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PMS supplies must try harder say LITIG

The Legal Technology Innovators Group (LITIG, whose membership now includes almost half of the top 50 law firms in the UK) has just published a report on the state of practice management systems suppliers in the UK. Based on a survey of 29 user organisations and looking at 12 different systems from nine suppliers, the report found that most PMS products currently only deliver around 80% of the services and functionality required by law firms today.

The report suggests that 'for existing legal industry suppliers to meet the challenge this presents, they need to spend more time with existing and potential client firms, understanding the current challenges facing the industry and the way law firms are trying to adapt their businesses to deal with this. It is no longer acceptable for suppliers to ignore the need for a system to deal with commoditised or volume business transactions, or the need to provide adequate information to manage the whole practice regardless of whether all areas time record.'

- The survey also found the minimum time organisations had been running their current PMS was 8 years and the average time was nearer 13 years.
- Copies of the LITIG report can be found on the Insider website (in the resources section) and on the Orange Rag blog. LITIG welcomes all comments on the report's findings. One supplier that's already commented is Lexis Nexis Axxia, who say they welcome the report 'as it has confirmed our thoughts that we need to continue our drive to improve our customer relationships and continually review our product roadmaps.'

April's big deals

Grindeys drop AIM & switch to Axxia

Grindeys LLP in North Staffordshire has awarded LexisNexis a contract to replace its current AIM practice management system with the Axxia DNA product. The firm, which has used AIM since 2002, anticipates DNA will be rolled out to all 240 fee earners and support staff at its Stoke and Stone offices by October 2008.

Collyer Bristow select Aderant

Collyer Bristow has ordered Aderant Expert as its new PMS. Full details still to be announced however the Neil Cameron Consulting Group will be project managing the implementation. Aderant has also been selected to provide an integrated practice and case management system for Victoria Legal Aid, the largest criminal and matrimonial practice in the Australian state of Victoria. And, Ashurst has upgraded to Aderant Expert v 7.5.

Two more wins for Recommind

Two more large firms have selected Recommind MindServer as the platform for their enterprise search operations. The firms are Eversheds, who are rolling out the system to 4000 staff, and Addleshaw Goddard (1500 staff). Addleshaws will integrate Recommind with their Interwoven DMS, while Eversheds (who also evaluated Microsoft and Fast as search platforms) will be integrating the system with their Microsoft Office Sharepoint Server (MOSS) IT portal.

Edgebyte win Jerusalem site

In what we believe is a UK first, Edgebyte Computers has received an order for its Lawbyte PMS from Asserson Law Office, a UK law firm that is based in Jerusalem.

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News in brief

Bond Pearce go with universal search

Bond Pearce is cranking up its knowledge management operations and rolling out Interwoven's Universal Search system to interrogate both internal and external information sources. The implementation is being handled by Phoenix Business Solutions. Niche law firm Philip Lee & Jenkins has also selected Phoenix to implement an Interwoven Worksite DMS.

Co-op selects will drafting system

Co-operative Legal Services (CLS) has taken delivery of a bespoke will drafting system developed for them by DPL (Document Plus Ltd – 01732 867792). CLS director of practice Robert Labadie said DPL "was the only contender with the software and expertise to meet our needs".

Added functionality for Proclaim suite

Eclipse Legal Systems has announced a number of additions and enhancements to its Proclaim case management software. These include a re-engineered version of its probate system, direct links to the PCOL (Possession Claim Online service) and a graphical workload monitor.

Open Text secure two DMS sites

In a rare example of a good news story from Open Text, the company has announced winning two new law firm (albeit small firm) sites for its eDOCS DMS. The firms are Rosenblatt in London and L K Shields in Dublin.

Copittrak offering EFI integration

Having completed hosted solutions with eCopy and Omtool AccuRoute, Copittrak has now integrated its cost recovery software on EFI DocSend scanning terminals. Fladgate Fielder has already moved over to this platform. Copittrak has also launched a single sign-on option for eCopy ScanStation users.

Now it's all change at TFB and SOS

Another busy month on Planet Legal Tech with not one but four legal software suppliers seeing changes of ownership. The big story is undoubtedly the AIM-listed Tikit Group's acquisition of TFB (Technology for Business) in a shares and cash deal worth – on an enterprise acquisition value basis – £8.5 million.

