



Law Society e-strategy - too little, too late ?

The Law Society's council has just approved an e-strategy policy document intended to address the problem of law firms who fail to adapt to developments in IT. But, while the sentiments are entirely laudable, is Chancery Lane guilty of doing too little, too late?

For example, many of the proposals come straight out of the dotcom era and would have been impressive if published in the year 2000 – but in 2005? Ironically, the Society could have published this document in 2000, as the content echoes Andrew Terrett's book *The Internet: business strategies for law firms* which was published by Law Society Publishing in 2000.

The document also outlines plans for a programme of e-business events in collaboration with appropriate government departments and bodies. Would this be the same e-business-literate government the Law Society president Edward Nally publicly criticised earlier this week “for failing to invest in efficient technology” because the scanners the Inland Revenue use to scan Stamp Duty Land Tax declarations cannot accurately read the forms?

A copy of the e-strategy document is available on the Insider web site.

THE INSIDER WEB SITE
www.legaltechnology.com

For the latest legal IT news, jobs, events and information, visit the Insider web site, described by *The Times* newspaper as “the definitive online resource for legal technology information”.

Olswang drop Intech for FWBS solution

Although it was only in November last year that Olswang were piloting the File-it! for Outlook system, from Intech Solutions, as the proposed basis for the firm's email management system, the firm has now dropped the Intech product and instead selected the rival OMS Matter Centre system from FWBS.

Olswang IT director Clive Knott said the firm “chose OMS principally for its email management capability. It is one of the few solutions we've seen that uses metadata to track emails that have been outside the system, so they can be filed automatically. Plus, it integrates directly with our Outlook and Office applications, so staff needed very little training.”

FWBS describe OMS as a system that can store emails 'matter centrally' so any fee earner can quickly access all email correspondence relating to a particular matter. Although Olswang is the largest firm to-date to order the OMS Matter Centre product, the Insider understands that FWBS are currently finalising a couple of other major deals.

Law firm saves £400,000 in three years thanks to digital dictation

With many firms still justifying their IT investments in terms of the 'soft' benefits gained – such as 'it will help provide a better service to clients' but without quantifying the details – it makes a pleasant change to see London commercial practice of Campbell Hooper bucking this trend by going public on the benefits of its adoption of a BigHand digital dictation workflow management system back in early 2002.

After three years of using the BigHand system, the firm estimates that in terms of cutting back on the costs of temps alone, it has saved over £400,000. In addition, while there may have been no savings in terms of the full time secretarial staff being made redundant, as a result of introducing digital dictation, the firm has been able to increase its number of fee earners from 40 to 48 during this same period – without having to make a corresponding increase in its secretarial headcount. According to the firm's IT director Chris Simmons, these savings equate to a return on investment of £3000 per lawyer per year – and there has also been a considerable improvement in document turnaround times.

Changes at Sweet & Maxwell

Following the recent promotion of Jitendra (JV) Valera to vice president international of Thomson Elite, Aline Lourie has taken over JV's former role as director of legal online services within Sweet & Maxwell. Lourie, who previously worked with Thomson's Gee and regulatory business, will be responsible for the Westlaw UK and Lawtel products within Sweet & Maxwell.

NEWS IN BRIEF

► **ROWBERRYS UPGRADE WITH MSS**
Rowberry Morris in Gloucester has awarded MSS (01252 371121) a contract to upgrade its IT infrastructure. The deal will see the 40 user practice replacing its existing SOS accounts software with an MSS AlphaLaw Vantage integrated case and practice management system, including the implementation of workflows for family, matrimonial, litigation, conveyancing and commercial work.

► **LOCKINGS SPEND £85k ON IT**
Lockings Solicitors, which has a volume conveyancing and personal injury business based in Hull, is to spend £85,000 on new case management software. The firm has selected the Eclipse Proclaim system and will be rolling it out to 50 users in its conveyancing department – Lockings handle about 7000 conveyancing transactions a year for builders, developers and private clients – and a further dozen users on its claimant personal injury team.

