



Media Release- 17th of June 2003

ComReg Quarterly Report shows strong growth in text messaging and demand for digital TV

The Commission for Communications Regulation (ComReg) in its latest quarterly report reveals that on average each mobile phone subscriber sends 78 text messages per month – up 31% on last year. It also shows that subscriptions to digital television have increased by 36% on last year and other local operators (OLOs) – operators other than eircom - share of the market has remained at 21% despite difficult market conditions over the past year.

The Quarterly Report contains the results of separate surveys carried out by Amárach Consulting and TNS MRBI on behalf of ComReg during April and May of this year.

TNS MRBI surveyed 400 companies and found that on the issue of broadband that 44% of companies intend to increase their broadband requirements over the next 12 months.

In addition, 47% of those surveyed believed that Ireland is well-placed to become an e-commerce hub for Europe. However, respondents said a number of key measures need to be addressed such as investment in national infrastructure, price reductions and nationwide access to new and improved broadband services.

The Report notes that roll-out of DSL (high speed digital lines) has reached almost 50% of all phone lines. While take-up appears to be increasing mainly due to a significant fall in prices during the period of the survey, Irish take-up of DSL still lags behind other EU countries.

The Amárach Consulting survey of internet use showed that 38% of respondents were regular users of the internet. It also showed 38% of respondents have either bought goods or purchased services on-line in the past 3 months.

In first quarter of 2003 the cost of renting a fixed line has increased by 8% and average revenue per user for mobile operators now stands at €45 per month.

Etain Doyle, Chairperson of ComReg, said today: “It is important that we continue to promote and develop competition to ensure that Irish consumers continue to get the benefits of lower prices. We hope to see the level of access to broadband in Ireland rising to match levels found in other EU countries.”

The main findings of the June 2003 quarterly report reveal the following:

- *Mobile phone use has grown to 80%, up 1% and up 3% in 12 months
- *78 text messages sent per month per subscriber – up 31% this year
- *An estimated 3.1 million people have a mobile phone.
- *38% of people use the internet on a regular basis, up 2% on last year.
- *Consumer interest in flat rate internet access has increased as prices have fallen
- *Subscriptions to digital television have increased by 36% on last year to 353,000 – 1 in 4 Irish households now have access to digital television.
- *OLO market share is at 21%, broadly in line with the previous quarter.
- *Overall revenues now stand at €3.46 billion – up 8% on last year.

ENDS

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