Although the deal has apparently caused some City IT directors to scratch their heads (for the record, 'no' this does not mean Tikit will be offering TFB's Partner for Windows PMS to top 50 firms as an alternative to Elite or Aderant) the logic looks to be a win/win scenario for both sides. For Tikit it offers an opportunity to expand into the sub top 100 market (ie firms 101-to-500) which is TFB's core regional practice/high street market. While for TFB, it means access to the Tikit portfolio of skills, services and products, so TFB will be able to offer its larger users the likes of industrial strength DMS, CRM and knowledge management systems.

One aspect of the acquisition that did raise eyebrows is the fact TFB's management had been banging on about the importance of independence ever since the CSG (and now IRIS) behemoth first strode into town. However at the moment the party line is TFB will remain an independent (or at least semi-autonomous) division within the Tikit Group. Also, both Simon Hill (managing director) and Mark Garnish (business development director) remain in the same roles at TFB as before – and both have signed long term contracts to remain with the company and become significant shareholders in the Tikit Group.

Bucking the trend by not going for an acquisition was SOS (Solicitors Own Software) which saw founder and managing director Michael Platt bowing out for a undisclosed sum after a management buyout. The team effecting the MBO includes directors Keith Denman, Elaine Galvin, Graham Colbourne, Stephen Parry and David McNamara, formerly sales & marketing director who now becomes managing director.

Platt said securing the independence of SOS was a paramount prerequisite for his retirement, while McNamara added "There has been widespread consolidation of software suppliers through recent ➔

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All change at TFB & SOS

⇒ *continued from page 2...* mergers and acquisitions. We believe many firms will be let down as some legal software will inevitably be dropped and firms will be forced in a direction that they don't necessarily want to take. Our MBO ceases any speculation that SOS users would suffer a similar fate and they can look forward to continued high levels of service and innovation in the years to come."

Falling into the category of the takeover also-rans, are the acquisitions of Digita International and Pinpoint Global. Digita (best known for its software for the accountants market – although its trusts system is used by some law firms, with top 150 firm Michelmores its flagship site) has been acquired by Thomson Tax & Accounting (not the same division that owns Elite) for an undisclosed sum.

And, the e-discovery start-up Pinpoint (no relation to the Quill Pinpoint service mentioned elsewhere in this issue) has been bought by the US e-discovery and litigation support systems vendor Epiq Systems (best known for its DocuMatrix software) also for an undisclosed sum. All the senior management, including managing director Greg Wildisen, are remaining with the business and will effectively form Epiq's London/international office. The pro forma revenue for Pinpoint in 2007 was £1.1 million.

Legis 'alive and very well'

"Yes, we're alive and very well," said David Penn of Legis Systems, when the Insider pointed out that the last time we'd heard any news on his company, John Major was still been prime minister. According to Penn, the company has in recent years been focusing on the needs of its larger customers – Irwin Mitchell has been running Legis case management software for 15 years, while Blake Laphorn Tarlo Lyons switched to the company's LegisSQL software in 2006 and is now rolling it out practice-wide.

With modules already available to handle personal injury, employment, conveyancing, probate, commercial premise licensing and family law work, Legis has spent the past 12 months developing LegisSQL2 for the broader/mid-sized market in conjunction with systems integrator KsysLegal (01489 580290) and is now planning an "aggressive marketing campaign".

www.legis.co.uk

www.ksyslegal.co.uk

News in brief

Swinton insures debt with Linetime

The Swinton insurance group has selected the Linetime DebttimeSQL system as its new debt recovery platform. The system will be installed at Swinton's Manchester office and be used by the debt collection team that handles the debts of the 442 branches the company has in the UK.

Quill going green with Converge-IT

Legal software supplier and Pinpoint legal accounts bureau operator Quill has awarded Converge-IT (0870 770 0790) a contract to supply, configure and install a new IT network, including business continuity and disaster recovery facilities. The network is to be based on a virtualisation architecture and should also enhance Quill's 'green' credentials by needing less power, space and cooling.

