

CHARLES CHRISTIAN'S

LEGAL TECHNOLOGY INSIDER

INDEPENDENT NEWS AND COMMENT ON LEGAL TECHNOLOGY AND NEW MEDIA

SHAKEOUT STARTS AS TFB BUYS AVENUE

The long predicted shakeout within the UK legal systems market finally got underway at the end of last week when Technology for Business announced it had purchased Avenue Legal Systems. The Avenue acquisition, which was backed by Northern Venture Managers and the Bank of Scotland, is TFB's second takeover in two months - in April it bought the Scottish legal IT specialist CB Systems.

TFB says the Avenue deal makes it the UK's largest legal IT supplier, with a combined turnover of over £12 million and a total client base approaching 1000 medium to large sized law firms. (By contrast Axxia reported a turnover of £10.3 million, Tikit £9.3 million and AIM £8.8 million for their most recent trading years.)

And there are no signs that the expansion will stop with Avenue. TFB managing director Simon Hill told the Insider the company will be "continuing to actively pursue further acquisition targets both in the UK and abroad to consolidate its position as a market leader" and hinted that the US, Irish, telecoms and knowledge management market sectors were all being investigated. TFB ultimately plans a public flotation on the main London stock market.

In terms of the consequences for Avenue users, TFB is committed to supporting the older Solomon legacy system for at least the next two years, while firms running the latest Avenue Wisdom system will in the short term benefit from TFB's extensive customer care and R&D resources. In the medium term, they will be entitled to a free upgrade to the common successor system now being developed to replace the Avenue, CB and TFB ranges.

LCD MINISTER LOSES SEAT

One of the biggest upsets in the 2001 general election was the departure of David Lock, who lost his Wyre Forest seat to an independent. Before the election Lock was a junior minister at the Lord Chancellor's Department with responsibility for court modernisation and IT projects.

LOTIES DEADLINE LOOMING

The closing date for nominations for the 2001 LOTIES - the UK's Legal Office Technology Innovation Awards - is Monday 25 June. The winners will be announced at an awards reception on 31 October at the London ExCel Centre. Copies of the nomination form can be obtained from *In Brief* magazine, email LOTIES@inbrief.co.uk

LAW SOC EXTENDS GUIDE DEADLINES

The English Law Society has extended, by one month, the closing date for applications from IT suppliers wanting to be included in the next edition of its Software Solutions Guide. The new closing date is Thursday 21 June.

In addition, during the following week the Law Society will be holding a briefing meeting for suppliers to explain its plans for the guide in more detail. The meeting will start at 11:00am on 28 June and is being held at the Law Society's Hall, Chancery Lane.

The Law Society's director of business development John Miller, who has overall responsibility for the guide, is also inviting suppliers to contact him directly (by phone 020 7320 5618 or via email john.miller@lawsociety.org.uk) if they have any queries or concerns about the project.

Miller told the Insider his number one priority was to create a guide that offered a genuinely useful service to Law Society members and that he welcomed any input from legal systems suppliers. Miller said that along with providing a Which? style buyers guide, he also wanted firms to appreciate the role of IT within the broader contexts of practice management and business development. The new guide is likely to be published in early 2002.

LEGAL TECHNOLOGY INSIDER

www.legalnewsmedia.com

Keep up with the latest developments in legal technology and new media law by visiting the Legal Technology Insider web site. • Regularly updated news • Diary of legal IT events • Virus reports • Archive of Insider back issues • Extensive search facilities • Legal Technology Solution Finder service • The Legal IT jobs board.

AXXIA JOINS LSSA

The UK's Legal Software Suppliers Association (LSSA) has received a boost to its credibility with the announcement that one of the market's largest suppliers - Axxia - has joined the ranks of the legal IT standards organisation. The addition of Axxia means that LSSA (01789-296096) members have been responsible for installing nearly 90 percent of all legal systems now in use in UK law firms.

LSSA chairman Neil Ewin said he was "delighted to welcome Axxia to LSSA. The fact that a few of the larger suppliers such as Axxia did not belong to the LSSA was sometimes used as an argument against the usefulness of the LSSA. However the widening of the LSSA agenda to include such issues as the development of XML standards has increased both its appeal and influence. We look forward to Axxia making a full contribution to the group."

Axxia managing director Stuart Holden added "It's well known Axxia refrained from joining LSSA at its inception but we feel the time is now right to become a member. We firmly believe organisations such as LSSA should provide clear benefits for customers as well as suppliers. As LSSA has matured, it has proved its worth in this respect.

