



SCL award goes to BigHand TotalSpeech

The Society for Computers & Law has presented its 2003 award “for the most outstanding application of information technology to the law” to BigHand for its TotalSpeech digital dictation workflow system. Baker Robbins consultant Andrew Levison, who chaired the award’s judging panel, described the winning entry as “easy to use, easy to deploy and the type of application which, in a difficult climate for lawyers, will really make a difference”.

The award was presented on Monday evening (20th January) at a reception at the Law Society in Chancery Lane. The runners up for the SCL award were: the Automated Registration of Title to Land system from the Registers of Scotland Executive Agency, easyconvey.com’s Electronic Conveyancing Solution and the Visualfiles case management system from Solicitec.

Law Society to launch latest guide at Legal IT

The Law Society is to officially launch the 2003 edition of its *Software Solutions Guide*, which effectively provides small-to-mid sized firms with a practice management systems buyer’s guide, at next month’s Legal IT exhibition, which takes place on 12th and 13th of February at the Business Design Centre in Islington, north London.

The Society’s director of membership services, John Miller, will announce the names of the suppliers who have passed the Society’s increasingly rigorous selection process, which this year was extended to include auditors vetting company accounts, to secure a place in the latest *Guide*. Alan Richardson, the chairman of the Legal Software Suppliers Association, will also be on hand to explain why LSSA is supporting this increasingly influential publication.

■ The presentation will start at 12 noon on Wednesday 12th in the conference hall - admission is free but you are advised to book places in advance. **See also page 5 for a full preview of the Legal IT exhibition and CPD conference programme.**

The Insider web site

For the top legal technology news, jobs, links and information resources - visit the award winning Legal Technology Insider web site. Recent enhancements include improved search facilities and the extended top 100 firms IT systems chart.

www.legaltechnology.com

Tikit and NFlow in DDS initiative

With 2003 likely to see no let-up in the legal market’s enthusiasm for digital dictation systems, nFlow Software, the developers of the DictaFlow DDS, have upped the ante by forming a strategic relationship with the systems integrator and consultancy Tikit.

Under the deal, nFlow will focus on software development while Tikit becomes the exclusive reseller for DictaFlow, with responsibility for marketing, selling and supporting the product. Commenting on the move, Tikit business development director Liam Flanagan said “Digital dictation technology has come of age and we plan to work with nFlow to broaden their software’s market reach.”

Flanagan added that Tikit was particularly impressed by the way DictaFlow can be integrated within the broader law office automation environment. Recent DictaFlow projects have included integration with the CMS Open practice management and Hummingbird document management systems at Reynolds Porter Chamberlain, and integration with the iManage DMS at Masons. **For more digital dictation news see page 4.**

Beecham out at Sweet & Maxwell

Last Friday evening, at 9:30pm London time, Sweet & Maxwell announced that Peter Lake, previously in charge of Thomson Legal & Regulatory’s business development activities in Europe, had been appointed its new managing director “effective immediately”. Lake succeeds Wendy Beecham who is leaving the company.

Sweet & Maxwell is not the only legal publisher currently experiencing interesting times. In September Butterworths’ CEO Paul Virik quit after just 18 months “to do something completely different” and then, just in time for Christmas, the company announced plans to make 98 redundancies, primarily among its commissioning and production staff.

News in brief

■ BIRD & BIRD TO USE NET RESULTS

Bird & Bird has become the first UK law firm to commit to the Solution 6 Net Results reporting and forecasting tool, with the On Budget module being installed this month across Bird & Bird's seven offices. On Budget extracts current data from general ledger, time & billing, human resources and payroll systems and loads this information into a central data warehouse to provide the foundation for the queries and analytical reporting. The firm's Bird & Bird chief financial officer Paul Colvin said with On Budget "we will be able to re-forecast and complete various what if? analysis scenarios much more quickly and easily" than by the traditional method of using spreadsheets.

