Surges in internet traffic this Christmas could cost SMEs £5 billion

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Small business web infrastructure creaking under 200 per cent site traffic increase

29 November, 2006 - UK small businesses are set to miss out on their share of the £5bn online Christmas spending (source: Interactive Media in Retail Group), because they are unable to cope with the massive surges in website traffic. Websites of small and medium sized enterprise's (SMEs), already creaking due to basic infrastructure, are set to collapse as site traffic increases by an average of 200 per cent, warns the UK's largest web hosting company Fasthosts (http://www.fasthosts.co.uk/).

SMEs running their websites on in-house, single server solutions are in danger of driving customers to competitors or larger online traders, by having slow and unresponsive sites. Broadband is empowering more consumers with faster internet connections than ever, and shoppers are becoming less tolerant of poorly performing websites.

With half of the UK's adult population shopping online for Christmas 2005, and spending an average of £208 each during the 10-week run-up to Christmas (source: IMRG), the need for a website to perform well under increased demand is essential.

"As online competition increases, it amazes me that so many SMEs are willing to chance their Christmas sales. Ensuring that your website is supported by the correct infrastructure is vital to provide a quality buying experience" said Stephen Holford, Director of Product Marketing, Fasthosts. "Having the right sort of hosting package is key if businesses are going to reap the benefits of the Christmas revenue window. To make this Christmas a success for SMEs, the right hosting is as important as turkey and mince pies."

Designed to respond to the individual website's operating needs, Fasthosts' hosting platform - whether powered by a dedicated server or a shared server package - provides businesses with the power to cope with unlimited amounts of traffic.   Scalability at times of high demand is essential for capitalising on peak consumer spending periods. Demonstrating maximum reliability and security ensures customers not only buy with confidence at Christmas, but throughout the calendar year.

The Fasthosts hosting environment has the following measures in place to deal with surges in website usage:

- Multiple, redundant gigabit internet connectivity with different providers to cope with any network connectivity provider outage and ensure optimal internet routing.

- Load balancing in case of any single web server outage - so if one server fails, website traffic can be directed to another fully-operational server.

- Fully-redundant power supply, so in the event of a power-cut, servers have an uninterrupted supply of electricity so they can continue hosting websites as usual.

- High availability e-mail provided by use of large mail server clusters which cope transparently with any single mail server outage.

- 24/7 technical support even on Christmas and New Year's Day helps SMEs keep their online business running and snap up any bargain hunters.

About Fasthosts

Fasthosts is the UK's largest web hosting (http://www.fasthosts.co.uk/hosting/) company. Based in the UK, and operating 24x7 from their dedicated UK data centres, Fasthosts keeps over 1 million domains running smoothly and ensures over 6 million emails are delivered safely each day. All Fasthosts services can be self-managed through the award winning Fasthosts web-based control panel that provides customers with unparalleled online control, enabling them to manage hosted services including domain registrations, shared web hosting, business-class email, dedicated servers (http://www.fasthosts.co.uk/dedicatedservers/), internet merchant accounts plus unlimited broadband. Fasthosts' highly successful reseller channel has recently been rated Number 1 for reseller hosting by industry portal Web Host Directory.

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