Video Remote Technology in California Courts

SURVEY AND FINDINGS

December 2014

JUDICIAL COUNCIL OF CALIFORNIA

COURT TECHNOLOGY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Judicial Council of California
455 Golden Gate Avenue
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Executive Summary

Almost two decades ago, the Court Technology Task Force (predecessor to the Court Technology Advisory Committee) in its 1995 report to the Judicial Council, identified nine technology goals, including the following:

> "To promote efficiency, access, convenience, and cost reduction, interactive video technology should be incorporated into all justice proceedings and administrative functions as permitted by law and consistent with the purposes of the judicial branch.

(Judicial Council of Cal., Commission on the Future of the California Courts, *Justice in the Balance 2020: Report of the Commission on the Future of the California Courts* (1993), p. 107.)

The *Tactical Plan for Technology* adopted by the Judicial Council on October 27, 2014 recommends an initiative for courthouse video connectivity, including use of telepresence technology to allow courts to provide the public with ongoing access to court proceedings at a time when court resources are being substantially reduced and courthouses are being closed.

In August 1997, the Court Technology Advisory Committee (CTAC) presented a report to the Judicial Council titled *Report on the Application of Video Technology in the California Courts.* Although primarily focused on use of video arraignments, the report noted the important benefits achievable by using this technology in other areas, including motions, mental health proceedings, and other pretrial matters.

This survey on courtroom use of Video Remote Technology (VRT) was conducted by the CTAC Projects Subcommittee to ascertain the extent to which VRT has actually been used, or is currently being used, by California judicial officers. It is intended to provide the Judicial Council, judicial officers, and court executives with a compilation of judicial experience with VRT, to leverage the benefit of that experience across the judicial branch, and to gauge the level of interest in expanded use of VRT.

The survey questionnaire was divided into four sections: Section A: Respondent Information; Section B: Use of VRT in Specific Case Types; Section C: Overall Experience with VRT; and Section D: View of Respondents Who Had Never Used VRT. The largest portion of the questionnaire, Section B, focused on use in specific case types. Section B asked questions about the use of VRT in case types and hearing types. It also had questions pertaining to the reasons for using VRT and whether there has been a growth in usage since 2010. Finally, Section B sought information about objections heard by judicial officers relative to the use of VRT in their courtrooms and how these objections were handled. Section C sought respondents' overall experience and general satisfaction with using VRT in their courts. Also included in Section C were questions about recommendations judges would make to judges considering integrating VRT into their courtrooms. Finally, Section D required respondents who had never used VRT in their courtrooms to state an opinion that describes their present view of VRT.

Responses were obtained from 333 judicial officers in 46 courts across the state, including 16 presiding judges. Eighty-five judges have used some form of VRT in their courtrooms. VRT is used most frequently for arraignment proceedings in criminal cases, both felony and misdemeanor. VRT is being used for remote appearances, including arraignment and evidentiary hearings, in traffic cases. Twenty of

the responding judges have used VRT in civil unlimited proceedings, for law and motion hearings, for status conferences, and for witness testimony in both jury and bench trials. No respondents reported use of VRT in civil limited proceedings. Five respondents have used VRT in probate proceedings (contested probate/trust hearings, conservatorship proceedings, guardianship proceedings, and mental health proceedings). VRT is also being used in some instances in hearings in juvenile court, in both delinquency and dependency proceedings (detention hearings, jurisdictional/dispositional hearings, and review hearings).

Courtroom use of VRT was most often permitted because it was a part of a court policy or a court program, or because the court approved a request by the lawyer/parties. The technology used varied widely and included Skype, WebEx, Video CourtCall, and other Internet-based video equipment or services.

Objections to use of VRT were asserted in some instances on constitutional/statutory grounds, and in fewer cases based on concerns with the adequacy and/or security of the equipment or service. The respondents reported that the objections were sustained in some cases and overruled in others.

Approximately 81% of the judicial officers responding expressed satisfaction with their experience in use of VRT, with 46% indicating that they were very satisfied. Of those respondents who had not used VRT, approximately 50% said they would consider mandating VRT in their courtroom, on appropriate occasions, if legally permissible and beneficial to the timely and efficient administration of justice. About 9% indicated that they would prefer not to implement VRT.

