

## Set up a web site

To set up a web site for your company, there are a number of steps you will need to take:

1. Make some clear decisions about why you want a web site.
2. Register a domain name. While not actually essential, this is certainly a step we would recommend.
3. Decide where the web site will reside or be 'hosted'. This could be on one of your own computers, but setting it up is not trivial. You would be best advised initially to select one of the many companies, which offer web-hosting services.
4. Have your web site designed.
5. Load the web site up to the computer (server) of the web site hosting company. Your web site developer should do this for you.
6. Your web site now needs to be registered with at least a dozen of the main search engines including those based on popularity and some "niche" engines if you are in a particular industry, eg motor vehicles, fishing.
7. Test the site and get some other people to look at it from their own computers to make sure that it looks good on a variety of computers.
8. "Launch" the site with whatever media coverage you think appropriate. Promote the address of your site by including it on all company stationery.
9. Make periodic checks of how many visits your site is receiving. The web hosting company should provide you with a simple way to do this.

### Deciding on a web site

It's very important to have a clear idea of just why you want to set up an Internet web site, what you expect to get out of it, and what it will be worth to you.

Address the following questions:

#### What are the benefits I am seeking from having a web site?

Be careful, here. It's hard to justify a standalone web site solely on the basis of advertising to new customers. There has to be a reason for people to come looking at your web site, so unless you have a very unique product, few people will look at it unless you spend a lot on promoting – or advertising – your site. There doesn't seem to be much point in spending money to advertise your advertising! The benefits of a web site lie more in the areas of providing on-going information to existing clients, demonstrating your range of products or services to clients, in generating revenue through on-line sales, or through a valuable online service.

#### Why would my customers want to visit my web site?

As we said above, there has to be a reason for people to come and look at your web site, and a reason for them to keep coming back. You need to offer something of value. While people are unlikely to come looking for blatant advertising, a detailed catalogue of your products or list of your services with current prices may be of value. However, if you can think of some valuable free service that you can offer to bring people to your web site, they are likely to browse around once they are there.



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## How will the web site assist my business?

If you can find a way in which your web site can improve your productivity, open new markets and cut your costs, then that is the best of all possible worlds.

## How to register a domain name

The domain name is the part of an e-mail address after the '@' symbol, or the first part of a web site address or Universal Resource Locator (URL), eg [www.ause.net](http://www.ause.net) is referred to as the domain name of AUSe.NET's web site. (Strictly the domain name itself is just the part after the "www", eg [ause.net](http://ause.net) )

It is possible to set up a simple web site under the 'umbrella' of another organisation such as one of the Internet Service Providers. This might give you a web site address such as [www.ISP.com.au/~mycompany](http://www.ISP.com.au/~mycompany). However, while this is fine for an individual, this looks less than professional for a business, and has the major disadvantage that if you were to need to change your Internet Service Provider, your web site address would change, possibly requiring changes to your stationery and publicity material.

If you are serious about setting up a significant and useful web site for your company, you should register your own domain name. You will generally find that the company, which will host your web site, will register the domain name for you for a fee, but it is quite simple to do yourself. You should try to register a domain name, which is easy for your visitors to recall. However, because domain names are a restricted resource – once a particular name has been registered, no other company can use it – registration is under control of a central body in each country, and there are a number of rules about whether you can register a particular name.

In Australia, commercial ('.com.au') domain name registration, which covers most businesses is administered by Internet Names Worldwide Ltd.(INWW) and the easiest way to register a name, or check whether it is free, is to go to their web site at: [www.inww.com.au](http://www.inww.com.au) and follow the instructions there\*. Other domain names are administered by other organisations. All of the rules about what you need to register a commercial domain name are on this site, but briefly, to register a domain name in Australia:

- You must either have a company with an ACN/ABN number you can quote, or a Registered Trade Name with a registration number you can quote.
- If you are a non-profit organisation, educational organisation, association, a government body, or other non commercial organisation, you may be better advised to register a domain ending in .org.au, .edu.au .asn.au, .net.au, .gov.au, or other. To register these types of domains, look at the [www.aunic.net](http://www.aunic.net) web site.
- The domain name you are seeking to register must not already be registered (this can be a shock to some companies who find that they have missed out on the most obvious domain name for their company).
- The name (without the "www" and before the "com.au") must be a single word with no spaces, though hyphens and underscores are allowed, if not advisable.



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- The name must be able to be made up from consecutive letters that are in the company name or registered trading name. If your company's name was Joe Blow Engineering, for example, any of these would be acceptable domain names: joeblow.com.au, jblowengineering.com.au, blowengine.com.au, jbenigneer.com.au.
- You cannot register a name, which generically covers an entire industry. The company above would be most unlikely to be granted the right to register engineering.com.au.
- If you chose to select a .com.au domain name, you will need to pay Internet Names Worldwide Ltd a fee.

