

CHARLES CHRISTIAN'S

# LEGAL TECHNOLOGY INSIDER

THE SOURCE FOR INDEPENDENT LEGAL TECHNOLOGY NEWS, COMMENT AND ANALYSIS

## TFB - PHIL FITNESS BOWS OUT

After 20 years with the legal systems supplier Technology For Business, including ten years as managing director, Phil Fitness has decided to move on to pursue other interests. As part of the changeover Fitness and outgoing TFB finance director Joe Valentine have sold their entire shareholding in the company to its existing managers, with former sales director Simon Hill taking over as the new managing director. Hill says not only was the transfer entirely amicable but the continuity of management and staff would ensure that it was "business as usual" for all TFB's customers.

Under the terms of the management buyout, TFB Group Limited has acquired 100 percent of the issued share capital of TFB Holdings, the company formed by Valentine and Fitness in 1989 when they bought TFB in an MBO from its former owners. The new board comprises Hill plus Len Hall as commercial director, Stan Krefta as finance director and Mark Garnish as technical director. The MBO's financial backers were Northern Venture Managers (NVM) and the Bank of Scotland, with KPMG Corporate Finance and Osborne Clarke acting as advisers. The new board retains a majority shareholding in TFB Group.

■ The financial terms of the MBO have not been disclosed by either side but it is rumoured Fitness and Valentine sold out for in the region of £4.5 million.

## MARKET NEWCOMER TO OFFER FREE SOFTWARE

Legal market newcomer Virtual Information Management Systems (0171 586 8606) says it will begin shipping a free case and document management system within the next fortnight. The product, a 32-bit application called Visual Portfolio Manager, is based on Microsoft's Access database and will be available for download from the Internet and distributed on CD-Rom with copies of the *Solicitors Journal*.

VIMS director Eric Lyle claims the free version of the software will handle about 90 percent of most High Street firms' needs. Additional functionality, including time recording, billing and archiving, is available as an "extra" costing £175 for an annual subscription. A "secure" version of the software, providing central access controls, costs a further £55 and support is also available but only via £1 per minute premium rate telephone helpline service.

**No such thing as free software ? See page 2**

## NT 4.0 - JUST SAY NO

The influential IT research consultancy GartnerGroup has warned PC users that they could be wasting money if they migrate to either the desktop or server versions of Microsoft Windows NT 4.0 without having a clearly defined business need for the extra functionality.

According to Gartner, Windows 98 and NT Server 3.51 will remain viable operating systems until the end of 2001, when they will be replaced by the Windows 2000 (aka NT 5.0) family. But, says GartnerGroup analyst Michael Gartenberg, "the notion you need to get NT now is ridiculous" as the move will still not make it any easier to migrate to Windows 2000 in the future. "You may as well open a bank account in the name of Bill Gates as move from Windows 98 to NT 4.0 to Windows 2000," he added.

## LSSA SET TO LOSE MEMBERS ?

Two of the largest members of the Legal Software Suppliers Association have, separately, told the Insider they have serious reservations about continuing their membership of LSSA when it comes up for renewal later this year.

The managing director of one supplier said the association had already lost its way since the departure of former leading light John Wilde and was suffering a credibility problem through its failure to recruit the perceived market leader Axxia. With the loss of another LSSA stalwart, Phil Fitness of TFB, he was concerned it was turning into an organisation that merely held meetings about meetings.

## 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

■ J M COMPUTING has moved to larger offices, approximately one mile away from its current Manchester premises. The new address is: Riverside, Agecroft Road, Manchester M27 8SJ. The main phone number is 0161 925 7777 (fax 0161 925 7700). The new support line number is 0161 925 7799.

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

■ The publicly-quoted IT services group SANDERSON, best known in the legal world for its Qnix and Galaxy case and practice management systems, has reported an increase in its pre-tax profits from £4million to £5.6 million for the six months to 31st March.

■ SOLICITORS OWN SOFTWARE has been awarded Investors In People (IIP) accreditation. The assessors, WESTERN TEC, singled out the SOS training plan and evaluation document as one of the best they had ever seen.

