

CHARLES CHRISTIAN'S

# LEGAL TECHNOLOGY INSIDER

THE SOURCE FOR INDEPENDENT LEGAL TECHNOLOGY NEWS, COMMENT AND ANALYSIS

## FRESH US INVASION ON THE WAY ?

American Lawyer Media, the New York company behind the highly successful LegalTech shows in the United States, is planning to bring the event to London in November 2000. As with the US original, the event will offer a technology exhibition running in conjunction with a high profile conference programme organised by the management consultancy PricewaterhouseCoopers. Further details are not yet available but it is understood the organisers hope to have around 70 exhibitors, including a number of US systems suppliers hoping to gain a foothold in the UK and European legal IT markets.

■ COMMENT - Given the roll call of US-based suppliers already operating in the UK, including CMS, PC Docs, Elite, iManage, Interface, Equitrac and Sage Carpe Diem, it might appear there is no room for anyone else. In fact APS, which supplies the DTE time entry system, has effectively written off the UK because of Carpe Diem's dominant position.

However there are a number of US suppliers with newer products that have still to make their mark on the UK and, with Y2K problems long out of the way by then, November 2000 could be an opportune time.

The Insider's own list of US companies and products to watch includes: the case management software supplier ProLaw; the Metz client information management system; LegalKEY Technologies' web-based records management system; the eVelocity legal e-commerce system; Omtool's LegalFax, which is currently the fastest selling network fax product in North America - the company has recently opened a European office in Surrey (020 8541 1444). And finally Softwise, developers of the MacroSuite template creation software. Softwise directors have also been in the UK recently talking to potential distributors.

For more exhibition and events news, see pages 5 & 7

## LINK SERVICE SET TO CLOSE

Last week legal publisher Legalease announced that its pioneering LINK online discussion forum and e-mail service for lawyers would be closing down on 30th November. In response to a deluge of protests from loyal LINK users, Legalease chairman John Pritchard proposed a rescue plan dependent upon 500 + users committing by the end of last week to pay a £150 annual subscription. But by the time the Insider went to print, only 86 people had signed up, leaving Legalease with little option but to pull the plug.

For background story see page 5

## Y2K - 51 DAYS TO GO AND APATHY RULES

According to the findings of a recent public opinion survey, UK business managers are more worried about the after-effects of New Year hangovers among their staff than potential IT failures within their own organisations. However one legal systems supplier has admitted to the Insider that despite this air of optimism, they are concerned that a lot of law firms are apparently still not taking the millennium bug seriously.

The supplier, which has asked not to be named, said it originally sent a free boot-up-and-go Y2K update disk to all users of its older legacy systems as long ago as last January. But despite three follow-up mailings, including sending further copies of the disk by registered letter, it estimates that by early October nearly 100 firms had still not bothered to install the update. The most frequent excuse was that the firm had been busy and not got around to doing it.

## SCL ENTRY DEADLINE

The closing date for the Society for Computers & Law's annual IT award is just over one week away on Friday 19th November. Entries must be submitted by 18.00 hours however there is an online submission facility. The winner will be announced on 24th January.

<http://www.scl.org/award>

## THE INSIDER WEB SITE

Visit the Legal Technology Online web site for regularly updated legal IT news plus access to archive material and links to additional services and information.

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

## NEWS IN BRIEF

■ WRAGGE & CO has set up a five person strategic development unit to improve the firm's use of IT. Instead of the more usual choice of an IT specialist, the team will be headed by lawyer DEREK SOUTHALL, who has been a fee earner at Wragge for the past six years.

■ LAWPAK FINANCIAL SYSTEMS (0181 658 8500) has launched a new 32-bit version of its LawPak legal accounting and time recording system. The software complies with the latest legal aid franchise requirements and single user systems are available from £1000.

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

■ The UK's NATIONAL AUDIT OFFICE has criticised the COURT FUNDS OFFICE for "weakness in financial management" after it was revealed that the body responsible for holding money paid into court, was unable to identify the legal owners of over £9.8 million in payments entrusted to it. The Court Funds Office blamed the problem on its records system, which is a mixture of computers, ledgers and 20,000 index cards dating back to 1726. The LORD CHANCELLOR'S DEPARTMENT said "considerable efforts" were being made to reconcile the records.

