

Q2 2026 REPORT

Same Query, Different Winners

Why Your Brand Is At Risk in AI Search

2

RESULT TYPES ANALYZED

700+

RESPONSES EVALUATED

8K+

CITATIONS ANALYZED

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

AI Search Has No Respect for the Status Quo

For years, earning organic rankings meant earning visibility. Google's shift toward AI-driven answers is changing that equation. Our analysis of thousands of AI Overview citations run against the same organic queries reveals the two channels are **surfacing different brands, publishers, and sources for the same queries.**

THE KEY QUESTION

If you've earned prominent organic rankings, do those rankings continue when users get AI answers? **Or has AI reshuffled the deck entirely?**

Our analysis indicates that AI has reshuffled the deck. The sources it cites, the brands it features, and the platforms it favors are often different from what organic returns for the same search. Brands that depend on organic search for visibility need to rethink how they approach visibility in an AI-first search era. The findings and action plan in this report show where to start.

KEY STAT

42%

of brands in organic don't appear in AI Overviews for the same query

KEY FINDINGS FROM THIS REPORT

FINDING 01

The brands cited in AI Overviews and the brands ranked in organic are **largely different sets** for the same queries.

FINDING 02

About half of all AI citations per query come from **sources not present** in that query's organic results.

FINDING 03

AI often routes evaluation queries to publishers, how-to queries to YouTube, and **category searches directly to brands.**

FINDING 04

YouTube has replaced Reddit as the dominant social network citation source in AI Overviews.

About this study: We analyzed 8,000+ citations across 700+ search result pages between May 22 - June 1, 2026 in our visibility platform LQ Vision™ to compare the websites cited in Google AI Overviews and Google Organic results for the same queries. Then we ranked each result by its share of total citations for each query to understand which are most prevalent. This report is focused on Citations (Sources), as opposed to Mentions in the AI response.

FINDING 01

The Brands Winning in Organic Often Are Not the Brands Winning in AI

Brands that rank well in organic often don't appear in AI Overviews at all, creating real business risk for market leaders.

For the same queries, our data shows that 4 out of 10 brand domains that appear in organic results don't show up in AI Overviews at all. For brands that have built their growth on organic visibility, that represents meaningful traffic at risk as more searches return AI-driven answers. On the flip side, 3 out of 10 brands cited in AI Overviews have little to no visibility in organic results, representing a huge opportunity for challengers who haven't been able to break through in traditional search.

Brand Citations in Search Responses

To what extent are different brands cited in Organic Search versus AI Overviews for the same query?

Brands cited in organic, not in AI

42%

Brands cited in AI, not in organic

28%

TAKEAWAY

Whether you're a market leader or a challenger, AI search is more than just an extension of organic. It favors different brands, runs on different logic, and has opened the door to a reshuffled competitive landscape.

EXAMPLE QUERY "how to start investing"

Different Brands are Visible

Q ORGANIC

#	DOMAIN	TYPE
1	fidelity.com	Brand
2	investor.gov	Other
3	schwab.com	Brand
4	vanguard.com ●	Brand
5	usbank.com	Brand
6	americancentury.com	Brand
7	reddit.com	Social
8	reddit.com	Social
9	wealthsimple.com	Brand
10	ers.texas.gov	Other

+ AI OVERVIEWS

#	DOMAIN	TYPE
1	reddit.com	Social
2	empower.com	Brand
3	vanguard.com ●	Brand
4	youtube.com	Social
5	voya.com	Other
6	youtube.com	Social
7	fultonbank.com	Brand
8	robinhood.com	Brand
9	ssga.com	Other
10	jobajlearnings.com	Other

While Fidelity, Schwab, and US Bank enjoy strong citation share in organic search, none of them appear in the top 10 domains with the highest citation share in AI Overviews for this query. Meanwhile, Robinhood doesn't rank in organic but earns an AI citation, giving a challenger brand a new level of visibility.

