

CHARLES CHRISTIAN'S

# LEGAL TECHNOLOGY INSIDER

THE SOURCE FOR INDEPENDENT LEGAL TECHNOLOGY NEWS, COMMENT AND ANALYSIS

## LAW SOCIETY SCHEME IN LAST MINUTE HITCH

The English Law Society's 1999/2000 *Software Solutions* guide for smaller firms has hit a last minute hitch and is now running about six weeks behind schedule, to allow for the list of participating suppliers to be finalised.

The Insider understands that although the list of "recognised suppliers" has been increased from last year, with six companies definitely included in the new edition of the guide, the delay has been caused by two other suppliers querying Chancery Lane's initial decision to exclude them or, alternatively, qualify their involvement with the scheme.

One supplier said he felt the Law Society was "moving the goal posts" for whereas the original tender document had talked about systems for "smaller firms" with "30 users and less", the emphasis in recent weeks had shifted to the needs of sole practitioners and very small firms. But, the supplier added, he was in talks with the Law Society and still optimistic of reaching a mutually satisfactory deal.

## DO WE REALLY NEED ANY MORE LEGAL IT SUPPLIERS ?

It is often claimed that the UK legal systems market needs more suppliers like it needs a hole in the head. But, despite all the gloomy predictions of pending shakeouts, the sector seems to just keep expanding, as more new vendors continue to appear.

This month already looks set to produce a record crop with debuts by JST Combined (**see separate story on this page**) plus four other suppliers, including a library systems developer, an Irish software house and a new document management/relationship management product all seeking to enter the market. And we still have the Glen Legal and SOLEX North events to come later in the month, both of which promise yet more new faces and products.

**New IT suppliers - the autumn collection, see pages 4 & 5**

## STOP PRESS

This week Martindale-Hubbell is expected to announce details of a UK and European version of its online law firm directory that will include a semi-automated web site design service for law firms and a consumer-oriented "lawyer locator" search engine.

**For a full report see the next issue of the Insider**

## JST MACKINTOSH SETS UP IT COMPANY

Liverpool-based commercial and insurance solicitors JST Mackintosh has set up its own IT business to provide a range of IT services, including computer consultancy, technical support, project management, hardware/software installation, training and web site design to third-parties, including other law firms.

Called JST Combined Solutions (0151 282 2828), the company, which is headed by the firm's current IT director Ben Hutchins, is offering a free half-day IT audit to prospects as part of its initial promotional activities. Hutchins says the idea is to show the way JST's own IT systems have been implemented and are now making money for the firm, as well as saving money for clients, and then look at how other organisations could enjoy similar tangible business benefits.

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

## Y2K - 86 DAYS TO GO

Including weekends and public holidays there are now just 86 days to go until the clocks strike midnight on the 31st December and the millennium bug either wreaks havoc or proves to be yet another technological damp squib. In the Insider's latest report, we look at last minute preparations in the private practice and government sectors.

**Y2K - ready for the end-game? see page 3**

## THE INSIDER WEB SITE

Visit the Legal Technology Insider web site for the latest legal and IT industry news, access to archive material and hyperlinks to additional services and information.



## PEOPLE AND PLACES

■ Electronic publishing specialists INFORMATION FOR LAWYERS and PROFORMA have moved to new offices at 5 Coval Passage, London SW14 7RE. The phone number is 0208 878 3033.

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

■ At the SAGE Time Division recent annual user group conference, UK distributor TIKIT won the CARPE DIEM partner and international reseller awards.

■ SARA WALKER has left LASERFORM for a new job outside the legal systems market. MIKE BOYNES, the company's sales & marketing director has taken over responsibility for Laserform's exhibitions and product roadshows.

■ PILGRIM SYSTEMS has moved its head office from central Edinburgh to new premises in the Commercial Quay district of Leith, an area currently enjoying a similar commercial resurgence to Canary Wharf in London and the Quayside in Newcastle. The new offices, in a former scotch bonded warehouse, overlook the new home of the Royal Yacht Britannia. Pilgrim chairman Jim Cummings said the company had seven staff when it moved into its previous offices 12 years ago but this had now grown to 50 and was expected to double again in the near future.

