



Thorpe joins Pilgrim

After several weeks of speculation, former Elite UK head honcho David Thorpe has confirmed that he is joining Pilgrim Systems as a director, with effect from 1st March. Thorpe, who carried out an independent assessment of the company and its software before accepting the job offer, described Pilgrim's LawSoft system as "an incredibly good technology platform". Pilgrim's chairman Jim Cummings told the Insider he believed Thorpe would add a whole new dynamic to the company on both the sales and strategic development fronts.

Legal IT show bought by Informa group

Informa plc, the events and publishing group that encompasses everything from the Gleneagles Legal IT Forum to *Lloyd's Law Reports*, has acquired the Legal IT exhibition business from Cordial Events.

Although the acquisition will see the departure of Cordial's founders David Colin and David Warren, whose own involvement in the legal IT market dates back to the old SOLEX exhibitions at the Barbican, the broad format of the event – with its combination of exhibition stands and conference sessions – will remain the same. Stephen Parrott of Informa told the Insider that although the location and format would not change, they were planning to "re-energise" the event to improve both the quantity and quality of visitors coming in through the door.

Barry Hawley-Green, the chairman of the Legal Software Suppliers Association – one of the sponsors of the event and who ran their annual conference in tandem with this year's show – said his members were very happy about the Informa deal as they felt this would genuinely take the event forward to the benefit of exhibitors and visitors alike. He added that while there were other event ...*continued on page 6*

Fifteen in this year's Law Society Software Solutions Guide

A total of 15 practice management system suppliers have made it into the 2006 edition of the English Law Society's *Software Solutions Guide*. They include 13 suppliers who were in the guide last year: AIM Professional, AlphaLaw (formerly MSS), Axxia Systems, Civica Systems, Eclipse Legal Systems, Edgebyte Computers, JCS Computing Solutions, Linetime, Mountain Software, Opsis, Quill Computer Systems, Solicitors Own Software and Technology for Business. There is also one newcomer – Access Legal Systems – whose product set would seem ideally suited to the guide's target audience, plus one returnee – DPS Software.

Managing director Osman Ismail told the Insider that DPS dropped out last year to explore some alternative marketing strategies but realised the guide, now in its eighth edition, was so influential among its core market that it really could not afford to stay out. Three suppliers – Gavel & Gown, Laserform/LFM and Pericom – have opted out of this year's guide. Pericom chairman Ron Cragg said it was a reluctant but unavoidable decision on his part as, at the time the entries had to be submitted, Pericom was in the middle of a major corporate restructuring and still renegotiating some of its third-party software licences. There is also one error, which crept in during the production process, namely that some of the research results for Access and AIM have been transposed. The two suppliers can give you the correct figures. A copy of the guide can be downloaded from www.it.lawsociety.org.uk



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News in brief

Two wins for Civica

Next month Tofields will be installing Civica's Galaxy Legal case and practice management system at its two offices in South Yorkshire. The firm will use the 50 seat system primarily to support its conveyancing practice. Civica has also won a contract from medical negligence specialists Gadsby Wicks to provide a fully managed IT service. Under the agreement Civica will take responsibility for full 24/7 system administration, first line support, remote fixes and security advice under a service level agreement for both installed software and hardware.

Addleshaw upgrade video links

Addleshaw Goddard has upgraded its Polycom video conferencing from an ISDN platform to a new VSX 7000 system running over an IP network. One of the benefits is the firm now has the ability to hold multipoint videoconference calls between different offices without having to use third-party videoconference service providers. The firm says since the upgrade, no longer having to use external providers has saved "in the region of £60,000".

www.polycom.com

Capita Legal select Aderant

Capita Legal Services, part of the Capita Insurance group, has selected the Aderant Expert software suite to provide its new financial management, case management and business intelligence solutions. The deal includes Aderant's own back office and analytics systems, as well as the Expert Front Office system, which is based on the FWBS Matter Center product.

Quote, unquote

"Aliens must have kidnapped all the buyers of IT and replaced them with clones who have money to buy stuff and want to spend it. What a great show. On the foot hurty index that was the best in years." ...a supplier talking about visitors to the recent Legal IT London exhibition.

