

## **Eight per cent growth in number of Irish businesses trading online this Black Friday on last year - .IE figures**

*An increase of 39% in .ie registrations overall from April-October 2020 points to a greater focus on having an online presence this year*

- **8% increase in number of Irish businesses with a website on Black Friday this year versus 2019**
- **53% of consumer's online spend has been with Irish SMEs since the Covid-19 pandemic began**
- **Just 25% of Irish retail and customer-facing professional services SMEs sell online**
- **46% of SMEs that have invested in online services during Covid-19 are busier or as busy as before the crisis**
- **.ie domain sees 39% increase in overall registrations from April - October 2020 on same period in 2019**

**The number of active Irish business websites has grown by eight per cent this Black Friday versus the previous year, according to new data released by .IE, the managers of Ireland's unique online .ie address.**

Overall registrations of .ie domains in the period of April – October 2020 have increased by 39% on the previous year - pointing to a significant intent and potential migration of Irish SMEs online since Covid-19.

This growth suggests an increased focus on online trading this year as a result of the Covid-19 crisis – with the majority of Irish retail SMEs forced to close their bricks and mortar premises as a result of Level Five restrictions. The significant increase in demand for government's trading online voucher is also a positive indicator of SMEs intent.

### **Consumers want to support local**

This move online by Irish SMEs aligns with an increased desire by consumers to support local. The recent .IE Tipping Point Report\* found that over half of Irish consumers (53%) have made online purchases from Irish SMEs during the Covid-19 crisis. This compares to just 48% of Irish consumers prior to the onset of the pandemic.

Over two thirds (67%) of those who shop online with Irish SMEs cite solidarity for Irish businesses during this difficult period as their primary reason for doing so.

### **The opportunity**

It is also estimated that Irish households have saved nearly €10 billion in the first seven months of 2020\*\*. This suggests a pent-up demand amongst many Irish households. For Irish SMEs, this presents clear opportunity for increased retail sales on Black Friday and the seasonal period ahead.

In 2019, Irish consumers spent €250m on Black Friday sales – with almost half of this estimated to have been spent online. Sensibly, SMEs did not engage in massive price discounting, recognising that shoppers were bringing forward their December purchases.

Given current restrictions, there is a strong likelihood this online spending figure will be surpassed in 2020.

Testament to the resilience and entrepreneurial spirit of Irish SMEs, many have already taken steps to adapt their business and continue trading in line with the current restrictions. However, some could still lose out on this year's valuable Black Friday trade due to their inability to take a sales order or process transactions through their website. .IE data shows that while almost two in three (66%) Irish retail and customer-facing professional services SMEs have a website, just one in four (25%) are able to sell their product or service online.

**Commenting, David Curtin, CEO .IE said:**

“The last week of November, or Black Friday weekend, has become one of the busiest weekends of the year for the Irish retail industry. With Covid-19 restrictions depriving consumers of the seasonal shopping experience in bricks and mortar stores, a business's online offering will become even more important. This year more than ever, Irish SMEs with a consumer product or service must look to maximise this opportunity by providing a compelling online offering.

“Irish consumers are keen to support and click local – our research shows that over half of their online spend has been with Irish SMEs since the onset of the Covid-19 crisis, representing a marked shift from previous years. We expect that this sentiment will carry through to Christmas and the New Year, but only if Irish SMEs offer a good online experience for consumers. Otherwise, this spending power will be lost to the more established international e-commerce websites.

“Providing options such as click-and-collect or a swift delivery service are e-commerce methods that are easily adapted to SMEs of all sizes, and if made available, can help stimulate further online shopping.

“We encourage consumers to ‘Champion Green’ this Black Friday and continue to support local where possible. If every adult in the country spent €50 with an Irish SME this November, it would deliver a €180m boost to the economy\*\*\* and a much-needed lift for businesses across the country.”

**ENDS**

\*.IE Tipping Point Report 2020 – [.IE Tipping Point Report 2020](#)

\*\*Ibec Quarterly Economic Outlook, October 2020

\*\*\*Champion Green data – Retail Excellence & Visa November 2020

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

Our purpose is to enable and empower people, communities and businesses across Ireland to thrive online.

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.

.IE is committed to digital advocacy for the SME community. 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.

.IE also produces fact-based research for the business community and policymakers, such as the [.IE Tipping Point Report](#), charting the attitudes of Irish SMEs and consumers to digital 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. There are over 300,000 domains in the database.

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