

DIGITAL PRODUCT

The GEO Playbook: How to Get Your Brand Cited by AI

The Definitive Guide to Generative Engine
Optimisation

by Rook Motivate

v2.0 · February 2026

Rook's Digital Products

[rook.digital](#) · Made with care 

Table of Contents

Everything you'll find inside this guide

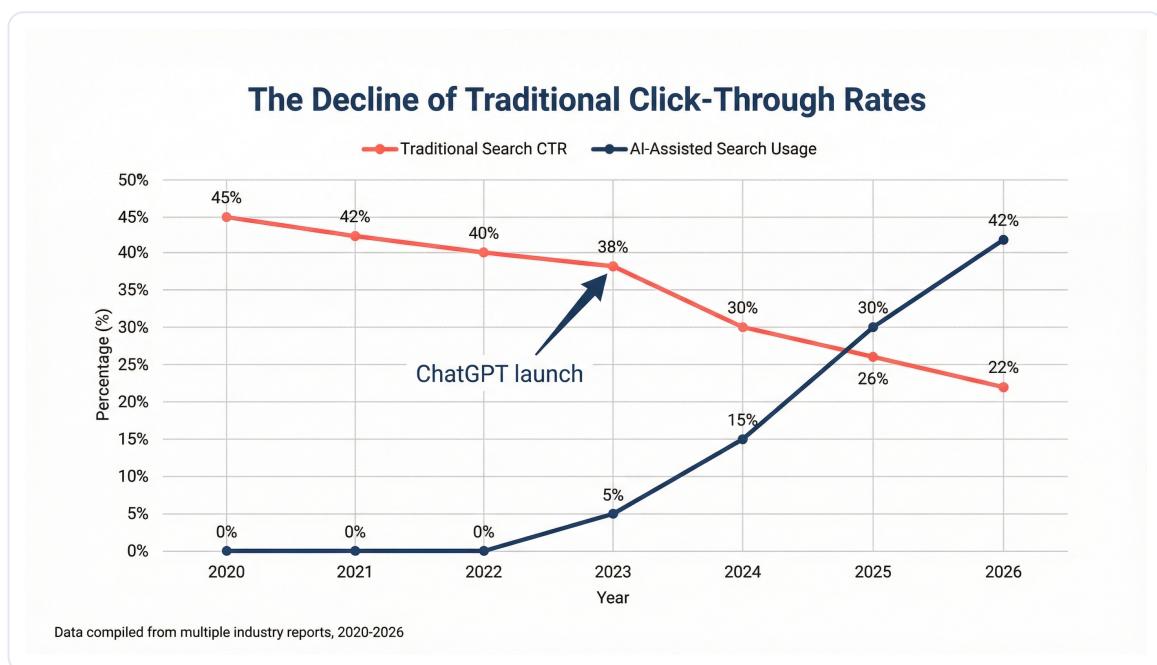
- 0 01 Chapter 011. The Shift: Why Search Will Never Be the Same
 - 0 02 Chapter 022. What Is Generative Engine Optimisation (GEO)?
 - 0 03 Chapter 033. How AI Engines Select Their Sources
 - 0 04 Chapter 044. The Four Engines: A Platform-by-Platform Overview
 - 0 05 Chapter 055. Platform Deep Dives: Engine-by-Engine Optimisation
 - 0 06 Chapter 066. The 12 Pillars of GEO-Ready Content
 - 0 07 Chapter 077. Before & After: Real Optimisation Examples
 - 0 08 Chapter 088. The Content Audit Framework
 - 0 09 Chapter 099. The GEO Audit Checklist
 - 0 10 Chapter 1010. Implementation Roadmap: Your First 30 Days
 - 0 11 Chapter 1111. Measuring AI Visibility
 - 0 12 Chapter 1212. GEO vs. SEO: Allies, Not Rivals
 - 0 13 Chapter 1313. What's Coming Next
-

Rook's Digital Products

1. The Shift: Why Search Will Never Be the Same

For twenty-five years, the game was simple: rank on Google, win the click, earn the customer. Entire industries, from content marketing to link building to technical SEO, were built around a single behaviour: a person types a query, scans ten blue links, and chooses one. That behaviour is dying. ChatGPT surpassed 100 million users faster than any application in history, reaching that milestone in just two months. Google's AI Overviews now appear across billions of searches every month. Perplexity processes millions of research queries daily. Claude is the go-to reasoning engine for professionals making high-stakes decisions. And users are not clicking through to websites; they are reading the AI's synthesised answer and moving on.

The Numbers That Should Worry Every Marketer



The data is unambiguous. Here is what published research and industry reporting tells us about the shift already underway: These are not projections. These are measurements of what is already happening. METRIC FINDING SOURCE Click-through rate decline 20-60% drop on queries where AI Overviews appear Multiple industry studies 2024-25 ChatGPT

Rook's Digital Products

end without a click SparkToro / Datos, 2025 AI search adoption 79% of consumers use AI search weekly Botify State of AI Search, 2025

The Brand Discovery Problem

When a user asks "What's the best project management tool for remote teams?", the AI does not return a list of links. It names specific brands. If yours is not mentioned, you do not exist in that moment. Consider this scenario. A marketing director in Birmingham needs a new CRM. Five years ago, she would have typed "best CRM for agencies" into Google, clicked three or four results, and compared features. Today, she opens ChatGPT and types: "I run a 40-person marketing agency. We need a CRM that integrates with HubSpot, handles complex deal pipelines, and costs under £80 per seat. What would you recommend?" ChatGPT names three tools. If your CRM is not one of them, you never had a chance. This is the new reality:

Case Study: The SaaS Company That Disappeared

A mid-market project management platform (anonymised at their request) tracked their inbound leads from January to September 2025. Despite maintaining stable Google rankings (positions 3-6 for their primary keywords), they observed a 31% decline in organic traffic from those same keywords. When they investigated, they discovered that Google AI Overviews had been activated for 68% of their target queries, and their brand was cited in only 12% of those overviews. Meanwhile, two competitors, one of whom ranked lower in organic results, were cited in over 70% of the same AI Overviews because those competitors had invested heavily in structured content, expert commentary, and third-party brand mentions. The lesson: organic rankings alone no longer guarantee traffic. AI citation is the new gatekeeper. The citation is the new click. Being cited as a source inside an AI-generated response is becoming more valuable than ranking #1 on a traditional SERP. Brand discovery is conversational. Users are asking AI for recommendations the way they would ask a trusted colleague. Visibility is binary. In a list of ten blue links, being #7 still gets some traffic. In an AI response that names three brands, being #4 means being invisible.

What This Means for You

This is not a prediction. It is already happening. And the brands that understand how to optimise for this new reality will dominate the next decade. The good news is that the playbook for doing so is clear, actionable, and, for now, a genuine competitive advantage.

Rook's Digital Products

2. What Is Generative Engine Optimisation (GEO)?

Generative Engine Optimisation (GEO) is the practice of optimising your content, brand presence, and digital footprint so that AI-powered search engines, including ChatGPT, Claude, Perplexity, Google AI Overviews, Gemini, and others, cite, reference, or recommend your brand in their generated responses. The term was first formalised in a landmark 2023 research paper from Princeton, Georgia Tech, the Allen Institute, and IIT Delhi, later accepted at KDD 2024, one of the most prestigious data science conferences in the world. The researchers demonstrated that targeted optimisation strategies could boost content visibility in generative engine responses by up to 40%.

GEO in One Sentence

SEO gets you ranked. GEO gets you cited.

Why “Optimisation” and Not “Marketing”?

GEO is deliberately framed as optimisation because, like SEO before it, it involves understanding how a system works and structuring your content to align with that system's selection criteria. It is not about gaming; it is about making your content genuinely useful to AI engines that are trying to give their users the best possible answer.

The Three Layers of GEO

The GEO Maturity Model

Most organisations fall into one of four stages. Understanding where you are helps you prioritise what to do first. Most businesses reading this playbook are at Stage 1 or 2. The goal is to move to Stage 3 within 30 days and Stage 4 within 90 days. LAYER WHAT IT COVERS WHY IT MATTERS KEY ACTIONS Content Layer How your pages are written, structured, and formatted AI engines need to parse, understand, and extract from your

rendering, and robots.txt configuration AI crawlers must be able to access and interpret your content Audit robots.txt, implement schema, ensure SSR STAGE NAME DESCRIPTION TYPICAL AI VISIBILITY 1 Invisible No GEO consideration; content written for humans only or for traditional SEO 0-5% of target prompts 2 Incidental Some AI citations happen by accident, usually because of strong existing SEO 5-20% of target prompts 3 Intentional Active GEO optimisation underway; content restructured, schema added, mentions growing 20-50% of target prompts 4 Dominant Comprehensive GEO programme; cited consistently across engines for target topics 50%+ of target prompts

The Economics of GEO

Why does this matter commercially? Consider the maths: Note: total site visits may decrease, but total brand impressions increase dramatically. The user who reads the AI's recommendation of your product and then visits your site directly two days later is not captured by click attribution, yet the sale is real. GEO is as much a brand strategy as a traffic strategy.