■ BIRD & BIRD has won an "excellence in application integration" from Hummingbird Communications for the firm's KESTREL intranet. This uses DOCS Open and DOCSFulcrum document and knowledge management technology. The intranet was developed by Bird & Bird in association with system integrators WEB ENABLED.

■ Reports suggest the private healthcare insurer BUPA may transfer a substantial slice of its legal work from SLAUGHTER & MAY to Leeds-based WALKER MORRIS because the latter firm's REACH online access and case tracking technology is perceived to offer clients both better communications and a cheaper service.

■ The English LAW SOCIETY is now back on target to launch the new edition of its *Software Solutions* guide for small firms towards the end of this month.

## FREE FORMS BECOME INSTANT SUCCESS

The new EveryForm electronic legal forms services, which allows users to download the latest legal and government forms free of charge from the Internet, has proved an instant success. Over 1000 organisations - the majority of them law firms - have registered to download the forms during the service's first 14 days of operation.

EveryForm communications manager Jill Nuttall said she was "pleasantly surprised" by the number of major firms that had signed up for the optional subscription-based forms update notification and maintenance services.

Among the early subscribers was Hill Taylor Dickinson, whose IT manager Lorraine Dickinson said the firm had spent the last seven years looking at alternative electronic forms systems but had remained with paper because they had been unable to find a product that suited their needs. Chandler said that along with price, one of the attractive aspects of EveryForm was an extendibility feature which allows users to re-size a box or add an addendum so a form can cope with excess text.

■ The Insider has also learned that a number of legal systems suppliers are interested in integrating their products with EveryForm, with one former Laserform partner already developing an API link between its case management software and EveryForm.

<http://www.everyform.net>

## TOSHIBA WORDPERFECT LINK

Corel has announced an agreement with Toshiba Europe whereby Corel WordPerfect Suite 8 wordprocessing software will be loaded as standard on all new Toshiba Satellite 2610-CDT and 2650X-DVD notebook computers sold into the French, English, Italian, German, Spanish and Swedish language markets. Customers will also receive a coupon to entitle them to upgrade to WordPerfect Office 2000 at a special price of £40 including VAT.

## ONLINE CONVEYANCING NOW ON ITS WAY

HM Land Registry last week awarded Compaq Services a massive £71 million contract to design, implement and manage the IT infrastructure for its new land registration system. The long-term project, which includes Compaq providing facilities management services for up to 10 years, will also see the creation of the world's largest property database and the integration and computerisation of all records, registers, title plans and supporting deeds.

Acting Chief Land Registrar Ted Beardsall said the new infrastructure and the creation of an integrated electronic land register would "open up the future possibility of full electronic conveyancing for England and Wales".

## LEGAL IT SUPPLIERS CHANGE HANDS

Within the past fortnight three well-known suppliers of legal IT products and services have changed hands.

### ■ WEALDEN COMPUTING - TRIAL/400

London Bridge Software has sold its Wealden Computing Services subsidiary to ACSIS Technologies (01923 226222) of Watford. Wealden was the London Bridge arm responsible for the group's IBM AS/400 product range. This includes the Trial/400 legal accounts system which is still in use at about a dozen law firms, including Sherwin Oliver. ACSIS says it hopes "to move the products forward" and offer "a substantially enhanced support capacity".

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

### ■ CSE - iMANAGE

The UK arm of CSE Systems, which is probably best known in the legal market as the European distributor of the iManage document management system, has been acquired by Imanage Inc of the United States.

As a wholly owned subsidiary of its new US parent, the business will now trade as Imanage Ltd (01483 453900) and has dropped its other distribution activities so it can focus on sales and support of the iManage product. CSE's UK manager Tom Bird will head the new venture, which remains at its current 32 London Road offices in Guildford.

