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An iDHL company



UNDERSTANDING AI *visibility* IN B2B MARKETING

How B2B organisations can influence what ChatGPT, Gemini, Copilot and Perplexity say about them.How brands influence what ChatGPT, Gemini, Copilot and Perplexity say about them.



INTRODUCTION

For more than two decades, digital visibility has largely been shaped by a familiar objective, rank highly in search engines and earn traffic to your website. Yet AI is now changing that model.

Increasingly, buyers are receiving answers before visiting a website. Whether through ChatGPT, Gemini, Microsoft Copilot, Perplexity or Google's AI-powered search experiences, users can now receive synthesised recommendations, explanations and comparisons directly within an AI-generated response.

According to The 2027 trend report from Onclusive, evidence suggests marketers are already recognising the significance of this shift.

In the report, 76% of marketers agree AI visibility will matter more than traditional search by the end of 2027 and 50% say AI assistants amoung the top three sources shaping brand repuation. Yet only 17% of marketers say their organisation actually monitors it.

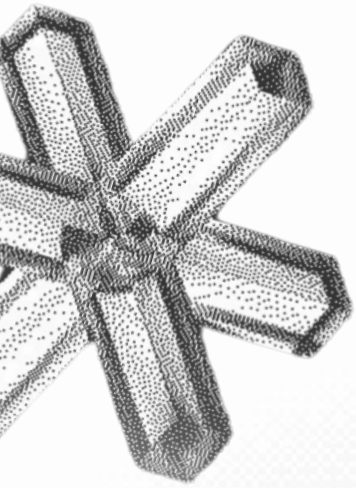
This reveals a significant gap between how important marketers expect AI visibility to become and how prepared organisations are to understand and manage it today.

For B2B marketers, this matters because research often begins long before a buyer makes contact with a business. AI can now influence how buyers understand a problem, which approaches they consider and which suppliers enter their consideration set before a sales conversation has even started.

These systems are no longer simply finding information. They are selecting, evaluating and citing sources to construct answers, creating a new challenge for marketers.

Visibility is no longer determined solely by where your website ranks. It is increasingly influenced by whether AI systems can find, retrieve, trust and cite your content when users ask relevant questions. This shift is creating a new discipline: AI Visibility or GEO.

WHAT IS AI *visibility?*

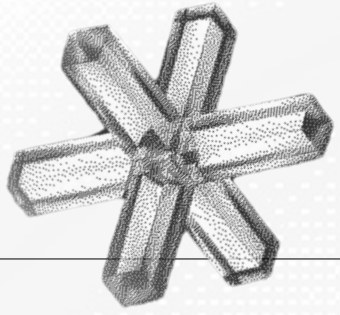


AI Visibility is the likelihood that your brand, content or expertise will be surfaced, referenced or cited when AI-powered search systems generate answers.

Unlike traditional SEO, GEO is not solely determined by rankings. Research shows that AI systems frequently cite content that sits outside the traditional top ten search results and often draw from a much broader ecosystem of sources, including:

- Brand websites
- YouTube videos
- Reddit discussions
- LinkedIn content
- Industry publications
- Review sites
- Directories
- Forums and communities
- Research papers
- Knowledge platforms such as Wikipedia

For B2B marketers, this expands the visibility challenge considerably. Buyers may encounter your expertise through your website, one of your people on LinkedIn, an industry publication, a YouTube explainer, a review platform or a community discussion, meaning authority has to be built beyond channels the brand directly owns.



HOW AI *search* ACTUALLY WORKS

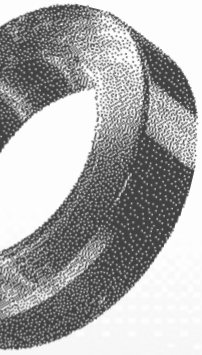


Understanding AI visibility starts with understanding where AI-generated answers come from. While each platform uses a different approach, most answers are built from a combination of three information sources.

PRETRAINED *knowledge*

Large language models are trained in vast quantities of content collected from public, licensed, and synthetic sources. Open research has shown that major training datasets are heavily influenced by web content, Wikipedia, GitHub, books, scientific papers, code repositories and question-and-answer platforms such as Stack Exchange. Common Crawl, a large-scale archive of the web, forms the backbone of many open training datasets.

