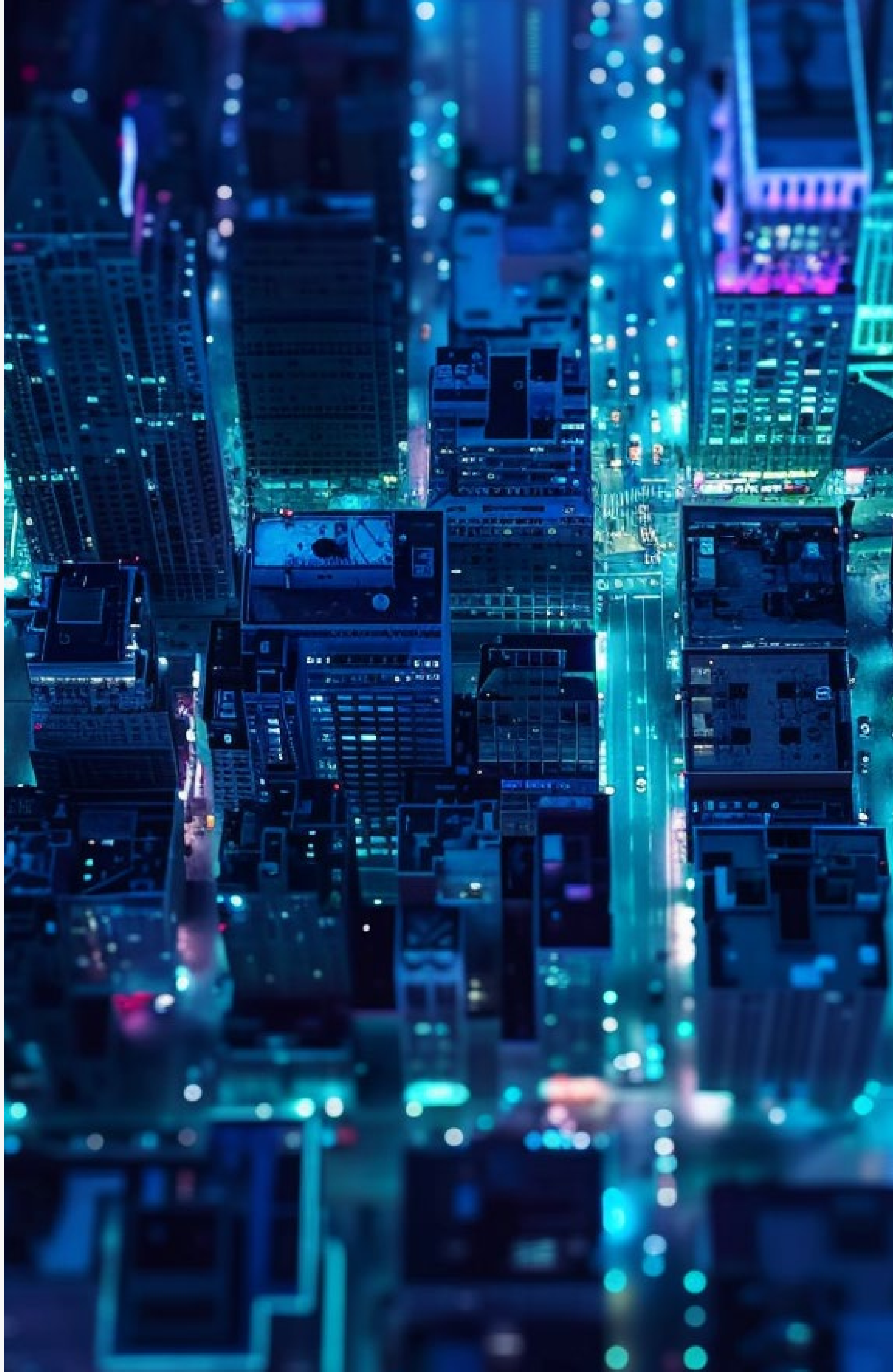
Gregory. | 2026

Location, Location, Citation: How AI Search Is Reshaping Real Estate Brand Visibility

54,796 AI responses. 7 sectors. 5 cities.

A data analysis of what AI search cites and what that means for real estate visibility.

What's Inside



The New Front Door of Real Estate Discovery

A potential tenant uses Google's AI Overviews to find the best apartment communities in Charlotte with dog parks. A developer asks ChatGPT for the top construction firms for mixed-use projects in the Mid-Atlantic. A dad with three kids asks Gemini to find local shopping centers with play areas and family amenities.

Each gets a synthesized answer with a shortlist of companies or properties and cited sources. No search results page or ranking of 10 blue links. A handful of names surface, and everything else is invisible.

This is the new front door of real estate discovery. And unlike traditional search, where firms could track rankings and optimize for known algorithms, AI search operates as a black box. But we can get a glimpse into the answers by tracking the sources AI models cite in their answers to see which sites most influence the responses over time.

