

Why Generative Engine Optimization (GEO)?

It's early summer, 2025. ChatGPT fervor is at its peak. The large language model is growing by significant double-digit percentages month over month.

Loud, influential voices are saying, "I'm never going to use Google again." Executives are paying attention.

A Slack message comes across from our COO.

"Just got word [our biggest client] had layoffs. We lost our point of contact."

By "biggest client," I mean a member of the S&P 100; seven figures in yearly revenue for Siege Media.

Stress beads in.

First, there's dismay for those impacted. Second, the harsh reality of layoffs hit, especially when they happen within the departments that work directly with our agency.

I reply, "Do we still have our champion internally?"

"We're checking."

A few hours pass, and I get the message I fear most:

"Ross. [Champion's] Slack has been deactivated."

This champion? The head of SEO.

A few days of misinformation, confusion, and backchanneling pass as we try to grip the situation. But within a few days, the reality becomes clear.

This company, with search traffic estimated at more than \$100,000,000 per year, just laid off its entire SEO department.

Our agency is left reporting to a new department: AI Transformation.

In the immediate aftermath, we learn we're not being cut—at least for the moment. But at the same time, there are other signs of turmoil in the air.

The Great SEO Agency Rotation

This company's reaction to the new search landscape isn't an isolated incident.

As ChatGPT accelerates—and the first graphs debut that ChatGPT could potentially catch Google's market share in the summer of 2027—executives everywhere start to panic.

“Is my SEO equipped to handle this change?”

Client churn spikes.

Six clients leave within three months, with a few specifically citing wanting to go with a “GEO agency.”

But here's the thing: As it becomes clear that Generative Engine Optimization isn't going anywhere, we start adapting our strategy and marketing to support the cause.

We put the appropriate landing pages on our website, and we rapidly assess the proper strategies we need to win.

In that same period, we have a high client churn rate, yet we also experience record lead volume in back-to-back months.

But these wins don't signal us being suddenly “GEO adept.”

It's marketing leaders everywhere questioning their current SEO agency and rotating out of them unless provided with overwhelming evidence to prevent the rotation.

This rollercoaster period represents a wave of emotion that most who read this book have likely experienced in some form during this timeframe.

Executive questions. Fear. Layoffs. Client loss.

Sometimes, we weren't able to change a single person's opinion in a time of fear.

But what we could do was pick ourselves up, learn, and put a new foot forward into this new world. At Siege Media, that's what we did. We learned, we invested in new techniques, and we let go of old ones.

This book aims to help you put your best foot forward. You'll learn the strategies and tactics we've rapidly implemented for companies of all shapes and sizes to adapt to the world in front of us and best answer those difficult questions as they come.

You'll learn the techniques that enable us to grow sales through LLMs (and then prove we did), even in the face of declining traffic.

At Siege Media, we also have a unique experience with LLMs.

It turns out that we had already been implementing the core strategies that most impact LLM visibility for several years before they became a more critical need. Even more, we were doing so across 60+ clients in the most competitive online verticals.

Before SEO, my background was in affiliate marketing and lead generation, one of the top techniques for LLM influence.

After, my focus moved to organic growth services (SEO, content, and PR), leading an agency that has now generated over \$100,000,000 in lifetime revenue.

That experience makes us uniquely qualified to share the best practices for implementing GEO techniques to drive significant results for the companies you help day to day.

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Why Generative Engine Optimization (GEO)?

But before we do so, let's take a step back. What is SEO? What is GEO? What is AI SEO?

Setting these definitions will lay the foundation for what's to come and, most importantly, equip you with the information needed to persuade stakeholders.

Let's dive in.

What Is Search Engine Optimization (SEO)?

You're at a networking lunch, and you tell someone you "do SEO."

Their reply is a blank stare. Based on their expression, they likely already moved on from the conversation, planning their next meal.

You respond that it stands for "search engine optimization." The blank stare continues.

Finally, you share that you help companies rank higher on search engines like Google, so potential customers buy from them instead of the companies that rank lower.

The lightbulb behind their eyes fully goes off—or maybe they just finally decided what to get for dessert.

Welcome to life working in search engine optimization.

Jokes aside, SEO is the process of influencing search engines to return businesses higher, typically through improving content quality, website structure, and the overall authority of the businesses you're helping.

This classical method of influence has led to an industry estimated at \$74.6 billion, with growth to \$154.6 billion in 2030 (Grand View Research, 2025).

A Brief History of SEO

SEO emerged on the scene in the mid-1990s, as practitioners aimed to influence early search engines like AltaVista, Ask Jeeves, Yahoo!, and Lycos as part of their day-to-day work.

Danny Sullivan, an industry analyst and eventual Google employee, noted that the first origins of the term appeared in 1997 (Search Engine Watch, 2004).

One year later, in 1998, Larry Page and Sergey Brin founded Google. They brought a novel algorithm to the world of search: PageRank (see Figure 1.1).

PageRank created a popularity algorithm: the more a website received links (especially from other sites that also had many links), the higher it appeared in search results.

In those days, search algorithms were simpler, which, in turn, led to more consistent search engine manipulation.

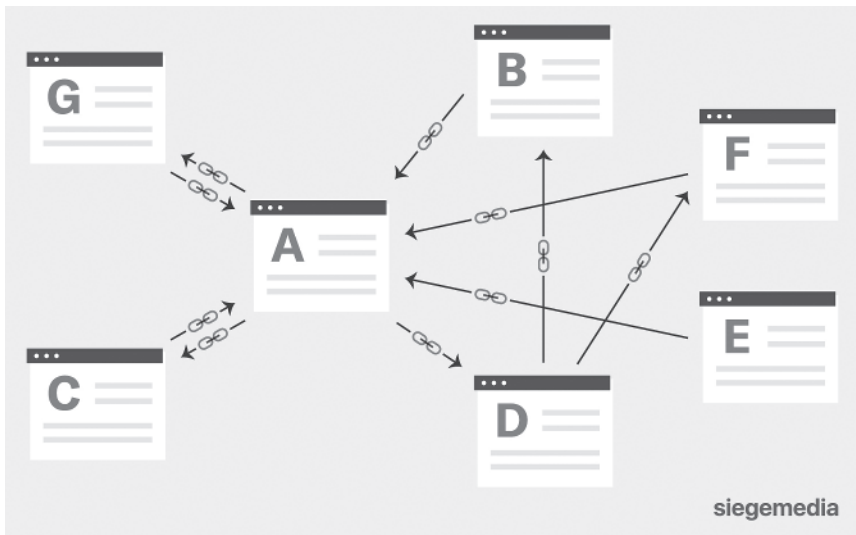


Figure 1.1 PageRank algorithm visualization.

You could place a link that said “buy wine” on a third-party website’s footer that had nothing to do with wine, and you would likely show up significantly higher on Google results because you had positively influenced its PageRank.

In the 2010s, Google iterated heavily on its algorithm, introducing major updates like Google Panda and Google Penguin that reduced this search manipulation.

This only compounded later that decade, when RankBrain (an AI for understanding search queries) and BERT (a deep learning model for language) improved semantic search (Moz Google Algorithm Update History, 2026).

SEO “Spammers” and Industry Reputation

The overall value of the SEO industry meant people came from far and wide to manipulate its search results.

As the 2020s hit, Google’s results had a mixed reputation. It wasn’t uncommon to see dismay over the state of the internet. One article from The Verge, entitled “The people who ruined the internet,” serves as a preemptive eulogy for what we apparently collectively lost (The Verge, 2023).

“Perhaps this is why nearly everyone hates SEO and the people who do it for a living: the practice seems to have successfully destroyed the illusion that the internet was ever about anything other than selling stuff.”

Some practitioners thought they were at an all-time best, but others said they had often completely abandoned searching for some things, turning to Reddit instead for authentic, non-manipulated results.

The Rise of Reddit

Reddit is a massive collection of user-created subreddits (what Reddit officially calls “communities”) where people share links, text, images, and videos, which its members then vote on. These members, for the most part, stay anonymous.

As we approached 2020, Reddit turned from a niche service to a blooming, globally known social network and de facto search engine for peer-to-peer advice, becoming one of the most popular websites online (see Figure 1.2).

Reddit’s growth through the years is connected to the growth in casual internet users who often append “Reddit” to their Google search for hands-on expertise.

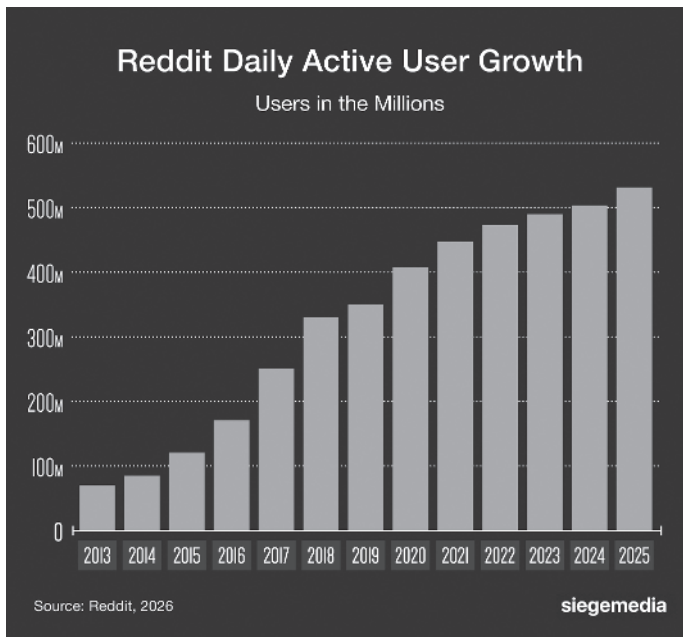


Figure 1.2 Reddit daily active user growth since 2013.

