

CHARLES CHRISTIAN'S

LEGAL TECHNOLOGY INSIDER

THE SOURCE FOR INDEPENDENT LEGAL TECHNOLOGY NEWS, COMMENT AND ANALYSIS

WRAGGE & CO ORDERS CMS OPEN

Late last Friday afternoon Wragge & Co in Birmingham, the largest single office law firm outside of London, became the latest UK firm to order the CMS Open practice management system from the CMS/Data Corporation.

The Wragge order brings to a close a record quarter for CMS business in Europe, with the company winning orders for CMS/Data from Fladgate Fielder in the West End of London, Boulton Wade Tennant, the UK's largest firm of patent attorneys, Punder Volhard Weber & Axster on the European mainland and Ward Hadaway on Tyneside, as well as Wragge's near neighbour Pinsent Curtis.

In addition to the three original CMS sites - Reynolds Perter Chamberlain, Bird & Bird and B P Collins & Co, between July 1998 and January 1999 the CMS Open system also went "live" at Titmuss Sainer Dechert, Norton Rose, Jeffrey Green Russell, Watson Farley & Williams and Arnheim Tite & Lewis.

With the exception of Sybase users Norton Rose, all the sites are running on Microsoft SQL Server 6.5 database platforms. CMS/Data has now completed its benchmark testing of CMS Open on SQL Server 7.0 and reports that it brings "significant advantages including performance improvements of between 30 and 90 percent". CMS Open will be available on SQL 7.0 for general release from April.

■ On 1st April, CMS/Data is moving its UK and European head office to new premises at Livingstone House, 12 Finsbury Square, London EC2A 1AS.

<http://www.cmsopen.com>

TIMESLICE SAY CONCURRENT USER LICENSING "FAIRER"

In a move that breaks with legal market pricing convention, Timeslice has announced that its soon-to-be-launched Lawman2000 practice management system will be sold on the basis of concurrent user licensing.

Timeslice say this approach is "fairer" than the more common per-user or per-seat basis, as it does not penalise firms wanting to put applications on the desktops of large numbers of fee earners who, unlike cashiers and accounts department staff, will probably only need to access the system for a relatively small proportion of the working day.

■ Lawman2000 is expected to receive its formal launch in early May however Timeslice is understood to already be finalising a deal with a firm wanting a 130 user system.

AVENUE TAKES ON SAXONS AND WOOLF

Avenue Legal Systems has expanded its UK operations by acquiring the East Anglia-based legal software distributor Saxon Computer Systems for an undisclosed sum.

Saxon has been operating in the East of England legal market for a number of years, first as a Kienzle dealer and more recently as a distributor for Avenue software. Under the deal, Saxon becomes a wholly-owned Avenue subsidiary and will continue to provide sales, support and training services from its Bury St Edmunds offices.

■ Avenue has appointed former Shoosmiths & Harrison partner John West as its strategic legal consultant.

Along with advising law firms on best practice implementations for their case management systems, West, who was in private practice for over 20 years, will also be working with Avenue on a number of "Woolf" civil justice-related projects. These include the development of Avenue's new Fast Track Case Manager module, which has been designed to ensure compliance dates are met and that letters and documents are produced in as efficient and cost effective manner as possible.

For more Woolf news see page 3

STOP PRESS... DAC LOSES HEAD OF IT

As Davies Arnold Cooper's internal power struggles continue, the latest to quit is head of IT Maurice Millen, who will be moving to Macfarlanes.

THE INSIDER WEB SITE

Visit the Legal Technology Insider web site for up-to-the-minute news and hyperlinks to additional information.

<http://www.legaltechnology.co.uk>

SPEECH TECHNOLOGY NEWS IN BRIEF

Last month's *Information Systems for Lawyers* conference at the London Marriott revealed the same old story we have been hearing for the last six years. Namely, that despite all the hype, speech recognition systems are still long on promise and short on delivery.

In fact only one firm at the conference admitted they were still using the technology - and they reported that, despite being assured users would be up to speed within less than a fortnight, it actually took fee-earners between six and eight months to obtain acceptable performance levels from these systems.

