

EBOOK

7 steps for winning when AI is stealing your clicks



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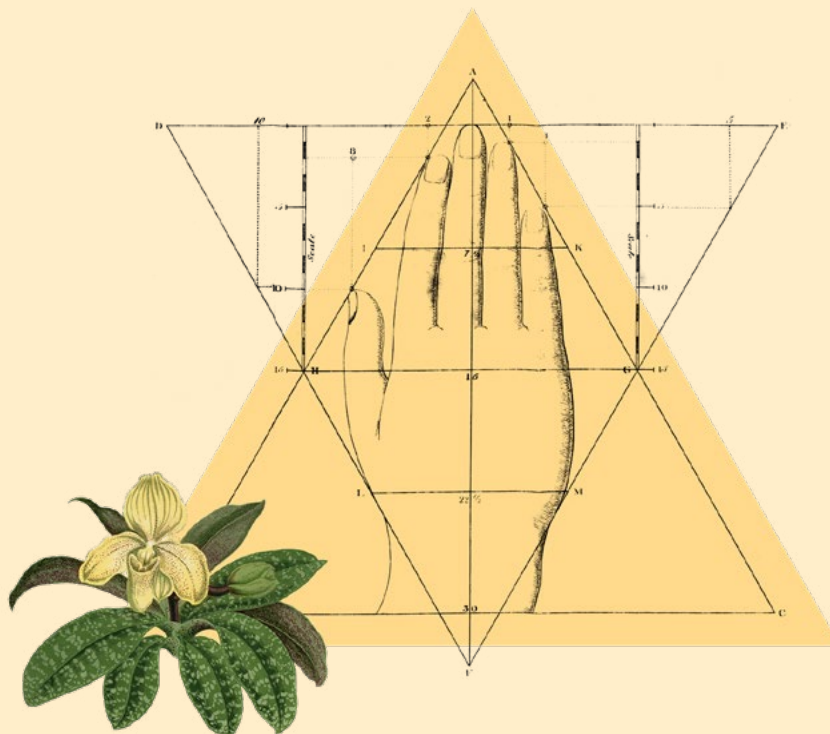
Marketers are experiencing an evolution in search marketing as AI-generated responses are reshaping how consumers find information online. Google’s AI Overviews — automated summaries that directly pull content from various sources — are appearing more frequently on search results pages. While these snippets offer quick answers, it reduces the need to click through to an actual website. This trend, known as “zero-click searches”, has disrupted user search behavior and caught the attention of the broader digital industry. As search engines continue to prioritize these AI-driven results, businesses face new challenges in driving organic traffic and capturing prospects.

Looking at recent real-world data from Search Engine Journal, Google’s AI Overviews have continued to increase, appearing in almost [43% of all searches](#) with some industries seeing much higher incidences. Question-based search queries and informational keywords are particularly vulnerable, triggering AI responses 99% of the time.

Are AI search results replacing traditional clicks?

Google used to primarily act as a gateway connecting users with external websites to find answers, discover products, or explore services. Now, Google itself is becoming the destination, providing AI-generated responses that minimize the need for users to click through to other websites. At the same time, AI-driven search engines like ChatGPT and Perplexity are gaining traction, offering users conversational, AI-powered results that further reshape how information is discovered and consumed. This fundamentally shifts who controls the search experience, with advanced AI models curating the most relevant information from multiple sources to generate a response before users even consider clicking a link.

Businesses that have traditionally relied on SEO to attract top-of-funnel visitors need to start rethinking how they compete in an AI-focused search landscape.



What happens when your important keywords trigger AI-generated results?

For years, marketers have created and optimized content to compete for top positions on search engine results pages (SERPs). Rankings within the top 3 results were considered the gold standard for maximizing visibility, traffic, and conversions. However, that prime real estate is declining as AI Overviews add yet another layer of competition to an already crowded space—where paid search, featured snippets, and knowledge panels continue to push organic results further down the page.

