

# Irish Weather Suits Data Centres

## Google's €75m data centre underscores virtual boom

IRELAND'S BRICKS and mortar building boom might be a distant memory but a virtual building boom is taking place in Dublin, which was confirmed when internet giant Google said it would build a €75 million home for its computers in the capital.

Google is just the latest technology firm pouring millions of euro into building a data centre in Ireland. Data centres are specialised facilities which are home to densely packed banks of computers used to run services delivered over the web.

The concentration of so many computer servers in a single place means they require huge amounts of power both to run the computers and to keep them from overheating. A single centre can use as much electricity as a provincial town.

Google's data centre is being built in a facility the fit-out of which will create 200 construction jobs. Following the completion of the project at the end of next year, Google will create 30 new jobs to run the centre.

Microsoft, the world's largest software company, invested more than €340 million building a "mega-data centre" in nearby location. It opened in September 2009 but Microsoft recently lodged a planning application for a new building on the site, which would expand its data centre space by one-third.

Digital Realty Trust, a specialist US firm which develops data centres and leases them to clients, is also expected to expand its centre at this Business Park which concentrates on attracting forward-thinking industries to locate there.

Google's top-ranking executive in Ireland, John Herlihy, said his company's decision to build the data centre in Ireland was a "a rare case where the Irish weather is a cause for praise". Google cools its computers using a technique known as "free-air cooling" where it sucks in air from outside and blows it over the servers.

Older data centres use power-hungry chiller units to blow cold air into the computer rooms. Google says its data centres have reduced their power consumption by 50 per cent through innovative approaches.

Microsoft also stated that the temperate Irish climate played a part in its data centre investment decision.