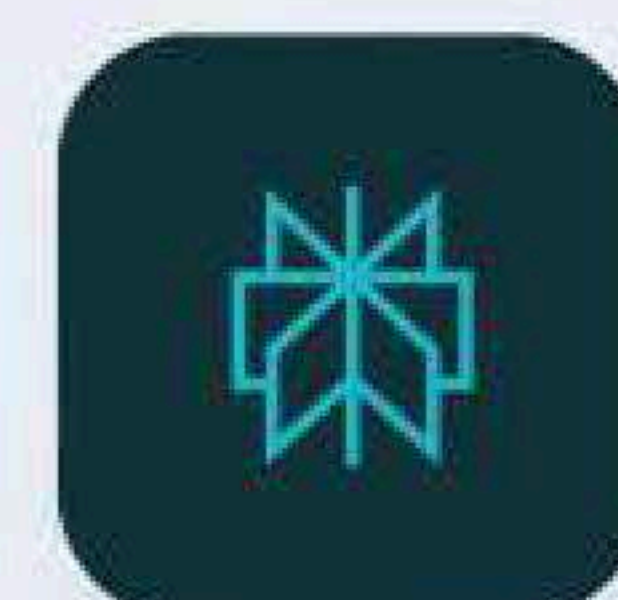


Your Brand's Biggest Audience Never Visits Your Website

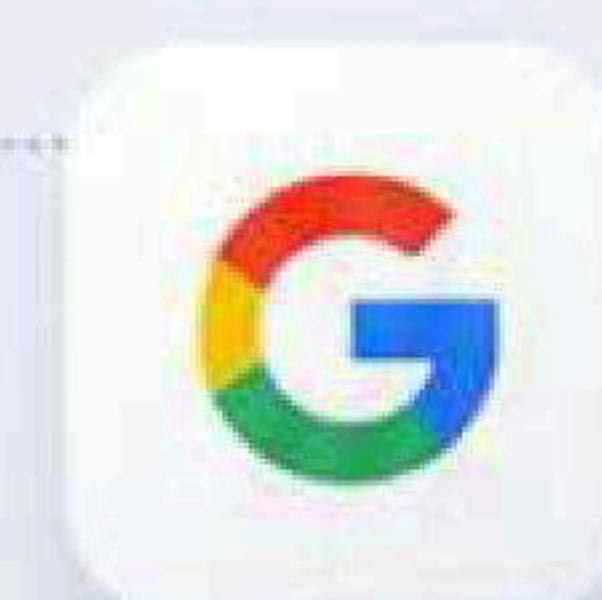
Buyers are forming opinions about your brand inside ChatGPT, Perplexity, and Google AI Mode.



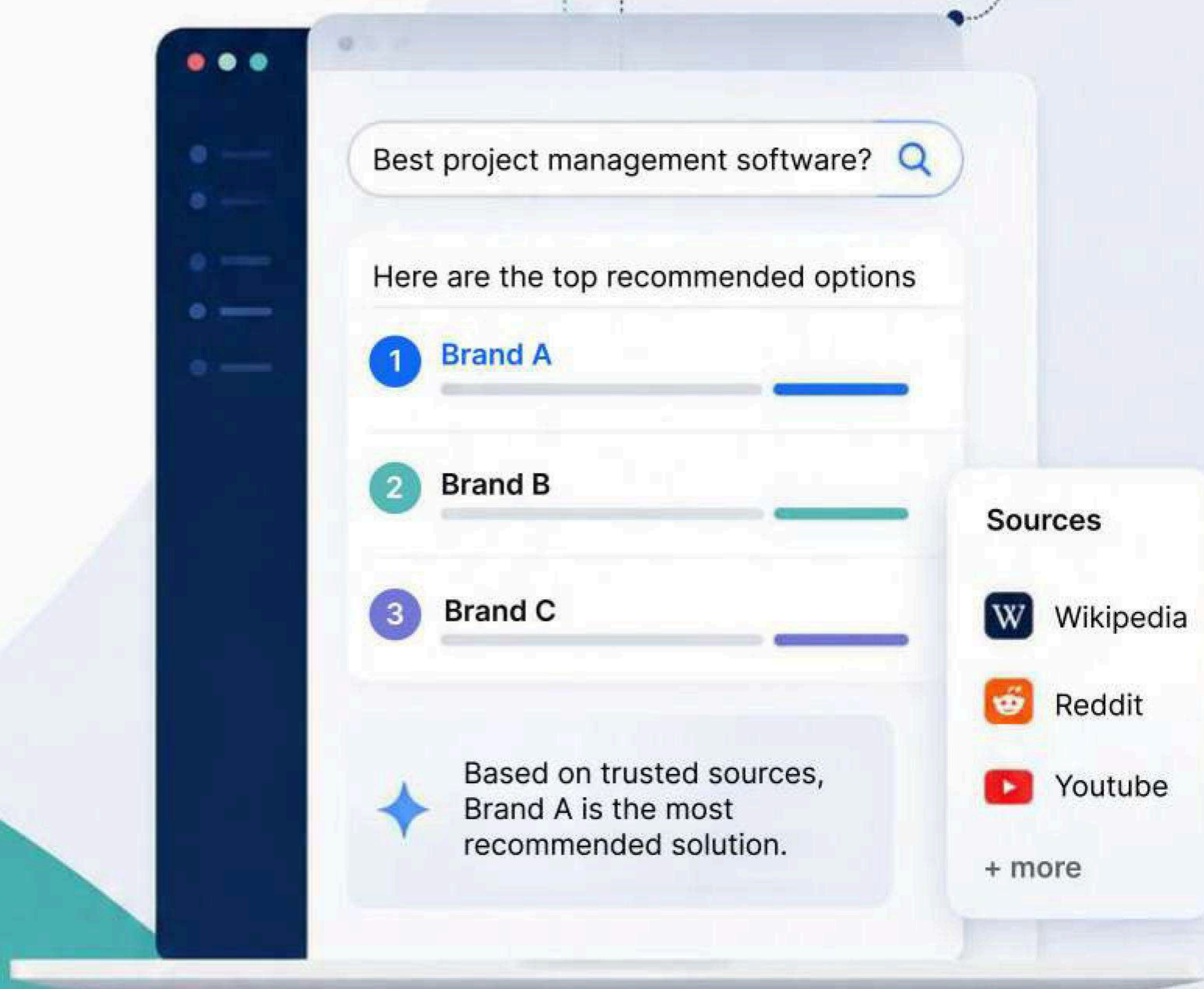
ChatGPT



Perplexity



Google AI Mode



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Most brands are optimising for a game that has **already changed.**

For decades, search visibility meant ranking higher on Google. Today's buyers increasingly rely on AI-generated answers before they ever visit a website changing how brands earn trust and conversions.



