



The LOTIES awards get bigger and better

This year's LOTIES (Legal Office Technology Innovation) awards ceremony, which took place at the Café Royal in London last week, firmly established the event as, probably, the most fun you can have in legal technology without taking your clothes off.

Yes, a woman was doing cartwheels across the dance floor. Yes, enough tequila was consumed to float an ocean liner. Yes, the event's host Ruby Wax did threaten to cut off the *cahones* of IT consultant Neil Cameron and turn them into earrings if he didn't stop heckling. And yes, a hard core of guests were still partying on in the disco at 3:30am in the morning.

On a more serious note, a total of 20,000 votes were cast for this year's LOTIES and e-LOTIES awards. With just under 400 guests attending last week's event (nearly 100% up on the 2002 awards), the LOTIES is now not only the fastest growing legal tech event in the UK but also one of the best attended. In fact the only event with a substantially bigger audience is the Islington Legal IT exhibition where admission is free. **For the full LOTIES results see page 5.**

The Insider web site

For news, jobs and information visit what *The Times* calls the "definitive online resource for the latest news about legal technology"...

www.legaltechnology.com

Pilgrim to bring SAP to a wider market

Pilgrim Systems will today announce that it has signed a formal agreement with the ERP (enterprise resource planning) systems specialist SAP to jointly develop a practice management solution for law firms with a turnover of between £20 million and £150 million. Pilgrim chairman Jim Cummings said it was quite clear that larger practices (the turnover bracket encompasses about 70 UK firms outside the top 15) were looking for a product that gave them more than just time and billing "and we believe this will give ambitious firms somewhere to go once they have outgrown existing PMS systems such as Elite and CMS."

Pilgrim are keen to stress that the new system will not simply be an integration of the company's current LawSoft product on top of SAP but an all new system providing legal functionality to SAP's SME offering: the MySAP Business Suite. Pilgrim CEO Benny Placido points out that as well as... **Continued on page 7.**

Videss opt out of Law Soc guide

In a decision that has surprised many of its competitors in the market, the legal systems supplier Videss has decided to opt out of next year's edition of the Law Society's *Software Solutions Guide*. The company said it "felt the enquiries generated were not in line with their target audience... this decision is simply part of the natural evolution of the company's marketing strategy." The 2004 edition of the guide will be published in February.

All change with digital dictation

The competition in the UK's digital dictation workflow systems market has just become a little bit more competitive.

Crescendo Systems of Canada, who produce the DigiScribe DDS software, have formed a subsidiary - Crescendo Systems (0870 770 1717) - to sell and support the product in the UK. Crescendo has also acquired the client base of DigiVoice, the exclusive UK dealer for DigiScribe, for an undisclosed sum. The current DigiVoice sales and support team, headed by John Bendall, have also transferred to Crescendo.

Crescendo managing director Costa Mandilaras said the company would "aggressively build" on DigiVoice's activities. "We see this evolving market as in its infancy and are making a strategic commitment to become the UK market leader. This expansion into the UK provides an international base from which we can broaden into continental Europe and beyond."

And, senior representatives of DictaNet Software, the German DDS market leader, are spending the latter part of this week in London talking to potential partners, distributors and resellers for its products in the UK. For details email DictaNet sales manager Lasgin Saydo on lsaydo@dictanet.com or visit www.dictanet.com

News in brief

■ PHONE INTO THE MEETINGZONE

DLA is reporting substantial cost savings, as well as better matter billing data, on conference calls since switching to the MeetingZone (0800 0155510) as its new provider of audio conferencing services.

www.meetingzone.com

■ CASETRACK RELAUNCHED

WordWave International has relaunched its Casetrack full-text online judgments service. New features include: a Pending List service, so users waiting for a particular decision will automatically be notified as soon as the judgment becomes available, and a Case Detective to help users track down more elusive judgments. For a free trial contact Jamie Pearce on 020 7421 4006 or email jamie.pearce@casetrack.com Existing subscribers can access the new service now at www.casetrack.com

■ KENNEDYS TAKE DDS TO HK

Kennedys has become the first firm to roll out a digital dictation workflow system in Hong Kong. The firm was already running the BigHand DDS at five UK sites and has now moved its entire Hong Kong office over to DDS in just a fortnight. Implementation was speeded up by shipping a ready configured dictation server to Hong Kong.

