THOMSON ELITE

Exchange Magazine

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The Global Leader in Financial and Practice Management Solutions

www.thomsonelite.com

Letter from the President & CEO

The past months have produced several major changes at Thomson Elite, but our goals have remained unchanged – a relentless focus on innovation, excellence and addressing the needs of the global professional services market. We have introduced significant new products like Elite Practice Manager and West km for Transactions, we have acquired three companies, and we are inching closer to completing our new Center of Excellence for customer service in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

The acquisition of Vertical Technologies in Calgary and our strengthened commitment to the Canadian market have brought many new customers to the fold and several additional law firms across Canada are now benefiting from Elite products. Those customers are newly benefiting from functionality within the Elite financial system, which specifically caters to Canadian market requirements and gives them a more powerful set of tools to help their practices grow.

Our current and planned international growth is also underscored by our recent appointment of Jitendra Valera (JV) who has taken up the newly appointed position of vice president, International for Thomson Elite. JV will drive new global initiatives for Thomson Elite in our mission to meet the needs of internationally based firms that have financial and practice management requirements specific to their geographical jurisdiction.

As a result of acquiring Expert Ease in 2004, we now have a fantastic new set of products for transactional attorneys, including West KM for Transactions and Elite DealProof. The West KM product family leads the market in providing powerful tools to hundreds of law firms, corporations and government agencies and is now available to both litigation and transactional practices.

I am pleased to welcome Wilson Technology Associates to the Thomson Elite family. Wilson Technology is a leader in custom reporting and analysis products and, as our long-term partner, has traditionally provided business systems integration and business intelligence to many of our customers. The acquisition will support our continued growth in the workflow solutions and business intelligence markets and allow us to deliver enhanced offerings. We look forward to the new growth and development opportunities that come with the expertise of Wilson Technology.

We were particularly pleased to recently announce the winners of the 2005 Thomson Elite Excellence in Legal Marketing Awards. This year's awards winners exemplified excellence in creativity and innovation in terms of creative client acquisition initiatives and successful customer relationship management.

In keeping with the awards theme, we are also proud to report that Elite Billing Manager was honored by Law Technology News readers once again as the best in category for Timekeeping and Billing Systems servicing over 50 attorneys. The award was presented at LegalTech New York, one of our industry's most significant meeting points for ideas exchange, new product showcasing and an important platform through which to learn from the industry's foremost experts on industry trends.

Customers of our LawManager solution continue to report innovative use of this line in addressing the evolving needs of corporations and governments. At Mutual of Omaha, one of Thomson Elite's newer clients, LawManager is more than a matter management system. The insurance company recently implemented a comprehensive case management system using the LawManager platform for their Special Investigations Area. Also, at our user group meeting for federal customers in February, meeting participants benefited from informative presentations by the Office of Inspector General of the Department of Justice and the Merit Systems Protection Board.

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INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Thomson Elite Exchange Magazine is published quarterly by the marketing department of Thomson Elite. Please email comments or suggestions to Connie Moser, Sr. Director of Marketing at cmoser@thomson.com. Visit www.thomsonelite.com for additional news and product information.

Don't Miss the 2005 Thomson Elite User Conference

June 14-16, San Diego, CA

The 2005 Thomson Elite User Conference, ***Rising Expectations: Do More with Less***, is just around the corner – we hope you will be joining us! This year's conference is being held June 14-16 at the Manchester Grand Hyatt in San Diego, CA. The conference curriculum has been expanded to include more information-packed sessions and tutorials than ever, covering Elite, ProLaw, West km and LawManager product lines. We'll also discuss the hottest industry trends to help your firm stay current.

To register and view the 2005 conference curriculum, visit http://www.thomsonelite.com/newsevents/user-conference.

Program Highlights Include:

- The ever-popular, "My Favorite Features"
- Special sessions on Practice Manager, Billback, West km for Transactions, Business Intelligence and LawManager Notebooks
- Full feature and functionality updates on the financial and practice management applications you use most
- Sneak previews of upcoming product releases
- Industry trends and hot topics, such as E-Invoicing, Paperless Proforma, cost management/recovery, workflow and Sarbanes-Oxley compliance
- Ask the Experts development panel – bring your questions!
- Second Annual "Development" skit

Schedule a Private Demo

In addition, attendees can get a closer look at all Thomson Elite products in our private demo suites.

