

CHARLES CHRISTIAN'S

# LEGAL TECHNOLOGY INSIDER

THE SOURCE FOR INDEPENDENT LEGAL TECHNOLOGY NEWS, COMMENT AND ANALYSIS

## LEXIS READY FOR THE NEXIS GENERATION

The Lexis-Nexis online legal information service may be fast approaching its twentieth birthday but next week parent company Reed Elsevier intends to show there is life in the old dog yet when it previews a new web-friendly version of Lexis-Nexis at the Online Information event at the Olympia Conference Centre in London.

The new-look Lexis, which begins shipping in English, French and German language versions during January, is being introduced following market research which has found that among lawyers (as distinct from librarians and other legal researchers) Lexis is increasingly being used as a source of business information (particularly EU material) to provide a factual background to both commercial negotiations and litigation.

The service has therefore been redesigned to have a more end-user friendly interface, so instead of a general menu the service is now split into four separate modules. These are: Lexis-Nexis EXECUTIVE, in effect a quick access or "lite" current awareness version only covering the last few months' news. PROFESSIONAL, the full service for people wanting to carry out "deep" legal research. ALERT, a daily push technology news tracking service. And, ALERT PERSONAL, an individual version of the full Alert service. Lexis reckon individual lawyers within a firm will subscribe to just the Executive and Alert Personal modules.

Lexis director Michael Fanning says the division also has no intention of being complacent about the threat posed by free legal information available on the internet and is aware that a lot of law librarians are now under pressure to use free rather than subscriber services. He is confident Lexis can differentiate itself from the competition on the grounds of both reliability - Lexis has been around for 20 years, many web resources are here today and gone tomorrow - and the value of its information - Lexis has a team of 17 people working full time on just the editing and preparation of the database's news and case reports.

## SANDERSON LEGAL ORDERS

Hertfordshire solicitors' practice Stanley Tee & Co is to spend £90,000 on buying and installing a Microsoft SQL Server-based LegalMIND practice management system from Sanderson Systems. The new system will run across the firm's three offices on a Windows NT network. In another deal, Slough Borough Council has ordered Sanderson's QNIX software for its legal department.

## LAW SOC INITIATIVE AMAZES SUPPLIERS

The English Law Society's new recognised supplier guide has, predictably, stirred up mixed emotions among legal IT vendors.

There have been grumbles that the Society's focus on Windows NT ignores otherwise acceptable software on alternative IT platforms. And there have been complaints that the five selected systems are unrepresentative of the market's full scope.

While such responses were only to be expected perhaps the most widespread reaction among suppliers, including some of those listed in the guide, is amazement that the Law Society was ever able to get its act together and complete the project.

Several suppliers told the Insider they declined the original invitation to apply for listing because they did not take the project seriously, thinking it a waste of time and effort that would be sunk by Chancery Lane politics. But, now they regret missing the opportunity and are very keen to get into next year's guide. In fact Laserform is actually lobbying for the guide to be temporarily suspended to give late entrants a chance to join this year.

## STOP PRESS

- **STAR SIGNS AVENUE DEAL**  
Dublin-based Star Computers has signed a deal with Avenue Legal Systems to become the exclusive distributor for Avenue's Wisdom system in the Republic. Star chief executive Jim Cahill says he will be offering Wisdom as an upgrade option to users of Avenue's older Solomon accounts software. Star says there are currently 200 Solomon users in Ireland.

- **REED EXPANDS IN EUROPE**  
The Reed Elsevier legal division, which is also the parent company of Tolley and Butterworths, has acquired the Austrian law and tax publisher Verlag Orac.

## TIME RUNNING OUT FOR CHADWICKS

Dewsbury solicitors Chadwick Lawrence, who last month were served with a writ claiming copyright infringement and alleging the firm had copied part of the source code of the award-winning NKT interactive internet system, have until Friday 4th December to file a defence.

