



## Marketing begins at home - or does it ?

Although many legal IT suppliers now sell marketing and CRM modules as add-ons to their software, new research conducted on behalf of the English Law Society suggests some of these suppliers are guilty of not practising what they preach.

The research (carried out as part of the annual *Software Solutions Guide* project and involving 640 mainly High Street firms) found that after buying and installing new practice management systems, 41% of firms in the sample were never subsequently contacted by their suppliers to find out how they were coping or whether they might be interested in any other systems.

What makes this lack of follow-up all the more surprising is that there is clearly a great sales opportunity being missed. In fact 67% of the firms said the primary source they would turn to for advice on future IT projects would be their current suppliers.

The next edition of the *Software Solutions Guide* will be launched at the Legal IT Exhibition, which takes place at the Islington Design Centre on 11 & 12 February 2004.

## The Insider web site

For news, jobs, events and information visit what The Times newspaper describes as the "definitive online resource for the latest news about legal technology"...

[www.legaltechnology.com](http://www.legaltechnology.com)

# OFT expected to rule on NLIS row in Spring

The Office of Fair Trading is expected to hand down a ruling on the ongoing dispute between two of the companies involved in the National Land Information Service (NLIS) - one of the key elements in government initiatives to speed up the conveyancing process in England & Wales - during the first part of 2004.

The dispute arose in March this year when TM Property, one of the three NLIS channel operators under the current licensing regime, made a complaint to the OFT about the behaviour of MacDonald Dettwiler UK. TM claims that through its common ownership of both the NLIS 'Hub' licence and a licence to operate an NLIS channel (which trades as Transaction Online) "MacDonald Dettwiler is able to cross-subsidise its NLIS operations in order to capture market share and thereby threaten the viability of the other NLIS channels, leading to a monopolistic position." The OFT is investigating TM's complaint under section 26 of the 1998 Competition Act. The third NLIS channel operator - Searchflow - is not a party to the complaint.

The dispute was further complicated this summer when MacDonald Dettwiler announced it wanted to increase the prices it charged channel operators for using the NLIS Hub. This prompted LGIH (Local Government Information House - the central government agency responsible for NLIS) to intervene but after some initial legal skirmishing, the matter was settled out of court and the price increases were approved.

Dr Andrew Larner, the director of LGIH - and in effect the NLIS regulator - told the Insider that he "awaited with interest the results of the OFT investigation." He added that because the channels were emerging businesses in an emerging market, it was not unusual to see companies in similar situations using creative pricing strategies to stimulate demand. "I'm comfortable that the Hub prices are not too high, it is now up to the OFT to decide if MacDonald Dettwiler's channel prices are too low."

## GlenLegal launches LITF Club

IBC/Informa, the organisers of the annual Gleneagles Legal IT Forum, are extending the event's networking opportunities to throughout the year with the launch of the LITF Club. This will meet three times a year to provide delegates with a mixture of keynote presentations and networking in an informal setting. The launch night is 26th February, when the Club will meet at The Magic Circle (that's the magicians' venue) in London.

Entry to the LITF Club, which is also offering members a number of other benefits and discounts, is free of charge to law firm IT professionals. In addition, there is an opportunity for 25 IT vendors to become members of the Club for £2000 per annum. This will give them, among other things, entry to LITF Club evenings and the opportunity to place promotional material in a 'goody' bag given out to each member. For more details email [simon.dieppe@informa.com](mailto:simon.dieppe@informa.com) or visit [www.legalitforum.com](http://www.legalitforum.com)

## News in brief

### ■ EVERSHEDES DEALBUILDER DEAL

Following an extensive pilot project, Eversheds is to deploy the DealBuilder document assembly and automation system from Business Integrity (020 7814 6886) to streamline “low level document production” in its real estate practice.

