July 2024

catchpoint

Catchpoint Industry Benchmarks

Hotel Website Performance Benchmark Report

Discover the top-performing hotel websites and key metrics for success based on our comprehensive website performance analysis

Introduction

The significance of continuous, proactive monitoring cannot be emphasized enough in today's digital environment. Even slight differences in your website's speed, reliability, and accessibility can have a significant impact on your ability to surpass competitors in search rankings, maintain user engagement, and successfully convert visitors into customers.

Catchpoint, the leader in Internet Performance Monitoring (IPM), analyzed the websites of some of the world's most popular hotel brands to identify key trends in their performance and availability. The top three sites from our analysis were **Aloft Hotels, Wyndham,** and **Sheraton.** Key factors that contributed to their ranking were consistent performance in various aspects of webpage functionality, from networking components such as the Domain Name System (DNS) to overall frontend performance.

These metrics collectively indicate that the top hotel websites provide a fast, stable, and reliable user experience, which is crucial for retaining and growing users, and ensuring their satisfaction. Continuous optimization in these areas will help maintain and further improve website performance.

Catchpoint has been conducting web performance benchmarking reports of this nature for many years, often as exclusive reports for our customers or other internal purposes. As a result, we have established our own set of standards, derived from combining the examination of existing industry standards and comparing these to real world examples.

Metrics tested:

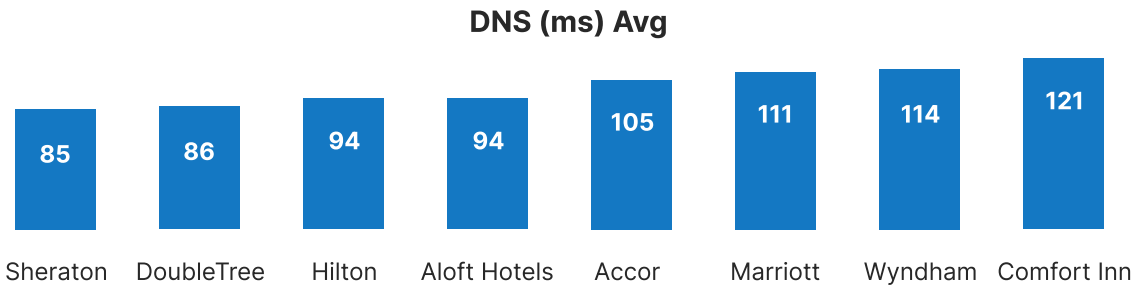
1. **DNS Lookup Time:** Time taken to resolve the domain name to its corresponding IP address
2. **Time to First Byte (TTFB):** The total time from the initial DNS request to receiving the first response packet from the server
3. **Document Complete:** Time from when the initial URL is issued until the browser triggers the onload event. This does not include any dynamic requests that may be called later by JavaScript
4. **Largest Contentful Paint (LCP):** Time when the largest content is visible within the viewport
5. **Cumulative Layout Shift (CLS):** Measures the unexpected shifting of webpage elements while the page is still loading
6. **Page Load Time:** Time until the last byte of the final element on the page is loaded
7. **Availability:** Percentage of time that the website is up and running

1. DNS

DNS lookup time measures the time taken to resolve a domain name to its corresponding IP address. A crucial part of delivering a website is fetching the base HTML, and DNS lookup times play a key role in this.

Catchpoint recommends that DNS lookup time should be less than 50ms.

DNS results for hotel websites



Key insights:

- All analyzed hotel websites have DNS lookup times exceeding our recommended standard of 50ms.
- **Sheraton** and **DoubleTree** have the fastest DNS lookup times, which will help their webpages load faster than the others.
- **Comfort Inn** has the slowest DNS time, which is slowing down its webpage loading. The other hotels fall somewhere in between, all with room for improvement to enhance performance.
- We saw that many websites had multiple levels of resolution, potentially increasing overall DNS lookup times.
- Akamai was the main DNS provider used by the hotel industry, followed by Cloudflare.

