5W Public Relations
Research · 2026

5W PUBLIC RELATIONS · 2026 RESEARCH

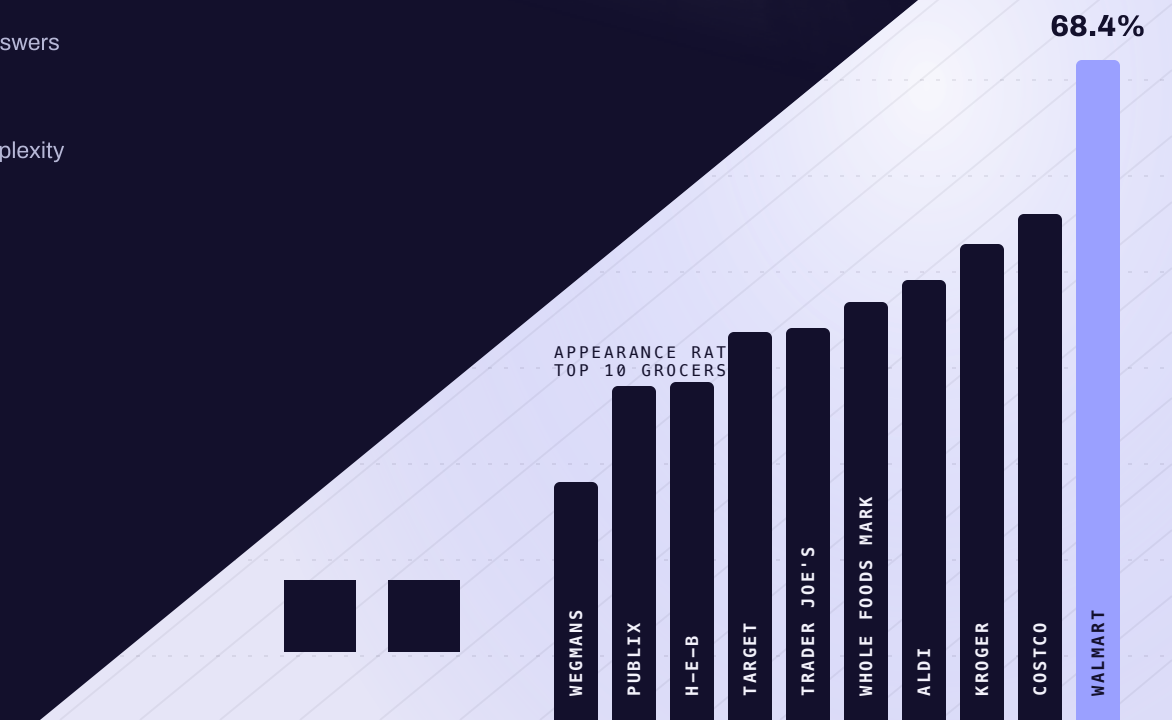
GROCERY RETAIL VISIBILITY INDEX

Which grocery retailers AI engines name
288 AI answers · October 28, 2026

Measured :
October 28, 2026
24 questions × 3 runs · 288 AI answers

Engines :
ChatGPT · Claude · Gemini · Perplexity
plus 63 Google AI Overviews

Prepared by :
5W Public Relations
5wpr.com



AT A GLANCE

Walmart leads. Costco is second.

Walmart was the grocer that ChatGPT, Claude, Gemini and Perplexity named most often. Walmart appeared in 197 of 288 answers (68.4%) measured on October 28, 2026. Costco came next at 151 of 288 (52.4%). Walmart was named first more often than any other grocer, in 40 of 288 answers. Google AI Overviews appeared on 63 of 72 searches (87.5%).

> Version 2. This version replaces the first version of this study, first published April 27, 2026. It uses measured counts, so the two versions are not comparable.

288
AI answers analyzed across ChatGPT, Claude, Gemini and Perplexity

68.4%
of answers named Walmart, the most-named (197 of 288)

25
tracked grocers named at least once (of 25)

87.5%
of Google searches showed an AI Overview (63 of 72)

INSIDE THIS REPORT

01 Key findings 03
02 The leaderboard 04
03 Profiles 06
04 How the engines differ 07
05 Google AI Overviews 08
06 Leaders by question 09
07 Who the engines cite 10
08 Frequently asked questions 13
09 Methodology 14
A Appendix: the 24 questions 15

KEY FINDINGS

01 What the data shows

MOST NAMED

197/288 (68.4%)

Walmart appeared in 197 of 288 four-engine answers (CI 62.8–73.5%). Costco appeared in 151 of 288 (52.4%, CI 46.7–58.1%). The intervals do not overlap.

