

**Internet Marketing:**  
**A study within SMEs in the Northwest of Ireland**

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Dissertation in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of MSc in  
Marketing Practice

*21<sup>st</sup> August 2013*

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## **Abstract**

The objectives of the research study was to consider factors affecting or influencing internet adoption (IA) within small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) and indeed of internet marketing (IM) by SMEs; to explore the different IM tools in use, the levels of implementation and measurement, the strategies of use and to consider the impact of these on the SMEs overall marketing performance.

This research adds to previous research in similar fields, complimenting the existing research regarding IM and SMEs in Ireland while also contributing to research between SME industry categories. The study also introduces new research in the area of IM and SMEs in the Northwest of Ireland.

The study incorporates a mixed method research philosophy and triangulation approach, where survey research by use of a questionnaire collected the data required with a second phase of data collection involving semi structured in-depth interviews with SMEs throughout business categories throughout the Northwest of Ireland. These methods of data collection conspired to provide insights throughout the different topics within the research study area. Although the triangulation method typically consumes greater time and financial resources, it acts to remove bias which overall benefits the research study more so than using any single data collection technique.

This research finds that IM and internet adoption (IA) is indeed in use by SMEs in the Northwest of Ireland and is driven by its advantages, ease of use, micro and macro influencers, business readiness and knowledge. The findings indicate that website, email and social media marketing are the most used throughout SMEs and that IM activity has a strong positive impact on the SMEs marketing performance. This research provides a contribution to the study of IM in SMEs and introduces new research into the area within the Northwest of Ireland. It provides new insights for marketers, SMEs, researchers, practitioners, and government policy makers by providing a clear understanding of key IM issues and IA influencers for SMEs in the Northwest. The research addressed such issues as research gaps pertaining to IM measurement, IM and overall marketing performance and IM tools used within SMEs.

The research was tested on 1,799 SMEs in the Northwest receiving a 20% response rate, and received further validation through eight semi structured in-depth interviews with SMEs throughout the Northwest. Expert insights were then obtained to validate and triangulate the data.

Overall the research found that IM is indeed in operation throughout SMEs in the Northwest but is perhaps still in its growth stages, with activity being reactive rather than proactive. There were no outstanding differences in activity between SME category other than in areas of marketing planning and awareness of any government assistance and IM incentives.

**Dedication:**

This dissertation is dedicated to my late father, Michael Kilmartin, and to my mother Olive for always being there.

## **Acknowledgments:**

We all have ambitions and in order to fulfil these ambitions, it takes a lot of determination, dedication, self-discipline, guidance and effort. It is guidance though that is most important. I could not have compiled this research were it not for the incomparable, ever available advice, constructive criticism and supervision from Kathleen McGettigan. At times when I felt I was drowning in academia, our meetings refocused me to the task at hand. For your guidance and support over the past year, for your speedy responses to every query, and for keeping me on track, I owe you a debt of gratitude.

I would also be remiss were I not to acknowledge the excellent, superfluous guidance and help that came from James Kearns, and indeed the entire team of lecturers throughout the masters program. Your help went beyond the call of duty and to each of you I am also grateful.

I would also like to thank all the staff of Letterkenny Institute of Technology, particularly those in the Library for their unparalleled help and support.

To all the respondents, businesses and participants of my research; your input provided immeasurable benefits to this research study. I thank you kindly for the time and effort you graciously permitted me.

My fellow masters in marketing practice students; it has been an experience to say the least. I will go forward having made many new friends and contacts with the assurance that our paths will cross again in the future.

Finally, to my family and friends, in particular Roy, for your encouragement, advice, and reassurance even when I was at my worst, stressed and incredibly temperamental – I thank each and every one of you. I finally got there!



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## List of Abbreviations

CSO	Central Statistics Office
CRM	Customer relationship management
EEN	Enterprise Europe network
EU	European Union
IA	Internet adoption
IM	Internet marketing
ISME	Irish small and medium enterprises association
PFP	Pay for performance
PPC	Pay per click
PR	Public relations
RSS	Really simple syndication
SEM	Search engine marketing
SEO	Search engine optimisation
SME	Small and medium sized enterprise
WOM	Word of mouth
WWW	World wide web

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## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

The scope of this research is the adoption of the internet for marketing related purposes by SMEs in the Northwest of Ireland. This region comprises of counties Donegal, Leitrim and Sligo (IDA Ireland, 2001; Enterprise Ireland, 2012). For the purposes of this study, marketing activities will focus on the key forms of IM website, search engine marketing (SEM), email marketing (including opt in email), viral marketing, online partnerships, online PR, interactive marketing, and social media (Adapted from Chaffey, et al., 2006 and Failte Ireland, 2012). This research will explore IA in SMEs and the level of active IM activity therein.

‘Marketing is the process by which an organisation relates creatively, productively, and profitably to the marketplace’, (Kotler, 1991, p.31). In its simplest form, marketing can be defined as ‘managing profitable customer relations’ (Kotler, et al., 1996, p.26) The Internet is a global channel where companies can reach a mass audience of potential consumers, ultimately increasing sales, revenue and market share. Its technologies impact directly on suppliers, customers, distributors and new industry entrants (Porter, 2001). The internet has radically changed the scope of marketing since the first web page was introduced in 1991, created by Tim Berners-Lee (Shontell, 2011).

Liikanen (2001), cited by Mullins, et al., (2007) describe the Internet as the SMEs gateway to global business and markets. It provides a viable, cost effective platform to make internationalisation an option. ‘With the emergence of the internet and associated technology-enabled, screen-to-face interfaces, a new era of marketing has emerged’ (Mohammed, et al., 2001, p.2). This new era of marketing, or IM, has shifted marketing from its traditional roots of television, print and radio marketing to an online focus.

‘40% of Irish SMEs do not have a website or an online presence and consequently are missing out on business opportunities’ (European Enterprise Network, 2010) yet 78% of Irish households have internet access; with 81% having computer access, making future internet access possible. (The Central Statistics Office (CSO), 2011). This research aims to identify whether SMEs are utilising the internet to their best ability and understand the benefits of doing so.

## 1.1 Research Objectives/Question

The overall aim of this study is to explore the current level of active IM among SMEs in the Northwest of Ireland.

Research objectives relating to the study include;

- To investigate the current level of IM among SMEs in the Northwest region of Ireland;
  - To explore the extent to which SMEs employ the following IM techniques:
    - Website,
    - SEM,
    - Email Marketing,
    - Viral marketing,
    - Online partnerships
    - Online PR,
    - Interactive marketing, and
    - Social media (Adapted from Chaffey, et al., 2006 and Failte Ireland, 2012).
  - To assess the extent to which SMEs evaluate the usefulness of the techniques used
- To discover the micro drivers of IM adoption and the factors that encourage SMEs to adopt IM strategies and techniques
- To examine the macro drivers of IM adoption and the factors which encourage SMEs to adopt IM strategies and techniques
- To consider the factors and issues which deter/hinder IM adoption by SMEs

It is estimated that the research questions will be addressed through the literature review and refined to SMEs in the Northwest region primarily through data collection.



## **1.2 Value of the study**

The area of IM is of particular interest to the researcher due to time spent working with SMEs both in a management and marketing capacity. Previous studies have indicated that there is a deficiency of research across multiple industries and as such research is required in order to ‘gain a fuller understanding of the determinants of IA and utilisation for SMEs’ (Simmons, et al., 2007, p.633). There are also no previous studies which have investigated IM and the performance of the tools outlined in section 1.1 by SMEs. There are also no studies in this area based specifically in the Northwest of Ireland. This research aspires to further reduce any deficiency in IM related research across SMEs and to conclude whether there are common characteristics of IM among them, and whether there are common influencers of IA between industries.

### 1.3 Chapter outline and word count

	<b>Title</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Word Count</b>
<b>1</b>	Introduction	The research study topic is presented alongside key objectives and the method by which the researcher will examine and explore relevant information.	696
<b>2</b>	Literature Review	Here the researcher will analyse secondary research surrounding IM, addressing issues such as key definitions, history and origins, influences and barriers and proposed benefits.	4910
<b>3</b>	Methodology	Primary research approaches are outlined. Additionally, attention is drawn to how the research and information gathered was designed, gathered, analysed and conclusions drawn.	2355
<b>4</b>	Findings & Analysis	The outcome of the primary research is presented in story format, originating from the results gathered through the completion of a survey and in-depth interviews. Findings from the primary research are considered alongside the literature in this area. Both are illustrated throughout by means of figures, tables and diagrams	4107
<b>5</b>	Conclusion & Recommendations	This chapter provides a summary of all results and includes any recommendations from the researcher, drawing attention to the overall research experience.	1132

Table 1 Chapter outline

## **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

### **2.1 Introduction**

The literature review begins with an introduction to the internet, exploring benefits and opportunities, concentrating on IM activities within the SME context. Gilmore, et al. (2007) and Simmons, et al. (2007) concur with Jutla, et al. (2002) that globally, 80% of economic growth is attributed to SMEs. This viability motivates the foundations of the research; presenting critiqued arguments on IM and SMEs. Previous research in IM will be examined and referred to accordingly. The literature studied was a combination of published articles, journals and textbooks. Studies accessed were Irish where possible/available, however relevant and timely international studies were also accessed where necessary. The literature search combined various descriptors of IM including E-marketing, web marketing, online marketing, digital marketing, E-business and E-commerce. Further refined searches enabled a search result of IM highlighting the levels and influences of IA. At the beginning of this literature review, it is necessary to briefly identify the internet, examining how it has revolutionised, and continues to innovate, how business is being conducted.

IM is marketing or advertising online. This process is achieved using a myriad of tools and techniques, all of which are readily accessible and available on the internet, which is an easily accessible, inexpensive international communication medium (Bennett, 1997). These tools are generally inexpensive and sometimes free to use by businesses. Such access calls into question the lack of significant adoption of IM by SMEs. Doiron (2009) proposes an answer somewhat lies in considering what encourages an SME to enter the realm of the internet initially, and more importantly, what factors constrain them from instigating this journey. Consumer media consumption is making the move away from the traditional media outlets to the more technologically advanced internet option (eMarketer, 2013; Berman, et al., 2011). These consumer behaviour changes herald a prime time for SMEs to transition into the digital foray. The fact that many techniques are now accessible to support IM also eradicates any doubt about SMEs at an online level. This literature review will examine barriers and drivers of IA, alongside discussing some of the tools and techniques available in aiding the successful transition to the online market, and identifying the significant opportunities of IM for the SME.

There have been many studies in the area of IM since the internet became commercialised, however limitations exist regarding issues such as barriers, successful strategies and the role

of the internet in SME marketing activity and capability; not to mention the advantages of IM (Avlonitis and Karayanni, 2000; Ching and Ellis, 2004). Areas this research will examine are the motivating factors of SMEs engaging in IM, the hindrances associated, and the merits in its use for overall marketing. Research shows that SMEs (compared to larger firms) ‘are reluctant to adopt a marketing approach mainly because of a lack of resources and skills’ (e.g., Liu, 1995; Verhees & Meulenbergh, 2004, cited by Marcati, et al., 2008, p3). SMEs are indecisive about competing with larger companies when it comes to IM (Olsen, 2013) as markets dominated by major players with larger financial resources can seem impenetrable (Coleman, 2013). However IM can be cost effective (Duffey, 2012) and by utilising the correct applications, strategies and tools, any SME can be successful. Experts agree that the Internet represents a significant marketing channel (Palumbo and Herbig, 1998) however SMEs respond slowly to internet related changes and therefore fail to make efficient use (Gallagher and Gilmore, 2004 cited by Gilmore, et al., 2007).

## **2.2 SME Defined**

SMEs are defined as ‘enterprises which employ fewer than 250 persons and which have an annual turnover not exceeding 50 million Euro, and/or an annual balance sheet total not exceeding 43 million Euro’ (European Enterprise Network, 2010). For the purposes of this research, this definition of a SME will be used as illustrated in figure one.

SMEs were chosen for this research study as they drive the economy representing 99% of all enterprises within the EU; provide approximately 65 million jobs, and furthermore contribute enormously to entrepreneurship and innovation (European Commission, 2006). SMEs account for almost 70% of people employed in the State (Government of Ireland, 2012 cited by Department of Finance, 2012). They are accepted as a main driver of the economy (EEN, 2010) forming it’s ‘spine’ (The Irish Times, 2010). The Irish Small and Medium sized Enterprises Association (ISME) found that there are approximately 230,000 SMEs in Ireland contributing more than €10 billion annually to the Exchequer, and employing in excess of 900,000 (ISME, 2012).

Enterprise category	Headcount: Annual Work Unit (AWU)	Annual turnover	or	Annual balance sheet total
Medium-sized	< 250	≤ €50 million (in 1996 € 40 million)	or	≤ €43 million (in 1996 € 27 million)
Small	< 50	≤ €10 million (in 1996 € 7 million)	or	≤ €10 million (in 1996 € 5 million)
Micro	< 10	≤ €2 million (previously not defined)	or	≤ €2 million (previously not defined)

Figure 1 SME defining Characteristics

(Source: European Commission, 2005)

### 2.2.1 Internet marketing and SMEs

The internet allows SMEs to compete nationally and internationally with global companies, (Hamill,1997 cited by Chrysostome and Rosson, 2009). In examining SME internet usage, this research endeavours to establish to what extent IM is being adopted, knowledge of its processes, limitations and/or hindrances being faced in terms of resources and financial restraints. The research will examine demographics and education and consider whether these are influential factors in determining the role of IM and its contributions to the SME. SMEs operating in the Northwest will be identified to determine the level of IA as a means of marketing. Previous research has indicated that a study over multiple industries is required in order to ‘gain a fuller understanding of the determinants of IA and utilisation for SMEs’ (Simmons, et al., 2007, p.633). ‘SMEs need to be fully engaged in internet marketing’ (Doiron, 2009, p.20), yet as aforementioned 40% do not have an online presence. This research aspires to conclude whether there are common characteristics in IM amongst SMEs

and industries determining IA. Effective use of IM can provide SMEs with inexpensive entry to wider markets presenting huge opportunities.

### **2.3 The Internet**

The internet has revolutionised marketing (Chaffey, et al., 2009). It is a network of globally interlinked computers 'operating on a standard protocol which allows data to be transferred between otherwise incompatible machines' (Hamill, 1997 p302). First users were typically government and university funded researchers. The brainchild of Tim Berners-Lee, the Internet has developed into a luxury almost as ubiquitous as television, and is considered an indispensable service in the eyes of the majority of people (Marsh, 2009). First commercialised in 1995, it has fostered a market space with varying idiosyncratic characteristics; shared; real-time; global; and open (Arnott and Bridgewater, 2002, Heinen, 1996 cited by Alnsour, et al., n.d.).

Holbrook and Hulburt, (2002) cited by Schibrowsky, et al., (2007) suggested that the internet could alter marketing, ultimately eliminating it. In his response, McCole (2004) counter argued that the internet is ultimately a marketing channel which can be adopted by most, but not all companies. This researcher agrees with Aldridge, et al., (1997) that IM gives a company a competitive edge, and that those who become engaged should find opportunities. The internet has become more than just a simple market space facilitating transactions having advanced into an interactive channel for communicating and interacting with customers (Heinen, 1996) with marketing opportunities widely agreed as immense (Berthon, et al., 1999; Kiani, 1998; Lazer and Shaw, 2000; Peattie and Peters, 1997 cited by Arnott and Bridgewater, 2002). The World Wide Web (WWW), the internet's graphical face, is the 'most recent, public, and far reaching of digital technologies' (Stewart, et al., 2002, p244). This global network has created the podium transforming the competitive arena for organisations, redefining the channels of how business is achieved in an international market place (Sprano and Zakak, 2000 cited by Pavic, et al., 2007). The Internet benefits SMEs presenting opportunities to advance efficiency, cut expenses while increasing profits and productivity (Levy, et al., 2005 cited by Lawrence, 2009). The advent of the Internet has impelled research by practitioners and academics alike. Studies conducted resolved to identify the impact of the internet on the future of the marketing discipline, proposing that it would lead to a marketing revolution (Aldridge, et al., 1997; King, et al., 1997; Kenny and Marshall, 2000). Companies should connect with the Internet or face being overlooked by customers (Forcht, 1996).

## **2.4 Defining the ‘E’ evolution**

In conducting the literature review, the researcher recognised many terms beginning with the E-prefix often with many different elucidations as outlined in table two. As with various terms in common parlance, the definitions of E-business, E-commerce and E-marketing; as well as IM, web marketing and online marketing have become blurred in usage and synonymous with each other, however many of these terms have opposing definitions. In particular, the terms IM, E-marketing, E-business and E-commerce are used interchangeably by the vast majority of researchers and taken to mean the same thing (El-Gohary, 2010). Throughout the research, multiple definitions and meanings were found for the various terms that form the umbrella of online marketing as outlined in table two.

Term	Description
<b>E-commerce</b>	Zwass (1998) developed a hierarchical framework in which he argued that E-commerce included all marketing communication. Chaffey and Smith disagree, arguing; ‘E-commerce is primarily about selling online or the ability to transact online’, (2008, p.12). Chaffey, et al., (2009) further use a narrower definition that E-commerce relates to online paid business transactions only. E-commerce is a term describing business transactions conducted online, taking into account such activities as online sales, banking, payments, and improving the efficiencies of dealing with both customers and suppliers (Hoffman and Novak 1996).
<b>E-Business</b>	A broader scope than E-commerce, and involves the computerisation of all business processes essentially generating the ability to run a business online. The term encompasses utilising ‘digital interactive technologies and information technology in order to conduct a firm’s business’ and is used ‘synonymously with e-commerce and e-marketing however, these latter terms are merely parts of those e-business activities’ (Gilmore, et al., 2007, p235).
<b>E-marketing</b>	E-marketing also uses digital and information technology to fulfil traditional marketing practices. It is at the core of E-business. Many experts consider IM and E-marketing to be one and the same (Chaffey, 2003; Coupey, 2001; O’Connor, et al., 2004; Strauss and Frost, 2005 cited by Gilmore, et al., 2007). E-marketing however provides a wider scope than IM as it encompasses using different technologies, namely digital media such as interactive television, smart phones, text messaging etc. Harridge-March, (2004, p.298) argues that mobile telephones and digital television are merely tools facilitating internet access, therefore the term electronic marketing is apt rather than IM. Barwise and Farley (2005, p.68) state however, that is ‘Internet-based advertising and communication’. This research assumes them to be the same however as ultimately the internet is the means by which marketing occurs despite the medium used.

Table 2: "E" definitions



## **2.5 Internet marketing**

During this study IM will be used interchangeably with E-marketing and will include the transactional activities of E-commerce. The research also views IA and IM hand in hand as ultimately without IA, IM is impossible. IM is the process of ‘building and maintaining customer relationships through online activities to facilitate the exchange of ideas, products, and services that satisfy the goals of both buyer and seller’ (Imber and Betsy-Ann, 2000 cited by Ngai, 2003, p24). It is ‘the application of the Internet and related digital technologies in conjunction with traditional communications to achieve marketing objectives’ (Chaffey, et al., 2009, p.9).

## **2.6 Internet use in SMEs**

Irish audiences have moved online with 77% of the adult population using the internet for personal use (AMAS, 2010). Irish consumers are expected to be spending up to €21bn on online purchases by 2017, with new estimates predicting a 40% annual increase in web-based transactions as consumer habits change further (Percival, 2013). There have been changes in traditional media usage owing to the internet’s popularity as a communication medium (Dimmick, et al., 2004). Newspapers, TV and other traditional channels are being replaced with their online counterparts making IM a less expensive and more effective method of targeting customers.

Many studies have considered the drivers and barriers of IA within SMEs (Gibbs, et al., 2007; Gilmore, et al., 2007; Quaddas and Hoffmeyer, 2007; Roberts and Toleman, 2007; Simmons, et al., 2007; Xu, et al., 2007). While the internet has been widely accepted on a corporate level, its adoption by SMEs has disparities (Sadowski, et al., 2002 cited by Simmons, et al., 2008). While some are somewhat aggressive, developing websites targeting multiple markets with multiple offerings, others have been rather timorous either ignoring the internet’s potential; or creating smaller scale investigational applications only (Doherty, et al., 2003; Ellis-Chadwick, et al., 2002 cited by Doherty and Ellis-Chadwick, 2006).

## **2.7 Determinants of internet adoption in SMEs**

Simmons, et al., (2007) state the main determinants of IA as marketing ability and industry norms. Warren (2004) cited by El-Gohary (2009) identify technological factors, human capital and business change as among IA determinants. Another influencer of IM in the SME is the business aim and strategy. Lack of sufficient planning or growth aims may hinder IA just as the opposite may drive adoption. Mazzoral, (2004) cited by Mokhtar and Burgess,

(2011) noted SMEs can typically be lacking in generating a long term vision or strategic plan/s. SME owners with unclear strategies may cause the business to lose sight of IA benefits (Migiro and Adigun, 2005). IA can be classified as a growth strategy as it is an international channel where businesses can present their offerings to targeted customers (Melewar and Smith, 2003). Failure to have in place a long term vision or strategic plan for growth may cause this resource to be under valued/used. IA in SMEs can be part of their strategic planning; establishing the needs of what is wanted, how to achieve it and the route by which to achieve it e.g what IM tools to use. Plans may include the use of third parties in successful IM. Doiron (2009) suggests that third parties can act as facilitators; ‘It could even be suggested that Google, in fact, sees their role as the facilitator of internet marketing’ (p117). The company is profit motivated but nonetheless has provided an avenue and been principally responsible for allowing SMEs to become engaged in IM by means of introducing and providing tools and services. Most tools available in aiding SMEs market themselves online are moderately economical and available in their abundance online. There is no business that should feel endangered by the Internet, but those who freely become engaged and get involved should see the benefits (Egan and Pollack, 1995). Marketers engaging with the internet can understand its market therefore enabling them to carry out effective strategies (Aldridge, et al., 1997).

### **2.7.1 Drivers of internet adoption**

The internet is a globally inexpensive yet efficient marketing tool, which helps companies ‘disseminate sales and marketing messages, create one-to-one relationships, educate prospects, and support existing customers’ (Janal, 1998, p40). The literature reveals several factors with regard to SMEs utilising the internet which are broken down into the SMEs depiction of what the benefits of IA will be. Poon and Swatman (1997) used the term ‘perceived benefits’ to qualify benefits gained through internet use. The perceived benefits are a central determinant of IA in SMEs (Downie, 2003; Poon and Swatman, 1999; Raymond, 2001,). These benefits, including ‘reduced transaction costs, improved cash flow, increased productivity, better customer service, competitiveness, reaching new customers, better relationships with existing customers and improved operational efficiency’ are key drivers of IA (Beatty, et al., 2001 cited by Alam, 2009, p.243). Although an older study, Pallab’s (1996) identification of the advantages of the internet as providing global opportunities, increased accessibility, utility and a source of major communication is still relevant today. IM benefits include increasing the scope of marketing, greater

communication, entering new markets, reducing operational costs, and the opportunity to partner with suppliers and other collaborators (Drew, 2003).

Gilmore, et al. (2007) found numerous drivers from the literature that they identified as proactive and reactive drivers. They propose that proactive reasons are to ‘eliminate competitive disadvantages of SMEs in peripheral areas, the chance to lower operating and marketing costs, the opportunity to promote their company better and enrich their overall marketing communications mix’ (Gilmore, et al., 2007, p237). Other reasons identified from literature are the enthusiasm of management, sales and improved market research (Dann and Dann, 2001; Downie, 2002; Jeffcoate, et al., 2002; Poon and Swatman, 1997 cited by Gilmore, et al., 2007). The reactive drivers are caused by competition from local business alongside larger businesses, decline in the national marketplace and put simply – following suit (Ching & Ellis, 2004; Kardaras and Papathanassiou, 2000; Premkumar and Roberts, 1999 cited by Gilmore, et al., 2007, p.236). Mehrtens, et al., (2001) agree that competitive pressure drives IA, adding that the awareness of benefits and financial readiness also play a role. The literature however suggests that it is more efficient to classify drivers as micro and macro environmental factors (Eid, 2003; Fillis, et al., 2004 cited by El-Gohary, 2009) as is more practical and owing to the fact that what may be proactive in one industry may not be elsewhere (El-Gohary, 2009). This classification is similar to Simmons, et al., (2007) identifying a number of determinants of SME IA which they conceptualised in the figure below.

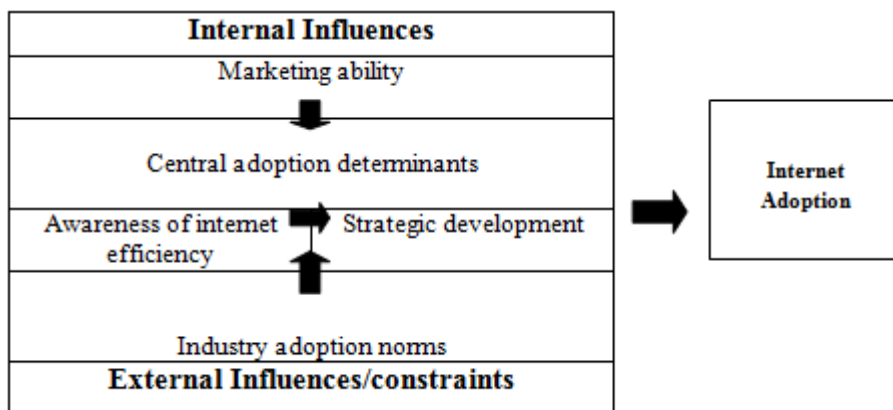


Figure 2 Determinants of SME IA

Source: Adapted from (Simmons, et al., 2007)

Drivers of IM can therefore be classified as micro and macro as listed below.

	<b>Drivers</b>	<b>Source</b>
<b>Micro</b>	Increased sales	(Dann and Dann, 2001) (Downie, 2003) (Jeffcoate, et al., 2002) (Poon and Swatman, 1997)
	Perceived benefits	(Downie, 2003) (Poon and Swatman, 1997) (Raymond, 2001)
	Customer relationship management (CRM)	(Alam, 2009) (Beatty, et al., 2001)
	Reduced costs	(Beatty, et al., 2001) (Drew, 2003) (Gilmore, et al., 2007)
	Enthusiasm of management	Dann and Dann, 2001) (Downie, 2003) (Jeffcoate, et al., 2002) (Poon and Swatman, 1997)
<b>Macro</b>	The role of the government in incentivising technology adoption	(Javalgi, et al., 2004)
	Competitive pressure	(Daniel and Wilson, 2002) (Dongen, et al., 2002) (Chang and Cheung, 2001) (Ching and Ellis, 2004) (Kardaras and Papathanassiou, 2000) (Mehrtens, et al., 2001) (Yu, 2006) (Zhu, et al., 2003)

Table 3 IM Drivers

### 2.7.2 Barriers of internet adoption

Gilmore, et al., (2007) found that IA is in its ‘infancy’ for many companies, with IM in SMEs underused. They concluded that marketing in SMEs is dependent on time and financial resources. Pallab (1996) however states that the internet aids SMEs who do not have the financial resources to expand their operation. Palumbo and Herbig (1998) also argued that the internet has ‘eliminated prohibitive cost of entry, enabling small companies to play in the same playing field as large multinational companies’ (p.260). Pallab (1996) also identified additional barriers as security, control and implementation. Another barrier of IM is the marketing ability of the SME, and whether this ability acts as a driver or barrier. Gilmore, et

al., (2007) identified barriers to include the 'generic characteristics of SMEs, practical implementation and maintenance issues and organisational obstacles' (p237). Organisational obstacles include cost effectiveness, no effective measurement tool, lack of customer readiness and perceived benefits.

Walczuch, et al., (2000) reported that the biggest barrier of IA was the concern that the internet would fail to be more efficient or decrease operating costs. Ramsey and McCole, (2005) argued that SMEs who did not adopt IM strategies due to a decreased level of knowledge by management should receive training. Other studies of IA barriers identify a lack of knowledge as it is associated with a lack of awareness; lack of advice and support or having staff without the necessary IT skills (Kohn and Husig, 2006; Stansfield and Grant, 2003, cited by Dlodlo and Dhurup, 2010). Barriers of IA are listed in table four.

	<b>Barriers</b>	<b>Source</b>
<b>Micro</b>	Lack of resources financial / time / knowledge	(Bodorick, et al., 2002) (Chapman, et al., 2000) (Cragg & King, 1993) (Dlodlo and Dhurup, 2010) (Hormozi and Harding, 1998) (Jeffcoate, et al., 2002) (Kohn and Husig 2006) (Mehrtens, et al., 2001) (Stansfield and Grant, 2003)
	Owner's ability	(Duan, et al., 2002) (Lal, 2005) (Fillis, et al., 2004)
	Trust issues with technology	(Dlodlo and Dhurup, 2010) (Van Akkeren and Cavaye, 1999)
	Business readiness	(Lal, 2005) (Mehrtens, et al., 2001)
	Failing to recognise the benefits	(Goode, 2002) (Walczuch, et al., 2000)
<b>Macro</b>	Lack of government incentives	(Dlodlo and Dhurup, 2010)
	Security Issues	(Aldridge, et al., 1997) (Forcht, 1996)
	Consumer readiness	(Dann and Dann, 2001) (Gilmore, et al., 2007) (Noyce, 2002)
	Internet Access	(Stockdale and Standing, 2006) (WDC, 2005)

Table 4 IM Barriers

## 2.8 Internet marketing Tools

The research considers the following as IM tools;

<b>Key IM tools for SMEs    6 Categories of E-communication</b>	
SEO	Search Marketing
Social Media	Online PR
E-mail marketing	Opt-in email
Online advertising	Interactive Ads
Affiliate marketing	Online partnership
Website	Viral marketing
Online PR	

Table 5 Internet marketing tools

Source (Adapted from (Failte Ireland, 2012, and Chaffey and Smith, 2008).

