Your team for today

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11th December 2025

Rethinking the Role of SEO Ahead of 2026

What we'll cover

1. **Current State of Play in Organic Search**
2. **Value of Sound Technical Foundations**
3. **Importance of On-Page Structure**
4. **Rethinking the Role of Informational Content**
5. **Key Takeaways**

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Current State of Play: in 5 Stats

Presence of an AI Overview leads to a 34.5% lower average CTR for top-ranking page

Organic CTRs for informational queries triggering AIOs fell 61% since mid-2024

AIOs are triggering on 21% of all Google searches – though it varies across industries

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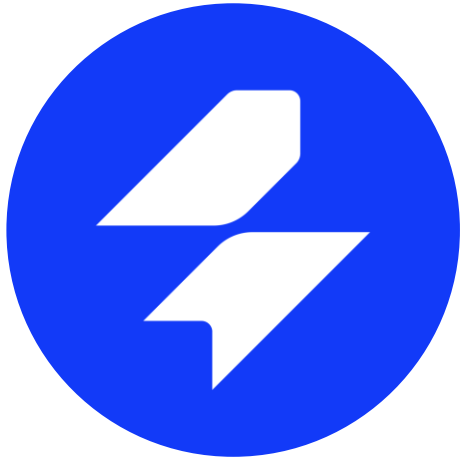
Sources: https://ahrefs.com/blog/ai-overview-triggers/; https://www.seerinteractive.com/insights/aio-impact-on-google-ctr-september-2025-update

Current State of Play: in 5 Stats



Traffic driven by AI search experiences accounts for just 0.07% in the UK.

Globally, AI platforms drive just 0.15% of internet traffic vs 48.5% driven by organic search.

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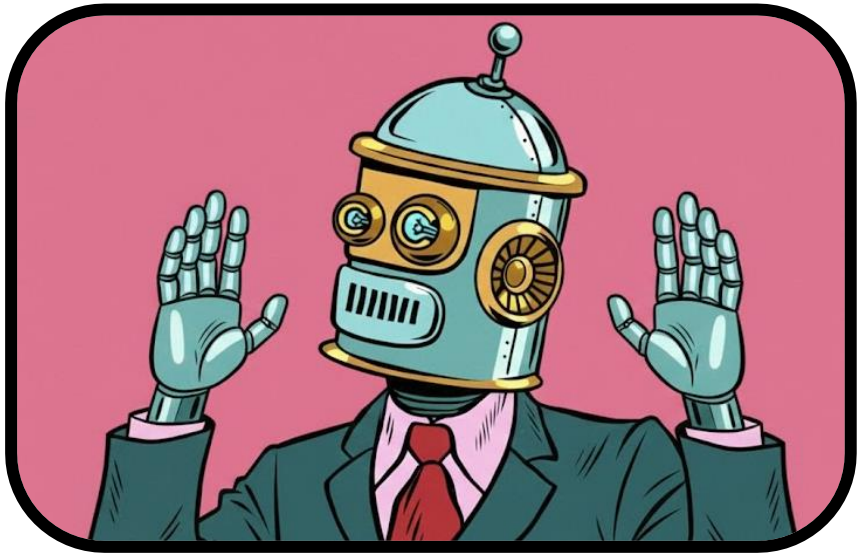
Source: https://seranking.com/blog/ai-traffic-research-study/


The landscape is changing...

However, it's the same, but different

Look at your GA4 account – Google likely drives most of your organic traffic.



But the growth of AI search experiences, such as ChatGPT, Gemini, AIOs is something you can't ignore.

It's about balancing now with the future

Balancing the need for traditional organic search visibility...

... and growing your citation / surface rate in LLMs.

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Luckily, the fundamentals of good SEO still apply!

Structure is more important than ever

SEO has always been about optimising information to ensure it's structured for search engines. So, they can understand the pages on your website, index, assess and rank them.

- Better structured content is easier for users to digest and understand...
- It's easier for Google to crawl and contextualise...
- And it's also easier for LLMs to crawl and contextualise!

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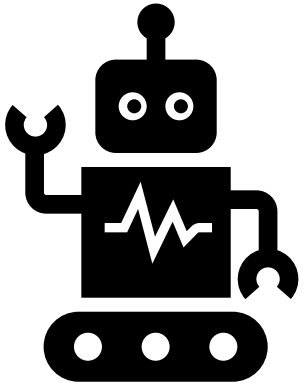
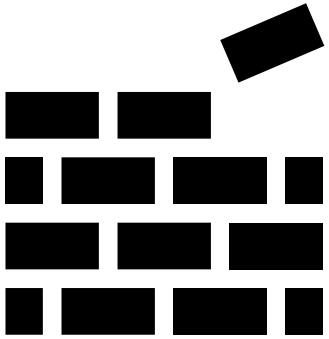
What does it mean for technical SEO?



