

# See and be seen

How visible are you? How visible is your company? How visible are your services and the possibilities you offer? I am not referring here to a striking building in the town's main street, publicity in the local newspaper, advertising hoardings around sports fields and football games, or even a state-of-the-art neon sign above the shop window. I'm talking about visibility in the virtual world of the Web.

Ten years ago the sorts of visibility described above were important for establishing and keeping a name in the sectors of surveying, mapping and GIS. But nowadays, with expanding markets in a world of increasing globalisation, the Web plays a much greater role. And it's not solely the growing importance of the sector itself, but also the increasing density and influence of computers that has helped to make an online presence just as important as offline existence.

Why so important, you might want to ask? Well, in large parts of the world the first step taken by professionals looking for companies, partners, individual consultants or solutions, is to go to the internet and open a search engine. Often this will be Google; sometimes the engine of choice is Yahoo or MSN Search, or maybe even a business-to-business search engine like Zibb. Always the aim is to look for contacts, answers to business-related questions, news on developments in the field and companies who help implement them. It's all there, and just seconds after you have filled in the search box. That's minutes faster than looking up info in the yellow pages. And on the net you get more than just a telephone number. Visibility on the Web therefore guarantees a company its orders and contracts. And visibility might even help employers and professionals to fill or to get that new job they are after.

So on the Web the motto is "see and be seen". And, to be even more specific, "be found". For a fancy website with the coolest design, newest interactive buttons and most savvy technical possibilities means nothing if searchers are not led to it on the Web. In other words: if you have a fancy website but your rating in search engines is low, you have a problem. Understanding the mechanisms of the search engines may therefore be even more important than having the latest design or high-tech interactive possibilities. Without such understanding of how the engines tick, you may end up in the lower areas of the search results where nobody comes to click. Visibility? Think about it.