Demos are available Tuesday from 1:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m. and from 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. on Wednesday and Thursday. Appointments will fill up fast so be sure to contact your Thomson Elite representative to schedule yours as soon as possible!

Accommodations

Make your reservation at Manchester Grand Hyatt San Diego by calling (619) 232-1234. Ask for the Thomson Elite conference discount rate.

Travel Discounts

For conference travel discounts call American Express Travel Services at (877) 882-8785 and select menu option 1.

New Practice Management Services

Thomson Elite's new Practice Management services monitor and evaluate critical processes within firms and provide detailed specifications to improve these processes. The new services focus on areas such as records process, conflicts process, process automation, records retention, and records destruction and assist firms to meet regulatory requirements and increase efficiency through the use of Elite Practice Management products.

Please contact your account representative to learn more about how our practice management consulting services can help your firm.

LawManager: Positioned for "Mega-trends"

By Rod Piette

Rod Piette, *Vice President, Segment Marketing*

In plotting the current and future course of LawManager Enterprise, we are always on the lookout for mega-trends in corporations and governments that will create new opportunities for LawManager to serve its current and future customers. We currently see some interesting industry trends developing.

Matter-centric Organizations Come to the Fore

Starting decades ago, from the trite finding that law firms work on cases, the world of knowledge workers generally has been awash in a subtle but ever strengthening sea change – the transition toward making formally defined "matters" a fundamental construct in organizing work, not only in law firms, and not only for litigation, but for wide swaths of what knowledge workers do throughout the public and private sectors. For these organizations, it turns out that their very essence and mission is best defined in terms of the sum total of the matters they handle, their objectives in handling them and the results achieved. Who are they? It's a very long list, but they include hearings and appeals organizations, investigative bodies, claims operations and, of course, all manner of specifically legal operations in corporate America as well as state, local and federal government. Their numbers are increasing, and even more importantly, the ones that have always been there are seeing more clearly than ever that their essence must be served by information technologies specifically designed with matters in mind. LawManager Enterprise exists to serve this large and diverse community.

Matter-centric Systems as the Information Backbone

Imagine you are a government official and you are called upon to justify a rather large budget. Perhaps you face a congressional inquiry. Your inquisitors want to know what you did with the taxpayers' money last year. You say: $100 million on payroll, $25 million on rent, $10 million on information technology, etc. Not a good answer. What is wanted is information on how the money was applied to work performed for citizens, such as how many complaints or claims were processed and at what cost, how many investigations were handled and at what cost, how many cases were adjudicated and at what cost, how many cases were "forwarded" for litigation, what matter types were most expensive to handle, how are human resources being aligned to meet trends in types of matters, and so on. To put your house in order for next year's inquiry, you have a choice: You can fiddle around with ERP systems and other types of applications and try to jerry-rig them to do what they were never intended to do, or you can implement a true matter-centric system, such as LawManager Enterprise, as the information backbone of your organization.

Case Management as a Line of Business in Federal Enterprise Architecture

In many areas of life and commerce, the federal government lags the private sector. But this is not always what happens. In fact, sometimes the situation is just the reverse, like the Apollo space program and the long list of private sector innovations that stemmed from it, the "ruggedization" of computer technology for challenging environments, and the current, steady development of published standards for electronic records. These are all examples where the federal government has been a leader, not a follower. And today, in some areas of case management as well, the federal government, especially through initiatives sparked by the Office of Management and Budget, is positioning itself to make some dramatic changes because it has become clear that "case management" is a broad, nearly universal requirement for many federal agencies. It is, in fact, a "cross-agency line of business" within the formal specification known as the "Federal Enterprise Architecture." This vision fits exceedingly well with the mission and character of LawManager Enterprise.

Matters First, Workflow and Other Applications Second

Okay, you say you need workflow. But workflow in respect to what? Often, if analysis serves you well, the answer will be "matters" and the systems specifically designed to manage them. These systems may well benefit from and be informed by many other applications, such as systems for document management, records management, and workflow, but without a sound matter-centric system at the core.

