

Computer Bits by Mark Eggert of Raad One Network Solutions, Inc.

Welcome to Computer Bits, a series of articles on computers and network information. This month's questions are: Do I need a website, in addition to my email address? How do I get one without spending an arm and a leg? Can I look fairly professional without worrying about being "slick", at least for now?

Since more and more companies are giving their employees internet access, I would think having a website a wise thing to do. Whether you have a website or not, having an email address is a definite must. All Internet Service Providers (ISPs) provide basic email services with their Internet Accounts. So you can have an email address without having a website. The negative thing about using the ISP provided email address is that it is going to have the ISP's Domain Name in the address, e.g. JohnDoe@aol.com. Some people may have a negative reaction to see a business using an email like this. The good news is that most ISPs will host your Domain Name for you so you can have email address with your business name in them, e.g. JohnDoe@bigtoolcorp.com. For this to happen you'll need to obtain a Domain Name for your business, which costs about \$35/yr, and you may have to pay a hosting fee with your ISP. Note: that a lot of ISPs have free Domain Hosting meaning that you don't pay a hosting fee.

To setup a website is not a difficult task for someone with a little web design knowledge. There are applications that will actually walk you through the creation of a website and help you post it on the web. A good web design application costs between \$50 and \$200. The other thing you need is an ISP to host your website. Web Hosting starts at \$19.95/mn and goes up from there depending on what functionality you need. If you have a basic informational website, you can look very professional without being "slick" to start with. Take a look at my website, it's very simple, yet very professional. It only took me a few hours to create and it can be hosted for \$19.95/mn. Please note that Web Hosting is different and separate from having an Internet Account with an ISP. So you will need some sort of Internet Account to be able to post and make changes to your website and to send and receive email.

If you have a computer or network question you'd like answered and you think others would like to know the answer too, please forward them to me. My email address is meggert@wi.rr.com, my phone number is 262-679-7704 and my fax number is 262-679-7664.