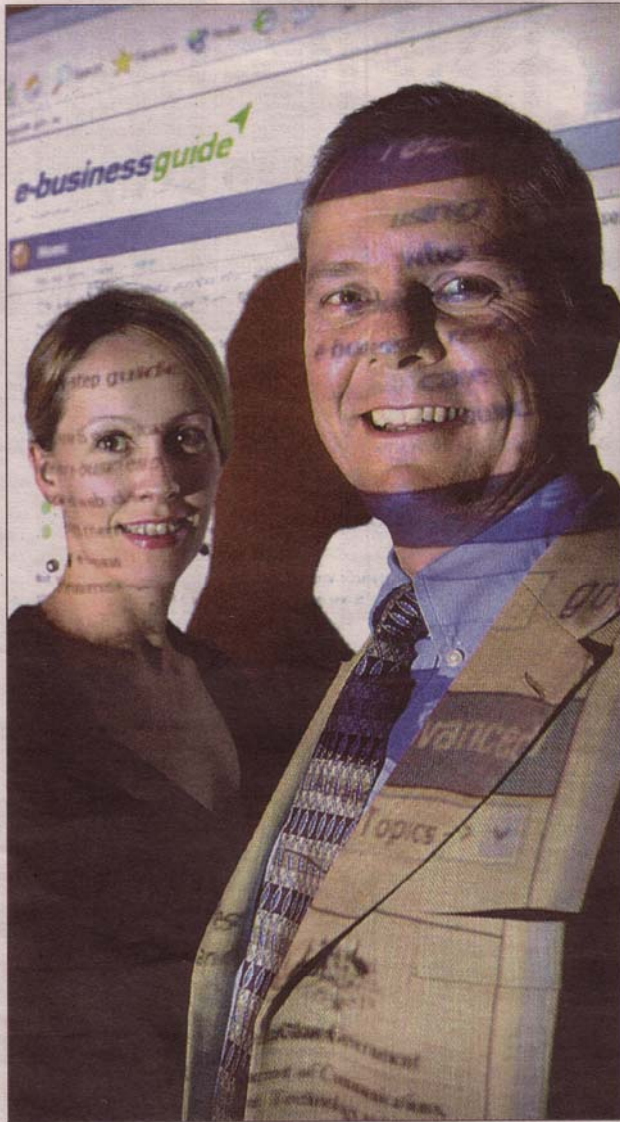


Firms failing to make use of web



WEB FOCUS: Steven Smith and Amanda Jarman of United Focus

MEREDITH BOOTH

ONLY 12 per cent of Australian small and medium-sized businesses have an effective website, Adelaide-based business consultant Steven Smith says.

The managing director of internet consultancy United Focus says only a quarter of the 45 per cent of Australian businesses that use the web do so effectively.

But businesses were getting better at doing business online following the realisation the web was a marketing tool, he said.

Mr Smith is the author of the Australian Government's e-business guide.

The former St Peter's College

history, English and computing teacher started United Focus with wife Prue Astley in 1995 after seeing a need for independent advice for businesses not knowing where or how to start working online.

Part of United Focus's work is to evaluate websites and intranets, write e-business strategic plans and present workshops about the web from writing for websites.

"The push has come from the banks where they have online banking," Mr Smith said.

He said removing the barriers for smaller companies and organisations that had no time to manage a website was vital.