.ie **We are Ireland online**

.IE Domain Profile Report 2020

Foreword

The .IE Domain Profile Report explores and analyses the .ie database. This edition assesses the first year of the new decade. We reveal the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on new .ie registrations and analyse the counties and countries of the registered domain holders. We also take a closer look at the broader .ie domain ecosystem and plot new .ie registrations on a month-by-month timeline.

In 2020, peaks and troughs in new .ie registrations generally followed the Government's restrictions on travel and business. The biggest peak in registrations occurred in May, approximately 6 weeks after the closure of non-essential retail. This peak began to drop off from June, as restrictions eased, but moved up sharply in October, peaking again in November corresponding to the announcement of the second national lockdown.

What the timeline shows clearly is an unprecedented mass mobilisation of digital across every part of Irish society and economy. Businesses migrated online, many for the first time, in direct response to the lockdowns. They realised that having an online presence, and in many cases e-commerce capabilities, would at the very least minimise the damage of reduced or non-existent footfall but also open new markets and create new ways to interact with customers.

Having a website has enabled businesses to communicate their new pandemic operating procedures, advertise their products and services, and operate click-and-collect and direct-to-door delivery services. Many professional services companies are now delivering their services online through virtual consultations. Digital has given them the tools they need to adapt to a socially distanced Covid-19 economy and sustain revenue, saving many from permanent closure.

At the end of 2020, the total number of .ie domains in the database was almost 310,000. 65,113 new .ie domains were registered last year, the highest annual figure ever recorded; 7,003 of those were registered in May alone, the highest monthly figure ever. The fact that it is now far quicker and

easier to register a .ie domain will have no doubt been a great relief for business owners who were eager to simply get online using their own uniquely Irish online identity and stay open.

Encouragingly, the increase in .ie registrations was universal across the country. For the first time ever, annual .ie domain registrations increased in every county on the island of Ireland. Four counties—Clare, Limerick, Monaghan, and Tipperary—recorded year-on-year registration increases in every month of 2020.

Our keyword analysis of the .ie domain database shows that health services, too, went online in increasing numbers. New .ie web addresses that contain the words "doctor" or "nurse" increased 44% year-on-year, while "mental health" and "counselling" were 105% more common. Many of these services will have offered patients virtual consultations and e-prescriptions.

The Central Bank recognises new .ie registrations as a forward indicator of economic health. While new company start-ups fell in 2020 because of the pandemic, this report indicates that entrepreneurs and new businesses are taking a digital-first approach and ensuring they secure their preferred online identity with a .ie domain before they register their company. A local .ie web address has therefore been a lifeline, a way to mitigate the worst effects of the physical lockdown. It has advantageously positioned many businesses for a more digitally integrated post-Covid-19 economy.

David Curtin
Chief Executive, .IE

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Timeline of new .ie registrations in 2020

Peaks and troughs in new .ie registrations in 2020 were broadly linked to changes in the Government's pandemic restrictions. Some businesses reacted quickly to premises closures and travel restrictions. Thousands moved online soon after the first lockdown was announced in order to secure lines of communication with their customers. Many invested in an e-commerce presence, such as a shop on their website or a third-party platform, for the first time. Encouragingly, new .ie registration growth was strong across the entire country, not just in urban centres.

LOCKDOWN ANNOUNCED

First pandemic restrictions in effect from **13 March**. At this point, new .ie registrations are **6% higher YoY**.

PEAK LOCKDOWN

By **May**, non-essential retailers have been closed for 6 weeks. **Over 7,000** register a .ie web address. The majority are businesses seeking to continue selling to and communicating with their customers online.

RESTRICTIONS EASE

New .ie registrations dip from May's peak to **August's** trough as pandemic restrictions ease in most counties. However, registrations are still **20% higher YoY**.

SECOND LOCKDOWN

In **November**, new .ie registrations peak again as a second national lockdown takes hold. This smaller peak suggests that those businesses who weren't online now saw the necessity of having a web presence. Registrations are **56% higher YoY**.

LOWEST POINT

Traditionally, domain registrations taper off at year end. The drop-off from November is steep, which suggests that many retailers took action in November in anticipation of online Christmas shopping.

● **2020 New .ie registrations**

⋯ **2019 New .ie registrations**

	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC
	4,778	4,676	4,720	5,536	7,003	6,538	5,856	4,677	5,480	5,537	6,247	4,065

Analysis of .ie domain database and growth

29.8%

increase in new .ie registrations

(2020 v 2019)

59.1%

Net growth
(new registrations - deletions)

(2020 v 2019)

Net growth of the .ie database (new registrations – deletions) was very strong at 59.1%.

There were **309,853** .ie domains in the database at the end of 2020, a **10.3%** increase on 2019. The database has grown **46.9%** on the same period five years ago (2015).

The .ie database's strong growth in 2020 can be attributed to the Covid-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdowns that closed physical premises and restricted travel and social gatherings. As the timeline on the previous page shows, the biggest surge in registrations occurred in the months of March, April, and May, following the first lockdown. Another surge occurred in October and November as the country was locked down for a second time.

Businesses invested in a trusted .ie web address to continue communicating with their customers and to sell their products and services via the internet.

TOTAL DATABASE

Year	Value
2015	210,839
2016	221,871
2017	237,412
2018	262,140
2019	280,958
2020	309,853

NEW REGISTRATIONS

Year	Value
2015	35,225
2016	34,615
2017	39,523
2018	51,040
2019	50,167
2020	65,113

Analysis of .ie domains by geography

Registered .ie domains on the island of Ireland

Republic of Ireland
278,042

Northern Ireland
4,532

Island of Ireland
282,574

Great Britain comprises the majority of internationally registered .ie domains. New registrations increased by **20.1%** year-on-year in 2020, from **1,313** to **1,578**.

