

CHARLES CHRISTIAN'S

LEGAL TECHNOLOGY INSIDER

THE SOURCE FOR INDEPENDENT LEGAL TECHNOLOGY NEWS, COMMENT AND ANALYSIS

AXXIA TOPS PMS CHART

New data compiled by Legal Technology Insider reveals that among the 300 largest law firms in the UK, just five IT suppliers dominate the practice management systems field, accounting for nearly 60 percent of the market between them, with Axxia alone taking a 25 percent share.

The top five (number of sites in brackets) are Axxia (74), Elite (31), AIM (28) and CMS and Norwel (18 each). Next come Miles 33 (16) and Pilgrim (13) followed by Avenue, Resolution, Sanderson, TFB and Videss with 8 sites each. Then come Keystone, Linetime and TMA with 4 sites each.

The PMS needs of the remaining 50 firms in the top 300 are addressed by 18 other suppliers, making a total of 33 vendors in all serving this market. There were also 15 sites running bespoke software. Rankings are based on the number of sites, not the number of seats or value of deals.

ACCESS TO JUSTICE SCHEME TO PILOT IN TELFORD

The Lord Chancellor's Department, in conjunction with Professor Stephen Molyneux's team at the University of Wolverhampton, is to run a pilot project in Telford to test some of the technologies outlined in last year's *civil justice* consultation paper as ways of providing the general public with wider access to the justice and legal systems.

The pilot is scheduled to start in March 2000 and will offer web-based explanatory information about the justice system plus downloadable court forms, backed up by audio and video links, through a network of dedicated kiosks at the town hall and central library, plus PCs located in the Citizens Advice Bureau and one local firm of solicitors. For security reasons, the downloadable forms will be in PDF file format.

Professor Molyneux suggests that if the pilot runs according to plan, it would be technically feasible to roll out the service on a nationwide basis "within five years". He also believes that along with kiosks and PCs, interactive digital television will become a key delivery mechanism.

Y2K - JUST 23 DAYS TO GO

With three weeks to go until the Millennium weekend, all law firm Y2K compliance projects should now be complete. But, this still leaves the problem of how to manage the actual roll-over period itself and in this issue of the Insider we suggest some last minute Y2K tips and precautions.

The last Y2K checklist - ever, see page 5

LAW SOCIETY LAB MEETING WELCOMED

Last week's round-table meeting, organised by the English Law Society to provide legal IT suppliers with an opportunity to meet with representatives from the Legal Aid Board to discuss the IT specifications for proposed LAFQAS franchise quality standard, seems to have been a success.

Thirty suppliers were expected but in fact representatives from 35 companies turned up. The LAB said it would in future try to give suppliers advance notice of any proposed changes in the LAFQAS requirements. And there are now plans to hold further meetings on a quarterly basis.

As one supplier put it: "This looks like the start of a useful dialogue between the Legal Aid Board, the Law Society and IT suppliers." The Law Society's Gary Day (0171 316 5533) will initially act as the meeting's coordinator.

SEE YOU IN 2000

This is the final issue of Legal Technology Insider this side of the Millennium but we will be back on the 19th January for what is expected to be an exciting year as law firms, free at last of Y2K worries, begin to focus on e-commerce and the online delivery of legal services.

The Insider will be introducing a number of new features next year, including a regular survey of legal IT buying trends. In addition, the Insider web site is receiving a face-lift and will carry additional services to ensure it remains the definitive online source for legal technology information.

Year 2000 IT events planner, see page 7

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www.legalttechnology.co.uk

NEWS IN BRIEF

■ Legal IT supplier ALTERNATIVE TEAM has introduced a new ActiveX link for its "The Time" legal aid time recording system. One of the benefits is it allows case details to be selected directly from within Word wordprocessing documents. BRUCE ARGUE of Alternative (0207 700 2369) would be interested in hearing from prospective dealers or application partners wanting to integrate The Time with document assembly, document management, case management, voice recognition or legal accounts systems.

■ Rapid expansion, including the appointment of 14 extra staff this year alone, has compelled SOLICITORS OWN SOFTWARE to move its head office into larger premises. The new address is 2 Widcomebe Parade, Bath BA2 4JT. The new phone number is 01225 787700.

