



**Identifiably Irish**

Ireland's Domain Registry



# dot ie

## Domain Profile Report

January 2017

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# Foreword

The IE Domain Registry (IEDR) is delighted to publish its fourth dot ie Domain Profile Report. In this first edition of the new year, we continue our analysis of .ie domain name registrations, looking at 2016 in its totality.

Our analysis focuses on the number of new registrations in 2016; the make-up of all .ie domain names in terms of sector type; classification of registrants; the geographic spread of .ie domains by county and province; and a European comparison of country domain names.

IEDR manages and administers Ireland's official domain name, .ie, in the interest of the Irish and global internet communities.

At the end of 2016, there were 221,871 registered .ie domains, a 5% increase on 2015. 34,615 new domains were registered last year. It was the second highest number of registrations in a single year since 2011.

72% of all new domains in 2016 were registered by businesses — either sole traders or corporate bodies. This is in line with previous figures and suggests that more and more Irish businesses not only recognise the importance of a website to their brand, but value the trust and authority of the .ie "Identifiably Irish" brand, too.

However, many Irish businesses, particularly Irish SMEs, still do not fully appreciate the importance of an online presence, particularly e-commerce. Our most recent dot ie Digital Health Index discovered that just 28% of Irish SMEs can process sales online, while two-thirds of offline SMEs see "no need" to have a website. These findings are discussed in detail on page 17.

The trend of urban areas registering more .ie domains than other more rural parts of the country continues. Registrants in Dublin and Leinster make up the majority of .ie domain owners. While registrations in Munster and Ulster rose in 2016, Cork, the second most populous county in the Republic of Ireland, registered 11,350 fewer domains than Dublin. Northern Ireland .ie domain registrations improved on 2015, but uptake is still relatively slow.

Infrastructural weaknesses, particularly a lack of broadband connectivity, in these rural areas are an insurmountable barrier for many SMEs looking to set up a website and begin selling online. On a positive note, ongoing e-commerce mentoring from business associations and government is beginning to help rural SMEs' attempts to trade online and improve their digital skills.

These problems are reflected in Ireland's 18th place ranking in the European league tables for country domain name registrations. While Ireland does indeed outrank some much larger countries, like Greece and Russia, for the number of country domains per 1,000 people, we are significantly outclassed by countries with smaller or comparable populations, including Norway, Denmark, Finland and Lithuania.

The Irish internet industry, business associations and government must continue to work together to make sure that the full benefits of our digital society are being felt by SMEs and private individuals across the country, regardless of geography.

**David Curtin**  
*Chief Executive*  
IE Domain Registry CLG (IEDR)  
January 2017

# About IE Domain Registry (IEDR)

The IEDR is the official registry for .ie internet domain names and maintains the database of registered .ie domain names.

The IEDR originated as a spinout from University College Dublin, becoming an independent, separate limited company 16 years ago in July 2000. Under the terms of the Companies Acts, it is defined as a public company.

The IEDR is responsible for the management and administration of Ireland's official internet address .ie, in the interest of the Irish and global internet communities. The IEDR operates the domain name system (DNS) for the .ie namespace, facilitates a dispute resolution service with WIPO and operates a public 'Whois' lookup service for .ie domains.

The IEDR is a managed registry which means that there are policies and procedures governing the registration of .ie domain names. New applications are reviewed to ensure compliance with the terms and conditions of registration. This contrasts with .com and .eu where there is no manual review, and the domain applied for will be automatically registered – once the name is available.

Only the IEDR can administer and manage the .ie namespace. These roles and responsibilities are undertaken as a public service. The IEDR liaises with government departments, governing bodies, trade associations and abides by internet best-practice principles while still operating as an independent public company.

The IEDR's mission is to provide unique, identifiably Irish domain names along with registry and related services to the local and international internet community.

A .ie domain name requires a connection with the island of Ireland and a legitimate claim to the chosen name.

A .ie domain name has a number of distinct advantages when compared against alternatives. These include: letting consumers know that a business is Irish; giving customers a greater sense of security particularly when buying online from a known local business; and providing more choices of desirable names, as a .ie domain name is more likely to be available than a similar .com.

Along with the recent introduction of one and two letter .ie domain names 2016 saw the launch of .ie domains names with fadas as well as a change to policies to enable the re-sale of .ie domains.

**The IEDR's mission is to provide unique, identifiably Irish domain names along with registry and related services to the local and international internet community.**

