STUDIOHAWK

Answer Engine Optimisation:

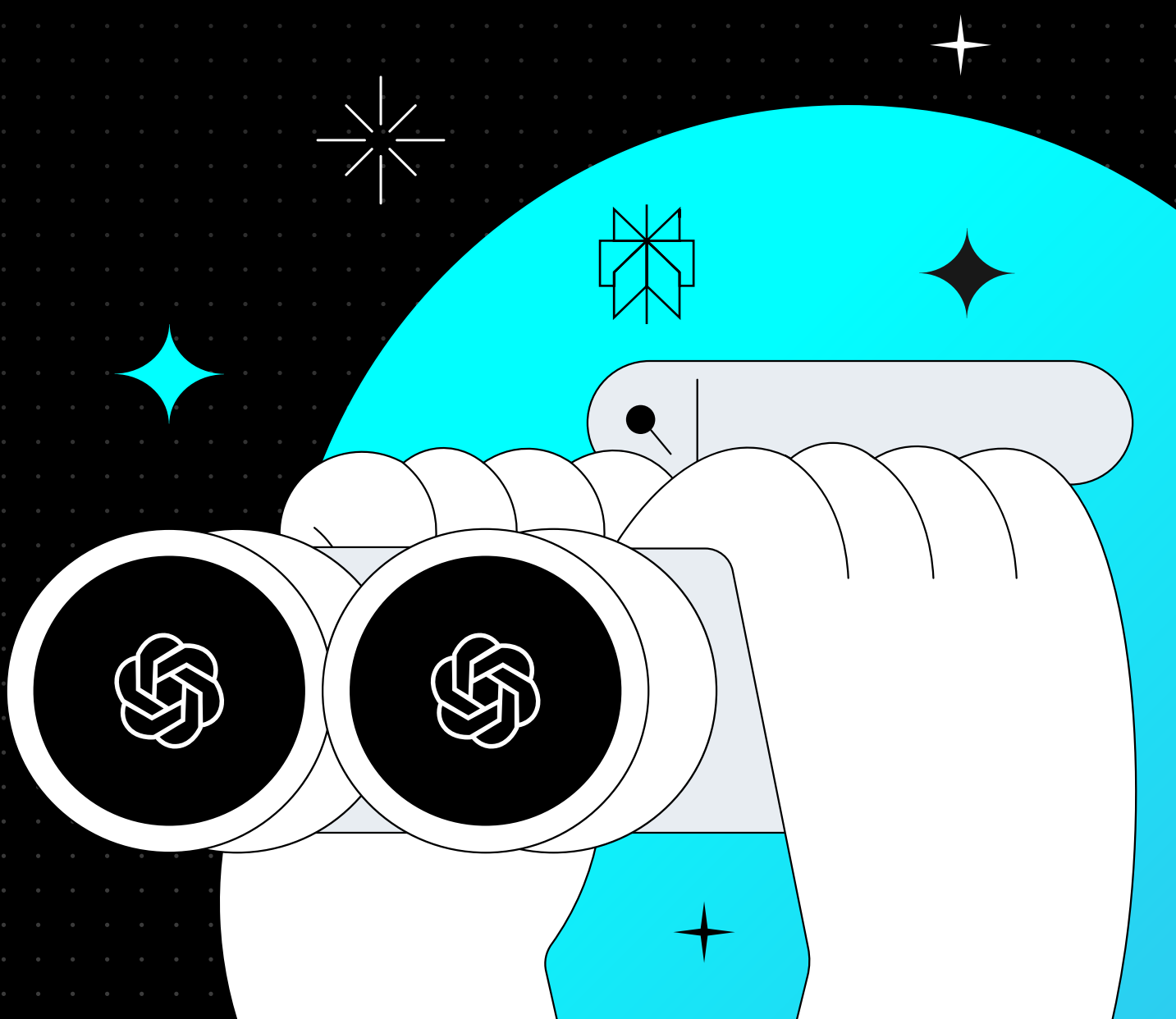
A Practical Guide to Ranking in AI Search

Search has changed.

AI tools like ChatGPT, Perplexity, and Gemini don't just list websites, they generate answers. Those answers are pulled from multiple sources, stitched together, and shown without clicks.

To stay visible, your brand needs more than traditional SEO. **You need Answer Engine Optimisation (AEO).**

AEO is the practice of getting your content cited by AI tools when they generate answers. It's not about being on Page 1 anymore, it's about being in the answer.



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1. Introduction: Why AEO Matters Now

The way people search is shifting, fast Instead of typing a keyword and clicking a result, users are asking full questions and getting full answers directly from AI-powered answer platforms. These tools don't point to websites. They respond in natural language, pulling from a mix of trusted sources.

If you want visibility, your content needs to be part of those answers. This whitepaper breaks down how to do that using AEO, a focused system for ranking in AI-generated search environments.

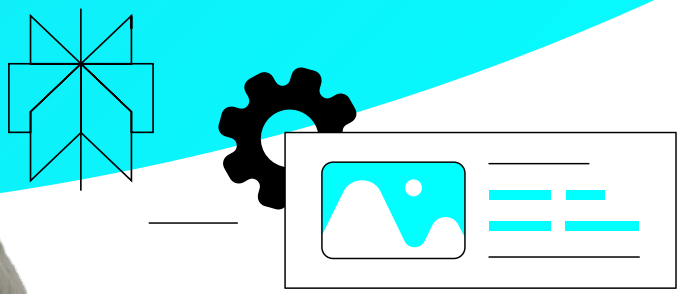
There are four key steps we'll break down to help you stay visible in this new environment:

1. **Understand Answer Engines:** Know how tools like Google AI Mode, ChatGPT and Perplexity work, and why old-school SEO isn't enough.
2. **Optimise by Platform:** Each AI system has its own rules. Learn what they look for and how to stand out.
3. **Use Semantic Optimisation:** Structure your content so AI understands and cites it.
4. **Build Organic Dominance:** Combine all channels and tactics to become the go-to authority in your niche.

SEO helped you rank. AEO helps you get referenced.

Both matter, but AEO is now essential.







2. Market Overview: ChatGPT, Perplexity, and Gemini

Three AI platforms are reshaping how people search and how your content gets seen. Each has a different model, audience, and approach to visibility.

ChatGPT: The Conversational Search Powerhouse

ChatGPT is no longer just a chatbot. It's a memory-driven search interface built by OpenAI, now integrated with Bing via SearchGPT.

It doesn't just list results, it holds a conversation, remembers what you asked, and refines answers over time.

Why ChatGPT Matters

- 180M+ monthly active users
- Embedded across Microsoft (Bing, 365)
- Pulls live data from Bing
- ~0.65 correlation with Google Page 1 rankings

What Makes It Different

Users don't click, they ask, clarify, and follow up.
To get cited, your content must be part of that evolving, trusted dialogue.

WHAT IT MEANS FOR YOU
If ChatGPT uses your content, it's because it fits the context and earns trust.

Perplexity: The Source-Citing Answer Engine

Perplexity isn't a search engine. It's a citation-first answer engine. Every response includes live source links, giving visibility back to the original publisher.

It's growing fast and attracting high-value users.

Why Perplexity Matters

- ~15M monthly users
- Growing 20% month-over-month
- 30% in senior leadership
- 65% are high-income professionals

Key Advantage

Your brand link isn't hidden. If you're cited, you're seen.

WHAT IT MEANS FOR YOU
Clear structure, credible sources, and factual clarity give you an edge. Perplexity rewards transparency and depth.

Gemini: Answer Engine Overviews, the Google Way

Gemini is Google's answer engine layer built into Search.

It doesn't replace search results; it enhances them with AI Overviews at the top of the page. However, this is likely to change over the next year to become an AI-first search.

This hybrid model blends traditional SEO with newer AEO visibility tactics.

