



Workshare to unveil strategy at LegalTech

Workshare Technology, the developer of 'in-document' content productivity applications, such as its DeltaView redliner software, will be announcing a new product strategy for all three of its systems - Synergy, DeltaView and Metawall at next week's LegalTech Solicitors event.

The new strategy has been developed after extensive consultation with law firms and corporations around the world in an effort to better automate and streamline common document-centric business processes. Workshare products are currently used by 65 of the top 100 UK firms and the new product has already been purchased by one firm - believed to be SJ Berwin.

LegalTech Solicitors takes place at the Birmingham International Conference Centre on 28 & 29 May. The Workshare launch is on Thursday 29th. Other new products include nFlow's preview of digital dictation integrated with iManage and the first public demonstrations by Tikit of their FileSurf system. This lets firms manage all their electronic and physical documents on one system, regardless of the media type.

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DMS wars - this time it's getting personal

You could be forgiven for thinking document management is one of the less exciting areas of legal IT but currently the whole sector is awash with rumours and allegations as iManage launches what it hopes is a knockout blow against long time market leader Hummingbird and its DM family of products.

The iManage argument can basically be paraphrased as 'our software has a modern architecture that makes it a more efficient and reliable document management system whereas DM is past its prime.' (*We will be looking at Hummingbird's response later in this story.*) To reinforce this message, iManage has launched an aggressive 'switch' campaign - complete with its own web site at <http://switch.imanage.com> - to encourage Hummingbird sites to swap over to using iManage. According to the site, over 175 organisations (not all law firms) have already made the switch.

In the UK, the number is far fewer but it is an open secret that Norton Rose is expected to announce a switch to iManage from Hummingbird within the next few weeks and the Insider has heard several other firms names mentioned in this context.

By way of further muddying the waters, earlier this month Hummingbird split with Tikit, the last of its original partners in the UK. Although Hummingbird described this as a "mutual decision," in a strongly worded letter to users, Tikit managing director David Lumsden complained of Hummingbird's "unilateral action". An added complication here is many Tikit Hummingbird sites also run Tikit proprietary DMS utilities.

Finally, a copy of a Hummingbird technical bulletin (133277 of 10th April) on the subject of missing edits and zero byte files has been widely leaked among users. ...*continued on page 6*

Battle of the IT events underway

The late spring/early summer period always used to be the high point of the UK's legal IT events year. However since the demise of the old SOLEX show at the Barbican, there has been a yawning gap in the calendar between the Islington Legal IT exhibition in February and the big three autumn events - Legal IT Leeds, GlenLegal and LegalTech Europe. But, is this about to change?

As reported elsewhere in this issue, next week (28 & 29 May) sees LegalTech Solicitors take place at its new home at the Birmingham International Conference Centre (ICC). Then, one week later on 5th June, the Law Society's Law Management Section (LMS) holds its annual Legal IT Forum at the Hilton Metropole on the Birmingham NEC campus. This event really is going from strength to strength, with its combination of seminar sessions and IT exhibition, to the extent that several legal systems suppliers have told the Insider that if it is a success this June, they may only be booking stands at the Islington and LMS exhibitions next year. Finally, just before the market winds down for the Long Vacation, on 3rd July CLT will be holding its annual IT Solutions Conference at the Café Royal in London.

News in brief

■ BIG INCREASE FOR CONVEYANCER

Southport-based volume conveyancers Barnetts, which now employs over 200 staff and handles 20,000 new instructions a year, is reporting a 110% increase in turnover in the 18 months since it upgraded its case management software. A long time user of Eclipse Legal Systems (01274 704100) Unix software, the firm moved to the newer Windows-based Eclipse ProClaim system. This also offers document management, support for SMS text messaging to clients and automatic progress reports to referrers and introducers via extranet links.

■ NEW APPOINTMENT AT KLA

Phillip Ayton, previously the technical manager at Charteris plc, has joined Kramer Lee & Associates (01268 494500) to head their management consultancy arm. KLA managing director Allan Bower said the appointment came at a time when KLA was seeing an increased demand from firms wanting assistance with "more ambitious" system implementations and the management of large scale roll outs.