Saturn 27 working with King on e-billing

The Saturn 27 legal IT consultancy and former Clifford Chance e-billing expert Bryn King have agreed to work together on e-billing projects for law firms.

Carillion ring right note for MMS

Carillion IT Services (formerly Alfred McAlpine IT) has won a three year contract from Maclay Murray & Spens to design, install and 24/7 remote monitor a diverse wide area network to link the firm's Glasgow, Edinburgh, Aberdeen and London offices. Carillion has already installed a new LAN at the firm's recently relocated Edinburgh office.

www.carillionplc.com/itservices/

Macfarlanes refresh with Eurodata

Macfarlanes has used IT services company Eurodata (020 7549 3000) to help with a technology refresh that has included virtualisation, new SAN storage and an upgrade to a Microsoft 2003 platform.

www.eurodatasystems.com



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Quill to pilot EBTA

Legal software supplier Quill's Pinpoint training centre for legal cashiers has become one of the pilot projects for the UK government's new Employer Based Training Accreditation (EBTA) scheme. EBTA is intended to encourage employers to offer university standard training for staff who want to improve their skills. Quill director Hilary Fisher said the company was a natural fit for EBTA as "faced with a real shortage of suitably trained legal cashiers, in order to meet our future recruitment needs we launched our own training centre last October." Under the Quill training scheme, candidates receive a professional certificate in legal account management, accredited by the University of Chester and earning 60 credits towards a foundation degree.

People & Places

All change for Informa legal IT shows

Jason Hulme, who for the past few years has been the events director for Informa's legal IT and law firm management division, leaves the company this week "for pastures new". Responsibility for running the events handled by this division – the February Legal IT show, the Legal IT Forum and By Legal For Legal – has been transferred to ICBI, a sister company within the Informa Group. Jenny Adams and Colette Leong-Son take over Hulme's role and responsibilities.

www.icbi-uk.com

Skinner joins Eclipse

Long time AIM (as was) salesman Steve Skinner has joined the sales team at Eclipse Legal Systems. Skinner has worked in the legal IT sector for 20 years.

Opinion: Paper, paper everywhere...

Law firms are drowning in a sea of paper filing. Data shows the amount of paper information created per employee per annum is nearly three times higher in the legal sector than in other sectors. It's been an irritation for years but has now reached critical proportions due, ironically, to the increase in communication via email.

The number of pages sent and received via email is far greater than the pages communicated via letters in the 'good old days'. And in many firms the majority of emails are printed and filed as hardcopy. Apart from the office space this requires, there is the time taken to process it all. Filing-related tasks can occupy up to 50% of a secretary's working time, while even fee earners are spending up to three hours a week on filing and retrieval. So what can be done? Well, here are some of the steps that can be taken.

For a project to be taken seriously, there needs to be a strong business case, typically based on cost savings. If you can quantify the cost of the current filing environment and the savings to be made by improving it, then a filing project can rise in the priority list. When undertaking this work for our clients, we have found some startling statistics that have made the partnership realise that 'something must be done'. For example, in just the London offices of one global law firm we identified measurable savings of £350,000 per annum, not including the reduction in staff costs.

I've already mentioned that email is often the source of paper filing, so if the need to file emails on paper can be turned off then the single biggest problem will be fixed. Most law firms have some form of document management system where electronic files can be stored, managed and retrieved. The problem is until recently these systems were unable to store large quantities of emails in a user-friendly and efficient fashion. It is almost as if the DMS vendors had been caught out by the growth of email as much as their customers. This is being fixed so, if you have not done so already, now is the time to look at upgrading your DMS to fully support email filing and retrieval. ➔



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⇒ A DMS upgrade project will consume a lot of resource and time. In the meantime how can you reduce the flow of additional filing? One way is to look at your current filing related policies and make sure they are appropriate for your current business environment. Here are a couple of good practices which can help to reduce filing volume:

- Make a clear definition between information that needs to be managed, namely *records* and information that is unmanaged – *documents*. A record, according to the ISO 15498 records management standard, is ‘information created, received, and maintained as evidence by an organisation or person in the transaction of business, or in the pursuance of legal obligations, regardless of media.’ Documents are pieces of information with no operational, regulatory or financial value. When a lawyer prints off an email, so they can read it more easily, they have created a document and it can be destroyed once it has served its short-term purpose. Copies of records are also classed as documents. So, when a matter is closed, if only the records are filed and all related documents are destroyed then filing volumes can be greatly reduced.