Let's consider the SaaS industry, where companies like Nintex, IBM, and SAP have long competed for top placements in search results. A popular search query like “process management automation” (featured above) no longer showcases well-structured product pages, detailed comparison articles, or in-depth thought leadership content. Instead, an AI Overview appears at the top, consolidating all of this information and reassembling it into a quick, condensed version for an answer. As a result, organic and paid links lose visibility, making it harder for brands to capture clicks.

This challenge isn't limited to SaaS — finance, healthcare, travel, and B2B industries are seeing similar trends, especially for informational searches.

While AI Overviews cite branded websites as sources, the links are hidden behind small icons that users must click to reveal the actual web pages. In theory, appearing in AI Overviews could be considered an SEO win, as it secures top position rankings. However, the extra effort on the user can discourage clicks leading to potential declines in website traffic. It's clear that Google is testing user adoption of zero-click searches.

Many marketers feel underprepared to navigate the impact of AI siphoning off a large portion of their website traffic. The goal has always been to guide prospects through the buyer journey on their own site — not lose them to competitors. But as AI-generated responses increasingly provide answers upfront, businesses are finding it harder to capture and engage potential customers before they move on.



So how do you compete for visibility and attract new website visitors when AI is doing the answering?

We can all agree that traditional search is facing a serious disruption. With AI fundamentally changing the structure of search results, businesses can no longer rely solely on traditional SEO tactics to drive traffic. Instead, they must adapt their strategies to stay visible in a digital ecosystem that continuously evolves to deliver better user experiences.

The good news? AI is still evolving and relies on structured, high-quality content to generate responses. While Large Language Models (LLMs) synthesize information differently than traditional search crawlers, they're still trained on indexed web content. So it might come as no surprise that core SEO best practices — such as authoritative content, structured data, and technical optimization — continue to play a critical role in positioning your website within AI-driven search experiences.

However, businesses must go further. The brands that thrive in this new AI-powered landscape will be those that don't just optimize for keyword rankings, but prioritize user intent and topical authority. That means expanding both topical depth and breadth to create more authoritative content to cover a wide range of subtopics ensuring that AI recognizes their brand as a trusted source for its responses.

This doesn't mean your website traffic is doomed. You might be surprised to learn that modern best practices in SEO are also the key to having your site content sourced in AI snippets.





SEO strategies to stay visible in an AI-driven search landscape

By evolving alongside AI, you can still capture high-value organic traffic and maintain strong engagement. Here are seven smart strategies to help your content stay relevant, discoverable, and effective in an AI-driven search world:

Assess your AI search visibility & strengthen topical authority

Before optimizing for AI search, you need to first understand where your content already appears in AI-generated results and where gaps exist. AI Overviews don't just pull surface-level answers; they prioritize content that delivers depth, breadth, and user intent alignment. Trusted, comprehensive sources are typically prioritized so if your content isn't surfacing, it could be a sign that it may need deeper insights (topical depth), additional subtopics (topical breadth), clarity, or authority signals. As a general guideline, detail-rich content pages and blogs with 3,000 words or more will give your content a leg up in the battle.

Action steps:

- Use Google Search Console & AI tracking tools (like SEMRush or Ahrefs) to identify which of your pages are already being featured in AI Overviews as well as competitor results
- Evaluate why certain content is being chosen — does it provide deeper insights or answer complex questions?
- Expand topical authority to cover content gaps around related subtopics focusing not just on the “what,” but “why” it matters and “how” it solves user pain points



Quick Tip

Analyzing the “People Also Ask” section of search results can give you ideas into what questions you need to be answering.

Optimize existing content for contextual & conversational improvements

AI search is shifting from keyword-based results to more contextual, conversational, and intent-driven outputs. Clear, structured content that anticipates the user's next steps is essential, so your existing pages should provide deeper, more insightful information.

