

What AI reads before it recommends.

The content AI assistants cite when B2B technology buyers ask for advice, and what the most-cited pages have in common.



AI mostly reads what companies publish.

When a buyer asks an AI assistant which software to shortlist, the answer comes with sources. We went through over 1.3 million of them, cited over 11 months in answers about 116 B2B technology brands, to see what the assistants actually read. This is the short version.

83%

of citations point to company websites. Media, review sites, forums, video and everything else share the other 17%.

22%

go to blog posts and articles, the biggest single type of page. Product pages and documentation come next.

6%

of citations go to a brand's own site when the question doesn't name the brand. When it does, the figure is 29%.

1%

of pages earn 30% of all citations. Most pages are cited once and never again.

+36%

more citations, on average, for pages with FAQ markup. Visible dates, lists, tables and length all go with more citations too.

5 months

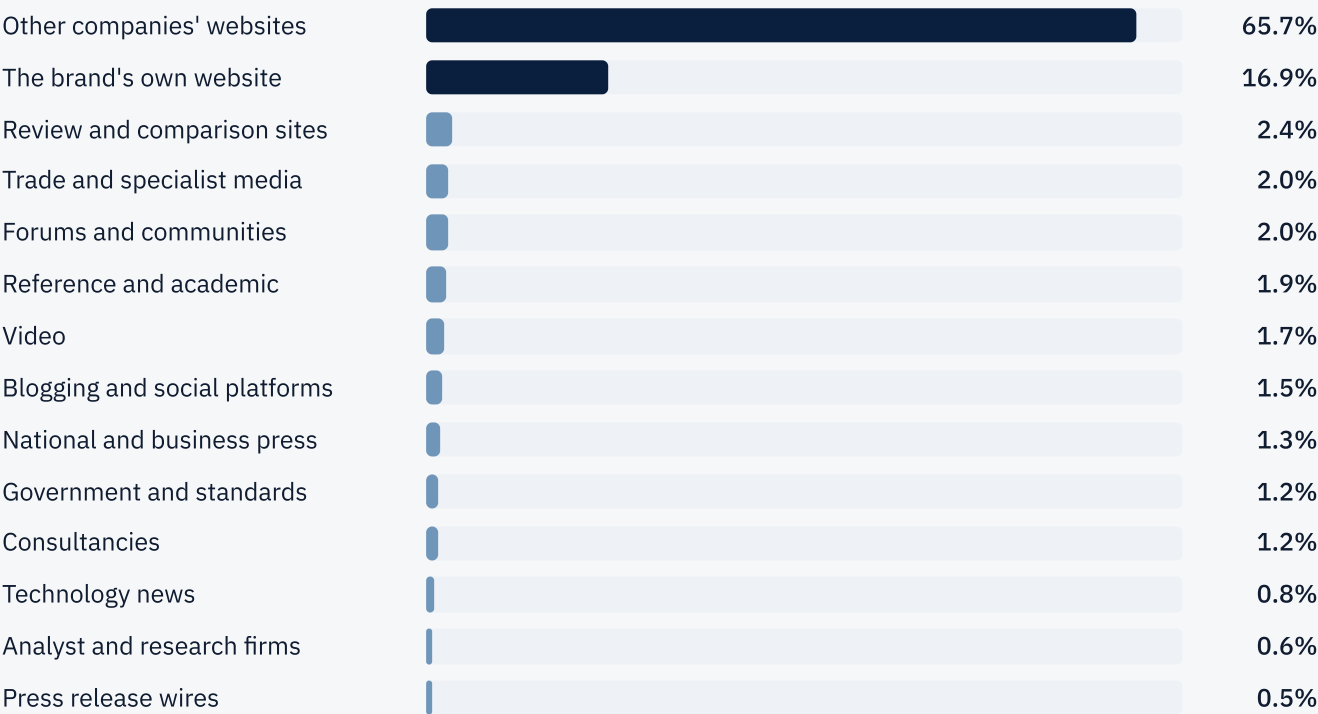
is the typical age of a dated page when it's cited. Four in ten were less than three months old.

