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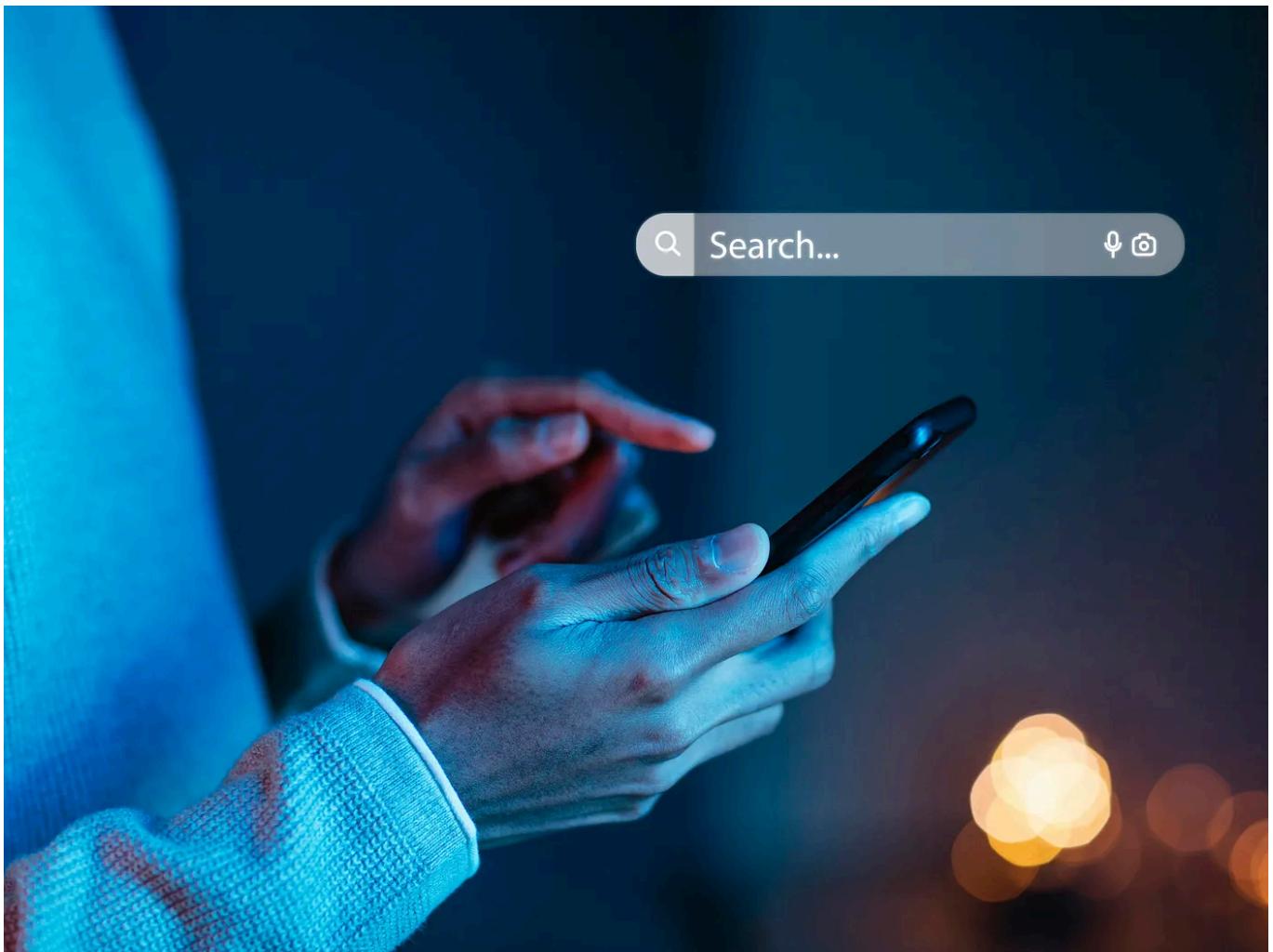


How is digital marketing related to the Answer Engine Optimization (AEO) and Generative Engine Optimization (GEO)



Angela Parra · 7 min read · Nov 21, 2025





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As a continuation of the previous article on how AI affects Digital Marketers, it would be beneficial to introduce new terms to our digital strategy: AEO and GEO. Nowadays, I have found numerous articles about the end of SEO and the beginning of an era of online searching through artificial intelligence. However, I disagree; at some point, SEO is not the end. It is similar to when Twitter became X and Musk acquired it, causing everyone to start moving to other platforms.