These are listed in figure three and are all areas discussed in “Internet Marketing: Strategy, Implementation and Practice” (Chaffey, et al., 2006). Each of these IM tools will be analysed individually to examine their online capabilities as an IM resource.

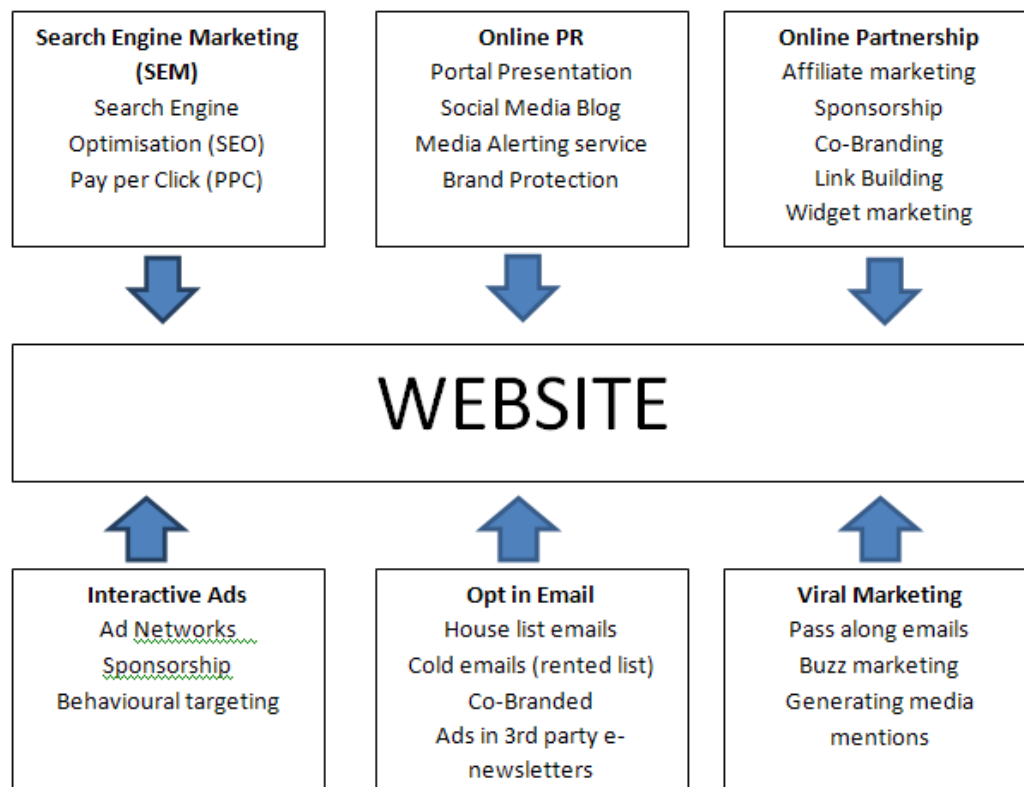


Figure 3 IM Tools

Source: Adapted from (Chaffey and Smith, 2008)

### 2.8.1 Website:

The website, a sales tool, is also a CRM tool whereby information can be captured for future targeted marketing. SMEs customarily use the internet to advertise rather than sell (Küster and Vila, 2011). Websites are considered important tools in terms of their usefulness and value to SMEs marketing efforts (Martin and Matlay 2003 cited by Simmons, et al., 2008, p353). Websites creates the link between company and customer, and therefore should highlight the companies value (Rocha, 2012). A website displays a multitude of information for customers, ranging from the complexity of structure to the products or services offered (Kappel, et al., 2006), and should also offer the portal whereby customers are afforded the opportunity to buy online where possible. This portal is a key IM tool where SMEs can promote and sell its products and services. Factors to be considered when designing a website

include; having a ‘high quality content, ease of use, quick download and frequent updates’ (Chaffey and Smith, 2008, p.226).

### 2.8.2 Search Engine Marketing

SEM involves promoting websites by increasing their visibility in the results of a specific search engine query through optimization (both on-page and off-page) as well as through advertising (paid inclusions, contextual advertising, paid placements). SEM is an umbrella term that incorporates various activities in the marketing of a website such as search engine optimisation (SEO) and pay per click (PPC). SEM comprises of: ‘ pay for performance (PFP), where the web site pays for visibility (through links, buying “words”, sponsored links, adverting, banners) and “organic” SEO, where the web site is “technically” optimised using keywords, linkage and meta-tags to be “found” by the search engines when indexing web pages for retrieval’ (Murphy and Kielgast, 2008, p90).

Table six illustrates the percentage market share of search engines in Ireland (2012).

Search Engine (SE)	% of market
Google	94.55
Bing	2.64
Yahoo	1.67
Ask Jeeves	0.36
Conduit	0.3
Other	0.48

Table 6 Search Engine Stats in Ireland

Source: (StatCounter Global Stats, 2013)

Search engines are instrumental in being discovered at the appropriate time by the appropriate people. (Kennedy and Kennedy, 2008) with customers finding a site two ways;

**SEO:** A ‘method that uses data observation and marketing research to identify the most suitable "keyword" for the site, which is also called "keyword advertisement"' (Malaga, 2007 cited by Chen, et al., 2011, p4645). It involves choosing keywords in order to allow a company’s website to become searchable and to ensure it is found through search engines. This organic listing is inexpensive for the SME with the search engine generating results



based on a particular keyword used by a customer. The sites are filtered and listed according to relevance based on content, frequency of update etc.

**PPC:** These are advertisements usually listed on a side bar of a search engine. These are also known as sponsored links which translates as paid for by a business. These advertisements are dichotomous insofar as they are not listed organically. Companies pay for these ads to be returned in a search listing by paying per click i.e. whenever a customer clicks on the link they are brought to the company's website and the company is then charged a fee by the search engine.

### **2.8.3 Email Marketing**

Email marketing communication can be broken into two distinct categories:

- 1) Outbound email marketing: emails sent to the customers and potential customers or leads from an organisation.
- 2) Inbound email marketing: Managing the emails sent into the organisation by customers.

Considered a vital communication technique, this method uses newsletters and email blasts to communicate with customers. Email marketing has become ever more accepted as non expensive, and has been described as a most effective IM tool due to its high response rate (Niall, 2000). The advantages of using email marketing have been documented by numerous researchers;

- Enables real time communication allowing customer relationship building and interaction (Jackson and DeCormier, 1999)
- Its high response rate and low cost make email marketing an invaluable tool (Peppers and Rogers, 2000)
- Emails can be adapted for specific targets and their performance tracked by use of promo codes, coupons etc.

The low cost and digital processing allow for businesses to send out vast quantities of emails to customers and potential customers. It is a simple procedure with the customer not having to initiate the interaction with the business. Companies must, however, have permission to contact any customer or potential customer this way. Failure to do so is referred to as unsolicited marketing which is illegal and could carry a fine of up to €50,000 (The Irish

Times, 2012). In 2012, Ireland had the fastest growing audience for market penetration of web based email usage (up 23%) (Comscore, 2012).

### ***2.8.3.1 Opt in Email***

Opt in is a term given to the method of obtaining details from a potential customer to subscribe to a particular service (Failte Ireland, 2012). Opt in is essentially a customer's permission to be included in email listings. Opt out is the reverse, the customer wishing to leave an email list. Opt in email is a part of email marketing and comprises of house lists, cold emails, co-branded and ad-ins.

*House list* are the businesses customers detailed already collected. *Cold emails* are whereby a list is obtained (rented) from third parties. Customer permissions must still be sought in order to make contact a second or subsequent time. *Co-Branded* involves a partnership between two businesses and each uses the others email lists. *Ad ins* is involved with placing advertisements in E-newsletters circulated by a third party (where no partnership exists).

### **2.8.4 Online Partnerships**

There are a variety of online partnership methods that include;

*Affiliate marketing* is a form of PFP marketing. It is commission based whereby the merchant gets paid when a sale is made or lead generated (Chaffey, et al., 2006). Gallagher, et al., (2001) further define it as internet advertising where a percentage of sales revenue generated by customers who click through to a companies website via a content provider is shared by merchants. The content provider or affiliate provides a link to another company. When the customer clicks through and either purchases or becomes a sales lead then the merchant is paid a fee. Simply put, affiliate marketing is where you use other websites to help drive traffic to your website.

*Sponsorship* involves 'the linking of a brand with related content or context for the purpose of creating brand awareness and strengthening brand appeal in a form that is clearly distinguishable from a banner, button, or other standardized ad unit' (Ryan and Whiteman, 2000 cited by Chaffey, et al., 2006, p.538).

*Link Building* is a method of providing a hyperlink to your website from other relevant sites with a high page rank. The ultimate goal with link building is sharing links with quality content driving traffic to a website.

### **2.8.5 Viral Marketing**

Viral marketing is a strategy designed to create customer motivation to share marketing messages creating exponential growth for the messages exposure and influence (Wilson, 2000). Also known as ‘word of mouth (WOM)’ or ‘generating a buzz’ viral marketing essentially relies on people to spread the marketing message. Viral marketing works by replicating and doubling each time it is iterated. According to Ferguson (2008) there are four steps for successful viral marketing;

1. *Use tactics to build awareness and trial.* Communicate the objective of the campaign using the most suitable method to achieve it. Viral marketing is an inexpensive method of building customer relationships and receiving feedback.
2. *No acquisition without identification.* Manage the method effectively. The appropriate tools will record customer details in order to trace them and measure performance.
3. *Look beyond the transactional.* Don’t focus on those that buy - the best customer may have purchased little but may have directed a lot of sales to the business through WOM.
4. *Connect your advocates to product development.* Customer feedback can lead to new products/services. It is free research and product development. (Adapted from Ferguson, 2008, cited by Anon., 2008).

### **2.8.6 Online PR**

Public relations (PR) are also referred to as press releases or press relations. PR pertains to an organisations reputation i.e. how people see/perceive the organisation. It relates to maximising favourable mentions of an organisation and its products/services or brands on third party websites frequented by that organisations target customers (Chaffey, et al., 2006). The reputation of a company can also be controlled under online PR using online reputation management. PR activities include the circulation/issuing of press releases that various parties can sign up to. There are many activities which belong to online PR. Link building mentioned previously can also be an activity of online PR as its objective is to make your brand visible on other websites. Blogs, podcasting and Really Simple Syndication (RSS) feeds are also all activities forming under the umbrella of online PR. Blogs act as online diaries prepared by a person or a group in order to broadcast information e.g. to customers.

Podcasts are similar to blogs but use media such as audio and video to communicate information.

### **2.8.7 Interactive Advertising:**

This is the placement of advertisement or ad banners on third party websites promoting a business. Once clicked, users will be redirected to the site of the advertisement. Unlike PPC, this method doesn't rely on SEM or SEO. Interactive marketing refers to placing ad banners on other websites. Benefits of this method include increases in;

- Efficiency and quality of the customer decision buying process;
- Customer involvement and satisfaction;
- Trust through information exchanging;
- Customer Feedback (Pavlau and Stewart, 2000).

Other benefits include increasing website traffic and building brand recognition (Chaffey and Smith, 2008).

### **2.8.8 Social Media**

Social media refers to sites that facilitate peer-to-peer communication allowing users to generate content and communicate through messaging and commenting (Chaffey, et al., 2009). It is marketing through conversation/engagement with potential customers (Failte Ireland, 2012). The figure below highlights the top ranking social media sites in Ireland for 2012.

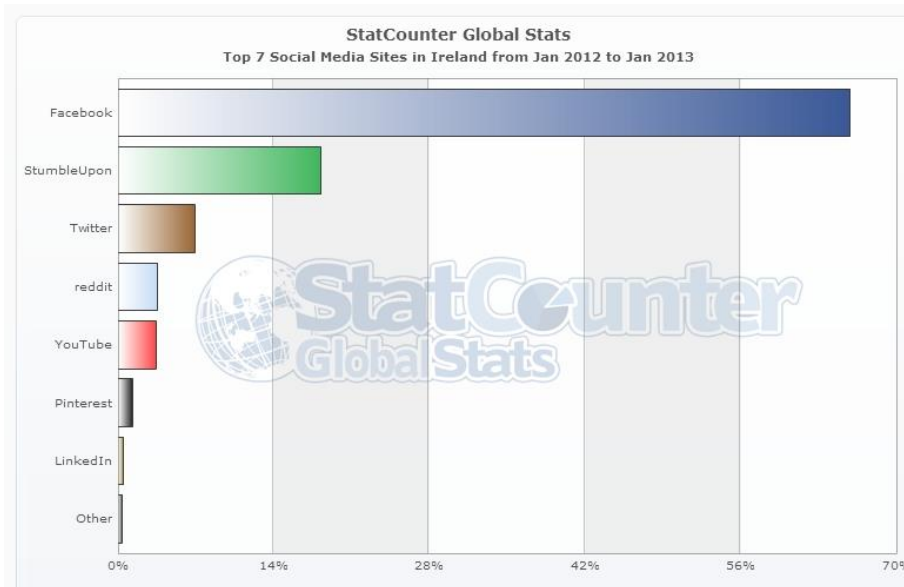


Figure 4 Ireland's social media ranking

(Source: Adapted from StatCounter Global Stats, (2013))

Social media has radically changed how you market your business (Failte Ireland, 2012). Its applications allow consumers to contribute to online content (Baruh, 2009) and enhance understanding of their needs/preferences based on information shared (Mitic and Kapoulas, 2012). Online communities or networks can be created by the customer or by the business themselves. Customers turn to social media for recommendations from their personal contacts; sharing experiences, and promoting companies they have received good service from. It can be seen to be a technologically advanced version of WOM. The benefits of social media marketing include;

- Generating exposure;
- Increasing in traffic/subscribers/search ratings/business partnerships;
- Generating leads and improved sales;
- Reduced marketing expenses (Adapted from Stelzner, 2011).

## 2.9 Conclusion

The chapter illustrated that this research will investigate the adoption of the main IM tools outlined in section 2.8. Throughout the literature review, areas or gaps relating to IM and

SMEs were identified. Within this context, gaps identified related to IA by SMEs in the Northwest as well as impacts on the SMEs marketing performance. Accordingly there is a need to research any differences in IA and performance across multiple industries. This research is therefore concerned with researching gaps by identifying the factors affecting the adoption of IM and the effect on SMEs marketing performance.

Doherty and Ellis-Chadwick (2006) noted that the literature on IM fails to substantially address performance measurement or attainment and sustenance of competitive advantage. The internet is ever evolving and many issues remain unsolved (Schibrowsky, et al., 2007). This research aims to provide some evidence of IA and its measurable benefits relating to IM. Gilmore, et al., (2007) suggest that future studies should research how use of the internet has developed, while Simmons, et al., (2008) recommend a deeper probe into issues central to IA in SMEs. This research aims to further delve into the internet role within SMEs and determine whether drivers and barriers are still as relevant today as they were in previous studies; and whether the assumed benefits are actually doing just what they should.

### Chapter 3: Methodology

This chapter describes/justifies the primary research methods used in collecting information about the level of IA and IM within SMEs. The majority of previous research has used either quantitative or qualitative methodologies. This research uses a mixed method approach as combining methods attempts to ensure that it is well focused and systematic, while providing an understanding, and explanation (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2007).

#### 3.1 Introduction

This research involved a literature review on IM where previous research was analysed and evaluated. There is an absence of research that examines differing industries to analyse influencing factors or commonalities regarding IA in SMEs in Ireland (Simmons, et al., 2007). This research will examine different SMEs categories to provide an insight into IM usage and any prevalent similarities or differences. The Northwest was chosen specifically as it was recognised that there has been no research in this region. Historically SMEs in the Northwest have had rural issues which may be eliminated and/or lessened owing to the use of IM technologies (OECD, 2004, WDC, 2005). The Northwest also represents almost 5% of the total national SME count (CSO, 2010).

#### 3.2 Primary Research Objectives

See chapter 1.1 and table five.

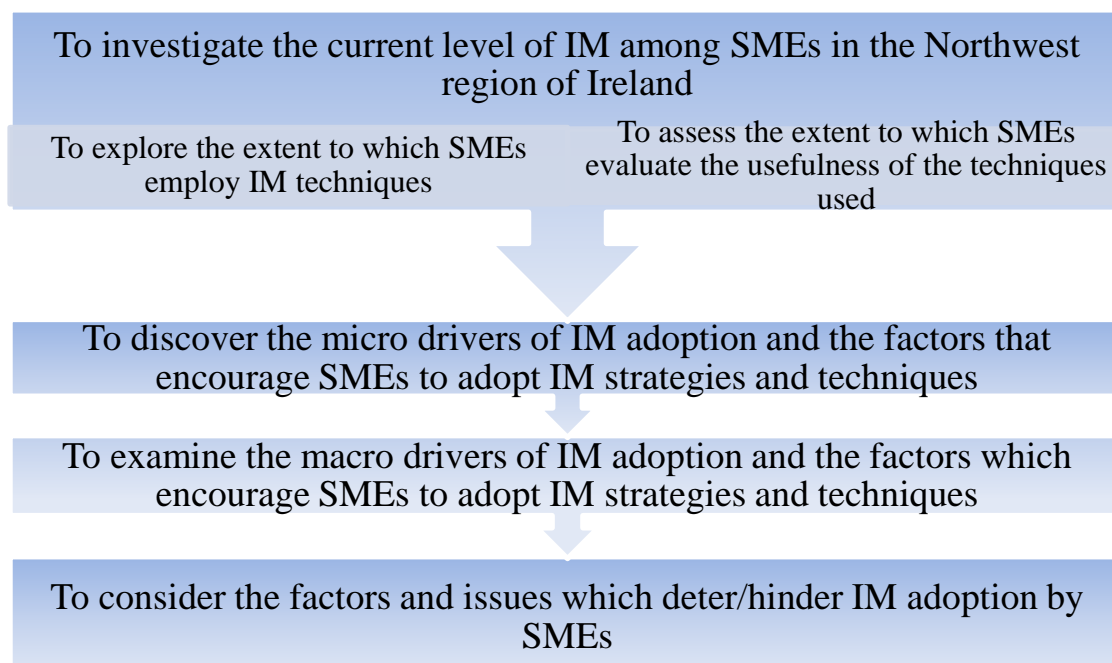


Figure 5 Research objectives

### **3.3 Research Philosophy**

Malhotra (2010) suggests that research is objective, attempting to offer precise information reflecting a truth. Research philosophy can be defined as the process of developing the researcher's background, knowledge, and nature (Saunders, et al., 2007). Combining research improves value (Kaplan and Duchon, 1988) and due to this the researcher adapted a mixed methods research philosophy. A mixed method approach in its design combines qualitative and quantitative methods providing clear interpretations of the research problem(s) (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007) allowing the researcher to develop triangulation on the research topic by using two or more independent collection methods to corroborate findings (Saunders, et al., 2007).

### **3.4 Research Design**

This is the plan that includes actions for research spanning 'decisions from broad assumptions to the detailed methods of data collection and analysis (Creswell, 2009, p3). Informing the method decision should be 'the worldview assumptions the researcher brings to the study; procedures of inquiry (called strategies); and specific methods of data collection, analysis, and interpretation...the nature of the research problem or issue being addressed, the researcher's personal experiences, and the audiences for the study' (Creswell, 2009, p.3). The research process took both descriptive and exploratory approaches. Descriptive research aims to describe characteristics and functions and involves predetermined and structured design while exploratory research aims to identify insights and understandings of a position. (Malhotra, 2007).

### **3.4 Data Collection**

There were two methods of data collection; survey research and in-depth interviews. The information and data was collected using descriptive and exploratory measures to best capture all relevant information. Creswell (2003, p.17) cited by Rushe, (2011) agree stating that 'multiple forms of data draw on all possibilities' reducing any possibility of ignoring vital information. In keeping with this thought, descriptive research was carried out in the form of a survey, allowing the researcher to understand the data collected, while in-depth interviews formed the exploratory research allowing the researcher to gain a valuable insight/understanding of the key issues (Malhotra, 2010).



### **3.4.1 Descriptive Research**

This involved survey research. The data collection document took the form of a questionnaire, which was sent to SMEs in the Northwest region. The questionnaire was designed so as to address the objectives, with all further probing to be completed at a later stage in the interviews. A well designed survey is a useful tool for assembling essential information, while also enabling the collection of data on a large scale with minimal input required from the person distributing them (Malhotra, 2010) and eliminates bias from the research while serving as both a time and cost-effective data collection instrument. Surveys were chosen as they are extremely cost effective when compared to other contact methods; and considering the geographic size of the Northwest and its population of 9,029 SMEs, this method was the most appropriate.

SMEs in the Northwest were contacted via email with a link to the questionnaire. The SME listing was compiled by the researcher using direct research. A number of state bodies were contacted by email, post, telephone and directly to retrieve any business listings they may have. These included local authorities and SME representing bodies such as Enterprise Ireland as well as online directories (see appendix B). The majority contacted could not assist citing data protection laws prevented them from sharing information; with most directing the query to local county enterprise boards however when approached they could not provide assistance. Enterprise Ireland did provide a small listing of funded companies throughout Ireland from which the researcher was able to generate a small listing. The researcher also supplied the online survey to these different bodies to distribute to their members. The researcher compiled a new SME listing through extensive online research which gathered 1,906 email addresses for SMEs throughout the Northwest, representing a 21% sample of the overall 9,029 SMEs.

Questionnaires provide a fast turnaround rate, are inexpensive, and are good for assessing attitudes and eliciting other content from participants (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2003). The emails were sent in late May 2013, with a reminder email sent after a three day period, and a final reminder in early June.

#### ***3.4.1.1 Measurement Techniques***

The questionnaire was kept short as suggested by Hague (2002) to encourage a high response rate, and the accompanying cover letter (appendix D) informed respondents of the relevance and importance of their responses to the research. The questionnaire was designed to provide

a systematic demographic profile of the SME and information regarding IM tools used; their effectiveness, alternative methods and the micro and macro elements influencing IA.

Survey principles established in the methodology literature search (e.g. Dillman, 2011; Kanuk and Berenson, 1975) was implemented in the overall construction, design and layout of the instrument. The task of question writing and designing the format of a questionnaire is crucial to developing the research design (Zikmund, 2003). The questionnaire was divided into sections that contained questions relevant to IM, company information and respondent profile. The research objectives were the key drivers along with the literature review in the final design. A combination of scales was used to gather different levels of information which included comparative, rank orders and Likert scales as listed below. Part one was concerned with company profile. Part two was concerned with IM. Key term definitions were included here to encourage respondents to answer. Part three focused on the respondent. The final questions were open-ended to allow respondents to make additional comments if desired as well as an option to provide details should they be willing to discuss their responses further in in-depth interviews. The full questionnaire can be seen in appendix E.

Type	Questions	Reason
Multiple Choice	1,2,3a,3b,4a,4b,5,6b,7a,7b,8a,9b,10a, 11b, 12	Elicit multiple uses
Open Ended	6a, 8c, 10b, 11a, 13b,	Encourages expansive responses
Ranking Scale	8b	Establish popularity
Likert Scale	9a	To understand perception
Ordinal Scale	13a	In determining highest education
Frequency Scale	14	To determine frequency of use
Dichotomous	15	Straight forward for screening

Table 7 Question types

### 3.4.2 Exploratory Research

This consisted of semi-structured in-depth interviews using a sample of survey respondents. A mixed mode method was offered to interviewees whereby they decided to participate via face-to-face, telephone or email – whichever is more suitable. This increases the response rate and is suitable where there are time constraints (Bergman, 2008).

The sample comprised of respondents from the survey who consented to further participation in the research study via in-depth interviews. A total of fifty-one respondents consented to the in-depth interview and from this eight were selected using judgement sampling where the interviews were based on selecting one participant from each SME category; services, science and technology, agriculture and fishing, construction, industry, transport, tourism and travel (CSO, 2013) with the addition of retail as it accounts for over ten per cent of Ireland's GDP (IBEC, 2013). A consent form was distributed and collected from participating respondents (see appendix G).

Initially an online focus group was considered for the second stage of data collection however the researcher ultimately opted for in-depth interviews as some of the information requested may be of a sensitive and confidential nature, and very often some participant's views in a focus group setting may be over-shadowed or biased by the empowerment of others. Interviews allow responses to be appropriately correlated to the right respondent (Wright and Crimp, 2000). Interviews are convenient when the participants cannot be observed directly in their day-to-day activity within the company, and allow a researcher a level of control over the questions (Creswell, 2003). The number interviewed was representative of the cross section of industry types included in the survey. Interviews were one to one with SME representatives and were semi-structured, with the general strategy to begin with broad questions and follow up on the interviewees responses. The interviews aim to capture opinion without imposing any meaning or influence. Interviews were chosen based on an approximate representative ratio of SMEs within each county i.e. 1:3:4 (Leitrim, Sligo, Donegal having 1275, 2454 and 5300 SMEs respectively) and therefore there was one interview in Leitrim, three in Sligo and four within Donegal.

Phase three involved a further interview with an expert within the study field in order to gain further insights and triangulate the data. The expert interviewed was Eoin O'Siochru, Manager of Enterprise Ireland's IM unit.

#### ***3.4.2.1 Measurement techniques***

Theme sheets were used to allow the interviewer to address and elicit key issues from the interview (see appendices).

### **3.5 Sampling**

As there was no up to date, reliable and available information, the researcher carried out secondary research to better understand the characteristics of the population. The researcher was now in a position to use their knowledge to exercise judgement in contacting a representative sample. Therefore judgement sampling was used.

In phase one the population was defined as SMEs in the Northwest totalling 9,029. Phase two comprised of survey respondents (360) with phase three utilising experts in the field in order to triangulate and validate the data. In determining the sampling frame the researcher compiled a new list of SMEs in the Northwest totalling 1800 SMEs. In phase two the sampling frame were those respondents willing to participate further, a total of 51 respondents. In total eight interviews were carried out with SMEs in different categories, while a further brief interview with experts provided additional thoughts. A response rate of 10-15% was sought in the questionnaire, with a 20% response received. Visser, et al., (1996) found that surveys with similar response rates returned a more accurate portrayal in comparison to those with higher response rates. This rate compares well to industry standards for on-line survey research.

#### **3.5.1 Descriptive Research**

##### *Target population*

The target population for the research was SMEs (as defined by European Commission, (2005)) in the Northwest of Ireland which totalled 9,029 (CSO, 2010).

##### *Sampling Frame*

As there was no SME listing available, the researcher compiled a new listing through extensive online research. The categories of industry as used by the CSO were used to ensure respondents were selected from each category. A total listing of 1,906 SMEs was compiled. This represented a sample of 21% of the overall Northwest SME population. Furthermore regions within the Northwest for which the study was based (Donegal, Leitrim, Sligo) were also used in selecting respondents to ensure each area was represented. . Both financial limits and time constraints had a dominant influence on the sample size (Malhotra, 2007).

### *Method*

The method was non-probability sampling, which relies on the researcher's judgement and does not incorporate random selection. Malhotra (2007) suggests that this sampling method is most appropriate for research without a well-defined sampling frame.

### *Sampling technique*

Judgment sampling was used when selecting respondents. Judgment sampling allowed the researcher to target SMEs believed to be representative of the overall target population while also knowledgeable in this area (Crask, et al., 1995 cited by Derler, 2010). In this study, the respondents were selected across industry type and across the northwest region.

### *Sample size*

Of the 1,906 questionnaires administered, 94 were invalid and a further 13 non-compliant with the study. Those deemed invalid were failed email deliveries and SMEs no longer in operation. This reduced the sample size to 1,800. Of this 360 valid responses were received which represented a 20% response rate.

## **3.5.2 Exploratory Research**

### *Target population*

The population for in depth interviews was derived from the consent of respondents from the initial questionnaire sample of 1,906 SMEs. 51 respondents consented to further participation in in-depth interviews.

### *Sampling Frame*

The sampling frame comprised of all respondents from the questionnaire phase.

### *Method*

Non probability sampling was used which relied on the judgement of the researcher.

### *Sampling technique*

Judgement sampling was used using including both region and industry type as strata. There were three regions to be considered (Donegal, Leitrim and Sligo) as well as eight industry categories (retail, science and technology, tourism and travel, industry, transport, agriculture and fishing, construction, and services).

### *Sample size (phase 2)*

The sample size was the total number of responses within the Northwest region. Of this 51 agreed to take part. As there were eight industry categories the researcher would conduct eight in depth interviews (one interview per industry).

### **3.6 Pilot testing**

Pilot-tests were conducted to minimise response errors (Malhotra, 2010) and were completed in April 2013 using a random sampling of businesses throughout the Northwest. Creswell (1998) recommends undertaking a pilot in order to test the research questions. The questionnaire should generally be tested or piloted with an analogous cluster of people to your proposed respondents. The aim is to attain estimates regarding response rates, data quality and validity, and the overall questionnaire clarity (Silman and Macfarlane, 2001) allowing for the identification of inappropriate questions and elimination of any ambiguity before administering the survey. Several amendments are typically expected before the official survey begins and therefore appropriate time should be allocated for conducting one. To test for comprehension, relevance and completeness, the pilot-test participants were asked to identify any problems they might encounter with regards the email invitation, all aspects of content, process, structure and ease of completion online and wording/format allowed for responses. Twenty-five responses were received and analysed manually to detect any problematic areas. Points were clarified with respondents once replies were received.

