

Internet Newsletter for Lawyers

By Delia Venables

May/June 2006

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.eu - New Kid on the Block by Tim Brown

EURid, www.eurid.eu, the proud parents of the new top level domain .eu - are now finally able to show off their new offspring to the world after a long wait. The new domain .eu was conceived some years ago but its parents have had difficulties perfecting the rules and regulations associated with its arrival and registrars and registrants alike have been pacing up and down outside the delivery room waiting for their individual bundles of joy.

As with the introduction of some of the other more recent top level domains, .eu was launched with a "sunrise period". Phase 1 began in December 2005 and allowed those with existing trade mark rights to apply for domains that exactly mirrored those rights. Phase 2, which began in February, was designed to allow those with other rights such as trading names, business identifiers and family names to apply for domains. To avoid the problems that plagued the launch of other top level domains, including .info and .biz, such as the submission of false trade mark details, EURid appointed PriceWaterhouseCoopers as "validation agents" for .eu and charged them with checking each and every application to ensure the submitted prior rights were valid.

This meant that registrants had to send copies of their trade marks or notarised proof of other prior rights to PWC in Brussels before they could be approved. The rules for how evidence could be submitted were very strict; A4 size paper only; at least 200 DPI resolution; forms must be unstapled; portrait form only and so on... This was obviously too much for many applicants and over 85,000 applications expired after registrants had failed to complete the relevant paperwork in time.

The good news is that this process seems to have weeded out most of the fraudulent applications, though there is a rather grey area where some registrants used rights derived from rapidly-applied-for Benelux trade marks in some rather odd use classes so they could register generic domains. However it remains to be seen how many rights holders will be forced to resort to the Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) to resolve any outstanding IP issues. Based closely on the Uniform Domain Name Dispute Resolution Policy (UDRP) used for .com (and other) domain disputes, the ADR will be administered by the Czech Arbitration Court and has yet to see any disputes at the time of writing.

.eu domains were finally made available to all-comers at the start of April and over 1.5 million domains were registered by the end of the first week of general availability (compared to 21 million .com domains now in existence – though .com, of course, had over 10 years to reach those dizzy heights). Germany has proved to be most interested with 540,000 registrations so far, followed by Britain with 320,000 and (interestingly) Holland with 200,000. The detailed figures can be seen at status.eurid.eu/registered.html.

Given that the number of registrations made within a few weeks of the land rush has already surpassed those of several country code domain spaces such as Italy (681,000 registrations) or Switzerland (442,000) and is already coming close to .co.uk, with its 3 million registrations, it certainly appears that the new kid on the block is doing well.

Where are they all?

You do not see a lot of .eu web addresses yet. A number of people are getting them as blocking domains and are just forwarding the .eu web address to their existing .com. (Try putting in the urls of some of the big name legal firms with .eu at the end instead of .com - most of them "redirect" quickly to the .com). Probably, some firms will start to use their .eu web addresses within a year or so as they a) might have got a more appropriate .eu domain compared to their .com; or b) the .eu domain might be a better way of projecting their firm, for example, if they have branches in several member states. .eu may also become more common when it comes round to headed-paper-ordering-season again!

How do you get one?

Now that the restricted sunrise period is over, anyone can register a .eu domain. There are around 1,000 registrars, see list.eurid.eu/registrars/ListRegistrars.htm?lang=en. This list can be sorted by country or by language, to make it easier to choose. Prices for registration vary quite a lot depending on what other services come bundled with the actual registration. My own company, Demys, for example, does not do "simple" registrations but offers a full IP management service for domains (rather like trade mark attorneys but with domain names).

The death of .pro?

As readers of this newsletter will recall, .pro was one of seven new top level domains introduced in 2001, along with .biz and .info mentioned above. Pitched at those in professional services .pro domains were bundled with a secure digital certificate, allowing for encrypted communications via email.

The US-based administrator of the domain, RegistryPro, at www.registrypro.pro, now allows members of the medical, legal, accounting and engineering professions who are licensed in the USA, Canada, Germany or UK to register a .pro domain. Registrants can secure profession-specific third-level names such as [name].law.pro, [name].med.pro and [name].cpa.pro.

Furthermore, anyone with existing trade mark rights can register a ".ProBlock Intellectual Property Defensive Registration" which is designed to prevent other entities from registering a domain that might infringe existing IP rights. However RegistryPro's rules prescribe that the domain cannot be used for email or web page services.

Unfortunately for the legal professional, .pro domains are far from the cheapest top level domain – at the time of writing I found the average cost of a basic .pro domain to be in the region of USD\$220 (GBP£125) with a .ProBlock registration being approximately ten times that amount. When compared to the cost of a .com, .co.uk or .ie of about GBP£50 it is not surprising that .pro has failed to catch on.

While RegistryPro does not release official figures detailing the numbers of .pro registrations, I conducted a quick survey of the office in preparation for this article and none of us had seen a .pro being actively used by any UK or Irish law firm (or indeed used by any firm in any jurisdiction).

Some industry commentators are now questioning the value of the .pro domain given its limited availability, high cost and lack of recognition. It is certainly not expected to eclipse other domains, such as .com, in popularity either with professionals or clients. Furthermore the defensive registrations have been criticised, being seen by some as a cynical strategy to generate revenue through registrations that cannot be used for any practical purpose and, given RegistryPro's registration restrictions, to defend against a non-existent threat.

So while it may have promised much, .pro has been largely ignored by the legal and other professions and given the success of new upstarts like .eu, it is surely now time to lay .pro to rest. No flowers.

Tim Brown is senior domain name consultant with Edinburgh-based Demys Limited (www.demys.com). Demys are specialist Internet Intellectual Property Managers and are EURid approved registrars. Email t.brown@demys.com.

Chambers offering significant legal resources on their web sites by Delia Venables

Please see www.venables.co.uk/n0605chambers.htm or www.venables.co.uk/n0605chambers.pdf for the full article. Here is a brief summary!

Now that solicitors are increasingly using the web to find legal information, they will surely be impressed by barristers or chambers who provide what they need. I am not suggesting that solicitors will be using search engines as their main means to find barristers on the web - that surely is too casual an approach for a legal professional. However, they will be using registers of barristers' sites such as my own at www.venables.co.uk/bar.htm to locate chambers and will then be looking for "proof of expertise" on particular topics. One good way for barristers to indicate expertise is to provide legal resources on their site.

However, keeping the site up to date is obviously difficult and sites with good legal information seem to come and go with alarming frequency! It often seems to be just one or two of the barristers who provide the new material for these web sites and if *they* lose interest, or move to another chambers, the site quickly becomes out of date.

Here are some of the most interesting chambers' sites – and these ones are kept up to date. I start with my three "best chambers' resources sites" and then cover a number of other good ones as well (see online, as above).