■ CIVICA IMPLEMENTS WIN 2003

Civica Systems (020 7731 7200/0121 359 4861) has just completed its first Windows Server 2003 implementation. Although this was at a non-legal site, legal sales director Tim Spriggs says the experience means Civica is now geared up to help law firms considering making a similar move.

■ HEWATS TAKE THE TFB ROAD

Galloway-based Hewats Solicitors has become the latest Scottish firm to install the TFB (01489 609000) Partner for Windows accounts system. The firm is also rolling out a 25 user case management system across three locations in Kirkcudbrightshire.

■ ONE OFFICE FROM DPS

DPS Software (020 8804 1022) has launched its new One Office architecture. DPS say this will give firms wanting to run a DPS case management system a 'best of breed' option, so they can integrate with client and matter data stored on any third-party legal accounts or practice management system, providing it is based on an ODBC compliant database such as Access, SQL Server or Oracle.

Prettys in the pink with Elite 'Out of the Box'

Ipswich-based Prettys has become one of the first firms in the UK to sign up for Elite Information Systems (020 7464 4148) Out of the Box pre-configured accounts and practice management system. The 150 user firm currently runs Axxia software.

According to Elite's European general manager David Thorpe, the attraction of Out of the Box is that it is not a scaled down version of Elite's full PMS but a packaged version for smaller firms that would otherwise lack the resources to implement and run Elite. "With Out of the Box, Elite still provides the same software producing the same business benefits but in a package that is much easier to implement."

It is worth noting that although Elite may be synonymous with big firms in the UK, on a global basis nearly a quarter of Elite's sites have fewer than 50 fee earners, 74 have less than 25 and the smallest user firm has just eight fee earners.

OTHER ELITE NEWS: It has been a busy couple of weeks for Elite, starting on Friday 9th May when the Thomson Corporation announced it had completed its takeover bid after acquiring 98% of Elite's shares. The acquisition went through smoothly after the Federal Trade Commission agreed to an early termination of the anti-trust waiting period.

Elite has also entered the cost recovery market, forming a strategic alliance with BillBack Systems to become the exclusive reseller of BillBack products in North America. Australian based BillBack (020 7246 9999) sells directly in the UK where its flagship site is Linklaters.

Finally, Elite has launched Business Intelligence, its new data warehousing and reporting suite. Based on Business Objects technology, it offers full integration with the Elite PMS.

Kaltons - software not to blame

Former Kaltons senior partner Maitland Kalton has refuted a press report suggesting the firm's investment in a new case management system may have contributed to its recent closure "because it put a financial strain on the firm."

Kalton told the Insider the reason he decided to wind up the firm a fortnight ago was his realisation that he "hated" running a law firm and felt it was holding him back from projects he felt "passionate" about, such as "the Internet and the opportunities it brings for change both within the legal profession and in the market place at large." Kalton added that the move "frees me up to pursue activities with our vLegal.net project," which he said is already offering "substantial promise."

As to the case management software issue, Kalton said the press report "didn't do justice to my feelings on the system which are extremely positive for the most part. The suppliers, Solicitec, are superb and very good on support. I don't see it as having any part in my downfall, on the contrary."

Axxia sponsors in-house KM and legal IT initiative

In what the Insider believes is the first initiative of its kind in the UK, a number of public sector and corporate inhouse legal departments have agreed to work together to develop a collaborative approach towards common technology issues, including case and workflow management, case know-how, best value and Lexcel compliance.

Sponsored by systems developer Axxia, the group - known as the Axxia In-House User Group - has already held an inaugural meeting at which it was agreed to establish a library of workflows and reports to which all members could contribute and share. Organisations participating included Manchester, Gateshead, Wakefield, East Staffordshire, Middlesbrough and Calderdale local authorities, BNFL and the Commission for Racial Equality.

