LEGAL TECHNOLOGY INSIDER

LexisNexis acquires Axxia

After a couple of months of not entirely inaccurate rumour, LexisNexis chose the eve of this year's Legal IT Show to announce its acquisition of Axxia Systems, one of the market's best known and longest established suppliers of case and practice management systems. Axxia will now join the LexisNexis UK practice management solutions division, which also includes the Visualfiles business that was acquired in the summer of 2006.

According to Axxia managing director Stuart Holden, who will be remaining with LexisNexis as commercial director, a big attraction of the deal was to become part of the "brilliant" strategy Lexis had created for its legal software portfolio. This included the fact it ensured Axxia users had a secure future because Lexis wanted to take the Axxia DNA PMS product forward.

First win for new Pilgrim system

Pilgrim Systems new Lawsoft Office 'next generation' case and practice management system (*see page 4 for more details*) has won its first order from Leeds-based Lupton Fawcett LLP. The system, which includes CRM and document management, allows users to enter data directly through their favourite Microsoft Office applications, including Outlook and Word. Luptons are replacing an old IRIS AIM Evolution Classic unix-based system.
• Ellis Jones, a 120 user firm in Dorset, has selected Pilgrim Lawsoft as its new PMS, workflow and CRM platform to replace its existing Cognito software.

February's big deals

Burges Salmon select Elite 3E
Burges Salmon has selected Thomson Elite's 3E as its new integrated practice and financial management system to replace its old Norwel PMS. The firm's finance director Simon Russell said "We feel we are buying into a future of enhanced functionality and a higher level and quality of management information."

IRIS wins Minster site
Minster Law is to swap out its Eclipse case management and Paragon accounts software in favour of an IRIS Legal Office (aka Videss) integrated practice and case management system. Minster Law (originally Corries) is the UK's second largest personal injury claims firm and, as part of its Horizon Change programme, plans to double in size over the next three years. The £400k deal will see the IRIS solution deployed across the firm's 400 strong workforce in York and Wakefield.

Macfarlanes to roll out SRC Winscribe
In one of the biggest DDS deals in recent months, Macfarlanes is to roll out SRC Winscribe digital dictation to over 350 users. The firm, which is replacing analogue tape, selected SRC after users were given half a day to test Winscribe and Bighand systems side by side.

Wiggin and Silkin pick Skywire workflow
Wiggin LLP and Lewis Silkin have selected Skywire Software's BPI for Legal workflow system to automate business processes including new matter and new hire intake. Skywire acquired BPI developer Whitehill Technologies last year. Saturn 27 will oversee the implementations at both firms. www.skywiresoftware.com

Browne Jacobson to migrate to FWBS

Browne Jacobson has confirmed that it is to migrate from a Visualfiles Solcase case management system to an FWBS Matter Centre platform. The deal, which is the largest FWBS UK law firm win to-date, will also involve FWBS integrating their software with the firm's Interwoven DMS, InterAction CRM and Tikit Firmware PMS.

Browne Jacobson's head of IT Peter Birley said this would be a long term process as the firm would not simply be transferring data from one case management system to another but would instead be taking the opportunity to review and re-engineer all its business processes. Birley added that the FWBS technology approach was a better fit with the firm's Microsoft + matter centric +.NET strategy.
• Browne Jacobson also piloted Visualfiles M2 but never implemented it.

FWBS sales & marketing director Mark Craddock said his company was moving away from its original integrated approach to one of forming alliances with other suppliers – including Interwoven, DocsCorp and Bighand – whose products had a "wow" factor.

Blog traffic up 30%

Latest figures show visitors to The Orange Rag blog increased by 30% in the six months to 31st January 2008, with last month (January) seeing a record number of 13,000 distinct hosts served and just over 130,000 page views. We've also added a new widget to the blog (you can find it at the foot of the left-hand column and in a similar position on the Insider website) that provides the geographic locations of the last 100 visitors to the blog. At the time of going to print we are apparently big in Hong Kong and Romania.
www.theorangerag.com

Bar vendor also enjoys the 'IRIS effect'

Last month the news was all about suppliers of law firm systems winning business from IRIS users but it appears the Bar are also unhappy. Reports suggest two sets have already stopped using their 'new' systems (co-developed on the same .NET platform as IRIS Mountain Connected) and switched back to their older Meridian software. Meanwhile Bar Squared (0845 0091180), the main competitor in the Bar IT market, has seen its busiest year to-date, securing 21 orders from barristers sets for its Lex chambers management system. The wins encompass a number of Mountain swap-outs, including Park Court Leeds, One Inner Temple and Citadel Birmingham.