"LSSA is also an ideal forum for wider issues such as the standardisation of coding used in case management systems. The need for compatibility so each firm or court's systems talk the same language is vital. It is an issue we at Axxia have long championed and through LSSA we hope to bring it to the attention of a wider audience."

ARE CONSULTANTS BEING FORCED DOWN MARKET ?

Following the Insider's recent story about the shakeout within the legal IT consultancy market, we were interested to hear from one top 10 firm that the reason they would no longer be using any of the 'traditional' consultancies for strategic work was they felt they had outgrown them.

While conceding these consultancies could still have a useful role to play providing smaller firms with strategic advice, as well as supplying implementation services to larger practices on a project by project basis, the firm said that in future it envisaged using someone of the calibre of McKinsey for consultancy as they had a better grasp of the business and management issues facing global law firms. McKinsey & Co is already undertaking high level consultancy projects for a number of leading US law firms.

■ In a separate development Tony Korn, an associate director of IT and management consultants Cornwell plc (01372 456086) has warned that many law firms may be still using Y2K compliant but otherwise "hopelessly outdated and increasingly unsupportable" technology. According to Korn "having spent large amounts of time and money on Y2K upgrades with little to show for it," many are unprepared to invest in new systems on the "once bitten twice shy principle".

NEWS IN BRIEF

■ LIGHTSPEED TO LAUNCH IN UK

Lightspeed Systems has signed an exclusive UK distribution agreement with Kramer Lee & Associates. The deal means KLA will supply and support Lightspeed's new Total Control network traffic management system. The product receives its official UK launch at a seminar in London next week (19 June). To book a place call 01268 584666.

■ VIRGO ENTERS NEW HOUSE

Irwin Associates, who sell and support Virgo Accounts - which is probably the cheapest legal bookkeeping system for small firms available in the UK today - has moved. The new address is 26 Fanshaws Lane, Brickendon, Hertford SG13 8PF. Phone 01992 511697.

Irwin Associates remains committed to the small firms sector but managing director Graham Irwin admits it is a frustrating business. One Virgo user - a sole practitioner - recently merged with another firm. The firm's response was not to upgrade or integrate its IT systems but to transfer all its computerised accounts records onto a manual system!

www.irwinassociates.co.uk

■ EXPORT MODULE FOR RIGHTFAX

Kommunicate (01962 835004) is now shipping a new "export module" for its RightFAX 5.2 (and higher) network fax system. The module is an archiving utility for firms needing to store faxes for reference purposes but not wishing to accumulate hard copies or take up disk space on their main RightFAX server. Archived faxes can be searched by user, group, date or type and the retrieved data exported to Access or Excel for reporting purposes.

■ CARYDAN TO RUN WORKSHOPS

Jonathan Beck & Associates, developers of the JBA Carydan integrated accounts and case management system, are running a series of one-to-one workshops to demonstrate the software's new LAFQAS and CDS/criminal billing facilities. The seminars start in Newcastle on 29 June and end in Bristol on 26 July. To book an appointment call David Phillips on 0161 941 3790.

NEXT GENERATION SECURE EMAIL NOW

Secure email delivery and encryption services have been popping up - and closing down again - in the UK for the past three years however Omtool, the latest contender in this market, reckons its new offering overcomes the weaknesses of earlier systems.

Called Genidocs, the system was launched in the United States in the autumn and is currently being implemented by US top 10 firm Sidley & Austin in Chicago. It is now available in the UK directly from Omtool's UK office (01932 334444), as well as from resellers such as Tikit. Prices start at around £20,000 for a 400 user system, which may sound a lot until you consider some merchant banks spend as much as £3000-4000 a week on courier services - the manual alternative to a secure email system.

Omtool Europe manager Alex Thompson is aware of the baggage surrounding earlier secure email systems but believes Genidocs has the edge on the competition. On the costs front Genidocs is an application that sits on the Exchange server, so firms only pay a one off software licence and avoid the per-message transaction charges of rival service based systems. Genidocs also has an advantage over product based alternatives, which require both senders and recipients to install and use dedicated email client software. In fact because Genidocs complements, rather than replaces, existing software, no one (apart from network managers) even require any extra training. (Recipients can use any internet email client or Hotmail-style web browser software to access messages.)