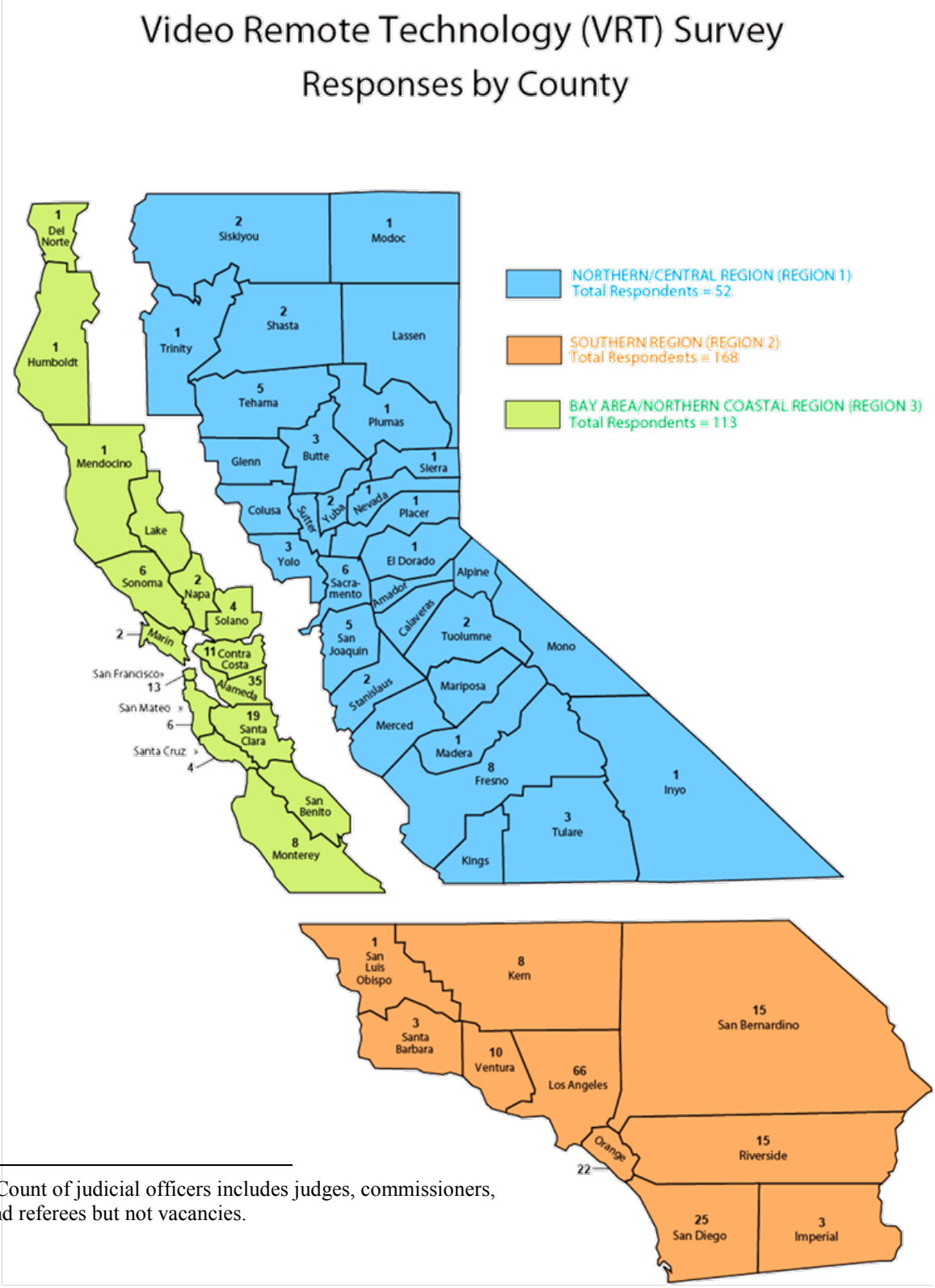
Contact

For information about this survey, please contact Judge Glen M. Reiser, Chair, CTAC Projects Subcommittee, at glen.reiser@ventura.courts.ca.gov.

Summary of Findings

On September 22, 2014, all judicial officers in California were sent the survey. Out of a possible total of 1,788 respondents, 333 judicial officers responded, a 19% response rate.[1]

Illustration 1: Responses by County



[1] Count of judicial officers includes judges, commissioners, and referees but not vacancies.

Table 1: Percentage of Bench by County

County	Total Respondents	Percentage of Bench
Alameda	35	43.2
Butte	3	23.1
Contra Costa	11	28.2
Del Norte	1	33.3
El Dorado	1	14.3
Fresno	8	16.3
Humboldt	1	12.5
Imperial	3	25.0
Inyo	1	33.3
Kern	8	19.5
Los Angeles	66	12.3
Madera	1	10.0
Marin	2	16.7
Mendocino	1	11.1
Modoc	1	50.0
Monterey	8	40.0
Napa	2	25.0
Nevada	1	14.3
Orange	22	16.5
Placer	1	7.1
Plumas	1	33.3
Riverside	15	20.8
Sacramento	6	8.3
San Bernardino	15	19.0
San Diego	25	17.0
San Francisco	13	26.0
San Joaquin	5	16.7
San Luis Obispo	1	6.7
San Mateo	6	20.7
Santa Barbara	3	13.6
Santa Clara	19	23.5
Santa Cruz	4	30.8
Shasta	2	16.7
Sierra	1	50.0
Siskiyou	2	40.0
Solano	4	17.4
Sonoma	6	27.3
Stanislaus	2	9.1
Tehama	5	100.0
Trinity	1	50.0
Tulare	3	15.0
Tuolumne	2	40.0
Ventura	10	32.3
Yolo	3	23.1
Yuba	2	33.3

Note: Bench count includes judges, commissioners, and referees but not vacancies.

Respondents

A total of 333 judicial officers responded to the survey: 278 judges (84%), 54 commissioners (16%), and 1 referee. Of the responding judges, 16 currently serve as the presiding judge in their county.[2]

Use of VRT in the Past

Of the respondents, 25.6% (85) have used VRT in the courtroom, 73.4% (243) have not used VRT, and 1% (3) do not recall.

Use of VRT by Case Type

Figures 1 and 2 show VRT used by judicial officers in both criminal and noncriminal proceedings.

Figure 1: Use of VRT by Case Type
Number of Total Respondents Stating That They Have Used VRT (n=85)

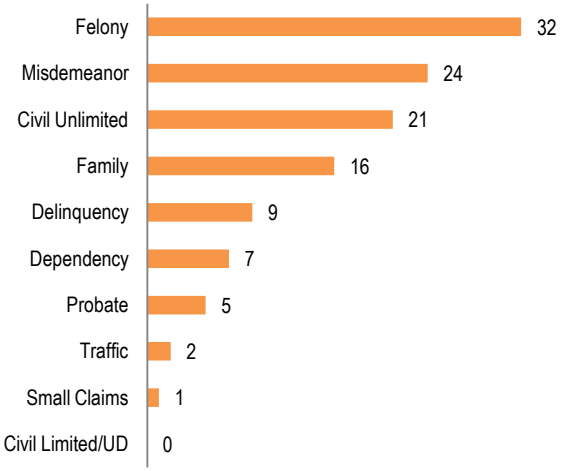
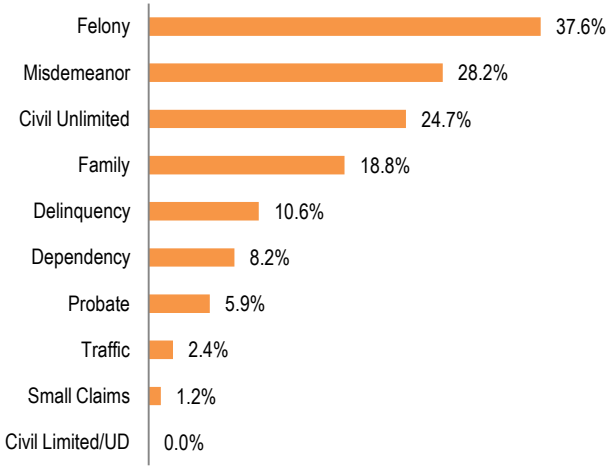


Figure 2: Use of VRT by Case Type
Percentage of Total Respondents Stating That They Have Used VRT (n=85)



[2] Although the survey was sent to judges, commissioners, and referees, two court IT staff members also completed the survey and submitted a response.

