FOCUS ON LEGAL PUBLISHERS AND SUPPLIERS

Bailey Solutions. Responding to Change: Surviving the Financial Crisis, the Pandemic and Everything Else!

Abstract: Bailey Solutions is a leading provider of library management software to the legal sector. Penny Bailey, Managing Director of Bailey Solutions, traces the history of the company from before its incorporation in the 1990s to the current year. The company has experienced both economic recessions and up turns. Penny will discuss what helps Bailey Solutions to survive and the lasting values that she attributes to its success.

Keywords: library management system providers; legal suppliers; technology; Bailey Solutions

INTRODUCTION: BAILEY SOLUTIONS

In the 1980s, I qualified as a Chartered Librarian and quickly started working in London law firm libraries. At DAC Beachcrofts, I was the first librarian and set up the library. It was here that I learnt programming. Then I moved onto Charles Russell Speechlys and established a library team. Over the following ten years, I worked at various law firms and corporate in-house legal libraries in both an employed and self-employed capacities. The name "Bailey Solutions" was created in the late 1990s for my work as a self-employed freelance programmer. During that time, I sold my first library management system called 'PenLib'. PenLib was based on a system that I wrote for myself because I could not find a library software system suitable for private law firms. These other systems were designed for school or public libraries. Some of those PenLib clients from the 1990s are still using one of our Bailey Solutions' systems.

The company became a limited company in May 2002 and quickly became the leading supplier of library software to the legal sector. In 2008, we launched LookUp. This was our first cloud hosted system. Then, in 2012, the company added KnowAll library management system for medium to large and multi-site law firms. This was followed closely by Enquire, an enquiry tracking system to support librarians in their research and enquiry work. In 2018, we launched SLLS (Simple Little Library System[1]) to replace PenLib and LookUp, while later in 2020 we released KnowAll Matrix[2] to replace KnowAll.

Something which has been very important to us is keeping our systems updated and future-proofed for our clients. In over twenty years, we have moved through various technologies including DOS, many iterations of Windows, DataEase, Microsoft Access, Microsoft SQL Server, Visual Basic for Applications, C#, AS.NET, Bootstrap, JavaScript, JSON and other development tools. Ensuring that our systems continue to work during all these changes has resulted in us enjoying the privilege of having very loyal clients. Some software transitions have been invisible to the users, while more recent upgrades have necessitated launching a whole new product, KnowAll Matrix.

This quite neatly introduces the theme of this article. Bailey Solutions has kept adapting to the external factors that affect our strategies. We have seen a couple of recessions and now, as I write, we are all enduring a deadly pandemic and probably the beginning of the worst global recession in our lifetime.

Now I will explore the core values to which we aspire that contribute to our survival.

WHAT'S DIFFERENT ABOUT LEGAL LIBRARY SOFTWARE?

My path to becoming a Chartered Librarian included gaining a Postgraduate Diploma in Library and Information Studies from University College (UCL), London. At UCL I learnt the principles of information science which have served me well. My first employment after qualifying was as Deputy Technical Services Librarian at Roehampton Institute of Higher Education (now Roehampton University). It was here I worked with DOS command driven operating system and a dial up modem - remember those? We dialled up to the British Library and downloaded bibliographic records in batches. Slow by today's standards, it was still quicker than cataloguing from scratch. Following this, I moved into my first law firm library and discovered that the academic ways of

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doing things did not quite fit in a law firm. Suddenly, my world was turned upside down. Soon, I found that while there were systems written for schools, universities and public libraries, there were no systems developed that suited law firm libraries or workplace libraries.