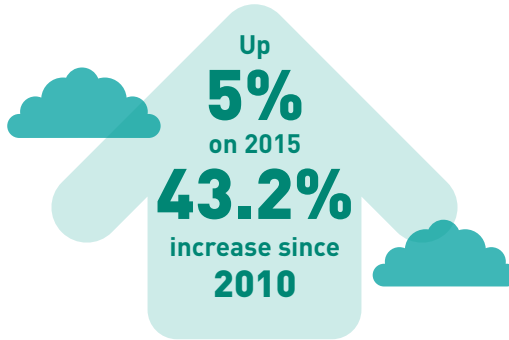
# Summary

- At the end of 2016, 221,871 .ie domains were active in the database, a 5% increase on 2015;
- 34,615 new domains were registered in 2016, an almost 2% decrease on the previous year;
- However, this was the second highest number of registrations since 2011;
- Corporate bodies and sole traders made up 72% of all .ie registrations in 2016. This is in line with the total .ie registry, where 78% of all domains are corporate bodies and sole traders;
- Of all .ie domains registered on the island of Ireland in 2016, 31,665 were registered in the Republic of Ireland (a 2% decrease on 2015) and 560 in Northern Ireland (a 9% increase on 2015);
- 2,390 .ie domains were registered internationally, a 4% increase on 2015;
- Leinster accounted for 67% of all new .ie domains registered in 2016, an almost 4% decrease on 2015;
- Munster accounted for 19%, a 4% increase on 2015; Connacht, 8.5%, down 6%; and Ulster, 5%, up 2%;
- In 2016, new Dublin .ie registrations totalled 14,187, or 44% of all new registrations;
- Cork registrations totalled 2,837, or almost 9% of all new registrations; Galway registrations totalled 1,512, or 5%;
- Dublin has the most .ie domains per 1,000 people (70), while Derry has the fewest (1) overall, and Donegal the fewest in the Republic (19).
- Ireland, with 47, ranks joint 18th of 22 European countries for the number of country domains per 1,000 people;
- While Ireland ranks ahead of larger countries like Greece and Russia for country domains per 1,000 people, it is significantly outclassed by others with similar or smaller populations including Norway, Denmark and Lithuania.

# OVERVIEW OF .ie DOMAIN PROFILE

Total registered .ie domains at the end of 2016:

**221,871**



**72%** of all new .ie registrations in 2016 were **businesses**



**78%** of the total .ie registry are **businesses**

**34,615**

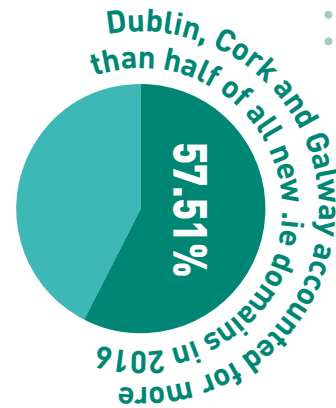
.ie domains registered in 2016

**1.7%**

**560**

.ie domains registered in Northern Ireland

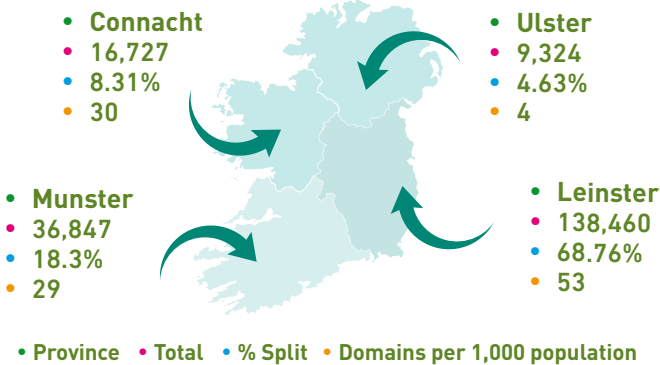
**9%**



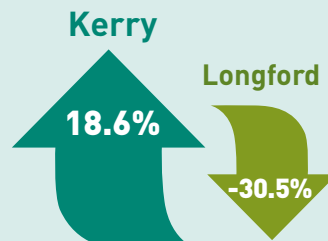
Most new .ie domains

**14,187**  
Dublin

## Analysis of .ie domain registry by province



% increase in new .ie domains registered



Fewest new .ie domains\*

**130**  
Leitrim

Ireland ranks joint **18th out of 22** in Europe for the number of country code domains per 1,000 people, but level with France and ahead of Greece and Russia.



Donegal has the lowest number of .ie domains per 1,000 people\*

**Donegal (19)**



Top 3 counties with the highest number of .ie domains per 1,000 people

**Dublin (70)**

**Carlow (55)**

**Wicklow (49)**

\*Republic of Ireland; excluding Northern Ireland

## ANALYSIS OF .ie DOMAIN REGISTRY AND GROWTH

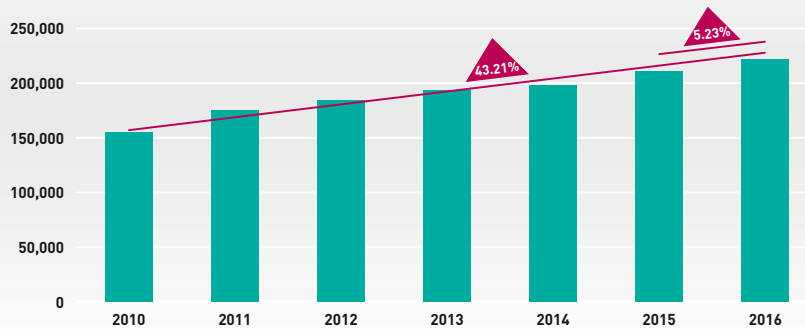
In 2016, the total .ie database increased by 5% on 2015, and 43% on 2010. There are now 221,871 registered .ie domains.

34,615 new .ie domains were registered in 2016. While this is a slight 2% decrease on the number of new .ie registrations in 2015, it is the second highest number of registrations in a single year since 2011.

Due to the decrease in registrations, and a 6% increase in deletions, the number of net additions to the total .ie database was 10,930 in 2016, down 15% on 2015.

