



## Outsourcing finally on law firm agendas ?

It has been a long time coming but it finally looks as if law firms are starting to take the outsourcing of core IT operations seriously. This summer Eversheds revealed it was finalising negotiations to transfer about 80% of its entire IT capability, including helpdesk, infrastructure support and training, over to IT services provider Computacenter. If the project runs to schedule, about 90 of Eversheds' IT staff will join Computacenter in November. Managing partner Bryan Hughes has commented that "We want to do more than just keep the lights on. We are not a specialist IT organisation and we do not have finite resources, so we cannot be at the cutting edge but with an outside provider we can."

## The Insider website

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# Carter headache for legal aid IT

Lord Carter's proposals for the reform of legal aid funding for criminal work look set to become the latest headache for legal technology suppliers in England & Wales, not least because the Legal Services Commission (LSC) seems to have overlooked the time it will take to rewrite the IT systems needed to support the new regime. According to one leading supplier, it will require at least 9 man-months to rewrite the software yet the specifications for the new regime – some parts of which, under a controversial phased implementation, are due to go live in April 2007 – will not be available until at least November this year.

Leaving aside the logistical problems for smaller suppliers with limited development resources, the Carter changes also raise an important commercial issue, namely who pays? Law firms we have spoken to say they expect them to be provided by suppliers as a free upgrade under their existing support contracts. In contrast, some suppliers say the changes are so fundamental that they should be chargeable as they amount to a totally new product. An added complication is with Carter predicting the reforms will compel at least 400 firms to pull out of criminal defence work, some suppliers may also follow suit.

Simon Meehan, the current chairman of the Legal Software Suppliers Association, described the Carter deadlines as "nonsense" and urged the LSC to start talking to suppliers "as it would make life so much easier for everyone, particularly legal aid firms". Meehan added that the LSC's approach was in marked contrast to other more IT-aware government agencies, such as HM Land Registry who do include software suppliers in their consultation process and are currently discussing the IT implications of changes at least two years before they are due to come into effect.

## Who bought who this summer

So you thought it was safe to go on holiday this summer, because surely there could not be any more takeovers happening in the legal IT world. But what happens? When you get back from the beach, you find a new management team and a stranger sitting in the MD's office. For a full run down on all the latest acquisitions and MBOs *see page 5*.

## Helping win the paper war

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## News in brief

### AlphaLaw wins best supplier award

Members of the Institute of Legal Cashiers & Administrators (ILCA) have voted AlphaLaw the best supplier of legal accounts software 'by a large margin'. The runners up were JCS Computer Solutions.

### Upgrades & outsourcing with DPS

Campbell Chambers Solicitors has upgraded its DPS system to the latest SQL Server based OneOffice product and King Prior in Kent has outsourced its IT operations and is now using the DPS Hosting solution.

### Howell-Jones sign up with TFB

The 50-user Howell-Jones Partnership has gone live with a new TFB Partner for Windows PMS and case system. TFB won the order in a three-way fight with Axxia and Emis IT. The new system also provides the firm with integrated telephony through the use of Corebridge, a component of TFB's partner programme. Eddowes Perry & Osbourne in Sutton Coldfield has selected TFB to replace its JCS system.

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

### SC@MS goes into Greenland

Solicitors Case Management Systems (0845 0382245) has rolled out its full suite of accounts, diary, case and practice management software to Greenland Lawyers LLP, a 25 user immigration and criminal practice in Camden. The system automatically generates Legal Services Commission SPAN reports and supports their online submission to the LSC.

[www.scams-law.com](http://www.scams-law.com)

## Quote, unquote

"I forgot. I had to go out and pick up my cat's ashes as she died last week" ...*the worst excuse we have heard yet for someone failing to turn up for a job interview at a legal IT supplier.*

## SOS hosted service targets smaller firms

Solicitors Own Software (SOS) has launched a new service – called Virtual Practices – that aims to give smaller law firms (defined as 1-to-4 partners and up to 20 users) one of the most technically and commercially attractive hosted solutions we have seen to-date. The entry level offering is an accounts bureau, with SOS providing 'virtual legal cashiers' for £350 a month, which includes 200 postings and unlimited web access to 12 financial reports.