The new address is: Pilgrim Systems, 96 Commercial Quay, Leith, Edinburgh EH6 6LL. The new phone number is 0131 555 9700. Pilgrim has also closed its old London office and opened a new southern office in Reading, which will house sales, support and training facilities. The office is at: Clipper House, 62/66 London Street, Reading RJ1 4SQ (0118 960 7300).

■ JAMES LESLAU has joined the London office of KEYSTONE SOLUTIONS as a product consultant and RACHEL SUTTON, previously with Keystone in Auckland, has formed her own consultancy PIPER CONSULTING, which will be offering implementation services to Keystone users in New Zealand and Australia. CORRINE WALLIS-HAY has joined Keystone and is now client manager for Australia and New Zealand.

## LAB DENIES LAFQAS IT PROBLEMS

Responding to the story in the previous issue of the Insider about allegations that the new LAFQAS franchise quality assurance standard was an IT "shambles", the Legal Aid Board has denied there are any problems or that it has failed to supply adequate information about the standard.

The LAB's Caroline O'Dwyer told the Insider that "The Board considers the requirements set out in LAFQAS are clear. In respect of IT used to deliver those requirements, while we accept that the Board has a role to play, the guidance needs to be developed in such a way as to allow maximum flexibility and minimum prescription. The Board has therefore been working alongside the Law Society and IT providers to deliver helpful guidelines so that IT suppliers can adapt their systems."

O'Dwyer said the LAB had published a detailed article on this topic in the July 1999 issue of *Dispatch* magazine, which goes out to all legal aid firms, covering information about how to define costs and how data might be collected and reported. She also added that practitioners still have almost a year to prepare, as the requirements do not have to be met until August 2000.

■ Information about the LAFQAS requirements is available from the Franchise Development Group on 0171 813 8604.

## NEW SERVICE AIMS TO SLASH IT RECRUITMENT COSTS

Independent IT consultant John Irving is to launch a new recruitment service which he believes will be able to offer prospective employers highly competitive fee rates through the use Internet-based facilities. The service, called Professional IT Staff.com, will be launched in November and is aimed at the senior IT staff jobs market for law firms and similar professional practices. The accompanying web site will offer candidates "virtual" career guidance advice.

[john.irving@dial.pipex.com](mailto:john.irving@dial.pipex.com)

## WINDOWS 2000 WARNING

The US technology research organisation GartnerGroup has issued a warning that organisations planning to migrate to Windows 2000, the operating system Microsoft is scheduled to launch later this month as a replacement for NT 4.0, should wait until at least the first service pack is available and stable in about 12 months' time.

Gartner also points out that as, even on Microsoft's own estimates, Windows 2000 will only reduce desktop total cost of ownership by around nine percent, if this figure does not look sufficiently attractive, then an organisation should either stick with its present platform or have a very sound business case for using Windows 2000 specific features, such as Activedirectory and Intellimirror.

## Y2K - READY FOR THE END-GAME ?

With most law firms having now either completed or entered the final stages of their Y2K compliance projects - with the obvious exception of those practices with their heads still firmly wedged in the sand - the main item now on the agenda is how to handle the immediate Millennium holiday period, when the most disruption is likely to occur.

From the firms contacted by the Insider, it looks as if many will have all IT staff on-site on Sunday 2nd January. And among the firms that still enjoy the luxury of closing down over the holiday period, switching off every system on the evening of Thursday 30th - so they can all be brought back up again in a controlled manner of the Sunday - appears to be a popular option.

One apparent cause of controversy is whether switching off systems, particularly servers that have previously been left running for months, exposes a firm to the danger of components cooling down and then "blowing" when the system is restarted three days later. The counter argument is that a shutdown may be unavoidable because some manufacturers recommend hardware be switched off before midnight on New Year's Eve so that the BIOS can be restored when the system is rebooted after midnight.

