



The Active Server Page database was developed in 1997 by the formerly Brisbane-based professional IT solutions company Rubicomm Pty Ltd on a contra basis (Yvette provided copywriting for their marketing materials and software projects, including Jellybean Chat, which won best software in the 1997 Australian Internet Awards).

In 1999, Yvette hired Noosa web designer Matthew Tanner, of Art Matters, to develop the community and professional services arms of the site. In January 2000, Yvette launched the expanded version of [brizcomm.com.au](http://brizcomm.com.au) including community tools and interactive features along with a section promoting the company's monthly web content workshops and consultancy services.

"My core business is online content consulting and training, so I need to demonstrate to my clients that I practise what I preach, that is to make the site as easy to read and use as possible," Yvette says.

"Because the demand for training in content skills has skyrocketed in 2000, I am implementing a secure payments system coupled with provision of a wide range of information about the workshops."

"Also, because I'm expanding throughout Australia and into Asia, automated bookings will allow me to concentrate on developing new workshops and marketing the business. I will also be able to implement online booking and payment for banner and newsletter advertising."

Yvette didn't see the need for an e-Commerce plan originally but is now developing one because the business is growing.

Her site specification has changed greatly over the past few years, but the basic principles and goals have remained constant.

Brizcomm didn't conduct any specific test marketing, but the initial market comprised

readers of Yvette's weekly web site review column in Brisbane News magazine.

"I have some idea of visitors via my ISP's statistics software (LiveStats), newsletter list and general email feedback. Many of my workshop participants like to keep up to date with content issues through my newsletter which also highlights changes to the site so encourages repeat visits."

As Yvette is Brizcomm, she is the sole driver of e-Commerce.

"I'm constantly upgrading my own skills by attending seminars and subscribing to online newsletters and online research.

"I email relevant articles to my web designer and former journalism colleagues who I hope to train to conduct workshops in Australia and Asia."

A basic hurdle Yvette encountered when setting up her business was finding web developers with a solid graphic design background and technical skills for reasonable rates.

"I was burnt by a local web design house — staff were not up to speed with the technology but charged as if they were," she says.

Finance was another problem as Yvette was working as a freelance journalist and couldn't afford to take on more work as she was too busy learning about the new media.

"Training in online content skills was non-existent when I first became interested in the industry in 1996. I've learnt through trial and error - actual hands-on experience of writing and editing online content - as well as through seminars, email newsletters, magazines and newspapers, and a few American sites and newsletters.

"I'm hoping e-Commerce will allow me more time to promote my site and services. I tried an online video of my workshop but the presentation lost much of its dynamic appeal so I've decided to package the course content as an online training manual, complete with updated links, to license to organisations and educational bodies."

Yvette sees the most tangible benefits of e-Commerce as being the chance to save her time with bookings and payments, to free her up to concentrate on the creative side of the business and to raise the company profile.

"These are exciting times for a small business, with lots of opportunities for change and growth. Websites like mine help to involve and encourage the community and small businesses alike to learn about and use the Internet."