Most existing research on AI search citation patterns tries to solve this problem by going wide. Cross-industry studies collect citations from finance, consumer goods, tech, and healthcare, find the common denominators, and present "the sources AI trusts most." That approach produces a generic answer.

Real estate has a distinct media ecosystem, a layered set of audience personas, and strong local market dynamics that broad, generic studies miss. The multifamily sector has three dedicated trade publications that collectively generate thousands of AI citations. The home improvement sector runs on directories, not media. Industrial real estate is shaped by brokerage research reports. These patterns disappear when you average across industries.

This study was designed to capture what actually drives AI visibility in real estate. Gregory analyzed 54,796 AI-generated responses to real estate queries spanning Entertainment, Home Improvement, Industrial, Multifamily, Office RE, Real Estate Finance, and Retail. The prompts covered five major metros — Chicago, Dallas, Houston, Los Angeles, and New York — and various audiences, including consumers, tenants, investors, operators, and clients. Responses were collected across ChatGPT, AI Overviews, Gemini, Microsoft Copilot, Perplexity, and other major models.

What emerged is a detailed map of influence across real estate, including which sources dominate each sector and how the citation mix shifts when queries go local. The data reveals clear, actionable patterns for marketing leaders, investor relations and communications teams, and content strategists working to build AI visibility for real estate brands.

Key Takeaways

1. **Trade media is the highest-leverage target for AI visibility.** Real estate trade publications appear in 19% of all responses — more than financial media (9.4%) and Tier 1 national outlets (7.7%) combined.
2. **Brand content is the dominant citation source.** Brand and company websites are cited in 72.5% of responses. Especially for more niche questions that media don't cover, a real estate company's website is a prime opportunity to clarify messaging and positioning that attracts citations and influences what AI answers say about your company or property.
3. **All real estate is local, and the source mix proves it.** Local queries shift the citation mix even for the same question. The top local media voice in particular changes completely from city to city. National visibility strategies do not translate to local AI search.
4. **List and ranking articles are the format AI cites most.** 46.3% of all media citations come from list-style or ranking content. A placement on a "Top 10" list in a trade publication is a high probability path to AI citations and mentions of your company.
5. **YouTube is an underutilized channel.** YouTube is cited in 4.2% of all responses overall, rising to 6.9% in Entertainment and 6.4% in Retail queries. Video content that directly answers common real estate questions — or brands that work with influencers who do the same — has a high potential for AI citation.
6. **Sector identity determines source mix more than any other variable.** The gap in citations of directories, for example, ranges from 35.6% citation rate for Home Improvement to just 5% for Real Estate Finance. Before building a visibility strategy, understand your sector's citation ecosystem.
7. **LinkedIn's influence is narrower than its brand suggests (and that's an opportunity).** LinkedIn was cited in 2.78% of responses, and its influence was concentrated in Industrial and Office contexts. In other industries, LinkedIn has become one of the most cited sources in AI responses, suggesting there's untapped potential for more real estate companies to attract citations and earn mentions in AI answers by sharing relevant content on LinkedIn.

1. The Big Picture

Overall Top Sources

Across all 54,796 responses, the two most-cited domains are Reddit and Wikipedia. Reddit appears in **8.2%** of all responses, Wikipedia in **7.9%**. Yelp comes in third at **4.8%**, followed by YouTube at **4.2%**. CommercialSearch.com is the first traditional CRE platform at #5 with a **4.1%** citation rate.

The top 20 list reflects the diverse sources AI models use when answering real estate questions. It includes social platforms, reference sites, listing aggregators, a multifamily trade publication, commercial lending education sites, and major brokerages.

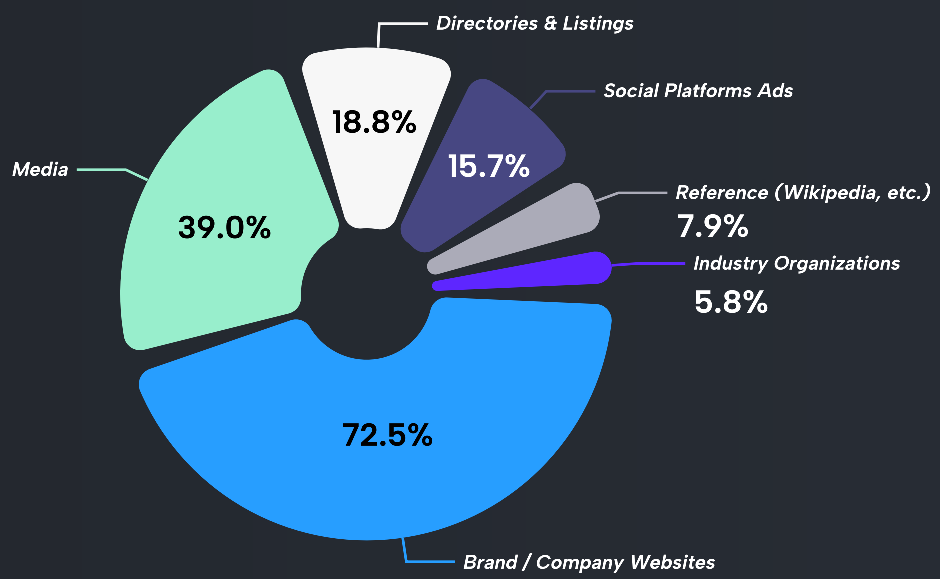
No single category monopolizes the top of the rankings, which means no single channel is sufficient for a real estate AI visibility strategy.

