

Charles Christian's

# LEGAL TECHNOLOGY INSIDER

INDEPENDENT NEWS &amp; COMMENT ON LEGAL TECHNOLOGY

## ATTACK ON AMERICA - THE AFTERMATH

With over 5000 people still reported missing after last week's attack on the World Trade Center, it is not yet possible to assess the final impact on the legal profession. However Sidley Austin Brown & Wood, which had 600 people in its Trade Center offices, lost one member of staff, while all the staff at Thacher Proffitt & Wood, the other major firm with offices in the WTC, survived the attack.

Thacher Proffitt, which saw its head office destroyed when the towers collapsed, says it has lost some data but is confident the practice will be rebuilt "from the ground up". Sidley Austin, which has its head office in Chicago, has leased an additional four floors in its midtown office in Third Avenue and reopened for business on Monday.

Sidley Austin's main IT problem was the loss of its global email system however within hours it had implemented a back-up voice mail service and now has resumed full IT operations. Sidley Austin's difficulties were exacerbated by the fact the attack also destroyed or damaged many of the telecommunications facilities located in the downtown Manhattan area, knocking out phone, data and cellular communications links.

Looking at the broader picture, because so much of the area surrounding the WTC is closed to all but emergency services, the Office of Court Administration estimates that over 14,000 lawyers - about 20 percent of all lawyers in New York city - are currently unable to use their offices.

One of many organisations trying to ease this problem is the West publishing group, which has set up a crisis response team offering a variety of facilities, including access to research materials and special discounts for firms having to rebuild their law libraries. The company has even offered "to share our computers and office space with as many legal professionals as we can accommodate" when its Westlaw centre on Fifth Avenue reopens.

## EPOCH BACK FROM BRINK

The money ran out, the liquidators were called in and the servers were switched off. But after a marathon round of negotiations, the company behind the Desktop Lawyer service was back in business. **See page 4 for the full story.**

## ARE YOU READY FOR THE UNTHINKABLE ?

In the wake of the attacks on America, there are concerns other high profile locations, such as Canary Wharf, may be targeted next. However it is not just terrorism that can destroy a law firm's infrastructure - fire, flooding and storms can all have a devastating impact. The Insider has been going through its files to see what sort of lessons were being drawn the last time this happened in the UK - the 1992 Bishopsgate bombing that badly damaged Norton Rose's offices.

■ Will your contingency plans work? Having a plan is not enough. You need well rehearsed plans to ensure your disaster recovery procedures work in an emergency. Insurers estimate that 70 percent of businesses fail to recover their systems at the first rehearsal due to errors or unfamiliarity with procedures.

■ It may not be what happens to your offices that closes you down as what happens to the surrounding environment. Norton Rose's servers and most of their offices survived the blast but neighbouring buildings were deemed so dangerous that staff were not allowed in them for weeks. As in New York, you need backup office space as well as backed up IT systems.

■ Implement a clear desk policy so the only papers on your desk at any one time are those you are working on. When a bomb goes off, even if no other damage is caused it blows out windows and out of those windows tumbles thousands of often highly confidential documents.

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## HOPING FOR BETTER LUCK WITH PILGRIM

Pilgrim Systems has picked up nearly £500k in new business after winning contracts for its LawSoft integrated practice and case management system from Manchester law firm Antony Hodari & Co and Stronachs in Aberdeen. Hodari say they evaluated a total of 40 products before going with Pilgrim. Stronachs will also be using LawSoft to provide "better knowledge management capabilities".

The latest deals bring to 11 the number of new orders Pilgrim has won this year. By coincidence, both firms have in the past suffered the misfortune of seeing their incumbent software supplier go out of business.

Stronachs had been one of the largest users of Signet accounts software from CB Business Systems Legal, until the company went into voluntary liquidation earlier this year. CB's assets were subsequently acquired by TFB.