Why Gemini Matters

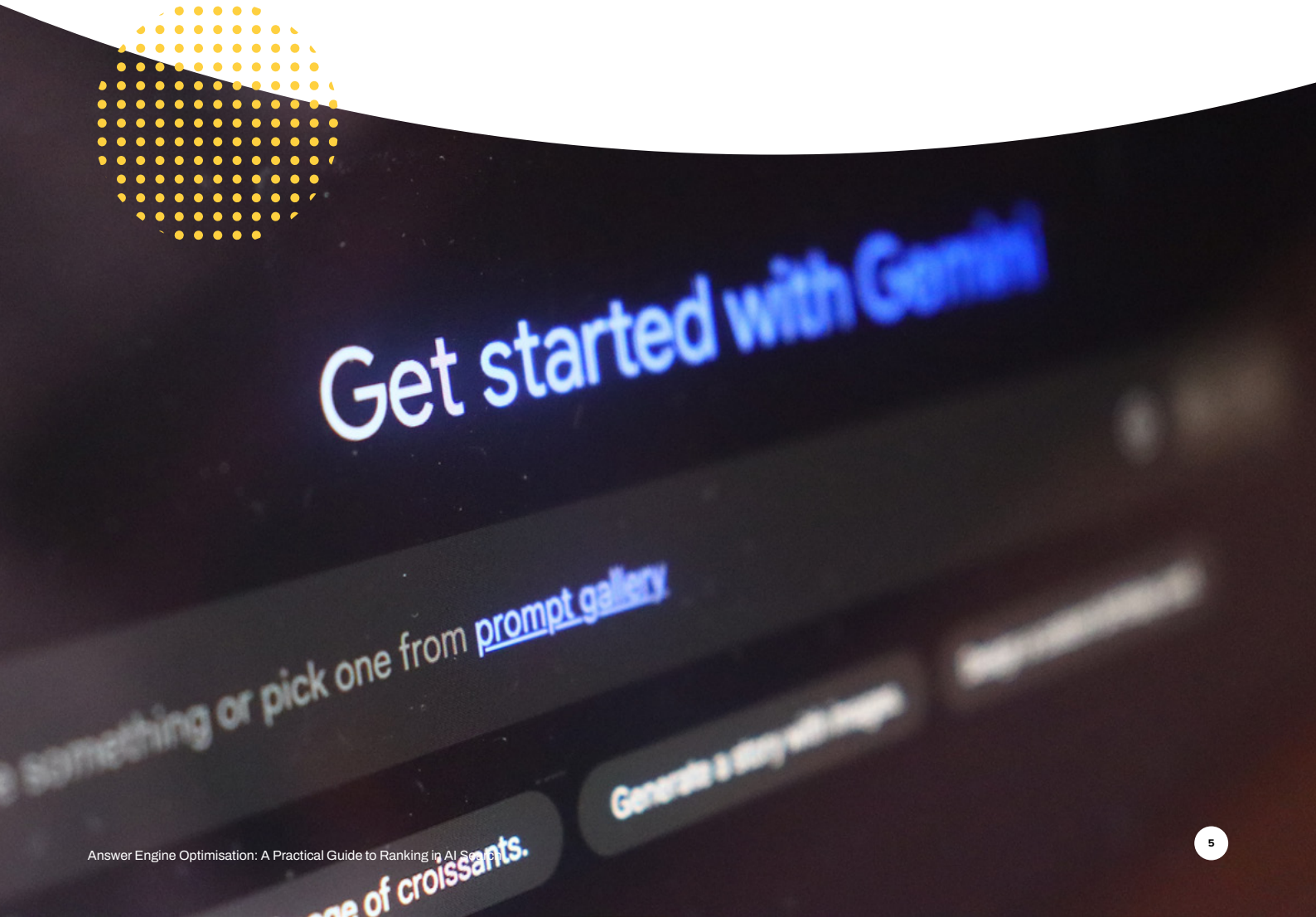
- Fully integrated into Google Search
- Billions of searches daily
- Combines summaries and links
- Heavily influenced by schema and E-E-A-T

What Makes It Different

Gemini doesn't browse like ChatGPT; it curates from indexed, structured, trusted sources.

WHAT IT MEANS FOR YOU

If you rank already, you have a head start. However, to be cited in AI Overviews, your content must be clean, structured, and rich in trust signals.



3. AI Search Is Rewriting The Rules

Answer engines are leading the charge, and it's reshaping how people discover and engage with content:

- AI gives the answer up front. ChatGPT, Perplexity, and Gemini now deliver direct responses. Users often don't visit the original site. Visibility without clicks is the new normal.
- Search happens on every platform. TikTok, Reddit, YouTube, and AI tools all have their own discovery methods. Google's share dropped from 91.6% to 89.7% in 2024.
- Relevance now depends on how well you answer a user's intent, not how many times you repeat a phrase.
- Google is rewriting the results page. AI summaries, ads, and paid placements are crowding out traditional links. Getting found means being included in those summaries.

From Search Results to Smart Answers

Search engines used to work by matching keywords and ranking links. That era is ending.

Google dominated for years by indexing pages and analysing backlinks. It was reliable. Marketers learned how to climb the rankings using that system.

Now, AI platforms like ChatGPT, Perplexity, and Gemini don't send users to pages, they deliver answers directly. These tools understand natural language and pull insights from multiple sources in real time.

For Example:

If you search for **"Netflix"** on Google, you'll get official links to the site, news stories, and maybe some competitors in the ads.

In a **vector-based engine**, the result might include Disney+, Prime Video, and Hulu, brands in the same category, not just exact matches. It's not looking for one company; it's returning similar concepts.

Keyword search still works best for precise queries. But AI is changing the default: from finding one result to understanding the space around it.

That changes everything

Visibility works differently now. It's not enough to show up in search results, **you need to be part of the answer**.

The old SEO playbook doesn't cut it. Tracking single keywords, ranking individual pages, and focusing only on Google assumes users click through to websites. But AI platforms now summarise answers using multiple sources, often without sending traffic.

It's a shift in how people find, trust, and share information.

Brands need new content strategies, new metrics, and a mindset that works across platforms.

What Is Vector Search?

Vector search is a way to find information based on meaning, not exact words. Instead of looking for exact match keywords, it compares the underlying meaning (semantics) of the data using something called vectors, which is a numerical representation of that meaning.

How Does Vector Search Work?

1. Turning Data Into Vectors

Rather than using just plain text or raw images to understand meaning, vector search converts data like text, images, video, or audio into numerical representations called vectors. These vectors capture how different pieces of data relate to one another in meaning, otherwise known as semantics.

2. Using Machine Learning To Understand Meaning

Machine learning models are then used to create these vectors. They're trained to understand the context and meaning of the data, meaning terms like "fast car" and "speedy vehicle" will end up with similar vectors as semantically, they are similar.

3. Searching By Meaning, Not Words

When someone searches, this query is also turned into a vector. Then, the system looks for other vectors (from the dataset) that are similar to the query. It does this using math (like cosine similarity) to measure how close the vectors are to each other.

4. Why It's Better Than Keyword Search

There are a few reasons why it's better than traditional keyword search for the end user:

- It understands meaning rather than being limited to exact words
- It's great for unstructured data, meaning it works well with images, audio, and text
- It scales well as it can search through huge amounts of data
- It provides more accurate results on what you're *actually* looking for, even if you word it differently

5. Current Real World Uses

We've already seen some real-world uses being introduced into the search landscape and digitally with things like image search, text search, recommendations that suggest products or content that you might like, and chatbots that give better and more natural responses.

Now, our search engines are heading this way too.



4. Understanding How Answer Engines Work (LLMs & Embeddings)

Think of a Large Language Model (LLM) like a turbocharged version of your phone's autocomplete. But instead of guessing your next word from a few messages, it's learned from billions of texts.

When you ask a question in ChatGPT or Perplexity, here's what happens:

1. **It breaks down your question.** This includes words and sometimes even pieces of words.
2. **It looks at the whole context.** It tries to figure out what you're really asking.
3. **It predicts what to say next.** Based on everything it's learned, it picks the most likely next word (again and again) to build a response.

And here's the kicker:
It doesn't "see" words the way we do. It turns them into numbers called *embeddings* so it can compare meanings.

This is why LLMs care about semantics. They're built to understand meaning instead of surface-level keywords.

Embeddings: How LLMs Understand Meaning

Embeddings are the way LLMs make sense of language. They turn words and phrases into number vectors in a multi-dimensional space. Words with similar meanings sit close together.

For Example:
- **"Cat" and "dog"** are near each other (both pets).
- **"Cat" and "lion"** are even closer (both felines).
- **"Cat" and "car"** are far apart (no meaningful link).

This is very different from traditional keyword matching. LLMs don't just look for the same letters. They look for related meanings.



What Works Across All Answer Engines

No matter the platform, ChatGPT, Perplexity, or Gemini, some tactics always help.

These are your basics for getting noticed.

Content Structure That LLMs Like

- Start with a summary. Open with 40–60 words that nail the point. This helps LLMs get your message quickly
- Define your terms. Use clear, direct definitions like "X is..." to anchor the topic.
- Lead with the good stuff. Put your key insights at the top. LLMs favour early content.
- Make it skimmable. Use bullet lists, tables, FAQs, and how-to steps. These formats are easy to lift and quote.

Build Trust with E-E-A-T Signals

If you want to be taken seriously by AI platforms, you need to prove you know your stuff. That's where E-E-A-T comes in, Experience, Expertise, Authoritativeness, Trustworthiness.

