CHADWICK LAWRENCE SUED OVER WEB SITE

Last Thursday NKT, the developer of the award-winning UKLAW.NET interactive internet system for lawyers, issued and served a writ on Dewsbury solicitors Chadwick Lawrence. The Chancery Division action alleges the firm infringed NKT's copyright by copying and using "the whole or a substantial part" of NKT's code on its own web site.

Earlier this year NKT discovered its systems, including one belonging to flagship client Kaye Tesler & Co, were crashing as a result of rogue instructions being sent to its web server. Subsequent investigations traced the problem back to the Chadwick Lawrence web site and its use of a line of source code designed to activate a program sending the completed contents of online fill-in forms, containing client instructions, back to the host web site for processing.

Curiously, although Chadwick Lawrence was not an NKT user and claimed to have independently developed its own interactive system, its site still included the following line of source code <form action="https://www.uklaw.net/FormsBin/doform.dll" method="POST"> This had the effect of sending instructions from Chadwick's clients to the UKLAW.NET server rather than to Chadwick's own web site.

The writ, drafted by Heather Lawrence of 11 South Square Chambers, seeks damages and an injunction to stop Chadwick Lawrence from using the code. Despite admitting in correspondence dated 27th August and 30th September that it had looked at and copied some of NKT's source code, Chadwick Lawrence denies any liability.

RECESSION - WHAT RECESSION ?

Recent stories in both the national and trade press have reported a downturn in the IT jobs market as the UK economy teeters on the edge of a recession. But is this having any effect on the legal IT market?

Legal Technology Insider put this question to a number of law firm IT directors and IT staff recruitment agencies and received almost exactly the same answer: There is no down turn in the legal market, there is no sign of any law firms cutting back on their IT projects and there is still a desperate shortage of suitable job applicants.

According to Paul Young, who heads Quarry Dougal's technology division, in terms of technical skills there is a strong demand for NT, Novell 4.11, Notes and database administration skills, while at a more senior level, IT managers who have the "client facing" skills to be able to communicate with partners continue to be in short supply.

COGNITO - MCS MARRIAGE OFF

The planned takeover of Cognito Software by MCS, the developer of the DPS system, has been called off following the breakdown of negotiations between MCS and Cognito's parent company Microvitec. The two companies had been talking since March. According to other DPS distributors, MCS is still in an "acquisitive mood" and interested in talking to suppliers of legal accounts software.

● Michael Belas, the sales & marketing director of Avenue Legal Systems, has told the Insider that, as part of its current expansion plans, Avenue is also looking to buy other legal IT suppliers.

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

NEWS ON THE WEB

The Insider web site has launched a Hot News facility. This will complement the fortnightly issues of LTi with regularly updated breaking news reports.

● In the six months to 30th September, Insider web site traffic has increased by 55 percent. The combined fortnightly readership of the digital and paper versions of Legal Technology Insider now stands at 4200.

http://www.cloudnine.co.uk

LINETIME HAS LAST LAUGH

Hammond Suddards has installed Linetime's Debtime debt collection system in its debt recovery department.

Readers with long memories may recall that back in the mid-1980s Leeds-based Linetime intended to call its original debt collection software Debtline but was forced to change the name to Debtime after Hammonds, who at that period operated a debt recovery service called "Debt Line" from its Leeds office, threatened to bring a passing off action.

● Developed in the Meta4 4GL language, Debtime is Y2K compliant and will run on character-based terminals on Unix and NT networks.

NOT THAT WEB SITE !

A number of readers have reported difficulty in locating the web site for legal systems supplier Resolution Systems. In fact the site's address is based on the company's name and can be found at http://www.resolutionsystems.co.uk

But, if you search for the site using the name of the company's flagship product Firm Control, you could be in for a rude awakening when you visit http://www.firmcontrol.com This is because the site belongs to "Mistress Miranda", a leather-clad dominatrix in San Francisco specialising in sado-masochism and bondage, whose idea of professional services is to truss up her clients and thrash them with a whip.

