

Charles Christian's

LEGAL TECHNOLOGY INSIDER

INDEPENDENT NEWS & COMMENT ON LEGAL TECHNOLOGY

CASE MANAGEMENT BUSINESS TO SOAR

Last week's Court of Appeal decision in the Callery -v- Gray and Pal Pak cases, which clarified the rules on the recovery of after-the-event legal expenses insurance premiums, has been widely welcomed for giving a boost to the civil claims market for 'no win, no fee' conditional fee agreements. However, as well as providing a fillip to law firms, insurers and claims handlers undertaking this type of work (Datamonitor predicts that the number of personal injury claims commenced in the UK each year will increase by over 30 percent from 740,000 today to over one million by 2005) the decision is also expected to breathe life into the case management software market.

One supplier already gearing up for the expected boom is Axxia Systems, which has just launched a new version of its Case Manager software product. New features include: integration with the HotDocs document assembly and Laserform 32-bit electronic legal forms, document version control, drag and drop file attachment and a more proactive approach to handling reports and enquiries.

But probably the biggest change has been a shift to a genuine best of breed architecture so the system can be run in a stand alone mode, integrated with one of Axxia's own back office products or linked to a third party practice management system via an API interface.

Axxia has also announced an enhanced version of its matter management system. This effectively offers the same kind of business information and controls as a case management system but is more suitable for firms with ad hoc, rather than high volume, similar type, workloads.

■ As part of a strategy to increase its case management capabilities, Bevan Ashford has recently installed the Solicitec SolCase system and is currently evaluating the use of online links with some of its institutional clients.

WE ARE OFF ON OUR HOLS

This is the last issue of the Insider before the Long Vacation. Although we will not be hitting desktops again until August 29, the Insider web site will continue to carry a regularly updated round up of the latest legal IT stories.

www.legalnewsmedia.com

IS ORACLE THE NEXT BIG THING ?

After years of being dismissed as too big or expensive for the legal market, the Oracle database is suddenly swinging into fashion.

In recent months both Keystone and Elite have announced plans to support the Oracle platform. However last week came a further endorsement when Interface Software, the company behind the InterAction 'must have' CRM program, confirmed that its application collaboration module had also been certified as compatible with the Oracle 8i database system.

CASHIERS BEING BLACKBALLED

We have received reports that two small London firms have effectively been blackballed by their current legal systems supplier because the freelance cashiers these firms employ have had the temerity to complain about the quality and cost of the supplier's software and support services.

Apparently their cardinal sin, which prompted the supplier's sales director to advise the firms' managing partners that he was not prepared to sell them any more software if they continued to use these cashiers, was to suggest that the supplier's latest 32-bit Windows system lacked the bookkeeping functionality of its DOS based predecessor. We would be interested in hearing from any other firms or cashiers who have encountered this form of discrimination.

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WHAT THE AMERICANS ARE RUNNING TODAY

American Lawyer Media has published its latest (summer 2001) AmLaw Tech Survey of the legal systems being used by the 100 largest law firms in the United States.

In terms of mainstream legal applications, 50 firms had Elite as their practice management system, while 27 were running CMS Open - the CMS market share was up on the previous year, primarily at the expense of smaller players. With document management systems, iManage increased its market share by 10 percent and now has 30 top 100 sites, as against 58 firms running Hummingbird PC Docs. Carpe Diem, in use at 31 firms, remains the most popular time entry application. InterAction goes from strength to strength as the leading contacts/CRM product, increasing its market share from 31 percent to 52 percent. Its only serious contender is Microsoft Outlook.

With office automation applications, WordPerfect continues its decline - only 12 firms still run it instead of Word. Similarly, just 4 percent now use Netscape as a browser, almost all others run Internet Explorer 5x. Both Lotus Domino/Notes (19 firms) and Novell GroupWise (11 firms) lost ground to Exchange/Outlook (62 firms) as a groupware platform. And the number of firms using speech recognition software actually declined last year.