### ■ ELLIOTT SLONE - WILLIAMS LEA

As predicted in the previous issue of the Insider, the document management services group Williams Lea has completed its acquisition of litigation support specialist Elliott Slone.

The Elliott Slone business, which has an annual turnover of approximately £4 million, employs 15 people and at any one time can have up to 180 paralegals on assignment, will be merged with the fast growing Williams Lea Legal Solutions division. Chief executive Tim Griffiths said Elliott Slone's clients would benefit from Williams Lea's "new media" expertise and on-site litigation support facilities. Elliott Slone is now based at Clifton House, Worship Street, London EC2A 2EJ (0207 772 4300).

■ The Insider has also learned that Linetime is exploring the possibility of buying the legal software operations of another systems supplier that is planning to withdraw from the legal IT market.

## A RELEASE DATE FOR WIN 2K ?

It was meant to be last month but at a recent conference in the USA, Microsoft executives said "barring discovery of any major bugs in the next two months" the long awaited Windows 2000 (aka NT 5.0) operating system upgrade would go on sale on Thursday 17th February 2000.

## IRELAND GETS NEW EQUITRAC DEALER

Last week's *Lawtech'99* exhibition in Dublin saw Milestone Systems (+ 353 1 2502050) makes its public debut as the Irish reseller for the Equitrac range of cost recovery systems.

Milestone has also appointed Billy O'Dwyer as sales & marketing manager and during the past few months has been tailoring the Equitrac products to meet the needs of the Irish legal market. O'Dwyer is keen to stress the Equitrac range includes affordable systems for firms with as few as two solicitors.

## JM CAREERS FAIR

With business booming in the North of England legal market, Manchester-based IT solutions provider JM Computing (0161 925 7777) is running a careers fair at its offices on Thursday 25th November.

The doors are open from 7.00am until 8.30pm and the £8 million turnover company is looking for staff at all levels, including trainers, project managers, software developers, sales consultants, systems engineers and telephone support staff. For details visit the JM web site.

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

## OUTSOURCING DEALS - MORE TO FOLLOW?

Clarke Willmott & Clarke's recent decision to outsource its entire IT operations are being watched by IT suppliers and law firms keen to know if this proves a viable option. Several firms have told the Insider they are looking at ways to cut inhouse IT resources, while Axxia is believed to be planning to offer an FM service next year.

■ The CW&C outsourcing deal is worth £1.9 million over the next three years to Quiss Technology, who will provide the Bristol-based firm with a full range of IT services including staff training, software and systems development, hardware and maintenance support. The firm, which will continue to run its existing case and practice management systems InControl and LegalMind, has now closed down its inhouse IT department and made all three members of its staff redundant.

## LEGAL PUBLISHING NEWS IN BRIEF

### ■ PENSIONS SERVICE BULLISH

Pendragon, the specialist publisher of pensions information, reports a rapid increase in the take-up of Perspective, its online pensions database, by major law firms, including eight of the UK's 16 largest firms.

Pendragon, which was recently bought out by its management team from the Thomson Corporation, has now moved to new offices at 19-20 Great Sutton Street, London EC1V 0DR (020 7608 9000). The company's chairman is the well known pensions lawyer (and Eversheds partner) Robin Ellison and its inhouse editorial team has been strengthened by the arrival of Susannah Davey from Sweet & Maxwell subsidiary Legal Information Resources.

### ■ LATEST CD & ONLINE TITLES

Butterworths have just launched two new services in the fields of competition and intellectual property law. *IP & Technology Cases* is the latest online product to join the Butterworths Direct service and covers patents, design rights, trademark, copyright, passing off, media, technology and entertainment law. The consulting editor is Michael Silverleaf QC and case commentaries are by members of 11 South Square. Butterworths will also be publishing a monthly printed version of the service. The second launch is the *Competition Law Library*, a CD-Rom version of Butterworths' existing *Competition Law* looseleaf title.

