

CHARLES CHRISTIAN'S

LEGAL TECHNOLOGY INSIDER

THE SOURCE FOR INDEPENDENT LEGAL TECHNOLOGY NEWS, COMMENT AND ANALYSIS

LAWNET IN NEW LEGAL SOFTWARE INITIATIVE

LawNet, the 60-firm strong grouping of independent solicitors' practices which last month was involved with the launch of the Freeserve Desktop Lawyer service on the Internet, this month launches a new case file and activity management software package for lawyers.

Called CASENotes, it is the product of a joint venture, trading as Case Notes Ltd, between Nicholsons Solicitors in Lowestoft, the Camberley based software house Nexus Technology, the LawNet central administration unit and half-a-dozen other firms within the LawNet group.

Reflecting the LawNet group's widespread use of Lotus Notes groupware technology, CASENotes is based on a Notes environment (currently Version 4.6 but there are plan to upgrade to 5.0 later this year) and provides what Nicholsons' partner Robert Nicholson describes as "an integrated filing, document creation, activity management and time recording system" that can be used to handle any type of legal work by any level fee earner or law firm staff.

Nicholson says the decision to develop the system inhouse was prompted by a belief that most conventional third-party case management systems were designed to support paralegals carrying out heavily automated low margin, high volume work and therefore do not cater for the needs of partners and other fee earners involved in modern day general legal practice, where there is little standardised work but an increasing emphasis upon key dates, budgets and compliance with regulatory and quality standards. (That said, Case Notes Ltd is also developing a series of "work type profiles" for firms who do want off-the-peg case management applications.)

One of the key features of CASENotes is making use of existing resources, thus while the system is fully compatible

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STOP PRESS - NEW ONLINE LEGAL SERVICE ON THE WAY ?

The World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO) has announced it is developing an Internet-based system for administering legal disputes. WIPO legal counsel Francis Gurry will outline the system's procedures, rules and tools, which were originally developed to resolve Internet domain name disputes, when he delivers the cyberlaw lecture at the NetMedia 1999 conference in London in early July.

EXCLUSIVE - Linklaters explain Blue Flag moves. See Page 5

HARD TIMES AROUND THE CORNER ?

Although the UK legal IT market is currently enjoying a boom year, thanks to firms bringing forward IT projects or upgrading systems to ensure Year 2000 compliance, plus the knock-on effect of Woolf and the Euro, could the bubble be about to burst?

Latest reports suggest the demand for contract staff is declining throughout the whole IT industry, as larger corporates wind down their Y2K projects, while here in the legal market a number of bigger firms look set to "freeze" their computer installations by adding no new systems until at least January 2000.

New software sales are predicted to plummet in the last quarter of this year and some legal IT suppliers, who had been recruiting large numbers of support staff in recent months to handle a backlog of implementation work, look like having to lay off staff by the spring.

VAZ TO OPEN SOLEX

Keith Vaz MP, the recently appointed junior minister at the Lord Chancellor's Department, will formally open this year's Solicitors & Legal Office Exhibition at the Barbican at 9.30am on Tuesday 15th June.

■ If the idea of listening to a politician giving a speech about a subject he does not understand (no change there then) does not appeal, at least you do not have to do it on an empty stomach. Network fax specialist Kommunicate is sponsoring a complimentary continental breakfast for all visitors with pre-registered tickets at SOLEX each day from 8.30 to 9.30am.

THE INSIDER WEB SITE

Visit the Legal Technology Insider web site for up-to-the-minute news and hyperlinks to additional information.

<http://www.legaltechnology.co.uk>

PEOPLE AND PLACES

■ Following the story in the last issue about LAWTECH SERVICES, a slightly tetchy TIKIT has been in touch to say that it is also a fully accredited CITRIX "gold partner" providing "thin client" networking solutions in the UK legal market. Recent Tikit projects include installing Citrix MetaFrame and WinFrame systems at TRAVERS SMITH BRAITHWAITE, REYNOLDS PORTER CHAMBERLAIN, MACFARLANES, CLYDE & CO, EVERSHEDES, S J BERWIN and OLSWANG. Tikit has also acquired the legal training company MANIFEST which will now trade as TIKIT TRAINING and offer fee earners at Tikit sites training on the RightFAX, InterAction and Carpe Diem product ranges.

