

CHARLES CHRISTIAN'S

# LEGAL TECHNOLOGY INSIDER

THE SOURCE FOR INDEPENDENT LEGAL TECHNOLOGY NEWS, COMMENT AND ANALYSIS

## CASE MANAGEMENT - 6 MONTHS OR GIVE UP

According to case and relationship management software specialist Hatton Blue, if a law firm takes longer than six months to implement a new case management project it could face serious problems because the market is likely to have changed so much that the underlying business justifications for the project will no longer be valid.

At a presentation in London earlier this month, product manager Dermot McCarthy explained how some financial services companies had been able to create working systems within six weeks which, despite still only being prototype projects, were already being used to process "live" matters. McCarthy suggests organisations should follow the 80:20 rule, opting for some benefits now and worrying about the finer details later, rather than spending months or years working towards a "big bang" launch and risk missing the business opportunity.

### ● COMMENT

Hatton Blue is an advocate of the "best of breed" approach to legal IT. Recent projects where it has implemented its Vectus case management software in conjunction with third-party practice management systems include Walker Morris in Leeds, who run Miles 33 Precedent on Oracle and defendant personal injury specialists Berrymans, who run Axxia Arista on Informix.

- Neil Tee's legal market team at Hatton Blue has now been joined by ex-PCS and Norwel salesman Martin Crook.

## GRANT THORNTON COUP

Leading legal IT consultant Andrew Levison has just pulled off a major coup by recruiting Richard Blasdale to join his team at Grant Thornton.

Blasdale, who expects to join Grant Thornton during April has, for a number of years, been the senior consultant working on legal IT projects and, more recently, Y2K compliance and contingency planning for clients of rival consultancy Robson Rhodes. His departure will leave one-time market leaders Robson Rhodes with no full-time consultants covering the legal IT sector.

Levison said he was "absolutely delighted" to have a consultant of Blasdale's calibre joining his team as it would "further enhance and confirm Grant Thornton's position as the number one IT consultancy to the legal profession". Blasdale will be based in Birmingham and have particular responsibility for projects in the North and Midlands.

## KEYSTONE SECURES EXTRA FUNDING

Hard on the heels of its dismal trading results, legal systems supplier Keystone Software has announced plans to raise an additional £1.5 million in funding (net of expenses) by means of a placing and open offer of 17.6 million 10p shares.

The rights issue has been fully underwritten by Seymour Pierce. For the purposes of the Companies Act 1985, Keystone must also undergo a capital reorganisation which will be ratified at an EGM on 5th March. Dealings in the shares are expected to commence on the London Stock Exchange AIM market on 8th March.

The extra funds will be used to support Keystone's operations in the UK, Australian and New Zealand market, as well as provide working capital until a number of new contracts commence generating revenue.

## STOP PRESS

- **NEW RIVAL FOR RIGHTFAX**  
US-based IT supplier Omtool is launching its new LegalFax system in the UK, a product the company reckons will give both RightFAX and Hexar a run for their money. The system can also be integrated with email and document management software and even post directly to billing systems. **See Page 7**

- **ACCOUNTS FOR UNDER £1000**  
A new guide to low cost IT systems for small law firms identifies ten accounts systems for under £1000 and one for under £100. **For full story see Page 4**

## 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>

## PRODUCT LAUNCHES

- COREL has confirmed that its new WordPerfect Office 2000 suite, which includes Version 9.0 of the WordPerfect wordprocessing application, will be commercially available in the UK and Ireland from June.
- Case management software specialist ALTERNATIVE TEAM (0171 359 3595) is putting the finishing touches to a new stand-alone time recording system that will be linked to Legal Aid Claim forms, such as CLAIM 10, and automatically incorporate all time postings data. The new system, which can be activated via wordprocessing software, will also produce Legal Aid franchise reports.
- PROFESSIONAL TECHNOLOGY (01634 815517) is to launch a new all-Windows accounts system later this spring. In common with the company's existing DOS-based Quaestor system, the new software will also be supplied on a "pay as you use" rental basis. Prices will be in the region of £2.50 for each matter that goes live plus £0.50 for each month the matter resides on the system. The new accounts software will offer full integration with the company's recently launched Seriatim Master Class workflow-based case management system. Professional Technology has also entered the final stages of development of a new Windows version of its MicroCosts costs drafting software.