Why are law firm needs different? For a start, lawyers are not interested in Machine Readable Cataloguing (MARC)[3]. They do not care if Mr. Woodfall was long dead and gone and the author / editor of *Woodfall: Landlord and Tenant*[4] is now somebody else. They often do not acknowledge that Moy's Classification[5] is a suitable classification scheme, even though it is highly respected in academic and large legal libraries to fill the class K or Dewey 340 gap. Furthermore, law firms tend not to use barcodes or accession numbers. Lawyers keep books in their room for as long as they like without renewing and they do not pay fines. Lawyers need a library system that integrates with Microsoft Office. I also wanted to avoid a system built on a vendor's own database platform that was impenetrable by anyone outside the vendor organisation. Ideally, legal and business libraries need a library system built using Microsoft development tools. However, the biggest challenge encountered in law libraries was how to handle multi-volume encyclopaedic sets, law report series and loose-leafs. Every system I reviewed required every volume to be catalogued individually creating a massive workload for the librarian and it yielded a cumbersome set of search results for the lawyer. With these other systems I could not keep track of the circulation or loan of an individual volume.

My solution was to create my own program in Microsoft Access, which has since migrated to Microsoft SQL Server. Bailey Solutions developed the first library system for legal and business libraries using Microsoft development tools. I established a top-down approach to the volumes, based on sound, data normalisation techniques, that to this day still works well in our systems for multi-volume works. Each title has a copy or set. Each copy or set has a list of volumes. (See image 1).

Once you have entered the title, publisher and other details for each set, the librarian only needs to list the volumes of, say, the All England Law Reports. Each one has a unique Volume ID which identifies it for loan and other stock check purposes. This is a huge labour-saving device which benefits the lawyers as well. Because, if a lawyer searches for "law reports", they would get thousands of entries in a traditional system, whereas in a Bailey Solutions system you will see each series title only once. (See image 2).

The lawyer can then click through to see the list of individual volumes in each location. This clarifies locating volumes very effectively and is particularly efficient for law firm libraries. This meets Ranganathan's Fourth Law of Library Science: "Save the Time of the Reader".[6]

The first lesson I learnt early on is to listen to clients; listen to what is required, then apply sound information science principles and deliver it. I wrote an article on where our ideas come from. [7]

MY ADVICE IS: DON'T LISTEN TO ADVICE

I will never forget going to the *Online Information Show*[8] as a librarian and reluctantly giving my contact details to a salesperson, who would not give me a ballpark figure for their library software. The sales consultant visited our law firm library of about 3,000 resources, talked at me (not to me) for ages and then, finally, revealed the price at nearly £100,000 in today's money! Here were the frustrations: that the software was not suitable for the firm's needs; it was very expensive; the price was not transparent, and I had to go through the uncomfortable and inappropriate hard sell to find all that out. Never again!

When Bailey Solutions started selling library software, the first thing I did, against all advice, was to reveal our prices. My first sales were to friends and acquaintances in my legal library network. Then we started going to trade shows. Our first library system showcase was at the British Library. We turned up with our hand-painted screens and festive balloons and were sneered at by the other vendors, who asked if, 'the
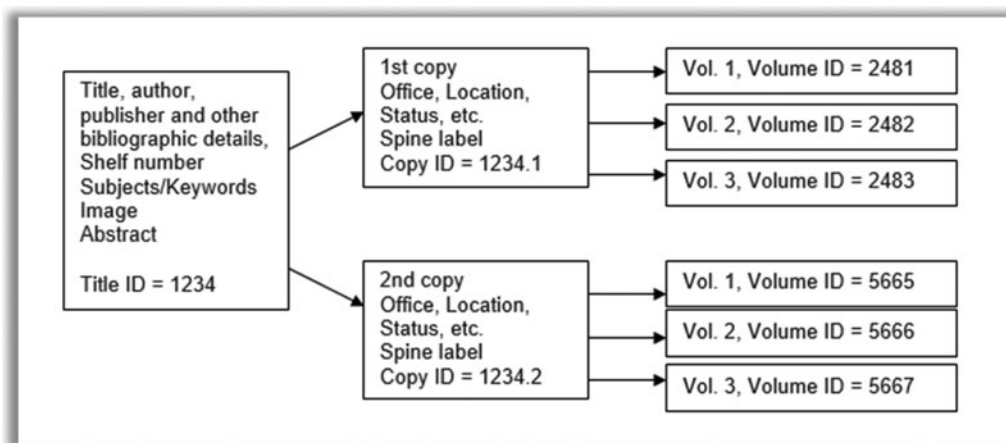

Figure 1: Showing the relationship of titles to copies and their volumes.