Antony Hodari was last in the legal technology news way back in 1996. This was when the firm set up its own software business - Ultima Computing - to support users of the ICAS case management system. At that time ICAS was in use in seven firms, including Antony Hodari, when its original supplier F&F Systems (formed by Brian Pittaway, previously a developer at Law Data) collapsed with cash flow problems and reported debts of £100,000.

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## LAW FIRM WINS IT AWARD

Northern Ireland's largest law firm Wilson Nesbitt recently became the first and only law firm to ever win the Belfast Telegraph's annual business award for the "best use of IT to enhance company development".

Senior partner Gilbert Nesbitt is widely credited as the driving force behind the firm's IT strategy. Wilson Nesbitt runs an SOS practice management system in conjunction and with SolCase case management software.

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## WHAT DO WE WANT ? WE WANT XP BUT NOT KMS

According to the findings of a survey published in association with the recent LawNet conference in Palm Springs (the US LawNet is no relation to the Lawnet group of law firms in the UK) the US legal IT industry is still suffering the after effects of the Y2K boom, with 9 percent of the firms responding to the survey planning to spend less on IT this year than they did in 2000 and 13 percent planning to spend less than they did in 1999.

The most frequently mentioned items on this year's IT shopping lists were upgrades to Windows 2000 or XP and Microsoft Office XP. The least popular items were knowledge management systems, ASP (application service provider) solutions and speech recognition, which elicited precisely zero interest among survey participants.

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### ■ MORE GALAXY BUSINESS

Ten partner Meade-King in Bristol is the latest firm to upgrade from Sanderson's QNIX software to the company's new Galaxy Legal integrated practice and case management system. The deal was worth approximately £50,000.

Another long time QNIX user - South Kesteven District Council - has upgraded to Galaxy Premier, the local government version of the product, but opting for thin client architecture instead of a more conventional 'fat' client/server solution. The council will run Galaxy on Microsoft Terminal Server.

### ■ PERCEPTIVE BUY AT S J BERWIN

S J Berwin has selected Perceptive Technology's Mentor e-business system as a platform to help deliver a range of online legal services to clients. As part of the deal, Perceptive will also host and manage the application from a secure data centre based in Docklands.

Commenting on the project, S J Berwin IT director Simon Kosminsky said: "We knew we needed a flexible solution that went beyond the traditional deal room and extranet applications we have used in the past. Mentor gives us the added functionality we require to deliver online services that complement rather than compete with our traditional service offerings."

### ■ WHERE THERE'S A WILL

AIM Professional has launched a new probate module for its Evolution case management system. It handles all aspects of will execution, including the production of distribution accounts, offers full integration with Microsoft Word and will run as both a stand alone application or integrated with AIM's practice management software.

### ■ SPENCER GIBSON TAKES PLUNGE

Professional Technology (01634 815517) has helped Surrey solicitors Spencer Gibson "take the plunge" by upgrading from stand alone wordprocessors, to a 30 user Microsoft Small Business Server network running across its two offices. The firm already uses Professional Technology's Quaestor accounts system.

## US CONSULTANTS SAY FIRMS WASTE MONEY

The US legal IT and management consultancy Hildebrandt International has warned law firms despite increasing their IT budgets, they are still not getting the best value out of their investments in technology.

Just over 70 of the largest law firms in the United States responded to Hildebrandt's 2001 IT/business process improvement survey. The good news is the survey found that IT now accounts, on average, for about 6.66 percent of a law firm's gross revenues - an increase on last year's average of 5.95 percent. (Of these budgets, about 35 percent goes on staff, nearly 40 percent on operating expenses and just under a quarter on depreciation.)

The bad news is the survey found that this increased IT expenditure "does not seem to have had a significant impact on the reporting firms' organisational structures or staffing ratios" with few firms hitting Hildebrandt's recommended benchmark ratio of two lawyers for every secretary or one lawyer to every administrative staff member (including secretaries and other non-fee earners).

The Hildebrandt study concludes with a warning from consultants Curt Canfield and Sally Gonzalez that: "Our survey results seem to support our sense that increasing IT expenses has not dramatically changed the way law offices work.