It is also worth noting that Omtool is not a speculative start-up but an established messaging systems developer - its LegalFax system is widely used by US law firms.

Although the system was primarily designed for the Microsoft Exchange platform, it is compatible with GroupWise as well as a growing number of third party applications including PC Docs and iManage. An Equitrac link is under development, digital signatures are available through integration with Verisign and a Lotus Notes version will be available by the end of the year.

www.omtool.com/mailgenidocs

L&H FREE TO RESTRUCTURE

Lernout & Hauspie, the troubled speech recognition group whose divisions include Dictaphone and Dragon Dictate, has been granted permission by its creditors to carry out a major restructuring exercise that will lead to the eventual break-up of the company.

At the last count the company owed over £340 million to 370 creditors. Its shares have lost \$10 billion in value in under 12 months and are no longer listed on any market. And company co-founders Jo Lernout and Pol Hauspie are currently languishing in a Belgian jail facing charges of fraud, insider trading and stock manipulation.

NEWS IN BRIEF

■ RIGGALL QUILTS SOLACE

After working with Irish based software house OPSIS and Solace Legal Systems (now part of the OPSIS group) for 12 months, IT consultant David Riggall is leaving Solace to launch a new business offering "interim sales and marketing services" to IT suppliers. In effect the new operation - IT (S & M) Associates - will provide marketing activities on an outsourced basis. For details email itsam@randb.freereserve.co.uk Solace can still be contacted on 01780 764947.

■ TAYLOR VINTERS DMS MOVE

Cambridge based law firm Taylor Vinters has purchased Hummingbird's DOCSFusion product as the basis of its new document management system.

■ BALFOUR & MANSON UPGRADE

Balfour & Manson, one of Edinburgh's largest law firms, has completed a major upgrade of its IT infrastructure, including migrating from Novell and WordPerfect to a Windows NT and Word platform. The project was carried out by legal IT integrators Ramesys who, along with providing practice-wide access to internet email, also had to deal with the added complication of installing a 130 user network in a listed building.

■ METICULUS IN CAPITAL DEAL

Document management systems developer Meticulus Solutions has formed another strategic partnership, this time with Capital Capture (0207 314 7700). The deal means Capital Capture will now offer the Meticulist low cost DMS system as part of its electronic document management solution for its customers in the London area.

LEGAL TECHNOLOGY JOBS BOARD

If you are a legal systems supplier or a law firm looking for IT staff, including positions in management, development, sales, support and training, you can post your vacancies free of charge on the Legal Technology Insider web site. Email job details to: news@legalnewsmedia.com

WHITE BOOK IS ONLINE

In conjunction with the publication of the 2001 edition of *The White Book*, Sweet & Maxwell has also launched a new Civil Procedure service as part of its Westlaw UK online legal information service. The online service includes the full text of *The White Book* plus commentary, statutory materials, civil procedure case reports, a daily current awareness service and over 400 downloadable court forms.

As part of the promotional drive behind the launch Sweet & Maxwell has been handing out miniature bottles of white port branded with *The White Book* name and carrying the slogan "Your first port of call." *The White Book* costs £225 for the two volume service, including updates or £275 for the books and CD-Rom. For a free trial of the Civil Procedure online service call 0800 028 2200.

KM & DEALROOM BRIEFINGS

■ Hummingbird, the company behind PC Docs and its more recent EIP (Enterprise Information Portal) product, is holding a briefing on knowledge management and legal portals at Gray's Inn in London on the morning of 3 July. Speakers include Richard Scott of virtual dealrooms developer PeopleDOC, Richard Russell of Butterworths internet services and James Boocock of Westlaw. For more details email: judith.williams@hummingbird.com

■ Williams Lea Legal Solutions is running a series of seminars to demonstrate its new virtual deal and data room service. There are six separate seminars taking place on Tuesday 26 and Wednesday 27 June at Clifton House, Worship Street, London EC2. For details call Hannah Slattery on 020 7772 4685 or email events@williamslea.com

BUTTERWORTHS NAME SAVED

To paraphrase Mark Twain, reports of Butterworths' death have been greatly exaggerated.

Although Butterworths parent group Reed Elsevier is committed to a "phased migration to the LexisNexis brand" as a masterbrand for its legal division's operations around the world, Butterworths Tolley executive marketing director Mark Seaman told the Insider that "The Butterworths name will not disappear - nor will that of our other brands such as Tolley, IRS and Eclipse." The Insider understands that the Martindale-Hubbell name has also won a reprieve and will survive.

