Editorial

The Autumn issue of LIM was over 100 pages long, so in these days of economic restraints, the Winter issue is held at 60 pages so that we do not over-run our budgeted page extent for 2010. We have regrettably had to hold over some of the BIALL Conference 2010 papers, together with a short theme on accessing historical legal records, but both will appear in our Spring 2011 issue.

BIALL Conference Papers

The Brighton Conference was extremely successful, due not only to the interesting and varied papers presented, but also because the various venues were so close together that delegates were not involved in any bus trips to dinners or the Conference Centre. The latter was vast and rather intimidating but provided all the facilities we needed. A selection of the papers is reproduced here, beginning with Anneli Sarkanen's presentation on the successful introduction of wikis within Field Fisher Waterhouse. The Knowledge and Information Services wiki has proven particularly useful, especially in terms of reducing work on re-inventing the wheel when answering enquiries and in bringing together in one place all material on suppliers, orders etc.

John Duffy recounts his experiences in using Web 2.0 technologies for the intranet at the Bar Council of Ireland Library. The latter is an interesting law library in that it serves as a centre for all barristers to work and meet up, but suffers from a chronic lack of space, so a virtual library on the desktop accessible anywhere became a high priority. A bespoke intranet was commissioned as out-of-the-box solutions such as Sharepoint, were not suitable in an organisation consisting of large numbers of sole practitioners. (We will be including an article on Sharepoint in the Spring 2011 issue).

Electronic resource management systems for monitoring online usage are considered by Rory Kingan in his paper and they would appear to have immense possibilities for improving the standard of search on online services, for cost recovery and for providing vital data to information staff on which services are most-used when it comes to fixing budgets.

Our colleagues from Yale Law Library, Femi Cadmus and Blair Kaufmann share with us their experiences in implementing a 15% budget cut across the Law Library service, including reducing headcount and undertaking a ruthless weeding of subscription material. They were saved a mass re-organisation of the library but have managed to retain their reputation for a first class service.

Recruitment is another vital area in a time of recession to make sure you get the best person for the job. Suzanne Wheatley from Sue Hill Recruitment gave practical advice to delegates on how to make sure they become as effective an interviewer as possible. As always, preparation is the key.

Finally, Amanda McKenzie from Olswang gave a paper on the changes that will be affecting the legal profession following the implementation of the Legal Services Act 2007. This is potentially the largest shake up of the profession for many years. Some changes have already come into force but major innovations, including the setting up of alternative business structures, which facilitate outside ownership and investment in law firms, are likely to be brought into effect in October 2011. Amanda concludes her paper by advising our profession on what it will mean for us.

Current Topics

Our Current Topics section is shorter than usual. David Wills, our President, reports on some interesting and varied sessions from the AALL Conference which he attended on our behalf earlier this year.

BIALL/SLS Survey – Peter Clinch

We also publish the latest SLS/BIALL Academic Law Library Survey compiled by Peter Clinch, which we unfortunately had to hold over from our Autumn issue (10(3)). It would have been unforgivable to allow the publication of the Annual Survey to go unnoticed, as this is potentially the last one to be compiled by Peter Clinch of Cardiff University, who retired earlier this year. Peter has almost single-handedly developed a body of carefully well-written and erudite academic analysis and writing about both academic and practical legal information issues, to the enormous benefit of our profession. He is the author of several books and many articles and the compiler of some extremely useful databases. Peter will be seriously missed by us all and the Editorial Board wish him a happy and fulfilling retirement. On a personal note, as Editor of LIM on two separate occasions, and for many years, I am truly grateful to him for supplying so much interesting and useful material. He is certainly LIM's most prolific author.

Subject Resource Guides

Geraldine Morris, who is a solicitor, author and editor specialising in family law has written a useful guide to the nature of family practice and the resources needed for its varied topics.

Checklist

Helen Dewar was responsible for implementing and maintaining an intranet in a small law firm and she

Anneli Sarkanen

provides a very practical article on do's and dont's for those who may be involved in such a project.

Correction

Privilege and Property: Essays on the History of Copyright.

In the Autumn issue of LIM 10(3) on page 258 we incorrectly attributed the book review to Lord Drummond Young. It was in fact written by John St. Clair. We send our apologies to all concerned.

Christine Miskin

BIALL Conference Papers

Using Wikis as Cost Saving Tools at Field Fisher Waterhouse

Abstract: This paper, presented at the BIALL Conference in June 2010 by Anneli Sarkanen, describes the process Field Fisher Waterhouse went through in utilising wikis in the firm for knowledge management and knowledge sharing. It describes the development of the project, the tactics used to encourage adoption, problems encountered and the project's planned future development.

Keywords: wikis; law firms

Introduction

This paper describes the process Field Fisher Waterhouse (FFW) went through in utilising wiki software within the firm for knowledge management and knowledge sharing. At FFW we have a document management system (DMS), a know how database with enterprise search and a new intranet (both subjects at recent BIALL Conference seminars Rudman, 2009 and Jannetta, 2008) yet with an increased need to provide opportunities to collaborate between our offices, we considered using a wiki as a solution.

The project began tentatively in 2008, with the Knowledge and Information Services (KIS) team trialling various wiki software. At the time, the team had little familiarity with wikis, having only ever seen Wikipedia, but not contributing to content. The team set up trials on PBWorks[1] (the wiki software used for the BIALL How Do I? wiki), MediaWiki[2] (used by Wikipedia) and Confluence by Atlassian[3]. These trials allowed the team to see the benefits of such software and how they could be applied at FFW.

The benefits of the wikis were the solutions we were seeking at FFW. We wanted something to allow for increased collaboration, cross-departmental and cross-office working which would provide for more dynamic content. There was a desire to have something which would aid departments or groups which were split geographically; an example of this is the KIS team who are situated in the practice groups across two buildings in London and in Brussels. We also wanted a system which would allow for knowledge sharing; our know how database is not suitable for all types of knowledge, so we needed something which would complement it, but not detract from it.

Project development

Management buy-in

Our wiki did not come free so, before the wiki project could start, we required approval from the Board, both in terms of the cost and also that it was a project they

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