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Event Spotlight: LegalTech New York

This year LegalTech New York in January served as a prime opportunity for attendees to hear industry experts and prominent legal figures map the future direction of legal technology and offer invaluable insight for legal practitioners and administrators. Thomson Elite executives presented at a number of sessions and several exciting new products were announced, including **West km® for Transactions, Elite® Practice Manager** and **Elite® Enterprise** 3.5. (See related article on page 7.)

The keynote speech entitled *Future Forward: Technology Trends that will Change How You Work, Live and Play* was presented by Mike Wilens, president and CEO, Thomson Legal and Regulatory, North American Legal and moderated by Alan Rich, chief strategist, Thomson Elite. During the presentation, key trends for 2005 were identified including the prediction that new technologies would be integrated into law and business to provide even more networking capabilities and connectivity. "Many new technologies have been introduced in recent years but they have not yet been fully integrated into the way law firms conduct business. It's time to take it to that next level," Mike stated. "Everything must be integrated to make real-time decisions."

The topic of practice management was featured prominently at this year's show. Brook Boehmler, VP of Practice Management for Thomson Elite, led sessions that examined industry trends and options open to law firms seeking increased efficiencies in the management of case, calendar, records, marketing, and conflicts management. Jim Whitmore, a Thomson Elite sales director, presented an emerging technology session on the issue of how law firms can use software solutions to effectively recover client costs. Kingsley Martin, industry knowledge management thought leader and senior director for West km presented a session entitled *New Strategies for Work Product Retrieval* during which he spoke on the issue of effectively searching information bases for relevant information and the software tools that expedite this process. His comments addressed the complementary approaches of universal search tools designed for broad recall and work product retrieval applications designed for high precision.

The annual *Law Technology News* awards dinner, held in conjunction with LegalTech New York, provided a glittering affair, with Elite Billing Manager honored once again by *Law Technology News* readers as the best in category for Timekeeping and Billing Systems servicing over 50 attorneys.

Thomson Elite Customer Support Earns Global Certification

Thomson Elite has been awarded Support Center Practices (SCP) Certification for its Los Angeles support center following a rigorous on-site audit process. The SCP certification program establishes a globally recognized service and quality benchmark for IT services support centers and is guided by a body of sponsoring companies who represent core members of the Service & Support Professionals Association, a consortium of leading technology companies.

Industry Recognition

Elite Billing Manager Wins *Law Technology News* Award

Elite Billing Manager was recognized by *Law Technology News* readers for the second consecutive year as the top choice in the Timekeeping and Billing System category for products servicing over 50 attorneys.

Thomson Elite Selected for KMWorld Magazine's 2005 List of *"100 Companies that Matter in Knowledge Management"*

For the third consecutive year, Thomson Elite's West km® product line was recognized as a leading knowledge management solution for law firms. It is the only firm-wide, legal-targeted knowledge management solution that uniquely integrates work product with Westlaw®.

LawManager

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LawManager Enterprise meets the needs of forward-thinking matter-centric organizations.

E-invoicing and the Management of Outside Counsel

E-invoicing has been around for a while, but forces are at work that promise to push it into greater prominence and, perhaps, reshape the e-invoicing industry as well. While both law firms and corporations strive to lower the cost and reduce the "friction" involved in fully adopting e-invoicing, another trend looms. This is the trend among "purchasers" of legal services to use the digital repositories that result from e-invoicing as the source of insights into how to manage, replace or re-configure the work performed by the "sellers." This goes beyond the adoption of a new technique to achieve purely administrative efficiency gains. Through its Case Management Financials module and steadily evolving support for e-invoicing, LawManager Enterprise is poised to meet the requirements of these trends.

Product Spotlight

E-Invoicing: A Growing Industry Standard

Interview with Jim Cochran, Network Engineer, Haynes & Boone

Elite® E-Invoicing is a Web-based administration module for electronic billing that integrates with Elite's financial management system. With E-Invoicing, firms can support virtually any standard electronic format requested by clients without learning complex translation procedures.