#	DOMAIN	CITATION RATE
1	*reddit.com*	8.22%
2	*en.wikipedia.org*	7.94%
3	*yelp.com*	4.76%
4	*youtube.com*	4.20%
5	*commercialsearch.com*	4.05%
6	*cushmanwakefield.com*	3.64%
7	*houzz.com*	3.39%
8	*multihousingnews.com*	3.34%
9	*multifamily.loans*	2.79%
10	*linkedin.com*	2.78%
11	*commercialrealestate.loans*	2.78%
12	*cbre.com*	2.73%
13	*finance.yahoo.com*	2.60%
14	*fool.com*	2.58%
15	*cordish.com*	2.31%
16	*jpmorgan.com*	2.27%
17	*clutch.co*	2.24%
18	*modernize.com*	1.88%
19	*bizjournals.com*	1.81%
20	*hughesmarino.com*	1.78%

Most-Cited Source Categories

The table below shows each source category by citation rate — the portion of responses that cite a source in that category. A single response might cite sources from multiple categories, and this measure captures how broadly each category reaches across AI responses.

Media appears in nearly **40%** of responses, second only to brand content, which shows how heavily AI models lean on editorial content to fill the gaps that brand content doesn't cover, including market context, competitive comparisons, and authoritative sector analysis.



MEDIA TIER	CITATION RATE
Real Estate Trade	19.0%
Financial Media	9.4%
Tier 1 National	7.7%
Local / Regional	6.5%
Lifestyle / City Guide	4.9%
Other Media	4.3%
Home / Design Trade	1.6%

Most-Cited Media Categories

Within the media category, real estate trade publications stand out with the highest citation rate by far — **19.0%** of all responses. For real estate brands building AI visibility, don't overlook strategic trade publication coverage.

Most-Cited Platforms: Wikipedia, Reddit, YouTube, LinkedIn

These four platforms earn consistently high citation rates across sectors even as they do so in different ways and reward different investment.

PLATFORMS	CITATION RATE	KEY PATTERNS
reddit	8.22%	*Strongest in Multifamily (12.1%), Retail (10.0%), Entertainment (9.7%), Home Improvement (9.7%).*
Wikipedia The Free Encyclopedia	7.94%	*Strongest in Entertainment (13.5%), Retail (11.9%), Industrial (10.0%).*
YouTube	4.20%	*Strongest in Entertainment (6.9%), Retail (6.4%), Home Improvement (5.3%).*
LinkedIn	2.78%	*Most cited in Industrial and Office.*

Wikipedia citations help AI models establish category context. It appears most strongly in sectors where queries involve broad definitional or comparative questions.

Reddit threads offer specific, relevant sources of user experiences, including contractor recommendations, neighborhood assessments, and lease comparisons.

YouTube is still underrated in many real estate sectors. A dedicated YouTube strategy targeting AI search influence — or existing YouTube influencers — can materially improve AI visibility.

LinkedIn's influence is real but modest. There's opportunity here for many sectors to gain visibility through relevant LinkedIn content.

Most-Cited Media Coverage

Not all media content is equally likely to be cited. List-style and ranking articles account for **46.3%** of all media citations across the full dataset. This structure directly matches comparative and "best of" questions and feeds AI responses to them.

But AI models also cite a number of other types of articles that can point to the types of media coverage more likely to influence AI answers. The key is to pursue a variety of media coverage across article types and publications.

2. Sector-by-Sector Analysis

Each real estate sector has a unique mix of AI citations. This analysis profiles each sector's most-cited types of content and identifies the strongest visibility moves within it.