■ BRCO HELP IMANAGE ROLL OUT

The IT consultancy Baker Robbins & Co (BRCO) played a major part in the recent global rollout of the iManage WorkSite document management system to 3000 users working in US law firm Holland & Knight's 30 offices around the world. Along with cutting the number of servers dedicated to DMS at its central office from 27 SQL servers to four, a key part of the project was the migration of 10 million documents over to iManage. This was achieved out of hours over two weekends using BRCO's own Shamrock tool which migrates documents at a rate of 200,000 per hour.

■ HUMMINGBIRDIES FLY THE NEST

Two of Hummingbird's best known faces in the UK - Neil Etheridge and Helen Freestone - have left the company. Etheridge has joined rival DMS vendor iManage while Freestone is believed to be joining Tikit.

Pracctice makes .NET perfect

Hereford-based Pracctice used its recent annual user group meeting as an opportunity to preview the new Microsoft .NET version of its Osprey integrated practice and case management system. The case, extranet, time recording, diary, email and fee earner desktop elements have already completed beta testing and will be shipping from the end of this month. These will include support for remote access via both laptops and PDAs, while a .NET version of the legal accounts module will be available during the first part of next year.

As well as the latest .NET developments, Pracctice was also previewing enhancements to its current Windows Osprey product. These included integration with Xerox scanning solutions for firms wanting to create a paperless case file and a new toolbar - in effect a series of user shortcuts - for the Osprey case management system. However the highlight was undoubtedly a new web-based central diary and email package, available as a hosted service, that provides an alternative to Microsoft Exchange while simultaneously using a 'trusted in box' to simplify email management and avoid spam.

Pracctice also used the meeting as an opportunity to launch its new 'Club Osprey' portal for Pracctice user group members. Along with the usual FAQs and update features, the web site will also have discussion forums catering for different types of user (partners, fee earners, cashiers etc) where members can exchange ideas, tips and experiences. www.clubosprey.org

Axxia breaks into Australia as local solutions fail to impress

Minter Ellison, one of Australia's largest law firms, has just announced that its Adelaide operation is deploying Axxia's Artiion case & practice management software in its defendant insurers and statutory compensation scheme departments.

According to managing partner Nigel McBride "High volume, transactional-based work can be great - but only if you get the business model right. Having seen how UK law firms had successfully leveraged IT to that end, we naturally regarded an enabling IT system as fundamental to our success. Amongst the systems available in Australia, we couldn't find one single solution that allowed us to meet the demands of our volume business model. Amongst the global players only Axxia Systems really gave us the required functionality with a single database."

Although the Minter Ellison deal is Axxia's first implementation in the Asia Pacific region, international operations director Doug McLachlan is reporting a lot of interest from other firms. In a related development, Axxia has announced the appointment of its first dedicated country manager for Australia. Former Axxia sales manager Andrea Pointing, who left in 2001 to join outsourcing specialists ITNet, is returning to the fold to take up her new post in the New Year.

Select rebrands with LawFusion

Select Legal Systems (01482 644334) has completed the beta testing of a new Windows front end to its practice management system and is now rolling it out under the LawFusion brand name. The first three firms to get up and running with the new system are Paul Rudd & Co in Grimsby, Ilett Clark in Worksop and Archer & Archer in Ely.

Select say there are two key aspects to LawFusion. The first is it provides a full Windows front end to a firm's accounts, time recording, fee earner desktop case and matter management software but is fully compatible with existing Select database records, so there is no need to convert data or change servers.

According to Select's sales director Steve Ness, the other benefit is that LawFusion is sold as a fully integrated system, even including advanced features - such as an onscreen KPI (key performance indicators) module - bundled in with the core licence fee, rather than sold "unlike most other practice management systems... as an endless list optional extras and add-ons, which means that the customer never stops paying for the functionality they need."