Commenting on the outcome of the meeting Gill Hague, the chair of the new group and practice manager of BNFL's inhouse practice, said "The discussions highlighted the similar issues inhouse practices face, whether in the public or corporate sector. Improving ways of working, providing a high standard of service to clients and demonstrating that you do so efficiently and cost effectively are common aims.

"Without the competitive pressures of private practice, inhouse users can see the advantage of sharing experience and best practice, to get the most effective use of the technology in their context. There are many common areas of work, and collaborating to share the development of workflows and reports will allow faster, more wide-ranging and cost effective implementation than individual practices could achieve alone."

DMS doomsday seminars

Tikit is hosting two seminars in London next month on how to prevent losses of data from document management archives. The seminars (for iManage users on 3rd June and Hummingbird on 4th June) feature Josh Wertheim of Wertheim Inc, who will be looking at ways utilities such as WincSync and WincArchive can manage DMS files as well as to replicate documents to back-up servers. For details call Sally Bellwood at Tikit on 020 7400 5960.

Record results for SOS

Following another year of significant contract wins including Horwich Farrelly in Manchester and Npower's My Home Move conveyancing project - where SOS is supplying the accounts and case management software - Solicitors Own Software (01225 787700) has reported the best trading year in its 16 year history, with turnover up by 25% and profitability up by over 150%.

SOS has also won a DTi SMART Award to help fund the development of its next generation .NET based legal software.

News in brief

■ MAJOR INFOGRAPHICS WIN

CMS Cameron McKenna has implemented the Infographics (01592 750677) FloSuite business process and case management software to support its real estate operations across its UK offices. FloSuite will initially be used to manage the processes, data and documents involved with commercial property cases, with plans to utilise the software for other applications in the future. Cameron McKenna is the sixth UK top 100 site to implement Infographics software.

■ WITHERS NEW INTERFACE

As part of its post-merger strategy with New York firm Bergman Horowitz & Reynolds, the London office of Withers/Withers Bergman is rolling out Interface Software's InterAction 5 CRM system.

■ NEW REACTION FROM TIKIT

Tikit (020 7400 3737) has unveiled ReAction Server, a new extension that allows InterAction 5 users to obtain direct feedback from their contacts within an intranet or over the Internet. Tikit chairman Mike McGoun says the system has applications in the areas of data protection and e-marketing regulation compliance and will also enable the automation of many marketing tasks. The Insider understands there is strong interest in this product and that the first three UK sales have already been secured.

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 new look Insider web site by emailing the details to jobs@legaltechnology.com

■ This week's top job: **Laserform** has a board level, £50k+ vacancy for a director to head up the company's practice management systems division. Other vacancies include: a **Solcase** developer in Manchester, an **Axxia** case management developer in Liverpool and **AIM Professional** is looking for a business intelligence consultant. For details of these and other vacancies visit the Insider Jobs Board at www.legaltechnology.com

News in Brief

■ BERESFORDS CHOSE PRACTICE

Beresfords, a South Yorkshire practice specialising in industrial disease and personal injury cases, has selected Osprey case and practice management software to provide the basis for what will eventually become a 250 user system. The Osprey system was developed by Pracctice (01432 372100) who are now strategic partners of Oyez Legal Software (020 7549 9600).

■ ECLIPSE INTRANETS GO LIVE

Colemans CTTS (Kingston-upon-Thames, Manchester & Walsall) and Barnetts (Southport) have recently gone live with practice-wide intranets developed by Eclipse Legal Systems. Eclipse, which has just been shortlisted for two categories in this year's eLoties awards, also supplied the firms with their case management systems.

■ TM TO RESELL BROADBAND

TM Property Service, one of the UK's three NLIS search channels, has been appointed a BT Openworld broadband reseller. The move means firms wanting to access NLIS services will be able to use a high speed internet link offering approximately 10 times the speed of a standard dial-up modem. TM estimate the price is less than £1 a day for 4 users having 24/7 access to the web. For details call TM's help desk on 0870 7405007.

