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THE INTERNET; AN ESSENTIAL TOOL FOR ACCOUNTANTS AND THEIR CLIENTS

A recent study funded by the National Institute of Accountants (NIA) has demonstrated the importance of the internet to accountants and small businesses.

The study entitled *The Use of Internet Reporting for Small Business and Accountants* completed by academics at Victoria University and funded by the NIA Research Grant Project demonstrated the value accountants and small businesses saw in internet-based communications.

The exploratory study looked at accountants and small business owners to analyse the extent to which they have moved their business into the digital age.

NIA chief executive officer Andrew Conway said the study found that not all small business users of internet communication transferred files to their accountants via the internet, but that accountants had harnessed the internet as an effective business tool.

“Victoria University’s work provides us with a good picture of ways in which internet-based communication is used by accountants and their small business clients. Most of the accountants surveyed, 79% of the sample, use the internet as a tool in their business, particularly to receive client files,” said Mr Conway. “Most small business owners interviewed use the internet to send materials to their accountants.”

“There was a minority of small business owners, however, that still used physical media such as compact disks or USB sticks to transfer data.”