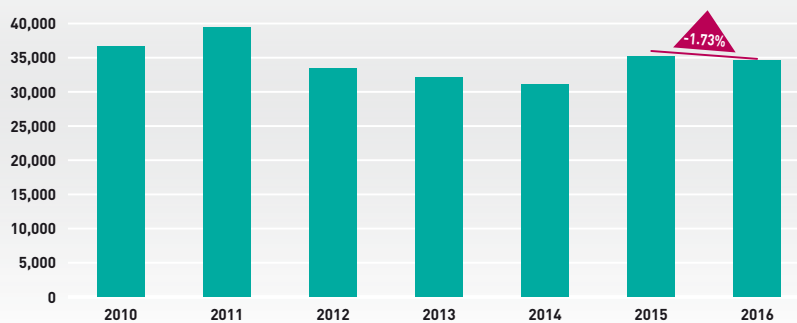
### .ie domain registry size and growth

Total number of registered .ie domains at end of each year and percentage growth



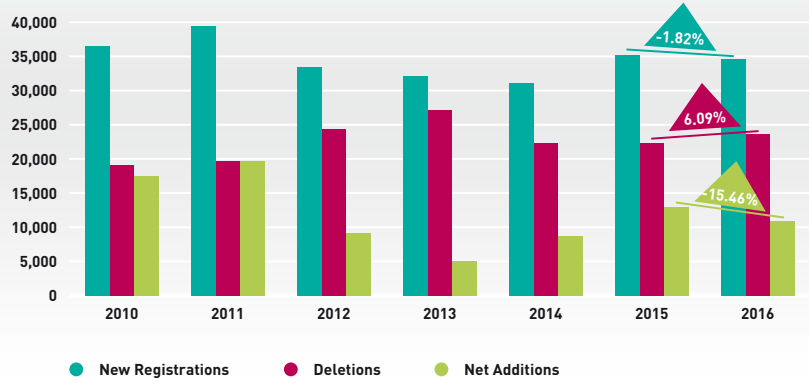
### New .ie registrations and growth

Number of new registrations in .ie domain registry for full year and percentage growth



## Total .ie registrations and growth

Total number of new .ie registrations, deletions and net additions for full year and percentage growth/decline





## ANALYSIS OF .ie DOMAIN REGISTRY BY TYPE

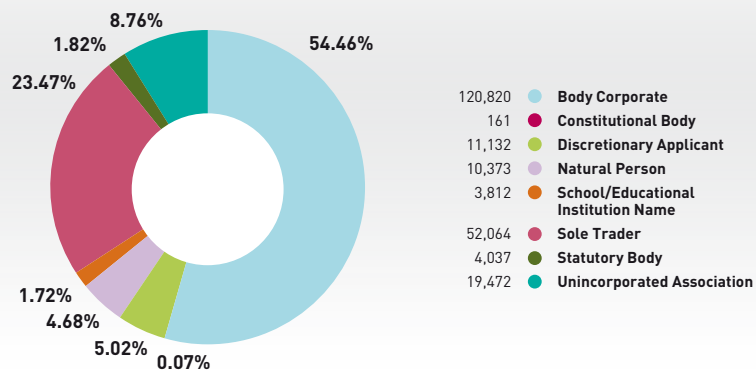
Each time a .ie domain is registered, IEDR collects valuable information profiling the registrant, specifically the type of registrant (e.g. sole trader, natural person) and their location.

In 2016, 72% of all new .ie domains were registered to corporate bodies and sole traders, a total of 25,006, in line with the total .ie database (78%). This marked a slight 2% decrease on 2015.

Unincorporated associations made up 9%, followed by discretionary applicants (applicants who are deemed to have a right to register a name but don't fulfil the criteria of any other classification) and natural persons (5% each).

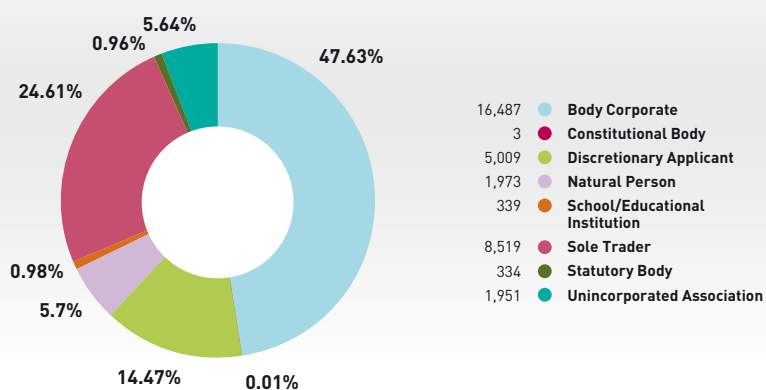
### Classification of .ie domain registry by registrant type

Classification of all .ie registrants at end of 2016



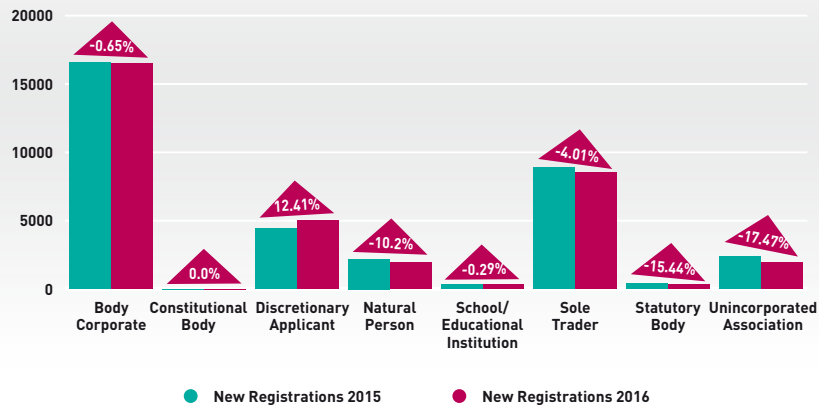
### Classification of new .ie registrations by registrant type

