

OCTOBER 2025

# TRENDS

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## IN ANSWER ENGINE OPTIMIZATION (AEO)

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# 2025 REPORT

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How your audiences are finding zero-click search results through ChatGPT, Google AI Overviews, Perplexity, and more—and how marketing teams are responding

# Executive summary

Whether for personal or business use, more people are using AI-powered search engines and chatbots to get answers to their questions—and marketing teams are starting to respond with strategies to maximize their brand visibility.

Over the last three years, ChatGPT and similar chatbots have changed how we interact with AI. Once a novelty, large language models (LLMs) today power an enormous amount of user activity. People turn to AI tools to research niche subjects, compare similar products and services, and get advice on a range of personal and business topics.

To better understand how people are using AI search tools and how marketers are adjusting their search optimization strategies in response, On Marketing conducted two surveys. Our consumer survey showed that nearly 95% of respondents had used an AI chatbot in the last 30 days, with 86% of respondents replacing a Google search with a question to the chatbot at least once. Our professional survey showed that 37% of marketers are already optimizing for AI search, with most others planning to do so within the next 18 months or earlier. By optimizing for AI search sooner rather than later, marketing teams can win greater visibility for their targeted queries.

86%

of survey respondents

have replaced a Google search with a question to an AI chatbot at least once in the last 30 days

37%

of marketing professionals

have already started implementing strategies for AI search optimization

# Search trends

As the adoption of AI chatbots like ChatGPT grows, more people are replacing Google searches with questions to their favorite LLM.

Today, the use of AI answer engines (chatbots and search tools) is stunning. The overwhelming majority of our survey respondents (94.8%) say they have used an AI chatbot in the last 30 days. More than a third report using a chatbot daily.

As their use of AI chatbots grows, their reliance on Google searches diminishes. In our survey, 86% of respondents had replaced a Google search with a question to an LLM at least once. However, only a small percentage had completely replaced Google searches with queries to AI chatbots, which means marketers should build hybrid strategies that optimize for both traditional Google searches and LLM visibility.

When it comes to Google searches, the Gemini LLM has introduced a new element: the Google AI Overview. Again, the overwhelming majority of our survey respondents (90.4%) say they at least sometimes read Google AI Overviews when they appear. However, most searchers (96.8%) continue to scroll past this AI-generated overview to see the top search results at least sometimes.

Naturally, people who use AI chatbots and search engines often use them to research purchases. A little over half (57.6%) researched a consumer purchase, while fewer (12.4%) researched a business purchase, indicating that LLM visibility is critical to both B2C and B2B marketing teams.

#	Questions
1.	How often do you use AI chatbots like ChatGPT, Microsoft Copilot, Perplexity, Gemini, etc.?
2.	In the last 30 days, how often have you asked an AI chatbot for an answer instead of doing a Google search?
3.	When you search on Google, how often do you read the Google AI Overview for an answer?
4.	If you read Google AI Overviews for an answer to your search question, do you also scroll down to see the top search results?
5.	Have you used ChatGPT, Microsoft Copilot, Perplexity, Gemini, or another AI chatbot to research a purchase?



## Survey methodology

On Marketing asked 250 people in the United States between the ages of 18-85 about whether and how they use AI chatbots and Google AI Overviews. Survey responses were collected in September 2025 through the Prolific market research platform.

## Chatbot growth and frequency

OpenAI released ChatGPT in November 2022. Within two months, it had become the fastest-growing consumer application software in history<sup>1</sup> with more than 100 million users.<sup>2</sup> Other LLM-based chatbots have launched since then. Some of the most popular chatbots today include Google Gemini, an AI assistant built into Google apps and mobile devices; Microsoft Copilot, a family of AI assistants for consumer and business use integrated into Microsoft applications; and Perplexity AI, a web search engine that processes user queries.

