

*NeverRanked* AEO + SCHEMA DEPLOYMENT

ANNUAL REPORT

# The State of AEO

*NeverRanked tracked-universe report, 2026-05-10*

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AUTHOR

Lance Roylo

SIX ENGINES TRACKED

ChatGPT · Perplexity · Gemini · Claude · Microsoft Copilot · Google AI Overviews

# State of AEO: NeverRanked tracked-universe report

*From The Citation Tape, NeverRanked's standing AI-citation measurement system.*

*Generated 2026-05-10. Window: 2026-04-14 to 2026-05-10.*

## *Data integrity notice*

*This week's data is partial. 3 of 3 tracked clients fell below 80% keyword completion due to a known infrastructure issue (filed at `content/handoff-questions/citation-cron-not-firing.md`). Numbers below should be read as a lower bound on what AI engines actually retrieve until the fix lands.*

*Affected this week: - **and-scene**: 1 of 5 keywords queried (20%) - **hawaii-theatre**: 2 of 14 keywords queried (14%) - **neverranked**: 6 of 15 keywords queried (40%)*

*The full per-client completion table appears in the methodology section at the end of this report.*

## What this report is

A standing snapshot of what AI engines actually cite when answering questions about NeverRanked's tracked client universe. Pulled from live 437 citation runs across 5 engines (bing, gemini, google\_ai\_overview, openai, perplexity), 17 tracked keywords, and 3 clients spanning 3 verticals.

Generated weekly. Same script, same data sources, no manual curation. The methodology is the script ( `scripts/state-of-aeo-generate.mjs` ) plus the public scoring engine at `check.neverranked.com`. Reproducible by anyone with the same query against the same database.

## Headline

Across 437 captured AI engine responses, the single most-cited third-party source is **vertexaisearch.cloud.google.com** (Google AI infrastructure (Gemini grounding)), appearing in 132 citation runs across 1 engine and 5 tracked keywords.

Implication: any tracked client whose category overlaps with this source's coverage area (and whose own brand is not yet present on it) is leaving citation share on the table. The path to closing the gap is source-specific. See the per-client baseline section below.

## Where AI engines pull from

Distribution of citation runs by source type, excluding client-owned URLs (which represent successful citation, not the moat-building question of "where else are they pulling from"):

SOURCE TYPE	RUNS	SHARE
aeo-services-agency	417	29.6%
seo-publication	227	16.1%
aeo-platform	203	14.4%
google-ai-infra	132	9.4%
google-maps	112	8.0%
youtube	108	7.7%
news	108	7.7%
wikipedia	41	2.9%
reddit	18	1.3%
directory	17	1.2%
tripadvisor	11	0.8%
social	11	0.8%

## Top 15 third-party sources

The domains that appeared most often as cited references across the dataset. Excludes client-owned domains.

DOMAIN	SOURCE TYPE	RUNS	ENGINES	KEYWORDS	CLIENTS
vertexaisearch.cloud.google.com	google-ai-infra	132	1	5	2
google.com	google-maps	112	1	4	3
youtube.com	youtube	108	3	10	1
prnewswire.com	news	102	4	1	1
hawaiitheatre.com	other	101	3	2	1
geekpoweredstudios.com	aeo-services-agency	74	4	1	1
eseospace.com	aeo-services-agency	58	3	1	1
orbitmedia.com	seo-publication	55	1	2	1
sparktoro.com	seo-publication	54	1	1	1
evertune.ai	aeo-platform	54	2	2	1
greenbananaseo.com	aeo-services-agency	52	2	5	1
arcintermedia.com	aeo-services-agency	48	2	4	1
animalz.co	seo-publication	48	1	2	1
generatemore.ai	aeo-platform	44	2	2	1
boralagency.com	other	42	2	2	1

## What each engine cites differently

Top 5 sources per engine. When two engines have very different top lists, that's a signal about how each one's retrieval differs.

