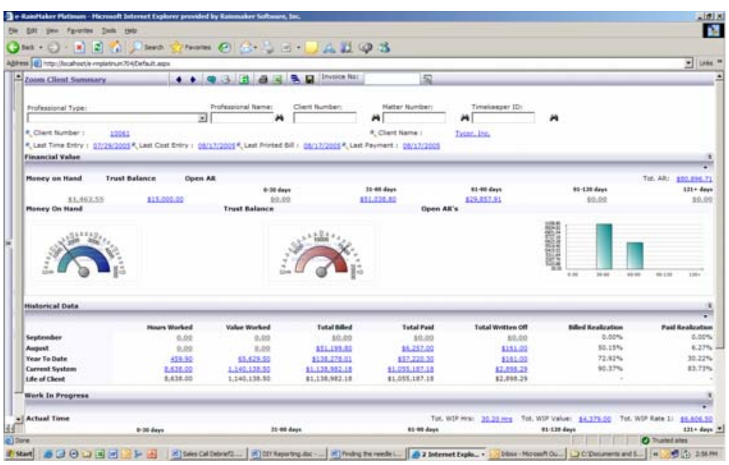
Finding the Needle in the Haystack
Marcy Fisher, Regional Sales Manager, RainMaker Software, Inc.

SUPPOSE you really had to find a needle in a haystack. How would you do it? And how big would the needle have to be for you to have a real chance of finding it? These may seem like silly questions but a version of this problem occurs every day within the management of a typical law firm. Let's say, for example, that your 90-day+ receivables total suddenly takes a dramatic jump upwards. Is it one department, one client, a particular bill or one attorney's time? How would you organize your search to find the cause?

Most financial applications make for unrealistic haystack searching. Ideally, it should be as easy to check the bottom and the middle of the haystack as it is to check the sides. In actual practice, many applications require you to select a spot randomly, inspect it, and if it is needle-free, step back, select another spot and so on. Eventually, you find the needle, but it probably takes you a lot of time (and reports or spreadsheets).

A better way would be to start in the vicinity of a selected spot, and employ the use of a "navigator" to drill down through the layers directly to the "needle" in question. The navigator would present each layer to you with increasing granularity until you've finally narrowed it down to the "needle." With such a tool, you would certainly waste less time and energy stepping in and around the haystack. And your chance of success would increase, even if the direction of each step was random.

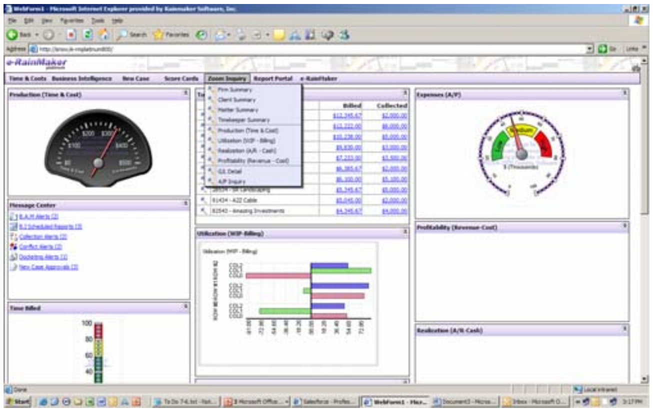
RainMaker's new ZOOM .NET Inquiry is just that - a navigator to help you spot individual anomalies or small clusters of data among the volumes of information held in your accounting and billing database – or the "needle in the haystack." The module begins with a "jazzy" Intranet site designed to make it easy to use (because, first and foremost, you need to be able to *find* what you're looking for), with data visualization features like graphs and gauges, and simple one-click drill down through various layers to the detail.



ZOOM .NET gives your attorneys and staff the ability to easily:

- Monitor the business activity of their clients and matters.
- Analyze financial performance of a single or group of offices, practice areas, departments or the entire firm, all from one screen.
- Customize their desktop view with advanced graphic tools to visualize variances and trends of all major business activities.

- Analyze their own productivity, view aged time in WIP, working attorney AR and other metrics.
- Look up, print or fax copies of client bills from the desktop.
- Drill down to a specific time entry, cost entry, cash payment entry or trust activity entry.
- Effectively manage their own section of the "haystack."



RainMaker ZOOM .NET Inquiry is an early release of one part of a planned Business Activity Monitor (BAM) suite of browser-based management tools that will combine RainMaker's existing Business Intelligence, ZOOM .NET and Digital Scorecards into a single Intranet site. RainMaker's Business Activity Monitor will answer the critical need to:

- *Display a variety of key metrics* – to see the both the "needle" and the "hay."
- *Make complex patterns stand out* – to easily identify relationships that are relevant.
- *Interact with the data* – to focus on interesting subsets as you drill down.
- *Be easy to understand* – to make learning quick, make the information usable by a wide audience and to facilitate communication among stakeholders and decision-makers.

When released, the Business Activity Monitor will include performance indicators for such items as cash, billing, receivables, profitability and gross margins, realization and utilization, recorded and billed time along with other key components. As in the ZOOM .NET Inquiry component, BAM screens will also offer data visualization aids like speedometers, gauges, and trend analysis graphs, allowing you to easily use visuals to see multiple attributes at once. Other web modules, such as RainMaker's NMI (new matter intake workflow), Smart Alert messaging, and time/expense entry will complete the Business Activity Monitor portal and present a true professional desktop to your partners and staff.

RainMaker can help you find that "needle," with better business intelligence tools and search capabilities. You'll appreciate it the next time you dive into that haystack!

RainMaker Software, Inc. provides proven, practical and progressive Financial and Practice Management systems designed to help mid-to-large sized law firms and legal departments effectively and profitably manage and grow their business. With more than 36 years of legal-specific development experience, RainMaker has consistently delivered stable and feature-rich, yet easy to use solutions.

For more information regarding RainMaker's products, interested parties can contact the sales department at 1.800.341.4012 x3413 or via email at legalinfo@rainmakerlegal.com.