

The State of Irish Websites 2026

We scanned 148,239 live websites on the island of Ireland to see how well the basics are covered: security, email protection, hosting and software.

148,239

live websites scanned

16 August to 13 October 2026

KEY FINDINGS

Many basics are covered. Too many are not.

Most of the gaps we found take minutes to fix. Here are the six numbers that matter most.

1 in 11

websites serve no HTTPS certificate

8.9% overall. 5.8% of .ie sites, 17.8% of .com sites

7.5%

enforce DMARC email protection

72.8% have no DMARC record at all

38.7%

of .ie websites are hosted in Ireland

24.6% are hosted in the US, 17.2% in the UK

60.5%

of WordPress sites are behind the latest release

Of those that show a version. 23.2% are on 5.x or older

67.9%

run PHP with no security support

Of sites that show their PHP version (18.4% do)

44.3%

of websites run on WordPress

24% run an online shop

WHAT IS GOING WELL

91.1% of sites we could check serve HTTPS, and 84.5% of certificates are free.

39.5% of WordPress sites that show a version are on the latest release.

WHAT NEEDS ATTENTION

Email impersonation protection is missing on 72.8% of domains.

Out-of-date WordPress and PHP are still widespread among sites that show their versions.

HOW TO READ THIS REPORT

Percentages are of the 148,239 live websites we scanned unless a chart says otherwise. "The island of Ireland" includes Northern Ireland. Our scan is large but it is not the whole internet or the whole .ie registry, and it does not tell us which sites belong to businesses. The method and its limits are on page 10.

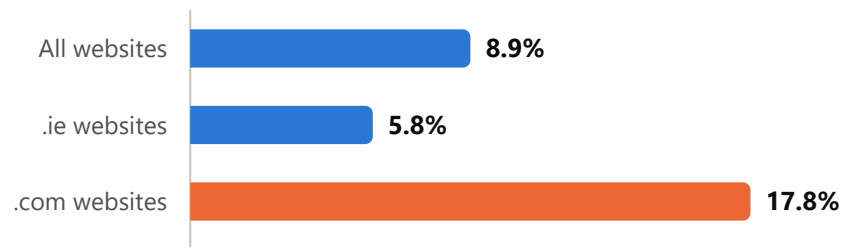
SECTION 1

1 in 11 websites has no HTTPS

HTTPS encrypts the connection between a visitor and a website. When it is missing, browsers can warn visitors that the connection is not secure.

Sites with no HTTPS certificate

Share of sites whose certificate status we could check

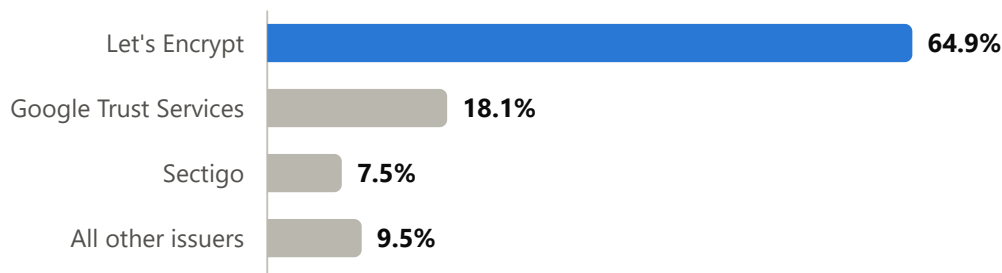


Of the sites whose certificate we could check, 8.9% presented no certificate at all. The gap is far wider on .com sites with Irish signals (17.8%) than on .ie sites (5.8%). A further 3.2% of sites that do have a certificate were showing an expired one, which usually triggers a full-page browser warning.

There is good news. Free certificates are now the norm: 84.5% of the certificates we saw were free, and Let's Encrypt alone accounts for 64.9%. Cost is no longer a reason to run without one.

Who issues the certificates

Share of certificates we saw, by issuer



WHY IT MATTERS

Visitors who see a warning often leave, and a site without HTTPS can be flagged by browsers and treated less favourably by search engines.

WHAT TO DO

Ask your host to switch on a free certificate with automatic renewal. Then open your site, click the padlock, and check the expiry date. HostBible's free **SSL checker** (hostbible.com/ie/dns-checker/ssl-checker/) does it in seconds.

SECTION 2

Three in four domains have no DMARC record

DMARC tells the world's mail servers what to do with email that claims to come from your domain but fails the checks. Without it, anyone can send email that looks like it came from you.

