



Spin off hopes to set probate market alight

Flamesoft, the recently formed software systems spin-off from Withy King Solicitors in Bath, has just launched a new application, called Ignis, that will help firms to store and track the movement of large numbers of wills, deeds, leases and other valuable documents.

Withy King, who originally developed the system for their own use, have been using it across six sites for the past two years and reckon Ignis has already saved them in the region £70,000 in 'downtime' in terms of the time that would have been spent by fee earners and secretaries having to visit the firm's strong room to search for deeds.

Ignis runs on SQL Server, is compatible with Windows 98/2000/XP and has been tested on a thin client platform. It will run on a stand-alone basis but is also capable of integration with other ODBC compliant databases - Withy King have integrated it with their Solicitec case management system.

Self-installing trials CDs of Ignis (latin for 'fire') are available and the software is being offered at a special introductory price of £8000 until the end of September. For more details call Bernard Stebbing on (01962 850524) or visit www.flamesoft.co.uk

THE INSIDER WEB SITE
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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".

Mountain ready to ship .NET by autumn

Mountain Software (01476 573718) looks set to gain a serious edge on the competition by becoming the first Law Society listed supplier able to offer users a full suite of Microsoft .NET based accounts, practice management and case management software, with its first systems due to ship as early as this September.

Mountain, which has been through a major transformation since the management buyout in 2002 - it now has 110 staff, an £8 million turnover and its software is in use in 550 solicitors practices, 320 barristers chambers and 105 of the 130 coroners courts in the UK, has been working on a .NET redevelopment project since late 2002.

Unlike some other suppliers, Mountain has opted for a two stage strategy. Phase one has been to redevelop all its core systems. Accounts and PMS, now in final beta testing, will be available from the autumn, while on the case management front, conveyancing and criminal billing are nearing completion and the company expects to have its full range of case modules available by December. This will be followed in phase two, when the systems will be enhanced to take advantage of the full functionality of .NET, particularly in terms of communications.

All Mountain law firm users with maintenance support contracts will receive the new .NET software as a free upgrade (although data conversion and training will be chargeable and firms will need to run Windows 2000/XP PCs) but the company is also committed to continuing to support the current Visual FoxPro product range "for years to come." It is also worth noting that far from being a mere rewrite of the old system in .NET, Mountain have taken the opportunity to add a lot of new features and enhancements to the software - almost all the result of user feedback - so even without .NET, this would constitute a major upgrade to the software.

The move to .NET also gives Mountain's software far greater scalability and will allow the company to target larger firms than it has been traditionally associated with. ...continued on page 5

Solcara in KM win at Ashurst

Solcara (0870 3332966), which is rapidly emerging as the only UK legal systems supplier offering any serious competition to Tikit in the knowledge management systems market, has just won a contract from Ashurst to implement its SolSearch multi-source search application.

SolSearch supports the simultaneous searching of internal document management systems, know-how databases and library catalogues, as well as external online information services (whether free or subscription based) such as Butterworths and PLC, without the need to index or manage the content directly. SolSearch is a component of the company's legal portal product Solcara Client-Partner, which was recently implemented at Harbottle & Lewis. www.solcara.com

NEWS IN BRIEF

■ **JAMAICAN FIRM GO WITH VIDESS**
Myers Fletcher & Gordon has awarded Videss (01274 851577) the contract to supply its new accounts and practice management systems. The move follows the firm being served with an 'end of life' notice by its incumbent supplier Quill which, according to Myers, made the Videss commitment to supplying life long upgrades through its maintenance package "particularly appealing". Although the firm has had a London office since 1995, with its head office in Jamaica, Myers Fletcher & Gordon is probably best known as the largest law firm in the English speaking Caribbean.

■ **COMPUTER SHOPPER SAYS BUY**
Computer Shopper magazine has given the LegalDocs file and document management system from PerfectArc (01584 841555) a glowing review in its August edition. The review suggests LegalDocs is the ideal solution for any firm wanting a system that can automatically create a folder structure and file documents. Although the review was based on the experiences of Manchester law firm Chronnell Hibbert, who still run on WordPerfect, LegalDocs is also compatible with Microsoft Word and digital dictation software. www.perfectarc.com

■ **NEW LAWMAN FOR DAVIES**
Davies & Partners, which has offices in Gloucester, Bristol and Birmingham, has selected the Lawman case and practice system from Timeslice (020 7231 0073) to replace its legacy Avenue system.

