

Understanding Conflicts Made Easier

Introduction

There has been some uncertainty about how ACMS handles conflicts. Comments like:

- Not all conflicts are handled in the same way.
- Sometimes conflicts may be created “unexpectedly”.
- I’m not sure what all the tables are and how they are used.

Keep in mind that ACMS maintains four kinds of conflicts:

- 1 Conflicts with Trial Court Judges
- 2 Conflicts with Parties
- 3 Conflicts with Parties’ Attorneys
- 4 Other Conflicts

Let’s take a few moments to look at how Conflicts have been initially implemented in ACMS. What we are hoping for is a better understanding of the “basics”. We will be pleased to work with individuals who wish detailed understanding of how ACMS works or who wish assistance in implementing Conflicts at their sites.

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Lets us start with how conflict information is presented, and work backwards.

The presentation of conflict information in ACMS is quite direct. The key table (file) is the Conflict table (OAS_Conflict_T)

This table holds the actual conflicts that pertain to all cases (current and Past).

The information in the Conflict table includes

- 1 County and Case Number
- 2 Person having the conflict (usually a Panel Judge)
- 3 The type of conflict type (a full list of conflicts is maintained in the Conflict Type table)
- 4 Who the conflict is with Trial court Judge, Attorney, Party
- 5 Comments

When one is in the ACMS Case, Assignment or Event Screens and sees the caption of the “SHOW CONFLICTS” command button in upper case, ACMS is using the information in the Conflict Table (OAS_Conflict_T).

Some reports also use this file.

ACMS Version 4.27.16 Case Maintenance

CASE ASSIGNMENTS Comments Consolidations EVENTS FILINGS ISSUES PARTIES TRIAL# Inquiry Tools Reports

K < > >| New Save Change Search Page 2 Copy Rename TC#Search Archive Delete ? ESC

Trial Court County: 47 Lorain Case Number: 00CA007535 Undo

Disposition: Affirmed

Disposition Type: DEC Decided SHOW CONFLICTS

Case Caption: State of Ohio v. Charles Perry, Jr.
Clipboard

Calendar Type: REG Regular Final Appealable Order: Yes

Release Date: 9/27/2000 Related Appeal Case Submitted: Briefs

Final Order Date: 9/27/2000 Settlement

Record Complete: 2/28/2000 Settlement Status: Enter the settlement status - F5 to Search

Brief Complete: 3/1/2007

ACMS Version 4.27.16 Case Maintenance

CASE ASSIGNMENTS Comments CONSOLIDATIONS EVENTS FILINGS Issues PARTIES TRIAL# Inquiry Tools Reports

K < > >| New Save Change Search Page 2 Copy Rename TC#Search Archive Delete ? ESC

Trial Court County: 47 Lorain Case Number: 00CA007714 Undo

Disposition: Affirmed

Disposition Type: DEC Decided

Case Caption:

Name	conflict	comment
Amy James	Personal Acquaintance	Hoping this works - Alfred Edw...
Amanda M. Axtell	Related to someone o...	- Alfred Edward KNewman

Clipboard

Calendar Type:

Release Date:

Final Order Date:

Record Complete:

Brief Complete:

ACMS Version 4.27.16 Assignment Maintenance

CASE ASSIGNMENTS Comments Consolidations EVENTS FILINGS ISSUES PARTIES TRIAL# Inquiry Tools Reports

I< < > >I New Save Change Search Delete ? ESC

Trial Court County: 47 Lorain Case Number: 00CA007535 Undo

State of Ohio v. Charles Perry, Jr.

Individual Assigned: WRB William R. Baird SHOW CONFLICTS

Assign Type: OPJ Oral Argument Panel Judge

Assign Start Date: 7/20/2000 Assign End Date: 9/27/2000

Assign Report Date:

Filing Number: 0000000

Assign Desc:

Conflicts:

Assign Desp:

Comments:

ACMS Version 4.27.16 Events Maintenance

CASE ASSIGNMENTS Comments Consolidations EVENTS FILINGS ISSUES PARTIES TRIAL# Inquiry Tools Reports

I< < > >I New Save Change Search Delete ? ESC

Trial Court County: 47 Lorain Case Number: 00CA007535 Undo

State of Ohio v. Charles Perry, Jr.

Event Abbr: OAR Oral Argument SHOW CONFLICTS

Filing Number: 0080339

Event Date: 7/20/2000 Event Time: 1:00 P.M.

