

REDC

End of Year Review 2014

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See Clearly

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The Changing Nation

*"All changed, changed utterly:
A terrible beauty is born."*

W. B. Yeats
Easter 1916

2014 was an important year for Ireland and what it means to be from the island. The nation lived up to its caricature of the Fighting Irish by challenging the long-established image of Ireland and the Irish as self-deprecating, conservative and traditional.

Launched ahead of St Patrick's Day, **Fáilte Ireland's Ireland Inspires** video worked to highlight the positive qualities

of the Irish people with particular emphasis on our achievements, endurance and heritage. In contradiction to our reputation as a modest country, the video unashamedly spoke of our accomplishments and enviable legacy; stirring a sense of pride in ourselves.



Above: #IrelandInspires video.
Source: FailteIrelandTV

Irish Water was established mid 2013 but had its official



Above: Anti-water protesters in Dublin city. Source: independent.ie

introduction to the nation in 2014 as water meter installation commenced. The reality of water charges was received with great hostility and, in contrast to customary Irish reaction, protests were held throughout the country.

In late 2014, **Enda Kenny** announced that a referendum on **same-sex marriage** would take place in 2015 – supported

by Government. This was a step away from the traditional ideas of marriage as outlined in the 1922 Constitution and paves the way to ensuring equal rights for same-sex couples.



Above: Maria Walsh became the first openly gay Rose of Tralee in August 2014.
Source: entertainment.ie

The changes witnessed in 2014 said more about the people than it did about the country and underlined the metamorphosis in Irish mentality.

A Tale of Two Economies



Above: People queue for houses in September in a residential development in Swords.
Source: independent.ie

The gap within our two tiered economy widened further in 2014 with housing playing a significant role in the divergence. Dublin was clearly separated from the rest of the country with the majority of jobs created by foreign direct investment going to the capital. The demand for housing in Dublin sky-rocketed with basic economics coming into play. Bidding wars and

human queues were witnessed and the faint whiff of Celtic Tiger madness could not be ignored. In the private rental market, prices also experienced an upward trend as demand exceeded supply. This, combined with a lack of social housing, was the platform for a major homeless crisis that came to a head in early December. The discovery of homeless man Jonathan Corrie's body near Leinster House propelled the Government into action to find a short-term solution to the problem.

While new lending regulations are helping stunt the upward movement of house prices in 2015, the provision of housing to meet demand will likely be an area to address.



Above: The doorway in which Jonathan Corrie was found dead is located meters away from the Gates of Leinster House. Source: irishmirror.ie

2014 Major Moments

Ebola

The epidemic in West Africa began, infecting and killing tens of thousands.

WhatsApp

Facebook purchased the instant messaging app for \$19 billion US Dollars in February.

Ukrainian Unrest

Civil war leaves thousands dead as relations between Ukraine and Russia worsen.

Malaysian Airlines

Tragedy struck as the passengers and crew of three different flights in March, July and December lost their lives.

Robin Williams

The much loved and widely celebrated actor was found dead in August.

Scottish Referendum

The quest for independence came to an end when the bill was rejected in September.

Oscar Pistorius

The blade runner was found guilty in October of the culpable homicide of his girlfriend Reeva Steenkamp.

2014 Political Trends

2014 was an important year in Irish Politics. Dominated by controversy; it is unlikely too many politicians will look back on it with fondness. But what actually happened and what are the longer term implications?

1. At the outset, 2014 had all the makings of a good year for both Fine Gael and Labour. With the Troika having left and the economy taking its first tentative steps towards recovery, members of the Government could have been forgiven for thinking times were changing.

The positivity was not to last however as the bugging of GSOC and whistle-blowers quickly became the national narrative. #Shattergate eventually became one of the most used hashtags in 2014, not to mention costing the Justice Minister his position. This and a stream of other controversies contributed to what was to be relatively poor Local and European elections for the two government parties. The particularly poor result for Labour led to Ireland getting a new Tánaiste, and Labour a new leader, as Eamon Gilmore was replaced by Joan Burton.

