CM/ECF
Creditor Manual

For Filing Claims and Claims Related Documents

December, 2004

CM/ECF Creditor Manual
Table of Contents

1	Accessing CM/ECF
2	Converting Documents to PDF
3	Proofs of Claim
4	Miscellaneous Creditor Filings: • Appraisals of Property • Assignment of Claim • Reaffirmation Agreements • Requests for Notice • Motions for Withdrawal of Unclaimed Funds • Withdrawals of Claim

Accessing CM/ECF

The CM/ECF system is a web based software program. At this time Netscape Navigator 4.7 (or earlier versions) web browser has been tested and recommended for use with this program.[1] CM/ECF court users process cases through the federal courts' restricted intranet while attorneys and other public users will submit pleadings and view case data from the internet. Both court and external users have different levels of access to screens via menu selections and functionality as determined by their needs.

STEP 1 To access the court web site, open Netscape Navigator and enter the URL (address) of the court's computer in the browser's Location field. **(See Figure 1.)** Familiarity with browser navigation and functionality is recommended for successful and efficient use of this system.

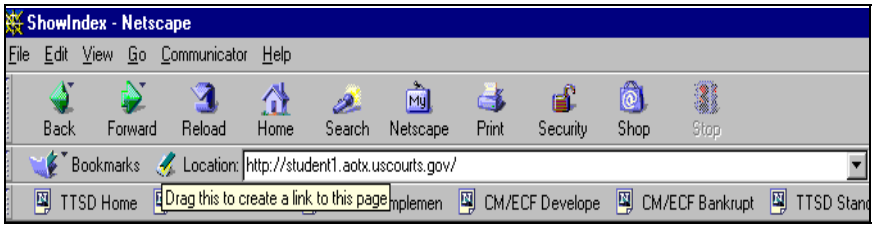
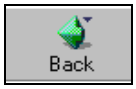


Figure 1

NOTE: For quick access to this site in the future, set a bookmark or create a button on your navigation bar, **(See Figure1.)**

The Back button on your Netscape navigation bar can be used to back up in case processing or queries at any time. 

You will find that the Back button and the Forward button will allow you added flexibility in case processing.

[1] Users will be notified when Internet Explorer and more recent versions of Netscape can successfully be used for CM/ECF.

STEP 2 The **CM/ECF CERTIFICATE NAME CHECK** screen may display next. You may see a series of security screens similar to this.

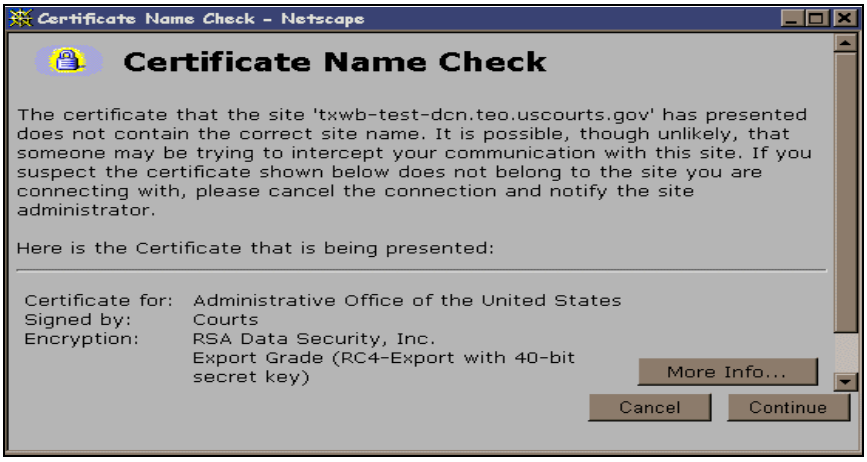


Figure 2

- Click **[Continue]** and read the security information until the **[Finish]** button appears.

STEP 3 **Logins and Passwords**
Internet users (attorneys, trustees and, in some courts, certain creditors) will use two sets of logins and passwords; one for CM/ECF filing and the other for Public Access to Electronic Records (PACER) access for queries and reports. Registered Internet users will see a login screen as pictured below. **(See Figure 3a.)**

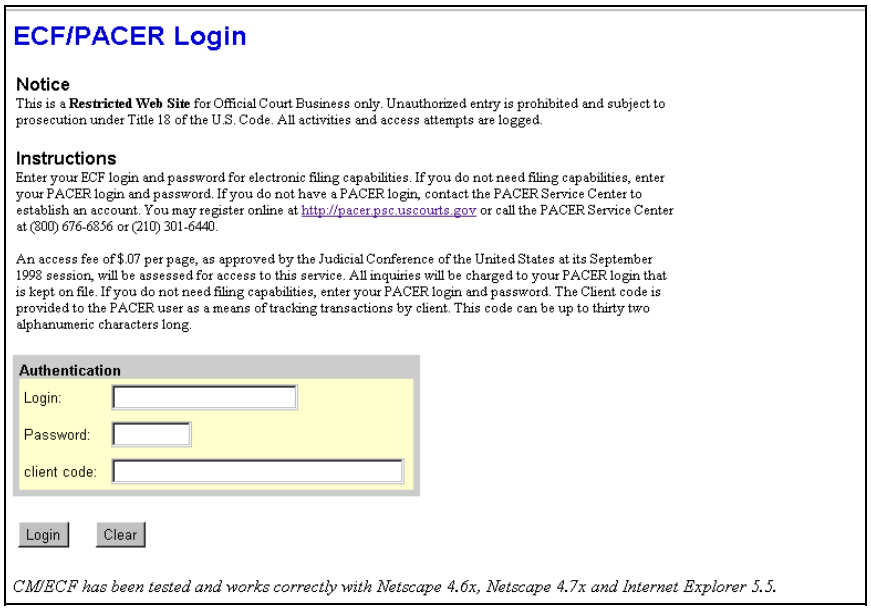


Figure 3a

Participants will initially enter their CM/ECF login and password which has been issued

by the court on this screen. This login and password allows electronic filing of documents, not access to reports or queries.
Most courts consider the registered user's login and password the electronic equivalent of their signature. This concept is generally incorporated into the court's General Order on Electronic Filing or by Local rule.

Your **Login** and **Password** fields are case sensitive. A login of thomask should not be entered as ThomasK or THOMASK. The password cannot exceed 8 characters and should not include special characters (%,#,$,%).

The **client code** field is optional and is used for PACER users to associate this activity to specific customers.

If an error is made entering login and password information before submitting the screen, clicking on the **[Clear]** button will delete the data and allow you to reenter information.

This login screen will subsequently appear when web users select any report or query selection from a CM/ECF menu. The PACER program charges 7¢ per page. After running a report or query, a PACER summary of pages and costs will appear at the end. A user will be advised of how many pages have been selected before accepting the information and/or charges for pdf documents only.

PACER information and registration is available at http://pacer.psc.uscourts.gov/

The PACER Service Center bills users only when annual usage exceeds $9.99, e.g., If on December 31, a participant owes $9.56, no bill will be issued for that year and a new billing cycle will begin January 1 of the next year. Copies of case files are still available at the court for $.50 per page.

All users are personally responsible for activity with their logins. Participants can also be given access to maintain their login and password, address and e-mail preferences.

The PACER site also offers free Internet access to a series of CM/ECF tutorials for attorneys and other web users through a series of Computer Based Training (CBT) modules. No login or password or charge is required for this feature. The lessons can be done at your PC in individual modules at the convenience of the student. Screens replicate the CM/ECF environment and are interactive.

Access to this resource is available at http://www.pacer.psc.uscourts.gov/ecfcbt/.

The court user CM/ECF login screen is pictured in **Figure 3b**.

