

Get Your Brand Recommended by AI

A Marketer's Playbook for Generative Engine Optimization (GEO)



Agenda

01 **Personal Story**
A brief history of myself & how I got started

02 **The Rise of AI Search**
How AI is changing brand discovery

03 **GEO: The Marketer's Playbook**
AI ranking signals + 7 moves for this quarter

04 **Paid Ads in AI Results**
New paid ad opportunities in AI platforms

05 **Closing Thoughts**
Final Takeaways & QA



Alex Melen
Co-Founder, SmartSites

Google Partner PREMIER 2024 · Microsoft Advertising 2024 Select Partner · Meta Business Partner · amazon ads Verified partner · HubSpot CERTIFIED PARTNER · Inc. 5000 8 YEARS · BBB A+ rating · klaviyo MASTER+CHAMPION





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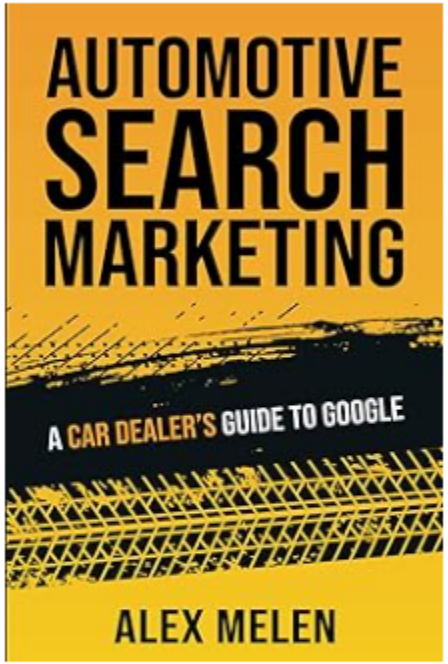
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2011

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Books › Business & Money › Marketing & Sales › Advertising







Read sample

Automotive Search Marketing: A Car Dealer's Guide to Google Paperback – April 25, 2023

by Alex Melen (Author)

5.0 ★★★★★ (51)

See all formats and editions

A detailed account of the latest and greatest in online marketing strategies for car dealers looking to take their digital marketing to the next level.

- Learn what it takes to plan and implement a search marketing strategy using the latest techniques to maximize your ROI.
- Detailed description of Google ranking signals to help you improve your SEO and jumpstart your organic search traffic.
- Learn advanced PPC implementations to revamp your Google Ads campaigns and increase your business immediately.
- Leading digital marketer explains how to select an advertising agency, evaluate performance, and continuously optimize your campaigns.

A must-have for car dealers looking to increase the effectiveness of their digital marketing. Alex Melen uses his three-decades of digital marketing

Read more

Report an issue with this product or seller



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ADWEEK FASTEST GROWING AGENCIES

