

# Accessing CM/ECF

The CM/ECF system is a web based software program. CM/ECF court users process cases through the federal courts' restricted intranet while attorneys and other public users will submit pleadings and view case data from the internet. Both court and external users have different levels of access to screens via menu selections and functionality as determined by their needs.

**STEP 1** To access the court web site, open Netscape Navigator and enter the URL (address) of the court's computer in the browser's Location field. **(See Figure 1.)** Familiarity with browser navigation and functionality is recommended for successful and efficient use of this system.

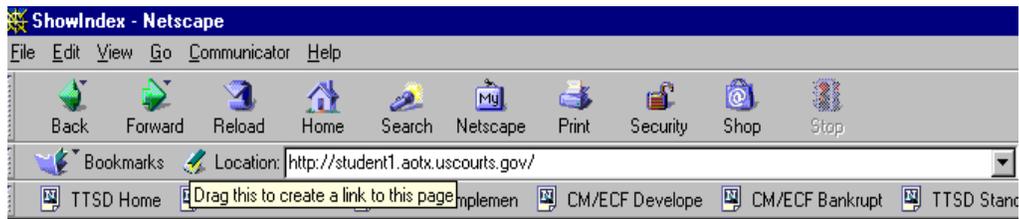


Figure 1

**NOTE:** For quick access to this site in the future, set a bookmark or create a button on your navigation bar, **(See Figure1.)**

The Back button



on your Netscape navigation bar

can be used to back up in case processing or queries at any time. You will find that the Back button and the Forward button

will allow you added flexibility in case processing.



**STEP 2** The **CM/ECF CERTIFICATE NAME CHECK** screen may display next. You may see a series of security screens similar to this.

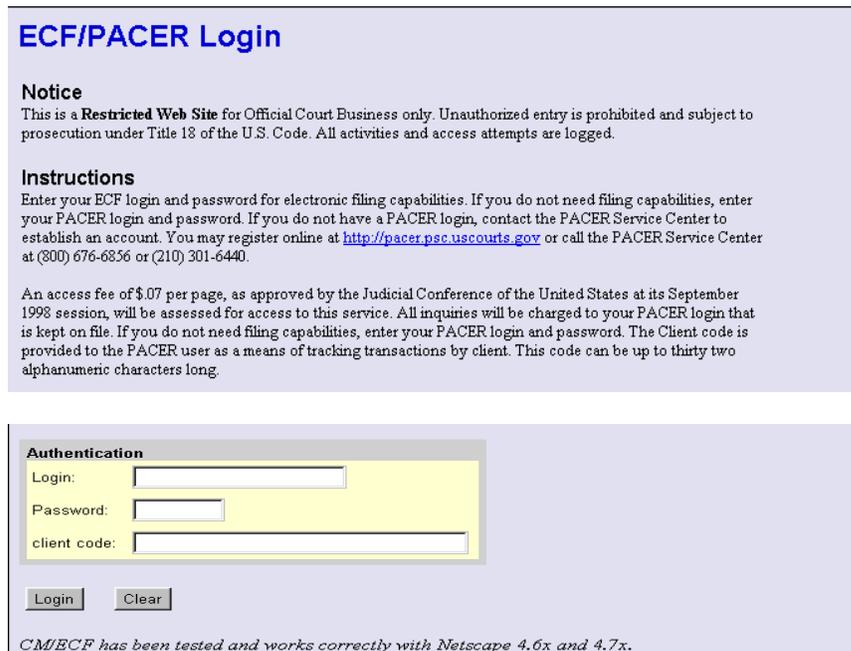


**Figure 2**

- ◆ Click **[Continue]** and read the security information until the **[Finish]** button appears.

**STEP 3 Logins and Passwords**

Internet users (attorneys, trustees and, in some courts, certain creditors) will use two sets of logins and passwords; one for CM/ECF filing and the other for Public Access to Electronic Records (PACER) access for queries and reports. Registered Internet users will see a login screen as pictured below in **Figure 3a**.



**Part** **Figure 3a**  
**will**

**participants**  
**initially**

enter their CM/ECF login and password which has been issued by the court on this screen. This login and password allows electronic filing of documents, not access to reports or queries.

Most courts consider the registered user's login and password the electronic equivalent of their signature. This concept is generally incorporated into the court's General Order on Electronic Filing or by Local rule.

Your **Login** and **Password** fields **are case sensitive**. A login of thomask should not be entered as Thomask or THOMASK. The password cannot exceed 8 characters and should not include special characters (%,#,\$,%).

