

SEO Pulse: Gemini 3 Arrives & Adobe Buys Semrush via @sejournal, @MattGSouthern

Welcome to the week's Pulse: updates affect how AI surfaces content, how you track brand demand, and where core SEO tools sit in the wider marketing stack.

Google launched Gemini 3 directly into AI Mode in Search, Adobe announced a \$1.9 billion acquisition of Semrush, and Google shipped two reporting updates in Search Console: custom annotations and a branded queries filter.

Here's what matters for you and your work.

Google Brings Gemini 3 To AI Mode On Launch Day

Google released Gemini 3 Pro and integrated it into AI Mode in Search on day one. This is the first time a new Gemini model has shipped to Search at launch.

Gemini 3 Pro is available now in AI Mode for Google AI Pro and Ultra subscribers in the U.S. by choosing "Thinking" from the model dropdown. Google plans to expand access to all U.S. users soon, with higher usage limits for paid subscribers.

Key Facts: Gemini 3 is live in AI Mode, the Gemini app, AI Studio, Vertex AI, and Google's Antigravity platform. It brings new generative UI layouts and a more aggressive query fan-out system, with automatic model selection coming soon to route complex questions to Gemini 3.

Why SEOs Should Pay Attention

Gemini 3 pushes AI Mode further away from static answer boxes toward dynamic, tool-based responses. Instead of plain text, Google can decide when to surface calculators, simulations, or comparison tables based on your query, which changes how often people need to click through, even when your content underpins the answer.

Mordy Oberstein, Founder at Unify Marketing, connected Gemini 3's capabilities to Google's broader strategy in a LinkedIn post:

Gemini 3 offering a more diverse display "take" on the topic is where this is headed. I think if you combine this with what Liz Reid (Google's Head of Search) said in a recent WSJ interview, the future of AI Mode is full-on SERP integration happens is multi-media text output + original source firsthand knowledge exploration.

His point frames Gemini 3 less as a model upgrade and more as another step toward AI Mode becoming the default SERP experience.

Read our full coverage: Google Brings Gemini 3 To Search's AI Mode

Search Console Adds Custom Annotations To Performance Reports

Google launched custom annotations in Search Console performance reports. The feature lets you add contextual notes directly to traffic charts, marking specific dates with explanations for site changes or external events.

You can right-click any date on a performance chart, select "Add annotation," and write a note up to 120 characters

explaining what happened.

Key Facts: All annotations are visible to everyone with access to a property, each property can store up to 200 annotations, and entries older than 500 days are automatically deleted.

Why SEOs Should Pay Attention

Keeping track of when you shipped a change has always been awkward in Search Console. You make a template update, fix a technical issue, or publish a new section, then come back weeks later and have to reconstruct the timeline from Jira tickets or chat logs.

Custom annotations move that context into the chart itself so you can see change points alongside traffic shifts.

Brodie Clark, Independent SEO Consultant, highlighted the timing in a LinkedIn post:

Overall, I think this is a great move for GSC. Especially after changes like we've seen with the disabling of &num=100, which messed with our impressions and average position data massively. These annotations appear directly on your chart, providing a clear visual reference point for your data (just make sure they're useful – because everyone who can access the property can see them).

For teams, that shared view makes it easier to understand why traffic changed without chasing down who did what and when.

Read the announcement: Custom annotations in Search Console

Adobe Acquires Semrush In \$1.9 Billion Cash Deal

Adobe and Semrush announced a definitive agreement for Adobe to acquire Semrush in an all-cash transaction valued at

approximately \$1.9 billion.

Adobe will pay \$12.00 per share, a premium of around 77% over Semrush's prior closing price. Semrush shares climbed more than 70 percent after the announcement.

Key Facts: Both boards have approved the deal, closing is targeted for the first half of 2026 pending regulatory and shareholder approval, and Semrush will join Adobe's Digital Experience business alongside Adobe Experience Manager and Adobe Analytics.

Why SEOs Should Pay Attention

Core SEO and visibility tooling continues to consolidate into large enterprise suites. Semrush has already moved toward monitoring brand presence across AI assistants as well as traditional search, which fits with Adobe's focus on cross-channel experience and analytics.

Eli Schwartz, Author of "Product-Led SEO," outlined the deal's strategic implications on LinkedIn:

Adobe + Semrush means three things: SEO is still a very valuable channel, yet it was undervalued by Wall Street, which is why Adobe paid a premium on its market cap. The value isn't in seeing the visibility – the value is seeing what happens after the visibility. Search visibility + analytics is going to make a potent tool. The cross-sell and upsell opportunities between these businesses are going to be massive.

If you rely on Semrush, you may see product and pricing shift toward deeper integration with Adobe's stack, which could benefit teams already standardizing on Adobe while changing the equation for everyone else.

Read our full coverage: Adobe To Acquire Semrush In \$1.9

Google Search Console Adds Branded Queries Filter

Google introduced a branded queries filter in the Search Console Performance report that automatically separates branded and non-branded search traffic.

The filter appears under “Filter by query” and works across all search types, including web, image, video, and news. A new card in the Insights report shows the breakdown of clicks for branded versus non-branded queries.

Key Facts: Google uses an AI-driven system to classify branded queries, including misspellings, variations, and brand-related products or services. The filter is only available for top-level properties with enough volume and is rolling out gradually over the coming weeks.

Why SEOs Should Pay Attention

Separating branded and non-branded traffic makes it easier to see whether your SEO work is expanding reach or amplifying existing demand.

Non-branded queries are your discovery channel, while branded queries reflect how often people look you up by name. With this filter, you can benchmark both segments before and after big initiatives and understand whether growth is coming from new audiences, increased brand demand, or a mix of the two.

Mags Sikora, SEO Director at Strategy for AI-Led SERPs, pointed out the technical detail in a LinkedIn post:

Crucially, this isn't regex-based. Google is using an AI-driven system that recognises your brand across languages, catches typos and variations, and can even classify queries

that don't explicitly mention the brand but refer to a unique product or service you offer.

She added that Google acknowledges some queries may be misclassified due to the dynamic, contextual nature of brand detection, and that the filter only changes reporting, not rankings.

Read the announcement: Branded queries filter in Search Console

Theme Of The Week: Making AI Search Legible

Each story this week is about making AI-powered search easier to see and explain.

Gemini 3 pushes more queries into dynamic AI layouts, while custom annotations and the branded queries filter give you better ways to document changes and separate brand demand from discovery. Adobe's Semrush deal continues the trend toward rolling SEO visibility into broader analytics stacks.

Taken together, this week is less about "new features" and more about storytelling: where your brand shows up in AI experiences, how that visibility changes over time, and how you translate those patterns into metrics your stakeholders actually care about.

Top Stories Of The Week:

More Resources:

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<https://www.searchenginejournal.com/seo-pulse-gemini-3-arrives>

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