

# 5 charts on the state of search in 2024: Google, AI, retail media, and more

Article



Search is undergoing a seismic shift. Google is still the go-to for most inquiries, but generative AI is changing how people search, and leading people to explore alternative search engines. Meanwhile, paid search dollars are moving to [retail media networks](#) as shoppers begin their searches on [Amazon](#) and other retailer sites. And [Gen Z's](#) search habits look different from

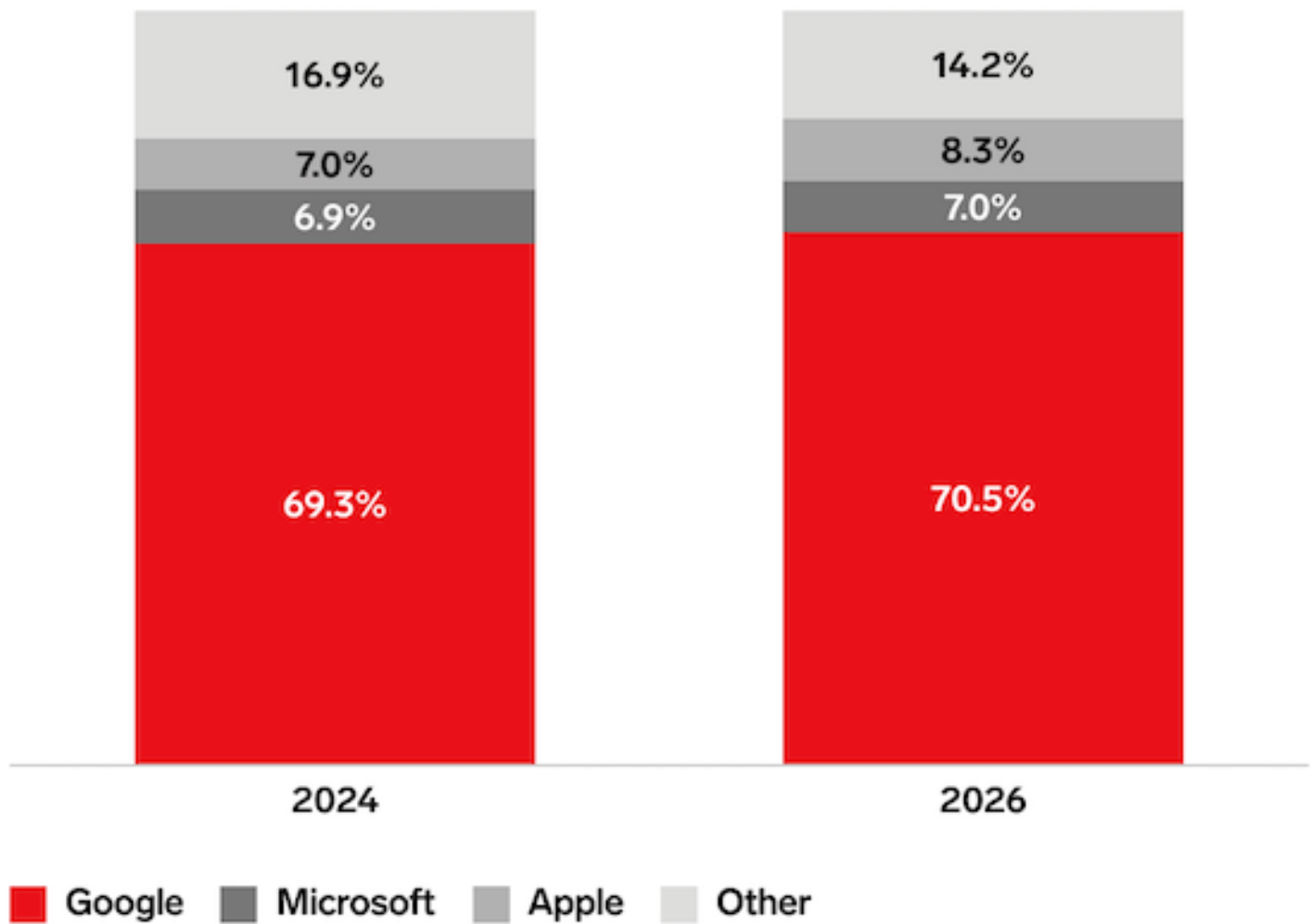
older generations, with the cohort flocking to social media sites like [TikTok](#) and using visual search and chatbots.

