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Bigband changes hands for £49 million

The legal sector digital dictation and voice technology market leader Bigband last week changed hands in a deal worth £49 million. The deal saw Lloyds Development Capital (LDC), which first invested in Bigband in 2006 in a primary buyout, sell the majority of its stake in the company to Bridgepoint Development Capital. LDC retains a minority stake and Bigband's existing management have all increased their personal shareholdings in the company. Bigband also retains its senior management team, including non-exec chairman, Graham Gilbert, CEO Jon Ardon and COO Rob Lancashire.

CEO Jon Ardon commented "We have exciting plans for new products and services. There are a range of untapped growth opportunities for our business in both existing and newer markets and, with the support of our new shareholder, we expect to grow our market share, build our customer base in target markets, *as well as extend our capabilities through targeted acquisitions.*"

Comment: The original LDC buyout figure was never disclosed but industry gossip suggests the founders Stephen Thompson and Gordon McAlpine pocketed somewhere between £6 million and £16 million on the deal. Either way the new price of £49 million constitutes a good return on investment for LDC. Bigband figures suggest it is now the largest vendor in the UK, US, Dutch and Australian law firms digital dictation markets. It also has a growing healthcare business.

- Legal IT sector finance specialists Marks Baughan & Co advised Bigband.

Field Fisher goes with Winscribe for BPM

Elsewhere in the digital dictation market, the decision by Winscribe to diversify into the BPM (business process management) arena seems to be paying off with top 40 law firm Field Fisher Waterhouse last week announcing it had signed up for an enterprise licence and would initially be rolling out Winscribe BPM to 700 users. The deal is Winscribe's largest BPM win in the UK to-date and the firm will initially use the system to streamline client matter intake.

- By coincidence, Thomson Reuters (as distinct from the Elite business) is now actively promoting FloSuite Legal (which the group acquired last year) as a platform for case management and BPM, including client matter inception.

www.winscribe.com + www.flosuitelegal.com

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Tiger eyes apps market

We first encountered Tiger Eye Consulting in 2009 when they were handling iManage document management integration projects for law firms however since then the company has diversified into other areas, including content-driven business apps for the Apple iOS platform.

Tiger Eye's approach has been to develop a series app templates (the Business App, the Informational App and the Events App) which can then be adapted by firms to deliver client specific information via a content management system. The Business and Info apps are available on a subscription basis, from as little as £199 a month, while the Events App is a customised one off (POA). Director Dave Wilson says the consultancy is also working with an employment law firm on the development of a corporate HR app.

You can find an example of the Info App on iTunes – search for *tiger-eye-consulting*.
www.tigereyeapps.com

Deal Proof proof is in the pudding

Although it has been part of Thomson Reuters in the US for eight years, the Deal Proof system has only just emerged in the UK as part of the Business Law Solutions division. However despite its recent entry, the system (which is already used by half of the AmLaw 100 firms) is now being looked at by 30 of the UK's largest firms, with one major firm in the process of signing on the dotted line for an enterprise licence. (Deal Proof is also available as a hosted solution.)

Deal Proof is one of those no-brainer products that does a simple but valuable job – and does it well. Essentially it is an automatic proof reading application that resides within Microsoft Word and produces easy-to-follow summaries of its findings that lawyers can then act on. Although it obviously proof reads a document far quicker than any human can, its value is it ➡

➡ can identify and flag typographical and numeration discrepancies, missing financial values (where the transaction price has not been included in the original draft etc), unpaired closing parentheses and all those other aspects that the human eye misses. Stephen Davies of Thomson Reuters describes Deal Proof as the legal context equivalent of a spellchecker and that when demonstrated to law firms, the system never fails to identify multiple errors.

Although initially pitched as a tool for transactional lawyers – because it can save time, ensure quality and mitigate risk – Davis says the product is now attracting interest from knowledge management departments as a way of review KM precedents. For example, it can flag all references to primary and secondary law sources, which can then be checked for accuracy.

Pricing starts at less than £5 per week per user in a mid-size firm For more details contact stephen.davis@thomsonreuters.com



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May's wins, deals swapouts and rollouts

Over in the United States, one law firm recently swapped out Autonomy iManage in favour of Worldox and now in the UK we have the Scottish firm **Tods Murray** selecting a cloud-based document management system from **NetDocuments** 'rather than go down the traditional path of an expensive and hardware intensive DMS.' The firm's IT manager James Walker said "Initially we were sceptical about a cloud-based DMS but NetDocuments actually gives us more than just a DMS. It also provides a built-in business continuity solution and email management, as well as an integrated external document sharing solution." The NetDocuments service is hosted in twin UK-based datacentres run by **InTechnology**.

North West firm **Jennings Law** has gone live with its new **Linetime Liberate** case and practice management system. Linetime also assisted with the migration of the legacy data.

