

ORIGINAL MEASURED RESEARCH · JULY 2026

State of Arabic and RTL Websites in 2026

A 220-site study of document language, RTL direction, logical CSS, Arabic fonts, accessibility, SEO, countries, and framework signals.

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Dataset v3 · Collected 24 July 2026 · moayyadfaris.com/arabic-web-stats/rtl-adoption

RTL-aware does not yet mean RTL-complete

Measured across 220 ranked Arabic-region homepages, 75% declared an Arabic language and 63% set root RTL direction. Only 60% did both. The largest engineering gap appeared in CSS: just 5% of sites used more logical directional properties than physical ones.

60% COMPLETE ARABIC + RTL ROOT	5% LOGICAL CSS DOMINANT	59% ARABIC WEB FONT	55% CANONICAL LINK
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What was measured

The collector analyzed initial server HTML, inline styles, and up to two linked stylesheets for 220 qualifying homepages. A qualifying page returned HTML over HTTPS and contained at least 200 visible Arabic-script characters. Hostnames were anonymized.

How to interpret the figures

- Measured: counts and percentages calculated from the published snapshot.
- Not a census: results describe this ranked ccTLD sample, not every Arabic website.
- No JavaScript execution: client-injected markup and styles are outside the measurement.
- No visual grading: technical signals do not prove that a layout is visually correct.

Indicator	Count	Rate
Arabic language declared	166 / 220	75%
Root dir=rtl	138 / 220	63%
Complete Arabic + RTL root	131 / 220	60%
Any RTL signal	188 / 220	85%
Logical CSS dominant	11 / 220	5%
Arabic web font loaded	129 / 220	59%

The document root is complete on 60% of measured pages

The durable baseline for an Arabic document is explicit: `<html lang="ar" dir="rtl">`. The language attribute identifies the language; the direction attribute establishes the base reading and layout direction.

75% ARABIC LANGUAGE	63% ROOT RTL	60% BOTH DECLARATIONS	85% ANY RTL SIGNAL
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The implementation gap

Thirty-five sites declared Arabic without setting root RTL, while seven set root RTL without a recognized Arabic language declaration. CSS can make a page look correct while leaving the document contract incomplete for browsers, search systems, and assistive technology.

Recommended root pattern

```
<html lang="ar" dir="rtl">
```

What to verify

- The language tag reflects the page's primary language, including a region subtag only when useful.
- The root direction is present in server-rendered HTML, not added only after hydration.
- Components override direction locally only for genuinely mixed-direction content.

Physical left/right CSS dominates 92% of the sample

Only 11 sites used more logical directional properties than physical ones. 203 were dominated by physical properties such as `margin-left`, `right`, and `text-align: left`. This does not prove visual failure, but it exposes a recurring direction-specific maintenance cost.

5%

LOGICAL DOMINANT

92%

PHYSICAL DOMINANT

220

CSS SETS ANALYZED

Direction-aware replacements

Physical declaration	Logical alternative	What changes
<code>margin-left</code>	<code>margin-inline-start</code>	Mirrors with writing direction
<code>padding-right</code>	<code>padding-inline-end</code>	Mirrors with writing direction
<code>left / right</code>	<code>inset-inline-start / end</code>	Direction-aware positioning
<code>text-align: left</code>	<code>text-align: start</code>	Follows text direction
<code>border-left</code>	<code>border-inline-start</code>	Mirrors the logical edge

Migration sequence

- Start with shared primitives: spacing, alignment, and positioned controls.
- Keep physical values where a physical screen edge is genuinely intended.
- Test arrows, breadcrumbs, pagination, and mixed Arabic/Latin strings separately.
- Remove redundant RTL overrides only after regression testing.

Typography adoption is stronger than accessibility and search markup

59% ARABIC WEB FONT	56% IMAGE ALT COVERAGE	55% CANONICAL LINK	35% JSON-LD
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Arabic typography

129 sites deliberately loaded an Arabic-supporting web font. That measures presence, not speed. Real transfer cost depends on WOFF2 compression, Unicode subsetting, selected weights, variable axes, caching, and fallbacks.

Accessibility

The crawler found 7,180 images with non-empty alt text among 12,864 images, for 56% presence coverage. It did not judge whether the descriptions were accurate, useful, or written in Arabic.

Search and sharing signals

Signal	Count	Rate
Meta description	152 / 220	69%
Open Graph	136 / 220	62%
Canonical link	121 / 220	55%
JSON-LD	76 / 220	35%
dir="auto"	3 / 220	1%
element	0 / 220	0%

Evidence boundary: signal presence is not equivalent to quality, validity, conformance, or search performance.

Eleven country samples met the 10-site publication floor

Country rates describe the measured ccTLD samples and should not be treated as national rankings. Small samples make modest differences unstable; every rate belongs beside its denominator.