Although comparable services are already available, users of Virtual Practices also get access to the full functionality of the new SOS Connect .NET-based Connect practice management system. Additional management reports are available but, rather more importantly, for £0.45p per document created (and stored and backed up on a secure remote server by SOS) users can also take advantage of Connect's document and matter management facilities, effectively giving all the functionality of case management. All users need is a 2Mb broadband connection, a modern PC, a scanner and be astute enough to see that £350 is cheaper than hiring a bookkeeper, as well as a small price to pay for freeing themselves from non-billable administrative chores. For more details call 0800 027 7341 or visit the Virtual Practices website.

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

## DMS vendor battle continues

Despite Interwoven having established itself as the UK leader, the battle to dominate the legal DMS market shows no signs of abating. Over the summer both Nelsons, previously on GroupWise, and Shoosmiths have selected Hummingbird to supply their new DMS platforms, while Reynolds Porter Chamberlain has extended its investment in Hummingbird by selecting the RedDot web content management system to support its internet and intranet operations. Meanwhile Interwoven has countered with the announcement that Slaughter & May has selected the WorkSite system to provide its new DMS. Working in conjunction with implementation partners Tikit, Slaughter & May will migrate from its current FileNet DMS to a 1350 user matter-centric email filing and document management infrastructure called OneFile. IBM, incidentally, purchased the US-based FileNet Corporation in August for \$1.6 billion in cash.

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## RoI: how to measure it - and how not to do it

SJ Berwin estimates its new Interwoven WorkSite email and document management system will save the firm more than £650k (\$1.25 million) a year in reduced paper storage costs alone. This is in addition to improved administrative efficiency (less time spent filing etc) and the convenience of having a unified digital client file. Another firm that has adopted a scientific approach to measuring return on investment (RoI) is Osborne Clarke. They calculate that the rollout of their new BigHand digital dictation system will save the firm over £2 million over the next five years. The firm has identified a number of key quantifiable benefits including: a reduction in document turnaround times – the DDS pilot suggests an average of a 77% cut in turnaround time is achievable; fee earner to PA ratios moving from 2:1 to 3:1 over the medium term, through the use of existing PA resources as new fee earner recruits; and a significant cut in the use of temps.

How not to measure RoI? This can be summed up by the firm which recently carried out a digital dictation pilot but decided against a full rollout on the grounds that the only people to benefit were their secretaries, who were able to get through their workloads quicker. Perhaps someone at Osborne Clarke should explain the facts of life to them.

## Eclipse win 'Tesco Law' deal

Co-operative Legal Services (CLS) – the first organisation to announce its intentions for Clementi era legal services (aka Tesco Law) has selected Eclipse Legal Systems as its core case management software provider. Insider sources suggest the selection process came down to a two horse race between Eclipse and LexisNexis VisualFiles. CLS will initially use Eclipse Proclaim software to support its accident management service and, subsequently, its conveyancing and probate services.

CLS project manager Andrew Ridland said "It was vital to implement a system quickly to allow CLS to hit the ground running and begin processing cases immediately. We didn't have the option of spending months customising a solution but Eclipse's system matched most of our needs and, where customisation was required, it took only a matter of weeks. Eclipse's track record of fast implementation made it the natural choice for us."

## News in brief

### Visualfiles win Law Soc complaints deal

The English Law Society's Consumer Complaints Service (CCS) has selected LexisNexis Visualfiles to supply a complaint management system to its offices in Leamington Spa. The decision follows a six-month evaluation process by the CCS, which was set up to assist consumers who have encountered problems when dealing with solicitors.

### Trade Union specialists pick Pilgrim

Trade union and employment law specialists Rowley Ashworth have selected Pilgrim's LawSoft case and workflow management software to assist them running employment tribunal litigation at three of their offices.

### Lawyers think Videss is Devine

Hull-based Devine Law has selected Videss practice and case management software to support its insolvency, commercial and property practice. The firm's founder Francesca Devine had used Videss in a previous firm.

### Laserform roadshows back on the road

Laserform has commenced its autumn series of roadshows with a programme of free CPD accredited seminars taking place across England from now until early November. This year the speakers include Professor James Driscoll providing an update on residential leasehold and tenancy law. For more details call Jenet Ingram of Laserform on 01925 750020.

