Devonport
Online Access Centre

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A Taste of E-commerce

E-commerce for beginners

Presented by John Guenther

Cat Conatus
Striving for excellence in every endeavour

Preface

Application and Version Differences

Because of version and preference differences, screen shots and descriptions may differ slightly from what a trainee may experience in the training environment. Where possible, the manual has been designed with the training environment in mind.

Cat Conatus Support

Cat Conatus offers free phone support for any material covered - and any other questions you may have. Most times a quick phone call will solve the problem and you'll be on your way.

Contact John Guenther on

Mobile: **0412 125 661**

Fax: **6425 4005**

Office: **6425 9016**

Email: **john@catcom.com.au**

If we can't answer your problem right away, we'll return your call within 24 hours.

About this Manual

This Manual has been developed for the sole purpose of Online Access Centre courses. It may not be copied without express permission of the author / presenter.

Course Structure

This course contains examples and detailed instructions.

Links to additional information can be obtained from:

http://www.catcom.com.au/ecom/

This site is used extensively through this course as a springboard to examples, illustrations and resource downloads

Course Objectives

By the end of this course you will

❑   understand what e-commerce is and what forms it can take

❑   have considered some of the advantages of engaging in e-commerce

❑   be able to develop an e-commerce strategy for your business

Module 1 – Accessing web sites

By the end of this module you will

❑   be able to use an internet browser to access web sites

❑   be able to navigate your way around the web

Getting Started

We'll assume here that you know how to turn on and switch off a computer. Start the

Internet Explorer browser by double-clicking the [Internet Explorer icon] on the desktop.

Internet Explorer

Let's take a look at Internet Explorer's main toolbar.
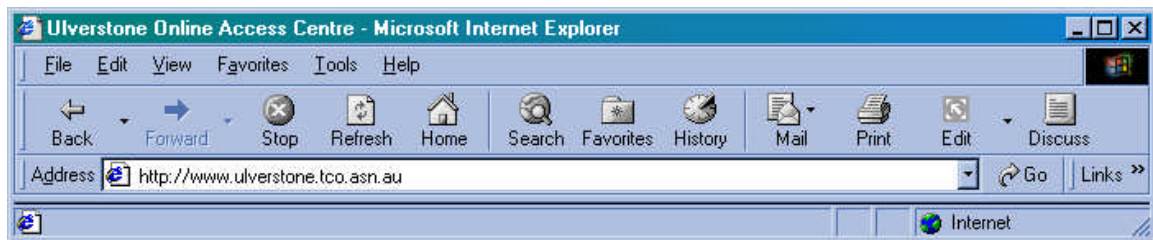
Table 1 explains each button and how you can use it.

Exercise 1 – Exploring the browser

1. Click on each of the buttons listed in the table below in both browsers to see what happens.

2. Find out what makes a button available or 'greyed out'.

Table 1 - Browser buttons and features

Internet Explorer toolbar button	What it does
Back	Goes back to the previous page. If greyed out, it means you can't go back further.
Forward	Goes forward to the next page in the order you visited them. If greyed out, it means you can't go any further forward.
Stop	Stops the browser from trying to go to an address.
Refresh	Reloads the current page and brings it up to date by checking for newer versions of the file.
Home	Sends you back to your home page. This is set under Tools | Internet Options in Internet Explorer 5.
Search	Directs you to a search page where you can type in a keyword or search by a category.
Print	Prints the current page.
(status bar)	Tells you whether you are at a 'secure' site for example when conducting confidential transactions. In IE5 a padlock appears in the status bar.
Favorites	Allows you to 'bookmark' your favourite sites for quick reference.
History	Displays a list of sites you have recently visited.
Mail	Opens up your default mail program. This button does not work if you have a Hotmail or web based account.
Address http://apcmag.com/	The address bar is used for typing in an address that you already know.

Accessing Internet web sites

When you know the address of a web site, it's just a matter of typing it into the
Address bar, as shown in the illustration below and pressing the ENTER key on the
keyboard.