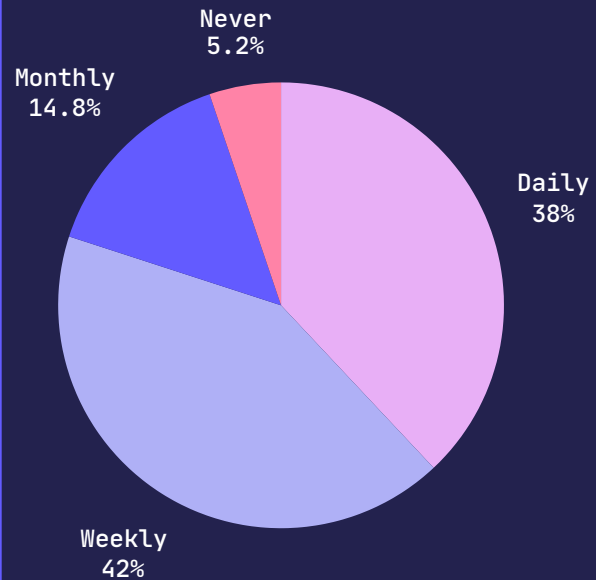
Among our survey respondents, 94.8% say they currently use an AI chatbot at least monthly. More than one-third use a chatbot on a daily basis, and 80% use a chatbot at least once a week.

Only about 5% of survey respondents report that they never use an AI chatbot.

It's clear that a large amount of user engagement is happening directly within the AI chatbot interface. In the next section, we'll explore the impact of AI chatbot use on traditional Google searches.

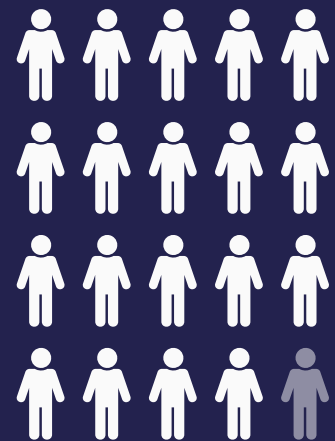
## AI chatbot use

How often do you use AI chatbots like ChatGPT, Microsoft Copilot, Perplexity, Gemini, etc.?



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19  
out of  
20  
survey  
respondents use  
an AI chatbot at  
least monthly



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## Chatbots as answer engines

As chatbot adoption grows, people are sometimes asking AI chatbots for answers that they previously would have found through a Google search. These are known as “zero-click” searches because users don’t have to follow links on a search engine results page (SERP) to get an answer to their question.

While the vast majority (86%) of our survey respondents say they have replaced a Google search with a question to an AI chatbot in the last 30 days, only a slim percentage (4%) have completely replaced Google searches with questions to chatbots.

This indicates a hybrid environment in which users find the information they’re looking for through a combination of Google searches and chatbot responses.

# 86%

of survey respondents

have replaced a Google search with a question to an AI chatbot at least once in the last 30 days

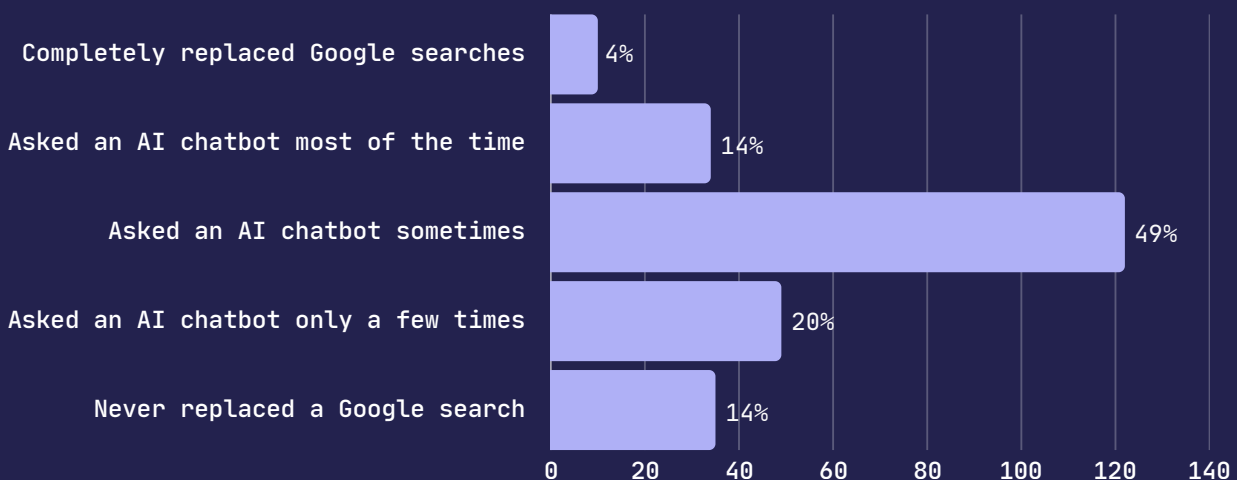
# 18%

of survey respondents

have either mostly or completely replaced Google searches with questions to an AI chatbot

## Replacement of Google searches

In the last 30 days, how often have you asked an AI chatbot for an answer instead of doing a Google search?