DMARC policy across all domains

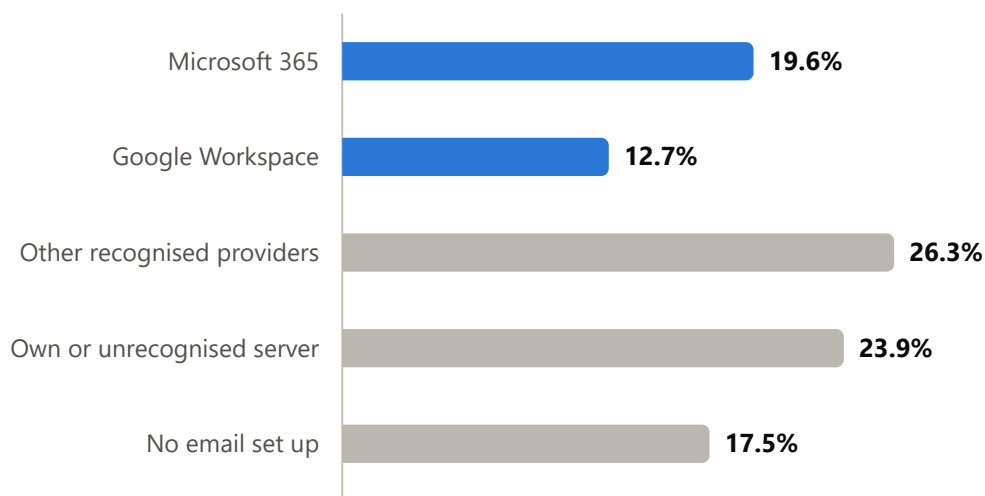
From no protection (left) to full enforcement (right)



Only 7.5% of domains enforce DMARC by telling receiving servers to quarantine or reject failing mail. 28% have neither SPF nor DMARC, which makes them the easiest to impersonate. That figure includes domains that do not receive email at all (17.5% have no mail record).

Who handles Irish business email

Email platform, by MX record



Microsoft 365 is the most common recognised email platform on the island, ahead of Google Workspace.

WHAT TO DO

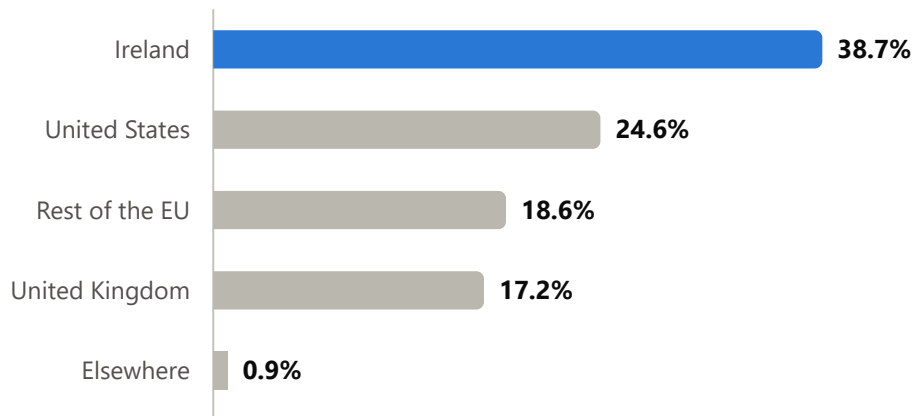
Check your domain with the free **DMARC checker** (hostbible.com/ie/dns-checker/dmarc-checker/). If there is no record, ask whoever manages your DNS to add one that starts in monitoring mode, then move to quarantine and finally reject once your legitimate mail passes.

Fewer than 4 in 10 .ie sites are hosted in Ireland

Where a website is hosted is rarely a deliberate decision. Most owners never choose it.

Where .ie websites are hosted

Server location by IP address. Sites behind a content delivery network such as Cloudflare are excluded, because their address shows where the network is, not where the site is.



38.7% of .ie sites are hosted on servers in Ireland. 57.3% are inside the EU. A quarter (24.6%) sit in the United States and 17.2% in the United Kingdom.

County spotlight

Share of .ie sites that publish an address and are hosted in Ireland



Where a business sits changes where its website lives. Among .ie sites that publish an address, 51.6% of those in Waterford are hosted in Ireland, against 32.6% in Monaghan.

WHY IT MATTERS

Hosting close to your visitors can make a site faster for them, and it decides where your customers' data is stored. It is worth knowing which country your website is in.

WHAT TO DO

Ask your host where your server is located and whether that suits your customers.

