

Special Advertising Section

Web hosting.

Do you want it right? Or do you want it now?
Or do you want it right, now?



Putting your business on the Web doesn't have to be hard. In this special supplement, we'll show you the various hosting options, how to pick the right partners, choose the best domain name, give you worksheets so you can calculate prices and explain some of the common pieces of the e-commerce puzzle.

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**TONIGHT WE'LL BE HOSTING A VERY NICE SAUTÉED
RED GROUPER WITH A PIQUANT CAJUN REMOULADE
THAT COULD TEAR YOU A NEW ONE.**

Restaurants.com tantalizes a hungry public with an eclectic menu of well-regarded eateries. When they came to HostPro for Web hosting, we responded with a robust MS SQL 7.0 database solution which allows visitors to customize restaurant searches by type of cuisine in all 50 states. From shared hosting to full-course dedicated packages, HostPro can serve up a medley of appealing Web-hosting options. Whether the need is for high bandwidth, a custom configuration or a single server dedicated to one site or several sites, we have the expertise to manage it all. **hostpro**
Get in touch anytime. You don't need reservations.

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How to get hip to e-commerce

These days, just about anyone claims to be an e-commerce hosting provider. There are literally hundreds and perhaps thousands of Internet Service Providers (ISPs) that offer some part of the tasks that you need to get up and online to enable you to sell goods and services. The sheer volume of choices through this overload of information can be overwhelming. How do you choose? Here are some tips to help you through this overload of choices and show you how to get the most out of your needs.

Buy vs. build. Putting up your own website is easier, provided you can afford it. However, you need to determine whether it's worth the cost. You can build in-house with purchased software, or you can buy a website available from an e-commerce provider.

There are many do-it-yourself website creation recommendations are available. IBM's Net.Commerce. Both offer a wide array of design, databases support network and payment processing. If you have staff familiar with the Web, you shouldn't attempt to do it yourself. Unless you plan on spending a lot of money. The better choice is to hire a professional to help you assemble your storefront.

Web server and e-commerce hosting. Every provider offers different packages for hosting your website. Some include extra charges for disk storage or usage, and others offer visitor log reports and design tools as part of the package. Some plans depend on the number of items in your online catalog and whether or not you want to accept credit card payments online. Check all the options before choosing the right plan. Make sure you leave room to grow into the ones you may not need immediately.

E-mail hosting. Your e-mail will become your corporation's communication lifeline, so make sure you have plenty of room to grow here and to add features such as having an "info@company.com" address for customer inquiries and plenty of mailboxes for future employees.

Database and streaming media services. Other companies include other specialized services, such as database

hosting and streaming media content hosting, so you can offer your own audio/video programming from your website, as well as tie your webpages into corporate data such as catalogs, departmental personnel listings and

you may wish to add to enable your visitors to interact with each other. Some of the products and services available

mean you'll have to go through some time studying the options to determine the best provider with the most flexible plans and options.

aid over the Internet

you with their credit cards. You need to do four things. First, you need to get a Web server to host your site. Next, you'll have to set up a secure account to accept deposits. If you already have a credit card, you probably already have a Web account. If you're starting a new business, you'll need to set up a new account. In the past, many banks didn't want to open

new accounts for Internet storefronts. But many hosting providers now offer links directly on their websites and provide convenient Web-based forms that allow you to establish such accounts.

Next, you'll need to set up a method to authorize the credit card numbers. "Authorize" refers to checking the number to make sure it is, first, a valid number; second, that it hasn't been reported stolen; and finally, that it matches the address of the cardholder of record. There are several ways to accomplish this authorization. You can sign up with one of the computer-based point-of-sale terminal software suppliers, such as PC/Authorize from Cybercash. You can make use of an online authorization service, such as Signio and Authorize.Net. Or you can manually enter the credit card numbers into the banking network directly with a point-of-sale terminal, similar to what is typically found in a physical retail store. If you think you'll only receive a few orders per day, then the

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manual method makes the most sense. If you think your business will grow and you will be handling several hundred orders daily, then you should consider the online approach.

Authorization is a separate step from what the banks call capturing the credit card number — this is when money actually changes hands and is supposed to happen when you ship the goods the customer ordered. The capture

step can be accomplished with the same routines that you

When your website has outgrown a shared hosting environment, HostPro's dedicated packages offer maximum performance and flexibility, allowing you to administer your own site.

Whether you need a single server dedicated to one site or several sites, we have the expertise to manage it all.

of users or e-mail accounts? Plan for growth on both, and determine what any additional fees will be.

- What kinds of payment processing options are covered by each e-commerce plan, and what are the fees involved for each option?
- Many ISPs have webpages where you can search for a local dial-up point of presence or see a list for different cities. Try searching for several cities here to make sure they have adequate coverage if you need to connect with an ISP from a remote location.

with technical support. You should also ask the company about the company's policies on technical questions, and if so, how they are handled on its website?