PERICOM/FWBS LINK

The Pericom Group has announced that its Sovereign Systems division (call Terry Wilkins on 01908 265533 for details) has been appointed UK distributor for Franklins Walker Business Systems' (FWBS) Epitome OMS office management software. Mike Franklin of FWBS says the benefit of this approach is it frees FWBS to concentrate on development while ensuring users have a nationwide sales and support network.

● FWBS has launched a new product, Envoy OMS, for the estate agency market although the company say it could also be used by solicitors' property centres.

LAWBASE FINALISES EXPANSION DEAL

Lawbase Legal Systems has finalised negotiations on a refinancing deal that will give the company a new northern office and fund the development of a range of new case management systems over the next few years.

The deal has been struck with Cheshire Datasystems, one of the market leaders in the insurance broker software market and, coincidentally, no relation to Cheshire Computer Systems who trade in the legal market as Access Legal Systems. According to Lawbase's Wyn Melville-Jones, there is a synergy between the two companies as their respective products use the same development languages.

As part of the new deal, Cheshire will also supply users with server hardware plus support services. Lawbase also plans to continue its relationship with accounts software supplier Solace but is interested in integrating its systems with other legal accounts products.

● Lawbase (0161 385 2385) launched Wills for Windows, the first of its new family of Y2K compliant all Windows software at the Barbican in June. The company's latest product, Probate for Windows, goes live at its first site later this month and will be followed by a number of other new titles during 1999. Melville-Jones says what differentiates the probate product from the competition is its scope - it can handle share dealing transactions, has a precedent library of oaths and can produce estate accounts, and its flexibility - accounts can be prepared in a formalistic IHT oriented fashion or on a more beneficiary-friendly basis.

IT COSTS HOW MUCH ?

Despite being a newcomer to the legal software market and presumably needing all the help it can get to win orders, Preston-based Eclatech has taken the unusual step of pricing its new Conveyancer's Assistant product at a level which causes a sharp in-take of breath.

On Eclatech's own pricing, a single user site licence costs £3895 plus £475 for each additional user. However, if a firm wants to run the software in a number of branches then it will be charged not on the number of additional users but on the number of additional sites, albeit at 60 percent of the full site licence fee. So, if a firm has two users in one office and one user in each of two further offices, the total cost will be £9044 plus 15 percent annual support, bringing the total to £10,400 plus VAT.

Bearing in mind the Eclatech product is a stand-alone system from an unproven supplier, offers no accounts integration, is only compatible with Word 97 and is based on FileMaker Pro, a rarely used database as far as the legal market is concerned, this is a lot of money, particularly when as an alternative you could opt for Laserform's Case Control property module and buy a comparable four user system, including annual support, for just £3900 plus VAT.

VALID GETS VIRTUAL IN SOUTHWARK

While the last couple of years have seen growing interest in the concept of electronic courtrooms, thanks to the *Woolf Report* and the LCD's more recent *civil.justice* consultation paper, there has not been very much practical progress in this area. One exception is a complex tax fraud trial now taking place at Southwark Crown Court in London, which is being used by the Court Service as a pilot project to produce "hard evidence" as to whether or not IT can be used to present cases more efficiently and generally assist in the administration of justice.

All 10,000 documents in the case have been digitised, stored on CD-Rom and can be viewed by judge, counsel, instructing solicitors, witnesses, defendants and jury via a network of 38 VDUs located around the court. The system is integrated with Smith Bernal's LiveNotes to provide real-time transcripts of the witnesses' testimony. And, the judge and lawyers (but not the jury!) also have laptop PCs so they can make their annotations to the evidence and then take the laptops back to the respective chambers and offices to prepare for the following day's proceedings.

As part of the pilot, LCD staff are monitoring the use of the IT systems and comparing this with how long it would take to complete the same procedures using conventional manual methods, such as wading through lever-arch files to locate a particular item of evidence.

Despite still only being half way through the trial, originally expected to run for twelve weeks (the case is subject to reporting restrictions) it is already reckoned IT is saving about one day a week in court time. Bearing in mind each day in court is estimated to cost £30,000, there will clearly also be a substantial financial saving.

● COMMENT

Despite having worked on similar projects in the past, including one of the Maxwell trials, the litigation support side of the contract was not awarded to Legal Technologies. Instead it went to Valid Information Systems and is based on their R/KYV system. Although Valid is better known for pre-trial work, R/KYV is now being used in an increasing number of public inquiries in the UK and has been used in comparable courtroom scenarios in the United States.