Kaim Todner Solicitors, who have 110 users across five offices, are now running Bar Squared's Edict browser based diary management system. This has Outlook and Blackberry integration, so appointments booked within the system are automatically forwarded to Blackberry users.
www.barsquared.com

LexisNexis acquires Axxia

Continued from front page... The Orange Rag blog for 5th & 7th February carries the full text of the formal LexisNexis statements however probably the key element is the new practice management group will be able to offer a broad range of integrated and open/point solutions, including Axxia PMS with integrated case and Axxia PMS with Visualfiles systems through a unified salesforce. The group will also retain its relationships with 3rd party suppliers, such as the long standing Visualfiles partnership with SOS.

On the people front, Kate Holden has been promoted to senior vice president for global practice management solutions, with overall responsibility for the legal software portfolio. As already mentioned, Stuart Holden is remaining with the business, working with operations director Dan Marshall, who is currently based in the Visualfiles Leeds office. Doug McLachlan of Axxia will be retiring from the business later this summer. (Visualfiles founder Neil Ewin has already retired.) And former Lawyer Group managing director Rachel Lesiter, who can take much of the responsibility for dragging the Lawtel service (now part of Sweet & Maxwell) into the 21st century, also joins the senior management team.

Civica – still here and focused on users

We haven't heard much from Civica in the private practice legal sector for about 18 months, so when a new order announcement arrived this month, we followed it up. According to Pam Kendrick-Astle, the managing director of Civica's legal business, the supplier is fully committed to both the private practice and local authority legal sectors, with "business going forward in line with expectations." Kendrick-Astle added that while the company had not engaged in any major marketing campaigns (as a matter of corporate policy it has not been involved with either the Law Society's *Software Solutions Guide* or the Islington Legal IT show since 2006) it had been focusing on the needs of existing users and developed a thriving consultancy service handling both compliance/risk management and extranet portal projects.

In terms of recent business, Francis Wilks & Jones, which has offices in London and Birmingham, has replaced its existing PMS with Civica's Galaxy Legal system. And, Sheltons in Nottingham and Terrells in Peterborough have both recently upgraded to Galaxy from older Civica Qnix systems. On the local government front, both Dudley MBC and Plymouth City Council have selected Civica to supply case management with integrated time recording and billing. And, East Ayrshire Council and Rochdale MBC have selected Civica's debt recovery software to improve revenue collection and reporting.
• The sales contact for Civica Legal is Susanne Hodgkinson on 01384 453400. **www.civica.co.uk**

Law London in three weeks

Along with a large number of technology exhibitors, this year's Law London event (which opens its doors at Olympia 2 in three weeks' time) will feature a technology conference (sponsored by the Insider) carrying a total of 12 free CPD hours. There are also 10 other conference streams, including extensive sessions on law and practice management topics. Last year just over 2800 delegates attended the event, including 950 who were there specifically for the technology side of the show.
• Law London 2008 takes place on 12th and 13th March. The opening times are 8:45am to 6:30pm on Wednesday and 8:45am to 4:30pm on the Thursday. For further details call 01332 226600 or visit **www.thesolicitorsgroup.co.uk**

News in brief

Dickinson Dees present Citrix
To support its growing number of fee earners who need to work remotely or via mobile links, plus the opening of satellite offices, Dickinson Dees' inhouse IT team (headed by IT director Simon Earnshaw) has implemented a new version of Citrix Presentation Server on a Microsoft Windows 2000 Server platform. The Citrix move has given staff access to their desktop environment from any location (mobile staff have laptops fitted with 3G cards) and supports the firm's Microsoft Office XP, Winscribe DDS, Interwoven DMS plus case and practice management applications.