## ALAN ROBERTS IN SOLACE MOVE

Gavel & Gown managing director Alan Roberts has been appointed the sales and marketing director of Solace Legal Systems. The move follows the recent announcement that Gavel & Gown's Amicus Attorney software, running in conjunction with Solace's Millennium practice management system, has become one of just five "recognised supplier" solutions in the English Law Society's new *Software Solutions Guide*.

Roberts, who will be dividing his time between his Gavel & Gown and Solace activities, says the Solace deal will initially run for twelve months and is primarily intended to ensure the two companies coordinate their efforts in promoting their involvement in the Law Society scheme. Roberts is also adamant that Amicus Attorney will remain an "open" product and is keen to maintain the product's relationship with other accounts system suppliers, including SOS, Quill, Curat Lex, Cognito, Elite and Laserform.

## SMITH BACK WITH A TAN - AND A PLAN

After quitting Resolutions Systems last month, former Mercury Computing head Alby Smith has returned to the UK from a holiday in Barbados with a tan and a plan. Smith says that having been his own boss for so long, he found it hard working for someone else at Resolution and has decided to go-it-alone with a new venture of his own. Smith refuses to give further details at this time, save to say it will not involve a legal market-only case or practice management system.

## THIN CLIENT - THIN END OF THE WEDGE ?

Last month's story on Crill Canavan's experiences with Citrix Winframe prompted a lot of interest among readers, including the issue of if a firm was considering going the "thin client" route, whether it was better to opt for Microsoft's comparable Hydra/Windows NT Terminal Server (WTS) system?

WTS may seem a more attractive technology as it uses a Windows NT 4.0 interface, whereas Winframe runs on NT 3.5, but if choice is to be based on price, Winframe is the clear winner. This is because Citrix pricing is based on concurrent licences, so a firm only pays for the number of users accessing the system at any one time, regardless of the number of terminals and PCs connected to a network.

For example, if a firm has a 100 user network but only 50 concurrent users, the Citrix licence fee will be £8,110. In contrast WTS does not support concurrent licensing, instead each physical "client" must have its own licence. Furthermore, every user must also have a NT Workstation 4.0 licence. This brings the total licence cost for a 100 user WTS network to a massive £19,700 - in fact this is nearly £5000 more than the £14,710 in licence fees that would be payable for running conventional PCs on a standard local area network.

The one consolation for Microsoft fans is if a firm is already running other Windows PCs (3x or 95) they could save over £90 per user by upgrading to NT 4.0 rather than paying the full licence fee. This brings the price down to £10,950 - yet this is still 30 percent more than the equivalent Winframe offering.

## DIBBS COME CLEAN ON SOAP

After rattling the bars of Dibb Lupton Alsop's cage in the last issue, the Insider has been able to extract a little more information about the firm's SOAP litigation initiative.

The IT element is called "Case Budgeting" and intended to provide litigators with a cost tracking and budgeting facility within a project management environment. The system is built on a SQL Server platform and, along with Excel plus some bespoke programming in Delphi, the main software component is Microsoft's Project 98 application. The program automatically downloads time recording data (taken from the firm's Axxia Arista system) and then compares these "actuals" against budgeted time costings to provide litigators with an up-to-the-minute snapshot of the financial side of a case.

During the development of SOAP, Dibbs looked at the way US lawyers handle case budgeting and have now created a system they believe has the edge over anything else in use in the UK today. But, as partner Robert Smart explained to the Insider: "We are not prepared to say anything further about the system because we do not want the competition to steal our lead."

## KLA AND PC DOCS IN LOW-COST INITIATIVE

Kramer Lee & Associates (01268 584666) and PC Docs have joined forces to provide a low-cost integrated document management solution for medium sized law firms that also encompasses precedent management, litigation support and library management facilities.

Called the Fee Earner Technology Suite, the system brings together PC Docs' entry level DOCS Open Esquire software plus KLA's EZSearch, KNOWLEDGEBase and LIT Support systems. The latter element is based on KLA's Claims Advice System, which is already in use with the Hiscox Lloyd's underwriting agencies and can handle scanning, discovery and the preparation of bundles.