■ TERRY LINDON, of LINDON WOOD CONSULTANTS, says his company is now offering law firms a "negotiating with suppliers" service where payment is based upon a percentage of the savings obtained on behalf of the client rather than a fixed fee. Recent projects where Lindon Wood has negotiated substantial reductions in the prices originally quoted by software suppliers include LOPIAN WAGNER in Manchester and ROWBERRY MORRIS in Reading.

■ MASONS has confirmed the story first reported six weeks ago in the Insider that former LOVELL WHITE DURRANT systems manager KEVIN CONNELL has become the firm's new IT director.

■ AVENUE LEGAL SYSTEMS has formed a "strategic partnership" with IT training specialists THE SPEECH & TRAINING COMPANY. As part of the new relationship Speech & Training will be demonstrating some of its products and services on the Avenue stand at next week's SOLEX exhibition. These include a new system that integrates speech recognition software, including command and control facilities, with Avenue's Wisdom suite of accounts and case management software. Avenue directors JOHN O'NEILL and MICHAEL BELAS are understood to have made investments, in a private capacity, in Speech & Training in recent months.

APOLLO TO TALK IN TONGUES

Bovy Technologies is to integrate Lernout & Hauspie's machine translation system into its Apollo Hermes litigation support software. The system automatically translates documents in any of the major European languages into English, or from English into French, German, Italian, Spanish and Portuguese. Other languages available include Arabic, Japanese, Korean and Chinese. Bovy will be demonstrating Apollo Hermes at SOLEX next week.

BIG NUMBER PHONE CODES

Please note that the Insider will now be using the new "02" telephone codes system that came into effect in the UK on 1st June. Thus 0171 XXX XXXX London numbers will now be displayed in the new 020 7XXX XXXX format.

LAWNET SOFTWARE INITIATIVE

Continued from front page

with third-party document management and legal forms software, it can also use "replication" and similar Notes utilities to handle such tasks internally, with assembled documents being output in either Word or WordPerfect.

Although the system has its own sophisticated time recording, the Notes replication facility also means all matter and client financial details can be transferred to and from CASENotes to almost any ODBC compliant legal accounts systems (Nicholsons runs Miles 33 Precedent) thereby ensuring lawyers always have access to the latest work-in-progress data and can constantly monitor the accuracy of fee estimates for the purposes of both Woolf and Legal Aid franchise management.

At the time of going to print, the pricing for CASENotes has still to be finalised but it is likely to be in the region of £300 to £500 per seat. The only other "extra" is a Lotus Notes Server licence, which costs about £1200, plus a £50 per user Notes client licence.

But, as Nicholson points out, the investment in Lotus also provides users with, free of charge, a full range of Notes utilities including e-mail, Lotus Organiser-style calendar, diary and address books plus what is effectively an intranet capability. It can even provide a simple solution to client requests for direct access to matter information. Instead of worrying about creating firewalls and publishing the material onto the Internet, clients can be given a copy of the Notes Client software and then just log on to the CASENotes system as a remote user.

The initial target markets for CASENotes are what Nicholson describes as "LawNet-type firms" with a general legal practice and larger Lotus Notes-using practices.

■ Case Notes has secured a last minute stand (No.157) at next week's SOLEX exhibition in London. For further details phone Robert Nicholson on 01502 532300.

ONLINE ON TOP IN 1999 LOTIES AWARDS

At next week's SOLEX show *In Brief* magazine will formally present trophies to the winners of the 1999 LOTIES (Law Office Technology Innovation) Awards and, as predicted in a previous issue of the Insider, this year's finalists include a strong showing from the online section of the market.

Solcitec's Solcase Online won the law office technology product of the year award, Lawyers Online was voted the best newcomer and Butterworths Direct won in the best legal web site category.

MSS scooped two awards - best law office technology supplier and for AlphaLAW as best back office product. Axxia's Fee Earner Desktop won the best front office product award and Capsoft's HotDocs came top in the law office automation products category.

In other categories, the ACUA (AIM Computer Users Association) was best user group, Sweet & Maxwell's *Kemp & Kemp Personal Injury Practice* won the award for best legal CD-Rom and Hays' Address Plus DX labeller won in the "gadgets" category.

