

Recent sites



Insurance Council

The Insurance Council of New Zealand chose Netco to redevelop it's 5-year-old Web site. The new site is fast and light, making use of drop-down menus and minimal graphics to deliver information about the Council and its activities. It complies with priority 1 accessibility guidelines and includes a real-time cost-of-crime counter on the home page.

www.icnz.org.nz



Keep New Zealand Beautiful

Keep New Zealand Beautiful Clean Up Week runs in September this year and Netco developed a focal point Web site to attract attention and participants. The site offers the event's programme and includes options to order clean-up supplies such as gloves and bags. KNZB welcomes business participation if you are looking for a worthy cause to support.

www.knzb.org.nz/cleanup



Talking Politics with United Future

Polical parties like to debate politics and United Future NZ is no exception. Its members can debate policy now, using an on-line forum installed and customised by Netco. The forum accepts multiple areas of discussion and is moderated by a staff member to keep arguments on track. United Future's site also now supports a tax calculator to calculate how much money is saved by income splitting, a central UF policy.

www.unitedfuture.org.nz



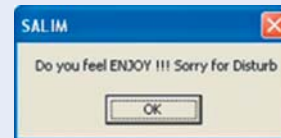
Advice and Action

From Auckland, Advice and Action commissioned Netco to update an older site. The brief was to keep it short, simple and to the point and make it fast. Advice and Action deals with importers and needed a central point from which to deliver its documentation. We even threw in Netco's drop down, or in this case, pop-out, menu system.

www.adviceandaction.co.nz

Count Google's pages by typing *.* into its search engine and see how many Web pages it catalogues. Hint: the count was more than 20 billion when this newsletter was being prepared. There were 33.7 million New Zealand pages.

The World Wide Web delivers a lot of good information amongst the tripe. If your employer's policy is to allow a little levity on the Web, try www.english.com. English has become an international, if strangled, language.



Deadline creeping up on the report you have to write? Fear not, use a jargon generator. It produces sentences indistinguishable from a Dominion editorial in a single mouse click:

www.unc.edu/~macmw/

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Welcome to the Web

Inside

Spam. Spam, Spam

For more than a decade, politicians have talked about an information super highway, technologists have declared the start of the information age and smart Kiwis have made fortunes for stumbling across and marketing a single, good idea.

It may be difficult to deduce this from a bland little PC monitor beaming out the latest from Yahoo or bean curd recipes from a health site but, already, there's no going back. We are as caught-up in this as the rest of the developed world. It holds big implications for us.

The knowledge gap

This is serious homework time for small business operators. They'll need to understand just a little of what's happening at the end of their phone line if they are not to wake up one morning and find their particular services are now being handled by a teenager in Vladivostok or Dallas at a tenth the previous price. It bites big busniesses too.

Text messaging

Spam filtering

A few years ago, a 19-year-old American kid wrote Napster, an on-line, shared database that allowed Internet users to steal music. The beauty of Napster and its imitators was that, to the participants, it didn't feel like stealing. They just clicked on a link and downloaded their favourite music and burnt their own CDs. Napster went legitimate after the music industry pounced and then Apple turned the industry on its ear when it fired up its on-line iTunes music store. Record industry executive were so busy trying to smother the sparks they missed the fire. Apple has a 70% market share of the UK and US on-line music sales according to American magazine, Business Week. Now record companies complain that Apple won't let them set the on-line selling price of songs - Apple sells all tracks for \$US99c regardless of popularity. Record companies appear to have lost control of their markets. How could such highly paid people have been so stupid?

Netco Search

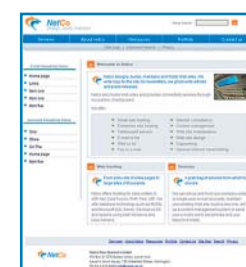
When the speed of the Internet increases, look for movie databases where you'll download (steal) whatever title you want. How do copyright owners pursue and sue 50 million thieves?

Recent sites

Owners of businesses dealing in products that are currently being distributed through the Internet will need to think where this will head in 5 years. Do you sell out now and hope the new buyer is not well informed or do you meet it head on and adapt?

On-line bookshops lose their owners fortunes, but they deliver titles cheaper and faster than traditional post. In a few days pretty much any book published anywhere can arrive at your letterbox, months before it's available in shops here.

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Welcome to the Web from P1.

The great thing for a small New Zealand company is that its Web page can occupy the same amount of real estate as IBM or General Motors. As far as any visitor is concerned, you might well have a head office in downtown Manhattan or Kowloon or even both because all they see is your Web site and your products. In reality, you can be working from a garage in backstreet Naenae or from a launch moored at Stewart Island. Your customers are as close as their keyboard to you.