Rules for web addresses

Domain names

The following diagram explains the parts that make up a web address (or domain
name).
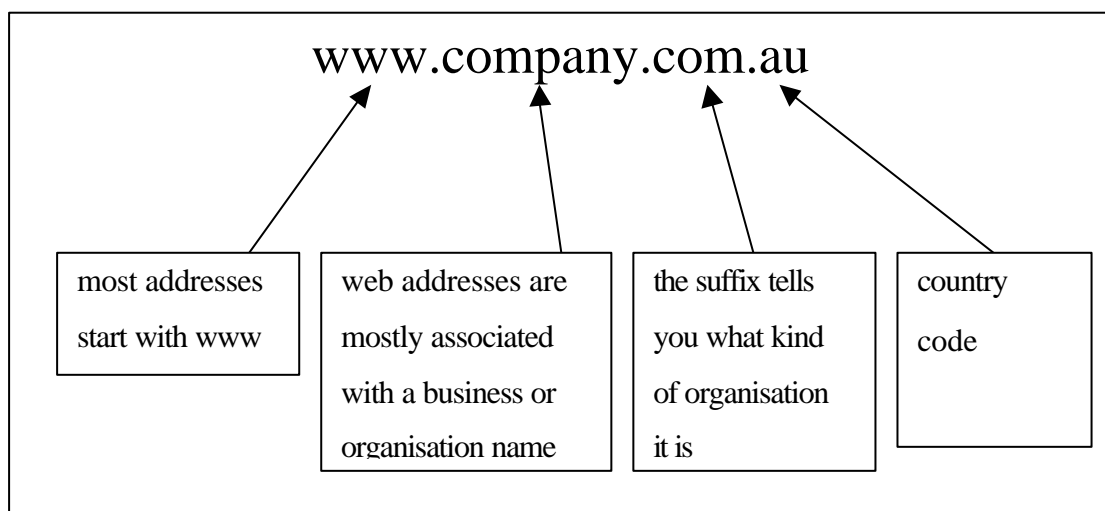
Guessing web addresses

The *domain names* of larger organisations are generally pretty easy to guess. You don't have to type in the **http://** part, because the browser assumes that this is the kind of address you are looking for.

Take Table 2 for example:

Table 2 - Easy to guess URLs

Organisation	Address
Optus	http://www.optus.com.au
The Advocate Newspaper	http://www.theadvocate.com.au
Westpac	http://www.westpac.com.au
Myer Direct	http://www.myerdirect.com.au
Service Tasmania	http://www.service.tas.gov.au
Centrelink	http://www.centrelink.gov.au
St Vincent de Paul	http://www.vinnies.org.au
American Red Cross	http://www.redcross.org
TAFE Tasmania	http:///www.tafe.tas.edu.au
ABC	http://www.abc.net.au

Suffix codes

Here are the common suffixes you will find.

Suffix	What it means
com	commercial organisation
org	non-profit organisation
gov	government organisation
edu	educational institution
net	networking organisation
asn	Australian association
mil	military organisation

Country codes

Most country codes follow a simple pattern. Here are a few examples.

Country	Code	Country	Code
Australia	au	New Zealand	nz
United Kingdom	uk	Germany	de
France	fr	Canada	ca
Indonesia	id	South Africa	za

Search Engines

Search engines are massive databases of web pages that are *registered* with the organisation that owns the search engine. By typing in a word or phrase, the search engine will provide you with a list of sites with those words. Alternatively, you can search by a category and narrow down your search that way. A list of some search engines is shown at www.catcom.com.au/search .

Hyperlinks

Many sites will provide you with links to related sites. The links will be attached either to a button or to an underlined word.

The example above shows what happens when you move your mouse pointer over a hyperlink. The image used for the 'ATO*assist*' logo takes you back to the ATO home page, while the underlined words take you to other pages in the 'Business' section.

Back and Forward Buttons

'Back' and 'Forward' buttons save you time when you are reviewing where you have been. Once you have visited a site, your computer stores the files associated with the

site in what is called the *cache* of the computer – a short-term storage area especially set aside for web pages. Often a site with lots of images or sound will take a long time to download, but by using the back and forward buttons you can save time because the browser recalls the files from its cache and displays those files, not the ones from the remote server.

Exercise 2 – Simple Navigation

1.   Open a browser window by clicking on the desktop shortcut for Internet Explorer.

2.   Take one of the addresses in Table 2. Type the URL into the address / location bar of your browser.

3.   Identify the links to other pages within the site and explore the site.

4.   Try to find links that take you *out* of that site.

5.   Use the 'Back' and 'Forward' buttons to review where you've been.

Tip: www.whatis.com is a great site for finding out what all these strange terms really mean

Favourites and history

Favourites are a convenient way of storing web sites that you may want to visit again in the future.