LSSA conference reveals digital divide

Barry Hawley-Green, the chairman of the Legal Software Suppliers Association, has described the organisation's first national conference – which took place in tandem with the recent Legal IT exhibition in London – as "a huge success" with delegate numbers exceeding expectations. LSSA is currently arranging to publish the conference proceedings, including the research carried out by Baker Tilly and the Practical Solutions consultancy, as a full report.

In the meantime, Hawley-Green said the event had already highlighted many key issues. This included the lack of management skills in firms so "they are still run as clubs rather than businesses". Hawley-Green suggests the involvement of non-lawyer specialist managers is rapidly becoming a key differentiator between successful and less successful firms. The LSSA research also found that while there were plenty of firms complaining they were not enjoying the benefits they had expected to see from IT, few were prepared to invest in the necessary training and change management skills to achieve it. In fact 80% of firms using LSSA members' software had taken no software training at all in the past four years.

Billback extends Elite deal

Billback Systems has announced changes to its relationship with Thomson Elite. As of the start of this year, the joint marketing of the benefits of using Billback's cost recovery systems in conjunction with Elite's accounts and billing software has been extended from North America to the UK, European and Asia markets. The duration of the relationship has also been extended to 30th June 2008. At the same time Billback has taken over responsibility for direct sales in North America, which were previously handled by Elite. Billback, whose systems are now used by 55 firms who also run Elite, has always been responsible for implementation and support in North America.

But, is time running out for vendors of traditional cost recovery systems? According to Richard Hellers, chief operating officer at nQueue, the world has moved on and "cost recovery systems based on what is essentially proprietary hardware are an anachronism". He says the trend is increasingly for pure software-based cost recovery systems (nQueue's speciality) that can be embedded in the multifunction devices (MFDs) law firms use for their everyday copying, scanning and printing.

www.billback.com

www.nqueue.com

New name and new direction for Icon

Following a £1 million plus venture capital injection and additions to its senior management team last year, case management specialist Intelligent Conveyancing has had a radical makeover in terms of both corporate image and product range. Whereas the original Icon application offered conveyancing with a strong risk management element, based on Visualfiles Solcase, the system – now called IntelliWorks – has been completely redeveloped as a turnkey solution. Sales director Michael Swift says the change – shedding the Solcase overhead and providing a fully developed application, rather than a framework that needed additional consultancy services – has opened the product up to a far wider market, currently ranging from 2 partner-to-60 partner firms. Prices start at £2400 for training and installation plus a pay-as-you-convey fixed price for every completed matter. This includes upgrades and ongoing support. Firms can also opt to either run the system inhouse on their own local servers or using a hosted ASP service.

Despite the new capital and management, the company retains its connection with Cheltenham law firm BPE, whose partners were instrumental in setting up the original business. However the company has changed its name to OchreSoft Technologies (01793 836730) in anticipation of moving beyond conveyancing into other areas of legal software. The first such product – a wills, trust and probate application, currently being developed in conjunction with BPE – is scheduled for launch later this summer.

www.ochresoft.com

CRM & DMS swap outs

Last week saw the announcement of two competitive swap-outs among best-of-breed suppliers. Norton Rose has exchanged contracts with Tikit to implement InterAction 5.1 client relationship management on a global basis. The firm previously used Aderant MarketSense for CRM. And, US firm Hall Render Killian Heath & Lyman is swapping out its Interwoven document management system in favour of Hummingbird's Enterprise for Legal and LegalKey records management. The firm's IT director Leslie Judkins said the driver was "to go beyond the microcosm of document management" towards a broader end-to-end matter lifecycle management solution.

News in brief

.NET gives Linetime 75% boost

Linetime is reporting a 20% increase in turnover for its financial year ending 31st January 2006 and a massive 75% increase in pre-tax profits. Managing director Tony Klejnow attributes the success to the take up of its Liberate software suite and growing range of .NET applications.

Barnetts join podcasting scene

Southport-based property lawyers Barnetts has become the latest firm to embrace podcasting. The firm's first podcast – by senior partner Richard Barnett on home information packs – will be available to download as an MP3 file from 11:30am today (Thursday 23rd February).

www.barnetts.co.uk

A dozen wins for AIM InSight

AIM has secured 12 orders for its new Evolution InSight practice and case management plus business intelligence suite during the final quarter of 2005. These include upgrades from older AIM systems by Blaser Mills and Britton & Co, orders from two start-up firms – Powell Davies and Decimus Fearon, and more wins from inhouse legal departments, the latest being at Remploy and Gwynedd County Council. Release 2 of InSight, which makes it easier for users of the Evolution system to report on key performance indicators, will be launched at the end of next month.

