



## **Choosing an Internet Service Provider**

Once you have your website, you need to get it visible on the Internet. For this you need a hosting company (ISP) who can register your domain name, store your website files on a specialist computer on the Internet and provide you with email.

There are many different ISP's (Internet Service Providers) on the Internet. From large ones such as IBM, Pipex, BT or Easynet to budget ISP's like Fasthosts; the choice can be overwhelming.

However, not all ISP's are the same. Some of these companies might not offer the support you would like e.g. they only offer help via email or they might require you to use their premium rate phone line. They may use a call centre (sometimes abroad) which could mean staying on hold for a while before you can speak to a person and you probably won't speak to the same person twice, so forming a relationship with the company can be difficult and sometime frustrating if you are having an ongoing problem.

There is however (to quote a certain bank!) 'another way', which Royal Doulton has taken. Within the Stoke-on-Trent area there are several ISP's that offer a different service than what you might be used to.

Hosting Systems, Internet Central, UKSubnet , Xperience Web Hosting (alphabetical order so as not to show bias!) are just some of the ISP's located in the Potteries. They all have the appropriate equipment to run their services, but tend to offer a more personal direct service and you can usually pop round to meet them too!

Having a direct relationship with a local ISP might not be the cheapest option, but it can save you time and effort when you encounter issues, and in business, time equals money. Be aware though, that just because an ISP has a flashy website doesn't mean they are necessarily the best choice. Email is vital to most companies these days and it's difficult to run your business without it, so choosing a local Stoke-on-Trent firm can ensure you get the support and service you need, along with helping the local economy too.