

Insurer offers online charity option

Travel insurer World Nomads has launched an online charity donation application called Footprints that e-commerce businesses can integrate into their websites.

The application collects donations ranging from \$2 to \$5 at the virtual point of sale. Immediately prior to the payment, purchasers are prompted with an offer to contribute to a specific project – an indigenous health initiative, for example, or building a school in Bhutan.

World Nomads has been running a version of the software through its own business portal since January 2005. It has so far collected \$211,000 from customers donating while they purchase travel insurance products.

Based on this success, World Nomads decided to re-engineer the

application to make it compatible with other business platforms online.

World Nomads has borne the cost of developing and maintaining the software, and will not charge other companies to use it early on.

Charities will not have to pay merchant fees for the donations, as they are already covered by the company with which the customer is transacting.

The managing director of World Nomads, Simon Monk, says he hopes that Footprints will eventually become an integral part of companies' corporate social-responsibility platform.

Footprints Fundraising, incorporated separately as a not-for-profit association, is holding talks with Westpac bank on the subject.

KATE BURGESS

IBA seals UK takeover

Shareholders in the troubled United Kingdom health software company iSOFT have voted overwhelmingly for a £140 million (\$327 million) takeover bid by Australian rival IBA Health.

The acquisition will take effect on July 30 and follows weeks of negotiations which almost came unstuck as recently as June when Computer Science Corporation using its clout as iSOFT's largest supply partner, sought to veto change of ownership.

IBA chairman Gary Cohen, right, who is expected to become chief executive of the combined operation, says: "We certainly weren't the favourite when we started this process."

The merger will create the world's fourth-largest health IT company and is expected to lift IBA revenues by a factor of seven to nearly \$600 million. It will also

David Rowe's Gallery

"Sure we're loaded but Kidman gets to wear Chanel while we're in skivvies ..."



"... yes ... skivvies woven from the gossamer harvested by our peasants in the Carpathian Mountains ..."

Focus on research

The new chief executive officer of the Australian Research Council, Professor Margaret Sheil, will review the council's commercialisation program Linkage when she takes up her position on August 17.

"I have not yet had a look at the outcomes [of Linkage] in detail," Sheil says. "I would want to evaluate it. The basic premise of Linkage is that, although [the ARC] does not keep intellectual property, we have expectations of commercial outcomes, where relevant."

ARC funds research in tertiary institutions and has a budget of \$578 million for 2007-08. It has two programs: Discovery, which funds basic research; and Linkage, which funds collaborations with industry. In 2005-06, Discovery projects received \$291 million while Linkage projects received \$261 million.

Sheil established a commercialisation program at the University of Wollongong where she has been deputy vice-chancellor (research) for the past five years. The university recently signed an