

Proclaim[®] increases efficiency and sharpens competitive edge at LR&S



E C L I P S E

One of the fastest growing Medico-Legal companies in the UK, **Legal Reports & Services (LR&S)** was formed in 1997 to provide a bespoke service to Solicitors, Barristers, Insurance Companies, Legal Expenses Insurers and Claims Management Companies requiring Expert Witness Reports for the courts.

Founded by brothers Russell & Jason Smart, along with Melanie Taylor (Solicitor) and Dr Elmer Molave (GP), LR&S has enjoyed phenomenal success, with March 2002 seeing the company take 'plc' status. Russell Smart, Chief Operating Officer, puts the growth of the firm down to three key factors – a thorough understanding of the personal injury market, a dedicated panel of experts and high levels of client service:

“We take our clients and their requirements extremely seriously – we understand that speed, reliability, accuracy and price play an important role for any professional handling a claim.”



LR&S

With the firm's growth and plc status came a need to further develop its reputation. It was decided that in order to effectively manage escalating workloads and increase the already high level of client service that LR&S prided itself upon, a new IT system was required to replace the incumbent 'Access' software. Russell Smart, a self-confessed IT cynic, trawled the market for a suitable system and was struck by Eclipse's approach:

“Most vendors I spoke to were very inflexible – when I asked if their software could run a certain functionality we required, the answers were invariably ‘no’. Eclipse offered a refreshingly open attitude to system development, assuring me that whatever features we needed could be built into its existing software, ensuring it would work 100% around what we wanted to achieve.”

Eclipse's Proclaim[®] system integrates a core case management database with diaries, word processing and document management to provide a complete solution to the working needs of all 25 LR&S staff across its 2 branches in Warrington & Grantham. Its structure has allowed Eclipse to custom-build the system to match the way LR&S works – with these same tools being available to LR&S system administrators, allowing them to evolve the application as they wish.

For LR&S, information storage and retrieval is crucial – Proclaim[®]'s database stores details of the firm's clients and their preferred working practices, along with its extensive panel of CPR compliant expert witnesses. All incoming mail and faxes are scanned into Proclaim[®]'s document management function, which attaches the relevant documents to the correct case files. Before the implementation of Proclaim[®], LR&S had a huge archive of paper-based information – Russell Smart estimates that electronic document management alone saves around £500 per month in the cost of purchasing new filing cabinets.

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The level of automation available through Proclaim[®] is of huge benefit to LR&S. Its workloads necessitate a large amount of administration that – although essential – can bog staff down. Proclaim[®]'s inbuilt 'workflow' capabilities remind case handlers of upcoming tasks, diarise reminders, and create standard outgoing documents – singly or in batches – with one mouse click.

“The workflow frees up staff to put more effort into the actual ‘thinking’ parts of their roles. It removes procedural errors, ensures a consistent ‘house style’ for our documents and increases the number of cases each individual can handle.”

Proclaim[®]'s in-built reporting functionality is another big plus – besides pre-defined reports being run at the click of a button, the software's Automated Task Manager (ATM) schedules certain reports to be run automatically at set times on set dates. Says Russell:

“If we promise a client that a report on their matters will be with them at 6pm every Friday, then that's what will happen. There is virtually no human input required (and therefore no risk of error!) to e-mail a report straight to the client's desktop PC, in whatever format they require. It's a brilliant feature.”

Such functionality works extremely well in LR&S' favour when selling its services to prospective clients. The flexibility of Proclaim[®]'s workflow means that LR&S can tailor its procedures and services to match how clients work – providing an outwardly bespoke service at no added cost. Once 'programmed' into the system, the workflows progress clients' cases automatically – negating the need for staff to try and recall how particular clients prefer things to be done, and therefore eliminating errors.

Perhaps the single most important feature to LR&S when attracting and retaining new clients is FileView. This is the facility that publishes selected case information from Proclaim[®] directly onto a secure section of the LR&S web site, allowing clients to access live information online. Russell Smart explains:

“Poor communication is one of the biggest complaints levelled at medico-legal report providers. FileView provides a level of transparency – clients can check exactly what has been done and what is to be done next. It sets us apart as open, honest and confident in our working practises. Many clients, including several ‘Top100’ law firms, use it daily – our largest user has almost 3,000 individual cases viewable online.”

The future will see Proclaim[®] continue to grow alongside LR&S' changing needs. The firm has recently finished working with Eclipse in creating and implementing an import routine which allows new cases and information to be received electronically from clients – and then automatically imported into Proclaim[®] – in the right format and stored in the correct location, at the click of a button. This means that clients can e-mail a list of new and amended cases to be dealt with to LR&S, and have them available to view online just minutes afterwards on the LR&S web site. The electronic importation of cases improves accuracy and speed, significantly reducing the workload for keying in new cases, thus saving time and reducing costs.

Implementation of a new IT system is a big step for any firm, but the arrival of Proclaim[®] at LR&S has had a huge positive impact. Concludes Russell:

“Overall, I would have to say that Proclaim[®] has revolutionised our business. It does everything we need – and can be tailored to do everything we will ever need. I'm extremely proud of the system we have!”