

The Impact of Generative AI: Publishers

Generative AI is reshaping how consumers discover and consume news. As users shift from traditional search to tools like ChatGPT, they're seeking faster, contextual answers to complex and evolving topics – from market trends to policy developments. As a result, news-related prompts on ChatGPT and zero-click search have surged, while organic traffic to publishers has declined. AI is changing how news is accessed while redefining distribution dynamics. Publishers must now adapt their strategies to stay visible and relevant across AI-powered platforms.

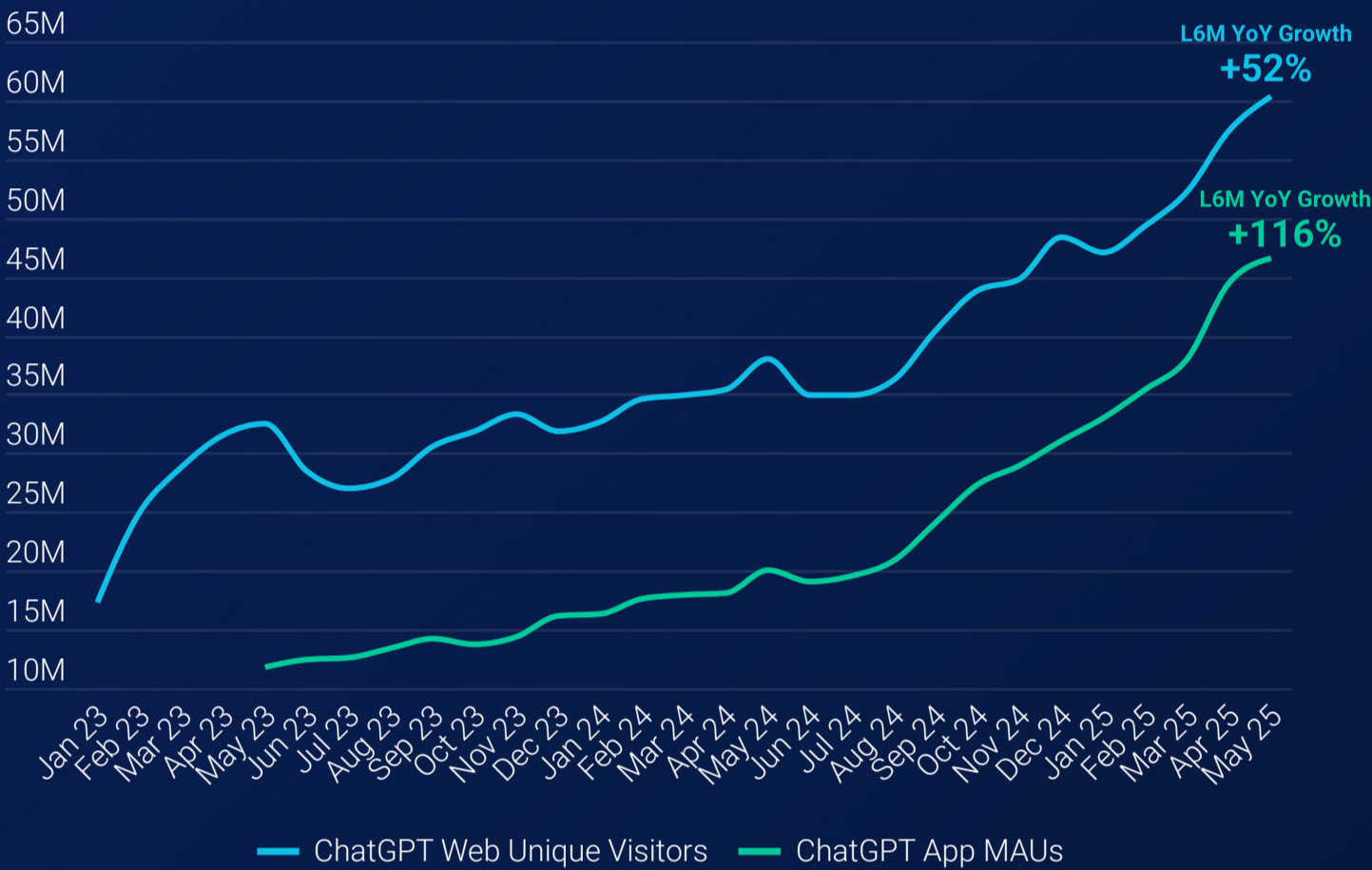
How ChatGPT's growth is driving change

The internet is in flux. Google's dominance is being challenged as ChatGPT's rapid growth reconfigures how consumers seek out news and information.