Classification of all new .ie registrations in 2016



## Growth of new .ie registrations by registrant type

Increase in new .ie domain registrations by registrant type and percentage growth/decline in 2016 compared to 2015

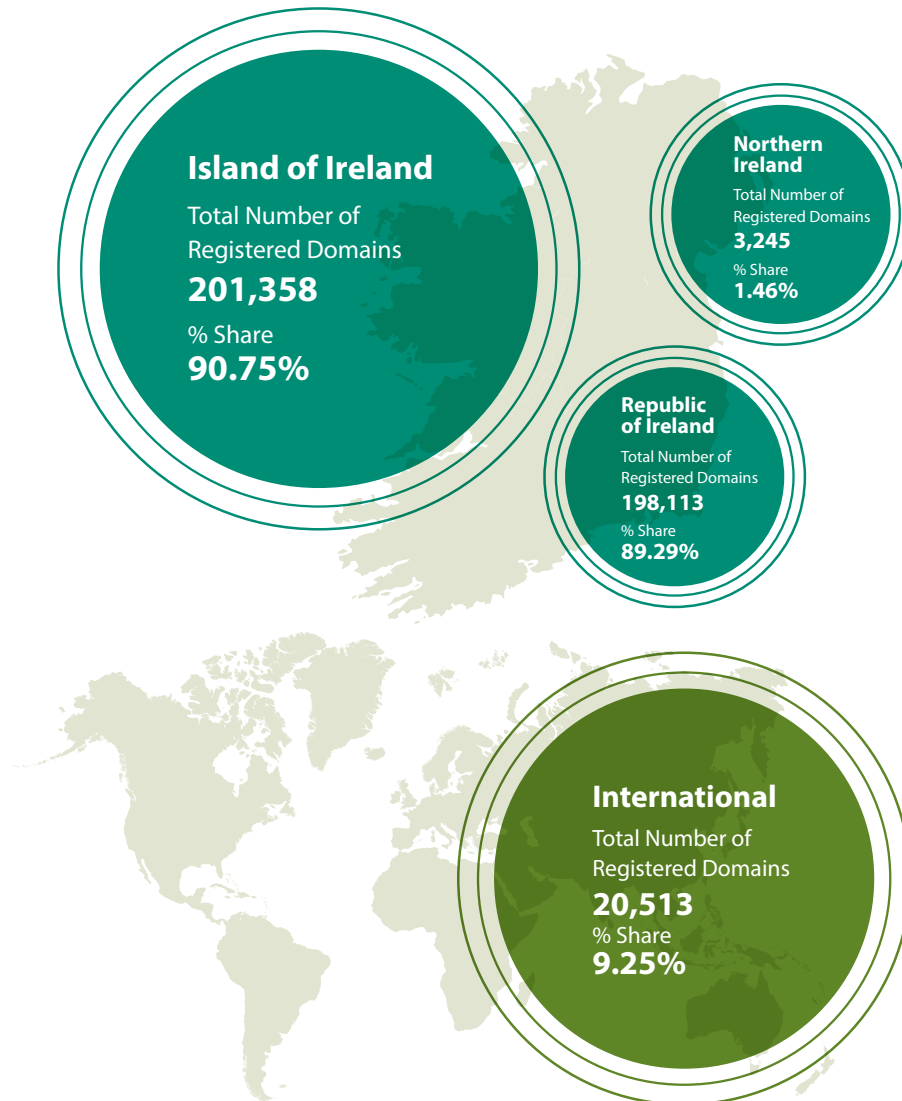


## ANALYSIS OF .ie DOMAIN REGISTRY BY GEOGRAPHY

In 2016, the total number of .ie domains registered on the island of Ireland surpassed 200,000 (201,358) for the first time, accounting for 91% of the database.

Of the 34,615 .ie domains registered in 2016, 93% were registered on the island of Ireland. Of that number, 98% (31,665) were registered in the Republic of Ireland (a 2% decrease); and 2% (560) in Northern Ireland (a 9% increase).

2,390 .ie domains were registered outside the island of Ireland in 2016, a 4% increase year-on-year.