## NEW LEGAL MANAGER AT SCHRODER

Schroder Finance, part of the Schrodgers leasing and merchant banking group, has appointed Jonathan Smith as its new national business development manager for the legal market. Smith, who can be contacted on tel: 0161 448 9799, will have responsibility for working with law firms and the Bar to develop finance schemes to fund practice development projects. Smith says that thanks to the need to implement Y2K compliance and Woolf projects, recent months have seen an increase in demand for finance for the upgrading and replacement of IT systems.

## QUISS - OUTSOURCING FOR LEGAL IT ?

Quiss Technology plc has launched a new outsourcing service for the legal market, called Works for Legal, which it believes will meet the needs of firms ranging from 10 to 200 staff in size who either lack or would like to reduce the size of their own inhouse resources and contract out the work to a third-party.

The basic Works for Legal service offers firms a three year contract providing them with all hardware, including top-of-the-range Pentium PCs, file servers and back-up systems on a Microsoft NT network and running standard Microsoft Office (including Word, Excel and email) products. (Novell and WordPerfect are available as alternatives.)

Quiss also provide full staff training but the most novel feature is that the contract includes an agreed number of hours of consultancy services covering advice on other IT issues, such as speech recognition, OCR and Y2K, as well as evaluating the technical aspects of any legal IT systems a firm may be considering buying. Quiss, incidentally, do not sell legal software applications directly but aim to work with specialist suppliers.

The company is already finalising terms with two well-known legal IT suppliers and hopes to announce its first orders from law firms within weeks. Firms can expect to pay between £1700 and £2500 per seat, per year for the full package of hardware, software, training, consultancy and maintenance. Upon renewing the contract after the initial three year term, all hardware is replaced by newer systems.

- Quiss (no relation to the legal IT supplier Quill) is ISO 9002 and Investors in People accredited, has been trading throughout the UK for the past 11 years and now has a total staff of 85, including 45 field engineers, providing IT services to over 1600 corporate clients. Works for Legal is primarily aimed at the English and Welsh market but is also available in Scotland and the Republic of Ireland. For more details contact Richard Blackburn on 01827 265000.

## HADDOCK PLACE ORDER

Donne Mileham & Haddock (DMH) has announced a massive £600,000 upgrade of its existing IT infrastructure that will see Timeslice software replaced by a range of applications from Axxia Systems. The deal also marks the first installation of a Legal ARMS debt recovery system from integration partner BCL (formerly the Beaver Corporation) at an Axxia site. The new systems will be rolled out to more than one hundred fee earners across the multi-site practice, which has branches in Crawley, Lewes, Worthing, East Grinstead, Newhaven and Brighton.

Commenting on the project DMH finance director Robert Mojab said: "Whereas once the focus of our work would have revolved solely around practice management, today we have to be far more client-oriented and meet their needs rather than fulfil our wants."

## PILGRIM ON ITS WAY TO THE MARKET ?

Clydesdale Bank Equity has just purchased a 20 percent stake in Edinburgh-based legal IT supplier Pilgrim Systems in a deal which values the company at more than £8 million. The shares were purchased from Pilgrim chairman Jim Cummings in a move that is planned to help pave Pilgrim's way for a UK stock market listing, either on AIM or the full market.

Cummings, who retains a 77.7 percent stake in the company, said: "Bringing Clydesdale on board is a huge step forward for us. Pilgrim is already very strong financially but I felt that we needed the clout of a major financial institution to help us take the company forward to a flotation, as well as realise some of my own investment."

Bill Nixon of Clydesdale said: "We have been keen to invest in Pilgrim for some time, recognising its market leading position and strength of management. Although it is not unusual to find a fast growing IT business, Pilgrim has underpinned its expansion with a strong balance sheet and high recurring contract income."

Arthur Andersen acted as advisers on the deal.

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## MANHATTAN OR MANCHESTER

Norwel sales director Alan Richardson has described the growing enthusiasm in some legal IT circles for US software using "matter centric" systems design (see *last issue*) as "American fad nonsense".

"It may be an old fashioned name but companies like Norwel have for some time been selling case management software that are, by the American definition, matter centric systems".

"We can provide a fee earner with access from one screen to case progress history, future actions awaiting progress, document history with on-screen viewer, to-do lists for fee earners and assistants, matter address books with details of all associated parties and relationships, work-in-progress, bills, disbursements, payment requests, on screen billing and more. Why go to Manhattan when you can buy it in Manchester."