■ ALLVOICE IN SPEECH DEAL

One UK company that continues to promote the cause of speech recognition technology is AllVoice Computing. Last heard of threatening IBM with legal action over alleged infringements of its intellectual property rights, the company has now signed a deal with Microsoft that will allow users to dictate directly into Microsoft applications using AllVoice WordExpress Direct software. There is a free downloadable trial copy of the software available on AllVoice's web site.

<http://www.allvoice.co.uk>

■ ONLINE TRANSCRIPTION SALE

Dictaphone has sold its DOTS online dictation and transcription business to Dictations & Transcriptions Ltd, a start up company that has been specifically established to sell online dictation services as a permanent cost-effective alternative to inhouse transcription. The new company will market the DOTS service under the new name of VoicePath.

In common with Dictaphone, D&T believes network-based digital dictation, which unlike speech recognition systems uses real people rather than computers to carry out the transcription, offers professional markets, such as law firms, a more viable alternative conventional dictation methods. The new element VoicePath adds to the equation is the ability to offer the service to lawyers located anywhere in the world - all they have to do is deliver their dictation down a conventional telephone line.

NEC SHOW - GOOD BUT COULD TRY HARDER

Last week's *Solicitors National Legal Office Exhibition* at the Birmingham NEC generated a broadly positive response from the IT exhibitors who attended the event. Although some expressed disappointment about the volume of visitors present - in fact numbers were up on last year - there was widespread agreement about their high quality.

Roger Jackson of JCS Computing went as far as to say it was one of the best audiences he had encountered at any regional IT event. Rosie Houghton, whose company Lawyers Online ran the Internet Cafe at the event, said the stand had been packed from first thing in the morning until closing time. And Mark Woodward of Solicitec said that not only would the company be back again next year but that it would probably be taking a larger stand space.

■ COMMENT

While this is still only the second year for the NEC event, it looks as if it has now established a permanent place for itself on the legal IT calendar. From the feedback the Insider has received, a number of exhibitors can be expected to drop the *Western Legal Office Exhibition* in Bristol from their schedules in favour of Birmingham and several others are hinting that, depending upon their experiences this June, next year they will either cut back on or entirely pull out of the Barbican SOLEX event in order to devote more resources to the Birmingham show.

However before Nationwide Exhibitions, who organised the event, start getting too cocky, it is also worth noting that there is still room for improvement.

The "G" block area was a warren of narrow aisles few visitors seemed to find their way into - the exhibitors there were definitely the unhappiest, whereas those near the front entrance were the happiest. There were complaints from visitors about some speakers not turning up for presentations. And there were complaints from exhibitors that the shell-scheme stands were not clad in "Velcro loops" - a minor technical point but it meant their expensively produced display boards kept falling down.

EIION SALES ON TARGET

Axxia reports it has now received its tenth firm order in just three months for its new Eiion practice management system for smaller (up to 30 users) legal practices. The company, which began installing the first systems on 1st March, estimates the combined order value is in the region of £250,000. Five partner Heald Nickinson in Camberley has been acting as one of the beta test sites for new system.

■ Axxia is using an appalling pun about the "dawning of the Eiion Age" to promote the new system. This makes sense if you pronounce "Eiion" as "eye-on" but according to the classicists among the Insider's readership, the correct pronunciation should be "ayon" or even "ee-on".

WOOLF SYSTEMS NOW COMING THROUGH

Despite having only had less than two months to come to grips with the new Civil Procedure Rules, the last couple of weeks have seen the launch or announcement of a number of new "Woolf" related products and services.

■ LASERFORM

Early April sees the launch of PI Case Control, Laserform International's new 32-bit Woolf-compliant personal injury case management system. The initial version will run on an Access 8.0 database and will be followed by a Microsoft SQL Server 7.0 version in a couple of months' time. The company is also rolling out Woolf-compliant versions of its electronic legal forms. These will be sold both under the Laserform brand name and via legal stationers Stat Plus.

Laserform is running a series of seminars around the country to demonstrate the new Woolf products. These will take place on 13th April (Leeds Marriott Hotel), 14th April (Birmingham Holiday Inn), 15th April (Manchester Holiday Inn) and 21st April (Law Society, London). Admission is free, for further details call Sara Walker on 01565 755154.