■ Melbourne-based CMS Open distributor HORWATH COMPUTER SYSTEMS has headhunted DAVID BOTTOM to join its Auckland office. Bottom was previously with KEYSTONE SOLUTIONS.

■ GEOFF HOON MP, the former minister of state at the Lord Chancellor's Department, was moved to the Foreign Office in last week's government reshuffle. The new LCD junior minister is KEITH VAZ MP. Vaz is married to LAW SOCIETY council member MARIA FERNANDES. Hoon had been scheduled to make a speech at the opening of the SOLEX event at the Barbican in June.

■ COMBINED SOLUTIONS GROUP (CSG) is reported to be negotiating with case management specialist SOLICITEC to take on a franchise to distribute the company's SolCase software.

■ Systems integrators TIKIT say that despite the supposed benefits of integrated PMS products, such as KEYSTONE and RESOLUTION, sales of the CARPE DIEM time recording system are running at record levels in the UK.

## SHAW'S MOVING TO 32-BIT FORMS

Electronic legal forms supplier Shaw & Sons (01322 621127) has commenced development work on a 32-bit version of its *Legal Forms on Disk* series. Currently the forms are only available in 16-bit format but the company hopes to be able to ship the new version by the winter. These will be provided as a free update to existing users.

Shaw's describes itself as a legal publisher rather than a software house and characterises the market - Oyez, Laserform and Peapod - as comprising "those who compete on quality and those who compete on price". Although Shaw's puts itself in the "quality" camp with Oyez, it also reckons its products are more competitively priced.

## SOLICITEC OPENS "PARTNER" PROGRAMME

Solicitec Legal Systems has appointed Paul Wyatt as its new "partner" programme manager with responsibility for developing collaborative relationships with third-party software suppliers. Solicitec's case management software can already be fully integrated with the SOS accounts system, as well as DOCS Open and Oyez electronic forms.

## NO SUCH THING AS FREE SOFTWARE ?

**Continued from front page**

Having not yet been able to test VPM - Lyle described it as being in the final beta stage - the Insider is not in a position to assess either its quality or scope but it does seem that an awful lot of key functionality falls within the chargeable 10 percent element of the software.

From the information available on the web site, Visual Portfolio Manager is designed to offer broadly the same "generic" case management functionality of products such as Amicus Attorney. (The accounting side of VPM is not intended to comply with Solicitors Accounts Rules.) VIMS claims the software will "change the face of the legal office" and is clearly targeting it at the Laserform/DPS market where systems fall into the £750 to £1500 price bracket.

That said, VIMS' marketing approach borders on the naive. Why the *Solicitors Journal*? The company also appears unaware that Lindon Wood already sells case management software with a £150 entry level price. Lyle was even (and maybe still is) planning to gate-crash SOLEX, standing outside the Barbican dishing out free CDs. And, the constant slugging-off of the competition - according to Lyle "There is a lot of b\*\*\*\*\*s talked about legal software, most of it is rubbish and over-priced," - may not be the best way to win friends and influence people.

<http://www.vimsltd.com>

## LAWTECH ADOPTS GOLD STANDARD

Lawtech Services has become the first - and so far still the only - supplier in the UK legal market to be accredited as a "gold partner" by Citrix, the developer of the WinFrame and MetaFrame "thin client" approach to computer networking.

Lawtech managing director Mike Sharples says that while thin client technology is not right for everyone, it is becoming increasingly popular among small-to-medium sized firms, with some practices realising annual savings of between £25,000 and £100,000 compared with the cost of conventional PC networks. Recent Lawtech thin client deals include projects with Sheridans, Lee Bolton & Lee and Royds Treadwell in London and Foster Wells in Aldershot.

## ONE MILLION WANT LINUX

Enthusiasts of the new Linux son-of-Unix operating system might like to note that since it went live in late December, over one million computer users have downloaded copies of the free WordPerfect 8.0 for Linux version of the well known wordprocessing package from the Corel web site.

