

Is Google About To Go Full AI Mode? via @sejournal, @wburton27

AI search is rapidly changing the way people discover content and engage with brands. Logan Kilpatrick, Google's lead product manager for AI products, suggested in an X (formerly Twitter) post that "AI Mode" will become the default for Google Search "soon" and then reclarified his statements, but if that happens, what could potentially happen to the SEO industry, especially with over 100 million monthly active users searching in AI Mode, according to Google?

Screenshot from X (Twitter), November 2025

Let's explore some potential possibilities, but before we do, let's distinguish the differences between AI Mode and AI Overviews, as there is a clear distinction between the two.

AI Overviews Vs. AI Mode

AI Overviews are short, AI-generated summaries that appear above traditional search results for some queries that help users find information quickly. AIOverviews provide quick, concise answers and save users time by reducing the need to click on links, reducing clicks and traffic to brands.

AI Mode is a more advanced, interactive search experience that might replace the standard search results page in the future, as it helps with complex, multi-step, or open-ended questions by providing a more comprehensive and conversational AI-powered response if you want to follow up and learn more. Google added "AI Mode" on its search page earlier this year, looking to retain its millions of users from going away to other AI models.

What Could Potentially Happen If AI Mode Becomes Default?

If Google decides to switch to AI Mode by default, brands will definitely see a decrease in organic traffic, since users will get direct answers to their queries and won't need to click through to websites, because they will find what they need right in the AI Mode. With AI Overviews, this is a trend that we are already seeing happening, but if AI Mode becomes the default, this will further reduce clicks.

Brands May Rely More On Paid For

Visibility

Currently, the way AI Mode is designed, there are no ads and no way for Google to monetize the interface, but that is all about to change, and change extremely fast. Google's head of Search, Liz Reid, shared a look into how the company is navigating its transition into the AI era – and how it's thinking about keeping its multibillion-dollar ad business alive. In 2024, Google made 264.59 billion in ads, according to Statista, and it's been growing year over year.

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eenshot from Statista, November 2025

Google is beginning to roll out ads in AI Mode, but it's in its infancy. Google is looking into showing ads when they're high-quality and relevant. Since queries are 2x to 3x longer than they are on main search, which means they can do better targeted, higher quality ads, according to Liz Read. Brands that can afford to be visible in AI Mode paid results will benefit from being visible, but brands that only focus on traditional SEO tactics and strategies could be left behind.

Google has also added advertisements to AI Overviews, increasing Search ad sales, so we can expect the same from AI Mode.

A Potential Shift In Visibility And Discovery

AI search is causing us to move away from traditional SEO metrics, i.e., keyword rankings and click-through rates, to brand visibility and relevance. Your brand should be cited as the authoritative source for AI answers, and if your brand is not visible as the answer, then you will lose more clicks.

Measurement

Tracking the customer journey may become harder because users interact within the AI interface rather than on your brand's website. Traditional analytics will provide fewer insights and will cause brands to develop new metrics focused on AI citations, brand mentions, and local visibility. We are seeing this already with the emergence of AI tools, from traditional players like Semrush, Ahrefs, and new AI players like PeecAI and Profound, to name a few.

Loss Of Control Over Brand Narrative

Since AI Overviews are taking information from various online sources to build a brand's presence, if your brand does not have a good brand strategy and has inconsistent, outdated, or poorly managed information across the web, i.e., reviews, social signals, and local listings, etc., then AI may inaccurately represent your brand across the web.

What Could Potentially Happen To Google

Chrome?

If Google does go to full AI Mode by default, Chrome could potentially undergo a major transformation with deep integration of Gemini and other AI capabilities, which would change the web browsing experience from a passive tool to a proactive, intelligent assistant. According to eMarketer, Gemini is growing its user base faster than ChatGPT.

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nshot from eMarketer, November 2025

ChatGPT has already opened its AI browser ChatGPT Atlas, which is currently only available on macOS and is challenging Google Chrome.

Screenshot from ChatGPT Atlas, November 2025

If Google Does Make AI Mode Default, What Can We Do?

- Experiment with AI paid ads when they become available and put aside some budget and test the impact and return on investment (ROI) of ads in AI Mode.
- Focus on making sure conversion funnels and processes are easy and provide a good user experience.
- Be present and have great content everywhere your audience is. Your brand must have a strong brand presence across Reddit, Quora, YouTube, OpenAI, Perplexity, etc., and other places where end users are

looking for information about your brand. For example, Apple is looking at search options on Safari, which could end its partnership with Google, but at the end of the day, we will see if Google will maintain the relationship or Apple will go somewhere else, like OpenAI, which could boost traffic and get more users using OpenAI or another large language model (LLM).

- Continue to optimize for AI0 by creating high-quality, authoritative content that directly answers user questions, is well-structured, and easy for AI to understand. This involves creating new content and refreshing your old content with up-to-date research, original information, and different perspectives.

Wrapping Up

The shift toward AI-powered search isn't hypothetical anymore; it's actually here and moving fast. With AI Overviews and AI Mode gaining traction among more than 100 million monthly users, Google is positioning itself for a future where conversational, answer-focused experiences may replace traditional search results.

If AI Mode becomes the default search for Google, it won't just change how users search; it will fundamentally reshape how brands earn visibility, traffic, and trust online.

For brands, publishers, and SEOs, this transition presents both risks and opportunities. Organic traffic will almost certainly decline as more answers stay within Google's ecosystem. Paid visibility in AI results will grow rapidly, favoring brands with budgets and adaptable strategies. And success will depend less on ranking for keywords and more on becoming a trusted source that AI cites, references, or recommends across platforms.

This era will demand a new kind of optimization centered on brand authority, AI citations, structured data, user trust

signals, and multi-platform presence.

No one has a crystal ball and knows what a full AI Mode future looks like, but brands that adapt early will be the market share leaders, and those that wait will lose visibility, traffic, and relevance.

More Resources:

Featured Image: Collagery/Shutterstock

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