Entertainment

Top Categories

CATEGORY	CITATION RATE
Brand / Company Websites	73.0%
Media	41.2%
Social Platforms	22.8%
Directories & Listings	15.3%
Reference (Wikipedia)	13.5%
Industry Organizations	6.3%

Top Sources

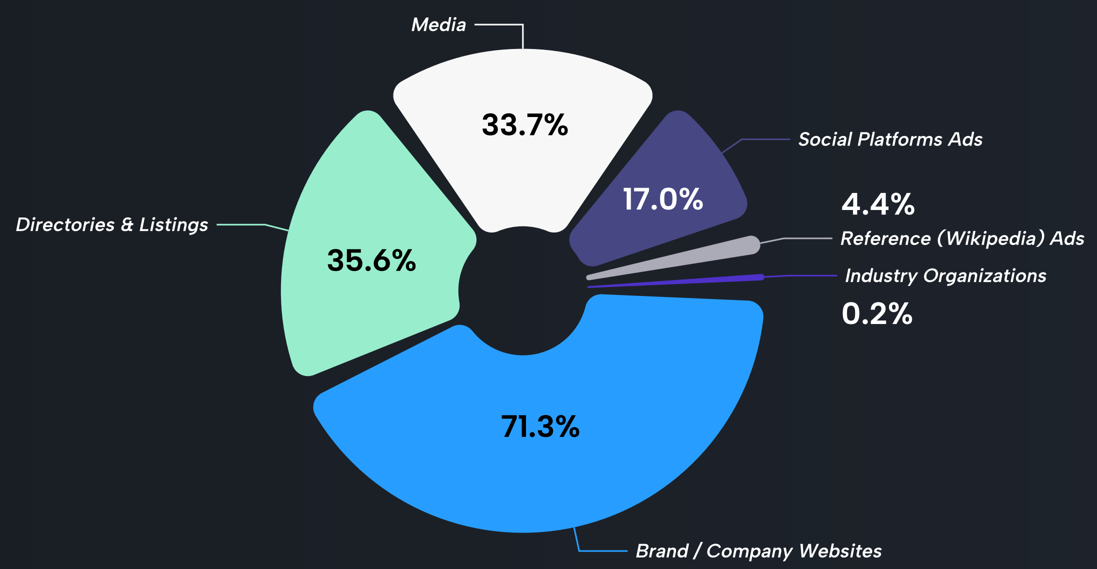
#	DOMAIN	CITATION RATE
1	*cordish.com*	15.96%
2	*en.wikipedia.org*	13.49%
3	*reddit.com*	9.71%
4	*youtube.com*	6.85%
5	*timeout.com*	6.78%
6	*tripadvisor.com*	6.12%
7	*gensler.com*	5.89%
8	*yelp.com*	5.88%
9	*bdcnetwork.com*	5.73%
10	*cordishleasing.com*	5.38%

Entertainment has the highest Wikipedia citation rate of any sector at **13.5%** of responses — about **70%** higher than the overall average. The most-cited Wikipedia pages are for developers and operators of venues, making an updated and comprehensive Wikipedia page an important asset for those firms in AI search.

Social platforms account for **22.8%** of responses, led by YouTube and Reddit's strength in consumer-facing entertainment discovery queries.

