

CHARLES CHRISTIAN'S

LEGAL TECHNOLOGY INSIDER

THE SOURCE FOR INDEPENDENT LEGAL TECHNOLOGY NEWS, COMMENT AND ANALYSIS

KEYSTONE - STILL A GOING CONCERN ?

Practice management systems supplier Keystone Software has published its interim results for the six months to 30th September. The figures reveal an unaudited turnover of £629,758 that was only achieved at an operating loss of £1,368,629, including a £707,845 "cost of sales" and £1,290,542 of administrative expenses. Fortunately, there were some other sources of income coming into Keystone's coffers, so that the final loss before tax was a mere £1,195,085 for the half year.

Although the poor results are attributed to "reflecting the continuing start-up period in the UK", the recently appointed chairman Tony Caplin says the company is "currently undertaking a fundraising exercise" and "is in the process of finalising these arrangements".

Auditors Horwath Clark Whitehill are not quite so chipper. Under the heading "Going Concern", the auditors note that "...the interim financial information describes the uncertainty relating to the adequacy of future working capital at a level sufficient for (Keystone's) requirements. In view of the significance of this uncertainty we consider that it should be drawn to the attention of shareholders and other readers of the interim financial information but our opinion is not qualified in this respect."

● COMMENT

Keystone chairman Tony Caplin has been described as a "company doctor" - on these figures it looks as if his powers will have to extend to raising the dead. Ironically, these results coincide with what would otherwise have been some very good news. Both Masons and Stephenson Harwood are due to go live this summer. Accountants Kidsons Impey have placed an order for the Keystone software. And, after six months' experience of using the system, D J Freeman has described the reported £1 million it spent on the project as a "major strategic breakthrough". Apparently the secret is not to treat Keystone as conventional back office accounts software but to use it as a fee earner support system.

WINDOWS 2000 - NEXT YEAR ?

Latest reports suggest Microsoft's Windows 2000 operating system (previously known as NT 5.0) will not now be released until 25th February 2000. There are also rumours that Microsoft may release a stop-gap interim product, code-named NT 4.5, later this year.

LONDON BRIDGE IS BUILDING UP

Publicly-quoted London Bridge Software Holdings, currently one of the fastest growing IT companies in the UK, has agreed to buy software house Hatton Blue, best known in the legal market for its Vectus case management system, for a total of £21 million.

The deal includes £11.25 million in cash, £3.75 in shares and a deferred consideration of £6 million that becomes payable upon Hatton Blue meeting certain performance criteria over the next 18 months. The deal also means London Bridge has now bought out the interest in Hatton Blue that was previously held by the 3i venture capitalists group. The net assets of Hatton Blue were £879,150 as at 30th June 1998 and the company, which employs 60 staff, reported trading profits for the last 12 months of £487,290.

● COMMENT

Although Hatton Blue has only enjoyed limited success in the legal market, the Vectus product is currently attracting a lot of interest among larger financial institutions as a customer relationship management system.

Interestingly, although London Bridge now specialises in credit management software for the commercial world, the company and its predecessor Charterhouse were once major players in the legal systems market with first Wang software and later the IBM AS/400 based Trial accounts and practice management system. Crutes on Tyneside (see also page 3) and Sherwin Oliver in Hampshire are among several firms that still run the Trial/400 system.

THE INSIDER WEB SITE

Visit the Legal Technology Insider web site for up-to-the-minute news and hyperlinks to additional information.

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

PEOPLE AND PLACES

- TERRY LAWLEY has left legal IT consultancy GRANT THORNTON to join CAPSOFT UK as business development director with responsibility for the new HotDocs enterprise licensing scheme. He will be based in the South-East. Before moving to Grant Thornton, Lawley was a director of LASERFORM LAW.

Grant Thornton partner and head of I S consultancy ANDREW LEVISON said he was sorry to lose Lawley but felt Capsoft could make better use of his skills. The Insider has also learned that Grant Thornton will shortly be joined by another "top six" legal IT consultant.