Pricing starts at £199 per user although it should be noted that because this is a SQL Server based system, any budgeting must also take into account the server licence.

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## MANAGING THE PROCESS

Welsh systems house Data Management Associates (01554 741144) has added what it describes as a business process manager to its Sentinel case management software. This provides a way for firms to automate practice procedures, such as Rule 15 client care, while still maintaining quality control. Other applications offering similar features include OMS from FWBS and Lexology's Francys system.

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## NEW APPROACH IN SCOTLAND PAYS DIVIDENDS FOR AXXIA

Since dropping Charlie Duthie's company Beltane Technologies and appointing John Richard Software as its new Scottish distributor and area consultant earlier this year, Axxia Systems has reported a substantial improvement in its Scottish legal market business. Recent signings include: Borland Montgomerie Keyden, Semple Fraser WS in Glasgow and Peterkins in Aberdeen.

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## SQL 7.0 ROLLOUT BEGINS

Two of the first legal market suppliers to announce product compatibility with Microsoft's new Microsoft SQL Server 7.0 relational database are PC Docs and Lexology.

Lexology can now offer full SQL Server 7.0 integration for users of its Francys case and practice management system, while PC Docs has announced support for SQL Server 7.0 across its full range of document and knowledge management products, including DOCS Open and DOCSFulcrum. Both companies say the combination of increased scalability and improvements in design, such as row-level locking, mean the latest version of the Microsoft database can process transactions faster and support more concurrent users.

## DEALS AND TENDERS

- FRANKLINS WALKER BUSINESS SYSTEMS has won orders for its OMS practice management system from FREDERIC HALL in Kent, who will be installing the system at their Dover and Folkestone offices, and DRIVERS, who have offices in York and Malton. The Drivers' project will replicate databases between the two sites and installation is scheduled for December/January.

- SOLICITEC has been awarded IIP (Investors In People) accreditation.

- Outsourcing and FM specialist ITNET (0121 459 1155) has won a three year contract worth £8 million to provide the English LAW SOCIETY with facilities management, help desk and desktop support services. ITNet will take on full responsibility for the Society's IT services in February 1999. The Law Society originally issued the FM contract ITT to six suppliers.

- RESOLUTION SYSTEMS' FirmControl software has gone live at FRESHFIELDS.

- MACLAY MURRAY & SPENS has pointed out that is moving from SoftSolutions to PILGRIM SYSTEMS' own LawSoft document management system, rather than DOCS Open as first reported. The firm is handling file conversion work in conjunction with specialist company WORD EXCHANGE.

- LEXOLOGY has installed a 14 user case management system at BREEZE BENTON in East London. The system will run in conjunction with a PRACCTICE accounts system.

- Twelve partner BOYES TURNER & BURROWS in Reading is to invest over £200,000 on new IT projects including an Arista practice management system from AXXIA SYSTEMS.

- The UK office of ELITE INFORMATION SYSTEMS has secured its first orders from law firms based in mainland Europe. They include SALANS HERTZFELD & HEILBRONN in Paris and GARRIGUES & ANDERSON in Madrid.

## LEGAL PUBLISHING NEWS IN BRIEF

### ● LLP AND IBC IN MERGER

LLP, better known as the publishers of *Lloyd's List* and *Lloyd's Law Reports* and the conference and newsletters group IBC (whose legal titles include the Monitor Press series of newsletters), have merged to create a new publicly quoted media group called Informa. The combined group will now run over 3500 events and conferences and produce over 1000 publications.

### ● BLACKSTONE PLANNING ONLINE BOOK SALES

Blackstone Press has appointed Nettek plc to design an e-commerce enabled web site that will allow law students and practitioners to order from a catalogue of over 450 books and CD-Roms. Users will be able to pay online by credit card and receive goods within 48 hours. The site, which is due to go live early next year, will use Nettek's own electronic commerce software. This includes an SSL (Secure Sockets Layer) to ensure the security of any credit card transactions made across the internet.