Obviously, Twitter's use started decreasing. However, that is not the case; politicians, presidents, and other key individuals still hold official posts there, so it is not the end. The same thing happens with SEO; it is not the

end, but we need to adapt to the new ways people search online and position our brands accordingly.

Let us start with definitions. It is somewhat challenging to understand the purpose and value of these terms, which is why defining them helps us navigate the new path of digital marketing.

Here are **three clear, citable definitions of Answer Engine Optimization (AEO)** taken from different sources:

This academic study examines how AI-powered search (ChatGPT, Bing Copilot, Perplexity) reduces traditional web traffic by generating *direct answers*. The authors argue that this structural shift in information retrieval has created a new optimisation discipline: AEO:

“Answer Engine Optimization refers to the process of structuring and optimizing content so that AI-powered answer engines can directly extract, generate, and deliver responses to user queries without requiring traditional search-engine clicks.”

(Sharma & Dhiman, 2025, p. 2)

This practitioner guide from SEO.com is one of the earliest industry-level documents formally defining AEO. It focuses on the shift from “ranking links” to “earning citations inside AI answers.”:

“Answer engine optimization (AEO) is the practice of improving a brand’s visibility in AI-powered answer engines — such as ChatGPT, Microsoft Copilot, and Perplexity — by earning mentions, citations, and placements within the engines’ generated responses.”

(Berry, 2025)

This analysis explains AEO as a response to “zero-click AI search,” describing how organizations must format and structure content so that AI models reliably use it as a trusted source:

“Answer Engine Optimization is the method of preparing and structuring information so that AI-driven search systems can easily understand, extract, and present it as authoritative answers in conversational search results.”

(Superset, 2024)

In other words, AEO is the one answer all of us see when we search for something on Google. The huge difference with SEO is that AEO provides us with real-time information, straightforwardly, without requiring any clicks, and we also do not have to search by keywords, as we did in SEO.

Let’s move to the other alien concept that just landed in digital marketers’ lives. Generative Engine Optimization (GEO). According to the paper GEO: Generative Engine Optimization, here is the definition:

“Generative Engine Optimization (GEO) is the process of optimizing content so that it is selected, used, or cited by generative AI systems — such as large language models — when producing answers, summaries, or recommendations.” (Liu et al., 2023, p. 1)

Regarding the paper: Generative Engine Optimization: How to Dominate AI Search, here is another definition:

“Generative Engine Optimization (GEO) is the new optimization paradigm required for AI-powered search engines — such as ChatGPT, Perplexity, Gemini, and Copilot — focused on developing methodologies and content structures that

improve visibility, ranking, and citation within generative AI answers, diverging significantly from traditional SEO.” (Chen, 2025)

In other words, the GEO appears in all the AI agents, such as GPT, Gemini, and Perplexity, among others. When you search for something on those agents, they scan rapidly through the entire web for the best definition for you, so the citations of those sources appear in your answer. The objective is to appear in those answers cited by those AI agents.

It's a little bit overwhelming, all those definitions. Here is a simple example that illustrates everything I've said above.

Example of Answer Engine Optimization

ChatGPT 5.1 ▾

↑ Compartir

what's the price of a big mac in the uk

The regular Big Mac at McDonald's UK is around £5.09 in many locations in the UK. [maccies-menu.c... +1](#)
However, prices can vary by region and restaurant. [mcdmenu.co.uk +1](#)

🔗 🤗 ⚡ ⏪ 🔍 ... McDonald's Fuentes

Example of Generative Engine Optimization

What does it mean for marketers?

As digital marketing enters the era of AI-powered search, it is increasingly clear that both Generative Engine Optimization (GEO) and Answer Engine Optimization (AEO) will become lasting components of strategic practice. Their rise does not signal the end of SEO; rather, it marks a transition in which traditional SEO remains essential while new optimization models gain prominence. **Marketers must preserve the foundational principles of SEO — relevance, structure, authority, and content quality — while adapting them to the behaviors and expectations of generative search systems such as ChatGPT, Perplexity, Gemini, and Copilot.** To achieve visibility in these environments, brands must ensure their content is sufficiently authoritative, interpretable, and trustworthy to be selected as a source in AI-generated responses. This demands a renewed emphasis on authenticity, human expertise, and high-quality information. **Paradoxically, succeeding in an increasingly synthetic, AI-driven search landscape requires content that is more human, more credible, and more grounded in real experience than ever before.** Only by aligning traditional SEO principles with the emerging logic of generative engines can organizations secure their place in both conventional search results and AI-curated answers.