Pro tips:

- The performance of authoritative DNS providers varies greatly, so choose your DNS provider wisely or carefully implement your own managed DNS.
- Improve DNS performance by continuously monitoring DNS performance to detect DNS issues early, pinpoint areas for DNS infrastructure improvement, and gain geographical insights to ensure consistent performance across different regions.
- If you're using your own DNS solution, specific techniques can be implemented such as optimizing DNS Time-To-Live (TTL) parameters, and using techniques such as CNAME flattening or DNS prefetching.
- To learn more about assessing DNS performance and its role in ensuring a fast, highly functioning website, download our report, written in partnership with IBM.

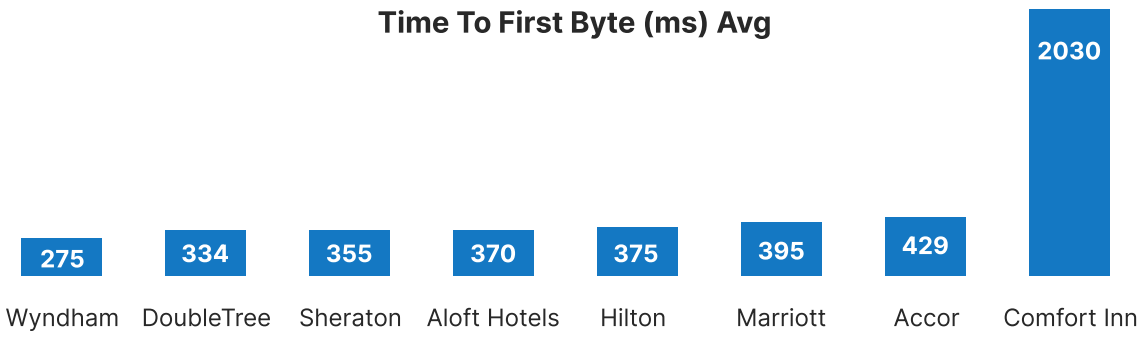
2. Time to First Byte

Time to First Byte (TTFB) measures the time from when a client makes an HTTP request to when the first byte of the response is received. It is crucial for several reasons: it enhances user experience by allowing content to be seen sooner, improves SEO as faster websites rank higher on search engines like Google, and helps identify performance bottlenecks in server or network infrastructure.

Additionally, enhancing TTFB improves overall webpage response time, ensuring a smoother user experience.

Recommended TTFB for a good user experience is about 200ms.

TTFB results for hotel websites



Key insights:

- **Wyndham** has the best performance with the lowest TTFB at 275ms. This indicates quick server response times, which contributes to faster overall webpage loading.
- **Comfort Inn** stands out with a significantly higher TTFB at 2030ms, likely because of prolonged wait times at the server level.
- These long wait times might be caused by a cache miss at the CDN, requiring a fallback to the origin server.

Pro tips:

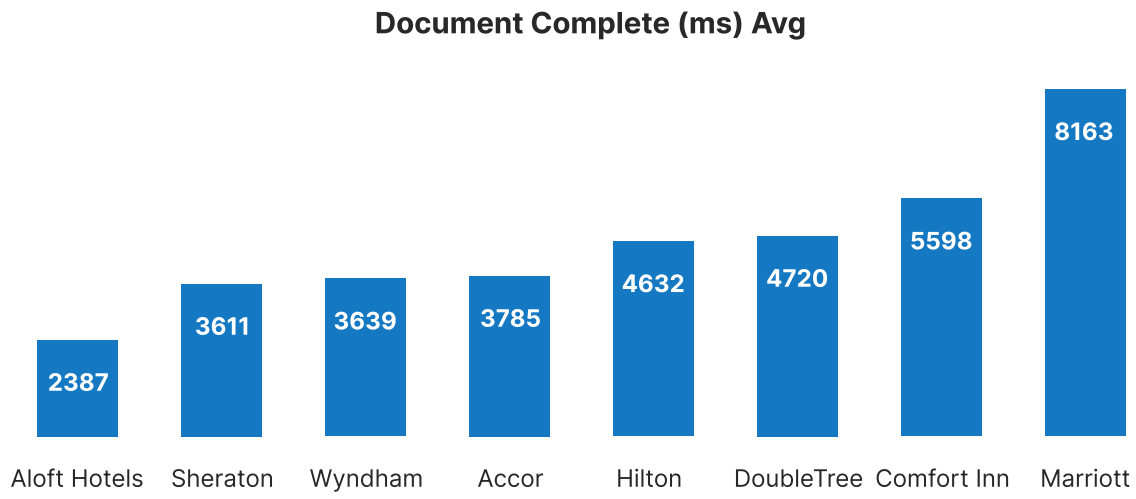
- To enhance TTFB performance, consider hosting content on a CDN (and benchmarking its performance against others to select the best one for your needs), web perf techniques such as compressing assets or using browser caching, and minimizing redirects.