► **AXXIA SCORE AT CHESTER CITY**
Chester City Council's legal service team has become the latest local authority site to select Axxia Systems as its preferred technology partner. The council, which will be using the systems to support its commitment to quality and service delivery standards, including Lexcel, best value and best practice, will be rolling out time recording, case management and reporting applications to the Chester's 20-strong legal team.

► **RECORD YEAR FOR PHOENIX**
Phoenix Business Solutions (0870 735 1426) is reporting booming business in the systems implementation sector, with turnover in the first six months of its current trading year matching the total for the previous 12 months and expected to exceed £2 million by the company's 31st July year end. Recent wins include contracts to implement Interwoven's WorkSite 8.0 DMS at Ozannes in Guernsey and Dawsons in London, while the company's customer base for support work now includes Clyde & Co, Brodies LLP, Field Fisher Waterhouse and Clintons, as well as Carey Olsen in the Guernsey. Phoenix has also moved to larger offices at 78 Cannon Street, London EC4N 6NQ.

Have legal IT suppliers kept their eye on the ball?

Although last month's Legal IT exhibition in London was undoubtedly one of the busiest events in recent years, not all delegates were impressed by what they saw.

For example, the IT director of one top 250 commercial firm, who was making his first visit to a legal technology exhibition since 2003, told the Insider he was "disappointed" on two main counts. The first was that for all their talk about open standards, very few suppliers seemed to have made any progress on opening up their systems to allow case and practice management software from different vendors to work together.

His second complaint was that while it was nice to see so many vendors had spent a considerable amount of time rewriting their systems to run on a Microsoft .NET platform, he wondered "if any of them had stopped to think if the user would receive any additional benefits from migrating to .NET?"

It was his view that none of the .NET systems at Islington offered any real benefits to law firms (as distinct from additional gimmicks they could easily live without) that would justify his firm moving to .NET in the foreseeable future. He added that many of the vendors seemed to be resorting to "technobabble" in their attempts to describe .NET and its supposed benefits.

iDOiNK Technologies rebrand

The workflow software company iDOiNK Technologies, probably best known in the legal market for its low cost VoiceFlo digital dictation system, has changed its name to FLOvate Technologies. Company chairman Edwin Harrell said the name change was prompted by a diversification into new markets and the need to have a name that reflected their innovative approach to workflow systems. FLOvate will be announcing details of a new workflow offering later this spring. The company's phone number (01473 405000) remains unchanged. www.flovate.com

New IT show on the way ?

Although it is less than two years since the American LegalTech organisation pulled out of the UK events market and a matter of weeks since LSSA decided to throw in its lot with the organisers of the Legal IT exhibition rather than run its own event, a fresh face in the market – Adrian Dion of The Solicitors Group (0870 000 4266) – has just announced plans for a new law office services exhibition to take place at the NEC on 14 & 15 June 2006.

Dion says the event "will be the largest legal exhibition the profession has ever experienced" and we wish him luck with this venture. He'll certainly need it as the Birmingham NEC has never been a popular venue for legal events and the feedback we've received from suppliers suggests June is too close to the start of the summer holiday season for following up sales leads.

Tikit business up 24% on previous 12 months

On Tuesday the AIM-listed Tikit Group announced its results for the year ended 31st December 2004. These disclosed a 24% increase in turnover to £11.90 million (2003: £9.56 m), pre-tax profits up 21% to £860,000, and record results for consultancy services – up 25% to £3.65 million and representing nearly one-third of total group revenues. As the only UK quoted company focused almost entirely on the legal sector, Tikit's results are always interesting as they have to be more transparent in their financial reporting than we see with some private companies.

On top of record sales and profits in 2004, both Tikit and stockbrokers Charles Stanley are optimistic about future prospects for the legal IT sector. Tikit managing director David Lumsden predicts boom areas this year will include document management, CRM and workflow/BPM work, as well as sales of the latest version of Tikit's own knowledge management system, while the brokers are predicting Tikit could double its present turnover to £23.4 million by the end of 2006.

u Tikit will shortly announce details of a new addition to its product range. Called WordSensa, this is a consolidation tool designed to help law firms analyse and compare the contents of large volumes of documents that may have a common root but have evolved independently through subsequent redrafting.