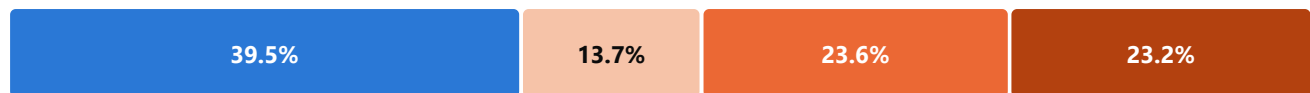
SECTION 4

Software that has not been updated

Out-of-date software is one of the common ways small websites get compromised. We could see the version for only a fraction of sites, and among those the picture is mixed.

WordPress: how current are the sites that show a version?

Share of WordPress sites that publish their version number



■ Latest release (7.1) **39.5%** ■ 7.0 **13.7%** ■ 6.x **23.6%** ■ 5.x or older **23.2%**

60.5% of WordPress sites that show their version are behind the latest release. 46.8% are on version 6.x or older, and nearly a quarter (23.2%) are on 5.x or older, versions released in 2022 or earlier. WordPress recommends running the latest release.

PHP: is the version still supported?

Share of sites that advertise their PHP version



■ Still supported (8.2 or newer) **32.1%** ■ Past end of life (below 8.2) **67.9%**

Of the sites that advertise their PHP version, 67.9% run a release that no longer receives security fixes, and 12.2% still run PHP 5, which has been unsupported since the end of 2018. PHP 7.4, end of life since November 2022, is the single most common version we found.

A FAIR CAVEAT

Only sites that publish their version are counted. Sites that hide it are probably better maintained, so the true share of out-of-date sites is likely lower than shown here.

WHAT TO DO

In WordPress, open Dashboard then Updates, take a backup, and update core, plugins and themes. Ask your host which PHP version your site runs and move to a supported release.

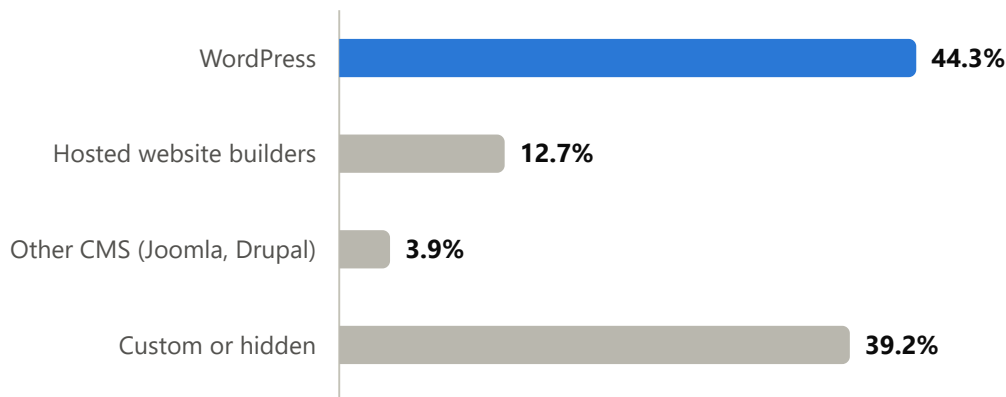
SECTION 5

What Irish websites are built on

WordPress runs almost half of the sites we scanned. Around four in ten are built in ways we could not identify.

Website platform

Share of live websites



24%

run an online shop

73.4% of those on WooCommerce

17.2%

sit behind a content delivery network

Such as Cloudflare, which hides where the site is really hosted

32.8%

show a copyright year of 2023 or earlier

Of the sites that show a year

38.8%

have no meta description

The text shown under a search result

READING THE PLATFORM CHART

"Custom or hidden" means we found no recognisable platform. It is not the same as having no content management system.