Adding Favourites

Adding Favourites in Internet Explorer is just as simple.

When you click on the 'Favourites' button in the toolbar, a separate window appears with a list of 'Favourites'.
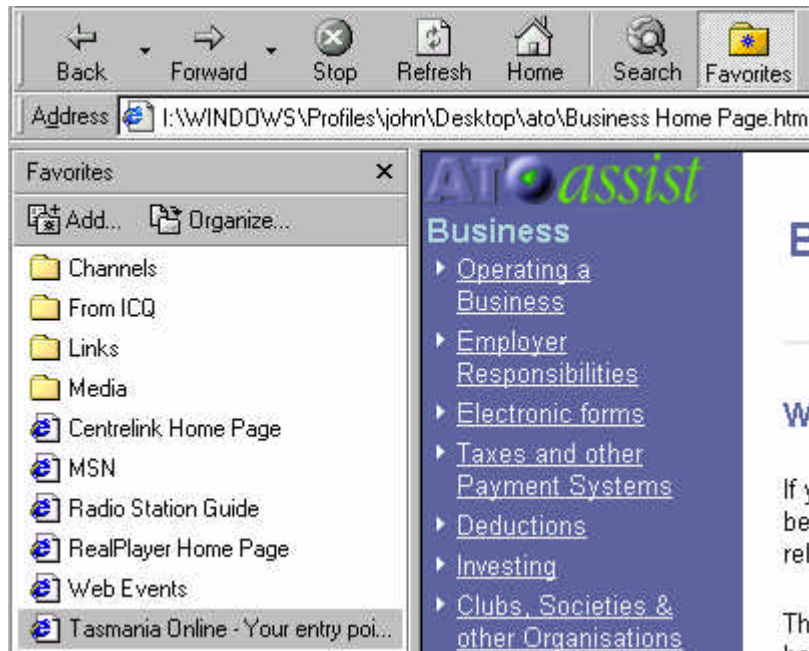
When you find a site you wish to add to 'Favourites' click on the [Add...] button and you can then organise your favourite into a folder (if you want).
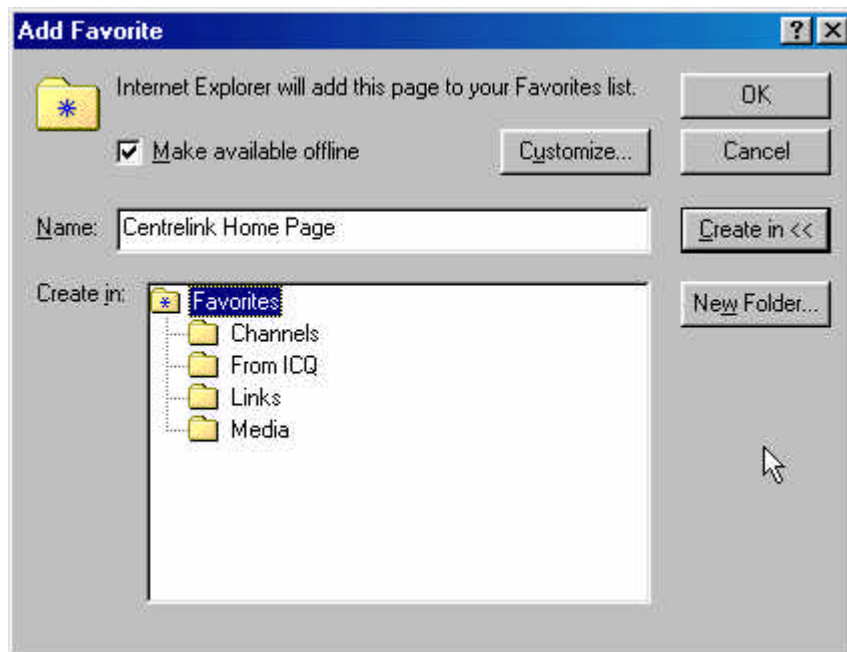
Next time you look in your 'Favourites' list, you will find your site on the list.

History Files

'History' has the advantage of being able to be viewed when off-line. Because Online Access Centres are always *online*, this is not so much of an issue. When you dial in

from home, however, being able to view the sites you have visited the day or week before, can be a distinct advantage.

Note that History will only be recorded in the browser you are using.