Figures are rounded. How we did it is on page 12.

Most citations go to company websites.

About 83% of the sources the assistants cite are company websites. Most are other companies' sites: vendors, competitors, partners and service firms writing about your category. About a sixth are the brand's own site.

SHARE OF ALL CITATIONS, BY SOURCE



Everything else, from review sites and forums to the press and YouTube, adds up to about 17%. That's a smaller slice than a lot of PR and SEO plans assume.

It's also where the assistants go for a view that isn't the vendor's own, so we've covered the media side separately in **Earned media in the age of AI answers**.

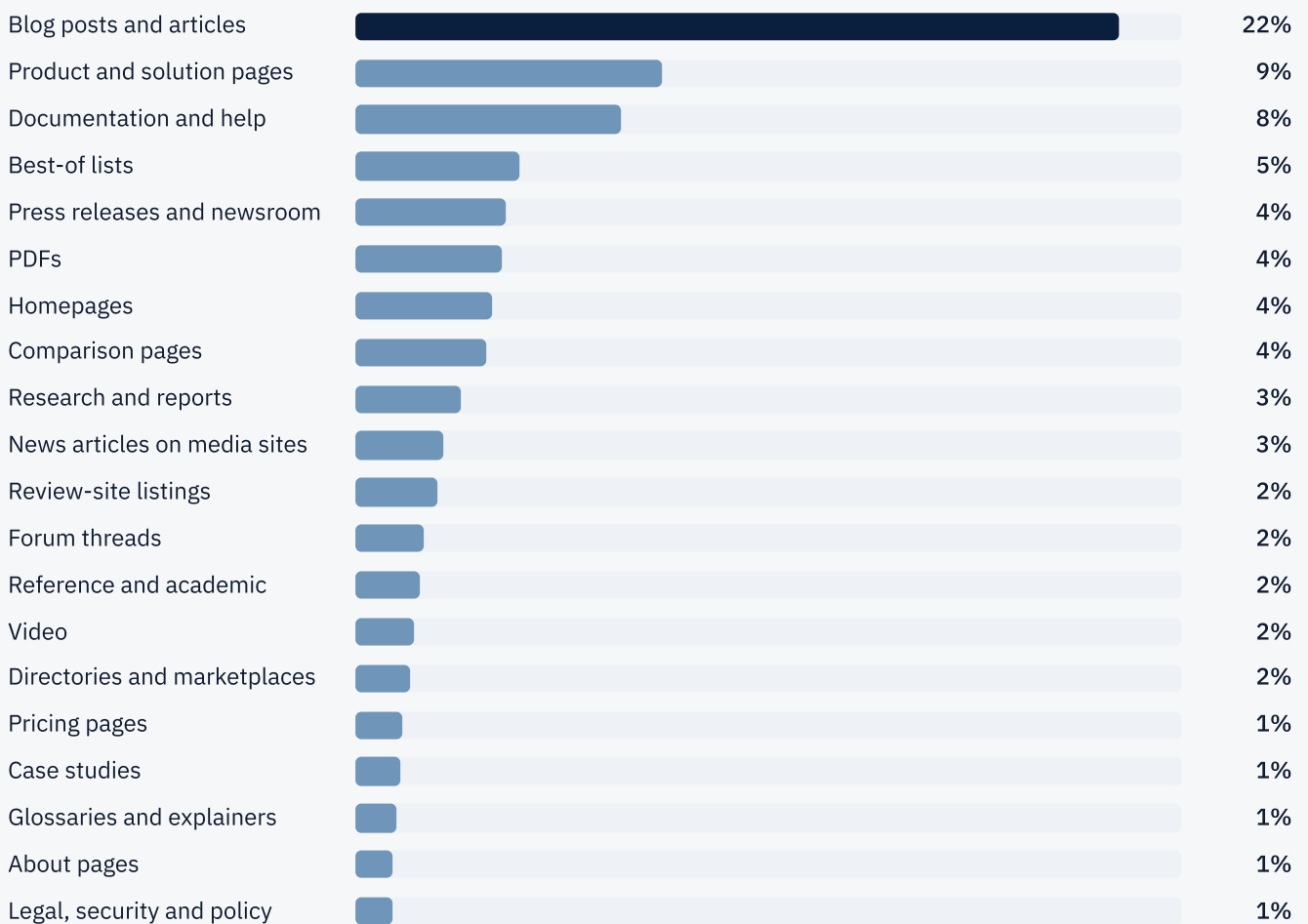
WHO ELSE GETS READ

- **Review sites** such as G2, Capterra and PeerSpot
- **Forums**, mostly Reddit and Hacker News