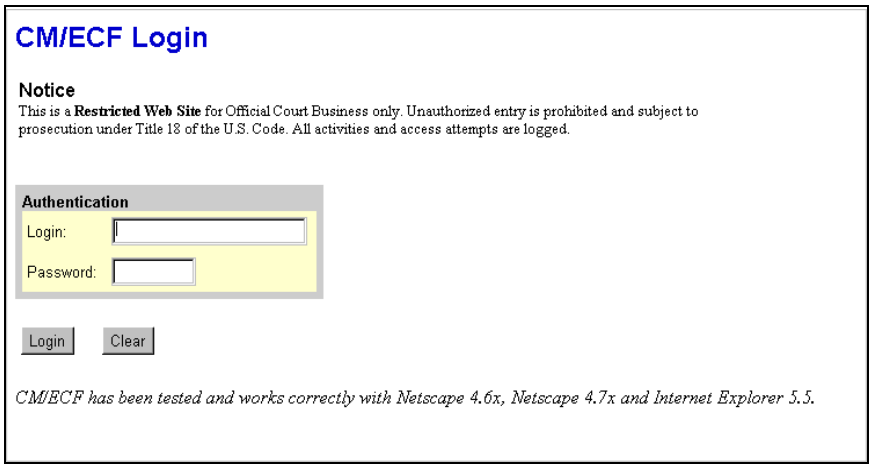


Figure 3b

STEP 4 The **CM/ECF MAIN MENU** screen is pictured in Figure 4.

Figure 4

Access to the various modules are provided by the blue Main Menu Bar at the top of the screen. Each selection is a hyperlink to another set of options or hyperlinks allowing participants to file documents, query, view or print a docket sheet, generate reports or maintain the system.

This menu is also used to exit the system. The preferred method to exit CM/ECF is to click the **Logout** hypertext link on the CM/ECF Main Menu Bar.

Public Access

Bankruptcy case information on CM/ECF is available to the public through participating court Internet sites. For instance, the bankruptcy court in the Eastern District of Virginia can be accessed by typing this URL, www.vaeb.uscourts.gov, in the Location Box of your browser. A PACER login is universal and may be used at multiple courts for access to reports and queries.

Inquiries can be made through Public Case Query which provides search capabilities by case number or name. **(See Figure 5.)**

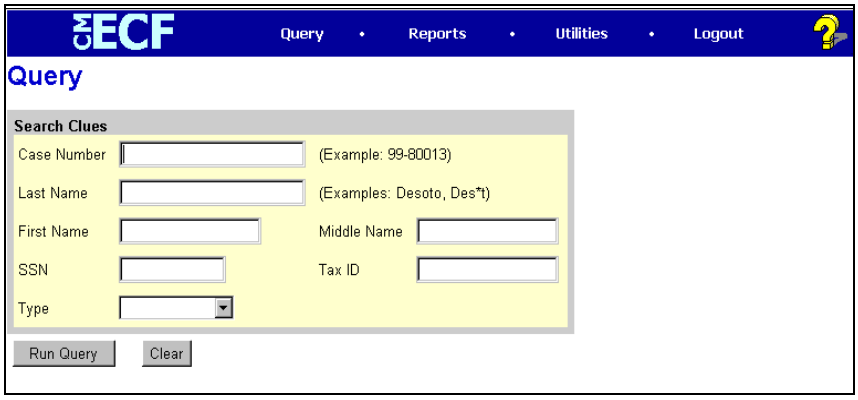


Figure 5

PACER gives participants access to a CM/ECF court calendar, a cases report, claims register, creditor matrix and case docket sheets. This information is current and is updated with activity in real time.

CM/ECF registered users can subscribe to electronic notification of any filing on any case within the district. These notices are received through the participants e-mail program. Notices can be monitored throughout the day or by requesting a daily summary of activity of all the cases they have signed up for. Every user can access a copy of the PDF document that has been filed **once without charge**. It is advisable to save or print this file. Subsequent requests through the document's hyperlink will produce the standard PACER login screen and the user will be charged the appropriate amount per page.

Creating a PDF Document

There are two primary methods for creating PDF documents: formatting text documents into PDF at the time of creation or scanning imaged documents from paper into PDF. Of these two methods, formatting at the time of creation is preferable. This method reduces the amount of labor involved, requires less storage space, and allows for text search capability.

When Adobe Acrobat is installed on your system, the PDF Writer installs a printer driver. Therefore, when text document is converted to PDF format it is done similarly to printing the document. Users will often refer to PDF creation as “printing the document in PDF.”

The PDF Writer is the recommended tool for creating PDF documents from word processing programs. Adobe Acrobat also contains a tool called the Acrobat Distiller. The Acrobat Distiller gives more precise control for documents containing graphics or embedded images.

The PDF Writer is the more basic of the two and works well for simple text documents. The PDF Writer works well for court documents which rarely contain graphics.

Creating PDF Files from Word Processors

Converting a word processed document to a PDF file is as simple as printing it to a standard printer if you have Adobe Acrobat installed on your computer. Once you have completed the word processed document or have opened a saved word processed file, you proceed as follows:

- Select File > Print, ***Figure 1.***

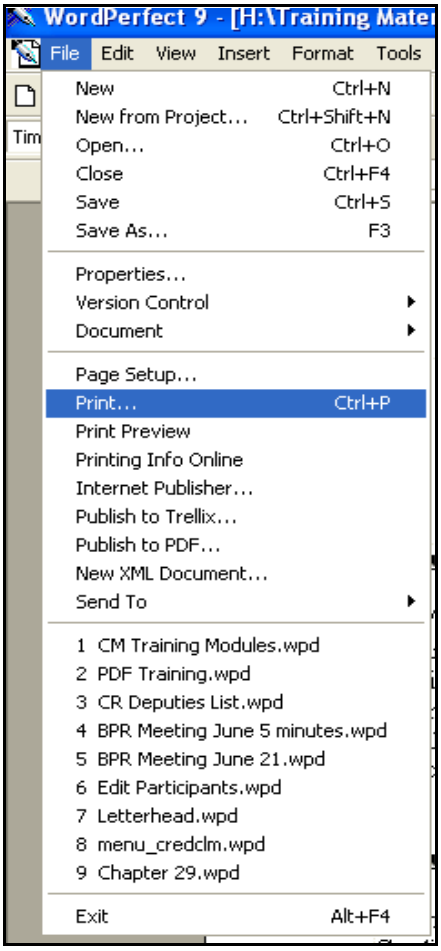


Figure 1

- Choose Acrobat PDF Writer from the Name menu in the printer selection box, ***Figure 2***, and click **[Print]**.

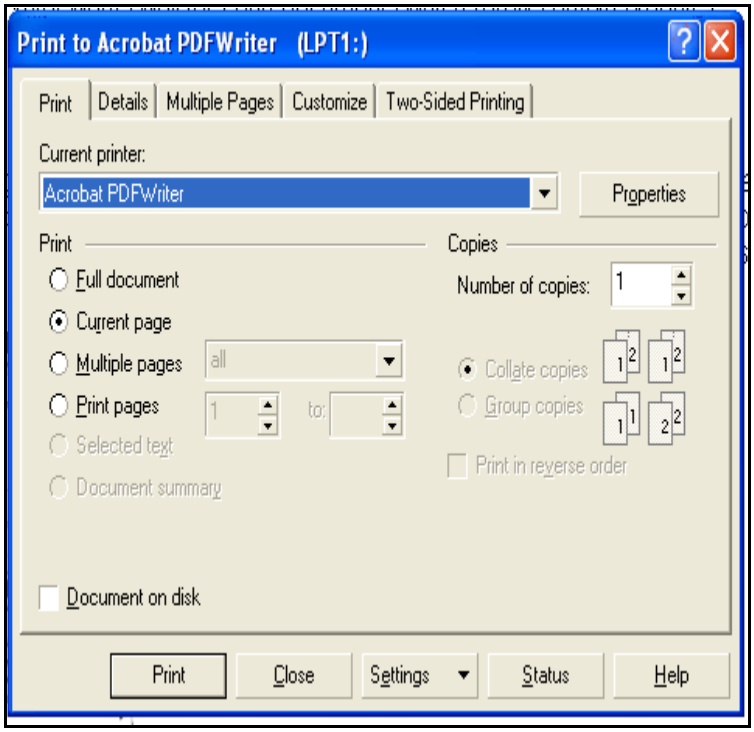


Figure 2

- In the Save PDF File As dialog box, ***Figure 3***, choose the location to save the PDF document/file. Enter a file name for your document/file and verify that the "Save as type" contains the extension for PDF files (*.PDF). Click **[Save]**.

