

Looking to be found: companies try to be part of our new AI search habits

1 Warmer

a. Discuss the questions. Give reasons for your answers.

- What can AI chats do that wasn't possible before?
- What are all of the different ways that you, or people you know, use AI chats?
- Why do you think internet searches using AI are becoming more popular than traditional internet searches?

2 Reading for gist

a. Go through the article quickly and choose the statement that best summarises the main idea.

1. Advertising companies have begun the process of making their websites appear more often on traditional search engines like Google.
2. AI search engines are reducing the usefulness of traditional internet search engines, so companies are focusing more on quality content.
3. New tools are helping brands appear in AI search results, which could hurt Google's core business of internet searches.

3 Key words

a. Choose the key words that match the definitions. Check your answers and your understanding of how the words are used by using them to complete the example sentence immediately after each definition. Then read the complete article to see how the key words are used in context.

brand	influencer	ranking
cannibalise	large language models	rival
co-founder	monopoly	search engine optimisation
contradiction	nuanced	seed funding
credibility	pose a threat	text prompts

1. a recognisable product made by a company and sold under a particular name _____

There are lots of coffee shops but the biggest _____ is definitely Starbucks.

2. the process of improving a website to make it higher in search engine results _____

Companies use _____ techniques to make sure people find them when they look on Google.

3. to cause a problem or difficulty _____

The latest financial results _____ to the market price of the company.

4. a representation of language made from large amounts of data that makes machines sound human _____

_____ *are the reason that artificial intelligence has improved so much recently.*

5. a person or thing that has the power to affect or change something.

She is such an important _____: whatever she wears in her videos is what many people will buy.

6. short phrases or questions given to AI so that it gives you the results you want

He is great at using AI chat because he knows how to write the perfect _____.

7. a system of ordering things by importance or position _____

The company pays a marketing agency to improve its _____ in search results.

8. competing with other people or companies for the same thing or in the same area

The companies produce _____ versions of the toy.

9. money invested into the business at the very early stages _____

In 2010, the company officially launched and immediately obtained \$1 million US dollars in _____.

10. reduce the sales of an existing product or service by selling a new product or service

The new breakfast menu might _____ the sales we normally make in the mornings.

11. someone who starts an organisation together with one or more other people _____

The company's _____ and CEO was born in London in 1986.

12. the fact of something being the complete opposite of something else _____

You're best friends, but you don't trust her. That's a total _____!

13. when one company or group controls the entire market for a product or service

Google's search engine is such a big _____ that we say 'googling' to mean 'searching'!

14. the quality of being trusted or believed in _____

When that video showed him dancing, he lost _____ as a serious politician.

15. showing small or subtle differences _____

Her performance as Queen Elizabeth II was so _____ that the royal family recognised the details.

AI chatbots now used to promote brands as users abandon Google search

AD AGENCIES ADOPT NEW STRATEGIES TO ENSURE CLIENTS APPEAR IN RESULTS PRODUCED BY OPENAI'S CHATGPT AND ANTHROPIC'S CLAUDE

BY CRISTINA CRIDDLE AND HANNAH MURPHY

- 1 Advertising groups and tech start-ups have been racing to find ways to help brands boost their likelihood of surfacing in results from artificial intelligence chatbots, marking a new era of "Search Engine Optimisation".
- 2 Companies such as Profound and Brandtech have developed software for monitoring how frequently brands were surfaced by AI-powered services such as OpenAI's ChatGPT, Anthropic's Claude and Google's Overviews feature. Brands such as fintech company Ramp, jobs search site Indeed and Pernod Ricard-owned Scottish whisky maker Chivas Brothers have adopted the software. They are hoping to reach millions of users who regularly use generative AI products as a new method to search for information online — a shift that poses a long-term threat for Google's main business.
- 3 "This is about much more than just getting your website indexed in their results. This is about recognising Large Language Models as the ultimate influencer," said Jack Smyth, partner at marketing technology group Brandtech, which has created its own interface for brands.
- 4 These new tools are able to predict an AI model's sentiment towards companies by feeding a slew of text prompts to chatbots and analysing the results. The technology is then used to create a ranking of brands, allowing agencies to advise on how best to ensure they are mentioned by the models.
- 5 The moves come as advertisers face pressure from the rising use of AI to create and to target their marketing. Meta and Google have been developing self-serve tools for running ad campaigns directly to brands, in a potential threat to the work of agencies and media buyers.
- 6 Some agencies are spotting the opportunity to offer new services to brands as AI becomes more prevalent and so-called search engine optimisation becomes less relevant.
- 7 Research from consultancy Bain found that 80 per cent of consumers now rely on AI-written results for at least 40 per cent of their searches, reducing organic web traffic by up to 25 per cent. About 60 per cent of searches now end without the users clicking through to another website, its research found.
- 8 However, on Thursday, Google's parent company Alphabet announced its core search and advertising business grew almost 10 per cent to \$50.7 billion US dollars in the first quarter of the year.
- 9 The strong results provided reassurance to investors concerned about the growing popularity of rival AI chatbots such as Elon Musk's Grok, while also being on alert for evidence that answers from Google's own Gemini chatbot and AI summaries are cannibalising its search business by reducing the number of user clicks on ads.
- 10 Still, agencies are racing to help corporate clients trying to appear within the results generated by AI services.
- 11 Brandtech has created a 'Share of Model' product that charges brands to see similar analysis and offers guidance on adjusting website text and image assets to better serve AI search.
- 12 Profound, which raised \$3.5 million US dollars in seed funding in August led by Khosla Ventures, offers a data analytics platform which allows brands to track common queries related to their industry and understand their performance in AI searches.
- 13 "Traditional search has been one of the biggest monopolies in the history of the internet," said James Cadwallader, co-founder of Profound. "And for the first time, it feels like the castle walls are cracking. This is a CDs to streaming moment."

