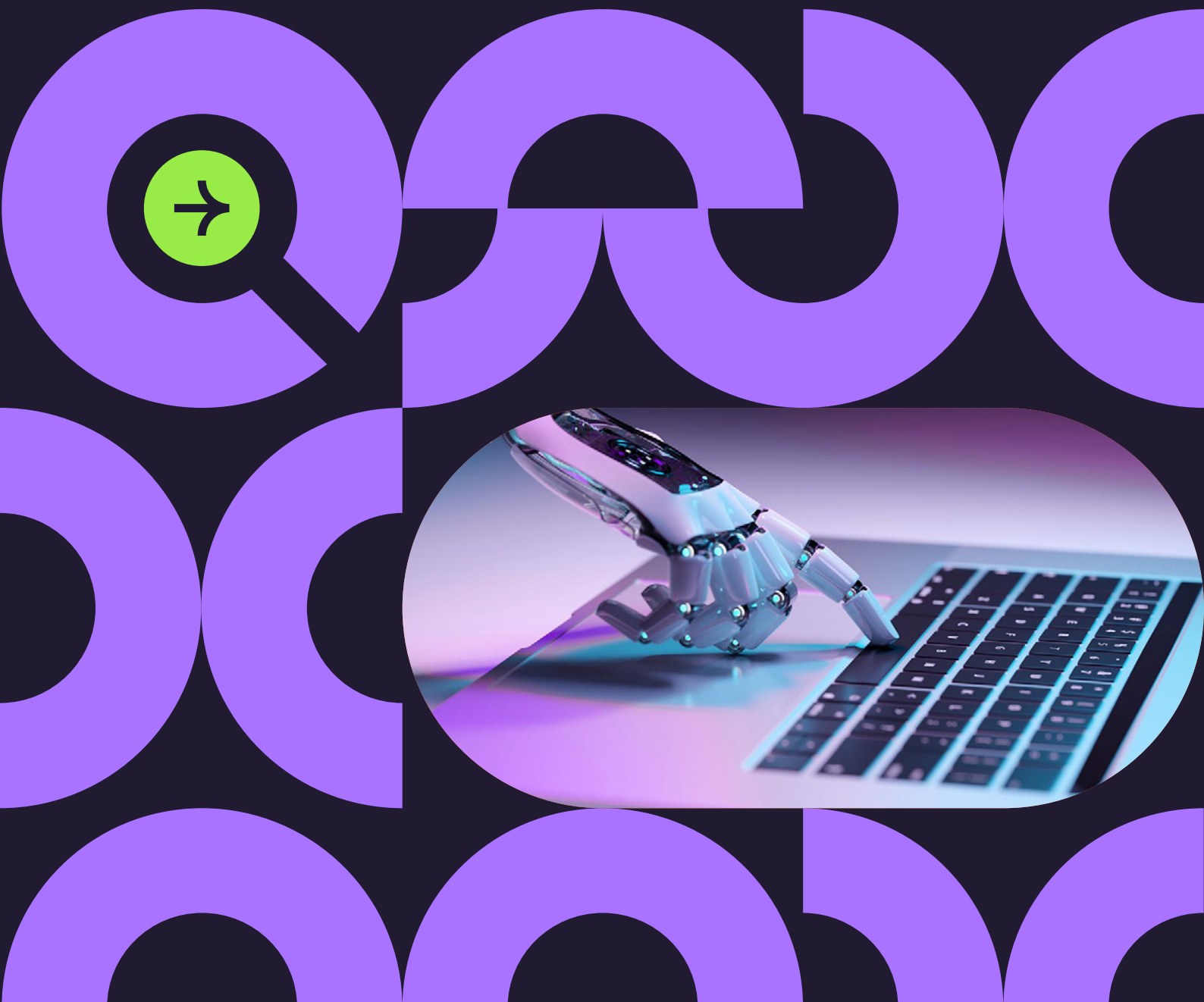


REPORT

# AI Overviews Study: Inside Google's New Search Reality



# STRENGTHS



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# Executive Summary

## → ORGANIC SEARCH IS EVOLVING

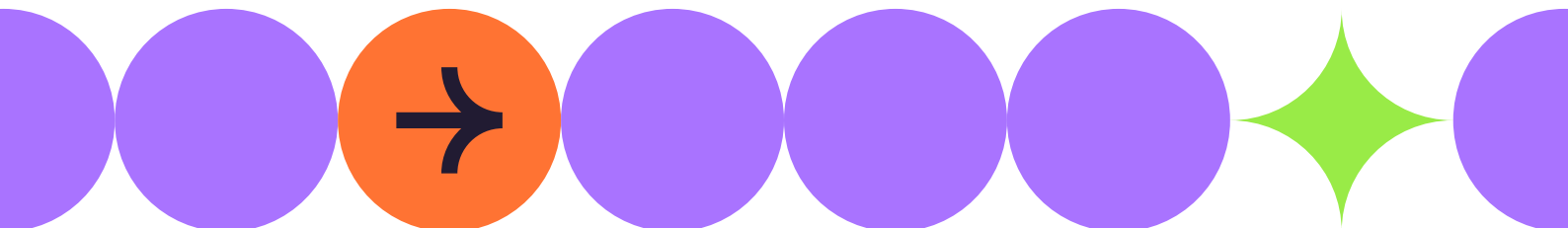
The rise of generative AI has altered the landscape for both brands and consumers. Finding information and products is becoming more conversational and personalized every day, and consumers are completing more of the customer journey directly on the results pages of search. Google, with 90% of [search engine market share](#), has rolled out AI Overviews, a feature that can appear for almost half of all queries and occupies anywhere between 40% of the visual space to the full page above the fold on both desktop and mobile.

## → TRADITIONAL METRICS AREN'T ENOUGH TO DRIVE AI-FIRST SEO STRATEGY

Brands are finding that traditional metrics, such as click-through rate (CTR), impressions, and organic ranking positions, aren't telling the full story of the customer journey. When organic rankings are high but visibility and engagement signals are dropping, what does that mean, and how can SEOs and marketers adjust their strategies?

## → AI OVERVIEWS ARE CHANGING THE GAME — OUR ANALYSIS AND INSIGHTS

Brands, SEOs, and marketers need strong data and insights to effectively reach consumers and drive organic revenue in this AI-powered world of search. To that end, performance marketing platform Botify partnered with visual SERP analytics platform DemandSphere to determine exactly how Google's AI Overviews are affecting organic results for brands. We measured and analyzed the visual impact, frequency of appearance, and keyword triggers of AI Overviews to develop a set of actionable recommendations for brands who want to compete in the age of AI search.



# Top takeaways

## → AI OVERVIEWS TAKE UP 42% OF THE SCREEN ON DESKTOP, 48% ON MOBILE

Visibility and attention on the SERP are the new organic rankings. We found that when AI Overviews appear, they overtake almost half of the space above the fold on desktop and mobile. Even if your content is ranking in the #1 position, it may not be visible to consumers depending on the other visual elements on the results page.

## → FEATURED SNIPPETS AND AI OVERVIEWS CO-OCCUR 60% OF THE TIME AND OCCUPY 67–76% OF YOUR CONSUMER'S SCREEN

When AI Overviews and featured snippets appear on a SERP together, they take up 67.1% of the screen on desktop, and a whopping 75.7% of the screen on mobile. With a 60.5% co-occurrence rate, these two features can further reduce the visibility of organic rankings, answer consumer's questions directly on Google, and make clicking into a website for more information unnecessary.

## → AI OVERVIEWS CAN APPEAR FOR ALMOST HALF OF CONSUMER SEARCHES

We used methods that encouraged the appearance of AI Overviews, and found that they can appear for up to 47% of keywords. Almost half of your top organic rankings may be pushed so far down on the SERP that they aren't immediately visible to consumers.

## → WEBSITES CITED AND LINKED IN AI OVERVIEWS HAVE A HIGH CONTENT SIMILARITY TO THE SUMMARY TEXT

Our cosine similarity analysis showed a distinct correlation between the semantic similarity of linked websites and the AI-generated text of the AI Overview itself. Essentially, the closer your content satisfies the same consumer intent and need as the AI Overview's summary, the more likely it is to be cited and linked.



# 48%

of the screen space is taken by AI Overviews on mobile

## → 75% OF CITED, LINKED WEBSITES IN AI OVERVIEWS COME FROM THE TOP 12 ORGANIC RANKINGS

Despite getting visually displaced on the SERPs, your organic rankings matter more than ever. Three-quarters of AI Overview links also appear in position 12 or higher for Google's organic rankings, and 90% of all AI Overview links came from position 35 or higher. Consumers might not always see and click on the organic rankings, but your position informs how they find you in the new world of search — both in AI Overview citations and other innovative, AI-powered engines and assistants that reference Google rankings for answers.

# Actionable recommendations

To keep up with organic search at the speed of AI, brands, SEOs, and marketers should prioritize the following:

**Maintain strong  
SEO fundamentals**

**Earn, grow, and  
defend top 12  
ranking positions**

**Measure AI  
Overview impact**

**Analyze similarity  
between content  
and AI Overviews**

**Develop a broader  
GenAI strategy  
beyond Google**



# Introduction: The Modern SERP

The visual layout of a search engine results page (SERP) has everything to do with how consumers find your brand. Let's start with a few statistics:

## 15 seconds

On average, searchers on Google click on a result in less than 15 seconds. 50% of them click within 9 seconds, 25% within 5. ([Backlinko](#))

## 600

There are currently over 600 unique elements on the SERPs, such as images, maps, product listings, the inner elements that augment those features, and more, that can appear in search results alongside the traditional 10 blue links. ([DemandSphere](#) internal data)

## 50%

Enterprise e-commerce trends show CTR drops around 50% on average between position 1 and position 3, ~75% between position 1 and 6 ([Botify](#) internal data)

## 60%

60% of searches are zero-click, where consumers visit a SERP without clicking any links at all. ([Sparktoro](#))

Why do these facts matter? They paint a picture of how consumer search behavior is evolving as search technology accelerates. You have a matter of seconds to be seen by a consumer in an increasingly crowded visual space, judged to be the best answer to their question, and if the intent matches, to be clicked. If your brand isn't shown in a high-visibility section of the SERP, fewer people are likely to click on and visit your site — even if your organic rankings remain high.

Google's AI Overviews are the biggest change to hit the SERPs since featured snippets — literally. Taking up between 40% to 67% of average screen height above the fold and appearing for 47% of keywords in our analysis, AI Overviews are the latest puzzle for SEOs and marketers to solve in the organic SERPs.