Here's how to show it:

- Put credentials front and centre. Include author bios, publication dates, and expert quotes.
- Link to reliable sources. Use first-party data or cite trusted names like PubMed, government sites, and academic journals.
- Use schema markup. Tag your content properly (Article, FAQPage, Product, VideoObject) so LLMs know what they're looking at.

Technical Basics Matter

AI tools can't use content they can't access. If your site's not crawlable, you're out of the game.

Don't block the bots:

Make sure BingBot, GPTBot, and PerplexityBot are allowed in your *robots.txt*. Just note: there's growing evidence LLMs don't always respect it. If you do need to keep content out, especially in regulated industries, use server-level tools like firewalls, Cloudflare, Google-Extended, or reverse proxies.

Speed and structure count:

Your site should load fast, work on mobile, and keep content visible without relying on JavaScript. LLMs struggle to parse or render it properly.

Use proper semantic markup:

Build with HTML5. Avoid overusing and tags. The more semantically clear your code is, the easier it is for machines to understand.

Get listed properly:

Submit your site to Bing Webmaster Tools and Google Search Console so your content gets indexed.



5. Optimising for Each Answer Engine

Here's what you need to know about how to optimise differently for ChatGPT, Perplexity, Gemini, and Bing Copilot.

ChatGPT
(OpenAI + Bing)

Unique optimisation tips:

- Perform well on Bing. ChatGPT pulls from Bing, so ranking there matters.
- Use structured content. Clear headings, bullet points, and FAQs make the info easy to extract.
- Answer "best X for Y" questions. Lists work well. Think: "Best pizza ovens for small kitchens".
- Include author bios and trust signals. Credibility counts.
- Check your Bing indexing. Submit your sitemap via Bing Webmaster Tools.

Perplexity

Unique optimisation tips:

- Diversify your sources. Perplexity likes citing multiple websites.
- Get into Reddit and forums. It pulls from these often, especially for niche or tech topics.
- Be part of "top 10" lists. Getting featured on trusted roundup pages boosts your chances of citation.
- Focus on factual detail. Stats, specs, and comparisons do well.
- Cross-platform presence helps. Consistency across your site, YouTube, and social media strengthens your entity.

Google Gemini
(AI Mode & AI Overviews)

Unique optimisation tips:

- Write strong intros. Start with a 40–60 word TL;DR.
- Use E-E-A-T elements. Author credentials, citations, and evidence of expertise matter more here than anywhere else.
- Use multi-format content. Videos, images, tables, and diverse formats perform better.
- Structured data is critical. Implement deep schema (FAQ, HowTo, Product).
- Mobile-first and fast loading. Gemini favours clean, mobile-optimised content.

General LLM Strategies
(That Help Everywhere)

Get mentioned on Reddit, Quora, LinkedIn, and Twitter. UGC boosts visibility.

- Aim for inclusion in roundup lists. LLMs love citing "best of" articles.
- Offer expert quotes. Credibility from recognised publications carries weight.
- Use visuals with context. Infographics, tables, and videos with schema and captions help AI understand and cite.
- List your business in relevant directories. LLMs often pull structured info from these sources.

Measuring What Matters in AI Search

Traditional SEO metrics don't tell the full story anymore. To track your performance in AI-driven search, you'll need to widen your toolkit.



Run consistent prompt tests.

Manually test ChatGPT, Perplexity, and Gemini to see if and how they mention your brand or pages. We built a tool that can help you do this.

Watch for patterns.

Compare AI mentions with your Bing and Google rankings to see what's working across platforms.

Use the right tools.

Tools like Semrush (for AI Overviews), Google Search Console filters, and Bing indexing data can show where your content is getting traction.

6. Semantic Optimisation: The Link Between SEO and AI Visibility

Ignore the acronyms, GEO, LLMO, and so on. The key link between traditional SEO and AI visibility is semantics: Optimising content for the meaning behind the query, rather than the keyword in the query. Good semantic structure helps you rank on Google and get cited by AI tools like ChatGPT, Perplexity, and Gemini.

Why Semantics Matter

Semantics is about meaning. AI platforms don't just match keywords, they try to understand what users want and whether your content answers that.

When your content is semantically sound, it's:

- Easier for search engines to rank accurately
- Easier for AI models to understand and quote
- More helpful to users (and more likely to be trusted)



How LLMs Read Content (Short Version)

Large Language Models (LLMs) don't search the web like Google. They predict language based on patterns they've learned.

When they pull from real-time data (like Perplexity does), they look for content that:

- Covers topics clearly and in depth
- Answers questions directly
- Uses language that makes sense in context

For the same pizza restaurant:

- **Traditional SEO says:** "Put 'best pizza NYC' everywhere."
- **Semantic SEO says:** "Explain why your pizza stands out, what style it is, and how it fits into the NYC food sce

This semantic approach aligns better with how modern search engines and LLMs actually work, understanding meaning.

Knowledge Graphs: How LLMs Understand Content

LLMs don't just read they map. They use knowledge graphs: networks of entities (like places, topics, or products) and how they relate to each other.

Example:

- **Lego** → toy brand → based in Denmark → known for building blocks and licensed sets
- **Star Wars Lego** → product line → includes Millennium Falcon, X-Wing, Darth Vader minifigures

When an AI generates a response, it pulls from this kind of structure. If your content reflects those connections, naming and linking entities it's more likely to be cited.

What does this change in content strategy mean?

Stop writing pages to rank for one keyword. Start building a network that:

- **Defines what each topic is**
- **Shows how they link to other topics**
- **Proves your content is trustworthy**

Think of a semantic content strategy as an ecosystem rather than a library...

Traditional content strategies, focused on isolated keywords, function more like libraries where content is structured but static. The books don't interact with each other, which means an individual book is only as deep and valuable as the content within it. The same goes for individual pages on a site.

An ecosystem, on the other hand, is interconnected. Plants, animals and resources influence and support one another. A semantic content strategy works the same way, with pages linked through topics, subtopics, user intent and contextual relevance. Each piece strengthens the others, creating an adaptable, meaningful site experience.

This setup doesn't just help with AI visibility. It sharpens your overall SEO by making your site easier to understand for both users and algorithms.



7. Context Preservation: Why Structure Matters

LLMs don't just track words, they keep track of meaning across sentences, paragraphs, and even full conversations. They do this using embeddings that preserve context.

Example:

- **First question:** "Who is Jon Snow's mother?"
- **Follow-up: "**What's her connection to Rhaegar Targaryen?"

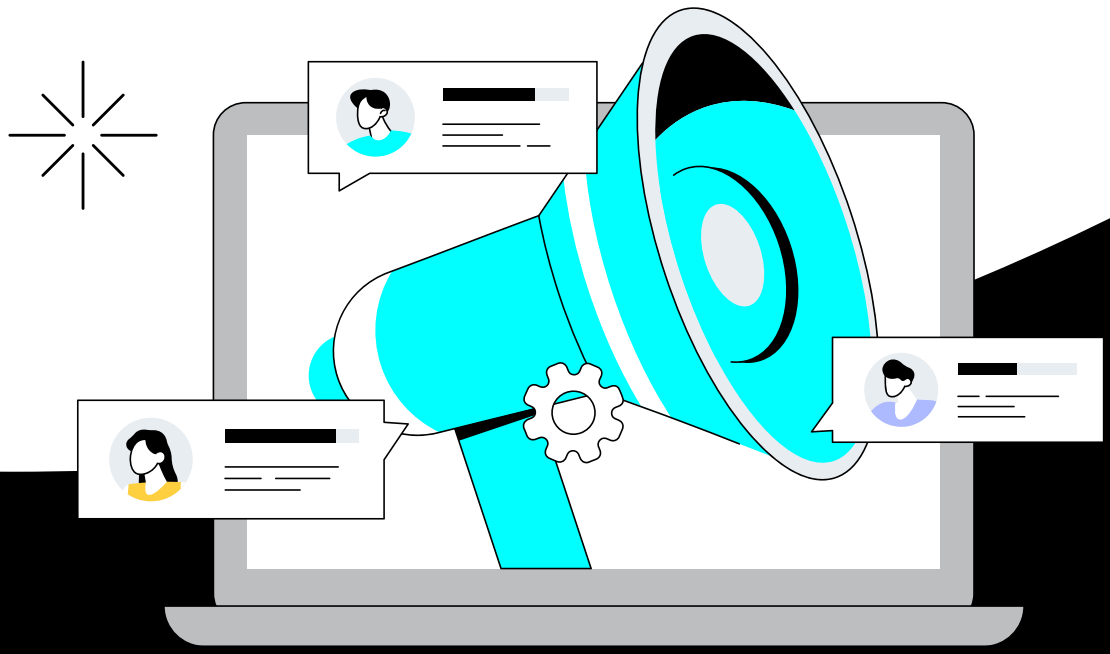
The model understands "her" refers to Lyanna Stark. Why? Because it keeps the earlier context, "Jon Snow's mother" active in memory.

