aruntastic

Study guide · Section 11

AI SEO COURSE 2026

Google's AI search position, in plain steps

AI Search Update · Lectures 11.6 to 11.11

This guide goes beside the six AI search update lectures in Section 11. Every figure and date comes from the lectures; links to Google's pages are on the website.





Arun Nagarathanam

6 lectures · prompts, ideas and checks

BEFORE YOU START

How to use this guide

Keep it open on your phone or a second screen while the lecture plays on your main screen.

ONE

Keep it beside the video.

Watch the lecture, then try the steps yourself.

TWO

Use the prompts.

Every dark window holds a prompt from the lecture. Select the text and copy it.

THREE

Check yourself.

Each lecture ends with one question. Answer it before you move on.

ALL LINKS AND COPY BUTTONS

Every link for this section, and every prompt with a working Copy button, is on one page of our website.

Open the Section 11 page

IN THIS SECTION

6 lectures

11.6	Is SEO Dead Now That AI Answers Questions?	Page 4
11.7	Which AI Search Worries Can You Drop?	Page 6
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11.6

Is SEO Dead Now That AI Answers Questions?

Hear Google's own position on AI search, and see why your SEO foundation is also the path into an AI answer.

IDEAS TO KEEP

01

On 15 May 2026 Google published a guide for website owners on generative AI features. Its position in one sentence: optimizing for generative AI search is optimizing for the search experience, and thus still SEO.

02

Google says there are no extra requirements to appear in AI Overviews or AI Mode, and no special optimizations needed.

03

Core ranking systems pick relevant, up-to-date pages from the regular Search index, and the answer is written from them. If Google cannot crawl, read and index your page, its AI systems cannot use it.

04

Google says content people find unique, compelling and useful will likely influence your presence in AI search in the long run more than any other suggestion in its guide. Evaluate third-party AEO and GEO claims under the same guidance you use for any outside SEO advice.

FOLLOW ALONG

1. Open Google's guide on generative AI features (link on the website page for this lecture) and find the sentence that says it is still SEO.
2. Think of one page of yours where you gave the direct answer in the opening paragraph, and one piece of practical advice only you could have written.

FILES AND LINKS

Links and copy buttons on the website

CHECK YOURSELF

If Google cannot crawl and index a page in regular search, what happens to that page in an AI summary?

11.7

Which AI Search Worries Can You Drop?

Clear four items off your AI search to-do list, using Google's own guide.

IDEAS TO KEEP

01

llms.txt: on 15 June 2026 Google clarified that Google Search does not use AI text files or Markdown. Keeping one for other systems is fine; for Google Search it neither helps nor hurts.

02

Chunking: Google says there is no requirement to break content into tiny pieces, or to write in a special way for generative search.

03

Paid brand mentions: Google's 15 May 2026 guide warns that inauthentic mentions do not help, and its spam rules apply to AI search.

04

FAQ schema: on 7 May 2026 Google stopped showing FAQ rich results. Leave existing markup alone, skip it on new pages, and keep your visible questions and answers. What is left: genuinely helpful content that Google can crawl and add to its index.

FOLLOW ALONG

1. Open the Drop List and decide on each of the four rows.
2. If you have paid for brand mentions, review them with Google's spam policies open.

FILES AND LINKS

11.7-Drop-List.md

Links and copy buttons on the website

CHECK YOURSELF

Which of the four items could create real risk for your site, and why?

11.8

Where Do AI Answers Get Their Sources?

See how Google builds an AI answer from fresh pages, and plan the neighbouring questions your page should answer.

IDEAS TO KEEP

01

AI Mode is Google's chat-style search, launched in the US in May 2025. An AI Overview is the AI summary above normal results.

02

A model's training is frozen in time, so Google looks up relevant, up-to-date pages before writing an answer. To appear, a page needs to be indexed and eligible for a normal snippet.

03

Query fan-out: Google turns one customer prompt into several background searches, finds helpful pages from its index and writes an answer with links.