#### **3.6.1 Pilot Study Results**

The pilot results presented no major complications within the questionnaire, however minor clarifications were made from some responses and revised accordingly. On reflection it was decided that the questionnaire was quite comprehensive for the primary stage of data collection. Crask et al., (1995) found that lengthy questionnaires result in low response rates and therefore the survey needed to be shortened to encourage a high response. The questionnaire was attempting to elicit answers to the entire research paradigm whereby it should provide concise information on demographics, IM strategy and what tools are in use. Further information could be elicited through the in-depth interview stages. Therefore the questionnaire was refined accordingly.

### **3.7 Data Analysis**

Data was analysed in phase one using a combination of tools including Microsoft Excel, Microsoft Word, and Survey Monkey. Questions were analysed individually and cross examined to identify commonalities/differences among the SMEs. In phases two and three, theme sheets were used for the depth interviews. Responses were recorded on Microsoft word/excel to identify common themes and insights. The resulting analysis is examined in detail in chapter four.

## Chapter 4: Findings & Analysis

### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the analysis of the research data collected through survey research and in-depth interviews. The study aims to identify factors determining IM adoption, tools used as well as IA and SMEs marketing performance. In achieving these aims, this chapter illustrates and discusses the descriptive analysis of the data to provide insights. The descriptive research represents completed questionnaires from SMEs and the exploratory represents the in-depth interview analysis.

### 4.2 Phase one: Questionnaire

#### 4.2.1 SME profile

Table nine and figure six represent the SME location. The majority were from Sligo with 39.4% of the total. Donegal was second at 31.5% with Leitrim presenting 13.0% of responses. A fourth category labeled “Other”, totaled 16.1% of responses. Of these, respondents selected “Other” where the business had more than one premises, and offered answers such as “shops in Sligo, Donegal and Galway” or “Northwest”. A small number of responses listed other counties. On follow up with these respondents it was understood that where a location supplied was not in the Northwest it was due to the survey being forward to a head office, which happened to be in different locations other than the Northwest; however businesses exist within the Northwest. A full listing of these and all “other” or “comment” responses can be seen in appendix F.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Donegal	31.5%	112
Leitrim	13.0%	46
Sligo	39.4%	140
Other (please specify)	16.1%	57

Table 8 Respondent Location



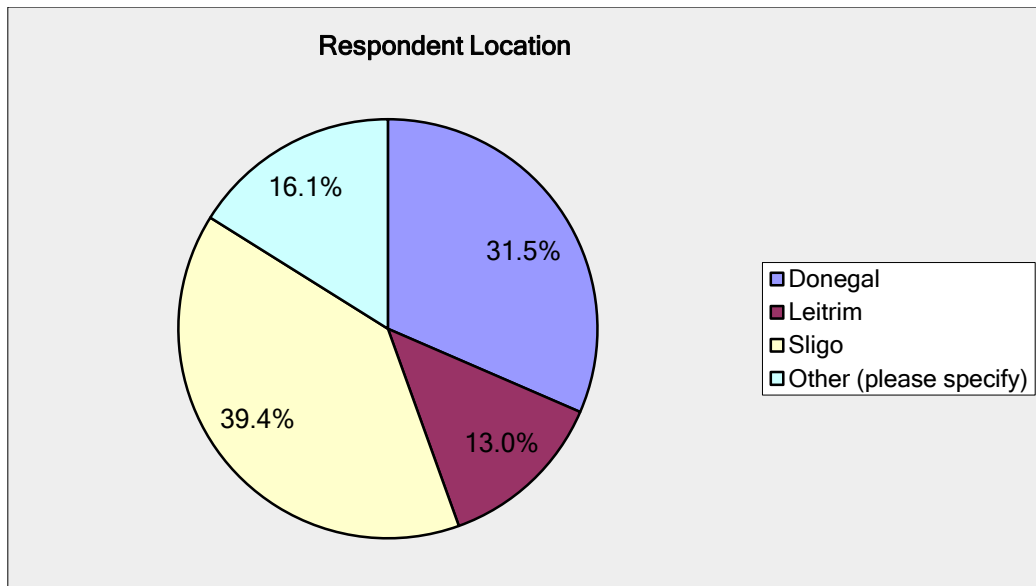


Figure 6 Respondent Locations

Data collection was designed to gather responses from different industry sectors throughout the Northwest allowing generalisation of the findings and increasing the research reliability. Consequently, the sample is comprised of 360 SMEs in eight different industries. Table ten and figure seven present distribution according to industry sector. Retail and services were the highest ranking at 26.7% and 22.2% respectively. Transport and science & technology were the lowest with both receiving responses of 3.7%. Tourism and travel represented 13.5%, construction 6.5% and agriculture and fishing 6.2%. 28.9% of respondents chose to answer under the “Other” label. Responses here ranged from a number of business types (see appendix F).

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Other (please specify)	28.9%	103
Retail	26.7%	95
Services	22.2%	79
Tourism & Travel	13.5%	48
Construction	6.5%	23
Agriculture & Fishing	6.2%	22
Industry	4.5%	16
Science & Technology	3.7%	13
Transport	3.7%	13

Table 9 SME Category

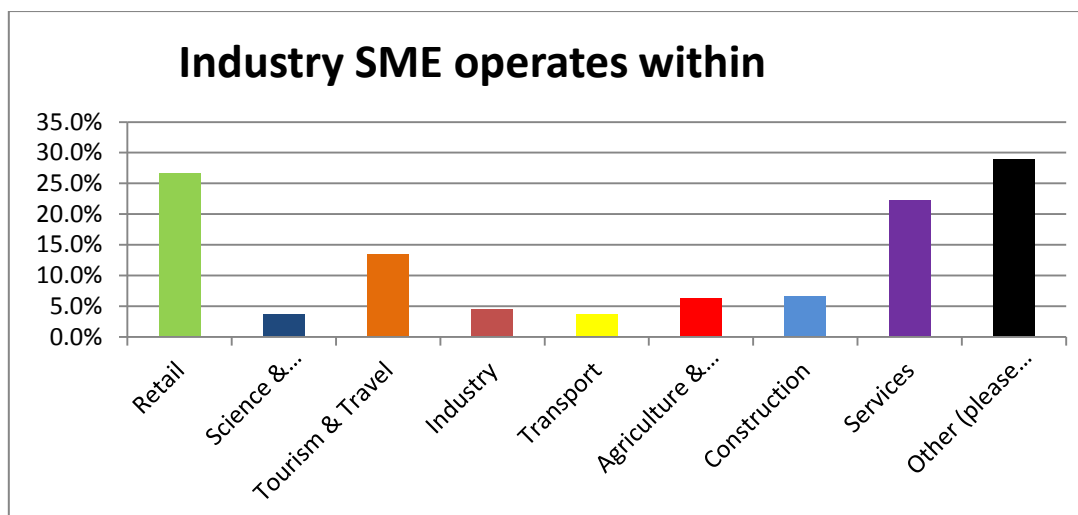


Figure 7 SME category

49.3% of SMEs are business to consumer. 29.9% operated with both business and consumers, while 14.1% operated business to business only. 1.1% was business to government and 5.6% chose the “Other” option (appendix F).

Categories	Response Percent	Response Count
<b>Business to Consumer (B2C)</b>	49.3%	175
<b>Both (B2C &amp; B2B)</b>	29.9%	106
<b>Business to Business (B2B)</b>	14.1%	50
<b>Other (please specify)</b>	5.6%	20
<b>Business to Government (B2G)</b>	1.1%	4

Table 10 Business Operation

65.2% are SMEs trading nationally. 2.2% are export only while 32.6% are both.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Nationally only	65.2%	232
Export only	2.2%	8
Both	32.6%	116

Table 11 Company selling profile

The majority of SMEs employed less than ten people (55.9%), as shown in figure eight. 3.4% exceeded the SME definition (>250) and are therefore outside of the SME definition. It is interesting to note however that there were no key discrepancies between SME responses and the 3.4% of larger company responses.

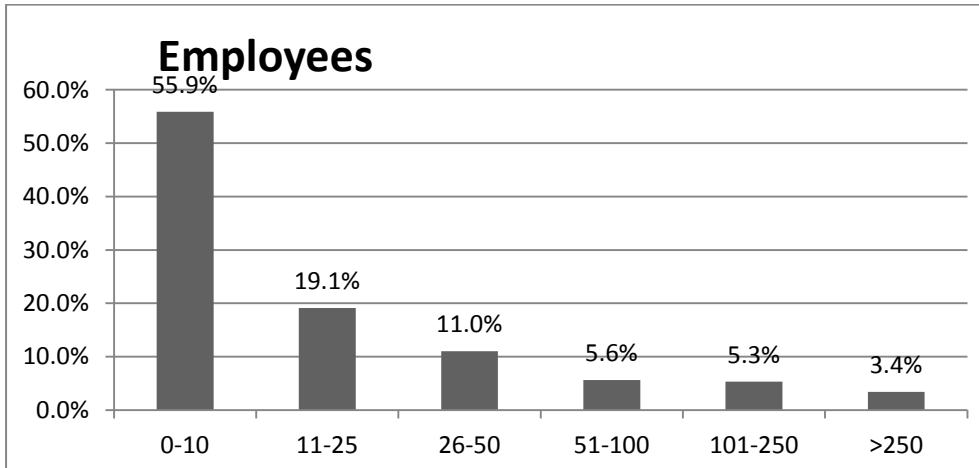


Figure 8 Number of employees

Of these 110 respondents state that more than 75% of their employees are full time, with 101 respondents stating part time staff accounts for up to 25% of employees.

Answer Options	0-25%	25-50%	50-75%	75-100%
Full Time	66	55	70	110
Part Time	101	46	35	33

Table 12 Employee Status

38.5% of SMEs are in business over 20 years as highlighted in figure nine. 24.7% have been operating between 11-20 years, 17.1% between 6-10 years and 19.9% for 5 years or less.

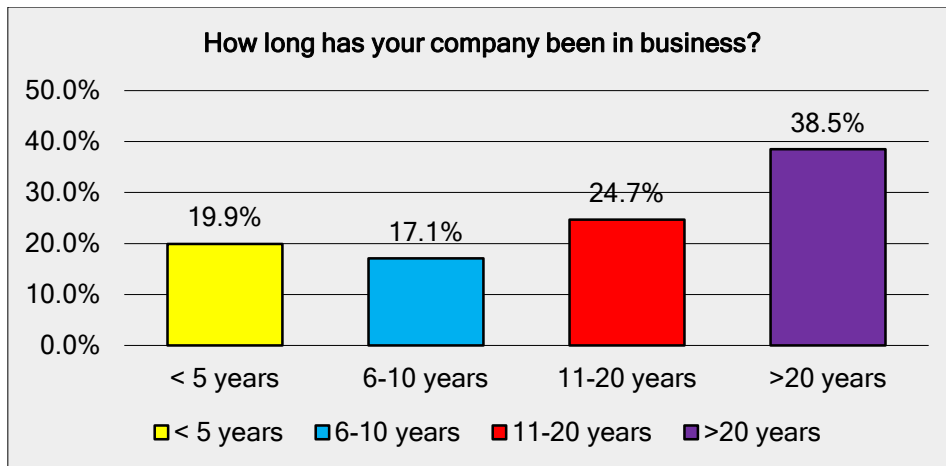


Figure 9 Business length

50% of respondents chose to provide answers regarding business turnover while 50% preferred to remain anonymous. 1.11% had turnover exceeding SME definitions (>43 million). The chart below represents the breakdown of turnover.

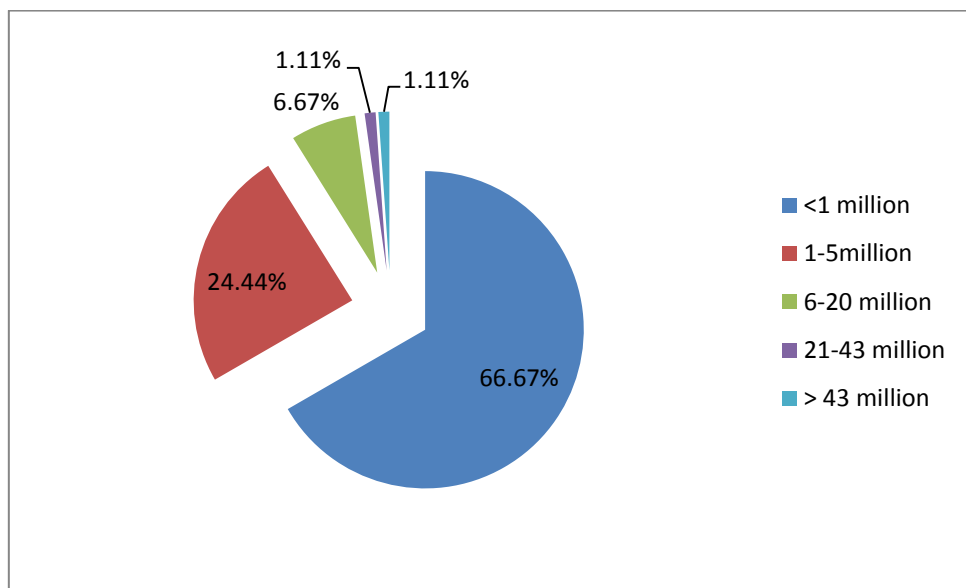


Figure 10 Business turnover

The majority of marketing budgets as a percentage of annual turnover was less than 10% (61.2% of SMEs). This is in line with findings that SMEs have smaller budgets and therefore may have little attention to marketing (Pomerantz, 2002, Carson, 1990 cited by Withey, 2009). 15.7% of SMEs have a budget between 11-20% of overall turnover. Just 0.6% state they have a marketing budget exceeding 50% of annual turnover. 7.6% have a budget of be-

tween 21-30% while 1.1% has between 41-50%. 11.2% were unknown. The last 2% of respondents stated that either their budgets change annually (5) or chose not to respond (2).

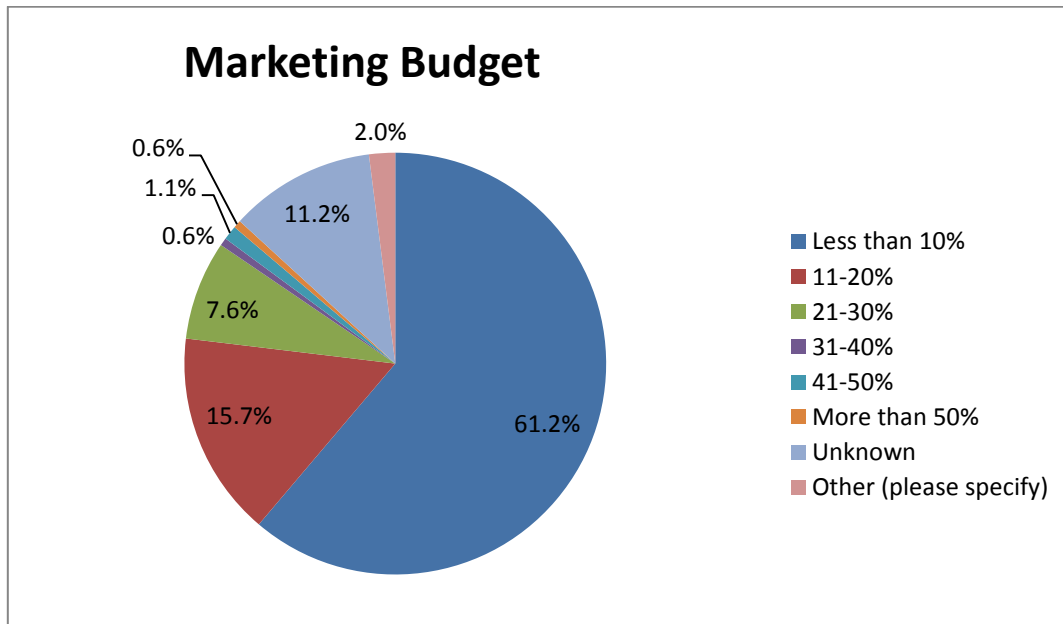


Figure 11 Marketing budget as a % of annual turnover

#### 4.2.2 IM

Part two was related to IM within the SME. Results found that it is the owners within SMEs who primarily carry out marketing activities. This aligns with previous findings that it is owner/managers and not marketing personnel conducting marketing activities (McCullagh, 2010). Thus marketing may be reactive, unstructured, haphazard and spontaneous (Gilmore, et al., 2001). Figure twelve displays that 56.9% of respondents list the owner as being responsible for marketing activity within the business. 21.7% of respondents list managers, 18.8% list the marketing manager, while 2.6% list external bodies as managing marketing activity. 5.51% of respondents chose “Other” listing various holders of responsibility including Director, employees and external consultancy firms (see appendix F).

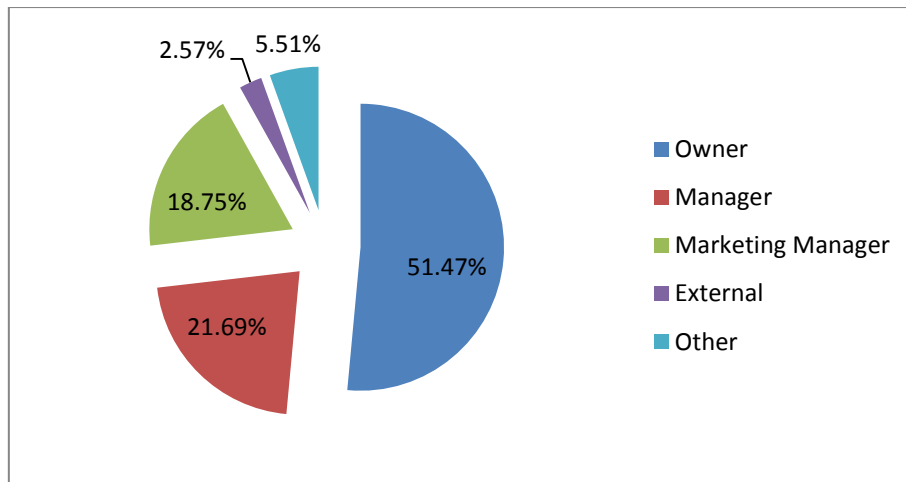


Figure 12 SME marketing responsibility

Of these 83.3% were fulltime staff and 16.7% part-time.

Following this, IM tools and corresponding objectives were examined. Respondents identified the tools used, rated them, and detailed the objectives of using.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
<b>Social Media</b>	70.9%	183
<b>Website Marketing</b>	62.4%	161
<b>Email Marketing</b>	55.4%	143
<b>Search Engine Optimisation</b>	41.5%	107
<b>Pay Per Click</b>	20.2%	52
<b>Online PR</b>	17.1%	44
<b>Online Partnerships</b>	14.0%	36
<b>Viral Marketing</b>	8.9%	23
<b>None of these</b>	7.8%	20
<b>Other (please specify)</b>	7.4%	19

Table 13 Use of IM tools

The most used tool is social media (70.9%). Website and email marketing followed closely with 62.4% and 55.4%. SEO and PPC garnered 41.5% and 20.2% respectively while online PR and partnerships were less popular with 17.1% and 14.0%. Viral marketing was 8.9% while 7.8% specified that they use none of the tools. 7.4% choose other options as preferred

IM activities used. Some of these included text messaging, polling, and fliers (see appendix F).

<b>Can you rate the tools by order of what you feel is important, 1 being most important, 8 being least important</b>									
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>Rating Average</b>
<b>Email Marketing</b>	38	46	30	14	22	17	20	23	3.87
<b>Social Media</b>	54	54	26	18	16	16	16	10	3.24
<b>Search Engine Optimisation</b>	34	24	42	42	18	16	21	13	3.87
<b>Pay Per Click</b>	9	10	16	31	41	29	33	41	5.42
<b>Viral Marketing</b>	5	3	18	31	43	42	32	36	5.56
<b>Website Marketing</b>	52	39	40	27	13	26	6	7	3.22
<b>Online Partnerships</b>	4	16	21	22	29	40	52	26	5.45
<b>Online PR</b>	14	18	17	25	28	24	30	54	5.37

Table 14 IM tool ranking by perceived importance

Website marketing and social media were the most popular tools scoring an average importance rating of 3.22 and 3.24, or 40.25% and 40.5% respectively. Email marketing and SEO were equal at 3.87 or 48.38%. Online PR ranked fourth with 5.37 or 67.13% with PPC closely following with an average ranking of 5.42 placing it fifth. Sixth and seventh preference was filled by online partnerships and viral marketing scoring 5.45 and 5.56 respectively. This is summarised below.

<b>Overall Ranking</b>	<b>Tool</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Ranking</b>
<b>1</b>	Website Marketing	40.25%	3.22
<b>2</b>	Social Media	40.50%	3.24
<b>3</b>	Email Marketing	48.38%	3.87
<b>3</b>	Search Engine Optimisation	48.38%	3.87
<b>4</b>	Online PR	67.13%	5.37
<b>5</b>	Pay Per Click	67.75%	5.42
<b>6</b>	Online Partnerships	68.13%	5.45
<b>7</b>	Viral Marketing	69.50%	5.56

Table 15 Tool ranking

Respondents then listed the objectives of using each tool. Table seventeen illustrates the response rate.

<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Percent</b>
<b>Social Media</b>	74.9%
<b>Email Marketing</b>	73.0%
<b>Website Marketing</b>	57.5%
<b>Search Engine Optimisation</b>	53.7%
<b>Pay Per Click</b>	45.2%
<b>Online Partnerships</b>	39.8%
<b>Viral Marketing</b>	39.0%
<b>Online PR</b>	37.5%
<b>Other (please specify)</b>	19.3%

Table 16 Response rate in using different tools and their objectives

The summarised objectives of each tool are listed in table eighteen next.



**Email Marketing**

Build awareness of business  
 Communicate with customers  
 Drive sales  
 Generate Customers  
 Newsletter/Ezine distribution  
 Promotions  
 Targeting

**Social Media**

Accessible on mobile phones  
 Build brand and raise awareness  
 Communicate with customers, clients and businesses  
 Facebook used  
 Promotion  
 Provide information  
 Sales  
 To advertise/promote

**Website Marketing**

To advertise  
 Build awareness  
 Provide information  
 Answer queries  
 Build customer base  
 Advertise  
 Sales

**Pay Per Click**

Advertising  
 Build brand  
 Create sales  
 Customer generation  
 Increased traffic to website  
 Localised marketing  
 Targeting

**Viral Marketing**

Build brand awareness / business awareness  
 Build customers  
 Don't use  
 WOM is free

**Search Engine Optimisation**

Build awareness  
 Drive traffic to website  
 To be in top results on search engines  
 To promote business  
 To promote the company

**Online Partnerships**

Branding  
 Creating links between other popular websites  
 Gain customers

**Online PR**

Awareness  
 Customer generation and management  
 Keeping the public informed  
 Sales  
 Working in partnership with third party sites to promote

**Other (please specify)**

Ads in newspapers  
 Apps  
 Face to face selling  
 Occasional local magazine editorials  
 Sponsorship of local events

Table 17 Objectives of IM tools

Question nine was concerned with a Likert scale to measure responses to different statements as table nineteen outlines below.

<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Neither agree nor disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Rating Average</b>
<b>Our company does not use the internet in conducting its marketing activities</b>	39	24	24	81	91	3.62
<b>Our company depends heavily on the internet in conducting its marketing activities</b>	63	68	63	40	25	2.60
<b>Our company could use the internet more in conducting its marketing activities</b>	64	137	40	11	7	2.07
<b>Our company does not see the benefits of using the internet to conduct marketing activities</b>	12	21	40	67	119	4.00
<b>Our company can measure the success of using the internet for its marketing activities</b>	38	98	92	21	10	2.49

Table 18 Statement measurement

This scale is measured by assigning a numerical value to each scale i.e. strongly agree equals one, agree equals two and so on to strongly disagree equalling five. The rating average then measures responses overall. With a rating of 3.62, respondents fall between indifference and disagreeing with the statement that they do not use IM for marketing related activity. This indicates that IM is used. Regarding dependency on IM, an average rating of 2.60 means that respondents tend to agree or be indifferent that their company's depend heavily on the function. The majority of respondents agree that they could use the internet more with a rating of 2.07. SMEs can identify the benefits of using IM as responses fall under the category of disagree with an average rating of 4.00. In terms of measuring the success of IM, responses lie between agreement and indifference at 2.49 with regard to whether the success

can be measured. Following on from this, respondents were asked about issues faced/barriers of conducting IM.

<b>What problems, if any, does your company encounter with relation to carrying out internet marketing activities? (please tick one or more)</b>		
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Percent</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
<b>Insufficient time to carry out the marketing activities</b>	51.2%	125
<b>Lack of internet marketing knowledge</b>	37.7%	92
<b>Lack of financial resources</b>	36.1%	88
<b>Difficulty measuring the effectiveness of internet marketing tools</b>	32.8%	80
<b>Our company encounters no problems with our internet marketing activity</b>	11.9%	29
<b>No opinion</b>	11.5%	28
<b>Other (please specify)</b>		

Table 19 Barriers faced by SMEs in conducting IM

Responses indicated that the main barrier encountered was insufficient time to carry out the marketing activities with 51.2%. Lack of financial resources was 36.1%. The absence of IM knowledge also rated high with 37.7% citing this as a problem. These figures reflect the literature as studies have found time and financial resources alongside lack of knowledge hinder IA (Gilmore, et al., 2007, Cragg and King, 1993, Mehrrens, et al., 2001, Bodorick, et al., 2002, Jeffcoate, et al., 2002, Chapman, et al., 2000, Dlodlo and Dhurup, 2010, Hormozi and Harding, 1998, Stansfield and Grant, 2003, Kohn and Husig 2006). The difficulty in measuring the effectiveness of IM tools (32.8%), echo Gilmore, et als., (2007) findings that no effective measurement tool was a barrier to IA. ‘The main question is not whether to deploy internet technology but rather how to deploy it’ with company’s having no choice but to in order to remain competitive (Porter, 2001, p64). 11.9% do not encounter any problems while 11.5% had no opinion on the subject matter. A number of respondents offered “Other” reasons by way of comments highlighted in table twenty-one.

Number	Other (please specify)
1	Competing with misinformation or spam style marketing without spamming ourselves.
2	company resource very important
3	insufficient time allocated to such marketing due to staff restrictions
4	Internet marketing is consistently changing
5	Higher speed internet in our area would help- should be happening soon.
6	Massive difference in cost between similar providers for some options make it difficult to know what form to pursue at times
7	response rates can be low - not enough of a sample when using existing customers
8	We also have the issue of ineffective rural internet access and slow internet speed This frustrates and makes online marketing difficult and more costly for the company
9	our marketing is done by word of mouth
10	LEARNING MORE EACH DAY
11	Security issues (hacking)

Table 20 IM barriers comments

Issues listed here and identified in the literature include security issues (Aldridge, et al., 1997, Dlodlo & Dhurup, 2010, Forcht 1996, and Gilmore, et al., 2007), and internet access availability (Stockdale and Standing, 2006).

As to whether SMEs intended to implement an IM strategy in future, the results are illustrated below:

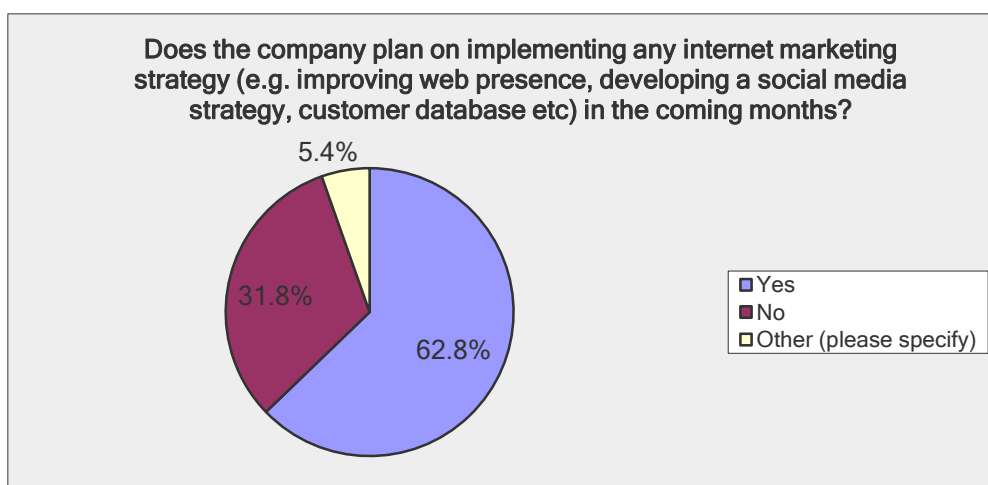


Figure 13 Future IM implementation

This response is positive, and similar to a study by Ramsey et al, (2003) that SMEs do appear to acknowledge the importance IM strategies for their business with 62.8% considering implementing strategies in the future. 31.8% however have no future IM plan and 5.4% chose other, the responses of which are listed in table twenty-two below.

