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SEO in the AGE of AI





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SEO in the AGE of AI

Published by Search Engine Journal
160 W. Camino Real, Unit #606
Boca Raton, FL 33432
SearchEngineJournal.com

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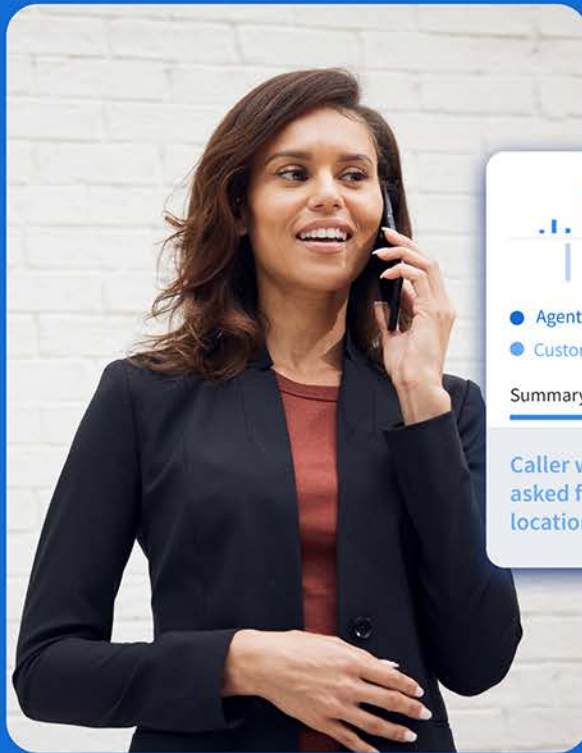
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☹️ Neutral

● Agent
● Customer

Summary Transcription

Overall sentiment
😊 Positive

Caller wanted an appointment for Friday. Rep asked for details about the appointment and location. Appointment scheduled with field rep.

☹️ Negative

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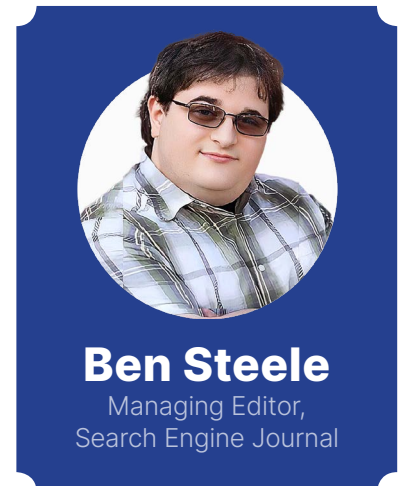
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Introduction

What does “the age of AI” mean?

AI has been around for years. Why is now the age of AI?

No matter what happens in the future, it seems that AI technology has reached a level of distribution across digital marketing that the changes it brings are permanent and sweeping.



This is less about the AI hype and more about the level to which AI is integrated into platforms, software, and workflows. Hype is, of course, part of that.

Love it or hate it, AI has hit a point where SEO professionals must learn about it.

AI has been in the backend of search algorithms for a long time, but its prominence continues to increase. Generative AI features are also baked into search experiences.

You must change your SEO strategy based on the kinds of information users can now acquire without clicking on websites.

On the other hand, new AI tools enable you to perform advanced tasks quickly. You can also use AI models to understand how to improve your information architecture.

What You'll Read In This Ebook

This ebook collects many of SEJ's best resources on AI, as well as insightful opinions from contributors and guides for further reading.

To fully understand the scope of AI in SEO, the first section summarizes all the major events over the last few months. This helps you build an idea of the trajectory so you can make educated guesses about the direction of the technology and its implementation.

Next, the book explores the impact that generative AI search features have had on SEO.

Then you'll find a series of how-to resources and recommendations about building an SEO strategy in a digital marketing environment so heavily impacted by AI.

Learn to adapt to the positive and negative changes and reach your audiences through the noise.



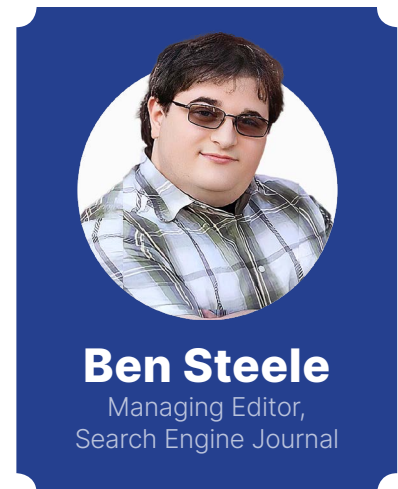
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A Year Of AI Developments

It's difficult to sum up all the events in the SEO industry that involve AI over the last year. But it's important to understand the development of AI technology and its incorporation into the platforms we, and audiences, use.

From there, you can build strategies for effectively working with AI in platforms and incorporating AI tools into your workflows.

First, we'll go over some of the major news events and reactions as reported by Search Engine Journal.



May 2023

[Google Invites More Users To Try Search Generative Experience After Recent Quality Updates](#)

Google first opened testing for its generative AI search feature, "Search Generative Experience" in May of 2023, and gradually increased the number of users who could take part. Eventually, all you needed was to opt in to Google labs to test SGE.

August 2023

[Google Adds More Links In SGE's AI-Generated Summaries](#)

Initial responses from SEO pros to SGE expressed concern about the fact that links were difficult to find and would result in many more "zero click" searches.

Google made this change to address user preferences, but it also provided a little relief to concerned publishers and SEO professionals.

October 2023

[Google's SGE Gets An AI Upgrade: Now Generates Images & Written Content](#)

These new features allowed users to ask SGE to create things such as images and drafts for them.

[SGE Responses Continue To Shrink In Google Search Results](#)

After a period of testing, Google appeared to be pulling back on the number of queries that triggered SGE results for those opted in.

November 2023

[Google's Search Generative Experience \(SGE\) Expands To 120+ Countries](#)

Google expanded SGE a few months after first opening it up to testing in labs. In the meantime, there was much speculation from SEO pros about what a final version of generative AI chats in search would look like and how it might impact websites.

December 2023

[Google Introduces Gemini And Updates Bard With Gemini Pro](#)

Google unveiled "Gemini," a generative AI system it claimed to be "multimodal." Multimodal means that the system can understand and generate multiple forms of information such as text, code, image, and video.

February 2024

[Google Rebrands Bard As Gemini, Launches New Model & Mobile App](#)

Google upgraded and rebranded its experimental Bard AI system to Gemini. The Gemini release was based on a new Ultra 1.0 model.

[Google Expands Gemini AI Across Its Product Suite](#)

Gemini has continued to roll out to Google services and products, such as [mobile devices](#) and Google ads. Just how much impact Gemini has on the backend search algorithms remains unclear, but considering that search algorithms have been using AI for years, it's fair to assume that new AI technology is likely to be integrated into them.

[Google's Gemini Decoded: Unveiling The Impact On SEO](#)

SEJ contributor Aleh Barysevich wrote about the potential impact of Gemini shortly after its rollout, predicting that search will become multimodal and user behavior signals will become more important to SEO.

[Why Did Google Gemini "Leak" Chat Data?](#)

Users quickly encountered problems with Gemini. The chat data "leak" wasn't actually a leak, as it only happened with publicly viewable chat pages, but it was a poorly timed error, coming 24 hours after release.

[Google Gemini Failure Offers Lessons For SEO](#)

The failure and subsequent pausing of Gemini's image generation features offers a clearer view of a product rushed to market without sufficient testing. The image generator caused a ruckus for refusing to generate images when innocent and basic requests flagged the safety systems. Users didn't appreciate asking for an image and receiving a lecture about ethics from an AI instead.

Google responded to these reports by explaining that it was overzealous in applying guardrails to the systems to prevent harmful content.

[Google Announces Deal To Show More Reddit Content](#)

Google and Reddit entered into a deal not just for Google to show Reddit content in search, but also for Google to train AI models using Reddit content.

March 2024

[Google SGE: Study Reveals Potential Disruption For Brands & SEO](#)

Search Generative Experience was the talk of the SEO community for many months, with industry pros releasing studies attempting to evaluate and predict its impact on search results and traffic.

April 2024

[Google Declares It The “Gemini Era” As Revenue Grows 15%](#)

Google reports 15% year-over-year growth and begins to lay out a plan for continuing AI integration.

May 2024

[Google Rolls Out AI-Powered Overviews To US Search Results](#)

After delays with unspecified end points, Google releases a generative-AI search feature, renaming it from SGE to “AI Overviews.”

[Google’s AI Overviews Go Viral, Draw Mainstream Media Scrutiny](#)

The AI Overviews go viral almost immediately for funny, nonsensical results, as well as false and potentially dangerous information.

[Ex-Google Manager Compares AI Overviews To Failed Google+](#)

Google faces criticism from many sides for the rollout of AI Overviews and AI-focused priorities. Criticism comes from media outlets, social media users, SEO professionals, and a former employee.

[Google To Prioritize AI Overviews Ads Over Organic Search](#)

Google reveals that it plans to serve ads with AI Overviews, causing them to take up more space and displace organic results further.

[Google To Limit AI Overviews For “Nonsensical” Queries](#)

Google was quick to address the criticism and dialed back the visibility of AI Overviews for certain queries. As dangerous or misleading instances were reported, they seemed to be removed.

June 2024

[Google Dials Back AI Overviews In Search Results, Study Finds](#)

AI Overviews evolved over the weeks after being released, occurring less frequently but becoming longer when they did occur.

July 2024

[Study Backs Google's Claims: AI Search Boosts User Satisfaction](#)

A study on user satisfaction found that satisfaction with search engines and social media platforms either remained consistent or rose slightly from the previous year.

The study's conclusions conflict with the very public criticism and viral derision AI Overviews was receiving from mainstream media, individual users, and publishers.

[Google's AI Overviews Coincide With Drop In Mobile Searches](#)

On the other hand, a different study, done by Rand Fishkin, suggested that the AI Overviews release coincided with a significant drop in mobile search traffic, which could indicate the opposite: that users are dissatisfied.

[Looking Ahead To The Future – SGE, Gemini...And AGI?](#)

Search Engine Journal contributor Marie Haynes wrote about Google's AI developments and the future, discussing the future of monetization models in search engines.



