

.eu identity

**Business dreams
become reality – they
did it, so can you**

**Winning strategies to
attract web traffic**

**How to get web
hosting that works
for you**

Business wins with .eu
Inspiring SMEs to get online

PICK UP A IN LEIPZIG, SKETCH ON IT IN UPPSALA



Behind every great business idea, you'll find .eu

www.wacom.eu

The reference graphic tablet for artists, photographers and professional designers needs to be available on every high street in Europe. That's why the team at Wacom's European Headquarters in Krefeld, Germany, started an e-store.

This is where every keen artist from Manchester to Madrid will find their professional Wacom tablet. Like many other companies, Wacom has found its way into Europe thanks to .eu.

What are you waiting for?

.eu
Your European Identity

www.eurid.eu

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THIS ISSUE OF .eu Identity is about inspiring you to take your business ambitions online. In the spotlight are European entrepreneurs who believe that having a .eu domain name is key to realising their dreams. An Italian financier turned winemaker talks of his passion for viticulture and how he uses .eu to help spread the word about his winemaking philosophy. And two Latvian friends explain why they chose .eu to take their brick-and-mortar business of selling fashionable streetwear online.

A surprising amount of small- and medium-sized businesses do not yet have a website, so if you're looking to get online, be sure to read our article about why .eu is the best choice. Don't miss our practical tips for finding the best web-hosting company to suit your business's needs.

Our article on phishing is full of useful advice about how to be secure on the web and in our piece on search-engine optimisation (SEO) we share how you can make sure your website attracts the kind of visitors you want.

I hope that you enjoy this issue and are truly inspired!

EDITOR IN CHIEF
Brigitte Lagrou

EDITOR
Megan Vosloo

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS
Frederik Hautain
Niklas Jörgensen

CONTRIBUTORS
Catherine Dowdell
Brigitte Lagrou
Megan Vosloo
Staffan Wallin

Do you own a successful .eu website? Would you like to be featured in .eu Identity? Write to us at identity@eurid.eu.

Words of wisdom

Accomplished Europeans share their thoughts on ambition.

“The man of petty ambition if invited to dinner will be eager to be set next to his host.”

Theophrastus



Photo: National Maritime Museum /IBL Bildbyrå



“Ambition leads me not only farther than any other man has been before me, but as far as I think it possible for man to go.”

James Cook

“Intelligence without ambition is a bird without wings.”

Salvador Dali



Photo: REX Features /IBL Bildbyrå



“I think we still believe that ambition is for boys.”

Jeanette Winterson

Business advice too good to miss



In Europe there is a growing trend among consumers that companies cannot afford to overlook.

TEXT: CATHERINE DOWDELL

INCREASINGLY, EUROPEANS ARE turning to the Internet to help them make their purchasing decisions. 39% of consumers do Internet research before purchasing a product¹. And more than half of Internet users actively change their minds about which brand to buy based on the information they find online².

If you want your products and services to be in the running when consumers make their purchase decisions, an effective online presence for your company is crucial.

A growing number of European businesses choose to boost their online presence with a .eu domain name. Here's why:

1. Raise visibility

A .eu website raises the visibility of your products and services by signaling to prospects that you are open for business across the European Union. With a single website that speaks to potential customers in 27 countries, you exponentially broaden your market.

2. Cut costs

With .eu, your business only has to be registered in one of the EU states, but you can be active online in all the others without needing a separate office or website for each country.

Expanding into new markets is a major step, but having a foot in the door in every EU market means that you can expand at your own pace. You can realise your ambitions when the time is right for you. And just think about all the red tape you won't have to worry about.

3. Signal trustworthiness

A .eu website tells your customers that you are a legal entity in the EU and are therefore subject to EU law, trading standards and courts. Implicitly this protects them and lets them know that you are legitimate and trustworthy.

The fact that only businesses established in the EU are eligible for .eu domain names means that everyone clearly sees your business credentials.

4. Protect customers online

With .eu, your customers can be confident that they are using your real website and not an imposter's.

This is because, at .eu, we have taken steps within the Internet's infrastructure to collectively protect all .eu domain names by implementing the DNSSEC protocol, one of the first large top-level domains to do so. This behind-the-scenes security measure means that your customers cannot be

led to a fake, ill-intentioned website and tricked into supplying personal information if they type your protected website's address into their browser.