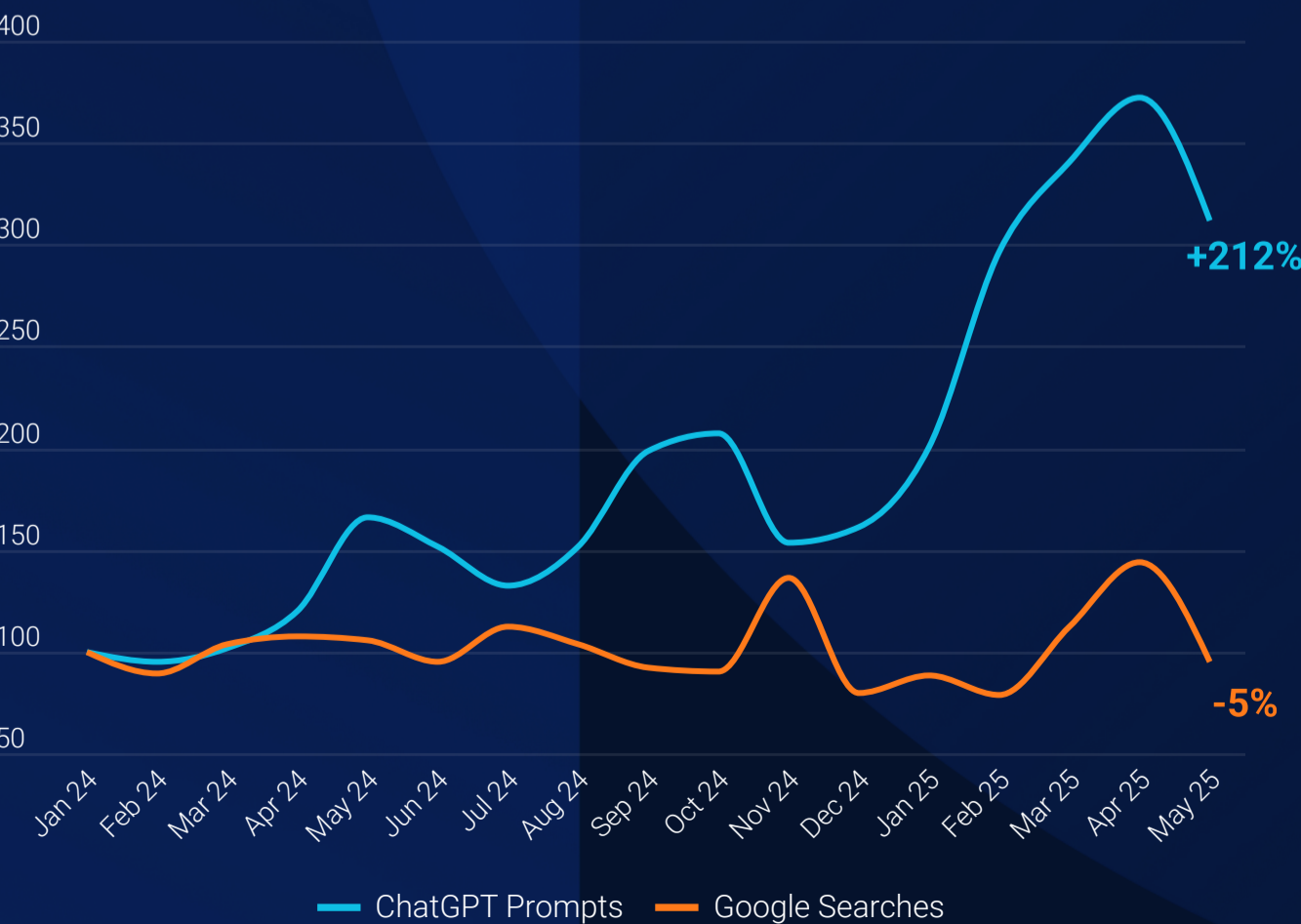
ChatGPT's app users have more than doubled in the last six months compared to the same period the previous year. While its web visitors also continue to grow, increasing by 52%.

