
CHARLES CHRISTIAN'S

LEGAL TECHNOLOGY INSIDER

THE ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO WHAT'S HOT (AND WHAT'S NOT) IN LAW OFFICE SYSTEMS

IN THIS EDITION...

Pilgrim planning
32-bit launch... 2

Another US
supplier heading
for the UK... 4

Me & My PC - Neil
Cameron reveals
all... 5

The LOTIES - now
it is time to
vote... 6

LTi to establish
CyberForum on
the Web... 7

LATE NEWS...
The Equitrac
Corporation has
just released
details of a new
Internet browser it
has under develop-
ment. Scheduled
for beta release at
the end of June, it
will allow users to
track online
research and email
for client billing
purposes. *Full
report next issue.*

COMMERCIAL LAW REPORTS GO ONLINE

New Law Publishing, which in 1993 upset the law reporting apple-cart by launching its "same day as judgment" faxed digests of High Court property cases, has now moved on to the next stage of its development plans with the announcement of its "New Law Online" service on the Internet.

At a preview of the service, New Law founder Kenneth Bagnall QC told **LEGAL TECHNOLOGY INSIDER** that from the outset he had been conscious that a weakness of conventional law reporting was only a fraction of the cases heard ever made the reports - and then often only appearing in print six months later.

This, he felt, exposed lawyers to the risk of advising clients and planning litigation strategies on the strength of inadequate or out-of-date information.

The fax service was the initial response and by 1995 this had been expanded to cover all "relevant" property, commercial and criminal law decisions in the High Court, Court of Appeal, House of Lords and European Court of Justice. Subscribers have the option of receiving the full text of judgments within 24 hours as well as the digest service. Along with fax, the delivery mechanism has also been expanded to include email.

Following the acquisition of a substantial shareholding in the company by the Oxford University Press, New Law began exploring the use of CD-ROM technology as a way of making the database of case reports more accessible for research purposes. It was at this point ➔

➔ New Law "saw the light" and opted to develop their next generation service on Internet web browser software rather than CD-ROM.

"We realised we were electronic publishers rather than conventional publishers trying to produce on-screen versions of law books," said Bagnall, "and so we went straight to publishing on the Net, which also means we can deliver reports far quicker than on disk." (Archive material will be published on disk.)

☞ **Technical Note...** The Online service was formally announced last week and is in the final stages of beta testing, with a view to being commercially available by early summer. The version **LTi** saw ran on Netscape Navigator 2.0, making extensive use of the "frames" facility for splitting screens. Pricing depends on the number of users and services etc however it is interesting to note the online search fee of 50p per minute is based on "active" use rather than straight connect time. For information call ☎ 0171 405 5434 or check <http://www.newlawonline.com/> ☐

THE BARBICAN EXHIBITION

The 1996 Solicitors & Legal Office Exhibition opens at the Barbican in London in just under a month on Tuesday 4th June. As the biggest event of its kind in the UK, it is certainly worth attending even if you are not in the immediate market for a new system.

Products and suppliers exhibiting there will be flagged in **LTi** with the ✓ **SOLEX '96...** sign. The next edition will also contain complimentary pre-registration tickets and an extensive review will be published in our 17th June edition. ☐

LSSA GIRDS LOINS

This Wednesday (8th May) sees the formal launch of the Legal Software Suppliers Association (previously known as the ALTS). The LSSA will unveil its Code of Conduct and what it describes as a "comprehensive complaints and mediation system" - full report next time.

STRIKE OFF

The strike by computer staff at the County Court Bulk Centre has been called off. Any one with large volumes of summons issue outstanding (over 500) should contact Rachel Underwood at the SPC on ☎ 01604 601636 to discuss how to handle the backlog.

PILGRIM SET FOR MAJOR LAUNCH

Pilgrim Systems will next month launch its new LawSoft system, which the company describes as "a significant step forward in law office computing as it will allow law firms to rationalise their IT installations".

Pilgrim believes LawSoft will appeal primarily to those firms whose IT strategy involves Microsoft products such as Windows, Word, Excel or SQL Server.

According to managing director Ronnie Paton: "LawSoft adopts a radical new approach in its design by dismissing artificial lines of demarcation, such as the concept of back and front office, to foster group working using a network of Windows PCs."

