LEGAL TECHNOLOGY INSIDER

William Sturges switch from Axxia to Pilgrim

The market may be quiet but there are still some orders for the taking. William Sturges, an 80-user firm with offices in Westminster and Ealing, has just selected Pilgrim's LawSoft Enterprise PMS as its next generation practice management system.

Having decided it needed to move on from its existing LexisNexis Axxia Arista system, the firm reviewed the market options in conjunction with its accountants and an IT consultant before opting for Pilgrim. The firm intends to initially use LawSoft for accounting, time recording, billing, CMI, credit control, document management and client relationship management.

All change on the corporate front for Aderant and Solcara

The start of the month saw changes of ownership at both Aderant and KM/search systems vendor Solcara. Vista Equity Partners announced it had acquired Aderant Holdings from its then owners – the private equity group Francisco Partners – in a deal that saw the entire Aderant senior management/executive team stay with the company. Financial details were not disclosed but the price paid by Vista is widely believed to be $111 million.

Meanwhile Solcara become part of Access Intelligence. Rob Martin and Ray Jackson remain as managing director and chairman of Solcara respectively. Access Intelligence's executive chairman is Michael Jackson, the former chairman of Sage and current chairman of Elderstreet Investments. No financial details were disclosed.

November's big deals

First wins for Lexis document bundling
Derby City Council and the London Boro' of Lambeth have become the first two organisations to deploy the new document bundling system from LexisNexis. First announced in September, the system combines Visualfiles case management with DocsCorp's PDF workflow technology. Lambeth currently produces an average 175 court bundles each year, while Derby's social services practice area alone produces nearly 200 bundles a year.

Eclipse expands into AIM site
"After viewing several systems" Harvey Ingram (which runs an IRIS AIM PMS) has selected Eclipse Proclaim case management software for its personal injury team. Other recent Eclipse wins include Robin Simon LLP in Leeds, Gross & Co in Suffolk, Parfitt Cresswell in London and new property start-up Woodgrange Solicitors.

November's big launch

FloSuite, one of the major developers in the BPM and workflow systems arena, has launched a new Pre-built Solutions Suite offering users a range of almost-out-of-the-box applications for handling dispute resolution, executry/probate, debt recovery, cheque request/cash receipt and new client/matter inception work. Sales director Russell Wood says flexibility is the key differentiator between the suite and competitor products because "Data, screens, processes, business rules and other key elements can be adapted and extended quickly using FloSuite's Microsoft Visio-based graphical development environment".

News in brief

PPS link up with eBillingHub

The IT consultancy Professional Plus Solutions (PPL) has formed an alliance with e-billing specialists eBillingHub. The deal will see PPL providing service and support for eBillingHub implementations in the UK and Ireland.
www.professionalplussolutions.com

Legaltx in StatPlus deal

Legal telecoms specialist Legaltx has signed a deal with OyezStraker's StatPlus division that will see the office supplies company marketing the full range of Legaltx products and services, including conference calling, broadband, mobiles and phone systems.

Calvis team up with Perot Systems

As part of a strategy to strengthen its MOSS proposition, Calvis has signed a 'teaming agreement' with Perot Systems that will provide Calvis with access to a development resource that will enhance its ability to roll out a Microsoft solution, primarily Microsoft Office Sharepoint Server 2007. Recently Calvis has carried out MOSS projects for Eversheds and Hines Cushman & Wakefield.

PISCES hoping for conveyancing harmony

PISCES executive member Registers of Scotland is talking to HM Land Registry on how to develop cross industry harmonised standard conveyancing elements.

Quote, unquote

"Vin eyes up vendors!" ...*a director of a well-known legal IT vendor tells the Insider what are his four least favourite words in the English language.*

Welcome to a Brave New Word

At the end of last month Tikit, in conjunction with the UK Document Excellence Group (for more details email ukdeg@europe.mwe.com) held another of their *Word Excellence Days* – one of the more interesting conferences we've attended this year. The event kicked off with Sherry Bevan of UKDEG reporting on their latest survey of UK law firms Office 2007 upgrade plans. This revealed that whereas last year 60% of firms surveyed hope to upgrade during 2008 and 2009, this year less than 40% thought they were likely to roll out before 2011 and 56% unsure whether to upgrade at all. (For the record, all the firms in the survey were running Windows XP as their OS).

