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Liberalisation of .ie registration rules and strong marketing campaigns drive 8.3% increase in IE Domain Registry turnover

IE Domain Registry turnover increased from €3.06 million in 2017 to €3.32 million in 2018

- The company experienced a 60% increase in year-on-year net growth of the .ie domain registry
- In 2018, IE Domain Registry spent over €200k on customer services and digital advocacy for Ireland's micro-businesses and SMEs
- 2018 was a year of policy development: Alternative Dispute Resolution Process developed and refined, liberalisation launched, GDPR implemented
- David Curtin, CEO: "Liberalisation of .ie domain registration rules has made it easier and faster for citizens and business owners to have an Irish online identity, connect with their communities and sell to local and international markets."

IE Domain Registry, the company that administers and manages the .ie country domain, reported strong financial results today in its 2018 annual report.

Turnover increased by 8.3% from €3.06 million in 2017 to €3.32 million in 2018. Net growth in .ie domain registrations increased by 60%. IE Domain Registry recorded an operating profit of €147k (2017- €186k) and ended the year in a strong financial position with €3.9m in Members' Funds. As a company limited by guarantee, it must rely on its own financial reserves as its only source of capital.

IE Domain Registry's overall financial position remained solid in 2018, with an expansion of its role as a digital advocate for Ireland's micro-businesses and SMEs.

Key achievements

.IE GROWTH

- IE Domain Registry saw exceptional growth in domain registrations in 2018, with 51,040 new domains registered, an increase of 29.1% YoY (2017- 39,523).
- The total .ie domain database recorded 259,815 active domains by the end of 2018, up 10% on the previous year.
- This buoyant performance was generated by marketing and promotional activity of the company's accredited Registrar community, particularly around the time of the liberalisation of the registration rules.
- The company's liberalisation policy, implemented in March 2018, makes it easier and faster for citizens and business owners to register a .ie domain. The change has facilitated a significant expansion of the .ie namespace.

- Following a year of preparatory work, IE Domain Registry implemented changes to ensure compliance with the new GDPR regulation in May 2018.

RESEARCH AND OUTREACH

- The company published a single edition of its flagship research, the SME Digital Health Index, which analyses and measures the digital health of Irish SMEs. This was the first year of the report in its new, annualised format, which surveyed 1,000 SMEs rather than 500 twice yearly as per previous reports.
- IE Domain Registry launched the 'Digital Town' initiative in 2018 to celebrate and highlight the knowledge, use and understanding of the internet among citizens, businesses and communities. Gorey, Co Wexford was selected as the 2018 Digital Town.
- As part of Digital Town, local and national business experts provided free advice and digital demonstrations to Gorey's business owners, community groups and citizens on all matters digital, including general digital skills, e-commerce, website development and mobile video.
- 2018 also marked the eighth year of IE Domain Registry's OPTIMISE programme. As part of the programme's sector-based approach, the company partnered with the Design & Crafts Council (DCCoI), Retail Excellence and the Irish Hardware Association to develop the digital presence and e-commerce potential of 40 SMEs in the design and craft, hardware and retail pharmacy sectors.

FUTURE OUTLOOK

- The work of the IE Domain Registry's Policy Advisory Committee will continue in 2019. The alternative dispute resolution policy, announced in May and launched in July this year, will provide an easier and more affordable service for citizens and small business owners who wish to contest ownership of an .ie domain.
- Internationally, IE Domain Registry continues to respond to developments impacting ccTLD registries, in particular EU regulations on the Digital Single Market and the recent expansion of the global namespace by 1,212 new gTLD competitors (with 27 million domains under management) by the end of 2018.

COMMENT

David Curtin, Chief Executive of IE Domain Registry, said:

"IE Domain Registry is in robust financial health. With ongoing emphasis in 2018 on strategic execution, the management team was particularly successful in achieving net growth of the .ie registry, continuous improvement in customer services, and a strengthening of the company's role as a digital advocate for Ireland's micro-businesses and SMEs, through its research, events and direct funding initiatives.

"2018 was an exceptional growth year for the company, with 51,040 new registrations, a 29.1% increase when compared to the same period in 2017. This growth has been powered by the liberalisation of .ie domain registration rules, a change implemented in March 2018. It's now easier and faster for citizens and business owners to get an .ie domain, connect with their communities, and sell to local and international markets.

"Accredited Registrars are essential partners in promoting and marketing .ie. The exceptional growth in 2018 is due to their energy and commitment to grow and develop the .ie namespace as an online identity for Irish business, residents and citizens.

“Through research like the SME Digital Health Index, initiatives like Digital Town, and direct funding through the OPTIMISE programme, IE Domain Registry continued its work in 2018 to promote excellence in SMEs’ use of websites and e-commerce, and greater uptake of digital technology in general.

“Our Policy Advisory Committee is continuing its work this year. The alternative dispute resolution policy will provide an easier and more affordable online service for citizens and small business owners to contest .ie domain ownership through a ‘Fair Play and a Fair Hearing’ system. Other policy initiatives will be undertaken, with the objective of improving cybersecurity for the .ie namespace and developing this digital national resource.”

ENDS

[Read the full IE Domain Registry 2018 annual report.](#)

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About IE Domain Registry

IE Domain Registry is the national registry for .ie domain names and is responsible for the management and administration of Ireland’s official internet domain, .ie, in the interest of the Irish and global internet communities. It operates the domain name system (DNS) for the .ie namespace, facilitates an independent [dispute resolution service](#) and operates a public WHOIS lookup service for .ie domains.

The company’s mission is to provide unique, identifiably Irish domain names, along with registry and related services to the local and international internet community. Currently, there are over 273,000 registered .ie domain names.

It is committed to being a digital advocate for the SME community. Through the [OPTIMISE Programme](#) and stakeholder engagement initiatives, the company works with, and supports, SMEs to improve their online presence and e-commerce capabilities.

IE Domain Registry produces fact-based research for the business community and policymakers, such as the annual [SME Digital Health Index](#), which provides key insights into the digital health of SMEs.

The company is focused on providing excellence in customer service through its ongoing customer experience (CX) innovation and improvement programmes. Since March 2018, it is now [easier and faster](#) to register a .ie domain name.

Based in Dun Laoghaire, Co Dublin, IE Domain Registry employs 22 people.

www.iedr.ie