With many firms still unconvinced about the merits of outsourcing, it is instructive to note just how long such services have been available. As part of a major infrastructure refresh worth £1.5 million and being rolled out to 500+ seats in nine offices, regional firm **Freeth Cartwright LLP** has reappointed its incumbent IT outsourcing services provider **Quiss Technology**. The firm first started using Quiss in 2001 and since then have worked together on numerous issues and upgrades, including an office flood, with little or no downtime.

Stephenson Harwood LLP has chosen **Recommind Decisiv Search** as its unified search solution to access documents, matters and expertise across the firm. The Recommind system will become the central focus of the firm's know-how environment.

Hill Dickinson has chosen the **Prosperoware Milan** platform to improve the adoption of the electronic file across the firm and to streamline the administration of its Autonomy iManage document management system. ➡

Thomas Eggar LLP has partnered with **Kineo** to deploy a **Totara Learning Management System**, an open source LMS developed by Kineo in conjunction with **Catalyst** and **Flexible Learning**. The end product –called the *TE Academy Online* – offers staff a fully functioning system to manage their elearning, face-to-face training and CPD. Ann Hemming, the firm's head of L&D and KM, said the new *Academy* had been integrated with **Yammer** and would also be used for rolling out risk and compliance training programmes.

Dechert LLP has selected the **Tikit Carpe Diem Mobile** system to provide fee earners in its 24 international offices with a mobile time recording system for smartphones.

Telephony and datacomms specialist **Matrix247Law** has signed up three more firms in the North West. **Millbank Edge** in Manchester has gone with VoIP, while two Cheshire firms **Nyland & Beattie** and **Rowlinsons** have implemented complete telecoms upgrades and refreshes.

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More wins & deals

DocsCorp has signed up four more law firms through its partner network. In the Netherlands, **Poelman van den Broek** has deployed Content Crawler, while **Tijbout** has gone with pdfDocs. Both deals were with the Dutch reseller **dFlow**. In the UK, **Phoenix Business Solutions** has swapped out **Workshare** in favour of DocsCorp compareDocs at **Ogier** and implemented Content Crawler at **Fluxmans UK**.

Following a competitive tender, **No5 Chambers**, one of the largest barristers sets in England, is rolling out a hosted **IRIS Meridian Law Connected** system across its chambers and annexes. The set has over 230 barristers and 70 clerks, managers and support staff.

Tods Murray (again) has signed up with UC Logic to use SyseroCTX as its case management application. In other UC Logic news,

the Swedish law firm **Gernandt & Danielsson** chose SyseroKMS as its SharePoint knowledge management system. UC Logic has also released an iManage integration for Microsoft Project 2010, which will allow Filesite and Desksite users to work with Project 2010.

Farrer & Co has implemented cloud-based online security and email management to protect mobile users and provide email archiving and audit management. The firm selected **Mimecast** and **ScanSafe** solutions which were delivered by comms technology integrator **Esselar**.

To tackle data growth and reduce its server footprint, **Watson Farley & Williams** has turned to **Brocade** for a high performance datacentre platform using Brocade VDX 6720 Data Center Switches to deliver 10Gb ethernet performance and underpin the firm's virtualised datacentre strategy. www.brocade.com

Atlanta Technology has completed legal aid firm **Kaim Todner Solicitors** migration to a fully virtualised infrastructure. The project saw 11 physical servers reduced to two hosted virtual servers and one centralised storage device. www.atlantatechnology.co.uk

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And more wins & deals

Johnson Law in Bolton becomes the sixth law firm this year to sign up for an Edge hosted desktop service from **Smartlegal.IT**

Expert witness services provider **Atkinson Lewis** has chosen court bundling software from **Zylpha** to increase the efficiency of its e-filing of evidence with courts.

Vital statistics: 23%

According to Mercato ITelligence, law firms in Western Europe pay on average a margin of 23% on prices for standard ICT products (hardware, servers etc) compared with the SOCITM-recommended best practice rate of 3%. The highest margin reported by a law firm is 145%.

The London Olympics - 58 days and counting

We've heard about missile batteries on top of high-rise blocks in the East End of London for the duration of this summer's Olympics but a security measure with a more immediate impact on IT is the lock-down of manhole covers, closing off network access points. With bandwidth and network resiliency concerns in mind **InTechnology** has announced a 600% increase in bandwidth availability to support its customers during the Games, which are expected to generate an unprecedented surge in internet and social media traffic. InTechnology director Ian Rhodes says his own tip is to ask "Would it make more sense to provide access to Olympic coverage on a few standard TV screens in the office rather than risk overwhelming the business network?"



