

GEO + AEO • OCTOBER 2026

HOW TO GET YOUR CONTENT INTO AI ANSWERS

What gets you cited by ChatGPT, Google's AI, Claude, etc.

Chris Snider • Drake University

Chris Snider



- Professor of multimedia in Drake University's School of Journalism and Mass Communication
- Classes I teach in our MAC program:
 - **Digital Media Strategies**
 - **Applied Gen AI For Professionals**
 - Multimedia Communication
 - Visual Communication
 - Content Marketing
 - Social Media Strategies

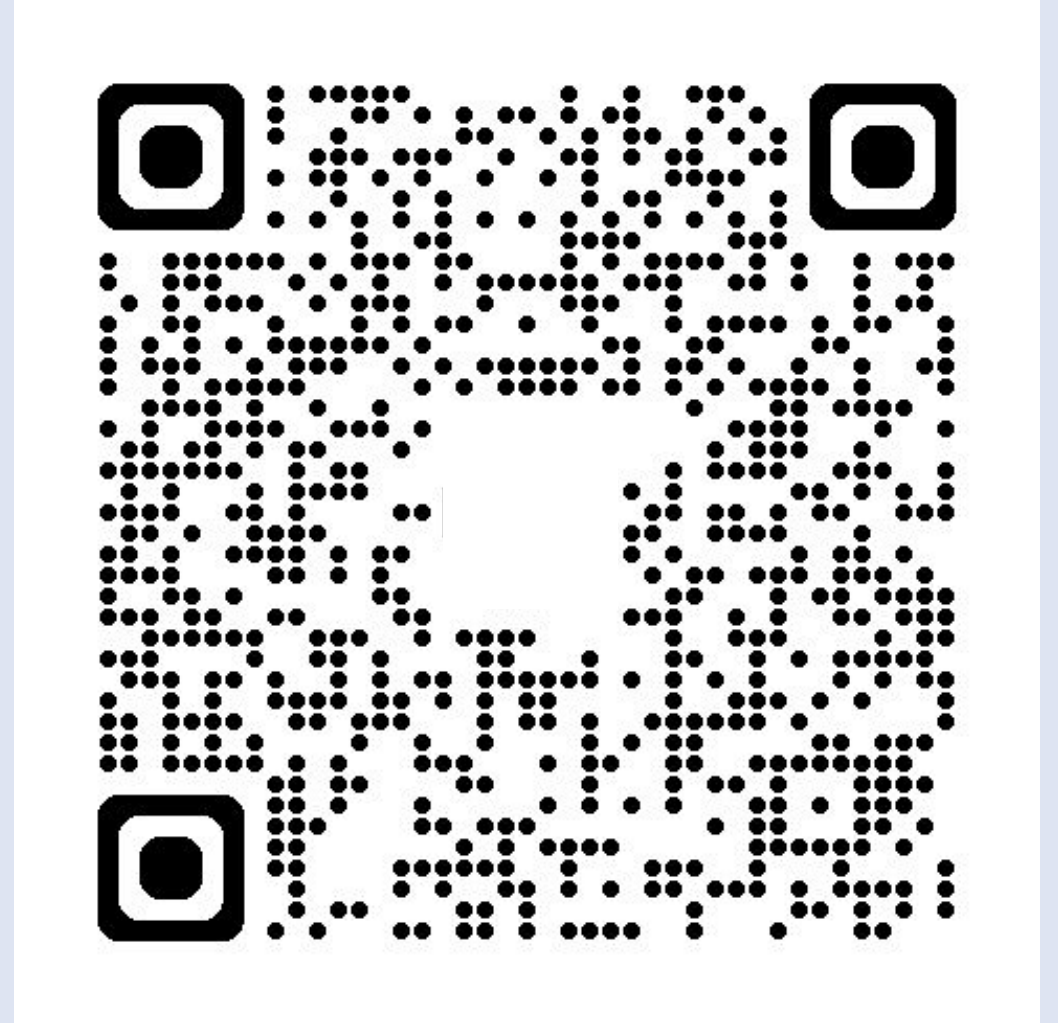
Drake University MAC

Master of Arts in Communication

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- Three tracks
 - Brand Communication
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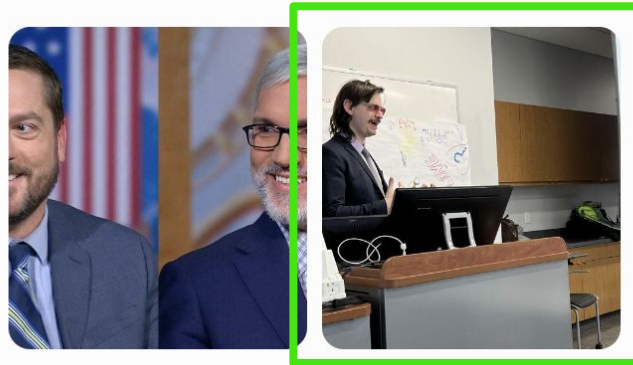


TRY THIS RIGHT NOW

Ask your favorite AI tool about yourself. What does it say?