Commenting on the awards, which first began in 1996, *In Brief* publisher Michael Fabian said this year the LOTIES "had come of age in terms of both their recognition and credibility. All the feedback we have received suggests they are now perceived at the UK's leading legal IT awards".

<http://www.inbrief.co.uk>

NEW MS WORD HERE NOW

Yesterday (8th June) saw the official UK launch of Microsoft Office 2000. This contains new versions of the whole Office suite of applications although the element of most relevance to law firms will probably be the new Word 2000 version of Microsoft's wordprocessing software.

While Word 2000 does introduce yet another new file format to contend with - XML on top of the existing DOC and RTF formats - the new system also appears to manage default file formats and older versions of Office applications rather more efficiently than its predecessor, so hopefully Office 2000 will not be followed by the confusion that accompanied the upgrade from Office 95 to Office 97.

Firms wanting to upgrade should check which version they are buying. The top of the range products - Office 2000 Professional and Premium, which cost between £420 to £515 new or £205 to £270 for an upgrade - contain many features most firms can live without. The Small Business package can also safely be ignored and if you just want a new version of Word, a single application upgrade costs £80. Office 2000 Standard, which includes new versions of Word, Excel, Outlook and PowerPoint, is priced at £327 new or £150 for the upgrade.

■ Corel will launch its new system, WordPerfect Office 2000, within the next few days. Standard edition prices are £265 new or £127 for an upgrade. (Add VAT to all prices.)

DEALS AND TENDERS

■ STEELE & CO, one of the largest firms in Norfolk has ordered the Windows NT-based Evolution Client Server from AIM as its new accounts and practice management system. AIM won the order in a run off against AVENUE LEGAL, AXXIA and TECHNOLOGY FOR BUSINESS. Steele & Co was previously part of a consortium of law firms that commissioned THOMPSON MOORE to develop PMS software for them.

BRIGNALLS in Stevenage has become the first AIM site to upgrade from the company's Unix-based Evolution Classic system to the newer Windows NT system. Brignalls' partner Bruce Lendrum is chairman of the ACUA (AIM Computer Users Association) small firms group.

■ Punder, Volhard, Weber & Axster, one of Germany's largest legal practices with 12 offices and 700 staff, has become the first firm in mainland Europe to select CMS Open as its new time and billing system. The deal was struck by the Dutch software services company TIMESOFT HANSCO, which is also the official Benelux distributor for CMS Open. Gary Rogers, the president of CMS Data, says the way the product handles multiple currencies makes it an ideal system for law firms in Euro-land.

info@timesoft-hansco.nl

■ MANAGEMENT INTERFACE (MIL) has completed a raft of Y2K compliance projects, including upgrading firms to the latest version of the AlphaLAW accounts and time recording system for THIRU & CO in East London, JOHN FOWLER OLDMAN of Colchester, RAGGETT TIFFEN & HARRIES in Ongar, APPLEBY HOPE & MATTHEWS of Normanby, PHILIP SMITH & CO of Camberwell and MILES HITCHINSON & LITHGOW in Middlesborough. MIL has also installed a new office automation system for ALMY & THOMAS in Torquay.

■ IVOR FITZPATRICK & CO in Dublin has ordered a SOLICITEC Solcase case management system. In the wake of creating its Scottish subsidiary, Solcitec is actively expanding sales beyond its original market in England & Wales.

LEGAL PUBLISHING NEWS IN BRIEF

■ SWEETS READY TO ROLL OUT NEW CURRENT LAW SERVICE

After months of rumours of fevered activity at its Hebden Bridge subsidiary, Sweet & Maxwell has announced details of its new *CLI* current legal information service. This will be published monthly on CD-Rom and supported by twice-daily Internet-based updates. *CLI* is available in two versions: *CLI Current Law Service*, which is essentially *Current Law Cases* digests from 1947 to-date plus the *BADGER* index, and *CLI Complete*, which includes additional indexes. Pricing will be based on a subscription calculated according to the size of the user organisation. Although this sounds expensive, it probably means there is room for negotiation on price. For a free trial or demo copy of the CD call Jane Atkins on 020 7449 1111.