What does this mean for your content?

Strong content isn't just a list of facts. It builds context:

- Related ideas are grouped together
- Links between concepts are clear
- The structure helps users (and AI) follow the logic

Content that's easy to follow is easier to rank and more likely to be cited by AI platforms.



8. Retrieval-Augmented Generation (RAG): How AI Pulls Your Content

When LLMs like ChatGPT have browsing enabled, they often use something called retrieval-augmented generation (RAG). It's how they fetch and use real-time info.

Here's how it works:

1. The model gets a query.
2. It searches a database of embeddings (math-based meaning maps).
3. It grabs the most relevant matches.
4. It generates a response using that info.

Why this matters for your content

If your content is:

- Well-structured
- Rich in clear entities
- Built with context

Then your embeddings will better match real queries. That makes your content more likely to be pulled into AI-generated answers.

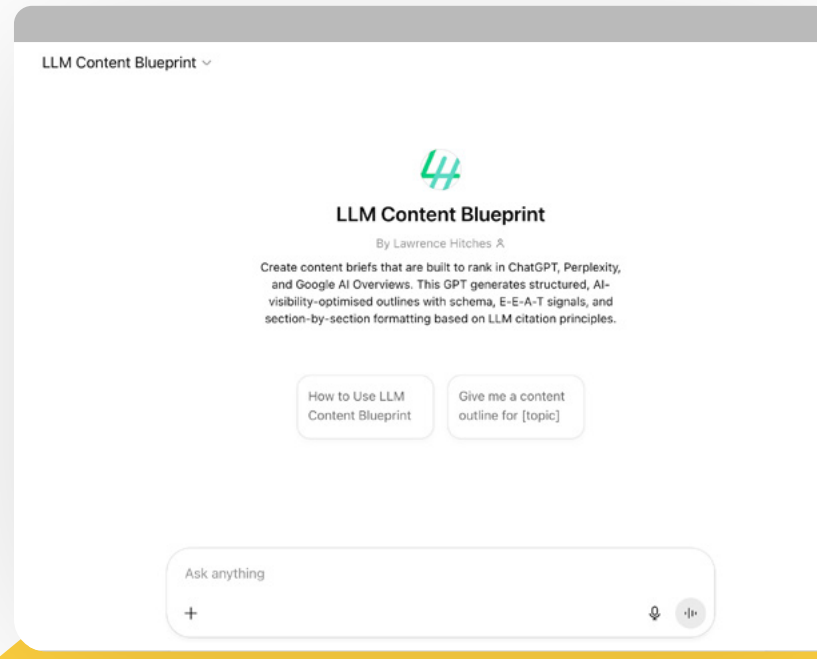
So if you're wondering why some content gets cited and yours doesn't, RAG might be the reason. Strong embeddings come from strong content: clearly defined topics, logical structure, and deep context.

Tool to Use: AI-Ready Content Brief Generator

Create content briefs that are built to rank in ChatGPT, Perplexity, and Google AI Overviews.

This GPT generates structured, AI-visibility-optimised outlines complete with schema, E-E-A-T signals, and section-by-section formatting based on how LLMs cite content.

Use our AI Content Blueprint GPT



9. Google AI Mode: SEO's New Reality

Google's AI Mode changes how users search and act. It's more than summaries. With Project Mariner, Google can now book restaurants, buy products, or complete research directly within the search interface.

This shift is the biggest change to search since Google launched. If brands don't adapt, they'll lose visibility, traffic, and conversions. Users are no longer clicking through: they're letting AI do the work for them.

How AI Mode Really Works

AI Mode isn't just a new way of displaying results, it's a completely different system for how Google answers questions.

Here's what's happening under the hood:

- **It rewrites your search:** You type one thing, but Google quietly breaks it into dozens of related questions to get a fuller picture of what you mean.
- **It pulls from multiple sources:** Instead of just looking at web pages, Google pulls snippets of information from across different sites to build a single, complete answer.
- **It looks at parts of pages:** Your content is broken into smaller pieces (like paragraphs or sections), and Google picks whichever part best fits the question.
- **It's personal for every user:** The answer you see depends on your history, what you've searched, where you've been, what you've watched, even what's in your inbox or calendar. That includes:
  - Your Gmail (e.g. receipts, bookings)
  - Google Calendar (events, routines)
  - Search history and YouTube watch habits
  - Google Maps and location tracking
  - Shopping patterns
  - Fitbit data and other device activity
- **Clicks don't matter as much:** Many users won't click any links. What matters more is that your content gets cited in the answer. Visibility is now about influence.

This means your content needs to be:

- Broken into clear, useful chunks
- Aligned with the kinds of questions people ask
- Recognisable and trustworthy to Google's systems
- Consistently relevant across a wide range of related queries

AI Mode is less about "ranking" and more about being chosen by the system, personalised to the user, and built into a smart, multi-layered response.

10. What Is Query Fan-Out?

At the core of this system is something called **Query Fan-Out.**

It's grounded in a 2024 Google patent and it's already influencing results across product, service, and informational queries.

What is Query Fan-Out?

Say someone searches:

"Best protein powder for weight loss, sensitive stomachs, and under $50."

Google no longer looks for one perfect page with that full phrase.

Instead, it breaks it down into parts:

- What's good for weight loss?
- What's gentle on sensitive stomachs?
- What's affordable (under $50)?
- Are there any products that fit all three?

Then it pulls content from different sources that best answer each sub-question, a Reddit thread on digestion, a blog post comparing prices, a review highlighting ingredient sensitivity, and assembles a unified response.

This is **Query Fan-Out** in action.

AI Mode is stitching together the most relevant passages from across the web, and that means:

- You don't need to win the whole query
- You just need to be the best answer to one part of it

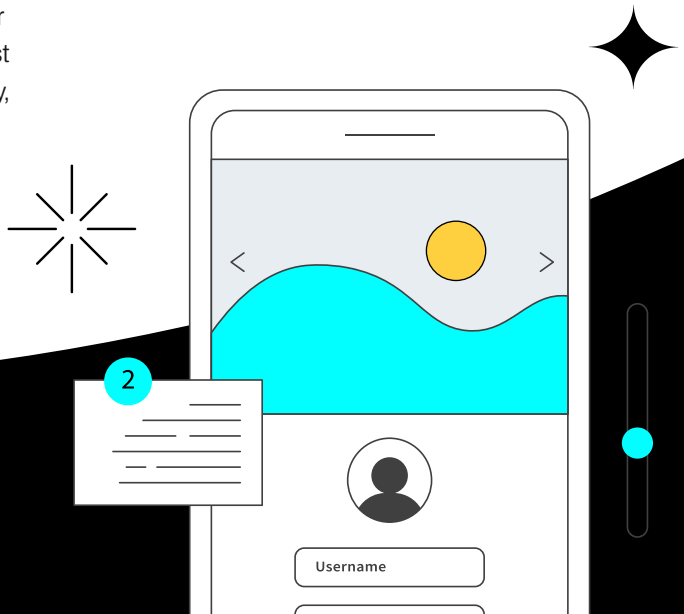
Visibility now comes from specificity and clarity.

How Query Fan-Out Works

Google's process, based on the patent, follows this logic:

1. **Breaks the query into semantic parts:** Each part targets a specific need.
2. **Runs parallel searches:** These sub-queries go out simultaneously across blogs, forums, and commerce pages.
3. **Selects the best-fit content:** Each passage is scored for clarity, trust, and alignment.
4. **Assembles the final output:** Gemini (or another LLM) merges them into a single conversational response.

Like a journalist quoting multiple experts to build a story.