- **Reference**: Wikipedia and arXiv lead
- **Video**: almost all YouTube
- **Blogging platforms**: Medium, LinkedIn, Substack

Blog posts are the most-cited type of page.

More than one citation in five goes to a blog post or article. Product pages and documentation come next. Pricing pages and case studies, which buyers lean on late in a deal, hardly get cited at all.

SHARE OF ALL CITATIONS, BY TYPE OF PAGE



About 18% of citations went to pages we couldn't type with confidence, mostly product and service pages with plain web addresses.

Documentation gets read

Assistants go deep into help centres and developer docs for technical and implementation questions.

PDFs get read too

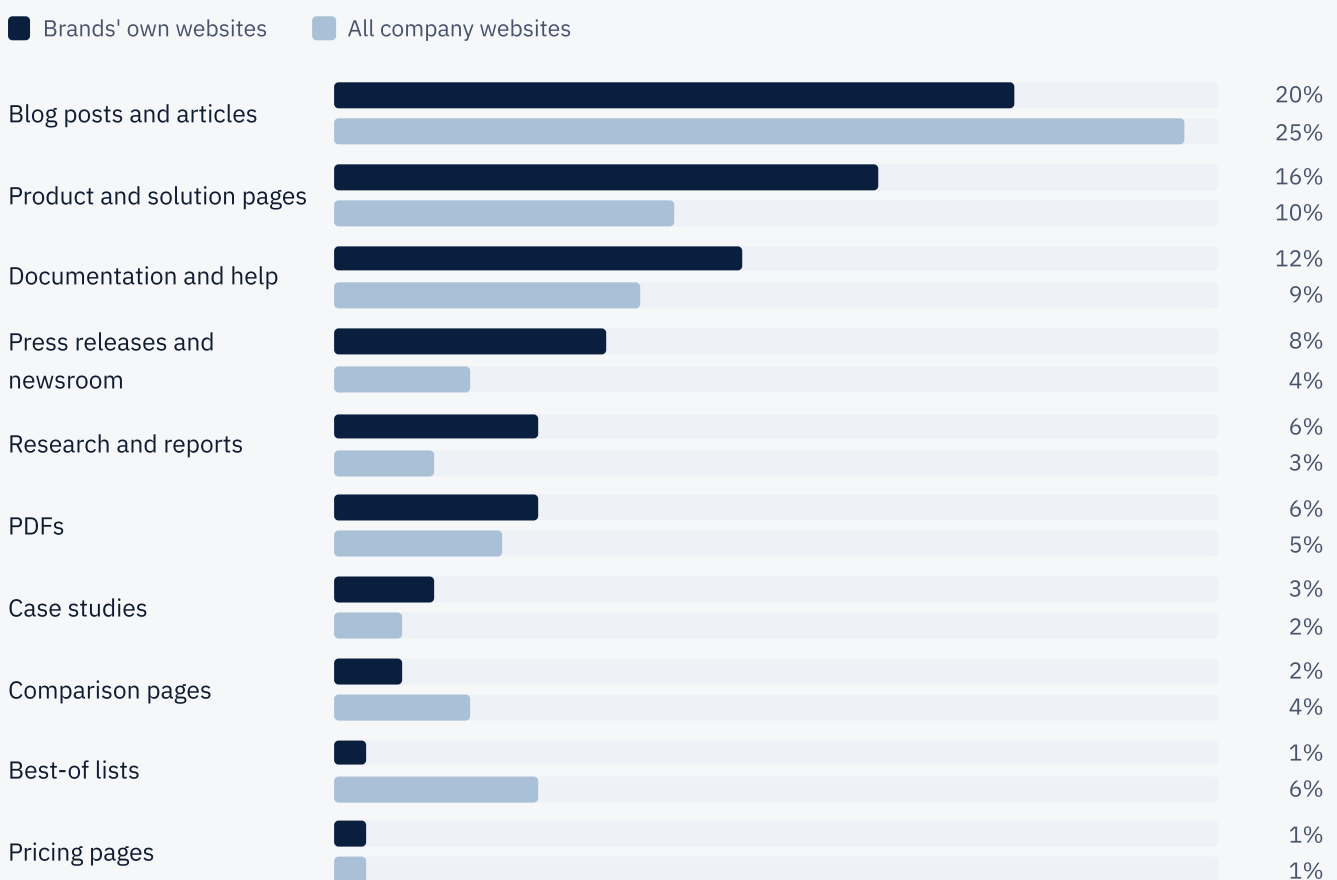
Whitepapers, datasheets and reports take 4% of citations, as long as the text can be read.