<b>Number</b>	<b>Other (please specify)</b>
1	This is carried out on a regular basis, an internet marketing strategy is in place every year
2	Don't know - not involved in decision
3	Blog on website to improve SEO performance
4	building short videos capabilities for internal and client PR, ongoing database building;
5	I wish we could have time to!
6	continual review
7	Internet marketing strategy is on-going
8	Yes in the near future
9	Research required on Who or what company offers an effective system that leaves the company self reliant and not dependant on internet support company Costs for such a service also an important factor
10	already have an active plan
11	Maintain existing web presence
12	-
13	Wish i had time
14	Party campaign on use of social media to be announced soon

Table 21 Comments on future IM strategy

### 4.2.3 Respondent Profile

Part three of the survey was concerned with the respondent. Those that completed the questionnaire were mainly owner managers, but respondents also were employed in categories that included accounts, administration, management, marketing department, and sales. Of these 85.1% was full time with 14.9% part time. 32.3% of respondents were employed for less than five years, 23.9% have been employed between 5-10 years while 43.8% have been in employment in their SME for greater than ten years.

Regarding age, 31.9% were between ages 41-50. 16.3% were under the age of thirty. 26.3% were aged 31-40 with 20.7% in the 51-60 brackets. 4.8% were over sixty.

<b>Less than 30</b>	16.3%	41
<b>31-40</b>	26.3%	66
<b>41-50</b>	31.9%	80
<b>51-60</b>	20.7%	52
<b>Over 60</b>	4.8%	12

Table 22 Respondent age profile

The majority of respondents held a postgraduate degree (21.1%). 18.7% held a bachelors degree, 19.1% attended some college, 17.1% attended secondary school, 12.4% held a diploma, 6.4% were university graduates and 0.4% held PhD's. 4.8% chose the "Other" option.

<b>Type</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Postgraduate Degree</b>	21.1%
<b>Some College</b>	19.1%
<b>Bachelors Degree</b>	18.7%
<b>Secondary School</b>	17.1%
<b>Diploma</b>	12.4%
<b>University Graduate</b>	6.4%
<b>Other (please specify)</b>	4.8%
<b>PhD</b>	0.4%

Table 23 Respondent education

Areas of graduation were identified as business related 44.57%, marketing related 18.48%, computing related 4.35% and non business disciplines (art, education, science, property, beauty, and engineering) at 32.61%.

<b>Area of Education</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Business discipline</b>	44.57%
<b>Non business discipline</b>	32.61%
<b>Business with marketing</b>	18.48%
<b>Computing</b>	4.35%

Table 24 Education disciplines

Regarding involvement in IM activity; 11% of respondents are not and were not involved in IM implementation. 7% of respondents will not be involved with IM in the future. 89% of respondents are/were involved in the SMEs IM activity.

Answer Options	Never	Occasionally	Sometimes	Often	Always	Rating Average
<b>Are you involved in internet marketing implementation in the company?</b>	28	40	31	51	101	3.63
<b>Were you involved in the implementation of internet marketing?</b>	29	32	37	50	103	3.66
<b>Will you be involved in internet marketing activities going forward?</b>	19	34	29	59	110	3.82

Table 25 Respondents role in IM

The final area within the survey encouraged respondents to provide feedback or questions regarding the survey and research overall (see appendix F).

### 4.3 Phase 2: In-Depth Interviews

This involved conducting eight in-depth interviews with SME owner/managers across industry categories identified by CSO (services, industry, transport, agriculture and fishing, Science and technology, tourism and travel, Construction) with the inclusion of retail. The interviews were broken into sections and what follows are the findings. Interview summary transcript excerpts can be seen in appendix I.

#### 4.3.1 Internet marketing defined

IM is seen as a productive tool in the SME arsenal, one used as a communication and advertising medium to reach both customers and clients. Each interviewee had a working definition of IM with communication as the common foundation. Encouragingly each SME category had in place some form of IM use. Two interviewees regarded IM as promoting their business online with a further two considering it a unique tool to communicate with customers and clients. Moreover two considered IM as having an online presence for their business. Commonalities of each response is however advertising the business and generating custom.

### 4.3.2 Tools and techniques

Interviewees all used one or more or a combination of the tools outlined in section 1.1. The breakdown is highlighted below. The most popular tools in use are website marketing, email marketing, and social media each used by 87.5% of respondents in their marketing activity. Least popular or underused with 25% respondents is viral marketing and online partnerships.

<b>Tool</b>	<b>% Count</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
<b>Website</b>	87.5%	7
<b>Email Marketing</b>	87.5%	7
<b>Social media</b>	87.5%	7
<b>SEM</b>	62.5%	5
<b>Online PR</b>	50.0%	4
<b>Opt in email</b>	50.0%	4
<b>Interactive marketing</b>	37.5%	3
<b>Viral marketing</b>	25.0%	2
<b>Online partnerships</b>	25.0%	2

Table 26 IM Tools used

The objectives of these tools echoed those identified in table eighteen from the initial questionnaire responses.

### 4.3.3 Influences (drivers and barriers)

Drivers and barriers identified by SMEs are listed in the following table



<b>SME Category</b>	<b>IM Driver</b>	<b>IM Barrier</b>	<b>IA Micro Influences</b>	<b>IA Macro Influences</b>
<b>Retail</b>	Free Easily accessible Everyone Can Use It Quick	Gaining traction		Not following trends
<b>Services</b>	Competition Inexpensiveness Reach	Lack of time and skills	Limited time and resources	Market share Competitive pressure Recession
<b>Tourism &amp; Travel</b>	Increased communication with customers/clients	Lack of time resources Lack of financial resources	Lack of time	Competitive pressure Bad PR resulting from online reviews Having everything out in the open
<b>Construction</b>	Proven value	Lack of time resources Lack of knowledge and skills	Lack of time Lack of knowledge	Competitive pressure
<b>Science &amp; Technology</b>	Competition Inexpensive Speed		Lack of time	Competitive pressure
<b>Industry</b>	Increased customer communication, interaction and promoting the business	Lack of times resources Lack of financial resources Lack of knowledge	Lack of resources Lack of time Lack of finance	Competitive pressure
<b>Agriculture &amp; Fishing</b>	Everything is online in today's business world	Lack of time resources Lack of financial resources	Lack of knowledge Lack of skills Different generation	Competitive pressure
<b>Transport</b>	Competition	Lack of time and knowledge	Time and knowledge	Competitive pressure

Table 27 IM and IA influencers

These all similar to those drivers and barriers identified in the literature and outlined in both tables three and four. Results show that SMEs consider similar issues regarding IM barriers and drivers as well as IA influencers. IM drivers are predominately reactive to competition and also owing to the value of using IM, increased communication and the speed by which it can be achieved. Beatty, et al., (2001); Drew, (2003) and Gilmore, et al., (2007) are amongst those who found reduced costs a driver of IM, as does SMEs. Increased communication also drives IM, which is identified as CRM in the literature (Alam, 2009; Beatty, et al., 2001).

A predominant issue with regards barriers is the lack of resources within the SMEs. Lack of time, finance and knowledge of IM are all considered as hindrances in its operation and are the major barriers identified by SMEs, and in the literature by Bodorick, et al., (2002); Chapman, et al., (2000); Cragg & King, (1993); Dlodlo and Dhurup, (2010); Hormozi and Harding, (1998); Jeffcoate, et al., (2002) ; Kohn and Husig (2006); Mehrtens, et al., (2001) and Stansfield and Grant, (2003). Competitive pressure is recognised as a major influence of IA among the SMEs. This is in agreement with the literature (Chang and Cheung, 2001; Ching and Ellis, 2004; Daniel and Wilson, 2002; Dongen, et al., 2002; Kardaras and Papathanassiou, 2000; Mehrtens, et al., 2001; Yu, 2006; Zhu, et al., 2003).

#### 4.3.4 Incentives

The interview found that just 62.5% are aware or had received any aid from government bodies or incentives. 37.5 were unaware of any help available to them. Those unaware were the construction, industry and transport categories.

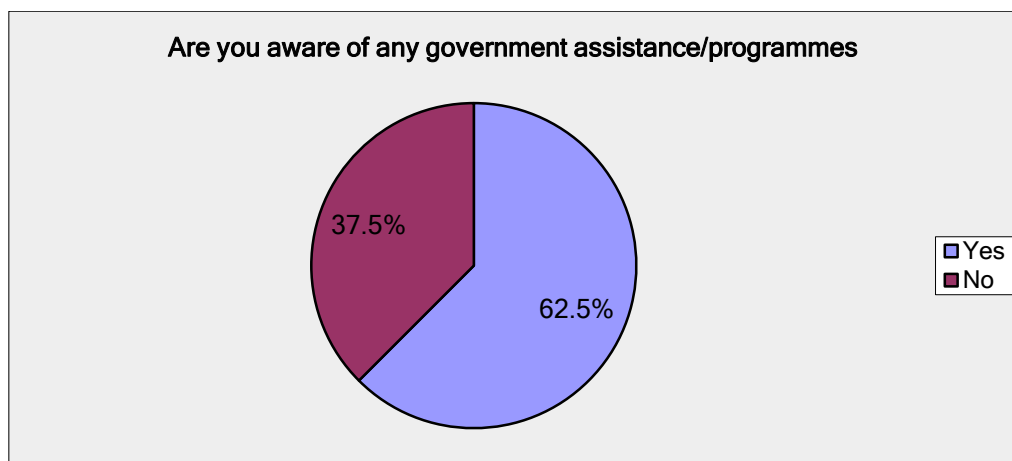


Figure 14 Awareness of government incentives

Of the responses, three had availed of such programmes regarding IM. The science and technology availed of grants, the tourism and travel SME attended social media workshops however iterated that it did not affect the IM within their company. The services SME also attended social media workshops whereby they received training in all aspects of various social media tools which they considered very helpful. In terms of availability of information, the county enterprise boards were noted as the body supplying workshops and information. Little knowledge existed regarding government grants or funding available. It should be noted that interviews were conducted prior to the new government incentive to get businesses

online (the first phase of the ‘National Digital Strategy’) (The Journal, 2013). Of the SMEs aware of help available, their actual knowledge was vague, however they admit that have not actively sought the information themselves.

#### 4.3.5 Marketing system

Table twenty-nine outlines the existence of a marketing plan within the SMEs. Just five SMEs have a working plan to guide marketing activity. Three SMEs do not have a plan; construction, industry and transport. Interestingly these are also the same categories unaware of any government assistance. These categories suggest that their planning is very “ad-hoc” (transport), that a plan is hoped for the future (industry) and that while an idea of future marketing plans is in place, it is not official (construction). Of those with plans in place just one SME (science and technology) map out a yearly strategy where others plans their activity shorter term with quarterly (retail) and monthly (agriculture and fishing) approaches. Others see their planning as reactive (services) and as a general guide changing often (tourism and travel). These findings relate to Mazzoral, (2004) cited by Mokhtar and Burgess, (2011) noting that SMEs can typically be lacking in long term planning.

<b>Is there a strategic marketing plan in place?</b>		
<b>Yes</b>	62.5%	5
<b>No</b>	37.5%	3

Table 28 Strategic marketing plan in place

#### 4.3.6 Measurement

Gilmore, et al., (2007) identified barriers of IM to include having no effective measurement tool. Doherty and Ellis-Chadwick (2006) also noted that the literature on IM fails to substantially address performance measurement or attainment and sustenance of competitive advantage. Measurement methods employed by SMEs to measure IM success are listed below.

	We do not depend on financial measurements to evaluate our IM performance		We do not depend on consumer behaviour measures to evaluate our IM performance		We do not depend on IM measures to evaluate our IM performance	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
<b>Retail</b>	X			X	X	
<b>Services</b>		X		X		X
<b>Transport</b>	X		X		X	
<b>Tourism and Travel</b>	X		X		X	
<b>Agriculture and Fishing</b>		X		X		X
<b>Construction</b>		X		X		X
<b>Science and Technology</b>	X		X		X	
<b>Industry</b>	X			X		X
	5	3	3	5	4	4

Table 29 IM measurement

Financial measurements include return on IM Investments, return on sales, net profit, gross profit, contribution margin, IM sales to total sales and brand equity. Consumer behaviour measures include customer loyalty and penetration while IM measures include retention rate, IM sales value, electronic sales to total sales, number of electronic transactions, traffic, visit duration and number of users. Just the retail, services, agriculture and fishing, construction and industry sectors use any form of measurement. The transport, tourism and travel and science and technology have no measurement technique in place to effectively measure IM performance. There, by admittance of the SMEs, are no specific measurement tools in place by any of the SMEs currently to effectively measure the success of the IM activity. A common use of Google Ad-words was identified throughout the SMEs however.

Poon and Swatman (1997) use ‘perceived benefits’ to qualify benefits gained through the use of the internet. Unanimously it was agreed that IM would result in new sales, new customers, increased profits, good customer relationships, new markets and fast communication with customers.

#### **4.4 Phase 3: Expert analyses**

The expert interview was carried out with an expert within the area. Mr Eoin O'Siochru, manager of the IM unit of Enterprise Ireland kindly provided his input. Eoin regards IM as a *“vital component of a company’s overall marketing strategy”* which *“should clearly articulate the value proposition of the company in line with customer expectations and needs”* and should occupy within 26-50% of total marketing. In line with findings Eoin regards website *‘To act as the hub of all internet marketing activity’* and email marketing *“If do correctly still one of the most effective revenue generating tools”* as among the most important IM tools, along with SEM *‘A definition of the overall online marketing strategy’* and interactive marketing *‘CRM vital to the client engagement process’*. However in line with findings Eoin does not think SMEs are using IM effectively *‘No - SME's tend to concentrate on website development and don't consider what the customer wants when planning a web deployment’*. Agreeing with findings regarding measurement, Eoin considers that *‘In most companies there is no measurement - however more enlightened companies are now using analytical tools and CRM applications to manage and measure customer engagement in terms of monetisation and return on investment’* and proposes that *‘The most important consideration for SME's when they are developing their online marketing strategy is to remember "Strategy before Structure"’*. Mr O'Siochru considers changing market forces as a main driver of IM alongside widespread IA. He considers a lack of understanding by managers as a main barrier as they fail to realise its benefits. Overall IA according to Mr O'Siochru is influenced by *‘Owner managers who recognise the value and importance of the cost to benefit rate of an appropriate internet strategy to their business’* which is in line with the perceived benefits and planning importance found in the findings. (See appendix L for interview).

#### **4.5 Discussion**

This section will examine the findings of the research thus far to include all phases of data collection and analysis. The findings are examined under the headings of the research objectives.

#### 4.5.1 Objective 1

*To investigate the current level of IM among SMEs in the Northwest region of Ireland;*

- *To explore the extent to which SMEs employ the following IM techniques:*
  - *Website,*
  - *SEM,*
  - *Email Marketing,*
  - *Viral marketing,*
  - *Online partnerships*
  - *Online PR,*
  - *Interactive marketing, and*
  - *Social media (Adapted from Chaffey, et al., 2006 and Failte Ireland, 2012).*
- *To assess the extent to which SMEs evaluate the usefulness of the techniques used*

The findings indicate that IM is indeed in use within SMEs and that 92.2% of these use one or more of the IM tools listed above (the objectives of which can be seen in table eighteen). The results show that 58.17% of respondents have a website, which is in agreement to a report by the EEN that 40% of Irish businesses do not have an online presence (European Enterprise Network, 2010). SMEs utilise these tools as they consider it *'brings us closer to customers'* and seeing as *'everyone is online now on phones, tablets and laptops. This is where information is, it's where the customer is'*. The interviews found that on average 65% of all marketing efforts is IM related with the remainder incorporating traditional methods and channels. Less than 10% responded that they did not use IM however upon further investigation respondents failed to realise that what they were using would be classified as IM. It is encouraging however that over 90% is in some method utilising and reaping the benefits of IM. SMEs rate the usefulness as *'ESSENTIAL! It's easy to use but difficult to get right'*, *'very useful and easy to implement'*, *'IM is very important, especially as the next generation of entrepreneurs and retailers (our target market) know all about the internet. They use it, believe in it and more importantly trust it'*; *'we use the Internet as it is a huge part of our business model'*.

While there is a trust in its benefits, there is however no effective common measurement system in place *'than online sales, we have no procedures in place'*. Google Ad-words is cur-

rently the only effective measurement tool that can actually measure the ratio of sales to online sales and where sales were generated but IM is considered *'hard to measure'*. Analytics also featured prominently as a measurement tool but in an ad-hoc manner and IM can be *'hard to see where the internet played a part sometimes so it would be good to have a more efficiently measurement device'*.

#### **4.5.2 Objective 2**

*To discover the micro drivers of IM adoption and the factors that encourages SMEs to adopt IM strategies and techniques.*

Micro drivers were identified by the literature and the data collection methods as being inexpensive, its means as a communication medium, proven value, perceived benefits, speed, and interaction and promotion of the business. The founding factors that encourage the use of IM is to grow the business *'wanting to have a national reach'*, improved CRM *'Communicating with customers at a direct level, interaction and promoting business offering'*. SMEs understand that IA and IM offer a much more cost effective method of reaching their customer and entering new markets.

#### **4.5.3 Objective 3**

*To examine the macro drivers of IM adoption and the factors which encourage SMEs to adopt IM strategies and techniques.*

Macro drivers as identified in the literature and through data collection are competitive pressure, and recessions. SMEs are adapting and changing to the modern world *'People do not look in the traditional places such as the phone book, everyone Google's'*. SMEs are *'trying to defend market share and margin. We are operating on less income so we have to find new customers'*. Competition is the resonating factor regarding external drivers of IM *'We have to keep up to stay afloat and ensure our business survival'*, *'keeping up and ahead of competitors is very important. It's not so much pressure but a necessity'*.

#### **4.5.4 Objective 4**

*To consider the factors and issues which deter/hinder IM adoption by SMEs*

The research identified numerous factors that influence IA within SMEs and in doing so influence IM. Major influencers were attributed to lack of resources to include time, financial,

knowledge and skills *'Time is the main hurdle we try to overcome'*. Limited time was cited by each SME category. Interestingly government incentives did not feature as a current influence with SMEs. As discussed previously, there are levels of awareness of incentives but this does not factor in any IA or IM. Other notable influences include the competition- *'If you're not on it your behind everyone else'* and *'if we don't have a fairly up to date, modern site a user may perceive us to be not as good as a competitor as the website is a reflection of our business'*. Business planning also does not feature predominately but is rather sporadic and reactive to changes or trends on the external environment *'It would be reactive. When I have time and think of it, I'm proactive. But when I don't have time it can be reactive'* and ranges from *'changing often'* to being rather *'ad-hoc'*.



## **5.0 Conclusion and Recommendations**

### **5.1 Introduction**

This study is one of the few to examine IM in SMEs among different industries and to the researcher's knowledge the first to examine IM and SMEs in the Northwest of Ireland. This chapter is concerned with illustrating the research contributions to the accumulative knowledge in the subject area, first illustrating the research objectives and findings alongside this studies contribution. Thereafter the chapter discusses implications/limitations of the study in both academic and SME contexts. Recommendations will also be presented.

### **5.2 Research Objective/s**

The research questions examined IM in SMEs in the Northwest of Ireland; developing an understanding and interpreting IA and IM within SMEs and exploring the factors affecting adoption; the different methods, implementation and measurement and considering the overall impact. IM is indeed employed by SMEs throughout the Northwest and considered an invaluable and essential tool as chapter four highlighted. There is however no strict procedure in place for IM, with SMEs adapting with trends and technologies and learning at their own pace. This indicates that IM is generally exploratory and reactive. The more common IM tools are social media, email and website marketing with the objectives being CRM and generating business in a speedy, inexpensive manner. These objectives drive IM; benefits including less cost than traditional marketing, increased reach and CRM. SMEs utilising IM tools the least are industry, construction and transport who also fail to plan effectively their marketing efforts. Cross tabulation of SME categories however does not yield any substantial anomalies. Barriers to IM identified are as the literature states; lack of SME resources (time, finance, knowledge). The major influencers of overall IA can be subcategorised into micro and macro factors which both act as deterrents and drivers and include competitive pressure, resources, ability, skills and the age of the business. Younger SMEs embrace new technologies more so than those in operation longer.

Measurement of IM activity is counterproductive. Analytics and ad-words are used and provide statistics and figures on traffic and can record click to sale ratios, however SMEs are not implementing and following strict procedures to measure efficiently how IM benefits overall SME performance. This in effect can lead to SMEs blindly following IM objectives

that may not be best for the business. Designing an appropriate marketing plan to include measurement will identify the key strengths of tools for specific businesses.

Those involved in marketing activity are educated in a relevant discipline and find IM tools easy to use. Ease of use however does not equate to adequate use and again proper planning will provide a roadmap and agenda on the IM strategy, objective and course of action to achieve this desired result. SMEs with little knowledge should avail of any incentives from government bodies and indeed any courses available. Those providing incentives should actively engage with SMEs and market the benefits of them accordingly.

Overall this study reflects that the literature on IM and IA and the reality in SMEs in the Northwest of Ireland are similar; with these findings validating the literature, and the literature in turn validating the current state of IM and IA within SMEs. Expert opinions are also reflective in the literature and research findings. In effect the data has been triangulated to present a current state within SMEs in the Northwest of Ireland, as has never been studied before.

### **5.3 Limitations**

As with any social science research, this study has its limitations as follows.

- The sample size of 1,799 is limiting insofar as it represents just 20% of the overall Northwest SME population. Caution is therefore needed when interpreting the results if they are to be considered in a national context as they cannot be accepted as wholly representative of other regions within the country.
- The problems encountered during data collection included the difficulty of arranging interviews and the uncooperative attitude and general lack of interest among some approached with the research.
- Time was a predominant constraint throughout the research study. In hindsight the researcher would have begun compiling the new listing of SMEs much earlier on at the proposal stage of the research and arranged preliminary interviews at this stage also.

### **5.4 Opportunities for further research**

This study adds to a limited body of knowledge on IM adoption in SMEs across multiple SME categories and introduces new knowledge on IM within SMEs in the Northwest of Ireland. IM and IA is an important research area which will benefit from more conceptual and empirical contributions. Hence, a number of directions for future research exist as follows.

- Further research may refine the research findings and mirror studies could be completed in other regions within Ireland using this study as a framework.
- These findings can be compared to any existing or similar future studies on larger corporations to evaluate key differences in IM activity.
- It should also be noted that while the IM tools used in this research are distinguished as being the more commonly used and as having the greatest impact, other dimensions may be taken into consideration.

These opportunities can motivate future studies with regards IM, SMEs and Ireland.

## **5.5 Data Validation**

Eoin O’Siochru of Enterprise Ireland considered this research “*comprehensive and the methodology used was very appropriate. Its findings are in keeping with our understanding of the SME online landscape and would be replicated throughout the SME's sector in Ireland*”. Sarah Duffley, PhD researcher, lecturer and marketing practitioner in the area of marketing (online and social media) at Letterkenny Institute of Technology also notes that “*Research in the area of new media aids in bridging the gap between what is being addressed by marketing academics and what is needed by management in practice that has been highlighted by researchers*”.

## **5.5 Recommendations**

In the context of SMEs; they need to engage more with IM and ensure that they are planning effectively their use and activity. Sufficient planning and measurement will identify areas of resources perhaps underused whereby the SME can allocate these resources to IM and ensure its best use. Knowledge of available grants or courses will also benefit the SME in increasing their IM advantage.

Government bodies should increase SME engagement raising awareness of available IM aid.

Marketers should identify with this research and understand the findings in terms of their businesses and take the objectives and benefits identified in this research and in the literature into their daily operations.

### **5.6 Research reflections**

Were additional time available the researcher would have carried out an SME consensus study of the total 9,029 SMEs in the Northwest of Ireland. The researcher would also have interviewed not just one SME in each category but multiple SMEs to identify commonalities firstly among business type and then across all categories and to generalise the findings. Time constraints was a predominate influence overall.

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33.px&wonload=600&honload=400&rotate=](http://www.cso.ie/px/pxeirestat/Statire/Graphics/MakeGraph.asp?gr_type=2&gr_width=750&gr_height=500&gr_fontsize=11&menu=y&PLanguage=0&pxfile=2013451504729919ICA33.px&wonload=600&honload=400&rotate=)  
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## Appendices

## Appendix A: A profile of the Northwest of Ireland

The Northwest of Ireland comprises of counties Donegal, Leitrim and Sligo. Combined, they provide prosperous and mixed sceneries together with a multitude of living, working and business opportunities. The Northwest comprises of many small rural towns and villages – home to a variety of communities. The West is home to lively towns and cities providing a great combination of urban and rural mixings (adapted from [www.lookwest.ie](http://www.lookwest.ie)).

Table two overleaf provides a breakdown of the main statistics for the individual regions and the Northwest as a whole. In total there are 9,029 active SMEs (CSO, 2010). Table one below provides a breakdown of the SMEs in the region, along with their percentage of the total amount.

Northwest		
Employment Size		% of Total
Under 10	8572	94.94
10-19	105	1.16
20-49	265	2.93
50-250	87	0.96
Total	<b>9029</b>	<b>100.00</b>

**Table A1: Northwest SME's**

This figure (9,029) accounts for 4.63% of Irish SMEs (Ireland's total SME count being 194,972). Of this, 94.94% or 8572 are enterprises with 10 employees or less. Enterprises with 10-19 employees account for 1.16% or 105 SMEs. Enterprises with 20-49 employees account for 2.93% or 265 SMEs while enterprises with 50-249 employees account for 0.96% or 87 SMEs.

## Information



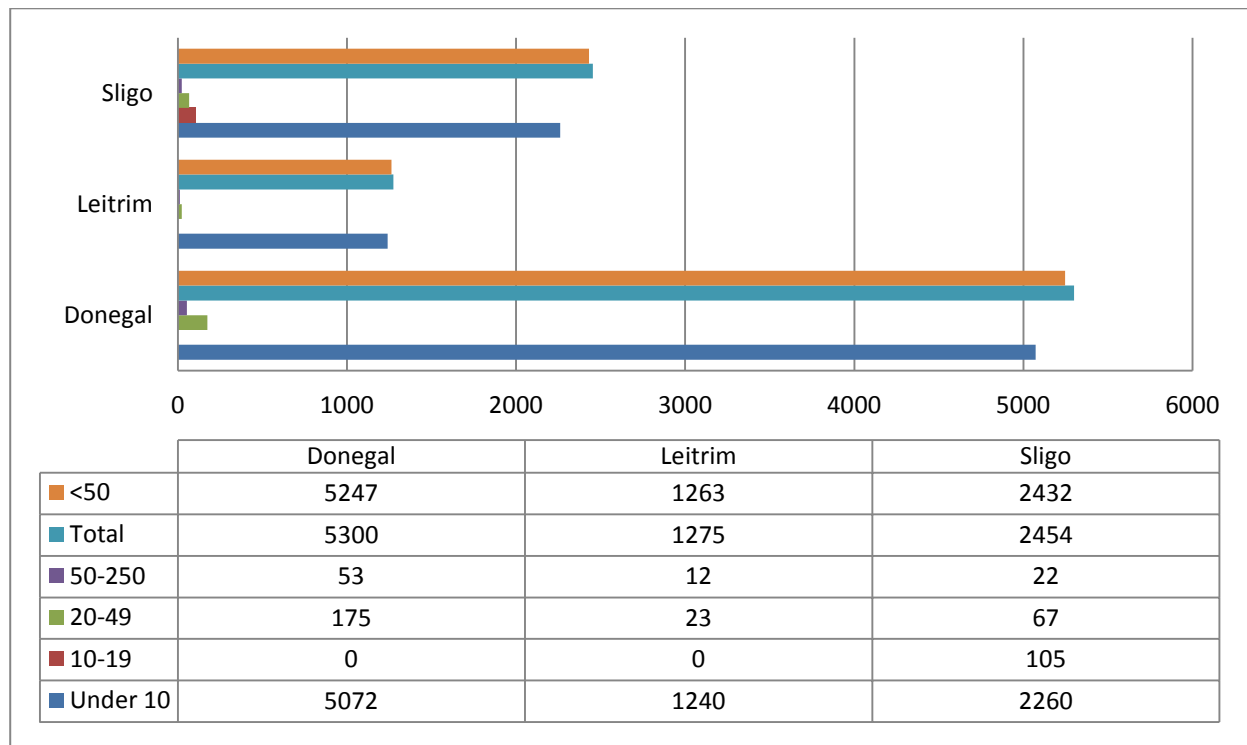
## The Northwest

Population	161,137	31,798	65,393	258,328
% of Ireland	3.51%	0.69%	1.43%	5.63%
SME Population	5,300	1,275	2,454	9,029
% of Ireland	2.72%	0.65%	1.26%	4.63%
Land Mass	485,951 ha	158,885 ha	183,746 ha	828,582 ha
% of Ireland	6.9%	2.26	2.6%	11.76%

**Table A2 Northwest profile**

Adapted from: People population (CSO, 2011), SME population (CSO, 2010), images and land mass (Western Development Commission, 2013)

Figure one below illustrates the breakdown of the number of SMEs operating in the Northwest (Donegal, Leitrim, Sligo) as of 2010.



