Under embargo

07:00, 31 January 2020

.ie domains total more than 280,000 as national registry enjoys a 10 percentage point swing from .com—new report

.ie overtakes .com to become the online identity of choice for Irish businesses and individuals, latest .ie Domain Profile Report reveals

- **IE Domain Registry recorded 50,167 new .ie registrations in 2019**
- **+27% increase in number of .ie domains registered by individuals**
- **'Smart', 'green', and 'tech' among most popular words used in .ie domain names in 2019**
- **Over half (51%) of all .ie domains now have SSL security certification, up +45% YoY**
- **IE Domain Registry CEO: "Rule changes have made it easier and faster for people with a connection to Ireland to secure their .ie domain of choice and build a web presence."**

At the end of 2019, the total number of .ie domains in the national database was 280,958, up from 154,918 at the end of 2010 (+81%) and 262,140 at the end of 2018 (+7%).

The figures were revealed in the 2019 edition of IE Domain Registry's .ie Domain Profile Report, which examines the makeup of the .ie database, including the counties and countries where .ie domains are registered and additional information about the wider .ie ecosystem.

The report also shows that over the last decade, .ie enjoyed a 10 percentage point swing in market share of Ireland's hosted domains from .com. In 2010, .com comprised 43% of all Irish hosted domains, versus 40% for .ie. In 2019, .ie comprised 50% of hosted domains, whereas .com's share shrank to 33%.

50,167 new .ie domains were registered in 2019. This was down slightly on 2018 (51,040, -1.7%), when IE Domain Registry first implemented a rule change governing .ie domain registrations.

The change, called 'liberalisation', allows anyone to register a .ie domain provided they can prove a legitimate connection to the island of Ireland. Previously, .ie domain applicants were required to also prove their claim to a particular .ie domain, which was often difficult for new start-up businesses and other informal associations without official documentation.

This led to a surge in new .ie registrations in 2018 that has since cooled off. However, when comparing 2019 registrations to 2017 registrations (pre-liberalisation), the positive effect is clear: new registrations grew by +27%.

61% of all new .ie domains in 2019 were registered by companies or the self-employed. Almost 80% of the total .ie database comprises these two types.

In an era of increasing social media restrictions, **new .ie registrations by individuals rose by +27% last year** as more seek a private digital space that they fully control.

Other findings

- **There were 8,583 total new .ie registrations** between 1990 and 1999; 174,086 between 2000 and 2009; and **383,265 between 2010 and 2019.**
    - *(These figures also include .ie registrations that were not renewed in subsequent years, hence the total .ie database totalling 280,958 at the end of 2019.)*
- Reflecting the times, **'smart', 'green',** and **'tech'** were among the most used words **in new .ie domains** in 2019. In 2010, **'energy', 'car',** and **'wedding'** ranked as some of the most popular.
- The number of new **.ie domains registered in Great Britain** by entities or individuals with a connection to the island of Ireland grew slightly (+0.5%), which is perhaps indicative of a sustained but slowing interest in Irish digital assets as the final Brexit deadline approaches.
- On the island of Ireland, **Fermanagh recorded the largest percentage increase in new .ie domain registrations** in 2019 (+146%), albeit from a low base. Roscommon (+25.7%) followed.
- **Dublin and Cork** both recorded decreases in the number of new .ie domains registered (-6.8% and -1.9% respectively) but also **recorded the largest overall number of new .ie registrations** (18,966 and 4,055).
- **Kildare (2,361) and Wicklow (1,873)** ranked in the top five for total number of new .ie domain registrations in 2019.
- **198 .ie domains featured a fada on a vowel** in 2019, up from 144 in 2018 (+38% YoY).
- **51% of .ie websites now have an SSL security certificate** (+45% YoY). Google downgrades search results for websites without SSL certificates.
- **422 .ie domains were put up for sale on the 'secondary market'** in 2019, up from 291 in 2018 (+45% YoY). This indicates strong demand for the .ie brand.

Comment

Speaking about the .ie Domain Profile Report, David Curtin, Chief Executive of IE Domain Registry, said:

"The 2010s were a period of monumental growth for the .ie domain, powered by a combination of rapid technological and social change through the explosion of digital media and e-commerce and the proliferation of internet-enabled devices, and because of key strategic decisions taken by IE Domain Registry's Policy Advisory Committee.

"The most fundamental of these was 'liberalisation', a rule change implemented in 2018 that dropped the requirement for applicants to prove their claim to a particular .ie domain name.

"This has made it easier and faster for people with a connection to Ireland to secure their .ie domain of choice and build a web presence for personal or commercial use.

"As Ireland becomes more globalised and the internet connects us to more international businesses and institutions, it's essential that our communities—be they villages, country towns, or city neighbourhoods—have the means to identify themselves online as familiar, local, and Irish through the trusted .ie brand."

ENDS

The .ie Domain Profile Report is a biannual analysis of the .ie database. The data for this edition covers the period 1 January–31 January 2019. Read the [.ie Domain Profile Report 2019 in full](#) or view the [factsheet summary](#).

For media enquiries, contact:

Nicola Forde │ nicola@pr360.ie │ 01 637 1777 │ 087 205 5541

Lauren Ennis │ lennis@pr360.ie │ 01 637 1777 │ 086 161 1912

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. Policy development for the .ie namespace follows a bottom-up, consensus-driven approach through a multi-stakeholder Policy Advisory Committee.

IE Domain Registry is committed to digital advocacy for the SME community. Through the OPTIMISE programme and stakeholder engagement initiatives such as Digital Town, 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 SME Digital Health Index, which provides key insights into the digital health of Irish 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 easier and faster to register a .ie domain. There are over 280,000 domains in the database.

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

www.iedr.ie