

LEGAL TECHNOLOGY

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

In association with



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MILES TO LAUNCH SMART ALTERNATIVE

Miles 33 has launched a new service it calls the "Smart Alternative" that is intended to bring the benefits of outsourcing to law firms wanting state of the art practice management systems.

Miles' chief executive Alexander Yew told **LTi** that the modern practice management system was in danger of becoming "a monster" for although firms know that as a business they need them, the selection process – should they pick Unix or client/server, Informix or Oracle – the size of the capital investment, and the ongoing support costs was turning IT procurement into a major distraction.

What Miles have therefore devised is a new service – in effect a computer bureau for the 21st century – that will give firms all the benefits of the latest PMS technology but without the burden of ownership.

Under the new scheme, all the technology and support issues are left with Miles (they run the computing infrastructure and processing activities from their own premises) leaving the law firm to concentrate on the data side – inputting records, producing reports, printing cheques, running EIS routines and enquiries etc.

Once a firm has selected the Miles service – and Yew believes another benefit of this approach is it removes the need for the prolonged contractual negotiations that normally surround the purchase of a new PMS system – implementation becomes a relatively simple matter of installing an ISDN line plus Smart gateway, printers, terminals, software ➔

➔ and, where necessary, converting data from the firm's existing PMS system.

Once this is done, Miles reckon most practices (and the Smart Alternative is already running in three firms) can be fully operational within just three or four days – as distinct from the many months it now often takes to implement inhouse PMS systems. ...continued on page 5 ➔

ALL CHANGE IN THE CITY

Masons' IT director Martin Telfer, one of the best known and respected names in the UK legal IT world, is quitting the firm and moving to Australia to become the head of IT at Mallesons Stephen Jacques. One of his main responsibilities will be seeing through the implementation of MSJ's new Keystone system (see **LTi 47, page 1 for first report**). Masons itself is due to go "live" with Keystone next year.

Telfer leaves in November and one consequence of his departure is he will be unable to chair next year's *Information Systems for Lawyers* conference. The organisers Centaur have now confirmed that the new chairman will be Baker & McKenzie IT partner Harry Small.

Coincidentally another of Masons' high profile legal IT names – Dr Richard Susskind – has also left the firm and is now working with them (and Clifford Chance) in a consultative capacity.

☞ City of London firms Clifford Chance and Titmuss Sainer Dechert are just days away from announcing they have selected the CMS Open product as the core for their respective new practice management systems. **LTi** also understands legal IT consultant Neil Cameron has been commissioned to help formulate the specification for Keystone's planned new case management product. □

LEGAL TECHNOLOGY INSIDER

LATEST NEWS COMMENT & ANALYSIS

Insider now available for intranets

Legal Technology Insider is now available in an electronic format suitable for accessing via a web browser across an internal intranet or as part of a Lotus Notes database.

Called LTi-NET, each issue takes the form of HTML files, complete with hyperlinks, and can be delivered on disk or by email. Subscribers already include a "Top 10" City of London firm and one of the largest networks of independent law firms in the UK.

☞ For further details contact the publishers CloudNine Technology on ☎ 01379 687518.

Solpak on Windows

Meridian Legal Systems (☎ 01780 482795), which now owns the rights to the Solpak legal accounts package, has launched a new Windows version of the software.

SAGE PROVES RIGHT FLAVOUR FOR CARPE DIEM

Sage US Inc, part of the UK-based Sage Group - one of the world's largest accounting software suppliers - has just acquired the ProSoft Corporation, the developers of the popular Carpe Diem time tracking system.

The takeover was an amicable affair and most of ProSoft's senior staff, including Karen Fate who has been handling sales in the UK in recent years, are remaining with the business. ProSoft itself has now become part of the Sage Time Tracking Products Division, with ProSoft founder and president David Goldstein as its new vice-president.

☞ **Comment...** Along with Carpe Diem, Sage's Time Tracking division is now also responsible for the TimeSheet system, which is used in consulting and project management markets, and the Timeslips time recording and billing software which is widely used by lawyers in the USA and a smaller number in the UK.