New integration system from Whitehill

Whitehill Technologies has launched BPI for Legal, a business process integration suite that makes it easier for firms to build connections and share information between different systems. Whitehill currently does not have any resellers in the UK so contact Tom Buchanan on (toll free) 00 800 0980 0980.

www.whitehilltech.com

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People & Places

Freestone joins Microsoft

Helen Freestone, who many readers will remember from her days at Hummingbird, has joined Microsoft as business manager for the UK legal market. She takes over from Simon Shaw, who has been promoted to another role within Microsoft.

New general manager for Cognito

Cognito Software has appointed Robin Lavery as general manager. Originally an electrical engineer, Lavery subsequently became the practice manager of the law firm Veitch Penny, during which time he had experience of Cognito software as it moved from DOS to a Windows platform. He was a committee member of the Law Society's Law Management Section.

SAP expert leaving Linklaters

Alex Young, the head of SAP development at Linklaters and project manager for the initial SAP global implementation, is leaving the firm in April. Young said that after 11 years with the firm, including over 4 years working on SAP projects, his immediate plan was to take a holiday and then he would explore fresh fields.

Solcara recruits new product manager

After three years at Verity and before that with SmartLogik, Andrew Maisey has joined KM specialists Solcara as product development manager.

SoftDesign expands training

Managed services specialist SoftDesign Services has expanded its training department with the appointment of Karl Whitburn and Preeti Patel. SoftDesign can now provide law firms with training on Microsoft Office applications, desktop operating systems and case management and digital dictation systems.

Promotion for Roberts

Bryan Roberts, head of EMEA sales at Aderant, has been promoted to vice president international sales and now also has responsibility for the APAC region.

Firms switch away from Blackberry

As reported on the back page of this issue, for a variety of reasons some law firms are now starting to look for PDA technology that can offer them more functionality than the humble Blackberry. **Ince & Co** is a good example where the firm wanted an integrated mobile phone/PDA solution that would allow fee earners to be connected to the practice's host systems but did not require them to carry laptop computers everywhere.

The firm's IT director Frank White explained that while "Most of the legal industry uses Blackberry, we chose not to go down this route because it lacked the functionality we needed. For example, much of our work is still done by fax, so we needed a device that could handle the receipt of electronic fax as TIFF files. We also wanted to be able to handle other attachment types, such as PDF, and to be able to send attachments directly from the devices. In addition we were not comfortable with the tariff restrictions and conditions imposed by Blackberry."

In conjunction with mobile computing specialists Handheld PCs Ltd, Ince & Co trialled a number of options before settling on a solution based around the XDA range of smartphones. These feature a compact design and a screen that swivels to the side to reveal a full QWERTY keyboard. It also runs the Intellisync mobile application, which supports remote access to host systems, Blackberry-style 'push' email and it has now even been integrated with the firm's dictation system. "The feedback from fee earners using the XDA," says White, "has been very positive and we are currently inundated with requests from many more staff keen to get hold of the system."

A second firm making the switch is **Darbys**, who are now replacing their Blackberrys in favour of HP iPAQ devices running the GoodLink mobile email system. This supports native email file attachments – so documents can be edited on the iPAQ – encryption and, according to head of IT Mike Warriner, involves far lower server administration overheads than the Blackberry. Darbys now plan to roll out the GoodAccess remote data access system.

Ince & Co used Handheld PCs (01628 644600) to supply their mobile solutions, including the XDA smart phones. Darbys used Good Technology (01628 509035), with the implementation handled by In-Situ (07917 218300).

www.handheld-pcs.com

<http://uk.good.com>

www.insitusolutions.com

Digital dictation news in brief

Voicepath links up with nFlow and Olympus

Outsourcing transcription specialist Voicepath (01926 821904) has formed an alliance with nFlow that offers seamless integration between the Voicepath service and the nFlow digital dictation workflow system. The link-up means outsourcing becomes just another option a fee earner can select when they want dictation transcribing, with the integration ensuring the related job information, reference numbers and administration is still automatically handled by nFlow. This is in contrast with some other systems where outsourced work has to be managed manually. For smaller firms, Voicepath has linked up with the Olympus dealer network so they can be introduced to the benefits of pay-as-you go outsourcing without having to find a suitable local agency to handle the transcription.