LawFusion will run on Windows 2000 Server or across Citrix MetaFrame and Microsoft Terminal Server networks and requires a minimum specification of Windows 2000 Pro or XP Professional on the desktop. The entry level price is £3000 for the server software plus £500 per user for the fee earner modules and £900 for the cashiers module. www.selectlegal.co.uk

Chivers moves to Laserform

Steve Chivers, until recently the sales manager at Pericom, has joined the Laserform/LFM Group as the managing director of its new LFM Partnership Solutions division. The division is responsible for marketing Laserform's Partnership suite of accounts and practice management software.

The Partnership suite (also known as LA6) is a SQL Server based system designed for firms in the 10-to-150 user bracket however Chivers says that along with selling and supporting the software, he also wants to refocus the division to give it a more customer facing emphasis. Chivers has also recruited Tim Bath, previously with Mountain Software, to join his sales team.

TFB opens in Northern Ireland

As part of the company's strategy to provide a comprehensive sales and support operation across the UK (the company last month announced the beefing up of its Scottish presence) and Ireland, TFB has opened an office in Northern Ireland. The new Belfast office (028 90 491336) will support firms in the Province, while the Republic will continue to be served by TFB distributor Legal IT (021 432 1829) which has offices in Cork and Dublin.

News in brief

■ **KENNEDYS TURN TO BLACKBERRY**
Kennedys has become the latest firm to embrace the BlackBerry wireless handheld as a way of providing remote access to email, contacts and diary information. The firm chose Isis Telecommunications to install a BlackBerry Enterprise Server (the BES automatically synchronises each user's handheld with their office mail box) and, following a successful pilot, 70 lawyers are already using the device and there are plans to roll it out to a total of 200 staff.

The firm's IT director Carolyn Lees said that "In the past, many partners had opted for PDAs but found they were complex and had many applications that were not relevant to them. The BlackBerry is all they need - a device where they can simply read and reply to their emails while away from their desks." Lees adds that the introduction of the BlackBerry has also seen a sharp decrease in demand for laptops. To register for a free one month trial or for more information contact Isis on 0870 163 5000.

■ **SOUTH LANARKS BUYS AIM**
South Lanarkshire Council has selected AIM Professional's Evolution integrated case management and time recording system for use within its Corporate Legal Services department. Evolution will be used to proactively manage and monitor legal work. Typically the department has approximately 2000 cases in an active or pending state at any one time, with a turnover of around 100 new cases each month.

Looking for IT staff ?

Looking for legal IT staff, including positions in sales, development, support and training? Then post your vacancies free of charge to the jobs board by emailing the details to jobs@legaltechnology.com

This week's top jobs include vacancies for a product consultant working with Thomson Elite out of their Sydney, Australia offices; an IT manager for a firm in the South West - salary in the £40K-to-£55K range; and a marketing director, with strong IT skills, for a firm based in West Sussex - salary up to £65K. For the latest postings visit the Insider Jobs board at www.legaltechnology.com

Latest research results

■ IS META DATA A SMOKING GUN ?

Workshare has published the results of research it commissioned into the way UK businesses share information and collaborate on the preparation of documents.

The research found that only 14% of businesses feel they are in control when it comes to completing documents for submission in time to meet deadlines. There again as 70% of businesses also have third parties from outside their organisations regularly contributing to their document content, perhaps this is hardly surprising.

More topically, given the ongoing controversy surrounding the Hutton Inquiry and the issue of the Blair government's 'dodgy dossier' on Iraq's weapons of mass destruction, the research also found that 90% of documents in circulation actually started life as something else and were then adapted or edited into their final format. But, even more worryingly, 68% of respondents were not aware of the risk of document metadata, such as the hidden information within Microsoft Word files showing document amendments and author histories.

www.workshare.com

■ WE'RE STILL HOPELESS AT IT !

