INTRODUCTION

This chapter examines the notion of how the success of a small business Web presence can be assessed. In doing so, there is initially a discussion of how a small business could classify its ICT expenses and attempt to match these outlays with
any expected revenue streams. The latter part of the chapter, discusses the different approaches a small business operator can use to investigate and evaluate the success of its Web presence.

THINK ABOUT WEB PRESENCE SUCCESS EARLY

It is important for a small business owner/manager to start thinking about the success of the Web presence, and how that will be measured, when the Web presence is being initially considered – that is, at the time when the decision is being made to actually have a Web presence. This may not be possible for many small businesses that already have some type of Web presence, but many of the concepts that will be discussed here can also be applied retrospectively.

We discussed the different strategies that can incorporate ICTs in Chapter IV, as well as discussing some techniques that can be used for ICT investment appraisal. In this chapter we will expand on that discussion.

Most small businesses have traditionally viewed their ICT investments from a cost perspective. That is, any ICTs have been considered as being a business adjunct that assists in improving operational efficiencies - without necessarily contributing directly to adding value to the products or services.

When talking with small businesses, one thing that we have noticed in our recent research projects is that the majority of them want to talk about their use of the Internet, be it about the power of e-mail as a communication medium or the development of their Web presence. In recent times there has been a notable and consistent reference by small businesses to their ICTs as if the technology directly relates to various elements of their products or services – thus, we have noticed a shift in focus in relation to the role that ICTs can play.

ICT EVALUATION

In previous chapters we have stressed that it is important to consider why any investment might be undertaken by a small business - an issue that needs to be considered reasonably early on in the decision-making process to adopt ICTs.

With respect to ICTs, the small business operator will predominantly invest in this type of technology allowing them to improve and enhance:

• **Communications:** Provides a conduit to facilitate information and message flows between the business and important partners,
Government Promotion of E-Commerce in SMEs: The Australian Government's ITOL Program
www.igi-global.com/chapter/government-promotion-commerce-smes/8753?camid=4v1a