

AI CITATIONS SERIES · NO. 2

In every room, never on the podium.

We logged every source Perplexity cited across 39 real buyer questions — all 328 of them. Reddit turned up in 87% of answers, more than twice as often as anything else. It was the top-cited source for exactly none of them.

39 buyer questions · 328 citations · 233 domains · July 2026 · US / English · **Perplexity only** — see scope note

Data update — July 16, 2026. We re-ran all 39 questions through the identical pipeline 15 days after collection. **Reddit's presence fell from 87% of answers to 18%** — the largest single change we have measured — and the top-cited source changed on 31 of 39 questions, while this report's structural findings (no podium; the long tail) held. This page reports the July 1 snapshot, as labeled; the follow-up drift report covers what changed.

87% of answers cited Reddit most of any source	0 questions where Reddit was the top source out of 39
34 different domains took the top slot across 39 questions	86% of cited domains appeared exactly once 200 of 233

Scope, before anything else. Every number in this report is **Perplexity, n=39**. ChatGPT and Gemini don't expose their citation URLs at all, so there is no source-level data to analyse for them — not by us, not by anyone. We'd rather publish a narrow true thing than a broad guess.

FINDING 01

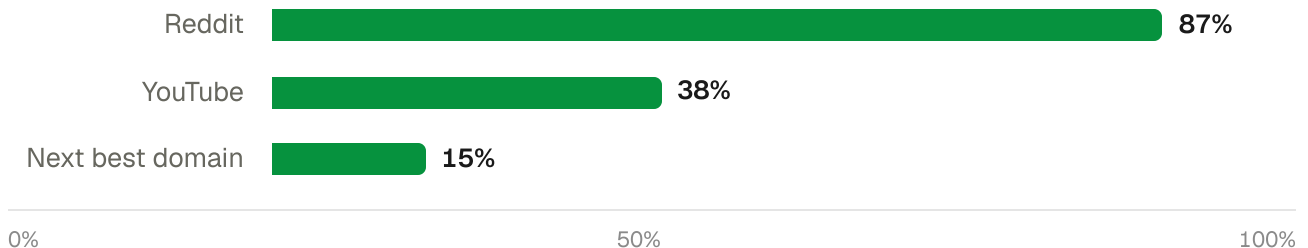
Reddit is the most inevitable source on the internet

Reddit was cited in **34 of 39 answers (87%)**. YouTube, in second, managed 15 of 39 (38%). Third place — a single agency site — appeared in 6 of 39, and it falls off a cliff from there.

Nothing else in the data has reach like that. Ask Perplexity a commercial question and a Reddit thread is almost certainly part of the answer. It holds across categories too: ecommerce 92%, B2B SaaS 92%, agencies 77%.

Share of answers citing each source

% of the 39 questions where the source appeared at all · Perplexity only



FINDING 02 · THE ONE NOBODY EXPECTS

But Reddit never actually wins

0 / 39

Across all 39 questions, the top-cited page was a Reddit thread **zero times**.

Reddit is cited once per answer, in 87% of answers — **34 of 328 citations, just 10.4% of the total**. It is never the source the engine leans on hardest. It's the source the engine checks itself against.

Reddit isn't the loudest source. It's the most inevitable one.

Implication: the standard advice — "go win Reddit" — misreads what Reddit is doing here. It isn't the destination the engine sends you to. It's the sanity check the engine runs before committing to a name. You don't rank on Reddit. You get *mentioned* there, and the engine treats that as corroboration for a recommendation it sources elsewhere.

FINDING 03

There is no podium, only a scramble

Across 39 questions, **34 distinct domains** held the top-cited slot. YouTube took it three times; two domains took it twice; every other winner won exactly once.

Concentration is weak deeper in the data too. The top three domains in each category account for only about a fifth of that category's citations.

Top-3 domain concentration, by category

share of all citations held by that category's three biggest domains

Ecommerce / DTC  21%

Web-design agencies  18%

B2B SaaS  18%

0%

50%

100%

There is no incumbent to displace. No five-site cartel. The engine reaches for a different source almost every single time.

FINDING 04 · THE OPPORTUNITY, AS A NUMBER

The tail is the market

200 of the 233 domains in this study (86%) were cited exactly once. Reddit and YouTube together — the two most dominant sources in AI citation by a wide margin — account for **15% of all citations.** Everything else, 85% of the pool, is the tail.

The median winner won once. The cost of entry is one page.

That's the whole opportunity stated plainly. The citation graph is not a fortress with a queue outside. It's a wide-open field. **Stop trying to beat the top of the list. There isn't one. Be in the pool.**

WHAT TO DO ABOUT IT

Four things this data actually supports

01

Earn Reddit mentions, don't chase Reddit rankings

It's corroboration, not traffic. Be the brand people already name in the thread.

02

Stop benchmarking against a category leader

In this data there isn't one. The top three hold about a fifth, and 86% of domains appear once.

03

Publish for the tail

One citable page per question you want to win beats one flagship page for the category. Breadth is what the data supports.

Measure per engine

All of this is Perplexity. Nobody can tell you what wins on ChatGPT or Gemini. Be suspicious of anyone who says they can.

THE DATA

Every number, in one place

METRIC	SCOPE	VALUE
Total citations logged	Perplexity, 39 questions	328
Distinct domains cited	Perplexity, 39 questions	233
Mean citations per answer	Perplexity, 39 questions	8.4
Answers citing Reddit	Perplexity, 39 questions	34 / 39 = 87%
Reddit's share of all citations	Perplexity, 39 questions	10.4%
Questions where Reddit was top-cited	Perplexity, 39 questions	0 / 39
Answers citing YouTube	Perplexity, 39 questions	15 / 39 = 38%
YouTube's share of all citations	Perplexity, 39 questions	4.6%
Reddit + YouTube share of citations	Perplexity, 39 questions	15%
Domains cited exactly once	Perplexity, 39 questions	200 / 233 = 86%
Distinct top-cited domains	Perplexity, 39 questions	34
Top-3 domain share — ecommerce	Perplexity, 13 questions	21%
Top-3 domain share — agencies	Perplexity, 13 questions	18%

METRIC	SCOPE	VALUE
Top-3 domain share — SaaS	Perplexity, 13 questions	18%

Limits, plainly. One engine — Perplexity, because it's the only one that shows its sources. **n=39 questions, 13 per category**, so category figures are directional. **Domain-level, not thread-level** — we logged `reddit.com`, not which subreddit, so we can't tell you which communities do the work. That's the obvious next study and it's running. **One snapshot, July 2026** — engines change retrieval constantly; we're re-running these questions monthly to measure the drift. The full dataset ships with this report, and `verify-numbers.py` recomputes every figure above straight from it.

QUESTIONS THIS REPORT ANSWERS

Quick answers, straight from the data

How often does Perplexity cite Reddit?

In 34 of 39 answers (87%) in the July 1, 2026 snapshot — more than any other source, across every category we tested.

Is Reddit the top-cited source in AI answers?

No. Reddit was the top-cited page on 0 of 39 questions, and it accounts for just 10.4% of the 328 citations logged.

How concentrated are AI citations?

Barely concentrated at all: 86% of the 233 cited domains appeared exactly once, and each category's top three domains hold only about a fifth of its citations.

Does AI recommend you?

Same method, pointed at your domain. We'll ask the engines your buyers' questions and show you who they name instead of you.

[Run the free audit →](#)

The 2026 AI Citations series · No. 2

By HarperFlow · July 15, 2026 · every figure recomputes from the released dataset

[Download the dataset](#)

[All six reports →](#)