The survey asked why plans had changed and the reasons given included: time and cost restraints, the belief Office 2007 was not as business critical as other projects, the feeling it offered no 'wow' factor, concerns about training, compatibility, user acceptance and template alterations, plus hardware issues – such as the fact the screen default is 1024x768. In fact just about the only positive point to come out of the survey was the view Office 2007's inbuilt redlining/document comparison utility eliminated the need to run 3rd party systems such as Workshare Deltaview.

Next on stage was American Microsoft Office guru Donna Payne of Payne Consulting. Her view is Office 2007 does contain a number of benefits, including a more intuitive interface, and that "once you've been using it, you see its not as big as the WordPerfect to Word change". However Payne also warned that Office 2007 contains a lot of undocumented features and along with downloading the Word 2003 to Word 2007 command reference.exe, firms should wait until service patch 2 (due in early 2009) is released as this is expected to deal with a number of issues, including problems with Outlook and the calculation bug in Excel.

'What calculation bug?' you ask, as did the audience at the Tikit day. Well apparently there is a bug that means Excel sometimes adds up figures incorrectly when it is performing a calculation. ⇨

Copitrak buck the trend

We predicted in the last Insider that despite the recession, there would be some products law firms would continue buying. One month later UK cost recovery systems market leader Copitrak has reported its best ever Q3, with strong performances across Europe, the Middle East and Asia. Key deals include major upgrades at Wright Hassall and Sidley Austin in the UK, expansion projects for Debevoise and Simmons & Simmons in Moscow (there are now 12 Copitrak sites in the Russian capital), and roll-outs for Latham & Watkins in Dubai and Abu Dhabi, MWE China Law in Shanghai and Squire Sanders Dempsey in Tokyo. Copitrak chairman Nicholas Child said "In spite of, or maybe because of, the deteriorating economy, we're seeing firms increasingly keen to invest in cost recovery. They either want to modernise and scale up their systems, or to extend them across worldwide office networks to ensure they reach the maximum number of staff."

Is this the best RM system going?

According to records management whizz Josef Elliott, of Oyster IMS (020 7199 0620), the CA Records Manager system is "the best records management product going." This is why his company has just signed a partnership agreement with Computer Associate to handle CA Records Manager in the UK. The product was originally known as MDY Filesurf (*see Insider #146 for first report*) prior to its acquisition by CA in 2006 and has a significant penetration of the US legal sector, with the most recent new customer being 950-attorney Gibson Dunn & Crutcher, who are using the system to manage paper and electronic documents.
• Norton Rose has selected information management consultancy Legal RM to review the way the firm provides records management services to its staff.

Contracts Team using HotDocs

Birmingham start-up The Contracts Team is offering what it describes as a "streamlined, quality-controlled, semi automated B2B contract service" driven by its Contract Delta document assembly technology. Contract Delta is based around Capsoft UK's well-known HotDocs system.

New wins

Nabarro select Research Monitor
After a comprehensive trial, Nabarro has become the latest firm to select Priory Solutions' Research Monitor 3 system. The firm has selected the access control, usage monitoring and cost recovery module to manage 70+ online resources.

Three more Linetime wins
KLS Law in Warrington, a new start-up specialising in personal injury work, has selected Linetime's Liberate system for its accounts and practice management. Other recent Linetime wins include North-West based debt recovery specialist J.B. Leitch & Co, who have ordered accounts and Debtime SQL, and NAS Advocates Ltd who have ordered Liberate case management.

New comms at Simmons & Simmons
Simmons & Simmons has selected NEC Philips to help the firm deploy Microsoft Office Communications Server. In addition NEC Philips is to implement a self-service password reset solution.

Going with the Aquarium flow
West Midland firm Peter Chahal Solicitors has selected Aquarium Software's fully managed/SaaS Casebook case management system for its road traffic accident department.
www.aquariumclaims.com

Shoosmiths select Mazu Networks
Shoosmiths has selected the Mazu Profiler network behaviour analysis (NBA) performance management system to help secure and optimise the performance and availability of its business applications.
www.mazunetworks.com/it-initiatives

Brave New Word *...from page 2*

However, by way of some consolation, Office 2007's Open XML file formats do make it harder for hackers to write macro viruses, so there is also a security bonus. Payne also suggested a number of useful online resources for anyone contemplating the Microsoft Office 2007 upgrade.