■ EDWINA VEITCH-CLARKE, who was the IT manager at CLARKE WILLMOTT CLARKE until the firm's recent decision to outsource its entire IT operations, has now joined AXXIA as a project manager.

■ Liverpool law firm JST MACKINTOSH, which earlier this autumn set up an IT subsidiary, JST COMBINED SOLUTIONS, say the new company is performing well and has already won several customers for its web site design services.

■ DONNE MILEHAM & HADDOCK is to sponsor the new e-commerce category in next year's Kent Business Awards.

■ As well as its work with a number of KEYSTONE sites, PROFESSIONAL PLUS (0171 713 8833) has now also completed implementation and training projects for WARNERS in Kent on a PILGRIM system and the London offices of CADWALADER WICKERSHAM & TAFT on PC DOCS systems.

<http://www.professional-plus.co.uk>

■ TOWELLS in Wakefield, HERBERT MALLAM GOWERS in Oxford and COLEMAN TILLEY TARRANT SUTTON in Kingston have all upgraded their existing accounts software to the latest NT products from SANDERSON SYSTEMS.

ELECTRONIC LEGAL INFO SLAMMED

According to the results of a new survey just published by BIALL, despite the millions of pounds being spent by the legal publishing industry on the development of digital titles and online information services, in many law firms conventional hardcopy sources are still more popular than their electronic alternatives.

Although some of the law librarians responding to the survey accepted that electronic resources offered valuable benefits in terms of enabling complicated searches to be carried out efficiently, others still believed information retrieval was both easier and quicker using hard copy.

One complaint was that it remains easier to browse backwards and forwards through printed works than it does to view the same text on a screen. And, according to another respondent: "Why load a CD-Rom and look through a table of contents or the index when you can twice as quickly go to the shelf?"

The study also uncovered widespread concern about the electronic publishing strategies of legal publishers. It was felt that publishers were restricting choice by pushing users towards particular formats, such as online, at the expense of alternative platforms, such as CD and print. But by far the biggest complaint related to the cost of electronic products, with publishers accused of unfair pricing schemes that discriminated between users. Or, as the report puts it: "Haggling now appears to form part of the role of the librarian in selecting information sources."

■ *Law & Order: Trends in Legal Information Provision*, by Shona McTavish and Kathryn Ray of the University of Northumbria. Published by British & Irish Association of Law Librarians and sponsored by Sweet & Maxwell.

CARPE DIEM FOR PALM PILOT

Sage US this week announced the launch of TimeReporter, a new version of its popular Carpe Diem electronic time sheet software specifically designed for the Palm 111/V and Palm Pilot handheld computing platform. The software also takes advantage of Palm's HotSync technology to simplify the exchange and updating of data with the user's desktop systems. TimeReporter will retail for US\$ 130 per individual licence.

BRISTOL SWINGS FOR SCL

The Society for Computers & Law's *Towards 2000* conference and exhibition in Bristol last week proved a popular event, with nearly 100 delegates and a dozen trade exhibitors attending. Although the delegates represented a broad swathe of the legal profession, everyone from local sole practitioners through to major City and regional firms, all showed great interest in the move towards e-commerce and the online delivery of legal services.

KEYSTONE IN PROFIT

Keystone Software has confounded critics by announcing its first ever profits - £17,000 for the six months to 30th September 1999, compared with a loss £1.2 million for the same period last year. The company has also reported a 278 percent increase in interim turnover to £2.4 million and announced orders by two more large Australian firms: Allen, Allen Hemsley and Arthur Robinson Hedderwicks.

■ In other developments, last Friday Stephenson Harwood announced it had gone live with Keystone in its London and Madrid offices. The firm anticipates Keystone's multi currency facilities will help support its international client base by streamlining foreign exchange transactions.

■ Keystone has extended its network of strategic alliances by signing an OEM agreement with Seagate, the developers of the popular Crystal reports package. Seagate software will be a component of Keystone's new KeyInfo business information module. The company has also launched a DOCS Open integration module called KeyDocs.