### Dickinson Wood go with Linetime

After beating AIM and Norwel in a three way shortlist, Linetime is installing its Liberate software at Dickinson Wood in Doncaster. The firm will initially use Liberate to support its e-conveyancing operations but also plans to implement Linetime's probate and family systems.

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## People & Places

### Changing the guard at Copitrak

Keith Child, one of the European pioneers of cost recovery systems – initially with Equitrac and for the last decade with Copitrak – has stood down as chairman of the group. Copitrak's new chairman is his son Nick Child. In addition, Stewart Hadley has been appointed managing director of Copitrak Systems UK.

### Deja vu for Jones

Andy Jones, previously with Iken Business where he led Iken's expansion into the local government market, has joined the public sector business development team at Axxia Systems. Jones began his career in IT at Kienzle, the company that went on to eventually be reincarnated as Axxia.

### Changes of address...

**Recommind Inc** has opened a UK office at City Point, 1 Ropemaker Street, London EC2Y 9HT. UK sales director Simon Price can be reached on 07775 591388 or email [simon.price@recommind.com](mailto:simon.price@recommind.com) And **Solicitors Case Management Systems** has moved to 24 Firs Road, Salisbury, Wilts SP5 1SQ. The 0845 838 2245 phone number remains unchanged.

### Other moves...

Longtime litigation support services specialist **Kelvin McGregor-Alcorn** has left Kroll Ontrack Legal Technologies. Damien Griffiths has left Addleshaw Goddard, his replacement as head of IT has not yet been announced. **Marie Livingstone** has left the London office of Baker Robbins. **Dan Brown** or, to give him his full monicker Daniel Cairns-Brown, has left (in his words) "the onerous world of CRM" to join the Practical Law Company. **Hugo Mahoney**, previously with Cable & Wireless, has joined LexisNexis Butterworths as the company's new director of sales & marketing.

## Case vendors forming DDS alliances

With digital dictation software now established as a 'must have' technology, more and more case management vendors are forming integration alliances with DDS suppliers. The latest are Eclipse Legal Systems, who have teamed up with BigHand, and Videss, who have linked up with WinScribe. TFB has also announced the integration of its Partner for Windows software with the DictaNet DDS.

## Digital dictation news in brief

### Wake Smith is the first firm to go with Olympus USB mike

Sheffield solicitors Wake Smith has become the first firm to select the new Olympus DR-2000 USB mikes (seen by many as the first serious competitor to Philips SpeechMike) as an input device for a WinScribe digital dictation system. The system implementation and roll out is being handled by WinScribe partner SRC.

- A new case study on Mayfair property lawyers Forsters and their use of SRC WinScribe in conjunction with an outsourced transcription bureau in South Africa is now available on the Insider website [www.legaltechnology.com](http://www.legaltechnology.com)

### Online hardware sales from Crescendo

Crescendo UK has launched the DigiBox Store, an online shopping facility for digital dictation and transcription hardware. The site carries recorders, USB mikes, headsets and accessories from Philips, Olympus and Grundig.

- Veitch Penny in Exeter has begun rolling out Crescendo DigiScribe digital dictation software to 50 fee earners and secretaries. And top 200 firm Bates Wells & Braithwaite, who rolled out DigiScribe to 110+ users earlier this year, say that since moving to DDS they have "cut the use of temps by 100%" which represents a saving of £40k a year. [www.digiboxstore.co.uk](http://www.digiboxstore.co.uk)

### nFlow appeals to thin clients

Dootsons LLP in Manchester and Gotelee & Goldsmith in Ipswich are the latest firms to implement an nFlow DDS running on thin client technology. Dootsons has 22 users in 3 offices running on Citrix, while Gotelee have 75 users in 2 offices on Microsoft Terminal Services. Both firms said nFlow's distributed storage architecture made the projects viable as it removed the need to stream audio files back and forth across the firms' networks.



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## Who bought who this summer

### CS Group make it three in a row

The Computer Software Group made it three in a row by buying Videss for £7.07 million. The last set of accounts, to 31 March 2006, showed sales of £4.97 million and pre-tax profits of £0.43 million. Founder & chief executive Paul Sanderson along with his wife Sonja, currently finance director, have retired from Videss. The transaction, following the acquisitions of AIM and Laserform earlier this year, brings the CS Group's total spend in the legal IT sector to just under £17.2 million.