With a number of firms reporting unfortunate experiences in the past with UPS systems (uninterruptible power supplies) proving all too easily interrupted, another reason mentioned for shutting down is to avoid the risk of hard disk damage during possible electricity supply failures.

### ■ ALL SYSTEMS ALMOST ALL GO AT THE LCD

The latest status report from the Lord Chancellor's Department reveals an organisation confident that it has almost resolved all outstanding Y2K compliance problems within its head office, Public Trust Office and Court Service operations.

As of last week, the LCD had spent nearly £10.5 million auditing, fixing, replacing and testing a total of 652 separate systems and now only has two "non-business critical" systems remaining outstanding. Both of these are scheduled for implementation over the next six weeks. The department will have also completed testing its "business continuity plans" by the end of this month.

The LCD has also published details of its "Millennium Operating Regime" for the immediate New Year period. This includes the avoidance of listing high profile and custodial cases for the period 4th-to-8th January; avoiding the roll out of any new systems and a total freeze on all IT development work during December 1999 and January 2000 and rescheduling all non-critical, routine activities and quarterly runs to avoid possible system overloads.

Curiously, just about the only thing the LCD has not yet done is agree a remuneration package with IT and support staff to ensure everyone turns up for work over the New Year period however this is "under discussion".

## DEALS AND TENDERS

■ Along with winning orders from major regional law firms, including BROWNE JACOBSON, EVERSHEDES and EDGE ELLISON, SOLICITEC's SolCase case management system is also making inroads into the local government and inhouse legal department sectors. Recent signings include WESTMINSTER CITY, NEW FOREST DISTRICT and SALISBURY DISTRICT councils, as well as ALLIED DOMEQC and the CHURCH OF ENGLAND COMMISSIONERS.

■ MILEY & MILEY has become the latest Dublin firm to order Arista practice and case management software from AXXIA SYSTEMS. The four partner firm, which selected Axxia in favour of SANDERSON and RODINE, will also install the company's fee earner desktop and marketing modules. Other recent Axxia signings in Ireland include VINCENT & BEATTY, IVOR FITZPATRICK and GERARD SCALLAN & O'BRIEN. Over half of the Republic's 20 largest firms now run Axxia-based installations.

■ Liverpool-based LINDON WOOD CONSULTANTS has won a contract to help build a new "Freeserve-style" web portal. A number of local authorities have already shown interest in the project, which has a preliminary site at:  
<http://www.sparticus.net>

■ KRAMER LEE & ASSOCIATES and PC DOCS/FULCRUM EUROPE have signed a "strategic alliance" for the joint sale and support of the PC Docs range of document and knowledge management systems. The deal means users will be able to obtain the system and associated deployment and consultancy services from a single source. KRIS GRABARCZYK, the IT director at ASHURST MORRIS CRISP, described it as "a major leap forward that these two organisations can finally work closely together".

**Hunting the Holy Grail of DMS, see page 7**

■ Independent consultant JOHN IRVING advised MILLS & REEVE on their recent IT project, which culminated in the firm ordering the FirmWare PMS system from RESOLUTION SOFTWARE.

## EMPLOYMENT LAW RIVALRY WELCOMED

Last month's outbreak of competition in the online employment law news and case reporting world has been welcomed by DiscLaw Publishing, who produce the budget-priced *LOAD* service.

DiscLaw managing director Henry Scrope told the Insider: "From our own commercial point of view I think this is likely to increase the relative value of our low cost employment law service.

"Daily summaries provided by Lawtel and CCH New Law are useful but I suspect many lawyers will take the view it is not worth paying a lot extra for daily online summaries when you can get full judgments free from the Employment Appeal Tribunal's own web site. Add in the fact a subscription to our service still costs less than half that of any other serious employment law service and it adds up to unbeatable value for money."

DiscLaw has also recently upgraded the free public-access side of its EMPLAW web site to include a time-saving selection of "employment law filtered" links to full text judgments on the House of Lords and Court of Appeal web sites, as well as to employment law related EC Directives and recent employment law Acts and statutory instruments. The DiscLaw site also provides indexes of recent EAT and ECJ employment cases.