[www.business-integrity.com](http://www.business-integrity.com)

### ■ TAYLOR WALTON CALL ROUTING

Taylor Walton has become one of the first UK firms to implement the ContactPortal ‘intelligent call routing system’ from Telephonetics (01442 242242). The system (which most readers will have encountered a version of if they have ever booked tickets at a multiplex cinema) uses a combination of computer telephony and speech recognition so that calls are directed to the correct extension in the correct branch office via spoken commands, without the intervention of a receptionist. Taylor Walton are using ContactPortal as an overflow system, when receptionists are busy, as well as to support out-of-hours calls and calls to their Hemel Hempstead office, which does not have a receptionist. [www.telephonetics.co.uk](http://www.telephonetics.co.uk)

### ■ BEACHCROFT'S DATA EXPORTER

Beachcroft Wansbroughs has installed the eXporter data extraction system from West Midlands-based eXant (0121 609 7102) to improve access to information held in its back office administration systems and to speed up ad hoc reporting and information gathering. Although a new name in the legal market, eXant has a number of major commercial plcs as clients, with eXporter being used by their financial controllers.

[www.exantworld.com](http://www.exantworld.com)

### ■ ELITE EXPAND .NET SUPPORT

Thomson Elite has announced expanded support for Microsoft .NET technologies, including Windows Server 2003 certification for the Enterprise 3.4 and WebView 4.0 versions of legal practice management software. The company has also launched two new .NET applications: Paperless Proforma, which speeds up the editing of proforma invoices, and E-Invoicing, an electronic bill ‘presentment’ system that can deliver invoices in a variety of digital formats including XML.

## Pannone seeing benefits of Axxia e-commerce

Pannone & Partners has become the first LMS panel member to deploy Axxia's e-Tran system, which allows LMS to automatically incept remortgage cases from its own STARS database, and is reporting substantial improvements in efficiency.

Once the instruction is received from a lender, LMS creates its own file within STARS and passes the instruction electronically to Pannone & Partners via e-Tran. This in turn opens a new file within the Axxia case management system without the need for any further user intervention. The firm estimates this transfer of data and instant case creation is eliminating a time lag of typically 2-to-3 days, which represents nearly 20% of the average completion time.

Pannone already use Axxia's e-Sync software, which enables the automatic updating of the STARS system with case progress information, such as critical dates, events and notes, and according to the firm's IT director David Griffiths “The rollout of e-Tran and e-Sync has enabled us to make this quantum leap in terms of processing efficiency and resource management. The staff we previously used for manual inception can now deal with other tasks leading to a reduction in the administrative staff necessary to process each transaction, while those updating STARS can now focus on legal, rather than administrative matters. We have been able to double our caseload of remortgage transactions while adding only 25% to staff levels.”

## MSS use spoof to promote risk management message

Legal IT supplier MSS (01252 371121) is using humour - in the form of a spoof revoked practising certificate - to promote the message that managing risk is a serious issue and that the majority of claims against solicitors succeed because firms fail to maintain effective practice management records and risk management audit trails. MSS argues that because its AlphaLAW system contains built in risk management features, it can not only protect against claims but also help lower indemnity insurance premiums. MSS managing director Simon Meehan said the general reaction to the spoof certificate was positive with several lawyers admitting it was the first piece of marketing literature to have made it through to their desks for many years.

## Hello Interwoven, so long iManage

With the red tape surrounding the merger of Interwoven and DMS specialist iManage complete, the “new Interwoven” has begun a rebranding exercise that will see the iManage name disappear. iManage UK's Guildford HQ is now the offices of the Interwoven Legal Group but all other contact details, including the phone number (01483 549400), remain unchanged.

## Pilgrim back in the black as it enters new markets

After its dire experiences last year, when the company reported a loss of £859,000, Pilgrim Systems is back in the black for its latest trading year to 30th September 2003. Turnover is up by nearly 30% to £2.46 million, compared with £1.93 million in 2002, while the net profit before tax is £106,412.

Company chairman Jim Cummings said that "Although market conditions continue to be soft, there are early signs of improvement, with project deferrals from 2001, 2002 and early 2003 beginning to come back on stream, as firms become aware that their lack of investment in IT is hampering growth."

The improved results come at a time when Pilgrim has just begun breaking into new market areas. These include being selected by North Ayrshire Council to supply their legal department with a web-based debt recovery system and winning a contract from the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators to develop a new case management system to support their dispute resolution service. The latter project is in partnership with Oxford Law & Computing and due for completion in March 2004.

■ Miller Hendry, one of the largest firms of solicitors and estate agents in Tayside, has ordered a SolCase 8 case management system from Solicitec Scotland to enhance the way the firm handles private client work. The system will be integrated with the firm's Pilgrim Lawsoft practice management software.

