

What you need to know about

# Information technology and telecommunications (IT&T) in the building industry



## Why should builders adopt IT&T?

The compelling reason for building practitioners to adopt IT&T is that it saves time and reduces risk. Having access to a computer loaded with relevant software packages, ensures jobs like tax, accounting, project management, tendering and procurement take less time and are of a higher quality. Furthermore, when applying for insurance, builders can easily present their financials and cash flow in a way that says 'this is my business and this is why you should insure me'.

## How is the Building Commission assisting the building industry?

The Building Commission is developing strategic IT&T in the building industry in three main areas:

- IT&T in the built environment
- IT&T training and awareness programs in the building industry
- IT&T tools for the building industry.

To assist the Building Commission in this area, the Commission has partnered with the RMIT School of Property, Construction and Project Management.

## IT&T projects in the building industry

IT&T projects in the building industry completed or planned include:

### IT&T in the built environment

*Digital River and national endorsement of Digital River's Digital Building Telecommunications Access Guideline (DBTAG) by the Australian Building Codes Board (ABCB).* Digital River is designed to stimulate a competitive broadband services market via the establishment of a guideline for digital telecommunications access to buildings. The Building Commission is project managing the national endorsement of DBTAG on behalf of the building industry and other Digital River members including the City of Melbourne, the Committee for Melbourne, VicUrban and the Property Council of Australia.

### The Terraces Project in partnership with Archicentre and the City of Melbourne.

The Terraces Project involved the renovation of two inner-city townhouses showcasing best-practice design and building including sustainability, innovative technology and accessibility. The project was completed in mid 2005 and fully documented the design and building process via onsite images projected live to the Archicentre website and information sheets providing an educational legacy for the community.

Following the success of the Terraces Project, a future project is incorporating a range of partners is being considered to examine the renovation of a detached home in the suburbs targeting energy-efficiency, water conservation, technology in the home, accessibility and consumer education on the building process. The renovation would be tailored towards our ageing population allowing people of 40-60 years to reach 60-80 years with minimal accessibility issues.

### Victorian Government's Land Exchange Project.

Since 2001 the Building Commission has partnered in developing the Land Exchange Project which aims to bring all property related transactions online including planning permits, standard land parcel identifiers and e-conveyancing. Extensive investigations into online building permits have also been undertaken.

## IT&T training and awareness programs in the building industry

### Cooperative Research Centre for Construction Innovation (CRC-CI) e-Business Adoption Project.

The Building Commission is a member of the CRC-CI e-Business Adoption project team along with the University of Newcastle, RMIT University, John Holland, Queensland Department of Public Works and Queensland Department of Main Roads. The project is designed to increase the use of e-Business in the building industry. In 2005 the Commission contributed to a simple and informative e-Business adoption booklet for the building industry including a Commission-run case study on the factors affecting take-up of e-Business by small to medium size enterprises in the building industry.

### Buildsmart training to provide building practitioners with the confidence and skills to take-up IT&T.

Developed in 2001-02 in partnership with the Master Builders Association of Victoria (MBAV) and the former IT Skills Hub, Buildsmart concepts have been integrated into the MBAV's domestic builder course and Building Your Business workshops. The training focuses members on what their business processes are, what IT&T options are available to more effectively run their business processes and where and how they can adopt these IT&T options.

### Residential Construction Advanced Technology Forum in partnership with the RMIT School of Property, Construction and Project Management.

Development is underway for a forum on residential construction advanced technology designed to bring together a group of leading technology adopters and suppliers both IT&T based and construction technology based. The forum will provide an opportunity to exchange knowledge, network and organise and publicise support case studies/trials of technology adoption.

## IT&T tools for the building industry

### My Virtual Home.

My Virtual Home is a games-based software and web services product launched in 2005 which allows consumers to design their own home in 3D and email the design concept to an architect or draftsman for plan development and a quote. The Building Commission will be contributing to the My Virtual Home product through the inclusion of registered building practitioner details on the website to ensure that consumers are fully informed of their rights and responsibilities when building a home in Victoria.

### BSITE.

Launched in 2005, BSITE provides a suite of technology products utilising mobile telephone SMS technology integrated with web services to provide project management and collaboration within the building, construction and facilities management sectors. As a member of BSITE since 2003, the Building Commission has provided strategic support for the product.

### Web Alive.

Web Alive provides a low cost product which allows trade-based small to medium size enterprises to have a web presence to improve customer relationships through integrated customer relationship management and email. The Building Commission has provided strategic support for Web Alive.

### inCITE.

The Building Commission supported the development of Optus inCITE which provides users with access to internet based functionality and software applications related to tender management, document management and purchasing.

### Use of IT&T in building industry integration.

In partnership with RMIT University, the Building Commission is considering a project to examine the integration of planning, design, construction and operation through information technology and information models.

A further partnership with the International Alliance for Interoperability (Australasian Chapter) is also being developed.

## Why is IT&T relevant to the building industry?

IT&T is an important driver for the building industry. It increases customer confidence and satisfaction in the building industry, while providing building practitioners with important business tools.

The use of IT&T in the building industry is a high priority for the Building Commission due to its strong positive effect on industry efficiency.

The Building Commission has embarked on promoting the uptake of IT&T to equip building practitioners with the skills to better run their businesses. Its IT&T strategic objectives are to:

- Lead the building industry in the use of IT&T through projects like *Pulse* – providing online building industry measurement, data and analysis to enhance industry decision-making. Visit [www.buildingcommission.com.au/pulse](http://www.buildingcommission.com.au/pulse) for more information.
- Identify and promote future developments in IT&T and its potential applications within the building industry to encourage higher adoption of leading-edge IT&T.
- Partner with building industry stakeholders, IT & T leaders and building industry leaders to promote and co-ordinate the use of IT&T in the building industry.
- Reduce fragmentation of IT&T solutions within the building industry.

The Building Commission will continue to establish IT&T partnerships based on technology developments and building industry relevance.

## Who are the Commission's IT&T partners?

Key partners of the Building Commission's IT&T agenda include:

- Archicentre
- Australian Building Codes Board
- BSITE
- City of Melbourne
- Committee for Melbourne
- CRC for *Construction Innovation*
- Department of Sustainability and Environment
- Digital Harbour
- Housing Industry Association
- inCITE Consortium of major construction companies
- International Alliance for Interoperability (Australasian Chapter)
- John Holland
- Master Builders Association of Victoria
- My Virtual Home
- Property Council of Australia
- Queensland Department of Public Works
- Queensland Department of Main Roads
- RMIT University
- University of Newcastle
- Web Alive
- VicUrban

## Need more information?

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