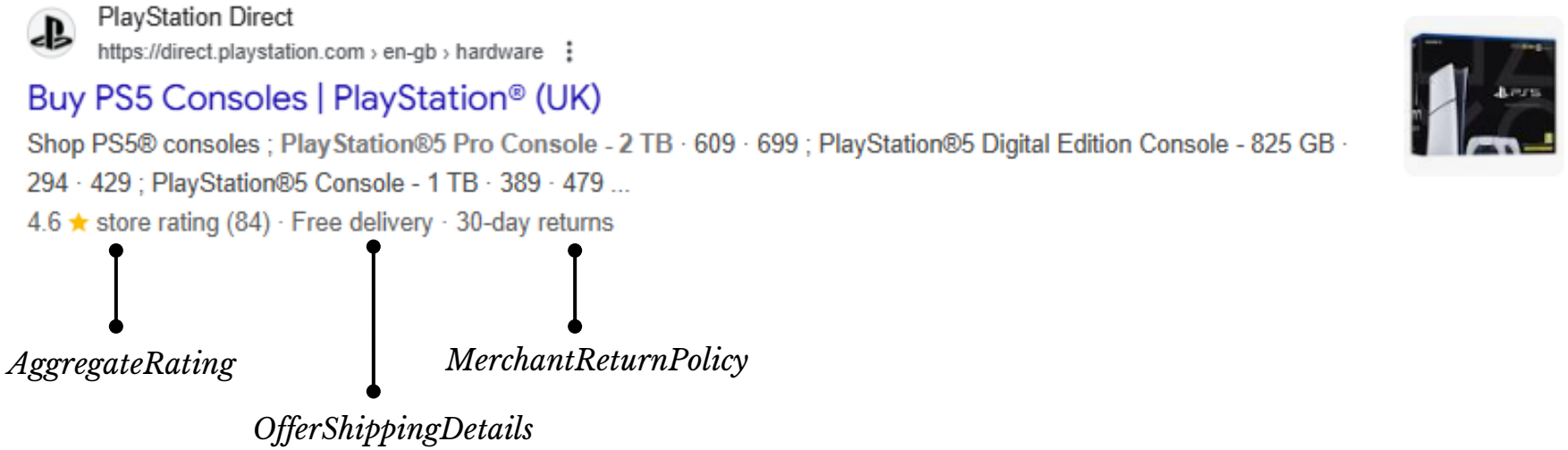
Sound technical foundations are important – a site that's fast, loads well and easily navigable for users, crawlers and LLMs.



Structure provides organisation and accessibility. Google loves this. LLMs love this.

Structured data becomes more valuable

Schema has traditionally helped your pages to stand out in a crowded SERP. Helping to boost CTRs. And they can still do this.



It also provides entity identification for LLMs to ingest – PlayStation is the entity. This is its price. This is its rating. This is its returns policy. Having this structure makes it easier to understand. And it's still beneficial for traditional search!

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Content clarity: winning the attention battle

Content and the way it's structured is important. We can see from citations in AIOs that direct and concise content is favoured.

Clearly signpost your content.

Make the info short, snappy and easy to digest.

Deliver on what you've outlined.

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What can help you achieve this?

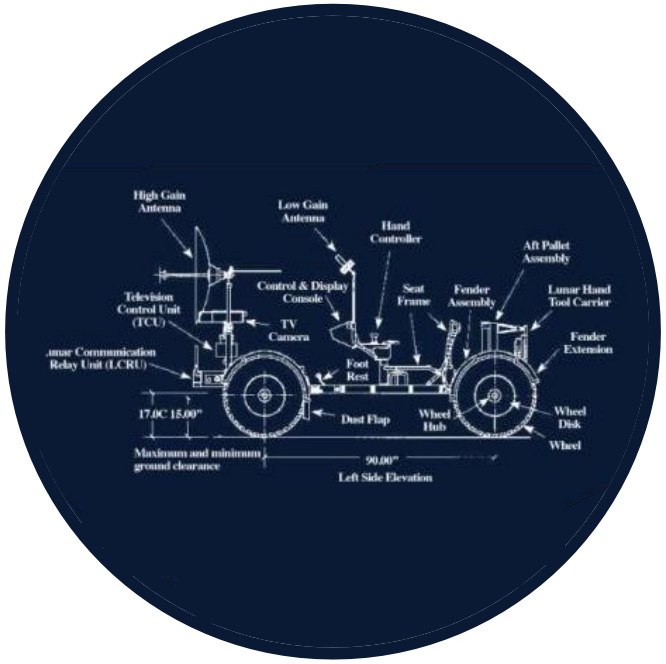
Clear sections with a heading hierarchy.

