



Online push: Brian Gillett demonstrates an iPhone application for the Bloo business directory website at the company's office.

Picture: Rod Taylor

Online directory comes out of the Bloo

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A new Perth web-based company is aiming high as it moves to tap into the growing number of small businesses migrating online to spruik their wares.

The Bloo business directory is fighting the likes of Sensis for advertising dollars but says it is gaining traction in the small to medium-business market.

Bloo has captured 250 paid advertisers, listed 110,000 Perth businesses and is clocking up 35,000

visitors a month since its launch four months ago.

"It has become almost a necessity for small businesses to have some sort of web presence," Bloo owner and director Brian Gillett said.

The Bloo listings come with contact details for the businesses, as well as website and email addresses and a map.

Mr Gillett, who is developing an iPhone application for the website, expects the online push to deepen as internet-enabled mobile devices become more common.

Last week's Sensis e-business report found 54 per cent of Australia's SMEs had a website.

However, the report, which surveyed 1800 SMEs around the country, also found that WA businesses were less internet-dependent than their national counterparts.

Only 45 per cent of local businesses were likely to take orders online, compared to 70 per cent in the Northern Territory. Some 71 per cent of WA businesses used the internet to place orders, against 74

per cent nationally. WA Internet Association chairman Richard Bone said it was disappointing WA businesses were not using the internet as much as the rest of the country, but would become more dependent as the Rudd Government moved ahead with plans for a national broadband network.

"Perth is the most geographically isolated capital city in the world, so Western Australians need to use whatever tools are available to them to try and engage in a global digital economy," Mr Bone said.