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Shifts In User Behavior Due To Generative AI

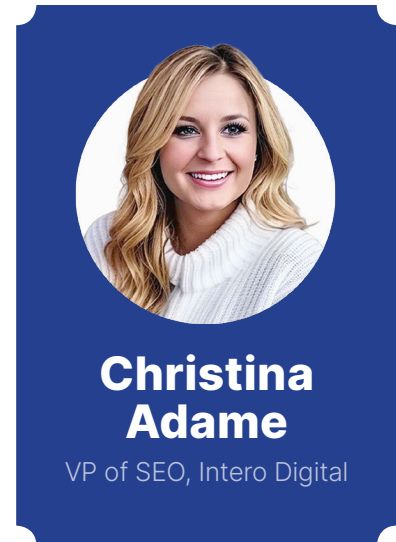
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Generative AI is rapidly [transforming the landscape of search platforms](#), reshaping how consumers find and interact with information. As AI-driven technologies evolve, they are influencing user behavior, the role of traditional search engines, and the strategies businesses must employ to remain competitive in the digital space.

One of the most significant impacts of generative AI on search platforms is the shift in user behavior. According to recent data, [79% of consumers](#) are expected to use AI-enhanced search within the next year, and 70% already trust the results provided by generative AI. This growing trust in AI-driven search tools, such as ChatGPT and Perplexity AI, underscores a fundamental change in how users approach search queries. Instead of relying solely on traditional search engines like Google, more users are turning to AI platforms for personalized, relevant, and quick answers. For instance, ChatGPT alone has over [180.5 million weekly active users](#) while Perplexity AI's search volume has surged by [658% in the past year](#), reaching approximately 10 million active monthly users.

This shift has profound implications for traditional search engines and SEO strategies. Gartner predicts that traditional search volume will drop by 25% by 2026, with organic search traffic expected to [decrease by over 50%](#) as consumers increasingly embrace AI-powered search. This trend suggests that businesses that integrate Generative Engine Optimization (GEO) into their marketing strategies will capitalize on opportunities to maintain market share.

The rise of AI in search platforms is likely to create a more competitive environment for brands. With AI engines prioritizing high-quality, relevant content, businesses must invest in creating content that meets these standards to remain visible and engage users effectively. Luckily, there is an overlap in quality SEO and GEO core principles. Businesses that already engage in high-quality SEO strategies can benefit greatly from incorporating GEO tactics:



- 1 Comprehensive Keyword Research:** Cover traditional search terms, long-tail keywords, and conversational queries, including contextual phrases for AI optimization.
- 2 Unified Content Strategy:** Create high-quality, relevant content that performs well on both traditional search engines and AI platforms, aligning with E-E-A-T principles.
- 3 Technical Optimization:** Ensure your website is optimized for load speed, mobile friendliness, structured data, and natural language processing.
- 4 Data-Driven Strategies:** Leverage insights from SEO and GEO data to continually refine and enhance your optimization efforts.



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SEO Impact Of Generative AI Search Features

For better or worse, AI Overviews are likely here to stay in some form or another. For one, Google has invested a lot of money in AI technology. Additionally, in the first half of 2024 Google's decision-making was driven by users, not publishers.

[Google's Indifference To Site Publishers Explained](#)

In the previous chapter, we saw that a study suggested AI Overviews, despite loud complaints from users and publishers both, hasn't resulted in a drop in user satisfaction. This is short-term data, and it doesn't negate the bad press, so I'm going to define continuing to lean into generative AI search features as "a choice."

In August, however, Google released a core update that it claimed addressed feedback from content creators and publishers about the quality of search results. The update focused on prioritizing high-quality content no matter where it comes from – even small less-known websites – and de-prioritizing low-quality, SEO-focused content no matter where it comes from – even massive brands and websites.

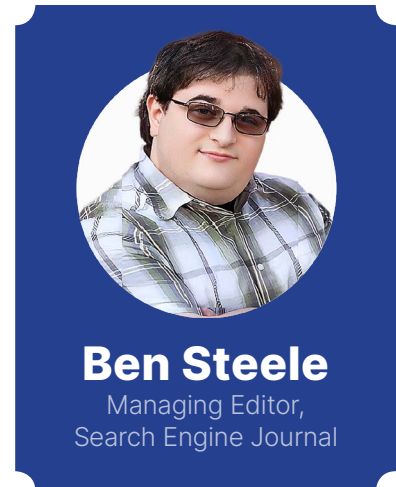
[Google Rolls Out August 2024 Core Update](#)

At the time of writing, we have yet to see the impact of this update. Whether it truly addresses the concerns of publishers who are suffering from other algorithm changes remains to be seen.

However, it seems that Google does very much pay attention to user data.

In addition, pressure and competition from other search engines and chatbots is likely to keep Google focused on AI, and especially on monetization.

What seems most likely is it will continue to prioritize AI features while tracking impact on user behavior, pulling back when the impact is negative.



All that to say that generative AI search features in Google and other search engines are likely here to stay.

Ex-Googler Pedro Dias, talking to SEJ's Shelley Walsh, said:

“As I have mentioned before, Google wants to be your personal assistant and not your friendly librarian.

This is an important distinction – to see Google from this perspective moving forward. Instead of pointing us to the books, they will do the work for us.”

[AI Overviews – How Will They Impact The Industry? We Ask Pedro Dias](#)

Now that AI Overviews have been live for a while, some folks have been studying them. Although it's likely to undergo even more changes, there's a lot of information we can gain about what does and doesn't trigger the overviews and what impact they have.

[Google AI Overviews: New Research Offers Insights](#)

Research by BrightEdge in June 2024 indicated how AI Overviews are interacting with specific searches. Local searches and searches with intent to do or purchase something seemed to trigger the overviews less. Informational searches, such as medical queries, seemed to trigger the overviews more.

The study also notes that AI Overviews will try and predict follow-up questions. This lines up with what Dias said about Google trying to be more of a personal assistant.

For SEO, this is an important direction to understand. Basic queries and answers may not perform well in an SEO strategy in the future.

Earning space on the SERPs in the future could be about predicting needs and followups better than AI can, or providing this kind of content in ways that AI can't by leaning into direct personal experience.

Currently, AI Overviews have a tiny percentage of appearance in news searches. Even in verticals where the overviews appear most often, such as health, the rate is a little under 30% according to a study by NewzDash.

[Google's AI Overviews Appear In 3.9% Of Trending News Searches, Study Finds](#)

AI Overviews can be more or less disruptive depending on your vertical. However, studies become out of date fast.

Katie Morton, SEJ's Editor In Chief said:

“Study to study, the results are short-lived. Google is constantly changing AIO as well as the algorithms. It's also impossible to say, without a massive data study, how much disruption is caused by AIO vs. algorithm changes.”

Here's the question we need to be asking ourselves: Can the answer to this query be served inside a search platform without a click?

If the answer is yes, then in the future, it very well could be.

There's also a chance that purchase intent queries could be impacted as well, as Google plans to prioritize ads directly in AI Overviews results.

[Google To Prioritize AI Overviews Ads Over Organic Search](#)

Mordy Oberstein, head of SEO brand at Wix, recently wrote about the “conversational” trends of the internet.

[Why You Should Be Focusing On Brand Marketing Right Now](#)

Oberstein's perspective is that brand marketing and integrated marketing efforts to build loyal audiences and communities could be the future of digital marketing campaigns.

Looking forward, it seems that SEO professionals will need to understand:

- How to optimize to show up in AI results.
- How to provide better information than AI where and when it counts.
- How to incorporate AI into SEO workflows where it provides productivity benefits, but remaining conscious of risk.
- How to build genuine trust with audiences and build communities without relying on traffic referral platforms.

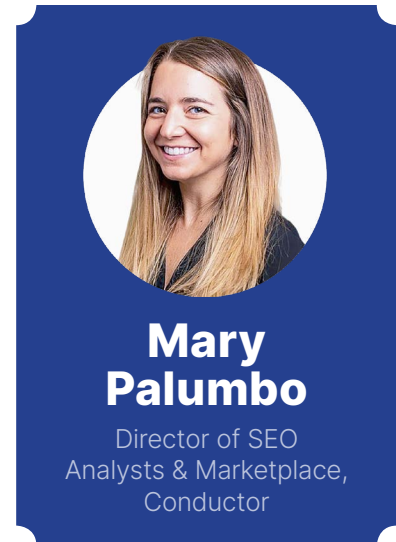


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How To Stand Out, Differentiate Your Content, And Build Trust

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With the increasing influence of AI-driven algorithms in search engines, some SEO strategies must evolve to stay competitive in the SERPs. At the same time, there are basic strategies that have stood the test of time and are still applicable (or more applicable!) today.



1 Make Your Content Stand Out:

- **AI-Optimized Content:** Leverage AI tools to refine your keyword research and generate People Also Ask questions based on search intent. Create content that directly addresses specific user queries.
- **Compelling Titles and Meta Descriptions:** Create engaging, keyword-rich titles and meta descriptions with a clear call to action. Try experimenting with different CTAs to see their impact on click-through rates.
- **Visual and Interactive Content:** Use high-quality images, videos, and interactive elements to capture your user's attention and increase engagement.
- **Featured Snippets:** Find keywords that you rank well for but don't own the featured snippet result type. Create featured snippet copy that stands out from the competition.

2 Differentiate Your Content From The Competition:

- **AI-Driven Content Creation:** Use AI for content creation but ensure it's combined with unique human insights. AI can assist with data analysis and identifying trends, but the human touch is crucial for adding value and impact.
- **Value Proposition:** Highlight what makes your service or content unique from the competition.

- **Unique Perspectives or Case Studies:** Share original insights, in-depth research, or case studies that offer value not found elsewhere. This also helps establish your site as an authoritative source.
- **Rewrite and Update Content:** Think about important trends and developments that may make your content outdated. Rewrite and update it to retain and increase its value over time.

3 **Build Trust and Authority:**

- **Authoritative Backlinks:** Secure backlinks from reputable, relevant websites to boost authority and signal trustworthiness.
- **Highlighting Expertise:** Add credentials, author bios with links to social media profiles, and trust signals like testimonials to showcase your expertise.
- **Secure and User-Friendly Website:** To build trust with both search engines and users, ensure your website is secure (HTTPS), fast-loading, and user-friendly.
- **Transparency with AI Tools:** Clearly disclose the use of AI in content creation. Transparency builds trust with users and aligns with search engines' focus on authentic, reliable content.

