted and docketed, or rejected, etc.) or the filing will have been cancelled. Even after the conclusion of the e-filing transaction, the Filing Identifier may continue to be useful for GetFilingStatus requests.

Intended usage is described as follows:

* A filing identifier is issued by the Filing Review MDE upon receipt of a valid ReviewFilingRquest to identify a unique filing in the court.
* The filing identifier MUST also be provided in the filingstatusrequest:GetFilingStatusRequestMessage and the filingstatusresponse:GetFilingStatusResponseMessage.
* This filing identifier MUST be present in each [docket:RecordDocketingMessage](file:///C%3A%5CUsers%5Cggraham%5CDocuments%5CECF-5%20Working%20Draft%5Cschema%5Cdocket.xsd), [reviewfilingcallback:NotifyFilingReviewCompleteMessage](file:///C%3A%5CUsers%5Cggraham%5CDocuments%5CECF-5%20Working%20Draft%5Cschema%5Creviewfilingcallback.xsd) and [docketcallback:NotifyDocketingCompleteMessage](file:///C%3A%5CUsers%5Cggraham%5CDocuments%5CECF-5%20Working%20Draft%5Cschema%5Cdocketcallback.xsd), [cancel:CancelFilingMessage](file:///C%3A%5CUsers%5Cggraham%5CDocuments%5CECF-5%20Working%20Draft%5Cschema%5Ccancel.xsd) and MUST also be present in each synchronous [cbrn:MessageStatus](https://d.docs.live.net/728701ba7454f41f/xml/ecf5/schema/niem/domains/cbrn/4.0/cbrn.xsd) response to these messages.
* This filing identifier MUST be present in each [filing:FilingMessage](file:///C%3A%5CUsers%5Cggraham%5CDocuments%5CECF-5%20Working%20Draft%5Cschema%5Cfiling.xsd), except in the ReviewFilingRequest.
* The filing identifier MUST also be provided in the [filingstatusrequest:GetFilingStatusRequestMessage](file:///C%3A%5CUsers%5Cggraham%5CDocuments%5CECF-5%20Working%20Draft%5Cschema%5Cfilingstatusrequest.xsd) and [filingstatusresponse:GetFilingStatusResponseMessage](file:///C%3A%5CUsers%5Cggraham%5CDocuments%5CECF-5%20Working%20Draft%5Cschema%5Cfilingstatusresponse.xsd).

The following is a non-normative example of a filing identifier assigned by the Filing Review MDE, where the filing identifier is “1234567890”:

<docket:RecordDocketingMessage ... >

 …

 <nc:DocumentIdentification>

 <nc:IdentificationID>1234567890</nc:IdentificationID>

 <nc:IdentificationSourceText>FilingReview MDE</nc:IdentificationSourceText>

 </nc:DocumentIdentification>

 …

</docket:RecordDocketingMessage>

**Additional Issues Not Addressed**

1. Since both Message Identifiers and Filing Identifiers use the very same elements (i.e. nc:DocumentIdentification) at the very same location within a message (i.e. as an immediate child element in a message element) they are difficult to distinguish. In some circumstances, it may be impossible to distinguish between a Message Identifier and a Filing Identifier.

At present, nc:DocumentIdentification/nc:IdentificationSourceText is intended to be used to distinguish Message Identifiers from Filing Identifiers. However, this approach is unsuitable since it only identifies the MDE that provides the element content and not the semantics of the content.

This problem can be seen in the docketcallback:NotifyDocketingCompleteMessage, since this message must carry the Filing Identifier, and must also contain the Message Identifier from the RecordDocketingMessage (i.e. because NotifyDocketingCompleteMessage is an asynchronous response to RecordDocketingMessage). Since both the Filing Identifier and the RecordDocketingMessage Message Identifier were provided by the Filing Review MDE, they will both have the same element content for nc:DocumentIdentification/nc:IdentificationSourceText, as shown in the illustration below:

 <nc:DocumentIdentification>

 <!-- Filing Identifier assigned by the FRMDE. -->

 <nc:IdentificationID>123456ABC</nc:IdentificationID>

 <nc:IdentificationSourceText>FilingReview MDE</nc:IdentificationSourceText>

 </nc:DocumentIdentification>

 <nc:DocumentIdentification>

 <!-- Message ID for RecordDocketingMessage -->

 <nc:IdentificationID>1065XYZ9786</nc:IdentificationID>

 <nc:IdentificationSourceText>FilingReview MDE</nc:IdentificationSourceText>

</nc:DocumentIdentification>

Without the comments, it would not be possible to know, just by inspecting the NotifyDocketingCompleteMessage, which identifier is the Filing Identifier, and which is the Message Identifier for the RecordDocketingMessage.

Recommendation: Require the use of nc:DocumentIdentification/nc:IdentificationCategoryDescriptionText for both Message Identifiers and Filing Identifiers. For Message Identifiers, require the value ‘MessageID’ and for Filing Identifiers, require the value ‘FilingID’. An example is shown below:

<nc:DocumentIdentification>

 <!-- Filing Identifier assigned by the FRMDE. -->

 <nc:IdentificationID>123456ABC</nc:IdentificationID>

 <nc:IdentificationCategoryDescriptionText>FilingID

</nc:IdentificationCategoryDescriptionText>

 <nc:IdentificationSourceText>FilingReview MDE</nc:IdentificationSourceText>

 </nc:DocumentIdentification>

 <nc:DocumentIdentification>

 <!-- Message ID for RecordDocketingMessage -->

 <nc:IdentificationID>1065XYZ9786</nc:IdentificationID>

 <nc:IdentificationCategoryDescriptionText>MessageID

</nc:IdentificationCategoryDescriptionText>

 <nc:IdentificationSourceText>FilingReview MDE</nc:IdentificationSourceText>

</nc:DocumentIdentification>

1. ReviewFiling Message Identifier – Since the Message Identifier on a request message MUST be provided on any response messages to the request message (both synchronous and asynchronous responses) and since reviewfilingcallback:NotifyFilingReviewCompleteMessage is an asynchronous response to filing:FilingMessage, then NotifyFilingReviewCompleteMessage must contain the FilingMessage Message Identifier. Whereas this is certainly doable, how it gets done it not defined in the specification.

One approach would be for the Filing Review MDE to retain the filing:FilingMessage Message Identifier, then apply it to the NotifyFilingReviewCompleteMessage upon receipt of the NotifyDocketingCompleteMessage.

Another approach would be to forward the filing:FilingMessage Message Identifier to the Court Record MDE in the RecordDocketingMessage so that the Court Record MDE can then forward/return the Message Identifier to the Filing Review MDE on the NotifyDocketingCompleteMessage. This approach does not require the Filing Review MDE to retain or persist the filing:FilingMessage Message Identifier.

There may be other approaches.

The ECF TC may want to consider whether one or the other, or any other approach is preferred.

1. The Scheduling Process – it is not clear whether Filing Identifiers or any other transaction identifier is relevant to the scheduling process.

Although the specification refers to this as a ‘filing’ (see 3.2.2) it is unlike any filing in the Filing and Serve Process. There is only one required operation; NotifyCourtDate on the Filing Assembly MDE. Unlike a filing in the File and Serve Process which begins with a ReviewFilingRequest, the Scheduling Process need not begin with a ReserveCourtDateRequest. In fact, the NotifyCourtDate operation can be invoked by the Court Scheduling MDE on its own will, or upon receipt of a NotifyCourtDateRequest from the Court Record MDE, without any anticipation or expectation on the part of the ‘Filer’.

If a Filing Identifier is relevant to the Scheduling Process, then unlike the Filing and Serve Process, the specification does not identify the source of the Filing Identifier.

When the Scheduling Process initiates with ReserveCourtDate (via a ReserveCourtDateRequest) and then culminates with one or more invocations of NotifyCourtDate (providing NotifyCourtDateRequest), then it appears that all that would be necessary to correlate the NotifyCourtDateRequest(s) to the ReserveCourtDateRequest would be a Message Identifier.