• Brian Jones' blog on Office Open XML
http://blogs.msdn.com/brian_jones/

• Windows and Office
www.askwoody.com

• Outlook and Exchange
www.slipstick.com

Payne's final piece of advice was not to follow the example of one US firm whose IT department rolled out Office 2007 over the course of a weekend, without any pilots, staff consultation or training. By 10:00am on Monday morning most of the firm's secretaries had resigned.
www.payneconsulting.com

The Tikit *Word Excellence Day* also featured a product shoot-out between Workshare and DocsCorp. While neither side delivered a knock-out, DocsCorp probably won on points. It was however interesting to see Workshare trying to differentiate itself from its redlining origins – and the less-than enthusiastic reaction of the audience when one of Workshare's speakers suggested Microsoft Word's Compare document feature "was fine for your mother-in-law to use" but not for a law firm. Although the audience may have been influenced by the fact that earlier in the day Robert Webb, of Clifford Chance, gave a presentation on their transition to Office 2007, highlighting the fact one of the benefits had been switching from Workshare Deltaview to Word Compare. If you get the chance, do not miss Tikit's next *Word Excellence Day*.

Recessionary tales

The grim reaper, that is the recession, is now loose and prowling the legal world and we're starting to pick up reports of the scope of its impact. Not surprisingly anything but essential projects are being either dropped or deferred from next year's spending plans. By 'essential' firms increasingly mean only projects that will help them save money – and that means actual cost savings with a hard RoI rather than woolly efficiency benefits. As one IT director put it "Any proposals to spend money on systems that will help us make money are off the table."

That said, one leading legal software vendor told us last week of a project they thought was a done deal but which fell through at the last moment when the law firm was unable to raise the capital it needed from its bank. It will be interesting to see if one of the long term effects of the credit crunch will be a boost in the take-up of software-as-a-service (SaaS) as an alternative acquisition model.

We are also seeing an end to the old practice of IT departments having to spend all this year's budget if they hope to be awarded a similar budget next year – now any economies that can be made are welcome. This includes firms cutting back on the number of users licences they have for specific applications, to reflect job losses, and even cancelling maintenance and support contracts for business critical applications. We've even heard of one firm cancelling an outsourcing contract and taking the work back inhouse to save money.

• In the next issue of the Insider we will be publishing the results of our latest readers' poll on the impact of the recession plus this summer's market research into IT trends. You've still time to vote in the readers poll.
www.legltechnology.com

Vital statistics: 961

According to *The Lawyer* magazine, the total number of redundancies and other job losses among lawyers and fee earners at the UK's 200 largest firms, since the start of the recession, now stands at 961 – however the magazine also reports that a further 80 redundancies are now under discussion at one national firm alone.

Winscribe next to go DDS 2.0 route ?

The Insider has spotted a new video clip on the web showing one of Winscribe's developers being interviewed about a new application the company is working on. Rather than being a digital dictation system with workflow processes attached, the new product seems to be a BPM workflow product with digital dictation functionality. From the clip it also appears to be integrated with Microsoft Dynamics CRM as well as Blackberrys and mobile devices. This suggests it must have been built from the ground up in accordance with Microsoft .NET and SOA (service oriented) architecture. So, does this mean Winscribe is also going the DDS 2.0 route, moving its products on to a second generation technology platform?
http://tv.devexpress.com/PDCfloorinterviews2.movie
• Since the Insider first coined the phrase DDS 2.0, opinion has divided on whether this is just spin by vendors playing to catch-up or the start of a new era in digital dictation technology. We'll shortly be opening up a section on the Orange Rag blog to allow everyone a say.

DDS news in brief

Blackberry way proves attraction for dictation users
SRC say the ability for fee earners to use Blackberrys to record and securely send dictation for immediate transcription while they're out of the office is proving very popular in larger firms. Ten firms have already signed up for Winscribe's Blackberry solution since it was launched earlier this year. The firms are Field Fisher Waterhouse, Taylor Wessing, Hugh James, Gorvins, Berrymans Lace Mawer, Beachcroft, Irwin Mitchell, Barlow Lyde & Gilbert, McDermott Will & Emery and Forsters.

