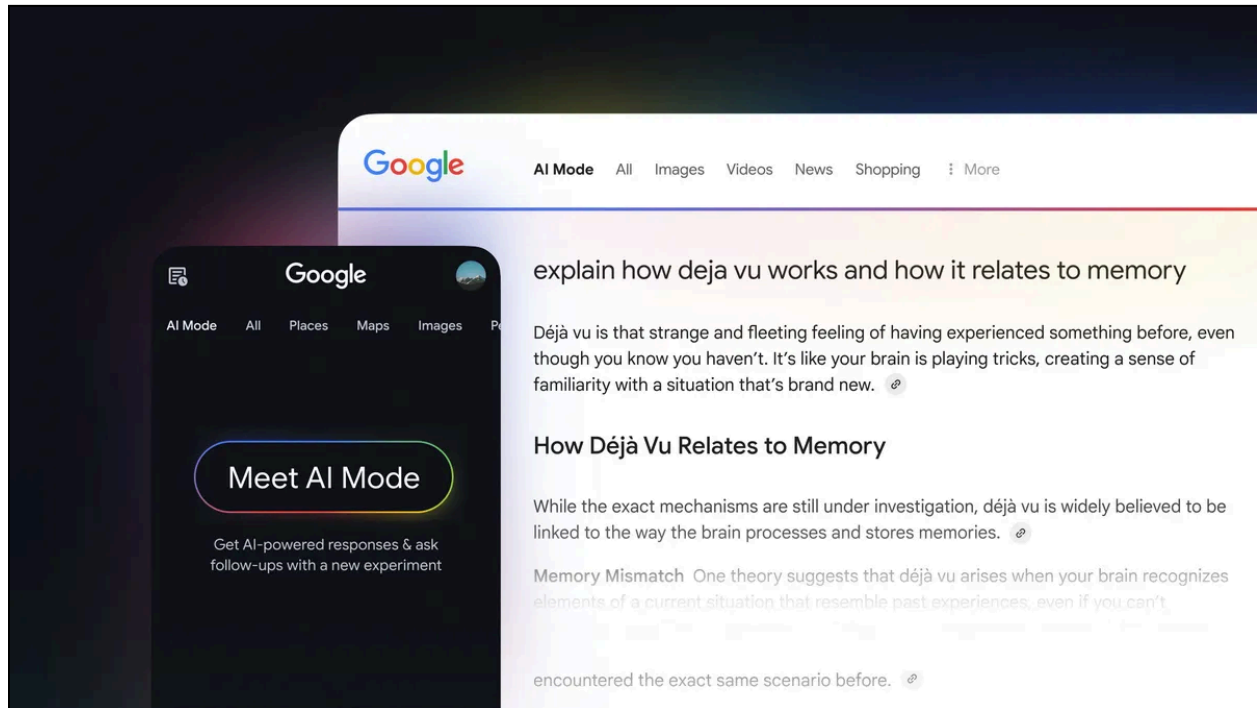


What is Google's AI Mode?