In Internet Explorer, click the History button and you will see a list of recently visited sites organised into folders.
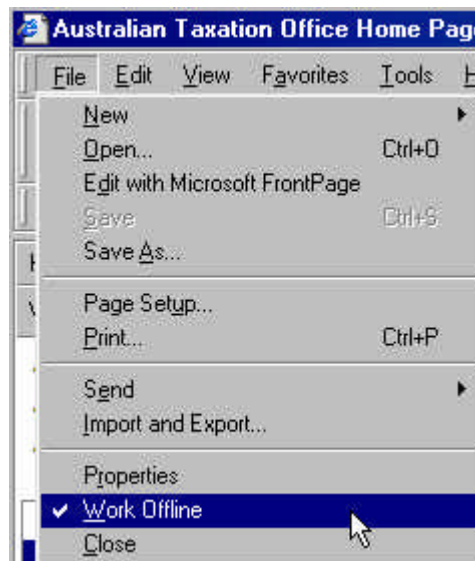
To view the files offline, you must click File | Offline. Then the files will be available offline.
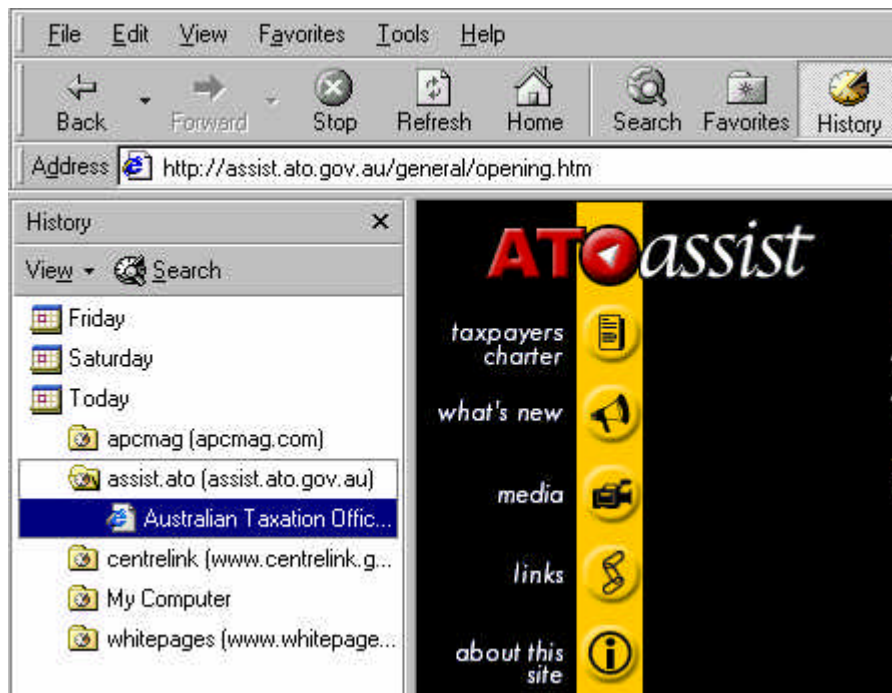
Module 2 – What is e-commerce?

In this module you will

❑   find out what the term 'e-commerce' covers

❑   look at a number of web-sites that use different levels of e-commerce

❑   consider the benefits of getting your business into using e-commerce at one or more levels

E-commerce: what is it?

E-commerce encompasses a whole host of concepts, technologies and ways of doing things.

From the www.tecc.com.au web site:

Using Electronic Commerce you can:

- Send letters, documents, orders, or advertising material around the world, almost instantaneously and low cost;

- Create a store-front on the Internet so that people around the world can find and access your business

- Buy or sell around the world via the Internet - do business with anyone, anywhere in the world at any time;

- Provide better information and services to businesses and consumers;

- Streamline your business processes and reduce costs.

Electronic commerce provides new ways to deliver the information and services that form the foundations of business relationships and business transactions.

It provides both businesses and consumers with opportunities and advantages that make it superior to conducting business in a face-to-face or paper-based manner.

Ways of using e-commerce

Perhaps the best way to think about what e-commerce is to see it in action.