Action steps:

- Refresh content with accurate information and improve structure by adding clear headings, bullet points, step-by-step guides and FAQ sections to improve readability
- Connect related topics with internal links to provide additional context to AI on how they relate
- Expand content to address user intent beyond quick answers with case studies, detailed guides, and real-world applications to encourage trust and deeper engagement



Quick Tip

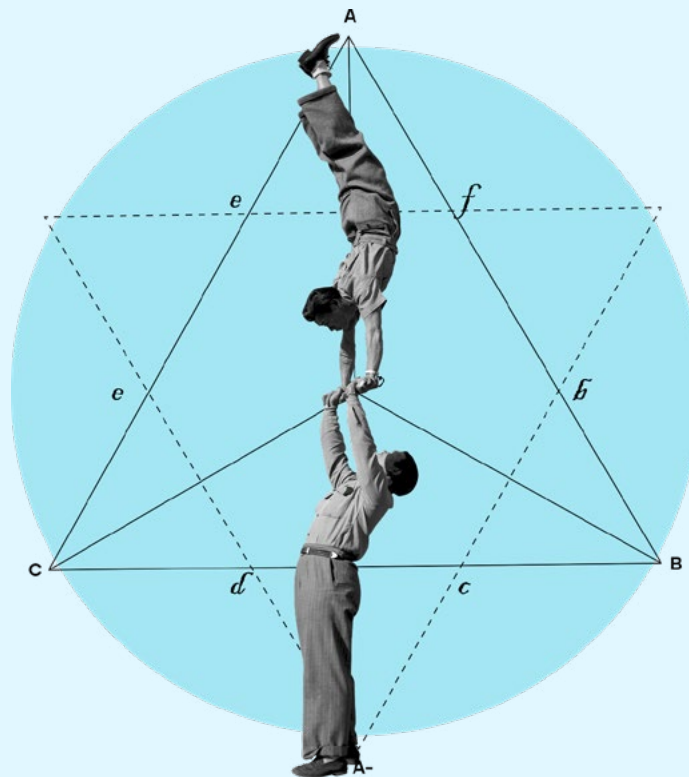
Identify underperforming pages with declining traffic and prioritize them first to boost visibility in AI-generated results.

Strengthen technical SEO to improve discoverability & user experience

Beyond just speed and structure, AI search engines consider how well your content fits within the broader Knowledge Graph — a system that maps relationships between topics, brands, and entities. Strengthening technical SEO, structured data, and content connections helps AI better understand your site's content and authority, making it more likely to surface in AI-generated results.

Action steps:

- Use schema markup (FAQ, How-To, Product, Article, etc.) to enhance your brand's Knowledge Graph and establish better relationships between topics and entities
- Fix broken elements and utilize internal linking to build an intuitive navigation making it easier for the site to be crawled
- Improve site speed and mobile performance to create a seamless user experience which AI favors



Quick Tip

Clear URL structures and breadcrumb navigation help AI understand your site's hierarchy and increases your chances of appearing in AI-driven results.

Prioritize Google's E-E-A-T as a differentiator

AI-generated results pull from sources that exhibit firsthand experience, relevant credentials, factual accuracy, and trust signals making E-E-A-T (Experience, Expertise, Authoritativeness, and Trustworthiness) more critical than ever. Businesses must be able to demonstrate expertise with real-world proof of knowledge and industry leadership rather than simply claiming it.

Action steps:

- Showcase firsthand experience by incorporating original research, case studies, and expert insights that offer unique value within your content
- Highlight author credentials with detailed bios to include relevant experience, certifications, and notable accomplishments to establish authority within your industry
- Incorporate social proof and trust signals such as testimonials, reviews, and industry awards to reinforce credibility



