
CHARLES CHRISTIAN'S

LEGAL TECHNOLOGY

INSIDER

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

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And, vote for your favourite systems, a nomination form for the LOTIES is included in this issue.

READY FOR THE MILLENNIUM ?

Last week AIM Professional announced that its Evolution and Workflow case and practice management software was fully Year 2000 compliant, so users need not worry about systems crashing in three years' time when the date moves from 1999 to 2000. But just how important is the problem of the so-called Millennium Bomb?

The good news is that less than a year ago computing problems associated with the Year 2000 (Y2K) were widely regarded as a joke or an excuse by salesmen to try to sell people new systems. At least now the issue is recognised as a real problem and being taken seriously.

The bad news is that while a growing number of legal IT suppliers are, like AIM, ensuring their *current* product ranges are Y2K compliant, there are no quick fixes available for older *legacy* systems and in many instances users may have no option but to replace their computer technology between now and the end of the century.

A factor muddying the water is that Y2K problems may arise in one or more of three separate areas, namely the applications software, operating system and/or hardware components.

It is for this reason that when it comes to older systems (AIM has one firm which is still using a system it bought 17 years ago) very few suppliers are prepared to give blanket assurances but have instead to look at each installation on an individual basis. Furthermore, even when a problem is identified, in the case of ➔

➔ hardware no longer manufactured or obsolete operating systems, such as some of the Unix variants that sprang up in the 1980s, physical remedies may not be possible, leaving users with only one option – to replace their systems.

So who is going to pay for all this? When the problem was first recognised, a number of lawyers suggested that IT suppliers should pick up the bill as it was their systems that are at fault. But, the computer industry is notorious for its use of exclusion clauses (*viz* the recent *St Albans v. ICL* case) and has traditionally sold systems on an “as is” warts and all basis. *continued on page 3 ➔*

D J FREEMAN ORDERS KEYSTONE

City of London practice D J Freeman has become the second law firm in the UK to order what chief executive Jonathan Lewis describes as a “next generation practice management system” from New Zealand-based software house Keystone Solutions.

The firm is investing £1million in the system, which will be installed next year by staff from Keystone UK's London office. Like the earlier Ashurst Morris Crisp order, the D J Freeman site will have a client/server architecture, with an Oracle database running on Windows NT.

☞ **Comment...** Currently the only other law firm in the world implementing a Keystone system is Phillips Fox in New Zealand, where it is expected to go “live” in the firm's Auckland and Wellington offices within the next few weeks. But, it is understood that Masons in London is also “actively” considering Keystone. □

Axxia goes to Uxbridge
Uxbridge-based Iiffes Booth Bennett has ordered a new 120 user Arista case and practice management system from Axxia Systems (☎ 01734 602602), which is scheduled to be up and running by February 1997.

☞ **Axxia also expect to be able to announce further orders from a consortium of law firms within the Irish Republic within the next few weeks.**

Scottish publisher to use HotDocs
Scottish legal publisher W.Green has signed a deal with Capsoft UK (☎ 0131 226 3999) which will see the publisher launching a series of HotDocs based products from December, starting with Ian Balfour's *Separation Agreements*.

DELOITTE SURVEY STIRS BACK OFFICE CONTROVERSY

According to the findings of a new survey conducted by management consultants Deloitte & Touche, many of the back office accounts and financial management systems now in use disappoint their users because they fail to provide the analysis and reporting information needed by modern law firms.

Deloitte & Touche partner Gary Simon says there is "a huge discrepancy between what is needed and what is out there," with the result finance directors do not have the software they need to do their jobs. But, is this a valid criticism?

Software suppliers LTI has contacted say it is not uncommon to find differences of opinion among back office staff over the merits of accounts systems, with cashiers primarily concerned about data posting, trial balances and the scope of profit & loss accounts, whereas finance directors, particularly those with an accountancy background, are said to be only interested in the number of nominal ledger sub-categories.

This seems to support Gary Simon's view that some accounts systems are not sophisticated enough. But, according to Charles Russell finance director Stephen Akers: the problem is the exact opposite. His view (and one of the reasons why the firm opted for the US Elite package) is that most UK legal accounts software is already too complex and needs to be made a lot simpler.

"We are not interested in their management reports as most IT suppliers don't know what finance directors really want. What we need is something that looks after time recording, billing and cash - but allows us to pull out raw data so we can create our own management reports using EIS systems or Excel."