Connect to your customers with .eu:

1. Choose your .eu domain name and check its availability using the search box on ambitionhasanaddress.eu
2. Select a .eu accredited registrar from the list to register your domain name
3. Follow your registrar's instructions, ensuring that they have your email address
4. Receive notification that your .eu domain name is activated. ●

Visit ambitionhasanaddress.eu.

Did you know?

- .eu is the fourth largest country-code top-level domain in the EU after .de, .uk and .nl
- .eu is available to any business with a legal entity in a EU country
- With .eu you can connect to 500 million Europeans in 27 countries with 1 domain name.

¹ Forrester Research, "Depicting European Shoppers' Complex Purchasing Decision Path" by Lauriane Camus et al, November 2009.

² European Interactive Advertising Association (EIAA) European Media Landscape Report, December 2010.

Volcanic vino

By returning home to run his family's vineyards on the slopes of Mount Etna, Alberto Graci did what many people dream of. Turning something you love into a viable business.

TEXT: CATHERINE DOWDELL

PHOTOS: COURTESY OF GRACI

ALBERTO NOW RUNS Graci, a boutique winery on the Italian island of Sicily that produces and sells three exclusive wines. This is a world apart from his previous career as an investment banker in Milan's financial industry.

What makes Graci's wines stand out from the crowd is Alberto's simple philosophy to winemaking: use local, indigenous grape varieties with as little human intervention as possible, both in the vineyards and in the cellar.

This natural approach, combined with Mount Etna's unique volcanic soils, the decision not to use any herbicides and the vineyard's small-scale production, give Alberto's wine business that all important edge of exclusivity. "It is the region and the soil that determine the character of the wine, not us," he explains.

This methodology also extends to how the wines are matured. Large, well-seasoned wooden barrels are used to simply let the wine rest without adding too much oak flavour, allowing each vintage to reflect the personality of the

native grape varieties grown on Graci's slopes. "Good grapes, good location and good people are the secrets to a great wine," Alberto enthuses.

Online showcase

The decision to use .eu for the company's website instead of another web extension was a natural one for Alberto. "I am an artisan, with a very limited production, but I sell my wines all over the world, in Australia, China, Japan, Russia, the USA and obviously Europe," he says. "I preferred .eu as it communicates the importance of European culture and helps support my point of view."

Graci.eu is used to showcase Graci's wines and to communicate Alberto's philosophy about winemaking. On the website, visitors can find information about the vineyards and the Mount Etna grape varieties that Alberto uses: Nerello Mascalese, Nerello Cappuccio, Carricante and Catarratto.

The website's style emphasises the exclusivity of Graci's products and the quality values that stand behind the Graci brand. A press kit and extensive photo gallery help spread the word.



Local product, global market

"Customers find me on the Internet and through magazines or wine guides," says Alberto. Internationally, he sells his wines through a network of importers, often with regional exclusivity agreements, but in Graci's home market of Italy he uses a more personal touch, selling the wines to restaurants and shops directly.

To wine connoisseurs and those in the know, the wines produced in the Mount Etna region have a reputation for being distinctive. Different micro climates, resulting from the volcanic soils and steep altitude changes (from sea level to over 1 000 metres), add different personalities to the wines. Even the volcano's conical shape affects how



“I preferred .eu as it communicates the importance of European culture and helps support my point of view.”



Alberto Graci, owner of Graci's three vineyards

and when the grapes ripen due to a 360-degree range of sun exposure.

Graci's three vineyards are between 600 and 1 000 metres above sea level, which is why Alberto's insistence on using local grape varieties, adapted to weather and altitude, makes good business sense. So much so, that he is introducing a fourth wine in 2012 – again, small-scale with a production of only 900 bottles.

Alberto's passion for his home region's tradition of winemaking is clearly reflected in his business. Respecting the soil and taking a natural approach to viticulture has enabled him to produce an exclusive product. When asked what the most rewarding thing is about running his business, Alberto simply replies: “The contact with nature and people from every part of the world.” ●

Visit graci.eu.



How to attract web traffic

Most people have become immune to direct online marketing techniques like banner adverts and sales emails, so increasingly companies are turning to search-engine optimisation (SEO) to reach their customers.