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## Search behavior with Google AI Overviews

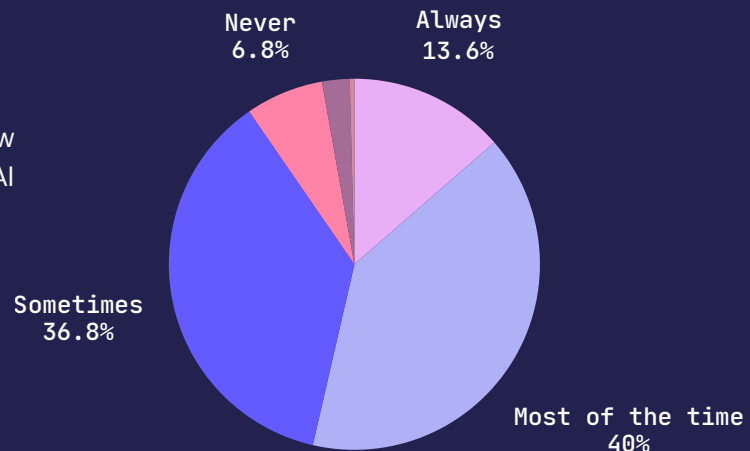
Powered by the Gemini model, Google AI Overviews are AI-generated summaries that sometimes appear at the top of Google search results. In addition to providing a complete answer to a query, AI Overviews also include links to sources, which users can follow if they want more information.

In our survey, more than 90% of respondents say they at least sometimes read the Google AI Overview when provided. Less than 7% say they receive AI Overviews but ignore them. About 2% of respondents don't see AI Overviews in their Google search results, while 0.4% don't know what AI Overviews are.

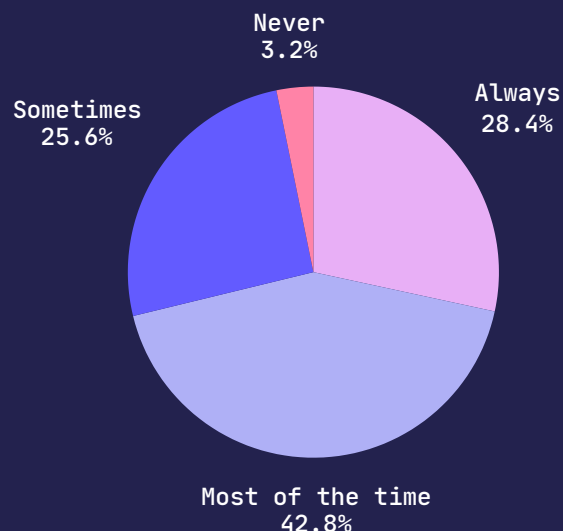
However, the presence of an AI Overview does not necessarily mean that users ignore the actual search result rankings. Nearly 97% of our respondents say that even when they read a Google AI Overview, they also scroll past the overview to see the top search results at least sometimes. This indicates that both AI-generated answers and traditional page rankings play a hybrid role in delivering the information users want to find.

### Google AI Overview use

When you search on Google, how often do you read the Google AI Overview for an answer?



If you read Google AI Overviews for an answer to your search question, do you also scroll down to see the top search results?



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## The role of chatbots in purchase decision-making

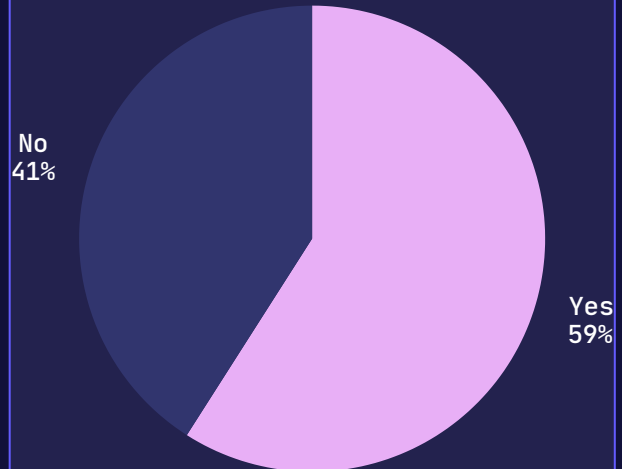
Given the overwhelming adoption of AI chatbots, it's no surprise that people are using ChatGPT and other LLMs to help them research and make decisions about purchases.