Home Improvement

Top Categories



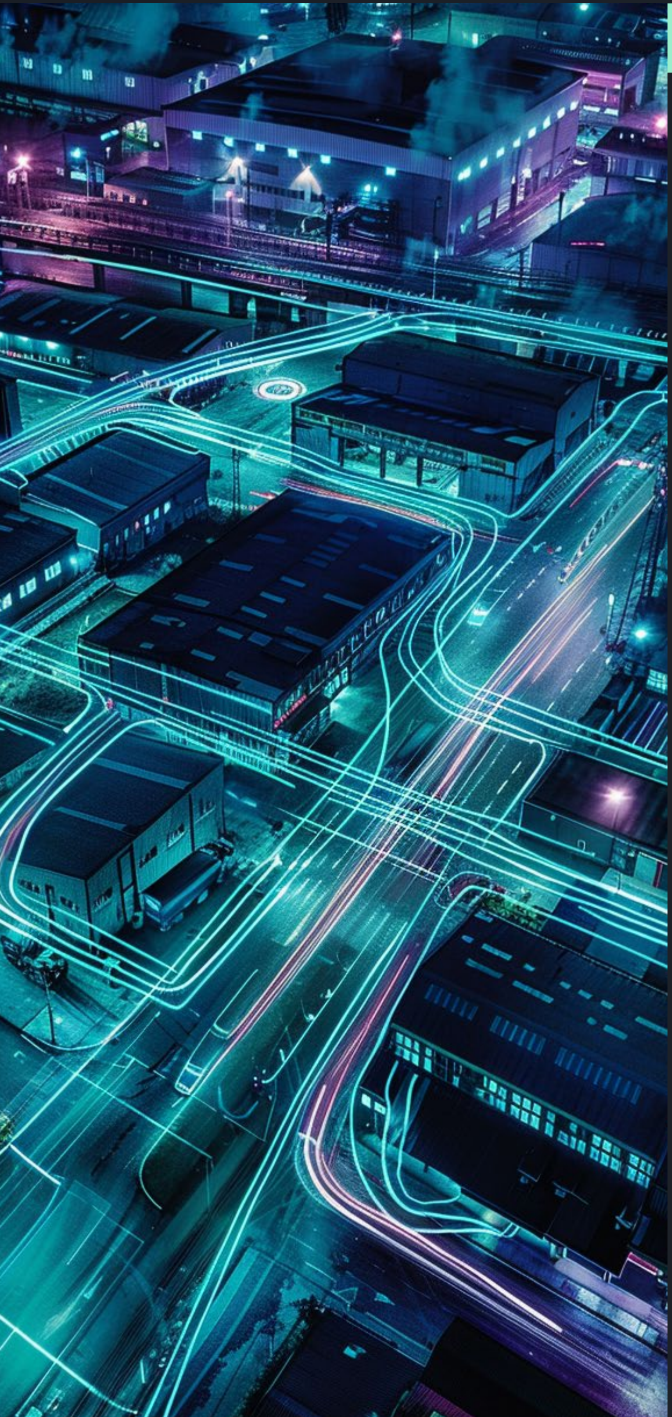
Top Sources

#	DOMAIN	CITATION RATE
1	*houzz.com*	23.16%
2	*modernize.com*	12.85%
3	*yelp.com*	10.69%
4	*reddit.com*	9.71%
5	*angi.com*	7.99%
6	*bbb.org*	7.87%
7	*consumeraffairs.com*	5.83%
8	*homeguide.com*	5.61%
9	*youtube.com*	5.28%
10	*bobvila.com*	5.14%

Home Improvement is the directory sector, with directory sources appearing in **35.6%** of responses. For home improvement brands, Houzz profile optimization and Yelp presence could be more consequential for AI visibility than any media placement.

But trade media is also well represented among the top sources, with Bob Vila, This Old House, and Qualified Remodeler as the most-cited trade voices.

Reddit's **9.7%** citation rate is based on active home improvement subreddit discussions that AI draws on for contractor recommendations and project guidance.



Industrial

Industrial has a high brand concentration among the top sources, with a REIT, a CRE listings platform, and two major brokerages among the top five sources. In this sector, AI citations are heavily shaped by the institutional brands that build, own, and broker industrial real estate. Brand content quality and comprehensiveness is the primary lever for AI visibility in this sector.

The nearly **40%** citation rate for media is made up primarily of financial media. For example, Motley Fool is cited in **7.8%** of responses for its industrial REIT analysis. This is a sector where the investment angle is as prominent as the operational one.

Local business journals are the clearest media target for city-level industrial real estate visibility, appearing reliably in local responses where national trade media has a weaker foothold.

Top Categories

CATEGORY	CITATION RATE
Brand / Company Websites	73.3%
Media	39.6%
Social Platforms	11.9%
Directories & Listings	10.2%
Reference (Wikipedia)	10.0%
Industry Organizations	4.5%

Top Sources

#	DOMAIN	CITATION RATE
1	*prologis.com*	11.41%
2	*en.wikipedia.org*	10.04%
3	*commercialsearch.com*	9.05%
4	*cushmanwakefield.com*	8.70%
5	*linklogistics.com*	8.23%
6	*fool.com*	7.83%
7	*cbre.com*	5.88%
8	*reddit.com*	5.22%
9	*readyspaces.com*	5.09%
10	*clutch.co*	4.65%

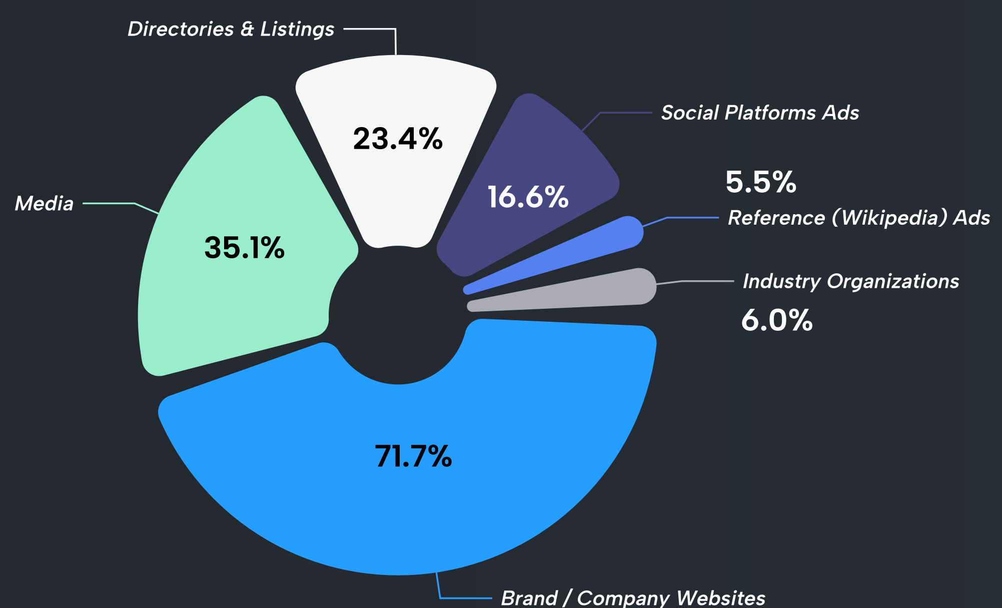
Multifamily

For multifamily developers, investors, and operators, highly cited trade publication coverage can be a path toward increased AI visibility. Multi-Housing News (16.3% citation rate), Multifamily Executive (8.7%), and Multifamily Dive (8.4%) all rank in the top five overall sources.