Microsoft buys Groove Networks virtual dealroom business

Microsoft has acquired Groove Networks, the US developers of the Groove 'virtual office,' peer-to-peer online collaboration system that a number of UK law firms have been experimenting with as an alternative to conventional virtual dealrooms (see *Insider issue 162 for first reports*). In fact Microsoft is no stranger to the company as it invested \$50 million in Groove in 2001 and has now got itself a ready-made .NET peer-to-peer platform and a new chief technology officer in the shape of Groove founder Ray Ozzie, who was also responsible for devising the Lotus Notes platform back in the 1990s.

According to industry analysts the Butler Group "the acquisition of Groove will undoubtedly inject new life in to the flagging Microsoft Office family." Closer to home Ray Jordan, of Groove's UK distributor D2i Solutions (07771 725002), who has been working with a number of firms in conjunction with IT consultant Tim Travers, says the Microsoft acquisition should raise the profile of a system that any firm involved in e-business or collaborative working should consider. Jordan adds that other features of Groove, including an out-of-the-box system for managing digital signatures, gives it a potential for use in e-conveyancing and e-government applications.

The professional version of Groove costs from around £103 per seat. A free trial version of the Groove Virtual Office product is available at www.groove.net/download + www.d2i.co.uk

NEWS IN BRIEF

► FARRER & CO SELECT CRM

Farrer & Co has selected the InterAction system from Interface Software (now part of the LexisNexis group) as its new client relationship management (CRM) system. The firm, which will be integrating the new CRM with Microsoft Outlook and their existing Axxia practice management system, have also purchased the InterAction Matters module, which will enable it to combine information about people, companies and relationships with matter data from Axxia.

► MSB PICK ECLIPSE FOR SOFTWARE

Further clarification on the story in the last issue about Liverpool law firm MSB (previously Moore Sexton Bibby) and its recent IT upgrade. It turns out the firm has not bought its new software from Videss but merely the hardware and the CFM facilities management and support services. Instead, the firm actually turned to Eclipse Legal Systems for its new case management system and a replacement for its existing accounts package. MSB is now implementing Eclipse Proclaim personal injury, conveyancing, matrimonial, criminal and probate case management software, plus Proclaim Accounts and the Eclipse FileView extranet system. www.eclipselegal.co.uk

► ECOPY AT MARTINEAU JOHNSON

Martineau Johnson has completed the implementation of the eCopy ShareScan and eCopy Connector for Interwoven WorkSite systems at its Birmingham office. The move means staff can now scan documents from copiers directly into the WorkSite document management system and, as a result can now store paper-based and digital matter-related documents together in context.

Explaining the objectives of the project, Martineau Johnson IT director Ken Agnew said "There was far too much paper moving around the office and the same information was being replicated several times, which led to physical storage problems, high costs and inefficient document collaboration. We wanted to create an environment where it was easy to communicate without producing large quantities of paper but we also wanted to easily add to our knowledge bank and computer systems without having to retype large documents. www.ecopy.com

NEWS IN BRIEF

► DPS COME TO E-BILLING RESCUE

DPS Software (020 8804 1022) has come to the rescue of Tayntons Solicitors in Gloucester who, at the end of last year, were given tight deadlines to comply with the new e-billing and real-time reporting requirements of the ACE insurance group and its legal activities management programme (LAMP). ACE had implemented the LSG Advocator litigation management system and required its panel firms to start submitting bills in an electronic format. Despite the time constraints, DPS were able to help Tayntons implement the workflows and e-billing routines to support ACE work within two weeks. You can find more information about the LSG Advocator system at www.legalsg.com

► TWO MORE WINS FOR VIDESS

Two more firms in the North-West – Myers Lister Price and Lopian Wagner in Manchester – have placed orders that will see them migrating from their current legacy systems to Videss Legal Office integrated case and practice management software. Both firms said the Videss policy of free software upgrades (to customers on a support contract) was an attraction compared with the “very expensive” upgrade policies of other suppliers.