TEXT: MEGAN VOSLOO

IN A NUTSHELL, SEO focuses on getting your website listed higher in unpaid search engine results.

This makes it better than search-engine advertising, where you pay to have your website appear at the top of the results (often in a section called “sponsored links”), because it gives your company more credibility. With SEO, if you appear at the top, it’s because the search engine decided that your website is the most relevant to what the user searched for, not because you paid to be there.

There are two main ways to build relevance. Following the tips below will allow you to develop a good SEO strategy that employs both.

1. Keywords are key

How high you rank in search results depends, in part, on how well the content on your website matches the words or phrases that someone has typed in as a search query. The better the match, the higher your ranking.

You can use tools like Google AdWords to find out which words

or phrases people are using to find products and services similar to yours, or to get ideas on other keywords that may work.

Once you’ve picked your keywords, be sure to use them in the following places on your website:

- i Page titles** – the text that appears in the top bar of your browser window. The page title is the first thing a search engine looks at to figure out what a page is about.
- ii Headings** – the larger, often bolded text that appears in the browser window itself. In html, headings are often defined as <h1>, <h2>, etc.
- iii Alternate text** – the text that allows you to describe what an image you’ve published on your website is about so that, if for some reason the image doesn’t load, the person looking at the page knows what should have been there.
- iv Meta tags** – tags hidden in the code of your website that search engines can see but visitors cannot. You

can recognise them in html by the <META NAME> tag.

- v **Web copy** – the text meant for customers and prospects. A word of caution: SEO experts advise to write your web copy without keywords in mind and use them only if and when it makes sense. Forcing words into text where they don't belong looks unnatural and will put visitors off.

The more specific a keyword or phrase the better, because there is a greater chance that the person who typed it is looking for exactly what you offer.

To find out how you need to get specific, think about how your product or service is different to your competitor's and use your unique selling points as keywords or phrases.

2. External links are excellent

Other than keywords, search engines also determine how relevant your content is by how many links there are from other websites to yours.

Whether people link to your website, or not, is mainly up to them, but there are a few things you can do to increase the likelihood that they do.

Press releases

Even away from your website, your keywords can be useful. Be sure to include them in any press releases you issue as hyperlinked text that links back to your website. Journalists will sometimes copy and paste the text you send them into their own online publications. If they do that with your text, that's rich with hyperlinked keywords, that's an external link to your website right there.

Also remember that these days people aren't only looking for text, but also for images, video and audio content, so include these in your press releases and on your website as well. Give files user-friendly names that contain your keywords to increase the chance of a potential customer finding you, no matter what type of content they are looking for.

Social media

Facebook and Twitter are two very popular and, most importantly, independent social media platforms. Use them and other platforms relevant to your market to reach out to your customers and prospects online. Include links to your website where relevant.

Just remember that social media only works as a SEO tool if what you contribute is relevant and appealing to your online community, so try to limit explicit self-promotion as this puts people off.

Blogs

Search engines love blogs because they usually feature content that changes frequently and content that is recent always does better in the rankings. Starting your own blog gives you the perfect place to link back to your own website and, if you blog well enough, other bloggers will link back to your posts and website as well. ●



Multilingual SEO is a must

Expanding your business into another market, especially in Europe, usually means making your website available in another language.

To make sure that your SEO efforts for the new language version of your website are not wasted, be sure to pay attention to the following:

1. Learn local terms

When you're picking the keywords for the new language version of your website, spend some time investigating what prospects call your products and services in their area or dialect. For example, if you sell pillows and your target market is in Austria, you're going to want to talk about a "polster" and not a "kissen", which is the word for pillow in Germany.

2. Have a human on hand

Even the best translating tools can make mistakes. If you are going to go the automated translation route for your website, have language experts on hand who can quickly identify and correct errors before there are any consequences in your important markets.

The human touch also applies to any images, audio and video footage you want to publish which, while perfectly acceptable in one market, may not strike the right note in another. This is something computers cannot possibly know.

3. Research search engines

When optimising your website, do not assume that all your prospects will find you through Google. Many Internet users

prefer to use regional search engines believing that the search results will be more relevant. So, as no two search engine algorithms are the same, find out which search engines are popular in your target market and optimise for them.