In this report, we'll use data to tackle some of the most pressing questions about Google's newest SERP feature:

- **How are AI Overviews generated?**
- **How do AI Overviews impact metrics?**
- **What should I be measuring today?**
- **How can my brand appear in AI Overviews' linked citations?**
- **What should I change about my optimization strategy?**

# High rankings, low CTR?

Brands are struggling with a growing problem when it comes to organic search: why are rankings better than ever before, but click-through rates are down year over year?

# The answer is SERP visibility.

**The modern SERPs on Google have a few main goals:**

- ① Provide consumers satisfying, accurate answers as quickly as possible
- ② Keep consumers on Google properties (such as the organic rankings, Shopping pages, News, and more)
- ③ Serve consumers Google Ads to maintain the search giant's bottom line

To that end, they've harnessed the power of AI to analyze, learn from, and summarize website content for consumers to generate highly personalized, in-depth answers. These allow the searcher to access a wealth of information about a topic directly in the SERPs, without always needing to click a website link. Consumers stay on the SERP, have more exposure to Google Ads, and receive satisfying answers that help them complete more of their customer journey on Google and off websites.

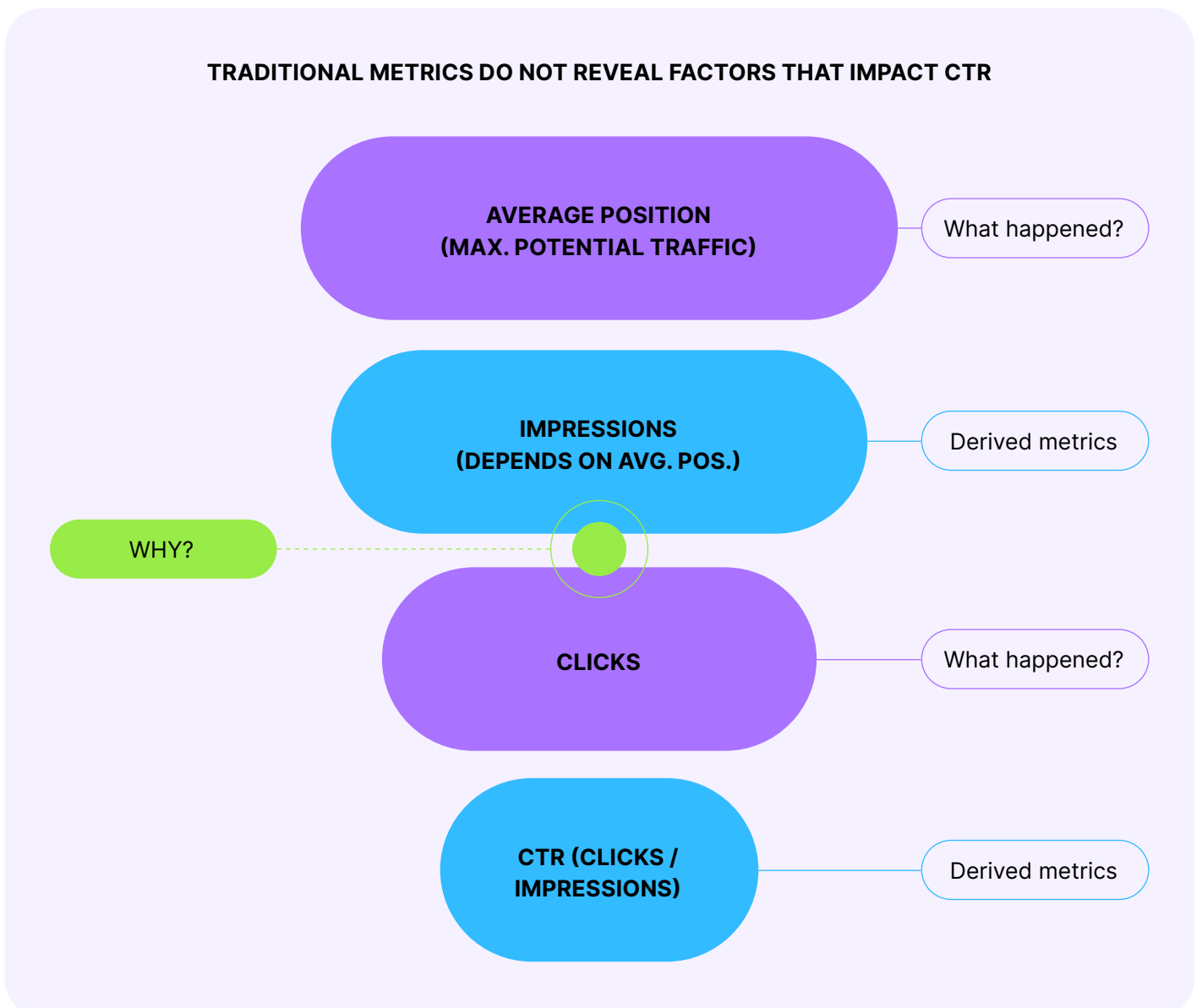
Metrics like impressions have also suffered decreased CTR. Complex user experiences like Google's faceted product page SERPs give consumers the option to refine results and browse products from multiple brands and retailers, without any need to click a website link until they're ready to buy. Because every facet selected is considered a new search query, impressions skyrocket while CTR stagnates. Customers can find everything they need on Google itself, and marketers are left to wonder why their metrics aren't telling the whole story.



# Traditional metrics don't tell the full story

While the robust data within Google Search Console can tell the story of what's happening at a given point in time, it doesn't provide the why. You can see how your search funnel is progressing: the average ranking position correlates to a certain number of impressions, which translate into expected clicks and CTR. But when you see rankings grow and clicks drop, how do you pinpoint the reason?

Visual analysis of the SERP, or "SERP shape analysis," is key. The search engine results page is a pre-click environment, and understanding your consumer's journey from search to click is integral to optimizing for the new era of AI-powered search and appearing in AI Overviews.





# Pixel depth affects brand visibility

Even if your organic rankings are high, in today's modern SERP, the searcher may never see your website in the ten blue links.

That's because the increasingly crowded SERP feature space is driving the physical location of those organic links lower and lower on the page, sometimes even below the fold. To understand how visible your brand is in an organic search landscape now defined by AI Overviews, you need to inspect your visual position in the SERP for your most valuable terms.

*To put it simply, pixel depth = attention.*

How far down your website appears on a SERP and whether it's above or below the fold will determine the amount of attention it gets from consumers — and attention determines CTR, answering the question Google Search Console can't on its own.

The image shows a Google search results page for "best hotels in london". Three callout boxes indicate the pixel depth of different sections:

- 330 pixels:** Points to the sponsored section titled "Sponsored - Best hotels in london".
- 540 pixels:** Points to the "Best Hotels | London" section, which includes a list of hotels like Shangri-La The Shard, Rosewood London, and NoMad London, along with a map.
- Pixel depth: 900 pixels:** Points to the AI Overview section, which features a "Traveller" card with "The best hotels in London 2024: Traveller editors' picks" and other relevant links.



# What Are AI Overviews and How Do They Work?

# 01

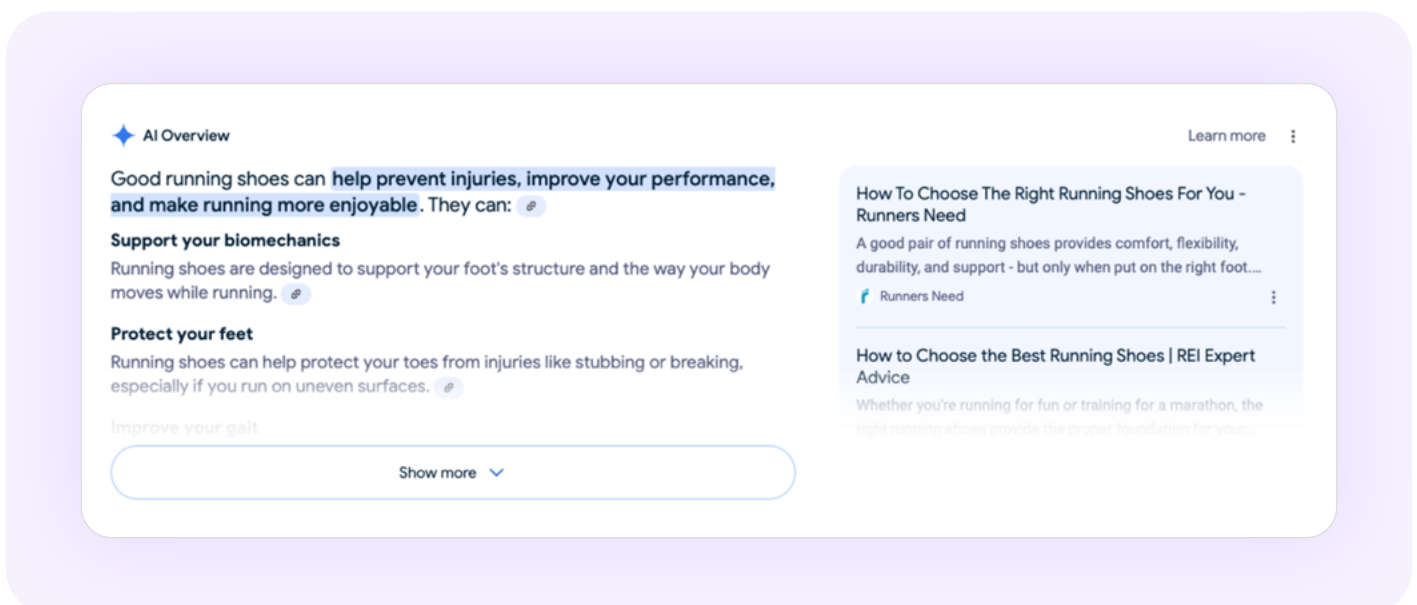
Announced in mid-2023 at Google's I/O conference, AI Overviews began as an experiment to incorporate generative AI responses into traditional search results, first branded as "Search Generative Experience" (SGE). In May 2024, they officially launched across live organic search results in the US with the new name "AI Overviews," introducing a new user experience for consumers and new questions for brands. As of autumn 2024, AI Overviews are in the process of rolling out globally.

