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## A high-tech love affair



High marks: E-Commerce Minister Renee Webb

E-Commerce Minister Renee Webb yesterday released a report showing that Bermuda-based companies are embracing technology to drive their businesses forward.

The extent of Bermuda companies' use of e-commerce tools was revealed in a 27-page report commissioned by Government earlier this year by research firm Research.bm.

One thing it showed was that Bermuda's companies are almost all online with 95 percent of the companies surveyed having e-mail with Internet access, an increase of three percent over those surveyed in

2002.

(See separate table for other findings in the report).

The assessment was said to be both a "benchmarking exercise" as well as a way of assessing current levels of e-business implementation; key motivators driving the adoption of e-business technologies; the impact of e-business technologies on organisations; impediments to the present and future deployment of e-business technologies in organisations; and awareness of the sources of information in the community, including the Government and consulting services.

Ms Webb said the analysis of the resulting data would be crucial in the development of the e-business action plan, as specified in the E-Business Green Paper presented to Parliament in December 2003, with the information being used to assist in framing policy and developing strategies to promote e-business adoption throughout the community.

Although the report showed e-Commerce had been adopted by many Bermuda-based firms, the report also found there was "no room for complacency".

It continued: "Companies in Bermuda are not uniformly using e-business technologies and there is still a considerable degree of scepticism about the true benefits e-business can bring an organisation".

Ms Webb pledged Government's continued role as a resource for technical and regulatory advice to the private sector, in a bid to fight those who are sceptical about the merits of technology in the workplace.

The assessment - which took place in February and was a two-part exercise setting the Ministry back \$30,000 - was also said to have been a valuable exercise in showing "the future of e-business is alive and well in both the existing plans and future visions of Bermuda-based companies".

The results of the assessment were compiled from "in-depth one-on-one interviews" with 46 company 'decision makers' from across 20 industry groups, followed by telephone surveys with 500 randomly selected participants.

Research.bm's Nosheen Syed said a cross-section of both large and small companies had been surveyed, and that they had tried to speak with managing directors and owners as much as possible. She added that calls had been fielded to heads of technology departments in the case of large organisations, but as some of the questions focused on a company's expenditure on technology, now and in future, Research.bm had tried to speak with someone responsible for making budget decisions.

Research.bm was said to have been chosen to do the assessment and compile the report after a Government request for proposals (RFP). Government E-commerce consultant Nigel Hickson said Research.bm had beaten out three or four other companies for the job.

Research.bm said the survey's margin of error was 2.69 percent, 19 times out of 20. The report is available online at [www.bermuda-ebusiness.bm](http://www.bermuda-ebusiness.bm)