



Searchflow wins this year's SCL award

The online conveyancing searches service Searchflow has won the Society for Computers and Law's 2002 award for "the most outstanding application of information technology to the law".

Andrew Levison, the chairman of the SCL award committee, told the Insider that the judges were impressed by Searchflow's "incredible technology" plus the fact this was a system "that would touch the lives of most people" as it should have a positive impact on the speed and cost of buying any home or piece of property in England and Wales.

The Searchflow service is one of three official channels under the Government's National Land Information Service (NLIS) initiative to help create an electronic conveyancing system. To date 60% of all NLIS searches, including HM Land Registry and local authority, are ordered via Searchflow.

The winner of the SCL award was announced by Lord Peter Goldsmith, QC Attorney General, at a presentation at The Law Society in London on Monday evening. The three runners up were the IntellX document assembly system from Business Integrity, Elite Information Systems' Digital Dashboard and the Granite & Comfrey Knowledge Management Taxonomy System.

■ In a related development, Searchflow has just announced a further enhancement to its service - a web based facility containing details of all determined and undetermined planning applications in the last five years within a 250 metres radius of a property. This planning data - called Plansearch Residential - will be sourced from Landmark Information Group. Plansearch also highlights flood plains and land use policy information.

DPS site goes ASP

Orpington criminal practice and long time DPS case management software user Graham Dobson & Co has migrated to a new FM/ASP service from DPS. Under the new service all the firm's applications, including Microsoft Office plus the DPS criminal practice and accounts software, are hosted and managed on servers at DPS' secure data centre and accessed by Graham Dobson staff via thin client terminals.

The firm's principal Graham Dobson is full of praise for the practical aspects of ASP, including performance and reliability, but he also cites some key commercial benefits. In particular, because he no longer has to employ inhouse IT support staff, his annual maintenance bill has been cut by 60% a year, enough to hire another fee earner instead.

The No.1 Legal Technology Site www.legaltechnology.com

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- breaking news stories
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- a full diary of legal IT events
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- virus and hoax reports
- the Legal Technology Jobs Board
- the Hit List of the UK's busiest legal sites
- the Legal Technology Solution Finder
- exclusive portal links to the Legal Software Suppliers Association (LSSA)

Mountain moves into the Bar systems market

Grantham based Mountain Software, best known as a supplier of accounts and case management systems to small-to-mid sized solicitors practices, has completed the purchase of Meridian Law, the supplier of IT systems to over 60% of barristers chambers in England & Wales. Mountain is taking on all Meridian's staff, with the exception of company founder John Willis who is taking a sabbatical from the commercial world, as well as Meridian's London and Manchester offices.

The deal gives the combined business an annual turnover approaching £6 million and over 80 employees, including a 20 strong inhouse development team. Steve Kendrick of Mountain told the Insider that the company was committed to the ongoing development of Meridian's Bar software, including support for recent initiatives such as the Freedom/Clerksroom ASP venture.

The Meridian deal is Mountain's second acquisition in recent months. Last year it also took over Ray Hemmingway's coroners court business which supplies administration software to two-thirds of the coroner's courts in England & Wales. Confusingly, Meridian Law is no relation to Meridian Legal Systems of Stamford, which sells the SolPak range of software to law firms.

News in brief

■ FOUR WINS FOR VIDESS

Videss won four orders, worth a total of £500K during the course of December, that brings the number of end users licenced to use Videss software to 6000. The biggest order came from 200 user Coffin Mew & Clover in Hampshire. The firm was an Usher site before moving to AIM when Ushers failed. The other wins were Machins in Luton, from TFB, Budd Martin Burrett in Essex from AIM, and the recently merged Blackhurst Swainson in Lancashire, which had been running Videss and Linetime.

■ MILES RESULTS MILES BETTER

Miles 33 has reported pre-tax profits up 25% at £2,446,000 (2000 - £1.96 million) for the year ended 30 September 2001. Turnover was up 6% to £8.3 million and group year end cash balances stand at £8.4 million (2000 - £7 million). Miles now commits over 10% of turnover to new product R&D.