Where users would previously search Google to find third-party websites, there was a rise in popularity around product review searches that added Reddit to the end, such as:

- Best headphones Reddit
- Best air conditioner Reddit
- Best makeup Reddit

The idea behind this was that Reddit users (or Redditors) were known to give authentic opinions, while Google often provided affiliate-influenced blog posts where the headphone that made the reviewer the most money was listed first, rather than the actual “best” option in the roundup.

There was some truth to this. For example, you would rarely see a review with this kind of first-hand depth on Google search results, as seen in Figure 1.3.

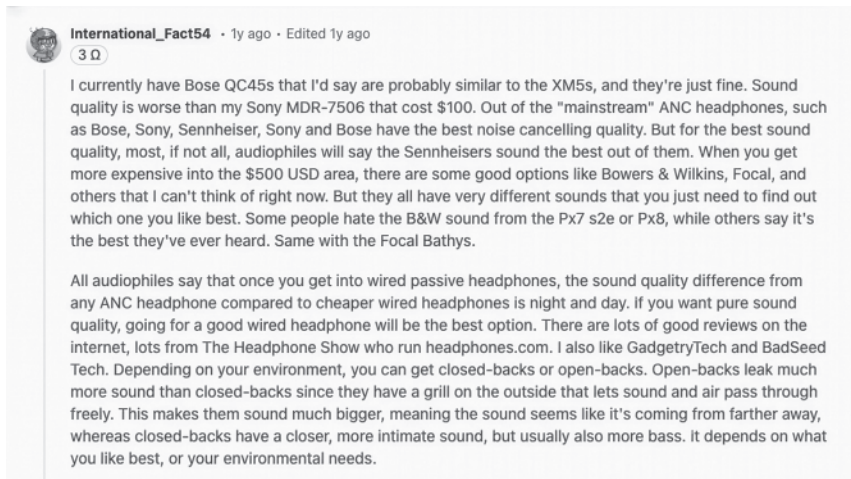


Figure 1.3 A Redditors’ review of the best headphones, 2025.

However, the authenticity of these results was not long for this world.

If You Can't Beat 'Em, Join 'Em

Google, understanding that Reddit was becoming a threat to its ecosystem, instead decided to embrace the social network.

Where previously Reddit was hard to find among their search result pages, it suddenly became a prominent part of most of them, surging from sixty million monthly average visitors from search to an estimated one billion at the end of 2025 (Figure 1.4).

Now users no longer have to search for their favorite product with Reddit tied to the end of their query. Instead, they can search and see Reddit almost always in the default result (Figure 1.5).

Announcing ChatGPT

On November 30th, 2022, the world changed.

OpenAI announced ChatGPT, their advanced AI chatbot, and within days, millions of users were using the service, making it the fastest-growing consumer application of all time (Figure 1.6).

This marked a significant change in the development of the web.

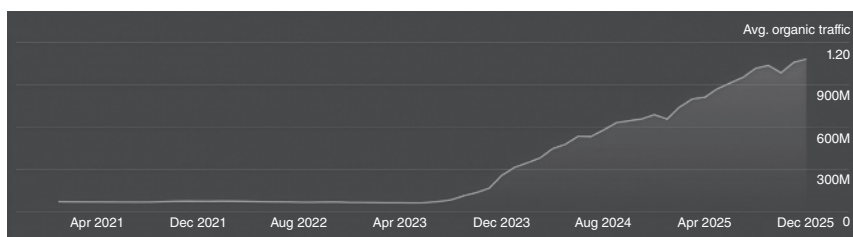


Figure 1.4 Reddit organic search growth, via Ahrefs.

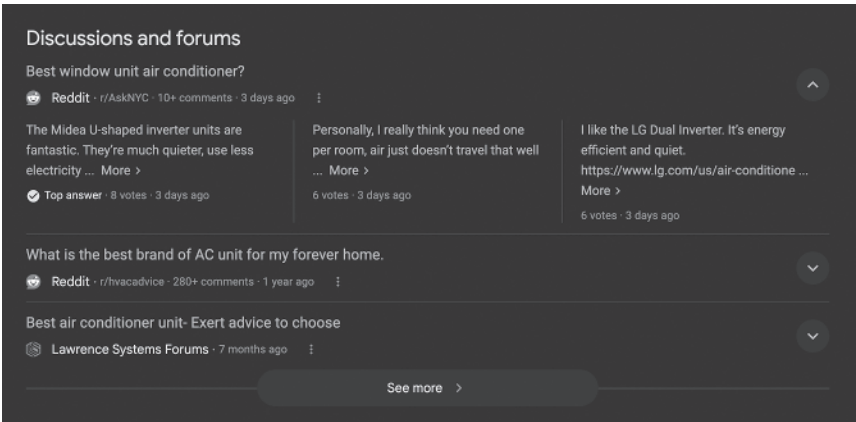


Figure 1.5 A commercial Google search result highlighting Reddit results.



Figure 1.6 ChatGPT daily visits through 2023, via Similarweb, a digital market intelligence company.

Where previously the web operated on an index-and-rank model using PageRank, ChatGPT and other LLMs changed the mode of

operation to a “synthesis” model, where the engine does not merely point to the information but consumes, processes, and *generates* it directly.

We can attribute ChatGPT’s initial popularity to multiple things, but one clear byproduct was that many users were frustrated with the quality of Google’s results—as evidenced by Reddit’s surge in popularity—and they were ready to use something else.

This change created a whole new way for people to research what to buy, and, in turn, new ways to influence those same purchasing behaviors.

Enter: Generative engine optimization.

What Is Generative Engine Optimization (GEO)?

Generative engines are artificial intelligence systems that create new, original content such as text, images, code, etc., by learning patterns from large datasets and then synthesizing them into a new result, such as in Figure 1.7.

Examples of generative engines are Gemini, ChatGPT, and Claude.

Generative engine optimization is the process of optimizing generative engines to return information that positively mentions our businesses, both in their visibility and overall sentiment.

If the public prompts an LLM for gift ideas for their significant others, the LLM aggregates information from various sources, often including the open web, in order to make appropriate recommendations based on specific factors for each user.

Our goal as marketers is to influence those results in our favor, just like SEO.

I’ll discuss the play-by-play process to influence generative results, including in-the-trenches case studies from several different industries you can bring back to your own businesses to improve results.

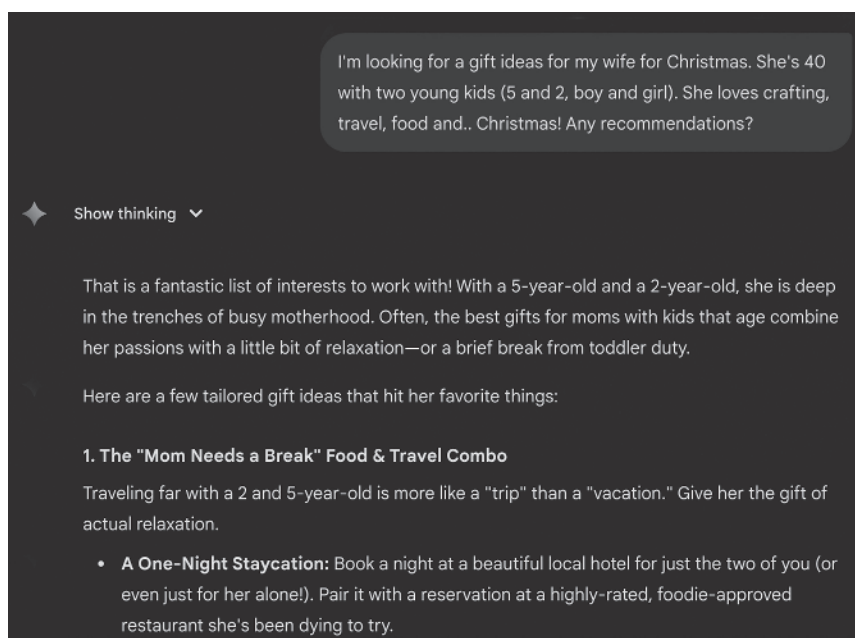


Figure 1.7 An example generative engine prompt from Gemini.

GEO vs. AEO vs. AI SEO: Which One Is It?

If you found this book, there's a good chance you became aware of generative engine optimization. But you may also be aware of similar terms, such as answer engine optimization (AEO) and AI SEO.

In addition to those, other acronyms have also popped up, like AI optimization (AIO) and LLM optimization (LLMO).

There is no right or wrong answer about which one is best to describe the practice, just opinions on which one is right and wrong.

When deciding which naming convention works best, our impulse is to let the market decide.

Marketers should meet the market by leaning into what the industry wants instead of fighting the current. It's not unlike SEO, where we optimize keywords for how people search, not how we prefer they search.

☐ Keyword	Intents	KD	SV ▾	GR 12M	DD	GSV	TP	GTP	CPC
☒ ✓ generative engine optimization	I	73	4.2K	+283%		14K	700	900	\$8.00
☐ + answer engine optimization	I	45	2.5K	+18%		6.5K	800	900	\$4.50

Figure 1.8 Data from Ahrefs, 2026. SV = Search Volume, GSV = Global Search Volume.

Currently, the data to that end says GEO is the winner (Figure 1.8). This tailwind behind GEO originally started with a loud article from influential venture capital firm Andreessen Horowitz titled “How Generative Engine Optimization (GEO) Rewrites the Rules of Search” (a16z, 2025).

The opening line? “It’s the end of search as we know it, and marketers feel fine. Sort of.”

