



Handshake launch rival for Lawport portal

Handshake Software, a US based legal systems integrator, this week launched its Web Parts for Microsoft SharePoint Portal Server integration for legal software. While not the snappiest of names, the Handshake system is potentially one of the more interesting product launches we will see this year, as it offers a matter-centric view of all related information, regardless of its source. Thus Handshake is compatible with PMS, DMS and CRM applications such as Elite, CMS, InterAction, Hummingbird and Interwoven but, because it is built on standard Microsoft technology, it can achieve this without having to use a data warehouse or any other proprietary systems.

Although good news for firms wanting matter centrality, Handshake's launch is bad news for SV Technology's Lawport portal (sold in the UK by Tikit) which until now has had this niche to itself. (And there is further competition for SV on the horizon in the shape of the soon-to-launch OMS Matter Centre system from FWBS.) Handshake's president Doug Horton, who some readers will recall from his days with CMS, is now in the UK talking to firms about the system. <http://www.handshakesoftware.com>

THE INSIDER WEB SITE
www.legaltechnology.com

For the latest legal IT news, jobs, events and information, visit the Insider web site, described by The Times newspaper as "the definitive online resource for legal technology news".

UK gets green light for e-billing standard

UK law firms could finally be on their way to having a uniform data standard for e-billing following the latest initiative by LITIG, the Legal IT Innovators Group, which now includes inhouse legal departments as well as the IT directors of 20 of the UK's largest law firms, representing in total about 30,000 end users of legal IT services.

The group has drawn up the LITIG 2004 (e-billing) standard, which builds on the earlier LEDES 98 standard that has enjoyed some success within the US legal community. LEDES is still managed by an oversight committee and at a meeting last month its members indicated their support for the release of the new LITIG standard. The net result has been to give UK law firms the green light to start providing detailed progress reports and billing information to their clients in an electronic format - but without needing to develop detailed parameters for each individual law firm/client relationship or format data to be compatible with different proprietary e-billing systems.

LITIG 2004 operates by allocating a code to each part of the process of carrying out legal work for clients. However by agreeing a standard definition of what these activities are and applying a common set of codes to each, law firms will now be able to provide e-billing to all their clients on a consistent basis, regardless of which software package they use. To enable as many firms and clients as possible to utilise the new standard, LITIG 2004 is designed to use an ASCII file format that should be recognised by all leading legal IT systems and software packages however it is also suitable for products using an XML format.

Law firm IT directors interested in finding out more about LITIG should visit the web site <http://www.litig.org>

Technology events - LSSA puts its money where its mouth is

The UK's Legal Software Suppliers Association is pushing ahead with its plans to run its own conference and exhibition in London this autumn. According to LSSA, the event is "in response to growing concerns that similar conferences, created by organisers not themselves directly involved in the industry, often present a lacklustre agenda and irrelevant exhibitors".

In a statement, LSSA chairman Alan Richardson said "There has been a plethora of legal software focussed exhibitions and events during the last 12 months with more planned. The feedback we've had is that they lack coherence and real practical advice from actual users of the technology. We want to cater to different needs and levels of knowledge so everyone who attends will gain something positive from the event."

The event is called Lexpo 2004 (no relation to the Lexpo legal IT events the Law Society of New South Wales has held in the past) and will take place at the Old Billingsgate Market Conference Centre on 15 & 16 September.

NEWS IN BRIEF**■ LOOSEMORES SWITCH TO SOS**

Newport law firm Loosemoores is to spend £100k with Solicitors Own Software on a new integrated accounts and case management system. The system, which will replace the firm's legacy Timeslice system, will also include document scanning, email integration and a new conveyancing workflow for the property department.

■ NEW BSI DIGITAL EVIDENCE CODE

BSI, the British standards group, has published a revised code of practice on the legal admissibility and evidential weight of information stored electronically. The code - BIP 0008:2004 - provides essential guidance on how to ensure that electronically stored information is acceptable in court. Copies can be ordered from BSI customer services on 020 8996 9001. <http://www.bsi-global.com>

■ TWO MORE WINS FOR VISUALFILES

The Visualfiles/Solicitec group has reported two more wins. Insurance and personal injury specialists Amery-Parkes have gone live with an integrated SOS accounts and Solicitec case management system. The 12 partner firm, which has 110 users at offices in Birmingham and Basingstoke, spent £280k to replace older Axxia and DPS systems.