Bighand first off the mark with Grundig
Bighand has become the first vendor to offer total support and integration between its DDS software and Grundig's new CordEx wireless USB speech recording mike. Bighand is offering users a free trial of the new mike. In a related development, Bighand's software now also supports encrypted dictation via Grundig's Dicta 420 recorder.

In other Grundig news, the company has launched new versions of its DigtaSoft voice processing software. New features of DigtaSoft 4.2 and Pro 4.2 include direct access to address books via Active Directory; the ability to set and flag deadlines by which time transcriptions must be completed; and, for the new CordEx, an extra DSS channel to enhance data transfer to PCs. The upgrades are available as free downloads.
www.grundig-gbs.com/en/software

Hillingdon roll out SRC Winscribe
The London Borough of Hillingdon has rolled out the latest version of the Winscribe DDS across its inhouse legal department – staff are using Philips SpeechMikes for dictation. The sale and implementation was handled by SRC, making Hillingdon the fourth London council to have selected SRC this year.

Freeth Cartwright widen DDS with nFlow
Freeth Cartwright, which has been been running its own inhouse developed DDS solution for some time in conjunction with its Case Viewer case management portal, is now extending the system by adding Blackberry integration. Following a pilot, the firm has selected the nFlow Mobile for Blackberry application, allowing fee earners to dictate direct from their Blackberrys, with files automatically being imported into the case management system. The firm say because the nFlow system is based on a per-device licence – rather than a monthly subscription – it is an inexpensive option compared to other Blackberry systems.

Date set for Philips awards show
Philips digital dictation division is holding its annual MDC awards ceremony at Hoar Cross Hall in Staffordshire on 29 January.

New product launches

Sword launches free Sharepoint service
The Sword Group last week launched its free Sharepoint Deployment Planning Services (SDPS) Programme. As a Gold partner, Sword is one of a small number of companies accredited by Microsoft to deliver an SDPS Programme. This provides anything up to 15 days of complimentary consultancy and project development assistance, corresponding to a customer's software assurance enterprise agreement with Microsoft. For more details email Terry Coyne at **sharepoint@sword-uk.com**

Costs software V.3 available free
We've mentioned costs lawyer Jim Diamond and his costs estimation system – called Budgets – before. Version 1 was released in 2003 and now Version 3 is available. Designed for both lawyers and buyers of legal services, the program can calculate the potential legal costs of litigation, for anything from domestic disputes to multi-million pound claims.
• You can download a copy of the software (as an .exe file) free of charge from Jim Diamond's website. The site also contains details about Diamond's other services and activities – including the fact he is clearly no slouch at karate and competed in this year's World Shotokan Karate Championships in the 40+ class.
www.jimdiamond.com/jim_diamond/software.html

Market Analyser launched
OneSource Business Information has launched Market Analyser, a new service company V-P Steven Shove says provides marketing professionals in law firms 'with a deep understanding of the opportunities and risks of their target markets'.
www.onesource.com

Thought Leader #1: Defusing the IP telephony time bomb
by Richard Quine, Director, InTechnology
If your firm hasn't yet taken the plunge into IP telephony, then time is running out. Manufacturers are rapidly replacing their phone systems with IP-based ones, which means spares, upgrades and patches for older systems will become harder to get and eventually stop. The momentum is unstoppable and inevitable. Even BT is ripping out its UK digital phone network and replacing it with an IP voice infrastructure as part of its 21CN project. So what's the problem? Surely it's just a new phone system?

Well, no. IP phones do look like a normal office phone but that is where the similarity stops. IP phones are, in fact, small computers that connect to your PC network, but just happen to look like phones. Pretty much everything about IP telephony is different and you need to be prepared for the change over. So where are the risks?

• Phone systems usually have had their own voice network to guarantee call quality. IP telephony instead runs over the PC network so your phone calls are now fighting for space against email, web browsing and everything else your staff use their computers for. When the network gets busy, IP telephony systems can fail.

