



Reynolds Porter digital dictation surprise

City law firm Reynolds Porter Chamberlain (RPC) has awarded nFlow Software the contract to run a digital dictation pilot project for the practice based around nFlow's DictaFlow workflow management system.

Although nFlow (01245 463377) has been active in the legal digital dictation market for some time, this is the company's first big win for its DictaFlow software. The RPC order is also one of the few UK digital dictation deals to have gone out to competitive tender.

RPC's IT director Julie Berry said "We chose DictaFlow because the product meets all our requirements using industry standard technology as well as demonstrating best value for money when compared with the other solutions. nFlow, as the developer of the product, impressed us with their understanding of the legal profession and their flexibility."

nFlow's Rob Lancashire told the Insider "You can probably appreciate we were ecstatic to win the first big name that was properly contested with a tender process. It was in the face of stiff competition from the market leaders who were gob smacked when they didn't win."

The Insider web site

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www.legaltechnology.com

ITNet to target top 45 firms

Technology outsourcing specialist ITNet has announced plans for a new CRM (client relationship management) initiative designed to make it easier for law firms to implement an effective relationship management strategy.

ITNet, who would typically base its solution around either the SAP or Siebel CRM applications, call the initiative 'refined relationship management.' As Les Francis, director of product development & alliances at ITNet explains: "CRM is a complex vision that often demands an 'all or nothing' approach. Return on investment can be slow and the benefits difficult to identify. Instead of the inefficient big bang approach adopted by many firms when implementing CRM solutions, we believe in achieving business benefits through the managed introduction of 'bite sized' roll out projects."

CRM is however only part of the story as ITNet went on to reveal to the Insider that it was "pressing ahead" to expand its outsourcing operations generally within the legal market and was already in talks with a number of major firms. According to ITNet, law firms stand to reduce costs and benefit from better service levels by switching from inhouse IT operations to outsourcing. In fact an ITNet spokesman said he was "horrified at the numbers of staff involved and the value not being realised" in some law firm inhouse IT departments.

As ITNet customers typically spend over £1 million a year on outsourcing, the company will initially only be targeting the UK's 45 largest firms - those with total annual IT budgets in excess of £2 million. (All 45 firms have turnovers in excess of £40 million and it is widely assumed that firms spend 5% of turnover on IT.)

■ ITNet's best known legal site is the English Law Society. A posting on the company's web site earlier this year reported that ITNet had secured another three year contract (until December 2004) to manage the Society's IT operations but ITNet will not be the main provider of the Society's own new CRM system.

Axxia to go on the offensive

Axxia has reported a turnover of £9.5 million for its trading year ended 31 March 2002, an increase of 8% on the same period last year. More importantly last year's £200K loss - caused by major investments in customer services and new product R&D - has been converted into a pre-tax profit of £500K.

Managing director Stuart Holden attributes the turnaround to successfully "competing with the best of best of breed standards" - in other words ensuring Axxia's own systems are comparable to, if not better than, third party alternatives.

Turning to the future, with new products - such as the PKC personal knowledge centre - now added to its portfolio and enthusiasm for best of breed apparently waning as firms realise integration is not as easy as it seems, Holden sees Axxia moving on from defending its user base to a more aggressive strategy of winning new business from its would-be competitors.

News in brief

■ MAJOR BUY AT CALL CENTRE FIRM

Scott Rees & Co, who offer road traffic and personal injury claims services on a national basis via their call centre in the North-West, have announced plans to spend £1 million on new IT systems, including software, staff training and reorganising working practices. The core of the new system will be Solicitec's SolCase case management software running in conjunction with the SOS accounts and practice management system. Founding partner Daniel Rees said the investment in new technology "reflects the ongoing ethos of the firm - to stay ahead of the game". The firm, which was established in 1992, now employs 225 staff and also has a major conveyancing and remortgaging practice.

■ LINKLATERS FIND VERITY

Linklaters has chosen the Verity K2 Enterprise search engine to power its intranet. A key factor in the choice was the ability to integrate Verity with other aspects of the Linklaters' technology infrastructure including Documentum and Outlook.

