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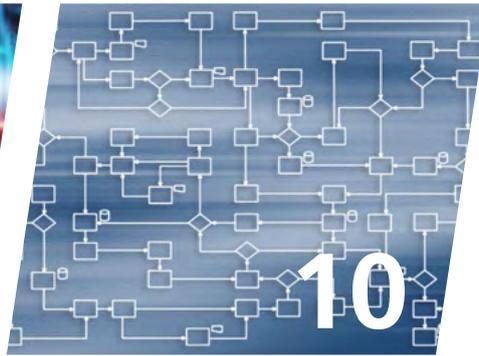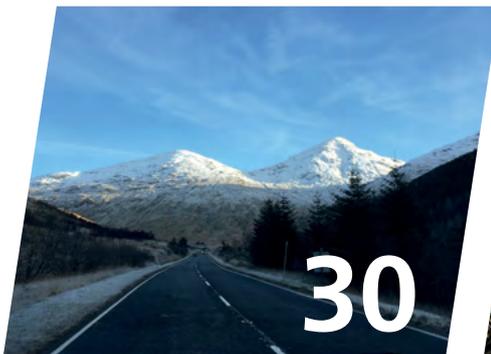
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Ben Mitchell is EMEA VP Sales for DocsCorp. This photograph was taken from the Queen Mary 2 in Brooklyn, New York.

LEGAL IT TODAY
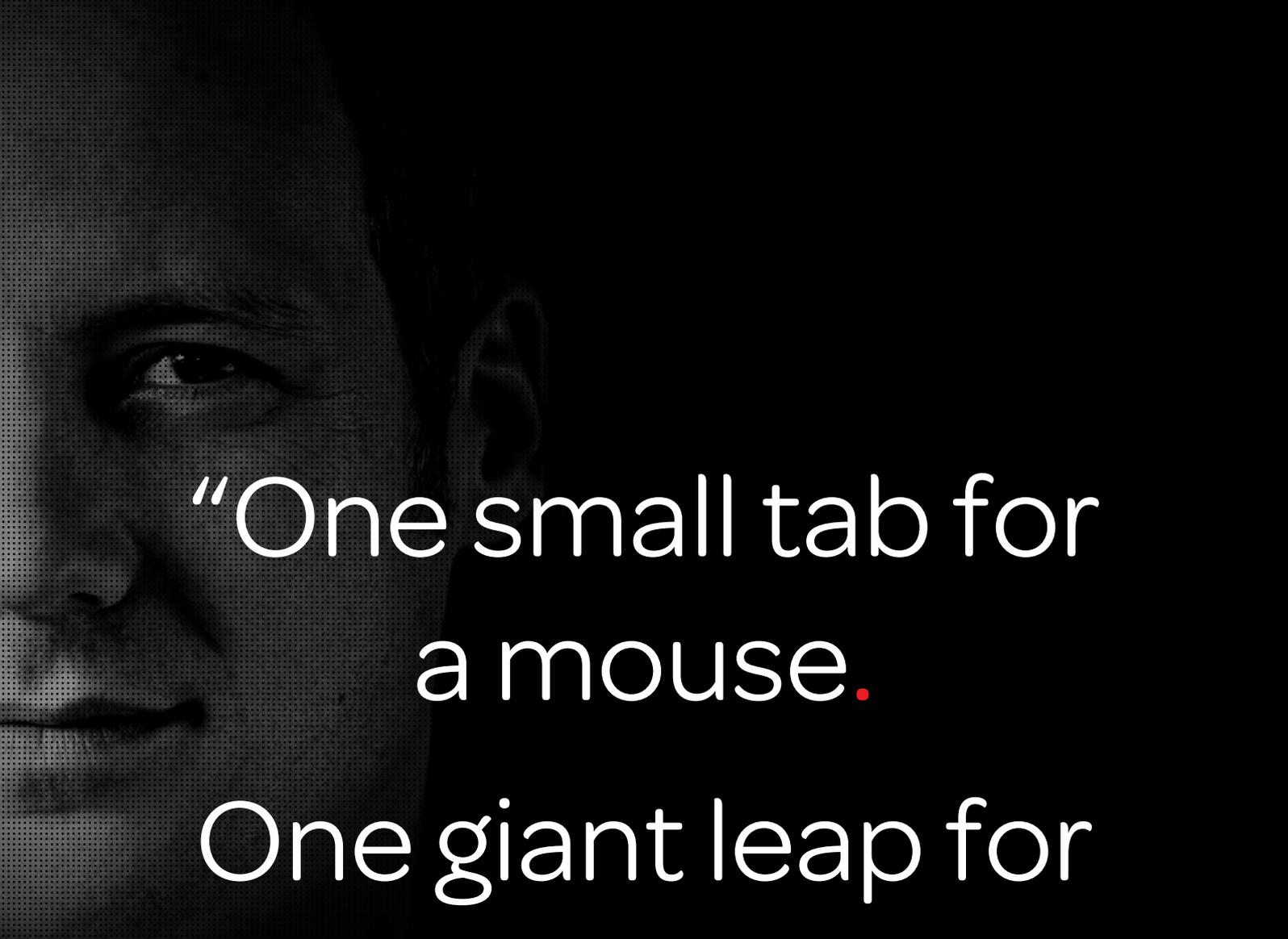
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From the editor

Welcome to issue 8 of Legal IT Today where we look at new horizons: the key trends and developments that set the scene for 2015 as the legal sector continues to shift direction in terms of its financial and business structure, its internal systems and processes and its interactions with existing and prospective clients.

Legal IT Today was media partner for the London Law Expo 2014. The keynote speaker was Dragon's Den entrepreneur James Caan. I was impressed by his clarity and business focus, and I have picked out some useful insights he shared in response to questions from representatives of the legal community.

In his speech and the Q&A session, Caan expressed the opinion that law firms are not sufficiently data driven. In my vendor-focused cover feature I argue otherwise – that there is a sea change in legal when it comes to data.

As the legal IT mainstream continues to consolidate, there is a parallel trend for successful start-ups, so rather than feature a single vendor, I chose to highlight some interesting offerings that demonstrate how applying big data analytics to law firm data can boost margins, client service and competitive advantage. I met Dan Wales of DW Reporting and Miles McGoun of Manzama, whose offerings are relatively new to the UK legal IT sector. To investigate further into how this works in practice, I spoke with Martyn Wells, CIO of Wright Hassall, who has applied data science across the business to great effect.

Legal services – and legal IT – cannot be limited to hard skills like data analysis, because law is a people business. 2014 saw a renewed focus on client relationships, which Caan identifies as the key to business development in any people-based business. Here the new horizons are virtual ones. Paul Hajek of Clutton Cox explains how he has harnessed online and social media platforms to boost his firm's brand and build strong customer relationships based on traditional values. Nigel Stott of Clarion highlights the strong influence of social media, and online customer and peer reviews on purchasing decisions. This is an important consideration for legal service providers reviewing their online and social media presence. It is also food for thought around the future of law firm and vendor directories as it prompts comparison between published guidance, which may or may not be commercially independent, and customer/client feedback which is, of course, subjective.

As ever, we keep an eye on IT's cutting edge, continuing our discussion of artificial intelligence (AI) and robotics. Matt Whalley, head of legal risk consultancy at Berwin Leighton Paisner, who I first interviewed before either of us were involved in the legal sector, highlights the potential benefits of applying robotic process automation (RPA) to the legal sector. Regular contributor Jeff Brandt, who in a column for Legal IT Professionals in 2011 invented the fictional future law firm DLA, Watson, Siri & Wal-Mart, discusses AI via an impressive series of literary and cinematic references before assessing its potential impact on the practice of law. As we go to press, we learn

that Riverview Law is working with the University of Liverpool's computer science department on AI and expert systems.

Finally, we look at the legal IT trends which are shaping the industry. Rupert Collins-White, head of content at Legal Support Network, gives us a snapshot of Briefing magazine's 'Legal IT Landscapes' report which identifies the key issues for legal IT leaders in UK and international law firms. The outcomes are positive, although not surprising or ground breaking: law firms are being run in a more business-like way, focusing on efficient systems and processes and better leverage of resources, notably management information, just as top law firms are experiencing an uptick in transactional work.

Our cover image is by talented photographer Ben Mitchell, EMEA VP Sales for DocsCorp. The photo was taken on the Queen Mary 2, where we celebrated the wedding of legal IT friends Jan (formerly Durant) and Tony DeCerce.

I got to know Ben and his colleagues when I joined the DocsCorp team for London's Byte Night – the IT industry's annual sponsored sleep-out in support of Action for Children, a charity that supports homeless young people. Byte Night 2014 raised over £1m. Thanks again to everyone who sponsored me!