<http://www.nettec.net>

### ● CAVENDISH TO USE FOLIO

Cavendish, which claims it is one of the UK's fastest growing legal publishing groups, is moving into electronic publishing and planning a Folio-based CD-Rom series of student law books. Managing director Sonny Leong says he wants to move away from ad hoc projects to a more "strategic approach" and will be using electronic publishing specialist Catalyst to provide consultancy services.

### ● SON-OF-LAWYER ON ITS WAY

Ex-Centaur publisher Mark Wyatt and former editor of *The Lawyer* Mary Heaney have formed a new publishing company. Called, modestly, Global Professional Media, the company will launch a new weekly legal magazine in the New Year called *Legal Week*. The majority of the company's shares are owned by the staff however investors in the company include another ex-Centaur publisher Tim Weller of City Financial Publishing.

## FREE LEGAL AID FORMS BY JANUARY ?

Following the Legal Aid Board's decision to stop providing solicitors with free copies of pre-printed legal aid forms (as of 1st December they will have to pay for them), the English Law Society and Capsoft UK have agreed to work together to develop a series of free legal aid forms that use the HotDocs electronic document format.

Subject to Legal Aid Board approval, the new forms should be available from January both on CD-Rom and as a free download from the internet. Capsoft is looking for volunteers to beta test the new forms. If you are interested contact Janet Abernethy via email: [ja@capsoftuk.co.uk](mailto:ja@capsoftuk.co.uk)

## SWEETS IN NEW CD VENTURE

Over the next three months Sweet & Maxwell will be launching a CD-Rom based *Local Government Law Library*. The series, which is part of Sweet's Connections range, will eventually run to five disks and include digital versions of the company's existing loose-leaf encyclopaedias on local government law, compulsory purchase, road traffic law and practice, environmental health law and highway law.

The Connections range is supported by a free helpdesk service and employs the widely used Folio Views interface on 16 and 32-bit Windows PCs. Contact Sweet & Maxwell on 0171 449 1111 for details of a special introductory offer.

### ● COMMENT

Sweet & Maxwell say research it carried out this summer found there was growing interest among local government lawyers in digital publishing, with over 91 percent (out of a sample of 285) now having PCs and 79 percent having "some sort of internet access". These findings echo a study conducted by the Local Government Users Association in the summer of 1997, which found there had been a significant increase in the number of local authorities "making widespread use of electronic mail as a mainstream business tool" over the previous twelve months.

Curiously, this increasing use of online services is interpreted by Sweet & Maxwell as justifying its decision to launch the new library in a non-online CD format!

### ● NEW SWEETS' WEB SITE ON ITS WAY

Sweet & Maxwell will be relaunching a totally redesigned web site in January 1999. And about time too as the current site is a clear contender for an award as the legal publishing world's worst web site. Some of the material has not been updated for the best part of a year and no attempt has been made to properly accommodate the FT Law & Tax and *Solicitors Journal* publishing operations it acquired earlier this year. Sweets' explanation is that it has been too busy over the last few months with other aspects of integrating the FT Law & Tax business.

<http://www.smlawpub.co.uk>

## INSURANCE LAW CD - THE PRICE IS RIGHT ?

One of the ongoing disputes between legal publishers and lawyers is the pricing of CD-Rom publications.

According to publishers, because CDs have a number of advantages over conventional books, such as built-in search engines, their price should be greater to reflect these "value added" features. But this argument singularly fails to impress lawyers who take the view that since "any fule no" it involves much less effort for publishers to produce and update CDs than to publish hardbacks and loose-leaf binder services, the price of CDs should actually be less than the paper equivalent.

One publisher who may be getting the pricing model correct is LLP, which has just launched its *Electronic Insurance Law Service* on CD-Rom. This contains the full text of three insurance law books, including Malcolm Clarke's *Law of Insurance Contracts*, copies of forms and legislation, coverage of recent decisions, including judgments from *Lloyd's Law Reports* and a Folio Views search engine. The total value of the texts on this CD is over £900 but LLP is selling an annual subscription (and the March update CD is expected to carry more law reports and additional texts) for £795 (+ VAT). True, this is not a big discount but at least it is a move in the right direction.