- STEVE FOX is leaving SIMMONS & SIMMONS to become a senior consultant with the UK arm of the US software company COMPUTRON. Simmons & Simmons has been running a Computron practice management system for the past seven years.

- Qualified lawyers JO SCOTT and LYNDON BADHAM have joined the paralegal management team at litigation support specialists ELLIOTT SLONE.

- Former head of litigation support services JONATHAN MAAS left SIMMONS & SIMMONS last Thursday to set up his own litigation support consultancy. He can be reached on 0181 761 2577 or email jmaas@netcomuk.co.uk

- Following the promotion of GARY LEVY to a more senior position within the TEXT SYSTEMS group, PHILIP CRAEMER has taken over day-to-day responsibility for legal market activities.

- IT recruitment consultant CRAIG COVERMAN has quit legal headhunters LONGBRIDGE/LFI TECHNOLOGY to develop the global recruitment practice of the new BEST PEOPLE consultancy (0171 300 9000).

Coverman says "it was not a difficult decision to leave Longbridge". His former deputy WENDY PHILLIPS succeeds him at Longbridge and will also be taking over his place on the conference programme for this month's *Information Systems for Lawyers* event at the Marriott.

NEW OWNER FOR THE SOLEX EXHIBITION

Truemist Professional Exhibitions, the company that has been running the Solicitors & Legal Office Exhibition at the Barbican since the mid-1980s, has been acquired by Imark Communications, the Miami-based conference and exhibitions group that runs the SoftWorld event.

As part of the deal, Imark has also acquired all rights in the Northern and Western Legal Office Exhibitions, which take place in Manchester and Bristol, as well as two other non-legal market Truemist events and the *Legal Technology Directory*. Truemist's *Solex Magazine* has now ceased publication. Both sides have agreed not to disclose the financial details of the deal.

By way of continuity, Truemist's former parent company Marketeer plc, which is also headed by former SOLEX boss Keith Searby, has been retained by Imark to handle PR and publicity for the events.

Imark Europe's managing director David Pegler told the Insider there would not be any major changes in the format of either next month's Bristol show or SOLEX in June but warned that after that all aspects of the events would be up for review, including sponsorship, timing and location. (The current SOLEX sponsorship deal with *The Lawyer* expires in June.)

"Imark is a US\$35 million dollar business employing 150 people worldwide," said Pegler. "We have substantial resources we will be using to invest in new facilities, new approaches and boost marketing. We want to work with exhibitors to add value to the events and make them even more attractive to visitors."

The Truemist events will be managed by Paul Dunne (0181 541 5040). Also visit <http://www.imark-com.com>

ALBY SMITH IN WORKING TIME DIRECTIVE INITIATIVE

Former InControl Legal and Resolution Systems front man Alby Smith this month launches his new software company Augment Ltd (07071 226696) which has a new product designed to help the personnel and HR departments of larger law firms comply with the requirements of the European Union's EU-48 "Working Time Directive".

According to Smith, the complexities of the legislation mean any organisation employing more than 300 to 400 staff, including fee earners and salaried partners, is unlikely to be able to cope with manual or spreadsheet-based administration systems. Similarly, door entry systems are not appropriate because the Directive also requires employers to account for holidays, sick leave and even travel time undertaken in the course of work.

The new Augment system is now being beta tested by a large City firm in the Broadgate area of London before being marketed to "top 40" size legal practices and banks.

NORWEL CONTINUES ITS RENAISSANCE

Market reports indicate growing interest in Norwel Computer Services' case and practice management systems. The PMS product is winning approval because it can deliver task-based billing on a SQL Server platform, while the case management software is being praised for being able to offer an effective dial-up ISDN link for fee earners working in branch offices and remote sites. According to one of the UK's leading legal IT consultants, the latest Norwel systems are now at least twelve months ahead of the rival offerings from Axxia.

MILES RESULTS MILES AHEAD

Miles 33 has reported record pre-tax profits of £1,256,000, an increase of 25 percent on the previous twelve months, for the year ended 30th September 1998. The turnover was £8.2 million, with ongoing R&D running at approximately 10 percent of turnover. The group ended the year with a £4.9 million cash balance. Chief executive Alex Yew says the outlook for the 1998/99 trading year is extremely encouraging, with a strong order book in the legal sector and the group is now looking for suitable acquisitions.