Corel say the 23.6 Mb file is currently being downloaded at a rate of 60,000 copies a week worldwide. There is now also a facility to download the application from the AOL UK software library. Corel will be launching a Linux version of its new WordPerfect 2000 software later this year.

■ WordPerfect clearly still has its fans within the legal wordprocessing world. Among the latest WordPerfect 6.1 to 8.0 upgrades to have been won by Corel UK are orders from Withers (280 seats), Wedlake Bell (200 seats), Finers (145 seats), Edward Lewis (200 seats), Munday's (100 seats), Toller Hales & Collcutt (150 seats) and Harvey Ingram Owston (180 seats). All the firms have taken the Freedom corporate licence option which includes a free upgrade to WordPerfect 2000 later this year.

In addition, the European Court of Justice has just decided to standardise on WordPerfect, a key factor in their decision being WordPerfect's XML file format capability.

## BIG ON THE TYNE

Legal IT consultancy Grant Thornton has just completed a series of consultancy projects for three major Tyneside-based firms. Based on consultant Andrew Levison's advice, Ward Hadaway has ordered a CMS open system, Dickinson Dees is replacing its old Usher system with LawSoft from Pilgrim, and Crutes has ordered a case and practice management system from Norwel.

Crutes partner Tim Wallis said one of the key factors behind the choice of the Norwel system, which will run under Windows NT with a SQL Server database on Compaq hardware, was it could accommodate "task based billing where fees are recorded and billed within phases relevant to the type of work, within the agreed client terms."

## DEALS AND TENDERS

■ LAWRENCE GRAHAM is in the closing stages of migrating from its 15 year-old AIA accounts system (WILDE SAPTE is another AIA user) to RESOLUTION SYSTEMS' NT-based FirmWare PMS product. Fee earners are already using the FirmTime time recording element and the final phase will see the accounts suite go live within the next few weeks. FRESHFIELDS has also gone live with FirmWare however it is running CARPE DIEM on the desktop.

■ PALSER GROSSMAN is to install new case and practice management software based on the AXXIA Arista system. GOWER BUSINESS SYSTEMS is working with Axxia to create a WAN linking the firm's offices in Cardiff, Swansea, Bristol, Southampton and Birmingham.

■ COUNTY OFFICE SYSTEMS (0121 248 7878) has won a contract to install a new NOVELL network and Pentium PCs at the Wolverhampton, Bridgnorth and Telford offices of MANBY & STEWARD.

■ AIM has knocked out TECHNOLOGY FOR BUSINESS to win orders in two recent competitive tenders. Both SMITH & GRAHAM in Hartlepool and HAROLD G WALKER in Bournemouth have decided to replace their existing TFB software with new AIM Evolution client server practice management systems.

■ After spending just over two years looking around the IT market, MARSH FERRIMAN & CHEALE has decided to spend £110,000 buying a new practice and case management system, including hardware and associated services, from VIDESS COMPUTER SYSTEMS. The system will support the firm's litigation work at its Littlehampton office and its private client practice in Worthing.

■ McGRIGOR DONALD in Glasgow and SINCLAIR ROCHE & TEMPERLEY in London are the latest firms to order the iManage document management system from UK distributor CSE. McGrigor Donald say the deal came down to a two horse race between iManage and OPEN TEXT's Livelink.

## RIVALS GUNNING FOR ARCHBOLD

In what appears to be a blatant attempt to challenge the status of Sweet & Maxwell's *Archbold* as the leading authority for criminal lawyers in England & Wales, legal publishers Butterworths and the Blackstone Press have teamed up to produce a new web-based criminal law information service called *Crime Online*.

The service, which is due to launch on 8th June, combines the narrative of *Blackstone's Criminal Practice* with case reports and legislative materials from Butterworths. The new service will also include a current awareness facility providing next day case reports, e-mail updates plus commentary and analysis by a team of expert contributors.

Describing the project as "a quality all-encompassing criminal law Internet service", Butterworths say one of the key features of *Crime Online* is the advanced searching and hypertext links between the case, narrative and legislative material as this should substantially speed up research time.