Dictaphone changes hands - again

After escaping from the Lernout & Hauspie debacle in 2002, Dictaphone – a company that can trace its roots back to Alexander Graham Bell – has been acquired again, this time for \$357 million by Nuance Communications. Nuance is the new name for ScanSoft, the scanning (it produces OmniPage and PaperPort) to voice recognition (Dragon Dictate) software company.

New speech + dictation package from Voice Technologies

Scottish supplier Voice Technologies (0141 847 5610 – the company's clients include Shepherd + Wedderburn, Anderson Strathern and Lindsays) has launched Voice Messenger, a new digital dictation workflow system with integrated speech recognition, so users can either have dictation transcribed normally or converted into text in real time so it only needs a final edit. The system is based on Philips SpeechMagic speech recognition technology.

Crescendo add Citrix to speech and dictation offering

Crescendo Systems (0870 770 1717) has launched a Citrix based 'document creation' suite that combines digital dictation and speech recognition within one workflow management and administration system so authors have a choice (see previous item) of ways of turning their text into a finished document. Crescendo say the benefit of Citrix is dictation files are stored on a central server and can be accessed from thin client terminals or even remotely via the web. The Crescendo system also utilises Philips SpeechMagic technology, which too now supports Citrix.

News in brief

Backup and disaster recovery

ImperaData, who have been selling data backup and disaster recovery systems for some time through channels such as BT, ICM and Eircom, have now produced a package of DR solutions to suit the generic needs of the legal sector. However the package can also be tailored to meet individual firm's operational and budgetary requirements. For more details call Andy Reed on 0845 006 8826.

www.imperadata.com

Cameron consultancy in ODPP deal

Jill Bazalgette, one of the members of the Neil Cameron Consulting Group, advised the Irish Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions in their recent case management procurement project. The €1.75m contract was awarded to Axxia.

www.neilcameronconsulting.com

Transam now MIMESweeping

Transam (020 7837 4050) has been appointed UK & Irish distributor for the Microdasys SCIP utility. This allows firms to inspect incoming encrypted web and email traffic for viruses. Michael Simkins LLP was Transam's first UK customer for SCIP (secure content inspection proxy), which works in conjunction with Clearswift MIMESweeper for Web.

Insider website – you want David Thorpe

You can now search the entire Insider website archive. Of the 2700 searches run last month, the most frequently searched for phrase was 'David Thorpe'. For the latest legal IT news, jobs, events, case studies and buyers guides visit the Insider website, described by *The Times* as "the UK's definitive online resource for legal technology information".

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ECLIPSE

Legal IT show bought

continued from front page... organisers trying to break into the market, LSSA's view is that the industry is best served by just one major exhibition each year, namely Legal IT. Legal IT 2007 will take place at the Business Design Centre, London on 7th & 8th February 2007

In other news... Informa's director of law firm management events Simon Dieppe is leaving the company and relocating to the Midlands. He is taking up a new post with Central Law Training, where he will be looking after their conference programme. The Wilmington Group, who own CLT and the *Solicitors Journal*, now also own the Lex Connect event which takes place in London next week (27 & 28 February).

Legal Week magazine has announced details of its new top-level IT conference for law firms. Called the Legal Week Technology Forum, it will take place in Lisbon on 7th-9th June this year. And, the Solicitors Group, which is holding its Law 2006 conference and exhibition at the Birmingham NEC on 14th & 15th June, has unveiled plans for a London event that will take place at Olympia on 14th & 15th March 2007.

Insider Job of the Week

Visualfiles/Solcase Trainer, £24k + car
A Somerset-based legal software supplier is looking for a skilled trainer with experience of Visualfiles/Solcase. The position offers a salary of up to £24k plus a company car plus onsite allowance. For details call Mark Lennard on 0870 800 9494 or email mark@jplgroup.com

The Insider Jobsboard

Looking for legal IT staff, including posts in management, sales, development, KM, support, marketing, accounts or training? The Insider Jobs Board has the best choice of legal IT jobs available in the UK and you can post your vacancies free of charge by emailing jobs@legaltechnology.com

Legal IT show reports

This year's exhibition at Islington was unusual in that one of the bigger stories surrounded the event's own change of ownership, nevertheless the product launches still justified its reputation as the UK's leading legal technology show.