TOP PPC COMPANY Clutch UNITED STATES 2024

BEST DIGITAL MARKETING U.S.News & WORLD REPORT

Forbes SEO SERVICES #1 BEST OF 2024

OVER 1,000 5-STAR REVIEWS

Company Name	Revenue	Number of Employees
SmartSit...	$105.9M	439

Personal Story

The Rise of AI Search

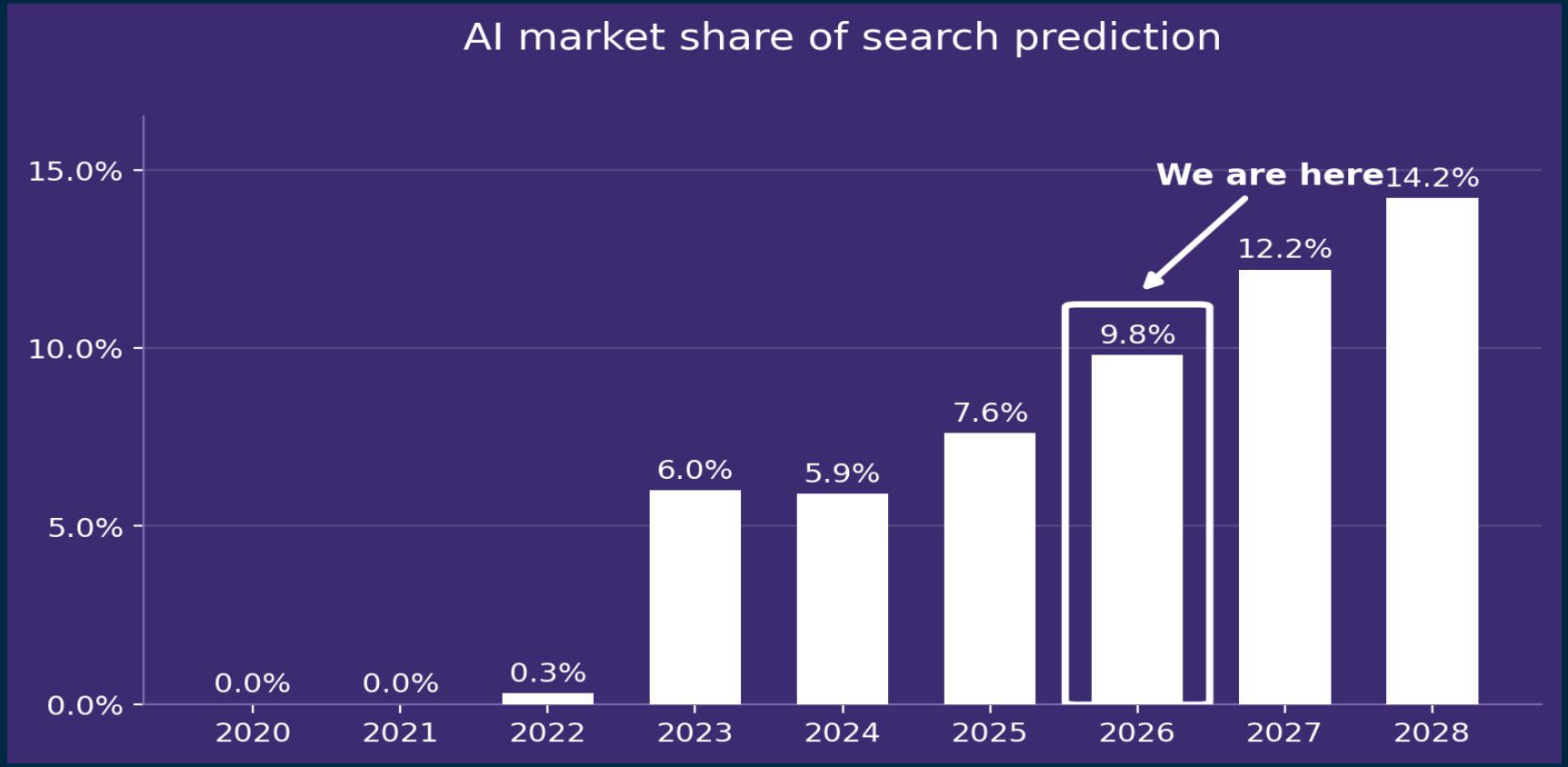
GEO: The Marketer's Playbook

Paid Ads in AI Results

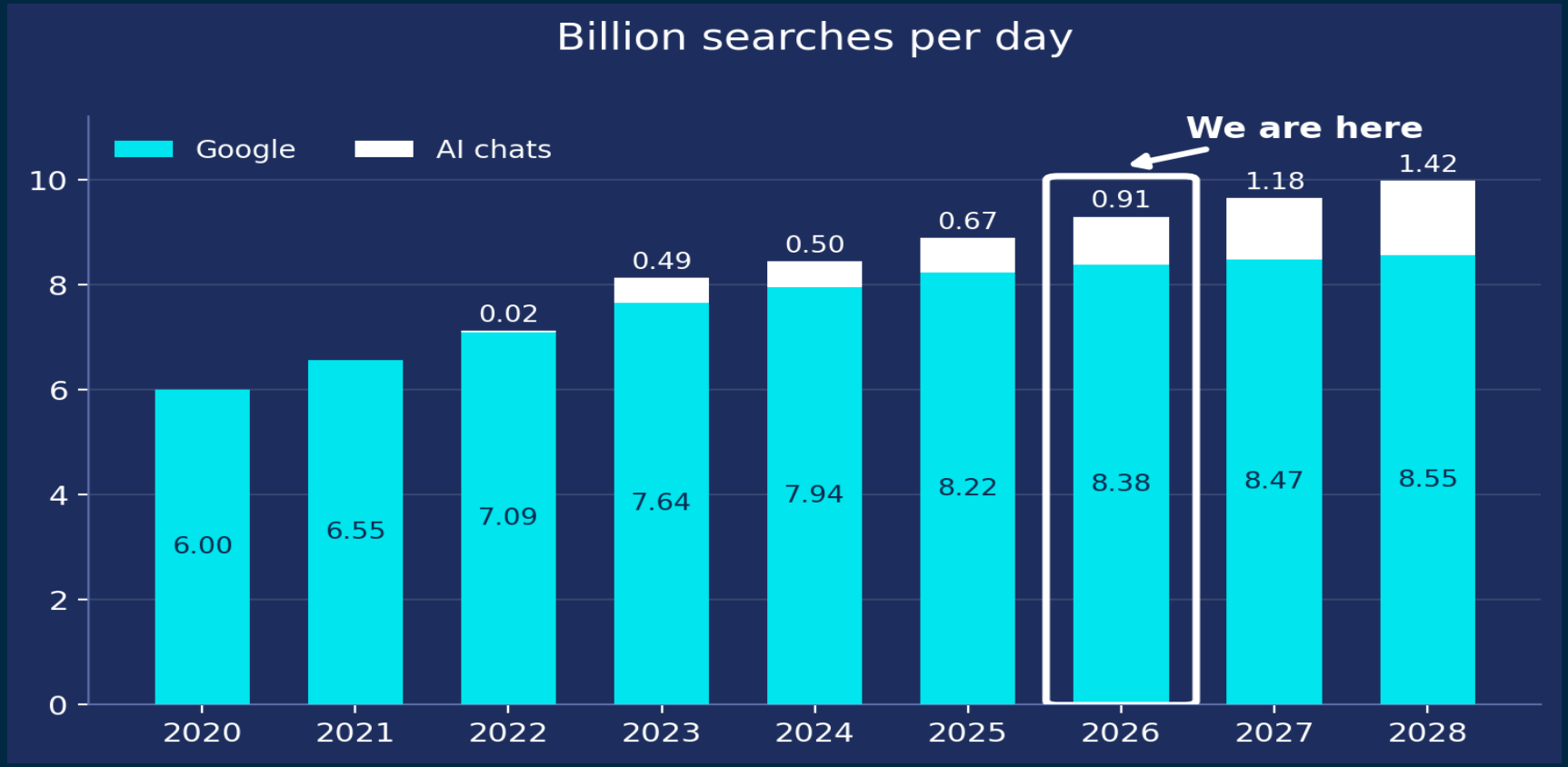
Closing Thoughts

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Search Trends



Search Trends



AI Search by the Numbers (2026)