Adapting Your Content: The Facet Strategy

Break multi-intent queries into content clusters:

Example Query:

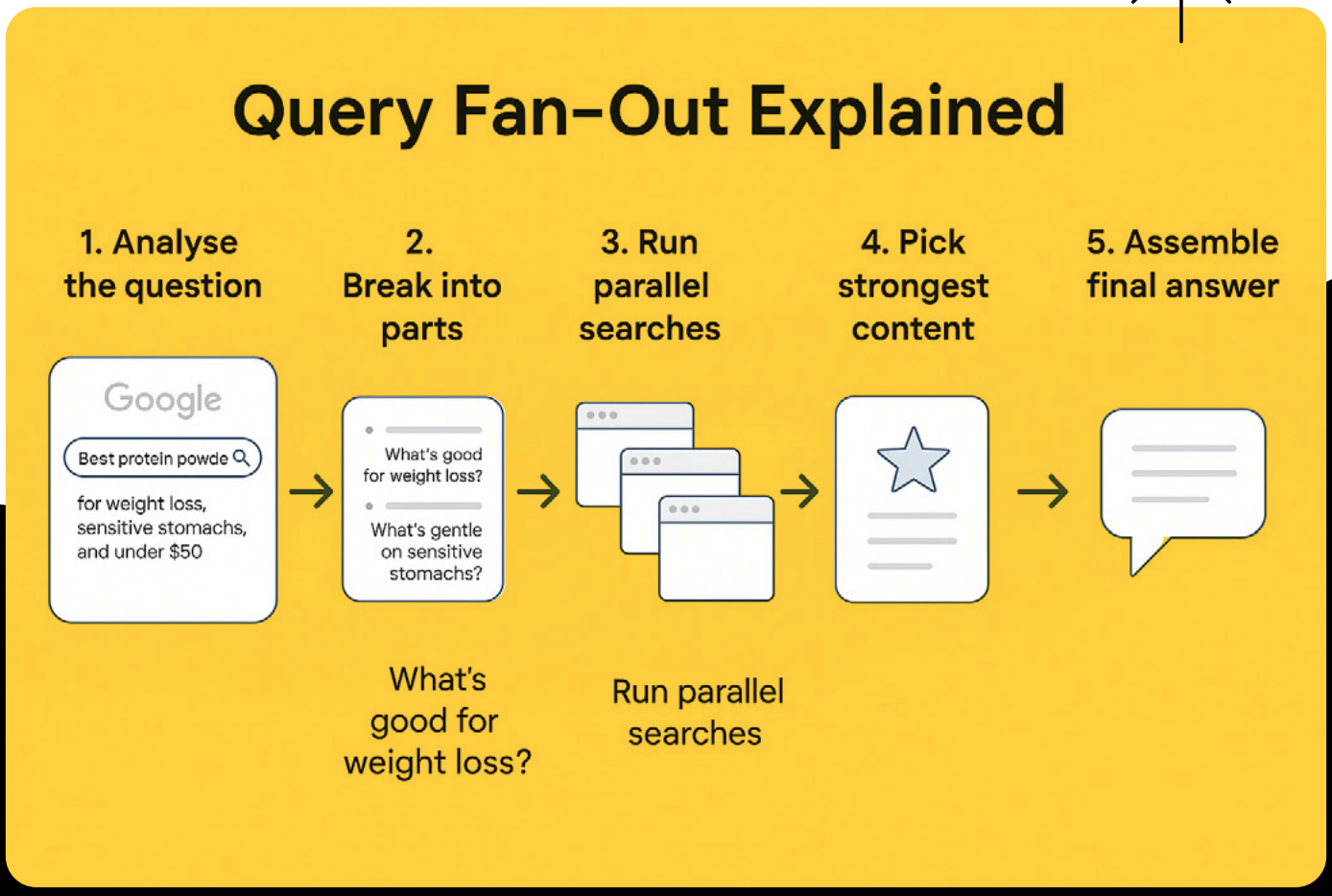
"Best laptops for students under $1000 with long battery and backlit keys"

Old model: One blog post targeting the whole phrase.

Fan-Out strategy:

- Article on laptops under $1000
- Post comparing battery performance in student laptops
- Feature piece on laptops with backlit keyboards
- Hub page tying them together: "Best Student Laptops for 2025"

Each page wins on a facet. Google pulls the best.



Example Topic: Electric Scooters for Commuting



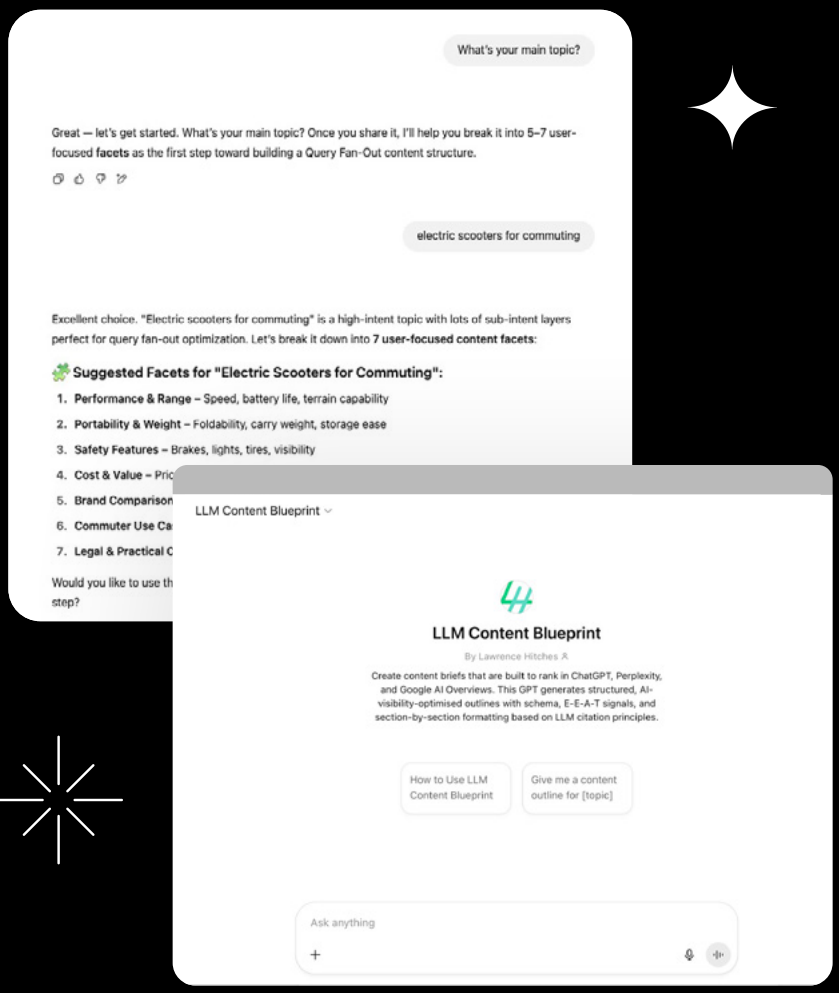
What the Search Is About	Example Search
Finding good options	“Best electric scooters for commuting”
Looking for specific brands	“Top Segway and Xiaomi scooters for city travel”
Wanting comfort	“Most comfortable scooter for long rides to work”
Needing long battery life	“Electric scooter with longest range”
Wanting both comfort + battery	“Scooter with smooth ride and long battery life”
On a budget	“Cheap scooters for daily commute”
Reading real user reviews	“Reviews of electric scooters for commuting”
Comparing brands	“Unagi vs Ninebot for city rides”
Looking for strong build	“Well-built scooter for rough roads”
Fast charging needs	“Scooter that charges quickly”
Needs to carry it around easily	“Lightweight scooter for commuting on train”

Still stuck?

The **Query Fan-Out Optimisation Bot** is a content strategy assistant we built for our internal teams. It helps break down any topic into user-focused sub-queries and

Use our Query Fan Out bot

...to skip the grunt work and get faster results. guides you in structuring E-E-A-T-rich, AI-optimized content.



Quick Check: Are You AI Search Ready?

Use this short test to assess how prepared your brand is for AI search.

- Have you submitted your sitemap to Bing and verified in Bing Webmaster Tools?
- Does your content include schema markup for key pages?
- Can your site be crawled by GPTBot and PerplexityBot?
- Are you mentioned on multiple platforms (Reddit, YouTube, LinkedIn)?
- Do you have any content assets or tools that AI can't replicate in a summary?

Answered NO to two or more of these questions? Don't worry! Keep reading, and we'll help close the AI gap for you.

11. Seven Ways to Rank In AI Mode

To stay visible in AI-driven search, brands need to take specific steps. These seven tactics aren't optional anymore, they're the baseline. Each ends with a clear takeaway to drive it home.

1. Make Your Site Agent-Friendly

What to do:

- Test your site using agents like Manus.im or GPT Operator.
- Set real tasks: fill a form, search for a product, complete checkout.
- Fix anything that stops agents from finishing the job.
- Test across different agents to ensure broader compatibility.

AI agents now act for users. If they can't complete tasks on your site, you're out of the running.

If agents can't convert, users won't either.

2. Use Full Structured Data

AI Mode relies on it to understand and cite your content.

What to do:

- Run your site through Google's Rich Results Test.
- Look for missing types like LocalBusiness, Event, Course, etc.
- Use tools like ChatGPT to suggest schema based on your content.
- Add schema that clearly defines what your content is, how it connects, and who it's for.

Structured data makes your content easier for AI to read and more likely to be picked up.

3. Target Long-Tail, Natural Questions

AI doesn't keyword match. It chats. So your content needs to sound like your audience.