DATA SECURITY LOCK-OUT

Watford-based Ital (01923 240525) has launched a new PC data access security system called Compblock. This uses an electronic "key" to blank out the screen and disable the keyboard/mouse when an operator needs to leave a workstation displaying personal data or confidential information unattended for a short period of time. Ital says it provides security-conscious firms with a more efficient alternative to requiring users to switch or log off and then reboot or log-on again each time they go to the photocopier.

HERZOG JOINS DPA

After seven years of managing litigation support projects for Slaughter & May, Brian Herzog has been recruited by DPA-Egami to head the company's training department. Herzog, who has also worked for Legal Technologies and run Xerox's London Document Imaging Service, is the first major appointment at DPA since company doctor Keith Negal recently took over as chief executive.

● Local authority payroll departments have voted DPA's Egami-COLD system "Payroll Product of the Year". With one CD capable of storing five million payslips, the system is used by a growing number of councils as an alternative to storing wages records on paper and microfiche.

DOCUMENT MANAGEMENT NEWS

● PHILLIPS FOX WINS AWARD

At a recent workflow conference in Geneva, Phillips Fox, one of Australia's largest law firms, won the 1998 GIGA industry award for its implementation of a DOCSFulcrum-based document and knowledge management system. LTi understands London law firm Bird & Bird has just contracted with PC Docs to begin an extensive pilot project in which DOCSFulcrum will be used to carry out full text searches across intranets.

● FILENET FACES LAWSUIT

Following a profits warning and a 55 percent fall in its share price, US document management systems supplier FileNET is being sued in a class action brought by the company's shareholders. Plaintiff attorneys Milberg Weiss say the lawsuit alleges FileNET and certain of its senior managers violated securities laws by making false and misleading statements about trading prospects.

● SOFTSOLUTIONS GONE

Novell has quashed rumours it plans to reintroduce one-time market leader SoftSolutions as a stand-alone product. Instead, document management facilities will continue to only be available as part of the overall GroupWise system.

SON-OF-LAWYER ON ITS WAY ?

Latest reports suggest former editor of *The Lawyer* Mary Heaney and ex-publisher Mark Wyatt are planning a new legal magazine, code-named the *City & Commercial Lawyer*, which will try to establish a niche in the market mid-way between *The Lawyer* and the sector currently occupied by *Legal Business*, *In-House Lawyer* and the *Commercial Lawyer*. Wyatt is also understood to be in talks with another ex-Centaur publisher Tim Weller, who now runs a business called City Financial Publishing.

But according to other publishers, the new venture's window of opportunity is closing rapidly. December and January are notoriously bad times to launch publications and by February the Wyatt team will have been out of the market for nearly five months and missed a lot of budget decisions by potential advertisers.

Centaur has already launched a pre-emptive strike at Wyatt with the introduction of a new supplement within *The Lawyer* called *City Lawyer*. This is described as a "major revamp" of the magazine's City and commercial law coverage. With the *Law Society's Gazette* having also beefed up its coverage of City and commercial news in recent months, Wyatt and Heaney may yet find there is truth in the old adage: "there may be a niche in the market but that does not mean there is a market in that niche".

CARPE DIEM HEAD MOVES ON

David Goldstein, the Texan who first introduced UK law firms to the Carpe Diem time management system, has announced his retirement from the legal software market. In the wake of last year's acquisition of his own company ProSoft by the US arm of the Sage Group, Goldstein has decided he is "ready to move on to other endeavours". One of his first new ventures is a family-oriented holiday and travel planning consultancy called Travel Together Vacations. Karen Fate remains with Sage and will continue to look after Carpe Diem sales in Europe.

http://www.traveltogether.com

NEW PROBATE SYSTEM FOR SCOTTISH MARKET

Last Saturday, at the annual conference of the Scottish branch of the Society of Trust & Estate Practitioners (STEP), niche software house Excelsior LawDesk launched ExecutryDesk, a Scottish version of the ProbateDesk system it sells in the English legal market.