Human Rights Update from One Crown Office Row at www.humanrights.org.uk

This is a database of reports and commentaries on civil cases dating back to 1998 and updated weekly. The cases are taken from domestic courts and the Strasbourg court involving human rights points that demonstrate the impact of the European Convention on domestic law and the site also explores the practical impact of these cases for practitioners. You have to register for much of the detailed material, but it is all free and there are apparently almost 10,000 registered users.

5RB (5 Raymond Buildings) at www.5rb.co.uk

5RB provides over 300 case reports on the site covering Media and Defamation, Privacy and Data Protection, Freedom of Information, Sports Law, Intellectual Property and other areas. The case reports include very recent ones and in many cases, copies of the judgments are appended. You can view these by subject area and then within subject area, alphabetically or by date. You can also register on the site for email briefings.

Doughty Street Chambers at www.doughtystreet.co.uk

DSC provides information on Human Rights topics, including articles and comment on the act, European Convention material, international material, a news section and a good set of Human Rights links. They also offer email updates. Note that the website contains a good mixture of "mug shots" and external comments on chambers (direct marketing) and legal news (indirect marketing).

Further chambers with significant legal content include Arden Chambers, 1 Chancery Lane, Hardwicke Building, 1 Hare Court, 11 Kings Bench Walk and 3-4 South Square.

Coming in the next issue: individual barristers offering legal resources on their sites - including the top five!

Multiple Domain Names by Ray Cobb

The use of multiple domain names for marketing purposes is not really unusual in larger businesses. For instance a multi national company with dozens of branded products is likely to have a parent site with individual sites (and probably domain names) for each brand. This is quite reasonable as it is the easiest way for a viewer to find the information about a particular brand without being faced with an enormous menu of products on a single home page.

When I first joined Coffin Mew & Clover five years ago I realised that we could be facing the same problem with our website www.coffinmew.co.uk, so I started to investigate purchasing relevant domain names for different parts of our business. The firm, one of the larger regional firms on the south coast, has over 200 personnel and provides a wide range of legal services to businesses, organisations and individuals. As well as 'traditional' areas of law, the firm has several 'niche' areas of practice which I believed could provide the ideal opportunity to begin this branding process. Over the last four years we have registered around 30 domain names with a view to eventually using these 'brand' names as individual sites for specific client needs.

In this article, I highlight two of the domain names that we use in our marketing activities – www.thisismodus.co.uk and www.insuranceregulation.co.uk - to illustrate our thinking. At present we do not register every domain name on the search engines, but we do point them at specific pages on our website (not all to the home page). As well as the two domain names mentioned above, some of the others include: www.wrongdiagnosis.co.uk, which links directly to the Clinical Negligence area and www.helpyouplan.co.uk, which links to the Wills Probate and Trusts section.

Methods of redirection

Technically this is fairly straightforward. There are two main methods - DNS redirection and HTTP redirection. DNS redirection requires the use of IP addresses rather than domain names. IP addresses only exist at site level, so a domain name (such as www.thisismodus.co.uk) could only be redirected to the IP address of www.coffinmew.co.uk. This is the most efficient method from a purely redirection point of view, since the end user gets redirected before even hitting the web server but all the redirects go to the home page, which may not be what the site owner wants.

HTTP redirection, also known as web server redirection or URL forwarding, allows for redirection to specific pages. On entering the specified URL in the address bar the user is redirected to the web server, which in turn forwards the user to a specific page. This is the method we use. These redirections are set up by our Internet Service Provider directly in the configuration files for the web server. HTTP redirections can be set to temporary or permanent. By default they are temporary, known as a '302 redirect'.

We use a '302' redirection because it will allow us to remove the redirection at some point in the future when we are in a position to run the site independently. We believe that this is also a very 'Google friendly' method.

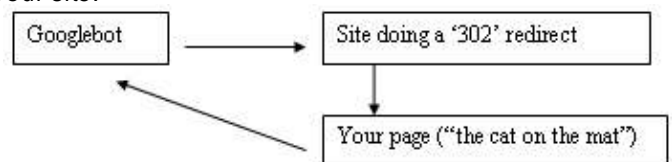
The redirection can also be made permanent (a 301 redirection) where required. '301' types are better if the redirection is to be made permanent, as this type should allow Google to take existing rankings to the new site. This is the method we used when we switched ISP about a year ago when we changed our .asp pages to .htm.

Recently there have been some concerns about 302 redirections being 'hijacked'. For the more technically minded, here is a brief outline of this issue. (Less technically minded people can skip this section).

The Google 302 redirect hijacking 'problem'

Consider a Google automated traversal of your site - a visit by a so-called 'googlebot' which is looking to index your page content: It visits your home page and returns a snippet from it ("the cat on the mat") for Google to add to its database and show in any results page for people searching on those words.

Now consider what can happen if Google visits another site which has a temporary redirect (302) set up on it to go to your site:



Google still gets and stores the content from your site, but may under certain circumstances store the URL of the *redirecting* site as the source of the content instead of your site. The exact circumstances under which Google can be fooled are unknown but have been surmised to be most common where the redirecting page is more popular (i.e. has more Google 'Page Rank') than the real page. In other words, the redirecting site has 'hijacked' your content. This gives rise to the potential for malign hijacking where Company A (who run a large popular site) could potentially host a series of 302 redirect pages to similarly-worded pages on Company B's site. Company A could thus hijack the search results in Google and effectively make their competitors' site invisible.

Most 302 redirects are, however, made for good reasons:

- The page is part of a web application and redirects according to a series of user choices on a form, or as a result of a logon or shopping cart system
- The main site is down and a temporary one is being used
- The site is using a "clean URL" to mask a long ugly one, e.g. "www.site.com/files/help/docs/help?user=0&page=1" is being replaced by "www.site.com/help".

Lawyers Online now offer 24Mb Broadband - at under £30/month

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(As with any ADSL broadband service, availability and speeds are subject to local exchange and line suitability.)

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Email us at info@lawyersonline.co.uk, call on 0870 777 8981, or visit www.lawyersonline.co.uk/24.

Google maintain that '302 hijacking' is not a problem and cannot affect the search results for your site.

Permanent 301 redirects do not suffer from this problem as they drop the redirecting page altogether, so no 'hijacking' can occur. 301 redirects should only be used where the redirection is genuinely permanent, such as where the site has moved and you wish to maintain your Google rankings.

Our special sites

In using a 302 redirection (and not relying purely on search engine results) we use a mix of traditional and electronic marketing methods to 'point' clients at particular areas relating to E-briefs, newsletters, brochures, letterheads and business cards for our particular services.

Because of the way in which our website is constructed using a single background template (we have paid particular attention to WCAG/DDA compliancy) it is set up in such a way that we couldn't totally change the look of the whole page, but have used the page to 'brand' a particular service.



