

## **BIALL US Law Librarians Group meeting minutes**

Date: 22 September 2010

Venue: Reed Smith

### **Improving Communication with overseas offices**

- Discussion on how to improve communication with the overseas offices of the firm network – particularly with the US offices.
- Issues with communication and sharing information between the US and UK. For example, one attendee reported that sometimes a US library colleague might contact lawyers in the UK office regarding a subscription renewal without copying in the UK librarian. The UK librarian then gets asked questions by the lawyers without knowing the context. Advice was to contact counterparts in the US office and ask them to copy in the local London librarian on emails to the London office lawyers.
- Another issue that can cause issues is that the UK librarian does not see or talk to their counterparts on a regular basis, which means there is no relationship building. One suggestion was to set up regular calls either with other managers in the library, or with the whole firmwide library team, and make regular contributions on the call. This will encourage others to see you as a person not just a name in another office.
- Set up mailing lists for the whole library team so info and new can be shared easily, and individuals in the team do not get left out.
- It was agreed that sometimes communication breakdown happens due to internal politics and is more difficult to resolve.

### **The Times paywall**

- Discussion on how to access The Times content: sources mentioned were Dialog/Datastar, Lexis Publisher, Lexis.com.
- The Times does not really seem to be set up to handle corporate clients, though one attendee said that they recently called customer services who were able to give them a quote for corporate access within a day.
- One person was quoted £520 for 10 users
- Only one attendee had taken up a corporate subscription to The Times, though there were others who had individual subscriptions.

### **PLC US**

- Discussion about the PLC US service which is split into two modules, and how useful it was and what sorts of lawyers were wanting to access it.
- It was agreed that this service was launched at the wrong time for firms to take a serious look at it – everyone has had budgets cut.
- PLC seem to be offering more flexible terms for the service – e.g. limiting the service to individuals within an office (rather than basing pricing on a 'benefiting group' number), or offering deals tied in to the UK service.
- One attendee has been a long term subscriber; one attendee has access for selected users in the US; one attend has access to the service in a deal with the UK content.

### **Westlaw UK – the new platform**

- Discussion on whether firms have access to the new Westlaw UK product as well as, or instead of, the Westlaw.com product. It seems to depend on whether the firm has a global or local contract for Westlaw services which determines what they currently access.
- There was confusion about what content was available on which platform, and value for money for the content available. For example, the AllNews file cannot be searched via the new platform and the user would still need to log onto the old platform to search that content. One user had been told they could not access the

White Book on the old platform, and another user said they had a subscription to this content on the old platform.

- Discussion on whether we should ask Chris Harris at Thomson Reuters to talk to the group about the new service, though there was a feeling this might not be helpful as everyone has a different contractual set up.
- One attendee asked if there were any trainers for Lexis.com or Westlaw who can train on the US materials. Sophie Barber at Westlaw has done training for one attendee recently which was very good. There seemed to be one person at Lexis but they were on maternity leave at the moment.
- *After these notes were circulated one of the attendees responded to say that there is a person called Rachel Thomas [rachel.thomas@lexisnexis.co.uk](mailto:rachel.thomas@lexisnexis.co.uk) at Lexis who can provide training on US materials. Apparently Susannah McCarthy that we had been thinking of is no longer with Lexis.*

### **Legal Week partnership club**

- Generally agreed that the functionality of the pdf version of the journal is not very good at all.
- Some firms said they were members of the partnership club because their marketing department wanted to have access, and having priority articles printed in the journal was part of the deal, and that was a valuable service. It was felt that the subscription to the club was expensive, but recently people had been offered a big slash in prices as an incentive to renew/join.
- One attendee subscribes to just one copy of LW and is not a member of the club.
- Another attendee subscribes to three or four copies and just been offered a cut price deal on the partnership club too.

### **Extended hours**

- Differences in culture between UK, US and Europe which impacts of hours offered in relation to the library enquiry service.
- Also cultural differences across geographical zones as to whether it is acceptable to charge time or database charges to a client matter number.
- Most firms offer a service of 9am to 6pm for their UK based clients.
- Many firms do not share the enquiry service across the offices – the US offices might share enquiry work but London wouldn't pass UK queries to New York, and Asia wouldn't pass queries to London.
- Licensing issues and expertise issues were cited as barriers to offering an integrated service across offices. Also, if queries are not urgent they don't need to be passed to the next office.
- Another issue was briefly discussed surrounding credit cards – many library managers did not have access to their own corporate credit card which means that they cannot purchase some materials as quickly as they could e.g. articles that can be purchased from the internet, using the docdel service at the Law Society.

### **Competitive Intelligence**

- One firm in attendance has had the library service integrated into the marketing department. They reported that they have been more involved with competitive intelligence work and wanted to know if others were doing this sort of work.
- It seems that people generally know about resources like OneSource, Legal 500, Chambers etc, but had not had to provide further in-depth analysis on competitors or client competitors.

### **Next meeting**

We hope to hold the next meeting of the BIALL US Law Librarians Group after Christmas.

*Jas Breslin*  
*1 October 2010*