Quick Tip

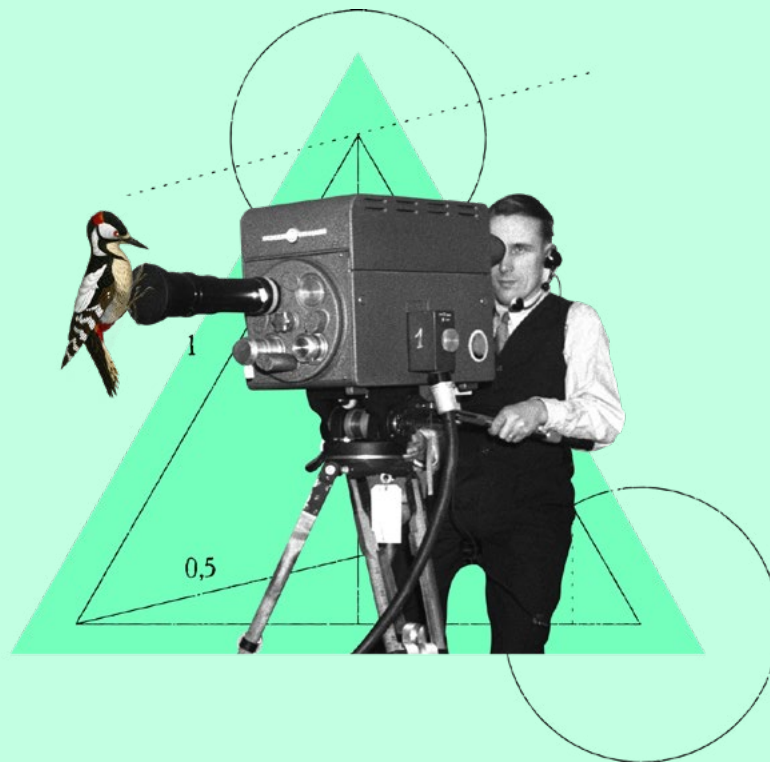
Repurpose existing content into video explainers, visual storytelling, or interactive content to improve engagement and increase visibility.

Diversify content formats for “beyond snippet” engagement

While AI-generated results tend to prioritize text-based summaries, user engagement remains highest with interactive and visual content. AI search may pull concise answers, but engaging formats like videos, infographics, and interactive tools encourage users to explore beyond the AI snippet. Diversifying content improves discoverability and positions your brand as a comprehensive resource.

Action steps:

- Design infographics and data visualizations to present key takeaways in an easy-to-digest format
- Produce high-quality video content to break down complex topics since AI frequently pulls from platforms like YouTube
- Consider adding interactive tools and quizzes that provide value to the user journey and give reasons to engage beyond AI-generated responses



Quick Tip

Adding author information to blog and resource content helps AI recognize authoritative sources.

Proactively monitor performance to identify growth opportunities

The digital landscape is evolving rapidly, making it essential to track how AI is affecting your visibility and engagement. Monitoring isn't just about rankings — it's about understanding where AI is pulling information from, where content gaps exist, and adapting to shifts in user behavior. Businesses may need to refine their KPIs to better measure AI-driven search performance and continuously adjust their content strategy based on real-time insights.

Action steps:

- Set up real-time alerts using tools like Google Search Console, GA4, SEMRush, or Ahrefs to monitor AI Overview appearances, keyword shifts, acquisition performance, and CTR fluctuations
- Analyze AI-generated responses to better understand how to enhance your relevance and scale activities across your site
- Test content variations to determine which formats and structures are the best fit within your industry niche



Quick Tip

Track engagement metrics like time on page and conversions instead of just rankings — AI Overviews may reduce clicks, but content that keeps users engaged signals long-term value.

Expand beyond search to build direct audience relationships

With AI-generated responses having the potential to reduce organic click-through rates, businesses must look to build direct relationships with their audience rather than relying solely on search engines for visibility. Owned media channels, community engagement, and reputation management play a crucial role in maintaining brand awareness and authority in an AI-dominated search environment.

Action steps:

- Utilize email marketing and social engagement with newsletters and communities to create a loyal customer base outside of search and improve retention
- Create profiles on business review platforms to ensure consistent brand data and keep a pulse on reputation management
- Earn high-quality backlinks and PR placements from trusted industry sources to reinforce credibility and boost domain authority



Quick Tip

Keep your business details, reviews, and citations up-to-date across platforms to reinforce credibility and ensure AI is pulling in the most accurate information.

