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5W RESEARCH · 2026 SERIES

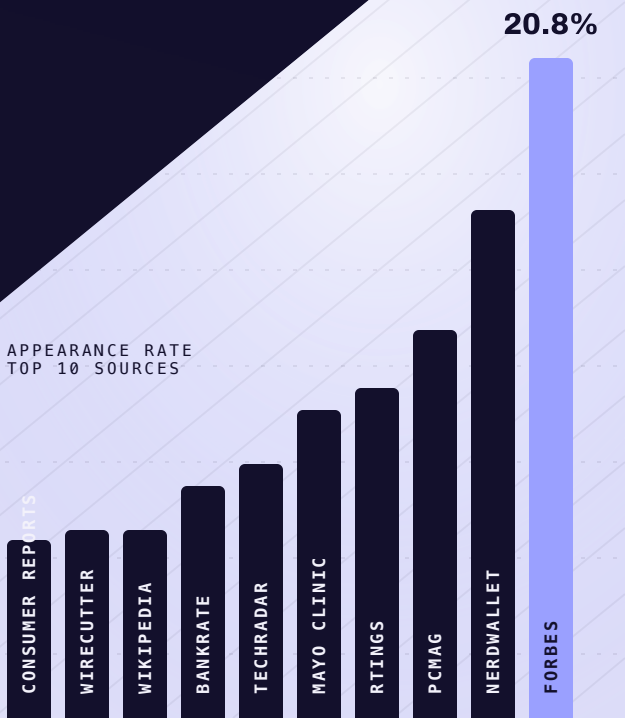
STATE OF AI CITATIONS SOURCE INDEX

Which sources AI engines cite
288 AI answers · October 26, 2026

Measured :
October 26, 2026
24 questions × 3 runs · 288 AI answers

Engines :
ChatGPT · Claude · Gemini · Perplexity
plus 66 Google AI Overviews

Prepared by :
5W
5wpr.com



AT A GLANCE

Forbes and NerdWallet lead. The two are statistically tied.

Forbes was named in 60 of 288 four-engine answers (20.8%) and NerdWallet in 46 (16%), with overlapping intervals. Of 2,449 four-engine citations, review and comparison publishers supplied 813 (33.2%), company and brand sites 546 (22.3%) and general news and business press 439 (17.9%). Google AI Overviews appeared for 66 of 72 lookups and cited reddit.com in 29 of them.

> Version 2. This version replaces the first version of this study, first published May 23, 2026. It uses measured counts, so the two versions are not comparable.

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

20.8%
of answers named Forbes, the most-named (60 of 288)

25
tracked sources named at least once (of 26)

91.7%
of Google searches showed an AI Overview (66 of 72)

INSIDE THIS REPORT

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KEY FINDINGS

01 What the data shows

TOP NAMED

60/288 (20.8%)

Forbes was named in 60 of 288 four-engine answers (20.8%, CI 16.5–25.9%). NerdWallet followed with 46 of 288 (16%, CI 12.2–20.6%). The intervals overlap, so the two are statistically tied.

BRAND SITES

49.7%

Company and brand sites accounted for 1,217 of 2,449 four-engine citations (49.7%). Review and comparison publishers supplied 473 (19.3%) and general news media 249 (10.2%).

AIO TRIGGER

91.7%

A Google AI Overview appeared for 66 of 72 lookups (91.7%, CI 83–96.1%). Six lookups returned no overview.

OVERVIEW COMMUNITY

29/66 (43.9%)

reddit.com was cited in 29 of 66 AI Overviews (43.9%). YouTube was named in 46 of 66 overviews (69.7%) but in only 2 of 288 four-engine answers (0.7%).

WIKIPEDIA SPLIT

17/72 (23.6%)

Wikipedia was named in 17 of 72 ChatGPT answers (23.6%) and in 0 of 72 answers from each of Claude, Gemini and Perplexity.

GEMINI AND FORBES

33.3%

Gemini named Forbes in 24 of 72 answers (33.3%), the highest single-engine rate for any tracked source. Perplexity named Forbes in 8 of 72 (11.1%).

PERPLEXITY GAP

2/72 (2.8%)

Perplexity named NerdWallet in 2 of 72 answers (2.8%), compared with 20 of 72 for Gemini (27.8%) and 14 of 72 for ChatGPT (19.4%).