~20%+

of Google searches now show an AI Overview

57% of long-tail queries

-47%

organic clicks when an AI Overview appears

CTR falls 15% → 8%

~60%

ChatGPT share of AI search usage

Gemini & Copilot rising fast

4x+

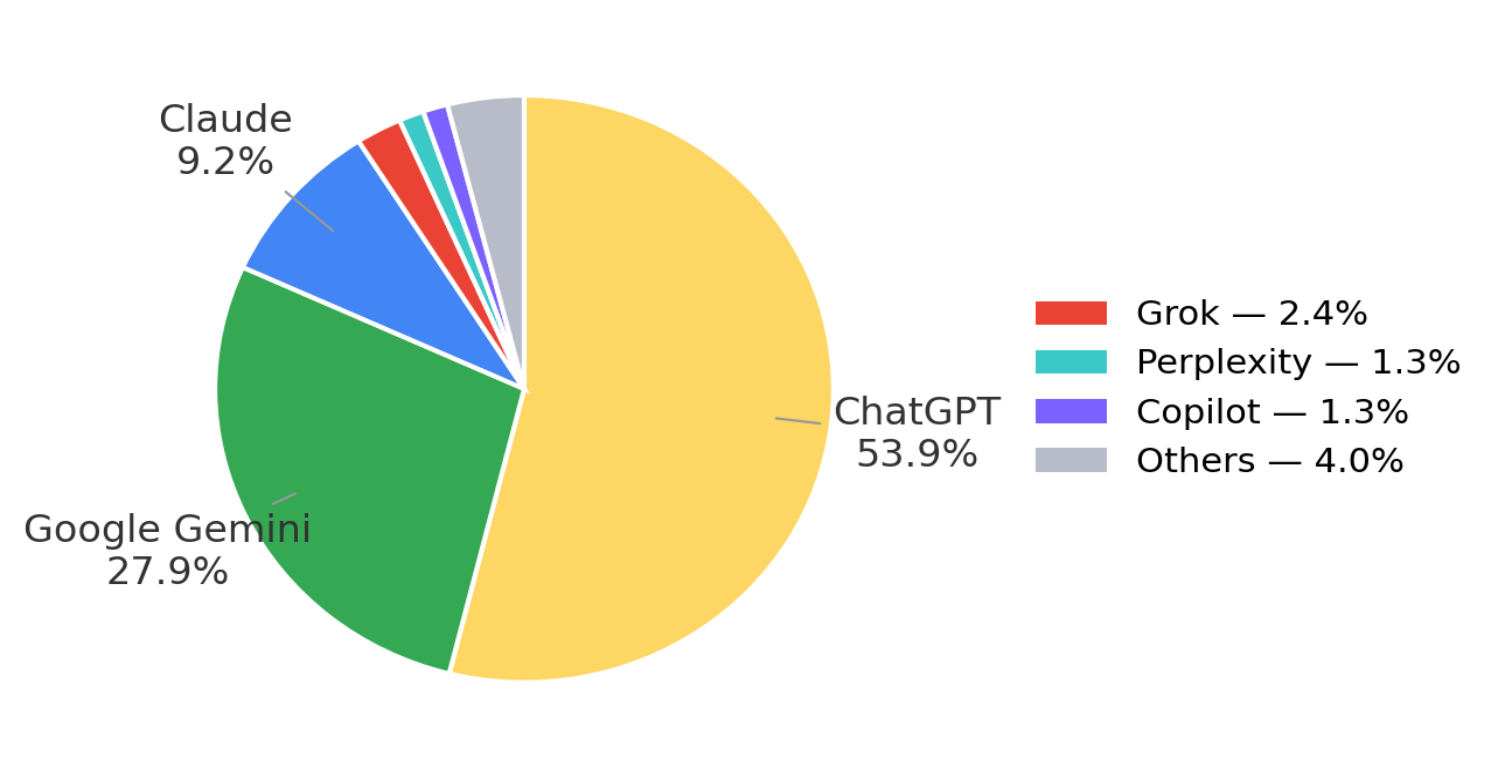
AI referral visitors convert vs. organic search

small volume, high intent

The takeaway: fewer clicks, higher intent — being the brand AI recommends matters more than ever

Sources: Ahrefs AI Overview study (300K keywords) · Memeburn/pixel CTR data · Stackmatix AI search share · Semrush/Seer/Ahrefs conversion studies

AI Chatbots by Market Share



Share of worldwide AI chatbot web visits, May 2026 — ChatGPT still leads but is down from 79% a year ago; Gemini +450% YoY, Claude +855% YoY

Source: Similarweb via Momentic / FirstPageSage, July 2026

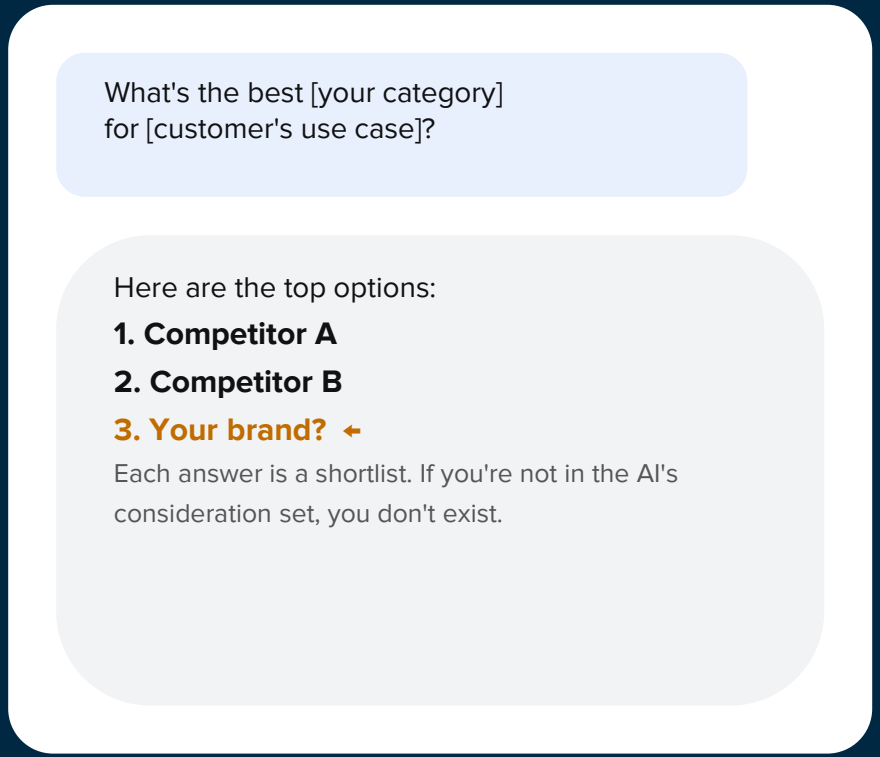
The New Question Every Marketer Should Ask

SEO asked:

“Do we rank?”

GEO asks:

“Does AI recommend us?”