Bulgaria registered the second-highest number of new .ie domains in 2020 (941, +72.3%), followed by the **United States** (350, -26.8%) and **Germany** (178, -17.6%).

.ie domain holders in foreign countries have a proven connection to Ireland and the registered owner is traceable. They either have customers in Ireland or can prove another type of professional or personal connection to Ireland.

new .ie domains

60,894
newly registered on the island of Ireland in 2020
+31%
on 2019

4,219
newly registered internationally in 2020
+14%
on 2019

Internationally registered .ie domains

International
27,279

Top 3 international registrants:

Great Britain
10,864

United States
4,776

Germany
2,390

Analysis of .ie domains by county

Mayo
Mayo recorded a 41.5% increase YoY in 2020, the largest increase of the Western counties.

Clare
Clare recorded the second largest YoY increase in new .ie domain registrations (70.5%). It recorded a YoY increase in registrations every month in 2020.

Limerick
Limerick recorded a YoY increase in registrations in every month of 2020. Registrations were up almost 30% YoY.

Wicklow
Wicklow recorded a 34.5% increase YoY in 2020, which may reflect the movement of businesses locating in satellite towns outside of big urban centres.

Tipperary
Tipperary recorded a YoY increase in registrations in every month of 2020. Registrations were up 45.3% YoY.

Cork
Cork recorded the second highest number of new .ie domain registrations in 2020 (5,295), a 30.6% increase year-on-year.

County	Island of Ireland database % share	New registrations 2020	% growth vs 2019
Antrim	0.57%	272	+7.1%
Armagh	0.18%	90	+7.1%
Carlow	1.70%	1,285	+48.0%
Cavan	0.92%	672	+39.1%
Clare	1.82%	1,381	+70.5%
Cork	8.68%	5,295	+30.6%
Derry	0.18%	135	+68.8%
Donegal	1.65%	1,153	+36.8%
Down	0.42%	268	+28.9%
Dublin	44.11%	23,952	+26.3%
Fermanagh	0.06%	43	+34.4%
Galway	4.54%	2,927	+37.8%
Kerry	2.07%	1,422	+31.7%
Kildare	4.50%	2,993	+26.8%
Kilkenny	1.48%	953	+19.3%
Laois	1.01%	733	+13.6%
Leitrim	0.46%	331	+59.9%
Limerick	2.89%	1,714	+29.3%
Longford	0.48%	284	+13.2%
Louth	2.20%	1,364	+25.8%
Mayo	1.77%	1,225	+41.5%
Meath	3.52%	2,373	+34.4%
Monaghan	0.68%	437	+74.1%
Offaly	0.89%	623	+46.2%
Roscommon	0.78%	507	+16.6%
Sligo	1.11%	715	+49.3%
Tipperary	1.77%	1,197	+45.3%
Tyrone	0.20%	129	+63.3%
Waterford	1.85%	1,259	+29.7%
Westmeath	1.30%	861	+29.9%
Wexford	2.52%	1,782	+39.9%
Wicklow	3.69%	2,519	+34.5%
Total	**100%**	**60,894**	

Analysis of .ie domain ecosystem

How has the Covid-19 pandemic affected new .ie web address keywords?

2020 top new .ie registration keywords

1 Ireland	2 Health	3 Dublin	4 Covid	5 Group

2019 top new .ie registration keywords

1 Ireland	2 Dublin	3 Group	4 Solutions	5 Tech

Pandemic keywords

Pandemic-related keywords, such as "virus", "sanitiser", and "vaccine", increased by **9,600%** in new registrations in 2020 v 2019.
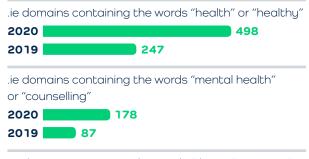
.ie domains containing the words "Covid", "coronavirus", "virus", or "pandemic"

2020 572
2019 0

.ie domains containing the word "mask" or "facemask"

2020 315
2019 6

.ie domains containing the word "remote" (for example, remote work)

2020 61
2019 5

Health keywords

General health-related keywords, such as "wellness", "supplement", "pharmacy", and "fitness", increased **92%** in new registrations in 2020 v 2019.
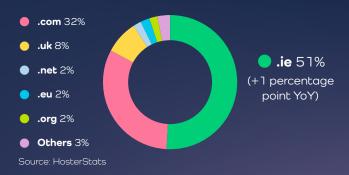
.ie domains containing the words "health" or "healthy"

2020 498
2019 247

.ie domains containing the words "mental health" or "counselling"

2020 178
2019 87

.ie domains containing the words "doctor" or "nurse"

2020 89
2019 62

Other ecosystem facts

Market share of Ireland's hosted domains

(by top-level domain, November 2020)

- **.com** 32%
- **.uk** 8%
- **.net** 2%
- **.eu** 2%
- **.org** 2%
- **Others** 3%

.ie 51% (+1 percentage point YoY)

Source: HosterStats

Number of .ie websites with a security certificate

64%

(+13 percentage points YoY)

Source: Pandalytics

Number of new .ie registrations with a fada

2020 → **103**
2019 → **56**

(+84% YoY)

About .IE

.IE is the national registry for .ie domain names and is 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 SMEs and for local communities. Through stakeholder engagement initiatives such as .IE Digital Town 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 to local consumers.

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

We are focused on providing excellence in customer service through our ongoing customer experience (CX) innovation and improvement programmes. Since March 2018, it is easier and faster to register a .ie domain.

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

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.IE is the trading name of IE Domain Registry CLG, company number 315315.

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