NAMED FIRST

40/288 (13.9%)

Walmart was the first grocer named in 40 of 288 answers, more than any other tracked grocer. Average first position: 3.3.

AIO TRIGGER

63/72 (87.5%)

Google AI Overviews appeared on 63 of 72 searches (CI 77.9–93.3%). On the other 9, no overview was shown.

AIO LEADER

32/63 (50.8%)

Walmart was the grocer named most often in AI Overviews, at 32 of 63, followed by Costco at 31 of 63 (49.2%). In the four-engine set, Walmart was named in 197 of 288 answers (68.4%).

TOP DOMAIN

49/288 (17%)

supermarketnews.com was cited in 49 of 288 grounded four-engine answers, with 71 of 2,420 citations (2.9%). grocerydive.com came second with 69 citations in 53 answers (18.4%).

OWN-SITE CITATIONS

35/288 (12.2%)

Walmart's own domains were cited in 35 of 288 grounded answers (12.2%), more than any other tracked name. Kroger followed at 29 of 288. In Google AI Overviews, Kroger's site was cited in 6 of 63 overviews. 7 tracked names had no own-site citation.

THE LEADERBOARD

02 Which grocers AI engines name

Appearance rate across 288 four-engine answers. The bar is the 95% confidence interval; overlapping bars cannot be told apart at this sample size.

	BRAND	RATE	NAMED IN
1	Walmart	68.4%	197/288
2	Costco	52.4%	151/288
3	Kroger	49.3%	142/288
4	ALDI	45.5%	131/288
5	Whole Foods Market	43.4%	125/288
6	Trader Joe's	40.6%	117/288
7	Target	40.3%	116/288
8	H-E-B	35.1%	101/288
9	Publix	34.7%	100/288
10	Wegmans	24.7%	71/288
11	Albertsons	23.3%	67/288
12	Amazon Fresh	18.8%	54/288
13	Sam's Club	18.8%	54/288
14	Safeway	18.1%	52/288
15	Meijer	12.8%	37/288

02 THE LEADERBOARD

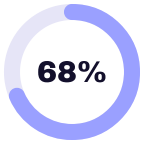
The full list

Own-domain citation is the share of 288 grounded answers that cited the official domains of each name (subdomains included). Citation share is of all 2,420 citations.