"We feel that profitability and productivity at many firms are not as high as they could be. It appears that IT is being deployed on a tactical level without strategic commitment to positively affect either the revenue or expense side of the ledger. Spending 5-6 percent of your gross revenue without some noticeable - and positive - effect often compounds economic, operational and cultural problems within the firm."

Hildebrandt suggest firms "take a fraction of this spending and devote it to strategic planning that will make the kind of difference that firms want and need".

## FORMER AVENUE FLAGSHIP SITE FALLS TO SOS

Napthen Houghton Craven, in Preston, has just gone live with a new 100 user practice management system from SOS. The deal marks a considerable coup for SOS as at one stage Napthens was the Avenue Legal Systems (now part of TFB) flagship site in the north of England, with the firm's then practice manager Ken Weights chairing the northern branch of the Avenue user group. Weights retired last year and was succeeded by Bob Kipling.

Napthens joins a list of sites SOS has taken from other suppliers over the past few months. Other wins include: Awdry Bailey & Douglas in Wiltshire and Wace Morgan in Shrewsbury from TFB, Landes & Co in Kent from Axxia, and Vanderpumps in north London from AIM.

## PEOPLE & PLACES

**Carl Clement**, the former regional technical manager for **iManage**, has moved on to start the consulting firm **Eurisko Consulting Services Limited** (01276 500571) specialising in EDMS, imaging and workflow.

**ResSoft** marketing manager **Shirley Haw** has left the company to go back to university to study for a Masters degree in IT. **Kate Mann** (020 7421 7162) takes over as the new marketing manager, with **Andrea Furnell** as her assistant.

**Ben Hutchins** has been promoted to the new position of Director of IT and Support at Liverpool law firm **J S T Mackintosh**. The firm's managing partner **Keith Teare** said the move was: "In recognition of his invaluable role within the practice and to underline the firm's commitment to IT to meet the challenges of the present and future."

Systems developer **Alternative Team Ltd** will shortly celebrate its 10th year in the legal IT business. The company has also appointed **David Rich**, previously a personal injury lawyer with **Russell Jones & Walker**, as a new director. Rich will oversee product development.

Finally, an attack of gremlins in the last issued resulted in the new head of IT at **Norton Rose** being incorrectly named. It should have read **Jeff Roberts**.

## LEGAL TECHNOLOGY JOBS BOARD

If you are a law firm or systems supplier looking for IT staff, including positions in management, development, support, sales and training, post your vacancies free on the Insider web site. Email the details to [news@legalnewsmedia.com](mailto:news@legalnewsmedia.com)

Current vacancies include:

- ▶ a sales consultant with legal supplier SOS - the package includes a BMW;
- ▶ a systems administrator with JST Mackintosh in Liverpool;
- ▶ three legal systems account managers for TFB operating out of Fareham;
- ▶ a systems administrator/accountant in the finance department at Lovells, experience of the Elite PMS is desirable;
- ▶ three sales account managers at CMS Open, including one Paris-based post.

## EPOCH SURVIVES NEAR DEATH EXPERIENCE

Twelve months ago Epoch Software, the company behind the Desktop Lawyer service, was being fêted as one of the great success stories of the legal dotcom world. Yet, at the end of August the company had run out of money - the statement of affairs issued by the liquidators suggested investors lost nearly £7 million on the venture - and gone into voluntary liquidation.

Ten days later, after a marathon 27 hour negotiating session, the liquidators agreed to sell the business to its original management team, including co-founders Richard and Grahame Cohen, for an undisclosed sum. So what went wrong and what implications does this have for the future of online legal services in the UK?

In an exclusive interview, Richard Cohen told the Insider that while the immediate cause of the collapse was the inability to secure additional funding - Epoch's board spent the past five months talking to nearly every venture capital group in the UK but was unable to find anyone prepared to invest in a dotcom business - the failure also raised serious doubts about the current demand for online legal services as an alternative to conventional bricks and mortar legal services.

Although the new business will continue to run the old Desktop Lawyer (MyLawyer.com in the US) consumer oriented online services, it would do so primarily as a shop window to promote the company's technology capabilities, including its RapiDocs document assembly system.

