Clifford Chance go global with SoftWise

As part of its 'improving document production' project, Clifford Chance has just announced plans to switch from Microsoft Word-based templates and document numbering schemes to a third-party document automation system. Although a number of firms have been piloting document automation projects over the last couple of years, there are two noteworthy features about the Clifford Chance announcement.

The first is that while most law firm document automation deployments are actually only rolled out to one or two departments – and in many instances only to a handful of individuals within those departments – Clifford Chance intend to make their system part of the firm's global desktop and will be deploying it to a total of 7000 users across the firm's 29 offices, located in 19 countries.

The second point to note is Clifford Chance's choice of product and supplier – they have opted for the Innova system from the New York-based SoftWise Corporation. Although SoftWise is little known in the UK (the Insider covered its older MacroSuite system in Issue 104 in July 2000) its Innova document automation software now has about 85,000 users in 280 sites, including about 30% of the top 200 US law firms.

In addition to the Innova deal, Clifford Chance has ordered SoftWise's Out-of-Sight application. This is a metadata management and removal utility that will also be rolled out globally and become part of the firm's standard desktop.

SoftWise president William Robertson, who founded the business in 1991, said the company had recently been restructured "to accommodate its next growth phase" and was planning to "aggressively expand its client base" both domestically and internationally. **www.softwise.net**

Tarlo Lyons go with Elite 'Out of the Box'

Niche commercial practice Tarlo Lyons has selected the Elite Out of the Box system from Thomson Elite as its new financial and practice management system.

Tarlo Lyons had previously used the old TMA SiMS system but was forced to look for an alternative supplier when Thompson Moore announced earlier this year that it was winding down and pulling out of the legal IT market. The experience with TMA inevitably had some influence on the choice of Elite – the firm wanted a system from a supplier they felt confident was secure and had a long term commitment to the market. However IT director Simon Bennett said they had also been impressed by the modular approach of the Elite system, as it meant they could expand the system to meet the needs of the firm as it grew but at intervals convenient to the firm.

Although Elite has a reputation for being a 'big firm' system, globally more than 25% of Thomson Elite sites have fewer than 50 fee earners (Tarlo Lyons have under 50), primarily using the Out of the Box system, which was specifically designed for small-to-medium sized firms wanting large firm management information and functionality.

Document automation partnership

In our second document automation story this issue, Business Integrity and Laserform have signed a partnership agreement that will see the integration of Deal Builder with Laserform products. The initial product release is a web-based and PISCES compliant system for the completion of Stamp Duty Land Tax (SDLT) forms. A number of other web-based products will be released during the next 12 months.

Record entries for Law Soc guide

The English Law Society has received a record number of applications for a place in its 2005 *Software Solutions Guide*. They include applications from all 14 suppliers featured in this year's guide plus a reapplication by a supplier who had been in previous editions of the guide and first-time applications by two well-known mid-market legal systems suppliers.

■ **LINKS CONSOLIDATE DEPLOYMENT**
At the Citrix iForum global conference earlier this month, it was announced that Linklaters had standardised its IT infrastructure on the 'enterprise alliance' consolidation solution from Citrix, Microsoft and Hewlett Packard to deploy nearly 450 different software applications to its user base of more than 5000 employees in 30 offices around the world. Linklaters' server & active directory manager Peter MacDonald said the consolidation solution meant the firm was better able to manage the complexity of the 450 application environment, while at the same time dramatically reducing the cost of deploying and running the applications. On average Linklaters deploys or updates one application per day.

■ **SOS SCORES 21st CONVERSION**
Nine partner Hartley & Worstenholme, which has offices in Castleford and Pontefract, has become the 21st firm running legacy Avenue software to migrate to a new system from SOS. The firm is to implement accounts and CRM software from SOS, along with Visualfiles SolCase case management software.

