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Executive Summary

Quickscribe: A Comparison and Evaluation Report

Prepared for Stem Legal Web Enterprises Inc.

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Executive Summary

Introduction

This report has been commissioned by Stem Legal Web Enterprises Inc. on behalf of Quickscribe to provide an objective comparison between Quickscribe and QP LegalEze. The report is meant to highlight the differences between the two services, and identify areas that could be improved as well as directions for future development.

Quickscribe is a small British Columbia-based business founded in 1984 to meet the needs of those seeking economical and reliable access to B.C. legislation as an alternative to legislation made available by government sources. President and CEO Mike Pasta has steered the company towards developing an online B.C. legislation service that rivals others in the marketplace.

QP LegalEze is the government offering, produced by the British Columbia Queen's Printer in partnership with the Ministry of the Attorney General and Legislative Assembly. The website indicates access by the public is made available through B.C. public libraries, government offices, and courthouse libraries. Unlike most other provinces, the British Columbia Queen's Printer provides this service on a user pay basis because it is run as a cost-recoverable operation.

Quickscribe advantages

Advantages of Quickscribe include pricing as well as timeliness of information, delivered both inside the subscription service and via its free RSS feeds. Quickscribe's

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service is easier to navigate, has superior current awareness services, and the customer service at Quickscribe is very accessible for those who need extra assistance. Quickscribe offers a free trial for anyone wishing to make a comparison.

Suggestions for improvement

The following are suggested areas for improvement:

- **functionality**: make the fonts more uniform; add a "bread crumb trail" for search results for easier navigation; remove the scroll bar for updated legislation on the front page;

- **currency information**: add a date of currency to legislation, especially for printing of current legislation and documents in the Archives; add notes on legislation that have changed names;

- **customer service**: add a help telephone number to the top toolbar; consider increasing customer service hours slightly to distinguish Quickscribe from the competition;

- **making researchers aware**: make those who publish legal research guides aware of this service so they can include it as an alternative;

- **a human face**: Mike Pasta should leverage his small company profile creating a blog to communicate with clients and potential clients;

- **visible pricing**: publish the pricing schedule; superior pricing is an advantage of Quickscribe, but because it does not publish a price schedule as the competitor does, this benefit is largely hidden from the potential customer.

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Future of digital legislation

Quickscribe currently plays the important role of bringing competition to the British Columbia legislation publishing landscape. As such, they need to stay a step ahead of the government alternative which is higher in profile and may inadvertently be seen as more authoritative by some. Quickscribe is already forward-thinking in its use of RSS and providing a portal-type experience in that the service remembers work done by the individual on previous visits. They might leverage what they have in these respects:

- **mobility**: many professionals are relying on mobile devices to access data; Quickscribe should work towards providing a mobile interface alternative;

- **widgets**: Quickscribe has built a fantastic set of RSS feeds, but many do not understand what these are or how to take advantage of them; make coding available so that clients can easily drop the RSS feeds onto their intranets and portals. This would increase clients' access to the service;

- **joint offering of niche products**: work with other small publishers to provide niche products on industry areas such as forestry, transportation and environment, and academic topics such as would be covered in law and other social science studies would help distinguish Quickscribe from its government competitor;

- **accessibility**: evaluate the service according to the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines. This is good both for certain clients who may have visual impairment and for generally all clients to ensure they can easily read the site. Quickscribe may already be compliant; it is helpful to have some indication of this on the website;

- **environmental concerns**: add a statement to the website outlining how the company addresses these concerns internally in producing the service, and give clients an idea of how their use of Quickscribe fits in with their "carbon footprint."

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Comparison of Quickscribe versus QP Legaleze

Comparison and Evaluation Summary Chart

Criteria	Quickscribe	QP LegalEze
Pricing	Starting from $295.	Starting from $415.
Look and Feel	Good layout; documents have clean layout and are easy to navigate; number of fonts should be reduced.	Drill-down menus are familiar but sometimes confusing; number of fonts should be reduced;
Content	Focus on new legislation and current research.	Focus on creating archive for historical research.
• Source(s)	Official Source	Official Source
• Comprehensiveness	• B.C. and selected federal statutes and regulations since 2004 or earlier • Orders in Council since 2004 • Bills since 2002 • selected federal legislation • forestry guide books	• Statute consolidations back to 1995 • regulation consolidations since 2003 • source regulations since 2001 • Orders in Council since 2002 • Hansard since 1992 (also available on free website) • current Private, Special and Local Statutes • B.C. Corporate Registry Notices back to 2003 (selected subscriptions only)

Criteria	Quickscribe	QP LegalEze
• Currency	• Amendments to legislation posted immediately • new legislation posted within days of proclamation • recent changes appear on front page • Amendment Tracker feature for selected legislation	• Amendments take longer to be posted • new legislation takes longer to post during busy times
• Consolidated legislation	• Current consolidations available from the main page • previous consolidated versions available immediately in the archives	•Archived consolidations made available approximately twice a year. •"Point in time" information also available.
• Historical	• Bills back to 2002 • Orders in Council back to January 2004 • archives section with past point-in-time consolidations and repealed legislation • link from current legislation to flagged previous versions • pre-2000 legislation from Quickscribe's historical paper records available to clients by calling customer service	• Table of Repealed, Replaced and Renamed Public Statutes since 1897 • list of Defunct Regulations with link to defunct regulations since August 2003 • directional notes for legislation that has changed names
Search and Results		

