Affiliate & Partner Marketing Association

# 2026 The New Rules of Discovery

## How AI is Reshaping Affiliate Marketing

## Part Two: Measuring influence

**Report by the APMA AI Taskforce**

July 2026



# About the APMA

**The Affiliate and Partnership Marketing Association (APMA) is the collective voice for the UK affiliate and partner marketing industry.**

Representing affiliates, networks, agencies and advertisers, it informs, educates and advocates for one of the most effective and diverse marketing channels.

The APMA develops industry standards, promotes best practice and champions the role of affiliate and partner marketing across the UK.

'The New Rules of Discovery: How AI is Reshaping Affiliate Marketing' is the first significant output from the APMA's AI Taskforce. This dedicated Taskforce has been created to ensure the affiliate and partner marketing channel remains visible, fairly valued and properly represented as artificial intelligence reshapes digital discovery and decision-making.

The APMA is a not-for-profit and can only survive with the generous support of our members. If you're interested in membership, please visit the website for details.

**Together, we grow.**

Find out more about our work and membership at: **www.theapma.co.uk**

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# Author credit

The APMA would like to thank **James Bentley** for authoring this guide on behalf of the APMA AI Taskforce. His expertise, insight and commitment have been instrumental in bringing this work together. We are also grateful to the members of the Taskforce, whose feedback helped shape the perspectives and recommendations presented throughout this report.

**James has over 20 years digital marketing experience at industry leaders like Adobe and Awin.**

James founded his own consultancy, Numerical, to empower marketing teams through AI-driven automation and advanced AI agents.

Most recently, as Director of AI Strategy at Awin Global, he led enterprise-wide AI initiatives across product and research, bridging technical capability with business impact. His previous leadership roles include UK Strategy Director at Awin and Head of Client Services at Adobe Advertising Cloud.

A recognised authority in the field, James chairs the APMA AI Taskforce, sits on the UKAI Agentic AI working group, and is a frequent speaker on generative and applied AI across Europe.

**For more information on Numerical please visit the website.**



**James Bentley**
Founder, Numerical

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# Introduction

## Measuring what we can’t see yet

The affiliate industry has always been excellent at measurement.

Clicks, conversions and commissions created one of digital marketing's most accountable commercial models. Affiliate marketing is the original performance marketing model, and over the years, other channels have gravitated to the levels of accountability we offer.

Yet AI introduces forms of influence that those metrics were never designed to capture.

A publisher's content may shape an AI-generated recommendation without ever generating a visit. An AI assistant may cite multiple sources before sending a user directly to a retailer. A shopping agent may complete a purchase with little or no conventional referral path.

These journeys are not invisible because they lack value. They are invisible because today's measurement systems were built for a different internet.

Rather than searching for a single replacement metric, the industry is beginning to assemble a broader evidence base.

**Part Two of ‘The New Rules of Discovery: How AI is Reshaping Affiliate Marketing’ will introduce an AI measurement framework with three layers:**




Each reveal different parts of the journey. Individually they are incomplete. Together they provide the first practical framework for understanding AI-mediated influence.

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# How the affiliate channel is faring today

**It is easy to become preoccupied by the impact AI search is having on publisher traffic.**

However, one of the largest independent studies into ecommerce referrals paints a more balanced picture. Researchers from the University of Hamburg and the Frankfurt School analysed 12 months of first-party data from 973 e-commerce websites generating more than $20 billion in annual revenue.

Although ChatGPT referrals are growing rapidly, affiliate remained the strongest-performing referral channel for commercial outcomes.

Visitors arriving via affiliate links were 86% more likely to convert than visitors referred by ChatGPT, while organic search also achieved higher conversion rates. Paid social was the only major channel to perform worse than ChatGPT on this measure.[17]

| Rank | Channel | Referral traffic vs. ChatGPT |
|---|---|---|
| **1** | **Affiliate** | **86% higher than ChatGPT** |
| 2 | Direct | Higher than ChatGPT |
| 3 | Email | Higher than ChatGPT |
| 4 | Paid Search | Higher than ChatGPT |
| **5** | **Organic Search** | **13% higher than ChatGPT** |
| 6 | ChatGPT | Baseline |
| **7** | **Paid Social** | **53% lower than ChatGPT** |

The findings suggest that AI search should not yet be viewed as a replacement for established affiliate and publisher traffic.