■ **AIM EXPANDS LOCAL COUNCIL BIZ**
AIM Professional has extended the range of products and services it can offer its local government customers. The City & County of Swansea is implementing a series of COM add-ins that will allow users to manipulate AIM Evolution data within Microsoft Word and Outlook. The authority is also rolling out AIM's ClientConnect module, which provides extranet access to case progress reports via XML style sheets. Also, the legal services divisions of both Cheshire and Carmarthen county councils are extending and upgrading their use of AIM time recording and case management systems.

TYPO CORNER

A subbing error in the last issue meant we wrongly attributed a Thomson Elite win to Aderant CMS. What we should have said is that Aderant's win at Thompsons was one of the largest PMS contracts to go through in the UK "since Simmons & Simmons ordered Thomson Elite last year." Apologies to all concerned.

Shoosmiths develop own deeds record management

Shoosmiths last week went live with its new inhouse developed deeds records management system. The system was required to amalgamate a variety of Microsoft Excel and Access based records and ensure that staff located across the firm's seven offices could use one centralised system. (An added complication here was the system had to be flexible enough to also work in the firm's smaller offices, where secretaries act as administrators.)

After reviewing the various products available in the market, including a records management system the firm already used, it was decided that internal development was the best way forward. The system is built around a combination of SQL 2000, ASP and XML with XSLT. Access is via Shoosmiths' intranet portal, complete with a search facility to identify a deed's location, with security validation linked to the firm's HR software – this also helps maintain a full audit history of a deed's movements from the moment it enters the system. Future plans include integration with Shoosmiths' case management systems.

New 'multimodal' expense and time capture from Tikit

Tikit has partnered with ExpenseWorld to launch LegalWorld, a new .NET/XML system that is described as a 'multimodal' law firm expense and time capture solution. What this means is users can capture time and expenses, as and when they happen, in a variety of different ways, so that information gets into a firm's billing system faster than was previously possible. LegalWorld is compatible with BlackBerrys, PDAs, mobile phones, web browser loggins and even voicemail inputs. In the UK, Tikit is working with O2 to handle the comms side of the system. Further information, including demos of how the system works on different input devices, can be found at **www.expenseworld.net**

Metastorm add Hyperion to mix

Metastorm, the workflow software specialist, which this week is holding its annual user conference in Baltimore, has integrated the Hyperion Intelligence business performance management software with its e-Work BPM system. Metastorm director of product strategy Laura Mooney told the Insider, when she was in London recently, the key feature of the Hyperion integration is it now gives users the ability to drill down and analyse the performance of workflow processes on real-time basis. This means any business issues, including making decisions about improving the overall process, can be addressed immediately and, if necessary, 'on the fly' whereas previously firms could only do this after the event. Mooney suggests one benefit is it will help firms ward off any potential liability issues with clients. Metastorm recently launched version 6.5 of its e-Work software.

Anti-spam software to save 1800 hours a month

Addleshaw Goddard has just implemented the Tumbleweed (0118 934 7100) Email Firewall & Dynamic Anti-spam Service to help the firm deal with computer viruses and the tens of thousands of spam messages it receives each month. Addleshaw Goddard estimate that its 1200 staff lose a total of 1800 non-chargeable hours each month sifting through spam. Given that the average UK fee earner only bills between 1200-to-1300 hours each year, the Tumbleweed system would appear to offer an inescapable return on investment. **www.tumbleweed.com**

■ In other Addleshaw Goddard news, the firm has just completed an Exchange 2003 rollout, with all Exchange servers running on top of a VMWare ESX server. This is a US server consolidation product that allows multiple 'virtual' servers to be run on the same physical hardware – the firm now has over such 30 virtual machines running on nine physical servers.

