



 Article 1 of 1

Computerworld, Nov 10, 1997 v31 n45 p4(1)

Mark

Web team sentenced to week of hard labor. (Lawyers Weekly Web site's increased traffic due to Louise Woodward decision) (Internet/Web/Online Service Information) *Sharon Machlis*.

 Print

Abstract: Judge Hiller Zobel's decision to announce his ruling on the Louise Woodward murder trial's post verdict motions via the Internet boosted Lawyers Weekly's Web site traffic from 30,000 average hits to 800,000. Zobel's actions mark the first time in history that a ruling has been posted on the Internet prior to being issued on paper. Although Zobel's decision was originally to be received exclusively by Lawyers Weekly's site, approximately 12 additional news outlets' Web sites were subsequently chosen for posting the decision. As Web users flooded the Lawyers Weekly site on Nov 12, 1997 at approximately 4:30 a.m., the Web site crashed. Although the site took only about three hours to resume business, other sites have been prepared for additional capacity needs.

Full Text: COPYRIGHT 1997 Computerworld, Inc.

Reporters from across the U.S. and Britain have been cluttering the office. Friends and family are calling to say, "I saw you on TV!" World Wide Web site traffic has exploded from about 30,000 hits one day to 800,000 the next.

It hasn't been an average week for the information technology staff at Lawyers Weekly Publications.

"It's been crazy. It's just been fabulous and madness," laughed Erin Moran McCormick, vice president of technology at Lawyers Weekly.

Life changed radically for the Boston-based company last Tuesday, when Hiller Zobel, the judge in the Louise Woodward murder trial, decided he would announce his ruling on the postverdict motions over the Internet and initially picked Lawyers Weekly as the site (www.lawyersweekly.com) to receive it. It is believed to be the first time a judge will announce a decision over the Internet, although rulings are regularly posted after being issued on paper. Court officials were concerned that clerks wouldn't be able to photocopy thousands of pages fast enough for the crush of reporters demanding instant access to the decision.

Later plans last week called for Zobel's decision to be sent to about a dozen news outlets for posting on their Web sites. Still, as the first announced site, Lawyers Weekly traffic remains high.

The trial of the 19-year-old British au pair accused of killing a baby in her care has riveted the public on both sides of the Atlantic. And suddenly, one of the world's most sought-after bits of information will Zobel reduce

or overturn Woodward's second-degree murder conviction? would be available first on a Web site that was designed solely to handle traffic from attorney inquiries.

McCormick said the first inkling she had of her company's involvement in the move was when "I found out from my aunt leaving me voice mail, who saw it on CNN."

As curious surfers flooded in, the Lawyers Weekly site crashed about 4:30 a.m. EST Wednesday, around the start of the British workday. The site was back up about three hours later when the first staffer came in. It has been up and running since, with the usual T1 line for Internet traffic. There have been a few delays getting access. Other sites that mirror Lawyers Weekly have been prepped if more capacity is needed. For now, surfers are advised to hit reload after a minute if they can't get initial access.

"I don't think any regular Web site could have planned for this," McCormick said.

Concerned about another crash in the glare of world media, McCormick said, her head programmer "set up a computer next to his bed [Wednesday] night. He kept waking up and checking" if the site was still up. It was.

Staffers expected a breather after it was announced that the decision wouldn't be released until today at the earliest. Instead, traffic got even heavier. "Our log file has gotten so big, we might have to split it in half to analyze it."

Lawyers Weekly hopes the mirror sites, including one in England at <http://louise.virgin.net/>, will siphon off much of the heavy traffic from the U.K. The staff also has turned off some graphics at the site to speed page downloading.

Meanwhile, all the attention has been a boon to Lawyers Weekly's Web advertisers, who have gotten "Super Bowl exposure for Monday Night Football prices," McCormick said. And, the hoopla hasn't hurt the Web sales force, she said. "We had a few [prospects] on the fence saying, 'OK, we want in!'"

View other articles linked to these subjects:

Judgments, Criminal

[View](#) 16 Newspaper references

[View](#) 9 Periodical references

Woodward, Louise

[View](#) 132 Newspaper references

[View](#) 62 Periodical references

Woodward, Louise - Cases

[View](#) 26 Periodical references

[See also](#) 9 other subdivisions

Computerworld, Nov 10, 1997[View](#)

other articles in this issue

Library holdings and other related sources

This journal is part of your library's collection, as described below. Please check to see if this issue is currently available.

Date Range Location Media

current year NEWSPAPERS paper

Print, e-mail, and other retrieval options

Browser Print — *Full Text* —

Reformat for printing (approximately 2 pages) from your browser. To return to InfoTrac, use the *back* function of your browser.

Acrobat Reader — *Full Text* —

Retrieve for viewing and printing from Acrobat™ Reader. Please allow a few minutes for the retrieval operation to complete (approximately 2 pages)

E-Mail Delivery — *Full Text* —

We will send a plain text version to the e-mail address you enter (e.g. *bettyg@library.com*).

E-Mail Address: Subject
(defaults to title):

Article 1 of 1

[Copyright and Terms of Use](#)