I am also contemplating new horizons after two years as editor of Legal IT Today. It has been a fantastic experience developing a magazine from scratch into a successful publication with a broad international readership and a unique position in the legal IT industry. I would like to extend my personal thanks to the Legal IT Today team – Rob Ameerun and Trudie Koorstra – for their hard work and for putting up with my fussiness about editorial content and style, and wish them and Legal IT Today every success in 2015 and beyond.

And I want to thank you all – contributors, advertisers, subscribers and readers – for your amazing support. I'm a freelance writer and editor and I'll still be looking for insights and comments for my features and columns. So if you would like to keep in touch, please find my details below. Of course I'd love to hear from you.

All best wishes for a happy and successful 2015.

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Value added data

BY JOANNA GOODMAN

Legal IT Today editor Joanna Goodman met DW Reporting and Manzama, whose offerings reflect big data principles by cross-referencing and analysing multiple data sources to produce valuable intelligence that enhances firms' revenues, client service and competitive advantage. Martyn Wells, IT Director at Wright Hassall, gives us a practical perspective on data intelligence in action!

2014 was the year when big data shifted from the conference keynote to law firms' strategic agenda. Although some firms have implemented big data projects, the legal IT mainstream has shifted towards data intelligence, bringing together internal and external data sources to support business agility and deliver better, faster legal services.

The legal industry's focus on data intelligence is reflected in the 2014 ILTA/InsideLegal Technology Purchasing Survey which for the first time included questions on big data. More than half of the respondents indicated using business intelligence/analytics.

Legal Support Network's 'Legal IT Landscapes' report also identifies this trend with 57% of respondents (from a group of UK top 100 law firms) saying

their firm uses dedicated business intelligence tools. On the other hand 20% (from the same group) said they still used spreadsheets for reporting.

There has been a sharp rise in data intelligence vendors targeting the legal sector. This feature focuses on two relatively new offerings. We also have an example of a law firm applying data analytics to key functions. At Thomson Reuters Elite VANTAGE conference in London I met Martyn Wells, IT Director at the wonderfully named Wright Hassall, who uses data science to improve productivity and performance across the firm.

DW Reporting – making data work
"Data – it's not about size, but what you do with it," says Dan Wales, managing director of data management

consultancy DW Reporting which provides business intelligence and data visualisation tools.

Wales worked as a finance systems manager in a succession of law firms, where he realised that legal businesses were generally not realising the potential of leveraging their financial and management data to improve productivity, business agility, efficiency – and profitability. Together with business analyst Lawrence Watkins, he set up DW Reporting in 2013 with the tag line 'Driven by Data'. DW Reporting is already working with over 30 law firms.

Firms store huge amounts of financial, operational and client information. DW Reporting creates a data map of the organisation – cross-referencing data from different systems and repositories

can deliver operational insights and identify opportunities to maximise competitive advantage.

The first step is to build an effective data management strategy, explains Wales. This means determining which data sets add value and where in the organisation they reside. Here he applies the principles of big data: volume, variety, veracity and velocity to create what he describes as a BI ecosystem which comprises three stages: data input, data aggregation and data visualisation/reporting.

Along with data quality, the user interface is critical. It is important to present different views of the data according to the user's role in the organisation. While FDs and financial and business analysts will be comfortable with number crunching, lawyers – including partners in the business – are notoriously bad at dealing with numbers. Therefore, financial and productivity data in particular need to be contextualised.

DW Reporting uses data visualisation – a key element of big data analysis – to combine data from different sources and identify trends, patterns and opportunities and present them in a clear, understandable way. A dashboard interface produces what is effectively a snapshot of the business for fee earners and management teams. This can be tailored to different roles and is designed to help lawyers and others without a financial background understand the significance, context and value of the information. And once they understand it, they will use it. "It's like having a financial translator," adds Wales. "The information is there in the business. It just needs to be channelled."

An interactive data dashboard is particularly valuable because the information is live, whereas if reports had to be produced manually, they would never be quite up to date. Although it is easiest to understand this in terms of financial and billing data – particularly as corporate clients

are increasingly expecting e-billing information that allows them to drill down into the detail – Wales emphasises that business intelligence is not just about financial performance and efficiency. It is also about achieving a better understanding of operational, risk and marketing information such as work in progress, individual performance and client information. On the client side, data visualisation enables firms to present data back to the client on real-time dashboards, so that they can see how their cases are progressing and manage billing.

DW Reporting enables decision makers to leverage the data that resides in their firms' systems and repositories by presenting it in a user-friendly way. "Data has to be relevant, simplistic and agile so that you can evolve the display according to the business drivers," says Wales. What differentiates DW reporting from the plethora of BI offerings is their practical experience of working in law firms. And it's not just about the software. "Frequently, law firms already have the right tools in place, but need advice on what key business data to surface and how to visualise and distribute this information to the various business teams."

Manzama – finding, not searching
Manzama is Swahili for 'from many there is one' – the African version of *e pluribus unum*. Already this is an indication that it might be a bit different. And it is.

Manzama is a cloud-based software engine that collates and aggregates unstructured data from external business, news sources and social media. Founded in the US in 2010 as the legal sector's first listening platform, it launched in the UK in October 2013 with Miles McGoun, formerly of Tikit, heading up global sales and business development. In addition to its significant US footprint, Manzama has 14 law firm clients in the UK and is making inroads into the Australian market.

Manzama applies big data principles to provide firms with real-time current ▶

'Frequently, law firms already have the right tools in place, but need advice on what key business data to surface and how to visualise and distribute this information to the various business teams.' – Dan Wales, DW Reporting

awareness – news updates and critical developments involving their clients, competitors, and industries they work in. The tag line is 'Stop searching, start finding'.

Manzama scans 70,000 data sources and blends subscription services such as the FT, LexisNexis, PLC and Westlaw with publicly available data, including social media. Users can differentiate between 'trusted sources', i.e. publications that verify their content and, for example, blogs. It includes the ability to personalise search criteria and share it with peers and clients. Users can add and remove parameters that are incorporated into an algorithm that delivers relevant information that reflects their current focus areas.

McGoun agrees with Wales that most firms have the potential to improve and leverage their data. Manzama helps them understand their clients' businesses and, crucially, the business environment in which they operate. As is typical of big data analytics, current awareness

alerts can uncover patterns of behaviour within industries, sectors and corporates that produce new intelligence and potentially new sources of work.

Firms use Manzama for competitor analysis, monitoring peers' announcements around transactions, cases and industry events. "Filters within the system enable users to immediately uncover valuable competitive intelligence that otherwise might take days or teams of people to find," explains McGoun. "These include 'Rumours and Whispers', looking for possible changes that are being talked about in the industry press; 'People on the Move' and 'Law Firm Produced Content', which might identify lateral hires; 'Contract Wins', which speaks for itself, and 'Business Expansion' – which highlights announcements of planned sales, purchases, mergers and so on. These are accessed via a drop-down
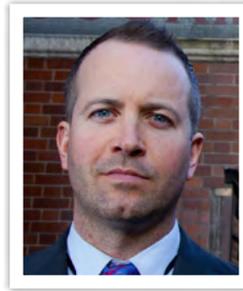
'Filters within the system enable users to immediately uncover valuable competitor intelligence that otherwise might take days or teams of people to find'
– Miles McGoun, Manzama

list on the front screen. It's as easy as running a search on Google!"

Corporate legal teams use Manzama to support legal services procurement

by monitoring law firm content and/or adding a lateral hire filter.

Manzama also provides information back into the business around which data sources represent value for money – i.e. it identifies what people are actually using.