Seaman said LexisNexis Group is the new name for the world-wide legal publishing division previously called the Reed Elsevier Legal Division. However apart from a new logo and, where space allows, the phrase 'a member of the LexisNexis Group' appearing beneath the Butterworths name, customers and subscribers are unlikely to notice the rebranding exercise.

■ The Insider's own research suggests the five most widely recognised brands in the UK legal market today are Oyez, Butterworths, Sweet & Maxwell, Axxia and Lawtel.

INFORMATION JUST ONE CLICK AWAY

Over the last few months there has been a growing debate about the respect merits of Autonomy versus Verity as top of the range knowledge management search engines. Is Autonomy the best - or is it just over hyped and over priced?

One company that has been using the system in anger for over three years on one of the largest full text databases in the legal market is Butterworths, where Autonomy is used to support the Butterworths Lexis Direct online information services.

Butterworths Tolley executive director online Ivan Darby admits he was sceptical when it was first suggested that Autonomy be used as an alternative to the traditional approach to searching a legal database and retrieving information by entering keywords or phrases but has since become a convert.

The key has been Autonomy's dynamic reasoning engine (part of the system's core technology) which uses mathematical techniques to analyse information and identify ideas and concepts, as opposed to simply matching words. The net result is the system can effectively "read along with the users" - Autonomy calls this a pre-emptive approach - so it can anticipate the sorts of information they may be looking for.

Darby says that along with abolishing the need for complex Boolean search queries, as everything is done in natural language, having Autonomy onboard "adds more value to users' subscriptions by saving them time and giving them better information".

TUNE IN AND WATCH LEGAL WEB TV

Sit back and watch the latest webcasts on legal technology and new media law. The new free service from the publishers of the Insider is in streaming video format and requires RealPlayer 8.

■ Legal Web.TV now also carries webcasts of more general legal news stories shot for the Butterworths CPD Direct Digital Television News Service.

www.legalwebtv.com

EVENT SPONSORSHIP - VALUE FOR MONEY ?

With the legal year winding down as we head towards the Long Vacation, legal systems vendors everywhere are opening their mail to find a growing list of conference and exhibition organisers inviting them to cross their palms with silver and sponsor their events this coming autumn. But is sponsorship actually good value for money - or are sponsors merely helping event organisers to grow rich?

The unanimous view of organisers is that sponsorship provides excellent value - no surprises there then. But they usually also add that one reason why sponsors may not always enjoy the best of experiences is they do not take full advantage of the opportunities available to them.

There is some justification to this argument. We all know of suppliers who, for whatever reason - including one marketing director who was so hungover he could not even stand never mind give a breakfast briefing keynote speech - have totally blown any marketing opportunities associated with a sponsorship deal. But, the pros and cons of sponsorship are not always so black and white.

■ Is the sponsored event relevant to the supplier's target market for its products and services? For example, it is a complete waste of money sponsoring an event for City firms if your systems are primarily designed for the needs of smaller High Street practices. The converse is also true.

■ Is the supplier's brand strong enough to lend itself to sponsorship? If no one knows who you are or what you do before an event, then having your name and logo splashed around the place is unlikely to leave them any the wiser.

Sadly many suppliers wildly overestimate the memorability of their product and company names.

■ Is the sponsorship deal on offer worth taking up? Event organisers now sell sponsorship packages on just about everything linked to a show, from the conference sessions themselves through to catering and even the Styrofoam beakers delegates drink their morning coffee from.

Forget it. No one ever bought a computer system on the strength of a prawn cocktail a supplier once sponsored. In the real world lawyers do not say "I remember seeing that company's name on a paper doily, let's buy some case management software from them." Suppliers would do better to spend more money on a major sponsorship opportunity rather than spending a modest amount on an instantly forgettable opportunity.

■ How does your sponsorship deal sit within the overall context of the event? Being the headline sponsor of an event is great but is it such good value for money when you are just one of many minor or secondary sponsors? Given the weakness of many legal suppliers' brands, the danger of being one of many is that you will be lost in the crowd and so once again receive a poor return on your investment. Remember, it is a buyers' market. Many of these events could not survive without your sponsorship, so do not be afraid of demanding a better deal.