It's got to be Perfect for Simmons
Perfect Information (020 7892 4200) has won a three year contract from Simmons & Simmons to supply it with PI Filings and PI debts, Perfect's databases of company filings and fixed income securities.
www.perfectinf.com

DocBuilder for lawyers
IOS (020 8249 6530) has launched DocBuilder, a new document assembly system that can speed up document creation by making it easier for users to locate the information needed to assemble consistently formatted documents. IOS says it reduces risk, as fewer elements are left for users to remember to change, and does not require users to have IT skills.
www.iosl.co.uk

Quote, unquote

"But at least I'll be able to tell my grandchildren that I once sat next to a man who had been short-listed for the Regional Law Firm Knowledge Officer of the Year Award." *...one guest at the recent Legal Technology Awards explains why he was underwhelmed by the experience.*

News in brief

Hat-trick of wins for GlobalExpense
Employee expenses management system specialists GlobalExpense (020 7298 5757) has won orders for its systems from three more UK firms: Trowers & Hamlins, McGrigors LLP and Dickinson Dees. GlobalExpense will manage the workflow and expense authorisation process for all three firms, including tax compliance plus receipt audit and validation.
www.globalexpense.com

Recommind on the move
Recommind this week moved into new London offices at 14 Greville Street EC1N 8SB. The phone line is 020 7785 7243/4.

Keyhouse competitive wins in Ireland
Irish legal software supplier has benefited from two competitive swap-outs in recent weeks. RDJ Glynn in Galway has switched from a Opsis accounts and case management system to Keyhouse's own LawOffice suite. And, David J O'Meara in Mallow has swapped out a TFB system in favour of Keyhouse software.
www.keyhouse.ie

New Metis CRM module
e1 Business (01962 718296) has launched a new business alerts module for its Metis CRM system (which is based on a Sage SalesLogix platform). The module creates pre- and post meeting reports, prompts and event confirmations via email.

TFB take out Pracctice site
Corker Binning in London is replacing its Pracctice system with TFB's Partner for Windows suite. Other recent TFB wins are Hubbard Pegman & Witney, Nicol Denver & Purnell and Loxley Legal Services.
• TFB has also released a free module for firms wanting to encrypt data that, for any reason, needs to be sent on CD away from an office or transferred between branches.

Legal IT show trends – Outlook and SaaS

At this month's Legal IT Show, two trends in system design and delivery stood out from the crowd, namely software as a service (SaaS) and Microsoft Office integration. One exhibitor, DPS, had already announced an SaaS initiative (*see last Insider*) and at Islington, Virtual Practices (01225 787700) – the online services arm of SOS, also threw its hat into the ring with its new guide *We're starting a law firm: what should we do about IT*. This reiterates the argument that start-ups should consider alternative approaches to IT, such as SaaS. It is not a new argument (although it remains one small firms seem unable to grasp) however perhaps the shift in terminology away from older concepts, such as bureaux, ASPs and hosted applications, and the new focus on 'service' may now attract the business interest it deserves.
• *Next month we look at new SaaS supplier e-know.net.*
www.virtualpractices.com/guide

Our Outlook embedding is more embedded than yours
We reported in the last issue that DPS (them again) had launched their Outlook Office system, which delivers legal accounts, case management and digital dictation from within a Microsoft Outlook interface. This has been followed by the launch of Pilgrim's Lawsoft Office PMS, a product that – in the words of one Pilgrim user – is "gobsmackingly awesome". David Thorpe of Pilgrim is keen to stress that Lawsoft Office is more than just a few buttons added to the Outlook menu ribbon but is instead fully embedded with Microsoft Office and Microsoft Exchange. This means that, for example, time can be recorded in Outlook and bills produced within Word.
• Lawsoft Office, it should be noted, is not an alternative or upgrade to the existing Lawsoft system but can co-exist with it. You can find further details of both the Pilgrim and DPS systems on The Orange Rag blog for 18th February.

For the record, both FWBS, with its Matter Centre product, and SOS, with its .NET based Connect software, already offer an Office/Outlook embedded interface. Similarly, LexisNexis Visualfiles M2 matter management runs within Outlook, as will its new Vanilla system, when it is finally launched. The one hazard we foresee is rival suppliers muddying the waters and confusing punters by claiming their respective Outlook and Office integrations are more embedded than those of their competitors.

HMRC – still schizoid after all these years

We've reported before that HM Revenue & Customs and the Land Registry have a schizoid relationship with the outside world. They know they must co-exist with commercial suppliers but still hanker for the days of the old state monopolies, as one conveyancer recently found when he was cold-called by HMRC. He was first asked why he wasn't using online submissions to handle SDLT returns – to which he replied he was and had been using a commercial service for the past two years.

"Oh," came the response, "but you are not using the HMRC service, why not, it's free you know?"

"But it doesn't integrate with case management does it?"

"No it doesn't," replied the HMRC representative. "But is that the only reason why you won't use us?"

"Well yes, afterall it is a pretty big reason."

"Is it?" replied HMRC. And with that exchange, the call ended. *In other conveyancing related news...*

New SMS server at Hammondsdirect
Hammondsdirect has implemented an Avanquest Text Message Server to help automate the way the volume conveyancer handles the distribution of SMS progress messages to its clients.