By effectively implementing these strategies, you can stay ahead of your competition and stand out in the evolving digital environment.



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Authority & Branding For Maximum SEO Impact

New consumer-facing AI systems put emphasis on authority. Citations and brand recognition are critical for surfacing in those AI results.

But these elements are also critical for building loyal audiences and connecting with users at the right time.

Platforms are creating more barriers to referral traffic. Building direct connections and active communities is becoming core to modern SEO strategies.

Two of the contributors at SEJ have been writing about authority and branding in the face of AI developments: Lemuel Park, Co-Founder & CTO at BrightEdge and Mordy Oberstein, Head of SEO Branding at Wix.

Park's recent writing focuses on what topical authority means and how to prioritize citations.

AI Agnostic Optimization: Content For Topical Authority And Citations

The search and AI ecosystem is full of promise, options, and new ways for literally every type of marketer to evolve and grow.

Yes, there is lots of complexity, but there is also commonality: the need for marketers to focus on topical approaches to content creation, build their brand authority for [AI citations](#), and become more predictive in their approach to how consumers interact online.



Ben Steele

Managing Editor,
Search Engine Journal



Lemuel Park

Co-Founder & CTO,
BrightEdge

The introduction of Google AI Overviews and new AI-first platforms like Perplexity AI are making how consumers find answers to their needs a lot more complex. The advancement of LLMs, such as Claude and Google Gemini, are also revolutionizing content outputs in visual and video formats. Just recently, Bing introduced GSE and OpenAI [SearchGPT](#).

One thing they all have in common is that they are all fighting for the best **authoritative sources for information and citations.**



I will mainly use Google AI Overviews in Search as an example, as they currently offer the most rich insights and best practices that are applicable to future and upcoming engines.

AI And Search Citations, Authority, And Your Brand

Being the cited source is quickly becoming the new form of ranking.

As AI looks to cite trustworthy and relevant content, brands need to be the source.

While [every engine has a different approach](#), the reality is that success relies on sources and quality.

They look to answer questions in many ways, and citations are common across the board. They look at authoritative sources to see whether that source answers that question, and then they seem to know whether it's quotable.

- Google wants quotable content that is above the fold, not buried. It also likes the question to be directly answered.
- Perplexity, which has steadily increased traffic referrals ([31%](#) in June), focuses on academic and research citations but has had issues with attribution and sources.
- Bing GSE is engineering its search results to satisfy users in a way that encourages discovery on the websites that originate the content.
- ChatGPT/Search does not need direct answers; it will digest them and express them in its own language. At first glance, it mainly cites and links to sources developed with input from major publishers like the Atlantic and NewsCorp.

So, as marketers, it is the simplest way to start focusing on the commonality and best practices that prepare you for what is ahead. Then, you can pivot and adapt as we learn more about how citations are shown and treated as each AI engine evolves.

For example, Google AI Overviews is beginning to cite more authoritative review publications to help users shop. The removal of user-generated content (UGC) and reviews from [Reddit and Quora dropped to near zero in AI Overviews](#).

- **Reddit citations:** 85.71% decrease.
- **Quora citations:** 99.69% decrease.

User-generated reviews may not be designed for a broader audience and lack the objectivity that a publication would. BrightEdge Generative Parser™ has recently found:

- 49% increase in presence from PC Mag.
- 39% in Forbes increase in presence from Forbes.

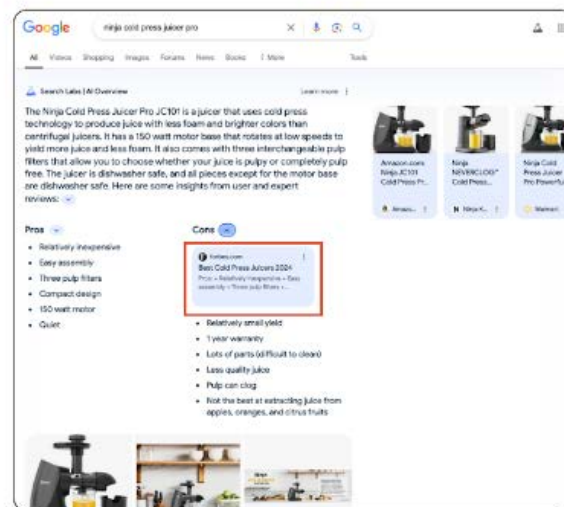
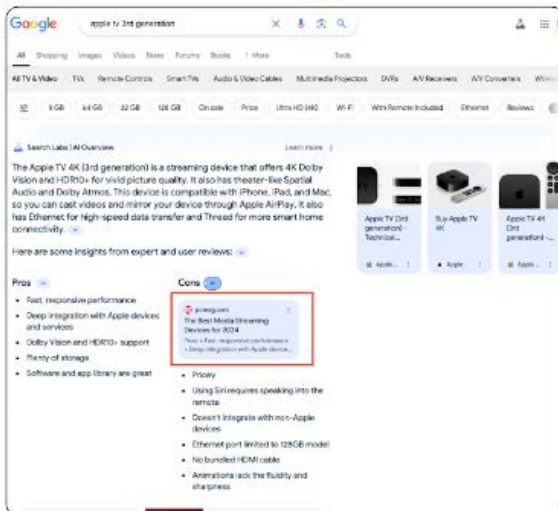


Image from author, July 2024

Sites like Forbes are becoming key players in AI Overviews. As well as thought leadership and instructive information, their comparative product reviews define where a product shines and where it falls short against competitors.

Here are three things that marketers can master now to stay ahead in AI and search.

1. Ensure AI Engines Find You: Become The Cited Source

Start by identifying core – and broader (see later in the article) – [topics relevant to your audience](#) and aligning with your business objectives. These topics should serve as the foundation for a thematic content strategy.

Schema+: Diversify And Mark-Up Your Content As Much As Possible

The importance of diverse content formats cannot be overstated. To adapt to answer engine models, content must be comprehensive and encompass multiple modalities, including text, video, infographics, and interactive elements.

This approach ensures that content caters to diverse user preferences and provides information in formats that are most accessible and engaging.

Core technical SEO approaches like [Schema Markup](#) are essential for content marketers aiming to enhance their visibility and relevance in search results, as they help search engines better understand the content.

This improves the likelihood of content being featured as a direct answer and enhances its overall discoverability.

- Provide AI engines with hints on who you are.
- Ensure your teams look at things like Schema so AI entities can see your content.
- Little formats like these can tell the AI models how to use your content.
- It ensures that you are more frequently cited as the source in topics where you already have the right to win.

Develop content clusters around these core topics, covering different aspects, subtopics, and related themes. Each piece of content within a cluster should complement and support others, creating a cohesive narrative for multiple users.

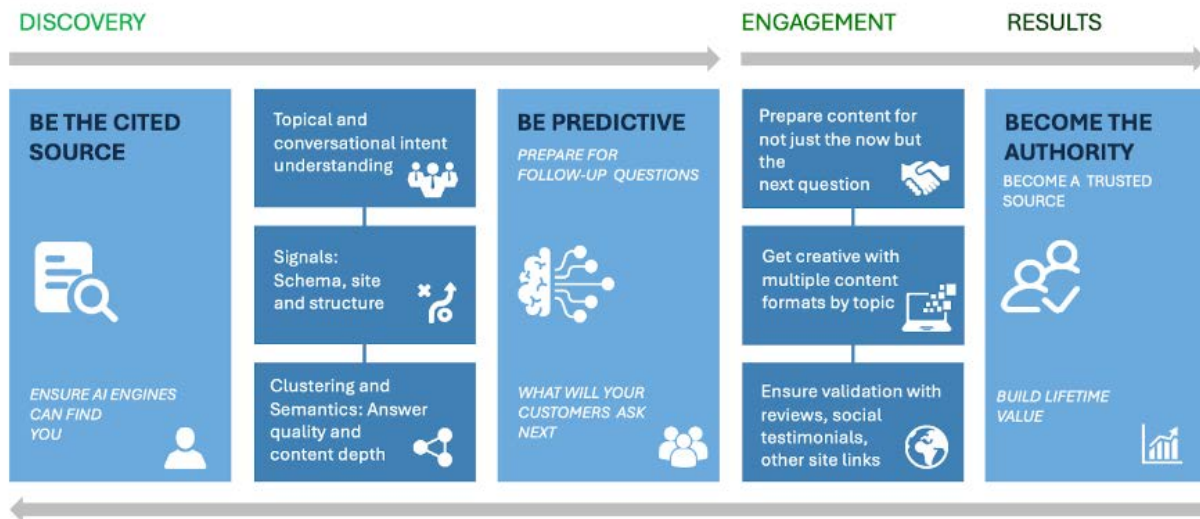


Image from author, July 2024

2. Anticipate Customers' Next Questions: Focus On The Follow-Up

Build Thematic Content & Focus On Content Clustering

AI-powered search engines like AI Overviews (as explained in [The Ultimate Guide to AI Overviews](#), free, ungated, and updated monthly by my company, BrightEdge) are redefining the criteria for visibility by prioritizing thematically connected content.

This applies even where the content doesn't rank highly in traditional search results, making intelligent content clustering and thematic coherence essential.

Adopting a strategic approach to [thematic content and content clustering](#) means that instead of creating isolated pieces of content, you focus on developing interconnected content clusters that comprehensively explore various aspects of a topic.

- AI search aims to do more than display a list of products for the keywords.
- They want to anticipate the following questions that the demographic will likely have: how, what, where, and more.
- AI models will cite trusted sources to generate these answers before the user even thinks about asking them.
- Marketers need to create content for all these types of follow-ups in different formats.

Ensure that content within the same cluster is interlinked using relevant anchor text.

This helps search engines understand the thematic relationship between different pieces of content and strengthens your website's authority on the topic.

Understanding what triggers things in AI Overviews will become essential.

For example, in June, there was a 20% increase in "What is" queries showing an [AI Overview](#). For brand-specific queries, there was a 20% decrease.

This could show that Google uses AI for more complex, knowledge-intensive topics while playing it safe with brand queries.

However, expect this to change monthly, as SEJ states and shares more below:

- **Read:** [Research Confirms Google AIO Keyword Trends](#)

3. Prove Your Expertise: Become The Authority In Your Field Domain

Baking User And Topical Intent Into Every Piece Of Content

Traditional SEO focuses on keyword rankings and visibility, but AI-driven search engines prioritize delivering precise, relevant answers based on user queries. This shift means simply ranking highly is no longer enough; you must ensure your [content aligns closely with users' needs and topics of interest](#).