■ MUTINY AT ROITER ZUCKER

London firm Roiter Zucker has installed a Toshiba Network Monitor system loaded with the Mutiny (020 7484 0570) alert and monitoring software to minimise unplanned network downtime. The Toshiba/Mutiny system is a plug & play appliance that can be installed in less than four hours and can warn of potential problems or service failures by email or SMS messages.

www.mutiny.com

■ HARDMAN UPGRADE HARDWARE

Manchester solicitors John Hardman has upgraded its IT infrastructure, installing a Compaq ML Series server running Microsoft Small Business Server 2000, along with Windows 2000 Professional as the standard desktop operating environment. The project was handled by Preston based Brett Technologies (01772 652990).

www.brett-tech.com

■ DOS ACCOUNTS TEN YEARS AFTER

Who says DOS is dead? This month Virgo Accounts, a single-user accounts package that sells for under £200, celebrates the 10th anniversary of its launch in 1993. Originally marketed by Wheatsheaf Professional, it was later renamed Kestrel Accounts before being sold to Laserform. In 1998 Laserform relinquished rights to the system which then reverted back to original co-author Graham Irwin (0870 747 2514) who continues to sell and support the system. Over 100 small firms and sole practitioners have now bought Virgo.

www.virgoaccounts.co.uk

New online legal service enters the UK debt market

The e-Xecute online debt recovery service, which has been operating in the South African consumer credit market for a number of years, has now opened for business in the UK through Execute Law Ltd (01992 462001).

The basic concept is the e-Xecute client uploads the details of the book debts they want to recover and the system then automatically generates a series of solicitors letters (there is a non-exclusive solicitor/client relationship between the client and the law firm Execute Law uses to draft the letters) to the debtors. Clients also have secure extranet access to management and progress reports and can revise their instructions at any time.

Managing director Peter Edwards says the service is most appropriate for companies with 1000+ debts or overdue accounts to handle each month. The typical charge for generating each solicitor's letter is around £15 however that is the only cost, as there are no set-up charges, collection commissions, monthly subscriptions or legal fees. www.executelaw.co.uk

AIM breaking away from legacy sites image

Latest figures from AIM Professional Systems reveal that since 1998, when the product was launched, over 40% of the 130 law firms that have ordered the company's Evolution Client/Server case and practice management system have been new sites. Managing director Steve Broadley says this competitive success effectively scotches the canard that the company only sells to existing AIM sites wanting to upgrade older legacy systems.

Recent AIM wins include Ashton Graham in Suffolk, which has selected AIM as its preferred supplier for a 140 user practice management system and 90 user case management system. The firm's IT partner Jonathan Long said they had considered but then rejected best of breed solutions in favour of a fully integrated solution from AIM. Former AIM user Leeds Day in Cambridgeshire has returned to the fold following a demerger and replaced its Sanderson Galaxy system with a 60 user Evolution Client/Server implementation. Practice manager Janet Venn said the system's risk management features were a key attraction. And, Munro & Noble in Inverness is extending its AIM installation with the introduction of case management systems in its court and conveyancing departments.

New category added to Insider who-is-using-what chart

Legal Technology Insider has added a new category, covering Copittrak/Equitrac-style cost recovery systems - to its chart showing the IT products being used by the UK's 100 largest firms. The Excel chart can be accessed free of charge via the Insider web site at www.legaltechnology.com/Top100Chart.xls

New look Mountain to launch .NET in autumn

Mountain Software (01476-573718) has become the first major UK legal IT supplier to announce a next generation accounts and practice management system based on the Microsoft .NET platform. The new system, which involved a complete rewrite of Mountain's current client/server software, is scheduled for an autumn launch and will be followed by a .NET case management application. In keeping with the company's customer care policy, the .NET system will be offered as a free upgrade to all firms on support contracts - although there will be a minimum hardware requirement of a Windows 2000 network.

Sales director Steve Kendrick says .NET is just one of the "proactive initiatives" Mountain is currently working on following last year's management buyout, which saw the retirement after 26 years of the company's founder John Brewin.

Withers buy Elite and InterAction

City of London firm Withers has signed contracts to replace its current Norwel practice management system with a new system from Elite. This makes Withers the 27th firm in the top 100 to migrate to Elite. However the firm rejected Elite Apex as the basis for its new client relationship management (CRM) system, preferring to opt instead for Interface Software's InterAction 5.