☞ **Comment...** This debate looks set to run and run however Gary Simon is ➡

➡ presenting a paper on the subject at next Wednesday's (27 November) *LITigate '96* conference in London. The event is co-sponsored by **LEGAL TECHNOLOGY INSIDER** (see *Diary Dates* for details). ☐

MORE UNCERTAINTIES IN CHANCERY LANE

As part of the ongoing management changes within the English Law Society, it has been announced that Geoff Bignell, director of the Society's commercial arm Law Society Services, is to leave Chancery Lane in February to make way for someone "with a marketing background".

☞ **Comment...** Mr Bignell says he is feeling "very positive" about his own future but his departure inevitably casts a shadow over some LSS operations, including the High Street Starter Kit (HSSK) software project.

As recently as last month Mr Bignell intervened to block Peapod Solutions from using the name "High Street Solution" for its rival system and his departure comes at a crucial time with HSSK still scheduled for a launch in the first half of next year.

The current Law Society president Tony Girling personally endorsed the HSSK during his election campaign but the pressure on Chancery Lane to cut costs means there is a possibility that Mr Bignell's eventual replacement will shelve the whole project. ☐

IT'S GOOD TO TALK

Talking Technologies (formerly Responsive Systems ☎ 0171 602 4107) has launched the VoicePad Pro speech recognition system. Retailing for just £79 + VAT, it is the cheapest product of this type on the market. But, the company does warn that because it only works with the Windows WordPad application, it is unlikely to meet the needs of most lawyers, who require compatibility with more powerful wordprocessing software. ☐

NEW SYSTEM FOR CRIMINAL LAWYERS

Brighton-based software house Anya Designs is to launch a series of low cost applications suitable for criminal practitioners that will run on the Psion Series 3a/c palmtop computer.

The system is the brain-child of Christine Gribben, an accredited police station representative and a director of Law Services Direct, whose experiences of the legal aid system and working in police stations in the middle of the night prompted her to look at ways in which technology could help.

The solution she and her colleagues in Anya Designs (☎ 01273 682020) devised is a suite of stand-alone modules (currently code-named Lawbase but that is being changed to avoid confusion with Lawbase Legal Systems) that can store client data, record time and produce legal aid bills.

The system has the backing of Blackstone Press, is scheduled to become commercially available in January 1997, with module prices ranging from £75 to £200. Initially it will run on a Psion Series 3a/c but versions for PC laptops and Apple Macs are planned.

☞ **Technical Note...** Although the Anya system seems to have much in common with the Advocate system from Paradigm Software (see p.5 of Issue No 25), there are a number of differences. These include the fact that unlike Advocate, the Anya system can exchange data with a billing system on a desktop PC. The Anya system can also cope with multiple fee earners and it is cheaper. □

WESTWARD HO

Perfect Software, which produces the Perfect Books accounts system for small firms, has relocated from Surbiton to South Wales. The new address is: Tondu Enterprise Centre, Bridgend, CF32 9BS (☎ 01656 720071/Dx 38040 Bridgend) ➡

➡ however the company's sales and training specialist Sarah Worsfold remains based in the South-East (☎ 01932 866417).

☞ **Comment...** The DOS-based Perfect Books system was originally aimed at very small firms, earning the endorsement of Arnold Rosen when he used to head the Sole Practitioners Group.

Although some 40% of users are still sole practitioners, the company finds a growing volume of business is coming from larger (up to 30 fee earner) firms wanting a no frills, low price system (the £575 price includes the first year's support) that allows them to export data to spreadsheets. Perfect Software say their main competitors are regional based: Edgebyte in the North-West and Jackson Computers in the Midlands. □

THE MILLENNIUM BOMB

➡ *continued from front page...* To get some suppliers to accept responsibility may therefore require resorting to litigation.

But, as IT lawyer Susan Singleton warns, if the system was bought over six years ago, users may be outside the limitation period for contract and have to resort to tort. Given the potential urgency of the situation (some case management systems could encounter problems from the end of next month) lengthy litigation may be a luxury that cannot be afforded.

Singleton advises users to get express warranties on all new contracts that systems are Y2K compliant. And she also suggests users check contracts on systems bought within the last six years as implied warranties may be relevant.

