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## 2018 a Record Year as New .IE Domain Registrations Jump 29%



### Relaxed rules and aggressive pricing are driving growth, says Blacknight's CEO

51,040 new .IE domain names were registered in 2018 – an average of almost 140 every day. It's a 29% increase on 2017, and the figures reveal some interesting insights for Irish online business.

The data come from the 2018 .IE Domain Profile Report, published today by IE Domain Registry, the company which manages Ireland's country-code domain.

The increase brings the total number to 262,140 active .IE domains at the end of 2018, up 10% on the previous year.

The rise is being attributed to the liberalisation of registration rules in March, which cut down on red tape and made it easier to register .IE domain names, especially for private individuals.

The news has been welcomed by the leading Irish company specialising in .IE domain names. Carlow-based Blacknight led a campaign for the liberalisation of the registration rules, and predicted a positive response from the public.

Prior to this change, registrants had to make a case explaining why they had a claim to use a particular domain name. Now all that is required is for registrants to have a connection to Ireland.

For most people that can be as simple as demonstrating citizenship or residency with a scan of a passport or driving licence. But even foreign entities can register a .IE name if they can show a business relationship with Ireland, for example.

There was a 59% increase in the number of .IE domain names registered by international users (3,439) and the number of .IE domain names registered from Britain increased by 28%. This might suggest that some British-based companies are looking to Ireland in an era of Brexit uncertainty.

“We argued for this change for a long time”, says Blacknight’s CEO Michele Neylon. The company’s stance was influenced by two factors, he says: feedback from customers who wanted to register .IE names, as well as Blacknight’s own experience of international best practice, working with other domain registries around the world.

Mr Neylon was speaking from Los Angeles where he is attending a meeting of the Generic Names Supporting Organisation of ICANN, the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers.

Blacknight conducted a high-profile campaign in print, broadcast and online media, aimed at raising awareness of the new registration procedures, as well as promoting the value of a .IE domain name, as a driver of trust and credibility for Irish businesses.

As a result, the company saw its share of new .IE registrations increase to 26%, regaining the market leader position it lost in 2017.

Besides the simplified registration procedure, Neylon believes that price is an important factor in the decision to register a domain name. The company has pursued an aggressive price strategy over the past year, and is currently retailing .IE names for just €4.99 ex VAT for a one-year new registration.

“Experience has shown us that Irish customers are very price sensitive. We believe the .IE domain has the potential for further growth, and the Irish online sector along with it. We call on IE Domain Registry to work with us to bring down the wholesale as well as the retail price”.

## **The .IE Domain Profile Report – key findings**

- 81% of all .ie domains in the total database are owned by businesses or the self-employed, indicating a national understanding of the value of digital business and marketing.
- In many Border, Midlands and West region counties, new .ie domain registration growth was higher than in Dublin. Leitrim recorded the highest overall YoY percentage growth in the country (+65.5%). Laois experienced growth of +43% and Roscommon +33%.
- In 2018, 28% of all .ie domains were registered by individuals, up +120% on the previous year. This suggests a positive impact of the relaxation of .ie registration rules to allow nicknames and geographical names, along with the rising popularity of .ie for personal branding purposes.
- There was a +59% increase in the number of .ie domain names registered by international users (3,439). Interestingly, the number of .ie domain names registered from Britain increased by +28%. This may suggest that some British-based companies are looking to Ireland in an era of Brexit uncertainty.
- Dublin registered the lion’s share of new .ie domains in 2018 (20,353, or 43%), followed by Cork and Galway.
- ‘Ireland’, ‘design’ and ‘care’ are some of the most frequently used words in .ie domain names in the database.
- Some of the earliest .ie pioneers have had their .ie domains for more than 20 years: they include tipperary-water.ie and esb.ie.
- Some .ie domains command a high price: music.ie, baby.ie, creation.ie, files.ie, and internet.ie are all for sale for €50,000.
- The number of .ie websites with SSL security certificates increased by +37.9% quarter-on-quarter (Q3 vs Q2 2018) after Google Chrome introduced a new feature that warns users about potentially unsafe sites.

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## Further Comment or Interview:

Mr Neylon is available for interview during normal US Pacific Time hours (GMT-8). Otherwise, contact:



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### ABOUT BLACKNIGHT

Blacknight (<http://www.blacknight.com/>) are an Irish based, ICANN accredited domain registrar and hosting company. Recipients of several awards for their revolutionary use of social media, Blacknight are one of Europe's most cutting edge Internet companies. Blacknight constantly seek to lead the way by introducing innovative solutions for its client base and provide dedicated servers and co-location as well as a comprehensive range of Microsoft Windows and Linux based hosting plans and domain name registration services to business globally. IP transit services and other solutions for more demanding business and academic customers are offered a la carte.

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