Again reflecting the big data ethos, Manzama presents results in a selection of ways – including an interactive dashboard, daily email alerts and a mobile app. The platform can be used to display information on the firm or corporate intranet via RSS feeds or Manzama's Sharepoint Web Part or API. Email alerts can be configured to the users' requirements and can be personal or group based. "The beauty of Manzama is its easy personalisation," adds McGoun. "If you asked ten random people at a law firm what they cared about in terms of valuable data, you would get ten answers, so users create their own unique profiles. For group alerts or dashboards you simply set up a group, add people to the group and decide how often they should receive alerts."
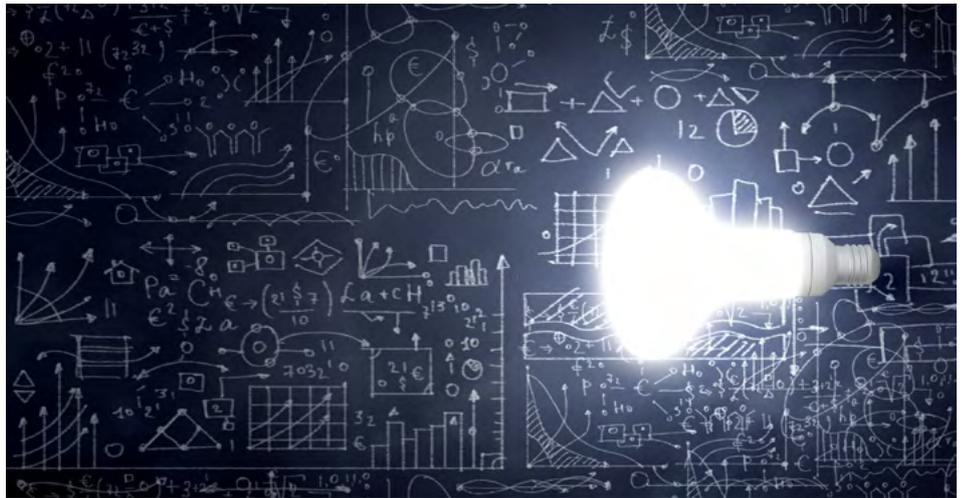
Next steps might be to find ways for the 55,000-strong Manzama community to identify popular terms and filters to enhance the suggestions element. The biggest challenge for Manzama – and probably all big data businesses – is to cover a wide range of relevant and useful sources of free content and create relationships with the key content providers that law firms use, to ensure that the information it returns to its users is a true reflection of what is happening in the legal sector

and the wider business environment so that it can genuinely supports and enhances the quality and efficiency of legal services delivery.

Data intelligence is transforming legal services delivery and bringing exciting new products to legal IT. But it also needs to reflect the firm's business needs and strategic objectives. To this end, forward-thinking firms are investing in cutting-edge tools – and the skills to apply them. ◢

Wright Hassall – actionable intelligence!

Earlier this year, IT director Martyn Wells decided to apply some principles from his financial services background to Wright Hassall LLP, by investing in C24's Bi24 business intelligence and analytics platform to enhance financial management and business efficiency and support regulatory compliance.

The Bi24 platform integrates with the firm's practice management system, allowing managers and fee-earners access to comprehensive financial and productivity data via an interactive dashboard.

Wells describes the platform as providing "actionable intelligence" notably when it comes to the firm's financials. "We set high and low tidemarks for lock-up days and work in progress and exceptions trigger automatic notifications and alerts. This improves financial management and mitigates risk," he explains adding that the same principles are applied to processing volume work and regulatory

compliance. "Again it is a matter of writing rules and programming the system so that activities that fall outside our agreed criteria trigger alerts, for example when fee-earner approval is needed. The idea is to drive activities linked to tasks rather than KPIs, and improve productivity," he adds.

Real-time data on work in progress and billing against targets gives practice group heads a helicopter view of their team's activities and motivates fee-earners to compete to overachieve as they can see at a glance where they are against their targets and how they rank in comparison with their colleagues.

Big data analytics using publicly available data support the firm's business priorities particularly when it comes to debt recovery work. A geo-demographic heat map identifies which locations have a higher propensity to pay and the firm concentrates its efforts on these areas, significantly improving its success rates.

Wells recognises the pitfalls as well as the benefits. The main challenge is data cleanliness, particularly when it comes to migrating data to new systems, he observes, having upgraded the firm's PMS and CRM systems and implemented Bi24 within a few months, all of which involved an extensive data cleansing exercise.

Identifying patterns and trends is only half the story; the other part of data intelligence is interpreting them. To this end, the firm has a dedicated data science function, including data analysts who are responsible for setting parameters and rules for the business intelligence tool, spotting trends and sharing their findings with fee earners and management. Data science at Wright Hassall focuses around monitoring the health of the business and informing strategic decision-making. "It's about identifying the symptoms, determining the cause and taking the appropriate action." ◢

RPA: humanising the workflow

BY MATT WHALLEY

I first interviewed Matt Whalley before either of us worked in the legal sector – for a book I was writing about organisational knowledge and culture. This article, which forms part of our series on artificial intelligence (AI) is adapted from his blog post on robotic process automation (RPA).

I recently came face-to-face with a cutting-edge legal IT trend. The topic – robotic process automation (RPA) – filled a room with 80 people from businesses around the UK. We were there to learn from the likes of Co-op Bank, Co-op Energy and Shop Direct exactly how they were using RPA to improve their business.

At this point, I should tell you that I have history as a Lotus Notes Developer and I used to write my share of Lotus Notes 'agents'. I designed these little packets of computer code to carry out a specific task, when a particular trigger event occurred. I could set them to run at the same time each day, for example, or to run when my database received

an e-mail containing some pre-expected information. The agent would process the data and send e-mail notifications to ask people to take action.

I've also spent many years working in very large IT departments. Some 15 years ago, I was part of a group at HSBC that assessed Autonomy, Verity (and

Google a few years later) to see which would be the right one for the bank to use. I have seen the 'cutting-edge' time and again, and have been constantly amazed at how technologies with such incredible potential consistently fail to deliver real value.

The problem with technology 15 years ago was that human beings were expected to adapt to it. Technology could deliver us the world, if only we would learn how to use it. But we didn't want to spend our days learning how to use a computer system, or learning how to code, so the investment in technology delivered little return. This 'Productivity Paradox' arose when Nobel Laureate Robert Solow remarked in 1987, "You can see the computer age everywhere but in the productivity statistics." Erik Brynjolfsson popularised the concept in his research in the 1990s. More recently, he co-authored 'Race Against the Machine' with Andrew McAfee.

> *'The difference between the process robots of today and the 'agents' of yesteryear is that today's robots can read, write and report data from any system in your enterprise.'*
> *– Matt Whalley*

The solution has also been written about in studies of 'socio-technical design'. This philosophy argues the need for IT systems to consider how humans will use them, our psychology and culture, and what we want to get out of using them.

The iPad is the ultimate example of a useable humanised technology that has been socio-technically designed. But before them, Nokia built incredible phones that helped a generation adapt to the mobile market. By considering how users wanted to interact with the machine, Nokia and Apple created ground-breaking products that embedded and created the market for mobile phones and tablet computers.

So, I turned up at the Custard Factory in Birmingham, expecting to be underwhelmed by the latest evolution of automated workflow technology. But early adopters of RPA, like the Co-op Bank, Shop Direct and Co-op Energy couldn't hide their enthusiasm for the value it currently delivers, and for its future potential. And there was genuine warmth for the technology. It seems that automated workflow processing has been humanised, and made incredibly easy to use.

RPA in business
Robotic process automation is already used successfully by banks, retailers and energy companies.

In a panel discussion hosted by Andrew Burgess of Source Consulting, we discovered that the Co-op Bank use RPA to make debt collection decisions (this is a good thing, if you want to be subject to reliable, evidence based decisions), and Co-op Energy use RPA to process up to 2,000 new customer applications each day (and free-up their staff to resolve customer problems).

The difference between the process robots of today and the 'agents' of yesteryear is that today's robots can read, write and report data from any system in your enterprise. The RPA teams are run and paid for by the business, rather than IT. And the process mapping is seen as more difficult and time-consuming than creating the robots.

The process robots we heard about can trigger other system routines to send out letters, reset accounts that have been fraudulently taken over, even give you a settlement figure on your current loan.

And demand for new 'robots' is increasing. The team in Shop Direct that create the 'robots' (the robots are all called Dennis, by the way) are in such demand that they are on the edge of closing the door to new requests.

Robotic contract analytics
Some applications of RPA in law firms are obvious. Three examples are conflict checks, client billing, and payroll tasks. Savings across these three areas alone would make RPA a viable proposition for law firms of all sizes.

But what excites me is the potential to combine RPA with new Artificial ▶

Intelligence (AI) engines, to create a new genre - Robotic Contract Analytics.

Artificial intelligence has been discussed in previous issues of this magazine. The scope of this article is different to that of the previous authors. I will simplify AI by describing it as being the latest generation of the search technology I reviewed at the turn of the Millennium.

The new generation of search can genuinely analyse unstructured data. It can learn from previous experience and apply its learning to future situations. This is AI, as it is commonly defined.

And when we create packets of machine code (robots) that will analyse and report on contracts (unstructured data), this will quite clearly revolutionise the legal industry. In their first ever legal IT scenario, Gartner analyst French Caldwell says that "[legal disruption will start when] organisations get software that can read and understand text".

When 'Contract Analytics Robots' are combined with RPA tools that will initiate tasks dependent on the data extracted, the working lives of hundreds of thousands of people will be transformed.

It is conceivable, for example, to create a robot to help with contract negotiations. You tell the robot what

'The new generation of search can genuinely analyse unstructured data. It can learn from previous experience and apply its learning to future situations. This is AI, as it is commonly defined.' – Matt Whalley

you are willing to negotiate – and what you aren't – how far and in what circumstances.

