

Digital Focus: Digital champions and towns countrywide called to enter ‘The .IE Digital Towns Awards 2022’

Applications are now open for the .IE Digital Towns Awards 2022, an initiative of .IE, the managers of Ireland’s trusted online .ie address.

- The .IE Digital Town Awards honour local town projects and people that are using digital to transform or enhance their communities for the betterment of local people, services, and society.
- Now in its second year, there is a total prize fund of €100,000 across 14 award categories including Digital Business, Community Digital, Digital Rising Star, Digital Changemaker, and Digital Local Hero.
- Oonagh McCutcheon, National Director of the .IE Digital Town Programme: *“We are excited to see how towns and communities are using digital tools and innovative thinking with transformative results for citizens and local society. Last year’s winners set the bar exceptionally high, and we are looking forward to shining a light again on the towns, digital champions and smart ideas that are breathing new life into communities and their people.”*

People and towns across Ireland are being called on to enter the annual .IE Digital Town Awards 2022, an initiative of .IE, the managers of Ireland’s trusted online .ie address which celebrate the digital achievements of local towns and citizens across the country.

Now open for applications, the .IE Digital Town Awards has a total prize fund of €100,000 across 14 categories to honour local towns and people that, through digital projects and innovation, have contributed to enhancements in areas such as e-health, digital tourism, community, education, and digital business.

Welcoming the launch of this year’s awards, Oonagh McCutcheon, National Director, .IE Digital Town Programme said: “While the past two years have undoubtedly challenged us all, there are lots of great examples of how communities and community leaders have stepped up and adopted new ways of thinking and doing, with digital tools and innovation helping them to not only survive but thrive.

“Whether this is creating an online visitor experience to drive tourism in a town, or a digital voucher scheme to encourage local commerce, there are many inspiring examples of everyday champions and digital leaders in our communities that are transforming local life and society in innovative and creative ways.

“The ambition of our awards is to recognise these people and projects that have created opportunities against the odds, as well as inspiring and motivating others to see how digital tools and technologies might benefit their towns and communities too.

“As we begin to emerge from the pandemic, we are excited to see how towns and communities have continued to embrace digital tools and are applying innovative digital-first thinking with

transformative results for citizens, business, and local society. Last year's winners set the bar exceptionally high, and we are looking forward to once more shining a light on the towns, digital champions and smart ideas that are breathing new life into communities and their people."

"We are delighted to welcome our category sponsors Western Development Commission, Connected Hubs, Vodafone and AIB Merchant Services"

Last year, Dingle Peninsula was the overall winner for its innovative project '*Reimagining Creatively Through Digital*'. The focus of the Dingle team was on promoting innovation and imagining new ways of doing things through digital.

Among the highlights of the Dingle Peninsula project was a pilot initiative to increase sustainability and productivity by collecting 'real-time' data using sensor technology such as current and predicted weather and soil conditions, and grass growth rates. Localised 'real-time' weather data also enabled tourism providers to tailor tourist packages based on changing weather conditions.

Categories and Awards

Ten of the awards will be digital projects in the areas of education, tourism, health, business, and community, with a further four special awards recognising a Digital Changemaker, Digital Rising Star, Digital Local Hero, and an Overall Winner, which will be decided on by an independent judging panel.

The judging panel for this year's special awards categories will be looking for digital leaders who show a genuine passion and ambition for their town or community, are self-motivated, and who apply digital thinking to problem solve with creative solutions and innovative ideas that 'disrupt' and enhance towns and communities for everyone's benefit.

Finally, the Digital Local Hero award will recognise the unsung heroes nominated by their peers for their tireless work on community-focused and digitally led initiatives that make a town or a group in the town better.

Applications are open now and will close at 17.00 on Friday, 25 March 2022.

The winners and runners up will be announced at a gala awards ceremony on 8 June 2022.

The .IE Digital Town Awards is part of a €1 million investment announced by .IE in 2021 and to be delivered over four years, with a particular focus on digital enhancement and adoption in Ireland's towns as part of its overall .IE Digital Town programme.

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Note to editors:

- Learn more about [applying for the Digital Town Awards](#), which is now open for entries.

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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 330,000 .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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