SEOs were...*mixed* on the article, to say the least. This said, it gave GEO, in particular, some lift. Another passionate set of users rallied behind AEO for different reasons, some of which were tied to the fact that “GEO” as a term is difficult for the industry to own.

If you search for “GEO” only, you get information on the Earth, gene expression, and an investment group called The GEO Group (Figure 1.9). And that’s just the start!

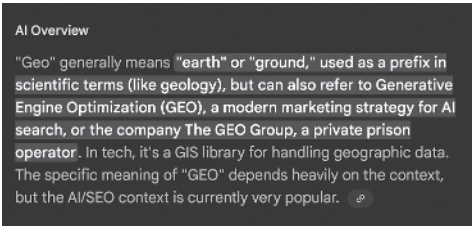


Figure 1.9 An AI Overview for the search “GEO.”

Maybe not the best marketing move for GEO, but if the data still points to that term being preferred, that's our opinion for the ideal direction to point.

Our contributing author, Josh Blyskal at Profound (an LLM optimization tool), even prefers AEO in Profound's own marketing.

But they aptly describe the differences when asked: There are none, they just think AEO is easier to own and may also stick around longer.

It's not impossible that AEO could eventually become the de facto framing for the practice. For now, though, we suggest meeting the market where it is.

That means leaning into GEO when they haven't brought it up, but when they do, you should mimic their own terminology.

If they call it AEO, you should call it AEO too, instead of starting an inconsequential battle over the term.

It's not that deep.

GEO vs. SEO: Are They Different?

Now that we've decided on the naming convention for the rest of this book, the next thing we need to decide is whether or not GEO is different from SEO.

This conversation has its own set of passionate arguments. Some say SEO is the same as GEO, and GEO marketers are just selling snake oil. Others say those who say GEO is not different are wildly behind.

I sit in a separate, middle camp.

SEO is not the same as GEO.

SEO influences GEO, so if you are only doing SEO for your website and not leaning into GEO, you won't have a good time.

But at the same time, there are clear, new behaviors that directly influence GEO but only indirectly influence SEO: strategies like affiliate

marketing, unlinked mentions on third-party websites, and the subtle details of your brand positioning that were less prominent in traditional search.

We'll get into all of those in subsequent chapters, but for now, we'll leave you with this thought: They *are* different, and to behave otherwise is leaving opportunity on the table.

That said, a good way to frame it is that GEO is a tag within SEO, and SEO is the category. As mentioned, if you aren't doing SEO, that's a bad idea.

But GEO builds on SEO best practices to specifically impact those results, not unlike other areas of SEO: local, Amazon, voice search, YouTube, etc. (Figure 1.10).

That's what we'll get into in this book.

Is SEO Dead?

Every two years or so, SEO dies. That is, someone creates an article proclaiming that everything is over, just as Andreessen Horowitz did.

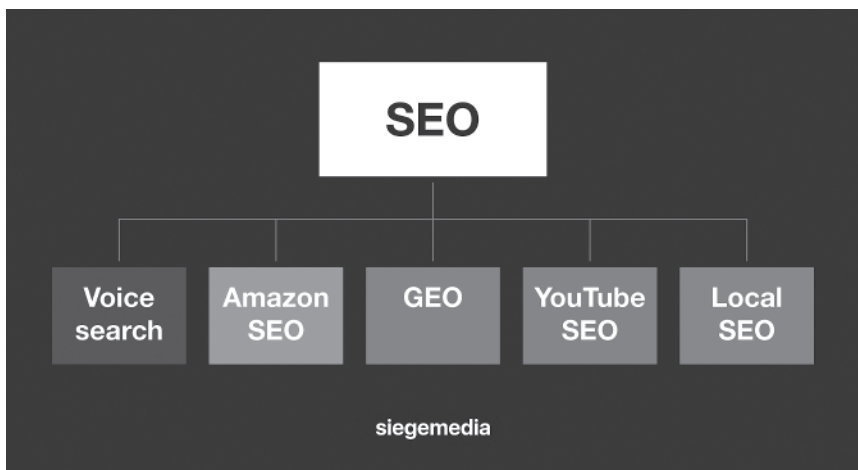
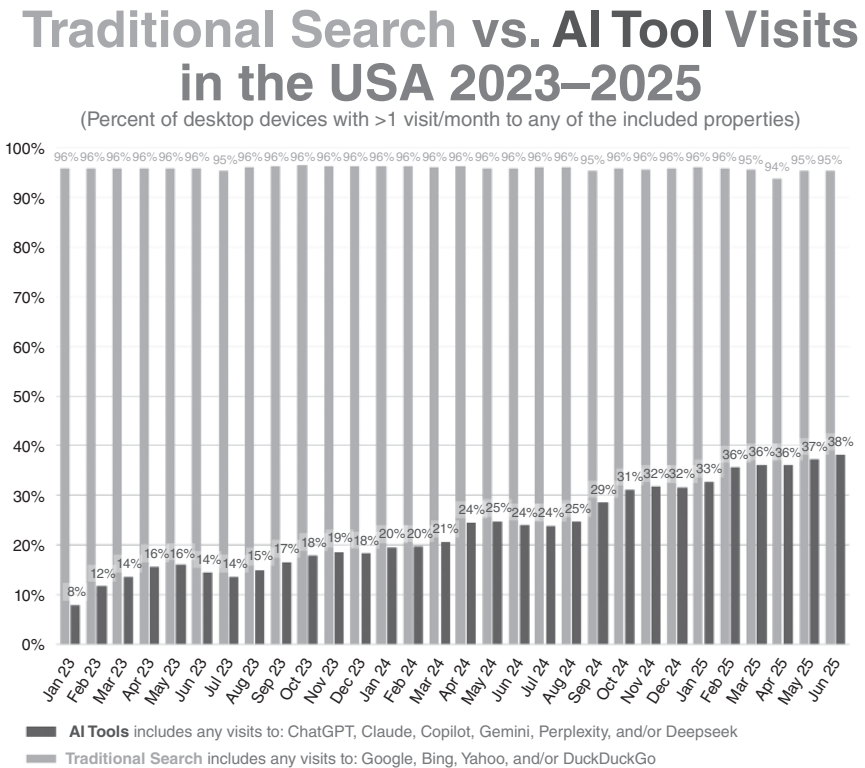


Figure 1.10 A diagram visualizing where GEO fits in the world of SEO.

Before them, leading global research and advisory firm Gartner put out a prediction that search volume would drop by 25% by 2026 (Gartner, 2024).

While Gartner wasn't technically accurate, the idea behind what they said wasn't dramatically off.

Search has changed, and traditional search has—or will very likely—decline by that amount by the time you read this. But what they got wrong is that a whole new search medium evolved, and generative engines have increased the size of the pie (Figure 1.11).



Source: multi-million device clickstream panel provided by **Datos** Assembled & analyzed by **SparkToro**

Figure 1.11 Traditional search vs. AI tool visits in the USA, 2023–2025, via SparkToro.

Google has reported that net search volume is up, and this is partially due to better AI results that inform additional queries on the platform.

Also, as shown in the research from SparkToro and Datos, it's clear that the total numbers are higher for traditional search.

This said, there's a decline, which *has* come in the form of web-site visitors.

LLMs have changed our behavior, and with that, it's not uncommon for many websites to see a Gartner-accurate 25% or more decline that often accompanies it.

The good news? These AI Overviews are often summarized, top-funnel traffic (Figure 1.12).

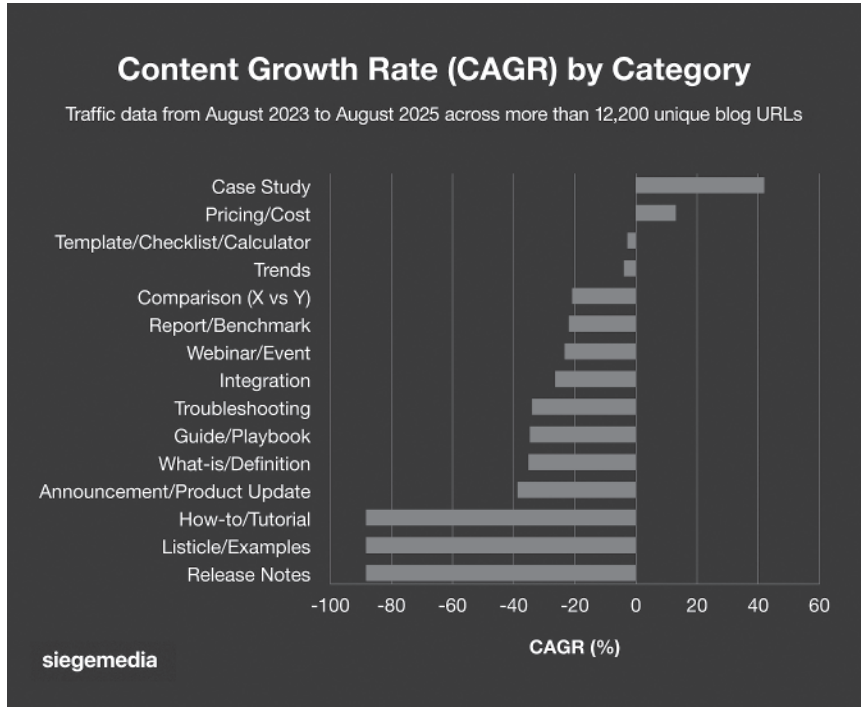


Figure 1.12 Content type analysis by Siege Media, November 2025.

It's not conversion-focused traffic, and the conversions and sales to our businesses are often flat to up, depending on the company and business model in practice.

In short, SEO is not dead, but we should expect these practices to merge more and more as time goes on, such that the core practice of GEO will be synonymous with SEO in a few years' time.