Treasury Solicitors to go with Solicitec case management

The Treasury Solicitor's Department, which provides a range of legal services to over 600 UK government departments, agencies and organisations, has awarded its PRACAMS Contract (Practice & Case Management System) to Solicitec Ltd for a solution based on its Visualfiles product after a tendering process involving "a close competition between a number of leading suppliers."

Implementation will start later this spring and will see the system rolled out to around 350 staff at the department's London offices. The contract is valued at £2.5 million over 5 years and it is intended that PRACAMS will modernise the Treasury Solicitor's litigation operations through: integrated case working, the generation of bills and tracking payments, electronic records management facilities and automatic workflow making it easier for caseworkers to process cases.

■ **COMMENT** For years Her Majesty's legal departments have been awarding bespoke IT development contracts to general purpose suppliers and then being surprised when the projects come in late and over budget. Now, one has finally twigged that when it comes to specialist legal case management applications, it could save a lot of blood, toil, tears and sweat - and taxpayers' money - by inviting a specialist legal case management systems developer like Solicitec to tender for the job. Let's hope this is the first of many similar projects for legal systems vendors.

News in brief

■ VIDESS WINS HULL SITE

Hull-based firm Williamsons has chosen Videss to supply it with a new 85-user practice management system, along with case management software to support personal injury work. Videss will replace AIM, the firm's incumbent accounts supplier of some 15 years standing.

■ COBBETTS MAKE TIME FOR DEBT

Following last year's merger with Read Hind Stewart, Incasso - the debt recovery division of Manchester-based Cobbetts - is spending £70,000 + on a new Debttime SQL debt collection system from Linetime.

■ GODWINS MOVE TO AXXIA

Winchester law firm Godwins has signed up with Axxia Systems to expand its front and back office software and upgrade its existing IT infrastructure. The project will see the replacement of the current Avenue system with the 5 partner firm installing Axxia's Eiiion Windows accounts package, along with the Axxia Desktop productivity suite and case management software. The firm is also installing new server and PC hardware.

■ LAWPORT SET FOR FIRST UK WIN ?

Insider sources suggest a London-based top 20 firm is set to become the first UK practice to sign up for SV Technology's LawPort knowledge management portal. The system, which is sold and supported in the UK by Tikit, is already in use in the London offices of several US law firms, including Baker Botts, Gibson Dunn and Altheimer & Gray.

Looking for IT staff ?

Looking for legal IT staff, including positions in sales, development, web services, know-how, support and training? Then post your vacancies free of charge to the Jobs Board on the Insider web site by emailing the details to jobs@legaltechnology.com

■ This week's top jobs include: law firms in London, Cheshire and Manchester looking for new IT managers plus vacancies in sales, project management and training at Solution 6, Solicitec, SOS, Copitrak and Laserform. For details of these and other vacancies visit the Jobs Board at www.legaltechnology.com

People & Places

Pilgrim Systems has appointed former DPS sales consultant **Andrew North** as sales manager for its new FastTrack entry level practice management system for 20-to-40 user sized firms. North will be based in Pilgrim's new London office.

After a career in legal systems design dating back to **Stukeley Computers** and its Solace accounts system in the late 1970s, **Peter Walker** has retired from **Opsis Practice Management Solutions**. Walker will however continue to work with Opsis, the Anglo-Irish legal systems supplier that acquired Walker's Stamford based business, on a consultancy basis. For more information about the new Millennium and Millennium Solo product ranges from Opsis contact **Ella Jenkins** on 01780 764947.

John Horne has retired as executive secretary to the **Bar Council**. Although latterly involved with the Bar's Law Reform Committee, Horne was always a strong advocate of the use of IT by members of the Bar, as well as a stalwart supporter of the **Society for Computers & Law**.

Perceptive Technology has moved to 78 Cannon Street, London EC4N 6NQ. The new phone number is 020 7618 6440.

Steve Jardine has left London law firm **Winckworth Sherwood**, where he was until recently the IT manager, to build up his own company which will specialise in the design and development of legal web services and a real-time document management and collaboration system, code-named **LIDEX** (Legal Integrated Data Exchange), which should be previewing later this spring.