■ Shipla Unalkat has left MCS to join Laserform where she will head up the introduction of the new Woolf compliant personal injury system.

■ MCS/DPS

Along with launching the new 32-bit version of its DPS case management software, MCS (0181 882 8811) has also introduced a new Woolf PI system that encompasses all the Woolf report reforms.

■ PEAPOD PRINTAFORMS

Peapod Solutions (0181 574 8288) will be providing a free update to its PRINTAFORM electronic legal forms to accommodate the Woolf reforms. The updates will be dispatched before the 26th April implementation date. Peapod's Legal Aid Board CIS forms will also be updated.

■ JORDANS CIVIL COURT SERVICE

Jordan Publishing (0117 918 1492) has launched a new *Civil Courts Service* that includes the full text of the Civil Procedure Rules plus practice directions, pre-action protocols and forms.

The book version of the new service costs £100 a year (+ £12 p&p) - less than half the price of the "official" version of the rules published by the Stationery Office - and for this the subscriber will also receive two replacement volumes containing the full text of all subsequent rules and amendments. The Jordans' service is also available on CD-Rom from mid-April for £117.50 (this includes VAT plus two updates) and all subscribers will have access to a new web site containing a weekly update. The *Civil Courts Service* is available on a 28 day approval basis.

<http://www.civilcourtservice.co.uk>

DEALS AND TENDERS

■ MANAGEMENT INTERFACE LTD (MIL) has installed new AlphaLAW accounts and time recording systems at PARAM & CO in North London, WHITEMANS in Gloucester and LEE-BARBER GOODRICH in Torquay. MIL has also networking projects installing new wordprocessing, internet access, LAND REGISTRY access and LASERFORM electronic forms systems for COLDHAM SHIELD & MACE in Essex and BRAND & CO of North Cheam, Surrey.

■ LAWTECH SERVICES have pointed out that regardless of what some of their competitors may be saying, they have not been ousted from SPEECHLY BIRCHAM but are continuing to handle IT projects for the firm's finance department. Lawtech is also completing an intranet/knowledge management project for DAVIES ARNOLD COOPER.

■ GOUGHS, one of the largest Legal Aid franchisees in Wiltshire, is spending just over £45,000 on the acquisition of a Wisdom practice management system from AVENUE LEGAL SYSTEMS. Goughs looked at 12 rival systems before selecting Avenue.

AIM UPGRADES

During the summer and autumn of this year AIM will be rolling out a number of enhancements to its Evolution range of practice management systems.

These include support for the Euro and multi-currency accounting, as well as a simplified method of calculating a practice's work-in-progress for the purposes of the Inland Revenue's new rules for calculating the capitalisation and tax liability on current WIP.

■ AIM has upgraded the Y2K compliant version of its TrustCharter trust and probate system. New features include the ability to export data to spreadsheets and reports applications, such as Excel and Crystal, and greater flexibility in both the formatting and presentation of schedules and distributed accounts.

Further details can be found on AIM's recently revamped web site.

<http://www.aim.co.uk>

LEGAL PUBLISHING NEWS IN BRIEF

■ SWEETS SPONSOR BIALL

As part of its 200th anniversary celebrations, Sweet & Maxwell has awarded the British & Irish Association of Law Librarians (BIALL) a £20,000 research grant to study the impact of IT on the provision of legal information and library services.

■ NEW LITIGATION JOURNAL

The *Law Society's Gazette* has launched a new journal for litigators. Published six times a year, *Litigation Funding* looks at the financial side of running a litigation practice, including how to market conditional fees and avoiding cash flow problems. For a free sample copy phone: 0171 320 5786. Orders placed before 1st April qualify for a £25 discount off the usual £125 pa subscription.

■ AUTHOR DIES IN HOUSE FIRE

Solicitor Jonathan Berman, one of the authors of Butterworths' *Countdown to 2000* on the legal aspects of Y2K, died in a fire at his home earlier this month. Berman was due to help create the new IT law department at the recently formed Sprecher Grier Halberstam partnership.