Google does not want to be disrupted, and the clearest way to guarantee it is to have an LLM-like experience in every search result. We'll be there soon.

What Industries Most Need GEO?

GEO as a practice is most effective when it builds on SEO.

In every industry, we can track our most important prompts and see a list of the most sourced domains and URLs that influence those prompts.

If we see a list of third-party websites in those results such as affiliate roundups, Reddit, or LinkedIn, the strategy is almost uniquely GEO.

For example, when we run a set of flight prompts like “what’s the best airline for flights to Tokyo” in the United States, we almost entirely get third-party aggregators in addition to Reddit (Figure 1.13).

In this situation, our own website (SEO) is not what is going to influence this outcome for the most part. It'll be additional strategies

 Domain	Used	Avg. Citations	Type
 expedia.com	55%	1.2	Other
 skyscanner.com	45%	0.6	Corporate
 skyscanner.net	43%	0.3	Corporate
 reddit.com	40%	0.4	UGC
 google.com	35%	1.1	Other
 kayak.com	35%	0.2	Corporate

Figure 1.13 Reference domains that appear for flight prompts for an airline (Peec AI, 2026).

that move that needle, and those same strategies won't directly influence our website appearing in traditional search results.

But if we compare this to another industry like sustainability certifications, non-profit Forest Stewardship Council (FSC.org) is the most referenced domain (Figure 1.14, Peec AI, 2026).

In this situation, Forest Stewardship Council doesn't need to do much differently from what they're currently doing to continue to perform highly in these results, as long as they properly position themselves on their own website to inform these LLMs.

If you start tracking your own prompts, these top domains (and the source URLs within) will give you a strong hint of how much you need to lean into this strategy.

But even for a company like Forest Stewardship Council, thinking about GEO can be instructive. In these situations, you are instead optimizing for the perception that LLMs have of your business.

- Do they describe your products properly?
- Are they missing any key features or product areas?
- Are there any prompts with neutral or negative sentiment? Can we determine why?

Domain	Used	Avg. Citations	Type
fsc.org	124%	1.9	You
wikipedia.org	56%	1.6	Reference
pefc.org	54%	1.6	Institutional
reddit.com	23%	0.5	UGC
scsglobalservices.com	22%	1.6	Corporate
preferredbynature.org	20%	1.9	Institutional

Figure 1.14 The most referenced domains within Forest Stewardship Council's top prompts.

This is mostly about brand positioning. You may think you properly describe what you do on your website, but until it comes to fruition in LLMs, you may not be doing it as well as you think you are.

I'll get into how to influence that in future sections, but for now, the most important note is that every industry is a little different, and you can't know for sure until you start tracking prompts.

Business and Product Implications of LLMs

How Generative Engines Impact the Top Funnel

Large language models synthesize information to provide you with an answer. For this reason, their job is to provide the best possible answer without the user ever having to visit another website.

As an example, when I ask Gemini, "What is content marketing?" I get a long, text-only definition with no links out to third-party websites (Figure 1.15).

For this reason, the behavior switch from traditional search greatly impacts informational searches.

Some LLMs will link out to sources within the text, but do so in a supplementary, not primary way, as was previously the case with traditional search. For this reason, you can expect the click-through rate (CTR) to be nearly non-existent for these searches.

Even worse, LLMs have little reason to ever reference your business in this situation, since it's rarely the answer to the user's question.

For this reason, traditional full-funnel SEO playbooks are no longer as instructive as they once were. It's less feasible to generate significant top-funnel awareness through LLMs than it was in the past.

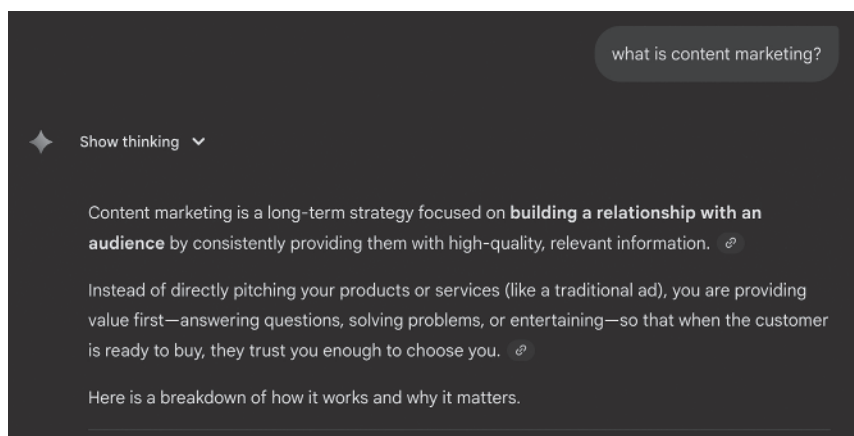


Figure 1.15 An informational prompt within Gemini.

TOFU GEO Strategies That Still Work

While the days of millions of visits from top-funnel may be in our rear-view mirror, there are a few exceptions to the rule that are more likely to hold up over time.

Multimodal Content

Multimodal content uses multiple content types, such as images, video, and audio—in addition to text—to communicate a concept effectively.

As an example, project management software Asana has a blog post on “matrix organizations.” Within this post, Asana has detailed text in addition to rich diagrams that visualize how matrix organizations work (Figure 1.16).

The more complex the idea, the worse LLMs are (at least for the near future) at generating content that matches the quality level of a rich, human experience. This may lead these same LLMs to link out, or otherwise for users to fall back to traditional search to find what they need (Figures 1.17 and 1.18).

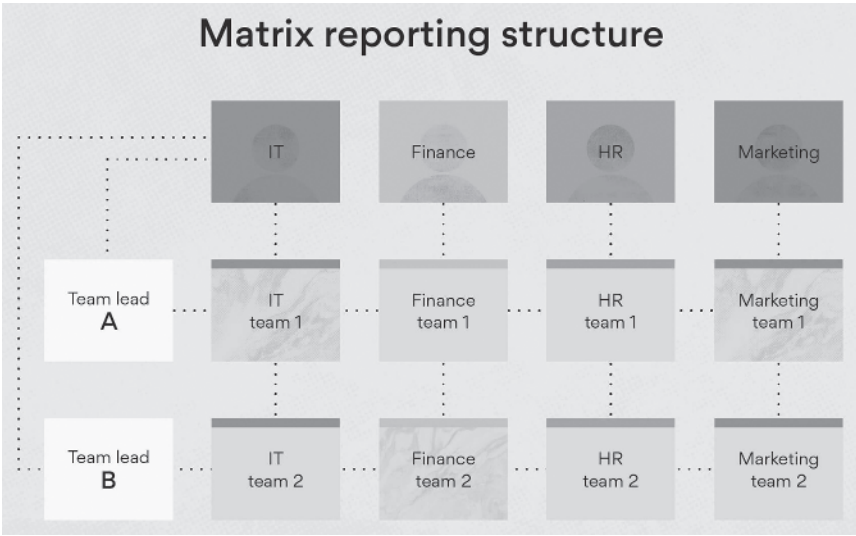


Figure 1.16 An example of a Matrix Organization, © 2026 Asana, Inc.

What is a matrix organizational structure

A matrix organizational structure is a way of organizing people where each person reports to two bosses instead of just one.

Usually, those two bosses are:

1. **Functional manager** – in charge of your discipline/department
 - e.g., Head of Design, Head of Engineering, Head of Marketing
2. **Project or product manager** – in charge of the specific initiative you're working on
 - e.g., Project Lead for "New Mobile App Launch"

So you sit at the *intersection* of:

- Your **function** (what you do: design, dev, content, finance, etc.)
- Your **project or business unit** (what you're working on: Product A, Client X, Region Y, etc.)

Figure 1.17 A search for “What is a matrix organizational structure” within ChatGPT.

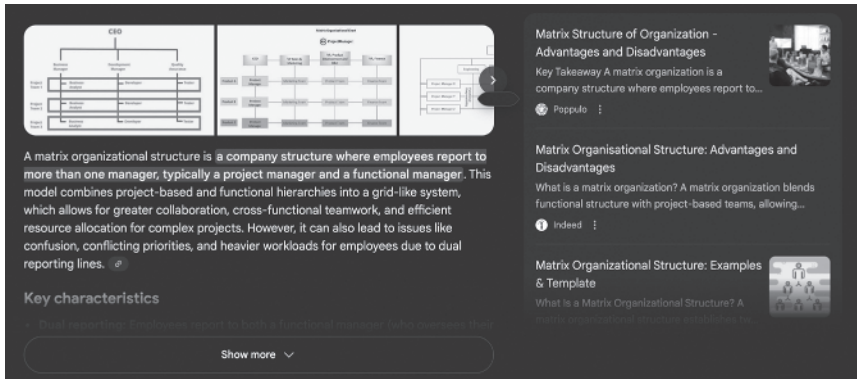


Figure 1.18 The same search on Google.

In Figure 1.17, ChatGPT only generates text.

Google's results, on the other hand, highlight diagrams that users will likely want to make larger within their default search experience, improving the likelihood that a user visits a website.

Similarly, midway down that result, we see several videos as references (Figure 1.19). These videos help explain the dynamics of this structure in more detail, in a way users recognize as human-created, not AI-generated.

Google's results, as well as those of other LLMs, are telling us a story about user preferences. In short, for high-demand search terms, we can assume these are ranked according to user preference.

This can happen in a few ways:

- Users click the tabs at the top of the page to tell Google which features are most important or are currently missing.
- Users click certain results more than others, telling Google to rerank results according to user click-throughs (Figure 1.20).

