FREE · FROM ON THE SHORTLIST

Helps / doesn't help: AI search

What gets a small UK business named by ChatGPT, Google's AI Mode and the rest, in the platforms' own words. Checked on 1 November 2026.

By Gareth Wray · garethrswray.com

Plenty of people will sell you "AI SEO". Most of it is either unnecessary or against Google's rules. Here's the short version, with the source for each line.

Doesn't help

- **An llms.txt file.** Google says Search doesn't use them, and they "will neither harm nor help" your visibility. (Google, AI optimisation guide)
- **Special "AI schema".** "There's also no special schema.org structured data that you need to add." (Google, AI features and your website)
- **FAQ markup for extra space in Google.** FAQ rich results are "no longer shown in Google Search results". (Google, Search Central updates)
- **Chopping pages into small chunks.** "There's no requirement to break your content into tiny pieces for AI to better understand it." (Google, AI optimisation guide)
- **Writing to a word count.** Does Google have a preferred word count? "No, we don't." (Google, Creating helpful content)
- **A page for every town or phrasing.** Doing it mainly to manipulate rankings or AI answers breaks Google's scaled content abuse policy. (Google, AI optimisation guide)
- **Bought links and planted mentions.** Buying links for ranking is link spam, and "seeking inauthentic 'mentions'" isn't as helpful as it seems. (Google, spam policies and AI optimisation guide)
- **Tools claiming insider access.** "No third-party tool has access to our internal ranking or AI systems." (Google, AI optimisation guide)

Helps

- **Letting the search bots in.** Sites that block OAI-SearchBot "will not be shown in ChatGPT search answers". (OpenAI, crawlers)
- **Checking Search Console's setting.** Settings, Search generative AI: include is the default, exclude takes you out. (Google, Search Console help)
- **Clear pages written for buyers.** Google's advice for AI search: "non-commodity content" with "unique expert or experienced takes". (Google, AI optimisation guide)
- **A complete Google Business Profile.** Profiles "can help your products and services to be visible" in AI responses. (Google, AI optimisation guide)
- **Real mentions from real sources.** Suppliers, trade bodies, local press and your own data. Earned, not bought.
- **Testing more than once.** The same prompt rarely gives the same list twice, so count how often you're named. (SparkToro, January 2026)

Nobody can promise you a mention in an AI answer. Anyone who does is guessing.

Want the full step-by-step? *On the Shortlist* is my guide to getting named by AI search tools, with a workbook, the AI shortlist tracker, a crawler card and a 30-day plan. At garethrswray.com. **Or have me look:** Run the six-minute search check, or book your free 15-minute call at garethrswray.com.