Figure 2: showing search results extract for a search on 'law reports'.

paint was dry yet?' Our marketing blurb revealed that our library system cost less than £1,000. We had a queue out of the door. The vendor opposite complained that we were "compromising their space". The competitor in question had been trading on the ego boost of only certain clients were able to afford their system. That company is no more.

This established our first set of core values. Be transparent about your pricing, offer good value and do not waste people's time. Treat your clients as you would wish to be treated yourself. We do not do the 'hard sell': ever. In this sense, we were twenty years ahead of the curve, as today major software suppliers in all fields now publish their prices and product information. This empowers the client to make their choice. Hopefully, the days of the hard sell are over. (See image 3).

CHANGING WAYS OF DELIVERING SERVICES

Before the 2008 financial crisis, most of our services were delivered in person and on our clients' premises. In the aftermath of that crisis, we realised that most of our clients were sensibly looking for ways to spend less money. The question was: how to respond to this without losing money ourselves? We introduced online training using online meeting tools like Citrix GoToMeeting, Skype for Business, Teams and Zoom. Over the last ten years, the take up has been good. We were early adopters. It has been very interesting to see the take up of Zoom for business and social purposes rocket during the 2020 lockdown. For years, Bailey Solutions had been using this method as a choice, not a necessity.

In the last two years, we have also developed online help centres to support clients using our software, replacing the product manuals. Originally, we envisaged that our help content would be entirely delivered using videos. We chose YouTube as our delivery platform because it is the second largest search engine[9]. (See image 4).

Again, we were ahead of the curve and unfortunately feedback from clients reported several problems with this approach. We discovered, to our surprise, that many of our clients were not allowed to use YouTube at all.
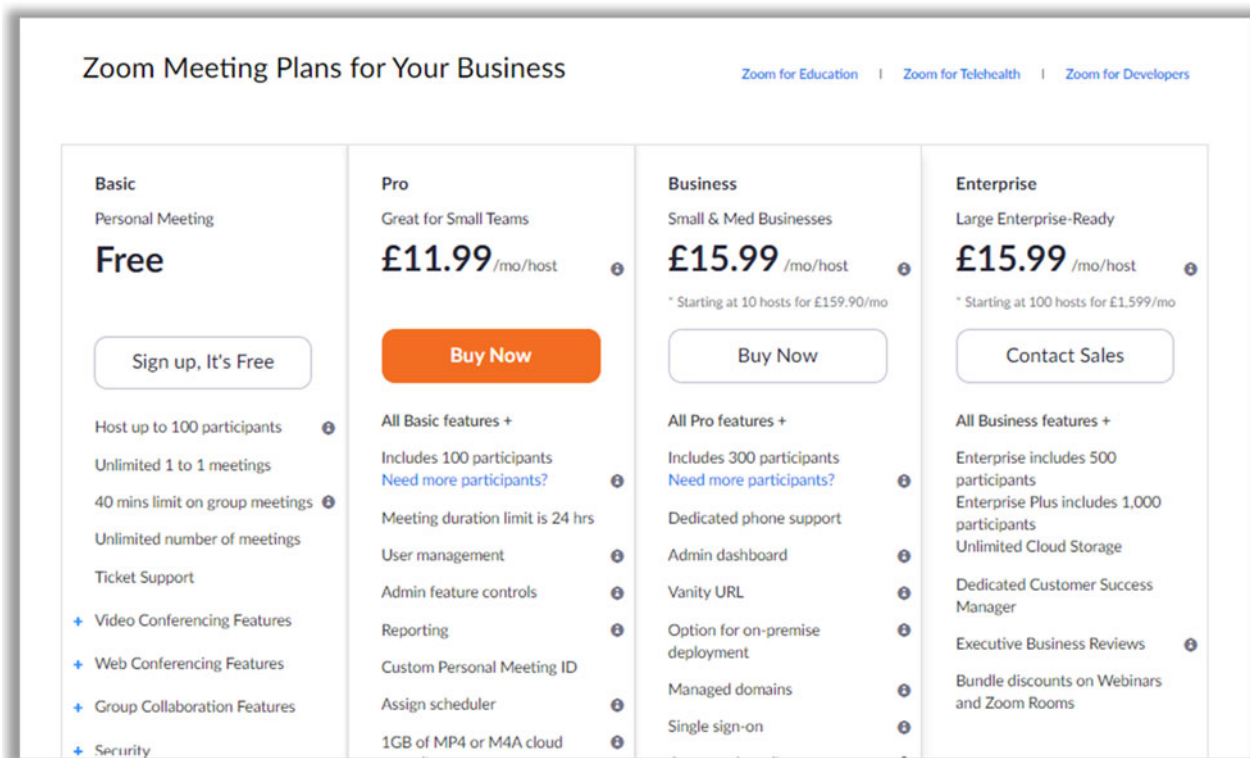
Figure 3: An example of software plans & prices from Zoom.

