Being seen on the internet in China

In many ways, Chinese trade is no different from that of any other country or region. Chinese businesses and consumers will always look for your business's internet presence. Your business's website is key to being seen in China, as international internet business platforms like LinkedIn (since 2023) and social media sites like Facebook and YouTube are all blocked.

It is essential that your business website can be seen in China. Approximately 80% of business websites attempting to be seen in China cannot be opened or respond slowly (taking over 30 seconds to load a page). Some website pages, including social media or CDN content, may also be missing. This collection of articles helps you understand the issues of being seen in the world's largest online market and take corrective actions.

Summary of 'Being Seen in China' articles

1 **Is your website visible in China?** Several reasons a website may not be visible in China include a blocked website IP address, incorrect Chinese name service configuration, blocked files, embedded social media files, and a slow-performing international CDN. These issues can be easily corrected.

   We recommend using our free web page testing tools to understand your business website's response times in China and identify any parts of your web page that are not visible. This will enable your technical staff to make adjustments if required. Access to China offers cost-effective services to help your website become visible there. For more information, please read: https://services.accesstochina.com/

2 **Chinese internet structure:** Maintaining an internet presence in mainland China is the most effective way to be visible online, provided your Chinese hosting provider has access to all three major networks: China Telecom, China Unicom (formerly China Netcom), and China Mobile.

   Your choice of internet provider for hosting and connectivity significantly impacts the performance of your website, social media, app, and other online content. Therefore, selecting the right provider, both within and outside China, is a critical decision that can significantly enhance your visibility there. For more information, please read https://accesstochina.com/internet-structure-in-china.

3 **Chinese name servers (DNS records hosted in China):** International DNS (Domain Name Server) records can take two to three attempts for a browser in China to locate your

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website. After the first attempt, the user believes there is a typing error or that the website does not work.

China's internet is one of the fastest in the world. Its DNS service operates extremely efficiently, responding in under 30 milliseconds. Any DNS response time over 80 milliseconds often results in a timeout. The international DNS response time in China is typically over 200 milliseconds. We strongly recommend purchasing a domain from another local Chinese domain supplier or us to increase your website's availability and visibility in China. For more information, please read: https://accesstochina.com/chinese-ns-and-dns-services

4   **Domain names for the Chinese market:** In 2022, Chinese authorities permitted overseas companies to purchase domain names from Chinese domain suppliers, such as Access to China, with domain ownership. This gives you full access to the Chinese Names Service across China. Purchasing a domain in China also gives you high priority in the Chinese search engine.

There are many domain name options for the Chinese market. If you do not have an established company or brand name in the Chinese market, consider using industry- or service-related keywords. The starting point is to identify relevant keywords, such as the market sector name. Review your current keywords in Google to check if any of these words are meaningful to the Chinese market. For more information, please read: https://accesstochina.com/domain-name-for-chinese-market

5   **Chinese top-level domains (TLDS):** The rules governing ownership of Chinese TLDs (.cn, .cn.com, etc.) do not allow overseas companies or individuals to own them. This may be unclear, as many internet companies sell Chinese domains to overseas companies or individuals worldwide. To achieve this, they use a Chinese company to register the domain. This means you do not own the domain.

Only allowing companies or individuals to own country top-level domains (TLDS) from their country now operates worldwide; for example, .uk and .co.uk can only be used if you are from the UK. The Chinese authorities are "cleaning up" domain ownership, leading to the cancellation of overseas registrations. For more information, please read: https://accesstochina.com/chinese-tlds.

6   **Great Chinese Firewall:** The Chinese authorities exercise strict control over Internet content, including websites, social media, apps, and other online platforms within China. This pervasive control, often referred to by the overseas press and businesses as the Great Chinese Firewall, is a significant aspect of the Chinese internet landscape.

Although most business content is not directly affected, a website's content can be significantly impacted. Understanding how the Chinese internet firewall works will help your business be seen in China. Many rules and regulations protect users and consumers from content that can mislead, misinform, and promote harmful ideas. For more information: https://accesstochina.com/great-chinese-firewall

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7   **GEO DNS and CDN Services:** Geo DNS, or Geographical Domain Name System, is a DNS-based service that routes users to different servers or IP addresses based on their geographical location. Many services are available worldwide, but most perform poorly in China.

CDN stands for Content Delivery Network. It is a network of servers distributed worldwide that efficiently delivers content to users, such as websites, videos, and other digital assets. CDNs reduce latency, improve load times, and enhance the overall user experience by caching content closer to end users. Please read for more: https://accesstochina.com/geo-dns-and-cdn.

8   **The use of QR codes in China:** Chinese social media platforms ingeniously tackled the language barrier by using them. When scanned, these codes provide access to services through embedded, long, and complex URLs. Consequently, QR code scanning has become ubiquitous among over one billion Chinese internet users.

In China, QR codes have largely replaced the need to enter URLS in various contexts, including marketing, sales, business links, and social media. Understanding this change and the ease of internet access it has given Chinese users is essential when trading in China. Instead of publishing a URL, consider replacing it with a QR code. Please read for more: https://accesstochina.com/qr-codes

9   **Website looks and feels for the Chinese market:** Chinese companies and consumers want to see overseas websites that resemble their local country's design and feel. They do not want to see a Chinese-looking site that raises questions about the product or service's genuine source.