For the future however, the main focus of the business will shift to the supply of bundled online legal service packages to third parties, such as banks and insurance companies, who will then include them as part of larger products that they sell directly to their own customers and policyholders. The Epoch's US arm (All American Law Inc) is already selling its services as part of a legal expenses insurance package offered by Royal & SunAlliance.

Cohen said Epoch would still be interested in talking to smaller law firms wanting to offer ecommerce services to their clients, via Epoch's DirectLAW system, but would no longer be actively promoting this side of the business.

"Because there is no money in it. You can advertise your online legal services until the cows come home but there are not the volumes of consumers and SMEs out there to buy these services.

"The only organisations that are going to make this work are either the very large law firms or organisations like insurance companies who already have a captive audience for their services. I really do believe the internet is the way legal services will be delivered in the future but we thought the market would move a lot quicker than it has done. With hindsight, I can see we were ahead of the times and that we are looking at maybe another five years before the demand for online legal services in the High Street firms/consumer market really takes off."

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### ■ PUTSMANS TO UPGRADE

Birmingham law firm Putsmans has announced a two phase IT upgrade that will see it spending £100,000 with Axxia over the next couple of years. Core to the project will be rolling out a matter management system to over 100 fee earners and support staff.

The first phase will also see the deployment of the LegalARMS debt recovery package. The second phase, planned for early next year, will focus on client reporting and management information tools, including the introduction of the Axxia Advantage web enabled report scheduler and GoalFocus executive information system.

### ■ BEVAN ASHFORD INTRANET

Bevan Ashford has installed the Obtree C3 content management system, from Swiss based Obtree Technologies, to support its new web site and intranet. As well as using the Obtree product to help provide its seven offices with a knowledge management platform, the firm will also use the system to develop and extend its client extranet capabilities.

[www.obtree.com](http://www.obtree.com)

### ■ DESKSPACE ON THE WEB

Software developer Deskspace Environments (01444 412997) has launched a new web site to support its DESKspace time billing and accounts software, which is used by a number of small firms in the UK and USA. Free trial versions of the latest Version 3 release of the software will shortly be available for downloading from the site.

[www.deskspace.com](http://www.deskspace.com)

### ■ VIDESS OUSTS INCUMBENT IT

Wiltshire based Wansbroughs and Temple Heelis in the English Lakes District have both ordered new case and practice management systems from Videss. Seventy-user Wansbroughs is replacing its incumbent TFB system, while 35-user Temple Heelis was previously an Avenue site. Videss managing director Paul Sanderson say the latest deals mean the company has signed up almost £400,000 of business since July.

## US CRISIS HITS EURO LEGAL IT SHOW

While there was always a doubt as to just how many law firms would visit The Hague for last week's Legal Solutions Europe conference, it is clear the tragic events in the United States did cast a shadow over the whole show.

Visitor numbers were low. From the stack of unclaimed name badges at the registration desk it looked as if less than half the 550 delegates expected actually turned up. It was always likely that some of the people who registered for the free exhibition never intended to visit however there were also a considerable number of no-shows among paying delegates who had booked for conference sessions, suggesting they had either abandoned their travel plans in the wake of the terrorist attacks or else were unable to attend because of the subsequent flight cancellations.

On a more positive note, all the exhibitors the Insider spoke with were full of praise for the quality of delegates who did attend - it was apparent that many firms had sent high level decision makers huge distances with the sole purpose of meeting up with specific suppliers.

For example CMS had appointments booked several weeks in advance by firms from Poland and Lithuania. The winner of the WordWave/Smith Bernal prize draw was a Bulgarian lawyer. The Insider met with delegates from Spain, Norway, Russia, Denmark and the UK. There were also a brace of Polish judges, plenty of delegates in evidence from the Netherlands - not surprisingly - and even one delegate from New Zealand. In fact the French were the only obvious absentees although that probably says more about French lawyers than the event.