■ Sweet & Maxwell has also launched a new European legal information service on CD-Rom. Called *ELI*, a single user version, with updates until December 1999, costs £750.

■ COURT SAYS "NO" TO WEST

The US legal publisher West, which is part of the same group that owns Sweet & Maxwell in the UK, has failed in an attempt to gain copyright protection for the "star pagination" page location system it uses in its case reports. Last week the US Supreme Court declined to review two decisions of the 2nd US Circuit Court of Appeals that went against West Publishing in disputes with Matthew Bender and HyperLaw, who both want to use "star" in their own CD-Rom products.

More publishing news on Page 6

■ INSIDER FREE-ZINES

Legal Technology Insider publishes a series of free current awareness e-mail newsletters (free-zines) providing news and comment on legal practice. The titles are: *E-Business + Law*, *Watching Brief Online* (local government law) and the *Litigation Support Digital Newsletter*. To subscribe send a note of your e-mail address to: info@legaltechnology.co.uk

BETAMAX VERSUS VHS REPLAY ON WAY ?

Is the legal publishing and litigation support market heading for a re-run of the old Sony Betamax versus VHS video standards war of the early 1980s?

At the time it was widely accepted that Betamax was a technically superior product (and in fact some parts of the BBC TV service still uses it) but the product that enjoyed the greatest commercial success, and indeed is still the market leader for VCR systems, was VHS. Why? Because although it may not have been so sophisticated, VHS won the support of the movie industry and became the most widely used format within the video movie rental business.

Today, in the VHS corner, we have the PDF portable document file format. It has its limitations but it is cheap and widely used. Challenging PDF's position are two wanna-be rival standards: XML and, trailing at a distance, SVG/PGML, a proposed new standard for graphical forms.

It is too early to predict the impact of SVG but XML has already been adopted as a file format by the European Court and both Microsoft and Corel in their new Office 2000 products. According to a report by US IT analysts Forrester Research "XML will take off over the next three years".

■ COMMENT

Does this mean goodbye PDF? On the Insider we do not think so. In fact we believe the format aficionados have got it wrong because out in the real world it is quite clear that although PDF may have had a slow start, it is now rapidly gaining a critical mass.

For example, within the last twelve months it has emerged as the de facto standard for both the US courts and the UK litigation support industry. Also, as reported in the last Insider, because "save to PDF" buttons are being incorporated on the next generation of photocopiers, it is now becoming a mainstream office technology.

When that happens - and users have large investments in both PDF systems and PDF file archives - it will be very hard for new formats to supplant it, no matter how technically advanced they may be. Perhaps the best analogy is that of the consumer electronics industry. All the efforts of suppliers to promote technically superior alternatives to compact discs, including mini-disc and DAT, have failed because the public has not been prepared to write-off its investment in CD record collections, hi-fi kit and in-car entertainment systems.

■ One inner London borough council (the name cannot be disclosed for contractual reasons) is planning a major electronic filing project to convert an estimated 50 million pages of documents into PDF files. The documents are currently stored in a network of portakabins around the borough, which frequently leads to problems when files need to be retrieved quickly. The PDF move was prompted by the council having to pay substantial compensation to one individual because it had "lost" her adoption records.

LINKLATERS EXPLAIN BLUE FLAG LATEST

In an Insider exclusive report, Linklaters' head of information systems Simon Thompson explains the latest developments with the Blue Flag service and why the firm has teamed up with Documentum...

Document management is Linklaters' business-critical application. Documents are the firm's key business output. Of the million or so documents produced each year, many are shared or jointly authored by teams located across the world. Linklaters chose Documentum to handle its document management, so that it could make any document available to any authorised individual in the company at any time, anywhere in the world. A single Documentum "Docbase" supports check in/check out for all users from all locations. There is fully distributed content and a single cabinet/folder structure and security model. Currently all 2400 Linklaters' staff are accessing the single Docbase, with over 350 concurrent connections to relational databases.

Linklaters see the main benefit of Documentum adoption as the proper management control of documents, making them openly available across an unlimited number of vertical business processes. We are sophisticated and experienced document management users. We have consistently led the market in deploying state of the art technology and giving our staff the best tools for the job. We successfully exploited Wang technology in the 80s and early 90s and NeXTSTEP technology in the mid-90s. We chose Documentum to take us into the new millennium because exhaustive research and trials by ourselves and Logica demonstrated that Documentum's software is the only truly scalable document management software available. It gives us a core reusable knowledge infrastructure.

