

CHARLES CHRISTIAN'S

LEGAL TECHNOLOGY INSIDER

THE SOURCE FOR INDEPENDENT LEGAL TECHNOLOGY NEWS, COMMENT AND ANALYSIS

EIGHT GET INTO NEW LAW SOCIETY GUIDE

A total of eight products have made it into the second edition of the English Law Society's annual *Software Solutions* guide for smaller law firms, which was formally launched yesterday by Law Society president Robert Sayer.

Along with the five products listed in last year's guide - Amicus Attorney/Solace Millennium, Osprey Professional from Pracctice, Quill's Quillennium, SOS Practice Manager from Solicitors Own Software and the Mountain Software system, the year 2000 edition also includes three new entrants: TFB's Partner for Windows Suite, Lawbyte from Edgebyte and Legal Ledger FILOS from JCS Computing.

Two other innovations in this year's guide are a series of extensive product functionality comparison charts and

Continued on page 5

RESCUE BID FOR LINK ?

Although legal publisher Legalease is still set to close its LINK online forum and e-mail service (**see last issue for full story**) at the end of this month, there is a growing chance that an alternative service provider will be able to offer a comparable system for LINK enthusiasts still wanting to access the same type of facilities.

Called Phoenix, the service is currently undergoing beta testing with a small core of users, with a view to going fully live during December. The company behind Phoenix is also negotiating with Legalease on a number of issues including the transfer of LINK subscribers to the new service.

Because Phoenix use the same SoftArc FirstClass software as LINK, the new service will have the same look and feel as the old service. There will also be a daily news service for subscribers. Phoenix will run on Version 5.5, the latest release of the FirstClass software, which is fully Y2K compliant and supports Windows 3x, 95, NT, 98 and Macintosh users. The subscription to Phoenix is expected to be £50 per year.

INSIDER NOW IN PDF FORMAT

Legal Technology Insider is now also available in a PDF file format that can be searched and read using Adobe Acrobat Reader. An archive of back copies in PDF format will be available on the Insider web site from January. Subscribers wanting to receive the latest issues in this format should contact the Insider office for details.

info@legaltechnology.co.uk

LAW SOCIETY IN LAB LAFQAS IT INITIATIVE

In September the Insider first highlighted the complaints being made by some legal software developers about the difficulty in obtaining accurate information from the Legal Aid Board about the LAFQAS (franchise quality assurance standard) requirements, in particular relating to IT specifications. With the LAB now considering amendments to these specifications, the English Law Society has taken the initiative of organising an open meeting between suppliers and the LAB to provide both sides with an opportunity to exchange views.

The meeting, scheduled to commence at 1.30pm, will take place next Monday (29th November) at the Law Society in Chancery Lane, London. To reserve a place call Gary Day on 0171 316 5533.

LEGAL IT MARKETING WHO ARE THE BEST?

Do legal IT suppliers make the best use of their marketing budgets or is the money squandered on glossy brochures no-one ever reads and curling ham sandwiches served-up at product presentation seminars no-one wants to attend?

Read the next issue of the Insider to discover who are the seven winners of the 1999 Legal Technology Marketing Awards.

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Visit the Legal Technology Online web site for regularly updated legal IT news plus access to archive material and links to additional services and information.

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NEWS IN BRIEF

■ INTERFACE SOFTWARE and the PC DOCS group have agreed to work with UK systems integrator TIKIT on the development of a new "knowledge-net" system for law firms that would combine the "people" data found in the Interface InterAction system with the document and knowledge management functions of DOCS/Fulcrum. Tikit expect to have a demonstration version available by the second quarter of next year.

■ PAUL PRENDERGAST is leaving LINKLATERS to become a senior consultant with ANDERSEN CONSULTING.

■ METZ SOFTWARE, the developers of the client information system Metz Phones Pro which is being pitched in the United States as a challenger to the InterAction system, is coming to the UK. Sales & business development director PAUL SCHNEIDER told the Insider that he was "positioning" the company to break into the UK market.