CPD FOR LEGAL IT TRAINING

Computer services company FMI (0171 432 3281) has just received CPD accreditation to run courses training lawyers to use Keystone's practice management system.

FMI, which has already organised training for Keystone users at DJ Freeman and Stephenson Harwood, can also offer courses on a range of office applications, including Crystal, Microsoft Office and WordPerfect. Another arm of FMI supplies PC hardware, with its legal market customers including Farrer & Co, Masons and Barlow Lyde & Gilbert.

VALID IN COURT

The Serious Fraud Office is currently running litigation support and document retrieval software, supplied by Valid Information Systems, in conjunction with videoconference and courtroom presentation technology supplied by Marcom, in a fraud case being heard in Court 16 at the Old Bailey. The system is also being used to take video evidence from overseas witnesses, with the court sitting in the late afternoon/early evening on video testimony days to cater for the different time zones.

MORE MACROS FOR WORD

Wordprocessing training and support specialist Integrated Office Solutions (01666 826225) is now shipping InterAlia, a new suite of law office-oriented macros for Microsoft Word. The macros, which are written in VBA, include facilities to handle paragraph numbering and house styles, create attendance notes and access precedent libraries.

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

■ Other suppliers offering legal WP training and macro development are: Kutana (01235 22744) - Word training, and LegalDocs (0181 325 8454) - WordPerfect macros.

NEWS IN BRIEF

■ ECLIPSE LEGAL SYSTEMS, which has begun shipping its new ProCLAIM case management software, has moved into larger premises at Kelso House, 11 Burnett Street, Little Germany, Bradford BD1 5BJ. The phone number is 001274 704100. The offices were formally opened by DIARMUID McKEOWN, the senior partner of McKEOWNS, which has been running Eclipse software products in its St Albans and Northern Ireland offices for the past seven years.

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

■ ANDREA BEER has joined AIM as the company's new marketing manager. Beer, who has a degree in marketing studies and has previously worked on both IT and Internet marketing projects, will be based at AIM's head office in Hull.

■ QUILL COMPUTERS' PINPOINT computerised legal accounts bureau has just won its 50th law firm customer.

■ In the United States, IKON OFFICE SOLUTIONS has agreed to pay US\$111 million to settle shareholder class action lawsuits that accused IKON of inflating its share price by making false financial statements. IKON will also cooperate with the plaintiffs' lawyers Berger & Montague in ongoing litigation against the company's auditors Ernst & Young.

■ FRANKLINS WALKER BUSINESS SYSTEMS (01908 265533) can now offer law firms CPD points accreditation on all training courses associated with its EpitomeOMS office and document management software. The Insider understands that SAYER MOORE & CO in West London - the senior partner is current Law Society president ROBERT SAYER - has now ordered Epitome. Other recent orders include HARROWELL SHAFTOE, which has installed the system in all three of its offices in York.

■ BYTEDRIVE reports that after an initially slow start, sales of its low-cost Virtual Portfolio Manager client and matter system have now taken off, with 25 sales made during the past 12 days.

<http://www.vimsltd.com>

GET A PRACTICE - GET ON THE WEB

Next week (15th December) sees the publication of *The Internet: Business Strategies for Law Firms* by Masons' lawyer Andrew Terrett.

It is a comprehensive and easy to read book that covers just about everything a law firm should ever need to know about putting its practice on the web, from devising a basic online marketing strategy through to legal e-commerce, by way of the practicalities of web site development, intranets and knowledge management. There is also a handy appendix that explains online security, as well as the various component services and technologies now making up the Internet.

Terrett's book is easily the best Internet guide to date for lawyers. If your firm is serious about moving into the digital age - and it should be - buy this book.

The Internet: Business Strategies for Law Firms - Law Society Publishing (ISBN: 1 85328 582 X), hardback, 240 pages, price £29.95. Also available from Marston Book Services (01235 465656).

LEGAL PUBLISHING NEWS IN BRIEF

■ SOFTWARE COPYRIGHT

Butterworths has just published the fourth edition of *Bainbridge: Software Copyright Law* by David Bainbridge, (ISBN: 0 406 92184 9), price £50. The new edition takes account of key recent developments including the EU Database Directive - the book carries the full text, plus cases such as Microsoft -v- Electro Wide and Creative Technology -v- Aztec.

