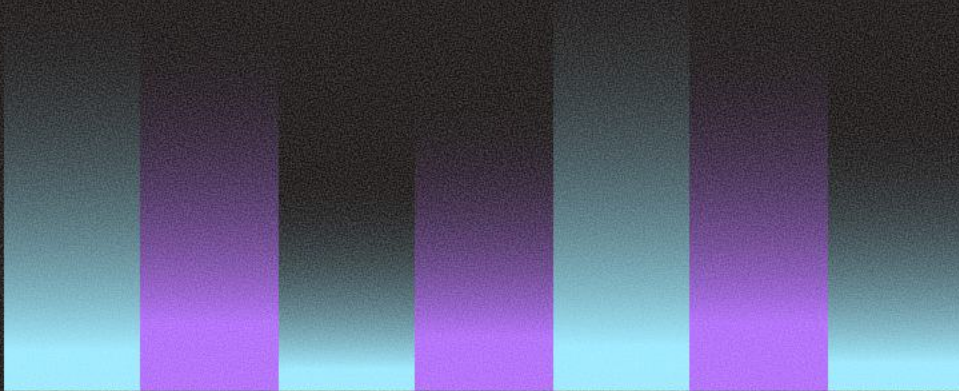


duda

REPORT

2026 AI Visibility for SMB Websites

What 858,000 SMB websites reveal about
AI discoverability



Internal data from Duda demonstrates how local businesses can
optimize their sites for AI search, and the business case for doing so.

Executive summary

As more consumers begin transitioning to AI as their primary search engine, local businesses are shifting toward Answer Engine Optimization (AEO) to maintain visibility online. Our analysis confirms this shift. Location remains a critical factor for discovery, even in AI, and businesses that implement technical enhancements and deep, structured content see significantly higher engagement from both AI crawlers and human users.

By moving beyond traditional link rankings and prioritizing site depth through tools like blogs and dynamic page generation, local businesses can ensure they are the primary recommendation provided by modern generative search tools.

To understand what separates the businesses benefiting from this shift from those being left behind, Duda analyzed a snapshot of **858,457 SMB websites**, examining AI crawler activity, human traffic, lead generation events, and the presence of specific site features and apps.

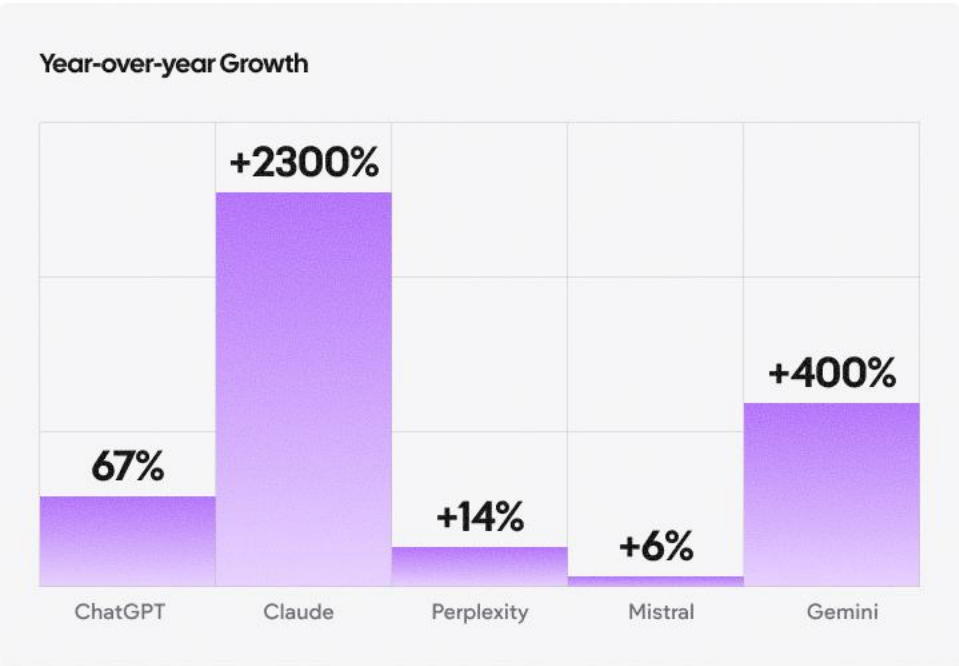
The findings are clear; AEO is not an enterprise game anymore. SMB websites can be optimized for AI systems, and doing so provides real business opportunities. **AI-crawled sites generate 3.2x more human traffic, 2.7x more form submissions, and 2.5x more click-to-call events.**

For agencies or SaaS platforms managing SMB websites at scale, this data points to a significant and largely untapped opportunity. The majority of analyzed sites have implemented fewer than two of the identified optimization strategies. The gap between where most SMB sites are and where they need to be is both wide and closable. This report shows exactly what moves the needle, by how much, and where to start.