After an initial bounce following the Labour leadership change and the cabinet reshuffle which followed, the tide continued to go against the Government parties

as the reality of water charges were to bring over 100,000 people on to the streets of the capital.

As we head into 2015, it will be interesting to see if the 2014 Annus Horribilis for both Fine Gael and Labour will be a year soon forgotten, or a sign of things to come. With an improving economy, declining unemployment and a potential sale of AIB likely to yield substantial dividends for the tax payer, the potential for a political turnaround is there. 2015 will by no means be smooth sailing for the coalition as the A&E crisis has already shown us, but if the first RED C poll of 2015 is something to go by, could political recovery finally be on the cards for the coalition?

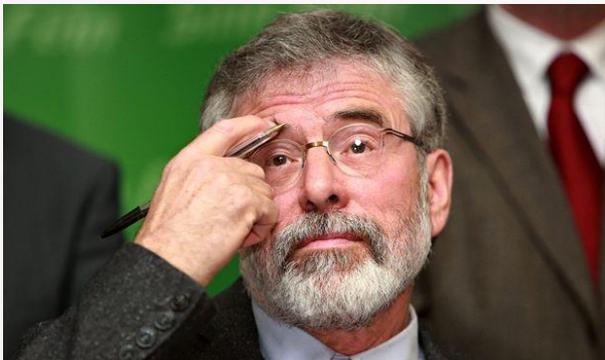


Source: thejournal.ie

2. It's rare that a football term can be so aptly used in politics, but 2014 truly was a game of two halves for Sinn Féin. Building on 2013's momentum, Sinn

Féin had a remarkably positive first 6 months of the year, positioning themselves as the leading voice of the opposition, leading to strong local and European elections for the party, with Sinn Féin taking seats in all of Ireland's Euro constituencies.

In the year of the political controversy, not even Sinn Féin were immune as the latter six months showed us, with the past once again coming back to haunt the party. Although managing to maintain most of their earlier poll gains, as we enter a potential election year the challenge for Sinn Féin will be how much of their poll support can be turned into actual votes. Will they finally be able to put the past behind them and find themselves Kingmaker?



Source: theguardian.com

3. The year the civil war ended? Although the guns have long been silent, for more than 90 years Irish politics has been dominated by divisions fostered in the Civil War of 1922 – 1923.

As we head into an election cycle, the legacy of 2014's political turmoil may well be that Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael are left with no choice but to end that strife and coalesce after the next election. With pledges from both party leaders that they will not go into Government with Sinn Féin, current polls indicate that this may well be the only alternative after polling day. Could we finally be about to see an end to Ireland's oldest political rivalry?

4. Was 2014 the year of the Independent or was it the year of the Rejectorate? As Independents have continued their rise in our polls, the question we often get asked is what is behind this trend. Is it a genuine desire to vote for Independent candidates or is this vote a "say anyone but them" vote against the parties that may not actually materialise on polling day. This is a difficult trend to analyse, but 2015 may well be the year we get the answer. With Lucinda Creighton announcing the formation of her new party and Shane Ross' alliance of independents, voters will now have a more definite choice beyond the establishment parties, but will they make that choice?

Private Goes Public

In August 2014, phone hacking headlines hit the news again as thousands of nude celebrity photos were stolen from Apple's iCloud facility and posted online. This was followed by a hack on Sony Pictures in November which exposed the operation of the Hollywood studio and highlighted inequality, as men were detailed as receiving higher salaries than their female counterparts both within the studio and on the screen.



Above: Jennifer Lawrence fell victim to iCloud hacking and was also revealed as receiving less pay than her male co-stars.

Source: salon.com

The hacking incidents started a dialogue regarding the remit of private and its overlap with public. Whether or not the discussion impacts on behaviour remains to be seen.

Here Come the Girls

Feminism underwent a big PR campaign in 2014, with the objective being to defend the title and finally eradicate negative associations. The message was clear and simple: equal rights for men and women.

From Emma Watson's seminal speech on the HeForShe campaign at the UN, to the Ban Bossy initiative faced by world-famous female celebrities; feminism was hurled into the spotlight.

