

Charles Christian's

LEGAL TECHNOLOGY INSIDER

INDEPENDENT NEWS & COMMENT ON LEGAL TECHNOLOGY

PETER RICKSONS GO FOR WEB ENABLEMENT

Preston based Peter Rickson & Partners is to spend "in excess of £50,000" upgrading its case management software to implement Axxia's e-Case and e-Tran web enablement modules to provide its clients with extranet access to matter records and reports.

Ricksons believes it is the first defendant insurance practice in the UK to go down this route and will initially be rolling it out to two clients: the Iron Trades and RAC.

Iron Trades will initially focus on e-Case as it wants to be able to inquire on multiple matters, inspect case plans and status as well as drill down into associated documentation and correspondence online. The RAC will firstly be using the system to send Ricksons advice of new cases via the internet, however, in the future it plans to pass simple instructions to Ricksons, where e-Tran will automatically incept a new matter, activate a team and feed all relevant data into the case management system.

The firm's senior partner Peter Rickson said the move was a "win-win situation" for both the firm and its clients as the Iron Trades and RAC could in turn pass on the benefits of the system, in terms of better service, to their clients, namely their members and policyholders. "In my view this represents a significant step towards the seamless and transparent management of litigation by law firms on behalf of their clients," he added.

LAW SOCIETY TALKS POSITIVE

Law Society business development director John Miller described last week's briefing meeting for legal systems suppliers, which was attended by representatives from 15 companies as well as the industry association LSSA, as "positive". Miller said the meeting, called to discuss the Society's plans for the next edition of its Software Solutions Guide, clarified a lot of issues and laid the foundations for a project that would be to the mutual benefit of both solicitors looking for IT systems and their suppliers. The Society is issuing a short consultation paper on the project this week. Interested parties should submit their views by the end of July. For a copy of the paper email Miller at john.miller@lawsociety.org.uk

CHANGING PLACES AT LSSA

The UK's Legal Software Suppliers Association annual general meeting last month saw Solicitec's Neil Ewin stand down as chairman after a two year stint in office. Ewin is succeeded by former vice chairman Alan Richardson of Norwel. Philip Snee of Linetime is LSSA's new vice chairman.

Ewin, who deserves much of the credit for establishing a better working relationship between suppliers and the English Law Society over the last couple of years, will continue to head the LSSA team liaising with the Law Society on its Software Solutions Guide.

The LSSA AGM also agreed to devote more resources to its XML working party after initial studies indicated that various US oriented XML initiatives, including LegalXML and LEDES, were not sufficiently relevant to lend themselves to a direct transfer to the UK legal IT market. LSSA member Solicitors Own Software (SOS) is already working on an XML system for handling Legal Services Commission reporting requirements.

DISCLAW EMIS DEAL

DiscLaw, publishers of the Emplaw.co.uk employment law web site, are finalising a new marketing deal with EMIS Professional Publishing - EMIS now owns the former CLT publishing division. DiscLaw say that from the autumn the company will also be offering an affiliation scheme allowing law firms subscribing to Emplaw to carry some of its content on their own web sites.

**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 for • regularly updated news • the Legal Web TV service • a comprehensive diary of legal IT events • an archive of back issues of the Insider • virus reports • the Legal IT jobs board • the Legal Technology Solution Finder service.

SYCAMORE TO FOCUS ON KEYSTONE US

Kaye Sycamore, the popular 'face' of Keystone Solutions since the company launched in the UK in the mid-1990s, has been reassigned to the United States as part of the build up to the US launch of the Americanised version of the Keystone Professional PMS product later this year. The company has also reassigned Brent Nicholson, one of its heaviest hitters from the Australasian market, to support the US project.

Still in the USA, top ten US law firm Mayer Brown & Platt has become the latest practice to order Keystone Net Results, the company's MIS and financial analytics software. And Neil Cameron - now Keystone's director of product strategy but still better known in the UK for his previous work as an independent consultant - gave the recent Javelan user group conference in Buffalo a major presentation on the future of legal technology. (Javelan is Keystone's legacy PMS product in the US market.)

Keystone will be staging this year's global user group conference in Australia during September 20 & 21.

CAN YOU AFFORD A WINDOWS XP UPGRADE ?

New research by the IT industry newspaper *Computer Weekly* warns that many businesses hoping to upgrade to Windows XP, the next version of Microsoft's desktop operating system, may have to upgrade or replace as many as 80 percent of their existing PCs.

