iCONECT aims to boost attorney review productivity – for everyone's bottom line

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Hosted e-discovery vendor **iCONECT Development** seized an early lead on the hosted market for attorney review, building a network of service-provider partners to enable remote collaboration among law firms. The company now bolsters its core nXT review tool for better project setup, more workflow customization, greater worker productivity and closer administrative oversight – all vital in a 'time is money' industry now fighting to lower client costs. The larger strategy is a long-term campaign for enterprise sales through the upcoming early case assessment (ECA) product, INCEPT, an ROI buy for general counsel that could usher in sales of nXT. The company claims it's already making nonlegal sales in the enterprise, too, as corporations look for more scalable search and usability in navigating Big Data.

The 451 take

As on-premises incumbents have caught up to the hosted model, and with SaaS startups facing a lower barrier to entry, iCONECT has seen its early lead in the hosted market somewhat eroded in the last few years. Design upgrades signal the company is both aware of the threat and committed to staying competitive, with a focus on the customers' bottom line – not just its ASP partners, but their resale customer base. Its enterprise play with INCEPT is having a longer gestation period – many rival review vendors that released ECA tools in 2009 still suffer underwhelming review-tool sales outside of law firms – however, iCONECT claims an aggressive pricing model will make it worth the wait. New hires in sales, marketing and product development; expanded facilities in its Los Angeles headquarters; and a new office in Washington DC signal the company is putting its money where its mouth is on the new investment.

The nXT 830 has been updated for better productivity and ease of use, from the project management level down to the individual mouse click. Enhancements aim at a fast learning curve and low-click reviewer usability, admin project creation and management, workflow customization, and speeding evidence to trial with integration to **LexisNexis'** popular Casemap tool.

The updated user interface represents a combination of Outlook-like familiarity, collaboration features, rules-based task automation, and more granular search and filtering tailored to the legal use case. On the administrative side, more flexible reviewer workflow customization supports nonlinear review and greater tailoring of a project, including launching different tasks immediately for users in various roles. Batching helps divvy up and populate review assignments among teams. Customized folders can now be turned on and

off for specified access to manuals, best practices or other document-sharing through a wizard tool. Rules can be invoked to automate coding decisions and tasks, either at the user level with a wizard tool or at the admin level. An updated admin dashboard monitors review completion at a batch level.

Regarding sales, the sweet spot for iCONECT (and many hosted review tools) remains the largest-scale multi-border litigation projects, including use in the Chinese drywall and Yaz birth-control class-action lawsuits, with hundreds of litigants. Boutique law firms servicing these types of cases have offered good repeat business for the company and its more than 60 ASP hosting partners. However, iCONECT reports a growing number of sales in the enterprise, as well (often on-premises or internally hosted), not always specifically around litigation. The government sector, in particular, is receptive to better search and navigation of huge data volumes, and other customers may use the system to host every check in a banking system, for example, or in pharmaceuticals to give doctors specified access to drug studies for testing.

The company's overall vision is to move further into the corporate arena by integrating with document management and archiving vendors to enable easier data transfer directly to nXT, integrating multiple internal sources for search. Future releases of nXT will focus on more rules-based coding to streamline and further automate review. The INCEPT early case assessment tool will also be available in September for enterprise clients, providing preliminary ingestion, culling and statistical reports. The plan is to price INCEPT aggressively for maximum enterprise traction, possibly distributed through a reseller program with existing partners.

Competition

Selling primarily through its service-provider network puts iCONECT in direct competition against other companies hosting through partners – for instance, rival startup **kCura**, which has built its own partner network on a multiyear flat-fee or user-based contract model (versus per-use volume-based or user-based charging for iCONECT) with an aggressive quarterly release schedule for its Relativity tool. ICONECT defends its scalability – one project is 17 billion documents – as well as market experience, built-in functionality, database agnosticism and stable architecture as differentiators among other tools.

Both iCONECT and kCura are available on-premises, as well, since customers increasingly want either option. Likewise, former on-premises heavyweights now routinely offer a hosted version, including **Autonomy ZANTAZ's** Introspect, **CaseLogistix** (now owned by **Thomson Reuters'** West division), **CT Summation's** iBlaze (now part of **AccessData Group**), **FTI Consulting's Ringtail** and **Recommind's** Axcelerate. Other review tools are offered primarily on demand in SaaS versions, including **CaseCentral**, **Catalyst Repository Systems**, **Daegis**, **Merrill Corp's** Lextranet and **Iron Mountain's Stratify**. Many of these vendors also offer their own ECA tools or services as an entry to enterprise sales, which will compete with INCEPT.

From the enterprise side, early case assessment pioneer **Clearwell Systems** has expanded into full attorney review, while other enterprise e-discovery platform providers, such as

Guidance Software and **ZyLAB**, offer more minimal 'first pass' review. ICONECT would not likely encounter these vendors for nXT sales, since stand-alone review adoption is still nascent in the enterprise. But with INCEPT for ECA, it could encounter not only Clearwell, but processing vendors making a play in the market, like veteran **IPRO Tech** and upstart **Nuix** (both of which have their own hosted review tools, as well), and in a broader collection and information governance context, **EMC**-**Kazeon**, **StoredIQ** and startup **Digital Reef**.