HEADING UP THE CHARTS

Deloitte & Touche has placed Edinburgh-based Pilgrim Systems as the 33rd fastest growing, based on turnover, hi-tech company in Scotland in its *Technology Fast 50* awards. The *Scottish Business Insider* magazine has also rated Pilgrim as the ninth largest software developer in Scotland, with a 30 percent increase in pre-tax profits last year on a turnover of £3 million.

NO, WE ARE NOT FOR SALE

In the United States, Microsoft has issued a statement saying it is not interested in buying Reed Elsevier, the parent group of both Butterworths and Lexis-Nexis. "This is an unsubstantiated rumour that seems to appear every once in a while," said a Microsoft spokesman.

Also in North America, the PC Docs Group has rejected an unsolicited merger proposal put forward by Open Text Corporation. PC Docs described the proposal as a "Grinch-like" publicity stunt by Open Text to distract attention from concerns about the viability of its own know-how and document management systems. However, as reported in the last issue, Open Text has now acquired the defunct Pagenet/Lava document management systems business.

Finally, and closer to home, Cognito Software has said it is not for sale and that its management would now like to get on with the rest of their lives and concentrate on growing the business rather than preparing endless reports, budgets and proposals for prospective purchasers.

DEALS AND TENDERS

- Niche City law firm RAKISONS has gone live with a Windows NT-based implementation of a FirmWare practice management system supplied and installed by RESOLUTION SYSTEMS. The firm simultaneously rolled out the system to back-office accounts staff and front-office fee earners.

- North Wales-based SWAYNE, JOHNSON & WRIGHT is to spend £110,000 on a new Wisdom case and practice management system from AVENUE LEGAL SYSTEMS.

- CRUTES, which offices on Tyneside, across the North-East and in Carlisle, has awarded THE DATABASE a contract to replace and upgrade its front-office systems. The consultant on the project was ANDREW LEVISON of GRANT THORNTON. Crutes is another user of the Trial/400 system from LONDON BRIDGE (see front page story).

- Newcastle-upon-Tyne firm WARD HADAWAY is reported to be finalising contractual negotiations to buy a CMS Open practice management system from CMS DATA. The system will replace an RS6000/AIX implementation of AVENUE LEGAL SYSTEMS' old Solomon accounts software.

- The recently merged NELSON CUFF/TURBERVILLES practice in Uxbridge and Harrow has chosen VIDESS to supply a new NT-based case and practice management system. The firm will also migrate to Microsoft Word. The legal department of BRIGHTON & HOVE COUNCIL, which was the first in the country to be awarded the Law Society's Lexcel quality standard, has ordered Videss software to handle case management and time recording.

- LINKLATERS is to replace its critically acclaimed but now largely obsolete NEXt based workstations. Uncharacteristically, the firm is not moving to another off-the-wall platform, such as LINUX, but is instead opting for a MICROSOFT-with-everything strategy, including MS-Word running across a Windows NT network.

GREIG BACK WITH NEW LEGAL TITLE

Lindsey Greig, the original founder of *The Lawyer* magazine, this month returns to the legal publishing market with a new monthly newsletter reporting on the latest legal developments in electronic commerce and online business. Called *E-Commerce Law & Policy*, the eight page newsletter costs £325 a year although it is currently available for a reduced "founders" rate of £275 per annum. For more details call: 0181 374 422.

● COMMENT

After selling *The Lawyer* to Centaur in 1992, Greig acquired and developed a number of equestrian magazines before selling them to another publisher. Greig says the new newsletter, which will be "journalistic rather than legalistic in style", will fill a gap in the market.

What gap in the market? Aside from the Insider's own *Internet Law Digital Newsletter*, as virtually every law firm in the land with a decent-sized internet, IT or digital media practice already produces its own newsletter on these topics, does anyone have time to read another one? All the competition are available free of charge and, given e-commerce is such a "wired" topic, it seems an oversight by Greig to only publish on paper rather than also in a digital format.