3. Document Complete

Document complete is the point where the browser triggers the onload event. This metric is important because it indicates that the browser has fully loaded all the necessary HTML, CSS, scripts, images, and resources, ensuring the webpage is ready for users to view and interact with. A shorter document complete time improves user satisfaction and engagement.

Our recommended document complete time is generally around 3 seconds, although this can vary depending on various factors such as the type of website, the nature of its content, and user expectations.

Document complete results for hotel websites



Key insights:

- **Aloft Hotels** has the fastest document complete time, with an average of 2387ms. This suggests efficient page loading and potentially a better user experience.
- **Marriott** has the highest document complete time, with **Comfort Inn** also scoring relatively high. This indicates a significantly slower webpage loading for these sites, which could negatively impact user experience and engagement. Marriott's document complete time is almost three times higher than recommended.
- Overall, there is a noticeable variation in document complete times across hotel chains, indicating that some companies may need to invest more in optimizing their webpage performance to enhance user experience and ensure optimum loyalty and conversion rates.

Pro tips:

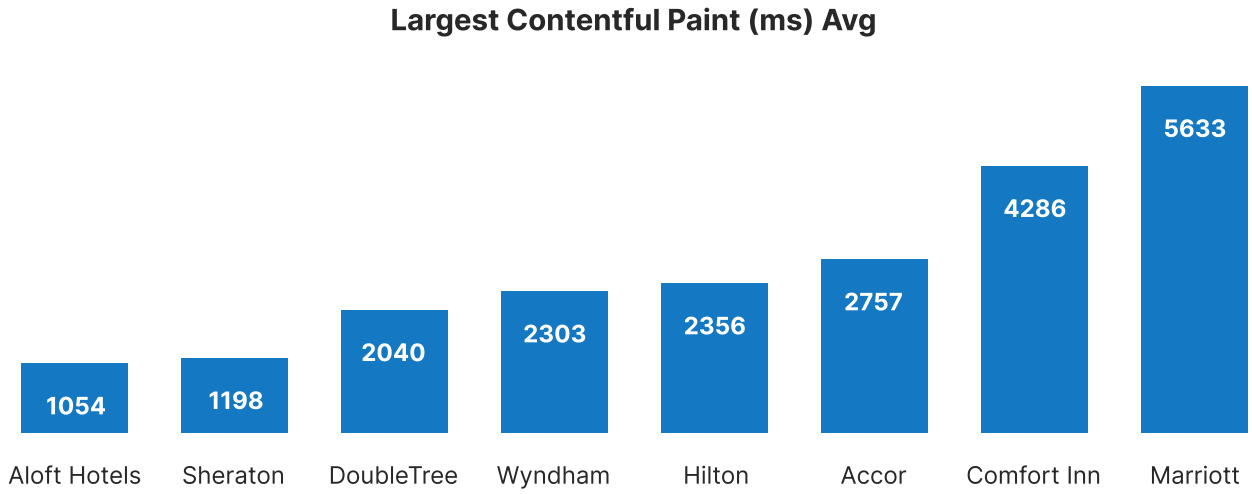
- To improve document complete times, prioritize rendering critical page elements first. This includes ensuring that the most crucial elements required for initial rendering (such as the main content, navigation, and primary styles) are part of the base HTML. Defer less essential content until after the document is complete.
- Optimize images and compress/minify resources to further enhance document complete times.