• You will want to keep your existing phone numbers but these will be with a traditional phone supplier like BT. To move these numbers over to a IP telephony provider is possible but is fraught with logistical and regulatory problems. And if it goes wrong, you can end up with disconnected numbers that go nowhere.

• The majority of costs associated with IP telephony are with maintenance and software upgrades. All the major IP telephony vendors make significant profit from ongoing upgrades to the core system. To maximise this they frequently release new versions of software that you must eventually upgrade to. These upgrade costs are not trivial and can be £100,000+ for a large phone system.

• Your phone system is the communication lifeblood of your firm and moving hundreds or even thousands ➡

⇨ of users to a brand new phone system without dropping a call is a major logistical challenge. Not only are the technical issues of installing a new IT system significant but how calls flow around your organisation – hunt groups, help desks, switchboard, etc – needs to be replicated exactly between the old system and the new.

• Once this new phone system is in place, who will look after it? Your current phone system could well be looked after by the facilities team, whereas your computer network and systems are looked after by IT, which is the natural place for IP telephony. But does your IT department understand phone systems? Who is going to help them get up to speed?

There are however a number of providers that are offering a complete a shrink-wrapped, managed IP telephony service to address these issues and this model is rapidly growing in popularity. Instead of buying a PBX with all the associated costs and risks, you agree a fixed monthly charge per employee. Like all managed services, it is supported by a 24x7 technical team and the monthly charge is guaranteed not to increase over the duration of the contract – and no nasty surprises or bills for upgrades.

The migration from your existing system to IP will be project managed by the supplier and you can usually phase it over months to reduce the impact. A major advantage of a managed service over a PBX is that it can be introduced one phone at a time which minimises the risk associated with traditional 'rip and replace' scenarios.

Unlike your in-house IT team, your managed service provider will have done this migration many times before with other customers and know how to avoid the pitfalls. And, because the provider is responsible for looking after the system both at installation and during the contract, they have the job of paying for all the expensive IT people to maintain it, not you.

The managed service model is not for everyone but it is a serious alternative to the IP PBX and much less expensive than you may think. And, with the clock ticking on your old phone system, it could be one way of diffusing the IP telephony time bomb.

People & Places

Award for Manchester firm
Manchester law firm Lewis Hymanson Small has won the British Chamber of Commerce (North West Region) award for Innovation through Technology for its inhouse developed compliance management system – *see Insider 206 for a full report on this system*.

Jabbari becomes BLG's first COO
Barlow Lyde & Gilbert has appointed David Jabbari as an equity partner and the firm's first chief operating officer. He will join BLG in February from Allen & Overy, where he is currently an associate director and global head of knowledge management.

Epona expands marketing team
Rotterdam-based systems house Epona has appointed Jaap van Vliet and Maureen van Althuis to its marketing team and business development team. One of Epona's partners is dFlow, the Dutch digital dictation systems supplier.
www.epona.nl

Promotions and new faces at Pilgrim
Following the departure of David Thorpe to Aderant, Pilgrim Systems has appointed Colin Kennedy – who joined the company last year from LexisNexis Visualfiles – as chief operating officer. Kennedy's team also includes two new recruits to Pilgrim: Matthew Fiske-Jackson, previously with the IT consultancy Zylpha and before that LexisNexis Visualfiles, where he worked as a new business sales consultant for seven years; and Brian Dudley, most recently the IT director of Gillespie MacAndrew, who will now be heading up Pilgrim's installation team.

DPS tackle LMS rules

DPS Software has announced it is updating its LMS module to take into account that from 8 December, LMS will require all LMS FTP gateway communications to be encrypted. Any traffic received after this date will be rejected. LMS has already piloted its new secure gateway (SFTP/SSH) with a number of firms and their respective case management systems.

• In other DPS news... new start-up Ersan & Co is now running the DPS Progress system to provide matter updates to clients and referrers. And, four more firms – Birds Solicitors, Meldrums, Gordon Young and RJ Osbourne – have signed up for the DPS hosted/SaaS service.