# What's noteworthy about AI Overviews?

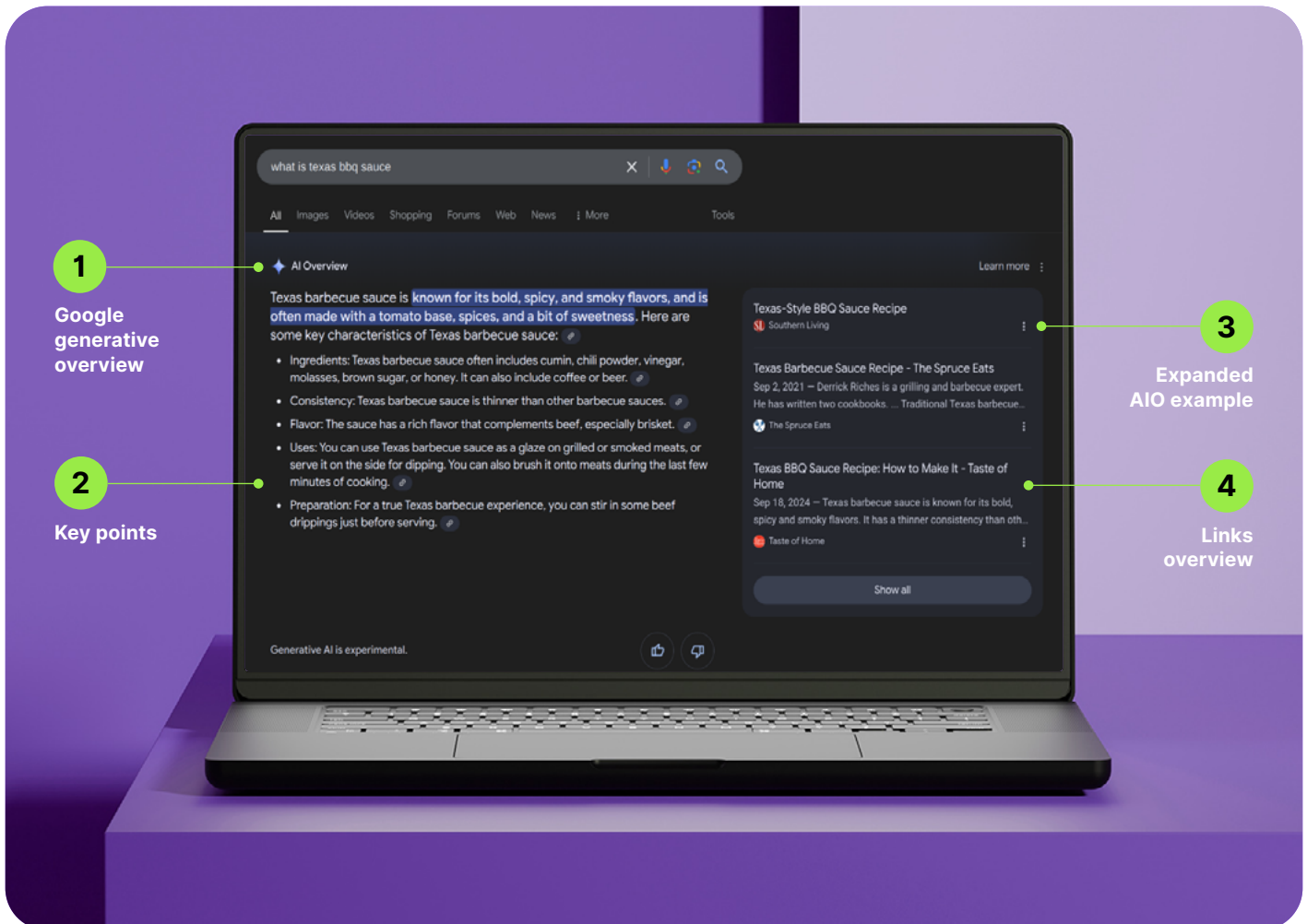
While AI Overviews are similar to familiar elements like featured snippets in a few ways, such as providing answers to consumers' questions directly in the SERP and repurposing content from ranking websites, the technology driving AI Overviews is the most important thing to understand about them.

As we know, featured snippets take a relevant section of content from a ranking website, provide it verbatim as an answer in "position zero" at the top of the SERP, and link to that website. All of this is done using the same search technology, web index, and Google algorithms that brands have dealt with for over a decade.

In contrast, AI Overviews harness the power of Google's large language model, Gemini, to provide AI-generated responses to consumers' questions. These appear as in-depth, usually multi-paragraph answers in "position zero" on the SERP, and they require a "click to expand" action to view the full generated response. Because LLM data is [limited to a particular timeframe](#) and can't trace knowledge to a source, linked citations are provided based on information from a different database: Google's organic search index, the same place organic rankings or "ten blue links" are sourced and ranked.



# Anatomy of an AI Overview



## ① Google generative overview

The AI-generated summary Google provides in response to a query. It's compiled using Google's knowledge of a subject based on the data within its Gemini LLM. It usually appears in a collapsed state and requires a click to expand and expose the full content.

## ② Key points

A list of key points, each associated with a website cited and linked as a source. These websites are matched to the answer after the fact, generally based on how similar they are to the AI-generated summary.

## ③ Expanded AIO example

The full text of the AI Overview after a consumer has clicked to expand and view the full answer.

## ④ Links overview

A list of the websites linked as sources for each key point. Clicking "show all" activates a scrollable box providing all cited links.

# How AI Overviews are generated

As we mentioned earlier, AI Overviews are compiled from two sources: Google's LLM, known as Gemini, and Google's organic web index.

**Generating an AI Overview uses the following process, according to [Google's patent](#):**

- ① A consumer inputs a query into Google search
- ② Google uses a natural language response system to understand the context and meaning behind the query
- ③ Google provides a generative summary using data from within their own LLM. This isn't based on specific context and links from the SERP, but rather what Google's [AI model knows about a subject based](#) on all the content it trained on in the past
- ④ Google consults top-ranking websites in its search engine index to find content that best answers the query, linking to these websites as sources within the AIO

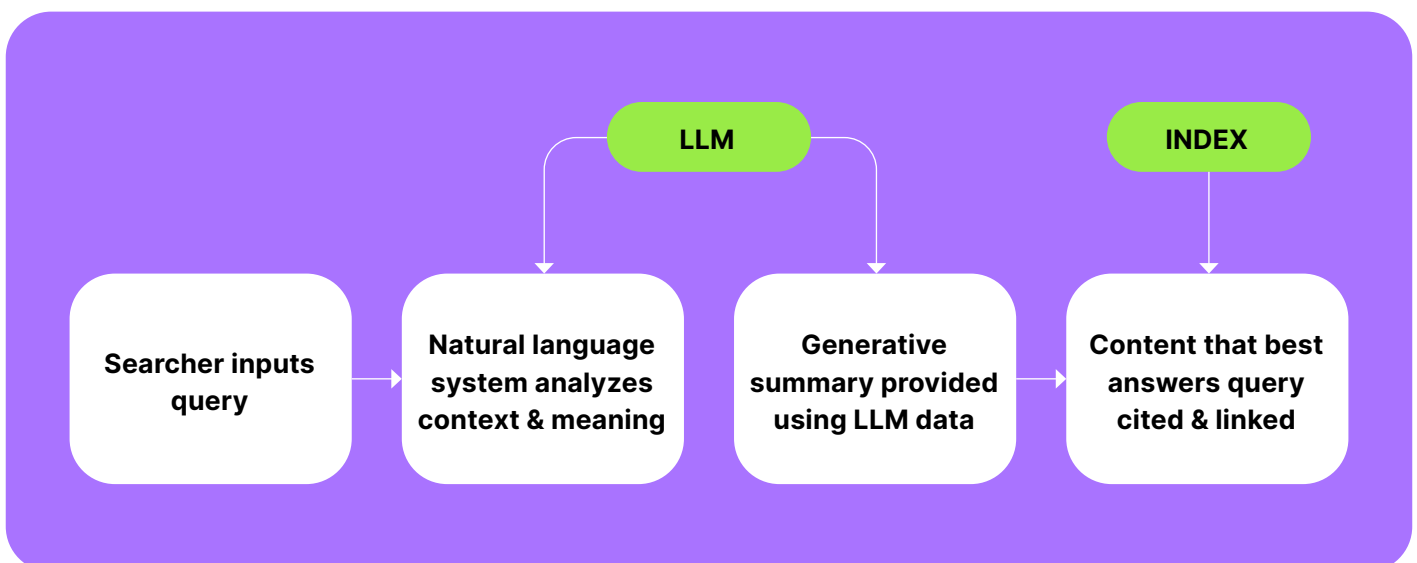
## Top takeaways to pay attention to here:

If your website and most important content aren't in Google's search engine index, they cannot be cited in an AI Overview.

Relevant, quality site content that satisfies a consumer's need is more important than ever before.

Your efforts to rank highly in organic Google search will benefit your visibility within AI Overviews.