[17] https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=5585812

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While conversational AI continues to evolve, affiliate remains one of the highest-converting sources of ecommerce traffic.

At the same time, ChatGPT represented less than 0.2% of all visits across the sites analysed, highlighting that its commercial influence is still relatively small despite its rapid growth.

ChatGPT traffic performed better than paid social on some measures, delivering favourable bounce rates and stronger results in more complex product categories. However, lower average order values limited the gains in revenue per session.

**For publishers and brands, the findings provide useful third-party evidence that affiliate marketing continues to deliver high-intent traffic with strong measurable performance, even as AI referrals grow.**

There are important caveats to keep in mind: the study captures only last-click referrals and may miss AI's role earlier in the buying journey.

It also covers a period when AI-driven commerce was still nascent.

Therefore, the University of Hamburg and Frankfurt School study is best viewed as a moment-in-time snapshot of affiliate's measurable strength.

As AI-driven commerce matures, brands, publishers, and networks must evolve their strategies to capture the growing influence of LLMs while simultaneously reinforcing the value of the affiliate channel amidst this rapid change.

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# The Measurement Challenge

## A framework for AI attribution.

AI is changing where commercial influence happens. The affiliate industry sees this dynamic. What it cannot yet do, reliably, is measure it.

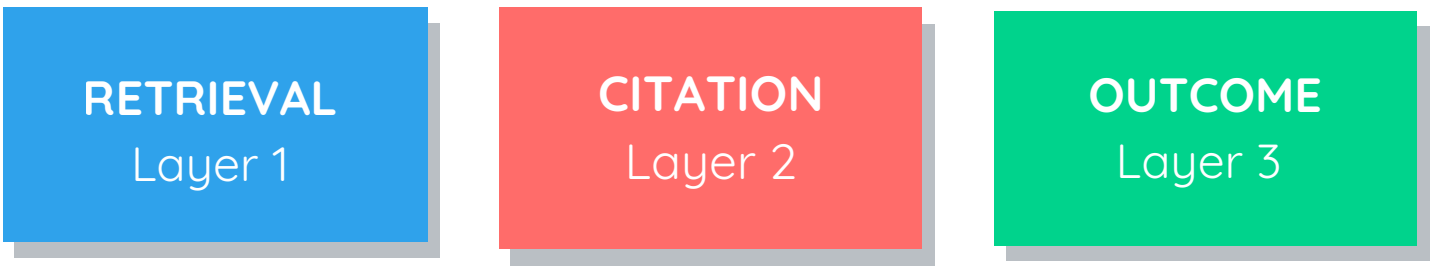
But progress is being made. At a high-level a three-layer framework is emerging across the channel*, maturing towards a shared language: retrieval, citation, outcome.

Put simply:

1. **Retrieval** shows whether AI systems accessed the content
2. **Citation** shows whether that content appeared in, or helped inform, an AI answer
3. **Outcome** shows whether a user journey can be connected to a measurable commercial event

**Each layer is useful, but none is complete on its own.**

## A measurement framework for AI attribution.




* This is a high-level framework, reflective of approaches currently being adopted within the affiliate channel. Further layers do exist for measuring the fullest interrelationship between publisher content and AI answer generation. For more information, see https://openattribution.org/

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## Layer 1 - Retrieval




Retrieval is the first layer of visibility. It shows when an AI system accesses publisher content.

AI systems are visiting publisher websites more often, and for more varied reasons than they were a year ago.

Agentic search tools, deep research features and live-grounded AI answers all involve an AI system fetching content from a publisher's site - either to answer a user's question, complete a task, or support an AI-generated response.

When that visit happens, it can be recorded. The publisher can see which platform it came from, which page it accessed, when, and how often. Two major approaches are now available:

1. **CDN-level crawl logging** which gives the most granular retrieval view
2. **Platform-provided tools**, which offer partial first-party visibility around citations and AI-referred traffic.