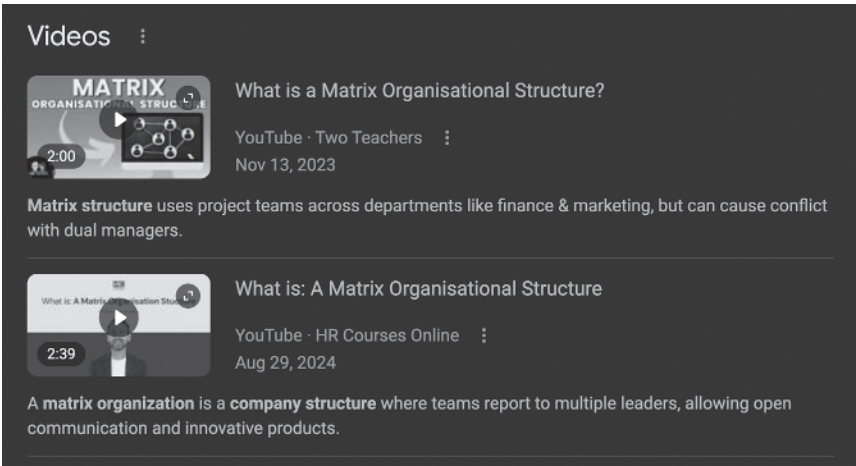


Figure 1.19 Video results on the same “What is a matrix organizational structure” search.

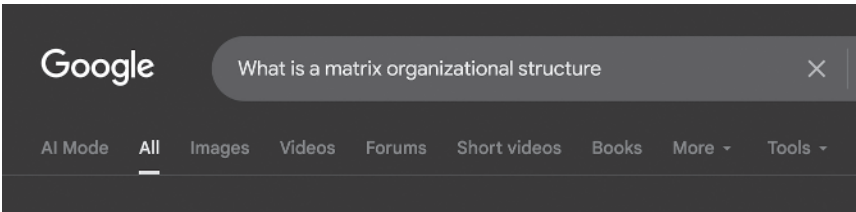


Figure 1.20 Navigational links, reranked in order of user preference from left to right.

By researching these search features within the results, we can make a better call on whether this top-funnel topic is likely to drive outcomes to our website over time, given the need for multi-modal features.

Complex, Generative Experiences

The rise of LLMs has created a new type of search: generative (Figure 1.21).

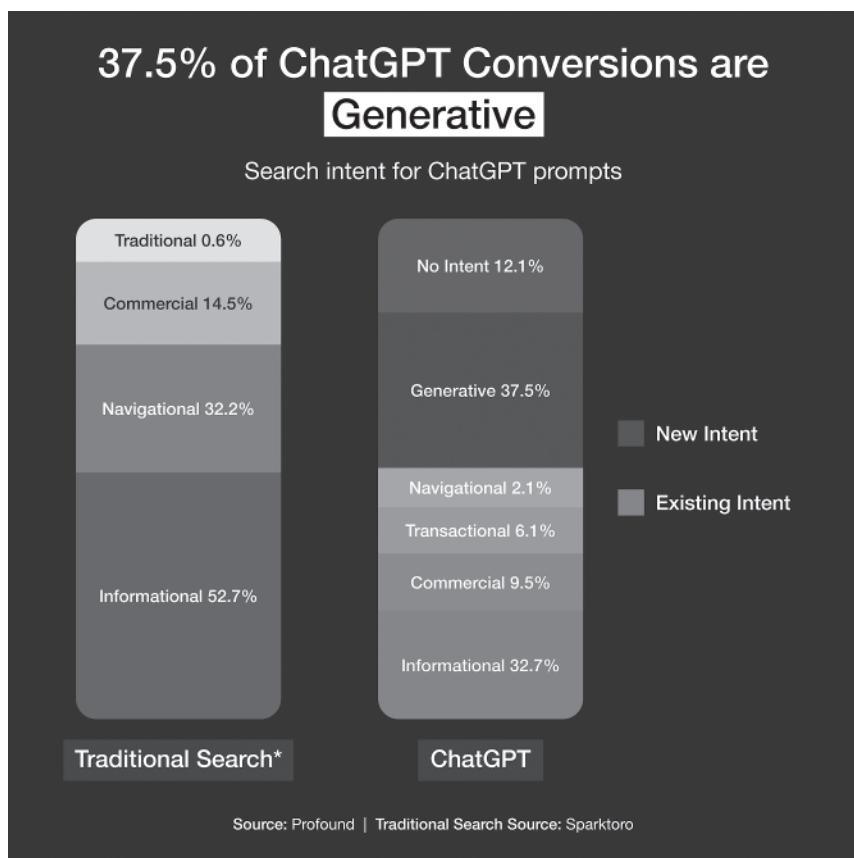


Figure 1.21 A study by Profound on AI search intents, 2025.

Previously, traditional search was composed of the following search types:

- **Navigational:** A user trying to find a specific website or brand (“Nike”).
- **Informational:** A user trying to learn more about a specific topic (“what is an IRA”).
- **Commercial:** A user doing research for a product they may eventually purchase (“best running shoes review”).

- **Transactional:** A user trying to directly purchase a product (“buy Nike shoes online”).

The rise of LLMs created two new forms of input.

One with no intent (“please,” “thank you,” etc.) and one that was more significant: generative, or the act of requesting that the LLM actually do something for you.

In a study we released with Profound on the characteristics of the one thousand most popular prompts, we found they spanned multiple generative types (Figure 1.22, Siege Media, 2025).

They range from personal planning (“build me an itinerary for my trip to Spain”) to job descriptions (“build me a job description for

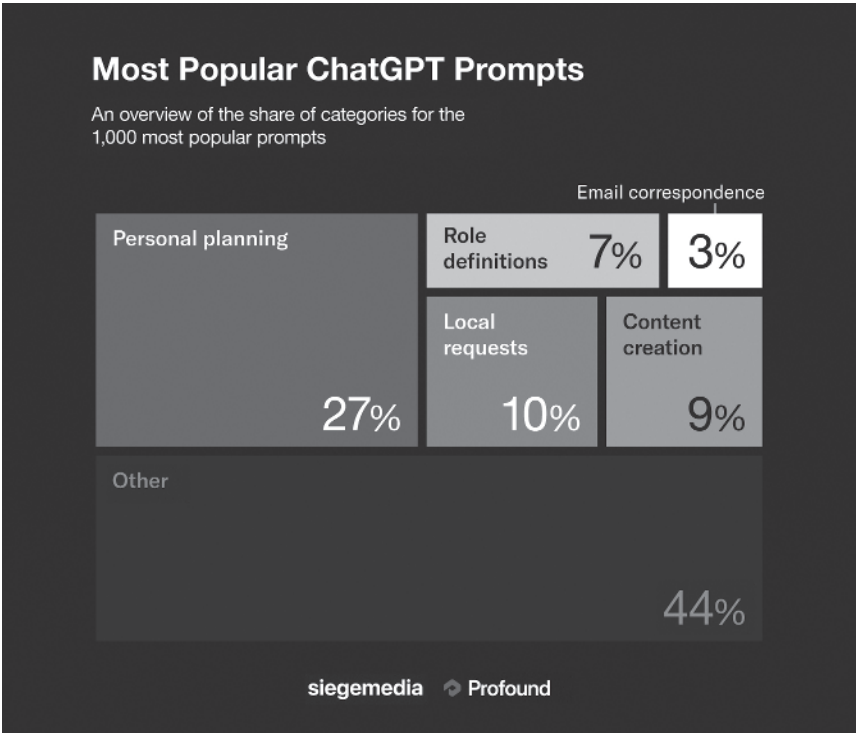


Figure 1.22 A breakdown of the most common prompts on ChatGPT.

a CFO role custom to my company”) to content creation (“write social media copy using my video transcript”).

What this new mode of searching/prompting has caused is a spinoff traffic source when LLMs can’t properly satisfy the request. When users make more generative prompts, LLMs will often refer back to tools that better fulfill the user’s need.

This opens a window for complex top-funnel tools. They can stand out and drive user value across generative searches and SEO, as AI Overviews will not be able to satisfy the query within Google’s constraints either.

As an example, Siege Media has Contrast Ratio (Figure 1.23), an asset that helps users understand the contrast ratio of the text on your site, ensuring content readability and accessibility for multiple user types.

This has multiple advanced components: the need to “feel” the color change of text on the background, and also the relative red (bad) to green (good) scoring based on the ratio between them relative to accessibility best practices.

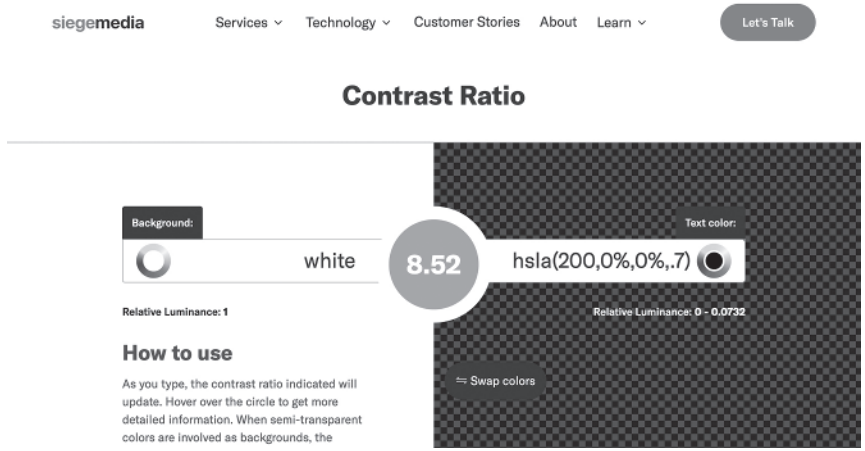
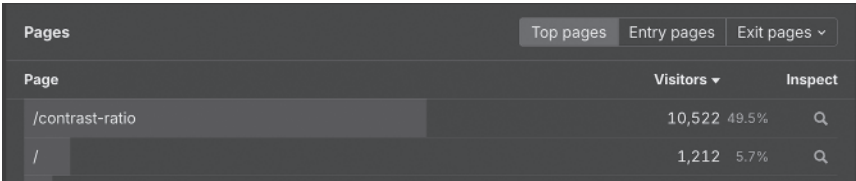


Figure 1.23 Siege Media’s Contrast Ratio tool.