Three of the sites - same "look and feel" but different content.

MODUS is our specialist training and consultancy for Registered Social Landlords. It is operated through our Social Housing team drawing on the resources of many other lawyers in the firm, as well as outside agencies. At present www.thisismodus.co.uk points to a dedicated area for MODUS. The redirect points at the MODUS 'home' page when the domain address is entered. The area can be viewed as totally stand alone or as part of the overall site.

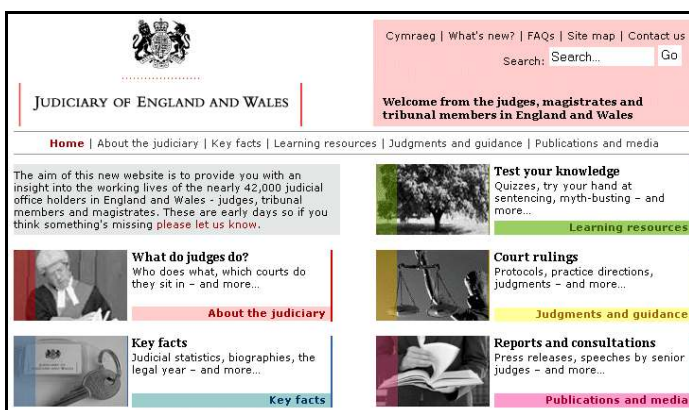
www.insuranceregulation.co.uk is used for a niche area of our practice. One of our partners, Malcolm Padgett, is a nationally recognised figure in the world of Insurance and Business regulation. He acts for the major insurers and his reputation is such that he is regularly asked to take part in major conferences. He uses this area to announce new regulations, warn of impending changes and generally inform people in the insurance world. We can monitor traffic visiting these areas very easily using our statistics program for the main website which identifies visitors to each page. Using these specific domains has been successful particularly when used in conjunction with marketing initiatives such as exhibitions, conferences and newsletters.

With so much technology now available at our fingertips, the firm has embraced the idea of new routes to market. Over the next few months we will be looking at pod-casts, community websites and other innovative ways to deliver information to market in a wide range of formats – ensuring a cohesive mix of traditional and technology based marketing initiatives.

Ray Cobb is Director of Marketing at Coffin Mew & Clover Solicitors, www.coffinmew.co.uk. He has twenty five years experience of designing and implementing pr and marketing strategies for a wide range of clients including professional services, manufacturing, retail and security.
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The technical content of this article has been written in conjunction with Bob Osala from the firm's ICT provider Taylor Made Computer Solutions (TMCS) of Fareham, Hampshire, www.tmcs.co.uk.

New Judiciary Web Site by Mike Wicksteed



A new website was launched on 3 April representing the judiciary of England and Wales. The launch coincided with the Lord Chief Justice's becoming head of the judiciary in England and Wales.

The website (www.judiciary.gov.uk) was built by the Judicial Communications Office's web team. The Office was set up last year to provide communications support to the more than 40,000 judicial office-holders in England and Wales - judges, tribunal members and magistrates.

The website aims to inform the public about the work judges do and, over a period of time, will attempt to dispel such perceived views as judges are out of touch with most people's lives and are inclined towards soft sentences. It contains a mix of statistical and educational information in five sections:

- **About the judiciary** including What do judges wear, Judicial terms of service, Judicial Roles, types and jurisdiction and How do I address a judge?
- **Key facts**, including an explanation of the Legal Year, Biographies, Statistics and an Organisation Chart;
- **Learning resources**, with a series of quizzes, video interviews, historic cases and scenarios relating judges to real life situations;
- **Judgments and guidance**, with information on how Sentences are determined, Practice Directions, Protocols and guidance on criminal cases and Tribunal decisions,
- **Publications**, with speeches and press releases.

We want the website to be of interest to young people and students in particular. To that end we have incorporated an interactive learning resource area where users can try their hand at sentencing or quizzes.

We've worked to make the site look and feel as little like a government website as possible. In a filmed interview on the website the Lord Chief Justice, Lord Phillips of Worth Matravers, gives the legal correspondent Marcel Berlins his views on a range of issues. Judges, magistrates and tribunal judiciary have contributed 'day in the life' diaries.

It is early days yet and my web team worked very hard to ensure that there was a significant volume of relevant and interesting content available for launch. All comers are most welcome. In particular we are looking for users' comments: about where it works well, where less so and suggestions for new topics.

Mike Wicksteed is Head of Judicial Communications.
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Corporate Use of VoIP

by Kieran Gilmurray

VoIP (Voice over Internet Protocol) is still relatively new and as with any new technology there is some confusion about what it is and where it best fits into an organisation. This article follows on from Chris Spencer's excellent article on his use of VoIP technology (Skype) in the March/April 2006 issue and explains how VoIP is used at Wilson Nesbitt.

The success of IP (Internet Protocol) in becoming a world standard for data networking has led to it being adapted to voice networking. Voice over IP enables voice traffic to be sent over a data network using a PC or a telephone that understands IP. Such a data based network may be public (the Internet) or private (a company local area network).

"Hard" and "Soft" Telephones

VoIP telephone calls can be made using a special VoIP telephone (a "hard" phone), or using VoIP software on a computer with speakers and a microphone (a "soft" phone). A hard phone is a physical device that looks much like a "normal" telephone except that it understands IP and instead of plugging into an ordinary phone jack, it plugs into your IP data network. The price of a hard phone will vary according to the features it can offer.

A soft phone is a software application that runs on your PC and it doesn't look like a phone at all. To make calls, you need network access (internet or local area network), a sound card, speakers, and a microphone.

We have found that hard phones provide better sound quality than soft phones. They also feel more like a "normal" telephone (you dial and pick up the receiver). This meant that staff were able to make and receive phone calls easily without having to understand a whole new process. That said, soft phones (plus headset) are good for staff acting as in-bound telephone call operators who are handling high volumes of calls.

VoIP phone calls can be placed either to other VoIP devices (on a local area network or over the internet) or to normal phones on the PSTN (Public Switched Telephone Network). We use a VoIP telephone within our offices but we still use the PSTN for outgoing calls from our buildings.

Who we are

Wilson Nesbitt Solicitors, based in Northern Ireland, have two offices (Belfast and Bangor) some twenty miles apart that are linked through leased line technology (a dedicated 1mb private circuit). Just over 2 years ago we installed a Mitel 3300 VoIP telephone system into each office and these systems are used by all 119 members of staff. We did have the option of installing only one central Mitel 3300 VoIP telephone system into our larger Belfast office and then, utilising our leased line structure, enabling Bangor's office staff of 45 to hang off it as telephone extensions, but we decided not to for reasons I will explain a little later.