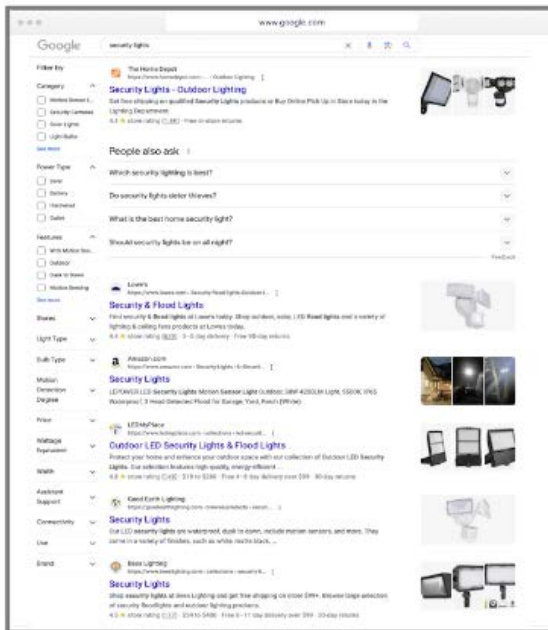
AI-powered search engines, like ChatGPT, Google's SGE, Perplexity, and now [SearchGPT](#), are designed to comprehend the context and nuance behind a user's query. They aim to provide direct answers and anticipate follow-up questions, creating a more dynamic and personalized search experience.

A Note of Serving Multiple Intents

AI-powered search results are evolving to coexist with traditional search. Google is experimenting with [blending conventional and AI-enhanced search results](#). For example, searching for [outdoor lighting solutions].

The traditional search component assumes the user intends to purchase such products and ranks relevant ecommerce sites accordingly. This serves users who know exactly what they're looking for and need quick access to buy options.

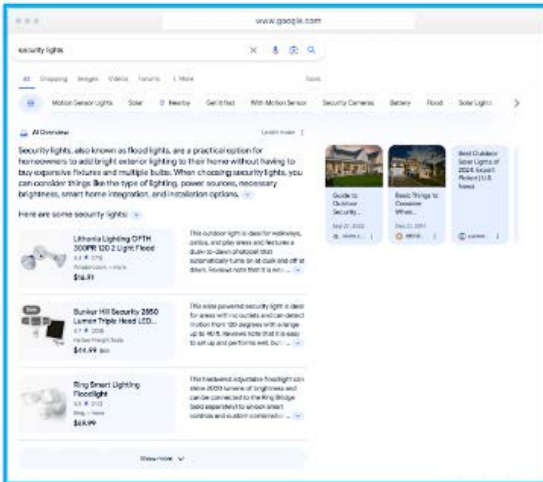
MULTIPLE INTENT TYPES: TRADITIONAL AND AI-BASED RESULTS



TRADITIONAL RESULT

Assumes the consumer wants to buy security lights and ranks/cities places where they can do that.

AI OVERVIEW



Serves customers who need to have a broader understanding of security lights.

- It does this in a very conversational way.
- Offers an informed opinion on some products consumers may like based on what is explained.

June 30, 2024

June 30, 2024, Brightedge

In contrast, the AI-generated overview caters to users seeking a broader understanding of outdoor lighting. It might provide a conversational explanation covering various aspects, such as:

- Key considerations when choosing outdoor lights.
- Various types of outdoor lighting and their characteristics.
- Available power options for outdoor illumination.
- Understanding brightness levels and their significance.
- Best practices for installation and placement.
- Tips for maintaining outdoor lighting systems.

Anticipating and addressing related queries helps build the site's credibility and improves the chances of being featured in AI-generated answers.

Since [AI-first engines, LLMs, and traditional search engines](#) are designed to recognize and prioritize unique, high-quality content over generic or duplicated material, this increases the chances that your content will surface in response to user queries.

- Prove your expertise and make it easy for AI models to trust what you say.
- AI engines need to see that your content is approved (validated) by other experts, as well as user-generated content and reviews.
- Ensure your content reaches expert influencers and connects to related sources and websites.
- Gain as much third-party validation that your content is trustworthy.
- Ensure your content workflows consider traditional ranking factors and AI citations, as they rely on some standard but separate signals.

Video And YouTube

We are now seeing (pros and cons) YouTube videos cited in AI Overviews in ways that benefit marketers at the top of the funnel.

If YouTube were not part of Google, it would be the [sixth biggest digital platform in the USA](#). It commands a lot of reach!

CITED SOURCES FOR AI OVERVIEWS

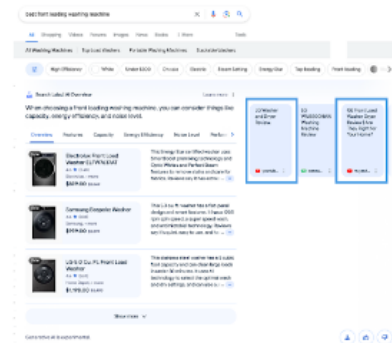
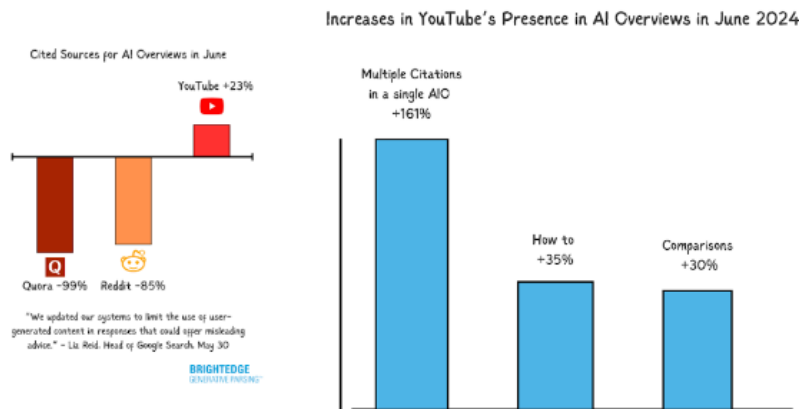


Image from author, June 2024

As you can see above, this offers new advantages to marketers targeting early-stage prospects. Visual content can effectively showcase specific offerings and provide tangible reviews, potentially swaying purchasing choices such as buying a washing machine.

They are being shown to help simplify complex topics for users. For example, abstract technological concepts like “blockchain fundamentals” often become clearer through visual demonstrations, accelerating audience understanding.

Ensure that when you identify high-potential topical themes, you pair them with AI’s video citation preferences. Video is on an explosive growth trajectory, so start to build and get creative as part of your more comprehensive marketing strategy and for maximum AI Overview visibility.

This helps offer multiple reference possibilities. A single piece of video content could be cited numerous times, expanding your topical reach, which I mentioned earlier.

- **Read:** [20 Confirmed Facts About YouTube’s Algorithm](#)

Key Takeaways

In an era where AI-driven search and AI-first answer engines or assistants reshape how markers operate, marketers, SEO pros, content creators, and brand marketers must adapt their strategies to optimize for AI answers and multiple types of search engines.

Below are a few end notes and outliers for your consideration also:

- The core basics of [SEO and classic search](#) still matter.
- [AI Overviews](#) are reduced in size to give more concise answers.
- AI answers more complex questions, but more common questions and queries are also answered in better-served universal or classic formats – balance will be essential.
- Monitor with cadence new engines; many are so new it will take an informed data-led opinion to form.
- Going forward, different types of consumers will use engines for various use cases, and each engine will cite some common sources and other specific ones like news academics and publishers. Let’s see how it develops; it is something I am looking into myself now.

- Always remember that everything varies depending on your vertical and type of business. [Experimentation is still very heavy everywhere, including at Google!](#)
- With new entrants emerging, the news and live experiments every day expect change.
- What happens in one month can differ from another while engines find equilibrium.

Essential best practices, such as focusing on user intent, leveraging structured data markup, and embracing multimedia content, aren't going anywhere. Classic search is here to stay; many skills are transferable to AI.

The future lies in a balance of classic online marketing, adapting to AI, and uncovering new AI engines' nuances as they grow and establish more of a foothold. It is an exciting time, and I think exercising a little patience will help us all prevail.

As for SearchGPT, [I believe its evolution does not diminish SEO](#); on the contrary, it makes it even more critical!

For now, monitor and use time-based data as your compass, and don't react to opinions without some substance behind them.

More from Lemuel Park:

[Chatbots And AI Search Engines Converge: Key Strategies For SEO](#) →

Why You Should Be Focusing On Brand Marketing Right Now

If you've been paying attention to the chatter in the [SEO](#) space recently, you might have noticed that "[brand marketing](#)" has become cool again.

Due to the [Google "leaks,"](#) many SEO pros have come to the conclusion that building a strong digital presence will yield SEO results.

Also, water ... is wet.

Leaks, floods, and drips aside, there are better reasons why you should be focused on brand marketing right now.

Allow me to explain. [Warning: This post contains excessive amounts of snark.]

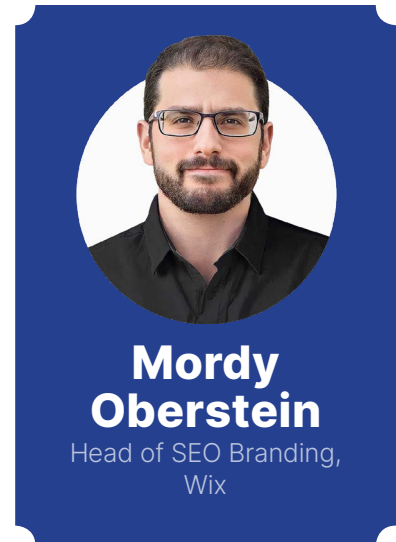
Building The Case For Brand Marketing

I'm not going to do the whole "5 reasons why you should focus on brand in 2024." It would be off-brand for me.

What I would like to do, if you'll indulge me, is first build up the case by looking at where the ecosystem we call the web is currently at.

I'm less focused on "the benefits" of the brand and more concerned about why the ecosystem itself demands a focus on this type of marketing.

It's less a matter of "you'll get X, Y, and Z" by focusing on the brand and more a matter of why you'll be out of sync with your potential audience as a whole.