For news publishers and aggregators, this shift signals a need to rethink distribution strategies. As more users turn to generative AI for real-time updates and conversational summaries, the traditional SEO-driven approach may be insufficient when it comes to capturing audience attention.

ChatGPT Web Unique Visitors and App Monthly Active Users
US, Desktop & Mobile Web, Android & iOS, Jan 2023 - May 2025



News-Related ChatGPT Prompts vs. Google Searches - Indexed Growth
US, Desktop & Mobile Web, Jan 2024 - May 2025



ChatGPT surges as a source for news while Google stalls

News-related queries on ChatGPT are rapidly increasing. Between January 2024 and May 2025, news-related prompts in ChatGPT rose by 212%, while equivalent Google searches declined by 5%.

A significant divergence started in late 2024, with ChatGPT usage accelerating sharply from January 2025 onward. This suggests users are increasingly turning to generative AI for real-time news insights. Meanwhile, Google's flat-to-declining trend highlights shifting user preferences and the growing role of AI assistants in information retrieval.

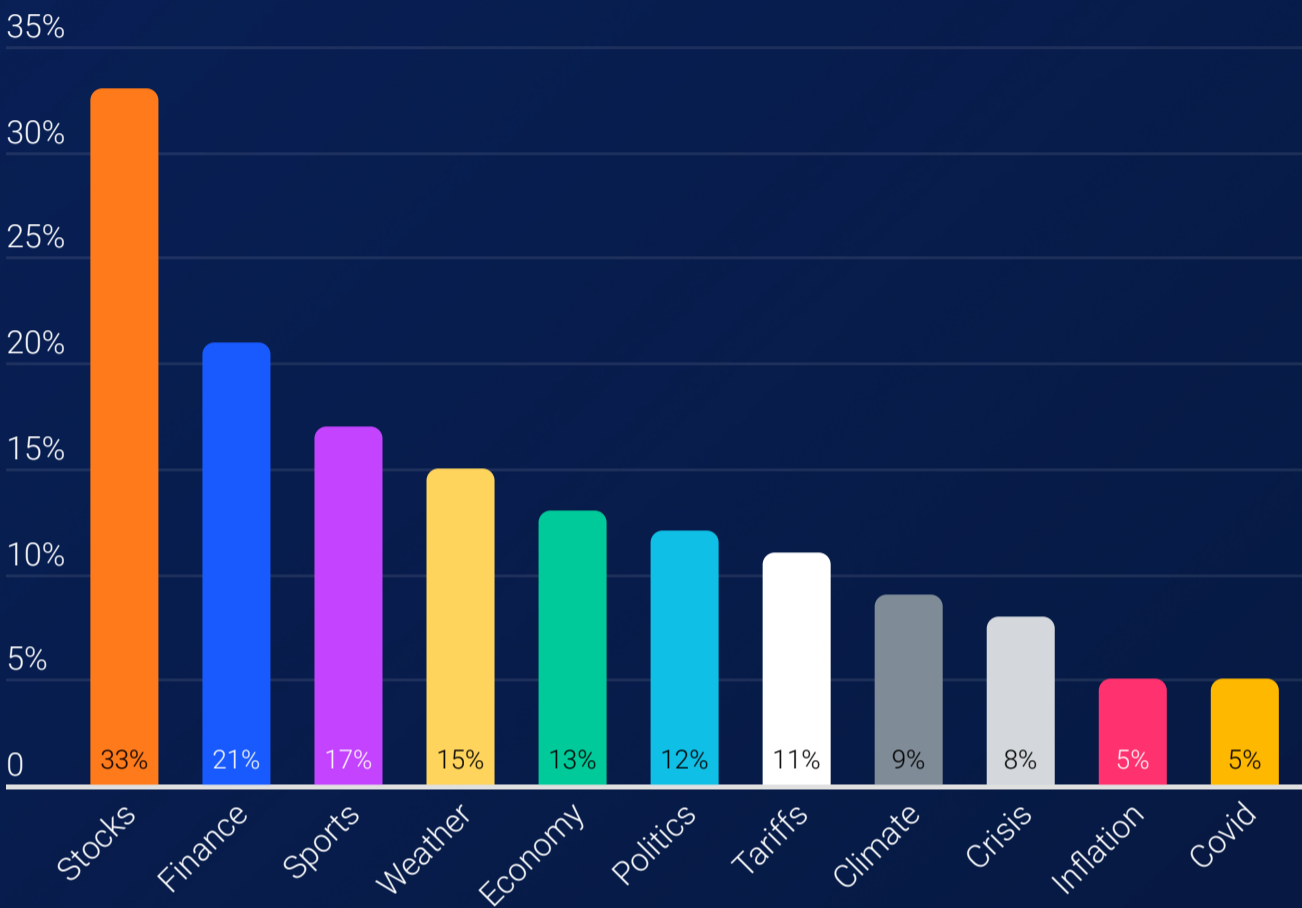
A New Path to the Headlines: ChatGPT’s Growing Role in News Consumption