■ AXXIA SENT TO COVENTRY

Coventry's Sarginsons Hughes & Masser is implementing Axxia's Case Management software to support its conveyancing practice, one of the largest in the Midlands. The firm sees the introduction of Case as a cornerstone not just of immediate delivery improvements but of future innovations, including clients having online access to case status reports and extranet links from the firm to estate agents, mortgage lenders, insurers and surveyors. Sarginsons is one of the first firms to buy Case from Axxia on a best of breed basis, independent of its accounts system.

Griffith Smith, on the South coast, is to expand its existing Axxia accounts system by rolling out a range of productivity tools to fee earners. Axxia will also be responsible for the firm's new network infrastructure, which includes the introduction of thin client technology in the firm's five branch offices.

■ ALTERNATIVE TO RESELL ISYS

Alternative Team (020 7700 1616) has been appointed a reseller for the ISYS range of knowledge management and information retrieval products. ISYS pricing starts at £150 per user for the networked version. The latest web enabled version 6.0 of ISYS can convert legacy documents to HTML on the fly. Highly rated in the US, to-date the only major UK legal user of ISYS is Norton Rose.

Workshare cleans up the top 10

Legal systems developer Workshare Technology reports that the UK's top 10 largest law firms have all now purchased the company's Deltaview redliner software. The latest win (using the ICC/*Legal 500* rankings) is Hammond Suddards Edge.

Workshare CTO Barrie Hadfield said the company planned to duplicate this success with its new Synergy "document change management" software for multiple author collaboration applications. Herbert Smith has already placed a 1500 user licence order for Synergy and Workshare recently recruited document management specialist Eliza Hedegaard from Tikit to head up sales of Synergy in the legal sector.

What makes buyers tick ?

Select Legal Systems has carried out a survey of its user base to try to discover which factors influence law firm IT purchase decisions. On a scale of 1 to 5 (with 5 the highest rating) the survey found having a supplier that was a Microsoft certified solution provider (4.0) was more important than a supplier listed in the Law Society Software Solutions Guide (2.0). The availability of ASP hosting services also received a low 2.16 rating, while the most desirable feature (4.67) was a supplier that could source and support a firm's entire IT infrastructure.

Can pay but won't pay

According to PricewaterhouseCoopers' latest annual survey of financial management within law firms, 65% of firms in the sample reported that the average client takes over 150 days to pay its bills, a 20% deterioration on the year 2000. PwC said lawyers had only themselves to blame for not billing and collecting debts quickly enough. This is a warning that should give heart to all those IT suppliers who have been struggling for the past five years to get firms to buy or implement client credit control and automatic/fee earner desktop billing systems.

AllVoice slays the Dragon - just

A US bankruptcy court has finally approved ScanSoft's bid to acquire the speech business assets (probably the best known part is the Dragon NaturallySpeaking voice recognition product range) of the now bankrupt Lernout & Hauspie (L&H) group. In addition the court has approved the settlement of a long running patents dispute between Dragon and the UK speech recognition company AllVoice Computing. Although AllVoice originally claimed nearly £40 million in damages, L&H's bankruptcy means the settlement is only worth £400,000 in cash and shares. AllVoice itself has suffered in recent years with turnover falling from over £1 million in 1995 to £176,000 last year.

Microsoft to renew focus on UK legal sector

Microsoft UK and legal IT specialist supplier First Stop Computer Group recently took senior IT staff from five major UK law firms to the Microsoft HQ in Redmond, Seattle. The two day event was intended to give an overview of the Microsoft vision for the future and how it can and will enhance and improve Microsoft infrastructures from a legal perspective.

According to Nick Taylor-Delahoy, the chief information officer at Nabarro Nathanson: "this event was like drinking from a fire hose. It was the most information rich two days of this year for me". Other participants included Tony Rowe of Clifford Chance, David Hamilton of Freshfields, Peter Owen of Eversheds and Janet Day of Berwin Leighton Paisner.

Microsoft UK business manager Anabel Lopez said the event had been "the most successful legal briefing run to date. There are certain Microsoft technologies, such as Pocket PC, Tablet PC and the new .NET strategies, that will revolutionise the way all lawyers will work in the future. It is a very exciting time for all concerned with IT and the feedback we have received from the clients certainly helped us understand further what Microsoft need to do to address some of the challenges law firms face."

Following the success of this event, Microsoft plans to run similar events annually and punctuate the interim period with quarterly legal user group briefings in London and Microsoft's UK head office in Reading.