■ ADDRESS DISK IMPRACTICAL

Delia Venables, the co-author of the new edition of *Researching the Legal Web* (Butterworths) has been in touch to say the reason the book is not accompanied by a disk containing hyperlinks to all the web sites mentioned in the narrative is because the URL addresses change so regularly the disk would be out of date within months. The sites can however be accessed via the authors' own web sites.

LEGAL TECHNOLOGY MARKETING AWARDS

Legal software may not be the sexiest of technologies but that is no excuse for the frequently uninspired standard of legal IT marketing seen in the UK. To redress the situation the Insider has launched a series of annual awards both to recognise those suppliers who have made the effort and to encourage others to try harder.

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

■ BEST ADVERTISING CAMPAIGN 1999

Winner - Quill Computer Systems for its "Quill IT" ad campaign, primarily in the *Law Society Gazette*. Instead of dull explanatory product-oriented ads, Quill opted for a series featuring intriguing abstract images. The agency was Holdenedy @ The Shed.

■ BEST CONFERENCE PRESENTATION 1999

Winner - Kaye Sycamore of Keystone Solutions for a presentation on "Sensitive New Age Practice Management Systems" at the Gleneagles Legal IT Forum in October that avoided turning into the usual glorified product plug.

■ BEST USE OF EXHIBITION STAND 1999

Winner - Lawyers Online for its Internet Cafe feature at the National Legal Office Exhibition at the Birmingham NEC in March. The staff were enthusiastic and, unlike some cyber cafes we have seen, it actually linked to the Internet. The stand was built by Lawyers Online and Nationwide.

■ BEST MARKETING CAMPAIGN 1999

Winner - Axxia Systems for a range of promotional activities, including exhibitions, PR, advertising, seminars and sponsorship, that consistently kept them in full view of the market. The agency was Vousden Levick Publicity.

■ BEST NEW PRODUCT LAUNCH 1999

Winner - Axxia Systems for the launch of its CaseBrief shrink-wrapped case management system at the SOLEX North exhibition at the Manchester GMEX in October. It was not vapourware and it was a genuine new product, as distinct from just another iteration of an existing system.

■ BEST USE OF ONLINE MEDIA 1999

Winner - Solicitec for abandoning the conventional print-format corporate/customer newsletter (as well as saving a few trees) in favour of an HTML e-zine. Called SolNotes, it is produced entirely inhouse.

■ BEST USE OF PUBLIC RELATIONS 1999

Winner - Epoch Software/Freeserve for the July launch of the Desktop Lawyer service. The PR generated so much interest that at one stage the service was condemned on TV by the Catholic Church, thus creating even more media coverage. The agencies were Marbles and Midnight PR.

10 LAST MINUTE Y2K PRECAUTIONS

■ LEAVE TIME FOR LAST MINUTE SHOPPING

Ensure the Christmas shut-down does not leave you with inadequate stocks of essential parts and consumables, such as laser toner cartridges and paper, so you can print off hard copy versions of all relevant files and records.

■ DON'T REINTRODUCE THE BUG BY THE BACK DOOR

Ensure staff do not inadvertently reintroduce Y2K problems by continuing to use double-digit date formats in data files.

■ HAVE YOU REMEMBERED EVERYTHING ?

Are you certain there are no update disks sitting on a desk that someone has forgotten to install?

■ FREEZE THE SYSTEM AND CLEAR THE DECKS

Do not risk introducing unknown factors by installing any new or untested hardware or software before the New Year. Where possible delay or bring forward end of month, end of quarter and end of year accounting and reporting routines to minimise disruption if there are any Y2K problems.

■ ANTICIPATE CASH-FLOW PROBLEMS

Carry out end of month billing and credit control early - consider closing your books on 17 December. Some clients will have real Y2K problems, others may use it as an excuse. Either way it could cause you cash-flow problems.

■ HAVE THE STAFF BEEN CONSIDERED ?