Best Practices for AEO & GEO

1. Structure content for machine readability.

Use clear headings, Q&A formats, and semantic structure. Generative engines surface content that is easy to parse and understand.

Supported by: Sharma & Dhiman (2025); Reyes-Lillo et al. (2025).

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2. Include evidence, citations, and explicit facts.

AI models prefer content that contains statistics, quotations, and clearly sourced information.

Supported by: Aggarwal et al. (2024); Reyes-Lillo et al. (2025).

3. Prioritize earned authority over owned content.

Generative search engines heavily favor third-party authoritative sources over brand-owned material.

Supported by: Chen et al. (2025).

4. Write for conversational and entity-based search.

Focus on natural questions, long-form intent, and clear entity descriptions (who/what/where).

Supported by: Sharma & Dhiman (2025); Aggarwal et al. (2024).

5. Optimize for scannability and justification.

Use brief summaries, explicit conclusions, and clearly stated reasoning — AI engines require justification to cite sources.

Supported by: Chen et al. (2025).

6. Embrace multilingual and engine-specific strategies.

AI engines differ in stability, domain preference, and sensitivity to phrasing, requiring tailored content across languages and platforms.

Supported by: Chen et al. (2025); Reyes-Lillo et al. (2025).

7. Track citations, not only clicks.

New metrics, such as the “reference rate,” reflect how often generative engines cite or integrate your content.

Supported by: Reyes-Lillo et al. (2025).

8. Maintain human authenticity.

Over-optimizing for AI can reduce human value; focus on real expertise, credibility, and grounded information.

Supported by: Reyes-Lillo et al. (2025).

Conclusion

Based on everything explored in this article, the main conclusion is straightforward: we must adapt our digital strategies to the new terms and the new ways people search online. The shift brought by AI-powered search, answer engines, and generative engines is not temporary — it is structural. And because of that, accuracy, authenticity, and credibility in content creation have become more important than ever. Paradoxically, the only way to remain present in the synthetic, artificial world of the AI era is by producing content grounded in real people, real experiences, and real references. That is the essential takeaway of this discussion.

It is not too late to begin this transition, but the time to act is now. If we want to appear within the emerging bubble of AI agents — this new ecosystem where recommendations, citations, and answers are mediated by generative systems — we must intentionally design our presence for it. The goal is clear: we want our organizations, brands, and content to be part of the new inventory of information that AI uses to respond to users. And naturally, this raises an equally important question: how will we measure success in this environment?

Traditional metrics, such as clicks and conversions, as well as the familiar pathways of inbound marketing, may no longer accurately reflect how users discover or engage with brands. This creates an opportunity — and a need — to rethink the ways we define performance. In fact, the changing role of content and the mediation of search may signal that **inbound marketing**, at least in its classic form, is reaching an end. We must redefine what conversion means and reimagine how we attract new customers when generative engines compress the user journey and filter the pathways between brands and their audiences.

All of this opens space for future reflection. In the next article, we can explore how inbound marketing will evolve — or be reshaped entirely — to remain relevant in an era dominated by AI-driven discovery and generative search.

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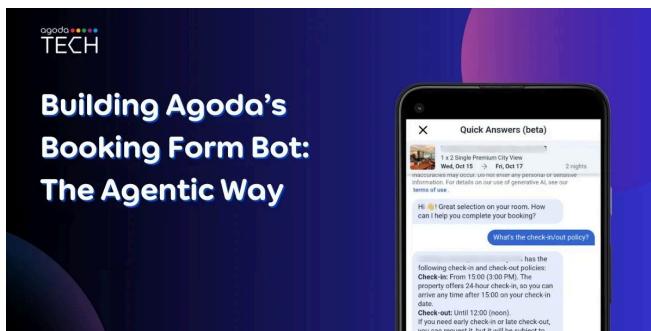
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