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## LAW SOCIETY SUPPLIER ON AWARDS SHORT-LIST

Outsourcing specialist ITNet, which last year won an £8 million facilities management contract from the English Law Society, has been short-listed in the "new company of the year" category in this year's *PLC Awards*. The awards' sponsors include PriceWaterhouseCoopers, the London Stock Exchange and Birmingham lawyers Edge Ellison. ITNet, formerly the IT services division of Cadbury Schweppes, floated on the Stock Exchange in June.

## DEALS AND TENDERS

- WILLIAM WRIGHT & SON of Dudley in the West Midlands, has installed an AlphaLAW-NET practice management system supplied by MSS MANAGEMENT SUPPORT SYSTEMS. The system will be used to support the firm's Legal Aid Franchise.

- SELECT LEGAL SYSTEMS has won two orders in the Nottingham area. Both ACTONS and EKING MANNING are to buy Select's case management system. The system now also supports Laserform electronic legal forms and WordPerfect V.8 documents. Select software already supports Microsoft Word.

- Despite having just ditched 90 staff, including partners and fee earners, and frozen all spending on IT until after the next partners' retreat in April, DAVIES ARNOLD COOPER is once more looking around the market for a new case management system. Although currently using an AXXIA system to handle motor insurance claims work, HATTON BLUE is among the suppliers DAC has recently been reviewing.

- IRWIN MITCHELL is set to become the second firm to install a Legal ARMS debt recovery system from the BEAVER CORPORATION (BCL) following the recent announcement of the integration partnership between BCL and AXXIA SYSTEMS. Irwin Mitchell run Axxia's Arista practice management system.

- LEGAL TECHNOLOGIES has won a contract to provide litigation support services at the forthcoming public inquiry into the deaths of babies after heart surgery at the Bristol Royal Infirmary.

- Four firms have gone live this month with the OMS office management system developed by FRANKLINS WALKER BUSINESS SYSTEMS (FWBS). The firms are: CHERYL LEWIS in Birkenhead, SMITH RODDAM in Bishop Auckland, DONNELLY & ELLIOTT in Gosport and GRUBER GARRATT in Oldham. The Cheryl Lewis and Donnelly & Elliott sites are joint implementations with the LEGATO accounts system.

## FREE GUIDE TO LOW COST LEGAL IT

Insider editor Charles Christian and IT consultant Delia Venables have just published a new guide to low cost IT systems for small law firms.

Called *Computers for the Very Small Firm*, the guide contains a listing of 25 software suppliers and bureaux offering low cost legal accounts and bookkeeping systems for solicitors' practices in England & Wales. They include ten systems for under £1000 and one system for under £100.

The guide, which looks at the whole issue of computerisation projects in small firms, including some of the alternative approaches, is available free of charge, call 01379 687518 for a copy. It can also be downloaded or printed off from the following web sites:  
<http://www.legaltechnology.co.uk/vsf.htm>  
<http://www.venables.co.uk/legal/>

## INSIDER Y2K READY

Our systems have been vetted, our date files have been changed to four-digit formats, our suppliers have been given the third-degree and we are now confident that the production systems for both the hard copy and digital editions of Legal Technology Insider are fully Year 2000 compliant. In fact because we use the latest Apple Macintosh technology, our systems should theoretically be safe until the year 29,940 AD - and if they crash then, quite frankly, we won't care.

## FICKLE DIGITS

The correct phone number for Lindsey Greig's new newsletter *E-Commerce Law & Policy* is 0181 374 4242.

### ● 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](mailto:info@legaltechnology.co.uk)

## WOOLF REFORMS - A FORM WARNING

Oyez Straker, the UK's leading supplier of paper-based and electronic legal forms, is warning that because the new "Woolf" *Civil Procedure Rules* are still evolving, law firms should be aware of the risk of confusion and inadvertently using the wrong versions of legal forms.

One potential problem is that the new core forms series use the same numbering codes as the old County Court forms. For example, under the current system Form N.1 is a Summons, whereas from the 26th April the same number will be used to identify a new-style Claims Form.

Similarly, the expected steady flow of practice directions and minor amendments means that even forms appearing in the Stationery Office's recently published official edition of the rules are already incomplete or, in some instances, out of date.

Oyez Straker are confident they will be able to offer their customers a full range of up-to-the-minute, Woolf-ready paper and electronic forms in time for 26th April - now just 41 working days away. But they also warn users to expect regular amendments and updates, as well as the need to change some of the forms used in other areas of legal practice, including family law, debt and landlord & tenant work, where it is now recognised the new civil justice procedure could also have an impact.