<http://www.metz.com>

■ Document management technology specialist KRAMER LEE & ASSOCIATES next week opens a new City of London office at 78 Cannon Street EC4. The office will house sales and consultancy staff, while development, administration and technical support staff will remain at the Basildon head office.

■ COREL has launched a new desktop version of the LINUX operating system as a free download product available from the company's web site. A more advanced package - Corel LINUX OS Standard, which includes WordPerfect 8 - will be available in the UK from January.

<http://www.corel.com>

■ Library software specialist SOUTRON (01332 821800) has been appointed sole UK distributor for the US "integrated library system" BIBLIO TECH PRO. The software, which is designed to combine conventional library software with knowledge management facilities, will make its UK debut at next month's Online Information show in London.

KEYSTONE RAISE £1 MILLION FOR ASP

Keystone Software last week raised just over £1 million on the AIM stock market, by way of a placing of 2,500,000 ordinary shares with institutional and other investors.

The money is targeted for the development of Keystone's new ASP (Application Service Provider) project, which will allow users to access a web-based version of Keystone's software applications via the Internet. Keystone, in common with a growing number of systems suppliers, believe that ASP architecture will be the next-big-thing in the business software applications market.

■ Microsoft has begun a pilot project with British Telecommunications and other industry partners, to deliver its Office 2000 applications suite on an ASP basis via the Internet. Called Office Online, the service offers the full range of Office 2000 applications, including Outlook, Word and Excel, and can be accessed on both Windows and Windows CE hardware.

<http://www.microsoft.com/office>

■ Elite has set up a new subsidiary Elite.com Inc that will begin offering an ASP version of its time and billing software from early 2000. The initial target market will be sole practitioners and small firms in the USA. The new company is headed by Mark Goldin, who was previously with the Trace computing group in London.

NEW APPROACH TO LEASING

Schroder Finance (0181 233 4034) has introduced a new "Technology Refresh" scheme that offers users of its leasing services the flexibility to replace, upgrade or expand parts of their IT systems without having to renegotiate the whole finance deal and even, in some instances, without having to increase the size of the regular rental payments.

SCL UNVEILS SURVIVAL PLAN

The Society for Computers & Law has unveiled its plans for restructuring the organisation to carry it forward into the next 25 years of its development.

Admitting the SCL "is at a watershed", joint chairmen Chris Reed and John Irving are proposing splitting the organisation into two main sections - one focussing on IT and the other on IT law - as well as devolving many of the decision making powers away from the current council and executive committee. In fact the Scottish branch is widely recognised as one of the most dynamic within the SCL because it already enjoys a semi-autonomous existence.

In a move that should also help ensure future SCL councils are not cluttered with dead-wood "participation in the Society's programmes of work will be a prerequisite for being eligible for election to the national offices".

The proposals will be put to SCL members at a general meeting later this year.

EXETER FIRM TAKES NEW AXXIA SYSTEM

As part of a major IT deal worth approximately £400,000, Exeter-based Michelmores will become one of the first law firms in the UK to begin rolling out Axxia's new Windows NT-based Artiion accounts software.

Artiion - previously known only as "Product Y" - is the big brother to Axxia's Eiiion NT product and will be offered as a client/server alternative to the company's ageing Arista Unix-based practice management system. Artiion will be available on both Informix and SQL Server platforms.

Michelmores has also ordered a full suite of fee earner desktop applications, including the marketing and case management modules. In addition, the firm will be installing the Axxia's Advantage web-enabled reporting software which provides the option of both fee earners and clients accessing selected reports remotely via Internet browser software.

Axxia won the Michelmores deal in a competitive tender which also included AIM and Avenue on the final shortlist.

■ In other developments, Sheffield City Council has placed an order with Axxia to upgrade the IT systems being used by its inhouse legal departments. This is the fifth major local government order Axxia has won in recent months.