The robot will tell you which of your contracts fall outside those parameters. It will be more reliable than its human equivalent. It won't guess. It won't be subject to heuristics in its thought processing. And it won't ask you to filter out information that you didn't ask for and don't need.

It may even suggest your next action - or decide itself whether the contract can be authorised as it is.

And it is also conceivable to create a robot that will check payments made/received, against all contracts signed with the other party. The robot would be aware of any under or over payments, and know what to do in each case.

This may sound fanciful, but it isn't a distant future. In fact, we created our first internal contracts robot a few

weeks ago, to report on data-points in a specific type of agreement.

I expect to create many more contract robots for the firm and for our clients over the next few years. And I am excited to be working in a time when, perhaps, this technology will begin to deliver on its potential.

Matt Whalley runs the legal risk consultancy practice for top 20 City law firm Berwin Leighton Paisner. His innovative group helps clients to quantify and report their legal risks, manage their risks proactively, and reduce the money they spend dealing with legal crises. This piece is adapted from his blog post published in November 2014: www.blplaw.com/expert-legal-insights/articles/robotic-process-automation-rpa-artificial-intelligence-ai-will-transform-approach-contracts/ *Matt's articles and white papers can be downloaded from* www.blplaw.com/legal-risk-consultancy, *and you can follow him on twitter* @mattwha.

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Mobility

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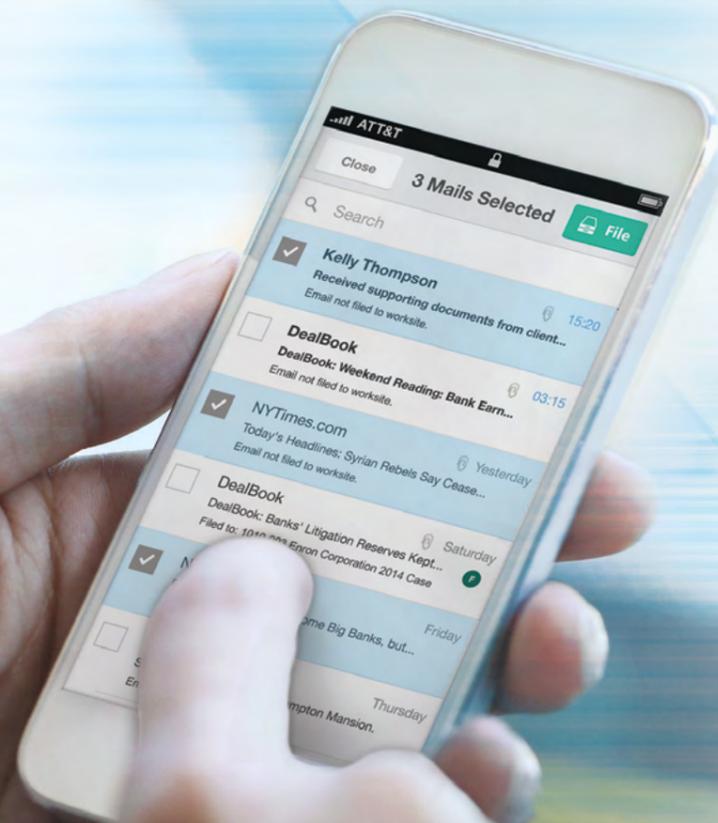
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Online marketing: the time is now

BY PAUL HAJEK

Paul Hajek, managing director of Clutton Cox Ltd outlines the digital strategy that has enabled him to build his firm's significant online and social media presence, and apply cutting edge legal technology to the firm and its interactions with clients and prospects.

Every law firm, we are told, will be at risk of disruption by fresh competition using innovative ways of delivering old legal services and products with the latest all singing and dancing technology.

But do law firms spend too much time worrying about who or what will be the next big competitor or which huge technological advance will come out of left field to 'disrupt' the legal services market place?

Most law firms have not yet woken up to the biggest disruptor there will ever be: it's called the internet, and folks, it arrived a little while ago.

Changing client behaviour
Word of mouth and recommendation will never disappear, but the internet has changed client behaviour. Increasingly, clients and prospects use the internet to ask around; to be better informed before selecting, contacting and instructing a law firm.

Prospects are looking for more depth and a more detailed understanding of the law and legal process – what it entails, what to look out for, and any tips and advice – before making key decisions.

Clients can ask questions, read reviews, digest content and start conversations

with people they've never met. And, importantly, they want to make up their own minds using the social proof available online as their modus operandi at any time of the day or night.

We underestimate, at our peril, the power of pre-selection prior to a prospect contacting a law firm.

Three choices for law firms in the digital future
As the internet continues to change how clients decide to buy legal services, so too, must law firms adapt to meet those changes.

I would argue that the majority of law firms have three choices:

1. Carry on (if you are lucky) regardless: reengineer and fine tune at the core and the edges with cost-savings, deskilling or outsourcing 'routine' legal processes; compete purely on price and hope that there is no further regulatory relaxation.
2. Get out quick: sell up or merge seeking a larger critical mass and move up the food chain.
3. Embrace the challenge: arm yourself with the best technology; plunge into the world of inbound marketing and social media and use innovation to achieve a winning position.

Small law firm, big digital footprint
My law firm Clutton Cox is a small, but far from traditional, high street practice specialising in conveyancing wills and probate in Chipping Sodbury near Bristol.

Digitally – we get it.

Our business strategy is bricks with lots of clicks – our website attracts between 7,000 and 8,000 visitors a month.

'We underestimate, at our peril, the power of pre-selection prior to a prospect contacting a law firm.'
– Paul Hajek

In order to compete effectively in today's legal services marketplace we needed to develop an online and social media strategy, supported by cutting edge marketing and CRM technology. So we concentrated on developing a strong online presence and producing large quantities of relevant, interesting and informative legal content.

We use a large range of social media channels to drive traffic to our website and the business. Getting clients and prospects to a website is not enough anymore: we need our visitors to ask for more.

We've beefed up our sales capabilities with excellent follow up of online enquiries with a strong sales edge, ensuring good conversion from opportunities to business.

We believe in being good helpers and this encourages clients and prospects to buy our legal services.

Legal publishers
We have published a prodigious amount of legal content on our website and consider ourselves akin to legal publishers.

We were early to content marketing in 2008 when we were the first UK law firm to blog about conveyancing – the legal process involved in buying and selling a house.

What we really mean as lawyers when we talk about content marketing is responding to clients and prospects and their informational needs for any given problem or process.

Great content for us exudes confidence and fulfils four essential components:

1. Be useful: solve problems or give useful advice;
2. Be compelling and hold interest: our mantra is avoid the turgid, bombastic and orotund;
3. Have catchy headlines: time is precious and great content will be foregone for want of a title which grabs interest;

4. Be 'Sticky': great content will engender an urge to find out more and stay glued to our website.

The latest legal technology
Large law firms have vast IT resources and use workflows for processing. Software as a service (SaaS) systems have opened up the workflow markets for smaller firms.

Most law firm expenditure is concentrated on IT process improvement via workflow based systems ensuring compliance and uniformity of service provision.

My firm uses IT for workflows to support my sales strategy: to keep in touch with existing clients to ensure a more comfortable experience throughout their transaction as well as getting their feedback on all parts of our service.

How marketing technology works with our clients
CRM is not new but it is often underutilised by small firms. We use Hubspot as the foundation of all our marketing. Hubspot is all-in-one marketing software solution which enables us to achieve powerful marketing goals which a few years ago would have been beyond our wildest dreams.

All our past and existing clients are contained in our Hubspot database from which we can segment sections for specific email campaigns. ▶

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The sale and purchase of a property takes between eight and 12 weeks, so we use a workflow to guide clients through the process to give time appropriate information and advice including instructional video, SlideShare presentations, infographics and specific blogs.

This we call the Clutton Cox Experience where we can be proactive and educational and take away some of the strain and stress of moving home.

It is an easy way to keep in touch with clients made simpler by technology.

How marketing technology works with prospects
Our main lead generation tool is an online conveyancing calculator giving a full online quotation for someone moving house.

Calls to action populate our website and prospects are taken to a specific landing page hosted by Unbounce.

In turn, the Unbounce landing page is integrated into two smart lists in Hubspot; one for prospects who instruct online and another list for 'undecideds' who will take part in a short email sequence designed to ensure we are firmly front of mind before they make their decision.

We also use additional software from Uberflip which collates all our legal content in every format into an easy-to-see-hub, providing great legal content at our clients' fingertips.

Again integration with Hubspot allows us to follow up prospects.

