



Guide to Preparing Documents for an eTrial

The parties to an eTrial are required to provide the eTrial Team with the documents to be contained in the Resolution Bundle and to be relied on at trial at least ten business days prior to commencement of trial. These documents must be saved and identified according to certain requirements before they can be uploaded to the eTrial site in preparation for trial. This guide provides non-technical instructions on how to prepare documents for use in an eTrial.

1. Where to start? - Document Management and Solicitor Training

- 1.1. The parties to the proceeding, or their legal representatives if they are represented, will be invited to a meeting with the eTrial Team for an overview of the eTrial process, to discuss how to effectively manage documents in an eTrial and for information about the preparation of documents in the Resolution Bundle for uploading to the eTrial site. Once uploaded the Resolution Bundle is referred to as the eCourtbook.
- 1.2. Prior to the meeting the parties should endeavour to agree on a numbering protocol for the identification of documents in the eCourtbook (see below) and the categories to be used to facilitate sorting and searching for documents. These categories include document type, date, source, author and recipient.

2. Where to Next?

- 2.1. All documents to be relied on in court should be converted to an electronic format (with certain exceptions as discussed below). Every document should be a numbered, multi-page (where applicable), text searchable PDF and should be allocated a Document ID in accordance with the document management protocol agreed by the parties.
- 2.2. Any photographs can be scanned into PDF, but these should be scanned at no more than 300DPI and saved as reduced size non text searchable PDFs. Any document that is a picture can be saved as a JPG or in a similar format, as these files need not be text searchable.
- 2.3. Audio files should be saved in mp3 format and video files should be saved in mp4 format.

3. What is a PDF?

- 3.1. Portable Document Format (PDF) is a file format used to represent documents in a manner independent of application software, hardware and operating systems.
- 3.2. A **text searchable PDF** is a PDF file that allows the user to search for and locate specific text within a PDF document. The software used to create text searchable PDF files is called OCR software.
- 3.3. The proprietary Adobe software is flexible in its application and is a useful tool for creating documents in the necessary format. In addition, there are other programs available that can create text searchable PDF files from electronic and/or scanned documents.

4. Collating the Documents

- 4.1. Identify the documents required for the Resolution Bundle.
- 4.2. Ensure all items to be submitted are in the correct format, that is:
 - 4.2.1. Text Documents - converted to text searchable PDF.
 - 4.2.2. Pictures – converted to PDF or JPG.
 - 4.2.3. Audio files – mp3 format.
 - 4.2.4. Video files – mp4 format.
 - 4.2.5. Other – Check with the eTrial Team.
- 4.3. Ensure every document has a unique filename. The existing filename may be retained for electronic documents. Paper documents must be scanned and saved with an appropriate name. The filename is not used for sorting or searching for documents in the eCourtbook. The important thing is that every filename is different.
- 4.4. Any attachments to or enclosures with a document are to be treated as documents in their own right and each should have a separate filename. (See below regarding the allocation of Document ID numbers to these documents.)
- 4.5. Copy the files into a single, separate folder and check that there are no duplicate filenames.
- 4.6. It may be impractical to scan or produce some documents, such as large format plans, as searchable PDFs. In addition, parties may wish to tender some documents in their original format for forensic reasons. These exhibits can be viewed in court using the document visualiser. The judge's associate will create a placeholder document and add this to the electronic exhibit list to ensure continuity of exhibit numbering.

5. Creating the Index to the eCourtbook

- 5.1. Create an index to the Resolution Bundle in spreadsheet format.
- 5.2. If the parties have completed electronic disclosure, the alternative schedule to Form 19 may be adapted and used as the index.
- 5.3. For each document, locate and record information in the spreadsheet, including:

Information	Form	Content
File Name	single line of text	name of the file
Document ID	single line of text	unique identifier for each file
Document Date	date	document date in dd/mm/yyyy format (may be left blank)
Document Type	single line of text	document type as agreed by parties
Document Title	single line of text	short description of document
Source	single line of text	party submitting document e.g. plaintiff, defendant or joint
Author	single line of text	person who created the document
Recipient	single line of text	person who received the document

Note: The information in **bold** must be included in the index. The other categories may be included if the parties consider they will be useful in identifying, sorting and searching for documents. The parties may also agree on their own categories to suit their particular proceeding.

- 5.4. DirectoryListPrintPro.exe is a free Windows based program that may assist in the creation of the eTrial Spreadsheet. This program enables the user to export filenames from a folder into a spreadsheet.
- 5.5. Documents provided in another electronic format, or in paper form, can be included in the index using a placeholder file containing relevant details. This is usually a single page bearing a typed description, for example: "DVD containing Images of ...".
- 5.6. Any cell in the spreadsheet must not contain more than 250 characters. Use abbreviations where necessary.
- 5.7. Document types must be consistent and used in accordance with the agreed document management protocol. For example, if a file contains more than one bank statement, the document type should still be given as 'bank statement' (if that is the agreed type), not 'bank statements'. If necessary, the document description may be used to provide further information as to the document(s) contained in a particular file.
- 5.8. Do not use the following as this will interfere with the function of the eCourtbook:
 - 5.6.1. Carriage returns. All information in each row must be contained on one line.
 - 5.6.2. Commas.
 - 5.6.3. "Double quotation marks" - These must be replaced with 'single quotation marks'.
 - 5.6.4. Characters such as < > : / \ | ? * &
- 5.9. Save the spreadsheet as an .XLS file.