This training gives AI systems their underlying understanding of language, concepts and relationships. However, training alone does not explain most modern AI-generated answers.



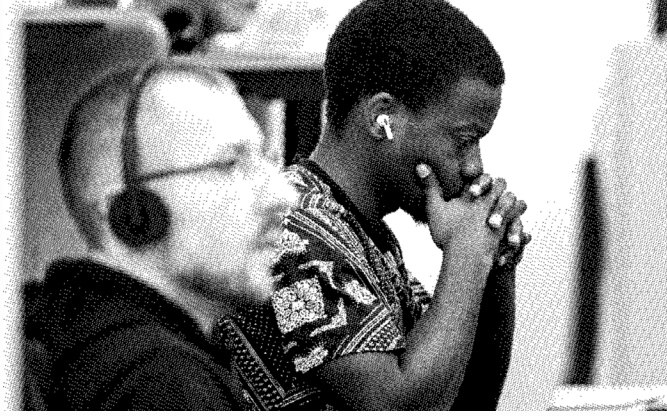
RETRIEVAL

Increasingly, AI search platforms retrieve information at the moment a user asks a question. OpenAI, Google and Microsoft all publicly acknowledge that their systems utilise various forms of live search, query expansion or retrieval to gather information before generating a response. These platforms often break questions into multiple sub-queries, search across relevant sources and synthesise the results into a single answer.

This is particularly important for:

- Product comparisons
- Commercial decisions
- Industry developments
- Local searches
- Company information
- News and current events

For brands, this means retrievability often matters more than historical presence within a model's training data.



USER *context*

Enterprise AI systems such as Microsoft Copilot can also access internal information sources such as emails, documents, OneDrive, SharePoint and connected systems. ChatGPT and Claude can similarly use memories, uploaded files and connectors to improve responses.

This adds another dimension for B2B marketers because AI can increasingly support research and decision-making inside the buyer's own organisation, using information that public marketing activity cannot see or influence. Marketers cannot control this layer, but they can influence the public content, discussions, media and authority signals that buyers bring into that environment.



THE NEW *reality:* RANKINGS ALONE ARE NO LONGER ENOUGH

One of the most important findings from AI citation studies is that visibility and rankings are no longer synonymous.

Recent research found that a growing proportion of citations appearing in Google AI Overviews come from pages ranking outside Google's top ten results, with substantial numbers originating beyond the top 100 altogether. Other studies found limited overlap between traditional rankings and AI citations.

This does not mean SEO is becoming irrelevant. Rather, it means visibility is expanding beyond rankings. The question is no longer: "Do I rank?"

The question is: "When a buyer asks a question that matters to their decision, are we one of the most credible sources AI can use to answer it?"



BUILDING A CONNECTED VISIBILITY SYSTEM

AI visibility is no longer determined by what happens on a brand's website alone. AI systems can draw on a much wider ecosystem of information, including publishers, video, social platforms, communities, reviews, professional networks and institutional sources.

In the B2B marketing world, this means influencing visibility across more of the places buyers use to understand problems, assess expertise, compare approaches, and evaluate potential partners.

For brands, this means being clear and useful enough to answer the questions audiences are asking, while ensuring the information AI systems find about them is credible, consistent and protected.

We see four pillars that brands need to consider as they build and protect their visibility across this wider ecosystem.

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THE *four pillars* OF AI VISIBILITY IN B2B MARKETING

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01. Websites, Publishers and Partners

TECHNICAL SEO | CONTENT | DIGITAL PR

A brand's website remains the foundation of AI visibility. It is the place where an organisation has the greatest control over what it publishes, what it demonstrates expertise in, and how clearly that information can be accessed and understood..

AI models learn by processing huge amounts of written information from sources such as websites and articles. This collection of information is known as a training dataset.

To process that information, AI models break text into smaller pieces. These might be a whole word, part of a word, a number or even a piece of punctuation. Each of these pieces is called a token.

The scale of the open web within this information is significant. RedPajama (an open-source collaborative AI initiative led by Together AI) when analysing a 1.2 trillion-token training dataset, 878 billion tokens came from Common Crawl, an archive of publicly available web content.

Put simply, the majority of the material within this dataset came from the open web. That places greater emphasis on creating websites that do more than describe products and services.