Former practising solicitor **Terry Frost** has gone into business with **David Street** to form **Solicitors Case Management Systems** (01747 855865). The company will initially focus on applications for firms in Dorset and the South-West. www.scams-law.com

Keep up with the news

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Speech technology news in brief

■ IRWIN MITCHELL EXTENDS DDS INSTALLATION

Irwin Mitchell is extending its digital dictation system to a further 195 users during the next two months. The firm's IT director Richard Hodkinson said in the first month of implementing DDS, the backlog of documents was reduced from seven to two days and support calls to IT were cut to practically zero. "Although well in excess of 12,000 dictations were created in the first month, the technology has meant we have been able to halve the average number of twilight jobs awaiting typing, meaning a significant cost saving." Irwin Mitchell uses a WinScribe system supplied by SRC (020 7471 0100).

■ ENHANCEMENTS AT WINSCRIBE

Winscribe UK (0118 984 2133) has announced a number of enhancements to its digital dictation workflow system. These include integration with Version 5, the latest release of Philips Speech Magic and the introduction of a new recording facility for conferences and meetings.

The latter enables a firm to record the proceedings of a meeting as it progresses but then, at a predetermined time such as every 5 minutes, finish that recording and send the file to a secretary to transcribe. Simultaneously, a new section of recording commences but it also overlaps with the last 5 to 10 seconds of the previous session, so there is no risk of any part of the meeting being lost. The secretary also knows where to paste the report together and, within minutes of a meeting ending, a hard copy of the transcription is available. This suggests that in some circumstances this application could also be used as an alternative to a machine shorthand writer/stenographer.

■ NEW HOME FOR NFLOW

Digital dictation workflow specialist nFlow Software has moved to larger premises at The Gatehouse, Hedgerows Business Park, Colchester Road, Chelmsford, Essex CM2 5PF. The main phone number remains unchanged at 01245 463377.

■ DIGIVOICE EXTENDS DEALER NETWORK

DigiVoice (0870 380 1112), the UK distributor of the DigiScribe digital dictation and workflow management system, is appointing new non-exclusive distributors. In addition to its original distributor Peapod Solutions, Harford Dictation Systems, south-coast based Professional Computer Group (PCG), and Mountain Software, who will be selling DigiScribe into the Bar and solicitors markets have all become distributors.

LOVELLS SELECT BIGHAND DDS

Lovells has chosen BigHand's TotalSpeech 2 digital dictation software after an extensive selection process, including a proof of concept pilot project the firm ran a couple of years ago with an earlier version of BigHand's systems. Lovells will initially implement the technology for 150 users in the London part of the international property practice. It is envisaged the system will eventually be rolled out globally, thereby allowing fee earners in other time zones to take advantage of the firm's London-based 24/7 secretarial and support services centre.

Exhibition preview: Legal IT 2003 London

Although the Legal IT 2003 London exhibition does not open its doors for business for another three weeks, the organisers Cordial Events say that on the strength of the advance ticket bookings they have already received (pre-registrations for the seminar sessions are nearly 100% up on last year) they are expecting a record attendance. And, with over 70 companies exhibiting, Legal IT London can now justifiably claim to be the largest legal technology event in Europe.

Along with the official launch of the latest edition of the **Law Society Software Solutions Guide**, - see *front page for details*, the event will also see a number of new products and systems making their public debut. These include the launch of SolCase 8 case management system from **Solicitec**. Suitable both for high volume procedural work, such as debt and personal injury claims, as well as high value non-procedural work, SolCase 8 also incorporates knowledge management features that automatically captures information during the life cycle of a case so it can be shared by other fee earners in a firm.

TFB will be giving the first public demonstrations of a new 'open source' version of its practice and case management system running on a low-cost Linux platform, as well a series of non-Microsoft desktop applications including Star Office, Open Office and alternative email products. And, staying in the realms of 'open source' systems, **Axxia** will be showing its Java-based Personal Knowledge Centre - in effect a next generation fee earner desktop system that uses a web browser interface.

Also, check out the **Civica** (previously Sanderson) stand, which will be featuring the company's new range of managed services, as well as a chance to win a multimedia picture phone, and **Timeslice**, which is launching new client extranet access and document management facilities for its Lawman PMS.