CATEGORY LEADERS

9/12 (75.0%)

Some questions had a clear first-named source. Kayak was named first in 9 of 12 answers on cheap flight timing, and PCMag in 7 of 12 answers on college laptops.

HEALTH SOURCES

28/288 (9.7%)

Mayo Clinic was named in 28 of 288 four-engine answers (9.7%). When it appeared, its average first position was 1.4. It was the most-named source on diabetes symptoms (8 of 12) and statin side effects (8 of 12).

SOURCE MIX

33.2%

Of 2,449 four-engine citations, review and comparison publishers supplied 813 (33.2%), company and brand sites 546 (22.3%) and general news and business press 439 (17.9%).

02 THE LEADERBOARD

Which sources 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	Forbes	20.8%	60/288
2	NerdWallet	16.0%	46/288
3	PCMag	12.2%	35/288
4	RTINGS	10.4%	30/288
5	Mayo Clinic	9.7%	28/288
6	TechRadar	8.0%	23/288
7	Bankrate	7.3%	21/288
8	Wirecutter	5.9%	17/288
9	Wikipedia	5.9%	17/288
10	Consumer Reports	5.6%	16/288
11	The Points Guy	5.2%	15/288
12	CDC	4.5%	13/288
13	Kayak	4.5%	13/288
14	CNBC	4.5%	13/288
15	NIH / NCBI	3.5%	10/288

THE LEADERBOARD

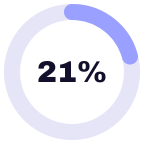
02 The full list

Own-domain citation is the share of 288 grounded answers that cited the entity's own domains (subdomains included). Citation share is of all 2,449 citations.

#	SOURCE	NAMED IN	APPEARANCE RATE	95% INTERVAL	FIRST MENTION	OWN-DOMAIN CITATION	CITATION SHARE
1	Forbes	60/288	20.8%	16.5–25.9%	1.8	28.8% (83/288)	4.2%
2	NerdWallet	46/288	16%	12.2–20.6%	1.7	24% (69/288)	3.1%
3	PCMag	35/288	12.2%	8.9–16.4%	1.5	13.5% (39/288)	2%
4	RTINGS	30/288	10.4%	7.4–14.5%	1.9	12.5% (36/288)	2%
5	Mayo Clinic	28/288	9.7%	6.8–13.7%	1.4	11.1% (32/288)	1.9%
6	TechRadar	23/288	8%	5.4–11.7%	1.9	11.8% (34/288)	1.5%
7	Bankrate	21/288	7.3%	4.8–10.9%	1.8	8% (23/288)	0.9%
8	Wirecutter	17/288	5.9%	3.7–9.2%	2.2	3.1% (9/288)	0.4%
9	Wikipedia	17/288	5.9%	3.7–9.2%	1.9	6.3% (18/288)	1.1%
10	Consumer Reports	16/288	5.6%	3.4–8.8%	1.9	4.9% (14/288)	0.7%
11	The Points Guy	15/288	5.2%	3.2–8.4%	1.9	5.9% (17/288)	0.9%
12	CDC	13/288	4.5%	2.7–7.6%	1.4	3.1% (9/288)	0.4%
13	Kayak	13/288	4.5%	2.7–7.6%	1.2	3.1% (9/288)	0.5%
14	CNBC	13/288	4.5%	2.7–7.6%	2.2	10.8% (31/288)	1.6%
15	NIH / NCBI	10/288	3.5%	1.9–6.3%	2.2	8.7% (25/288)	1.4%
16	G2	8/288	2.8%	1.4–5.4%	2.4	6.3% (18/288)	0.9%
17	WebMD	7/288	2.4%	1.2–4.9%	1.4	4.9% (14/288)	0.7%
18	Cleveland Clinic	7/288	2.4%	1.2–4.9%	1.4	3.5% (10/288)	0.4%
19	Healthline	7/288	2.4%	1.2–4.9%	2.3	3.8% (11/288)	0.4%
20	Tripadvisor	5/288	1.7%	0.7–4%	1.2	1.4% (4/288)	0.3%
21	Capterra	4/288	1.4%	0.5–3.5%	1.8	2.4% (7/288)	0.3%
22	Investopedia	4/288	1.4%	0.5–3.5%	1.5	4.2% (12/288)	0.5%
23	YouTube	2/288	0.7%	0.2–2.5%	1	8.7% (25/288)	1%
24	Reddit	2/288	0.7%	0.2–2.5%	2.5	5.9% (17/288)	0.7%
25	Allure	0/288	0%	0–1.3%	–	1% (3/288)	0.1%