HIPs integration with Zylpha
Zylpha (01962 875475) – a new name to us – has launched HIPCase. This is described as an 'out-of-the-box' integration utility that allows law firms to create home information packs directly from information they already have stored in their conveyancing case management systems. For example, MoveHomeLegal is already using HIPCase with its Visualfile case management software. **www.zylpha.com**

Visualfiles show latest conveyancing
At this month's Legal IT Show, LexisNexis Visualfiles showed its next generation conveyancing software. Called VisualConvey, this is aimed at the company's traditional Solcase case management user base but in addition to the core functionality of its predecessors, also provides a gateway to all the integrations necessary in today's HIPs and e-conveyancing environment. VisualConvey also includes a prospect management feature to manage the workflows associated with quoting for new business and the follow-up to convert prospects into actual clients.

Offshoring to save £2 billion by 2015

New research by the outsourcing consultancy princeOMC predicts that 20% of law firm staff will be located in low-cost overseas markets by the year 2015, in a move that will save the legal world's largest firms as much a £2 billion a year in operating costs. The survey found that while 25% of global 100 firms were already offshoring some aspects of their activities – primarily IT and support services – 53% predicted that both support services and legal work could be outsourced and/or offshored within the next five years. The primary drivers for offshoring are financial, with 27% blaming pressure from clients to reduce costs, followed by increased competition (22%) making cost reduction a priority.

International news

Dubai firm selects Tikit for IT refresh
Dubai-based law firm Hadef Al Dhahiri has awarded Tikit a contract to conduct a major overhaul of its information management systems. The project will see Tikit implementing the LexisNexis Interaction CRM, Interwoven Worksite, Workshare Professional, Sage Carpe Diem time recording and Tikit's own TMS document template management system. Tim Travers, who was previously based in the UK, has been advising the law firm.

Timesoft win more Aderant business
Belgian law firm Lydian Lawyers has selected Timesoft to implement its new Aderant Expert practice management. The 50 lawyer firm is based in Brussels.

Morningstar wins Norwegian implementation
Dutch-based IT integrators Morningstar Systems have been selected to implement a LexisNexis Interacion CRM system at the Norwegian law firm Wiersholm.

Editorial: Goodbye to 'best of breed' ?

Since the mid-1990s the accepted dogma in the legal world has been that IT systems fall into one of two categories. They are either 'integrated systems' or they are 'best of breed systems' – but is this distinction still valid today?

The old argument was that integrated systems gave users no choice. So, if you ran a PMS from Supplier X, then the only case management you could use in conjunction with it would also be from Supplier X – and hard luck if you wanted to use a system from a different supplier. In contrast best of breed gave you the keys to the sweetshop so you could pick and mix the elements you wanted, with a PMS from Supplier A, case from Supplier B, etc.

Unfortunately, somewhere along the line the definitions blurred and a generation of salesmen and IT managers grew up thinking 'best of breed' meant better than integrated. Which was unfortunate as some of the so-called best of breed systems that have come and gone were, quite frankly, crap. As for 'pick and mix'? In many application categories the system choice is so limited as to be verging on the non-existent. For example, there are arguably just three best of breed PMS products in the market, compared with 40 plus integrated systems.

More importantly, over the past decade almost all suppliers of integrated systems have opened up their product ranges, so their software will happily co-exist with third party software, thus offering punters the benefits of the integrated and best of breed approaches to technology. Perhaps the simplest solution is to drop the divisive term 'best of breed' and call such systems what they are known as in other industries, namely as 'point solutions'.

...Charles Christian

Opinion: Why firms still build their own systems

Manchester-based Lewis Hymanson Small (LHS) began life last year as a breakaway from Rowe Cohen. For operations director Brian Rogers, the priority was to ensure resources were devoted to fee earners, rather than back office staff, and that wherever possible IT systems would handle routine administration.

Key requirements, along with getting away from a system of endless monthly form filling on Excel spreadsheets, included HR, file management and compliance in its widest sense – ideally all within one integrated solution, as there were so many areas of overlap. However a trawl through the market was unable to locate a suitable off-the-shelf system and so the firm decided to use its own inhouse IT expertise. Brian Rogers takes up the story...

LHS set about developing its own fully interactive HR and compliance system, the development of the HR system giving the firm the foundation on which to build the compliance system, which is linked into each individual's HR account. This means that if someone is promoted to a fee earner position, for example, or team leader, the HR system is able to automatically update the compliance system for auditing and other purposes.

