



Has Lexis 'got it' with legal IT?

Normally when we visit a legal publisher to hear their plans for technology, we come away depressed. However, LexisNexis Butterworths have bucked the trend and for once we are impressed. The object of our admiration is a new project, code-named the Law Office of the Future, intended to provide a platform to show law firms how they can improve their businesses by having access to information – and not just Butterworths' online services – that just so happens to be delivered by technology.

'Es' is all the rage

It may be a little bit early for making New Year predictions but if the news stories coming into the Insider are any indication, then two of the biggest trends in 2006 are going to be e-conveyancing in all its many permutations, including systems to support the increasingly unpopular HIPs (home information packs), and e-disclosure – or e-discovery as the Americans call it. As a director of one international e-discovery services supplier recently told the Insider "...e-disclosure is coming, it may not be the tidal wave we have seen in the US but the waters are definitely rising. For more e-disclosure news see page 5.

According to Jonathan Brewer, who is heading up the project "this is not about selling more law books but positioning Lexis as an incubator for ideas" and working with suitable partners. Currently the list includes Microsoft, Cisco, Visualfiles, Interface Software, Interwoven and Interse iBox, who produce a taxonomy metadata system. Lexis is also working with Pilgrim on its E-Practitioner workflow series and the consultancies Lynx and Trinity.

The project is due to be launched later this month and will feature a series of 'pep' (profit per equity partner) talks looking at the role of information in client development, business differentiation, legal services delivery and risk management. For a taster of this new approach, contact Heidi James for a copy of the LexisNexis KYC know your client route map, email heidi.james@lexisnexis.co.uk

Is SAP a cheap option?

Interesting conversation with a couple of IT directors at a recent conference. They suggest that if a law firm wants a modern ERP-style (enterprise resource planning) practice management system, it is actually cheaper to buy a total solution from SAP, where you will get everything (including CRM and HR software) in one box. They say the alternative, of buying a product such as Aderant or Elite, is more expensive once you take into account the cost of third-party applications, as well as the consultancy and integration overheads associated with such projects.

Freshfields relaunch KM

Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer has launched Athena, a new integrated know-how system to help standardise knowledge management working practices for the firm's 2500 lawyers. The firm's chief knowledge officer Michael Hertz commented "From the lawyer's perspective, the requirement was simple – I want Google. This meant being able to search all our internal know-how collections using a few words and find relevant results promptly. Having searched the market for an off-the-shelf product, we found that none of them would satisfy even 50% of our KM requirements. We therefore decided to develop Athena inhouse, adopting an approach that integrated best-of-breed commercial products with bespoke applications, resulting in a single cohesive system."



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News in brief

Batchelors expand Axxia offering

Batchelors in Kent is expanding the scope of its IT operations and working with Axxia Systems to focus on compliance, performance measurement and client relationship projects. In a phased roll-out the firm will be deploying Axxia's ADI document integration system, its KPI key performance reporting software and its e-case extranet for conveyancing work.

R&B consultancy wins

David Riggall's Rose & Bridge Associates consultancy (01904 720334) has just commenced projects for three firms: Hart & Co in Wetherby, Berwins in Harrogate and the Endeavour Partnership on Teesside. More information is available on R&B's IT advice and assistance website.

www.itaabiz

New products from Eclipse

Eclipse Legal Systems has added employment law to the list of worktypes available within its Proclaim case management software. The company is also about to rollout a major upgrade to its accounts software, with enhancements including a new interface, greater depth of billing data analysis and a 'healthcheck' tool to automatically monitor and report on exceptions and anomalies.

AlphaLaw now supporting SQL 2005

Users of MSS AlphaLaw software will soon be able to take advantage of Microsoft's newly launched SQL 2005, to enjoy increased security and scalability.

Quote, unquote

"Legal Technology Insider, the invaluable monthly whose bright orange pages adorn the desks of most serious legal technologists." ...*Richard Susskind writing in The Times last month.*

AIM to focus on legal & professional services

The Hull-based AIM group has sold off the remainder of its retail systems business and will now focus exclusively on the legal and professional/business services sectors through its AIM Professional and SharpOwl divisions. The company's chief executive Richard Bearpark told the Insider that after a long history, AIM's retail division no longer had a strategic role to play in the group. (In fact back before the dawn of time, the whole AIM group began life in the 1970s as a computer bureau using the spare capacity on neighbouring Jackson Bakery's mainframe.)