■ The subscriber-only side of the site (annual subscription £185 + VAT, 24 hour day ticket £5 + VAT) now carries the full text of the Employment Rights Act 1996, as amended. Over 160 of the Act's 245 sections have already been amended and are shown in colour with annotations and commencement dates.

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

## INSIDER E-ZINES

Legal Technology Insider publishes two current awareness e-mail newsletters: *New Media Lawyer*, which covers all aspects of the Internet law industry, and *Watching Brief Online*, which carries commentaries on the latest local government law cases. Subscription is free and to be added to the distribution list send a note of your e-mail address to:

[info@legaltechnology.co.uk](mailto:info@legaltechnology.co.uk)

## NEW IT SUPPLIERS - THE AUTUMN COLLECTION

### ■ LINKING DOCUMENTS WITH CONTACTS

The first of this month's newcomers is the Link 5 system (the earlier versions were only available in Europe) from Brussels-based Link Software. Link describes the product as a "relationship management for teams" system but it is actually more of a multi-purpose tool that allows groups of users to access and share information about common contacts, projects and documents.

As such, it has the potential to overlap with some of the document, case and relationship management systems now in use in the legal sector - the company believes it will give DOCS Open and Interaction a run for their money. And, it is no surprise to learn that Link has not only identified law firms as a potential market but is also very close to appointing its first vertical market value added reseller for legal. Freshfields is also understood to be looking at the product.

Link 5 runs on all modern Windows platforms and is compatible with the usual Microsoft Office products. The software, which is designed for the "SME" market and caters for teams ranging from five to 200 in size, comes complete with a Borland Interbase database however it can also be run in conjunction with SQL Server and Oracle.

Pricing starts at around US\$ 250 rising to US\$ 500 per seat, depending on the level of functionality and additional customisation and integration required. Anthony Berry, who heads Link's UK operations - the company now has offices in central London (0207 661 9472) - reckons the product is 80 percent ready to run out of the box and 20 percent configurable. Berry is interested in talking to other potential VARs and integrators.

<http://www.linkforwindows.com>

### ■ THE REPUBLIC STRIKES BACK

For most of the decade the trend has been for English and Scottish legal software suppliers to sell their systems in their home markets and then head for the Republic and Northern Ireland. Now the boot is on the other foot with Dundalk-based solicitor Gary Matthews hoping to crack the British market with the Garcon Office System, an integrated "case management, accounting and document creation" application he has developed for law firms.

Garcon is a 32-bit Windows system written in Access and fully integrated with Microsoft Word. The accounting element has a full nominal ledger and handles separate client and office ledgers, as well as time recording.

Garcon has already been running in a number of law offices in the Republic and Northern Ireland for over two years and Matthews is now looking for distributors in England, Wales and Scotland. UK pricing has still to be finalised but a full product fact sheet is available via email:

[gary.matthews@virgin.net](mailto:gary.matthews@virgin.net)

### ■ A LOT OF SOMETHING FOR NOTHING

There may be no such thing as a free lunch but what can you expect when you opt for free software? The answer, in the case of the ByteDrive (0171 586 8606) Visual Portfolio Manager system, is a sophisticated piece of 32-bit Windows software which not only loads and performs efficiently but is also sufficiently intuitive in its design that you are not forever scratching your head wondering what to do next.

ByteDrive call VPM a "practice management system" and it is, in the context of being a clients-and-their-matters management rather than purely accounts-oriented system. Its nearest competitor is therefore Amicus Attorney from Gavel & Gown, rather than one of the traditional client and office ledger-based solicitors' bookkeeping systems. But, while it may lack the attractive screen layouts and design of Amicus, opting instead for the basic Microsoft Access austere card index style, it does cover much of the same ground and has the additional benefit of being free.

Given that one of the major problems facing very small firms and sole practitioners is not bookkeeping per se (they often have insufficient business to justify computerising their accounts) but keeping track of the status of various matters, avoiding conflicts of interest and not missing key dates, VPM would seem to meet most of these needs.