■ The Insider will carry a full review of Legal IT 2003 in its 5th March issue.

■ Legal IT 2003 also features a series of free CPD seminars that have been organised by the event's official conference partner **Legal Technology Insider**. The speakers are **Andrew Levison** (Wednesday 10:00am) on formulating an IT strategy, **Nicola Webb** of Osborne Clarke (Wednesday 3:00pm) on internet marketing, **Neil Cameron** (Thursday 10:00am) on squeezing extra benefits from IT, **Derek Sturdy** of Granite & Comfrey (Thursday 12:00pm) on knowledge management for smaller firms, and **Brian Blackwell & Allan Carton** from Practical Solutions (Thursday 3:00pm) on e-conveyancing. Each session qualifies for 1 CPD point and to secure a place you are advised to book in advance.

■ **Timing & Location:** The opening hours are 9:30am to 6:00pm on Wednesday 12th and 9:30am to 5:00pm on Thursday 13th February. The venue is the Business Design Centre in Islington, nearest Tube - Angel. Admission is free and you can avoid the queues at the door by pre-registering for both the exhibition and the seminar sessions in advance by either using the enclosed ticket or online at www.legalitshow.com

Legal technology events diary

■ **JANUARY 23, LONDON.** Lawyers don't (need to) care about technology - one day seminar organised by Tikit at the Montague Gardens Hotel, Bloomsbury. The seminar is chaired by Neil Cameron and includes speakers from Addleshaw Booth & Co and Berwin Leighton Paisner looking at client and matter centric approaches to technology. The event qualifies for 5.25 CPD hours. For more details email Lucy Morrell at Lucy.Morrell@tikit.com

■ **JANUARY 27-29, NEW YORK.** LegalTech New York at the Hilton. American Lawyer Media's flagship conference and exhibition featuring four simultaneous seminar streams including Insider editor Charles Christian on web site makeovers for law firms.

www.legaltechshow.com

■ **JANUARY 28, LONDON.** The first of a series of seminars on The Practical use of Technology, organised by Pericom Legal Services in conjunction with Microsoft. Admission is free and there are separate seminar sessions starting every 2 hours from 10:00am and the series ends in Norwich on 6th February. Other venues include Manchester, Newcastle, Birmingham, Leeds, Reading, Cardiff and Milton Keynes. For more details email legal@pericom.co.uk or visit www.pericom.co.uk/seminars.htm

■ **FEBRUARY 12 & 13, 2003, LONDON.** Legal IT 2003 at the Business Design Centre. The UK's leading legal technology exhibition plus accompanying seminar series - see *main feature on this page*.

■ **MARCH 10 & 11 AMSTERDAM.** Lex Connect at the Amsterdam Hilton, the Ark Group's new management forum for managing partners and senior executives from Europe's leading commercial law firms. For details contact Caroline Searle on +44 (0)20 8785 5930. www.lexconnect.com

■ **MARCH 25-27, LONDON.** 4th Annual Knowledge Management for the Legal Profession Conference. The event takes place at the Kensington Hilton, is organised by the Ark Group, prices start at £1095 + VAT, for more details call +44 (0) 208 785 2700.

Web site of the month: www.lightfoots.co.uk

What do you do if you are a law firm running three distinct business activities: a conventional solicitors practice, an estate agency and a residential property lettings agency?

For most firms it is a simple choice between getting in an appalling muddle or creating separate corporate identities and, in the process, diluting the benefits of any cross selling opportunities there may have been.

Alternatively, you could follow the example of our latest web site of the month, Lightfoots Solicitors in Thame. Just have an exceptionally clearly and well designed site that provides access to all three elements from the same home page, so as to maintain the brand image, while ensuring subsequent pages and sub menus are not cluttered and only show the options relevant to the visitor's particular area of interest.

Although not overloaded with high tech features and multimedia, this is nevertheless an interactive site. Visitors to the law firm section have access to a search facility and can register to go on a mailing list for regular updates, while the estate and letting agency sections both have property search facilities.