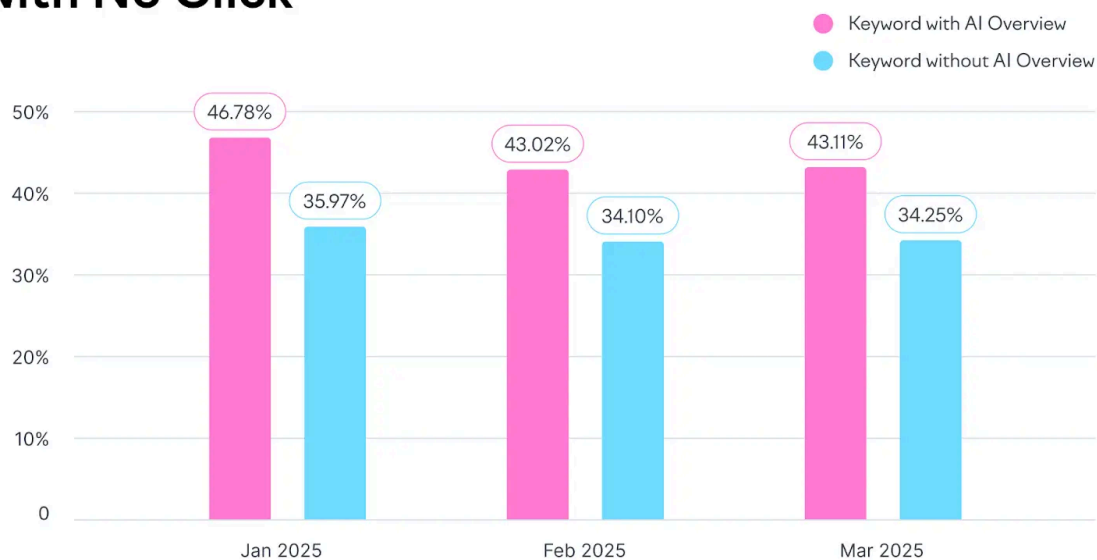


- Liz Reid, Google's head of Search, said, "This is the future of Google Search, a search that goes beyond information to intelligence," when talking about AI Mode ([see video](#) 54 seconds in).
- Effectively, Google uses a customized version of their Gemini 2.5 large language model to generate a series of queries (via a fan-out technique) related to the user's query. Then, it accesses the cached documents in its index and pulls the semantic chunks (based on its [understanding of the passages](#)) to feed them back to Gemini, generating the response.
- LLMs and AI mode like to surface answers based on consensus, so it's unclear how cutting-edge news and science will be surfaced in AI Mode (it will still rank as a news item in "regular search" with the proper promotion).
- Deep Search has [added more capabilities to AI Mode](#)
- Live Search allows [multimodal searching in AI Mode and Google Lens](#).
- AI Mode provides comprehensive answers to questions, presents comparisons, and can even incorporate data visualization.
- Eventually, it will have agentic functionality. Agentic search will enable AI mode to [assist with tasks like researching ticket purchases on your behalf](#).



- It generally pulls from top-ranking websites in Google search results as a primary input for generating answers.
- Sometimes it links to publishers in that answer, and sometimes it links to other Google properties or searches. If you see dotted line links, those are links within the AI Overview to either a Google product or a whole new search result.
- Additionally, we have spotted Google thoroughly answering People Also Asked with AI answers.
- AI Mode will bring more [personalization directly to search results](#). Users can opt in to personalized search based on past searches and usage of connected Google apps such as Gmail. Personalization will be based on your past click behavior and location, as well as your Gmail email and message history, and YouTube viewing behavior.
- Ads have now rolled out to AI Overviews and AI Mode.
- These summaries appear above organic results and push the top organic result down.
- They reduce the need for users to click through to your website. [This UX study](#) shows that users are not clicking on references in AI Overviews. Now, nearly [60%](#) of searches end without a click.

Zero-Click Searches: % of Queries with No Click



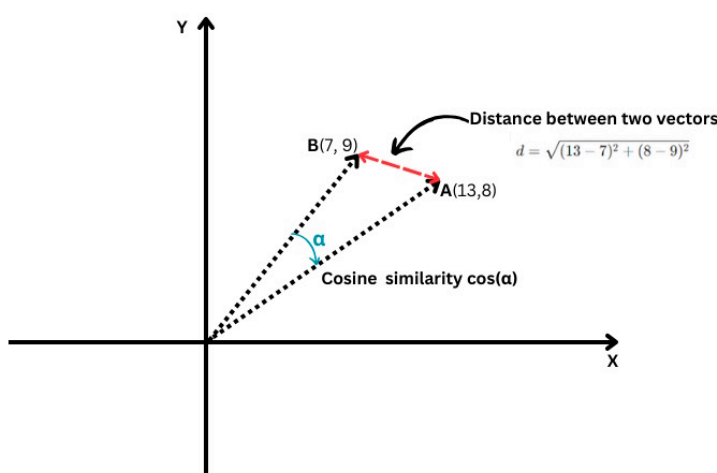
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How is AI Mode Different?