The compliance system is fully interactive and helps the firm meet its obligations under the new *Solicitors Code of Conduct 2007* and *Money Laundering Regulations 2007*. It also aids general client care and quality programmes. The system centrally controls all professional indemnity insurance matters, complaints, client feedback, money laundering reports, referral fee arrangements, file auditing and experts. Other compliance areas will be added as and when required.

The system includes the following functions:
• Automatic reminders to fee earners to complete monthly professional indemnity returns, with email alerts to supervisors if they fail to do so.
• Online file auditing – supervisors complete an online screen and tick the relevant boxes as they go through files, any adverse ticks tells the system to send an email alert to supervisors for follow-up.
• Complaints handling – each client complaint is recorded separately and the system manages the process in ➯

⇨ accordance with the firm's complaints policy with key date flags appearing as necessary. A full printed chronology can be produced if the complaint ends up with the Legal Complaints Service.

• Client feedback – clients who send thank you letters or return questionnaires have their details recorded centrally and this feedback can be used during performance reviews of staff.

• Referral fee agreements – the system records all details required by the SRA including source details, fee scales and review dates, and produces alerts when six-monthly reviews of arrangements with referrers are due.

On a technical note, the LHS system is intranet based, developed on Microsoft .NET technologies, and linked to the firm's Outlook system for email and diary purposes.

Many small to medium sized firms do not have in house IT people to develop sophisticated systems and therefore have to use a range of different systems which are often not fully integrated preventing all departments from working in unison. With the increasing pressure on firms to be efficient, give good client care, avoid money laundering and adhere to strict conduct rules, it is becoming more important than ever for law firms to have efficient systems in place.

...Brian Rogers, Lewis Hymanson Small

• LHS believes the system would be of interest to other law firms and is now looking for IT partners who could help refine the software and bring it to market.

It pays to be honest

A law firm IT director writes in to say... "Some time ago, mid 2006, we became aware that the VMWare licensing shown on our online account screen had two additional VMWare server licences attributed to us that we had neither ordered nor paid for. Suffice to say, repeated requests to correct this produced a continual passing of the buck within VMWare but now perhaps it is resolved?

"According to our latest licensing statement, it would appear that compensation has been given to us in the form of 130 free licences. Wouldn't if be lovely if this were true. It's nice to know," adds our contact, "that the quality of VM's software is *not* reflected in their administrative abilities – or should I say inabilities."

News in brief

Gateley Wareing selects DMC
HBJ Gateley Wareing has selected a range of products from DMC Business Machines (0845 130 6251) to improve the management and operations of the firm's print and scanning systems. The DMC project will include integration with the firm's Interwoven DMS, eCopy, expenses retrieval, OCR and scanning systems.

Goldsmith Williams goes paperless
Goldsmith Williams has deployed a mailroom automation system to help handle the road traffic claims paperwork coming into its Liverpool offices. The new system – designed by Basware UK (01606 331234) and using Kofax software – integrates with the firm's Eclipse case management and automatically scans and allocates 85% of the 1500 pages of mail (including faxes and emails) it receives each day to the correct matter files.
• A feature length article looking at mailroom automation can be found on the Orange Rag blog for 11th February.
www.basware.co.uk

From Equitrac to Moddocs
Randy Henderson, who we first encountered with ICG Research and more recently Equitrac, has set up the Moddocs legal technology marketing and costs recovery consultancy. The marketing business aims to help UK companies wanting to break into the US legal IT market. We'll be publishing one of his cost recovery articles in the near future
www.moddocs.ca

BLP pick Research Monitor
Berwin Leighton Paisner is to roll out the Research Monitor online research usage, password tracking and cost recovery system from Priory Solutions (0845 056 9464) at its London office.

People & Places

Hemming joins Tikit
Ann Hemming, our favourite MBA, has departed from LexisNexis to join Tikit and head up e-learning projects.

From Zantaz to Mimosa
Brian Bennett, who headed up UK legal market operations for Zantaz before it was acquired by Autonomy last year, has been appointed managing director of email archiving specialists Mimosa Systems Inc. The company's UK office is based in Reading (01189 637860).
www.mimosasystems.com

Kirton raises at Tikit
Ian Kirton, previously with DDS vendor SRC, has moved to Tikit as business manager for the office productivity group.