Users can benefit from some handy additional functionality, including reminders, time recording, correspondence templates and invoicing, by upgrading to the optional subscriber version software. This costs a whole £175 per firm per annum. It is also worth noting that the software - even in the basic version - contains an excellent onscreen help facility. Verdict: it is potentially a useful application, so try it after all there is nothing to lose.

VPM is available on CD-Rom or can be downloaded from the web. The original version was developed in association with Enfield solicitors Howard Gross & Co. A new version 2 of the software is now undergoing beta testing, the main changes being closer integration with Word 97, including the ability to print VPM reports directly from within Word.

<http://www.vimsltd.com>

### ■ LIBRARIES FOR THE 21st CENTURY

Finally, another new face in the legal market, Bailey Solutions (01273 773788), which is offering a 10 percent discount on data conversion work to any organisation placing an order for its PenLib Library Management System before the end of 1999. Projects covered include converting old data from DOS-based catalogues, spreadsheets, Idealist, MicroCairs, other library systems and wordprocessed lists.

PenLib, which was developed by former law librarian Penny Bailey, retails from £500. The system is designed for small-to-medium sized law firms and can handle serial management, cataloguing, financial reporting and subject indexing. Recent enhancements include an optional barcode loans system and a know-how function with hyperlinks to files, scanned images and web sites. PenLib also fully integrates with Microsoft Office.

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

## NEWS IN BRIEF

■ WordPerfect may no longer be the legal world's favourite wordprocessor but at least COREL, the company behind the software, is currently enjoying financial success, having just reported its best financial results for several years. In its latest trading quarter, Corel made a net profit of \$17.6 million, compared with a net loss of \$7.8 million in the same period last year. In a related development, Corel and US software house INPRISE have also announced a "strategic alliance to accelerate commercial mainstreaming" of LINUX, the operating system reckoned by some people to be a viable alternative to Microsoft Windows NT.

■ Austrian-based CSE SYSTEMS GmbH has been acquired by SER SYSTEME AG of Germany. CSE's UK operation is best known in the legal market as the UK distributor of iManage document management system, which has been winning growing support among both US and UK law firms - HARBOTTLE & LEWIS and CLINTONS are the latest London practices to have placed orders. The takeover will not affect availability or support for the iManage product.

■ BVRP SOFTWARE, the French parent of KOMMUNICATE, has reported an 86 percent increase in revenue in its trading year to 31st July 1999. Winchester-based Kommunicate Ltd, the UK distributor of the RightFAX network fax system which is widely used by larger law firms, was acquired by BVRP in December 1998.

■ IBM has launched a new version of its Netfinity Windows server hardware - the 5600 - incorporating a "software rejuvenation" facility that can detect when the operating system is about to crash and automatically reset itself, thereby avoiding costly downtime or the risk of data being lost. The system achieves this through the use "smart" monitoring technology that calculates when the operating system may reach a critical point and schedules a system reset, clearing the memory and preventing system failure. The IBM web site contains a white paper on the 5600.

<http://www.ibm.com/netfinity>

## WEB NEWS IN BRIEF

■ OSBORNE CLARKE has launched a new site providing legal information and FAQs on developments in marketing and advertising law. There are also a number of documents clients can download free of charge, including prize competition rules and confidentiality letters

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

■ ASHURT MORRIS CRISP has advised the IRON TRADES insurance group on the creation of what is believed to be the UK's first fully interactive, e-commerce enabled motor insurance web site. The site will allow the insurer to sell policies directly and exclusively to web users.

<http://www.ironsure.com>

■ Since its launch earlier this autumn, the UKLIT free e-mail forum for the UK legal IT sector has begun to build up its membership, with recent discussions including last minute Y2K planning. To join, send a blank e-mail to:

[uklit-subscribe@egroups.com](mailto:uklit-subscribe@egroups.com)

■ A new version of the IP Exchange intellectual property web site has been launched by PricewaterhouseCoopers. For a £15 annual fee subscribers have access to a database of IP lawyers and an online Q&A service. PwC is also planning a trademark search facility.

<http://www.ipex.net>

■ Lexis is now shipping the Professional, a new enhanced version of its web browser interface.