The event also revealed that English is the language of modern legal practice management with most delegates seemingly unconcerned that much of the software they were looking at was only available in English.

The layout of the venue left something to be desired, for example the conference sessions were far too remote from the main exhibition area. And a number of people said they would have liked to have seen a Dutch-style 'coffee' shop - an improper suggestion the organisers, the Ark Group, quite rightly pretended not to understand.

Despite all the unfortunate circumstances this year, most of the exhibitors we spoke with were willing to give the event another chance - Ark have already earmarked October 9 & 10 as the dates for Legal Solutions Europe 2002. The location will be Jersey in the Channel Islands.

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## IRISH LAW TECH SHOW PUT BACK UNTIL SPRING 2002 ?

The Law Society of Ireland will not be holding its biennial LawTech exhibition in Dublin this autumn. Instead the Society is considering rescheduling the event for the spring of next year.

## LEGAL TECHNOLOGY EVENTS DIARY

- **SEPTEMBER 24 & 25, NEW YORK.** LegalTech Fall (New York Hilton Hotel & Towers). [www.legaltechshow.com](http://www.legaltechshow.com)
- **SEPTEMBER 25, GLASGOW.** Special conference to launch the new Centre for Legal Information Management & Business (CLIMB) at Glasgow Caledonian University. Speakers include Richard Susskind. For details call Janet Abernethy (01506 202341).
- **SEPTEMBER 25, EDINBURGH.** Knowledge portals & client collaboration. Briefing organised by Kramer Lee & Associates and iManage. There is a similar event in Dublin on the 27th. For details call KLA on 01268 584666.
- **SEPTEMBER 26, LONDON.** Laserform Roadshows demonstrating a range of products including forms, legal accounts, case management & criminal billing systems. The national tour, which includes Belfast on 2nd October, ends in Manchester in November. For details call Andrea Priestley on 01925 750025 or email [andrea.priestley@laserform.co.uk](mailto:andrea.priestley@laserform.co.uk)
- **SEPTEMBER 28, LONDON.** Lexcel accreditation seminars for law firms and local government legal departments. Organised by Axxia (call Heidi Cranfield on 0118 960 2602) with subsequent events in Cardiff (2 October), Coventry (4 October) and Harrogate (16 October).
- **OCTOBER 9, THAMES VALLEY.** One day seminar on use of Kommunicate's RightFAX and messaging systems in conjunction with Lotus Notes and Domino. Takes place at IBM Bedfont Lakes, Feltham. For details call Kommunicate on 01962 835004.
- **OCTOBER 17-19, GLENEAGLES.** The Legal IT Forum at the Gleneagles Hotel. For details call GPM on 020 7566 5602.
- **OCTOBER 31 & 1 NOVEMBER, LONDON.** LegalTech London exhibition and conference at the Excel Centre. For details call Imark on 07000 763896.

## BEING PROFESSIONAL WITH XML

It's been a long time coming but after years of hype XML (eXtensible Markup Language) is finally making an impact on the legal IT world. Companies like SpeedLegal in Australia and Valid Information Systems, which recently redeveloped its core R/KYV electronic records management system to make it fully XML compliant, are actively supporting the platform, and the Legal Software Suppliers Association is looking at XML standards.

Now, KnowHow Systems (01483 757457) has released details on the role XML and its KcentriX content management system played in the development of the BeProfessional.com service. This is a joint venture by Berwin Leighton Paisner and Deloitte & Touche to deliver a range of professional, advisory services on legal, tax and accounting issues to small businesses over the internet.

According to KnowHow managing director Tony Foy, one of the big problems was the internet 'language conversion barrier' which makes it difficult to control the look and integrity of documents created and stored in multiple formats, including Word/RTF, HTML and PDF.

BeProfessional.com needed a common format and saw XML as the way ahead, as it allows the presentation requirements for documents to be separated from the content, which can be stored and finally transformed into differing formats as required.

