Decision day for legal IT events ?

Today (13 February) could be decision day for the future of legal IT events in the UK as the Legal Software Suppliers Organisation (LSSA) meets with representatives of Cordial and Imark, the UK's two main exhibition organisers, to discuss plans for future events.

What concerns suppliers is not just the growing number of events fighting for their time and a share of their marketing budgets but also the fact that visitor numbers seem to be falling as the market becomes increasingly cannibalised.

For example this year is currently scheduled to see four national exhibitions plus at least 10 other conferences and events offering niche or mini-exhibition facilities. October is a particularly busy month with four events in the space of just over a fortnight, including one clash of dates.

LSSA is not disclosing its intentions at this stage but with many suppliers saying they want just one big London show and one smaller regional event, it remains a possibility that LSSA will opt to endorse one organiser's events and leave the other jilted at the altar.

Also in this issue

www.legaltechnology.com
For the latest news plus additional resources visit the award winning Insider web site.

SAP wins Linklaters ERP deal

After months of speculation, Linklaters has confirmed that it has awarded the contract for its next generation practice management systems infrastructure to SAP. Although virtually unknown in the legal market, SAP is the third largest software company in the world and this contract adds credence to the argument that major league global law firms have outgrown the capabilities of traditional legal software suppliers and now need industrial strength ERP (enterprise resource planning) systems.

Linklaters will be implementing the mySAP.com software which will, in due course, replace the incumbent ResSoft PMS system. A Keystone plus Oracle Financials combined solution was one of the offerings rejected on the final Linklaters short list.

MIL name goes in merger

Is the UK legal systems market about to rationalise? One of the sector's older names MIL (Management Interface Ltd) is to disappear from the scene following the company's merger a fortnight ago with Greenwich-based SoftDesign Services Ltd.

SoftDesign's sales & marketing manager Phil Heath told the Insider that as part of the deal, the merged business would not only support existing MIL customers on an "as is" basis but was also keen to continue distributing the MSS AlphaLaw range of software to law firms.

In terms of what it brings to the party, while the SoftDesign (020 8293 3123) name may not be that familiar in legal circles, the company has actually been providing what it calls 'managed IT services' - including outsourcing, facilities management, consultancy, systems integration and bespoke programming - to solicitors practices and barristers chambers for over 20 years. One of its flagship customers is Vizards Wyeth, which has been using SoftDesign to manage and support its IT systems for the past six years.
■ Still in the realms of consolidation, the Insider has learned that another legal IT vendor, best known for case management software (and it is not Solicitec) is currently looking to acquire a small-to-mid sized accounts and/or case management supplier.
www.softdesign-services.com

Legal IT best show in 5 years

Last week's Legal IT 2002 exhibition in London is already being described by visitors and exhibitors as the best legal technology event the UK has seen in five years. Although visitor numbers - just over 2200 - were only 4% up on last year , almost without exception exhibitors were reporting that the people visiting their stands were good quality and in the market for new systems.
■ Legal IT 2003 will take place at the same venue - the Business Design Centre - on 12 & 13 February. The date has been moved back one week to avoid overlapping with LegalTech New York.

News in brief

■ **NORWEL IN AT HAMMERSMITH**
The London borough of Hammersmith & Fulham has selected Norwel as the preferred supplier of its new debt recovery, practice and case management systems.

■ **CPS SIGNS LOGICA DEAL**
The Crown Prosecution Service has signed a "a multi million pound contract" with Logica for a standardised case management system, called Compass, that will be installed in all 42 CPS areas in England & Wales by the end of 2004. The contract is scheduled to run for 10 years and will eventually put a Compass terminal "on the desk of every user in every criminal court in the country".

■ **NEW AUTOMATED DMS**
Reef Document Solutions (0114 221 1752) is now shipping its PowerRetrieve automated document management system. Reef say the system has two key benefits: a more compact indexing system and file retrieval based on adaptive pattern recognition (APR).

