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CHARLES CHRISTIAN'S

# LEGAL TECHNOLOGY

## INSIDER

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

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**And don't forget to visit <http://www.cloudnine.co.uk>**

## NKT SCHEME AIMS TO BRING LEGAL WORK ONTO THE WEB

**North London solicitors Kaye Tesler & Co believe their new interactive approach to taking legal instructions directly from the Internet's World Wide Web could transform the way law firms conduct their business - and they have now launched a scheme that will allow other firms to offer similar services.**

As originally reported in the 13th January issue of **LEGAL TECHNOLOGY INSIDER**, the firm's Web site contains the "front ends" to number of fixed price legal services, including will drafting, small claims, debt collection and conveyancing.

The key feature is access to these services is via interactive CGI fill-in forms, so instead of being restricted to merely requesting further information about the services, the prospective client can submit instructions online. Also, because this data is sent as a form rather than as an unstructured email message, the material can be incorporated directly into any documents the firm has to prepare, thus avoiding the need for retyping.

Kaye Tesler senior partner Michael Kaye has been so impressed with the reception the service has received, that he has now set up a commercial arm to sell the scheme to other law firms. Or, as Kaye puts it: "It is such a good idea that someone is bound to copy it, so we thought we may as well get in first."

The new company is called NKT Computer Consultants and although ➤

➤ it has only been actively marketing the NKT Interactive Scheme since the end of March, the company is optimistic the first sales will be concluded "soon".

So what is the deal NKT has to offer? The basic package is that a law firm gets its own Web site, Internet address and email facility hosted on NKT's own secure server - so no problems with hackers as messages can be encrypted. NKT will also produce the design for the Web site pages, incorporating up to 5000 words of promotional text about the firm.

Although this sounds similar to the many *Yellow Pages* style legal services directories already available on the Web, what differentiates the NKT package is that the law firm also gets the interactive forms facility, including up to 30 blank question boxes, so they can create their own instructions forms.

The basic package costs £3250 + VAT and also includes a copy of the Kaye Tesler will writing facility. The full service costs £4995 and also includes copies of Kaye Tesler's conveyancing, tenancy, debt collection and criminal modules. The cost of hosting the site for the first year is included in these figures, for subsequent years the price is £250 + VAT.

Although NKT host the site, users will still need PCs in their offices to access incoming new business messages. However, NKT are investigating leasing arrangements for firms who want to acquire computer hardware.

According to Michael Kaye, the beauty of the system is that it takes law firms beyond conventional *brochureware* and into the realms of a transactional system that allows them to sell, deliver and even be paid for legal services across the Internet. ...continued on page 5 ➤

**Canada Life installs Quill**  
Life assurance company Canada Life has purchased a case management system from Quill Computer Systems. Canada Life will be running it on an existing local area network at their Potters Bar offices.

**CWJ invests in Wisdom**  
Eight-partner firm Clarkson Wright & Jakes in Orpington has installed the Wisdom accounts and practice management system from Avenue Legal Systems. The firm, which is a member of LawNet and was recently awarded Investors In People accreditation, is also using Avenue's DACS case management software.

## LAWTECH IN MAJOR RESTRUCTURING EXERCISE

**Systems consultancy and integration specialist Lawtech has embarked upon a major restructuring exercise. The move follows a split between the company's two founding directors.**

Former Miles 33 managing director Clive Deen set up the company in 1994 with Mike Sharples (previously with Miles and Avenue Legal Systems) with the intention of providing a range of training, support, consultancy and systems integration services to larger London law firms. But, according to Sharples, the margins available in this line of business have grown so slim as to be uneconomic.

Following "a difference of opinion" over the future direction of Lawtech, Clive Deen quit, leaving Mike Sharples to reassess and redefine the company's longer term strategy.

"We did have problems," admits Sharples, "but have now recognised that the way ahead is in applications rather than trying to cut deals."

In particular Lawtech, which has recently recruited Steve Williams (also ex-Miles and Avenue) to provide additional development expertise, is planning to focus attention on workflow technology.

"Although we will be developing some off-the-shelf solutions in the more traditional field of case management," says Sharples, "we see a greater potential for workflow in the broader area of legal business process automation.