DRILLING FOR DATA

Weston Law Manual Services has issued a new *Offshore Health, Safety and Environment Information CD*. It contains the latest legislative guidance and costs £760 for a single user licence. For a free preview version of the CD Rom call Digital Networks (0181 998 8748.)

● INSIDER EMAIL NEWSLETTERS

Legal Technology Insider publishes a series of free current awareness email newsletters providing news and comment on areas of legal practice. The titles are: *Internet Law Digital Newsletter*, *Watching Brief Online* (local government law) and the *Litigation Support Digital Newsletter*.

To subscribe, send a note of your email address to: info@legaltechnology.co.uk

WOOLF AT THE DOOR

Ready or not, and the signs tend to suggest the answer is not, there now just over nine weeks to go until the Woolf civil justice reforms creak into life. The following sources of information may help ease some of the pain.

● LINK

Legalease's LINK online discussion forum continues to flourish and now has a new forum dedicated to the Woolf reforms and related issues.

● HARD COPY PROCEDURE RULES

The Stationery Office (HMSO as was) is the official publisher of the *Civil Procedure Rules* on behalf of the Lord Chancellor's Department. The full package, which includes the rules, practice directions, pre-action protocols and forms plus one year's updating service costs £250 plus £2.94 p&p. For credit card orders, phone 0345 02474.

● PROCEDURE RULES ON THE WEB

The Lord Chancellor's Department is making the full text of both the *Civil Procedures Rules* and subsequent *Practice Directions* available free of charge on the LCD web site. They will eventually be available in HTML, Word 7.0 and PDF file formats for users to download. However, do please note the site currently carries two versions of the rules: a "First Proofs" set dated 20th January and a "Final Version" dated 2nd February. To find the rules, select the "Civil Matters" menu option on the LCD home page and follow the directions from there. The site also contains an easy to use search engine that can be used to locate other LCD papers dealing with the Woolf reforms.

<http://www.open.gov.uk/lcd/>

● SOLICITEC ESTABLISHES WOOLF GROUP

Case management software specialist Solicitec has set up a users sub-group to discuss how the new rules will affect legal practice. At the first meeting, at the end of January, there was widespread concern about the amount of details that had still to be defined and the tight time scales for effecting substantial changes however Solicitec will be showing Woolf compliant modules for handling personal injury (defendant & plaintiff) work at next month's Western Legal Office Exhibition. Solicitec has also established an email discussion group covering Woolf news. Contact Bevan Read (0113 226 2000) for details.

● WOOLF IN THE GREEN BOOK

The forthcoming 1999 edition of *Butterworths Civil Court Practice* (the "Green Book") will incorporate the new Woolf *Civil Procedure Rules*. The book, which is also available on CD Rom, retails for £225 (£199 for customers on standing order). It is also available on a 30-day free trial offer basis, call David Bishop on: 0171 400 2907 for details. There is also a free "Woolf tracking" service available on the web.

<http://www.butterworths.co.uk/woolf>

PROLAW - THE NEXT BIG AMERICAN FAD ?

Although over the last five years UK law firms have become accustomed to turning to North American legal systems suppliers for PMS, document management and litigation support products, to-date home-grown case management software has had the edge over its US counterparts.

The main reason for this has generally reckoned to be that US law firms tackle case management in a different way. Thus, the software they use is often little more than a diary, file and "docket" management system for attorneys, whereas in the UK the demand has been for "workflow" systems that allow fee earners to delegate large volumes of similar type work, such as debt recovery, to junior staff.

But, could this be about to change? Visitors returning from last month's *LegalTech* conference and exhibition in New York were singing the praises of US case management systems in general and the ProLaw product in particular.

In terms of functionality, ProLaw is a SQL Server based product for Windows 95/NT platforms that combines front office case and document management with back office billing and accounting. It is also sufficiently open in design that it offers what is described as "built in automatic integration" with Word, WordPerfect, GroupWise, Outlook, DOCS Open, Excel, Equitrac and HotDocs and can also be linked into the fee earner desktop elements of both the Elite and CMS Open practice management systems.