If you staff are required over the holiday period (some firms are bringing IT staff in on Sunday 2nd January) you may need to provide transport as public services will be suspended or running on restricted timetables.

■ BACK UP - AND BACK UP AGAIN

Take multiple back-up copies of all data on fresh tapes or storage media. Verify that the back-ups are complete and ensure staff know how to reinstall data from them.

■ SWITCH OFF - OR KEEP ON RUNNING ?

Decide if you are going to switch off IT systems and risk components "blowing" when they are restarted from cold (try warming up the room before you switch them back on) or keep them running and risk the possibility of harm if there are prolonged power-cuts over the New Year period.

■ CHARGE UP THE BATTERIES

Ensure the batteries for your laptops computers and mobile phones are fully charged before the lights go out.

■ IS THERE A CONTINGENCY PLAN

Make hard copy versions of all current files, staff and client contact records, diary appointments, to-do lists and key dates for at least the first two weeks of January.

NEWS IN BRIEF

■ **CARTWRIGHTS** in Bristol this week becomes the first law firm in the UK to go live with AXXIA's new Artiion practice management system. Cartwrights will be running the software on an Informix database running across a Windows NT network. Axxia say it has a further 16 Artiion orders on its books. Meanwhile Axxia has also won its 20th order for its smaller Eiion accounts system. The order was placed by TUGHAN & CO in Belfast. To-date Eiion sales split 50:50 between existing Axxia sites upgrading from the older Kisol system and new orders.

■ **RUPERT KENDRICK** (01234 782810), who until last month was the editor of the *Legal Executive Journal*, has opened his own management consultancy service. Drawing on his own experiences as a partner in a provincial solicitors' practice, as well as the more recent completion of a masters degree in legal practice management, Kendrick will be focussing upon the strategy and training needs of law firms, including the growing role of web-based legal service delivery channels. Kendrick is also an accredited consultant for the LEXCEL and IIP quality standards schemes.

■ At last week's PRO SHARE awards ceremony recruitment consultancy **LONGBRIDGE INTERNATIONAL** won the annual award for employee share ownership schemes in smaller companies and was runner-up in the innovative private investor communications category.

■ **AVENUE LEGAL SYSTEMS** has given its web site a complete new look and moved it to a new and more memorable address. The site now also offers users a range of online support services including downloadable software updates and patches. There is also a FAQs (frequently asked questions) section.

<http://www.avenuelegal.com>

■ **BEI METASTORM** has released version 4.1 of its e-work workflow management software. New features include greater scalability, plus support for SQL Server 7.0 and Internet Explorer 5.0

<http://www.bei-metastorm.com>

WEB NEWS IN BRIEF

■ Advertising law firm THE SIMKINS PARTNERSHIP has launched the *Virtual Advertising Lawyer*, a web-based guide to advertising and marketing law. The site was developed by Hyperlink. In September Osborne Clarke launched a similar service called *MarketingLaw*.

<http://www.simkins.com/val>

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

■ CONCENTRIC SOFTWARE (01604 679393) has become the UK distributor for a new online security and anti-virus software tool called CyberSight. CRYPTIC SOFTWARE, the US developers of the new product, says CyberSight has been designed to detect all potential security violations and not just check for known viruses.

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

■ CYBERSETTLE, which describes itself as "the world's first independent online claim resolution system" has launched a Version 2.0 upgrade to its service. The enhanced system includes a simplified user interface, a redesigned web site and an expanded transaction area.

Cybersettle provides insurance companies, lawyers and claimants with 24/7 access to a secure, real-time settlement system. Participants submit three settlement offers via a confidential web site; if an offer and demand are within an agreed range - usually 30 percent or US\$5000 - the claim is instantly settled for the median amount. Cybersettle say that since the service's introduction in August 1998 it has processed more than 3,800 claims worth over US\$20 million in settlements.

<http://www.cybersettle.com>

■ LEGALMART, the Australian online legal services provider that operates the Pacific Rim equivalent of the EPOCH LegalDesktop system, is planning to open in the UK. LegalMart's CEO Peter Janssen told the Insider the company was considering a number of options, including a joint venture with Epoch, as well as directly recruiting UK lawyers as affiliates. Janssen said LegalMart is best described as a portal to instant advice.