Q: *Why was your firm an early adopter of Elite E-Invoicing?*

JC: The product is not that expensive and I knew we were going to be doing a lot more electronic transmission of invoices. Plus, it's a matter of that's where the market is going, period.

Q: *How long did it take to implement?*

JC: It shouldn't take more than one to two hours at the most, and minimal training was required.

Q: *What was the process for sending out electronic invoicing before using Elite E-invoicing?*

JC: Before we started with E-Invoicing, we prepared invoices using the regular Ledes 98 format that Elite supplied with its financial management system. Using a Telnet session, we created a file and we could send that out to clients. We would have someone create the file and they would send it out via email. We did have another client that had to have a totally different looking file – we used Elite's 4GL scripting to manually create a file that met their requirements. Over time, we then had to add little bits and pieces to change the formats slightly, and that's where it started to become a bit of a headache. At that point, I began thinking that there had to be a better way to accomplish this work. We were getting more and more client requests everyday. We needed to implement something to streamline the process, plus I needed something simple that accounting could work with.

Q: *Do you use E-Invoicing to translate the billing information from the Elite financial system into Ledes format for emailing to the client or does it go through a clearing house?*

JC: Both. Different clients do different things. The attorney still goes through the usual proforma review process and we create the paper bill. The system, in turn, automatically generates a flat file in the background that's stored on the invoice server. So the person in accounting will pull up this file and do one of two things: they will either send this file in an email, or they will go to a Web site designated by the client and upload these flat files. The client's accounting system takes that file and uses it as if you're keying in all of your time and cost entries into their system. They use this data to determine what they will pay you. They may still get a paper invoice, but they're looking at their database to see how our costs and fees are laid out. And a lot of times the Web site will tell you that you're not billing this right or you're not billing that right, and if there are errors in the flat file, it will send it back out and it will tell me what the problem is and I can go back to the report writer and make the changes in the flat file.

Q: *Do you have any sense of what percentage of the firm's total invoice volume is going out electronically?*

JC: I would say at least 50%.

Q: *Over the past year since it has been implemented, how many more new requests have you received for electronic invoicing?*

JC: I would say the number has more than tripled because the list started out at 10 to 12, but now it's over 50.

Q: *So would you say that the primary reasons for choosing E-Invoicing were the low cost nature of the solution and the lack of expensive implementation and training requirements?*

JC: Yes. And a third benefit was that it stayed within the Elite family of products. I knew that it would be better integrated than with a third party Ledes system.

For more information about E-Invoicing contact your account representative or visit www.thomsonelite.com/solutions/products/e-invoicing.

Haynes and Boone, LLP is an international law firm with nine offices throughout Texas, Washington, D.C., Mexico City and New York, providing a full spectrum of legal services to clients around the world. With more than 450 attorneys, Haynes and Boone is ranked among the largest law firms in the nation by the National Law Journal.

Product News Round-up

Thomson Elite made a number of important product announcements at LegalTech New York in January. Please visit www.thomsonelite.com/ newsevents/ pr for full details.

Practice Manager – Manage matters from one user-friendly view

Elite® Practice Manager, a practitioner-focused application for large law firms, is now available for general release. Practice Manager, part of the Elite Practice Management suite of products, provides matter-centric, Web-based access to Elite's docketing, marketing, conflicts, and records applications and incorporates a new workflow application that enables collaboration and business process automation between each module.

Also, firms can now upgrade their Practice Management suite without having to upgrade their financial management system, and the suite has the unique benefit of integrating fully with any supported version of the Elite Financial Management system.

West km for Transactions – Knowledge management for transactional attorneys

West km® for Transactions is Thomson Elite's newest knowledge management offering created specifically for transactional attorneys. West km for Transactions helps users find, analyze and reuse precedent documents, clauses and definitions from within their own document collections. Additionally, it allows transactional attorneys to gain negotiating leverage against opposing counsel by targeting past work product.

Instead of searching the firm's entire document collection by attempting to craft a full-text search, attorneys can quickly find the firm's best deal documents or clauses by type, such as loan agreement or interest payment clause. The product's patented text-mining engine with artificial intelligence capabilities returns documents that match the search terms, but also finds similar documents, such as credit and debt agreements. Users can then drag and drop selected content directly into word-processing programs.