Other nice touches include the use of plain English - they offer 'home selling' rather than 'conveyancing' services; the use of FAQs to provide background information to particular areas of work before any instructions are placed and contact details that include not just a map but also information about car parking facilities. We also liked the fact that when it came to finding out who would be working on a particular matter, clients can track down individual fee earners by name and by practice area.

Admittedly none of this stuff is rocket science but for a mid-sized, high street practice in a market town offering a broad range of legal services to businesses and private clients, it is these little things that combine to create a useful site and the impression of a friendly, approachable firm.

■ The Lightfoots' site was developed by Bite IT (01705 525220) working in conjunction with The Ridley Partnership, a legal marketing consultancy.

www.biteit.net
www.theridleypartnership.co.uk

Now iManage enters the email management market

Next week, at LegalTech New York, the document management systems giant iManage will mark its debut in the emerging email management systems market with the launch of its new iManage Communications Server for Email Management product.

Speaking about the new system, Dan Carmel, iManage's vice president for marketing and business development, told the Insider that there are effectively two dimensions to the email management problem. The first is primarily an IT issue relating to handling the sheer volume of message traffic, along with its subsequent storage and the implications that had for servers, mailbox sizes and bandwidth. This problem is already being addressed by products such as KVS Vault and is currently not on the iManage agenda.

Instead, iManage's new system is targeted at the second element of the problem, namely the management of information and the need for lawyers to be able to consolidate all client related correspondence within one file, whereas at present it is typically stored within two separate repositories - a document management system and an email system. Although iManage users can already manually drag and drop email files into the DMS, the idea behind the Communications Server is to automate this process to support the unified matter-centric file structure many firms are now trying to achieve.

Because any folder within the iManage DMS can already be given an email address, the new system deals with outgoing emails by automatically sending a copy to the appropriate folder. Carmel concedes that dealing with incoming email is a more complicated process however in the first release of Communications Server any incoming message that uses a specific client/matter email address will automatically be routed to the appropriate folder in the DMS. Subsequent versions should also be able to route emails by the client and matter details appearing in the 'subject' line of the message header.

Communications Server should commence shipping in the UK and Europe at the end of March and will initially be available in English, French and German language versions.

Tikit signs its first iManage site

Newcastle-based top 50 firm Dickinson Dees has awarded the systems integrator Tikit the contract to implement its iManage document management system. Tikit will also be installing the related iManage MailSite, WorkSite and DeskSite collaboration applications.

Although Dickinson Dees is the first firm that Tikit has signed up for iManage - the company was previously a DOCS distributor - business development director Liam Flanagan believes iManage is set to become one of Tikit's key products in 2003. One reason for this is that along with being an accredited iManage reseller and developer, Tikit is also the only company in Europe to become a fully authorised iManage training centre.

Bryan Cave split IT into service and client arms

St Louis-based Bryan Cave LLP this month went live with a reorganised technology infrastructure that splits its core IT operations (now called Information Services and responsible for such things as the firm’s Elite PMS) from a new Client Technologies group. The latter will concentrate on all client facing projects, including knowledge management as well as the firm’s TradeZone family of subscription-based online services.

When he was visiting the firm’s London offices last month, technology partner John Alber told the Insider that although one of the benefits of the reorganisation would be to remove the problem of having administrators and lawyers competing for a slice of the same IT department budget, the main objective was to free the Client Technologies group to focus on delivering a value proposition to the client. “We are not interested in dabbling in technology or speculative projects. All the products we develop are expected to be profitable. The real goal,” Alber said “is using IT to do something better or faster for the client.”

■ Footnote: Alber said Bryan Cave’s own experience suggests that an attorney equipped with a laptop PC will bill about 2 hours a week more than a non-laptop user. www.bryancave.com

Murray advocates “scanning by stealth” to manage paper

For a long time perceived as the face of Equitrac in the UK legal market, Rupert Murray has now joined the Sentinel Business Services Group (020 7940 5003) with responsibility for selling the company’s document storage and management solutions.

Document storage may seem a low tech topic but according to Murray “we are still going to need our aircraft hangers full of paper for some years to come because currently we are creating and filing more paper than ever before.” While conceding that document archiving is “part of the furniture,” Murray believes there is a crossover between electronic and hard copy storage.