Traffic from AI sources is on the rise

AI is no longer a future consideration for local businesses. Rather, it is an active, measurable source of traffic. Between March 2025 and February 2026, human website traffic to analyzed websites from AI sources has increased **73%** with ChatGPT driving the majority (57%) of that traffic.

While not included in this traffic analysis, it is believed that **68%** of local searches now contain AI Overviews, an AI generated answer response to a user query.

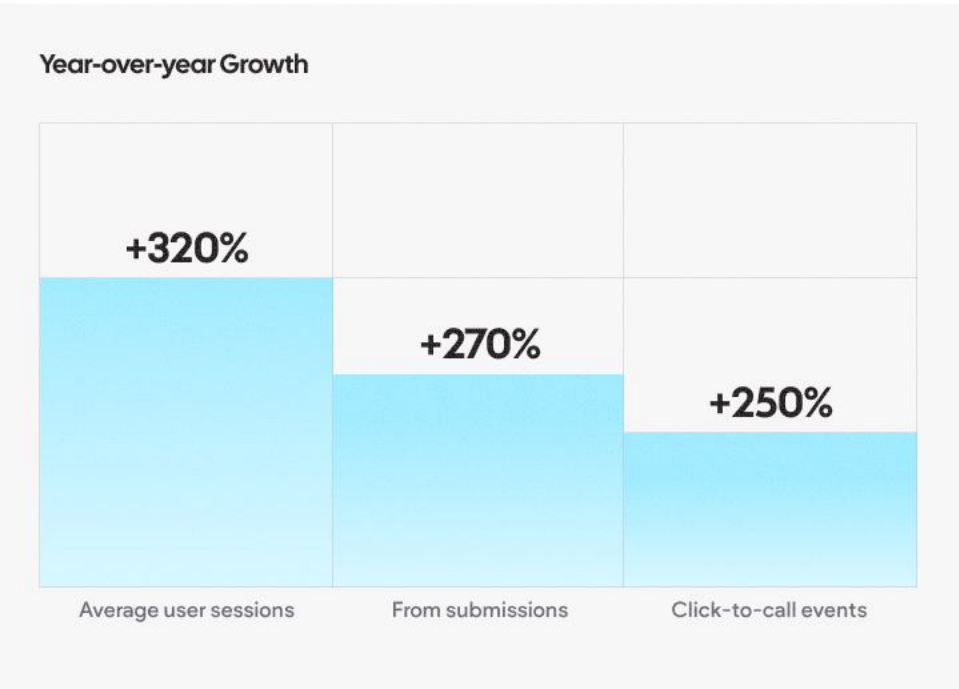


Year-over-year growth of traffic referred to SMB websites built on Duda, measured as user sessions, from AI platforms, between March 2025 and February 2026.

The sites AIs visit are the sites humans visit

In addition to human traffic, websites receive traffic from crawlers—programs built to retrieve information from the open web. Unlike traditional search engine crawlers, which catalog information for future retrieval elsewhere, LLMs, particularly ChatGPT, have been shown to crawl websites in real-time as information from the site is referenced. This phenomenon makes traffic from crawlers a reliable way to measure how “visible” a website is to an LLM.

Analyzed websites visited by AI crawlers saw better performance overall. Namely, these websites earned **3.2X more human traffic** over the analysis period, **2.7X more form submissions**, and **2.5X more “click-to-call” events**.



Highly crawled websites had factors in common

Commonalities were found among websites with high visitation rates from AI crawlers. Particularly, these websites had implemented certain features, or installed certain apps. The greatest combination of features was the implementation of Google Business Profile synchronization, local schema, dynamic pages, and the presence of a blog.

Duda’s internal data confirms that the presence of traditional Local SEO optimizations, like local schema and the consistent presence of name, address, and phone number information across the website, results in greater levels of visibility from LLMs. **Actively visited sites with these optimizations had a +7pp higher crawl rate by AI providers than those without.** This demonstrates that location is a factor in AI search.

