BUSINESS NEWS LESSONS

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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 the 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 are starting to make their websites appear more often on traditional search engines like Google.

2. AI search engines are making traditional internet search engines less useful, so companies are focusing more on quality content.

3. New tools are helping brands appear in AI search results, which could hurt Google's business.

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.**

adjust	large language models	relevant
brand	monitor	search engine optimisation
cannibalise	monopoly	target
credibility	nuanced	text prompts
influencer	ranking	track

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.

Intermediate

3. the act of observing or checking something over a period of time _____

The marketing team has to _____ how many people respond to their ads.

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 their _____ in search results.

8. to aim or direct something towards a speci ic group or goal _____

The advert for the watch wants to _____ people who are active and sporty.

9. very appropriate to what is being discussed or done at the moment _____

Tell us about that project you did. I think it is very _____ to what we are talking about.

10. to 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.

Intermediate

11. to change something to make it better or more suitable _____

    The company is trying to _____ its product to be more popular with the

    older market.

12. to follow the progress or movement of something _____

    Our company uses software to _____ what their workers are typing.

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.

Intermediate

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."

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."

FT

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Intermediate

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 created AI tools 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. AI chatbots, like ChatGPT, will never 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) is losing money. _____

6. Investors are checking to see if including AI results in Google searches will affect Google's business model. _____

7. For a very long time, there have been only a few 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 becoming less specific in the way they search for information. _____

10. It is easier to change your website to be found in an AI search than in a traditional internet search. _____

5 **Business language – present perfect simple and continuous**

a. **Match the sentences from the article to the rules for present perfect simple and continuous.**

1. Advertising groups and tech start-ups have been racing to find ways to help brands. _____

2. Brandtech has created its own interface for brands. _____

3. Traditional search has been one of the biggest monopolies in the history of the internet. _____

A. The present perfect simple is used to describe an action that was completed in the recent past.

B. The present perfect continuous is used to describe an action that started in the past and is still happening.

C. The present perfect simple is used for verbs that describe a state or one of the senses (*agree, be, believe, hear, smell, taste*).

Intermediate

b. **Use the verbs provided in brackets to complete the sentences in present perfect simple and continuous.**

1. I've just _____ (send) my boss the quarterly sales report.

2. I've always _____ (believe) that clear communication is key to team success.

3. She's _____ (manage) the accounts since January even with all the recent changes.

4. They have _____ (be) in the meeting room for over five hours now.

5. Somehow, they have _____ (finish) the client presentation before the deadline.

6. We've _____ (negotiate) the contract terms for over a week, and we are almost there.

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 do live searches so may provide outdated or inaccurate information about a company. (-)

Intermediate

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 that 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 ...

Intermediate