In other AIM news... the company has just launched its E-Vigilance business automation toolkit. Based on the concept of automated exception management, it provides law firms with a simple way of delivering key information and alerts to staff via email and SMS text messaging. Although the system is supplied out of the box with 20 pre-defined alerts, including WIP management, missing timesheets and matter milestone reminders, E-Vigilance can be used to automate other areas of reporting both within a firm and externally to clients and referrers.

We are also glad to report that AIM Professional's marketing manager Andrea Beer has not left the company permanently but merely taken maternity leave (baby Kaitlin Mary Lander doing very well) and is returning to AIM in January. Graeme Stagg, who handles marketing for other parts of AIM, is looking after legal pro tem.

IM - friend or foe?

One of the more controversial technologies to hit lawyers' desktops (and business generally) in the last couple of years is instant messaging (IM). According to some recent research: while 60% of UK office staff regularly use IM, only 28% use it for business purposes and 56% of commercial organisations now discourage its use – the main reasons cited being regulatory compliance issues and having no permanent record. London systems house Transam (020 7837 4050) has now entered the IM arena and last month completed what is believed to be the first integration on this side of the Atlantic of the Akonix L7 Enterprise instant messaging solution and the Veritas Enterprise Vault email archiving system, so IM conversations can be retained, archived and retrieved.



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Try before you buy the paperless office

With so many firms having had bad experiences when it comes to trying to create a paperless office – the most frequent problem being the use of cheap but slow flatbed scanners or multi-function devices – Xerox has introduced a ‘try before you buy’ scheme offering a no obligation test drive of a DocuMate professional scanner for six weeks.

As well as being fast – the 262 can scan both sides of a document (duplex) at a rate of 33 pages a minute – there are also some nice touches to the pain of converting paper into digital files. These include the ability to scan to PDF with the option of later converting the file to a searchable PDF, creating a single PDF from multiple documents, and using a barcode separator so a stack of pages can be scanned as a batch but automatically saved to separate PDFs. For details of the try before you buy scheme email jennifer_watts@xeroxscanners.com

Paraskeva to open TFB event

Janet Paraskeva will give the keynote at TFB’s national user group conference in Birmingham later this month. The Law Society’s chief executive will be talking about Clementi and the recent legal services white paper. Other sessions at the two-day event include risk management, HIPs and an opportunity to see TFB’s new CTI (computer telephony integration) following its recent alliance with Corebridge. Using Corebridge’s ‘CoreClick’ technology, users of TFB’s case and practice management systems will be able to make and time record calls simply by clicking an onscreen phone number.

General counsel bite back

Do lawyers really need CRM systems or to subscribe to online information services to keep in touch with developments taking place within their corporate clients’ business operations? The general counsel of one FTSE 100 company told the Insider that, to keep their external law firms up to speed, at meetings they will toss in questions such as ‘what are the legal implications of the current increase in our share price?’ Solicitors are allowed one white-faced ‘what change in your share price?’ moment of panic – but if they are caught out on another occasion, then they are swiftly dropped from the company’s panel.

News in brief

Two more firms go with Elite

Thomson Elite has secured two more wins for its practice management system. In Croydon, Streeter Marshall is replacing its legacy TMA Sims system, while in the Channel Islands, Ogier are switching from AIM to take advantage of Elite’s multi currency facilities. Ogier join a growing number of Channel Island firms running Elite, including Bedell Cristin, Carey Olsen, Viberts and Walbrook.

Linetime offering anti-virus solution

Linetime, in conjunction with Acer and Trend Micro, is now able to offer users of any case or practice management system an out of the box (it comes complete with its own server) web and email security service to protect PCs and networks from viruses, spam and other forms of malware. Prices start from £58 per user, which includes a 12 month update service.

Opsis money laundering protection

Opsis (01780 764947) has launched a stand-alone anti-money laundering system called Sentinel that can be used by solicitors or anyone else who needs to comply with the money laundering regulations. The system costs £999 for a 5 user licence and includes a Xerox scanner. Users of the Opsis case management system can already use an integrated AML module.