Is it accurate? Are you even there? Who shows up instead of you?

Tip: Use an incognito tab and either Gemini, ChatGPT or Perplexity



Chris Snider

Chris Snider is an American journalism educator and professor at Drake University, associated with its School of Journalism and Mass Communication. He is particularly known for teaching **digital media, social media, multimedia storytelling, and emerging technology** in journalism and communications.

YOUR TURN • 3 MINUTES

Ask AI a question that you or your business should be the answer to

STEP 1 • ASK

Pick a question a customer would ask

“Best [service] in Des Moines?”

“Who can help with [problem]?”

“What is [your product]?”

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STEP 2 • WHO SHOWS UP

Are you there?
Who is instead?

Note which businesses or experts get named, and whether what it says about you is right.

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STEP 3 • THE SOURCES

What sites does it cite?

Your website? A news story?

Reddit? A review site? A

competitor’s blog? Those are the places you need to be.

Try it in more tools (ChatGPT, Gemini, Perplexity, Google AI Mode) and compare. Then ask the same question again with a different level of “thinking” and see what changes.

THE BIG SHIFT

68%

of U.S. Google searches end without a click

Up from 60.5% in 2024. When an AI summary appears, people click a traditional search result on 8% of searches, versus 15% without one. Links inside an AI summary receive clicks on just 1% of visits.

Sources: SparkToro/Similarweb, Jan–Apr 2026; Pew Research Center, March 2025 data

Ranking No. 1 on Google is losing value



Click-through rate for the #1 result drops **52%** when an AI Overview shows up.
Ahrefs measured a 58% drop.

AI answers are already mainstream

2.5B+

monthly users of
Google AI Overviews

1B+

monthly users of
Google AI Mode

1.2B

weekly ChatGPT users

~950M

monthly Gemini
app users

Google is now merging AI Overviews and AI Mode into “one seamless Search experience.”

But AI is still a small source of traffic

0.21%

of website traffic comes from ChatGPT,
versus about 40% from Google

+117%

growth in referral visits from AI platforms, year
over year

Big influence, small clicks. People read the AI answer, then Google your name or type your URL. That shows up as branded or direct traffic, not “AI.”

WHAT IS GEO?

Getting your content retrieved, cited or named inside AI answers

	Traditional SEO	GEO / AEO
Goal	Rank a page in a list of links	Get cited or named in the answer
Success	Position and clicks	Mentions, citations, accuracy
Results	Fairly stable rankings	Different on almost every run
Off-site goal	Backlinks	Brand mentions and press

Also called AEO (answer engine optimization), LLMO or “AI SEO.” Term coined by Aggarwal et al., Princeton/Georgia Tech, KDD 2024.

GOOGLE'S OFFICIAL TAKE, MAY 2026

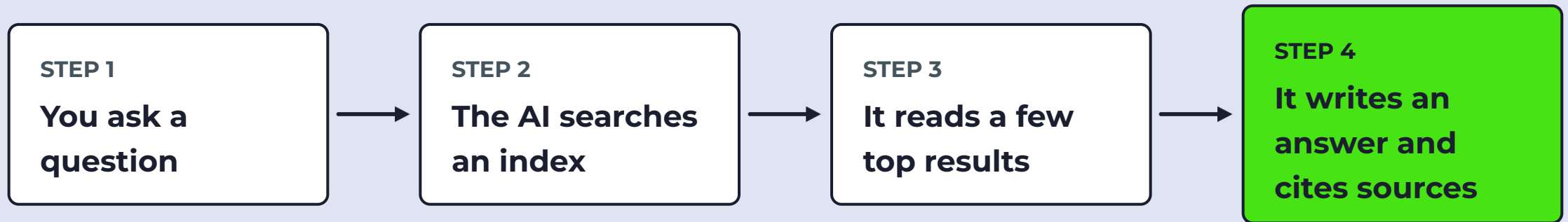
“Still SEO.”

Google's AI Overviews and AI Mode run on its core search ranking systems. No special files, schema or rewriting required.

My take: GEO = SEO + digital PR + a new measurement problem.