New! Elite Enterprise 3.5 – Increased Westlaw® integration and financial enhancements

Elite® Enterprise 3.5 is the latest version of the Elite suite of financial and practice management applications. It provides deeper functionality, new integration capabilities and enhanced accounting features.

Elite® Case Manager and Elite® Apex Marketing Manager now include Westlaw® integration. Users can connect to the Westlaw site from within Case Manager to check the validity of a citation and can be automatically directed to relevant Westlaw case information based on the specific case type on which they are working. Users working within the Apex module can seamlessly view Westlaw company profile information and perform a Westlaw company news search.

Elite® Records Manager incorporates a new Electronic Document Connector, offering direct integration with Microsoft® Outlook® and other e-mail systems.

Elite® Billing Manager includes a credit allocation method, and Intake capability, providing a streamlined approach to searching and adding matters and clients in Elite® Conflict Manager.

Wilson Technology Associates Acquired by Thomson Elite

In March, Thomson Elite acquired Wilson Technology Associates, a long-term strategic partner. Wilson Technology provides business systems integration and business intelligence solutions that complement Thomson Elite's product and service offerings.

Thomson Elite and Wilson Technology have worked together as strategic partners since 1992, serving the same medium and large-sized law firm customers. Wilson Technology has become a leader in custom reporting and analysis products. The acquisition will support Thomson Elite's continued growth in the workflow solutions and business intelligence markets.

Wilson Technology's service, research and development operations will be integrated into Thomson Elite, with current Wilson Technology employees joining the organization and remaining at the current location in Newton Square, PA. Additionally, Wilson Technology CEO and founder Bruce Wilson and vice president of Operations, Rob Beisswenger, will remain with the business.

Canadian Law Firms Select Elite

Thomson Elite, through its acquisition of Calgary-based Vertical Technologies, continues to help Canadian firms meet their unique financial reporting requirements with the help of award-winning Elite financial and practice management solutions. New Canadian clients using Elite include Duncan & Craig LLP, Kanuka Thuringer LLP, McInnes Cooper, McLeod & Company LLP, Whitelaw Twining, Lerners LLP and Pitblado LLP. For more information, contact Mike Rose via phone (403) 208-7590 or email, mike.rose@thomson.com.

Business Process Management: New Leadership in Process Execution

By Garvin Fouts, WorkFlow Development Manager, Thomson Elite

Differentiation and the ability to execute better than your competition are keys to building and maintaining a competitive advantage in the marketplace. Many firms are focusing their budgets on technology, giving their employees best-of-breed systems for managing and analyzing data to improve service or product offerings to their clients. These systems include customer relationship management systems to keep and manage your contacts and potential clients, financial and accounting systems to manage the incoming and outgoing resources, and document management systems to manage the records of items relating to the business with a client just to name a few, and the list goes on and on. One area that has been overlooked but is now getting the attention it deserves, is the increasingly important task of business process management (BPM), i.e., managing how the firm's data gets approved and entered into these various systems. All businesses have a "process" for getting core tasks completed, but the degree of data quality control and automation involved varies significantly, from paper-pushing to partial automation and ultimately, full automation, utilizing the full range of BPM software capabilities.

Levels of Business Process Automation

Firms today are using many different technologies and methods to manage their data entry and business processes and can be categorized into four stages. At each stage, firms have identified different challenges and inefficiencies and are taking steps to address the most important issues they face.

Recognizing the Need

At the lower end of the spectrum, there are firms still using paper forms and routing them around the office via inter-office or intra-office mail or even manually moving the paper between the participants in the process. In this type of environment, many variables can affect the quality of data that is ultimately entered into the various systems such as loss of forms, non-legible handwriting, data entry errors, and partially completed forms. These inefficiencies and errors require time to address and correct, and time is money. These small delays, data clarifications, and the time to route these forms around to the required participants quickly add up to big costs in countless staff hours. At this stage, standardization and ease of movement are two key drivers to get data through the process and to the right people much more efficiently.