Stocks, finance, and sports dominate share of news prompts on ChatGPT

The current distribution of news-related prompts on ChatGPT reveals a user base still anchored in real-time financial and market updates. Stocks, finance, and sports have captured the lion’s share of engagement. But there are signs of change: rising interest in politics, tariffs, and the broader economy points to a growing appetite for issue-based, policy-driven content.

This diversification signals a shift from reactive, event-based news consumption toward more intentional, explanatory use of generative AI. As the next chart will show, many of these mid-tier topics are among the fastest-growing, hinting at a broadening user definition of what counts as “news.”

Share of all News-related Prompts on ChatGPT by Topic
US, Desktop & Mobile Web, Jan-May 2025

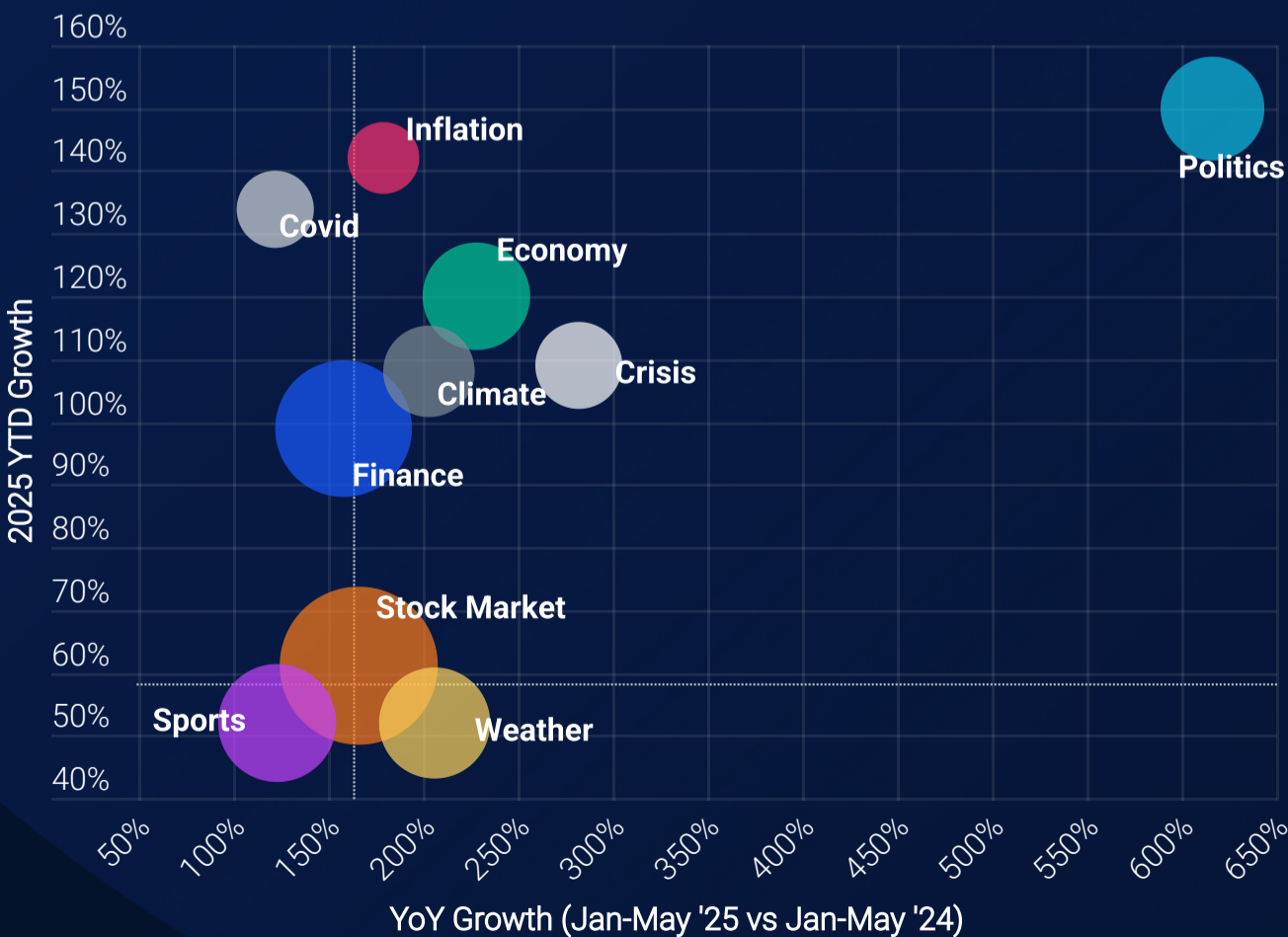


Politics pulls ahead as ChatGPT's fastest-rising topic

Politics stands out on ChatGPT, outpacing all other categories in long-term (YoY) and short-term (YTD) growth. Indeed, has been the breakout theme of 2025. Inflation, economy, and climate also show sustained upward momentum, reflecting user interest in real-world consequences of macroeconomic and policy shifts. Tariffs – excluded due to outlier growth – are also a key breakout topic.

This contrasts with traditional go-to topics like the stock market, weather, and sports. These have tended to have a larger share of the news-related prompts (as shown above) but are seeing slower growth, suggesting a move away from reactive information toward deeper issue-driven engagement.

News-related Prompts by Topic - YoY Growth vs YTD Growth
US, Desktop & Mobile Web, Jan 2024 - May 2025 (bubble size = volume share)