The one Microsoft product that seems to have left people deeply unimpressed is SharePoint Portal Server, which was described by one of the Seattle visitors as "a solution looking for a problem". Although to be fair, Microsoft themselves are not portraying SPPS as a full blown document management system that could take on DOCS Open or iManage but rather as a portal through to other databases.

First Stop will also be organising a number of locally based technology briefing sessions in conjunction with Microsoft.

Two more iManage wins for KLA

West End commercial firm Fladgate Fielder has selected iManage WorkSite as its preferred document management system. Kramer Lee & Associates (KLA), who have provided technical support for the firm's existing DMS, have been selected to project manage the iManage implementation. Fladgate plans to use iManage not only as an enhanced document and content management system but also to provide the basis for extranet and know-how facilities.

KLA have also won a contract to swap out the existing Hummingbird DOCS Open document management system at Clyde & Co and implement iManage in its place. The new system will also be going into the firm's various overseas offices. IT manager Clive Nicholas said that along with support for the overseas offices, Clyde & Co were impressed by the iManage's ability to build and support collaborative virtual dealrooms.

News in brief

■ PENSIONS FIRM ORDERS ELITE

Sacker & Partners, one of the UK's leading pensions law firms, has signed contracts to implement Elite's practice management system. One factor influencing the choice of Elite was the availability of a web browser interface, rather than conventional fat client terminals, for fee earners.

■ DLA BUYS INTERACTION

DLA is buying the InterAction CRM system which will be integrated with DLA's Gemini intranet portal. DLA IT director Daniel Pollick said one of the attractions was the flexible architecture of the InterAction Relationship Intelligence Server (IRIS) which would allow fee earners to access InterAction data through existing web browser screens without having to learn another application.

■ MORE E-LEARNING PROGRAMMES

TutorPro (01403 741880), the developer of e-learning courses for legal software applications, is extending its range to include modules for CMS Open and Carpe Diem. TutorPro already has courses for DeltaView, Concordance, DOCS Open, iManage and Elite, as well as applications such as Word, Excel and Outlook, in use in 14 UK firms.

www.tutorpro.com

Correction

In the last issue of the Insider we reported industry speculation that Solution 6 recently had exploratory talks with Keystone Solutions and Axxia Systems. Keystone subsequently confirmed their discussions, adding that they "are at a very early stage and may or may not lead to a transaction." Unfortunately our reference to Axxia was incorrect. Representatives of Axxia have not met with Solution 6 for talks of any sort, nor have they any plans to do so.

We are not sure if this is a return to the bad old days of legal IT, when suppliers habitually slagged off each other but here on the Insider we have detected a significant increase in the amount of malicious rumours in circulation in recent months, with Axxia the latest victim of negative spin. It is unprofessional and it harms the credibility of the industry - maybe the suppliers' organisation LSSA should intervene?

People & Places

Anthony Pinsent, a former chairman of the Lloyds Brokers Committee and director of AON, has joined **Alternative Team Ltd** in a consultancy role and will be working on insurance and legal software related projects.

John Gailey, previously with **Pilgrim Systems**, has joined **Solicitec** where he will be working with the team marketing the company's new Visualfiles system.

Following the appointment of **Stephen Murphy** as sales director for Spain, **Simon Black** and **Helen Freestone** are now looking after **Hummingbird** DMS and portal customers in the UK legal sector.

Long time **Axxia** staffer **Graham Mills** has joined **Elite Information Systems**, where he takes up the new position of senior product manager with responsibility for the UK and Continental markets.

Solution 6 has opened a new office in Paris (+33 (0) 1 462 51870) which will house all CMS Open and CABS consultants working in France. It will also act as a focal point for all Solution 6 sales activities in Continental Europe, with the exception of the Benelux region, which continues to be covered by Dutch reseller, **Timesoft-Hansco**.

After a period outside the legal sector, working as a consultant in the foot & mouth ravaged tourist industry, independent consultant **Duncan Finlyson** is back in the legal sector advising the **Law Society** on its proposed new client relations rules - and ensuring they are compatible with the **Legal Services Commission's** own standards.

In the aftermath of its takeover by **Opsis**, Stamford based **Solace Legal Systems** will, with effect from 1st February, change its name to **Opsis Practice Management Solutions**. Solace founder **Peter Walker** remains with the company as technical director.