Reddit sits at a 12.1% citation rate thanks to the consumer audience in multifamily. Apartment seekers use Reddit to evaluate property management quality, neighborhood character, and lease terms in ways that generate citation-worthy threads.

The NMHC's 5.5% citation rate stems from its rankings of developers, owners, managers, and more.

Top Categories



Top Sources

#	DOMAIN	CITATION RATE
1	*multihousingnews.com*	16.28%
2	*reddit.com*	12.11%
3	*multifamily.loans*	9.48%
4	*multifamilyexecutive.com*	8.68%
5	*multifamilydive.com*	8.42%
6	*apartments.com*	8.40%
7	*apartmentlist.com*	7.12%
8	*rentcafe.com*	6.96%
9	*yelp.com*	5.59%
10	*nmhc.org*	5.49%

Office

Office citations are divided by query intent. Institutional and B2B queries surface citations of brokerages, financial media, and listings platforms. Small business and flex-space queries surface WeWork (10.3%), Regus (6.1%), Drop-Desk (5.8%), and coworking platforms that barely register in institutional results.

CommercialSearch at 8.9% and CommercialCafe at 7.2% confirm that CRE listings and data platforms are highly cited AI sources for office market information — directories are cited in nearly a quarter of responses.

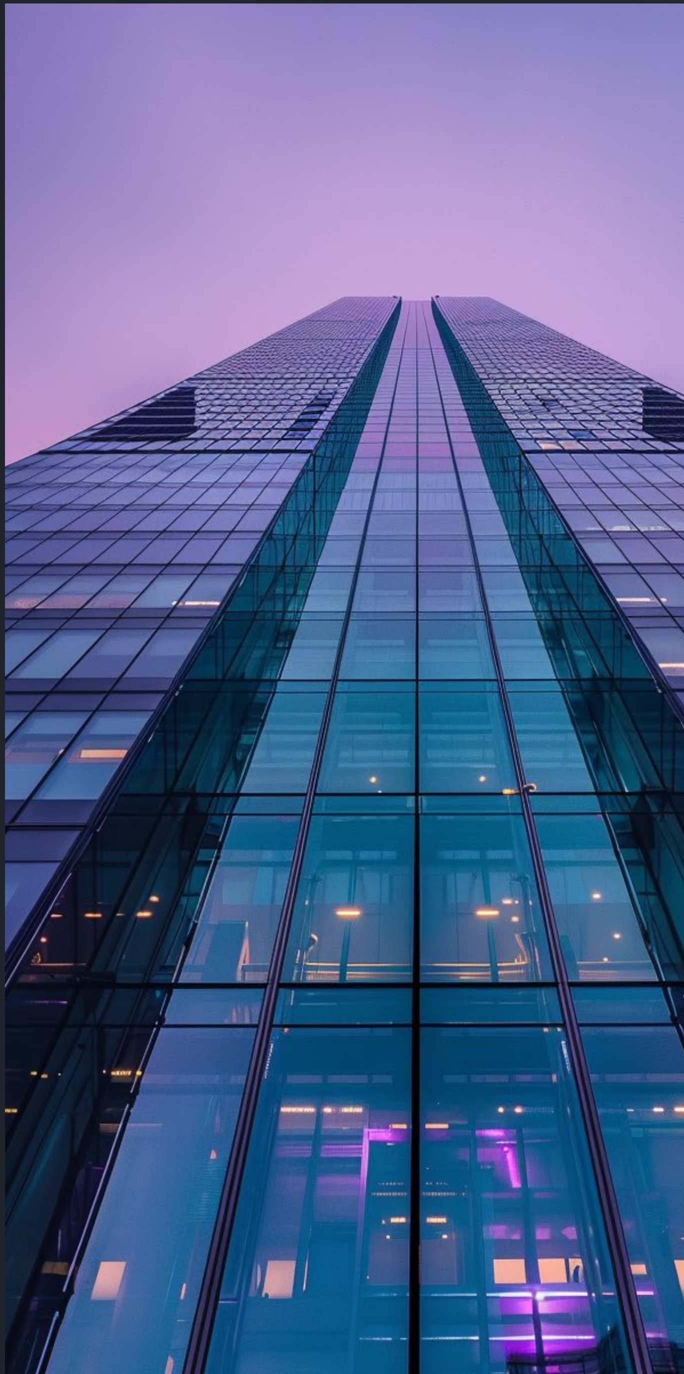
Brokerage firms (Cushman & Wakefield 8.2%, CBRE 8.0%) compete closely with listings platforms, showing the value of a content-rich brokerage web presence.