### BigHand founders bow out

BigHand's founders – Stephen Thompson and Gordon McAlpine – sold their shareholding in the digital dictation supplier for a rumoured £6 million to a management buyout team, backed by LDC, the private equity division of the Lloyds TSB Group. LDC invested an undisclosed amount for a 'significant stake' in BigHand. The new management board comprises: Stephen Edwards – chairman, David Fryer – CEO, Simon Lewis – development director, Steve Butterworth – sales director, and Jonathan Carter – client solutions director. Kevan Leggett of LDC also joins the board as a non-executive director.

### Lexis continues buying spree

LexisNexis continued its spending spree with the acquisition of two more US litigation support systems suppliers, namely Dataflight and CaseSoft, respectively the suppliers of the Concordance and CaseMap, TextMap and TimeMap applications. The systems will be added to the LexisNexis Total Litigator portfolio of services, which already includes other litigation support products such as LexisNexis Applied Discovery and LexisNexis Court Link.

### Montagues and Capulets agree to be friends

Despite having once been described as the Montagues and the Capulets of the DMS world, Hummingbird's board has unanimously approved a \$489 million takeover bid by rival DMS vendor Open Text. There is a shareholder EGM later this week to consider the bid, which is expected to be finalised by the end of this month.

### MBO at lease finance group

Syscap, who provide law firms with lease finance for IT systems, completed an MBO with private equity funding supplied by AnaCap Financial Partners.

## New IT consultancy

Paul Longhurst, previously with ResSoft, Tikit and more recently Hummingbird, has set up as an independent consultant, working under the 3Kites Consultancy brand. He is currently working on a document management systems project for a top 10 firm (earlier in his career he was responsible for the implementation of Allen & Overy's original SoftSolutions DMS) however he can also offer IT consultancy in the fields of CRM and knowledge management. He can be reached at [paul.longhurst@3kites.com](mailto:paul.longhurst@3kites.com)

## Legal IT for sale

The internet address legalit.co.uk is for sale. It is currently registered to 3G Internet of Bromley. Other domains available include legalit.biz and legalit.org [www.legalit.co.uk](http://www.legalit.co.uk)

## Legal Brain on TV

LegalTV – no, we'd never heard of it either but it's only just cranking up its PR operations – is showing its new *Legal Brain* quiz show at 11:30am on Friday mornings. The show features cartoonist Bill Tidy as the host and airs on Sky channel 885. A full programme guide can be found both on Sky and on the web. [www.legaltv.co.uk](http://www.legaltv.co.uk)

## What they say about the Insider...

"Legal technology is a key business issue for any size of practice, not that you'd know that from the ever diminishing, top 100-oriented media coverage on the subject. The lone bright spot is Legal Technology Insider, it's been the one constant over the last decade and is now the only publication regularly reporting on IT developments for High Street firms."

...legal IT PR consultant Sarah Levick



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## Insider featured jobs

### Vacancies with InterAction team, London

The London-based LexisNexis InterAction team has openings for the following posts:

#### Solutions Sales/Account Manager

Responsibilities include working with Tikit on new client sales & providing account support for existing clients.

#### Senior Technical Solutions Consultant

Job responsibilities include design & build processes, installation & configuration of InterAction etc.

#### Project Manager/Business Consultant

Responsibilities include developing & managing project plans, translating business requirements into system designs.

Although based in London these last two posts may involve projects anywhere in Europe, Canada, Latin America or Africa. Preference will be shown for candidates with prior InterAction experience. For full details call 020 7911 1950 or email CV to Daniel Von Weihe, Director, International Sales & Operations LexisNexis, at [daniel.vonweihe@lexisnexis.com](mailto:daniel.vonweihe@lexisnexis.com)

#### IT Director, Brabners Chaffe Street LLP Liverpool, £60-£70k + benefits

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## Tikit say best still to come


The Tikit Group was in a suitably bullish mood after the publication, last week, of its interim results for the six months ended 30 June. Turnover was up 19% to £11.41 million compared with £9.55m for the same period last year, while pre-tax profits were up 272% from £266k to £990k. The company has also over £3 million cash in the bank and, as chairman Mike McGoun pointed out, the company's second half is traditionally stronger.