The telephone systems in the two offices are linked and calls can be passed seamlessly between them using our leased line. When we first installed the system we had, and still have, the option of using either soft phones or hard phones or a combination of both. We retained the use of hard phones for all staff with the exception of reception who use a complete soft phone solution. We wanted to reduce telephone training and support queries by using a phone type that had superior functionality to the existing telephones but was also familiar to staff.

Why Two Separate Telephone Systems

Traditionally lawyers are a cautious bunch. We prefer to be just a little behind those companies on the bleeding edge, so we can experience more gain and not so much pain. Placing all our eggs into one telephone basket would, we felt, have been a step too far.

Each office location has its own phone system so, if one telephone exchange were to fail, the other office could continue to operate as normal. With the assistance of a helpful telephone company we have been able to set up the system so that, if one site experiences technical problems for a prolonged period, we can transfer calls to our other office and route calls internally. Similarly we could route calls out of one office in the opposite direction with no discernable loss of service to our staff or clients. This backup telephone option works well in terms of our business continuity and disaster recovery planning processes.

Why Move to a VoIP Telephone System

Our traditional PSTN telephone system was coming to the end of its life (it was ten years old) and was starting to creak at the seams due to several factors;

- * the demands we were placing on it in terms of numbers of users (our original system was bought for 45 users and our staff numbers have more than doubled since then),
- * the new features our users started to demand from their telephone system (staff were more increasingly more demanding due to the features and functions they were used to getting from our computer system), and
- * the telephone manufacturer had stopped manufacturing (and supporting) our old system as they had moved wholeheartedly into VoIP telephony.

We had to move on!

Managing The System

Our IP phone system is configured from a secure web interface. Moving staff members is as simple as moving the telephone which retains all configuration settings. Setting up voicemail, adding telephone extensions, amending phone names, and so on, are all easily and rapidly completed. A description of how to complete day to day tasks is maintained on our intranet to make sure that we remember how to complete regular and non-regular tasks. Previously we waited up to ten days to get a telephone engineer to visit us. Now, 99.9% of telephone support is completed onsite within 15 minutes.

If we need to add more users to our telephone system we simply have to buy more software. Previously, on our old PSTN system, we had to buy extension cards and pay for the services of a telephone system engineer to come on site to install and program them.

Were we to add another office location we could install a 1mb leased line from one of our buildings to the new office (or indeed a 1mb broadband connection) and add the new telephones as extensions off one of our main buildings saving reception staffing costs. As with Skype, it is possible to use Wifi (a wireless network connection) to connect a building in line-of-site to our main office and put telephones into it if required.

As both the telephones and the computers share the same network (the phone is plugged into the network point and then the computer is plugged into the phone) we only need to have network engineers install one network point for each person and this saves money.

Centralised Reception Call Handling

We have reception staff in both offices and now combine their talents to create a bigger answering pool. The telephone system is programmed to transfer calls seamlessly between office receptions if calls are not answered after a number of rings. As the calls can pass seamlessly between the offices and extensions the client is unaware of any transfer process.

Each IP telephone has an advisory message service which enables the staff member to let other staff know where they are. For example, messages such as At Court, In Meeting, On Holiday, Gone Home are all possible, as are varieties of other messages. Central bulletin boards for reception staff enable central note taking of who is in or not on a particular day or more.

Telephone Information Management

As telephone calls are now essentially "just" data, a raft of reporting options has been opened (in a similar fashion to email management and reporting) whereby we can track call statistics relating to a wide variety of usage. For example, we can have reports such as calls per hour, week or month, call by extension or by department and numbers of calls to international destinations. All sorts of useful information can be tracked, logged and presented as a secure web page and emailed automatically to anyone inside of the organisation or outside of it, should we wish, on a fully automated schedule basis.

Call Recording

All telephone calls into our offices can be recorded and in the event of dispute resolution, call abuse, staff training, arguments about fees or verbal commitments being given, call recording is invaluable. Calls can be replayed on demand from a web interface, tagged with a suitable description or emailed to a third party, as required.

Working From Home

If a member of staff has a suitable broadband connection, they can plug their phone into their home router. It will then connect to the office network through a phone firewall and obtain a phone number from our phone system. The home user can then plug their computer into their phone and join the computer network as another extension, just as if they were in the office. Staff who have broadband are delighted to have become more flexible in their work patterns and we as a company benefit from happier staff.

Unified Messaging - Convergence Of Technologies

As voice calls are essentially data calls, voice traffic can be integrated further into "normal" data traffic systems. Voice calls can be recorded. Calls can be stored in a mailbox program such as Microsoft Outlook as another message. Users then have one central, easy to use unified messaging system that they are familiar with and might find easier than separate phone messaging and email systems.

Call Destination Management

Users can be set into groups (not necessarily in the same physical building) and groups can be assigned rights as to whom they can or cannot call. For example, we can prevent some telephone users calling directory services or international destinations or national telephone numbers, whilst enabling others to do so. This has led to greater control of telephone calls and the costs associated with telephone calls in general.

Cost of VoIP Systems

VoIP equipment is increasingly similarly priced to traditional phone system equipment. Often a comparison between the two (like for like) will not find you significantly worse off.

Indeed, VoIP may even work out less costly to a traditional telephone system (free except for hardware and developer time) were you to install the increasingly feature rich offerings of the open source community (www.asterisk.org). This option would be seriously considered were we now purchasing a new VoIP system. Imagine installing a feature rich telephone system that can be developed and moulded around your business practice for the cost of a computer, some headsets and a sound card for each pc in your firm!

A Word of Caution

Combining voice and data traffic on one network through one set of computer switches means we have a single point of failure for both systems. Previously, were the computer network to stop, we were able to use our telephones and get on with work. Now, when the computer system stops we have no telephones.

We have had our VoIP telephone system in place for over two years and there have been two complete network stoppages to phone and computer equipment. Both were the result of a local utility company undertaking essential electrical work in the business park in which we are located. Thankfully this work was undertaken primarily outside of office hours but nevertheless it has encouraged us to investigate alternate backup power solutions (a generator) and to adjust our business continuity documentation accordingly. We have also added more data switches into our server room in case one or more fails and made sure all that all our switches, servers and telephone equipment operate on Uninterruptible Power Supplies.

In addition to power considerations we have also had to guarantee that the extra "phone" network traffic between office sites did not saturate network bandwidth to the detriment of "normal" data traffic (email messages, case management applications, etc). Installing telephone call compression software at each end of the leased line has stopped this becoming an issue and has also permitted more free inter-office calls as a result.

Final Thoughts

With a VoIP system, there are significant benefits to be had such as reduced cabling costs, increased functionality at work and home, information availability and management, configuration of the phone system from a secure web interface from any location and centralised call handling.