68%

Searches now end without a click.

Early 2026 data shows most Google searches never reach external websites.

Source: SparkToro / similarweb, 2026



42%

AI visitors convert better

AI- referred traffic out performed all other channels combined

Source: Adobe digital Insights, Q2 2026



58%

Searches now end without a click.

Early 2026 data shows most Google searches never reach external websites.

Source: SparkToro / Similarweb, 2026

THE SHIFT

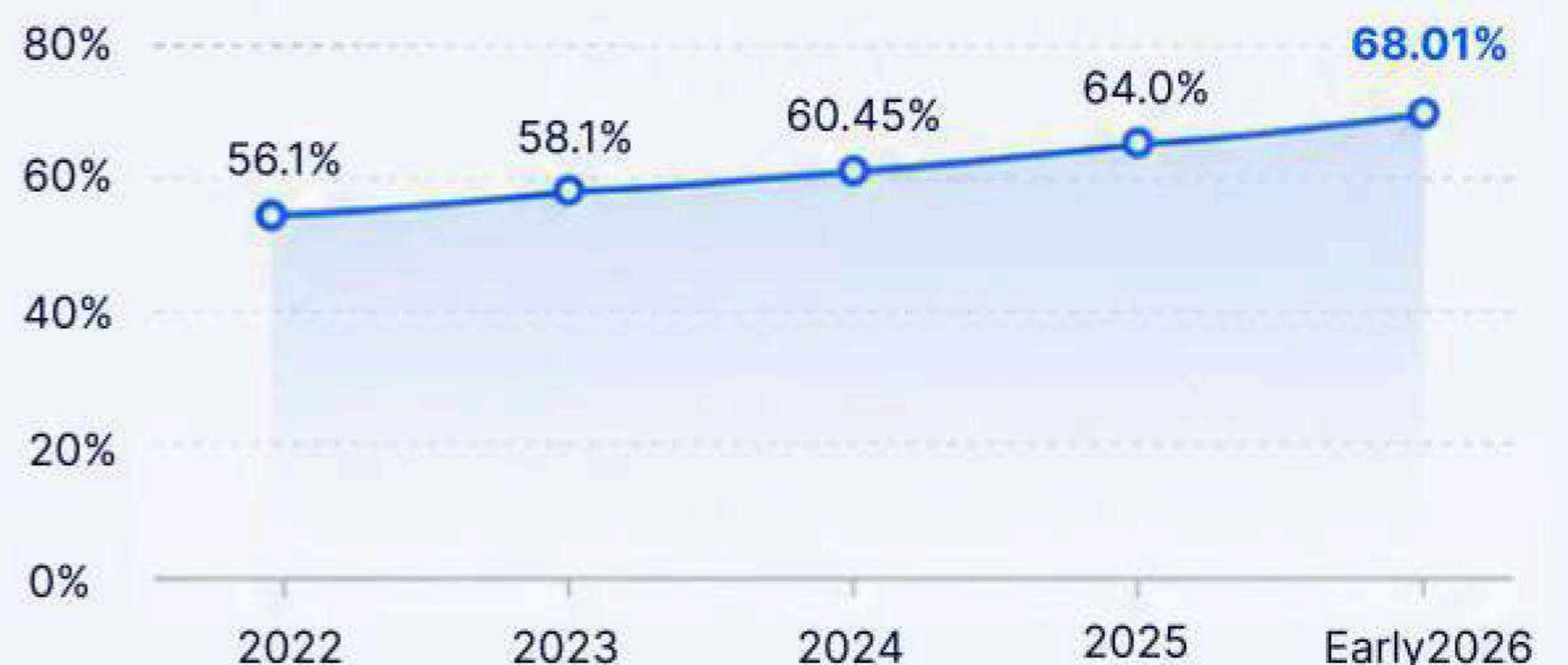
Fewer searches are reaching the open web and the trend is accelerating.

Gatner forecasted a 25% drop in traditional search volume by 2026 as AI tools absorbed more queries. SparkToro and Similarweb data shows this trend is already here.



Only **275** of every 1,000 searches now reach the open web.

