



HOW BRANDS CAN DOMINATE THE BATTLE FOR VISIBILITY IN AI WITH PR

Prepared By PR Agency One

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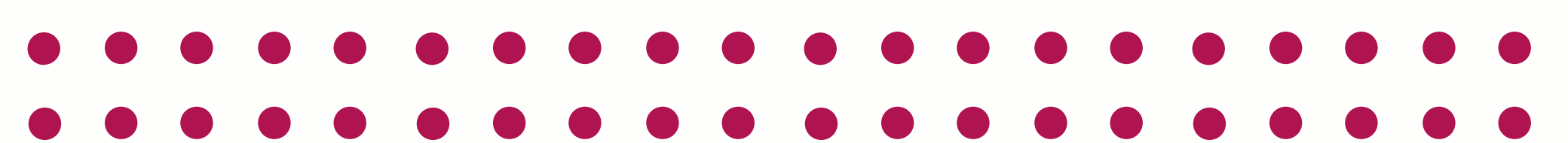


Executive summary

As artificial intelligence (AI) increasingly influences online brand perception, brand managers and PR professionals must ensure AI-generated content accurately and positively represents brands.

This report examines how PR-driven content, across earned, shared, and owned media, shapes AI-generated outputs and provides insights on optimising brand visibility in AI-driven search and content generation.

Using Chat GPT Deep Research we ran 100 queries and tallied up how the results were sourced. Focusing on large language models (LLMs) such as ChatGPT, our research reveals a clear trend: AI relies extensively on PR-generated content, with earned media acting as the most authoritative source. Key findings include:



With AI-driven search and content generation poised to redefine brand visibility, PR must evolve to lead this space, just as SEO transformed digital marketing. The ability to optimise for AI will be a key differentiator in the future of reputation management.

This report provides a roadmap for brand managers, marketers and PR professionals to enhance their AI visibility, from securing high-authority media placements to structuring content for AI indexing and monitoring AI-driven brand perception. By adapting now, PR can secure its role as the primary architect of AI-generated brand narratives.

PR-driven content dominates AI outputs

Over 75% of AI-generated brand references stem from earned, shared, and owned media influenced by PR professionals.

Earned media remains the primary source of AI knowledge

AI models prioritise reputable news and trade publications, underscoring the importance of strategic media placements.

Social engagement shapes AI perception

AI integrates brand sentiment from social platforms, making PR-driven online discussions essential for influencing AI-generated narratives.

Owned content plays a critical role

Well-structured brand websites, corporate blogs, and Wikipedia pages significantly contribute to AI-driven brand representations.

Introduction

AI-powered search, content generation, and chatbot responses are transforming how brands are discovered and represented online.

Traditional search engines once dictated digital visibility through backlinks and domain authority, but AI models operate differently.

They rely on tokenisation and contextual weighting to construct brand narratives, pulling from earned media, social media, and owned content—all of which are directly influenced by PR professionals.

This fundamental shift marks a new era: AI optimisation, where PR strategy plays a decisive role in shaping brand visibility and understanding. AI models such as ChatGPT, Claude, and Gemini do not simply retrieve search engine-ranked pages; instead, they:

- Tokenise and contextualise information rather than ranking it based on links.
- Rely on high-authority sources, prioritising journalistic content and structured brand narratives.
- Employ search selectively, only when gaps in their internal knowledge require real-time updates.

Why PR now sits at the heart of AI-driven brand visibility

Our research demonstrates that PR-driven content is the dominant source of AI-generated brand representation. Unlike SEO, which depends on search ranking algorithms, AI models synthesise information from the PESO model, Paid, Earned, Shared, and Owned media, to determine what is most relevant.

- Earned media dominates AI responses – AI prioritises news outlets, trade media, and expert sources, meaning PR-secured coverage directly influences AI brand perception.
- Social media shapes AI sentiment – AI incorporates real-time discussions, influencer engagement, and consumer sentiment from platforms like LinkedIn, X (Twitter), Reddit, and YouTube.
- Owned content is essential for AI retrieval – Corporate blogs, brand websites, and structured knowledge sources (e.g., Wikipedia) act as core AI reference points.