People & Places

Dr Colin Paice, of professional negligence specialists **Henmans**, has been elected the new chairman of the **Solicitec User Group**.

iManage is claiming a major coup with the recruitment of **Mahshid Rafizadeh**, previously director of professional services at rival DMS supplier **Hummingbird**, as iManage's new director of customer excellence for the EMEA region.

John Keane, widely rated as one of the best salesmen in the market, has returned to **Valid Information Systems** (previously **Ymijs**) to head up sales of the company's R/KYV system into the central government sector. After leaving Valid in 1997, Keane was with **CMS** (now **Solution 6**) and most recently Belgium based **Falcon/Anubex**.

Grant Mackie has been appointed general manager of **Legal Document Management Ltd (LDM)**. He joins the company from **Hays IMS**.

Following the recent appointment of **Eliza Hedegaard** as legal account manager (see last Insider) **Workshare Technology** has further beefed up its sales operation with the appointment of **Clive Lamb** as its new sales & marketing director.

SCL AGM SAYS OK TO MAJOR CHANGES

Last week's annual general meeting of the Society for Computers & Law saw the organisation approve a discussion paper from joint chairman Harry Small and Laurie West-Knights QC containing plans to restructure the SCL to make it a more effective and dynamic organisation. In effect the proposals, which still need to be formally sanctioned by an EGM in March, will strip out a layer of red tape - the old SCL council - so the people interested in helping the SCL can put their time to the best use rather than waste it discussing minutiae at endless committee meetings. And about time too.

The SCL has also published its accounts for the year to 31 March 2001. After last year's blip, which saw the Society report a £30K loss, the organisation is back in the black with a profit of £22.6K and just over £90K of accumulated funds in the bank. And this is despite the fact the SCL was much more active, including totally redeveloping its web site, during this period.

Copitrak cracks Magic Circle

Perseverance has been rewarded. After a five year campaign to re-establish the product in the UK, Keith Child's Copitrak business has won a major order from a Magic Circle firm (we are not allowed to publish the name) to install its cost recovery systems at the firm's new office building. The deal also anticipates Copitrak replacing the cost recovery systems from arch-rival Equitrac that are currently installed in the firm's existing offices. Copitrak is also in the final stages of negotiating deals with one other Magic Circle firm and a top 20 practice.

Brands on the run at Pericom

Pericom, which despite having only entered the legal market a couple of years ago already has one of the fastest growing law firm user bases in the country, has indulged in a well needed rationalisation of its product names and branding.

Out goes the wordy Paragon and FWBS Epitome OMS brand names and in comes the Pericom Practice Management System and Office Management System. (The latter is in effect a document and workflow management system.) Explaining the changes at a recent legal users' open day, Pericom chairman Ron Cragg said the objective was not name changing for its own sake but to focus on the business solutions the company could offer and avoid confusing sales prospects as to who Pericom was and what its products could do.

In addition to its Milton Keynes (01908 265533) head office, Pericom's legal division now has offices in York, Yeovil and Fareham. David Amies, whose CTS business was acquired by Pericom, has joined the company's board as a director. Felicity Duff, who previously worked on web site projects for Pericom, has joined the legal team as a regional sales manager.

ROI finally recognised as a serious issue

Are law firms finally recognising the importance of trying to measure their expected return on investment (ROI) before they embark upon an expensive IT project?

From conversations the Insider has had with both systems suppliers and finance houses, it does appear that the penny is finally starting to drop, particularly among those larger firms where the recent downturn in commercial business has seen finance directors gaining more influence at the expense of IT directors. However, according to Jonathan Smith of Siemens Financial Services (previously Schroder Leasing) there are still far too many smaller firms rushing into expensive IT upgrade projects without adequately considering the business case or else seeking to justify it on vague, wishy-washy grounds such as "it will help us provide a better service for our clients".

Smith says instead of worrying about how much the system is going to cost, a firm should ask "how much is it going to save us?" and "how much extra money will it help us earn?"

■ In an interesting footnote, the CEO of one systems supplier said legal IT consultants were partly to blame for the widespread ignorance of ROI issues because they focussed exclusively on system selection and price rather than the business benefits of IT.

