



Scottish Law Society in web domain dispute

The Law Society of Scotland has become embroiled in a dispute over its LawScot domain with a Scottish internet company that also claims the name.

The row dates back to late 1999 and the heady days of the dotcom boom when the Scottish Law Society relaunched its web site at the new www.lawscot.org.uk domain and, at the same time, registered LawScot as a trademark. By coincidence - or not, as this is one of the issues in dispute - in November 1999 a company called Real McCoy registered the www.lawscot.co.uk domain name for an online directory project - called Local Websites - that it was then working on.

The Law Society allege that Real McCoy's actions constitute trademark infringement whereas Real McCoy claim they legitimately registered the co.uk domain first and that the Law Society is just being heavy handed because its attempts to acquire the name have failed. At the Law Society's request Nominet, the main registrar for .co.uk names, has now suspended the www.lawscot.co.uk URL and Real McCoy is seeking to have the move reversed under one of the internet domain name dispute arbitration schemes.

The Insider web site

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DLA sees ClientZone portal as key to vision

At its annual press conference last week, the UK law firm DLA (previously Dibb Lupton Alsop) announced a 15% increase in gross fee income to £203 for the year ending 20 April 2002 and a 16% increase in profits per equity. Managing partner Nigel Knowles also outlined the firm's 'vision' - or three year strategic plan - for the period 2002-to-2005 which is to make DLA "a top 5 European full service firm with a significant presence in Asia".

This theme was expanded on by DLA's IT director Daniel Pollick. According to Pollick, along with building the framework to support closer integration between DLA and members of its D&P international association of law firms, one of his priorities was "to use the power of the internet to deliver better solutions for our clients through the integration of online with offline services." Pollick was however keen to stress this was not the usual law firm dotcom hype as he was only too well aware of what does not work on the internet, highlighting both standalone online legal services and first generation virtual dealrooms as non-runners.

DLA will instead focus its attentions on a new "relationship building" extranet portal called ClientZone. This will provide clients with a single, searchable point of access to live data on their matters, documents and financial records, including a permanent repository of every document they have ever received from DLA.

ClientZone is expected to go live in late 2002 however the technology, developed inhouse and based on Borland AP Server, JZEE protocols and Java, already provides the basis for the firm's myDLA intranet. DLA currently spends a "seven figure sum" of between 5-to-7% of its annual turnover on IT, including hardware, software, services and staff resources, each year.

■ After spending time on a consultancy exercise reviewing alternative practice management solutions, DLA has decided to stick with its existing Axxia Arista system for at least the next three years. Pollick told the Insider that, at this stage in the firm's development, project's like ClientZone and digital dictation took a far higher priority in DLA's IT strategy.

Clifford Chance says yes to GPMS

Clifford Chance has finally given the green light to its Global Practice Management System project with IT consultancy Cap Gemini Ernst & Young selected as the prime contractor. GPMS will provide Clifford Chance with one integrated system for time recording, billing, accounting, financial analysis and reporting across all of its 28 offices in 19 countries. GPMS system will start to go live from early 2003 and the global programme will be completed during 2004. GPMS is the first time a combination of the two systems - Oracle and Keystone - have been integrated to provide an end-to-end solution. Oracle supplies the database and financial software; Keystone, the law firm functionality including time, billing and client management applications.

News in brief

■ CW&C DEBT SOFTWARE UPGRADE

The debt recovery department at Clarke Willmott & Clarke has placed an order with Linetime to replace its old Deptime package with Linetime's new Deptime SQL system. The firm has been using its original Linetime system for over 10 years but felt it needed to upgrade to ensure it had a system that could continue to support a service that satisfied the increasingly complex demands of debt recovery clients. Items on the CW&C 'wish list' that were met by Deptime SQL included the ability to have multiple defendants on one file and suitability for both high or low volume/value debt recovery.

■ HARTNELLS USE VOIP LINK

Camberwell Green Magistrates Court has always been one of the busiest courts in south London and to cope with its growing criminal practice, local solicitors Hartnells recently opened a new office for its criminal department. To provide a link between the new office and its main site just under a mile away (the space freed by the move has been taken over by Hartnells' conveyancing department) the firm has installed a VoIP (voice over IP) kilostream link.