In this context, marketers need to take note that PR professionals are now the architects of AI brand visibility and understanding. AI models do not distinguish between SEO-optimised web pages and PR-driven narratives; instead, they favour authoritative, structured, and widely cited content. This means that brands relying solely on traditional search rankings risk becoming invisible in AI-generated search results.

What this report covers

This report provides a strategic roadmap for PR professionals looking to harness the power of AI optimisation. It explores:

- How AI models construct brand narratives using earned, shared, and owned content.
- Why AI retrieval differs from traditional search and how tokenisation affects brand visibility.
- How PR professionals can influence AI-driven search and content generation through media placements, structured brand messaging, and AI-aware content strategies.

AI-driven brand visibility is already reshaping the digital landscape. By understanding and adapting to these shifts, PR professionals can take a leadership role in ensuring that brands are not only visible but accurately represented in the AI era.



Findings: PR as the core driver of AI content

Our research classified AI-sourced content in AI Deep Research according to the PESO model, revealing the following key trends:

1. Earned media dominance

- AI models rely heavily on authoritative news sources and trade publications such as The Guardian, BBC News, Wired, and the Financial Times.
- PR professionals secure media placements in these sources, which in turn become the foundation for AI-generated brand narratives.
- The weight AI assigns to high-authority earned media demonstrates PR's impact on credibility and visibility.
- AI referenced high-authority news and trade sources in **43 per cent instances in Chat GPT Deep Research**, underscoring the dominance of traditional media in AI-generated brand narratives.

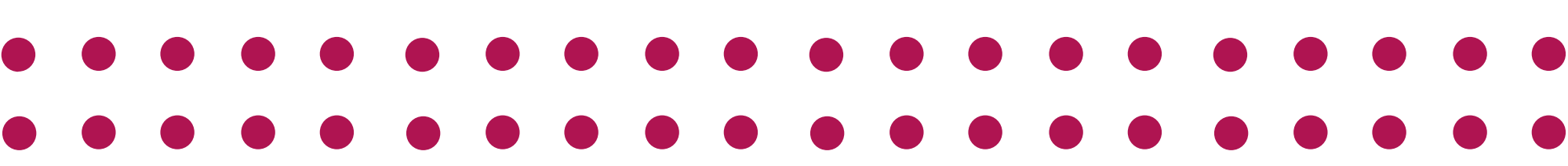
2. The influence of shared media

- AI scrapes data from social media platforms (Twitter/X, LinkedIn, Reddit, YouTube) to assess sentiment and trends.
- PR-led influencer engagement and brand-driven conversations shape how AI interprets and presents social discussions.
- Brands with high engagement in positive PR-driven discussions are more likely to be presented favourably in AI-generated summaries.
- Social platforms contributed 23 per cent of instances, highlighting the growing influence of PR-driven social engagement in AI perception.

3. Owned media as a key AI input

- AI frequently references brand-owned websites, corporate blogs, and press releases, which PR professionals manage.
- Wikipedia, often classified under owned media, is a major AI source, and its citations are largely drawn from earned media.
- By strategically structuring owned content, PR teams can influence how AI retrieves and summarises brand information.
- AI retrieved brand-owned content from 103 different sources, demonstrating the importance of structured corporate messaging in AI outputs.

Findings – Is the marketing industry equipped to track AI optimisation?



As artificial intelligence (AI) becomes a central driver of online brand visibility, marketing and PR professionals must demonstrate how their work influences AI-generated content. The ability to evaluate PR impact effectively is essential – not just for proving PR’s value but for ensuring that PR efforts are shaping AI-optimised search and content.

Our research in this section uses a thorough search and social listening exercise to curate the latest reports and data on AI in marketing. We found that while AI-powered monitoring is widely used in PR, the marketing industry is lagging in applying AI for strategic evaluation and attribution – a critical gap that must be addressed to ensure PR plays a leadership role in AI-driven brand management.