CMS in BPM workflow deal

Solution 6, the company behind the CMS Open PMS software, last week announced a global distribution deal with Teamflo (an offshoot of Scottish legal systems developer Infographics) that will see Solution 6 resell Teamflo's new FloSuite workflow/BPM (business process management) products into the legal market.

FloSuite, which is built on Microsoft's new .NET platform, will help provide CMS Open users with case and workflow management systems that are fully integrated with their practice management software. Russell Wood of Teamflo said a major attraction of FloSuite will be that new workflows can be defined by users in Microsoft Visio, thus avoiding the need for any scripting or programming.

■ Fladgate Fielder has become the first CMS user in the UK to buy the InterAction client relationship management system from Solution 6. The move follows last year's strategic partnership between Solution 6 and CRM specialists Interface Software.

Solution 6 has also signed a reseller agreement with PYA InfoSolutions to sell PYA's Practice Intelligence system as an add-on to CMS. PYA's product is in effect a legal management information system (MIS) based on Cognos reporting software.

Award for Insider web site

The Legal Technology Insider web site has been rated 'Site of the Month' by the influential US portal Internet Tools for Lawyers.

www.netlawtools.com

News in brief

■ **CLIFFORD CHANCE DOCS UPGRADE**
Clifford Chance has purchased licences from Hummingbird to upgrade its document management system to DOCSFusion from DOCS Open. The firm, which already has more than 4000 existing DOCS Open users, is also purchasing a further 1200 licences to extend the reach of document management across the firm. By Insider calculations this will be the largest DMS implementation the global legal market has seen to-date.

■ **FIELD FISHER ORDERS ELITE**
London top 50 firm Field Fisher Waterhouse has signed contracts to implement Elite's practice management system. FFW finance director Douglas Peniston said one of the reasons for selecting Elite was its European specific functionality, including support for multi-language, multi-currency, VAT and multi-company facilities.

■ **AXXIA SWAP OUT AVENUE/TFB**
Cumbrian law firm Poole Townsend is to spend over £100K on a major upgrade of its IT infrastructure. As part of the project it will be replacing its current Avenue/TFB systems with new Artiion accounts software from Axxia Systems. The firm will also instal Axxia's case management system to help process its growing volume of conveyancing and personal injury claims work.

■ **LEGAL ARMS GETS WEB ARMED**
I-many International (the group incorporates the old BCL/Beaver business) has released version 3.09 of its Legal ARMS debt recovery software. New features include web enablement supporting extranet access for matter initiation and progress monitoring.

Looking for IT staff?

If you are a law firm or supplier looking for legal IT related staff, including positions in sales, development, know-how, support, management and training, you can post your vacancies free of charge to the Jobs Board on the Insider web site. Email details to **news@legaltechnology.com**

■ **This week's top job:** Solution 6 is looking for a pre sales systems consultant for its CMS Open product. The post is based in London.

News in brief

■ **COZENS-HARDY SELECTS SELECT**
Cozens-Hardy & Jewson, one of the largest firms in Norwich, is replacing its existing Norwel practice management system with Select Legal Systems' BackOffice accounts and PMS software. Select, who won the deal in a competitive tender against a joint bid from Ramesys and Norwel, will also be replacing the firm's Novell GroupWise system with Windows 2000 Server and Microsoft Office 2000.

■ **NEW BUREAU FOR SMALL FIRMS**
The accountancy service Key Legal (08707 512244) is now offering a bureau service, based on Peapod's StrongBox software, for sole practitioners and very small firms.

■ **THAMES VALLEY FIRM ONLINE**
Thames Valley solicitors Charles Lucas & Marshall (CLM) have selected Solicitec to supply their new case management system. The firm's managing partner Peter Graham says the driving force behind the move - this will be the firm's fourth case management system - was to improve client care by "providing a quality service meeting and exceeding clients' expectations" and in turn "help distinguish us from our competitors." When implemented, the new system will allow clients to access matter progress reports via an extranet.