■ YOU SHALL GO TO THE BALL

Last week's Young Solicitors Group May Ball in Reading was sponsored by IT systems supplier Comtec Enterprises (020 8687 340). Comtec's legal market customers include Horwich Farelly, Halliwell Landau and Lawrence Hamblin of Reading. Comtec will continue to support the Berks, Bucks and Oxfordshire YSG throughout the year.

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Speech recognition set for a come back ?

After years of failing to live up to the hype, it looks as if speech recognition technology might finally take off in the legal market. A number of firms the Insider has spoken to recently have said that following their positive experiences with digital dictation, they now feel confident to revisit speech recognition.

In recognition of this resurgence of interest, nFlow Software will be previewing what they describe as "a brand new concept in speech recognition" at next week's LegalTech Solicitors event.

In a related development, a new face - Volexia - has entered the legal IT market with a solution based around Dragon speech recognition software. This includes integration with electronic forms - so they can be filled in with spoken commands - and a £75 per month rental deal as an alternative to making a capital investment in the technology. For details contact Howard Briggs on 01246 267710 or visit Volexia's web site which features a multimedia demonstration of the system. www.volexia.com

Digital dictation news in brief

■ AMC TO GO GLOBAL WITH BIGHAND DDS

BigHand (020 7793 8200) TotalSpeech is set to become the first digital dictation workflow software to be rolled out across a multinational network, with Ashurst Morris Crisp currently in the process of implementing it globally. TotalSpeech is already in use in AMC's London and Frankfurt offices, with Madrid due to receive it next month and Munich now in the planning stage. TotalSpeech will then go into the Milan, Brussels, Paris, New York, Singapore, Tokyo, and New Delhi offices before April 2004, bringing the total number of TotalSpeech users at AMC up to approximately 1500.

■ PAYNES HICKS BEACH ORDER NFLOW DDS

Following a successful pilot project in its litigation department, Payne Hicks Beach has placed an order with nFlow Software (01245 463377) to roll out their DictaFlow digital dictation software to all 100 users in the firm's Lincoln's Inn offices. In line with nFlow's 'value for money policy,' one of the by-products of the pilot was the development of a conversion kit for the foot pedals and headsets already used with PHB's tape machines, so they could continue to be used by secretaries rather than have to be replaced by similar new equipment.

■ DDS SEMINAR FOR THE EASTERN COUNTIES

iDOiNK Technologies (01473 408620), who entered the legal DDS market earlier this year with its VoiceFLO system, is holding a half day (starts 9:30am) seminar on successful strategies for digital dictation at the Cambridge Science Park on 19th June. The CPD accredited event includes presentations by Insider editor Charles Christian, as well as Philips on speech recognition. For details email Lesley Huskisson at lesley.huskisson@idoink.com

Fresh on the radar - new faces and new products

■ DDD FROM TOPCALL

Another day, another TLA (three letter acronym) this time DDD, which stands for digital document delivery - a new concept that unified communications specialist Topcall (01344 383100) hopes will catch on with law firms - in fact Simmons & Simmons and Nabarro Nathanson are already using DDD in the UK.

Topcall CEO Herbert Blieberger says the objective is "to solve the problem of managing paper based documentation in an increasingly email based working environment" with a DDD system scanning conventional incoming post and delivering it electronically via a workflow network. And, because documents have been digitised, users can also have their contents translated into a text-to-speech format so they can hear them 'read' over a phone. Topcall also offer a related email management system called MetaMail and a secure DDD option that converts documents into an unalterable PDF format. www.topcall.com

■ CONNECTING UP FOR LITIGATION SUPPORT

As the demand for online collaboration tools grows, iCONNECT of Los Angeles has tapped into a key niche with its systems for the litigation support industry. The latest version (V4, to be launched on 1st June) allows users real-time direct access, via portal interface, to all transcripts, tasks, contacts, diaries, images and documents in a case. V4 is powered by Dataflight's Concordance search engine, works with any web browser and can support both fuzzy and synonym searches.