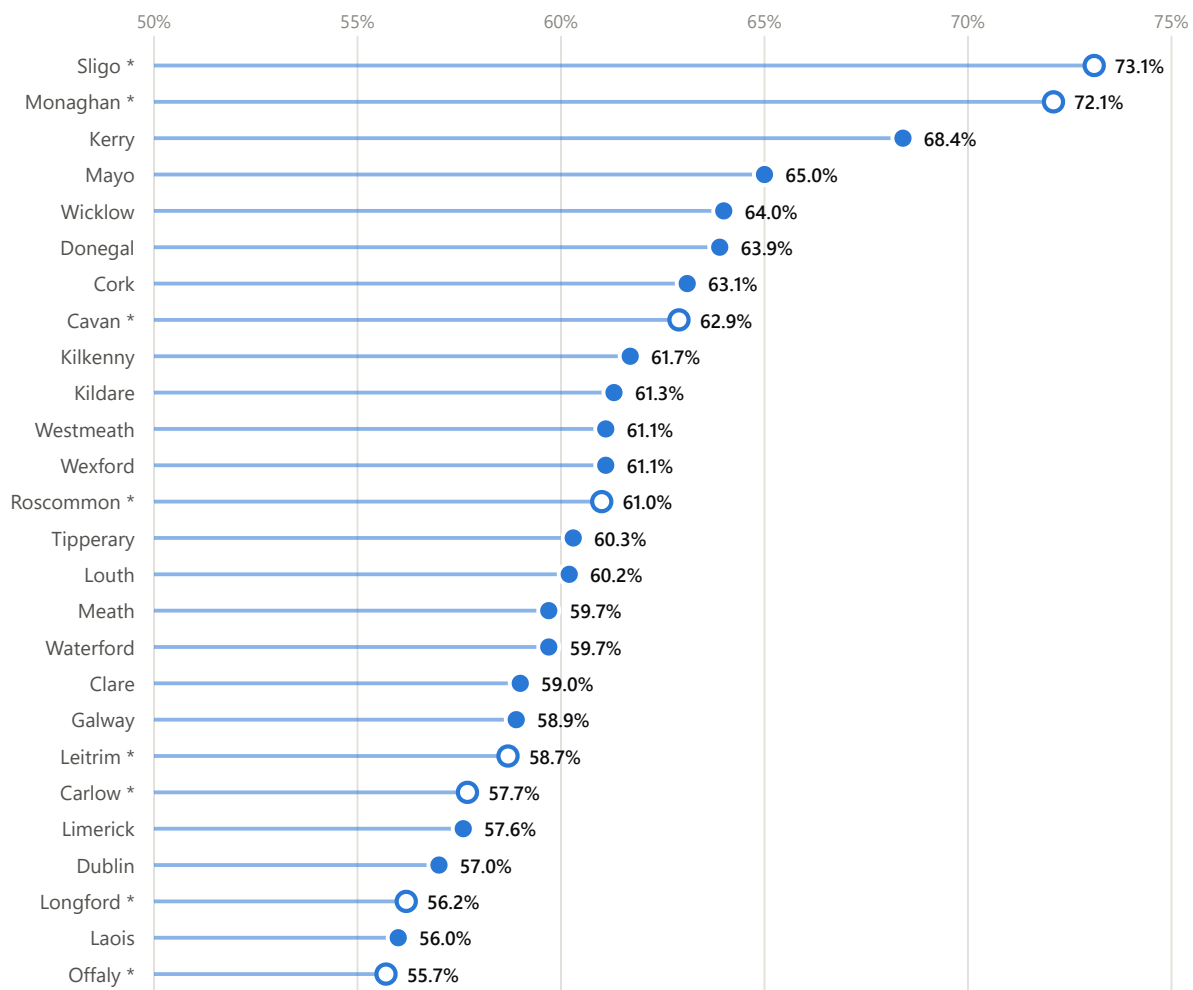
SECTION 6

County by county

Out-of-date WordPress varies by county. Each county is measured among sites that publish an address. Hollow markers (*) have fewer than 300 WordPress sites showing a version, so they are indicative only.

WordPress sites behind the latest release, by county

Share of WordPress sites that show a version, all counties. Solid: 300 or more WordPress sites showing a version. Hollow *: fewer than 300, indicative only.



- **DMARC:** Offaly has the highest share enforcing it (11.6%), Roscommon the lowest (4.5%).
- **No HTTPS:** highest in Carlow (10.1%), lowest in Waterford (3.3%).

COMPARE COUNTIES WITH EACH OTHER, NOT WITH THE NATIONAL FIGURES

County results cover only the sites that publish an address (about 31% of the total). Those skew towards more established businesses, so they look healthier than the national picture. Full county figures are in the appendix.

WHAT TO DO

A ten-minute check for your own site

None of this needs a developer. If you are not the one who manages your site, forward this page to whoever is.