Google Searches Ending Without a Click % of US Google searches



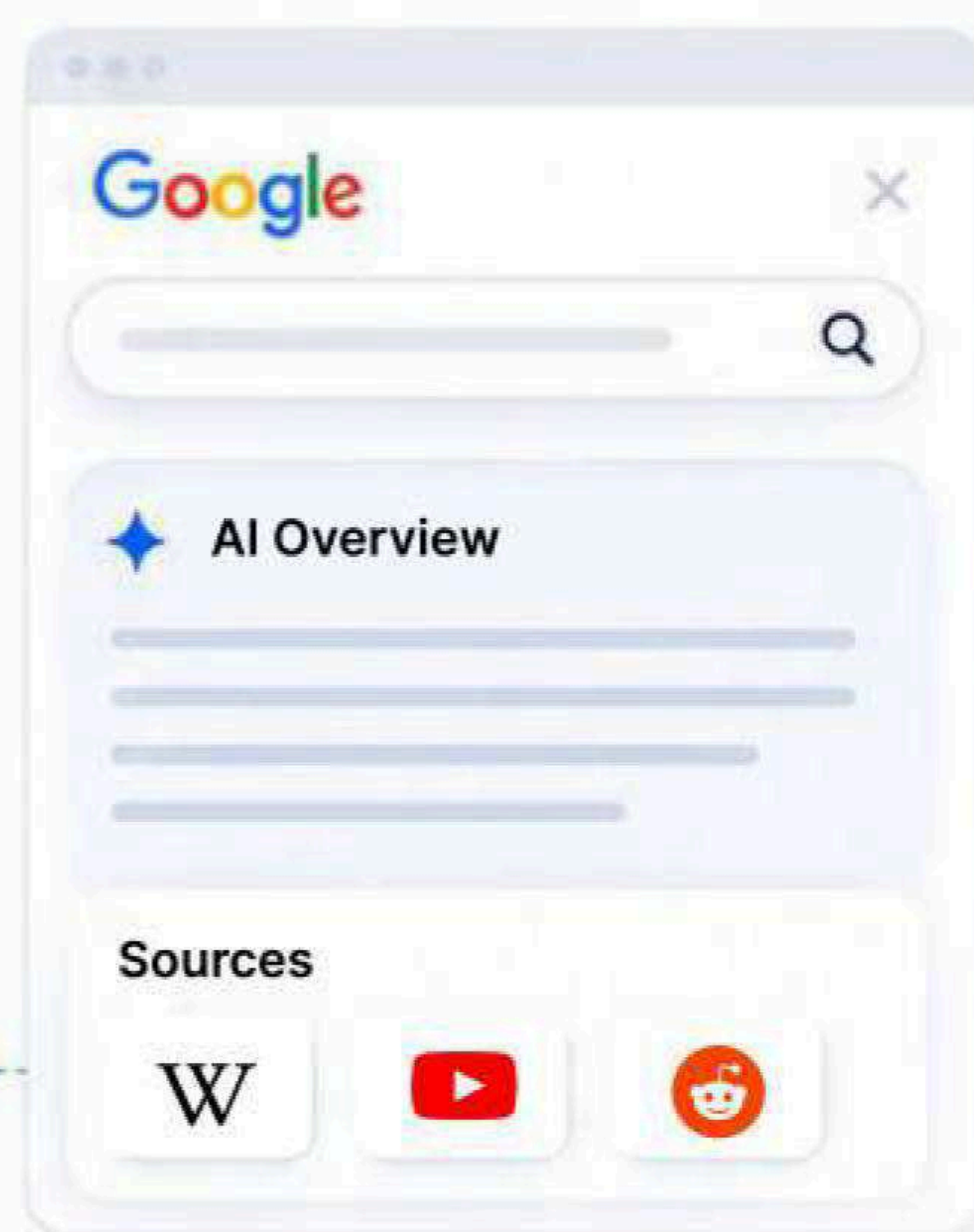
Source: SparkToro / Similarweb, 2026

BUYERS BEHAVIOUR

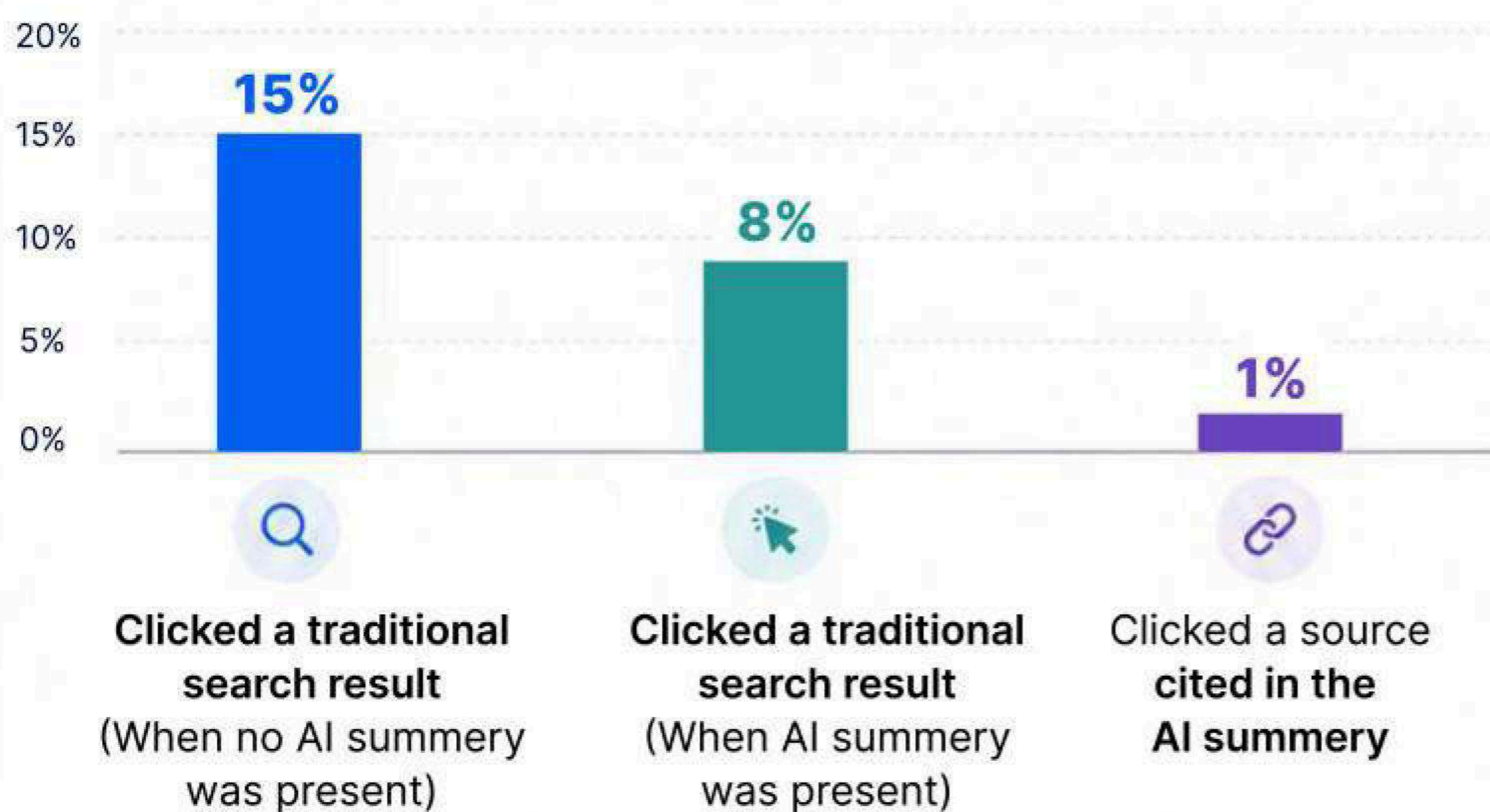
Buyers rarely click after seeing AI answers.