### PERPLEXITY (236 RUNS)

- **youtube.com** – 83 runs
- **orbitmedia.com** – 55 runs
- **geekpoweredstudios.com** – 54 runs
- **sparktoro.com** – 54 runs
- **eseospace.com** – 52 runs

### OPENAI (146 RUNS)

- **google.com** – 112 runs
- **prnewswire.com** – 59 runs
- **en.wikipedia.org** – 33 runs
- **hawaiiitheatre.com** – 32 runs
- **cited.so** – 25 runs

### GEMINI (34 RUNS)

- **vertexaisearch.cloud.google.com** – 132 runs
- **hawaiiitheatre.com** – 36 runs
- **builtin.com** – 6 runs
- **20northmarketing.com** – 6 runs
- **vividseats.com** – 6 runs

### BING (11 RUNS)

- **myapplications.microsoft.com** – 8 runs
- **mychart.org** – 5 runs
- **mypay.dfas.mil** – 5 runs
- **merriam-webster.com** – 5 runs
- **mytax.hasil.gov.my** – 4 runs

### GOOGLE\_AI\_OVERVIEW (10 RUNS)

- **reddit.com** – 18 runs
- **linkedin.com** – 8 runs
- **semrush.com** – 5 runs
- **farandwide.io** – 4 runs
- **runningfish.net** – 3 runs

## Vertical breakdown

*Verticals with at least 3 tracked clients enable category-level insights.*

Current vertical distribution:

VERTICAL	CLIENTS	RUNS
AEO agency	1	403
corporate training	1	3
performing arts venue	1	31

As more clients onboard inside any vertical, this section will populate automatically with category-level patterns.

## Per-client baselines

Each client's current citation footprint as of 2026-05-10. These numbers are the baseline against which any future case study is measured. Citation rate climbing from one of these starting points to a higher one over a defined window is the case-study artifact.

### NEVERRANKED - AEO AGENCY

- **403** captured runs across **14** tracked keywords
- Named in **0** runs (**0%** citation rate)
- Top 5 sources cited alongside this client's queries:
  - vertexaisearch.cloud.google.com (129 runs)
  - youtube.com (108 runs)
  - prnewswire.com (102 runs)
  - google.com (100 runs)
  - geekpoweredstudios.com (74 runs)

### HAWAII-THEATRE - PERFORMING ARTS VENUE

- **31** captured runs across **2** tracked keywords
- Named in **30** runs (**97%** citation rate)
- Top 5 sources cited alongside this client's queries:
  - hawaiitheatre.com (101 runs)
  - tripadvisor.com (11 runs)
  - en.wikipedia.org (9 runs)
  - ticketmaster.com (8 runs)
  - google.com (6 runs)

## AND-SCENE - CORPORATE TRAINING

- 3 captured runs across 1 tracked keywords
- Named in 0 runs (0% citation rate)
- Top 5 sources cited alongside this client's queries:
  - google.com (6 runs)
  - themanifest.com (2 runs)
  - theknowledgeacademy.com (2 runs)
  - dalecarnegie.com (1 runs)
  - nobleprog.com (1 runs)

## Methodology and sample disclosure

Every number in this report comes from `citation_runs` in the NeverRanked production database. Each run is one query against one AI engine for one tracked keyword, with the engine's `response_text` and `cited_urls` captured as raw evidence.

Engines covered: `bing`, `gemini`, `google_ai_overview`, `openai`, `perplexity`.

Sample size at this snapshot:

- 437 citation runs
- 3 tracked clients across 3 verticals
- 17 tracked keywords
- Window: 2026-04-14 to 2026-05-10

## KEYWORD COMPLETION THIS WINDOW

Per-client share of active tracked keywords with at least one citation run in the window. Below 100% means the producer did not complete the full keyword set. A known infrastructure issue causes partial completions on multi-keyword clients (filed in `content/handoff-questions/`); numbers will rise as the fix lands.

CLIENT	ACTIVE KEYWORDS	KEYWORDS WITH RUNS	COMPLETION
and-scene	5	1	20%
hawaii-theatre	14	2	14%
neverranked	15	6	40%

Honest limits: this is NeverRanked's tracked subset, not a random sample of the AI search universe. Findings are descriptive of what AI engines say to questions in our clients' categories. Generalizing beyond those categories requires more data.

The script that generated this report is at `scripts/state-of-aeo-generate.mjs` and reads no private data. The schema for `citation_runs` is public in the migrations folder.