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Welcome to the Spring/Summer edition of the Newsletter for 2008.

## Windows 98 - 10 Years On



As from the next update for Quaestor for Windows and Seriatim Master Class we will no longer be supporting computers running Windows 98.

Previously, we have unofficially supported computers running Windows 98 Second Edition (with all service packs applied). This meant that, if Quaestor for Windows or Seriatim Master Class installed and ran, we would do our best to support you but could not guarantee any fixes, etc.

*“Windows 98 is now a dead product- either replace or upgrade!”*



With Windows 98 now being a long dead product we can no longer offer this unofficial support. If you have any PCs running Windows 98 with Quaestor for Windows or Seriatim Master Class we replace them or, if possible, upgrade them to a more (Windows XP SP2 or Windows Vista).

would suggest that you either recent operating system

## Email Invoices

Our accounts department say that those of you with email can, if you wish to, receive your invoices via email. For more information regarding this please contact Mrs Carla Cunningham via the main office telephone number or alternatively via email at [Carla@ptuk.co.uk](mailto:Carla@ptuk.co.uk).



## Support Number



On the 28<sup>th</sup> March, 2008 we sent emails and letters out to inform you, that KISS, our Technical Support, had changed their contact details. Please note that their new telephone number is:-

**01795 534964**



## Supporting You

Did you know that your support desk can do many other things for you as well as just providing a telephone help line?

We are arranging a number of workshops and training sessions over the coming months to cover various topics including Preparing for ISO 27001, Using Case Management and Getting More from Quaestor for Windows Accounts.

As an example, ISO 27001 states that data must be (a) secure, (b) integrally correct and (c) available. With cheap broadband and the right low cost security devices, we can help you implement a Disaster Recovery and Business Continuity plan covering these requirements that will satisfy the most stringent auditor and customer demands. Our half-day seminar tells you how from just £199 + VAT per delegate.

Why not call us today to register your interest and we'll enter you into a free prize draw for a Nintendo DS hand held games console - useful for the little ones this summer.

## Extension to HIPs temporary provisions announced



Housing Minister Rt. Hon Caroline Flint MP announced on 8 May 2008 the extension of the temporary provisions for first day marketing and leasehold requirements in the HIP Regulations from 1 June to 31 December 2008.

### First day marketing

The temporary first day marketing provision was introduced after working with industry in order to help smooth the implementation of HIPs and allows a property to be marketed where the HIP has been commissioned and paid for, or arrangement for payment been made, and the documents are expected to arrive within 28 days.

The order laid will extend the temporary provision from 1 June to 31 December 2008.

### Leasehold information

The temporary provision requiring HIPs to include the lease only, and to 'authorise' other leasehold documents was introduced in response to concerns about delays and additional costs in obtaining leasehold information.

The order laid will amend the HIPs Regulations, extending the temporary provision for leasehold requirements until 31 December 2008.

For the full Minister's announcement please visit: [www.homeinformationpacks.gov.uk](http://www.homeinformationpacks.gov.uk)

## Solicitors' Accounts (Residual Client Account Balances) Amendment Rules 2008



Effective from 14<sup>th</sup> July 2008 there will be new rules governing the return of funds to clients. It affects client monies and controlled trust monies equally.

### Synopsis

These amendments introduce specific obligations for the prompt return of client funds and reporting to clients if funds are retained. They also permit solicitors to deal with the withdrawal of smaller residual balances themselves, without recourse to the SRA.

### Returning surplus client money



A new rule 15(3) will impose a specific obligation to return client money promptly as soon as there is no longer any proper reason to retain the funds.

### Reporting to clients

A new rule 15(4) will require a solicitor to inform a client promptly of the amount of any funds retained at the end of a matter, and the reason for that retention.

*“Remember – You are obliged to report in writing to the client on at least an annual basis if funds continue to be retained!”*

This rule also introduces an obligation to report in writing to the client on at least an annual basis if funds continue to be retained, with an explanation for the ongoing retention.



### Left over balances

Under an amended rule 22, solicitors will have the option to withdraw from client account left over balances of £50 or less without prior SRA authorisation, subject to paying the balances to a charity and complying with the other safeguards set out in a new rule 22(2A). Prior SRA authorisation will still be required for amounts exceeding £50, or for amounts not to be paid to a charity because, for example, they represent costs.



### Summary

- You are going to need to close files promptly and to return any client monies to the client.
- If you keep money after a case is completed you are going to have to report to the client at least once a year to tell them why you are holding the money.
- You can pay over left-over client balances of less than £50 to a Charity (subject to certain safeguards).

For the full rules see <http://www.sra.org.uk/documents/rules/accounts-rules-residual-client-accounts-amendment.pdf>.



## HMRC CHANGE SDLT FORMS

HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC) is banning the use of bar-coded computer generated paper SDLT returns forms with effect from 1st November this year.

This seems to be bad timing at the very least as it will mean those firms who use bar coded forms will need to upgrade their systems in the middle of a conveyancing downturn.

Strangely, it is not all paper forms that are being banned, the hand written ones will still be accepted. However, if you use bar-coded forms you are going to have to revert to hand written forms or upgrade your electronic systems to overcome this latest announcement.

Unsurprisingly HMRC has its own on-line SDLT returns system and that is what it wants you all to use. However, there are a growing number of alternative on-overcome the main drawbacks of the HMRC

The HMRC system cannot integrate to case limit its appeal to most practices. You also need be a bit of a nightmare to acquire. The deal with this administrative headache for you offer integration to case management systems.

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*“If you use bar-coded forms you are going to have to revert to hand written forms or upgrade your electronic systems.”*

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line SDLT returns services which can system.

management software which does a government Gateway ID which can alternative systems out there tend to and, to a greater or lesser extent,



## Unregistered Solicitors Risk Data Protection Act Breach

Solicitors who are not registered under the Data Protection Act will be presumed to be in breach of the act, the information commissioner’s Office (ICO) warned this week.

The ICO revealed that recent prosecutions of London Solicitors are part of a blanket crackdown on solicitors and accountants.

**‘We know that solicitors are almost certainly processing personal information, so anyone who has failed to notify under the act is almost certainly breaking the law’**, a spokesperson said.

Notification is a procedure required by the 1998 act of any organisation holding personal data about clients. It costs £35 per year. At least four solicitors have been successfully prosecuted this year, the ICO said.

In the latest case, one North London based firm of solicitors, was fined £150 with costs of £539.20 for failing to notify as a data controller despite repeated reminders from the ICO.

Meanwhile, evidence of Lawyers’ shortcomings as data managers emerged from a survey published by a telecommunications supplier. **More than a quarter of UK law firms are guilty of leaving the security of their computerised archive to chance**, Kingston Communications said. Of 200 solicitors surveyed, 28% admitted that their firms did not back up their data off-site, making them vulnerable to fire or flood.

Half of all firms rely on employees to back up data manually, described as a **‘high-risk strategy’**. Apart from risks to the business, failing to take measures against the accidental loss of personal data could also put a firm in breach of the Data Protection Act.

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*“More than a quarter of UK law firms are guilty of leaving the security of their computerised archive to chance.”*

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## PDQ-IT

Here's something great. The "unbundled" postal services in the U.K. now allow private providers to deliver mail just as "unbundling" British Telecom let others provide phone services.

Imagine printing from a Windows based program to a special printer installed on your PC. The print job is sent via the internet to a secure facility where it is physically printed, enveloped, stamped and posted without you having to do anything more than click your mouse. Think of the savings on time, toner and paper.

The service is currently being used by many organisations (including banks in case you are concerned about security) who are gaining savings up to a staggering 60% on their post costs. To find out more call us today.

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