Use of VRT by Hearing Types

VRT is used frequently for arraignment proceedings in criminal cases. Figures 3 and 4 represent the percentage of respondents using VRT in varied types of felony and misdemeanor proceedings.

Figure 3: Percentage Using VRT in Felony Proceedings (n=29)

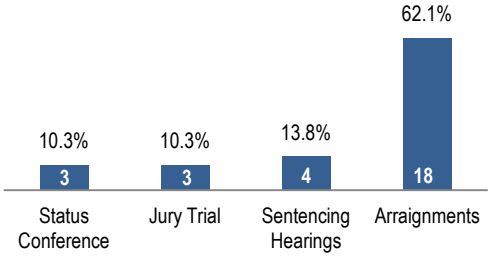
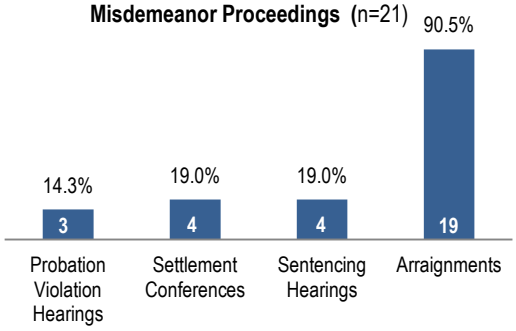


Figure 4: Percentage Using VRT in Misdemeanor Proceedings (n=21)



Two respondents reported use of VRT in traffic proceedings. One respondent used VRT in contested traffic trials, and both respondents used VRT in uncontested traffic matters.

Eight respondents reported use of VRT in juvenile proceedings, and seven respondents reported use in dependency proceedings. Figures 5 and 6 represent the percentage of respondents using VRT in varied types of delinquency and dependency proceedings.

Figure 5: Percentage Using VRT in Juvenile Delinquency Proceedings (n=8)

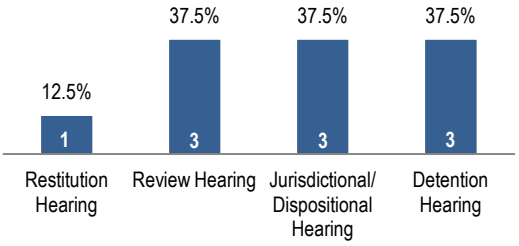
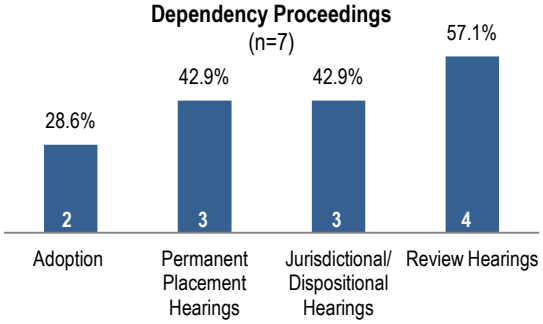


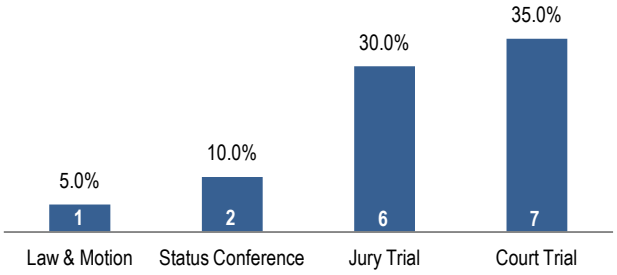
Figure 6: Percentage Using VRT in Juvenile Dependency Proceedings (n=7)



No respondents reported use of VRT in civil limited or unlawful detainer proceedings. One respondent reported VRT use in small claims proceedings for the entire hearing. The responding judicial officer agreed to VRT because one of the parties would have had to travel for several hours to make the hearing.

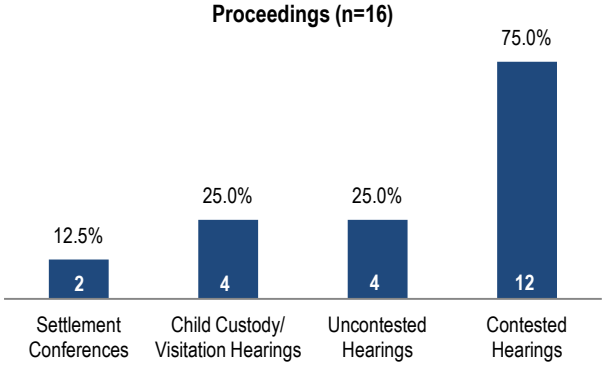
Twenty respondents reported using VRT in civil unlimited proceedings. Use was primarily in trial proceedings (see figure 7).

Figure 7: Percentage Using VRT in Civil Unlimited Proceedings (n=20)



In family law matters, VRT was reported used most frequently in contested hearings (see figure 8).

Figure 8: Percentage Using VRT in Family Law Proceedings (n=16)



Five respondents used VRT in probate proceedings. The hearing types in which VRT was reported used in probate included contested probate/trust hearings, conservatorship proceedings, guardianship proceedings, and mental health proceedings.

How VRT Was Used in the Courtroom

In criminal proceedings, VRT was used most frequently for video arraignments. Of those responding in felony proceedings, 78% used VRT in video arraignments. Of those responding in misdemeanor proceedings, 100% used VRT in video arraignments. Figures 9 and 10 show how respondents used VRT in criminal proceedings.