The ESX Server also supports VCentre, a system that allows all the servers to be managed centrally, and the you-have-to-see-it-to-believe-it VMotion system that lets virtual machines be moved between physical servers while they are still running. According to the Insider's records, Addleshaw Goddard is currently the only UK law firm running this technology. ESX resellers in the UK include Cetus Solutions, Computacenter, Real Solutions and Ultima Business Solutions. **www.vmware.com**

Eclipse embraces .NET

Eclipse Legal Systems has released its first major Microsoft .NET development for its ProClaim case management software. The new system extends the capability of its current FileView extranet facility so law firms can create and upload bespoke reports, based on any data held within the ProClaim system to a web site for secure, remote access by clients. The system can also display Excel reports and Word documents. Further .NET developments soon to be released by Eclipse include two-way integration with all NLIS search providers and the option for law firms to automatically open new case files from instructions accepted online from visitors to their web sites.

Law Society and Land Registry sign e-conveyancing agreement

The Land Registry and the Law Society of England & Wales have signed a memorandum of understanding to co-operate on the development of the e-conveyancing programme. The MoU is intended to give formal recognition to the way the organisations are working together to deliver improvements to the home buying process through the electronic exchange of documents. A series of joint events are planned for 2005 to ensure solicitors are kept fully briefed on developments in e-conveyancing.

LDM's litigation technology forum

LDM is holding an early evening (4:30 - 8:00pm) seminar at the Chancery Lane Chez Gerrard in London, on 11th November, that will feature a roundtable discussion looking at some of the latest developments in e-discovery, followed by a mini-exhibition of litigation support software. The round table panel members include George Rudoy, the director of litigation support services at Schulte Roth & Zabel in New York. You can register via email **seminars@ldm.uk.com** or online **www.ldm-uk.com/Contact/Seminar.php**

PEOPLE & PLACES

■ **TRAINING CONSULTANCY MOVES**
Humber Ashford Associates, the Midlands-based legal IT training consultancy that was formed by Joanne Humber and Dawn Ashford in 2000, this week moves to new offices at 27 Rother Street, The Minories, Stratford-upon-Avon. The consultancy's clients include Cobbetts Lee Crowder, Martineau Johnson, Needham & James and Anthony Collins. **www.humber-ashford.co.uk**

■ **E-DICT'S NEW ADDRESS**
E-Dict Transcription Services has moved from Welwyn Garden City to new offices at Premier House, 1-5 Argyle Way, Stevenage, Herts SG1 2AD. Mike Coxall and his team are retaining the same (01708 851808 / 08707 446206) phone numbers. **www.e-dict.co.uk**

■ **HUNT NOW WITH COPITRAK**
Debbie Hunt, most recently with Axxia, has joined the UK sales team of Copitrak and is based at the London office (020 7621 2350).

■ **ADERANT'S NEW HOME**
Aderant's new central London office is at Ciena House, 43 Worship Street, London EC2A 2DX. The switchboard number is 020 7038 9600 – senior account manager Simon Price can be reached on 020 7038 9657.

■ **NFLOW RELOCATES**
DDS supplier Nflow Software has moved to larger premises at 7 Freebournes Court, Newland Street, Witham, Essex CM8 2BL. The new switchboard number is 01376 532266 and 532277 for the support line.

Digital dictation is not just for larger firms

Although it is the orders from big firms that inevitably grab the headlines, small firms – particularly those with multiple sites – can also benefit from digital dictation workflow software. To meet this need, DDS supplier Nflow (01376 532266 - note this is a new number) has developed an SMP version of its software for small-to-medium sized practices.

The latest firm to go this route is personal injury solicitors Irvings in Liverpool, who have just completed a rollout to 44 users in two offices. Irvings are also planning to use Nflow's recently launched 'universal integrator' module to link the digital dictation software to the firm's Axxia practice management system, so that attaching dictation to a particular matter will become a point and click operation. (Nflow's DDS system is also distributed by Mountain Software and its partners.)