#	GROCER	NAMED IN	APPEARANCE RATE	95% INTERVAL	FIRST MENTION	OWN-DOMAIN CITATION	CITATION SHARE
1	**Walmart**	197/288	**68.4%**	62.8–73.5%	3.3	12.2% (35/288)	1.5%
2	**Costco**	151/288	**52.4%**	46.7–58.1%	4.5	8.3% (24/288)	1%
3	**Kroger**	142/288	**49.3%**	43.6–55.1%	3.4	10.1% (29/288)	1.3%
4	**ALDI**	131/288	**45.5%**	39.8–51.3%	3.8	4.9% (14/288)	0.6%
5	**Whole Foods Market**	125/288	**43.4%**	37.8–49.2%	4.5	9.4% (27/288)	1.1%
6	**Trader Joe's**	117/288	**40.6%**	35.1–46.4%	4.7	3.1% (9/288)	0.4%
7	**Target**	116/288	**40.3%**	34.8–46%	4.6	8.3% (24/288)	1%
8	**H-E-B**	101/288	**35.1%**	29.8–40.7%	4.7	2.1% (6/288)	0.2%
9	**Publix**	100/288	**34.7%**	29.5–40.4%	5.4	4.5% (13/288)	0.5%
10	**Wegmans**	71/288	**24.7%**	20–29.9%	5.4	3.8% (11/288)	0.5%
11	**Albertsons**	67/288	**23.3%**	18.8–28.5%	5	5.9% (17/288)	0.7%
12	**Amazon Fresh**	54/288	**18.8%**	14.7–23.7%	4.2	0% (0/288)	0%
13	**Sam's Club**	54/288	**18.8%**	14.7–23.7%	4.6	3.1% (9/288)	0.4%
14	**Safeway**	52/288	**18.1%**	14–22.9%	5.7	2.1% (6/288)	0.2%
15	**Meijer**	37/288	**12.8%**	9.5–17.2%	6.1	0.3% (1/288)	0%
16	**Sprouts Farmers Market**	34/288	**11.8%**	8.6–16%	5.7	0.7% (2/288)	0.1%
17	**BJ's Wholesale Club**	32/288	**11.1%**	8–15.3%	4.1	2.1% (6/288)	0.2%
18	**WinCo Foods**	32/288	**11.1%**	8–15.3%	5.5	0% (0/288)	0%
19	**Hy-Vee**	30/288	**10.4%**	7.4–14.5%	6.2	1% (3/288)	0.1%
20	**Market Basket**	28/288	**9.7%**	6.8–13.7%	4.6	0% (0/288)	0%
21	**The Fresh Market**	23/288	**8%**	5.4–11.7%	3.6	2.8% (8/288)	0.3%
22	**ShopRite**	15/288	**5.2%**	3.2–8.4%	5.9	0% (0/288)	0%
23	**Harris Teeter**	12/288	**4.2%**	2.4–7.1%	6.4	0% (0/288)	0%
24	**Stop & Shop**	10/288	**3.5%**	1.9–6.3%	8.9	0% (0/288)	0%
25	**Food Lion**	4/288	**1.4%**	0.5–3.5%	8.3	0% (0/288)	0%

PROFILES

03 The top eight, side by side

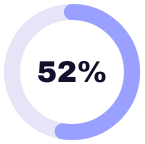


RANK 1

Walmart

197/288 answers · 95% CI 62.8–73.5%

3.3	12.2%	1.5%
first-mention position	owned-domain citation (35/288)	citation share

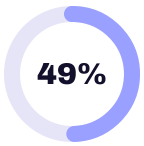


RANK 2

Costco

151/288 answers · 95% CI 46.7–58.1%

4.5	8.3%	1%
first-mention position	owned-domain citation (24/288)	citation share

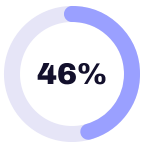


RANK 3

Kroger

142/288 answers · 95% CI 43.6–55.1%

3.4	10.1%	1.3%
first-mention position	owned-domain citation (29/288)	citation share

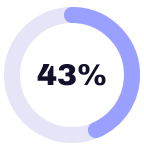


RANK 4

ALDI

131/288 answers · 95% CI 39.8–51.3%

3.8	4.9%	0.6%
first-mention position	owned-domain citation (14/288)	citation share

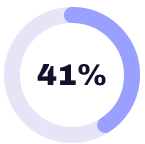


RANK 5

Whole Foods Market

125/288 answers · 95% CI 37.8–49.2%

4.5	9.4%	1.1%
first-mention position	owned-domain citation (27/288)	citation share



RANK 6

Trader Joe's

117/288 answers · 95% CI 35.1–46.4%

4.7	3.1%	0.4%
first-mention position	owned-domain citation (9/288)	citation share

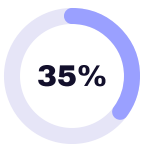


RANK 7

Target

116/288 answers · 95% CI 34.8–46%

4.6	8.3%	1%
first-mention position	owned-domain citation (24/288)	citation share



RANK 8

H-E-B

101/288 answers · 95% CI 29.8–40.7%

4.7	2.1%	0.2%
first-mention position	owned-domain citation (6/288)	citation share

HOW THE ENGINES DIFFER

04 Same questions, different answers

The four engines named the leading names at similar rates.