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Criteria	Quickscribe	QP LegalEze
• Search	• Quick search from front page, left side-bar • advanced search including Boolean search, word search, specific document search, document title search, and amendments in last two months	• Quick, advanced, Boolean and field searching • field searching allows for search of only one field at a time • specific document search
• Search results	Results are in list of legislation; click through for keywords highlighted and in context	Results list have various keywords in context ("KWIC") options
Usability		
• Learning curve	• Can be learned without much instruction • may look confusing for first-time user, but easy on subsequent visits	• Can be learned without much instruction • looks easy to use but not all the apparent navigation works, so can become confusing later in the search
• Instruction availability	• Quick Video Tutorials • step-by-step instructional screen shots on using RSS feed • RSS demo video • free personal telephone tour	• Complimentary training sessions • video tutorials on selected topics
• Portability - printing	• Easy to print either selections or full text • attractive printouts with amendments listed at the top and footers indicating source • not an official version; printouts not admissible in B.C. courts	• Easy to print full text; printing selections is by copy and paste • attractive printouts with currency indicated • not an official version; printouts not admissible in B.C. courts

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Criteria	Quickscribe	QP LegalEze
• Portability - copy and paste	Easy to copy and paste selections into other documents.	Easy to copy and paste selections into other documents.
• Portability - saving documents	PDF version easily saved but may not be obvious.	Print Preview version easily saved but may not be obvious.
Features		
• Free trial availability	Free trial available from the front of the website.	No indication of free trial, but short-term passes are available for purchase.
• RSS, alert services	• RSS feeds track new B.C. statutes, regulations and amendments, and selected federal legislation; links to text as it read before and after the change • RSS available free from the main website; password needed to access full text of documents	• Monthly alert service: Word document via email listing recent statutes and regulations • RSS available free from website, but not kept up to date
• Customization	• Clients can select legislation for their own needs under "My Account" • previous research remembered by the system • content management system under development will allow clients to upload and maintain own non-legislation related content to the server	• Custom Content Collection service available
Support		
• Help information online	Recently made available.	Not available.

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Criteria	Quickscribe	QP LegalEze
• Contact information for live support	• Easy to find contact information; toll free number available • support hours 8:30 am - 4:30 pm PST	• Easy to find contact information; toll free number available • support hours 8:30 am - 4:30 pm PST
• Responsiveness and helpfulness	helpful person answered telephone call, owner Mike Pasta usually answers the customer service line	voicemail answered the call; call returned within half hour; question could not be answered
Communication with clients	regular newsletter via email with service development notes and important changes to legislation	periodic email messages
Privacy	privacy policy available at: http://www.quickscribe.bc.ca/privacy_statement/	privacy policy not posted
Cancellation policy	not indicated on the website	not indicated on the website

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About Crosby Group

Crosby Group Consulting was founded in January 2008 in Toronto, Ontario, by Connie Crosby to help organizations and individuals start their social networking and knowledge management projects. Services include: writing for the web, content creation for blogs and wikis, creation of a web presence, information organization, and both formal and informal instruction on the use of social networking tools such as blogs, wikis, RSS, Facebook and LinkedIn.

About Connie Crosby

Connie is an expert in social networking, communication and information organization. Prior to creating Crosby Group, she was Library Manager at WeirFoulds LLP, a prominent Toronto law firm. She has acted as a leader in the Canadian legal and library industries, blogging, writing and speaking to librarians and lawyers on legal research, social networking, knowledge management and change management.

Connie has served as president of the Toronto Association of Law Libraries and on the executive board of the Canadian Association of Law Libraries. She is a founding member of Slaw.ca, a Canadian law and technology blog, and has been blogging on her blog for law librarians http://conniecrosby.blogspot.com since March 2004. She is also an instructor with the Professional Learning Centre at the Faculty of Information Studies, University of Toronto.

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About Stem Legal

Our expertise is web marketing for the legal industry.

Stem Legal was started in August 2007 by Steve Matthews. From 1998 to 2007, Steve was the Knowledge Services Director at Clark Wilson LLP in Vancouver and the driving force behind the firm's web strategy, including concept development, design, coding, web marketing and SEO operations. The vision behind Stem is to offer an outsourced service for law firms to increase online profile and web-driven business opportunities.

About Steve Matthews

Steve Matthews is the Founder and Principal of Stem Legal, a company dedicated to bringing web visibility to the legal industry.

Steve's involvement online dates back to the early '90's and includes 12 years of in-house law firm experience. His comments on web trends within the legal industry have appeared in a wide range of publications, including the CBA's National Magazine, Lawyers Weekly, ABA's Law Practice Magazine, the Texas Bar Journal and Business in Vancouver. He is considered by many to be an authority on how lawyers can strategically leverage their efforts online.

Between 1998 and 2007, Steve was the Knowledge Services Director for a mid-sized Canadian law firm Clark Wilson LLP. In this role, he was the driving force behind the firm's web strategy, including concept development, design, coding, web marketing and SEO operations. His role also included directing the firm's internal Knowledge Management program and Library Services.

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