Pew Research tracked real browsing behaviour across **68,879** Google searches in March 2025.

When an AI summary appears, users click traditional results far less and almost never click the sources cited in the answer.



User actions when an AI Overview appears



WHAT PEW RESEARCH FOUND ABOUT WHICH SOURCES AI CITES

In AI generated answers on Google, these sources appeared most often across 12,593 AI triggered searches.



Wikipedia
Cited most frequently



Youtube
Highly cited across topics



Reddit
strong presence in AI answers



Government (.gov)
More likely in AI answers than standards search



Other authoritative domains
Trusted editorial and educational sources



Brand owned websites are not among the dominant citation sources.

THE TAKEAWAY

AI citations influence decisions even when they don't generate traffic.

Buyers read the AI's assessment, form a view, and then search for your brand directly, book a demo, or ask a colleague.
The citation shapes the decision.

Source: Pew Research Center, July 2025

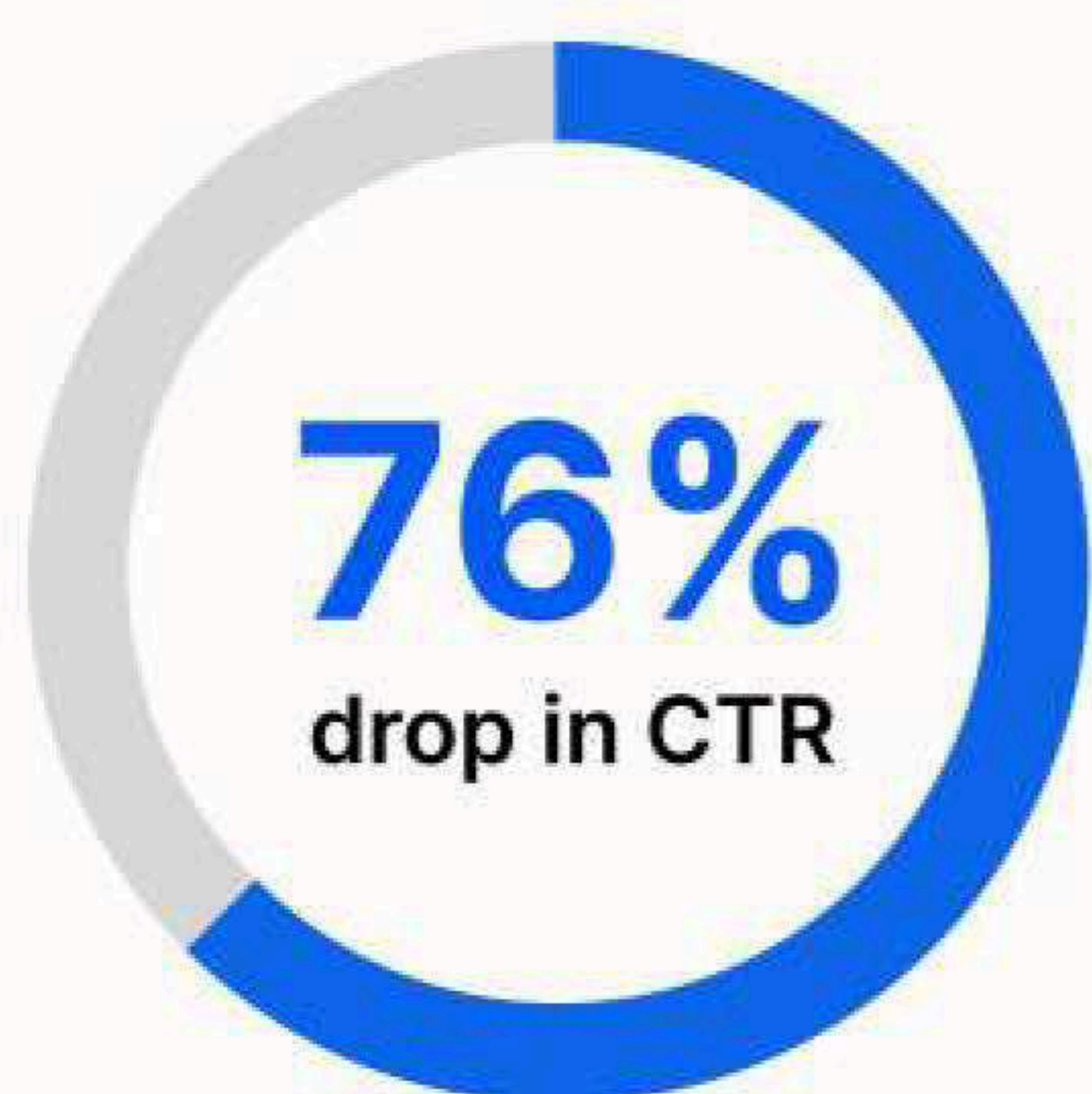
RANKING ≠ CITATION

Ranking on Google no longer predicts whether AI cites you.

Ahrefs studied AI Overview citations in mid 2025. The overlap between Google rankings and AI citations has dropped sharply.

AI Overview citations are drawing from a much wider pool of sources including pages with little or no organics visibility. The correlation has nearly halved in under a year.