### ● COMMENT

Oyez Straker claims to have sold its OyezForms electronic legal forms package into just over 1000 law firms and legal departments. Peapod, who produce a rival 32-bit product called PrintaForm, claim sales to over 800 firms. The Oyez forms are also integrated with systems sold by legal IT suppliers Avenue, TFB, Videss and MSS - Oyez say deals with other suppliers are "in the pipeline".

## AUTONOMY UNDERPINS BUTTERWORTHS' AUTHORITY

Butterworths has disclosed more details about the technology used to support its *Halsbury's Laws Direct* and *Legislation Direct* online legal services which, between them, encompass more than 17,000 pieces of legislation dating back to 1267 and 300,000 pages of legal material.

Faced with the task of identifying, cross referencing and hyperlinking all this material, Butterworths is using Autonomy's Agentware software to tackle the job. According to Autonomy CEO Mike Lynch: "Because the software analyses the overall patterns in a piece of text, it can identify the main ideas in an article whether or not a particular keyword is present. This makes it particularly suitable for publishers such as Butterworths, whose works contain masses of constantly changing technical information."

<http://www.autonomy.com>

## PDF - THINGS CAN ONLY GET BETTER

Over the last month the PDF portable document file format has received two further boosts to its growing credibility.

The first came in New York at the recent *LegalTech* conference where representatives from a number of courts expressed their enthusiasm for PDF as the medium for electronic case filing (ECF). In fact at the US District Court for the Eastern District of New York (Brooklyn), those cases that have been designated by the court for electronic filing are to be submitted electronically only as PDF files.

<http://www.nyed.uscourts.gov>

The second development was last week's announcement of a new release - Version 4.0 - of Adobe Acrobat, which is still the most widely used software application for creating PDF files. (Although it is a theoretically open standard, Adobe Systems Inc is the originator of the PDF format.)

New features in Version 4.0, which is scheduled for a UK release in the second quarter of this year, include: additional security and support for digital signatures so users can authenticate information and verify a document has not been altered since it was sent; improved annotation including sticky notes, text blocks and audio clips; and a webcapture tool that allows users to download web pages and convert them into PDF files that preserve the pages' graphics, fonts, colours, and active hyperlinks.

For users on Windows platforms, Version 4.0 also includes a new PDFMaker utility that converts Microsoft Word, Excel and PowerPoint files into PDF from within those applications by adding a new button to the menu bar.

Version 4.0 will retail for £149 (+ VAT) but existing users of Adobe Acrobat 2.0 or higher can upgrade for £59. It is also possible to obtain a beta test version of the software by registering with the PDF Zone site.

<http://www.adobe.co.uk> <http://www.pdfzone.com>

### ● COMMENT

When it comes to promoting PDF, Adobe has been its own worst enemy by confusing the market about the different versions of Acrobat and the so-called "click charge" for creating PDF files.

There are effectively three versions of the software: Acrobat Reader, which is available free of charge and allows users to access and view (but not create) PDF files, hence its popularity in litigation support applications. There is Adobe Acrobat (see above) which allows users to save documents, already in an electronic format, as PDF files free of charge. And, finally, there is Acrobat Capture that allows hard copy documents to be scanned and their images saved as PDF files. This element is chargeable, with usage protected by a "dongle" that meters (the click charge element) the number of files being created. By way of a small concession to users Adobe has recently changed its licensing policy so the old one million copies dongle (which retails for about £8000) now allows unlimited usage.

## LITIGATION SUPPORT NEWS IN BRIEF

### ● NEW LIT SUPPORT COMPANY

Former Simmons & Simmons head of litigation support services Jonathan Maas has set up a new consultancy in conjunction with two other ex-Simmons staff Dipak Patel and Brian Stuart. Called The Litigation Support Company (07957 140130), Maas says the venture will provide a totally independent advisory and project management service for medium-sized law firms that cannot afford inhouse litigation support staff.

"We will not be running a coding or scanning bureau. Nor will we be a distributor for specific brands of hardware and software," says Maas. "Instead, we will act as an intermediary between litigation support technology suppliers and law firm litigation partners."

### ● WOOLF SEMINAR SELL OUT

Last week's *Woolf: Practical Impact for Litigators* conference in London proved so popular the organisers had to switch the event to a larger venue, the Café Royal, to accommodate the demand for tickets.

### ● ALL CHANGE FOR T/A-LAW

Newgate Technologies (0171 353 4414) has become the new distributor for the T/A-Law litigation support system. The move follows the decision by the original distributor and co-developer Sellers Imago (0171 405 4512) to drop T/A-Law in favour of a new system. Sellers Imago will continue to support its existing T/A customers but is expected to launch the replacement product, called BriefCase, next month.

