

```html

If you've ever encountered a "Site Currently Unavailable" message when trying to visit your website, you know how frustrating it can be. One of the usual culprits behind this issue is a mismatch or misconfiguration in your DNS records. Whether you're using a shared hosting provider or managing your own VPS, ensuring your **A record** and **CNAME record** are correctly set up is crucial for your site's availability.

In this guide, we'll walk you through how to perform a proper *DNS lookup*, identify whether your DNS is pointing to the right server, and understand related error codes like HTTP 400, 401, and 403 — all to help you avoid common pitfalls.

## Why Is My Site Showing "Site Currently Unavailable"?

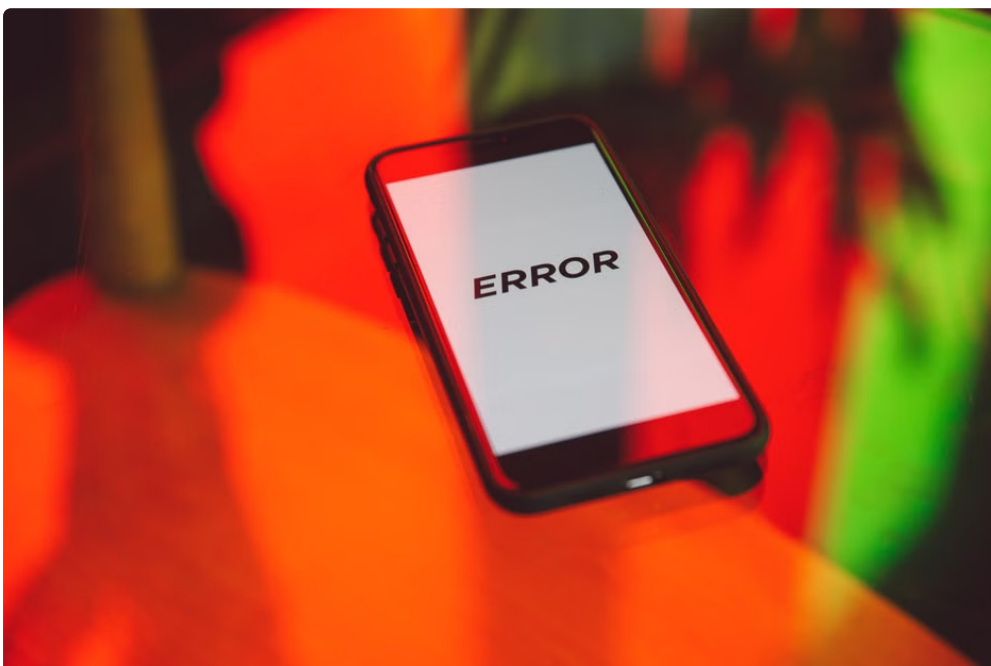
Before diving into the DNS details, it's important to understand what a "Site Currently Unavailable" message usually means. This generic message may be shown by your hosting provider's infrastructure or the webserver itself when it can't properly serve your website content. Common causes include:

- **DNS misconfiguration:** DNS records not pointing to the correct IP address where your website is hosted.
- **Host-level suspension or billing holds:** If your hosting provider has suspended your account due to overdue payment or policy violations, the site may be temporarily taken offline.
- **Server or web application issues:** Backend errors, misconfigured web server software, or expired SSL certificates.
- **Domain issues:** Domain registration expired or domain itself suspended.

As a hosting support and reliability generalist with over 12 years of experience, I can confidently say that the DNS pointer is one of the first places to check. Let's look at how to validate your DNS records.

## Understanding DNS Records: A Record, CNAME Record, and More

Before you run any checks, here's a quick refresher on the key DNS records involved in connecting your domain to your hosting server:





Record Type Purpose Example **A Record** Maps a domain to a specific IPv4 address. example.com → 123.123.123.123 **AAAA Record** Maps a domain to an IPv6 address. example.com → 2001:0db8::1 **CNAME Record** Redirects one domain or subdomain to another domain name. www.example.com → example.com **MX Record** Directs email services to the correct mail servers. example.com → mail.example.com

For your website to load correctly, the **A record (or AAAA record for IPv6)** for your domain must point to your hosting provider's server IP address or the IP address given in your hosting control panel. If you use a **CNAME record**, it should point to a domain name that ultimately resolves to the correct server as well.