■ PROFITS DOWN BUT R&D UP

Reed Elsevier, the parent of Lexis-Nexis, Butterworths and HotDocs, has reported a six percent fall in pre-tax profits to £773 million in 1998 and warned that 1999 "will not be a year of any significant profit growth". On a more positive note, the results also reveal that last year the company spent £80 million on research and development on a range of online services, including Lexis-Nexis.

■ INSIDER E-MAIL NEWSLETTERS

Legal Technology Insider publishes a series of free current awareness e-mail newsletters providing news and comment on areas of legal practice. The titles are: *E-Business + Law*, *Watching Brief Online* (local government law) and the *Litigation Support Digital Newsletter*.

To subscribe send a note of your e-mail address to: info@legaltechnology.co.uk

NEW Y2K SURVIVAL GUIDE FOR LAWYERS

The English Law Society last week launched a new Y2K guide that pays specific attention to the computing and management issues faced by solicitors in private practice.

Called *Year 2000 Compliance - the lawyer's guide to surviving the millennium bug*, the book has been written by Legal Technology Insider editor Charles Christian to provide a practical, step-by-step survival guide and includes the latest compliance information on a wide range of legal and general business software applications.

The book, which traces the Y2K problem back to the impact of Julius Caesar's relationship with Cleopatra and ends with a recommendation that firms should throw a "thank you" party for staff on Friday 7th January 2000, takes the optimistic view that the bug is still survivable providing lawyers don't panic.

According to Richard Susskind, the author of *The Future of Law*: "The bad news is that Y2K presents a significant threat to the businesses of all lawyers and all clients. The good news is that almost all that needs to be known and done about Y2K for lawyers is snappily described in Charles Christian's excellent book. I recommend it wholeheartedly to all lawyers who are eager to avoid tragedy in the early days of 2000."

Year 2000 Compliance (paperback, 145 pages, ISBN 1-85328-675-3) is published by Law Society Publishing and available in all good legal book shops. It can also be obtained by mail order from Marston Book Services (01235 465656), price £19.99 (+ carriage).

■ The guide received its formal launch at last week's *Solicitors* exhibition at the NEC. One visitor, passing a stack of copies of the book on the Law Society's stand, said he did not need to buy or read a book about Y2K as his firm had decided it would be far simpler to just replace all their computer hardware and software. No comment.

SOCIAL SECURITY LAW ON CD

Ferret Information Systems, which produces IT-related products for welfare law practitioners, has launched the first edition of its *Social Security Law Sources & Commentary* on CD-Rom. Along with the full text of commissioners' decisions from 1977, the CD also contains copies of the social security "blue book", the child support "orange book", all relevant Acts and statutory instruments over the past ten years and commentaries such as the *Disability Rights Handbook*. Ferret estimate that in printed form the contents of the CD would occupy 12 feet of bookshelfspace.

■ The CD, formatted for Windows 95/98/NT PC platforms, is available on subscription for £235 a year (+ VAT) - the price includes quarterly updates disks. A free trial copy CD containing the full edition's text is also available. Call 01222 644660 for details although it should be noted the trial disk is limited to five hours running time.

NEW LAB FORMS NOW FREE ON THE WEB

Free interactive Legal Aid Board forms, developed by the English Law Society with Capsoft UK, are now available for downloading off the web from both the Law Society and Capsoft sites. The decision to produce an electronic version of the forms follows the LAB's decision last year to stop providing legal aid practitioners with printed copies of the forms. A CD-Rom containing both the forms and HotDocs software needed to complete and print out the forms will be published later this year. Copies of the HotDocs software can also be downloaded from the web free of charge.

<http://www.lawsociety.hotdocs.co.uk>

<http://www.capsoftuk.co.uk>

■ COMMENT

Capsoft UK (0171 732 7484) has now introduced an enterprise licence to replace its former site licensing scheme. The new licence is intended to make it more cost effective for law firms to take advantage of the internet-ready features of HotDocs 5.0 and publish precedent forms online, so they can be downloaded and completed by staff or clients from web-based intranets and extranets.