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## By Legal, For Legal in September

The organisers of By Legal, For Legal, which was one of the highlights of the autumn's legal IT season, have confirmed they will be running the event again next year. The dates are 15-to-17 September, at a country hotel in the Bath area. The format stays the same: a series of round table seminars for an invitation-only audience of top 100 IT directors, with a limited number of spaces for commercial sponsors. For details email Lewis Silkin head of IT Jan Durant at [jan.durant@lewissilkin.com](mailto:jan.durant@lewissilkin.com) There are rumours of another event planned for September but hopefully the organisers have done their homework properly to avoid a clash?

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## Hummingbird restructures its European legal operations

Hummingbird has completed the restructuring of its European operations, which began earlier this year with the acquisition of Kramer Lee & Associates. As part of the new arrangements, Earnie Kramer - one of the co-founders of KLA - becomes head of Hummingbird's new European Legal Practice. Hummingbird will also announce the membership of its new 21-member legal CIO advisory board early next year. The board is intended to provide a forum for feedback and consultation on issues related to the functionality and quality of Hummingbird DMS solutions.

## News in brief

■ **MONEY LAUNDERING - NO THANKS**  
Mountain Software (01476 573718) has become one of the first legal IT suppliers to launch a dedicated module to help firms comply with the new Money Laundering Regulations which come into effect in March. Developed in conjunction with BRM Solicitors in Chesterfield, the software accommodates all the monitoring and reporting requirements of the regulations, including the role of the 'nominated officer'. The software costs £500 and is available as an add-on for existing Mountain sites or as a stand-alone system for non-Mountain users.

■ **SOLCASE TO HELP FIGHT INJUSTICE**  
The Scottish Criminal Cases Review Commission, which recently received an application from the convicted Lockerbie bomber Ali Mohamed Al-Megrahi, has signed a contract with Solicitec Scotland for the implementation of a SolCase system to assist in the processing of criminal case appeals. The SCCRC was set up under the terms of the Criminal Procedure (Scotland) Act 1995 to consider cases of alleged miscarriages of justice and to refer appropriate cases to the High Court for determination. CEO Gerard Sinclair said the implementation of SolCase was central to the SCCRC's commitment to the effective handling of such sensitive work.

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## The best legal IT jobs board... ever!

According to our latest feedback from law firm IT departments, software houses and recruitment consultancies, the Insider Jobs Board is now the place to go for legal IT vacancies with both a wider choice of jobs and a more targeted audience than any other legal magazine or jobs board. And it's free!

If you are looking for legal IT staff, including positions in sales, development, support and training, post your vacancies free of charge to the jobs board by emailing the details to [jobs@legaltechnology.com](mailto:jobs@legaltechnology.com)

This week we have a record number of new postings, including a vacancy for a document automation specialist (salary £50k to £80k) at PLC/Practical Law Company. For full details of all vacancies visit the Insider Jobs board at [www.legaltechnology.com](http://www.legaltechnology.com)

## People & Places

### ■ INTRODUCING BROOKLAND

Daniel Brown, previously with Kramer Lee, has joined the business development team at Brookland Computer Services (020 8652 2600). Brookland, which is now moving into the legal sector and includes products such as Workshare 3 in its portfolio, is currently helping a 350 user law firm migrate from Hummingbird DOCS to Interwoven WorkSite. [www.brookland.co.uk](http://www.brookland.co.uk)

### ■ NEW TFB FACE IN SCOTLAND

Technology for Business (TFB) has further expanded its Scottish operations with the appointment of Sandy Adam as new business development manager. He will be based at TFB's Glasgow office and will focus on developing business opportunities in the east of Scotland. Adam was with TFB until last year, when he briefly went to work for a competitor. He has been working in the IT sector since 1978 when he joined Olivetti.

### ■ WARD HADAWAY BEEF UP IT TEAM

Melanie Carroll has joined the IT team at Newcastle law firm Ward Hadaway to handle IT development projects including implementing a standard firm-wide desktop and developing ways to improve document and knowledge management across the network. Carroll, who was previously with Eversheds, is also working on a new digital dictation system implementation.

### ■ MURPHY MOVES TO INTERWOVEN

Stephen Murphy, originally the face of Hummingbird in the UK and more recently the sales director for Spain (for those of you with long memories, he was also with DPS) is the latest high profile departure from Hummingbird to join Interwoven, their arch-rivals in the DMS market.