■ SLOUGH FIRM GOES WITH EIION

Slough-based Barrett & Thomson is upgrading its IT infrastructure with Axxia Systems. The 40-strong firm will be installing the Eiion accounts system along with Axxia's desktop productivity applications and case management product.

■ OUTLOOK NOW FRONTING APEX

Elite has launched its new Apex Connector utility. This will allow users of Elite's Apex client relationship management system to run Microsoft Outlook as the CRM front end. Apex Connector automatically synchronises data between Apex and Outlook.

■ REEF GOES TO COURT

The Nottinghamshire Magistrates Court Service has installed a new document management system from Reef Document Solutions (0114 221 1752). The system's main role will be to scan and process the data - collected from questionnaires completed by people using the courts, including lawyers, police, victims of crime and even defendants - that now has to be supplied to the Lord Chancellor's Department on a regular basis as performance analysis statistics.

www.retrievalsolutions.co.uk

Oyez to host Steelpoint litigation support system

Oyez Legal Technologies (OLT) has signed a deal with US based legal software specialist Steelpoint Technologies to become the primary host for its Introspect litigation support software for the UK and Continental Europe. OLT will host Introspect on its own servers and is licensed to make the software fully available to its customers via a secure web connection.

Steelpoint describe Introspect as a "browser based litigation support and disclosure management system that fits in with modern law firms' SQL best of breed environment." Steelpoint say Introspect has been "developed under fire" through working in conjunction with law firms both in the USA and the UK, where the company has been operating for the past three years and includes Linklaters, Slaughter & May and Beachcroft Wansbroughs among its users.

OLT is the first company to be licensed by Steelpoint to host its Introspect software. According to Oyez Legal Technologies managing director Chris Baldwin: "The hosted model has many advantages for litigation support. For example clients needing a turnkey solution on a single case can access specialist software with no need to purchase the system, install it on their own network or build the technical infrastructure required. It also enables legal teams to trial the software on one or more projects, before committing to its purchase and installation. And, by reducing the costs associated with specialist software, it makes full litigation support services more widely available to law firms and in-house legal teams."

www.oyezlegaltech.com

www.steelpoint.com

FileNet loses flagship DMS site

Freshfields Bruckaus Deringer has selected the iManage system as the basis for its new document and content management platform. The deal, which was secured by iManage business partner First Stop Computer Group, comes as a blow to FileNet which was the incumbent DMS supplier at Freshfields. FileNet now has just two sites remaining among the UK's top 100 law firms - Farrer & Co and Slaughter & May. The latter is a hybrid platform based around FileNet, the original Saros Mezzanine document management software and the firm's Atlas 2 desktop which was developed by ResSoft.

Lawman get DMS function

Timeslice has added document management functionality to its Lawman 2000 practice management system. Along with simple storage and retrieval of documents and emails, the DM system includes the ability to produce new documents from templates and full text indexing to speed up the process of searching for and locating specific documents.

Clifford Chance sign up for electronic tendering

In a move intended to “manage supplier relationships more efficiently” and “looking forward to the potential savings we should make,” Clifford Chance has signed up for Barclays’ B2B electronic tendering service.

The deal, which initially consists of 15 individual tenders, relates to the procurement of capital items, such as office furniture and computer equipment, required for the firm’s move to its new London offices at Canary Wharf. Barclays B2B (0870 333 1860) will also provide the training and technical support associated with the electronic tendering process.

New kid on the Tyneside block

Despite the grumbles that there are already too many suppliers in the market, that does not stop a steady flow of new entrants, the latest of which is Tyneside based Griersons (0191 215 0075). In fact the company has been involved with the legal sector for over 40 years but has now adopted a more “proactive marketing strategy” to promote its Griersons Office Manager software.

This is a file management system that is already being used by a number of firms, including Patterson Glenton & Stracey and Carmichael & Heathfield, to manage legal aid franchises however Griersons is now expanding its operations across the North from the “Scottish borders to Merseyside”.