With Documentum, Linklaters enjoys global desktop access, with a common browser and full integration with Microsoft Office. The system facilitates knowledge management, intranet management and delivery, as well as providing a transaction index. Working with Documentum, Linklaters has created a new legal documentation offering as part of its Blue Flag suite of products. The first generation, Blue Flag Regulatory launched in 1996, was Linklaters' ground breaking initiative to provide "commoditised" legal advice services, and be first to market as the "Virtual Lawyer".

As Mark Boggis, Linklaters' Blue Flag business manager puts it: "The nature of legal services revolves around advice and counselling, documentation, and transaction management. Our clients demand 100 percent accuracy and judgement, continuous availability and responsiveness. They also want us to be cost effective and operate globally."

Blue Flag replaces the conventional customised legal delivery mechanism with an electronically enabled commoditised one.

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LITIGATION SUPPORT NEWS IN BRIEF

■ EGAMI MOVES

DPA-Egami, the company behind the Egami-Legal litigation support system, has moved to new offices at 25 Maddox Street, London W1R 9LE. The new phone number is 0171 308 0446.

As part of the reorganisation that followed the appointment of Keith Negal as the new chief executive of DPA-Egami last summer, the group has wound up its old DP Advisers subsidiary. Negal says this was primarily an "administrative matter" and that otherwise business is booming both in the UK and Ireland, where the company has been working with Malcolmson Law in Dublin.

Recent UK projects include the use of the Egami-Legal system by Gordon Dadds in the Paloma Picasso divorce case and by Davies Arnold Cooper in the Baghadrani/Commercial Union insurance fraud dispute.

<http://www.dpaegami.com>

■ 32-BIT LIVE NOTE ON WAY

LiveNote Technologies, whose eponymous LiveNote software is used by Smith Bernal to provide its real-time transcription service, has confirmed that it is working on a new 32-bit version of the product. But, according to the company's chief executive officer Graham Smith, it is a mistake to place too much emphasis on technology because what really matters is the quality of the staff using the system and the overall service they deliver. "It's not about software but about the service," says Smith.

LiveNote has also recently rolled out a VideoNote system that can synchronise text with video images, so users can instantly pinpoint key clips of video testimony. There is also a new Internet-based service that will allow secure remote access of live real-time transcript testimony from anywhere in the world through a local Internet connection.

■ Smith Bernal has produced a new *Guide to real-time reporting in the Crown Courts*. It is available free of charge, for a copy phone 020 7404 1400 or download it from <http://www.smithbernal.com/whatnewwhatnewsframe.htm>

WEB NEWS IN BRIEF

■ THE BIG NUMBER SITE

Confused by the new "Big Number" changes to telephone codes which came into effect in the UK on 1st June? A full explanation, including a downloadable Excel spreadsheet containing a guide to changes plus some implausible excuses why OFTEL did not foresee the problem the last time it reorganised the phone codes, is now available in the web.

<http://www.numberchange.org>

■ CRILLS' SITE REVAMP

The Jersey law firm Crills has revamped its web site to include an integral search engine, better navigation, a "what's new" section on the latest legal developments and a "Homelink" facility that allows prospective clients, wishing to buy or sell property on Jersey, to place their initial instructions online. Crills say that because property transactions on the island generally require a court appearance, it is unlikely the system can ever be fully automated.

<http://www.crills.com>

■ KHAKI IS THE NEW BEIGE

Legal systems supplier Keystone's new web site has just gone live. It is a primarily promotional site with lots of grey photos of grey men (sorry, company executives) and possibly the drabest front page ever. The colour scheme is khaki, khaki and yet more khaki, including some illegible pale khaki text on a white background.

<http://www.keystone-solutions.com>

■ LTI-NET - THE DIGITAL EDITION OF THE INSIDER

LTI-Net is the digital version of Legal Technology Insider. It is available in an HTML file format that can be delivered as an e-mail attachment or accessed via a secure subscriber-only web site.