On the desktop, the last year saw a big increase in the use of Windows 2000, now in 23 firms however 30 are still on NT, 16 on Windows 98 and 25 are still using Windows 95. The year also saw an increase - up to 48 percent from 41 percent - in the number of fee earners who use a laptop rather than a desktop as their main PC hardware.

Turning to litigation support technology, 64 firms were running Summation, 59 had LiveNote, 52 had Access, 47 had Concordance, 40 had Litigator's Notebook, 34 - which is more than twice the year 2000 figure - were running CaseMap/TimeMap and 23 had Folio Views.

■ US figures reveal that for the first three months of this year, the biggest selling legal application in the United States was Workshare Technology's DeltaView redlining software which went into over 25,000 seats in 46 firms.

CONFUSED BY MICROSOFT'S NEW LICENSING REGIME ?

If you are confused by the proposed changes to Microsoft licensing agreements, that are due to take effect on 1st October this year, it might be worthwhile attending the Microsoft licensing briefing seminar that Sanderson MSL (part of the same group as legal supplier Sanderson IT Systems) is holding in Manchester next month. The event, which starts at 10:00am and runs through until lunch, is being held at The Lowry, Pier 8, Salford Quays, on Friday 3rd August. The event is free but to reserve a place contact the marketing department on 020 7731 9292.

NEWS IN BRIEF

■ TAXMAN INSTALLS SOLCASE

The Office of the Solicitor of Inland Revenue has installed Solicitec's SolCase case management system. The taxman bought a 200 user system which to date has been rolled out to the Enforcement, PI, Employment and Advisory sections. The implementation was a result of close collaboration between the Solicitor's Office, Solicitec and EDS, the Revenue's strategic IT partner. Within the enforcement section SolCase automates the production and completion of enforcement documents and monitors the progress of each case, including the production of daily to-do lists.

■ WHITEHILL AT WARD HADAWAY

Aurra Consulting (020 7861 9740) has closed its first deal as a reseller of Whitehill Technologies' products in the UK. Newcastle based Ward Hadaway has purchased the Whitehill Enterprise system, which it will run in conjunction with its CMS Open practice management software. The Whitehill software provides firms with a way to extend formatting options when it comes to converting numerical data into bills and similar documents to be presented to clients.

■ SOLUTION 6 IN FRx DEAL

Solution 6 has announced that its CMS Open PMS system will now include the FRx Forecaster budgeting, planning and collaboration application, from FRx Software, as part of its core product offering. FRx Forecaster offers analysts, accountants and financial controllers with fast and accurate budget planning, reporting and forecasting capabilities. The system also allows users to run CMS Open general ledger data to establish baseline budgets and eliminate problems with spreadsheet based budgeting.

■ INTERFACE WIN 2000 COMPLIANT

Interface Software's InterAction product last week achieved compatibility certification for Microsoft Windows 2000. Interface say certification means users need have no worries about scalability, reliability and security issues when running the InterAction CRM software on Windows 2000 platforms.

IS THIS BEST ASP DEAL YET FOR LAWYERS ?

In what has been a busy month for the company, Axxia Systems has teamed up with specialist internet services operator The Hub to offer a managed ASP (application service provider) service to UK law firms for a fixed monthly cost. The move follows successful trials with Telford solicitors Martin-Kaye, which has been running a 70 user ASP operation since the end of last year.

Under the terms of the new service - called Axxia ASP - all hardware, software, communications, implementation, support and training becomes the responsibility of Hub and Axxia. Axxia managing director Stuart Holden says the aim is to offer users an alternative route to best of breed technology with the emphasis on resilience, security, simplicity and cost effectiveness.

The full service, including Microsoft Office, comms links, internet access and Axxia legal applications, will cost from around £200 to £300 per user per month, depending on the firm's existing IT, number of users and modules required. This sounds expensive when spread across the 5 year minimum contract period but Axxia say that taking into account the total cost of ownership, the ASP option represents a potential saving of up to 50 percent on the cost of conventional networks. Axxia is also proposing ASP as a low cost route for firms wanting to migrate from its Arista/Unix platform to its new Windows products.

