

New figures reveal that online ad spend is continuing to climb

By Catherine O'Mahony

The growth in Irish online investment is continuing, with the latest figures from PriceWaterhouseCoopers and IAB Ireland showing 13.5 per cent growth in digital advertising spend last year to a new high of €110 million.

The growth, which particularly reflects the advances in social media advertising, confirms expectations that online media should overtake radio this year.

While classified advertising and search advertising revenues also rose, display advertising rose fastest, as its share of the total investment rose from 26.6 per cent to 31 per cent. Social media sites have become popular brand advertising vehicles in the past 18 months.

Neither Facebook nor Google releases ad revenue data for Ireland, but PwC is able to produce estimates, relying on agency data. Online classified advertising and paid-search advertising represented 25 per cent and 44 per cent respectively of total ad spend.

IAB Ireland chief executive Suzanne McElligott said the growth in display ads was particularly positive, as it showed that brands were investing more in digital advertising.

"We would have anticipated



Eamonn Fallon, chairman, and Suzanne McElligott, chief executive, IAB Ireland, with Bartley O'Connor, consulting senior manager, PwC

growth, but this has surpassed expectations," she said.

Stripping out display and classified ads, the top spending categories were fast-moving consumer goods, telecoms and finance.

The only big gap in the research was mobile advertising, which is not yet being measured here. However this seems set to change, with IAB Ireland pledging to take a ser-

ious look at the area in the next few months.

Data for the survey was provided on a confidential basis by all members of IAB Ireland, which represents multiple sites including RTE, Eircom, Independent News & Media and TV3.

PwC's Bartley O'Connor noted that the online ad market was not booming universally. He added that

it was obvious that some firms, largely those in the small-to-medium-sized category, were reducing their investment in all forms of advertising.

"Not all the numbers were up, and it's clear that there are indeed two economies at play – one for those who are international, and another for the smaller localised companies," he said.