New wins

InTechnology see Riverbed start to flow
InTechnology is reporting growing interest in its Riverbed WAN optimisation offering, with two top 10 firms – Shoosmiths and Pinsent Masons – signing up for the systems in the past two months and another half dozen deals expected over the next quarter. Shoosmiths' IS director David Bason said that since installing Riverbed WAN accelerators, the firm had been able to implement a new WAN with just 60% of the bandwidth originally planned and a 99% reduction in the time taken to backup applications over the WAN, with one system that used to back-up in six hours now taking 10 minutes.

Joining the SCAMS happy family
Solicitors Case Management Systems (SCAMS) has signed up six more firms as users of its family law case management software. The firms are Rowberry Morris in the Thames Valley, Gross & Co in Bury St Edmunds, Alexander Christian (no relation) in Harrow, Beashel Solicitors in Warminster plus JJ Solicitors and Belinda Smith & Co in Peterborough. Chris Bell & Co, an English insurance law solicitor practising out of Zurich, has also ordered a SCAMS accounts system.

Open Text back with a plan – and new products

After a traumatic 18 months following the acquisition of Hummingbird by Open Text, the combined group now believes it has got its legal vertical market act together both with regards to its existing DM5 product stream and to its new LIM (Legal Information Management) Solution, which takes the company into a new and wider market.

With the DM range, the latest version is DM 5.2 which, along with being Microsoft Office 2007 compatible, is also described as being the most advanced and stable version to-date. It has already been rolled out at Clifford Chance, McCann Fitzgerald in Ireland and Cuatrecasas in Spain and the plan is to migrate all DM5 users onto this platform over the next 12 months.

Although Open Text now admit they were initially left behind when Interwoven moved into the email management arena, the company says the latest additions of functionality to the eDOCS range of email filing modules – including auto-filing from Outlook folders to the DMS and server-side filing for the bulk transfer of messages – now gives it the edge. Interwoven has been previewing server-side filing for some months but is not formally releasing the product until LegalTech New York in February. Ten firms have already signed up for Open Text's new email management including Travers Smith in the UK and McCann Fitzgerald.

The next major release in the DM range – code-named DM 14 – is scheduled for Q4 2009 and, along with merging the DM5 and DM6 product lines, will coincide with the launch of Microsoft Office 14 and Sharepoint 2009. But, in the meantime Open Text is pushing forward with a second product stream – its Legal Information Management Solution. This is a dedicated Sharepoint-based document management system for the legal market – but aimed at the tier of firms that have never previously run a discrete DMS. LIM version 1.1 is released next month and will be going live in two European firms during the first half of next year. Although user firms must be on Office 2007 to run LIM, Open Text describe it as a 'no brainer' for firms new to DMS.

In related developments...

Open Text and SAP relationship 'significant'
Open Text describes the fact its products are now included on SAP's price list as 'significant' and says the relationship between the two companies will become increasingly ➡

⇨ important as they work together in the legal space on not just ERP but also HR and CRM projects.
• Insider sources suggest Open Text will be announcing another key relationship – possibly with an enterprise search systems vendor – later this week. As soon as we have any news, we will report it on the Orange Rag blog.

Open Text and The Frayman Group expand partnership
Open Text and The Frayman Group are expanding their existing partnership in the legal market, in a deal that will see Frayman providing support and maintenance services for Open Text's LegalKEY product line. The two companies have also agreed to co-operate on the development of new legal market products and solutions.

Frayman and Tikit in reseller deal
Earlier this week the Tikit Group entered into an exclusive reseller agreement with Frayman, whereby Tikit will market Frayman's CompliGuard 2.0 information barriers and ethical walls software in the UK and Europe. CompliGuard 2.0 is built in Microsoft .NET and also integrates natively with Microsoft Office, Outlook and Sharepoint.
www.fraymangroup.com.

New product launches

Outerin plan to optimise Blackberry usage
Outerin, a new VC-backed company has launched a new managed service – called Optimii – for the legal market. This converts Blackberry and mobile phone usage data in billable time and rechargeable disbursements – without requiring legions of law firm bookkeepers and secretaries to spend days analysing mobile phone bills. Outerin flagship site Freshfields say it used to take them three weeks to compile reports they now get automatically from Optimii. Outerin CEO Jonathan Evans has put together a useful presentation that explains the service's RoI – it can be downloaded as a PDF from the Orange Rag blog.
www.outerin.com + www.theorangerag.com

Redwood 'momentem' now on Orange network
Redwood Technologies is now offering its 'momentem' telecoms expenses management system for Blackberry users as a download from Orange's application shop on £15 for a 90-day subscription.
www.momentem.net/orange

TFB expands email management portfolio

TFB has expanded its product portfolio with the addition of two new email management products. The first is Mimecast's software as a service (SaaS) unified email management system for archiving, discovery, continuity, security and policy. The second product is E-merge, a server-based email marketing tool originally developed by TFB parent Tikit that supports the creation and distribution of bespoke communications, such as newsletters and invitations.