☞ **Recommendation...** Along with their own systems, readers should where possible also ensure the IT systems used by their major clients and customers are also Y2K compliant. Otherwise, come 1st January 2000, it may be very difficult to obtain payment for the goods and services that have been supplied. □

Dates to watch

Although the date change from 31st December 1999 to 1st January 2000 is the main problem area, some systems record dates on a register running from 0 to 9999, which means they are unable to accept records dated later than 9th September 1999 (9/9/99). And, there are also some systems that do not recognise the Year 2000 as a leap year and so will omit 29th February from their records.

Components to watch

The Y2K problem is not confined to the processor chips in computer hardware. Similar technology is now found in office automation systems and domestic appliances, including fax machines, telephone switchboards, video recorders and microwave ovens. Expect some of these systems to fail as well.

Market shares

Latest figures from the IT market research group Dataquest reveal that in terms of sale of operating systems for PCs this year, Microsoft Windows products have taken an 87% share, followed by Apple Mac with 6% and DOS and IBM OS/2 level pegging with just 2% each.

☞ In terms of office automation suites, during the 2nd quarter of 1996, Microsoft Office took 84.5% of sales (measured by revenue not units) followed by Lotus SmartSuite (7.8%) and Corel PerfectOffice (7.7%). Among individual product sales, Microsoft's Excel took an 80% share of the spreadsheet market, while the company's Word application had a 70% share of new wordprocessor sales.

WINDOWS... FUNCTIONALITY SHOULD BE THE KEY

A number of readers have said they are becoming increasingly confused by the rival claims software suppliers are making for the different approaches now being used to develop Windows applications. But what are the issues involved in the choice between C++, Delphi and Visual Basic - and does it really matter anyway?

For all their pretensions, computers are actually very dumb creatures who can only understand two impulses, namely: the presence and absence of an electrical charge. This *binary notation*, with numbers represented by a series of digits consisting of 0 or 1, is the basis of all computer programming. But it is also very slow, for example the number "45" is represented by "101101" in binary or *machine code*.

To overcome this problem, the computer industry has over the years developed a series of increasingly sophisticated *higher level* programming and development languages (or *tools*), as clearly the closer you can get to the human programmer's own language (English) the simpler and quicker the programming task becomes.

This is where the likes of C++ and Delphi enter the picture as these are all higher level languages. However an additional complication is that not only is there competition between, say, Delphi and Visual Basic but also between the different *generations* of language,

C++ is a *third generation* language whereas Delphi & co are *fourth generation* languages (or 4GLs). Generation in this case meaning the higher the number, the higher the language and the further away it is from machine code.

So are there any differences between the rival 4GLs?

In the UK legal market, probably the most frequently encountered are Visual Basic, Delphi, Progress and

☞ PowerBuilder. And, not surprisingly, the companies who have selected these tools will sing their praises at the expense of rival products.

In reality, because this is such a competitive market, these tools are being upgraded every few months, so while Delphi may currently be widely rated as the "best", by next spring Visual Basic is likely to have caught up with it.

So what about the C++ versus 4GL argument?

At one stage it was probably true C++ programs were more efficient in their use of computing resources but the great improvement in 4GLs is fast eroding this advantage. And, C++ programming does have one major drawback in that it is much slower than using a 4GL - which explains why many suppliers often use a mixture of tools, such as C++ and Delphi.

It also must be borne in mind that suppliers are not always entirely objective in their choice of system. For example, if you have spent the last couple of years working in C++ you are not going to throw all that work away and start again in PowerBuilder. Similarly, if you need to develop a Windows application quickly, Visual Basic is not only quicker than C++ but also a more attractive option than Delphi, which has a steep learning curve.

☞ **Recommendation...** Although it may sound like heresy to some suppliers, the choice of development tool should be irrelevant to prospective purchasers (unless they have their own IT staff and plan to do their own programming). Not least because if an application program is poorly designed and developed, it does not matter whether it was written in a 3GL or a 4GL - it is still a poor product.

More to the point, this is all "under the bonnet stuff" and users really should be basing their choice on the factors that are important to their legal practices: namely the performance and functionality of the software, its compatibility with the firm's longer term IT strategy and its price! ☐

ME AND MY PC

Singletons is a specialist intellectual property/IT, EC/competition & commercial law practice founded in early 1994 and operated from Susan Singleton's home office in North West London. On page 3 we quote her on the Year 2000 issue but what technology does she use in her own practice and for her extensive writing commissions?

