

LEGAL TECHNOLOGY

iNSIDER

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THE ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO WHAT'S HOT (AND WHAT'S NOT) IN LAW OFFICE SYSTEMS

In association with



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NEW LAW ACQUIRED BY CRONER

New Law Publishing, the UK pioneer of next-day law reporting, has been acquired by Croner Publications, a division of Wolters Kluwer. As part of the deal, the Oxford University Press has disposed of its shareholding in New Law and founder Kenneth Bagnall QC has left the company.

New Law began its law reporting service in 1993, initially delivering the full text of judgments by fax, then email and in the summer of 1996 via the web-based *New Law Online* service.

Although New Law was the pioneer of the concept, a growing number of mainstream legal publishers, including Centaur/Lawtel, Context/Smith Bernal and, most recently Butterworths with its *All England Reporter* service, have now entered the market with rival web-based next-day law reporting services. The result has been open speculation that the days of independent pioneers, such as Kenneth Bagnall, were coming to a close and "now it was time for the big boys to take over".

New Law Publishing will continue to operate from its Quality Court offices off Chancery Lane in London (☎ 0171 405 5434) however L*Ti* understands that David Johnston of CCH, which is also part of the Wolters Kluwer group, will now be closely involved in the company's activities, including the planned relaunch of the *New Law Online* service.

☞ **Comment...** Another name to have vanished from the online legal services field (cynics might say it was never a player in the first place) is LawCity, the ➡

➡ Current Science Group's proposed internet "club for legal professionals". When L*Ti* recently contacted CSG to ask when, if ever, the service would go "live" (the launch was originally scheduled for February 1997), a spokesman said the project had been wound up and that LawCity's managing director Christopher Gasson "left the company a few weeks ago." ...More takeover news on page 2 ➡

FOUR SHORTLISTED FOR SCL AWARDS

With nominations now closed, the Society for Computers & Law has named the four products shortlisted for its 1998 award for "the most outstanding application of IT to the law". They are:

- The Costs Plus taxation costing system from Wordwright Associates (☎ 01473 212752) - see L*Ti* 26 for product review.
- The NKT Interactive Internet system, which allows law firms to take new instructions directly from a web site, from NKT Computer Consultants (☎ 0181 802 6817) - see L*Ti* 36 for first report.
- The Case Control case management system from Laserform Law (☎ 01565 633807). Laserform also won the SCL award in 1995 for one of their electronic legal forms products.
- The Egami-Legal litigation support system from DPA-Egami (☎ 0171 592 8012). DPA recently secured its first US order for the system from a New York firm.

Despite (or perhaps because of) the controversy surrounding last year's award, the SCL received a record number of 39 nominations, compared with 20 last year and just 12 the previous year.

Shortlisted entries will give presentations to the judging panel on 3rd December and the winner will be announced on 26th January. □

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LATEST NEWS COMMENT & ANALYSIS

TCO Dart signs up Ison Harrison

Ison Harrison, which has six offices in the Leeds area, has selected the TCO Dart practice management system as the replacement for its current accounts software.

Senior partner Stephen Harrison said he was also "very keen" to look at TCO's "Commercial Connection" facility as a way of establishing electronic links between the firm and major corporate clients, such as insurance companies and building societies.

☞ The Leeds order is the first to be announced since the rights to Dart software were acquired earlier this summer by Tech Computer Office (☎ 0181 893 9039).

BLUEPOINT PURCHASED BY DATATEC

South African IT services company Datatec Ltd has acquired UK systems integrator Bluepoint plc in a takeover deal worth £15 million.

Bluepoint is probably best known in the legal sector as a specialist in network implementation services, with a customer list that includes Masons, the Law Society, Kingsley Napley and Pritchard Englefield. The Bluepoint deal, Datatec's second major acquisition in the UK in three months, brings the combined revenue of Datatec's UK interests to in excess of £100 million.

The current board of Bluepoint will continue to run the business as an integrated division within Datatec's UK operations however managing director Ed Hennessy believes the "cross fertilisation of ideas and skills" with other companies in the group will enable Bluepoint to broaden the range of services they can offer their customers.

"Size counts in securing big corporate business," said Hennessy. "The directors of Bluepoint have recognised that to effectively compete, it is necessary to have a certain critical mass."