## TRY LTI-NET FREE

Try LTI-Net, the digital version of Legal Technology Insider. Available in an HTML file format, it can be accessed via a subscriber-only web site or delivered as an e-mail attachment. It comes complete with all hyperlinks and is designed for firms wanting to access the newsletter across corporate portals, intranets and Lotus Notes databases or people who just want to be able to read and print it from the desktop. Subscription rates start at £135. For a free trial copy e-mail:

[info@legaltechnology.co.uk](mailto:info@legaltechnology.co.uk)

## MORE NEW FACES

The flow of new products, services and suppliers into the UK legal IT market continues. Here are the latest entrants:

### ■ INFOGRAPHICS - CASE MANAGEMENT

Although the company is based in Scotland, Infographics' (01592 750677) new case management software Benchmark is designed for use in law offices throughout the UK's various legal jurisdictions. There are pre-configured templates for property, litigation, personal injury and debt recovery work, with the emphasis on workflow automation.

The product is a 32-bit Windows application that runs across a Windows NT network with either Oracle or SQL Server 6.5/7.0 installed as the database on the server. The application has a Microsoft Outlook look and feel and prices start at £25,000 for the server plus £850 per seat for the client software. The Insider understands Benchmark has already been integrated with the Miles 33 Precedent practice management system.

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

### ■ 3D SOLUTIONS - CASE MANAGEMENT

3d Solutions (0114 281 5201) of Sheffield has dipped its toes into the legal IT market with CaseManager, a relatively low-cost (a single user licence is £450) application for organising client/matter files, maintaining to-do lists and time recording. The software, which is available for Windows 3x as well as more recent 32-bit PCs, falls most closely into the Amicus Attorney style of case management product.

<http://www.3dsolutions.co.uk>

### ■ INFOCAP - DOCUMENT RETRIEVAL

InfoCAP Technologies (01793 601660) of Swindon has launched PowerCDRetrieve, a document retrieval system designed to search through large volumes of data stored on multiple CD-Roms and locate specific items of information within seconds. The system uses a search engine originally developed by Excalibur Technologies for use in its own knowledge management applications and can handle fuzzy logic as well as more conventional Boolean searches. Prices start at £699 per user and InfoCAP is interested in talking to potential resellers in the legal market.

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

### ■ PROSUM - NETWORK MANAGEMENT

Prosum Software (0171 444 4800) has just had its new and exotically-named "Eye of the Storm" network management software installed at Denton Hall. This is the first sale the company has made in the legal market (the actual deal was made through reseller Grant Systems) but the product is already in use with several financial and telecoms companies and a number of other law firms are now evaluating it. The product's main role is to proactively identify and solve network degradation and performance problems in mission critical complex switched networks.

<http://www.prosumsw.com>

## DIRECT ACCESS AND Y2K BONUSES

Legal IT staff headhunters Law & Finance International (LFI) have published the first issue of *Resource*, a regular research report on trends within law firm IT departments.

Among the findings, based on a survey of about 90 of the 100 largest law firms in the UK, were that nearly half the firms had introduced special Y2K bonuses for IT staff and that, despite the importance of technology in modern law firms, IT training and helpdesk support staff were amongst the most poorly paid. The average salary was around £20,000, compared with an average of £30,000 for analyst programmers and network support specialists.

Interestingly, although salaries were broadly similar between top 10 firms and the remainder of the sample, a big gap opened up at IT director level, with top 10 firms paying on average over £90,000 pa compared with just under £80,000 in the other firms. The highest salary paid to an IT director was £120,000 a year.

Turning to the future, once Y2K issues are out of the way, it looks as if most firms are putting direct access at the top of the agenda. Whereas currently less than a third of firms offer clients online access to information, almost 90 percent plan to be able to provide it by the end of 2000.

■ Copies of *Resource* are available free of charge from Law & Finance International (0171 208 5800).

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## LINK 1994 - 1999 R.I.P.

Because it had the attraction of being both very easy to use and free, the LINK (Legal Information Network) service proved a runaway success when it was launched in the late spring of 1994. But, although at one stage it had over 6000 users, the majority of people only used the free e-mail and discussion group facilities and ignored the optional subscription-based services, with the result that the system has probably been running at a loss from the outset.