We'll use a web page specially set up with a few links to check out, to demonstrate some of the ways you can *use* e-commerce. Type this address in your browser's address bar:

http://www.catcom.com.au/ecom/

From here, we'll explore things like:

- where to get information about e-commerce

- ways of buying and selling goods and services over the net

- how to use the Internet for networking and keeping in touch with customers

- how you can set up Internet banking

- how to deal with the Tax Office electronically
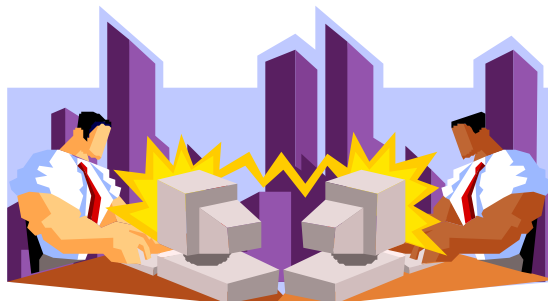
In this course we won't be looking at e-mail, and we won't be looking at how to get information and resources from the web (those topics are covered in other Taste of e-commerce courses), but these things are a part of e-commerce.

One of the best places to start when you are considering e-commerce is the TECC web site. There is heaps of information that should answer many of your questions.

Remember: e-commerce is not just about selling on the Internet

Consider the benefits of e-commerce

We could talk a lot about many of the benefits of building an e-commerce strategy into your business, but the best way to look at these benefits is to take a look at examples. Again we will be using the TECC web site which includes a number of case studies of Tasmanian business that have successfully used the Internet in a variety of ways. You can either type the following address into your browser or at the bottom of the web page we have just been using you can click on the link entitled "Consider the benefits".

http://www.tecc.com.au/5Online_Library/2Case_Studies/

From here we can explore what several kinds of small to medium business enterprises have done in Tasmania to use Internet technologies to get into e-commerce.

In a nutshell…

We could summarise the benefits in terms of the following:

- opening up new markets in places where your business has no geographical presence or where it would not be feasible to establish one.

- increased efficiency achieved through electronic data exchange with existing customers, suppliers and other participants in your business.

- the ability to collaborate with business partners in diverse locations using tools like email and real time Internet conferencing solutions.

- the ability to cut out the 'middle man' and market direct to your customers with orders coming through a web site interface and linking with sales and inventory databases.

- cost-effective promotion of your businesses' goods and service with the ability to keep information up to date and fresh.

- cost and time savings achieved through internet ordering and procurement.

The reality is that as more and more businesses get online, there will be an expectation that your business will also be able to deal electronically with your customers and suppliers.

Pitfalls

There are pitfalls too. It is worth being reminded that e-commerce is not a cure all for your marketing problems. In fact it brings with it several problems that you will need to work through in order to get the best out of it. That's why we'll be looking at an e-commerce strategy for your business in the next module.

Module 3 – Developing an e-commerce strategy

In this module you will

❑   think about possible ways your business could use e-commerce strategies.

❑   consider practical steps for achieving your goals

❑   consider the costs involved

Pathway through the e-commerce maze

The following diagram shows a possible way forward with e-commerce.

We'll consider each step in turn.

Gather information

Assess your markets and suitability for e-commerce

Spend time browsing the Internet. What are others doing?

Talk to people in business who are already using the net.

Find out about industry incentives.

Talk to your bank.

Get started

Consider ISP and web-hosting options. Get connected.

Use e-mail. Start networking electronically.

Use Internet banking, ordering, e-tax. Get used to it!

Register a domain name for your business.

Get a web presence

Get a simple web site set up. DIY or professional?

Publicise your site using conventional means.

Register with search engines.

Secure transactions

Use an Internet consultant to coordinate site development.

Set up secure servers, banks and payment methods.

Set up an online catalogue.

Gathering information

Gathering information is the first place to start. Here are some suggested points of contact. Remember at this stage you don't even need your own Internet connection or computer for that matter. Use the resources of your local Online Access Centre – that's what they are there for.

- Discuss Internet use with colleagues and other people in similar businesses. Find out what works and what doesn't for local people.

- Get some magazines and read widely. (See Appendix 2 for a recommended list)

- Think about the nature of your business and what kind of e-commerce model would best suit your circumstances. Some of the questions you might need to ask are:

    o Will an online presence open up new markets?

    o Are there businesses in my industry already online?

    o What are the trends for marketing in my industry?

- Talk to your industry association to find out about incentives, subsidies and grants that may apply to you.

- Discuss e-commerce with your bank.

- Talk to impartial people in the know. Your local Online Access Centre is a good place to start. Appendix 1 has a list of North-West coast OAC phone numbers.