Ever wondered why legal IT vendor and law firm helpdesks are always so busy when you call them? According to a report in this month's edition of *Management Today* magazine it could be because they are still having to help users tackle some of the more basic aspects of working with computers. The findings of a survey published by the magazine reveal that 14% of staff surveyed still needed help switching their PC on and off, 19% were not sure how to save a document and 21% were still confused by the meaning of the 'Print' command.

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Document automation news brief

■ SIMMONS & SIMMONS TO USE DEAL BUILDER

Simmons & Simmons has deployed the DealBuilder document automation system from Business Integrity (020 7814 6886) to streamline the production of client documents within the firm's Real Estate practice. DealBuilder helps organisations generate legal contracts and other complex documents by representing them as easy to use, web-based questionnaires. When the questionnaire is completed, DealBuilder automatically builds the required documents. Simmons & Simmons rolled out the software last month to give its new intake of trainee solicitors the opportunity to work with the system from day one.

Over in the US, North Carolina law firm Poyner & Spruill is using DealBuilder at the heart of its new 'P&S eLoan' mortgage modification system to streamline the production and recording of mortgage documents for its banking clients. And the Insider understands that Cisco Systems has also begun using DealBuilder: in their case to automate the global production of non-disclosure agreements. www.business-integrity.com

■ DUNDAS & WILSON TO ROLL OUT HOT DOCS

Dundas & Wilson is to roll out the HotDocs Online document assembly system on a practice-wide basis. Laurence Ward, one of the firm's partners and Head of Technology, said the combination of HotDocs and the experienced team at Capsoft UK (0131 226 3999 - the distributors of HotDocs) "gives us confidence that our implementation will be successful in saving money for the firm and for our clients."

■ FACTIVA TO HAVE SMART PRECEDENTS

Factiva, the Dow Jones/Reuters online information service, is to use SmartPrecedent, the enterprise document automation system from SpeedLegal, to deliver tailored first drafts of sales contracts to its global sales team and then on to Factiva customers.

The XML-based system lets users generate their own draft contracts without having to wait in line for legal sign-off. The sales force simply answers a few questions that the Factiva legal team has drafted and, based on their responses, the SpeedLegal software selects the appropriate clauses for the first draft of the contract. Factiva deputy CEO Claude Green estimates that "sales staff will now be able to get a first draft to the customer within a half-hour after agreeing terms, no matter where in the world they are located, no matter whether the lawyer normally assigned to them happens to be otherwise engaged."

Factiva say they selected SpeedLegal because it supported global delivery via a standard web browser and because the XML foundation allows users both to edit contracts in Microsoft Word and to generate contracts as a read-only PDF. SpeedLegal will also allow Factiva to share contract data with other systems, such as customer relationship management and billing.

In a related development, one of New Zealand's biggest firms - Bell Gully - has announced that it is to roll out SmartPrecedent. Bell Gully will use the system to create intelligent, automated precedents, initially for the lawyers in the firm's financial services and property groups. www.speedlegal.com

Copitrak gets open and webby with terminals

This week Copitrak (0207 234 3000) announced the global launch of a new 'OPEN' technology upgrade to its market leading expense recovery operating system. The move is part of Copitrak's ongoing R&D programme and will now standardise their systems around a SQL database platform to allow closer integration with law firms' existing practice management system databases and permit IT departments full access to cost recovery data for their own reporting needs.

While next year will also see Copitrak introducing support for a Microsoft .NET platform, the company this week also released a full browser based graphical interface for statistical reporting from the users' desktops and their new 'next generation' WebE terminals.

The latter development builds on Copitrak's current DIAMonde range of terminals to take into account the ever more international and mobile nature of the legal profession. In effect this makes the terminals far more user centric so that, for example, a lawyer working for an international practice can walk up to a copier or a scanner in whichever office they are working and access their client matters and recently charged codes in their own language.

Group managing director Keith Child says that while this may not sound very important to traditional Copitrak users, with increasing numbers of firms now opening offices in Eastern Europe, Central Asia and the Far East, where English is not automatically the second language, having multilingual terminals will be an asset. www.copitrak.com

Magus Research acquires Vrisko

Knowledge management of external content specialists Vrisko, whose user sites now include Linklaters, Eversheds and Allen & Overy, has been acquired by Magus Research, a specialist supplier of content and information management products to major corporates and, more recently, leading law firms.