Griersons sales & marketing manager Avtar Matharoo is promising “an exciting year ahead” with new products on the way including CTI integration that will automatically link incoming phone calls to client/matter information, online links to legal information and a web enabled version of the system.

www.griersons.com

Worthing say ‘I do’ to Iken

Worthing Borough Council’s legal services department reports that its use of the Iken information management system “has played a fundamental part in enabling the department to become Lexcel compliant.” According to legal services head Simon Aley, since replacing their old paper based system with Iken last August, the department has been able to reduce administration costs, increase productivity and so free up staff time to concentrate on achieving ‘best value’.

The Iken application, which is sold and supported in the UK by Iken Business, is described by Iken director Elizabeth Miles as a “case management, time recording, document and client care system.” Spelthorne Borough Council has also installed Iken.

■ Iken Business (0117 373 0790) is the new name for Chester & Miles, who originally developed Iken and launched it into the legal market in early 1999. The company has moved into new offices at 4th Floor, Centre Gate, Colston Avenue, Bristol BS1 4TR

www.iken.biz

News in brief

■ **FIRST DELTASEAL LONDON WIN**
Collins Benson Goldhill has become the first London firm to buy the new SoliciTrack secure email system from DeltaSeal Software (08707 466522). Along with protecting outbound emails by encryption, the system also incorporates an audit trail so the sender is aware when the recipient accesses the message and any attached documents.

■ **LIBERATE FEELING AT RMNJ**
Birkenhead law firm Roberts Moore Nicholas Jones, one of Merseyside’s largest criminal practices, has migrated to Linetime’s Liberate integrated accounts and case management system. RMNJ is a long time Linetime user and will initially use the case software within its conveyancing department.

■ **ONLINE DX PILOT SUCCESS**
Glasgow based APX Systems (0141 572 5639) has announced the successful conclusion of a pilot for its online document exchange facility. A total of 20 major Scottish law firms, including Maclay Murray & Spens and Dickson Minto, supported the project. Last month also saw the release of a new look and feel interface for the system and APX plans to launch an “end-to-end e-conveyancing platform” within the next few months.

www.apxhub.com

Looking for staff - the Jobs Board expands

Legal Technology Insider has expanded its web based Jobs Board to include postings of vacancies within the UK and international law librarians and information services community. To post a vacancy, which will now also be carried in our companion ezine Legal Technology News, just email the details to jobs@legaltechnology.com

■ **This week’s top jobs include:** CVG Computer Services is looking for two legal software sales staff based in either Glasgow or Aberdeen. Millnet is recruiting litigation and legal support staff. And a ‘prestigious City law firm’ is seeking to fill vacancies for three IT trainers, with spoken French or German. For full details of these and other vacancies visit the Insider Jobs Board at

www.legaltechnology.com

Changing places at Baker Robbins

Legal IT consultancy Baker Robbins has lost its extranet and KM expert Andrew Terrett, who has moved back to Canada for family reasons. Terrett is also the author of one of Law Society Publishing's most popular books in recent years *The Internet: business strategies for law firms*.

Terrett has been replaced by Dave Cunningham, who is on a long term secondment from Baker Robbins in the US. In the US Cunningham has been working with firms on developing strategic technology plans and evaluating IT staffing requirements. He is a member of several law firms' technology committees.

People & Places

John Howells, previously with SJ Berwin, KPMG, McKenna & Co and most recently Riversoft, has been appointed IT director at **Lawrence Graham**. The placement was handled by **Craig Coverman** of **Eutopia**.

Personal injury specialists **Scott Rees** has appointed **Michael Lough**, previously a management consultant at KPMG, as chief operations officer.

The English Law Society has made **Al Freimanis**, its director of business planning, redundant. A Chancery Lane spokesperson said Feimanis' post had always been seen as "a short term development" and that his departure would not affect the Society's new 'Programme Engineer' CRM project.

Tim Hyman, previously with Olswang and Tikit has been appointed head of IT at **Harbottle & Lewis**.

Roy Stew has been appointed as the new European general manager for the **Solution 6 CMS Open** product line.