In our survey, 59% of respondents say they have used an AI chatbot to research a purchase. A total of 57.6% used an LLM to research a purchase for themselves or their household (consumer purchase). A total of 12.4% used an LLM to research a business purchase. This indicates that marketing teams responsible for both consumer and B2B products should prioritize visibility in AI answer engines.

Forty-one percent of respondents say they have never used an AI chatbot to research either a consumer or business purchase.

### Purchase research

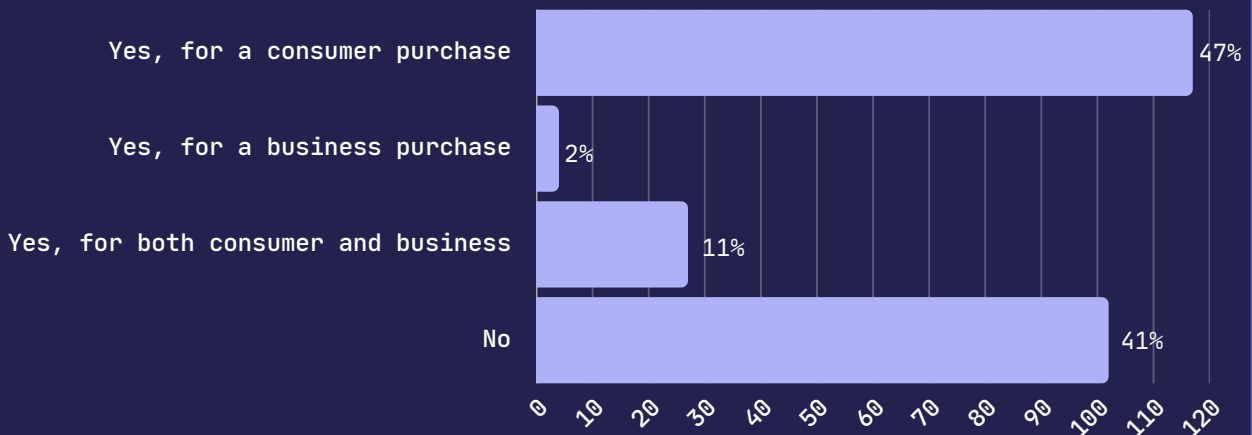
Have you used ChatGPT, Microsoft Copilot, Perplexity, Gemini, or another AI chatbot to research a purchase?



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### Types of purchases: Consumer and business

Have you used ChatGPT, Microsoft Copilot, Perplexity, Gemini, or another AI chatbot to research a purchase (for consumer, business, or both)?



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# Marketing trends

Today, most marketers are not yet optimizing for visibility in AI-powered answer engines, but they recognize the opportunity and are starting to include AI search in their SEO strategies.

When optimizing for search, marketing teams typically focus on getting the highest ranking possible in Google search results. This is the main goal behind traditional search engine optimization (SEO), which emphasizes the use of high-volume keywords.

Although Google search results are still important, marketers should now expand their efforts to optimize for answer engines like ChatGPT, Gemini, and Perplexity. Keywords still play a role, but it's more important to provide full answers to the questions that are relevant to a brand or product.

Our survey showed that 37.2% of marketing teams are actively optimizing their website or content for AI search. However, many more recognize the need, and the vast majority of marketing teams are starting to make plans to incorporate AI search optimization into their strategies. Most marketers say they either have already implemented AI search optimization strategies or plan to in the next six months.

When it comes to tactics, marketing teams are exploring how to expand upon their existing strategies: website optimization, keyword and topic planning, and thought leadership content. Some are adopting new practices, such as AI search visibility monitoring.

## # Questions

1. Have you heard of any of the following terms: generative engine optimization, AI search engine optimization, LLM optimization, answer engine optimization?
2. Has your marketing team adopted any strategies to optimize for search visibility in AI chatbots and platforms (like ChatGPT, Google AI Overviews, Perplexity, or Copilot)?
3. Which AI chatbots and search engines are you monitoring for brand/content visibility?
4. What AI search optimization strategies has your marketing team adopted?
5. How soon will your marketing team implement AI search optimization strategies?