Axxia v. SOS – at last a choice of interfaces

We mentioned the SOS Connect practice management and Axxia DNA business process management systems in last month's preview, having now had an opportunity to look at them, probably the most striking feature is the way the two companies have opted for entirely different user interface strategies. The SOS approach is to embed everything within Microsoft applications – Outlook for fee earners and Word for secretaries – very much the .NET way. In contrast Axxia has gone for a web portal interface because, says Axxia Doug McLachlan "law firm processes live in workflows not Outlook – they should be linked to what you are doing". Look at the two systems and make your own mind up but at least we are getting away from every system having the same Windows look and feel.

LuxTech offers 'Skype' for business

Outsourced IT services supplier LuxTech (0870 011 1096) and IP (internet protocol) telephony developer Swyx launched the Integrated Office, a joint venture to deliver a hardware independent phone system that can support remote working, reduced inter-branch call charges and the pooling of resources to create a "virtual receptionist".

Russell Lux says the software-based SwyxWare system is effectively "Skype for business" and for many firms "will be the last phone system they ever need to buy". Because all you require is a server that will run Microsoft XP – you don't need feature phones and you can have fax to the desktop without a fax server – this is probably the first IP phone system that is a commercially viable proposition for smaller firms. LuxTech's target market is firms with between 5 and 25 users although they do have some larger users, such as Wards with 150 staff at 11 different offices in the Bristol area. SwyxWare also supports individual client billing and integration with Outlook address books. www.luxtech.co.uk

Cognito 9.0 brings interface and integration boosts

Cognito Software launched Version 9.0 of its accounts and practice management system. New features include: a revised interface for fee earners, so they can access all the information they need through one configurable screen view; Microsoft Exchange integration including the option to store messages and attachments against matter files; and a new short cut for retrieving management reports.

Automating info collection

Litigation support bureau LIT Group has launched digIT. This can automatically collect electronically stored information across a business, regardless of location, file type or format, (including voicemail boxes) while still maintaining any metadata and upholding the chain of custody. digIT is based on the Autonomy system and can search for information using keywords or concepts, with the data then fed into standard litigation support systems for processing. LIT Group see digIT's main role being to help corporate counsel ensure they identify all relevant information when responding to a discovery request.

www.litgroup.com

Law reports dead on time

Justis Publishing, which next month celebrates its 20th anniversary in the online legal publishing business, has launched a new service – *Inquest Law Reports* – providing the full text of all English law reports relevant to inquest law and the work of coroners courts from 2000 onwards.

www.justis.com

Remote access with ETT

With 3500 lawyers in 28 offices and 19 countries – and the firm predicting that within two years most of them will need 24/7 mobile access to the firm's networks and data centres – Clifford Chance has potentially the biggest remote access problem of any firm on the planet. To tackle this issue – and to ensure that any system for dealing with email and accessing documents from the network was secure – the firm has implemented the iPass system from data services integrator ETT (020 7489 7200).

The firm's global IT procurement manager Jean-Luc Lévy said that along with meeting all these requirements, one of the primary benefits the firm has achieved since the iPass implementation is enhanced reporting functionality. It is now possible to track how much iPass is used within individual regions, which in turn provides an insight into the requirement for its services within different geographies. ETT is now working with Clifford Chance on a new portal that will provide staff with a consistent remote access method irrespective of the technology they are using, including WiFi, DSL, GPRS or even analogue connections via a dial-up modems.

www.et-t.net

All change for NLIS channel providers

MacDonald Dettwiler & Associates, the provider of the NLIS hub infrastructure and operator of the Transaction Online (TOL) NLIS search channel, has entered into an agreement – subject to regulatory approval – to acquire PropertyFlow, the operator of the rival SearchFlow NLIS channel. The Office of Fair Trading is expected to make a preliminary ruling in March on the deal, which would give SearchFlow and TOL a combined market share of in excess of 70% of current NLIS search traffic. Brokers Scotia Capital say the deal is connected with the emerging home information packs (HIPs) market, in particular access to the HIP preparation technology for law firms that SearchFlow has been developing jointly with xit2.

Meanwhile Steven Foster, the chief executive of TM Property Service – the third NLIS channel provider in the UK – is describing the MDA bid as a “reactive move” after its own recent restructuring. Following the completion of a share transfer that saw the original investors bought out, TM Property Service is now owned equally by Rightmove and estate agents Countrywide, Connells and Halifax. Rightmove is tipped to become the largest provider of home information packs when they are introduced in 2007, while the Halifax is the UK's third largest estate agency chain and part of the HBOS Group, the UK's largest mortgage lender.

