



Houston Traffic Court Computer Flops

New \$26 million computer system goes live for only 4 hours. Courts come to near halt. Old computer system turned back on.

Houston, TX ([PRWEB](#)) January 4, 2006 -- On Tuesday, January 3, 2006, the new computer system at the City of Houston Municipal Courts went live. The new computer system which has cost the City of Houston more than \$26 million began serving the public around 7:00 A.M. The new computer system called ICMS , which stands for Integrated Case Management System, began experiencing problems almost immediately. Behind the public service counter, personnel wearing badges that read "ICMS" scurried about quickly making cell phone calls and assisting clerks who were experiencing difficulties.

Attorneys who had waited over two weeks to post bonds, while the courts were closed, could not do so because of "form" problems with the new computer system. "I waited over an hour to post two sets of bonds," said Houston traffic ticket attorney Kameron Searle. "Under the old computer system, posting two bonds would take less than 5 minutes." Because of the backups at the public service counters, Searle, a former City of Houston prosecutor, was never assisted by a single clerk in posting his bonds. Finally, he had to leave to go to another court.

Problems at the public service counters were followed by huge bottlenecks due to technical problems in each of the city's many courtrooms. Around 11:00 A.M., after only 4 hours of operation, the City of Houston stopped using the new ICMS computer system and returned to the old computer system known as "Rhumba."

The old Rhumba computer system has served the City of Houston Municipal Courts very well for over a decade. After Rhumba started back up, things began moving smoothly again at the public service counters and in the courtrooms. Hundreds of Houstonians who had been waiting for hours in the courts began to be served again.

The design phase of the new ICMS computer system was completed more than two years ago. In 2005, the City of Houston had previously scheduled the new ICMS computer to go live on at least three different occasions. On all three occasions, the new ICMS computer system failed to go live. On each occasion, the City of Houston Municipal Courts were closed for one or two weeks at a time.

On December 16, 2005, the old Rhumba computer system was shut down so that the new ICMS computer system could be brought on line on January 3, 2006. For two weeks, no trials were heard and most of the court's business was brought to a stand still. On January 3, 2006, after a mere 4 hours of less than successful operation by the new computer system, the old Rhumba computer system has returned and the future of the city's new ICMS computer system is unknown.

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