

Google's AI Overviews force marketers to diversify search strategies

Article

The news: Google's AI Overviews are growing larger in size and appearing in more queries, a sign that this latest search product could fundamentally alter SEO strategies and the value of

organic search results.

Zoom out: After a [rocky start last year](#), Google moved forward with AI Overviews, [broadly rolled out ad space](#) in the new product in October. While AI Overviews could lead to interesting marketing opportunities, their size and prominent placement at the top of results risk devaluing other space on its platform.

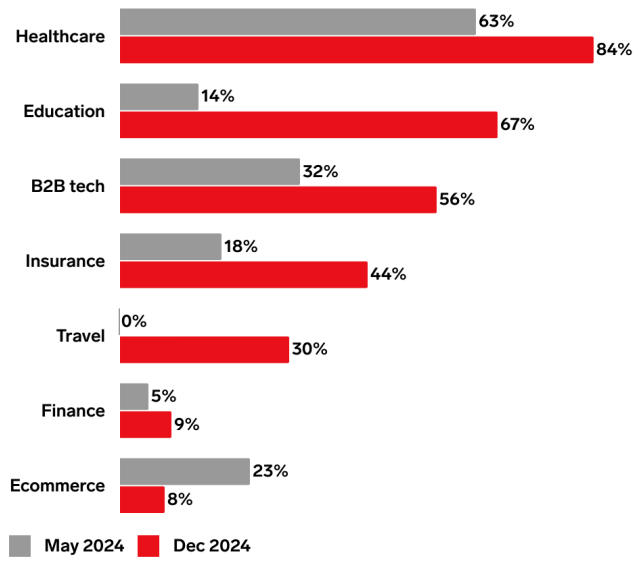
- AI Overviews' placement will make the product a highly sought-after ad space, but it is still unclear how much impact they drive for marketers or how they contribute to Google's ad revenues.
- As EMARKETER senior analyst [Evelyn Mitchell-Wolf](#) notes, that lack of information means marketers will have to [pursue a holistic strategy](#) that involves sponsored search results and SEO strategies to increase the odds they reach desired audiences.
- Another issue facing AI Overviews advertising is measurement. Since overviews surface the answers to queries without the need for a click, clickthrough rates and impressions may not be as effective indicators of success.

Our take: Despite the questions and uncertainties swirling around the functionality of AI Overview advertisements, they are already causing significant changes.

- AI Overviews have forced Google to rearrange elements of the results page. A browser search for “laundry detergents for eczema,” for example, brings up results with an AI Overview and its cited sources at the top of the page, followed by a carousel of sponsored products. Sponsored results, however, are further down the page after publishers and **Reddit** threads.
- The layout of results pages can vary significantly, even for identical queries, but those inconsistencies highlight how sponsored search results are no longer guaranteed to instantly put an ad in front of consumers.
- A flurry of earnings reports from publishers in Q2 2024 showed that AI Overviews [weren't having the negative effects](#) on clickthrough rates and impressions that many news outlets initially feared. However, eight Democratic lawmakers [asked the FTC in October to investigate](#) how the product could negatively affect news publishers.

Google's AI Optimization Is Now Ubiquitous Across Queries Requiring Specialized Knowledge

% of US Google search queries resulting in a Google AI Overview, by industry, May 2024 & Dec 2024



Note: represents search query activity on the BrightEdge Data Cube organic index; broader industry metrics may vary
Source: BrightEdge, "Google AI Overviews: November - December Insights," Dec 16, 2024

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