In later years the rise of the Internet and the spread of "free" web access and e-mail services have taken their toll on the LINK user base, as have some of the technical limitations of the proprietary non-browser based ArcSoft FirstClass software (originally designed as an internal bulletin board system) that the service is built around.

By this autumn although there were still over 3000 registered users, the number of actual regular users was probably down to between 200 and 500, including around 100 frequent users logging on several times a day.

John Pritchard of Legalease has hinted that LINK may "re-emerge in an Internet guise at some time in the future" but in the meantime he deserves credit for helping establish e-mail as the killer application for lawyers in the UK.

■ Both Lawyers Online and The Professionals can offer LINK-type browser-based discussion forums for lawyers.

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

## IT EVENTS NEWS

### ■ EURO DISNEY VERDICT

Mixed reports from some of the legal IT suppliers and publishers who attended last week's English Law Society *Solicitors' Law Festival* at Disneyland Paris.

The main grumble seems to have been that whereas at previous Law Society conferences, the exhibition areas were always a focal point for delegates to mingle and "network" between conference sessions - and on some years the venue for formal receptions - at Euro Disney exhibitors were competing with the attractions both of the theme park and the delegates' own families. There were also some complaints that the French stand builders were less than helpful.

On the other hand, Lawyers Online, who ran the Internet Cafe feature at the event, said they found the mixture of business and pleasure highly successful, with some delegates visiting the stand several times a day to check their e-mail and others letting their kids surf the web while they discussed Internet issues with Lawyers Online staff.

### ■ GLEN LEGAL

Legal Week magazine has confirmed that it will be hosting another legal IT forum at Gleneagles in Scotland next year. The dates for 2000 are 18th-to-20th October.

### ■ SOLICITORS AT THE NEC

Nationwide Exhibitions, who mount the *Solicitors National Legal Office Exhibition* at the Birmingham NEC, say stand space at next year's event (14th-to-16th March 2000) is almost fully booked, with all the big names in the mainstream legal IT systems market having now booked stands. Among the suppliers exhibiting at the NEC for the first time are: AIM, Axxia, Laserform Law and TFB.

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## INSIDER E-ZINES

Legal Technology Insider publishes two current awareness e-mail newsletters: *New Media Lawyer*, covering the Internet law industry, and *Watching Brief Online*, providing local government case law commentaries. Subscription is free. To subscribe, send a note of your e-mail address to: [info@legaltechnology.co.uk](mailto:info@legaltechnology.co.uk)

## WEB NEWS IN BRIEF

■ The ILS offshore incorporations group has launched a new "no frills, low cost" online service that permits solicitors, accountants and trust companies to buy offshore services via the Internet. The service is called GETCO-OFFSHORE and can currently supply companies in the following jurisdictions: Bahamas, BVI, Belize, Delaware, Gibraltar, Mauritius and Nevis. Users must undertake that they will be responsible for all due diligence checks on beneficial owners.

<http://www.getco-offshore.com>

■ The AMERICAN LAWYER MEDIA group and US legal web portal LAW.COM have launched *LegalTimes.com*, a new online daily news service reporting on the latest legal stories in Washington DC, including developments in Congress, the US Supreme Court, the Justice Department and key regulatory agencies.

<http://www.law.com>

<http://www.legaltimes.com>

■ Computer virus detection specialist NETWORK ASSOCIATES has spotted the first virus to attack Microsoft's Project 98 software. The virus, called Corner or P98M/Corner.A, infects both Microsoft Project and Word files by turning off the macro warning feature of Project 98, Word 97, Word 2000, Excel 2000 and disabling the Word Tools/Macro menu option. The main risk presented by Corner is it could leave systems exposed to attack at a subsequent date. The latest versions of most anti-virus software programs can tackle Corner.

■ The DATANET GROUP has launched *Complinet*, a new online news and information service for the compliance industry. The service's editorial board includes lawyers from Clifford Chance, Anheim Tite & Lewis and KPMG's Klegal.