ChatGPT

	72 ASKED	72 RETURNED	72 GROUNDED
Walmart			**75%**
Costco			**62.5%**
Kroger			**59.7%**
Whole Foods Market			**51.4%**
Trader Joe's			**45.8%**
ALDI			**43.1%**

Claude

	72 ASKED	72 RETURNED	72 GROUNDED
Walmart			**70.8%**
Kroger			**59.7%**
Costco			**54.2%**
ALDI			**52.8%**
Whole Foods Market			**44.4%**
Target			**41.7%**

Gemini

	72 ASKED	72 RETURNED	72 GROUNDED
Walmart			**65.3%**
Kroger			**54.2%**
Target			**51.4%**
Trader Joe's			**50%**
Costco			**47.2%**
Whole Foods Market			**47.2%**

Perplexity

	72 ASKED	72 RETURNED	72 GROUNDED
Walmart			**62.5%**
Costco			**45.8%**
ALDI			**41.7%**
H-E-B			**38.9%**
Whole Foods Market			**30.6%**
Trader Joe's			**29.2%**

GOOGLE AI OVERVIEWS

05 The fifth engine

Google AI Overviews were captured through 72 U.S. desktop searches and scored only where an overview appeared, so five-engine figures use 288 + 63 = 351 answers.



TRIGGER RATE

Google AI Overviews appeared on 63 of 72 searches (87.5%, CI 77.9–93.3%). The other 9 searches showed no overview. Within the 63 overviews, Walmart was named in 32 (50.8%), Costco was named in 31 (49.2%), Kroger was named in 30 (47.6%), ALDI was named in 22 (34.9%). facebook.com was the most-cited source, with 20 citations and an appearance in 14 of 63 overviews.

FIVE-ENGINE RANK (FOUR-ENGINE RANK IN ARROWS)

1	Walmart	65.2%	=
2	Costco	51.9%	=
3	Kroger	49.0%	=
4	ALDI	43.6%	=
5	Whole Foods Market	41.6%	=
6	Trader Joe's	37.9%	=
7	Target	37.0%	=
8	H-E-B	33.9%	=
9	Publix	33.6%	=
10	Wegmans	24.8%	=

06

LEADERS BY QUESTION

Who each question surfaces first

Six questions from the set. Each tile uses that question's own four-engine answers as the denominator.

Q01 · 12 ANSWERS

Trader Joe's 100%

TIED WITH PUBLIX

Publix	100%
H-E-B	91.7%

AI Overview shown on 3 of 3 searches

Q02 · 12 ANSWERS

Costco 100%

TIED WITH WALMART, ALDI

Walmart	100%
ALDI	100%

AI Overview shown on 3 of 3 searches

Q03 · 12 ANSWERS

The Fresh Market 91.7%

Whole Foods Market	75%
Wegmans	75%

AI Overview shown on 3 of 3 searches

Q04 · 12 ANSWERS

Costco 100%

TIED WITH WHOLE FOODS MARKET

Whole Foods Market	100%
Trader Joe's	91.7%

AI Overview shown on 2 of 3 searches

Q05 · 12 ANSWERS

Trader Joe's 100%

Costco	91.7%
Walmart	75%

AI Overview shown on 3 of 3 searches

Q06 · 12 ANSWERS

Costco 100%

Kroger	66.7%
Walmart	58.3%

AI Overview shown on 3 of 3 searches

07

WHO THE ENGINES CITE

Most-cited domains

The four engines produced 2,420 citations in total. supermarketnews.com was cited most often, with 71 citations (2.9%) across 49 answers. Next came grocerydive.com (69), tastingtable.com (58), yahoo.com (46), walmart.com (33), consumerreports.org (32).

FOUR AI ENGINES · SHARE OF 288 GROUNDED ANSWERS

tastingtable.com	**19.1%**
grocerydive.com	**18.4%**
supermarketnews.com	**17%**
yahoo.com	**13.9%**
consumerreports.org	**11.1%**
walmart.com	**10.8%**
reddit.com	**9.4%**
wholefoodsmarket.com	**8.7%**
nbcnews.com	**8.3%**
kroger.com	**8.3%**

