

Shortening the arduous
LEGAL PROCESS
of family-related issues

Legal processes are integral to every nation, providing justice and stability to the society. However, these processes are known to be time consuming and emotionally draining. This is especially so for family-related issues.

Case Study:

While standard of living has been on the rise, there is a global trend of strained family and community ties. As a result, divorce rates are on the rise and many other family disputes now require court intervention.

And often, family cases involve parties whose relationships have to continue beyond the case lifecycle. Dealing with such sensitive issues puts FJC in a complex position of having to serve justice with the considerations of the various parties' lives after the case.

The Customer:

The Family Justice Courts of Singapore (FJC) is established on 4th August 2014 to address the needs of youth and families in distress. It brings together all the different family-related work under a specialised body of courts, providing a suite of family specific services.

FJC deals with a full range of family-related issues, from divorce and child custody to family violence issues.

Summary

PROJECT NAME

Integrated Family Application Management System (iFAMS)

DIGITAL GOVERNMENT DOMAIN

Judiciary

CUSTOMER

Family Justice Courts of Singapore

CHALLENGES

- Lack of central directory to manage all cases
- Sensitivity and complexity of cases
- Preparing for future policy changes

BENEFITS

- Protection and support within the community
- Simplifying complex cases with case timeline
- Seamless court hearings with e-minute sheet and dynamic court orders
- Visualising case connections and patterns

The Challenges:

Family-related cases are often interlinked and coupled with complexities of human relationships which may bring about psychological consequences.

Sensitivity and Complexity of Cases

Family-related cases are normally related and have causal effect. However, by dealing with the cases in silos may fail to deal with root issues. And more importantly, these cases involve family members whose relationships often have to continue beyond the case lifecycle.

Preparing for future policy changes

Family-related cases are getting more complex and it is inevitable that policies have to be revisited and adjusted. The system needs to provide business agility, enabling FJC to respond quickly to policy changes.

Lack of central directory to manage all cases

As a newly setup organisation, there was no central system that tracks the entire lifecycle of the different cases. Information is stored in silos, lacking the holistic picture of the cases.

The Results:

Integrated Family Application Management System (iFAMS) is a comprehensive end-to-end system that predominantly deals with family-related cases brought before FJC. It takes a holistic, multi-disciplinary and collaborative approach, bringing together all whose work falls within the ambit of family justice on a single platform. Designed based on the entire case lifecycle, iFAMS ensures follow-up support even after Orders are made.



Seamless court hearings with e-minute sheet and dynamic court orders

Parties are able to submit their positions or applications via the e-case file before the hearings. The information is pre-loaded into a court order with default values tailored to the respective parties' position. This facilitates the making of Orders by the judge and eliminates the need for unnecessary data entry.

Judges can easily call out court Orders with the dynamic e-minute sheet. It also enables the effective recording of proceedings and real-time generation of court orders. With the dynamic court Orders, judges can make amendments to the court orders on the fly. Cases that require special attention will be flagged out and documents can be sealed with restricted access to ensure confidentiality.

Visualising case connections and patterns

In family matters, cases are often related. iFAMS draws these information together, grouping the related cases and displaying them in a visual format.

It provides a holistic picture of the case by drawing the relevant information and related parties together. iFAMS helps in the recognition of key events and drawing of relation between the events' cause and effect. This enhances the judge's sensitivity and understanding of the different needs and circumstances unique to each case. Now, Orders target the root issues instead of merely dealing with the symptoms.

Simplifying complex cases with Case Timeline

On top of the usual e-case file repository where all case information and documents are indexed and stored for the relevant parties to access simultaneously, iFAMS display case events in a timeline format.

Cases are visualised in a timeline format, helping stakeholders understand the sequence of events in a glance. Information is spaced out with markers, making information visually less complex so users can quickly relate case events to their corresponding times.

Protection and Support within the Community

Individuals can prepare and submit applications to FJC without having to be physically present at the courts. Instead, applications for family-related protection and maintenance order can be drafted from home, and submitted at the various community touch points or law firms.