Pricing pages are rare

Pricing pages and case studies get about 1% each, often because they're gated, vague or missing.

When buyers ask about the category, someone else writes the comparison.

Comparison pages and best-of lists earn about one in ten citations across company websites, but only about one in thirty on brands' own sites. So when an assistant compares you with your competitors, it's usually reading a page somebody else wrote.



Share of citations to each group of sites, by type of page.

Your own site shows up once buyers know your name.

29%

of citations go to the brand's own site when the question names the brand.

6%

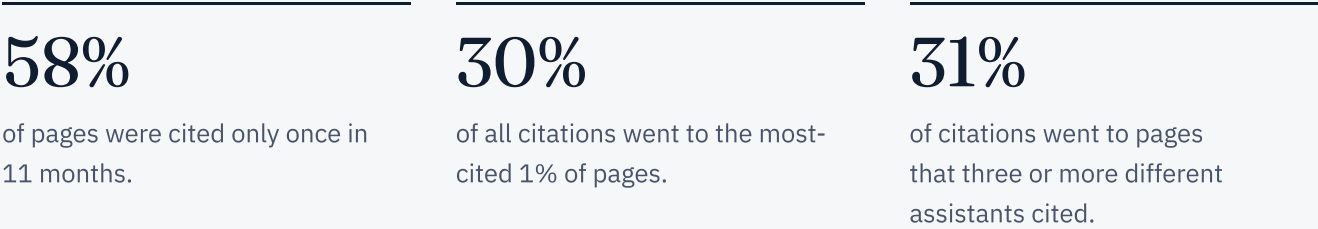
when it doesn't. Those are the category and problem questions where shortlists get made.

2.5%

of the comparison and best-of pages cited on those questions sit on the brand's own site.

A small number of pages earn most citations.

The assistants cited about 360,000 different pages, and most of them only once. A small group gets picked again and again, often by several assistants.



Once an assistant treats a page as the reference on a subject, it tends to keep using it, and other assistants find it too. That's worth knowing when you decide where to put your effort.

What the most-cited pages have in common

We audited about 190,000 cited pages and compared the top 10% with pages cited only once.