GOOGLE AI OVERVIEWS · SHARE OF 63 OVERVIEWS

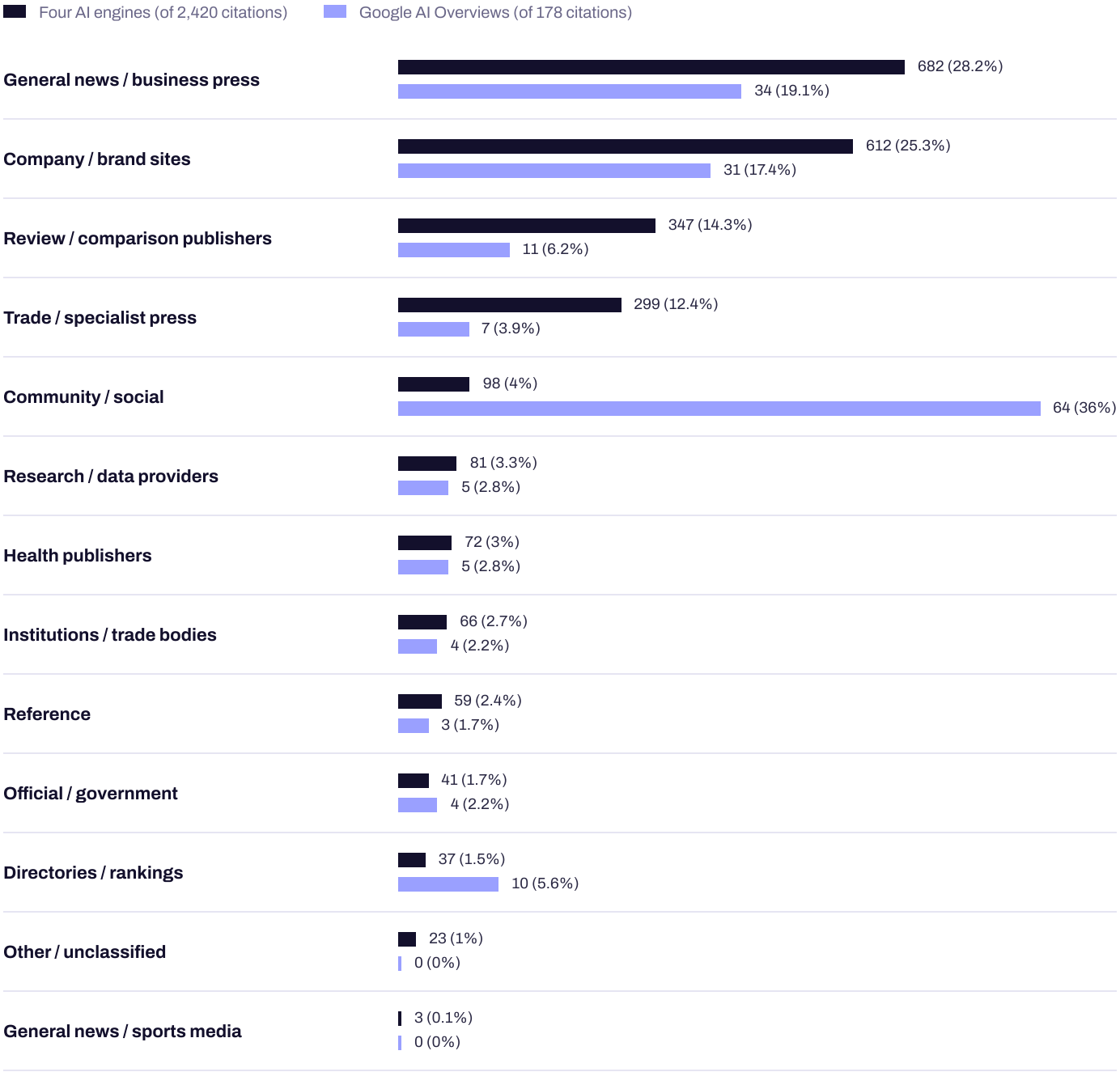
facebook.com	**22.2%**
youtube.com	**22.2%**
reddit.com	**22.2%**
foodandwine.com	**12.7%**
consumerreports.org	**11.1%**
kroger.com	**7.9%**
10best.usatoday.com	**6.3%**
finance.yahoo.com	**6.3%**
m.yelp.com	**4.8%**
fortune.com	**4.8%**

07

WHO THE ENGINES CITE

Citation share by source type

Share of all citations by the type of site cited. Source types were reclassified on October 29, 2026. 'Company / brand sites' now covers only the official sites of companies, brands and schools; publishers, directories, trade bodies and other sites have their own types, and sites that could not be placed are 'Other / unclassified'.



07

WHAT THE DATA SUGGESTS

How can a grocer improve its AI visibility?

These steps follow from the measured results above. They describe what the engines cited in this study and are not a guarantee of results.

