

The Legal IT Awards 2003

IT for Litigation Support/Alternative Dispute Resolution

The Legal IT Awards: IT for Litigation Support/Alternative Dispute Resolution

Project title: "KM Suite"

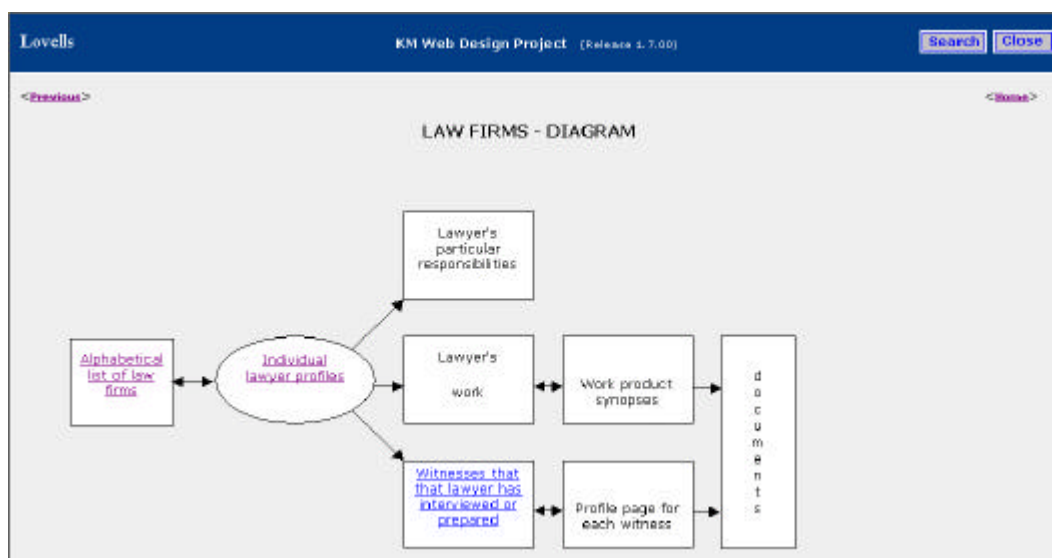
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Introduction

Our submission for "IT for Litigation Support/Alternative Dispute Resolution" is "**KM Suite**", a knowledge management module based on the Ringtail litigation support system. KM Suite was developed by Lovells' IT department in response to the need for a centralised information store by the firm's international product liability practice. The suite has been eagerly embraced by the practice, which consists of over 70 lawyers, and has revolutionised working practices by increasing efficiency and significantly reducing costs. The success of KM Suite has led to its evaluation by other practice areas and a firm-wide roll out is anticipated in late 2003.

The Issue

In late 2001 Lovells' product liability practice realised that the requirements of some of their cases were outstripping the capabilities of conventional litigation support tools. The practice was already making extensive use of the Ringtail system, designed specifically to operate in this area. However the lawyers were working on a number of cases that were complex, large or of extended duration, and these called for additional functional capabilities in order to store critical information uncovered during document analysis and preparation phases within the litigation support environment, where it could be accessed and added to by other lawyers in the practice. By streamlining its support systems the practice would be able to avoid duplication of work, improve response times and ensure consistency of position, from the first instruction right through to the conclusion of the case.



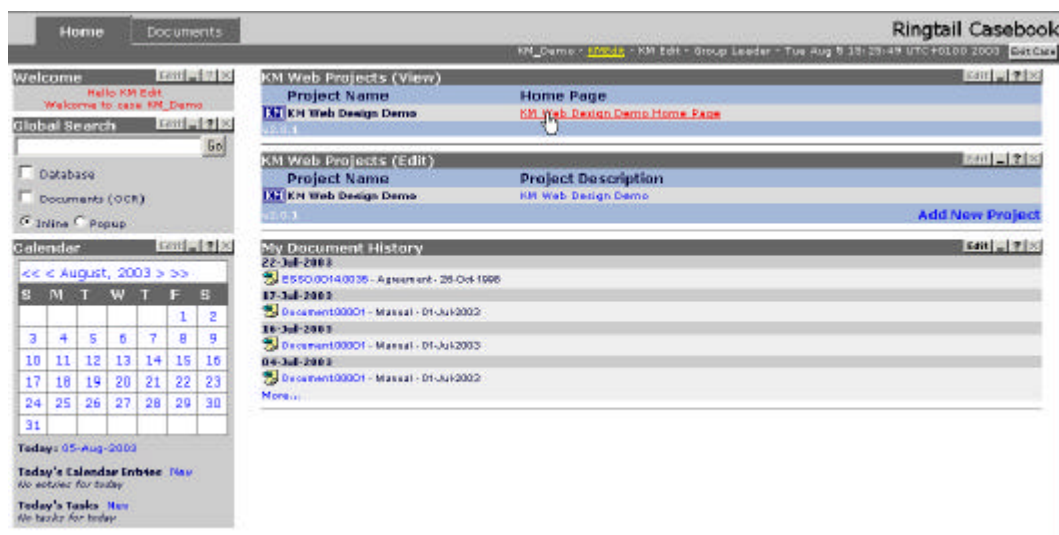
Web page showing diagrammatic view of knowledge and information

Lovells' solution

In response to the requirements of the product liability practice and working closely with the lawyers at every stage, Lovells' technology department designed and implemented **KM Suite**, an innovative knowledge management module within the Ringtail litigation support system which gives lawyers the ability to create and share web sites that draw together key case knowledge and link it through to the underpinning material.

KM Suite is made up of three core elements:

- **KM Load** enables lawyers and legal staff to add and check coded information, both objective and subjective, in a controlled workflow. This ensures that every document has been quality reviewed in an environment that does not let human error pass, prior to being loaded into Ringtail.
- **KM Edit** uniquely allows the creation of web pages and informed links between work product, court documents, issue and witness information and disclosure material with analytical commentary that lawyers may otherwise store in their heads. KM Edit is effectively a toolkit accessed via a set of ASP pages which were built using Visual Basic and Java script. Users employ KM Edit to build standard HTML web pages which are viewed with KM View.
- **KM View** allows both internal and external users (clients, counsel and lawyers at other firms) to view the entire package of information and resources relating to the case.



KM Edit and View Ringlets within Ringtail

Using KM Suite

For lawyers in the product liability practice, counsel and clients, KM Suite has become an invaluable tool at every stage of a case. It is used to obtain a general steer on an issue, for finding answers during preparation for trial and even for checking information once the trial is in progress. It is used to prepare witnesses, and for educating new fee-earners in the work of the practice. Users with a procedural query, or who are writing a pleading or in-depth report are able to tap into a comprehensive resource that contains the entire history of the matter they are researching.

From the outset this project has been driven by lawyers to meet very specialist business needs. Their input has been vital in designing a system which underpins and extends work practices, and the result has been adopted enthusiastically, with its use championed to co-defendants and clients.

The Benefits

KM Suite has engendered a cultural change in lawyers' working practices. Through building knowledge webs they are encouraged to share the information they have gleaned from working on a case, rather than keep it locked away in their heads. As well as avoiding duplicative work, the efficiency of the practice has been increased through accelerated response times and

consistency of position. The value of work product provided to clients has increased demonstrably, and the resulting cost savings have been welcomed all-round.

Finally, we invite your judges to visit Lovells for a demonstration of KM Suite in action, so they can see first hand how KM Suite has revolutionised the working practices of the product liability practice and why its eventual deployment in all practice areas is inevitable.

Note - this submission contains confidential information. It is provided on the strict understanding that no extracts from this submission will be quoted without the prior approval of the firm.

Andrew Haslam

August 2003