Description:

Address:

City: Elyria

Event Room:

Comments: no notice sent- pro se apt in jail

That was the easy part. Let us now look at how conflict entries are created.

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There are 4 ways that entries are made into the OAS_Conflict_T table.

- 1 Automatically based upon user entered;
Conflicts with Trial Court Judges' information, or
Conflicts with Attorney information
- 2 User Assisted. Based upon matching conflict with party information,
the user selects which conflicts apply
- 3 Manually User enters the conflict for a case directly
(provides ability to include "unusual" conflicts)
- 4 Through the Back Door
Conflicts created when the user maintains the Conflict with Trial Court Judge
or Conflict with Attorney tables

Let us look at each of these in a little greater detail.

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The user maintains a table of Conflicts a panel judge may have with trial court judges. These conflicts could be because the panel judge was the trial court judge. The trial court judge may be a personal friend or relative. The trial court judge may be a business partner, etc.

The screenshot shows a software window titled "ACMS Version 4.27.16 Conflict Judge Maintenance". The window has a standard Windows-style title bar with minimize, maximize, and close buttons. Below the title bar is a toolbar with buttons for navigation (I<, <, >, >I), Save, New, Delete, Search, ?, ESC, and Undo. The main area of the window contains a form with three rows of input fields, each with a dropdown menu and a button:

- Individual: BW (dropdown), Beth Whitmore (text), button
- Trial Court Judge: 121 (dropdown), 121 (text), button
- Conflict Type: PJ (dropdown), Prior Judge (text), button

Below these fields is a "Comments:" label followed by a large, empty text area with a vertical scrollbar.

The table of conflicts contains the Trial Court judge identifier, the panel judge identifier and the type of conflict. Space is provided for additional comments.

During normal case entry, the trial court information is entered on the Case screen of ACMS. When the user clicks the save button, ACMS compares the trial court judge with the entries on the Conflicts with Trial Court Judges table and creates appropriate entries into the Conflicts table for the rest of the application to access.

The person entering the trial court information into ACMS does not need to take any special action. The creation of the conflict is "Automatic".

In a similar manner the user maintains a table of conflicts a panel judge may have with attorneys. Attorneys are identified by their attorney Registration number.

ACMS Version 4.27.16 Conflict Maintenance

I< < > >I Save New Delete Search ? ESC

Undo

Individual: CB Caroline Broadman

Ohio Attorney

Attorney Number: 69080 Mark Fankhauser

Conflict Type: BZ Business Conflict

Comments: Comment about the nature of the conflict

Again, when the person associating attorneys with the parties saves the information, ACMS access the Conflicts with attorney table and creates the conflict automatically.

It is important to note that Conflicts with Attorneys and Conflicts Trial Court Judges can be automated because Attorneys and Trial Court Judges are identified uniquely.

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Parties, on the other hand, are identified by:
Appellation (Mr/Mrs/Ms/etc),
Name (first, middle and last) and
Title

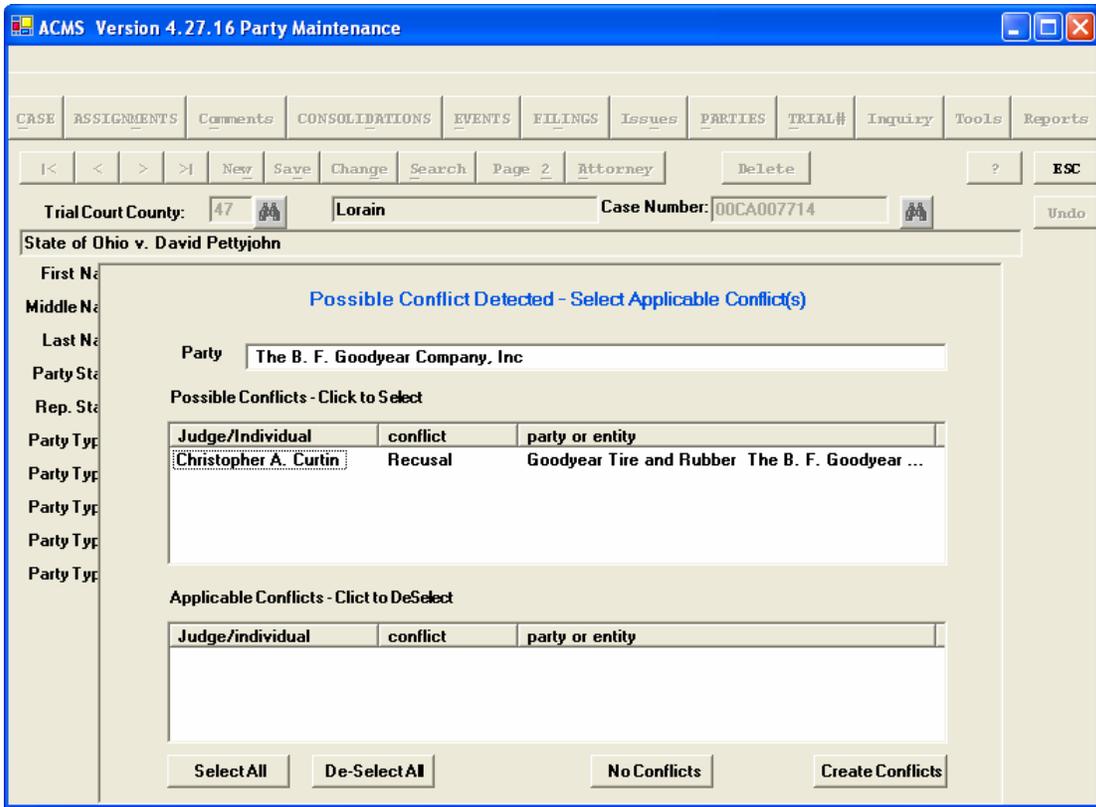
Note: entities and business names are placed in the Last Name

