DESIGN

A free report from E-3 Design

What 7,500+ website support requests taught us

About 7,600 small-business support requests, 2017 to 2026: what people ask for, what breaks, how fast it's fixed and what prevents it.

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The latest version is always at e-3design.com/downloads

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Most website support is small and predictable. Nearly 4 in 5 of about 7,600 requests took under an hour, and in 2026 the typical request was done in a day. The most common breakage was a contact form whose emails quietly stopped arriving. Six habits, from authenticated form mail to staging updates, would have prevented a large share.

The short version

- **78%** of requests took under an hour of hands-on work.
- **1 day** was the median time from request to done in 2026; 62% were done within a day and 89% within a week.
- **Contact form emails that stop arriving** are the most common breakage of all, about 120 requests. A fully down site was rare, about 30.
- **March** is the busiest month (30% above average); January is fix-it month; December is the quietest.
- **Email** fell to 12% of requests in 2026 as mailboxes moved to Microsoft 365, and content edits rose to 35%.

What people ask for

Share of about 7,600 requests by topic, February 2017 to October 2026. Content edits and email lead; logins, the online store, site errors, domains and forms follow at around 1 in 10 each.

Topic	Share	
Content edits (text, photos, links, PDFs, events)	22%	
Email (new mailboxes, passwords, phones, delivery)	19%	
Website logins and access	10%	
Store and payments	10%	
Site errors and bugs	8%	
Domains, DNS and SSL	8%	
Forms and registration	8%	
SEO, Google and analytics	6%	
New sites and redesigns	3%	
Hosting, updates and migrations	3%	
Billing, accounts and general	2%	
Security and spam	2%	

The mix has shifted. Email ran 17–26% of each year's requests through 2024, then fell to 12% in 2026. Domain and DNS requests jumped to 19% in 2025, the year of the Microsoft 365 DNS switch. Logins fell from 13–15% to 4–8% since 2024. The ten most common problem types are only 14% of all requests; the top hundred are 56%.

What breaks

Requests where something stopped working, rather than a change. Approximate counts, all years.

Breakage	Requests
Contact form emails stopped arriving	~120
A link is broken	~100
The security firewall locked out the office	~100
A site feature stopped working	~90
The login page says “page not found”	~70
“Not Secure”: the certificate expired or didn’t renew	~70
Email account locked, or bounced by Gmail, Yahoo or AOL	~60 each
The site broke after an update	~40
The whole site is down	~30

Email delivery (forms, bounces and spam folders) causes far more breakage than outages do. A fully down site is rare; a quietly broken form is common.

How big the jobs are, and how fast

Typical hands-on work

Work	Share
Minutes	36%
Under an hour	42%
1 to 3 hours	16%
Half a day or more	6%

Request to done, 2026

Done	Share
Same day	30–47%
Within 1 day	62%
Within 7 days	89%

The median was 1 day for almost every topic. Domains, DNS and SSL took 2 (waiting on registrars and DNS), and new sites and redesigns 3 (feedback rounds).

When requests arrive

Requests by month, full years 2017–2025, where 100 is an average month.

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
114	105	**130**	105	112	96	87	97	92	92	94	76

Spring is project season: new sites, hosting moves, search work and store changes peak in March. Site errors and form problems peak in January. Email peaks in May, and December is the quietest month.

Prevention wins

Six habits that would have prevented the most requests.

- [ ] 1. **Send form mail through an authenticated service, save every entry, and test the form monthly.** Removes the #1 breakage (about 120) and most form mail in junk.
  e-3design.com/learn/email-deliverability/website-form-mail-smtp
- [ ] 2. **Publish SPF, DKIM and DMARC for every sending domain.** Bounces, spam folders and certificate warnings: about 135 requests.
  e-3design.com/articles/business-email-spf-dkim-dmarc
- [ ] 3. **Allowlist the office's internet address in the site firewall,** with sensible lockout limits. About 100 requests, plus locked-out logins.
  e-3design.com/help/login-page-404-blocked
- [ ] 4. **Use a password manager, and document each site's login address.** Forgotten passwords, "page not found" logins and locked mailboxes: about 380.
  e-3design.com/learn/security/password-manager-rollout
- [ ] 5. **Add a redirect whenever a page moves or is renamed.** Most of the 100 or so broken-link requests.
  e-3design.com/help/broken-links-buttons
- [ ] 6. **Update on a staging copy first, with a visual check.** Broken updates, layouts and features: about 175.
  e-3design.com/answers/staging-site

Also worth it: spam protection on every form by default (about 45), certificate expiry monitoring (about 70), and an onboarding checklist for every new staff mailbox, the most common request of all (about 175).

Method and caveats

- **Sources:** E-3 Design's support history, about 4,250 knowledge-base entries from help-desk tickets (Feb 2017 to May 2026) plus later entries, and 966 client requests from Jan to Oct 2026: 7,591 ticket-equivalents. Not every original ticket was kept, so yearly totals undercount.
- **Grouping:** 437 problem types drafted from machine clusters, every request labelled with AI; a spot check found about 90% right. Counts are approximate (±10–15%): compare shares, not totals.
- **Dates and time:** older months are estimated from ticket numbers (±2 weeks). Time to done is 2026 only (539 requests), in calendar days. Hands-on effort is typical per problem type.
- **Privacy:** anonymized aggregates only, with no client names, addresses, domains or message text. No business-type breakdown.

Charts, the problem explorer and the data (CSV): e-3design.com/report and e-3design.com/report/explorer.

E-3 DESIGN

About E-3 Design

E-3 Design builds, hosts and looks after websites for small businesses. Larry Davis has been building on the web since 2000. Most of our clients are around Dayton, Ohio and Somerset and Johnstown, Pennsylvania, and we work with businesses anywhere.

What we do

- Websites and redesigns
- Website care: uptime monitoring, tested updates, daily backups and security alerts
- Hosting, with SSL included
- SEO and AI search, including Google Business Profiles
- Leads and follow-up

How we work

- Accounts we set up are in your business's name, with E-3 added as a user
- Domains we manage are registered to you
- Redesigns and speed fixes are tested on a staging copy first
- For redesigns and site moves, you approve the plan and the preview before launch
- We save your DNS records before changing them

Rather we did it for you?

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