6. Allocating the Document ID

- 6.1. The parties must agree on the format for the Document ID prior to or at the Document Management Meeting.
- 6.2. Each file in the index must be allocated a Document ID number in accordance with the format agreed by the parties. This number must be entered in the index/spreadsheet in the designated column.
- 6.3. The Document ID need not be the same as the filename.
- 6.4. The Document ID is the number used to identify each document at trial, locate documents in the eCourtbook and display documents via the courtroom monitors. The parties must state the Document ID in full when calling for documents at trial. The Document ID should therefore be as simple as possible.
- 6.5. The simplest format for the Document ID is to use three letters to identify the party relying on the document, followed by a number to identify the document. The use of consecutive numbers in the Document ID will mean that documents will appear in the same order in the basic view in the eCourtbook as they do in the index/spreadsheet.

For example, the letters used in the Document ID could be as simple as PLA for plaintiff or DEF for defendant. Where there a number of parties, the first three letter of the party's name could be used, for example ABC Developments Pty Ltd could be identified as ABC. If more than one party will rely on the document at trial, the parties may agree to use the letters JOI, for joint.

The number of digits required in the ID number will depend on the number of documents to be included in the Resolution Bundle.

Number of Documents	Value	Required No. of Digits
Less than 10	1 - 9	1
Less than 100	01 - 99	2
Less than 1,000	001 - 999	3
Less than 10,000	0001 - 9999	4

It is important to use leading zeroes in the Document ID to maintain the order of the documents, for example, where there are less than one thousand documents in the Resolution Bundle (and therefore only three digits in the Document ID) the first document in the index/spreadsheet relied on by the plaintiff according to the protocol in 6.2 above will be **PLA001**, not **PLA1**.

- 6.6. As any attachments to and enclosures with documents are treated as documents in their own right, with each bearing a separate filename, it is important that the principal document and the attachments/enclosures are able to be identified both as a group and separately. This can be achieved by allocating the same Document ID to the principal document and to each of the attachments/enclosures to that principal document, with information provided in the title/description field sufficient to identify each enclosure or attachment. For example, a report and ten attachments may all be allocated the Document ID PLA001, with the description field identifying each file variously as Report, Attachment One - email, Attachment Two - invoice and so on.
- 6.7. The Bundle should not contain any duplicate documents. If any document is attached to more than one principal document, for example where the same invoice is attached to both a report and an email, the parties may create a placeholder file to mark the location of a duplicate document and allocate the Document ID to that placeholder file as was given to the document when it first appeared in the Bundle.
- 6.8. If parties wish to search for and view documents in the eCourtbook by reference to the witness who is to prove the document, or to whom the document is to be referred, they should agree on appropriate witness IDs in the document management protocol. They should then notify the eTrial Team and they will be provided with a formatted spreadsheet for completion. This spreadsheet can be adapted so that it can be stored digitally, externally to the eCourtbook, incorporating hyperlinks that facilitate the downloading of documents from the eCourtbook. This may be of assistance to trial counsel in preparing for trial as it provides a “witness view” of documents in the eCourtbook and easy access to the documents within that view.
- 6.7. Where there is a large amount of material contained in one file, it may be split into several files. These should be allocated the same Document ID and further information should be provided in the title/description to facilitate searching for and locating documents. For example, a large bundle of hospital records may be separated into four parts, each with the same Document ID but relevantly identified as Part One, Part Two and so on in the description field.

7. Checking and delivering the documents

7.1. Check the following:

- 7.1.1. All files are saved in a single, separate folder in the required format.
- 7.1.2. There are no duplicate filenames.
- 7.1.3. The number of items/rows in the index/spreadsheet is the same as the number of files in the folder where the files are stored.

- 7.1.4.** The filenames in the index are the same as the filenames in the folder.
 - 7.1.5.** Each file has been allocated a Document ID.
 - 7.1.6.** All the columns in the index contain the correct information.
 - 7.1.7.** Document types are used consistently and in accordance with the agreed document management protocol.
 - 7.1.8.** Any dates are in dd/mm/yyyy format.
 - 7.1.9.** All linked documents (where used) have the correct Host Document ID.
 - 7.1.10.** There are no “double quotation marks”.
 - 7.1.11.** There are no carriage returns.
 - 7.1.12.** There are no commas.
 - 7.1.13.** Characters such as < > : / \ | ? * & have not been used.
 - 7.1.14.** No text box contains more than 250 characters.
 - 7.1.15.** The Spreadsheet is saved as an .XLS file.
- 7.2.** Burn/save the files and the index/spreadsheet to USB, CD or DVD.
- 7.3.** Deliver the USB, CD or DVD to the eTrial Team at least ten business days prior to the commencement of trial.

Disclaimer

The eTrial Team assists parties where possible, however it remains each party’s responsibility to provide documents for an eTrial in the required format.

Any software mentioned in this document is referred to for information only and is not provided or otherwise endorsed by Queensland Courts.

Enquiries should be directed to the eTrial Team at eTrials@courts.qld.gov.au.