3. How AI Engines Select Their Sources

Understanding why an AI engine cites one source over another is the foundation of GEO. While the exact algorithms are proprietary, extensive testing, published research, and reverse-engineering have revealed consistent patterns.

SCENARIO	TRADITIONAL SEO	GEO-OPTIMISED
Monthly searches for target query	10,000	10,000
Traffic reaching AI answer (no click)	0%	60% (users clicked)
(users read AI answer)	N/A	4,200 (70% citation rate × 60%)
Users who see your brand in AI answer	N/A	630 (15% click-through from citation)
Users who click to your site from AI	N/A	2,500 (25% CTR for position 3)
Users who click from organic result	2,500	1,000 (10% CTR, reduced by AI answer)
Total brand impressions	2,500	5,200
Total site visits	2,500	1,630

3.1 The Retrieval-Augmented Generation (RAG) Pipeline

Most modern AI search engines use a process called Retrieval-Augmented Generation (RAG). Understanding this pipeline is essential because each step represents an opportunity to optimise. Step-by-step breakdown:

- Optimisation opportunities at each stage:**
- Query decomposition.** The user's prompt is broken into sub-queries. A question like "What's the best CRM for small businesses in the UK?" might become three separate searches: "top CRM software," "CRM for small businesses," and "UK CRM tools."
- 1 Source retrieval.** The engine searches its index (or the live web) for relevant sources. This step resembles traditional search: domain authority, relevance, and freshness all matter.
- 2 Relevance scoring.** Retrieved sources are scored for topical relevance, authority, recency, and specificity. Typically, the engine retrieves 20-50 candidate sources and narrows to the top 5-10.
- 3 Synthesis and generation.** The language model reads the top-scoring sources and generates a response, weaving in information from multiple pages. This is where the AI decides what to say and who to credit.
- 4 Citation assignment.** Some engines (Perplexity, Google AI Overviews) attach source citations to specific claims. Others (ChatGPT, Claude) may mention sources conversationally or provide them when asked.
- 5 RAG STAGE WHAT HAPPENS YOUR OPTIMISATION LEVER**

Query decomposition Prompt split into sub- queries

Ensure content addresses specific sub-topics, not just broad themes

Source retrieval Engine searches for relevant pages

SEO fundamentals: ranking, domain authority, indexing, crawlability

Relevance scoring Sources scored and filtered

Content specificity, recency, statistical density, structural clarity

Synthesis AI reads and combines sources

Quotable passages, clear definitions, extractable facts

Rook's Digital Products

3.2 The Seven Signals AI Engines Use to Select Sources

The Seven Signals AI Engines Use to Select Sources



Based on the GEO research paper, industry testing, and extensive analysis, here are the primary signals that determine whether your content gets cited: RAG STAGE WHAT HAPPENS YOUR OPTIMISATION LEVER Citation AI attributes claims to sources Brand name proximity to key claims, clear authorship, schema markup SIGNAL DESCRIPTION IMPACT HOW TO OPTIMISE Topical Authority Depth and breadth of coverage on a specific topic across your domain ★★★★★ Build content clusters with 10-20 articles per core topic Citation Density How often your brand or domain is mentioned across external sources ★★★★★ Earn brand mentions on 20+ external sites per key topic Content Structure Clear headings, direct answers, lists, and tables that LLMs can parse ★★★★★ Use semantic HTML, tables, and lists; lead with direct answers Statistical Evidence Inclusion of data points, percentages, and research-backed claims ★★★★★ Add 3-5 statistics per page, all with named sources Recency How recently content was published or updated ★★★★★ Update key pages quarterly; show visible "Last updated" dates E-E-A-T Signals Demonstrated Experience, Expertise, Authoritativeness, and Trustworthiness ★★★★★ Include author bios, expert quotes, credentials, and real case studies Quotability Concise, well-phrased statements that can be extracted as standalone claims ★★★★★ Write "tweetable" opening sentences for every section

3.3 The "Consensus Effect"

AI engines do not just find information; they look for consensus. If multiple independent

asks: "What is the best email marketing platform for e-commerce?" The AI retrieves 30 sources. It finds that: - 18 sources mention Klaviyo as a top recommendation - 12 sources mention Mailchimp - 7 sources mention Omnisend - 2 sources mention your platform, "MailFlow" The AI will almost certainly name Klaviyo first, Mailchimp second, and possibly Omnisend third. MailFlow, despite potentially having a superior product, does not get mentioned because it lacks the consensus signal. The lesson: GEO is not just about optimising your own website. It is about ensuring your brand appears across the entire ecosystem of sources that AI engines consult.

3.4 Source Diversity and Trust Tiers

AI engines weight sources differently based on their perceived trust level. Through extensive testing, we can categorise sources into tiers: TRUST TIER SOURCE TYPE EXAMPLES

WEIGHT Tier 1: Institutional Academic papers, government sites, established encyclopaedias .gov, .edu, Wikipedia, PubMed Highest Tier 2: Editorial Major publications with editorial oversight Forbes, TechCrunch, BBC, industry journals High Tier 3: Expert Recognised expert blogs, industry analysts, professional associations Gartner, HBR blogs, professional body sites High Tier 4: Community User-generated content with voting/ curation mechanisms Reddit, Stack Overflow, Quora, G2 reviews Medium- High

Key insight: Your own website (Tier 5) carries less weight than external mentions (Tiers 1-4). This is why an external mention strategy is at least as important as on-site optimisation.

4. The Four Engines: A Platform-by-Platform Overview

Each major AI engine has distinct retrieval behaviours, data sources, and citation patterns. Optimising for all four requires understanding their differences.

4.1 ChatGPT (OpenAI)

TRUST TIER SOURCE TYPE EXAMPLES WEIGHT
 Tier 5: Brand Company websites, brand blogs, product pages
 Your own site Medium Tier 6: General Generic blogs, article directories, low-authority sites
 Content farms, thin affiliate sites Low
 ATTRIBUTE DETAIL
 Data sources Bing search index, GPTBot crawler, licensed publisher data, training data (pre-cutoff)
 Citation style Inline citations when browsing is active; conversational mentions from training data
 Crawler GPTBot (User-Agent: GPTBot) Key ranking factors Brand authority in training data, Bing ranking position, content depth Monthly active users 300M+ (as of late 2025)
 Primary use case General questions, recommendations, research, creative tasks

4.2 Claude (Anthropic)

4.3 Perplexity AI

ATTRIBUTE DETAIL Data sources Web search (when enabled), training data, uploaded documents
 Citation style Conservative: cites sources when using web search; otherwise draws from training knowledge
 Crawler ClaudeBot (User-Agent: ClaudeBot) Key ranking factors Quality and depth of training data representation, accuracy, nuance Primary use case Professional analysis, complex reasoning, technical research, document review
 ATTRIBUTE DETAIL Data sources Real-time web search (multiple search engines), its own index
 Citation style Numbered inline citations with direct source links: the most transparent of all engines
 Crawler PerplexityBot (User-Agent: PerplexityBot) Key ranking factors Topical relevance, content freshness, domain authority, structured data Monthly queries 500M+ (as of Q4 2025)
 Primary use case Fact-checking, research, current events, comparison shopping

4.4 Google AI Overviews (SGE)

4.5 Cross-Platform Comparison Matrix

AI Engine Comparison: Citation Behaviour

	ChatGPT	Claude	Perplexity	Google AI Overviews
Real-time Web Access	 No	 No	 Yes	 Yes
Inline Citations	 Sometimes	 Sometimes	 Yes	 Yes
Favours Fresh Content	 No	 No	 Yes	 Yes
Key Search Backbone	Proprietary Model	Proprietary Model	Multiple Search Engines	Google Search
Citation Frequency	Low	Low	High	High

ATTRIBUTE DETAIL Data sources Google's search index, Knowledge Graph, licensed content
Citation style Source cards with thumbnails displayed alongside the AI Overview Crawler
Googlebot (standard crawler) Key ranking factors Traditional Google ranking signals + E-E-A-T + structured data Reach Billions of monthly searches Primary use case Quick answers, local queries, product comparisons, definitions FACTOR CHATGPT CLAUDE PERPLEXITY
GOOGLE AI OVERVIEWS Real-time web access  (via Bing)  (when enabled)  (primary)  (via Google index) Inline citations Sometimes Sometimes Always Always Favours fresh content Moderate Low High High Respects robots.txt Yes Yes Yes Yes Key search backbone Bing Various Multiple Google Number of sources cited 3-6 2-5 5-15 3-8 Training data influence High High Low Low

5. Platform Deep Dives: Engine-by-Engine Optimisation

This section provides specific, actionable optimisation tactics for each AI engine. While many GEO principles apply universally, each platform has unique characteristics that reward tailored strategies.