4. Explore social media

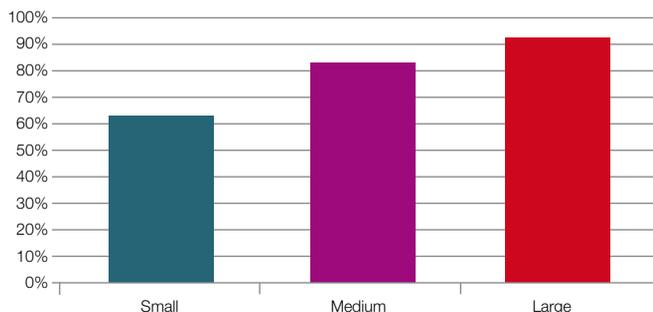
Just because your French customers are active on LinkedIn, doesn't mean your Dutch customers will be too. In the Netherlands for instance, hyves.nl is more popular than Facebook. To have a truly successful SEO strategy, you need to find out which social media platforms each of your target markets prefers.

Where are the SMEs?

More than 90% of large European companies have a website, but for small- to medium-sized enterprises the figures are less encouraging.

TEXT: STAFFAN WALLIN

ONLY 60% OF small- to medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), and only 40% of micro enterprises are online¹, even though together they account for 99% of businesses across the European Union (EU)².



Small, medium and large European enterprises with a website, 2010

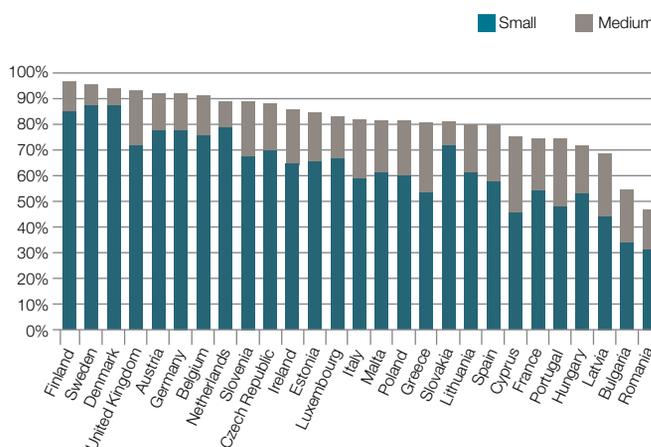
So what is going on? The reasons for this difference in online presence between large and small businesses become apparent when the numbers are analysed more closely.

The country counts

More than 80% of SMEs in Sweden, Denmark and Finland have a website, whereas less than 60% of medium-sized, and less than 40% of small enterprises, are online in Romania and Bulgaria.

Economic factors can partly explain these differences. For example, there is a strong correlation between a country's standard of living (measured as GDP per capita) and the percentage of its small businesses that have a website³. Similarly, in countries where people are accustomed to ordering goods online, there is usually a large percentage of small companies with a website⁴.

You might argue that this is a vicious circle – people can't order online if companies don't have websites, and as long as their customers are not ordering online, the companies



Small- and medium-sized business with a website across the EU

in question have no reason to run a website. But this is not entirely true.

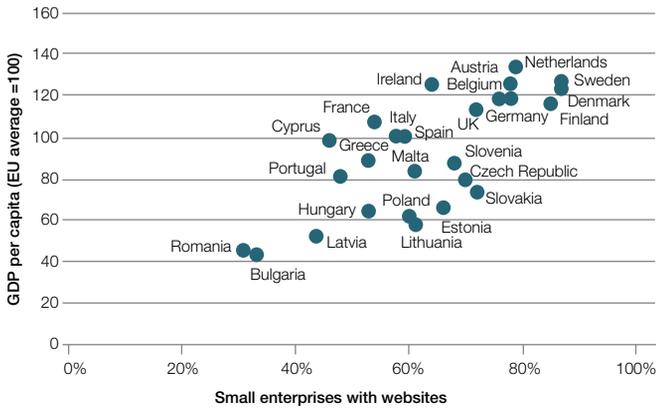
This is because, when it comes to large companies, the difference between countries is much smaller. This seems to indicate that large companies get websites first. In time, people become used to ordering online, which in turn leads to smaller enterprises realising that they also need e-commerce websites to benefit from this consumer behaviour.