4. Largest Contentful Paint

Largest contentful paint (LCP) measures how long it takes for the main content of a page to load. High LCP metrics suggest that users will perceive the website to be loading slowly.

Our recommended standard for LCP is approximately 2.5 seconds.

LCP results for hotel websites



Key insights:

- **Aloft Hotels** and **Sheraton** have the fastest content load times, although **DoubleTree, Wyndham,** and **Hilton** are also within the recommended range.
- **Comfort Inn** and **Marriott** have the slowest LCP times, indicating significantly delayed loading of main content. This can lead to poor user experience and decreased engagement.

Pro tips:

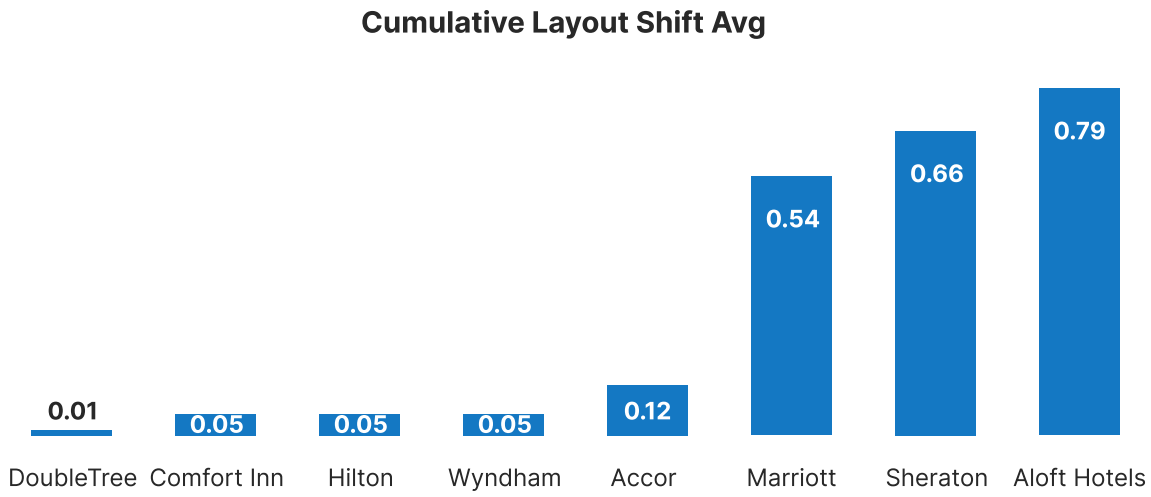
- A faster LCP improves user experience by quickly displaying key content. Prioritize preloading or immediate loading of the largest content elements on your page to effectively address LCP concerns.

5. Cumulative Layout Shift

Cumulative layout shift (CLS) measures the visual stability of a webpage. This metric is important because unexpected layout shifts can lead to a poor user experience. A lower CLS score indicates a more stable and user-friendly page.

The recommended CLS score should be below 0.1.

CLS results for hotel websites



Key insights:

- **DoubleTree** has the best CLS score at 0.01, indicating very stable content layout with minimal unexpected shifts, leading to a smooth user experience.
- **Comfort Inn, Hilton,** and **Wyndham** each have a CLS score of 0.05, which is still well within our recommended threshold of 0.1.
- **Marriot, Sheraton,** and **Aloft Hotels** need significant optimization to reduce layout shifts and enhance user experience.

Pro tips:

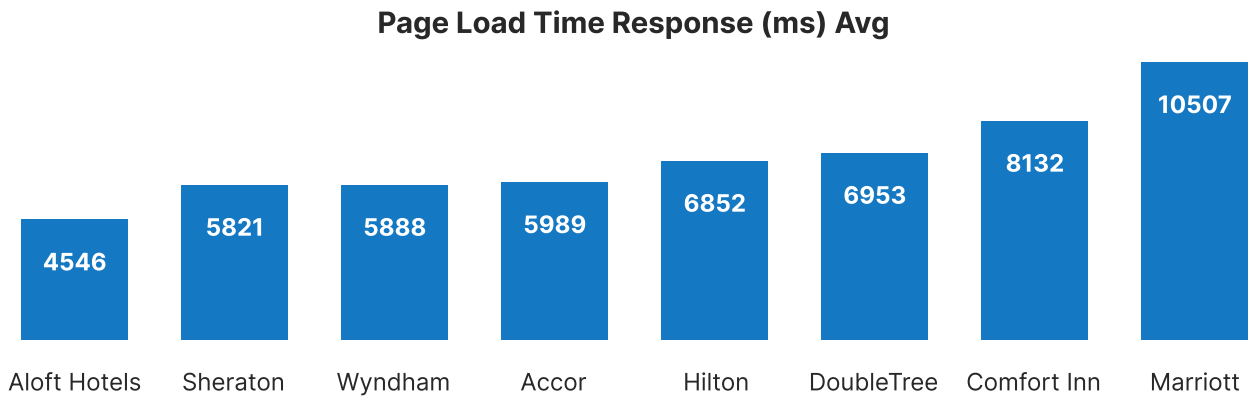
- To improve CLS scores, specify dimensions for images and videos, avoid loading dynamic content above the fold before user interaction, and apply other relevant optimizations such as delaying the loading of ads until after user interaction.

6. Page Load Time

Page load measures the time from initial navigation to receiving the last byte of the final element on the page. Various factors influence page load time, such as the number of requests on the page, the total amount of data downloaded, the quantity and quality of DNS connections, the loading of third-party requests, and the asynchronous loading of JavaScript.

Recommended page load time is less than 5 seconds.

Page load time results for hotel websites



Key insights:

- **Aloft Hotels** has the best page load time and is the only site we analyzed that falls within our recommended range. This indicates a high level of optimization and efficiency in their website performance.
- **Comfort Inn** and **Marriott** have the highest page load times, indicating significantly slower webpage load times. This can negatively impact user experience, suggesting a need for substantial optimization.

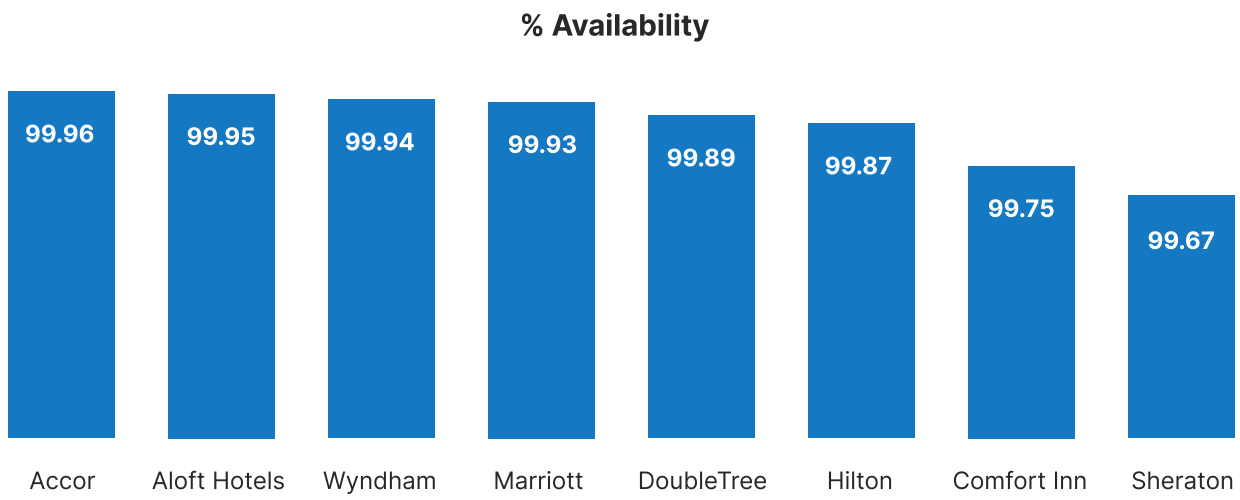
Pro tips:

- As a rule of thumb, it is recommended to keep the page as light as possible. This includes minifying CSS, JavaScript, and HTML to reduce file sizes, and optimizing images and other assets for faster loading, as the page weight directly impacts how long it takes for each request to be made and downloaded.
- Regarding third-party requests, it's critical to continuously monitor their performance to ensure they don't negatively impact overall page speed.