DDS NEWS IN BRIEF

■ **SRC LAUNCHES E-COMMERCE ARM**
SRC this month launched SRC Direct. This is an online sales arm that allows organisations to buy speech recognition and digital dictation products direct from the web through an excellent Amazon-like e-commerce system. The current range of products available includes Dragon NaturallySpeaking software, the latest Philips and Olympus hardware, USB microphones and smartmedia cards – and you can pay online through a secure credit card scheme. **www.src-direct.co.uk** Birmingham-based Speak-IT Solutions also offer a similar online source for speech and digital dictation products at **www.speakit.info**

■ **G2 AVAILABLE ON VOICEPATH**
DDS supplier G2 Speech has signed a partnership agreement with Voicepath which means that G2 software will now have an embedded link direct to Voicepath's onshore outsourced legal transcription service. To further encourage the use of Voicepath, whether to boost capacity generally or just as an overflow facility to cover busy periods, holidays and sick leave, G2 Speech customers who sign a transcription services agreement with Voicepath before 31 March 2005 will be entitled to £1500-worth of transcription credit. **www.voicepath.net**

■ **NEW DDS WORKFLOW SUPPLIER**
Dorset-based Voice Integrated Products (01202 715500) is adding a digital dictation workflow management system to its range of voice and data applications. For more details visit **www.vip.co.uk**

■ **WINSCRIBE VOICE COMMANDS FOR PHILIPS**
WinScribe Europe has introduced voice command support for the new Philips Pocket Memo 9450 voice recorder. With it, users can assign client or work codes to jobs by speaking them and the WinScribe software will subsequently use this information in the transcription workflow process. **www.winscribeeurope.com**

CRM is not being afraid to say you are sorry

Speaking at a seminar last week on the business and cultural aspects of client relationship management, Steve Hughes, the chief executive of Carnegie Information Systems, said any CRM strategy should seek to achieve two main objectives: to ensure your clients always have a positive experience in their dealings with you – and that you have a 360 degree view of your clients.

In terms of 'positive experience,' this means fulfilling any promises you make to a client (not just on major projects but also smaller issues such as returning phone calls) and ensuring that if something does go wrong, you pull out all the stops to fix it. Hughes said the latter point should never be overlooked as research suggests clients who have a bad experience, that is subsequently satisfactorily resolved, actually come away with more positive feelings than those who encounter no problems.

Turning to the '360 degree view,' Hughes said this was all about getting to know everything there is to know about who your clients really are, including the impact on your business. Hughes cited research which suggests that in the professional services sector approximately 15% of clients generate 45% of turnover and 70% of profits. This is in contrast with the lower end of the client-base where 60% of clients deliver 20% of turnover and a mere 10% of your profits.

Hughes did however warn that instead of just dropping these smaller clients, you should first see if you could increase revenues by cross-selling them more services and/or increase profitability by streamlining your business processes. But this is only possible if you first have a CRM strategy in place to give you that 360 degree viewpoint! For more information about Carnegie phone David Fry on 0141 427 8330.

Will 'rich' audio files be the next big thing in digital dictation ?

Although digital dictation is one of fastest selling technologies in the legal IT world today, most firms have still not changed their business processes to take full advantage of its potential and are using it as little more than a replacement for analogue tape. One company hoping to change this situation is Australian systems house Quikscribe, which is now championing the cause of 'rich' audio, based on its own IAF intelligent audio file format.

The IAF concept is whereas current DDS systems (Quikscribe CEO Rod Payne believes "digital dictation today is where wordprocessing was 20 years ago") can only handle dictation and voice instructions, with IAF an author can also embed the text of emails, Word documents, spreadsheets and other sources of information all within a single file, through a simple cut and paste process, so transcriptionists have everything they need to create documents, without having to refer to other materials.

Quikscribe's web site has full details on IAF including a series of explanatory animations. **www.quikscribe.com.au**

DOCUMENT MANAGEMENT

■ **DORSET GOES WITH VALID ON FoI**
Dorset County Council has selected the R/KYV electronic records and document management software from Valid Information Systems (020 8215 1414) to help it comply with new legislative requirements, such as the Freedom of Information Act, and e-government targets. The first department to go online will be social services, which has to meet the Department of Health's target of digitising all new social care records by October 2005. **www.valinf.com**

■ **RECOMMIND MINDSERVER WINS**
Silicon Valley-based Cooley Godward and Miller Canfield Paddock & Stone, which has offices across the US, Canada and Poland, are the latest firms to order the Recommind MindServer Legal system to provide a practice-wide search system that can access information from multiple repositories and in multiple languages. Miller Canfield will integrate MindServer with multiple DOCS Open DMS libraries, the firm's intranet and several external web sites. Both Phoenix Business Solutions and Baker Robbins now support MindServer in the UK.