Despite the low profile the company has had in recent months (its PR has been below the horizon) it has actually been very busy in the UK, Continental Europe and the US, where it now has over 50 customers and is involved in CRM projects with blue chip organisations such as management consultants Bain & Co. Other activities, along with the Slaughter & May DMS project mentioned elsewhere, include two new managed services deals – Brabner Chaffe Street and Dickinson Manser; more CRM projects – O'Donnell Sweeney in Ireland, Pannone LLP, and accountants Grant Thornton, who have all selected InterAction running in conjunction with Tikit's own eMarketing suite; a 500 user time recording system based on Carpe Diem for HM Treasury Solicitors; and a billing workflow project with Freshfields, who run the Firmware PMS Tikit inherited when it acquired ReSoft.

Turning to the future, Tikit's managing director David Lumsden says the company is only just scratching the surface of the professional services IT market. Lumsden estimates that if you take the turnover (£10.88 billion) of the top 100 law firms alone (Tikit is also targeting the top 50 accountancy practices who have a £7.6 billion turnover) their total annual spend on IT is approaching £435 million. Tikit assumes they spend just 4% of turnover on IT, which is probably conservative. Richard Susskind says it is 7%, the Insider would suggest 5.5%. Clearly a lot of this goes on salaries plus products and services outside Tikit's domain, nevertheless Tikit is setting its sights on winning as much as half this IT spend.

## Christian quits software guide

Insider editor Charles Christian has quit the English Law Society's annual *Software Solutions Guide* project citing "editorial differences". Christian, whose Independent View commentary has appeared in seven editions, also ghosted the Law Society presidents' forewords to five guides.



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## Time to consider VRM ?

We've a new TLA (three letter acronym) for you today. It's VRM – or 'vendor relationship management' – which was coined by Tim Hyman, head of IT at Taylor Wessing, to sum up the value of networking with legal IT suppliers.

According to Hyman, while networking with your peers and generally sharing 'war stories' about suppliers and their products remains vital, not least because it "can save you time, money, pain and ultimately your career," it is equally important to network with suppliers. Hyman says that while you inevitably meet people who only want "to talk about release 9.5 of their system," they are becoming a rarity at networking events, such as By Legal For Legal.

"Increasingly," says Hyman, "vendors are seeing good quality networking events more as account management opportunities and the smart guys have realised that the hard sell is completely missing the point. Relationship building is the way forward. Staying in touch, hearing about successes, recognising issues and above all understanding the challenges facing law firms are the business intelligence that a good vendor will take away with them and turn into future profitable relationships.

"A good relationship with a vendor is equally as important as those with your peers," adds Hyman. "How many times have you wished you'd known who to call when your Exchange server has corrupted on a Friday afternoon and the partners conference is on Monday? And even if you'd called, how many would pull out all the stops to get you a resource over a weekend? Believe it or not a relationship like this is achievable and one day you will need it.

Hyman goes on to say that "while it may appear all events have the same basic premise of people gathering in a room to suffer 'death by PowerPoint', because each event has a different focus or agenda – and assuming you have neither the time, budget nor drinking capacity to attend them all – it is essential you choose carefully. Not all events have networking as the main focus. With some, learning from the seminar programmes available is the most important use of time. With others, it is learning from people who have experienced similar challenges to those that you currently face. If you get it right you will take away different ideas and new contacts. If you get it wrong you will be mindlessly bored, have a massive bar bill and 2000 emails waiting in your inbox.

## International news

### DDS suppliers go international

Digital dictation systems supplier SRC has made its first move into Continental Europe, with the sale of a 285 user WinScribe system to Plesner, one of the largest law firms in Denmark. The firm has now rolled out the system, which includes a Danish language user interface for WinScribe. And, BigHand – which moved into Europe last year – has secured its first win in the US with an order from Wisconsin lawyers Godfrey & Kahn. The firm has rolled out BigHand3 to over 350 attorneys and assistants across five offices.

### Two more Axxia wins in Australia

Axxia Australia has secured two more wins for its case and practice management software. The orders were placed by Carroll & O'Dea in Sydney and Brisbane personal injury specialist Trilby Misso. Axxia has also moved into larger offices in Sydney and recruited additional staff, bringing the complement to five.