## Common Mistakes Leading to DNS Misconfiguration

One of the most common support tickets we see at hosting providers involves clients mixing up DNS and hosting issues. Hosting is about where your files live; DNS controls which server those domains point to. Here are typical mistakes:

1. Changing your A record to the wrong IP address inadvertently.
2. Setting a CNAME for the root domain, which many DNS providers don't support properly.
3. Leaving old DNS records from previous hosts that cause conflicts.
4. Failing to update DNS records after server migration or provider change.

These errors often result in your browser showing errors or even status codes that look like server issues but are DNS related.

## How To Check Your DNS Records Are Pointing to the Right Server

Here's a reliable "first 5 checks" routine I recommend when handling these types of issues:

1. **Get your server IP address from your hosting provider:** Log in to your hosting control panel or contact your provider's support to confirm your server's IP.
2. **Perform an A record check:** Use a tool like MX Toolbox DNS Lookup or run `nslookup yourdomain.com` from the command line.

3. **Verify the CNAME record for subdomains:** For www or other subdomains, run `nslookup -type=cname www.yourdomain.com` or use online DNS checkers.
4. **Check TTL and propagation:** DNS changes can take time to propagate based on the TTL (time to live) settings – typically 1 hour to 48 hours.
5. **Verify domain registration status:** Confirm your domain isn't expired or suspended by using WHOIS lookup.

If your A record or CNAME doesn't match the IP address your hosting provider gave you, then your DNS is pointing to the wrong server. Update your DNS records accordingly, and allow time for propagation.

## Example: Using nslookup to Perform a DNS Lookup

On [unsuspend website with host](#) Windows, macOS, or Linux terminals, open your command prompt or terminal and type:

```
nslookup example.com
```

This command returns the current IP address from DNS. Compare it to your hosting provider's server IP address. For CNAME records:

```
nslookup -type=cname www.example.com
```

This will tell you what domain the www subdomain points to.

## Decoding HTTP Status Codes: 400 vs 401 vs 403

When troubleshooting, you might see various HTTP status codes instead of your site loading normally. It's crucial to differentiate what these mean:

| Status Code             | Meaning                                                                                                                                           | Typical Cause |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|
| <b>400 Bad Request</b>  | The server cannot or will not process the request due to a client error. Malformed request syntax, invalid DNS settings causing improper routing. |               |
| <b>401 Unauthorized</b> | Authentication is required and has failed or has not been provided. Site requires login, or incorrect credentials used.                           |               |
| <b>403 Forbidden</b>    | The server understood the request but refuses to authorize it. IP block, folder permissions, .htaccess rules preventing access.                   |               |

The frequently misunderstood **400** status sometimes gets reported by end users simply as "site unavailable." In reality, it can be caused by DNS not resolving correctly or the client browser sending a request the server can't understand. This acts as an indicator that DNS and routing may be wrong, rather than the server being down outright.

## Host-Level Suspension and Billing Holds—What You Should Know

It's important not to overlook your hosting provider's account status. Many times when a domain resolves correctly but your site is still "Currently Unavailable," the problem lies with a billing hold or suspension at the host level. The hosting provider suspends account resources before the domain expires for missed payments, security issues, or policy violations.

Unfortunately, some support channels won't clearly state if your account is suspended, instead showing vague error pages or generic "site down" messages. Always verify by:

- Checking your hosting provider's control panel notifications
- Reviewing recent emails from your provider

- Contacting support directly and asking for the exact reason for site unavailability

Don't confuse this with DNS problems; a suspended hosting account generally won't serve your website even if your DNS is perfectly configured.

## Summary & Final Tips

To prevent downtime and "Site Currently Unavailable" errors due to DNS misconfigurations, keep these key points in mind:

- Always confirm your hosting provider's current server IP address before updating your DNS records.
- Perform regular **a record checks** and **cname record** validations using tools like nslookup or MX Toolbox.
- Understand the differences between HTTP status codes 400, 401, and 403 to better pinpoint where issues originate.
- Don't ignore host-level problems such as billing suspensions; these can cause downtime even if DNS is perfect.
- Keep your domain registration active and ensure WHOIS info is up to date.

When in doubt, gathering exact error messages and timestamps goes a long way in helping support teams assist you effectively instead of dealing with vague advice or assumptions.

DNS configuration is often the first gateway to your website's visibility online. Run your DNS lookups carefully and regularly to keep your site pointing to the right place—and avoid unnecessary downtime.

...