■ **IRON MOUNTAIN WIDENS RANGE**
Iron Mountain has purchased the Connected Corporation, a US developer distributed data archiving and recovery systems, for $117 million. Iron Mountain, which already uses Connected software in its electronic vaulting service for PCs and servers, plans to use Connected to broaden the portfolio of physical and digital records management, backup and data recovery services it can offer customers. **www.ironmountain.co.uk**

■ **LOTUS NOTES INTEGRATION**
At a time when over 35% of all mission critical business correspondence is received via email and/or stored within email repositories, Hummingbird Enterprise can now offer out-of-the-box integration with Lotus Notes for email and business content management. Users will now be able to manage all correspondence from within the Lotus Notes interface, as well as incorporate Notes content into their records management retention, compliance and lifecycle policies. Hummingbird Enterprise also supports Microsoft Outlook and Novell GroupWise.

LawNet to rebrand as ILTA from January

LawNet, the US peer-to-peer networking organisation for legal IT professionals, is to change its name to the International Legal Technology Association, with effect from the 1st January 2005. The LawNet president Sean Curry said the new identity would better define and position the organisation for the future as it continues to expand internationally as it "is beautifully descriptive of who we are, what we do and where we do it." Curry added that it would only be the name that changed "the values, people and 'spirit' that over the past two decades have brought LawNet to this point remain unchanged and unchangeable." The new web site address is **www.iltanet.org**

LEGAL IT EVENTS DIARY

■ NOVEMBER 3, NEWCASTLE. Laserform is running a series of free half day (8:30am to 1:30pm) open days looking at e-conveyancing, electronic forms and practice management systems. Speakers include Philip Freedman from Mishcon de Reya/Lesley Webber from Reed Smith (at alternate events) and John Williams from the Land Registry. Each event qualifies for 4 CPD hours. The venue is the Copthorne Hotel and is followed by similar events in Birmingham (10th November) and Bristol (17th November). For details email **sarah.hearn@laserform.co.uk**

■ NOVEMBER 4, LONDON. S&G Training is holding a free seminar on the Workshare 3 content and collaboration system (qualifying for 2 hours CPD) at its Hatton Garden office. There is a further briefing on 1st December. For details email Hayley Smith at **hayley@sandg.co.uk**

■ NOVEMBER 4, LONDON. Ultima Business Solutions is sponsoring a lunch on security issues, including risk management and compliance. Email **helen.freestone@ultimabusiness.com**

■ NOVEMBER 10, MANCHESTER. Pericom is holding a workshop at the Lancashire County Cricket Club to demonstrate the new OMS Matter Centre product plus desktop faxing, digital dictation and online conveyancing systems. Further seminars are planned in York, Milton Keynes and Bristol. To register for a place visit **www.pericomlegalservices.co.uk/events**

ClicknMove hopes to open up online conveyancing

One of the many 'good ideas' that never quite took off during the dotcom boom was the concept of the marketing referral portal that would allow smaller firms to sell legal services online but without the burden of the costs associated with promoting their individual web sites to a wider audience. The big drawback is the portal operator usually retains control of the client relationship, with the result that the process of sub-contracting work to solicitors forces fees downwards.

David Jones and David Pett, both partners with Norwich solicitors Morgan Jones & Pett, believe they have devised a way of restoring the balance with their new conveyancing portal ClicknMove. Although the basic model is familiar – individual practices pay a monthly fee to become one of the panel of firms featured on the site – once a prospective client has registered details of the property they wish to sell or purchase, it is then down to the firms to lodge online bids for the work. The result should be a win/win situation for everyone: firms have a cost effective way of promoting their services, the client has access to a range of competitive quotes to choose from, and lawyers can charge what they believe is a fair price for the job.