"For example, in most firms the gap is still far too long between the completion of a job and the submission of a bill. And there can be similar delays associated with opening new case files and raising cheques, both of which should be routine tasks."

Lawtech now has exclusive distribution rights for a workflow product called FlowFile, which was originally developed in the UK for use within an insurance company but was recently ➔

➔ acquired by the US company Insci.

"With FlowFile we have both the basis for ready-to-run applications and a toolkit firms can take on to develop their own workflows," says Sharples. "We recognise there is an element of having to educate the market but we believe this is the way ahead."

Lawtech is now negotiating with customers the best way of winding down its outstanding commitments and will be launching its workflow operations under the Lawtech Services name. The company remains at its Whitefriars Street offices in London on ☎ 0171 583 2345.

Clive Deen is understood to be no longer working in the legal market. Sharples says the last he heard was that Deen "was selling furniture". □

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## WILL TADPOLE CROAK ?

Last week Tadpole Technology, the maker of the high powered SPARCbook range of Unix laptop computers, had trading in its shares suspended on the London Stock Exchange amid rumours that the loss making company might be sold to a third party. At the time of suspension, the share price was 23.5p compared with its peak of 440p in November 1994.

The concept of Unix on a laptop – and the ability to take a complete set of case files with you wherever you go – has been enthusiastically championed by major law firms such as Hale & Dorr and Sullivan & Cromwell in the USA.

Closer to home both Linklaters & Paines and Speechly Bircham have been running the Quest litigation support system on Tadpoles – in the latter case, the firm has a pool of SPARCbooks which can be loaned to instructed barristers.

SPARCbooks run the standard Sun Solaris version of Unix, so ongoing support for the software from companies such as Legal Expert Systems (☎ 0171 404 1633) who are a distributor of Quest in the UK, should not be a problem if Tadpole does disappear. □

### IT CONSULTANTS... LOVED BY USERS BUT LOATHED BY SUPPLIERS

The results of the LEGAL TECHNOLOGY INSIDER reader survey on legal IT consultants reveal that the market is broadly split in its views, with law firm enthusiasm for computer consultancy matched only by the antipathy of systems suppliers.

Of the readers from law firms and inhouse legal departments responding to the survey questionnaire (*published in Issue No.33 on 24th February*) all had used IT consultants at one stage or another and all said they would use them again.

Asked to rate consultants' skills in terms of their understanding of the needs of legal practices, 75% said they were "excellent", with the remainder describing them as "good". No-one put them in the "reasonable", "below average" or "poor" bands.

As to the advantages of using a consultant, the main benefit was perceived as being their independence, both from suppliers and "preconceived partnership views". A related benefit cited was that because consultants could appreciate the "bigger picture", they were also able to help firms develop more logical, longer term IT strategies.

A minority of respondents also said having a consultant strengthened their bargaining position with suppliers and so could "save them money".

Only one firm admitted to having a bad experience with a consultant and that was when their "independent" adviser turned out to be "locked in" with an IT supplier.

Turning to the other side of the coin, the legal IT suppliers replying to the questionnaire were almost unanimous in their criticisms of consultants.

For example, when asked to rate consultants in terms of their technical skills, 40% described them as "poor", with the remainder putting them in either

▶ the "reasonable" or "below average" categories. None of the suppliers in the survey gave consultants an "excellent" or "good" rating.

It was also alarming to see that all suppliers said there were circumstances where they would rather withdraw from a deal or refuse to tender for a contract because they knew specific consultants were involved.

So what do suppliers feel is wrong with consultants?

One complaint was their lack of technical skills, in particular relating to legal accounts applications. However, a more common grumble was the feeling many consultants "just go through the motions", inviting suppliers to respond to ITTs "merely to make up the numbers" or to "pad out their reports" and so justify their consultancy fees.

Having said that, suppliers do concede that some firms can benefit from using a consultant, the main advantages being seen as independent advice, help with drawing up longer term IT strategies and - in the case of larger scale projects - acting as "project managers".

#### The consultants

When it came to naming names, the survey clearly results revealed that Andrew Levison, of the David Andrews Partnership (part of Grant Thornton), is the UK's most widely used legal IT consultant. He is followed, at some distance, be Neil Cameron and Delia Venables.