FEATURE	MOST-CITED 10%	CITED ONCE
FAQ section on the page	22%	16%
Tables	22%	19%
Visible updated date	58%	52%
Named author	47%	41%
FAQ markup (schema)	9%	6.5%
Meta description	84%	80%
Lists	92%	89%

Share of pages with each feature. The most-cited pages were also longer (about 1,700 words against 1,500) and had more headings.

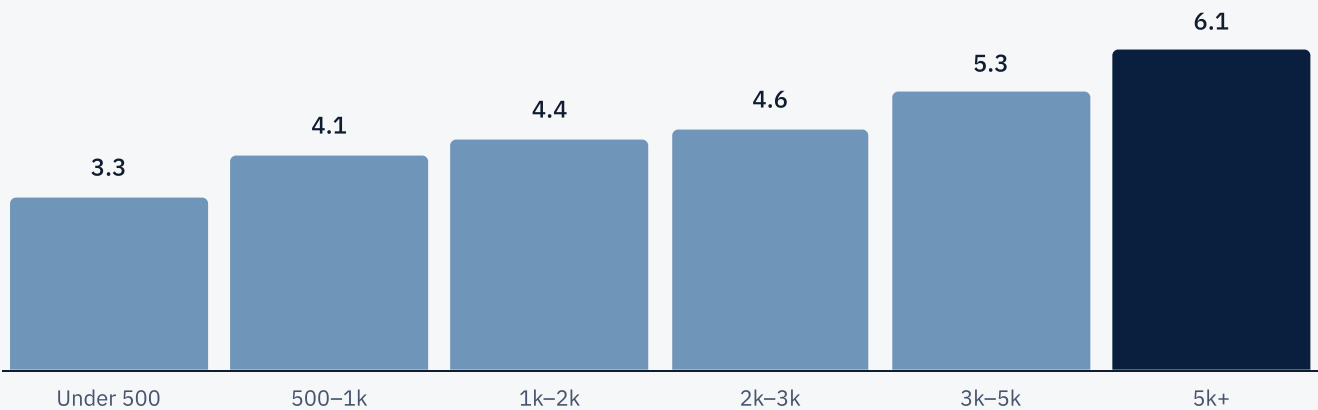
Pages with FAQs, dates and more depth get cited more.

Pages that are easy to scan do better: questions with direct answers, a date you can see, lists and tables. Longer pages do better again.

AVERAGE CITATIONS PER PAGE, WITH AND WITHOUT EACH FEATURE

FEATURE	WITH	WITHOUT	DIFFERENCE
FAQ markup	5.9	4.4	+34%
Visible updated date	4.9	3.9	+26%
Lists	4.6	3.7	+24%
Tables	5.0	4.3	+16%
Named author	4.6	4.4	+5%
Article markup	4.4	4.5	-2%

AVERAGE CITATIONS PER PAGE, BY LENGTH IN WORDS



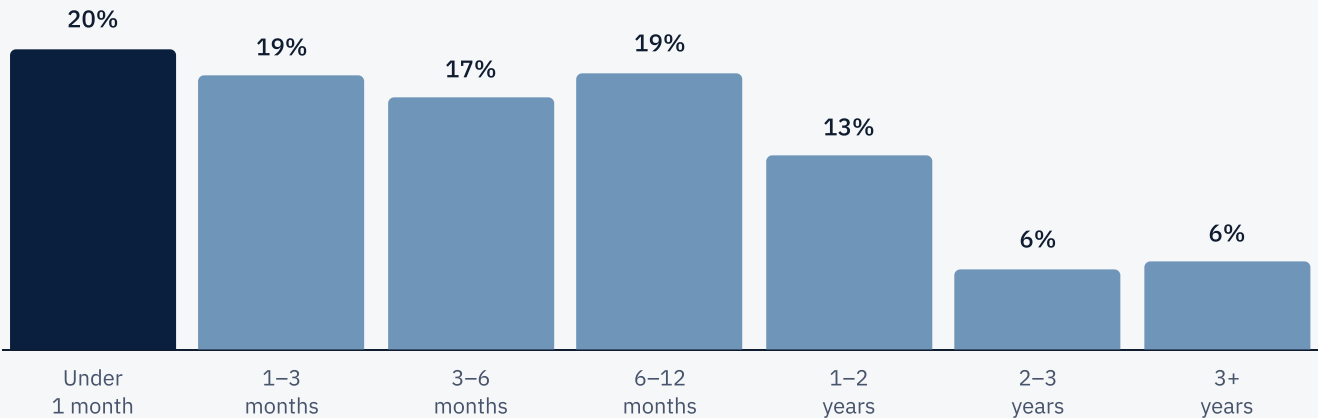
Nine pages in ten already use lists, so they won't set you apart. Article markup on its own made no difference, and a named author only a small one.