- Google is using Gemini 2.5 to generate the answers.
- It employs a query fan-out technique to gather multiple questions and synthesize all the answers into a single, coherent response.
- It utilizes cosine similarity to compare the question asked with the passages provided in the answer. To be a reference, you need to have a high cosine similarity between the topic and your passage (or page).
 - The platform converts the word and the passage to vector embeddings. Then it calculates the distance between the two vectors to determine if the keyword and topic are semantically related.



Mathematically, it is defined as:

$$\cos(\alpha) = \frac{A \cdot B}{|A| \cdot |B|}$$

- It's personalized to the end user based on everything [Google knows about you](#) (which includes Gmail) and what it knows about your learning journey. Your user embedding is used in delivering the final input.
 - Building user embeddings from browsing behavior involves transforming a user's interaction data into a numerical representation that captures their preferences and habits. This is typically done by collecting and processing raw event data (like page views, clicks, or search queries), then applying machine learning models to create dense vectors (embeddings) that summarize behavior patterns. *Google is also including interactions with Google products in the user embeddings.*
- It can provide answers with multimodal inputs (text, talking, or uploading images)
- It allows for follow-up questions
- It integrates with DeepSearch and utilizes its features as necessary.



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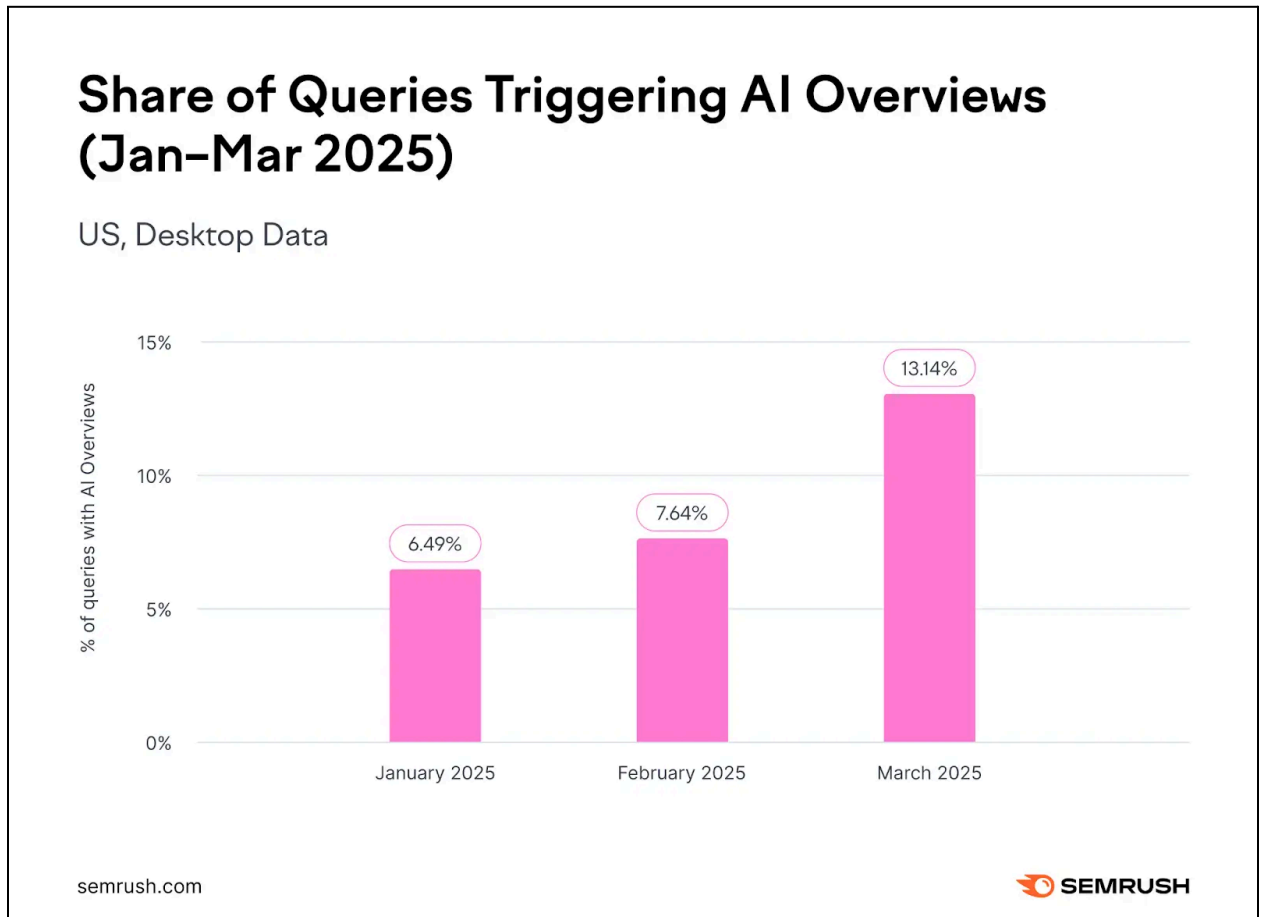
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- It will be highly personalized, and eventually it will function as an AI agent on your behalf.

