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Generative Engine Optimization in 2026

Why SEO Isn't Enough to Increase Brand Visibility on Generative AI Engines

[Report](#) by **Nate Elliott** | Nov 4, 2025

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AI offers brands an attractive and trusting audience

SEO tactics don't guarantee visibility in AI

To succeed, optimize for and measure GEO differently than SEO

Adapting to AI discovery may prove simpler for B2B brands

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About This Report

Generative AI is transforming how consumers discover products and brands earn visibility. As usage of—and trust in—AI grows, brands must rethink how they optimize for discovery and measure success.

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Executive Summary

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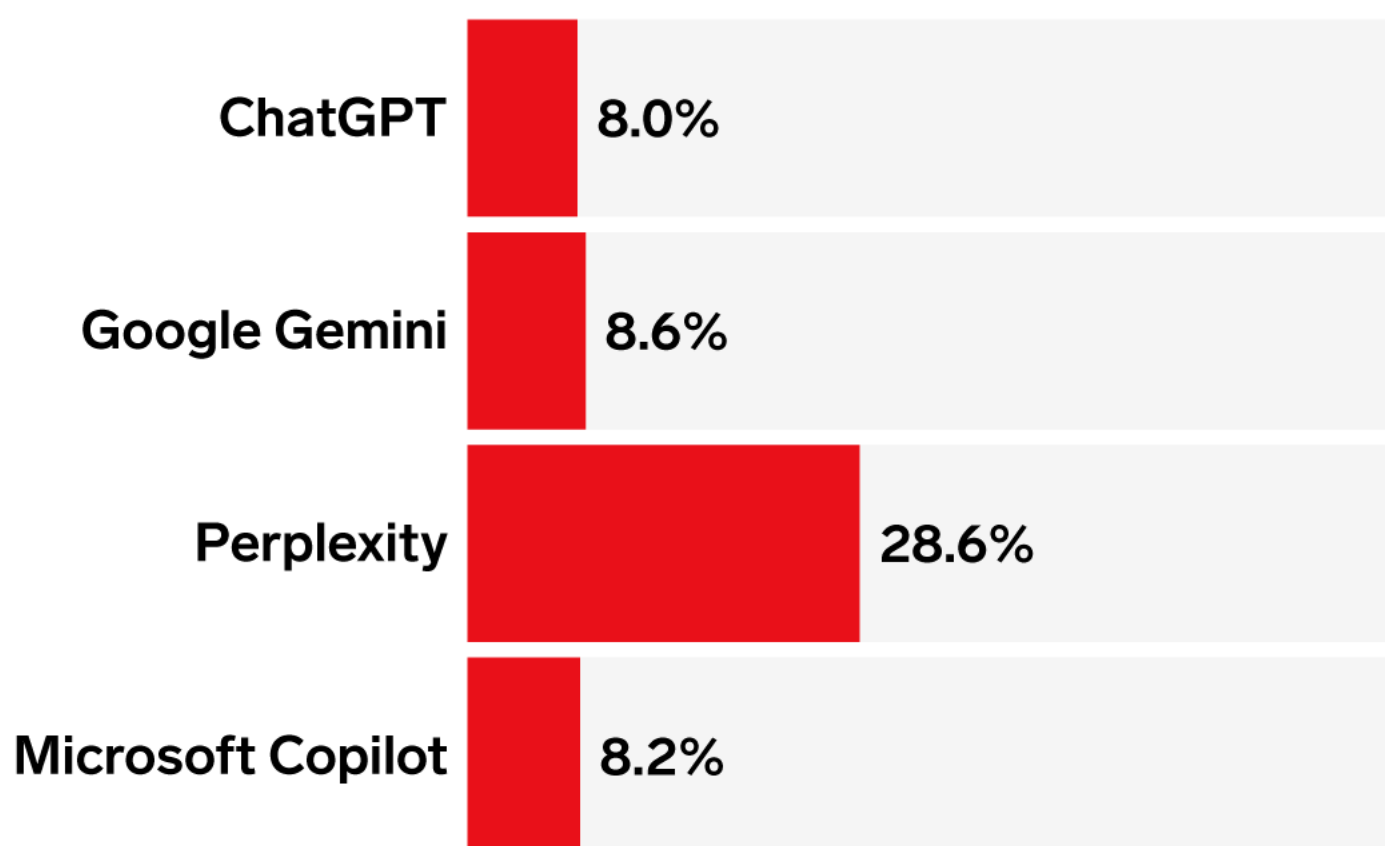
Generative AI is transforming discovery and forcing marketers to rethink visibility. Success now depends on treating AI as a branding channel, managing generative engine optimization (GEO) separately from SEO, and adapting fast as AI models evolve.

Key Question: How is GEO different from SEO, and how should brands respond?

Key Stat: Fewer than 10% of the sources cited in ChatGPT, Gemini, and Copilot rank in the top 10 Google organic search results for the same query—meaning SEO tactics won't guarantee brands visibility in AI.

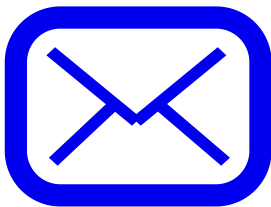
Generative AI Engines Rarely Cite Links in Google's Top 10 Search Results

% of genAI source citations worldwide that appear in the top 10 organic results for the same query, by engine

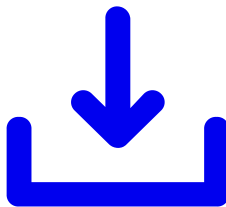


*Note: ChatGPT data is for in-text citations; Ahrefs searched 15,000 queries to genAI platforms, and extracted visible citations; *Similarweb data as of Oct 3, 2025; includes desktop and mobile web; read as “ChatGPT citations among ChatGPT’s in-text citations, 8.0% appeared in Google’s top 10 organic results for the same query.”*

Source: Ahrefs as cited in company blog, Aug 11, 2025; Similarweb, Oct 3, 2025



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