FINDING 02

About Half of All AI Citations Don't Appear in Organic

The two channels seem to draw from substantially different source pools.

Zooming out from brands specifically, the pattern holds across all types of sources. For the same query, about 46% of AI Overview citations don't appear in that query's organic results at all. This covers brands, publishers, and social networks alike. The two channels appear to draw on different sources for the same searches.

Citations in Search Responses

To what extent do Organic results and AI Overviews cite different domains for the same query?

AI citations not in organic results

46%

Organic citations not in AI Overviews

54%

MOST DIVERGENT

Broad consumer queries show the greatest separation.

MOST ALIGNED

Technical category queries converge on the same established authorities.

TAKEAWAY

Organic rank and AI source citation are largely separate games. It's often different brands, different publishers, and different social networks showing up on each side.

EXAMPLE QUERY "hipaa compliant phone service"

Zero Shared Domains

Q ORGANIC

#	DOMAIN	TYPE
1	reddit.com	Social
2	phone.com	Brand
3	dialpad.com	Brand
4	hipaajournal.com	Other
5	ringrx.com	Brand
6	ringrx.com	Brand
7	emitrr.com	Publisher
8	t-mobile.com	Brand
9	doctorconnect.net	Brand
10	doctorconnect.net	Brand

+ AI OVERVIEWS

#	DOMAIN	TYPE
1	vivo.tech	Other
2	iplum.com	Brand
3	ringcentral.com	Brand
4	accountablehq.com	Brand
5	youtube.com	Social
6	accountablehq.com	Brand
7	youtube.com	Social
8	fax.plus	Other
9	accountablehq.com	Brand
10	accountablehq.com	Brand

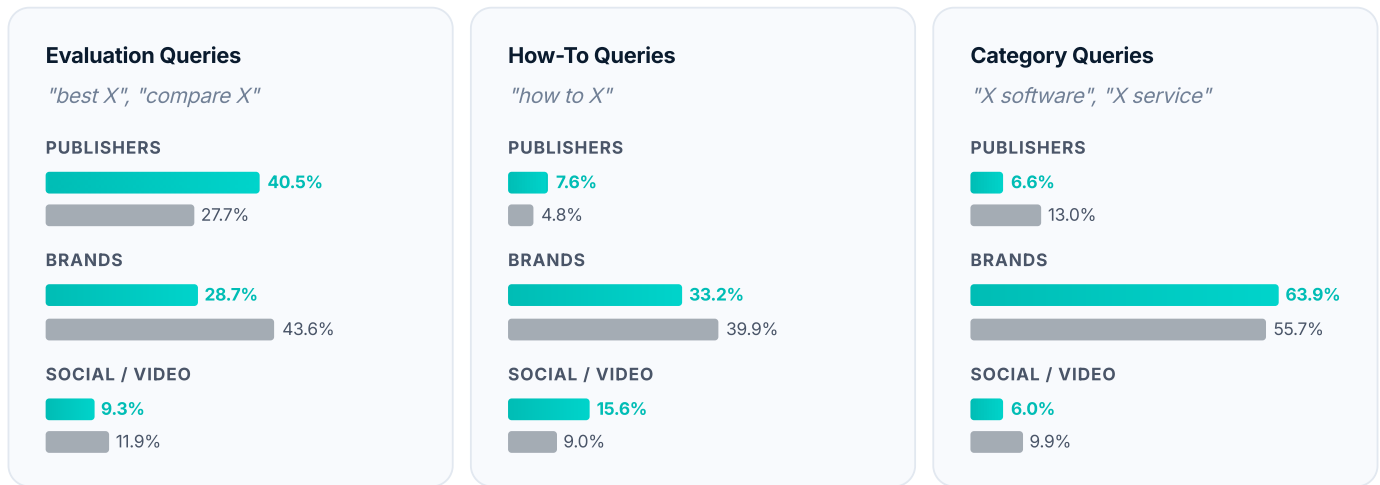
A small healthcare SaaS, accountablehq.com, provides 4 of the 10 highest sources by citation share, a level of influence most brands would envy. At the same time, established players like Dialpad that rank well in organic face real headwinds.