Moving on Up

The second level is where progressive firms have recognized the problem and have taken the initial steps to get closer to a full BPM system where they have leveraged the technical infrastructure of the firm to a limited degree. They have taken the paper form and transformed it into an electronic form resulting in the ability to move that form around the firm through email (e.g., paperless proforma). Firms at this level have addressed the manual routing delays to some extent and have also addressed the issue of standardizing the capture of data. Many of the forms are somewhat sophisticated, whether limited validation is built into the forms using macros or formulas. With these improvements, data capture standardization and increased collaboration have been addressed, but there are still efficiency issues associated with retyping data into other systems, data validation, and partial data going through the routing system. The next step is to automate the data entry and ensure data integrity throughout the firm.

Taking on the Data Integration Challenge

The third level requires much more from the IT professionals either internally or in the form of consultants. Firms at this level want to invest in their business process control and manage the data without requiring large amounts of rework and clerical activity. While they have the electronic forms and some limited data validation, firms are moving toward full automation of the data, which includes database validations, field and form level validations such as protection and required status, and database updates for the various data repositories such as the accounting or CRM system. This level is where true efficiencies begin to be realized such as validated fields cannot be entered incorrectly, multiple systems receive clean data, retyping data is minimized, and data modeling saves input time. Until this point, there was little control over the business rules and process, just data control. These firms have almost reached the point of full business process management but are missing a few key components, which are addressed in level four.

Full Business Process Efficiency

Level four is the most advanced but is also the most challenging. Firms at this level recognize the requirement for a full process management solution and have purchased or will need to purchase a full BPM system capable of automating and managing those processes. This level requires a substantial amount of time devoted to defining the needs of the organization, defining the processes and rules, and deploying the system firm-wide. Business process management consultants work closely with firms to customize the best BPM solution.

Getting Started

The biggest challenge for most firms is to define the business processes. Not only is this the most critical success factor for firms using a business process management system, but it is generally the most difficult. Why is this so challenging? Often the process that the firm's managers think is in place is very different than the process that the employees are using and following. Many of the firms are using "generational stories" to pass along the business activities inside the firm, including approval processes and exceptions to the rules. In the past, an ad hoc approach has been used where each staff member would have the ability to send the forms to the appropriate user and even bypass approvals if speed was of the essence. Firms may not have enforced process security such as defining who can begin a process other than hiding the forms in a locked directory on the network. Many firms have never defined their business processes. The challenge is to convene the appropriate process owners and users to produce and agree to a definition that is usable and realistic.

Selecting BPM Software

Once the process is defined and accepted, the next challenge is to find an appropriate BPM software solution that is powerful, scalable, flexible and fits with the organization's technology direction and capabilities. It must be easy for the end user to use as well as for the administrator to maintain and update processes. Some other features to consider are time needed to deploy and ease of development. It is important that the firm match its resources and capabilities to the tools that it will use to build the business process solution. These solutions require a substantial amount of time and resources to achieve the intended long-term outcome of work and cost efficiencies.

The BPM Competitive Advantage

Firms that reach this level can fully expect to see a number of benefits that can take them to a new level of efficiency and control. The defined business process and deployed BPM system allows the firm to define who can start and participate in a process and how much they can see and do. The process can interact with disparate systems and aggregate data for review such as client, contact, and AR information viewable for an approval stage. It can be started from another system or event in that any credit to an invoice would automatically kick off an approval process before allowing the credit to enter the system. The opportunities are endless in regards to automating the business rules and leveraging the system to control any process in the firm. Using the system, managers are able to now look at processes and work history to determine load balances, process lifecycle times, or even see what stage is holding up the process. In a non-automated process, these metrics are almost impossible to extract, but now firms have the ability to streamline and optimize their processes and enforce the business rules they require.

> *"The biggest challenge for most firms is to define the business processes. Not only is this the most critical success factor for firms using a business process management system, but it is generally the most difficult."*

As a result of new laws, such as the Sarbanes-Oxley Act, firms are now finding that there needs to be an audit capability within the business processes, especially in the financial and accounting world, where auditors and managers are able to view and record the business practices going on in the firm. With a full BPM system, firms have that audit history available including data, attachments, participants, and it gives them a fully documented control system for auditor review.