LTi understands David Goldstein is meeting with representatives of Deepak Sareen, the main Timeslips distributor in the UK, to discuss future business plans. Among the items on the agenda is whether Sage should extend to the UK its recently announced "strategic alliance" with Gavel & Gown Software Inc.

Under this deal, the latest version of Gavel & Gown's Amicus Attorney software has been designed to link up with Timeslips to give users the ability to create an integrated time recording, billing and case management system. Amicus Attorney's UK distributor Alan Roberts believes this would also prove popular in this country but is waiting for news from Sage.

ProSoft is currently in the process of moving its Dallas operations into the Dallas head offices of Sage US but Karen Fate can be reached by email at kfate@sageus.com ☐

NEW QUILL SYSTEM READY FOR BETA TESTING

Quill Computer Systems (☎ 0161 236 2910) has begun previewing its new 32-bit practice and case management system for Windows 95 and NT platforms. The new system - called Quillennium - will shortly commence beta testing and is scheduled to be launched during the first quarter of 1998.

Taking into account the needs of its current user base, which includes a number of smaller legal aid practices, Quill plans to continue supporting its existing Quantum character-based system. The new Quillennium product will be available for running on both Windows NT and Novell networks. ☐

FATHOM IN DEBTCO DEAL

Debt collection software specialist Fathom Technologies (☎ 0118 975 0886) has completed the implementation of its Caseflow case management system at Harrogate-based solicitors Raworths.

Raworths ordered Caseflow earlier this year as part of a major upgrade to its office automation infrastructure. As part of the deal Fathom also transferred over all the files and records from the firm's old AIM Law Data Debtco II system.

Fathom director Julian Lipman said this was a particularly interesting part of the project, for although the company has extensive experience of electronically converting Debtco data, this was the first time it had tackled the latest release 5.2 version of Debtco II.

☞ **Comment...** Along with its Debtco expertise, Fathom is also starting to earn a reputation as a *best of breed supplier* by concentrating on case management software that is sufficiently "open" in design that it can be linked to other suppliers' accounts and practice management systems. Fathom has already been involved in projects with Avenue and TMA and LTi understands a deal with a third company is on the cards. ☐

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LATEST NEWS COMMENT & ANALYSIS

LASERFORM - GOOD BUSINESS BUT NO TAKEOVER

Legal software and electronic forms supplier Laserform Law report its latest trading year to 30th September saw turnover increase to a record £1.76 million, compared with £1.3 million the previous year.

Managing director Barry Hawley Green says although unaudited results indicate profits enjoyed a similar surge, most of this will be ploughed back into research & development.

Two major projects underway are: the development of a SQL Server-based version of Laserform's Kestrel accounts system. This is intended to improve the product's appeal to larger firms and will shortly enter beta testing. And, the development of "intelligent" documents and workflow routines based around Capsoft's HotDocs document assembly software (see also story on page 4).

Green also said Laserform had recently appointed legal stationers Stat Plus as "preferred status" distributors, as he believed there was a natural synergy between his company's electronic forms and the Stat Plus range of pre-printed legal forms. However, he added that while Laserform had received a number of approaches from prospective purchasers, there was no truth in the rumour that Stat Plus had recently acquired a 25% share holding in Laserform. □

FORMS IN BUT WILLS OUT

Oyez Legal Software, the electronic legal forms division of the Oyez Straker Group (which was formed by the recent merger of the Solicitors' Law Stationery Society and Straker), has announced a new 32-bit (ie Windows 95 and NT only) version of its OYEZForms software.

Called OYEZForms 98, it will be available from January 1998 on the same pricing basis as the current 16-bit forms and will be supplied as a free upgrade ➔

➔ to existing users. From November a demonstration version of the new system will be available free of charge on CD-Rom. Call ☎ 0171 232 1000 for details.

Oyez say one of the main benefits of the new system is it makes greater use of the Windows software environment, including allowing users to resize some of the fill-in boxes to accommodate multiple parties etc.

☞ **Comment...** Since the launch of its original electronic forms product in March 1996, Oyez has struck up relationships with a number of legal software vendors, so its forms are now integrated within systems from Avenue Legal, TFB, Videss, Jackson Computer Solutions and MSS. Latest figures suggest OYEZForms are in use in over 400 firms around the UK, with new systems being installed at a rate of about 20 to 25 per month.