04

You cannot see or target those searches. Building a page for every variation can violate Google's scaled content abuse policy. Better move: list the 4 to 6 neighbouring questions your customer asks next and answer them on your page or across linked sections of a topic cluster.

FOLLOW ALONG

1. Pick your answer-first page.
2. Fill in the Neighbouring Questions Worksheet with 4 to 6 questions.
3. Decide which section or linked page answers each one.

FILES AND LINKS

11.8-Neighbouring-Questions-Worksheet.md

Links and copy buttons on the website

CHECK YOURSELF

Why does a pile of thin pages never make a site more relevant?

11.9

Can Readers Pick Your Site in Google?

Decide whether the Preferred Sources feature is worth 10 minutes for your site, and set it up if it is.

IDEAS TO KEEP

01

Searchers can choose sites they want to see more often. When they choose yours, Google places a label beside your links, now including inside AI Overviews and AI Mode (expanded 27 May 2026).

02

Google reported people are twice as likely to click through to a Preferred Source, and more than 345,000 sources had been selected. It does not say what the comparison is measured against, so treat it as Google's report, not a forecast.

03

Any site with fresh content and its own domain or subdomain is eligible. It applies to the whole address, not a subfolder.

04

Worth it if you have repeat customers, a newsletter or returning readers. Skip it for a brochure site with no returning audience. You cannot mark yourself. Invite readers with Google's 2-line button, a direct link, or by pointing them to the Preferred Sources page.

FOLLOW ALONG

1. Open the Preferred Source Invite Kit.
2. Add the button or direct link.
3. Put the link in one newsletter, post or customer message.
4. Look up your domain on Google's Preferred Sources page.

FILES AND LINKS

11.9-Preferred-Source-Invite-Kit.md

Links and copy buttons on the website

CHECK YOURSELF

Who decides whether your site becomes a Preferred Source, and how can you invite them?

11.10

What Does ChatGPT Say About Your Business?

Capture your AI Visibility Baseline in about 5 minutes: 2 dated screenshots and one short note.

IDEAS TO KEEP

01

A keyword gives a useless answer. People prompt AI assistants with full questions in their own words.

02

Use a new ChatGPT chat so earlier chats do not colour the answer, then run the same question in Google.

03

A missing Google AI summary is normal. Google shows one only when it adds something useful. If none appears, use AI Mode.

04

Date every screenshot and keep both in one folder with your exact question and the businesses named. The baseline is one question on one day, an honest before picture to compare against later in the course.

FOLLOW ALONG

1. Write your customer question as a full sentence.
2. Run it in a new ChatGPT chat and read the answer for mentions.
3. Run the same question in Google (AI summary or AI Mode).
4. Save both screenshots with today's date, plus the note, in one folder.

AI search · Your customer question

PROMPT

[Your customer question, as a full sentence in your customer's own words]

Paste into: a new ChatGPT chat

FILES AND LINKS

11.10-AI-Visibility-Baseline-Note.md

Links and copy buttons on the website

CHECK YOURSELF

Why does the question need to be a full sentence rather than a keyword?

Is AI Search Worth It Yet?

11.11

See what the traffic numbers say about AI search, and how to hold the work calmly.

IDEAS TO KEEP

01

Ahrefs, February 2025, 3,000 websites: AI chatbots sent 0.17% of the average site's visitors, and 63% of sites received some AI traffic.

02

That count is a floor, because some visits arrive with no source label and show up as Direct in your reports.

03

Smaller sites (under 999 monthly visitors) took a larger share of their traffic from AI than large brands did.

04

Zero-click answers still carry awareness: some readers search for your name or type your address later. Show up steadily, keep measuring, and be patient. AI traffic is too small to bet your whole business on.

FOLLOW ALONG

1. Open GA4, Traffic acquisition, and find the Direct row.
2. Note your AI referral traffic, if any, next to your baseline folder.

FILES AND LINKS

Links and copy buttons on the website

CHECK YOURSELF

Why is the AI traffic figure in the Ahrefs study described as a floor?