The pre-launch price for a single user annual subscription to the service is £350. For a free 7-day trial call Karen Farman on 0845 608 1188.

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## 200 CANDLES ON THE CAKE

Today (Wednesday 26th May) Sweet & Maxwell is holding a gala dinner at the Guildhall in London to celebrate the 200th anniversary of the company's entry into the legal publishing world in 1799. Butterworths did not open for business until 20 years later in 1819.

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### ■ INSIDER FREE-ZINES

Legal Technology Insider publishes a series of free current awareness e-mail newsletters (free-zines) providing news and comment on legal practice. The titles are: *E-Business + Law*, *Watching Brief Online* (local government law) and the *Litigation Support Digital Newsletter*. To subscribe send a note of your e-mail address to: [info@legaltechnology.co.uk](mailto:info@legaltechnology.co.uk)

## PDF - A TECHNOLOGY WHOSE TIME IS NIGH ?

At a recent seminar a Dibb Lupton Alsop litigator was heard to comment that his ideal gadget would be a photocopier that had three buttons on it. One for printing copies of a document, another for faxing them to a remote location and a third for converting the document into a PDF file. Good news, the first machines to offer this level of functionality will be hitting the UK this summer.

### ■ XEROX DOCUMENT CENTERS

The next few months look like being interesting times for Xerox. Last week the company announced an alliance with Microsoft. One of the main changes this will bring will be the introduction of Windows NT Server into its top of the range Document Center multi-function copiers and printers (or "mopiers") whereas currently these machines have Unix engines. This will, in turn, allow them to be integrated with and directly support a wider range of office software applications - Copittrak's NT-based LaserTrak cost recovery system is one of the first to have been signed up.

Later this summer the company will also be launching a new range of multi-function mopiers supporting network printing, LAN faxing, scanning, walk-up (ie conventional) photocopying, password protected secure printing, printing to and from a disk, e-mail and scanning to PDF files.

### ■ HEWLETT PACKARD DIGITAL SENDER

Whereas Xerox has opted for the fully integrated approach to mopiers, Hewlett Packard has tended to produce discrete devices. This situation has now changed with the launch of the company's new HP 9100C Digital Sender, which effectively provides a multi-function box that sits on a network between copier/printer and fax/scanners.

UK product manager David Smith says the system's underlying strategy is to provide a gateway or bridge allowing the user to take monochrome or colour paper documents and communicate them to anywhere in the world via fax (the 9100C supports most of the popular legal LAN fax systems including Hexar, RightFax and Zetafax) or electronic mail. Alternatively, the document can be copied in the normal way or saved as a PDF file for archiving or litigation support purposes. 9100C prices start at £2500.

<http://www.digitalsender.hp.com>

■ With the PDF portable document file format gaining ever greater acceptance in the American legal world - PDF has been selected as the electronic filing standard for federal courts, with nine districts already online for bankruptcy and civil litigation work - there is now a free webzine (web-based newsletter) dedicated to the subject. Called PurePDF, the latest issue looks at the respective strengths and weaknesses of HTML, XML and PDF as document publishing standards.

<http://www.purepdf.com>

## LITIGATION SUPPORT NEW TOYS FOR BOYS

The litigation support sector of the market has regularly produced some of the more innovative legal software systems and this year is no exception.

### ■ BOVY TECHNOLOGIES - APOLLO EXPRESS

Bovy Technologies (0171 269 6900 - NB this is a new phone number) will be launching two new versions of its Apollo litigation support software at next month's SOLEX event at the Barbican. The Hermes Edition is a top of the range knowledge management product for larger organisations needing to view files created by a wide range of current and legacy applications. Server licences are in the £25,000 price bracket.

The second product - Apolloexpress - is an entry-level litigation support system intended for small firms or those needing a stand-alone application. Prices start at £750 - Bovy can also supply the software bundled with PC and scanner hardware.

