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VONQ
VIEW

Special Edition:
GEO Is Here!
Is Your Recruitment
Strategy Still
Optimised for SEO?

“It’s official: Google’s AI Overviews are eating search.”

That was [Fortune Magazine’s](#)¹ stark warning about the disruption looming over the search and paid advertising market this year. For those of us in HRTech and hiring, the message was even clearer: job ads and vacancy publishing are facing a serious shake-up.

In this special edition of The VONQ View, by popular demand, we explore this seismic change in detail, what it means for HR, Recruiting or Hiring Professionals and how to adapt to it to ensure your hiring momentum is unaffected. We also take a look ahead to where we think this development might be going next.

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What's happening to search?

In 2024 Google began deploying Generative AI (GenAI) summaries or overviews in response to some search queries.

Beginning in Beta, and including a small footnote reading “AI responses may include mistakes”, the summaries have increased in regularity of appearance. By March 2025, according to a report by [Pew Research](#)², AI generated responses appeared in one in five search queries, or 18%.

The research found that this happened in 26% of queries returning a GenAI response versus only 16% without. Equally, click-through rates fell to 8% compared to 15% for traditional search results.

This phenomenon is known as “zero-click”.

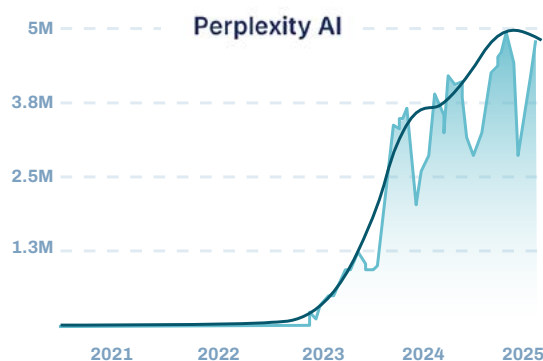
The rate at which AI is dominating search is gathering pace. [Perplexity.ai](#)³ - a free AI-powered answer engine - saw an 858% surge in search volume, now boasting around 10 million monthly users. Meanwhile, [Google reported](#)⁴ in its July 2025 earnings call that its new AI overviews now serve 2 billion users every month, up from 1.5 billion two months ago!

In its 2024 “How GenAI will Reshape Tech Marketing” Report, Gartner predicts that 79% of consumers are expected to use AI-enhanced search within the next year.

Critically, the impact on web traffic from search queries is predicted to be significant, with [Gartner](#)⁵ also forecasting that “traditional search engine volume will drop 25%, with search marketing losing market share to AI chatbots and other virtual agents” by 2026.

What is most significant about these GenAI responses is that, citing Pew:

“Google users are more likely to end their browsing session entirely after visiting a search page with an AI summary than on pages without a summary.”



But it could be even worse than that. In May 2025, [the head of SEO at the Mail Online](#)⁶, a leading news publisher, reported that AI overviews cut desktop and mobile click-through rates by 61% and 65% respectively.

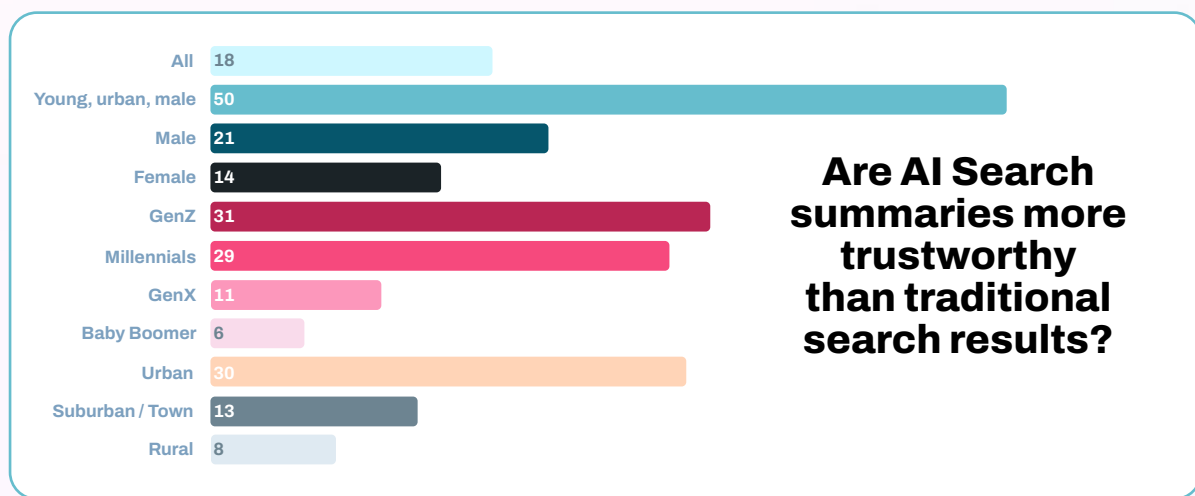
[Analysis by Authoritas](#)⁷ found that sites previously ranked first in search results can lose as much as 79% of their traffic for that query if AI overviews appear above results.