Announcing the deal, Magus founder and MD Simon Lande said "The acquisition of Vrisko brings us market leading skills in searching and integrating proprietary content, which complement our own skills in managing content on the public internet." Vrisko chairman Chris Knowles added "Magus is the ideal partner. This is great news for us and our customers. As part of a larger group we will continue to improve our existing products and be looking to develop a range of new products."

Lande told the Insider that he was "genuinely fired up about the acquisition" as the two companies' operations both fell into the category of providing 'crucial information,' in terms of business intelligence and news aggregation, to their customers.

Vrisko has now relocated to Rowlandson House, 289-293 Ballards Lane, London N12 8NP (tel: 020 8446 2505).

www.vrisko.com + www.magusresearch.com

Cameron wins Loties merit award

In the face of stiff competition from Janet Day, John Rogers and iManage, the UK's best known legal IT consultant **Neil Cameron** won the Concordance Merit Award at last week's LOTIES awards ceremony in London.

In the vendor categories, the award for Best Legal Office Technology System went to the Tikit Group's **Tikit Granite Comfrey KM** product; digital dictation specialist **BigHand** took the Best Legal Office Technology Supplier award; while the **Solution 6 Net Results** system was voted Best Legal Technology Newcomer. The Best 'Best of Breed' award went to **Interface Software's InterAction CRM**, while **SOS Practice Manager** was voted Best Integrated System.

Millnet Legal Services were voted Best Litigation Support Service and, in another hotly contested category, **Harry Townsend** of Thomson Elite took the Vendor Personality of the Year award, ahead of Liam Flanagan of Tikit and Dan Von Weihe of Interface Software.

In the commercial category, the award for the Best Use of IT by an In-House Legal Department went to **Barclays Legal Function** for their use of the Corprasoft case & matter management system. The runners up were Arup's Strictly Legal intranet and the Office of the Solicitor to the Scottish Executive.

Over in the law firm categories, **Julie Berry of Reynolds Porter Chamberlain** won the IT Director of the Year award, ahead of Rosemary Kind of Shoosmiths and Peter Owen of Eversheds. The award for the lawyer who has been the Best Legal Technology Champion went to **Nick Williams of Eversheds**, with David Haywood of Reynolds Porter Chamberlain and Christopher Honeyman Brown of ASB Law as runners-up.

The Law Firm IT Team of the Year went to **Reynolds Porter Chamberlain**, ahead of Shoosmiths and Eversheds, while the Law Firm of the Year award went to **Eversheds**, ahead of Clifford Chance and Pinsents. Finally, the award for the Best Workflow or Case Management Project went to **Shoosmiths** for their interactive debt recovery system. The runners up were Eversheds and Nalders Solicitors.

Legal technology events diary

■ **NOVEMBER 25, BIRMINGHAM.** Eclipse Legal Systems is running a series of roadshows on online case tracking. After Birmingham there are sessions in Oxford (4th December) and Nottingham (9th December). Eclipse is also holding a series of previews of the latest version of its ProCLAIM case management system. One preview is scheduled at the Bradford Hannover International on 27th November, with another taking place at Stanhill Court, Horley (3rd December). For more details contact Darren Gower on 01274 704100 or email darren@eclipselegal.co.uk

■ **NOVEMBER 28, MANCHESTER.** The Association of Personal Injury Lawyers (APIL) IT Fair & Business Management Conference at the Midland Crowne Plaza. The event features seminars plus a small IT exhibition. For details call 0115 958 0585.