¹No EU-wide data on micro-enterprises was available. Data for Germany, which was available, was extrapolated.

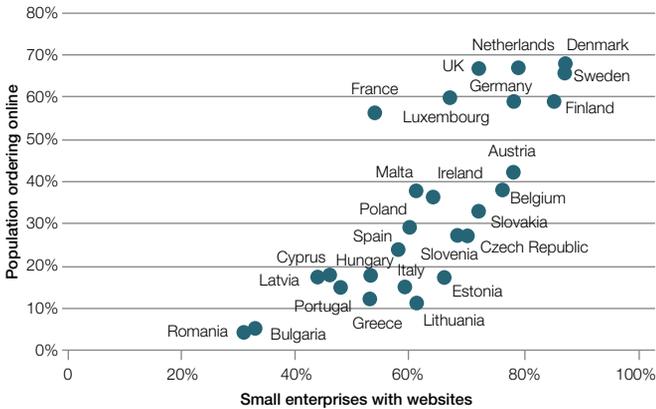
²Eurostat, 2010.

³Correlation coefficient 0.74, where 1 is perfect correlation (Luxembourg is excluded since GDP data is distorted by foreign residents employed in the country).

⁴Correlation coefficient 0.79.



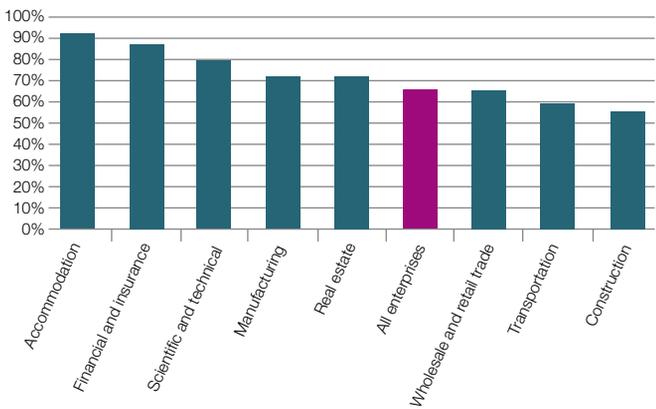
Relationship between standard of living and small businesses with a website



Relationship between the population ordering online and small businesses with a website

Accommodation domination

Online presence also varies greatly between industries. Around 90% of all enterprises in the accommodation and financial sectors have a website, compared with less than 60% in the transportation and construction sectors.



Percentage of websites per sector

It's no surprise that the accommodation sector leads the way. People most often look for accommodation in places far away from where they live, which makes the Internet the perfect research tool. On the other hand, construction and transport businesses are more likely to be online through local Internet phone books than their own websites.

For businesses that are online

EURid has conducted recent research which shows that 26.5% of all domain names of the surveyed top-level domains are used for business purposes⁵. For the 75 million domain names registered across the EU⁶, this translates to more than seven million domain names for business use. .eu scores slightly above average, with 31.4% of its domain names being registered for business use.

While many small companies might not have any domain names, larger ones may hold several. For example, a company doing business in three EU countries could have .eu and .com domain names in addition to three country-code names, such as .de (Germany), .fr (France) and .nl (the Netherlands) to maximise its online presence. Larger companies also often have dedicated product and marketing campaign websites, each with unique domain names.

That only 31,4% of all domain names are used for business might seem surprising. However, domain names are not seen as expensive items, so businesses tend to register many that are not actually used for functioning websites. These may be protective registrations to prevent competitors from obtaining the names instead or registrations of brands and products that never make it to market.

It seems then that many European businesses still need to get online, but of those that are online, many are choosing to establish their presence with .eu. ●

31.4% of all .eu websites are being used for business.

⁵Results from EURid's website categorisation exercise, 2011. The 36% value is the average of the values of three of the top ten European country-code top-level domains, .eu and .com top-level domains. The value is fairly representative since 63% of all registered domain names in the EU are country-code top-level domains and more than two thirds of the remaining 37% are .com domain names.

⁶zooknic.com and European national TLD registries.