On usage there is agreement but when it came to recommending consultants, the split between firms and suppliers once more opened up.

The consultant most highly recommended by law firms was Andrew Levison, followed - again at a distance - by Neil Cameron, Delia Venables and Michael McDonald (another independent). Among suppliers, however, votes were split almost equally between John Irving of Stoy Hayward, Richard Blasdale of Robson Rhodes, Neil Cameron and Delia Venables. ▶

#### ▶ Comment...

It was perhaps inevitable that the people who buy legal IT should have an entirely different perspective on consultants from the people who are trying to sell them these systems.

Nowhere is this more clearly demonstrated than in the ambivalent attitude towards Andrew Levison, who over the years has earned a reputation as "the user's friend" who will champion their cause against the supplier and ensure they get the best deals on price. And why not? Afterall, it is the firms - and not the suppliers - who are paying his fees. □

### Axxia in the right lane

Twelve partner Lane & Partners, who are based in London's Bloomsbury Square, have just placed an order worth a total of £150,000 for a new Arista case and practice management system from Axxia Systems.

The firm's finance director Alastair Mitchell anticipates the new system will produce more efficient billing procedures "enabling us to reduce work in progress by five percent" while at the same time freeing lawyers from clerical chores "and thus making available for each fee earner another 30 or so chargeable hours per annum."

Axxia won the order in the face of competition from three other suppliers invited to tender for the deal.

### MICROSOFT SUFFERS THE MEMPHIS BLUES

Software giant Microsoft has suffered a double dose of bad news over the last couple of weeks, thanks to a bug in its Web browser software and delays on its next generation operating system.

The browser problem was spotted by a student who realised there was a security flaw that would let hackers bypass normal *firewall* protection to attack the contents of a user's hard disk.

The bug potentially affects all users of Internet Explorer 3.0 and 3.01 running on either the Windows 95 or NT operating systems. However, Microsoft has produced a remedial patch which is freely downloadable from <http://www.microsoft.com/java/issue.htm>

The second item of bad news was the announcement that the planned major upgrade to the Windows 95 operating system (code named Memphis and employing the new Internet Explorer 4.0 Web browser as the user interface) was now unlikely to become commercially available until early 1998, whereas it had been expected this autumn.

One suggestion now being made is that this is all a ploy by Microsoft to encourage business users to move direct to a Windows NT Workstation platform.

☞ **Comment...** It would be an obvious remark to make but instead of forever rushing to bring out bigger and better upgrades, wouldn't it be nice if companies like Microsoft first paid more attention to getting the current versions of their systems to work properly. For example, for the last month people have been avidly downloading *beta* versions of Internet Explorer 4.0 from the Web (at <http://www.microsoft.com/ie>) while at the same time Explorer 3.0 still contains flaws.

Web enthusiasts may like to note that you can now also download the new Netscape Communicator browser from <http://www.netscape.com> ☐

### WORDPERFECT PLANNING LEGAL ACTION ?

In the United States it has been announced that Corel, who now own the WordPerfect wordprocessing program, will shortly be launching a "Legal Edition" of Corel WordPerfect Suite for Windows 3.1 and Windows 95.

First reports say the suite will include case management and document assembly capabilities, along with a legal spelling checker and even legal clip art!

It is also understood that Corel is hoping to encourage a number of US legal software suppliers (including Gavel & Gown, whose Amicus Attorney system is also available in the UK) to forge stronger links between their products and the Legal Edition. What is not yet clear is if or when a "British-English" version will be available in the UK.

### And Microsoft ?

Meanwhile Microsoft, the company that has been expanding its share of the law office automation market largely at the expense of WordPerfect, has launched a new version of the Office 97 suite called the Small Business Edition.

Like the Standard Edition it contains Word and Excel but instead of PowerPoint presentation software you get the AutoRoute Express journey planner, the Publisher '97 desktop publishing system and an accounts and financial analysis program that runs on Excel. ☐

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### YEAR 2000 UPDATE

☛ Computron Software, whose flagship legal site in the UK is Simmons & Simmons, has confirmed that users of its accounts and financial management systems will not encounter any problems with the Year 2000 date change.

