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AUSNETECH NEWS

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Is Your Web Site Working For Your Business?

By Mark Thomas

Most businesses now have some sort of web presence – ranging from a simple, brochure-style web site, right up to a full e-commerce enabled web site. But are businesses in Newcastle fully utilising what the web has to offer?

Get the design right to start with!

A well-designed web site does not necessarily mean it has to be exceptionally good looking. A good looking site is important, but secondary to these other design considerations:

- ♦ *Simple but effective* – Don't include too much text on any one page, keep the wording and the layout simple.
- ♦ *Get to the point* – The front page (Home page) of your site should get straight to the point. What is it that your business does or sells?
- ♦ *Easy to use* – Your site should have simple, easy to use navigation facilities, and a fast, intelligent search facility built-in.
- ♦ *Suit all browsers* – The site design and the way the site is built determines whether or not the site can be viewed by any web browser. Always strive to build your site so that it suits as many browsers as possible.
- ♦ *Usability testing* – Always get a number of people to try out your site – is it easy for them to use? Can they find what they are looking for? Do they find it informative?

Other Considerations

There are a number of other considerations to take into account when designing and implementing your site, such as:

- ♦ Targetting the right audience
- ♦ Building a flexible site, with good Content Management facilities
- ♦ Using a web hosting service that has enough power for your needs

The list goes on, with security issues, providing good functionality, search engine optimisation and so on. It seems complicated, but it needn't be too hard – if you enlist the right people to help you do the job.

Please read on, to find out *why* it's so important to get the job done right (see over) . . .

Learning from other's mistakes

There's no doubt about it, use of the Internet by the Australian public and as a useful tool by Australian businesses, is well behind that of the USA. This matches trends in other areas of technology such as

off the mark

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mobile phones, pay-TV and other audio-visual equipment.

However, we tend to look on and learn from mistakes made in the US and other countries, and then take up the technology as it becomes relevant and suitable to our economy and social awareness.

Here In Newcastle, use of broadband (particularly ADSL) Internet is growing at a rapid pace. Companies such as Exetel are offering very low rates for permanently-on, fast Internet access. From recent studies in the US, we can see how customers and the public are now using the Internet to find information and do business on the web.

We have a unique opportunity right now to *get it right*, to build web sites that draw and keep customers, and help grow our businesses to new levels.

We know Small Business and we know the Internet. Contact us now.

Ausnetech Pty Ltd

Ph: (02) 4927-8115

Request a free quote online:

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Mark Thomas is Managing Director of Ausnetech – a Newcastle-based IT services company. Mark has worked extensively with companies in Australia and the USA building web applications and complete web-based businesses.

Next month ...

... Controlling spam and viruses

Checklist for your Business Web Site

- ✓ **Look & Feel** targets the right audience.
- ✓ **Simple** to use, but fully **functional**.
- ✓ Web applications are **integrated** with back-office systems.
- ✓ Site **content can be managed** by staff.
- ✓ **Performance** of site is more than adequate.
- ✓ **Security** controls are in place.
- ✓ Web and application servers are **well maintained** – regularly backed up, monitored and updated.
- ✓ My customers and prospects can **easily find** my site.