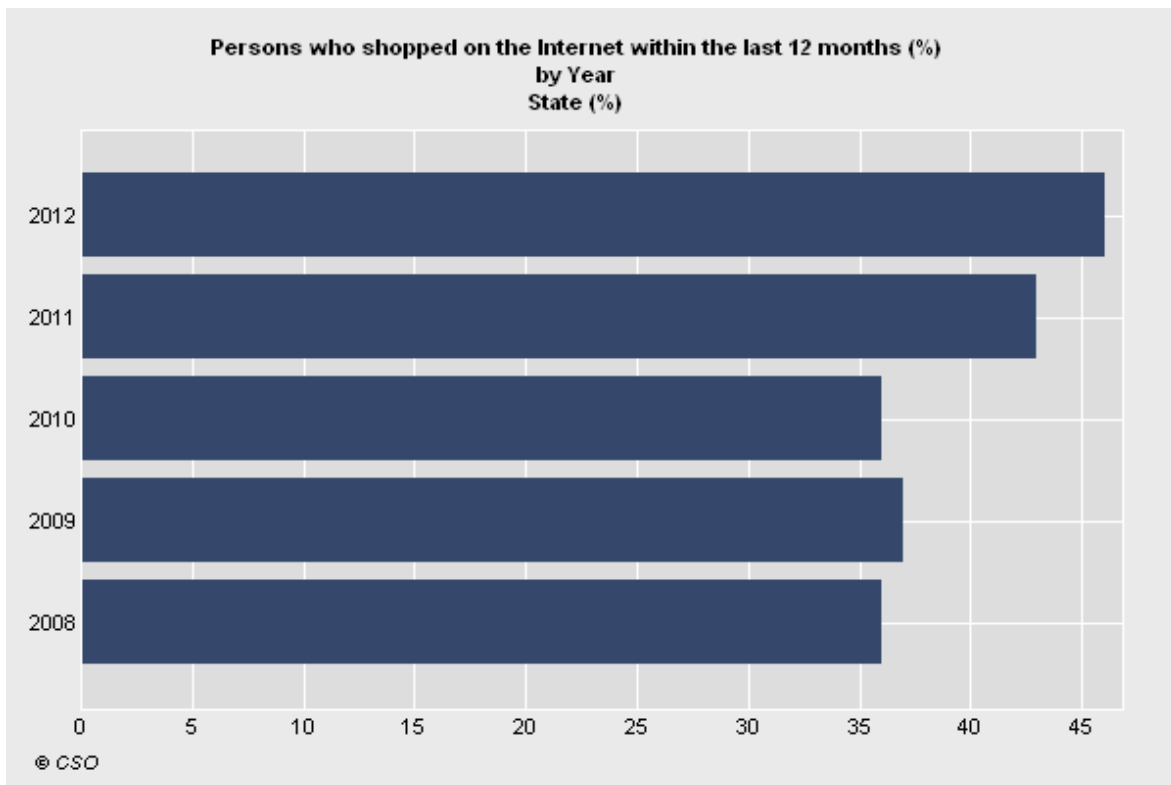
**Table A3 SMEs in the Northwest**

Source: adapted from (CSO, 2010).

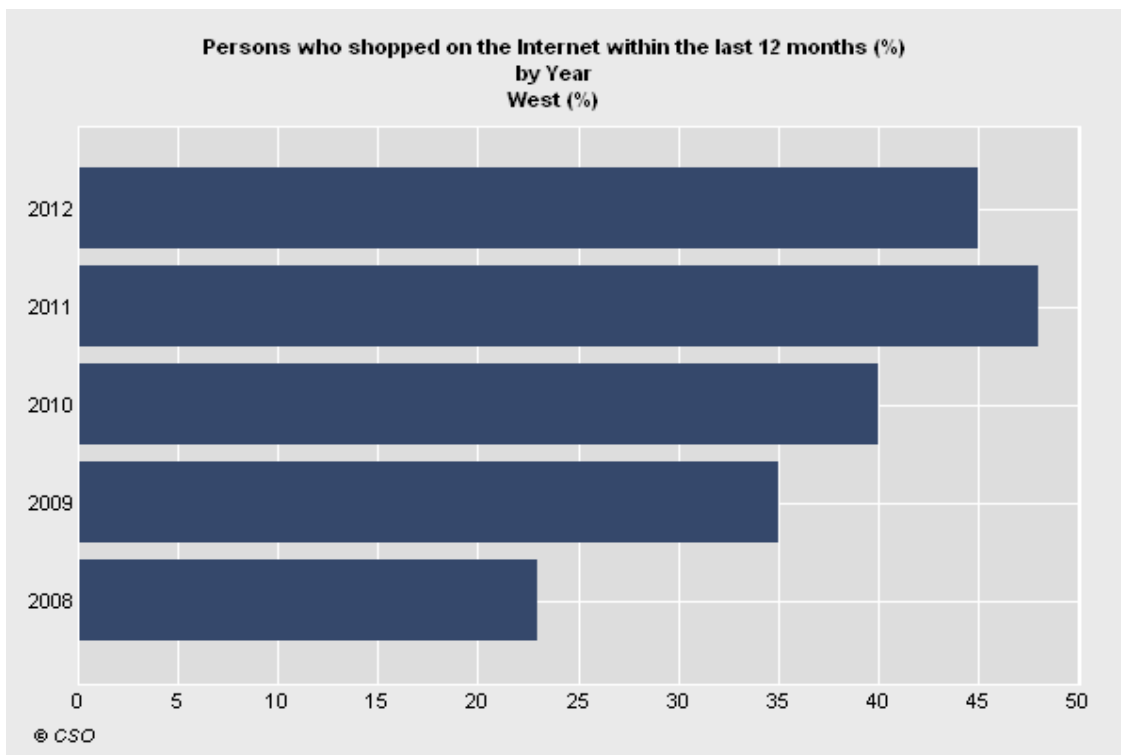
### Online activity in the Northwest

Online retail activity for the country has been increasing steadily over the past five years. On a more regional scale, online retail activity for the west has similarly been increasing progressively, jumping 20% in the past five years. Such increases in internet use particularly online shopping, herald an opportunity for SMEs to engage with their customers and potential customers online.





**Figure A1 Internet use Source: (CSO, 2012)**



**Figure A2 Source: (CSO, 2012)**

## Appendix B: Bodies contacted requesting business directories

- Enterprise Ireland
- Sligo County Council
- Sligo Borough Council
- Sligo Chamber of Commerce
- Sligo County Enterprise Board
- Donegal County Council
- Donegal County Enterprise Board,
- Donegal Chamber of Commerce
- Letterkenny Chamber of Commerce
- Leitrim County Council
- Leitrim County Enterprise Board
- Leitrim Chamber of Commerce
- Carrick on Shannon BNI Group
- Irish Small and Medium Enterprise Association (ISME)
- IDA Ireland
- The Central Statistics Office (CSO)
- The Company Registration Office (CRO)
- The Western Development Commission (WDC)
- Small Firms Association (SFA)
- Irish Business and Employers Confederation (IBEC)

As well as online directories;

- Redbook
- Kompass
- Plato Midwest
- FocuSME
- Handyinfo.ie

- [The big red book](#)
- [Mytown.ie](#)
- [Yalwa.ie](#)
- [Sligofree.com](#)

## Appendix C SME listing

1. 3 Mobile
2. 3D Innervision
3. 5 Star Fun
4. 7Th Wave Surf School
5. A Cab Hire
6. A Novel Idea
7. A&C Entertainments
8. A.B.I Ireland
9. A.D.O.P.T
10. A+M Grooming
11. Abbey Arts Centre
12. Abbey Foods
13. Abbey Hotel
14. Abbey Insulation
15. Abbey Marine & Field Sports
16. Abbeyfield Hotel
17. Abtech Precision Ireland Ltd
18. Accubook Ltd
19. Action School Of Film
20. Acushla Ltd.
21. Ad Vantage Media
22. Addams
23. Adl Stoneworks
24. Advance Drive
25. Affordable Tyres
26. AIB Northwest Branches
27. Aiken Promotions
28. Aisleigh Guest House
29. Ait Eile @ Gilroys Bar
30. Ait Eile Restaurant
31. Akad
32. Alan Lillis
33. Albany Home Decor
34. Alderford Home Furnishings
35. Alfie's The Barber Shop
36. Allingham Arms Hotel
37. Allingham Arts
38. Allure Designer Accessories
39. Alturalift
40. Alzheimer Society Of Ireland
41. Am Quinn & Co
42. Amg Garage Doors
43. Amour Arrow
44. An Tostal Festival
45. Anderson Auctioneer
46. Andoras Ltd
47. Andrew Hodson
48. Andrew Murray Motoring
49. Andrius Juranas
50. Andy Cox Promotions
51. Angel Hair & Beauty
52. Angelworld
53. Animal Healthcare
54. Anna's Hair Salon
55. Annie's Crafts
56. Antenna Electronics
57. Anthony Murray & Son Ltd
58. Aqua Nightclub/Twisted Pepper
59. Archers Arro
60. Archway Products Ltd
61. Arcon Recruitment
62. Arctic Fish Processing Ltd
63. Arctic Fish Shipping Agency
64. Arctic Ship Agents
65. Arctic Shipping Agency
66. Ard Na Breatha
67. Ard Na Hoo
68. Ardara Agricultural Show
69. Ardara Autoparts Ltd.
70. Ardara Business Association
71. Ardcarne Garden Centre
72. Arena 7 Leisure Complex
73. Argento
74. Arigna Fuels
75. Arigna Mining Experience
76. Ark Veterinary Centre
77. Armin Lowe Jewellers
78. Armstrong Engineering
79. Arroo Hair Salon
80. Arroo Septic Tank
81. Arrotek Medical Ltd
82. Asg Ireland
83. Ashtree
84. Ashtree Garden Centre
85. Assetco Managed Services Ltd
86. Astoria Wharf Bar
87. Atlanfish Ltd
88. Atlantic Beauty Salon
89. Atlantic Lock & Key

90. Atlantic Marine Supplies LTD
91. Atlanticside College
92. Aura Group
93. Aura Leitrim Leisure Centre
94. Auto Tech Motor Repair Centre
95. Autolak
96. Autoline Motor Factors
97. Avena Leisure
98. Avenue Mould Solutions Ltd
99. Award Motoring
100. Aware Menswear
101. Axa Insurance Ltd.
102. Azzurri
103. B&B Ireland
104. B&M DIY Store
105. B.B'S
106. B. Donaghey & Sons Exterior Insulation
107. B1 Diner
108. Baby Bay
109. Babylon Aesthetic Clinic
110. Ballast Signs
111. Ballinagleara Festival
112. Ballintogher Feis
113. Ballintra Races
114. Ballybofey Library
115. Ballybookies
116. Ballygawley Group Water Scheme
117. Ballykilgannon Drama Society
118. Ballymote Arts & Culture Community Development
119. Ballymote Bingo
120. Ballymote Business Association
121. Ballymote Credit Union
122. Ballymote Horse Show
123. Ballymote Pharmacy
124. Ballyshannon Annual Show Ltd
125. Ballyshannon Car Boot Sale
126. Ballyshannon Chamber Of Commerce
127. Ballyshannon Coal
128. Ballyshannon Credit Union
129. Ballyshannon Drama Club
130. Ballyshannon Folk Festival
131. Ballyshannon Leisure Centre
132. Ballyshannon Mace
133. Ballyshannon Mart
134. Ballyshannon Musical Society
135. Ballyshannon Shoe Co
136. Ballyshannon Town Council
137. Bandito
138. Bank Of Ireland
139. Barbershop Choir
140. Barbra McGroary Photography
141. Barna Waste
142. Barontop Fun Farm
143. Barry Electronics LTD
144. Barry's Bar
145. Barry's Pharmacy
146. Barton Smith Lock & Safe
147. Barton Smith Ltd
148. Baskin Tarmacadam Contractors
149. Bathroom Bliss
150. Battlebridge Paintball
151. Beach Hotel
152. Beacon Studio
153. Beatty Shipping Services LTD
154. Beauty On The Move
155. Bee Park Community Centre
156. Beginning Experience
157. Begley Pharmacy
158. Beirnes Bins
159. Beirnes Of Battlebridge
160. Belcoo Pharmacy
161. Beleek Insulation Services
162. Bella Vista
163. Beleek Chamber Of Commerce
164. Beleek Pottery Ltd
165. Beleek Pottery Visitors Centre
166. Belmont Hotel
167. Ben Sweeney
168. Benbulbin Physiotherapy & Sports Injury Clinic
169. Benview Patios
170. Bernie Donaghue
171. Bernie's Beauty Salon
172. Bespoke With Direction
173. Best Western
174. Beverly Hills Boutique
175. Biddy's Bar
176. Bikes & Toys
177. Bistro
178. Bizzprint
179. Black Cat Cove
180. Blacklion Fair Day
181. Blu Shepard Enterprises Ltd.

- |  |                                 |
|--|---------------------------------|
| 182. Blue Apple Dental Implant Team                    | 228. Brusna Energy Solutions    |
| 183. Blue Haven Hotel                                  | 229. Bryson Kitchens            |
| 184. Blue Hills Consulting Civil & Structural Engineer | 230. Bubbly Baby Market         |
| 185. Blue Poppy Dental                                 | 231. Bumble Bees                |
| 186. Blue Waterworld                                   | 232. Bundoran Adventure Park    |
| 187. Bluestack Ramblers Festival                       | 233. Bundoran Community Library |
| 188. BM Blinds & Shutters                              | 234. Bundoran Golf Club         |
| 189. BMDC  | 235. Bundoran Hardware          |
| 190. Bob Mullan Motors                                 | 236. Bundoran Motors            |
| 191. Body Wisdom                                       | 237. Bundoran Retail PK         |
| 192. Bonnar Engineering Ltd                            | 238. Bundoran Surf              |
| 193. Bonus Beds  | 239. Buon Appetite              |
| 194. Bookmaster Bookeeping Services Ltd                | 240. Burns Car Sales            |
| 195. Borderline Players                                | 241. Bus Eireann                |
| 196. Bothar  | 242. Bush Hotel                 |
| 197. Bow Wows & Meows                                  | 243. Business Assist Northwest  |
| 198. Boyce Travel                                      | 244. Buttermarket Management    |
| 199. Boyle Arts Festival                               | 245. C & S Tool & Plant Hire    |
| 200. Boyle Property                                    | 246. C Bonner & Son Ltd         |
| 201. Boyne Valley Foods                                | 247. C&C Cellular               |
| 202. Bradley Chiropractic                              | 248. Caca Milis                 |
| 203. Bradley Tyres                                     | 249. Cactus Jack                |
| 204. Brady Insurance                                   | 250. Cafe Fleur                 |
| 205. Brady Opticians                                   | 251. Cairde Festival            |
| 206. Brady Travel                                      | 252. Cairde Liatroim            |
| 207. Brainwave Charity                                 | 253. Cake Walk                  |
| 208. Breaffy House Resort                              | 254. Caldra House               |
| 209. Bredins Mannorhamilton                            | 255. Call Of The Wild           |
| 210. Breffni Cottages                                  | 256. Callan Tansey              |
| 211. Brendan Lowe & Sons                               | 257. Canning House & Garden     |
| 212. Brenan's Farm Shop                                | 258. Car Audio Ni               |
| 213. Breslin's Fine Furniture                          | 259. Cara Pharmacy              |
| 214. Bretts Pharmacy                                   | 260. Career Wise                |
| 215. Brian Mullins Insurance Brokers                   | 261. Caring Angels              |
| 216. Bridge Windscreens                                | 262. Carmel Gunning             |
| 217. Bridgestone                                       | 263. Carolans Restaurant        |
| 218. Brien & Associates Loss Assessors                 | 264. Carpet Interiors           |
| 219. Brilliant Red Consulting                          | 265. Carpet Right ROI           |
| 220. Brindley Advertising Ltd                          | 266. Carpetcleaning.Ie          |
| 221. Britelite Windows                                 | 267. Carr Communications        |
| 222. Brittons Pharmacy                                 | 268. Carraig Donn               |
| 223. Broadcast Department                              | 269. Carraroe Auto Supplies     |
| 224. Brockwell Ltd;                                    | 270. Carrick Community College  |
| 225. Brooks Hanley                                     | 271. Carrick Craft              |
| 226. Brouder Design                                    | 272. Carrick Holiday Homes      |
| 227. Browne's Autos                                    | 273. Carrick Indoor Shooting    |

- 274. Carrick Music Festival
- 275. Carrick On Shannon Motors
- 276. Carrick Print & Design
- 277. Carrick Tiles
- 278. Carrick Water Music Festival
- 279. Carrick-On-Shannon Golf Club
- 280. Carrie Bradshaw
- 281. Carron Quads
- 282. Carty Land & Sea Sports
- 283. Carty's Garage
- 284. Casey Accountants
- 285. Cash & Carry
- 286. Cash & Carry Kitchens
- 287. Cashel Chimneys
- 288. Cassidy Electrical
- 289. Castle Lighting
- 290. Castle Murray House Hotel
- 291. Castledargan Hotel
- 292. Castledavitt Furniture
- 293. Causeway Mobility Centre
- 294. Cawley's Hotel
- 295. CDC Voice & Data Solutions
- 296. CDVEC
- 297. Cecil Barber Bus Hire
- 298. Cecil's Whitesides Supervalu
- 299. CEF
- 300. Celtic Fringe Festival
- 301. Celtic Link Ferries
- 302. Celtic Seaweed Bath Products Ltd
- 303. Celtic Weave China Ltd
- 304. Centra - Filans
- 305. Centra Cartron
- 306. Central Hotel
- 307. Chain Driven Cycles
- 308. Charcoal Kebab
- 309. Charles Bonner & Sons
- 310. Charles Vial Ltd
- 311. Charlie's Barber Shop
- 312. Chase Images
- 313. Chasin Bull
- 314. Chatterbox Designs
- 315. Cheapest Quote
- 316. Chemco Pharmacy
- 317. Cherrymore Wholesale Kitchens Ltd
- 318. Cherrymore Cash & Carry Kitchens
- 319. Chimney Repairs Ireland
- 320. Chnoc Na Re
- 321. Choc - Amore
- 322. Chris Mc Grath Electrical
- 323. Chris McGlynn Painting & Decorating
- 324. Christies Supermarket Ltd
- 325. Christy O Grady Video
- 326. Ciaran Mchugh
- 327. Cinema Northwest
- 328. City Lady
- 329. Claire Crystal
- 330. Clancy Motors
- 331. Clancys Of Glenfarne
- 332. Clanree Hotel Dalrieda Ltd
- 333. Clare Clothing
- 334. Claremorris Motor Auctions
- 335. Clarion Hotel Sligo
- 336. Clarke & Conlon Insurance
- 337. Clarkes Bar
- 338. Classic Blinds
- 339. Classic Fireplaces
- 340. Clenahoo House
- 341. Cleveragh Park Managment Company
- 342. Clevery Mill
- 343. Clifford Electrical
- 344. Cloughbally Fishing Tackle & Bait
- 345. Cmd Group
- 346. Cms Marketing
- 347. Co Sligo Races
- 348. Coach House Hotel
- 349. Coastal Hydraulics
- 350. Coastal Windows
- 351. Coey Advertising Co Ltd
- 352. Coleman Construction
- 353. Coleman Electronics Sligo
- 354. Coleman Traditional Music Centre
- 355. Collins McNicholas
- 356. Collins Solicitors
- 357. Collooney Credit Union
- 358. Collooney Pharmacy
- 359. Colm Moyles Tractors
- 360. Colour Bar Hair Design
- 361. Comiskey Contracting
- 362. Commercial Hotel
- 363. Compupac Ireland Ltd
- 364. Computer Bits
- 365. Computer Jobs

366. Computer Repairs Sligo
367. Con Brio Sligo Music Association
368. Conal Gallen
369. Concensus Mediation
370. Connacht Amusements
371. Connacht Council
372. Connacht Gold
373. Connacht Gold Co-Op Society Ltd
374. Connaught Baby
375. Connect Hearing
376. Connolly Bros Car Sales Ltd
377. Connolly Mcdonald
378. Conrad Gallagher
379. Convoy Windows
380. Coolera Dramatic Society
381. Coolera Strandhill GAA Club
382. Cooney Industrial Auctions Ltd
383. Cooney Motors Ltd
384. Copley Retail Ltd
385. Copper Beach Landscaping
386. Cora Systems Ltd
387. Cordners
388. Corinne Beattie
389. Corran College
390. Corset Ireland
391. Cos Cos Festival
392. Cost Control Services
393. Cost Plus Sofas
394. Costcutter
395. Country Inn
396. Country Kitchens
397. Country Side Properties
398. County Leitrim Citizens Information Office
399. County Sligo Golf Club
400. County Sligo Golf Club Male Voice Choir
401. Courthouse Rest
402. Cox Pharmacy
403. Cpl Learning & Development
404. Cpm Ireland
405. Crabtree Cottage
406. Crafters Basket
407. Craigville Garden Centre
408. Crana Handknits Ireland Ltd
409. Crawfords Tiles & Bathroom Suites
410. Crea8Ive Corner
411. Crean Mosaics
412. Creative Media
413. Credit Union
414. Cromleach Lodge
415. Cronan Mac
416. Crossans Jewellers
417. Cryans Quayside Hotel
418. Ct Ball The Jewellers
419. Ct Electric
420. Ctc Training
421. Cuba Boutique
422. Cuddles & Care
423. Cullen Communications
424. Cullens Bar & Off License
425. Cup Of Tae Festival
426. Curleys Furniture
427. Curran Travel
428. Currid Motors
429. Currids Off Licence
430. Cut N' Crew
431. Cutting Corner
432. Cystic Fibrosis
433. D & R Cleaning Services
434. D.G Block Laying
435. Daily Fresh
436. Daly's Drinks
437. Damien Mc Kelvey Trailers
438. Damien Wimsey Septic Tank Cleaning
439. Danny Gallagher
440. Darcy Cleansweep
441. Dark Daughter Productions
442. Darren Hallinan
443. Davenport Direct Ltd
444. Davey Motors
445. David Cawley
446. David Hull Promotions
447. David Mc Conville Specialist Dentistry
448. Dawn Fresh
449. Declan Nerney
450. Decorworld
451. Deidre Cooke Opticians
452. Delcassion Ltd
453. Delta Direct Furniture
454. Dempseys Car & Van Spares
455. Derry Taheny Electric LTD
456. Desi Quinn Shoes
457. Dew Drop Inn



458. Dhr Communications
459. Diamond Coast Hotel
460. Dicey Reilly'S Bar
461. Digicreativ
462. Digital Services
463. Diorama
464. Discount Tyres
465. Discover Aloe
466. Discover Bundoran
467. Diver's Centra
468. Dlde Tirhugh Resource Centre
469. Dm Auctions
470. Dm Computing
471. Dmac Media
472. Dmg Motors
473. Dng Flanagan Ford
474. Doddy Taxi
475. Dog & Cat Boarding Kennels
476. Dog Safe Fence
477. Doherty Joinery
478. Doherty Tiles
479. Doherty White Marketing
480. Dolmen Stone
481. Domestic Violence Advocacy Services
482. Dom's Pier One
483. Donaghey Motor Homes Ltd
484. Donaghys Coach Lane
485. Donal Mcmonagail Agus A Mhic Teo
486. Donegal Adult Learning Guidance Service
487. Donegal Adventure Centre
488. Donegal Airport
489. Donegal Bay Festival
490. Donegal Christmas Fair
491. Donegal Community Chamber
492. Donegal Country Music Festival
493. Donegal County Library
494. Donegal Creameries Plc
495. Donegal Democrat
496. Donegal Down Syndrome
497. Donegal Drama Society
498. Donegal Engineering Employers Association
499. Donegal Equestrian Store
500. Donegal Fish Ltd
501. Donegal Fish Products
502. Donegal Fuels
503. Donegal Golf Club
504. Donegal Harvest Ltd
505. Donegal It
506. Donegal Livestock Mart
507. Donegal Meat Processors
508. Donegal Oil Co. LTD
509. Donegal Plumbing & Heating
510. Donegal Precision Engineering
511. Donegal Sports Partnership
512. Donegal Texel Sheep Breeders
513. Donegal Tile Centre
514. Donegal Town Credit Union
515. Donegal Town Food Fair
516. Donegal Town Hardware
517. Donegal Tyre Centre
518. Donegal Vec
519. Donegal Waste & Recycle
520. Donegal Water Safety
521. Doni Feeney Painting & Decorating Ltd
522. Donlon Plant Hire
523. Donnells Bar
524. Donnelly School Of Motoring
525. Donohue Studios
526. Doohan Shell Station
527. Doory Fashions
528. Dorrians Imperial Hotel
529. Dorrians Pharmacy
530. Dowds Fireplace
531. Dowra/Ballyshannon Mart
532. Dowramarts
533. Dow-Tech Security Systems
534. Dp Berry Company Solicitors
535. Dpd Courier
536. Dps Print
537. Dr. Mark Alexander
538. Dress To Impress
539. Drimaster
540. Drumkeerin Community Family Festival
541. Drury
542. Dtk
543. Duffey Circus
544. Duggan Brothers
545. Dunfanaghy Jazz & Blues Festival
546. Dunlevy's Giftworld
547. Dunree Yoga Centre
548. Dunview Ltd
549. Durkins Electrical

550. E & I Engineering Ireland Ltd
551. E K Marine Ltd
552. E&J Oil
553. Eagles Flying
554. Eamon Scanlon Auctioneers
555. Eamonn Mcsharry
556. Eamonn Tinney & Sons.
557. Earagail Arts Festival
558. Eason's
559. East Brothers Machinery
560. Eclipse Cinema
561. Eco Energy & Flooring
562. Eco-Energy Solutions
563. Eco-Par
564. Eddie Walsh & Sons Butchers
565. Edelman Agency
566. Edenmore Farm Meats Ltd
567. Edward Buchanan Fruit + Veg
568. Edwin Foley
569. Eg Events
570. Eire Eco Wise
571. Ej Formal Hire
572. Ek Marine Ltd
573. El Pelo Designs
574. Elite Chimney Repairs
575. Elphin Fitted Furniture
576. Elverys Sport
577. Emerald Trading Company
578. Employ Ireland
579. Enda Horan Pharmacy
580. Enda Lannons Pharmacy
581. Enda Mc Carrick Cars
582. Engineers Ireland Nw
583. Enniscrone Golf Club
584. Enniscrone Pharmacy
585. Enniscrone Show
586. Enterprise Ireland
587. Enviro Grind Ltd.
588. Equicom Cctv
589. Erin Recyclers Ltd
590. Erne Enterprise
591. Errigal Fish Co
592. Eske Pharmacy
593. Essential Seconds
594. Eugene Bennett
595. Eutec Engineering Ltd
596. Event Bars
597. Events By Ray Michael
598. Evolve Menswear
599. Ewings Sea Angling
600. Excellence Hair Salon
601. Exotic Event Catering
602. Expert Electrical
603. Express Dry Cleaners
604. Extra Sales Consulting Ltd
605. F Dowler Ltd
606. F.R Cathcart Home & Garden
607. Fabric Centre
608. Face Of Ireland
609. Faitle Ireland NW
610. Falcon Dental
611. Farrent Tax Consultants
612. Fas Training Centre
613. Fast Com Broadband
614. Fdr Tyres
615. Feehily Stone
616. Feehily's Florists
617. Feenys Garden Centre
618. Feis Shligigh
619. Fermanagh Lakelands Properties
620. Fermeng Ltd
621. Fiddlers Creek
622. Fine Gael Ballintogher
623. Fine Gael Sligo Office
624. Fintel
625. Fisca
626. Fish Sales Ltd
627. Fit Finesse
628. Fitness 4 All
629. Fk Performance
630. Flair Fashions
631. Flairline Fashions Ltd - Pamela Scott
632. Flanagan Furniture
633. Flanagans Cycles
634. Flannery Cleaning Services
635. Flat Roofs
636. Flaunt
637. Fleishman Hillard
638. Fleming Engineering Ltd
639. Flexforce
640. Floss
641. Fluid Controls Ireland LTD

642. Flyaway Travel
643. Flynn's Pub
644. Foleys Bar & Off Licence
645. Food Experience
646. Food For Thought
647. Foodstore & More Cash & Carry Ltd.
648. Foodys Deli
649. Forest Enterprises Ltd.
650. Forget-Me-Not: Craft Shop
651. Fort Lucan
652. Forward Emphasis
653. Forward Emphasis International
654. Fou Tees
655. Four Masters GAA
656. Foxford Wollen Mills
657. Foy & Co
658. Francescos Traditional Italian
659. Frank Farry Machinery
660. Frank Gallagher Vetenary
661. Freelan Photography
662. Friday Fight Night (Fistycuffs)
663. Friends Of St.Cecilia's
664. Frost
665. Frost Debt Solutions
666. Frs Recruitment
667. Furey's Bar
668. Furniture Factory Marco
669. G & M Mortgage & Financial Services
670. Gabriel Dolan
671. Gabriel Mcsharry
672. Gael Scoil Chnoc Na Re
673. Gallagher Bros Fish Merchants Ltd
674. Gallagher Marine Co. LTD
675. Gallagher Property
676. Gallaghers Bakery
677. Gallaghers Hotel
678. Gallaghers Kitchen
679. Gallogley Jewellers
680. Galway Arts Festival
681. Galway Cpl
682. Gannon & Mc Namara
683. Gannon & Sons
684. Garavogue Bar & Restaurant
685. Garden Centre
686. Gartan Technologies Ltd
687. Gartlans Internet Cafe
688. Garys Petworld
689. Gaslight Bistro
690. Gateway Alarms
691. Gavs Manshop
692. Gearldine Murphy
693. Genesis Skin Care & Laser Clinic
694. George Lynch & Son Solicitors
695. Georgina Price College Of Beauty Therapy
696. Geraldine Ogs
697. Gerard Anthony
698. Gerard Anthony & Ga2 Experience
699. Gerard Clarke
700. Gerry Brett
701. Gerry Davey Agricultural Contractor
702. Gerry Doherty Electrical
703. Gerry McGuires Shoes
704. Gerry Quinn
705. Gibson & Kelly Solicitors
706. Gillaroo Ifi Project
707. Gillespie's Men & Sport
708. Gilligan Butchers
709. Gills Driving School
710. Gilmartin's Craft Shop
711. Gilmore's Spar
712. Gilroy Gannon Financial
713. Gilroy Tiles
714. Glamour Girl & Little Angels
715. Glasshouse Hotel
716. Gleamin Kleen
717. Glen Centre
718. Glencar Distributions Ltd
719. Glenfarne Gala Festival
720. Glenfarne Wood Products Ltd
721. Glengarth Garden Centre
722. Glenveagh National Park
723. Global Flexi Bulk Systems Ltd
724. Global Rail Services Ltd
725. Gmg Plumbing Providers
726. Gno Maigh Eo
727. Gold & Silver
728. Gold Ring Video
729. Gold Star Jewellery Company
730. Golden Rainwater Harvesting Ltd
731. Golden Sea Restaurant
732. Goodbuys
733. Gordon Sherlock