For security and integrity purposes, BeProfessional.com also wanted to be able to present some documents in a non-revisable PDF format. To tackle this aspect of the project, KnowHow teamed up with CDC Solutions which has a Java based publishing system, called Xtensia, that can deliver content from XML directly into PDF.

By adding the different elements together, KnowHow's system guides users through a document assembly process by asking simple questions on standard HTML pages at the browser. KcentriX assembles the document and populates the necessary fields based on user input and the rules within the system, storing the user inputs and generated documents in XML for re-use. Then, CDC's Xtensia takes the content, fusing together the XML boilerplates and style sheets, and dynamically publishes it to a PDF file format which is then archived and available for future search or re-use.

Foy admits that it all sounds complex but says the beauty of this approach is BeProfessional.com users encounter none of the underlying technology. Instead, they simply access and complete tax forms or legal documents online and then print them out.

[www.knowhowsystems.com](http://www.knowhowsystems.com)

[www.cdcsolutions.com](http://www.cdcsolutions.com)

■ Neil Ewin, the chairman of LSSA's XML working party, will be taking part in a seminar session on XML in the civil litigation process during the LegalTech London event (Track 2 Communications & Technology) on 1st November.

## DEDICATED SEARCH TOOL FOR LAWYERS

Information for Lawyers (020 8878 3033) who launched the UK's first legal portal in February 1995, this week launched a new research tool that effectively gives lawyers a dedicated search engine.

Called the infolaw finder, it provides access to a catalogue of over 36,000 legal documents, including primary and secondary law sources, plus thousands of other key legal resources and relevant organisations - all browsable and searchable from a single access point. In addition, a 'References to this' feature also enables users to locate all web references to each of the resources listed with a single extra browser click.

Commenting on the need for the new service Information for Lawyers' managing director (and co-author of *Butterworths Researching the Legal Web*) Nick Holmes said: "Lawyers are currently frustrated by the inadequacies of search tools for the purposes of legal research and the considerable time and effort required to achieve meaningful results. Traditional global search engines are extremely good at what they do, but looking for material within a specific vertical domain you get a lot of haystack with the needles. By contrast, infolaw looks for needles in the needle box."

The service is initially being offered free of charge for an introductory period. Thereafter it will be available on an annual subscription - rates have yet to be announced. To access infolaw visit

[www.infolaw.co.uk](http://www.infolaw.co.uk)

## AFTER THE EVENT ONLINE FUNDING

Composite Legal Expenses (029 2022 2033) has launched a new 'after the event' funding and insurance scheme for law firms offering personal injury and other claims based services. Called Event Litigation Funding, the scheme provides solicitors with online access to funding. Composite say an attraction of the ELF scheme is improved cashflow as firms do not have to pay disbursements in advance as litigation proceeds.

[www.composite-legal.com](http://www.composite-legal.com)

## VIDEO CONFERENCING - STILL NOT LISTENING

Suppliers in the videoconferencing systems industry are still not listening to the market when it comes to selling to law firms. This was probably the strongest message to emerge from a roundtable conference on videoconferencing and the law recently attended by the Insider.

The event was hosted by videoconference technology developer PictureTel and it was quite clear from the demonstrations of the company's new iPower range that the latest generation of videocon systems not only offer far better data integration for working with PC applications but have also largely overcome the 'audio fatigue' (the delay in the transmission of sound) problems that made earlier units so awkward to work with.

Instead, it was the unanimous verdict of all the lawyers present at the event that the biggest inhibitor to the take up of videoconferencing by the legal community were not technology factors or even concerns about the effectiveness of video testimony but price.

All made the same point, if videoconference systems suppliers followed the example of the mobile phone industry, where hardware prices are subsidised, it would encourage more people to use it and so develop the critical mass videoconferencing needs if it is ever to move on from being a nice-to-have novelty and become an essential, must-have communications medium.

Ironically, while audio fatigue may have been banished from the actual hardware, it still remains prevalent among the suppliers of videoconferencing systems, who steadfastly rejected all criticism of their pricing strategies.