B2B brands need useful, accessible content that demonstrates what they know and answers the questions buyers ask as they move from understanding a problem to comparing potential approaches and suppliers. But authority does not stop with owned content, what credible third parties publish about your brand matters too.

A 2026 BuzzStream study analysed more than 4 million AI citations across roughly 4,000 prompts and found that, when brand-agnostic queries were excluded, around 80% of citations came from earned media.

That brings content, SEO and digital PR much closer together, suggesting brandsn should focus on:

- Creating genuinely useful website content that answers buyer questions rather than relying on promotional messaging.
- Building depth around priority topics through research, guides, FAQs, analysis and educational content.
- Maintaining strong technical foundations so important information can be crawled, understood and retrieved
- Publishing original research and insight that gives publishers and other organisations credible material to reference.
- Earning coverage and links from relevant third parties that reinforce expertise beyond the brand's own channels.
- Working with credible partners and publishers to create a wider network of authority around the topics the brand wants to own.

The objective is no longer simply to rank. It is to create an interconnected body of information that makes a brand a credible source worth using in an answer.

02. Social and Community

YOUTUBE | COMMUNITIES | REVIEWS AND DIRECTORIES

Some of the information shaping AI-generated answers now comes from places where people explain, discuss, compare and evaluate brands rather than from the brands themselves.

Video is increasingly becoming a more important part of the visibility mix. An analysis by Ahrefs found that YouTube accounted for 24.5% of AI Overview citations came from YouTube, including videos that did not rank within Google's top 100 organic results for the same query.

For B2B marketers, that creates an opportunity to make specialist knowledge easier to discover. Product demonstrations, technical explainers, implementation guidance and answers from subject matter experts can turn expertise that might otherwise sit inside the business into information buyers can find and AI systems can understand.

Almost one in four citations among these leading sources came from YouTube. For brands looking for more visibility, video creates an opportunity to turn expertise into searchable knowledge through tutorials, demonstrations, explainers, and answers to common industry questions. Even titles, descriptions, chapters, captions and transcripts also create additional information that can help systems understand what a video is about.

Online communities however provide a different type of authority. Platforms such as Reddit and Stack Exchange contain real questions, answers, recommendations and experiences that can offer perspectives that are difficult for brand-owned content to recreate.



In B2B markets, these conversations can be particularly valuable because buyers are often looking for exactly the information that polished brand content struggles to provide, including implementation challenges, real-world experiences, limitations and comparisons between different approaches.

In RedPajama's 1.2 trillion-token training dataset we mentioned earlier, 20 billion tokens came from Stack Exchange, showing that community-created knowledge was represented within the information used to train the model.

Reviews and directories provide another layer by capturing customer experience, comparisons and reputation signals beyond brand claims. When buyers ask which provider to choose, how competing solutions compare or what existing customers think, these independent sources can provide evidence that company-owned content cannot provide on its own.

For this pillar, B2B marketers should be looking at:

- Creating useful video content that answers questions and demonstrates genuine expertise.
- Understanding relevant communities and the questions and conversations taking place within them.
- Listening to the language audiences use when describing problems, products and experiences.
- Participating genuinely in communities where the organisation can add useful knowledge or expertise.
- Maintaining accurate information across relevant directories and review platforms.
- Encouraging authentic customer reviews and responding constructively to negative experiences.
- Monitoring how the brand and its category are discussed beyond owned channels.

Some of the information shaping AI-generated answers comes from places where people discuss brands rather than from the brands themselves, making social and community platforms an increasingly important part of AI visibility.

03. Business and Institutional

YOUTUBE | COMMUNITIES | REVIEWS AND DIRECTORIES

For B2B organisations, authority is increasingly connected to the people and professional sources that demonstrate expertise around a subject. This creates an important role for subject matter experts, professional networks, industry bodies and other institutions alongside corporate publishing.

LinkedIn provides a clear example of this in action. A 2026 Meltwater study analysed 9.5 million AI citations across 16 B2B categories and found that LinkedIn was the second most-cited source overall, behind YouTube. The research also found that 75% of LinkedIn citations came from individual member profiles rather than Company Pages, with a further 51% of that coming from members with fewer than 10,000 followers.