It is also worth noting that Axxia ASP is a managed network service based on point-to-point communications, delivering applications to users' thin client terminals via leased lines rather than the internet. Axxia is so confident of the reliability and security of this approach that it is offering a guarantee of 99.5 percent per month uptime or your money back for that month.

FALCON FLIES REAL NEST

The Belgian legal systems supplier Falcon Software has pulled out of its joint venture with the Real Software Group by "mutual agreement". Falcon issued the following statement on the breakup "For some time, it had become obvious to the management of Falcon Software that the synergy and new business opportunities that we had hoped to achieve as a result of our relationship with Real Software, never came about. This incompatibility and the obviously different business interests of the two companies, led to the current decision."

All shares in Falcon Software will now revert to the initial founders of the company. Falcon managing director Louis Heymans also added that "We would like to re-affirm our commitment to our clients and are happy to answer any questions they might have regarding this matter." The statement ended with a cryptic quotation from Maya Angelou: "If you don't like something, change it. If you can't change it, change your attitude. Don't complain."

NEWS IN BRIEF

■ SRC TO SHIP WINScribe

The Speech Recognition Company (020 7471 0100) has become the latest UK legal IT supplier (Timeslice also ship the product) to distribute the WinScribe digital dictation workflow system. SRC, who already supply speech recognition related products to firms such as Irwin Mitchell and Morgan Cole, say WinScribe will "sound the death knell of audio tape" because of the huge increases in productivity - as much as 40 percent with a return on investment (ROI) in six months - offered by the workflow system.

■ ELITE TO SUPPORT SHAREPOINT

At the recent Microsoft Fusion event in London, Elite Information Systems said it planned to embed Microsoft's Web Parts and SharePoint Portal Server (SPS) technologies as a centrepiece of its new product offerings. Elite will use SPS in its development of the Elite Dashboard to help simplify portal access at Elite PMS installations.

■ SAGE LAUNCH CARPE DIEM V.4

Sage US has launched a major upgrade, Version 4.0, to its Carpe Diem electronic time sheet product. Enhancements include improved synchronisation for mobile users, a favourites list of recently used validation records and changes to the user interface so the web based version of Carpe Diem has a similar look and feel to the Windows version. Sage say this will make it easier for users to switch between the two versions.

LEGAL TECHNOLOGY JOBS BOARD

If you are a legal systems supplier or a law firm looking for IT staff, including positions in management, development, sales, support and training, you can post your vacancies free of charge on the Legal Technology Insider web site. Email job details to: news@legalnewsmedia.com

■ Current postings include vacancies for a business development manager to work for an IT consultancy/software house in the M62 corridor and an IT trainer at Stevens & Bolton in Guildford.

AUTO HYPERLINKING IS NOW AVAILABLE

In what seems to have been a genuine coincidence, two legal publishers - Butterworths Tolley and Context - last week both announced details of new software utilities that will automate the process of creating hypertext links within legal documents.

■ The Butterworths offering - Link Direct - effectively acts as a filter reading all inbound legal content, such as case reports, government papers and official press releases, coming in from the internet as pages of text in HTML file format. The software then identifies any unlinked legal cross references and inserts an active link from the page to the relevant ACT, statutory instrument or case in the Butterworths Lexis Direct service.

Interestingly, Link Direct is designed to supplement web content, so it does not overwrite any links that may already exist in the text (for example, if you were running pages from Westlaw through the system) and its validation mechanism can distinguish between absolute links and non-links, such as a reference to a repealed section of a statute. Although Link Direct operates in real time - it takes less than a second to process a page - users do have the option to switch the software off when it is not needed.

Link Direct, which has been pilot tested at Andersen Legal and DLA, is available immediately, free of charge to existing Butterworths Lexis Direct subscribers.