Pages			Top pages	Entry pages	Exit pages ▾
Page	Visitors ▾		Inspect		
/contrast-ratio	10,522	49.5%	Q		
/	1,212	5.7%	Q		

Figure 1.24 Content with First-Party Data.

The average LLM is not capable of solving for this, and the traffic we receive from LLMs supports this: Our Contrast Ratio page generates almost 50% of the traffic we receive from AI search.

The other top funnel item likely to hold up over time is unique content; that is, content with proprietary data (Figure 1.24).

This data is often pulled out by these LLMs as a reference point, appearing as a source that many users may want to click through to find the original reference to learn more (Figure 1.25). This can also lead to additional mentions online, as webmasters link to the original source in their own content.

In a study by HubSpot AEO (first-party data I’m referencing!), research and news were cited 24.8% of the time—behind only product pages and affiliate sites in mention volume (Figure 1.26).

How Search Behavior Is Changing

The ability to do entirely new things with LLMs has changed the way users think about search.

Traditional search met users with an experience whereby the shorter their query, the more likely they were to get a great result.

Long-form searches on Google meant unqualified website results, sometimes leaving users without a satisfactory answer to their question.

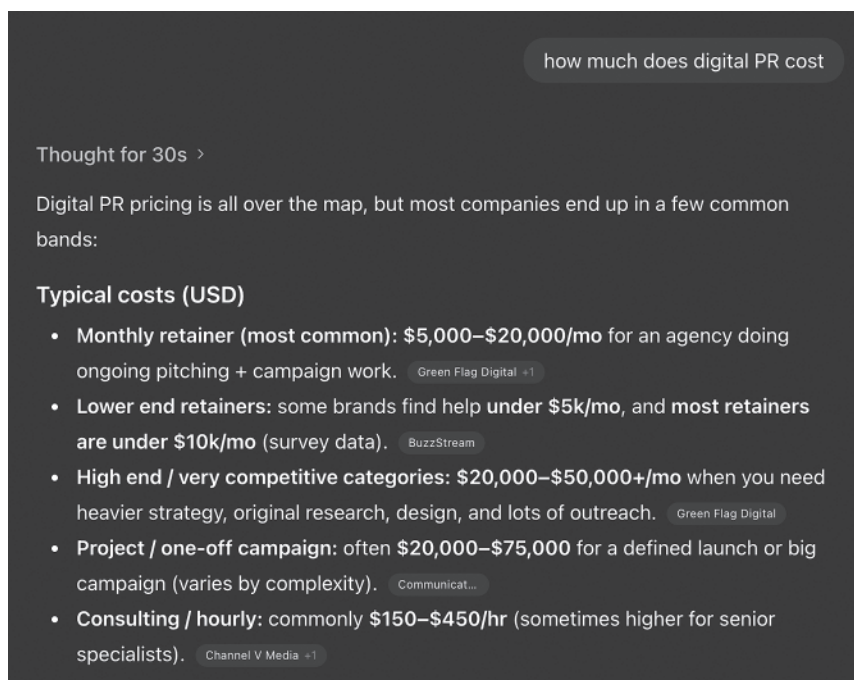


Figure 1.25 A ChatGPT prompt referencing several data sources.

As LLMs emerged, a whole new ocean of possibilities opened up. We can now ask essay-length questions to the AI and get great answers.

This completely flipped search expectations on their head. And with it, how marketers should think about matching it.

Programmatic SEO in the Age of AI

Programmatic SEO is the idea that you can create thousands, if not millions, of pages very, very quickly on your website, often with AI.

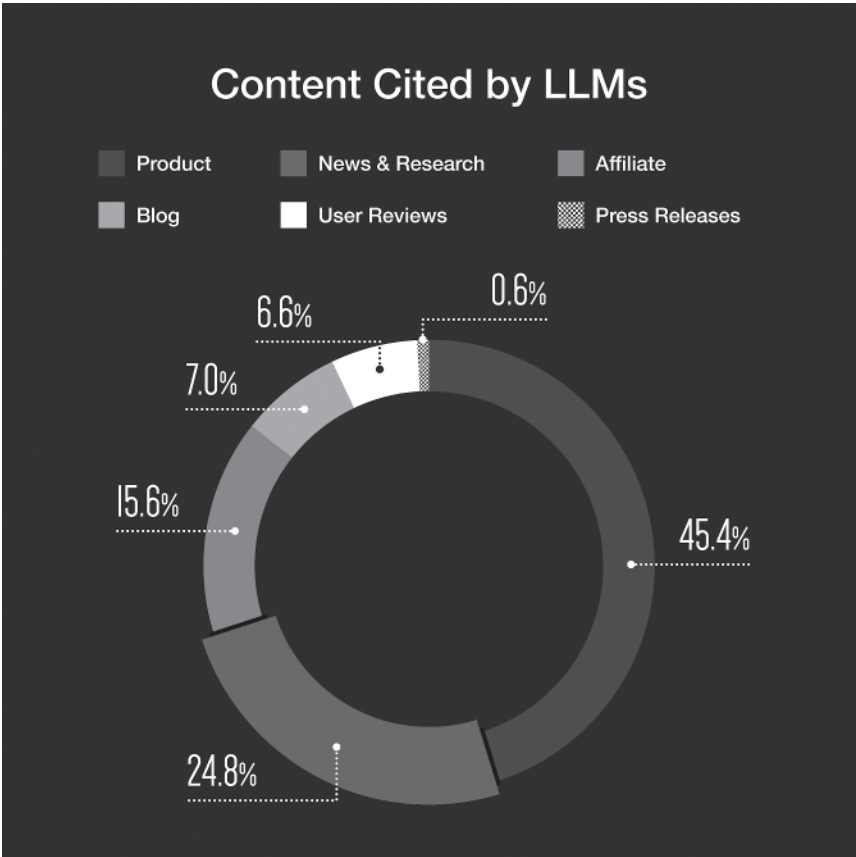


Figure 1.26 The most cited content by LLMs, with news and research at 24.8% according to a study by HubSpot AEO, 2025.

One popular programmatic example is real estate, where the MLS (multiple listing service) helps auto-populate pages for millions of properties throughout the United States.

Real estate companies like Zillow, CoStar, Redfin, and Trulia then populate their websites with this information, differentiating mostly through user experience and unique datasets that make their pages varied from the competition (Figure 1.27).

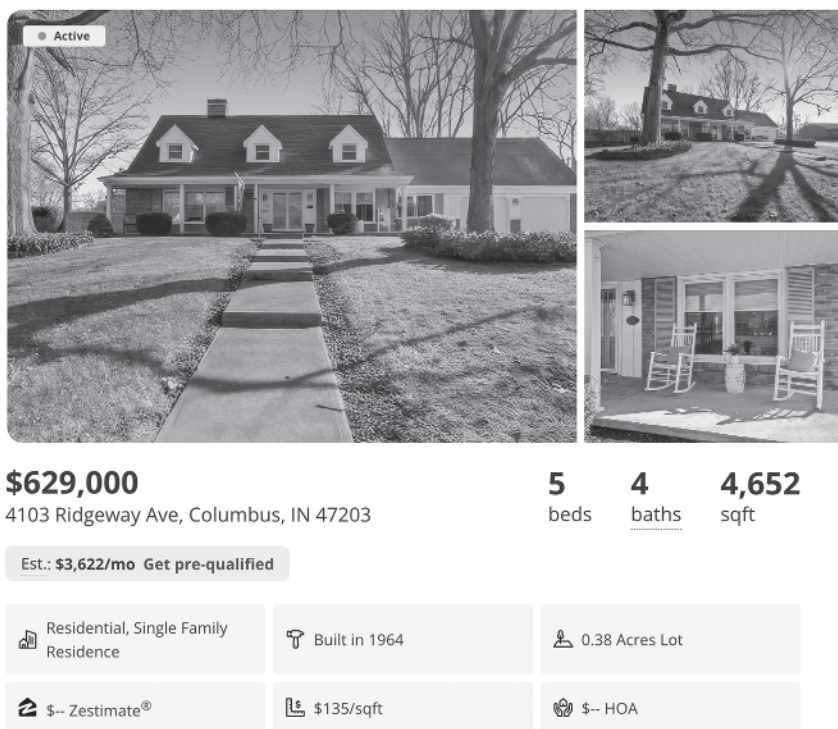


Figure 1.27 An example property page for Zillow, using auto-populated information from the MLS.

Generative AI has also made this approach more popular in the last few years, as text summaries can be auto-generated for these pages at high volume.

As shown in the earlier HubSpot AEO study, one of the most popular content types cited by AI is product pages (Figure 1.28). This is because products are too complex for LLMs to provide an answer, instead returning direct mentions or links.

When we consider this against changing user behavior in LLMs, we see a new ocean of opportunity: long-tail product pages generated programmatically.