When did your practice first start using computers ? From when I first set up the firm.

When did you personally first start using computers ? I taught myself to touch type when I was 15 and bought my first typewriter on which I wrote a series of rather poor novels and my autobiography (!) which now reside in my loft. I then bought an early Amstrad in 1990 to write my first competition law book (which now resides in book shops) and after that, in 1992, a simple laptop on which I taught myself to use WordPerfect.

What systems does your firm use? The practice consists of me - I am a sole practitioner and do my own typing. Most of my clients use Word so in the interests of good client relations (just joking) I have stuck to WordPerfect 5.1. I am still not convinced that my very fast key strokes are slower than a mouse.

I have a major lack of time at the moment as I am working an average of 80 hours a week. It is great to have so much work but hard to put my IT plans into place. I will be upgrading my office premises (ie moving house) next year and am holding off technology changes until then. I will probably go for Word or WordPerfect for Windows and Microsoft Office. My litigation management systems are my paper files and my accounts are in a bound notebook, for which readers will brand me a heretic.

What is your main PC hardware? I work in DOS but also have Windows 3.11 and Windows 95. I have two machines: a 386 and a Packard Bell multimedia machine with a Pentium ➔

➔ 133MHz processor, 1.2Gb hard disk and 16Mb of Ram which is more than enough for my needs, which are basically wordprocessing.

I also run WordPerfect on the laptop. I mostly use it on train journeys when I am away on business and have legal articles to catch up on. Sometimes I use it in client meetings out of the office because my writing is so awful. I always take typed notes of what everyone says to me on the telephone as they say it, which saves doing file notes afterwards.

What is your main applications software? My only and favourite program is WordPerfect for wordprocessing.

When is your PC turned on in the morning - and switched off again at night? When I am in the office it goes on at about 8.15am once I return from packing my three children (and my husband - a teacher) off to school. It goes off at about 10pm unless I am working late - and 10pm is early at the moment..

What was your worst moment with a computer? Nothing really bad. Once I got back from holiday to find the main and backup batteries of my Psion Organiser had died and I had to rekey a lot of names and addresses but it was all duplicated elsewhere. I am usually quite thorough about taking back ups.

Have you ever surfed the Net and what is your favourite site? I try to avoid surfing because of lack of time. The Data Protection Registrar's home page is good and I find the Department of Justice site useful for competition law. Of course the best Web sites are those designed by two of my clients whose business is designing Web pages!

How many times a day do you check your email? I usually check LINK about once a day unless I am expecting a message, when I check more often.

What do you never leave home without? My mobile phone, electronic organiser and a little black box device which I use to pick up messages on the answering machine in the office (it was second hand 10 years ago). ➔

➔ **Have you any advice you would like to pass on to lawyers working with computers?**

Don't be persuaded by salesmen to spend more than you need but always buy twice the memory you expect to use. And if you cannot touch type fast, then learn.

Would you describe IT as a benefit or a liability? I can work from home serving over 100 clients from some of the biggest plcs to tiny businesses as far apart as Germany and Cornwall, providing a service which is hardly distinguishable in terms of quality (I hope), appearance of documents and, certainly, speed from the large City firms where I used to work. IT makes that possible. It saves time and staff costs. And it enables a profitability of turnover ratio of over 90% to be achieved. ☐

INSIDER Info Service

Need a telephone number, a product name, a contact point or any other elusive item of information concerning legal technology? We can help. As a free service - and only available to subscribers - you can call **LEGAL TECHNOLOGY INSIDER** on ☎ 01379 687518 and we will provide you with the facts you require.

INSIDER Rates

Subscription rates for **LEGAL TECHNOLOGY INSIDER** in 1997 remain unchanged at £95 (overseas £125) for 24 issues. However in response to reader requests a new two year subscription rate of £170 for 48 issues (overseas £225) - a saving of 10% on the normal annual rate - is now available.

CARPE DIEM GETS MAJOR UPGRADE

The US ProSoft Corporation has announced a major upgrade to its popular Carpe Diem time and expenses tracking software. Among the many enhancements, Carpe Diem 2.0 can now handle VAT on expense reports, a move expected to increase its appeal among UK law firms.