Pilgrim suggests another selling point is that because individual elements of LawSoft can be used independently, it allows users to gradually migrate from older legacy systems rather than having to go for the big bang approach.

☞ **Technical Note...**Written as a 32 bit application using C++ and Visual Basic 4, LawSoft invokes native Windows functions such as OLE2 to allow data to be shared transparently with Word and Excel, thereby enabling automated document production. LawSoft can be used with Windows 3x as well as Windows 95 or NT at the desktop.

LawSoft is a client/server product compliant with Microsoft's ODBC standard for relational database access. It encompasses the usual range of law office activities: accounting, time recording, billing, performance analysis, management reporting, case management, document indexing and retrieval, client and contact database and marketing.

✓ **SOLEX '96...** To mark the launch of LawSoft, Pilgrim (☎ 0131-226 5528) has moved to a larger stand (17) at the Barbican and will be staging brief theatre style presentations of the product. □

LAW SOCIETY UPGRADE DEBT TO WINDOWS

The Law Society's publications department has extended the range of legal software applications it publishes with the launch of a Windows version of its Debt Collector debt recovery system.

The software, which includes a full set of forms and automatic interest calculation, retails for £475 + VAT. The program installer on the disks automatically optimises the application for Windows 3.1, Windows 95 or Windows NT.

Orders should be directed to the Law Society Shop (☎ 0171-242 1222). The Law Society will continue to sell the DOS version of Debt Collector however there are currently no plans to make two other DOS applications (Summons Made Simple and the Expense of Time Calculator) available in Windows versions.

✓ **SOLEX '96...** The Debt Collector system will be demonstrated on the Law Society/Gazette stand at the Barbican. □

BAR COMPETITION HOTS UP

Last month Applied Computer Expertise announced it had acquired control of Legal Information eXchange Ltd, who market the LIX system. This month starts with the news that the "One KBW" set of barristers' chambers headed by James Hunt QC (which recently moved from the Temple to Bedford Row) has gone "live" with a new chambers billing, diary and management system supplied by one of ACE's competitors Meridian Information Systems (☎ 0161-442 2227).

Meanwhile another ACE rival Pimcroft Systems (☎ 0171-404 2198) is now previewing its new Falcon One all Windows chambers management system. Pimcroft, who were acquired by the Good Information Group last year, developed the system in conjunction with five sets of London and provincial chambers. For details see the Pimcroft WWW site at <http://ourworld.compuserve.com/home/pages/goodinfo> □

CMS “NO CONFLICT” – SAYS RESOLUTION

According to James Low, sales director of Resolution Systems, last month’s UK launch of the CMS Open financial and information management system for law firms by Quintec International will cause “no conflicts of interest”.

Prior to this, there had been speculation that some of Quintec’s value added resellers (VARs), who were selling the Docs Open document management system into the legal market, would be reluctant to continue if Quintec became a direct competitor with its own legal accounts package.

Quintec themselves said the move should not cause any problems as the CMS Open and Docs Open products were being handled by different divisions.

This view has now been echoed by Resolution Systems. Although CMS Open is seen as direct competition for Resolution’s FirmControl system, as both are aimed at the top end of the legal market, James Low told **LTi** that Resolution is “quite happy” to continue working with Quintec on Docs Open business. In fact the company recently signed up with Quintec as one of its “premier VARs”.

✓ **SOLEX ‘96...** Both CMS Open and FirmControl (understood to be favourite for the Norton Rose contract) will be on show at the Barbican. □

MORE LINETIME WINS

Four more firms have ordered systems from Linetime (☎ 0113 250 0020), they are: Francis & Co in Newport, Clarke & Co in Bournemouth, Sumner Sketchley in Coventry and Furley Page Fielding & Barton in Canterbury. Rachel Rowling has joined Linetime’s sales team to cover the Midlands and the NorthWest.

✓ **SOLEX ‘96...** Linetime’s stand will focus heavily on the new FeeStyle Windows front end for fee earners. □

ROAD SHOW COMING TO GUILDFORD

The Professional Computer Group (PCG) is following up its recent Chichester event with another one day mini-exhibition of legal systems, this time at the Forté Hotel in Guildford on Wednesday 15th May.

Along with PCG, who will be showing DPS-based case management solutions, there will be the David Webber/Legato group previewing the new Paragon system, plus demonstrations of speech recognition technology and Law System’s Probate Plus software.