### 1 CDN-level crawl logging

A CDN, or **Content Delivery Network**, is the infrastructure layer that sits in front of a publisher's site and helps serve pages quickly and securely to users around the world.

**Cloudflare** and **Akamai** are two of the most common providers. Because CDNs see requests arriving at publisher pages, they can be an effective layer for monitoring AI crawl activity.

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A useful way to picture this is to imagine a publisher's CDN log, summarised by page and crawler:

| Page | Googlebot | OAI-SearchBot | ClaudeBot | PerplexityBot |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| /best-running-shoes-2026 | 412 | 38 | 6 | 14 |
| /budget-laptops-roundup | 287 | 22 | 4 | 9 |
| /home | 156 | 12 | 2 | 5 |
| /old-archive-post | 8 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| /sitemap.xml | 24 | 18 | 3 | 11 |

Different kinds of automated visit have different commercial implications:

- **Pre-training crawlers** download content in bulk for datasets that are used by AI platform engineers to train future AI model versions.
- **Live search crawlers** fetch content in response to a real-time user query, to ground an AI-generated answer with current information.
- **Browsing-action agents** visit pages on behalf of a specific user - to find a product, fill a form, or complete a purchase - and may behave more like a person than a traditional bot.

These distinctions are important. A page fetched frequently by live AI search crawlers may be helping answer real user queries. A page accessed only by pre-training crawlers is used differently: as input for future model development rather than as part of a live search journey.

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CDN logs allow publishers to begin separating those use cases, set permission policies, and use the evidence in commercial conversations with brands and networks.

CDN-level analysis is the most granular retrieval data available. It is not always simple to deploy, but it gives publishers the clearest view of which AI systems are consuming their content, which pages are most affected, and how that activity changes over time.

However, they aren't perfect: CDNs can sometimes miss activity due to technical 'caching,' and some bots use 'proxies' to hide their true identity.



## Platform-provided tools

Some retrieval-adjacent visibility is also beginning to appear through platform tools. These tools are useful, but they should not be confused with complete retrieval measurement.

In February 2026, Microsoft launched a public preview of the AI Performance dashboard inside Bing Webmaster Tools. It gives publishers visibility into pages cited inside AI-generated answers, the search queries used to 'ground' those answers in factual content, and visibility trends over time. This is a narrower view than CDN logging, but it is valuable and potentially more accessible to digital marketing teams.

In May 2026, Google Analytics introduced a dedicated AI Assistant channel in GA4. Visits from ChatGPT, Gemini and Claude are now automatically labelled when the AI tool passes referrer information. The limitation is that many journeys do not preserve that information.

Desktop browser clicks usually do; mobile app traffic, copy-paste journeys and some in-app browsers often do not. Those visits may still appear as “Direct.”

In June 2026 in response to the UK CMA publisher requirement Google released updates to Search Console. This offers site owners insight into content “impressions” in AI Mode and AI Overviews. It does not include click data.

**Neither of these tools were designed specifically for affiliates. Together, however, they give publishers and brands a first-party baseline: Bing AI Performance gives partial visibility into AI citation and grounding activity; GA4 shows which AI surfaces are sending traffic when referral data survives.**

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### What the retrieval layer shows

Retrieval data can show which AI platforms are accessing a publisher's content, which pages they access, and how often. This gives publishers a basis for understanding which pages AI systems appear to treat as valuable.

It can also show which types of AI activity are taking place. **CDN logs can help distinguish live search crawls from pre-training activity or user-action (e.g. shopping) agents**, which is important for licensing, crawler permissions and commercial positioning.

**Over time, retrieval data can show how AI activity changes by page, platform or category**. A product guide may experience a spike in AI search visits around a seasonal buying moment. A long-lived evergreen article may become more valuable to AI systems than its human traffic would suggest.

Retrieval data can also be combined with adjacent first-party tools. Bing AI Performance may show whether a page was cited in an AI-generated answer. GA4 may show whether an AI surface sent traffic. These are not complete retrieval measures, but they help build a fuller picture.