Bar systems news

■ **BARRISTERS BUY INTERACTION**
London barristers' set 2 Temple Gardens has become the latest legal site - and the first barristers' chambers - to order Interface Software's InterAction client relationship management (CRM) system. The order came at the end of Interface's most successful year to-date, with sales up 50% on the year 2000 and the number of InterAction sites increasing by 70 to 300.

■ **CARDIFF SET CHOSES FREEDOM**
The chambers of John Jenkins QC, at 30 Park Place , Cardiff, has become the latest set to chose Freedom 2000 (01483 534347) as its managed IT services provider. As part of the deal Park Place will also be accessing the Mountain Meridian Law chambers administration software on an ASP basis.

Wragges wring a little extra out of systems

Although there are complaints that there are currently no 'killer apps' to excite the IT legal market, one benefit has been to concentrate law firms' attentions on getting the best out of their existing systems rather than chasing after the latest gimmicks.

A good example of this can be seen at Wragge & Co, which has just invested in a new suite of business information and analytical tools to speed up the production of reports drawn from data within its practice management system. Wragges is using the Seagate Information Reporting Solution, a web enabled version of the Crystal reports product, supplied by Seagate distributor Contemporary PLC. The system allows users to access reports direct to the desktop via a browser or convert them into an Excel or Word file for emailing to clients.

Head of strategic development Derek Southall said it was part of Wragge & Co's policy of building a solid infrastructure to make the day-to-day aspects of running a firm easier. In the case of the Seagate system, the ROI was the time saved with reports that used to take hours to prepare now completed in minutes.

Linetime debuts Debtime sequel

Linetime has launched the successor to its still widely used Debtime Unix-based debt collection software. Called Debtime SQL, the new system is a Windows 32-bit application running on a SQL Server platform. Linetime chairman John Burrill said that in common with the original Debtime (still used by the DSS in Newcastle to process nearly 250,000 debts a year) the new SQL system was developed from the outset as a dedicated debt collection product, as distinct from being based on generic case management software. West country firm Clarke Willmott & Clarke is currently piloting the Debtime SQL system.

New system for solo firms

Opsis Practice Management Solutions (formerly Solace Legal Systems) has launched Millennium Solo, a new accounts system designed for the single user. The software is fully compliant with the Solicitors Accounts Rules and is supported by illustrated manuals, plus free upgrades, training and telephone support. Solo is supplied on a simple self install CD and Opsis is offering the option of direct debit instalments to spread the cost.

LSSA XML policy on its way

The Legal Software Suppliers Association is expected to publish a strategy paper by its XML working party later this week. The paper will be published on the LSSA web site and in the next issue of the Insider's companion ezine *Legal Technology News.*
                                      www.lssa.co.uk

Legal IT 2002 exhibition review - the big launches

Appropriately enough two of the biggest launches at last week's Legal IT 2002 Exhibition in London were from two of the market's biggest players - TFB and Axxia. Both are designed to make life easier for fee earners but there the similarity ends as the two companies have devised entirely different solutions.

TFB was previewing its new **MaRTHA** (Mobile RemoTe Handheld Access) concept intended to provide fee earners with access to case and practice management information when they are working outside the office. Significantly, MaRTHA does not rely solely on a conventional modem and phone line or ISDN link but is instead looking forward to the newer wireless protocols, including 3G, GPRS and Bluetooth.

TFB already has two MaRTHA products on the stocks. These are: the Pocket PC, which allows users to capture a snapshot of current matter, client, billing and diary details on a PDA, via a point and shoot infrared link, to take with them to meetings. TFB see this proving popular with partners who do not want to lug a laptop around with them to meetings. Pocket PC is available now.

The second product - Partner Remote (available from April) - uses server-to-laptop synchronisation technology to check out a full copy (via SQL Server RAS) of the required files to the remote user. These can be viewed and amended and then checked back in to update the master copy on the server.

Over on the **Axxia System** stand the flagship launch was the new browser based **PKC** (Personal Knowledge Centre) system. On the face of it, this is just a web enabled version of the now familiar fee earner desktop but underneath the surface it marks a sea change and the start of a true server/browser alternative to client/server technology. So, no Windows, no Citrix just HTML and Java. Interestingly PKC is based on JZEE protocols rather than Microsoft .NET, which Axxia believe is still too novel to be stable (a sentiment echoed by other exhibitors at the event).