Because it is currently too expensive for a firm to scan all its outbound archives, particularly when they may only ever want to retrieve 15% of the material, Murray is advocating the concept of “scanning by stealth”.

“We believe,” says Murray, “the trick is to store deeds offsite in a secure fire and flood proof environment but when a fee earner requests a deed we can still bike over the original but alternatively we can scan it and email over the copy. With the latter option, the lawyer can then revisit the material as often as they like from their in-box yet the document need never move from its secure location, thus reducing the risk of it being lost.

“At the same time, because we are scanning the documents as they are requested, we are building the scanned archive library organically, and at a low cost. Hence scanning by stealth. We see this as an emerging technology that slots neatly into the logistical operation of file storage and retrieval.”

www.sbsg.co.uk/sentinel

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Legal technology - what's going to be hot in 2003 ?

Time for the Insider to stick its neck out and predict the hot technologies in 2003.

Digital dictation continues to go from strength to strength, particularly following the boost the SCL Award will give the technology and the fact that Tikit and Mountain will now be distributing and implementing the systems.

We also think **risk management systems** to help firms both limit their exposure to professional indemnity claims and satisfy clients (as well as PI insurers) that they have appropriate quality standards in place will be high on the agenda. We expect most will take the form of enhancements to existing case and practice management systems.

With the increase in email traffic volumes showing no signs of slowing down, another big trend will be **email management systems**. In fact there are two distinct sets of problems here: the technical issues associated with storage and bandwidth, which products like KVS Vault seek to address, and the management issues associated with ensuring email messages and conventional documents are all integrated within one matter centric location. DMS suppliers such as iManage - *see story on page 6* - are now starting to address the latter problem.

Finally, 2003 will be the year we start to say **good-bye to TINA** and the prevailing wisdom that there is no alternative to 32-bit Microsoft Windows client/server software with everything. As reported elsewhere in this issue, Mountain Software has become the first supplier to publicly announce a next generation system based on Microsoft .NET architecture however at least four others will be launching .NET systems before the year is out. In addition, we can expect to see more suppliers offering open source alternatives to Microsoft. TFB has already put its head above the parapet with Linux solution and Axxia is rumoured to be going the Java route.

Carydan acquired by Aonix

Carydan/JBA, the developers of the Carydan integrated case and practice management system, has been acquired by Aonix, an IT consultancy, telecoms, media and software company.

Carydan managing director Jonathan Beck said the move would provide the company with the infrastructure, resources and services needed to accelerate development of both the Carydan software portfolio and into newer generations of technology in the coming months.

Commenting on the deal, Aonix chairman Graham Burton said "We had for a long time been looking at expanding into the legal software vertical market. Having seen many offerings, we were impressed by the simplicity yet sophistication of Carydan and felt that together the two organisations could really make an impact on the legal market."

Carydan has relocated from Northwich and is now based in Manchester. The new phone number is 0161 438 2618.

Bevan Ashford picks Meticulus for new DMS

Bristol-based Bevan Ashford, ranked number 32 on our chart of the UK's largest law firms, has upset the cosy world of document management systems by rejecting both Hummingbird and iManage as the supplier of its new DMS and opting instead for the Meticulist DMS from Meticulus Solutions (01249 700050). Bevan Ashford has initially commissioned Meticulus to implement a proof of concept demonstration based on Meticulist however the four phase project will eventually culminate in a practice-wide rollout to nearly 400 users.

Bevan Ashford's chief information officer Dick Sayers said "Meticulist offered an opportunity to deliver the well understood benefits of DM in enhancing productivity, quality and profit without incurring the high costs in systems integration and training associated with more traditional systems. Our DM project team was particularly impressed that Meticulist offers a high level of integration with our standard desktop applications. The team was also impressed with the intuitive and logical feel of the product that we expect to speed the implementation and rate of adoption across the firm."

■ Unlike some DMS products, Meticulist's integral search engine means its retrieval capabilities are not dependent upon the amount of document profiling information keyed in by users. www.meticulus.com

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■ **Coming soon:** The next newswire is scheduled for 31 January. The next issue of the Insider newsletter (No.144) will be published on Wednesday 12 February 2003.