Wills software

Oyez's first flirtation with electronic forms was actually a DOS based will-writing application for which it had distribution rights. Underwhelming sales led Oyez to drop the product earlier this year. Now the software, in a 16-bit Windows format, is back on the market and being sold by Sweet & Maxwell under the *Express Wills* brand name.

Like the original Oyez version, the software takes users through a question and answer routine to assemble a will. Also, as in the original system, its cost is based on a metering system - it retails for £75 plus £5 for every engrossed copy of a will produced. (However, there is no charge for producing draft wills or powers of attorney.)

Other features include the ability to prepare client bills and incorporate the wording of precedents taken from a firm's own sources or other Sweet & Maxwell electronic products.

Express Wills can be run across a PC network at no extra charge and is available on diskette and CD-Rom. Call ☎ 0171 393 7000 for details. □

Jordans rolls out PC-Sec

Jordans (☎ 0117 918 1284) has now formally launched its new Windows PC-Sec company secretarial system - see LTI 45 for first report.

The software, which operates over an Access database, is supplied on the basis of an annual licence. Prices start at £850 (+VAT) and are dependent upon both the number of users and the number of client companies. The software also includes a library of Companies House approved electronic forms.

Access all clients

Access Legal Systems (☎ 01270 766774) has launched a new SQL client database product that also supports automatic document assembly using Word for Windows.

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Litigation support news

☞ **Law Copy** (☎ 0171 404 4660), an imaging and repro bureau based in Chancery Lane, is offering to scan and index a "trial" file of documents before undertaking full scale projects for new clients. **Law Copy is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week and can handle projects inhouse at its own premises or on site at a law firm's offices.**

Two other bureau offering similar services are: RWM Data Management (☎ 01493 853350) and **LawsScan** (☎ 0171 242 9601).

☞ **Litigation support specialist Elliott Slone** (☎ 0171 729 2088) has implemented a new transactional facility on its web site at <http://www.elliottslone.co.uk> to provide clients with an online tick-box form for submitting new instructions. The web site also allows prospective paralegal recruits to register with Elliott Slone.

NO CHANGE TO HOT DOCS IN UK SAY CAPSOFT

The Utah-based Capsoft Development Corporation, best known for its Hot-Docs document assembly software, has been acquired by US legal publisher Matthew Bender. However Russell Shepherd, managing director of Capsoft UK Limited (which is entirely independent of its US namesake), says the takeover will have no impact on customers or operations in the UK.

Shepherd told L*Ti* Capsoft UK's distribution contract includes a provision that its rights will not be affected by any change of control of the US company. "Effectively Capsoft/Matthew Bender concentrate on American legal materials, while Capsoft UK has the rights to the English law market," said Shepherd.

Along with work for a number of leading legal publishers, including W.Green in Scotland which has just published Sinclair, Giusti & Martin's *Conveyancing* and the *Summary Criminal File* as HotDocs-based "digital" titles, Capsoft UK has also been forging alliances with a growing number of legal IT suppliers (including Laserform and Solace) and law firms/in house legal departments who want to use HotDocs as the basis of their document assembly operations. As well as "top 20" City of London firms, recent HotDocs signings have included Dunhill Madden Butler and Purves Clarke Richards in Australia.

☞ **Comment...** The growing appeal of HotDocs among legal practices can, in part, be attributed to the realisation that it offers a simpler way to create standard forms and precedents without resorting to macros, not least because macros have become almost a black art in recent years as firms try to cope with the less-than-compatible file formats of WordPerfect 5.1, Word 6.0 and Word 97.

It is also interesting to see that W.Green has a realistic pricing policy ➔

➔ for it *Conveyancing* title. The basic work costs £245 (+VAT) but additional user licences rapidly fall to £5 per seat, a move which should encourage firms to use the work more widely. ☐

NEW SOLCASE PREVIEWES

Three years ago Solicitec launched one of the first true Windows case management systems for the UK legal market, this month the company begins previewing SolCase Version 6.0 – what it describes as a "second generation" Windows system.