Industry statistics suggest that nearly 20 percent of PCs in use in the UK today do not have the 1.5 Gbyte of hard disk space required to support XP, 56 percent have less than the 128 Mbyte minimum RAM memory requirement and only 22 percent meet the 233MHz minimum speed requirement.

The IT consultancy Bloor Research is recommending 256 Mbytes of RAM and a 400MHz processor speed as a realistic specification to support Windows XP. Even Microsoft has admitted that pre-1999 PCs are unlikely to support the new operating system - a development which could hit those law firms still running Windows 95 and 98 who did not move to Windows 2000.

■ Last week Microsoft won a partial victory in its long running antitrust suit when the US District Court of Appeals unanimously ruled that bundling Internet Explorer with Windows was not illegal. But the court did find that Microsoft had attempted to illegally maintain a monopoly in the operating systems market. This issue now goes back to the trial court for reconsideration but even here Microsoft can take consolation from the fact the original judge - Thomas Penfield Jackson - has been removed from the case and the appeals court also said breaking up Microsoft is not an appropriate penalty.

NEWS IN BRIEF

■ JMC IN ASP PARTNERSHIP

Legal systems integrator jmc.it (the new name for J M Computing) has been appointed as one of the UK's first Cable & Wireless 'a-services' partners, authorised to supply ASP (Application Service Provider) solutions to businesses throughout the North of England. jmc.it is also a distributor for Mountain's range of legal software.

The Insider understands that Axxia will also be announcing a major ASP initiative of its own later this week.

■ NEW MD FOR SOLUTION 6 EUROPE

CMS parent Solution 6 has appointed chartered accountant David England as its new European managing director.

■ PRINT TRACKER GETS DMS LINK

Tikit is now offering DMS (document management system) integration for users of ICG Research's EMSys Pro Print tracking software. EMSys Pro version 2.79 comes ready to integrate with both PC Docs and iManage. Integration with the Worldox DMS will be available from later this year.

■ EQUITRAC GOES TCP/IP

Equitrac's System 4 copier and fax cost recovery terminals are now shipping with direct LAN/WAN connectivity supporting an IP address. The change means the system can now support fax and copier terminals regardless of their location on a WAN without the need for dedicated cabling or serial polling. Equitrac will shortly release Printlog Version 4 for laser and digital print tracking. Enhancements include integration with document management systems and greater flexibility on charging parameters.

■ RECESSION HITS INFORMA

Informa, the publishing and conferences group created by the merger of IBC and the Lloyd's of London Press, has laid off 150 people (about 5 percent of its staff) in the past six weeks after being hit by "a significant drop" in the numbers attending its telecoms conferences. The group says its activities in other markets have not been hit by the recession.

IS AIM NOW THE MOST PROFITABLE SUPPLIER ?

Legal systems supplier AIM has published its audited results for the year ended April 2001. Although the company's turnover has decreased to £8.79 million, its profit before tax (after deductions for R&D) was up at £1.57 million, representing a profitability of 18 percent of turnover. AIM also has cash reserves of £2.9 million.

Although AIM may not have the biggest turnover and only two thirds of its revenues come from legal work, it is one of the most profitable suppliers in the market, particularly when you consider the way certain other suppliers - legitimately under current tax rules - treat pension underfunding and debtors on their balance sheets.

■ AIM has just launched Evolution Debt Manager, a new module for corporate arrears management and debt recovery work in the legal profession. The software, which takes the process from letter before action through to enforcement, is fully integrated with Microsoft Word and most electronic legal forms packages. It can be used in a stand alone capacity as well as in conjunction with AIM's Evolution Client/Server practice management system.

NEW CASE & DMS PRODUCTS ON WAY FROM TIMESLICE

Timeslice is to begin final beta testing its new 'matter management' workflow system. The next few weeks will also see the launch of an integration module linking the Timeslice Lawman 2000 practice management system to Solicitec's SolCase case management software.

The next development project underway at Timeslice is a document management product based on Microsoft's new SharePoint Portal Server system. Timeslice can also support third party DMS products. Gordon Dadds, who went live with Lawman 2000 earlier this week, will be running the system in conjunction with PC Docs.

ACE OUT IN SEVEN DAYS

The One Garden Court barristers' set (the family law chambers headed by Eleanor Platt QC and Alison Ball QC) have switched to Meridian Law software for their case management and diary system having previously used the ACE Infinity for Windows system.

As part of the deal the set asked that the software installation and data conversion be completed as rapidly as possible as their ACE system had ceased to function. Meridian, who have completed data conversions for over 160 sets that have moved away from ACE, were able to handle the complete migration in just seven working days.