PROFILES

03 The top eight, side by side

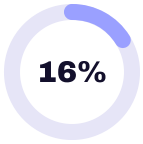


RANK 1

Forbes

60/288 answers · 95% CI 16.5–25.9%

1.8	28.8%	4.2%
first-mention position	owned-domain citation (83/288)	citation share



RANK 2

NerdWallet

46/288 answers · 95% CI 12.2–20.6%

1.7	24%	3.1%
first-mention position	owned-domain citation (69/288)	citation share



RANK 3

PCMag

35/288 answers · 95% CI 8.9–16.4%

1.5	13.5%	2%
first-mention position	owned-domain citation (39/288)	citation share



RANK 4

RTINGS

30/288 answers · 95% CI 7.4–14.5%

1.9	12.5%	2%
first-mention position	owned-domain citation (36/288)	citation share

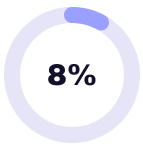


RANK 5

Mayo Clinic

28/288 answers · 95% CI 6.8–13.7%

1.4	11.1%	1.9%
first-mention position	owned-domain citation (32/288)	citation share

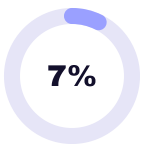


RANK 6

TechRadar

23/288 answers · 95% CI 5.4–11.7%

1.9	11.8%	1.5%
first-mention position	owned-domain citation (34/288)	citation share

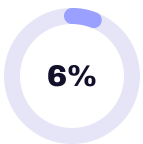


RANK 7

Bankrate

21/288 answers · 95% CI 4.8–10.9%

1.8	8%	0.9%
first-mention position	owned-domain citation (23/288)	citation share



RANK 8

Wirecutter

17/288 answers · 95% CI 3.7–9.2%

2.2	3.1%	0.4%
first-mention position	owned-domain citation (9/288)	citation share

04

HOW THE ENGINES DIFFER

Same questions, different answers

All four engines returned grounded answers for 72 of 72 prompts each. ChatGPT was the only engine that named Wikipedia (17 of 72, 23.6%). It also named G2 in 7 of 72 answers and Consumer Reports in 10 of 72, more often than any other engine. Gemini named the large publishers most often, including Forbes 24 of 72 (33.3%), NerdWallet 20 of 72 (27.8%) and PCMag 18 of 72 (25%).

ChatGPT

72 ASKED | 72 RETURNED | 72 GROUNDED

Wikipedia	**23.6%**
NerdWallet	**19.4%**
Forbes	**16.7%**
RTINGS	**16.7%**
TechRadar	**16.7%**
Consumer Reports	**13.9%**

Claude

72 ASKED | 72 RETURNED | 72 GROUNDED

Forbes	**22.2%**
NerdWallet	**13.9%**
CNBC	**9.7%**
WebMD	**8.3%**
Healthline	**8.3%**
RTINGS	**6.9%**

Gemini

72 ASKED | 72 RETURNED | 72 GROUNDED

Forbes	**33.3%**
NerdWallet	**27.8%**
PCMag	**25%**
RTINGS	**15.3%**
Mayo Clinic	**11.1%**
Bankrate	**11.1%**

Perplexity

72 ASKED | 72 RETURNED | 72 GROUNDED

Forbes	**11.1%**
PCMag	**11.1%**
Mayo Clinic	**8.3%**
Bankrate	**6.9%**
The Points Guy	**4.2%**
Kayak	**4.2%**

05 The fifth engine

GOOGLE AI OVERVIEWS

Google AI Overviews were captured through 72 U.S. desktop searches and scored only where an overview appeared, so five-engine figures use 288 + 66 = 354 answers.



TRIGGER RATE

Google showed an AI Overview for 66 of 72 lookups (91.7%, CI 83–96.1%). Three questions triggered an overview in only 1 of 3 lookups: noise-cancelling headphones, Paris family hotels and college laptops. Of 233 Google AI Overview citations, community and social sites supplied 66 (28.3%) and company and brand sites 58 (24.9%). The four-engine figures were 546 of 2,449 (22.3%) for company and brand sites and 68 of 2,449 (2.8%) for community and social sites. YouTube was named in 46 of 66 (69.7%). Among publishers, NerdWallet was named in 16 of 66 overviews (24.2%) and Forbes in 10 of 66 (15.2%).