The program was developed in conjunction with Murray Beith Murray WS in Edinburgh and has the facility to prepare and automatically calculate CAP Forms A-3, B-4 and B-3 (1997 editions). The CAP Form A-3 is a Scottish Courts Service/CTO approved substitute when printed out on a laser printer.

In common with all Excelsior software, ExecutryDesk runs on a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet, versions 5, 7 or 8 (aka Excel '97). The entry level price for a two user system is £2995 (plus VAT - this does not include Excel) rising to £4395 for a six user system. It is also worth noting Excelsior do not believe in imposing annual maintenance agreements - the company feels they cannot be justified - and that the standard software licence permits users to transfer files to a laptop or home office PC so they can be used at home or in other out-of-the-office locations.

● The English jurisdiction version of this product, ProbateDesk, now sells for £2100 (plus VAT) and can produce IHT forms 200, 201 and 202 - these are also CTO approved substitutes.

Two other new Excel-based templates from Excelsior are: FormDesk Trust & Estate Tax '98 for calculating the Trust & Estate Tax Return (SA900), with supplementary pages and working sheets from the *Tax Calculation Guide.* Prices start at £225 for a single user licence, falling to £125 for each additional user. And FormDesk Residuary Income Pack '98 for calculating Form 922 for 1997/8 with a linked version of FICO Worksheet 2 plus R185 (estate income) form. (This can handle each of ten beneficiaries per file opened from the template.) Residuary Income Pack prices start at £95 for the first user, falling to £50 for additional users. (Add VAT to all prices.)

For details or to place an order phone David Williams on: 01273 494978 or email lawdesk@pavilion.co.uk

ONLINE DISCUSSION GROUP FOR PROBATE PRACTITIONERS

Barrister James Kessler, a founder member of STEP and author of *Drafting Trusts & Will Trusts* (the latest edition was published by Sweet & Maxwell in October) has launched a moderated emailing list dedicated to the discussion of the drafting and administration of trusts and wills and related private client topics.

You can join the mailing list via the moderator's web site at http://www.kessler.co.uk or by sending an email to: majordomo@webwright-uk.com saying: *subscribe kessler.*

EXIT NT - ENTER 2000

In a surprise move, Microsoft has announced it is dropping the name NT 5.0 from its next generation operating system. Instead, the client workstation version will now be called Windows 2000 Professional, while NT Server becomes Windows 2000 Server. Given the buggy nature of the current beta 2 version of NT 5.0 and the fact at least one third of the system's functionality is unlikely to materialise until the third beta version, the launch date of Windows 2000 has now slipped back until the final quarter of 1999.

YEAR 2000 NEWS ROUND-UP

• PERFECT SOFTWARE

Perfect Software reports that its DOS-based Perfect Books accounts and time recording system for small firms and sole practitioners is Y2K compliant. Since its launch in 1992 the system has been installed at over 420 sites in England, Wales and Ireland. A new Windows version of the product is in the final stages of development. Call Sarah Worsfold on: 01656 720071 for details.

• MICROSOFT WINDOWS NT

Users of Microsoft NT 4.0 (Server & Workstation) should upgrade to the latest Service Pack 4.0 to ensure they are fully Y2K (and Euro) compliant. For the latest Y2K news on Microsoft software visit http://www.microsoft.com/technet/topics/year2k/product/product.htm

• AVENUE SOLOMON

Avenue Legal Systems has produced a Y2K patch for its old Solomon character-based accounts system. Users need to upgrade Solomon Version 2.2. There is a £1500 charge for this but it does includes the installation of the system on the users server and a full data transfer.

• SCO UNIX

Although SCO has been supplying a Y2K patch for some of the earlier releases of its version of the Unix operating system, it will be dropping Release 3.2/4.2 from its support cycle at the end of this year. In practical terms this means SCO users who want a fully-supported Y2K product will have to pay to upgrade to Release 5.0.