The second win was at London-based Health & Case Management Ltd, which has purchased the Visualfiles system to help with its work in the field of personal injury rehabilitation case management. HCML will subsequently implement an online case tracking facility giving clients access to their own case records.

■ MORE PROCLAIM ECLIPSE

Eclipse Legal Systems has announced that another 12 firms have ordered its ProClaim case management software. The firms will be running the software to handle primarily personal injury claims and conveyancing work however there have also been orders for the company's probate, criminal and matrimonial modules. Three firms - Alyson France, Ian Brand and Parry & Co - have also ordered Eclipse's accounts system.

In a separate development, Eclipse has extended the scope of its user support facilities with the introduction of an online fault logging and tracking service.

Ex-RJW IT chief launches free time recording toolkit

Ian Lauwerys Consulting (01206 735953), which was set up last year by the former IT director of Russell Jones & Walker, is offering its Time Recording Monitoring Toolkit free of charge to solicitors and other professional services businesses.

The Toolkit uses a spreadsheet to automatically extract and analyse time recording data to give users of legacy software access to the same depth of financial management information users of more modern practice management systems now enjoy. The toolkit, which comes complete with 100+ pages of training and user manuals, can also be used with paper based records. The Toolkit is already in use at London firm KSB Law, where it provides a link between the firm's newer Windows desktop systems and its older Unix-based AIM Classic accounts software.

According to Ian Lauwerys, whose company also provides a full range of IT consultancy and implementation services, "Sound financial management starts with time recording. Fee earners who are disciplined about it also tend to be better at billing and collecting cash. It's a skill that can be learned but only if fee earners are given timely and accurate feedback about their performance." Copies of the toolkit can be downloaded from

<http://www.lauwerys.co.uk>

Business as usual as everything changes for Solution 6 group

Solution 6 Holdings has announced the most dramatic corporate restructuring in its entire history. Its Professional & Enterprise division - best known in the legal market for its Keystone and CMS practice management systems - is to be sold for A\$34 million (about £14m) to Francisco Partners, one of the largest technology-focused private equity funds in the US. The deal is expected to be completed within about a month.

In a statement, Solution 6 executive vice president Cindy Sessions (who has been involved in the legal sector since the days when CMS was still an independent company) said "It is very much business as normal as the company will continue to operate under the Solution 6 name and retain its current managers and business teams". According to Sessions, one of the other benefits of the acquisition is it "will move ownership and operations closer to the largest markets in the Northern Hemisphere". Currently about 40% of Solution 6's legal business takes place in North America, compared with 30% in Europe (including the UK) and 30% in the Australia/Asia Pacific market.

Equally dramatically, Solution 6 Holdings has announced that the remainder of the company (everything else except the Professional & Enterprise division) is to merge with MYOB, an Australian developer and supplier of business software for the SME market. The merger is expected to take between three to four months to conclude and likely see that side of the business dropping the Solution 6 name.

Select Legal Assured of expansion into South East

In the wake of the busiest six months in the company's history, Humberside-based Select Legal (01482 644334) has formed a strategic partnership with Kent IT services company Assured Systems (01732 455911) that will see Assured become the sole reseller for Select's LawFusion case and practice management system in London and the South East. Until now Select's user base has been largely confined to Yorkshire and the East of England however marketing director Steve Ness said that following the "unprecedented demand" for the company's new LawFusion system, the time had come to expand geographically.

In a separate development, Select Legal this month launches Version 2 of its LawFusion practice management software. New features include an anti-money laundering module, enhanced conflict checking with Lexcel compliant audit reports, integration with Microsoft Outlook and compatible PDAs, and a fee earner 'PAL' priority action list for monitoring key actions and events across all areas of the system.

Making Real partnerships

Real Decisions (020 8346 7143), the real estate and legal software consultancy, has announced partnerships with two more legal systems vendors. The first is with Laserform and the two companies are now working on a product that will combine Real's smart-Docs XML software with electronic forms, such as the new SDLT1 (Stamp Duty Land Tax) form, to create forms that effectively automatically complete themselves, along with performing any calculations that are needed.

The second alliance is with ResSoft, which will see the two companies working together on Interwoven DMS projects in the legal and property sectors. <http://www.smart-docs.com>

Laserform needs user champion

Attempts to form an independent Laserform user group have been set back after Susan Midha, the sole practitioner who had been leading the group, resigned "owing to the pressure of work". Midha still hopes "there will be someone who is able to take this up and lead us forward."

