

21 pioneering Irish players building the online economy

If the Covid-19 crisis has taught us anything, it is that digital commerce is at the heart of the future of business. Here are 21 Irish firms building the global online economy.

If anyone doubted the importance, necessity and power of the digital commerce economy before Covid-19 there is no doubt in anyone's mind now that the future of business is digital.

Companies from retailers to restaurants that had an online presence were able to remain trading or pivot to respond to the realities of life in lockdown.

Recent research from Banking & Payments Federation Ireland (BPMFI) indicates that the trend towards online shopping seen during the Covid-19 pandemic could continue once restrictions are lifted.

For example, consumers currently shopping online for goods such as clothes, electronic goods and books, are more likely to continue to do so, with 31pc saying they would look online for clothing and sports goods and 26pc for toys and games, or for films, music, books.

According to research from Bank of Ireland tracking spending using debit cards since 11 March 2020, retail spending was buoyed by online activity and a 37pc increase in grocery shopping.

Today we look at the Irish-led companies that are laying the foundations for the future of the digital economy – providing the shovels and pickaxes, so to speak – by enabling everything from payments and fashion to food delivery, even by drone.

Buymie

<https://twitter.com/LucindaIreland/status/1262340612474404864>

[Buymie](#) has created a platform using artificial intelligence (AI) technology, that enables consumers to access multiple large grocery retailers and receive short notice delivery to their chosen destination in as little as an hour. Currently, the Buymie service is available to more than 490,000 households across Dublin as well large towns in Kildare and Wicklow. In recent weeks, it emerged Buymie raised €2.2m from existing and new investors as well as entering into a multi-year partnership with Lidl Ireland. Consumers are also able to use their Buymie application to shop from Tesco in Ireland.

Flipdish

[Flipdish](#) was founded in 2015 by brothers Conor and James McCarthy and is Ireland's number one platform for white-label digital food ordering and marketing systems and the most popular alternative to the larger online aggregators (Deliveroo / Just Eat etc) that dominate digital food ordering globally. Flipdish currently employs 90 staff and has raised €7m to date in funding. So far in 2019, Flipdish order deliveries covered 1,146,575 km – the same distance as going to the moon, back to earth and returning to the moon again.

Ding!

<https://twitter.com/dingcares/status/1261628975908040705>

Founded by Irish entrepreneur Mark Roden, [Ding](#)'s platform lets users around the world transfer mobile phone credit to each other. More than 300,000 people around the world use Ding's platform each month to send mobile phone credit as a form of cross-border remittance. The company, which had a turnover of more than \$424m last year, last year forged a partnership that will allow its users to buy each other Netflix subscriptions.

ChannelSight



One of Ireland's original e-commerce pioneers, John Beckett, CEO of [ChannelSight](#), first flew to prominence when as a teenager in 1999 he built the very first Ryanair website along with a school pal for £20,000. Since then he has built up a global e-commerce business called ChannelSight which is key to the e-commerce strategy of for global brands such as Bosch, Philips, Coca Cola and Sony. In recent months Beckett spearheaded a new social enterprise called [Forestry Partners](#) which has a 12-month roadmap to get to 250 Irish partners with the goal of creating at least 25,000 tons of CO2 equivalent offsets and achieving 200 acres of planted or committed trees.

EdgeTier

<https://twitter.com/Episode1VC/status/1247890354809888769>

Dublin start-up [EdgeTier](#) delivers high-quality analytics products and services to clients in the areas of customer service, customer simulation, and analytics services. Founded in 2015 by Bart Lehane,

Ciaran Tobin and Shane Lynn, the company recently raised €1.5m in a funding round led by Episode 1, ACT Venture Capital and Enterprise Ireland. The company recently won Enterprise Ireland's Digital Disruptor award.

Glofox

<https://twitter.com/weareglofox/status/1255101395331616770>

[Glofox](#) is a business management platform that encompasses an integrated mobile and web application, a booking platform and payment processing, all specifically tailored for the health and fitness industry. The company was founded in 2014 by Conor O'Loughlan, Anthony Kelly and Finn Hegarty. In recent weeks it emerged that [Glofox](#) raised \$10m (€9.2m) in funding as well as the launch of a new platform that enables gyms and fitness studios to deliver live streaming and premium on-demand content. The \$10m funding brings total funding raised by Dublin-based Glofox to \$23m.