### What does Layer 1 - Retrieval show?

- ✓ Which AI platforms are accessing content
- ✓ Which pages are being accessed
- ✓ How often pages are being accessed
- ✓ Show types of AI activity (e.g. pre-training vs live search)

### What doesn't Layer 1 - Retrieval show?

- ✗ What the user actually asked for
- ✗ How the content was shown
- ✗ Whether the retrieval of information resulted in a commercial outcome

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### What the retrieval layer can't show

Retrieval does not show what the user actually asked.

**An AI search crawler visiting a "top running shoe reviews" page does not reveal the user's prompt.**

It does not show how the content was used in the answer, or whether it even influenced an answer. A page may be retrieved, but the publisher cannot see which claims were incorporated, how the answer was phrased, or whether the publisher was credited.

It does not show whether the retrieval led to a commercial outcome. Layer 1 records access. It does not follow the journey through the generated answer, any user click, or a later conversion.

It also does not capture the full breadth of AI activity. **Current tools have blind spots across devices, apps, browsers, platforms and journey paths.** Different AI systems exhibit very different retrieval behaviours, and these behaviours change frequently due to a myriad of technical, performance and cost management objectives.

### Practical considerations

CDN-level crawl analysis requires coordination between infrastructure teams and commercial teams, functions that have not historically worked together on affiliate questions.

The data can also be commercially sensitive. Crawl volumes are a form of audience and content intelligence, and not every publisher will be comfortable sharing them directly with brand partners or networks.

**Even with those caveats, Layer 1 gives publishers something concrete: page-level evidence that AI systems are accessing their content**. That evidence underpins crawl-based metrics, emerging AI-impression models, licensing discussions and the commercial approaches described later in this paper.

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## Layer 2 - Citation




Retrieval shows whether AI systems accessed the content. **Citation** asks whether that content surfaced in the answer.

When an AI system generates a response, it sometimes attributes claims or recommendations to named sources - a link, a footnote, an inline reference, or a publisher domain.

These references are commonly described as citations. Not all AI answers include them, however, recent UK regulation requires that Google include these citations in all AI Overview responses (enforced from Dec. 2026).

The format varies by platform. Many answers may draw on publisher content without citing it at all.

Citation visibility is therefore harder to measure than retrieval. But it can be approximated through two broad approaches:

1. **Citation simulation platforms**
2. **Structural analysis tools**

### 1 Citation simulation platforms

A new category of AI citation visibility platforms has emerged. These solutions typically send large sets of simulated prompts to AI systems, or run them through virtual machines that mimic user sessions, and observe which sources are cited and in what context.

Some vendors also draw on first or third-party sample user panel datasets to analyse citation patterns from observed behaviour.

The output is usually brand-mention extraction, citation-share measurement, source prominence and trend lines across multiple AI systems.

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**This data is useful, but it should be treated as directional rather than deterministic.**

Methodologies differ between vendors: prompt selection, sampling cadence, panel composition and definitions of “cited” versus “mentioned” all affect the results.

### 2 Structural and semantic analysis tools

Several platforms also analyse AI responses for sentiment, representation and accuracy. This can help brands and publishers understand whether AI systems are describing a product, brand or category in a favourable, neutral or misleading way.

Separately, **some vendors offer structural analysis of publisher pages to estimate how likely they are to be extracted or cited by AI systems.** These approaches are sometimes described as **AEO or GEO scoring**. They are conceptually useful, but their accuracy has not been independently validated at scale. They are best understood as predictors of citation performance, not proof of actual retrieval or influence.

### What the citation layer shows

Citation data can show indicative views as to which publishers and brands appear in AI answers, how often they appear, and how prominence changes over time.
It can show which sources AI systems seem to favour for particular topics, products or categories, and whether editorial or content changes are reflected in citation outcomes.

It can also show how a brand or product is represented inside AI answers. That creates a basis for publishers and brands to work together on category education, product accuracy and content quality.

The most useful analysis is citation data aligned with page-level retrieval data

Structural analysis can show how well a publisher page appears positioned for AI extraction or citation, although this remains predictive rather than observed.