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- 14 The software requires an understanding of how the individual models surface brands. ChatGPT, for example, uses a traditional web search and then evaluates the different sources for what information is most relevant for the user, including assessing the credibility and authority of the website.
- 15 Adam Fry, OpenAI's ChatGPT search lead, said users are being more nuanced and precise in the questions they are asking, such as "can you find a quiet restaurant for a family of five in New York", instead of "restaurants in New York".
- 16 "The really new thing here is you have a layer of ChatGPT's model, a layer of intelligence above traditional search," said Fry.
- 17 Meanwhile, Perplexity, an AI-driven search engine, is currently piloting sponsored "questions" as a suggested follow-up after a user query.
- 18 "LLMs understand more content and can be more nuanced. They can find contradictions or find if information is misleading... so it's a much more thorough process than reviewing links," said Denis Yarats, co-founder of Perplexity. "It is much harder to be a target of SEO because the only sort of true strategy is to be as relevant as possible and provide good content."

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4 Understanding the article

a. Are these sentences True or False according to the information in the article? Tick (✓) the true sentences and rewrite the false ones.

1. Companies like Profound and Brandtech have recently released AI tools that are able to help brands appear more often on search engines like Google. _____
2. The main goal of these AI tools is to help brands get mentioned by LLMs. _____
3. It is highly unlikely that AI chatbots, like ChatGPT, will ever replace traditional search engines. _____
4. More than half of internet searches now finish without someone clicking a link to another website. _____
5. Alphabet has said that its main product (Google search) has some serious financial performance issues. _____
6. Investors are checking to see if including AI results in Google searches will affect Google's business model. _____
7. For the longest of times, there have been only a handful of ways to search on the internet. _____
8. Using ChatGPT to search is different because it analyses the results for what is most important for the user. _____
9. People are beginning to be significantly less specific in the way they search for information online. _____
10. It is easier to change the content of a website so that it can be found by an AI search than it is to change it for a traditional internet search. _____

5 Business language – reduced relative clauses

a. Read the rules for reduced relative clauses and label the following examples adapted from the article either A or B. Use the words in bold to help you.

- A. Relative clauses in the active voice can be reduced to a present participle phrase and the relative clause is introduced with an *-ing* verb.
- B. Relative clauses in the passive voice and in a simple tense can be reduced to a past participle phrase and the relative clause is introduced with a past participle, e.g. an *-ed* verb.
1. Advertising groups want to help brands appear in AI searches, **marking** a new era of 'Search Engine Optimisation'. _____
 2. Brands want to be able to track common queries **related** to their industry. _____
 3. Research shows 80 per cent of consumers now use AI results for at least 40 per cent of searches, **reducing** organic web traffic by up to 25 per cent. _____
 4. Agencies want to help their clients appear within the results **generated** by AI services. _____
 5. The technology creates a ranking of brands, **allowing** agencies to advise the brands on how to be mentioned by the LLMs. _____

b. Change the active and passive relative clauses to reduced relative clauses.

1. The agency that presents the most cost-effective marketing strategy will win the proposal.

2. Those invoices that were sent last week have still not been paid.

3. The staff that were recruited last week are very professional.

4. Employees who attend the workshop will receive a certificate.

5. The consultant who is reviewing our supply chain process specialises in logistics.

6. Any product that is manufactured in our Asia branch has a lower production cost.

6 Discussion

a. Discuss these questions.

1. James Cadwallader describes the current shift from traditional internet searches to AI based searches as a 'CDs to streaming moment'. What do you think he meant by this?
2. In your opinion, what effect could the growing popularity of AI searches have on the business world?
3. How should businesses adapt to be included in AI search results?
4. What other ways is AI in general changing the way people do business?

7 Wider business theme – making a business case for an AI-friendly website

a. Use the categories in the table below to classify the following pros and cons for companies when their customers use AI searches instead of traditional internet searches.

AI searches

1. Small companies with good content appear in results without having to pay for Search Engine Optimisation. (+)
2. AI can explain or recommend search results for users with very nuanced needs. (+)
3. AI answers user questions without sending traffic to the original site. (-)
4. AI doesn't have to live searches so may provide outdated or inaccurate information about a company. (-)

Internet searches

1. Users often click through to company websites. (+)
2. Location-based searches help small businesses attract customers who live nearby. (+)
3. The top results are often influenced by ads sponsored links. (-)
4. Search results show many similar offerings and are not specific for customers. (-)

Helps small businesses	Quality of information	Searches specific to customers	Traffic

- b. Work in pairs or small groups. Make a business case for a website which is adapted to maximise AI search results. Explain the benefits and what needs to be taken into consideration.
- c. Present your ideas to the class and compare the ideas you discussed.

Useful language:

We have been facing a significant challenge ...

We have identified an opportunity to ...

We need to address ...

We believe that by implementing ...

This approach will ...

I propose we ...