LTI-NET comes complete with live hypertext links and is designed for firms wanting to access 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 (inc VAT). To obtain a free sample copy e-mail info@legaltechnology.co.uk

N-Z MINISTER WARNS BAR OVER IT

At a recent seminar at the Inner Temple in London, New Zealand's minister for transport & technology Maurice Williamson gave a presentation to members of the Bar Council's practice management & development committee about New Zealand's attempts to turn itself from being a primarily agricultural economy into a "knowledge-based" society through harnessing the benefits of information technology.

The minister pointed out it was a little worrying to realise that after 160 years of development, the country's entire economy was still worth less than the personal fortune of Bill Gates of Microsoft, who started his business empire from scratch just under 25 years ago.

The minister had been invited to the event by Bar Council chairman Dan Brennan QC who, while not going quite so far as to suggest the Bar was in danger of becoming a Third World backwater, still made it clear he felt barristers needed to change their working methods and plug into the online world of video conferencing and the Internet if they were to remain commercially competitive.

■ Legal Technology Insider editor Charles Christian followed the minister's presentation with a short speech giving a UK legal market perspective. This included the suggestion that the Bar Council should set a target date for getting all its members online and using e-mail.

SOLEX NOW ON THE WEB

The Solicitors & Legal Office Exhibition (SOLEX), which takes place in London next week, now has its own web site.

<http://www.solex.uk.com>

LEGAL PUBLISHING NEWS

■ TIMES TO LAUNCH LEGAL MAGAZINE ?

Reports from Wapping suggest that *The Times* newspaper is considering relaunching Frances Gibb's Tuesday legal section as a separate tabloid newspaper along the lines of its regular *Interface IT* supplement. The move reflects the growing competition between *The Times*, *The Lawyer* and *Legal Week* for recruitment advertising. **See also Page 8.**

■ TWO NEW HOT DOCS TRAINING PROVIDERS

Capsoft UK has appointed two new accredited training providers for its HotDocs document assembly software. They are: Christina Archbold, the former Law Society IT advisor who now runs her own training consultancy in London, and Devon-based Cognito Software, who will be launching a new Woolf-oriented case management system in the autumn that incorporates support for HotDocs and Proforma's civil procedure forms.

<http://www.capsoftuk.co.uk/products/training/>

NEW SECURITY RISK FOR INTERNET USERS

The US systems house Network Associates says it has discovered a potentially dangerous new "trojan horse" program called BackDoor-G that could allow hackers to remotely access and control infected PCs over the Internet.

BackDoor-G is a Windows 9x backdoor trojan that installs files in a user's Windows and Windows/System folders. When executed, BackDoor-G turns the system into an open client, giving virtually unlimited remote access to the system via the Net. The trojan is virtually undetectable by the user although it has been reported as spreading as a screen saver and an update to a computer game.

While not technically a virus, (it is actually an HST or hybrid security threat) the latest version of Network Associates' VirusScan software (which can be downloaded from the web) will detect and eradicate BackDoor-G.

<http://www.nai.com>

■ Later this month Legal Technology Insider will be launching a free online service providing information about the latest viruses, e-mail hoaxes and software bugs.

Full details in the next issue - 23rd June.

LINKLATERS BLUE FLAG

Continued from page 5

Customised legal services are high value, involve a live lawyer, and are paper-based, innovative and almost certainly unique. Blue Flag commoditised legal services are repetitive but essential. The next generation of Blue Flag products - Blue Flag Confirms - is tailored for investment banks, has global reach, offers extensive functionality and replicates the legal thought process. It is delivered as a software solution using Documentum and offers three components: a lawyer's legal knowledge, analytical and drafting skills.

The system automatically completes confirmations of trades in the OTC derivatives market. It does this by taking data generated by the trader and incorporating it automatically in the confirmation. Where legal input is required, for instance in the selection and incorporation of definitions from the ISDA documentation, Blue Flag Confirms analyses the requirement and selects, by way of logic paths and other algorithms, the appropriate term or definition.

The output - whether by way of letter, fax, e-mail or telex - is customised to reflect the user's own preferences, from its preferred legal terminology down to the typeface of the document itself. Blue Flag Confirms encapsulates Documentum's market-leading management system, the advisory delivery of laws and regulations, and Linklaters own lawyers' derivatives transaction skills.