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websites are looking for? What started out as a simple website (or a set of pages) has now become a portal (or a set of portals) and are some important features that are missing here.

Who's home page is simple, it doesn't take advantage of the connections, and it doesn't give you an grasp what to do next. It's a matter of seeing it appear and not having it have much in the way of navigation, objects or scrolling options. For the most

part, it is just text and a few small graphics, and on a plain white background, too.

There are lots of tools to help you design websites, including Trellix Corporation's tools and Microsoft's FrontPage (both of which are offered by HostPro) and NetObjects' Fusion, among others. But you don't necessarily want to choose all the various fonts and special effects in creating your site.

Many Web users avoid places on the Web that require Shockwave to navigate their sites, as well as places that put navigation links inside graphics on their home pages.

Questions to ask your e-commerce consultant

To pick the best e-commerce host, ask your consultant some questions to ask them to help you decide and to find the best match of host to your needs. Use these questions, fill out the answers, and use the worksheet on the next page.

- Start with the company's home page. Look for links for products or services. Is the site attractively laid out and easy to navigate with clear descriptions of services?
- Check out pages with specific business pricing options and plans. Are there any limitations or particulars that make one plan more attractive for your immediate needs? Can you find everything you need to determine prices of various plans?
- Does pricing include the initial domain name registration fee, or is that extra? And how and where do they register your domain?
- Are there plans for supporting a particular number

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AFTER DINNER, HOW ABOUT A NICE MOVIE?

(IT'S TRUE. THE WEB HAS GONE HOLLYWOOD.)

Two enthusiastic thumbs up were recently given HostPro by the American Film Institute. Thanks to load balancing, we were able to rapidly accommodate millions of simultaneous hits at afionline.org. We also helped viewers download movie clips during the AFI's TV awards show. Of course, HostPro offers critically acclaimed packages in every Web-hosting category. Each with the requisite performance and adaptability to let you effectively administer your own site (or sites). Why not give us a screen test? We think we'll earn rave reviews.

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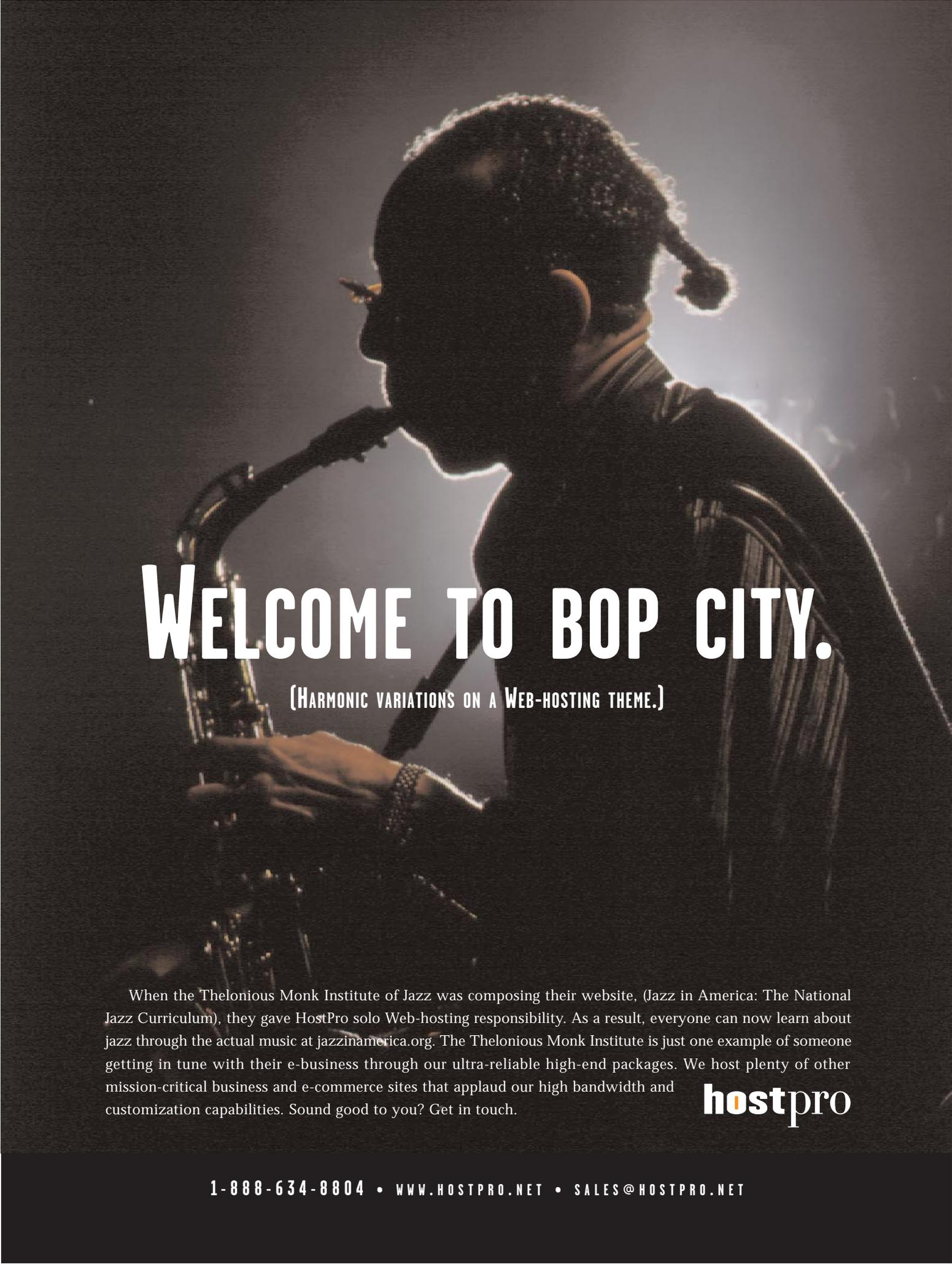
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WELCOME TO BOP CITY.