Features	Crawl Rate (without)	Crawl Rate (with)	Delta
GBP Synced	59%	93%	+34 pp
Booking	59%	89%	+30 pp
Reviews Widget	59%	80%	+21 pp
Local Schema	55%	72%	+17 pp
Dynamic Pages	58%	69%	+11 pp

Websites who have synced their information, such as name, address, and phone number, with their Google Business Profile are 21pp more visible to AI than those who have not—a classic Local SEO recommendation. Similarly, websites with blogs containing more than one post are 11pp more visible to AI.

App	Crawl Rate (without)	Crawl Rate (with)	Delta
Yext	58%	97%	+39 pp
Reviews Apps	59%	90%	+31 pp
Uberall	59%	88%	+29 pp

Websites who installed the Yext app, a digital presence management solution, were 39pp more visible to AI systems than those who have not, while websites with customer reviews present were 31pp more visible.

Optimizations	AI Visibility
0	51%
1	63%
2	80%
3	71%
4+	89%

These optimizations compound, as well. **Websites with four or more of these optimizations had 38pp greater visibility** than those without any optimizations. In addition to visibility, those sites had 1600% more human traffic than unoptimized websites.

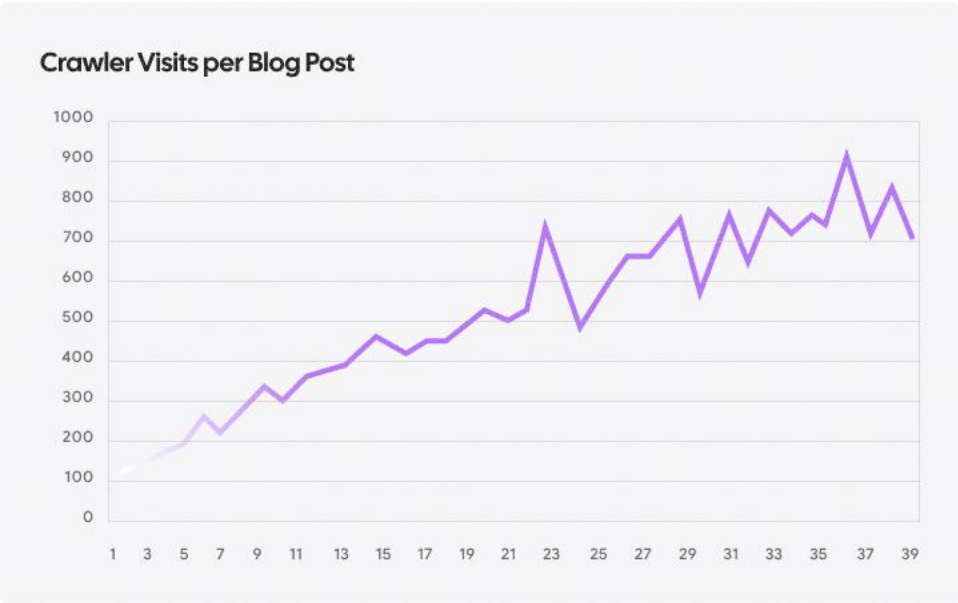
About Dynamic Pages

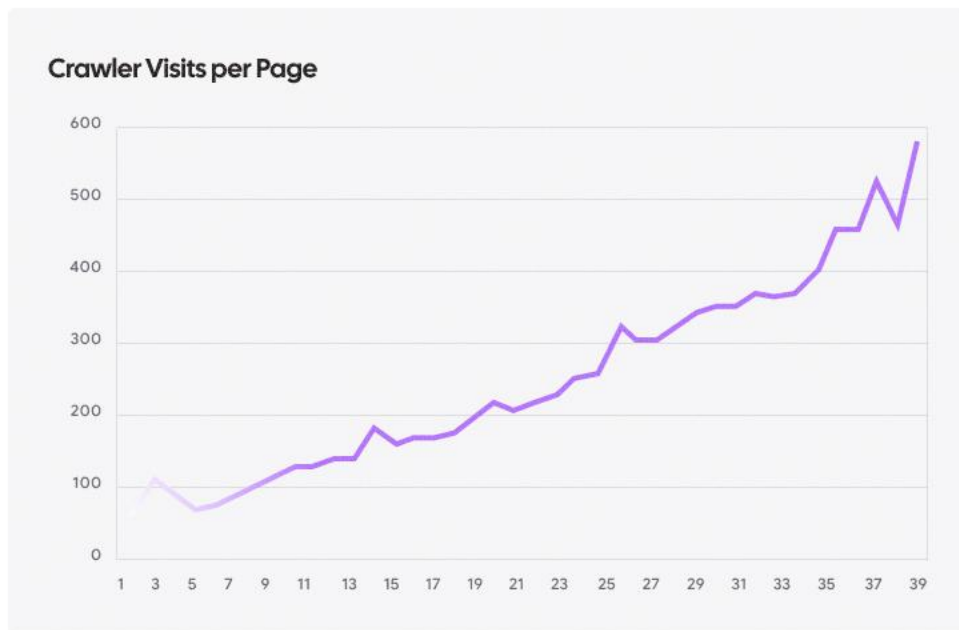
Dynamic Pages are a feature of the Duda platform that allow builders to create website pages in bulk, programmatically, by placing variables—called Connected Data—onto a templated page.