The **client code** field is optional and is used for PACER users to associate this activity to specific customers.

If an error is made before submitting the screen, clicking on the **[Clear]** button will delete the data and allow you to reenter information.

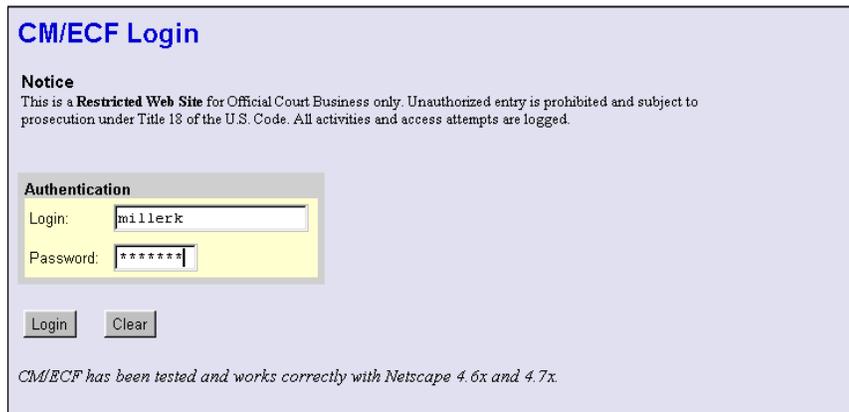
This login screen will subsequently appear when web users select any report or query selection from a CM/ECF menu. The PACER program charges 7¢ per page. However, the user will be advised of how many pages they have selected before accepting the information. After running a report, a PACER summary of pages and costs will appear at the end. PACER information and registration is available at <http://pacer.psc.uscourts.gov/>.

The PACER Service Center bills users only when annual usage exceeds \$9.99, e.g., If on December 31, a participant owes \$9.56, no bill will be issued for that year and a new billing cycle will begin January 1 of the next year. Copies of case files are still available at the court for \$.50 per page.

All users are personally responsible for activity with their logins. Participants can also be given access to maintain their login and password, address and e-mail preferences.

The PACER site also offers free Internet access to a series of CM/ECF tutorials for attorneys and other web users through a series of Computer Based Training (CBT) modules. No login or password or charge is required for this feature. The lessons can be done at your PC in individual modules at the convenience of the student. Screens replicate the CM/ECF environment and are interactive. Access to this resource is at <http://www.pacer.psc.uscourts.gov/ecfcbt/>.

The court user CM/ECF login screen is pictured in **Figure 3b**. These fields *are also case sensitive*.



**Figure 3b**

**STEP 4** The **CM/ECF MAIN MENU** screen is pictured in Figure 4.



**Figure 4**

Access to the various modules are provided by the blue Main Menu Bar at the top of the screen. Each selection is a hyperlink to another set of options or hyperlinks allowing participants to file documents, query, view or print a docket sheet, generate reports or maintain the system.

This menu is also used to exit the system. The preferred method to exit CM/ECF is to click the **Logout** hypertext link on the CM/ECF Main Menu Bar.

## Public Access

Bankruptcy case information on CM/ECF is available to the public through participating court Internet sites. For instance, the bankruptcy court in the Eastern District of Virginia can be accessed by typing this URL, [www.vaeb.uscourts.gov](http://www.vaeb.uscourts.gov), in the Location Box of your browser. A PACER login for each court is necessary for access for reports and queries.

Inquiries can be made through [Public Case Query](#) which provides search capabilities by case number or name. (See Figure 5)

**CM/ECF** Query • Reports • Utilities • Logout ?

### Query

**Search Clues**

Case Number  (Example: 99-80013)

Last Name  (Examples: Desoto, Des\*t)

First Name  Middle Name

SSN  Tax ID

Type

NOTICE: As of July 1st 2001, a user fee, approved by the Judicial Conference of the United States is applied for access to information on this system.

**Figure 5**

PACER gives participants access to a CM/ECF court calendar, a cases report, claims register, creditor matrix and case docket sheets. This information is current and is updated with activity in real time.

CM/ECF registered users can subscribe to electronic notification of any filing on any case within the district. These notices are received through the participants e-mail program. Notices can be monitored throughout the day or by requesting a daily summary of activity of all the cases they have signed up for. Every user can access a copy of the document that has been filed **once without charge**. It is advisable to save or print this file. Subsequent requests through the document's hyperlink will produce the standard PACER login screen.