● COMMENT

The aspect of ProLaw attracting the most interest is that it offers a comprehensive "matter management" capability allowing a lawyer to call up a particular case and locate all related documents, status reports, time postings, financial transactions, diary entries, contacts and billing records.

This is also termed a "matter centric" (or "work centric") system to distinguish it from the traditional "tool-centric" approach to legal software design, where information is artificially pigeon-holed by application. With a matter centric system, all information is available from one central point, whereas with tool-centric systems only part of the information is found in the case management element. For the full picture you must also access accounts, document management and client/matter database programs.

According to the latest *AmLaw Tech* quarterly survey of buying trends, out of a sample of 60 large US law firms, during the last three month period seven firms bought the ProLaw system - no other case management system made it into the survey. In terms of other categories of software, ten firms bought practice management systems (seven were Elite sites, the other three were CMS) and 35 bought document management products (four Worldox, 12 DOCS Open and, way ahead, 19 firms chose iManage). The only other product to feature in the survey was Interface's InterAction relationship management software, which was purchased by ten firms. <http://www.prolaw.com>

US NEWS IN BRIEF

● ELITE PRO DESKTOP

Elite Information Systems has introduced a new web-based front end, called the Professional's Desktop, that is designed to give fee earners the ability to access, enter and review financial, practice management and marketing information via the internet. Reflecting the latest fashion in software design (see *ProLaw story*) Elite describe this as a "matter centric" system.

● AMICUS IN SPEECH TALKS

The Toronto head office of Gavel & Gown, the developers of the Amicus Attorney system, and Lernout & Hauspie (L&H) have entered into an agreement to develop a legal case management product that will feature full integration with L&H speech recognition software. The speech element will include control features, so the software can be prompted to perform tasks such as scheduling an appointment or opening a file by voice commands rather than using a keyboard or mouse, as well as more conventional speech-to-text transcription.

● CARPE DIEM 3.0 IN BETA

Sage US has begun beta testing Version 3.0 of its Carpe Diem time tracking and recording software. The new software is web-enabled, so users will be able to enter and access data remotely via a web browser over the internet or an intranet. Sage describe the web element as a "zero configuration feature" because it is installed centrally on a firm's web server.

Carpe Diem 3.0 is scheduled to be commercially available from March however UK distributor Tikit (0171 717 1580) will be demonstrating a preview version of the software on its stand at the *Information Systems for Lawyers* conference at the end of this month.

● UPGRADE FOR PRINTLOG

The Equitrac Corporation has launched PrintLog 3.2, a new version of its cost recovery software to track the use of Windows-based printers and digital devices, such as network copiers. New features include a stand-alone reports generator and improved support for Postscript printers.

WEB RESOURCES

- **WORD BY NUMBERS**

If you are running Microsoft Word 97/8.0 and need a quick way to apply legal numbering styles to documents, have a look at the new Numbering Assistant from Payne Consulting. There is a free downloadable demo version of the software on the company's web site.

<http://www.payneconsulting.com/legal-numbering.htm>

- **MDU ONLINE**

The Medical Defence Union this month launched its own web site containing the latest news and risk management advice on medical negligence matters.

<http://www.the-mdu.com>

- **SINGLE MARKET ON THE WEB**

The European Commission has launched what it describes as a "free one-stop internet shop" for small to medium sized businesses, containing practical information, business data and access to public procurement tender notices.

<http://eur-opa.eu.int/business>

- **CANADIAN LEGAL RESOURCES**

Professor Michael Geist at the University of Ottawa Law School has launched a Canadian Internet Legal Resource Page (CILRP) facility. Access is free and the site contains information on legislation, case law, government reports and conference papers on all aspects of "cyberlaw" in Canada, including encryption and privacy.

<http://aix1.uottawa.ca/~geist/cilrp.html>

- **LTi-NET - THE DIGITAL EDITION OF THE INSIDER**

LTi-Net is the digital version of Legal Technology Insider. It is available in an HTML file format that can be delivered as an email attachment or accessed via a secure subscriber-only web site.