The variables are populated from either a table—called an Internal Collection—or a third-party database like Google Sheets, AirTable, or any other database. This enables builders to create many structured pages quickly, like Team Member or Service pages.

Additional pages increase visibility

Each additional blog post published to a website increased the amount of visits AI crawlers made to that site by a median 7%, while each additional website page increased visits by a median 4%. This stayed largely consistent regardless of the total number of pages or articles.





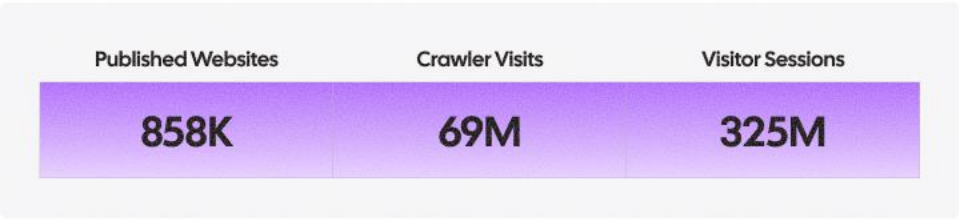
Each additional website page increases the number of visits per crawler.

This is an arena where Local AEO diverges from Local SEO. AI systems simply prefer more content than traditional search algorithms, and more specific content at that. Highly recommended SMB websites will explain, exhaustively, everything their business offers, and where it is offered—leading to better, more useful websites for both LLMs and their prospective customers

What does this data mean for SMBs?

AI systems are visiting SMB websites, and they are referring traffic. Considering the impact location-specific optimizations like local schema and Google Business Profile synchronization have on crawler visits, it can be inferred that local queries are driving at least some of this crawler traffic. Most importantly, though, SMB websites can be optimized to increase the amount of traffic they receive from crawlers in simple, scalable ways.

Methodology



We analyzed the performance of 858,457 websites in the month of February 2026, considering only eligible websites initially built and published prior to 2026. Performance metrics included form submissions, user sessions, crawler visits, click-to-call events, and more. Across all considered websites, 325M user sessions were analyzed as well as 68.9M AI crawler visits. Due to the nature of how crawlers identified themselves at the time of analysis, Google’s AI Overviews feature is not represented in this report.

AI Crawler Breakdown			
Provider	User-Fetch	Model Training	Content Indexing/ Discovery
Open AI	57%	12%	11%
Anthropic	—	17%	—
Perplexity	—	—	2%
Google (Gemini)	—	—	1%

Why trust us?

Duda powers 1,000,000 active SMB websites and counting, built by over 23,000 digital marketing agencies, web professionals, and SaaS platforms from around the world. These websites represent local businesses ranging from mechanics and electricians to cafes and veterinary offices—all of whom depend upon local search to earn leads online.

What is crawl rate?

Crawl rate is the percentage of websites that received visits from AI crawlers in February of 2026. For example, a cohort with a 50% crawl rate means only half of all analyzed sites were visited by an AI crawler.

Implement AEO at scale

The optimizations in this report are not complicated. But executing them consistently, across dozens, hundreds, or thousands of client websites, is where most agencies struggle. The difference between knowing what to do and doing it at scale is the platform.

Duda was built for exactly this challenge. As the website platform powering over 1,000,000 SMB websites across more than 23,000 agencies worldwide, Duda's tools translate directly into the AEO gains this data describes.

Whether that's a powerful AI Stack, built to streamline the entire website creation, management, and optimization process, auto-generated local schema and native Google Business Profile sync, an App Store featuring Yext, Uberall, and Reviews integrations or thoughtful, time-saving tools like Dynamic Pages, designed to make page creation easy at bulk—Duda is equipped to solve this challenge.

For agencies operating at even greater levels of scale, Duda's robust API enables programmatic AEO implementation across thousands of sites simultaneously.

**Visit duda.co to learn more, or speak
with our team at duda.co/contact.**