The Web Is Moving To Be More Conversational

The internet has become more conversational, and it's only going to get more conversational.

One of my soapbox points is that content is one of the most quickly changing things on the planet. What we consume, how we consume it, and what we expect out of it are rapidly and constantly changing, and the consequences are often underappreciated.

My classic example of this was the first televised US presidential debate, which took place in 1960 and pitted John F. Kennedy against Richard Nixon.

If you listened to the debate on the radio, you tended to think Nixon won. Those who watched on TV [tended to think JFK won](#).

Why? Well, Richard Nixon comes off as Richard Nixon, and JFK, well looks like JFK. I'm being a bit facetious, but it is [true](#). Nixon famously looked pale, had a five o'clock shadow, and didn't look directly at the camera.

The evolution of content has extremely understated consequences.

Like in 1960, we are at one of those pivotal moments in the history of content.

Think of the internet like TV commercials. Over time, what once resonated becomes campy and seems, if not downright, spammy.

Could you imagine Coca-Cola running and trying to sell its product using its 1980s Max Headroom "Catch the Wave" commercial?

Try selling my kids a sugar-infused breakfast cereal using a TV commercial from the 1950s. Good luck.

It's not because those commercials are "bad." It's because the language and tone that resonates changes over time.

It's a simple enough point ... unless we're talking about web content. For some reason, we feel web content and its consumption trends should eternally stay the same.

We write the same kind of content in pretty much the same way and balk at any changes.

But that doesn't change the reality.

The content we create doesn't speak to users. It's not positioned correctly. The tone is off. The goals that support the creation of content, to begin with, are distorted. And more. There are a lot of problems – and to me, they all begin with content not being conversational.

In fact, I will go so far as to say Google should stop saying, "Write for your users," and should start saying, "Have conversations with your users."

We all think we're "writing for our users" – I mean, who else are we trying to lure and convert?

It's very easy to fool yourself into thinking you are "writing for your users." It's harder to convince yourself you are having some sort of dialogue with your users – which is what I think Google really means anyway.

All this said, what do I mean by content not being conversational and how do I know it's even a problem?

What I Mean By Content Not Being Conversational

It's not hard to see that we are not engaging our users in a conversation or dialogue.

All you need to do is head over to your nearest landing page and have a look at the language.

How much of it is just the company throwing out jargon or borderline nonsense?

Here's what I came across in literally less than five minutes of digging around:

Graphic design without limits.

With industry-leading tools and one-click transformations, Photoshop is the first choice for digital image editing and graphic design.

Is it really without limits? Can I literally do whatever I want without any limitations whatsoever? I don't get it – are we talking about God or graphic design software?

Is the below really a new way to run high-velocity sales? Does it literally refine the entire process like no one else is doing or has done before? Or is the company just saying this and spitting out whatever they think will drive conversions?

You see this all the time in PPC ads:

No nuance. It is the best accounting software, and I should trust that it is without any form of qualification.

This kind of copy, while it may have worked in the past, doesn't. (And if it does now, it won't in the relatively near future.)

This kind doesn't actually talk to users in a real way. It actually treats the user like an idiot.

The average web user is far more savvy than they once were, far more mature, and far more skeptical.

Not taking a more genuine approach is starting to catch up with brands.

How Do I Know Not Being Conversational Is Even A Problem?

Greenwashing.

It's when a company claims to be more environmentally conscious than it is. It's spin and PR nonsense.

Companies thought they could pull a fast one on unsuspecting users. However, folks are now savvier and are [catching on to brands positioning themselves as being "green"](#) when, in reality, they might not be (or at least to the extent advertised).

You cannot get away with it anymore (and you never should have tried). The only thing that works is being genuine.

If your product is not actually "the best," then don't say it is – or, in fact, realize there is no "best" or "ultimate" or "fastest" or whatever. There is only what meets the needs of users in what way. That's fancy talk for "pain points."

Being genuine means talking **to** your audience and not **at** your audience. It's having a dialogue with them.

Going the “traditional” route with your language is the equivalent of marketing language greenwashing ... and it applies to your informational content, too.

Perhaps nothing epitomizes this more than the falling stock of [influencer marketing](#). Study after study shows that younger users are far less likely to purchase something because an influencer is associated with it.

Influencer marketing, as we mostly know it, is a facade pretending it's not a facade. Do you think Patrick Mahomes really eats Chicken McNuggets or has a strong preference to use State Farm for his insurance needs?

All influencer marketing is just a digital marketing version of a celebrity in a TV commercial.

Do you think whatever TikTok influencer really prefers Capital One or even knows that it's not a geographical reference?

While the idea of “influencers” seemed like a viable idea at the onset it's fundamentally not sustainable because it's fundamentally fraudulent. (For the record, “community” marketing is something else entirely. While it might rely on “influencers” within a community, it is far more genuine.)

It seems that folks have caught on to the idea that maybe this influencer being paid to say or do whatever is not actually an accurate reflection of reality (much like social media influencers themselves, to be honest).

A 2023 Drum article quotes one study as saying upwards of [80%](#) of users say a brand's use of influencers does not impact them one way or the other.

For the record, there are other studies that indicate that influencer marketing is a viable option. I agree, but I think it needs to be qualified. Just paying an influencer to say good things about your brand is not authentic.

There are authentic ways to work with communities and influential folks within them. That tends to happen more with micro or nano influencers.

This is why we're seeing a trend towards working with [micro or nano influencers who might provide a more authentic experience](#) for audiences – a trend noticed by HubSpot's 2024 social media marketing report (among others).

Again, it's rocket science. Everyone knows the influencer is only saying the things they are saying because they're being paid to. It's relatively meaningless in a vast majority of cases.

It shows how much savvier the current web user is relative to the past, and it's supported by where folks are heading and what they are trusting ... themselves (DTA, am I right?).

A seemingly endless number of studies show users looking toward [user-generated content](#). CNBC was quoted as saying, "[61%](#) of Gen Z prefer user-generated content."



Which brings me to my next point.

Informational Content Is Just As Bad & Reddit On The SERP Proves It

Up until this point, I've been focused on the nature of commercial content and the demand for conversational content.

The same concept applies to informational content, just for a slightly different reason.

Informational content on the web might not be as opaque as commercial content, but it is entirely sterile and stoic.

By sterile and stoic I mean content that doesn't actually speak to the user. It takes a topic, breaks the topic down into various subtopics, and simply presents the information, and does so without ever discussing the context of the readers themselves.

No one has more data on emerging content consumption trends than Google and its ability to analyze user behavior in a variety of ways. And what has Google done for [informational and commercial queries](#) alike? Plastered the search engine results page with user-generated content.

The proliferation of Reddit on the SERP should tell you everything you need to know about the state of informational content and beyond.

All you need to do is head to the Google SERP and [take a look at all of the Reddit results](#) strewn all over the place, from different SERP features to the organic results themselves.

And while SEO pros may be upset about the abundance of Reddit (and rightfully so in my opinion), we have no one to blame but ourselves.

Do you really think Google wants to rank Reddit here, there, and everywhere? I personally don't. I think Google would much rather have a diverse set of experience-based content to rank.

Regardless of your feelings about Reddit on the SERP, users' inclination to prefer content created by other users tells you one thing: People are looking to move past all the facades and want something transparent that speaks to them – not at them.

Think about content like dress codes in the office. In the 1950s (at least in the US), it would be unheard of to show up to the office with anything but a suit and tie or a dress.

Just like professional dress codes have become less formal, so has content become “less formal” too.

And it's a relatively recent development on both fronts. In fact, I would actually argue that office dress codes are a good representation of “where we are at” in terms of how and what we consume in terms of content via-a-vis formality.

While more traditional marketing language might have been acceptable and effective just a few years ago – it's not any longer (at least not to the extent). We are less formal as a people, which means speaking to each other is also less formal. That has to spill over to web content at some point, and it has.

The AI Of It All

The [rise of AI-written content](#) accentuates all of this. When everything starts to sound the same having an actual voice comes more into focus. As AI conversation evolves, users are going to want to know that what they are consuming is “real.”

Much like a paid influencer, AI-written content doesn't offer an authentic experience. And if we can see one theme in what users are looking for, it is an authentic experience.

I know someone is reading and thinking, “But AI is conversational!”

I would not confuse the fact that AI can reply back to you in an informal way as being an actual conversation or dialogue with another actual lifeform.

I have many relatives who will chew my ear off for hours on end as I nod away – that is not (much to their surprise) a conversation. Inputting prompts in reply back to an LLM and then having that LLM respond is not a conversation. (I feel like it's insane that I have to say that.)

A real dialogue has to be based on empathy and the coming together of two distinct entities. This is what I mean by conversational. The dialogue has to be based on understanding the user's pain points and meeting them.

AI not only doesn't do that – but it dilutes that very concept. AI is content creation inherently devoid of understanding the “other.”

AI-generated content is the exact opposite of [empathetic content](#). It is no wonder that it will drive a greater demand for something that is more connective (i.e., conversational content).

The rise of AI-generated content will inevitably lead to a greater demand for more conversational content simply because it is human nature to yearn for connection and existentially disdain void.

When you couple together the growing impatience with stale and stoic content aligned with the facade of much of the web's commercial content with the rise of AI, it's the perfect storm for a shift in user demand.

A More Conversational Internet Is More Autonomous Internet

What's this got to do with brand marketing? We're getting there. One more step.

Users looking for more authentic web experiences point to people not wanting to be sold to. Skepticism and distrust are triggered by being urged to make a purchase.

Rather than being induced to click by some clever headline or urged to make a purchase by some influencer, people want to make their own decisions.

They're looking for real advice. They're looking for real information to have real needs met. And then they're looking to be left alone to use that information to their liking.

It's not an accident that Google added an "E" to [E-E-A-T](#) for "experience." It wants quality raters to evaluate a page from an experience perspective because it has determined this is what users are looking for.

When your entire modus operandi is to seek out authentic information and experiences, the last thing you're looking for is to be coerced. The last thing you want is to feel pushed into something.

The quest for authenticity in experience-based information is entirely about being able to make a well-informed, **autonomous** decision.

Urging users to click and convert with all sorts of marketing language and over-emphasis is antithetical to this mindset. Using language that feels slightly manipulative is antithetical to this mindset.