Unlike the 16-bit T/A-Law, which was written in Delphi, the new BriefCase system is a 32-bit product developed in C++. During the course of the spring Sellers Imago will also be launching a new document management system called LegalEyes, as well as a real-time transcription system, called WriteAway, that will be pitched in direct competition with Smith Bernal's Livenote product in the court reporting market. The Insider understands that WriteAway is already in final beta testing with a couple of court reporting agencies.

## WEB RESOURCES

### ● SCOTTISH CASES DEFINITELY MAYBE ON THE WEB SOON

The Scottish High Court is finalising plans start publishing its decisions on a free public access web site. The site was due to go live at end of January however this was postponed until the beginning of February and now has been further delayed by further trials to ensure the service can publish judgments on the web on the same day they are delivered in court. Keep watching the site for further developments.

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

### ● MARKETING ADVICE ONLINE

Legal marketing and PR consultancy Client Appeal has launched a web site which invites law firms in the Thames Valley to email in marketing questions and receive free advice by return.

<http://www.enablis.co.uk/client-appeal>

### ● BUZZWORD BINGO

This week's off-the-wall site relates to the popular but covert game of buzzword bingo. The site allows you to create a bingo card on which the squares carry a random selection of buzzwords, such as "paradigm shift" and "know-how". Then, when you are attending a meeting or a conference, you tick off the words as and when someone mentions them. Once you have a complete line of jargon, if you are completely fearless - or have another job to go to - jump up and shout "bingo".

<http://www.buzzwordbingo.com>

### ● 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](mailto:info@legaltechnology.co.uk)

## LAWLINK OUT OF NEC

Thanks to running the Internet Café stand at last year's *Solicitors National Legal Office Exhibition* at the Birmingham NEC, LawLink UK, the embryonic legal web portal-to-secure email service, managed to earn itself a very high profile and spend the next six months being mentioned as a potential market leader.

But since the autumn LawLink's fortunes appear to have turned decidedly pear-shaped with first E-Docs and then BT/Butterworths *Legalconnect* announcing rival services. Now, in the latest twist, NEC event organiser Nationwide Exhibitions has announced that LawLink will not even be attending this year's *National Legal Office Exhibition* and that the Internet Café stand will instead be run by law firm internet service providers Lawyers Online.

### ● COMMENT

LawLink vice chairman Stewart Thompson told the Insider that "all is well and we are ploughing ahead in the UK" but it had been decided the European Business Information Conference (EBIC) was the "perfect promotional forum" for both the UK and Irish versions of the company's LawLink and Business Gold services "...unfortunately EBIC is on the same dates as the NEC."

Fair enough but this does rather beg the questions: how is attending an event most lawyers have never heard of going to help promote LawLink in the legal market? And, why not attend both events (Quill managed to attend the NEC and the Western Legal Office Exhibition when their dates clashed last year) particularly as the potential major rival *Legalconnect* is going to be at the NEC next month?

● Lawyers Online, which has recently added links between its site and a number of online bookshops, is currently offering a 30 day free trial to customers providing credit card details. If users still wish to subscribe at the end of the 30 day period, their card will be billed at the reduced rate of £90 (+ VAT) so they effectively get thirteen months of internet access for just £6.92 (+ VAT) a month. The offer runs until the end of March. Call 01432 356711 for details.

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

## LOCAL ENQUIRIES GO ONLINE

MVM SearchNET (0117 974 4477) in Bristol has just launched a new local land charges search and enquiry service aimed at conveyancers. Called SearchNET 1-2-3, the service, which was originally developed by the Digital Equipment Corporation in the mid-1980s and taken over by MVM last year, will allow users to send off searches, via a desktop PC and modem, to most of the local authorities in England and Wales and then receive back an electronic reply containing the results.

The current system uses Windows software in place of the earlier Digital dumb terminal technology but MVM is now working on a new version that will allow the service to be accessed over the internet via a standard web browser.

## NEW CHALLENGER FOR RIGHTFAX ?

New Hampshire-based fax systems developer Omtool has announced plans to enter the UK legal systems market with a network fax automation product called LegalFax.

Although the new system will be pitched directly against Hexar's FaxSwitch and current market leader RightFAX from Kommunicate, Omtool claim LegalFax has the edge on the competition because it has been specifically designed to meet the requirements of law firms.