These findings demonstrate the visibility potential of expertise that already exists within B2B organisations. A technical specialist, strategist, researcher or senior leader who consistently contributes useful insight can help strengthen the association between a business and the subjects it wants to be known for, even without building a particularly large personal audience.

Institutional sources can reinforce that authority further. Industry bodies, professional associations, research organisations, educational institutions and other respected sources can provide independent context and credibility around specialist subjects, giving brands opportunities to contribute expertise beyond their own corporate channels.

So, when it comes to this influence, you should consider:

- Identifying the subjects where they have genuine authority rather than attempting to comment on every industry conversation.
- Turning internal knowledge into external insight so expertise does not remain inside the organisation.
- Encouraging subject matter experts to contribute regularly across LinkedIn and other relevant professional platforms.
- Publishing original opinions, observations and analysis rather than simply repackaging corporate content.
- Building relationships with relevant professional and industry bodies that influence conversations within the sector.
- Contributing expertise to research, industry initiatives and wider discussions where the organisation has something useful to add.
- Creating consistent associations between the organisation, its people and its areas of expertise.

For B2B brands in particular, authority therefore has both a human and institutional dimension, with the expertise of employees and recognition from credible external organisations helping reinforce what the business knows and the subjects it can credibly speak about.

04. Brand Integrity and Defence

HALLUCINATION AUDITS | PROMPT INJECTION DEFENCE | AGENTIC-COMMERCE READINESS

Arguably the most important pillar for B2B marketers, visibility also creates a new brand management challenge. Being surfaced in an AI-generated answer has little value if the information a prospective buyer receives is inaccurate, outdated or misleading.

As AI becomes more embedded in research and purchasing, monitoring how the brand is represented needs to become part of visibility strategy.

One risk associated with poor management of brand integrity is hallucination, where an AI system generates information that sounds plausible but is incorrect. For brands, this could mean inaccurate information about products, services, people, policies or capabilities appearing within AI-generated answers.

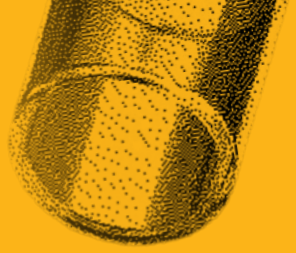
Regular hallucination audits can test important brand, product and category prompts to identify incorrect descriptions, outdated information and inconsistent recommendations, giving organisations a clearer picture of how they are currently represented.

Security needs to be a second consideration. OWASP defines prompt injection as a vulnerability where inputs alter an AI model's behaviour or output in unintended ways, including indirect attacks where instructions are encountered within external sources such as websites or files.

For brands introducing AI into connected customer journeys and internal systems, understanding where those vulnerabilities could occur needs to form part of the broader approach to brand integrity.

This becomes more significant as AI moves from providing information to carrying





out actions. OWASP has highlighted risks associated with agentic AI where systems can interact with tools, credentials and connected services, reinforcing the importance of enforced scope, appropriate permissions and monitoring of the actions an agent takes.

The development of agentic commerce adds a commercial dimension. It could include agents researching suppliers, comparing specifications, checking compatibility, gathering pricing information, evaluating availability or assembling potential shortlists. That makes the accuracy and structure of commercial information increasingly important, even for businesses with complex or sales-led buying journeys.

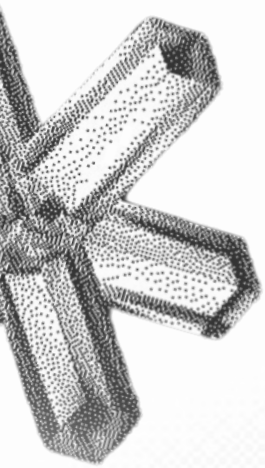
It is therefore paramount that as part of the visibility strategy brands are:

- Running regular hallucination audits around important brand, product and category questions.
- Monitoring incorrect and outdated representations and investigating the sources that may be reinforcing them.
- Maintaining consistent product and service information across the places AI systems may access.
- Assessing exposure to prompt injection where AI systems interact with websites, external content, files or connected tools.
- Applying appropriate permissions and human oversight to consequential AI actions.
- Preparing structured commercial information that can be accurately interpreted as AI-assisted buying develops.
- Establishing clear ownership of AI reputation and integrity across marketing, digital, technology and security teams.