■ **DECEMBER 2-to-4, LONDON.** The Online Information 2003 conference and exhibition takes place in the Grand Hall at Olympia and this year runs in conjunction with the Content Management Europe event. www.online-information.co.uk

■ **DECEMBER 3 & 4, DUBLIN.** 'Spam - the death of email' conference looking at how ISPS, government agencies, legal bodies and multinationals are tackling the problem. Takes place at the Jurys Doyle Burlington Hotel. www.ema.org/spamconference

■ **DECEMBER 8, MANCHESTER.** iManage is taking its Legal IT Leadership Summit Report & Roadshow around Europe to explain the findings of its recent research into what are the big issues concerning law firms today. Attendees will receive an exclusive summary report that includes quantitative and qualitative data on current trends in legal IT. The Manchester event is a lunchtime session (12:00pm to 2:00pm) at Addleshaw Goddard's offices and is followed by a breakfast briefing at Berwin Leighton Paisner's offices in London (9th December). For details and registration visit <http://mktg.imanage.com/mk/get/itroadshow?src=10-0116-1003-ITSUMM>

Marketing software gets new UK outlet

Cole Valley Software's ContactEase legal marketing and contact management system has found a new UK sales and support outlet in Phoenix Business Solutions (08707 351426) who will now be offering the software to their customers.

Phoenix director Roger Pickett describes ContactEase as "a strong offering that meets our ideology for common integration methods into core applications such as PMS, email, Microsoft Office and document management systems such as iManage."

Here on the Insider we have always felt that the Cole Valley product (previously sold in the US as LegalEase) has been seriously under-rated and often unfairly passed over in favour of the InterAction CRM. This is despite the fact ContactEase has always defined its market sector in the narrower terms of a marketing and contact management system and never claimed to be a full blown client relationship management application like InterAction. Maybe Phoenix will have better luck with it?

Meanwhile, with their iManage hats on - the company was formed by Pickett and five other iManage consultants previously with Kramer Lee - Phoenix has been selected as the support and implementation partner by Teacher Stern Selby, who will be installing the iManage DMS during the first part of next year.

www.phoenixbs.com + www.colevalley.com

News in brief

■ ROBERT MUCKLE GO FOR SALES LOGIX CRM

Newcastle-based Robert Muckle has chosen e1 Business (01962 831496) to supply and implement its new client relationship management system. It will be based around the SalesLogix CRM product and integrated with the firm's Axxia Arista practice management system.

■ eCOPY NOW INTEGRATING WITH DOCUMENTUM

eCopy, the developer of document distribution systems, has launched a new integration product that allows users of the Documentum document management system to capture and transmit paper-based content directly into their Documentum repositories. The eCopy Connector for Documentum can be purchased through Canon resellers. www.ecopy.com

■ JMW RELAUNCHES ITS WEB SITE

Manchester-based law firm JMW (previously Jones Maidment Wilson) has relaunched its web site as part of its rebranding and online marketing strategy. The new site includes an interactive 'find a solicitor' tool and the firm will be pursuing a number of online marketing tactics - including search engine optimisation, 'rich media' ads, HTML email campaigns, video streaming and reciprocal links - to drive traffic to the site. The site was designed and built by EyeDea (0161 833 2555) who are also based in Manchester. www.jmw.co.uk + www.eyedea.co.uk

Email management news in brief

■ EMAIL HEALTH CHECKS WITH ITNET

The IT consulting and outsourcing company ITNET (0121 459 1155) has launched a free email management 'health check' service for law firms. The service will cover such things as storage, regulatory compliance, security and virus management, tracking and traceability, Spam and the use of email in home-based and mobile working. www.itnetplc.com

■ MASONS ROLL OUT MAIL METER

Masons has become the latest firm to install the MailMeter email management system from Waterford Technologies. MailMeter is described as a 'non-invasive' system, in that it does not read the content of emails but does analyse and report on such things as attachments, headers and the domain names that emails are being sent to and received from. Masons IT director Kevin Connell said "The ability to access data on the specifics of all email traffic places us in a position to better manage and plan our network bandwidth and storage capacity."

Connell added "We need to ensure that we're in a position to protect ourselves from the risks surrounding email misuse, such as corporate privacy and legal liability. Should a situation arise, MailMeter can provide us with demonstrable evidence of which employees are failing to adhere to the guidelines set out in our Acceptable Usage Policy for email."

www.waterfordtechnologies.co.uk

Pilgrim to bring SAP to market

Continued from front page... providing financial accounting, client and matter management, human resource planning, CRM and business intelligence facilities within one package "it is a multi-platform, multi-database, multi-currency, multi-language, multi-everything environment with unheard of flexibility and power to help firms drive their businesses forward."