Legal technology jobs board

If you are a law firm or supplier looking for legal IT staff, including positions in sales, development, support and training, post your vacancies free on the Insider web site. Email the details to news@legaltechnology.com

■ **This week's top job:** Practical Solutions is looking for an IT consultant to advise mid to large law firms on a range of business and IT strategy issues. Salary £50K + benefits.

Business solutions - not software solutions

He is the best known and undoubtedly the most controversial IT consultant working in the UK legal market today but is there still a need for people like Andrew Levison of Baker Robbins?

The criticisms we hear fall into three categories: The first is Baker Robbins can no longer claim to be independent because it now undertakes implementation projects. The second is Levison risks going the same way of the Dodo as more and more firms employ good quality IT directors, build up their own inhouse expertise and so no longer need consultants to help them select their IT systems. And, the third is traditional consultants risk being pushed down market as larger firms turn to top level management consultancies such as Bain & Co and McKinsey.

Levison is well aware of the rumours that he will only recommend certain products so Baker Robbins can also win the follow up implementation business. Leaving aside the obvious riposte that this criticism is most frequently levied by suppliers who miss out on a Levison tender, he is keen to stress that Baker Robbins are not just another system integrator because, unlike other integrators, they do not re-sell software product.

Levison says this will always be a key differentiator between his firm and the rest of the market but adds that it needs to be understood in the context of Baker Robbins' belief that what law firms should focus on today is "business solutions rather than software solutions".

To this end Levison also believes that while some consultants have ceased to have a role, Baker Robbins is set to go from strength to strength because it can offer more than mere IT selection services. "We are into solving business problems and because we can also deliver integration services, we can give our clients the freedom to choose the solutions they need, rather than make do with whatever package products a supplier can offer."

But what about the provision of higher level strategic advice? Levison says he is increasingly being asked for advice of this kind from firms of all sizes. NDAs prevent him disclosing names but these include more than 50% of the top 20 firms, including one that threw out a "top level" consultancy after six weeks when it became clear how little they understood of the legal market.

So there is life after technology

Life's a bitch and then you die but some people do manage to escape. Howard Slone, of Elliott Slone, has done it, concluding the final element of his buyout deal with the Williams Lea group just before Christmas and now living in France. (His co-founder Jo Elliott remains with Williams Lea.) However one of the more dramatic life style changes can be claimed by Jackie Wyles, who for many years ran the old Oyez legal accounts bureau. She has swapped a computer room in Bermondsey for a swimming pool in Hollywood, where she is now the housekeeper for her brother, the movie actor Gary Oldman. Her sister, the actress Laila Morse, plays the character Big Mo in the soap *EastEnders*.

Legal IT 2002 exhibition preview

It may still only be January but next month's Legal IT show at the Business Design Centre in North London (6 & 7 February - for more details see diary listing) already looks like being the biggest exhibition of the year 2002 in the UK legal technology events calendar.

With law firms having apparently recovered from their autumnal worries about an economic downturn, the organisers report that pre-registration bookings for tickets are running 30% up on last year. And, the exhibitors are also pulling out all the stops. For example Axxia Systems will have its biggest presence ever at a legal show, with two stands featuring both conventional displays and presentations by various user firms.

Axxia (Stands 1 & 16) also promises a major new product launch but is not disclosing details until the event - we will however have a report on this and other new launches in our show review in the next issue. In the meantime, new product debuts we do have information on include: **Solicitec (Stand 19)** who are launching the latest version of their case management system SolCase Version 7.0, along with SolFile - a new entry level case and file management system and Visualdocs - a new intelligent document assembly system.

Among other launches from established suppliers are a multi currency facility for the Evolution/Client Server PMS system from **AIM (Stand 20)**. The system allows different currency transactions to co-exist on the same ledger/€uro triangulation. **TFB (Stand 15)** is also showing a multi-currency/€uro facility along with a new Criminal Defence Services (CDS) module. **DPS Software (Stand 6)** is showing its new ASP service for practice and case management applications (you can also find ASP services on the Axxia stands and see also story on page 1). And, **Kommunicate (Stand 11)** is adding to its wide range of comms products with the launch of Text Message Server, a multi-user SMS texting management application, as well as diversifying into new areas with OnBase, a web based integrated document and workflow management system.