LEGAL TECHNOLOGY EVENTS DIARY

■ JUNE 19, BIRMINGHAM. Legal Application Integration. Half day seminar at the Posthouse organised by Pilgrim Systems, in conjunction with iManage, looking at collaboration within legal software solutions. For details call Louise Butcher on 0131 555 9700 or email louiseB@pilgrimsystems.com

■ JUNE 19, LONDON. Knowledge Exchange Forum at the City Conference Centre, London EC2. One day event hosted by Kramer Lee & Associates and co-sponsored by iManage. The event will also showcase the thinkDOCS document assembly system and the UK launch of Lightspeed's Total Control network traffic management product for Windows. To book a place phone 01268 584666 or email marketing@kramerlee.com

■ JUNE 20, LONDON. The CMS OPEN Experience at the Chiswell Street Brewery, 09:30-12:30 followed by lunch. CMS OPEN and partners will be hosting a presentation of their collaborative approach to providing a best of breed practice management solution. Guest speaker Richard Barrington (Office of the e-Envoy). For details call 0208 997 5500 or email: michael.ballard@solution6.com

■ JUNE 22, LONDON. Legal Knowledge Management Workshops - ResSoft is hosting a series of workshops (09:00am to 11:00am) showcasing Autonomy's knowledge management solution. Legal specific demonstrations will be given on issues raised. The workshops are at ResSoft's London offices with further sessions on 6 July & 20 July. For details call Laura Gulliver on 020 7421 4157 or email: LGulliver@ResSoft.co.uk

■ JUNE 27, LONDON. Online Strategies for Smaller Law Firms. Afternoon seminars (1:30pm to 4:30pm) organised by Martindale-Hubbell looking at making the internet work for law firms. The main speaker is Insider editor Charles Christian. The event qualifies for CPD points and costs £75 + VAT. For details call 020 7868 4867.

BARRISTERS GET ASP

Two new services have launched this month, each offering barristers a virtual alternative to the traditional clerk and chambers administration system.

The first is Freedom 2000 (01483 534347) which offers an ASP approach (application service provider) to the delivery of general purpose office applications such as Microsoft Office as well as more specialist software such as the Meridian Law chambers and fee note system.

Freedom runs on thin client technology (Citrix or WTS) enabling barristers to access it on a 24/7 basis from anywhere using relatively low specification PCs. Freedom's Simon Matthews says along with savings on hardware and software, ASP removes the need for barristers to worry about upgrades or network management. But users must sign up for a fixed price, three year contract period.

Five sets have already signed up for Freedom although the only one to go public to-date is the Clerksroom.com. This is a new virtual set that already provides some 90 barristers with online clerking, internet access to legal information databases and web based marketing services.

www.clerksroom.com

www.showmefreedom.com

■ The second new service - BarristerWeb - delivers a similar combination of virtual clerking services, plus remote access to their diary and fee records. BarristerWeb is using Applied Computer Expertise (ACE) to supply its core chambers management software.

UK TO MALAYSIA VIA VIDEO

Coventry solicitors practice Mander Hadley has used a videoconference link with Kuala Lumpur to resolve a dispute over the damages payable in a personal injury action involving a Malaysian resident, who sustained brain damage in a road accident while on a visit to the UK. Gordon Catford, one of the counsel for the claimants (he was led by Simon Brown QC) recommended the use of the video link as the most cost effective, as well as least traumatic, way of hearing evidence from the claimant's witnesses - including her family and doctors, who were all based in Malaysia.

Mander Hadley used videoconference organisers EyeNetwork to handle the logistics of the event, which ran for over seven hours across two days, with an office in Birmingham serving as the virtual courtroom for Judge MacDuff QC, sitting as a high court judge. Although a third day of video testimony had been scheduled, the defendants made an offer of £1 million in damages at the end of day two and this was accepted by the court.

The hearings took place between 8:15am and 1:00pm (London time) to accommodate the seven hour time difference with Malaysia. The protocols for using videoconferencing equipment in civil proceedings were based on those used by the Federal Court of Australia.

www.eyenetwork.co.uk

NEWS IN BRIEF

■ NEW PORTAL TAKES ON LAWZONE

The iCorporation Group plc has added a legal channel to their range of specialist "magazine style" web news portals. Called Legal UK, the site's combination of news, links, directories and member services, primarily funded by advertising, looks to be a direct challenger to the LawZone business model. The site has a clean and efficient design although since it has only just gone live, content is still relatively thin on the ground.

www.legal-uk.co.uk

■ NEW IRISH LEGAL WEB SITE

Dublin solicitors practice Malcolmson Law has gone live with its new web site. By coincidence, internet commentator Delia Venables has just published the results of a survey she has conducted of the "best" Irish law firm sites. Firms listed include Mason Hayes & Curran in Dublin and Pierce & Fitzgibbon of Listowel. Selection criteria included good information about the firm, good design, fast download time plus "something extra" - such as the provision of useful legal information and material in foreign languages to attract overseas viewers.

www.venables.co.uk/ireland.htm

www.mlaw.ie

■ BLUE FLAG CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Linklaters has appointed Patrick Hynes as the first chief executive of its Blue Flag online legal service.