They also reported that they worked in open plan offices, did not have headphones or speakers, or simply did not like watching videos. Taking this on board, we moved the video content to our own platform and now, our help centre is task-focused, offering groups of articles and searchable content. Each help article may have an optional video to watch and all articles have step-by-step instructions with screenshots explaining how to do a task. (See image 5).

Our help centre is always available, so clients can ask their question and get an answer immediately. This along with the clean and consistent interface of the new software products, means clients do not need to purchase training when they first implement the software nor when new staff join. This is consistent with the modern self-sufficient client experience. In fact, the feedback we consistently received is that librarians wanted to be able to configure their own software without recourse to IT or us. So, we developed an easy-to-use configuration panel. Of course, we are still on hand if help is needed.

REACHING MORE CLIENTS

When we migrated clients from PenLib or LookUp to Simple Little Library System, we looked at how we were communicating with clients as this was quite a major upgrade. Up until then, we held annual user group meeting, usually in London, occasionally in other cities. However, the number of clients who attended these user group meetings was less than 10%. Hiring premises was expensive and it involved 3-4 staff travelling and being out of the office for a long day. Clients also had to travel and take time out of their offices. Of course, it was great seeing some clients face-to-face and going for a drink afterwards. The trouble was, these meetings were not reaching enough people nor reaching them frequently enough. We experimented with online webinars, offered not once but several times over a few weeks on different days and times of the day. We found that this reached over 70% of our clients and there were no longer any barriers to our overseas clients getting the same level of communication from us. Furthermore, it is greener for everyone. Online webinars and meetings are now an important part of how we reach our clients. We can connect in small groups or with individuals.