Here are five charts marketers can use to demonstrate the evolving nature of search in 2024.

**1.AI is transforming search, but not Google’s prowess**

# Google Will Remain the Top Destination for Search Ad Spending in the Generative AI Era

% of US traditional search ad spending, by company, 2024 & 2026



Note: includes advertising that appears on desktop and laptop computers as well as mobile phones, tablets, and other internet-connected devices for all formats mentioned; includes contextual text links, paid inclusion, paid listings, and SEO; Google includes YouTube advertising revenues; numbers may not add up to 100% due to rounding

Source: EMARKETER Forecast, March 2024

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Google is still the top destination for search ad spend, even as generative AI innovations for Microsoft and Apple get attention. Google will account for about 7 in 10 US traditional search ad spend in 2026, per our forecast.

Search engines have already adapted to generative AI innovations.

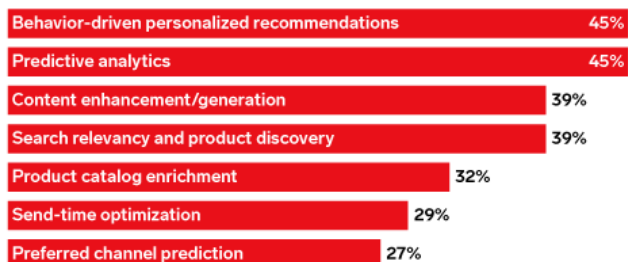
- [Google](#) released AI Overviews in search results as well as an AI search bot called Gemini to mixed results.
- Microsoft has worked with OpenAI to revamp Bing.
- AI-powered search startups like Perplexity are gaining traction.

Paid search [marketers](#) shouldn't reverse strategies just yet; Google still accounts for 56.6% of worldwide search ad spend, per our forecast. But content marketers, SEO professionals, and publishers should stay vigilant over what happens to traffic as AI summarization becomes more popular and consumers have less need to click through to websites.

## 2. AI is also improving search relevance

### AI/Machine Learning Features That Marketing Professionals Worldwide Are Leveraging to Bolster Marketing Efforts, Q4 2023

% of respondents



Source: Netcore, "State of Ecommerce and Retail Marketing 2024" conducted by Dynata, May 8, 2024

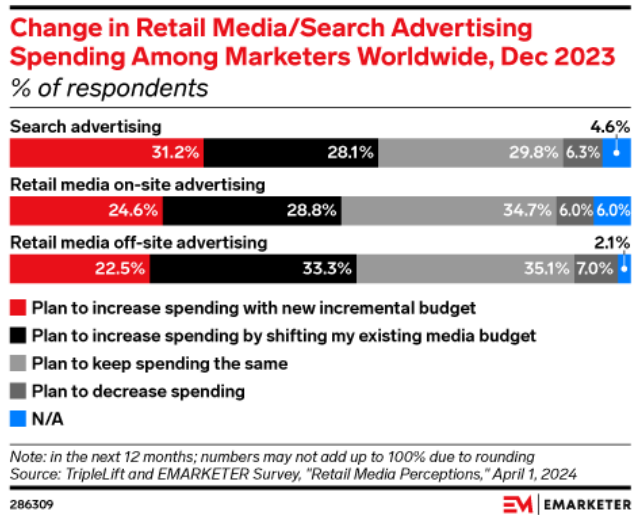
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Some 39% of marketing professionals worldwide are using AI to improve search relevancy and product discovery, according to Q4 2023 data from Dynata and Netcore. These improvements are not only happening on search engines but also on retailer websites. [Walmart](#), for example, has used generative AI to improve its search results.

As search result relevance improves and Google’s AI Overviews become more common, websites must keep optimizing content to increase chances of being cited in AI Overviews. AI-optimized search will take clicks away from some sites, but generative AI still can’t answer complicated queries, which could be a sweet spot for SEO optimization. Brands may also take advantage of paid search ads to stay at the top of retailer search results.

