

# INFORMATION SERIES

## E - C O M M E R C E F O R S M A L L B U S I N E S S

### FACT SHEET # 4

### HOSTING YOUR WEBSITE

Once you have a domain name and a Web site designed, the next step is to have your Web site stored on a computer where the world can access it (called a "host" computer).

#### HOSTING YOUR WEBSITE

Your Internet Service Provider ("ISP") – ie. the company you use to connect to the Internet, may well offer to host your Web site as part of the services provided. However, this has the major disadvantages because you generally cannot use your own domain name as your Internet address will be attached to their address and the e-commerce capabilities you need may not be available.

There are specialist Web "hosting" companies which take the collection of Web pages which make up your Web site, store them on their computers which are available to Internet users all the time. Shopping around is necessary and some of the things to be taken into account in deciding upon a host your Web site include:

- **Reliability** - It is essential that the host is reliable and that your Web site will be available day and night, every day of the year.
- **Security** - Your chosen host needs to provide a high level of security. There are many ways people can illegally access your site and damage your business, whether by hacking into your customers' personal details or attempting to bring your site down.
- **Speed** - If your site's performance is slow or unpredictable, it won't matter how good your product is, people won't come back.
- **Space** - Hosts store your Web site on computers called servers. When you enter into a hosting agreement, you pay for a certain amount of space on these servers (A basic professional site might require 5 – 20MB (megabytes), whereas a fully e-commerce enabled, content rich site could require 100MB or more). Elements like email and images take more space than text. Make sure you ask what is included in the space you are getting.

- **Scalability** - Hopefully, your Web site will attract more and more traffic in which case you will want to add options such as e-commerce facilities. Make sure you understand the options to increase your space and functionality before you enter into a hosting arrangement.
- **Email capabilities** - Most hosting providers will also provide email addresses such as yourname@yourcompany.com.au. The number of email addresses provided with a hosting arrangement can vary and depends upon your needs.
- **Support** - If you have a large site with a lot of traffic, you may require 24-hour technical support. The level of support provided by the host vendor varies and is an important consideration.
- **How much does it cost** - Costs will obviously vary from provider to provider and will be dependent on your requirements. Most vendors will charge an initial set up fee then an ongoing charge each month.

#### EXAMPLE PACKAGE

The following is an example of package elements and indicative costs for an SME hosting package:

- 20 email boxes
- Support for FrontPage extensions
- Pre-written CGI Scripts
- Detailed web usage statistics
- Private FTP facilities for file upload
- five extra passwords beyond the master password for accessing or editing the site
- 70 megabytes of storage, and 750 megabytes of data transfer per month
- Support for CGI scripts, Active Server Pages (ASP) and Microsoft Access database.
- Set up costs - \$100 (once only)
- Ongoing costs - \$55 per month or \$550 per year

These features and costs may vary, so we recommend you shop around for the latest prices and most appropriate services for your situation.

## USEFUL LINKS

**au.tophosts.com**<http://au.tophosts.com>

A useful site which contains articles and information on site hosting.

**“How to Get an Online Presence”**<http://www.business.act.gov.au/documents/dir60/doc511860.htm>

This article is by BusinessACT and covers many of the issues related to getting an online presence for your business.

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