734. Gormely Construction
735. Gormley Pub
736. Gourmet Parlour
737. Graham Menswear
738. Grainne's Hair & Beauty Salon
739. Grange Fuels
740. Grange Pharmacy
741. Grange Vet Practice
742. Grant Water Systems
743. Green Belt
744. Green Isle Foods Ltd
745. Green Pastures Ltd
746. Green Welly
747. Green Works
748. Greenstar
749. Greg Timoney Windows
750. Grogan & Currid Ltd
751. Grow In Northwest
752. Gunne Reynolds
753. Gurns Milestone Pub
754. Gurteen Summer Festival
755. H. Ritchie & Sons
756. Halfords Superstore
757. Halmac Hardware
758. Hamilton Electrical Solutions
759. Hand Craft Furnishings
760. Handy Hardware
761. Hanly Castle Hotel Group
762. Hanna Hats Of Donegal Town
763. Hannas
764. Happy Days Creche
765. Haran & Associates
766. Harbour Bar
767. Harbour House Hotel
768. Harcourt Hotel
769. Hargadon Bros Pub
770. Harmony Music Management Ltd
771. Harp Tavern
772. Harrison's Bar & Restaurant
773. Harry Corry Ltd
774. Harvest Moon Printing
775. Harvest Spectrum Property Co
776. Harveys Point
777. Hastings Westport
778. Hawaii Tanning Salon
779. Hawkswell Theatre
780. Hays
781. Hazels Beauty Salon
782. Hbl
783. Hearty Imc
784. Hegarty's Centra
785. Heiton Buckley
786. Henderson Hardware
787. Hendersons Motorpark
788. Henry Kearins & Co
789. Henry's Bar & Restaurant
790. Henry's Jewellerys
791. Higher Education Authority
792. Highland Motors
793. Ho Wang Chinese
794. Holey Soles
795. Holiday House Sligo
796. Holistic Fair Ireland
797. Holistic Kinesiologist
798. Holland Gardens
799. Hollywell
800. Holmes Insulation
801. Holyrood Hotel
802. Home Assist Healthcare
803. Homecare Medical Supplies
804. Homestore & More
805. Hora Precast Concrete
806. Horkans Garden Centre
807. Hotel Carlton - Bestwestern
808. House Of Value
809. Howleys Of Curry
810. Hugh O' Donnell
811. Hugh Rodgers Management
812. Hugo Boyce
813. Humble Spud
814. Hunters Coal
815. I Motors
816. Ias Smarts Hse
817. Ice Group
818. Ice House
819. Icsa
820. Iec Accountancy Services
821. Iffpg Plastic Collection
822. Image Promotions
823. Imagine Group
824. Impact Media
825. In House Design

826. Inc Advertising
827. Independent Radio Sales
828. Infacta Ltd
829. Infinite Touch
830. Inis Communications
831. Inishowen Business Services
832. Inishowen Engineering Manufacturing Ltd
833. Inishowen Motors
834. Inishowen Tourism
835. Ink Expert
836. Ink Nightclub
837. Inland Fisheries Ireland
838. Inmo-Tech Ltd
839. Innisfree Costa Blanca Holidays
840. Innisfree Service Station
841. Internetalia
842. Inver Tool Hire & Sales Ltd
843. IQ Financial
844. Irc Ltd Account Closed
845. Ireland West Airport
846. Ireland West Seafare
847. Irish Cancer Society Of Ireland
848. Irish Charolais Cattle Society
849. Irish Concert Travel
850. Irish Crash Courses
851. Irish Farmers Association
852. Irish Film Institute
853. Irish Natural Medicine
854. Irish Roof Repairs
855. Irish Satellite & Aerial Association
856. Irish Shamrock Trees
857. Irish Wheelchair Association
858. Island Seafood's
859. Ithink Technology
860. J & C Promotions
861. J&J Drains
862. J.T.S Auto
863. Jack & Jones
864. Jack Robinson
865. Jacksons Hotel
866. Jacobs Service Station Ltd
867. Jacobs Trucks
868. Jacqui Sharkey
869. Jako Sportswear
870. Jama Homecare Ltd
871. James Cafferty - Show Tours
872. James Foy Auto Services
873. James Henderson & Son
874. James Kilbane
875. Jc Engineering
876. Jd Blinds
877. Jennings O'Donovan & Partners
878. Jet Products
879. Jetwash Ltd
880. Jim Owen Car Sales
881. Jimmy Mc Sharry Carpets & Furniture
882. Jk Printing & Photography
883. Jmg Cruise
884. Jmg Travel
885. Job Waves
886. Joe Bonnar Metal Craft Ltd
887. Joe Brennan
888. Joe Hamilton Design
889. Joe Mc Laughlin Waste
890. Joe McCann
891. Joe McLoughlin Waste Disposal Ltd
892. Joe Mooney Summer School
893. Joe Simon Building Supplies
894. John Begley Denture Clinic
895. John Conlon
896. John Farry
897. John Hogan
898. John Kent Sports
899. John Magee
900. John McGowan Funeral Directors
901. John Molloy
902. John O' Hara
903. Johnson & Johnson
904. Johnson Furniture
905. Johnston Court
906. Johnston Press Publishing
907. Juice Plus
908. Jules Hair & Beauty Supplies
909. Julias Beauty Salon
910. Justin Gillespie Cleaning Services
911. Jw Promotions
912. K Plastics Products Co Ltd
913. K. Style Furniture & Tiles Ltd
914. K.T. Nets
915. Kabuki
916. Kalzen Tool Hire
917. Kaos Hair

918. Kate's Kitchen
919. Kathleen's Fashions
920. Kavanagh Supervalu
921. Keady's Dry Cleaning
922. Keane Meats At Sherlocks
923. Keanes Centra
924. Keaney's Bookshop
925. Keaney's Photo
926. Kearns Centra
927. Keegan & Higgins Centra
928. Kees Of Laghey
929. Keith Gorman
930. Keith Nolan Photography
931. Keith Pc Repairs
932. Keith Taylor Furniture
933. Kelco Communications
934. Kelly Cleaning Co
935. Kelly's Bar
936. Kelly's Pharmacy
937. Kelly's Toyota
938. Kennedys Bar
939. Keown Carpets
940. Ker Services Ltd
941. Kernan's Spar
942. Kevin Bradley
943. Kevin Callaghan Construction
944. Kevin Egan Cars
945. Kg Construction Supplies Ltd
946. Kid Care Creche & Montessori
947. Kiddies Kuts
948. Kierans Pharmacy
949. Kilcarr House
950. Kilcawley Construction
951. Killinascully
952. Killoran
953. Killybegs Electrical Refrigeration Services LTD
954. Killybegs Seafood's LTD
955. Killybegs Seafood's Ltd
956. Killybegs Shipping Services
957. Killybegs Stevedoring LTD
958. Killybegs Trawl Nets Ltd
959. Kilmore Signs
960. Kiltyclougher Community Group
961. Kims Beauty Sanctuary
962. King & Moffit Retail Ltd
963. King Communications Ltd.
964. Kingspan
965. Kingspan House
966. Kinlough Pharmacy
967. Knight Logistics
968. Knock Shrine
969. Knockranny House Hotel
970. Kool Kidz
971. Koppertopz
972. La Femme
973. Laghey Big Blast Festival
974. Laghey Waste Ltd
975. Lake House Hotel
976. Lakeland Tyre Service Centre Ltd
977. Landmark Hotel
978. Langan Fruit & Veg
979. Langan Stained Glass
980. Langs Bar & Rest
981. Lapland
982. Laura's Of Carney
983. Lavelles Grange
984. Lavins Outfitters
985. Lawan Mow Buncrana
986. Laya
987. Lcm
988. Learn Early Academy & Creche
989. Learning ireland
990. Learning To Exhale
991. Lee's Laundry & Dry Cleaners
992. Leitrim County Childcare Committee
993. Leitrim Culture Centre
994. Leitrim Development Company
995. Leitrim Farm Machinery
996. Leitrim Hardware
997. Leitrim Sports Partnership
998. Lenehan Landscaping
999. Leonard Line Transport
1000. Leonards Building Supplies
1001. Letterkenny Karting Centre
1002. Letterkenny Paintball
1003. Lh Publicity
1004. Lidl
1005. Life Hair & Beauty Salon
1006. Lifestyle Events
1007. Lifestyle Innovations
1008. Lifford Coach Works Ltd
1009. Limelight

1010. Limelight Glenties  
1011. Limonchello Restaurant  
1012. Lions Club  
1013. Little Macs Chipper  
1014. Lm Glazing  
1015. Local Blinds  
1016. Loftus Insurance Brokers  
1017. Loftus Recycling  
1018. Lotus Automation (ireland) Ltd  
1019. Lough Allen College  
1020. Lough Allen Foods Ltd  
1021. Lough Allen Hotel  
1022. Lough Erne Golf Resort  
1023. Lough Key Forest Park  
1024. Lough Rynn Festival  
1025. Lough Rynn Hotel  
1026. Loughern Resort  
1027. Loughside Water Group  
1028. Love Tefl  
1029. Lowes Londis Texaco  
1030. Lunaghsa Festival  
1031. Lunney Tractors  
1032. Lunney's Gala Market  
1033. Lunneys Service Station  
1034. Lynmore Enterprises  
1035. M&B Heraty Harbour Bar  
1036. M.G. Cleaning  
1037. Mac Plant Hire  
1038. Mac Sand & Stone  
1039. Mace  
1040. Mace Supermarket  
1041. Mad About Flowers  
1042. Madden's Bridge Bar  
1043. Magee Clothing  
1044. Magee Of Donegal  
1045. Magee Weaving  
1046. Magees Pharmacy  
1047. Magherly Hotel  
1048. Mai Kelly  
1049. Make Peace Public  
1050. Malin Waters  
1051. Mallon Foods  
1052. Mammoth Communications  
1053. Mandarin Buffet  
1054. Mannorhamilton Childcare Services Ltd.  
1055. Mannorhamilton Livestock Mart  
1056. Mannorhamilton Show  
1057. Mantis Cranes ireland Ltd  
1058. Marble Arch Caves European Geopark  
1059. Mark Mc Sharry Properties  
1060. Market Yard Auctions  
1061. Markree Castle  
1062. Marlboro House Restaurant  
1063. Marrians  
1064. Martin Houston & Sons Ltd  
1065. Martin Reilly Motors  
1066. Martina Mullaney Supervalu  
1067. Mary Doran  
1068. Mary Meehan  
1069. Mary Queen Of Piece  
1070. Marys Of Donegal  
1071. Mason Hayes & Curran  
1072. Masonite ireland  
1073. Master Dry Cleaners  
1074. Masterson Ns  
1075. Mattcos Ltd / Cosgrove's Supervalu  
1076. Mattie Fox Management  
1077. Mattru Ltd  
1078. Mayo - Sligo Co-Op Mart  
1079. Mbt ireland  
1080. Mc Cormacks Services  
1081. Mc Coy Landscaping  
1082. Mc Donaghs  
1083. Mc Donnell Butchers  
1084. Mc D's Upholstery  
1085. Mc Faddens Funfair  
1086. Mc Ganns Plaster Moulding Ltd.  
1087. Mc Garrigles  
1088. Mc Gees Jewellery & Photocentre  
1089. Mc Kelvey Asbestos Removal Ltd.  
1090. Mc Laughlin Transport  
1091. Mc Manus Pharmacy  
1092. Mc Monagle Fireplaces  
1093. Mc Morel& Duffy Reuse Accountants  
1094. Mc Ternan Foods  
1095. Mcbfg Woodberry Leisure Ltd  
1096. Mcbrien Electrical  
1097. Mccloughan Gunn & Co  
1098. Mccormacks Fuels  
1099. Mccullagh Machinery Ltd  
1100. Mccullagh's Jewellers  
1101. Mcd Plumber

- 1102. Mcdonagh Electrical
- 1103. Mcelhinney's
- 1104. McEwen Expert Electrical
- 1105. McGarrigle Framing
- 1106. McGarrigles Bar
- 1107. McGettigan Butchers
- 1108. McGinley Motors
- 1109. McGinley's Sports Shop
- 1110. McGinty Farm Machinery
- 1111. McGoldricks Londis
- 1112. McGowan Solicitors
- 1113. McGowan's Spar
- 1114. McGrane Transport LTD
- 1115. McGroarty Sky Installations
- 1116. McGroarty Tv
- 1117. McGuinness O'Neill
- 1118. McHugh's Bar
- 1119. McMenamin Engineering Ltd
- 1120. McMullan O' Donnell
- 1121. McNeil's & Co. LTD
- 1122. McPartland Fuels
- 1123. McPhilemys
- 1124. Mcsharry & Foley
- 1125. Mcsharry Carpentry
- 1126. McSweeney Dispensers
- 1127. McTernan Carpets & Furniture
- 1128. Meadow Miniatures
- 1129. Media Box
- 1130. Meehan Carpet Centre
- 1131. Meehan Tiles & Bathrooms
- 1132. Melvin Gaels GAA Club
- 1133. Melvin Multi Fuels
- 1134. Men With A Van
- 1135. Menarys Retail Ltd
- 1136. Mental Health ireland
- 1137. Mercedes
- 1138. Merenda Ltd
- 1139. Merlin Car Auctions
- 1140. Michael Clarke
- 1141. Michael Flannery Car Sales Ltd
- 1142. Michael Flemming
- 1143. Michael H At Ryan's
- 1144. Michael Kennedy
- 1145. Michael Kilcoyne
- 1146. Michael Magill Entertainments
- 1147. Michael Mc Elhinney
- 1148. Michael O'Reilly - Dental Impact Clinic
- 1149. Michelle Bell's School Of Dance
- 1150. Mickey Macs
- 1151. Midway Light Commercials
- 1152. Midwest Donegal Vintage Club
- 1153. Mill Park Hotel
- 1154. Millennium Forum
- 1155. Milos Gala
- 1156. Mindshare
- 1157. MJ Sports Supplement Shop
- 1158. Mocha Beans Ltd.
- 1159. Model Niland Centre
- 1160. Modern Tyres
- 1161. Moffitts
- 1162. Moll Industries ireland Ltd
- 1163. Molloy's Lifestyle Pharmacies
- 1164. Molly Fultons
- 1165. Molly 's Diner
- 1166. Momentum Consulting
- 1167. Monaghan Bros
- 1168. Money Village
- 1169. Moodwatchers
- 1170. Moon River
- 1171. Mooney Boats LTD
- 1172. Mooney's Bar
- 1173. Moorlands Equestrian Centre
- 1174. Morans Bar
- 1175. Morelli's Family Restaurant
- 1176. Morning Star Bakery
- 1177. Moss Go West
- 1178. Motability ireland
- 1179. Mothercare ireland
- 1180. Motoworld
- 1181. Mountcarmel Medical Group Sligo Ltd
- 1182. Movers & Makers
- 1183. Mpi
- 1184. Mpjp Sales Ltd;
- 1185. Mpn Computer Services
- 1186. Mr. McGinley
- 1187. MS ireland
- 1188. Ms Northwest Therapy Centre
- 1189. Mud & Wood
- 1190. Muddy Burns
- 1191. Mulcahy Mcdonagh & Partners
- 1192. Mulhern Leonard Accounts
- 1193. Mullaney Bros.



1194. Mullarkeys Interiors
1195. Mullen & Mclaughlin Mazda
1196. Mullen Domestic
1197. Mullen's Spar
1198. Mulligan Photo
1199. Mulmuf Ltd
1200. Mulreany Gulkian Optometrists
1201. Mulrines Beverages Ltd
1202. Mulrines Furniture & Carpet
1203. Multipurpose Garden Shed & Garages
1204. Mulvey Centre
1205. Mulveys
1206. Munster Joinery
1207. Murphy & Sons Auctioneers
1208. Murphy Ballantyne Solicitors
1209. Murphys Auctioneers Sligo Shop
1210. Murphys Hotel
1211. Murphy's Spar
1212. Murray Consult
1213. Murray Consultants
1214. Murrays Pub
1215. Musgraves
1216. Musgraves Supervalu Centra
1217. N W Sky Installations
1218. Nairn Blinds
1219. National Automation Ltd.
1220. National Dairy Council
1221. National Hairdressing Academy
1222. National Health Products
1223. National Irish Bank
1224. Nb Green Tanks
1225. Needles & Threads
1226. Nesbitt Arms Hotel
1227. New Smile Dental
1228. News + Views
1229. Newtowngore Engineering Ltd
1230. Next Door Off-Licence
1231. Nicholson Pharmacy
1232. Nicola's Hair & Beauty Salon
1233. Nirvana Restaurant
1234. Nissan
1235. Nmni
1236. Noc Carpentry
1237. Noel Morris
1238. Noone Carpets & Furniture
1239. Nora Career
1240. Norfish Ltd
1241. North Agricultural Show
1242. North Connaught College
1243. North Leitrim Driving School
1244. North Old Engine + Tractor Club
1245. North West Aluminium Slate Trim (ireland) Ltd
1246. North West Forklifts
1247. North West Grass Machinery
1248. North West Hearing Clinic
1249. North West Independant Hospital
1250. North West Limousine Club
1251. North West Simon Community
1252. North West Training Centre
1253. North West Water Services
1254. Northern Garage
1255. Northwest Adventure Centre
1256. Northwest Attic Ladders
1257. Northwest Gardening Show
1258. Northwest Investments
1259. Number 6 Café
1260. Nu-Therm Ltd
1261. Nvolve Ltd
1262. Nw Automatic Lawnmovers
1263. Nw Water Services
1264. Obg Financial Services
1265. Obn
1266. O'Carolan Harp Festival
1267. Occasions Jewellery
1268. Ocean Breeze Laundrette
1269. Ocean Sands Hotel
1270. O'Connor's Supervalu - Kavanaghs
1271. Odd Hanger
1272. O'Donnell Motors
1273. O'Dowds Fireplaces Furniture & Stoves Centre
1274. Office & Training Solutions Ltd
1275. O'Hehirs Bakery
1276. Oideas Gael
1277. Oilean Glas Teo
1278. Old Church Vet Hospital
1279. Olde Castle Bar
1280. Olimotion ireland Ltd
1281. Oliver Flemming
1282. Omnicom Media Group
1283. O'Neill Leisure Wear
1284. Onestop Motor Shop
1285. Oona Doherty

1286. Orbit Security
1287. Oro Gold Cosmetics
1288. Osd - Omniscience Design
1289. Ots
1290. Our Schools Got Talent Ltd.
1291. Outerpoint
1292. Oven Clean
1293. Owenmore Inn
1294. Oxfield Community Centre
1295. Oxmount Furniture
1296. P Clarke & Sons
1297. P Mulrine & Sons
1298. P Walpole Sons Ltd
1299. P. Collery Furniture
1300. Padre Pio Prayer Group Ballyshannon
1301. Papillon
1302. Parker Advertising
1303. Parkes Garage
1304. Parkinsons Association
1305. Pat Boland
1306. Pat Egan Sound Ltd
1307. Pat Mearon
1308. Patrick Coyle Furniture Spraying
1309. Patrick Rodgers Hardware
1310. Paul Allen & Associates
1311. Paul McNulty
1312. Peach
1313. Peaches & Cream
1314. Peadar Conway
1315. Pearse Road Dental
1316. Pearse Road Tyres
1317. Pepper Alley Restaurant
1318. Perfect Day
1319. Permanent Tsb
1320. Pete The Plumber
1321. Peter Mans Shop
1322. Peter Mooney Motors
1323. Peter Power
1324. Pets Direct
1325. Petstop
1326. Phd Network
1327. Phil Cassidy Slurry Spreading Contractor
1328. Phil Mack Promotions
1329. Phillips Travel
1330. Photofast
1331. Pier Head Hotel
1332. Pierce Media
1333. Pilates Studio Sligo
1334. Pisces Repens Fishmonger
1335. Pixifoto Mothercare
1336. Pizza Hut
1337. Pk Motors
1338. Plan 4 Interior Design
1339. Pmms
1340. Pod
1341. Pod Promotions
1342. Pontoon Bridge Hotel
1343. Poppadom Restaurant
1344. Powerbar Ltd
1345. Powerright Ltd
1346. Presley Joinery
1347. Prevent - A - Puncture
1348. Prim-Ed Publishing
1349. Print Supplies
1350. Printfix
1351. Prior Fruit & Veg
1352. Prior Tool & Die Ltd
1353. Professional Driver Training
1354. Professional Tailoring & Sewing Service
1355. Profile Windows
1356. Property Claims Direct
1357. Pro-Tek Medical Ltd
1358. Ps Exhibitions
1359. Publicised.Ie
1360. Pulse Wave ireland
1361. Pure Niteclub
1362. Qa Assistant Ltd
1363. Quality Meats
1364. Queenan Properties
1365. Quinn Body Repairs
1366. Quinn Crane Hire Ltd
1367. Quinn Fix Garage
1368. R Mc D Windows & Doors
1369. R.J Joinery
1370. Race Night
1371. Radiance Beauty & Body Clinic
1372. Radio Sales
1373. Radisson Blu Hotel
1374. Radisson Hotel
1375. Raftery & Co Accountants
1376. Rathedmond Crash Repairs
1377. Raymond Goulden Furniture

1378. Rb Remy Barcelona
1379. Red Door Books
1380. Red Hurley
1381. Redz Hair Salon
1382. Regional Employment Services
1383. Rehab Foundation
1384. Renew Therapies
1385. Research & Education Foundation
1386. Reynolds Topline Providers
1387. Ribbon Rythm Festival
1388. Richard Mc Carthy
1389. Richard Trimmer (Kumon)
1390. Richmond
1391. Right Place Fireplaces
1392. Right Price Tiles
1393. Ripples Restaurant
1394. Riva Takeaway
1395. Riverbank Restaurant
1396. Riverside Motors
1397. Riverstown - Sligo County Agri Show
1398. Robert Kee & Sons
1399. Robert Mc Nabb
1400. Robert Mizzell Promotions
1401. Robertos Sligo
1402. Robertos Takeaway
1403. Rochford Motors
1404. Roemer Quality Furniture
1405. Ronan Boiler Services
1406. Ronan Browne
1407. Rooney Butchers
1408. Rooney's Supervalu
1409. Rooneys Supervalu Mannorhamilton
1410. Rory Gallagher Festival
1411. Roscommon Race Committee
1412. Rossano's Hair Salon
1413. Rosses Point Sea Shanty Festival
1414. Rossinver Development
1415. Rowlette Garden Equipment
1416. Royal Theatre & Event Centre
1417. Ruby Lane
1418. S & R Motors
1419. S.D.Kells Fashion
1420. S+G Bouncy Castles
1421. Safeguard Protective Ltd
1422. Safetech Safety Professionals
1423. Safetread
1424. Saint. Patrick's GAA
1425. Sallys Salon Services
1426. Salon 2
1427. Salus Beauty Salon
1428. Sam Hire
1429. Sandhouse Hotel Spa
1430. Sasta Sligo
1431. Save Killegar Campaign
1432. Scott's Wideplank Flooring Ltd
1433. Scratch Repair Service
1434. Seamus Monaghan Solicitor
1435. Seamus Feehily & Son Funeral Directors
1436. Seamus Reynolds & Sons
1437. Sean Gallagher Cars
1438. Sean McGee Hypnotherapy
1439. Sean Nos Festival
1440. Sean O' Boyle
1441. Sean Ward (Fish Exports) Ltd
1442. Seanachie Og Promotions
1443. Seaquest Engineering Ltd
1444. Self Build ireland
1445. Serenity Hair
1446. Set Dancing Sligo
1447. Seventh Son Healer Aidan Wrynne
1448. SF Engineering
1449. Shamrock Metal Recycling
1450. Shane Mchugh
1451. Shannon's Corner Restaurant
1452. Shannonside Electricians
1453. Sharon Mc Cormack
1454. Shaw's Commercials
1455. Sheerin Photography
1456. Sheerins Meatin Place
1457. Shells Cafe
1458. Shenanigans
1459. Sherbet
1460. Sherry Fitzgerald Draper
1461. Sherwood Forestry Ltd
1462. Shop Lk
1463. Shovlin Marine
1464. Show Tours
1465. Sierra Communications
1466. Signs Express
1467. Silent Night Footwear
1468. Silver Apple
1469. Silver Hardware

1470. Silver River Images
1471. Silver Tassie Hotel
1472. Silverline Catering Ltd.
1473. Silvers Doorstore
1474. Simones
1475. Simpsons Supermarket
1476. Sinbad Marine Services
1477. Siren Hair & Beauty Salon
1478. Sjm Food Services
1479. Skc Providers
1480. Skellville Enterprises Ltd
1481. Skin Therapy @ Brittons
1482. Slcontrols Ltd
1483. Slevins Of Ballyshannon
1484. Slieve League
1485. Sligo Ai
1486. Sligo Antique Fair
1487. Sligo Cancer Support Centre
1488. Sligo Champion
1489. Sligo City Hotel
1490. Sligo College Of Further Education
1491. Sligo County Agricultural Show
1492. Sligo County Childcare Committee
1493. Sligo Digital Hearing Centre
1494. Sligo Folk Park
1495. Sligo Framing Services
1496. Sligo Free
1497. Sligo Fuels
1498. Sligo Gestalt Counselling
1499. Sligo Glass
1500. Sligo Golf Academy
1501. Sligo Haulage
1502. Sligo House Furnishers
1503. Sligo Indoor Airsoft Shooting & Archery
1504. Sligo International Choral Festival
1505. Sligo Jazz Project
1506. Sligo Karting
1507. Sligo Kitchen Centre
1508. Sligo Leader Partnership
1509. Sligo Live
1510. Sligo Mediation
1511. Sligo Music Festival Ltd
1512. Sligo Northside Community Partnership
1513. Sligo Office Supplies
1514. Sligo Oil Painting
1515. Sligo Orpheus Choir
1516. Sligo Park Hotel
1517. Sligo Rape Crisis Centre
1518. Sligo Regional Sports Complex
1519. Sligo Rovers
1520. Sligo School Of Rock
1521. Sligo School Project
1522. Sligo Southern Hotel
1523. Sligo Sport & Recreation Partnership
1524. Sligo Stoves & Fireplaces
1525. Sligo Supply Centre
1526. Sligo Swim & Lifesaving School
1527. Sligo Tennis Club
1528. Sligo Tool & Die Co Ltd
1529. Sligo Tyre Centre
1530. Sligo Vec
1531. Sligo Volunteer
1532. Sligo Weekender
1533. Sligo Weight Loss Clinic Ltd. (Motivation)
1534. Sligo Windscreens
1535. Sligo Wood Flooring
1536. Sligo Youth Theatre
1537. Slimming World
1538. Sloans Footwear Shoeshop
1539. Small Firms Ass
1540. Small World Donegal
1541. Smart Start Pre School
1542. Smith Monumentals
1543. Sms Motors
1544. Socrates Healthcare Ltd
1545. Sole Burger
1546. Sonas Healthcare
1547. Sony Centre
1548. Sound Computers
1549. Source Sligo
1550. South Sligo Summer School
1551. South Sligo Walking Festival
1552. Southwest College
1553. Southwest Donegal Mens Sheds
1554. Special Olympics ireland
1555. Specsavers
1556. Spendlove C. Jebb
1557. Spotlight Entertainment
1558. St Farnans Community Players
1559. St. Michaels Family Resource Centre
1560. Standard Life
1561. Star Bingo

