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## What should we call it?

Lord Justice Briggs thought it was not a very good idea for the first court designed to be used without lawyers to be called the “online court”. For one thing, not all its proceedings would be conducted online: some hearings will be by telephone and others face-to-face. Another problem is that, in due course, every court will be accessible online.

After some thought, Lord Justice Briggs suggested the name Online Solutions Court. He hoped the word “online” would fall away as people got used to the concept.

Solutions court was not a bad name. It struck a reasonable balance between dignity and approachability. But it never caught on. Although the term is used occasionally, most people speak instead of the online court.

But that term has many different meanings. At one level, it means an existing court that is accessed wholly or partly through some sort of electronic device. At a higher level, it means a wholly new jurisdiction underpinned by statute. Once we get used to the new structures, it’s possible that the “online court” will become simply “the court”.

It’s hoped that the online civil court will improve access to justice – not just for those who are struggling through traditional court processes as litigants-in-person but also for those of limited means who are unable to deploy valid defences to a claim for fear of being sucked into expensive litigation. Sir Terence Etherton, master of the rolls, said the court’s success would be measured not just “in improving the quality of access for those using the system but by giving effective access to those who do not currently issue claims”.<sup>1</sup>

## References

1. <https://www.judiciary.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/law-works-lecture-mr-20161205.pdf> paragraph 9.

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