



News Release

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RECORD NUMBER OF SEARCHES AS CREDIT CRUNCH BITES

Technology is facilitating increasing access to information underpinning the credit economy. Searches, particularly online, of the Register for County Court Judgments, Orders and Fines reached record levels in Q1 2008, according to statistics published today (June 20) by Registry Trust, the not-for-profit company which collects and distributes judgment information in the public interest throughout the UK.

In Q1 2008 there were over 10,000 searches of the register made by the public, the highest quarter since the register began to be administered by Registry Trust in 1986.

In Q1 2008, the number of County Court Judgments in England and Wales dropped by 10 percent to 261,474. Consumer judgments dropped by 11 percent, while commercial judgments against businesses dropped by three percent.

Issuing the quarterly statistics, Malcolm Hurlston, Chairman of Registry Trust, said:

“As the credit crunch has hit home, we have seen an uptake in the number of searches of the register. The ease of use of the online search facility is such that it is fuelling the growth, and over two thirds of searches now happen online.

“With no end in sight to the current economic difficulties, I would expect searches to remain historically high throughout 2008. Should the UK economy enter into recession then we would expect judgments to rise significantly. Thankfully this has yet to happen.”

Table 1: Searches of the register (all jurisdictions)

	Q1 2007	Q2 2007	Q3 2007	Q4 2007	Q1 2008
Postal	2,852	2,598	3,049	2,598	2,484
Personal	1,286	1,102	708	688	881
Internet	5,675	5,512	5,317	5,716	6,926
Total	9,813	9,212	9,074	9,002	10,291

Table 2: County Court Judgments in England and Wales

	Q1 2007	Q2 2007	Q3 2007	Q4 2007	Q1 2008
Consumer	241,596	173,732	190,402	190,798	213,181
Commercial	49,654	45,673	47,449	42,619	48,293
Total CCJ	291,250	219,405	237,851	233,417	261,474
Y/y change	17.0%	-10.0%	-15.2%	-6.0%	-10.2%

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Notes for editors:

1. Registry Trust maintains judgment registers in the British Isles, including (under contract to the Ministry of Justice) the Registry of Judgments, Orders and Fines which covers England and Wales only. Judgment records are an important factor in avoiding debt and in assisting responsible lending decisions, which in turn support a modern and stable economy.
2. Full statistics are available from Registry Trust's website: <http://www.registry-trust.org.uk>
3. Anyone may search for entries against a named person or business at a stated address or a corporate body by submitting a request and paying the appropriate fee either via Registry Trust's website <http://www.registry-trust.org.uk> or by post to Registry Trust, 173-175 Cleveland Street, London W1T 6QR.