■ **NOW U CAN SMS TXT WITH DPS**
DPS Software (020 8804 1022) has added support for SMS text messaging to its case management software so messages can now be automatically generated by the workflow.

**INSIDER WEB SITE POSTINGS
www.legaltechnology.com**

The latest postings to the Insider web site KM and downloads facility include: a buyers guide on case management systems for High Street law firms and a white paper from DespatchBox on the company's new DDX 5.0 encryption and email management system. Both documents are in PDF file format and can be downloaded free of charge.

Costs recovery - scanning and research now on tap

Billback Systems (020 7246 9999) has launched the iBillback Connector for eCopy ShareScan. This utility allows law firms using an eCopy system (typically linked to Canon scanners and digital copiers) to automate the recovery of costs associated with scanning paper documents on behalf of clients. eCopy ShareScan can be connected to any application, including email, fax and document management, where there is a need to distribute digital copies of paper documents, while the iBillback Connector provides full reporting information and cost recovery data.

In a related development, Thomson Elite (the exclusive distributor for Billback systems in North America) has just announced the release of the Elite Research Manager. This is a desktop application designed to recover the cost of any online legal research carried out on behalf of a client, by automatically transferring any billable expenses to an accounts system. The application allows administrators to manage user IDs and passwords to provide a single sign-in for multi-site research and then meters usage, so all users need do is enter the appropriate client or matter codes at the start of each research session.

■ Copittrak is planning to release a similar online research cost recovery system later this summer - full report in the next Insider.

Freshfields latest firm to adopt Shadow Planner for DR

Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer has become the latest law firm to adopt the Shadow-Planner crisis planning software system from Office-Shadow (07004 742369) to manage their disaster recovery and business continuity plans.

Although Freshfields have maintained business continuity plans for a number of years, they were previously based on Microsoft Word templates however according to the firm's business continuity manager Andy Thorpe, the logistics of plan co-ordination and management proved onerous. "We were having to spend a lot of time chasing people for information which made plan management both resource intensive and inefficient. As a result we started looking for a tool that would help us streamline the process.

"The Shadow-Planner system had a number of attributes that were on our wish list," said Thorpe. "As a web based tool, it enabled anyone in the organisation to access our business continuity plans from any location, while its hierarchal structure ensured we would be able to manage cross-border co-operation between offices effectively."

Although Freshfields is still rolling out Shadow-Planner, other organisations within the legal community already using the system include Pinsents, Finers Stephens Innocent, Thomson Snell & Passmore and the Legal Services Commission. Online webinar demos of the system are available, for details visit

www.office-shadow.com

Axxia puts users in picture with web-based training

Axxia Systems is launching a new web-based training service that aims to provide law firms with a more accessible, convenient and affordable approach to ad hoc training. Called PictureTalk, it uses interactive web conferencing technology that allows attendees to not only see a demonstration of a particular system or feature but also to engage in two-way conversations with the trainer, collaborate on the creation of documents and even take over control of the presentation so they can highlight the elements they need explaining in more depth.

Axxia's PictureTalk project director Ruth Jackson said this new approach to training was a response to users "who would like a bit of training on this topic or a bit of a refresher on that area but who find it hard to justify a full or even a half day's formal training and the attendant costs and inconvenience. This can apply to any of our users but is felt particularly acutely by those who are some distance away from any of Axxia's offices. The ability to offer an hour or two's specific instruction on a topic without anyone having to leave their office has obvious appeal. It is cheaper, less disruptive and much more flexible."

Axxia users can arrange training sessions for as short a period as one hour. The cost is £115 per hour, regardless of the number of participants and the sessions can be recorded for replaying back at a later date. Users only require a standard web browser and an internet connection. For more details contact Caroline Franks on 0118 960 2630.

