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E-commerce

Continued from Page 1

LeeKwai, Entrepreneurs Club co-founder and president. "It's an easy business for students to do because all you need is the same tool you use for learning: a computer."

LeeKwai, a senior majoring in Japanese and business administration, started his own business in May called Maxxx Co. LeeKwai sells Fin-blockz, a product he invented to protect the fins of surfboards while traveling. The Fin-blockz are made of polystyrene, a foam-like substance, and fit like a plug over the fins.

"I travel a lot surfing, and each time I've ended up with broken fins due to the impacts of luggage in travel," LeeKwai said. "I've also come across many other surfers who've encountered the same problem."

As a student, LeeKwai did not want to take on distribution issues. His solution was to sell his Fin-blockz on-line at www.bigfoot.com/~maxxxco.

"My future plan was to do international distribution," LeeKwai said. "After an analysis, the international market proved to be relatively untouched."

International or local, LeeKwai said the Internet can be a relatively cost-effective way to distribute.

"In my opinion, electronic commerce is the most efficient business available to students," LeeKwai said. So far, LeeKwai has sold all of his prototype designs for \$25 a piece.

After summer, LeeKwai's business took a back seat to school and other activities. Subsequently, Maxxx Co. is for sale. But LeeKwai concedes that his venture was well worth it.

"The money I invested in my company was more valuable than anything I could have studied in

school," LeeKwai said.

LeeKwai said Maxxx Co. has grown from a hobby to a business and admits it would be a great investment for anyone looking to enter the electronic commerce market.

"The money is there waiting for someone to take it," LeeKwai said. "But it would have to be someone that knows about the surfing industry."

Alex Hughes, a junior majoring in journalism and a member of the University's Entrepreneurs Club, has grossed nearly \$6,000 since he started X-ray Visionz in June. As an independent Web site and graphic design consultant, Hughes charges \$50 an hour for his services.

Hughes has designed everything from intranet sites to mass-mailings to wedding invitations.

As a graphic-design consultant for Kemper/Ford Marketing, Hughes created a mass-mailing campaign for Modell's, a sporting goods store in New York. The campaign, which went out to 30,000 people in Manhattan, was designed to boost sales of Nike shoes at their stores.

ESCO, an international steel-manufacturing firm based out of Portland, sought Hughes to design an intranet site to aid department executives in using the Web to research their competitors.

"The site makes it so executives can use the Internet as a source for looking at competitors and their financial statements," Hughes said. "It also serves as a form to announce information to their own department."

Although his business is thriving, Hughes is concerned that the attention paid to X-ray Visionz is detracting from what he wants to do after he graduates.

"I don't want to have to worry about making this successful if it's not what I want to do for a living," Hughes said. "I'm worrying

because it's taking away a lot of the energy I need to put toward an internship in my field of study."

But Hughes agrees with LeeKwai that the Internet has a great deal of opportunities for students at very little cost.

"Doing business over the Internet speeds things up, increases productivity and it's often a free way of advertising," Hughes said. "All it cost me was a computer, and that was tax deductible."

Brian Jennaro, a senior finance and economics major, is a partner in the Internet venture uobookhunt.com, which started in May and allows University students to trade their used textbooks on-line.

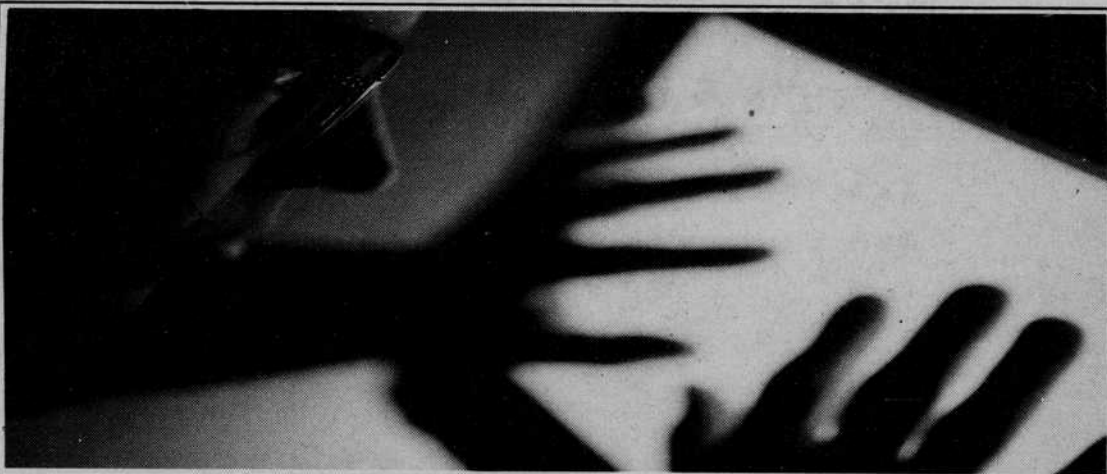
Jennaro said that students can save an average of \$129 each term on books if they use his site.

Jennaro said students get an average of 10 to 15 percent return on their used books at the University Bookstore. He said students buy, on average, five books a term for a total of \$250. At UO Bookhunt, students can sell their books at the bookstore rate and make up to 75 percent on the sale as opposed to only 15 percent.

Although the service to students is free, Jennaro expects to profit from advertising revenue. He hopes that as more students take advantage of the service and post their books on-line, local businesses will want to advertise on his site.

If the service stays here, Jennaro said he expects revenues to cover the cost of maintaining the Web site, plus a little more. But he also said that if the service is successful, he will expand to other campuses.

"There's no doubt that e-commerce will touch all facets of business," Jennaro said. "It's important to have your feet wet. That's the whole reason I want to be involved in this — to increase my understanding of e-commerce."



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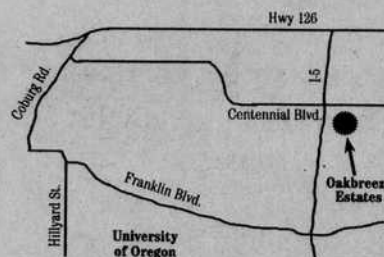
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