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Chronically out of date data will slow down digital adoption, says national domain registry, as it reports further growth of .ie database – new report

25,539 new .ie domains registered in first half of year as .ie database grows overall by 2.6% year-on-year -- .IE Domain Profile Report H1 2022

- More than 120,000 new .ie domain names registered during the pandemic
- Database has grown 21.8% since H1 2019. Some evidence from the data that urban-rural digital divide is closing.
- Gaps in data relating to SME productivity, consumer preferences and adoption of digital tools critical to closing the remaining digital divide
- **Comment from .IE:** *"This report clearly illustrates the nation's digital intent, county by county, but there are major gaps in our understanding of the full extent of digital transformation across the country during the two years of lockdowns. Gathering post-Covid data must now become a critical priority for policymakers and local leaders to ensure that all new programmes and initiatives reflect the post-Covid digital transformation and build on that progress."*

In its latest .**IE Domain Profile Report H1 2022,** .IE, Ireland's country domain manager, points to major gaps in our understanding of the full extent of digital transformation following the pandemic, impacting SME productivity, consumer preferences and behaviours, transformation of professional service delivery, adoption of digital tools and websites by citizens and communities and where in society the digital divides remain.

"This .IE Domain Profile Report clearly illustrates the nation's digital intent, county by county, reflecting a narrowing of the digital divide," says **David Curtin, Chief Executive of .IE**. "However, there is a significant lack of data as to the full extent of digital transformation across the country during the two years of lockdowns. This is because pre-2019 data on digital adoption is chronically out of date.

"Gathering post-Covid data is a critical priority for policymakers and local leaders to ensure that all new programmes and initiatives reflect the post-Covid digital transformation. This starts with understanding what metrics really matter when driving digital adoption, and then enforcing a whole-of-Government approach in developing programmes, initiatives, and solutions to close the digital divide(s).

Silo-ed data leads to incomplete analysis and, even worse, misdirected investment decisions and supports for communities, sectors, towns and counties. Sharing up-to-date data with motivated stakeholders and commercial service providers will help to avoid this."

In particular, .IE believes that essential national cyber security initiatives will benefit from this approach, enabling them to effectively direct cyber security awareness training and developing wide-ranging cyber skill sets to protect and defend digital assets and applications, often adopted in haste during the pandemic-enforced lockdowns.

.IE, through the services of Netcraft and with cooperation from the Registrar community, identified **211 cybersecurity attacks in the 6 months to 30 June, and 386 in the 13-month period from 1 June 2021 to 30 June 2022**. The most common cybersecurity attacks during H1 2022 were phishing (52%), malware (17%), web shell (13%) and shopping site skimmer (8%).

The .ie ecosystem: an analysis

The **.IE Domain Profile Report H1 2022**, which explores and analyses the .ie database over the period 1 January to 30 June, shows that the rate of new .ie domain registrations is now back at pre-pandemic levels.

There were 25,539 new .ie domains registered in this period, bringing the total .ie database to 332,642 domains. This is a 2.6% increase on the same period last year, and a 21.8% growth on the same period three years ago (H1 2019), before the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic. **During the two years of the pandemic, more than 120,000 new .ie domains were registered**, with evidence from the data reported showing that the urban-rural digital divide is closing.

The H1 2022 Report also shows that 91% of all .ie domains are registered on the island of Ireland. The .ie domain accounts for 53% of all top-level domains hosted in Ireland, an increase of 1.1 percentage points year-on-year. In comparison, .com accounts for 30% of all hosted domains, followed by .uk (7%) and .eu (2%).

Just under half of all .ie domains (48%) have a content-rich website, with almost 1 in 4 (23%) of these e-commerce-enabled, including automated bookings and reservations. The top three payment processors on .ie websites are Apple Pay (59%), Visa (43%) and American Express (38%).

The .IE Domain Profile Report is a biannual analysis of the .ie domain database. The H1 2022 report covers the period 1 January - 30 June 2022.
- Read the .IE Domain Profile Report H1 2022 in full.

- Read the .IE Domain Profile Report H1 2022 key facts.

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About .IE

.IE is the national registry for .ie domain names and the trusted and progressive guardian of Ireland's unique online .ie address. Our purpose is to enable and empower people, communities, and businesses across Ireland to thrive online.

We operate the domain name system (DNS) for the .ie namespace, facilitate an independent dispute resolution service, and operate a public WHOIS lookup service for .ie domains.

In cooperation with our Registrars, technical partners, and stakeholders, we help advance Ireland's internet ecosystem. Good governance is evidenced in our policy development process for the .ie namespace, which follows a bottom-up, consensus-driven approach through a multi-stakeholder Policy Advisory Committee.

At .IE we are committed to digital advocacy for local towns, communities and SMEs. Through stakeholder engagement initiatives such as .IE Digital Town programme, we work with and support SMEs' organisations to improve their members' online presence and e-commerce capabilities so they can unlock the power of the internet to boost sales.

We also produce fact-based research for the business community and policymakers, such as the .IE Domain Profile Report and the .IE Tipping Point, which charts the attitudes to digital of Irish SMEs and consumers during the Covid-19 pandemic.

There are over 330,000 .ie domain names registered. Since March 2018, it is easier and faster to register a .ie domain. As part of the domain registration process, every applicant must provide tangible evidence of its identity and its connection to Ireland. This provides the benefits of domain ownership, for consumer protection or registrant protection purposes, should it be required.

www.weare.ie

Note to editors:

More information available on .IE's high-level security features and web usage of its domains are available on .IE blogs, and in the.IE Tipping Point report.