

## **.ie manager celebrates 20 years in business with rebrand and launch of €20,000 prize fund for .ie customers**

*IE Domain Registry rebrand to '.IE' marks a new chapter for the company that this year celebrates 20 years of managing .ie, Ireland's country domain.*

- To mark its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary, .IE launches €20,000 prize fund for .ie domain holders/customers with an established .ie website
- .IE calling on .ie domain holders to enter, with a chance to win up to €10,000 in cash from the overall €20,000 prize fund
- .IE CEO: "We are excited to share the celebration of our 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary with the .ie community and mark this new phase of our journey as we rebrand to .IE and continue the growth and expansion of the .ie namespace, enabling Ireland to thrive online."
- 40% spike in new .ie domain registrations since March 2020

The guardians of Ireland's unique online .ie address are today celebrating their 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary with the launch of a €20,000 prize fund for .ie domain holders. The company is also marking the occasion by rebranding to .IE from IE Domain Registry-

The €20,000 fund, divided into individual prizes (2 x €5,000, 1 X €10,000) will be awarded to three .ie domain holders who enter the competition through the company's new website, [www.weare.ie](http://www.weare.ie), on or before 6 November 2020.

The prize money could be used many ways to unlock new opportunities for the businesses, individuals or community groups who may win. For a business, the money could be used to enhance their online presence and upgrade or enable e-commerce functionality, which, particularly during the Covid-19 pandemic, has allowed many to continue to trade and in some cases, to grow, while bricks and mortar premises have been closed.

For an individual, it could provide a welcome boost for anyone whose job may have been impacted in recent months as a result of Covid-19. It could be used to start a new venture or explore a new hobby.

For a community group, it could be invested in digital skills training, put towards the creation of a website or used to purchase technology or equipment for members.

### **.IE celebrates 20 years**

2020 marks 20 years in business for .IE, the guardians of Ireland's unique online address, .ie.

In that time, the company has led the advancement of Ireland's internet ecosystem, working with businesses, communities, and people to educate, guide, and support them on their internet journey and to highlight the benefits of an online presence.

The careful guardianship and management of the .ie domain has resulted in it becoming Ireland's most trusted domain, with 77% of Irish consumers preferring a .ie website when buying online.\* The .ie domain now has 51% of the hosted market in Ireland, followed by .com with 33% market share.

### **Some of the key company milestones for .IE include:**

- The spin out from UCD to form IE Domain Registry CLG in 2000
- Registration of the 100,000<sup>th</sup> .ie domain by royal-hospital-kilmainham.ie in 2008
- The launch of the OPTIMISE programme, providing €100,000 in web development funds for Irish SMEs, in 2011
- The celebration of Internet Day for the first time in Ireland in October 2015

- The publication of the first .ie Digital Health Index report, charting the attitudes to digital of Irish SMEs and consumers in the period 2014 to 2016
- The removal of the requirement for a 'claim to the name' for .ie domains, unlocking more opportunity for Irish citizens to purchase a .ie in March 2018
- The recognition of Ireland's first 'Digital Town', Gorey, Co. Wexford, in October 2018
- Introduction of the alternative dispute resolution process (ADRP) to manage domain-related disputes in July 2019
- Celebration of the company's 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary and rebrand to .IE in 2020.

## **Ireland and the internet**

Ireland's relationship with the internet has evolved significantly over the last 20 years. In 2000, just 20.5% of households in Ireland had access to the internet, and just 32.5% had a permanent home computer. The most recent census figures (2019) show how that number has skyrocketed, with internet access a standard fixture in 91% of Irish households, used mainly for finding information on goods and services (84%), email (84%), instant messaging (75%), reading the news (73%) or internet banking (73%).\*\*

The number of .ie domain registrations during that time aligns with the acceleration in internet adoption over the past 20 years, with 174,086 new domains registered between 2000 and 2009, an increase of 1,928% on the previous decade. Registrations climbed by a further 120% from 2010 – 2019 to 383,265 domains.\*\*\*

51,982 domains have been registered in 2020 so far, with a huge spike witnessed in the months of April to September as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, a 40% increase in registrations on the previous year.

There are currently 301,312 .ie domains in the database. (correct on October 20<sup>th</sup> 2020).

## **Comment**

The opportunity to thank the .ie community for their support and mark a significant milestone at the same time was a welcome opportunity according to the CEO of .IE, David Curtin.

“20 years is a significant milestone for any company – but in internet years, it is particularly significant.

“In that time, we have witnessed major developments in the global internet landscape such as the proliferation of e-commerce, the birth of social media and the internet of things, to name but a few. Informed by those changes, we have worked closely with SMEs, industry partners, community groups and citizens to develop an Irish internet ecosystem that is accessible and provides opportunity for all.

“We have witnessed the particular impact that the internet has had this year in keeping family and friends in touch, virtual offices open and traditionally bricks and mortar SMEs trading during Covid-19. We anticipate that as we enter into six weeks of Level Five restrictions, the internet will play an even more important role for all, and we have witnessed many SMEs pivot online in recent weeks and months, adjusting their model and embracing the opportunity that e-commerce presents at this critical time. As people rush to buy online in the coming weeks and in the run up to Christmas, I would ask people to think Irish and where possible look to buy from .ie websites so we can all support local Irish businesses in these difficult times.

“As we move into our next chapter as a business, it only seemed right to mark the occasion with a change to our name, one that aligns with our purpose and ambition to empower people, communities and businesses across Ireland to thrive online.

“We are excited to share the celebration of our 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary with the .ie community and mark this new phase of our journey as .IE moves forward with confidence into 2021.”

**ENDS**

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**Notes to editor**

\*.IE Consumer Trust Survey 2020

\*\*CSO figures for 2019

\*\*\*.ie Domain Profile Report 2019

**Prize fund terms and conditions**

- Only .ie domain holders with an active website are eligible to enter and win a prize.
- One entry per .ie domain only.
- Applications will open on 27 October 2020 and close on 6 November 2020.
- Winners will be chosen by an independent adjudicator and announced on 11 November 2020.

**About .IE**

.IE 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 purpose is to enable and empower people, communities and business across Ireland to thrive online.

In cooperation with our Registrars, technical partners and stakeholders we help shape the development of the internet landscape and 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](#).

.IE is committed to digital advocacy for the SME community. Through stakeholder engagement initiatives such as the [.IE Digital Town](#) programme, the company works with and supports SMEs organisations to improve their members’ online presence and e-commerce capabilities.

.IE also 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 300,000 domains in the database.

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

[www.weare.ie](http://www.weare.ie)