1. **Check your padlock.** Open your site and click the padlock beside the address. Make sure there is a certificate and note when it expires. No certificate? Ask your host to enable a free one. Free tool: hostbible.com/ie/dns-checker/ssl-checker/
2. **Protect your email domain.** Check your domain for SPF and DMARC records. If either is missing, ask whoever manages your DNS to add them, starting with DMARC in monitoring mode. Free tools: hostbible.com/ie/dns-checker/spf-checker/ and hostbible.com/ie/dns-checker/dmarc-checker/
3. **Update WordPress.** Dashboard, then Updates. Take a backup first, then update core, plugins and themes. Remove plugins you no longer use.
4. **Ask about PHP.** Ask your host which PHP version your site runs. If it is below 8.2, ask them to move you to a supported release.
5. **Know where you are hosted.** Ask your host which country your server is in, and whether that suits your customers.
6. **Fix the small things.** Add a page title and a meta description to every important page, and update your footer year.

WANT HELP?

HostBible is a web hosting company with a team in Ireland. If you would like a second pair of eyes on your site, we are happy to take a look. Visit hostbible.com/ie/ to get in touch.

How we did this, and what it cannot tell you

What we scanned

- We scanned 185,259 domains classified as Irish between 16 August and 13 October 2026. Of these, 148,239 were live websites (reachable and not parked or placeholder pages): 106,166 on .ie, 28,024 on .com, 1,167 on .irish and 12,882 on other endings.
- A site counts as Irish if it has a .ie or .irish ending, a +353 phone number, Northern Ireland address signals, or, for other endings, nameservers at an Irish DNS provider. Northern Ireland sites are included, so we describe the results as the island of Ireland.
- The scan reads publicly visible information only: certificates, page headers, DNS records and page text. It does not log in to anything or test for weaknesses.

What to bear in mind

- This is a large scan, not a census. It is not the whole .ie registry, and it does not show which sites belong to businesses.
- .com sites are included only when they carry the Irish signals above, so the .com results are not a sample of every Irish .com site. We therefore quote hosting location for .ie sites only.
- Certificate status could not be determined for some sites, mostly .com, and those are left out of the HTTPS figures.
- WordPress and PHP versions appear only where a site publishes them. Sites that hide them are likely better maintained.
- County figures use the county named in a site's own text, which covers about 31% of sites.
- We did not measure page speed, security headers or change over time.

About HostBible

HostBible is a web hosting company with a team in Ireland. It provides web hosting, WordPress hosting, domains and email to small businesses. This research was produced from HostBible's own scanning data. Data by county is available to journalists on request. Press enquiries: HostBible Press Office, press@hostbible.com.

County figures

Sites that publish an address. Compare counties with each other only. Counties with fewer than about 500 sites carry a margin of error of roughly 5 points or more. * Based on fewer than 300 WordPress sites showing a version: indicative only (hollow markers in section 6).

County	Sites	WP sites showing a version	WordPress behind latest release	DMARC enforced	No HTTPS	Online shop
Carlow	631	272	57.7% *	7.8%	10.1%	31.2%
Cavan	622	240	62.9% *	9.0%	5.9%	33.0%
Clare	1,414	571	59.0%	7.1%	3.7%	32.5%
Cork	5,432	2,318	63.1%	7.4%	5.6%	32.3%
Donegal	1,334	559	63.9%	6.5%	4.9%	38.6%
Dublin	11,060	3,948	57.0%	8.8%	6.9%	27.9%
Galway	2,693	1,042	58.9%	7.2%	5.8%	32.3%
Kerry	1,867	782	68.4%	5.7%	4.5%	32.9%
Kildare	2,688	1,151	61.3%	7.7%	5.4%	31.1%
Kilkenny	919	350	61.7%	7.5%	4.1%	33.5%
Laois	757	316	56.0%	8.6%	5.0%	33.9%
Leitrim	401	167	58.7% *	7.7%	9.0%	39.4%
Limerick	1,400	575	57.6%	7.4%	3.6%	28.1%
Longford	335	121	56.2% *	8.1%	4.5%	26.3%
Louth	1,554	560	60.2%	5.6%	4.8%	29.9%
Mayo	1,459	586	65.0%	5.6%	6.2%	32.2%
Meath	2,397	965	59.7%	6.6%	4.4%	32.7%
Monaghan	547	215	72.1% *	8.0%	4.2%	34.7%
Offaly	658	291	55.7% *	11.6%	5.2%	30.9%
Roscommon	466	205	61.0% *	4.5%	4.3%	35.0%
Sligo	565	216	73.1% *	7.1%	5.8%	36.1%
Tipperary	1,356	534	60.3%	6.9%	6.4%	29.8%
Waterford	1,212	462	59.7%	7.3%	3.3%	29.6%
Westmeath	915	422	61.1%	6.1%	5.6%	34.3%
Wexford	1,740	800	61.1%	6.6%	6.1%	38.1%
Wicklow	2,077	802	64.0%	5.7%	6.7%	33.8%