ClicknMove has been developed as a joint venture with Bury St Edmunds systems house Greenduck. For more information call Maureen Goffin on 01284 717273. **www.clicknmove.co.uk**

ONLINE LEGAL INFO SERVICE NEWS

■ **LEXIS NEXIS CONSOLIDATES ONLINE SERVICES**
In one of the biggest shake-ups of its online legal information services to-date, LexisNexis this month launched its new LexisNexis Butterworths system. This now provides one-stop access to the company's full range of case law, legislation and commentary, whereas previously the information was buried in more than 60 separate online services. Apart from simplifying the loggin process (individual users now need just a single ID and password) the new portal is also intended to give users faster and more efficient search facilities. Publishing systems director Bill Marshall said one of the key objectives was to help reduce the amount of time lawyers spent trawling for information.

■ **NEW LAWTEL SERVICE FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT**
Lawtel, which is now part of Sweet & Maxwell, has launched a new daily update service carrying reports of Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) case summaries and rulings. With complaints to the LGO up by 8% to just under 19,000 cases last year, rulings by the LGO have become an increasingly important guide in the decision making process for local government managers and lawyers, as well as enabling authorities to identify new trends in complaints and areas of controversy. The new LGO service, which is free to existing Lawtel users, will carry all new LGO reports – averaging about 400 a year – plus an archive going back to January 2002.

FRESH ON THE RADAR

■ **FUNDS REUNITED FOR PROBATE LAWYERS**
The punningly-named Funds Reunited (020 8971 3300) service has launched two new search facilities – covering lost shares and life assurance policies – to help probate solicitors locate financial assets. Funds Reunited, which operates on a fee basis (starting from £15 for a life assurance search – the service does not take a percentage of any funds found nor handle client monies at any stage) acts as a central registration point for searches, thus removing the need for solicitors to contact banks, building societies and insurance companies on an individual basis. A search takes between four and 20 weeks and Funds Reunited say a typical project would be like one they recently carried out for a North Wales practitioner, who was dealing with the estate of someone whose financial records had been destroyed in a house fire – within a few weeks the service had located £6000 in a personal equity plan. **www.fundsreunited.com**

■ **NEW SCANNING SERVICE**
East Midlands-based Square3 Technologies (0870 850113) has launched a scanning bureau service for law firms and local authorities that already have some form of electronic case or document management system but also have a backlog of hard copy records and correspondence they need to get online. Square3's sales director Peter Church makes the valid point that most organisations find setting up their own inhouse facility to handle the back-scanning and archiving of documents prohibitively expensive and time consuming. **www.square3.net**

■ **GROOVE NOW HAS UK DISTRIBUTOR**
Back in May (issue 162, p.3) we carried a report about Groove Networks' Workspace low-cost virtual office/dealroom online collaborative system. Groove now has its first reseller in the UK, namely Hampshire-based D2i Solutions. For more details phone Ray Jordan on 07771 725002 or visit **www.d2i.co.uk**

■ **TM ADDS OS MAPS TO THE CONVEYANCING MIX**
The NLIS information provider TM Property Service has teamed up with a number of geographic information and mapping software specialists to add a map search facility to its services. Called TM YourMap, this allows conveyancers to retrieve an onscreen Ordnance Survey map of a specific property location and then overlay it with additional data, such as the location of the nearest footpaths, rights of way, bus stops and post boxes, in fact just about everything above the ground that could adversely affect a prospective purchaser's interest in a property. For a free demonstration of YourMap call TM on 0870 740 7833.