We now have management and control of a significant business tool that to a large extent was denied to us in the past when the phone system was exclusively handled by our phone supplier (management and usage reports, ability to make immediate configuration changes to extensions and the overall telephone system, voice recording, etc).

However, there must be a real business reason for changing to a VoIP telephone system, such as the fact that the required functionality is not available with a current system or the telephone system is at the end of its life. VoIP systems are not a panacea for poor business practice or poor client communications.

Kieran Gilmurray has been the IT director of Wilson Nesbitt Solicitors, www.wilson-nesbitt.com, for 7 years. Email kgilmurray@wilson-nesbitt.co.uk.

How to work with HIPs by Richard Hinton

For the last 10 years or so the fragmented nature of the conveyancing market and the apparent distance between the conveyancer and the seller's legal purchasing decision has been successfully exploited by estate agents and panel managers. They have channelled conveyancing instructions to their own panels and of course to their own advantage.

Law firms now look at the intimidating £millions being spent by estate agents and giant corporates squaring up to fight a war of attrition in the new field of HIPs. They may think the future looks ever more bleak - with the prospect of the unfettered client becoming an endangered species.

And yet for some, perhaps the picture isn't that stark.

The HIPs battleground

If HIPs are to be the new battleground on which sellers (and buyers) will be won and lost, then some of the HIP offerings out there that have been designed to dovetail with conveyancers could be the 'exoskeleton' the profession has desperately needed. In the right hands and with the right ambition they could be used as a tool to correct the structural imperfections which have previously been exploited by third parties.

This isn't a macro argument that suggests the specialist Pack providers are going to have to retire with a bloody nose – far from it. The problems of scaleable delivery persist for the industry and leave the field wide open for new entrants - but it is a fillip for law firms using those models that either value the independent role of the conveyancer or by way of extension, allow a conveyancer to manage the whole HIP production process.

This view is based on the central tenet that a HIP is nothing more than a gateway to a house move and a house move is going to continue to rely on the harmonious interaction of estate agent and conveyancer. If a HIP proposition allows a conveyancer to step up and provide a HIP on at least a comparable basis to that of its competitors, then the real strengths of a good conveyancer's proposition are left with a clear run to the finishing line – and the agent's bottom line.

It also leaves conveyancers in an excellent position to build the links through from HIP to conveyance, possibly bridging with some form of supplemental detail around the Title and an interpretation of the search results.

Generic HIP Models

There are two principal models.

The first is effectively an outsourced managed service which allows the user to specify their own component suppliers. A conveyancer can either take the solution to the agent with themselves as the Legal Component Supplier or an agent using the service can specify whom the Legal Component Supplier should be. In both cases the actual instruction, assembly and publishing of the HIP is managed externally.

The second is a purer technology solution which effectively provides the technological infrastructure that allows the user complete control over the HIP production. This wholly owned solution places the conveyancer 'on the bridge' as it were, managing all aspects of the commercial relationships (including fees, SLAs, panel composition and allocation etc) using a supplied technology platform. This probably needs a larger management overhead but gives rise to a more flexible, better differentiated solution.

Both these models are almost certain to have funding and fulfilment services available with well defined online interfaces. They will be hosted solutions with all issues around security, scalability and resilience dealt with as part of a transaction fee.

A third option would be to work with agents using one of the propositions that creates a HIP without any involvement of external conveyancers but doesn't then seek to control the subsequent conveyancing referral – but this doesn't change the current market dynamics.

The choice of model really comes down to a firm's risk/reward appetite which is probably a function of a firm's market position and its relationships with potential introducers. Paradoxically, it may be that conveyancers who have avoided building large operations on the back of intermediary-introduced conveyancing find themselves best placed to develop relationships with agents. There remain however some important technological requirements.

The essential IT titles for 2006 from Sweet & Maxwell

The most informative and up-to-date titles in the market

- The Encyclopedia of E-Commerce Law
- Encyclopedia of Information Technology Law
- Rennie: International Computer and Internet Contracts and Law
- Encyclopedia of Data Protection and Privacy
- Computer & Telecommunications Law Review (CTRL)
- Morgan and Burden on Computer Contracts 7th Edition
- Electronic Signatures: Law and Regulation
- Data protection Strategy
- Information Technology Transactions: Legal and Commercial Strategies

For more details, ring 020 7393 8051, access the website www.sweetandmaxwell.co.uk or contact your local representative. There is a 30-day satisfaction guarantee - you can cancel at any time within 30 days.

Technological Requirements for Conveyancers

Firstly, no conveyancer trying to supply a legal component to a HIP in either of the two models above can do so without some type of workflow to automate the procedure. They are going to be operating in a very time sensitive environment (if you thought agents were pushy on conveyancing, wait until you're holding up their HIP!) and dealing with volume. These, with a relatively simple process added, are the foundation stones of case management. Anyone trying to provide content for a HIP using a manual process is not going to feature in any but the most niche of agents' plans.

Such workflow (or 'HIPlet!') is going to automate the inception of an instruction, understand its source and possibly its content (where the model allows for different types of Pack). It will instigate requests for data from third parties as necessary (Sellers information and searches) and allocate tasks to internal teams. These tasks then are captured within 'to do' lists with suitable escalations, prompts and use of robots. The HIPlet will provide a full audit trail and publish Management Information.

Secondly, this workflow is going to have to be based upon the forthcoming PISCES schema that have been devised for the HIP environment. Law firms should adopt these. The schema uses xml as the format and consequently law firms should ensure their case management suppliers are up to the challenge (xml capability is a racing cert for the world of e conveyancing in any event).

Thirdly, law firms are going to want to be able to seamlessly move a case from its 'HIP form' into their case management system but beyond this, it is probable that they themselves will need to be able to panel out the instruction to other law firms. It isn't likely that a conveyancer can manage all the conveyancing associated with the HIPs they have supplied so there is a happy scenario in which law firms use technology to panel instructions to fellow professionals.

Some solutions will incorporate both this HIPlet dimension and a panel management tool within their proposition whilst others will leave the law firm to build the complete picture.

Final Thoughts

The introduction of HIPs will send shockwaves through the profession but there are some real positives.

Technology per se isn't going to be a defining requirement. Packaged technology supplied by major players, available off the shelf, is going to be the conduit for the delivery of professional services to the seller at the point of instruction. Conveyancers can just as easily use these packages as anyone else (more so with their ability to add interpretive elements and manage the significant minority of exception cases). Consequently they can use this as a Trojan horse to inveigle themselves in the process from the outset and bind themselves to the subsequent conveyance which remains a key driver for much of the estate agency market.

The successful firms will not be the ones with the greatest investment in technology but those who have sourced the HIP platform which best suits their ambition, have integrated with it and have best sold their services to their introducers – be they estate agents, mortgage brokers or developers.