It is already becoming clear that younger generations, especially Gen Z - who are more comfortable with AI generally - are happy to trust Generative AI responses to their queries.

Research by [YouGuv](#)⁸ found that 31% of Gen Z and 29% of Millennials believe AI summaries to be more trustworthy than traditional search results (conversely 33% of Gen X say AI summaries are less trustworthy). Interestingly, the research found that trust in AI was highest in the cities, with 30% of urban residents finding AI summaries to be more

trustworthy than traditional search results, while Suburban (13%) and rural users (8%) were more skeptical.

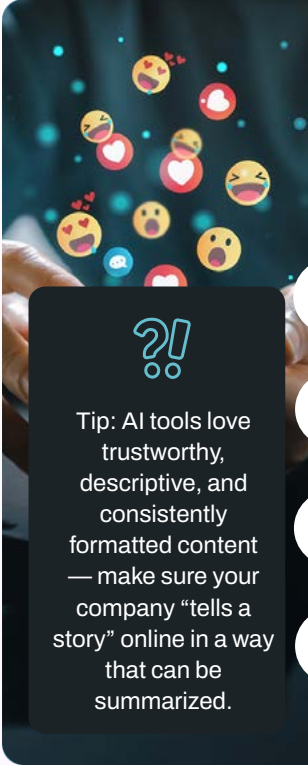
For employers therefore, this changing search behaviour poses a significant and urgent threat to traditional organic and paid traffic for job ads, not to mention for the visibility of employer brand content, using existing tactics. A moment like this spells “adapt or die” for the digital marketing strategies of Talent Acquisition (TA), HR and recruitment teams.



How do you optimise for Generative AI search?

While it is clear that Generative AI is having a significant impact on search results, traditional and organic activity will remain. So it is important that responses to the rise of AI Summaries in search do not cannibalise traditional SEO. Therefore understanding how they align and how they differ is key as some optimisation techniques for Generative AI (GEO) are the same as for SEO, but some are different. sage implicitly carry the authentic stamp of employee approval (especially when content is user-generated), but also brings additional reach into new audiences via your employee advocates' own networks.

There's excellent general advice in this [MarTech Guide](#)⁹ for building your “GEO” playbook, but we've summarised the essentials for hiring and TA professionals here:



Tip: AI tools love trustworthy, descriptive, and consistently formatted content — make sure your company “tells a story” online in a way that can be summarized.

1. Ensure Your Employer Brand Content Is Indexable & Authoritative

AI tools pull from public web data — especially highly trusted, structured sources. That means:



Maintain a strong, well-structured careers site with clear job categories, job titles, benefits, culture content, and values.



Use structured data (Schema.org markup) on job and employer brand pages to help search engines and AI tools better understand and categorize your content.



Publish thought leadership, employee stories, and media mentions — especially on your own domain and LinkedIn.



Get listed or referenced on reputable sites: Glassdoor, Indeed, LinkedIn, Comparably, Crunchbase, and company review platforms.



2. Optimize Job Visibility Across Aggregators



Ensure your job feeds are correctly integrated with Google for Jobs, Indeed, LinkedIn, and other job boards that AI tools crawl.



Validate your job listings using clean, keyword-rich titles and descriptions. Avoid overly branded or vague language.



Use platforms (like VONQ or recruitment marketing suites) that push your jobs to channels that are indexed by AI and search engines.



3. Create AI-Readable, Public-Facing Content About Working at Your Company



Write and publish “Why work at [Company Name]” articles or landing pages.



Include FAQs, EVP (employer value proposition), DE&I initiatives, growth stories, team interviews.



Use question-based content (“What’s it like to work at [Company]?”) — these often get picked up as part of AI model training.



4. Think Prompt-First: Answer What Candidates Might Ask an AI

People now ask AI tools questions like:

- “Best companies for remote marketing jobs in [Country]”
- “What’s the culture like at [Company Name]?”
- “What benefits does [Company] offer?”
- “Who’s hiring for mechanical engineering roles in [City]?”

Your content should be designed to answer those types of queries. Blog posts, landing pages, job descriptions, and even employee reviews all contribute to the AI’s understanding of your brand.

NB: Pew’s Research found that longer searches were more likely to result in an AI Overview. Only 8% of one or two word queries yielded AI Overviews, while 53% of 10 word+ searches returned an AI summary.