The opening hours are 9am-to-6pm, for further details contact Richard Pottinger of PCG on ☎ 01202 893040.

✓ **SOLEX ‘96...** Law Systems (☎ 01326 317529) plan to be showing the new Windows version of Probate Plus at the Barbican. Written in *Delphi*, this is based around a Paradox database and will be able to produce probate accounts. □

NEW CONSULTANT

Kathryn Trounson, who was previously with legal systems suppliers Lawbase and Linetime, has joined the IT division of Lancaster-based Charter Management Consulting (☎ 01524 846847) where she will be offering IT consultancy services to law firms in the NorthWest of England. □

QUILL GOES NETWORKING

Stitt & Co in London EC4 is upgrading its existing Quill installation to a 12-user network, while further east in Stratford E15, Mullinger Banks has ordered Quill’s Quantum system plus WordPerfect for Windows – these will run across a Novell network.

✓ **SOLEX ‘96...** At the Barbican, Quill Computer Systems (☎ 0161 236 2910) will be launching a new system for criminal practitioners, as well as showing its latest developments in Windows case management software. □

A PRINCELY UPGRADE

Insurance and shipping law specialist Elbourne Mitchell has used West London systems house Prince plc (☎ 0181 237 7220) to help it migrate from DOS to a Windows network. Prince will be running seminars on Windows 95 and Office 95 throughout the spring.

SEARCH AND REPLACE

Legal systems supplier Thompson Moore Associates has moved to: Windlesham Court, 53 Guildford Road, Bagshot, Surrey GU19 5NG. The phone number stays the same: 01276 452070.

SOS RESPOND TO CHAWNER GREY

West country solicitors Chawner Grey & Co has replaced its old AIM system with a Windows accounts and time recording system supplied by Solicitors Own Software (☎ 01225 448664).

✓ SOLEX '96... The latest SOS systems will be on show at the Barbican.

OFFICE TALK EVALUATION

Sareen Software says the latest version of its Office Talk "workgroup information manager" outperforms better known PIMs such as Lotus Organiser and Microsoft Schedule Plus. Free evaluation copies can be obtained by calling ☎ 0181 423 9434 or by downloading from the Web site at <http://www.sareen.com>

✓ SOLEX '96... Sareen (previously Deepak Sareen Associates) will be showing OfficeTalk 1.5 at the Barbican.

US SYNAPTEC PLANS JUNE UK DEBUT

The latest American software house with plans to make its mark on the UK legal market is Synaptec Software which will be unveiling its case management and "file room" management systems at next month's Barbican Exhibition.

When L*Ti* spoke to Synaptec (☎ 001 303 320 4420) at their Denver, Colorado head office last week, the company said it saw its products as having two key selling points.

The first is a user definable database so the system can be configured to meet exact requirements of the law firm or legal department using it.

The second selling point is that it can be integrated with third party legal products such as the Docs Open document management system and ProSoft's Carpe Diem time tracking software.

In fact it was David Goldstein of ProSoft who first suggested to Synaptec that the Barbican would be a good venue to mount their UK debut.

This collaboration between the companies now extends beyond product integration, with the ProSoft Corporation and Synaptec currently investigating the possibility of establishing a UK operation, including a permanently staffed London office. Among the options being explored is an agency/distribution deal with City of London-based litigation support specialists Elliott Slone.

☞ **Comment...** Synaptec's systems will run on DOS, Windows, Windows NT or Unix platforms and are described as being relevant for law firms ranging in size from 5 fee earners to "the very largest". This is the same section of the UK market into which Carpe Diem has already made inroads. Prices will start at £3000.

✓ SOLEX '96... Synaptec, ProSoft and Elliott Slone (☎ 0171 929 5252) will all have stands at the Barbican. □

KLUWER LAUNCHES DOCUMENT ASSEMBLY SYSTEM FOR CONTRACTS

Legal publisher Kluwer Law International this week launches an interactive software package for drafting international contracts.

Called Global Law Practice Systems, the Windows-based software (PCs with 8Mb of RAM strongly recommended) takes the form of separate modules for different areas of contract law and automatically drafts an agreement by taking the user through an interactive computer questionnaire which mimics the client-lawyer interview. By responding to the questions about the proposed transaction, the user provides the data required to assemble a customised draft contract.