ORDER A IN BRUSSELS, TASTE IT IN GENOA

Behind every great business idea, you'll find .eu

www.beerplanet.eu

How do you sell more than 1 000 unique Belgian beers across Europe when you only have a 40 m² shop in Brussels? The answer: beerplanet.eu. The online place to be for all beer connoisseurs from Helsinki to Cagliari. Beerplanet is now such a success that other entrepreneurs seek advice from founders Aram and Sam about how to set up similar shop concepts abroad. Like many others they have found their way into Europe thanks to .eu.
What are you waiting for?

.eu
Your European Identity

www.eurid.eu



Please submit your credit card details

What you can do to protect yourself and your business from phishing, one of the most common online fraud schemes.

TEXT: BRIGITTE LAGROU

PHISHERS ATTEMPT TO acquire sensitive information online, such as your user-name, password or credit card details by masquerading as someone you trust, like your bank or favourite online store. They then use the information they obtain to, for example, steal from your bank account.

Whereas in the early days, phishers targeted e-banking and large e-commerce websites, they are now an ongoing threat to the entire Internet community. According to the figures from the Anti-Phishing Working Group (APWG), an association working to eliminate identity theft on the Internet, there were more than 67 000 phishing attacks worldwide during the second half of 2010, occurring on over 42 000 unique domain names¹.

What can you do?

To avoid being reeled in by phishers, the rule of thumb is simple: be careful about sharing personal information on the Internet.

In practical terms:

- Be suspicious of any email urgently requesting personal financial information
- Don't click on links in emails, web-pages or chat sessions. Instead, type the URL into the browser window yourself

- Avoid completing online forms asking for financial information
- Check for the "https" in your browser window, which indicates a secure website, before submitting credit card details. Or choose websites using strong authentication or payment solutions like PayPal
- Regularly check your bank and credit card statements for irregularities
- Ensure that your computer's anti-virus and anti-spam filters are up-to-date.

For businesses online

The tips above are just as relevant if your company is active on the Internet, but there are a few extra steps you can take to protect your business from phishers:

- Develop a cybercrime protection plan that protects your business-critical and personal data
- Make an inventory of the company's IT infrastructure and the data that requires protection
- Identify new applications and processes that have been added to the IT infrastructure. They may contain sensitive data that has to be protected, or they may be malicious and will need to be removed

- When selecting security solutions for your organisation, evaluate each solution to see whether it meets your business objectives
- Ensure that the security solution you choose works for everybody legitimately associated with your company: from employees on the road and in remote offices to customers and suppliers who interact with your IT infrastructure
- Stay up-to-date on the latest fraud schemes and reassess your protection plan once a year to make sure it's still up to the task of keeping your business secure.

What does .eu do?

.eu combats malicious domain name registrations by actively screening newly registered domain names. This is an important measure in the fight against phishing as, according to the APWG report, about 28% of the unique domain names used in phishing attempts were registered maliciously. By monitoring new registrations, we make the service we provide as secure as possible for .eu domain name holders.

We also work closely with law enforcement authorities and are constantly looking for ways to improve this cooperation to combat cybercrime. ●

¹APWG, Global Phishing Survey: Trends and Domain Name Use in 2H2010, April 2011.



Partners in fashion

What do you do when you can't find your favourite clothing labels in the local shops? For two Latvian friends the answer was obvious – start an online store that sells them.



TEXT: MEGAN VOSLOO PHOTOS: COURTESY OF STREETSOULEU

STREETSOULEU specialises in selling funky streetwear and accessories for youthful Europeans. Streetwear, if you didn't know, is a distinctive urban fashion style with its roots in the skateboarding fashion popularised in the 1980s.

Martins Dubrovskis and Maris Lapins, two entrepreneurs with backgrounds in architecture, photography, marketing and business, began Streetsoul as a brick-and-mortar business in 2006, when they opened their flagship store in Riga, Latvia.

"We wanted to create something new for our region in the clothing indus-

try," explains Martins. "Our goal was to bring fresh streetwear styles to the Baltic market that were not available anywhere else."

Following their initial success, the business partners quickly realised that there was a gap in the market that they could fill. They wasted no time in registering streetsoul.eu with the intention of turning it into an online store with a European focus - thereby giving them access to a much bigger market.

