

How to choose an AI visibility tool

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Ask for evidence, not a bigger score. A useful AI visibility tool should make its measurements, costs and responsibilities easy to inspect.

Vendor: _____ Review date: _____

01. Measurement: is the data real?

Request a sample report and trace a headline figure back to its original answers.

- ☐ Which engines are tracked by name, and which are included on each plan? Is the actual consumer answer engine being measured, rather than a substitute model?
- ☐ Does it explain whether readings use live web search or built-in knowledge, and keep different modes separate?
- ☐ Does it distinguish being mentioned from being recommended, rather than blend them into one score?
- ☐ Can you inspect the exact question, answer, engine, sources and capture date behind each figure?
- ☐ Are sample sizes and denominators visible? Do pages agree when they refer to the same dated reading?
- ☐ Does it keep no answer, not mentioned and namesake confusion separate, without crediting another business's recommendations?
- ☐ Are at least some questions asked without the brand name, as a buyer would ask them? Who chooses the questions and markets?
- ☐ Is the methodology dated and its limits clear? If confidence ranges or industry averages are claimed, are their calculations and comparison samples explained?

02. Pricing: are there surprises?

Request the total checkout amount, renewal terms and a link to the cancellation and refund rules.

- ☐ Are prices, VAT treatment, billing currency and included brands and seats stated before checkout?
- ☐ Are credits, question limits, refresh frequency, engine add-ons and extra charges explained? Flat pricing can still have usage limits.
- ☐ Can you inspect a real example or try a free report without supplying a payment card?
- ☐ Is there a written refund policy saying who qualifies, the time limit and how to request it?
- ☐ Can you cancel online? What happens to access and data after cancellation?
- ☐ Are automatic renewal, annual commitment, renewal pricing and the cost of adding or removing brands clear?

03. Accountability: who is behind it?

Match the legal identity in the terms with the checkout and invoice. Verify the company in its official register.

- ☐ Is there a named legal company, registration number, registered address and country?
- ☐ Are the operator and support arrangements identifiable, rather than an anonymous website?
- ☐ Can you reach support and raise privacy or security concerns through published contact details?
- ☐ Who is the contractual seller and who issues the invoice? Is a merchant of record involved, and is tax treatment explained?

04. Privacy: what happens to the data?

Ask for the privacy notice, relevant processing agreement and an up-to-date list of subprocessors and AI services.

- ☐ Where consent is required, are optional cookies and tracking off until agreement, with a genuine reject option and a way to change the choice?
- ☐ Does the privacy notice identify who controls the data, what is collected, why it is used and the applicable UK or EU GDPR rights?
- ☐ When the vendor acts as a processor, is an appropriate data processing agreement available?
- ☐ Which hosting, analytics, payment and AI services receive data? Are subprocessors and international-transfer safeguards disclosed?
- ☐ Where is data stored and processed, including onward AI processing? Are retention and backup-deletion periods explained?
- ☐ Can you export useful records and request deletion? What is retained for legal obligations, and what cannot be deleted immediately?
- ☐ Are AI training, provider retention, resale and confidential-input rules explicit, rather than covered by a blanket 'private' claim?

05. Security: are the claims specific?

Ask which organisation holds each certification, its scope and current date. Infrastructure certification is not product certification.

- ☐ If SOC 2 or ISO 27001 is cited, who holds the report or certificate and does its scope cover the service being used?
- ☐ Are payments handled by a payment provider with documented PCI compliance, without the tool storing full card details?
- ☐ Are encryption in transit and at rest documented, along with who can access customer data?
- ☐ Are account protection, access roles, seat permissions and access removal appropriate for the team? Is two-factor sign-in or SSO available if required?
- ☐ Is there a published security contact or vulnerability-reporting process, with a clear incident-notification approach?

☐ Can the vendor provide service-status information, backup and recovery arrangements, or relevant service commitments?

06. Website tracking: is the snippet safe?

Request the snippet's data fields and inspect an example request before installing it. This section applies only if tracking is offered.

☐ What does the snippet send: full URLs, query strings, IP addresses, device signals or identifiers? Does it avoid collecting unnecessary personal data?

☐ Does it use cookies or browser storage, and is any required consent obtained? Cookie-free does not automatically mean personal-data-free or consent-free.

☐ Are claimed AI crawler visits verified beyond a user-agent label, and are unknown or unverifiable visits labelled honestly?

☐ Is the script lightweight and removable, with no hidden third-party tracking? Is a no-snippet measurement option explained?

07. Red flags: promises instead of proof

One missing document is a question to resolve, not proof of misconduct. Repeated evasive answers are a reason to pause.

☐ Guaranteed '#1 in ChatGPT' rankings or guaranteed recommendations, without control over the answer engines.

☐ Precise uplift statistics, scores or industry averages with no traceable source, dates, sample or method.

☐ Testimonials, reviews or customer logos that cannot be traced or independently checked.

☐ Artificial urgency, unexplained renewal charges, or unwillingness to provide terms and a named seller before payment.

☐ A small-business product with no clear price or limits. Bespoke enterprise pricing is different: request a written quote and scope.

Decision and missing evidence

This is a buying checklist, not a compliance certificate or legal advice. A missing feature is not proof of misconduct. Requirements depend on the service and intended use.