Keep up with the news

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First CaseLite orders go in

The CaseLite case management system for small firms, which was launched at the end of last year by Oyez Legal Software, who handle sales in association with IT supplier Pracctice who handle implementation and support, has secured its first five law firm orders and has already been installed at four sites.

The four are Hill Johnson in Surbiton and Oliver Fisher in Kensington, who are both using CaseLite for conveyancing, and Elmhirst Nicholas Alliott in Barnsley and Grainger Appleyard in Doncaster, who are using it for property management. The fifth order, signed at the end of last week, is from Genja & Co in Wembley who will be using it for asylum and criminal work.

Acculaw celebrate 15th birthday

Legal software supplier Acculaw (01926 886808) - best known for its Accudebt debt recovery system although ironically its flagship site Wragge & Co primarily use it for ULR, personal injury claims, re-mortgage and repossession work - has just celebrated its 15th year as a company.

According to founder Tom Hervey "the key question for sales success seems to be if the decision maker is an IT type or a law type. Accudebt is a lot more successful with the latter because I still regard my constituency as the people who do the actual legal work rather than the people who run IT. There is a tendency among IT people to rank products by IT characteristics rather than the ability to do legal jobs accurately and efficiently."

■ Another supplier that may not be in the news but is still serving the market is **IT Accounting**, developers of the Cashier accounts system. The company has moved from Taunton to offices at The Courtyard, High Street, Wiveliscombe, Devon TA4 2JX (01984 624644). And John Benson, previously with Lexology, has launched a new IT services company called **Solutios** (07976 159911). Based at 5 St John's Lane, London EC1M 4BH, Solutios is currently reorganising its internet presence.

The LOTIES back for 2002

The Legal Office Technology Innovation Awards - the LOTIES - are back for another year with the organisers *In Brief* magazine last week announcing details of the 2002 event, which includes new categories and, for the first time, its own special awards ceremony, scheduled to take place at the Café Royal in London on 14 November.

The LOTIES retain their populist approach - it is the users of legal systems who have the opportunity to nominate the candidates for the awards and vote for the shortlisted entries. This year four new 'merit' categories have been created for IT director of the year, IT team of the year, law firm of the year and vendor personality of the year.

The chairman of the judging panel is *Legal Technology Insider* editor Charles Christian and an online nomination form can be found on the *In Brief* web site.

www.inbrief.co.uk

Hello Civica, goodbye Sanderson

It may sound like a car made by Honda but Civica is in fact the new name for the part of the Sanderson Group that serves the legal market. Following Sanderson's delisting from the London Stock Exchange two years ago, the group has been restructured to change it from a 1980s style conglomerate into a series of industry sector focussed businesses.

The latest stage in this process took place last month when Sanderson announced the creation of Civica, a wholly owned subsidiary that will handle public sector activities. The new company includes an "enforcement" division responsible for serving the local government legal department and law firm markets - the old Sanderson Galaxy Legal business.

Civica CEO Simon Downing told the Insider one of the main benefits of the new structure was that along with providing applications software, Civica would now also be able to offer the legal market a range of managed services, include ASP, web hosting, outsourcing, general Microsoft systems consultancy and disaster recovery.

In fact Sanderson has already enjoyed some success in this area, with projects for such firms as Slaughter & May, Richards Butler and Freshfields. According to Downing, Civica is aiming for the middle market - those law firms requiring more than "the man down the road" but not the full services of an EDS. To the Insider that sounds like Tikit and First Stop could soon be facing some serious competition.

Civica will continue to operate from the same addresses as Sanderson and the familiar Sanderson Legal team remains in place with Tim Spriggs heading activities sales director-legal. The only major change is that Allan Hodgkinson, for many years the face of Sanderson Legal, has moved to another part of the Sanderson Group - the Tallyman credit management business - and so will no longer be actively involved in the legal market.

www.civica.co.uk

Financial news in brief

■ 36 PERCENT UP AT iMANAGE

iManage has reported its financial results for the first quarter ended 31 March 2002. Revenues were \$11.8 million, up 36% as compared to \$8.7 million reported for the same period last year. iManage also reported Q1 net income of \$165,000 compared to a net loss of \$2.6 million in the same period in 2001.

