Billing rates: a law firm's flexible friend ?

CT TyMetrix and Corporate Executive Board have just announced some of the findings of the *Real Rate Report*, an analysis of more than $4 billion in law firm billings to corporate clients (comprising over 4000 law firms, 50,000 individual billers and 18.9 million invoice items) from 2007 to 2009.

Although the full report will not be published until later this month, some of the initial findings include: 78% of lawyers bill different hourly rates to different clients for similar work – the largest rate differences range from $350 to $1000 an hour. And, median partner rates are significantly lower than reported in most industry surveys. For example, while some partners were quoting rates of up to $1590 per hour for work for major corporates, over the course of 2009 the average rate was a far lower $340 an hour.

The report also found the five most important factors driving the billable hour were lawyer location, law firm size, experience level, partner status and key practice area, with rates determined much more by law firm size and location of a lawyer, than by the lawyer's experience or practice area.

Office upgrades planned

According to this year's ILTA/InsideLegal technology purchasing survey, law firm technology spending is still down on pre-recession levels but slowly recovering, with 45% of firms reporting they are back to normal financially and the number of firms with increased budgets up by one third on last year. In terms of spending priorities, 43% said they are planning Microsoft Office upgrades in 2010/11, while the number involved with cloud computing projects has doubled this year. A total of 49% of firms are now running Sharepoint internally, with 24% also using it as a collaboration tool for client and external communications. Email management remains one of the biggest challenges facing firms.

Top Elite job for Massana

Kim Massana, who has been the interim president of Elite for the past six months, has now been confirmed in the top job. He joined the company in 2008 as senior VP for Strategic Marketing & International and, immediately prior to that, a director of Sweet & Maxwell, the UK legal publishing arm of Thomson Reuters.

ALTi extends coverage

As part of a realignment of our news coverage, from this month American Legal Technology Insider will also be carrying global legal IT news from the rest of the world including the Australia and Asia-Pacific region. (The original Insider will cover UK & EMEA).

September's deals

eBay to use CT TyMetrix OK, resist the jokes about buyer and seller ratings but eBay has just selected CT TyMetrix 360 as its global legal spend management platform. eBay's legal depatment currently works with over 250 law firms around the world and will be using 360 for matter management and ebilling.

• Second Image, a provider of subpoena and document production services to law firms and insurance companies, has implemented the T360 e-invoicing platform from CT TyMetrix.

Gardiner Roberts moves to 3E Toronto-based Gardiner Roberts LLP has selected Elite 3E for its new financial and practice management platform. The firm also plans to use 3E's workflow processes as well as its Blackberry integration and flexible billing functionality.

Linking DMS with Sharepoint Canadian law firm Stikeman Elliott, a long-time Open Text user, has selected Open Text's eDOCS integration of SharePoint by SeeUnity Inc to consolidate content on its STELLA corporate intranet with a centraly management document management system.

Two more Aderant APAC wins Aderant has secured two more wins for its Expert financial and practice management system with law firms in the Asia-Pacific region. The latest wins are at Carroll & O'Dea Lawyers in Australia and Chapman Tripp, one of New Zealand's leading firms.

Major wins for Autonomy Autonomy has announced two major deals. Bingham McCutchen LLP, a long-time iManage DMS site, has expanded its Autonomy platform with the selection of iManage Universal Search, Records Management and Conflicts Manager. And, Clifford Chance, the world's largest law firm, has selected Autonomy ⇨

⇨ Introspect as its processing, review and production solution for handling complex litigation and regulatory investigations involving data, video, audio and other forms of ESI. Clifford Chance currently runs an Open Text eDOCS DMS platform.

Two build walls with IntApp IntApp has won orders for its Wall Builder ethical screening and client confidentiality system from Sutherland Asbill & Brennan and McCarter & English. Both firms have multiple offices across the US and each employ approximately 400 lawyers.

Win for Calvis & Interaction Little Rock-based Friday Eldredge & Clark has become the latest US firm to select the Interaction for Smartphone application from Calvis. The app allows attorneys to access CRM data via their Blackberrys and iPhones. **www.calvis.com/partners/interaction/default.aspx**

New product launches

Profiles Legal Suite Client Profiles has launched its next generation case and financial management system. Called the Profiles Legal Suite, new features include a customizable user interface that is consistent with Microsoft Outlook 2010 tools, deeper Outlook integration, security to support workgroups, embedded SQL reporting, plus the ability to track related matters, define a 'lead' matter and split time transactions across related matters.
www.clientprofiles.com

Five vendors launch legal toolbox Five leading legal IT vendors have launched an innovative bundle of systems and services aimed at providing litigators in smaller firms with productivity tools to help them compete more effectively. The five are Wolters Kluwer with their Loislaw online library, Deadlines on Demand from Compulaw, Nationwide Legal's process serving service, SmartRules from RealPractice and Redact-It! from Informative Graphics. Bundled together under the LawyerToolbox brand, users can save more than 90% on the regular price of purchasing the five products separately.
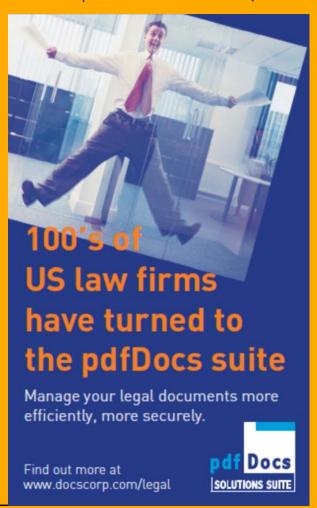**www.lawyertoolbox.com**