<http://www.complinet.com>

■ The insurance data provider WIRE has launched *WIRE Intelligent Quantum*, a web-based database of personal injury claims, court rulings and negotiated settlements intended to make it easier for insurers to assess quantum of damages.

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

## MORE CRITICISM FOR LAWYERS ON THE WEB

Two new reports both criticise the way law firms in the UK approach the issues associated with online legal services.

According to the latest edition of *The Insider's Guide to Legal Services - Digital Media & E-Commerce 1999*, "The gap is clearly widening between those firms who genuinely understand e-commerce and have adapted their practices to meet client needs - and those who merely pay lip service to the concepts. Many lawyers simply fail to understand how new technologies are impacting on the business world - and how it will change their own businesses."

Guide editor Mark Brandon said despite intensive marketing on the part of firms, too many clients are still complaining about "paying for the lawyer's learning curve".

The second report is based on a survey commissioned by the *E-Commerce Law & Policy* newsletter. This found that most firms are unsure how to exploit e-commerce opportunities, with only six percent regarding the Internet as a potential source of income generation and large numbers still creating web sites merely because "everybody else is". The survey also found that although ten percent of firms in the sample had spent more than £10,000 on the development of a web site, the typical spend was between £2000 and £3000, excluding partner time.

■ *The Insider's Guide to Legal Services - Digital Media & E-Commerce 1999* is published by New City Media (020 7405 6081), price £32.50.

■ *The E-Commerce Law & Policy Law 100 Survey* will be published later this month and also be given to delegates attending the *Lawyers and the Internet* conference on November 23rd at the Marriott County Hall in London. The main topic is developing a successful law firm web strategy. Speakers include Steve Vincent of Go Interactive and Neil Ewin of Solicitec. For details call Cecille Park Conferences (0704 400 4282), fee £450 + VAT.

■ Latest Nielsen market research reports that 12.5 million adults (or 27 percent of the UK adult population) now use the Internet on a regular basis, with 44 percent logging on daily and 72 percent using it for work-related activity.

■ At the Euro Disney conference Epoch Software, the company behind Freeserve Legal Desktop, had first-hand experience of the profession's reaction to the challenge of online legal services. One delegate told Epoch founder (and qualified solicitor) Richard Cohen that he "should have been strangled at birth", while a woman delegate tore up the company's literature and said the Internet was the reason she was retiring.

## E-MAIL SECURITY TIP

A reader has suggested that one way to ensure the security of document exchange via e-mail without using encryption software is to send the documents in question as password-protected Microsoft Word attachments.

## WEB CREDITED WITH DIET PILL VICTORY

US lawyers acting for plaintiffs in the class action brought against American Home Products over alleged side effects of the diet pills Redux and Pondimin (known as "fen-phen") say their use of the Internet as a virtual forum undoubtedly contributed to last month's decision by the defence to settle out of court for US\$ 3.75 billion. Described in the *Wall Street Journal* as America's "first big cybersuit", defence lawyers used the web to advertise for clients and swap intelligence until, in the words of one attorney: "we knew the documents better than the lawyers for AHP".

<http://www.leflaw.net/fenphen>

## GET AHEAD - GET A NAME

Internet names vendor Web Names is currently offering a range of pre-registered domain names for law firm web sites. These include "uksolicitor.com", "citylawfirm.co.uk" and "cybersolicitor.com". The company suggests the domains can be used either as a name for a new service or to help direct more traffic to a firm's existing web site.

<http://www.webnames4sale.co.uk>

## NEW LEGAL WEB SERVICE

Mountain Software (01476 573718), best known as a supplier of legal accounts and case management software, has launched a new Internet division offering law firms web site development, e-mail connectivity and associated training services. Contact Sean Uys (pronounced "ace") for further information.

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

■ Mountain Software has also joined the Insider affiliate scheme and will shortly be carrying the *Legal Technology Breaking News* service on its web site. Other affiliates include the legal ISPs Lawyers Web and Lawyers Online.

## THE SHOCKING TRUTH

Judicial web sites are not known for their excitement but the Florida Supreme Court has achieved the dubious distinction of currently having the most controversial site on the web following Justice Leander Shaw's decision to publish his dissenting judgment in a recent case that upheld that state's use of the electric chair as a form of capital punishment.

