

COMPARE & CONTRAST: Midsize law firm practice management software.

After evaluating practice management software as a service (SaaS) in the October 2011 issue of *Law Technology News*, I sent a request for information to LexisNexis, Orion Law Management Systems, and Thomson Reuters so I could compare their PM software installed in midsized law firms (50+ attorneys).

The aim was to investigate what is keeping midsized firms from ditching their on-premise software for the perceived benefits of cloud-based PM, to lower costs of licensing and software maintenance. The answers

I received in the chart below tell me “it’s not about matter management, stupid” — it’s about the business of law.

SaaS-based and on-premise PM software manage matters and link them with calendar and task management. What sets midsized offerings apart are the full-featured accounting packages (with accounts receivable and payable), along with software for docketing and calendar rules, conflicts management, and contact relationship management with marketing features. These systems offer deep integration with a firm’s

back-office infrastructure, such as Microsoft Exchange, SQL, and SharePoint, as well as front-office tools, such as Microsoft Office.

All of the vendors have mobile client software, but only TimeMatters has built-in support with its Mobility Service for Apple, Google, Microsoft, and RIM devices. Orion and ProLaw use third-party software tools.

Costs vary with different modules and add-ons, but all the vendors offer bulk discounts from the initial purchase price. The LexisNexis price includes the first year of maintenance. — Sean Doherty

	LexisNexis		Orion Law Management Systems	Thomson Reuters
MANUFACTURER	TimeMatters 11.1	Juris 2.5	Orion 4.4	ProLawXII R2
Integration & Operating Environment:				
API free, added cost, or not available with license	Added Cost	Free	Free	Not Available
Client-server with (d)esktop / (w)eb / (m) client	D/W/M	D	D/W/M	D/W/M
Operating environment	MSWindows	MSWindows	MSWindows	MSWindows
Database engine	MSSQL	MSSQL	Pervasive SQL	MSSQL
Practice Management:				
Calendar management	Y	N	Y	Y
Case / matter management	Y	N	Y	Y
Client intake management	N	N	Y	Y
Conflict of interest	Y	Y	Y	Y
Contact management	Y	Y	Y	Y
Docket / calendar rules	Y	N	Y	Y
Document management / assembly	Y/Y	N/N	Y/Y	Y/Y
Email integration (treat messages as document or records)	Y	N	Y	Y
Event-driven alerts (rules-based alerts)	Y	N	Y	Y
Marketing tools	Y	N	Y	Y
Records management (document retention/destruction)	Y	N	Y	N
Financial Management:				
Accounts payable	Y	Y	Y	Y
Accounts payable imaging	Y	N	Y	N
Accounts receivable	Y	Y	Y	Y
Apply payments to client ledgers	Y	Y	Y	Y
Bank statement reconciliation	Y	Y	Y	Y
Cost and fee recovery tools	Y	Y	Y	Y
eBilling / LEDES support	Y/Y	Y/Y	Y/Y	Y/Y
Payroll	N	Y	Y	N
Time management	Y	Y	Y	Y
Trust accounting	Y	Y	Y	Y
Cost:				
Starting cost per seat	\$950 (after first seat \$550)		\$850	\$1,000