**The most useful application today is citation data aligned with page-level retrieval data from Layer 1.** If a page is frequently crawled and also appears in citation visibility tools, the case for AI-mediated influence becomes stronger.

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### What the citation layer doesn't show

Citation data does not provide a complete record of real user behaviour. Simulations use prompts chosen by vendors or platform users, run at defined intervals, and are processed through systems that may not match live user sessions.

Panel-based approaches, which track real user web-journeys are closer to observed behaviour, but still depend on sample size, composition and extrapolation.

Citation results can also vary, especially at low sample sizes. Repeated prompt runs may return different sources, which limits their reliability for automated commission settlement.

Vendor methodologies are not yet standardised. **Definitions of "citation," "mention," "visibility" and "prominence" differ, making cross-vendor comparison difficult.**

Most importantly, citation data does not show whether the user clicked, remembered, acted or converted. It only shows that a source appeared in an AI-generated answer. The link between that appearance and commercial outcome belongs to Layer 3.

### What does Layer 2 - Citation show?

- ✓ Which publishers and brands are appearing in AI results
- ✓ How often pubishers and brands are appearing & how that changes over time
- ✓ How publishers & brands appear in AI results
- ✓ How well a publisher page appears positioned for AI extraction or citation

### What doesn't Layer 2 - Citation show?

- ✗ A complete record of real user behaviour
- ✗ Results can vary, especially with small sample sizes
- ✗ Whether the cited information resulted in a commercial outcome

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### Practical considerations

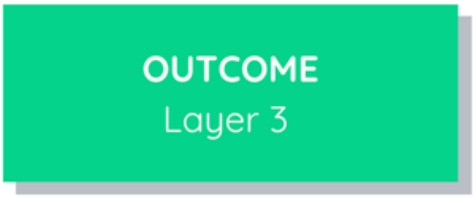
Citation visibility platforms are often the easiest entry point for Layer 2. They do not require CDN access or tracking implementation, which makes them accessible to brands and publishers that lack infrastructure-level data.

**The trade-off is confidence. The data is modelled, vendor-generated and methodologically variable.**

Where commission settlement is involved, citation metrics can therefore be predominantly leveraged as insights supporting broader attribution and investment frameworks.

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## Layer 3 - Outcome




Layers 1 and 2 show that AI systems access publisher content and sometimes cite it. Layer 3 addresses the harder question: can an AI touchpoint be connected to a conversion?

In some conditions, yes.

If a user clicks out from an AI tool to a publisher or advertiser site, analytics and attribution systems may classify the visit, provided the referrer data survives the journey. Where that happens, AI can be tracked in a customer journey alongside affiliate, paid search, organic, social, display and other channels.

### Practical considerations

When a user clicks from an AI tool to a publisher or merchant site, existing tracking infrastructure may identify the AI platform as the source. This depends on the AI platform passing the referrer header and the advertiser having robust tracking in place.

As with other tracking solutions, there are some persistent gaps. Mobile apps, copy-paste journeys, in-app browsers and privacy settings can all strip or hide referrer information - obscuring the role AI played in the journey.

**Where referrer data survives, journey-path attribution can show how AI search intersects with other channels in converting journeys**. Brands and networks can examine whether AI appears early, mid-journey or near conversion; whether it overlaps with affiliate; and which publisher pages appear in higher-value paths.

**This can support early influence-based or rules-based commission approaches, where a publisher-related AI touchpoint is present in a converting journey**. But those rules need to be agreed clearly between advertiser, network and publisher. Outcome data can show presence and sequence; it does not automatically prove incremental value.

**Early influence-based, or rules-based commissions could be supported.**

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### What the outcome layer shows

Outcome data can show where AI platforms sit in converting journeys: whether they appear as first touch, mid-funnel assistance, or near conversion.

It can show which AI surfaces send traffic that later converts, where referrer and tracking data survive.

It can help identify publisher pages associated with valuable AI-assisted journeys, such as pages that appear in paths with higher order values, stronger conversion rates or better customer quality.

It can also support comparative analysis. Brands and publishers can examine journeys that included publisher-influenced AI touchpoints against journeys that did not, and use those comparisons to shape investment, testing and partner strategy.