### 3. Search spend is moving to retail media



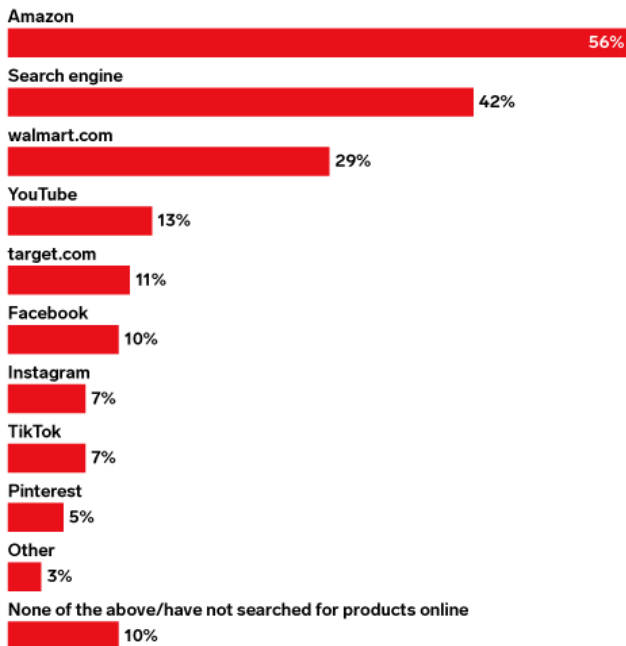
An increasing portion of paid search spend is going to [retail media](#). Six in 10 (59.3%) marketers worldwide plan to increase retail media search ad spend this year, according to an EMARKETER and TripleLift survey. Retail media will account for 27.2% of US search ad spend this year, and that share will grow every year through the end of our forecast in 2028.

Brands need to consider paid search advertising on both search engines and retailer websites, especially because the searches on those retailer websites tend to be from people with intent to purchase.

### 4. More people start their shopping searches on Amazon than on search engines

## Where US Consumers Start Their Search When Online Shopping, Feb 2024

% of respondents



Note: ages 18+; 49% of respondents were ages 59+; respondents could select multiple options

Source: Jungle Scout, "Consumer Trends Report: Q1 2024," March 26, 2024

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More than half (56%) of US consumers start their shopping searches on Amazon, putting the site ahead of search engines (42%), Walmart (29%), and TikTok (7%), per February 2024 data from Jungle Scout.

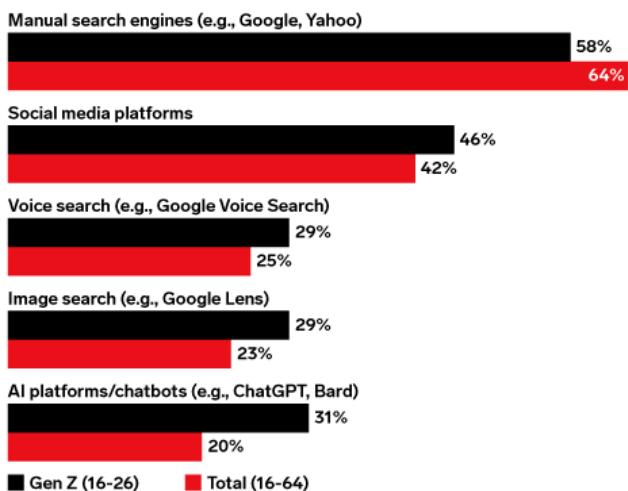
An increasing number of US internet users are [starting their shopping journeys on social media](#) sites, per a February 2024 report from Attest, but TikTok, Instagram, and other platforms have a long way to go before they become most shoppers' first destination.

Marketers can't ignore social media sites or search engines, especially when it comes to product discovery. But when focusing marketing efforts on where consumers are most likely to make a purchase, Amazon is a wise priority.

### 5. Gen Z is more likely to use a search engine alternative than older generations

## Platforms/Programs Gen Z vs. Total Internet Users Worldwide Use to Find Information Online, Aug 2023

% of respondents



Note: total n=15,469; Gen Z n=2,072

Source: GWI, "2024 Global Media Landscape Report," March 26, 2024

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When finding information online, search engines rank No. 1 among all generations worldwide, per August 2023 data from GWI. But Gen Z is more inclined than older generations to use social media, voice search, image search, and [AI chatbots](#) like ChatGPT.

Those aiming to reach Gen Z must understand that they aren't strictly looking things up on Google. Brand content should be accessible via the other channels Gen Z uses.

*This was originally featured in the EMARKETER Daily newsletter. For more marketing insights, statistics, and trends, subscribe [here](#).*