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## Harvest your online potential

### The Important of the Internet in Irish lives

What does the Ice Age, the Iron Age and the digital age have in common? On first glance nothing at all but there is one important commonality between all three – all of these periods of time have had a considerable impact on our existence.

The digital age, largely dominated by the introduction of the internet, has considerably changed the way we conduct business, go about our daily lives and has even altered the manner in which we communicate with family and friends. The internet has become such an integral part of our business and personal lives that it is hard to remember how we managed without it. With access to such colossal amounts of information in just a few clicks, it has changed the way in which we search for information.

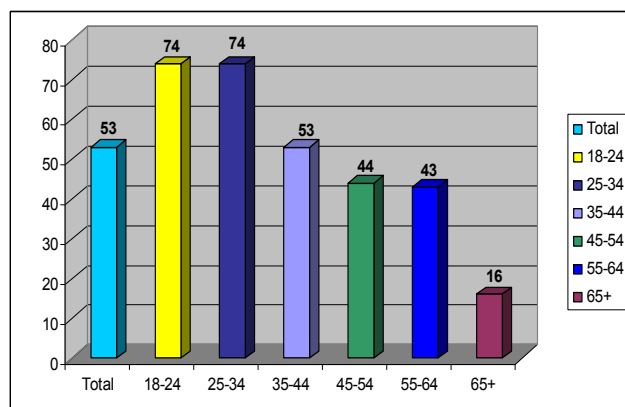
However even with its colossal impact on our lives and its existence on our fair shores since the 1990's, there is a startling lack of published research on Irish internet usage and internet search behaviour. To date most of the facts, figures and data in use are based on research conducted within the UK, US and to a lesser extent Europe. However, the tide is beginning to turn and at long last research is beginning to emerge that is shedding light on how we Irish use the Internet.

### Irish Internet Usage and Search Behaviour: The Facts and Figures

Amarach consulting, on behalf of Comreg, recently published the results of a survey which asked participants about their online internet behaviour. Considering that over half of the Irish population, 2.2 million people, currently have access to the internet it is surprising that this research is only emerging.

The number of Irish who have access to the internet has increased steadily over the past number of years. In fact, it appears to be growing at a rate of 15% over a four year period. In 2000, only 20.9% of the population had access, increasing to 34.9% in 2002 and reaching the current figures of 50.2% in 2006.

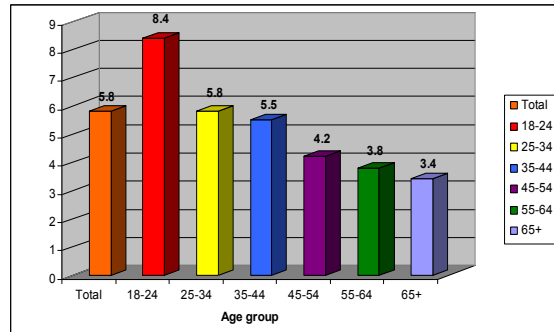
So taking into account that over half the population has access to the internet, what is the average profile of an Irish internet user?



Well the most ardent uses of the internet are aged between 18 and 34 years of age. In fact, 74% of people in this age group are reported to use the internet on a daily basis. When it comes to internet usage, the most restrained users are the over 65's as only 16% of this age group use the internet on a daily basis.

## We Use Search Engines A lot!

Search engines are also a major part of Irish user's internet usage. In fact according to Amararch consulting nearly 50% of Irish internet users use a search engine every day, 74% use them several times a week and 93% of all Irish internet users use a search engine once a month.



## Google is Our Favourite!



It is not surprising then that Google.ie is currently the most visited website in Ireland followed by yahoo.com in third position (Alexa.com). Although no statistics exist regarding the popularity of the different search engines, it is estimated that approximately 90% of Irish internet users use Google as they're preferred and only search engine.

These figures highlight the importance of having online visibility as search engines have become an integral part of internet usage. Furthermore, not only is it important that your website appears in search engine listings but it is imperative to rank well in these listing. Nearly half all of Irish users do not proceed past the first page of results. In fact, the majority of people do not proceed past the first five results. This means that if your website is not appearing in the first page of results you are losing out on a considerable amount of potential business. As search engines

Hopefully this is just the beginning of several surveys examining internet search behaviour from an Irish perspective. What it certainly highlights, is the importance of websites appearing in the first page of results. If your website is appearing on the second or third page you are losing out on a considerable amount of potential business. As search engines match interested buyers with relevant sellers, not ranking well for relevant keywords ultimately means lost business opportunities.

## Continuum Online Marketing

At Continuum Online Marketing, our goal is simply:-



*"to work in partnership with our clients to harness the internet and associated media to further develop our customers business and exploit the efficiencies of web-based technologies."*

For more information on our Search Engine Optimisation services offered by Continuum Online Marketing and to see how we can help you achieve your internet marketing ambitions, please call +353 1 855 8860 or e-mail [info@continuumonlinemarketing.ie](mailto:info@continuumonlinemarketing.ie).

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