The new alliance with SAP will, incidentally, have no impact on Pilgrim's current LawSoft system. This will continue to be developed and enhanced but with a focus now on firms in the top 100-to-500 bracket although as Placido points out, the SAP deal will now give larger LawSoft users a clear upgrade route.

Although SAP's own sales force will continue to support the £150 million + turnover end of the market, the relationship with Pilgrim will also help to nail the lie that SAP systems are only suitable for the Linklaters of this world. In fact SAP has already carried out a successful implementation with one smaller firm - Haarman Hemmelrath in Germany, which has about 600 lawyers and a turnover of € 145 million (£102M) - while on a broader scale over a third of the company's revenues in the UK and Ireland comes from the SME market.

■ Pilgrim, who will shortly be publishing details of their much improved financial results, will be giving the first previews of the new system in conjunction with SAP at the Lex Connect event at Millennium Mayfair Hotel, London, on 19 & 20 January.

www.lexconnect.com

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iManage goes on the road with its research data

With iManage scheduled to finalise its merger with Interwoven this week, the company is also planning to go on the road during early December - *see page 6 for dates* - with a series of presentations on the results of its recent CIO survey looking into the key IT issues and trends affecting major law firms today.

Among the survey's findings are: a greater demand by clients for 'transparency' with over half the firms responding to the survey reporting that clients are making direct access to financial and matter progress information a major issue. One consequence of this has been the widespread deployment of extranets, which are now in use at 94% of the participating firms.

In a related development, the survey also found that the demand for 'matter centric collaboration' (or MCC) is gaining speed and while only 8% of CIOs had MCC projects either underway or already completed, more than 75% were planning to move to an MCC system within the next 18 months. Over 80% of CIOs expect matter centric collaboration to provide substantial help in enabling matters to be handled by teams of lawyers working in different offices and more than 70% also anticipate a direct improvement in client service.

Another high priority is business continuity. Of the CIOs surveyed, 65% already have an IT disaster recovery plan in place and, of the remaining firms, 67% plan to prepare a recovery plan within the next six months. That's the good news, the bad news is that of those with a plan in place, only 26% have ever tested it in a drill.

Finally, on the spending front, 44% of firms reported no change in their 2003 IT budget from previous years, with increases and decreases evenly split at 28% each. This may change however for although 47% project no change in spending next year, 40% anticipate a slight increase averaging 5% in 2004.

Information rights management system on the way

Logica CMG and Meticulus Solutions (01249 700050) last week announced that they were working together on the development of an information rights management (IRM) system for law firms. The two companies will contribute their IT security and integration expertise to enable their customers to benefit from the improved client confidentiality and reduced business risk potentially offered by IRM technologies.

IRM (yes, this is the first sighting of a new three letter acronym) allows the senders of electronic documents or emails to specify precisely what subsequent actions individual recipients are permitted to perform. These permitted actions - or 'rights' - can be set by authors and can include viewing, annotating, editing, copying, forwarding and printing. Where appropriate, these rights can be granted for a limited period, also determined by the author. www.meticulus.com

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Gazette IT award goes to Addleshaw Goddard

Congratulations to Damian Griffiths and his team at Addleshaw Goddard for winning the award for 'the best use of IT' at the Law Society Gazette Centenary Awards Dinner last week. The award, which was sponsored by IT outsourcing specialists ITNET, went to the firm for its A-to-C project. This involved the firm "pushing the envelope" in terms of combining a major upgrade of Addleshaw Booth & Co's IT infrastructure with integration with the newly merged Theodore Goddard side of the practice, the latter element being completed in just five weeks. Commiserations to the runners up, who included Wragge & Co and Tessa Shepperson's Landlord-Law Online service.

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■ **Coming soon:** The next newswire is scheduled for the 27th November. The next Insider newsletter (No.156) will be published on Thursday 11th December 2003.