

Staycations and al fresco dining prompt 64% increase in new .ie web addresses with ‘outdoor summer’ keywords, such as ‘barbecue’ and ‘pool’

New H1 2021 .IE Domain Profile Report shows continued year-on-year increase in new .ie domain registrations as pandemic accelerates e-commerce, digital trends

- H1 2021 (January–June) best first half-year period on record for new .ie domain registrations
- .ie domain holds 51% market share of all hosted top-level domains in Ireland, ahead of .com
- .ie domain the second fastest-growing country domain in Europe, behind .pt (Portugal)
- New .ie web addresses with explicitly pandemic-related keywords decreased 76.4% year-on-year, but general health-related keywords increased 18.8%
- Number of .ie websites with security certificates increasing; .IE expects further increase after HSE ransomware attack fallout
- .IE CEO says figures ‘good news for Irish economy’ as new domain registrations ‘a forward indicator of digital intent and future e-commerce activity’.

There was an increase of 64% in the number of new .ie web addresses with ‘outdoor summer’-related keywords in the first half of 2021 (H1 2021: 1 January–30 June) compared to the same period in 2020, according to the latest .IE Domain Profile Report.

The report, published biannually by .IE, the company that manages Ireland’s country domain name, shows .ie web addresses containing the word ‘pool’ increased by 187.5%, ‘barbecue’ by 100%, and ‘tent’ by 55.6%, among other outdoor activities and hospitality products.

Explicitly **pandemic-related keywords**, such as ‘Covid’, ‘sanitiser’, and ‘vaccine’, decreased by 76.4% in H1 2021 vs H1 2020, while **general health-related keywords**, such as ‘doctor’, ‘pharmacy’, ‘wellness’, and ‘fitness’ increased by 18.8%.

Commenting, **David Curtin, Chief Executive of .IE**, said: ‘Homeware stores, garden centres, GPs, and pharmacists who may previously have been reluctant to invest in their online presence are now benefiting from the convenience and revenue-generating power of online sales and virtual consultations.

‘When the Government announced lockdown restrictions, we have seen a concurrent rise in the number of new .ie domain registrations. A website and e-commerce functionality mean SMEs can adapt quickly to changing economic circumstances and remain open to customers even if their physical premises are closed.

‘Even with the option to shop in-store, for convenience or price reasons many consumers now simply prefer to buy online, or at the very least browse or research products online before buying them in-store.

The pandemic has greatly accelerated the trend towards omni-channel retail, whereby the process of buying and selling a product or service integrates digital and physical platforms. A rise in .ie domain registrations suggests SMEs are increasingly prepared for this reality.'

New registrations and database growth

H1 2021 is the **best first half-year period on record** for new .ie domain registrations. A total of **33,815 new .ie domains were registered**, up 1.6% on the same period last year.

Broken down, new .ie domain registrations were **up 34% on Q1 2020** but **down 22% on Q2 2020**. For comparison, lockdown commenced only midway through the final month of Q1 2020, reaching its peak in Q2. Q1 2021 was dominated by the strict post-Christmas lockdown, but Q2 was largely defined by the re-opening of non-essential retail and hospitality and acceleration of the vaccine rollout.

At the end of H1 2021 (30 June), there was a **total 324,074 .ie domains** in the database, up 9.6% on the same period last year.

'These figures are good news for the Irish economy given that new domain registrations are a forward indicator of digital intent and future e-commerce activity,' said Mr Curtin.

.ie market share

At 51%, the **.ie domain holds the highest market share** of all hosted top-level domain names in Ireland. The .com domain has a 32% market share, followed by .uk with 8% and .net with 2%.

Ireland is the **second fastest-growing country code domain** in Europe, behind Portugal, with 9.6% growth year-on-year.

'Authentically Irish and trusted at home and internationally, the .ie domain remains the domain of choice for Irish businesses and individuals,' said Mr Curtin.

Cybersecurity

.ie domain holders can add extra layers of security to their website by purchasing security certificates and other tools from trusted third-party providers and domain registrars.

100,576.ie websites have a **security certificate** (indicated by a URL beginning with https://), a 20.4% year-on-year increase. Security certificates prove to website visitors' browsers that they are on an authentic and secure site.

The number of .ie domains with **DNS Security Extensions/DNSSEC** (a cryptographic security protocol) and **Registry Lock** (a manual service that minimises the risk of unauthorised or unwanted changes to a domain) is, however, much lower, at just 0.11% and 0.01% respectively of the .ie database.

'After the ransomware attack on the HSE, the importance of cybersecurity to government institutions and private businesses has come into sharp focus,' said Mr Curtin.

'While security certificates are crucial to trust and privacy, additional features, such as DNSSEC and Registry Lock, provide extra layers of domain security and peace of mind to the owner and to users. We strongly encourage all .ie domain owners to contact their domain registrar or a trusted, verified third-party provider for more information about their use.'

ENDS

Read the [.IE Domain Profile Report 2021: January–June](#) report in full.

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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 SMEs and for local communities. Through stakeholder engagement initiatives such as [.IE Digital Town](#), we work with and support SME 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 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 324,000 .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 a connection to Ireland.

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