What to do:

- Write for full questions instead of keywords. Think "How do I..." or "What's the difference between...".
- Go after specific, low-volume queries, these are where AI looks for answers.
- Use tools like AnswerSocrates to find real user questions.
- Build content that gives clear, direct answers.
- Match the emotional drivers behind the query. Solve a problem, don't just sell a product.

Speak to the situation your users are in. AI is tuned to intent over information.

4. Spread Out Your Digital Footprint

What to do:

- Publish beyond your website: TikTok, Reddit, YouTube, Instagram, and Pinterest.
- Tailor content to each platform's style and algorithm.
- Use automation tools to simplify cross-posting.
- Use AI avatars if you're not comfortable on camera.

AI tools pull answers from across the web.
The more places you show up, the more chances you get cited.

5. Get Your Site Running Smoothly

What to do:

- Use GTmetrix and Page Speed Insights, similar tools to test load speed.
- Ensure calls-to-action are clear and clickable.
- Use AI tools to simplify technical reports into action steps.Check your IA structure to make sure it makes sense for users and AI (what is an IA structure here: [LINK HERE]

A slow or cluttered site blocks both users and AI.
If your site's slow or messy, AI won't wait around.

6. Use Google Search Console

What to do:

- Verify your site in Google Search Console.
- Submit your sitemap.
- Use the URL Inspection Tool to push new content for indexing.
- Monitor performance by query, page, device, and country.
- Google AI Mode builds on traditional indexing.

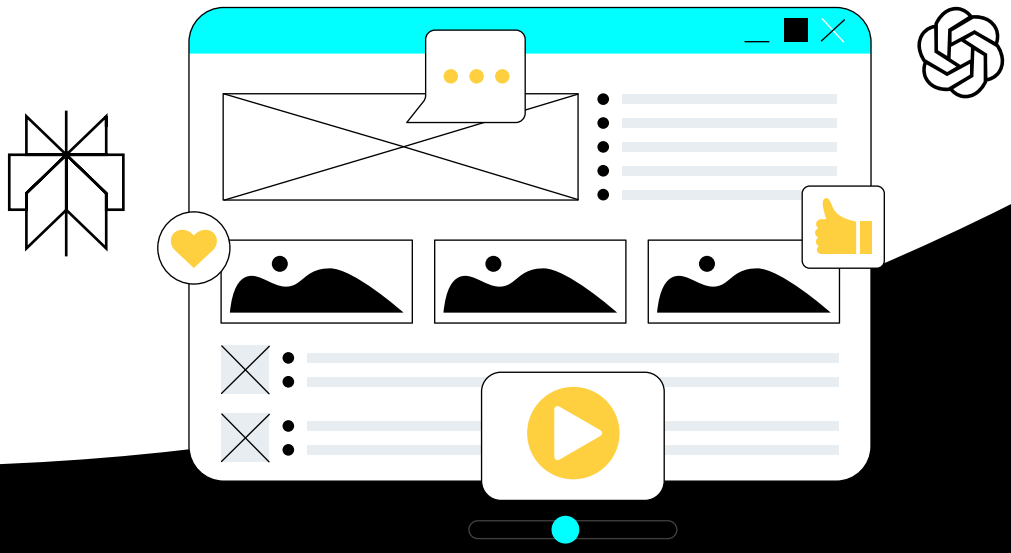
If your content isn't properly submitted and tracked, it's harder to surface in AI summaries.

7. Build Interactive Tools

What to do:

- Build simple web apps or calculators that solve real problems.
- Embed them directly in your content.
- Focus on tools AI can't replicate inside the answer box.
- Use AI tools like Gemini 2.5 Pro to build without coding.

Interactive tools keep users on-site and offer unique value.
Tools drive traffic, AI can't steal.



Inspiration: Simple ROI Calculator (Built with ChatGPT + JS)

I wanted to build something fast that earned links, got shared, and reinforced our brand, using nothing but SEO.

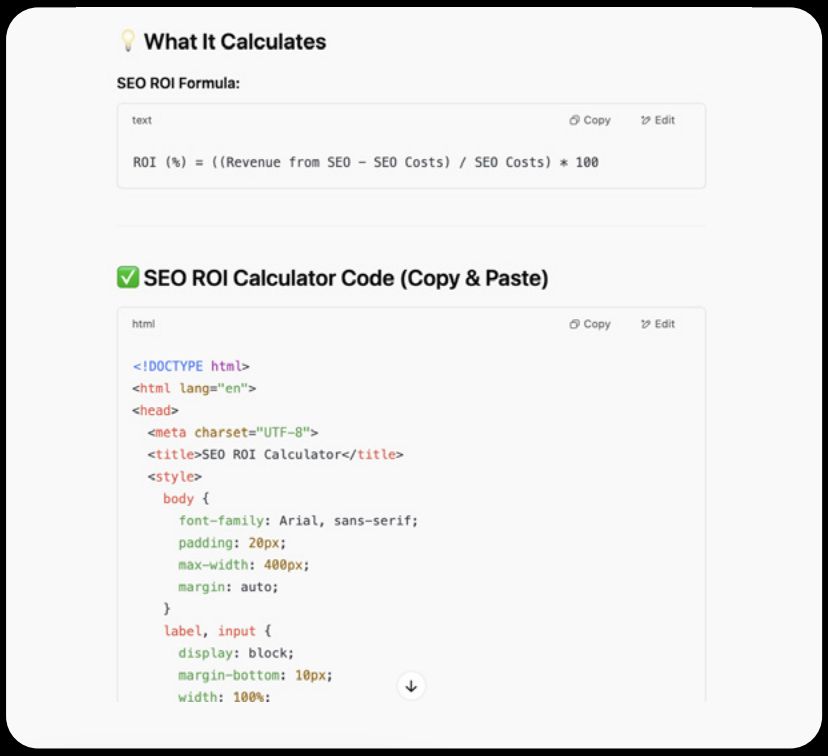
So I built this: a lightweight ROI calculator using HTML, JavaScript, and a ChatGPT prompt. Build time: ~20 minutes

How it works:

- Embedded directly on a WordPress page
- User enters monthly SEO spend and revenue
- It returns ROI instantly no forms, no friction

Why it works:

- Fast, clean, and usable
- Answers a real question marketers ask every day
- Bookmarkable, embeddable, and LLM-friendly
- It's a utility, rather than a basic blog post.





Make a simple ROI calculator with HTML

Result

And that's just one option. You could also build:

- Pricing estimators
- Interactive product selectors
- Site migration checklists
- Legal or compliance widgets
- Cost–benefit calculators
- Lead qualification tools
- Technical audit checkers
- Eligibility or qualification forms (e.g. grants, services, memberships)

These tools give people something useful, and give you clearer signals of intent. No developer needed. Each one can be briefed just like a blog post. This worked so well, we build it out further.

12. Measuring Success in the AI Mode Era

Don't panic if your traffic drops. A lot of it was never useful. Clicks without intent, rankings without returns, those numbers looked good, but didn't always mean much.

Now, the goal is quality. Focus on what moves the needle:

- **AI Citations:** Are AI tools mentioning your brand when answering questions?
- **Task Completion:** Can AI agents do something useful on your site?
- **Cross-Platform Visibility:** Is your brand showing up across the tools AI pulls from?
- **Schema Accuracy:** Is your structured data working the way it should?
- **Agent Conversions:** Are AI tools driving actual leads, signups, or revenue?

These metrics tell you if your organic presence is doing real work.



Deep Research Targeting: How to Match AI Refinement Prompts

Generative search platforms like ChatGPT and Perplexity now guide users with follow-up questions like:

- → Are you comparing providers?"
- → "Do you need integration support?"
- → "What's your company size?"

These aren't just user aids, they're signals.
AI systems are narrowing queries in real time to improve answer accuracy. If you want to get cited, your content needs to anticipate these refinements.

What to Do

- Run prompt tests across ChatGPT, Perplexity, and Gemini
- Document the common refinement paths
- Review the content that gets cited in those flows
- Create or revise pages that explicitly address these follow-ups
- For Gemini (which doesn't prompt), improve structure, clarity, and E-E-A-T so it can infer alignment

Example:
ChatGPT Prompt Refinement

Query: "Best email marketing tools"
Follow-up prompt: "Are you a small business or enterprise?"
Action: Create separate pages:

- Best Email Marketing Tools for Small Businesses
- Best Enterprise Email Marketing Platforms

These match the prompt paths directly, making your content more likely to be referenced.

Example:
Perplexity Prompt Refinement

Query: "What's a good Shopify alternative?"
Follow-up prompt: "Do you want something cheaper or with more features?"
Action: Write targeted comparison posts:

- Cheaper Alternatives to Shopify
- Feature-Rich Shopify Competitors for Growing Stores

Preempt the refinements. Don't wait to be found and build content that's already the answer.