Smart Time gets Silverlight Smart WebParts has announced that version 3 of its Smart Time time capture software has a new interface built in Microsoft Silverlight. The company says the interface creates 'a faster, more engaging experience for users,' with CTO and founder Steve Bronstein adding "Silverlight has the potential to revolutionize the way we build business applications... it comes close to being the perfect platform."
Comment: With growing numbers of users familiar with interactive interfaces like the iPhone and now iPad, even if only in their private lives, Silverlight offers a similar approach within the business applications sector. No doubt some vendors will ⇨

⇨ dismiss it as just a gimmick but they said that about the iPhone as well. Like it or not, Silverlight is going to make some applications look as behind the times as Windows did with old DOS software.
www.smart-webparts.com
www.microsoft.com/silverlight

Workshare Sharepoint DMS beta Workshare has announced details of its beta program for a new email and document management system that will extend the content management capabilities of Microsoft Sharepoint 2010. Along with DMS, the system will integrate with the full Workshare product set and operate from within Outlook and office. A full production release is set for Q4 2010.

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More September deals

Litéra Innova win Houston-based Bracewell & Giuliani has selected Litéra Innova as its new document automation platform for handling TOCs, numbering, templates, pleadings and others aspects of document production standardization.

Two choose star*targetCash Newark-based McCarter & English and Boston's Choate Hall & Stewart have chosen the star*targetCash browser application from Select Associates to manage their year end and periodic cash forecasting processes.
www.selectsa.com

Win for Aderant's DMS alternative Bowman & Brooke, which is based in Minneapolis, has selected Aderant StarLaw and will implement the integrated suite of document, records, and email management applications in its offices nationwide. The latest version of Starlaw integrates with Office 2010.

Two new Prolaw deals Boston area Higgins Gianino & Pignone and Forchelli Curto Deegan Schwartz Mineo Cohn & Terrana on Long Island have both recently implemented the Prolaw case and document management, time, billing and accounting system from Elite.

Loeb & Loeb new LAN Cypress Communications has won a contract from Loeb & Loeb to implement its C4IP cloud-based hosted VoIP and unified communications solution to connect the firm's five US and Beijing locations.

Keno Kozie managed services deal Schopf & Weiss is the latest firm to select Keno Kozie Associates to provide managed IT services and help desk support.

Another coach passenger Detroit-based Clark Hill has purchased Traveling Coaches' CLASSe ⇨

⇨ (Continued Learning and Software Skills) just-in-time elearning program, as part of the firm's ongoing technology training. CLASSe now includes over 1200 IT-related elearning lessons.

DocHunter cuts paper mountain Barnes & Thornburg, which is based in Indianapolis, has just reported on its recent experiences of running Daegis DocHunter software in a recent ediscovery project. Using traditional ediscovery software, they were able to reduce a 500,000 document pile to 235,000 that needed paralegal review. However, at an average review rate of 600 documents per day, this would have still taken 391 days. The firm then hired Daegis who, through a combination of DocHunter software and consultancy services, were able to reduce the document mountain to 18,000. The result was the overall cost for the project fell from an estimated $486,000 to $36,000.
www.daegis.com

Digital dictation roll out New Orleans-based Lugenbuhl Wheaton Peck Ranking & Hubbard has replaced its fleet of analog tape dictation devices and replaced it with a Verdatum digital dictation and transcription workflow system.

News round-up

Two more partners Philips has announced two more partners for its Enterprise digital dictation workflow system. They are Digital Voice and Tampa-based Voice Systems.

DocketFlow finds reseller DocketFlow, a Metastorm-based docketing workflow system designed by Boston IP lawyers Sunstein Kann Murphy & Timbers, will be sold and supported by Texas-based business process management automation specialists I-nnovate.
www.i-nnovate.com

New round-up

IE Discovery buys into eDirect Austin, Texas-based IE Discovery Inc has acquired a majority interest in eDirect Impact LLC. The move will help fund development of eDirect's eManage discovery workflow management technology. In return for the equity stake, IE Discovery also gets an exclusive licence to deploy eManage in the corporate and government market sectors.
Comment: The bigger picture here is whether this is just a one-off deal or the start of an industry-wide trend for alliances and consolidation? It is hard to see how the market can support so many ediscovery players, particularly with big beasts like Autonomy and Open Text on the prowl.
www.edirectimpact.com + **www.iediscovery.com**

iPad apps ahoy! We suspect this is the start of a regular feature but here's news of two more iPad apps for the legal market. **World Software** is set to launch an iPad version of its Worldox DMS. Full feature set and pricing still to be announced but it will be available through the company's new managed services offering Worldox CompleteCloud or via users' existing Citrix or Windows Terminal ⇨

services environments. And Thomson Reuters has optimized its legal research system **WestlawNext** for iPad users, with a new app available at the App Store free of charge to all current subscribers.

Thompson is co-president Scarab Consulting's sales & operations manager Robin Thompson has been elected co-president of the Association of Litigation Support Professionals. She will share her duties with Barbara Bennett of Dickinson Wright.