<http://www.lexis-nexis.com>

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[info@legaltechnology.co.uk](mailto:info@legaltechnology.co.uk)

## PRETTY GOOD PRIVACY NOW PRETTY COMMON

Not that long ago it was still difficult for anyone in the UK to buy good quality and professionally supported e-mail encryption systems on the open commercial market but this month has seen two new products become available.

The first of these is Worldtalk's WorldSecure system, now being distributed in the UK by Resolution Systems, a sister company of legalPMS supplier Resolution Software.

The WorldSecure server engine combines server-based S/MIME encryption and digital signature, plus access control, content filtering and virus checking on a single Windows NT server. The client software element provides S/MIME encryption and digital signature plug-ins for products such as cc:Mail, Eudora, Exchange, Outlook and Lotus Notes. The client and server products can be used together or independently.

The second product is Version 2 of GFI Fax & Voice's Mail Essentials software. In the new version users have access to an encryption/decryption module for Exchange and SMTP-based e-mail communications. The module uses the PGP (Pretty Good Privacy) format and has a facility for companies to store "public keys" centrally, so messages can be encrypted and decrypted automatically, without end users having to learn how to operate encryption software.

Mail Essentials 2 is available in the US, UK, Australia, France and Germany. Prices start at US\$250 for a 10 user licence. Evaluation copies can be downloaded off the web.

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

<http://www.gficomms.com>

## MORE PHONE CONFUSION

Still confused by the "Big Number" changes to phone codes that came into effect on 1st June this year?

Although the new codes do not become obligatory until 22nd April 2000, they have caused problems in the London area because whereas the new "020" national code can be used throughout the transitional period, the old "local" code must still be used until next year. And now there is another problem to worry about, namely the introduction of the new "07" prefix for all mobile phones and pagers, as of 30th September this year.

Once again there is a transitional period but this time running until 28th April 2001. And, once again there is a potential cause for confusion, in this instance arising from the fact the new prefix will vary depending upon the old prefix.

If the old prefix was "03" or "04", then these digits will be replaced by "077". So, for example, if the old number was "0498 783448", under the new regime the number becomes "07798 783448". However if the old prefix was "05" or "08", it becomes "078". And if it was "09" it becomes "079", except if you have a pager when will become "076".

<http://www.numberchange.org>

## HUNTING FOR THE HOLY GRAIL OF DMS

Kramer Lee & Associates is currently beta testing a new product it claims amounts to the "Holy Grail" of document management, namely a simple way of optimising and reorganising entire directories of DOCS Open document management files.

Using the KLA-developed script, the utility can be run overnight, during which time it will reorganise directory structures by automatically moving batches of documents, thereby freeing redundant disk space on library servers, as well as re-sorting the prime indexes on a SQL database.

In fact at one beta site, Bircham & Co in Westminster, IT manager Roly Pickering says that since starting to run the utility, user access to documents "has been speeded up from minutes to seconds, with the added bonus that the performance of our library servers has significantly increased."

■ KLA expects to release the utility during November. For details contact Jason Vaughan-Phillips on 01268 584666.

■ COMMENT - KLA thinks it has found the Holy Grail of document management but who needs DMS anyway? This is the heretical suggestion Ed Hodgson, of systems house The Data Base, recently posted onto a legal IT industry discussion forum.

"Over the last couple of years," said Hodgson, "I've sometimes wondered if the benefits of large scale DMS really stack up. Some people believe it has become an essential component in a law firm's IT infrastructure. Yet there are quite a few firms, some very large, who have stayed in business, and prospered, without a document management system.

"I've heard IT managers claim the main benefit is that 'they've never lost a document' but I am not sure if that is worth the money that has been invested. I would hope that with even the simplest search tools and some file storage/naming conventions, particularly since the advent of long filenames, it would be very hard for anyone to lose a document!"

Hodgson believes some of the main reasons why firms buy document management systems is to benefit from their indexing, retrieval and revision control facilities. But, as he points out: "this could be undertaken at little or no cost by populating the custom properties of a Word document".