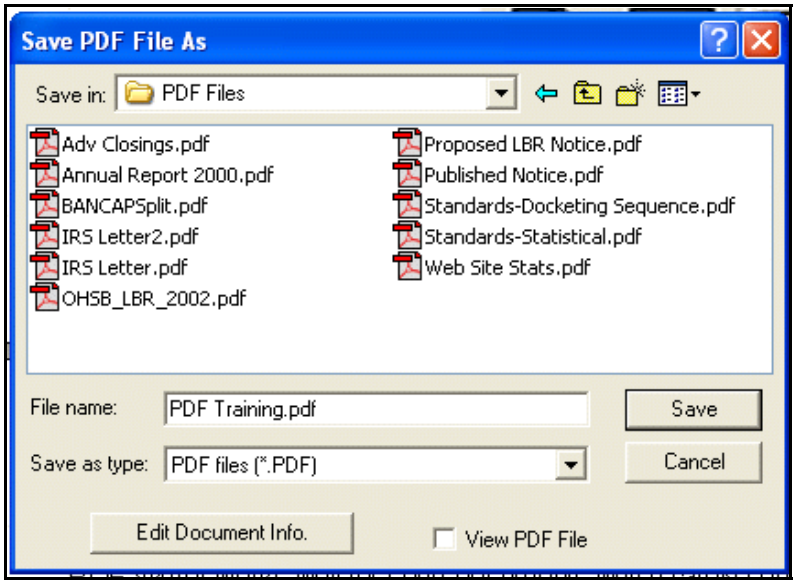


Figure 3

- Your word processed document has now been saved as a PDF document/file.

Scanning Paper Documents into PDF

For those documents that must be imaged, the preferred method is to scan the document directly into PDF format using Adobe Acrobat. Scanning to a format other than PDF adds both delay and labor. It requires not only the document to be scanned but also to be converted into PDF format after scanning. The process for scanning a document directly into PDF format is as follows:

- Launch Adobe Acrobat. This may be done by clicking on the Adobe Acrobat icon or by clicking on Start > Programs > Adobe Acrobat.

- Select File > Import > Scan, ***Figure 4***.

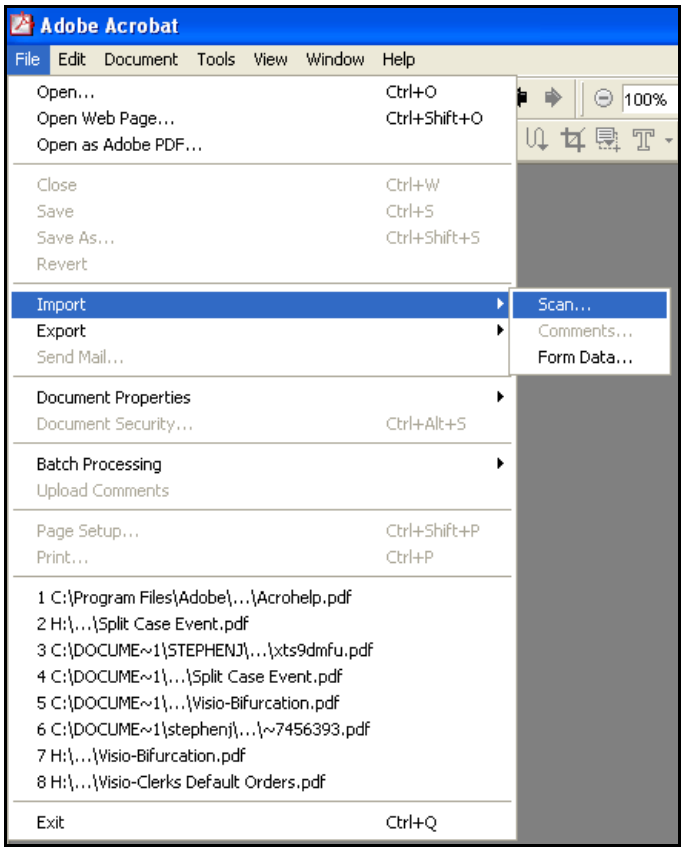


Figure 4

- An Acrobat Scan Plug-in dialog box will appear, ***Figure 5***. Verify the correct scanning device and format; then click **[Scan]**.

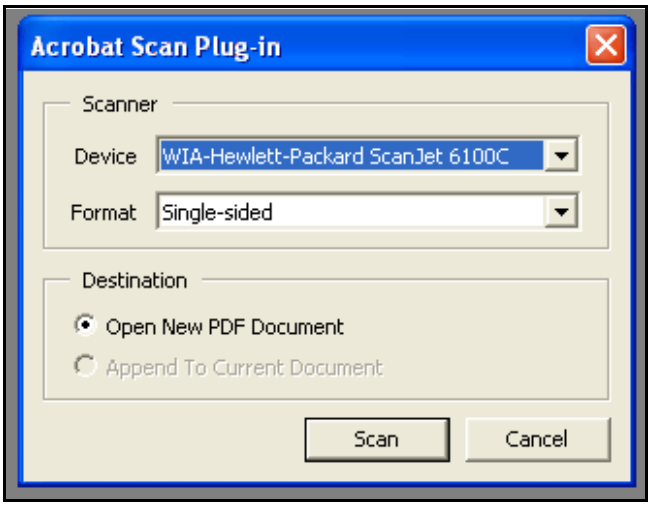


Figure 5

- A scan dialog box will appear, ***Figure 6***. Select the appropriate setting for the document you are scanning. Almost always, the document should be scanned in black and white, so that the file size will be as small as possible. However, there are some documents (those with shaded boxes, for example) that may need grayscale instead. Click **[Scan]**.

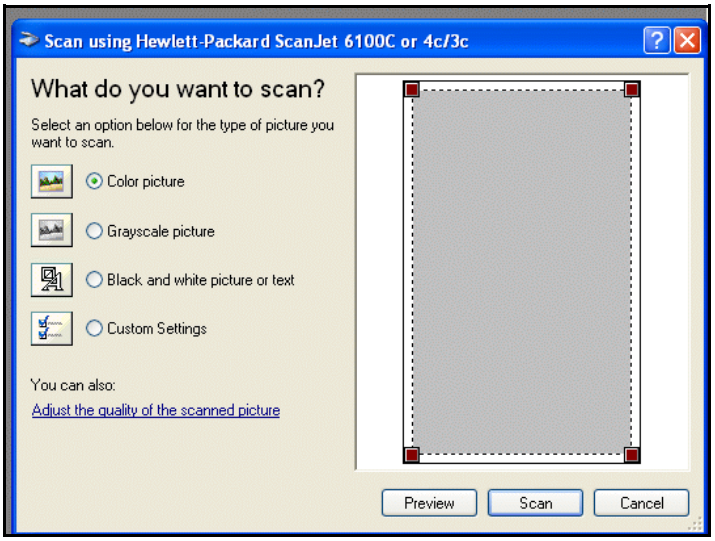


Figure 6

Note: Scan dialog boxes will vary depending on printer brands and/or models.

- Another Acrobat Scan Plug-in dialog box will appear, ***Figure 7***. If multiple pages are being scanned, remove the previously scanned page from your scanner and insert the next page to be scanned; click **[Next]**. Once you have scanned all pages, click **[Done]**.