For further investigation, most of these solutions can be accessed from the Association of Home Information Pack Providers website at www.hipassociation.co.uk.

Richard Hinton has worked in the legal and technology industries for 15 years, firstly as Business Development Director with Shoosmiths and now with Visualfiles, www.visualfiles.com, as Head of Residential Property. He is the commercial architect of the business's HIP application. Email r.hinton@visualfiles.com.

Visualfiles is the leading supplier of case management technology to the legal marketplace. It has jointly developed the HIP application that is in use with First Title and is available as a technology platform to the whole market. Clients include 4 of the UK's top 5 lenders, several major Utility Companies, the largest conveyancer in the UK, nearly half the members of the Direct Conveyancing Association and several hundred other law firms.

Resources....

Exploring online legal services as alternative revenue channels, 13 - 14 June, London

This is a conference from Ark Group, www.ark-group.com, publishers of innovative journals including Managing Partner and Elderly Client Adviser, and a variety of information and IT related conferences. There are best-practice case studies from Addleshaw Goddard, Berwin Leighton Paisner (beprofessional and e-brief), Morgan Cole, Allen & Overy (newchange and Omnia), Pinsent Masons (Out-Law.com), Mills & Reeves (Naked Law, one of the few corporate legal blogs) and Osborne Clarke (marketinglaw) as well as from smaller firms including Woolley & Co. (a "virtual" law firm), Fidler & Pepper (an early provider of online services) and Human Law (one of the first legal bloggers).

Top legal IT consultant Neil Cameron as well as a variety of business leaders are also contributing to this two-day event. There are also two workshops available on 15th June, exploring technological support issues for e-commerce.

It all looks very interesting and highly relevant to many readers of this newsletter. I will be there myself. I am taking part in a panel session but I shall stay for the whole 2 days. For more information, email lvalvano@ark-group.com, call 0208 785 5910 or visit www.ark-group.com/events.

Law 2006, 14 - 15 June, Birmingham NEC

This is an Exhibition and Training Congress being put on by the Solicitors group, www.thesolicitorsgroup.co.uk. As part of the event (which is wider than "just" IT) they are providing lectures on many key areas of law including Litigation, Property, HIPs and Age Discrimination as well as practice management topics (all CPD accredited). The exhibition is free as well as some of the lectures; there are 15 hours free CPD on offer, over the 2 days. You can register on the site.

"Timelines" on human rights and police cases

Bhatt Murphy, www.bhattmurphy.co.uk, is a firm specialising in human rights issues and who handle complex and serious cases against state agencies including the police, prison and immigration authorities. Their new site offers a series of "timelines" - histories of legal areas relating to police misconduct and prisoners rights, with the legislation, political initiatives, campaigns and case law of each area. There is also a very useful set of links to other bodies involved in these issues. A very welcome new resource.

34 common mistakes law firms make with their website (and how to avoid them)

Conscious Solutions, www.conscious.co.uk, is a company providing technology, content, and marketing services for building and operating websites for law firms. Download this free booklet (in pdf form) from their site! It's good!

Staff Computer and E-mail Policies by Jeremy Holt

This article, and the associated specimen computer and email use policy (see later) were written for a lecture which I gave earlier this year. It can be considered either as advice for clients, or advice for a law firm or chambers itself.

Employees can get up to all sorts of mischief using computers and e-mail. Such hassles include racial and sexual harassment, downloading of pornography, defamation of management, customers or competitors, breach of confidence, copyright infringement, inadvertent formation of binding contracts, excessive time on the internet in working hours and breaches of either the Computer Misuse Act 1990 or the Data Protection Act 1998. To try to combat these potential problems and to provide staff with some guidance, employers are increasingly adopting computer use and e-mail policies. More than half of all businesses in the United States now have such policies. I can see a mini-boom for lawyers in this country helping draft such policies. Every business is different and no one size fits all. It is surprising how tough Tribunals are prepared to be about the dismissal of employees for downloading of pornography, particularly if there is a policy in force forbidding this. One question that clients often ask me in these circumstances is whether they are required to notify the Police. In my experience, the Police are not interested unless the pornography is being sold by the employee or it involves children.

The Investigation

Employers sometimes wonder whether they have the right to monitor voice calls or e-mail messages and there are a number of myths about this. There is no legal distinction between phone calls and e-mail messages for these purposes. Where employers have told employees that their calls will not be monitored or given an indication that that is the case then monitoring will be in breach of both the terms of employment and of the Human Rights Act 1998.

The Telecommunications (Lawful Business Practice) (Interception of Communications) Regulations 2000 SI 2000/2699 ("the Regulations") came into force in 2000. The Regulations state that it is lawful for an employer to monitor and record certain types of communications in restricted circumstances without the consent of the sender or recipient. Without the Regulations the employer would be in breach of the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000. Under the Regulations an employer who wants to intercept communications must make all reasonable efforts to inform every person who may use the system that interception may take place. This is easy with employees as notification of monitoring can be given. It is more difficult with third parties. One possibility is to include an automatic warning about monitoring at the end of all external emails.

Employers need to remember that even if interception of messages is carried out by them in a legitimate manner, any use by them of the information gathered must be proportionate and in accordance with the data protection legislation (e.g. it should not be passed on to third parties without good cause or the consent of the employee concerned). The data protection legislation prohibits the abuse of data about living individuals, e.g. by such data being used for purposes for which the individual has not consented. The Information Commissioner (who deals with data protection) has published a code on monitoring at work. Although this code does not have the force of law it can be used in any enforcement action by the Information Commissioner and may be referred to in employment

tribunal proceedings. The code emphasises that monitoring of messages should only take place when there is a real business need and the methods used should not be unduly intrusive into an employee's privacy. Employees have a reasonable expectation that they can keep their personal lives private which means that they are entitled to some privacy at work. It is recommended that employers should wherever possible avoid opening emails, especially ones that clearly show that they are private or personal. Employees should be aware that monitoring is taking place and told the reasons for it and the means used. Covert monitoring will only be legitimate in the most exceptional of circumstances such as the detection of crime or equivalent wrongdoing. It is good practice for this monitoring to be carried out by someone other than the employee's line manager e.g. by security or human resources. In this way, such personal information that is picked up about employees can be sifted so that only the most relevant ever becomes known by those who work with the employee.

Not the Answer

Clients sometimes believe that all their ills can be cured by a well-drafted disclaimer at the foot of an e-mail. E-mail disclaimers are of little value other than to notify the recipient that the contents of the e-mail are confidential and to offer a method of reporting any misdirection. They can look particularly silly if a one line message is followed by a seven line disclaimer (large firms of Accountants please take note). E-mail disclaimers are no substitute either for a proper e-mail policy within a business or for the information that must be shown on a letter.

