

APRIL 21–27, 2025

The Overlap Collapsed

Google rank and AI citation are now structurally different games. The data arrived this week to prove it.

Three numbers define this week: 83% of AI citations come from outside the organic top 10. Position-one CTR drops 58% when AI Overviews appear. And the overlap between Google's top links and AI-cited sources has fallen from 70% to below 20%. If your AI visibility strategy still assumes Google rank is a proxy for citation, you're optimizing for the wrong scoreboard.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- AI Overviews now reduce position-one CTR by 58% — nearly double last year's impact.
- 83% of AI citations come from pages outside the Google top 10; the rank-to-citation link is broken.
- Google AI Mode shows a 93% zero-click rate — being cited and generating traffic are now separate objectives.
- Adobe shipped LLM Optimizer, the first major enterprise platform with dedicated AI visibility tooling.
- GPT-5.5 released with improved search and retrieval — citation behavior shifts incoming over the next 2–4 weeks.

 **Surfaced on Reddit**
Search signals and trends across posts of r/surfaced

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Practitioners are stuck in the measurement mud — and starting to push back on the Reddit-as-strategy consensus.

Reddit's AI Search conversation split into two camps this week: practitioners watching organic traffic crater and looking for answers, and marketers just discovering the category. The most valuable signal wasn't either group — it was the counter-narrative gaining traction. Multiple threads questioned whether "post on Reddit for AI visibility" is actually effective, citing Cassie Clark's "Found in AI" episode on the Reddit visibility myth. Neither the believers nor the skeptics have data. That gap is the content opportunity.

The measurement problem dominated. "How do I prove AI Search ROI to my client/boss?" appeared across [r/SEO](#), [r/PPC](#), and [r/Marketing](#) — mostly unanswered. Practitioners can articulate the problem clearly; they just can't translate citation frequency into metrics that survive a finance review. The diagnostic framework for "is my traffic drop from AI Overviews or the core update?" doesn't exist in the wild yet either.

"Our owned content is losing to strangers' Reddit comments in AI answers — what do we do?"

— [r/Marketing](#) thread, VP-level brand content lead

→ **Competitive anxiety is a buying trigger.** "My competitor shows up in ChatGPT and I don't" appeared multiple times — the emotional setup for an advisory sale.

→ **Agency credibility is being evaluated publicly.** "Agency pitching me GEO services — is this legit or a scam?" on [r/smallbusiness](#) confirms buyers are vetting vendors before any sales call.

→ **GPT-5.5 content window is open.** "How does it change AI Search?" has 48 hours of activity and essentially no authoritative answers. First-mover opportunity for the next 2–3 weeks.

 **Surfaced on LinkedIn**
Search signals and trends across posts of LinkedIn

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Marketing directors hit the ROI wall — and buyer skepticism is now public.

Two events dominated LinkedIn this week: Adobe's LLM Optimizer launch at Summit and the updated Ahrefs CTR study. The 58% click reduction number moved fast — it's now the data point most likely to shift budget conversations. But the more revealing signal came from the comment threads: marketing directors explicitly struggling to prove AI Search ROI to their CMOs. The "awareness to action" gap is no longer theoretical.

Peter Caputa's "Is GEO even real?" debate panel continued generating heat, with 28+ comments from agency owners venting that client education is the hardest part of the practice. Meanwhile, the ALM Corp study claiming LinkedIn is the second-most-cited source in AI Search (from 325K prompts) circulated widely — generating both FOMO and confusion among brand managers without a measurement strategy.

325K
Prompts analyzed in ALM Corp study finding LinkedIn as #2 AI citation source

28+
Comments on Caputa's GEO skepticism panel — buyer doubt in real time

→ **B2B SaaS growth leads are stuck at "now what?"** They engaged with the citation study but expressed uncertainty about operationalizing it.

→ **Agency owners are frustrated with client skepticism.** The education burden is the constraint, not the capability.

→ **LinkedIn is positioning itself as an AI Search platform.** The LinkedIn Business Blog published "How to Leverage LinkedIn for AI Visibility in 2026" — they're aware of their citation footprint.

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The structural break is now documented: Google rank does not equal AI citation.

ConvertMate's GEO Benchmark study delivered the week's most important number: 83% of AI Overview citations come from pages outside the top-10 Google organic results. The overlap between top Google links and AI-cited sources has dropped from 70% to below 20%. This isn't drift — it's a structural break. Content structure now outperforms domain authority; product pages with benchmark data are cited 2.8x more than generic descriptions.

Ahrefs updated their AI Overviews CTR study with harder numbers: position-one CTR drops 58% when an AI Overview appears, up from 34.5% in April 2025. For informational keywords specifically, position-one CTR collapsed from 7.0% to 1.0% — a 79% drop. Any prior materials citing the 34.5% figure are now outdated.

83%
Of AI citations come from outside the organic top 10

58%
CTR reduction for position 1 when AI Overviews appear

93%
Zero-click rate in Google AI Mode searches

48%
Of all queries now trigger AI Overviews — up 56% YoY

Google AI Mode went mainstream this week — no Labs sign-up required, side-by-side web browsing launched on Chrome desktop. With a 93% zero-click rate (more than double AI Overviews), AI Mode is the highest-friction environment for organic traffic generation yet observed. Being cited and generating traffic are now explicitly separate optimization objectives.

OpenAI released GPT-5.5 on April 23, with improvements specifically targeting search, retrieval, and document-grounded tasks. Citation behavior shifts should surface over the next 2–4 weeks. Adobe entered the category at enterprise scale with LLM Optimizer — the first major marketing platform to ship dedicated AI visibility tooling. The awareness phase is over for enterprise buyers.

"Agentic Engine Optimization is the practice of structuring content for AI agents — covering discoverability, parsability, token efficiency, capability signaling, and access control."

— [ADY Osmanli](#), Director of Engineering, Google Cloud AI

→ **Adobe entering GEO signals category maturity.** Enterprise buyers now have a procurement-ready option; Surfaced conversations should shift from education to differentiation.

→ **AI traffic to retail is up 269% YoY.** Adobe's own measurement data — the volume is real, the visibility gap is the problem.

→ **AEO is formalizing as an enterprise category.** Osmanli's framework and "AEO-as-a-Service" as a procurement line item both landed this month.

THIS WEEK'S SIGNAL

What to carry into next week

- The 70% to 20% citation overlap collapse is the single most important number this week — any brand treating Google rank as a proxy for AI visibility is now operating on a false assumption.
- GPT-5.5's search and retrieval improvements create a 2–4 week window to publish first-mover content on citation pattern shifts.
- Measurement remains the universal blocker — from Reddit practitioners to LinkedIn marketing directors, no one can prove ROI in a budget review.
- Adobe's LLM Optimizer launch moves enterprise buyer conversations from "should we care about AI Search?" to "which solution?"
- The Reddit-as-AI-strategy consensus is fracturing — counter-narratives are gaining traction without data on either side.



BACK NEXT MONDAY WITH MORE SIGNAL.