The product was originally developed by practising US lawyers Ken Slade of Hale & Dorr and Anne Stone of Morgan Lewis & Bockius LLP. The "global" element stems from the fact each module has been vetted by and/or contains recommendations from legal practitioners in 20 US states and 56 countries around the world, so that the documents drafted will be valid in most legal jurisdictions. More jurisdictions will be added and while the system is at present only available in an English language version, German, French and Spanish versions are under development.

Global Law currently contains modules for drafting international distribution, commercial agency (sales rep), licensing, value added reseller (OEM) and sale of goods agreements. Pricing is based on an annual licensing fee ranging from £1,885 to £2,500 (+VAT) per module.

A demo disk, showing the distribution agreement module, is available free of charge from Kluwer Law (☎ 0171 821 1123 or Freephone 0800 963 955). Information is also available through Kluwer's Web site at <http://www.kli.com>

☞ **Technical Note...** The delivery software was developed by CapSoft who also wrote the HotDocs application. □

ME AND MY PC

This edition sees the start of a new occasional series in which LTI will be asking various people from within the legal technology industry, including IT partners, consultants and software developers, what systems they personally use - as distinct from those they recommend or advise fee earners, clients and customers to use.

First into the hot seat is the well-known legal technology consultant **Neil Cameron...**

What is your main PC hardware set up? A Hewlett-Packard XU 5/90c with 24Mb of RAM, two x 1Gb hard disks, SoundBlaster AWE32, USR "everything" fax/modem, Wang DAT tape streamer, Intel ProShare ISDN video-conferencing and a Virtual Music Vpick (for playing tennis racquet "air" guitar).

The printers are a Hewlett-Packard HP III and DeskJet 560c and the PC is networked to the kids' 486 (and two laptops) for playing multiuser Doom.

Which operating system do you use? Windows 95.

What are the main applications you run? Wordprocessing, accounts, spreadsheet, comms, diary/contact list.

What are your main software applications programs? Microsoft Word, Excel, QuickBooks, Schedule+, Exchange/MSN /WinFax/Netscape/Internet Explorer.

What is your favourite program? As a serious application I would say WWW browsers such as Netscape because they will change the world.

As for utilities, these change all the time as I find new things. Currently Inso's QuickView Plus from the people who bundle the cut-down QuickView with Windows 95. You can view, select, cut bits out and print from any kind of data file, even if you don't have it →

→ including those very annoying UUEncoded attachments that CC;Mail insists on putting in electronic mail.

What is the most disappointing program you have encountered - and why? WordPerfect 5.1 for Windows because the DOS 5.1 program was so good.

What was your worst moment with a computer? The first had to do with Stacker and it is too painful to recall in detail. Suffice to say I swore firstly never to use disk compression again and, secondly, to back up more often. A resolution about as successful as my current, or any previous, diet.

The second was when I arrived to give a presentation and found that my VGA output would not plug into the only available SVGA input. Ever seen 40 people hunched around a 12" laptop screen?

When does your PC go on in the morning - and get switched off again in the evening? Never, it is a fax machine which needs to be on all night so that foreigners can fax me as well.

How many times a day do you check your email? If out and about - say twice. If at home, about once an hour.

What do you never leave home without? Orange Nokia phone, Nokia data/fax card, Toshiba Portege CT610 laptop, Microsoft/Timex Data Watch, Swiss Army Knife and wallet. □

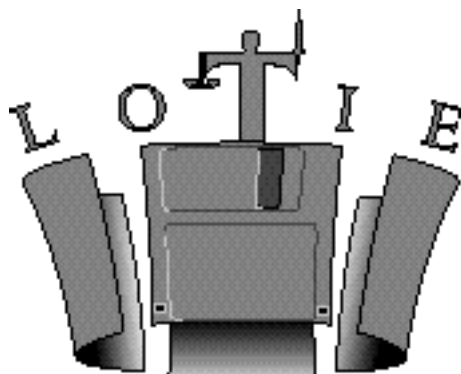
GOLD CARDS SUPPORT GSM

Psion Dacom (☎ 01908 261686) has announced that its Gold Card range of PC Card (PCMCIA) fax modem cards is now available in a GSM format for use with digital mobile phones. Prices start at £199. In addition, existing customers who have bought standard Gold Card fax modems since September 1995 can take advantage of an upgrade option. □

OFFICE INSTALLED IN OFFICES

Wiggin & Co has installed Microsoft Office 95 running on a Windows NT platform in its Cheltenham and London offices. The firm's six partners have laptops so they can log onto the network from either office or from home.