1562. Starcom
1563. Steetech Sheds
1564. Steve Noone Landscaping
1565. Stira Fitting Services
1566. Stock House Furniture Stores
1567. Stop Suicide
1568. Store - Tec
1569. Strandhill Accommodation
1570. Strandhill Gymkhana & Craft Fair
1571. Strandhill Lodge & Suites
1572. Strandhill Surf Festival
1573. Stranorlar Mart
1574. Strawberry Media
1575. Studio Donegal
1576. Subish Ltd.
1577. Sunflower Management Ltd.
1578. Super Valu
1579. Supermacs Sligo
1580. Surf N Turf
1581. Surlis Supervalu
1582. Susan Jenkins Pr
1583. Swan Net Gundry LTD
1584. Swarbrigg Productions
1585. Sweeney Todds Gifts & Music Shop
1586. Sweeneys Opticians
1587. System 10
1588. T&M Healthcare
1589. T. Casey Pharmacy
1590. Tabula Rasa Ltd.
1591. Taga Ltd
1592. Taheny Electrical
1593. Tank & Percalation
1594. Tara Hotel
1595. Tax Clinic Letterkenny
1596. Taxi
1597. Taylor's Carpets & Curtains
1598. Teach Murray
1599. Teagasc
1600. Tearfund ireland
1601. Tedcastles Oil Products
1602. Teds Bike Shop
1603. Teeling Cafe
1604. Teeling Centre
1605. Tegre Ltd
1606. Tekniks - Electronic Repairs
1607. Terrys Stoves
1608. Tesco
1609. Texoil Ltd
1610. The Bank Bar
1611. The Barber Masterson
1612. The Bards Management
1613. The Beach Bar
1614. The Beauty Of Earth
1615. The Benwiskin Centre
1616. The Birds Nest
1617. The Broken Jug
1618. The Bubblegum Club
1619. The Carers Association
1620. The Cat & The Moon
1621. The Computer Store
1622. The Copy Shop
1623. The Crafters Basket
1624. The Craze Menswear
1625. The Crokey Hill Club
1626. The Crossbar
1627. The Dealer
1628. The Different Dairy Co Ltd
1629. The Dock
1630. The Dock Theatre
1631. The Dresser
1632. The Elegant Touch Bridal Boutique
1633. The Fabric Centre
1634. The Fairy Cake
1635. The Fleet Inn
1636. The Four Masters Bookshop
1637. The Foxs Den
1638. The Gaiety Cinema
1639. The Gardens Garden Centre
1640. The Glen Gallery
1641. The Granary
1642. The Great Northern Hotel & Leisure Centre
1643. The Green House Bar
1644. The Grill
1645. The High Kings
1646. The Irish News
1647. The Landmark Hotel
1648. The Lazy Bush Bar
1649. The Leitrim Marina Hotel
1650. The Letterkenny Court Hotel
1651. The Lions Mane
1652. The Market Kitchen
1653. The Mcwilliam Park Hotel

1654. The Melting Pot Festival  
1655. The Melvin  
1656. The Melvin Pharmacy  
1657. The Natural Way  
1658. The Oarsa Man  
1659. The Organic Centre  
1660. The Park Hotel  
1661. The Pilot Bar  
1662. The Pilot Training College  
1663. The Printing Experts  
1664. The Pulse Nightclub  
1665. The Reading Room Book Shop  
1666. The Richmond Shopping Centre  
1667. The Rockall Group  
1668. The Rub Home Remedy  
1669. The Saddlers  
1670. The Samaritans  
1671. The Sign Warehouse  
1672. The Sky Shop  
1673. The Snug  
1674. The Soundhouse  
1675. The Still Bar  
1676. The Strand Bar  
1677. The Swag Man  
1678. The Swilly Group  
1679. The Three Tenors  
1680. The Valet Depot  
1681. The Velvet Room  
1682. The Venue  
1683. The Village Inn  
1684. The Western People  
1685. The Western Simmental Club  
1686. The Wine Buff  
1687. The Woodview Inn  
1688. The Wyatt Hotel  
1689. The Yellow Pepper  
1690. The Zip Yard  
1691. Think Direct  
1692. Thomas Cook  
1693. Thomas J. Crummy  
1694. Tighes Giftware  
1695. Tile Experience  
1696. Tiles Direct  
1697. Tirconaill Fuels Ltd  
1698. Tirhugh Resource Centre  
1699. Tj Tyres  
1700. Tj Grady  
1701. Tom Kelly Promotions  
1702. Tommy Joyce's Superstores Ltd.  
1703. Tone From Home  
1704. Tony Quinn Foods  
1705. Topchem Laboratories Ltd  
1706. Total Western Wear  
1707. Tots & Tassels  
1708. Traceys Surf Shop & Cafe  
1709. Trail Blazers Outdoor Retail Ltd.  
1710. Travel Logic Ltd  
1711. Trinity Innovations Ltd  
1712. Trinity Pc Repairs  
1713. Tropical World  
1714. Tubbercurry Golf Club  
1715. Tullyboy Farm  
1716. Tullymore Promotions  
1717. Twinfest  
1718. Ulas Global  
1719. Ulster American Folk Park  
1720. Ulster Bank ireland Ltd  
1721. Ultimate Events - Red Hurley  
1722. Ultimate Insulation Services  
1723. Ultimate School Of Motoring  
1724. Union Foods  
1725. Unique Acent  
1726. United Fish Industries LTD  
1727. United Fish Industries Ltd  
1728. Urmasys Ltd  
1729. V.M Shoe Repairs  
1730. Valerie Kearins Solicitor  
1731. Velocity Worldwide  
1732. Veritas  
1733. Verus  
1734. Victoria Hall Restaurant  
1735. Video-Tech Security Systems  
1736. Villa Rose Hotel  
1737. Village Food Fair  
1738. Village Garden Centre  
1739. Vincent Foley  
1740. Vintage Antiques  
1741. Vintage Car Fundraiser  
1742. Visit Inish Owen  
1743. Vistamed Ltd  
1744. Vitto  
1745. Vk Agri-Recycling

- 1746. Vlits
- 1747. Vobe Interiors Ltd
- 1748. Vogler Spring Festival
- 1749. Volunteer Sligo
- 1750. Voya Seaweed Baths
- 1751. Vr&D Co Ltd
- 1752. Walker Communications
- 1753. Walsh Dry-cleaning
- 1754. Ward Automation Ltd
- 1755. Ward Paving & Groundwork's
- 1756. Water Tech 2000
- 1757. Waterfront Bar Restaurant & Off Licence
- 1758. Waterfront House
- 1759. Water glades Garden Centre
- 1760. Water point
- 1761. Waterways ireland
- 1762. Water world
- 1763. Watson Tool Hire
- 1764. Watters Tiling
- 1765. Web Headz
- 1766. Wedding Network Ltd
- 1767. Weight Watchers
- 1768. Well Cut Hairdressers
- 1769. Wellness Centre
- 1770. Wes-Chem
- 1771. Wesley Mackey Plant & Agri Spares
- 1772. Westcoast Garage
- 1773. Westcoast Pvc
- 1774. Westend Beauty Clinic
- 1775. Western Cars
- 1776. Western Mobility
- 1777. Western Paving
- 1778. Western Salt Spas
- 1779. Westlink Coaches
- 1780. Westport Festival
- 1781. Westware Tiles Ltd
- 1782. Wet & Wild The Outdoor Store
- 1783. Wherlys Jewellers
- 1784. White & Associates
- 1785. Wholesale Furniture Cash & Carry
- 1786. Wildrose Leisure - Rose Of Innisfree
- 1787. William Clarke & Son Ltd.
- 1788. Winterwood Ltd
- 1789. Wizard
- 1790. Wm Mckinney & Sons Ltd
- 1791. Wtone Integration Ltd
- 1792. Yama Hara Gymnastics Club
- 1793. Yeats Country Antiques
- 1794. Yeats Country Hotel
- 1795. Yeats Partnership
- 1796. Yeats Tavern Drumcliffe
- 1797. Zoetis ireland Ltd
- 1798. Zuba
- 1799. Zumba

## Appendix D: Survey cover letter

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am a postgraduate student taking part in a Masters in Marketing Practice in Letterkenny Institute of Technology. As part of the Masters program I must complete research. The purpose of my research is to determine the levels of internet adoption for marketing related activities in business.

To this regard I have attached a link to a questionnaire and I would greatly appreciate your time in completing it. This study is purely academic and any information which you provide will be used only for scientific research and will help in gaining a better understanding of the effects of using internet marketing in SMEs. Your reply will provide a valuable insight, and contribution to my research.

Your cooperation is greatly appreciated and I sincerely hope that you will find the study of interest and beneficial to your business. If you have any questions regarding the research or indeed the questionnaire please do not hesitate to contact me on (086) 3744359 or by email to [jameskilmartin00@gmail.com](mailto:jameskilmartin00@gmail.com).

Here is the link that will take you to the questionnaire:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/LFLJYSF>

Thank you very much for your time and cooperation.

Yours sincerely,

James Kilmartin

MSc in Marketing Practice Student



## Appendix E: Survey Questionnaire

## Internet Marketing in SMEs

Thank you for agreeing to complete this questionnaire. It is in partial fulfillment of a research study of "Internet marketing within small to medium sized enterprises in Northwest Ireland".

The questionnaire is relatively short; and should only take 5 minutes or so to complete. All answers will be treated with the strictest of confidence.

I appreciate your help and your responses will greatly assist in my data collection.

## Part 1: Company Background

Here you will be asked a few questions about the company.

### \*Q1. Where is your company based?

- Donegal
- Leitrim
- Sligo
- Other (please specify)

### \*Q2. Which of the following best describes the industry your business operates within?

- Retail
- Science & Technology
- Tourism & Travel
- Industry
- Transport
- Agriculture & Fishing
- Construction
- Services
- Other (please specify)

### \*Q3. (a) Which of the following best describes your business operation?

- Business to Business (B2B)
- Business to Consumer (B2C)
- Both (B2B & B2C)
- Business to Government (B2G)
- Other (please specify)

### \*Q3. (b). Is your company selling;

- Nationally only
- Export only
- Both

## Internet Marketing in SMEs

**\* Q4. (a) About how many employees work at your company?**

0-10       11-25       26-50       51-100       101-250       >250

**Q4 (b) Please indicate how many of these employees are part-time/fulltime (Approx)**

	0-25%	25-50%	50-75%	75-100%
Full Time	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Part Time	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**\* Q5. How long has your company been in business?**

< 5 years       6-10 years       11-20 years       >20 years

**Q6 (a) Please indicate the annual turnover of your company (approx)**

**\* Q6 (b). Please indicate the annual marketing budget as a percentage of overall company budget (approx)**

- Less than 10%
- 11-20%
- 21-30%
- 31-40%
- 41-50%
- More than 50%
- Unknown
- Other (please specify)

## Part 2: Internet Marketing

Here you will be asked some questions about internet marketing within your company.

Internet marketing refers to marketing or advertising online. This process is achieved by using a myriad of tools and techniques that include;

Email Marketing marketing a message using email

Social Media Creating content through social media that attracts attention for the company

Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) improving the visibility of a web site or a web page in search engines

Pay per Click Internet advertising model used to direct traffic to websites

Viral Marketing a method of promotion that relies on getting customers to market an idea,

Website marketing using a company website to raise awareness

Online Partnerships Partnerships with others through sponsorship etc

Online PR the practice of managing information between an individual or an organisation and the public

### \*Q7. (a) Who in your organisation is in charge of marketing?

- Owner
- Manager
- Marketing Manager
- External

Other (please specify)

### \*Q7. (b) Are they:

- Full Time
- Part Time

Other (please specify)

### \*Q8. (a) Do your company use the following Internet Marketing tools? Please see brief description of each at top of page.

- |   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Email Marketing            | <input type="checkbox"/> Pay Per Click     | <input type="checkbox"/> Online Partnerships |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Social Media               | <input type="checkbox"/> Viral Marketing   | <input type="checkbox"/> Online PR           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Search Engine Optimisation | <input type="checkbox"/> Website Marketing | <input type="checkbox"/> None of these       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify)     |  |  |

# Internet Marketing in SMEs

**Q8. (b) Can you rate the tools by order of what you feel is important, 1 being most important, 8 being least important**

<input type="text"/>	Online PR
<input type="text"/>	Online Partnerships
<input type="text"/>	Website Marketing
<input type="text"/>	Viral Marketing
<input type="text"/>	Pay Per Click
<input type="text"/>	Search Engine Optimisation
<input type="text"/>	Social Media
<input type="text"/>	Email Marketing

**\*Q8 (c). Please outline the objectives of each tool used (brief description of how and why they are used)**

Email Marketing	<input type="text"/>
Social Media	<input type="text"/>
Search Engine Optimisation	<input type="text"/>
Pay Per Click	<input type="text"/>
Viral Marketing	<input type="text"/>
Website Marketing	<input type="text"/>
Online Partnerships	<input type="text"/>
Online PR	<input type="text"/>
Other (please specify)	<input type="text"/>

# Internet Marketing in SMEs

**\*Q9. Please rate the following statements.**

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Our company does not use the internet in conducting its marketing activities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Our company depends heavily on the internet in conducting its marketing activities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Our company could use the internet more in conducting its marketing activities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Our company does not see the benefits of using the internet to conduct marketing activities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Our company can measure the success of using the internet for its marketing activities	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**\*Q9 (b) What problems, if any, does your company encounter with relation to carrying out internet marketing activities? (Please tick one or more)**

- Lack of financial resources
- Insufficient time to carry out the marketing activities
- Difficulty measuring the effectiveness of internet marketing tools
- Lack of internet marketing knowledge
- Our company encounters no problems with our internet marketing activity
- No opinion

Other (please specify)

**\*Q10. (a) Does the company plan on implementing any internet marketing strategy (E.g. improving web presence, developing a social media strategy, customer database Etc) in the coming months?**

- Yes
- No
- Other (please specify)

## Internet Marketing in SMEs

**Q10. (b) Please provide details on any internet marketing tools that the company plans to use in the future?**





## Part 3: About You

Here you will be asked a few short questions about you.

**\*Q11. (a) What is your job title/role within the company?**

**\*Q11 (b) Are you:**

Full Time

Part Time

Other (please specify)

**\*Q11. (c) How long have you worked for your organisation?**

< 5 years

5-10 years

> 10 years

**\*Q12. Please indicate the age group that you belong to?**

Less than 30

31-40

41-50

51-60

Over 60

**\*Q13. (a) Please indicate your highest level of education?**

Secondary School

Some College

University Graduate

Diploma

Bachelors Degree

Postgraduate Degree

PhD

Other (please specify)

**Q13. (b) If you attended and graduated from a 3rd level institution, please state the discipline studied (e.g. Business, Marketing, Accounting etc)**

## Internet Marketing in SMEs

### \*Q14. Please tick where appropriate:

	Never	Occasionally	Sometimes	Often	Always
Are you involved in internet marketing implementation in the company?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Were you involved in the implementation of internet marketing?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Will you be involved in internet marketing activities going forward?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

### Q15. Please fill in the following if you would like to receive an electronic copy of the research study results.

**Name:**

**Company:**

**City/Town:**

**Email Address:**

**Phone Number:**

**If you have any further comments or queries in relation to internet marketing or any aspect the research, please include them below.**

## Thank you

Your responses are much appreciated and will provide unique insights for this research study.

**Further clarification may be required with your responses. If you are willing to discuss your responses further in an in-depth interview please provide your email address below.**

## Appendix F: Questionnaire responses excerpts

### Respondent Locations

Number	Other (please specify)
1	Cavan
2	Connemara
3	Connacht region
4	Cork
5	Derry
6	Donegal
7	Dublin
8	Fermanagh
9	Galway
10	Hornchurch, Essex, England
11	London, United Kingdom
12	Mayo
13	Mayo and Roscommon
14	Meath
15	Monaghan
16	National
17	Nationwide
18	North Roscommon
19	Offaly
20	Roscommon
21	Sittingbourne Kent
22	Sligo & Ballina
23	Westmeath

## Industry Type (“Other” responses)

Number	Other (please specify)
1	Food processing
2	Finance & insolvency
3	Racing
4	Optometry and sale of optical appliances
5	Hotel
6	Food manufacturing
7	Wholesale / distribution
8	Country music cd's dvd's and management
9	Financial
10	Education
11	Pub
12	Racecourse
13	Sales
14	Dairy
15	Automotive
16	Entertainment agency
17	Business membership organisation
18	Complementary therapies
19	Motors
20	Education

- 21 Rainwater harvesting systems
- 22 Doorskin manufacturing
- 23 Financial services
- 24 We manufacture about 40% of our products on site
- 25 Food production
- 26 Fast foods
- 27 Events
- 28 Wholesale
- 29 Traditional music summer school
- 30 Public service/local authority
- 31 Entertainment
- 32 Hospitality
- 33 Social media/pr
- 34 Leisure
- 35 Emotional support service(voluntary)
- 36 Insurance brokers
- 37 Garden maintenance
- 38 Sports
- 39 Health
- 40 Broadcasting
- 41 Truck body building
- 42 Manufacturers product distribution
- 43 Horticulture

- 44 Entertainment
- 45 Fish fresh, processing, freezing, aquaculture (salmon)
- 46 Insurance brokerage
- 47 Education
- 48 Insurance / financial services
- 49 Recycling
- 50 Manufacturing
- 51 Manufacture of smokeless fuels
- 52 State education provider
- 53 Health services
- 54 Marine services
- 55 Annual festival
- 56 Christmas tree farm
- 57 Arts and drama
- 58 Training
- 59 Education
- 60 Sport
- 61 Community not for profit sector
- 62 Importation, distribution, retail
- 63 Pharmacy and health retail
- 64 Education
- 65 Hospitality/entertainment
- 66 Motor industry

- 67 Childcare support programme funded by dcya
- 68 Manufacturing
- 69 Security
- 70 Cultural tourism and theatre & outdoor events
- 71 Community
- 72 Health related
- 73 Design & print
- 74 Community development
- 75 Arts
- 76 Motor trade
- 77 Hardware & DIY, gardening, farming
- 78 Beauty industry
- 79 Photographer
- 80 Cultural
- 81 Forest, garden, construction, irrigation
- 82 Education
- 83 Manufacturer
- 84 Sport
- 85 Education
- 86 Business membership organisation
- 87 Financial services
- 88 Estate agent
- 89 Engineering



- 90 Consumer goods
- 91 Recycling/composting
- 92 Television media & entertainment
- 93 My skill set can be applied to a wide variety of SME's
- 94 Political party (administrative)
- 95 Choir society
- 96 Design and print of promotional products
- 97 Bar and restaurant
- 98 SEO & web design
- 99 Entertainment
- 100 Musician & composer
- 101 Entertainment
- 102 Entertainment, we are a festival
- 103 Entertainment

## **Business operating category**

Number	Other (please specify)
1	We have retail, b2b and food service divisions
2	Restaurant
3	Voluntary community project
4	Providing a financial service
5	Organisation to vulnerable callers
6	Community
7	B2B B2C and B2G
8	Community
9	Community Service
10	Volunteer based organisation
11	Community
12	All three
13	B2B, B2C & B2G
14	Community development
15	B2C (but in our case Consumers are school leaving students, those returning
16	To further studies and those who want to up skill)
17	Primary School
18	Business to the general public
19	Serving needs/supports to members of a political party
20	Social outlet

## Marketing responsibilities

Number	Other (please specify)
1	Marketing specialists
2	Committee members
3	Several staff are involved
4	Employee
5	Nobody
6	And a team leader
7	Depends on each section and school or centre
8	Public relations officer
9	Volunteers
10	Existing staff member with expertise in this area
11	Head office marketing department
12	Senior manager
13	Marketing is mainly carried out by one person (marketing is one of many roles for this person)
14	Principal, secretary, staff
15	Director

## Responses to IM tools used

Number	Other (please specify)
1	Anything that helps
2	Fliers
3	Texts
4	Google Ad-words
5	No comment
6	CRM
7	Word of mouth
8	Retail websites
9	Radio and newspaper
10	Print media, word of mouth,
11	Rewards card
12	Leaflets to households / businesses
13	Pay per impression
14	Sponsored posts - Facebook. Twitter. Moving into Google Ad-words in next few months.
15	Trade show websites
16	Text messaging
17	Qualitative and quantitative research (polling)
18	Text marketing
19	None of the above

## Feedback / general comments on survey

- Some of these questions were not relevant to our organisation but I have answered them as best I can
- Some questions difficult to answer as I work for a large company who have their own marketing department.
- Good luck with it an interesting study which will be of value. Thanks
- Best of luck with survey, I am interested to see what the results will be.
- The quality of online content - including web copy, social media and news/blogs - is one of the key things in terms of both short and long-term profile. This should include good quality copy, images and video and must be updated regularly to be effective. Static sites are no longer enough. PR is just as important as marketing and can be done cheaply and effectively online. In-house training should be ongoing in these fields or the work should be outsourced. It will still be cheaper than traditional advertising.....
- Just starting up a new company so early days...
- You never asked respondents about the effect on the bottom line or financials? Would have thought that is very important?
- It would have been good to have some explanation of the topics I wasn't sure of, e.g. Viral Marketing. No idea what that means. Some of your questions don't allow me to give a proper answer, e.g. We do a festival which hopes to attract people nationally and internationally but it does not 'export' anything. Q14 doesn't make grammatical sense, e.g. you ask "were you involved..." and the answer I've given is 'Always'. Hence this question was difficult to answer with accuracy. Am also too busy to detail what future plans we have.
- Also, if you are doing a survey to a selection of people using mass emailing to collect information about marketing and how this might work more effectively, it's very poor marketing to begin the email, "Dear Sir/Madam". If I were considering taking on someone to do marketing, I would not choose someone who sent emails indiscriminately and consider it worthwhile to have spent a little longer beginning the

email with the name of the addressee, if known and using Sir/Madam only as a last resort. Better still to drop it altogether and just get to the point.

- Seeking marketing intern/Seasonal / volunteer Immediately
- Best of luck with your research
- No
- Best of luck with your masters and your studies
- Would like to know about new trends and best methods of marketing successfully.
- Go n-eiri leat!
- Would like some government assistance, grants

## **Appendix G: Informed consent form**

### **Purpose of the Study:**

As per requirements for the MSc in Marketing Practice at Letterkenny Institute of Technology, I have to carry out a research study. The study is concerned with Internet Marketing and its use within SMEs in the Northwest of Ireland. The research study will be approved by Letterkenny Institute of Technology before commencing. Further information if required can be obtained by contacting the researcher

### **Research objectives**

This research involves collecting data through a survey questionnaire and in-depth interviews.

### **Why have you been asked to take part?**

You have been asked to be a respondent because you match criteria relating to the research study and your insights would be most valuable.

### **Do you have to take part?**

You do not have to take part. This information sheet is to inform you of what the research intends to evaluate. Your information will be used anonymously in order to complete the dissertation. Participants can withdraw from the research at any time before, during or after the commencement of data collection. All information collected will be treated in the strictest of confidence. There is no reason that there should be any disadvantages of participating.

### **Will your participation in the study be kept confidential?**

Yes. Any extracts from what you say that are quoted in the thesis will be entirely anonymous. Similarly all responses and information given is in confidence throughout the study. Once the research is complete, the data will be retained for up to a period (typically 6 months) and then disposed of.

### **Findings and resulting analysis**

The dissertation will include analysis of the collected data and resulting findings from your participation. This will be read by a supervisor and additional examiners. The research can be

used by the Institute for future teachings. It is also a possibility that the research could be published in a relevant journal.

**General**

*James Kilmartin – 0863744359 – [jameskilmartin00@gmail.com](mailto:jameskilmartin00@gmail.com)*

Please sign the attached consent form should be willing to participate.



## Consent Form

I.....agree to participate in James Kilmartin's research study.

The purpose and nature of the study has been explained to me in writing.

I am participating voluntarily.

I give permission for my interview with James Kilmartin to be tape-recorded

I understand that I can withdraw from the study, without repercussions, at any time, whether before it starts or while I am participating.

I understand that I can withdraw permission to use the data within two weeks of the interview, in which case the material will be deleted.

I understand that anonymity will be ensured in the write-up by disguising my identity.

I understand that disguised extracts from my interview may be quoted in the thesis and any subsequent publications if I give permission below:

(Please tick one box :)

I agree to quotation/publication of extracts from my interview

I do not agree to quotation/publication of extracts from my interview

Signed.....

Date.....

## Appendix H: In-Depth Interview Theme sheet (SMEs)

Company: \_\_\_\_\_

Industry (circle):

- Retail
- Services
- Transport
- Tourism and Travel
- Agriculture and Fishing
- Construction
- Science and Technology
- Industry

Interviewee: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Venue (circle):

- Leitrim
- Donegal
- Sligo

## 1.0 What is your understanding of internet marketing IM?

- Why you use it –
  - For what reason?
  - What brought you to use it
  - Why continue your use
  
- What percentage of overall marketing activity does it occupy? What other non IM methods are used?

## 2.0 Current IM practices employed by the business/usage

Probe responses from Questionnaire

- Discuss tools used:
  - Website,
  - SEM
  - Email Marketing
  - Viral marketing,
  - Online partnerships
  - Online PR
  - Interactive marketing
  - Opt in email, and
  - Social media
- Brief objectives of these - what works for your SME?
- How IM is perceived– useful or can do without?
- Do you find IM complicated – hard – easy?
- Are you using IM adequately, in your opinion?

### 3.0 Drivers/Barriers

What are your industry main drivers for IM in the SME?

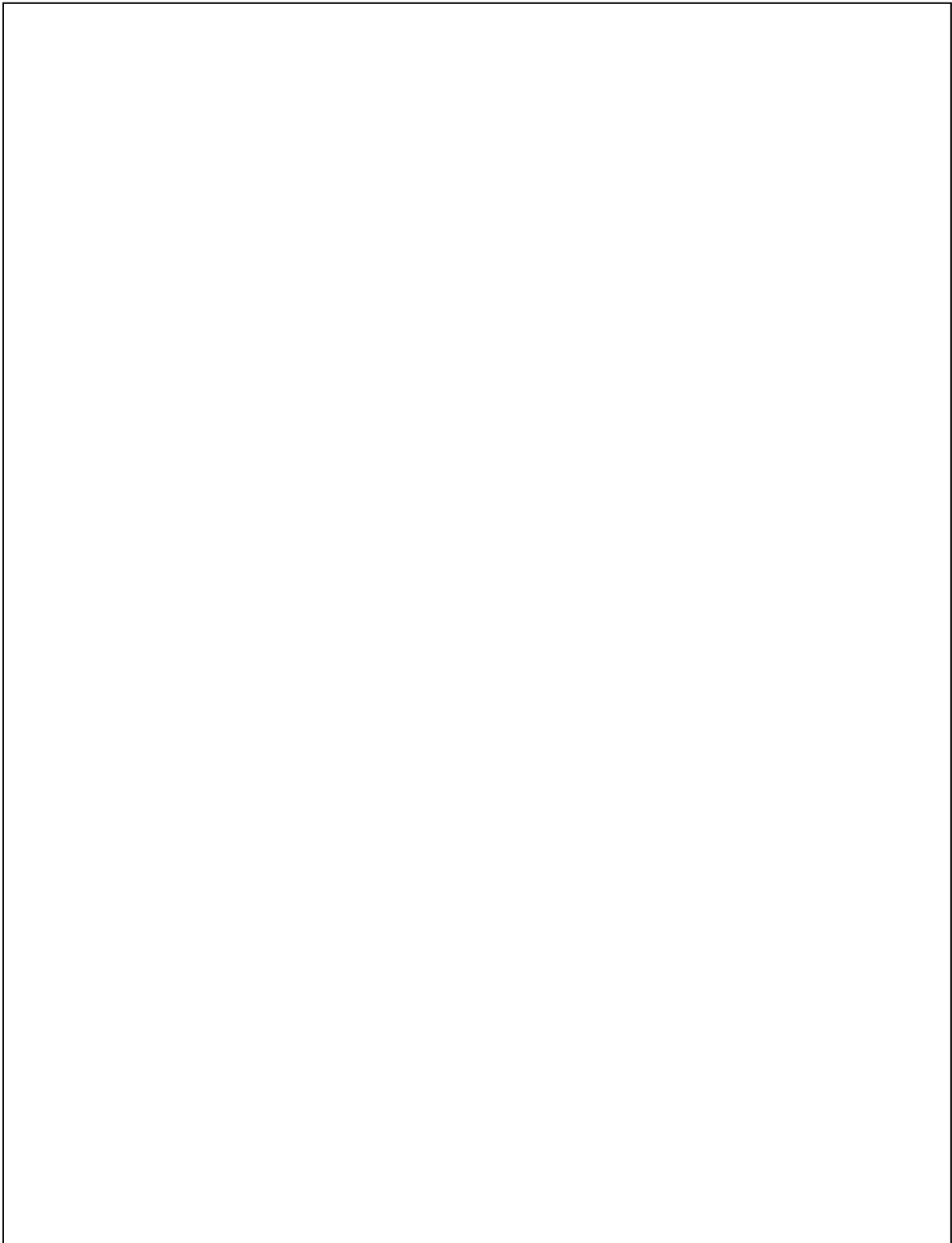
What are your industry main barriers for IM in the SME?

What are the Micro influencers of internet adoption e.g. factors within the company - Limited time and resources to pursue marketing strategies; does the firm's stage in business lifecycle have an impact

What are the Macro influencers of internet adoption– competitive pressure? E.g. the factors that are not controllable and arises from outside the company.