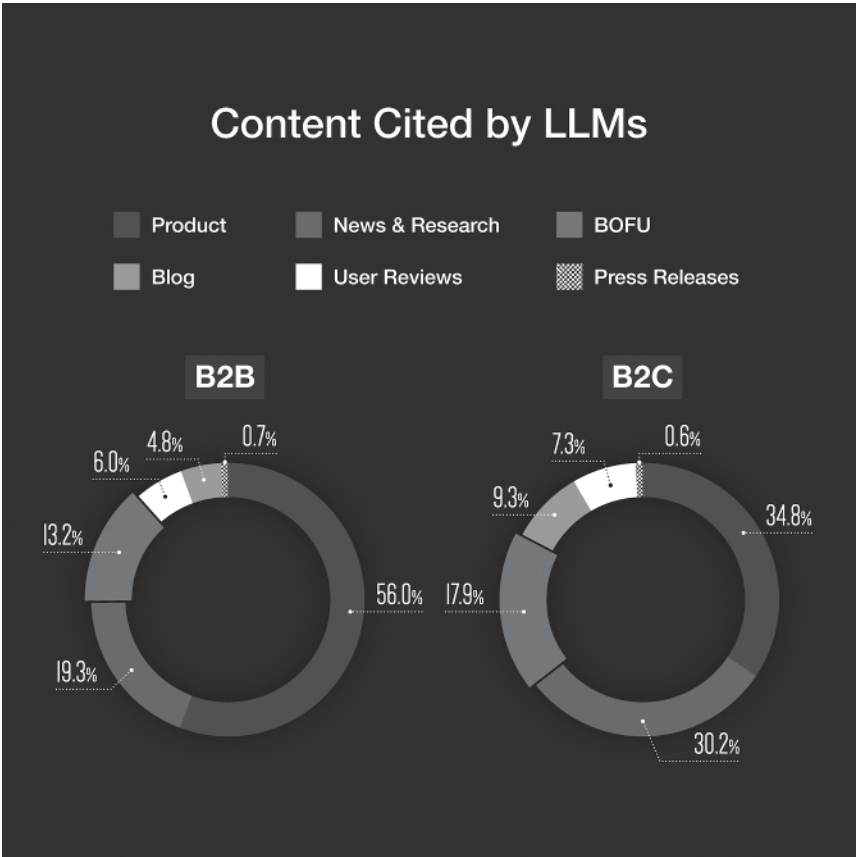


Figure 1.28 BOFU product page citations vs. other LLM citations, via HubSpot AEO.

As users realize their inputs are likely to get qualified answers, their search behavior expands to become longer and more specific. For businesses to meet them, we often need a relevant page that addresses that demand.

Long-Tail Use Case Pages

Programmatic SEO consultant Matt Bowers, formerly of Zillow and Zapier, said it best:

*“If you don’t put something into the world saying ‘my tool can do this’—which programmatic is really good at—then (LLMs) may not be able to find out that you can.”
(Figure 1.30, Siege Media, 2025)*

This is the value of long-tail “use case” pages, a popular strategy for many tools leveraging generative AI to fill out the page.

The tool itself is usable via login, but the copy below provides context that LLMs and Google use to understand the product.

As an example, AI video clipping tool OpusClip has a Tools page in its footer (Figure 1.29). Within it, there are 150+ pages with varied tool use cases.

These pages all have boilerplate summaries and text descriptions, with an identical landing page feel. The reason it ranks is the value of the product itself, not the copy, but generative AI does speed up the company’s ability to generate these pages.

Could they also use human copywriters to improve conversion from here? Potentially. But generative AI likely has assisted in getting the first version quickly into production.

Another variation of this is long-tail e-commerce pages. Using review data and other sources, programmatic AI tool Optiversal can help determine needs that don’t currently exist in the form of landing pages.

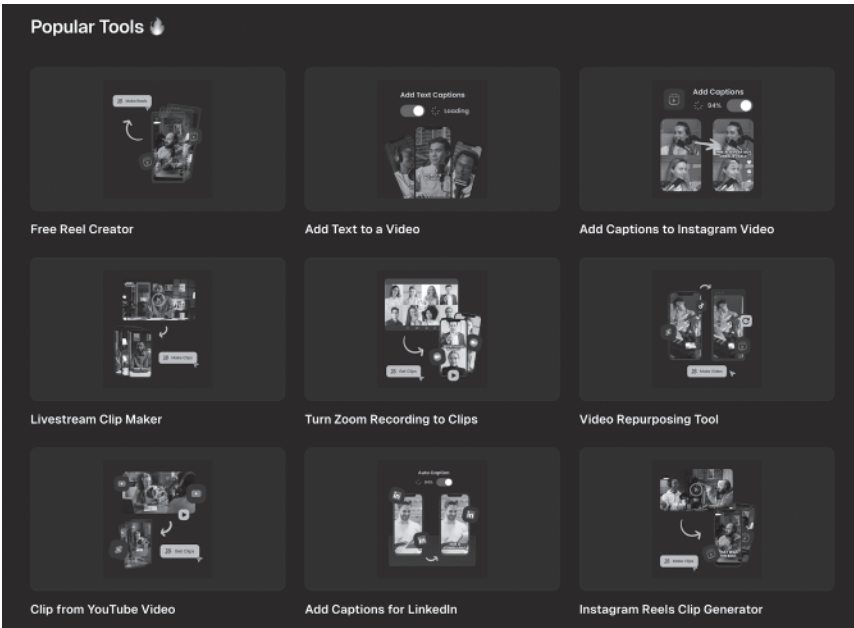


Figure 1.29 A list of use case pages in a tools hub created by OpusClip.



Figure 1.30 Podcast with Matt Bowers on “Programmatic SEO in the Age of AI”: bit.ly/matt-programmatic.

Generative AI can then summarize the page’s core elements, helping e-commerce companies generate new landing pages at scale.

Back To School Backpacks With Laptop Sleeves

Back to school backpacks with laptop sleeves make it easy for students to stay organized and prepared for every class. Designed with busy days in mind, these backpacks combine lasting quality with practical features, helping keep schoolwork, tech essentials and daily gear all in one place. From early morning bus rides to after-school activities, our durable backpacks offer comfortable carrying and timeless style for every step of the school year.

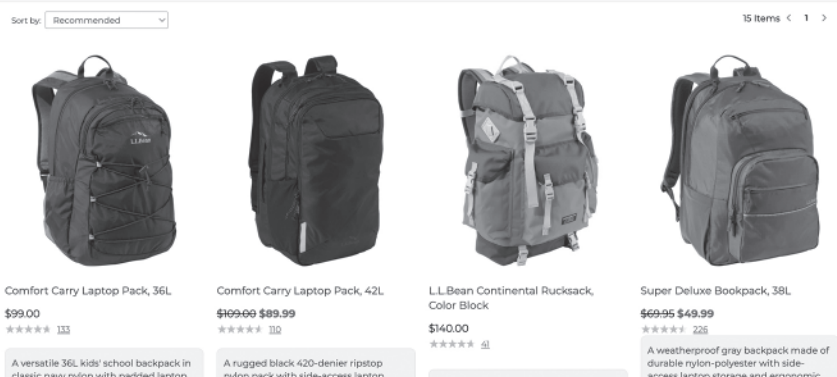


Figure 1.31 L.L.Bean, back to school backpacks category page.

An example of this is L.L.Bean, which probably wouldn't have, by default, realized they should create category pages for "back to school backpacks with laptop sleeves" (Figure 1.31).

With the power of generative AI, they can now generate helpful product descriptions and category summaries at scale that make this unique in the eyes of LLMs. And most importantly, they have actual great products to match that demand.

This is a use case that LLMs love, and Optiversal's landing pages are seeing significant traction due to that (Figure 1.32).

No matter what tool you use, the idea that long-tail landing pages can help match LLM use cases is a growing one to embrace, should it be relevant for your business.

There are a few ways to identify if it makes sense for you:

- Aggregate user data (such as reviews) and use LLMs to analyze the results with search in mind. Many SEO tools support MCP servers (the ability to link LLMs to external tools), enabling you to link analysis to SEO data points in new ways.

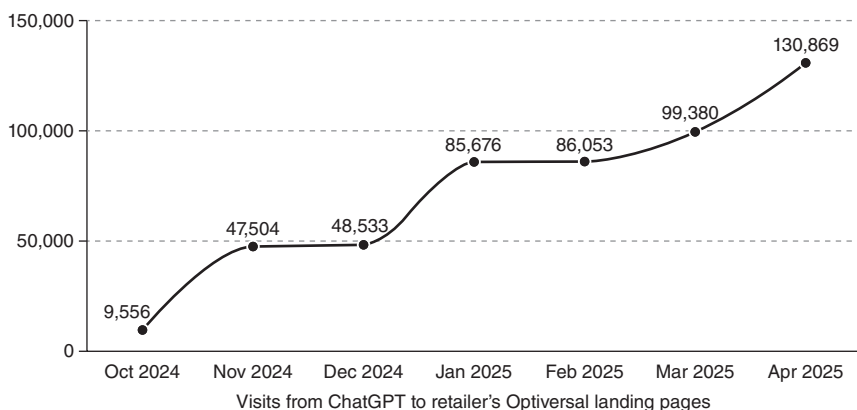


Figure 1.32 William Underwood, CEO of Optiversal, via LinkedIn.

- Comb through user search data on your own site. Internal search queries are indications of long-tail pages users wish you had, but don't. They will likely mimic search demand on LLMs, too.

Programmatic Is Not an Article Strategy

As hinted at in the thumbnail with Matt on a prior page (Figure 1.30), the value of programmatic SEO lies in describing product use cases, not in spinning up articles at scale.

That approach is problematic in a few ways, but it most importantly violates the core rule you should memorize when using AI for content:

Our core task as search professionals is to aim to create the best thing that exists for a given search.