The following is recommended as sensible practice:

- Don't use uppercase letters in domain names, as Internet users generally do not expect this.
- Don't use hyphens and underscores, as they are difficult to type.
- Don't make the name too long or too difficult to type correctly.

Once you have registered a domain name, you don't actually need to set up a web site straight away. Your registration will prevent other companies registering the same name, whether your own web site is online or not.

When you come to setting up your web site, you can delegate the domain name to the web hosting company (or of course, to yourself if you are setting up your own server) and they will essentially publish the domain name on the Internet, so that computers around the world will be able to find it. If you need to change your web hosting company, you can re-delegate the domain name to the new company, and your web site visitors will never know the difference.

## How to find a web hosting company

A web hosting company is one, which will let you set up your web site on their computers. All of the major Internet Service Providers also offer web hosting services to their customers, generally including hosting the web site, hosting your domain name, providing multiple email addresses, etc.

While some ISPs allow you to set up a simple web site for free, this would not include your own domain name, and we recommend against this for a business. (See "How to Register a Domain Name")

If you already have an Internet Service Provider, it is certainly worth approaching them first to get their costs for hosting a web site with your own domain name. But check their costs and services against those of some other organisations.

You will find that there are a range of monthly fees depending on how large your web site will be, and how many 'hits' or visits it is likely to receive. In general, web hosting is inexpensive - for a small set up fee and ongoing monthly fees you can get a web hosting service that includes:

- A web site up to 50MB.
- Hosting your company's domain name.
- 20 email boxes.
- Support for secure transactions.
- Provision of statistics – how many people accessing different parts of your site.
- 500Mb of data transfer from the site each month.
- Support for forms, access to databases, etc.



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It is also suggested that an initial site for a small to medium business would typically be less than 10MB in size, unless there is a need for lots of graphics such as photographs for a catalogue, and would probably receive less than 50,000 hits per month.

If you require very advanced features, or have very high usage rates on your web site, you will find that the web hosting company will want to charge higher fees. It is a matter of deciding what the value of these services will be to your company.

The web hosting company should include as part of its package the provision of detailed statistical information on how often your web site pages are being visited. This information can be extremely valuable, and can even include details of how often your site is visited from various countries around the world and which pages inside your site have been looked at.

## How to find a web site developer

There are literally thousands of companies offering to set you up with a web site, for prices ranging from \$500 up to \$500,000. So how do you make sense of all of this?

- ☑ Firstly, you need to have a very clear idea in your own mind of why you are setting up a web site, what your business objectives are, and what you want to get out of it. These aspects are the main focus of the e-Business Seminars and Workshops at your local State Development Centre, but you should also read our Fact Sheet “Deciding on a Web Site” as well.
- ☑ Secondly you should work out, if you can, what you think the web site will be worth to you, and therefore what you are prepared to spend to achieve these potential returns.
- ☑ You should also look towards the future, and try to build a longer-term relationship with a developer. For that reason, if you plan to provide transactional features such as on-line sales further down track, you would be advised to find a developer who can help you with such features eventually.
- ☑ As you would do with any new supplier, try to determine if the developer has been in business for a while, and is likely to be there in a year’s time to help you with changes to the web site. Your 13-year old nephew or niece may be a computer whiz and can set up your initial web site today, but he or she may have other interests next year!
- ☑ You should also strive for some professionalism. Your web site will represent your company as much as street signage, letterhead or brochures, and should demonstrate a professional appearance. At the same time, don’t pay a fortune for slick, animated graphics and 3D modelling if that isn’t the normal company style.
- ☑ It is very difficult to be prescriptive about what you should pay for an initial web site design. There is no lowest price, as some individuals or organisations will set you up some kind of initial web site for free. But this may not meet your needs or your requirements for professionalism as indicated above. However, an initial web site of modest size and complexity should probably not cost you more than \$10,000 as an upper limit unless there are special requirements. As usual, you will get what you pay for and a web site can be built for a few hundred dollars up to several thousand. Research shows SMEs pay around \$2,000 for a reasonable site.



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Here are some questions to ask of a potential web site developer:

- How long have you been in business?
- Can you give me the web site addresses of some web sites you have developed? (You should make a point of looking these up. If you don't currently have access to the Internet yourself, ask at your local State Development Centre or Council Library, or go to an Internet Café or get the company to mail you some colour printouts of these sites).
- If I send you some company information, can you look at it and provide me with a firm quote for developing a web site based on that information?
- Can you develop a web site with transactional features such as a database back-end or on-line sales using credit card facilities?
- Find out what it will cost to make changes and updates to your web site. Find out an hourly rate if you can.
- Check if it will be possible for you to make your own minor updates yourself, and what software the developer would recommend that you use to do this.

## Further information

The following fact sheet provides further information on these issues:

- Benefits of e-commerce