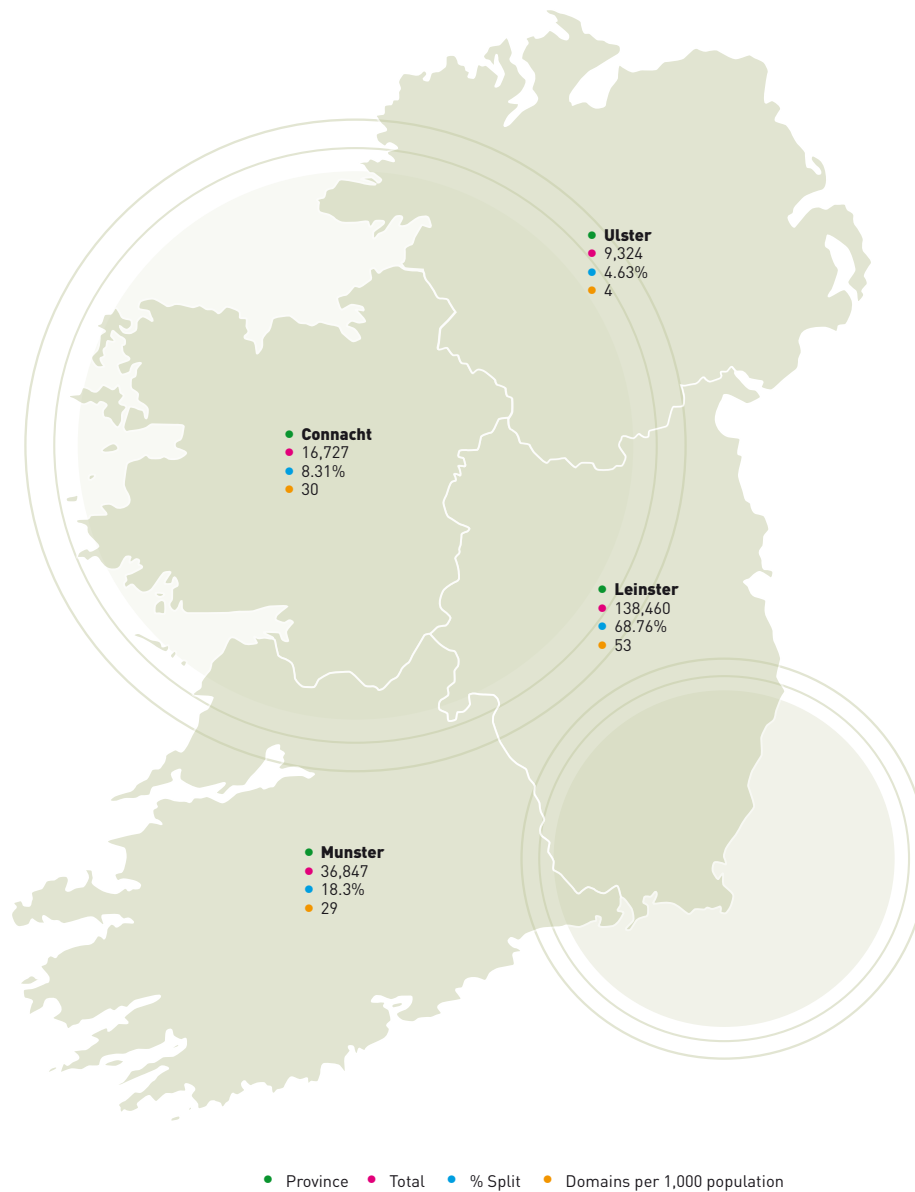
## Split and growth of new registered .ie domains by geography

New .ie domain registrations by geography and percentage growth over 2015

Country	New Reg 2016	% Mix	% Increase Year On Year
International	2,390	6.90%	4.14%
Island of Ireland	32,225	93.10%	-2.14%
Ireland	31,665	91.48%	-2.32%
Northern Ireland	560	1.62%	9.16%
<b>Total</b>	<b>34,615</b>		

## ANALYSIS OF .ie DOMAIN REGISTRY BY PROVINCE

Excluding internationally registered domains, Leinster continues to account for the largest number of .ie domains in the database (69%, or 138,460), followed by Munster (18%, 36,847) and Connacht (8%, 16,727).



## Split and growth of new .ie registrations by province

New .ie domains registered by province and percentage growth over previous year

Province	New Reg 2016	% Mix	% increase/decrease Year On Year
Connacht	2,739	<b>8.50%</b>	-6.04%
Leinster	21,739	<b>67.46%</b>	-3.59%
Munster	6,185	<b>19.19%</b>	4.21%
Ulster	1,562	<b>4.85%</b>	2.02%
Ulster - ROI	1,002	<b>3.11%</b>	-1.57%
Northern Ireland - UK	560	<b>1.74%</b>	9.16%
<b>Total</b>	<b>32,225</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	

In line with the total database, Leinster accounted for 67% of all .ie domains registered in 2016 (21,739), a 4% decrease year-on-year. This was followed by Munster with 19% (6,185), a 4% increase on 2015; Connacht accounted for 8.5% of all new .ie domains (2,739, down 6%); Ulster accounted for 5% (1,562, up 2%).