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

LINK ALTERNATIVE TO GO AHEAD

Although legal publisher Legalease is understood to still be talking to two other organisations about a possible rescue deal for the LINK service, two former LINK users Andrew Lutley and Oystein Graham-Flatebo are definitely going ahead with a rival service called Phoenix.

The system, which uses the same FirstClass software as LINK, has successfully completed four weeks of beta testing and is now offering prospective subscribers a two months free trial. The standard annual subscription charge of £50 provides users with full e-mail, news reports and chat room facilities. There will also be an optional pay-as-you-go company information service.

Lutley says he also plans to offer additional premium services in the New Year, including an offline-reader facility and the ability to log into Phoenix via the Internet. For further details call 01372 207040/279066.

<http://www.precedents.co.uk/phoenix>

CITY FIRM BECOMES ISP

City of London law firm - Simmons & Simmons - has jumped head first into the digital ocean to become the first solicitors' practice in the UK to operate as a free Internet service provider (ISP).

The new business arm - ELEXICA - provides all the Internet access services normally associated with ISPs but has been given a novel slant to make it appeal to inhouse lawyers and law students, by giving them access to parts of the firm's know-how, including articles, client checklists, research papers and an online discussion forum.

■ COMMENT - It sounds a great idea but with most law students already having Internet access at college and over 250 other free ISP services now on offer in the UK, will there be any real take-up of the free ISP element?

<http://www.elexica.com>

FRESHFIELDS INVESTS IN E-MAIL FIREWALL

"Magic circle" law firm Freshfields has just completed the implementation of a new e-mail encryption and anti-virus firewall system supplied by Resolutions Systems (020 8665 5050). The product installed was Worldtalk's WorldSecure system, which also includes anti-spam and content filtering facilities, automatic encryption at the desktop and content-based message archiving.

■ COMMENT - With the volume of e-mail traffic in law firms increasing exponentially and legal e-commerce set to become the next big thing, the Insider predicts that firewall and online security systems will be among next year's top selling technologies.

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

LEGAL IT DIARY DATES

■ JANUARY 24, LONDON - Society for Computers & Law's annual IT awards ceremony at the Law Society Hall, Chancery Lane. Starts 18.00, for tickets and further details call Caroline Gould at the SCL on 01179 237393.

■ JANUARY 24-to-26, NEW YORK - LegalTech NY, the biggest and best legal IT show and conference in the United States. Organised by American Lawyer Media, the event takes place at the New York Hilton & Towers.

<http://www.legaltechshow.com>

■ FEBRUARY 1, LONDON - E-commerce in the Legal Marketplace. One day conference (6 CPD hours) on the commoditisation and online provision of legal services at the Chiswell Street Brewery, EC1. Speakers include Mark Boggis of Linklaters Blue Flag, Richard Cohen of Epoch and Neil Cameron on e-commerce. The event is sponsored by Legal Technology Insider and organised by Strategic Business Events (020 7733 3700). Fee £549 (+VAT) with early booking discount plus £50 discount for firms with less than 10 partners.

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

■ FEBRUARY 2 & 3, LONDON - Legal IT 2000. Brand new legal technology event that includes an exhibition with over 50 IT suppliers, four keynote conference sessions and a series of supplier seminars at the Business Design Centre, Islington. Sponsored by Legal Week, in association with Legal Technology Insider, the event focuses exclusively on legal IT issues, including the Internet. Times: 9.30am to 6.00pm Wednesday and 9.30am to 5.00pm Thursday. Admission to all parts of the event is free of charge. For tickets call Cordial on 020 7221 1155 or pre-register online.

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

■ FEBRUARY 22 & 23, LONDON - Information Systems for Lawyers. The annual Lawyer conference at the Marriott Hotel this year focusses on putting technology at the heart of the legal business. Speakers include Tim Hyman of Olswang on being more client focussed and Clare Wardle of the Post Office on what clients really want in terms of direct access to law firm know-how. Leading IT consultant Andrew Levison will also be unveiling the results of a survey Grant Thornton has conducted into the use of IT by law firms. There will also be a small exhibition. Fee £797 (+VAT) with discounts for additional delegates. (10.5 CPD hours.) To book a place call Centaur on 0207 970 4770.