- Review file retention policies. Many firms have retention policies well beyond the necessary period to meet business and regulatory requirements, which simply clogs the system. Even when files reach the end of their retention period, there is often reluctance to destroy them. It is good practice for the filing staff to be able to destroy files without having to get explicit permission from the relevant lawyer (subject to the appropriate business processes being in place to ensure records have not been misfiled).

...**Geoff Hogg, Senior Consultant, NewField IT**

- NewField IT is a vendor-independent software and services provider that helps organisations achieve control of document and print management costs. NewField have a white paper on this topic called *Legally Overweight? Optimising a law firm's filing environment*. To request a copy email legalinfo@newfieldit.com or call 020 8948 9565.

Scots Law Soc supplier scheme

The Scottish Law Society has launched a new scheme to put its members in touch with suppliers of products and services. Called the Service Provider Scheme, it will cost suppliers £2000 pa to be included in a range of marketing and promotional opportunities to reach Scottish solicitors. For details email the Society's business development manager charlottacederqvist@lawscot.org.uk

Vital statistics

Some interesting data has made its way into the Insider office over the past month. For example, Stockport based O'Neill Patient Solicitors reports that since implementing a Waterford Technologies MailMeter email management and archiving system, the firm has cut its email storage by 70%, with its email server capacity reduced over the course of one month from 80Gb to 25Gb. Among other things, because emails older than 45 days are removed from the server and archived, MailMeter has reduced the time it takes to run a full server backup by 14 hours.

www.waterfordtechnologies.com

Next up is Shepherded + Wedderburn, who have implemented an EDMS (electronic document management system) strategy in conjunction with Ricoh multifunctional devices, eCopy and the firm's Interwoven DMS. The firm came from a position in which space restrictions meant 90% of its paper-based documents were held in off-site storage and only the previous 12 months' documents were physically held on-site. Working with local EDMS specialists Capital Solutions, the firm now uses a combination of Ricoh scanners and eCopy workflow software to create an electronic document filing environment. According to IT director Gary Alman, the new approach has reduced the volume of paper filing by 80%, while simultaneously streamlining data retrieval processes, and has seen a 40% reduction in print volumes, as email can now be archived in a digital rather than hard copy format.

www.capital-solutions.co.uk

Finally, Microsystems has just launched version 6.0 of its DocXtools document clean-up and quality control system. The company say the new version can reduce by 70% the time it takes to format a Microsoft Word 2003 or 2007 document.

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Equitrac to spread the green message

At its biennial analysts meeting in Miami earlier this month, Equitrac's president and CEO Mike Rich said the company had witnessed an 'epiphany' among both customers and prospects.

Rich explained that while the company's traditional message (that it can count printer and photocopier volumes so the cost can be recharged on to clients) still remained valid – and could still deliver a return on investment within months in most organisations, what really excited customers now was the fact Equitrac systems could also help cut waste and thus help them meet their own 'green' and 'sustainability' targets. For example, Equitrac systems can be configured to enforce a policy so all routine documents are printed duplex (ie on both sides).

Equitrac is already working with the American Bar Association (ABA) on its environmental protection (EPA) 'waste wise' strategy that aims to reduce the amount of paper used in law offices (did you know that during its lifecycle, one ton of paper can generate 11 tons of CO₂) and will be launching further initiatives.

- As well as spreading the green message, Equitrac continues to be active in its traditional law firm market. Recent new wins in the UK for its Professional 5 (EP5) system include Shepherd Wedderburn, Shakespeare Putsman, Vertex Law, Hamlins LLP and Turbervilles, whilst firms upgrading from older Equitrac systems to EP5 include Halliwells, Weightmans, Wollastons, Withers and Ward Hadaway. UK sales for Equitrac are headed up by Peter Straughan: pstraughan@equitrac.com

Now ECHR is going the MOSS route

With Microsoft Office Sharepoint Server (aka MOSS) on the march across the legal tech industry, the latest organisation to confirm a MOSS strategy is the European Court of Human Right in Strasbourg. The head of the Court's IT division John Hunter told the Insider that they had developed inhouse a workflow system to deal with the approval process for committee and chambers cases, and to provide the court with a mechanism to streamline case management processes.