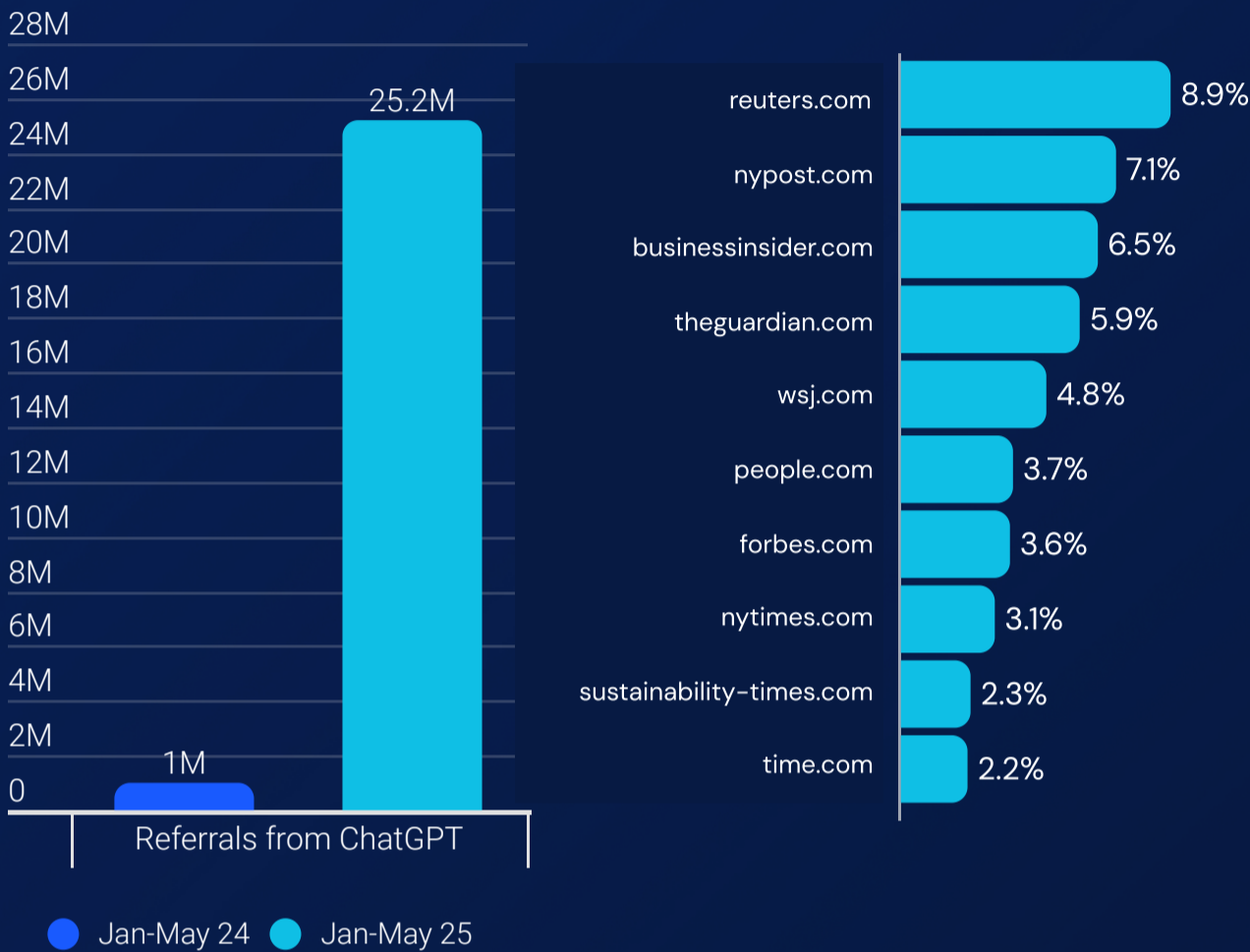
A New Path to the Headlines: GenAI's Growing Role in News Consumption

GenAI news referrals surge YoY. But some key sites are missing out

Referrals from ChatGPT to news publishers jumped from just under 1 million in Jan–May 2024 to more than 25 million in 2025—a 25x increase. Publishers like Reuters, NY Post, and Business Insider have emerged as major beneficiaries.

However, notable outlets, such as CNN, are absent from the referral rankings, while others, like the New York Times, are under-represented due to restrictions on ChatGPT sourcing or linking to their content. These gaps underscore the growing strategic divide within the news ecosystem over how to engage with AI tools and who stands to gain from their expanding influence.

ChatGPT Referral Traffic & Top 10 News Sites Receiving Traffic
US, Desktop & Mobile Web, 2024 - 2025

