2 February 2018

2017 the strongest year on record for new .ie domains with 108 registered every day

- **39,523 .ie domains registered in 2017, a 14 percent increase on 2016, according to new IEDR dot ie Domain Profile Report**
- **237,412 .ie domains now in the database, up 7 percent on 2016**
- **Nearly every county in Ireland posted increases in new .ie registrations, with significant increases in Munster, Connacht and Ulster**
- **IEDR CEO: "The .ie domain remains the preferred online address and a powerful digital tool for businesses, organisations and individuals...and is recognised as authentic and trustworthy."**
- **dot ie Domain Profile Report critical of recent Eurostat report that claims Ireland is number one in EU for business web sales.**

2017 was the strongest year on record for new .ie domain registrations, according to the latest dot ie Domain Profile Report published today by IE Domain Registry (IEDR), the company that manages and maintains Ireland's official country domain name, .ie.

39,523 new .ie domains were registered in 2017—an average of 108 a day. The figure is a 14 percent increase on 2016 and the best single year for new registrations.

There are now 237,412 .ie domains in the database, a 7 percent increase on the previous year end and an almost 30 percent increase on five years ago.

The increase was driven by nationwide demand, with new registrations up in all but four counties on the island of Ireland. Corporate bodies and sole traders made up the majority of new .ie registrations (67 percent) in 2017.

Leinster accounted for two-thirds of new registrations in 2017 (24,776), followed by Munster (20 percent, 7,347), Connacht (9 percent, 3,318) and Ulster (5 percent, 1,920).

In Ulster, new registrations increased by 23 percent on the previous year; in Connacht by 21 percent; in Munster by 19 percent; and in Leinster by 14 percent.

On a county level, Dublin registered the most new .ie domains with 43 percent of the total (16,065 domains), a 13 percent increase on 2016. The capital was followed by Cork (9 percent, 3,280 domains) and Galway (5 percent, 1,807 domains), recording 16 percent and 19.5 percent year-on-year increases respectively.

Fermanagh registered the smallest number of .ie domains on the island of Ireland (39). Leitrim registered the smallest number in the Republic of Ireland (171), although both were increases on the previous year.

Despite the national increase in registrations, Ireland still lags behind its European neighbours for the number of country domains per 1,000 people. With 50 .ie domains, Ireland is 18th out of 22, ahead of France and Spain, but behind countries with smaller or similar populations like Lithuania (64 .lt domains per 1,000 people), Norway (141 .no domains) and Denmark (234 .dk domains).

Commenting on the 2017 report, David Curtin, Chief Executive of IEDR, said: "The .ie domain remains the preferred online address and a powerful digital tool for businesses, organisations and individuals in Ireland. A .ie domain is immediately identifiably Irish, and is recognised as authentic and trustworthy.

"More than two-thirds of new .ie domains in 2017 were registered by businesses, a 6 percent increase on the previous year. This signals a strong, growing economy with enterprises that have the confidence and willingness to invest in their online presence and digital processes. Online address registrations are often recognised as a forward indicator of economic growth and entrepreneurship.

"Encouragingly, .ie domain registrations are spread out across the country. While urban centres dominate the database, we have seen significant year-on-year increases in registrations in Munster, Connacht and Ulster."

In the new dot ie Domain Profile Report, IEDR says that new Eurostat figures claiming Ireland ranks number one in the EU for web sales are potentially "highly misleading". *

Mr Curtin said: "Eurostat's recent survey into EU businesses' web sales ability puts Ireland in the top spot. While this seems like a very positive result, the reality is that the survey excludes the micro-businesses with fewer than ten employees that make up 92 percent of the Irish economy. The survey is therefore not an accurate reflection of Ireland's e-commerce capability.

"According to IEDR's most recent dot ie Digital Health Index, a survey of predominantly Irish micro-businesses' use of digital assets, two-thirds of Irish SMEs with websites cannot process online payments, while 1 in 5 have no online presence whatsoever. We have a lot of work to do at home before we can truly proclaim ourselves European leaders.

"To improve Ireland's digital capabilities, we are calling on the Government to collaborate with industry and roll out a national campaign focused on teaching micro-businesses essential digital skills. Robust broadband for rural communities must also be prioritised. In Connacht and Ulster, a quarter of SMEs report a 'poor' or 'very poor' internet connection."

IEDR anticipates continued growth nationwide in 2018 as registration of .ie online addresses becomes easier and faster. After March 2018, any individual or business with a provable connection to Ireland will be able to register any available .ie online address on a first-come, first-served basis. Businesses, townlands, parishes

and clubs are expected to be interested in the changes. Citizens will be able to register nicknames and short names for the first time.

ENDS

* '1 in 6 EU businesses sold on the web in 2016', *Eurostat news release*, 14 December 2017. Link: http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/2995521/8536129/9-14122017-AP-EN.pdf/084bc3ac-be33-4090-ad3a-cc326f0e2232

For media enquiries, contact:

Nuala Ryan | nuala@pr360.ie | 01 637 1777 | 083 421 2733

Michael Sullivan | michael@pr360.ie | 01 637 1777 | 085 220 6616

About IE Domain Registry

The IE Domain Registry (IEDR) is the official registry for .ie domain names, and it maintains the database of registered .ie domain names.

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

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

Policy development for the .ie namespace follows a bottom-up, consensus driven and consultative approach, set out in IEDR's 10-step Policy Development Process (PDP).

IEDR established the Policy Advisory Committee (PAC) in July 2014 to consider and provide advice to the IEDR Board of Directors on policy change requests. The PAC operates under specific Terms of Reference and follows the PDP.

The PAC recently completed a public consultation process that showed there was strong consensus for the policy change to liberalise the rules for .ie domain registrations. IEDR's change to the registration process retains the requirement for applicants to prove their connection to Ireland, but drops the need to prove a valid claim to the name. Going forward, any individual or business with a provable connection to Ireland will be able to register any available .ie domain name on a first-come, first-served basis.