



Those who think the New Economy was some late-90s flash-in-the-pan staked to the emergence of dot-coms are roughly equivalent to the great wits who shouted "Get a horse!" at early motorists broken down on the side of the road. In the early 1930s, people might have equated the bankruptcy of car companies with the end of the auto era. But obviously that was just the beginning.

The 2002 State New Economy Index, Progressive Policy Institute  
<http://www.neweconomyindex.org/states/2002/index.html>

## I DON'T HAVE A WEBSITE ...WHY SHOULD I BOTHER?

### TO GET MORE BUSINESS.

- \*49% of Irish people have access to the Internet
- \*69% of Irish Internet users use it to gather information.
  - This is researching product information.
- Without a website you are missing out on over a third of all Irish people researching products and services. Unless they know you are in the marketplace they will never buy from you.
  - Ireland is becoming a more I.T. focused workplace. More people are sitting at computers. It is easier to search the Internet than find a copy of the golden pages. Without a website none of these people will know you exist. It is not unreasonable to expect that there are more people in Ireland using the Internet since 2002, so these numbers are conservative.

### ENHANCE YOUR CURRENT MARKETING

- A business card or brochure can only contain so much information.
  - A website can contain more information and so give buyers a more complete image of your company and products/services.
- Once printed brochures are an image of your company and products at that time.
  - If your website is set up correctly you can update it yourself. Keeping it current and matching your business. Never out of date.
- Up to the minute information.
  - Latest offers, Company announcements, Support documents...
- Make available often asked for information.

### GLOBAL REACH

- Through the Internet you can get your message out to the world for the same cost as getting it out locally.
  - Once a website is developed it can be seen by anybody anywhere in the world.

\* *Information Society Commission - Business Survey - 2nd April, 2003* – [www.isc.ie](http://www.isc.ie)



## I HAVE A WEBSITE, BUT IT'S NOT WORKING FOR MY BUSINESS. WHAT DO I DO ABOUT IT?

If you already have a website, but it is not working for your business then it is worth your while getting it fixed. The Internet is only going to become more important as a sales and marketing tool.

### CHECK HOW YOUR WEBSITE WORKS

- Check is your website live. Just because your email works doesn't mean your website works.
  - It's amazing how many people don't look at their own website. Maybe it is down.
- Read the text on your website.
  - It's amazing how, with a clear head you can see how the text on your website is viewed by visitors. It may not be giving the clear message you first thought.
- Be Blunt
  - Even though it is described as 'browsing the web' it is more like speed-reading. Visitors scan your site to see if there is anything there that they are interested in. If not then they move on.
  - Unless you hook them immediately you will lose them
  - If you have products or special offers make them part of your homepage
- Call to action
  - Tell the visitors to your website to contact you. On the Internet you have to prompt visitors as to what you want them to do. A website full of information without a 'call to action' is less likely to work for your business.
- Get a few people not connected with the business to visit your website
  - Ask them the following questions after their visit so as not to prompt them.
    - What was your first impression?
    - How was it to navigate?
    - Was it easy to find your way around?
    - Could you find our contact details?
    - Would you submit an enquiry through the website?
    - How fast did it load?
  - The results can be very interesting and useful in getting your website to work for your business.



## NOW YOU HAVE A WEBSITE AND IT LOOKS GREAT AND WORKS THE WAY YOU WANT IT TO – WHAT NOW?

### GET IT LISTED IN THE SEARCH ENGINES

Without having your website listed in the search engines the only business you will get is from people who already know about your business through other advertising.

There are two steps to getting a good placement in the search engines.

1. Make sure your website is search engines friendly.
  2. Get links from search engines, directories and other websites to your website.
- Make sure your website is search engines friendly
    - What does your Title bar contain? This is the text at the top of your web browser.
      - This should say who you are and what you do. If relevant also, where you are. Keep it short
    - META TAGS – not seen by visitors, but seen by the search engines.
      - This is your opportunity to increase the priority for words that you care about.
    - ALT TAGS for images and image names
      - Another opportunity to increase your websites focus for the search engines. You are required to have ALT TAGS for images under accessibility laws.
    - Use the words you expect people to use when looking for your product/service in the main content of your website.
      - There is no use describing your products in technical terms if people are going to search using normal language.
      - Unless the words people search with are of a high priority on your website nobody will find it.



- Get links from search engines, directories and other websites to your website.
  - Check if your website is listed Google \*
    - Go to [www.google.com](http://www.google.com) and enter your company name. Any results?
    - Enter the words you would use to find your service. Any results?
    - Enter your website address
      - If your website is known then text will appear below the link to your website. This means Google knows about your website and you are on the road to getting a high listing.
      - Click on 'Find web pages that link to [www.yourwebsite.com](http://www.yourwebsite.com)
        - You should see more than just your own website
        - If not then it will be nearly impossible for somebody to find your website using search engines.
  - Search using the words you expect people to use to find your product/service.
    - See what other websites come up.
      - Who is the competition?
      - Where are they listed?
      - Can you get links from these website?
      - Are there any professional body websites or organisations you are a member of that you can get a link from?
- The reason I suggest Google for checking your search engine position is because it is the most popular search engine. Also, it is the default search engine on [www.eircom.net](http://www.eircom.net) and [www.iol.ie](http://www.iol.ie), which means anybody using these ISPs, and who hasn't changed their default home page will be presented with Google as their default search engine.

## SO WHAT WILL YOU DO FOR ME?

- To begin with, all of the above. Make sure a new website has all these items taken care of, or for an existing website modify it to include all these necessary items.
- Manage the technical side of setting up and maintaining a website.
  - Register your web name.
  - Set up your website hosting.
  - Create your email addresses.
- Develop the website.
  - Create the website layout.
  - Place all the content into the website.
  - Install any necessary databases
  - Optimise all graphics on the website so they will download quickly.
  - Develop tools to allow you to update the website yourself.

**‘ We make websites work ’**