5. Build a Presence on AI-Referenced Platforms

Some tools pull heavily from certain domains. Be active on:

- LinkedIn (for company profiles, employee posts, job listings)
- Glassdoor & Indeed (for reviews and job visibility)
- GitHub, Stack Overflow (for tech hiring)
- Medium or your company blog (for thought leadership)
- Wikipedia (if relevant and eligible — highly trusted source)

Collectively, just three sites - Youtube, Reddit and Wikipedia - accounted for 15% of all the sources listed in the AI summaries examined by Pew Research.



6. Monitor & Optimize Your Visibility

Use tools like:

Google Search Console: see how your pages are indexed

AI search platforms like Perplexity, You.com or ChatGPT’s web-enabled mode to test prompts like “What’s it like to work at [Company Name]?”

Set up alerts or tools (e.g. Brand24, Mention) to track how often and where your company appears online response.

How to train AI with AI

The shift to AI-powered search doesn't just affect how job ads are found — it fundamentally changes how they need to be written.

As outlined earlier, AI summaries rely heavily on structured, high-quality content to understand and surface relevant results. For recruitment teams, that raises the bar for job ad creation.

New tools are becoming available to meet this challenge such as the VONQ AI Job Description Builder, which helps hiring teams quickly create consistent, high-quality job ads in minutes that are both candidate-friendly and AI search-ready.

Rather than starting from scratch, recruiters can input a few bullet points or key requirements and generate a fully written job ad in minutes. The tool adapts tone, structure, and language to the role, ensuring the output aligns with both employer branding and best

practices for visibility in traditional and generative search environments.

What makes this especially relevant in the context of GEO is that the ads produced are inherently optimized for how AI interprets and indexes content. Structured formatting, role-specific language, and a consistent narrative make them easier to summarize and more likely to appear in AI-generated results.

In short: better-written job ads aren't just about candidate experience anymore — they're about discoverability. And tools like the AI Job Description Builder help ensure your content is fit for both.

But being GEO-ready doesn't stop merely at AI generated descriptions which is why the R&D team at VONQ - led by our CTO - are working to get out ahead of it by building AI agentic workflows for recruiters so they are prepared for the next wave of AI evolution.



View from the CTO

Following the launch of Google's AI Mode rolls out across Europe this summer, we can see that Google will be providing AI summaries of original data sources with greater frequency and decreasing their reliance on traditional data sources and a more organic search. This approach forces content providers to consider how their content gets consumed by the large search engines, including LLM tools like ChatGPT. LLM-based tools will increasingly be using search as a retrieval function to perform tasks. Content providers, like job boards, need to have an understanding of how their data is being accessed and consumed.



"In interviews, [OpenAI's] Sam Altman, talks about 'agentic workflows' that allow ChatGPT to breakdown and perform specific tasks (find a restaurant and book a table), 3rd party website lookups (for example, having the App perform a Google search to retrieve current, structured data), adding new data sources to improve inference capabilities and expanding context windows.

A job seeker will use a GPT tool to build a CV. A recruiter will use a GPT tool to write a job description. They might be willing to pay a modest „seat license“ to do this.

But, what if after the job description was written, OpenAI then asked the recruiter if they'd like help finding candidates. The LLM could use new „agentic workflows“ to execute the task, use „external search“ capabilities to interrogate

3rd party data sources, and use „inference“ capabilities to match candidates to jobs.

This creates much more value for the recruiter than just „text generation“ and leads to more expensive „seat licenses“ or API calls than before. Similarly for the job seeker, after ChatGPT builds a CV, it can then offer help finding - and applying for - open roles, using a similar tech stack.

In this world, companies and candidates will want to better position themselves (new forms of SEO & advertising), and hiring still needs to abide by regulatory concerns and have 'systems of record.' My hunch is that much of the ecosystem remains but is just very different."



Bill Fischer
Chief Technology Officer, VONQ



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Key Takeaways



AI Overviews are appearing in 1 in 5 search queries today and serving more than 2 billion users every month. By 2026 Gartner predicts 79% of consumers will be using GenAI search overviews.



AI Overviews are causing a drop off in search traffic of anywhere between 25% and 65%. According to Fortune Magazine, "Google's AI Overviews are eating search."



Trust is growing in AI generated search responses, with 31% of Gen Z and 29% of Millennials believe AI summaries to be more trustworthy than traditional search results.



GEO tactics are required to optimise digital marketing and recruiting campaigns in order to sustain hiring momentum.



To adapt, we advise adopting Generative Engine Optimisation (GEO) tactics, such as

- ensuring employer brand content is easily indexable and authoritative for AI
- optimising job visibility across aggregators
- creating AI-readable content
- and anticipating candidate questions to AI tools



In the future, "agentic workflows" will transform both how candidates search for jobs, and how employers recruit - according to VONQs CTO, Bill Fischer.

Is Your Hiring Strategy Built for AI and GEO?

Stay ahead with VONQ - combining AI-powered solutions and Generative Engine Optimisation to make your recruitment faster, smarter, and more effective.

