8 Jul 2020

PROTOCOL FOR E-BUNDLES IN THE SERVICE JUSTICE SYSTEM (SJS)

Background

1.   This Protocol is designed to enable the Prosecution and the Defence to create bundles to the same standard and format. It provides for the Defence and the Prosecution creating separate bundles in order to avoid placing an undue burden on any one party. The procedures in this Protocol reflect many aspects of practice in the Civilian Justice System.

E-Bundle Formatting

2.   Where an e-bundle is to be used the following technical requirements should be observed:

    a. PDF[1] format is to be used;
    b. All documents are to be contained, if possible, within a single PDF file;
    c. The default display view size of all pages must always be 100%;
    d. All documents should appear in portrait mode. If an original document is in landscape, then it should be inserted so that it can be read with a **90-degree rotation clockwise**. No document should appear upside down.
    e. When scanning documents to form part of a bundle, the resolution should be set to 300 DPI, unless the document requires a higher resolution to be legible, in order to maintain a balance between file size and document quality.
    i.   It is accepted that documents provided by an external source may not be at 300 DPI, however documents should never be manually be reduced to below this level.

---

[1] The requirement for all bundles to be presented as .pdf files allows standardisation of file format. It is not necessary for parties to procure bespoke software to edit .pdf files as up-to-date versions of Microsoft Word (and other software) include an ability to save a .doc or .docx file as a .pdf format file. In MS Word, see the:- "File -> Save As -> .pdf" option. This will carry over pagination, footnotes etc from the source document to the .pdf file.

We advise against the use of on-line PDF conversion tools which require the uploading of source files for conversion.

3.   The PDF should be searchable, and the addition of comments and highlighting must be supported, except in cases where the format of the documents render this impossible;

    a. Pagination must be computer generated within the PDF, not hand-written;

        i.   Pagination should not mask relevant detail on the original document.

    b. The documents must be clean of all highlighting and written comments save those that are to be taken as part of the evidence;

    c. Pagination must restart for each section of the document: witnesses and exhibits/ supporting documents;

    d. Any additions to the middle of the bundle of documents should be added in the following format 1a, 1b, 1c, depending on the page number where it is inserted;

        i.   If between 1a -1b the format 1a.1 1a.2 shall be used;

    e. Each section of the bundle, and each individual document referenced in the index, should be separately bookmarked;

        i.   These bookmarks should be formatted to show clearly any sub-bookmarks that may be contained;

        ii.   First level bookmarks must be **bold,** and any second level bookmarks with sub-bookmarks should ***be bold and italicised***;

        iii.   The bookmarks must be labelled indicating what document they are referring to – For a witness statement this can be by surname and date (if required). Exhibits by exhibit label number and a description.

4.   The file should be named according to MOD file naming convention as per JSP 441 (MOD guidance);

        i.   yyyymmdd-Reference Subject Version_Originator-Protective Marking-descriptor (Protective Marking is also known as Security Classification. Descriptor gives further information to the Marking))

        ii.   An example is the first bundle made for the case of Joe Bloggs and John Smith, SPA Ref SPA/UK/20/0010 created on April 1st 2020 is "20200401-SPA UK 20 0010 Bloggs plus 1 Pros Bundle V1-O PERSONAL" or" 20200401-SPA_UK_20_0010_Bloggs_plus_1_Pros_Bundle_V1-O PERSONAL"

iii. PERSONAL is used to identify Personal Data (any information relating to an identified or identifiable living individual) whose release or loss could cause harm, distress or detriment to the individual(s) to whom it relates.

iv. Some material will have a security classification of OFFICIAL SENSITIVE or OFFICIAL SENSITIVE PERSONAL. Guidance on Security Classifications can be [here](#).

5. The bundles should be delivered by e-mail as a single PDF, where possible. If this is not possible by email alternative methods shall be used.;

   a. The email subject line should be contain a clear description of its contents.

6. It is acknowledged that trials and hearings will only be partly paperless, and that Boards will still require paper bundles until alternative arrangements can be made.

7. The makeup of bundles for boards shall be as follows:

   a. A single paginated file, with a front index;

   b. Tabs need not be used.

8. Litigants in Person should take note of the following (and they will be signposted towards this guidance):

   i. An e-bundle is an organised collection of electronic copies of documents for use at a court hearing; If you wish to provide documents for the Court to consider at your hearing, they must be provided to the Court and the Prosecution as an e-bundle unless the Court orders otherwise. The e-bundle must still if at all possible, comply with the above requirements. Your assisting officer and Unit admin staff can help you with this.

   ii. If it is not possible for you to comply with the requirements on e-bundles, a brief explanation of the reasons for this should be provided to the court as far in advance of the hearing as

possible. You will still need to provide copies of the documents to the Court and Prosecution.

iii. Where possible you should identify a practical way of overcoming the problem so that the court can consider this.

9. This document will be updated and revised with the benefit of live experience, therefore it will be important to check it regularly.

Judge Advocate Alan Large, Deputy Judge Advocate General, for the Judge Advocate General