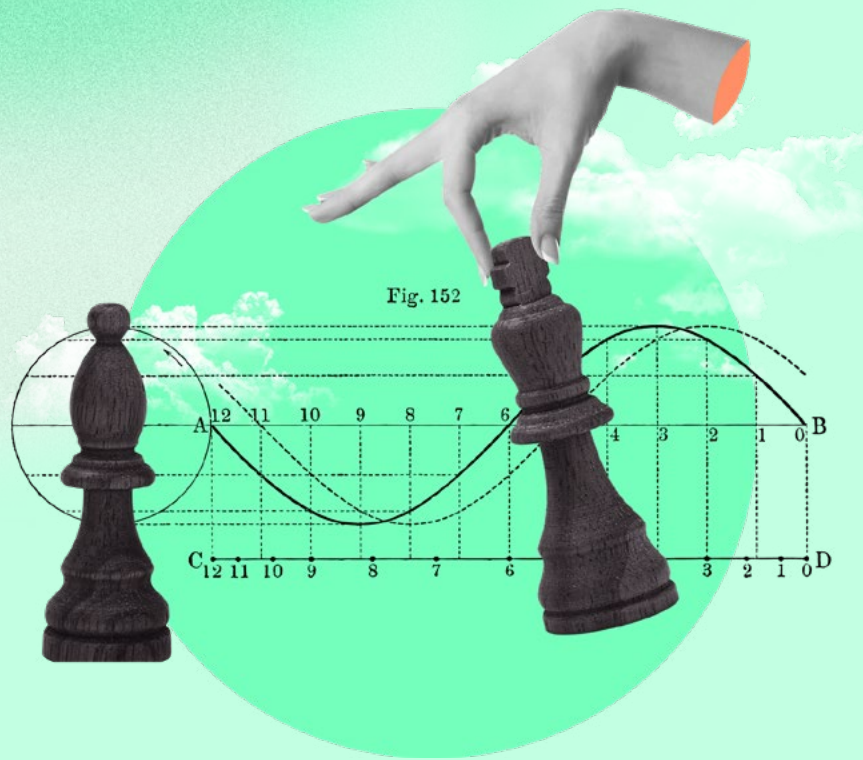
What does the future of SEO look like in an AI-dominated world?

SEO is no longer just about ranking on search engines — it's about being visible wherever and however users search for information. As AI-driven search reshapes the digital landscape, businesses must rethink their approach to organic visibility. The rise of zero-click searches, AI-generated summaries, and conversational search means that simply targeting keywords is no longer enough. Instead, brands must align their content, marketing, and user experience strategies to meet intent at every stage of the funnel.

This shift highlights the need for **Search Everywhere Optimization** — a more holistic, integrated approach that ensures businesses are discoverable and engaging across organic, paid media, social, PR, and analytics. AI may be delivering quick answers, but brands that create deeper content experiences, personalized engagement, and seamless customer journeys will be the ones that thrive.

Rather than viewing SEO as a standalone tactic, businesses must integrate it with a full-funnel strategy — ensuring that organic content, paid advertising, PR, and social media efforts work together to create a cohesive digital presence. AI search is evolving to provide predictive, intent-driven experiences, meaning that businesses must prioritize high-value content, strengthen authority signals, and optimize engagement beyond the search results page. There is a pathway to success for search marketing, even in the age of AI.





Stay ahead of AI-driven search with Alloy

At Alloy, we help businesses navigate this shift with AI-optimized SEO strategies, data-driven paid campaigns, engaging creative concepts, effective content marketing, strategic PR, and powerful analytics that work together to create a seamless, full-funnel approach to digital marketing.

As a [Top 25 Atlanta Marketing & Advertising Agency](#) and one of the region's fastest-growing businesses, we've been at the forefront of innovation ensuring our clients are setup for success in this new era of search.

Want to future-proof your search strategy? [Contact us today](#) to learn how we can help maximize your visibility. Not quite ready? Download our latest resource, [The State of the Modern Customer Journey](#), to see how we approach the evolving buyer journey and build strategies that connect with customers at every stage.