Lightspeed win at Stephenson Harwood

Stephenson Harwood is the latest firm to order the Total Traffic Control network, web and email security system from Lightspeed Systems Europe (020 7074 0030). Other recent signings include Taylor Wessing, Cripps Harriers Hall, Travers Smith, Osborne Clarke and Taylor Vinters. Lightspeed has also appointed Phoenix Business Solutions (0870 735 1426) as its legal market preferred reseller.

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People & Places

Ventura Boulevard bound

Select Legal Systems' sales & marketing director Steve Ness has retired. Future plans include finishing his CIM marketing studies although his first stop is Ventura Boulevard in Los Angeles to help his sister and brother-in-law reopen and relaunch their pub. Called *The Pickwick*, it was a traditional English Dickensian-style hostelry complete with oak panels and sawdust on the floor – until someone firebombed it in the middle of the night.

Herbert Smith lose EOC appeal

The Employment Appeals Tribunal has upheld claims of unfair dismissal, contravention of the part-time workers regulations, victimisation and sex discrimination against the law firm Herbert Smith, in the case of Michelle Langton. Mrs Langton, a former part-time senior manager with the IT department, was awarded approximately £40,000 by an employment tribunal in July 2005, who also ordered the firm to re-engage her on a jobshare basis. Among the allegations made at the tribunal hearing was the firm's head of IT George Kalorkoti told her that her career at the firm depended on whether she was "planning on having any more children". The tribunal also found one of the firm's partners, Paula Hodges, had victimised Mrs Langton during the firm's internal grievance procedures.

Promotion for Robson

Barry Robson, who has managed the company's support operations for the past three years, has been appointed to the board of Axxia Systems as support director.

Come in number 10

In a recent conversation, the sales director of a well-known High Street legal software supplier confessed that "ten years ago, if we didn't get 10 decent orders a month, we thought we were doing badly. Today, if we get 10 big orders a year we feel we are doing well."

Time running out for outsourcing ?

According to a recent survey by the outsourcing world's UK industry body – the National Outsourcing Agency – over 60% of members have noticed a growing trend for 'insourcing', with companies cancelling outsourcing contracts and bringing operations back inhouse. The NOA say the main reasons cited are: hidden costs that reduce the financial benefit of the contract, breakdowns in the relationship between the customer and the outsourcer and the failure to meet agreed service level agreements.

Corporate news in brief

Record first quarter for Visualfiles

Visualfiles is reporting record results for the first quarter of its current trading year, with turnover up 19% to just over £2.5 million and orders up nearly 60% on the same period last year. According to Visualfiles managing director Mark Woodward, the main growth areas are in the residential property market – where there is a demand for HIPs related systems from law firms, lenders and panel managers – and for the company's M2 matter management system. The latest M2 order was from Prettys in Ipswich, who will be running it in conjunction with their Elite PMS.

Metastorm and CommerceQuest BPM merger

CommerceQuest, whose customers include American Express and Coca Cola Bottling, has merged with Metastorm to create what is reckoned to be the largest BPM and workflow software provider on the planet. The new company will maintain the Metastorm brand.

Espreon completes Billback acquisition

The Australian business services group Espreon has completed the acquisition of Recount Expense Management, which is better known as Billback Systems in the legal costs recovery systems market. Billback's chief executive Eldean Ward said the deal would provide the company "with greater access to capital to support ongoing product innovation and accelerate growth in our global market share."

nQueue acquires Research

Staying with expense recovery systems, nQueue has acquired the ResearchAgent Corporation's entire product line. These include a range of applications managing and monitoring online research, including the maintenance of practice-wide subscriptions to online research services.

www.researchagent.com

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Stop press: DLA Piper is Elite's biggest win

Just as we were going to press, it was announced that DLA Piper Rudnick Gray Cary had selected Thomson Elite to provide a unified financial and practice management system for its UK, European and Asian offices. The order, which is the largest single deal ever won by Elite, will see DLA Piper replacing nearly 20 inherited and incumbent accounts systems. The Insider understands the deal came down to a two-horse race between Elite and SAP, which is an additional boost for Elite as it dramatically counters the suggestions being made in some quarters (see front page) that major law firms have outgrown suppliers such as Elite. **More next time + full report on the Insider website**