■ ELITE UP BY 28.5 PERCENT

Elite has reported revenues for the first quarter ended 31 March 2002 of \$18.4 million, up 28.5% from the \$14.3 million reported in Q1 2001. The company also reported a net income of \$706,000 for the first quarter compared with a net loss of \$303,000 for the same period last year. Based on the current state of its order book, Elite is expecting revenues to increase approximately 15-to-20% during the course of 2002.

Legal technology events diary

- MAY 9-10, LOS ANGELES. LegalTech at the Westin Bonaventure Hotel.
www.legaltechshow.com
- MAY 13, LONDON. SCL London Group Meeting on E-Conveyancing. The speakers are Mark Riddick of Searchflow and Steve Kelway, Land Registrar & General Counsel to the E-Conveyancing Task Force. The event starts at 6:30pm at Simmons & Simmons' Ropemaker Street offices. The fee is from £20 + VAT. Call Caroline Gould of the Society for Computers & Law on 01179 237393.
- MAY 21, LONDON. Employees, Email & the Internet. One day legal conference at the Bloomsbury Holiday Inn, 5 CPD points, fee from £515 + VAT. For more details call IRS on 020 7420 3519.
- MAY 30, LONDON. Digital dictation panel evening organised by BigHand, taking place at Ashurst Morris Crisp's office. The event runs from 6:30 to 8:30pm. To attend call Dan Speed on 0207 793 8264.
- MAY 30, LONDON. Easing the pain of document drafting. Seminar on new ways to draft legal documents in a collaborative environment organised by Workshare Technology. The keynote speaker is Neil Cameron. The event takes place at Vinopolis and runs from 4:30 to 7:30pm. To attend call Meir Moses on 020 7481 6100 or email marketingUK@workshare.com
- JULY 3, LONDON. Legal IT - make IT a success. One day conference organised by CLT at the Posthouse Kensington. Includes sessions by Janet Day of BLP, Neil Cameron, Derek Sturdy, Andrew Levison and Insider editor Charles Christian. Fee 315 + VAT for CLT subscribers or £445 + VAT for non subscribers. 5.5 CPD hours. For details call Central Law Training on 0121 355 0900.
- JULY 10, LONDON. Law Society Law Management Section IT Forum at the Regents College Conference Centre. The event runs from 9:00am to 5:00pm and qualifies for 5 CPD hours. For details call Paul Seymour on 020 7316 5572.
www.lms.lawsociety.org.uk

News in brief

■ LAW REFORM CONSULTATION

Tessa Shepperson's LandLordLaw web site now carries a questionnaire intended to make life easier for landlords and tenants wanting to respond to the recently issued Law Commission consultation paper on housing law. The questionnaire, designed in conjunction with the Commission, carries a more readily digestible synopsis of the full 290 page consultation document.

www.landlordlaw.co.uk

■ DESPATCHBOX LAUNCH EMAIL DDX

Software developer DespatchBox (01296 398100) has joined the growing number of suppliers offering secure email solutions with last week's launch of its DDX system. The DDX uses the increasingly popular approach of having the message remain on the sender's server and only releasing it when the intended recipient has responded to notification that it is ready to be collected and provided password clearance. DDX prices start at £3000 for a 25 user licence.

www.despatchbox.com

■ HERBERT SMITH ROLL OUT VAULT

Herbert Smith is to deploy the Enterprise Vault email management system from KVS (0118 927 3800) to reduce email storage overload problems within its Microsoft Exchanges servers and provide a more efficient tool for the archiving, search and retrieval of messages. Head of IT services John Rogers said one of the main objectives for selecting Vault as the firm's corporate email management system was the need for a product that "could provide our lawyers with the ability to store emails by matter, so for example, if a lawyer needs to review all the information available on a specific and current client matter, it can be retrieved in seconds and consequently, shared within a team or across practices in other countries."

www.kvsplc.com

■ NEW LIBRARY SYSTEM

Beachcroft Wansbroughs has chosen Fretwell-Downing Informatics' OLIB7 product as its new library and information management system. The firm's head of library services Sue Jarvis said "We were particularly impressed with OLIB7's ability to manage both serials and looseleaves, which has become a must for legal libraries."