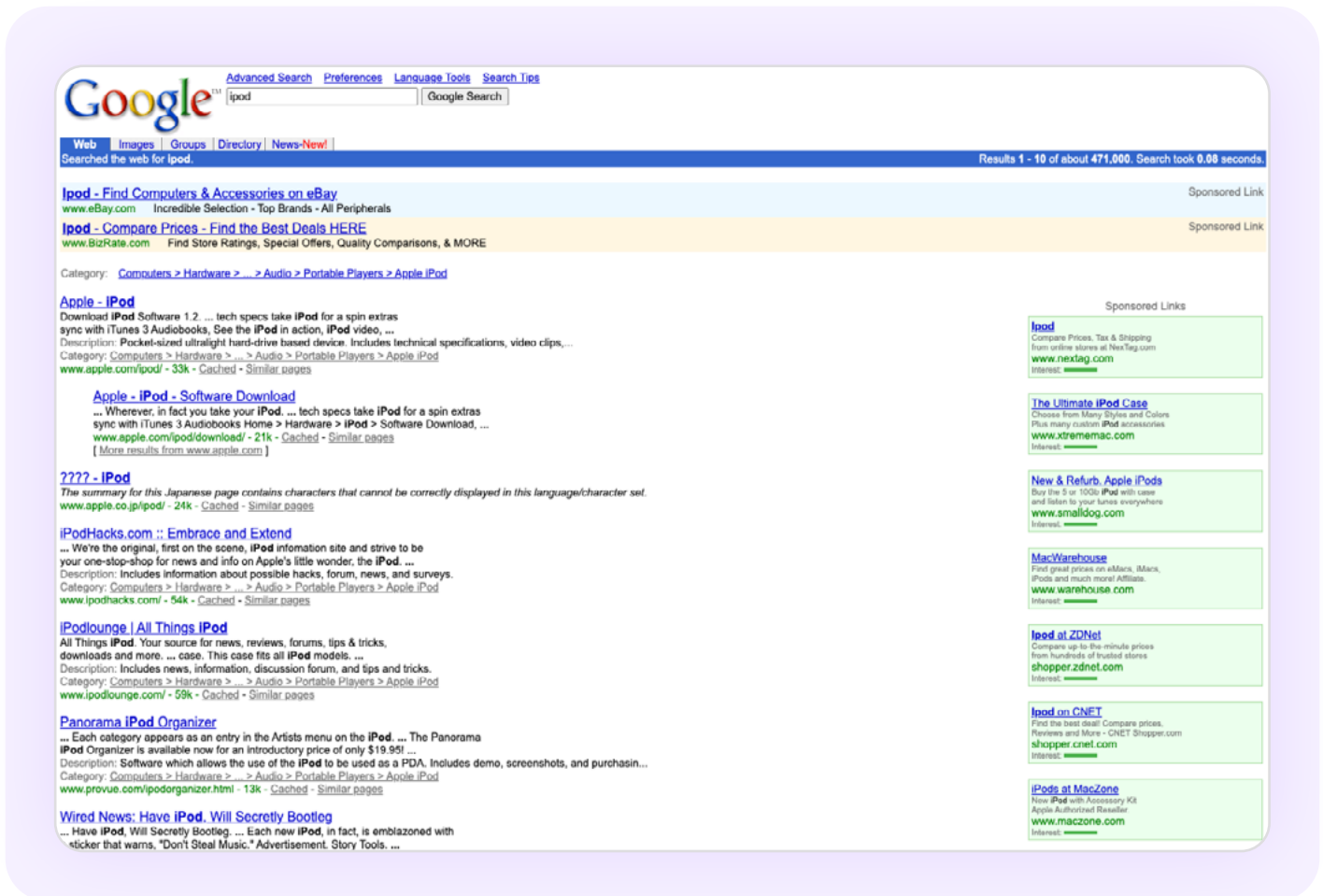
This is a virtuous cycle, as the content Google encounters while indexing the web also feeds into and trains their language models as well.



# The impact of AI Overviews



SERP feature	Average pixel height (desktop)	Average pixel height (mobile)
Screen resolution height	942.29px	835px
AI Overview (collapsed)	394.44px (41.9% of total height)	400px (47.9% of total height)
Featured snippet	237.75px (25.2% of total height)	232px (27.8% of total height)
AI Overview + featured snippet	632.19px (67.1% of total height)	632px (75.7% of total height)



Google SERP for "ipod," 11/21/2002

Before the first SERP features like news, the local pack, and the Knowledge Graph began to crowd the results page, the original organic rankings enjoyed prime real estate at the top of the results. Organic rankings and sponsored links were the only way to find and click on a website in search.

As elements like featured snippets, People Also Ask, Shopping results, and more appeared, the organic rankings began to push ever lower in the SERPs. Highly personalized results meant more satisfying answers for consumers, and greater friction for marketers and brands as they adjusted their strategies to maintain and grow organic traffic.

Now, AI Overviews are appearing for almost half of the keywords we analyzed for this study, with almost a fifth of commercial queries triggering a generative response.

With an average pixel height of just under 400px in their collapsed state, AI Overviews take up a lot of digital space. And because they can co-occur alongside featured snippets, together these features can command a full two-thirds of the visible SERP above the fold. This drives even the highest organic rankings down a minimum of 632px on the page and impacts how many consumers see and click those links.

It's possible to estimate the CTR impact on your top rankings. Take the average click-through rate for your top 1–3 results, then shift those rates down the same amount to reflect their "new position" in the presence of an AI Overview. When you begin to see organic positions 1–3 may earn the CTR of 4–6–place rankings, the impact on visibility feels much more keen.



# About This Study

# Q2



We set out to understand the impact of AI Overviews, determine their relationship with organic rankings, and quantify what it means for brands. Knowing from Google's patent that traditional rankings influence which websites are cited and linked as sources in AI Overviews, we wanted to find out exactly where brands should focus their efforts to earn the most visibility in today's AI-first SERP.



### Some questions we wanted to answer:

- **Why are brands ranking higher than ever before but getting fewer clicks?**
- **What types of queries are triggering AI Overviews?**
- **How often do AI Overviews appear for informational and commercial queries?**
- **How does Google choose a website to cite as a source for generated responses?**

# Methodology

To look at a cross-section of a number of different industries, we gathered 120,778 total keywords from public sources (such as keyword research tools and Keyword Planner) across 22 websites from 10 e-commerce retailers, 10 brands, and two publishers. To understand the breakdown between keywords with different search intents, we categorized them into 36,000 commercial keywords and used the People Also Ask data from those SERPs to generate an additional 85,638 informational keywords. Overall, we analyzed over **120,000 total SERPs**, measuring the visual impact of SERP features via pixel depth on desktop devices. All keywords and SERPs analyzed were US-based.

2  
Publishers

10  
Brands

10  
E-commerce  
retailers

22  
Websites

To understand the relationship between AI Overviews summary text and the websites ranking as cited links, we conducted a cosine similarity analysis, a process by which words are converted into numbers ([vector embeddings](#)) to measure the mathematical distance between the meaning of two pieces of text. This allowed us to correlate how semantically similar a ranking piece of content was to the AI-generated summary. For this analysis, we used Google's embedding models to vectorize each AI Overview text and the page content found on each URL in the citation links for that AI Overview. Next, we calculated the distance between the overview text on Google's generated response and the body of text in each one of the top cited links using a standard cosine similarity function.

This study was conducted with data collected from August 15, 2024 to September 1, 2024 and analyzed in September 2024.



# Data Insights

# 03

# How often do AI Overviews appear?

In our study, AI Overviews appeared for 47% of the keywords analyzed, 57,263 SERPs in total. One of our goals was to observe and collect data on as many instances of AI Overviews in the wild as possible. To that end, we intentionally “encouraged” a heightened



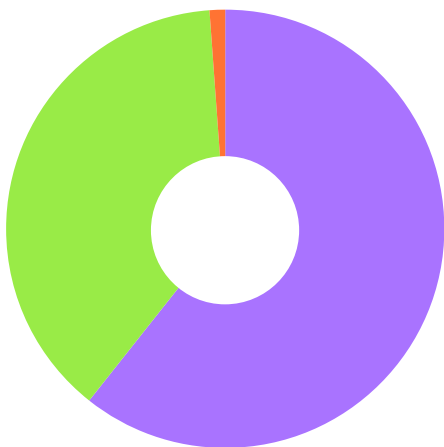
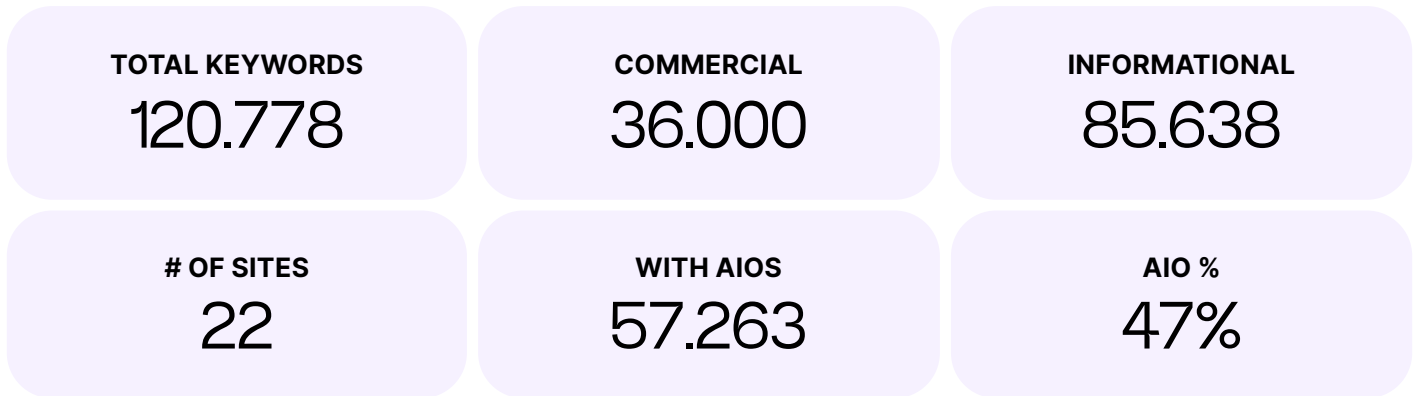
appearance rate by using a well-curated starting list of 36,000 commercial keywords, fetched the People Also Ask (PAA) questions from each SERP, and then used those to generate the remainder of the dataset. This resulted in a list of 85,638 informational keywords that could be tied back to queries with strong commercial intent.

Because our study focused on keywords intended to surface AI Overviews, the observed appearance rate is higher than what you’ll see observed across worldwide datasets. Keep in mind that this data reflects real SERPs based on the questions consumers are actually asking — although the appearance rate is high, it’s representative of the potential AI Overviews have to overtake enterprise ranking positions.

Across our set of 85,638 keywords with informational intent, 59% triggered an AI Overview. Our set of 36,000 commercial-intent keywords triggered AI Overviews 19% of the time.



