

Computer Architecture & Systems – Research Assignment 2006
Assignment Brief – Overview

Assignment Weighting: 60%

Lantry, Williams & Cole Solicitors are a legal firm started in 1982 by Jim Lantry. From a modest single solicitor beginning the firm has now established itself in the locality with two other partners and a busy case load. This positive reputation allows the firm to continue to grow as it requires.

The company has hundreds of cases at any point in time (and has handled thousands of cases since it's inception); this is because once the company takes a case, depending on it's nature, the case may run for years. Whilst some cases resolve themselves quickly, some may last months such as conveyancing, others – such as certain civil or criminal cases – may run for years.

From an information generation viewpoint, the company generates large volumes of simple text based data. This is in the form of letters typed and sent, as well as received and filed.

Most of the actual work is done in this form between LWC and other firms of solicitors, or arising from attendance at court.

All paperwork generated is filed and kept indefinitely in the appropriate master case file.

Any case may generate a large amount of paperwork. Each case is allocated a case number sequentially from a ledger; the ledger is the only place that a case number may be allocated from, to prevent more than one case having the same number. Recorded also in the ledger is the name of the company client, the opposition solicitors and their clients name, and a three or four word summary of the nature of the case, for quick reference. All other data is kept in the master case file.

There is also a small element of accounting, in that all of the staff salaries are calculated in a spreadsheet devised by one of the administrative staff. The use of spreadsheets is considered sufficient for most or all operations (including the keeping of accounts) as none of this is considered too difficult for processing in this manner. For billing purposes, appointment registers and meeting logs are used.

The staff breakdown is as follows:

- 3 partners
- 4 other solicitors
- 2 administrative staff
- 5 secretarial staff

The partners and solicitors largely generate the paperwork, the secretaries process the paperwork (in and out-bound) and the two office administrators ensure that the whole operation flows as smoothly as possible.

None of the operations are computerised, but the decision has been taken to computerise all operations.

As the building has one room designed for large meetings it is suggested to make this room into one suitable for presentations/conferences

A final budget has not yet been agreed for this; Further details will follow.