Overlooked Requirements

From a legal point of view, emails count as "letters" for the purposes of disclosure of information about the sender.

The following information **must** appear on company letters: the full **name** of the company, the **registered number** of the company, the address of the **registered office** and an indication that that address is the registered office and finally, the country of registration of the company. For partnerships of 20 partners or less, the **names** of the partners must all appear together with an **address** for service. Partnerships of more than 20 may simply say that a list of the partners is available at a particular address. Sole traders must give their **real name** and an **address** (in addition to whatever trading name that they have chosen to use). Businesses who do not abide by these rules risk looking amateur or newly started (or both). Some employers now provide employees with two different templates for e-mail messages – one with all the company information and the other without (making it clear that it is a personal message from the sender and is not sent on company business).

There is no reason to differentiate between a written letter sent by post and a letter sent by e-mail. Not all businesses are abiding by this at the moment; word seems to be slow to percolate through. There are a number of consequences of failing to abide by the Companies Act 1985 and the Business Names Act 1985 in this respect:

- it is a criminal offence **BOTH** by the company concerned **AND** by the person who authorises the communication on behalf of the company (Section 349(3) Companies Act 1985)
- if it relates to an order for goods and the company's name is not mentioned in the e-mail the individual who sent it can be **personally liable** for the order (Section 349(4) Companies Act 1985)

- difficulties can arise in bringing legal proceedings to enforce a contract made where the appropriate information has not appeared on the company's notepaper or in the company's e-mail (Section 5, Business Names Act 1985)

The Answer

You need to get the security policy across to everyone using the employer's computers (who, of course, are not necessarily all employees). The staff handbook and employment terms are a means to that end backed by emphasis on induction. I have read of one employer who gives new employees a copy of the Computer Misuse Act 1990 when they start (they cost £3.40 each from TSO, formerly HMSO, telephone 0870 600 5522). They are also available free online from: www.opsi.gov.uk (the ISBN of the Computer Misuse Act 1990 is 010 541 8900).

The point can be backed up by reminders on computer screens and regular training. The same rules should also be applied to any in-coming freelance contractors (often overlooked). Internal audits should check that security policies are being followed and the side should not be let down by senior management (as it frequently is). The aim should be that no user of the firm's computers could reasonably argue that they were not aware of the rules of use.

Jeremy Holt is Head of Computer Law Group at Clark Holt, Commercial Solicitors, www.clarkholt.com. email jeremyh@clarkholt.com.

A specimen computer and email use policy is provided at www.venables.co.uk/n0605computerspecimen.doc. This is in Microsoft Word format and you are welcome to download it and adapt it for your own organisation.

Creating a Wiki on Crime by Andrew Keogh

WikiCrimeLine (reached via www.crimeline.info or directly at www.wikicrimeline.co.uk) was set up in response to a challenge by Professor Richard Susskind who called for a dedicated UK resource of English Law Materials. The implications, both funding and otherwise, for such a project were outside of my own capabilities at the present time (I already run the overall Crimeline site, offering free updating materials for an online community of 7800 criminal lawyers). However the idea of a criminal law resource had been at the back of my mind for some time, and an abortive attempt to devise such a system had been made over a year ago. The availability of the software to run a collaborative online system, and the realisation that I could implement at least a subject sensitive resource set me alive with enthusiasm, and WikiCrimeLine was born just one day after Professor Susskind's call.

A Wiki allows anyone to add content to a website, or to expand or alter content already present. The idea is that individuals will contribute materials within their own specialism or interest (murder for example), and others may contribute perhaps by adding links to external resources (e.g. Bailii) such as cases or reports. As well as links to external resources there is also a facility to add documents (such as court forms or pro forma materials) and even video clips of interviews with judges or advocacy tutorials. The possibilities are almost endless.

An example of this can be seen on the page dealing with bad character evidence (one of the most popular pages). The page was created by me, but within a short space of

time another user has added links to 7 relevant cases, along with references to Law Society guidance on the subject. Similar examples exist across many other pages, and I am sure that if you look at pages of interest to your particular area of expertise you will quickly come to realise that you know something of relevance that is not currently referenced in this is where you step in!

Alternatively you may want to start a new topic. First, simply enter the name of that subject, and see whether the search produces relevant results; if not, you can create that page. Write what you know about the topic (even if only a little) and watch others take an interest and add to it. Over time, the vision is of a community of lawyers working together, each contributing just a little, to a resource that could soon become the encyclopedia of English criminal law.

I am seeking contributions from lawyers, academics and judges; since registration is anonymous, you can hide your identity if you so wish. Phase 1 of the project is content building and I have set aside one year as a realistic target before the project could be said to be truly of use to both lawyers and lay people alike. This period allows for structure and content building, and hopefully an opportunity to iron out some initial difficulties.

Regrettably the software that is behind the project is not as user friendly as I had first hoped. The first few weeks have seen considerable content added by a very few people; I had expected more lawyers to take up the challenge, particularly as the project has had widespread publicity, and one of the reasons may simply be that people are not clear how to actually add and alter content. The problem is being addressed.

That said the progress to date has been quite impressive, with 164 people registering for the site (registration is not required to view the material, only to add or alter it, so it is thought that these people have at least the intention to contribute content at some point). Latest figures show that there have been over 27,000 page views, reflecting a widespread interest in the work to date. All told I am very pleased with the work done and fully expect that when people see that this project has value added material that will be around as an important resource for the future, they too will seek to add their own contribution.

Andrew Keogh is a partner at Tuckers Solicitors and can be contacted via andrewkeogh@gmail.com.

Note from Delia... here comes another wiki...

Wiki Mental Health, www.wikimentalhealth.co.uk, is an internet resource on mental health law in England & Wales, primarily for mental health practitioners, set up by mental health solicitor Jonathan Wilson. There are currently three embryonic sections to this website which Jonathan hopes will develop into the following:

- i) Caselaw; regularly updated commentaries on the cases, with links to the full text judgments on Bailii. (Bailii contains nearly every judgment, but no specific commentary.)
- ii) Legislation; a simple and up-to-date commentary on the Mental Health Act 1983 and related legislation.
- iii) General articles to explain the concepts and terminology used in the caselaw and legislation sections.


To add to the wiki, you have to register, but it is free and all lawyers and health care professionals are invited to contribute.

Is Blogging Good for Business? by Nick Holmes

The so-called blogosphere (the world of blogs) now occupies the position that the web itself did 10 years ago. Hands up those who, in 1996, did not appreciate the significance of the web? So now it is with blogs - you can't afford to ignore them.

But blogging is first and foremost about independent, individual voices. Do blogs published by, or with the support of, an organisation - reflecting the corporate voice - contradict this idea of a blog as an independent voice? Can they work to the corporate advantage?

