

## Belgians are conscious about online security

All of us are spending more and more time online, and the way we do so is becoming more and more secure. The vast majority of Belgians is becoming increasingly aware about security on the internet, and our knowledge of domain names and extensions is also growing. Trust is important for Belgian internet users, and .be domain names score high on that front. This has been shown by a market survey conducted by InSites Consulting on behalf of DNS Belgium at the end of 2018.

### More often online, and more securely

Our attitude to the internet has changed in one year's time. For 67% of the Belgians, the internet is part of their daily life. That is a whopping 10% more than at the end of 2017. We also see an equally high increase in the number of people who use the internet very regularly during their spare time. Furthermore, the number of people who like to be connected continuously to keep abreast of what is happening is also growing, having gone up by 13% in one year to 47% of the respondents.

Fortunately, being constantly online is accompanied by an increasing awareness about internet security. Precisely half of the respondents are conscious about security when they are online and a quarter of them are aware of the possibilities for protecting themselves online.

### Trust in website and domain names

No less than 64% of Belgians will not visit websites that do not seem reliable. The most important reasons for trusting a website are an encrypted connection (https instead of http), the domain name extension and indications that it is an official website (e.g. by means of a logo). Furthermore, we are guided by the ranking in Google, the ease with which we find contact details on the website, the absence of advertisements on the website, etc.

Apart from the websites, whether Belgians trust a domain name has to do with the language of the domain name, the extension, the length of the domain name and the brand that is mentioned in the domain name (e.g. smithoptics.be). We choose the latter over domain names in which an activity is mentioned (e.g. buysunglasses.be). A company website inspires more trust and confidence than a company page on Facebook and we also put more trust in an e-mail address that is linked to a proprietary domain name than in a generic e-mail address.

### .be and .com are the most popular and most reliable

Five percent of Belgians have already registered one or more domain names. This has not changed since our previous market survey one year ago. What has changed is the awareness about domain names: 50% of Belgians know what a domain name is and what you can do with it. In addition, awareness about domain name extensions seems to be on the increase also. The extensions .be and .com continue to be the most popular and most reliable. Whereas .com is somewhat more popular, we find .be a bit more reliable and easier to remember.

We are gradually also becoming familiar with less obvious extensions such as .online, .shop, .jobs, but our trust in them appears to be minimal. This seems to be to the advantage of “conventional” extensions, because .be. and .com have become more popular and our trust in both extensions has gone up by more than 10% in one year’s time. For the entrepreneurs among our respondents, the reliability of .be has gone up by as much as 15% compared to last year.

[Take a look at the infographic](#)

#### About DNS Belgium

[DNS Belgium](#) is a non-profit organisation that was created in 1999 by ISPA Belgium, Agoria and BELTUG. Our mission is to register .be, .vlaanderen and .brussels domain names, improve the accessibility of the Internet, encourage its use, and do so in a more sustainable manner. For more information on DNS Belgium, please go to [www.dnsbelgium.be](http://www.dnsbelgium.be).

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