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

1	Forbes	19.8%	=
2	NerdWallet	17.5%	=
3	YouTube	13.6%	▲ 20
4	PCMag	12.1%	▼ 1
5	Mayo Clinic	9.9%	=
6	Reddit	9.3%	▲ 18
7	RTINGS	8.8%	▼ 3
8	Bankrate	6.8%	▼ 1

LEADERS BY QUESTION

06 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

Mayo Clinic 66.7%

CDC	58.3%
Cleveland Clinic	25%

AI Overview shown on 3 of 3 searches

Q02 · 12 ANSWERS

NerdWallet 66.7%

TIED WITH FORBES

Forbes	66.7%
Bankrate	58.3%

AI Overview shown on 3 of 3 searches

Q03 · 12 ANSWERS

NerdWallet 25%

Investopedia	16.7%
Forbes	8.3%

AI Overview shown on 3 of 3 searches

Q04 · 12 ANSWERS

Mayo Clinic 8.3%

TIED WITH NIH / NCBI

NIH / NCBI	8.3%

AI Overview shown on 3 of 3 searches

Q05 · 12 ANSWERS

Forbes 41.7%

YouTube	8.3%

AI Overview shown on 3 of 3 searches

Q06 · 12 ANSWERS

TechRadar 58.3%

Forbes	50%
PCMag	50%

AI Overview shown on 3 of 3 searches

07

WHO THE ENGINES CITE

Most-cited domains

The four engines produced 2,449 citations. forbes.com was the most-cited domain with 99 occurrences (4%), appearing in 79 answers (27.4%). nerdwallet.com followed with 75 occurrences (3.1%) in 69 answers (24%), then rtings.com with 49 (2%).

FOUR AI ENGINES · SHARE OF 288 GROUNDED ANSWERS

forbes.com	**27.4%**
nerdwallet.com	**24%**
rtings.com	**12.5%**
techradar.com	**11.8%**
cnbc.com	**10.8%**
pcmag.com	**10.4%**
mayoclinic.org	**10.1%**
tomsguide.com	**9%**
youtube.com	**8.7%**
en.wikipedia.org	**5.6%**