### ● REVIEW - LLOYD'S ELECTRONIC LAW REPORTS

Within the last couple of weeks LLP has launched its new *Lloyd's Electronic Law Reports* series on CD-Rom. This was developed in conjunction with electronic publishers Context and uses the latest version of their JUSTIS 5 software, including the J-Link "soft" hypertext system.

The software loads smoothly - you can be up and running for the first time in less than five minutes - and, despite offering an undoubtedly sophisticated interface, JUSTIS is positively intuitive to operate. Yes, you can use advanced Boolean search techniques. Alternatively, you can click on the "Parties" button in the "Quick Search" window, type in the word "canyon", press "Search" and in a couple of seconds up pops the full report of a 30 year-old US Court of Appeal case between the UK Government and the Barracuda Tanker Corporation involving the wreck of the Torrey Canyon. Highlighting a phrase within the text allows you to cross-reference to other cases, which can then be annotated on screen or used as the basis of another thread of research. It really is that simple. Quicker and more efficient than manually trawling through 80 years-worth of bound law reports yet the skills required are still those of a lawyer, not a computer operator or librarian.

The *Lloyd's Electronic Law Reports* archive goes back to 1919. Prices start at £3250 for a single user version, rising to £6500 for a 5-to-9 user licence. The update service costs £600 pa from the second year. (Add VAT to all prices.) For further details call Cormac Connolly on 0171 553 1266.

## LEGAL TECHNOLOGY DIARY DATES

● **CONFIDENTIALITY AND ELECTRONIC INFO EXCHANGE**  
Breakfast briefing and seminar at the St Paul's Cathedral Conference Centre in London on Thursday 3rd December on the subject of the security of electronic information exchange systems, including how to deal with internet junk mail and email viruses. The event, organised by Resolution Systems, starts at 8.30 and will run until 11.00. Call Anthony Hipperson for details on 0181 665 5050.

● **ONLINE INFORMATION '98**  
Context, Lexis-Nexis and the new Companies House Direct service are among the exhibitors at the annual Online Information event, which takes place next week at the Olympia Conference Centre in London. The event, which runs from 8th-to-10th December, is organised by Learned Information Europe (01865 388000). A full timetable of events plus admission charges can be found on the event's web site.

<http://www.online-information.co.uk>

● **AVENUE SEMINARS**  
A series of free seminars running until April to promote Avenue Legal Systems' practice and case management software. Call Clare Wynn at Avenue's Manchester office on: 0161 776 4387 for details.

● **LEGAL MARKETING**  
Centaur Conferences is holding a one day conference *Winning Business* at Lord's Cricket Ground on Monday 25th January on the theme of law firm marketing, including the use of relationship management software and how to differentiate a firm. Speakers include Lorraine de Wet of Eversheds, Elizabeth Rantzen of Denton Hall, Mitch Grossbach of Interface Software, Tim Clement-Jones of ICM and Hugh Donald and David Sanders of Shepherd Wedderburn. The event is sponsored by Tikit and the chairman is James Broomfield of Allen & Overy. Starts at 9.00 and closes at 16.45. Tickets £417 + VAT, with discounts for extra delegates. For details call: 0171 970 4770.

## ELECTRONIC FORMS NEWS IN BRIEF

### ● COURT SERVICE FORMS

The Court Service now publishes six forms of summons on its web site. All six can be downloaded and used free of charge however it is worth noting that the forms are in the Adobe PDF portable document file format.

PDF is sometimes described as the Esperanto of the electronic publishing world but what this means in practice is although these forms can be completed onscreen and printed off for subsequent service, the information that is keyed into them cannot be saved and reused.

The Patent Office is also offering a free downloadable version of its patent application Form 1/77 in PDF format on its web site.

<http://www.courtservice.gov.uk>

<http://www.patent.gov.uk>

### ● HOTDOCS FIXES & UPGRADE

Capsoft UK has posted a patch onto its web sites (and also onto the Law Firm Management forum on LINK) that will allow users of the widely distributed HotDocs Player Law Society CD to run the software on Windows 98 PCs.