The VoIP link carries both data and voice traffic however both sites are able to share a single telephone switchboard. Professional Technology UK (01634 815517), who also supply the firm's accounts and case management software, organised the router technology to connect the two sites.

■ TEXT MESSAGE SERVER SHIPPING

Kommunicate (01962 835004) has begun shipping the latest version of the SMS test messaging system Text Messenger Server 3.0.

■ CONVEYANCING SERVICE LAUNCH

Earlier this year Hill Dickinson announced plans for a major roll out of the Axxia case management system to 400 users across the firm. One of the first departments to take advantage of it has been the residential conveyancing department in Chester. There, the case management software has been used to provide the basis for both streamlining the firm's internal procedures - for example all searches are now submitted electronically via NLIS - and providing clients with an online progress tracking service, via the Axxia E-case facility.

Foot Anstey launch deal room as reality bites

West country firm Foot Anstey Sargent has become the latest solicitors practice to develop and launch a virtual dealroom facility. Called FAStDirect, the facility is already being used by some of the firm's clients as an ongoing resource as well as by participants in a number of complex commercial transactions.

The FAStDirect facility is based around an IBM electronic collaboration application called QuickPlace. This provides the framework to create, with minimum delay, secure virtual dealrooms for whichever clients or projects they are required. Foot Anstey Sargent therefore has the option to build (the firm's inhouse IT department configures the dealrooms) simple one-off dealrooms, as well as more complex ongoing multi roomed 'suites' that include discussion rooms, available for editing and commenting on documents, and data rooms containing definitive versions of documents that are locked against edit.

Foot Anstey are confident that FAStDirect has "tremendous potential" and echo the popular view that virtual dealrooms will eventually become a standard part of the package of services commercial firms offer their clients.

Foot Anstey Sargent's decision to go with QuickPlace (a number of other firms now also use this product) does however also reflect a growing sense of reality among lawyers when it comes to dealrooms. By opting for a relatively low cost package based system, the firm is not only likely to see a more immediate return on its investment but also avoid being saddled with an expensive white elephant.

This is in contrast with those firms who reputedly spent millions - or as Clifford Chance director of knowledge & information Paul Greenwood gnomically commented "We have not spent £6 million but it is measured in millions" - on bespoke development projects during the period 1999/2000. According to recent research conducted by the Legalease magazine *Media & Technology Adviser*, the huge sums spent on first generation dealrooms provoked little enthusiasm from clients. MTA interviewed 30 investment bankers who had used dealrooms but found only five who would use them again. The rest thought them "a waste of time" and less efficient than using email.

Courts heading for 24/7 era ?

Commenting on last week's launch of a new report on the civil courts system *Modernising the Civil & Family Courts*, the chief executive of the Court Service Ian Magee said: "These plans will enable us to change radically the way that the courts work. This programme will make full use of the opportunities that modern IT provides, including the internet, to ensure the courts can play their full part in joining up justice, through more effective case management systems and exchange of information. We must provide court users with better access to the courts, better information and a wider choice of services, if possible available 24 hours a day."

www.courtservice.gov.uk

Gamesbiz takes a flutter on GhostFill

Osborne Clarke has supplied the GhostFill document assembly system with its first major win in the UK. The system will initially be used in conjunction with the firm's Gamesbiz.net niche web site for the computer games industry to provide dynamic document creation and online delivery. Once the system has been launched on Gamesbiz.net, within the next few months, there are plans to implement GhostFill on other Osborne Clarke web sites, extranets and the firm's intranet.

Commenting on the choice of GhostFill, Osborne Clarke's head of e-business Nicola Webb said the firm realised "we needed to make the Gamesbiz site easier and faster to use for clients by automating the documents. In essence, making access to legal solutions to business problems simpler. The web continues to play an increasingly important role in delivering legal services to our clients and GhostFill is now central to our web based solutions."