☛ AIM Professional says it is now *beta* testing a software application that will help assess an organisation's exposure to Millennium computing problems. ☐

### CONTEXT SCRAP PAY AS YOU GO FOR FIXED FEES

**Context Limited, one of the UK's leading electronic publishers of UK and European legal and parliamentary information, has scrapped its pay-as-you-go tariffs for online services and replaced them with fixed annual subscription rates.**

Context say they decided to change the pricing structure after their own research, prompted by customer comments, revealed that pay-as-you-go was not a popular option "because it induced constant awareness of the cost of searching online".

In particular Context was concerned that "customers felt financially penalised if they made any mistakes and did not feel sufficiently encouraged to spend real time exploring and learning how to use the database fully".

Under the new fixed rate scheme prices have been designed to reflect existing patterns of usage to appeal to both heavy and occasional users. For example, for an annual fee of £120, users of the Justis Online case law service will have an annual limit of 120 minutes total access time. Context can be contacted on ☎ 0171 267 8984. □

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### LEGAL PUBLISHER USING WEB AS SAMPLER SITE

Legal publishers Blackstone Press, whose *Blackstone's Criminal Practice* guide is now widely regarded as the alternative to *Archbold*, are using the Internet to help promote the 1997 CD-Rom version of the book.

Rather than producing and distributing sample copies of the disk to demonstrate the way the electronic edition's Biblos software can be used to locate and cross reference information, Blackstone have posted a sampler version of CD-Rom on the Web at <http://www.pointref.com/bcp97> ➔

➔ The capacity of the CD-Rom has allowed Blackstone to add additional material, besides *Criminal Practice*, including the text of 10 recent statutes and the CPS charging standards. □

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### NO CHANGES AT COGNITO

Legal accounts specialists Cognito Software (☎ 01363 775582) say the recent acquisition of sister company CSM by the Pegasus group will have no effect on Cognito's activities.

The position was clarified by Shirley Turner of Cognito who explained that although Peter Mart of CSM had also been managing director of Cognito, both companies were independent subsidiaries of the Microvitec group. "CSM has now been sold but we remain an active part of Microvitec," she said "and will be launching new products for lawyers later this year". □

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### LEGAL WORK ON THE WEB

➔ *continued from front page...* "Because the commercial use of the Internet is still in its infancy, the NKT scheme provides High Street firms with an excellent opportunity to become established on the Web while there is still a level playing field" says Kaye.

Turning to the future, Michael Kaye says he has not ruled out selling the service through a nationwide dealer network and he also believes there is scope for linking the interactive forms to third party case management software, so the instructions data can be integrated directly into the system, again without the need for any retyping.

The Kaye Tesler site, which provides the model for the NKT scheme (additional facilities are available as optional extras) is at <http://www.kt.uklaw.net> Michael Kaye will also be talking about the service at seminars in Leicester and Reading on the 14th and 21st May respectively. For further details call ☎ 0181 802 6817. □

### New face at Norwel

**Alison Bagnall has been appointed marketing manager at Norwel Computer Systems. She was previously at Laserform Law, where she was involved with the Kestrel accounts system. Alison replaces Deborah Stevenson, who left Norwel at the end of last year.**

### Insider DX box closed

**Could readers please note LEGAL TECHNOLOGY INSIDER has decided to close its DX (Document Exchange) box. The postal and email addresses remain unchanged.**

### READER SERVICES

**Need help or information?** If you need a phone number, product name, contact point or any other elusive item of information concerning legal technology, just call the Insider Info Line on ☎ 01379 687518.

**Hotlinks** Readers with Internet access can visit the Insider Hotlinks pages at <http://www.cloudnine.co.uk/hotlinks/> where you will find hyperlinks to the Web sites of organisations mentioned in this and previous issues.

## LEGAL TECHNOLOGY DIARY DATES

☉ **April 9 - AIM Evolution Spring Seminar Programme** This week in London. The programme continues until end of May. Admission free with choice of morning or afternoon sessions. Call Jo Hunter on ☎ 01482 326971 for details.