Capsoft UK is currently beta testing Version 5.0 of HotDocs, with a view to launching it during the first quarter of 1999. One of the main enhancements will be the introduction of powerful web enablement features to make it easier for law firms to create interactive forms that can then be loaded onto their web sites to support e-commerce transactions.

<http://www.hotdocs.co.uk>

<http://www.capsoftuk.co.uk>

### ● FORMS MARKET TRENDS

Legal Technology Insider's latest review of buying trends within the electronic legal forms market shows that while Laserform is still the market leader, Peapod's low cost PRINTAForm series is now outselling OyezForms. Forms market newcomer ProForma is also starting to make some impact among both small firms and larger users - its biggest client is the Alliance & Leicester. The market share for DMR's CompuForms series was so small that it failed to register.

## BROWSER WARS TWIST

The ongoing rivalry between Microsoft and Netscape for command of the web browser software market has taken some unusual twists over the past fortnight.

First came the news that a court in San Francisco had granted Sun Microsystems a preliminary injunction and given Microsoft 90 days to modify the Java technology it ships with its Windows 98 and Internet Explorer software or remove the Java element altogether.

US District Court Judge Ronald Whyte granted the order saying Sun "was likely to prevail on the merits" of its lawsuits and that Microsoft should either modify its version of Java - the SSDK software development kit - to comply with compatibility tests with Sun's JNI Java Native Interface or else remove the Java element. The ruling covers only new purchases or downloads and no recall of products has been ordered. Microsoft's immediate response was that it was considering all its options, including asking for an extension of time in which to comply, lodging an appeal or dropping Java and replacing it with an alternative system.

Then came the news last week that America Online (AOL) had launched a US\$ 4.2 billion agreed takeover bid for Netscape and agreed a three year "alliance" with Sun Microsystems to develop e-commerce systems. Although AOL, Sun and Netscape have all testified against Microsoft in the US Justice Department's ongoing anti-trust case Microsoft has broadly welcomed the move, as it reckons it undermines the Government's case that Microsoft has monopolistic powers. "The deal shows how the competitive landscape in this industry can change overnight," said a Microsoft lawyer, "making government regulation unnecessary and counter-productive". Microsoft is now expected to move that the suit be dismissed when the US government finishes presenting its case in January.

● Meanwhile Microsoft has announced that the next version of its browser Internet Explorer 5.0 will be available from January. New features include smaller size - the basic system will occupy just 6Mb of hard disk space - and full support for XML (extensible mark-up language). Netscape's new Navigator 5.0 browser, which should also be available within the next few weeks, will also support XML.

### ● XML COMMENT

XML is described by Microsoft as "having potentially a bigger impact than HTML" (hypertext mark-up language). This is because HTML focuses on hypertext links and the way a web page looks but not the data it contains. By contrast XML focusses on content and thus as well as making data more accessible, can also support web-based interactive applications, e-commerce and automated business-to-business data communications - such as a law firm providing clients with automatically updated information about the progress of their cases. The formatting side of web pages is handled by a subset of XML called extensible stylesheet language (XSL).

<http://www.xml.com>

## IT SHOWS - THERE IS AN ALTERNATIVE

The rivalry between Truemist, the organisers of SOLEX at the Barbican, and Nationwide Exhibitions, whose National Legal Office Exhibition at the Birmingham NEC makes its second appearance in March (16th to 18th), is hotting up.

Compared with the first NEC show, significantly more legal IT suppliers will be heading for Birmingham in 1999. New signings include litigation support specialists Legal Technologies and Elliott Slone. Nationwide is also claiming two "coups" in the form of Linetime, which has pulled out of the Barbican in favour of the NEC, and Avenue Legal Systems, which has halved the size of its Barbican stand in order to exhibit at the NEC. By way of redressing the balance, one IT supplier, who has now exhibited at both events, has told the Insider that once clear of contractual obligations, it will in future only attend SOLEX because it felt the quality of visitors at the NEC was not as good.