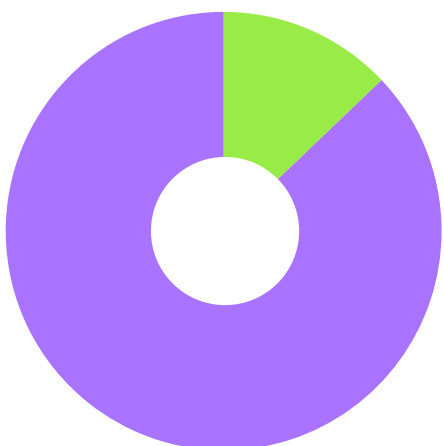
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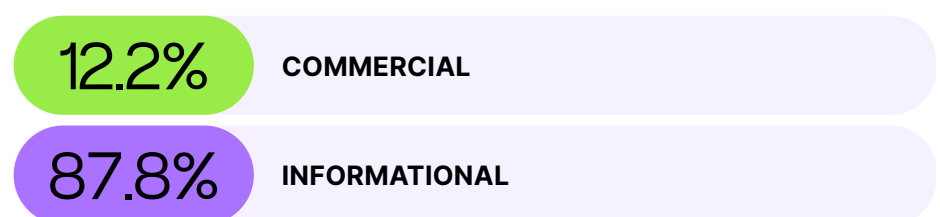
### Keyword set breakdown



### SERPs with AIOs



### AIO intent breakdown



# What kind of queries trigger AI Overviews?



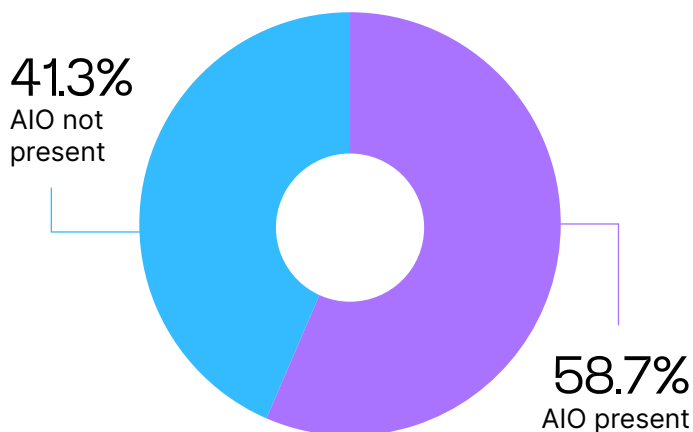
## Commercial vs informational intent breakdown

**Commercial intent** keywords inform consumers nearing a purchase action. Consumers either want to buy an item, or learn key information to make a purchase decision.

**Informational intent** keywords help a consumer better understand a topic. These are often longer-tail queries that are top-of-funnel or mid-funnel.

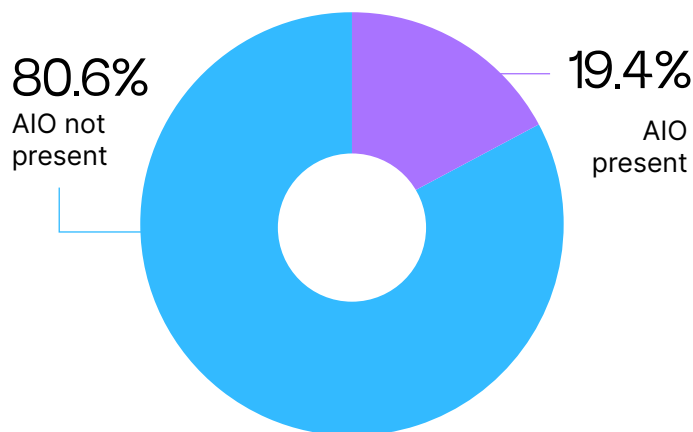
**Navigational intent** keywords help consumers go somewhere specific, such as physical directions, a brand website, or a particular page (such as a product page.) These are often branded keywords.

### 59% OF INFORMATIONAL TRIGGERED AIO



**Keywords with informational intent triggered AI Overviews 58.7% of the time.** This makes sense — consumers who want to learn more about a subject will most benefit from a summary directly on the SERP. Google is doing the work of finding, ranking, evaluating, and summarizing in-depth website content, taking the burden of effort off the consumer.

### 19% OF COMMERCIAL TRIGGERED AIO

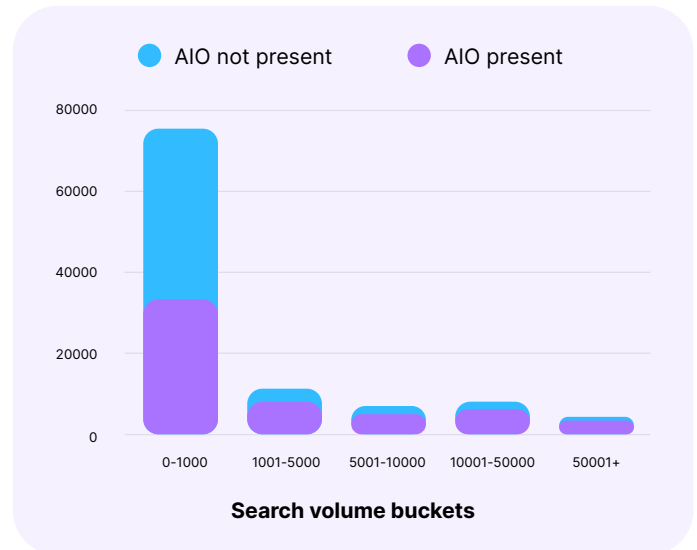


**Keywords with commercial intent triggered AI Overviews 19.4% of the time.** This was a surprising find — commercial intent keywords are often accompanied by Google Ads, which are responsible for generating [77% of parent company Alphabet's revenue](#). While Google AI Overview Ads [officially launched for mobile results](#) in October 2024, the AI Overview itself occupies the valuable space at the top of the SERP. AI Overview Ads appear below the AI Overview itself, potentially affecting clickability and revenue impact for Google.



### AI Overviews by search volume

Lower search volume keywords triggered the most AI Overviews, with the feature appearing on 55% of queries under 1,000 monthly searches. As search volume increased, we saw the incidence of AI Overviews decrease; the lowest frequency of AI Overviews was seen for keywords with over 50,000 monthly searches.



### Head, mid, and long tail keywords

For the purpose of this study and to quantify the appearance of AI Overviews for each phrase length, we defined “head,” “mid,” and “long” tail keywords as follows:

- **Head tail keywords: 1–2 words**

Head tail keywords are short phrases with high search volume, usually broad in nature.

- **Mid tail keywords: 3–4 words**

Mid tail keywords are medium-length phrases with a medium amount of search volume.

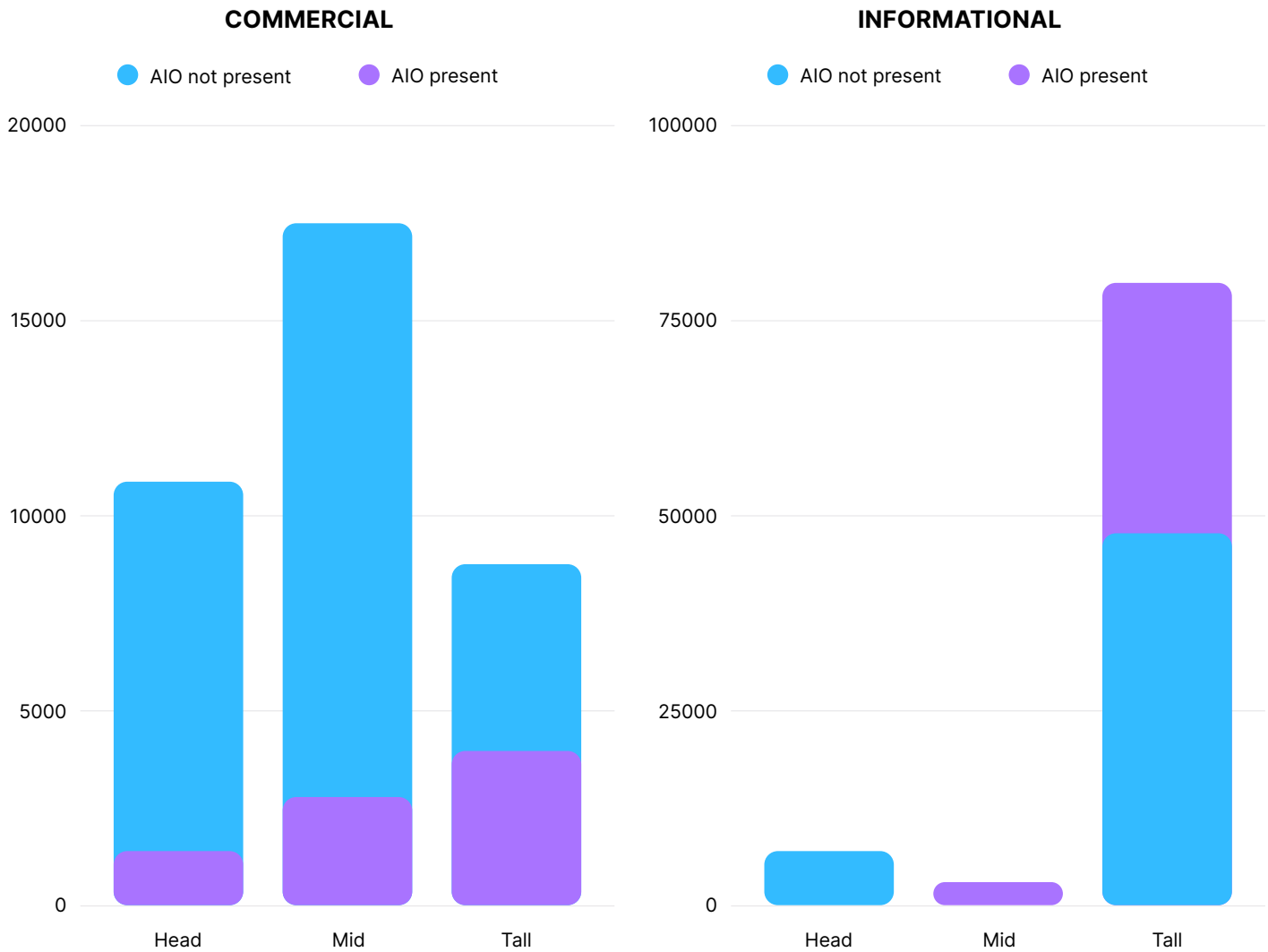
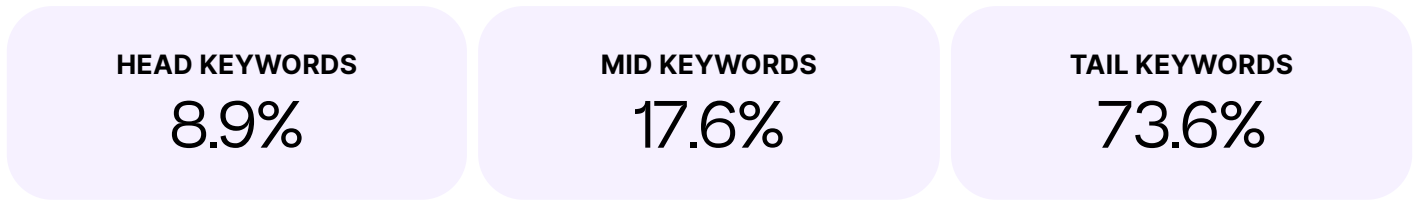
- **Long tail keywords: 5+ words**

Long tail keywords are more specific phrases with a lower search volume. Often, and especially today with AI search, long tail keywords are conversational.