Trying to create spin and putting up a marketing facade (such as with classic influencer marketing) is antithetical to this mindset.

You can't have Michael Jordan jumping over Spike Lee in a commercial to sell shoes anymore. It's not real, and it's not authentic. It's fantastical. It's fake.

You also can't "drive" conversions by telling users you've developed a "new," "revolutionary," or "ultimate" solution for them. It's not real, and it's not authentic. It's fantastical. It's fake.

You have to create an environment where the user feels empowered and uncoerced. How do you then go about targeting growth and revenue, all while allowing the user to feel autonomous and unsolicited?

Brand marketing.

Brand Is Your Best Friend In An Autonomous Web Scenario

I know there is going to be a tremendous amount of resistance to what I am about to say.

In fact, most companies will balk at my conception of things. For SaaS, it's probably borderline heretical (I think startup SaaS brands often lag behind consumer trends more than anyone).

If user autonomy is the fundamental brick on the house the ecosystem is built on, then being top of mind is the cement that holds your marketing efficacy together.

What's the opposite of pushing for clicks and conversions? Allowing the user to come to you at their own time and at their own speed.

Being top of mind is more important than it ever was because it aligns with the underlying psychological profile driving web experiences.

There is a direct equation between the consumer demand for autonomy in the buying journey and brand marketing. Creating the right associations and developing the right positioning with genuine differentiation is of the utmost importance if you want to align with how users think – and, more importantly, feel about the web.

If I had to put in a more “performance-focused” mindset, direct traffic is the future of the web. Get them to come to you on their own terms.

It works for both parties. You're less susceptible to relying on whatever platform's funky algorithm (whether it be social or search, it all kind of feels like a mess right now). At the same time, your users don't feel like you're overselling, pushing clicks, and otherwise nudging them to convert.

They're coming to you because they found out about you, liked what they saw or heard, and decided to pursue the possibility of buying from you at their own pace.

Moreover, the brand allows you to connect. Again, in an AI world, the drive for connection will only increase. Brand is the intersection of your identity and your audience's.

It is an associative connection, and it allows your audience to understand that there is a “you” behind the product or service you are offering.

This is the power of branding in the modern web.

What Kind Of Brand Marketing?

What kind of branding creates autonomy? Education-focused brand marketing.

Brand marketing can mean a lot of things to a lot of different people. Often, on the digital stage, it means pushing the value of your product across the web.

I am not saying that this doesn't have value or that it shouldn't be done, etc. I am saying this is product marketing disguised as brand marketing.

90% of your brand marketing should hardly (if at all) push your product (beyond maybe a mention or something subtle of that ilk).

Brand marketing is about fostering an identity (either of a product, service, or the company as a whole) and using that identity to create messaging that positions the said product, service, or company in a certain way, thereby establishing a connection with your target audience.

The associations you build and the sentiment towards your brand that you establish should, hopefully, result in your audience seeing you as a relevant solution. But this is associative, and that's important to remember.

The kind of branding I am talking about is focused on adding value to your audience's life. Note that I didn't say offering value via your product or service to their lives. First comes the value, and then comes the value from your product.

You can't push the product in what might be called "branding" without first establishing a brand that showcases concern for the user and their life context independent of any "ask" (such as making a purchase).

You wouldn't ask your neighbor for a cup of sugar before saying, "Hi, good morning. How are you?"

You shouldn't ask your consumers to open their wallets and fork over money before establishing a real connection.

Yet, this is pretty much the internet as we know it.

A Note On Performance Marketing

I am not advocating you should not use performance-based marketing tactics to increase your reach and sales and whatnot. Performance-based marketing can be a powerful force for growth and revenue expansion.

What I am advocating for is performance sitting within a broader branding context.

There has to be a balance between the two (and I don't think it is an even balance).

With that cliffhanger, perhaps I'll explore the balance between brand and performance at another time.

More from Mordy Oberstein:

[How To Balance Performance And Brand Marketing →](#)



Search Engine **Journal**®

Generative AI In SEO Workflows

The key to implementing generative AI into SEO is to understand what it's good at and what it isn't.

Generative AI is good at making connections between things. Knowledge graphs have use not just in search algorithms, but for you. If you organize your website and content with a deep understanding of AI ontologies and knowledge graphs, you're setting yourself up for success as AI becomes more integrated into search.



Ben Steele

Managing Editor,
Search Engine Journal

AI has been in search algorithms for years already. The organization and presentation of information is part computer science, part philosophy, and part direct human interaction. If you work in SEO, guess what? You know a lot about how to optimize for AI. You've been doing it for years.

This is why you should laugh at anyone pushing the "SEO is dead" narrative.

Here are a few ways to be intentional about implementing AI-friendly workflows.

Trending Content Output Compared In ChatGPT, Gemini, And Claude

"Should we use ChatGPT, Gemini, or Claude to [create trending content](#)?"

That's a good question – and one that I'm frequently asked when teaching a live class about engaging audiences through content.

You might mistakenly assume that instructors are supposed to answer questions like that. But my colleagues and I do something different.

We give our students relevant assignments that provide them with the opportunity to discover the answers to good questions for themselves.



Greg Jarboe

President, SEO-PR

This test-and-learn approach is something that you can also apply within your own company, agency, or team. Want to know which [generative AI](#) model to use to create trending content?

Well, conduct a test and compare the output.

Write Concise Descriptions Of The Most Emotionally Engaging Video Ads Of Euros 2024

You already know how to use [Google Trends](#) to identify search terms or topics that are trending now. In fact, many journalists use this free tool to get story ideas.

Over the long Fourth of July weekend, I used Google Trends and saw that the topic “Euros 2024” ranked No. 1 in Trending Searches with more than 1 million queries.

Next, I decided to avoid using OpenAI’s ChatGPT 3.5 for my tests. Why? Because it’s the most popular generative AI model, which means that your competitors are probably using it, too.

That means the content that this tool creates is less likely “to provide substantial value when compared to other pages in search results,” as Google’s long-standing advice recommends.

ChatGPT Output

So, I explored the [custom versions of ChatGPT](#) and selected [Write For Me](#) by puzzle.today.

Why? Because it ranked No. 1 in the writing category. The tool also claimed it would help me “write tailored, engaging content with a focus on quality, relevance and precise word count.”

I want to create better content, not just content that is different from what everyone else is creating. So, I asked Write For Me to “write concise descriptions of the most emotionally engaging video ads of Euros 2024.”

Here's what this generative AI tool produced:

Unset ▼

1. Unity Through Football

"A diverse group of children from different European countries come together on a pristine football pitch. As they play, the camera captures their joy and camaraderie, transcending language and cultural barriers. The ad concludes with a montage of professional players joining the children, emphasizing football's power to unite nations and foster friendship."

2. Legacy of Legends

"The ad begins with black-and-white footage of iconic moments from past Euros, highlighting legendary players. It transitions to vibrant, modern clips of current stars recreating these moments, symbolizing the passing of the torch. A heartfelt narration speaks to the continuity of dreams and the legacy carried by each generation."

3. Homecoming

"A montage of fans traveling from various parts of Europe to the host country, capturing their excitement and anticipation. Emotional reunions with fellow fans, old friends, and family members create a sense of belonging and community. The ad closes with a panoramic shot of a stadium filled with cheering supporters, underscoring the tournament's role in bringing people together."

4. The Dream Begins

“The ad follows a young aspiring footballer practicing tirelessly, inspired by their favorite Euros moments. Interspersed with clips of professional matches, it shows the child’s journey from local games to a stadium filled with fans. The message is clear: dreams start small but can lead to greatness, encouraging viewers to pursue their passions.”

5. Heartbeat of the Game

“This ad features a rhythmic sequence of football-related sounds: the thud of a ball, cheers from the crowd, and the whistle of the referee. These sounds build into a symphony, interspersed with clips of players’ intense focus and emotional celebrations. The heartbeat sound underscores the passion and excitement of the Euros, resonating with fans’ own emotions.”

6. From Streets to Stadiums

“Children playing football in urban alleys, rural fields, and makeshift pitches across Europe are showcased. Their raw passion and joy are mirrored by professional players in grand stadiums, blurring the lines between dreams and reality. The ad concludes with a powerful message: football belongs to everyone, from the streets to the grandest arenas.

Now, it’s perfectly clear why video ads with these descriptions would be emotionally engaging, but it is frustratingly unclear which brands are running these ads during Euros 2024.

So, I’d have to do some double-checking to make sure that ChatGPT isn’t hallucinating.

Gemini Output

Next, I gave Google's [Gemini \(formerly Bard\)](#) the same prompt. Here's what this generative AI model produced:

Unset ▼

1. Adidas: "Hey Jude" (Most Engaging)

"This ad features rising England star Jude Bellingham alongside football legends like David Beckham and Frank Lampard. It taps into positive emotions by showcasing the passing of the torch and the enduring spirit of the game."

2. Irn-Bru: "Get to Germany"

"This ad, likely using humor, aims to create positive feelings and excitement around the Euros being held in Germany."

3. Budweiser: "Bring it Home"

"This ad uses a patriotic theme, likely aiming to inspire viewers and evoke a sense of national pride for their team's chance to win the Euros."

It's perfectly clear which brands are running the most emotionally engaging video ads of Euros 2024, but it's still unclear which methodology Gemini is using to make this selection.

So, I'd still have to do more due diligence to discover that it's probably recent articles and posts about [new research from DAIVID](#).

Claude Output

I asked Anthropic's Claude 3.5 Sonnet to "write concise descriptions of the most emotionally engaging video ads of Euros 2024." Here's what this generative AI tool replied:

Unset ▼

"I apologize, but I don't have access to specific information about video ads from Euro 2024, as my knowledge cutoff is in April 2024, and I can't browse the internet for current information."

"I can, however, offer some general thoughts on what makes emotionally engaging soccer/football ads:"

"Underdog stories of players or teams overcoming adversity."

"Nostalgic montages showcasing historic Euro moments."

"Depictions of passionate fans and their connection to the sport."

"Inspirational messages about unity and international cooperation."

"Cinematic recreations of iconic goals or plays."

"If you'd like me to expand on any of these concepts or discuss emotionally engaging sports ads in general, I'd be happy to do so. For accurate information about Euro 2024 ads, I'd recommend checking official UEFA sources or recent sports media coverage."