ID-Pal

<https://twitter.com/TweetIDPal/status/1257965163858329600>

[ID-Pal](#) enables businesses to verify the identity of customers in real-time simply, securely and conveniently. The company was founded by James O'Toole and Colum Lyons and enables businesses to onboard and verify customers identity in seconds.

Intercom

<https://twitter.com/intercom/status/1262811260808282112>

[Intercom](#) is a customer messaging platform started in San Francisco in 2011 by four Irishmen – Des Traynor, Ciaran Lee, Eoghan McCabe and David Barrett – and which in 2018 sailed past the \$1bn valuation milestone after raising \$125m in a series D round. The company employs about 600 people in five offices worldwide and has more than 30,000 customers. Most of the company's engineering takes place at its Dublin office on St Stephen's Green.

Loylap

<https://twitter.com/Loylap/status/1241404272417345541>

[LoyLap](#) was started in 2012 by Irish entrepreneurs Patrick Garry and Conor O'Toole. LoyLap helps businesses to market to their customers in an automated way. It has a number of features beyond a loyalty application. It can send promotions to customers on their birthday, it can suggest new products to customers based on their past spend, being able to be integrated into POS systems. It

can also act as a digital wallet, while also allowing customers to order ahead. LoyLap is currently helping over 3,300 businesses, it has over 1m users and has enabled transactions of more than \$130m.

Manna

<https://twitter.com/MannaAero/status/1261042642378543105>

Bobby Healy, one of the brilliant minds behind the success of CarTrawler, is back with [Manna.Aero](#), a fascinating new venture focused on using drones to deliver goods. Originally the venture focused on food deliveries but with the onset of Covid-19 it has pivoted in the direction of delivering medication and critical supplies to vulnerable people. If he is successful Healy could be the author of a breakthrough in transport platform that could make much of the road transport of goods by road a thing of the past. Manna has already attracted backing from venture capital firms Elkstone Capital and Frontline Ventures and raised \$3m in funding last December.

Popertee

<https://twitter.com/popertee/status/1262788874717233153>

[Popertee](#) is a platform that connects brands with spaces for short term retail and marketing campaigns using proprietary technology. The business was founded in 2016 by Lucinda Kelly, former marketer at Paddy Power and combines AI and social media to match the perfect audience with the perfect location for experiential marketing, pop-ups, events and brands looking to test markets.

Pointy



[Pointy](#) is an Irish e-commerce platform that was acquired in January by Google for an estimated \$160m. The company was established in Dublin by Mark Cummins and Charles Bibby in 2014. Pointy's technology enables retailers to make their stock visible online without the need to invest in a full e-commerce system. The app directs shoppers to where particular items they are interested in are available locally. Pointy's technology – a small box that connects to a shop's barcode scanner – enables ordinary retailers to compete directly against e-commerce giants like Amazon and eBay.

Phorest

https://twitter.com/pro_beauty/status/1262113156920311808

[Phorest](#) has developed cloud-based salon software solutions for hair, nail and beauty salons and spas. Phorest Salon Software takes the pain out of managing and growing salon businesses. Founded in Dublin in 2003 by Ronan Perceval along with Dylan Collins and Sean Blanchfield, the company is one of the biggest scheduling platforms for beauty salons in Europe, with 88pc of salons in Ireland and 19pc of the UK market. Phorest last year secured €20m in funding from US

investment firm Susquehanna Growth Equity in a move that facilitated a buyout of, and a healthy return for angel investors who backed Phorest through the Halo Business Angel Network (HBAN).

Profitero

<https://twitter.com/Profitero/status/1262838778206597122>

Dun Laoghaire-headquartered digital commerce player [Profitero](#) is eyeing the digital future of brands. Profitero is an e-commerce intelligence business for retailers and brands and tracks products across 8,000 online stores in 50 markets for 4,000 clients including Adidas, L'Oreal and General Mills. The company was founded in 2010 by Vol Pigrukh, Dmitry Vysotski and Kanstantsin Chernysh and is headquartered in Dun Laoghaire. Last month the company raised \$20m in a series B round was led by by Scaleworks, with participation from Conviction Capital.