ROI of social media for law firms
Contrary to what many lawyers believe,

> *'Social media allows us to get as close to our clients as our grandfathers and great grandfathers did with their businesses: first name terms; knowing their likes and dislikes and demonstrably showing we care. Law firms of all sizes must make caring more scalable.' – Paul Hajek*

law is not so different from other business that it is subject to separate and discrete rules.

Law is a people business. Law firms exist because of the people: the clients they serve. We should be encouraged to go back to old-fashioned values of client service which served previous generations so well.

Social media allows us to do just that: to engender the care and commitment of older generations who built their businesses on old fashioned virtues. It allows us to get as close to our clients as our grandfathers and great grandfathers did with their businesses: first-name terms; knowing their likes and dislikes and demonstrably showing we care.

Law firms of all sizes must make caring more scalable.

Staying ahead of our rivals
Great legal content is not one dimensional.

Content and social media marketing are now much more than the creation of articles blogs and the odd Tweet. We're continually looking for new media to showcase our legal content so as to stay one step ahead of our rivals. For example, around six months

ago we discovered SlideShare, which is a great tool for creating visually appealing content. We love the SlideShare sharing ethos which enables our content to reach prospects who have never heard about us.

SlideShare also frees us, to an extent, from the burgeoning tyranny of the Google organic search which inexorably propagates more paid-for results.

Whither or wither law firms?
The internet is a true meritocracy and a great enabler.

Smaller law firms can compete on a level playing field with the bigger law firms.

Innovative legal services can be quicker to market and be viewed by a greater audience.

The bad news is, that without a strong internet strategy utilising best-of-breed IT, smaller law firms will find it increasingly more difficult to survive and thrive in this brave new digital and connected world.

The good news is that the advantage remains firmly with law firms.

The time is now.

Paul Hajek has been a solicitor for over 31 years. He has run Clutton Cox Limited, a High Street practice in Chipping Sodbury near Bristol since 1985. In May 2012 he published his first book on conveyancing which is available on Amazon. He runs an inbound and content marketing consultancy for law firms SolicitorsOnlineSuccess You can follow him on Twitter @PaulHajek and connect with him on LinkedIn and Google+

James Caan Q&A:
Seven key takeaways

BY JOANNA GOODMAN

Photography: NetLaw Media

Following his keynote at London Law Expo 2014, James Caan took the time to apply his sharp business perspective to questions from representatives of law firms and the legal profession. In an exclusive report from the Q&A, Legal IT Today editor Joanna Goodman highlights seven key takeaways.

1. Invest in the right skillsets

Entrepreneurs are not technicians. My principal concern is building businesses and brands. I don't need to be a technician because the businesses I invest in already have technical expertise. I am concerned with who in the business is focused on growth, scalability, branding, marketing and talent attraction, because those are not natural skillsets.

Is it necessary to separate management and productivity? Yes - without exception. I have zero background in financial management. I recognise that weakness and I have found someone who has a brain the size of Venezuela when it comes to numbers! Do I really get technology? Absolutely not! I employ a phenomenal technologist. A business is like an engine with many moving parts. If they are best in class, the engine will run like a Ferrari. But if any of those parts are outdated and do not work together harmoniously, they will compromise the business.

2. Identify who owns the key business drivers

If the person responsible for technology is not best in class, the whole business will be mediocre. When I invest in a business, I want to know who owns the key business drivers. The response is often that everyone owns them. But it is harder to measure something if nobody owns it.

I like attaching numbers to words because they show me whether something is working. It is easy to see the difference between four out of ten and nine out of ten. When I invest in a business, at the first board meeting I departmentalise the key business drivers and identify who is responsible for them. If nobody claims ownership of an issue that is important to the business, to be brutal, I have a vacancy.

3. Corporate law is not changing

Corporate law is still very much about expertise, knowledge and personal service. Corporate lawyers have a niche specialisation, which is highly valued because it's a relevant part of the transaction. If I'm buying a business for £20m and the lawyer's fees are £250,000, those fees are relevant to the transaction – and the business risk.

> *'A business is like an engine with many moving parts. If they are best in class, the engine will run like a Ferrari. But if any of those parts are outdated and do not work together harmoniously, they will compromise the business.'* – James Caan

I invest in a law firm, but I still need specialist legal advice for the high-value transactions I am involved in. The high street is moving towards commoditised lower margin, high-volume work, but I don't see the top end of the market changing because of the correlation between complexity, value and fee.

4. Litigation – the business perspective

There seems to be a decline in businesses that are willing to fight, and more are looking for ways of avoiding the problem or finding some other way of settling without litigating.

I am not a big believer in litigation, but sometimes you have no choice. Success in litigation is not about technicalities; it is about tactics. When I hire a law firm to represent me, I look for a brilliant tactician, rather than a brilliant lawyer.

5. Use referrals to develop business

How should law firms approach business development?

There is a direct correlation between doing a great job and winning referrals. Every time you win business and complete it successfully, whether it is a corporate transaction or litigation, you should socialise with the clients: take them out to dinner or to an event, because they are ambassadors for your business. Most people in law firms think their work is done when the transaction is complete. But you are only half-way there. My approach is more proactive. For me, the transaction ends when I get a new piece of business from that client. First, it will be easier to get more business from that client; and secondly, a satisfied client is the best person to refer me to the next client.

6. External investment in law firms

Law firms in general are still struggling with the concept of giving equity to a third party. Although investors are quite proactive, most law firms are still sitting on the fence. The legal sector will not be ready for external investment until it comes to terms with the fact that it is a

People-based businesses
- Five fundamental principles of people-based businesses;
  - Vision
  - Talent
  - Clients
  - Productivity
  - Cash & Profit

Photography: Sam Mardon

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partnership between the business and its investors.

The most important lesson I have learned from 30 years' experience in people-based businesses is that decisions work only when everyone buys into them. Being a majority shareholder means nothing. If people haven't bought into a decision, you can never enforce it. If you do, you'll have a demotivated organisation that doesn't function properly, and as an investor, that means I will lose my money. Law firms should not be overly concerned that an external investor will come in and destroy the business. That wouldn't be logical, because if he destroyed the business, he would lose his money!

At Knights, whenever we have proposition for David Beech, the managing partner, we educate him, work with him and give him lots of mentoring. Most importantly, we show him evidence to support our

'Law firms should not be overly concerned that an external investor will come in and destroy the business. That wouldn't be logical, because if he destroyed the business, he would lose his money!'
– James Caan

proposals. For example, Knights invested a huge amount in technology. Were the partners all queuing up to do it? Absolutely not! They didn't believe it would make a big enough difference.

So we took David to see other businesses where technology had transformed the way they worked and he realised that investing in technology would directly impact his ability to attract new talent into the organisation. His decision was based on his need to embrace the future. The same is true for every firm: if you don't embrace the future you will be left behind. Ultimately, the market should open up and embrace change. External investors' interests are aligned with yours. We are on the same side because we can't win unless you win.

7. Make data count
Do law firms place enough value on data?

Law firms operate in an environment where data is not perceived to be very important. I'm obsessed with data and I would never make a decision without it. A lot of it comes down to showing people in an organisation the power of making sound decisions evidenced on data.

My approach to data is quite basic. It started about five years ago, when I invested in a firm and three days before the first board meeting they sent me a 64-page board pack. It was packed full of data, but all the spreadsheets and numbers didn't tell me anything. Ultimately I thought about what I was actually looking for: revenue, productivity, client spend, hiring decisions. It came down to seven key indicators and I redesigned the pack into just seven pages.

It is important to understand how to read data and convert it into meaningful information. I have 46 businesses. I don't have time to read 46 board packs. As all my businesses are people-based, I have identified a single metric that tells me whether a people-based business is making money: the power rate. The power rate is people cost as a percentage of revenue. If your power rate is 70% your business won't make any money; if it is 42% it probably will. ◢

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AI in legal:
Fear, uncertainty and doubt

BY JEFFREY BRANDT

Jeffrey Brandt continues the discussion of artificial intelligence (AI) in legal with an opinion piece that draws on multiple literary and cinematic references.

Since even before the first mechanical computers were imagined the concept of an artificial life has been with us. Pygmalion had his ivory statute, Galatea. Alchemists in the 16th century looked to create the ultimate homunculus. Gepetto wanted to bring the wooden puppet Pinocchio to life. As we developed more devices and machines, the idea of a 'thinking machine' has been one we can't leave alone.

