

Google AI Overview Study: 90% Of B2B Buyers Click On Citations via @sejournal, @MattGSouthern

Google's AI Overviews have changed how search works. A TrustRadius report shows that 72% of B2B buyers see AI Overviews during research.

The study found something interesting: **90%** of its respondents said they click on the cited sources to check information.

This finding differs from previous reports about declining click rates.

AI Overviews Are Affecting Search Patterns in Complex Ways

When AI summaries first appeared in search results, many publishers worried about “zero-click searches” reducing traffic. Many still see evidence of fewer clicks across different industries.

This research suggests B2B tech searches work differently. The study shows that while traffic patterns are changing, many users in their sample don't fully trust AI content. They often check sources to verify what they read.

The report states:

“These overviews cite sources, and 90% of buyers surveyed said that they click through the sources cited in AI

Overviews for fact-checking purposes. Buyers are clearly wanting to fact-check. They also want to consult with their peers, which we'll get into later."

If this extends beyond this study, being cited in these overviews might offer visibility for specific queries.

From Traffic Goals to Citation Considerations

While still optimizing for organic clicks, becoming a citation source for AI overviews is valuable.

The report notes:

"Vendors can fill the gap in these tools' capabilities by providing buyers with content that answers their later-stage buying questions, including use case-specific content or detailed pricing information."

This might mean creating clear, authoritative content that AI systems could cite. This applies especially to category-level searches where AI Overviews often appear.

The Ungated Content Advantage in AI Training

The research spotted a common mistake about how AI works. Some vendors think AI models can access their gated content (behind forms) for training.

They can't. AI models generally only use publicly available content.

The report suggests:

“Vendors must find the right balance between gated and ungated content to maintain discoverability in the age of AI.”

This creates a challenge for B2B marketers who put valuable content behind forms. Making more quality information public could influence AI systems. You can still keep some premium content gated for lead generation.

Potential Implications For SEO Professionals

For search marketers, consider these points:

- Google’s emphasis on Experience, Expertise, Authoritativeness, and Trustworthiness seems even more critical for AI evaluation.
- The research notes that “AI tools aren’t just training on vendor sites... Many AI Overviews cite third-party technology sites as sources.”
- As organic traffic patterns change, “AI Overviews are reshaping brand discoverability” and possibly “increasing the use of paid search.”

Evolving SEO Success Metrics

Traditional SEO metrics like organic traffic still matter. But this research suggests we should also monitor other factors, like how often AI Overviews cite you and the quality of that traffic.

Kevin Indig is quoted in the report stating:

“The era of volume traffic is over... What’s going away are clicks from the super early stage of the buyer journey. But people will click through visit sites eventually.”

He adds:

“I think we’ll see a lot less traffic, but the traffic that still arrives will be of higher quality.”

This offers search marketers one view on handling the changing landscape. Like with all significant changes, the best approach likely involves:

- Testing different strategies
- Measuring what works for your specific audience
- Adapting as you learn more

This research doesn’t suggest AI is making SEO obsolete. Instead, it invites us to consider how SEO might change as search behaviors evolve.

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