Nominations closing for Loties

Nominations for the Loties and eLoties technology and online services awards are due to close next week on Friday 30th April. There is however still time to nominate your favourite system, project, supplier or hero online. Full details of the Loties timetable and links to the nomination forms can be found at: <http://www.legaltechnology.com/itdiary.htm>

NEWS IN BRIEF

■ **MAKING IT HAPPEN FOR START-UP**
Bradford start-up law firm Smith & Makin has chosen Axxia's Eion accounts software and desktop productivity tools, ahead of rival offerings from AIM and Mountain, to help launch the firm's family law practice.

Co-founder Caroline Makin said "We knew technology had to be a core discipline from the outset. It isn't just a case of processing documents quickly, it is more about having the ability to monitor workloads, measure outputs, manage resources, evaluate profitability and use the information we can extract from the system to allow us to plan ahead more effectively. For a fledgling business, this degree of insight and the control IT gives can often be the make or break when it comes to succeeding over the long term."

■ **HULL FIRM GOES WITH VIDESS**

One of Hull's largest law firms - Andrew M Jackson - is investing £350k in new case and practice management software from Videss. The software will be rolled out to 150 users and replaces the firm's current mix of front and back office systems including an old JHC/John Hemmings accounts package. In a separate development Videss has relaunched its web site. <http://www.videss.co.uk>

■ **eCOPY IN AT WATSON FARLEY**

Watson Farley & Williams has selected a Canon/eCopy system to integrate paper documents into the firm's Lotus Notes workflow and Lotus Notes document management repositories.

■ **MULTIMEDIA TRAINING FOR SCOTS**

The Scottish Law Society has opened a multimedia training room at its Edinburgh offices to provide more modern facilities for seminars and conferences.

THE INSIDER JOBS BOARD www.legaltechnology.com

Looking for legal IT staff, including positions in management, sales, development, support, KM, publishing, marketing, online services, accounts or training? The Insider Jobs Board has the best choice of legal IT jobs available in the UK and you can post your vacancies free of charge by emailing the details to <mailto:jobs@legaltechnology.com>

PEOPLE & PLACES

■ PROMOTION FOR GARNISH AT TFB

Mark Garnish, previously the company's technical director, has been promoted to the position of business development director at TFB. Managing director Simon Hill said the combination of technical expertise and active involvement in the company's expansion strategy, including the recent moves into Ireland and New Zealand, made Garnish the perfect candidate for the post. Garnish, who has now been with TFB for nearly 20 years, was responsible for the development of a barcode based time recording system that is still in use in many practices.

■ BROWN NOW HAS PIVOTAL ROLE

Daniel Brown, previously with KLA and more recently Brookland Computers, has moved to Pivotal (01582 406650) as a corporate account manager. Pivotal is a developer and supplier of CRM software and its legal market flagship site is CMS Cameron McKenna although there are rumours that another firm is about to sign up for the system. <http://www.pivotal.com>

■ DOLLING LEAVES LEXIS NEXIS

Yolanda Dolling, previously with the LexisNexis group as international business development director for the Martindale Hubbell legal directories and web portals division, is joining Cape Town-based Inxcom International as the managing director of the company's Inxcom Business Solutions arm. This is a new venture intended to expand Inxcom's existing IT and web services operations into a broader consultative business within Europe. Inxcom's existing customers include BSKyB, Deutsche Bank and LexisNexis, for whom the company has done a lot of web development work. <http://www.inxcom.com>

■ HORNSBY GETS HIS RECOGNITION

Congratulations to Geoff Hornsby who has just been promoted by DMS market leaders Interwoven to director of the company's UK Legal Group.

■ GOODERHAM SIGNS FOR TIKIT

Stuart Gooderham, previously with thin client and wireless comms specialists Interchange Group, has joined Tikit as a services account manager.

Suddenly legal research became a little simpler

The last three weeks has seen two sets of developments that could make online legal research a little simpler for lawyers and librarians.

First off the marks were The Lawyer Group and electronic publishing specialists Context with the announcement that visitors to the <http://www.thelawyer.com> web site will soon be able to access the JustCite legal research tool directly from within the site's LawZone section. JustCite is Context's provider-neutral research service that provides links to searchable content from different legal publishers - including Justis, Butterworths, Westlaw, BAILII and HMSO - from within a single search box.