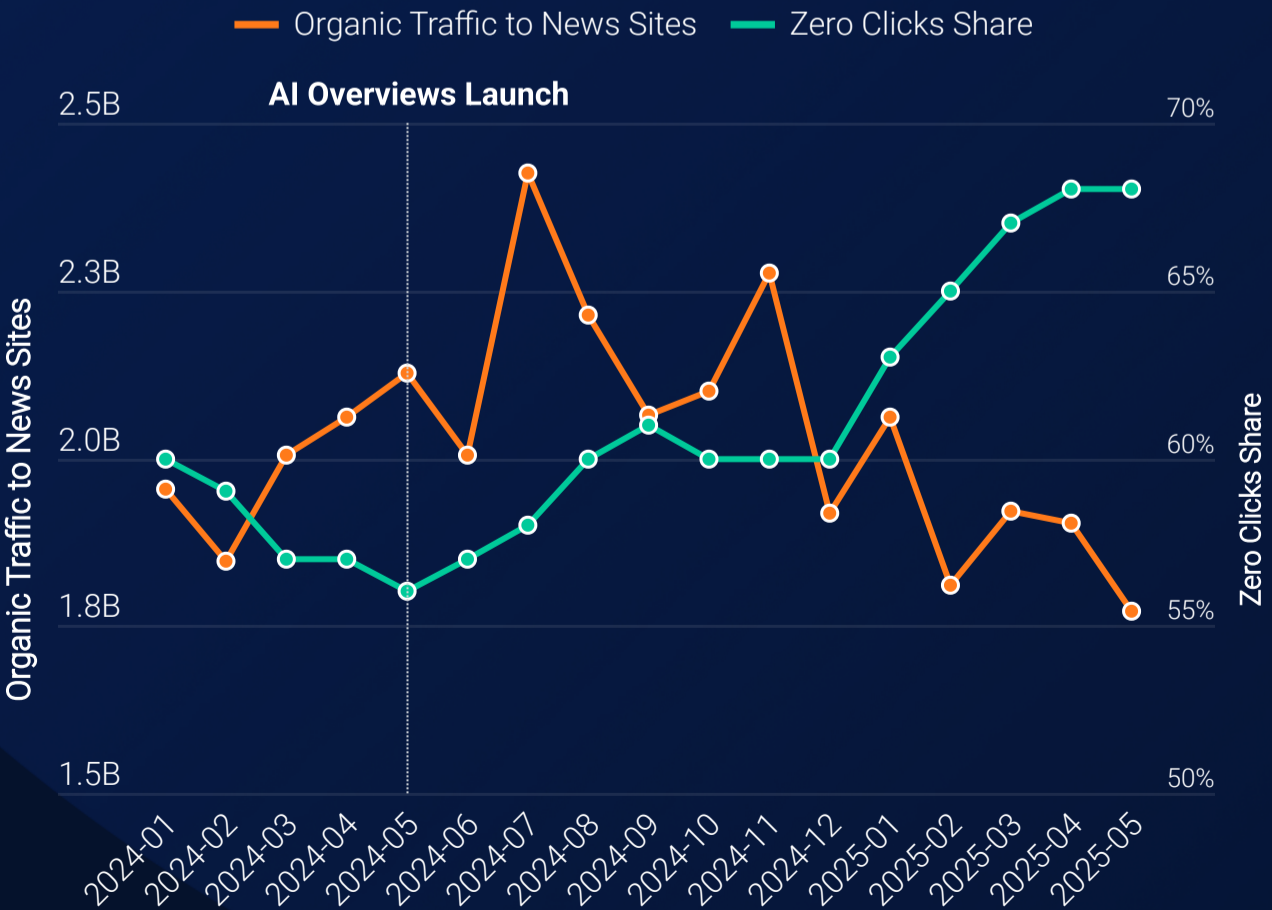


As zero-click searches rise, news sites lose organic traffic

Since Google launched AI Overviews in May 2024, the share of zero-click news searches (e.g., the percent of searches resulting in no clicks) has steadily increased – rising from 56% to nearly 69% by May 2025. During the same period, organic traffic to news publishers has declined noticeably, dropping from over 2.3 billion visits at its peak to under 1.7 billion.

The inverse relationship suggests that users are increasingly getting answers directly on the results page, without clicking through to publishers. For news organizations, this shift marks a critical inflection point: visibility alone may no longer translate into traffic, challenging long-standing assumptions about the value of ranking in search.

Organic Traffic to News Sites vs. Zero-Clicks Search Share
US, Desktop & Mobile Web, Jan 2024 - May 2025



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