Personal Story

The Rise of AI Search

GEO: The Marketer's Playbook

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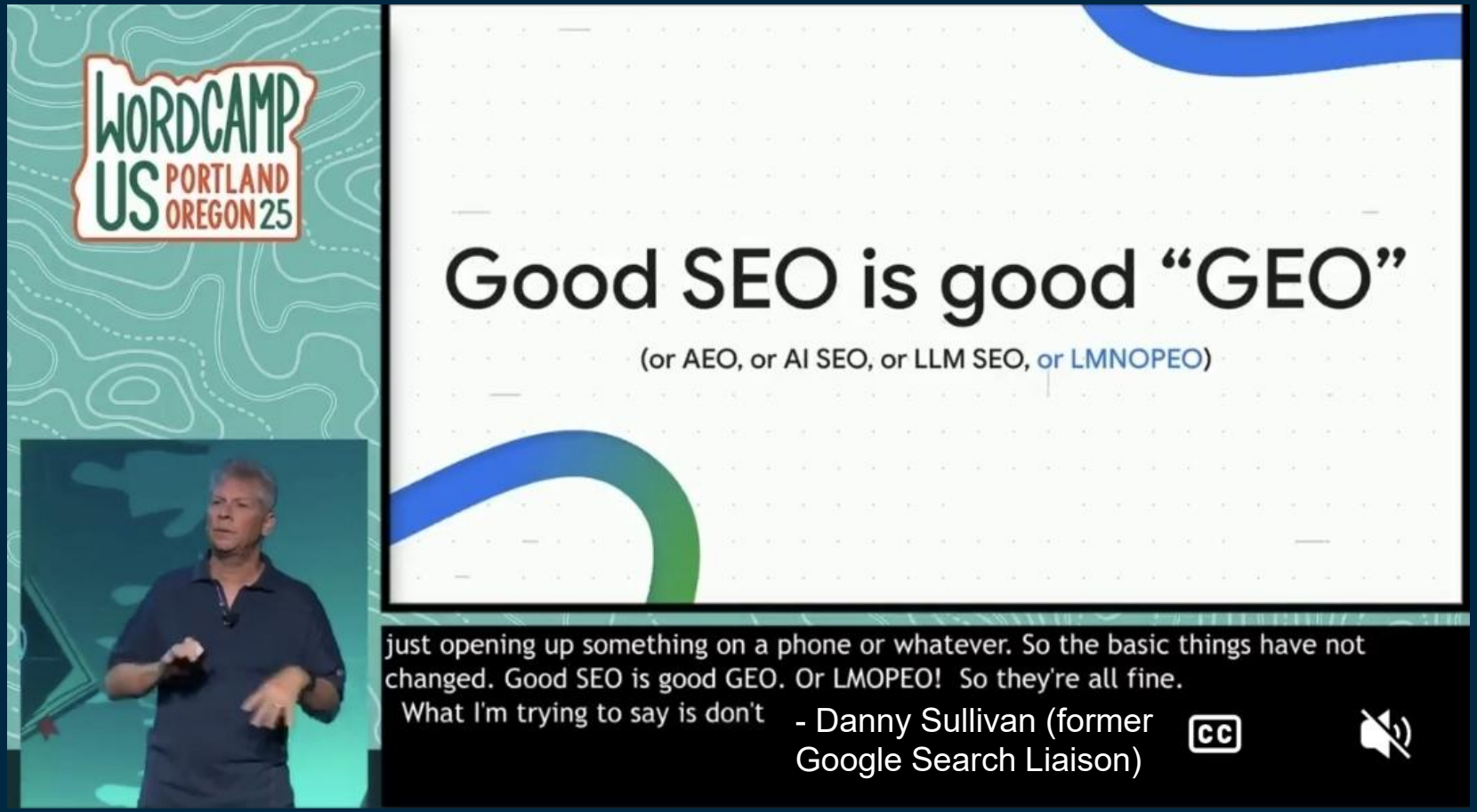
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Generative Engine Optimization

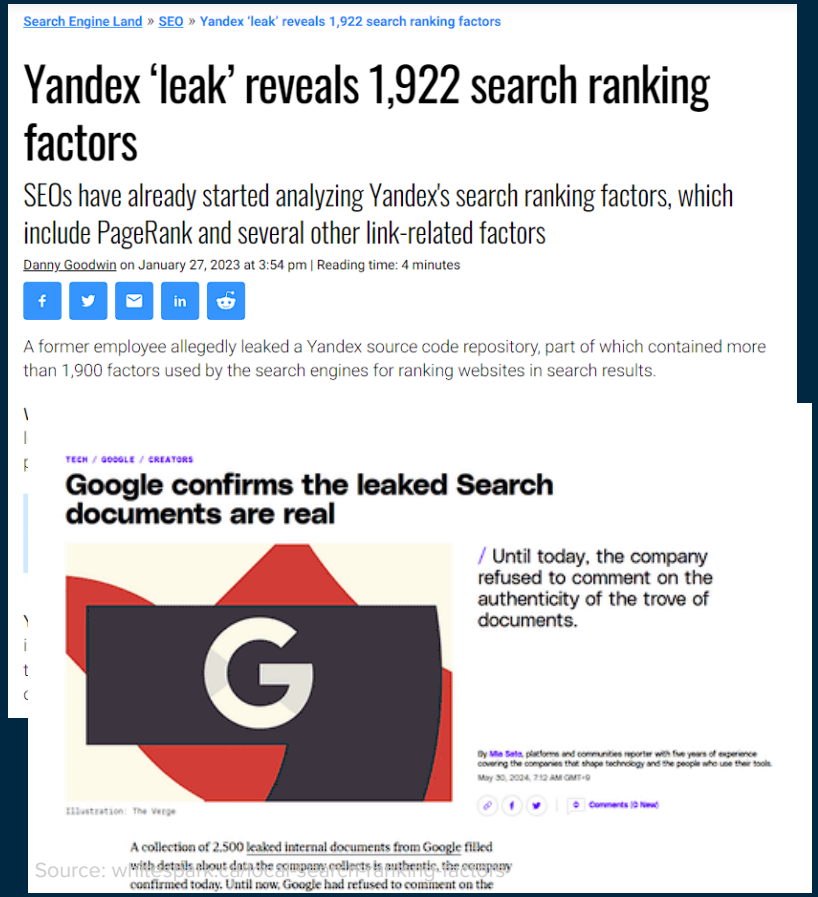




Generative Engine Optimization



SEO Ranking Signals



Search Engine Land » SEO » Yandex 'leak' reveals 1,922 search ranking factors

Yandex 'leak' reveals 1,922 search ranking factors

SEOs have already started analyzing Yandex's search ranking factors, which include PageRank and several other link-related factors

Danny Goodwin on January 27, 2023 at 3:54 pm | Reading time: 4 minutes

A former employee allegedly leaked a Yandex source code repository, part of which contained more than 1,900 factors used by the search engines for ranking websites in search results.

TECH / GOOGLE / CREATORS

Google confirms the leaked Search documents are real

Illustration: The Verge

/ Until today, the company refused to comment on the authenticity of the trove of documents.