■ The Context system - Automatic J-Link - operates along broadly the same lines, creating hypertext links on the fly through its ability to recognise all references to Context Justis content within any web page or intranet document the user is currently viewing. Context's J-Link is at present going through final beta testing and will be available, free of charge, to Justis subscribers within the next few weeks.

Both applications remove the need for users to hard code hyperlinks but one important distinction is that Link Direct runs off a network server (this must be an NT 4 or later proxy server) whereas J-Link sits on the client PC the end user is running. J-Link is activated by clicking on a special button, located on the web browser toolbar, to scan for linkable citations and convert them into links.

With the Butterworths system, because the 'pattern' for all links is derived from the Lexis Direct service, user firms must regularly update the pattern stored on their proxy server by downloading a master pattern from Butterworths. Although this is a large (100Mb) file, Butterworths suggest running the download once a week, either late at night or over weekends, will avoid disruption.

Butterworths is also developing an Office XP Smart Tags version of the application however, for the time being, a more interesting feature is that Link Direct will work with not only third party legal material but also inhouse generated content. It therefore offers a one click solution for any firm wanting to create a knowledge management intranet with links to case and law reports.

NEWS IN BRIEF

■ BRODIES ORDER ELITE

Brodies, one of Scotland's largest law firms, has chosen Elite to supply its new practice management system. Managing partner Bill Drummond said the availability of Elite's WebView browser interface was a key attraction as it opened up the prospect of running a thin client environment within the firm and extranet access from the outside.

Brodies will also become the first UK firm to run the 'Ask Elite' knowledge portal. This will enable users to run natural language queries against both structured and unstructured data.

■ NEW MOBILE ACCESS SERVER

Kommunicate (01962 835000) has just launched version 2.4 of its mobile access server for firms needing to support fee earners working out of the office. New features of the system, which will run on Exchange and Domino platforms, include notification of important messages via SMS and the ability to review tasks lists remotely.

TUNE IN AND WATCH LEGAL WEB TV

Watch the latest news and views on developments in law, legal business, new media and legal IT on Legal Web TV. This is a free service from the publishers of Legal Technology Insider. Programmes are delivered in streaming video format and viewed using RealPlayer 8. The current programme line-up includes:

- Legal Technology Reports
- Legal Interviews - with Lord Woolf, Nigel Savage of the College of Law, Karen Seward of Allen & Overy and US deputy attorney-general George Terwiliger
- Current Legal Issues - EU & human rights law, litigation including the press, insurers and the Elton John case and substantive law including how to handle high profile divorce cases.

■ Legal Web TV's team also produce video programmes for inhouse training, CPD courses and corporate promotions.

www.legalwebtv.com

OLD NAMES AND NEW LINE UP FOR LOTIES

The nominations have closed for this year's LOTIES - the Legal Office Technology Innovation Awards - and *In Brief* magazine has now published the short list of entries for each of the eight award categories...

■ BEST LEGAL OFFICE TECHNOLOGY PRODUCT

- AIM Evolution
- MSS AlphaLaw
- Solicitec Solcase Online
- Solicitors Own Software - Clientinform.net *text messaging*

■ BEST LEGAL OFFICE TECHNOLOGY SUPPLIER

- AIM • Elite • Axxia Systems • ResSoft

■ BEST LEGAL OFFICE NEWCOMER

- AIM - PostRoom *digital case file system*
- Jonathan Beck Associates - Carydan *integrated case/PMS*
- Axxia - e-Case + e-Tran *web enablement systems*
- SpeedLegal SmartPrecedent *XML based document assembly*

■ BEST FEE EARNER SUPPORT SYSTEM

- Elite - Web Parts/Digital Dashboard
- Workshare Technology - DeltaView *redliner software*
- Interface - InterAction *CRM system*
- Axxia - Fee Earner Desktop

■ BEST LEGAL OFFICE AUTOMATION PRODUCT

- Capsoft UK HotDocs • Kommunicate RightFAX
- Oyez Legal Forms • Workshare Technology DeltaView