In other TFB news, the company has signed up three more firms for its Partner for Windows PMS. The three are Solomon Law in Peterborough plus Spencer Shaw and Saffron Solicitors in Birmingham.
• TFB has rolled out Hornbill Systems' Supportworks service desk management system to assist its customer support staff. IT services desk manager Miles Osbourne said Hornbill's solution (which allows customers to log calls by phone, email or a web self-service portal) gave TFB more visibility on help desk traffic, which in turn made it easier to prioritise workloads.
www.hornbill.com

News in brief

Young joins Kestrel board
Alex Young has been appointed as a client liaison director of the legal IT consultancy Kestrel Business Solutions. Prior to joining Kestrel in 2006, Young was at Linklaters for 11 years.

CPA implementing Logicalis
Logicalis is to roll out a global enterprise content management system at CPA, a provider of IP management and outsourced legal support services. The project will run until 2013.

Insider featured job

DAVIES ARNOLD COOPER

IT director - six figure package + benefits

Davies Arnold Cooper is an international firm well-known for its dispute resolution and real estate expertise. With offices in London, Manchester, Madrid and Mexico City, it now has an outstanding opportunity for an ambitious IT professional to join this thriving 230 lawyer firm and share in its future growth.

This is a new position and carries significant responsibility for the leadership, development and delivery of the firm's IT strategy. You will therefore possess strong commercial and management skills as well as having excellent technical skills.

The successful candidate will be responsible for managing the firm's IT function and will work with senior partners across the practice; good communication skills are therefore essential, as is the ability to influence at the highest level amongst the partnership as part of the firm's senior management team. A good working knowledge of Microsoft products is important, as is previous experience of working in a law firm or similar professional services environment.

Please contact Neil Cameron of the Neil Cameron Consulting Group – by email to **neil@neilcameronconsulting.com** – for full job description and application details.

• For a wide range of legal IT job opportunities, both with vendors and law firms, visit the Insider Jobsboard. **www.legaltechnology.com**

Thought Leader #2: Cloud computing – the future for SaaS applications ?

by Miles Tinsley, managing director, Vaulthouse Ltd

Law firms have a lot to gain from exploiting the next generation of internet services. We are not talking web-enabled legacy applications or simple web based services but full-blown web based enterprise class applications. There are solutions available right now that redefine case and claim management with performance and reliability track records that put most in-house solutions to shame. These enterprise web applications are lightweight, powerful, flexible and affordable. They embody the essence of the internet and allow firms to run more efficiently, save time and money, and operate globally with seamless data exchange between staff and clients.

A successful web application demands an innovative approach. The software as a service (SaaS) model describes an application that is hosted and maintained by a provider who offers specific services to users, without the need for installed software on local machines. It defines the fundamental approach to how web software services are deployed, covering everything from hosting to the pricing model, typically slashing the barrier-to-entry costs and ongoing usage charges. Instead of making high initial capital investments, which then depreciate, businesses can benefit from low setup costs and put their IT budgets to a more economical use without the need for expensive hardware, electricity, maintenance and management costs.

Enter 'cloud computing' – a broad term that encompasses SaaS but abstracts the end user away from the difficulties of maintaining a centralised system and allows for a consistent, platform agnostic, user experience. Cloud computing services are always available, instantly offering more capacity when your company grows and gracefully scaling down when there is less demand, meaning you only pay for what you use. Also, by definition, the efficiency of cloud computing makes it inherently environmentally friendly. SaaS and cloud computing go hand in hand but they are not the same thing.