☉ **April 9 - Financial & Marketing Management for the Bar** Start of a series of weekly courses running until June looking at the way IT can help barristers and chambers manage their practices. The course has been developed by Central Law Training in conjunction with Applied Computer Expertise. Call CLT on ☎ 0121 362 7712 for details.

☉ **April 16 - Excel Spreadsheets at Intermediate Level** A one day advanced training course organised by Institute of Legal Cashiers & Administrators. At the ILCA offices in South-East London, fee from £200, call ILCA on ☎ 0181 294 2887 for details.

☉ **April 16 - Unified Messaging** Choice of three seminar sessions on the integration of voice, fax and email systems. Organised by Kommunicate Ltd at the Institute of Directors, Pall Mall, London. Admission free, call Sandra Smith on ☎ 01252 815514 for details.

☉ **April 22 - Windows Technology for Modern Law Firms** Half day (am or pm) seminar organised by Applied Computer Expertise in conjunction with Online Law (see separate story on page 7) looking at the role of case management, Windows NT and the Internet in legal practice. Admission free, call Stephen Murphy at ACE on ☎ 0171 404 55772 for details.

☉ **April 24 - IT for Lawyers Exhibition & Workshops** One day of seminars and supporting exhibition organised by the Society for Computers

↪ ↗ & Law in association with the Yorkshire & North East region law societies. Speakers include Steven Vincent of Go Interactive on the Internet, Law Society council member Philip Hamer on IT for High Street practitioners, plus papers by Neil Cameron, John Irving and Richard Susskind. Admission from £15 at the highly rated Royal Armouries Museum in Leeds. Call the SCL on ☎ 0117 923 7393 for details.

☉ **May 12 - Support Services in Law Firms** One day conference on human resources, technology, support staff motivation and outsourcing, including speakers from Taylor Joynson Garrett, S J Berwin and Reynolds Porter Chamberlain. Fee £349 + VAT with £50 discount for members of the Solicitors Personnel Managers (IPD) Forum. The event also qualifies for 6 hours CPD points. At Radisson Marlborough Hotel, London. Call Centaur Conferences on ☎ 0171 434 3711 for details.

☉ **May 14 - Legal Issues of Doing Business on the Internet** One day conference on copyright, Web publishing and related issues. Speakers from Bird & Bird, Masons and publishers Harper Collins, plus Michael Chissisk of Field Fisher Waterhouse on the *Shetland Times* case. Fee £695 + VAT, the event qualifies for 7 hours CPD points. At Cumberland Hotel, London. Call ICM Marketing on ☎ 0171 436 5735 for details.

☉ **June 3, 4 & 5 - Solicitors & Legal Office Exhibition** With in the region of 100 exhibitors, this is still the UK's leading legal technology exhibition. The location is the Barbican Exhibition Centre in London and admission is free. The doors open each day at 9.30am and close at 6pm on Tuesday and 5pm on Thursday - on Wednesday there is 7.30pm late night closing. For further details about the event or pre-registration (to save queuing for admission on the day) call Truemist on ☎ 0181 742 3399. □

### COMMUNIC@TIONS FUTURES

Direct hyperlinks to all the organisations mentioned on this page can be found at <http://www.cloudnine.co.uk/hotlinks/>

Details about Web Master/FM, the new outsourcing service for web site updating and maintenance can be found at <http://www.cloudnine.co.uk/fm/> ☐

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### TECHNOLOGY ANSWERS OVER THE WEB

Legal IT consultant Delia Venables (see also story on page 3) has launched a series of information packs for lawyers that answer some of the most frequently asked questions about technology and computerisation projects.

Called "nuggets" each element in the series contains between three and four pages of information explaining aspects of law office computing and offers practical suggestions that should benefit all small-to-medium sized law firms.

Explaining the background to the series, Delia Venables said: "The nuggets arose out of my day-to-day consultancy work where I found many of the same topics – such as how to implement a case management system, can you upgrade a DOS network to Windows – cropping up time and time again.

"I therefore decided to package the answers to these queries as a series of self contained reports that can be purchased both conventionally in printed form and electronically. Although there are still relatively few lawyers surfing the Internet, it does make an ideal sales medium for information of this type and because my overheads are lower, it is also the cheaper option" added Venables.