Axxia has also recruited six more members of staff since September. These are Suzanne Toms, who will be looking after major accounts in London and the South-East. Paul Clyde, previously with Butterworths, who will be looking after medium-sized firms in the North. Two new salesmen: Richard Connock and Simon Holmyard, who previously handled debt software sales for Beaver and Gail Mansley and Rebecca Thurlow who join the company as graduate sales staff.

MICROSOFT PROJECT OFFER

Microsoft has announced details of the forthcoming release of Schedule 2000, the latest version of its popular project management software. The most significant enhancement is the introduction of a companion Project Central module that will allow a team of fee earners to collaborate on a specific project via the web. Other changes include closer integration with Microsoft Outlook.

The new release will be commercially available from around April 2000 however Microsoft are warning users of earlier versions of Project to upgrade to Project 98 now to ensure their file formats are compatible with Project 2000.

■ Microsoft is offering a free beta copy of Project 2000 and Project Central to the first 5000 people to order the CD from the Project web site. After the first 5000 CDs customers can order the beta for only the cost of shipping and handling. Customers purchasing Project 98 between now and 30th April 2000 will automatically receive a free copy of Project 2000 when it becomes available.

<http://www.microsoft.com/project/>

NEWS IN BRIEF

■ LARCOMES in Portsmouth has just completed an IT project that has seen over £100,000 invested in new software, hardware and associated services. The project included the installation of a new VIDESS practice management system, Y2K compliance work and a switch from WordPerfect to a Word wordprocessing platform. Larcomes is one of three large firms in the Portsmouth area now running Videss systems.

■ Litigation support specialist LEGAL TECHNOLOGIES has moved its head office Cardinal Tower, 12 Farringdon Road, London EC1M 3HP. The new phone number is 0207 549 9600.

■ KOMMUNICATE, the UK distributor of the market-leading network fax system RightFAX, this week began shipping the new Version 7.0 of the product. Among the new features are enhancements to the e-mail gateways - SMTP/POP3 Internet mail, cc;Mail, Novell GroupWise and Microsoft Mail are supplied as standard, Lotus Notes and Microsoft Exchange are available as options.

■ LEGAL DOCS, which recently made its debut in the UK legal market with a macro enhancements system for WordPerfect users, is now in talks with LASERFORM about integrating LegalDocs with the Laserform range of electronic legal forms for WordPerfect.

■ SIMPSON MILLAR, which has offices across the UK, and the ENDEAVOUR PARTNERSHIP, a new commercial firm in Stockton-on-Tees, have both placed orders for NT/SQL-based Galaxy Legal software from SANDERSON SYSTEMS. Endeavour has ordered the case and practice management elements, whereas Simpson Millar is installing just case management to run in conjunction with its exiting PILGRIM accounts system.

■ At a recent press conference the Lord Chief Justice LORD BINGHAM admitted that five years after the courts had begun Project Judith to get more judges using computers, the percentage who were IT literate was still "well under 50 percent".

LEGAL PUBLISHING NEWS IN BRIEF

■ JORDANS FAST TRACK

Jordans Fast Track is a new phone-based service exclusively for solicitors and accountants that offers a forms-free approach to company formations. The service runs on Companies House approved software that makes the completion of hard copy statutory forms redundant yet still complies with the relevant anti-money laundering regulations. The service can also handle Internet domain name availability checks and registration. The Jordans Fast Track direct line is 0845 308 6000.

■ TOLLEY'S PAYROLL LINK

Butterworths Tolley has just launched the *Tolley's Payroll Link* service. Based on CD-Rom, the service is intended to provide payroll and HR departments with a complete payroll information library. This includes copies of selected Inland Revenue manuals and guidance notes, the text of relevant legislation, including data protection, wages, social security, employment, sick pay, pensions and income tax measures and a commentary taken from Tolley's payroll reference works. All sections are hypertext linked for cross-referencing purposes.