### ■ DIGITAL EVIDENCE PRESENTATION

Smith Bernal (0171 404 1400) has obtained exclusive UK, Hong Kong and Australian distribution rights for DOAR Communications' Digital Evidence Presentation System. Although DEPS, which is already in use in a number of US courts, is compatible with most presentation, document management, video playback and videoconferencing systems, it can also be used to display, enlarge and highlight conventional paper-based evidence, thus providing parties with a level playing field on which to present evidence in a courtroom.

The basic DEPS unit is a portable cabinet the size of a conventional speaker's lectern that is ready-cabled to support rack-mounted PCs and video units, plus multiple digital and video inputs and up to 14 display outputs.

<http://www.smithbernal.com>

<http://www.doar.com>

### ■ RINGTAIL SOLUTIONS - LANTERN

Will Melbourne-based Ringtail Solutions (+61 (3) 9650 5778) be the next antipodean software company to take the UK legal market by storm? Ringtail has developed a system called Lantern that appears to bridge the gap between conventional litigation support software and due diligence, knowledge management and archiving products. Lantern is based on a browser interface and, according to Ringtail, its design provides a "document centric" view of any case or matter via extensive use of hypertext links.

Australian mega-firm Blake Dawson Waldron is already using the system, UK litigation support specialists who have seen Lantern say it has the edge on many comparable US and UK products and there are rumours that Clifford Chance is currently evaluating it.

<http://www.ringtail.com.au>

## LITIGATION SUPPORT NEWS IN BRIEF

### ■ ELLIOTT SLONE CRY FOUL

Elliott Slone director Howard Slone says his own company, along with others operating at the "quality" end of the litigation support market, are currently facing unfair competition from scanning and coding bureaux who are ignoring the provisions of the EU Working Time Directive by paying casual and contract paralegal staff in cash rather than giving them their statutory entitlement under the new regulations.

Slone estimates that the Directive increases the cost of employment by around seven to eight percent, thus giving a distinct price advantage to companies that do not play by the rules.

However Slone also adds that most law firms could substantially reduce their litigation support costs if they prepared and planned projects further in advance, rather than leaving them to the last minute, when they then incur premium rate charges for overnight and weekend work.

### ■ BERNAL SAY WE PLAY FAIR

At a recent meeting with the Insider, Smith Bernal group managing director Adrian Carey said there was no foundation to the rumours spread by some competitors to the effect that the company only won so much business because it resorted to dirty tricks.

This follows the news that earlier this year the Lord Chancellor's Department awarded Smith Bernal a significant increase in the number of courts it is contracted to provide with reporting services. Previously it covered the Central Criminal Court contract, which included 30 courts, but from 1st April this was increased to 85 London area courts.

"Although we have a good working relationship with other 'quality' reporting services," said Carey, "there are some companies who cannot accept that the reason we beat them is because we can offer a higher standard of service. We are not cheap, in fact sometimes our prices are higher, but we do set an industry standard for reporting services that some competitors struggle to even approach."

## WEB NEWS IN BRIEF

### ■ SO THAT'S HOW IT'S DONE

The London office of Malleons Stephen Jaques has gone live with a Keystone practice management system. Staff keep in touch and exchange data with the head office in Australia using virtual private networking over the Internet to a Citrix Metaframe server in Sydney.

### ■ DOWNLOAD iMAIL TRIAL

MAZ Technologies has now been granted US Department of Commerce Bureau of Export Administration approval to sell its iMail e-mail encryption software on a global basis. The product is compatible with DOCS Open and a free 21-day evaluation copy of the software can now be downloaded from the web. The registration code is: mahne - all lower case with no spaces and ignore any warnings about the software only being available in the USA and Canada.

<http://www.maztechnology.com/files/>

### ■ URL IN A TWIST

Oops, we transposed part of the URL for Berg Kaprow Lewis in the last issue. The correct web site address is:

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

### ■ ANOTHER SUPPLIER ONLINE

Select Legal Systems has launched a web site. Along with the usual sales bump, the site includes a feature on Y2K and links to sites of legal interest. Not bad but the visitor counter is a mistake.