What can you do with PKC? Eventually, everything you can currently do with client/server - Axxia are pitching the product as a full interactive business intelligence portal providing access to financial, case and marketing information - but without the need for the latest Windows PC and fixed network bandwidth. In terms of current functionality, Axxia will be offering time recording via PKC from the spring, with matter enquiries and key performance indicators available later this year.

Still on the browser interface front, **Pilgrim Systems** used the event to launch its **LawSoft Web Client**. Like the Axxia product, this provides a genuine interactive alternative to the Windows desktop however Pilgrim is keen to stress that Web Client is more than just a web-enabled version of LawSoft. Because the Web Client is based on Active Server Pages and MS Com objects technology (once again *not* .NET) the system is sufficiently open and customisable that it can form the basis of an inhouse intranet or an extranet portal for clients. It is also compatible with third-party APIs, such as Hummingbird, and is hugely scalable. The first Pilgrim site using Web Client went live last week.

■ See page 7 for more Legal IT 2002 show reports.

Legal technology events diary

■ FEBRUARY 26 & 27, LONDON. *The Lawyer* magazine's Information Systems for Lawyers conference makes its 14th annual outing. The programme includes sessions on: strategic vision from McKinsey, using IT to win more business, new ways to train lawyers in IT, measuring the ROI on IT investments and e-business and service delivery to clients. There are two breakout sessions and 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. Admission to the exhibition and an excellent programme of keynote seminars, including a presentation by Legal Services Commission chief executive Steve Orchard on the LSC's new e-commerce initiatives, is free. For details call 01635 588866 or visit **www.solicitors-legal.com**

■ MARCH 18-19, WEST MIDLANDS. AIM Computer Users Association (ACUA) annual user conference at the Belfry. The ACUA has a reputation for holding the best user group conferences in the UK and this year looks to be no exception with a full programme of seminar sessions on IT, marketing and law firm management topics (qualifying for up to 11 CPD hours) plus a mini exhibition, a golf competition and leisure activities. The price, (inc accommodation + dinner) is £370. For details call Roger Hancock on 01789 296096.

Online news in brief

■ **CONFUSED BY E-CONVEYANCING ?**
If you are confused by the endless stream of announcements about NLIS and other aspects of the UK government's various electronic conveyancing initiatives, make a point of bookmarking the EGi Propert-e web site. The site has been developed jointly by *Estates Gazette interactive* and Wragge & Co to provide news, articles and analysis on the latest developments in e-conveyancing. Access to the site is free of charge and it also provides links to relevant legislation, consultation papers and other resources.

www.egi.co.uk/properte.asp

■ **ONLINE FILE CHASE NOW HERE**
For a good example of what a small firm can do with a web enabled case management system have a look at the services now being offered by Burgess Hill firm Fitzpatricks Solicitors. These include an "online file chaser" that allows clients and, with the consent of the client, estate agents to monitor the progress of a matter. The site also makes good use of jargon-free plain English and the file chaser element is powered by Solicitec's SolCase Online software.

www.fitzpatricks-law.co.uk

■ **DPS PROGRESS NOW SHIPPING**
DPS Software is now shipping its Progress web enablement module for DPS case management software. Progress, available as a free update to existing DPS sites, monitors any updates to matter files and automatically publishes them to the internet via XML.

■ **AMS MAKES MOVING EASY**
Sheffield solicitors practice AMS Law has launched an interactive online conveyancing service - called E-ZeeMoves - offering clients and, where required, third parties access to transaction status reports. AIM Professional provided the technology framework.

www.e-zeemoves.com

■ **PLANNING REPORTS MADE SIMPLE**
Landmark Information has launched a new planning reports service for residential conveyancers. Called Plansearch Residential, it offers details of all planning applications made over the last 5 years within 250m of a target property. Reports cost from £30 and will cover the whole of England by April.

www.landmark-information.co.uk

Eversheds to get secure email via the web

Eversheds is rolling out a new managed authentication service that will allow staff to access the firm's email system securely from any location via a standard web browser. Eversheds has introduced the system so staff can access the service while on the road, on secondment, at client premises or working from home. Once the email system is bedded in, the firm will extend the system to include remote access to documents and its intranet.