Source: Google Search Central, “Optimizing your website for generative AI features on Google Search,” May 15, 2026

If you're not retrieved, you can't be cited



70%+

of chatbot mistakes come from retrieval failures, not reasoning (the right page wasn't retrieved)

57.8%

of repeated ChatGPT runs never searched the web at all

Each AI engine reads a different slice of the web

Engine	Where it searches	Sources it favors
Google AI Overviews + AI Mode	Google's index	YouTube, Reddit, Quora, LinkedIn
ChatGPT	Its own crawler + Bing	Wikipedia, Reddit
Perplexity	Its own crawler + search APIs it pays to use	YouTube, Reddit, LinkedIn
Claude	Brave Search (79% of citations in Brave's top 10)	News and trade outlets; almost no social
Gemini	Google Search	Reddit, YouTube, Wikipedia
Copilot	Bing	Follows Bing rankings

Sources: Ahrefs Brand Radar, Aug 2026; Similarweb, Jan–Feb 2026; MERJ/Profound, mid-2026; Muck Rack, May 2026. Exact shares vary by tracker.

WHAT ACTUALLY WORKS

1

Be findable.

Get indexed and readable by
the bots AI tools use

2

Be quotable.

Answer clearly, with real
numbers and sources

3

Be talked about.

Earn mentions on the sites
AI trusts

Make sure AI can find and read your pages

Get indexed in Google, Bing and Brave

Copilot runs on Bing. Claude's citations track Brave. Check Bing Webmaster Tools, not just Search Console.

Let AI search bots in

Allow OAI-SearchBot, ChatGPT-User, PerplexityBot, Claude-SearchBot and Bingbot. Training bots are a separate choice. Check your CDN (such as Cloudflare) too.

Serve plain HTML

In 500M+ GPTBot fetches, ChatGPT, Claude and Perplexity's crawlers didn't run JavaScript. If your text loads via JS, those tools may see a blank page.

Write pages that are easy to quote

44%

of ChatGPT citations come
from the first 30% of a page

- ✓ Answer the main question in the first paragraph
- ✓ Use real, sourced numbers, named experts and quotes
- ✓ Show dates and “last updated” notes
- ✓ Answer the questions customers actually ask

3 • BE TALKED ABOUT

AI trusts what others say about you

84%

of AI citations come from earned media.
Paid content: about 0.3%.

Mentions > Links

Being talked about matters more to AI than
being linked to.

Press, including trade and local

YouTube videos

Reddit and forums, done honestly

Reviews and “best of” lists

Skip these (for now)

What you'll hear	What the evidence says
"You need an llms.txt file."	Not a priority for most sites. Google Search doesn't use it, and 97% went unread in one Ahrefs study.
"Add schema and AI will cite you."	Schema supports SEO, but it doesn't guarantee AI citations. Google requires no special AI schema.
"Rewrite pages into chunks for AI."	Use clear headings and helpful sections for readers. There's no proven universal formula for AI-friendly chunks.
"We'll get you #1 in ChatGPT."	There's no universal, guaranteed #1 position. Visibility varies by question, context and platform.
"Buy mentions or seed Reddit."	Prioritize credible coverage and authentic participation. Paid placements and manufactured mentions don't guarantee citations.
"SEO is dead."	SEO fundamentals still matter. Being discoverable helps, but high search rankings don't guarantee AI citations.

Sources: Ahrefs, 137,210 domains, May 2026; Google Search Central, May 2026; SAGEO Arena (Kim et al., 2026); SparkToro, Jan 2026; Muck Rack, May 2026

1 in 100

chance ChatGPT or Google's AI gives you the same brand list twice

Same list in the same order? About 1 in 1,000. So don't track a "rank." Track how often you show up across many repeated prompts.

Source: SparkToro/Gumshoe, 2,961 runs with 600 volunteers, Jan 2026

MEASURE HONESTLY

Four ways to track AI visibility

GA4 “AI Assistant” channel

Added May 13, 2026. Tags visits from ChatGPT, Gemini, Claude, Copilot and more (next slide). Google AI Overviews still count as Organic.

Bing AI Performance report

Free in Bing Webmaster Tools. Shows how often Copilot cites your pages and which queries triggered it.

Search Console AI reports

New in 2026: impressions and pages for your appearances in Google’s AI features.

A monthly prompt test

Run 25–50 buyer-style prompts, several times each, across four AI tools. Track % of runs that mention you and whether they get you right.