GhostFill templates are created on the desktop and published to the web server version. Users can access the system via a standard web browser and do not need to load any special software to use it. A series of dialogue screens containing questions and guidance notes take the client through the process of assembling a document (Webb reckons the system is so easy to learn that users do not require any training) which can then be delivered immediately or else checked by a lawyer prior to final release to the client. The system also generates and maintains a full record and audit trail of all the answers given by the client to the various questions during the assembly stage.

■ GhostFill is distributed in the UK by Syscorp (01909 824824).

So who are nFlow anyway ?

The recent decision by Reynolds Porter Chamberlain to award nFlow Software (01245 463377) rather than market leader BigHand, the contract to run a digital dictation pilot at the firm came as a major surprise but just who are nFlow Software?

Although the present business was only formed in 1999, it has its roots in an earlier company that since the mid-1990s has been specialising in database workflow development projects for major multinationals. According to nFlow's Rob Lancashire, it was this background, with the emphasis on achieving maximum productivity gain for minimum working practice change, that has given nFlow what Lancashire says is its "fresh approach" compared with traditional speech technology suppliers.

Recognising that transcription is a critical business process within law firms, nFlow is also committed to maximum resilience and this has led to the development of some features that Lancashire believes "are pioneering in the field". These include a distributed server model that mitigates a single point of failure and a completely transparent auto save that will recover work if the client PC crashes or hangs mid dictation.

www.nflow.co.uk

News in brief

■ THOMPSONS CHOOSE AXXIA

Thompsons, one of the largest trade union law specialist practices in the UK, has selected Axxia Systems to supply an 80 user case management system to support the activities of its Employment Rights Unit. The software will be rolled out on a stand alone basis, with discrete installations going into the firm's 10 regional offices. Thompsons' head of employment rights Stephen Cavalier said that along with case planning and management, the new system would be used to enhance client reporting procedures.

■ WHITEHILL'S ELITE ENHANCEMENT

Elite has launched its Document Studio 5.0 facility. The product of an OEM agreement between Elite and Whitehill Technologies, the new Studio system provides users of the Elite Billing Manager with the ability to format and produce invoices and reports directly from within the application.

■ RELIEF AT A GLANCE

Class Publishing (020 7371 2119) has published *@eGlance* - an electronic version of the Family Law Bar Association's *At a Glance* guide to calculating allowances and ancillary relief for family law work. The electronic guide contains over 40 different specialist calculators, including Duxbury, CGT liability and child support assessment calculations. *@eGlance* is available on CD on a 35 day free trial basis. The full version costs from £199.95 pa (with a £70 discount for FLBA members) including a quarterly update service.

Looking for IT staff ?

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

■ **This week's top jobs:** Osborne Clarke in Bristol is looking for a web executive to look after the firm's various internet sites. And **First Stop** is looking for an IT solutions consultant to join its London based legal sales team. For details of both these vacancies, plus hyperlinks visit the Insider Jobs Board at www.legaltechnology.com

People & Places

AIM Group Holdings, the parent of legal systems supplier AIM Professional, has appointed **Richard Bearpark** as chief executive. The appointment follows on from the announcement made at the time of the secondary buyout by **Dunedin Capital Partners** and **Albany Venture Managers** in July last year. Prior to joining AIM, Bearpark held a number of senior posts within the **Siemens Nixdorf** computer group.

Patrick O'Neill has joined **Axxia Systems** as the company's new regional sales manager for Scotland. Axxia also continues to sell into the Scottish market through its distributor **John Richards & Co.** **Marc Cooper** has also joined the Axxia sales force.

David Higdon has joined London law firm **Rooks Rider** as director of finance & administration - the post includes responsibility for IT, HR and marketing. Higdon, a chartered accountant, was previously a partner with legal management consultancy **The Ridley Partnership** and takes over from **James Marwick**, who retired from Rooks Rider earlier this month.

Well known legal journalist **Rupert Kendrick** has a new book out this month. Called **Managing Cyber-Risks** (price £34.95), it is the latest practice management title from **Law Society Publishing** and looks at the strategic risk management issues associated with email abuse, misuse of personal data and online legal services.