• WORDPERFECT

Corel is now testing the following versions of WordPerfect for Y2K compatibility: 5.1 for DOS, 5.1 for Unix (character & GUI versions), 5.2 for Unix, 6.0 for Unix (GUI only) and 7.0 for Unix (character & GUI versions). While Corel is unable to rewrite or reissue upgraded versions of these legacy systems - not least because the source code is unavailable - the company will be providing patches and "workarounds which will be available to the public and freely downloadable from the Corel web site.

http://www.corel.com/2000.htm

LEGAL TECHNOLOGY DIARY DATES

• AIM SEMINARS

A series of free seminars around the UK (including Glasgow on 10th November) until 17th November to promote AIM's case and practice management systems. Call AIM on: 01482 326971 for details.

• AVENUE SEMINARS

A series of free seminars running until 13th April to promote Avenue Legal Systems' Wisdom suite of practice and case management software. Call Clare Wynn at Avenue's Manchester office on: 0161 776 4387 for details.

• AXXIA SEMINARS

A series of free seminars running until 12th November on fee earner productivity and case management to promote Axxia products. Call Claire Jones or James Lambert on: 0118 960 2602 for details.

• LASERFORM ROADSHOWS

Laserform is running a series of roadshows this month to promote its new 32-bit accounts system plus its latest case management and electronic forms software. For details call Sara Walker on: 01565 755154.

• KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

One day Centaur conference on Monday 16th November looking at the role of intranets and know-how systems within law firms. Speakers from Allen & Overy and Ashurst Morris Crisp. The chairman is Clive Whitfield-Jones of Jeffrey Green Russell. Starts 9.30, ends 17.30. Tickets £417 + VAT. Call: 0171 970 4770.

• AND YET EVEN MORE KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

The Bi-Annual Conference on Practical Aspects of Knowledge Management takes place at the Fairfield Halls, Croydon on 25th November. Speakers include Chris Baldwin of Legal Technologies and Johannes Scholtes of Zylab. The event, which is being organised by Ted Clark's new company E-gnosis, starts at 9.00 and closes at 17.00. Tickets £185 + VAT, with discounts for additional delegates. For details call: 0181 240 4463.

RIGHTFAX GETS DOCS LINK

Kommunicate (01962 835000) has begun shipping a document management connector for its RightFAX network fax system. The new module allows users to send faxes directly from either DOCS Open or Microsoft Office 97 applications. The module can also import faxes into DOCS, as well as automatically assign and validate billing codes.

DISCOVERY MARK

Bowhawk Consulting (01252 716694) has added Discovery Mark, an electronic "watermarking" and encryption service to its range of litigation support services. The new service is intended to ensure the authenticity of document images and restrict access to documents in a digital format while in transit.

WEB SITE NEWS

● LEXOLOGY SITE FACELIFT
Legal systems developer Lexology has given its web site a face-lift to provide customers and business partners with interactive support services and user group conference forums.

http://www.lexology.com

● KT SIMPLIFIES INTERFACE
North London law firm Kaye Tesler & Co has redesigned its "24 Hours Interactive Solicitors" web site. The new-look site has a far clearer interface, with the firm's range of web-enabled services displayed as a scrolling frame to the side of the home page. The site retains its daily news slot and is currently commenting on the Microsoft anti-trust case in the USA.

http://www.kt.uklaw.net

● WEB WATCHDOG REVIEW
As part of a DTi initiative to assess the effectiveness of the Internet Watch Foundation as a web watchdog, Denton Hall and management consultants KPMG have launched a new web site that will allow members of the public to express their views on illegal content on the internet and the work of the IWF.

http://www.kpmgiwf.org

SCL IN PRO BONO INITIATIVE

The Society for Computers & Law has made itself useful by providing the funding, technical support and ongoing web hosting services to allow the Solicitors Pro Bono Group (a registered charity) to establish a web site.

As well as containing general information for the public and other interested parties about the concept of "pro bono" legal work and the role of the SPBG, the site also has a password protected area for SPBG members. The glue holding the pages together is a very efficient and simple to use on-site search engine.

Design-wise this is a tastefully constructed site marred only by one blemish, a remarkably unsubtle pull-down menu listing the SPBG's sponsors, the SCL plus most of the big City of London law firms. The site also sends visitors a "cookie" before they can access the home page however the SPBG say they are reconsidering that element.