## Survey methodology

On Marketing asked 250 marketing professionals based in the United States about how their teams are adopting strategies to optimize content for AI search engines and chatbots, like Google AI Overviews, ChatGPT, Perplexity, and Microsoft Copilot. Survey responses were collected in September 2025 through the Prolific market research platform.

## Marketing awareness of AI search

Most marketing professionals are aware that their target audiences are using AI-powered search tools and that this trend will call for new strategies in search optimization. However, the marketing industry hasn't yet aligned on what to call the practice of optimizing for AI visibility.

The majority of marketers (83.6%) recognize the term "AI search engine optimization," or "AI SEO." More than a third recognize the term "generative engine optimization," or "GEO," (38.8%) and the more technical "LLM optimization" or "LLMO," (37.6%) which refers to the large language models these AI search tools are based on. Fewer recognize "answer engine optimization," or "AEO" (19.6%). A small percentage of marketers aren't familiar with any of these terms.

# 90%

of marketing  
professionals

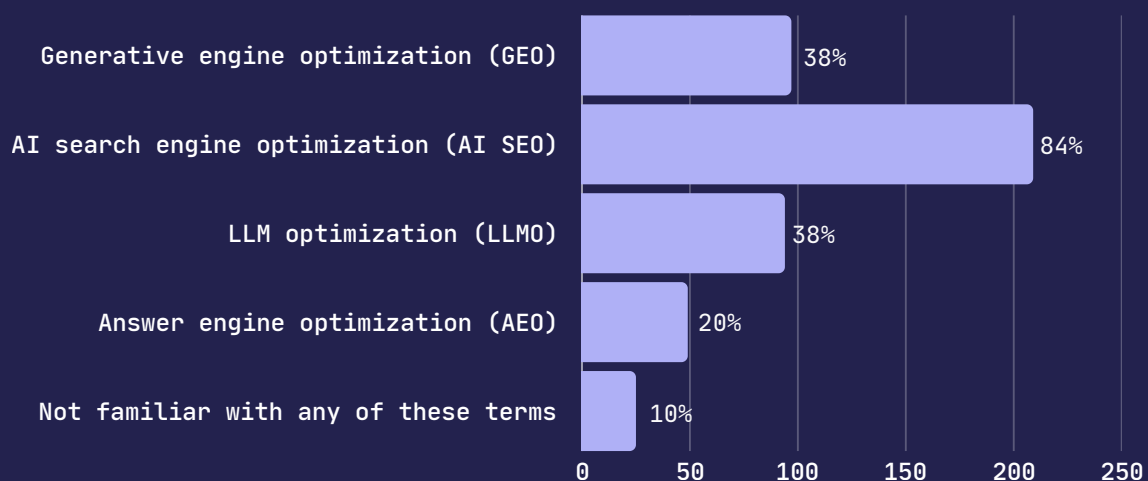
recognized at least one of the  
many terms currently being used  
to describe the practice of  
optimizing for AI visibility

### \* AI SEO

"AI search engine optimization," or "AI SEO," appears to be the term marketers most often recognize to mean optimizing for AI visibility.

## Awareness of AI search optimization

Have you heard of any of the following terms? (Select all that apply.)



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## Marketing team adoption of AI search visibility strategies

While most marketing professionals in our survey recognize the practice of AI search optimization, most say their teams have not implemented any strategies or are unsure if their existing strategies are sufficient. However, at least a third are already optimizing for AI search.

According to our survey respondents:

- 37.2% of marketing teams are actively optimizing their website or content for AI search.
- 30.8% have not yet implemented any strategies, but are exploring how to optimize for AI search.
- 16.8% have optimized for SEO and assume that will help with AI search.
- 10% have not optimized for AI search and don't have any plans to do so.
- 5.2% are not familiar with AI search optimization.

