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# Technology

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## The Hawaii Senate's Paperless Initiative

Transforming the Legislative Process  
Submitted by the Hawaii Senate Clerk's Office

In December 2007, Hawaii Senate President Colleen Hanabusa launched the Senate's Paperless initiative for the 2008 Regular Session (January 16 to May 1). The Initiative's goals were twofold: reduce our consumption of paper and increase public access to the legislative process through technology. This Initiative was the result of months of discussions amongst Senate leadership and key staff who participated during the 2007 interim in working groups established to chart a course and develop an operational plan for the Initiative.

For our Senators, this initiative transformed chamber floor sessions so that by the end of our 2008 session, over 90 percent of our members were solely using their Senate issued laptops to access our interactive Order of the Day (OD) in their caucus discussions and on the chamber floor. The interactive OD contained links where members could view measure text, status, committee reports, and testimony received on any measure on the OD. Additionally, the Senate Health Committee and the Senate Ways and Means Committee agreed to conduct all their public hearings throughout the 2008 session solely using their tablet personal computers (TPC's). These TPC's allowed the members and staff to review measures and testimony via interactive hearing notices and supported on-screen note-taking. Based upon their success, additional committees are interested in "going paperless" in the 2009 Regular Session.

For the public, participation in the legislative process became more accessible as they could submit testimony via e-mail as well as view all measures, committee reports, and testimony submitted on any measure via the Legislature's website. Public hearing notices posted on our website were also interactive, containing links to the above documents. Free Wi-Fi service provided throughout the State Capitol building allowed constituents to bring their laptops or other electronic devices to follow along in reviewing testimony submitted during the hearings.

At the end of this 2008 session, we compared paper usage statistics from the 2007 regular session and found that we had reduced our paper usage by 60 percent, having used 6,707,084 less sheets of paper, or, saving the equivalent of 725 trees. Additionally, our website statistics indicated that subscribers to RSS (really simple syndication) feeds from the Legislature's website tripled from 714,482 hits to 2,561,907 hits between January to April 2008.

We will again be convening working groups during this 2008 interim to develop a plan for expansion of paperless operations to other committees and to consider how existing and enhanced technology can more effectively support our legislative process. We want to acknowledge the leadership of Senate President Hanabusa and Senator David Ige who worked with our members to encourage their participation, and offer our thanks to Senate leadership staff for their assistance and support. Finally, a generous Mahalo to our Senate Data Systems staff who spent countless hours ensuring that our Initiative would be properly supported with the appropriate hardware, software, and technical assistance.

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# States At a Glance

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## Hawaii

### The Hawai'i Senate's Paperless Initiative Part 2 - Standing Committees Join the E-Senate Submitted by the Hawai'i Senate Clerk's Office

The Hawai'i Senate previously reported on its Paperless Initiative in the Summer 2008 edition of The Legislative Administrator. To re-cap, Hawai'i Senate President Colleen Hanabusa launched the Senate's Paperless Initiative for the 2008 Regular Session (January 16 to May 1). The Initiative's goals are twofold:

- reduce our paper consumption; and
- increase public access to the legislative process through technology.

By the end of the 2008 Regular Session, over 90 percent of our members were solely using their Senate-issued laptops to access our interactive Order of the Day during their caucus discussions and chamber floor sessions. Additionally, two Senate committees agreed to pilot paperless committee proceedings during the 2008 Regular Session. As a result of the Initiative, the Senate reduced its paper consumption by 60 percent, and public access to electronic documents increased three-fold (based upon website hit statistics) during the 2008 Regular Session.

Encouraged by the success of the Initiative during the 2008 Regular Session, Senate President Hanabusa asked the Clerk's Office to convene an interim working group to develop procedures for the expansion of the Paperless Initiative to all 14 Senate standing committees. This interim working group was composed of staff representing committee chairs, individual members, and support offices. Under the direction of Senator David Ige, Senate Majority Technology Leader, the working group reviewed and refined the procedures used by the pilot paperless committees and identified software and hardware enhancements necessary for the expansion.