<http://www.sellegal.demon.co.uk>

### ■ 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 e-mail 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 e-mail [info@legaltechnology.co.uk](mailto:info@legaltechnology.co.uk)

## SPAMS AND HOAXES JUST DON'T PANIC

Just for a change there is yet another e-mail virus hoax doing the rounds and clogging up the Internet's arteries as panicking lawyers forward warning messages to everyone in their address books.

The latest warns of a virus lurking in an e-mail message headed "It takes guts to say Jesus". Sorry, but you have all been had, it was just another hoax.

With nine out of ten of the most frequently reported viruses in the first three months of this year being macro viruses (including Laroux which infects Excel macros) best advice still has to be: do not open or admit on to your network any DOC, EXE or RTF files attached to unsolicited e-mail messages from unknown senders before you have either run them through an up-to-date virus scanning program or otherwise verified their contents. If you are still worried, just trash the message - after all why would a complete stranger want to send you a file?

■ Meanwhile news has just come in from the United States of an e-mail based hoax involving a mass spamming (distribution of junk e-mail) and fraud. The alleged defendant company - the Federal Trade Commission has filed a fraud suit - sent out thousands of e-mails warning that a purchase of US\$ 899 had been accidentally charged against the recipients' credit cards and offering access to a customer service help line number. Unfortunately, when the customers called the number, they were stung with a premium tariff connection to a pay-per-call telephone sex line service on the Caribbean island of Dominica.

## EQUITRAC GETS WEB LOOK

Equitrac has launched System 4 Web X, a new extension that allows users to edit cost recovery transactions remotely, via web browsers, from anywhere on the Internet.

## COOL SITE AT MANCHES

In contrast to the last law firm site the Insider reviewed - Speechly Bircham's unwanted blast from the past, developed by Waterlow Internet Services - this week's offering from Manches provides an object lesson on what a good legal web site should look like in 1999.

It has a clean, cool, quick and intuitive design, which was handled by E-marketing. You do not need a magnifying glass to read the small print, there are no unnecessary graphics or frames and it contains a lot of useful information about the firm and its areas of legal practice. One nice touch is the fact that when you place a mouse pointer over a hyperlink, it automatically pulls up a plain English explanation, so you do not waste your time jumping to irrelevant sections of the site.

<http://www.manches.com>

<http://www.e-marketing.com>

## LAWNET ADDS SPIN TO FREESERVE DEBATE

LawNet, the 60-firm-strong grouping of independent solicitors' practices, has now provided its own spin on the recent launch of the Freeserve Desktop Lawyer service on the Internet.

LawNet managing director Duncan Finlyson says that while he has some reservations about the concept of a latent legal market - his view is that such a market does exist but is probably not PC based and so will only truly evolve when the next generation of interactive digital TVs start delivering web access to the couch potatoes in the living room - he firmly believes that no sensible law firm can afford to ignore the threats presented by the Internet.

"The Internet is moving so rapidly that it seems that by the time you understand the implications of one new development, the window of opportunity is already closing. It may be too early to predict what will be the most viable business model for online legal services but in the meantime we are going to explore every opportunity on behalf of our LawNet members."

As for the zero-sum issue of whether online legal services providers will merely win work at the expense of conventional High Street firms, Finlyson's view is that he does not really care as long as LawNet members will be among those in a position to benefit.

■ Finlyson has also provided a little more explanation about the apportionment of responsibilities for the support services that back-up Freeserve Desktop Lawyer.

If a member of the public has a technical query about which Rapidocs legal template to download or needs help to complete a document - typically because they are unfamiliar with the legal terminology - their first call is to the legally qualified staff at the Rapidocs call centre.

As part of their brief, if call centre staff recognise this is not a simple query (as a rule of thumb because of the amount of time it is taking to resolve) they will recommend that the caller should not progress any further until they have consulted an independent solicitor.

This is where the referrals service to LawNet members comes in. Callers will be referred to their geographically closest LawNet firm, who will respond within four hours, during normal office hours. However, from this point on the matter will be handled in exactly the same way as any other conventional non-online case, with the firm running a conflict of interest search and supplying the usual letters covering terms & conditions and client care.