But, while Truemist and Nationwide engage in a Holmes and Moriarty-like struggle atop the Reichenbach Falls, the signs are the rest of the market may be moving in a different direction. Computer exhibitions no longer have the novelty value they once enjoyed and with suppliers launching increasingly sophisticated products, many now want more tightly targeted audiences and one-to-one venues.

For example Axxia Systems pulled out of SOLEX and, in the process, freed up £100,000 of budget to spend on other marketing activities, including a major presence at GMEX, an invitation-only series of roadshows, a joint stand with Middlesbrough lawyers Jacksons at the Insurance Net event, a user group trade show and sponsoring Centaur's recent "networking" weekend for lawyers in Monte Carlo.

Axxia director Bill Kirby echoes the view of many IT suppliers today when he says exhibitions are now just part of the marketing mix and that the right sort of smaller specialist event can often be a more effective option.

- Truemist reports the number of visitors to its Northern Legal Office Exhibition at GMEX in October increased by 230 to 1567. Truemist's next event is the Western Legal Office Exhibition in Bristol on 3rd & 4th March.

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## LAWYERS Y2K GROUP LAUNCH

A new specialist lawyers association has been launched to share knowledge and expertise on the legal aspects of Year 2000 computing issues. The founder members are: Bird Semple in Edinburgh, Withers in London, Robert Muckle in Newcastle, Lester Aldridge in Bournemouth, Ross & Co in the Wirral and John Melville-Williams QC. Called the Y2K Lawyers Association, the organisation is supported by an extensive web site that includes news, articles and bulletin boards. Membership is open to all lawyers with an interest in the topic. The annual subscription is £125 and this includes access to members-only information on the web site. For more details visit <http://www.y2klaw.org>

## READER SERVICES

- **LTi-NET**

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<http://www.cloudnine.co.uk>

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## ● NEXT ISSUE

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# THE CLICK OF DEATH

Iomega, the manufacturer of the popular Zip range of removable disk drives, has become the subject of a class action filed in the Delaware Superior Court following allegations by users that its Zip drives are plagued with a technical problem known as the "click of death". Plaintiffs claim the click - the last sound the Zip disk makes before it terminally crashes and loses all the data it contains - is caused by metal residue and a lubricant that decomposes and accumulates on the reading mechanism.

Iomega denies liability and says the problem only affects less than half a percent of all the Zip drives it ships. But as Iomega also claims to have shipped nearly 18 million drives, that could still mean over 70,000 defective Zip drives. This news may provide some solace to the board of SyQuest Technology - Iomega's main competitor in the removable disk drives market - which has laid off half its staff since August and is now considering whether to file for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection. There is a site on the web that contains advice about testing Zip drives.

<http://www.spinrite.com/click-death.htm>

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### ● SELLERS IMAGO NEW ADDRESS

Court reporting services-to-litigation support software supplier Sellers Imago has moved to new offices at High Holborn House, 52-54 High Holborn, London WC1R 4LR. The new phone number is: 0171 405 4512.

### ● IKON WINS GOVERNMENT AGENCY DEAL

The US-based Ikon group, which is currently manoeuvring into the UK litigation support market, has just won a five year contract worth £10 million from British Government central purchasing arm The Buying Agency (TBA) to supply office technology to a range of government departments, NHS trusts and executive agencies. The contract was won by Ikon's office solutions division.

### ● THE DATA BASE TO EXPAND ACTIVITIES ?

Midlands-based document production systems and intranet integrator The Data Base is currently receiving presentations from PR agencies, prompting speculation that the company is planning to beef up its marketing activities and expand its presence in the UK legal market.

### ● NEW WORDPERFECT TO BE WEB ENABLED

Corel has released more details about its next WordPerfect upgrade. Called Office 2000, it will have greatly enhanced internet compatibility, including a web authoring and presentation tool called Trellix and the ability to publish WordPerfect wordprocessing files in HTML, XML and Microsoft Office 97 file formats. Office 2000 will be launched in North America during the second quarter of 1999 and should be available in the UK by the summer.