1. PR is tracking media coverage, but not measuring AI influence

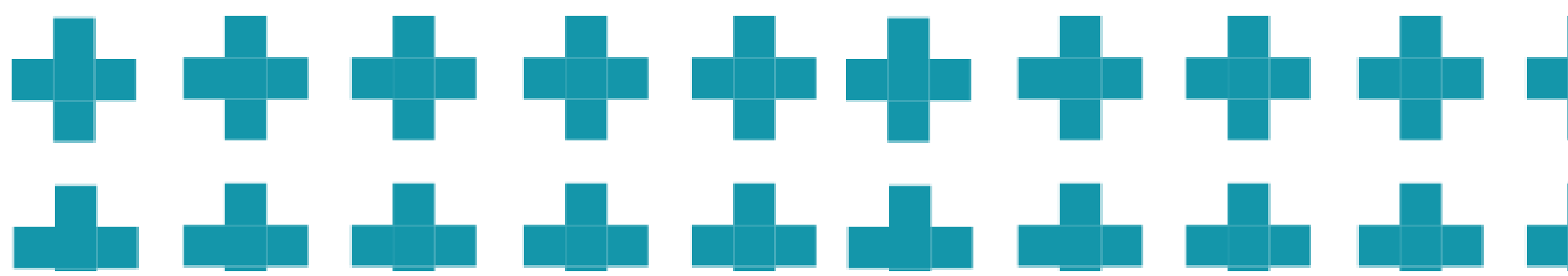
- 75%+ of PR professionals use AI for monitoring, focusing on media coverage, sentiment analysis, and social listening.
- However, only 20–30% of PR teams use AI for advanced impact measurement, such as tracking how PR influences AI-generated search results or how earned media shifts AI-driven narratives.
- Few PR agencies or in-house teams have AI-optimised evaluation frameworks that directly link PR activity to how AI prioritises, ranks, and retrieves brand information.

2. AI use in PR is focused on content, not evaluation

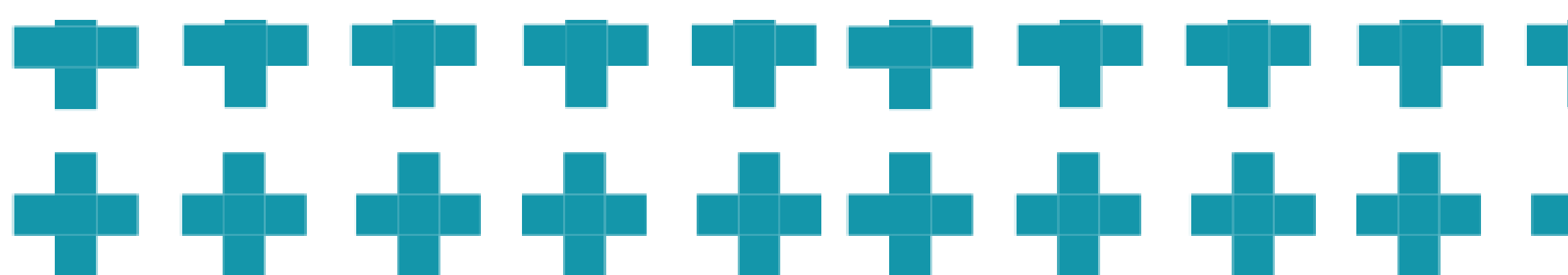
- AI-powered content creation dominates AI-in-PR discussions (30% of industry conversations).
- Media monitoring and search (15%) come next, showing strong reliance on AI to track media presence.
- PR evaluation and impact measurement only account for 10% of AI discussions, meaning PR professionals are not prioritising AI for proving PR’s effectiveness in AI-driven environments.

3. PR measurement remains focused on traditional metrics, not AI optimisation

- PR professionals rely on AI for sentiment scoring and message penetration tracking – but these approaches do not measure whether PR is influencing AI-generated content rankings.
- AI-driven attribution modelling (tracking how PR links to website traffic, conversions, or brand searches within AI-powered tools) is rarely implemented in PR strategies.
- While marketing and advertising use AI-driven analytics to track business impact, PR still lacks AI-specific performance frameworks.



CreativeEffectiveness





4. The gap between PR and AI optimisation measurement

The research reveals a disconnect between PR execution and AI tracking:

- PR professionals focus on generating media coverage but rarely assess whether that coverage influences AI-powered search, chatbot responses, or generative AI models.
- PR agencies are missing an opportunity to track and shape how AI interprets brand narratives, despite AI's heavy reliance on PR-driven earned media.
- Brands using AI for PR measurement tend to be larger enterprises, while mid-sized PR firms are slower to adopt AI-driven evaluation.