The move also looks set to pitch Capsoft UK into direct competition with Epoch Software (0181 452 1133) which, with its rival Rapidocs and DirectLaw systems, is planning a number of services that will allow clients to download legal documents and forms via the internet.

<http://www.directlaw.com>

<http://www.epochsoftware.co.uk>

SELLERS EYES LITIGATION SUPPORT MARKET

Court reporting specialist Sellers Legal Services is diversifying into the litigation support software market with the launch of its new LegalEyes system.

The 32-bit system, which has already been used in the Stephen Lawrence inquiry, stores, indexes and searches images of case-related documents. The software has also been designed to support the electronic exchange of lists of documents and bundles via CD-Rom and e-mail.

Other features of the system include: the ability to run multiple cases on the same system, support for remote sites via ISDN, automatic re-ordering of lists by date, author and type, a record-locking system to ensure different users do not simultaneously edit the same information, and the ability to add, index and search upon any annotations made the documents.

■ Pricing starts at £1475 for the software, which can also be leased at £95 per month. The core system includes an audio-visual training guide for users. Leasing contracts are for a minimum period of two years but this does include telephone support. For a free demo copy of the software on CD-Rom call Deborah Putsman on 0171 405 4512.

NEW CONNECTIONS CDs FROM SWEETS

Sweet & Maxwell has added four more titles to its Connections range of CD-Rom products.

The new titles are: *Data Protection Laws of the World*, which includes both local language and English translations of all the source materials needed by practitioners. *Palmer's Company Law Service*, which provides a digital edition based on its namesake paper version, which this year celebrates its centenary. *Practical Will Precedents*, a companion to the recently launched *Practical Trusts Precedents* CD and a new *Planning Law Service*.

NEWS IN BRIEF

■ BARGAIN UPGRADE

If you purchase Office 97 or any Office 97 application between now and the end of July, the Microsoft Office Technology Guarantee allows you a free upgrade to the corresponding Office 2000 suite or application, when available, subject only to paying the cost of shipping and handling. For details call: 0345 00 2000.

<http://www.microsoft.com/uk/link/news/chan/march-5.htm>

■ CARPE DIEM 3.0 SHIPPING

Sage has begun shipping the latest version of its Carpe Diem time recording system. Now rechristened the Carpe Diem 3.0 Electronic Time Sheet, the software features a new CDWeb module for internet based access, so users can log their activity times via a web browser. Tikit (0171 717 1580) continues to be the UK legal market distributor but since Sage's acquisition of Carpe Diem, the supporting web site has a new address.

<http://www.timetracking.com>

■ ELECTRONIC PRESENTATIONS

The Steljes Group (0181 213 2117) is distributing the Smartboard courtroom presentation system in the UK. The system, which operates in conjunction with a multimedia projector, effectively provides users with the digital equivalent of a conventional flip chart, complete with light pens using electronic ink.

WEB NEWS IN BRIEF

■ NEW NETSCAPE BROWSER

Hard on the heels of last week's launch of Microsoft's Internet Explorer 5.0 web browser comes news that Netscape has launched an upgrade to its rival browser. Netscape Communicator version 4.51, the first product launched since last year's acquisition of Netscape by America Online, includes AOL Instant Messenger software and a stock quotation service.

<http://home.netscape.com/download/>

■ LORD HIGH BROWSER

In response to a parliamentary question, LCD junior minister Geoff Hoon revealed that the Lord Chancellor's Department spent £7,368 setting up its web site, which now receives 10,000 visits a month. The allied Court Services site, which cost £18,500 to set up, receives over 50,000 visits a month. A further £45,000 a year will be spent running the LCD site next year following the recruitment of a full-time web master.

<http://www.open.gov.uk/lcd>

■ FILED PLANS ONLINE

The Land Registry has begun investigating the viability of allowing users web-based access to its files. In the meantime the agency is expanding the number of services available via its current proprietary online direct access service and by the end of 1999 hopes to offer users the ability to view and print copies of filed plans, as well as register records.