The set is now working with Meridian to act as an early adopter of the next release of Meridian's software which will support the new family law graduated fee structure.

NEWS IN BRIEF

■ GWIZ, IT'S AN INTRANET

Gateley Wareing last week launched GWIZ - the Gateley Wareing Information Zone - its new practice wide intranet. The system was developed by Definitive Applications (01635 551553) and based on that company's SORCE software. GWIZ will initially support the firm's staff in its Birmingham, Nottingham and Leicester offices however the longer term plan is to implement an extranet and open up the system to clients.

www.definitive.co.uk

■ GLOBAL DEALROOM ON THE WAY?

Thirty five of the largest US law firms, including Skadden Arps, the US arm of Clifford Chance and Silicon Valley's Wilson Sonsini (which has just launched its own Document Access & Subscription virtual dealroom system) have agreed to work together with US consultants LawCommerce.com on the development of a global standard for law firm virtual dealrooms. The objective is to make life easier for clients so they do not have to master different interfaces when working with different firms' dealrooms.

■ COREL IN PROFIT AGAIN

Corel, the company behind WordPerfect, has reported a profit for a second consecutive trading quarter. Income for the quarter was \$2.3 million, compared with a net loss of \$23.6 million in the same period last year.

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

■ Current postings include vacancies for legal cashiers who want to work as accounts software trainers at legal IT suppliers Videss and Mountain and an opening for an IT developer at Osborne Clarke to work on e-commerce and browser based projects.

CRIMINAL COURTS IT SYSTEMS DELAY

The Lord Chancellor's Department has denied that its new Project Libra case management system for magistrates courts in England & Wales has been suspended indefinitely, despite reports of implementation delays and a £162 million budget overrun.

According to the LCD, although there had been problems with the software which "proved more complex to develop than expected" it was still hoping for delivery "towards the end of next year". This is approximately 18 months later than the date promised in 1998 when the LCD told magistrates courts committees that "acceptance of the service is planned for no later than July 2001".

Official papers also reveal that the budget for the PFI funded project has increased from £183 million to £319 million, with a further £26 million allocated for internal costs within the LCD. EDS, which withdrew from bidding for the project in 1998 (leaving ICL the only bidder) after expressing concerns about the tendering process, says it could have delivered the system for £120 million. ICL has also had its contract extended from eight to 12 years.

CENTAUR REBRANDS ITS LEGAL MARKET BUSINESS

Last month Reed Elsevier announced a rebranding exercise for its legal division's operations, this month it is the turn of the Centaur group, the publisher of *The Lawyer* magazine and Lawtel online information service, to give its corporate monikers a fresh coat of paint.

As part of the rebranding project, all Centaur's publishing activities within the legal field are being consolidated into a new entity: The Lawyer Group. Other changes include bringing all the group's online black letter law reporting and commentary services under the Lawtel banner and renaming the interactive-lawyer.com service as TheLawyer.com.

VENABLES SIMPLY THE BEST

At the recent BIALL annual conference (British & Irish Association of Law Librarians) in Cork, Delia Venables' *Internet Newsletter for Lawyers* was voted the 'Legal Serial Publication of the Year' for 2001. Biall president Barbara Tearle said the newsletter contained articles which "are both focused and topical. They have something for all sectors of the legal profession and for law librarians". She added that Delia Venables "had filled an emergent niche with a newsletter making an appropriate use of the dual media of print and web with links to the sites". Two other titles were highly commended by the judges: the *New Law Journal* and the Legal Action Group's *Legal Action*.

www.venables.co.uk

NEWS IN BRIEF

■ USING CITRIX FOR A PORTAL

US lawyers Orrick Herrington & Sutcliffe has become one of the first firms in the world to implement the new XML-based Citrix XPS portal software system. Working in conjunction with systems integrators and consultancy Baker Robbins, Orrick is using XPS "to create a practice centric information portal" for the firm's 1300 lawyers and support staff worldwide, as well as its global client base. The portal will replace the traditional PC desktop with a web browser linking 26 applications and information sources within a single, secure interface.

■ HOT DOCS TRAINING COURSES

Document assembly consultancy Understand-IT (01506 202341) will be running a series of four training courses for HotDocs users and developers in London this autumn. The courses include MS Word integration and an advanced course for developers working with HotDocs Professional. The courses run from Monday 3rd September upto and including Thursday 6th. Each course is priced at £300 + VAT.

www.understand-it.net

■ A ROSE BY ANY OTHER NAME

David Riggall, who recently quit Solace Legal Systems (*see last issue for first report*) to form his own IT sales and marketing management consultancy, will now be trading as Rose & Bridge Associates (01904 720334).