For the sole proprietor or small business the answer is "yes" since the interests of the individual and the business are at one. Blogging offers a way for the business owner to engage with his or her audience, offering a personal view of developments and issues surrounding the business in a way that is designed to reflect well on the business.

<p>ABOUT</p>  <p>Email Me</p> <p>HUMAN LAW IN THE NEWS</p> <p>Ark Group Conference</p> <p>Law Society Gazette</p> <p>The Times - In The City Law Column</p> <p>What About Clients? Law Blog</p> <p>CATEGORIES</p> <p>Branding</p> <p>Copyright</p> <p>Dispute Resolution</p> <p>Employment Law</p>	<p>In defence of big legal publishers</p> <p>Solo is the quarterly magazine of the Solicitors Sole Practitioners Group. The magazine has recently acquired a new editor in Stephen Roberts and its current edition has a piece written by the lawyer Susan Singleton of Singletons entitled "Big legal publishers - Don't you just love them?" Ms Singleton took pen to paper having seen a previous edition where a writer criticised big legal publishers.</p> <p>At page 7 of the latest edition, Ms Singleton provides a helpful list of ways to not only making money out of legal publishers but also keeping up to date with developments in your field. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subscribe to nothing unless there is a major business case for it • Write for as many publications as you can • Join relevant legal committees for areas where you are involved • Never buy any product which is free or available on the internet elsewhere • Do not assume that because another firm or many firms have a product that a sole practice "has to have it." <p>24 April 2006 in Lawyers Section Permalink Comments (0) TrackBack (0)</p> <p>Understanding the impact of blogs, wikis and RSS</p> <p>As part of the trend illustrating the movement of blogs to the corporate sector, there is going to be a conference called "Understanding the impact of blogs, wikis and RSS" which is to be held at the Hilton London Metropole on 17th May 2006.</p>
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Justin Patten's Human Law Blog

It is no surprise therefore that the majority of current law bloggers are sole practitioners or from small firms. Notable examples are:

- Family Lore from John Bolch ([familylawsolicitor.blogspot.com](#))
- Human Law from Justin Patten on IP/IT/employment law ([humanlaw.typepad.com](#)) and
- Landlord Law Blog from Tessa Shepperson ([landlordlaw.blogspot.com](#)).

Examples of barrister blogs include:

- NIPCLAW from John Lambert of Northern Intellectual Property Chambers on IP/IT law ([nipclaw.blogspot.com](#))
- the anonymous Geeklawyer on IP/IT/media law ([geeklawyer.org/blog](#)).

For the larger firm or corporate, the answer is less straightforward. A corporate blog that is seen as a thinly-disguised marketing medium will fail. The aim should be to interact with clients, associates and other contacts, to collect feedback on products and services and to showcase expertise, providing and exchanging useful information and ideas. To engage with their audience, the corporate veil needs to be lifted, exposing - at least to some extent - the personality of those blogging. Some teams of lawyers are already blogging in this way. For example, Mills and Reeves' technology team blogs about the latest UK legal/regulatory

developments affecting hi-tech industries at Naked Law ([nakedlaw.typepad.com/naked_law](#)).

The business must also consider the risks of blogging. Struan Robertson, Editor of OUT-LAW.com ([www.out-law.com](#)) in a recent article entitled "Corporate blogs are a liability" ([www.out-law.com/default.aspx?page=6818](#)) gives the following examples:

- the risk of defamation
- unhappy bloggers generating negative PR
- copyright and trade mark infringement (particularly easy)
- a joke provoking a sexual or racial harassment claim
- reader feedback sealing a contract without that vital small printand more.

These examples highlight the importance for the larger firm of drawing up an appropriate blogging policy.

Pinsent Mason's OUT-LAW.com is not a blog "but it has achieved many of the same things as a good corporate blog: it raised our profile; it proved our expertise in technology law where rivals only claimed to be experts; it communicates in plain English, not legalese; it made the law firm more approachable; it brought out some personality. Most importantly, it brings in work for the firm."

In between the positions of the individual and the corporate, there are many independent employee voices blogging about their businesses and their associated thoughts. Bloggers who are generally supportive of their employers use these blogs to showcase their expertise. Robert Scoble, a well-known employee of Microsoft, is one such, blogging at Scobleizer ([scoble.weblogs.com](#)). He refers to this type of blogging as "business blogging" and, with Shel Israel, he has now written *Naked Conversations*, a book about "How Blogs are Changing the Way Businesses Talk with Customers" (see [redcouch.typepad.com](#)).

Tim Bray of Sun Microsystems is another business blogger at Ongoing ([www.tbray.org/ongoing](#)). He points out that "The opinions expressed here are my own, and neither Sun nor any other party necessarily agrees with them." Scoble and Israel's message according to Bray is that "blogging is good for good companies and bad for bad companies".

A "business blogger" of this ilk amongst lawyers is Jolyon Patten of Halliwells whose Re Risk blog on re-/insurance law ([www.rerisk.net](#)) is a continuation of his former blog whilst Head of Reinsurance at Elborne Mitchell.

In the wired world, success is best engendered by communication. John Naughton, writing in the Observer, argues that blogging is a communication tool that will help businesses to survive. "But the decision to adopt that tool requires a sea change in corporate attitudes. ... markets were originally conversations, but the arrival of mass production and of mass markets created by mass media changed that, and the gap between the people who ran businesses and those who bought their products began to widen, bringing in its train a pathological distrust that made consumers increasingly resistant to broadcast messages.

The internet, by enabling conversations between consumers on a global scale - and potentially between consumers and businesses - will turn the clock back, and make markets more like conversations again."

Nick Holmes, of Information for Lawyers Limited (*infolaw*) is a publishing consultant specialising in the legal sector. His site [www.infolaw.co.uk](#) was the first legal portal on the web over 10 years ago. He blogs himself on legal information issues and provides an index of all UK law blogs. Email [nickholmes@infolaw.co.uk](#).

Westlaw UK now provides Weekly Law Reports and Industrial Cases Reports

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With an archive now stretching back to 1953 for the WLRs and 1972 for the ICRs, this major content addition cements Westlaw UK's position as the UK's premier aggregator of primary law materials.

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For more information, visit www.westlaw.co.uk, call 0800 028 2200 or e-mail enquiries@westlaw.co.uk.

DeadMan's Handle - stops data theft in its tracks

Losing your notebook might be expensive - but losing your data could be catastrophic.

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DeadMan's Handle is a new approach to security. It has won a 9/10 "Editor's Choice" award from "What Laptop", a UKT&I innovation award and a nomination for the coveted European IST award.

For more information, visit *DeadMan's Handle* at www.deadmanshandle.com.

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