AI can be helpful in accomplishing this when you give it something great and differentiated and ask it to do something with it.

AI is a commodity at best, and dangerous to performance at worst, when you simply ask it to generate something for you without significant differentiation provided.

The previous programmatic examples work well because we have given AI something great in every situation:

- For OpusClip, a differentiated video product.
- For L.L.Bean, e-commerce products with thoughtful human touchpoints from design to delivery.
- For Zillow, a user experience crafted over twenty-plus years, in addition to unique data such as their “Zestimate” price estimate for listings.

Products naturally tie in here: If there’s a business model behind it and years of sweat and tears went into developing subsequent iterations, having AI describe it is more likely to provide a compelling end product.

But when we have it create blog posts on informational topics, it is hard to argue that that approach will ever be better than the human version of the same equivalent, or the human-powered, AI-augmented version, for that matter.

Similarly, if you can generate articles with AI at the click of a button, why can’t someone else?

It’s a challenging, catch-22 strategy to have it generate informational content. Even if you can rank temporarily, the likelihood that that content’s performance will sustain is slim to none.

Worse than that, the chances are that the content likely did nothing for you when it *did* rank. Mediocre content is exactly that, and empty visits are not conversions.

In fact, they may backfire, causing reputational damage to your business due to the low-quality user experience.

LLMs Are Creating a Bigger Pie ... Without Clicks

This new, longer-tail mode of searching is actually expanding the total search pie.

Where there was real concern that LLMs would kill SEO, the conversation has actually evolved to new modes of searching rather than replacement.

Semrush conducted an instructive study that revealed that the number of Google searches actually *increased* after using ChatGPT (Figure 1.33).

Surprise: The proposed killer of SEO is actually growing its visibility instead!

This said, the data is not all rosy. Clicks have significantly declined due to AI’s ability to summarize information, ridding website users of the need to click.

It’s now commonplace to see a graph like this (Figure 1.34) across SEO tools—a once beautiful graph ruined by declining clicks.

The good news is that this is mostly represented by informational search, and many companies have actually reported their conversions increasing through significant declines in traffic.

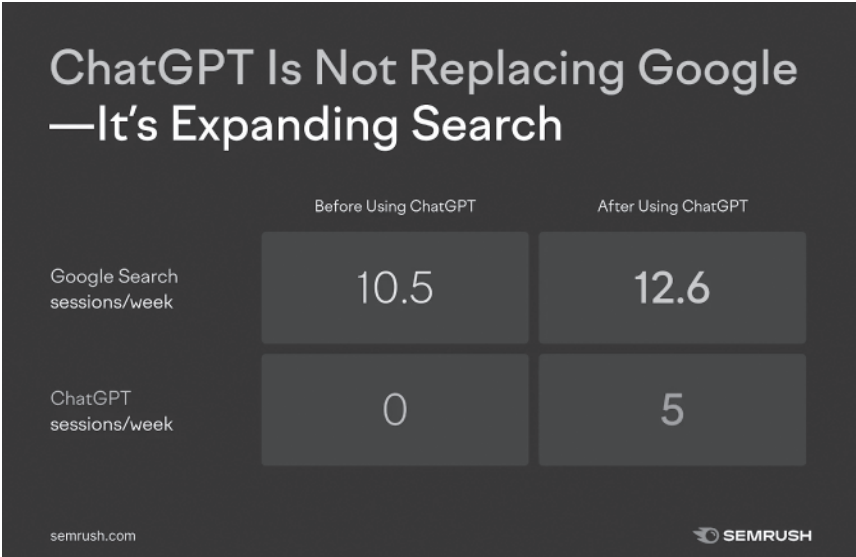


Figure 1.33 Semrush, “ChatGPT is not replacing Google—it’s expanding search.”

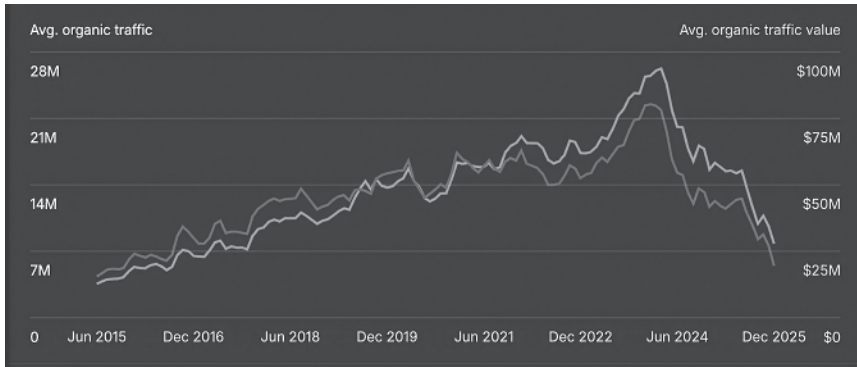


Figure 1.34 NerdWallet traffic, Ahrefs.

Wil Reynolds, founder and VP, Innovation at Seer Interactive, even pulled out his own data to show the link between traffic and revenue was not casual (Figure 1.35).

The rationale is that, despite changing search behavior, the general demand to buy remains.

If you needed project management software before, you're still going to need project management software even if AI summarized some informational topics. What's changed is that the buyer's journey to eventually make that decision previously passed through top-funnel content queries.

This said, if your business model is information, you are much more likely to be disrupted.

An Increase in Homepage Traffic

As LLMs and AI Overviews return names, not websites, a natural byproduct of that is users doing one of two things:

- Searching for the brand name to find the website.
- Directly typing in the brand name's website, if guessable.

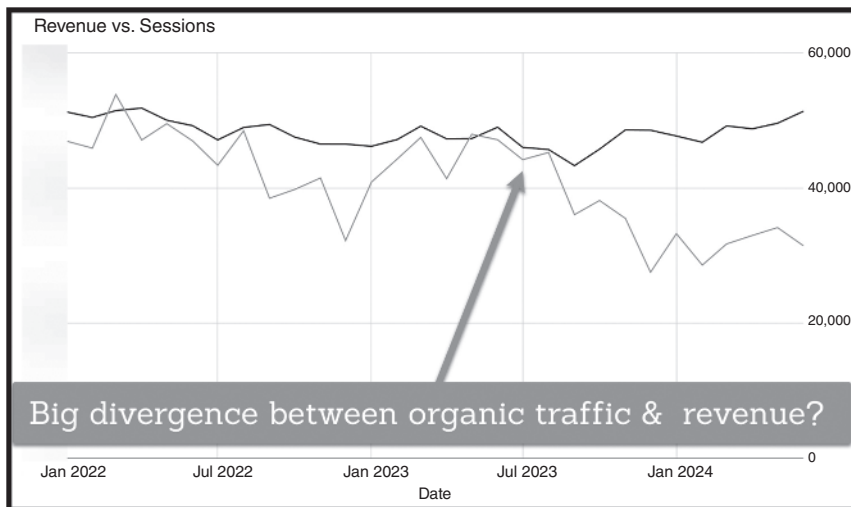


Figure 1.35 Seer Interactive revenue vs. search traffic, 2024.

This means that traffic previously attributable to search is now muddled by direct visits to your homepage.

In a study we conducted across fifty nationally leading websites, we found that as traffic shifted to LLMs and AI Overviews, homepage traffic increased by 10.7% (Figure 1.36, Siege Media, 2025).

An additional insight we missed in our analysis was the potential impact on direct traffic, not just search traffic. This is likely more profound when users can guess the homepage with reliability, such as with short, easy-to-spell domain names:

- AAA.com
- Pepsi.com
- Coke.com
- etc.

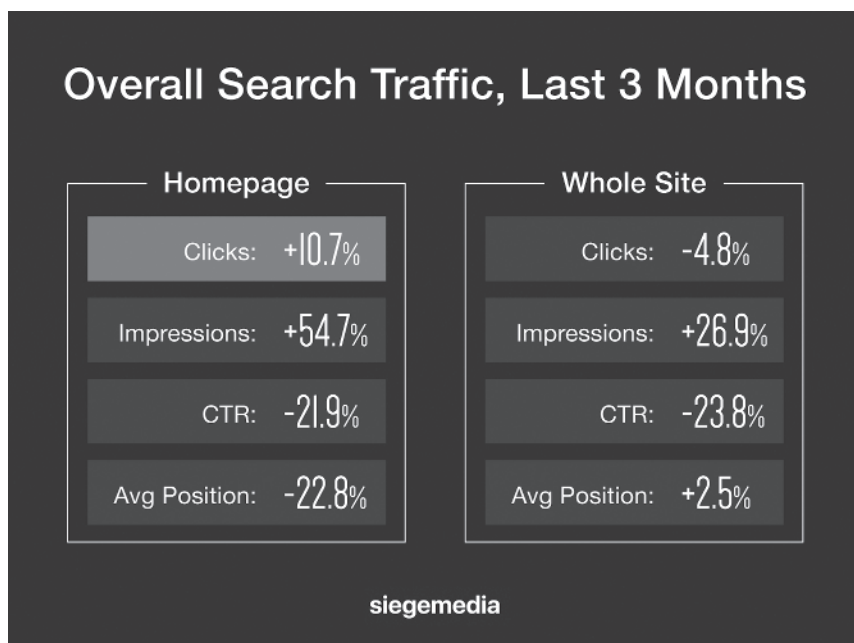


Figure 1.36 A recap of search traffic changes, May 2025. <https://bit.ly/homepage-study>.

This all means that performance measurement for search as a channel is getting harder and harder to do accurately. However, knowing where the waves are moving will make our job easier in painting the full picture for executives.