Phrase length influences the occurrence of AI Overviews as well. In this study, long tail keywords represented the bulk of queries with AI Overviews, triggering them 73.6% of the time overall. Mid tail keywords surfaced AI Overviews 17.6% of the time; for head tail keywords, that number dropped to 8.9%.

In 2017, [Google](#) stated that 15% of the billions of searches performed daily were completely unique, never searched before. With the expansion of conversational AI-powered search, that number has and will only grow exponentially, meaning it's more important than ever to keep the value of your long tail keywords in mind.

For keywords with informational intent, the long tail captured the vast majority of AI-generated responses from Google. For keywords with commercial intent, the incidence of AI Overviews was more evenly distributed between mid and long tail queries. For both types of intents, head tail keywords resulted in the fewest number of AI Overviews.



→ Why do mid and long tail keywords trigger more AI Overviews?

For one thing, short, commercial head tail queries like “buy shoes” or “shoes” may signal that a faceted product page SERP better satisfies the consumer’s need, allowing them to select and refine their initial search. Short informational head tail queries, such as “calico cat” or “accessible playgrounds,” are very broad: the consumer may want images, a definition,

locations, or other knowledge a different SERP feature could provide. Expanding those terms to signify more specific intent — “are all calico cats female” or “what are accessible playgrounds” — triggers an AI Overview that better answers the need. It all comes down to providing a high-quality, satisfying answer to the consumer.



# The role of featured snippets

While there tends to be an assumption that the presence of an AI Overview means there won't be a featured snippet on the same SERP, our research study shows that this isn't true. With a 60.5% co-occurrence rate of featured snippets and AI Overviews, both elements appear together often enough to take up a large visual portion of the SERP pie.

394.44px



## AI Overviews & featured snippets: Better or worse together?

When AI Overviews and featured snippets appear on a SERP together, they take up a combined pixel height of 632.19px, or [67% of the average screen resolution height on desktop](#). Remember, because these elements always appear in "position zero," that pushes all other results even further down the page — including and especially the traditional organic rankings. This often requires a full scroll to move down the page — and it's even more stark on mobile.

What does it mean? **If you're not found in an AI Overview, your website may not be seen by consumers at all.** Measuring and understanding what's happening visually on the SERP is your key to describing the story of what's happening to your CTR and other organic metrics.

237.75px

how long does it take to walk 1 mile

All Images Videos Forums Shopping News Maps More Tools

AI Overview

On average, it takes a person **15-22 minutes** to walk one mile. However, walking speed can vary depending on a number of factors, including:

- Fitness level: More aerobically fit people tend to walk faster.
- Terrain: Walking on a hard, flat surface like pavement is faster than walking on a soft, uneven surface like grass.
- Weather: The weather can impact how long it takes to walk a mile.
- Age: A person's age can affect their walking speed.
- Carrying a heavy bag: Walking while carrying a heavy bag can slow you down.
- Walking up and down hills: Walking up and down hills can slow you down.

Some ways to improve your walking pace include:

- Bending your arms
- Taking shorter, quicker steps
- Swinging your arms straight
- Keeping good posture
- Picking a target to walk toward
- Mixing up your paces

What is the fastest time to walk a mile? What is the fastest way to walk a mile?

Generative AI is experimental.

15-22 minutes

According to data gathered in a 2019 scientific study, it takes the average person **15-22 minutes** to walk one mile. Remember that the weather, your age, the terrain you're walking on, and how fast you're walking are all factors that can impact your mile time.

adidas US  
<https://www.adidas.com/blog/992695-how-long-does-it-take-to-walk-a-mile>  
 How Long Does It Take To Walk A Mile - Adidas

**Impact on searchers**

With so much information summarized for the consumer directly on Google's SERP, there may be no need for them to review, evaluate, and click on a link in a list of organically ranked websites. Google's AI responses take care of the effort involved in choosing the best content found in search, streamlining the experience for the consumer.

More and more effort will shift from consumers to the AI agent that finds and generatively summarizes content. This isn't always a threat to your conversion rates, however: as consumers adopt new search behaviors that rely on AI agents and their responses, more of the customer journey will be completed directly on the SERP. That means that when a customer clicks into your website, they're more qualified than ever to make a purchase, and the traffic you do earn is much higher quality.

**Fabrice Canel**

Principal Product Manager - Bing at Botify Connect 2024

*“What we are seeing is that the AI experiences [on Bing] often offer more click transfer value over traditional search because we are really better able to understand the user and we are better able to understand the intent ... so while clicks may go down, the revenue per click will go up.”*

# AI Overviews and links



## How organic rankings impact AIOs

The million-dollar question in our study: what role do organic rankings play in regards to AI Overviews?

As it turns out, it's a big one. A full 75% of AI Overview links came from position 12 or higher in the traditional organic rankings. With a median organic rank of position 4 and an average organic rank of position 12.03, it's clear that the fundamentals are still vitally important. Performing well in organic rankings is the single strongest influencing factor for appearing in AI Overview links as a cited, linked source. Think of the AI Overview list of links as the new SERP — the first clickable options a consumer will see after searching.

# 12.03

Average organic rank

# 4

Median organic rank

# 12

75th percentile



## How sources are selected for inclusion

To be selected as a linked source within an AI Overview, your site should be ranking within the top 12 organic positions for the term. All best practices with regards to organic rankings apply: you need to keep your SEO fundamentals strong, ensure your website can be found and indexed by Google, and align your website content with your consumer's needs and customer journey.

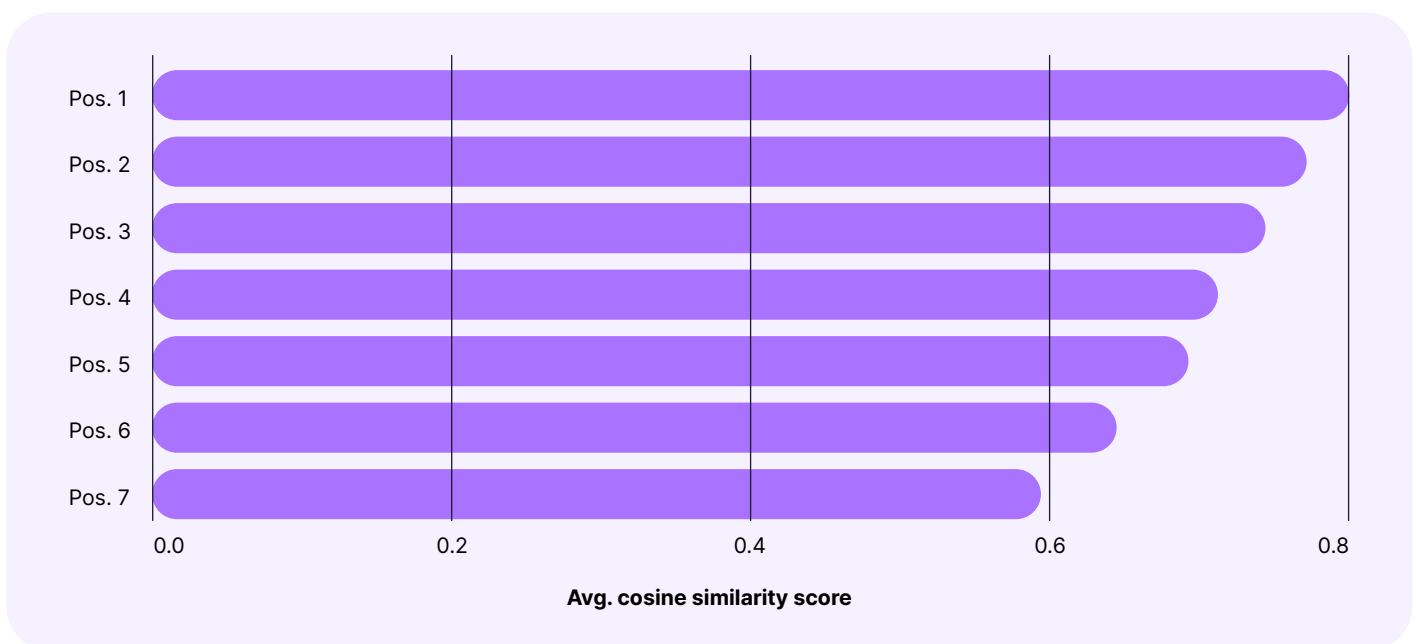
This alignment between the content on your website and the answers your consumers are seeking is something we sought to measure via cosine similarity scores, and it turns out there's a high correlation between the website sources cited and linked and what appears in AI Overviews.

# AI Overviews, content, & cosine similarity

There is a direct content relationship between the pages in the top 12 ranking positions and what appears in the generated responses of AI Overviews.

This can be measured via a process called cosine similarity, or assigning a score to content based on how semantically similar they are.

## RELATIONSHIP OF COSINE SIMILARITY TO TOP RESULTS

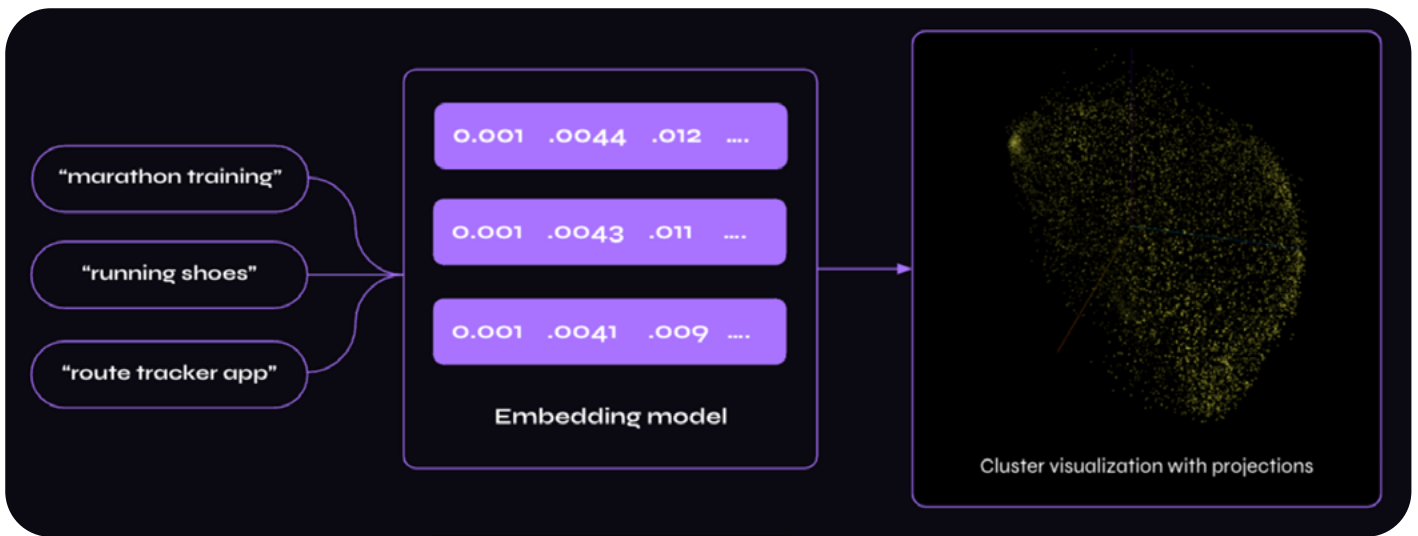


The majority of linked sources in AI Overviews come from the top 12 organic rankings.