(HARMONIC VARIATIONS ON A WEB-HOSTING THEME.)

When the Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz was composing their website, (Jazz in America: The National Jazz Curriculum), they gave HostPro solo Web-hosting responsibility. As a result, everyone can now learn about jazz through the actual music at jazzinamerica.org. The Thelonious Monk Institute is just one example of someone getting in tune with their e-business through our ultra-reliable high-end packages. We host plenty of other mission-critical business and e-commerce sites that applaud our high bandwidth and customization capabilities. Sound good to you? Get in touch.

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Why should they take the time to download this junk when they have other, more pressing things to do with their surfing time? This is especially critical for shoppers, and saves them time when they are trying to buy something on your site. So the Yahoo-ization of the Web is a good thing, not because we all like the Yahoo design but because the message of ease of use is finally getting through to Web designers. If you are in charge of designing your e-commerce pages, keep Yahoo's simplicity in mind the next time you make changes to your site.

Pricing Worksheet

	Initial fees	Monthly fees
Access account (if required)		
Domain name registration		
Website hosting		
Additional disk space		
E-commerce account		

Links to learn more

go.hotwired.com/webmonkey/e-business/tutorials/tutorial3.html/eg
WebMonkey's e-commerce tutorial basics and shows you how they set Cold Fusion.

www.hatfactory.com/customer.html
"The customer isn't an idiot," by R of e-commerce site design.

www.poorrichard.com/freeinfo/shop.h
Shopping Cart Software and Service Richard's website, a very extensive shopping cart and payment processes and products.

www.ihtmlmerchant.com/support_pay
Good list and links to SSL credit cards from Inline Internet Systems.

www.scambusters.org
Scambusters has lots of helpful articles. Steps to Minimize Credit Card Fraud for [Internet Merchants] and "Don't Be Victimized by Online Credit Card Fraud."

www.zdnet.com/enterprise/e-business/
ZDnet's e-commerce pages, with lots of helpful resources and articles, including examples of the best e-commerce practices.

strom.com/pubwork/ecommerce
David Strom's e-commerce links page, with demonstrations of various e-commerce technologies, servers and other resources.

David Strom has written over a thousand articles over the past 15 years for numerous computer trade publications. He was the founding editor-in-chief of Network Computing magazine and was executive editor of PC Week. He runs his own consulting practice based in Port Washington, NY, and publishes a weekly series of essays called Web Informant on Web marketing, e-commerce and Web technologies. He can be reached at david@strom.com.

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hosting services) offer you a reduced fee to use their names, don't be tempted. Having your own name is more professional.

- Does your provider register your name, or do you? Some include the registration fee as part of their charges, others mark up the fee or don't handle the registration at all. There are several new registrars offering services, such as Register.com, DomainValet.com and NameSecure.com. Compare prices and plans before deciding.

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TO TOP THINGS OFF, A PRIMO ESPLENDIDO OR A VIRTUOSO ROBUSTO?

(WHAT KIND OF HOST WOULD WE BE IF WE COULDN'T PROVIDE SOME
INTRIGUING INCENDIARY INDULGENCES?)

When the smoke had cleared, c-gar.com had domain names scattered all over the net. By transferring their Web hosting to us, they instantly consolidated everything under one umbrella. Thanks to our domain name support and some super-responsive tech support, their e-business literally lit up. It's the same kind of above-and-beyond service you'll find throughout our product line, from starter and business/e-commerce packages right through to our high-end and dedicated solutions. So no matter what your Web-hosting needs, contact us and be the master of your domain. We suspect that cigars will definitely be in order.

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