

## **Epoq announces DirectLaw – a virtual law firm platform**

### **All law firms can now afford to compete in a rapidly changing market**

**London, 1st Oct 2009:** Law firms of all sizes can deal with clients online and effectively increase their hourly rates with a new solution from market innovators Epoq Legal.

The DirectLaw virtual law firm platform lets law firms engage with existing clients online and draw in new clients via the web. It leverages the same technology that major brands such as Halifax and RBS are using to offer online legal services, levelling the playing field for solicitors to compete with new entrants to the market.

Using Rapidocs®, Epoq's web-enabled document automation system, clients seeking any one of a wide range of services complete an interview online, and their answers automatically create a detailed first draft document for the firm to review, advise on and, if required, amend before returning it to the client – or seeing the client face-to-face.

This focuses the solicitor's time on providing value-added legal advice, rather than churning out boiler-plate documents. This allows them to charge a good rate – albeit cheaper to the client than before – but because they have to dedicate less time to the matter, the solicitor's hourly rate effectively goes up. DirectLaw improves efficiency by enabling firms to handle a greater volume of work.

The technology can also be used offline when meeting with clients in the usual way. Richard Denton, a partner at London law firm Stock Fraser Denton, says: *"We have been making use of Rapidocs LawDraft for speeding up the production of documents. I liked the way Rapidocs amended itself on screen as I went through the interview with the client and it significantly cut down the time I spent drafting. We now have plans to deliver legal services online to our clients with DirectLaw."*

DirectLaw is a Software as a Service (SaaS) turnkey solution. Firms can select from the comprehensive range of Rapidocs® enabled content libraries to offer clients online services, including wills, family, employment, landlord & tenant and company/commercial. DirectLaw

also provides a secure workflow environment to communicate with and manage the online experience for the client, as well as an integrated e-commerce features for online credit card purchases.

Additionally, firms can decide the best-fit business model for their practice, whether it is having an online store where services can be purchased by clients or using their site to provide an enhanced service to serve clients where fees are agreed in advance and billing is undertaken traditionally.

Richard Cohen, solicitor and Joint CEO of Epoq, says: *“The prospects for the high street have been seen as bleak in recent years, with some saying that the ‘end is nigh’ for small to medium sized firms. Yet with access to the right technology, there is no reason why these practices cannot compete with new entrants to the market and trade on their experience and expertise. DirectLaw supplies the cutting-edge workflow, content and document automation systems which will introduce economies of scale to many areas of law and help firms claw back the initiative.”*

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For further information, quotes or interviews please contact: Humphrey Clarke, Richard Cohen or Grahame Cohen on 020 8731 2424 or email: [press@epoq.co.uk](mailto:press@epoq.co.uk)

#### **About DirectLaw**

DirectLaw ([www.directlaw.co.uk](http://www.directlaw.co.uk)) enables small and medium sized law firms to service clients and compete technologically by using Web-enabled automated document assembly. The service enables solicitors to work virtually and seamlessly without the need for IT resources, thus levelling the playing field for law firms wishing to be able to compete with new entrants to the market. Firm’s using the system will be able to quickly create an online store and give themselves a new distribution channel for their clients.

DirectLaw firms will also be able to utilise Rapidocs® LawDraft to reduce their internal costs. Using this system, users can draft documents for their clients over the phone, face-to-face or in preparation for a meeting. Overall the product is aimed at enabling small to medium sized firms to reduce their operating costs, increase the recoverable hourly rate, and introduce new revenue streams; all at an affordable price.

DirectLaw is powered by Rapidocs®, the industry standard legal document automation technology from DirectLaw’s creators Epoq ([www.epoq.co.uk](http://www.epoq.co.uk)). Epoq’s clients include law firms and well known brands such as Hugh James LLP, Nelsons LLP, MORE TH>N (RSA), Halifax Legal Services, RBS and Allianz Legal Online.