



IE Domain Registry

## **IE Domain Registry launches Internet Day 2018 with new 'Digital Town' initiative to combat low rates of e-commerce in Irish towns**

***While Ireland's e-commerce economy is worth €12.3bn, only 3 in 10 SMEs can take sales orders through their website – survey of 1,000 SMEs<sup>1</sup>***

- **Gorey, Co Wexford chosen as Ireland's first 'Digital Town' and the location of Ireland's Internet Day 2018 events on 25 October next**
- **IE Domain Registry reports 29% growth in new domain registrations in Gorey town in 2017**
- **As part of the Digital Town initiative, IE Domain Registry will plan and oversee a number of digital activities aimed at further developing digital skills for local businesses, citizens and community groups in Gorey**
- **Insights show that the use of digital technology impacts positively on citizens lives**
- **IE Domain Registry research shows that businesses stand to lose up to €25,761 a year on average if they do not have a website**

IE Domain Registry, the company that manages and maintains Ireland's country domain, .ie, has today launched its 'Digital Town' initiative as part of Internet Day 2018, taking place on 25 October. Gorey, Co Wexford has been selected as this year's Digital Town. Pioneered and led by IE Domain Registry, the Digital Town initiative seeks to highlight the economic, social and cultural benefits of the internet to towns across the country, and to ensure SMEs and local economies are realising the full potential of the digital age, particularly e-commerce.

Gorey has been chosen for its achievements in cultivating a truly digital environment in the town, and for its ongoing successes in fully embracing digital for its residents and for local business. IE Domain Registry believes that through showcasing its efforts, Gorey can inspire Irish towns to begin their journey to becoming fully digital.

### **Bringing local towns online**

New findings from IE Domain Registry's SME Digital Health Index 2018—research conducted among 1,000 SMEs—show that Irish SMEs are not maximising their full e-commerce potential. Ireland's e-commerce economy is worth €12.3 billion, but just 3 in 10 SMEs (30%) can take sales orders, and even fewer can actually process payments for transactions through their website (26%). Almost two-thirds

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<sup>1</sup> Source: IE Domain Registry SME Digital Health Index 2018 <https://www.iedr.ie/uploads/IE-Domain-Registry-SME-Digital-Health-Index-2018.pdf>

(61%) of SMEs do not promote their services online and just 1 in 10 SMEs have taken part in a digital skills training or business funding programme.

In 2017, there were approximately 250,143 SMEs and micro-businesses in Ireland, accounting for 99.8% of total enterprises.<sup>2</sup> IE Domain Registry research shows that each of these businesses stand to lose up to €25,761 a year on average if they do not have a website.

The benefits of being online apply to the whole of society; businesses, community groups and citizens. Adding digital capabilities can bring great benefits to all aspects of an Irish town. They can transform the delivery of public services, making it possible to do more with the same available resources. They can enhance a workplace experience, to one that moves beyond slow paper-based processes and office systems and allow workers to be more productive and work remotely from anywhere.

From a social perspective, connecting people through digital fosters a sense of community and positivity, with research showing that 78% feel more connected and 80% feel happier when using digital technology.<sup>3</sup>

## **Gorey, Digital Town 2018**

Gorey has already made significant strides in cultivating and encouraging digital transformation.

Over the next four weeks, IE Domain Registry—working with Wexford County Council, tech co-working space The Hatch Lab, and Gorey Chamber of Commerce—will plan and oversee a number of initiatives aimed at showcasing Gorey and developing additional digital skills and know-how for the people and organisations of the town.

This work will culminate in the official launch and celebration of Internet Day 2018 in Gorey town centre on 25 October. Now in its fourth year, Ireland's Internet Day aims to promote awareness, knowledge, use and understanding of the internet among citizens, businesses and communities.

Domain registrations are seen as a forward indicator of economic activity. IE Domain Registry data shows a 29% growth in new .ie domain registrations in the town in 2017 and this growth has continued through the first half of 2018.

## **Comment**

Commenting today, David Curtin, Chief Executive of IE Domain Registry, said: "We are delighted to celebrate Ireland's fourth Internet Day in Gorey, Co. Wexford, a town that is actively embracing digital and the possibilities of the internet.

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<sup>2</sup> Source: SBA Fact Sheet 2017 <https://dbei.gov.ie/en/Publications/Publication-files/2017-SBA-Fact-Sheet.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Source: Virgin Media Ireland Digital Insights Report [https://www.virginmedia.ie/pdf/VM\\_IE\\_Digital\\_Insights\\_Report.pdf](https://www.virginmedia.ie/pdf/VM_IE_Digital_Insights_Report.pdf)



"Gorey has made significant advances in cultivating a digital environment. The arrival of high-speed broadband in the town has stimulated a significant increase in digital activity. This includes the launch of the tech co-working space, The Hatch Lab, earlier this year. Gorey Chamber of Commerce is taking a leadership role and has been pro-active in driving many projects to develop the digital economy, including actively promoting the 'de-commute programme' and encouraging enterprise investment in the area.

"With more and more consumers shopping online, in an e-commerce market worth €12.3 billion in Ireland, it is important that Irish businesses throughout the country have the capacity and necessary digital skills to sell their products and services online.

"IE Domain Registry, through our OPTIMISE programme, is already helping Irish SMEs grow their online presence and improve their e-commerce capabilities. Through the Digital Town initiative, we plan to apply this know-how and tangibly demonstrate the benefits of the internet to businesses, communities and citizens in towns across Ireland.

"We expect to build on this work and highlight the benefits of the internet to the whole town of Gorey in the lead up to Internet Day 2018, improving citizens' ability to engage with local businesses, community groups and local government services, enhancing the strong community spirit and creating a truly digital town."

## **ENDS**

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### **About IE Domain Registry**

IE Domain Registry is the national registry for .ie domain names and 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.

The company's mission is to provide unique, identifiably Irish domain names, along with registry and related services to the local and international internet community. Currently, there are over 250,000 registered .ie domain names.

The company is committed to being a digital advocate for the SME community. Through the [OPTIMISE Programme](#) and stakeholder engagement initiatives, the company works with and supports SMEs to improve their online presence and e-commerce capabilities. IE Domain Registry produces fact-based research for the



business community and policymakers, such as the annual [SME Digital Health Index](#), which provides key insights into the digital health of SMEs.

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The company is focused on providing excellence in customer service through its ongoing customer experience (CX) innovation and improvement programmes. Since March 2018, it is now [easier and faster](#) to register a .ie domain name.

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

### **About International Internet Day**

International Internet Day is celebrated worldwide every year on 29 October. Since 2005, the day has been celebrated to commemorate a momentous day in the history of telecommunications and technology: the sending of the first electronic message—the characters 'L' and 'O' of "LOGIN"—from one computer (in UCLA) to another (in Stanford) in 1969, by Charley Kline, a student programmer at the UCLA.