

# DOING BUSINESS VIA CMA ONLINE

By Rob Whitelock

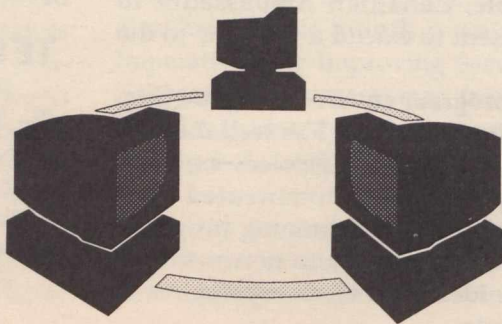
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Communications technology has been developing at an accelerating rate. The Internet, of course, is a seemingly wondrous place where almost anything can be found, and without the problem of long distance charges! Unfortunately, the Internet can be time consuming to use, and confusing to the uninitiated.

CMA (Canadian Manufacturers' Association) *Online* is a communications medium for all Canadian businesses. Our clients are for the most part senior management staff. The system is an exclusive business system: members of the general public cannot gain access to this system.

Unlike the Internet, CMA Online is a single integrated service, in which messages can be sent and received, public and private conferences established and files transmitted. Users can log into this system by direct dial-up, or from the Internet via telnet. It uses proprietary software and provides users with an intuitive graphic interface (for Windows and Macintosh users).

Why would businesses choose to use CMA Online rather than the Internet? For many, CMA Online provides quick access to the business-critical information available in USENET Newsgroups and LISTSERVS without having to access the Internet directly. It provides all of the benefits of an Internet electronic mail address, again without having to obtain an Internet account. It also contains the private member areas of the Canadian Manufacturers' Association. Members can communicate directly with the CMA through the CMA



Members Only conference.

Information available on CMA Online comes from publicly available newsgroups, Statistics Canada's The Daily, currently available material on DFAIT's web sites and from other various ministries within the Federal Government.

The Global Business conference in the Service Centre on CMA Online contains an area set aside for the use of the Trade Commissioner Service. By arrangement with DFAIT, all trade mis-

sions abroad are invited to establish an area on CMA Online in which to share news and trade developments. If you have an Internet e-mail address of any kind, it is possible for us to set up an

account that this information can be e-mailed to. The e-mail message will then be automatically posted to the conference by the Internet gateway. Thus, a self-maintaining dynamic conference can be set up. It is even possible to make such a conference interactive for users.

If you have an Internet account (ie. if you can browse the Web with Netscape or Mosaic), you can actually log into CMA Online from anywhere in the World without long distance charges.

So how do we start? With an Internet account, please send a message to: [rob@cmaonline.com](mailto:rob@cmaonline.com) requesting that a conference be set up for your trade mission abroad. We will set up the conference, and inform you which address you may use for your e-mail postings. You can just e-mail the information you would like to post, and it will automatically post to your conference!

*Rob Whitelock is the Director of CMA Online. If you are interested in obtaining an account on CMA Online, please e-mail as above, or phone (416)798-8000 ext. 264*