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IMPROVING JUDICIAL ADMINISTRATION:
THE ROLE OF SYSTEMS TECHNOLOGY

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Early in this century, Dean Roscoe Pound, writing on "The Causes of Popular Dissatisfaction with the Administration of Justice," urged his colleagues to examine and apply those new techniques and procedural reforms which could help society; this comment reflects both his idealism and pragmatism:

The public seldom realizes how much it is interested in maintaining the highest scientific standard in the administration of justice.^{1/}

The situation in our courts today reflects the larger problems of a growing, complex, mobile society. The effectiveness of the courts—at all levels and in all localities—is a function of the judges who must render decisions and the judicial administrators who are responsible for the scheduling, logging, and preparation of documentation on criminal and civil cases. There has been an increasing awareness on the part of judges, lawyers, legislators, and the citizenry that new tools and techniques must be identified, placed in operation, and evaluated in order that the judicial mode of operation be improved sufficiently to cope with contemporary problems.

Judicial administration involves the handling of large quantities of narrative and statistical information. These data, derived from various sources and available in a variety of forms, must be carefully filtered, specially structured for optimal processing, indexed, stored, and retrieved according to criteria that will satisfy a diverse user group. Developments in automatic data processing (ADP) and microform technology have added a new dimension in the hand-

^{1/} Pound, Roscoe, The causes of popular dissatisfaction with administration of justice. In Reports of the American bar association, v. 29, 1906. p. 181

ling of these requisite data. Accurate, rapid, and selective processing have proven to be beneficial to the decisionmakers on the bench and to the court administrators charged with managing the daily operations which affect judge, legal counsel, and client alike.

The references included in the bibliography that follows appear by virtue of their contribution to the theory and practice of systems technology in the functioning of the courts. Four major subsections have been created, in order to facilitate use of the bibliography:

- * Section I -- books, periodicals, and speeches reflecting an overview of court administration, its problems, and the uses of computer technology.
- * Section II -- source materials describing the potential of information technology for the Federal courts, and the role of the Federal Judicial Center.
- * Section III -- commentary on the District of Columbia study and efforts toward improvement.
- * Section IV -- descriptions of major court systems improvement projects, featuring efforts undertaken to improve county and large city court operations.

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