

A Sophisticated Search platform implemented at Carey Olsen

Carey Olsen is the largest law firm in the Channel Islands with over 135 lawyers, and offices on Guernsey, Jersey and in London. The firm focuses on corporate and finance work, litigation, fiduciary law, property and local employment. It works with several different legislatures; the Islands are not governed by UK law and furthermore, each has its own local legislation and courts system.

To support the firm's dynamic and growing practice and to maintain its leading position in the competitive offshore marketplace Stuart Bush, IT Director and Kathryn Hall, Knowledge

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and Information Manager at Carey Olsen, have recently focused on providing fee-earners and support staff with quick access to 'know how' and other high value information such as legislation, cases and precedents.



Kathryn Hall, Knowledge and Information Manager at Carey Olsen.

To address this requirement Stuart required a sophisticated search platform that could easily gather knowledge and information from different sources. He chose Solcara SolSearch, the leading federated search application, that enables users to search across online resources such as Lawtel and Lexis Nexis simultaneously, without having

to sign into each one separately. 'It allows the firm to Interrogate these resources and their own internal repositories that are indexed with ISYS Web 8 technology', explains Rob Martin, Managing Director at Solcara.

Stuart is very forthright when it comes to the 'build it or buy it' debate. 'It's a matter of finding the right providers and looking at how different applications fit together rather than designing bespoke systems' explains Stuart. 'In-house projects have the potential to grow out of all proportion. You start with one or two programmers. They need some back up and before you know it you have an in-house software company. I have deliberately avoided that approach, partly because writing bespoke software or manipulating packages can end up becoming very expensive.' Stuart explained another disadvantage

of creating bespoke systems. 'You lose the input from other users.

For example, if you choose the same solution as other leading law firms, you benefit from enhancements that are developed in response to suggestions from the wider community.'

That is why Carey Olsen implemented two best of breed technologies; Solcara SolSearch the leading federated search engine, and ISYS Search Software's indexing technology. He chose these products because, in combination, they offered a powerful solution to the firm's specific search requirements.

Solcara and ISYS were commissioned to develop a solution that indexed content sources that were either poorly indexed or not indexed at all, and combine these with other internal and external sources. The result is a single, easy to use search interface for fee earners and professional support staff.

The Carey Olsen project was the company's first joint effort, but the relationship has thrived and they are now collaborating on several similar projects. 'We are proud of the fact that we suggested the idea to ISYS and Solcara and they got together to develop a solution' Stuart commented, 'Working with two firms can be complicated, but in this case they developed an excellent working relationship that has produced a leading Knowledge Management solution.'





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Stuart is keen to emphasise that the result of the collaboration is not a bespoke system. ‘We put the idea of creating a single interface to our content (indexed with ISYS) and other external resources, and they have put together a complete package. The result is impressive. Obviously, we contributed a fair amount of input to ensure that it delivered exactly what we wanted.’

The one-stop search system is very flexible. Users can put in quite a complex search term and interrogate all the resources available or make a selection from the list. The resources are grouped into profiles that give quick access to, for example, all case law or precedents, and further allows for the classification of sources by jurisdiction. ‘For example, a lawyer in Jersey might want to just search their local laws, or those and UK laws, while someone else might want to search the firm’s entire knowledge and information resources’, explains Stuart. ‘Although other providers offer search engines, none offers the same value for money, which is particularly important for mid-sized firms like Carey Olsen,’ says Stuart. ‘Cost effective IT projects produce greater return on investment and add more value to the business.’

“Being responsible for the content management side of the project, I had to ensure that all of the connectors were pointing to the right place, in the right way. This was quite a lengthy process with plenty of initial ‘tweaks’ in implementation and design and the support and communication with the Solcara and ISYS teams proved extremely helpful.

One of the areas which proved particularly tricky was in accessing the mainstream Legal publishing sites, such as Butterworths and Westlaw via an integrated search. Issues such as password access and connectors arose, but we managed to negotiate deals with the assistance of the Solcara network and knowledge of other case scenarios.

We chose a very simple design and on roll-out, I drove home the simple ‘Google type’ search aspect of our new ‘One-Stop Search’. I also highlighted the fact that it was not there to replace any of our other systems, it was simply adding to them, to assist them locating their information.

This went down a treat with our lawyers, from junior to partner level and I had full house attendance at all of my training sessions, with requests for further sessions (a very rare occurrence).

Users could not believe how simple and efficient the search proved to be.

stores of information. Online products are also now being used to their full potential and none of our electronic/online stores are left unturned, when searching via our One-Stop Search.”



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