FINDING 03

What You're Asking Determines What AI Cites

The type of query acts as a routing signal, sending AI to different source types than organic uses for the same searches.

Not all queries play out the same way. When we grouped queries by intent, a clear routing logic emerged: evaluation queries, how-to queries, and category searches each produce different citation patterns in AI. Brands that understand this will invest in the type of content AI favors for each query type they compete on.



■ AI Overviews ■ Organic

Evaluation: Review sites and comparison guides get more AI share than the brands directly.

How-To: For instructional queries, AI routes users to video content at a substantially higher rate than organic does.

Category: AI skips comparison publishers and cites brands more directly.

TAKEAWAY
 Since the sources that AI favors depend on the query type, there is no single AI content strategy. Understanding your brand's query mix determines where to focus your AI visibility investment.

FINDING 04

AI Has Replaced Reddit with YouTube

For the same queries, YouTube leads AI search citations and Reddit leads organic.

Our data suggests total social media citation share is roughly the same between AI and organic. But the two channels have landed on completely different platforms. YouTube appears 4.3x more in AI Overview citations than in organic; Reddit appears 3.9x more in organic than in AI. The two channels simply favor opposite social platforms for the same searches.

Citation Appearances Per Platform

To what extent does each social platform appear in the top 10 share of citations?

YOUTUBE 4.3x more in AI

REDDIT 3.9x more in Organic

AI Overviews

43 appearances

AI Overviews

13

Organic

10

Organic

51 appearances

TAKEAWAY

For brands building a content strategy with AI visibility in mind, this data points clearly toward YouTube as the platform that earns AI citation share.

EXAMPLE QUERY "how to manage money better"

Social Network Swap

Q ORGANIC			+ AI OVERVIEWS		
#	DOMAIN	TYPE	#	DOMAIN	TYPE
1	finra.org	Other	1	moneyhelper.org.uk	Other
2	moneyhelper.org.uk	Other	2	youtube.com	Social
3	usbank.com	Brand	3	wpcu.coop	Other
4	bettermoneyhabits.bankofamerica.com	Brand	4	youtube.com	Social
5	localbank.com	Other	5	youtube.com	Social
6	greatbasin.org	Other	6	fultonbank.com	Brand
7	reddit.com	Social	7	investor.vanguard.com	Brand
8	guardianlife.com	Other	8	westernsouthern.com	Brand
9	reddit.com	Social	9	nerdwallet.com	Publisher
10	fultonbank.com	Brand	10	finra.org	Other

YouTube appears three times in the top 10 AI sources by citation share, and it doesn't appear in the organic top 10 by share. Reddit holds two organic positions and zero AI positions in the top 10 by citation share. Same query, same intent, different social platforms.

— FROM INSIGHT TO ACTION

Search Has Changed. Your Strategy Should Too.

The shift from organic-first search to AI-driven results is changing which brands get found. For market leaders, acting now means protecting the visibility you've worked to build. For challenger brands, it represents one of the best opportunities in years to gain ground on established competitors.

01 Benchmark Your Citation Visibility

Understanding where your brand stands in AI Overviews is the first step. Map which queries surface your brand, how much citation share you hold, and how that compares to competitors. AI citation share and organic rankings often tell very different stories.

Use a search monitoring platform like **LQ Vision™** to track AI citation share, benchmark competitors, and surface where your visibility diverges most from organic.

02 Build a YouTube Content Strategy for Your Key Queries

AI cites YouTube 4.3x more than organic does. A YouTube content investment delivers AI citation share in ways that written content alone cannot replicate. Identify the how-to and educational queries that matter most to your category and create a video strategy that positions your brand as a trusted authority.

03 Secure Placements on the Publishers Cited by AI

Across many query types, AI search relies heavily on established third-party publishers — review sites, comparison platforms, and editorial guides that it consistently cites as authoritative sources. Securing placements on these publishers is one of the most direct levers for improving AI visibility.