☞ **Comment...** It is frequently said there are too many players in the UK legal technology arena and that the market is due for a shakeout.

Bearing in mind that if you exclude all those firms whose investment in IT will never progress much beyond replacing their wordprocessing and accounts systems every five years, this leaves a core UK market of about just 1500 practices, ranging from "City" giants to larger High Street firms employing 10 to 15 solicitors (including partners).

With approximately 100 specialist IT suppliers already selling into this market, clearly no-one is ever going to get rich quick. Yet although there are one or two companies currently up for sale, ➔

➔ the overall trend is actually for more players entering the market.

In addition to Datatec acquiring Bluepoint, the last couple of weeks has seen Computer Associates linking up with systems integrator Lawtech to sell into the legal market (see *IT Diary Dates* on page 7 for more details).

LTi has also learned that systems house Prince plc is looking to expand its activities in the legal market. Although the company has featured prominently in the news recently as a result of a dispute over its registration of the prince.com internet domain name, it also has a track record in the legal market: Elbourne Mitchell is one of its customers.

And, the news that Mercury Computing's InControl case management system was for sale (see *story in LTi 50*) produced a flurry of calls to the *Insider* offices from interested parties. **LTi** understands the sale of the software is likely to be finalised within the next fortnight.

Bluepoint is on ☎ 0181 391 4488 and Prince is on ☎ 0181 748 7448. ☐

Scottish news... NEW SYSTEM FOR CRIMINAL LAWYERS

Glasgow-based software house Integrated Office Applications (☎ 0141 639 8119) has launched a new case management software package for criminal lawyers.

Called LawTec, the system has been on trial with a number of Glasgow solicitors for the last eight months and is intended to handle all aspects of criminal work, including client management, court appointments, fee note generation and automatic document production.

On the technical side, LawTec is a Windows system designed in VisualBasic, operates around a Microsoft Access database and is fully integrated with Microsoft Word wordprocessing.

A single user licence is £799 but subsequent user licences can be as low as £50 a seat. LawTec is also available on a free no obligation 30 day trial. ☐

PC DOCS RELEASE VERSION 2.0 OF CMS OPEN

The Canadian CMS Data Corporation, which is part of the PC Docs Group and the developer of the CMS Open practice management system that is "flavour-of-the-month" among larger English law firms, has just announced an upgrade to the software.

Along with a number of minor enhancements, new features in Version 2.0 include: multi-language capabilities, VAT compatibility for the UK and European markets, and an internet enabled reporting facility, that will allow reports to be output as HTML files and automatically create hypertext links to sections of the report.

Mike Bailey, the director of CMS European operations, says he believes "these enhancements are critical to the continued success" of CMS Open and will help boost its expansion.

CMS Data UK is on ☎ 0171 505 1200 and further information can be found at <http://www.cmsopen.com> □

ALBY SMITH TO HEAD RESOLUTION COME-BACK

Alby Smith, until recently one of the directors of the now defunct Mercury Computing (see also story on page 2), has been appointed the legal division sales manager of Resolution Systems (☎ 0181 665 5050), with responsibility for business development and "raising the profile of Resolution in the legal market".

Smith told **LTi** that although Resolution has, over the last couple of years, attracted a reputation of being preoccupied with a handful of major "City" accounts, he believed the company was poised to make the breakthrough as a "top to bottom supplier of everything from document management to practice management" and present a real challenge to suppliers such as Keystone, Elite and CMS Open. ➔

➔ Currently Resolution is working on projects for 27 law firms in the M25 area and shortly expects to announce a major order for its FirmWare PMS system. □

Millennium countdown... MIXED NEWS FOR IT USERS

There are approximately 530 working days left until January 1st in the year 2000 and while a growing number of IT suppliers are now prepared to say their systems are Y2K compliant, there are also some unpleasant surprises cropping up.

- On a positive note, Kommunicate has confirmed its RightFAX NT network fax system is millennium proof. Support manager Graham Reddie says the system's internal code and database uses real dates rather than double digit code (ie "2001" not "01"). In addition, all client display and input screens have now been modified to reflect Y2K compliance. Call Kommunicate on ☎ 01252 815514 for upgrade details.