- Take time to browse the Internet and look for examples of the kind of thing businesses in your industry are doing on the net. Look for things like:

    o Web sites of varying complexity. Try to identify what you like and dislike.

    o Discussion groups and forums for your industry that you can sign up with.

    o Ways that others promote their business online. Look at advertising and promotional tools.

Getting started

At some stage you will have to get started. There is nothing like personal experience.

ISPs

An Internet service provider (ISP) is an important part of the process. A good ISP will not only give you access to the Internet, but a range of other services as well. Here are some ISPs that offer services on the North-West coast.

Provider	Local Call Access Area	Address
Hotnet	Port Sorell - Somerset	http://www.hotnet.net.au/
Trumpnet	State wide / Interstate	http://www.trump.net.au
Southern Internet Services	State wide	http://www.southcom.com.au
Tassie's Access Server	State wide	http://www.tassie.net.au
Vision Internet Services	State wide / Sydney	http://www.vision.net.au
Telstra Bigpond	Australia wide	http://www.bigpond.com
VP Microtech	Launceston - Somerset	http://www.microtech.com.au
Active Internet	Launceston - Rocky Cape	http://www.activeinter.net.au
Ozemail	Australia wide	http://www.ozemail.com.au
Satway	Australia wide	http://www.satway.com.au/
Our Net	State wide	http://www.our.net.au
Global Freeway	National (not easy to get signed up)	http://www.globalfreeway.com.au
WinNET	National	http://www.winnet.com.au

Here are some questions you can ask before you sign up:

- **How fast are your modems?**

  (56K with V.90 support is the latest and fastest)

- **Do you offer free web page space?**

  (Most providers offer around 5MB for a personal home page)

- **What do you charge for domain hosting?**

  (there is usually a registration fee plus ongoing monthly fees)

- **Can I get help if I have problems with my connection?**

  (The better providers will offer a freecall or toll free number you can ring at any time)

- **Is there a download limit?**

  (If you think you might use the net to download lots of stuff - beware!)

- **Can I change the plan if I don't like it?**

  (Some plans lock you into a long term commitment)

As a general rule, the cheaper service providers are slower - even the ones that say they have 56K lines can be slow if they are cheap (because of the load they carry).

ISPs offering free service may not be as good as they seem... advertising and slow connections, together with disconnections may mean additional frustrations and extra local phone calls.

Using e-mail

While using e-mail is not covered in this course, you can sign up for a Taste of e-commerce course that covers this topic, or you can download the course material.

Refer to the reference web page for details.

Banking, ordering and e-tax

Refer to the section in Module 2 for links to the main banks, sites that allow you to order online and the ATO.

Registering a domain name

To check the availability of a URL type the following address in your browser address bar, which takes you to the Internet Names Australia web site.

http://www.ina.com.au

You should note that there are rules associated with registration of domain names just as there are with registration of business names. Your URL should be related to your business name.

Getting started costs

Some indicative costs for the process of getting started are shown in the following table.

Getting started costs	Costs
Get an ISP to connect to the Internet	- local call costs $0 to $50 set-up fees - Plans vary from $4 per hour for casual use, to $30 per month for unlimited time (with download restrictions)
Register a domain name	$137.50 for a .com site – 2 years (your ISP can help you with this)

Get a web presence

Here's where it can get a bit tricky. You'll have to make some decisions. Once you have your domain registered, you may as well do something with it.

DIY or professional?

You may choose to do the site development yourself. If you have some good computer skills, a lot of patience and a fair amount of creativity, doing it yourself is certainly an option.

You may however prefer to use the services of a professional web designer. Refer to the reference web page (http://www.catcom.com.au/ecom/strategy.htm) for contact details of locally available web designers registered with TECC. Of course you can also talk to your local Online Access Centre.

If you want a web presence without the hassle of dealing with ISPs or web designers, or want some ideas, talk to your local Online Access Centre.

Web Hosting

Hosting a site with your domain name is a service your ISP will normally provide. This is in addition to the Internet access service described in the previous section. However you don't have to use your ISP to host your site. Your local Online Access Centre can arrange a range of hosting services for you at a competitive rate.

Registering with search engines and net advertising

A vital part of doing business online is to make sure you can be found online. This involves registering with search engines or paying for a service that does this for you.

Registration with search engines is normally free, though some charge a fee for a priority registration. Beware of services that offer registration with hundreds of search engines.

