

A €5bn e-commerce opportunity for Irish retailers

While Ireland's e-commerce economy currently supports a spend of €3.58bn by 2.89m users across Ireland, this is far from where it should be because only three out of 10 Irish retailers can process an online order.

And what's more, an additional 460,000 users are expected to be shopping online from Ireland by 2022, growing the Irish digital economy to potentially €5bn per annum. But what if a lot of the potential spend is allowed to slip away to overseas retailers?

The low take-up by Irish retailers is no doubt going to be the talking point at [a two-day e-commerce conference](#) and on-the-spot workshops that will take place 2 and 3 October in Tralee, led by global e-commerce giants including eBay and Overstock.com.

Over the two days, there is expected to be up to 500 delegates from companies across the globe descending on the Rose Hotel for a conference centred on learning. Rural parts of Ireland do not normally get to host such events and organisations typically do not know how to access these customers to help them.

At present approximately only 3.5 retailers out of 10 can take an online order through their website. Approximately as little as €180 per year is spent by micro businesses on digital skills training in Ireland annually – led predominantly by fear, doubt and uncertainty.

Fewer than one in 10 SMEs have availed of private or public digital skills of funding programmes with 44pc of SMEs preferring one to one style mentoring or training. Other barriers exist such as expense, time and crucially lack of skills. (Source IEDR Digital Health Index 2018).

Fashion is currently the leading product category in Ireland, accounting for €93bn market share, followed by toys, hobby and DIY, which generates \$91bn in sales. ([eshopworld Oct 2018](#)).

However, while the numbers look good, they are nowhere near where they should be.

A systemic e-commerce failure in the Irish economy

“E-commerce has been mismanaged for a long time in Ireland. As a result, adoption of genuine strategies has failed,” explained Vinny O'Brien, an ecommerce consultant with over 13 years' experience in the e-commerce industry across the EU with companies like eBay, Arnotts and has run projects with Unilever, PepsiCo and Tesco.

“We need to have a collective understanding of how to utilise the vehicle of e-commerce and allow businesses find the appropriate path for them.”

“The education both professionally and academically needs re thinking from top to bottom immediately in order for Ireland to plan for economic shifts. Tralee offers an alternative to Dublin in terms of venue but also as a future centre for excellence, which I am working on.”

eBay Commercial Manager for the EU Colin McCallion said the answer is education.

"We recognise the need to accelerate the learning process for retailers in Ireland. We have a proven gateway to international markets. We are delighted to be supporting this conference and promote learning in the retail community. We will be working with the Tralee Chamber Alliance over the next 12 months to help retailers realise their e-commerce potential."

To learn more go here. [A 2 day early bird ticket](#) can be purchased today for €350 plus VAT. (30pc saving).

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Published: 26 July, 2019

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