Turning to the companies making their legal market public debuts at Legal IT 2002... **EMIS Legal (Stand 12)** will be showing its new Seneca document and knowledge management software. **APX Systems (Stand 39)** is giving its first public demonstrations of a new secure electronic document exchange system. APX say key features include compatibility with existing desktop applications and ease of use so extra training is not required.

Staying in the realms of online security, the memorably named **Indicii Salus (Stand 2)** is using the event to launch its Xenophon PKI security system for internet e-commerce transactions. One of the interesting features of the system is that it is server-centric and so can support a variety of applications and devices, including PDAs and wireless networks. Finally, **EuroProspectus.com (Stand 32)** will be demonstrating its new text searchable prospectus database (DealMaker) and M&A database (RainMaker) which provide users with the ability to download from over 100,000 prospectuses and M&A documents.

Legal technology events diary

■ **JANUARY 29 & 30, LONDON.** E-Law Symposium. Two day conference - the first day is devoted to extranets, while the second (chaired by Insider editor Charles Christian) will focus on knowledge management. For details call Osney on 020 7880 0000 or visit www.osneymedia.co.uk

■ **FEBRUARY 4-6, NEW YORK.** LegalTech New York (Hilton Hotel & Towers). www.legaltechshow.com

■ **FEBRUARY 6 & 7, LONDON.** Legal IT 2002 at the Islington Business Design Centre. Free exhibition with accompanying free keynote speaker programme. Speakers include Andrew Terrett, Gerald Newman, Neil Cameron and Andrew Levison. Exhibition doors open at 9:30am. Register for tickets online at www.legalitshow.com

■ **FEBRUARY 26 & 27, LONDON.** The Information Systems for Lawyers conference. The event includes sessions on: strategic vision from McKinsey, using IT to win more business, measuring the ROI on IT and service delivery to clients. There is also an optional half day workshop on IT training. Chaired by Chris Bull from Osborne Clarke, the show takes place at a new venue - the recently refurbished Hotel Russell in Holborn. For details call 020 7970 4713 or email swarshal@centaur.co.uk

■ **FEBRUARY 28, LONDON.** Managing Know-How breakfast briefing at the Law Society organised by KM vendor Solcara. For details email charlie.orourke@solcara.com

■ **MARCH 5 & 6, LONDON.** Knowledge Management in the Legal Profession - two day conference at the Kensington Hilton Hotel, with optional third day on the role of professional support lawyers. Organised by the Ark Group, the publishers of *Managing Partner* magazine, chaired by Andrew Levison and sponsored by Legal Technology Insider. For details call 020 8785 2700.

■ **MARCH 13 & 14, BIRMINGHAM NEC.** Solicitors National Legal Office Exhibition. For details call 01635 588866 or visit www.solicitors-legal.com

Online news in brief

■ **DISCLAW LAUNCHES EXTRANET**
DiscLaw Publishing, the company behind the popular EmpLaw employment law site, has launched an extranet product offering solicitors a source of regularly updated employment law content for their own web sites. There are a number of options available, ranging from free content for marketing sites through to password protected material for firms wanting to charge for access. An online presentation of the new service is available.

www.emplaw.co.uk

■ **NEW VIRTUAL DATAROOM**
DespatchBox (01296 398100) has launched an out-of-the-box virtual DataRoom system, incorporating PKI security and digital rights management technology. The product offers broadly the same capabilities as PeopleDoc's (now part of Hummingbird) managed data room service launched last spring in conjunction with Williams Lea.

www.despatchbox.com

■ **ONLINE PROPERTY LAW UPDATE**
MARPLUS is a new, low cost property law service providing a monthly synopsis of key case law, legislation and practice changes sent by email to subscribers and backed by its own web site. Written by John Martin of Pinsent Curtis Biddle and Professor Peter Reekie, it costs £210 + VAT per year per firm. There is also an HTML version that can be placed on a law firm's intranet.

www.marplus.co.uk

■ **REVENUES UP AT SIFT**
Sift, the online services company behind the LawZone and AccountingWeb portals, has announced a 135% in revenues to £2.3 million for the year ended 31 December 2001.