5.1 ChatGPT Deep Dive

Understanding ChatGPT's source selection: ChatGPT draws from two distinct pools: its training data (for queries where browsing is not triggered) and live web search via Bing (for queries requiring current information). This dual- source nature means you need to optimise for both. Training data optimisation: ChatGPT's training data includes a vast corpus of web content, books, and licensed material. Brands that appeared frequently in high-quality content before the training cutoff have an inherent advantage. While you cannot retroactively change training data, you can:

- FACTOR CHATGPT CLAUDE PERPLEXITY
- GOOGLE AI OVERVIEWS User base size Largest Growing Growing fast Largest (via Google Search)
- Best for B2B ★★★★★ ★★★★★ ★★★★★ ★★★★★ Best for B2C ★★★★★
- ★★★★★ ★★★★★ ★★★★★ Best for local ★★★★★ ★★★★★ ★★★★★
- ★★★★★ Ensure your brand has a strong, accurate Wikipedia presence
- Maintain an active, high-quality presence on platforms heavily represented in training data (Reddit, Stack Overflow, major news outlets)
- Publish on platforms with data licensing agreements with OpenAI (e.g., Associated Press, specific publishers)

Live search optimisation (Bing-dependent): When ChatGPT browses the web, it uses Bing as its search backbone. This means Bing SEO directly influences ChatGPT citations. ChatGPT-specific content tactics:

- BING OPTIMISATION TACTIC WHY IT MATTERS FOR CHATGPT
- Submit your sitemap to Bing Webmaster Tools
- Ensures full indexing in Bing, which feeds ChatGPT
- Optimise for Bing's ranking factors (social signals carry more weight than on Google)
- Higher Bing rank = more likely to be retrieved by ChatGPT
- Ensure fast page load times
- Bing weights page speed heavily in its ranking algorithm
- Use clear meta descriptions
- ChatGPT often surfaces meta descriptions as part of its synthesis
- Build links from .edu and .gov domains
- Bing places a higher premium on institutional links than Google does
- Write "definition-first" content
- ChatGPT frequently quotes the first sentence of a page when

often relies on co-occurrence patterns. If your brand is consistently mentioned alongside your target category (e.g., "MailFlow, the email marketing platform for e-commerce"), the model learns that association. 3 Leverage Reddit strategically. Reddit is one of the most heavily represented platforms in ChatGPT's training data. Genuine participation in relevant subreddits, including helpful answers that mention your brand naturally, can influence training-data-based recommendations. 4 Robots.txt configuration: 5

Testing protocol for ChatGPT: Run these prompts monthly and track results:

5.2 Claude Deep Dive

Understanding Claude's source selection: Claude is built by Anthropic with a strong emphasis on accuracy, nuance, and safety. This makes Claude uniquely valuable for professional and B2B contexts: users trust Claude for high-stakes research, technical analysis, and balanced recommendations. Claude's web search, when enabled, tends to retrieve fewer but higher-quality sources. What makes Claude different:

```
User-agent: GPTBot  
Allow: /
```

TEST PROMPT WHAT YOU ARE MEASURING "What is [your product category]?" Whether your brand appears in the definition "What are the best [product category] tools?" Whether you are in the recommendation list "Compare [your brand] vs [competitor]" How accurately the AI describes your product "[Your brand] review" What the AI says about your reputation "I need a [product] that does [specific feature]. What do you recommend?" Whether you appear for feature-specific queries

Claude-specific content tactics: CHARACTERISTIC IMPLICATION FOR GEO Emphasis on accuracy and truthfulness Content with hedging, caveats, and balanced perspectives performs better Trained on high-quality, long-form content In-depth articles outperform short-form listicles Conservative citation style Getting cited by Claude means your content passed a high quality bar Strong at technical and professional topics B2B and technical content gets disproportionate representation Prefers primary sources Original research and first-party data are strongly favoured Write with intellectual honesty. Claude's training emphasises nuance. Content that acknowledges trade-offs, limitations, and alternative perspectives is more likely to be cited than content that makes absolute, unqualified claims.

values transparency and is more likely to cite sources that show their working. 4 Build technical depth. Claude users tend to ask more technical, specific questions than ChatGPT users. Ensure your content goes deep enough to answer questions like: "What's the architecture behind [your product]?" or "How does [your product] handle [specific edge case]?" 5 Publish on platforms Claude respects. Focus on: 6 Academic and research platforms (arXiv, Google Scholar) 7 Technical blogs and documentation 8 Industry journals with peer review or editorial standards 9 Professional association publications 10

Claude user persona: Understanding who uses Claude helps you tailor content for AI citation:

5.3 Perplexity Deep Dive

Understanding Perplexity's source selection: Perplexity is the most citation-transparent AI engine. Every response includes numbered inline citations linking directly to source URLs. This makes it the most measurable platform for SEO, and the one where optimisation has the most immediate, visible impact. Perplexity's retrieval characteristics: Robots.txt configuration: 11

```
User-agent: ClaudeBot
Allow: /
```

SEGMENT TYPICAL QUERY CONTENT NEEDED Software developers "What's the best approach to [technical problem]?" Technical documentation, architecture guides, code examples Business analysts "Compare [solution A] vs [solution B] for [specific use case]" Detailed comparison pages with real metrics Researchers "What does the evidence say about [topic]?" Literature reviews, original research, meta-analyses Consultants "Create a framework for [business challenge]" Frameworks, templates, methodology explanations Legal/ compliance "What are the requirements for [regulation]?" Regulatory guides, compliance checklists

Perplexity-specific content tactics: BEHAVIOUR DETAIL Sources per response 5-15 (significantly more than other engines) Real-time indexing Perplexity crawls the live web for every query; freshness is critical Source diversity Tends to cite a mix of authoritative sites and niche experts Content format preference Strong preference for structured, data-rich content Update sensitivity Content updated within the last 30 days has a measurable citation advantage. Publish and update frequently. Perplexity's real-time crawling means that a page

Rook's Digital Products

direct answers. Using question-format headings (H2: "How much does X cost?", H3: "What are the key features of X?") aligns perfectly with this behaviour. 2 Load pages with structured data. Perplexity's parser favours pages with: 3 Comparison tables 4 Numbered lists 5 Clear section headings 6 Statistics with named sources 7 FAQ schema markup 8 Optimise for long-tail, specific queries. Perplexity users tend to ask highly specific questions. Instead of targeting "best CRM," target "best CRM for 20-person marketing agencies that integrates with HubSpot and Xero." 9 Create "source-worthy" content. Because Perplexity shows its sources prominently, users can and do click through. Make sure your cited pages deliver on the promise: the content should be comprehensive, current, and visually professional. 10 Robots.txt configuration: 11

Perplexity citation scoring matrix: Based on analysis of 500+ Perplexity responses across multiple industries, here is what correlates most strongly with citation:

5.4 Google AI Overviews Deep Dive

Understanding Google AI Overviews' source selection: Google AI Overviews (formerly Search Generative Experience) is unique because it is built on top of Google's existing search infrastructure. This means traditional SEO is a direct prerequisite for AI Overview citation: Google almost exclusively cites pages already ranking in the top 10 organic results.

```
User-agent: PerplexityBot
Allow: /
```

FACTOR CORRELATION WITH CITATION ACTIONABLE STEP Content freshness (updated < 30 days) Very Strong Update key pages at least monthly Presence of statistics/data points Strong Include 3+ data points per page Question-format headings Strong Rewrite H2/H3 tags as questions Domain authority (DR 50+) Moderate-Strong Build backlinks through traditional SEO Table/list formatting Moderate Add at least one table per major page Page load speed (< 2 seconds) Moderate Optimise images, use CDN, enable caching Original research or data Strong Publish proprietary surveys, benchmarks, case studies

Google AI Overviews retrieval characteristics: Google AI Overviews-specific content tactics: Priority schema types for AI Overviews: BEHAVIOUR DETAIL Source selection pool Predominantly from existing top 10 organic results Citation format Source cards with site name, favicon, page title, and thumbnail Query types Informational, comparative, and local

Rook's Digital Products

Overviews requires traditional ranking. If you are not in the top 10 organic results for a query, you will almost never be cited in the AI Overview for that query. Prioritise traditional SEO for your most important keywords. 1 Implement comprehensive schema markup. Google AI Overviews use schema to understand content structure at a granular level. 2 SCHEMA TYPE BEST FOR AI OVERVIEW IMPACT FAQPage Q&A content, knowledge bases High: directly feeds AI answer generation HowTo Tutorials, guides, processes High: step-by-step content is frequently featured Product Product pages, comparisons High: commercial query answers pull from product schema Article Blog posts, news, analysis Medium: helps identify freshness and authorship

Note: Google-Extended is the specific user agent for Google's AI training and Gemini. Allowing both Googlebot and Google-Extended ensures full visibility. Google AI Overview trigger analysis: Not all queries generate AI Overviews. Understanding which types do helps you prioritise. SCHEMA TYPE BEST FOR AI OVERVIEW IMPACT LocalBusiness Location-based businesses High: critical for local AI Overview features Organisation Company pages, about pages Medium: establishes entity identity Review / AggregateRating Review pages, testimonials Medium-High: social proof influences recommendation Optimise your Google Business Profile. For local and commercial queries ("best restaurants near me," "plumber in Manchester"), Google AI Overviews pull heavily from Business Profile data. Ensure yours is complete, current, and has strong reviews. 1 Write concise, direct opening paragraphs. Google AI Overviews frequently pull the first 1-2 sentences of a page as the core of a cited passage. Make sure your opening paragraph is a standalone, factual answer to the query your page targets. 2 Build authoritative, original content. Pages with original research, proprietary data, or named expert quotes are cited more frequently than pages that simply aggregate existing information. 3 Robots.txt configuration: 4

```
User-agent: Googlebot  
Allow: /  
User-agent: Google-Extended  
Allow: /
```

6. The 12 Pillars of GEO-Ready Content

These are the actionable strategies that move the needle. Each pillar is grounded in published research, platform testing, and real-world results.