Context, incidentally, is now providing academics and students with recognised UK and Irish institutions with free, unlimited access to the JustCite service. <http://www.justcite.com>

The second development was the announcement earlier this week by independent electronic legal publisher Infolaw of its new Lawlinker service. This identifies any legal references on a web page and provides direct links to the full text source materials and further reference links. Infolaw's Nick Holmes says Lawlinker will save users considerable time as "no longer will you need to examine a page for references, visit several sites and browse or search them to locate the source you need as Lawlinker does it all for you in seconds. Lawlinker is accessible to subscribers at <http://www.infolaw.co.uk/lawlinker>

DIGITAL DICTATION NEWS IN BRIEF

■ LEXACOM NOW HAS THIN CLIENT SOLUTION

Lexacom (0870 777 3336) now has a number of its customers running digital dictation in a thin client environment using Windows Terminal Services either to access their main network from a branch office or to utilise legacy PCs, rather than upgrade to newer, higher spec machines.

Lexacom managing director Andrew Whiteley said the approach they have taken is to utilise the remote PC's sound card (or USB SpeechMike) and native OS (providing it is Windows 95 or later) to record and control the digital dictation process and then use Terminal Services to transfer the completed dictation to its final destination for transcription. Whiteley says another advantage of this approach is that it reduces network traffic and the workload on the Terminal Services server.

■ BRANTON EDWARDS ROLL OUT DDS IN 11 DAYS

Manchester personal injury specialists Branton Edwards has deployed a WinScribe digital dictation workflow system across the entire firm in a roll out that took just 11 working days. The firm reports that since moving to DDS, it has cut document turnaround times by on average 33%, reduced its reliance on temps and can now provide transcription services for fee earners working remotely, either from home or out of the office. The sales and implementation was handled by SRC (020 7471 0100).

The KGB software that came in from the cold

Over the years we have encountered software applications that claim to have been originally developed for the CIA, MI5, FBI and Mossad however this week we go one better with a system that began life as an artificial intelligence system the old Soviet KGB used to filter and sort their multi-terabyte, multi-language knowledge base. Called InfoTame, the system is now being developed, sold and supported by a Silicon Valley company - although there remains a substantial R&D team in Moscow.

In its post-Cold War manifestation, InfoTame is now being used by US law firms, large corporates, energy companies and news organisations as a search engine but with the emphasis on extracting information based on its 'significance' rather than the frequency of keywords or other Boolean queries. InfoTame say the AI element "can essentially understand and find significant concepts and ideas in large volumes of information, and then summarise, categorise and correlate hidden patterns in seconds". Along with more conventional search engine-type activities, the system has also been used by law firms, in large scale litigation and discovery work, and by corporations to monitor their entire incoming and outgoing email traffic to spot suspicious activity or unusual patterns in real time.

■ InfoTame now has a UK sales office in London - contact Paul Cheng on 020 7262 8797 - and the software is available to law firms on an evaluation basis. <http://www.infotame.co.uk>

LATEST PRODUCT LAUNCHES

■ WINSCRIBE NOW SUPPORTS SMART PHONES

Following on the heels of DictaNet, with the recent launch of its smartphone compatible digital dictation system, WinScribe this week announced the release of its WinScribe Pocket Author software for smartphones and PDAs. Along with providing all the functionality you would expect from digital dictation, with support for online or offline dictation, and synchronisation via USB, wireless networking or GPRS links, authors can dictate from anywhere in the world and send their dictation to their preferred typist within moments of completion. There is also a 3-for-1 benefit here for if you invest in a smartphone, then not only do you no longer need to carry a separate mobile dictation machine around with you but there is also the potential to dispense with your PDA. <http://www.winscribееurope.com>

■ NEW REDLINING OPTION

AKS-Labs in the US has released CompareSuite, a new Windows (compatible with Win 95 upwards) utility that lets users compare and redline documents in most popular file formats, including Word, Excel and PDF. It can also be used to monitor and track changes on web site pages. The software costs from US\$60 per seat to US\$8 for 500+ seats. A 30 day free evaluation copy can be downloaded from the web. There is also an online version that can be accessed from a browser. <http://www.comparesuite.com>