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Janet Day, IT Director, Berwin Leighton Palsner (BLP)



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Alliances & Partner news

The technical consultancy **Exen Legal Solutions** has signed up as an alliance partner with **Elite**. As a partner, Exen will provide Elite LawSoft customers with the opportunity to create customised solutions, including workflows, as well as assistance with transferring legacy data to more advanced platforms. *See also Insider #252.*

www.xnls.co.uk

Legal IT implementation specialists **Saturn27** has joined the **Peppermint Technology** academy programme for partners planning to deliver the Peppermint Platform to law firms. Saturn27 is already working on a Platform implementation at one of Peppermint's early adopter firms.

The **Seal Software Group** has entered a strategic partnership with **LexisNexis** to deliver the Lexis

Contract Finder service. Powered by the Seal Contract Discovery search engine, the new service makes it easier for organisations to locate, categorise and manage contracts. Lexis Contract Finder can search nominated servers and identify all contractual documents (including text, PDF and other file formats) prior to processing.

www.seal-software.com

Hobs Legal Docs, now one of the UK's largest independent litigation support services providers, has become a premium hosting partner for the **kCura Relativity** ediscovery platform.

Following a new agreement, **Linex Systems** can now offer mutual customers access to **LexisNexis** content directly from the Linex Smart Alerts platform. Linex has also added a de-duplication function so users can mash all their news sources into one consolidated feed.

www.linexsystems.com



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New product launches

Tricostar has launched a web-based court bundling product as a hosted or inhouse system, with optional time recording. Pricing for the product, which can also be linked to SharePoint libraries, starts at £3000pa for up to five users.

www.tricostar.com

Following a successful pilot, **Plan-Net PLC** has extended its 24/7/365 legal-dedicated IT support service to include more law firm customers.

www.plan-net.co.uk

Worried about COLP and COFA compliance? Peppermint Technology has just added risk management and reporting tools to its Platform.

www.pepperminttechnology.co.uk

Select Legal Systems has signed up with **Cloud One Services** to offer the MozyPro server and desktop backup SaaS solutions to law firms. Over 70% of new Select customers already opt for the cloud version of the company's LawFusion case and practice management system.

www.selectlegal.co.uk

If you are interested in cloud computing, new-to-the-legal-market provider **Green Cloud Hosting** is now offering free no-obligation 30 day trials on all their hosted services. There is also an article on cloud computing by Green Cloud's Kamran Maqbool on the Insider website's new case studies and whitepapers section.

www.greencloudhosting.co.uk

www.legaltechnology.com/category/case-studies/

People & Places

Following the appointment of **Richard Bretherton** as CEO of legal workflow software supplier **OchreSoft Technologies**, the company has made two more board-level appointments. They are **Viv Williams**, the CEO of the **360 Legal Group**, who joins the company as non-executive chairman, ➡

➡ and **Pauline Freegard**, formerly business development manager at **LexisNexis Enterprise Solutions**, who joins as business development & sales director.

Patrick Rowan, most recently with **Ernst & Young**, has joined **Hobs Legal Docs** as sales director and board director, with the brief of growing the company's reputation in the law firms market and expanding into the competition and regulatory sectors.

Digital dictation systems provider **Crescendo Systems** has moved to new premises at Saxon House, Downside, Sunbury, Middlesex TW16 6RT. The switchboard number is 0844 846 6417. www.crescendosystems.co.uk

The Bristol-based **ITEC Group** is now sponsoring the **Southwest Legal IT Forum**. For details about the Forum's activities contact **Duncan Eadie**, the IT & Business Services Director at Foot Anstey duncan.eadie@footanstey.com www.itecgroup.co.uk

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KM - it's all about BYOD and social media

The Ark Group/*Managing Partner* had an excellent turnout for its 13th annual *KM Legal 2012* event earlier this month. Hot topics included the rise of social media in the know-how space, with the likes of *Google Scholar* emerging as a possible threat to traditional online legal information sources, while Yammer is increasingly being seen as the Facebook for KM.

There was huge interest in BYOD (buy/bring your own device) and the rise of tablet and smartphone devices as a platform for delivering knowledge. Hogan Lovells said 29% of their UK fee earners now had iPads, while lawyers at Eversheds were described as "handing back laptops and Blackberrys like there was no tomorrow". There was also fascination that Eversheds take the view the iPad is so simple to use that they refuse to offer training and support.

Quote, Unquote

"Legal publishers should stop trying to content-enable workflows and instead focus on workflow-enabled content." ...consultant Neil Cameron.

25 years ago today

Eclipse Legal Systems, now the UK's largest independently owned legal IT provider, is celebrating its 25th anniversary this month. The company was founded on 17th May 1987 by Steve Ough (now Chief Software Architect) and has gone on to become the market's leading case management software vendor. Steve Ough said "It's an incredibly proud time for us. The business has gone from one man – literally, me! – to a headcount of 120 and we are actively recruiting for more. As part of the celebrations, Eclipse's 2012 company conference (to which all 120 staff are invited) is taking place in Barcelona.

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