TUNE IN AND WATCH LEGAL WEB TV

Sit back and watch the latest news and views on developments in law, legal business, new media and legal IT on Legal Web TV. This is a free service from the publishers of Legal Technology Insider. Programmes are delivered in streaming video format and viewed using RealPlayer 8.

■ Legal Web TV's production team can also produce video programmes for inhouse training and CPD courses.

www.legalwebtv.com

SMITH BERNAL MOVES INTO EVENTS SECTOR

To date Smith Bernal's name has been synonymous with court reporting and the Livenote real-time transcription system but last week the company launched a new joint venture with conference organisers IBC that will move the company into the broader events market.

Called KeyNote Online, the service will draw on Smith Bernal's transcription and digital audio recording skills to provide delegates with not only the full text of conference presentations but also copies of speakers' PowerPoint slides and searchable recordings of what was actually said at the event. Along with providing a comprehensive record of an individual event, it offers a way for firms to build up a library of conference papers that can also be used for ongoing education purposes by non-attendees.

www.casetrack.com/keynote

■ Smith Bernal intends to use the new Version 8 release of Livenote in the Barings litigation which, barring any last minute settlements, will run until March 2002. Features include improved messaging services for discretely passing annotated notes around and auto tags as an alternative to full text searching. The company also plans a major upgrade (Version 9) for the middle of next year. This is likely to include XML and an interactive browser interface.

TECHNOLOGY OVERLOAD ?

Legal publisher Context is holding a seminar on the theme of developments in IT and whether the legal profession is heading for technology overload. With 40 percent of lawyers complaining that computers have made their lives more stressful, keynote speaker Charles Christian will be suggesting ways lawyers can learn to live with technology and not have to take their laptops on holiday with them.

The event takes place at The Law Society in Chancery Lane on Thursday 19 July (4:30pm to 6:30ish) and the fee is £35 including drinks. To book a place email

customer.relations@context.co.uk

SPONSORS LINE UP FOR LAW SOC ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Legal publishers Sweet & Maxwell and Martindale-Hubbell plus legal systems supplier Solicitors Own Software (SOS) are among the companies to have already signed up as sponsors for Solicitors 2001 - the English Law Society's annual conference.

The event takes place over the weekend of 27th and 28th October at the Birmingham International Conference Centre and features sessions on law firm dynamics and the role of managing partners, e-conveyancing practicalities, quality measurement and risk management and the proliferation of online legal services.

LEGAL TECHNOLOGY EVENTS DIARY

We are now fast approaching the Long Vacation quiet period for legal IT in the UK so, along with the few remaining events this month, here is a rundown of the major upcoming conferences and exhibitions.

- JULY 6, LONDON. Legal Knowledge Management Workshop - ResSoft is holding a workshop (9:00am to 11:00am) showcasing Autonomy's knowledge management solution. The workshop is at ResSoft's London offices with a further session on 20 July. For details call Laura Gulliver on 020 7421 4157 or email: LGulliver@ResSoft.co.uk
- JULY 26, BRISTOL. Carydan LAFQAS and CDS/criminal billing software demonstrations. To book a place call David Phillips of JBA on 0161 941 3790.
- SEPTEMBER 11-13, DEN HAAG, NETHERLANDS. Legal Solutions Europe 2001 at the Netherlands Conference Centre. A new pan-european exhibition with accompanying high profile conference. Speakers include David Maister and Charles Christian. For more details contact the Ark Group on 020 8785 2700 or visit www.lseurope.com
- OCTOBER 17-19, GLENEAGLES. The Legal IT Forum at the Gleneagles Hotel. Legal Week's annual conference and networking opportunity. For details contact GPM Events on 020 7566 5602.
- OCTOBER 27 & 28, BIRMINGHAM. Solicitors 2001 - the English Law Society's annual conference at the Birmingham International Conference Centre. The theme is competition, challenge and change and includes a session looking at the proliferation of online legal services and e-conveyancing.
- OCTOBER 31 & 1 NOVEMBER, LONDON. LegalTech London at the Excel Centre in Docklands. The organisers are aiming to make this the UK's leading legal IT conference and exhibition. For details contact Imark on 01932 730700 or visit www.imark.co.uk

BUTTERWORTHS IN WEB TV MOVE

Legal publisher Butterworths Tolley and the producers of Legal Web TV have agreed to a pooling of resources that will in future see Butterworths streaming video news reports broadcast as part of the Legal Web TV channel. The Butterworths programmes (made by Rollingball Digital Television, the same production company used by Legal Web TV) were previously promoted as the Butterworths CPD Direct Digital Television News Service.