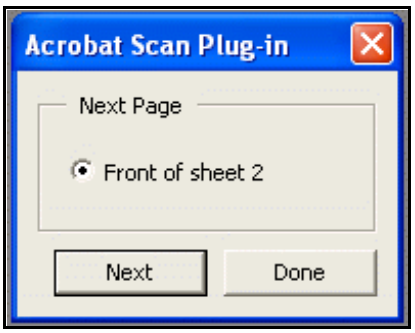


Figure 7

- Once you have clicked the **[Done]** button, Adobe will open up your scanned document. The document can now be saved as a PDF file by selecting File > Save/Save As.

- In the Save PDF File As dialog box, ***Figure 8***, choose the location to save the PDF document/file. Enter a file name for your document/file and verify that the "Save as type" contains the extension for PDF files (*.PDF). Click **[Save]**.

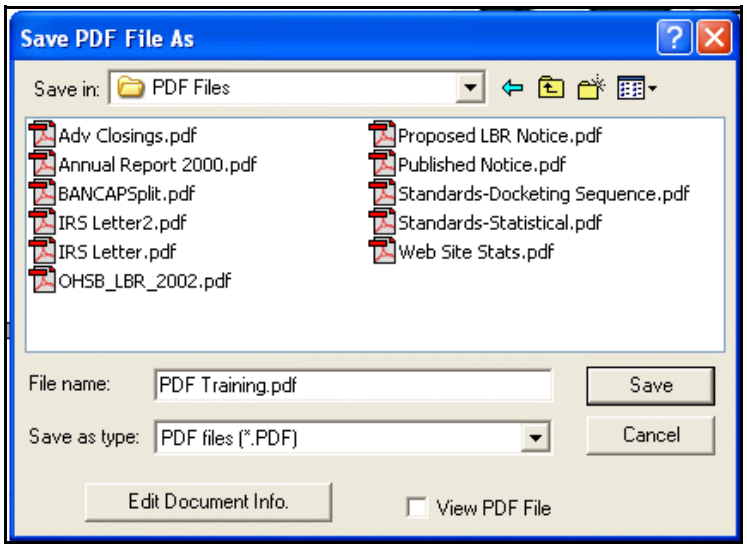


Figure 8

Proofs of Claim

When a proof of claim is filed in CM/ECF, the claim will be attached to the creditor record of the claimant. One must first locate the creditor by searching the creditor database and then enter the corresponding claim.

Most often the creditor filing the claim already resides in the creditor database. If the creditor cannot be located in the case, they should first be added to the creditor database. The Creditor Addition section of this manual provides instructions for adding a creditor.

In the following exercise, the creditor is already on the case. Other lessons show how to add creditors to the creditor database by uploading the matrix or adding each record separately.

Internet users will access CM/ECF through PACER and will use two different sets of logins and passwords; one for CM/ECF filing and the other for PACER access to queries and reports.

This module will assume that the internet user has accessed the court's web site with their court assigned CM/ECF login and password.

STEP 1 Click the Bankruptcy hyperlink on the CM/ECF Main Menu. **(See Figure 1.)**

Figure 1

STEP 2 The **BANKRUPTCY EVENTS** screen displays. **(See Figure 2.)**

- Click on the File Claims hyperlink.

Figure 2

STEP 3 The **CREDITOR SEARCH** screen will display. **(See Figure 3.)**

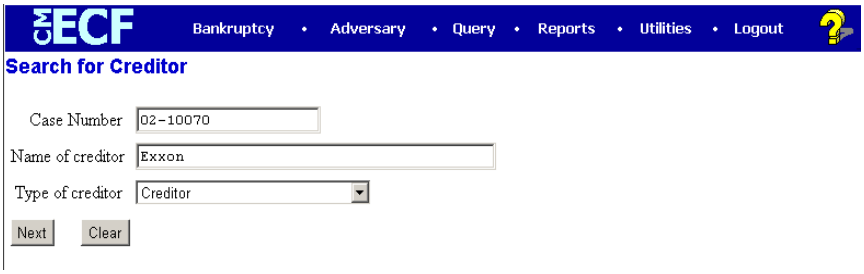


Figure 3

- Click in the **Case Number** box and enter the correct case number in *YY-NNNNN* format.
- Enter the **Name of creditor** filing the claim. Additional search clues are shown below.

Search Hints for Creditor Database:

1. Include punctuation. (O'Brien or Garcia-Barrera)
2. Partial names can be entered. (Smi)
3. Significant words or names are effective. (Radio for Radio Shack and Northwest Radiology)
4. Try alternate search clues if your first search is not successful.
5. Wild cards are not required but may be used.

NOTE: Do not change the default of **Creditor** in the **Type of Creditor** box. When a matrix is uploaded into the system, the Creditor Type field defaults to **Creditor.**

The **Creditor Type** must match the creditor information. If creditors are stored on the database as a different **Creditor Type** you will have to search by that Type. A creditor with a **Creditor Type** of **Notice of Appearance** will not be found unless the **Creditor Type** field is changed to **Notice of Appearance**.

- Click **[Next]** to search the creditor database for this claimant.

STEP 4 The **CREDITOR SELECTION** screen will then display the creditor(s) who match the search criteria. **(See Figure 4a.)**

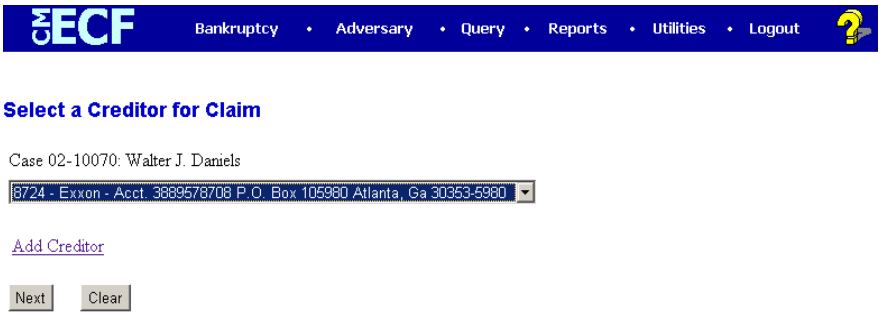


Figure 4a

NOTE: If no search criteria was entered in the search Name of Creditor field, all creditors belonging to the case will be found. Click on the drop-down arrow to display all of the creditors **(See Figure 4b.)**

Figure 4b

- Select the desired creditor by clicking on it with your mouse if using the drop-down select window.

  If you are unable to find a creditor, or if an existing creditor's address does not match, after using various search criteria, the Add Creditor hyperlink allows you to add a creditor to the case (refer to the Creditor Addition section on page 8 for instructions on how to add a creditor).

- Click **[Next]** to continue adding a Proof of Claim.

STEP 5 The **PROOF OF CLAIM INFORMATION** screen displays fields for each claim. **(See Figure 5.)**