## Keep up with the news

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## DictaNet - about to stir up the UK DDS market ?

Last month while DictaNet (the digital dictation systems market leader in Germany - Freshfields' Dusseldorf office is one the company's flagship sites) was in London to preview its product range, the Insider took the opportunity to talk to DictaNet director Florian Schwiecker about the company and the deal it is prepared to offer UK distributors in this country.

Although DictaNet comes from a solid legal IT background - its parent is RA-Micro Software, the largest supplier of legal systems in Germany - in the DDS sector it is concentrating on being the product developer, with distribution exclusively in the hands of resellers and sales partners. Currently it has about 60 of these in Germany and the Netherlands and is looking to apply the same model in the UK. Interestingly, although DictaNet does not allocate exclusive distribution territories and forbids price discounting, it does provide resellers with a comprehensive sales support facility and very generous dealer margins - as much as 66% on the £399 per seat price of its main DictaNet DDS product.

This product is a fully featured digital dictation and workflow management system that is compatible with a wide range of desktop and mobile dictation devices, including Sony P800 mobile phones. As an optional extra, DictaNet offer a customised version of the Dragon speech recognition system to automate transcription. And, in Germany, there is also a network of accredited independent transcription bureaux available - these can be found at [www.mcwrite.com](http://www.mcwrite.com)

Along with the main DictaNet system and related services, there is also the separate SoundClipper product range, which effectively turns Microsoft Outlook into a low cost (some versions are actually free) digital dictation and optional speech recognition system. There are free, downloadable, 30 day evaluation copies of both DictaNet and SoundClipper available at [www.dictanet.com](http://www.dictanet.com) For details about reseller opportunities in the UK, email Lasgin Saydo on [lsaydo@dictanet.com](mailto:lsaydo@dictanet.com)

## Digital dictation news in brief

### ■ LEGALDOCS DEBUT IN IRELAND

Cork solicitors McGuire Desmond have become the first firm in the Irish Republic to install a combined WinScribe/LegalDocs system, providing them with digital dictation, along with fully integrated document assembly and matter management. Further information is available from DocMan Ireland (00 353 447 2496).

### ■ BISHOPS MOVE TOWARDS DDS

Bishops Solicitors in Glasgow have installed a WinScribe digital dictation and workflow management system. The system was installed by Scottish DDS reseller Welgo Office Equipment (0131 667 0195) and the firm is running WinScribe both across a LAN and via internet clients supporting portable recording devices.

[www.welgo.co.uk](http://www.welgo.co.uk)

## Kroll acquires litigation support arm from Oyez

On Monday night (8 December) it was announced that Kroll Inc, the international corporate risk and investigations company, had acquired Oyez Legal Technologies - the UK litigation support services market leader - from its parent company, the OyezStraker Group, for an undisclosed sum.

The acquisition was effective from 1st December and the company, which remains based at its Farringdon Road address in London, will now trade as Kroll Ontrack Legal Technologies Ltd. Three of Oyez Legal Technologies' directors - Kelvin McGregor-Alcorn, Jeremy Rooth and Martin Carey - are joining the Kroll Ontrack team. Oyez Legal Technologies, which has approximately 120 employees, reported revenues of £6.5 for the year ended 31st August 2003. Kroll Ontrack is the Kroll group's e-discovery, litigation support and technology services arm.

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## Perfect access to new redliner

Perfect Access Speer's series of seminars last month on upgrading from Microsoft Office 97/2000/XP to Office 2003 struck the right note with those attending. According to Reynolds Porter Chamberlain IT director Julie Berry "The event did exactly what every IT director craves. It provided a review of Office 2003 from a business point of view: the good, the bad and the items that had not changed. Our representatives left the event feeling in a substantially better position to advise on whether or not we should consider this upgrade."

The seminars also provided an introduction to Esquire Innovations, a US company making its debut in the UK with its iRedline 2.0 redlining system. As well as providing competition for the Workshare 3/DeltaView system, iRedline also includes a 'Metasealant' utility that locks documents against further edits, as well as eliminating the metadata issues associated with Word's track changes facility. iRedline is compatible with both the Hummingbird and Interwoven DMS products.