This is the foundation of LQ's **Influenceable Publisher strategy**, detailed in our companion report *Affiliate Opportunities in AI Search*.

04 Invest in AEO as a Core Discipline

Closing the AI visibility gap is not just about better SEO. In addition to practicing core SEO practices, which are still important, Answer Engine Optimization (AEO) requires its own strategy: the content formats AI cites, the signals it weighs, and the sources it trusts are all different from what organic rewards. That means expert-attributed content, authoritative long-form writing, video, and third-party placements.

POWERED BY LQ VISION™

The Intelligence Behind the Insight

The data behind this report is powered by LQ Vision™, our proprietary search intelligence platform that reveals where your brand stands across all major AI and search surfaces.

THE UNFAIR ADVANTAGE

LQ Vision™ shows you exactly where your brand stands in AI search, and what it takes to own your space.

Track citation share across every answer engine, identify competitor gaps, and surface the publishers driving visibility in your category.



AI Citation Tracking

How often your brand is cited in AI Search over time



Competitor Intelligence

Which competitors are gaining AI authority



Gap Analysis

Your specific visibility gaps across AI search



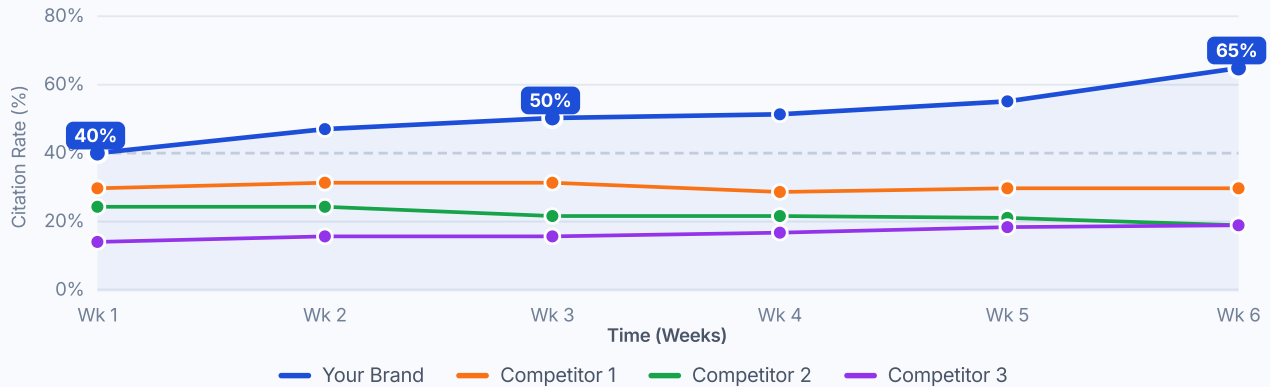
Opportunity Map

Prioritized publishers and content types to target

Example Insight: Brand Citation Rate

Engine: **Google AI Overviews**

How often your brand is cited in AI responses vs. competitors



YOUR NEXT STEP

Find Out Where Your Brand Stands in AI Search — Free.

The AI Search Scorecard gives you a fast, free snapshot of your brand's current visibility in AI Search, and a clear roadmap for what to do about it.

STEP 1

LQ Scorecard

Your AI visibility snapshot. Free, fast, and insightful.

STEP 2

LQ Vision™

Ongoing intelligence on how AI is reshaping your brand visibility.

STEP 3

LQ Partnership

Acquire profitable customers with our proven playbook and talented team.

YOUR SCORECARD REVEALS:

- ✓ Are you present for key searches?
- ✓ How do you compare to direct competitors?
- ✓ Which sources define your brand to AI?

WHAT IT COSTS:

\$0

Free. No commitment.
No technical setup required.

[Get My Free AI Search Scorecard →](#)[Book a Strategy Call with LQ](#)lqdigital.com/scorecardsales@lqdigital.com