■ FEBRUARY 23, BIRMINGHAM - Law Office IT Awareness Day. The Institute of Legal Cashiers' annual conference and exhibition at the Botanical Gardens, Edgbaston. From 9.30am to 5.00pm. (6 CPD hours.) Fee: members £110, non-members £140, with discounts for additional delegates. For details call the ILCA on 0181 294 2887.

■ MARCH 14-to-16, BIRMINGHAM NEC Solicitors - the National Legal Office & Legal Services Exhibition. Now in its third year, the NEC show has already become the best-attended event in the UK. The organisers say the March 2000 show, which is once again sponsored by the Law Society Gazette, will feature more IT suppliers than ever before. The exhibition is accompanied by a programme of free seminars and supplier presentations. Admission is free, to pre-register for tickets call Nationwide on 0117 907 1000 or visit the web site.

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

■ APRIL 11, LONDON - The Future for Mid-Size Firms. One day conference at Lords Cricket Ground looking at the IT and management issues facing middle tier law firms. Organised by Centaur Conferences and sponsored by Axxia Systems, more details will be reported when the full details of the programme have been finalised.

■ MAY 16-to-18, LONDON - SOLEX. The Solicitors & Legal Office Exhibition, now in its 17th year, remains at its old home the Barbican but this year moves forward in time from June to May. Along with exhibition stands, there will also be an extensive programme of seminars and supplier presentations. Admission free, to pre-register for tickets call Imark on 07000 763896 or visit the web site.

<http://www.solex.uk.com>

■ JUNE 28-to-30, LOS ANGELES - LegalTech LA, the second largest legal IT show and conference in the USA. Takes place at the Westin Bonaventure Hotel.

<http://www.legaltechshow.com>

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COMPUTER LORE

■ ANOTHER THING YOU NEVER KNEW

While some of us still worry whether the world will grind to a halt on the 31st December, legal accounts software developer Graham Irwin has been in touch to point out that Friday 19th November 1999 - that's 19/11/1999 in four-digit Y2K compliant format - was the last day to have all odd number digits until 01/01/3111. That's right, you have just seen the last "odd digit day" of your lifetime and for approximately 37 generations to come.

■ TIME FOR A CHANGE OF DIRECTION

So farewell Karen Short, who recently left litigation support specialists IGL to carve out a career in the brave new world of feng shui and interior design. And, goodbye and good luck to Penny Coatsworth - one of those rare creatures, the efficient public relations consultant - who last week resigned her long running account with legal IT supplier Solicitors Own Software to focus on PR work for stately homes, parks and gardens in southern England.

■ SEE YOU ON TOP OF THE POPS

The recording company Arista has taken out an injunction against Axxia Systems to stop them from ever selling their Arista legal accounts software in the United States. Accounts records, musical records, well its easy to confuse the two companies' products. There is however no truth in the rumour that Axxia was planning to launch its own recording label. We can see it now: Cliff Richard sings *The World's Greatest Bank Reconciliations Ever*, including the Insider's all time favourite *I lost my heart to a legal cashier*.

■ WEB TRIVIA AHOY !

Thanks to a change in a rule limiting the length of Internet domain names to just 26 characters - the new maximum is 63 - a village in Wales has just registered what is currently the longest domain name in the world. You can also use the plain Llanfair address.

<http://www.llanfairpwllgwyngyllgogerychwyrndrobwlllantsiliogogoch.com> or <http://www.llanfair.com>

■ MISSION STATEMENTS TO GO

Today no self respecting commercial practice is complete without a mission statement. However instead of spending valuable fee earning time trying to think up a snappy phrase that incorporates the words "paradigm" and "shift", try visiting the Dilbert Zone on the web, where you can now find an automatic mission statement generator that leaves no cliché unturned.

www.unitedmedia.com/comics/dilbert/career/bin/ms2/cgi

NEXT ISSUE

The next issue of Legal Technology Insider - No. 93 - will be published on Wednesday 19th January 2000.