### TFB wins in Ireland - and Fiji

TFB's global domination plans are taking it to some interesting places. Beauchamps in Dublin has selected TFB's Partner for Windows software to replace its existing Axxia system. TFB's Irish distributor Legal IT are working on the implementation which includes rolling out a DictaNet digital dictation system to users. And, hard on the heels of a recent sale to a Maori law firm, TFB has now sold Partner for Windows to a Fijian law firm.

### Australian firm takes FWBS

As part of their Aderant accounts, front and back office IT infrastructure, Australian lawyers Johnson Winter & Slattery will be rolling out a badged version of the FWBS OMS Matter Centre system. Matter Centre is sold by Aderant as part of its Expert Front Office suite.



Many IT managers and IT directors tell us that they are constantly trying to get more from their existing software systems.

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## Survey finds still gaps in approach to KM

Curve Consulting has published the results of its latest survey on the current state of knowledge management in 71 of the world's largest law firms. Highlights include: the top three KM objectives are: improving quality of client service (71%), leveraging expertise (49%) and gaining a competitive advantage (48 %); almost 40% of firms will spend more than \$1 million on KM in 2006; the average KM team in a European firm is more than 10 times the size of the average US team; less than two-thirds of firms use taxonomies; return on investment is measured by just 13% of firms; and, the time based billing model is seen as the greatest cultural barrier to KM projects.

Curve's Gretta Rusanow says although the scope of KM has broadened, there is still too much emphasis placed on managing knowledge related to the practice of law and not enough emphasis on managing knowledge relating to the business of law, including such factors as financial and marketing information. A fuller report of the survey's findings can be found on the Insider's Orange Rag blog.

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

## Buzzword corner: internetomania

Internetomania – otherwise known as IAD (internet addiction disorder) or PIU (pathologic internet use) – is a term newly coined by psychologists in Canada to describe the phenomenon of people who spend so much time online that their social lives start to suffer. The symptoms, we are told, are much like alcoholism or compulsive gambling, featuring similar destructive urges and psychological dependence. Sorry, no time to write anything further on this topic as we need to check for new email messages.

## Suddenly the legal web becomes more interesting

It has been a long time since we've seen any real innovation on the legal internet but this month has seen the launch of three initiatives that raise the bar.

### Will radio kill the boring podcast?

Pinsent Masons has added a podcast facility to its Out-Law IT and e-commerce law news service. Where Out-Law sets itself apart from other podcasts is instead of publishing a series of ad-hoc items, these have been designed as a weekly radio programme (think *World at One* or *PM* on BBC Radio 4 – in fact they are branded as Out-Law Radio) complete with a professional presenter, a summary of the latest news stories, various feature items and interviews – one of the most recent was with Billy Bragg on how he managed to get the social networking site MySpace to change its small print. The podcasts last about 12-to-15 minutes and a new episode is available every Thursday. Best of all the technology, including the audio streaming, works a treat and does not require third-party applications to be downloaded. Definitely worth visiting, even if only to gnash your teeth and say 'I wish we'd done that first'.

[www.out-law.com/page-7212](http://www.out-law.com/page-7212)

### Looking for the right medical expert

MacBeal describes itself as 'a matchmaking, web-based marketing tool that allows personal injury lawyers to find the right medical experts'. It sounds like yet another online directory but its search facilities not only allow candidates to be located by postcode but also provides a CV, terms & conditions and sample reports for all listed experts.

Registered users can even exchange documents with doctors using a secure electronic delivery system and it has one of the clearest user guide tutorials we have ever seen.

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

### Something for the legal costs and finance specialists

Finally, the Legal Support Network (LSN) is a new site for professionals working within the finance and costs areas of the legal community in the UK & Ireland. The range of services includes a newsroom, a calendar of training events, an information centre, a business directory, various online tools, plus recruitment services and networking opportunities. The service was set up by David Sparkes who reckons (we believe correctly) that LSN is the only facility catering for this niche area of the legal market.

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# Chris Poole steps aside at Elite

At the end of last week it was announced that Thomson Elite’s long-time president & CEO Chris Poole had made the decision to step away from day-to-day operations responsibility. Poole now becomes chairman and has been replaced as president & CEO by Steve Buege, a senior executive within the parent Thomson Legal & Regulatory group who has served in a broad range of executive-level technology, strategy and operational roles. He is described as having a “strong customer focus and knowledge of the legal marketplace, and has demonstrated a successful track record in managing technology-driven businesses”.