Position-one organic CTR when an AI Overview appears

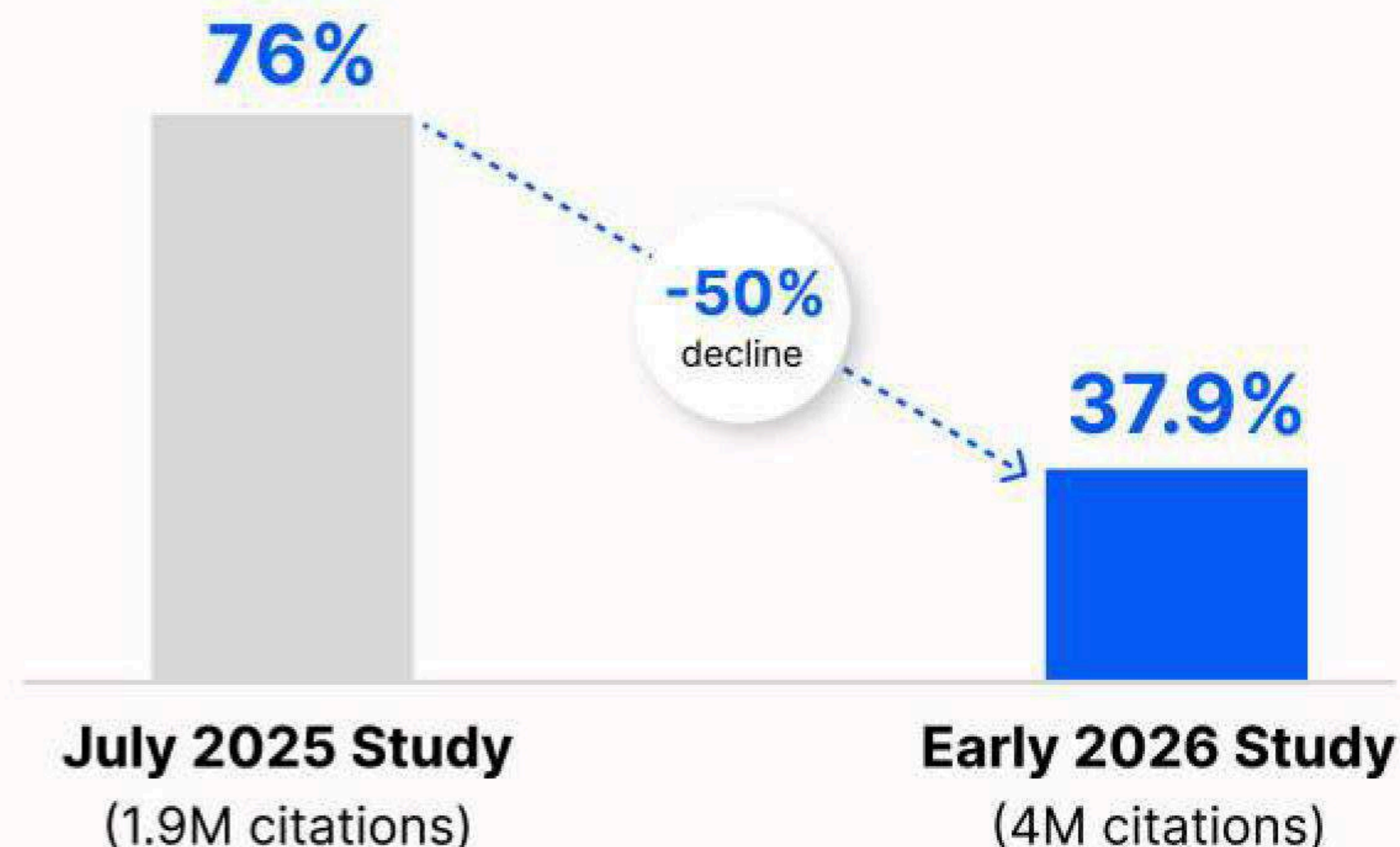


Even the page in position one loses more than half of its clicks.

Source: Ahrefs, December 2025

Share of AI- cited pages that also rank in Google Top 10

Ahrefs Research



Nearly one in three AI-cited now have **no meaningful Google ranking** at all.

AI-cited pages show stronger engagement

Semrush analysis of 5M URLs cited by ChatGPT Search and Google AI Mode



Nearly one in three AI-cited now have **no meaningful Google ranking** at all.

AI Overviews now appears on **48%** of all tracked Google searches, up from **31%** a year ago.

For brands relying on informational content as a top of funnel traffic driver, the implication of that growth the significant.

Source: BrightEdge, February 2026

THE CONVERSION CASE

AI-referred visitors are now the highest-converting traffic most brands receive.

Adobe Digital Insights tracks over a trillions visits annually across US retail, financial services, and technology. Their Q2 2026 report documents a conversion reversal that deserves attention.

Conversion performance

AI-referred visitors vs. all other channels combined

March 2025

AI visitors converted

38%

worse

March 2026

AI visitors converted

42%

better

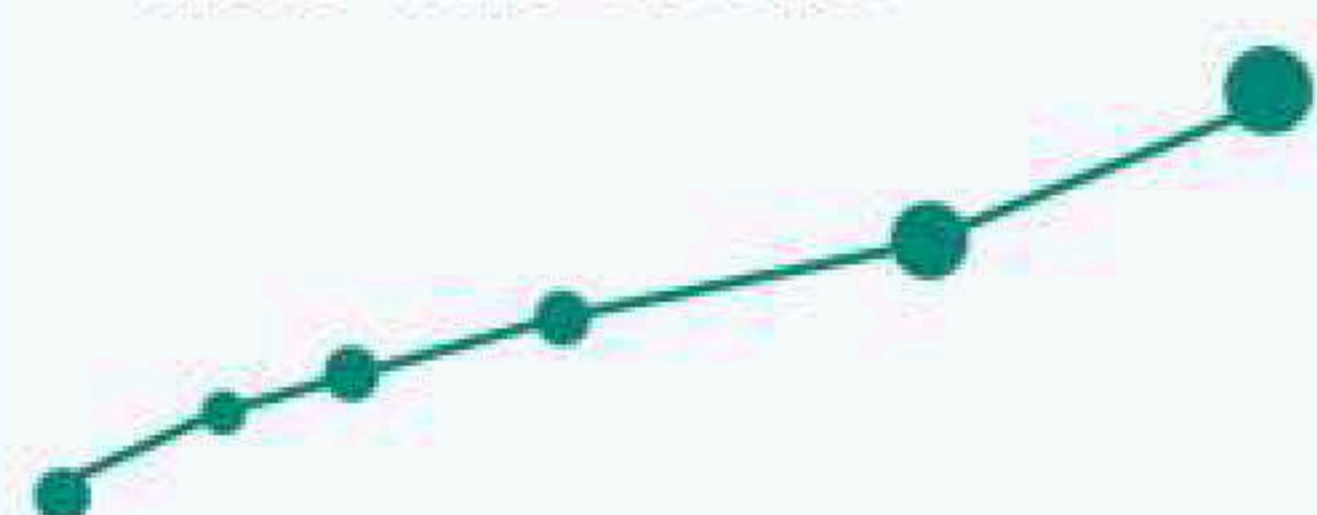


The channel went from **worst** to **best-performing** in just twelve months.