► 80 FIRMS NOW WITH BAILEY

Bailey Solutions (01273 773788) reports that over 80 law firms are now running one of its library and information management systems. Although the majority are using the PenLib software, since the launch of its new KnowAll and Konduct products last year, Bailey Solutions has begun selling into larger firms, including Bristows, Mishcon de Reya and, in Ireland, William Fry.

www.baileysolutions.co.uk

► EFI & EQUITRAC INTEGRATION

Equitrac has announced the immediate availability, at no extra charge, of integration between its cost recovery products and EFI's SendMe scanning and digital document delivery system. Users of SendMe, which includes Bates stamping, can download connector software for the Equitrac Professional system free of charge from www.efi.com/support/sendme?download_cost.fhtml

Grundig set to go head to head with Philips on mikes

Having had the USB microphone market to itself for the past few years with its SpeechMike product, Philips could soon face real competition from the new Digma ProMic 840 from Grundig. In terms of functionality and design the ProMic is arguably a more attractive product than SpeechMike – and Philips has not exactly endeared itself to the digital dictation systems community in recent months by launching its own workflow management software and increasing the price of the SpeechMike

Although the feedback we have received from DDS suppliers about the ProMic (due to become available in the UK from April) is largely positive, there is a question mark over pricing. Grundig has traditionally had a ‘we sell a premium product at a premium price’ strategy but with hardware margins under pressure it is going to have to ensure ProMic's pricing is competitive (OK, cheap) if it is really to present a serious challenge to Philips.

DIGITAL DICTATION NEWS IN BRIEF

► MARTINEAU JOHNSON CHOOSE NFLOW

Following an extensive pilot using both desktop client applications and portable dictation devices, Martineau Johnson is to roll out the Nflow digital dictation system to 238 users at its Birmingham and London offices. The firm's IT director Ken Agnew said “Nflow sealed the deal with their public commitment to a Microsoft Windows native dictation recording format.” Future plans including delivering digital dictation over Citrix, as well as integration with the firm's Interwoven DMS.

► NHS SCOTLAND ROLL OUT CRESCENDO DDS

The central legal office for the NHS in Scotland has completed the rollout of the DigiScribe-XL digital dictation system from Crescendo (0870 770 1717) to staff and inhouse lawyers within all its departments. NHS Scotland director of legal services Ranald Macdonald said that after seeing the benefits of digital dictation, his view was that “we should have done this a long time ago”.

► A PDF containing a selection of recent Crescendo case studies can be downloaded from the Insider web site's know-how page.

► E-DICT INTRODUCES UK TRANSCRIPTION SERVICE

The digital dictation outsourced transcription service e-Dict (08707 446206) has just introduced a UK-based transcription service for work submitted during working hours. Out-of-hours projects for overnight delivery will continue to be handled by the company's offshore facility.

► NEW TRANSCRIPTION BUREAU

Secretarial Solutions (0151 255 4433), which is based in Ellesmere Port in Cheshire and run by former practising solicitor and barristers clerk Robert Moss, is now offering a digital dictation transcription service using UK-based legal secretaries. Prices start at 95p per minute of dictation. www.secretarialsolutions.biz

1000+ seats of Visualfiles new M2 already ordered

Visualfiles' recently unveiled M2 file and matter management system looks like becoming the fastest selling product the company has ever developed, with orders for over 1000 user licences placed even before the product was formally released.

To-date, the largest orders have come from Browne Jacobson in Nottingham and Beachcroft Wansbroughs, who will be rolling out M2 across eight offices. At Beachcroft Wansbroughs (the firm was involved in the development of M2 from the outset) the firm's IT director Jeffrey Ng said "M2 ticked all the right boxes for us. It will provide a common fee earner support system to satisfy a number of key requirements including risk management, email and document management via a Microsoft Outlook interface and integration with our PMS."