An annual subscription for a single user version is £149 +VAT. A multi-user version (2-to-5 users) is £199 +VAT. Both include four update disks a year.

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JERSEY'S LAWS GO ONLINE IN NEW PILOT

The Channel Island of Jersey's Legal Information Board has launched a pilot project to test the value of making all its legal information freely available on the Internet.

At present it just covers the period late 1997-to-date and contains unreported judgments (available to registered users only), legislation enacted, regulations, practice directions, draft legislation and certain projects before the States (the island's government). However work is already underway to provide information prior to 1997 so that the whole legislative database is available and will, in due course, provide consolidated legislation with full hypertext linking. Access is free and the Board welcomes all comments on style, scope and substance.

■ COMMENT - Over the last couple of years there has been growing speculation about the merits of making "all the laws of the land" freely accessible to the general public via the Internet, as well as the impact this could have on the traditional publishers of legal information. Given that Richard Susskind, the author of many of the proposals for making the law more accessible in the British government's recent *civil.justice* consultation paper, is also involved with the Jersey pilot, the project must be viewed as not only an interesting development in the Channel Islands but also as a potential test-bed for the rest of the UK.

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

ONE-STOP SHOP DOWN UNDER

The Australian legal publishing and services group Excata has just launched a new web site intended to provide a "one-stop shop" for news and information for the Australia, New Zealand and Asia-Pacific legal markets.

The site provides links to both European and Pacific rim legal publishers, news reports on the latest Australian commercial law deals and access to online services and research facilities of interest to Australian lawyers. This includes links to the new LegalMart system, which offers Australian law firms the opportunity to join a franchise scheme for selling legal services, including downloadable documents, directly over the web. (In effect this is the Australian equivalent of Epoch's LegalDesktop service.)

<http://www.excata.com.au>

<http://www.legalmart.com.au>

CAN WE HAVE A DISK PLEASE

Butterworths has just published the second edition of Nick Holmes and Delia Venables' excellent book *Researching the Legal Web*. But while its scope and style cannot be faulted, at £45 the book is not cheap - it is three times the price of Susskind's *The Future of Law*. At this price the publishers could have at least supplied a listing of the URLs for all the sites mentioned in the book on an accompanying disk.

EIGHT GET INTO NEW LAW SOCIETY GUIDE

Continued from front page

...the introduction of a colour-coding system to make it easier for users to identify the sector of the market (sole practitioners, very small firms, small-to-mid sized firms etc) for which specific products have been designed.

The layout of this year's guide also makes it clearer that it is the software packages, rather than their developers, suppliers and, in some instances, third-party distributors that have been recognised by the scheme.

Commenting on the launch of the guide, Law Society president Robert Sayer, a long-time advocate of the use of IT by smaller firms, had this to say: "Selecting new software is a potential minefield for lawyers. Not only must it be reliable and robust but it also needs to make practices easier to run and more profitable. This guide, by providing a short list of tried and tested products, makes this vital investment decision easier."

The Law Society will also be following up the publication of the guide with a series of regional "IT showcase" mini exhibitions and seminars in the spring and early summer.

■ COMMENT - Well it would not be a proper Law Society project if it was not tinged with at least some controversy.

This year the main complaint - raised by some suppliers included in the guide as well as, more predictably, those who were excluded - was that halfway through the selection process the Law Society appeared to "move the goal posts". Thus, whereas the original tender document talked about systems for firms with "30 users and less" by the time the product presentations actually took place, the assessment panel's criteria had shifted to finding systems that met the IT needs and budgetary constraints of sole practitioners and very small firms.

To be fair to Chancery Lane, the Law Society has now recognised there can never be a one-size-fits-all solution for firms of such diverse size and nature, with this year's introduction of colour-coding being one attempt to address the problem. The Insider also understands an option already being considered for the next edition is a form of streaming, with some products being entered for the very small firms category, while others would be recognised as only suitable for larger practices.