The Future of Search with AI Mode

AI Mode isn't a feature, it's a complete shift in how search works.

Here's what's next:

- **More autonomy:** AI will handle complex tasks without needing a click.
- **Multi-modal search:** Text, voice, images, and video will merge into one seamless experience.
- **Heavier personalisation:** Answers will match each user's preferences, behaviour, and context.
- **Fewer site visits:** For simple questions, users will get what they need from the AI, no clicks required.
- **New success metrics:** SEO will be measured by AI visibility and conversions over traffic and rankings.
- Adapt early.

Focus on what AI sees, understands, and cites.



13. Common Myths About Answer Engine Optimisation

Myth 1:

"If I rank on Google, I'll show up in ChatGPT too."

Not necessarily. ChatGPT pulls from Bing and prioritises structured, citation-ready content.

Myth 2:

"Schema is optional."

Schema is now essential for AI visibility. Without it, your content is harder to parse and less likely to be cited.

Myth 3:

"AI platforms don't send traffic."

Some don't, but Perplexity does. And even when clicks don't come, citations still build brand trust and visibility. SEO has never been about clicks, ultimately it's about conversions.

Myth 4:

"AI search will kill SEO."

Wrong. It's changing the rules. SEO now rewards clarity, real expertise, and structured value.

14. Quick Wins & Practical Tips for AI Search

You don't need to rebuild your whole site to see results. Start with small, high-impact changes that make your content easier for AI to read, understand, and cite. These practical tactics are fast to implement and built for the way search works now.

Semantic optimisation is how content earns attention in AI search. The more clearly your content signals meaning, trust, and relevance, the more often it gets picked up.

These tactics help you get there without guesswork.

Tactic	What To Do	Why It Matters
Use Entity-Rich Language	Be specific with names, places, and descriptions. Example: "New York-style pizza, known for its thin crust..."	AI tools pick up and remember content with clear entities.
Strengthen Internal Links with Purpose	Link pages that logically connect (e.g. styles of pizza to a list of restaurants). Use anchor text that shows the relationship.	Helps AI and users understand the topic network within your site.
Use Deep Structured Data	Add detailed schema markup: LocalBusiness, MenuItem, AggregateRating, etc.	Makes content more machine-readable and more likely to appear in AI results.
Build Topical Authority	Don't stop at one post. Create content clusters (e.g. history, ingredients, comparisons).	Shows depth and builds trust in your niche.
Write for Snippets & AI Answers	Use Q&As, lists, how-tos. Keep answers short and self-contained.	These formats are easily pulled into featured snippets and AI responses.
Switch to Semantic SEO	Focus on meaning. Build pages that answer real questions from multiple angles.	Delivers broader reach and higher-quality citations from AI platforms.

Human Editing Still Wins

AI content is grammatically perfect but often soulless. To earn citations and trust, you still need the human edge.

7 Human Writing Capabilities AI Can't Replicate:

- Pattern recognition
- Topic intuition
- Personal experience
- Moral judgment
- Stylistic taste
- Sensory richness
- Proprietary knowledge

11 Signs a Paragraph Was Written by AI:

- Overuse of passive voice
- Awkward transitions
- Structural monotony
- Sourceless claims
- Generic statements
- Repetitive phrasing
- Unclear subject references
- Lack of narrative logic
- Too-perfect grammar
- Weak conclusions
- No opinion or stake

Copying straight from AI tools into WordPress or other CMS platforms can leave hidden HTML footprints, extra tags, styles, or characters that reveal the source and bloat the code.

Use AI for first drafts, no problem there. AI streamlines content research and can define a logical flow for your page. But final content should *always* pass through human editors, with the goal to inject personality, conversational rhythm, nuance, clarity, and brand voice.

Getting Started: What to Do First

Not sure where to begin? Here's a short list sorted by impact and ease:

High Impact, Low Effort

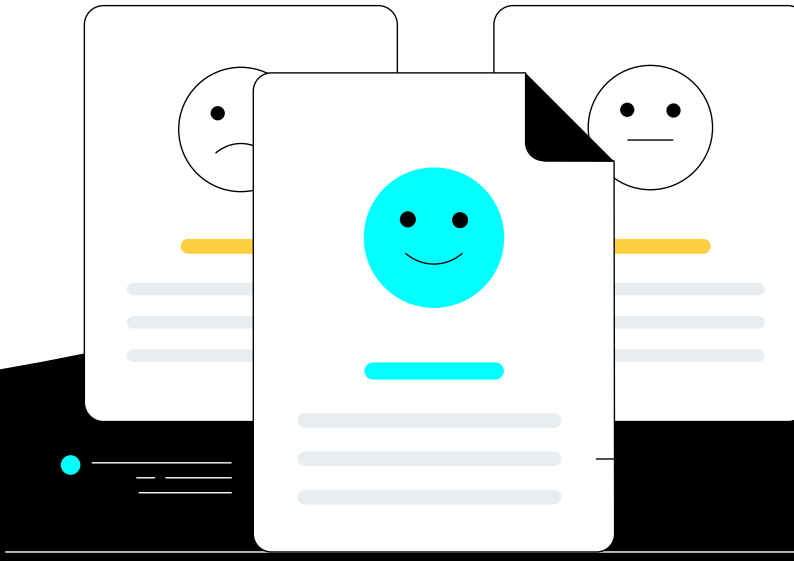
- Allow GPTBot, BingBot, and PerplexityBot in robots.txt
- Add schema markup using tools like RankMath or Schema.org plugins
- Verify and submit your site to Bing Webmaster Tools

High Impact, Medium Effort

- Rewrite 5 key pages with semantic structure and long-tail queries
- Add author bios and trust signals to all educational content
- Launch content across 2 additional platforms (e.g., Reddit and YouTube)

High Effort, Long-Term Payoff

- Build a simple interactive tool (calculator, checklist, selector)
- Create full-topic content hubs around core queries
- Run regular prompt tests across ChatGPT, Gemini, and Perplexity



15. The Organic Dominance Strategy

Organic Dominance means your brand shows up everywhere it matters: Google, ChatGPT, Perplexity, Reddit, YouTube, and more.

The Three Pillars

1. **Impressions:**
   You're visible wherever people search AI tools, search engines, social, video, and community forums.
2. **Rankings:**
   You hold top spots: Google's first page, featured snippets, AI citations, Reddit threads, YouTube results.
3. **Clicks & Conversions:**
   People don't just find you. They engage, click, and convert because your content answers their questions and earns their trust.

Build a Connected Content Ecosystem

If you stop treating platforms as silos, all your owned channels will start feeding into each other. This is about delivering a consistent brand message for a stronger presence.

Here's how they should work together:

- **Website SEO:** Builds authority and feeds AI citations
- **YouTube:** Supports Google and YouTube search with watchable, valuable content
- **Social media:** Boosts reach and adds credibility signals
- **Digital PR:** Earns backlinks and gets you cited
- **Reddit & forums:** Show you know your stuff

Optimise by Platform (but Keep the Strategy Unified)

Your core message stays the same. The tactics, content format, and tone flex by platform.

- **Google:** Nail content depth, E-E-A-T, technical setup, and UX
- **ChatGPT:** Use clear structure, direct answers, and Bing optimisation
- **Perplexity:** Focus on facts, citations, and being listed in trusted roundups
- **Gemini** (Google AI Overviews & AI Mode): Combine schema markup, deep content, and mobile-friendly design
- **YouTube:** Use clear titles, thumbnails, and valuable content that satisfies search and recommendations
- **Reddit:** Be useful, honest, and non-promotional in relevant threads
- **Social platforms:** Post in the native style, what works on TikTok doesn't work on LinkedIn

Organic Dominance doesn't happen by accident.

Its consistent execution across platforms, built on a foundation of content that's structured, helpful, and everywhere your audience is.

16. What Brands Should Actually Be Doing

You need to be seen as the source people trust and AI tools cite. Here's how to build real authority and stay visible across the search landscape.