- Novell has admitted that its network operating systems software Netware 3.12 and 4.1 are **not** Y2K compliant however the company has now issued a beta version of a *patch* that fixes the problem. Novell has also said the final version of the patch will include an automatic *client* update feature so it can be downloaded from a central server to all desktops on a network rather than have to be installed individually. Call Novell on ☎ 01344 724000 for details.

- Controversially, the PC manufacturer Compaq has warned it is currently only prepared to warrant new hardware bought **after October 17th, 1997** as being fully Y2K compliant. Compaq is concerned models belonging to earlier PC ranges may contain BIOS problems and is investigating the possibility of supplying upgrades. A *white paper* on the topic can be found on Compaq's web site at <http://www.compaq.com/year2000/> □

Printaform to support DOCS Open

The next upgrade to Peapod Solutions' 32-bit electronic legal forms software - PrintaForm version 7.3 - will be compatible with the DOCS Open document management system from PC Docs. Peapod (☎ 0181 574 8288) will launch 7.3 in January.

New home for Carpe Diem

Following its recent acquisition by the Sage group in the USA, Carpe Diem time tracking software is now available from: Time Tracking Products Division, Sage US Inc, 17950 Preston Road, Suite 800, Dallas, Texas 75252, USA.

The new customer support line is ☎ +1-972 732 7089, fax: +1-972 931 6654, email: cdsupport@sageus.com

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LATEST NEWS COMMENT & ANALYSIS

Publishing news

☞ Jordans is to take over the publishing of *Masons Computer Law Reports* from January 1998. Jordans plan to change the format of the *Reports*, which will be published on a quarterly basis. The annual subscription will be £120. Call Jordans on ☎ 0117 923 0600 for a free trial issue. The *Reports* were previously published by Legalease, who have since announced they are to launch their own IT law reports series (see L*Ti* 49 for first report).

☞ Butterworths *Family & Child Law Library* will be launched on CD Rom at the end of November. The title will bring together all Butterworths' family law texts and materials, including a new unreported case transcripts service and electronic legal forms software on one CD. Prices start at £250.

Speech recognition systems... **YOU SAY "HELLO" AND IBM SAYS "ERROR REFERENCE"**

Earlier this year IBM launched *Via Voice*, its first "continuous" speech recognition system. Sadly, it now appears the software contains a feature that could make it less than satisfactory for some law firms.

L*Ti* was alerted to the problem by the IT director of a large London law firm, who was running Microsoft Word 7.0 on Windows 95 PCs. Like other practices, lawyers in this firm make a lot of use of the automatic cross-reference feature in Word 7.0, which creates hyperlinks between different items of information within a document.

Unfortunately, when *ViaVoice* was loaded and the Word documents were reopened, the firm found to its horror that all the links had been lost and in their place were "error reference source not found" messages.

The problem seems to be a conflict between the way Word uses *bookmarks* to denote cross-references and *ViaVoice* uses *bookmarks* as part of the speech recognition process. Effectively each word that is dictated has its own *bookmark* – which also limits the maximum size of documents that can be dictated. But, the two different sets of *bookmarks* cannot co-exist, with the result that *ViaVoice* will overwrite any Word *bookmarks* if the two applications are run together.

It is worth noting that there also seems to be a conflict between *Via Voice* and the Word "normal.dot" templates, which causes Word *bookmarks* to be overwritten even in documents that have not been used in speech recognition dictation activities.

On the other hand, if you only dictate into the *ViaVoice* "Speech Pad" utility (in effect an intermediary dictation window) and then cut and paste the text into the Word document, your Word *bookmarks* should remain in place. ➔

➔ There again this would seem to be an arguably retrograde step tending to defeat the whole purpose of installing an advanced speech recognition application like *Via Voice* in the first place.

☞ **Comment...** The IT director says he believes this aspect of *ViaVoice* renders the program "rather dangerous and unsatisfactory" for law firms using Word 7.0. But is this a fair comment?

IBM told L*Ti* they were aware of the problem (it also arises with Word 8.0) and admitted there was currently no quick fix because of the way the two applications handle *bookmarks*.

IBM's advice to Word 7.0 users is to uninstall *ViaVoice*'s Word technical support functions and carry out dictation indirectly through the *Speech Pad* facility.