Commenting on the move Butterworths' John Pitman, the publisher of CPD Direct, said: "Because delivering legal news in the form of online webcasts is such a new development, we still have to help the market to understand the benefits of this approach and the technology it involves. As this is an issue for both parties we decided to pool our resources so that through the addition of our content Legal Web TV becomes the premier source for quality legal digital TV programmes in the UK."

Legal Web TV is a joint venture between the publishers of Legal Technology Insider, and Rollingball, the multimedia arm of Semple Piggot Rochez. There is no charge for viewing Legal Web TV programmes but users do need to have RealPlayer 8 installed on their computers.

www.legalwebtv.com

LAW SOC GUIDE ON THE WEB

The English Law Society has published its *Guide to Professional Conduct of Solicitors* on the web. The 893 page manual, which costs £29.95 for the printed version, is available free of charge at www.guide.lawsociety.org.uk

PROBLEMS MOUNT FOR CLAIMS DIRECT

Within the next few days the Court of Appeal is expected to deliver a ruling on the validity of after-the-event legal expenses insurance. However, that is not the only problem currently facing Claims Direct, the personal injury claims handling agency or "ambulance chasing insurer" as the *Evening Standard* newspaper recently called it. Last week the company admitted that despite spending nearly £17 million on advertising during the spring, the number of new cases it was taking on had fallen from 4000 a month in November to 1700 a month in May.

Claims Direct, whose shares stand at 11p compared to their post flotation high of nearly 353p last September, also reported a pre-tax loss of £20.2 million for the year to 31st March, in contrast to last year's profits of £10.1 million. The company is also the subject of a cut price takeover bid by its former founders Tony Sullman and Colin Poole and is being sued for breach of contract by 35 of its franchise holders (believed to be solicitors' practices).

NEWS IN BRIEF

■ NEW DOMAIN FOR LCD

The Lord Chancellor's Department has changed its main web site address. It can now be found at www.lcd.gov.uk rather than at its previous less than obvious www.open.gov.uk/lcd location.

■ PROBATES SERVICE GOES ONLINE

Yorkshire law firm Lister Croft has launched Probates Direct, a new online service designed to help members of the public to apply for grants of representation. People using the site can complete a simple form authorising Probates Direct staff to process their applications, as well as access free advice on bereavement related legal issues. The project was the initiative of Lister Croft partner Alan Benstock.

www.probatessdirect.co.uk

■ CLEAR CUT LEGAL ADVICE

London lawyers Sykes Anderson have developed a web based legal advice service for the hair care products group Schwarzkopf. The service provides Schwarzkopf customers - primarily hairdressing salons - with advice on a range of legal issues from employment, lease and health & safety disputes through to how to deal with disgruntled customers and litigation.

www.hairco.co.uk

■ REDESIGN AT WEDLAKE BELL

New media agency Hyperlink Interactive, part of Cable & Wireless, has completed the redevelopment of London law firm Wedlake Bell's site. Hyperlink redesigned the web site to provide faster navigation to more information, displayed in a more user-friendly format, with an emphasis on making the site a research tool, contacts directory and a source of information for potential clients.

www.wedlakebell.com

■ EMAIL EMAIL EVERYWHERE

A new survey published last week predicts that by next year some lawyers will be spending up to four hours a day dealing with their email. The survey said the average UK business user already spends 49 minutes a day on email - a 35 percent increase on last year.

CCTV ANALYSIS HELPS SECURE CONVICTIONS

Litigation support specialists Oyez Legal Technologies were recently called in by the prosecution to help with the R -v- Myers, King, Hunter & White trial at Bristol Crown Court where one of the key pieces of evidence was video footage of a fatal altercation outside a nightclub.

Because the original footage was captured as time lapse CCTV, it took the form of a series of photographic stills taken at four second intervals. Legal Technologies' role was therefore to present the material in a format that would provide cohesive evidence in court and devise a system for displaying the evidence in the courtroom.

Legal Technologies prepared the video footage so it could be displayed in two ways: as individual stills shown on demand and in any order required or, alternatively, as a series of images displayed at four second intervals to provide a representation of events closely resembling the speed at which they happened. The images were displayed on 17 screens around the court and linked to a TrialPro presentation system so counsel, witnesses and the judge could highlight specific events or individuals simply by pointing at the screen images.