Cloud computing is a way of maintaining the infrastructure over which an SaaS application is served. It defines ⇨

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➡ an approach employed by the SaaS provider. In fact you could say when you look at the underlying principles, and putting technology aside, cloud computing refers to the agreement between provider and user. For example, if a provider offers unlimited file storage as part of its service, the user knows they can upload as many files as they like. If hardware requirements change as a result of this, it is up to the provider to maintain the promised service level, at no extra cost or disruption to the user, who need not be concerned about the details behind the scenes.

However, more important than the difference between cloud computing and SaaS, are the resultant features and benefits when the two are used together. These ultimately translate into real-world benefits for firms.

We are in the middle of an economic downturn, making this a good time for IT departments to re-evaluate their spending. Do they really want to use most of their budget simply making sure existing systems stay up and running? Switching to a cloud computing model will allow business to focus on innovation and strategic initiatives, rather than pumping resources into traditional software, that has not been refreshed for years. So, what is the difference between cloud computing and SaaS? For the end user, it simply doesn't matter. It is more meaningful to recognise the cutting-edge features and immense potential made possible by these technologies.

• Vaulthouse operate cloud computing model for their ClaimAble claims management system. **www.claim-able.com**

News wins

Dickinson Dees buy Vivantio service desk
Dickinson Dees say since rolling out a Vivantio Service Desk system, they have been able to introduce service level agreements and can now resolve 98% of users queries within three hours.
www.vivantio.com

NextiraOne win Blake Lapthorn comms deal
Blake Lapthorn has picked NextiraOne to help deliver the unified communications platform at the firm's new offices.
www.nextiraone.co.uk

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MBO at Meridian Legal

Stamford-based Meridian Legal Systems – best known for its Solpak legal accounts software (and no relation to barristers systems supplier Meridian Law, now part of the IRIS group) has completed a management buyout. The MBO deal, which was backed by Co-operative Business Banking, sees the existing management team of Steve Greenfield and Jane Cooling taking over from founder Graham Currie, who has now resigned as a director. No financial details were disclosed but the new owners say there will be no changes among existing staff and plans are in place 'for expansion in the near future'. Cooling added that along with supplying legal software, Meridian could now also offer a full IT network support service, making it a one-stop supplier for SME law firms and giving it the potential of "expanding our IT services to other markets".

Gossip central

• Which well known consultant walked out of the *New Legal IT Forum* gala dinner after being being told by the management of the Celtic Manor hotel that although he might be staying at a 5-star hotel, there was no cheese available. As the director of a legal IT vendor commented: "That's what happens when you let people who run golf clubs take over a hotel."

• Congratulations to Ann Elia, the head of IT at Travers Smith, who became Ann Cant at a marriage ceremony at Niagara Falls last month.

• Congratulations also to Tikit for winning the Summer '08 *London Legal 5-a-Side Premiership League*, losing only two of the 12 games they played. And, a big hand to Gareth Thomas, who was named player of the match on their last outing: a 2-nil win against Easynet.

• If you click on the link below, you can read the full, unexpurgated account by Nathan Hayes (the head of IT & infrastructure at Osborne Clarke) of his attempt to climb Mont Blanc this summer. The account includes hyperlinks to photos of the expedition stored on Flickr.com
www.legaltechnology.com/Updates/MontBlanc.htm

10 years ago today...

The big stories in November 1998 were the launch of the first issue of the English Law Society's now annual *Software Solutions Guide* – there were just five systems listed in the 1998/99 edition. And, Jeffrey Green Russell – back in the latter part of the 1990s the firm was a consistent pioneer of leading edge legal IT – became the first UK firm to select iManage (now Interwoven Worksite) as its document management platform rather than the then market leader DOCS Open (later Hummingbird and now OpenText).

Vital statistics

• **20 percent**: The share of the browser market now held by Firefox. Microsoft Internet Explorer's share has fallen to 71% but IE8 is expected in January 2009.
• **15 years**: On 1st November, 15 years after its launch in 1993, Microsoft finally withdrew Windows 3.11 for Workgroups from its embedded devices OEM channel.

Legal Technology Insider

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Next issue...
The next issue of the Insider (No. 215) will be published on December 18, 2008. The editorial deadline is December 12. In the meantime keep up with the latest news by visiting our blog at **www.theorangerag.com**