



*HTTP://ARTY is Digital Ireland's weekly look at the Irish web scene's events, parties and awards shows. This week, firmly into the beginning of "Awards Season" which sees the Eircom Golden Spider awards and the IIA Netvisionary awards being held we have a new set of awards – the Irish Web Awards (IWA). Read on for the inside scoop...*

## The New Kid On The Block

Awards nights are not a new phenomenon; decades of organisations, industries and charities have praised their staff and members for hard work, excellence or bravery. The IWA are not like most awards shows in the I.T. sector with €250-plus plates, a black-tie dress code and paid entry. Don't get me wrong – we all enjoy food and awkward dancing – but the IWA are a breath of fresh air to the Irish web industry which has seen a surge in productivity and attention in recent years. The IWA are an awards show for the web community by the web community; prominent blogger, technical writer and broadband advocate Damien Mulley created the new accolades. Damien is at the centre of the Irish "Web 2.0" scene, frequently using "blogs", Facebook and Twitter for new levels of communications between those in the web industry and the public. Damien sought to reward bloggers by creating the Irish Blog Awards in late 2005 to "point out what we [...] think are the blogs which should be recognized

for their quality". The success of these awards and the enthusiastic call

*"I was so used to organising things that it was a breeze."*

from the community to create awards recognizing talent in design and development spurred Damien to create the event that was hosted in the Radisson SAS hotel, Dublin on October 11th. Damien was kind enough to give me an interview over email to learn more about the awards and their history. I asked Damien how he came up with the Blog Awards initially; "Photo bloggers mostly. Their work was amazing and nobody was seeing it except the blogging community." Damien's view was validated when twice the sign-ups as expected necessitated a move to a larger venue; the Alexander Hotel. Given the logistical problems of organizing awards, food, seating, a PA system, tickets etc.. for such a large event I asked

Damien how his experience with the Blog Awards helped his organisation of the Web Awards. Damien responds coolly; "I didn't have any nerves for the IWAs despite 20 grand being on the line for it. I was so used to organising things that it was a breeze." and goes on to say of his team; "Having the team of me, Rick O'Shea and Brian Greene also meant we didn't even need to chat in

advance about what we were going to do. We just knew." RTE 2FM's Rick O'Shea hosted the night; his warm and comical approach to the announcements complimented perfectly the award's laid-back and personal focus. The format of the night was an hour or so for guests to sign-in and mingle after which guests were hustled in to the conference room which had been filled with chairs for the 300-plus crowd. After a quick welcome the nominees for the awards gathered in front of the stage for a group picture – with heckling and comments abounding from

the audience. The nominations were presented along with “screen shots” of the sites on a screen behind the stage, after which Rick announced the winner from a variety of coloured envelopes. Rick

provided some comical moments including Damien’s highlight of the night “[...] when the DVD broke down [...] Brian whacked on Rick Astley, Rick O’Shea starts laughing and the crowd all whoop and cheer” Asked what he’d change of next year’s awards Damien lists mostly administrative items; “Online registration and ticket printing [...] the scorecard and judging system will be iterated to make it more complex...” All of us attending from Digital Ireland agreed that regardless of hiccups, judging systems or worryingly-sized “W”s the IWA are a great addition to the Irish web industry and they’re here to stay.

*“ ...when the DVD broke down [...] Brian whacked on Rick Astley, Rick O’Shea starts laughing and the crowd all whoop and cheer... ”*

SpunOut.ie Promoter steps up to help out Rick O’Shea during laptop malfunction.



2FM’s Rick O’Shea presents in front of the foam W’s provided by Dublin-based company Made In Hollywood.



Award	Winner
Best Online Publication, Most Useful	Irish Times
Best Entertainment Site	Entertainment.ie
Best Technology Site	Silicon Republic
Best New Web App	PollDaddy
Best Discussion Forum	Boards.ie
An Suíomh Gaeilge is Fear	Focal.ie
Most Accessible Website	Kanchi
Grand Prix	Boards.ie

A selection of the awards and winners. Source: [awards.ie/webawards/](http://awards.ie/webawards/)

## Features Used

- Tab markers for text box, header and column alignment.
- Image inserted.
- Background colour (background image behaved unpredictably).
- 3-column layout.
- Text is 1.1pt spaced.
- Text box for quotation.
- A table, with tab-positioned columns.
- Section breaks.

## Acknowledgements

- **Interview Credit**  
Damien Mulley, Interview available at <http://labs.imsiss.com/st1001-a1>
- **Image Credit for: SpunOut.ie Dancer**  
<http://flickr.com/photos/keithbohanna/2934282784/in/set-72157607951570258/>
- **Image Credit for: Rick O'Shea**  
<http://entertainment.ie/caughtout/image.asp?ID=478&PhotoID=2935069758>

**DAVID DORAN  
SOFTWARE APPS  
ST1001  
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