## ANALYSIS OF .ie DOMAIN REGISTRY BY COUNTY

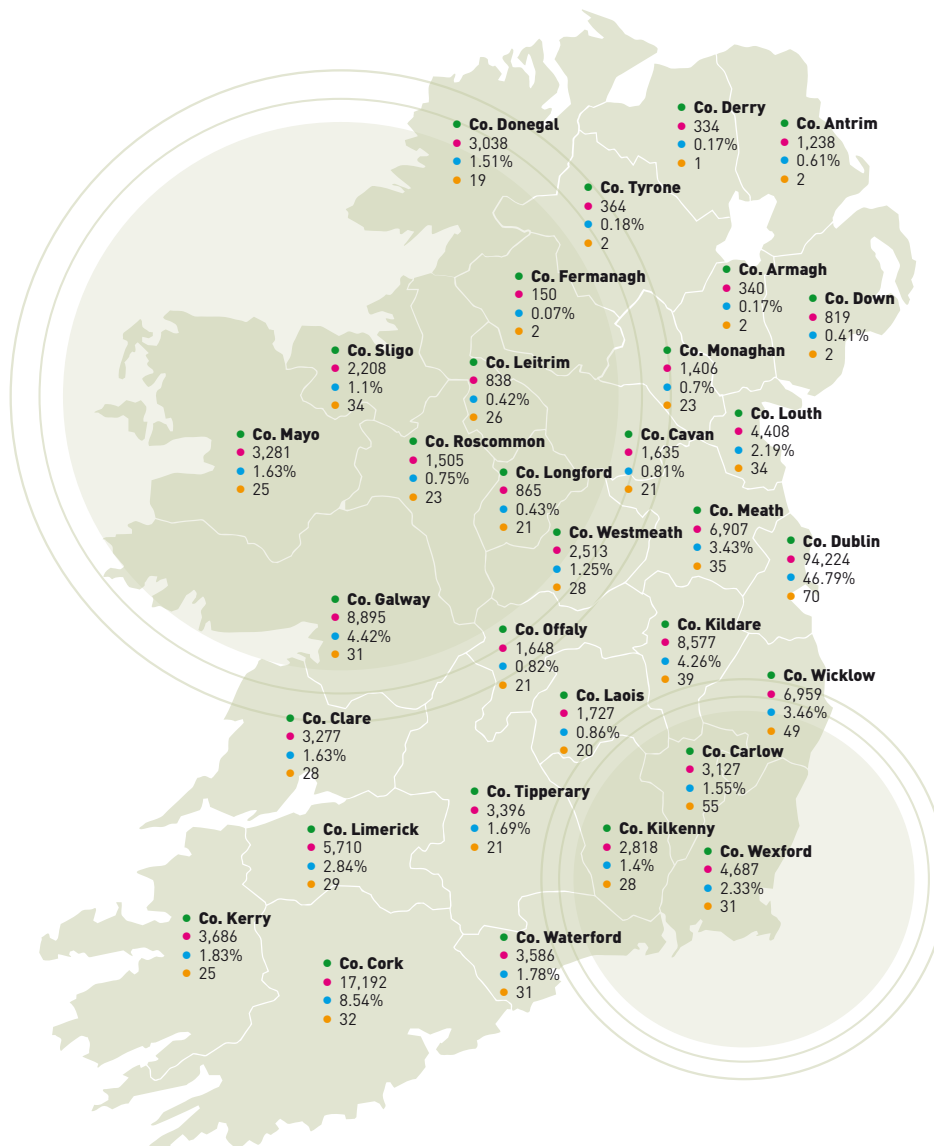
Dublin continues to dominate the .ie domain registry, accounting for 47% (94,224) of all .ie domains registered on the island of Ireland, followed by Cork (17,192, or 8.5%) and Galway (8,895, or 4%).

In 2016, new Dublin .ie registrations totalled 14,187, or 44% of all new registrations. This was a slight 4% decrease on 2015. Cork registrations totalled 2,837, or 9%, a 3% increase on 2015; Galway registrations totalled 1,512, or 5%, an increase of just under 1% on 2015.

County Fermanagh registered only 31 .ie domains in 2016, the smallest number in Northern Ireland and on the island of Ireland overall. Despite this, the number was up 48% on 2015, the largest increase in any county.

County Leitrim registered the smallest number of .ie domains in the Republic of Ireland – 130, or just 0.4% of all .ie domains in 2016. The largest drop in .ie domain registrations occurred in County Longford (down 31%).

Dublin has the most .ie domains per 1,000 people (70), while Derry has the fewest (1) overall, and Laois the fewest in the Republic (20).



● County ● Total ● % Split ● Domains per 1,000 population

## Split and growth of new .ie registrations by county

New .ie domains registered in by county and percentage growth over previous year

County Total	Total New Reg 2016	% Split	% Increase
Co. Antrim	215	0.67%	19.44%
Co. Armagh	48	0.15%	4.35%
Co. Carlow	627	1.95%	-9.00%
Co. Cavan	269	0.83%	-8.81%
Co. Clare	556	1.73%	10.76%
Co. Cork	2837	8.80%	3.01%
Co. Derry	47	0.15%	-11.32%
Co. Donegal	453	1.41%	-5.63%
Co. Down	148	0.46%	-9.76%
Co. Dublin	14187	44.02%	-4.27%
Co. Fermanagh	31	0.10%	47.62%
Co. Galway	1512	4.69%	0.93%
Co. Kerry	725	2.25%	18.66%
Co. Kildare	1389	4.31%	-4.27%
Co. Kilkenny	395	1.23%	-15.96%
Co. Laois	311	0.97%	-7.72%
Co. Leitrim	130	0.40%	-16.13%
Co. Limerick	900	2.79%	1.24%
Co. Longford	134	0.42%	-30.57%
Co. Louth	710	2.20%	2.01%
Co. Mayo	523	1.62%	-12.40%
Co. Meath	1239	3.84%	5.63%
Co. Monaghan	280	0.87%	15.23%
Co. Offaly	269	0.83%	-2.54%
Co. Roscommon	261	0.81%	-4.74%
Co. Sligo	313	0.97%	-19.95%
Co. Tipperary	555	1.72%	-5.61%
Co. Tyrone	71	0.22%	44.90%
Co. Waterford	612	1.90%	3.55%
Co. Westmeath	450	1.40%	-6.25%
Co. Wexford	891	2.76%	14.23%
Co. Wicklow	1137	3.53%	-3.97%
<b>Total</b>	<b>32225</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	



## INTERNATIONAL COMPARISON OF DOMAIN MARKETS

There are more than 240 country code top-level domain extensions (ccTLDs) worldwide, including .ie.

Compared to 22 other European countries, Ireland, with 47, ranks joint 18th with France for the number of country code domains per 1,000 people.