The authentication service, which was supplied by Signify and is based on RSA Security's SecurID system, uses a special 'token' as an alternative to the rather lower level of security offered by conventional passwords. Users must present two forms of identification before they can access the Eversheds' email service. There must be something only they know, such as a PIN number, plus a unique one-time passcode that is automatically generated by the Signify token - which could be incorporated in a key fob or via mobile phone or PDA.

■ Still on the subject of security, there is an executive briefing on intrusion detection and data protection in London on 27 February (starts 9:30am, ends with lunch) with speakers from Eurodata, RSA and PricewaterhouseCoopers. For details call 020 07619 1518 or visit **www.eurodatasystems.com/invite.html**

Money claims go online

The Court Service last week launched Money Claim Online. This is a web based debt recovery service intended to address the problem that where the sum involved is small, the bureaucracy and inconvenience associated with commencing conventional court proceedings may lead some people not to bother to pursue a claim. But now, according to Court Service chief executive Ian Magee, where the debt claimed is for a fixed amount of less than £100,000 and undefended, claimants with access to a web browser will be able to recover the money from their home "without ever stepping inside a county court".

Initially the service will be targeted at individuals and small law firms however it will be expanded later this year to provide integration with computerised case management systems.

www.moneyclaim.gov.uk

Leases online via the BPF

The property industry organisation - the British Property Federation - is offering members the opportunity to download and use standardised short term commercial leases. The leases are delivered via Business Integrity's DealBuilder document assembly system and the service is hosted on Tarlo Lyons' secure web server. The new service, which Business Integrity won in competition against a rival Capsoft/HotDocs bid, replaces a CD based service previously offered by Sweet & Maxwell.

www.bpf.propertymall.com

Legal IT reviews in brief

■ **NEW CRIMINAL BILLING SYSTEM**

Among the companies making their debut at Legal IT, **Digital Law** (020 7247 0448) undoubtedly picked the most unusual name for their system: Platypus. What does it do? In fact it is a new billing and client accounts system for CDS and civil legal aid work. It is not, it should be stressed, intended to be a new practice management system. Instead, it provides a legal front end, with Sage providing the back end bookkeeping and ledger facilities. One interesting feature is Digital Law will also provide an online data backup service, in addition to more usual update and maintenance facilities delivered via a modem link.

www.digitallaw.co.uk

■ **FIGHTING BACK THE COB WEB SITES**

Recent research by the Insider suggests that at any one time over 90% of law firm web sites contain stale news or errors, such as broken links and spelling mistakes. One product that might help address this problem is ActiveLawyer 3.0 from **Active Lawyer** (020 7239 9050). The company (previously called Go Interactive) has been developing web sites for City law firms and the Society for Computers & Law, among others, for a number of years but has now developed an application firms can use to update their own sites and intranets without recourse to mastering HTML coding and FTP applications or having to rely on web designers. Marketing manager Naomi Nevies says the software takes about 30 minutes to master (it is comparable to using Microsoft Word) but then allows users to update a site in minutes.

www.activelawyer.com

■ **DEVELOPING SOME BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE**

Another new face was **Solvenda Ltd** (01628 604441), a company offering consultancy and implementation services to law firms wanting to pull together content stored on disparate PMS, CRM and HR systems within a single data warehouse and then covert it into useful information via business intelligence reporting tools. For related services see also the Wragge/Crystal and CMS/PYA stories on MIS systems in this issue.

www.solvenda.com

■ **THE BEST OF THE REST**

Elsewhere, **Peapod Solutions** gave the first public demos of its DigiDictate digital dictation system. This is based on technology and workflow software developed by Crescendo Systems. The focus of attention on the **Timeslice** stand was the new Fee Earner Workstation, which has been enhanced to incorporate improved time recording and case management. **Perceptive Technology**, which also announced its participation in Microsoft's .NET development programme, unveiled its Mentor WebServer Intranet system. In effect this is an out-of-the-box solution to developing and managing intranets. A**IM Professional** has added seamless integration with Microsoft Outlook to its Evolution Client/Server 1.05d system, so users can select Outlook as their primary desktop interface. And both **Hub** (01858 529100) and **iRevolution** (01895 444 420) were demonstrating their ASP (application service provider) services.