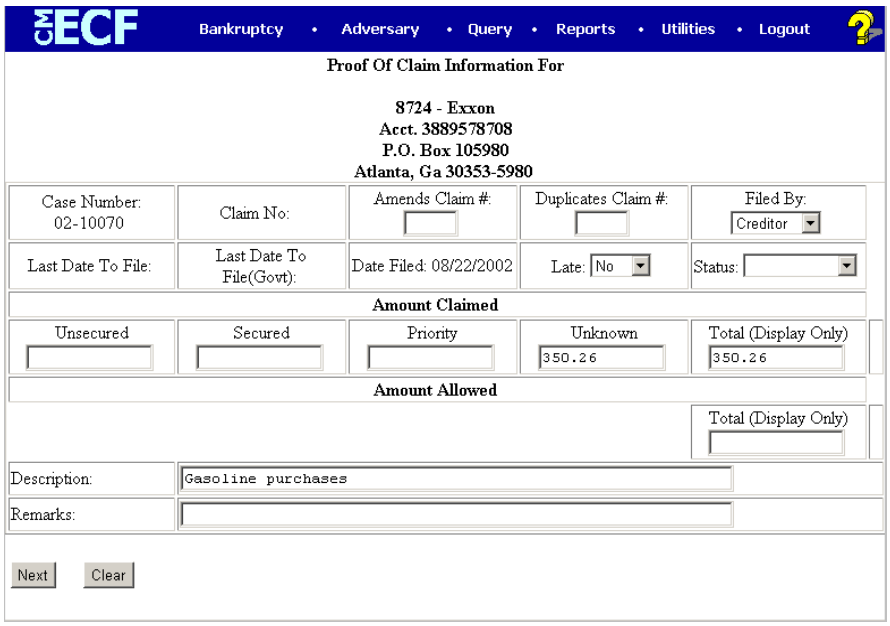


Figure 5

- Enter the data in the appropriate fields for the claim. Do not enter the "$" or commas in the dollar amount fields. Values default to whole dollars. Decimals are accepted but not required.
- Enter the **Amount Claimed** in the appropriate category. Amounts will total automatically and will appear on the Claims Register.
  Amounts should **NOT** be entered in the **Total (Display Only)** field.
- The **Filed By** field offers the options of attorney, creditor, debtor, or trustee.
- The optional **Status** field displays the Claim status of Allow, Amend, Expunge, Reclassify, Reduce, Withdraw. These values are controlled by your local court.
- The **Description** and **Remarks** fields will appear on the Claims Register. Both fields are 255 characters long.
- The **Total Amount Claimed** and the **Total Amount Allowed** fields total the values of Unsecured, Secured, Priority and Unknown. An aggregate total of all claims is included at the end of the Claims Register.
- When you have completed this screen, click **[Next]** to associate the PDF file of the claim with this filing.

STEP 6 The **PDF Document** screen displays. **(See Figure 6a.)**

Figure 6a

- A PDF image of the claim is required.
- Click **[Browse]**, then navigate to the directory where the appropriate PDF file is located and select it with your mouse.
  - To make certain you are about to associate the correct claim file for this entry, right click on the filename with your mouse and select **Open**. **(See Figure 6b.)**

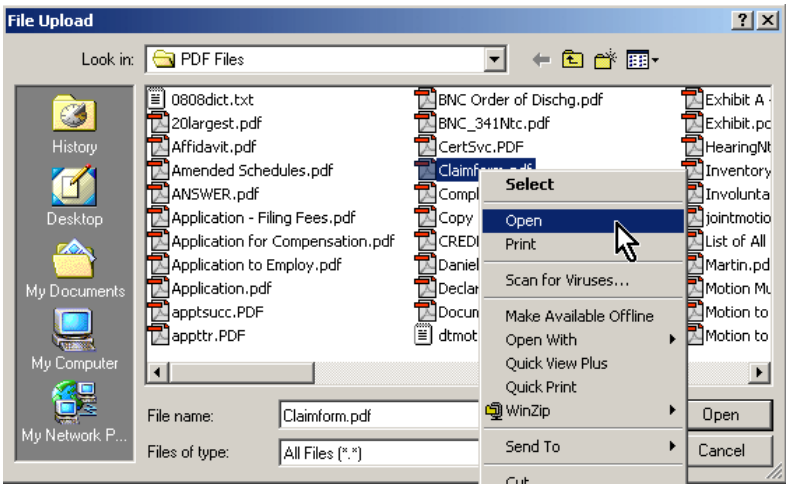


Figure 6b

  - This will launch the Adobe Acrobat Reader to display the image of the claim. Verify that it is correct.
  - Close or minimize the Adobe application after verifying the file, then click on the **Open** button on the File Upload dialogue box. **(See Figure 6c.)**

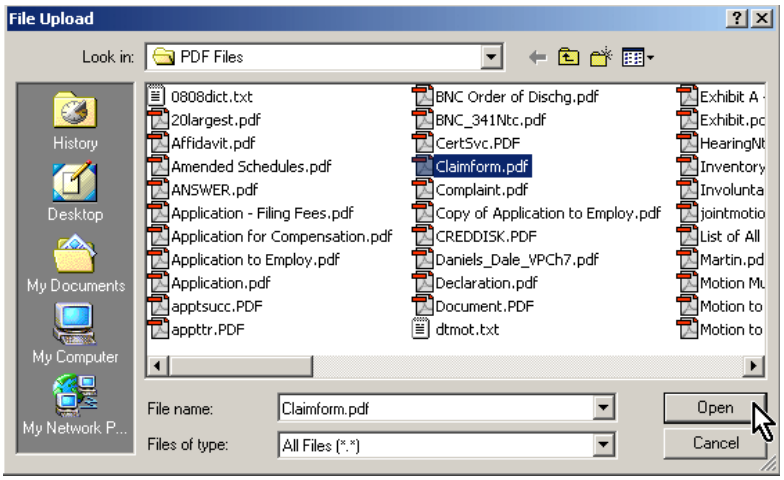


Figure 6c

- The **PDF Document** screen will reappear displaying the complete path of the associated PDF document that was selected. **(See Figure 6d.)**

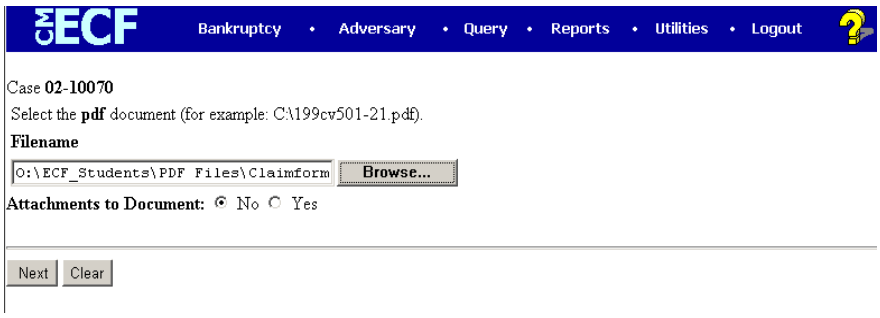


Figure 6d

- PDF **attachments** to claims (contracts, invoices, or other supporting documents) can be linked to this claim. To attach supporting documents, click the **Yes** radio button to the right of the **Attachments to Document** prompt to attach the PDF document.

NOTE: Please note that the PDF file of this claim is not an **attachment.** An **attachment** is other supporting document or collateral information.

An **attached** document will be referenced in the docket text separately, and the **attached** image will be accessible by a separate hyperlink within the docket text.

- Click **[Next]**.

STEP 7 The **NOTICE OF ELECTRONIC CLAIMS FILING** is then produced and displayed. **(See Figure 7.)** This claim is now part of the official court record.

CM ECF Bankruptcy • Adversary • Query • Reports • Utilities • Logout

U.S. Bankruptcy Court

Systems Deployment and Support Division

Notice of Electronic Claims Filing

The following transaction was received from Wilson, D.L. on 8/22/2002 at 2:46 PM CDT

Case Name: Walter J. Daniels
Case Number: 02-10070
Creditor Name: Exxon
Acct. 3889578708
P.O. Box 105980
Atlanta, Ga 30353-5980
Claim Number: 1
Total Amount Claimed: $350.26

The following document(s) are associated with this transaction:

Document description: Main Document
Original filename: O:\ECF_Students\PDF Files\Claimform.pdf
Electronic document Stamp:
[STAMP bkecfStamp_ID=981735245 [Date=8/22/2002] [FileNumber=7242-0] [5
d52503b07fdf8f74887738403a76c8940f99d18379ca8515170faf180f3f78d9c6c2b7
3b4998b8b93ffc033830f53e9d29400b60dc12c1aebede6bb8b9a2405]]

Figure 7

- Clicking on the case number hyperlink on the **Notice of Electronic Claims Filing** will present the case docket report via PACER.
- Clicking on the document number hyperlink displays the PDF image, via PACER, of the claim itself. If the claim includes imaged attachments, they will be accessible also through a separate hyperlink.
- To print a copy of this notice, click the browser **[Print]** icon.
- To save a copy of this notice, click **[File]** on the browser menu bar and select **Save Frame As**.
- To continue claims processing, click again on **Bankruptcy**, File Claims. Your prior case number will be preserved for further claim entries to the same case. For a new case, simply type in the new number and repeat the process outlined above.