Figure 9: How VRT Was Used in Felony Proceedings (n=23)

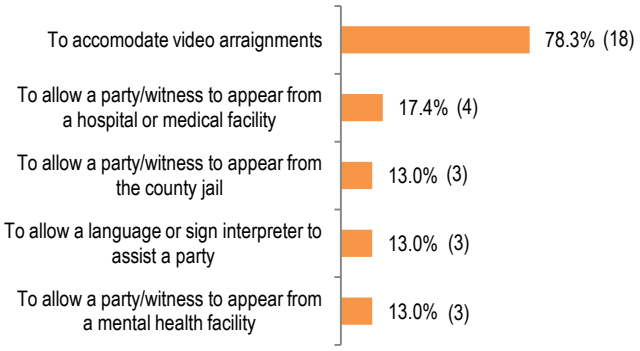
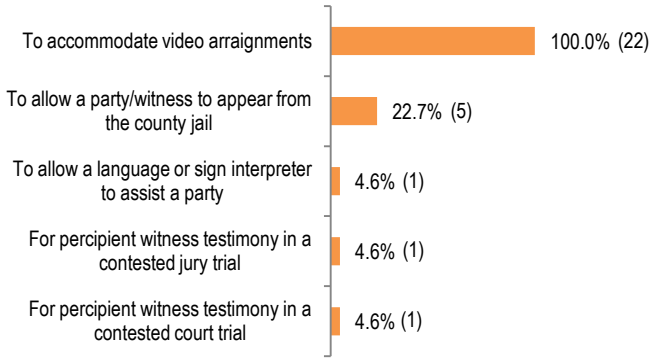


Figure 10: How VRT Was Used in Misdemeanor Proceedings (n=22)



In traffic cases, the two respondents indicated that they used VRT for video arraignments, for witness testimony in a contested manner, and to allow a language or sign interpreter to assist a party.

Uses of VRT in delinquency proceedings include for video detention hearings, to allow an attorney or minor to appear remotely in an uncontested matter, for witness testimony in any contested matter, and to allow a probation officer to appear remotely (see figure 11).

In dependency proceedings, respondents used VRT for witness testimony, to allow an attorney or minor to appear remotely in an uncontested matter, and to allow an attorney or minor to appear remotely in a contested matter.

In civil unlimited proceedings, 15 respondents primarily used VRT for percipient witness testimony in court trials (see figure 12).

Figure 11: How VRT Was Used in Delinquency Proceedings (n=6)

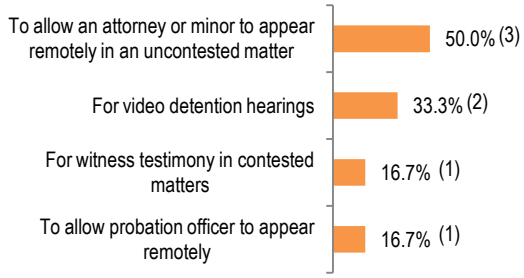
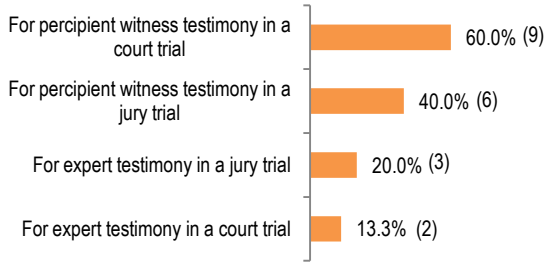


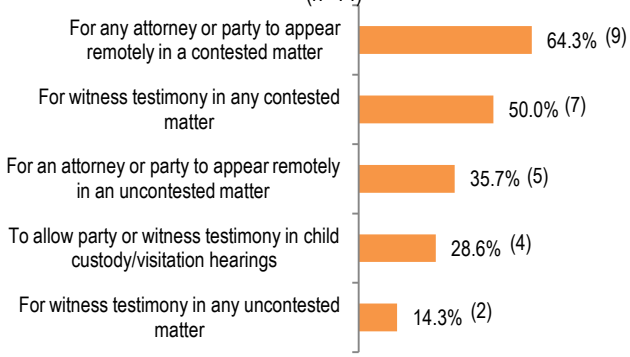
Figure 12: How VRT Was Used in Unlimited Proceedings (n=15)



In family law proceedings, VRT was used primarily to allow an attorney or party to appear remotely in contested matters (see figure 13).

In probate proceedings, VRT was used for witness testimony in contested matters; to allow a conservatee, conservator, or witness testimony in an establishment hearing; to allow a conservatee, conservator, or witness testimony in a post establishment hearing; and to allow a party or witness to appear from a hospital or other medical facility.

Figure 13: How VRT Was Used in Family Law Proceedings
(n=14)



Why VRT Was Used

The reasons judicial officers allowed VRT in their courtrooms were varied, but the two most selected reasons were that (1) it was part of court policy/court programs and (2) the lawyer/parties so stipulated and the judge approved the request. Table 2 shows the breakdown of reasons for allowing VRT in the courtroom.

Table 2: Why VRT Was Allowed in the Courtroom

	Felony (n=25)	Misd. (n=21)	Delinquency (n=8)	Dependency (n=6)	Civil Unlimited (n=19)	Family (n=16)	Probate (n=5)
It was part of court policy or programs	18	20	5	2	1	1	0
The lawyers/parties stipulated and I approved the request	9	4	2	5	10	6	1
A lawyer asked because of his/her distance/ transportation issues	1	2	1	1	6	2	1
A lawyer asked because of his/her health or disability	0	0	1	1	1	1	0
A party or witness asked because of his/her distance/transportation issues	4	1	2	2	6	7	1
A party or witness asked because of his/her health, age, or disability	3	0	1	1	3	5	0
A court interpreter asked because of logistical reasons	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
It was my idea because of party, witness, interpreter, or judicial economy	2	1	1	1	3	5	2

VRT Equipment Used

A variety of VRT formats was used in the courtroom. A number of respondents in each case type were unable to recall the format used. Table 3 provides an aggregate of the formats used in each case type.