By Mia Sato, platforms and communities reporter with five years of experience covering the companies that shape technology and the people who use their tools.

May 30, 2024, 7:12 AM GMT+9

Comments (0 New)

A collection of 2,500 leaked internal documents from Google filled with details about data the company collects is authentic, the company confirmed today. Until now, Google had refused to comment on the

Source: whitespark.ca/blog/article/ai-ranking-factors



Whitespark Local Search Ranking Factors 2026

47 top local SEO experts · published Nov 2025

NEW: now scores AI search visibility factors too

Local Search Ranking Factors (2026)

2026 LOCAL SEARCH RANKING FACTOR GROUPS

LOCAL PACK/MAPS
RANKING FACTORS



- **32%** GBP signals
- **20%** Review signals
- **15%** On-page signals
- **9%** Behavioural signals
- **8%** Link signals
- **6%** Citation signals
- **6%** Personalization
- **4%** Social signals

LOCAL ORGANIC
RANKING FACTORS



- **33%** On-page signals
- **24%** Link signals
- **10%** Behavioural signals
- **8%** Personalization
- **7%** GBP signals
- **7%** Citation signals
- **6%** Review signals
- **5%** Social signals

AI SEARCH
VISIBILITY FACTORS



- **24%** On-page signals
- **16%** Review signals
- **13%** Citation signals
- **13%** Link signals
- **12%** GBP signals
- **9%** Personalization
- **9%** Social signals
- **4%** Behavioural signals

whitespark

Source: Whitespark 2026 Local Search Ranking Factors — survey of 47 top local SEO experts (Nov 2025)

Good GEO = Good SEO + A few extras

Optimizing for AI-Driven Search

- Write with “Promptability” in Mind
- Use clear, question-based headers & direct answers (FAQ style)

Prioritize Entity Clarity

- Clearly define who you are, what you do, who you serve, and what you’re known for
- Showcase people, services, industries, case studies, and areas of expertise

Build Topical Authority

- Create deep, consistent content hubs on key topics
- Get established, authoritative websites to link to you and showcase you

The GEO Playbook: 7 Moves for This Quarter

1 **Audit yourself** — ask the AIs what they recommend in your category

2 **Write with promptability** — question-based headers, direct answers

3 **Nail entity clarity** — who you are, what you do, who you serve — everywhere

4 **Build topical authority** — deep content hubs, not thin pages

5 **Get mentioned where AI looks** — listicles, review sites, Reddit, roundups

6 **Be technically ready** — structured data, llms.txt, crawlable content

7 **Own your reputation** — reviews are the trust layer AI leans on

Every move on this list can be started this week — no specialized tools or agency required

Move 1: Audit Yourself

30 minutes, zero budget — find out where you stand today

NO TOOLS NEEDED

- Ask ChatGPT, Gemini & Perplexity: “best [category] for [use case]?” — 10+ ways, 10+ times
- Record: Do you appear? Who beats you? What sources get cited?
- Ask the AI directly: “What would make you recommend [your brand]?”
- Run the same prompts monthly — AI answers vary run to run; consistency is what counts

THIS WEEK: Run 10 category prompts across 3 AI platforms and log which brands appear.

Move 2: Write with Promptability

Structure content the way people actually ask AI questions

NO TOOLS NEEDED

- Use clear, question-based headers with direct answers underneath (FAQ style)
- Answer in the first sentence — AI extracts passages, not pages
- Cover comparisons: “X vs Y”, “best for…”, “alternatives to…”
- Conversational long-tail beats keyword-stuffed copy in AI retrieval

THIS WEEK: Rewrite your top 3 pages with question headers + direct first-sentence answers.

Move 3: Nail Entity Clarity

NO TOOLS NEEDED

AI must understand exactly who you are before it can recommend you

- Clearly state who you are, what you do, who you serve, and what you're known for
- Keep name, description & category consistent across site, LinkedIn, GBP, directories
- Showcase people, services, industries, case studies, and areas of expertise
- Confused AI = omitted brand. Consistency is the whole game

THIS WEEK: Google your brand + ask AI “who is [brand]?” — fix every inconsistency you find.

Move 4: Build Topical Authority

Deep, consistent content hubs on the topics you want to own

- Create pillar + cluster content around your core expertise — depth beats breadth
- Google rewards high-quality content “however it is produced” — AI-assisted is fine
- Original data, research & expert POVs earn citations that generic content can't
- Publish consistently — topical momentum compounds

THIS WEEK: Pick ONE topic you should own and outline a 5-piece content hub.

Move 5: Get Mentioned Where AI Looks

AI recommendations mirror the sources AI reads

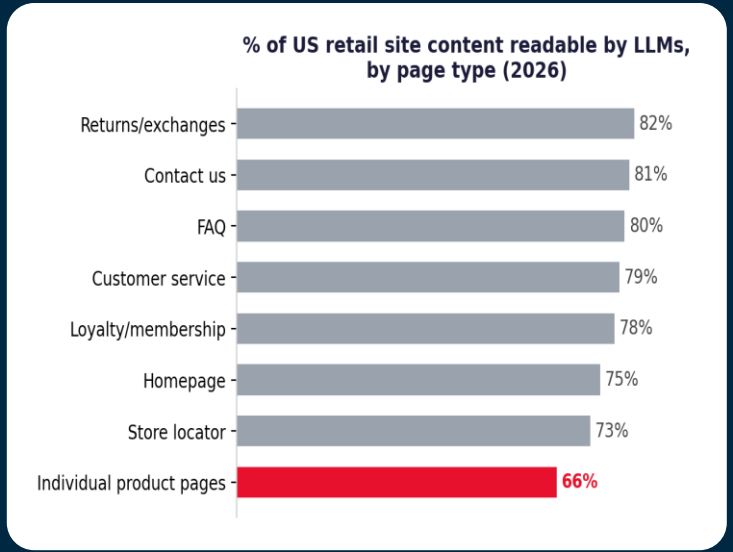
- “Best of” listicles & industry roundups drive a huge share of AI citations
- Review platforms (G2, Clutch, Yelp, TripAdvisor…) are heavily retrieved
- Reddit & community threads feed both training data and live retrieval
- Digital PR > link building: the mention matters even without the link

THIS WEEK: List the 10 listicles/directories in your category and get on 2 of them.