How AI Overviews are Impacting Traffic:

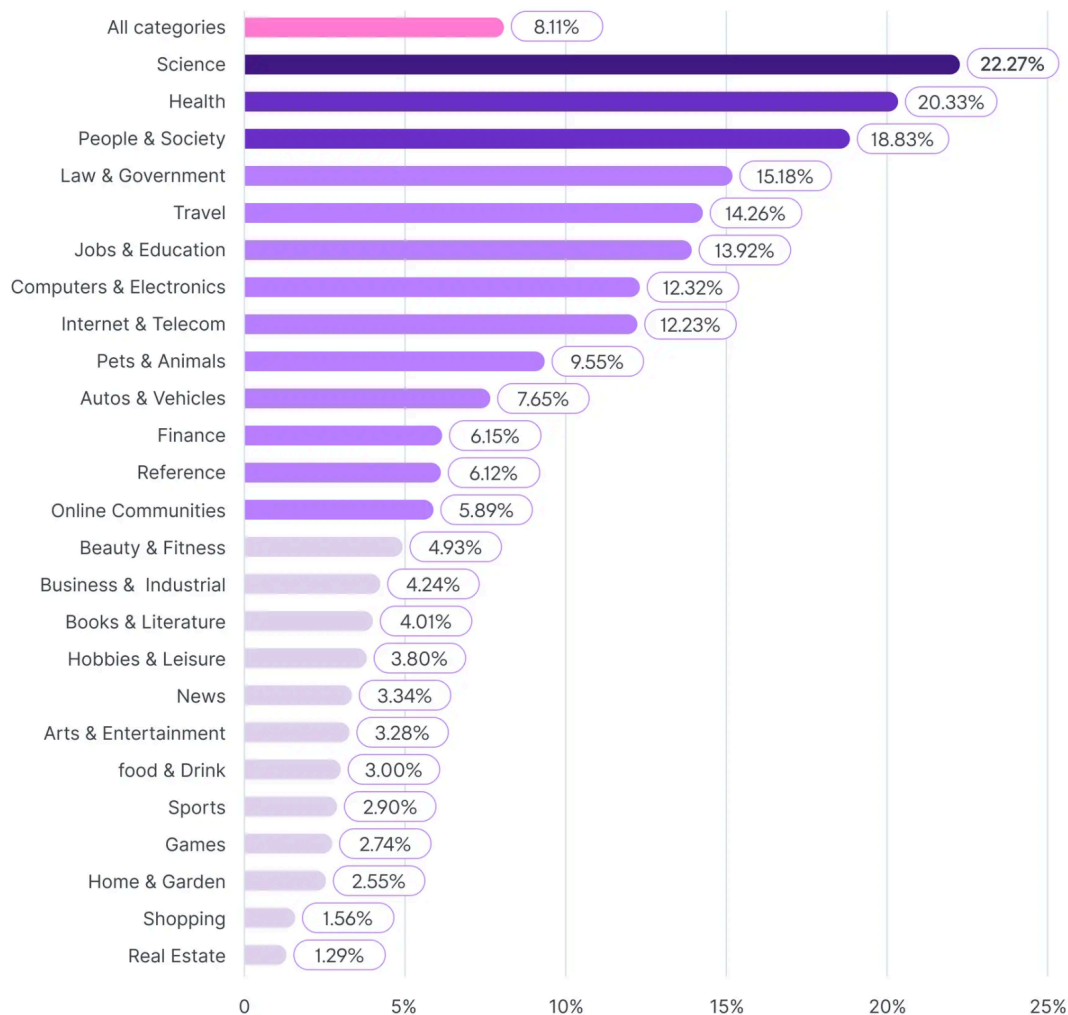
The number of keywords for which AI Overviews are shown has been increasing. Here's a chart of the percentage growth from Jan 2025 to March 2025:



And here's the growth by industry:

Industries by SERPs with AI Share Change

September 2024 – March 2025



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While Google states that AI Overviews receive more clicks, everyone in the SEO industry has seen decreases.

Here are the studies:



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- Search clicks [are down 30% YoY](#) while impressions rise, signaling visibility without traffic.
- Publishers report [30–50% traffic losses](#).
- AI Overviews saturate 90% of healthcare and education content queries.
- 88.1% of information-based queries [trigger an AI Overview](#).
- Science, Health and Society saw the most [increase in AI Overviews](#).

Measuring AI Mode:

- AI Mode does not have its own referrer, and the traffic is currently shown under “Organic” in GA4.
- Once AI Mode *is* tracked in Google Search Console, all links in the answer will be combined into ranking #1 and will not be broken out with their own filter in GSC.
- Some AI Overviews have scroll-to-text [highlighting](#), but all scroll-to-text elements (including People Also Asked and Featured Snippets) are combined in GA4 tracking.
- “Rankings” in AI mode change hourly and are personalized to the end user. Even if we had rank tracking software for AI Mode, it wouldn’t be actionable data.
- Many of these queries will also be missing in Google Search Console, as [approximately 50% of search queries appear as “anonymous queries” in Search Console](#). GSC only starts tracking a query once it reaches a certain popularity threshold. (FYI, Ahrefs GSC reporting will show you some of these anonymized queries.)

How Brands Should Pivot

- Be aware that you can use Google’s AI to get information from [content hidden behind paywalls](#). Leverage Cloudflare’s AI labyrinth if you’re on Cloudflare to protect your IP and [work on licensing deals](#).
- Make sure you have your foundational SEO program running, as all LLMs pull from top-ranking results.
- Build your brand entity - claim and improve your Wikipedia page, Wikidata page, and Knowledge Panels. Add sameas markup to your about page, linking to those references. Google Confirms: [Structured Data Still Essential In AI Search Era](#)
- Brands should set up AI Mode/AI Overviews to monitor brand mentions and how their brand is described. No SEO tool now measures AI Mode, and the best tool for measuring users who are both logged in and out of their Google account is Ziptie.dev.
- Brands should set up [Large Language Model \(LLM\) tracking in Google Analytics 4 \(GA4\)](#).
- Brands should test and improve email conversions on their website to establish a direct relationship with their consumers. Those lists and email campaigns should be segmented based on user interest.