STEP	WHAT THIS STUDY MEASURED
Put your facts on your own domain.	Walmart's own domains were cited in 12.2% of grounded answers, Kroger's in 10.1% and Whole Foods Market's in 9.4%.
Keep your facts accurate on the sites engines cite.	The most-cited sites other than the tracked names' own were tastingtable.com (in 19.1% of grounded answers), grocerydive.com (18.4%), supermarketnews.com (17.0%), yahoo.com (13.9%) and consumerreports.org (11.1%). General news and business press supplied 28.2% of citations and review and comparison publishers 14.3%.
Check each engine separately.	ChatGPT named Kroger in 59.7% of answers against 23.6% on Perplexity. Gemini named Target in 51.4% of answers against 27.8% on Perplexity.
Do not ignore video and community sites.	Community and social sites supplied 36.0% of Google AI Overview citations against 4.0% in the four chat engines. facebook.com was cited in 22.2% of overviews, youtube.com in 22.2% and reddit.com in 22.2%.
Watch names outside the tracked list.	Lidl (25), H Mart (22), Instacart (19), Patel Brothers (19), Kirkland Signature (17) were named often but were not tracked.
Re-run the same questions every month.	Compare counts and intervals, not ranks. The 24 questions are in the appendix.

QUESTIONS PEOPLE ASK

08 Frequently asked questions

Q1 Which grocer do AI engines name most often?

Walmart, named in 197 of 288 four-engine answers (68.4%, CI 62.8–73.5%). Costco was second at 151 of 288 (52.4%).

Q2 Which grocer is named first most often?

Walmart was the first grocer named in 40 of 288 answers, with an average first position of 3.3.

Q3 How often do Google AI Overviews appear for these questions?

An overview appeared on 63 of 72 searches (87.5%, CI 77.9–93.3%). Within those 63 overviews, Walmart was named most often, in 32 (50.8%).

Q4 Which sources do the engines cite?

Across 2,420 four-engine citations, supermarketnews.com was cited most (71 citations, in 49 of 288 grounded answers), followed by grocerydive.com (69 citations).

Q5 Do the four engines agree?

Only in part. Walmart was named on every engine, from 62.5% on Perplexity to 75.0% on ChatGPT. The widest gap among tracked names was Kroger, from 23.6% on Perplexity to 59.7% on ChatGPT.

METHODOLOGY

09 How this study was measured

24	×	3	×	4	=	288	+	72
questions		runs each		AI engines		answers		Google searches · 63 AI Overviews

24 questions, each asked 3 times on each engine, measured October 28, 2026. Market: United States, English. The destination site was not mentioned to any engine. Gemini answers were produced by gemini-3.6-flash; every Gemini answer in this report used that one model. All 72 Gemini answers had search sources. Grocers count as named when they appear in the answer text; products and name variants roll up to the tracked name. Longer names take precedence over shorter overlapping ones, and common words count only in context. Unicode apostrophes and dashes are normalized.

ENGINE	MODEL IDS CALLED	ASKED	RETURNED	GROUNDED
ChatGPT	gpt-5-mini	72	72	72
Claude	claude-sonnet-5-5	72	72	72
Gemini	gemini-3.6-flash	72	72	72
Perplexity	sonar-pro	72	72	72
Google AI Overviews	DataForSEO Google SERP (live, advanced)	72	63 shown	63

Own-domain citations count a domain plus all its subdomains, with the same rule in every table.

METRIC DEFINITIONS

- Appearance rate: answers naming the grocer ÷ answers returned, with Wilson 95% intervals.
- First mention: average order in which the grocer first appears (1 = first).
- Own-domain citation: grounded answers citing the grocer's domains ÷ grounded answers.
- Citation share: citations to the grocer's domains ÷ all citations.