<http://www.open.gov.uk/landreg/home>

■ LTI-NET - THE DIGITAL EDITION OF THE INSIDER

LTI-Net is the digital version of Legal Technology Insider. It is available in an HTML file format that can be delivered as an e-mail attachment or accessed via a secure subscriber-only web site.

LTI-NET comes complete with live hypertext links and is designed for firms wanting to access the newsletter across intranets and Lotus Notes databases or individual subscribers who just want to read and print it from the desktop.

Subscription rates start at £135 (inc VAT). To obtain a free sample copy e-mail info@legaltechnology.co.uk

LAWYERS ONLINE MOVE INTO SOFTWARE

Lawyers Online, the fast growing dedicated legal market ISP, has entered into an agreement to resell/distribute Irwin Associates' ultra low-cost Virgo Accounts legal accounting system. The Y2K compliant Virgo software will run under DOS and most flavours of Windows.

Lawyers Online founder Rosie Houghton told the Insider it was exciting to see the way the service had progressed in six months from unknown start-up to a company people were queuing to do business with. Lawyers Online expects to announce a number of further initiatives during the course of the spring.

<http://www.lawyersonline.co.uk>

LINKS PUT OUT MORE FLAGS

Linklaters & Alliance has extended its Blue Flag legal information extranet with the introduction of the new Blue Flag Funds service. This will provide clients in the portfolio and fund management industry with access to an interactive database of regulations governing the marketing of investment products. Linklaters say that because fund managers now frequently promote and run a range of funds across borders in a variety of markets, the international aspect of the service will help them comply with overlapping regulatory regimes.

US E-FILERS MERGE

New Jersey-based JusticeLink, the electronic filing (e-file) service that is partly owned by Andersen Consulting, is to merge with LAWPlus, another US e-file venture. The new company will concentrate on the development of services that will allow courts and law firms to electronically file, serve, store and retrieve court documents via the internet using only standard web browser technology. Five US jurisdictions use the LAWPlus service, which is currently in use in over 5000 civil cases.

<http://www.lawplus.com>

E-MAIL NEWSLETTER REVAMP

The monthly e-mail based *Internet Law Digital Newsletter* has been relaunched as a fortnightly publication. The content has also been refocussed and in future will give more coverage to the legal issues associated with electronic commerce and online business. Reflecting this change of emphasis, the publication's name has been changed to *E-Business + Law*. The newsletter, which is available free of charge to subscribers, is funded by sponsorship. The sponsors are the Internet Law Group of solicitors Jeffrey Green Russell and case management software developers Solicitec Legal Systems. To subscribe, send a note of your e-mail address to: info@legaltechnology.co.uk

NOT IN MY OFFICE !

We have all heard the term "NIMBY" used to describe the "not in my backyard" argument encountered in planning application disputes but at the recent *Information Systems for Lawyers* conference at the London Marriott, Michael Jimmerson, a legal IT consultant with Arthur Andersen in the United States, introduced the audience to the new concept of "NIMO".

It stands for "not in my office" and reflects the attitude of many partners and fee earners when it is first suggested that they should actually use a computer.

Faced with the usual intransigence, failures to turn up for training courses and general hostility towards using IT, the attitude of many practice managers is to try to bribe or cajole recalcitrant lawyers to switch on and use their PCs on the promise of achieving higher billable hours for less effort and wider profit margins.

But, instead of pushing lawyers towards using some of the major legal IT applications a practice may have just purchased (such as a time recording, practice management or document management system) Jimmerson suggests firms would actually do better to identify the utility programs that interest and excite these reluctant IT users.

It could be something as simple as a Sterling to Euro currency converter but - according to Jimmerson - once it appears on their PC, they will immediately appreciate the benefits, start using it, be won over to the advantages of IT and so shift from being an opponent to a proponent of law office automation. Well, at least that is the theory!

NEWS IN BRIEF

■ MEET LINETIME'S BILL WIZARD

Linetime has added a billing wizard to its accounts and time recording software to speed up the process of requesting, preparing and producing bills. The new system uses Microsoft's familiar "Wizards" technology to give fee earners a point-and-click method of producing bills based on time recorded or fixed fees. The system can also handle disbursements and cheque requisition.

