Ontario Energy Board

Commission de l'énergie de l'Ontario

The Electronic Hearing Room

Timeliness, Inclusiveness, Fairness and Efficiency in Public Processes

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About the OEB

Our mandate
- To regulate the province's electricity and natural gas sectors in the public interest

Our vision
- A viable and efficient energy sector with informed consumers served by responsive regulatory processes that are effective, fair and transparent

Technology supports our vision
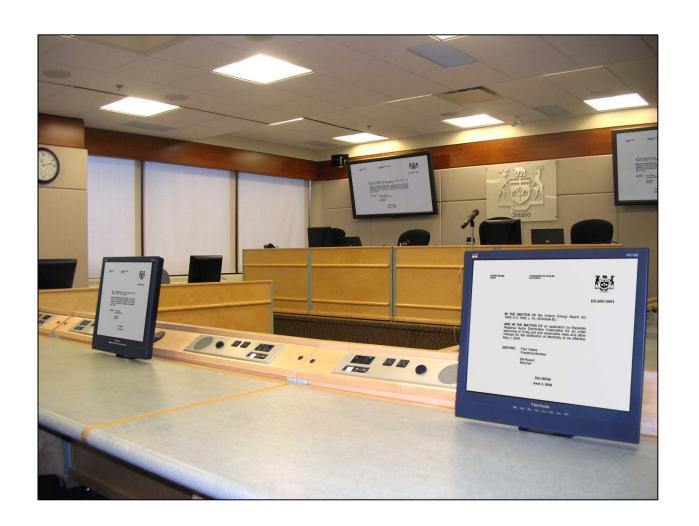- promotes timeliness, inclusiveness, accessibility and efficiency in our processes

Timeliness and inclusiveness …

- Example: Low Income Rate Consultation
    - 4-day consultation (September 22-25)
    - Multiple stakeholders (45)
    - Listen in "live" from office or home
    - Transcripts available online within hours instead of days/weeks

Efficiency and fairness …

- Example: Ruling on IPSP "Motion" Day
  - Single all-day session
  - 27 submissions were heard
  - Panel members aided by "live" transcripts
  - Result:
    - Ruling at end of day
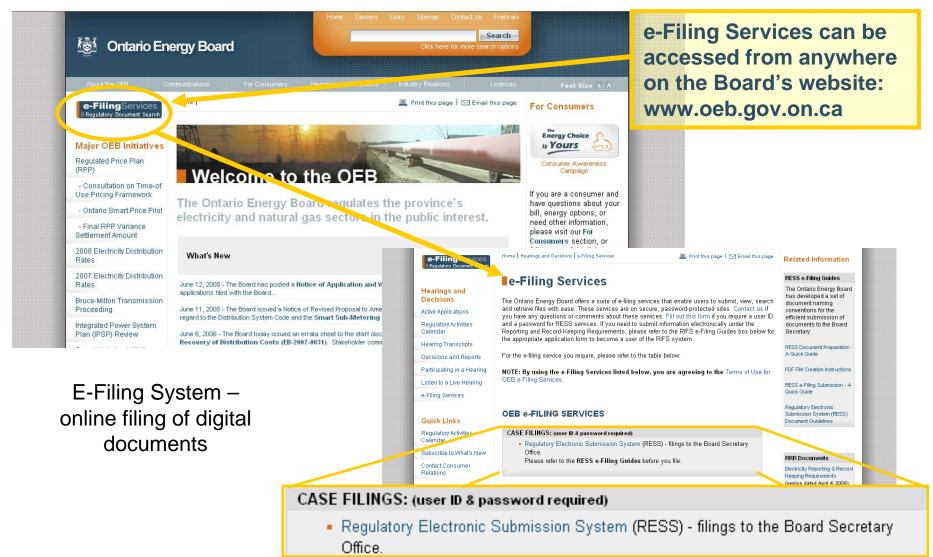   - Accurately quoted witness submissions

The Electronic Hearing Room

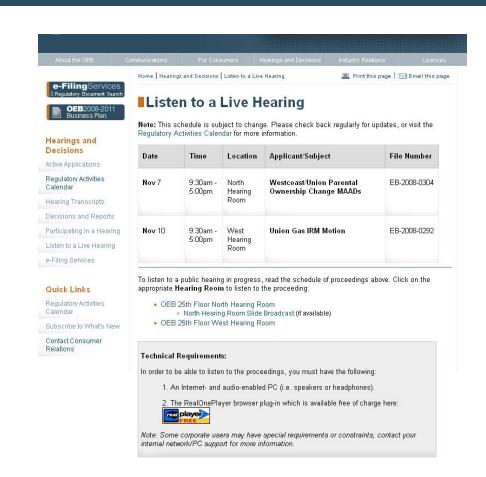# Live Notes in the Electronic Hearing Room

- "Real-time" distribution of transcripts to panel members

- "Notate" function
  - Stop, scroll back and freeze text
  - Annotate transcripts as evidence is given
  - Highlight areas of testimony of particular interest or relevance
  - Printed annotations capture related text

- Benefits
  - Identify issues and relevant testimony in real time
  - Assists with Decision writing
  - Eliminates need for detailed notes and searching through transcripts

OEB E-Filing Services Website

e-Filing Services can be accessed from anywhere on the Board's website: www.oeb.gov.on.ca

E-Filing System – online filing of digital documents

Listen to a Live Hearing

- **Listen to live testimony**
- **View document slides online**
- **Accessible through the OEB internet**
- **Technical Requirements:**
  - Internet-connection
  - Speakers or headphones
  - Real One Player browser plug-in available free

Teleconferencing

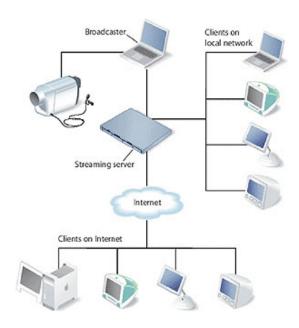- Gets around limits of in-house teleconferencing hub

- Sometimes useful in combination with webcasts or webinars

Streaming technology

- # Broadcasting over the Internet
  - ## Webinars
    - for instruction sessions with small groups (around 8-12)
  - ## Webcasts
    - for consultations and technical presentations to larger groups

Webinars

- **Webinars:**
  - Small number of users – need only web browser
  - Users share screen
  - Moderator controls mouse – can relinquish control to individual participants
  - No time limit
  - Use teleconferencing hub

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Webinars

- **Benefits:**
  - Inexpensive
  - Productive use of experts' time
  - Better quality input from stakeholders
  - Fewer documents returned for correction and resubmission
  - Quicker action from the Board

Webcasts

- Any number of participants

- Broadcast PowerPoint presentation over internet to registered participants

- "Live" audio of presenter

- Questions submitted online

- Can also be used with teleconferencing technology

Webcasts

- **Benefits:**
  - Real-time interaction
  - Presenters can control participant interaction through email – less so teleconferencing
  - Reasonable cost – economics of scale available

Conclusion

Technology :

- Enhances timeliness

- Increases efficiency

- Promotes inclusiveness

- Increases accessibility

- Reduces complexity

- Makes regulation "user friendly"