MEASURING AI *visibility?*



As with SEO fifteen years ago, measurement remains challenging.

AI platforms are evolving rapidly and citation behaviour changes frequently. However, brands can begin measuring progress through indicators such as:

- Growth in branded searches
- Referral traffic from AI platforms
- Citation appearances within AI answers
- Share of voice across high-authority sources
- Review volume and sentiment
- LinkedIn engagement
- YouTube visibility
- Community mentions
- Publisher coverage

The objective is to strengthen your overall visibility ecosystem over just tracking a single metric.

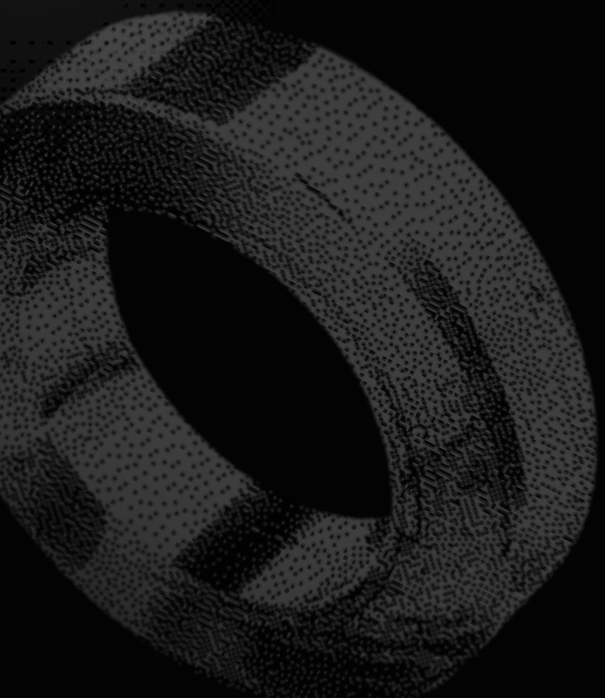


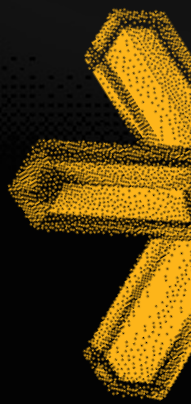
THE *future* OF DIGITAL VISIBILITY

The emergence of AI search does not replace traditional digital marketing fundamentals. Strong websites still matter. Authority still matters. Trust still matters.

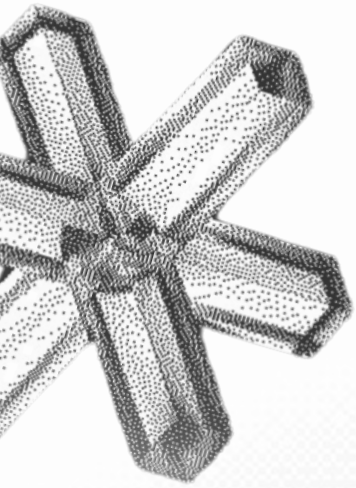
What has changed is the range of places where those signals are created. The brands that succeed over the next five years will not simply optimise for search engines. They will optimise for discovery. They will build visibility across websites, video platforms, professional networks, communities, publishers and review ecosystems.

They will treat AI systems not as a new channel, but as a new layer sitting across the entire digital landscape. The future of visibility is not about ranking first. It is about becoming the source that AI systems trust when buyers ask questions that matter.





YOUR *ten-step* B2B AI VISIBILITY CHECKLIST



AI visibility extends far beyond checking whether your brand appears in ChatGPT.

Use these ten steps to build an initial picture of how accurately and consistently your brand is being understood, represented and recommended across AI search.

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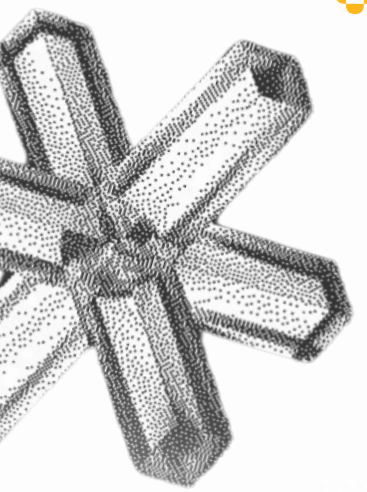
01. AUDIT HOW AI CURRENTLY REPRESENTS YOUR BRAND

Test your brand across ChatGPT, Gemini, Microsoft Copilot and Perplexity. Review not only whether you appear, but the accuracy, sentiment, positioning and consistency of the answers. Look for incorrect information, outdated claims, gaps between platforms and differences in how your expertise is represented.