Euro news - Thommessen ahead in Norwegian KM

For the benefit of our growing Scandinavian readership, we have some more information on the knowledge management project recently completed by Thommessen, one of the largest law firms in Norway.

The IT side of the project was handled by Swedish systems house Intelligo AB, who have now carried out KM projects - all based around the Hummingbird DMS - for seven law firms in Sweden and Norway. However the underlying taxonomy was developed by Thommessen, who also supplied the specification for the KM system. There again Thommessen was the first Norwegian firm to appoint a dedicated knowledge manager (Jan Sandtrø, who is also a lawyer) as distinct to giving additional KM responsibilities to IT or library services staff.

Don't throw away that cartridge !

Uncertain what to do with old mobile phones and used printer toner cartridges? The Roy Castle Lung Cancer charity will take them off your hands for recycling and then use the proceeds for cancer research. Visit www.recyclingappeal.com/roycastle

NEWS IN BRIEF

■ VERITY TAXONOMY MANAGEMENT

Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer has been piloting the new Collaborative Classifier 1.0 browser based taxonomy and classification management system from Verity (01372 747076). Freshfields believe the system will help shorten the time it takes to develop and manage the taxonomy (indexing) side of knowledge management projects. According to the US analysts group Delphi, Verity is now the world's leading developer of taxonomy software. www.verity.co.uk

■ AIM TECHNICAL IN AT HOWES

AIM Technical Services (01482 326971 - part of the AIM Professional group) has won a £120k contract from Howes Percival to upgrade the firm's IT infrastructure. The project includes migration to SQL Server and Microsoft Exchanger Server 2003, plus the implementation of a network infrastructure based on SAN (storage area networks).

■ TIKIT BENEFIT FROM DRANE BRAIN

Simon Drane, previously chief knowledge officer at Morgan Cole, is joining Tikit as head of the group's knowledge services division. Tikit has now implemented KM projects at over 40 law firms in Europe and the US, including 11 top 20 UK firms.

■ SHAPING LANYON'S NETWORK

AIM Technical Services has implemented PacketShaper, an 'application traffic management appliance' from Packeteer at Lanyon Bowdler, the largest law firm in Shropshire. IT director Dave Grattage said the benefit of the PacketShaper system is it can monitor, control and compress network traffic vying for bandwidth, with the result that the firm has been able to increase the number of users on the network without also having to increase bandwidth.

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PEOPLE & PLACES

■ MOVES AT PILGRIM & PRACCTICE

Martin Siddle has joined Pracctice (0870 443 6300) as the company's new sales director. Siddle, previously with Pilgrim Systems, says part of his profile is to raise the profile of Pracctice to ensure more people recognise the new .NET Osprey.TM system "as a real alternative to older and more staid PMS and case systems". Meanwhile Pilgrim has appointed Duncan Campbell, previously at workflow and e-commerce software house Plexus, to take on Siddle's old role as head of the company's case and workflow management division.

■ NEW HEAD OF IT AT RJW

Russell Jones & Walker has appointed Adam Tulk as its new head of IT. Tulk, who is based out of the firm's Manchester office, is a solicitor who for the past three years has been handling personal injury claims for the firm. More recently he has been involved in a number of management projects, including the acquisition of the Claims Direct business, and in his new role he will be responsible for the strategic and operational direction of the IT department. Earlier this year Morgan Cole also appointed a solicitor as head of IT.

■ BEEN THERE, DONE THAT

Sean Town, who we had thought was leaving Gavel & Gown to join DPS, is now with Mountain Software where he has been appointed sales manager with responsibility for new business.

■ ALL CHANGE AT OMTOOL

After nearly five years with Omtool, Martin Bass has left to join IT training, support and recruitment services company Globaltech Solutions (020 7072 8445) as business development director. www.gts-uk.com

Meanwhile Peter Straughan, previously with email and messaging specialists C2C Systems, has joined Omtool Europe (01932 334463) to take on Bass's old role as territory sales manager. www.omtool.com

TYPO CORNER

A couple of typos crept into the last issue. The correct phone number for Thomson Elite's London office is 020 739 7379 and the email address for the Manthan outsourcing service in India is phil.prashant@manthanservices.com