Litigation support news

Capital Capture Susskind

Capital Capture (020 7314 7700) is holding a late afternoon seminar at the Magic Circle Club in London on 29th November. The theme is total litigation support in managing paper-based information and electronic data discovery and the keynote speaker is Richard Susskind. www.capitalcapture.com

Trilantic add eDoc Review to service menu

Nigel Murray's start-up e-disclosure business Trilantic (020 7042 1000) has added 'eDoc Review' to its list of service offerings. The service is intended to deliver cost and time savings over traditional document review and printing methods by extracting key information from emails and electronic documentation, and then entering it into a spreadsheet with hyperlinks to the original materials. Once reviewed, collated and sorted, the user only needs to print the documents of significance. www.trilantic.co.uk

E-courts get legal

Legal Inc (08704 323027), which provides consultancy services on electronic evidence presentation is holding a seminar at the London Law Society on the evening of 23rd November taking a 'warts 'n all' look at e-courtroom technology. Legal Inc's founding directors are Lisa Burton and Dipak Patel, and the team was recently joined by Clair Woodward, previously with Wordwave International. www.legalinc.co.uk

News in brief

FileTrail wins records management deal

Pensions law specialist Sacker & Partners has selected software from the US supplier FileTrail to handle its records management requirements. FileTrail can supply both internal server and web-based systems with a focus on meeting the needs of small-to-mid sized law firms. www.filetrail.com

Yorkshire firm goes with PTUK

Yorkshire private client firm Grahame Stowe Bateson has upgraded its existing IT infrastructure with Professional Technology UK (01634 815517) to link its six offices together over a virtual private network (VPN). The firm is now rolling out PTUK's Seriatim case management software on a practice-wide basis.

Fentons sign up for Laserforms

Fentons in Manchester has signed up for Laserforms' new LFM9 electronic forms product. The new forms have a strong risk management element, including a facility to open several linked forms for completion and an online verifier so users can check which forms need updating.

TM now PISCES compliant

NLIS channel information provider TM Property Services has become PISCES compliant. TM say PISCES will help speed the order and delivery of the searches needed for the new HIPs.

Legal IT 2000-2005

Following its recent acquisition by the Incisive Media Group, Legal IT is to cease publication as an independent magazine and, from the end of this year, will become a bi-monthly supplement within Legal Week. Legal Week is currently advertising for an IT correspondent to write about legal technology.

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Blackberry corner

Blackberry planning Intel machine

RIM will launch a new version of its Blackberry PDA in the US later this month containing an Intel processor and 64Mb of flash storage. A UK release date for the device, which will retain the classic Blackberry format, has still to be set.

Blackberry legal integrations

We've been asked by several suppliers if we know of any company with Blackberry integration skills. Onset Technology, who have been described as 'recognised leaders in enabling business applications to be used with Blackberrys,' have worked with Aderant and have an app called METAmesssage that allows PC type information to be converted into a format acceptable to a Blackberry. Onset also offer a number of ready to go legal tools. www.onsettechnology.com

New venture on mobile time capture

Kirk Fackre (whose ResearchAgent deal with nQueue is mentioned on page 4) has launched a new venture called Airtime A4P that allows lawyers using Blackberrys and Palms to capture calls and emails with a single click and automatically transfer the data into a time recording system such as Carpe Diem and Elite Webview. www.a4p.biz

Insider Job of the Week

Technical Consultant, Trilantic, £30-£40k

London and European eDisclosure specialists Trilantic are looking for a technical consultant with experience of litigation support systems. For full details call Lucy Harrison on 07970 284699 or email lucy.harrison@people-link.co.uk or visit the Insider website.

The Insider Jobsboard

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 jobs@legaltechnology.com

Digital dictation news in brief

Countryside Properties inhouse legal pick Nflow

The corporate legal team at Countryside Properties has rolled out an Nflow digital dictation system to all its lawyers and secretaries. The team handle the conveyancing work on the sale of the new houses the company builds. Rob Lancashire of Nflow (01376 532266) said the company was encountering growing interest from inhouse legal teams. "Whilst they operate in a corporate culture they are still under the same budgetary pressures to do more with less. DDS is a simple process common to almost all legal professionals so it can deliver the same productivity benefits whatever the environment."