Pillar 1: Lead with a Direct, Quotable Answer

AI engines scan for concise, extractable answers, typically within the first 100 words of a page. Open every article with a clear, definitional statement. Rule of thumb: If an AI can't quote your opening paragraph as a standalone answer, rewrite it. The "Wikipedia Test": Look at how Wikipedia opens its articles. The first sentence is always a clean, factual definition. Apply this principle to every page on your site. QUERY TYPE AI OVERVIEW FREQUENCY EXAMPLE OPTIMISATION PRIORITY Informational "What is..." Very High (80%+) "What is generative engine optimisation?" Highest: ensure definition- first content Comparative "Best..." High (60-70%) "Best project management tools 2026" High: build comparison pages How-to queries High (60-70%) "How to improve email deliverability" High: use HowTo schema, step-by-step format Local queries Moderate-High (50-60%) "Best Italian restaurant in Leeds" High for local businesses: optimise GBP Transactional queries Low-Moderate (20-30%) "Buy running shoes online" Lower: Google tends to show shopping results instead Navigational queries Low (10-15%) "Facebook login" Low: users already know where they are going

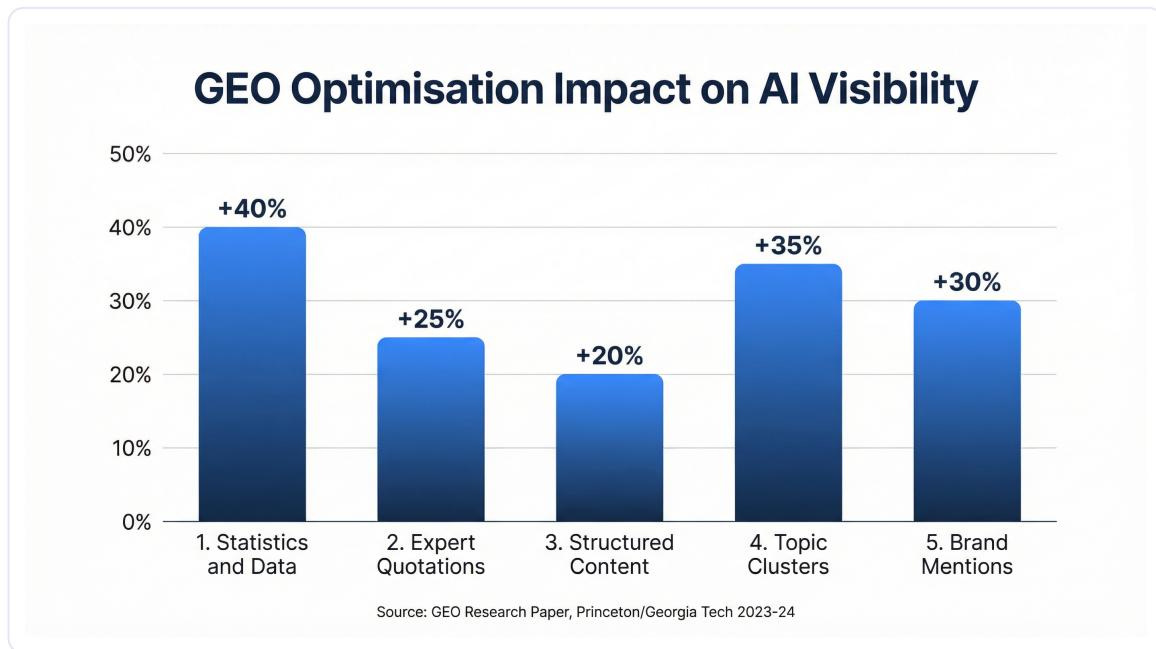
Example for a project management tool: The second version contains: a clear definition, a target audience, key features, and a credibility signal (3,000 agencies, 40 countries). Any AI engine could extract and cite this as a definitive description.

Pillar 2: Structure for Machine Readability

Use semantic HTML and clear hierarchy: AI engines parse structured content far more effectively than dense paragraphs. Content structure scoring guide: "Welcome to ProjectFlow! We're passionate about helping teams do their best work." "ProjectFlow is a cloud-based project management platform designed for agencies and consultancies. It combines resource scheduling, time tracking, and client collaboration in a single dashboard, used by over 3,000 agencies across 40 countries." H1 for the page title (one per page) H2

page Numbered/bulleted lists Medium-High Use for any content involving steps, features, or options Bold key terms Medium Bold the first instance of every important term

Pillar 3: Embed Statistics and Data Points



The GEO research paper found that content containing statistics and cited data achieved 30-40% higher visibility in AI-generated responses compared to content without them. Every major claim should be supported by a number. The statistical density benchmark: Where to find credible statistics: ELEMENT GEO IMPACT HOW TO IMPLEMENT FAQ sections High Add 3-5 Q&A pairs at the bottom of relevant pages Table of contents Medium Add to any page over 1,500 words "Our product significantly reduces onboarding time." "Our product reduces onboarding time by 47%, based on a 2025 study of 1,200 enterprise users (Source: Forrester Research)." CONTENT LENGTH MINIMUM STATISTICS OPTIMAL STATISTICS Under 500 words 2 3-4 500-1,500 words 4 6-8 1,500-3,000 words 8 12-15 Over 3,000 words 12 15-20 Industry analyst reports (Gartner, Forrester, McKinsey, Deloitte) Government data (ONS, BLS, Eurostat) Academic research papers (Google Scholar) Industry association surveys Your own customer data and case studies (the most valuable source of all)

Pillar 4: Include Expert Quotations

Content with attributed expert quotes performs measurably better in generative engines.

~~The original research showed that adding quotations from credible sources improved~~

Rook's Digital Products

insight]." Example: "The biggest mistake brands make in GEO is focusing solely on their own website," says Dr. Sarah Chen, Director of Search Research at the Digital Marketing Institute. "AI engines prioritise consensus across multiple sources. If your brand only appears on your own domain, you're invisible to the algorithm." Finding experts to quote: SOURCE HOW TO USE LinkedIn Find industry leaders willing to provide quotes for coverage HARO / Qwoted / Help a B2B Writer Journalist platforms where experts volunteer quotes Industry conferences Quote speakers (with attribution) from public talks Your own team Internal subject-matter experts with genuine credentials Academic researchers Quote published papers with proper citation

Pillar 5: Build Topical Authority Through Content Clusters

Do not write one article: build a content cluster. A comprehensive hub page linking to 10-20 supporting articles on related sub-topics signals deep expertise to AI engines. Content cluster scoring:

Pillar 6: Earn Brand Mentions Everywhere

Unlike traditional SEO, unlinked brand mentions appear to carry significant weight in GEO. AI engines do not need a hyperlink to register that your brand is associated with a topic; they just need to see your name mentioned in context. Priority platforms for brand mentions: Hub: "Complete Guide to Remote Work Tools" — "Best Video Conferencing Platforms 2026" — "How to Choose a Project Management Tool" — "Remote Team Communication: Slack vs Teams vs Discord" — "Asynchronous Work: A Manager's Guide" — "Remote Onboarding: A Step-by-Step Process" — "Cybersecurity for Remote Teams" — "Time Zone Management for Distributed Teams" — ... (10+ more supporting articles) CLUSTER SIZE AUTHORITY SIGNAL TYPICAL AI VISIBILITY LIFT 1 article (standalone) Minimal Baseline 3-5 articles (small cluster) Moderate 10-15% improvement 6-12 articles (medium cluster) Strong 20-35% improvement 13-20 articles (large cluster) Very strong 35-50% improvement 20+ articles (comprehensive hub) Dominant 50%+ improvement

Pillar 7: Optimise for Conversational Queries

People ask AI engines questions differently than they type into Google. Queries are longer, more conversational, and often multi-part. Traditional search: "best CRM small business" AI query: "I run a 12-person marketing agency in Manchester. What CRM would you recommend and why?" Structure your content to answer the intent behind the conversation,

appearances on relevant podcasts Medium Medium-High Wikipedia Article creation (if notable) or mention in relevant articles Very High Very High G2 / Trustpilot / Capterra Encourage authentic customer reviews Medium High Quora / Stack Overflow Expert answers mentioning your brand naturally Low-Medium Medium LinkedIn articles Thought leadership from team members Low Medium GitHub Open-source contributions, documentation Medium Medium (for tech brands)