There are currently nine in the series, covering such topics as the Word versus Wordperfect wordprocessing debate; voice recognition technology and managing office networks – do firms need network managers and how should they set about recruiting the right person? ➔

➔ The price is £25 (+ VAT) for four nuggets, call ☎ 01273 472424 for details. They are also downloadable from Delia Venables' Web site at <http://www.venables.co.uk/legal/nuggets.htm> for £20 (+ VAT) for a set of four. ☐

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### NEW LEGAL WEB SITES

Two new legal Internet sites open for business this month...

The first is the Society for Computers & Law's totally redesigned Web presence at <http://www.scl.org>

The site contains a full range of membership services, including events diary, contact information about special interest groups, an online version of the SCL magazine *Computers & Law* plus LINK style discussion groups and bulletin boards.

The site was designed for the society by Internet consultancy Go Interactive (<http://www.gointeractive.co.uk>) so complain to Steven Vincent at that company if you think the site makes excessive use of frames.

The second site, which at the time of going to press was still not "live" and merely showing pilot material is at <http://www.online-law.co.uk>

This seems to be yet another general purpose site containing legal resources plus plenty of legal links and a directory of courts, solicitors' practices, barristers' chambers, expert witnesses and IT suppliers for England & Wales.

☞ **Comment...** Online Law clearly hope to make the site commercially viable by charging for Web design services, hyperlinks and advertising but with interactive transactional services – such as the new NKT scheme (see front page story) now appearing – it could be that the days of *Yellow Pages* style legal brochureware sites are coming to an end. Online Law will be talking about their service on 22nd April at a seminar organised by Applied Computer Expertise (see *Diary Dates* on page 6 for details). ☐

### Employment law

**Disclaw Publishing, who specialise in electronic guides to employment law, have revised their Web site to include more free downloadable legal information and a database of law firms with an employment law capability. The site can be found at <http://www.emplaw.co.uk>**

### Masons' site

**In the last issue part of the URL for the Masons' web site was omitted. It should read <http://www.masons.com>**

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# LEGAL TECHNOLOGY INSIDER

## NEWS ▶ VIEWS ▶ MOVES ▶ DEALS ▶ DATA

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### LEGAL TECHNOLOGY INSIDER

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- don't miss it.

### Alexis Byter's COMPUTER LORE

#### One from the archives

The Insider's Info Line service likes to think it can cope with most queries but was thrown by one recent request for a phone number for a very old accounts package called Notary. Apparently the caller still used the system and wanted to know if it was Millennium proof!

A trawl through the archives revealed that the last known reference to the software was in 1985. At that time it was being sold by Legal Micro Systems, a subsidiary of law stationers Stephen Cox. The Cox group was itself subsequently bought out, chewed up and generally trampled on by Robert Maxwell before returning to the real world, via a management buyout, as part of the reborn Oyez/Solicitors Law Stationery Society organisation.

Somewhere along the way during the Maxwell years both Notary and its chief salesman (and one time Society for Computers & Law luminary) Owen Williams disappeared from view. If anyone has had recent sightings of either of them, please let us know.

Incidentally, it was interesting to see that in 1985 the CP/M hardware on which Notary ran required a minimum specification of 64K of RAM and a ➔

➔ 10Mb hard disk. Pretty puny by modern standards but back then the asking price was the princely sum of £5300 for the hardware alone.

Today, by comparison, for just £5100 you buy a network of no less than six Dell Pentium 133 PCs - each with 16Mb of RAM and 2Gb hard disks - and you would still have enough change left to buy a Tory MP.

#### London Bridge floats away

Talking of names from the past, anyone remember Gordon Crawford? He first popped up in the late 1980s as the managing director of Charterhouse Systems, which in those days specialised in Wang and later IBM AS/400 hardware.

Charterhouse was subsequently acquired by NMW, who in turn were swallowed up by ACT, who in turn were acquired by Misys - but not before Crawford had staged a buyout to regain control of the rump of the old Charterhouse business.

This became the London Bridge group, which as well as continuing to be involved in the legal market, also built up a portfolio of products in the credit risk management systems field. And, clearly to good effect, as at the end of March the company was floated on the London Stock Exchange in a deal which left Crawford with a cash and shareholding worth an estimated £40million. □

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