

Virtual courts

Enabling Remote Government

When the [Philippine government](#) implemented a quarantine to limit the spread of COVID-19, the legal system faced a new challenge: how to ensure justice is served when the people responsible for doing so can no longer gather in the same room. The court system needed to move to a remote government model.

The Supreme Court teamed up with Microsoft to enable video conferencing hearings using Microsoft 365.

The court system immediately saw improvements in efficiency and productivity. In the first nine days of piloting the technology, they were able to release [4,683 people](#), compared with an average of 1,622 per week for the previous six weeks, prior to implementation of Microsoft 365.

Video conferencing hearings are now conducted in Metro Manila and select courts in key cities nationwide. In addition, [the high court allowed](#) the e-filing of complaints, petitions for bail, as well as the submission of requirements for bail to minimize physical contact.

Courts around the world are undergoing similar transformations as they seek to support remote government. They're finding that the benefits of virtual courts go well beyond continuity of operations to include creating new efficiencies and solutions to traditional challenges.



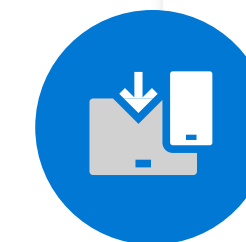
I am so proud to be a part of this historic moment in the Philippines. This is the first time the Supreme Court has moved to a virtual courtroom, to ensure they continue to provide justice and due process during COVID-19. This agility creates government resilience and ensures they remain accessible to citizens and communities during these challenging times."

Andres Ortola,
Country General Manager for the Philippines,
Microsoft

Digitizing outdated operations

Court systems are burdened by new and long-standing challenges, such as a heavy reliance on rigid and time-consuming paper-based processes and procedures.

Courts are beginning to enable e-filing and in some cases mandating its use. By digitizing paper-based processes, courts can become more efficient, enable remote processes, provide dashboards for judges and other officials to track proceedings, and aggregate document data to generate insights.



Benefits of digitizing outdated operations

- ✓ Faster, more secure access to electronic documents.
- ✓ Ability to perform analytics on all court-related data submission.
- ✓ Ability to track processing of documents from a single dashboard.
- ✓ Eliminates the cost, effort, and inefficiency of producing, transporting, and storing paper.

Sentencing backed by data

Access to data analytics can help judges make fair and just decisions based on the foundations of law. Judges can draw on insights from similar cases to ensure that penalties align with modern ethical expectations, while data from specialty courts can enable more rehabilitative behavior and address problems at their root.



Benefits of sentencing backed by data

- ✓ Insights into sentencing for defendants with similar profiles can help ensure effective and appropriate sentencing.
- ✓ Judges can confidently apply the correct penalties, knowing that they are backed by data.
- ✓ Historical record of sentences for similar crimes helps ensure consistent rulings.

Trials by video conferencing

Virtual attendance in court has also solved some legacy issues of appearing in person in court. Police officers, for example, often need to provide testimony, but time traveling to and from the courthouse means time not on patrol. Other witnesses have struggled with finding childcare and transportation.

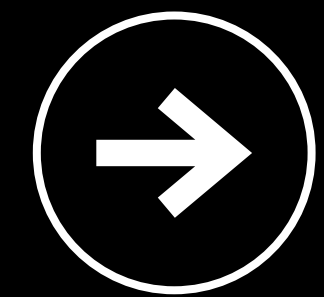


Benefits of trials by video conferencing

- ✓ Easily scalable: hearings are not limited to court room availability.
- ✓ Justice is served more equitably because it's easier to obtain witness testimony.
- ✓ Eliminates the cost and security risk associated with transporting detainees to hearings and trials.
- ✓ Police officers can attend hearings virtually.
- ✓ Prisons can hold virtual visits between inmates and family and visitors.

Enable Remote Access

The move to virtual courts solves an immediate need—and so much more. Some court systems are already embracing video conferencing hearings, digital case management, and data analytics as a permanent mode of operating—enabling everyone involved in a hearing to work and access data remotely. For agencies that are just beginning the journey to virtual courts, here are three ways to get started.



[Download the full e-book >](#)

More resources

[Watch the video demo >](#)

[View "The future of virtual court hearings is here" infographic >](#)

[Learn more about Enabling Remote Government Access >](#)