Although designed as a non-invasive file management system (M2 is presented to the user as an extension of Outlook) to handle such tasks as risk management, compliance with regulations and quality standards, email management and document assembly and management, add-on modules mean it can be upgraded into a full case management. The entry level price for a 20 user system would be around £20-£25,000 and for larger systems, approximately £400 per seat. www.visualfiles.com

NEW PRODUCT LAUNCHES

► JOINING UP THE DOTS FOR HOME WORKING

Community Internet (01865 856000) is starting to create a niche for itself as a provider of home working and out-of-the-office communications services for law firms. These include: advising on the best broadband products available for each remote worker; billing solutions – such as 0800 chargeback, so instead of being charged at the point of connection, a monthly itemised bill is sent direct to the firm; and wi-fi and global roaming facilities so staff on the move can keep in touch with the office and clients wherever they are. Firms for which Community Internet has already undertaken projects include Blake Laphorn Linnell, Pinsent Masons, Cobbetts, Clarke Willmott and Simmons & Simmons. www.community.net.uk

► DOUBLE VISION FOR AXXIA BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE

Axxia Systems has announced two new additions, Vision Lite and Vision Lite+, to its suite of management information and business intelligence reporting tools. Both are streamlined versions of the Vision system Axxia launched last year and intended to provide smaller firms with a lower cost, more accessible approach to management information reporting. Both provide users with an out-of-the-box solution, complete with over 150 standard views of data, such as lock-up, WIP and unbilled time, with macro/micro analysis by, amongst others, fee earner, team, worktype, client partner and client. However whereas Vision Lite allows for no user modifications, Vision Lite+ can be modified by Axxia staff to provide bespoke reports.

Civica launches 'Authority Legal'

Civica has launched its enhanced local government legal offering 'Authority Legal' to address the growing needs of local authorities for improved efficiency, compliance and risk management. Together with expert consultancy and available as a fully managed service, Authority Legal is intended to help legal departments achieve a more integrated and streamlined approach to meeting growing legislative requirements both now and in the future.

Civica director of legal services Tim Spriggs said new legislation, including the Freedom of Information Act, the Licensing Act and the Anti-Social Behaviour Act, "had increased both the workload and the profile for local legal teams, and Authority Legal would provide enhanced capabilities to deliver improved internal and public services while controlling costs and risks."

Authority Legal builds on Civica's proven time recording and case management technology to offer workflow and web services, together with practical solutions for knowledge and risk management.

INSIDER JOB OF THE WEEK www.legaltechnology.com

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► Looking for legal IT staff, including positions in management, sales, development, support, KM, publishing, marketing, online services, accounts or training? The Insider Jobs Board has the best choice of legal IT jobs available in the UK and you can post your vacancies free of charge by emailing the details to jobs@legaltechnology.com

PISCES set for autumn AGM and conference

PISCES, the e-conveyancing and property EDI standards group is to hold its annual members conference and AGM this autumn (7th & 8th September). The programme is still being finalised but for further details, including sponsorship options, contact Vida Godson at vida.godson@pisc.es.co.uk

In other PISCES news, Richard Barnett, the senior partner of Barnetts Solicitors, has been elected to the PISCES board – he also chairs the lenders conveyancing workgroup. PISCES has also reorganised its residential workgroup, splitting it into a number of separate groups to cope with the large number of participants and their range of interests. www.pisc.es.co.uk

LEGAL IT EVENTS DIARY

► APRIL 13-15, LONDON. The Ark Group is holding its annual knowledge management for the legal profession conference, providing two days on KM followed by one day on the role of the PSL. The KM days are chaired by Heather Robinson, the head of information services at Bevan Brittan, and include KM specialists from some of the UK's largest firms. Places for the KM sessions cost from £1195 + VAT. For details call 020 8785 2700 or email jbradford@ark-group.com

► APRIL 20, LONDON. LexisNexis Butterworths is running a one day conference on profitable business development strategies, including client acquisition and retention. Speakers include consultant Nick Jarrett-Kerr, Rosemary Kind, the IT & Finance director of Shoosmiths. The event, which qualifies for 5 CPD points, is chaired by Kendall Freeman managing partner Laurence Harris. The fee is from £399 + VAT and for more details call 020 7347 3500 or visit www.conferencesandtraining.com/business

THE INSIDER WEB SITE

The Insider has published a new buyers guide listing all the 40 + suppliers of legal accounts and PMS software in the UK, including their various accreditations. The guide is available as an Excel spreadsheet and can be downloaded free of charge from the Insider web site's know-how & white papers section www.legaltechnology.com

British Land tells property lawyers to work smarter

Speaking at a commercial property briefing, organised by the conveyancing search company Searchflow in London earlier this month, Stephen Spooner of British Land told the audience of commercial property lawyers that they needed to become smarter at embracing new technologies or face the consequences.