For information about iCONNECT in the UK contact Diarmuid O'Donoghue at Williams Lea (0207 772 4300) www.iconect.com

News in brief

■ STILL WITH TFB AFTER ALL THESE YEARS

Following on from recent Insider stories about the amount of time some firms remain with the same systems supplier, TFB has just announced that West Country firm Milford & Dormor is upgrading its accounts software to TFB's Partner for Windows system. What is interesting about this deal is that the firm has been a TFB user since the supplier first entered the legal IT market in 1976. The firm said TFB's approach to customer care was a key factor in retaining their loyalty.

■ INVARO INVEST IN EVOLUTION

Liverpool based legal expenses insurer and personal injury claims referrer Invaro is implementing AIM's Evolution system to store claimant and case data, and will subsequently be using it to handle the financial side of claims processing and law firm panel management. AIM Professional managing director Steve Broadley says the Invaro deal reflects the inherent flexibility of Evolution and its suitability for applications outside traditional law firm and local authority legal department environments.

Law firm data - where next for standards ?

The story in the last issue, about the various initiatives underway to try to create uniform data standards for communications between law firms and their major clients, produced some interesting reactions.

One reader said the problem was already solved because according to their figures "92% of UK law firms already had US time and billing systems capable of producing an electronic invoice in a LEDES format." Well up to a point Lord Copper, except that the correct figure is more likely that 92% of firms **do not** have LEDES compatible systems.

Rather more worrying was the realisation that separate teams within Barclays Bank are currently involved in two separate data standards initiatives - and neither is apparently aware of the other's existence.

Still, we did have a long and useful exchange with DataCert vice president Jeff Hodge about his company's strategy for turning its ShareDoc/LEGAL product into a "secure pipeline" through which law firms can move invoices, budgets, case plans and other document types. DataCert can also support virtual dealroom operations but has not actively pursued this because to-date it has only detected "lukewarm interest" in the concept. www.datacert.com

CRM - a mediocre approach will do nicely

Although Interface Software is shortly about to announce the 50th UK customer for its InterAction CRM software, it is worth noting that not all firms are quite so plugged into the concepts of CRM and marketing. Joe Reevy, previously with LawZone and now running Best Practice Online (01392 423607) recalls a consultancy project he was involved with a while ago where the senior partner said one of his firm's goals was to establish a "mediocre CRM strategy." When queried on this, the partner explained that if the firm could achieve just a mediocre result, this would still give them a significant marketing advantage over their competitors.

■ Reevy will be giving a presentation on effective web site design at CLT's annual IT Solutions conference in London on 3rd July.

Legal technology events diary

- **MAY 28 & 29, BIRMINGHAM.** LegalTech Solicitors - the event, which combines a full conference programme with an exhibition, moves from its March slot at the NEC to the International Convention Centre in the centre of Birmingham. Speakers include Steve Williams of AMS Law, Derek Southall of Wragge & Co and KM guru Derek Sturdy. For details call 020 7936 9850 or visit www.legaltechshow.com
- **JUNE 5, BIRMINGHAM NEC.** The Law Society Law Management Section's annual Legal IT Forum at the Hilton Metropole Hotel. Along with a major exhibition with 30 plus IT suppliers, the event has a full conference programme chaired by Charles Christian. Speakers include Janet Day, Allan Carton, Neil Cameron and Rupert Kendrick. The event qualifies for 5 CPD hours, fees start at £195 + VAT. For details email paul.seymour@lawsociety.org.uk
- **JUNE 5, LONDON.** Tikit seminar at the Canadian High Commission looking at the role of the Whitehill Enterprise system in law firms. For details call Sally Bellwood on 020 7400 5960 or sally.bellwood@tikit.com
- **JUNE 12, LONDON.** Managing know how for competitive advantage - early morning (8:30 to 11:30) executive briefing organised by Solcara at the Law Society in Chancery Lane. Speakers include Tim Hyman of Harbottle & Lewis and Jeremy Tobias-Tarsh of Practical Law. For details email charlie.orourke@solcara.com
- **JUNE 13-16, CARDIFF.** British & Irish Association of Law Librarians (BIALL) 34th Annual Conference at the City Hall.
- **JUNE 16, LONDON.** Business Development & Marketing Master Class. CRM software supplier e1 Business, in association with the Sage group and the Chartered Institute of Marketing, is holding a free morning seminar at the Law Society in Chancery Lane on how firms can grow profitable client relationships. For details contact Emma Austen on 01962 831496 or email emma.austen@e1business.com