Conveyancing Month!

Confused by HIPs and e-conveyancing? Then conveyancing specialist Tim Platel may have the answer with his new ezine *Conveyancing Month!* It is available in a PDF file format and is delivered by email. To register for a copy email Tim Platel at tim@timplatel.lawlite.net or visit his website at www.horizonlegal.co.uk



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International news

New star in Benelux CRM sector

Leading Benelux law firm CMS Derks Star Busmann has selected Contact Manager from Guide Consultancy Legal as its new client relationship management (CRM) system. Following Stibbe, CMS Derks Star is the second Benelux top 10 law firm to select the Contact Manager system in recent months. Guide Consultancy developed the application based on the specifications set out by some of the largest law firms in The Netherlands. The consultancy has also developed the Dutch equivalent of a CPD management system for law firm HR departments. For more information contact Marck Kasius at m.kasius@guideconsultancy.nl

BigHand partners into Benelux

UK digital dictation market leader BigHand has appointed Morningstar Systems as its reseller in the Benelux market. René Beulen of Morningstar said their initial focus would be on the top 50 Dutch law firms. www.morningstarsystems.nl

Jackson McDonald choose Elite

Jackson McDonald, one of the largest commercial firms in Western Australia, has selected Thomson Elite as its new practice management and CRM platform. Commenting on the deal, the firm's chief executive John McLean said "We don't know precisely what our needs or our clients' needs will be in five years' time so we want a provider who has the willingness and capacity to grow with us."

NZ firm crosses analogue divide

Christchurch (New Zealand) commercial firm Anthony Harper has switched from a mixture of analogue tape and digital dictation to a full workflow management system based around the Winscribe DDS. The firm now runs a mixture of Olympus DS-4000 and Philips SpeechMike digital voice recorders. Sound Business Systems of Auckland carried out the installation. www.soundbusiness.co.nz

UK vendors enjoy success down under

As there always seems to be a steady stream of foreign companies trying to break into the UK legal systems market, it is nice to be able to reciprocate with tales of UK vendor success in overseas markets, in particular Australia and New Zealand.

Double legal aid success for Visualfiles

Visualfiles Australia has won contracts from both the Legal Aid Commission of Australia Capital Territory (LAACT) and the Tasmania Legal Aid Commission to develop new systems to manage and process applications for legal aid.

Sparke Helmore to pilot Visualfiles

Australian top 20 firm Sparke Helmore is to trial Visualfiles case management software in its Sydney and Newcastle offices. Explaining why the firm had turned to Visualfiles, managing partner John Davis said "Clients are expecting shorter turnaround times at ever higher service levels. We are always looking for innovations to help us deliver consistent quality and better value. For some years we have been using our own bespoke system but we are a law firm, not a software developer." Visualfiles' Australian operations are headed up by Matt Fiske-Jackson, phone +61 2 9460 4166 or email m.jackson@visualfiles.com

ConveyanceLink wins £6 million NZ deal

ConveyanceLink, the UK pay-as-you-convey conveyancing case management software supplier, has won a £6 million contract that will see its systems marketed and distributed to New Zealand law firms by Conveyancing Solutions NZ. As part of the 15-year deal, ConveyanceLink will be repackaged at CCH Conveyancer and resold by the legal publishers CCH New Zealand. The contract also includes an option to sell ConveyanceLink into Australia. www.conveyancelink.com

Timeframe takes Nflow DDS to Australia

Nflow has teamed up with Australian legal IT specialists Timeframe to offer its popular Nflow digital dictation software to law firms in Australia and New Zealand. The system has been launched in Sydney and Melbourne, and a couple of pilot installations are already in the pipeline. The Australian connection was forged by Stuart Geddes, who originally worked on the Nflow implementation at Reynolds Porter Chamberlain in London, before moving to Australia to work for Timeframe. Timeframe say one of the attractions of Nflow is the way it can be integrated with PMS, DMS and CRM systems and is not a 'standalone silo'. www.timeframe-systems.com.au

The Insider poll - to outsource or keep inhouse?