In effect Blue Flag Confirms offers customised commoditisation. It is quick, highly accurate, provides an automatic audit trail and is cost effective for our clients.

LEGAL TECHNOLOGY DIARY DATES

■ **SOLICITORS & LEGAL OFFICE EXHIBITION** - Annual legal IT exhibition at the Barbican Exhibition Centre in London. This year's show features a number of innovations including an enlarged seminar section. Opens on Tuesday 15th June at 9.30 am, closes on Thursday 17th at 5.00 pm. On Wednesday the show is open until 7.30 pm. Admission is free. For pre-registration tickets call 07000 763896.

■ **NORWEL'S DAY OF DIFFERENCE** - Norwel's annual mixture of entertainment and seminars at the Chiswell Street Brewery in London on Tuesday 15th June. This year's speakers include Andrew Levison of Grant Thornton and David Marshall of Anthony Gold Lerman & Muirhead. For details call 020 7583 0363.

■ **THE POWER OF VOICE** - One day seminar on Thursday 16th June, at the Highland Hotel in Stirling, looking at the role of speech recognition and networked digital dictation systems. Starts 10.00 am. For details call Sandra Smith on 020 7878 5202.

■ **AVENUE LEGAL SEMINARS** - Series of free seminars around England and Wales to promote Avenue Legal Systems' latest software, including its new Woolf-compliant case management system. For details call Linda Moore on 01489 609010.

■ **IT SOLUTIONS '99** - A product promotional seminar organised by Sanderson Systems in London on 13th July. Admission is free, call Lisa Quinn on 0121 359 4861 for more details.

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LEGAL TECHNOLOGY INSIDER

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■ **DON'T MISS THE NEXT ISSUE OF THE INSIDER - No. 83 - OUT WEDNESDAY 23rd JUNE.**

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COMPUTER LORE

■ TOY STORY

The Hollywood actor W C Fields once commented that you should never work with children or dumb animals. Well, we will have to accept his word for it regarding children but a current court case in Los Angeles has certainly confirmed his worst fears about animals, both dumb or, as in these proceedings, just plain stuffed and animatronic.

As part of ongoing litigation with Walt Disney over the size of the termination bonus payable to Disney's former studio boss Jeffrey Katzenberg, one of Mr Katzenberg's lawyers produced one of the interactive toys - a talking teddy bear - that been developed during his client's period in office. Unfortunately the lawyer, a Bertram Fields no less, was unable to switch off the bear so his opening arguments were drowned out by such choice comments as "Squeeze my ear and I'll tell you what I'm thinking". No prizes for guessing what the lawyer was thinking.

■ DON'T TRY THIS AT HOME

According to a story currently doing the rounds on the Internet, to combat the millennium bug, Johnson & Johnson, the makers of the famous KY Jelly, are about to release a new product called Y2K Jelly. Apparently if you smear this on your computer's hard disk, it allows you to put four digits into places which would previously only have taken two. Better not try this at home - or work.

■ CURIUSER AND CURIUSER

Now here is an odd thing, if you go onto the Internet to look for the web sites of either the *Legal Week* or *Legal Business* magazines at <http://www.legalweek.co.uk> and <http://www.legalbusiness.co.uk>, you are taken directly to the home page of their arch rival *The Lawyer*. In fact if you want to access the *Legal Business* site, or any other material published by its parent company Legalease, you need to go to <http://www.icclaw.com>

Legal Week has yet to launch a web site however the Insider has learned that in the wake of a "phenomenally successful" five months since the magazine's debut in January, plans to develop a site have been brought forward. Apparently sales of recruitment advertising are well ahead of target - largely at the expense of *The Times* and *The Lawyer*.

■ IT'S NOT CLEVER AND IT'S NOT NICE

Clearly the sales success CMS Open software is enjoying is hurting some of its competitors. At the Insider we recently received an anonymous note purporting to be the CV of a CMS salesman who had been made redundant because of the "financial uncertainties" surrounding the company. Powerful stuff, until a phone call revealed the individual in question had resigned for personal reasons and that far from cutting back, CMS is actually recruiting more staff to support its activities in the UK and mainland Europe.