✓ SOLEX '96... The project was handled by Peapod Professional Solutions (☎ 01753 581600) who are about to put the firm's network onto the Internet with the Borderware Firewall product protecting the security of the overall installation. Peapod will be demonstrating the Firewall system at the Barbican.



HOW TO VOTE

Either cut out or photocopy the voting form, place a tick in the box against just one of the short-listed nominations in each category and return it to **LTi** by post or **DX** by no later than 31st May. You can also fax, phone or email in your entries.

THE LOTIES – THE FINAL ROUND

The nominations have closed for the 1996 Law Office Technology Innovation Awards – the Loties – and we now move on to the final stage in which the readers of **LEGAL TECHNOLOGY INSIDER** vote for their favourites from the short-listed nominations in each of the eight categories. (A copy of the voting form also appears in the latest edition of *In Brief* magazine.) The winners will be announced next month.

CATEGORY

1. LAW OFFICE TECHNOLOGY PRODUCT OF THE YEAR

- LINK – the Legal Information Network
- LIX – the Legal Information eXchange
- CARPE DIEM – ProSoft Corporation’s on-screen time tracking software

2. BEST LEGAL FRONT OFFICE PRODUCT

- QUILL CONVEYANCING – for residential conveyancing work
- QNIX CASE PROCESSING – Sanderson GA’s case management system
- THE NORWEL DESKTOP – a Windows interface to the front & back office

3. BEST LEGAL BACK OFFICE PRODUCT

- NORWEL EXECUTIVE INFORMATION SYSTEM – Norwel’s EIS system

- QUANTUM – Quill’s accounts and practice management system
- THE SELECT LEGAL SYSTEM – highly scalable client/server system

4. BEST LAW OFFICE AUTOMATION PRODUCT

- WORDPERFECT 6.1 FOR WINDOWS
- KOLVOX OFFICETALK – speech recognition technology for lawyers
- HEXAR FAXSWITCH – a system for managing desktop faxing on PC networks in larger firms

5. LAW OFFICE TECHNOLOGY NEWCOMER OF THE YEAR

- IN-CONTROL LEGAL – Mercury Computing’s Windows workflow management software
- SCP/CD – Sweet & Maxwell’s Supreme Court Practice (the White Book) on CD-ROM
- AMICUS ATTORNEY – Gavel & Gown’s US developed PIM/case management/time recording system

6. THE QUALITY OF SERVICE AWARD FOR THE BEST LAW OFFICE TECHNOLOGY SUPPLIER

- HEXAR LTD
- AIM PROFESSIONAL LTD
- QUILL COMPUTER SYSTEMS LTD

7. BEST LAW OFFICE TECHNOLOGY USER GROUP

- ACUA - the AIM Computer Users Association
- AXXIA Systems Solicitors User Group

8. BEST LEGAL WORLD WIDE WEB/INTERNET SITE

- DENTON HALL
- JEFFREY GREEN RUSSELL
- INFORMATION FOR LAWYERS

NAME OF VOTER

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Web site operators are welcome to create hyperlink jumps to the **LTi** home page at <http://www.cloudnine.co.uk/cloudnine/>

LEGAL TECHNOLOGIES AND LTi TO ESTABLISH LITIGATION CYBER FORUM ON THE WEB

LEGAL TECHNOLOGY INSIDER is to assist computerised litigation support specialists Legal Technologies Ltd to establish an interactive debating "open forum" on the Internet's World Wide Web.

Called the LTL CyberForum, it will provide lawyers and anyone else following or interested in the use of IT in litigation and courtroom proceedings with an opportunity to exchange news and views about the latest developments in technology, law and legal practice.

The CyberForum goes "live" this month and one of the first topics on the agenda is the thorny question of taxing and the recovery of costs when *high tech* systems are brought in by one side to support the litigation process.

Compared with conventional litigation, when costs start relatively low and reach their peak as the case goes to trial, when technology is used there is a potentially far higher up-front cost. But, should the client be expected to pay? And, what is the likely reaction of the Taxing Master?

Point your Web browsers at <http://www.ltl.co.uk> to find out more or express your own views on the subject.