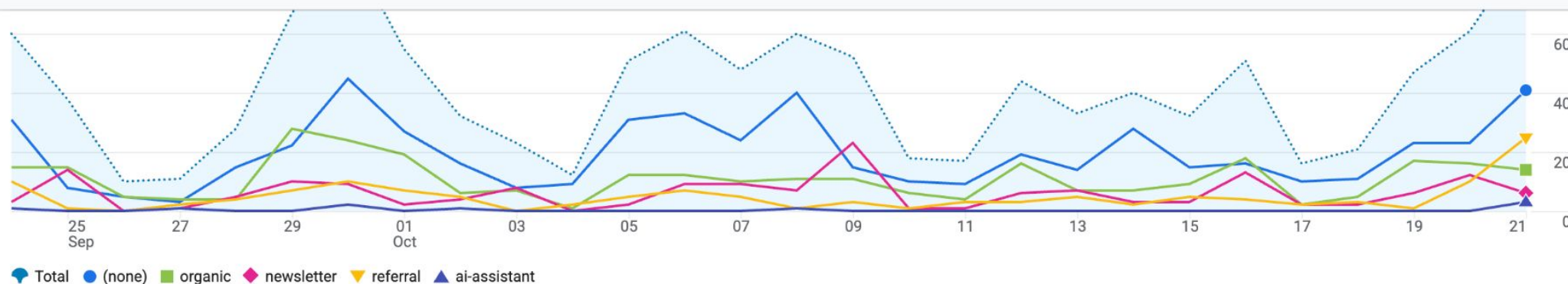
Paid trackers: Profound, Semrush AI Toolkit, Ahrefs Brand Radar, Peec AI and others. All see a logged-out, generic version of answers.



Traffic acquisition: Session medium



Last 28 days Sep 24 - Oct 21, 2026



Plot rows

Search...

Rows per page: 10

1-6 of 6

-	Session medium +	↓ Sessions	Engaged sessions	Engagement rate	Average engagement time per session	Events per session	Event count All events ▼	Key events All events ▼
✓	Total	1,166 100% of total	515 100% of total	44.17% Avg 0%	25s Avg 0%	4.20 Avg 0%	4,895 100% of total	0.00
✓	1 (none)	552 (47.34%)	195 (37.86%)	35.33%	21s	3.83	2,113 (43.17%)	0.00 (-)
✓	2 organic	305 (26.16%)	156 (30.29%)	51.15%	28s	4.06	1,237 (25.27%)	0.00 (-)
✓	3 newsletter	168 (14.41%)	100 (19.42%)	59.52%	19s	5.21	875 (17.88%)	0.00 (-)
✓	4 referral	133 (11.41%)	57 (11.07%)	42.86%	41s	4.42	588 (12.01%)	0.00 (-)
✓	5 ai-assistant	9 (0.77%)	8 (1.55%)	88.89%	34s	8.78	79 (1.61%)	0.00 (-)
□	6 register	1 (0.09%)	0 (0%)	0%	0s	3.00	3 (0.06%)	0.00 (-)

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Overview

Insights

Performance

Generative AI

URL Inspection

Indexing

Pages

Videos

Sitemaps

Removals

Experience

Core Web Vitals

HTTPS

Enhancements

Breadcrumbs

Security & Manual Actions

Links

Achievements

Performance > Generative AI features Beta

EXPORT

24 hours

7 days

28 days

3 months

More

Search type: Web

+ Add filter

Reset filters

Last update: 4 hours ago

Total impressions

1.25K

Daily

Impressions

600

400

200

0

10/18/26

10/19/26

10/20/26

PAGES

COUNTRIES

DEVICES

DAYS

Top pages

Impressions

https://newsletter.innovationprofs.com/p/how-to-choose-the-right-version-of-chatgpt

1,129

https://newsletter.innovationprofs.com/p/how-to-stop-your-flyers-from-screaming-made-with-chatgpt

102

AI answers are becoming ad space and storefronts

Ads in ChatGPT

Testing began Feb 2026.
Self-serve ads since May.
30+ countries by October.

Ads in Google's AI

Ads showed up in about 29% of
AI Mode responses on
commercial searches.

AI shopping

"Buy" buttons in Google AI Mode.
ChatGPT pulled back on in-chat
checkout. For now: discover in AI,
buy on site.

Your to do list

- 1 Ask ChatGPT, Gemini, Perplexity and Claude about your business. Save the answers.
- 2 Confirm you're indexed in Bing (Bing Webmaster Tools) and Brave, not just Google.
- 3 Check your robots.txt, CDN (like Cloudflare) and your host's security settings. Any of them can quietly block AI search bots. To test, ask Claude or ChatGPT to visit your site. If it can't, ask your host why.
- 4 Rewrite your top 5 pages so the first paragraph answers the main question.
- 5 Pitch one story, dataset or expert comment to a trade or local outlet.
- 6 Check GA4's AI Assistant channel and set up a monthly prompt test.

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