■ SFLA LAUNCHES NEW WEB SITE

The Solicitors Family Law Association (SFLA) has launched a new site carrying useful free information about family law issues and providing surfers with a way of locating family lawyers in their area. The SFLA, which has a membership of over 5000 solicitors, hopes the site will become the first port of call for people looking for help on family law problems.

www.sfla.org.uk

■ NAME CHANGE FOR BCL BEAVER

BCL Vision, better known as the Beaver Corporation, the debt collection software developer, has changed its name to i-many International (020 7936 2828).

www.i-many.com

SHAREPOINT - SORTING THE SPTS FROM SPS

Microsoft Office XP may have only been available for a fortnight but already it is being hyped as the answer to many firms' document and knowledge management problems Or, as Rob Moores, e-business manager at Lynx Technology (Lynx recently installed the new network at Dickinson Dees) put it: "It could seriously challenge current document management systems, delivering 80 percent of their functionality for 20 percent of the price".

But there does seem to be some confusion over parts of the XP suite, namely: SharePoint Team Services (SPTS) and SharePoint Portal Server (SPS) so here is our brief bluffer's guide to the two...

SPTS offers interactive collaboration space where users can create content and track work. SPTS has been described as a virtual dealroom facility.

By contrast SPS is a document and knowledge management solution featuring search facilities and portals (Microsoft calls them 'dashboards') to assist users find information. SPS can search across many sources including SQL Server databases and SPTS document libraries. SPS also incorporates basic document approval workflow, automatic versioning, automatic content categorisation and a system for notifying users when a document has been changed.

DON'T DELETE THAT FILE... IT'S JUST A HOAX

Virus specialist McAfee has issued a warning about a new email virus hoax that maliciously advises people to delete perfectly innocent system files from their PC hard drives.

There are several versions of this message circulating but typically along the lines of... "A VIRUS could be in your computer files now, dormant but will become active on June 1. Try not to USE your Computer on June 1st. FOLLOW DIRECTIONS BELOW TO CHECK IF YOU HAVE IT AND TO REMOVE IT NOW. No Virus software can detect it. It will become active on June 1, 2001. It might be too late by then. It wipes out all files and folders on the hard drive. This virus travels thru E-mail and migrates to the C:\windows\command folder."

The email will also instruct you to delete SULFNBK.exe and to pass the message along to everyone you know. SULFNBK.exe is a standard part of the Windows operating system and should not be removed. For more information about the hoax or for instructions on how to replace SULFNBK.exe if you have already deleted it, visit:

<http://clinic.mcafee.com/clinic/ibuy/campaign.asp?cid=2274>

■ The Legal Technology Insider web site also carries a Hoax & Virus service containing reports of the latest bugs as well as links to the leading anti-virus software sources.

www.legalnewsmedia.com

SUBSCRIPTIONS TO THE INSIDER

Legal Technology Insider is published every three weeks and available only on subscription. UK rates: £115 for 20 issues or £200 for 40 issues. Rest of World £135 for 20 issues or £240 for 40 issues. Payment in £Sterling.

■ **To subscribe or to apply for a free trial subscription:** copy, complete & return this form to: Legal Technology Insider, Ferndale House, Harling Road, North Lopham, Diss, Norfolk IP22 2NQ, UK

Name.....

Firm/Organisation.....

Address.....

..... Post/Zip Code.....

Phone Number.....

Email.....

Tick boxes or complete as appropriate:

■ Three free issues trial subscription

■ I enclose my cheque for £ (payable to Legal Technology Insider) for 20 issues or 40 issues

Send receipt Please invoice me

Purchase Order No.....

■ Please charge my: Visa MasterCard Amex

Name on Credit Card:

Credit Card No:

Expiry Date: /

Today's Date.....

Signed.....