■ BEST LEGAL E-COMMERCE PROJECT

- Linklaters - clients@linklaters
- Hammond Suddards - Hammonds Direct/LegalMove.com
- Simmons & Simmons - elexica
- Eversheds - Everdebt

■ BEST LEGAL KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT PROJECT

- Simmons & Simmons - elexica
- Rowe & Maw - KnowMaw
- Wright Hassall *based on Perceptive Technology Mentor system*
- Freshfields Brukhaus Deringer *based on ResSoft/Autonomy*

■ BEST LEGAL PUBLICATION IN NEW MEDIA FORMAT

- Sweet & Maxwell - The White Book 2001
- Butterworths/Semple Piggot Rochez - CPD Direct
- Delia Venables - Internet Newsletter for Lawyers
- DiscLaw Publishing - EmpLaw.co.uk

■ The winner of each category is decided by public vote: the closing date for voting is 30 September. There is a voting form on the *In Brief* web site at www.inbrief.co.uk or email LOTIES@inbrief.co.uk for a copy. The winner will be announced at LegalTech London on 31 October.

LEGAL TECHNOLOGY EVENTS DIARY

■ AUGUST 2, SWANSEA. Mountain Software is running a series of free seminars looking at block contracting in criminal defence service work. There are further seminars in Ashford on August 8 and Southend on August 9. For details call Caroline Robinson on 01476 573718.

■ AUGUST 3, MANCHESTER. Microsoft Licensing Briefing Seminar - Legal systems supplier Sanderson is holding a briefing seminar to explain the changes in Microsoft's licensing agreements that are due to take effect on 1st October 2001. The event, at The Lowry, Pier 8 Salford Quays, starts at 10:00am and runs through until lunch. For details call Sanderson on 020 7731 9292.

■ SEPTEMBER 11-13, DEN HAAG, NETHERLANDS. Legal Solutions Europe 2001 at the Netherlands Conference Centre. A new pan-european exhibition with accompanying high profile conference. Speakers include David Maister and Charles Christian. For more details contact the Ark Group on 020 8785 2700 or visit www.lseurope.com

■ SEPTEMBER 12, BRISTOL. Laserform Roadshows. Laserform is back on the road this autumn exhibiting its wide range of software including forms, case management, legal accounts & criminal billing systems. The 10 date tour ends in Manchester in November. For details call Andrea Priestley on 01925 750025 or email andrea.priestley@laserform.co.uk

■ OCTOBER 17-19, GLENEAGLES. The Legal IT Forum at the Gleneagles Hotel. Legal Week's annual conference and networking opportunity. For details contact GPM Events on 020 7566 5602.

■ OCTOBER 27 & 28, BIRMINGHAM. Solicitors 2001 - the English Law Society's annual conference at the Birmingham International Conference Centre. The theme is competition, challenge and change and includes a session looking at the proliferation of online legal services and e-conveyancing.

DEALMAKER SET TO WIN MAJOR DEAL

Software developer Business Integrity (020 7814 6886 - the company was spun off out of a joint venture between Logic Programming Associates and law firm Tarlo Lyons) is close to finalising a deal to supply a top 75 UK law firm with its new DealMaker document assembly system.

The system, which is already in use at Standard Chartered Bank, was designed from the outset to be used over the web in a collaborative, extranet environment. But Business Integrity's Richard Newton says the aspect that really distinguishes DealMaker from other products is its 'spreadsheet for words' design architecture. This splits the document assembly process into a series of cells, thus minimising programming requirements and making it suitable for assembling even very long documents.

www.business-integrity.com

CLIFFORD CHANCE BEEF UP DEALROOM OFFERINGS

Clifford Chance has beefed up its virtual dealroom services (originally called FruitNet but now renamed as CliffordChanceConnect) through the introduction of additional technology, including more powerful servers and mirror sites, to ensure the services will always be secure and accessible on a 24/7 global availability basis.