LIMITATIONS

- Measured on one day, October 28, 2026. Each engine answered 24 questions 3 times. Answers came from each engine's API (model IDs above); the consumer apps can answer differently.
- Only 25 tracked grocers were scored. Untracked names that appeared often were not scored, including Lidl (25), H Mart (22), Instacart (19), Patel Brothers (19), Kirkland Signature (17).
- AI Overview figures are based on only 63 overviews, so estimates for individual grocers are less precise than the four-engine figures.
- Reports describe what the engines said, attributed to the engines. They make no judgement about the people or organizations named and are not legal or financial advice.
- Some answers were asked again on October 28, 2026 after a storage error. The earlier texts are kept in the evidence archive and are not used in the counts.
- One question, "Is Costco worth it for a family of four?", names a retailer, so those counts include up to 12 answers to it. Without it, Walmart and Costco are still the top two.
- Intervals treat each answer as independent, so they understate uncertainty for the 24 repeated questions.
- Corrected October 29, 2026: own-domain citation now uses each name's official domains (subdomains included), listed in the evidence file entity_rollups.csv. Names without a resolvable official site count zero.

A

APPENDIX

The 24 questions

Questions marked "Core question" are the original study questions, asked word for word. The others are added neutral questions.

#	QUESTION	GROUP	SOURCE
01	What is the best grocery store in the US?	The US Grocery Retail AI Visibility Index 2026	CORE QUESTION
02	Where can I buy the cheapest groceries?	The US Grocery Retail AI Visibility Index 2026	CORE QUESTION
03	Which grocery store has the best produce?	The US Grocery Retail AI Visibility Index 2026	CORE QUESTION
04	Where is the best place to buy organic groceries?	The US Grocery Retail AI Visibility Index 2026	CORE QUESTION
05	Which grocery store has the best store brand?	The US Grocery Retail AI Visibility Index 2026	CORE QUESTION
06	Is Costco worth it for a family of four?	The US Grocery Retail AI Visibility Index 2026	CORE QUESTION
07	What is the best grocery delivery service?	The US Grocery Retail AI Visibility Index 2026	CORE QUESTION
08	Which grocery stores have the best online pickup?	The US Grocery Retail AI Visibility Index 2026	CORE QUESTION
09	Which grocery chain has the best customer service?	The US Grocery Retail AI Visibility Index 2026	CORE QUESTION
10	Where should I shop for groceries on a tight budget?	The US Grocery Retail AI Visibility Index 2026	CORE QUESTION
11	Where can I buy international foods and ingredients?	The US Grocery Retail AI Visibility Index 2026	CORE QUESTION
12	What groceries should I buy if I am taking a GLP-1 medication?	The US Grocery Retail AI Visibility Index 2026	CORE QUESTION
13	Which US grocery retailers publish unit prices for online orders?	The US Grocery Retail AI Visibility Index 2026	ADDED QUESTION
14	Which warehouse clubs offer grocery delivery and pickup?	The US Grocery Retail AI Visibility Index 2026	ADDED QUESTION
15	Which grocery chains carry certified organic private-label products?	The US Grocery Retail AI Visibility Index 2026	ADDED QUESTION
16	Which grocery retailers offer low-cost private-label pantry staples?	The US Grocery Retail AI Visibility Index 2026	ADDED QUESTION
17	Which grocery delivery platforms disclose service fees and membership costs?	The US Grocery Retail AI Visibility Index 2026	ADDED QUESTION
18	Which regional grocery chains are named in national customer-satisfaction surveys?	The US Grocery Retail AI Visibility Index 2026	ADDED QUESTION
19	Which grocery stores publish nutrition information for their private-label products?	The US Grocery Retail AI Visibility Index 2026	ADDED QUESTION
20	Which grocery retailers offer prepared meals and meal kits?	The US Grocery Retail AI Visibility Index 2026	ADDED QUESTION
21	Which US grocery chains specialize in international ingredients?	The US Grocery Retail AI Visibility Index 2026	ADDED QUESTION
22	Which grocery retailers publish food-allergy and ingredient information online?	The US Grocery Retail AI Visibility Index 2026	ADDED QUESTION
23	Which grocery chains offer high-protein private-label foods?	The US Grocery Retail AI Visibility Index 2026	ADDED QUESTION
24	Which sources compare US grocery prices using a published shopping basket?	The US Grocery Retail AI Visibility Index 2026	ADDED QUESTION

5W

5W PUBLIC RELATIONS · RESEARCH

The US Grocery Retail AI Visibility Index 2026

Measured October 28, 2026 across ChatGPT, Claude, Gemini, Perplexity and Google AI Overviews.

WEB
5wpr.com

RESEARCH
5wpr.com/research