1 Build Real Authority (Not Just Domain Authority)

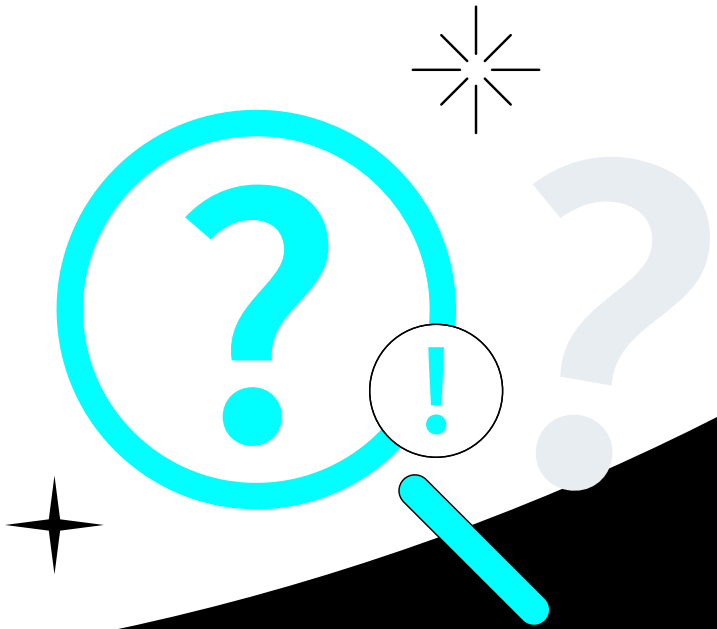
- Know your stuff. Go deep in your niche.
- Write content that shows expertise, not jargon.
- Use real examples, results, and case studies.
- Be seen on multiple platforms with a consistent message.
- Contribute to your industry through guest posts, podcasts, and talks.
- Back it up with credentials or certifications.
- Publish your own data, research, or surveys.
- Create hands-on, how-to content that proves you've done the work.

2 Show Up Where People Search

- Be active on Reddit, YouTube, and other UGC platforms.
- Don't just repost and create content that fits each platform.
- Join real conversations in your niche.
- Work with influencers who already have platform trust.
- Tailor your content for discovery: Reddit titles, YouTube thumbnails, TikTok hooks.
- Track what's trending and respond fast.
- Show up in niche forums where experts talk.
- Make stuff that people want to share.

3 Make Content That AI Wants to Cite

- Link your ideas together with a clear semantic structure.
- Cover topics fully, don't leave gaps.
- Tie your content into known entities and concepts.
- Use proper HTML and semantic tags so AI can read it cleanly.
- Add rich schema markup to define what your content is about.
- Use headings, lists, and tables to make the info easy to pull.
- Answer common questions directly (and clearly).
- Link to credible sources.



4 Get Niche and Stay There

- Pick a narrow space where you can lead.
- Answer the questions others ignore or gloss over.
- Cover every angle of your niche to build topical authority.
- Offer insights generalists can't.
- Create "definitive" content others will reference.
- Develop unique methods or frameworks people remember.
- Publish niche case studies that show your depth.
- Own high-value micro-niches no one else is touching.

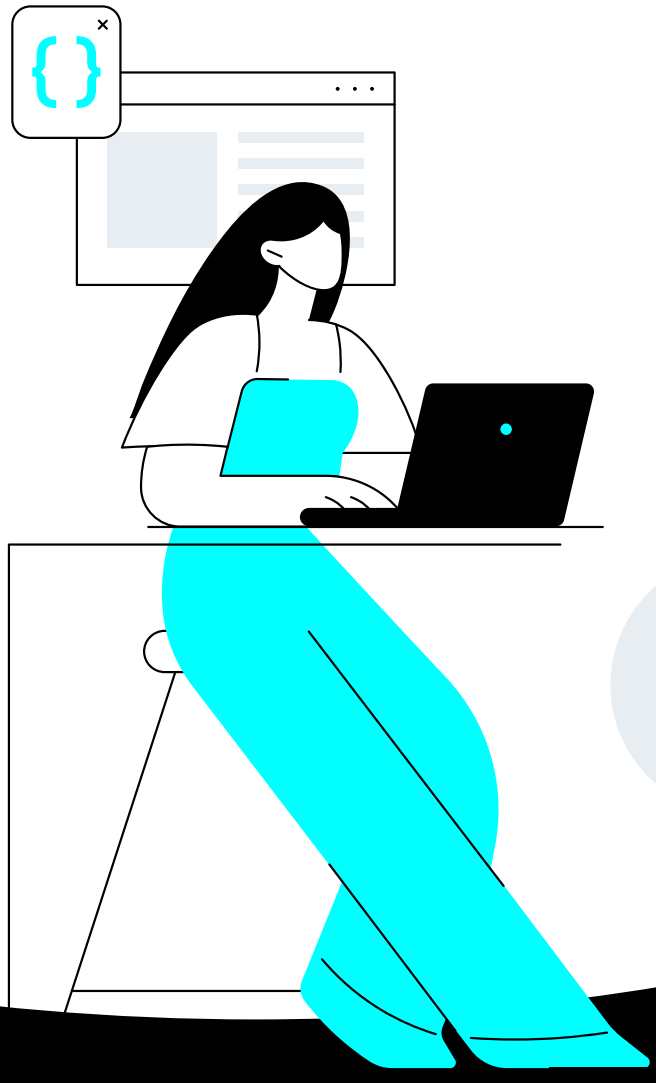
5 Design the Whole Customer Journey

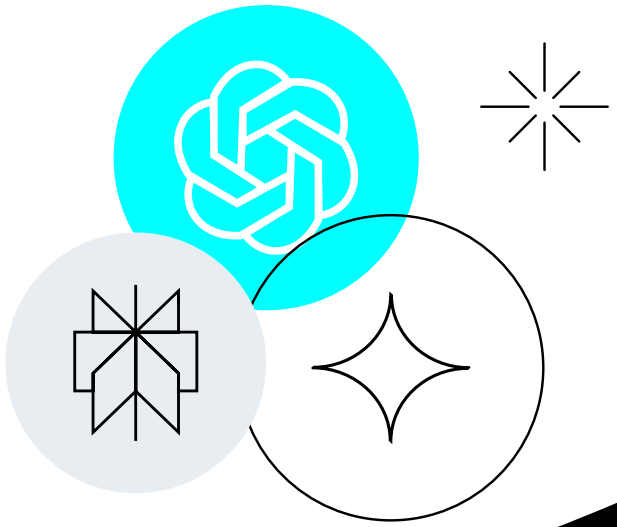
- Map every step from the first search to the final decision.
- Match content to where the user is in that journey.
- Guide users naturally from one platform to another.
- Don't just count clicks and track what converts.
- Use micro-conversions (downloads, email signups) to keep momentum.
- Answer questions tied to buying decisions at every stage.
- Create clear next steps across all touchpoints.
- Use attribution modelling to see what's working across channels.

Stop chasing rankings.

Start building trust, relevance, and presence across every platform your audience uses.

That's how real authority gets built in 2025 and beyond.





17. How We're Doing It at StudioHawk

We've moved from traditional SEO to AEO-first visibility.

That means:

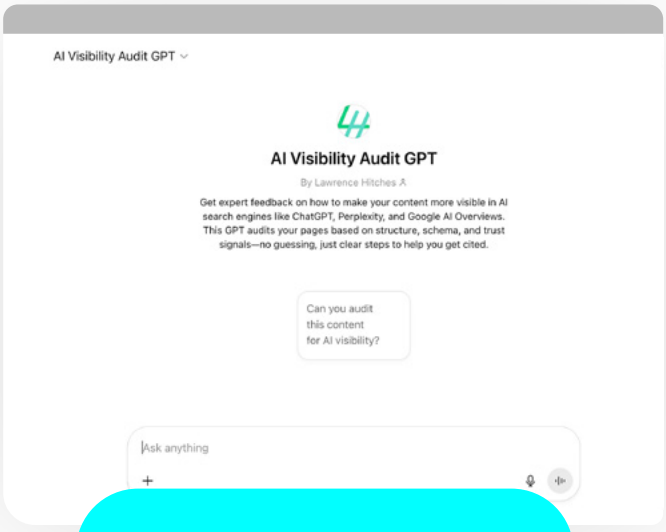
- Optimising for Google, ChatGPT, Perplexity, Gemini, and more
- Creating content that earns citations across search, social, and forums
- Testing what LLMs pick up, and building around it

We're seeing real results already, including with our eComm brand, Kadi.

Our approach is simple:

- **Authority is the algorithm.** Prove you know your stuff.
- **Visibility is platform-wide.** Be present everywhere AI looks.
- **Value leads.** Help people. Skip the noise.

Want to see where you stand?



Try our free AI Visibility Audit.



18. Final Word & First Steps

AI search has already changed the game. If your content isn't structured, trusted, and visible across platforms, you're invisible.

Here's what to focus on now:

- Make sure your content is clear, structured, and semantically rich
- Submit your site to Bing and Google's indexing tools
- Check that major bots (GPTBot, BingBot, PerplexityBot) can access your site
- Track how and where your brand shows up in AI search responses
- Create content that solves problems.

The longer you wait, the harder it gets to catch up.

Start now.
Be the source, not just another link.

For personalised advice, get in touch with us at studiohawk.com.au - we're on this AI journey together and here to help you dominate this new era of SEO.