We'd treat all of this as the habits of well-kept pages. Sites with the budget to add FAQs and keep dates current usually have strong content and plenty of links too, so these are associations and don't prove cause.

Most cited pages are less than a year old.

Where we could find a publish date, the typical page was about five months old when it was cited. Four in ten were under three months old, and only 6% were more than three years old.

AGE OF CITED PAGES WHEN CITED, SHARE OF PAGES



How long pages last depends on the source

News gets cited while it's news, usually within a few weeks. Company pages, trade features, forum threads and review pages stay in use for many months.

Brands' own cited pages are typically almost a year old. Evergreen pages keep working, so it's worth checking they're still accurate.

SOURCE	TYPICAL AGE WHEN CITED
Technology news	18 days
National and business press	about 2 months
Other companies' websites	about 4 months
Trade and specialist media	about 9 months
The brand's own website	about 11 months
Forums and communities	about 14 months
Review and comparison sites	about 17 months

Based on about 7,700 cited pages with a detectable publish date. Median ages.

Buyers see different pages at each stage and in each assistant.

Early on, the assistants pull in best-of lists. As buyers get closer to a decision they reach for evidence: review listings, pricing, case studies and PDFs. Your own site shows up more at every step.

SHARE OF CITATIONS	AWARENESS	CONSIDERATION	DECISION
Best-of lists	6.6%	6.2%	4.3%
Comparison pages	2.4%	3.7%	3.7%
Review-site listings	1.6%	2.7%	3.2%
PDFs	4.2%	4.5%	5.3%
Pricing pages	1.0%	1.7%	1.8%
Case studies	1.0%	1.4%	2.0%
The brand's own site (all pages)	6.4%	16.7%	20.4%

Each assistant reads different content

ChatGPT goes to documentation and product pages and hardly touches best-of lists or comparisons. Perplexity and Gemini read far more blogs, lists and comparisons, plus YouTube. Ask two assistants the same question and the answers may be built from quite different pages.

SHARE OF CITATIONS	CHATGPT	GEMINI	PERPLEXITY
Documentation and help	16.0%	4.9%	3.6%
Product and solution pages	14.2%	7.0%	6.4%
Blog posts and articles	11.6%	24.5%	29.2%
Best-of lists	0.7%	5.1%	8.3%
Comparison pages	0.7%	4.3%	6.1%
Video	0.0%	2.5%	2.6%

Assistants are citing brands' own sites more often.

Over the 11 months, the brand's own site went from about one citation in twelve to one in five. YouTube, Reddit and Substack grew from a small base.

SHARE OF CITATIONS	Q4 2025	Q1 2026	Q2 2026	Q3 2026
The brand's own website	8.3%	15.3%	17.0%	21.1%
Other companies' websites	77.1%	66.1%	66.0%	62.1%
Forums and communities	1.0%	1.6%	2.3%	2.3%
Video	0.6%	1.5%	1.9%	2.1%
Blogging and social platforms	0.4%	1.4%	1.4%	2.0%
Review and comparison sites	2.3%	2.6%	2.4%	2.3%
Reference and academic	2.7%	2.2%	1.9%	1.5%
Statistics round-up sites	0.0%	0.1%	0.2%	0.5%

The rise happens whether or not the question names the brand (18% to 35% when it does, 2% to 11% when it doesn't), so it's not down to the mix of questions. Comparison pages grew from about 1% of citations to 5%, and PDFs from almost nothing to about 4%.