Along with a redesigned and simpler user interface, SolCase V6.0, which will be commercially available from January 1998, will incorporate both document image processing (DIP) and an interactive link, called SolCase Online, between the system and internet web sites.

Solicitec (☎ 0113 226 2000) sales director Mark Woodward says the online facility will allow law firms to transform web pages from being purely promotional to transactional sites, with clients able to make case enquiries, give instructions and enter new matters within seconds. ☐

NEW LITIGATION SUPPORT CONTENDER ?

Document imaging bureau Westkey (see *also side-bar*) has announced it is moving into the litigation support market where it plans to take on the likes of Bowhawk, Legal Technologies and Elliott Slone.

Marketing director Julie Bridge has already scored one major success when in a competitive tender Westkey (☎ 0171 700 4274) was awarded the contract by Nabarro Nathanson to handle the document processing in one of the British Coal respiratory diseases group actions.

Although Westkey says its strength lies in the quality of its services, one supplier told L*Ti* the real reason for its success was its aggressive pricing policy, in some instances under-cutting competitors by nearly 35 percent. ☐

SOLACE SIGNS UP FOR THE MILLENNIUM

Solace Legal Systems has announced a number of new enhancements to its Millennium next generation accounts and practice management software.

The Windows based system, which uses the Microsoft Access database as its core and has full integration with the full Microsoft Office suite, now has a new onscreen time recording system called Timesave, plus a fee earner desktop module and a new debt collection facility called Debtlite.

Solace (☎ 01780 764947) has also established links with two third-party applications: the Amicus Attorney case management product and the HotDocs document assembly system. The company has also confirmed that Solace Accounts Version 4.6 (its older DOS and Unix product) is Year 2000 compliant. □

MERGER PUTS DAMPENER ON FT LAW SALE TALKS

Following the story in the last issue about the Pearson group's plans and the likely sell off of the legal publishing side of FT Law & Tax (the old Longman division) **LTi** has learned that Kluwer, another major international publishing group, has been involved in talks about buying FT Law from Pearson.

However, the announcement a fortnight ago that Reed Elsevier and Wolters Kluwer were planning a merger has cast doubts on whether this acquisition will now go ahead because of fears it could trigger a referral to the Monopolies Commission.

The problem is both sides to the proposed merger already have substantial legal publishing interests - Butterworths is part of Reed Elsevier and Kluwer own CCH. With Kluwer out of the picture, the company now being mentioned as a likely suitor is Gee Publishing, part of the same group that owns Sweet & Maxwell. □

MILES SMART ALTERNATIVE

➡ *continued from front page...* In terms of pricing, there is a one off set up fee of £4925 plus £50 per seat (in effect per terminal) which includes training and access to a suite of management reports, plus a quarterly "fixed" fee of as little as £250 to cover the rental of the service. In addition there is a variable monthly fee based on £45 per 100Mb of data to cover processing costs. There are also optional extras, including cheque printers and "smart" Windows terminals for fee earners who want on-screen time recording.

Other than these items, the user only has to pay for consumables, leaving them free to expand their usage of the service as and when they need or budgets allow.

All data is backed up, encrypted and stored by Miles to ensure maximum security and should a user wish to terminate an agreement, although Miles will remove all their hardware, in return the user will receive a tape containing all their data. "It is a fundamental feature of the service that while we own and manage the system, the users owns and inputs the data," says Yew.

☞ **Comment...** Although the service is only just moving out of the pilot phase, Miles say the response it has already received in presentations has been very positive, leading them to believe this really could be a product that will appeal to a broad sweep of the legal market.

LTi has encountered a growing number of firms in recent months who know they need good PMS systems but would like to acquire them without the hassle associated with the traditional approach to IT procurement. Perhaps the time for outsourcing has finally arrived in the legal market - as it already has done in other markets.

Further details are available from Caroline Hearne at Miles on ☎ 01344 861133. For the record, Miles 33 will continue to market and support its existing Precedent system. □

New face in the UK

Dublin software house Opsis has appointed ITB in Manchester (☎ 0161 236 3629) as a distributor for its Opsis Solicitor case management software.