Following the acquisition by **Solution 6**, former **Keystone Solutions** head of communications **Jonathan Mayo** is leaving the company at the end of this week. He is taking a two month sabbatical - well he actually claims he is off to Siberia to join the Russian cosmonaut academy but that just may be an excuse for holding his farewell party at a vodka bar - before heading back to New Zealand in August.

Keep up with the news

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Speech recognition first, digital dictation later

In recent months it has become almost accepted wisdom that law firms considering a move into speech technology should start with digital dictation and only consider speech recognition as an optional extra at some later date. One firm to go against this trend is Morgan Cole, which hopes to have all 380 of its fee earners using speech recognition, based on the Dragon NaturallySpeaking system, by early next year.

In common with many firms, Morgan Cole had been looking at ways to cut transcription costs and the amount of time fee earners spent on document creation. And, after testing a pilot project at its Oxford and Croydon offices, the firm began working with the Speech Recognition Company (SRC) on the development of a speech recognition system for the entire firm.

Morgan Cole's IT director Richard Martin said a key element was the creation of a bespoke vocabulary of nearly 13,000 words and phrases specific to the firm and its legal practice. "In the past speech recognition could involve a steep learning curve as you had to teach the software the different phrases and words but with the bespoke vocabulary our people could start working with it straight away. There's no doubt the creation of the vocabulary was key to staff quickly adopting the technology."

The firm did however recognise that speech recognition was not appropriate for all tasks, such as when fee earners were working out of the office, and have supplemented it with digital dictation. According to Martin "geographic independence was a key driver" here.

With SRC's digital dictation workflow system, users can capture data in almost any way they wish, through a telephone, on a handheld recorder or via a desktop microphone and then transfer that data in digital format to a central server that automatically allocates the files to a transcriptionist, allowing fee earners and transcriptionists to be completely independent.

"Our plan with digital dictation is to increase efficiency through flexibility and better use of human resources. We will be able to have a fee earner in Croydon, for example, dictate a document and route the data file across our WAN to a secretary in Swansea for transcription."

SRC managing director Colin Howman says the merit of this approach is "by leading with speech recognition, Morgan Cole's fee earners achieve increased productivity while having access to a digital dictation workflow solution for maximum flexibility. Importantly, this avoids a single, combined solution scenario whereby the benefits of speech recognition can easily be ignored in favour of the initially simpler digital dictation system."

■ Irwin Mitchell, who already run a speech recognition system supplied by SRC, has just announced plans to extend its use of digital dictation. The latest phase in the project, again in conjunction with SRC, will see another 74 'authors' being supplied with digital dictation kit - bringing the total within the firm to just under 200. Transcription is routed around the firm's various offices using the Winscribe workflow system.

www.src.co.uk

CCH launches new trust and probate package

CCH Software, part of the Croner.CCH Wolters Kluwer tax and legal publishing group, has launched a new trust and estate tax product designed to automate the entire trust returns process.

Called TrustPlus, it allows practitioners to automate the completion of the full range of SA900 trust forms, including tax liability computations and tax pool calculations, as well as R185 certificates for estates, discretionary and non-discretionary trusts. Users can enter data directly on to the forms or import relevant information, such as dividend income and capital gains disposals to and from other CCH software applications.

TrustPlus also includes a reporting function that allows draft computations to be sent to clients in a PDF file format - the package comes complete with Adobe Acrobat 5.0. In addition there is a 'milestones' facility to assist practitioners manage the trust and estate process workflow by flagging-up tasks and individual deadlines.

CCH believe TrustPlus will be particularly useful to practitioners when it comes to decision making. For example its ability to create 'what if' scenarios can help them decide which type of trust would be more tax efficient when taking on new trust work, and to check the tax implications for existing trusts of any proposed future decisions by trustees.

TrustPlus 1.0 is the advanced version of the standard CCH Trust product. Supplied on CD-Rom, it is a 32-bit application compatible with Windows 98, NT Workstation, 2000 or XP. It is available now from CCH Software (01483 775070) who can also offer training courses. Prices start at £795 for the single user version, with subsequent annual updates costing £599.