■ The Law Society will be sending copies of the guide free of charge to all 9500 solicitors' practices with 10 or fewer partners. For additional copies call the Practice Advice Office on 0171 315 5516 or 0870 6062522.

DAMP SPIRITS IN DUBLIN

Although there were plenty of exhibitors present - a total of 20 office automation, legal systems and Internet service suppliers - the LawTech '99 exhibition in Dublin earlier this month was blighted by far lower than expected visitor numbers. One exhibitor told the Insider that poor weather and even worse car parking facilities were largely to blame.

LONGBRIDGE OFFER ONLINE HEADHUNTS

Headhunters Longbridge International has formed a new subsidiary to handle Internet and electronic business. Called eBridge (020 7208 5757) the company plans to develop a range of recruitment services, with the first launching early next year. Based on a publicly accessible database, this will automatically match employees and employers directly and confidentially, removing the need for recruitment agencies to become involved in the high volume selection market.

Longbridge chairman Frank Varela said he set up eBridge because he felt recruitment agencies were not fully realising the potential of the web, merely using it for advertising when it offered scope to conduct interactive business transactions that could "push back the boundaries of the recruitment industry".

NEWS IN BRIEF

■ MSS MANAGEMENT SUPPORT SYSTEMS reports excellent sales for its AlphaLAW Esprit entry level accounts system in Northern Ireland and the Irish Republic. MSS director JOHN MEEHAN said a key selling point in the Republic is the fact the system is Euro compliant. Sales are handled by A M SYSTEMS, which has offices in Belfast and Dublin.

■ According to KEY PERSONNEL (0121 643 7745) in Birmingham, there is a boom in demand for legal secretaries, with out-of-London rates as high as £18,000 a year. Key say that along with shorthand, wordprocessing and IT skills, a legal secretary's diploma from a London Chamber of Commerce course, or similar, is an essential qualification.

INSIDER E-ZINES

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WEB NEWS IN BRIEF

■ LINDA TRIPP, one of the more controversial characters in the whole Monica Lewinsky-Bill Clinton saga, has launched a "defense fund" web site to raise financial support to help her fight the various legal battles that have arisen from her original decision to tape and leak Monica's confessions about Bill, the cigar and the stains on that dress. Tripp is currently suing both the White House and the Pentagon for invasion of privacy, while she herself faces criminal charges for alleged wire-tapping offences.

<http://www.lindatripp.com>

■ E-MARKETING, the designers of some of the better law firm web sites in the UK, have launched an online "benchmarking tool" that allows professional services firms to assess the effectiveness of their marketing activities against those of their peer groups. The benchmarks are based on new research data and even allows users to compare levels of marketing spend. For example major City law firms now spend as much as £5,900 per fee earner each year. There is also a hard copy version of the data *Marketing the Advisers II* available from WHEELER ASSOCIATES (01707 372140) price £500.

<http://www.marketingtheadvisers.com>

■ The LAW SOCIETY has accredited the legal Internet service provider LAWYERS ONLINE for the purposes of awarding CPD continuous education points to solicitors attending the company's seminars. Users of the service will also be eligible for up to an additional 12 CPD points a year if they complete a number of virtual "tutorials" published on the Lawyers Online web site.

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

■ STRATEGIC BUSINESS EVENTS (020 7733 3700) is offering a £100 early booking discount for its *E-commerce in the legal marketplace* conference on 1st February to delegates who book a place before the 10th December. There is an additional £50 discount for firms with less than 10 partners. Speakers include NEIL CAMERON on e-commerce, MARK BOGGIS of LINKLATERS on Blue Flag, MARK SLADE of FIDLER & PEPPER.

KALTONS GET A NICHE

It is often suggested the only way smaller firms can hope to survive is by giving up trying to be generalists and to focus on niche markets. One practice enthusiastically pursuing this strategy is Kaltons in north London, which now has a team dedicated to Internet and e-commerce law - one of its clients is the British Web Design & Marketing Association - and recently launched a web site to promote its services. It is a well designed site that operates without any hitches, does not bombard visitors with cookies and contains one marketing gimmick - a web site risk assessment service - that actually offers potentially useful free advice.