STEP 8 **CLAIMS REGISTER**

- To run the Claims Register, via PACER, click **Reports** on the Main Menu Bar and then Claims Register hyperlink. There is a separate CM/ECF Claims Register lesson.

Creditor Addition

After conducting a search if you are unable to find the desired creditor, or if an existing creditor's address is incorrect, you may add a new creditor to the system. Searches should **always** be performed prior to entering creditor data to reduce the number of duplicated creditors within a case.

Creditors are added to ths system as follows:

STEP 1 From the **CREDITOR SELECTION** screen click on the Add Creditor hyperlink. (**See Figure 1)**

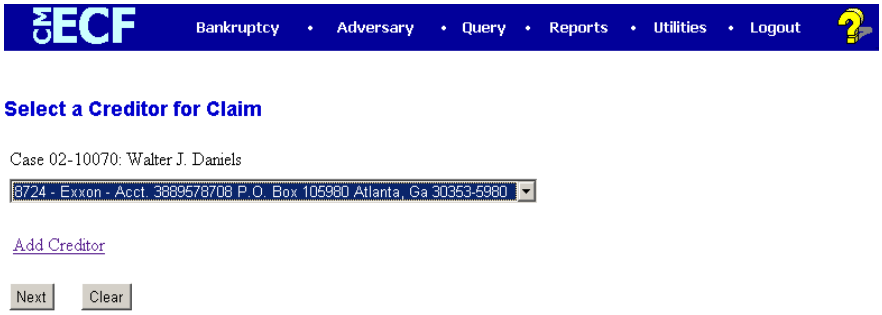


Figure 1

STEP 2 The **CASE NUMBER** screen will display. **(See Figure 2)**

Figure 2

- Enter the case number in the format yy-nnnnn, including the hyphen.
- Click **[Next]** to continue.

STEP 3 The **CREDITOR INFORMATION** screen displays. **(See Figure 3)**

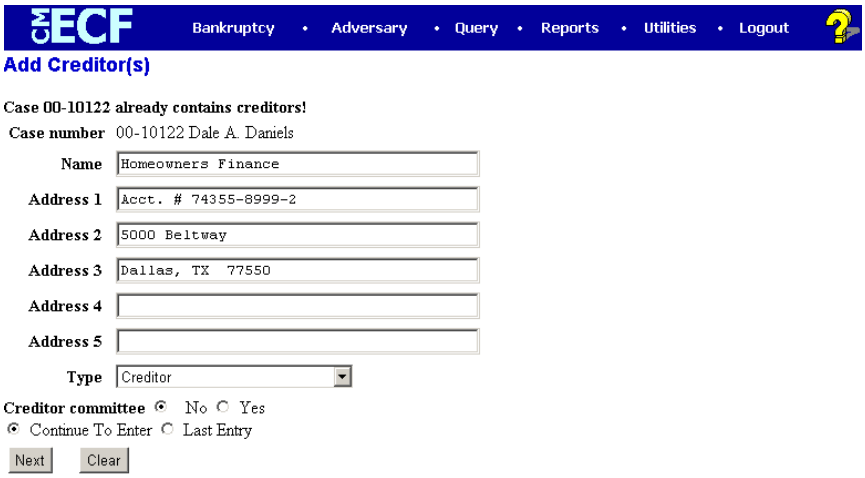


Figure 3

- Enter the creditor name and address information.

  Remember: 5 line maximum
  Each line no more that 40 characters
  Avoid special characters (# & C/O are okay)
  Account number/attention line placed on line 2
  City, state and zip on last line
  Zip + four must include hyphen
  State must be 2 letter abbreviation

- **Creditor Type** defaults to "Creditor.' **The default should not be changed.**

- If you have multiple creditors to add, accept the default of **[Continue to Enter]** button and then click **[Next]** to continue.

  - When you have entered the final creditor, click the **[Last Entry]** button, then click **[Next]** to continue.

  - If you have only one creditor to add, click the **[Last Entry]** button then click **[Next]** to continue.

STEP 4 The **TOTAL CREDITORS ENTERED** screen will appear. **(See Figure 4.)**

Figure 4

- Verify the number of creditors you have entered.
- If the number is not correct, click the browser **[Back]** button to investigate your entries.
- Otherwise, click **[Submit]** to continue.

STEP 5 The **CREDITORS RECEIPT** screen will then display. **(See Figure 5.)**

Figure 5

This screen confirms the number of creditor records that have been added to the creditor database. The example in STEP 5 shows just one creditor added in this manner.

When claims are filed in CM/ECF, they are attached to the specific creditor record of the claimant.

The Proof of Claim module is accessible on this screen so a claim can be added to this new creditor in one continuous operation.

- Click Return to Creditor Maintenance Menu to continue creditor processing.

Miscellaneous Creditor Filings

In addition to the ability to file Proofs of Claim, creditor filers can also electronically file the following documents with the Court:

- Appraisals of Property
- Assignments/Transfers of Claim
- Reaffirmation Agreements
- Requests for Notice
- Motions for Withdrawal of Unclaimed Funds
- Withdrawals of Claim

The following example demonstrates the filing of an Assignment/Transfer of Claim. While filing other miscellaneous creditor filings may involve slightly different *User Prompts*, the basic functionality is the same for all miscellaneous creditor filings.

STEP 1 Click the Bankruptcy hyperlink on the CM/ECF Main Menu. **(See Figure 1)**

Figure 1

STEP 2 The **BANKRUPTCY EVENTS** screen will display similar to the one shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2

◆ Click on the Creditor Claimant Activity hyperlink.

STEP 3 The **CASE NUMBER** screen will display. **(See Figure 3)**

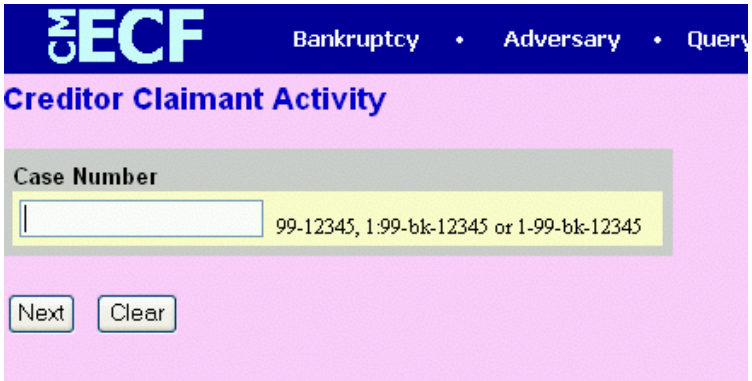


Figure 3

- Enter the case number, including the hyphen.
- Click **[Next]**.

STEP 4 The **CREDITOR CLAIMANT ACTIVITY** menu will display. **(See Figure 4)**

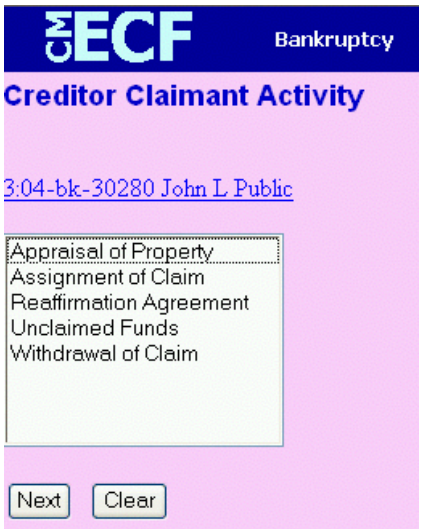


Figure 4

- Click to highlight Assignment of Claim.
- Click **[Next]**.

