

## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **Litig launches new guidelines on managing electronic files October 2005**

Litig has been working with the Law Society to revise the Law Society's e-mail guidelines and open the door to full electronic file management of client-matter files.

The Law Society's new e-mail guidelines due to be published soon have been updated to reflect the growing use of document management systems for the storage of relevant client-matter related e-mails and the new guideline now reads

3.18 Firms should take a pragmatic and risk-based approach to records of e-mails. That is, significant and substantive e-mails (including e-mails that are subject to statutory retention periods) should be stored in a suitably managed electronic storage system or printed and stored, but those that are ephemeral can be left to expire from electronic storage in the ordinary course of events.

The introduction of filing in a "suitably managed electronic storage system" as an alternative to printing seems a small change but opens the door to matter centric management of documents, files and e-mails. The Law Society has worked remarkably quickly on the changes requested by Litig, turning them around in a matter of weeks.

With the doors opening to full electronic storage, the Law Society and also the Bar Council were keen to join in and support one of Litig's active Key Issue Teams who were working to produce a paper offering managing partners and law firm IT directors help in this complex area of compliance, best practice guidance and technology.

The team, lead by Peter Owen (Secretary of Litig and Director of Lights-On Consulting Limited), teamed up with the Law Society, the Bar Council and Sam Suri from TheWorkingPractice to develop the guide.

The paper, entitled "A CONCISE GUIDE TO THE MANAGEMENT OF ELECTRONIC DOCUMENTS" helps differentiate between backups, archives and forensic systems then moves on to summarise and comment on the most relevant legislation and guidance affecting law firms in this area. In short, it gathers together the majority of what you need to know when developing an information management strategy, offering summary and comment in the paper and how to find the full standard, case or legislation should more detail be required for your particular requirements.

The draft for public review and feedback was launched at the Legal IT Forum at Gleneagles on October 12<sup>th</sup>. Litig want as many legal IT Directors, Law firm management and legal suppliers as is possible to contribute to the document before full release.

"Independent, concise guidance in this complex area is long overdue", said Peter Owen, Secretary of Litig, "We have put the paper together and now want real contribution and debate on the area. The end result should be a very considered and full, yet concise guide to the minefield of conflicting legislation. It will also provide a pragmatic summary of the plethora of standards and best practice guides out there. I think it will be really helpful to Legal IT Directors and Law firm management".

\*\*\* READY FOR RELEASE \*\*\*

## PRESS RELEASE – NOTES TO EDITORS

Derek Southall (Chair) on behalf of Litig:

Litig ('Legal IT Innovators Group') was originally formed in late 2002 to comment and advise on the potential value and use of an integrated matter management/workflow system across all desktops within a law firm. Following successful conclusion of this initiative, the group created its own independent structure and is funded by its members, who are responsible for over 30,000 legal IT users.

A strictly non-sales environment, Litig currently has 36 members from 35 firms/organisations which include law firms with UK fees from £3m to over £300m plus representatives from leading in house legal departments, all with a keen interest in UK legal IT issues.

Litig operates at a strategic rather than operational level, meets for a whole day each quarter (at one of its member's offices) and has had/given presentations on topics such as:

- Electronic Billing (from the in house legal client's perspective & required UK standards)
- Digital Dictation
- XML standards (such as LSSA and PISCES)
- Legal IT trends & priorities
- The effect of the 'Statutory Imperative' caused by government initiatives

Litig are keen to work with existing legal sector bodies (such as The Law Society or Society for Computers & Law) in order to pursue a co-ordinated approach, support other groups and avoid duplication of effort.

If you are interested in finding out more about LITIG or would like to become a member – please visit the Litig web site [www.Litig.org](http://www.Litig.org), contact Litig via [mail@Litig.org](mailto:mail@Litig.org) or call Derek Southall (Chair) on 0870 733 0573, Peter Owen (Secretary) on 0121 706 1755, Rosemary Kind (Treasurer) on 07712 647754 or Jan Durant (Communications Officer) on 020 7074 8037.