The client/server-based software includes full integration with popular enterprise-wide email systems, such as Lotus Notes, Microsoft Exchange and Novell GroupWise, as well as the DOCS Open, SoftSolutions and NetRight iManage document management systems.

Users can fax directly from DOCS, or from any Windows application, with client/matter numbers automatically validated in DOCS before the fax leaves the desktop.

Incoming faxes can be archived and profiled directly into DOCS, with immediate electronic distribution of the fax to any number of recipients within a practice through email. LegalFax's billing fields can also post data to a number of accounts systems including CMS Open, Equitrac and Elite.

LegalFax, which is already in use in several US law firms, is available for immediate delivery. It is being marketed and distributed in the UK by Integrated Solutions (0181 591 2720) who will initially be targeting the 1500 largest solicitors' practices.

<http://www.int-solutions.com>

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## MORE PRAISE FOR NEW LAW SOCIETY SCHEME

The English Law Society's recently launched *Software Solutions* scheme for smaller firms has come in for praise from two more of the participating "recognised suppliers".

Peapod Solutions, who market the Osprey accounts systems in conjunction with Pracctice Ltd, report that not only has the scheme generated plenty of leads but many of them have already been converted into sales.

The second endorsement for the scheme has come from JM Computing, the Manchester-based exclusive northern area distributor for Mountain Software's integrated case and practice management system. The Mountain system is another "recognised" product and, according to JM, since it was listed in the *Software Solutions* guide "the number of enquiries and orders we have had runs into three figures."

● Following the recent increase in the number of firms approaching the company for new systems, JM Computing is looking for more sales consultants, with a background in law and preferably experience of working in a solicitors' practice, to advise on and implement IT solutions for law firms throughout the North of England. For details call legal systems manager Tim Maxwell on 0161 792 6020.

## LEGAL TECHNOLOGY DIARY DATES

● **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 an Internet Café run by Lawyers Online and Corel showing the latest version of its 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 exhibition web site.

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

● **AIM SEMINARS** - Legal IT supplier AIM is running a series of seminars to promote its Windows NT based Evolution Client/Server case and PMS system. The dates are Redditch 16th March, Northampton 17th March, Bury St Edmunds 18th March and London 23rd March. Admission free. For details call Iquo Ema of AIM on: 01482 326971.

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# NEWS IN BRIEF

● **HAMER ENJOYS BENEFITS OF EVOLUTION**  
Philip Hamer & Co, which has offices throughout south Yorkshire, has just gone live with AIM's Windows NT-based Evolution Client/Server practice management system. The firm, which was founded by Law Society council and Information Technology & Courts advisory committee member Philip Hamer, has been using AIM systems of one form or another since 1975. Hamer says one of the most impressive features of the new system is its integration with the Cognos Impromptu reporting tool and the power this gives practice managers to extract information from the database and generate reports.

● **MICROSOFT GETS EURO HABIT**  
Microsoft's new Office Update web site contains a number of downloadable products that allow Office 97 applications to format and print the Euro symbol. There is also advice on adding the Euro symbol to the Windows 95 and NT 4.0 operating systems and a fact sheet "Working with the Euro in Excel 97" explaining the process for adding formulas to existing Excel 97 worksheets to convert values to Euros.  
<http://officeupdate.microsoft.com/focus/catalog/focuseuro.htm>

● **NEW NOKIA DELAYED**  
The good news is the new Nokia 9110 Communicator mobile phone plus email/pocket computer has more functionality, a bigger and better screen display, five times the battery life and weighs about half as much as the brick like 9000i it replaces. Unfortunately, despite an extensive TV and newspaper advertising campaign for the new model, none of the outlets in the UK currently have any in stock. Retailers say the need to fix a bug in the email software has delayed shipping by about two months.

● **ONLINE RELOCATION SERVICE**  
Luton-based law firm Taylor Walton has launched an interactive web-based conveyancing service. The firm says the service is proving particularly popular with staff working for large companies in the Home Counties and Thames Valley area who need to relocate to other parts of the UK, for as long as they have access to a PC and modem they can send instructions. Taylor Walton is one of Avenue Legal Systems' largest users.  
<http://www.taylorwalton.co.uk>

● **GOODBYE AND HELLO MISTER MCKENZIE**  
Rod McKenzie, until November head consultant with ZMB's now defunct ZGT legal IT recruitment division, has joined rival headhunters Longbridge International. Longbridge was itself hit earlier this year by the departure of its head of IT recruitment Craig Coverman. Meanwhile Paul Young still heads operations at QD Technology, the only other serious legal IT recruitment consultancy left in the market.