

Generative Engine Optimization

A Complete System for AI Search Visibility

Version 1.0 | February 2026
White-Label Reference Document

2B+

AI Overview Users/Mo

800M

ChatGPT Searches/Wk

2-7

Domains Cited/Query

47%

Brands Without GEO

1. The Paradigm Shift

Search is no longer about ranking in a list of links. It is about being **cited as part of the answer itself**. AI-powered search engines now serve over 2 billion users monthly, and they cite only 2-7 domains per response. The question is no longer "Are we on page one?" but "Are we in the answer?"

Traditional SEO optimized for search engine rankings. Generative Engine Optimization (GEO) optimizes for AI citation and recommendation. The two disciplines overlap but have distinct requirements. Sites that score high on GEO metrics see **30-115% more visibility** in AI-generated responses.

New Primary Metric: Share of Model (SoM) — How often your brand appears in AI-generated responses versus competitors. This replaces traditional "share of voice" in the AI search era.

Evidence: What Drives AI Citations

Signal	Impact	Source
Fact-to-word ratio > 1:80	4.2x more likely cited by ChatGPT	Incremys
Statistics in content	30-40% higher AI visibility	Profound
Semantic completeness > 8.5/10	4.2x more cited in AI Overviews	Wellows
Clean H1>H2>H3 hierarchy	2.8x more likely to be cited	Incremys
Strong E-E-A-T at rank #6-10	2.3x more cited than weak #1	Wellows
Topic clusters + interlinking	30% higher citation rates	Wellows
Domain Authority correlation	r=0.18 (collapsed)	Wellows

Key insight: Traditional domain authority has collapsed to just r=0.18 correlation with AI citations. Entity authority, E-E-A-T signals, and content structure now determine whether AI systems cite your content.

2. The Six GEO Dimensions

Our GEO scoring system evaluates websites across six weighted dimensions, producing a composite score from 0-100:

Dimension	Weight	What It Measures
AI Citability	25%	How quotable and extractable content is for AI systems
Brand Authority	20%	Third-party mentions, entity recognition, review signals
Content E-E-A-T	20%	Experience, Expertise, Authoritativeness, Trustworthiness
Technical GEO	15%	AI crawler access, rendering, speed, llms.txt
Schema & Structured Data	10%	JSON-LD markup quality and completeness
Platform Optimization	10%	Presence on platforms AI models cite from

Score	Rating	Interpretation
90-100	Excellent	Top-tier GEO; highly likely to be cited by AI
75-89	Good	Strong foundation with room for improvement
60-74	Fair	Moderate presence; significant opportunities exist
40-59	Poor	Weak signals; AI systems struggle to cite
0-39	Critical	Largely invisible to AI search systems

3. The AI Search Platform Landscape

Each AI platform has distinct citation behaviors. Understanding these differences is critical to effective GEO strategy:

Platform	Sources/Query	Top Cited Domain	Key Behavior
ChatGPT	~8	Wikipedia (7.8%)	Encyclopedic, factual, authoritative
Perplexity	~22	Reddit (6.6%)	Community-driven, recency-focused
Google AI Overviews	Varies	Balanced mix	Existing rank + E-E-A-T
Gemini	Varies	Google ecosystem	YouTube integration, structured data
Bing Copilot	Varies	Bing index	IndexNow responsive, commercial intent

Cross-platform reality: .com domains account for 80.41% of all AI citations. Only 44% of citations come from owned websites; 48% come from community platforms (Reddit, YouTube, forums). Your off-site presence matters as much as your website.

4. The Four-Phase GEO Framework

Our system follows a continuous four-phase cycle derived from search intelligence best practices:

1. ASSESS

Baseline citation audit across all AI platforms. Technical crawlability analysis. Brand perception mapping. Competitive gap identification. Produces a composite GEO score with category breakdowns.

2. OPTIMIZE

Content restructuring for AI citability. Entity authority building. Technical foundation improvements (schema, crawlers, llms.txt). Cross-platform presence expansion.

3. MEASURE

Citation frequency tracking. Share of Model monitoring. Citation sentiment analysis. AI-referred traffic attribution via GA4. Platform-specific visibility scoring.

4. ITERATE

Identify high-performing content for expansion. Repurpose across formats (blog, video, social). Build cross-functional workflows. Refresh cadence optimization.

Foundation work (schema, content restructuring) takes 4-8 weeks. Authority building takes 3-6 months. Measurable citation improvements appear within 90 days of systematic optimization.

5. Why Now

The window of opportunity is closing. Currently **47% of brands** lack any deliberate GEO strategy. Early movers establish entity authority that compounds over time, making it progressively harder for competitors to catch up.

- **AI referral traffic to SMBs grew +123%** in recent months (HubSpot)
- **59% of ChatGPT searches** involve local intent
- **31% of Gen Z** use AI platforms as their primary search tool
- Mid-market brands invest **\$75k-\$150k/year** on GEO optimization
- Enterprise brands invest **\$250k+** annually

The shift from link equity to citation authority is not a trend; it is a structural change in how information is discovered and consumed. Organizations that adapt now will define the competitive landscape for the next decade.