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## NEW DOMAIN WATCH SERVICE

The French telecoms group Questel-Orbit has launched a new domain name/trademark monitoring service for intellectual property lawyers. Called NameWatcher, it is available in both English and French language versions.

<http://www.namewatcher.com>

## LEGAL TECHNOLOGY DIARY DATES

■ **IT SOLUTIONS '99** - A series of product promotional seminars being organised by Sanderson Systems. The next two are 8th June in Bristol and 13th July in London. Admission is free, call Lisa Quinn of Sanderson on 0121 359 4861 for more details.

■ **SOLICITORS & LEGAL OFFICE EXHIBITION** - Annual legal IT exhibition at the Barbican in London which this year sees an enlarged seminar section. Opens on Tuesday 15th June at 9.30 am, closes on Thursday 17th at 5.00 pm. On Wednesday the show is open until 7.30 pm. Admission is free. For pre-registration tickets call 07000 763896.

■ **NORWEL'S DAY OF DIFFERENCE** - Norwel's annual mixture of entertainment and seminars at the Chiswell Street Brewery in London on Tuesday 15th June. This year's speakers include Andrew Levison of Grant Thornton and David Marshall of Anthony Gold Lerman & Muirhead. For details call 0171 9583 0363.

■ **THE POWER OF VOICE** - One day seminar on Thursday 16th June, at the Highland Hotel in Stirling, looking at the role of speech recognition and networked digital dictation systems. Starts 10.00 am. For details call Sandra Smith on 0171 878 5202.

■ **AVENUE LEGAL SEMINARS** - Series of free seminars around England to promote Avenue's latest software, including its new Woolf-compliant case management system. For details call Linda Moore on 01489 609010.

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# SOFTWARE UPGRADES

## ■ WOOLF AMENDMENTS ON WAY

Legal publisher Information for Lawyers (IFL) will be publishing the first update to its *infolaw/cpr* CD-Rom, which contains an electronic version of the new "Woolf" Civil Procedure Rules, in early June. The update, which will be available to subscribers online as well as on CD, will include the CPR amendments expected this week along with the new Commercial Court and Chancery guides. IFL's update service is only available to subscribers however initial copies of the CD (which includes the extensive last minute CPR amendments of 19th April) is available free of charge. For details phone 0181 878 3033.

http://www.infolaw.co.uk

## ■ TRUST AND PROBATE CALCULATIONS

Excelsior LawDesk (01273 494978) has launched the 1999 upgrades to its FormDesk software for trust and probate practitioners. Trust & Estate Tax '99 (£235 + VAT for first user) calculates the 1999 Trust & Estate Tax Return (SA900). Residuary Income Pack '99 (£120 + VAT for first user) calculates the new Form 922 for 1998/9 with a linked version of the FICO worksheet plus estate income Form R185. Both programs run on an Excel spreadsheet.

## COMPUTER LORE

### ■ MEOW, GIVE THAT MAN SOME MILK

One of the cattier exchanges of insults between legal IT suppliers occurred in Leeds the other day when two salesmen from rival companies were discussing the promotional materials they were ordering for next month's SOLEX exhibition at the Barbican. The first salesman boasted that his company's mouse mats were of a higher quality than those being ordered by the other supplier. Quick as a flash the second salesman replied: "But why do your users need mouse mats when they are still running character-based applications on Wyse dumb terminals?"

Talking of promotional gimmicks, Linklaters has been dishing out a novel liquid-filled mouse mat to plug the latest additions to its Blue Flag service. A cross between a lava lamp and a miniature water bed, it even has tiny little flags (geddit ?) floating around its interior. Just a pity the tactile sensation of using the mat is akin to resting your hand on a plate of raw liver.

### ■ DON'T EVEN ASK

The last few weeks have seen a growing number of PR agencies, headhunters, CPD event organisers and other members of the living dead requesting permission to use the Legal Technology Insider mailing list. Don't even ask. We do not sell, lend or give our mailing lists to anyone, at any price. The same strict privacy policy also applies to the e-mail address lists of subscribers to our e-zines.