

OPTIMUM MODULE

AI Summary Citation Gap Analysis and Tracking

Methodology: the Monthly Citation Watch

1. Purpose

This module tracks whether client pages that already rank in Google's top eight organic results also earn a citation in AI generated answers.

The process runs monthly rather than as a one-off audit, because an AI Overview citation is not permanent. A citation held this month can disappear next month without any change to the page itself, and a page rejected today can be picked up next month once the underlying fault is fixed. Only ongoing monitoring catches either movement.

2. Product structure

This module sits with 'Monthly Citation Watch' in a one product structure but a bespoke Quarterly Audit may be designed with client:

- Monthly Citation Watch: the ongoing paid service set out in this document. It replaces the earlier concept of a separate one-off full audit tier, since the monthly process is already more thorough than that tier was ever intended to be.

3. Monthly query pool

Fifteen queries are tested each month, drawn from three sources in equal number:

- Five popular industry queries, agreed directly with the client
- Five queries drawn from Google Search Console, selected where the domain already shows impressions
- Five queries built from category modelling, using sector knowledge to cover queries Search Console data would not surface on its own

Each of the fifteen queries is tested on two platforms: Google Search, covering both organic position and the AI Overview, and ChatGPT.

4. Per-query process

Step 1. Check organic position for the query. If the client's page ranks in the top eight, it is a candidate for this pass. If it ranks below the top eight, it is logged separately and left for the category modelling review rather than actioned here.

Step 2. Check the AI Overview for the same query. If the client's page is cited, log it as cited; no page work is required, though the query remains in the process rather than being closed out (see the Symmetric Stability Rule below). If the client's page is not cited, this is the gap. Log the query, the page URL, and the domain that received the citation instead. The competitor domain costs nothing extra to record, since the Overview

is already open, and it gives a direct comparison for the client: a page ranking third that still lost the citation to a lower ranked competitor.

Step 3. Work the page. For each flagged gap, review and correct the specific extraction fault. The usual starting points are schema markup, direct answer formatting near the top of the page, and E-E-A-T signals.

Step 4. Recheck monthly. Every query in the pool, whether cited or not the previous month, is tested again on both Google AI Overview and ChatGPT. A ChatGPT baseline is logged at the point a query is first flagged, so the following month's ChatGPT result has something to compare against.

5. The Symmetric Stability Rule

Citation status is tracked over a rolling three month window on each platform. The rule applies equally to queries that are failing and queries that are succeeding:

- Three consecutive months not cited: the query escalates from monthly to quarterly recheck. A page that has not earned a citation after three months of work is more likely facing a broader authority or competitive problem than a fixable on-page fault, and probably warrants a separate conversation with the client rather than continued identical checks.
- Three consecutive months cited, with no change: the query also escalates to quarterly recheck. A stable citation has earned some confidence and does not need monthly attention.
- Any change in status, in either direction, resets the query to monthly and full attention.

An AI Overview citation is not a one-time win. It is contested every time the AI regenerates an answer, and can be lost or gained independently of any change the client makes.

This is the argument for the Monthly Citation Watch over a one-off audit: a single check only ever confirms what was true on the day it was run.

The Symmetric Stability Rule keeps the active monthly list bounded to genuinely volatile queries, rather than growing indefinitely as more queries are flagged over time. It also, usefully, identifies the subset most worth reporting to the client: a stable win or a stable loss is less interesting than a query that keeps moving.

6. Logging fields

Each query in the pool is recorded against the following fields:

Field	Detail
Query	The search query being tracked
Page URL	The client page targeted at this query
Source	Client-agreed, GSC, or Modelled
Date flagged	The month the query first entered the watch list
Google position	Organic ranking position at time of check
Google AI Overview cited	Yes or No, plus the domain cited if not the client
ChatGPT cited	Yes or No, plus the domain cited if not the client
Status history	Rolling three month record of citation status, both platforms
Stability	Volatile, Stable-cited, Stable-not-cited, or New

Action taken	Page work carried out, if any
Recheck date	Date of next scheduled check
Status	Monthly-active or Quarterly-escalated