For more information about Word 2003 migration or Esquire products email Gabrielle McManus on [gmcmanus@paspeer.com](mailto:gmcmanus@paspeer.com) or visit the Esquire web site at [www.esqinc.com](http://www.esqinc.com)

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## Eclipse preview latest ProClaim

Eclipse Legal Systems (01274 704100) has been previewing the latest version of its ProCLAIM case management system, which will be rolled out free of charge, to all users on maintenance contracts, from early in the New Year. New features include: improved Outlook integration, the ability to drag & drop files and images into case histories, and a risk management system that includes the ability to assign priority levels to case tasks and automatically escalate matters to team leaders/partners on set dates or after user-definable periods of inactivity.

## Masons go live with Windows XP Pro

Masons has completed the rollout of Microsoft Windows XP Professional to 700 users in its UK and international offices. Datashare Solutions (020 8337 2700) were chosen to help the firm, completing the project, in the words of Masons' IT director Kevin Connell "on time, on budget and with minimal disruption to our business".

The project included installing Windows 2000 servers, managed by Active Directory, to support Microsoft Exchange 2000 (itself an upgrade from Exchange 5.5) and upgrading the firm's iManage (now Interwoven) document management system, with Datashare involved both on the design and migration, including training, to the new XP desktop environment.

One of the findings of the initial workshop sessions, held to listen to users' views, was there was a feeling that the desktop login scripts were cumbersome and that PC boot up times were unacceptably slow. Along with standardising the build of PC desktops, Datasure also updated the Active Directory infrastructure, so that management of the PC environment could be centrally controlled. One consequence of this is that typical user downtime during a PC failure has now been cut from two hours to half an hour.

The project also focused on security, with the XP file encryption system being used so iManage is now able to protect parallel data stored locally on PCs and laptops. Datasure is currently working with Masons on the development of a bespoke data recovery solution, while other projects on the horizon include email archiving and implementing the iManage email management system.

[www.datasharesolutions.com](http://www.datasharesolutions.com)

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## They think it's all over

Commiserations to Sarah Levick, one of the few legal tech PR people who actually understands the industry, who is spending the Christmas holiday season hobbling around on crutches with a steel rod and 4 screws holding her leg together. She broke her tib and fib last week, while trying to save a goal during a game of football.

## Legal technology events diary

■ JANUARY 19 & 20, LONDON. Lex Connect UK 2004 at the Millennium Mayfair. Following the success of LEX Connect 2003 in Amsterdam, the Ark Group is holding its first UK invitation-only strategy and solutions event for managing partners and IT directors from leading firms. Sponsors include SAP, Computacenter, Voicepath, Canon, eCopy, e1Business and Nortel Networks. For details email Caroline Searle at [csearle@ark-group.com](mailto:csearle@ark-group.com) or visit

[www.lexconnect.com](http://www.lexconnect.com)

■ FEBRUARY 2-to-4, NEW YORK. Legal Tech New York at the Hilton. American Lawyer Media's flagship conference and exhibition. For more information visit

[www.legaltechshow.com](http://www.legaltechshow.com)

■ FEBRUARY 11 & 12, LONDON. Legal IT 2004 at the Business Design Centre. The UK's leading legal technology exhibition. For details visit [www.legalitshow.com](http://www.legalitshow.com)

■ FEBRUARY 22-to-25, FLORIDA. Summit 2004 - the Hummingbird worldwide user conference at the Westin Diplomat Resort & Spa at Hollywood in Florida. Full conference and registration information is available from <http://events.hummingbird.com/summit/hollywood.html>

■ FEBRUARY 26, LONDON. Informa launches the LITF (Legal IT Forum) Club to extend the networking opportunities offered by the Gleneagles event throughout the year. The inaugural meeting takes place at The Magic Circle's HQ - yes, the magicians' organisation - near Euston Station. The event kicks off at 6:00pm and admission is free to law firm IT professionals. For more details email [simon.dieppe@informa.com](mailto:simon.dieppe@informa.com) or visit [www.legalitforum.com](http://www.legalitforum.com)

■ MARCH 1 & 2, AMSTERDAM. Lex Connect 2004 at the Amsterdam Hilton. Following the success of its 2003 event in Holland, the Ark Group is holding its second invitation-only strategy and solutions event for European law firms. For details email [csearle@ark-group.com](mailto:csearle@ark-group.com) or visit [www.lexconnect.com](http://www.lexconnect.com)

## Laserform help dig firms out of SDLT admin hole

Apart from being another form of stealth tax and a bureaucratic nightmare for property lawyers, the new Stamp Duty Land Tax, which came into force on 1st December, is yet another example of just how hopeless Whitehall is when it comes to translating all its hype about 'joined up e-government' into reality.