"We developed the solution using Sharepoint Workflow foundation and a series of MS SQL reporting tools so users can easily see the status of all workflows at any point in time. The Court uses four web services that allow us to seamlessly integrate our case management and document management databases. So, when a user wishes to send a document on an approval route, they right click on the document name from within the DMS and choose the option *Start Workflow*. This launches a web service that identifies the case associated with the document in the Court Case Management Information System (CMIS) and dynamically builds the route of the workflow based on the lawyers responsible and the supervisor for the case and the type of workflow (chamber or committee) they choose.

"The document is then managed by the MOSS workflow module until it is approved. Then, the document is automatically converted from Word to PDF via a web service, an electronic signature added and the final PDF document locked down by the DMS, replacing the original Word version to ensure we have only one copy of the final document. Where appropriate, the system also inserts events, recording the decision taken into the CMIS database. Users can easily see the status of workflows via the SQL reporting tool that resides within a Sharepoint web page and also have the ability to click on 'Tasks' to find all outstanding workflows assigned to them. We are confident this system will radically enhance the time spent processing cases, as well as providing a valuable reporting tool to keep stock and measure the overall case management functions of the Court."

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IRIS Legal unveil latest strategy

The management of IRIS Legal can be forgiven for thinking 'we just can't win,' for having been roundly criticised for announcing their 'Legal Link' long-term product roadmap just before Christmas, the company has now come in for even more criticism over the publication of its mid-term product strategy earlier this month. In a nutshell – and the company is touring the country explaining the rationale and fine print to users – there is a new practice and case management platform, called IRIS Law, which will be offered to all new customers. This is available in two editions, depending upon practice size and complexity, namely IRIS Law Enterprise for the larger firms and IRIS Law Business for the smaller firms. Enterprise is based on the Videss Legal Office 10 product, while Business is based on the Mountain Connected system.

AIM and TPS (the old Laserform Partnership Suite) users will be supported until July 2011 and can have a free software upgrade to IRIS Law when they are ready. Firms remaining with AIM or TPS after this date will be covered by a 'vintage support' programme but at an extra cost. Full details of the strategy, including IRIS documentation plus reader comment (including a posting by ACUA chair Dave Grattage) can be found on our Orange Rag blog. But, it will be market forces that determine the strategy's success. Will existing users migrate to Enterprise and Business – or move elsewhere? More importantly, if the group is to grow rather than just consolidate, will new customers (those currently using non-IRIS systems) be attracted to IRIS Law?

- IRIS Legal's Laserform division has launched a range of five probate practice checklists. Called ProbatePro, these are the latest additions to Laserform's growing collection of litigation (LitPro) and residential conveyancing (ConPro) out-of-the-box knowledge management/practice guides. ProbatePro provides step-by-step guidance through the stages of applications for probate and applications for letters of administration. They are fully electronic, incorporating hyperlinks direct to the Non-Contentious Probate Rules, case law, relevant Laserforms, associated websites and practices' own in-house know-how.

Digital dictation news

Winscribe enhance Blackberry offering

Just two months after the launch of its DDS system for the Blackberry, Winscribe has announced new enhancements for the device. These include the ability to insert and over-write audio dictation captured on a Blackberry, as well as flag jobs as priority directly from the device. Other vendors, such as nFlow, already offer insert and overwrite however we believe the prioritisation is an industry first.

Rix & Kay swap out SPS for nFlow

Rix & Kay Solicitors LLP, a member of the LawNet law form network, has selected the nFlow DDS to replace its incumbent SPS system. Explaining the decision to switch, the firm's senior partner John Kay said "We were overwhelmed by the functionality nFlow could deliver, along with the performance and resiliency of the system in our Citrix environment.