The place to start for Tasmanian organisations is to register with Tasmania Online. The following address will take you straight to the registration page:

<div style="border:1px solid">

http://www.tas.gov.au/tasonline/addurl34.htm

</div>

You can try some of the free web site submission services like Register-it, which allows you to register your site with up to 12 search engines. Here's the address.

<div style="border:1px solid">

http://register-it.netscape.com/

</div>

You can use the most popular search engines and register manually yourself. The following table has been rated as the top ten search engines by Nielsen Net Ratings for the month of August 2000
(source: http://209.249.142.57/au/web/NRpublicreports.toppropertiesmonthly)

These kinds of ratings can be useful to help you make a decision about advertising and registering with search engines.

Property	Unique Audience	Reach %	Time per Person
1. NineMSN/MSN	2,055,609	54.49	0: 49: 16
2. Yahoo!	1,654,396	43.86	0: 43: 02
3. Microsoft	1,164,781	30.88	0: 08: 48
4. AOL Websites	1,019,062	27.01	0: 11: 03
5. Telstra	971,460	25.75	0: 13: 26
6. Lycos	763,568	20.24	0: 08: 44
7. Excite@Home	721,795	19.14	0: 17: 59
8. AltaVista	583,847	15.49	0: 08: 03
9. OzEmail	535,274	14.19	0: 07: 22
10. Australian Federal Government	522,645	13.86	0: 17: 10

Another interesting source of information about internet usage can be found at
http://www.top100.com.au , which gives a quick list of the most popular sites in
Australia.

Costs of getting a web presence

The following table gives indicative costs of getting a web presence using a registered domain name:

Step	Costs
DIY: web design software	• $200+ for basic web page creation software • $500 for good image editing software
Professional web design services	• $1000+ for a basic, professional quality site + ongoing maintenance costs to keep the site fresh and up to date
Web Hosting	• $11+ per month (amount depends partly on size of site required) Note that this only gets you hosting, not secure servers, database capabilities or any other services you may wish to ultimately incorporate.
Registration with search engines	• DIY for free!
Advertising on the net	• Check with the web site

Secure Transactions

The next step involves a degree of complexity that realistically involves engaging the services of a professional IT consultant. However there could be a few relatively inexpensive ways of getting your business online with secure transactions. Again, you can talk to your local Online Access Centre for advice on this.

One of the inexpensive alternatives is to use a free, customisable shopping mall. A good example of this kind of service can be found at:

www.findit.com.au/mall/

There are of course limitations with this kind of service but they may be enough to get you started without it costing you the earth.

Security

Security is of paramount concern to Internet consumers. If you want to sell using credit card facilities, you will need to add a secure sever to your site. Security on the Internet normally means that data transferred electronically is 'encrypted' so only the two computers involved in the exchange 'understand' what has taken place. Put simply, encryption ensures that malicious 'hackers' can't intercept your transactions.

Online Catalogue

If you want to add an online database connected to inventory and sales data you will also need an additional database server. This enables you to keep a track of orders, customers and can advise you of inventory requirements. If you want to be serious about setting up an online catalogue you will have to think about making sure the site is kept fresh and up to date. This takes considerable resources.

Credit card payments

Finally and perhaps most importantly, in order complete a transaction you have to have some means of accepting payments – usually by credit card. The process involves validating the card, debiting the purchaser's account and transferring the funds to the merchant's account.

Costs of secure transactions

The sky's the limit here, but the following table might give you some idea.

Step	Cost
Setting up a secure server	• $200+ setup + $50+ per month
Setting up a credit card payment system	• $300+ setup +$20+ per month +percentage or flat rate fee for each transaction
Setting up a database server for an online catalogue	• $200+ setup +$20+ per month
Engage a consultant to set up the catalogue and design the site	• $5000+ initial +$2000+ per year maintenance costs

Conclusions

As you can see, the last step in the strategy can be quite expensive. However the important thing is to make a start and get the ball rolling.

A good way is to start simple. Take things a step at a time. Review your strategies regularly.

But don't wait until your competition jumps in front of you!