Steve Falconer flies into Pilgrim
Steve Falconer, previously a regional manager for LexisNexis Visualfiles, has joined Pilgrim Systems as customer account manager.

Kropholler now VP at CPA
Derk Kropholler has left Thomson Elite to take up a new role as VP for EMEA business development with CPA Management Systems. He can be reached at dkropholler@cpaglobal.com

Stone free
Legal business manager Helen Freestone has moved on at Microsoft to a new role. A replacement has not been announced.

Gooderham now at Redwood
Following its recent acquisition by LexisNexis, Redwood Analytics has recruited Stu Gooderham as the company's first UK-based salesman. He will be based at the Lexis Chancery Lane offices and he can be contacted at sgooderham@redwodanalytics.com

Reader poll: Sharepoint definitely, maybe

In our latest readers' poll, we asked a series of questions relating to the take-up of Microsoft Sharepoint by law firms. We had 62 responses and this is what you said...

We started by asking does your firm use or plan to deploy Sharepoint? A total of 29% said it was already deployed, 48.4% said they were planning to deploy it – leaving 22.6% with no plans to deploy Sharepoint. As to what firms were using or planning to use Sharepoint for, the most popular response (45.8%) was intranets, followed by information sharing platforms (33.3%). Only 16.7% were looking to use it as a DMS platform, and a further 4.2% saw it as a process and workflow platform.

When asked if Sharepoint would become the standard for law firm intranets over the next 12 months, just over half (51.6%) agreed, a quarter (25.8%) disagreed and 22.6% proffered no opinion. We also asked if Sharepoint could become the key information search and retrieval platform for fee earners. A massive 71% agreed, with just 16.1% disagreeing – and 12.9% with no opinion.

We then asked if Sharepoint could provide a real alternative to the traditional DMS. The response was split with a quarter (26.7%) saying 'yes' and the same number saying 'no', leaving 46.7% replying 'maybe'. However when we asked if readers thought the remaining enterprise DMS vendors would eventually create hybrid products that incorporated Sharepoint with their own systems, 48.4% said 'yes', 41.9% said 'maybe' and just 9.7% said 'no'.

For our penultimate question, we asked firms using or planning to use Sharepoint how critical it would be to their businesses. Very critical was the response of 18.5%, another 18.5% said plain vanilla critical, 55.6% said important, leaving just 7.4% who didn't think it was very important.

Surprisingly – well actually rather worryingly – given this enthusiastic response, only 35.5% of respondees said Sharepoint infrastructure featured in their current disaster recovery and business continuity plans, leaving nearly two-thirds of firms apparently exposed risks-wise.

• *See back page for details of this month's readers poll.*

Digital dictation news in brief

Now Winscribe joins the Blackberry jam
Winscribe has formally launched a version of its digital dictation system that uses a Blackberry as the recording device. Users can record on the device, playback and edit texts and then send them to their firm's Winscribe server for transcription. Winscribe has put the system through extensive testing in a number of locations, with Thring Townsend Lee & Pembertons the main UK beta test site.

Here at the Insider we've tried the Winscribe system on a Blackberry 8800 (running o/s version 4.21.68) and found it very simple to use – the sound quality was excellent. There is an extra icon on the home screen, clicking on that brings up a Winscribe jobs menu. Click on 'create jobs' to bring up the Winscribe Mobile Recorder application and then use the trackball to jump between the record, stop, rewind and play commands. For hard core dictators, used to the traditional multi-function slider switch found on digital recorders, the Winscribe system achieves about as close a replication of this experience that is possible on a Blackberry. Now all law firms have to do is get fee earners to also use their Blackberrys as phones.

Southerns pick SRC Winscribe
Southerns, which has five offices across Burnley and Lancashire, has selected a Winscribe system – to be supplied and implemented by SRC – as its new digital dictation platform.

New recruit for Grundig UK team
Grundig Business Systems has recruited Lee Marshall as a technical account manager for its UK team. He will report to country manager Ian Laycock and have responsibility for pre-sales consultancy and project management.

New conference recording system from Philips
Philips has launched its new 955 conference recording system for organisations needing to create a digital ⇨

Also in this Insider

Along with this issue of the Insider we also include the latest edition of *Insider Corporate Legal*, our regular supplement for inhouse legal departments, and a new publication from Web4Law called *Security @ Risk*. Please contact the Insider office if any supplements are missing.

