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IP addresses explained: static, dynamic, private, public, shared and dedicated

Domains & DNS

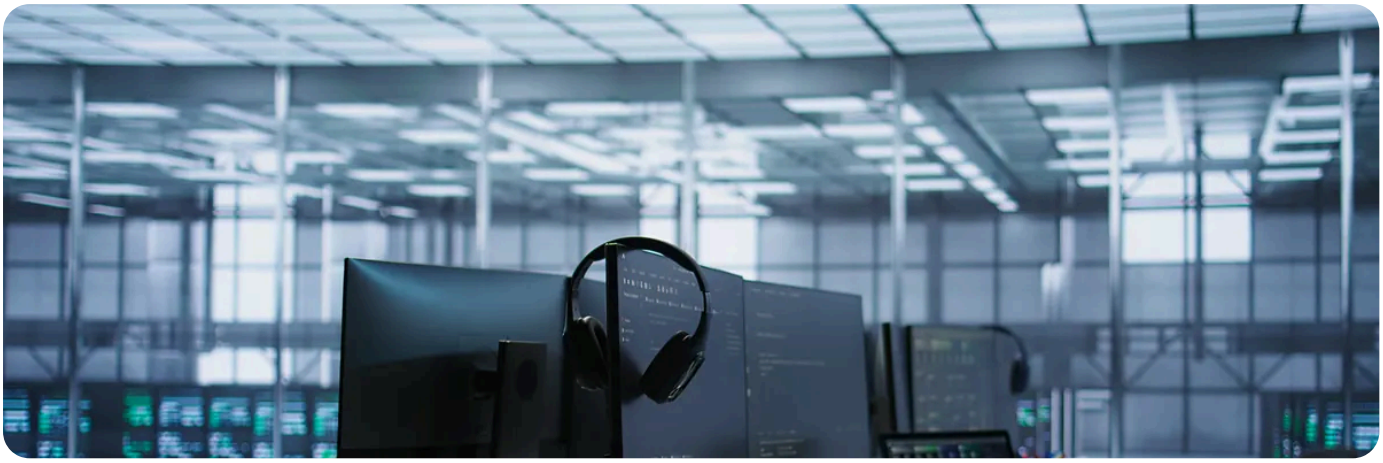
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IP addresses explained: static, dynamic, private, public, shared and dedicated

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An IP address is a device's address on the internet. Without one, data has nowhere to go - like a letter with no address on it.

Where people get lost is that **there is no single kind of IP**. A phone has one; the network at home has another; the server your site lives on has a third. They are different things, and mixing them up costs hours spent fixing the wrong problem.

Fixed or changing

Type	What it means
Static (fixed)	It does not change. This is what servers use - a site has to stay at the same address for the world to find it
Dynamic	It changes now and then, or whenever the equipment restarts. This is normal at home and on mobile

This is why you get blocked again.
If your home IP is dynamic, allowing it through the firewall today guarantees nothing tomorrow - tomorrow it is a different number. See **why your IP gets blocked by the firewall**.

Private or public

Inside your home, the router gives each device an address - the **private IP**, something like *192.168.1.5*. It only exists inside that network.

To the outside world, all of those devices appear as **one** address: the **public IP** your provider assigns. That is the one websites see, and the one we ask for when something gets blocked.

Want your public IP? No commands needed.
It is in **how to find your public IP address**, which shows it to you in a second.

And the private one?

You only need it for local network things - connecting a printer, reaching a NAS. Each system shows it somewhere different:

System	Where
Windows	Open the Start menu, type `cmd`, and in the black window type `ipconfig`. It is the *IPv4 Address* line
macOS	Apple menu › **System Settings** › **Network**, then click the active connection
Android	**Settings** › **About phone** › **Status**
iPhone	**Settings** › **Wi-Fi**, then tap the *i* next to the connected network

Shared or dedicated - what matters if you run a site

On shared hosting, several sites live on the same server and use **the same IP**. That is not a shortcut: it is how most of the web works. The server tells sites apart by the **name** the browser asks for, not by the address.

A **dedicated** IP is yours alone. It comes with VPS and dedicated servers, and there are cases where it genuinely pays off - they are all in **dedicated or shared IP: which one you need, and when**.

To find *your* hosting IP, the route is in **what your hosting IP address is**.

IPv4 and IPv6: why there are two

IPv4 is the long-standing format - four numbers from 0 to 255, like *203.0.113.10*. It allows about 4.3 billion addresses, and it **ran out**: there are more connected devices than there are addresses.

Hence **IPv6**, longer and with letters - *2001:0db8:85a3::8a2e:0370:7334*. The number of addresses it allows is large enough that it stops being a problem.

The two coexist, and will keep doing so.
You do not have to choose or do anything: systems use one or the other depending on what both ends of the connection support.

How this connects to names

Nobody memorises addresses. That is what DNS is for: you type a name, and the system translates it to the right IP before the page opens. The translation lives in DNS records - see **DNS records explained**.

The translation also works backwards, from IP to name, and that is called **reverse DNS**. It sounds like a detail, but it decides whether your e-mail is accepted or discarded: **PTR and reverse DNS**.

NEED A HAND?

Not sure which of the addresses you were asked for?

Ask us →

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