Bulleted and numbered lists

Tables for features and benefits; comparisons; technical specs.

What can help you achieve this?

Video content – LLMs are multi-modal



Images and diagrams (tagged up with alt. text!)

FAQs – and not just where there's search volume

Rethinking the role of informational content

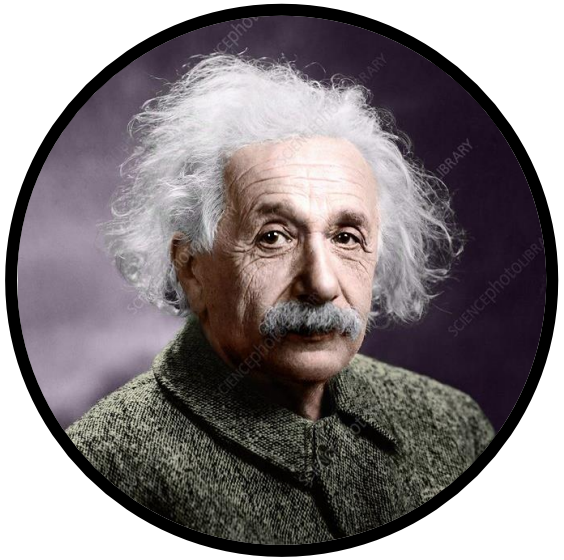
Will informational content still be valuable in 2026? **Absolutely**.

- It's your stage to demonstrate your **topical authority**.
- It allows your business to set its stall when it comes to the **Expertise** and **Authoritativeness** elements of **Google's E-E-A-T** quality guidelines.
- It just may not drive the volume of **clicks** and **sessions** it once did – because of the **prevalence of AIOs** driving zero-click searches.

Rethinking the role of informational content

However, appearing in AIOs and being cited in LLMs more frequently is important – it's a **new form of brand awareness**. If you don't, your competitors will. To stand out:

Get your brand out there – the more you appear in trusted sources, the more likely you are to be cited.



Draw on the experts within your business to bring fresh takes on well-worn concepts.

Maintain the human element – this is important; people buy from people.

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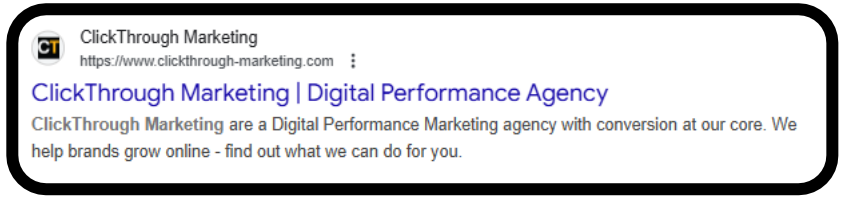
Can you match the keyword intent?

Keywords are still important – they're a north star in highlighting where opportunities lie. But more than ever, **the intent users have when searching those terms is key**.

- Before creating top-of-funnel content, particularly on tangentially-related topics, **consider whether you can realistically compete** in the SERP.
- Even if the term has a high search volume, if you **can't match the intent**, you're **unlikely to drive the clicks**.
- And if you do drive clicks, is that traffic going to be of a **high-quality that benefits your business**?

Are there tasks you can automate?

The digital marketing world has always moved at pace. In 2026, it's going to be quicker than ever. What can AI to help you save time on?



Meta descriptions: Google rewrites around 70% of them. And while valuable, they're not a ranking factor.

Image alt. text: with good prompting, you can save significant time. Leaving you to review.

Keyword Research: AI agents open possibilities to automate bulk keyword research tasks.

Content Structure: get started with templates you can build from, freeing you up to consider new angles.

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Key Takeaways

1. We're in the **infancy of AI Search** – balance your optimisation efforts
2. **Technical foundations** matter and **structured content** is vital
3. **Informational content** still holds value
4. The **expertise within your business** sets you apart – call on this in your content!
5. Automate **low-effort**, **high-time** tasks to free your focus

Thank you!

For further information please contact our experts

experts@clickthrough-marketing.com

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