



The SDRCC Case Management Portal; Five Years Later

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Case management at the Sport Dispute Resolution Centre of Canada, as in so many organizations, used to be weighed down by printed documents, tabbed binders, fax transmissions, postal and courier deliveries, etc. Far from being eco-friendly, this situation was also costly, slow and administratively cumbersome for the tribunal and the panel as much as for the parties and their representatives. Then came the email era, which, while much faster and kinder to the environment, caused confusion through presumed message transmission errors, inadequate electronic filing systems among recipients, lost or omitted attachments, attachments that were too heavy to send via email, full mailboxes, calendar transcription errors, and so on.

The good news is that since February 2011, the SDRCC has provided to parties access to its Case Management Portal (CMP). This innovative online dispute resolution platform allows the SDRCC to be a virtual and accessible tribunal, from anywhere in the world, 24 hours a day. A godsend for parties, particularly athletes, coaches and sports federation employees who are active in the international arena almost year-round, as well as for their representatives who are often on the move as much as their clients. Arbitrators and mediators have also gradually adopted the CMP, some a little faster than others.

An Overview

The CMP provides users with full access to their case from any computer or smartphone. From documents submitted by the parties and their representatives to administrative tribunal correspondence, including the panel's orders and awards and an interactive calendar of proceedings, the entire case is literally at the users' fingertips of users, regardless of their location or time of day. Its main functionalities are described in the sidebar.

The Benefits of Virtual Case Management

Managing tribunal cases using the CMP offers a number of indisputable advantages, from both the SDRCC's and parties' points of view. In addition to centralizing all key components of a case on a platform

Main Features of the CMP

Users navigate through six different tabs, each with its own particular features.

The **Main** tab offers users an overview of their case as well as general and administrative information, such as the list of parties involved and the teleconference numbers assigned to the case.

The **Party Filings** tab enables users to view all of the documents submitted in a case and sort them by name, date and/or party. All documents may also be downloaded onto a local computer, tablet or smartphone, as applicable.

The **Admin Documents** tab provides users with access to all SDRCC administrative communications in reference to their case, including letters, notices, emails and the minutes of preparatory meetings.

The **Orders/Awards** tab contains all documents issued by the panel, including preliminary decisions, procedural orders and awards, along with the reasons for the decision.

The **Events** tab contains the calendar of proceedings for the parties, all deadlines for the filing of documents and communication of information to the tribunal as well as all scheduled meetings, including mediation sessions and hearings. Users can choose to download/import all or some events from the CMP calendar to their own electronic agenda. The calendar automatically sends an email reminder to the parties 24 or 72 hours prior to each event, as applicable.

The **Forms/Resources** tab is a directory where users can find all tribunal forms, preparatory meeting agendas, procedural rules that apply to their case and other helpful resources such as the CMP User Guide.



accessible 24/7, this tool allows users who travel to limit the need to print and carry in their luggage numerous documents, which prevents theft, loss and oversights and any resulting breach of confidentiality. Regardless of whether they travel or not, 82% of users surveyed by the SDRCC confirmed that the CMP had substantially reduced the need to print documents. While no formal data collection has been conducted on this aspect, it is fair to claim that the tool represents significant time and cost savings for both the SDRCC and the parties involved in cases. In fact, in addition to bringing down postage/courier costs to deliver documents to all parties and panels, the CMP has lowered the SDRCC's printing and copying costs, eliminated the need for document storage and increased staff productivity.

It should also be noted that the SDRCC's administrative team can now open urgent cases remotely on evenings and weekends, which eliminates the need for staff to be at the office to deal effectively with these situations. The CMP's administrative interface allows a user to be added to a case in no time at all. Users who are added to a case during proceedings - lawyers for example - gain access to the same information as the other parties, even about what occurred prior to them being added to the CMP. In addition, documents can be uploaded by an employee from any computer, which means documents are available to the parties and panel within minutes. A message is sent directly from the CMP administrative interface to all parties to advise them of changes made to the case file.

The CMP is also useful for the professional development of arbitrators and mediators who take part in the SDRCC Observer Program, as it permits case observers to consult documents online and read up on the situation before the resolution process begins. Last but not least, the CMP promotes an environmentally-responsible management of tribunal cases.

The CMP Security

Security merits a special section, not only because it is a priority of all users, given the confidential nature of the cases handled by the SDRCC, but also because it is an obligation to which the SDRCC has committed. Among the security measures governing the use of the CMP are random passwords assigned to new users, who can then change them, provided that the new password is robust. A user account is blocked following three unsuccessful connection attempts. Sessions expire after a predetermined period of inactivity, which lowers the chances of the account being accessed by a non-authorized person if the user forgets to properly log out. All documents uploaded to the CMP are encrypted and completely deleted once a file has been closed, 21 days after its resolution. In a survey conducted by the SDRCC in 2013, 100% of users said they were comfortable with the portal's security measures. However, despite this high satisfaction rate, the SDRCC added additional security measures as part of a recent system update.

From an administrative perspective, because messages to the parties are sent directly from the CMP platform and case-related documents are accessible online, email attachments sent by SDRCC personnel have almost become a thing of the past. This has eliminated the risk of the wrong attachment being inadvertently sent, or going to unwanted recipients.

In short, the CMP is a versatile tool that has become indispensable to an efficient, accessible, economic, eco-friendly and simplified management for all users of SDRCC's dispute resolution services. Moreover, it is drawing the interest of other administrative tribunals in the sports world and beyond, which suggests that the product may be marketable in the near future. The SDRCC frequently updates the CMP and pays particular attention to suggestions for its improvement. ■

Sport organizations and sport tribunals interested in experiment with the CMP, with the goal of possibly using it for the management of their own appeal procedures, may contact the SDRCC. Access may be granted to a fictive case to enable them to become familiar with the user's interface.