Bighand in at Connect2Law

The Connect2Law support and referral network for UK law firms has dropped Winscribe as its recommended DDS and has instead switched to Bighand 3 as its preferred system.

www.connect2law.co.uk

Oxfordshire firm outsources to 'genie'

HMG Law in Oxfordshire is now using the Voicepath, UK based, transcription service to handle its overflow digital dictation work rather than put it out to local temps. The firm's administration manager Pauline Swain said "We call Voicepath our 'genie' – if our secretaries start to feel their workload becoming too excessive, they know they can outsource it at the push of a button."

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Advanced Digital Dictation...

People & Places

Thorpe to head sales at Phoenix

Alison Thorpe, previously with LexisNexis and Aderant, has joined Phoenix Business Solutions as sales manager. Phoenix has also appointed Yasmina Baileche as its new marketing executive, replacing Briony McKenzie who joined PureTech Marketing last month.

Tilling defects to InterAction

In a coup for LexisNexis Interaction, Paul Tilling has joined the business as client development manager. Immediately prior to this move he was with Client Profiles, where he was responsible for setting up their Microsoft CRM business in the UK and Europe. Until a replacement is found, his departure effectively halts Client Profiles' attempts to establish their implementation of Microsoft CRM as a viable alternative to Interaction. In other LexisNexis news, Judith Pickett has been promoted to head of marketing for UK Practice Management, the division that includes Axxia and Visualfiles, and Guy Phillips becomes Interaction sales director.

Hendricks promoted at Hobs Legal Docs

Litigation support services bureau Hobs Legal Docs has promoted Waseema Hendricks to the post of director of litigation technology. Hendricks will continue to oversee Hobs' digital solutions department but also assumes other duties associated with the bureau's increasing amount of international EDD work.

C-NLIS becomes Land Data

The Council for the National Land & Property Information Service (C-NLIS) has changed its name to Land Data to avoid confusion with NLIS (the National Land Information Service). Hands up anyone who realised C-NLIS and NLIS were not the same organisation.

www.land-data.org.uk

Readers' poll – how much a day ?

In our most recent poll we asked how much suppliers and consultants were charging for training, support and implementation services. We also split the questions to check out whether travel and expenses were included, and how much the rates varied between London and the South-East and the rest of the UK...

For training services in London & SE, the most widely charge rate (45%) was between £751-£950 a day, followed by £501-£750 (30%), and £301-£500 (25%). We also had one firm that was paying in excess of £951 a day. As for expenses, 65% of respondees to the survey paid travel and expenses on top of these rates. The position was broadly mirrored over the rest of the UK with 45% paying £751-£950 a day, 25% on £501-£750 and 30% on £301-£500. However out of London & SE nobody was paying more than £950 and the percentage (55%) paying expenses was also marginally lower.

For support, implementation and consultancy services, per day rates for London & SE varied from under £500 (6%) to £1501+ (also 6%) with the most widely quoted rate (44%) being £751 to £1000, followed by £501-£750 (26%) and £1001-£1500 (18%). Once again, it was a similar story across the rest of the UK, with rates in the £751-£1000 bracket the most widely cited (50%) followed by £501-£750 (33%), and £1001-£1500 (12%). There was nobody charging the top rate of £1500+ however 5% were paying £500 or less per day. The full results of the survey can be found on the Insider website.

Curiously, far more firms outside the London & SE area (60%) are charged extra for travel and expenses, compared with those (just 39%) within that zone. Could the explanation be that because so many consultancies are based in London, they are happy to make travel (in many instances only a Tube or cab fare) inclusive but charge extra once their consultants are required to head into the nether regions beyond Potters Bar?

- For this month's survey we are looking at how people like to receive their media – including the Legal Technology Insider newsletter – in the digital age. By email, via a blog or do you still prefer to have a hard copy version because 'you can't take your laptop to the loo'.



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News in brief

Howard Kennedy sign up for Microsystems

Howard Kennedy is the latest UK firm to sign up for Microsystems' Knowledge Partnership document analysis, formatting and quality control system for Microsoft Word.