LTi-NET comes complete with live hypertext links and is designed for firms wanting to access the newsletter across intranets and Lotus Notes databases or individual subscribers who just want to read and print it from the desktop.

Subscription rates start at £135 (inc VAT). To obtain a free sample copy email info@legaltechnology.co.uk

THINKING DIGITAL IN STOCKPORT

Gorvin Smith Fort in Stockport has become the first firm in the UK to offer a web-based interactive conveyancing service based on Solicitec's new Solcase Online case management software.

The new service, which goes live in March, will allow prospective clients and estate agents to request and obtain virtually instantaneous quotations via the internet. Thereafter clients and agents can make enquiries and receive up-to-the-minute reports on the status of a particular conveyancing matter, as and when they want, via a password protected section of the Gorvin Smith Fort web site. The interactive service operates automatically and is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Conveyancing partner Andrew Callaghan says the firm is always looking for new ways to improve the service it offers to clients and was particularly attracted by this approach, as the close integration with the case management software meant there was no additional staffing overhead involved in providing the service since the relevant information was already held inside the system.

MAJOR LEGAL PUBLISHERS IN WEB SITE REVAMPS

This month both Sweet & Maxwell and Butterworths unveil new look web sites.

The Sweet & Maxwell site, whose redesign was long overdue, went live at the beginning of February and provides surfers with a range of online legal information and current awareness services - including a "Countdown to April 26th" feature on the Woolf reforms, plus instantly accessible industry comment and the latest information on the company's products and services.

It is a clean looking, quick, primarily text-based site with no superfluous graphics and good navigation controls accessible via a flow chart-like site map. One feature that distinguishes the Sweet & Maxwell site is the fact that, unlike the rival Butterworths' web facility, all the current awareness services, including the daily updated Court Alerting Service, Local Government Library Online and Planning Monthly Bulletin Online, are non-subscription based and accessible free of charge.

To mark the launch of the new site, Sweet & Maxwell is offering a 10 percent discount on all orders over £50 placed via the site during February.

Butterworths will launch its redesigned site on Monday 15th February. Although there will not be any changes to the Butterworths Direct content or subscription charges, the web pages code is being rewritten to cut back on the confusing number of "frames" the site now features.

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

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

NEWS IN BRIEF

- **US WEB PORTAL SUPER-SITE LAUNCHED**
US company Law.com LCC has launched what it hopes will become a one-stop "portal to the law" for all internet users, including lawyers, academics and members of the public. The site contains over 30,000 pages of legal material.
<http://www.law.com>
- **PAISNER & CO EMAILS E-BRIEF**
City law firm Paisner & Co has launched a new web site containing the latest legal information on all aspects of technology, communications and intellectual property law. The firm is also piloting a series of update briefing newsletters, called e-Briefs, that will be distributed by email.
<http://www.paisner.co.uk>
- **NO D-I-Y LEGAL ADVICE HERE**
A Dallas federal court judge has ruled that Iowa software company Parsons Technology violated a Texas unauthorised practice of law statute by selling legal self-help computer software within the state. The move reflects a growing trend among state bar associations to challenge the legality of web and disk based D-I-Y legal advice products.

LEGAL TECHNOLOGY DIARY DATES

- **WOOLF: PRACTICAL IMPACT FOR LITIGATORS** - One day conference in London on 19th February with an impressive list of speakers, including Lord Woolf, looking at all aspects of the civil justice procedural reforms and the impact on case management. The event starts at 8.30 and runs through until 17.25. Fees: £695 (+ VAT). For details call IQPC on: 0500 821057.
- **FEE EARNER PRODUCTIVITY DAY**
One day event at the Portland Hotel, Piccadilly Gardens, Manchester on 23rd February. The event is organised by Laserform Law and will feature the company's new case management system for personal injury work. Admission free, for details call Sara Walker on: 01565 755154
- **INFORMATION SYSTEMS FOR LAWYERS** - Centaur's annual two day conference and exhibition takes place at the London Marriott Hotel on 23rd and 24th of February. This year sees the introduction of interactive discussion forums to complement the seminar sessions. Topics covered will include: IT training, know-how systems, desktop productivity for fee earners, meeting the needs of inhouse lawyers and alternative working practices, such as the "virtual office". The event carries 10.5 CPD hours. Fees: £797 (+ VAT), with £50 discount for extra delegates and small firms. For details call Centaur on: 0171 970 4770.