REFERENCE

Words used in this section

AI Overview
The AI summary Google shows above normal results.

AI Mode
Google's chat-style search, launched in the US in May 2025.

Query fan-out
Running several related searches at once to answer one customer prompt.

llms.txt
A text file placed on a website for AI tools. Google Search does not use it.

Chunking
Cutting pages into tiny self-contained pieces for AI. Google says it is not required.

Preferred Source
A site a searcher chose to see more often. Google labels its links.

AI Visibility Baseline
Two dated screenshots and a short note showing what AI tools say about your business today.

Zero-click answer
An answer read on screen with no click to a website.

Keep building your AI search foundation

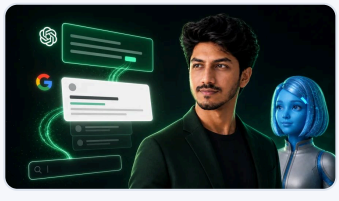
Next, the course looks at tools that show what your draft is missing compared with the pages AI answers already use.

Continue the course | Section 11 on the website | aruntastic.com



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Written by Arun Nagarathanam
Part of AI SEO Course 2026



KEEP BUILDING

More from Aruntastic

Practical courses for people who want to build useful things with AI.



AEO, GEO, AI SEO: Get Cited by ChatGPT, Google, Perplexity

Study how AI search finds information, and make your pages clear enough to be cited.

Open the course



Claude Code Without Coding: AI That Does Real Work for You

Start with the installation, give Claude Code a real project, and learn how to check what it changes as you build.

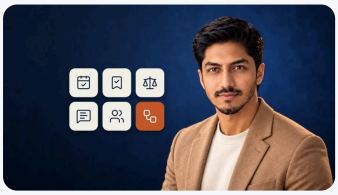
Open the course



Microsoft PowerPoint Presentation 2026 for Professionals

Learn visual hierarchy, slide composition, typography and animation through practical work.

Open the course



AI Agents for Leaders Who Have No Time to Learn AI

If you can delegate to a person, you can delegate to an AI agent. You keep the judgment. For managers and founders.

Open the course

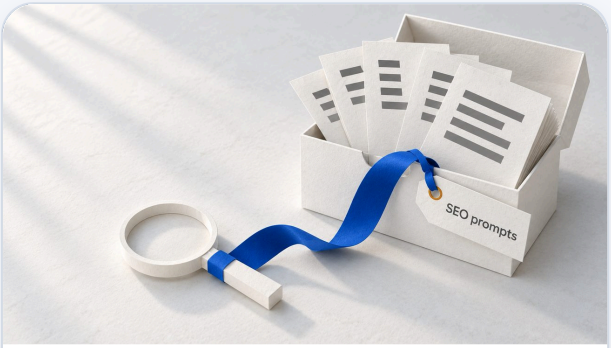


Introduction to Agentic AI and AI Agents

Learn how to direct an AI agent at work, with agentic workflows, RAG and MCP explained from a real first run.

Open the course

Go deeper



TOOLKIT

SEO Accelerator Toolkit

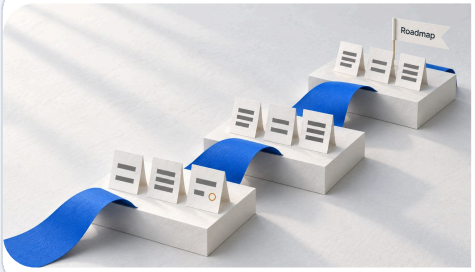
150+ copy-paste AI prompts for audience research, keywords, content, technical SEO and link building.



TOOLKIT

GEO Accelerator Toolkit

100 detailed AI prompts for GEO audits, entity building, content structure and client reporting.



PROGRAMME

GEO Authority Accelerator

A complete GEO programme on our learner platform: nine modules and a 30, 60, 90 day roadmap. The GEO Accelerator Toolkit is included.

Learn more

CLAUDE CERTIFICATION PRACTICE

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Architect Foundations



CCAO-F
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