Dublin tech conference cancelled

Europe has seen the cancellation of a second major legal technology conference scheduled for May. The latest casualty is a one day event - The Impact of Technology on the Practice of Law - the International Bar Association (IBA) were planning to hold in Dublin today (29 May). Earlier this spring the Ark Group pulled the plug on its Legal Solutions Europe Conference & Exhibition, which had been due to take place in Paris this month.

Next Carpe Diem UK user group

UK users of the Carpe Diem system should note that the next user group meeting is scheduled for 12 June. The event, which starts at 2:00pm, will be held at Freshfields' London offices. Over for the meeting from Carpe Diem's US parent company Best Software will be sales manager Karen Fate and development director David Robinson. Anyone interested in attending the meeting should email either user group chairman Richard Joseph of Norton Rose on josephr@nortonrose.com or Gareth Thomas of UK distributor Tikit gareth.thomas@tikit.com

Legal technology events diary

■ JUNE 10, EDINBURGH. ResSoft starts its TechDrive Roadshows focusing on knowledge management (Autonomy), document management (iManage), workflow (e-work), CRM (InterAction) and practice management (FirmWare). Further events in 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

■ JUNE 11, SHEFFIELD. Videss begins a series of one hour legal IT workshops providing law firms with a chance to see the company's latest practice and case management systems on a one-to-one basis. For details call David Phillips at Videss on 01274 851577 or email info@videss.co.uk

■ JUNE 12, LONDON. nFlow Software is hosting a presentation of its DictaFlow solution followed by an opportunity to engage the Reynolds Porter Chamberlain digital dictation project team in an open floor discussion on their recently announced project. Starts 6:00pm at Reynolds Porter Chamberlain's High Holborn office. To attend call 01245 611222 or register online at www.nflow.co.uk/events

■ JUNE 24-28, LONDON. Aurra Consulting in conjunction with ICG Research from Canada is showcasing the latest generation of ICG's EMSys Pro Disbursement Recovery System. Hosted by Randy Henderson, VP Business Development at ICG, these personalized presentations will show how to increase profitability by managing disbursements more effectively. For details call Nathan Ott or Tracy Troke on 020 7400 3737 or email: nathan.ott@aurra.co.uk

■ JUNE 25-27, LONDON. Library + Information Show at the ExCeL centre in Docklands. www.lishow.co.uk

■ JULY 3, LONDON. Legal IT - make IT a success. One day CLT conference at the Posthouse Kensington. Includes sessions by Janet Day of BLP, Neil Cameron, Derek Sturdy, Andrew Levison and Insider editor Charles Christian. Fee from £315 + VAT. (5.5 CPD hours.) Call CLT on 0121 355 0900.

News in brief

■ NOTTS FIRM E-CONVEYANCE MOVE

Nottingham solicitors Young & Pearce have installed a new web-enabled conveyancing quotations system. The system, which was developed by Mountain Software and is hosted on Mountain's secure web server, can handle fixed or percentage fees, as well as local authority search fees, to ensure the prospective client receives an accurate quote.

www.youngandpearce.com

■ iMANAGE AND TIKIT DEAL

iManage has signed up Tikit as a new channel partner to implement, support and resell the iManage WorkSite suite of content and document management applications in the UK legal sector.

■ SCOT'S FIRM ENCOMPASSES ELITE

Edinburgh niche practice Bell & Scott has become the first firm outside the US to order Elite's new Encompass portal-based document management system. The 50 user firm has also purchased Elite's complete practice management suite. Encompass is based around Microsoft's SharePoint Portal Server (SPS) technology

■ ADR SITE OFFERS MANAGEMENT

ADR Chambers UK has launched a new web site intended to provide its members with 24/7 access, via a web browser, to case management, billing and credit control data. The secure, members-only, part of the site already provides access to over 32,000 live files. The final touches are now being put to the members database. This will allow members of the public to search for mediators based on their experience and work. The site was planned and developed by Clerksroom (0845 083 3000) and uses Citrix to provide access to case management functionality based on Meridian Law and Microsoft Office software applications.