STEP 5 An **ATTORNEY SELECTION** screen will display. **(See Figure 5)**

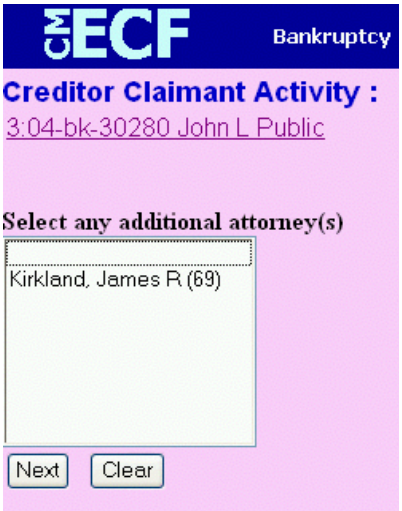


Figure 5

- No selection should be needed here. Click **[Next]**
- Click **[OK]** on the message box, "Note: you have not selected an attorney."

STEP 6 A **PARTY SELECTION** screen will display. **(See Figure 6)**

Figure 6

- If you, the creditor, **are** listed, click the creditors name to highlight it. Click **[Next]**. Proceed to step

- If you **are not** listed, click on the Add/Create New Party hyperlink.

STEP 7 A **PARTY SEARCH** screen will display. **(See Figure 7)**

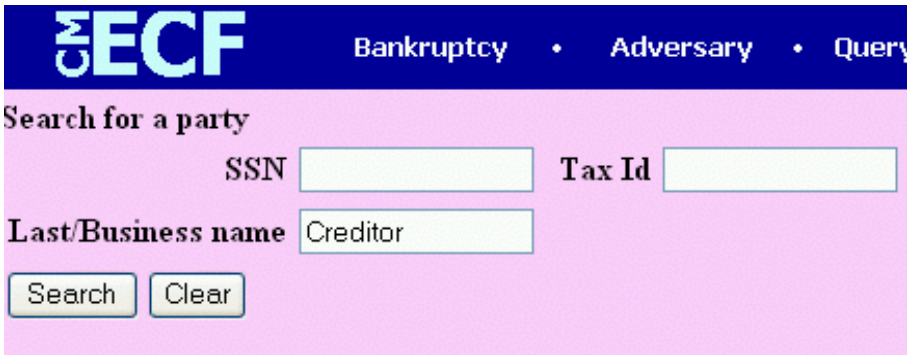


Figure 7

- Enter the creditor's name in the Last Name field. Click **[Search]**.
- Your name search may find more than one record having the same name. Clicking on each of the names will display a window showing the party's address information for verification. If a name matches but the address data is incorrect you can modify the address (for this case only) on the following PARTY INFORMATION screen.
- If the appropriate creditor is found, click **[Select name from list]**. If no matching creditor was found, click **[Create new party]**.

STEP 8 The **PARTY INFORMATION** screen will display. **(See Figure 8)**

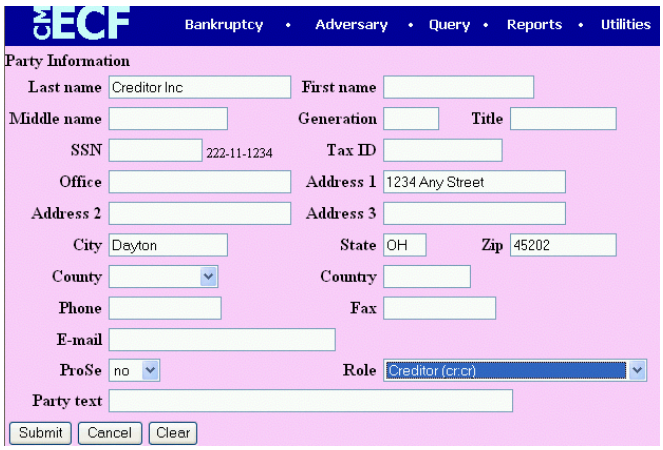


Figure 8

- Insert or modify the address of the creditor being added.
- **Change the ROLE to Credit**.
- Click **[Submit]**.

STEP 9 The **PARTY SELECTION** screen will display again. **(See Figure 9)**

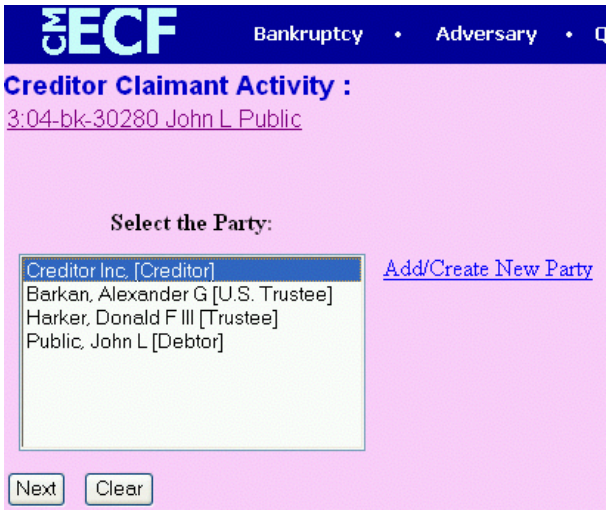


Figure 9

- The Creditor that you added/created should now be highlighted. Click **[Next]**.

STEP 10 The **PDF DOCUMENT** screen will display. **(See Figure 10)**

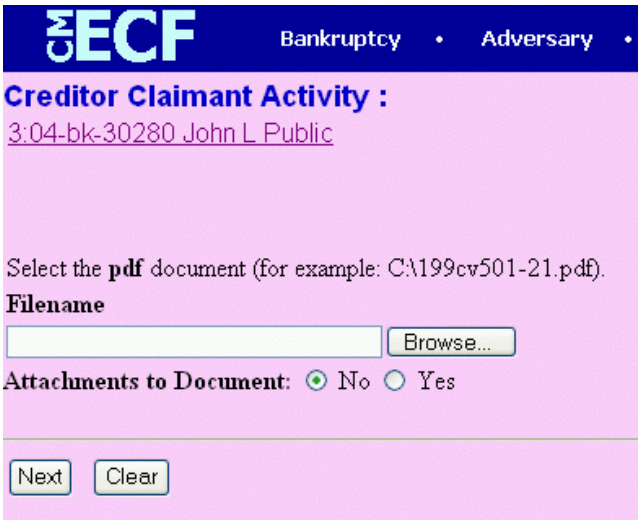


Figure 10

- A PDF image must be associated with this entry.
- Click **[Browse]**, then navigate to the directory where the appropriate PDF file is located and select it with your mouse.
- To ensure that you are about to associate the correct document for this entry, right click on the filename with your mouse and select **Open**. **(See Figure 10a)**

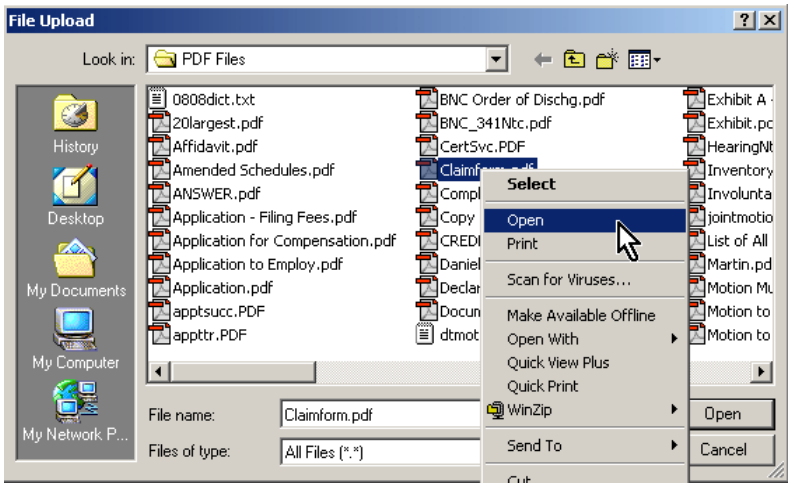


Figure 10a

- This will launch the Adobe Acrobat Reader to display the image of the document. Verify that the document is correct.
- Close or minimize the Adobe application after verifying the file, then click on the **Open** button on the File Upload dialogue box. **(See Figure 10b)**