In the hyper-competitive market today where any advantage, however small, can mean the difference between success and failure, firms need to embrace change and strive for operational excellence. Complacent firms are falling behind and some will never be able to recover unless they reduce costs, create more efficient workers, and maintain the processes that set them apart from their peers. Business process management can take the firm to a new level of performance, visibility and control.

This article was first published in the March 2005 ILTA white paper entitled "Finance: Accounting in the Electronic Age," and is reprinted here with permission. For more information about ILTA, visit their Web site at www.iltanet.org.

Events

April 18 — **ALA Educational Conference & Expo**
San Francisco, CA

April 28-29 — **Glasser CIO Forum**
New York, NY

May 5-6 — **Glasser CIO Forum**
San Francisco, CA

June 5 — **SLA Annual**
Toronto, Canada

June 14-16 — **Thomson Elite User Conference**
San Diego, CA

June 22-23 — **LegalTech West Coast**
Los Angeles, CA

June 22-23 — **Corporate Legal Times SuperConference**
Chicago, IL

Letter

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The Thomson Elite user conference in San Diego is drawing near and we look forward to welcoming you to participate in this year's event, which will focus on succeeding in a climate of rising expectations and innovating in order to stay competitive. Each of our user sessions and tutorials will arm attendees with the tools needed to increase practice efficiencies and maximize return on investment in Thomson Elite products.

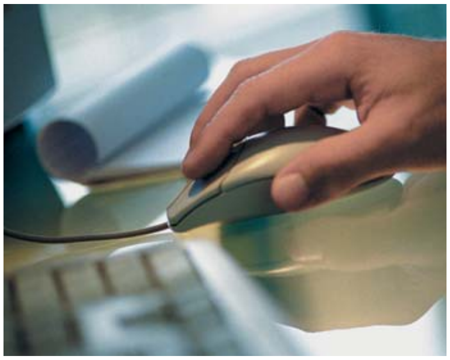
Carrying the theme of this year's conference, we also invite you to set your expectations high as we aim to help you to realize greater practice efficiencies and boost your profitability. We look forward to seeing you in San Diego, June 14-16.

Sincerely,

Chris Poole
President and CEO

FAQs

By Shelley Alvord, CPA, Sr. Consultant, Thomson Elite Global & Financial Solutions, and Fran Gonzalez, Guru, Thomson Elite Global & Financial Solutions



? How can the Trust module be used to manage Retainers

A frequently asked question about the Trust module is, "When we are tracking both retainers and trusts in the Trust module, how do you maintain the separate identity of retainers without allowing the accounting system to automatically apply them to bills?"

Trust is a module within Elite Billing Manager that tracks client money separately from firm money. The module includes features for entering deposits, generating disbursements, transferring funds, tracking balances, storing 1099 data, clearing checks and reconciling trust accounts. Standard Trust listings and reports are more than adequate for the needs of most firms.

The Trust module can be set to interact with other components of Billing Manager in the following ways:

- Matter Inquiry displays trust and retainer balances.
- The 1099 Generator can issue Trust 1099s along with A/P Vendor 1099s.
- Proforma Edit and Bill Generate can automatically apply retainer money to client invoices.
- Trust can automatically disburse checks to the firm when retainers are applied to bills.
- Ledger Credits can apply the automatic Trust disbursements to the bills.

Firms using Elite Enterprise that are concerned about identifying client retainers separately from client trust money are usually defining retainers as unearned payments that the firm can keep after it performs services for the client and incurs related costs. They define trust money as client money that the firm is holding in trust until the firm either disburses it to third parties on the client's behalf or refunds it to the client.

Many firms want some retainers to automatically apply to the next bill generated for the matter, and other retainers to remain in the accounts until operators manually apply them to firm invoices. The Trust module does not allow an operator to designate money as a retainer until the operator first instructs the specific master matter record that it is associated with a specific trust account. When Accounting enters a value in the retainer field of the Trust Receipts window, the system does two things: (1) distinguishes the retainer amounts from other trust amounts in Inquiry and reports; and (2) automatically applies it to the next bill generated for the matter.