ISSN 1361-1240 Copyright © Legal Technology Insider 2001. All rights reserved. Legal Technology Insider is published by Legal News Media. No part of this publication may be reproduced without consent. While every effort is made to ensure the accuracy of the information in this publication, no guarantee is expressed or implied and the Publisher does not accept liability for any loss or damage that may arise from any errors or omissions. Please note that web site addresses can change. All brand names and trademarks are acknowledged.

Privacy policy: We do not sell or disclose the names, addresses or contact details of our subscribers. We are registered under the Data Protection Act 1998.

IT RECESSION TO LAST UNTIL AT LEAST 2004 ?

Struggling UK legal systems suppliers hoping for a rapid recovery in the IT market could be in for an unpleasant surprise. According to the latest edition of the *Holway Report*, produced by independent IT analyst Richard Holway in conjunction with the Ovum Consultancy, the demand for IT products and services in the UK is unlikely to recover next year.

Instead, Holway says the demand for the years 2002 to 2004 "will remain modest" and predicts many suppliers "especially companies involved with systems integration" will be forced to issue profits warnings in the months to come. Holway also notes that while many IT suppliers are seeing turnover growth fall to below 10 percent per annum for the first time since the recession of the early 1990s, the real damage is being inflicted on profits, which last year declined by an average of 86 percent.

Turning to the future Holway points out that every time there has been an IT recession in the past "the recovery has been associated with a technology revolution. In the early 1980s demand was led by the introduction of the PC. In the early 1990s it was led by Windows and in the late 1990s by the internet boom.

"But there will be no big technology shift before 2004 and anyone who believes Europe will be immune to the US slowdown is living in cloud cuckoo land."

■ The 2001 *Holway Report* is produced by Ovum Holway (01252 740900) price £6000. (Yes, six thousand pounds.)

TIKIT FLOATS AT £13 MILLION

The legal IT services and consultancy company Tikit Group plc has floated on the London AIM stock exchange. The placing, on 4 June, with institutional and other investors raises £3.4 million and the 115p share issue price capitalises the company at £13 million.

Amid all the doom and gloom surrounding the IT market (see previous *Holway story*) it is worth noting that Tikit is building up its outsourcing and FM services, one of the few areas of the IT services sector that Richard Holway reckons is strong at the moment.

OLD ECONOMY VERSUS NEW

Finally, and we really are not making this up, tomorrow (14 June) sees the Real Fight Club hold its next round of heats in London. This is the transatlantic white collar amateur boxing circuit "for guys under pressure" who find boxing "a great stress reliever" - or who like to imagine they are Brad Pitt in the movie *Fight Club*. Bizarrely, among Thursday's heats is a New Economy versus Old Economy bout between New York state judge Phillip Maier and Alex Mehta, one of the co-founders of the UK online legal service Freelawyer.co.uk.

NEWS IN BRIEF

■ 70 PERCENT UP AT BIGHAND

The speech recognition and digital dictation systems specialist BigHand has reported total sales of £1.2 million for the year ending 31 March 2001, an approximately 70 percent increase on the previous year's figure of £700,000.

As part of its expansion plans, the company is currently looking for additional staff including a senior sales account manager, a marketing manager and another experienced legal sales manager. For details call Stephen Thompson on 020 7793 8200. Details of all three posts also appear on the Legal Technology Jobs Board.

www.big-hand.co.uk

■ BLOCK CONTRACTING SEMINARS

Legal systems specialist Mountain Software is holding free seminars to explain block contracting under the new CDS (Criminal Defence Service) procedures. The next seminar is in London of 21 June. To book a place call Caroline Robinson on 01476 573718 or email caroliner@mountainsoftware.co.uk Since releasing its own CDS Block Contracting software in April, Mountain has sold the package into over 100 firms. The software, which integrates with Mountain's accounts and practice management systems, completes and generates forms CDS6, CDS7, CDS9 and CDS11 as well as file review reports.

LEGAL TECHNOLOGY INSIDER

www.legalnewsmedia.com

■ How to contact the Insider

Legal Technology Insider, Ferndale House, Harling Road, North Lopham, Diss, Norfolk IP22 2NQ, United Kingdom

Tel: 01379 687518 - Fax: 01379 687704

Videophone: 01379 687690 x2

Email: news@legalnewsmedia.com

Publisher & Editor: Charles Christian

■ **The next issue** of Legal Technology Insider - No.120 - will be published on Wednesday 4 July 2001.