

Eight years of elexica

By Mary Loosemore

Clients tell us they want current, relevant and commercially astute know how delivered in ways that make it easy for them to use it, whenever and wherever they want. Since 1999, elexica (www.elexica.com) has been the means by which Simmons & Simmons markets its legal services and expertise to contacts and clients, potential recruits and the media.

elexica (yes, with a small "e") provides:

- an extensive and fully searchable collection of high quality legal information with expert commentary and analysis from our lawyers
- a weekly EU Diary
- access to all Simmons & Simmons newsletters
- CPD accredited training modules
- a library of categorised internet links
- a current awareness email service – elexica Insiders – which keep subscribers informed of the latest important developments in areas of interest, ranging from key UK legal developments to Securities & Derivatives
- an RSS feed, enabling users to be notified of new material on elexica as soon as it is published.

elexica is a free service, but registration is required to ensure that we can provide a portfolio of additional resources to our key clients, whilst enabling other users to continue to see the breadth of our know how.

Evolution

Back in 1999 we wanted to move into online services with a slightly different approach from that taken by other firms. We wanted to send out a message that we were forward thinking, not afraid of technology and able to work in an innovative way.

Technology and the market have changed significantly since then – the first dotcom bubble has burst and more and more law firms now offer online legal services, with the internet becoming a fundamental information medium amongst lawyers, particularly the "Google generation".

Accordingly, elexica has evolved as the vehicle for getting our know how to clients and contacts:

- Home
- What's New
- In Brief
- In Depth
- EU Diary
- Newsletters
- Links
- Training
- Email Alerts
- About elexica

Welcome to elexica

Good afternoon and welcome to elexica, the **award-winning**, free online legal resource created by leading international law firm **Simmons & Simmons**.

You are not logged in. Until you log in the amount of material you can see on elexica may be limited.

1999 – elexica launched, winning two major awards within 12 months.

2004 – elexica begins feeding into the Banking Legal Technology (BLT) Portal.

2005 – Tiered access introduced, bringing exclusive access for clients to premium content.

2006 – Integration with the Simmons & Simmons (www.simmons-simmons.com) website providing online legal resources pages for each service and sector and driving seamless crossover traffic between the sites.

2006 – Introduction of RSS feeds to supplement the email alerts service.

2007 – Simmons & Simmons enewsletters fully integrate with elexica.

As a result of these developments, Simmons & Simmons' online offering is now more streamlined, giving clients and key contacts a seamless experience however they choose to consume our expertise.

Results and measurement

Results take many forms, both quantitative – numbers of registered users, numbers of document downloads – and qualitative – for example strengthening and developing client relationships.

Since we relaunched elexica in October 2006 we have seen significant increases in the number of registrations on elexica (up by 52 per cent), document hits (up by 166 per cent) and click throughs from the firm's corporate website. More importantly our clients and key contacts love the difference, and tell us so.

Internal measures are also important, such as the

Work from anywhere with mobile email from Nasstar

From just £8 per month per user access your Outlook email from your mobile or Blackberry*, through a web browser or at your desktop with Nasstar's Microsoft Hosted Exchange email service. Call us now on 0870 240 1634. For full details visit www.nasstar.com or email sales@nasstar.com * Windows mobile smart phone or Blackberry device.



NASSTAR



Nasstar plc is a Microsoft Gold Certified Partner and is listed on the London Stock Exchange.



number of contributions from each team/office (good) and the number of times know how is disseminated externally without being added to elexica (bad!). Fortunately, across the firm we are largely "good" rather than "bad".

The level of integration between the firm's two websites has brought the added benefit that our professional support and marketing teams work closely on thought leadership and other know how based client care initiatives. We see cross fertilisation of ideas between groups and across offices – whether it be sharing successful ways of using elexica in a conference context or turning internal analysis of major legal developments into an online resource for key contacts.

Managing, and the art of persuasion

All of elexica's content is provided by lawyers based in Simmons & Simmons' international network of offices, covering a variety of topics, jurisdictions and languages. The central elexica team works closely with professional support and marketing teams across our international practice and sector groups to ensure that elexica is home to all know how material produced by the firm for external consumption.

We are always looking for ways to make it easier for people to contribute – ranging from running a short session at group meetings so that people have a face to go with the name, to the more technological opportunities provided by our new document management system.

Recognition and acknowledgement are powerful means of stimulating contributions. Each month we circulate details of the most popular elexica articles in the last month. Recognising good contributions and the effort made by the contributors not only encourages them to continue but also inspires others to start. Sharing user feedback and elexica success stories at a senior level is highly effective in getting buy in from partners and directors, which in turn stimulates contributions and further conversations.

Downsides are few and usually turn out to have an upside. As elexica is a free service, user expectations are manageable – they are not expecting us to be LexisNexis. We are also careful to point out that the site provides information not legal advice.

Tiered access, keeping up to date and assessing web 2.0

When it was set up, elexica was open to all and so access to the know how available on it was not seen as a special benefit for clients. We addressed this by introducing tiered access, which allows us to make the more valuable content accessible to a selected group of users so that clients feel they are getting a benefit. This ability to ring fence articles and resources has also resulted in an increase in higher quality contributions, and indeed we increasingly work with professional support and marketing teams on knowledge resources to support our clients' business needs.

Keeping material up to date is always a challenge. We focus our attention on our most popular items, and we work with our professional support teams to undertake periodic content reviews with a view to culling or updating material. Each article carries details of the date the article was submitted and the date of its most recent review, so that readers can take a view on whether to check for more recent developments.

Technology is always on the move, and for any business the challenge is deciding which new developments merit investment of time, effort and resources. Working out how Web 2.0 can support the firm's business plan is currently providing a lot of food for thought.

We often find that technological developments bring with them the need to educate colleagues and clients about that technology. Taking RSS feeds as an example, contacts quickly grasp the benefits of using elexica's RSS feed as a current awareness service, but setting themselves up with an RSS newsreader can prove more problematic.

Looking back, it has been an eventful eight years. However, clients continue to seek access to our know how as part of the service we offer, and elexica is the means for Simmons & Simmons to meet this demand.

Mary Loosemore is the editor of elexica (www.elexica.com), the award winning online legal resource powered by knowledge from Simmons & Simmons (www.simmons-simmons.com).

Email: Mary.Loosemore@simmons-simmons.com.

Chitty on Westlaw UK

Always indispensable, always available

Westlaw™ UK

The UK's online legal information service
westlaw.co.uk 0800 028 2200 enquiries@westlaw.co.uk