GOOGLE AI OVERVIEWS · SHARE OF 66 OVERVIEWS

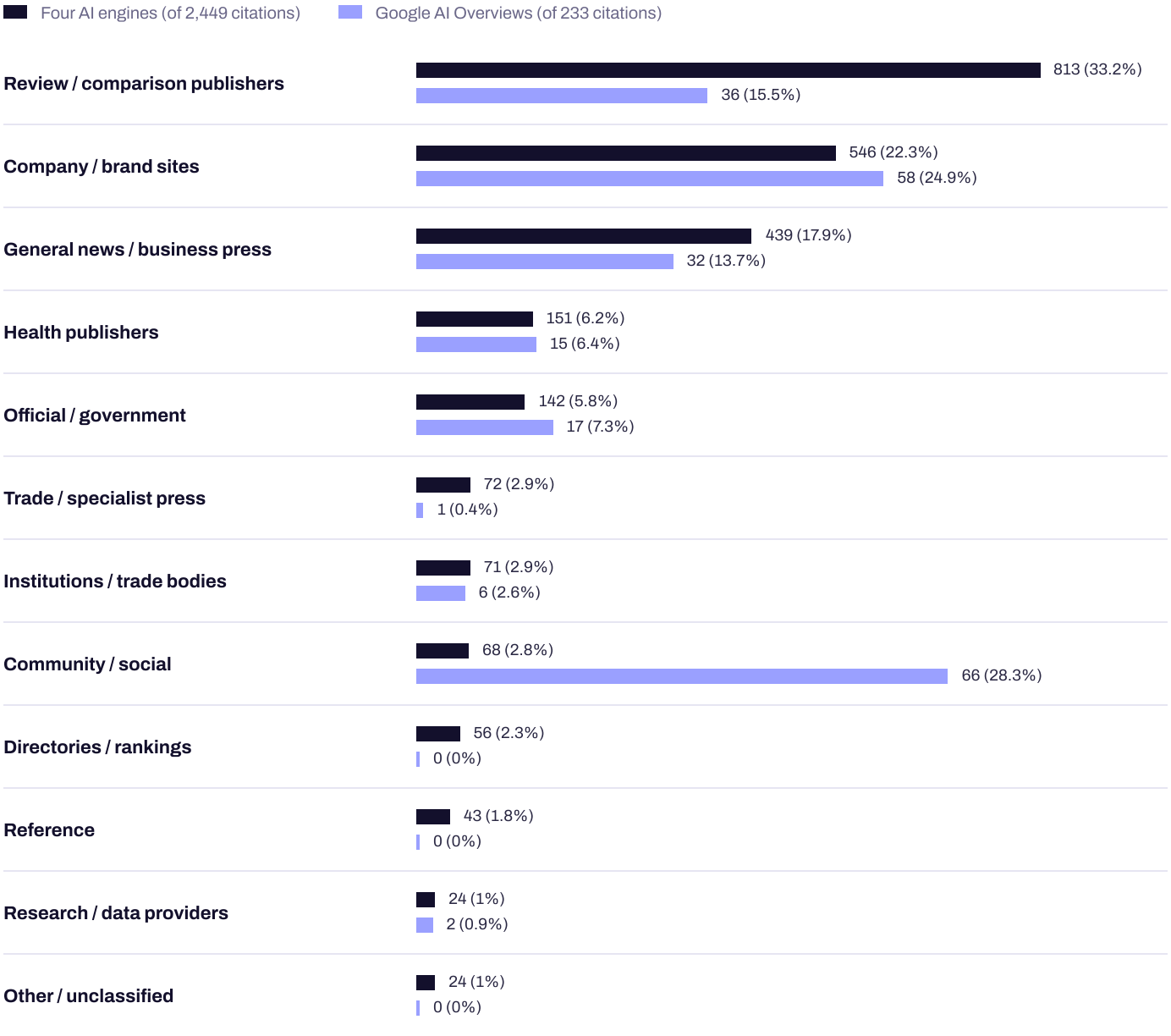
reddit.com	**43.9%**
nerdwallet.com	**13.6%**
youtube.com	**12.1%**
pcmag.com	**12.1%**
facebook.com	**9.1%**
mayoclinic.org	**9.1%**
nytimes.com	**6.1%**
instagram.com	**4.5%**
tsa.gov	**4.5%**
quickbooks.intuit.com	**4.5%**

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 sources improve their 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.	Forbes's own domains were cited in 28.8% of grounded answers, NerdWallet's in 24.0% and PCMag's in 13.5%. Forbes was named in only 20.8% of answers, yet its own domains were cited in 28.8%.
Keep your facts accurate on the sites engines cite.	The most-cited sites other than the tracked names' own were tomsguide.com (in 9.0% of grounded answers), nbcnews.com (6.6%), money.com (5.6%), cnn.com (5.2%) and cnet.com (5.2%). Review and comparison publishers supplied 33.2% of citations and general news and business press 17.9%.
Check each engine separately.	Gemini named PCMag in 25.0% of answers against 0.0% on Claude. Gemini named NerdWallet in 27.8% of answers against 2.8% on Perplexity.
Do not ignore video and community sites.	Community and social sites supplied 28.3% of Google AI Overview citations against 2.8% in the four chat engines. reddit.com was cited in 43.9% of overviews, youtube.com in 12.1% and facebook.com in 9.1%.
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 source did AI engines name most often?

Forbes was named in 60 of 288 four-engine answers (20.8%) and NerdWallet in 46 of 288 (16%). Their 95% intervals (16.5–25.9% and 12.2–20.6%) overlap, so the data cannot separate them.

Q2 How often did Google show an AI Overview?

An AI Overview appeared for 66 of 72 lookups (91.7%, CI 83–96.1%). Six lookups had no overview.

Q3 Do AI engines rely on Reddit?

It depends on the surface. Reddit was named in 2 of 288 four-engine answers (0.7%). In Google AI Overviews, reddit.com was cited in 29 of 66 overviews (43.9%) and was the top-cited domain with a 12.4% share.

Q4 What kinds of sites get cited most?

Of 2,449 four-engine citations, review and comparison publishers supplied 813 (33.2%), company and brand sites 546 (22.3%) and general news and business press 439 (17.9%). Review and comparison publishers followed with 473 (19.3%), then general news media with 249 (10.2%).