EARLY ADOPTION OF CLOUD HOSTING

Back in 2008, we launched LookUp, our first cloud hosted system. Over 10 years ago, the legal sector was not quite ready for cloud-hosted software and the take up was disappointing. In fact, the early reluctance to move trust-hosted software taught us that we had to work hard to earn this trust. In 2012, we moved to outsourcing our hosted platform services in order to offer high level security. Part of our workload is to complete many security questionnaires each year. Some have hundreds of questions about security, which we
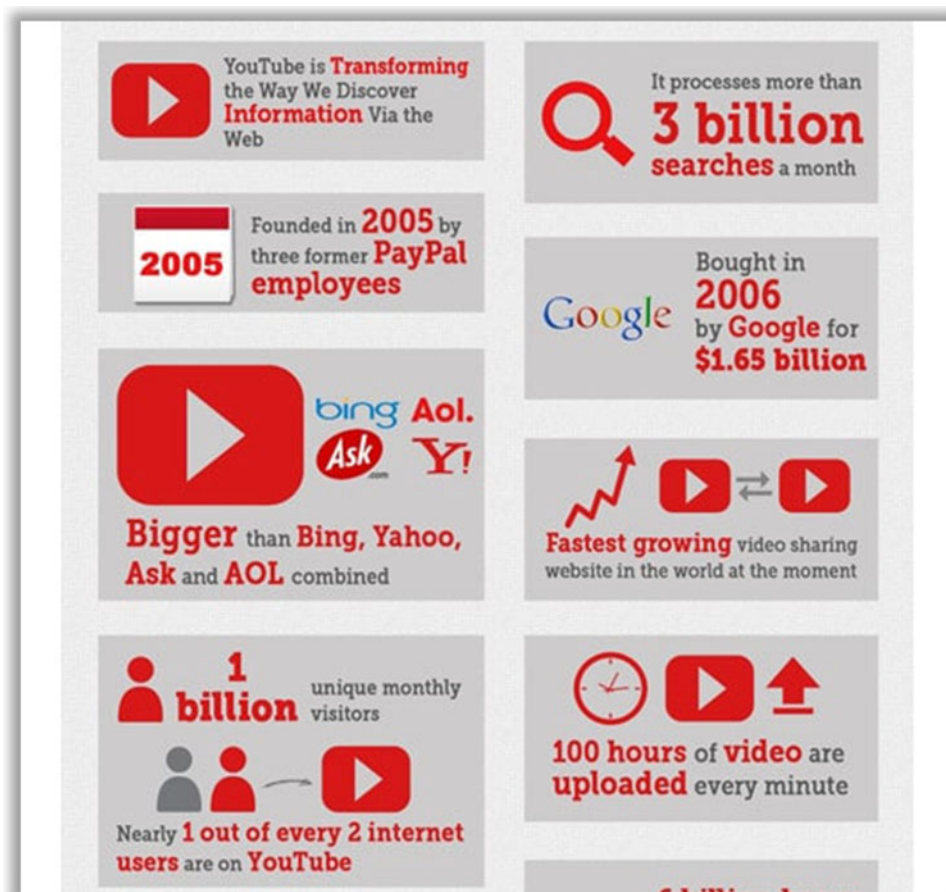
Figure 4: Infographic of YouTube as the 2nd largest search engine.

respect and dutifully answer. However, I do find it ironic that we are often dealing with a client, where our software is hosted on a server on their premises, which does not have the security that we could offer them. For example, do law firm servers have Ministry of Defence bunker-level security? Is their server underground? Does it have a barbed wire perimeter, staffed by security guards and dogs, 24/7? Is their server room locked with a pin code that is changed every week? Are nightly backups performed automatically and encrypted off-site? Because that is what our hosted platform provides our clients.

Before we offered hosting, we regularly had clients phone us up to ask if we had a copy of their data, because either their IT department had not backed up the library system, or the required restore had failed, perhaps the wrong system was backed-up or the backups were stored on the same server and that room was compromised. Well, I rest my case.

Most of our clients now prefer the Software as a Service (SaaS) subscription model. LookUp is now replaced by the Simple Little Library System (SLLS) which also replaced PenLib. 99% of our SLLS clients are now using our hosted version. 50% of our KnowAll clients are hosted and with migration to KnowAll Matrix we expect

to see that rise to 99% as well. The Chief Technology Officer at Legal Futures' Associates writes that,

> 'The previously cautious legal sector are now the ones who are creating a demand for SaaS products as they migrate from their core legacy systems to reap the benefits of cloud-based solutions.'[10]

The main benefit for our clients is that we can deliver frequent updates. Before SaaS, we often found that the librarian was required to make a business case before their IT department would spend the time applying the annual update. Updates went awry too, and we often had to sort out a muddle. We now automate the application of a software update to all our client sites overnight. We issue and apply updates every 4-8 weeks, which means we can respond more readily to modification requests, suggestions for new functions and features and issue fixes for errors.