⇨ record of an interview, meeting or conference. The system comes complete with a remote control, a carrying case, a mike with a 360 degree pickup and all the software needed for editing and archiving recordings. Files can be saved in a variety of formats including DSS and MP3.

nFlow to mount annual conference
nFlow Software has announced plans to hold its first annual conference for users of its digital dictation software. The full programme has still to be announced but it will take place on the 4th and 5th of June at Reynolds Porter Chamberlain's offices in London.

Two new Crescendo wins
Two more firms – KJ Commons Solicitors, one of the largest criminal practices in the North-West with offices in Workington, Whitehaven and Carlisle, and JSP Solicitors in Skegness – have completed implementations of Crescendo's DigiScribe-XL 4.0, the latest version of the company's digital dictation software. KJ Commons are running the system across a LAN with a Citrix link to remote offices.

Olympus launches the DS-5000
Olympus has launched the DS-5000 digital voice recorder for professional users. The device, building on the success of the market leading DS-4000, supports centralised firmware updates, file security via encryption, offers multiple file formats (including DSS Pro, DSS, WMA, WAV and MP3) – and it looks good with a matt black metal case. Prices start at £349.

Quote, unquote

"It got every sixth word wrong, which meant you'd swear in exasperation, and it would think you had finished each sentence by saying 'Offer fox ache' and type that in too.." ...*Guardian columnist Charlie Brooker is unimpressed by his new speech recognition software.*

More people & places

Neil Rose branches out
After 12 years with the *Law Society Gazette*, latterly as deputy editor, Neil Rose has left to go freelance. He will retain a consultant editor role with the *Gazette* and has also been appointed as editor of the Institute of Legal Executives Journal. He can be reached at
neil.rose@writtenmedia.co.uk

Promotions & appointments at TutorPro
E-learning specialists TutorPro has promoted UK sales manager Simon Meager to its main board as business development director. Tony Smith, previously with competitors Intellego, joins TutorPro as UK sales manager.

Recruitment at SDLT
Mike Whitfield, previously with law firm Watson Burton, has joined the network and support team at SDLT.co.uk.

Ballard joins Saturn 27
Legal IT industry veteran Michael Ballard is the latest recruit to the new Saturn 27 consultancy.

Pullman now at 3Kites Consulting
Tony Pullman, whose track record includes stints at SJ Berwin, Linklaters, Simmons & Simmons and Clifford Chance, has joined the team at 3Kites Consulting.

Say hello to Sahu
Stuart Sahu, most recetly with Kroll, has joined the technical team at litigation support specialists Legal Inc, as part of a planned expansion to help meet a growing demad for software programmatic utilities.

New senior VP at Thomson Elite
Thomson Elite has appointed Kim Massana as senior vice president, strategic marketing & international, heading pricing, branding and marketing activities.

LegalTech NY: EDD and a killer exchange rate

As we were unable to make it out to New York at the start of the month for LegalTech, due to the date clash with the Islington exhibition, we asked Andrew Haslam* to take some soundings from the British contingent over there and send back this report on proceedings...

The dust has settled on LegalTech 2008, and next year the show will be even bigger, as even more of the Hilton is dedicated to exhibition stands. As ever, the event was dominated by all things electronic disclosurely. Or as several UK visitors commented "Why don't they just rename it EDD Technology Show?" That being said, there were pointers to other trends in amongst the clamour of the 'e with everything' vendors.

Large US corporates are renewing their KM initiatives, this time around driven by the spiralling costs of litigation and its associated disclosure demands, but also fuelled by regulatory pressures. All of this is leading back to renewed interest in search. The need to be able to index and search effectively is critical for EDD but are now being deployed across the enterprise. We are back to the mantra of 'search is king' but with the use of analytics software such as Recommind, Autonomy, Inference also in the mix.

The big four accountancy practices were very active at the conference and exhibition, with a couple of presentations questioning how long law firm litigation support services would be needed, as clients started to deliver on three-to-four year programmes to take information management and disclosure responsibilities in-house. As one CIO commented "We have 30 cases on the go around the world, 30 different law firms, 30 different vendors crawling over our data. I'll take care of that and save a significant amount of money on economies of scale, and the law firms can do what they do best, which is provide professional advice, not act as data collection bureaux." Whilst the UK litigation support community are probably still safe in their jobs, the move into the arms of accountancy firms could add extra pressure on some of the smaller vendors in our marketplace.

The US adoption of Sharepoint as the core of their intranet environments continues with both Star Law and Incisive demonstrating integrated suites of products. It will be ➡

⇨ interesting to see how this fares over the next year. Also, as Ann Hemming, fresh into her first week at Tikit, commented "Office 2007 seems to have reached tipping point in US law firms, with interest in training and Word template management very high".

