



Government
of South Australia

Department of Trade and
Economic Development

BizFacts

www.southaustralia.biz

Electronic Commerce

E Commerce

E Commerce (Electronic Commerce) is any form of business transaction in which the parties interact electronically over the Internet rather than by physical exchange or conduct.

The Internet

The Internet (or World Wide Web) is a worldwide network of computers providing access to information from anywhere around the world. Many businesses and government agencies have set up Internet sites (websites) providing information on their business.

The main business uses of the Internet

- The ability to buy, sell and advertise goods and services to customers and consumers
- To communicate with businesses and customers around the world
- To promote products and services by electronically publishing brochures, manuals, product updates etc
- To give businesses the competitive edge by researching information on specific industries.

Keep in mind that your competitors can also see what you are doing.

Selecting an Internet Service Provider

Choose an Internet Service Provider (ISP) which:

- is in a city near you
- has a good reputation
- is business focussed
- runs a Help Desk
- is competitively priced
- provides training if required
- provides a connection with a local phone call (this may not be available in some remote areas).
- Don't shop by price alone. The cheaper a provider, the more likely they may be skimping on some part of their service.

The cost to use the Internet could be:

- local call per session
- timed connection fee to ISP
- broadband contract.

Some ISPs provide different price structures or packages.

Finding an ISP

To find an appropriate ISP ask business contacts or your industry association, watch for advertisements in the press or search the Internet.

Access to the Internet

Access to World-Wide Web (www), e-mail etc is via a telephone call to your Internet Service Provider (ISP) through the modem connected to your Personal Computer (PC).

Connecting to the Internet

To connect your business to the Internet you need:

- a PC or Macintosh (at least a 486 with 8 Mbytes of memory)
- a modem (at least 28.8 kbps)
- a separate telephone line is desirable (some PABXs have problems)
- an account with an ISP
- internet software eg Web browser and e-mail software (provided by the ISP).

Registering a Domain Name

Your domain name is your organisation's "internet trade mark". You can register online as many domain names as you like for a fee of approx \$150/2yrs, or an ISP can arrange this for you for a fee.

You don't need a domain name to operate a website, but it helps market your services.

Domain Names

General and accredited registrars information can be accessed from <http://www.ada.org.au>

Com.au names

The ending com.au is typical of a commercial organisation seeking an Australian identity on the Internet. Other endings are .org.au, .net.au, .edu.au, .gov.au, biz.au.

Setting up a Website

To set up your website you can use the services of your ISP, use a specialist website design organisation or you might choose to invest in web-skills and develop the site yourself.

The site should:

- be easy to find
- clearly explain and describe goods, related terms and conditions
- be convenient and attractive without too many 'bells and whistles'.

E Commerce on your Website

You may use the services of the same ISP that is going to host your site or use a specialist website design organisation. If you want your customers to pay online, you will need to have a 'merchant services agreement' with a bank. This needs to include approval to accept credit card details over the Internet. Check whether the services offered by your bank and your ISP are compatible.

Your website needs to:

- describe the products or services that you offer
- explain the terms and conditions of sale, including warranties, after-sales-service and assurances about what you do with the personal data that you collect
- enable your customer to select products for purchase
- enable your customer to provide credit card details
- enable your customer to provide delivery information.
- provide an order form to allow your customers to fax their order with credit card details if they have a concern about security.

Maintaining your Website

- Check the website regularly to ensure that it is functioning properly and the links are not broken
- Make sure you control the content of the site and that objectionable content has not crept in
- Update your website regularly to keep your customers interested and ensure the information is current
- Check incoming mail regularly and insert a message if there is likely to be a delay in response (if you are away)

Further Information

Reports and publications are available on the website of the Australian Government Information Management Office <http://www.agimo.gov.au> or AUSeNET <http://www.ecommerceadvantage.com.au/ausenet.htm>