## Choosing which platforms to monitor

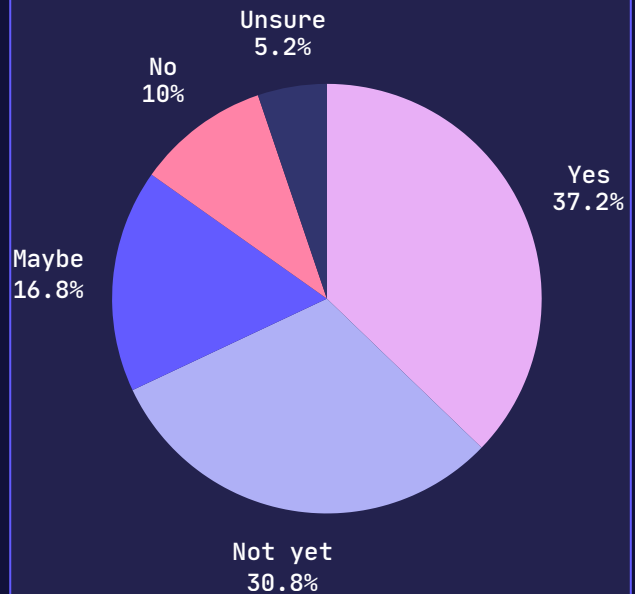
Even if they don't already have a fully developed AI search optimization strategy, many marketing teams are already monitoring for brand or content visibility in AI platforms. The most popular platform is ChatGPT, which 76.4% of survey respondents say they are monitoring.

The next most popular platforms being monitored are Google AI Overviews (35.6%), Microsoft Copilot (27.2%), and Google AI Mode (24.4%). Fewer marketing teams are monitoring xAI Grok (13.6%) and Perplexity (12%). A minority (6.8%) are monitoring other AI platforms not listed.

One in 10 respondents say they are not monitoring their brand or content in any AI platform.

## Adoption of AI search optimization

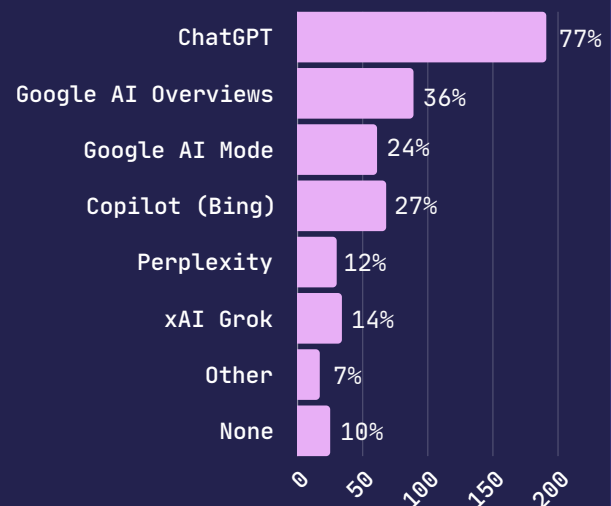
Has your marketing team adopted any strategies to optimize for search visibility in AI chatbots and platforms?



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## AI platforms monitored

Which AI chatbots and search engines are you monitoring for visibility?



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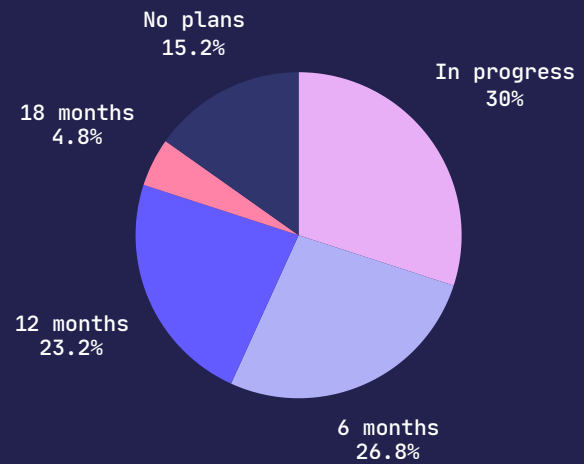
## Expected timeline and strategies for AI search optimization

By optimizing for AI search sooner rather than later, marketing teams can gain an edge over their competition by winning visibility for their preferred search queries. In our survey, an even 30% of respondents say their teams are already optimizing for AI search. More than a quarter say they will start implementing their strategies within the next six months, and about another quarter plan to implement within the next 12-18 months.