In the 4-to-3 decision, in *Re Thomas Provenzano*, the court ruled that execution by electrocution is not a "cruel and unusual punishment". To support his dissenting opinion Justice Shaw attached three photographs, showing the face of a convicted murderer *after* he had been electrocuted, to his judgment which now appears on the court's official web site. (NOTE: They are truly gruesome.)

<http://www.flcourts.org>

## LEGAL TECHNOLOGY DIARY DATES

■ NOVEMBER 12-to-15, MONTE CARLO - Legal Monte Carlo '99 conference and networking event for commercial law firms and inhouse legal departments. Axxia is one of the main sponsors. Call Centaur Events on 020 7970 4772.

■ NOVEMBER 16, MANCHESTER Laserform Product Open Days. A series of product presentation seminars. The remaining venues are Leeds (18th) and Nottingham (29th). Admission free. For details call 01925 750000.

■ NOVEMBER 16, BRISTOL - AIM's autumn series of one day seminars looking at Microsoft Word, Windows 2000, and providing client access via corporate portals. Other dates and locations: London (18th), Huddersfield (23rd) and Newcastle (24th). To book a place call 01482 326971.

■ NOVEMBER 25, LONDON - Managing for Success. One day conference at the Cumberland Hotel, Marble Arch, organised by the Law Society's Law Management Section. Speakers include Richard Susskind and Brian Capstick. Prices £260 (LMS members £195) + VAT. Booking enquiries through Central Law Training on 0121 355 0900.

■ DECEMBER 1, BRISTOL - Society for Computers & Law 25th Anniversary Workshops & Exhibition. The UK's last legal IT event of the 20th Century. Call SCL on 01179 237393 for details.

<http://www.scl.org>

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## COMPUTER LORE

### ■ ANOTHER TRABANT ON THE INFO-HIGHWAY

The following is another true story that sadly reflects the less-than dynamic approach of some lawyers when it comes to grasping the benefits of the Internet revolution. A firm in the London area, faced by complaints that it was taking in excess of a week to respond to e-mail messages sent in by potential clients interested in the services being promoted on its web site, tackled the problem in its own unique way. It had the web site redesigned to exclude all e-mail contact details. Expect them to be tearing out their telephones next to stop all that annoying ringing.

### ■ MUZAK TO OUR EARS

So we cannot talk about the legal IT supplier in the North of England that had to sack its new marketing manager when it was discovered he was spending seven hours a day looking at pornographic web sites. And we shouldn't really mention the London litigation support bureau that offers to clean up database records by deleting duplicate entries and last week sent the Insider three change of address notes, each to different permutations of our address.

Perhaps a safer topic is muzak, particularly the tunes callers hear when the switchboard puts them on "hold". As with the rest of the commercial world, Vivaldi's *Four Seasons* is the most frequent choice but two notable exceptions are case management suppliers DPS, who blast callers with rock music at high volume, and office services supplier IKON who actually have their own theme music. Its an Enya-esque piece with lots of "new agey" voices singing the word "ikon" over and over and over again.

### ■ BUT WE REALLY WERE THE FIRST

Much enraged gnashing of teeth at Halsbury House, the home of legal publishers Butterworths, when they opened last week's law supplement in *The Times* to read that *The Lawyer* was claiming it had just launched "the first online daily news service for lawyers". Why? Because as it happens the first such daily news service was *News Direct*, which Butterworths launched in May 1998 along with a raft of other online legal information services.

### ■ DEDICATED FOLLOWER OF FASHION

Over the years the Insider's distinctive "Halloween" orange and black colour scheme has come in for some varied comment but we always knew that if we stuck with it long enough, it would come into fashion. And it now has, as according to a report in last week's *Financial Times* "By the end of the autumn-winter fashion shows... it was clear that orange is the new grey". And we are also read all over.

### NEXT ISSUE

The next issue of Legal Technology Insider - No. 91 - will be published on Wednesday 24th November 1999.