Lit support - law firm launch new service

Cardiff solicitors Gimblett Williams, in collaboration with Skwirel Software, has launched a new litigation support service. Called Case Support, it runs on Skwirel's own document management system and is suitable for civil and criminal work. It offers services from basic document management through to full litigation support but with an emphasis on the needs of smaller law firms and legal departments. Pricing is based on a fixed fee of 20p per page, while the rate for discovery support ranges from £30 to £150 per hour. Call Steve Thompson on 029 2037 5902 or visit <http://www.casesupport.co.uk>

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

■ DUTCH FIRM ORDERS CMS

Dutch firm Barents & Krans has selected CMS.Net from Solution 6 as its new practice management system. The deal was secured by local reseller Timesoft and will be rolled out to 120 users in offices in The Hague and Brussels. The firm said CMS.Net was the only product it had seen that was flexible enough to create 'Chinese walls' between the law firm and notaries side of the practice within a single integrated system. For the last 10 years the firm has run two separate systems to comply with Dutch regulations on maintaining confidentiality and exclusivity between the two sides of the firm.

■ MORE FIRMS GO HUMMINGBIRD

Six more European law firms have ordered new document management systems from Hummingbird. The six are Miranda in Lisbon, Studio Legale Abbatescianni and Cabinet Bennani in Milan, Legares in the Canary Islands, Kromann Reumert in Copenhagen and Haavind Vislie in Oslo - the latter deal was handled by Hummingbird partner SaveIT.

■ RESSOFT IN AMERICAN UNION

UK-based ResSoft has formed an 'informal partnership' with New York-based systems integrators Union Square Technology, that will allow both companies to extend consultancy and support services to their respective clients in Europe and North America. <http://www.union-square.com>

WEB NEWS IN BRIEF

■ COUNTERFEITING ON THE RAIDAR

The niche media law firm Briffa has launched what is believed to be the UK's first fixed price anti-counterfeiting service. Called RAIDAR, the service combines legal preparation - including use of trademark protection - with an international network of investigation resources and enforcement agencies. See <http://www.briffa.com>

■ ONLINE CONTRACT CREATION

Genius Contracts, a new firm offering online contract creation for musicians, now has its web site up and running. The service uses the Enjudica virtual dealroom and document assembly technology to create management contracts within about 15 minutes for under £300. At present contracts are printed centrally and posted out however this will be extended over the next couple of months to allow clients to print contracts directly from their PCs. <http://www.enjudica.co.uk> + <http://www.geniuscontracts.com>

■ NEW LAW SOC EMAIL GUIDELINES

The English Law Society has published a new set of guidelines on the use of email by law firms, including copyright, data protection, professional undertakings and the regulations governing monitoring staff emails. The full guidelines can be found at <http://www.lawsociety.org.uk>

■ LATEST ILCA TRAINING COURSES

The Institute of Legal Cashiers & Administrators' web site now contains details of the ILCA's full programme of training courses. <http://www.ilca.org.uk>

LEGAL IT EVENTS DIARY

■ MAY 20 & 21, LONDON. The Association of Personal Injury Lawyers annual conference & exhibition at the Novotel. <http://www.apil.com>

■ MAY 26 & 27, LONDON. Ark Group annual IT conference at the SAS Radison Portman Square. Fees are from £1095. <http://www.ark-group.com>

■ MAY 27, LONDON. Transam is holding a free, half day (starts 9:00am) seminar at the Guildhall on email security, with speakers from Olswang + email security systems vendors KVS & Waterford. <http://www.transam.co.uk/events>

Web sites - are the Bar overtaking law firms ?

Are barristers chambers making better use of the web than solicitors? According to a new report *Barristers Websites 2004 - who is winning and why?* published this month by the web consultancy Intendance, there is a far higher take up rate of web sites among barristers chambers than by law firms. For example, out of a sample of 100 sets, only five chambers did not have a functional web site. However, as the report also points out, while the majority of chambers offer competent brochureware and marketing sites, only eight sets of chambers could supply any form of extranet/collaborative functionality.

Web sites were ranked on three criteria: content - what information is offered; usability - how easy is it to find information; and design - with any over-reliance on Flash and frames being penalised. Sadly - but not unexpectedly - design was the strongest category, with an average score of 76%. Usability averaged 63% and content came in last with 52% score.