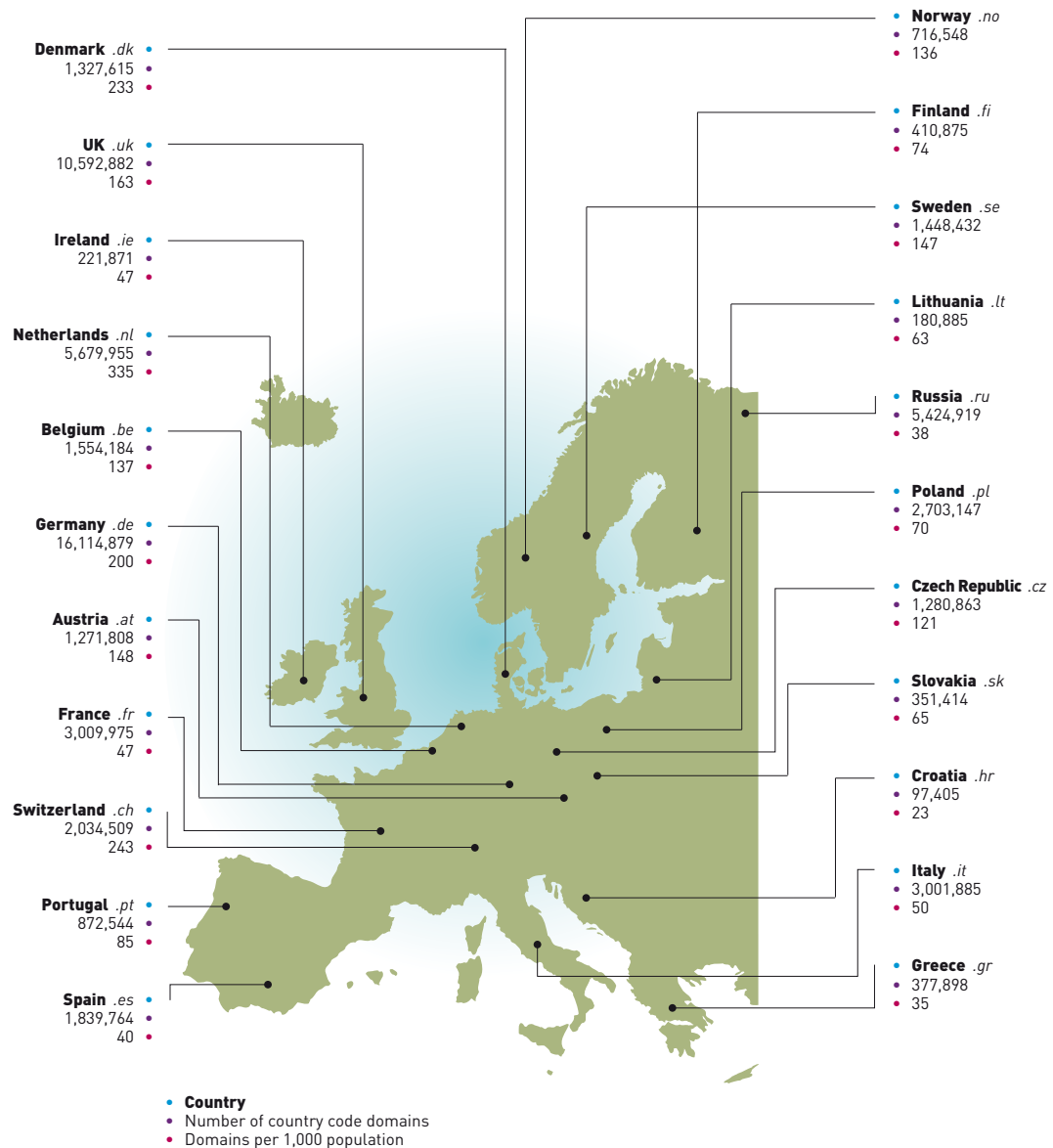
Using this metric, Ireland ranks ahead of, or is comparable to, European countries with larger populations, including Spain (40 .es domains per 1,000 people), Russia (38 .ru domains) and Greece (35 .gr domains).

However, Ireland also ranks behind several European countries with smaller or similar populations, including Denmark (233 .dk domains), Norway (136 .no domains) and Lithuania (63 .lt domains).

Our nearest neighbours in the UK has 163 .uk domains per 1,000 people.

### Analysis of European domain market size

Breakdown of international domain market size by country and per 1,000 population



Source: Association of European National Top Level Domain Registries ([www.centr.org](http://www.centr.org))



# “Death by a thousand clicks”: The importance of e-commerce to Irish SMEs

At a time when 90% of consumers go online to find information about companies and their products and services, it is clear how lucrative the digital marketplace has become.

For business and consumers, it is an unsleeping economy, open for business 24/7, 365 days a year.

Indeed, there are very few circumstances where a business does not need a web presence.

Our most recent dot ie Digital Health Index report (November 2016), however, revealed that more than 1 in 5, or 22%, of Irish SMEs still have no online presence whatsoever.

With Irish consumers so active online, it is surprising that there is a significant cohort of SMEs that are not online in any capacity. Worryingly, the majority of these businesses (66%) have no plans to get online in the future.

Consumers are far outpacing SMEs in terms of their engagement with digital technology and tools. They expect and almost demand businesses to move forward with them to meet their digital needs.

The dot ie Digital Health Index research revealed that the majority of consumers, 94%, shop online, with almost a quarter, or 24%, doing so at least weekly, if not more frequently. 2 in 5 people said they are spending more online today than over the past two years.

There are great examples of businesses that have successfully transformed the customer experience for the better using digital, but unfortunately, these businesses are the exception rather than the rule.

Instead, SMEs that remain offline, or without e-commerce capabilities, are missing out on huge revenue opportunities.

The Irish share of the digital marketplace is worth almost €9bn, but only one third of SMEs can take payments online. This could potentially have long-term consequences for Ireland's economy, particularly for rural communities given their significant dependence on SMEs.