7. Availability

Availability is the final piece of the puzzle. It measures the percentage of time a website is up and running when a person or customer visits it. High availability ensures that users can access the site reliably at any time. Downtime can lead to a loss of traffic, reduced revenue, and erode user trust.

Availability results for hotel websites



Key insights:

- **Accor, Aloft Hotels,** and **Wyndham** have the highest website availability, ensuring users can access their sites almost all the time.
- **Hilton** and **Comfort Inn** are at the lower end but still good.
- **Sheraton,** while still reliable, has the most room for improvement.
- Our analysis highlights how much Internet Resilience is a key capability of top-performing websites, ensuring users can access their services almost all the time. Maintaining such high availability is crucial for excellent user experience and retention.

Actionable steps for improvement

Here are 5 actionable steps to improve website performance:

1. **Regular monitoring and testing:** Implement continuous monitoring of all key performance metrics to promptly identify and address issues.

2. **Establish and adhere to industry benchmarks:** Regularly compare website performance against these standards to identify areas for improvement.

   Use the performance data of top-performing websites in reports such as these as a benchmark to guide improvements.

3. **Holistic optimization:** Address not just individual metrics but also their interdependencies. For example, improving DNS and TTFB can collectively enhance overall page load times.

4. **User feedback:** Collect and analyze user feedback to understand pain points related to website performance. Use this data in conjunction with the insights gleaned from your monitoring strategy to prioritize optimization efforts.

5. **Performance audits:** The choice of CDN provider, for example, significantly impacts performance metrics like DNS and TTFB. Schedule regular audits to review and optimize server configurations, CDN settings, and frontend performance.

Catch issues before they impact your website performance

You can have the best website in the world, but if it's slow, or no one can reach it, your users are going to get frustrated, leading to lost revenue and a damaged reputation.

Catchpoint's Internet Performance Monitoring (IPM) enables detailed, global visibility across the Internet Stack – the tangled web of distributed network systems that connect your web applications to your users, including BGP, CDN, and DNS services. Our cloud-native platform ensures Internet Resilience across your organization with five enterprise IPM solutions, including a best-of-breed Website Experience Solution.

Website Experience, powered by Internet Performance Monitoring

Not only does Catchpoint's Website Experience Solution empower you to monitor your site's speed, usability, and resilience in real-time across various browsers, devices, and global locations, but it also allows you to rapidly identify and fix performance issues before they impact your business.

Key benefits

- Leverage WebPageTest's extremely accurate synthetic browser testing methods to monitor all your web pages' key metrics in a single dashboard.
- Find and fix performance complications before they impact revenue.
- Ensure reachability - not just availability.
- Alert the right people when performance thresholds are exceeded.
- Monitor DNS, BGP, CDNs, third-party assets, and other possible bottlenecks from real devices and browsers around the globe.
- Compare and contrast your web pages between releases.
- Compare your website's performance to your competitors and uncover opportunities for improvement with side-by-side benchmarking tests.
- Leverage real user monitoring (RUM) to paint a precise picture of your user base.

About Catchpoint

Trusted by the world's leading brands who understand in the digital age performance is paramount, Catchpoint is dedicated to monitoring what matters from where it matters to catch issues across the Internet Stack before they impact business.

The Catchpoint Platform offers a comprehensive suite of Internet Performance Monitoring capabilities, including Internet Synthetics, RUM, BGP, Tracing, performance optimization, and advanced analytics, all supported by high-fidelity data and flexible visualizations. Leveraging thousands of global vantage points inside the critical systems that make the Internet work, Catchpoint provides unparalleled visibility into what affects customer experiences, workforce efficiency, network performance, websites, applications, and APIs.

Today's digital world requires resilience and exceptional performance, which is why *The Internet Relies on Catchpoint*.

Learn more at: www.catchpoint.com/

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