Table 3: Types of VRT Formats Used by Case Type

	Felony (n=41)	Misd. (n=36)	Delinquency (n=10)	Dependency (n=15)	Civil Unlimited (n=19)	Family (n=27)	Probate (n=5)
Skype	8	2	4	9	10	10	2
Video CourtCall	4	1	2	1	12	7	0
WebEx	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Cisco TelePresence	0	5	0	0	1	0	1
FaceTime	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Polycom Video	3	2	0	2	0	0	0
In-House, Network Based	5	13	2	5	1	5	0
Other	7	1	2	0	5	3	0
Don't Know	13	12	3	3	8	8	2

WebEx was used in one of the two traffic matters captured in the survey, and the one respondent using VRT in small claims used the Polycom Video format.

Objections to VRT Use

Respondents were asked whether objections were raised to the use of VRT in the proceeding. Table 4 shows the responses of those noting objection.

Table 4: Objections Heard by Case Type

	Felony	Misd.	Delinquency	Dependency	Civil Unlimited	Family	Probate
Based on constitutional or statutory grounds	3/29	1/22	0/10	1/7	5/20	0/16	1/5
Based on insufficiency/inadequacy of the VRT equipment	3/28	0/22	0/10	0/7	1/20	0/16	1/5
Based on VRT not being secure	1/27	0/22	0/10	0/7	0/20	0/16	0/5
Based on VRT potentially creating calendaring/scheduling problems if VRT fails	1/27	0/22	0/10	0/7	1/20	0/16	0/5
Based on insufficient/inadequate control of testimony or exhibits at remote location	0/26	0/22	0/10	1/7	3/20	0/16	0/5

Resolving Objections

Most objections based on constitutional or statuary grounds were overruled. However, where the defendant in a felony case objected to the use of video, and the conservatee in a probate matter insisted on being physically present at the hearing, objections were sustained.

Other objections were generally overruled, or they were resolved through stipulation of counsel.

Overall Satisfaction and Experience with VRT

Approximately 81% (57) of the respondents (n=70) expressed satisfaction with VRT, 46% (32) expressing that they were *very* satisfied. About 16% (11) were neutral and 2.8% (2) expressed dissatisfaction.

Generally, respondents believed that the technology functioned well (as planned) and parties/lawyers were satisfied with its use (51%; 35 respondents). Although there were technological problems, 40.6% (28) responded that proceedings went forward and most lawyers/parties were generally satisfied (36.2%; 25). Three percent indicated that the technological problems were so great that the proceedings had to continue without VRT.

Responding to questions about their overall impressions of VRT (n=65), 40% (26) believed it was equivalent to having the entire proceeding and all parties/witnesses in the physical courtroom. About 52% (34) believed that something was lost by not having everyone in one courtroom but that the loss did not affect the ultimate result. For one respondent, VRT made it too difficult to do his/her job, and absent extraordinary circumstances, that officer would prefer to have everyone in the courtroom.

Perspective of Those Who Had Never Used VRT in the Courtroom

Approximately 50% of respondents who had never used VRT said that they would consider mandating VRT in their courtroom, on appropriate occasions, if legally permissible and beneficial to the timely and efficient administration of justice (see table 5).

Table 5: Opinions Best Describing Present View of VRT
Total Population (n=56)

Answer Choices	Responses Percentage (#)
I might be amenable to VRT, but only if stipulated by the parties.	14.4 (35)
I would be amenable to VRT, regardless of stipulation, if I had some confidence in the efficacy of the technology.	23.5 (57)
I would consider mandating VRT in my courtroom if legally permissible and beneficial to the timely and efficient administration of justice.	48.9 (119)
I would prefer not using VRT in my courtroom.	9.1 (22)
Other	3.7 (9)
Decline to state	0.4 (1)

There were several write-ins as well, including but not limited to the following:

- I would consider it if appropriate and legal.
- I might be amenable depending on the circumstances.
- It depends on the situation. In criminal cases, it is more limited.
- Perhaps a good idea for certain types of scheduling—non-substantive types of hearings.
- I am open to the idea.

Recommendations and General Comments

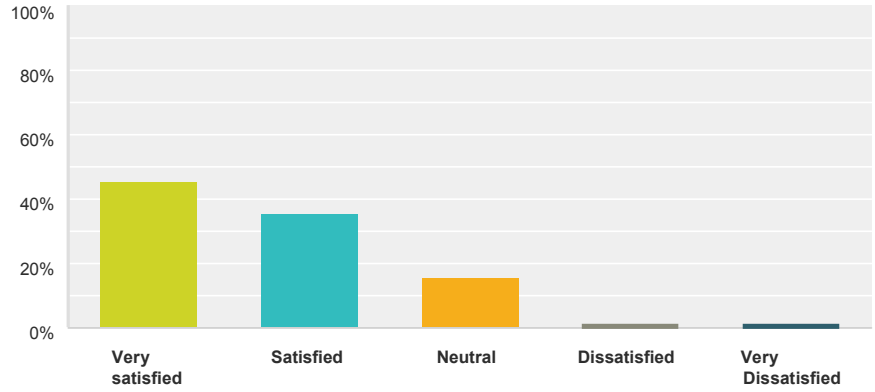
Responses for recommendations and general comments were raised, and they are presented verbatim in Appendix A.

Appendix A

Questions 291 through 298 of the survey addressed overall satisfaction with use of VRT in the courtroom, as well as any recommendations or general comments respondents wished to express. These responses are included below.