New Olympus DS-4000 sets standard for dictation

Next month Olympus begins shipping its new DS-4000 digital dictation recorder. Having tried both the DS-4000 and its widely used predecessor - the DS-3000 - we think the new unit is set to become the standard for DDS recorders over the next couple of years. Compared with the DS-3000, the new DS-4000 has: a new all metal construction, fewer fiddly buttons, an auto-off switch to save inadvertently draining batteries, a larger display panel with backlighting and a four-way slide switch similar to those found on conventional analogue tape recorders. Pricing starts at £349 + VAT, which also includes a USB docking and battery recharging cradle plus improved editing software. www.olympus.co.uk

DIGITAL DICTATION NEWS IN BRIEF

■ LATEST DDS IMPLEMENTATIONS

Birkett Long has begun rolling out the Nflow Software (01245 463377) DictaFlow V.4 digital dictation system to 80+ staff at its three offices in Essex. And Hugh James, one of the largest firms in Wales, is rolling out an SRC (020 7471 0100) WinScribe DDS system to 260 fee earners and secretaries in five offices. Both implementations follow extensive pilot projects at the two firms.

■ DICTANET IN IRELAND

Legal IT (+353 21 43 21 829) which has offices in Dublin and Cork, has been appointed a distributor of the DictaNet digital dictation system. www.legalit.ie

■ NEW DISTRIBUTION DEAL FOR NFLOW DDS

Nflow Software has entered into a new distribution partnership with Mountain Software, that will see Mountain offering Nflow's DictaFlow digital dictation system to the 550+ law firms now running Mountain's case and practice management software.

Nflow sales director Rob Lancashire said there was "a perfect synergy between Mountain and Nflow" in terms of their commitment to customer-facing R&D and delivering technology "in a cost effective and uncomplicated way". The two companies are now working on an integration of the Nflow DDS with Mountain's software to provide a complete legal office solution. Tikit, incidentally, will continue to distribute the Nflow DDS to its own large firm customer base.

■ CRESCENDO UPGRADE TACKLES MOBILITY ISSUE

Crescendo Systems (0870 770 1717) has released Version 3.4 of its DigiDictate-IP mobile dictation application. Part of the company's broader DigiScribe-XL digital dictation suite, 3.4 uses 'voice streaming technology' to send voice files to a central database for subsequent transcription. Crescendo reckon this provides a more efficient and secure way of transferring voice files than file copying or FTP and helps eliminate file duplication and bandwidth bottleneck issues. There is also a pocket-PC compatible version of the DigiDictate system available.

E-CONVEYANCING NEWS IN BRIEF

■ **E-CONVEYANCING MASTERCLASS**

EasyConvey is hosting an e-conveyancing seminar at the Donnington Valley Hotel, Newbury, on the morning of 27th July. The speakers, who include Steve Kellway from HM Land Registry and Denis Purshouse from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, will be looking at all aspects of conveyancing including the increasingly controversial topic of home buyers information packs. For details call EasyConvey on 01483 419025.

■ **FIRST ORDERS PLACED FOR SMART-DOCS**

Real Decisions (020 8346 7143) has secured the first orders for its new smart-DOCS, 'intelligent document authoring tool,' which allows organisations to incorporate PISCES data from real estate transactions directly into Microsoft Word and Excel documents. Six organisations have ordered the system, including the law firms CMS Cameron McKenna, SJ Berwin and Berwin Leighton Paisner. Real Decisions is also working on a project to integrate smart-DOCS with Laserform's electronic forms, starting with the infamous SDLT form. www.realdecisions.co.uk

■ **DPS SIGNS UP FOR PISCES**

DPS Software has become the latest legal IT supplier to be nominated to join PISCES and to commit to XML standards for property related data communications.

