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# Yext Research: 86% of AI Citations Come from Brand-Managed Sources, Clarifying How Marketers Can Compete in the AI Search Era

*Study of 6.8M AI citations across ChatGPT, Gemini, and Perplexity shows why location-level data is the key to visibility and why brand-level studies can mislead.*

NEW YORK--(BUSINESS WIRE)-- Yext, Inc. (NYSE: YEXT), the leading brand visibility platform, today released a landmark study analyzing 6.8 million AI citations – defined as the sources surfaced in AI-generated answers – across ChatGPT (OpenAI), Gemini (Google), and Perplexity.

The research shows that **86% of citations come from sources brands already control, such as websites and listings**. This finding cuts through confusion about the role of forums like Reddit and provides marketers with trusted data to guide strategy as consumers rapidly adopt AI search.

The Yext analysis starts where consumers start: with a query, in a specific location, with a specific intent. This approach shows how AI visibility actually works in practice and why brand-level visibility reports often give an incomplete or misleading picture.

“Discussions about measuring AI visibility are missing the most important factor. The *consumer*. AI generates answers based on a person's real-world location and context, not a generic brand view. This has led to more confusion than clarity about what really powers AI,” said Christian J. Ward, Chief Data Officer at Yext. “Our research clears this up. We start with the consumer and their specific query. That is what determines visibility. The message for marketers is that the most impactful sources are the very ones they can already control or influence.”

## Key Findings

- **Websites are the #1 citation source:** First-party websites generated 2.9M citations (44%), ahead of listings (2.9M / 42%) and reviews/social (545K / 8%).

- **Forums are less influential than expected:** Reddit and similar platforms accounted for just 2% of citations once location context and query intent were applied.
- **AI models show distinct preferences:** Gemini favors websites (52.1%), OpenAI leans on listings (48.7%), and Perplexity diversifies across MapQuest and TripAdvisor.
- **Citation patterns vary by question type:** For unbranded objective queries – often the most discoverable – first-party websites and local pages made up nearly 60% of citations. Branded or subjective queries leaned more heavily on listings and reviews.

## Industry Differences

- **Retail relies on owned websites:** 47.6% of citations come from first-party websites, underscoring the importance of structured, authoritative local pages.
- **Finance favors authoritative domains:** 48.2% of citations are tied to brand-owned websites like local banking pages, reflecting consumer demand for trusted sources.
- **Healthcare depends on directories:** Listings account for 52.6% of citations, with WebMD and Vitals and industry-specific directories dominating visibility.
- **Food service is reputation-driven:** Reviews and social content make up 13.3% of citations, the highest of any industry, while listings remain the single largest driver at 41.6%.
- **Across industries, brands hold control:** 86% of citations come from owned or managed sources (websites, listings, and reviews/social), giving marketers a clear path to influence visibility in AI search.

## AI Search Adoption is Accelerating

The findings come as consumer adoption of AI search is surging. According to our recent report, [The Rise of AI Search Archetypes\\*](#) more than half of U.S. consumers already use AI assistants like ChatGPT, Gemini, or Perplexity at least once a week, with adoption skewing even higher among younger demographics.

This surge in usage has made AI visibility a critical concern for marketers:

- 64% of marketing leaders in the survey said they are unsure how to measure success in AI search today.
- 72% believe AI search will have a bigger impact on customer acquisition than traditional SEO within three years.

Yext's location-first framework offers marketers a clear way forward and a data foundation for competing in an AI-driven future.

## What Brands Can Do Now

Yext's research reveals that visibility in AI search is not random. It's driven by structured, consistent information distributed across the right sources.

To increase citation rates and appear in AI-generated answers, brands should:

- Measure visibility at the local level and across sources to identify where they're cited and where they're missing.
- Structure brand facts in a centralized system that connects entities like locations, services, and providers, making them machine-readable and trustworthy.
- Distribute information to the sources AI trusts most – websites, listings, and review platforms – so brand facts are complete, accurate, and easy for AI to use.

“From the beginning, Yext has pioneered the idea that structured, accurate data is the foundation of digital visibility,” said Mike Walrath, CEO of Yext. “This research proves what we’ve always known: when brands control their data, they control their visibility. That’s the through-line of our innovation, and it’s why Yext continues to lead in a rapidly changing landscape.”

## Methodology

The results in this report are based on an analysis of 6.8 million AI citations collected from 1.6 million queries per model across ChatGPT (OpenAI), Gemini (Google), and Perplexity between July 1 and August 31, 2025. The queries were structured to test four intent quadrants (branded/unbranded × objective/subjective) across four industries: retail, financial services, healthcare, and food service. Data was gathered using the Yext Scout platform across thousands of client and prospect locations worldwide. In total, the study identified 20,820 unique citation domains.

**Explore the full Yext Research findings:** <https://www.yext.com/research/article/ai-citations-user-locations-query-context>

***\*Survey details:** The results in this report are from an online survey of 2,237 adults who made a purchase online within the past three months and used voice search (e.g., Siri, Google Assistant, Alexa) or conversational AI (e.g., ChatGPT, Perplexity, Claude) to find information online. The survey was conducted from March 20 to April 6, 2025, by Researchscape International on behalf of Yext. Results were weighted by country population, age, and gender. Respondents were from four countries: the United States, the United Kingdom, France, and Germany.*

## About Yext

Yext (NYSE: YEXT) is the leading brand visibility platform, built for a world where discovery and engagement happen everywhere — across AI search, traditional search, social media, websites, and direct communications. Powered by over 2 billion trusted data points and a suite of integrated products, Yext provides brands the clarity, control, and confidence to perform across digital channels. From real-time insights to AI-driven recommendations and execution at scale, Yext turns a brand's digital presence into a competitive advantage. Thousands of leading brands rely on Yext to stay visible, stay ahead, and grow. To learn more about Yext, visit [Yext.com](https://www.yext.com) or follow us on [LinkedIn](#) and [X](#).

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