<http://www.linetime.co.uk>

■ PERFECT BOOKS NOW IN WINDOWS

Perfect Software (01656 720071) has launched Perfect Books 3 for Windows as a replacement for its existing DOS-based accounts and time recording system for smaller firms. The new system includes a number of enhancements including ledgers that are fully accessible while posting, budget review using Microsoft Excel, extended SIF/Legal Aid Board matter coding and analysis and compliance with the latest Legal Aid Franchise requirements. Existing Perfect Books 2 users wanting to upgrade from DOS to Windows will not have to re-input data as the new system incorporates its own conversion program. The entry level price for the software is just under £1500 (+ VAT).

LEGAL TECHNOLOGY DIARY DATES

■ KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

Two day conference and exhibition at Olympia in London with numerous sessions covering those "flavour of the month" concepts: know-how systems, knowledge management and intranets. Starts today (24th) and finishes tomorrow Thursday 25th March. For more details call Learned Information Europe on 01865 388000.

<http://www.knowledge-management.co.uk>

■ INTERNET LIBRARIAN & LIBTECH 99

- No, you are not experiencing déjà vu. This really is another conference and exhibition at Olympia in London - but this time lasting three days - with sessions covering know-how systems, knowledge management and intranets. The event starts on Monday 29th March and closes on Wednesday 31st. There are also pre- and post-conference workshops looking at various practical issues, including web authoring and intranet development. On Tuesday two speakers from the USA will be talking about managing law firm intranets. Prices begin at £149 (+ VAT) for a one day ticket. For more details call Information Today on 01865 204947.

<http://www.libtech-international.com>

■ TFB SEMINARS

- Technology for Business has started a roadshow series that will, over the next few weeks, hold half-day (afternoon) seminars across the south of England to demonstrate TFB's Partner for Windows accounts system and Dragon's NaturallySpeaking speech recognition software. The next seminar takes place in Brighton on 15th April. Admission is free, call Gareth Thomas of TFB on 01932 781120 for details.

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LEGAL TECHNOLOGY INSIDER

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NEWS IN BRIEF

■ ECLATECH SLASHES PRICES

Preston-based software house Eclatech (01772 556777) has introduced a new pricing policy for its Conveyancer's Assistant system that effectively slashes the entry level price from £3895 to just £975 (add VAT to all prices). At the time of the product's launch last October the Insider expressed surprise that an unknown and unproven supplier should set a price that was almost three times more expensive than a comparable system from an established supplier such as Laserform.

■ FRIENDS IN HIGH PLACES

Legal systems supplier Solicitors Own Software was one of only four businesses invited to the recent Lloyds TSB post Budget forum in London. SOS managing director Michael Platt, who attended the briefing, said one of the criteria for being invited was the businesses had to have a faster than average growth rate.

■ DIGITAL SENDER BLENDER

David Smith, previously with Kommunicate/RightFAX has moved to Hewlett-Packard, where he will be responsible for the forthcoming launch of a new "digital sender" system. This effectively combines scanner technology with a document management system that can output to a variety of devices including e-mail, fax, printers and messaging services.

■ COGNITO GOES 32-BIT

Cognito Software (0500 234513), now safely ensconced as the legal software division of cabling and network integrators UTN Solutions, has launched Cognito for Windows, a new 32-bit version of the company's long-established accounts and time recording system. As well as moving to a Windows NT-compatible platform, the new software now includes a number of management accounting and practice management features, including completed matter histories, document management and legal aid analyses. Cognito's Chris Poulson says these features will "provide the critical financial indicators and bench marking needed to assess the opportunities and threats posed by Legal Aid Franchising, block contracts, WIP taxation and no win, no fee arrangements".

■ PERICOM AIMING TO BE SINGLE SOURCE

Pericom Desktop Networks (01903 265533) has rebadged itself as a single source supplier of legal software, PC hardware, networking and support services for High Street law firms. The move follows its recent appointment as a distributor for Franklins Walker Business Systems' EpitomeOMS practice management system. Pericom also has a close working relationship with Legato Computer Services, who market the Paragon accounts system. Pericom's flagship legal site is Shoosmiths & Harrison.