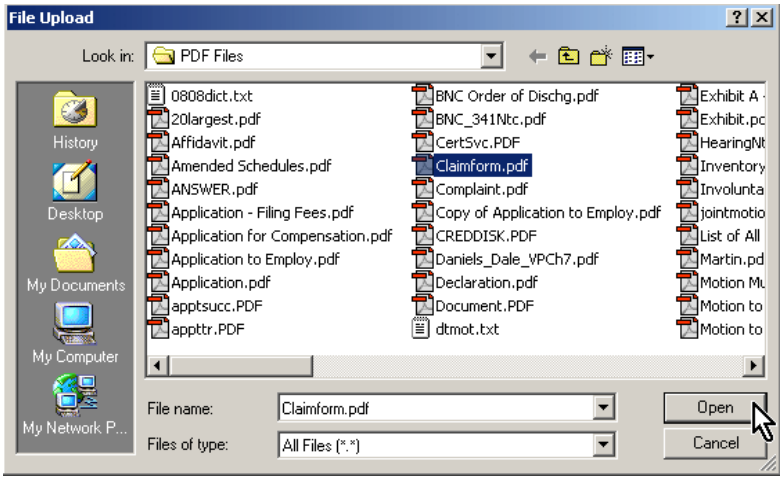


Figure 10b

- The **PDF DOCUMENT** screen will reappear displaying the complete path of the associated PDF document that was selected. **(See Figure 10c)**

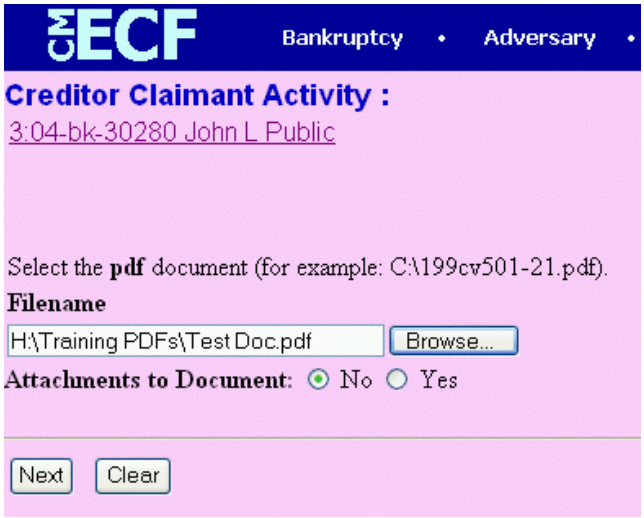


Figure 10c

- Click **[Next]**.

STEP 11 A **CLAIMS TRANSFER** screen will display. **(See Figure 11)**

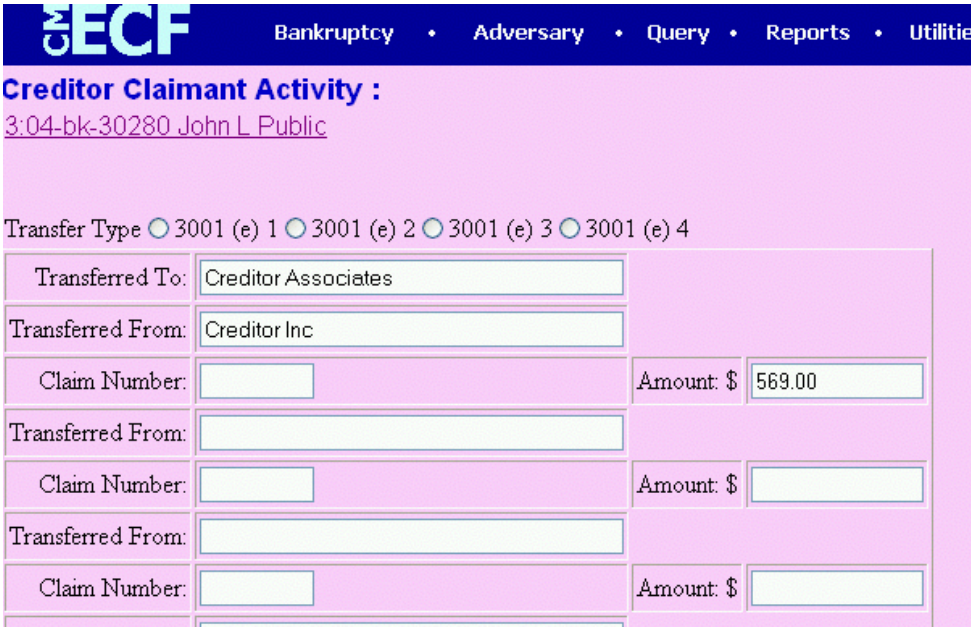


Figure 11

- Fill in all applicable information.
- Multiple claims may be transferred within the case.
- Click **[Next]**.
- A **CASE VERIFICATION** screen will display. Click **[Next]**.

STEP 12 The **FINAL TEXT EDITING** screen will display. **(See Figure 12)**

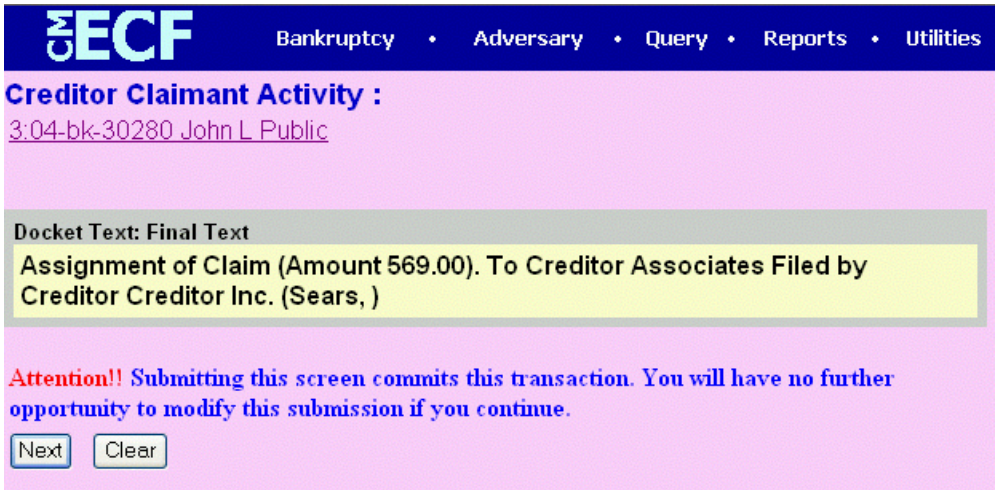


Figure 12

- Proof this screen carefully! This is the last opportunity to make any changes.
- If the docket text is incorrect, click the browser **[Back]** button at the top of the screen one or more times to find the screen to be modified. Make any needed corrections and continue through the event.
- To abort or restart the transaction, click the Bankruptcy hyperlink on the **CM/ECF Main Menu Bar.**
- If no changes are needed, click **[Next]**.

STEP 13 The **NOTICE OF ELECTRONIC FILING** screen will display. **(See Figure 13)**

CM ECF Bankruptcy • Adversary • Query • Reports • Utilities • Logout

Creditor Claimant Activity :
3:04-bk-30280 John L Public

U.S. Bankruptcy Court

Southern District of Ohio

Notice of Electronic Filing

The following transaction was received from Sears, entered on 7/15/2004 at 12:41 PM EDT and filed on 7/15/2004
Case Name: John L Public
Case Number: 3:04-bk-30280
Document Number: 3

Docket Text:
Assignment of Claim (Amount 569.00). To Creditor Associates Filed by Creditor Creditor Inc. (Sears,)

The following document(s) are associated with this transaction:

Figure 13

- To print a copy of this notice click the browser **[Print]** icon.
- To save a copy of this receipt, click **File** on the browser menu bar and select **Save Frame As**.