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Marketing, Web & Print

QUICK GUIDE · ASTRO

Why Astro is exploding: pros and cons.

If you've talked with a web designer lately, you may have heard about Astro. It's a free tool developers use to build websites, and it's one of the fastest-growing in the industry: downloads grew about eightfold in a year, and Cloudflare bought the team behind it in January 2026.

This quick guide explains what Astro is in plain English, why its popularity is exploding, the honest pros and cons, and how to tell whether it's the right way to build your business website.

November 2026 Richmond, Illinois rmartincreative.com

HOW THIS GUIDE BREAKS DOWN

PART 1	What is Astro?	Why it's exploding
PART 2	The pros	The cons
PART 3	Astro vs. Next.js vs. WordPress	Is it right for you?

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Downloads grew about eightfold in a year.

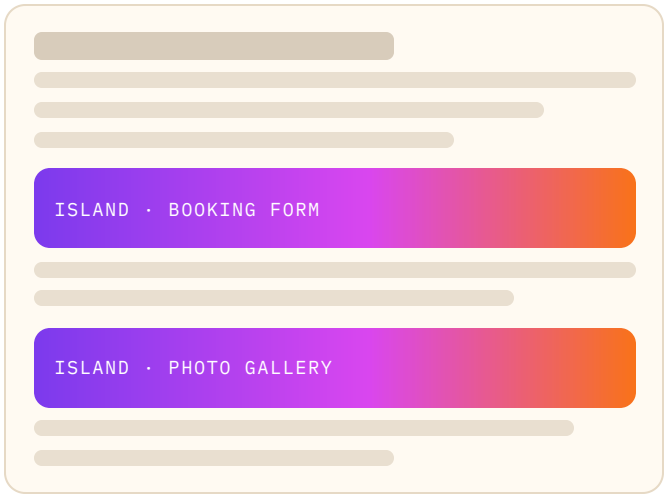
Cloudflare
Bought the team behind Astro in January 2026.

$0
Free and open source.

Part 1 THE BASICS

What is Astro?

Most small business websites are mostly for reading: your services, hours, photos, and reviews. Many modern website tools still send a big bundle of code to every visitor's phone just to show that text. Astro does the opposite. It builds each page ahead of time as plain, finished text and images, and adds code only to the parts that need it, like a booking form or a photo gallery.



- **Plain, finished text and images**, built ahead of time
- **“Islands”**: only the parts that need code

Developers call those parts “islands.” The rest of the page is calm, fast, and ready the moment it arrives. That's why Astro sites tend to score so well on speed tests, especially on phones.

Part 1 CONTINUED

Why Astro's popularity is exploding

Downloads grew about eightfold in a year.

Developers downloaded Astro about 3.8 million times in October 2025 and about 31.6 million times in October 2026. Downloads count every install, including automated builds, so they aren't a count of websites, but the trend is hard to miss.

Cloudflare bought the team behind it.

In January 2026, Cloudflare, one of the world's largest web networks, acquired the company that makes Astro. Astro stays free and open source, and it still works with other hosting companies.

Developers like using it.

In the State of JavaScript 2025 survey, a yearly poll of thousands of web developers, Astro was the best-liked tool in its category, well ahead of Next.js.

Google rewards fast pages.

Google's speed scores (Core Web Vitals) favor pages that load quickly and respond right away on phones. Astro sends so little code that good scores come almost by default.

Developers can bring the tools they know.

Astro works with components built for React, Vue, and Svelte, so a team can switch without starting from scratch.

It keeps getting better.

Astro 6, released in March 2026, added built-in font handling, stronger security settings, and a faster setup for sites hosted on Cloudflare.

Part 2 6 PROS

The pros

1. **Pages load fast, especially on phones**

   Astro sends finished pages with little or no extra code, so there's less for a phone to download and run. Interactive parts load only where they're used, and often only once someone scrolls to them.

2. **Easy for Google and AI to read**

   Every page arrives as complete text, with its own title, description, and structured data. Search engines and AI assistants like ChatGPT can read it all without running any code first.

3. **Low (or no) hosting bills**

   Most Astro sites are plain files, which are cheap to serve. Many small business sites fit in the free plans from Cloudflare, Netlify, or Vercel.

4. **Fewer security worries**

   A site built ahead of time has no login page or database for attackers to poke at, and no plugins to keep patched every week.

5. **Flexible content editing**

   Content can live in simple text files, or in an easy editor like Strapi or Prismic (a headless CMS). WordPress can even stay on as the editor while Astro builds the fast public site.

6. **Free, open, and well backed**

   Astro is open source under the MIT license, so nobody can lock it away or start charging for it. Cloudflare's backing pays for a full-time team.

Part 2 5 CONS

The cons

1. **No built-in editor for owners**

   Unlike WordPress, Wix, or Squarespace, Astro has no dashboard where you log in and change a page. You'll need a developer for changes, or a content editor set up for you.

2. **Not built for heavy web apps**

   Astro shines when most of a page is for reading. A site full of logins, dashboards, or live data is usually better on a tool like Next.js.

3. **No one-click plugins**

   WordPress has a plugin for almost anything. With Astro, features like booking, forms, or a members area come from outside services or custom code, which takes a developer.

4. **It moves fast**

   Astro has had three major versions in under two years. Each one improves things, but updates can take a developer's time, so plan for occasional upkeep.

5. **Fewer developers know it**

   Astro is popular, but far more developers know WordPress. If you change web designers later, make sure the next one works with Astro.

Part 3 SIDE BY SIDE

Astro vs. Next.js vs. WordPress

All three can make a great small business website. They're built for different jobs.

	ASTRO	NEXT.JS	WORDPRESS
Best for	Sites that are mostly for reading	Sites with app-like features	Owners who edit pages themselves
Speed out of the box	**Excellent**	Very good	Depends on theme and plugins
Editing for owners	Through a separate editor	Through a separate editor	Built in
Typical hosting	Often free	Often free	Usually a monthly plan
Interactive features	Where needed	Everywhere	Through plugins
Upkeep	Occasional updates	Occasional updates	Regular plugin and security updates

Is Astro right for your business?

A great fit
Service businesses, restaurants, contractors, salons, portfolios, blogs, and landing pages. Any site that's mostly there to be read.

Better on WordPress, Wix, or Squarespace
You want to edit every page yourself and you're happy to trade some speed for that.

Better on Next.js
You need customer accounts, dashboards, or other app-like features.

Better on Shopify
Selling online is the main job of the site.

What I use

I build with both Astro and Next.js. My own website, rmartincreative.com, runs on Next.js because it includes interactive tools, like the quote form and the website health check. For a site that's mostly for reading, Astro is often the faster, simpler choice. Either way, I'll recommend whatever fits your business, even if that's WordPress or Shopify.

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Want a hand with any of this?

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