

AI for finding products or services

A conversation with three AI engines. The questions asked assume you have a basic understanding of SEO.

Key summary points

- The answers are contradictory in areas
- Focus on Authority and Expertise (E-E-A-T): AI models prioritize content from authoritative, trustworthy sources. To stand out, you need to build your reputation as an expert in your field.
- Create high-quality, factual content that answers questions in plain language.
- Grow reputation through reviews, local links and from authoritative sites
- Google business profile is indexed as an authoritative source
- AI's dataset is old and so weak at searching recent information. ChatGPT offers plugins and gemini is better with access to googlebot.
- Basic SEO strategies are important - Keywords - Semantics

Does AI Collect Data Like a Search Engine?

ChatGPT - A search engine crawler, like Googlebot, has a primary goal: to find, download, and index web pages to create a searchable database.

AI tools like ChatGPT don't fetch live product/service data unless explicitly given access to real-time search (e.g. via the web tool, browser plugin, or third-party integrations).

DeepSeek - Yes, in part: DeepSeek may use web crawling (similar to search engines) to gather training data, but it also relies on other sources like books, research papers, and curated datasets.

No, in purpose: Unlike search engines, DeepSeek doesn't index pages for real-time retrieval—it learns patterns from the data to generate text.

Gemini -Some training data is gathered from the public web using methods that resemble crawling, the ultimate purpose is different.

In essence, a search engine is a tool for retrieving existing information, while a large language model like Gemini is a tool for generating new information based on its training.

How often does AI index the web

DeepSeek-V3's knowledge cutoff is July 2024.

ChatGPT uses its training data up to ~mid-2023 by default - GPT-4o's cut-off is June 2024.

Specifically for **Gemini**, the system heavily relies on Google's existing search index. This means that if a webpage isn't indexed by Google's crawlers, it's unlikely to be used by Gemini. The frequency with which Gemini's knowledge is updated for real-time queries is therefore tied directly to the frequency of Google's web crawling, which can vary widely.

When AI crawls website data, does it use the same semantic structure as a search engine

No — **ChatGPT** (and similar AI tools) **does not crawl** the web like a search engine does, and **does not use the same semantic structure** or indexing approach.

No, **Gemini** doesn't use the exact same semantic structure as a traditional search engine. While Gemini relies on Google's search index for its source data, it processes and understands that data in a fundamentally different, and more advanced, way.

In essence, a search engine's semantic structure is built for **finding** information, while Gemini's is built for **understanding and creating** information.

DeepSeek

Search Engines (Google, Bing) - Semantic Indexing:

- Stores web pages in an inverted index (keyword → document mapping) for fast retrieval.
- Uses BERT, RankBrain, or neural matching to understand query intent but still focuses on ranking pages, not generating text.
- Preserves page structure (titles, headings, meta tags) for SEO and snippet generation.
- Output: Returns links + snippets, not original content generation.

DeepSeek (AI Training) - Semantic Processing:

- Extracts raw text but discards HTML structure (no need for metadata/SEO tags).
- Tokenizes and embeds text into numerical representations (vectors) for training.
- Focuses on statistical language patterns (predicting next words) rather than document retrieval.
- Output: Generates human-like text by learning from aggregated patterns, not storing pages verbatim.

So what does this mean for marketing a small business?

DeepSeek

1. Traditional SEO Still Matters (For Search Engines)

Since Google/Bing rely on structured, indexed content, you must:

- Optimize for keywords (use tools like Ahrefs, SEMrush).
- Follow SEO best practices (meta tags, headers, backlinks).
- Publish fresh, high-quality content (blogs, product pages).
- Leverage local SEO (Google My Business, local citations).

◆ Why? Search engines still drive most commercial traffic.

2. AI Chatbots (Like DeepSeek) Require a Different Approach

Since AI models learn from raw text (not links or metadata), focus on:

A. Become a Data Source for AI Training

- Publish high-quality, factual content (AI scrapes trustworthy sites).
- Use clear, natural language (avoid keyword stuffing—AI prefers well-written text).
- Get cited by authoritative sites (AI may prioritize well-referenced info).

B. Optimize for AI Answers (Zero-Click Results)

- Answer common questions in a structured way (FAQs, bullet points).
- Target long-tail, conversational queries (e.g., "best budget CRM for small biz").
- Use schema markup (helps AI understand context).

C. Prepare for AI-Driven Search (The Future)

Google's AI Overviews & tools like DeepSeek reduce clicks to websites.

- Focus on brand visibility (AI may cite you without sending traffic).
- Encourage direct traffic (newsletters, social media, word-of-mouth).