This was in contrast to the traditional approach of displaying the images on a VHS tape and using the 'pause' button to see individual stills. All four defendants were convicted and come up for sentencing later this month.

BIG BROTHER IS WATCHING

The database company Informix Software last week launched its new Law Enforcement Foundation for Biometrics system at the International Crime Conference at New Scotland Yard.

The system brings together a number of different technologies used in biometric identification systems, including facial and voice recognition, fingerprint and palm matching and any other human attributes that can be digitised (such as iris details) and stores them on a database where they can be readily accessed by police authorities, immigration officers and security personnel.

Informix say because the way the system records and analyses biometric data is based on digital watermarking, prosecution authorities can have full confidence in its validity as evidence when used in court proceedings.

LATEST LEGAL WEB SITE TRAFFIC SURVEY UNDERWAY

Legal Technology Insider is currently conducting its latest survey of the UK's busiest legal web sites. The results will be published in a forthcoming issue of the Insider. If you think your site could make the chart, email your request for an entry form to: news@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.

HOT DOCS - THE NEXT 14 YEARS

It may be the daddy of the document assembly world but over the past 12 months the Capsoft HotDocs system has seen more rival products launched to challenge its market leadership than at anytime in its history. So does HotDocs have a future? The answer, according to Capsoft software development head Marshall Morrise, is a definite "yes".

Morrise has been with Capsoft for 14 years although he began working on document assembly projects back in the late 1970s, while he was still at university, and in the 1980s was one of the developers responsible for the CAPS DOS document assembly system. Last week he was in London for a series of presentations at which he outlined the future strategy for HotDocs.

Morrise said the next minor upgrade to HotDocs is Version 5.3. Due imminently, this will offer compatibility with WordPerfect 10 and Word 2002/XP file formats. This will be followed at the end of this year/early next year by a more substantive upgrade - Version 6.0 - that will include dynamic updating and enhancements to the developer tools. But then, in approximately 15 to 18 months time, comes HotDocs Professional (Version 7.0).

This will be the first major rewrite HotDocs software has ever had and along with substantial changes to the developments tools - Morrise reckons they could result in a five fold improvement in productivity and efficiency - the introduction of version controls, new file formats and a web browser interface (likely to be HTML rather than XML based) the new system will be written for Microsoft's planned dot NET next generation operating system.

Morrise admits the new system is being developed to meet the needs of larger law firms and publishers (Capsoft now has a team of developers working on inhouse projects for other companies within its Reed Elsevier parent group) but says Capsoft will continue to support earlier versions of HotDocs "for the next three to five years" and will also develop a low end edition of Version 7.0 for smaller firms.

■ Sarah Sheehan, who until earlier this year was the product development manager for CCH.New Law, has joined HotDocs's UK distributor Capsoft UK (0131 226 3999) where she will be working in a project management role liaising between developers and end users.

HERE COMES THE CHAMP

Congratulations to Alex Mehta, the dotcom barrister and co-founder of the Freelawyer.co.uk online service, who won, on points, his recent boxing match with New York judge Philip Maier in a 'New World versus New Economy' bout for the world white-collar light middleweight title.

Billed as Capital Punishment 2, the charity event took place in London to raise funds for a children's hospice and featured a team of white-collar boxers from New York trading blows with a team from the City of London.

ELITE EXPANDS ITS DATABASE OPTIONS

Although the company originally made its name as an advocate of Informix on Unix, Elite Information Systems has, over the last couple of years, broadened the range of operating system and database platforms it supports.

The company has just reported the results of a performance load test it ran to establish the viability of Microsoft SQL Server 2000 as a platform for large scale applications. The tests found that SQL supported nearly 2000 concurrent users without error and without using more than 80 percent of available CPU resources. The database server used in the test was a Compaq Proliant 8500R with 8 x 700MHz Xeon CPUs.

Elite also announced last week that it was adding Oracle to the range of databases it supports. The company, which expects to receive certification for the move to the new platform later this year, will support Oracle 8i as well as 9i on its release.

Elite says Oracle will allow it to supply its practice management systems "to a much wider array of professional service firms" than in the past. Or, to put it another way, the company recognises that over the next couple of years more and more global law firms are going to be following in the footsteps of Clifford Chance and Linklaters, who already look set to migrate to Oracle.

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.121 - will be published on Wednesday 25 July 2001.