Mountain ready to ship .NET

Continued from front page... To this end, Mountain will offer three different versions of the .NET system: an MSDE based small firms system for up to 10 users, a mid-range system for 11-to-75 users, and an enterprise version for 76+ users. (Mountain will also continue to offer a single user, entry level system for very small firms.) Although the average size of current Mountain sites is around 25 users, it already has some larger sites with 150+ users and the new .NET systems will undoubtedly take the company further up market, making it a contender for the turf now occupied by the likes of AIM, Axxia, SOS, TFB and Videss. Mountain's .NET software will also be distributed by its existing resellers JMC IT and PCG. In other Mountain Software news:

■ Mountain will shortly be releasing details of its new LAWWWDIARY service for barristers and other advocates. We will have full details of this service, which provides an innovative approach to the problem of locating suitable advocates to appear in court at short notice, in the next issue.

■ Mountain's senior managers will be visiting the Asia-Pacific region in September to meet with local organisations to discuss the potential for its solicitors, barristers and coroners court software. Mountain will visit Hong Kong and Singapore during the first week of September and Australia the following week. If you are interested in meeting, contact managing director Ian Knox at iknox@mountainsoftware.co.uk

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PISCES set to expand in UK and internationally

The PISCES standard for property related data communications looks set to expand both nationally and internationally. In the UK, the standard is already moving out from commercial property into the residential market. The Halifax and some of the country's largest volume conveyancers have already joined PISCES, and in the autumn PISCES is co-hosting an event with the Council of Mortgage Lenders, as well as becoming involved in a new e-conveyancing initiative backed by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, the E-envoy and the Land Registry.

On the international front, PISCES is now part of the Open Standards Consortium for Real Estate (OSCRE - pronounced 'oscar') which hopes to replicate the PISCES model on a global scale. Under the new arrangement PISCES will now manage the standard for Europe and the rest of the EMEA region, OSCRE America, which has companies like Cisco and Sun involved, will look after the US, and a soon to be formed OSCRE APAC will be responsible for the Asia-Pacific region.

According to PISCES director general Roger de Boehmler "although the standard was originally envisaged as primarily for the UK market, the emergence of global real estate organisations and an increase in cross-border communications is now fuelling the demand for a global standard."

De Boehmler also believes that as web based applications become more widely used in the real estate sector (for example Datscha.com already has an 80% share of the Swedish market) so the demand for standards will become even more apparent. "Rather than focussing exclusively on the EDI/data exchange side," says de Boehmler, "what we are looking at is PISCES becoming an interface program - or a single agreed 'babel fish' (see *The Hitch Hiker's Guide to the Galaxy*) - that will permit different systems to talk to each other." For more details call PISCES on 020 7643 9300 or visit www.pisc.es.co.uk

Law Soc guide - apply online

The summer is here, everyone is going on holiday but don't forget that applications for a place in next year's Law Society *Software Solutions Guide* close in just under a month - on Friday 13th August for new applicants. Suppliers already listed in the guide have until the end of the following week (20th August) to apply. For details call 020 7841 5570 - you can now also apply online at www.it4law.co.uk

Les vacances commencent

The Insider is about to take its annual summer break and will be returning bright-eyed and bushy-tailed in September with even more free services for readers. In the meantime, we will continue to post any breaking news and all the latest job vacancies on the Insider web site. www.legaltechnology.com

Interwoven heading for clean sweep offshore

DMS market leader Interwoven seems to be heading for a clean sweep in the Channel Islands, where it has signed up yet another firm for its WorkSite document management software. The latest win is Bailhache Labesse in Jersey, which was signed up by local sales partner XKO, and joins Carey Olsen, Bedell Cristin, Ogier & Le Masurier, Mourant du Feu & Jeune, Collas Day and Bois & Bois to make Hummingbird a rare breed offshore.

Other recent Interwoven DMS wins include Bird & Bird in the UK, via Tikit following an extensive trial of both WorkSite Hummingbird, Houthoff Buruma in the Netherlands, and Gide Loyrette Nouel in France. Insider sources suggest at least two more London firms might be switching from Hummingbird to an Interwoven DMS during the next few weeks.

And the winner of the BlackBerry is...

Congratulations to Chris Loweth, a programme lawyer with the television channel Five, whose entry was first out of the hat and so becomes the winner of our recent survey prize draw competition to win a BlackBerry 7230 remote email device. Our thanks also to Isis Telecommunications (0845 277 1000) for providing the prize. We will be carrying a report on the survey's findings in the next issue of the Insider.

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