Move 6: Be Technically Ready

1/3 of the average retail product page is invisible to LLMs (Adobe, Apr 2026)

- Why it's invisible: JavaScript-rendered content, image-only specs, poor structured data
- Put critical product info in crawlable HTML — many AI crawlers don't execute JS
- Add schema markup (Product, FAQ, Review) + structured product attributes
- Rich descriptions & FAQs give AI shopping tools (ChatGPT, Gemini, Perplexity) something to cite
- Don't block AI crawlers (GPTBot, PerplexityBot, ClaudeBot) · add llms.txt



THIS WEEK: Audit your top product pages for LLM readability — paste a URL into ChatGPT and ask what it can (and can't) see.

Source: Adobe AI Content Visibility Checker, as cited in press release, April 16, 2026

Move 7: Own Your Reputation

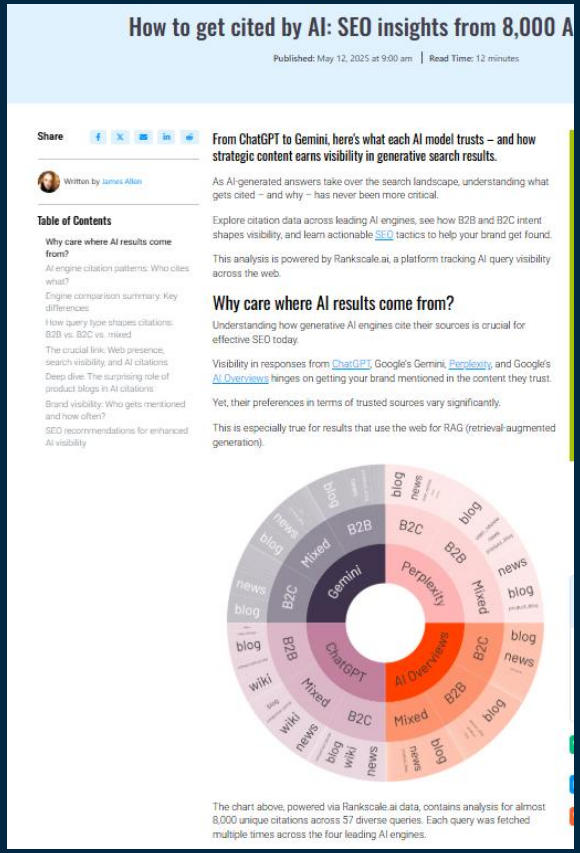
Reviews and sentiment are the trust layer AI leans on

NO TOOLS NEEDED

- AI weighs review volume, recency & sentiment when picking recommendations
- Respond to every review — engagement signals a trustworthy, active brand
- Seed authentic customer stories: case studies, testimonials, community praise
- Monitor what AI says about you — sentiment in answers shapes buyer perception

THIS WEEK: Set up a review-request flow and reply to your last 10 reviews.

Results: SmartSites top cited brand in LLM



How to get cited by AI: SEO insights from 8,000 A

Published: May 12, 2025 at 9:00 am | Read Time: 12 minutes

Share

Written by James Allen

Table of Contents

- Why care where AI results come from?
- AI engine citation patterns: Who cites what?
- Engine comparison summary: Key differences
- How query type shapes citations: B2B vs. B2C vs. mixed
- The crucial link: Web presence, search visibility, and AI citations
- Deep dive: The surprising role of product blogs in AI citations
- Brand visibility: Who gets mentioned and how often?
- SEO recommendations for enhanced AI visibility

From ChatGPT to Gemini, here's what each AI model trusts – and how strategic content earns visibility in generative search results.

As AI-generated answers take over the search landscape, understanding what gets cited – and why – has never been more critical.

Explore citation data across leading AI engines, see how B2B and B2C intent shapes visibility, and learn actionable SEO tactics to help your brand get found.

This analysis is powered by Rankscale.ai, a platform tracking AI query visibility across the web.

Why care where AI results come from?

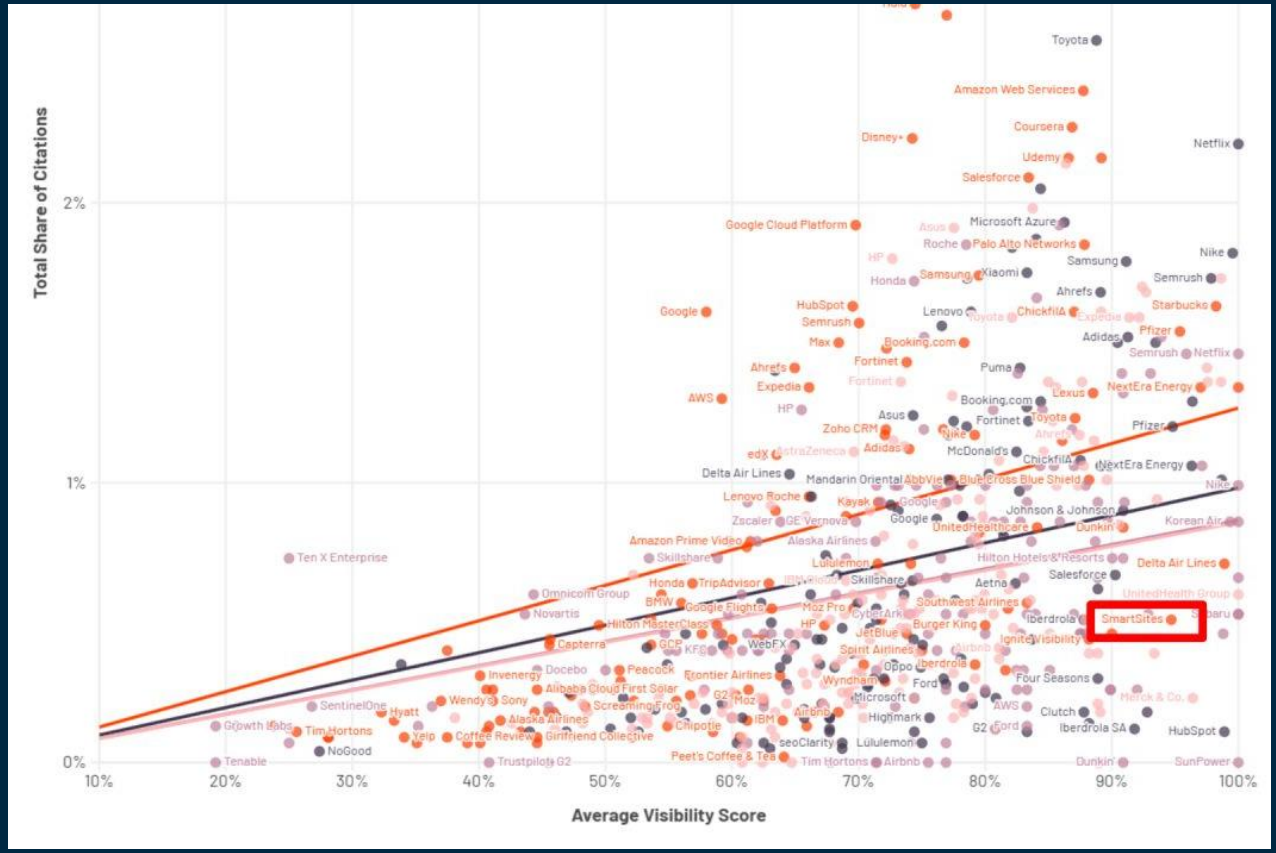
Understanding how generative AI engines cite their sources is crucial for effective SEO today.