CliffordChanceConnect has two elements: Client Centres - customised extranet for clients and Clifford Chance lawyers to exchange and publish information, such as matter progress reports, contact lists, financial data, continuing legal education resources and announcements pertinent to their relationships.

The second element, Matter Sites, is a collaborative web space for clients to work with Clifford Chance on their deals, cases and other projects on which the firm advises them. Clients can also give third parties access to these sites and specify levels of access rights for each party.

Clifford Chance say the new service is the first major law firm offering to give clients an "industrial strength e-commerce capability" In fact before its launch the firm put CliffordChanceConnect through extensive field testing, including a simulated 'live' situation involving over 60 Clifford Chance personnel in nine offices simultaneously accessing the service. This might sound like hype but it is actually an astute move if the service is to achieve a long term credibility - unlike some other law firm online legal services where the performance is decidedly flakey.

AXXIA ON SOLUTION FINDER

Full details of Axxia's products and target markets can now be found on the Legal Technology Solution Finder service.

www.legalnewsmedia.com/solutions

WEB NEWS IN BRIEF

■ ONLINE DIVORCE IN A HANDBAG

Divorce-online.co.uk has signed a contract to supply the UK's leading women's portal Handbag.com with legal document services and information, including a lawyer referral service through the Conquest solicitors network. The new channel on Handbag.com is called 'Your Rights' and will focus on legal issues from personal injury and divorce through to consumer rights.

■ NABARROS RELAUNCH WEB SITE

Nabarro Nathanson has relaunched its web site. The new site, which reflects a wider rebranding exercise within the firm, is designed to meet the needs of clients, prospective clients, employees, graduates and the media. The site has some of the best navigation - with drop down menus, links to complementary material on all the main content pages and an interactive quick menu - that we have seen on a law firm web site.

www.nabarro.com

■ FRESHFIELDS CHOOSES ANTIGEN

Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer has purchased a 4000 user licence for Antigen 6, a pre-emptive virus detection and content management system from Sybari Software. Freshfields will run Antigen on a Microsoft Exchange platform but a version for Lotus Domino/Notes will be available later this summer. Antigen is available as a two year renewable licence with prices ranging from £17.37 to £6.95 per user. To download a free evaluation copy visit

www.sybari.com

■ ELECTRONIC DISCOVERY ADVICE

US litigation support specialist Applied Discovery has launched an electronic discovery resource centre on its web site. Along with information about e-discovery services and solutions, the centre contains an extensive library of white papers, articles and case reports. Topics covered include e-discovery cost sharing, electronic evidence spoliation, acceptable forms of production of electronic evidence and electronic document retention policies.

www.applieddiscovery.com

RESOLVING SUPPLIER DISPUTES BY ADR

In the wake of the recent *Anglo -v- Winthur Brown* and *Watford Electronics -v- Sanderson CFL* court decisions, which represent something of a swing back in favour of systems suppliers in IT implementation disputes, Bristol lawyers Osborne Clarke have launched a new fixed price mediation package for clients faced with such disputes. Called ITMediate, as long as the client provides all the relevant information and documents up front, the firm will commit to a fixed price for preparing the submissions.

Osborne Clarke say the *Anglo* case highlights the need for the customers of IT suppliers to act with care when terminating a supplier's contract, as the court has set a number of standards against which their actions will be judged. In particular customers should document all contractual failures, give clear written warnings where necessary and should err on the side of caution and allow the supplier to remedy defects. Before any termination the customer should also undertake a careful analysis of the supplier's breaches by reference to the supplier's contractual obligations.

According to Peter Rogers at Osborne Clarke "the case also reinforces the need for both sides in such disputes to act reasonably. Where, as is all too often the case, these standards have not been met by a client they may well be better off attempting to resolve the dispute by other means, such as mediation." says the firm.