It should also be noted that IBM will be launching an enhanced version of the software, called *ViaVoice Gold*, in the New Year and while this does not solve the *bookmarks* problem, it will contain a "direct dictation" that should make life easier for Word users.

For the record *NaturallySpeaking*, *Dragon Systems*' rival continuous speech recognition product, uses a dedicated dictation window and so does not interfere with the wordprocessing application. And, *Dragon's* discrete speech system *DragonDictate* does not use *bookmarks*.

Incidentally, IBM subsidiary *Lotus Development* has announced that the latest version of its *SmartSuite 97* office automation package now contains a voice-enabled version of its *Word Pro 97* wordprocessing application, which will allow users to dictate text directly into documents without having to go through the intermediary stage of using a separate speech recognition program.

In effect *Word Pro* has built in speech recognition (it is actually the *Via Voice* program) however although the product is now available in the USA, it is unlikely to be on sale in the UK until the release of *SmartSuite 98* in the spring. ☐

REMOVING THE TERROR OF TERABYTES

As part of its preparations to install a new CMS Open practice management system, Bond Street solicitors Jeffrey Green Russell has become the first firm in the UK to install an OmniRAID server from Storage Computer. JGR's IT manager Alison Cooke explained to LTI why this option was adopted....

Although the firm's first Novell LAN server was only introduced in 1993, as more and more users and applications went online, including an NT-based intranet, by this year JGR had a total of ten servers, each with between 1 gigabyte and 28 Gb of disk storage. With the need to install yet another server – a DEC Alpha with 48 Gb – to support the new PMS system, centralised control had become an important and urgent issue.

“Quite apart from the prohibitive costs, we realised that simply throwing more processing power at the problem was not going to solve the real issues: how to coordinate, centrally control and backup all our data currently stored on a dozen different devices with no single point of access,” said Cooke. “We therefore compiled a six point wish list for a centralised storage management system, which also meant we could install a diskless lower specification machine to run the new accounts system.”

According to these points, the system would have to concurrently connect to and share data between at least ten host servers running Novell, NT and possibly UNIX; have high resilience, real time disk allocation, scalability from 100 Gb to at least 1 terabyte (*over one million Mb*) and preferably in small, disk at a time segments, high performance in both read and write applications coupled with easy manageability; and still be competitively priced, especially in terms of long term cost of ownership.

“To meet our requirements we established we needed a RAID (Random

➔ Array of Inexpensive Disks) system. Since we required at least 100 Gb with the facility to double capacity in a single full height cabinet (our computer room is compact), this ruled out most of the RAID box suppliers. Besides, none of them could meet our multiple host criteria.

“In the final analysis,” said Cooke we took the view that Storage Computer (☎ 01372 376221) was the only vendor able to connect to ten different servers concurrently (*the basic model can handle 12 and be upgraded to handle 48*). It was also the only system we found offering on-the-fly disk allocation, as well as mix and match disk-at-a-time scalability.”

The £70,000 system (with an initial 109 Gb storage capacity (12 x 9 Gb disks) was installed in October 1997 and by the end of the month had relieved eight of JGR's servers of their storage functions, as well as providing all the centralised data management facilities the firm required.

According to senior partner Clive Whitfield-Jones: “Besides resolving our immediate storage problems, the new OmniRAID has given all our existing LAN servers a fresh lease of life, enabling us to handle a raft of new applications without further hardware investment. This alone will help pay for the system in a very short time scale.

“As for the future, we can make further savings by simply adding basic, low cost, diskless servers to handle new applications and the firm's expansion. We expect our storage requirements to grow by at least 50% per annum for the next five years, whereas the OmniRAID server is scalable up to 4 terabytes, more than enough even if our requirements were to double every year.

“This gives me confidence, particularly as we are now using our intranet in earnest for know-how capture. I've always believed that if you want a leading edge solution that gives you a competitive edge, you should look to innovative companies who thrive on doing things differently.” □

CD-Rom sans frontières

In a pan European venture supported by the EC, six chambers of commerce & industry, including Birmingham, Paris and Frankfurt, have collaborated to publish a CD-Rom containing information about the practical and legal aspects of establishing companies in six different EU states.