Visibility in responses from ChatGPT, Google's Gemini, Perplexity, and Google's AI Overviews hinges on getting your brand mentioned in the content they trust.

Yet, their preferences in terms of trusted sources vary significantly.

This is especially true for results that use the web for RAG (retrieval-augmented generation).

The chart above, powered via Rankscale.ai data, contains analysis for almost 8,000 unique citations across 57 diverse queries. Each query was fetched multiple times across the four leading AI engines.



Source: https://searchengineland.com/how-to-get-cited-by-ai-seo-insights-from-8000-ai-citations-455284

Results: SmartSites AI traffic

Google Analytics 4

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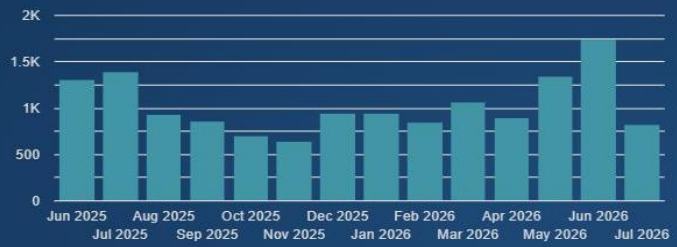
Site Traffic- AI Traffic

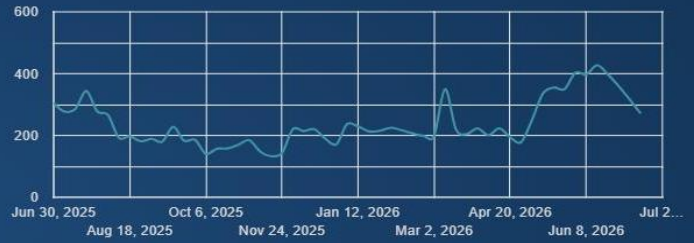
Jun 1, 2026 - Jun 30, 2026

Total users
1,231
↑ 32.4%

Sessions
1,741
↑ 29.5%

Monthly Traffic from AI Source





By Source / Medium

	Session source / medium	Sessions ▾	Key events	Engageme...
1.	chatgpt.com / ai-assistant	1,533	165	60.99%
2.	gemini.google.com / ai-assistant	106	0	48.11%
3.	chatgpt.com / referral	62	3	19.35%
4.	perplexity.ai / ai-assistant	14	2	71.43%
5.	chatgpt.com / organic	10	0	70%
6.	claude.ai / ai-assistant	8	0	25%
7.	claude.ai / referral	4	0	50%

1 - 9 / 9

By Landing Page

	Page path	Sessions ▾	Key events	Engage. Rate
1.	/	1,429	118	65.15%
2.	/digital-marketing-services/	261	3	72.41%
3.	/work/	159	1	81.13%
4.	/contact/	123	28	82.93%
5.	/company/	78	0	91.03%
6.	/web-design/	61	4	77.05%
7.	/company/careers/	56	0	80.36%

1 - 100 / 137

SmartSites.com GA4 — AI traffic up 32.4% YoY; ChatGPT dominates AI referrals (June 2026)

Personal Story

The Rise of AI Search

GEO: The Marketer's Playbook

Paid Ads in AI Results

Closing Thoughts

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Paid ads in AI Overviews are here now

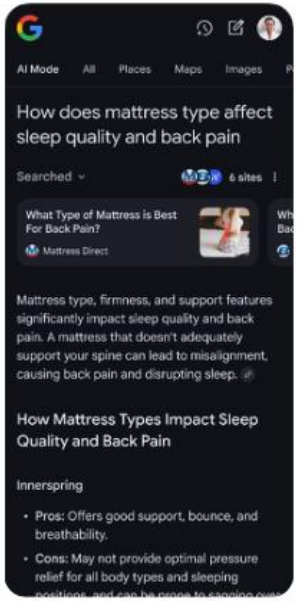
Proprietary + Confidenti

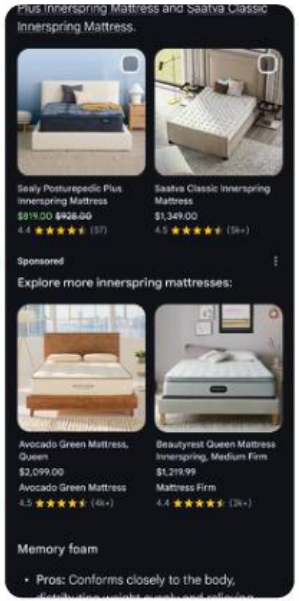
Ads in AI Mode

Ads integrated in the 1st response: Starting in Q4 2025 as an experiment in the US for desktop & mobile

Be part of our most powerful AI search experience, as customers explore their toughest questions with AI Mode.