■ **2 PERCENT OF DIVORCES ONLINE**
According to Mark Keenan, the founder of the Divorce-Online service, based on the latest government statistics (there were 144,000 divorces in 2000-2001) his company last year processed close to 2% of all divorce proceedings commenced in England & Wales. Keenan says "the potential for growth in the business remains huge" because so many divorces are uncontested, so few people are eligible for legal aid and online services are so cheap, costing just £80 compared with £1000 in some parts of the country.

Linklaters first to buy DealBuilder

Linklaters has become the first magic circle firm to buy the DealBuilder document assembly system from Business Integrity. The system will be used to enhance Linklaters' Blue Flag online service by allowing clients to automatically assemble complex contracts from simple web based questionnaires without jeopardising the legal integrity of the completed document.

Commenting on the deal, Blue Flag CEO Patrick Haynes said that although document assembly is not a new concept "until recently the time, costs and inaccuracies involved outweighed the potential benefits. DealBuilder changes the game, enabling us to automate documents easily and quickly but above all with complete accuracy".

DealBuilder lets users generate contracts from automated masters documents (themselves created by Business Integrity's companion template creation product IntellX - a runner up for this year's SCL award) by converting them into web based questionnaires. According to Business Integrity (020 7814 6900) co-founder Richard Newton, the company "is also in advanced talks" with other magic circle and top 10 law firms.

Email disclaimers in context

One of the most striking features of law firm email messages is the size and scope of the various disclaimers and privacy notices they contain. But are these blanket disclaimers entirely relevant? For example, is it appropriate to use the same disclaimer for emails to clients or co-counsel that you use for third parties?

If this keeps you awake at night you might check out Red Earth Software's new Policy Patrol 1.2 product. This is an add-on for Microsoft Exchange 2000/5.5 and Lotus Notes/Domino that allows users to set context sensitive disclaimers, formatting and signatures both to outgoing emails and internal messaging.

Policy Patrol pricing starts from \$119 for 10 users. A 30 day free evaluation version can be downloaded from:

www.policypatrol.com/downloadfrm.htm

LCD hit by the enemy within

In response to questions raised by the Liberal Democrats, the Lord Chancellor's Department has admitted that hackers have tried break into its computer systems on 19 occasions over the past five years. Ironically 16 of these hack attacks came from within the department itself, possibly using some of the 77 computers the LCD reported stolen over the same period.

Elsewhere along the corridors of power, the Northern Ireland Office is coming in for extensive criticism for having already spent over £52 million on Lord Saville's Bloody Sunday inquiry, including £13.3 million on IT and courtroom presentation systems. With the inquiry expected to last another two years, the final bill for taxpayers is likely to be more than £100 million.

Online blast from the past

LawPak Financial Systems (020 8249 6028) the company behind Harry Freeman's old 1978 vintage DOS based legal accounts package, have now launched LawPak32 Online. This is an ASP version of the application, offering direct access for data entry and retrieval, via the internet, on a 2p per minute pay per view basis plus a £25 per week maintenance and support charge. LawPak can also offer bookkeeping services on a bureau basis. www.lawpak.co.uk

Wordprocessing news in brief

■ WORD VBA TRAINING

Specialist legal software developers Kutana will be running a series of two day Microsoft Word Visual Basic (VBA) courses, commencing on March 25. The courses are offered at introductory and more advanced levels. Delegates can learn how to create templates and macros for swift and efficient document production. For details visit www.kutana.co.uk

■ REVEALING THE REVEAL CODES

The US wordprocessing software add-ons developer Levit & James has released a new program - CrossEyes version 1.0 - that gives firms who have just migrated from WordPerfect the ability to open up and display the formatting codes in Microsoft Word. The list price is \$75. For details visit www.levitjames.com

■ OFFSHORE PROCESSING

Atul Jain of the Indian text and document processing bureau WinFocus will be in the UK in February to meet up with law firms interested in outsourcing dictation transcription, document management and litigation support work to India. WinFocus reckon firms can cut costs by as much as 60% by outsourcing via a high bandwidth internet link. Remote transcription can also be processed with dictation saved as .dss/.wav files and then uploaded from the UK via FTP/email for typing by WinFocus in the user's choice of text or templates. For more details email infowfpl@sify.com or visit www.winfocus.net

■ WHERE IS THE € URO SIGN ?