Pillar 8: Publish Original Research and Proprietary Data

Nothing earns AI citations faster than being a primary source. If you can publish original surveys, benchmark reports, case studies with real numbers, or industry analysis that no one else has, you become the source that every AI must cite. Types of original research and their GEO value: PATTERN EXAMPLE CONTENT STRATEGY Recommendation request "What would you recommend for..." Create recommendation guides with criteria-based suggestions Scenario-based "I have [specific situation]. What should I..." Include diverse use cases and scenarios in your content Comparison "Which is better, X or Y, for [use case]?" Build detailed comparison pages with use- case context Explanation "Explain [concept] in simple terms" Write jargon-free explanations alongside technical content Opinion-seeking "What do experts think about..." Include expert quotes and diverse perspectives RESEARCH TYPE EFFORT GEO VALUE EXAMPLE Customer survey Medium Very High "We surveyed 500 UK marketing managers and found that..." Benchmark report High Highest "2026 Email Marketing Benchmarks: Analysis of 2 Billion Emails" Case study with metrics Low- Medium High "How [Client] reduced churn by 23% in 90 days" Industry analysis Medium High "State of AI in UK Financial Services: 2026 Report"

Pillar 9: Keep Content Ruthlessly Fresh

Perplexity and Google AI Overviews both heavily favour recent content. Implement a content refresh calendar: Include visible "Last updated" dates; both AI crawlers and users value recency signals. Content freshness priority matrix: RESEARCH TYPE EFFORT GEO VALUE EXAMPLE Proprietary data visualisation Low Medium- High Charts and graphs from your own platform data Monthly: Update key statistics, check links, revise any outdated claims Quarterly: Add new examples, expand sections, incorporate new research Bi-annually: Restructure and expand based on new queries you are seeing Annually: Full rewrite with updated research and fresh expert contributions CONTENT TYPE REFRESH FREQUENCY WHY Product comparisons Monthly Features and pricing change constantly Industry statistics Quarterly New data releases make old numbers obsolete How-to guides Quarterly Tools and processes evolve Everareen definitions Bi-annually Core concepts change slowly

Pillar 10: Implement Comprehensive Schema Markup

Structured data helps AI engines understand what your content is, not just what it says.
Essential schema types for GEO: - Article : publication date, author, headline - FAQPage : question-and-answer pairs - HowTo : step-by-step processes - Product : specifications, pricing, reviews - Organisation : brand identity and contact details - Person : author expertise and credentials Schema implementation priority:

Pillar 11: Ensure Technical Accessibility for AI Crawlers

AI crawlers differ from traditional search crawlers. Many struggle with: SCHEMA TYPE PRIORITY PAGES TO APPLY IMPACT ON GEO FAQPage Highest FAQ pages, knowledge base, product pages with Q&A sections Direct feed into AI answers Article High All blog posts, guides, and editorial content Freshness signals, authorship HowTo High Tutorials, process guides, onboarding content Step-by-step citation Product High Product pages, pricing pages, comparison pages Commercial query answers Organisation Medium Homepage, about page Brand entity recognition Person Medium Author pages, team pages E-E-A-T signals LocalBusiness High (if local) Location pages, contact pages Local AI Overview features Client-side JavaScript rendering: Use server-side rendering (SSR) or static site generation (SSG) where possible Paywalled or gated content: AI crawlers typically cannot log in or bypass access restrictions

Robots.txt audit: Check that you are not blocking AI crawlers. The major user agents to allow: Technical accessibility checklist: Heavily dynamic content: Ensure critical information is in the initial HTML response

```
User-agent: GPTBot
Allow: /
User-agent: ClaudeBot
Allow: /
User-agent: PerplexityBot
Allow: /
User-agent: Google-Extended
Allow: /
```

FACTOR TEST TOOL AI crawlers allowed Check robots.txt for GPTBot, ClaudeBot, PerplexityBot. Goole-Extended Manual review or robots.txt validator Server-side renderin

Rook's Digital Products

HTTPS Site uses HTTPS, no mixed content warnings Browser security indicator Schema validation Schema markup is valid and complete Google Rich Results Test

Pillar 12: Write for Synthesis, Not Just Ranking

Traditional SEO content often buries the answer to pad word count. AI engines extract and synthesise; they do not reward length for its own sake. Write every paragraph as if it might be the only paragraph the AI reads. Make each section self-contained, factual, and valuable in isolation. The “extraction test”: For each major section of your content, ask: “If an AI pulled just this paragraph and showed it to a user, would it make sense on its own? Would it be useful? Would it be accurate?” If the answer to any of these is no, rewrite it. Synthesis-friendly writing patterns: FACTOR TEST TOOL Sitemap XML sitemap is current and submitted to Bing Webmaster Tools Bing Webmaster Tools PATTERN EXAMPLE WHY IT WORKS Definition-first “GEO is the practice of...” AI can extract as a standalone answer Claim + evidence “Email marketing ROI averages £36:£1 (DMA, 2025)” Citable with built-in source Comparison structure “Tool A costs £50/mo; Tool B costs £80/ mo but includes...” AI can synthesise comparisons from structured data Step-by-step “Step 1: Audit your robots.txt. Step 2: Check schema markup.” Clear sequence for how-to answers

7. Before & After: Real Optimisation Examples

Example 1: SaaS Product Page

Before (traditional marketing copy): Welcome to CloudSync, the revolutionary platform that's transforming how teams collaborate in the modern workplace. Our innovative solution leverages cutting-edge technology to deliver an unparalleled experience. With CloudSync, your team will achieve new heights of productivity.

After (GEO-optimised): CloudSync is a cloud-based team collaboration platform used by over 14,000 organisations across 80 countries. It combines real-time document editing, task management, and video conferencing in a single workspace. In a 2025 benchmark study by Forrester, teams using CloudSync reported a 34% reduction in context-switching and a 28% improvement in project delivery times compared to using separate tools.

Why it works: The optimised version contains a clear definition, specific numbers, a named research source, and factual claims an AI can confidently cite. The original is pure fluff; no AI would ever quote it.

GEO score comparison: FACTOR BEFORE AFTER Quotable definition [] Specific statistics [] (14,000 orgs, 80 countries, 34%, 28%) Named source [] (Forrester) Extractable as standalone []

Example 2: Blog Post Introduction

Before: In today's fast-paced digital landscape, email marketing remains one of the most powerful tools in a marketer's arsenal. But are you really making the most of it? In this comprehensive guide, we'll explore everything you need to know about email marketing in 2026.

After: Email marketing generates an average return of £36 for every £1 spent, making it the highest-ROI channel in digital marketing (DMA, 2025). This guide covers the five strategies that drove the best results in 2025-26: segmentation, behavioural triggers, interactive emails, AI-powered personalisation, and deliverability optimisation. Each section includes benchmarks, examples, and implementation steps.

Why it works: The optimised version opens with a cited statistic, previews specific content, and reads as an authoritative reference. An AI answering "What is the ROI of email marketing?" would cite this immediately.

Q: How long does shipping take? A: Shipping times vary depending on your location and the shipping method you choose. We offer several options to meet your needs. ■ After: Q: How long does shipping take? A: Standard UK delivery takes 3-5 working days. Express delivery arrives within 1-2 working days. International shipping to Europe takes 5-10 working days and worldwide 10-21 working days. All orders include tracking. Orders placed before 2:00 PM GMT on weekdays are despatched the same day. Why it works: Specificity. AI engines prioritise content that answers questions completely in a single passage. Vague answers are never cited.

Example 4: Professional Services "About" Page

■ Before: At Smith & Partners, we pride ourselves on delivering exceptional legal services. Our team of dedicated professionals is committed to achieving the best outcomes for our clients. With decades of combined experience, we bring a wealth of knowledge to every case. ■ After:

Smith & Partners is a commercial law firm based in Manchester, specialising in technology transactions, data protection (UK GDPR), and intellectual property licensing. Founded in 2008, the firm has 34 solicitors across three offices (Manchester, London, Edinburgh) and advises over 200 technology companies annually, from seed-stage startups to FTSE 250 enterprises. The firm was ranked in Legal 500 (2025) for Technology and Telecoms and holds a Chambers UK Band 2 ranking for IP in the North West. Why it works: The original says nothing an AI could cite. The revised version is packed with extractable facts: location, specialisms, founding year, team size, client volume, and named third-party rankings. When an AI is asked "Which law firms in Manchester specialise in technology law?", this version provides everything it needs to include Smith & Partners in the answer. GEO score comparison:

Example 5: E-commerce Product Description

■ Before: FACTOR BEFORE AFTER Location specified ■ ■ (Manchester, London, Edinburgh) Specialisms named ■ ■ (tech transactions, GDPR, IP) Verifiable credentials ■ ■ (Legal 500, Chambers UK) Quantified scale ■ ■ (34 solicitors, 200+ clients) Founded date ■ ■ (2008)

Our amazing noise-cancelling headphones deliver an incredible listening experience. With state-of-the-art technology and premium materials, these headphones are perfect for music lovers who demand the best. Available in three stylish colours. ■ After: The SonicPro NC-700 noise-cancelling headphones use hybrid active noise cancellation with four microphones

Rook's Digital Products

rook.digital · Made with care ■

Black, Arctic White, and Navy Blue. RRP: £249. Why it works: The original is undifferentiated marketing copy. The revised version is a specification sheet that AI engines can parse, compare, and cite. When a user asks "What are the best noise-cancelling headphones under £300?", the AI has concrete data to work with: specific dB reduction, battery life, weight, Bluetooth version, and price. These are the exact data points that AI engines extract for comparison answers. GEO score comparison: FACTOR BEFORE AFTER Product model name   (SonicPro NC-700) Technical specifications   (38dB, 32hrs, 254g, BT 5.3) Social proof   (4.6/5, 2,300 reviews) Price   (£249) Comparable data points   (every spec is comparable)

Example 6: B2B Case Study

 Before: "Working with DataPulse transformed our business. Their team was incredibly professional and the results speak for themselves. We couldn't be happier with the partnership." , Happy Client  After: Case Study: How Meridian Logistics Reduced Freight Costs by 19% with DataPulse Client: Meridian Logistics, a UK-based 3PL provider with £45M annual revenue and 120 employees. Challenge: Manual route planning was causing an estimated £780,000 in unnecessary fuel costs annually. Solution: DataPulse's AI-powered route optimisation platform, deployed across Meridian's fleet of 340 vehicles over a 12-week rollout. Results: 19% reduction in fuel costs (£148,000 annual saving), 23% improvement in delivery punctuality, and ROI achieved in 4.5 months. "DataPulse paid for itself before the end of Q2. The route optimisation alone saved us more than the entire annual licence fee," says James Whitfield, Operations Director at Meridian Logistics. Why it works: The original is a generic testimonial that no AI would cite. The revised version is a structured case study with named client, specific challenge, measurable results, and an attributed quote. When an AI is asked "What are the benefits of AI route optimisation for logistics companies?", this case study provides exactly the kind of evidence it needs.