Irwin Mitchell dictate first million jobs with SRC

Irwin Mitchell, SRC's flagship digital dictation site, has completed the one millionth dictation job since installing a Winscribe DDS system just under three years ago. Sheffield-based fee earner Louise Morgan, who dictated the one millionth job, received a box of champagne from SRC, as did Janine Gates, the secretary who transcribed it.

In other SRC news, Foot Anstey is to roll out Winscribe DDS to staff at its three offices: Plymouth, Exeter and Taunton. And Mayfair property firm Forsters is rolling out Winscribe Anywhere on a practice-wide basis. Fee earners are using Olympus DS-400 handheld recorders and will upload their dictation from any internet-enabled PC. Forsters run Winscribe on a Citrix thin client platform.

Voicepath almost win award

Legal transcription specialist Voicepath was runner-up in this year's National Outsourcing Awards in the Outsourcing Service Provider category. The winner was the IT consultancy Cap Gemini.

OutSec win three awards

Legal transcription specialist OutSec.co.uk has picked up two awards this autumn. The first, for its FileManager file transfer application, was a DTi e-commerce award. The other two, for best business expansion plan and best marketing plan, were both picked up at the Handbag.com Barclays Business Plan Awards in London last month.

New transcription service

Debra Mitchell has launched Apple Transcription (01706 828020) a new internet based digital dictation transcription service for law firms. Apple is also offering a free trial of digital kit for firms still thinking about migrating from analogue dictation equipment. www.appletranscription.co.uk

Litig launch guidelines for email & taxonomies

Litig (the Legal Technology Innovators Group, the forum for law firm IT directors to discuss and co-ordinate strategies for dealing with common IT issues) has produced a new discussion paper on the management of electronic documents. The paper, which was developed in conjunction with the English Law Society to reflect a soon-to-be published revision of the Society's rules on electronic documents, particularly client-matter related email messages, where the advice changes from requiring emails to be printed out and instead allows the alternative of using 'suitably managed electronic storage systems'.

The proposed new rule 3.18 states that 'Firms should take a pragmatic and risk-based approach to records of emails. That is, significant and substantive emails (including emails that are subject to statutory retention periods) should be stored in a suitably managed electronic storage system or printed and stored, but those that are ephemeral can be left to expire from electronic storage in the ordinary course of events. A copy of the Litig paper – called *A Concise Guide to the Management of Electronic Documents* – is available on the Litig website.

Litig has also been working on the development of a 'useable' standard legal taxonomy for knowledge management purposes. A draft is also on the Litig website. www.litig.org

Readers poll: Microsoft rules ?

Last month we asked the question: if Microsoft were to move into the small business software market and offer applications such as accounts, CRM and document management suitable for law firms, would you (a) still continue buying specialist legal systems or (b) switch over to Microsoft? The poll found that 45% of you would immediately opt for Microsoft whereas 55% would stick with your current suppliers – although whether this is out of loyalty or a greater fear of Microsoft was not clear.

This month we are asking which technology have you found the most useful over the past 12 months: digital dictation or mobile email devices such as the BlackBerry? You can complete the readers poll via the Insider website. www.legaltechnology.com

International news

Axxia recruiting heavily in Australia

Following the success of its sales operations in Australia, Axxia Systems is now recruiting technical and case workflow specialists, account managers and practice management specialists to work out of its Sydney offices. You can find full details on the Insider website. Meanwhile at Axxia's flagship Australian site, the Adelaide offices of Minter Ellison, the firm is now planning to use Axxia's case management system in a new contract it has just been awarded by the South Australia WorkCover Corporation, which handles workplace compensation claims.

DictaNet secure Benelux partnership

The German-based digital dictation systems supplier DictaNet has formed an IT partnership with Dutch supplier Lindeberg, which will now see Lindeberg providing support and tailor made MSI scripts for DDS users who need custom rather than out-of-the-box solutions. www.lindeberg.nl

More Hummingbird wins in Portugal

Portuguese law firms Morais Leitao and Vieira de Almeida have opted for Hummingbird DM 5.1 document management systems. The systems will be implemented by Lisbon-based integrator eChiron. The latest orders mean five of the six largest Portuguese firms are now using or implementing Hummingbird DM 5.1.