Registering a .eu domain name was a conscious choice. ".eu immediately tells our customers where we are based and which territory we focus on," says Martins. Maris adds, "This way they know

the advantages of shopping with us. They don't have to pay any customs or taxes after they receive their purchases - as you often have to when buying goods from the US - and the shipping costs are lower."

Streetsoul.eu's customers have certainly shown their appreciation of the store's Europe-minded approach, visiting the website approximately 180 000 times a year.

Martins and Maris choose the labels to stock by keeping tabs on industry trends and relying on their own experience. The goods are sold using customised e-commerce software, which allows them to accept payment online



“.eu immediately tells our customers where we are based and which territory we focus on.”

by various credit card types or PayPal. Orders are processed within one working day and shipped all over Europe, most often to Denmark and the United Kingdom.

To attract visitors to the website the two entrepreneurs interact with their customers on Facebook and Twitter and offer a special online-only discount to streetsoul.eu members. They also host a blog. Being constantly active on the Internet means that they are highly visible to their most typical customers, the 18 – 30-year-olds who purchase goods on streetsoul.eu after having found the store by searching for their favourite streetwear brands on Google.

Online in every sense

But Martins and Maris don't just sell their goods online, they buy most of them online as well. In fact, the friends very seldom meet any of their suppliers face to face, making use of online purchasing platforms and email order forms to buy merchandise. The two agree that operating online in an efficient business-to-business environment saves time and money.

In 2012 they plan to expand their operation by partnering with select shops with a similar style so that they can broaden their product range. In preparation for this, they are rebuilding streetsoul.eu's online store platform.

Martins considers this to be one of their biggest challenges, to be constantly in technical development, to keep up with the times and implement new solutions.

“But,” he concludes, “the positive feedback we get from our customers makes it worthwhile. It's confirmation that we were right to turn our idea into reality.” ●

Visit streetsoul.eu.



Spoilt *for choice*

*So you have a web address for your business, but you don't yet have a website. **Where do you start?***

TEXT: MEGAN VOSLOO

WITH SO MANY web-hosting companies competing for your business and so many different offers to choose from, deciding on the right host can be daunting.

Start at the beginning

Before you even consider disk space, bandwidth or price, figure out what you want your business to achieve online.

For example, winemaker Alberto Graci uses the website graci.eu as an information tool for potential customers and the media to promote his boutique wines. But Martins Dubrovskis and Maris Lapins use their website, streetsoul.eu, for e-commerce, so it comes complete with a shopping-cart feature and a safe and convenient way for customers to pay for orders.

To help you decide how you are going to take your business to the Internet, ask yourself the following questions and use the answers to draw up a list of services that your website needs:

- What is your business model?
- What are your primary business goals?
- What will potential customers expect to see and do when they visit your website?

The services on your list should be your primary consideration when comparing various hosting offers. You should not make your decision based on price alone.

We also recommend taking note of the following:

Website tools

Most web-service companies include basic tools in their hosting packages that

allow you to design your own website. But it is not always easy for beginners to do or do well.

If you have experience, like Martins from streetsoul.eu, you may be confident enough to use your host's tools to build your own website. But if you would appreciate some pointers, make sure you pick a hosting company that is prepared to offer you design help if you

need it or offers web-design services. You could also hire an independent web-design agency.

Buyer beware: some hosts offer website building tools for free, but these may be proprietary, meaning that they will only work on that hosting company's name servers. If this is the case, you won't be able to move your website to another hosting company without having to rebuild it from scratch.

When comparing various hosting offers, don't make your decision based on price alone.

Uploads

File Transfer Protocol, or FTP, is a good way to quickly upload big amounts of data to your website, like video clips, audio files and downloadable documents. But if you are not comfortable using FTP, you should make sure your host offers a good online file manager.

Remember that the more data you upload, the more disk space you will

need. Also, certain types of content, like video and audio files or high resolution images, take up more space than others.

Analytical tools

To optimise your customers' online experience, you need to be able to see what they are doing and where they are going when they visit your website. Analytical tools like Google Analytics, AWSTATS and Webalizer offer valuable insight into visitors' behaviour and your host should allow you to download the logs of these programs.