8. The Content Audit Framework

This framework provides a systematic, step-by-step process for auditing your existing content for GEO readiness. Use it to evaluate and prioritise improvements across your entire site.

Step 1: Identify Your Priority Pages

Not every page needs GEO optimisation. Start with the pages that drive the most business value. Priority page selection criteria: Action: List your top 20 pages by business impact. These are your GEO audit candidates.

Step 2: Run the GEO Readiness Score

For each priority page, score it against the following criteria. Each item scores 0 (absent), 1 (partial), or 2 (fully present). GEO Readiness Scorecard:

CRITERION	HOW TO ASSESS	WEIGHT
Revenue impact	Pages that directly drive leads, sales, or conversions	★★★★★
Search volume	Pages targeting keywords with significant monthly search volume	★★★★★
Current ranking	Pages already ranking in top 20 (easier to optimise than starting from scratch)	★★★★☆
AI query relevance	Pages targeting topics that users commonly ask AI engines about	★★★★☆
Competitive gap	Topics where competitors are being cited but you are not	★★★★★



CRITERION 0 (ABSENT) 1 (PARTIAL) 2 (FULLY PRESENT) SCORE 1 Quotable opening paragraph No clear definition or direct answer Definition exists but lacks specificity Clean, extractable definition with key facts /2 2 Statistics and data points No statistics 1-2 stats without named sources 3+ stats with named, credible sources /2



CRITERION 0 (ABSENT) 1 (PARTIAL) 2 (FULLY PRESENT) SCORE 3 Expert quotes No expert quotes Generic testimonials Named experts with credentials and specific claims /2 4

schema (Article only) Comprehensive schema (FAQ, HowTo, Product, etc.) /2 8 Freshness signals No update date, content over 12 months old Updated within 12 months Updated within 90 days with visible date /2 9 External brand mentions Fewer than 3 external mentions for the target topic 3-10 external mentions 10+ external mentions across diverse sources /2 10 AI crawler access AI crawlers blocked in robots.txt Some crawlers allowed All major AI crawlers explicitly allowed /2 11 Self-contained sections Sections require context from other parts of the page Most sections standalone Every section extractable as a standalone answer /2

Scoring interpretation:

Step 3: Conduct the Technical Audit

For each priority page, check the following technical factors: Technical audit walkthrough:



CRITERION 0 (ABSENT) 1 (PARTIAL) 2 (FULLY PRESENT) SCORE 12 Conversational query match Content targets keywords only Some conversational headings Content structured around natural language questions /2 SCORE RATING ACTION 20-24 Excellent Minor tweaks only; focus on external authority building 15-19 Good Targeted improvements to specific weak areas 10-14 Needs Work Significant restructuring and content additions required 5-9 Poor Major overhaul required; consider rewriting from scratch 0-4 Not GEO-Ready Full rewrite needed with GEO principles from the ground up Check robots.txt (5 minutes) 1 Visit yourdomain.com/robots.txt 2 Search for: GPTBot, ClaudeBot, PerplexityBot, Google-Extended 3 If any are blocked (Disallow), update immediately 4 If not mentioned, they are allowed by default (good), but explicitly allowing them is better practice 5 Validate schema markup (10 minutes per page) 6 Use Google's Rich Results Test: search.google.com/test/rich-results 7 Paste your page URL 8

Step 4: Audit Content Quality

Walk through each priority page with these specific checks: Opening paragraph audit: Statistical density audit: Check for: valid FAQ, Article, HowTo, Product schema as appropriate 9 Note any errors or warnings for fixing 10 Test rendering (5 minutes per page) 11 Right-click > View Page Source (not Inspect Element) 12 Search for your key content in the raw HTML 13 If your main content is not visible in the source, it is JavaScript-rendered and potentially invisible to AI crawlers 14 Solution: implement server-side rendering or pre-

content, tables, and media display correctly on mobile 22 [] Does the first sentence define what the page is about? [] Could the opening paragraph be quoted as a standalone answer? [] Does it contain at least one specific fact or statistic? [] Does it name the brand and category clearly? [] Count the total number of statistics on the page [] For each statistic, is the source named? [] Are statistics from the current or previous year? [] Do statistics support the page's primary claims?

Structure audit: Expert content audit:

Step 5: Audit External Authority

For each priority topic (not page, but topic), assess your external brand presence: Brand mention audit process: External authority scorecard: [] Map the heading hierarchy (H1 > H2 > H3): are there gaps? [] Count tables: is there at least one per major section? [] Count lists: are features, steps, and options formatted as lists? [] Is there an FAQ section? [] Are there expert quotes with names and credentials? [] Does the page demonstrate first-hand experience? [] Is the author identified with a bio and credentials? Search for "your brand name" + "topic keyword" across: 1 Google (regular search) 2 Reddit (via Google: site:reddit.com "your brand" "topic") 3 YouTube (search for brand mentions in video titles and descriptions) 4 Major industry publications in your sector 5 Count the total number of unique external sources mentioning your brand in relation to the topic 6 Identify gaps: which platforms and publications mention competitors but not you? 7 SOURCE TYPE YOUR MENTIONS TOP COMPETITOR MENTIONS GAP Industry publications ? ? ? Reddit threads ? ? ?

Step 6: Prioritise and Plan

With scores complete, prioritise your pages using this matrix:

9. The GEO Audit Checklist

Use this checklist to audit any page on your site for GEO readiness. This is the condensed, reference version of the full Content Audit Framework in Section 8.

SOURCE TYPE YOUR MENTIONS TOP COMPETITOR MENTIONS GAP YouTube mentions ? ? ? Review platforms (G2, etc.) ? ? ? Wikipedia ? ? ? Podcast appearances ? ? ? Total ? ? ? PRIORITY CRITERIA ACTION TIMELINE

- P1: Quick Wins GEO Score 15-19, already ranking well, small gaps to fill
- Week 1-2: optimise these first
- P2: High Impact GEO Score 10-14, high business value, requires significant work
- Week 2-4: restructure and enhance
- P3: Rebuilds GEO Score under 10, high business value, needs complete overhaul
- Month 2: full rewrite
- P4: New Content Topic gaps where you have no content but competitors are being cited
- Month 2-3: create new GEO-ready content
- P5: Low Priority Low business value or low AI query relevance
- Backlog: address when higher priorities are complete

Content Quality

Content Structure

Technical Foundation

[] Opening paragraph contains a clear, quotable definition or answer [] Key claims are supported with statistics, percentages, or named data sources [] At least 3 statistics with named sources per 1,000 words [] Expert quotes with attributed names and credentials are included [] Content answers the query directly: no filler before the answer [] Each section is self-contained and extractable [] Content is written in British English consistently (not mixed) [] “Last updated” date is visible and accurate [] Content includes at least one original insight, data point, or framework not available elsewhere [] Proper heading hierarchy (H1 > H2 > H3, no skipped levels) [] Bulleted or numbered lists used for steps, features, and comparisons [] At least one data table per major page [] Key terms and definitions are bold or highlighted [] FAQ section included with question-format headings [] Table of contents included for pages over 1,500 words [] Content sections could be extracted independently and still make sense [] AI crawlers (GPTBot, ClaudeBot, PerplexityBot, Google-Extended) are allowed in robots.txt [] Page uses server-side

Authority and Distribution

Freshness

Rook's Digital Products

rook.digital · Made with care 

10. Implementation Roadmap: Your First 30 Days

This section provides a week-by-week action plan for implementing GEO across your organisation. Each week builds on the previous one.

Week 1: Foundation and Assessment

Goal: Understand your current AI visibility and establish your baseline.

