

Study: Google AI Mode Shows 91% URL Change Across Repeat Searches via @sejournal, @MattGSouthern

A new study analyzing 10,000 keywords reveals that Google's AI Mode delivers inconsistent results.

The research also shows minimal overlap between AI Mode sources and traditional organic search rankings.

Published by SE Ranking, the study examines how AI Mode performs in comparison to Google's AI Overviews and the top 10 organic search results.

"The average overlap of exact URLs between the three datasets was just **9.2%**," the study notes, illustrating the volatility.

Highlights From The Study

AI Mode Frequently Pulls Different Results

To test consistency, researchers ran the same 10,000 keywords through AI Mode three times on the same day. The results varied most of the time.

In **21.2%** of cases, there were no overlapping URLs at all between the three sets of responses.

Domain-level consistency was slightly higher, at **14.7%**, indicating AI Mode may cite different pages from the same

websites.

Minimal Overlap With Organic Results

Only **14%** of URLs in AI Mode responses matched the top 10 organic search results for the same queries. When looking at domain-level matches, overlap increased to **21.9%**.

In **17.9%** of queries, AI Mode provided zero overlap with organic URLs, suggesting its selections could be independent of Google's ranking algorithms.

Most Links Come From Trusted Domains

On average, each AI Mode response contains 12.6 citations.

The most common format is block links (**90.8%**), followed by in-text links (**8.9%**) and AIM SERP-style links (**0.3%**), which resemble traditional search engine results pages (SERPs).

Despite the volatility, some domains consistently appeared across all tests. The top-cited sites were:

1. Indeed (1.8%)
2. Wikipedia (1.6%)
3. Reddit (1.5%)
4. YouTube (1.4%)
5. NerdWallet (1.2%)

Google properties were cited most frequently, accounting for **5.7%** of all links. These were mostly Google Maps business profiles.

Differences From AI Overviews

Comparing AI Mode to AI Overviews, researchers found an average URL overlap of just **10.7%**, with domain overlap at **16%**.

This suggests the two systems operate under different logic despite both being AI-driven.

What This Means For Search Marketers

The high volatility of AI Mode results presents new challenges and new opportunities.

Because results can vary even for identical queries, tracking visibility is more complex.

However, this fluidity also creates more openings for exposure. Unlike traditional search results, where a small set of top-ranking pages often dominate, AI Mode appears to refresh its citations frequently.

That means publishers with relevant, high-quality content may have a better chance of appearing in AI Mode answers, even if they're not in the organic top 10.

To adapt to this environment, SEOs and content creators should consider:

- Prioritizing domain-wide authority and topical relevance
- Diversifying content across trusted platforms
- Optimizing local presence through tools like Google Maps
- Monitoring evolving inclusion patterns as AI Mode develops

For more, see the full study from SE Ranking.

Featured Image: Roman Samborskyi/Shutterstock

<https://www.searchenginejournal.com/study-google-ai-mode-returns-largely-different-results-across-sessions/550249/>