To find out more about the SPBG call Peta Sweet on 0171 929 5601 or email: pro.bono@virgin.net

http://www.scl.org/spbg/

E-DOCS HAS A RE-THINK

After a less-than stunning debut, E-docs plc has had a rethink on the strategy behind its new E-docs electronic document exchange service.

The most important change is E-docs has now linked-up with Cable & Wireless and will be using its LegalNetwork global managed network infrastructure as the backbone for the service. An immediate consequence of this is E-docs messaging can now be totally independent of the internet and so avoid the net's potential communications black holes. Users will also be able to benefit from other aspects of the C&W managed network service, including greater security and better transaction records and audit trails.

E-docs' sales director Peter Richmond says the whole basis of the service is to be "customer led" and to this end, along with the C&W initiative, another new development with E-docs has been the introduction of DOCS open integration, so all email messaging can be channelled in and out of a document management system.

Further enhancements are promised and Richmond is confident the company will soon be in a position to announce some major orders.   http://www.e-docs.plc.uk

HOLD THAT FRONT PAGE

Although many of the more arriviste law web site designers now use Microsoft FrontPage Extensions as a short cut to avoid having to create interactive forms with Perl or CGI scripting, it is worth noting the majority of internet service providers (ISPs), including CompuServe, Pipex Dial, AOL and Demon, currently still do not support Extensions - and some of those that do charge extra for the privilege.

DOCS FACING NEW RIVALS FROM USA ?

Since the demise of SoftSolutions as a viable player in the document management industry, the DOCS Open system from PC Docs has had the market almost entirely to itself in the UK. However two new names are now threatening to challenge its hegemony.

The first of these is Livelink from Toronto-based Open Text Corporation. Livelink is one of the new generation of intranet-based document management systems that can be accessed via a general purpose browser rather than a dedicated application.

Despite its relative novelty, Simmons & Simmons has already chosen Livelink to replace its old SoftSolutions system and later this month will begin the implementation of the new system. (There again Simmons & Simmons has always had an idiosyncratic approach to IT, viz its choice of Computron for its PMS platform.)

Open Text's European offices are in Beaconsfield (01494 679700) and the company also has a London office in the Centre Point tower. The business development manager is Greg Gaulston (0171 497 1403). http://www.opentext.com

The second newcomer is the iManage system from NetRight Technologies. The development team behind this product includes some ex-SoftSolutions people and over the last twelve months the system has been installed in some major US law firms, including Cravath Swaine & Moore, often as a swap out for DOCS.

As yet the product has no users in the UK but it does have a UK distributor in CSE Systems International. CSE, an Austrian company by background, may be better known for having installed a 270 seat workflow system at the Office for the Supervision of Solicitors earlier this year.

The business development manager is Tom Bird, who can be contacted at CSE's Guildford office (01483 453900). http://www.csesystems.com http://www.netright.com

● Interestingly, one of the largest law firms in New Orleans has already swapped out iManage in favour of the rival Worldox system. Worldox has always given DOCS a run for its money in the USA and now, via new distributor Systematic, is starting to make an impact in the UK.

LAWYERS ONLINE CHANGES

Lawyers Online, the new lawyers-only internet service provider, has responded to the concerns of prospective users and will shortly be dropping the premium-rate phone charges for its helpline service. In addition, the company has redesigned its home page to remove the Java scripting that was causing some users' browsers to crash. Technical director Bill Naylor also points out that users do not have to migrate to the Internet Explorer 4.0 browser supplier with the Lawyers Online CD but can instead choose to make their existing Netscape software the default browser.

http://www.lawyersonline.co.uk

READER SERVICES

● LTi-NET

LTi-Net is the digital version of Legal Technology Insider. It is available in an HTML file format that can be delivered as an email attachment or accessed via a secure subscriber only web-site. LTi-NET comes complete with all hypertext links and is designed for firms wanting to publish the newsletter across intranets and Lotus Notes databases or individual subscribers who just want to read and print it from the desktop. Subscription rates start at £135 (£115 + VAT). For details phone: 01379 687518.

● INSIDER INFO LINE

If you are looking for a phone number, product name, contact point or any other elusive item of legal IT information, call the Insider Info Line: 01379 687518.