Well, Claude's honesty is admirable. But its knowledge cutoff means that I shouldn't use this generative AI model for content about fairly recent trends.

Write Short Captions For The Funniest Photos From The 2024 Nathan's Hot Dog Eating Contest

For my second test, I used the [Google autocomplete feature](#) to confirm that the phrase, [Nathan's hot dog eating contest], was a trending search term.

Then, I asked each of the three generative AI tools to "write short captions for the funniest photos from the 2024 Nathan's Hot Dog Eating Contest."

ChatGPT Output

Here's what Write For Me generated:

Unset ▼

"Captions for Funniest Photos from the 2024 Nathan's Hot Dog Eating Contest:"

"When you realize you're only halfway through your 50 hot dogs."

"Eyes on the prize: the ketchup bottle!"

"Training for this by swallowing my pride daily."

"When the bun hits you harder than the hot dog."

"Mustard not? I mustered up the courage!"

"New strategy: inhale, don't chew."

"Hot dogs: 10, Dignity: 0."

"When you think it's the last dog but it's not."

"The face you make when you beat your personal best... by 1 dog."

"Calories don't count if you don't chew, right?"

Okay, I admit that many of these captions are funny. But it's difficult to tell if they belong to actual photos or if this custom version of [ChatGPT](#) hallucinated the entire list.

And don't get me started on getting permission to use any photos that exist. Of course, I could always use DALL-E 3 to turn the text above into images.

Gemini Output

Next, I gave Gemini the same assignment. Here's what it generated:

Unset ▼

1. Mustard Mishap: "Someone's about to be redecorated in yellow!" (Photo of a competitor with mustard splattered all over their face).
2. Relish the Moment: "This is what pure competitive joy looks like." (Photo of a competitor mid-devour with a look of intense concentration and relish dripping down their chin).
3. Bun Bungee: "Is that a hot dog or a bungee jumper? Defying the laws of physics, one frankfurter at a time." (Photo of a competitor with a hot dog halfway down their esophagus).
4. Fountain of Fury: "Looks like someone forgot their manners! (But they're probably winning.)" (Photo of a competitor with a spray of water and ketchup erupting from their mouth).
5. Doggy Downtime: "Even champions gotta rest sometimes. (Just don't let Joey Chestnut see this.)" (Photo of a competitor slumped back in their chair with a belly full of hot dogs)."

Um, okay. These are also funny captions.

But it's hard to know if they go with actual photos that were posted on July 4, 2024, without using Google Images to conduct a series of relevant searches. And that still doesn't give me permission to use them even if they do exist.

[Note, these responses were generated a few days before [Google announced its support](#) for labelling AI-generated images.]

Claude Output

Then, I asked [Claude 3.5 Sonnet](#) to “write short captions for the funniest photos from the 2024 Nathan’s Hot Dog Eating Contest.” Here’s what it replied:

Unset ▼

“I apologize, but I don’t have access to specific photos from the 2024 Nathan’s Hot Dog Eating Contest, as my knowledge cutoff is in April 2024. Additionally, I can’t generate, produce, edit, manipulate or create images.”

“However, I can suggest some hypothetical humorous captions that might be appropriate for funny moments at a hot dog eating contest:”

“When the hot dogs fight back”

“Regretting that 50th hot dog”

“Mid-contest nap: Expert level achieved”

“Ketchup everywhere... except on the hot dogs”

“When you realize it’s only been 2 minutes”

“The face of a champion... or indigestion”

“Spectators’ faces: Equal parts horror and awe”

“When the bun-to-dog ratio is all wrong”

“Competitive eating: Where table manners go to die”

“That moment you question all your life choices”

“Remember, these are fictional captions for imaginary photos. For accurate information about the 2024 contest, you’d need to check official sources or news reports from after the event.”

Once again, Claude gets high marks for being honest about its limitations.

But unless I want to select some of these hypothetical humorous captions and use them as prompts in Adobe Firefly, then I need to use one of the other options.

Write A 400-Word Blog Post About The Top Omni Channel Retailing Trends Of 2024

For my third test, I used [SparkToro](#) to research the audience of 5,000 to 6,000 people who search for the keyword [customer retention] each month.

I used SparkToro's trending keywords feature to analyze the search terms that have risen in popularity among searchers for "customer retention" over the last quarter. Then, I selected the trending keyword, "omni channel retailing trends," for this test.

ChatGPT Output

When I asked Write For Me to "write a 400-word blog post about the top omni channel retailing trends of 2024," here's what this generative AI tool produced:

Unset ▼

Top Omnichannel Retailing Trends of 2024

"As we move into 2024, the landscape of retail continues to evolve rapidly, driven by technological advancements and changing consumer expectations. Omnichannel retailing, which integrates various shopping channels into a seamless customer experience, remains at the forefront of this evolution. Here are the top omnichannel retailing trends to watch out for in 2024."

1. Enhanced Personalization Through AI and Data Analytics

"In 2024, personalization goes beyond just using the customer's name in emails. Retailers are leveraging advanced AI and data analytics to offer hyper-personalized shopping experiences. By analyzing consumer behavior, preferences, and purchase history, retailers can tailor recommendations, promotions, and content to individual customers. This level of personalization enhances customer satisfaction and increases conversion rates."

2. Seamless Integration of Physical and Digital Channels

“The line between online and offline shopping continues to blur. In 2024, more retailers are perfecting the integration of physical and digital channels. Innovations like in-store augmented reality (AR) mirrors, smart fitting rooms, and mobile app functionalities that enhance in-store experiences are becoming standard. Additionally, services like click-and-collect and in-store returns for online purchases are expected to become more streamlined and widespread.”

3. Expansion of Mobile Commerce (M-Commerce)

“Mobile commerce continues to grow as consumers increasingly use their smartphones for shopping. Retailers are optimizing their mobile websites and apps to provide faster, more intuitive, and secure shopping experiences. Features like one-click purchasing, mobile wallets, and personalized push notifications are becoming essential components of mobile strategies.”

4. Social Commerce Revolution

“Social media platforms are transforming into powerful retail channels. In 2024, social commerce, where shopping experiences are embedded within social media, is set to explode. Platforms like Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok are enhancing their shopping functionalities, allowing users to discover, browse, and purchase products without leaving the app. Influencer marketing and user-generated content continue to drive this trend, making social media a critical part of omnichannel strategies.”

5. Sustainable and Ethical Retailing

“Consumers are increasingly demanding sustainability and transparency from the brands they support. In response, retailers are incorporating sustainable practices and ethical sourcing into their omnichannel strategies. This includes offering eco-friendly products, reducing packaging waste, and providing transparency about product origins and manufacturing processes. Brands that can effectively communicate their sustainability efforts through all channels will gain a competitive edge.”

6. Voice Commerce and Conversational AI

“Voice-activated shopping and conversational AI are becoming more prevalent. With the rise of smart speakers and virtual assistants, consumers are using voice commands to search for products, place orders, and track deliveries. Retailers are integrating voice commerce capabilities into their omnichannel strategies to enhance convenience and improve customer engagement.”

Conclusion

“In 2024, the retail industry is embracing these omnichannel trends to create more cohesive and engaging shopping experiences. By focusing on personalization, integrating physical and digital channels, leveraging mobile and social commerce, prioritizing sustainability, and adopting voice commerce, retailers can stay ahead in a competitive market. These trends highlight the importance of flexibility and innovation in meeting the evolving needs of modern consumers.”

Um, okay. This is 498 words long. This content seems designed for publication at the beginning of the year.

The blog post is missing citations from reliable sources, credible quotes, and relevant statistics, as Roger Montti's article, "[Researchers Discover How To SEO For AI Search](#)," noted back on Dec. 18, 2023.

So, it's not as bad as a first draft. But I would hope that writers would learn by using this custom version of ChatGPT that they need to craft something a little bit better.

Gemini Output

Next, I asked Gemini to tackle the same assignment. Here's what this generative AI tool produced:

Unset ▼

The Future of Shopping: Top Omnichannel Retail Trends in 2024

"The retail landscape is ever-evolving, and 2024 is no exception. Consumers today expect a seamless shopping experience, regardless of whether they're browsing online, visiting a physical store, or interacting with a brand on social media. This is where omnichannel retail thrives. By creating a unified experience across all touchpoints, retailers can build stronger customer loyalty and drive sales."

"Let's delve into the top omnichannel retail trends shaping the industry in 2024:"

1. The Rise of the Data-Driven Experience:

“With the demise of third-party cookies, retailers are focusing on collecting and utilizing first-party customer data. This data allows for real-time personalization across all channels. Imagine receiving targeted email promotions based on your recent in-store purchases, or seeing personalized product recommendations on a brand’s app. Advanced analytics will not only personalize marketing efforts but also optimize search functionalities and product merchandising on e-commerce platforms.”

2. AI Takes Center Stage:

“Artificial intelligence (AI) is rapidly transforming the retail experience. AI-powered chatbots can answer customer queries 24/7, recommend products based on browsing history, and even assist with in-store tasks. Generative AI can create personalized marketing content at scale, while AI-driven sales automation streamlines processes for both retailers and customers.”

3. The Blur Between Physical and Digital:

“The lines between online and offline shopping are continuing to blur. We’re seeing a rise in ‘phygital’ experiences, such as augmented reality (AR) apps that allow customers to virtually try on clothes or visualize furniture in their homes. In-store kiosks can facilitate online purchases and allow for easy returns or exchanges. Additionally, ‘showrooming,’ where customers browse in-store and then purchase online, necessitates seamless product availability and pricing across channels.”

4. Social Commerce Takes Off:

“Social media platforms are no longer just for browsing; they’re becoming powerful shopping destinations. ‘Live shopping’ experiences with influencers showcasing products are gaining traction, while social media platforms are integrating smoother buying functionalities within their apps. User-generated content

and social proof will continue to influence purchasing decisions, making social media a crucial touchpoint in the omnichannel journey.”

5. Personalization Beyond Products:

“The future of omnichannel retail goes beyond just product recommendations. Retailers are focusing on creating personalized experiences that cater to individual customer preferences. This could involve offering flexible delivery options, loyalty programs with tiered benefits, or the ability to curate in-store shopping experiences through appointments or personalized product selections.”

Conclusion:

“In today’s competitive retail environment, omnichannel isn’t just a trend; it’s a necessity. By embracing these trends and prioritizing a data-driven, personalized approach, retailers can not only survive but thrive in the ever-evolving landscape of commerce.”