Other senior management changes include the appointment of Peter Ozolin as vice president with responsibility for the practice management systems group and the recruitment of Salim Sunderji from IBM as vice president with responsibility for finance. Elite say the changes lay the foundations for a new phase of growth.

Meanwhile here in the UK, Kevin Smith, Thomson Elite UK’s long-time operations director has left the company. Smith, who had been with Elite for nearly 10 years, is planning to set up as an independent consultant. He can currently be reached on 07876 568034 or [kevinesmith@uk2.net](mailto:kevinesmith@uk2.net) The UK office has also seen the departures of Bridget Hardiman and senior consultant Sue Emirali. Hardiman has joined David Thorpe’s team at Pilgrim Systems (Thorpe himself was at one time the head of Elite’s operations in the UK and Europe) with responsibility for new business sales in Scotland and the North of England.

## News in brief

### SOS wins two more signings

Glenisters in Middlesex and Turner Coulston in Northampton, are the latest firms to invest in practice management software from SOS. Turner Coulston will also be rolling out a Visualfiles case management system.

### Harper Robertson swap out AIM for LawWare

Scottish firm Harper Robertson & Shannon has swapped out its AIM Evolution Client/Server PMS in favour of a LawWare (0870 2000 577) Enterprise system.

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## Long hot summer takes its toll

The long hot summer has taken its toll on smaller legal IT suppliers. In August we conducted one of our regular audits to identify which suppliers are no longer active or otherwise missing in action. This time the casualty list numbered 20 suppliers who had either closed down their legal market operations or gone out of business altogether. Although there were no big names among the fatalities, they did include 8 Tikit-wannabe systems integrators, 3 suppliers of digital dictation products and services and 3 online service providers, who presumably had only just realised the dotcom boom had come and gone.

## What happened to your Blackberry ?

Our thanks to *The Lawyer* magazine for drawing attention to an informal competition held by partners at Charles Russell to discover whose BlackBerry had met the most bizarre fate. Entries included one inadvertently flushed down the loo, one dropped out of the window of a moving taxi cab and two thrown from balconies into hotel swimming pools. However first prize went to the partner whose BlackBerry was crushed under the heels of his mistress's red stiletto shoes.

- Family lawyers might like to note that when Kid Rock (of course you've heard of him) and Pamela Anderson married in the south of France last month, they read their vows to each other off their BlackBerrys.

## Fancy a challenge?

Kevin Connell, previously with Masons and now with BP Legal, is going to walk a section of the Great Wall of China in September 2007 and is looking for some adventurous souls to go with him. Kevin's son Jamie has Asperger's Syndrome and the aim of the trek is to raise funds for the National Autistic Society and Jamie's school Newick House, as well as forging links with a school in Beijing which also looks after autistic children. Connell said "Jamie is my inspiration for this trip. I am passionate about doing something to help him and to raise awareness of autism so we can help other children with the condition. I'm hoping the legal IT community will join me on the trek and take this opportunity to explore China." See the flyer with this Insider or visit [www.trekchina0907.org.uk](http://www.trekchina0907.org.uk)

## 50 years ago today...

While the PC turns 25 this year, this summer also marked another important IT birthday – the 50th anniversary of the launch of the hard disk drive by IBM in 1956. These first disk drives, called RAMACs, were nearly two feet in diameter, resided in units weighing over a ton that could only be moved by a forklift truck and had a whole 5 megabytes of data storage capacity – about five minutes worth of MP3 music. Apparently IBM could build bigger capacity disks but didn't think anyone would need more than 5Mb of data. On a technical note, the original RAMAC stored data at about 300 bits per square centimetre, whereas on modern disks the figure is nearer 21 billion bits per square centimetre.

## £34 million & counting

The Bloody Sunday Inquiry into the 1972 shootings in Londonderry has now spent £172 million on the proceedings, including over £34 million on IT systems. The inquiry has yet to deliver its findings and cannot say when they will be ready. So, still plenty of opportunity to spend more taxpayers' money.

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