Email

If you have decided that you need email, consider whether you also need autoresponders – computer programs that automatically answer any emails they receive – email aliases or mail-

boxes which store your email until you can download it. Beyond your website, email is an important marketing tool that allows you to stay in contact with website visitors, potential and past customers. Also, an email address that matches your website address looks more professional and official.

Customer service

We hope you never need it, but if you do, your web host should offer 24/7 support in your native language.

If you prefer telephone support, you should check that your host offers it before signing up. Some only offer customer support via email or live chat. ●

Testing testing

How can you be sure the web-hosting company you've chosen is as good as they claim to be?

1. Call or email customer support

And see how long it takes them to respond. Make sure you call the technical or support department, not the sales department because response times per department may vary.

2. Check reliability

Ask your web host if they guarantee a certain number of hours or minutes of uptime. Also find out whether they provide their services directly or are a reseller for another company, which means they have less control over the service quality. This is important, because if your website disappears from the Internet, even for a few hours, you could lose both sales and credibility.

3. Read reviews

Use the host's name to search for independent service reviews online. If the company you're considering has a forum, this is another good place to check out what people have to say about them.



.eu mini-guide to doing business

Give your company a boost with our useful list of .eu websites that offer business services.

TEXT: CATHERINE DOWDELL



Durable

German company Durable sells office equipment, providing you with all the supplies you need for filing and organising, clipping and binding, as well as creating a professional impression using name badges, presentation folders and office signage.

Website: durable.eu



MarkIT

MarkIT is an online computer equipment store that integrates 100 leading IT distributors into a single web service that offers real-time comparative prices, availability and direct ordering. With headquarters in Tallinn, Estonia, MarkIT operates across 21 European countries.

Website: markit.eu

Leinonen Group

Expanding into a new country can be a daunting prospect. Finnish-owned Leinonen Group comes to the rescue with their accountancy, legal and administrative services specifically tailored to help you make the leap between countries through their offices in Bulgaria, Estonia, Finland, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland.

Website: leinonen.eu



Why go

Save time and travel costs by meeting your international customers online. Global video conferencing and telepresence venue supplier "Why go" offers its European customers online booking for more than 2 500 video conference facilities through whygo.eu.

Website: whygo.eu

Studio54

Based in Marbella, Spain, Studio 54 offers companies of all sizes a wide range of graphic design services, such as logo design, print advertising, business cards and other stationary, promotional posters, magazine layout, website design, trade show exhibition stands and much, much more.

Website: studiofiftyfour.eu

ICEShop

Looking to move your retail activities online? ICEShop – short for Internet Commerce Engineers – develop open source e-commerce products that power web shops and online ordering systems for many clients in the Netherlands and beyond.

Website: iceshop.eu





Green-a-Way

Operating in the United Kingdom, Green-a-Way specialise in paper shredding and secure document destruction. They also help make the most of limited office space by offering offsite document storage and paper collection for recycling.

Website: confidentialshredding.eu



Ataxo

Ataxo offer Internet marketing and website services to help entrepreneurs find new business opportunities online. Based in the Czech Republic, Poland and Slovakia, Ataxo specialise in pay-per-click campaigns and their expertise covers search-engine optimisation (SEO) and social networking consultancy.

Website: ataxo.eu

The Muze

Who said office walls need to be boring? Online store The Muze sells tailor-made, photographic art prints for offices, hotels and restaurants. The subject matter on offer by this Netherlands-based e-shop is varied, ranging from abstract and nature to food, people and travel, so there is something to enhance the atmosphere of any space.

Website: themuze.eu



Photo: Courtesy of The Muze



Nomado

Belgian company Nomado Telecom offer low-cost telephone calls to businesses and individuals using Voice over IP (VoIP) Internet telephony. Through the website nomado.eu, the company also offers an e-store for phone numbers and hardware and customer support via live chat.

Website: nomado.eu

Bobbert and Partner

Know your rights. Protect your ideas, designs and inventions by filing patents and registering trademarks using German patent attorneys and intellectual property experts Bobbert and Partner.

Website: bobbert-partner.eu



Cleaning Supplies

Keep your business premises neat and tidy by ordering from cleaningsupplies.eu, an online store selling an extensive range of cleaning, hygiene and safety products to companies in the United Kingdom. ●

Website: cleaningsupplies.eu

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