In Ireland, women made advances in the national



Above: Emma Watson became UN Women Goodwill Ambassador

Source: popsugar.com



Above: Nóirín O'Sullivan became the first female Garda Commissioner in 2014

Source: irishexaminer.com

profile as Nóirín O'Sullivan became the first female Garda Commissioner and Joan Burton took on the role as Labour party leader -the first woman to do so.

The conversation will likely gain further momentum in 2015 as gender quotas no doubt become an issue in the lead up to political elections.

Bye-Bye Freebie! Hello UTV!

The Metro Herald, the Dublin commuter's daily print, ceased publishing at the beginning of December 2014. The free newspaper, handed out at street corners and commuter stops across the city, cited an "unsustainable" business model as the basis for their decision. However, as one

door closes, another one opens, and in early 2014 the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland signed a contract with the Northern Irish television station UTV regarding the broadcast of UTV Ireland. The jury is still out as to the popularity of the new station and both RTÉ and TV3 have reinvigorated

their programming to compete head on.



Left: Kenny will make his way back to our screens.
Source: irishtimes.com

An Exciting Year in Sport

In football, we all went World Cup Crazy and rubbed our eyes in disbelief as the mighty Brazil crumbled to eventual winners Germany. John O'Shea single-footedly reignited the Irish dream in Gelsenkirchen with his late-late equalizer against Germany in the Euro 2016 qualifier. St Patrick's Athletic won the FAI Cup for the first time in 53 years. Stephanie Roche became a household name, and Roy Keane was, well, still Roy Keane. With a beard.

It was a great year for the Irish rugby team who finished at number three in the world rankings after their Six Nations triumph and victories over South Africa and Australia in November. Former Leinster boss Joe Schmidt sealed his place in history, orchestrating Ireland's Six Nations

success with a thrilling 22-20 win in Paris. 2014 also saw grown men and women alike sob as we bid farewell to probably the most loved sports star ever to grace a sports field in Ireland – Brian O'Driscoll.



Above: Brian O'Driscoll leaves the pitch at the Aviva Stadium for the final time on 8th March.
Source: independent.ie

In GAA, Kerry surprised everyone but themselves by winning the All-Ireland football final, defeating Donegal, while Kilkenny surprised no-one by again taking Liam McCarthy home. Tipperary eventually fell to the kings of hurling after two thrilling games.

In Ladies' GAA, Cork did the double, with the Cork Ladies making it 9 from 10 to beat Dublin, and the camogie side triumphing over Kilkenny.

In golf, Europe won the Ryder Cup and Rory McIlroy ended speculation by declaring to represent Ireland in the 2016 Olympics. Andy Lee became the WBO middleweight boxing champion, while Katie Taylor won her fifth consecutive world championship.

Trends to Watch 2015



Source: pandawhale.com

Here at **REDC** we have pooled our consumer research knowledge to compile the **Top Ten Predictions for 2015**

2. Location, Location, Location

Whether you're looking for love or your nearest taxi, we predict that location-based apps will become even more highly regarded in 2015.

Self-prioritisation is the driving force behind the popularity of the concept; ensuring that only that which is geographically relevant to *you* is available when *you* want it.

Its significance extends beyond the fickle and social as Click Clinic's developer Ellevyn Irwin discovered in 2014 when she won The Best New Idea prize in the Entrepreneur Awards. The app which facilitates the location of nearby healthcare professionals highlights the importance of location-based assistance tools in various aspects of our lives. Remembering the importance of geographical convenience will be important for brands going forward.

1. The Internet of Things

Managing our lives via an online platform will take off this year. Whether for monitoring the food in our fridge or adjusting the heat in our homes, the internet will connect us to all things.

As such, we foresee the Internet of Things evolving from concept to reality for many in 2015. A model which will utterly change the way we live and conduct our daily business; it is expected to revolutionise human life but how can brands benefit from this?

The Internet of Things will allow constant access to target markets and consumers; permitting a more consistent interaction and, consequently, more opportunities to infiltrate their lives.