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 - we do accept credit cards.

■ **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..

Fat lady not yet singing for Keystone & Solution 6

The merger talks between Solution 6 and Keystone Solutions are grinding on, with Keystone last week issuing the following statement to the London Stock Exchange: "Discussions (with Solution 6 Holdings regarding a possible merger of some of the subsidiaries of Solution 6 with Keystone) are progressing well and further announcements will be made as appropriate."

But, while the word in London is the two companies have already entered the due diligence phase, with a possible deal being struck by March - and Keystone staff exchanging their City address for a season ticket on the Underground to Solution 6's offices in Ealing, the response in Australia seems to be rather more cautious. In fact last Friday Solution 6 group company secretary Steve Alperstein faxed out a statement warning that "we are discussing joint business opportunities with Keystone but advise that no agreement on any potential structure or pricing has been reached between the parties."

There again, mindful of the prolonged and ultimately doomed merger talks it had with Elite in 1999/2000, Solution 6 is probably only too well aware of the dangers of prematurely celebrating a deal.

■ Keystone has also reported that "while there have been delays, negotiations on the contract (with Clifford Chance) are progressing satisfactorily." Keystone is part of a consortium with Oracle Financials to supply the firm's new global practice management system.

Suitors line up for Freelawyer

Judicium Ltd, the company that developed and owns the Freelawyer legal advice and law firm referral site, says it has been swamped with enquiries since it announced it was putting the site up for sale on the basis of an exclusive annual licence.

Currently the site, which uses expert systems to help members of the public identify the legal issues they face, allows users to get free legal information and to contact a number of law firms if they want to take matters further. However, as Judicium CEO Leon de Costa explained: "We have developed a number of other projects that are keeping us busy and feel the site is better suited to benefit a single law firm, one that is technology literate and wants to establish itself immediately as the dominant legal player on the internet. It will have exclusive use of the site and can alter it to suit whatever purpose they have in mind."

Negotiations have already begun with one Midlands firm but Judicium say they have been surprised by the level of interest shown by non-law firms. Or as Judicium's Alex Mehta puts it: "As competition within legal services intensifies and diversifies, its almost salutary how many non-lawyers are getting involved. I guess there is a real difference between doing law and winning new legal business, with lawyers perhaps less suited to the latter."

Freelawyer consistently makes the top 5 of Legal Technology Insider's Hit list rankings of the UK's busiest legal web sites.

News in brief

■ **NABARROS SELECT HUMMINGBIRD**
As part of a project to create a single browser interface to all applications, Nabarro Nathanson has purchased a 900 seat licence for Hummingbird's EIP Enterprise Information Portal. The firm will also migrate more than 450 lawyers from DOCS Open to Hummingbird's advanced DOCS Fusion document management software. The firm has also ordered Hummingbird's PD Accord (the old PeopleDOC collaborative web product) which will be used to create a new generation of virtual dealrooms.

■ **TIKIT ALLIES WITH iMANAGE**
Systems integrator Tikit has signed a partnership agreement with iManage UK to implement, support and resell its document and content management software. As part of the deal Tikit will redevelop a number of its applications that are currently only available for Hummingbird products (these include Document Link, Tikit Publish and DOCS Plus) to support the iManage range.

■ **GOOD NEWS AND BAD**
Finally, congratulations and commiserations to Berwin Leighton Paisner IT director Janet Day, who made it through to the final 8 in last week's *Women Inventors in Industry* awards. While it is a shame she got no further, Ms Day, a biochemist by training, still deserves maximum respect for gaining this degree of recognition for the technical aspects of her project - BLP's Be-Professional online legal service.