There has been an unforeseen benefit. Hosting has enabled all our hosted clients to easily switch to working from home during the 2020 pandemic lockdown. Importantly, we embraced hosted software ourselves. All the applications that Bailey Solutions uses for finance, project management, office productivity, development,
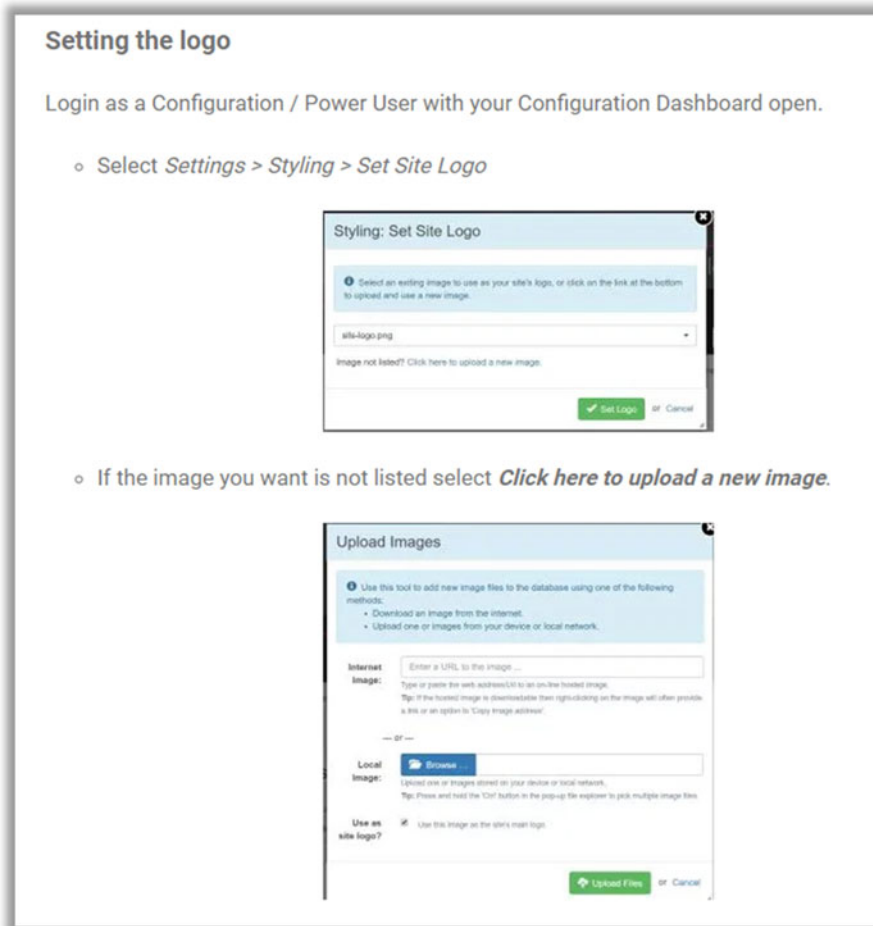
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Figure 5: Help Centre extract.

etc. are hosted applications. We did this so that we can recruit and retain developers, who often like to work from the quiet thinking space of their own home. It also embraces flexible working for all our employees. By watching what was happening in other countries, we had anticipated the lockdown scenario. We switched to home working with no loss of productivity in mid-March 2020, one week before government-imposed lockdown began.