AI in science fiction
We've been fascinated by the idea of recreating the human mind. Science fiction has taken artificial intelligence (AI), as one of its favourite themes. In fact, when we think of AI, most of us turn to the science fiction version – what we've seen in movies or on TV or read in books. We've watched Doctor Emil Vaslovik's Questor search for his missing tapes and Doctor Noonian Soong's creation, Commander Data, in his quest for humanity. Great writers have given us intelligent thinking tools like the Knight Industries Two Thousand Trans-Am, the master computer aboard the USS Enterprise and robotic sidekicks and helpers like R2-D2, C-3PO and the Ambuquad, Twiki. We've seen Earth run by a 'computer council' of AIs like Dr. Theopolis. We've also seen a very dark imaging of AI. From the shiny Cylons to the deadly Terminators, society ends up on the losing end of these computer advancements. Most everyone can quote a line or two from HAL9000. The new movie, *Avengers: Age of Ultron* will bring yet another evil AI to the world's attention. ▶

'While the definition of what is 'lawyer work' itself will change globally and rather drastically, it is highly unlikely that Watson would ever be admitted to a bar to practice law in the United States.'
– Jeffrey Brandt

AI in IT

Fortunately (when you consider the potential downside) real world AI doesn't match what authors and script writers can imagine. For one thing, there is no one clear definition of artificial intelligence. It is often broken down into a series of sub-issues like deduction, knowledge representation, communication, perception, motion and others. The group Ai describes it by saying, "Today, the field of artificial intelligence can be described as a global primordial soup of cognitive and computer science, psychology, linguistics, and mathematics, waiting for that flash of lightning." When the computer first appeared in the 1950s, we seemed closer than ever to creating an 'electronic brain'. As far as we have come, it has yet to be achieved. Cheap parallel computing, big data and significantly better algorithms are allowing AI to advance more rapidly than in the past. We have indeed reached several milestones.

Classic 1964 chatbot ELIZA might be considered the great great grandmother of Siri, Cortana and Google Now. Gaming AI algorithms like El Ajedrecista have matured, culminating in 1997 with IBM Deep Blue beating chess grand master Garry Kasparov. Back in 2005, a Stanford robot won the DARPA Grand Challenge by driving autonomously for 131 miles along an unrehearsed desert trail. And two years later, a CMU robot won the DARPA Urban Challenge by autonomously navigating 55 miles in an urban environment while adhering to traffic hazards and all traffic laws.

These achievements have led to Google's self-driving cars. IBM have continued pushing the envelope of AI. In 2005 their DeepQA project worked on Watson, a system designed to win U.S. syndicated game show *Jeopardy!* In 2011, Watson competed on *Jeopardy!* against former super winners Brad Rutter (noted as the biggest all-time money winner on *Jeopardy!* and the biggest all-time money winner on a game show) and Ken Jennings (noted for holding the record for the longest winning streak on *Jeopardy!*).

Three roles for AI in law

So how does this impact lawyers and the practice of law? Most law firms and lawyers are not the first kids on

'Cheap parallel computing, big data and significantly better algorithms are allowing AI to advance more rapidly than in the past. We have indeed reached several milestones.'
– Jeffrey Brandt

the block with the new tech toys (perhaps with the exception of Apple iPhones and iPads). And according to the latest ILTA 2014 Technology Survey more than half the participating law firms are still not using any of the many document automation tools that are now decades old.

The traditional law firm may have no choice in the application of AI if they wish to remain competitive in the face of continued client pressures and stiff competition from alternative business structures with no qualms whatsoever about utilising technology. Watson was sent off to medical school and it seems that law school is next. IBM is confident enough in its AI to infuse $1bn into the IBM Watson Group. Rich Holada, vice president of transformations for the legal industry (how's that for a potentially scary title?) in the IBM Watson Group sees three possible roles for Watson in law.

The first would be an all-knowing electronic associate. Watson would be able to instantly recall everything associated with the case and law and make inferences based on all that data. The second would be as an intelligent combination of researcher and case manager. No one would be in a better position to break down big data and make it useable. The third use would focus on analytic decision management – automating business decisions. Watson, sifting through and recognizing patterns in the data would be invaluable to an attorney, helping them make data-driven decisions on how to pursue

or dispose of a matter. That would certainly seem to corroborate Richard Susskind's call in 'Tomorrow's Lawyers' that future lawyers must explore alternative roles.

Will Watson compete with humans for those roles? While the definition of what is 'lawyer work' itself will change globally and rather drastically, it is highly unlikely that Watson would ever be admitted to a bar to practice law in the United States. The American Bar Association has made it painfully obvious that they are averse to non-attorney ownership. Many local bars are fighting any entity (like LegalZoom) to shut them down for the unauthorized practice of law. While I am no expert, Watson may have better luck becoming a lawyer in the United Kingdom or Australia.

Do we need to fear AI? Some very smart people are scared of its potential. Recently both Elon Musk and Professor Stephen Hawking published some dire warnings. "Success in creating AI would be the biggest event in human history," Hawking wrote. "Unfortunately, it might also be the last." Musk has tweeted such provocative and pessimistic things as "Worth reading Superintelligence by Bostrom. We need to be super careful with AI. Potentially more dangerous than nukes." – he was referring to 'Superintelligence: Paths, Dangers, Strategies' by Nick Bostrom – and "Hope we're not just the biological boot loader for digital super intelligence. Unfortunately, that is increasingly probable." I don't think we need to fear that Watson Esq will end up turning into SkyNet any time soon.

Back in late 2011, I predicted the fictional future law firm of DLA, Watson, Siri & Wal-Mart. It will look very different from the law firms of today.

Jeffrey Brandt is editor of the PinHawk Legal Technology Digest, a columnist for Legal IT Professionals, blogger for Firmex, a member of the Law Technology News Editorial Board, and a frequent educational speaker at regional and national user, trade shows and industry conferences. A former Chief Information and Knowledge Officer for several top 100 US law firms, he now consults to law firms and professionals.

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Social media: opinions count!

BY NIGEL STOTT

Social media is not the real world – or is it? In any case, it is undeniable that online feedback and reviews have made opinions count! This article by Nigel Stott is based on his recent blog post which considers one of the key ways social media is changing the marketplace: the strong influence of customer and peer reviews on purchasing decisions. This is food for thought for law firms considering their online and social media presence.

Not the opinion of the author. Let me explain.

At a recent event I heard an interesting exchange between two lawyers. Discussing social media, they were surprised to learn that some companies actually employed people whose sole responsibility was to manage the social media activities for their organisation.

"Just wait until they get a job in the real world!" quipped one.

That led me to wonder – if social media isn't the 'real world', what is?

'Businesses have also been quick to realise that a brand is nothing unless it has an online presence. … And social media speaks volumes about what kind of business you are.'
– Nigel Stott

We live in a society where the opinions of our friends, families and peer groups matter. However our social network is no longer limited to the people we see on a regular basis. We have hundreds of friends we never – or hardly ever – see on Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, Instagram or whichever is our preferred platform. I appreciate that the social media definition of friend is a little loose but their opinions still matter to us.

Despite the fact we seldom (if ever) see most of our social media contacts outside social media (in real life?) we still value or at least absorb their thoughts

and opinions. Let's face it – the majority of people are constantly glued to their phone, trawling status updates or searching for products and services. We can't help but see a steady stream of thoughts, opinions and reviews of the world in which we live.

Businesses have also been quick to realise that a brand is nothing unless it has an online presence. If a prospective customer can't find you on the internet, the common perception is that you can't be a real business. And social media speaks volumes about what kind of business you are.

Consider this example – I'm looking for an entertainer for my son's party. I search the web and find two

media is a two-way thing) are savvy, not out of touch.

It's not just customers whose opinions count. Websites like Glassdoor are giving employees the opportunity to review organisations where they have worked (or work) and rate them on a variety of criteria including whether they would 'recommend to a friend'. Although this could be a potential opportunity for unhappy former employees to air their grievances, the content is well balanced and has a similar feel to Trip Advisor. Glassdoor take a very professional and positive approach to the content on their website and encourage firms to engage with the users of the site.

cases, firms' concerns and fears around what should or shouldn't be said has resulted in a fairly dry stream of legal updates. Where social media is used effectively, it presents a mixture of good content, personality and engagement.

Fear around the repercussions of saying the wrong thing can result in locked down social media policies in some firms. Giving lawyers the freedom to sell themselves in a specific niche through a mixture of social media and blogging is best done outside of the firm's main marketing channel – being seen as the 'go to' lawyer in your area is the goal. Authenticity is important – production line tweets and blogs can rapidly lose an audience unless there is good, original content behind them.

'Companies that invest in professionals to ensure their social media channels are pushing out high-quality content, managing their reputation and ensuring that they are engaging and interacting with their customers are savvy, not out of touch.' – Nigel Stott

entertainers fairly close to me. The websites are roughly the same and so is the price.

However, I need to know more so I turn to Facebook to search for their company page. Things become clearer. One entertainer has 2,500 likes and a series of glowing reviews. I can't find a Facebook page for the other – they may indeed have one but might have called it something different that makes it difficult for me to find. They may not have one at all. It's too late anyway – I'm a busy person and I have made up my mind.