We recommend maintaining your local website's look and feel for the Chinese market, provided it is responsive and displays clearly on mobile devices and tablets. While the rest of the world uses mobile devices to access the internet, in China, they have been the primary gateway. Therefore, almost all internet use originates from mobile devices. For more information, please read: https://accesstochina.com/website-look-and-feel.

10   **Translation of your business website:** This unique circumstance stems from China's vast online population of approximately 854 million internet users, the largest in the world. The prevalence of advanced translation tools has enabled Chinese netizens to access and comprehend foreign content more efficiently. This approach not only simplifies the process of businesses entering the Chinese market but also alleviates the costly burden of professional website translation services.

The SEO data, including titles, web page descriptions, and headings, needs to be translated. Focus on the minimum data required by Chinese search engines while considering the costs and overhead of maintaining your website in multiple languages. For more information, please read https://accesstochina.com/translate-your-website.

11 **Automatic translation:** While translation tools are imperfect and may not always capture the nuances of your intended messaging, they provide a starting point for

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visitors who wish to explore your website in their native language. This approach can help mitigate some of the challenges businesses often face when entering the Chinese market, such as cultural misunderstandings or linguistic barriers.

A consumer will not know the source of the language on your website, and errors in it will reflect poorly on your website. For many years, the Chinese have used local software for translation as required. In doing so, they know it is an automatic translation and does not reflect poorly on your website.

We recommend using automatic translation to review written English. Start by translating it into a second language that you, a staff member, or a family member can read. When you find an error, return to the original English and make the necessary corrections. For more information, please read: https://accesstochina.com/translate-your-website.

12 **Chinese Multimedia:** Multimedia has become more important than written or spoken media. For example, high-quality multimedia can be the difference between success and failure in the hospitality industry. The same can be said for most products and services. Social media will create multimedia for your products and services, both good and bad. We recommend taking control from the outset and publishing your multimedia content. Please read for more: https://accesstochina.com/chinese-multimedia.

13 **Chinese social media and e-commerce:** Since approximately 2016, China has spearheaded the global landscape of social media and e-commerce development at an unprecedented pace. This rapid advancement has created a unique trend in China where social media and e-commerce have increasingly merged into a unified digital platform. Two prime examples of this symbiotic relationship are WeChat and TikTok, indispensable components of everyday life for hundreds of millions of Chinese users.

Most, if not all, international social media and e-commerce platforms are blocked in China. If you wish to engage with and sell to the Chinese consumer market, you must be part of one or more platforms. Access to these platforms is restricted for individuals and businesses outside the country. We are currently updating this article; more information will follow.

14 **Emailing in China:** Like the rest of the world, it is not the primary tool for communication. WeChat has replaced most emails since its launch in January 2011. While most emails are encrypted during transmission, they are typically not stored as encrypted files on servers, mobile devices, or PCS. This leaves emails vulnerable to hacking and accessible to government agents worldwide. Please read for more: https://accesstochina.com/emailing

15 **Messaging in China:** It has many of the same problems as email. We recommended opening a WeChat account for yourself or your business (a personal account is a more straightforward setup). Most Chinese enterprises and staff use WeChat as their primary communication tool. For example, when emailing in China, please remember to comply

with Chinese rules and regulations regarding message content. Please read for more: https://accesstochina.com/messaging

16 **Chinese telephones and mobiles:** Most Chinese S&E business office desk phones are no longer used. Large companies still use desk telephone systems. Mobile calls are increasingly being made over social media platforms, such as WeChat. A good internet connection and local Wi-Fi support are essential for this. The international internet can experience slowdowns during peak usage. Please read for more: https://accesstochina.com/chinese-telephones-and-mobiles

17 **APIS in China:** Mobile apps are popular, so many mobile operating systems have reached the limit on the number of APIS allowed. The WeChat platform, launched in January 2011, addressed this issue by enabling you to run APIs within it. Today, APIS in China are often written as WeChat programs. By doing so, your API becomes part of WeChat's social media ecosystem. We are currently updating this article; more information will follow.

18 **Up-to-date internet content:** Keeping your business content up-to-date with your products, services and business information is obvious. Many companies are increasingly finding this challenging, given the number of platforms and channels that must be updated with company information and data. When considering a new market like China, it is essential to review your website. This is especially true in China, where international social media and messaging platforms are unavailable.

Do you need to set up a new platform for the Chinese market in addition to your existing public business information? WeChat would be our recommendation. This can range from a personal account for messaging (WhatsApp is the nearest comparison we have to a personal account on WeChat) to a business account linking to your website, i.e., one that looks and works like a web app inside WeChat. Please read for more: https://accesstochina.com/up-to-date-content

19 **Performance upgrades:** Unless specifically developed, most websites utilise third-party services that are unavailable in China. Many websites include articles and images from social media. However, most social media sites outside China are blocked, resulting in missing information on websites. Platform and cloud services, such as Google and CDNs, are blocked or given limited internet capacity, resulting in very slow response times.

To boost your business's online presence in the rapidly expanding Chinese market, we strongly advise updating your website's structure and content. While these recommendations have been primarily designed to enhance website performance in China, many of the strategies are universally applicable and can improve visibility and engagement globally. Please read for more: https://accesstochina.com/performance-upgrades