

Birmingham community college

Business



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Up and down the country, website addresses are appearing on the awnings above High Street shops and on the side of white vans.

An online presence is rapidly becoming essential for almost every small and medium sized enterprise (SME). The question most SMEs are asking themselves is this: “ If UK Internet e-commerce is going to be worth nearly £26 billion in 2003, can I really afford not to be online?” Even so there are those who are still reluctant to embrace e-commerce. Why? For many the high cost of setting up and maintaining an e-commerce capability means that there is little incentive to take the plunge into cyberspace. So where does a small business that wants to trade online start? One answer comes from learning net Project Manager Darren Tranter: “ A low-cost path to e-commerce is what the SME market has been waiting for – and that is exactly what learning net has set out to deliver. The news that you really don’t have to spend a fortune to develop an effective website should be welcome right across the small business community”.

He adds: “ We wanted to remove the concern most SMEs have about jumping on the Internet bandwagon – and that is their return on investment. Simply put, the learning net is in the business of using technology to run websites for SMEs at a fraction of what it would cost them to do it for themselves”. How Nimoi helps spell the end of high cost website development for SMEs
The learning net’s original brief – to source a provider capable of delivering 150 e-commerce web sites – was rejected as prohibitively expensive. Says Darren Tranter: “ Of the other options

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available, only a content management solution really gave us the opportunity to continue to support and develop those SMEs that initially signed up. We wanted to work closely with a partner, but still keep ownership of the project ourselves.

After a review of many of the UK's providers, the Nimoi web content management system from Live Information Systems emerged as the leading choice". Nimoi is a robust, flexible and scalable product that lets small businesses establish an online e-commerce presence quickly and then makes it easier for them to monitor, administer and update their websites: "The typical perception of websites is often very one-dimensional", says Darren Tranter. "You build your first website, then sit back and wait for the customers to come flooding in". That is not going to happen. You need to manage your Web Site in the same way you manage your business.

Promote it, then keep it fresh and up-to-date with all the latest details about your company's products and services to draw customers back again and again. Nimoi not only enables you to do this, it actively encourages you to".

A professional website designed, uploaded and updated in minutes

For most businesses, designing or changing a web page can be a job for at least three people. One to write the content, one to design the page and one to manage the server to make sure it is published. Inevitably it is a slow, inefficient and expensive process.

Using Nimoi, however, new sites can be deployed quickly. And because Nimoi allows contributors to the content to create and manage the site

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independently of the underlying database and the desired formatting, once it's set up, changes to the site can also be made without any need to funnel content through technical web staff. Authorised users simply log into a secure web site and use a series of forms and menus to create, edit or update the content. No knowledge of HTML, FTP or any other web technology is required and since the content is published using standard templates, the entire site always shares a consistent look and feel." If you can turn on a PC and open a basic application such as Microsoft Word, you have all the skills you need".

That's according to Matt Farrar CEO of Live Information Systems. He goes on to say: " Nimoi gives you have access to a portfolio of standard templates that let you change individual elements or even the entire site at the click of mouse". As an example, if you want to alter the appearance of the site you just change the template. Every content item is then updated automatically. Using a web designer this same process could last days, weeks or sometimes months.

With Nimoi it takes only a matter of minutes and costs absolutely nothing". The learning net also decided to add an optional module that links Nimoi directly to Worldpay – one of the world's leading Payment Solution Providers (PSPs) – and so enables SMEs to start taking online payments immediately. One other advantage of the Nimoi system, as Darren Tranter is quick to point out, is that it is infinitely scalable: " It was important to us to give our SMEs a scalable solution for conducting business over the Internet. Many of these companies know their websites will need to grow quickly, so we had to find a content management solution that would ease any growing pains and help <https://assignbuster.com/birmingham-community-college/>

keep those sites running efficiently”. Of the quality of support learning net has received from Live Information Systems, Darren Tranter has nothing but praise: “ Our relationship has been excellent. We’ve been involved in every step of the development process so that we know we can get the maximum useability possible from the Nimoi system”.

The online success stories of tomorrow

For SMEs in the West Midlands, the learning net is proving that you don’t have to be a multinational plc to develop a robust, e-commerce business. The result, says Darren Tranter, is ‘ a leading-edge service that is more affordable and up-to-date than anything most SMEs could ever hope to achieve in-house’. He concludes by adding: “ Because it is so easy to manage and publish up-to-date content rapidly with Nimoi, the cost of ownership remains low. We might not be promising a short cut to dotcom riches but, for our SMEs, having an online presence is another extremely valuable part of the marketing mix and one more way of bringing more customers to the door”.