3. Future-Proofing: AI + SEO Hybrid Strategy

| Tactic | Traditional SEO | AI-Optimized Marketing |
|---------------------------|-----------------|---|
| Content Style | Keyword-rich | Natural, conversational |
| Backlinks (sources) | Crucial | Helps authority (AI trusts reputable sources) |
| Structured Data | Helps rankings | Helps AI understand context |
| Social Proof (businesses) | Indirect impact | AI may prioritize popular/well-reviewed |

Action Plan for Small Businesses

- Double down on SEO (Google still dominates).
- Create content that answers questions (for AI training & snippets).
- Build authority (get mentioned by reputable sites).
- Experiment with AI-driven platforms (e.g., optimize for ChatGPT/DeepSeek answers).
- Diversify traffic sources (social media, email, referrals).

Gemini

The Shift from "Blue Links" to "AI Overviews"

Traditional SEO focused on getting your website to rank high in a list of "blue links." The user would search, see the list of results, and click on the one they thought was most relevant.

With the rise of AI, and specifically features like Google's AI Overviews, this is changing. Now, for many "informational" searches, a user may get a synthesized answer at the very top of the search results page, often with citations to the original sources. This means a user might get their answer without ever clicking through to a website.

What this means for you:

- **You may see a decline in organic traffic.** If your content is used to create an AI Overview, you'll gain brand visibility and authority, but a user may not need to click to your site to get the answer they were looking for.
- **Zero-click searches are becoming more common.** This reduces the direct connection you have with potential customers and makes it harder to convert them through your website content alone.

A New Approach to Content and SEO

Instead of trying to beat the AI, your strategy should be to work with it. You need to create content that is not only relevant to a user but is also "AI-friendly" and "citation-worthy."

1. Focus on Authority and Expertise (E-E-A-T): AI models prioritize content from authoritative, trustworthy sources. To stand out, you need to build your reputation as an expert in your field.

- **Create in-depth, unique content:** Go beyond simple, easily summarized information. Write content that provides original research, unique data, or specialized insights that the AI can't easily replicate.
- **Build a strong brand:** A recognizable and reputable brand is more likely to be cited. Encourage customer reviews and testimonials, and get your business mentioned in credible online news sources, directories, and industry publications.
- **Maintain your Google Business Profile:** For local businesses, a well-optimized Google Business Profile is more important than ever for local search and for appearing in AI Overviews.

2. Optimize for AI, not just keywords: While keywords are still important, the new focus is on providing clear, structured, and helpful content that the AI can easily understand and use.

- **Structure your content with clear headings:** Use logical heading hierarchies (H1, H2, H3) to make your content easy for both humans and AI to read and understand.

- **Answer specific questions directly:** Think about the questions your customers are likely to ask and answer them concisely and directly within your content. This makes your content more likely to be pulled into a "featured snippet" or AI Overview.
- **Use structured data (Schema markup):** This is a powerful way to explicitly tell search engines and AI what your content is about. Using schema for FAQs, products, or reviews can significantly increase your chances of being featured.

ChatGPT

Marketing a small business in the age of AI tools like ChatGPT means **you need to think beyond traditional SEO** — and expand your digital footprint into **trusted, structured, and accessible sources** that both search engines *and* AI tools reference.

What This Means for Small Business Marketing:

1. Don't Rely on ChatGPT to "Find" Your Website

- ChatGPT doesn't crawl or index the web like Google.
 - Unless your business info is mentioned in **public sources ChatGPT was trained on**, it won't be found.
 - Even tools with browsing (like ChatGPT with Browse or Bing Chat) still rely on **prominent, structured, and authoritative sources** — they don't "see" your whole site like Google might.
-

What You Should Do Instead:

1. Own Your Google Business Profile (GBP)

- Make sure you show up in **Google Maps and "near me" searches**. Keep it updated with:
 - Services
 - Photos
 - Reviews (ask happy customers)
 - Accurate hours
- **These profiles are often pulled into AI-generated answers.**

2. Be on Trusted Directories

Add your business to:

- Yelp
- TrueLocal
- YellowPages
- Hotfrog
- Apple Maps
- Facebook Pages

These **add credibility**, and many are referenced in AI tools and search engines.

3. Create Simple, Searchable Content

- On your website: list services, location, and contact details **in plain language**.
 - Example: We offer affordable auto electrical repairs in Yarram, Victoria. From alternators to battery diagnostics, we handle it all.
- Add **FAQs** and answer common questions customers ask — AI tools pull from this kind of natural language.

4. Collect and Highlight Reviews

- Ask for Google reviews.
- Put testimonials on your site and social pages.
- AI tools use reviews to judge **reputation and relevance**.

5. Get Mentioned by Others

Ask to be included in:

- Local business blogs
- Chamber of Commerce listings
- Community Facebook pages
- News articles - These are more likely to be **in the dataset used by ChatGPT** (or at least ranked in search engines).

Summary:

To market a small business in the AI era:

- Focus on **visibility in structured sources** (GBP, directories).
- Build **natural, clear content** on your site.
- Grow **reputation through reviews and local links**.
Don't assume ChatGPT or AI tools will "crawl" your website — instead, **feed them content through trusted channels**.