Several observers noted this was finally the year America rediscovered the rest of the world. Unicode compliance (the ability to store and search foreign language characters sets) so long paid lip service to, is actually starting to be fully implemented in products, with Russian and Chinese/Asian alphabets being proudly shown off at a number of stands. There was also renewed confirmation of jurisdictional and data protection issues coming to the fore, with Japan and Australia quoted as countries joining the EU in opposing data being processed in the USA.

Mixed reactions to the conference content, some found it excellent, others were disappointed by the lack of new developments, overall it was fair to say, that if you were a newcomer, then you would be very well educated, for the experienced there was a lot of repetition, with very few 'nuggets' in evidence. The lack of new developments was replicated on the exhibition floor, with most people seeing signs of a maturing marketplace as products consolidated their functionality. On the all pervasive litigation support side, all software seems to be in varying stages of fully embracing electronic data processing, embedding analytics software and becoming fully Unicode compliant.

Both UK and US vendors expressed a slight backlash to the hordes of freebie collecting visitors, typically delegates hailing from small or one person firms in Hicksville, Nowhere. They roam the halls, clearing stands of pens and goodies in locust like swarms. Many vendors are now retreating from the main floor, booking hotel suites and running focussed client demos and user groups, so the conference is now spilling over into neighbouring hotels.

For many people the main reason for attending the show is the chance to network and socialise. The Brits that make it across the pond are a self selecting group of key players in the UK legal IT market. More than one noted they fitted a month's worth of meetings into the weekend before and the days of the conference. The fact it happens in one of the most vibrant cities in the world, and with a killer exchange rate, is a happy coincidence that adds to the charms of LegalTech. Roll on 2009.

* Andrew Haslam is a litigation support IT consultant

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The LTAs – and IT awards for all

Last month saw the Legal Technology Awards take place in London, with more categories than ever. Breaking with tradition, this year the Insider did not inadvertently release details of the winners before they were announced at the ceremony, so here are the winners of the supplier awards:

The integrated system supplier of the year was **Eclipse Legal Systems**, **Bighand** won in the best of breed category, **Tikit's template management system** was the technology innovation of the year, **Legal Inc** was the best e-disclosure services provider, **Thomson Elite** won the award for outstanding contribution to the legal market, **Vinciworks** had the best online product, the **Recommind** project at **Field Fisher Waterhouse** was the implementation of the year, and the most customer focused supplier was **ITS**. Insider editor **Charles Christian** also won a lifetime achievement award at the LTAs – however as it has yet to arrive at Insider Towers, we'll believe that when we see it.

Gossip central

Charities in the pink with Legal Inc
Litigation support specialists Legal Inc raised just over £6000 last year for the Legal Pink fund, which supports a range of male and female cancer charities, through a series of fundraising activities, including a photo exhibition and sponsored moustache growing.

Anyone for tennis
Which legal IT supplier's managing director has such good taste in babysitters that one of them is now acting as a model for the company's advertising? Clue: the ad is a variation on the old Athena 'tennis girl' poster.

What flavour of Office ?

An IT director mentioned recently it would be nice to know which versions of Microsoft Office law firms were using as he was fed up of vendors trying to fob him off with the lame excuse that they couldn't support his firm because "no-one else uses your version of Office". So are law firms ahead or behind the curve when it comes to Office? Take part in our next readers poll to find out. You can find the poll on the Insider website.

Legal IT Show gets cautious thumbs-up

While we heard a lot of grumbling in the run up to the Islington event (the main grouses were the lack of any general pre-show buzz and concerns about a lack lustre marketing campaign that seemingly hadn't moved on from the days when Cordial still ran the event) the verdict from most exhibitors at this month's Legal IT Show was a cautious thumbs-up. Although there were times when delegates appeared to be outnumbered by salesmen, Archie Courage of SDLT.co.uk said the show was busier than last year, while Simon Hill of TFB described it as "the best show in years," in terms of attracting quality leads to be given product demonstrations.
• That said, we still think it a pity that the largest trade show on this side of the Atlantic clashed with the dates of the largest trade show on the other side of the Atlantic (LegalTech New York). Legal technology is now a global market and there are delegates and exhibitors with a genuine need to attend both events.

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The next issue of the Insider (No. 207) will be published on 20th March 2008. The deadline for editorial contributions is 12:00 noon on Friday 14th March.