New PDF server offers OCR facility

Sydney-based DocsCorp has launched pdfDOCS OCR Server, a new utility that allows any document image from a scanner, fax or document management system to be converted into a fully text searchable PDF or editable Microsoft Word wordprocessing file. www.docscorp.com



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ECLIPSE

Online news in brief

Open source content management

Website development agency Intendance can now offer its customers the MySource Matrix open source content management system for intranets and extranets. James Tuke of Intendance says MySource offers all the functionality of a proprietary CMS but at a cost effective price.

www.intendance.com

Going live with out-of-the-box intranets

Shulmans in Leeds and Parker Bullen in Salisbury have become the first UK firms to go live with Dashboard out-of-the-box intranets, which are sold and supported in the UK by Conscious Solutions.

www.conscious.co.uk

Legal bloggers gather in Chicago

This week legal bloggers of America are in Chicago for the Blawg Think event. Recent research found that in the US, lawyers are now the fourth largest group of blog users after IT professionals, students and OAPs. For details visit the organisers' website.

www.lexthink.com

New ILTA paper available online

ILTA (International Legal Technology Association) has published a new white paper *Supporting the Technology that Supports the Practice of Law* which looks at the supplier and user sides of the service and support of legal IT projects. The paper is on the ILTA website.

www.iltanet.org

Insider website update

New additions to the Insider website include a case study on the way Cobbetts support staff working from home and other out-of-the-office locations via a broadband solution provided by Community Internet.

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

www.legaltechnology.com

Shop4Law nails flag to Clementi mast

With the post-Clementi report government white paper threatening to make the purchase of legal services as easy as buying a can of beans, Shop4Law is a new website that hopes to make this a reality. Based on the US 'Case Post' business model (this US site attracted over a quarter of a million cases in its first two years of trading), Shop4Law invites the public to submit details of their legal requirements via the web and then matches them with the law firms listed on the site's database. Firms can then review a claim's details and decide whether to decline or respond to it. The service is free to the public but law firms on the database must pay an annual subscription.

www.shop4law.co.uk

Law librarians win prizes

Gail Sanderson of Davies Arnold Cooper was named best Legal Information Professional at a Large Law Firm at last month's inaugural BIALL + LexisNexis Butterworths Awards. Fighting off strong competition from Baker & McKenzie and Olswang, the judging panel praised Sanderson's idea for Intrafind – a web-based tool that enables intranet users to locate relevant material easily.

Kate Stanfield at CMS Cameron McKenna took the award for the Best Use of Technology in a Library Project. The judges described her as "living proof that library skills are transferable to the wider information needs of the modern law firm" in acknowledgement of her almost single-handed development and subsequent launch of a portal that links together internal and external sources. Emily Allbon of City University won Best Academic Legal Information Professional for her LawBore website, which is extensively used within and beyond the academic law library community. Michael Oberwarth from Matthew Arnold & Baldwin was presented with the award for Legal Information Professional at a Small/Medium Law Firm and David Sparrow, from The Disability Rights Commission, won the Legal Information Professional - Special Libraries category.

Buzzword corner: online oxygen

Our thanks to Guy Stephens at Wirebox Designs for drawing this to our attention. Cited at a recent seminar, online oxygen is that sensation of dread (or frustration) when your email goes down or a network connection crashes and you feel as if there is nothing you can do, the world has ended, and you are left almost breathless.

The Insider move saga

Settled as we now are amidst the rolling vistas of the Waveney Valley, betwixt Misery Corner and Mutts Farm, it is time to reflect on the Great Insider Relocation Saga. Leaving aside the unfortunate business of the dead horse on the lawn and one of those ‘we say it is it an unsightly heap of rubble but the vendors say it is a rockery’ disputes, the following experiences spring to mind...

In the course of clearing out redundant kit from our old offices, we discovered there is no second-hand market for computer CRT monitors. You cannot give them away. In fact according to one environmental group, even the Third World will no longer touch them, with Nigeria receiving an average of 400,000 old computers each month, the majority of which go straight into landfill sites.