Regardless of your politics, the €uro is now a fact of life - but can your wordprocessing system handle it? If you are running the latest software and PC hardware you may find you already have keyboard support for the "€" symbol. If not, the following sources may help:

Both Microsoft and Adobe have fonts containing the €uro symbol that can be downloaded free of charge from the web. In addition Microsoft's Technet site contains white papers (search for 'euro') on which applications may need upgrading to achieve €uro compatibility. Finally, IBM has a free EuroReady Reckoner download for calculating currency conversions.

- www.microsoft.com/typography/fontpack
- www.adobe.com/support/downloads
- www.microsoft.com/technet
- www.ibm.com/euro

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Digital dictation off to a flying start in 2002

Digital dictation, one of the technologies the Insider predicts will have a great future in the year 2002, has made a flying start with the announcement that Ashurst Morris Crisp is dispensing with traditional analogue tape and rolling out BigHand's TotalSpeech digital dictation workflow software in what will be one of the largest uptakes of digital speech technology in the UK legal market to date. The system will be rolled out by department to 700 users in AMC's London office between now and March.

In other digital dictation and speech technology related news...

■ DIGITAL DICTATION EVENING

BigHand is hosting a discussion evening on the role of digital dictation on Thursday 31 January at The Law Society in London. The panel of speakers includes Robin Farey of AMC, Lewis Silkin head of IT Jan Durrant and Ashley Jones of Lovells, another major TotalSpeech user. The event starts at 6:30pm. For details call Dan Speed on 020 7793 8264.

■ SPEECH MIKE INTEGRATED WITH WORKFLOW

nFlow Software (01245 463377) has released a new version of its DictaFlow digital dictation workflow server software that supports the popular Philips SpeechMike Executive system. The server add-on means users no longer have to operate SpeechMike in a stand-alone environment.

■ MORGAN COLE ORDERS SPEECH RECOGNITION

Morgan Cole last week announced it is to spend over £100k on the roll out of a new speech recognition and digital dictation workflow system from SRC (020 7471 0127) that will be going into the firm's six offices and eventually be used by all 380 fee earners. The order, which follows an earlier pilot programme, will see the implementation of both a digital dictation workflow system from SRC and a pure speech recognition system. The later is based on Dragon NaturallySpeaking Version 5 software with a bespoke vocabulary developed by SRC which includes over 12,500 words and phrases specific to Morgan Cole and automatically incorporates the firm's house style for sentence construction.

■ HOWARD KENNEDY USING REMOTE VOICEPATH

Howard Kennedy, which in the 1990s piloted and then dropped speech recognition, is reporting major improvements in both efficiency and fee earner-to-support staff ratios since introducing a digital dictation system that gives lawyers the option of routing transcription to a network of teleworkers located around the UK. Although users retain the option of having work transcribed inhouse, the remote service has proved invaluable in overcoming the backlogs of work that can build up when staff are absent or during busy times. The remote transcription service is supplied by Voicepath (01926 821909) and is configured to be fully integrated with the firm's Worldox DMS.

News in brief

■ SUNRISES ON HELP DESKS

A frequent complaint the Insider hears about legal IT suppliers is the poor quality of their support help desks. One vendor determined to avoid this failing is Axxia Systems which 18 months ago installed the new Enterprise customer support system from Sunrise Software (020 8391 9000). With the addition of an extranet interface developed by Axxia, the new system provides users with multiple ways of logging calls plus web access to progress reports, FAQs and bug fixes.

According to Axxia administrator Vicky Neiva, the introduction of the Sunrise system had two key benefits. The first was to give the support desk extra functionality and the capacity to handle calls from Axxia's growing user base. The second, on the evidence of surveys and user group feedback, has been a marked increase in customer satisfaction.

www.sunrisesoftware.co.uk

■ PANNONE COMPLETES .NET MOVE

Associated Network Solutions (0870 6000 900) last week completed a major network infrastructure project at Pannone & Partners that has seen the Manchester firm upgrade from Novell NetWare and GroupWise to a Microsoft .NET platform. The project, which has included the installation of new server hardware, Windows 2000, Exchange 2000, Microsoft Office XP and Citrix MetaFrame, is intended both to strengthen the firm's current capability and provide a foundation for future intranet and extranet plans.

www.ansplc.com

LEGAL TECHNOLOGY INSIDER

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