The Internet of Things will leave consumer monitoring less challenging.
Source: 2damnfunny.com



Finding suitable services, products and people based on location will become more important in 2015
Source: jasoncupp.com

3. Non-Conform to Norm

We're all different - it's a given – but emphasising your deviation from the masses is highly important for identity in 2015. In a world where social media encroaches on all aspects of our lives, separating the self from other selves gains momentum and becomes a way of life. Whether via physical appearance, technology products or diet, priority is placed on deviating from the traditional approach of blending into the crowd. Craft beer saw an increase in popularity in 2014 but within the next twelve months brace yourself and your brand for the proliferation of unique experience as consumers vie to be distinct from one another.



2015: Dare to be different
Source: wordpress.com

4. Monitoring Me

If you have joined the Health Crusade of 2013/2014 jump on the 2015 Well-Being Movement. Built on a heightened awareness of your personal welfare in terms of physical and mental health and combined with a proactive approaching to limiting or resolving the problem, the well-being movement is all about self-monitoring and prevention. 2015 immediately started off on this footing with the launch of 'On the Dry' January by the Irish Heart Foundation. This developing attitude teaches us about consumers' willingness to engage in the now for a better long term outcome – potential brand food for thought!



Irish Heart Foundation January campaign
Source: activelink.ie

5. Nature's Best

Food has become more than a basic requirement to sustain life – the *right* food is now fashionable. Of course 'right' is all about pure, untouched, unprocessed foods – natural is all the rage. For 2015 expect catering for niche products that adhere to the 'right' rules to grow. In a dramatic mindset shift, Alchemy Juice Co. replaced the Mochafrappuccino Generation's coffee house in BT2 in 2014. As this year progresses you can anticipate that consumers will appreciate nature's way and make the 'right' choices.



Source: jokideo.com

6. Right Here. Right Now.

We anticipate that impatience will become the consumer attitude of 2015; what's the brand reaction? Priority fast track.

Starbucks introduced Mobile Order & Pay in the US late last year, allowing customers to skip the pain of queuing and get straight to the joy of sipping. Netflix buttons on remote controls will soon become the norm, allowing you to avoid an online search via TV screens.



Netflix becomes more accessible than before
Source: totalhtpc.com

As the world offers us more and more, time becomes increasingly precious. Ensuring a brand experience is delivered time-efficiently is key for consumers going forward.

7. Censoring the Self

Last year taught us that our online persona is not necessarily granted the same liberty as our real-life one. As reviews, comments and feedback have the potential to not only reach a wider audience but to be shared with a global community, the line between personal opinion and defamatory commentary is blurred.

We expect that 2015 will see a greater awareness of accountability among commentators – perhaps deconstructing consumer commentary will be more laborious as a result?



Source: doblelol.com

9. Online Interaction

Consumers will engage in less and less traditional ways with brands this year. Recorded television in particular allows for the consumption of brand advertising on the consumer's terms.

Discovery of advertising campaigns via Facebook or YouTube will become more regular and as this happens performance measurement will evolve for brands.



Source: digitalmarketingmaniacs.com

8. To buy or not to buy, that is the question

As a nation, we are generally all consumed with ownership, but things are changing. Lack of commitment is the way to go in



Commitment will be shot down in 2015
Source: outlish.com

2015. As standard, this approach leads to greater freedom for the consumer – no ties and less responsibility. From entertainment to transport, abstaining from ownership is in vogue; Spotify continues to grow users and dublinbikes plans to expand stations across the city, while other cities plan to introduce the initiative. Even the traditional idea of requiring car ownership in order to drive has dissipated with the introduction of GoCar.

Treat relationships with consumers much in line with that of love – ensure security, trust and reliability but don't overwhelm, pressurise or entrap!

10. The Glorification of the Image

The importance of the image will swell for consumers in 2015. As Instagram gains more users than Twitter, association via the image will be the way forward in terms of communicating. The saying goes "A picture paints a thousand words" and it's this rhetoric that will see brands connect emotionally,

intellectually and rationally with consumers. Other platforms, such as Snapchat will allow brands to engage in real-time marketing.

Image also permits the development of unofficial brand ambassadors, as experience is captured and posted for widespread viewing.