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The Future of Technology at Trial

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Over the last ten years, we have been involved with the set-up of hundreds of high tech trials bringing evidence display capabilities to courts from New York to California. Up until now, courts have relied upon analog signals to transmit video and audio throughout the trial environment. These analog signals are slowly being replaced by Internet Protocols (IP), which allow video and digital information to be transferred over standard networks. By placing IP technology into courtrooms and courthouses, these environments are open to all the advantages of wireless communication. The use of high-speed bandwidth allows for email, instant messaging, wireless networking, real time court reporting and, yes, even video streaming and videoconferencing. The increased use of videoconferencing for expert witness testimony for example, has reduced costs and shortened trial lengths by as much as 30%. In New York alone, such communications have been employed in both state and federal courts.

Within five years, I believe many more courts will incorporate Internet bandwidth to accommodate these types of wireless communications. One day, attorneys' files will be stored not on CD but in virtual warehouses and the court provided terminal will be the conduit by which attorneys retrieve their case documents. That is the future of court technology. IP addressing and "smart" hardware will enable attorneys to access their entire case from a secure web site via any computer. The key to effectively using trial technology (now and in the future) is how well we acquire, store and organize case data.