Shop for luxury goods at www.ashford.com and decide whether anyone would know (or care) whether it was based in New Zealand.



*Ashford.com
shopping for the brand-
conscious. Who cares
where the Web site is
based?*

So, you say, you deal only in wholesale to other businesses and you're immune from all this? The American, Gartner Group predicted that business to business e-commerce would reach US\$8.5 trillion annually by 2005. No one seems to have done the sums to see whether we made it but the figure's so big that even if they're 20% out it's still a vast market.

Like it or not, the Internet will affect your business if it hasn't already. Can you kick start a country to catch up on its rich northern neighbours? In the Beehive and the Ministry of Economic Development they're trying to talk it up but ultimately, it's the business owners who have to decide that they want a piece of all this.

Spam, Spam, Spam

Anyone listening to Monty Python's "Spam, Spam, Spam" thirty years ago couldn't have realised that the name for this processed meat would haunt them. It arrives in most e-mail in-boxes hourly. Spam is the bane of people who use e-mail to stay in touch.

Nuisance and scam e-mails are generally called Spam and fighting Spam is a tedious task but necessary to return e-mail to being a useful tool.

Protect Against Spam

Reducing Spam takes a mixture of common sense when using e-mail and preventative programs. Sensible use means following a few rules when sending and receiving e-mails.

1. Never reply to spam. That just confirms to the spammer that he or she has found a live address. They'll invite you to "click here" if you want to be removed from their mailing list. Expect more rather than less spam if you do.
2. Never open attachments unless you trust the sender and even then take care. Right-click the attachment and save it somewhere on your computer then check it with your anti-virus program before opening it.
3. Hand out your e-mail with care. Don't go to a dodgy site and type your work e-mail in a form. If you must go there, take out a free e-mail on Yahoo or Hot Mail and use it just for this site, discarding it when spam starts flooding in (as it certainly will).
4. Obfuscate your e-mail on your web site. Spammers use automation to scour the Web, stripping e-mail addresses from web sites and collating them to add to their distribution lists. Talk to Netco about disguising the way your e-mail address is displayed on a web page.

The Knowledge Gap

A lot is said about the so-called 'knowledge society'. It claims that people participating in it (whether they realise it or not) automatically become knowledge workers. 'Closing the gaps', enjoyed a brief life and could well do with a resurrection here as nowhere are there gaps as gaping as knowledge gaps.

People who hope to prosper using databases, the Web and spreadsheets need to learn their intricacies. When was the last time a knowledge worker of your acquaintance who had captured your e-mail address in their Outlook file hammered you unknowingly with a virus-infected torrent? Did you open that innocent message and if you read it and opened the attachment then you became the next to send out the virus to everyone who had the misfortune to be in your electronic address book. That's a knowledge gap at work.

Are so-called knowledge workers taught to defrag their hard drives weekly or even care what that means? Do they write Word macros or wait until the help desk gets around to installing something for them? Suppose they wanted to e-mail their company logo at the top of documents to gussy them up. Would they realise that 600 dots per inch might just slow down the e-mail a tad, seeing they were loading an extra 300KB to each message in what should have been a 4KB message? Do their customers and suppliers start to doubt their abilities and lose a little bit of confidence in them as a result?

If the equipment were all that was required, anyone buying a PC and Word Perfect would become a competent novelist and, with a Stanley knife a brain surgeon. The gap appears whenever the tool needed to complete the knowledge task is beyond the ability of the worker to understand, it. Until this gap is narrowed, knowledge workers should more accurately be described as employees.

Here's a hint for those who hire and fire. If your heart goes wickety-wickety when you run up a few stairs, see a trained heart specialist, not a part-time naturopath. Similarly, if you want your company to prosper from a knowledge society, hire a knowledgeable knowledge worker or train your staff thoroughly. You can bet bet your some of your competitors do. Ω

*when
knowledge
gaps become
knowledge
chasms*

Text messaging the easy way

Netco is now a reseller of Sonic Mobile's text message services.

We now offer e-mail to txt, Web to txt, txt to e-mail, voting and competition engines.

In its simplest form, it allows you to use your e-mail program to send and receive text messages. It means you can group your contacts and blast out text messages - cheaper than a business phone call and faster than thumbing a tiny cell phone key pad.

Spam filtering

If your e-mail inbox looks a little crowded every morning with junk and Spam mail, try Netco's e-mail Spam filter.

An automated routine runs on your mail box and filters out the rubbish. You can add a list of known contacts and add constant spammers to a list that's automatically intercepted and deleted.

Netco Search

Version 2 of Netco's search engine is about to be released.

It now includes reports on the words and phrases searched, including the top 20 phrases and words and from which country the query came. Visitors may group searches by relevance or date.

More information in the next issue of Netco Update.