- [] Mobile responsive
- [] XML sitemap is current and submitted to Bing Webmaster Tools
- [] No broken internal or external links
- [] Brand is mentioned on at least 10 external authoritative sources for the target topic
- [] Content is referenced or linked from industry publications
- [] Brand has presence on UGC platforms (Reddit, Quora, YouTube, G2)
- [] Google Business Profile is complete and optimised (for local/commercial queries)
- [] Wikipedia article exists or brand is mentioned in relevant Wikipedia articles
- [] Social proof (reviews, testimonials, case studies) is publicly accessible
- [] Brand appears in at least 3 different source trust tiers (see Section 3.4)
- [] Content has been updated within the last 90 days
- [] Statistics and data points reference the current or previous year
- [] No broken links or references to discontinued products/services
- [] Content refresh schedule is documented and followed
- [] "Last updated" date reflects the most recent substantive edit

Week 1 deliverables:

- AI visibility baseline data
- Robots.txt fixed (if needed)
- 20 pages scored for GEO readiness
- External authority audit for top 5 topics
- Prioritised action plan for Weeks 2-4

Week 2: Quick Wins and Technical Fixes

Goal: Implement the changes with the highest impact-to-effort ratio.

DAY	TASK	TIME
ESTIMATE	DELIVERABLE	
Mon	Set up AI visibility tracking: create a spreadsheet with 20-30 target prompts across all four engines	2-3 hours
Mon	Run each prompt across ChatGPT, Claude, Perplexity, and Google; record brand mentions, citations, and competitor presence	3-4 hours
Tue	Audit robots.txt for all AI crawlers; fix any blocks immediately	30 minutes
Tue	Identify your top 20 pages by business value (revenue impact, traffic)	

2-3 hours External authority scorecard Fri Compile findings into a GEO Action Plan document 1-2 hours Action plan with prioritised tasks

Week 2 deliverables: - 10 pages with GEO-optimised opening paragraphs - 30+ statistics added across priority pages - FAQ schema on 5 pages - 10 new data tables - Freshness signals on all priority pages

Week 3: Content Depth and Authority Building

Goal: Build the content depth and external authority that drive AI citations. DAY TASK TIME ESTIMATE DELIVERABLE Mon Rewrite opening paragraphs of your top 10 pages to lead with quotable definitions 3-4 hours 10 updated opening paragraphs Tue Add statistics with named sources to all 10 pages (minimum 3 per page) 3-4 hours 30+ statistics added Wed Implement FAQ schema on your top 5 pages; add FAQ sections where missing 3-4 hours FAQ schema live on 5 pages Thu Add at least one data table to each of your top 10 pages 2-3 hours 10 new data tables Thu Implement Article schema on all blog posts that lack it 2-3 hours Article schema deployed Fri Add visible "Last updated" dates to all priority pages; update any statistics older than 12 months 2-3 hours Freshness signals added DAY TASK TIME ESTIMATE DELIVERABLE Mon Identify 3 expert sources for quotes; reach out via LinkedIn, HARO, or your network 2-3 hours Expert outreach initiated Mon- Tue Write 2 new supporting articles for your highest- priority content cluster 6-8 hours 2 new cluster articles published

Week 3 deliverables: - Expert outreach in progress - 2 new cluster articles published - 5 guest post pitches sent - Reddit engagement started - Podcast outreach initiated - Customer review requests sent

Week 4: Measurement, Iteration, and Systemisation

Goal: Measure progress, iterate on what is working, and build sustainable systems. DAY TASK TIME ESTIMATE DELIVERABLE Wed Submit guest post pitches to 5 industry publications in your sector 2-3 hours 5 pitches sent Wed Create or update your Wikipedia presence (if brand is notable) or identify relevant Wikipedia articles to contribute to 2-3 hours Wikipedia strategy documented Thu Begin Reddit participation strategy: identify 3-5 relevant subreddits, contribute genuinely helpful answers that naturally mention your brand 2-3 hours Reddit engagement started Fri Reach out to 3 relevant podcasts for guest appearances 1-2 hours Podcast pitches sent Fri Encourage 10 existing customers to leave reviews on G2, Trustpilot, or relevant review platforms 1-2 hours Review request emails sent

Week 4 deliverables: - Week 4 visibility data (compared to baseline) - Progress report with measurable improvements - 5 additional pages optimised - Monthly content refresh calendar - Internal GEO guidelines - Month 2 plan

30-Day Milestone Targets

DAY TASK TIME ESTIMATE DELIVERABLE Tue Based on results, identify which optimisations had the most impact; double down on those 2-3 hours Updated strategy priorities Wed Optimise 5 more pages using the most effective tactics from Weeks 2-3 4-5 hours 5 additional pages optimised Thu Set up a monthly content refresh calendar for all priority pages 1-2 hours Content refresh calendar Thu Document your GEO process: create internal guidelines so any team member can optimise new content 2-3 hours Internal GEO guidelines document Fri Plan Month 2: identify next batch of pages, new content to create, and authority-building actions 2-3 hours Month 2 action plan METRIC WEEK 1 BASELINE (TYPICAL) WEEK 4 TARGET HOW TO MEASURE Pages GEO- optimised 0 15-20 Count of pages that score 15+ on GEO Readiness Scorecard AI citation rate 5-15% of target prompts 20-30% of target prompts Manual testing across all four engines

11. Measuring AI Visibility

You cannot improve what you cannot measure. Here is how to track your GEO performance systematically.

Manual Monitoring

The prompt test: Regularly ask each AI engine questions that your brand should appear in.
Track: Create a tracking spreadsheet: METRIC WEEK 1 BASELINE (TYPICAL) WEEK 4
TARGET HOW TO MEASURE External brand mentions (for top topic) Varies +10 new mentions Brand mention audit (Section 8, Step 5) Schema markup coverage Varies 100% of priority pages Rich Results Test Content freshness Varies 100% of priority pages updated within 30 days Visible "Last updated" dates Whether your brand is mentioned Whether your website is cited as a source What position your brand appears in (first mentioned? third?) What competitors are cited instead How the AI describes your brand (accurate? favourable? outdated?)

Prompt design best practices: PROMPT ENGINE BRAND MENTIONED? POSITION COMPETITORS CITED SENTIMENT DATE "Best CRM for agencies UK" ChatGPT Yes 2nd HubSpot, Pipedrive Positive 03/02/26 "Best CRM for agencies UK" Perplexity No N/A Salesforce, Zoho N/A 03/02/26 "Best CRM for agencies UK" Claude Yes 3rd HubSpot, Salesforce Neutral 03/02/26 "Best CRM for agencies UK" Google AIO Yes 1st HubSpot Positive 03/02/26 PROMPT TYPE PURPOSE EXAMPLE Category prompt Test if brand appears for the broad category "What are the best [category] tools?" Feature prompt Test for specific capability association "Which [category] tool is best for [feature]?" Comparison prompt Test head-to-head positioning "Compare [your brand] vs [competitor]" Recommendation prompt Test scenario-based citation "I need [specific use case]. What would you recommend?" Reputation prompt Test brand perception accuracy "Tell me about [your brand]" Local prompt Test geographic association "Best [category] in [location]"

Automated Tools

Several platforms now offer AI visibility tracking. Here is a comparison of the leading options:

Rook's Digital Products

Key Metrics to Track

TOOL WHAT IT TRACKS PRICE RANGE (MONTHLY) BEST FOR Semrush AI Visibility Toolkit
Brand mentions, sentiment, share of voice across AI engines £100-300 (part of Semrush subscription) Comprehensive tracking alongside traditional SEO Profound Brand presence in LLM responses across GPT, Claude, Gemini £150-500 Dedicated AI visibility monitoring
Scrunch AI AI citation patterns, competitor analysis, recommendation tracking £100-400 Competitor intelligence Otterly.AI Brand appearances in AI-generated answers with historical tracking £80-250 Affordable entry-level tracking Peec AI AI search results monitoring with alert system £50-200 Budget-friendly, alert-focused Manual tracking (spreadsheet) Whatever you choose to test Free (time cost only) Small businesses, early-stage GEO METRIC DEFINITION TARGET MEASUREMENT FREQUENCY AI Share of Voice % of relevant prompts where your brand is cited vs. competitors

30% Monthly Citation Frequency How often your domain appears as a cited source
Increasing month-on-month Monthly

Setting Up Your Measurement Dashboard

Recommended dashboard structure: METRIC DEFINITION TARGET MEASUREMENT FREQUENCY Brand Sentiment Whether AI descriptions of your brand are positive, neutral, or negative Positive Monthly Source Accuracy Whether AI engines present accurate information about your brand

95% Monthly Prompt Coverage % of target prompts where your brand appears at all
50% Monthly Position in Response Where your brand appears (1st, 2nd, 3rd mentioned)
Top 3 Monthly Cross-Engine Consistency Whether your brand appears consistently across all four engines All four Monthly SECTION METRICS DATA SOURCE Overview Overall AI citation rate, month-on-month trend, top engine performance Aggregated from all tracking Engine Breakdown Citation rate per engine (ChatGPT, Claude, Perplexity, Google AIO) Per-engine testing Competitor Comparison Your share of voice vs. top 3 competitors Competitive prompt testing Content Performance Which pages are being cited most frequently Source URL tracking Accuracy Tracker Any inaccurate AI descriptions of your brand Reputation prompts

12. GEO vs. SEO: Allies, Not Rivals

A common misconception is that GEO replaces SEO. It does not. They are deeply complementary, and the most effective strategy treats them as two aspects of the same programme.