ScrapingHub

<https://twitter.com/ScrapingHub/status/1262815908675883008>

[Scrapinghub](#) which enables businesses to extract data from the web, was founded by Shane Evans. The business now employs 180 staff – mostly remote workers in 20 countries. Originally the head of engineering at Lastminute.com, Evans has built Scrapinghub into a business with more than 2,000 customers that supports 1m developers and that has revenues in excess of \$12m.

ServiceDock

<https://twitter.com/ServiceDock/status/1261280797933408256>

[ServiceDock](#) helps multi-unit businesses like retail chains and restaurant groups thrive in a digital world by enabling them to capture feedback and provide customer service at store level via the messaging apps consumers love using while delivering reports and insights to head office. The business was founded in 2016 by Leonardo Daruiz Correa and Oisin Ryan and has raised €475,000 in funding to date.

Scurri

<https://twitter.com/scurri/status/1262730322766188545>

Wexford-based [Scurri](#) is redefining the future of retail. It has just been named among the top 50 retail tech start-ups operating globally, according to a new report published today by RWRC – home of Retail Week and World Retail Congress.

Scurri, whose technology connects and optimises the e-commerce ordering, shipping, and delivery

process, was the only Irish company to have been listed in the industry ranking.

The company, which has also opened offices in London, adds value at multiple stages along the e-commerce journey: from selecting the most effective delivery option for each package, creating accurate labels, tracking the packages, and running analytics to deliver insight to support process improvement.

Founded by Josephine O'Connor, Rory O'Connor and Eugene Crehan, the company has raised €7m in funding to date.

Skmmp

<https://twitter.com/StartupsIreland/status/1252613545537294337>

Irish fashtech start-up [Skmmp](#) is an enterprise supply chain optimisation product for the wholesale fashion industry that helps designers, wholesalers and retailers get more lines of clothing in stores. The business, which was founded by Aileen Carville, is focused on the \$275bn wholesale luxury fashion industry. Skmmp's virtual showroom centralises wholesale order management and with the onset of Covid-19 it has emerged that the company is being approached by major fashion brands to digitise their collections.

Stripe

[Stripe](#), the online payments company which was founded by two Irish brothers Patrick and John Collison, is now worth \$36bn after [raising \\$600m](#) in a Series G round.

Stripe was founded in San Francisco 2009 when CEO Patrick Collison was just 22 and his brother John was 19. Prior that the brothers who hail from Nenagh but as teenagers living in Limerick established a start-up in 2007 called Shuppa that later became known as Auctomatic. They sold Auctomatic for \$5m when they were just 19 and 17 respectively.

Stripe intends to invest the latest funding in stepping up product development, global expansion and strategic initiatives. In September ThinkBusiness reported how the company had [surpassed its 2,000th employee milestone](#). The company is spearheading its global expansion from its European headquarters in Dublin.

Stripe, which has more than \$2bn on its balance sheet and is speculated to be plotting an IPO, provides an on-ramp to the digital economy for businesses around the world. The rate of new businesses going live on Stripe has accelerated since the start of the year, it revealed.

“People who never dreamt of using the internet to see the doctor or buy groceries are now doing so out of necessity,” said John Collison, president and co-founder of Stripe.

“And businesses that deferred moving online or had no reason to operate online have made the leap practically overnight. We believe now is not the time to pull back, but to invest even more heavily in Stripe’s platform.”

Webio

<https://twitter.com/webioHQ/status/1262344728894464000>

Dublin and Limerick-based [Webio](#) provides conversational middleware for very large companies in retail, financial services, and utilities. Founded by Paul Sweeney, Graham Brierton, Mark Oppermann and Cormac O’Neill Webio raised €1.75m in a seed round to build a platform to pursue this vision and now employ ten people spread between Dublin, Cork, Belfast and the UK.

Xsellco

<https://twitter.com/xSellco/status/1261235246017785856>

[XSellco](#) makes selling online more simple by empowering e-commerce businesses of all sizes to fulfil their potential. Its products – [Repricer](#), eDesk and Feedback – help firms sell smarter, respond faster and enhance their reputation. XSellco was founded by tech entrepreneur Ray Nolan in 2014. Nolan is a highly successful entrepreneur behind companies like Web Reservations International and Hostelword, which floated publicly in 2015 raising €180m in the process.

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