Plan A was for lawyers to complete the SDLT return forms, along with their 71 tick-boxes, online in realtime - until it was realised the Inland Revenue did not have the IT infrastructure to support such a process.

Plan B was for lawyers to complete forms manually and for the returns to then be digitised by scanning and ICR (intelligent character recognition) - until it was realised that no government department had practical experience of processing the high volume of returns the Revenue was expecting. And even those that did use scanning still had to employ legions of clerks to check the forms and manually rekey data.

Next, Plan C was devised - the forms would be submitted manually and the money saved on not buying scanners would be used to employ data entry clerks. The one light in this dismal tunnel is that the Revenue also allowed forms and software suppliers to produce their own substitute forms.

Here, Laserform (01925 750000) seems to have stolen the march on its competitors (according to Mike Boynes the company has been "inundated with orders") with an electronic 'smart' form that also automatically calculates the 'net present value' figures required on the returns. The bad news is the regime could be about to change again in the spring, if the Revenue persists with its Plan D - the introduction of automated processing, this time based around '2D' bar codes.

## Stamp duty land tax news in brief

### ■ SDLT LEASE CALCULATOR ONLINE

Sykes Anderson LLP, one of those firms who consistently use the web in an innovative way to gain an edge on some of their larger competitors, now have an SDLT calculator available online. Access is free and it can calculate the amount of tax payable on the acquisition of new commercial leases. Managing partner David Anderson says the facility is proving very popular with estate agencies. [www.sykesanderson.com](http://www.sykesanderson.com)

### ■ SDLT DEADLINES MET WITH HELP OF BIGHAND DDS

Andrew M Jackson Solicitors in Yorkshire is one of many firms reporting November as one of their "busiest months ever in terms of volume of business in our commercial property department" as clients rushed to complete transactions before the new SDLT tax came into effect on 1st December. According to AMJ managing partner Rob Penrose, one of the technologies helping them cope was their BigHand (020 7793 8200) TotalSpeech digital dictation workflow system.

# Research: are UK lawyers the most techno illiterate?

The IBA (International Bar Association) in conjunction with LexisNexis, has just published the results of an international survey it conducted among 600 of its members in Europe, North America and Australia on the subject of legal technology.

Despite the fact many of these lawyers operate in similar common law jurisdictions and use almost identical IT systems, the survey uncovered some surprising differences of opinion and attitude. For example, the UK has the highest proportion of lawyers (17%) who feel that a general lack of IT skills is the biggest barrier to the adoption of technology. This contrasts with 16% in Germany, 14% in France, 12% in Australia, 10% in the US and just 6% in Canada.

Techno-illiterates we may be but at least we are not the biggest worriers about price, with only 34% citing this a problem, compared with 54% of lawyers in Australia and 52% in the US. Canada and Australia have the highest number (22%) who believe that a lack of perceived benefits is the biggest barrier, compared with 16% in the UK - the Germans are the most optimistic with only 7% sharing this concern. On the other hand, Germany (29%) and France (25%) have more lawyers who believe the problem is an unwillingness to change working habits. This contrasts with 14% in the UK and 7% in Australia.

There are more partners carrying out legal research in the US (72%) and Germany (71%) than anywhere else, particularly France where just 22% of partners ever bother to open a book - in the UK 48% of partners claim to conduct research. Librarians (78%) and associates (87%) are the most widely used in Australia, compared with 61% and 47% respectively in the UK.

As to the frequency of all this research: 44% of Americans say they do it everyday, compared with 43% in Germany, 42% in France, 35% in Canada, 27% in Australia and a mere 25% in the UK. In fact 19% of UK lawyers say they only carry out research once a month or less - and 2% claim they never do any at all! However we are not the biggest slackers here, as nearly 10% of French lawyers in the sample claimed that dubious honour.

For the record, 36% of UK lawyers complained that online research services were too expensive, 33% said they often felt overloaded by the amount of research data they received, and 16% said their firms needed to update their research tools.