Q291 Moving away from case type–specific questions, please rate your overall satisfaction with VRT in the courtroom:

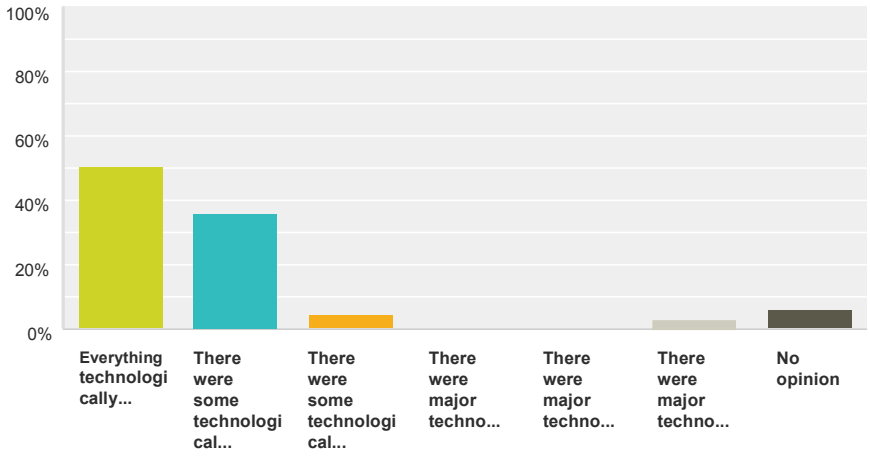
Answered: 70 Skipped: 263



Answer Choices	Responses	
Very satisfied	**45.71%**	32
Satisfied	**35.71%**	25
Neutral	**15.71%**	11
Dissatisfied	**1.43%**	1
Very Dissatisfied	**1.43%**	1
Total		**70**

Q292 My overall experience with VRT in the courtroom can best be summarized as:

Answered: 69 Skipped: 264

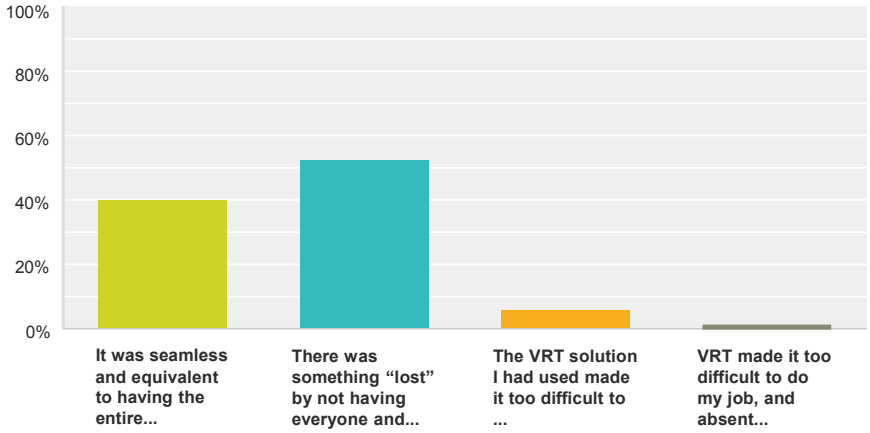


Answer Choices	Responses
Everything technologically went as planned and lawyers/parties were satisfied.	**50.72%** 35
There were some technological problems but proceedings went forward and lawyers/parties appeared generally satisfied.	**36.23%** 25
There were some technological problems but proceedings went forward. However, lawyers/parties did not always appear satisfied.	**4.35%** 3
There were major technological problems but they were resolved and proceedings went forward. Lawyers/parties appeared generally satisfied.	**0.00%** 0
There were major technological problems but they were resolved and proceedings went forward. Lawyers/parties did not always appear satisfied.	**0.00%** 0
There were major technological problems and we had to proceed without VRT.	**2.90%** 2
No opinion	**5.80%** 4
Total	**69**

#	Other (please specify)
1	Arraignments went smoothly.
2	Non-court equipment worked fine; court equipment was too old, and sound and connection were issues.
3	When we would lose video feed, we would switch to Tele conference mode while the system was reviewed and restarted. It did not happen frequently.
4	The situation was ordered on the defendant.
5	The demo worked fine. Video will eliminate the need to interrupt a speaker who speaks continuously.
6	I was very sorry to see the program discontinued. In the downtown courthouse where I used the system, that occurred in 2002 or 2003.

Q293 My overall impression of using VRT in the courtroom can be best summarized as:

Answered: 65 Skipped: 268



Answer Choices	Responses
It was seamless and equivalent to having the entire proceeding and all parties and witnesses in the physical courtroom.	**40.00%** 26
There was something "lost" by not having everyone and everything in one courtroom, but that loss did not affect the ultimate result and was offset by the advantage of convenience.	**52.31%** 34
The VRT solution I had used made it too difficult to do my job, but I would consider using VRT again if the technology itself was improved.	**6.15%** 4
VRT made it too difficult to do my job, and absent extraordinary circumstances, I need to have everyone in the courtroom.	**1.54%** 1
Total	**65**

#	Other (please specify)
1	VRT is a MUST with court budgets limiting hours and closing courts. It is not NEW technology. It is only new to the court.
2	Due to IT labor needed to set up and confirm available technology on both sides.
3	Attorney provided Skype capability on laptop.
4	The hearing was in an LPS/mental health case, which you did not list.
5	Local public defenders too often MUTE the microphone at jail.
6	It was a little awkward getting it set up and running, but once that was accomplished, it was a great asset.
7	Would be satisfied if the equipment was reliable.
8	The clerk in my courtroom felt there was something lost in the process. For her, the recollection of cases, parties, and faces was lost in the process.
9	See above.
10	Just scratching the surface of the possible

Q294 Based on your experience with VRT, what would you recommend to trial court judges who are considering VRT in their courtrooms?