■ **SOFTWARE FOR LAWYERS - DIRECT FROM JUDGES**
ClickDocsLegal have produced an interesting series of Microsoft Word templates, originally developed by now retired district judges Bill Vincent and Richard Stevens, to generate draft and consent orders, such as Ancillary Relief Directions, for High Court and County Court proceedings. Each template costs £80 per year, per single user however a 30-day free trial version of the software can be downloaded from **www.clickdocslegal.com**

INSIDER SUBSCRIPTIONS

Legal Technology Insider is published every three weeks and 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 two 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 ☐
Cardholder's Name:
....
Card No:...
Start Date: /   Expiry Date: /
For security write the last 3 numbers on the reverse of your card. (If Amex the 4 numbers on the front of your card.) ....
Cardholder's Signature:......................................

Microsoft set to give legal e-billing critical mass ?

Speaking at the Ascertus Inhouse Legal IT Seminar in London last week, Jeff Hodge, the vice president of US e-billing software specialist DataCert, said Microsoft's decision to require all 1000 of the legal practices it instructs around the world to start submitting invoices through an e-billing system by mid-2005, would put e-billing technology firmly on the law firm agenda.

However Hodge also warned that many inhouse legal departments – particularly those in the UK and Europe which have on average about 30% fewer managers and support staff than their US counterparts – still had to recognise the benefits of e-billing. Hodge said there was no point in these departments devising detailed outside counsel billing guidelines, if they had no systems or people available to monitor the bills being submitted and enforce compliance with their guidelines.

Among the speakers at the event were law firm IT director turned consultant John Rogers plus representatives from Corprasoft, Interwoven and Workshare, all software companies that have offerings for inhouse legal departments. Workshare general manager Andrew Pearson raised the interesting point that while email spam was a nuisance for IT departments to cope with, his own company's research suggested that in terms of wasted fee earner time, a far bigger problem now was finding and managing email file attachments.

Ascertus director Roy Russell said the event, which attracted a total audience of just under 100, had set a "good benchmark" for similar conferences in the future. The event was organised by MTW Services (01708 221554). **www.ascertus.com**

DDS first for LSSA

The Legal Software Suppliers Association's latest member is BigHand, the first digital dictation workflow systems supplier to join the UK's legal IT trade organisation. LSSA chairman Barry Hawley-Green said he was "very pleased to accept BigHand as a member… because of the innovation they have shown in developing essentially a new technology for the legal market."

BlackBerry the big winner in the PDA and smartphone stakes

According to the latest data from the research group IDC, sales of PDAs and smartphones in the UK and Europe increased by 38% during the third quarter of 2004, compared with the same period last year. Although the biggest sellers by volume were Nokia and HP, enjoying respectively 44% and 13% increases in sales, the big winner was the RIM BlackBerry device which managed a huge 304% increase in sales. Sony Ericsson's P900 smartphone range had a 21% increase in sales but the original PDA pioneer PalmOne saw its Q3 2004 sales fall by 16%.

Gleneagles 2004... the best yet ?

From feedback to the Insider, from delegates and sponsors alike, this year's Legal IT Forum, which took place at Gleneagles a fortnight ago, was one of the most successful in the event's six year history. A typical comment was that of Rosemary Kind, the IT & finance director of Shoosmiths, who said that of the three GlenLegals she has attended, this was the best to-date.

Event director Simon Dieppe said that since T&F Informa had taken over the Legal IT Forum, his team had spent a lot of time listening to the views of delegates, speakers and sponsors both on how the event was run and how it could move forward. Based on their findings, the format of the event was changed this year so there were fewer set piece conference hall presentations and more think-tank, panel and roundtable sessions that provided smaller groups of delegates with an opportunity to exchange views with other participants in an informal and interactive environment.

■ During the course of welcoming delegates to the event, conference chair Liz Broderick of Blake Dawson Waldron conceded that while there was a growing level of IT literacy within law firms, it did not apply to all lawyers, particularly one who recently asked her if he now needed a Windows XP compatible mouse mat to go with his new Windows XP PC.

Next year's Legal IT Forum will take place on 12th-to14th October at Gleneagles.