

# **News: Access Track Organizer Richard Schaffler Reflects that CTC2015 Focused on Consumer Driven Solutions Shaped by Data (Court Technology Conference 2015)**



Richard Schaffler, Director of Research Services at the National Center for State Courts and Co-Organizer of the Access to Justice track at the [Court Technology Conference 2015](#) with SRLN's Katherine Alteneder, offered us a host of great reflections on the gathering.

Overall, Schuaffler noted how this year's presentations were much more data driven and practical. "Every single presenter," he said, "had data- data that informed the design of their solution (surveys of customer need), data being used to monitor how well the solution is working (web analytics) and data being used to improve the current solutions (how long it takes users to do something)." He told us that from day one "the sense of urgency to reinvent how we do business was palpable."

Data, he told us, plays a pivotal role in access to justice. "The ability to provide intelligent access to justice rests," he said, "with facilitating the exchange of information between the customer and the court." He continued: "Customers need to be asked the right questions at the right time, and courts need to collect and store and use that information in a timely manner to respond. And the responses have to be accessible to the customer through phone or web. Great progress is being made on all sides of this."

On this note, the other shift Schuaffler observed at the conference was a move towards consumer-driven solutions. He observed "a high level of awareness" among participants and presenters about what customers want. He noted examples of this ranged from a web-based Avatar to walk SRLs through traffic proceedings to a court card that can be swiped by a court's counter staff, immediately pulling up any relevant information on a litigant's "account." Schuaffler noted that this innovation he found particularly "visionary in terms of showing how courts can contextualize the needs of customers and focus their services and information to meet the specific needs of each person at the time that information or service is needed."

Schuaffler continued that "perhaps the biggest insight of CTC was that often an off-the shelf, low tech solution can be most effective because it is affordable, sustainable, and gets the job done without the need for specialized training. The sometime grandiose technological solutions envisioned years ago are neither appropriate nor needed."

On the final day, Schuaffler reflected: "At the end, we posed the question of what the biggest impediment to measuring performance was in the courts of the attendees. Using Poll Everywhere, attendees texted answers to this multiple choice question. The two issues that no one said were an impediment were data and technology and the almost unanimous issue was lack of local leadership. Wow. Half of those in the room were IT people, the other half administrators, and a handful of

judges and attorneys. How different than two years ago. The fact that there were 50% IT folks also says to me that they understand this tooling up their systems to support performance measurement is now a part of their core business that they need to master. Sea change!”

[The materials from CTC2015 are available online.](#)

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