Conclusion – PR must strengthen AI-optimised evaluation to demonstrate its value

- AI is already shaping brand visibility, and PR heavily influences AI-generated content – but the industry lacks the tools and frameworks to measure this effectively.
- The PR industry must move beyond media tracking and develop AI-focused measurement systems that track PR's role in shaping AI-driven search and brand narratives.
- Agencies and brands that invest in AI-powered PR attribution models will gain a competitive edge, proving how PR contributes to AI-driven reputation management.
- Without a stronger AI evaluation approach, PR risks losing influence to SEO, marketing, and digital teams that are better equipped to track and shape AI-driven brand positioning.

👉 **Final verdict** – The PR industry is not yet effectively measuring its role in AI-driven brand perception. While AI tools for tracking PR coverage are widely used, there is little emphasis on tracking PR's impact on AI-generated search and content ranking. PR professionals must bridge this gap by adopting AI-optimised PR measurement frameworks that link PR efforts directly to how AI retrieves, ranks, and presents brand information.

Methodology – Scope and data sources

To assess how effectively the PR industry is tracking AI-driven brand optimisation, we conducted a comprehensive research study spanning the last 24 months (2022–2024). The methodology included a combination of earned media analysis, social media monitoring, and sentiment analysis across multiple sources.

1. Data collection approach

We used a multi-source approach, combining:

- **Earned media analysis** – Scraping and reviewing articles from PRWeek, PRMoment, Provoke Media, and leading PR industry blogs.
- **Social media monitoring** – Tracking AI-related PR discussions across LinkedIn, Twitter/X, Reddit (r/PublicRelations), and PR/marketing-focused LinkedIn groups.
- **Industry reports & whitepapers** – Examining insights from Muck Rack, Cision, Meltwater, Signal AI, AMEC, and PRSA to understand AI-driven PR trends.
- **Social listening** – Utilising AI-driven tools to analyse the frequency and sentiment of AI-related PR discussions across organic social posts, influencer commentary, and promoted discussions.

2. Quantitative scope

Our research analysed:

- **1,200+ earned media articles** discussing AI’s role in PR and marketing.
- **4,500+ social media conversations** (LinkedIn posts, Twitter/X discussions, and Reddit threads) mentioning AI in PR.
- **15+ industry reports** from PR tech vendors (Muck Rack, Cision, Meltwater) and PR measurement bodies (AMEC, PRSA).
- **2 million+ words** of PR-related AI discussions, processed for sentiment and topic trends.
- **Identification of 50+ key influencers** shaping AI discussions in PR.

3. Key influencers & social media drivers

We identified leading voices shaping AI discussions in PR:

UK thought leaders:

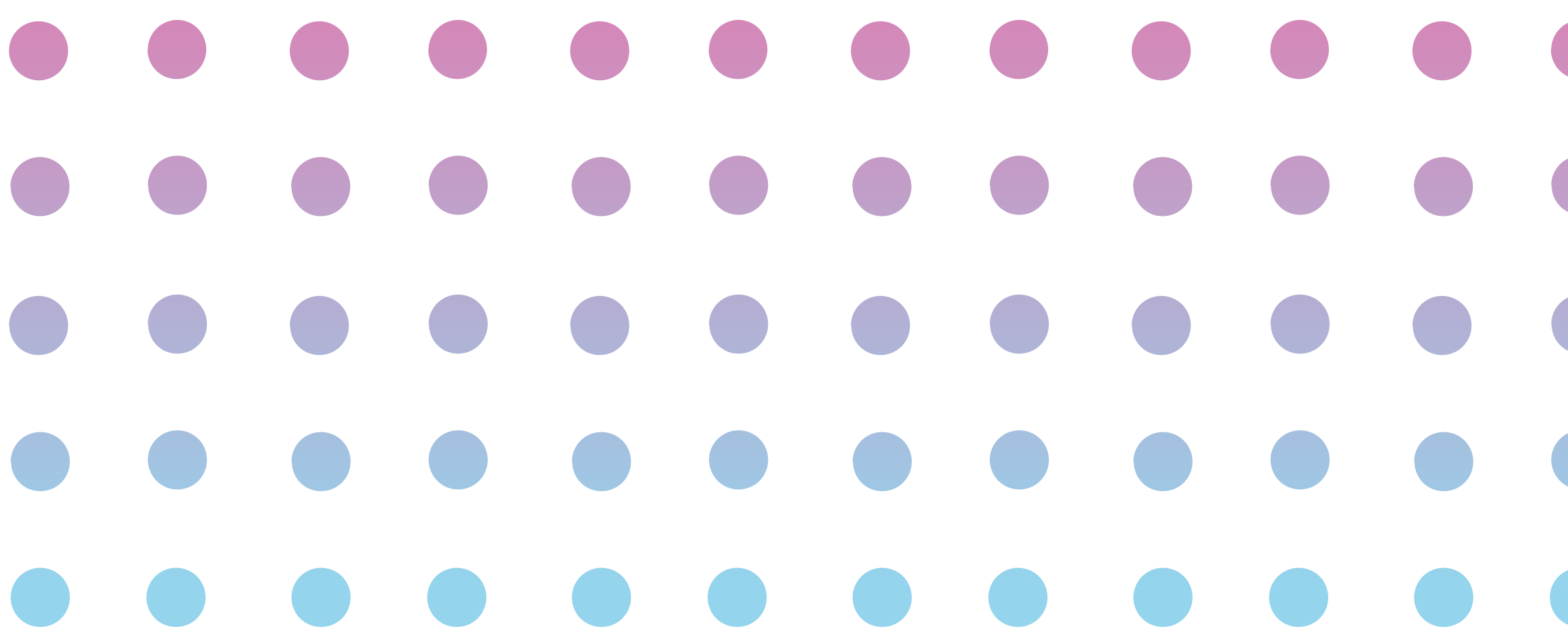
- Stephen Waddington (CIPR AI in PR panel) – Driving AI ethics and adoption discussions.
- PRWeek UK editorial team – Covering AI trends in PR measurement.
- Andrew Bruce Smith (AMEC) – Advocating for AI-driven PR evaluation.