Shopping Ads integrated in the response



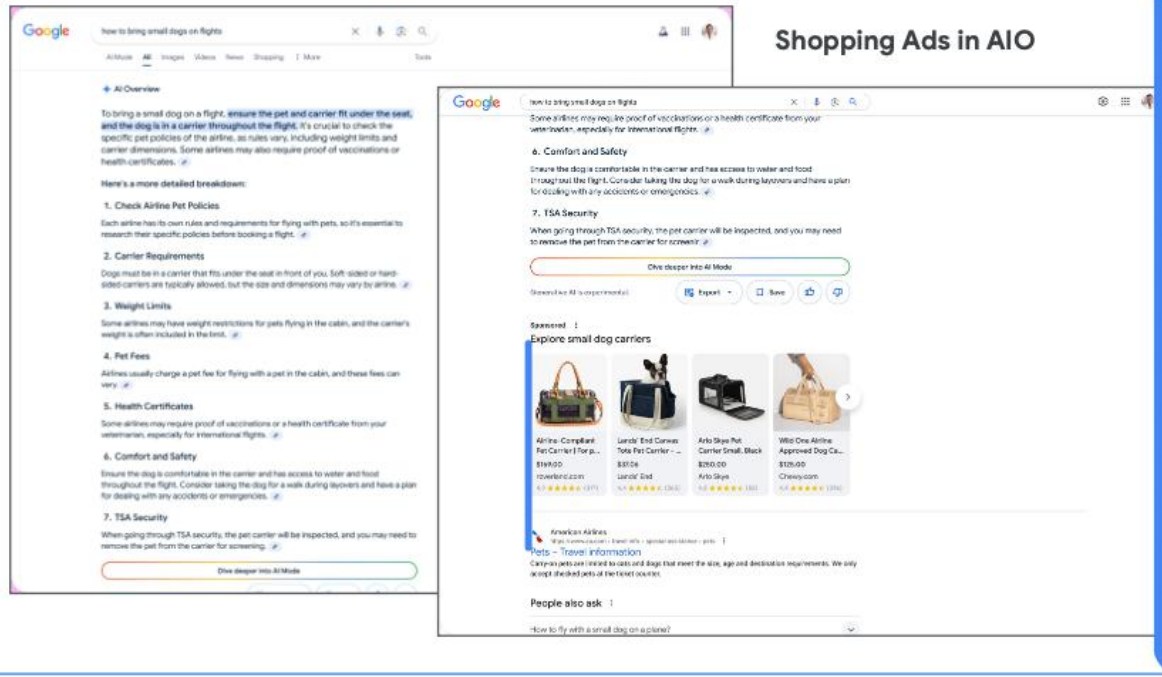


Paid ads in AI Overviews are here now

Proprietary + Confidenti

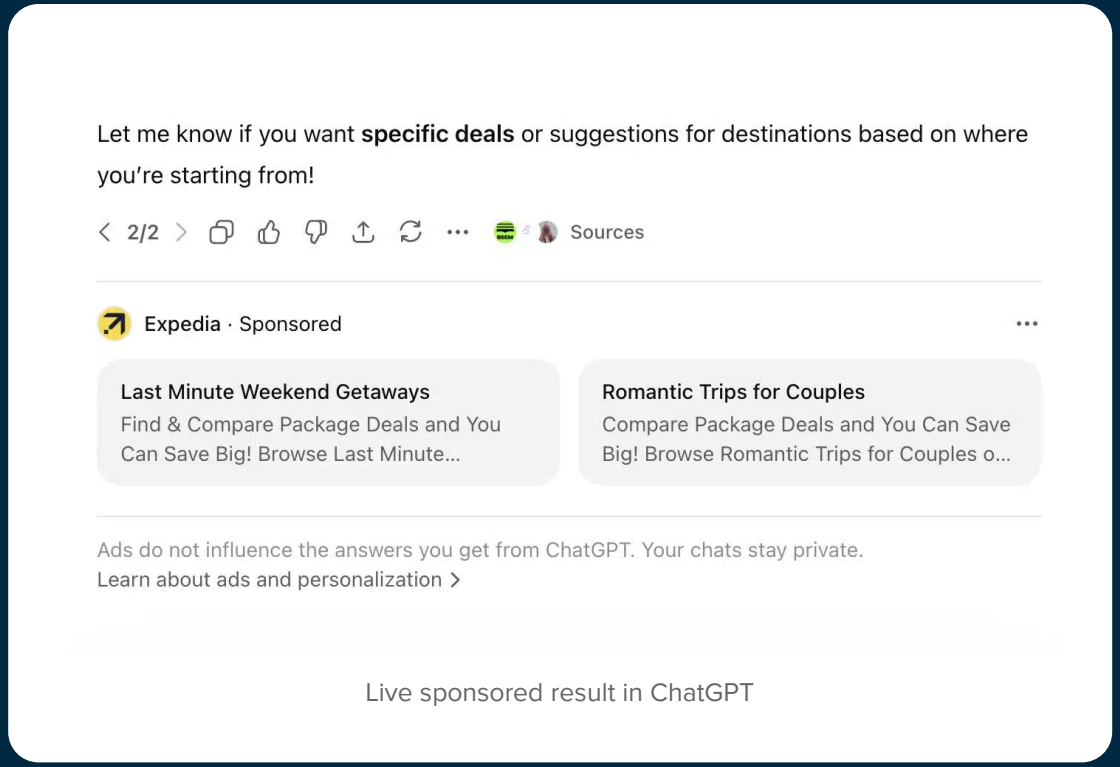
Ads in AI Overviews

Launched in the US for desktop & mobile



Get consumers from discovery to decision faster, by integrating ads into helpful AI-powered responses.

Paid ads in ChatGPT are here too



Live sponsored result in ChatGPT

- Launched Feb 9, 2026 (US, Free & Go tiers)
- "Sponsored" card below the answer — never inside it
- Now expanding: Canada, Australia, NZ, UK, Japan +
- Answers stay independent — ads don't change results
- Early mover window: premium prices, limited data

Sources: OpenAI "Testing ads in ChatGPT" (Feb–May 2026) · openai.com/advertisers

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Paid Ads in AI Results

Closing Thoughts

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Closing Thoughts: What Really Matters

📈 **AI search is growing fast**	But Google still dominates discovery — optimize for both. SEO remains the foundation AI answers are built on.
✅ **Good GEO = Good SEO + extras**	Entity clarity, promptable content, topical authority, and mentions where AI looks.
🛠️ **You don't need expensive tools**	Auditing yourself in ChatGPT is free — every move in the playbook works without specialized software or an agency.
💰 **Paid ads in AI are here**	Google AI Overviews and ChatGPT ads are live — new inventory, early-mover pricing.
🚀 **Early movers win big**	Pick your 7 moves and start this quarter.



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Thank You!

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