Although I don't actually know who is responsible for any of those 2,500 likes, it doesn't matter – 2,500 people can't be wrong. I've made my decision!

Companies that invest in professionals to ensure their social media channels are pushing out high-quality content, managing their reputation and ensuring that they are engaging and interacting with their customers (social

Sites like Glassdoor present a compelling opportunity for consumers to peek behind the scenes of the companies they use. They transcend the customer-facing veneer and offer an insight into the inner workings of a business.

When it comes to law firms, there is no doubt that many have realised the importance of having a presence on social media. Unfortunately, in most

For example, setting up an independent specialist blog separate to the firm's main website can be great for attracting interest in specific legal services. This allows lawyers to engage their audience with precision and build relationships with high-quality clients.

People see the connection between good content, social media engagement and leaders in their field. Firms and lawyers that have identified this link are raising their profile with an ever growing number of switched on buyers of legal services.

This is the real world.

Nigel Stott is IT Director at Clarion in Leeds, responsible for the strategic development of IT systems and project management. Prior to working in legal Nigel worked in the manufacturing sector. ◢

Legal IT Landscapes

BY RUPERT COLLINS-WHITE
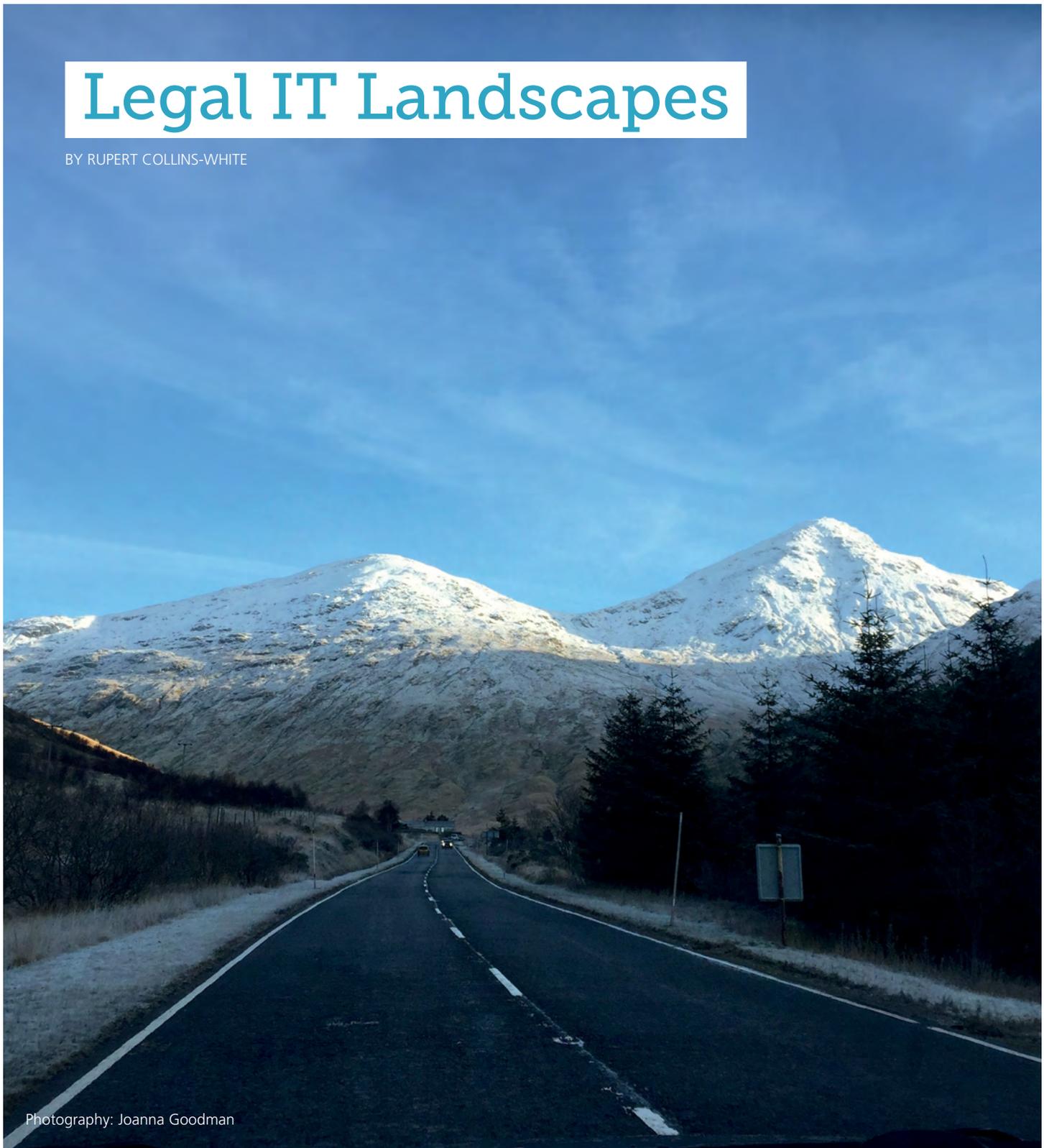
Photography: Joanna Goodman

'Legal IT Landscapes 2015' presents the findings of *Briefing* magazine's survey of legal IT leaders highlighting the key technologies – and IT strategies –that are shaping the business of law. Legal Support Network's editor in chief and head of content Rupert Collins-White gives us a snapshot of legal IT trends into 2015 and beyond.

Market pressures and the recession have reset the IT ambitions in legal. Law firms are finally breaking through into being much more like other businesses, at least in IT terms. A lot of this is client-driven, of course, but there are other agents of change working behind the scenes, and IT leaders are – possibly – chief among them.

Briefing magazine carried out a survey of legal IT leaders (and some in other roles) in the UK top 200, covering a variety of topics. We also reached out, in conjunction with Legal IT Professionals, to US firms to see if we could compare our results with those across the pond.

To what extent do you agree with this statement: *The traditional partnership structure holds law firms back from investing enough in IT*

50 %
36 %
7 %
7 %
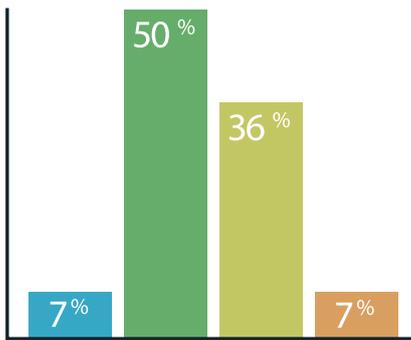
- Strongly agree (7%)
- Agree (50%)
- Neither (36%)
- Disagree (7%)
- Strongly disagree (0%)

The outcome? Many of those in legal IT management think their firms will be running significant systems (such as document/case/practice management, or CRM) in the cloud. The appetite for project management and process management tools and methods appears to be off the scale. And firms across the board know they need more, better and broader-based management information from which to draw strategic conclusions and to set pricing and profitability goals.

In the style of most TV talent shows, I can reveal that the key technologies for tomorrow's competitive UK-headquartered law firm are case

'Legal business is slowly but surely adopting the way of the project. Alongside process improvement … the next couple of years will see the adoption of both matter and project management tools across the UK top 100 and in US/UK big law.' – Rupert Collins-White

management, business intelligence, process management and workflow, mobility, project management and cloud. We learnt this from asking, using free text boxes (so there were no suggested responses), which technologies respondents felt would have the biggest impact on their firm's efficiency, and on its competitiveness. The list above represents the technologies mentioned top of mind across both categories.

Responses from a mix of the top US and UK firms weren't fundamentally different from the UK top 100 norm – they also named these technologies multiple times in the free text boxes we gave them, though they did add a couple of additional technologies, such as e-discovery and predictive email filing, both of which relate to the very different world that US firms find themselves in regarding discovery. But excepting that, they agreed with UK-based firms.

Do you think UK-based firms are ahead of similar-sized US based law firms when it comes to using technology?

21 %
22 %
57 %

Yes
No
Don't know
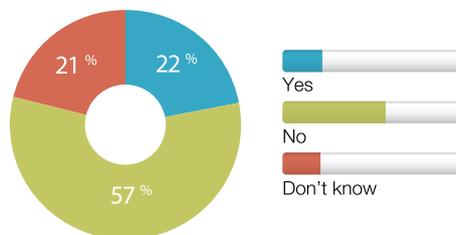
Does the US do legal IT better than the UK?
Does that mean all things are (otherwise) equal in legal IT on both sides of the Atlantic? No, sir. When we asked our small group of the biggest US and UK firms whether they thought UK-based firms are ahead of

similar-sized US firms when it comes to using technology, the answer was resoundingly no – over half said no, and just a fifth (all from UK firms) said yes. This is very different to the result we got when we asked this question of UK big firms: 34% of UK respondents think UK firms do legal IT better than US firms.