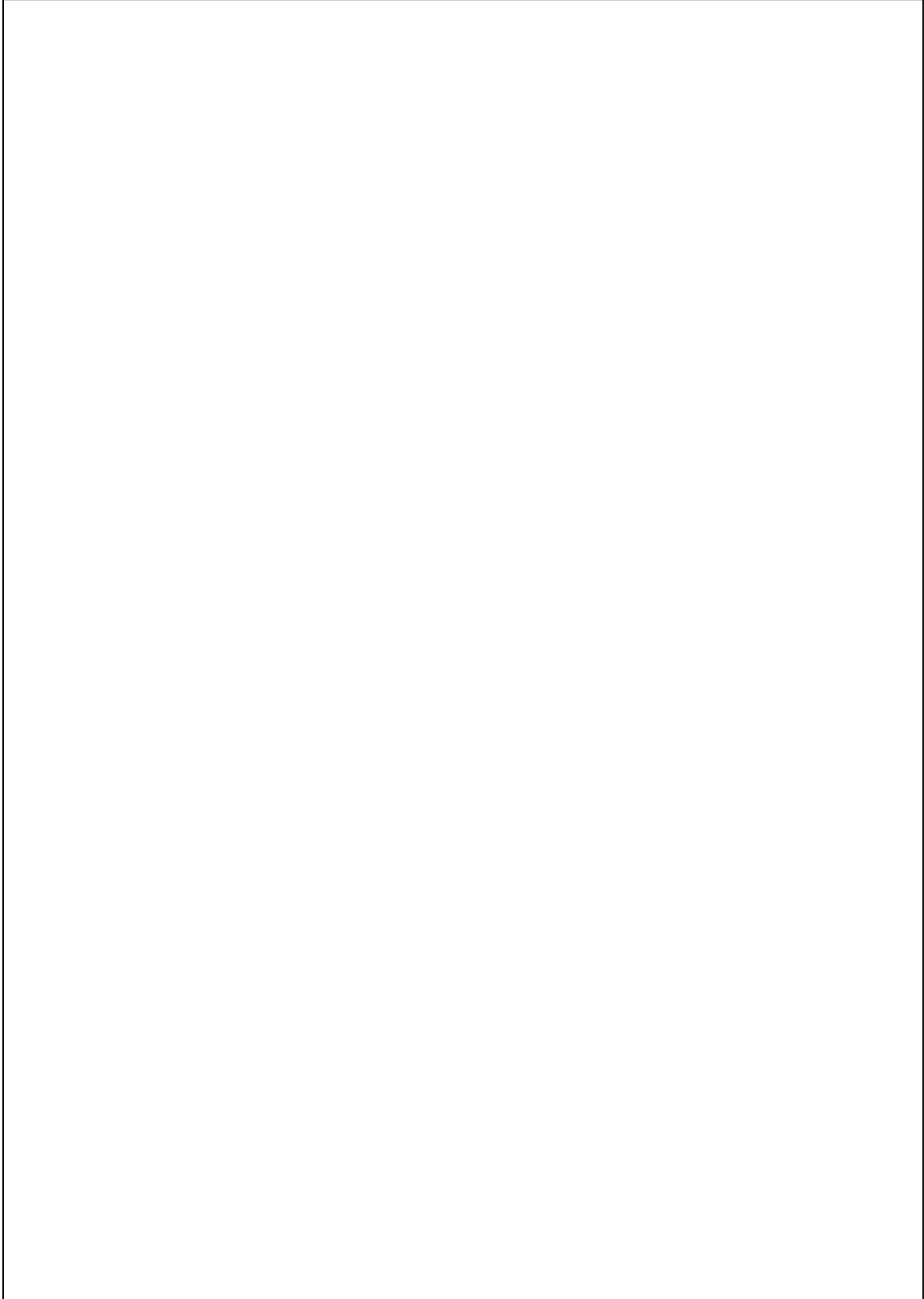
#### **4.0 Government assistance / incentives**

- Are you aware of any support networks available?
- Government assistance?
- Courses?
- Would this aid change IM within the SME?



## 5.0 Marketing System

- Is there strategic marketing plan in place



## 6.0 Measurement

- How is IM measured? / What procedures are used?

--

<b>Do you use financial measures to evaluate IM? How?</b>		
	Yes/No	Detail (where applicable)
Return on IM Investments		
Return on Sales		
Net profit.		
Gross profit.		
Contribution margin.		
IM sales to total sales.		
Brand equity.		
We do not depend on financial measures to evaluate our IM performance.		
Other		
<b>Do you use consumer behaviour measures to evaluate IM performance? How?</b>		
Customer loyalty.		
Consumer penetration.		
We do not depend on consumer behaviour measures to evaluate our IM performance		
Other		
<b>Do you use IM performance measures to evaluate IM performance:</b>		
Retention rate.		
IM sales value.		
Electronic sales to total sales.		
Number of electronic transactions.		
Traffic		
Visit duration.		
Number of users		
We do not depend on IM measures to evaluate our IM performance		
Other measurements (Please specify):		



	Implementing IM led to Y/N	Implementing IM will lead to Y/N
New Sales.		
New Customers.		
Increased Profits.		
Good Customer Relationships.		
Reduction of sales costs.		
Faster discovery of customer needs.		
Greater customisation of products.		
New markets.		
Fast communication with customers.		
Increased customer satisfaction.		
Developing new products.		
Faster adaptability of customer needs.		
Faster adaptability of customer needs.		
Providing better service quality.		
Increased market share.		
Brand equity.		

## 7.0 General

- Are there comments or issues with IM that you find should be highlighted?
- Any areas that your company should improve
- Any general comments



## **Appendix I: In-depth interview summary transcripts (SMEs)**

<b>Interview</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Method</b>	<b>Business</b>
Retail	Donegal	Face to face	Online publishing
Services	Leitrim	Telephone	Insurance
Agriculture & Fishing	Donegal	Face to face	Prefer anonymity
Tourism & Travel	Donegal	Face to face	Prefer anonymity
Industry	Sligo	Email	Prefer anonymity
Construction	Donegal	Email	Prefer anonymity
Science & Technology	Sligo	Face to face	Software
Transport	Sligo	Face to face	Bus / taxi/ private hire

Important and summarised key points elicited from semi structured in-depth interviews with SMEs in the Northwest of Ireland. SME categories are as follows;

- 1. Retail**
- 2. Services**
- 3. Agriculture & Fishing**
- 4. Tourism & Travel**
- 5. Industry**
- 6. Construction**
- 7. Science & Technology**
- 8. Transport**

## Part one: Internet marketing - your understanding and use of it.

1. My understanding of Internet Marketing is that it is essential and crucial for any business/ company to have in this day and age. The Internet is the first port of call for any type of research these days whether it to be to check the weather or look at the price of stocks and shares. People have greater access to the internet than ever before due to smart phones and tablets. This means that for companies it is essential that you have not only the right website but also the right social media sites on the go. More importantly than that is having the right content on the website. We use the Internet as it is a huge part of our business model. We have digital editions available of our products, without the internet this would not be possible. We also use the internet to create awareness of our brand and products. To promote what we are doing and most importantly to research what the competition is doing. Not using the internet was never an option for us. We continue our use of Internet marketing as it creates over 50% of our revenue and that's something we cannot ignore. We also have a large following on our blog. IM accounts for over 70% of our overall Marketing. Or other methods are marketing with papers and Magazines. We also do a lot of trade show's which is great exposure for us.
2. *My take on it (IM) would be everything to do with my online presence and kind of PR so my website, my Facebook accounts, I have two different ones, and I suppose to a lesser extent linked in, my links to my website from other parties, the information on my website that is relevant and I would also use email marketing. Anything to do with the online message. Ad-words would be the primary thing that we would use but I would see the internet marketing as Facebook, linked in, ad words, what's on the website, what's on the content that we put out and that kind of stuff. I have a background in internet, I worked for a web company from and I was around when it was all being invented and I knew the benefits but really I suppose I knew them in theory but it was only when I had my own business to promote that I started to use them when we re-branded and got a new website. I started pushing the website using ad-words where I had experience selling ad-words prior to that so it was really practically obvious to me. In the past it was all talk, but now I was practicing. Last year,*

*2012, we spend 12,000 on Google ad-words and I could account for 50000 of our net earnings from it. Google ad-words is a no brainer but you have to spend the money and keep on top of it in my opinion to maximize what you are doing. We don't pay anybody we do it ourselves which makes it easier for a business like ours with a limited budget. But email templates and marketing and email I think are brilliant because it's basically free and you can take a group of offer or topic and market specifically to them. Segmenting and that's what we've been doing. We did get clients from it. Our overall use would be about 65% of total.*

3. It is having an online presence for the purpose of promoting a business. Generally it's promoting something through the use of the internet. It makes since as times change to use the latest tools to sell. I use it as it keeps me in touch with clients. I'd say about 80 percent of my marketing is online. I do occasional fliers and ads in my local newspaper during quieter times.
  
4. *IM is marketing and advertising efforts that use the web, social media tools and email to communicate with the target audience, grabs the attention of the target audience and drive sales. IM tools consist of: Websites, social media sites (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram etc), E Commerce and Email campaigns. I use it to communicate my brand/service with potential clients. It allows me to target specific audiences quickly, accurately and cheaply. It is also a good means of keeping in contact with current/past clients as well as receiving feedback from clients. It is a must to use it- every business/service uses IM... I have learned to use it myself through practice, workshops and learning from other companies. Every service/business must have an online presence in order to survive... when a client is looking for a service/business the internet is usually the first place they search and therefore it's extremely important to be there with the correct information available. It also provides my service/business with sales and attention. Our IM occupies 75% of marketing with traditional methods being newspaper advertisements, PR launches (via radio newspaper) and postal campaigns.*

5. To me internet marketing is essentially marketing your business/product offering using the internet. It can include Social Media, Display advertising, email marketing, SEO, display banner advertising, mobile advertising, ad-words etc. We use it to promote products and to communicate with our customers. We had no opportunity to not use it internet marketing as you grow with the trend or get lost behind. Internet marketing is expected as clients want us to communicate with them using a medium that is most accessible it occupies 80% of our marketing efforts. Radio Advertising, print advertising, posters and leaflets are traditional methods used.
  
6. *Internet marketing to us is getting our name out there through using the internet. The type of business that we are is not something that is easily seen randomly by customers. We therefore use the internet to ensure that we are found easily when searched for. Just as the phone book or classifieds were the main listing and service finder's years ago, the internet and search results are the new medium to find what you need. We would consider the internet marketing to be advertising and selling our business online. We would use it just to keep our customers updated. We didn't set out to use IM but just followed trends where the internet was becoming huge and therefore we adapted to the norm. Other businesses were developing websites and could see results from it and therefore we followed suit. We have also seen an improvement in call backs and repeat business and continue to use internet marketing therefore. 70% of our marketing would be online using social media and our website. 30% would be traditional routes such as radio and local papers. Ultimately we would prefer our IM to be 100% but there are still a number of our customers in the older generation and prefer to see us listed in traditional methods but as times change and new generations who are more tech savvy then we will adapt to this.*
  
7. IM is a method for communicating our offering to the public. We include the public to be existing and prospective customers. We viewed it as a way of cutting marketing costs while reaching a wider audience. E.g. we created PDF versions of all our promotional material which are available to download or attach to emails. We found more and more people were turning to the internet so we have invested more in SEO and website. IM would occupy about 20% of our total marketing use/spend each year.

As our offering is high value low volume product, the traditional methods of advertising, trade shows and direct selling through on site demonstration and networking events.

8. *Promoting your business on the internet. Approximately 60% of our marketing is online.*

## Part two: Current IM practices employed by the business/usage

1. We use website, email marketing, online partnership, online PR, interactive marketing, opt in email, and social media. Our website and email marketing are probably our weakest form of IM. We have online partnerships with Amazon, I-tunes, Graphically etc, which have proven to be very beneficial and a great endorsement for our brand. Online PR is great for us as we can manage it ourselves but also have contributors give us free PR in the form of reviews and mentioning us on their sites etc. IM IS ESSENTIAL! It's easy to use but difficult to get right. In my opinion we are using IM as best we can at the moment. There is always room for improvement and learning.
2. *We use email marketing to send useful info to segments and be seen as a specialist in that segment. Social media to get likes and word of mouth and be seen as active Search Engine Optimisation is needed to get website ranking as high as possible on stats - free advertising Pay per Click gives me actual business, based on what I am prepared to spend. Website Marketing involves overall promotion of website - send customers there for information & new customers get profile of our business. Online PR gets a good feeling out there, to be seen as a proactive company. IM I suppose relatively easy - it's easier for us. I forget to keep doing it. You get busy and you don't send another email. Ad-words is handy as it keeps running in the background so long as you keep paying but other things you have to be proactive with. Write an article or go on Facebook and put a post up or whatever. Be consistent is needed. We could do a bit more but I think we are pretty OK in comparison to other businesses in our industry - I think we are doing brilliant.*
3. The website is used to update clients, emails to send out promotions to clients, social media for query handling and promotions also. These are used as they are a quick inexpensive way to reach my market and new markets. It takes seconds to post a status on Facebook to reach my followers. I find it useful as I get a lot of queries through the Facebook. The major difference between that and telephone queries are the easy of using social media. Similarly the website can take queries and email. Using it is easy at a basic level but with anything else the more time you invest in learning new meth-



ods then the higher the reward. Our use is good enough for our business for now but should things change then we will have to change as well.

4. *Website- we have a website, we use it to inform potential clients about what we do, we update news, new advancements etc. We also use Google analytics to target/measure visitors; Email Marketing- I use this a lot, the response rate is quite low, once I send out an email campaign I then have to follow up with a phone call; Viral marketing,- very important in terms of word of mouth. Many of our customer come from referrals; Online PR- very important, we update PR news on our website and social media sites; Interactive marketing- it is very important to communicate with our clients and we do this by posting on their social media sites and featuring them on ours. This builds good rapport; Opt in email, opt-in email is important as you do not want to waste time on the wrong people so it is a means of finding out who is genuinely interest in your service/product; Social media is the most important tool as it a means of communicating with clients, seeing what competitors are doing, sharing information and getting feedback. IM is perceived as very useful and easy to implement. Do we use it adequately? - Yes but there is also room for improvement and advancements-it is therefore important to keep an eye on what competitors are doing.*
5. We use website marketing, SEM (internally), email marketing, online partnerships, online PR and social media (Facebook, twitter, YouTube). Email marketing, helps us communicate with existing and inactive clients and it gives us an opportunity to inform our customers about our new business offerings and how we are growing etc in a cost effective manner. In this day and age IM is very important. IM is easier for younger generations but it is hard for other colleague's to incorporate it into their every day work. For younger generations – a lot of research is needed to stay on top of the trends. We should be developing a cohesive social media strategy. The difficulty is resources and time to plan out a new strategy
6. *We use website marketing (updating consistently), SEM (SEO and Ad-words), email marketing, viral marketing and social media tools as they are accessible, cheap (we*

*can see a return) and for convenience. It is useful as it brings us closer to customers. We find it easy enough. There are constant changes however and so it can be difficult to keep up. I think we could be doing more but are happy with things as it is.*

7. We use website; we have recently purchased a new CMS website from a local company. This will enable us to update the website more regularly which was a problem of the old system. The content would become stale quite quickly. SEM, – we use Google ad-words and email marketing – have looked at it but haven't used it. We have moved all our customers to e-billing to cut costs and improve efficiencies. Social media – we have Facebook, twitter and Google + accounts. We have not been active on them; we intend to use them in the future. However, as it is a B2B product, we think that this is not a relevant avenue for us. We are currently researching this area for more information. SEO and website are the main things that deliver results for us. We learned the hard way in the beginning how quickly your Google ad-words budget can be wasted if you do not understand how it works e.g. certain community websites allowed ad-words to be displayed. Owners of these community websites were clicking them in order to generate revenue for their own websites. Once we clicked not to allow ads on community sites, we found our budget lasting much longer. The words we use are quite expensive as there are a lot of players in the marketplace. IM is very important, especially as the next generation of entrepreneurs and retailers (our target market) know all about the internet. They use it, believe in it and more importantly trust it. A lot of the time we find people contact us only after evaluating our company and a number of competitors. IM is easy to use, once you know how but you can always use it smarter.
  
8. *We use website marketing and search engine marketing (basic keywords – no ad-words). We are generating some business but time and lack of expertise in-house is a restricting factor. I know we could generate even more business if we strategically invested more in marketing IM is absolutely useful and the way forward. It needs to be embraced more within our organisation and we haven't looked into it properly and are not using it properly. It's used to increase sales and generate more business. We use it for keeping up with competitors and a need to attract and grow seasonal tourist business, and continue to use to attract new business. We do not partake in as much*

*marketing as we should. We use brochures, direct mail, business cards, word of mouth, sponsorship and networking. We have a website but no social media.*

### **Part three: Drivers/Barriers**

#### What are your industry main drivers for IM in the SME?

1. The main drivers are: free; easily accessible; everyone can use it; quick
2. *Drivers are competitiveness landscape, prices - you know it's very competitive pricing out there. Also wanting to have a national reach and to fight against the recession are main drivers.*
3. Everyone is online now on phones, tablets and laptops. This is where information is, it's where the customer is.
4. *It is a must for SME's. Online is where clients search for info so it's extremely important to have an online presence. It provides you with great insights into clients and competitors. It's also quick, accurate and cheap in comparison to other tools... but it is time consuming.*
5. Communicating with customers at a direct level, interaction and Promoting business offerings
6. *The return and reach of it*
7. Keeping up with and ahead of the competition, low cost method of communication and speed
8. *It's a very competitive market space and a shrinking marketplace – less tourists availing of organised transport – driving more themselves or taking public transport – this is also because of smaller groups. People do not look in the traditional places such as the phone book, everyone Googles – so you need a good website that does your business justice.*

What are your industry main barriers for IM in the SME?

1. Barriers for us are that not enough people are aware of who we are and what we offer. Gaining traction and getting our name out there is the hardest part.
2. *Time, being organised, and I don't want to hire somebody to do it as I cannot afford it. I prefer to spend money on ad-words.*
3. I think lack of time maybe and lack of money to hire someone to do it.
4. *It is time consuming. It takes time to build up an online presence. While social media and email marketing etc is cheap building a quality website can be expensive. But our results have been positive.*
5. Resources, budget, time and encouraging staff to embrace the concept
6. *I think the construction industry isn't your typical internet business. Technical knowledge is probably a main barrier as is time.*
7. Hard to quantify until specific measuring criteria put in place.
8. *IM is not expensive in comparison to other marketing strategies but you need to know what you are doing. In an SME you are constantly under pressure to get everything done, marketing in general is always towards the bottom of the list. The main concern is to get things done to satisfy existing customers and other operational issues. Marketing for future business is something you know needs to be done, but is always push back. Time and lack of expertise would certainly be the main barriers for IM in our company.*

What are the Micro influencers of internet adoption e.g. factors within the company - Limited time and resources to pursue marketing strategies; does the firm's stage in business lifecycle have an impact

1. Limited time and resources
2. *Limited time and resources*
3. Limited knowledge and no skills and older businesses find it hard to convert to the internet
4. *Yes, it takes time to build an online presence and as the service/product develops and gains a presence off line (developing into the growth/maturity stage) it begins to grow online. Micro factors: timely, you must be extremely careful about what you say and how you phrase it*
5. Resource, budget and time
6. *I don't think lifecycle has any impact as the cost of IM is relatively low so shouldn't factor. Limited time and lack of tech knowledge however are influences.*
7. Time is the main hurdle we try to overcome. We passed IM over to an intern and while they made some progress, you need to have someone to really drive the efforts.
8. *Time and expertise. The stage in business life cycle is not as important as economy. There is less demand so you must stimulate demand.*

What are the Macro influencers of internet adoption– competitive pressure? E.g. the factors that may be uncontrollable and arises from outside the company.

1. We try not to follow the trend. As for us our immediate competitors in the North West are concentrating on one aspect of the market. We are multiplatform trans-media, so as arrogant as it sounds. We are setting the trends at the moment.
2. *I think they are all under pressure. Larger companies I don't know but I think every smaller is trying to defend market share and margin. We are operating on less income so we have to find new customers. We are in a small time with a perfect channel. Leitrim has the smallest population in Ireland so we need to expand our market share.*
3. Yes if the competition is on the internet then you have to keep up with that
4. *Bad PR, negative comments, negative reviews, dealing with unhappy customers while everyone else can see, competitive pressure (competitors can see exactly what you are doing and will try to copy/do something better), internet can crash etc*
5. If you're not on it your behind everyone else. Online you want customers and listeners to think of your brand and use us before anyone else. We would fall to competition to those that have a social media strategy set up
6. *Definitely competition. We have to keep up to stay afloat and ensure our business survival.*
7. If we don't have a fairly up to date, modern site a user may perceive us to be not as good as a competitor as the website is a reflection of our business.
8. *Certainly keeping up and ahead of competitors is very important. It's not so much pressure but a necessity. If we don't have a website, people think we are not a pro-*

*gressive company nor can they learn more about the solutions we can provide to their transport needs. We provide a comprehensive variety of transport from taxis, mini-buses, coaches and wheelchair accessible transport.*



#### Part four: Government assistance / incentives

- Are you aware of any support networks available / Government assistance?
1. We are aware of the local enterprise board offering course's in IM but must be paid for privately. The fee is not sky high and we are hoping our Marketing Manager will avail of this in the coming months. It will hopefully improve our IM as a direct result.
  2. *I know that I get regular contact from Leitrim County Enterprise Board with regards training and supplement training and I did actually avail of a Facebook training session with an expert earlier in the year. That was very useful at the time. She helped me come up with a promotion on Facebook and showed me how. We ended up getting about 200 extra likes from it. That's all I can think of. They contacted me. The enterprise boards are brilliant.*
  3. I heard from colleagues that there are courses and what not but I've not looked into them directly. I know there are different schemes but I don't know a lot of them. I wouldn't have the time to give to learn new things but it's good that it is available.
  4. *Yes, I have been to some social media workshops which have been held by Letterkeneny chamber of commerce. It did not change IM within my SME but I know that it has for others*
  5. Don't know of any government assistance. I would assume that would change perception of IM for SMES.
  6. *I wouldn't be aware of any no. I'm sure if I looked or sought the information I would find it but I'm unaware as to any help. I'm sure courses are offered but we can't afford to send staff on courses nor pay for them.*

7. We have availed of a government grant for e-commerce/marketing activities each year. This comes in a grant form up to 1,500 per annum. They have cut this back in the last number of years and now only cover the actual cost of attending trade shows – trade stand expenses only no associated costs such as travel or accommodation. We have received mentoring and also attended various workshops put on by the local enterprise board. Education is the main thing that will change IM within the SME. A lot of these courses focus on social media, whereas I think it should be more focused on SEO and website content.
  
8. *No. A course in IM would be beneficial, but like all courses, it's great when you are there but then when you arrive back at the office, life starts again and the notes are put into a file in a filing cabinet in the hope to implement the lessons learnt at some point in the future. We would probably benefit from a consultant to come in and do what we need regarding IM and Social media marketing.*

## Part five: Marketing System

- Is there strategic marketing plan in place
1. Yes, we plan our Marketing Strategy Three months ahead. This is to keep us on track ourselves but also helps us plan for the future. However if something were to arise which needed attention immediately we would deal with that as and when it comes in.
  2. *It would be reactive. When I have time and think of it, I'm proactive. But when I don't have time it can be reactive*
  3. Yes we try and decide monthly what we will do. It could be better but again we haven't the time. We had a student in before who did various plans which was great so we should start to take heed and plan in advance.
  4. *Yes we have a marketing strategy but its changes often, we add new ideas and remove others that have not worked. The strategic marketing plan is just a guide.*
  5. No, but we are planning on developing one.
  6. *Not as such. Not officially. We have an idea of what we want and where we want to be in terms of sales figures but we don't map out intrinsically the process. It's more as we go along.*
  7. Yes, each December we plan out our activities for the coming year. It rarely changes unless a specific opportunity arises that we would like to take advantage of e.g. we cancelled a trade show as it was not yielding results in the last few years, we diverted this money to a 12 month advertising campaign with a magazine for one of our target sectors.
  8. *No, it is very ad hoc.*

## Part six: Measurement

- How is IM measured? / What procedures are used?
1. At the moment other than online sales, we have no procedures in place.
  2. *Well I suppose we have - it's hard to say overall- circumstances of our business we lost customers and we got lower margins so it's not like our profits have increased, we are staying stagnant but the internet marketing is helping us fill the hole that was lost. We definitely see benefits for example on the commercial side of the business in June 50% of new business was from the web. In May 17 out of 24 new business cases was from the web. Around half of our new commercial business comes from the internet. Yes. Well so far this year January to June 2013 in commercial net earnings we had net profit from ad-words of €26,500. We actually had the ads turned off for a few months as we couldn't deal with the amount of business we were getting in. This cost €2,240 in IM ad-word costs on average and netted €26,500. We cover the cost of salary for the person to look after ad-words but overall it is definitely worth it.*
  3. Good old fashioned money is always the key measurement. It's hard to see where the internet played a part sometimes so it would be good to have a more efficiently measurement device in place. I wouldn't know what or how to do this though.
  4. *Google analytics, amount of FB like and twitter followers, responses, messages, comments.*
  5. Google Analytics, Social media analytics, Google ad sense performance reports, email newsletter providers reports etc. Try and continuously improve on performance
  6. *Generally by sales, calls and queries from customers. Google analytics and website analytics also show us what was popular so we can use it again or refine it. Ultimately money in the bank is our greatest indicator.*

7. IM is hard to measure. When a new lead comes in or we install a new site, we ask where they came across us. It is hard to apportion how much of an effect IM or other marketing activities have on generating a sale. From our experience, it happens to be what happened that day to the customer e.g. if a direct mail from our company arrives on their desk when they are having difficulty with their existing supplier or they met us at a trade show.

8. *It's not.*

## Part seven: General

1. Greater time and care should be put into developing our online strategies.
2. *I would say that a lot of the questions were kind of...in some ways my business doesn't change; IM is just a new channel. A lot of my business is not affected but I'm defiantly helped with new business. It's good for morale but a lot of business I don't think would be affected by I'm and a lot of my customers that come in are customers for years that would have no idea I do IM. In some cases it's very important in other cases it's completely unimportant. For getting those new customers in, it's great. You can be seen as an expert in a certain field through IM. It's not the be all and end all, it is fantastic but you have to be aware. That's all I'll say.*
3. It is an area of growth that will continue to get bigger. Anyone should be getting in on it now so as to not be overwhelmed further down the line with more developments.
4. *IM is essential to every business/service in moderation.... It is important to not over rely on IM but to have a strong online presence without annoying the audiences.*
5. Social Media needs improvement; Length of time on our website needs to increase. Developing a new website/Mobile app and marketing plan to combat problems and the way we conduct our work on daily basis.
6. *We just try and continuously stay with what is new and modern. At times we have enough business to keep us busy and hold off on marketing a slight bit to ensure we can fully satisfy current customers. I think marketing is huge for any company or industry to keep in the game.*

7. We need to spend more time and effort on our website and internet marketing. We don't feel social media such as Facebook or twitter is relevant to our product as it is a high involvement and expensive item. In the future with SAAS model, this may change.
8. *IM is an organic process – you can't think that because you pay a web design company for a website and put it online, the work is done, you need to constantly monitor it and update it.*

## **Appendix J: Business Sectors**

- Agriculture and Fishing
- Industry
- Construction
- Services
- Transport
- Tourism and Travel
- Science and Technology (CSO, 2013)
  
- Retail



## **Appendix K: Expert Interview Questions**

- What is your name?
- What is your definition of Internet marketing?
- Why should it be used? Why do you think it is beneficial?
- What percentage of total marketing do you think IM should occupy?
- Which of the following would you consider important IM tools?
- What would you consider the objectives of these?
- Do you think SMEs are using IM adequately, in your opinion?
- What do you consider the main drivers of IM? Within a SME context.
- What do you consider the main barriers for IM in the SME?
- What influences internet adoption altogether?
- What government assistance is currently operating?
- How do you think IM is measured?
- Are there comments or issues with IM that you find should be highlighted? Any general comments on the research?

## **Appendix L: Expert Interview Full**

**What is your name?**

Eoin O Siochru

**What is your definition of Internet marketing?**

Internet Marketing is a vital component of any companies overall marketing strategy. It clearly identifies how an organisation will use the online channel to achieve business goals and objectives.

**Why should it be used? Why do you think it is beneficial?**

An Internet strategy should clearly articulate the value proposition of the company in line with customer expectations and needs. The online channel and activity thereon can be easily monitor and accessed. This in turn allows companies to modify its strategy in accordance

**What percentage of total marketing do you think IM should occupy?**

26-50%

**Which of the following would you consider important IM tools?**

Website

SEM

Email Marketing

Interactive marketing

**What would you consider the objectives of these?**

Website: To act as the hub of all internet marketing activity

**SEM: A definition of the overall online marketing strategy**

Email Marketing: If done correctly still one of the most effective revenue generating tools

Viral marketing: limited scope - depends on the target audience

Online partnerships: again depends on the nature of the target market

Online PR support tactic

Interactive marketing: CRM vital to the client engagement process

Opt in email: legally correct

Social media: Only if the customer is using this channel

**Do you think SMEs are using IM adequately, in your opinion?**

No - SME's tend to concentrate on website development and don't consider what the customer wants when planning a web deployment.

**What do you consider the main drivers of IM? (within a SME context).**

Changing market forces and the wide spread adoption of the internet as a research tool for buyers.

**What do you consider the main barriers for IM in the SME?**

Lack of understanding by the owner managers of the importance of the channel. They still think it's about technology rather than human behaviour and customers' needs.

**What influences internet adoption altogether?**

Owner managers who recognise the value and importance of the cost to benefit rate of an appropriate internet strategy to their business.

**What government assistance is currently operating?**

Certain state agencies have support programmes for qualifying clients to help them develop their online marketing strategy.

**How do you think IM is measured?**

In most companies there is no measurement - however more enlighten companies are now using analytical tools and CRM applications to manage and measure customer engagement in terms of monetisation and return on investment.

**Are there comments or issues with IM that you find should be highlighted? Any general comments on the research?**

The most important consideration for SME's when they are developing their online marketing strategy is to remember "Strategy before Structure". With regard to this research work carried out by James Kilmartin - it was comprehensive and the methodology used was very appropriate. Its findings are in keeping with our understanding of the SME online landscape and would be replicated throughout the SME's sector in Ireland.