☞ **Technical Note...** Legal Technologies Ltd (☎ 0171 935 8242), which recently completed an MBO from its US parent, is probably best known in the UK for its ShowCase multimedia courtroom presentation system which was used to help manage documentary evidence in the recent Maxwell Trial at the Old Bailey. ☐

MICROSOFT MAKES OFFICE SUITE INTERNET-READY

Microsoft has announced new Internet capabilities for all the component applications within the Microsoft Office Suite.

Internet "assistants" for the conversion of documents into HTML are now available for Word, Excel, Access, PowerPoint and Schedule+ so that documents can be automatically translated into a format that can be distributed online for Internet and intranet use.

In addition, Microsoft has also announced ActivePoint for PowerPoint for Windows 95, a free browser extension for publishing and viewing live PowerPoint 95 presentations on the Web.

Internet assistants, viewers and ActivePoint are available for download at no charge from the Microsoft Web site at <http://www.microsoft.com/msoffice> under "Internet Tools". ☐

ACTUARIAL ADVICE AVAILABLE ONLINE

Independent consulting actuaries Bacon & Woodrow (☎ 01372 733958) now offers an electronic pensions and employees benefits information network called, appropriately enough: "ONLINE!"

The basic service includes a regular bulletin containing a digest of the latest news and developments relating to employee benefits, while a more advanced "briefing" service offers reports by Bacon & Woodrow's research department on the latest legislative and tax developments.

There is an initial installation charge of £750 + VAT followed by a monthly charge (depending on the service taken) of either £200 or £300 + VAT.

One complication is the service was originally designed to run across a Lotus Notes groupware network and so many of the more attractive features will be lost to firms with a straight Internet email link. A free demonstration disk is available from Bacon & Woodrow on ☎ 01372 733173 or via email: ONLINE.BWUK@notes.compuserve.com ☐

EMAIL FIRST

London media lawyers Schilling & Lom have scored what they believe to be a first by serving a High Court injunction by email to prevent the distribution of libellous material about one of their clients on the Internet.

LOSSES CAST SHADOW OVER HMSO

A recommendation by the House of Commons information committee that Hansard should be published and made freely available on the Internet "by next November" now looks in doubt following a National Audit Office report that HMSO, which is scheduled for privatisation later this summer, lost between £3 and £6.5 million on a deal to sell stationery supplies to Uzbekistan.

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Alexis Byter's
COMPUTER LORE

So do I exaggerate when I go on about the importance of lawyers, as distinct from their secretaries and administrative staff, using computers and communications systems like electronic mail? Consider what Christine Slight, senior corporate legal advisor at Cable & Wireless, had to say about the subject at the "Information Systems for Lawyers" conference earlier this year...

Her paper looked at the IT issues associated with the use of external law firms by inhouse lawyers and while she accepts the services they provide are important, her department also takes the view that firms providing "bread and butter services" must be prepared to provide high quality services at competitive prices - or lose business.

To this end, the department is analysing the business processes involved in their work to see where *re-engineering* can increase efficiency through the use of IT or eliminate processes that add no value. Slight says a good example of the potential for re-engineering can be seen when you compare the time it takes to produce a letter using the traditional route, with the email alternative.

Her own statistics suggest that to produce a four paragraph letter in response to a client enquiry takes a ➔

➔ minimum of 12 minutes production time *plus* delivery, whereas with email, the total elapsed time in responding to the client will be a mere five minutes.

"In the light of these statistics, it is hardly surprising that virtually all our internal communications in Cable & Wireless are now done using email," says Slight. "The effect on secretarial staff has been dramatic. Most managers no longer have secretaries. In the Law Department our lawyer to secretary ratio has moved from around 1:1 to 2:1.

"Our response has been to replace secretarial positions with more highly skilled staff, such as a records manager and paralegal staff. The relatively marginal increase in cost is far outweighed by the added value from these more highly qualified staff."

If this sounds radical enough within the Law Department, the consequences for external lawyers is likely to be even more dramatic: "We already have email access to a number of firms. In view of the benefits of email, I am sure we will demand this facility from our external legal advisors in the relatively near future. We will also expect lawyers to use email themselves rather than dictating emails to their secretaries.

"In fact," says Slight, "lack of email facilities is a considerable disadvantage and may mean you are not considered for Cable & Wireless work." ☐

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Send receipted invoice..... Please invoice me..... Purchase Order Number.....