This is a Windows based system with an on-screen card index approach to organising client, matter, activity, and document files. Anyone who has used PIM or organiser should be familiar with these. There are also links to a diary/to do list and the software is fully integrated with Microsoft Word.

New show off to flying start

The Northern Legal Office Exhibition, which made its debut at the GMEX Centre in Manchester last week, got off to a flying start with over 1500 visitors. The organisers Truemist say they plan to expand the show next year and have already had a number suppliers book space at it.

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Seen around the Web...

☞ The US Embassy in London has launched a web site at <http://www.usembassy.org.uk> containing material relating to US government trade policy, plus a FAQs (frequently asked questions) section and a guide to other US internet resources.

☞ Legal system supplier Linetime now has a web site up and running at <http://www.linetime.co.uk>

☞ A new US site called *FindLaw* contains an archive of over 60 law related email lists (including an internet law issues section). The site is at <http://www.legalminds.org>. Users can view the archive by thread, date or author.

☞ Moneynet's new site at <http://www.moneynet.co.uk> contains comparative data, including information about redemption penalties, on 80 UK mortgage lenders.

BUTTERWORTHS SAY QUALITY IS KEY

As previewed in the last issue of *LTi*, Butterworths has now launched its first web-based subscription service, the *All England Reporter*.

The annual charge for the service ranges from £3000 to £7500 for law firms (the actual figure depends upon the number of end users) but there is a reduced rate of £1500 for academic institutions, while individual barristers will only pay £500 per year.

The service, which focuses on commercial law cases, provides three levels of access to cases: an at-a-glance four to five line synopsis summarised by catchword, a more comprehensive digest that takes the same format as the *All England Law Reports* and the full text of each judgment.

Butterworths publisher Caroline Vandridge-Ames says there is a need for a service that can deliver decisions some eight to twelve weeks before the official transcript as "among litigators, there is a premium on the currency of information".

As to the threat of competition from other next-day reporting services, Vandridge-Ames believes Butterworths has the edge because it uses the same highly skilled law reporters who work on the *All ER* and editors who can ensure the service only carries cases that are relevant to practitioners.

Asked to differentiate the product from the competition, Vandridge-Ames said the *All England Reporter* would have the benefit of being "reliable, accurate, authoritative and timely".

Butterworths will add a more advanced search facility employing the same BOS (Books on Screen) approach used in other electronic titles, by the end of the year, to keep pace with the growing volume of cases on the service.

Butterworths is also offering a one month free trial of the service. For details of this contact Lisa Taylor on ☎ 0171 400 2907 before 31st October. ☐

LEGALEASE MISSES BOAT ?

Legalease has announced it is to launch a new series of IT related law reports. Called the *IT & Communications Law Reports*, the series will be available in a variety of formats, including hard copy, on disk and electronically.

The *Reports* are available at an introductory price of £190 pa (four issues plus disk, newsletter and one user licence to access the reports via the web) for anyone subscribing before 30 November 1997. For details call Nigel Armitage on ☎ 0171 396 5610.

☞ **Comment...** In the past Legalease has had a reputation for innovation but this new product seems to have seriously missed the boat. Not only are there already at least four computer law related titles on the market, including Sweet & Maxwell's *Computer & Telecommunications Law Review*, but there are also a growing number of law firms producing their own reports and commentaries.

These include *Masons Computer Law Reports* (available free of charge in hard copy format or on the web at <http://www.masons.com/library/reports>) and Jeffrey Green Russell's *Internet Digital Newsletter* (delivered monthly free of charge by email). (Email cwj@jgrlaw.co.uk to ask to be put on the distribution list.)

Mention should also be made of Crills in Jersey, where advocate Peter Harris is producing a series of briefing notes (available conventionally and electronically) on internet law but with Channel Islands/offshore haven flavour. For details check <http://www.crills.com> ☐

PORTABLE NUMBERS SOON

Subscribers to mobile phone services will be able to change networks without changing numbers in 1999 after the UK's four mobile phone operators (Vodafone, Cellnet, One-2-One and Orange) agreed to a timetable set down by the telecoms watchdog Oftel. The charge per change is expected to be between £5 and £10. ☐

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NET USER DEMOGRAPHICS

Latest statistics suggest electronic mail (email) is now used by over 5 million people at work in the UK and some 3.1 million have individual email addresses. At the same time, the proportion of PC users who can access the web from work has increased from 19% to 46%.