AI-referred visitors engage more deeply across the board

48%

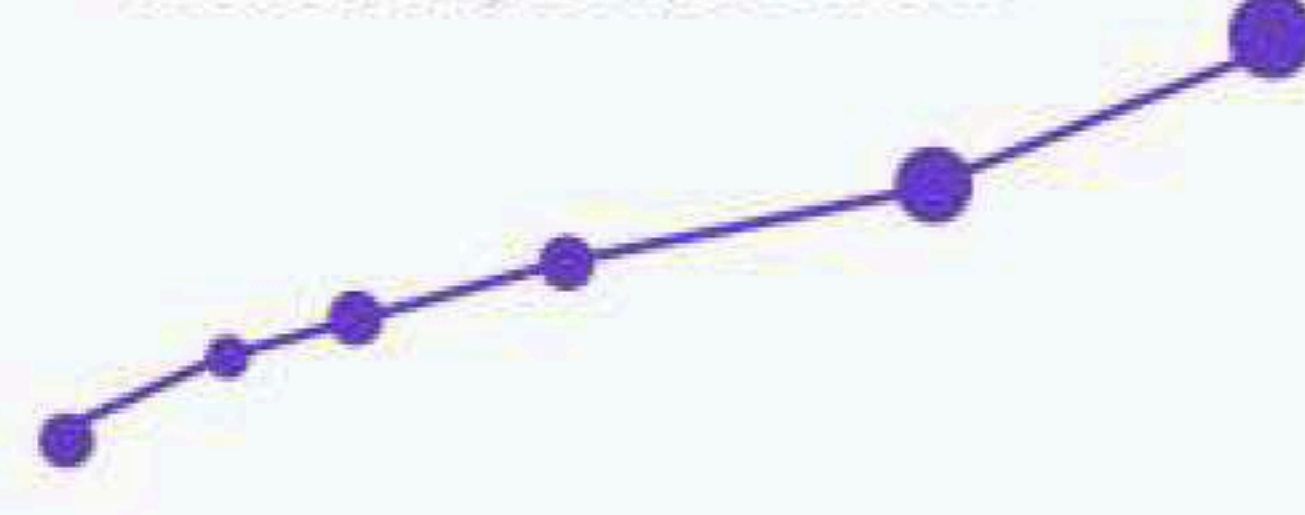
more time on site



They spend significantly more time engaged with content.

13%

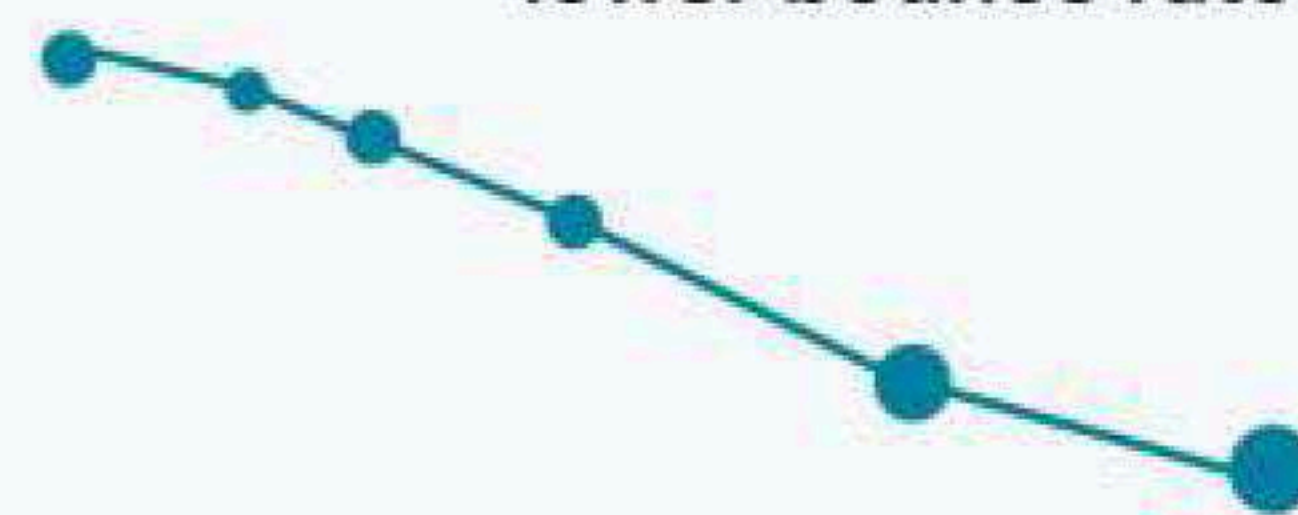
more pages per visit



They explore more pages and consume more information.

32%

lower bounce rate



They arrive with intent and interact instead of bouncing.

Conversion premium

than all other channels combined



The buyers AI sends you convert at the highest rate.

THE OUTLOOK

AI channels will drive equal economic value to traditional search by late 2027,

not because AI traffic volumes will match organics, but because the conversion premium of AI-referred visitors more than compensates for lower click volumes.

THE PRACTICAL IMPLICATION

Getting cited in AI answer is not just a brand awareness play.

not because AI traffic volumes will match organics, but because the conversion premium of AI-referred visitors more than compensates for lower click volumes.

WHAT DRIVES CITATION

AI tools cite sources they **independently verify**. Brand websites rarely qualify.

Editorial mentions, forum discussions, review, and community conversions carry more weight because AI systems treat them as independent sources rather than promotinal content.

AI CITATION TRUST HIERARCHY



“ AI evaluates what **others say** about you.

Brands active in communities are far more likely to be cited.

