INTRODUCTION

In earlier chapters we discussed the need to link Web presence strategy with anticipated small business direction and motivations - where this strategy would invariably be reflected in the business’s Website activities. In this chapter we examine and elaborate on the diversity of options available to the small business operator...
when hosting their Web presence - hosting options that can impact on Websites features. Arguably, the appropriate use of Web hosting services have evolved to the point were they are an integral part of the Web presence experience for the small business operator.

WEB PRESENCE OPTIONS

Previously we discussed the notion of a small business Web presence as opposed to its own Website. In reality, it is typical for a small business to have its own Website, but then perhaps also have some sort of presence on other Websites, such as Web portals (which are discussed later in this chapter). In order to discuss the different options that are available to small businesses, it is necessary to first examine the different aspects that are involved in Web presence hosting.

ISP Selection

We have already described and alluded to Internet Service Providers (ISPs), whose basic function is to provide Internet access for businesses and individuals. Hence, for a small business operator, the ISP is typically the entity through which they arrange their Internet connection, allowing them to surf the Internet for information and use e-mail to communicate with others. The ISP can usually also host a Website for the small business. Indeed, there are numerous specialist ISPs that host Websites for particular industry groups that a small businesses might wish to use. We will revisit this later.

It is not the aim of this book to discuss the selection of a suitable ISP in any depth. Furthermore, it is also beyond the scope of the book to provide a list of ISPs given the vast numbers of services found in modern and technologically developed countries. What we do examine are some of the integral factors that should be taken into consideration when a small business operator selects an ISP. These factors are discussed in relation to surfing the Internet and communicating using e-mail, and then will move on to other services and features they may offer. The small businesses need be aware of several factors associated with the selection of an ISP. These include:

- **Cost:** The cost of purchasing ISP activities and services may be more than the regular basic fee that is generally charged on a monthly basis. Is there a separate fee for downloading/uploading data after certain limits are reached?
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