In terms of technology usage, new media specialist Webmedia has launched a *browser monitor* service. This is updated daily and can be accessed free of charge at <http://browser-monitor.webmedia.com>. At the time of going to press, 61.5% of web-browsing PC users were running Windows 95, approximately 24% were on Windows 3.1 and 7.5% were Windows NT.

Microsoft's Internet Explorer 3.0 was the most popular browser, used by 36% of surfers, followed by Netscape 3 with 33.5% - although the latter's share is falling almost daily. Reflecting the fact that globally more than one million people downloaded a free copy Microsoft's new Internet Explorer 4.0 browser within 24 hours of its release at the beginning of October, Webmedia reports IE 4.0 already has a 6.25% market share.

NO SUCH THING AS A FREE ONLINE SERVICE

Tempted by those shiny CD-Rom disks fixed to the covers of computer magazines and their offers of "free" email and internet access? Then make sure you read the small print before logging on.

For example AOL (America Online) is currently running a promotion offering one month's membership and up to 50 hours of online usage free of charge. But this arrangement does not lapse when the month is up. Instead, the small print (in this case very small print on an easy to lose slip of paper) states the free trial must be used within one calendar month of initial sign on and "Unless you cancel your account before the end of your free trial by calling 0800 376 7444 during office hours, you will thereafter be charged a monthly membership fee".

LEGAL IT DIARY DATES

October 28 & 29 - DPS Roadshow, London. MCS resumes its seminar series on the use of its DPS case management system. Takes place at London Mews Hilton - the first day is on conveyancing, the second on criminal work. Further seminars to be held at the Brighthouse Northern Hotel on 4 & 5 November. For details call MCS on ☎ 0181 882 8811.

October 29 - How to Meet your Goals, Newcastle. Avenue Legal Systems begins a series of regional roadshows looking at the way IT can help law firms meet their business goals. All the seminars take place at the conference facilities of major football clubs around the UK starting with Newcastle United on 29th and running through to Sheffield Wednesday on 26 February. Call Avenue on ☎ 01621 776 4387 for details.

October 29 - Interactive Internet Sites for Lawyers, Birmingham. Two half-day seminars hosted by Michael Kaye of Kaye Tesler looking at ways law firm web sites can generate new business. Commences at 10.00am and 2.00pm. Cost £40 (+VAT) and the event qualifies for 3 CPD hours. Further seminars to be held in Leeds (12 November) and Bristol (27 November). Call NKT Consultants on ☎ 0181 802 6817 for details.

November 4, 5 & 6 - Essential Technology for the Modern Law Firm, London. Three seminars (each lasts approx 2 hours but at different times each day) looking at latest developments in law firm practice management systems, Windows NT and the internet. For details call Stephen Murphy on ☎ 0171 404 5577.

November 6 & 7 - Norwel 25th Anniversary Interactive Roadshow, London. Norwel roadshow at Institute of Directors. Admission is by invitation only, for details contact Alison Bagnall on ☎ 0161 945 3511. ➔

➔ *Legal IT Diary Dates continued...*

November 18 Is your Practice ready for Library Automation? Luton Hoo.

Euroserve, the developer of the Masta-Lib legal library software system is holding an open day at the Hunting Lodge on the Luton Hoo Estate. Starts 11.00am, for details call Garry Simpson on ☎ 01582 455322.

**November 26
LITigate '97, London.** One day conference and mini exhibition looking at case management technologies and litigation strategy. Speakers from Davies Arnold Cooper and Dibb Lupton Alsop, as well as sessions looking at web enabled case management and intranets. Takes place at Café Royal, Regent Street, starting at 9.00am. Cost £380 (+VAT). Call Forum on ☎ 0181 445 8060 for details *plus see insert with this issue.*

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LEGAL TECHNOLOGY INSIDER

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Next issue...
Issue 50 of the Insider will be published on Monday 10th November.

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