However, this still adds up to a world where UK legal IT people think the US has it more right than they do, whatever the detail. That's pretty strange, because UK-based firms arguably use business intelligence and data gathering better – BI penetration in UK big firms is better than in US big firms – for example. Is this an indication of humility, mistaken perception, or reality?

To what extent do you agree with this statement: *Law firms in general need to collect and analyse more management information than they currently do to get the edge they need in an increasingly competitive legal market.*


21 %
22 %
57 %

Strongly agree
Agree
Neither
Disagree
Strongly disagree
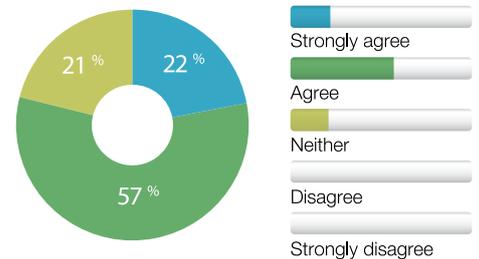
More information, please
Something everyone can (and, in fact, does) agree on is that legal business needs more management information to gain a competitive edge, and it needs to more fully integrate the various IT systems within firms to get this information (and the efficiency that should come with it).

UK respondents agreed much more strongly than US firms did with those two statements. For example, 90% of UK respondents (combining 'strongly agree' and 'agree' responses) agreed that law firms in general need to collect and analyse more management information than they currently do to get the edge they need, while 79% of respondents at the biggest US/UK firms we surveyed agreed.

To what extent do you agree with this statement: *Law firm need to more fully integrate their various systems to be able to get the efficiency and management information that other businesses get from 'joined-up'*

14 %
36 %
50 %

Strongly agree
Agree
Neither
Disagree
Strongly disagree
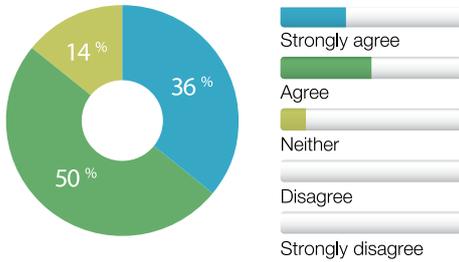
The gap between the UK top 100 and UK/US big law was far smaller on the question of whether firms need to better integrate IT systems to get more efficiency and better management information – the agreement was far north of 80% in both camps on that point.

Into the cloud
The move to the cloud was the loudest that our Legal IT Landscapes research heard – and it was overwhelming.

Over what timescale do you you think your firm might migrate significant systems to the cloud?

43 %
29 %
14 %   14 %

- Within the next 12 months (43%)
- Within the next 18 months (29%)
- Within the next 2 years (14%)
- Within the next 3 years (14%)
- Within the next 5 years (0%)
- Within the next 10 years (0%)
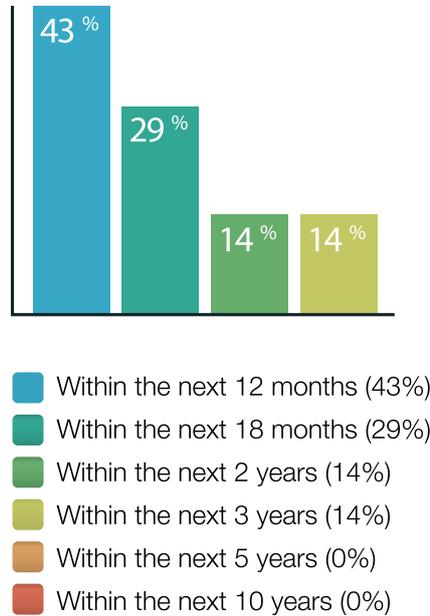
US/UK big law firms are hurtling into the cloud, with almost three-quarters of respondents saying that they expected to migrate significant systems (such as practice management or CRM or DMS) to the cloud within the next 18 months (that is, by the end of 2015, now).

UK legal businesses can't really move into the cloud in the way that consumers do, or even in the same way that US firms do. US firms already exist in the least secure (in terms of snooping and prying) data jurisdiction in the developed world, so moving a law firm to Google Apps hardly creates a worse platform for client data. For a UK firm, however, things are very different.

But the cloud is coming to them also, and more UK legal businesses are realising that it is entirely possible to safely move a lot of their IT infrastructure into the cloud (or, more properly, to a cloud-like hosted environment). Moreover, they're actively looking to do it – 72% of LITL UK 100 respondents said their firms were likely to adopt cloud-based solutions for significant systems within the next two years.

Over what timescale might your firm be using or adopting legal project management technologies:

38 %
25 %
13 %   13 %   13 %

- Within the nest 12 months (38%)
- Within the next two years (25%)
- Within the next five years (13%)
- Inside the next 10 years (13%)
- Never (13%)
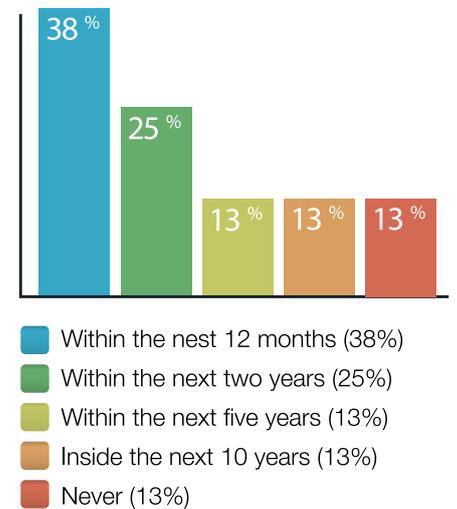
Projected benefits
Legal project management (LPM) is, I think, going to be massive – and our research backs that statement up. Just over two-fifths of our UK 100 respondents said their firm was already using a legal project management solution (though vendors we've run these numbers past put on huge frowns of disbelief when they hear that).

It may be the case that legal IT people in UK firms are conflating LPM systems with pricing tools – which they sometimes ▶

see as synonymous. But legal business is slowly but surely adopting the way of the project. Alongside process improvement – also becoming a big thing in legal – the next couple of years will see the adoption of both matter and project management tools across the UK top 100 and in US/UK big law, according to our research.

According to our results, the top 100 UK firms are aiming to adopt project management technologies in significant numbers (46%) over the next two years, with the rest looking at adoption within five years. The US/UK big law are even more gung ho: 63% of respondents in the biggest US/UK firms we polled say their firm would be adopting LPM technologies in the next two years.

Is your firm considering implementing any 'presence' technologies that allow users to set their availability/ visibility or have management outline how their availability is managed?

14 %
7 %
79 %

Yes
No
Don't know
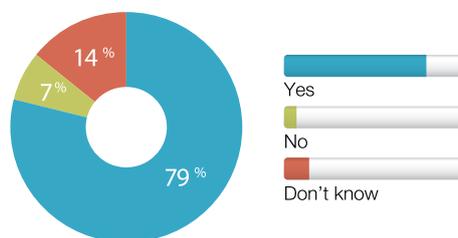
Ever-present lawyers
Perhaps the greatest shift in legal, arguably far bigger than the cloud (though it is a massive driver for cloud technologies), is the shift towards a more consumer style of working – one that is more mobile, more on-site, more physically distributed around the world, more globalised and more team-based than before.

People need to share information more, but they also need to communicate more effectively. They need to be available – and they also need to be able to bind their availability to a team. That points to a set of technologies that legal has yet to adopt in any significant way, but if it did, it could revolutionise how firms work both internally and with clients – presence and unified communications. There are now signs that legal business is starting to take 21st-century comms far more seriously.

Almost three quarters (73%) of UK 100 respondents say their firms are seriously considering or piloting desktop-to-desktop video; 78% say their firms are considering implementing presence technologies "that allow users to set their availability or have management outline how their availability is managed"; 76% say their firms are considering or conducting a pilot for unified comms.

Global big law is even more up for presence – 79% of our US/UK big firm respondents say their firm is looking seriously at presence. Of course, there's a distance between considering and actually implementing these technologies and strategies. But if law firms really are moving to a world of presence, alongside projects and process improvement, they are making great strides towards a more businesslike future.

Download the full Legal IT Landscapes UK top 100 report: www.lsn.co.uk/ LITL2015

Rupert Collins-White is editor in chief of Briefing and LPM magazines and head of content at Legal Support Network. Originally an IT journalist, he escaped that world by creating a wormhole under his desk. Unfortunately, the wormhole's terminus led him into the Law Society. LSN broke him out, and he's been there ever since. ◢

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