The overall winner, with a total score of 88%, was Hardwicke Building - <http://www.hardwicke.co.uk> - which on 110 tenants was the largest set in the sample. Hardwicke was also the only set to receive a AAA rating under the Bobby test for accessibility by disabled users. But, just to prove that size does not matter, the runners up were Outer Temple Chamber (46 tenants and a score of 87%) - <http://www.outertemple.com> - and Monkton Chamber (31 tenants and 86%) - <http://www.monkton.co.uk>

Overall, the average total score was 62%, with nearly half of all sets clustered in the 61-70% scoring band, which suggests they make a conscious effort to keep up with each other. Copies of the report are available free of charge from Intendance (020 8871 1330) or <mailto:reports@intendance.com> Intendance will be publishing its annual report on law firm web sites later this year.

Zantaz aiming to take on KVS in email archiving and security biz

KVS, the company behind the Enterprise Vault email archiving system, could soon be facing some serious competition in Europe and the UK following the acquisition of Educom by Zantaz.

Ottawa-based Zantaz has specialised 'e-communications' compliance and electronic discovery systems, both on a hosted and onsite basis - since 1998 but earlier this year it acquired Educom, developers of the EAS Exchange Archiving Solution. Along with rounding off the Zantaz offering to include mailbox extension, email storage and retention management, the acquisition has also given Zantaz a European distribution channel via Essential Computing.

Zantaz CEO Steve King told the Insider that along with dealing with ongoing email management issues, he was anticipating an increase in demand for his company's products and services as "instant messaging was set to explode on the scene as a compliance issue". <http://www.zantaz.com>

New deal offers web services at bargain rates

For smaller practices, whose IT and marketing budgets are limited at the best of times, the cost of setting up a web site and accompanying email accounts (particularly while there remain concerns about being ripped off and there is no guarantee of what the take-up will be from the clients anyway) continues to be the main reason why so many still have no online presence.

One company now hoping to make a difference in this area is The Scension Group (0870 991 4108) which has obtained funding from an EU agency supporting ICT and e-commerce projects. With effect from the 1st April this year, the EU will now pick up approximately 75% of the cost of a law firm establishing its online services through Scension. To further sweeten the deal, Scension is also offering a number of fixed price services.

For example, the cost for up to 40 email accounts, 45Mb of web space, FTP access and web mail is just £45 + VAT a year. Although you still have to pay for the phone call (but only at local rates) when you access the internet, this is still substantially cheaper than the deals advertised in the back of internet magazines, where £200 pa is nearer the going rate. Scension can also offer a web design service at £45 + VAT per page, another bargain when most law firms can normally expect to pay around £2000 for a 10 page site. <http://www.scension.com>

OneSource to deal with your money laundering problems

OneSource Information Services (020 7367 5757) a company best known as a compiler and supplier of data from over 35 content providers, including Reuters and Dun & Bradstreet, this week launched its Synergy Solution automated anti-money laundering (AML) service.

Unlike most AML and KYC (know your client) systems, which focus on the workflow procedures surrounding checking client details, with OneSource Synergy you just type in a name and the system automatically searches OneSource's data warehouse, which now contains information on over 1.7 million companies and 6 million executives. Armed with the results, the system then produces a report, complete with an audit trail for compliance purposes and a risk assessment (based on either a percentage score or 'traffic light' warnings) of the prospective client. Because OneSource Synergy is sold bundled with a licence for an AppLink SDK, the system can be integrated with PMS or CRM and made a part of the matter inception process.

Steve Arnison, who looks after OneSource's legal customers (over half the UK's top 25 firms already use the company's content services) says the new service is designed to be used on a practice-wide basis, rather than just a few staff in marketing or accounts, and sees the initial target market as the top 50 firms. Insider sources suggest the first customer for Synergy will be announced within a few weeks. <http://www.onesource.com>

INSIDER SUBSCRIPTIONS

Legal Technology Insider is published every three weeks and is available only on subscription. UK rates: one year @ £130 for 15 issues or two years @ £220 for 30 issues. Rest of World £150 pa or £250 for 2 years. Payment in £Sterling - we accept credit cards.

■ **To subscribe or apply for a FREE TRIAL subscription:** copy, complete & return this form to: Legal Technology Insider, Ferndale House, Harling Road, North Lopham, Diss, Norfolk IP22 2NQ, UK

☞-----
Name.....
Firm/Organisation.....
.....
Address.....
.....
..... Post/Zip Code.....
Phone Number.....
Email.....

Tick boxes or complete as appropriate:
■ Three free issues trial subscription
■ I enclose my cheque for £
(payable to Legal Technology Insider) for one year or two years subscription.
Send receipt Please invoice me
Purchase Order No.....