The dilemma is that Enterprise does not presently allow a firm to designate – and therefore report – money as a retainer without automatically applying it to the next bill.

One method for reserving a retainer for manual application is to hold it in a distinct matter that is not open for time and cost entry. For example, a firm may reserve the number XXXX.7777 (where XXXX is the client number) for the matter records set up only to hold retainers.

Working in Proforma Edit on any other matter, an operator can access the Trust account for matter XXXX.7777 and apply a portion of the account balance to the bill being generated. Enterprise features allow efficient transfer of trust and retainer money from one account to another and one matter to another. The firm can apply security in User Access.

The following Trust-related defaults in Billing Manager can be employed to achieve desired results and should be reviewed:

- 5300 – Vendor ID for Auto Trust Disbursements: Creates automatic Trust Disbursements for Entities that allow automatic application of retainers to client invoices; and assigns the Vendor ID that is used for the disbursements, usually a firm vendor.
- 6500 – Note Type for Trust Warnings: Displays a warning when operators enter trust receipts and disbursements if the client has entries in the Notes System.
- 10400 – Bill Auto Trust Ledger Code: Automatically applies cash in Ledger Credits when a retainer is automatically applied to an invoice being generated.
- 10500 – Bill Auto Trust Type: Specifies the Trust Disbursement transaction type code to use for an automatic Trust batch disbursement when a retainer is automatically applied to a bill being generated.
- 10600 – Trust Batch Check for Finalized Only: Allows operators to finalize trust disbursement batches before printing the related check.
- 10900 – Require Vendor ID for Trust Check Processing: Requires the use of Vendor Identification Numbers for Trust disbursements, so that operators can generate 1099's for Trust disbursements along with 1099's for Accounts Payable vendors.

NOTE: Changing any trust setting or procedure requires a preliminary analysis of current operating procedures and a go–forward plan. *Do not change any setups or the way you are processing Trust Retainers without contacting Thomson Elite support.* Trust us on this one. Thomson Elite personnel is available to assist you.

Questions? Please contact Shelley Alvord at Shelley.Alvord@thomson.com or Fran Gonzalez at Fran.Gonzalez@thomson.com.

New! Download Hot Fixes from Thomson Elite's Customer Support Knowledge Base

Beginning with Enterprise 3.5, download links to hot fix patches will be provided for specific issues (client side only) on Thomson Elite's Customer Support Knowledge Base. The knowledge base provides access to a complete documentation library, along with release notes, troubleshooting guides and many "how-to" articles. Learn how this online resource can help you by visiting https://kb.thomsonelite.com.

Directory

Worldwide Offices

United States

Los Angeles *World Headquarter*	323-642-5200
New York	212-655-7173 or 212-655-7174
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Asia/Pacific

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Customer Support

Self Support (Knowledge Base)

https://kb.thomsonelite.com

Assisted Support

https://customerhub.elite.com

United Kingdom and Europe

UK only	08000151631
Outside the UK	+442073697470

Asia/Pacific

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Malaysia:	1800-884612
Philippines:	1800-14410157
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To learn more about the following topics, please visit Thomson Elite's Web site.

Thomson Elite User Groups
www.thomsonelite.com/supportservices/elite/user-groups.asp

Current Software Releases
www.thomsonelite.com/supportservices/elite/current-soft.asp

Partner Spotlight

Stratika PSG Changes Name to SeTech, LLC

One of Thomson Elite's consulting partners, SeTech LLC provides consulting and technical services that include planning, testing, training and post-implementation support for Elite Enterprise upgrades and Elite Financial and Practice Management systems. Additionally, SeTech offers expertise in the areas of bill and proforma template design and creation; check templates; custom reports; mergers and conversions; and Best Practices assessments. Judy Bergquist leads the Elite Consulting Practice for SeTech with more than 15 years of experience.

SeTech also offers general consulting services, including document management, database administration, and custom scripting and development work.

Learn more about SeTech, LLC and other Thomson Elite partners by visiting www.thomsonelite.com/partnersalliances.

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