That said, the majority of marketers we surveyed are already practicing some activities that are part of an AI search optimization program. More than half (52.4%) are optimizing their websites for search, an activity that can be expanded to LLM optimization by using structured data or schema markup. Nearly half (48%) are mapping keywords and topics—a traditional SEO activity that plays a large role in AI search. Many (42%) are monitoring AI search visibility (by tracking query rankings or using brand visibility dashboards) and 29.6% are producing thought leadership content to build authority (such as blog articles, reports, and guides).

### Timeline for implementation

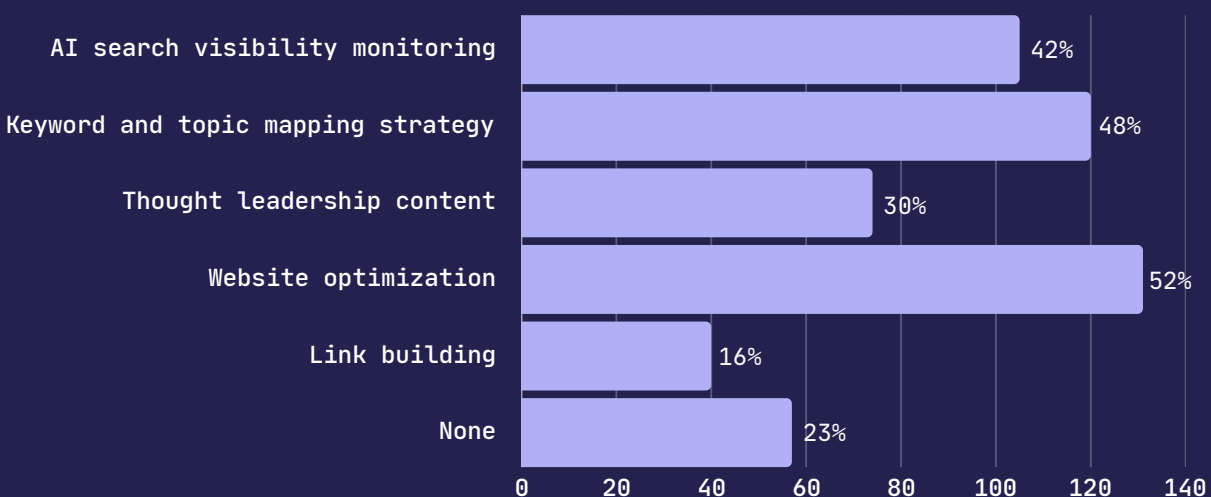
How soon will your marketing team implement AI search optimization strategies?



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### Marketing strategies for AI search optimization

What AI search optimization strategies has your marketing team adopted? (Select all that apply.)



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# Conclusion

Marketing teams have an opportunity to feed favorable information into the most popular LLMs used today. Strategies including visibility reporting, keyword and topic planning, authority content, and website optimization.

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LLMs have made it incredibly easy to see and act on information that was once only reachable by visiting multiple websites and clicking through dozens of pages. This new way of searching is especially helpful when it comes to making purchase decisions for both consumer and business products. People are using AI search tools to compare product features, pricing, and “best for” descriptions.

Brands have an opportunity to influence the answers LLMs provide, and acting quickly can help them differentiate their products and correct any inaccurate information. Most marketing teams understand that AI search visibility needs to become part of their digital and content marketing strategies. However, many organizations are unclear about where to start and which techniques will get the best results.

On Marketing is an answer engine optimization (AEO) agency that can help your brand and content show up in responses from AI-powered engines like ChatGPT, Google Gemini, and Copilot. We offer services across four key AI search optimization categories:

- **AI visibility reports** to track brand visibility by platform with metrics on sentiment analysis, query topics, and competitor analysis.
- **User search query analysis** to identify target keywords, questions, semantic keywords, and topic clusters.
- **Authority content** that emphasizes expertise, including blog articles, original research, guides, e-books, and guest articles.
- **Website optimization** to make digital properties LLM friendly through content structuring, schema markup, and llms.txt file creation.

To get in touch with our team, visit [onmarketing.ai/contact](https://onmarketing.ai/contact)

1. ["ChatGPT sets record for fastest-growing user base - analyst note"](#). Reuters. Archived from [the original](#) on December 6, 2024. Retrieved December 14, 2024.
2. Milmo, Dan (December 2, 2023). ["ChatGPT reaches 100 million users two months after launch"](#). The Guardian. ISSN [0261-3077](#). Archived from the original on February 3, 2023. Retrieved February 3, 2023.

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