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# Press Notice

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## Top judges cutting paper

Justices of the Supreme Court will tomorrow embark on a ‘test case’ aimed at significantly reducing the amount of paper consumed by the court during the hearing process. Apart from a ‘core bundle’ of around 600 pages, the case, being heard by the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council (JCPC), will use an electronic system for sharing documents – a move which could eventually save more than 1.25 million sheets of paper every year if the pilot is extended to every case heard by the Supreme Court and the JCPC.

The barristers appearing at the appeal hearing in four linked cases involving Kyrgyz Mobil Tel Ltd, due to last five days, will refer to an electronic file containing more than 18,000 pages of scanned material. Each of the five Justices hearing the appeal, along with the advocates addressing them, will be equipped with a monitor controlled by a member of the relevant solicitors’ team, to display the page to which the advocate is referring.

The innovation by the UK’s highest appeal judges follows similar steps by lower courts to cut down on paper usage. A number of corporate fraud cases have been supported by electronic document management systems to enable navigation of the large volume of disclosable documents involved, and a number of major public inquiries have adopted the approach, including the Bloody Sunday Inquiry.

Estimates suggest that the average Supreme Court and JCPC case relies on 10 bundles of papers for every official, totalling around 2,500 sides of printing per person – in turn equating to approximately 13,000 sheets of paper per case.

Jenny Rowe, Chief Executive of the Supreme Court of the United Kingdom, comments: “Apart from the time and cost savings that could be achieved by using less paper, the sheer volume presently generated by court cases represents a significant environmental impact, even though at the Supreme Court we always use partially recycled paper.”

**The Supreme Court of the United Kingdom**

Parliament Square London SW1P 3BD T: 020 7960 1886/1887 F: 020 7960 1901 [www.supremecourt.gov.uk](http://www.supremecourt.gov.uk)

“It will be some years before advocates and judges feel fully comfortable with the idea of an entirely electronic document management system, but we hope this pilot will demonstrate to a range of stakeholders that it is possible.”

**Ends**

**UKSC contacts:**

Sian Lewis  
Tel: 020 7960 1886  
sian.lewis@supremecourt.gsi.gov.uk

Ben Wilson  
Tel: 020 7960 1887  
ben.wilson@supremecourt.gsi.gov.uk