Top Sources

#	DOMAIN	CITATION RATE
1	*wework.com*	10.28%
2	*commercialsearch.com*	8.93%
3	*cushmanwakefield.com*	8.21%
4	*cbre.com*	8.04%
5	*commercialcafe.com*	7.18%
6	*en.wikipedia.org*	6.46%
7	*regus.com*	6.12%
8	*fool.com*	5.84%
9	*drop-desk.com*	5.79%
10	*reddit.com*	5.64%

Top Categories

CATEGORY	CITATION RATE
Brand / Company Websites	73.7%
Media	36.2%
Social Platforms	22.4%
Directories & Listings	12.1%
Reference (Wikipedia)	6.5%
Industry Organizations	5.6%



Real Estate Finance

Real Estate Finance has the highest media citation rate and lowest directory citation rate of any sector. When someone asks about commercial lending, construction financing, or multifamily debt, the answer typically comes from brand content and editorial sources, not listings.

CommercialRealEstate.loans (15.7% citation rate) and JPMorgan (13.5%) represent opposite ends of the brand spectrum — a specialized lending education platform and the country's largest bank — both generating high citation rates through extensive content relevant to the questions their audiences ask.

Bankrate at 6.6% is the highest-ranking consumer finance media source, reflecting the retail borrower audience within RE Finance queries. The MBA at 5.2% is primarily news announcements of research and rankings.

Top Categories

CATEGORY	CITATION RATE
Brand / Company Websites	73.0%
Media	43.9%
Social Platforms	10.8%
Directories & Listings	5.0%
Reference (Wikipedia)	4.2%
Industry Organizations	6.4%

Top Sources

#	DOMAIN	CITATION RATE
1	*commercialrealestate.loans*	15.70%
2	*jpmorgan.com*	13.50%
3	*multifamily.loans*	9.29%
4	*amerimort.com*	7.81%
5	*commercialsearch.com*	6.68%
6	*bankrate.com*	6.60%
7	*perecredit.com*	5.77%
8	*loanbase.com*	5.45%
9	*reddit.com*	5.45%
10	*mba.org*	5.21%

Retail

Retail has a balanced source mix — one of the lower citation rates for brand content, along with media, social, reference, and industry organization citation rates that exceed their overall averages.

This diversity of sources covers institutional investors asking market and financial questions, and consumers asking where to shop, eat, and be entertained.

Wikipedia appearing in 11.9% of responses and ICSC in 8.1% are the two most interesting data points. Wikipedia's prominence is almost entirely because of B2B and institutional queries, not consumer discovery. The most-cited Wikipedia pages are REIT and property owner companies.

ICSC confirms that industry associations can achieve significant citation rates when they consistently publish relevant and authoritative market data.

YouTube's 6.4% citation rate represents consumer queries about shopping destinations that genuinely benefit from video content.

Top Categories

CATEGORY	CITATION RATE
Brand / Company Websites	71.3%
Media	43.5%
Social Platforms	19.9%
Directories & Listings	19.3%
Reference (Wikipedia)	11.9%
Industry Organizations	11.7%

Top Sources

#	DOMAIN	CITATION RATE
1	*en.wikipedia.org*	11.94%
2	*reddit.com*	10.02%
3	*icsc.com*	8.14%
4	*youtube.com*	6.43%
5	*tripadvisor.com*	5.54%
6	*yelp.com*	5.48%
7	*cushmanwakefield.com*	5.42%
8	*wealthmanagement.com*	4.62%
9	*clutch.co*	4.57%
10	*finance.yahoo.com*	4.43%

3. The Local Factor: How the Source Mix Shifts by Market

When AI search shifts from national to local queries or from location to location, the top sources can transform entirely. The local query filter has two effects that compound each other: It replaces national brand content with market-specific operators, and it shifts the balance of media, directory, and social citations toward locally specific sources that have no presence in national analysis.

City-level category breakdowns reveal some consistent patterns across markets:

1. **Brand content stays stable across all five cities studied** (at 69–71% citation rates), but the sources within that category shift entirely to local and regional operators.

2. **Media citation rates vary meaningfully by market.** For Houston-specific queries, the responses included at least one media citation in 38.1% of responses — roughly 33–37% higher than Dallas (28.6%) and Chicago (27.8%).

   Houston's outlier status is fueled by a local media ecosystem with genuine depth for real estate topics, including Houstonia Magazine and the Houston Chronicle, which together generate substantial citation volume.

   The Dallas and Chicago numbers suggest that beyond BizJournals and D Magazine, local editorial voices in those markets aren't driving the same AI citation weight.

3. **The multifamily sector shows the most dramatic city-by-city variation in source mix.** In Dallas, Reddit is the #1 cited source for multifamily queries at 13.7% of responses, ahead of every listing platform, media outlet, and brokerage brand. Community discussion has a heavy influence in AI responses for Dallas apartment searches.