These properties, or "meta data", are held within the actual document and can be completed during the normal document creation process (assuming users already employ profile forms or macros for document creation). Searching can then be performed within Word, Internet Explorer or through Microsoft Index Server, a full text search engine shipped free with Microsoft NT that can be configured to search on document titles and properties.

Similarly, version control, document comparison and redlining can also all be handled from within the Microsoft Word application itself. So, who does need DMS?

## LEGAL TECHNOLOGY DIARY DATES

■ OCTOBER 9, LONDON - Bar Council 1999 Conference & Exhibition, the Queen Elizabeth Conference Centre.

■ OCTOBER 12, BRISTOL Laserform Product Open Days. A series of product presentation seminars around England running until November. Other venues include Nottingham, Leeds, London, Manchester and Birmingham. Admission free. For details call 01925 750000.

■ OCTOBER 13-to-15, GLENEAGLES, SCOTLAND - The Legal IT Forum 1999. Invitation-only event staged by *Legal Week* to provide law firms and systems suppliers with a mixture of seminar sessions and informal networking opportunities. Call on 020 7566 5612.

■ OCTOBER 19, SLOUGH - Start of autumn programme of free half-day seminars organised by Corel and Philips to promote latest version of WordPerfect software in conjunction with speech recognition. Other venues include York and Colchester. To book call Channel Market Makers on 01703 814142.

■ OCTOBER 20 & 21, MANCHESTER - SOLEX North Solicitors & Legal Office Exhibition, G-MEX Centre. Last major legal IT exhibition of the century. Most of the leading systems vendors will be present and there is a full seminar programme. Doors open at 10.00am and close at 5.00pm on the Wednesday and 4.00 pm on the Thursday. Entry free, for tickets call Imark on 07000 763896.

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## COMPUTER LORE

### ■ THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

Writing in the latest edition of the *AmLaw Tech* journal about the legal profession's frequently hysterical approach to e-mail security, Mark Grossman, who heads the Internet law department of Florida law firm Becker & Poliakoff, comments: "Imagine if first class mail were new. Law journals would be overflowing with sombre warnings about the weaknesses of various glues used to seal the envelopes and analyses of opening envelopes with steam. Lawyers would probably come up with rules requiring tamper-proof envelopes.

"Go figure," says Grossman. "Lawyers will debate the merits of e-mail without giving much thought at all to the security breaches all around them with paper documents. Sure, the reality of a dumpster diver is a bit less interesting than a possibility of a hacker snatching e-mail out of cyberspace. But if lawyers are going to worry so much about e-mail, shouldn't they at least shred their paper documents too?" Grossman thinks the problem stems from the fact lawyers are "a leery lot" who "spend too much time on useless mental solitaire".

### ■ NOW THE GUARDIAN JOINS THE THRONG

In the last issue we reported that *The Times* had beefed up its coverage of legal affairs with the launch of a new tabloid supplement. Now *The Guardian* has retaliated with its own expanded Monday law section, edited by veteran legal journalist Marcel Berlins. In case you are still looking for fresh reading matter - or a change from "mental solitaire" - last week also saw the launch of *Benchmark*, the new *Legal Week* bi-monthly for inhouse lawyers, and BBC legal affairs correspondent Joshua Rozenberg make his debut as a regular columnist for *The Lawyer*.

### ■ ITS THE CONTEXT, STUPID

A reader reports his firm is very proud of its new Internet firewall system as it not only keeps out viruses but also ensures users do not access or are sent "unsuitable adult entertainment material". The snag is the reader works in the firm's new media law group and needs to subscribe to a number of online news services and e-mail newsletters which, given the territory, regularly carry stories about the scams being used to trick Internet users into visiting pornographic web sites. Unfortunately the reader has now discovered he cannot receive any of these reports because the firewall is not context-sensitive and so automatically censors any incoming material containing "invalid and offending phrases" such as "porn" and "pornography".

### NEXT ISSUE

For technical reasons, the next issue of Legal Technology Insider - No. 89 - will be published one week later than usual on Wednesday 27th October 1999.