Indeed, if consumers continue to migrate online, this may result in the permanent and irreversible loss of business and customer loyalty.

Early indicators show that this issue will be exacerbated by Brexit, with Irish consumers migrating to sterling-based websites or travelling across the border for a better shopping experience.

The time for action by SMEs is now.

# Stores are dying the death of a thousand clicks



50,000 Irish businesses have little interest in engaging with customers online

## Online presence has never been more important

To prevent your business from becoming... Luckily, there are many local com-

## SMEs lag behind in online space

CHARLIE TAYLOR

## Shoppers making a seismic shift

US retail giant Macy's announced this week that it was closing its shop in Dublin as part of a rationalisation of its store network. That was Dublin, Ohio, rather than our own splendid capital, but it is a signal of the seismic shift that is under way in global retail.

force last year following an ex process that allowed it to rene onerous leases on its Irish stor HMV is probably the highest i casualty here of the switch to Even Dunnes Stores, a long holdout against online shoppi



The evidence suggests that Irish retail is losing out at fairly remarkable levels to international online retail businesses

... 62% emailing, 61% general internet surfing, and 70% social networking. Unsurprisingly, social networking was revealed as the most popular online activity for 16-24 year olds, with 87% of this cohort logging on to social networks in a typical month. The survey showed that watching films, listening to music, making phone calls and downloading music are also



popular pastime for people also monthly based. For business particularly of Irish people a monthly study from



# A Break For The Border

## One in four small firms lacks know-how or funds to go online

## €4.5bn in online sales 'missed'

A second major survey has found that retailers here are foregoing €4.5bn in lost sales

## A national shame?

The latest report detailing the extent of Irish SMEs with no online presence... be more than just a w

## Lack of online presence means Irish SMEs losing out on global business

have a proper... Instead, the Media by

Amárach has found that €4.5bn worth of sales was leaking abroad.



# IEDR in 2016: The IEDR Policy Advisory Committee

In 2016, the IEDR continued to work with its Policy Advisory Committee (PAC) to review policy changes in the .ie namespace and release new domain product offerings that offer more options to Irish businesses and consumers.

The PAC was established in 2014 to consider and provide advice on policy issues concerning the .ie namespace. The PAC operates in line with a detailed Policy Development Process and since its launch, it has discussed and worked to enable policy changes relating to the release of one and two-letter domain names, Internationalised Domain Names (IDNs), and the re-sale of the right to use a .ie domain name on a secondary market.

## One- and two-letter domains

The release of one- and two-letter .ie domains continued in 2016 with the launch of the IEDR's secondary registration phase, 'Landrush', in February. In this phase, any party that could show compliance with the IEDR's Registration and Naming Policies was deemed eligible to apply for any remaining available one- and two-letter .ie domains. Any domains contested by multiple eligible participants were sent to auction, with the highest bidder gaining the right to use the domain.

The final stage of release, 'General Availability', launched in May, with the remaining one- and two-letter .ie domains released on a first-come, first-served basis to any party who could show their connection to Ireland and claim to the domain name.

## Internationalised Domain Names (IDNs)

Following extensive discussions by the PAC and a Public Consultation during February and March 2016, the introduction of .ie domains which included the fada character (acute accent) on vowels was formally approved. This meant that applicants could apply for domains in the Irish language for the very first time.

To support the introduction of these domains, a specialised release process was designed, and it was decided that three stages of release would be implemented. Under the initial phase, 'Sunrise', certain rights holders were able to register the IDN which corresponded to their protected right to ensure that they could protect their brand. This was followed by 'Landrush', a special phase for existing .ie registrants, which allowed registrants who held .ie domains in the Irish language, but without the fada character, to register their domain name with the appropriate fada. Finally, these domains were released on 'General Availability' in November on a first-come, first-served basis and in accordance with the IEDR's standard registration process and policies.

## Secondary market

The PAC formed a specific development group to review this proposed policy change. It worked with the wider PAC to find consensus on how best to introduce secondary market operations to the .ie namespace.

In accordance with the IEDR's Policy Development Process (PDP), a public consultation was held to ensure that the opinions of the public were taken into consideration during the decision-making process. A new, specially designed registrant transfer process was created to support the secondary market operations and once formal approval was obtained from the PAC and IEDR Board of Directors, the IEDR worked with its accredited .ie Registrars to release secondary market operations in November.

## Geographic rule

Throughout 2016, the PAC continued its review of the proposed policy change to remove the restriction on the registration of .ie domains which corresponded to geographic place names in the island of Ireland; these had previously been reserved for local authorities and government bodies.

After consultation with the various local authority and government body stakeholders, including the City and County Managers Association (CCMA), and the Local Government Management Agency (LGMA), it was agreed that no objections existed to the proposal, and that the restriction should be removed. Following a 90-day countdown period of communications to the relevant stakeholders, this restriction was fully removed in December.



**Identifiably Irish**

Ireland's Domain Registry

**IE Domain Registry CLG**

4th Floor  
2 Harbour Square  
Crofton Road  
Dun Laoghaire  
Co Dublin  
A96 D6R0

Tel 00 353 (0)1 236 5400  
Fax 00 353 (0)1 230 0365  
Email [outreachprogramme@iedr.ie](mailto:outreachprogramme@iedr.ie)  
Twitter [@IEDR\\_dot\\_ie](https://twitter.com/IEDR_dot_ie)  
Web [www.iedr.ie](http://www.iedr.ie)