.com vs .io vs .ai: which extension should you choose?

All three work technically the same way. The differences are in recognition, cost and what people assume about your business.

By the Harer team · Updated 22 November 2026

> **QUICK ANSWER**
> Choose .com for the broadest recognition. Choose .io or .ai for tech or AI products when the name is better there and you accept a higher yearly cost. Google treats all three as generic, so the extension does not limit you to one country in search.

What the extensions are

- **.com** is a generic top-level domain open to anyone.
- **.io** is the country-code domain of the British Indian Ocean Territory, widely used by software companies.
- **.ai** is the country-code domain of Anguilla, widely used by artificial intelligence companies.

How Google treats them

Google lists .io and .ai among the country-code domains it treats as generic, so they are not tied to one country in search, just like .com.

Side by side

	.com	.io	.ai
Recognition	Highest for general audiences	Strong in tech	Strong in AI products

	.com	.io	.ai
Short names available	Rare	More likely	More likely
Yearly cost	Usually lower	Usually higher than .com	Usually higher than .com
Search treatment	Generic	Generic (per Google)	Generic (per Google)
Harer price (register / renew)	Coming soon / Coming soon	Coming soon / Coming soon	Coming soon / Coming soon

Our suggestion

Choose .com if the name you want is available and your audience is broad. Choose .io or .ai if your product is in tech or AI, the name is clearly better, and you are comfortable with the higher renewal cost.

Sources

- Google Search Central: generic ccTLDs list (checked 22 November 2026)

Written by the Harer team. Updated 22 November 2026. This is general information about how domains, email and hosting work, not advice for your specific setup. Read our editorial policy.