The product, called IDEM, will run on any Windows PC supporting a CD Rom drive, is multilingual, contains copies of all relevant regulatory texts and procedural forms and sells for approximately £250 plus VAT and delivery.

For more information contact Tony Bradley of the Birmingham Chamber of Commerce & Industry on ☎ 0121 454 6171.

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Seen around the Web...

☞ **Tolley Publishing has now launched its *Tolley On-Line* web site at <http://www.tolley.co.uk> This is a subset of the growing web publishing operation being run by Tolley's parent company Butterworths and contains a full range of catalogue, online ordering and news services, as well as access to the main Butterworths site.**

☞ **Following the story in the last issue about "spamming" and other junk email techniques, LTI has found some useful resources at <http://spam.abuse.net/spam/tools/> and <http://www.sendmail.org/antispam.html>**

☞ **The new web site for the *Legal Executive* journal and the publishing services side of ILEX is due to go "live" at <http://www.ipa.ac.uk> in the New Year.**

NEW BT SERVICE NOT ALTERNATIVE TO BUSINESS ISDN

The announcement by British Telecommunications that it will shortly begin trials of a new high speed digital phone service called "Home Highway", has prompted calls from a number of readers wanting to know if this could be a low cost alternative to installing an ISDN line. LTI investigates...

Although some of the details about the proposed service (including the price) have still to be finalised by BT, it would appear it is going to be based on an "intelligent" junction box that will allow subscribers to simultaneously connect to two different services down the same telephone line. So, for example, it would be possible to make and receive ordinary voice calls while sending a fax from a stand-alone fax machine or accessing the internet from a PC.

There are however some important qualifications to the service - starting with availability. BT is stressing that the commercial roll-out of this service will be dependent on the successful completion of field trials, initially at some 300 homes in the Birmingham/Coventry area. These are not due to start until February 1998 and are expected to run for six months.

On a more positive note, BT has also said that if the trials are a success, the commercial roll-out could be brought forward to as soon as May for the Midlands, with the service being extended to the rest of the UK later in the year.

It is also worth noting that while the service will allow internet access at speeds of up to 64 kbps - in other words the speed of a single ISDN line - it will not be able to support the multi-channel features of the full ISDN2 service and so is unsuitable for users wanting to install video-conferencing.

☞ **Comment...** BT's insistence that the Home Highway will "not prove a satisfactory replacement" for ISDN for ➤

➤ business users is probably technically correct but the company's reticence about pricing also raises the suspicion that Home Highway may only be offered to residential subscribers, leaving business users out in the cold.

That said, the service is going to be handy for those lawyers who need occasional fax, email and web access services at home, as they will now no longer need to install a second line.

For the record, BT this month introduced ISDN2e, an upgrade to the ISDN service that complies with the latest European telecommunications standards and will allow subscribers to take advantage of a wider range of terminals and hardware as it becomes available. ☐

NEW PACKAGE TO SPEED INTRANET DEVELOPMENT

Intranet specialists Blue Ice Technology (☎ 01242 227188) is now distributing the Net-IT Central software application in the UK. The package is a server based product that allows users to rapidly convert files into hyperlinked documents that can be published across internal intranets.

Prices start at £1395 for a starter edition that can manage up to 100 documents. Further details can also be found at <http://www.blueice.co.uk> ☐

KEEPING THE HARD DISK TIDY

Software publisher IMSI (☎ 0181 581 2000) has launched WinDelete 97. This is a major upgrade to IMSI's already widely used system management utility for Windows 95 and NT PCs and includes features to help regular internet users to manage downloads and plug-ins, as well as remove some of the unwanted clutter - such as browser cache files - that surfing can create on hard disks.

WinDelete retails for around £35 and a free 30 day trial version is available to download from IMSI's web site at <http://www.imsiuk.co.uk> ☐

LEGAL TECHNOLOGY INSIDER

LATEST NEWS COMMENT & ANALYSIS

NEW "VIRTUAL" SWITCHBOARD FOR LAW FIRMS

The Slough-based telecoms services company Procall has just launched a new telephone outsourcing service called Connect 24, which the company believes provides a viable out-of-hours alternative to voice mail.