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

SELECT GET NEW LOOK

Legal IT supplier Select Legal Systems has given its web site a face lift, with a fresh, clean design that takes advantage of the company's new corporate image and logo, as well as organising the content in a simpler-to-navigate fashion.

One of Select's best known users are Fiddler & Pepper, who were one of the first out-of-London law firms in the UK to launch a web-based interactive conveyancing service for their clients. Select has also joined the Insider affiliate scheme and is now carrying the *Legal Technology Breaking News* service on its web site.

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

TIL WEB DO US PART

Mike Carson has become the first person in Britain to obtain a divorce using the Internet. It cost him a total of £59.99 (compared with an average of £400 using a High Street solicitor) to download a D-I-Y undefended divorce kit from the Freeserve Desktop Lawyer web site. Carson will be speaking at the *E-commerce in the legal marketplace* event in February.

Latest statistics from Epoch, the company behind Desktop Lawyer, reveal that during the 10 week period following the launch of the divorce kit in July, over six percent of the 30,000 divorce petitions filed in the UK during that period were online in origin. The majority of users were in their thirties - 43 percent - although there were also a plucky three percent of pensioners who decided to take the digital divorce plunge. And, men (78 percent) far outnumbered women using the kit to file for divorce.

MOBILE PHONE SECURITY TIP

A reader reports that if you have lost track of your mobile phone's security number, usually supplied as a 15-digit code on a sticky label accompanying the documentation that arrives with every new phone, you can relocate it by keying the numbers *#06# and the code will then be displayed on your handset. These codes can be used by service providers to block calls being made on stolen phones.

TWO MORE LEGAL WEB PORTALS LAUNCHED

Two new legal portals have opened within the past 10 days.

■ Legal publisher Waterlow Professional says it hopes its new ConnectingLegal site will become the “first stop on the Internet” for the UK legal world, thanks to a collection of services including news stories from the main legal weekly magazines, an online book selection and ordering service from Hammicks, access to Central Law Training’s database of CPD courses, recruitment advertising from *Legal Week* and a searchable series of professional directories, including Waterlow’s own range.

Users can also take advantage of free Internet access facilities via the ConnectingBusiness free ISP service run by Waterlow’s parent company Wilmington. ConnectingLegal also has the advantage of a user-friendly home page design.

<http://www.connectinglegal.com>

■ This Monday also saw stock market information specialists Hemmington Scott launch Hemscott Legal, a new web site aimed at primarily larger commercial practices. Features include a legal recruitment service, a very easy to use online bulletin board/discussion forum and a database of deal and dispute particulars intended to help inhouse lawyers research law firm’s areas of expertise.

The Hemscott Legal operation is headed by Pauline Lyle Smith, one of the founders of the DX service and a past editor of the *Chambers* legal directory. Lyle Smith says “an aggressive expansion programme is planned for the new portal over the next few months” as she aims to make it “the principal international platform bringing clients and law firms together.”

<http://www.hemscottlegal.com>

E-MAIL SECURITY WARNINGS

A reader’s tip, that appeared in the last issue, about using password-protected Microsoft Word file attachments as an alternative to encryption software, has sparked off a debate on the security of this approach.

According to the IT manager of one London firm: “While the chances of individual e-mails being intercepted in transit are low, once intercepted - or more likely accessed at either the sender or recipient ends on local systems - I personally would not rate Word as secure because there are tools available on the Internet that can “crack” Word password encrypted documents.

This view was echoed by BP Collins partner Andrew Katz who warned: “Word’s security feature is not very strong, and although it may deter casual interception, any half competent hacker will have the document unencrypted in no time. An Internet search for ‘Word password cracker’ will throw up a horde of programs.” Katz says there is no real alternative to an encryption program, such as PGP.

