



Google, Blacknight, An Post and the National Network of County and City Enterprise Boards have joined forces to create Getting Irish Business Online. With the mission to help Irish businesses benefit from the opportunities of the Internet, they are dedicated to helping businesses succeed online. Targeting the 40% of Irish SMEs including sole traders that do not have a website or an online presence the campaign is calling on all businesses that do not have a website to log on to [www.gettingbusinessonline.ie](http://www.gettingbusinessonline.ie) where they can create their business website for free.

Speaking at the launch An Taoiseach Enda Kenny T.D., said, "Irish businesses need to be establishing themselves on-line now to get a foothold in the on-line market. In the challenging economic times that we are working to overcome, having an on-line presence would help Irish businesses survive and keep people in jobs. For most businesses, having a presence online is no longer an optional extra: it's an essential part of business in the twenty-first century.



The presence of Google and other technology companies here forming a digital services hub is a very real asset to the Irish economy. This new innovation will help get more Irish small business online - so they can sell their goods and services from Ballina to Beijing."

Google research shows that almost 60% of Irish commercial SMEs do not have an entry in an online directory and that 40% do not have a website. This is despite the millions of euros being spent by Irish consumers shopping online every year. Over 75% of Irish customers use the Internet as their primary tool for researching new companies and products, and 68% believe that search engines help to find relevant sellers of products. But, with only 21% of Irish businesses e-commerce enabled, Ireland is effectively losing revenues to UK and US online businesses.

Google's research also found that common barriers to setting up online are a lack of skills, perceived high costs and time restrictions. Many businesses surveyed think that the average cost to set up a website is 1,000 euro whereas the campaign launched today will provide a website for free and it will be quick to set up and easy to use. The campaign will also provide online training materials at [www.gettingbusinessonline.ie](http://www.gettingbusinessonline.ie) and further training via seminars held by the County & City Enterprise Boards.

Ronan Harris, Director of Online Sales, Google said: "There is a huge opportunity for Irish businesses which they are failing to grasp. An online presence gives the potential to increase sales and revenues not just locally but internationally and helps to build stronger, more sustainable businesses that will ultimately benefit local, regional and the national economies.

Irish consumers spend almost 20 hours per week online and with millions of people in Ireland shopping online there is a significant marketplace for Irish SMEs to exploit. At the moment a large part of that spend is going overseas and we need to accelerate the number of Irish businesses online. Today we are hopefully seeing the start of a national movement which will gather momentum and bring every sole trader, micro enterprise and SME online."

The Getting Irish Business Online campaign will support businesses and sole traders to build a free website in under 30 minutes which is the first step to building an online business. Blacknight Solutions will provide participants with a free website, and hosting with a .ie, .eu or .com domain name which is free for one year from the set-up of their website. Google will also provide a trial of online advertising with a coupon worth €100. The County & City Enterprise Boards will run nationwide seminars giving registered businesses additional support in setting up a website and learning how to attract new custom online.

An Post is supporting integration of a postage calculator into a full e-commerce solution, launching June 1st and it will provide promotional offers, support and advice to businesses who sell online and have developed their website through Getting Irish Business Online.

Businesses interested in getting a website set up should go to the Getting Irish Business Online campaign website [www.gettingbusinessonline.ie](http://www.gettingbusinessonline.ie) to set up their website with a straightforward step by step process. Once established their web address can be found using Google's search engine and they can also learn how to further enhance their business website to attract new customers online.

Interestingly, a very similar initiative has been launched by IrishDomains.com and Blueface and you can get more details by checking out [www.gettingirishbusinessonline.ie](http://www.gettingirishbusinessonline.ie) . SMEs are being spoilt for choice!