Appendix 1 - Online Access Centre contact details

Online Access Centre	Contact details
Burnie	Spring Street, Burnie 7320 Phone: 03 6431 9469 Coordinator: Maureen Webberly Email: burnie@tco.asn.au Website: www.burnie.tco.asn.au
Devonport	State Library, 21 Oldaker Street, Devonport 7310 Phone: 03 6424 9413 Coordinator: Lorraine Hamilton Email: devonport@tco.asn.au Website: www.devonport.tco.asn.au
Edith Creek	Edith Creek Primary School, Main Road, Edith Creek 7330 Phone: 03 6456 4208 Coordinator: Maureen Duniam Email: edithcreek@tco.asn.au Website: www.edithcreek.tco.asn.au
Forth Valley	Forth Primary School, Wilmot Road, Forth 7310 Phone: 03 6428 3485 Coordinator: Scott Jamieson Email: forth@tco.asn.au Website: www.forth.tco.asn.au
King Island	King Island Regional Development Organisation, George Street, Currie 7256 Phone: 03 6462 1778 Coordinator: Jenny Thorn Email: kingisland@tco.asn.au Website: www.kingisland.tco.asn.au
Latrobe	State Library, Gilbert Street, Latrobe 7307 Phone: 03 6426 1001 Coordinator: Brett Drinkwater Email: latrobe@tco.asn.au Website: www.latrobe.tco.asn.au

Online Access Centre	Contact details
Penguin	Penguin High School, Ironcliffe Road, Penguin 7316 Phone: 03 6437 0771 Coordinator: Sue Hodgetts Email: penguin@tco.asn.au Website: www.penguin.tco.asn.au
Queenstown	State Library, Driffield Street, Queenstown 7467 Phone: 03 6471 2903 Coordinator: Scott Stringer Email: queenstown@tco.asn.au Website: www.queenstown.tco.asn.au
Redpa / Marrawah	Redpa Primary School, 68 Comeback Road, Redpa 7330 Phone: 03 6457 1016 Coordinator: Mark Paton Email: redpa@tco.asn.au
Ridgley	Ridgley Primary School, 104 Mount Road, Ridgley 7321 Phone: 03 6435 7924 Coordinator: Astrid Wootton Email: ridgley@tco.asn.au Website: www.ridgley.tco.asn.au
Roesbery	Rosebery District High School, Morrisby Street, Rosebery 7470 Phone: 03 6473 1938 Coordinator: Ruth de Kaste Email: rosebery@tco.asn.au Website: www.rosebery.tco.asn.au
Smithton	State Library, Nelson Street, Smithton 7330 Phone: 03 6452 5001 Coordinator: Dale Marthick Email: smithton@tco.asn.au Website: www.smithton.tco.asn.au

Online Access Centre	Contact details
Sheffield	Sheffield District High School, Henry Street, Sheffield 7306 Phone: 03 6491 1878 Coordinator: Tim Wilson Email: sheffield@tco.asn.au Website: www.sheffield.tco.asn.au
Strahan	The Esplanade, Strahan 7468 Phone: 03 6471 7788 Coordinator: Sharee Lennard Email: strahan@tco.asn.au Website: www.strahan.tco.asn.au
Tullah	Tullah Progress Association Rooms, Village Square, Tullah 7321 Phone: 03 6473 4264 Coordinator: Jacky Turner Email: tullah@tco.asn.au Website: www.tullah.tco.asn.au
Ulverstone	State Library, Civic Square, 15 King Edward Street, Ulverstone 7315 Phone: 03 6425 7579 Coordinator: Anne-Marie Guenther Email: ulverstone@tco.asn.au Website: www.ulverstone.tco.asn.au
Wilmot	Wilmot Primary School, Main Road Wilmot 7310 Phone: 03 6492 1270 Coordinator: Leigh Jordan Email: wilmot@tco.asn.au Website: www.wilmot.tco.asn.au
Wynyard	State Library, Saunders Street Wynyard 7325 Phone: 03 6442 4499 Coordinator: Barry Ferguson Email: wynyard@tco.asn.au Website: www.wynyard.tco.asn.au

Online Access Centre	Contact details
Yolla	Yolla District High School, School Lane off Murchison Hwy, Yolla 7325 Phone: 03 6438 1493 Coordinator: Tracey O'Malley Email: yolla@tco.asn.au Website: www.yolla.tco.asn.au
Zeehan	Zeehan Primary School, Main Street, Zeehan 7469 Phone: 0409 171813 Coordinator: Pauline Lycett Email: zeehan@tco.asn.au Website: www.zeehan.tco.asn.au

Appendix 2 – Magazines recommended for reading

The following magazines often include sections about e-commerce and include a CDROM with software you can try out or download for free.

- PC World

- Australian PC Authority

- Australian Personal Computer