According to Spooner "the residential 'volume' business is innovating the market, through the use of standardised products and process driven operations borne out of a need to satisfy a more sophisticated client base and new government legislation. Everyone accepts the industry needs to be more efficient, the challenge now is to make it happen, sooner rather than later.

"Gone are the days when we looked forward to receiving a weighty tome of nicely bound paper documents to review. We now expect our legal partners to provide all data electronically, for transparency and ease of use. The time, money and resources saved in working in this way has huge potential for improving operating efficiencies and business performance," said Spooner.

TM Search & Argyll partnership

The NLIS channel TM Search and the environmental consultancy Argyll have teamed up to produce a new service that provides conveyancers with a full range of property searches and environmental support services through a single web portal. The service also includes Ordnance Survey mapping technology and integration tools for linking to case management systems.

www.tmargyll.co.uk

Lit support - revised draft out now

LiST – the UK's Litigation Support Technology Group – has published the latest (fifth) iteration of its draft practice direction on the use of technology in civil proceedings. A copy of the draft can be found on the Insider web site's know-how & white papers section www.legaltechnology.com Comments should be sent to Jonathan Maas at jonathan.maas@simmons-simmons.com

KM - new course for PSLs

The training services company TPFL (020 7954 3831) has announced two new courses for professional support lawyers (PSLs). For new PSLs there is a one day induction course, while for more experienced staff there is an extended course (comprising 10 evening workshops, with approximately one workshop per month) on the role of PSLs in knowledge management. The courses, which commence in April, are facilitated by Juliet Humphries, who was previously a director of knowledge for Linklaters. www.tfpl.com/training

Linex Legal rebrands & launches new services

Linex Legal (0870 446 0844) has rebranded – the company was previously known as LegalWebWatch – and launched a series of new subscription-based information services for law firms and inhouse legal departments.

Linex Legal’s managing director Matthew Dickinson describes the company’s role as “the complete weekly alerter” notifying lawyers of news stories, commentaries, announcements and other legal developments reported in over 1000 legal content sources, including primary sources as well as secondary sources, such as law firm newsletters and briefing papers. “We don’t create content but we do select and distribute it in such a way that makes it possible for lawyers to keep up-to-date with the latest legal information from hundreds of different sources without having to waste time on research.”

The new services are also available via the Linex web site, which now also includes a new search engine that allows registered users to search through all the articles and reviews that have been published in the last two years by Linex content sources. Linex Legal is already available in Australia & New Zealand, as well as the UK. www.linexlegal.com

INTERNATIONAL NEWS IN BRIEF

► **LITIGATION SUPPORT – RINGTAIL BOUGHT BY FTI**
Ringtail Solutions, the privately owned US-Australian company behind the Ringtail CaseBook litigation support-meets-case management, KM and intranet document repository system, has been acquired by Annapolis-based FTI Consulting. Ringtail, whose UK user sites include Allen & Overy, Lovells and Norton Rose, will now become part of FTI’s forensic & litigation consulting division. www.ringtailsolutions.com

► **TFB WINS 10 DEALS IN 12 MONTHS IN NZ**
Since opening for business in Auckland last year, TFB New Zealand has won 10 orders for its Partner for Windows case and practice management system. Recent orders include Angus Rogers, Rainey Collins Wright, Dennis Gates, Kay Law, Rory MacDonald and Cooney Law in Cambridge. For more details email Nicole Birdsall of TFB NZ at nicole.birdsall@tfnz.co.nz

