

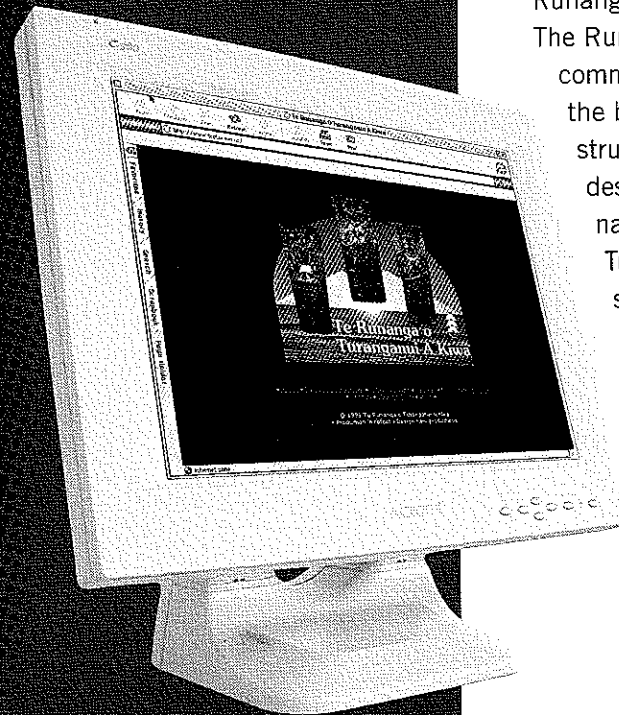
Te Runanga O Turanganui A Kiwa, Gisborne

A Maori initiative heightening the profile of smaller iwi in a region and using technology to further their community's development in land use and innovative environmental projects.

Te Runanga O Turanganui A Kiwa represents the interests of three iwi in the Gisborne area: Rongowhakaata, Ngai Tamanuhiri and Te Aitanga A Mahaki. Established in 1985, it operates a number of services, including education and training programmes, social services, some public health projects such as nutrition education and injury prevention, and a local iwi radio station and newspaper Pipiwaharoa.

The website was set up in time for the Millennium celebrations on 1 January 2000 to enhance the Runanga profile in both the region and the world. The Runanga chief executive, Tracey Tangihaere, commissioned a local web design firm, gave them the basic information about the Runanga history, structure and current operation, and asked them to design and establish a web presence. The domain name (being the initials of Te Runanga O Turanganui A Kiwa) was registered, the "iwi" status (a web term unique to New Zealand) was confirmed by the Maori Internet Society and Clear Communications initially hosted the site.

Since the site was established its content has been fairly static. However, a "back door" portal to allow the Runanga to place news and update information has recently been



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developed. The emphasis is currently on keeping the “What’s New?”, events and vacancies sections current. Future options include the possibility of placing text from the latest edition of the Runanga’s newspaper Pipiwharauoa on the site, and possibly news items arising from the radio operation. This however depends upon the appointment of a media worker to the Runanga office.

Funding is not specifically allocated for the website, but comes out of general administration. It is difficult to develop the website in the absence of an overall communications strategy, and without a budgetary allocation

Other areas in which the Runanga uses IT are in its training programmes and economic development. Two computer suites at the Runanga’s training centre are primarily used for teaching office skills to young people seeking work qualifications and experience.

A Geographic Information System designed and operated by Te Runanga O Turanganui A Kiwa is a tool to identify economic opportunities for Maori land blocks. Data from the Te Puni Kokiri Maori land digital cadastral database is aligned with a database compiled by the Runanga about local land block owners, a complex exercise involving extensive searches of information sources. Once the land and the owners in a particular area are identified, the Runanga hosts a hui to discuss options for future development of the land.

Most of the land is currently leased for horticulture or farming, but the Runanga is encouraging owners to utilise the land themselves in innovative ways such as organic crop growing (also taught by the Runanga training centre) or medicinal herb production.

The future

Future development of the website depends on more clarity within the Runanga administration about its purposes and greater acceptance of its importance so that resources follow. They would like to employ a young innovative web designer from one of the iwi to redesign and enhance the site, but this depends on iwi priorities and resources.

Useful tip

Choose a domain name which reflects the culture as well as being available. Trotak has an unusual sound for a Maori site, but the existence of the category “iwi” makes it unique.