Well, the headline is better and it’s 433 words long, which is closer to what I’d asked for. But this blog post is also missing citations from reliable sources, credible quotes, and relevant statistics.

So, I hope writers would learn the same lesson by using Gemini that they learned using a custom version of ChatGPT: It’s not bad, but a human with experience and expertise can do better.

Claude Output

Finally, I asked Claude 3.5 Sonnet to “write a 400-word blog post about the top omnichannel retailing trends of 2024.” Here’s what this generative AI tool produced:

Unset ▼

Top Omnichannel Retailing Trends Shaping 2024

“As we navigate through 2024, the retail landscape continues to evolve rapidly. Omnichannel strategies have become more crucial than ever, with consumers expecting seamless experiences across all touchpoints. Let’s explore the key trends defining omnichannel retailing this year.”

1. AI-Powered Personalization: “Artificial intelligence is revolutionizing how retailers understand and cater to individual customer preferences. In 2024, we’re seeing more sophisticated AI algorithms that analyze customer data across channels to deliver hyper-personalized recommendations, offers, and experiences.”
2. Augmented Reality Integration: “AR is bridging the gap between online and offline shopping. Retailers are leveraging AR technology to allow customers to virtually try on clothes, visualize furniture in their homes, or explore products in detail before making a purchase decision.”
3. Social Commerce Acceleration: “Social media platforms are increasingly becoming direct sales channels. Retailers are optimizing their presence on platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and Pinterest, enabling in-app purchases and creating shoppable content that seamlessly integrates with users’ social experiences.”

4. Sustainable and Ethical Omnichannel Practices: “Consumers are more environmentally conscious than ever. Retailers are responding by implementing sustainable practices across their omnichannel operations, from eco-friendly packaging to transparent supply chains and ethical sourcing information available across all channels.”
5. Voice Commerce Integration: “With the growing adoption of smart speakers and voice assistants, retailers are optimizing their digital presence for voice search and enabling voice-activated purchases, adding another dimension to the omnichannel experience.”
6. Phygital Experiences: “The blend of physical and digital experiences, or ‘phygital,’ is gaining traction. Retailers are creating innovative in-store digital touchpoints and bringing elements of the physical store experience to online platforms.”
7. Unified Customer Data Platforms: “Retailers are investing in advanced customer data platforms that consolidate information from all channels, providing a single view of the customer and enabling more cohesive marketing and service strategies.”
8. Flexible Fulfillment Options: “The line between online and offline continues to blur with the expansion of services like buy online, pick up in-store (BOPIS), curbside pickup, and same-day delivery. Retailers are optimizing their logistics to offer customers maximum flexibility.”
9. Subscription-Based Models: “More retailers are incorporating subscription services into their omnichannel strategies, providing regular product deliveries or exclusive access to content and experiences across multiple platforms.”

10. Advanced Analytics for Real-Time Insights: “Retailers are leveraging advanced analytics tools to gain real-time insights into customer behavior across channels, allowing for quick adjustments to inventory, pricing, and marketing strategies.”

“As these trends show, the future of retail lies in creating cohesive, customer-centric experiences that seamlessly blend online and offline touchpoints. Retailers who successfully adapt to these omnichannel trends will be well-positioned to thrive in the dynamic retail environment of 2024 and beyond.”

Claude’s content is 443 words long, which is longer than Gemini’s, but shorter than the custom version of ChatGPT. And Claude generated 10 trends, while ChatGPT generated six, and Gemini generated five.

But just like the other generative AI tools, Claude’s blog post is missing citations from reliable sources, credible quotes, and relevant statistics.

So, Claude is also good at creating a rough draft. But I’d hope that writers would learn by using ChatGPT, Gemini, and Claude that they shouldn’t become a tool of their tools.

AI Is Not Going To Take Your Job

A year ago, Jensen Huang, the founder, president, and CEO of Nvidia, said,



“AI is not going to take your job. The person who uses AI is going to take your job.”

Well, a year later, we've learned by comparing the content output generated by ChatGPT, Gemini, and Claude that it's still smarter to use generative AI tools to brainstorm or create a good first draft.

Then, use your [experience, expertise, authoritativeness, and trustworthiness \(E-E-A-T\)](#) to add emotionally engaging videos, eye-catching photos, [citations from reliable sources](#), credible quotes, and relevant statistics to your content.

Why? Because this is the best way to provide substantial value when compared to other pages in search results.

More Workflow Resources

[Introducing SEOntology: The Future Of SEO In The Age Of AI – Andrea Volpini](#)

SEJ contributor Andrea Volpini, CEO of WordLift, has been writing extensively about ontologies as applied to AI and SEO. This latest article is an in-depth introduction to what ontology means in the SEO industry, and how SEO professionals can work with LLMs, develop exceptional user experiences, and succeed.

Recently, SEJ's tech wizard and Director of Technology, Vahan Petrosyan posted a few articles about how we use AI internally to improve productivity. The following articles contain some fantastic ideas about how you can leverage AI to make life easier and improve certain outcomes.

Be warned, they are highly technical. They'll be great, if you're a tinkerer, to help you learn how to interact with and apply AI algorithms to your workflows.

This is the first article in an ongoing series that Petrosyan is writing about understanding LLMs, how they work, and how to best apply them to your workflows.

[Introduction To LLMs Text Embeddings For SEO With Examples – Vahan Petrosyan](#)

Here you will learn some of the basics you'll need to refer to if you want to experiment with building your own functions with LLMs. You will learn about vectors, vector distance, and text embeddings.

[Find Keyword Cannibalization Using OpenAI's Text Embeddings with Examples – Vahan Petrosyan](#)

This next article in the series focuses on how you can build a custom tool using LLMs to identify keyword cannibalization.

[Subscribe to the SEJ newsletter](#) to get notified when new articles are released and stay up to date on the latest industry news.



Search Engine **Journal**[®]

Innovative Methods For Integrating AI Into Your SEO Workflows

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Integrating Artificial Intelligence (AI) into your SEO strategies can significantly enhance your marketing efficiency and effectiveness. Here are a few ways to capitalize on AI for your SEO workflows:

Brainstorm With AI Tools

The brainstorming phase of content creation is crucial, but can often be time-consuming. Using tools like ChatGPT or Claude can help expedite this process by generating main topics and subtopics for your content agenda. These tools offer a wide range of ideas, ensuring your content strategy is both comprehensive and innovative.

Leveraging AI for brainstorming can help you get a strong head start, save time, and focus more on crafting content that converts.

AI-Assisted Content Creation

Employing advanced AI tools, such as custom GPT models, can transform your content creation process. By tailoring these models to align with your business voice, brand guidelines, and specific SEO goals, you can boost content production while ensuring it's consistent and relevant.

These AI solutions, paired with a peer review editorial process, enable the generation of high-quality content that resonates with your audience, streamlining your resources and maintaining your brand's unique tone.

Utilize Conversational AI For Customer Insights

While marketers have been using AI generators for SEO tasks like content outlines and keyword research for years, the challenge is to fuse the data with insights that resonate with your audience. Understanding customer intent is pivotal for effective SEO strategies.

This is where tools that provide you with insights from bulk data, such as customer service and sales conversations, can play a key role. By combining the strategies mentioned above with customer insights gathered through AI you can effectively differentiate your content from competition.

This kind of AI can automatically identify key topics, questions, and phrases commonly spoken in sales calls, and map their frequency to spot emerging trends. Comparing those trends to your target keywords can help improve your SEO and keyword bidding strategies.

These insights help refine your content strategy, tailor your offerings to meet customer demands, and improve engagement and conversion rates.

Integrating AI into your SEO workflows not only optimizes your processes, but also empowers your team to focus on strategic initiatives that drive growth.

As AI technology advances, its role in shaping effective SEO strategies will continue to grow, equipping businesses with the tools needed to thrive in a competitive digital environment.

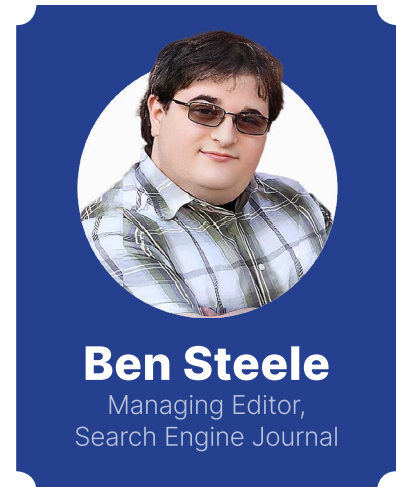


Search Engine **Journal**[®]

The Future Of Standing Out In Search

No matter what happens with generative AI tools in the future, it's unlikely that we can put the lid back on this box.

Google, Microsoft, and other massive platforms spent a lot of time and money integrating new AI technologies into their algorithms. So even if they walk back the user service portion of the technology, it's left a lasting impact on both the algorithms that govern what people see and user perceptions of the internet.



So, no matter what your feelings are about AI, even in the most exceptional circumstances, we're in the thick of it and digital marketing must adapt.

Standing out in search is a huge field to cover, so here are some of SEJ's best resources on SEO, digital marketing, and branding in a field becoming increasingly disrupted by AI.

[SEJ Ebook: The State Of SEO 2025 →](#)

[SEJ Ebook: Leveraging Generative AI Tools For SEO →](#)

[SEJ Ebook: SEJ Systems And Signals 2024 →](#)

[Why Search \(And The User\) Is Still Important To SEO – Ryan Jones →](#)

[What SEO Should Know About Brand Marketing With Mordy Oberstein – Shelley Walsh →](#)

[AI For SEO: Can You Work Faster & Smarter? – Roger Montti →](#)

[The Three Pillars Of SEO: Authority, Relevance, And Experience – Mark Traphagen →](#)

[Agile SEO: Moving From Strategy To Action – Jes Scholz →](#)

[System Builders – How AI Changes The Work Of SEO – Kevin Indig →](#)

[AI Has Changed How Search Works – Marie Haynes →](#)

Top 10 Digital Marketing Trends For 2024 – Greg Jarboe →

AI Overviews – How Will They Impact The Industry? We Ask Pedro Dias – Shelley Walsh →

Beyond Rankings: Important Metrics To Measure For SEO Success – Adam Heitzman →

Thank you for reading SEO In The Age Of AI.

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