Answered: 46 Skipped: 287

#	Responses
1	Have a Plan B in case the technology fails you.
2	Based on experiences in our courtroom that uses VRT for felony arraignments for prison inmates, I would recommend that there be two TV monitors in the courtroom. One monitor would be focused on the judge and attorneys in the courtroom at all times, and the other monitor would be focused on the inmate and counsel at the prison.
3	I think it is a good alternative, especially with budget cuts.
4	Only proceed if all parties stipulate.
5	Try it, you'll like it.
6	Absolutely.
7	Give it a try but pick the right case.
8	Encourage expanded use with adequate infrastructure and training (judicial officers and staff).
9	It does work, but it does make it difficult for the attorney to speak confidentially with client. They need to have another device available for off-record conversations.
10	The only thing lost on taking pleas via VRT is that the judge does not have the plea form in court. I have noticed a few errors on plea forms that required "fixes"/waivers on future court dates.
11	Cautiously, yes. The downside is the impact on the jury—i.e., not as effective as a live witness.
12	I think it is a useful tool that can work for certain cases.
13	Yes.
14	This can be an efficient use of resources, particularly when handling routine matters.
15	The biggest problems come when the client is separated from counsel. This means they cannot consult privately with one another. When we have used it, we have a backup setup in a private room. If the client and counsel need to consult with each other during the proceedings, we adjourn and they used the backup setup with which they can consult privately. I have only used VRT with a bench trial. This arrangement would not be possible with a jury sitting around waiting, in my opinion.
16	It is too cumbersome for general use.
17	VRT use is a means to cut down on continuances and also reduces the load on the Sheriff and California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) to transport inmates for brief appearances.
18	Generally use VRT, but check and double check all technology first prior to using it. Have the IT expert on standby and ready to handle any problems.
19	yes
20	Contact other courts for best options. Attend national conference (offered every two years) and view options.
21	If you can get good equipment, software, etc., it is a distinct advantage and promotes access especially in rural areas.
22	YES
23	yes
24	Make sure the equipment is operating correctly, and have someone available to help if it is not. Someone needs to make sure that any documents, such as a complaint, are available in duplicate at both locations.
25	Depends on the type of case.
26	Yes!
27	One size does not fit all. Decide what is best for their court.
28	A LOCAL RULE PROHIBITING 'MUTING' DURING THE HEARING ITSELF.

29	Proceedings go much smoother if you have your locations equipped and tested prior to proceedings, and have local procedures agreed upon for general use.
30	Yes.
31	Yes.
32	Use it
33	I recommend they try it and see if it works for their particular type of hearing.
34	If for criminal calendar, get buy-in from DA and PD.
35	Yes. It is time saving and equivalent to testimony in court, in my opinion.
36	Yes. What it provides is access to court services. It clearly has limits and should not be used in trials or contested hearings.
37	Absolutely. The proceedings we conduct are NGI Extensions (PC 1026.5 (b)), Restoration of Sanity/Outpatient Requests (PC 1026.2), MDO Extensions (PC 2970-72), and Marsden hearings. All with Napa State Hospital (NSH). The DA and the Judge are in the courtroom within sight of the 2-way camera. The court clerk is out of sight, as is court reporter. The Respondent, his/her attorney is with him/her at NSH, as are the witnesses (usually Doctors). Respondent and People waive jury and agree to VRT court trial.
38	Yes
39	Make sure you have good technology and good technological support and be prepared for delays.
40	yes
41	It will be a tremendous boost to the efficiency of CourtCall.
42	I would recommend that absent a really good reason, they do it.
43	I believe it is an excellent alternative, in appropriate cases, to live and in-court testimony or proceedings.
44	As we continue to deal with funding shortages and closures, we need to look to remote access for users.
45	To at least try it; it's very convenient.
46	Not necessary if you have audio CourtCall

Q295 Based on your experience with VRT, is there a particular type of VRT equipment or Internet-based software solution that you would recommend?

Answered: 31 Skipped: 302

#	Responses
1	no
2	I only have received testimony via Skype.
3	no
4	CourtCall video has worked fine.
5	I've only used Skype, but I am aware of other available software.
6	I do not know enough about it to be able to answer this.
7	None
8	Generally, in-house is best.
9	no
10	Insufficient experience with the options.
11	Don't have enough info. Only used for our appellate division hearings.
12	I HAVE COURT CALL. JUST NOT YET UTILIZED. RECOMMEND IT AND NEFSYS AND SKYPE.
13	In very limited experience, Video CourtCall has been OK.
14	No.
15	No knowledge re equipment.
16	No. Our system was developed by County IT for court and sheriff.
17	NO
18	No.
19	NO.
20	No
21	The Cisco system seems to work pretty well; we have only had one issue relating to the sound breaking up periodically at one hearing.
22	Our courthouse has equipment that runs through our computers. I don't know the type, but it works very well.
23	I would suggest that the answer to this question is one for the IT staff of the court who were in charge of putting our system into use.
24	We use an LCD monitor with camera as part of 2 way. It is a Cisco system.
25	No
26	No
27	Unknown
28	No
29	no
30	No.
31	no

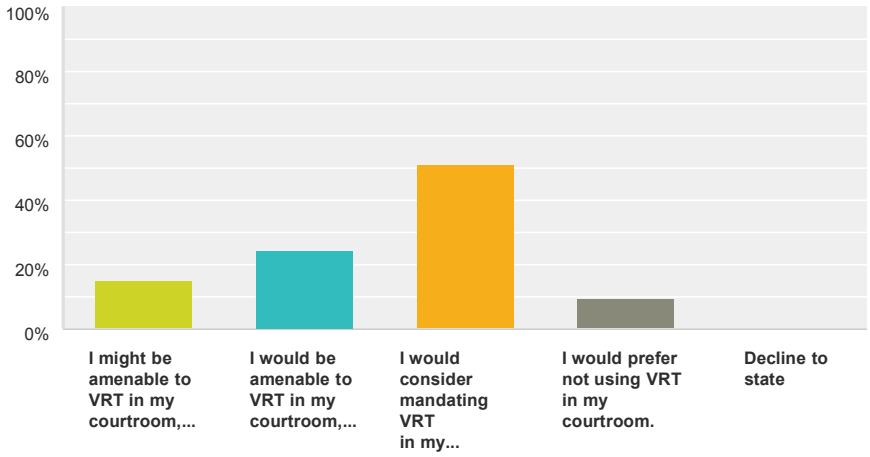
Q296 Based on your experience with VRT, is there a particular type of VRT equipment or Internet-based software solution that you would recommend avoiding?