■ OK, so we are blowing our own trumpet but the Insider is pleased to report that at the end of last month editor Charles Christian successfully delivered a live keynote speech at the Rivers of Knowledge special, health and law libraries conference in Melbourne using a videolink from the UK. Our thanks to Althea Ward, at Phillips Fox, and all the other people involved with the event who were prepared to put their faith in the technology.

## LSC TO SPEND £16m ON LOCAL INNOVATION INITIATIVES

The Legal Services Commission has just announced plans to provide £16 million worth of funding over the next three years to a series of local innovation projects. This is part of a wider LSC scheme to help develop the Community Legal Service by actually putting money into local communities to encourage law centres and related organisations expand the range and scope of services they offer. Several of the projects approved for funding are of a webby nature, including web sites, online advice schemes, intranets, public information points and even a virtual law centre.

[www.legalservices.gov.uk](http://www.legalservices.gov.uk)

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## SIGNS OF RECOVERY IN UK LEGAL IT SECTOR

The economy may be teetering on the brink of recession but a growing number of suppliers are reporting an upturn in their business fortunes, suggesting that for some at least the post Y2K slump is now history.

In terms of financial results, Solicitec has just recorded a record year with turnover up 15 percent to £6 million. Over the past year the company's case management software has been implemented in over 50 new law firm sites, with the majority opting for the SolCase Online web enabled version of the system. Chairman Neil Ewin is optimistic that the company's new VisualFiles product, which is now running on SQL Server, will open up new markets for Solicitec.

Good news too at Valid Information Systems (*see also page 6*) which announced a 76 percent increase in turnover to £2.8 million for the year ended 30th April and a five-fold increase in post tax profits to £690k. Valid also wrote off £580k on R&D during this period.

And it is a similar positive story from MSS where managing director Simon Meehan reports that while sales are now almost back to the levels during the pre-Y2K boom, profitability has substantially improved as the company focuses more on software and services. Meehan anticipates a further boost when Version 1.7 of the company's flagship PMS product Vantage is released next month. Enhancements include a new criminal attendance notes system for CDS work and a CRM/marketing module.

## FALCON IN AT LINKLATERS

Linklaters has purchased a 3000 user licence version of Falcon Software's ACIS conflict of interest checking system.

In related developments: Falcon, which already has offices in Antwerp and London, has recently opened branches in Paris and Dublin. Also, for marketing and domain name purposes, the Belgian company is now trading under the new brand name and image of Anubex.

[www.anubex.com](http://www.anubex.com)

## NEW PENTIUM AND XP ? TRY A CUP OF COFFEE INSTEAD

Now here is an idea for all those law firms currently toying with the idea of upgrading to the latest Pentium 4 PCs and Microsoft Windows XP platforms. Instead of investing in technology to improve efficiency and productivity, why not start providing your staff with free coffee?

Why? Because according to researchers at Hofstra University in New York, a single cup of coffee can apparently increase typing speeds by five words a minute and even improve spelling accuracy, thus yielding a far better return on investment (or ROI) than technology.

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### ■ NEW ELITE WINS

Elite Information Systems has notched up two more wins: Thomas Eggar Church Adams and Field Fisher Waterhouse, where Elite will replace the firm's AIM system.

### ■ CRM SYSTEM EXTENDED

e1 Business (01962 831484) reports that its SalesLogix client relationship management system in the UK - the flagship legal site is Irwin Mitchell - has now been extended to include a graphical 'associations tree'. The new feature means users can now view contact associations using a graphical tree displayed on the same screen as the contact details, whereas previously these had to be accessed on a separate tab. The SalesLogix product was developed in the United States by Interact Commerce, which is probably best known in the UK for its ACT! contact management system.

### ■ STIBBE TO GO WITH CMS OPEN

Although at one stage there were reports that Stibbe, the pan-European law firm, might replace its old Timesoft Hansco AS/400 accounts software with Elite, following the recent demerger of its Paris office, the 350 lawyer firm last week signed up to implement the rival CMS Open PMS system. The contract was won by the Dutch reseller of Solution 6/CMS, namely Timesoft Hansco.

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