Some lawyers have been slow to adopt electronic signatures, the paperless office, hosted applications and remote working. Often, access to Twitter and other social networks is banned from law firm office networks. Lawyers and staff have identities on LinkedIn which only include their first name and include no photo – what is the point? The current pandemic is forcing a digital update on lawyers. Marc Cohen, writing on Forbes' website asserted that:

"The coronavirus will turbocharge legal industry transformation. It will propel law into the digital age and reshape its landscape. The entire legal ecosystem will be affected." [11]

It seems obvious that the firms, which are ready with a positive mindset around remote working with hosted applications, will survive better than those which are not.

It will be difficult to change a whole organisation's infrastructure and mindset overnight.

ONE SEARCH FOR ALL INFORMATION
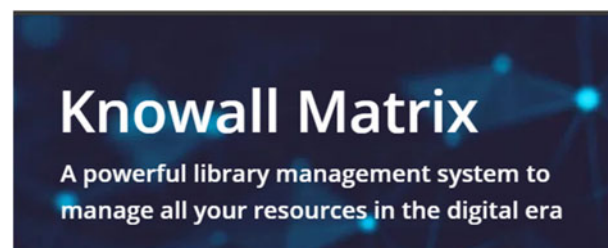
Our systems are conceived as fully-inclusive information systems and not just a catalogue of printed books. 'KnowAll' was selected as a name to indicate that the system caters for all knowledge and information resources in a firm; from printed books, files, leaflets, law reports, journals to e-books, e-journals, PDFs, Word documents, websites and textbooks delivered as part of an online subscription. This includes published, semi-published, unpublished, or internal information. Cataloguing means creating metadata that describes a piece of

information however it is produced. Our systems have always embraced the concept of one search for all information to the lawyers working in a firm, so they do not have to rummage around, searching different systems. In fact, one client has called their KnowAll their 'e-library' because it mainly contains documents and PDFs.

ELECTRONIC RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

As electronic resources have grown in dominance, so we are adding more features to handle them. Our planned development for KnowAll Matrix, once we have finished replacing the existing modules in 2020, is to revisit how the system handles electronic resources. We already have tools to handle diverse user roles and permissions in the system, which we will extend to controlling access to electronic resources. In KnowAll Matrix, our loans or circulation module has been renamed 'Access and Loans'. The concept is that different group users can be offered different resources, depending on the access rights that they have been granted. This could be determined by office location, practice group, type of user or other attributes.

SINGLE SIGN-ON AND MULTI-FACTOR AUTHENTICATION

When systems were on premises, Bailey Solutions' system could pick up the Windows login and allow a lawyer to log in to our system, without a name or password challenge. As clients move to the Cloud, we offer IP recognition, so lawyers from a listed IP address can search and browse without logging in. With the pandemic, the need for single sign-on has become urgent. IP filtering is no longer practical, because many home workers have a dynamic IP address which keeps changing. We could develop our own or we could find a technical partner with a fully developed identity management solution which is purposed for Cloud-hosted applications. We realise that we do not have to re-invent the wheel. We are in discussions with a technical partner to deliver a solution which covers both single sign-on and multi-factor authentication very soon.

A corollary of the Fourth Law of Library Science is 'Save the time of the staff'[12]

At Bailey Solutions, we are always looking for ways to help our library staff users work smarter. Let us face it, the less time spent on library administration and more on interfacing with lawyers, providing effective research and support services, the better. Having in the past worked in two large academic libraries, downloading bibliographic records, rather than cataloguing from scratch, I always wanted to offer the same facilities to our customers. In 2012 we introduced AutoCat, short for automated

cataloguing. AutoCat now retrieves bibliographic records, images, and enhanced text, where available, from a variety of sources including Google Books, national libraries, Library Hub Discover[13] and, especially for our legal libraries, Wildy's website[14]. Previously, users could only set a single source to use. We have recently improved AutoCat, so that it scans through the available sources according to the priority set by the client. If the bibliographic does not have enhanced text or image, the tool will source these from the next source, and so on, to create as rich a bibliographic record as possible. Our latest systems, SLLS and KnowAll Matrix can also create the first copy and volume automatically using default values. This saves the librarian time and can allow the task of cataloguing to be assigned to a less experienced member of the team.