Who makes the decisions when its comes to new technology projects? Committees of partners still rule across the board, having the most influence in France (45%) - the figure for the UK is 38% - and least influence in Canada (18%). Chief technology officers/IT directors have the most influence in Australia (33%) - 14% in the UK - and the least influence in France (0%). And, KM officers/head librarians have the most influence (19%) in IT decision making in Australia and least (1%) in the UK.

Turning to future spending, the UK has the most optimistic outlook - 60% of lawyers said their IT budgets would increase over the next year and only 2% predicted a decrease. The biggest pessimists were in France where only 44% predicted an increase.

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## McCann FitzGerald drop Axxia for CMS.Net

McCann FitzGerald, one of Ireland's top five largest firms, has picked CMS.Net from Solution 6 as its new practice management system. The software will be used by over 400 users across all three of the firm's offices in Dublin, London and Brussels.

The firm selected CMS.Net after an evaluation process that included their existing Axxia system but according to McCann FitzGerald's IT director Paul Errity "We chose CMS.Net because we found it fitted best with our information architecture needs. The agility offered by a Microsoft .NET browser-based platform fits well with our overall technology strategy and provides the level of flexibility we require going forward."

Of the other big five Irish firms, Matheson Ormsby Prentice is on Axxia, A&L Goodbody has Solution 6 Keystone, William Fry run Thomson Elite and Arthur Cox have a bespoke PMS.

In a related development, Richards Butler has just announced that it has successfully deployed the Solution 6 CMS.Net PMS in its London offices. CMS.Net replaces the bespoke PMS software the firm had been using for the past 10 years and Richards Butler is now rolling out the system to its other offices around the world.

■ McCann FitzGerald has also announced that it is to deploy the FloSuite business process management (BPM) software from Infographics (01592 750677) to meet legal and financial process management requirements within the firm, as well as help create 'a processes-centric working environment' that integrates various IT systems.

FloSuite is the BPM side of the business Infographics retained after it sold its Teamflo case management operations to AIM Professional earlier this autumn. Reports suggest Infographics will shortly be announcing further FloSuite contract wins. [www.infographics.co.uk](http://www.infographics.co.uk)

## Xmas shopping in a good cause

This Christmas, Solicitors Own Software (SOS) is hosting a charity web site that helps raise money for charitable causes whenever you shop online from major retailers. The site, which is currently clocking up about 5000 page views a day, is called GiveAsYouGet and was devised by Jonny Platt - currently a student at Sussex University and, coincidentally, the son of SOS managing director Michael Platt.

Every time you link through to a retailer, such as Amazon, Boots, Currys, Dell, John Lewis, PC World or WHSmith, via the site, the charity earns a commission, ranging from 2% to 20%, of the purchase price of anything you buy online. Then, every quarter, 92% of the proceeds (the remainder goes towards the cost of running the site) are distributed to a range of charitable good causes. The total range of products available amounts to over 4 million items so there is no shortage of stuff to buy - and it costs you, the customer, nothing extra. [www.giveasyouget.net](http://www.giveasyouget.net)

## Olswang puts email in secure Vault

City law firm Olswang has selected the Enterprise Vault email management system from KVS to tackle the issue of escalating email volumes. The firm's IT director Clive Knott said Vault would "help improve the overall reliability and performance of Microsoft Exchange. Initially we are using the Vault to archive emails but longer term will be extending the system to help search for emails on a matter basis."

The Vault was sold and implemented by First Stop Computer Group (01923 247707) who have been a KVS reseller since 2000.

[www.firststop.co.uk](http://www.firststop.co.uk)

## Speakers announced for Lex Connect

The Ark Group has announced the speakers panel lined up for its Lex Connect UK event at the Millennium Mayfair Hotel in London next month (19 & 20 January). They include: Steven Chernikeeff, head of operational services at Allen & Overy, John Verry, the risk manager at Charles Russell, Bird & Bird KM director Andrew White, managing partners Ralph Cohen of SJ Berwin, Tony Angel of Linklaters and Laurence Harris of Kendall Freeman, plus Berwin Leighton Paisner marketing director Gillian Khan and Eversheds head of business development Kevin Doolan. [www.lexconnect.com](http://www.lexconnect.com)

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■ **Coming soon:** The next Insider newsletter (No.157) will be published on Thursday 29th January 2004. There will also be newswires published on 18 December and 15 January.