Likelihood of ChatGPT Citation

High Reddit/Quora Presence



4x
more likely
to be cited

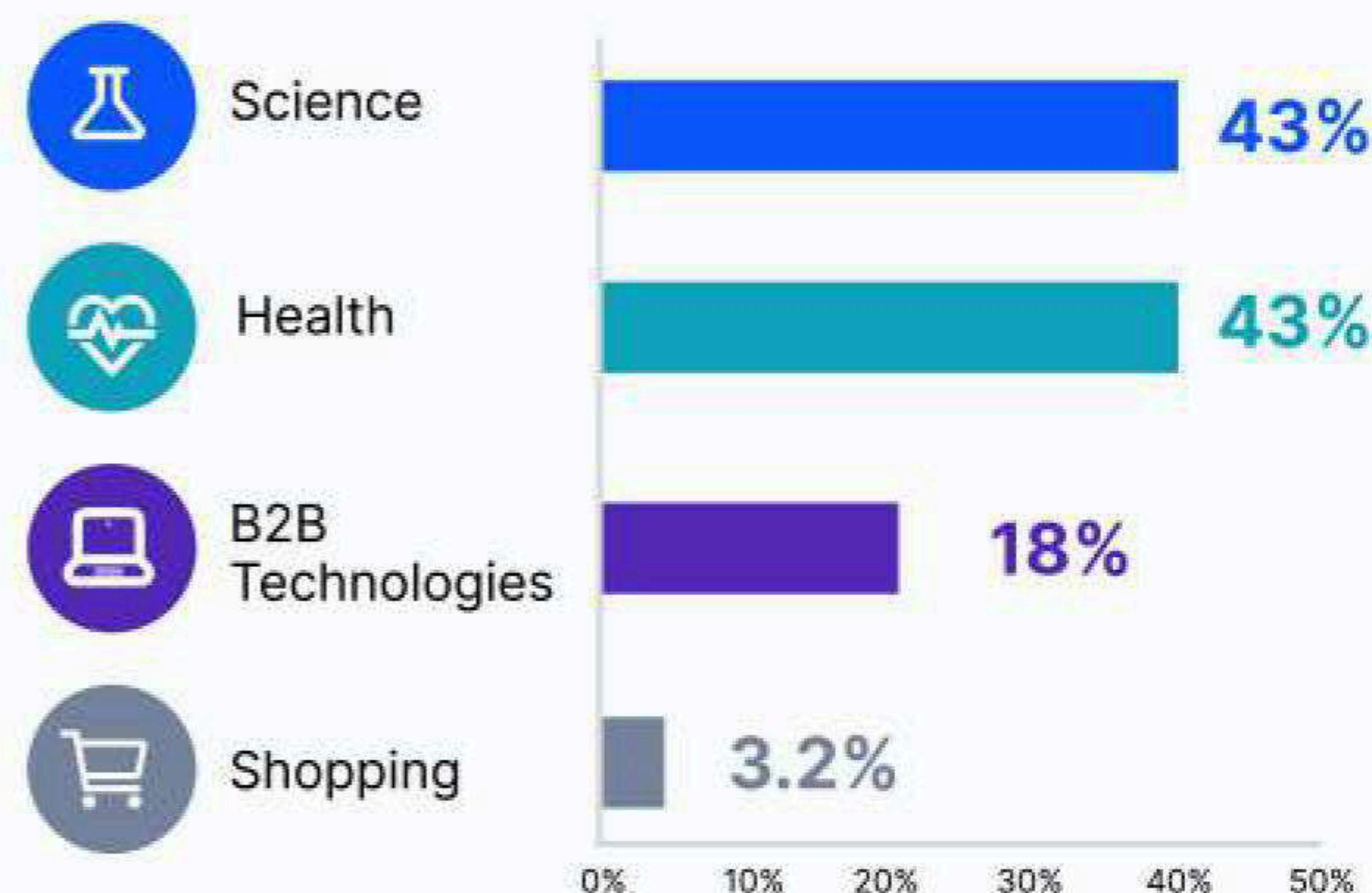
Low Community Presence



Source: Ahrefs, July 2025

Citation exposure varies dramatically by industry.

AI Overview Trigger Rate



For B2B brands, informational searches dominate.

Missing citations means missing evaluation-stage buyers.

How you format content influences whether AI cites it.

Comparison Pages



Multiple data tables increase citation likelihood.



FAQ Sections

Question-based content is selected more frequently.



Question Headings

Structure answers help AI extract information.

“

The AI is not evaluating how well you describe yourself. It is evaluating what **independent sources** say about you.

”

WHAT TO DO ABOUT IT

How Tesseract builds your AI citation presence, stage by stage.

Most brands have no visibility into whether they are being cited in AI answers, let alone which platforms are recommending them and which are ignoring them.

Tesseract was built to solve exactly that. Here is how the work breaks down across four stages, and where Tesseract fits into each one.

THE AI CITATION JOURNEY



VISIBILITY AUDIT

Understand where you stand.



CITATION STRATEGY

Build the right plan to get cited.



AUTHORITY BUILDING

Earn mentions on the surfaces AI trusts.



ONGOING TRACKING

Track shifts. Stay ahead. Protect share.

STAGE

01



VISIBILITY AUDIT

Before anything else, you need to know where you stand. Tesseract runs a full AI visibility audit across ChatGPT, Perplexity, Google AI Mode, and Gemini to show you exactly which queries mention your brand, which do not, and what competitors are capturing in the gaps.

- AI citation baseline across 4+ platforms
- Competitor citation gap mapping
- Query-level visibility scoring



STAGE

02



CITATION STRATEGY

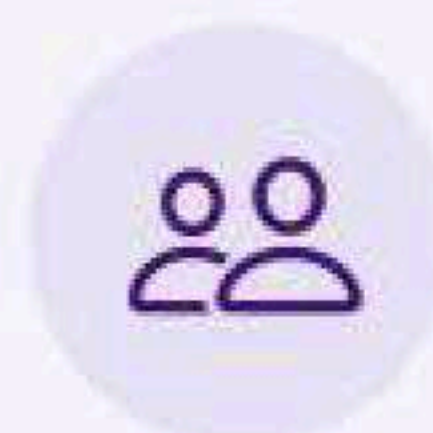
Tesseract identifies the specific content gaps, third-party surfaces, and structural changes that will move the needle on your citation rate. No generic checklists. Every recommendation is tied to what AI systems are actually citing in your category.