Where each assistant looks

SHARE OF CITATIONS	CHATGPT	GEMINI	PERPLEXITY	CLAUDE
The brand's own website	21%	14%	17%	20%
Review and comparison sites	1.4%	2.5%	3.0%	5.7%
Trade and specialist media	0.8%	2.8%	2.0%	3.1%
Forums and communities	1.8%	2.8%	1.4%	0.2%
Video	0.0%	2.5%	2.6%	0.0%
Reference and academic	2.5%	1.9%	1.7%	0.8%

Claude is on a smaller sample. Q3 runs to 24 September.

What we'd do about it.

You don't need a new team for any of this. It's mostly about what you publish, how you lay it out and how often you go back to it.

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- 01** **Write for the question that doesn't name you.** Category, problem and “best tool for” questions are where shortlists form. There, your own site gets about 6% of citations and competitors fill the rest.
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- 02** **Publish your own comparisons.** Fair pages comparing you with named alternatives, and clear pages on who you're best for. If you don't write them, the assistants read someone else's.
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- 03** **Treat documentation as marketing.** Docs and help centres earn about one in eight citations to brands' own sites. Keep them public, current and easy to crawl.
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- 04** **Put the answer first.** Questions with direct answers, tables, clear headings and a visible date. The most-cited pages have more of all of them.
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- 05** **Go deep on fewer pages.** Longer, thorough pages are cited more, and 1% of pages take 30% of citations. Build the reference page for your subject and keep improving it.
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- 06** **Refresh on a schedule.** Four in ten cited pages were under three months old. Review your key pages every quarter and show the date you did.
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- 07** **Make your best evidence readable.** Reports and whitepapers get cited when the text can be read. Evidence behind a form or inside images is invisible to an assistant.
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- 08** **Earn the pages you can't write.** Review sites, trade media, forums and best-of lists fill the gaps between vendor pages. Getting you into them is PR's job.
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SEE WHERE YOU STAND

Agency, our AI visibility platform, shows which pages the assistants cite for your category's questions, yours and everyone else's. Resonance turns that into a content and PR plan. Talk to us at resonancecrowd.com/contact

How we did the research.

The questions

Agency, our AI visibility platform, asks AI assistants the questions B2B buyers ask at each stage of a purchase, from early research to the final shortlist, and records every answer and every source it cites.

The data

Over 1.3 million citations in almost 190,000 answers to about 67,000 questions, from October 2025 to September 2026. The answers cover 116 B2B technology brands across enterprise software, AI infrastructure, fintech, cybersecurity, sustainability software and data.

The assistants

ChatGPT, Gemini and Perplexity account for most of the answers. Claude, Google AI Overviews, Google AI Mode, Copilot and Grok are included on smaller samples.

Sources and pages

We sorted more than 78,000 cited websites into source types, checking the most-cited by hand, and typed pages from their web address and markup. Page features come from an audit of about 190,000 cited pages; ages from about 7,700 pages with a detectable publish date.

Limits

The brands skew towards enterprise technology, so other sectors may differ. Differences between pages show association, and don't prove cause. Figures are rounded. We don't name any brand we track.

ALSO IN THIS SERIES

Earned media in the age of AI answers.

The press, trade titles and specialist media the assistants cite.

What AI gets wrong about B2B tech brands. The errors in AI answers, and where they come from.

resonancecrowd.com/research

ABOUT RESONANCE

Resonance is a strategic communications consultancy for B2B technology companies. We run PR, analyst relations and AI visibility programmes, with Agency measuring what the assistants say about our clients and why.

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