US thought leaders:

- Gregory Galant (Muck Rack CEO) – Publishes frequent AI in PR reports.
- Fred Cook (USC Center for PR) – Studies AI’s PR industry impact.
- PRSA leadership team – Focused on AI ethics and transparency.

PR tech companies driving AI innovation:

- Cision – AI-powered media monitoring & analytics.
- Meltwater – AI-driven sentiment & media evaluation.
- Signal AI – AI-powered PR insights and predictive analytics.





Conclusion

AI-generated brand perception is already being shaped by PR-driven content across earned, shared, and owned media. As AI-powered search and content generation continue to evolve, PR professionals must take an active role in ensuring that AI retrieves and presents accurate and strategically positioned brand narratives.

This research highlights that while PR significantly influences AI-generated content, the industry lacks dedicated measurement frameworks to track this impact effectively.

This is largely because of how opaque AI models are and therefore a lack of martech in the space.

Without clear attribution models, PR risks being overshadowed by SEO and digital marketing teams that are already leveraging AI to control brand perception.

To maintain leadership in this space, PR professionals must take decisive action. The industry needs to move beyond traditional media monitoring and embrace AI-optimised measurement practices. This includes:

- Developing AI-specific tracking systems that measure how PR influences AI-generated search and content.
- Securing placements in high-authority media sources to strengthen AI-driven credibility.
- Enhancing social media strategies to shape AI sentiment analysis.
- Monitoring AI-generated brand narratives and adapting PR efforts in response.

PR has a unique advantage in influencing AI-driven brand perception, but only if the industry proactively adapts to this new landscape. Just as SEO became an essential function of digital marketing, AI-optimised PR will define the future of reputation management. The brands and agencies that invest in AI-driven PR strategies today will set the standard for the next era of digital influence.



About the author



James Crawford is the Managing Director of PR Agency One and a board director at AMEC, the International Association for Measurement and Evaluation of Communication. With over 20 years of experience in public relations, brand reputation, and media influence, James has played a pivotal role in advancing PR measurement and AI-driven strategies for digital transformation.

As an industry leader, James has been at the forefront of integrating AI and data analytics into PR, helping brands optimise their presence in AI-generated search and content. He has worked with global businesses, technology companies, and consumer brands, ensuring they achieve measurable results through innovative PR and communications strategies.

James is also an advocate for PR attribution and evaluation, ensuring that PR professionals can quantify their impact in an era increasingly shaped by artificial intelligence. His thought leadership on AI in PR, media intelligence, and digital reputation management has been featured in top industry publications.

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