→ What is a cosine similarity score, and why does it matter?

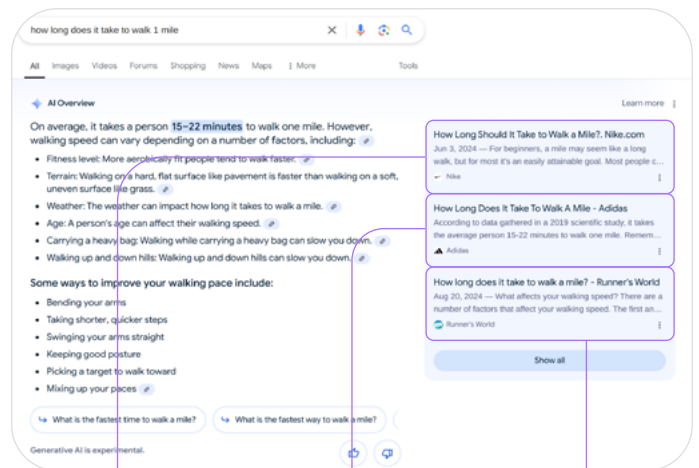
A cosine similarity score is a way to compare meaning between different pieces of content. Measuring [cosine similarity](#) allows us to draw a correlation between those bodies of text — in this case, the AI Overview summary, and the text on top-ranking websites cited in the list of links.

By converting text into numbers via [vector embeddings](#), you can calculate how similar clusters of meaning are. Those pieces of text with a high similarity to the text generated by an AI Overview response are more likely to be cited and linked as a source for that response.



The closer the similarity score is to 1, the more semantically similar the texts, which may indicate that the cited webpage content is the best and most authoritative source to be paired with the AI-generated summary.

While the technical details of calculating cosine similarity are complex, the simple thing to remember is that the more similar your content is to the generative response Google provides for a query, the better your chances of appearing in “the new SERP.” That doesn’t mean you should copy or spin AI Overview summary content on your website to try to rank — it means that you should hyper-focus on understanding and satisfying your consumer’s intent for your valuable keywords.



**COSINE SIMILARITY**







### Cited links with low cosine similarity

In most cases, the websites cited in the list of links were highly correlated with the summary text of the AI Overview itself. It gets especially interesting, however, when the cited sources have a low cosine similarity score. Why would a website with less similarity to the AI-generated summary be cited as an authoritative source?

#### Some ideas:

- A non-text embedding model may be used, such as for video content like YouTube links
- Google may have other reasons to promote a particular URL outside of semantic similarity, perhaps related to new and evolving ranking systems for the AI Overview citation lists

Regardless, every brand will want to analyze and measure this for themselves, then adjust their content accordingly.





# Actionable Takeaways

# 4

# Measure the AI Overview impact for your brand

Before kicking off any strategy to address how you appear in AI Overviews, first you need to understand the impact it's having on your brand.

While robust data on AI Overviews in the SERPs can be elusive, there are plenty of clues that can signal how these elements are affecting your organic results:

**1**

## LOOK FOR HIGH RANKINGS WITH LOW CTR

What does the SERP look like for your top queries? Perform a manual or automated analysis and see how often AI Overviews are appearing for these keywords. Your high rankings may be pushed so far down on the SERP that they aren't visible without scrolling below the fold.

**2**

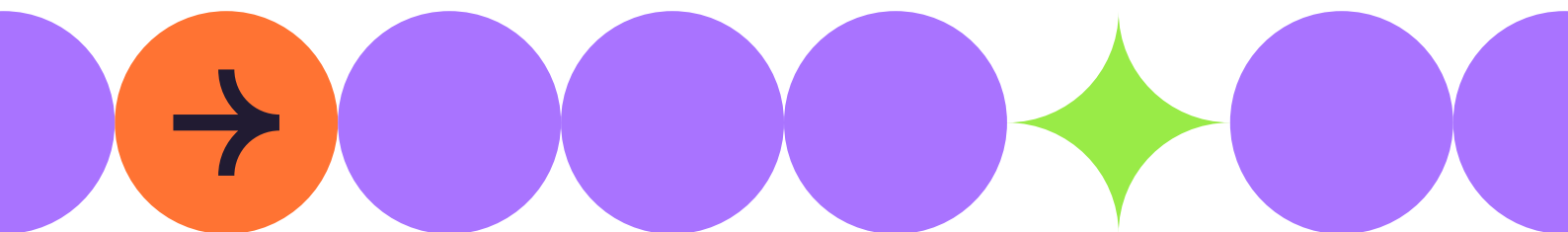
## BEGIN TO MEASURE PIXEL DEPTH ALONGSIDE YOUR TRADITIONAL RANKINGS DATA

DemandSphere has advanced [Visual Rank Tracking](#) that will help you understand your true keyword rankings in an AI-first organic landscape. Visual SERP analytics enable SEO teams to turn what the searcher sees into concrete data about their position above or below the first fold, a critical boundary for higher CTRs. This is a strong hint to how your content is reaching consumers in the pre-click environment.

**3**

## SEGMENT AND ANALYZE YOUR KEYWORDS TO IDENTIFY TRENDS

Consider segmenting by various buckets, such as intent, branded versus non-branded, products & categories, head/mid/long tail, and seasonality. In particular, look at keywords that address questions under the "six Ws": who, what, where, when, why, how. This can help you understand which topics and groups may be most impacted by AI Overviews.



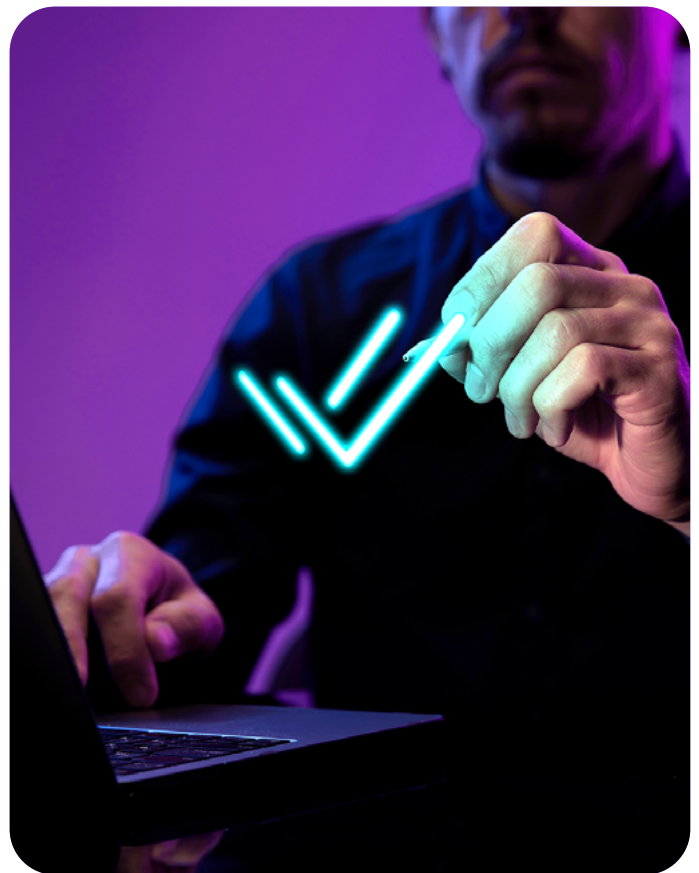


# Analyze the cosine similarity between your page content and AI Overview generated text

To maximize the chances of your top-ranked content appearing in AI Overview linked citations, it should be the best, most satisfying response aligning with the AI-generated summary. Measuring cosine similarity helps you quantify this.

It's possible to automate these calculations via a vector process, but you can also perform this analysis manually. By visiting a SERP for your top queries that have an AI Overview, you can assess:

- **How does the content linked in the AI Overview compare to the AI-generated text summary?**
- **How does it match the keyword intent?**
- **How directly does the content answer the consumer's need?**
- **What kind of tone and style does it use? Does it match that of the AI Overview summary?**



While it's impossible to know exactly what content trained Google's Gemini LLM and how that knowledge is surfacing in an AI Overview, the exciting thing about this correlation is that it could imply that the content on the top-ranked pages may be driving that Overview itself. While this is a difficult theory to prove, it's an interesting one to keep in mind, especially as you develop your generative AI SEO strategy and make decisions around [crawler bot governance](#) on your website.

# Focus on ranking in the top 1–12 search results

Your organic rankings are still critical to driving results for your brand. Focus on your most valuable content, understanding what's ranking well and where you have opportunity to improve. Prioritize getting that content ranked highly and defending your rankings with an ongoing and well-resourced search strategy.

Look at your rankings data to target low-hanging fruit. In the dataset used for this study, 90% of cited links in AI Overviews came from position 35 or higher. Valuable pages that rank in positions 13–35 may have straightforward improvements that could bump them into the “sweet spot” for appearing in AI Overview links. Consider finding ways to implement optimizations at scale to multiply the impact of your efforts, such as with [Botify Activation](#).

The bonus? You'll benefit from this focus, regardless of whether AI Overviews are triggered or not. High organic rankings are still a critical way to reach consumers, both on Google and on any platforms that share Google search results, such as Meta AI, virtual assistants like Apple's Siri, and others.