► **INTEGRATED AND WINSCRIBE ALLIANCE**
Integrated Solutions, the Australia-wide IT services consultancy, has formed a strategic alliance with the digital dictation systems developer WinScribe Inc that will see Integrated creating a new division – WinScribe Pty Ltd – to sell and support the WinScribe DDS throughout Australia. As part of the deal WinScribe Pty, whose sales and support staff are currently based in Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria, will become the sole distributor for the WinScribe DDS in Australia. For more details call Ta Ly of WinScribe Pty (+61 3 937260009) or email ta.ly@winscribe.com.au + www.i-solutions.net.au

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Anya Designs slashes costs for smaller firms

When it comes to software, the plight of sole practitioners and small firms is reminiscent of the old saw about access to Justice being like the doors to the Ritz – open to all, providing they have the money. This problem is particularly rife at the legal aid end of the market, where already tight margins and increasingly onerous contracting procedures mean it is a brave lawyer that is prepared to invest in IT when there is a real risk their firm won't be in business in 12 months' time.

One supplier that has just launched an initiative to tackle this issue is Anya Designs in Brighton, which has slashed the cost of its CaseKeeper case management software for legal aid practices by as much as 75%. Whereas Anya previously sold its software at a price of £2000 per module (there are separate modules for civil, criminal, immigration, family and private legal work) the price for sole practitioners has been cut to £499, while for smaller firms, with up to 10 users, the price is now £1500.

Although Anya is the only software supplier specialising solely in 'out of the box' case management systems for legal aid practices, the company's CEO Christina Grzasko said the move was a response to pressures on this sector by the LSC, which "are forcing many sole practitioners and smaller legal aid firms to close their doors or merge with larger more commercial practices. It is a growing concern for many of our clients that the regulatory pressure on them to automate is causing problems. Not only do they constantly have to update contracting procedures but they must implement systems which track and record these changes. They need the help of software to comply but this is often beyond the budget of smaller firms as the capital investment they need is tied up in administration" said Grzasko.

The price cuts are only on offer until the end of April but Anya say the discount will be reviewed and, depending upon the initial response, may be continued. For details call Charlotte Bishop of Anya on 0870 402 8839 or visit www.anyadesigns.co.uk

Suppliers just want to have fun

Two legal systems suppliers, both coincidentally located in the North of England, have come out well in the latest *Sunday Times* awards for the 100 best small companies (defined as businesses with between 50 and 249 employees) to work for in the UK.

Manchester-based JMC.IT, who have 88 staff, was placed 9th overall, a big improvement on last year's results, when they came in at number 44. Visualfiles in Leeds also improved their ranking from number 20 to number 15. According to the *Sunday Times* report, staff at Visualfiles work towards a main goal of "having fun", with more than 100 of the 128 staff attending a company weekend in Marbella last year. Visualfiles spent a total of £450 per head on 'team-building' events in 2004 – and it obviously did some good as only 14% of their staff said they would consider a job with another company.

Telfer moving to Baker & McKenzie APAC

Martin Telfer is moving on from Minter Ellison in Sydney, where he has been the head of technology for the past three years, to take up a new position as Asia-Pacific regional IT director for Baker & McKenzie. He will take up the new post in early May.

Hedegaard joins Cryo

Eliza Hedegaard, previously with Tikit and most recently Workshare, has been recruited to head legal sales at Cryoserver, a supplier of email archiving compliance products. These maintain a tamper-proof record of all email traffic in and out of a firm, so users can access copies of messages, even if they have been deleted from their own servers, while still complying with data protection regulations. Current law firm users include Lewis Silkin and Travers Smith. For details call 020 7251 1000 or visit www.cryoserver.com

Good start for TFB in Northern Ireland

Since opening offices in Northern Ireland last year, TFB has secured a string of wins in the province, including orders placed by John Fahy & Co, MacKenzie & Dorman, Rafferty & Boyle and Martin King French & Ingram for its Partner for Windows case and practice management system.

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► Publisher & Editor: Charles Christian
Tel: 01379 687518 - Fax: 01379 687704
Email: news@legaltechnology.com

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