02. TEST THE QUESTIONS BUYERS ASK THROUGHOUT THE BUYING JOURNEY

Build prompts around the different stages of your B2B buyer journey, from early problem identification and research through to solution comparison, supplier evaluation and purchase consideration. Prioritise questions with clear commercial intent to understand whether your brand appears when buyers are getting closer to a decision.





03. BENCHMARK WHO AI RECOMMENDS AND WHY

Compare your visibility with key competitors across the same commercially important prompts. Identify which brands are recommended, how they are positioned, why they appear to be recommended, and which sources are cited to support those recommendations. This can begin to reveal where competitors have built authority that your brand currently lacks.

04. ASSESS WHETHER YOUR EXPERTISE IS GENUINELY ANSWERABLE

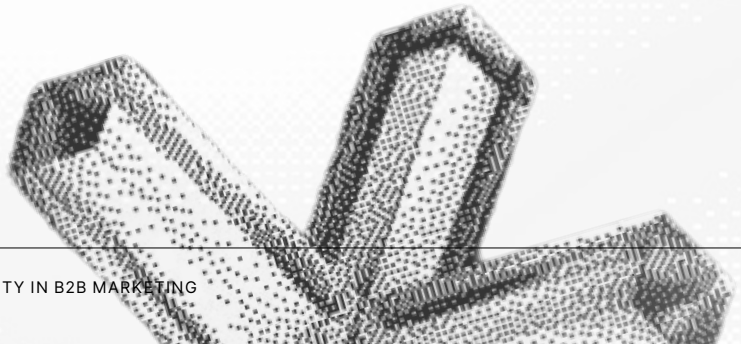
Review whether the expertise across your website is accessible, understandable and genuinely useful to AI systems. Look beyond keywords and ask whether your content provides clear answers, demonstrates depth and gives enough context to what your organization knows.

05. REVIEW HOW DISCOVERABLE YOUR CONTENT IS TO MACHINES

Assess whether crawlers and retrieval systems can easily access and interpret your most important information. Review crawl accessibility, structured data, internal relationships between content, entity associations and overall content discoverability, particularly around the topics and services most commercially important to the business.

06. MAP YOUR INDEPENDENT AUTHORITY

Look beyond your owned channels to understand where your expertise is being independently validated. Review publisher coverage, industry media, partner websites, research, professional bodies and other authoritative third-party sources. Assess whether these sources reinforce what you want to be known for and provide credible evidence beyond your own claims.





07. UNDERSTAND THE CONVERSATIONS INFLUENCING YOUR REPUTATION

Identify the Reddit communities, forums and specialist groups where people discuss your category. Look at the questions being asked, brands being recommended, experiences being shared and reasons people give for choosing one solution over another. Pay particular attention to recurring opinions or recommendations that could influence how both buyers and AI systems understand your market.

08. MAKE YOUR HUMAN EXPERTISE VISIBLE

Identify the subject matter experts inside your organisation whose knowledge could strengthen your external authority. Assess whether their expertise is visible through LinkedIn, industry commentary, articles, events and other professional sources, and whether those individuals are consistently associated with the topics your business wants to be known for.

09. JOIN THE DOTS

Look across everything you've uncovered so far to understand where the gaps connect. Identify important areas where competitors, publishers or other experts consistently dominate the conversation, but your organisation has little or no visibility. This helps pinpoint where you need to build greater depth and authority, rather than simply producing more content.

10. PRIORITISE THE GAPS WITH THE GREATEST COMMERCIAL IMPACT

Bring the findings together and prioritise opportunities based on buyer relevance, competitive gaps and potential commercial impact. Focus first on the questions that influence buying decisions, areas where competitors consistently outperform you, and gaps where stronger visibility could contribute to consideration, preference or demand.



OTHER MTM *content*

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1. Building a Reddit strategy that shapes your AI reputation
2. Could ChatGPT Ads change advertising forever?
3. Why marketers should pay attention to concepts like WebMCP