Answered: 27 Skipped: 306

#	Responses
1	no
2	No
3	no
4	I do not know enough about it to be able to answer this.
5	None
6	no
7	Insufficient experience with the options.
8	same as above
9	NO
10	No
11	No.
12	No knowledge re equipment.
13	No opinion.
14	NO
15	No.
16	No
17	No
18	Those with poor computer on the other end as a fast-speed computer on the outside terminal prevents image distortion.
19	See last answer.
20	Skype. It is terrible for our purposes. We tried to use it. The resolution was bad; the sound was off. Probably shielding, etc., from the walls, etc.
21	No
22	WebEx?
23	Unknown
24	No
25	no
26	No.
27	no

Q297 Which of the following opinions best describes your present view?

Answered: 234 Skipped: 99



Answer Choices	Responses
I might be amenable to VRT in my courtroom, but only if stipulated to by all parties.	**14.96%** 35
I would be amenable to VRT in my courtroom, regardless of stipulation, if I had some confidence in the efficacy of the technology.	**24.36%** 57
I would consider mandating VRT in my courtroom, on appropriate occasions, if legally permissible and beneficial to the timely and efficient administration of justice.	**50.85%** 19
I would prefer not using VRT in my courtroom.	**9.40%** 22
Decline to state	**0.43%** 1
Total	**234**

#	Other (please specify)
1	I would consider if appropriate and legal.
2	See comments.
3	I might be amenable depending in circumstances.
4	some combination of the first three options
5	It depends on the situation. In criminal cases, it is more limited.
6	2 and 3 - legally permissible and confidence in the technology
7	Perhaps a good idea for certain types of scheduling / nonsubstantive type of hearings
8	I am in the process of implementing this now (web cams).
9	I am open to the idea.

Q298 Comments:

Answered: 32 Skipped: 301

#	Responses
1	Certain types of cases would be appropriate, such as cases with parties outside the area who cannot make it to court (in particular, custody disputes with parties living outside the area, etc.). Also cases with in-custody parties.
2	Anything that would allow for greater access would be great.
3	I would hope that all parties would stipulate and the technology would be sufficiently good that the lawyers and parties understand its value.
4	San Joaquin Superior Court is very interested in this technology and looks forward to the results of your survey. Thank you.
5	Given my assignment, Open Trial (misdemeanor trials and felony preliminary hearings), it is hard for me to see how VRT would be useful.
6	I believe the project and inquiry should be stopped at this time because I have no confidence that the AOC, and others associated with CCMS, has the ability to evaluate and/or effectuate technology programs in the best interests of the courts and taxpayers.
7	It would slow down civil proceedings
8	I sit in a family law department in San Bernardino County, the largest county in the United States. Some parties live hours from the courthouse, and some parties live outside of California. It is important that parties participate in custody, support, restraining order, and other requests to make informed decisions. VRT allows a party to appear from a remote location.
9	When I was an attorney I observed the use of the technology in the US Bankruptcy Court for the Eastern District of California and it worked very well.
10	From 6/2010 through 12/2012 I was assigned to a Family Law Department. Before that, I had a misdemeanor assignment. In FL, we had many litigants who spoke little or no English. The majority spoke Spanish, but we had need for interpreters in many other languages. In most Family Law proceedings, interpreters are not provided as a matter of right. We were able to request interpreter services but there was normally a delay before the interpreter was available. For some less common languages, matters would have to be continued to obtain an interpreter. I believed then and continue to believe that VRT could be a very effective way to provide and effective leverage interpreter services in Family Law matters, and particularly when the litigants speak less common languages or dialects.
11	In juvenile dependency it would be great. For delinquency generally the minor has to be there, but VRT would be helpful in many situations if that is the only way to have a litigant or another person participate in the hearing.
12	I do criminal matters. My initial sense is that I would use it for only or primarily for status conferences and case administration tasks.
13	In criminal cases, of course, there are limits on our ability to use VRT.
14	The VRT technology would have to be efficient to operate.
15	This is infraction court, almost entirely pro per. It is hard to manage in person. I cannot imagine courtroom control with VRT.
16	Given courtroom closure and lack of access to services in areas of Siskiyou County, VRT would support access to justice.
17	By “efficacy,” all I would need to be confident in is the ability of the “remote” party to hear and see what was happening in the courtroom, and for the in-court participants to also see and hear the remote party.
18	Many parents in Juvenile dependency proceedings have a right to be present at hearings in which the statute offers few options to their outcome (i.e., no reunification services because the parents are in prison beyond the statutory time limit). It would save the state and county millions of dollars and the children greater stability if the proceeding did not need to be delayed for statewide transportation of those parents.
19	I have a long-cause felony assignment, so must be very cautious.
20	I welcome the opportunity to increase access and minimize expense if the rights of the parties are not impaired. We should use technology for that purpose.
21	In place of CourtCall. Still problems with documents.
22	I preside over juvenile dependency matters. I see VRT, in limited circumstances, as a useful tool to secure more parental involvement—especially for those parents who live outside of the state or country.

23	The nature of the proceeding is important. I would be more amenable for non-trial proceedings such as civil pretrial motions and hearings. Depending on the nature of the testimony and nature of the witness's testimony, I may be less amenable for trial testimony.
24	Might make a difference if it is for purposes of appearance of attorney at hearing versus witness at trial
25	I have had bad experiences with audio remote technology and I see this as only a slight improvement if that. It might even be worse. There is much abuse of the process and it makes court proceedings more difficult and less productive for the judge and the judicial system. It's great for the attorneys but not the court.
26	I have had discussions with a colleague who has utilized VRT and found the system to work very well.
27	For non-minor dependents have review hearings every six months and VRT might be an effective tool for them to participate in hearings that they otherwise would not attend
28	Through VRT would it be possible for the participant(s) to see documents that may be presented to the Court for review and/or evidence?
29	We need the legal infrastructure (Rules of Court) to allow testimony by video appearance in some case types.
30	Absolutely in support of it
31	unnecessary interference in the judicial process
32	Litigants deserve more: an appearance in an actual courtroom, face to face with the judge.