Q5 Does Wikipedia appear in AI answers?

Only ChatGPT named it, in 17 of 72 answers (23.6%). Claude, Gemini and Perplexity each named it in 0 of 72. en.wikipedia.org made up 26 of 2,449 citations (1.1%).

Q6 Which sources appeared on health questions?

Mayo Clinic was the most-named source on diabetes symptoms (8 of 12), statin side effects (8 of 12), back pain (5 of 12) and adult sleep needs (6 of 12). CDC was named first on diabetes symptoms in 6 of 12 answers.

09 METHODOLOGY

How this study was measured

24	×	3	×	4	=	288	+	72
questions		runs each		AI engines		answers		Google searches · 66 AI Overviews

24 questions, each asked 3 times on each engine, measured October 26, 2026. Market: United States, English. The destination site was not mentioned to any engine. Entities count as named when they appear in the answer text or the extracted entity list; products, imprints and research arms roll up to their parent.

ENGINE	MODEL IDS CALLED	ASKED	RETURNED	GROUNDED
ChatGPT	gpt-5-mini	72	72	72
Claude	claude-sonnet-5-5	72	72	72
Gemini	gemini-3.7-flash	72	72	72
Perplexity	sonar-pro	72	72	72
Google AI Overviews	DataForSEO Google SERP (live, advanced)	72	66 shown	66

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

METRIC DEFINITIONS

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

LIMITATIONS

- Measured on one day, October 26, 2026. Answers came from each engine's API (model IDs above); the consumer apps can answer differently.
- The question set has 24 questions with 12 answers each, which gives 72 answers per engine. Per-engine rates therefore carry wide intervals.
- Named-source rates count mentions in answer text. Citation shares count linked domains. The two measures can differ for the same source, as with YouTube.
- Google AI Overviews are scored only for the 66 of 72 lookups where an overview appeared.
- Only 26 tracked sources are ranked. Names outside the tracked list, such as CeraVe and Fidelity Investments, are not ranked, and that list also contains extraction artifacts such as section labels.
- Intervals treat each answer as independent, so they understate uncertainty for the 24 repeated questions.

APPENDIX

A 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 are the early symptoms of type 2 diabetes?	AI Citation Sources	CORE QUESTION
02	Best high-yield savings account	AI Citation Sources	CORE QUESTION
03	How should I start investing with little money?	AI Citation Sources	CORE QUESTION
04	Best skincare routine for acne-prone skin	AI Citation Sources	CORE QUESTION
05	Best retinol serum for beginners	AI Citation Sources	CORE QUESTION
06	Best CRM software for small business	AI Citation Sources	CORE QUESTION
07	Best project management tool for a remote team	AI Citation Sources	CORE QUESTION
08	Best noise-cancelling headphones	AI Citation Sources	CORE QUESTION
09	Best robot vacuum	AI Citation Sources	CORE QUESTION
10	Best time to book flights for cheap fares	AI Citation Sources	CORE QUESTION
11	Best travel credit card	AI Citation Sources	CORE QUESTION
12	Best hotels in Paris for families	AI Citation Sources	CORE QUESTION
13	How to treat lower back pain at home	AI Citation Sources	CORE QUESTION
14	Best budgeting app	AI Citation Sources	CORE QUESTION
15	How much sleep do adults need?	AI Citation Sources	ADDED QUESTION
16	What are the side effects of statins?	AI Citation Sources	ADDED QUESTION
17	How much should I keep in an emergency fund?	AI Citation Sources	ADDED QUESTION
18	Best moisturizer for dry skin	AI Citation Sources	ADDED QUESTION
19	Best accounting software for small business	AI Citation Sources	ADDED QUESTION
20	Best password manager for a business	AI Citation Sources	ADDED QUESTION
21	Best laptop for college students	AI Citation Sources	ADDED QUESTION
22	Best air purifier for allergies	AI Citation Sources	ADDED QUESTION
23	Best travel insurance for international trips	AI Citation Sources	ADDED QUESTION
24	How do I get TSA PreCheck?	AI Citation Sources	ADDED QUESTION

5W

5W PUBLIC RELATIONS · RESEARCH

AI Citations Report: AI Citation Sources 2026

Measured October 26, 2026 across ChatGPT, Claude, Gemini, Perplexity and Google AI Overviews.

WEB
5wpr.com

RESEARCH
5wpr.com/research