DIARY DATES EXTRA

- **ILCA IT AWARENESS DAY**
The ILCA (Institute of Legal Cashiers & Administrators) holds its annual Law Office IT Awareness Day on 24th February at the Birmingham Botanical Gardens. The event, which combines seminar sessions and an IT exhibition, starts at 9.30. Topics this year include the Euro, Y2K and the 1998 Solicitors' Accounts Rules. The event carries 5 CPD hours. Fees: £125 (£95 for members), with discounts for extra delegates. For details call the ILCA on: 0181 294 2887.
- **WESTERN LEGAL OFFICE EXHIBITION** - Two day IT exhibition, sponsored by *The Lawyer*, at the Bristol Marriott Hotel on Wednesday 3rd (12.00 to 19.00) and Thursday 4th March (10.00 to 16.00). Admission free. For details and to register for tickets call Imark Truemist on: 0181 541 5040.
- **NATIONAL LEGAL OFFICE EXHIBITION** - The three day event, sponsored by the *Law Society's Gazette*, at the Birmingham NEC is now in its second year. Although the format remains the same, a mixture of seminars, free CPD workshops, exhibition stands and online services, this year also sees a significant increase in the number of legal IT suppliers taking stands. Along with the usual names, there will also be Corel showing the latest version of the WordPerfect wordprocessing package. The event opens on Tuesday 16th and closes on Thursday 18th March. Opening times: 10.00 to 18.00, except the final day when the doors close at 16.00. Admission free. For details or to register for tickets call Nationwide Exhibitions on: 0117 907 1000. Up-to-the-minute information can also be found on the web.
<http://www.nwe.co.uk>

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NEWS IN BRIEF

● **MSS USERS TUNE IN TO ESPRIT**
MSS Management Support Systems reports that, since its announcement in October, the new all 32-bit AlphaLAW-Esprit accounts and time recording system for small firms has received such an enthusiastic reception that it could prove to be the company's most successful product to-date. Esprit has now completed full beta testing with a number of users and full delivery has started both in the UK and, because it is also Euro-compliant, in the Irish Republic.

● **LEXOLOGY HAS DOMINO EFFECT**
The inhouse legal department at Northumbrian Water has begun installing Lexology's case management system. The project includes integrating the software with the department's Lotus Notes/Domino infrastructure.

● **MOUNTAIN MOVES TO THE SUMMIT**
Legal systems supplier Mountain Software has moved to new offices in Grantham. The address is Summit House, Alma Park Road, Grantham, Lincs NG21 9SP. There is no change to the 01476 573718 phone number.

ANY QUESTIONS ?

One of the new features of this year's *Information Systems for Lawyers* conference, at the London Marriott at the end of this month, will be a series of interactive discussion forums. The moderator for these sessions, giving his best Jerry Springer impersonation whilst leading the debate and asking the awkward questions, will be the Insider's editor Charles Christian. If there are any particular topics you would like to raise, you can email your questions in advance to Steve Warshal at the conference organisers Centaur. The email address is swarshal@centaur.co.uk.

RECRUITMENT OPPORTUNITIES

● **COGNITO SOFTWARE - SALES EXECUTIVE**
Cognito Software is looking for a sales executive for the London area. Responsibilities will include prospecting, qualifying and closing new business opportunities for solicitors in private practice. Degree level qualifications and experience of the legal systems market preferred. Please contact Shirley Turner of Cognito on: 01363 775582.

● **LEGATO COMPUTER SERVICES - SALES**
Legato requires a new sales executive to handle demand for their Paragon accounts and time recording system plus linked case management. Applicants should be prepared to work on a basis of high commission and low basic. Please contact Liz Yelland on: 01489 881105 or in writing to Legato Computer Services Ltd, 1648 Parkway, Solent Business Park, Whiteley, PO15 7AH.