■ Please charge my:
Visa MasterCard Amex
Name on Credit Card:
.....
Credit Card No:
.....
Expiry Date: /
Today's Date

Cardholder Signature

ISSN 1740-5033 (Print) Copyright © Legal Technology Insider 2004. All rights reserved. Published by Legal Technology Insider Limited. No part of this publication may be reproduced without consent. While every effort is made to ensure the accuracy of the information in this publication, no guarantee is expressed or implied and the Publisher does not accept liability for any loss or damage that may arise from any errors or omissions. Please note that web site addresses can change. All brand names and trademarks are acknowledged. Privacy policy: We do not sell or disclose the names, addresses or contact details of our subscribers.

Interface puts blue water between it and wannabes

Although there are plenty of software suppliers vying for a share of the legal marketing and client relationship management business, Interface Software - the company behind the market leading InterAction CRM system - has now put a further stretch of blue water between it and its wannabe rivals with the purchase of the assets of Scout Solutions.

Founded in 1999, Scout Solutions launched the Aptus CRM product, a web based system that was deployed by a number of large professional services organisations, primarily in the United States. Commenting on the deal, Interface president & CEO Nathan Fineberg said "Consolidation is a natural process in a maturing marketplace. As the market leader we are always looking for complementary technologies to build upon our strong base. Scout Solutions' customers and its great technology offer a natural fit and will further strengthen our offerings."

As part of the deal, Scout's president & founder Brett Balmer has joined Interface as director of technology. Balmer described the acquisition as "a win-win situation for Interface Software and Scout Solutions customers. In my new capacity I will have greater time and resources to focus on technology innovation, which ultimately will allow us to deliver more value to customers in less time." Other members of Scout's sales and support staff will also be joining Interface Software.

Take part in a new KM survey

Matthew Parsons, the author of OUP's upcoming book *Effective Knowledge Management for Law Firms*, is conducting an online survey of knowledge management within law firms, with a view to providing objective data on current practices, resources and initiatives. The survey is independent - it is not sponsored by or affiliated to any suppliers - and copies of the report will be available free of charge. To participate in the survey, log on to <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.asp?u=30906417097>

New forum for IT directors

Bournemouth-based Lester Aldridge has launched a Southern Forum for IT directors and managers to meet to exchange views, suggestions and solutions. According to LA's director of IT & communications Neil Prevett, who was behind the forum initiative, "There are a lot of common issues that face legal IT professionals. Working under the pressure of tight deadlines and limited budgets, they shouldn't have to feel they are on a lonely path." Prevett believes the forum may even become a force to be reckoned with when dealing with software suppliers.

Over 20 firms attended the forum's recent inaugural meeting and IT directors and managers wanting to join should contact Neil Prevett on 01202 786217 or <mailto:neil.prevett@la-law.com>

Are accountants easier to please than lawyers?

We all know the old saw about there being lies, damned lies and statistics but the results of a recent survey conducted on behalf of Laserform seems to suggest that lawyers and accountants have entirely different mindsets.

Random samples of lawyers and accountants were asked 'Are you confident that your practice management system adds to the profitability of your firm?' Of those replying, only 11% of accountants said 'no' they did not think it added to profitability whereas 37% of lawyers were underwhelmed by their systems.

As accountants and lawyers use similar - and in some instances identical - IT systems, why this disparity? Laserform suggest it is because law firms "have historically felt less at ease with IT" and been slower to exploit modern business practices. But could it actually be because lawyers are just so much harder to please than accountants?

Frail Pool stirs interest

Congratulations to Mark Keenan of Divorce Online and Gianni Brancazio of WordWave for being the first to spot the spoof story in the 1st of April issue of the Insider. And commiserations to the PR agency, the conference company and the two software houses who all phoned up wanting to make contact with the mythical 'Tesco Law' supermarket. The clue was an anagram.

LEGAL TECHNOLOGY INSIDER www.legaltechnology.com

- Each issue of the Insider is now read by an average of over 6000 legal IT professionals.
- For all editorial, subscription, reprint and advertising enquiries contact: Legal Technology Insider, Ferndale House, Harling Road, North Lopham, Diss, Norfolk IP22 2NQ, UK
- Publisher & Editor: Charles Christian
Tel: 01379 687518 - Fax: 01379 687704
Email: mailto:news@legaltechnology.com
- The next Insider newsletter (No.162) will be published on Thursday 13th May 2004.