Country sample	Sites	Complete root	Rate
Bahrain	11	9 / 11	82%
Algeria	13	10 / 13	77%
Saudi Arabia	22	16 / 22	73%
Egypt	10	7 / 10	70%
Oman	14	8 / 14	57%
Iraq	25	14 / 25	56%
Jordan	18	10 / 18	56%
Syria	13	7 / 13	54%
Lebanon	17	8 / 17	47%
Kuwait	13	6 / 13	46%
Palestine	16	6 / 16	38%

How to read the table

- Bahrain measured 82% complete roots in an 11-site sample.
- Palestine measured 38% in a 16-site sample.
- The difference is descriptive of these ranked ccTLD pages, not every organization in either country.
- Countries below 10 qualifying pages remain in the full dataset but do not receive standalone report pages.

Country reports: moayyadfaris.com/arabic-web-stats/rtl-adoption#countries

No identifiable platform dominates the sample

Framework detection is a heuristic fingerprint based on generator metadata and recognizable HTML, assets, and cookies. A missing signature does not mean a site has no framework, and a signature does not establish version or implementation quality.

Detected framework / CMS	Sites	Share
Custom / unidentified	123	56%
WordPress	44	20%
Next.js	23	10%
Drupal	13	6%
Laravel	10	5%
Shopify	4	2%
Joomla	3	1%

Measured interpretation

- Custom or unidentified: 123 sites (56%).
- WordPress: 44 sites (20%).
- Next.js: 23 sites (10%).
- All other individually detected platforms: 14% combined.

The useful conclusion is narrow: the ranked Arabic ccTLD sample is technically heterogeneous.

Seven priorities for Arabic website teams

Priority	Action	Verification
01	Set accurate lang and root dir in server HTML	Inspect page source
02	Replace shared physical CSS with logical properties	Compare LTR and RTL
03	Test mixed Arabic/Latin strings	Use prices, URLs, codes
04	Control Arabic font files and fallbacks	Measure real WOFF2 transfer
05	Write useful Arabic alt text	Review meaning, not presence
06	Publish canonical and search metadata	Validate rendered head
07	Measure the delivered response	Do not rely only on hydration

Free implementation resources

- RTL Website Checker: moayyadfaris.com/tools/arabic/rtl-website-checker
- RTL Preview: moayyadfaris.com/tools/arabic/rtl-preview
- Implementation checklist: moayyadfaris.com/api/rtl-adoption-stats/checklist
- Embeddable charts: moayyadfaris.com/arabic-web-stats/rtl-adoption/embed
- Machine-readable API: moayyadfaris.com/api/rtl-adoption-stats

Start with the document root, then remove direction-specific maintenance from shared components.

A reproducible snapshot with explicit limits

Sample frame

Candidates came from the Tranco top-one-million list and were filtered to 22 Arabic-region country-code top-level domains. Candidates were interleaved by ccTLD, preserving rank within each country, and a soft cap limited country dominance.

Inclusion rule

A homepage qualified when HTTPS returned HTML and the visible initial response contained at least 200 Arabic-script characters. The July 2026 run attempted 1,032 candidates to collect 220 qualifying pages.

Measured surface

- Initial server-returned HTML.
- Inline style blocks and style attributes.
- Up to the first two linked stylesheets.
- Language, direction, CSS, fonts, forms, bidi signals, accessibility/SEO markers, and framework fingerprints.

Outside scope

- JavaScript execution, hydration changes, and JS-loaded stylesheets.
- Internal pages, user flows, visual correctness, accessibility conformance, and search rankings.
- A census of all Arabic websites or equal country representation.

Privacy and trend integrity

Hostnames are replaced with truncated SHA-256 identifiers. The earlier version 2 snapshot is preserved but excluded from trend calculations because the sampling method changed. Only compatible methodology IDs are compared.

Use, cite, and reproduce the research

Suggested citation

Faris, Moayyad. State of Arabic and RTL Websites in 2026: A 220-Site Study. Dataset v3, collected 24 July 2026.
moayyadfaris.com/blog/state-of-arabic-rtl-websites-2026

Primary sources

- Live dataset and methodology: moayyadfaris.com/arabic-web-stats/rtl-adoption
- Tranco research paper: tranco-list.eu/assets/tranco-ndss19.pdf
- W3C language declarations: w3.org/International/questions/qa-html-language-declarations
- W3C HTML direction: w3.org/International/questions/qa-html-dir.en.html
- MDN CSS logical properties: developer.mozilla.org/docs/Web/CSS/CSS_logical_properties_and_values

Reuse terms

Charts and measured figures may be quoted or embedded with visible attribution and a link to the live dataset. Do not present the sample as a census, remove denominators, or describe heuristic framework detection as authoritative inventory.

About the author

Moayyad Faris is a software architect and engineering leader who builds Arabic web developer tools and maintains the Arabic & RTL Web Adoption research project.

Live data · country reports · trends · tools
moayyadfaris.com/arabic-web-stats/rtl-adoption