ProSoft president David Goldstein says the main change has been to give Carpe Diem a more "open" architecture, so not only is it compatible with a wider range of report writers, such as Access and Crystal Reports but also supports the move towards client/server computing.

For details call ☎ 001 214 386 7769 or check the ProSoft web site at <http://www.pscorp.com>

☞ **Other US News...** Equitrac has now completed final development work on its new EPIC system (Equitrac Professional Internet Client - first previewed in Issue 15). This is a Web browser designed to control Internet access and track on-line research and email for billing and resource management purposes. EPIC receives its first public showing at the New York *Legal Tech* event in January (see *Diary Dates* for details). ProSoft will also be there with Carpe Diem 2.0. ☐

BUTTERWORTHS TO TAKE ACTIVETEXT

Legal publisher Butterworths is now using the ActiveTEXT editorial system to create and synchronise multiple versions of the same published material. Initially the company will be using the system on its loose leaf titles, where the same statutory documents are continuously revised and reinterpreted.

ActiveTEXT was developed by Abbey Information Systems (☎ 01306 745600) who are showing the system at next month's *Online Information* event (see *Diary Dates* for details). ☐

DIARY DATES

☉ **AIM Evolution Seminars** From now until 11th December AIM Professional is running a series of half day seminars to promote the company's Evolution software. Admission is free, with a choice of morning or afternoon sessions. Call Jo Hunter on ☎ 01482 228465 for details.

☉ **26 & 27 November - Software for Solicitors** Technology exhibition features major legal systems suppliers at the Queens Hotel, Leeds. Admission free, call Truemist on ☎ 0181 742 3399 for details.

☉ **27 November - LITigate '96** One day conference plus workshop sessions on legal IT, law firm re-engineering and case management. Co-sponsored by **LEGAL TECHNOLOGY INSIDER**. Venue: Café Royal, London WC2. Fee £380 +VAT, registration from 9.00am. Call Forum on ☎ 0181 445 8060 for details.

☉ **Legal Admissibility of Electronic Documents** Seminars looking at legal issues surrounding electronic documents. Fee £195 + VAT. Venues: Edinburgh 29 November and Manchester 4 December. Call BSI-DISC on ☎ 0181 996 7408.

☉ **3 to 5 December - Online Information '96** Exhibition at Olympia in London features some 20 publishers with online and CD-Rom products of interest to law librarians, researchers and information managers. For free tickets call ☎ 01923 233442.

☉ **10 & 11 December - Advice & Information in the Community** Conference at Warwick University looking at the use of IT as a way for local councils to deliver advice services. Fee £145 + VAT, for details call Ferret on ☎ 01222 644660.

☉ **27 to 29 January - Legal Tech New York** The major US legal IT show, at the New York Hilton. Call Corporate Presentations on ☎ 001 212 877 5619 for seminar programme details. ☐

COMMUNIC@TIONS

FUTURES

Web operators are welcome to create links to the **LTi** site at <http://www.cloudnine.co.uk/cloudnine/> **LTi** is a member of the HTML Writers Guild and supports the Electronic Frontier Foundation campaign for free speech on the Internet.

LINK UPGRADE DELAYS

PROMPT COMPLAINTS

The growing chorus of disapproval being voiced by LINK users on the system's General Chat area suggests that tolerance is fast running out for the current diet of system crashes, lost email messages and continued non-appearance of the long awaited Link '96 upgrade.

Reporting the loss of a recent email message, Nigel Steward, the senior partner of Sherwin Oliver in Fareham, posted a message to LINK administrators warning that: "Your committed users are loyal but will, I believe, not necessarily remain so if they are continually kept uninformed. Surely issues such as this (*ie the loss of email*) deserve a prompt answer and reassurance?"

This view is echoed by Aina Khan of the Aina Khan Partnership in east London who, after asking what had happened to the upgrade and her lost email, added: "Why cannot LINK keep us informed and keep its promises. If we behaved like this with our clients we would soon find ourselves without work."

☞ **Comment...** **LTi** has noticed one of the latest foibles to afflict LINK is the way a whole PC can freeze when a user tries to print off a copy of an email message.

