

UNDER EMBARGO

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It's now easier than ever to register a .ie online address as 'liberalisation' policy comes into force today

- **The change will transform the customer experience, making it easier and faster for individuals, businesses and community groups to register a .ie domain**
- **Those registering a .ie domain will no longer need a 'claim to the name'—but they'll still need to prove their connection to Ireland**
- **IEDR CEO: ".ie is the only online namespace in the world reserved for Irish citizens, communities and businesses. Liberalisation will allow applicants to get online with an identifiably Irish website in less time and with less hassle."**

Registering a .ie online address is now easier and faster than ever as IE Domain Registry's (IEDR) domain 'liberalisation' policy change comes into force today (21 March).

Previously, any individual or business registering a .ie domain had to prove that they had a valid claim to the desired name **and** a real, tangible connection to the island of Ireland.

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 a name.

From now on, 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.

IEDR says that this change will further open up the .ie domain namespace to citizens, clubs, communities and businesses that may have otherwise struggled with the administrative steps required to prove their claim to a particular .ie domain.

".ie is the only online namespace in the world reserved for Irish citizens, communities and businesses. Liberalisation will completely transform the customer's .ie domain registration experience, allowing them to get online with an identifiably Irish website and email address in less time and with less hassle," said David Curtin, Chief Executive of IEDR.

"Having the means to connect to and communicate with the wider internet community is essential in today's digital world, particularly in terms of e-commerce."



IE Domain Registry

If returning customers (existing .ie domain holders) need to register additional .ie domain names, they can now avail of the 'Fastpass' registration process. With Fastpass, it is not necessary to re-submit evidence of a connection to Ireland.

The change to .ie domain registration policy was agreed last year following an extensive multi-stakeholder consultation with the general public and IEDR's Policy Advisory Committee (PAC), made up of key stakeholders from Ireland's internet and business community.

The IEDR PAC Working Group carefully considered all comments during the public consultation process, including concerns that domain liberalisation could lead to an increase in 'cybersquatting'.

In response, Mr Curtin said: ".ie domains are registered on a first-come, first-served basis. To ensure that no one registers a domain that is another party's protected right, we strongly encourage any individual, business, organisation or local community group to register the .ie domains related to them as soon as possible. There is a wide choice of available names.

"In cases where .ie domain applicants believe that another party has improperly registered a .ie domain, there are dispute resolution mechanisms in place, including the formal dispute resolution process independently operated by the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO).

"IEDR is also moving ahead with plans to create an alternative dispute resolution service in the form of an independent Irish mediation service. This will mean that disputes will be resolved in a more efficient, speedier manner. We are confident that we will have this service in place later in the year."

According to the latest edition of the IEDR dot ie Domain Profile Report, which analyses the makeup of the .ie domain database, 2017 was the strongest year on record for new .ie domain registrations—108 were registered every day.

".ie is the preferred online address for Irish citizens and businesses. Though .ie registration has changed, all applicants will still be required to meet IEDR's terms and conditions for registration and prove their connection to Ireland. Consumers can remain confident that a .ie online address is trustworthy and authentically Irish," said Mr Curtin.

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About IE Domain Registry

IE Domain Registry (IEDR) is the national registry for .ie domain names, and it maintains the database of registered .ie domain names. IEDR originated as a

spinout from University College Dublin, becoming an independent, separate limited company in July 2000.

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 a [number of mechanisms for handling complaints](#), including 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

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 multi-stakeholder 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 considers all proposed policy change requests submitted for review, and where consensus exists, advises on the implementation of such policy change requests. The members of the PAC are stakeholders with an interest in the .ie namespace and its policies. The membership includes representatives from eligible organisations, including the .ie accredited Registrars, the Department of Communications, Enterprise Ireland, the Irish Internet Association, the Small Firms Association, the Law Society, the Internet Service Providers Association of Ireland, the Department of Enterprise, the Irish Computer Society and the Association of Patent and Trademark Attorneys.

In 2017, the PAC focused on the liberalisation policy change request, submitted by IEDR. In 2016, seven policy change requests were concluded, which involved two public consultations and a public auction of contested two-letter domains. In particular, IEDR successfully managed and completed release processes:

- to allow one- and two-letter domain names (previously blocked due to historic technical reasons that are no longer an issue);
- to allow domain names with fadas on the vowels (previously restricted because email systems and internet browsers could not cope with non-Latin characters, again no longer an issue);
- to allow a secondary market in .ie domain names (originally prohibited to deter cyber squatters and large-scale foreign domainers). This policy change will help to unlock the intrinsic value of a registrant's .ie domain name by permitting an aftermarket to allow domain holders to sell the right to use their .ie domain.

On an ongoing basis, other policy initiatives will be undertaken, with the objective of expanding the .ie namespace and developing Ireland's digital national resource.