Procall managing director Andrew Try describes Connect 24 as a "virtual switchboard" in that clients can phone a law firm's normal telephone number out of hours but the call is actually redirected to one of Procall's operators, who answers in the firm's name.

As all operators have computer screens in front of them containing details of where to find the solicitor being phoned, callers can be patched through to them regardless of whether they are physically located in the practice's offices, at home or answering from a mobile phone in a car.

☞ **Comment...** Although this sounds very similar to the services already offered by other telephone answering bureaux, Try believes Procall is different because it places an emphasis on learning a firm's requirements and ensuring operators screen all incoming calls and check with individual solicitors before connecting them to callers.

Andrew Try says that unlike voice mail, the Procall service provides a human operator but without a firm running to the expense of manning its own switchboard 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Perhaps more importantly, it also means important calls will always get through but the solicitor is shielded from being contacted at home in the middle of the night - or the middle of Christmas lunch - about minor matters that can easily keep until office hours.

Procall (☎ 01753 710420) offer a range of services and suggest an out-of-hours only service for a small practice would cost from £80 per month. ☐

LEGAL IT DIARY DATES

November 26 - LITigate '97, London. Second annual one day conference and mini exhibition looking at case management technologies and litigation strategy. This year's event, which is once again sponsored by **Legal Technology Insider**, will include speakers from Davies Arnold Cooper and Dibb Lupton Alsop, as well as sessions looking at web enabled case management and intranets. Takes place at Café Royal, Regent Street, commences 9.00am. Cost £380 (+VAT). Call Forum on ☎ 0181 445 8060 for details.

November 27 - Interactive Internet Sites for Lawyers, Bristol. Two half-day seminars hosted by Michael Kaye of Kaye Tesler looking at ways law firm web sites can generate new business. Starts at 10.00am and 2.00pm. Cost £40 (+VAT) and qualifies for 3 CPD hours. Call NKT on ☎ 0181 802 6817 for details.

November 27 - How to Meet your Goals, Hull City FC. Part of Avenue Legal Systems' series of regional roadshows looking at the way IT can help law firms meet their business goals. All seminars held at the conference facilities of football clubs around the UK. Call Avenue on ☎ 01621 776 4387 for details.

November 28 - IT Systems Management, London. Half day (morning) free seminar at The Law Society, Chancery Lane, organised by Lawtech Services and Computer Associates looking at network management and how CA's Unicenter TNG software can help. Call Lawtech on ☎ 07000 5298324 for details.

December 2 - Document Management, London. Organised by DPA-Egami, the event will look at recent developments in document management, including workflow and internet technologies, and how it could "revolutionise" the litigation process. Call Mark Burrows of DPA on ☎ 0171 592 8012 for more details. ➔

➔ *Legal IT Diary Dates continued...*

December 9 Intranets for Law Firms, London.

New event organised by Osney Media and sponsored by **Legal Technology Insider** looking at the practical issues associated with developing intranets and internal know-how systems etc. Speakers include consultant Neil Cameron, Richard Brockbank of Oxford Law & Computing, Clive Whitfield Jones of Jeffrey Green Russell, Andrew Taylor of Linklaters and Jane Henderson of Macfarlanes. Takes place at the Business Design Centre, Islington. Starts 8.45am. Cost £449 (+VAT). Call Osney on ☎ 0171 880 0000 for details.

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LEGAL TECHNOLOGY INSIDER

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Issue 52 of the Insider will be published on Monday 8th December.

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Legal Technology Insider is now also available on disk or via email in an HTML file format suitable for accessing via an internal intranet or as part of a Lotus Notes database. If you are running Internet Explorer or Microsoft Word 7.0 (or later) you can open the file directly by clicking on it. Alternatively, open it through your web browser via drag and drop or the "open file" command. The subscription rate to LTI-NET is based on a licence fee of £125 pa plus £5 for each additional user accessing it on a network.

Recruitment Advertising

In response to requests from subscribers, Legal Technology Insider, which has a fortnightly readership of over 2000 legal IT professionals, is to commence carrying recruitment advertising for technology related posts, including management and technical staff for law firm IT departments, legal systems supplier sales and implementation personnel and litigation support staff. For details of rates and availability contact the Insider office.

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