LEGAL TECHNOLOGY DIARY DATES

■ NOVEMBER 25, LONDON - Managing for Success. One day conference at the Cumberland Hotel, Marble Arch, organised by the Law Society’s Law Management Section. Speakers include Richard Susskind and Brian Capstick. Prices £260 (LMS members £195) + VAT. Booking enquiries through Central Law Training on 0121 355 0900.

■ DECEMBER 1, BRISTOL - Society for Computers & Law Workshops & Exhibition at the Swallow Royal Hotel, College Green, Bristol. Good programme, including five stand-alone presentations: John Irving on e-commerce, Andrew Levison on getting value from legal IT, Neil Cameron on case management, Stephen Molyneux on the “civil.justice” initiative, and Insider editor Charles Christian on last minute Y2K preparations. Fee: full day £120 +VAT, individual sessions £35 +VAT. Starts 9.30am, finishes approx 5.15pm. Call SCL on 01179 237393. For the online brochure and booking form visit:

<http://www.scl.org>

■ DECEMBER 7-to-9, LONDON OLYMPIA - Online Information 99 conference and exhibition. For free pre-registration tickets call 01923 690647.

<http://www.online-information.co.uk>

■ FEBRUARY 2 & 3, LONDON - Legal IT 2000. New legal IT event, including exhibition and seminars, at the Business Design Centre. For free pre-registration tickets call 020 7221 1155.

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COMPUTER LORE

The following saga, purporting to be a genuine exchange of e-mail messages between a fee earner and his firm's IT support desk, must be true because so many people have forwarded copies of the correspondence to the Insider...

"Dear Tech Support: I am contacting you as a last resort. Last year I upgraded from Girlfriend 7.0 to Wife 1.0 and noticed the new program began unexpected child processing that took up a lot of space and valuable resources. No mention of this phenomenon was included in the product brochure.

"In addition, Wife 1.0 installs itself into other programs and monitors all other system activity. Applications such as Poker Night 10.3, Boys Night Out 2.5 and Sunday Afternoon Football 5.0 no longer run, crashing the system whenever selected.

"I cannot seem to keep Wife 1.0 in the background while attempting to run some of my favourite applications. I have attempted to go back to Girlfriend 7.0 but un-install does not work with Wife 1.0. I'm desperate. Can you help me, please!!! Thanks, Desperate User."

"Dear Desperate User: This is a very common problem that plagues men who make such an upgrade believing that Wife 1.0 is merely a "Utilities & Entertainment" program. Wife 1.0 is an OPERATING SYSTEM and is programmed to run everything. If you attempt to purge Wife 1.0 and return to Girlfriend 7.0, hidden files will cause Girlfriend 7.0 to emulate Wife 1.0 in every way so nothing will be gained.

"Once installed, Wife 1.0 cannot be un-installed, deleted or purged. Some users have abandoned Wife 1.0 in favour of Girlfriend 8.0 or Wife 2.0. There is also a package called Divorce 99 that will rid your system of Wife 1.0 however these are all very expensive to run and can take most of your hardware as well. Use only in extreme situations as this is not recommended for the faint-hearted.

"My advice is to get to know Wife 1.0 really well and also suggest you read the entire section regarding General Partnership Faults (GPF's) in the manual. You will learn it is your responsibility to fix all faults or problems regardless of the cause.

"Best course of action is familiarity with the command C:\APOLOGISE. You will hopefully find that Wife 1.0 is a great system although requiring very high maintenance. Additional software is advised, specifically: Flowers 2.1, Jewellery 6.1, Chocolates 4.2 and Posh Frocks 5.0.

"Caution: do not, under any circumstances, attempt to install Short Skirt Secretary 3.3 as this is not a supported application for Wife 1.0 and will cause irreversible damage to the operating system. Best of luck, Tech Support."

NEXT ISSUE

The next issue of Legal Technology Insider - No. 92 - will be published on Wednesday 8th December 1999.