   In Houston, the picture is almost the opposite: Houstonia Magazine and the Houston Chronicle together account for more citation volume than Reddit, and the sector takes on a media-first character.

   These two cities, roughly comparable in market size and growth trajectory, rely on vastly different mixes of citations. A brand operating in both markets needs a different visibility strategy in each one.

4. **Entertainment shows how different city guides or lifestyle publications control the local narrative.** In New York, TimeOut is the primary entertainment media voice in AI responses. In Dallas, the Dallas Observer. In Houston, Houstonia Magazine again. In Chicago, Choose Chicago drives tourism and entertainment discovery queries. In Los Angeles, the LA Times functions as the city's entertainment authority in a way no equivalent publication does in other markets.

   The practical implication for entertainment venue operators is that there is no single national city-guide strategy. The publication that matters for AI visibility in each market is different.

5. **Industrial has the most local media consistency.** In every city studied, local business journals appear as a highly cited earned media source for industrial AI responses.

   BizJournals leads in Houston and Dallas, the LA Business Journal leads in Los Angeles, Crain's leads in New York, Rejournals and CoStar lead in Chicago.

   The specific publication varies, but the category is consistent. For industrial operators and developers, local business journal coverage can be a predictable, reproducible earned media lever for local AI visibility across all markets.

6. **Directory influence also varies widely.** Los Angeles has the highest directory citation rate of any market at 46.7%, driven by the city's entertainment and home improvement query mix and Yelp's unusually strong 17.9% citation rate there.

   New York, by contrast, has the lowest directory citation rate at 34.0%, with a more distributed mix of sources filling the non-brand citation space, including the highest Wikipedia citation rate (8.1%) of any local market.

The overarching finding from local analysis is that national AI visibility and local AI visibility are different problems requiring different solutions. A brand that ranks well in national queries may be largely absent from local AI answers in its key markets.

The sources that AI cites for local queries are city-specific media outlets, regional directories, and market operators that often don't appear in national rankings. Auditing local AI visibility and citations and continuously monitoring its changes offers a roadmap for improving AI search presence.

4. How to Increase Your AI Search Visibility

While the mix of sources that influence AI search answers shifts by sector, location, audience, and question, there are some overarching principles for increasing your AI visibility.

The companies that are succeeding do the following:

1. **Prioritize media — especially the trades and list and ranking placements.** Media has the second-highest citation rate of any content category among the top sources. Focus on consistent media coverage across different publications and types of articles, prioritizing trade coverage and lists and rankings.

2. **Build owned content that makes your messaging crystal clear.** The brand content that gets cited the most is the most relevant to the questions your audiences are asking. Make it exceptionally clear what you do, who you do it for, where you do it, and how you do it differently or better. Use your owned content to send signals out into the world so the right tenants, investors, and others can't help but find you.

3. **Adapt your strategy to the unique mix of sources for your sector, location, and audience.** The mix of brand content, media, directories, social media, and other categories will shift for each question. What works for a roofing company in Seattle is going to differ drastically from what works for a mall in the Philadelphia suburbs. Audit the questions your customers ask to see how visible you are, where you stand versus competitors, and which sources have the greatest influence on the answers.

4. **Treat AI visibility as an ongoing monitoring discipline, not a one-time project.** The most-cited sources evolve as models update, media publish new articles, and competitors add content. Some rise, some fall, new ones appear.

   The brands sustaining visibility are monitoring which domains surface in their sector on an ongoing basis and adjusting media, content, and platform strategies accordingly. Continuous tracking of your citation presence — and your competitors' — is what turns a one-time audit into a durable advantage.

Conclusion

AI citation patterns in real estate, as in every industry, are fragmented, and that's the opportunity.

Many companies approaching AI search visibility are borrowing from the traditional SEO playbook. They're looking for universal rules. Which sources do AI models trust? What content format wins? The data here says those questions have no single answer.

Reddit drives apartment discovery in Dallas. Editorial media influences it in Houston. Yelp accounts for nearly 18% of citations in Los Angeles. Directories define Home Improvement but barely register in Real Estate Finance. The top sources shift by sector, by city, and by audience.

That specificity is what makes the problem solvable. A multifamily operator can build a strategy around which trade publications generate the most AI citations, which local media control the narrative in each of its markets, and which pages on its website are highly cited and which aren't. Most competitors aren't doing this work yet. The companies that start now will build an AI search presence that can compound over time.

Three layers of investment hold across every sector in the data: brand content as the foundation (cited in 70%+ of responses everywhere), trade media as the highest-return earned channel (particularly list and ranking placements), and platform-specific plays that vary by vertical and market.

The firms that coordinate these three layers, and track their citation performance continuously as models update and sources change, will be the ones who show up in — and shape — AI answers.

About Gregory Agency

Gregory is a top-ranked communications and public relations firm. Its Gregory Influence Engine enables brands to measure and improve their visibility in AI-generated search results across all major platforms. For more information, visit gregoryagency.com.