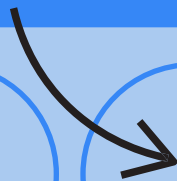


# How AI Is Rewriting The Rules Of Search



*Your Blueprint for Content  
Strategy Built for AI Discovery*



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# CHAPTER 1

## *The Rise of AI Search: How Queries Became Conversations*

AI has taken center stage in how consumers discover products, make decisions, and interact with brands. In the U.S., 53% of consumers are now experimenting with or regularly using generative AI, up from 38% in 2024.

**To better understand the landscape, let's start with how we started.**

For decades, search revolved around keywords. A shopper typed "best running shoes" into Google, clicked a ranked link, and followed a predictable path from query → click → conversion. Brands competed for visibility with technical SEO tactics, keyword targeting, and paid placements: a clear, linear journey.

**Today, that model looks very different.**

Gone is the straight line from query to purchase. Consumers aren't just searching: they're asking. Queries like "What's the best shoe for marathon training in cold weather?" or "Show me styles similar to this on TikTok" reveal a new kind of search behavior: one where brand discovery is conversational and every query feels personalized.

 **For brands, *this shift represents both a challenge and an opportunity: to show up not just as a result, but as a trusted voice in the evolving search experience.***

## **The Mechanics of Change: How AI Rewrote Search**

### *Analyze Macro Trends & Consumer Behavior Shifts:*

Large Language Models (LLMs) changed the mechanics of discovery by introducing contextual understanding and reasoning. Instead of matching words, LLMs interpret meaning, evaluating relationships between concepts, tone, and user intent. The result isn't a static list of blue links, but a synthesized, conversational answer drawn from multiple sources.

Today, search is no longer synonymous with Google. Don't get us wrong, Google still matters, and remains the top search destination, but other platforms are quickly gaining traction. In 2025, 34% of Gen Z use AI chatbots for search. Search behavior is also becoming more specialized, with users showing platform preferences based on the type of search.

### **Information Queries:**

For simple information queries, traditional search engines lead at 47%. AI chatbots are used by 28% of users, followed by AI search engines (23%).

### **Deeper Exploration:**

For complex, deeper exploration, traditional search engines are used by 36% of users, followed by AI chatbots (27%) and AI search engines (21%).

 **Consumers are discovering products across a growing network of AI-powered ecosystems: ChatGPT, Perplexity, Claude, Amazon, TikTok, and beyond. For brands, the strategic implications are that each platform has its own discovery logic, ranking system, and data signals.**

## **The SERP itself has also changed.**

Search behavior has entered a new era, driven by AI-powered engines and large language models (LLMs) that no longer just retrieve results but generate them. Google's 2024 algorithm update was the inflection point: the moment generative AI became fully integrated into search, transforming the results page from a list of links into a living, synthesized experience.

With this update came AI Overviews (AIOs): synthesized summaries that surface brand and product information directly within Google Search, often without requiring a click. Users can ask a question, scan the summary and move on, bypassing the very sites that informed the result.

**As of March 2025, research has shown that AIOs appear in roughly 13% of all Google searches. However, their visibility varies by markets, devices, and intent types.**

For brands, this variability is critical. In content-heavy verticals like news, health, and education, publishers report notable declines in organic clicks as users get answers directly within Google. In contrast, ecommerce still leans on product grids and shopping modules that keep users in the Google ecosystem, reducing AIO frequency for now.

## From Search Results to Search Answers

While Google asserts that AI Overviews drive “more queries and higher-quality clicks,” third-party analysis suggests otherwise. [Ahrefs](#) found that AIOs reduced click-through rates by an average of 34% across affected queries, especially non-branded ones.

### *AI Overviews Signal A Fundamental Shift:*

**The era of link-based search is fading fast. More users are finding what they need without ever leaving the SERP, signaling the rise of zero-click discovery, where:**

- Consumers get their answer directly within Google’s interface.
- Brands may lose organic traffic, even if their content informs the result.
- Visibility now depends on whether your brand is referenced, represented, or trusted by Google’s AI engine.

## Why This Matters for Brands

As search behavior evolves, brands face a defining moment: adapt or risk falling behind competitors who do. In this new path to purchase, consumers are no longer clicking their way down a funnel, they’re conversing their way to a decision.

To stay visible and competitive, marketers must think beyond keywords and rankings. Brand must be part of the conversation.

**As AI becomes the primary layer of search, visibility must be engineered, not just earned. Success now depends on how well AI systems understand, interpret, and trust your brand.**

### *Visibility Is Shaped By:*

- The **consistency** of your presence across reviews, forums, social posts, and product feeds
- The **clarity** of your structured data and content architecture
- The **strength** of your brand authority and topical expertise
- The **contextual** signals that teach AI when and where to recommend you

 **Search has evolved from static results to dynamic conversations. The brands that thrive will be those that understand how AI interprets trust, translates authority, and connects intent with experience.**

## **According to Adobe,**

A majority of generative AI users say these tools improve their shopping experience:



**18%**

*Use generative AI for tailored product recommendations.*

**25%**

*Use generative AI for shopping and price comparison.*

**36%**

*Of generative AI users report replacing traditional search with AI assistants.*

**AI isn't just influencing purchase paths, it's merging them.**