WORKING WITH PRENAX

We are working closely with Prenax[15] to improve the order and invoice processes for our mutual clients. Prenax is well known among legal librarians and knowledge and informational professionals. In addition to managing everyday subscriptions, shelf-ready books, loose leafs and memberships, they have unique expertise in handling complex licences in the legal and wider corporate sectors. Prenax redesigned their customer portal in January 2020 which works seamlessly with both our SLLS and KnowAll Matrix library software systems, enabling us to better serve our clients. Beta trials are underway to automate the exchange of acquisitions data with Prenax, so clients do not have to enter order and invoice information into their library system as well, which is another great time saver.

The collaboration with Prenax will not stop there however, and we have more ideas still under wraps about how we can make other efficiencies for librarians.

CONCLUSION

Being early adopters of new technology tools has stood us in good stead. I once caught myself thinking that I could not be bothered to keep learning new things. That would be like standing still: I quickly removed that thought. We are providers of technology solutions. You must move with it or be left behind.

Thinking like a librarian and listening to clients are also key to our success. It is important to think through problems and processes with fresh eyes to come up with our own solutions. Collaborating with partners is always evolving the benefits for our clients. We are constantly reviewing how we do things and, like many other businesses, the COVID-19 pandemic has given us much to think about. Predict it we could not. Being prepared by being agile and responding to changes, hopefully before or as they happen, is the best thing we can do.

Footnotes

[1] https://simplelittlelibrarysystem.co.uk/.

[2] https://www.knowallmatrix-software.com/.

[3] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/MARC_standards accessed April 2020.

[4] The Hon Lord Justice Lewison et al (eds.), 'Woodfall: Landlord and Tenant', Looseleaf ed., Sweet & Maxwell.

[5] Moys, Elizabeth M. (2013), 'Moys Classification and Thesaurus for Legal Materials', 5th rev. & expanded ed., Walter de Gruyter.

[6] https://www.librarianshipstudies.com/2017/09/five-laws-of-library-science.html accessed April 2020.

[7] P Bailey, 'Where do our ideas come from?' (CILIP Gazette Oct 2016).

[8] The *Online Information Show* ran for 36 years until 2013. It comprised a conference and an exhibition. https://philbradley.typepad.com/phil_bradleys_weblog/2014/01/online-information-show-closes.html accessed April 2020.

[9] https://www.mushroomnetworks.com/infographics/youtube---the-2nd-largest-search-engine-infographic/ accessed April 2020.

[10] https://www.legalfutures.co.uk/associate-news/how-your-law-firms-legacy-software-is-holding-you-back accessed April 2020.

[11] https://www.forbes.com/sites/markcohen1/2020/03/24/covid-19-will-turbocharge-legal-industry-transformation/ accessed April 2020.

[12] https://www.librarianshipstudies.com/2017/09/five-laws-of-library-science.html.

[13] Library Hub Discover formerly known as COPAC: https://discover.libraryhub.jisc.ac.uk/about/libraries/ accessed April 2020.

[14] https://www.wildy.com/.

[15] https://www.prenax.co.uk/.

Biography

Penny Bailey has worked in the legal library sector since 1986, both as an employed librarian and as a self-employed consultant. In this capacity, she was involved in a significant number of projects to set up, troubleshoot or run library and information units in law firms, barristers' chambers and businesses. Her work experience has also included training and project management roles, programming and university lecturing. A Chartered Librarian since 1984, Penny is a member of the Institute of Directors and is a fellow of the Royal Society of Arts. Penny is now Managing Director of Bailey Solutions which incorporated in 2002 and is the fastest growing mid-market library system vendor in the UK and, according to *Legal Technology Insider*, 'clear market leader' in the top 250 law firms.