With one major City of London telecoms group (not Mercury's LegalNet) now investigating the viability of creating a rival legal market intranet, this ebbing away of sympathy could have disastrous consequences for LINK's longer term survival prospects. ☐

NEW COMMON LAW LEGAL BULLETIN FREE VIA EMAIL

Peter Faris, an Australian-based QC and Web consultant, has just launched the Supreme Court International Bulletin (SCiB), a free service providing, via email, a weekly summary of all new "significant decisions" in the United States Supreme Court, the Supreme Court of Canada and the Australian High Court. House of Lords' decisions will also be available in the near future.

The SCiB is delivered direct to a subscriber as an HTML document attached to an email. It can then be viewed offline with a Web browser. It also contains hypertext links to the full text of the judgments, so these too can be either viewed or downloaded.

Peter Faris can be emailed at farisgp@ozemail.com.au and there is a sample SCiB bulletin on the Web at <http://www.farislaw.com/scib1.html> ☐

NETCOM NOW TESTING NEW x2 TECHNOLOGY

Internet service provider Netcom has opened up its network to allow all UK Internet users to test the 56 kbps modem speed offered by US Robotics new x2 technology, which effectively doubles the speed of a V.34 modem. Users do not need an x2 modem but the tests do check the quality of the local exchange line and its suitability for using with the new technology. The number to dial is ☎ 0845 079 8022 and further instructions can be found on the Netcom home page at <http://www.netcom.net.uk> ☐

GO INTERACTIVE

Litigation support specialists Legal Technologies Ltd (☎ 0171 935 8242) has set up a new subsidiary with former Clifford Chance litigation support manager Steve Vincent. Called Go Interactive, it will specialise in providing Internet and intranet consultancy services, including Web site design, to the legal market. ☐

The e-mile high club ?

From the first quarter of 1997, passengers flying on airlines belonging to the Skyphone network will be able to access computer networks and email at 35,000 feet, thanks to the latest air-to-ground satellite communications technology. But, transmission will initially be limited to V.22 (2.4 kbps) modem speeds.

☞ **BA and Virgin Atlantic belong to the Skyphone group. BT provides further details about the project at <http://www.commstore.bt.com>**

Budget news on the Web

Next Tuesday (26th November) sees the UK Chancellor of the Exchequer deliver the annual Budget Speech. A number of sites will carry online news and analysis including the *Financial Times* at <http://www.ft.com>

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Coming soon...
Forthcoming issues of LTI will include features on pocket organisers, network computers and a survey of the most highly rated IT consultants. Don't miss the next issue No 28 out: 2nd December.

Alexis Byter's COMPUTER LORE

Alive and kicking

Last week a chartered accountant, who now dabbles in providing law firms with IT consultancy services, confidently told me that Lawbase Legal Systems had stopped trading many years ago.

Naturally this news came as a bit of a shock to Lawbase managing director Wyn Melville-Jones, who assures me that not only is he alive and well and working in Ealing but also that Lawbase is now putting the final touches to a new family of Windows-based case management systems, the first of which will be seeing the light of day in the first part of 1997.

In fact this is the third time this year Lawbase has found itself cast as a latter day Mark Twain (reports of its death being an exaggeration) prompting US company Synaptec and more recently Psion software house Anya Designs to drop the name "Lawbase" from their UK product ranges.

Thames Valley enterprise

Still on the subject of case management software, Fathom Technologies (who are behind the CaseFlow product range) have been nominated for the 1996 Thames Valley Business of the Year Awards in the "enterprise" category. The winners will be announced in January. ➔

No bar on Harry

Also alive and well and now once more working in the legal marketplace is Axxia Systems' stalwart Harry Townsend. One of the original men from Kienzle, Harry has spent most of this year working with Axxia's commercial systems accounts but has now been reassigned back to the legal division, with special responsibility for looking after the large number of Axxia users who are still happy to run the old KISOL system.

What we hate the most is...

Good news for technophobes everywhere, Reed Personnel Services has just published the results of a survey it conducted to find out what people love and hate about communications technology.

Not too surprisingly, the vote for "the most useful technology" went to electronic mail, closely followed by mobile phones. This was in sharp contrast to voice mail (otherwise known as telephone answering machines with delusions of grandeur) which was widely condemned as an inefficient, time wasting robotic medium - not least because it was widely suspected most users fail to check for messages often enough.

Also getting the proverbial thumbs down were the Internet (too confusing), laptop modems (too complex), and video-conferencing, which was slated for being too expensive and lacking atmosphere. ☐

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