- Category-specific citation gap analysis
- Answer-first content briefs
- Third-party surface prioritisation



STAGE

03



AUTHORITY BUILDING

Pew Research found YouTube, Wikipedia, and Reddit dominate AI citations. Ahrefs found that community mention volume drives 4x higher ChatGPT citation rates. Tesseract maps the off-site surfaces that matter most for your vertical and builds a presence plan around them.

- Off-site authority roadmap
- Editorial and PR placement strategy
- Community and forum presence plan



STAGE

04



ONGOING CITATION TRACKING

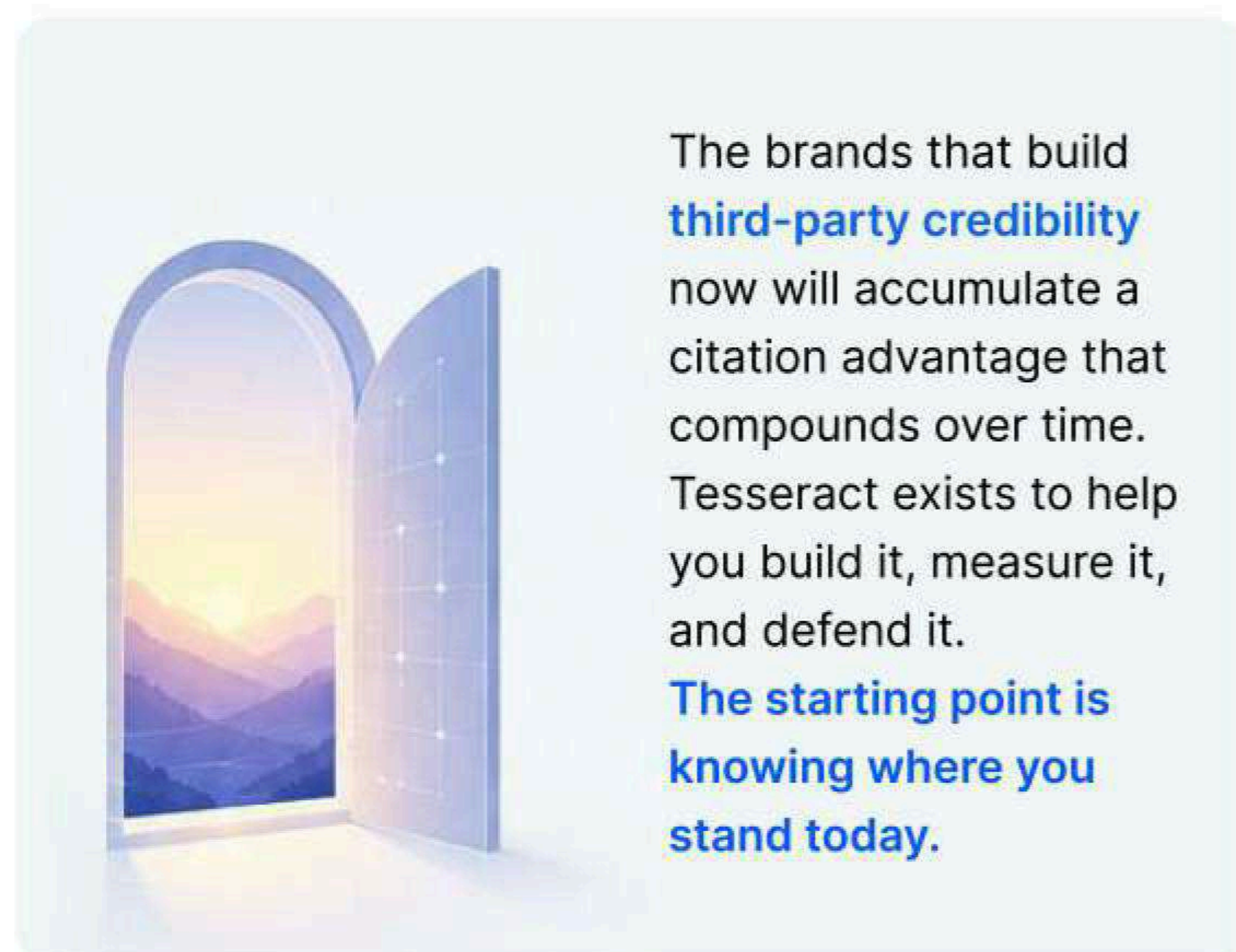
Citation share shifts continuously. Tesseract monitors your brand across AI platforms in real time, tracks competitor movements, and surfaces the signals that matter before they show up as revenue loss. This is the measurement layer that traditional analytics cannot provide.

- Real-time citation share dashboard
- Cross-platform mention monitoring

THE BOTTOM LINE

The window to build AI citation authority **is open.** It will not stay that way.

Most brands have not yet built a deliberate AI citation strategy. The urgency is not visible in most dashboards because the erosion is happening upstream, in the AI answers where buyer shortlists are formed before the first click.



THE RESEARCH POINTS IN ONE DIRECTION



Gartner forecasts a **25%** decline in traditional search volume.



SparkToro click data shows AI answers are capturing **real user demand**.



Adobe numbers show where the high-quality traffic is **moving**.



Ahrefs shows what **drives citation**.



Semrush shows which content formats **earn more citations**.



Pew Research shows what buyers actually do when they encounter an **AI answer**.

Find out where your brand stands in **AI answers today.**

Tesseract tracks your AI citation share across ChatGPT, Perplexity, Google AI Mode, and more, so you know exactly where you appear, where you do not, and what your competitors are capturing.



Let's Elevate Your AI Visibility

Tesseract helps you understand how AI platforms perceive your brand and how you can stay visible in every AI-generated answer. Start Tracking, benchmarking, and optimizing today to lead your category tomorrow.

Ready to Get Started?

Create your Project in
Tesseract and unlock
actionable insights that
drive real impact

Create Your Project →

Need Help?



tesseract.adlift.com

Smarter Insights. Stronger Presence. Superior results
That's Power of Tesseract