DMS wars - this time it's getting personal ...continued from front page

It may only be a coincidence but within days of the bulletin being leaked, an informal group of some of Hummingbird's larger law firm users held urgent meetings in the London Bridge area with senior representatives of first Hummingbird and then iManage to discuss the future of their DMS options.

So much for the FUD (fear, uncertainty and doubt) being spread - although it should be noted there are some very big law firm sites, such as Clifford Chance, and even bigger non-legal users who have no complaints about the Hummingbird DM product - but what does Hummingbird have to say in reply?

The response from Hummingbird UK country manager Liz Maloney has been very robust. Regarding allegations about the reliability of the product, she told the Insider that it was "all pure subjection and no evidence." Maloney went on to say that all document management systems had problems with zero byte files (which basically means that documents get lost) but almost inevitably this was a problem with the operating environment, with SQL Server proving less reliable than Oracle, rather than the DMS itself. She also added that DM 5.1, set for a June release, would be the most secure and scalable DMS on the market.

Turning to the iManage switch campaign, Maloney said Hummingbird was not interested in swap-out battles, not least because "I don't see iManage as our competitor, they are a single product company who have made inroads but won't get into our space. Maloney's view is that Hummingbird's "space" within the legal market has changed, with the company now moving on beyond document management into portals, virtual dealrooms, collaborative platforms and knowledge management.

This change of space also provides the background for dropping Tikit and the announcement of a new partnership with ITNet (0121 459 1155) and the decision to take up executive membership of PISCES, the data and XML standards group for the UK property and real estate sector. Maloney said the time had come to work with different types of partners - such as ITNet, with its track record in business process outsourcing - who can help deliver strategic solutions to Hummingbird users.

As to Hummingbird's future in the legal market (and 'yes' there is an XML-based DM 6 product under development for the longer term although this would be in parallel rather than as a replacement for the current Windows platform) Maloney admits the company is going through a period of change but change that will ultimately benefit all Hummingbird users.

Meticulus revamps DMS prices

Lest we forget, there is a third DMS supplier, namely Meticulus (01249 700050) which has just announced an annual licence price structure for its Meticulist system. Compared with conventional pricing, there is no change in the overall cost of ownership over a six year period, the move cuts initial spending commitments and therefore make it easier for firms to justify the investment.

Masons use Genidocs for document-centric email

Document delivery specialist Omtool (01932 334444) has released details of the way Masons is using its Genidocs system to support 'document-centric' email exchanges with its clients.

Genidocs was installed on Mason's existing email server to add security capabilities including encryption, authentication, conversion into unalterable file formats such as PDF, delivery confirmation, audit trails and digital signatures.

However IT director Kevin Connell said one of the key factors was that along with being easy to use and easy to deploy, the system also had to be non-intrusive, in particular "clients absolutely could not be inconvenienced by any desktop installation requirements." Instead, with Genidocs, clients who receive a secure message from Masons are not required to learn anything new or download any software. The messages are delivered into an inbox, just like any other email, and clients simply follow a small number of clear and concise steps to 'unlock' the secure message's contents and attachments.

"Genidocs works within the context of our existing practices and exemplifies what our partners and staff demand when it comes to new technology," said Connell. "It provides a high degree of functionality without intensive training or behavioural changes. For our existing clients, it immediately fills a security need, and when we engage with new or prospective clients, it's a powerful differentiator." www.omtool.com

Email management news in brief

■ EMAIL MANAGEMENT SEMINAR

Email archiving specialist KVS and Intech Solutions are holding a seminar at the Law Society in London on 11 June on integrated document capture, including scanning and profiling directly into a DMS. For details call Jeanne Holland on 020 8989 1244.