Norton Rose select IntApp

Norton Rose is to deploy IntApp Inc's Wall Builder information barrier system to help it comply with the SRA Code of Conduct Rule 4 and insider list management practices mandated by the Market Abuse Directive. The firm will also roll out IntApp's Time Builder billing system. www.intapp.com

Visualfiles battle it out with Tricostar

After a quiet period, the local government market has woken up with both LexisNexis Visualfiles and Tricostar announcing wins. The Visualfiles wins are with the Essex County, Hounslow Boro, Portsmouth City and Bury Metropolitan councils. Meanwhile Tricostar Solutions – which this year celebrates 20 years in business – has won orders for its time recording and/or case management software from Ealing Boro and Sefton Metropolitan councils, plus four authorities in North Wales: Conwy, Denbighshire, Flintshire and Wrexham.

'.NET for Legal' to preview in London

London-based IT consultancy i-Quest (020 7902 1970) is holding a '.NET for Legal' seminar at the Grange Hotel on 14 May to demonstrate the FileHold'08 document management system from Canada. FileHold is a .NET DMS that integrates with Microsoft Office and Sharepoint and can, apparently, handle workflow, scanning, redaction and records archiving policies, as well as integration with case management and digital dictation software. www.i-questltd.com + www.filehold.com

Epona wins in the Netherlands

The Epona Software Consultancy in Rotterdam has secured three more orders from law firms. Lexense Advocaten in Amserdam, with 110 users, and Ekelmsn & Meijer in The Hague, with 90 users, have both ordered Epona's Contact Manager legal CRM system. And, Rabobank Legal is to roll out Epona's EmailFiler (the software integrates with Outlook to provide a simple way of storing emails within Sharepoint) to 400 staff. www.epona.eu

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Law firm IT roles – it pays to shop around

Legal IT recruitment specialist JPL Group has just published the results of a survey looking at law firm IT staff salaries. The figures once again reveal a huge disparity between the lowest and highest rates available for individual positions. For example, while the average rate for a development manager role is £58,500 and the lowest rate is £49,330, some firms are paying as much as £100,000 for this position. In other words, by shopping around, it is possible to double your salary.

Rates for IT directors average £130k, with a high of £205k and a low of £85k. For heads of IT/IT managers for a team of 4 plus, the average is £78k, with a high of £110k and a low of £60k, while for IT managers with teams of 3 or less, the average is £63k, with a high of £75k and low of £50k.

Elsewhere in the jobs market a network/infrastructure manager should average £50k (high £75k, low £42k); an analyst programmer/developer £39k (high £55k, low £35k); and a PMS/DMS database administrator £39k (high £51k, low £31k). An IT training manager can expect to average £46k (high £66k, low £40k) while the rate for an IT trainer is £36k (high £42k, low £28k). On the support front, the average for network infrastructure analyst/3rd line support is £39k (high £60k, low £32k); for 2nd line/desk support £30k (high £44k, low £23k) and for helpdesk analysts/1st line support £26k (high £33k, low £19k).

- A full chart of rates for 23 job titles can be downloaded from the Insider website at www.legaltechnology.com. The figures are based on London rates and JPL suggest that for regional roles, a reduction of 5-to-10% is appropriate, except for senior posts where salaries are very much consistent nationwide.

Ness opens another bar

Steve Ness, who retired from Select Legal Systems and was last seen helping restore his brother-in-law's bar on Sunset Strip, has been involved in a new venture – the opening of the English Viking Bar & Restaurant in Solvang, California. Solvang is described in guide books as 'a Danish village'.

Another brick in the Chinese wall

Well done Kevin Connell, Ann Hemming, Neil Cameron and all the other people who took part in the Trek China fundraising walk along a section of the Great Wall of China last year. The event, organised by Connell to raise money for autism charities, had hoped to hit £100k but in the event raised £115,000.

- On the same topic, congratulations to Stuart Cowell, Russ Elliott and Paul Smith from Davies Arnold Cooper who raised over £7000 for Children with Leukaemia in this month's London Marathon. They all came in between 4 hours 21 and 4 hours 31 minutes. And, to celebrate its 30th anniversary, Transam Microsystems is sponsoring a hike to the North Pole later this month by a group of deaf people to raise funds for the National Deaf Children's Society. You can find out more at www.ndcschallenges.org.uk/northpole

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Publisher & Editor: Charles Christian

Tel: 01986 788666 – Fax: 01986 788808

Email: news@legaltechnology.com

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For more information, please contact Adam Wiles. Email: awiles@interwoven.com