● INSIDER WEB SITE

For the latest news and links to legal IT web sites visit the Insider home page.

http://www.cloudnine.co.uk

● EXTRA COPIES

Tired of waiting for the latest issue of the Insider to make its way around the office and arrive at your desktop? For details of discount rates for bulk sales and group subscriptions phone: 01379 687518.

● E-PR@CTICE NEWSLETTERS

A series of free current awareness email newsletters providing news and comment on areas of legal practice. Titles available: *Local Government Law Digital Newsletter* and the *Internet Law Digital Newsletter*. To subscribe, send a note of your email address to: info@cloudnine.co.uk

LEGAL TECHNOLOGY INSIDER

For all editorial and subscription matters contact: Cloudnine Technology, Ferndale House, North Lopham, Diss, Norfolk IP22 2NQ, United Kingdom

Editor: Charles Christian

Tel: 01379 687518 - Fax: 01379 687704
Videoconference line: 01379 687690 x 2
Email: info@cloudnine.co.uk

● NEXT ISSUE
Issue 71 of the Insider will be published on Wednesday 18th November.

TO SUBSCRIBE

Legal Technology Insider is available only on subscription. UK rates: £115 for 21 issues pa or £210 for 42 issues. (Rest of EU: £135 for 21 issues or £245 for 42 issues. Rest of World: £140 for 21 issues or £250 for 42 issues. Payment by International Money Order or Bankers Draft in £ Sterling drawn on London.)

To subscribe, complete & return this form to: Cloudnine Technology, Ferndale House, North Lopham, Diss, Norfolk IP22 2NQ, United Kingdom

✁---

Name ....
Position ....
Firm/Organisation ....
....
Address ....
....
....
....
....
Post/Zip Code ....
Phone Number ....
Email ....
I enclose my remittance of £ ....
(cheque payable to Cloudnine Technology) or complete as appropriate:
Send receipted invoice ....
Please invoice me ....
Purchase Order Number ....
Send me details of receiving the Insider in an electronic format ....
Send me details of discount rates for bulk sales and group subscriptions ....

CRIMINAL LAWYERS IN FROM THE COLD

Criminal lawyers have tended to be the legal profession's poor relations when it comes to IT systems but the last few weeks have seen a flurry of new product launches.

● NEW MOUNTAIN CRIME BILLING MODULE
Mountain Software (01476 573718) has launched a new criminal legal aid billing module. Although the system can be fully integrated with other Mountain legal software, it is also available as a stand-alone package for firms running third-party legal accounts products. The system, which automates the production of Claim 7 and 8 forms, was developed in conjunction with Manchester's largest criminal practice Burton Copeland.

● HARD ON CRIME, SOFT ON SOLICITORS
Kent software house Claimsoft has launched a DOS-based criminal legal aid information management system called CLAIMS for duty and "own" PACE solicitors. The program can create DSPS1, DSPS2 and DSC forms, as well as handle changes in rates (unsocial hours, Bank Holidays etc) automatically. CLAIMS costs £499 + VAT per copy. For a free demonstration disk call: 0181 308 0077.

● CRIMETIME ALTERNATIVE
The latest version of the CrimeTime legal aid billing and forms package (see LTi 69 for first report) is now being distributed by the Alternative Team (0171 359 3595).

LINUX - THAT'S WHO

In LTi 67 we asked to hear from anyone either running or planning to use the Linux version of the Unix operating system. The immediate response was underwhelming with just one practice - Morton Fraser in Edinburgh - admitting to running it. Morton Fraser uses a Linux system as a firewall, mail server and proxy server for internet access.

Since then there have been some rather more positive developments. These include Corel's announcement of a special no-charge download version of WordPerfect 8 for Linux Personal Edition. Interested users can pre-register at http://www.linux.corel.com and will be notified by email of sites from which to download the application. And, legal systems developer Lexology has just confirmed it is looking at using Linux as an alternative server platform. Lexology technical director John Benson says he believes Linux to be a far more scalable product than Windows NT.

● Ironically one organisation to have recently migrated to Linux from Microsoft Windows NT is Medina town council in Washington State. The local authority is having to deal with so much paperwork generated by the construction of Bill Gates' enormous lake-side home that it has had to upgrade its IT systems and, in the process, has installed a new Linux-based document management system.