Web site traffic - more now means less

The Insider has just completed its latest monthly survey of the UK's top 25 busiest legal web sites and while there is no change among the names jostling for top slot - for the past six months the chart has been headed by Lawtel, Butterworths and the Court Service - what is noticeable is that their respective audience shares have decreased. For example in December 2001, Lawtel was the busiest site with a 14.96% share of the UK's total legal web traffic, by visits. By April however Lawtel was still at number one but with only a 9.77% share of the web traffic. Six months ago the 25 sites in the Insider chart accounted for nearly 97% of all activity, last month this figure had fallen to just 73%.

The problem seems to be a resurgence in web activity - recent new launches include Legal Day and Law in Black & White - resulting in more sites competing for thinner and thinner slices of the surfing cake. So bad news for site operators but good news for advertisers as this does create a buyer's market for web banner advertising space. The full April chart is at:

www.legaltechnology.com/hitlistuk.htm

Web site health checks

Thinking Virtual (01428 661255) which is now carving a niche for itself in the electronic transaction 'bibles' market, has another side to its business, namely internet performance management. This offers services to maintain a site's high profile through search engine optimisation. Companies for which Thinking Virtual has already completed what managing director Duncan Campbell calls "web site health checks" include Interflora.

www.thinkingvirtual.com/website_performance_management.com

Lawtel teams up with the Judge

The Lawyer Group, publishers of *The Lawyer* and Lawtel, has teamed up with after-the-event (ATE) insurance service The Judge. As the only available searchable database of its kind, The Judge provides an archive of historical information back to April 2000 (the date from when the rules on recoverability apply) as well as access to the latest information on ATE premiums. This data enables claimant solicitors to source likely premiums on behalf of clients and can provide defendant solicitors with retrospective information to help challenge premium levels. The service covers all types of policy including: conditional fee agreement (CFA), both sides' costs, and opponents' costs only.

The Judge also offers a broking service so lawyers can submit details of a case just once and have them forwarded to seven ATE insurers to obtain a competitive quote. Single application fees start at £99 for personal injury cases and are fully refundable out of any commissions received. The Judge is available both directly and via the Lawtel Personal Injury service.

www.thejudge.co.uk

Trend for Microsoft alternatives growing

Neil Ewin, the chairman of Solicitec, reports that his company is seeing "something of a ground swell of interest in non-Microsoft products," particularly among local authorities and "tech savvy" medium-sized law firms. According to Ewin, the main reason for interest in these alternative technologies is the cost of mainstream Microsoft systems, particularly with the new - and still highly controversial - licensing regime now coming in.

Along with Linux at the back end, Ewin says there is also growing interest in Sun's StarOffice suite as an alternative to Microsoft Office for wordprocessing and email. As a long standing supplier of systems based on the Progress platform, Solicitec has no difficulty supporting the Linux platform and the company is now giving "careful consideration" to integration with Star, which uses Java rather than VBA to control it.

■ The 4GL and database developer Progress now has a subsidiary called Nusphere that markets and supports a commercial release of MySQL. *See last Insider for more details.*

Tech roadshow down your way

ResSoft is hosting a series of workshops offering a "hands on technology experience" focusing on knowledge management (Autonomy), document management (iManage), workflow (e-work), CRM (InterAction) and practice management (FirmWare). Called the TechDrive Roadshows, they will take in Edinburgh on 10 June, Leeds on 11 June, Manchester on 12 June, Birmingham on 13 June and Bristol on 14 June. For details call Robin Pitkin on 0207 4214145 or email marketing@ressoft.co.uk

News in brief

■ SOLUTION 6 SAY IT'S 'YOUR WORLD'

Solution 6 has christened its series of strategic alliances, between the CMS Open PMS and third-party software suppliers, the 'Your World' initiative. The alliances include a link with Scottish based Teamflo, developers of the FloSuite workflow and business process (BPM) management system, and Interface Software, developers of the InterAction CRM.