The user maintains a table of party names (and/or portions of names) along with search criteria (e.g. "must start with", or "must contain") to identify which party with which a panel judge may have a conflict.

Field	Value	Matching	Action
Appellation:		NOT	Do Not Match
First Name:		NOT	Do Not Match
Middle Name:		NOT	Do Not Match
Last Name:	Goodyear	CON	Must Contain
Title:		NOT	Do Not Match

Note: for some parties or entities, multiple entries may be needed to avoid missing variations.

When the user entering the party information into ACMS issues a save command, the application compares the party name with the entries in the Conflicts with parties table. A list of all possible conflicts is prepared and presented to the user.



The user can select a possible conflict by clicking on it. The possible conflict will be moved from the possible (upper list view) to the applicable (lower list view). When the user is completed selecting the applicable conflicts, (s)he can click on “Create Conflicts” or if none apply click on “No Conflicts”.

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Not all conflicts can be categorized as Party, Trial Court Judge or Attorney related. For example, a panel judge may wish to recuse him/her/it self because of strong feelings they or members of their family may have concerning a particular issue.

In addition, some (visiting) panel judges may not have entries in the related Party, Trial Court Judge nor Attorney conflict tables. It may be easier to enter a conflict directly rather than “set up” entries for the visiting panel judge.

ACMS supports the entry of such conflicts.

Note: the user can also use this feature to edit or delete conflicts.

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When the new entries are added to the Conflict with Trail Court Judge, ACMS will also search all open cases for which there are NO assignments. If such a case is found then a conflict will be automatically added. This feature was implemented in version 4.26.

In a similar manner if an entry were deleted from the Conflict with Trail Court Judge, ACMS will also search all open cases for which there are NO assignments. If such a case is found and the conflict had been automatically created, ACMS will delete that conflict.

Note: one unexpected result occurred when a site had been entering Trial Court Conflicts manually and decided to begin to use the automatic feature. The result was two similar conflicts (the first conflict was the one created manually, the second conflict was created when the Conflict Trial Court entry was created).

The Conflict with Attorneys is analogous to the Conflict with Trail Court Conflicts.

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As we noted earlier, conflicts with attorneys and conflicts with trial court judges can be automated because an attorney (via the attorney registration number) and the trial court judge (via the trial court judge identifier) can be specified uniquely. Parties are identified by names which are not necessarily unique nor consistent.

As a result, ACMS does not search open cases to create nor delete party conflicts when the conflict with party table is modified.

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The last diagram is an attempt to summarize the files, modules, and information flow.

As one can see, the Conflicts table is central to the conflicts in ACMS.
It is from this table that conflicts for all individual cases are stored.

There are two types of conflicts which have been automated: Conflicts With Attorneys,
and Conflicts with Trial Court Judges.

Conflicts with Parties has been implemented but requires the user to make the decision.

Provision has been made to enter conflicts on a case by case basis, and edit or delete any
conflict regardless if it were created automatically or not.