The ITMediate package includes: lawyers experienced in the mediation field, and with a firm grasp of the specific issues arising in IT and telecoms disputes; a fixed price for preparing the mediation documentation and written submissions; and the use of authorised alternative dispute resolution organisations, with experienced mediators and an 80 percent plus success rate.

SEARCHFLOW NOW AVAILABLE

Searchflow, one of three groups to have been awarded a channel licence under the National Land Information Service (NLIS) scheme for providing online access to land and property information, last week commercially launched the latest version of its system. Also called Searchflow, the system allows solicitors to run searches direct from their desktop and builds upon the group's experiences with an earlier version of the system which has already handled over 30,000 searches since last year.

Norton Rose, one of the firms to trial the system, has described Searchflow as "a very real solution for cutting the delays in obtaining conveyancing searches and property reference information." NLIS is part of a larger British government initiative to create an electronic conveyancing market. The other two channel licence holders are Teramedia and Transaction On-Line.

www.searchflow.co.uk

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AIM CLEARS THE DECKS FOR EXPANSION

Dunedin Capital Partners and Albany Venture Managers have backed a secondary buyout at legal systems supplier AIM. AIM's original MBO in 1987 was backed by Dunedin, who together with Albany went on to invest a second tranche of development funding in 1992 before backing this secondary buyout.

The existing executive management team - including Jim Chase, Anne Mansfield and Steve Broadley - will remain in place, as does Mike Booth who continues in his role as deputy chairman. In addition, the secondary buyout will be followed by the recruitment of a new chairman and chief executive who will focus "on growing the business organically and by acquisition".

AIM is refusing to go into any further details at this stage but it is understood that the secondary buyout values AIM shares at 700p each (compared with Keystone whose shares are currently trading at around 24p on the London Stock Exchange) and provided an exit for a number of former management shareholders, including David Hewitt, John Wilde and Clive Telfer.

The most interesting report we have heard is that after investigating the possibility of a trade sale to another IT supplier last year, AIM's board realised the company was actually far healthier than most of its competitors and is now gearing up to make an acquisition. Current speculation is that the takeover target will be a US or Australian legal systems supplier, with Elite Information Systems being suggested as one potential candidate.

THE MID LIFE CRISIS APPROACH TO MANAGEMENT

Finally, before you head off for your summer break, just remember this cautionary tale of what can happen when a heady mixture of sun, sand and sangria results in a holiday romance.

In recent issues the Insider has reported that the founders of a growing number of UK legal systems suppliers, particular those managed or owned by men of a certain age (Avenue is a good example) have been seeking to sell their shareholdings and retire. However we have also identified another phenomenon where, despite having reached that certain age, individual directors of at least three legal market suppliers are currently having to work far harder than ever before.

It is what we have christened management by mid-life crisis and occurs when, as a result of an extra marital fling, the proprietor of a company finds himself having to support both the high maintenance demands of a new wife and young family and the maintenance payments and divorce settlement secured by his ex-wife and family. So remember, infidelity can seriously damage your wealth.

NOVAPLEX AIMS TO CUT PRINT QUEUES

Although Kent-based systems house NovaPlex Business Solutions (01634 725777) is best known for providing consultancy and development services for organisations implementing document management systems, the company also undertakes custom projects for users wanting to enhance their Microsoft Office applications.

As a result of requests from some of its law firm customers, NovaPlex has now launched a new print management utility for firms wanting to improve the efficiency of handling Microsoft Word 97, 2000 and XP documents.

Called Print-Path for Word, the system uses XML configuration documents as building blocks to organise printing for workgroups of users. The company says this greatly simplifies the task of printer management, by ensuring documents are always output to specific printers and printer trays through a single click procedure, and consequently reducing the time secretaries spend reconfiguring print commands. NovaPlex reckon the average time can be cut from 15 to just 2 seconds per document.

Print-Path has already been evaluated by a number of firms, including Tarlo Lyons, and NovaPlex managing director Scott Hews says a number of good sales with top 25 firms are "imminent".

www.novaplex.co.uk

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