What SEO Does for GEO

What GEO Adds Beyond SEO

SECTION METRICS DATA SOURCE Action Items Specific optimisation tasks based on measurement gaps Analysis of weak points Ranking in Google's top 10 is a prerequisite for being cited in AI Overviews: if you do not rank, you will not be cited Backlinks build the domain authority that AI engines use as a trust signal during source retrieval Keyword research identifies the queries that inform your GEO content strategy Technical SEO ensures crawlability for both traditional and AI crawlers Unlinked mention strategy: building brand presence where links do not matter Cross-platform optimisation: ensuring visibility in ChatGPT, Claude, and Perplexity, not just Google Synthesis-first writing: structuring content for extraction rather than just ranking AI crawler management: specifically managing access for GPTBot, ClaudeBot, and PerplexityBot Prompt-based strategy: optimising for conversational queries, not just keyword strings

SEO vs. GEO Comparison Matrix

The Unified Approach

The most effective strategy is to treat GEO as an extension of your existing SEO programme. Every SEO improvement you make, from better content to more backlinks to a stronger technical foundation, also improves your GEO performance. The GEO-specific additions (structured answers, statistical density, expert quotes, unlinked mentions, AI crawler access) layer on top. The integration model: DIMENSION TRADITIONAL SEO GEO OVERLAP Primary goal Rank in organic results Get cited in AI answers Both increase visibility Key

GEO more Technical Crawlability, Core Web Vitals, mobile AI crawler access, schema, SSR
Technical foundations serve both Freshness Important but not critical for all queries Critical,
especially for Perplexity and Google AIO Both benefit from regular updates Target keyword
Short-tail and long-tail keywords Conversational queries and prompts Long-tail SEO aligns
well with GEO Measurement Google Search Console, rank trackers AI prompt testing,
citation monitoring Some tools now cover both

Budget Allocation Guidance

For organisations wondering how to split resources between SEO and GEO:

13. What's Coming Next

GEO is in its infancy. Here is what we expect to see in the next 12-24 months, and how to prepare now.

Traditional SEO Foundation — Keyword research → Informs GEO prompt strategy — Content creation → Apply GEO pillars to all new content — Link building → Add unlinked mention strategy for GEO — Technical SEO → Extend to AI crawler management — Analytics → Add AI visibility monitoring — Content refresh → Align with GEO freshness requirements

ORGANISATION TYPE RECOMMENDED SEO : GEO SPLIT

REASONING Early-stage (weak SEO foundation) 80% SEO : 20% GEO Build the foundation first; SEO directly supports GEO

Established (strong SEO, weak AI visibility) 50% SEO : 50% GEO SEO maintenance plus aggressive GEO build-out

Mature (strong SEO, some AI visibility) 40% SEO : 60% GEO GEO is where the marginal gains are largest

Advanced (strong SEO and GEO) 30% SEO : 70% GEO SEO in maintenance mode; GEO is the growth frontier

13.1 AI Engine Advertising

Paid placements within AI-generated responses are coming. Perplexity has already begun testing sponsored results. Google will follow. Microsoft has hinted at ad formats within Copilot. What this means for you: Organic GEO (earning citations through content quality and authority) will become even more valuable as paid options emerge. Just as organic SEO became more valuable when Google Ads made the top of the SERP paid-for, organic AI citations will carry a premium of trust. How to prepare: Build your organic AI visibility now, before advertising makes the space more competitive and expensive.

13.2 Standardised AI Analytics

Just as Google Analytics became the standard for web traffic, tools for measuring AI citation performance will mature rapidly. Expect: How to prepare: Start measuring now, even with manual methods. The habit of tracking AI visibility will put you ahead when automated tools mature.

13.3 AI-Specific Content Formats

platforms Standardised metrics for AI share of voice Attribution models that connect AI citations to conversions Machine-readable “answer blocks” that AI engines can extract directly Standardised citation metadata (how your content should be attributed) AI-optimised sitemaps with content summaries

13.4 Personalised AI Results

As AI engines learn individual user preferences, brand visibility will become more nuanced. Your content may be shown to some users and hidden from others based on their history. How to prepare: Build broad authority across multiple topics and platforms. The more diverse your presence, the more user segments you will reach.

13.5 Voice and Multimodal Search

As AI assistants become the primary interface through smart speakers, in-car systems, and AR glasses, GEO will expand to optimise for voice synthesis and visual responses. Key difference for voice: Voice answers are even more binary than text. A smart speaker gives one answer, not a list. Being the single cited source becomes even more critical. How to prepare: Write content that sounds natural when read aloud. Test your key definitions by reading them out loud: if they sound stilted, rewrite them.

13.6 Regulatory Scrutiny

Governments are beginning to ask whether AI engines have an obligation to fairly represent all sources, not just the ones they prefer. The EU AI Act, UK Online Safety Act, and similar legislation may reshape how citations work. How to prepare: Focus on genuine quality and authority. Regulatory changes will likely penalise manipulation and reward authentic expertise, which is exactly what good GEO already emphasises.

13.7 Timeline of Expected Changes

DEVELOPMENT	EXPECTED TIMELINE	IMPACT LEVEL	PREPARATION	PRIORITY	AI
advertising (Perplexity, Google)	Already started, scaling in 2026	High	Build organic visibility now	Standardised AI analytics	H2 2026 - H1 2027
			Start manual tracking immediately		Medium

Final Thoughts The transition from traditional search to AI-powered discovery is not a distant

Rook's Digital Products

simple truth: AI engines don't rank pages. They cite sources. And to be cited, your content must be authoritative, structured, specific, evidence-based, and present across the web. GEO is not a replacement for good marketing. It is the evolution of it. The fundamentals, including genuine expertise, valuable content, and a trustworthy reputation, matter more than ever. GEO simply gives you the framework to ensure those fundamentals are visible to the machines that are increasingly deciding which brands get recommended and which get ignored. Your action plan starts now:

DEVELOPMENT	EXPECTED	TIMELINE	IMPACT LEVEL
PREPARATION	PRIORITY	AI-specific content formats	2027 Medium
first	Personalised AI results	2026-2027 (gradual)	High Build diverse authority
	Voice-first AI search	2026-2028	High for B2C Optimise for spoken delivery
	Regulatory frameworks	2027-2028	Uncertain Focus on genuine quality
	Run the baseline assessment (Week 1 of the Implementation Roadmap)	1	Fix the technical foundations (robots.txt, schema, crawlability)
	Optimise your top 10 pages using the 12 Pillars	2	Build external authority through mentions, reviews, and expert content
	Measure monthly and iterate	3	5

The first-mover advantage in GEO is real, and the window is open. Every week you wait, your competitors may be the ones getting cited instead.

14. Appendix: Resources, Tools, and Further Reading

Essential Reading

Recommended Tools

RESOURCE TYPE	WHAT YOU WILL LEARN	"GEO: Generative Engine Optimization" (Aggarwal et al., 2023)	Research paper	The foundational academic research behind GEO; published at KDD 2024	Google Search Central Blog	Official documentation
How Google AI Overviews	select and cite sources	Bing Webmaster Guidelines	Official documentation	How Bing (ChatGPT's search backbone) ranks content	Perplexity AI Blog	Official documentation
How Bing (ChatGPT's search backbone) ranks content	Perplexity indexes and cites the web	Schema.org Documentation	Technical standard	Full reference for structured data markup	TOOL	Documentation
Official documentation	How Perplexity indexes and cites the web	Schema.org Documentation	Technical standard	Full reference for structured data markup	TOOL	Documentation
PURPOSE	FREE/PAID	Google Search Console	Monitor organic rankings and indexing	Free		
Bing Webmaster Tools	Monitor Bing indexing (critical for ChatGPT)	Free	Rich Results Test	Test	Google PageSpeed Insights	Test page load performance
Test	Validate schema markup	Free	Rich Results Test	Test page load performance		
Free						

AI Crawler User Agents Reference

TOOL	PURPOSE	FREE/PAID	Schema	Markup Generator (Merkle)	Generate schema code
Free Semrush / Ahrefs	Comprehensive SEO and emerging GEO metrics	Paid	Screaming Frog Technical site audit	Paid	Screaming Frog
Free (limited) / Paid	CRAWLER USER AGENT STRING OWNER PURPOSE				
GPTBot	Training data and web browsing for ChatGPT	ChatGPT-User			
OpenAI	Live web browsing during ChatGPT conversations	ClaudeBot			
Anthropic	Training data and web access for Claude	PerplexityBot	PerplexityBot		
Real-time web indexing for Perplexity answers	Googlebot	Googlebot	Google		
Standard web crawling for Google Search and AI Overviews	Google-	Extended Google-			
Extended Google AI training data specifically for Gemini and AI features	Extended Google-				

```
User-agent: GPTBot  
Allow: /  
User-agent: ChatGPT-User  
Allow: /  
User-agent: ClaudeBot  
Allow: /  
User-agent: PerplexityBot  
Allow: /  
User-agent: Google-Extended  
Allow: /
```

Standard Googlebot (already allowed by default in most configs)

```
User-agent: Googlebot  
Allow: /
```

End of Playbook

The GEO Playbook v2.0 February 2026