As the relocation ground to a halt at one stage because it took over four hours to transact an electronic transfer of funds from our account to that of the vendors, we also found the government’s hype about e-conveyancing rather amusing. Conveyancing in the digital age? Given we were only moving 25 miles up the road, the whole process could have been handled more expediently by an articulated clerk on a bicycle with a bankers draft in his saddlebag.

And then there was BT and its attempts to provide a reliable broadband service. You know those horror stories you hear about BT? They are all true. Never have we met such a bunch of buck-passing, responsibility-shifting monkeys with screwdrivers since... well since the last time we had to deal with BT. We won’t say their service was lamentable but let’s just say there are chimpanzees in the Congo who could probably set up better communications links with just two cocoa tins and a piece of string.

News in brief

Anthony Gold get VoIP

Anthony Gold is the latest firm to opt for a VoIP-based phone system. The project, which was handled by Optus Business Systems (0800 316 7566), including deploying Inter-Tel Windows Operated Consoles (WOCs), so just one receptionist can now answer calls for all three of the firm’s branches and calls between offices are effectively free because they travel over the IP connection.

Maples & Calder select Bailey Teswaine

Offshore law firm Maples & Calder has selected Bailey Teswaine (0800 028 2229) to provide it with a voice, data and cabling solution based on Cisco and Mitel technology.

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Groundhog day for free legal forms

It's Groundhog day in the world of electronic forms as Russell Shepherd's Capsoft business this week launches Capform, a library of over 1000 useful government and legal forms in HotDoc format that can be downloaded free of charge from the web. But haven't we heard this before? Yes, in 1999 Shepherd launched a similar service called Everyform, which within 12 months was being used by almost half the law firms in the UK. However in 2001 he sold this business to what is now LexisNexis Butterworths for "an undisclosed seven figure sum". So why the relaunch? Because earlier this year Lexis dropped the free service and introduced a subscription, so Shepherd decided to repeat his previous free forms formula.

www.capform.co.uk

Legalease & Insider to launch new legal tech journal

Legalease (publishers of The Legal 500 and Legal Business magazine) and Legal Technology Insider are teaming up to launch the Legal Technology Journal, a new quarterly publication. According to Legalease new projects director Jeremy Hill "The use of IT has matured to a stage where there is now a need for a quality publication that looks at the broader management and strategic issues associated with law office automation. With Insider editor Charles Christian on board as editor-in-chief, we believe the Legal Technology Journal will establish a world-class reputation" The launch issue will appear in April 2006 and look at such topics as the role of technology in delivering financial management, HR, marketing, litigation support and knowledge management functions within law firms. The Legal Technology Journal costs £76 a year however it will be distributed free of charge to Insider subscribers.

Network - and help a charity

Recruitment consultancy Laurence Simons International is hosting an 'elite marketers' dinner at the Great Eastern Hotel in London on 22nd November for the heads of marketing within the legal world, with all proceeds going to the Disasters Emergency Committee. For details of this ticket-only event contact Clare Quinn-Waters on 020 7645 8500 or email clarequinnwaters@laurencesimons.com

10 years ago today...

Stories in the Insider in November 1995 included: the worsening relations between the legal IT industry and the English Law Society. These were to deteriorate further the following year when Chancery Lane embarked upon its unfortunate 'High Street Starter Kit' project. We also carried a number of stories about law firms being hit by 'RAM raids'. With memory then costing as much as £200 for a 4Mb SIMM (you can now buy 256Mb for under £20) there was a short-lived craze for criminals to raid offices to steal RAM and processor chips from PCs. On the deals front, Finers announced it was buying a Unix-based PMS from Axxia. The firm, now Finers Stephens Innocent, still runs Axxia today.

Gone for a Chinese

After spending the summer in the UK recovering from tackling the Inca Trail in Peru, Alan Richardson of Norwel has just headed off on another long distance walk, this time taking on a 100+ mile section of the Great Wall of China. Once again Richardson will be raising funds for charity. We wish him well.

Legal Technology Insider

www.legaltechnology.com

Each issue of the Insider is now read by an average of 6500 legal IT professionals. For editorial, subscription, advertising and any other enquiries contact – **and please note that our contact details have changed** – Legal Technology Insider, Oak Lodge, Darrow Green Road, Denton, Harleston, Norfolk, IP20 0AY

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