**ECF5 Feedback and Considerations 27 – Filings**

At the TC Conference call on July 10, 2018, terminology issues were raised. One in particular was the term ‘filing’. This discussion resulted in a revision of the term ‘filing’ in the ECF5 glossary (i.e. Terminology section 1.1). The definition was revised from “an electronic document (with any associated data, attachmnets and the like) that has been assembled for the purpose of being filed into a specified court case” to something more akin to a Review Filing Request (i.e. “An electronic submission (with any associated data, attachments and the like) that has been assembled for the purpose of being filed into a specified court case.”).

This revised definition is an improvement as it is now well understood that a ‘filing’ can contain more than one document.

However, I think this definition can still be improved somewhat. Consider the following:

* Documents should still be mentioned specifically and should convey the idea that there may be more than one (a filing should not require any documents).
* The word ‘attachments’ should not be used. I believe the word ‘attachments’ was intended to describe connected documents. In ECF, attachment has a very specific technical meaning that could result in confusion if also used as a synonym for ‘connected documents’. In ECF, an attachment is described in section 4.4.

Here is a suggested rewording:

An electronic submission (with any associated data, one or many lead and connected documents, and the like) that has been assembled for the purpose of being filed, either into a specified court case, or to initiate a new court case.

Additionally, there are other adjustments that should be considered to the specification to bring it into line with the updated definition for ‘filing’. These include redesign of GetFilingListRequest, GetFilingListResponse, and GetFilingStatusResponse.

The GetFilingList message also sets the tone as to what is a filing. As the name suggests, a GetFilingListRequest should result in a response that list ‘filings’ that satisfy the list request. The GetFilingListResponse provides the element ecf:MatchingFiling. Unfortunately, the element content of ecf:MatchingFiling is not that of a filing, but is instead just that of a document (e.g. lead or connected document). The element content of a filing should be the element content of a ReviewFiling (e.g. FilingMessage). This same issue appears to also exist for GetFilingStatusResponse.

For starters, there is nothing in the ECF5 specification that makes clear the purpose and expectations for GetFilingListRequest and GetFilingStatusRequest, other than what the names suggest. The root elements do provide the following definitions:

GetFilingListRequestMessageType – “This is query to get a list of filings by Filer Identification, Case Identifier, or time period.”

GetFilingStatusRequestMessageType – “This is query to get filing status by Filing Number.”

Both response messages for the above requests include ecf:MatchingFiling. The definition for ecf:MatchingFiling is “the document that is the subject of this query.”

Also observe the two example messages provided, i.e. FilingResponse.xml and FilingStatusResponse.xml

FilingResponse.xml appears to contain a document and not a filing. The same appears to hold for FilingStatusResponse.xml.

It seems clear that ecf:MatchingFiling was designed under the antiquated idea that a filing was a document and must be redesigned.