www.adrchambers.co.uk

■ RELIEF FOR LESS WELL ENDOWED

Martindale-Hubbell has launched a new endowment calculator on its LawyerLocator online directory of solicitors and law firms. It can estimate how much a policy is worth today on the Traded Endowment Policy market so policyholders have a clearer picture of the size of any mortgage shortfalls.

www.lawyerlocator.co.uk

Web sites - still a rarity among smaller firms

The results of a survey carried out in March this year by the OyezStraker group seems to confirm the widely held suspicion that the smaller a law firm is and the weaker the penetration of technology within that practice, the less likely it is to have a web site presence.

Oyez looked at a total of 278 firms and found that only 118 - or just over 42% of the total sample - had a web site. Rather more interestingly, Oyez split up this sample into categories based on the number of people within each practice having access to a PC and using legal software applications. This revealed that while over 66% of firms with between 10-to-19 computer users had a web site, the figure fell to 42% for firms in the 5-to-9 user bracket, with a further drop to 33% for 2-to-4 users and down to just under 20% for single user practices.

However size is not everything as the survey also showed that even among larger firms web sites are still far from being all pervasive. For example among firms with between 20-to-39 users, just over 73% of firms in the sample had a site, while among firms with 40 or more users the figure was just over 71%.

NLIS - just a starting point for the e-conveyancing revolution

For conveyancing practitioners, one of the more confusing aspects of the much hyped electronic conveyancing revolution is how the various elements fit together. How does NLIS (the National Land Information Service) initiative relate to the much criticised NLPG (National Land Property Gazetteer) database? Has progress on digital signatures been rendered irrelevant by the stalemate over seller's packs? And how do the three apparently rival NLIS channels fit into the picture?

According to Steven Foster, the chief executive of NLIS channel provider TM Property Service (TM was previously called Teramedia, the other two channels are Searchflow and Transaction Online) NLIS "is already proving itself to be a very good way of ordering and accessing information online." But Foster also says it is important "to realise that NLIS is just the starting point for e-conveyancing and not the whole picture."

Foster concedes that the failure of the seller's pack legislation has left the market without a catalyst for change and agrees with HM Land Registry's analysis that it could take another 10 years before all the pieces of the e-conveyancing revolution are in place. However he also believes that although NLIS only deals with just one part of the conveyancing process - local authority searches - this is no excuse for law firms to do nothing today.

"Of course it may be tempting for lawyers to 'wait and see' how the e-conveyancing revolution pans out before they commit to the new technologies but the ease of connection, the ease of payment and the time saved in the office mean the existing NLIS services already offer a value proposition for getting online."

www.tmproperty.co.uk

XML for speech and telephony applications

In recent editions of the Insider we have reported on both the Legal Software Suppliers Association's attempts to devise an XML 'schema' for the legal IT industry and the activities of the PISCES XML initiative in the property market. Now we have yet another XML standard to report: VoiceXML (or VXML).

This is a new industry markup language used to script spoken dialogue interfaces and in particular interfaces accessed using a telephone, so it includes both CTI and speech recognition related applications. It may sound complex but the underlying premise is simple enough: the phone is much more of a universal device than the PC and speech is a more natural mode of interaction than the computer keyboard.

As with other XML initiatives, VXML began as a proprietary venture but subsequently widened into an international forum, whose members now include IBM, Motorola and the Speech Recognition Company (see *Morgan Cole story*). Version 1.0 of the VoiceXML specification was issued in late 2000. The next version is in draft form and likely be published later this year.

www.voicexml.org

Costs recovery enhanced

ICG Research, developers of the EMSys Pro disbursement recovery system and exclusive UK distributors Aurra Consulting (020 7400 3737), have announced the availability of the latest release - Version 3 - of EMSys Pro. Enhancements include Ethernet connectivity for control terminals and call logging buffers, improved client disbursements allocation and expanded integration with third party-systems including Lexis and the iManage and DOCS Open document management systems.

www.emsyspro.com

Document assembly news in brief

■ HOT DOCS 6 ON THE WAY

Capsoft UK reports that the next major upgrade to its HotDocs document assembly system - Version 6.0 - is slated to start shipping in September this year. Capsoft UK managing director Russell Shepherd said despite the fact that the document assembly market was seeing the launch of "one new competitor a month," the only serious competitors to HotDocs were still "Microsoft, Adobe PDF and apathy".