■ CONVEYANCERS TO GET WEB CONNECT

Users of Select Legal Systems (01482 644334) conveyancing case management system can now take advantage of a new 'Web Connect' facility. This enables certain internet related aspects of the case plan, that would have previously had to be performed manually - such as logging on to the web at a specific stage in the process to carry out a 'Homecheck' survey using a postcode, to be handled automatically.

The latest firms to sign up for Select's conveyancing software are Battersby James in Chatteris, Bilton Hammond in Mansfield and Butcher & Barlow in Bury.

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Pisces swimming with the XML flow

In a recent issue (*No.131 - 27 March*) we reported the merger between Calvis and NovaPlex however there is another side to the Calvis story relating to its long term involvement with the PISCES (Property Information Systems Common Exchange Standard) initiative which aims to create an XML standard for electronic data exchange of real estate information.

Although Calvis CEO Chris Lees has been involved with the PISCES project from the outset in 1996 and the company now sells a couple of related products - SlipStream and Pisces WorkBench - Lees is keen to stress that it is not a proprietary initiative. In fact the fate of PISCES is determined by a not for profit company, called Pisces Limited, whose board includes representatives from Linklaters, Lovells and some of the largest property management companies in the UK.

There is also a PISCES legal sector working group involving representatives from Berwin Leighton Paisner, CMS Cameron McKenna, Dechert, Dundas & Wilson, SJ Berwin, Nabarro Nathanson, Mayer Brown Rowe & Maw and NLIS Searchflow. And, in recent months, the HM Land Registry has been talking to PISCES about adopting the standard.

Lees says that while PISCES shares obvious similarities with the Legal Software Suppliers Association's XML project, the big difference between it and almost every other XML initiative is PISCES was started by and continues to be driven by end users rather than suppliers. Lees says by not having the XML standard linked to a proprietary product, the group has more room to manoeuvre when it comes to accommodating new types of data.

Further information about PISCES can be found on both the Calvis and The Property Forum e-conveyancing web sites.

www.calvis.com

www.thepropertyforum.net/forum

News in brief

■ PILGRIM CHASES ALLIANCE

Pilgrim Systems has formed a strategic alliance with the Chase International Consultancy that will give Pilgrim users access to specialist training courses on management information and performance report design both from within Pilgrim's own LawSoft application and via tailored Crystal reports. Further details of the courses can be found on the Pilgrim web site.

www.pilgrimsystems.com

■ TWO MORE SIGN UP FOR VIDESS CASE EXPERT

Two more firms have signed up for the Videss 'expert solution,' the company's new approach to case management which aims to provide practices with an out-of-the-box application that removes the need for endless implementation work. The firms are Anderson Eden in Preston, which is rolling out a personal injury system, and Poppleton & Appleby in Sheffield, who are installing the debt recovery package.

Decision day for Sol 6 and Keystone bid

The offer period for Keystone shareholders to respond to the takeover bid made by Solution 6 is scheduled to close today (8 May) at 3:00pm. This follows a decision to extend the original offer period by a fortnight to allow remaining shareholders and owners of Keystone warrants to respond to the offer document. At the time the extension decision was made, acceptances had been received in respect of over 80% of Keystone shares and 53% of warrants.

Time runs out for Wagner and Smartlogik

Dan Wagner's eight year career as a dotcom entrepreneur came to an end last week when it was announced that his latest business venture - the Smartlogik knowledge management software company and its legal market specific product SmartLegal - was to sell off its assets after failing to find a buyer.

Wagner first appeared on the scene in 1994 when he launched the MAID online information service. In 1997 he bought the Dialog online information division of the US publisher Knight Ridder for £210 million but subsequently sold most of the business three years later for £174 million and renamed the rump BrightStation. Last year BrightStation became Smarlogik and raised £13.5 million in a rescue share placing but last week the company revealed it had just £400K left to settle debts, leases and salaries.

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■ For all editorial, subscription, reprint and advertising enquiries contact:

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

Publisher & Editor: Charles Christian

Tel: 01379 687518 - Fax: 01379 687704

Videophone: 01379 687690 x2

Email: news@legaltechnology.com

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