1. Incorrect examples – there are numerous ECF-5 examples provided in the examples folder. Many, perhaps most, of these are incorrect regarding Message Identifiers and Filing Identifiers. A work group should be formed to review and correct these examples.

To illustrate, here is one incorrect example (i.e. filingstatusrequest.xml):

<?xml version="1.0" encoding="UTF-8"?>

<filingstatusrequest:GetFilingStatusRequestMessage xmlns:nc="http://release.niem.gov/niem/niem-core/4.0/" xmlns:j="http://release.niem.gov/niem/domains/jxdm/6.0/" xmlns:ecf="https://docs.oasis-open.org/legalxml-courtfiling/ns/v5.0/ecf" xmlns:filingstatusrequest="https://docs.oasis-open.org/legalxml-courtfiling/ns/v5.0/filingstatusrequest" xmlns:xsi="http://www.w3.org/2001/XMLSchema-instance" xsi:schemaLocation="https://docs.oasis-open.org/legalxml-courtfiling/ns/v5.0/filingstatusrequest ../schema/filingstatusrequest.xsd">

 <nc:DocumentIdentification>

 <nc:IdentificationID>123456ABC</nc:IdentificationID>

 </nc:DocumentIdentification>

 <ecf:DocumentAugmentation>

 <ecf:DocumentFiler>

 <nc:EntityPerson>

 <ecf:PersonAugmentation>

 <ecf:ParticipantID>

 <nc:IdentificationID>10</nc:IdentificationID>

 </ecf:ParticipantID>

 </ecf:PersonAugmentation>

 </nc:EntityPerson>

 </ecf:DocumentFiler>

 </ecf:DocumentAugmentation>

 <ecf:SendingMDELocationID>

 <nc:IdentificationID>http://example.com/efsp1</nc:IdentificationID>

 </ecf:SendingMDELocationID>

 <ecf:ServiceInteractionProfileCode>urn:oasis:names:tc:legalxml-courtfiling:schema:xsd:WebServicesMessaging-5.0</ecf:ServiceInteractionProfileCode>

 <j:CaseCourt>

 <nc:OrganizationIdentification>

 <nc:IdentificationID>10</nc:IdentificationID>

 </nc:OrganizationIdentification>

 <nc:OrganizationUnitName>Municipal Court</nc:OrganizationUnitName>

 </j:CaseCourt>

 <nc:DocumentPostDate>

 <nc:DateTime>2008-07-07T13:47:42.0Z</nc:DateTime>

 </nc:DocumentPostDate>

 <ecf:CaseTrackingID>

 <nc:IdentificationID>123456ABC</nc:IdentificationID>

 </ecf:CaseTrackingID>

 <j:CaseNumberText>123456ABC</j:CaseNumberText>

</filingstatusrequest:GetFilingStatusRequestMessage>

Although there is not any documentation accompanying the examples, nor are there explanatory internal comments within this example, I am certain, nevertheless, that the nc:DocumentIdentification/nc:IdentificationID value provided (i.e. ‘123456ABC’) is intended to be a Filing Identifier. In this example, the requester is asking for a status update on the filing which has a Filing Identifier equal to ‘123456ABC’.

However, since section 6.2.4 states that “Message identifiers are labeled by nc:DocumentIdentification/nc:IdentificationID when present as an immediate child in a message element derived from ecf:CaseFilingType”, and since GetFilingStatusRequestMessage is derived from ecf:CaseFilingType, then the value provided in the request (i.e. “123456ABC”) must be a message identifier and not a filing identifier. It doesn’t help that nc:DocumentIdentification/nc:IdentificationSourceText is not provided, as it should be.

**Conclusion**

The distinction between Message Identifiers and transaction identifiers, such as the Filing Identifier, is important and needs to be clear in the specification. Treating each separately helps clarify and communicate this distinction.

There are additional issues that should be considered before closing the chapter on Message Identifiers and Filing Identifiers. Additional Issue number 1 above is particularly grave. Not properly addressing this issue will harm the specification.