■ LEGALDOCS GETS UPGRADE

LegalDocs file management software has received an upgrade to to improve external file handling. The main benefit is Microsoft Outlook messages can be saved directly to a client/matter folder as separate .msg files at the same time as being indexed in the LegalDocs matter database. This means users can select the messages to save, from among all their junk mail, and share one message rather than forward it. It should also mean personal, often badly managed and rarely backed-up, mailboxes become redundant. For details email support@legaldocs.uk.com

■ THE BLACK SPIDERS ARE COMING

BlackSpider Technologies (0118 965 3453) has launched a new service to counter email-based security threats and junk email. This includes the use of BlackSpider's proprietary Huntsman heuristic scanning technology to perform behavioural analysis of emails and attachments. www.blackspider.com

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Sycamore takes over as head of Elite Asia Pacific

In one of the more surprising career changes of direction the market has seen in recent years, Kaye Sycamore, the co-founder of Keystone Solutions - which was acquired by the Solution 6 Group just over a year ago, has returned to the legal systems sector as managing director of Elite's Asia Pacific operations.

The new job, which initially will be based out of Elite's WebView development team's offices in Auckland, will see Sycamore responsible for setting up a sales operation covering the New Zealand, Australia, Singapore, Hong Kong, Malaysia and Philippines markets.

Currently Elite has 20 user sites in this area but although it is the home turf of arch-rivals Solution 6, Sycamore told the Insider that there is "more market momentum" in the region than most people realise. Sycamore also places great store on Elite's partners in the region, which include JuzLAW Solutions in Singapore and Billback and InterLegal in Australia.

LSC says it is surprised by supplier 'cheesed off' complaint

The criticisms over the way last month's new legal aid reporting requirements were introduced, levelled at the Legal Services Commission by Steve Ness of Select Legal Systems in the last issue of the Insider, prompted an angry response from the LSC.

Richard Shand of the LSC told the Insider that "We were surprised to read that Steve Ness is 'totally cheesed off' with the LSC and his claim that one solicitors practice was only informed about the introduction of five new civil outcome codes on their 1st April implementation date.

"The LSC has a Software Suppliers' Forum that meets with us, roughly once a quarter, to be briefed on upcoming changes and have the opportunity of feeding back any practical suggestions they have. In addition to the meetings, there is also an email group for notifying software suppliers of any issues that may arise in-between meetings

"The changes to reporting case outcomes were discussed at the January 2003 meeting of the Forum, with all relevant papers being circulated in advance. We also consulted with solicitors about the changes in September 2002 and there were articles in the LSC Focus magazines in both the December 2002 and March 2003 issues. The implementation date of April 2003 was given every time. Details about the changes have been on the LSC's web site since the start of this year and solicitors received the new forms in early March."

The Forum currently consists of 30-to-40 software suppliers plus other interested parties, including the Law Society and the Legal Software Suppliers Association (LSSA). Any supplier wanting to join the Forum and email group should contact Tim Colliou at tim.colliou@legalservices.gov.uk Copies of Focus are available on the LSC web site at www.legalservices.gov.uk

AIM expand share of publicly funded sector

AIM Professional (01482 326971) has added another high profile publicly funded practice to the list of firms using its Evolution system. The latest signing is JR Jones in London, who will be running time recording, accounts and case management software. Similar profile firms using Evolution include Fisher Meredith, TV Edwards and Hickman Rose.

AIM has also announced three other deals. Trust and wills specialist Senior Calveley & Hardy in Lytham is installing Evolution to fulfil database and accounts requirements. Croyden-based Gowen & Stevens has ordered practice management plus case management for its property department. And, long standing user John Darby & Co in Torquay is migrating from AIM's Unix-based Classic system to Evolution client/server.

Prescott selects Valid

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (John Prescott) has selected the Valid Information Systems(020 8215 1414) R/KYV v9 electronic document and records management system to manage its files.

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■ **Coming soon:** The next newswire is scheduled for 30 May. The next issue of the Insider newsletter (No.149) will be published on Wednesday 11 June 2003.