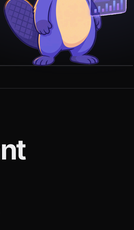
Is PHP Dead? The 2026 Picture, by the Numbers

PHP's 2026 snapshot through W3Techs, Stack Overflow, JetBrains and Packagist data: five of six signals strong, one a warning; weaknesses included.

01 PHP · DATA

Is PHP Dead? The 2026 Picture, by the Numbers



Usage share, survey rankings, ecosystem, release calendar and job market: PHP's 2026 snapshot from four sources.

Muhammet Şafak · October 3, 2026

02 THE SHORT ANSWER

A mature, dominant language that is open to criticism .

Five strong signals, one warning. This is not the picture of a "dead language."

71.2%

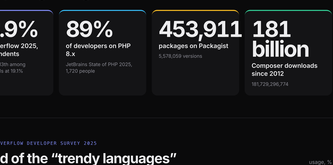
03 W3TECHS · MAY 2026

of websites with a known server-side language run PHP

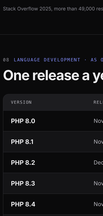
The share has sat in a narrow band for years: it slipped from around 75% to around 71%, but it is still more than ten times that of the second most common server-side language.

04 W3TECHS · MAY 2026

The gap to its rivals



W3Techs, websites with a known server-side language, May 2026



05 W3TECHS · PHP VERSION DISTRIBUTION

Version share of PHP sites (%)

PHP 8.x		59.9
PHP 7.x	7.4 reached end of support in November 2022	31.6
PHP 5.x		8.4
PHP 4.x		0.1

06 SURVEYS AND ECOSYSTEM

In use, and growing

18.9%
Stack Overflow 2025, all respondents
12th place; 13th among professionals at 18.1%

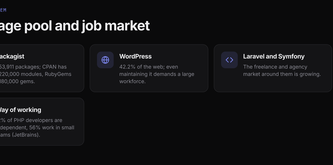
89%
of developers on PHP 8.x
JetBrains State of PHP 2025, 1,720 people

453,911
packages on Packagist
6,374,000 versions

181 billion
Composer downloads since 2012
181,129,246,774

07 STACK OVERFLOW DEVELOPER SURVEY 2025

Ahead of the "trendy languages"



Stack Overflow 2025, more than 49,000 respondents, all respondents

08 LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT · AS OF MAY 2026

One release a year

VERSION	RELEASE	END OF SUPPORT
PHP 8.0	November 2020	November 2023 · ended
PHP 8.1	November 2021	December 2025 · ended
PHP 8.2	December 2022	December 2026 · active
PHP 8.3	November 2023	December 2027 · active
PHP 8.4	November 2024	December 2028 · active
PHP 8.5	November 2025	December 2029 · active

09 SUMMARY TABLE

Six signals

- [x] Usage share: leading, 71.2% of websites
- [x] Developer popularity: 18.9%, ahead of Go and Rust
- [x] Ecosystem: 453 thousand packages, 181 billion downloads
- [x] Language development: a new release every year
- [x] Job market: strong, especially around Laravel and WordPress
- [ ] Newcomers: slow but flowing, from 2% to 4%



10 WHAT A DEAD LANGUAGE LOOKS LIKE

ColdFusion and TIOBE's Perl

	ColdFusion and TIOBE	PHP
SUPPORT	ColdFusion 2021 exited core support in November 2025	✓ A new release every year
NEW FRAMEWORKS	None are coming out for ColdFusion	✓ Laravel, Symfony, Pest, Livewire
TIOBE RANK	ColdFusion is not in the top 50	✓ 14th in May 2026
METRIC	TIOBE blends searches, books and courses: Perl jumped from 27th to 10th in a year with 4 times as many books on Amazon as PHP	✓ Usage: W3Techs share and Packagist downloads

11 ECOSYSTEM

Package pool and job market

Packagist
453,911 packages; CPAN has ~220,000 modules, RubyGems ~180,000 gems.

WordPress
42.2% of the web; even maintaining it demands a large workforce.

Laravel and Symfony
The freelance and agency market around them is growing.

Way of working
12% of PHP developers are independent, 56% work in small teams (JetBrains).

12 OPEN TO CRITICISM

Real problems

Where it is strong

- CRUD-heavy web applications
- Content management
- E-commerce

Where it is weak

- Async is secondary: ReactPHP, Swoole and FrankenPHP are layers added on top of the language
- No generics; they are simulated through docblocks with PHPStan
- 31.6% of PHP sites are on 7.x; 7.4 reached end of support in November 2022
- Real-time messaging, high-frequency trading, ML: not the natural choice

13 CONCLUSION

Not dead: mature, dominant, open to criticism.

muhammetsafak.com/blog/is-php-dead-2026-the-data/

Sources: W3Techs, Stack Overflow 2025, JetBrains State of PHP 2025, Packagist.