For last month's Insider online survey, we asked whether electronic disclosure/e-discovery is a core function that should be kept inhouse or outsourced to external litigation support bureaux. Only 8% of you said you would keep it totally inhouse, 46% said outsourcing was the way to go and the remaining 46% said they would opt for a combination of inhouse and outsourced facilities. Interestingly nobody said they would base their choice on whatever was the cheapest option.

Despite the success of the recent Legal IT event in London, we still keep hearing that thanks to so much information now being available on the internet, the days of the traditional exhibition are over. So, this month we are asking what sources of information do law firms and inhouse legal departments rate the most highly when they are looking for new IT systems? Exhibitions? Consultants? Buyers guides? Supplier presentations? The internet? Word of mouth from other firms? You can find the survey form on the Insider website.

www.legaltechnology.com

Litigation support news

Kroll swallows Ibas swallows Vagon

Kroll Ontrack, the data recovery and legal technologies subsidiary of Kroll Inc, has completed the acquisition of Ibas Holdings, the Norwegian-based provider of data recovery, data erasure and computer forensics services across Europe. The acquisition is valued at \$45 million. Ibas recently expanded its own geographic reach through its acquisition of Vagon International, a UK provider of data recovery and computer forensics services.

An Rol for message filtering

Seattle-based Blank Law & Technology, which describes itself as a hybrid law firm and security integrator, reports that it saved an estimated \$50,000, during the e-discovery phase of a recent bankruptcy case, by using the Postini offline message filtering service to filter and reduce 12Gb of archived files to 1Gb of legitimate email. The firm's managing partner Eric Blank said "Email has become the most critical e-discovery document. But to get to the gold you have to wade through a lot of spam and that can rack up enormous costs. Postini's solution identifies and archives spam but without changing the date, time, address and other key information and preserves the metadata essential to forensic discovery."

www.postini.com

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Black(berry) Friday tomorrow ?

Over the past few months Research in Motion (RIM – the company behind the hugely popular – and lawyer friendly – Blackberry device) has fought off a number of legal challenges, the most recent being a patent infringement suit brought by InPro of Luxembourg which could have shut down RIM's activities in Europe. However it might still be crunch day tomorrow (Friday 24th February) when the US District Court in Virginia is scheduled to determine whether or not to grant an injunction that would shut down the Blackberry service in North America.

RIM say they are confident they will beat all the patent infringement claims being brought by NTP but add that, even if defeated, they still have contingency plans in place that will see the Blackberry service switching over to an alternative technology that does not infringe NTP's IP rights. NTP for their part say they "seriously doubt" RIM could devise any workaround technology that does not infringe their patents.

In theory the NTP action should not affect Blackberry users in the UK although it is a moot point how long the UK operations could survive if the US parent went out of business. It is however noticeable that a growing number of UK law firms (*see also page 4 in this issue*) are now switching to alternative wireless email/PDA platforms. Although uncertainty about the future of Blackberry is a consideration, the main motivation here seems to be that after nearly three years of the Blackberry, users now want more functionality than RIM can offer. The Insider will be looking at some of these RIM rivals in the coming months in its new product reviews section.

IT salaries climbing again

According to the results of a new survey carried out on behalf of the Association of Technology Staffing Companies, salaries for IT staff in central London have risen to levels not seen since the Y2K and dotcom bubbles. The survey says the boom has been fuelled by the demand among City, financial and professional services organisations for staff who can change their accounting and communications systems to ensure they comply with the emerging international regulatory framework, including Sarbanes-Oxley and Basel II.



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The top stories in the Insider for February 2006 included: Sweet & Maxwell seeing its new Docklands offices destroyed by an IRA bomb on 9th February. It was also announced that Corel had agreed to purchase WordPerfect from Novell for \$116 million – a bargain as Novell had paid \$1.4 billion to buy the one-time wordprocessing market leader just 20 months previously but then they fluffed the migration to Windows. And, one of the highlights of the annual Information Systems for Lawyers conference at the end of the month (this was the old Lawyer Marriott event) was Clive Whitfield-Jones of Jeffrey Green Russell giving a presentation on the then still very novel topic of how law firms could use the internet for business purposes.

20 years ago today...

Early 1986 saw the appearance of the first computer virus. Called 'Brain', it was a boot sector virus that infected computers via a floppy disk. Boot viruses are now as rare as floppy disks but were the main form of malware for 10 years until Windows 95 was launched and hackers switched their attention to macro viruses.

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