■ STAFFORD JOINS THE ONLY GAME IN TOWN

Adrian Stafford, previously heading up some of the document automation activity at Allen & Overy, has joined DA specialists Business Integrity to work on pre-sales consulting and implementation. Stafford says he considers Business Integrity to be the "only game in town for law firms who want to reliably automate complex and high value transactions".

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Keystone after Solution 6 - business as usual

Shortly after our last issue was published, the Solution 6 Group announced that its bid to acquire rival legal systems supplier Keystone Solutions had been successful after receiving acceptances in excess of 90% of the issued share capital of Keystone. But, apart from the usual red tape, including the publication of Keystone's final set of accounts and its delisting from the London Stock Exchange, what happens next?

According to David England, the managing director of Solution 6 Europe, it is "very much business as usual". Both Keystone and Solution 6 have the same regional structure based on North American, European and Asia Pacific operating companies. So, for example, Keystone's chief executive, Graeme Frost is taking up the position of managing director of Solution 6 for the Asia Pacific region.

Rather more importantly, there will be no changes to the existing product line-up - and certainly no plans to develop some sort of hybrid practice management system based on the best of the Keystone and Solution 6 CMS Open products. Instead, although Keystone as a company may disappear, the Keystone Professional system will live on and become one of the range of PMS offerings, along with CMS Open, CABS 2000 and Viztopia, from Solution 6. England says that far from resulting in competing products, it will actually provide customers with a wider choice of options, with CMS running on SQL and Keystone on Oracle platforms.

The one possible exception is Keystone's Net Results reports package which does overlap in concept with the PYA system sold by Solution 6. Net Results is already used by a number of CMS sites in North America and is now likely to be developed for the UK and Continental European law firms' market.

For the techie who has everything

Operating on automatic pilot with your Palm? Packed your Compaq iPAQ back in its box? If you are the jaded techie who has everything then perhaps the latest PDA from Sharp Electronics will help relight your firewire.

Called the Zaurus SL-5500 and due in the shops within the next couple of weeks, the new Sharp gadget offers all we have come to expect from a modern PDA however the Zaurus also has two extra features: it supports both the Java and Linux platforms. Users also get a Microsoft Office compatible Linux suite called Hancor Mobile Office that includes spreadsheet, WP and presentation viewer applications.

In terms of appearance, the Zaurus is similar to the iPAQ and has a 3.5" TFT colour screen. One unusual, and welcome, feature is that along with the now familiar PDA style handwriting recognition and stylus-plus-touch screen keyboard, the Zaurus also has a retractable QWERTY keyboard to speed up the input of large volumes of text. The Zaurus will retail for around £499.

www.myzaurus.com

Insider in Legal IT conference project

Legal Technology Insider is to be the official conference partner for the forthcoming Legal IT 2002 Leeds (9 & 10 October) and Legal IT 2003 London (12 & 13 February) exhibitions. The Insider will be responsible for developing the seminar programmes that accompany these two exhibitions. The theme for the seminars will be 'From legal practice to practice management - making legal IT work for your firm'.

David Collin, the managing director of Cordial Events who organise the Legal IT exhibitions, said he was "very pleased to be able to confirm Legal Technology Insider as our conference partner and to build on the success of the speaker programme which has over the last three years established itself as a market leading source of information."

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Telfer staying in Oz

Despite speculation that he might be moving back to London, Martin Telfer, one of the most influential voices in the UK legal IT world until his departure to Sydney to head IT at Mallesons Stephen Jaques, is remaining in Australia where he has just accepted the position of chief information officer with Minter Ellison.

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■ For all editorial, subscription and reprint 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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