A report to Senate Leadership was presented in October 2008, which included a Paperless Committee Procedures Manual and recommendations for the procurement of additional software licenses and hardware to enhance public participation via electronic means. Two of the recommendations to improve public participation included allowing the public to submit their testimony via the Hawaii legislature's website or via individual e-mail accounts established for each committee. When leadership approval was received, the Senate Data Systems staff installed additional document scanning equipment and upgrades to Adobe Pro and Office software on committee chair and staff computers. Once these software upgrades were installed and tested, all committee chairs and their staff were required to attend intensive training on these enhanced applications and were invited to participate in mock paperless committee hearings to learn how to lead a paperless committee hearing. The Senate Ways and Means (WAM) Committee, which typically holds budget briefings one month prior to the convening of each regular session, also served as a training ground for committee members, as the WAM committee comprises almost 50 percent of the entire Senate. During these briefings, members and staff were able to identify implementation bugs that could be addressed prior to the convening of the 2009 Regular Session.

As the 2009 Regular Session convened and the Paperless Committee expansion was implemented, we found that all 14 Committee Chairs and their respective Vice Chairs conducted their hearings by accessing testimony and legislative documents via Senate-issued laptops, and most members also participated via electronic means. We continued to offer both technological and procedural support to those Chairs and committee members who were not as comfortable using electronic documents and files in lieu of paper. Eliminating paper committee files also resulted in the added benefit of allowing committee staff to re-allocate their time from paper management to addressing constituent concerns. We were particularly gratified that our constituents who reside on our neighbor islands now have enhanced access to the legislative process even though they are not physically present at the Capitol.

# States At a Glance

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## *Hawaii continued*

Our 2009 post-session paper usage statistics indicate that we were able to reduce our paper consumption by an additional one million sheets of paper beyond our 2008 savings. Most importantly, results from a post-session survey of our internal and external users confirms that our Senators, committee staff, and our constituents are unified in their support for accessing legislative documents via electronic means and are committed to continuing the Senate's Paperless Initiative.

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## Illinois

**Scott Kaiser**  
Assistant Secretary of the Senate

Is there any such thing as a "normal" session? Not recently in Illinois. The past several years have seen wrangling among the legislative leaders and the governor over fiscal and policy matters that have taken the Illinois General Assembly into several overtime and special sessions. The 96th General Assembly started with a bang this past January - the impeachment of the governor. Now, you don't see that everyday, thankfully. The last impeachment of any kind by the Illinois legislature was way back in 1833. Not much precedent to go on. With a large dose of professionalism on the part of members and staff, the proceedings were handled in a thorough yet expeditious fashion. Afterward, many expected the remainder of the session to go more smoothly. Unfortunately, like many states, Illinois found itself with extremely difficult budget and revenue decisions forcing yet another overtime session. Relying on some budget cuts, some borrowing and other fiscal maneuvers, the legislature managed to adjourn July 16th. Social service providers, vendors, state employees and others who rely on state funding will be watching with interest to see if the budget holds together and hoping that the economy turns around soon.

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## Bill Introduction Goes Green In The Oklahoma House

**Joe Kintsel**  
House Clerk

Throughout the history of the Oklahoma House of Representatives, the legislative process has expressed itself mostly through physical documents. Beginning in the 1990s, the Oklahoma Legislature, both as individual houses as well as jointly, began to convert the legislative process from a strictly paper process to a partially electronic process.

Over time, the conversion from paper to electronic documents has occurred in distinct phases. Most recently, beginning with the 2009 legislative session, the Oklahoma House launched a new, exclusively electronic process for introduction of bills and resolutions.

By agreement, the House and Senate have established a "pre-filing" period for introduction of bills and resolutions prior to the start of each annual legislative session beginning in late November and lasting until mid-January. With limited exceptions, the pre-filing period concludes immediately prior to the beginning of regular session in February.

Beginning with the Oklahoma territorial legislatures, House measures have been introduced by physically filing them with the Clerk of the House. Until 2009, the introduction process had changed very little. Prior to filing, a member developed language to be included in a working draft. Once satisfied, the member "introduced" the working draft as a bill or resolution by physically filing unnumbered copies with the Clerk of the House. The number of unnumbered copies required by the Clerk's office rose to an all-time high of twenty-six (26) per measure in the 1990s later subsiding to six (6) copies in 2008, the final year prior to implementation of the electronic introduction process.