# 90%

of cited links in AI Overviews came from position 35 or higher

# 13–35

Valuable pages that rank in positions 13–35 may have straightforward improvements that could bump them into the “sweet spot” for appearing in AI Overview links

# Keep your SEO fundamentals strong

To stay competitive in the organic rankings that inform most AI Overview links, your SEO fundamentals should be strong and well-maintained. Even if organic CTR drops as rankings rise, that isn't the whole story — you need to investigate the SERP, understand what exactly is influencing consumer behavior, and identify where obstacles and opportunities lie.

**Your organic strategy should include the following:**

**CRAWLABILITY  
AND INDEXATION**

**TECHNICAL  
SITE HEALTH**

**AI-FORWARD  
CONTENT  
STRATEGY**

**AUTOMATION  
& OPTIMIZATION  
AT SCALE**



## 1 **Crawlability and indexation**

The first step to ranking in the top 12 positions, on Google, Bing, or any other traditional or AI-powered search engine, is to be indexed.

Since Google links to content from its search index within AI-generated responses from its Gemini LLM, any content that isn't indexed may as well be invisible — consumers will never see it. Solutions like Botify can help identify and fix indexation issues on your website, tracking [how traditional and AI bots](#) find, crawl, and explore your pages. [SpeedWorkers](#) within Botify Activation can even pre-render your content and serve it directly to search engine crawlers to guarantee your revenue-driving pages are found.

Our data shows that Google misses crawling about 50% of the pages on large websites, while in some cases Bing misses crawling 20% of the pages that drive organic traffic from Google. You may have the best answer in your site's pages, but if they aren't found within the Google search index, they risk not being cited in an AI Overview link — no matter how well-optimized they are otherwise. If your pages aren't found within the Bing search index, you're missing the opportunity to appear in other generative AI platforms that rely on Bing, such as ChatGPT. To be ranked in *any* way, your site must first be found.

# 50%

Number of pages missed by Google on large websites

Botify Analytics data based on a sample of global e-commerce customers

## 2 Technical site health

Ensuring your site can be crawled swiftly and easily by search engine bots helps you get a higher volume of important site content found and ranked in the SERPs. Prioritize [technical optimizations](#) such as:



**Internal linking** to help search engine crawlers find your top content quickly and easily, at a low crawl depth on your website



**Structured data** to both improve your chances of winning highly visible SERP features (like featured snippets) and to help search engine crawlers quickly understand critical information about your content



**XML sitemap optimization** to signal to search engines what content should be prioritized when they visit your website, a process you can automate at scale with [Botify Activation](#)



**Improving page speed** to make sure search engine bots crawl through your website with ease and don't get bogged down by issues such as large file sizes, slow server response times, code bloat, and others



**Prioritizing user experience** via conversion rate optimization, web accessibility, mobile-first indexing, and more



**Fixing URL issues** such as redirect chains, broken links, improper HTTP status codes, and more that can impede how both search engines and consumers find the content they need



### 3 AI-forward content strategy

Understanding your consumer's search intent and satisfying that intent with quality, [E-E-A-T-optimized](#) content on your website is still integral to ranking. Informational content, which supplies answers to the top and middle of the funnel, is critical to getting your product pages ranked for commercial keywords as well. You must build your authority on a topic and satisfy the customer journey start to finish.

While most brands have been prioritizing high-quality, satisfying content for many years, now you must also view your content strategy with a focus on how it might be served in AI Overviews. SERP analyses comparing the similarity of your content to the generative text of an AI Overview can help you better understand what kind of answers Google wants to serve.

### 4 Automation & optimization at scale

Implement sitewide optimizations using automation, like [PageWorkers](#) within Botify Activation, to save time and resources otherwise spent on manual updates and engineering delays. Use your newfound bandwidth to focus on experimenting and measuring results to better inform your AI-first SEO strategy.



→ You must build your authority on a topic and satisfy the customer journey start to finish.

# Develop your GenAI search strategy beyond Google

AI Overviews are Google's answer to the exponential rise of AI-powered search engines offering new ways for consumers to find products and interact with brands. But they aren't the only answer — [ChatGPT Search](#), Perplexity (now with an [AI-powered shopping assistant](#)), Meta AI, and [Mistral's le Chat](#) are just a few of the new players entering the AI search scene.

Similar to how Google generates responses with its LLM and sources links for its AI Overviews from its search index, each of the new AI-powered search engines combine the vast knowledge of an LLM with the reference power of a search index to provide links and citations to websites — especially recent, fresh content. The indexes most AI platforms tap into are powered by the Bing API, Google SERP data, or new, proprietary website indexes built by the platforms themselves. To be found by consumers in any of these emerging competitors to Google, you must be included in the website indexes they reference to train their LLMs and to find relevant links.

While these platforms are still proving their impact, AI search is here to stay, and consumers will shift their behaviors to welcome easier, more conversational experiences. Be sure your most valuable content is found by Google, Bing, and the [top AI bots](#) responsible for building new website indexes.

This doesn't mean you have to craft a new SEO strategy for Bing, ChatGPT, Meta, and more. It just means that you should ensure your website is accessible to and found by the top AI engines, that you have a thoughtful bot governance plan in place to manage AI crawler traffic to your site, and that you should practice the same strong SEO fundamentals that secure your

high rankings in Google. Strategies like sitemap optimization, [pushing your content](#) directly to the Bing index, protocols like [IndexNow](#), and even partnership programs like [Perplexity's Merchant Program](#) can help your content be found across platforms.

It can feel overwhelming to add new tasks to an already long list of SEO to-dos. You can also expand your team's capabilities by integrating the search expertise of the [Botify Advantage](#) team, with a special focus on helping you craft your GenAI strategy.





# About Botify

Botify's leading search visibility technology gives every brand the power to be found, both in traditional and AI-powered organic search. With one powerful platform, brands achieve visibility and relevance across top search engines such as Google, Bing, ChatGPT Search, Meta AI, and more.

With AI-powered automation, data insights, and actionable recommendations, Botify ensures content is effectively indexed, summarized, and discoverable online, helping brands connect with consumers at exactly the right place and time — wherever they search.

Trusted by 500+ leading brands including Macy's, Levi's, Farfetch, the New York Times, and Marks & Spencer, Botify drives digital discovery, boosts profitability, and supports sustainable growth in an AI-first world.

[Book a demo with Botify](#)

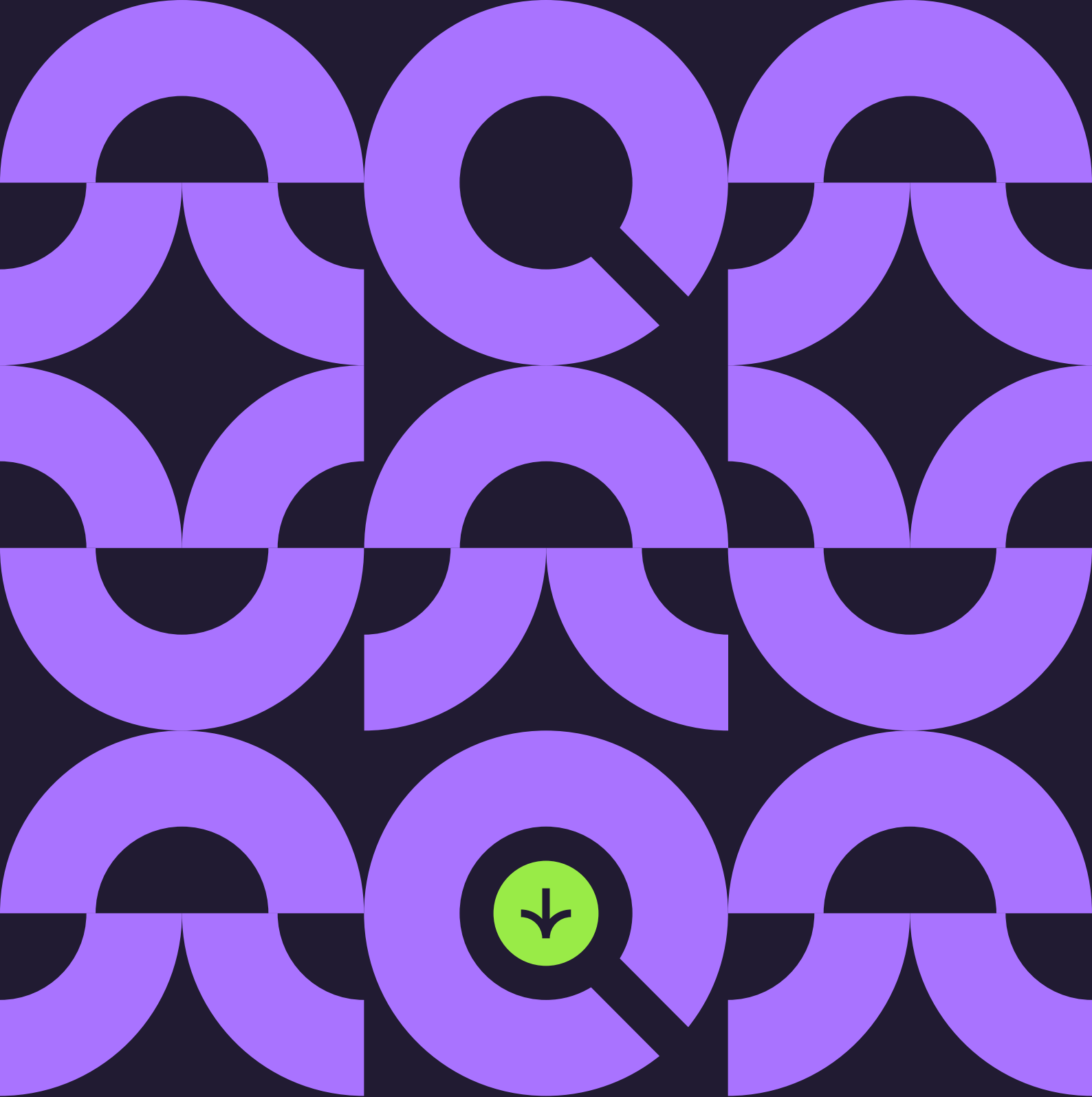
# About DemandSphere

DemandSphere's visual SERP analytics platform helps brands and agencies push the boundaries of AI search strategy, unlocking new opportunities for growth across the internet's fastest-growing traffic sources.

By combining daily insights, team collaboration tools, and competitive intelligence, DemandSphere enables its customers to achieve greater productivity and profitability.

More than 250 industry-leading brands and agencies — such as Fast Retailing, L'Oréal, GroupM, and iProspect — rely on DemandSphere to elevate search visibility, strengthen client relationships, and drive revenue growth.

[Book a demo with DemandSphere](#)



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