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- Brands should strive to have their brand mentioned across the Internet in places where the LLM training sets expect the brand to be mentioned. For [Gemini](#), that's high-quality blogs, YouTube, and authoritative publications. Reddit or Quora, Q&A sites, if they appear for your keyword. An [Ahrefs](#) study found that "Brand Mentions" were THE SINGLE MOST correlated factor with brand inclusion in AI Overviews. Note: You can get a sense by prompting the LLM with "what does [company/brand] do?" "What is [company/brand] known for?"
- Target your users or personas over keywords. [Sparktoro](#) is excellent for this if your audience is in the US/UK/Canada. [Gemini's Deep Research](#) is also extremely useful for developing and confirming your personas.
- Engage in communities relevant to your target audience. Participate authentically and transparently - listening first, then engaging. Don't barge into the social media platform "party" blatantly selling from the get-go. Develop an influencer program that encourages people on social media to talk more about your brand. Get them to promote your category pages so that you increase your links to them to aid the LLMs in learning more about the major topics associated with your brand.
- Brands need to lean into [zero-click marketing](#) and adjust their KPIs to focus on impressions and conversions or share of voice for their target topics rather than rankings and clicks from search, as users don't click on those AI Overviews.
- Work to improve your [site and author's EEAT signals](#). Share first-hand experience and demonstrate subject matter expertise, publish author bios, and an editorial policy.
- Content improvements:
 - This [study found](#) that large language models consistently cite explicit, fact-based product content and authoritative resources. Product pages, vendor comparisons, and structured "best of" lists top the charts across all engines and funnel stages (46-70% of all cited sources).
 - News and research are cited 5-16% of the time.
 - In Latin America, research was cited 19.7% of the time.
 - Ensure that your content presents a distinct point of view, offers expert commentary, or features an interactive format, such as YouTube videos. See the reference section for tools to measure the cosine similarity between your content passages and the topic, and increase the similarity (see the [presentation below](#) for how to execute on this).
- Structure your content and internal links so that you create a category "hubs" of content on your site.
- Google uses schema to gain a deeper understanding of [your content and entities](#) - use schema markup for authors, organizations, and products. Link those with sameas markup to off-site references.
- This Ahrefs study shows that Google AI Overviews show a [citation preference](#) for deep-linked content, requiring two or more clicks from the home page (i.e., 2+ clicks deep). 82.5% of clicks were to 2+ deep pages. If you observe the second study unfolding



in your LLM analytics, ensuring that all your content (with clear passages) is crawlable, indexable, and semantically interlinked will help LLMs find the best content.

- Run Google Ads in the AI Overviews, because advertisers will get data around keywords and clicks in the AI Overviews that SEOs won't have.
- Google Discover will be coming to Desktop, so create a Google Discover strategy. Set up a page referrer filter for "quicksearch" visits in GA4, which is largely Google Discover traffic.
- Play with integrating fan-out queries into your copy. [Qforia](#) is a free tool from iPullRank that generates a series of synthetic queries, which may be used in AI Mode and AI Overviews.

How to use Qforia:

1. Grab a Gemini key and put it in the API Key input box. You need a paid key because it connects to the most advanced version of Gemini.
2. Put in your query in the query text area. The more complex the query, the more results you're likely to get.

The tool then generates around 28 queries that are:

- Related Queries
- Implicit Queries
- Comparative Queries
- Recent Queries
- Personalized Queries
- Reformulation Queries
- Entity-Expanded Queries

Once you have those queries, you can create chunked passages that are quantitatively relevant to the targeted queries.

Check the cosine similarity of your passages against the target queries using [MarketBrew's](#) AI Overviews Visualizer tool.

Publish the passage chunks on different URLs, and you'll have a better chance at being sourced multiple times since there's a preference for diverse sources.



References

- [How AI Mode Works](#) - Mike King
- [Query Fan Out Approach](#) - Aleyda Solis
- [How to Survive the Search Apocalypse](#) - Katherine Watier Ong
- Tools to measure cosine similarity - [this custom GPT](#), and [Marketbrew's AI Overview visualizer](#).



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