

FOR LOCAL BUSINESS OWNERS

AI Visibility *Self-Audit.*

A way to see yourself the way AI sees you right now — and a checklist of the five areas that decide whether you show up.

STEP ONE

Before you audit anything, search for yourself.

Run these four searches right now. Replace the brackets with your actual business type and city. Screenshot the results before you change anything — you'll want something to compare against later.

CHATGPT

QUERY

"What are the best [your business type] in [your city]?"

LOOK FOR

Is your business named? Which competitors are? Screenshot the full answer.

PERPLEXITY

QUERY

"Who is the most trusted [your business type] in [your city or neighborhood]?"

LOOK FOR

Does the answer cite a source? Identify which website it pulled from. That's the business winning right now.

GOOGLE AI OVERVIEW

QUERY

"best [your business type] near [your city]"

LOOK FOR

The AI summary at the top, before the map pack. If there isn't one, try "top-rated [business type] in [city]."

GEMINI

QUERY

"Best [your business type] in [your city]"

LOOK FOR

Gemini groups results into categories and often adds a comparison table. Note whether you appear and which sources it cites.

01

THE FOUNDATION

Google Business Profile

These may look like standard SEO advice. They were, and they still are. But AI models don't use your GBP to rank you – they use it to verify you. Your categories, your services, your Q&A are the data points an AI uses to decide whether your business is the right answer to return.

- Primary and secondary categories are specific, not generic
"Cosmetic dentist" outperforms "dentist." "Residential HVAC contractor" outperforms "HVAC." Specificity is relevance.
- Services section is fully populated with descriptions
AI reads this like a menu. If it's empty or vague, you're off the menu for that service.
- Q&A section has at least 5 answered questions
We've almost never seen a local business with this section actually filled out. That makes it the easiest win on this list.
- Photos and video are recent, authentic, and present on your GBP
AI uses vector embeddings to connect visual content to topical relevance. Real team photos and short authentic video outperform stock imagery every time.
- Category claims are backed by review language
If you call yourself the "best pediatric dentist in Raleigh," your reviews need to say it too. AI verifies the claim.

02

TRUST SIGNALS

Citation Consistency

You've heard this one before – keep your NAP consistent across directories. Good SEO advice then, and still true. But AI models don't just crawl your listings for ranking signals. They use them to verify facts. When your address is different on Yelp than it is on GBP, AI doesn't know which one to trust. So it hedges, or skips you entirely.

- Business name, address, and phone are accurate and consistent with your website
Anywhere these don't match – even a suite number abbreviated differently – AI second-guesses you.
- NAP is identical across all major directories
Yelp, Apple Maps, Bing Places, industry directories. Every one needs to match GBP exactly. Bing Places feeds Microsoft Copilot the same way GBP feeds Google. Don't skip it.
- Business is listed on at least 10 relevant directories
Each consistent citation is a signal that you exist and are who you say you are.
- No duplicate or outdated listings exist
Old listings from a previous address are especially problematic. AI doesn't know which version to trust, so it hedges or skips you.

03

YOUR SITE AS EVIDENCE

Your Digital Footprint as a Data Source

Most business owners think of their website as a place for customers to land. AI doesn't see it that way. It reads your site the way a researcher reads a source — looking for verifiable facts, specific service descriptions, named expertise, and clear location context. If it can't find those things, it moves on to a business it can verify.

- Dedicated service pages exist for each core offering**
One page per service with specific descriptions. A single "Services" page with a list tells AI almost nothing.
- Location page is specific to your city or neighborhood, not generic**
"Serving Wilmington, Leland, and Wrightsville Beach" is more citable than "serving the greater area."
- AI crawl access is not blocked in robots.txt**
Type `yourdomain.com/robots.txt` into your browser. If you see `Disallow` under any AI agent name, that crawler is completely blocked. Rare, but when it happens the impact is total.
- About page includes your name, credentials, and specific area of expertise**
AI cites named experts. "Our team of professionals" establishes nothing. Your name and your specific expertise do.
- FAQ section answers common customer questions in plain language**
FAQ content maps almost directly to conversational AI queries. It gets cited verbatim more than any other section of your site.
- Authentic video is present on your website or GBP**
A 60-second walkthrough of your space or a short intro from you does more for AI retrieval than a paragraph of description.

04

THE LAYER MOST SKIP

Structured Data and Schema

Schema markup is the one layer almost no local business has touched. It tells AI exactly what your content means — your business type, your services, your reviews — so it doesn't have to guess. When AI has to guess, it gets it wrong. When it gets it wrong, it cites someone else.

- LocalBusiness schema is implemented on your homepage**
Includes business type, address, phone, hours, and service area. This is the baseline.
- Service schema is on each individual service page**
Connects your services to your business entity in a way AI can parse and cite directly.
- Review schema is implemented where applicable**
Surfaces star ratings in AI Overviews and increases how often you get cited.
- FAQPage schema is applied to your FAQ content**
Makes your answers directly readable by AI with no extra interpretation required.

Content for AI Retrieval

Content strategy for AI visibility looks different. You're writing to be retrieved as an answer, not to rank for keywords. AI looks for content that takes a specific position, names a specific place, and shows real expertise. Generic service descriptions don't qualify. Neither does a blog post from 2021.

- At least one piece of content answers a specific local question
"What's the best medspa in Wilmington for first-time Botox?" Written by you, about your market. That's the kind of content AI retrieves.
- Content uses your city and neighborhood name naturally throughout
Location context is one of the four factors AI uses to match businesses to queries. Make it easy.
- Content establishes your perspective, not just your services
There's a difference between "we offer sod installation" and "here's what Wilmington's clay soil means for your sod choice." The second one is citable.
- Content is updated within the last 6 months
AI platforms deprioritize stale content. A blog post from 2021 isn't doing the work you think it is.
- Your business is mentioned or reviewed on third-party platforms beyond directories
AI ingests from YouTube, TikTok reviews, Reddit, and niche forums. A genuine review or forum mention is a citation you didn't have to create.

SCORE YOUR AUDIT

How to read your results

22-24

CHECKED

FOUNDATION

You have a real foundation. The work now is monitoring and deepening your content.

16-21

CHECKED

GAPS

Gaps exist, most likely in schema, video, and content. Prioritize GBP and citation consistency first.

<16

CHECKED

STARTING LINE

AI can't reliably find or verify you. This is where most local businesses start — and it's fixable.

The next move *is yours.*

Most local businesses skip this work entirely. Whether you fix everything on this list yourself or bring in help, the first move is the same: look at what AI sees about your business, and decide what to do about it.

WHEN YOU'RE READY TO GO DEEPER

The AI Visibility *Audit.*

A clear picture of where you stand in AI platforms and exactly what to fix to get cited, sourced, and mentioned. Six scored sections covering AI citation across ChatGPT, Perplexity, Google AI Overviews, and Gemini, plus GBP, website architecture, content depth, local search footprint, and ads. You get a scored, custom analysis, prioritized fixes, and one clear recommendation.

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