### What does Layer 3 - Outcome show?

- ✓ Where AI platforms sit in converting journeys (e.g. first/last touch)
- ✓ Which AI platform sent converting traffic
- ✓ Identify which publisher pages have higher value to a brand
- ✓ Comparative performance of AI influenced journeys vs other journeys

### What doesn't Layer 3 - Outcome show?

- ✗ What the original prompt & answer was that started the converting journey
- ✗ Full value of AI conversions due to missing data
- ✗ Any non-click journeys

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## What the outcome layer doesn't show

Even when an AI touchpoint appears in a journey, **outcome data cannot show what the user asked, what the platform said, or how the answer influenced the decision**.

It does not show the full volume of AI-referred conversions. If tracking signals are lost, analytics may record the visit without identifying its source.

It does not prove the precise value of publisher influence in each conversion. It can show that a publisher-related AI touchpoint was present, and incrementality testing can estimate impact across groups of users. But **individual-level influence still depends on agreed attribution rules**.

It cannot fully capture non-click influence. A user may read an AI-generated recommendation, remember the brand, and later return directly or through another channel. In that case, AI may have influenced the consideration set, but outcome-level tracking will not show it.

## Practical considerations

The outcome data that exists today is useful enough to support early testing, but not enough to settle the commercial question on its own. Influence-based commission depends on clear rules, careful governance and, where possible, incrementality testing.

This places more weight on tracking quality. Advertisers need site-wide tags, server-to-server tracking, fallback conversion pixels and consent signals working properly.

Affiliate networks should leverage their collective influence to lead advertisers toward best-practice tracking. As AI-assisted journeys become more prevalent, their successful measurement depends on the strength of the underlying technical implementation.

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# Three layers, no silver bullet

**Measuring AI-mediated publisher influence is developing quickly, but no single layer solves the problem.**

Publishers, advertisers, networks and vendors each see different parts of the journey: crawl logs, citation visibility, AI-referred visits, journey-path attribution and network tracking structures.

**Networks are already working with citation platforms and technology providers to connect these views into more usable evidence of publisher influence. (see Part Three: Appendix).**

Partnerize's AAM-certified VantagePoint Fractional Compensation Standard and NYORDA's Enma.ai are important early examples of affiliate-specific implementation, although it remains vendor-led rather than a universal industry standard.

Broader initiatives such as IAB's Project Eidos* and IAB Tech Lab's AAMP** show that the advertising industry is moving toward new measurement and agentic advertising frameworks, with affiliate commissioning still underdeveloped within that work.

Where they exist, the channel will need clear explanations of how affiliate network provisioned AI touchpoint attribution models work.

Standardised definitions, transparent rules and agreed governance need to become baseline expectations as these approaches mature.

**This remains a fundamental challenge for the APMA and is one we will continue to explore through the work and ongoing roadmap of the AI taskforce.**

*The IAB's Project Eidos is the IAB's industry-wide initiative to address measurement challenges by defining the principles, standards, and frameworks that guide how measurement is developed, evaluated, and compared across the industry.
**The IAB Tech Lab's Agentic Advertising Management Protocols (AAMP) is a technical standards initiative for AI-powered ("agentic") advertising workflows.

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# Three disconnected layers

No single metric will solve AI attribution.

**Retrieval** shows that content was accessed.

**Citation** shows that it appeared in AI-generated answers.

**Outcomes** reveal where measurable commercial activity still exists.

None proves value independently, but collectively they offer something the industry has been missing: a common language for discussing influence beyond the click.

The immediate objective is not perfection. It is consistency.

Shared definitions, transparent methodologies and comparable evidence will allow brands, publishers and networks to experiment with confidence rather than relying on assumptions. As measurement matures, those foundations will become increasingly important for commercial decision-making.

Because once influence can be evidenced, the conversation naturally shifts from measurement to remuneration.

**The final part, part three, of 'The New Rules of Discovery: How AI is Reshaping Affiliate Marketing' will look at how we build a future that is fair for publishers and advertisers, how regulation may, or may not, help and what practical things you can do now in your business.**

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# Appendix 1

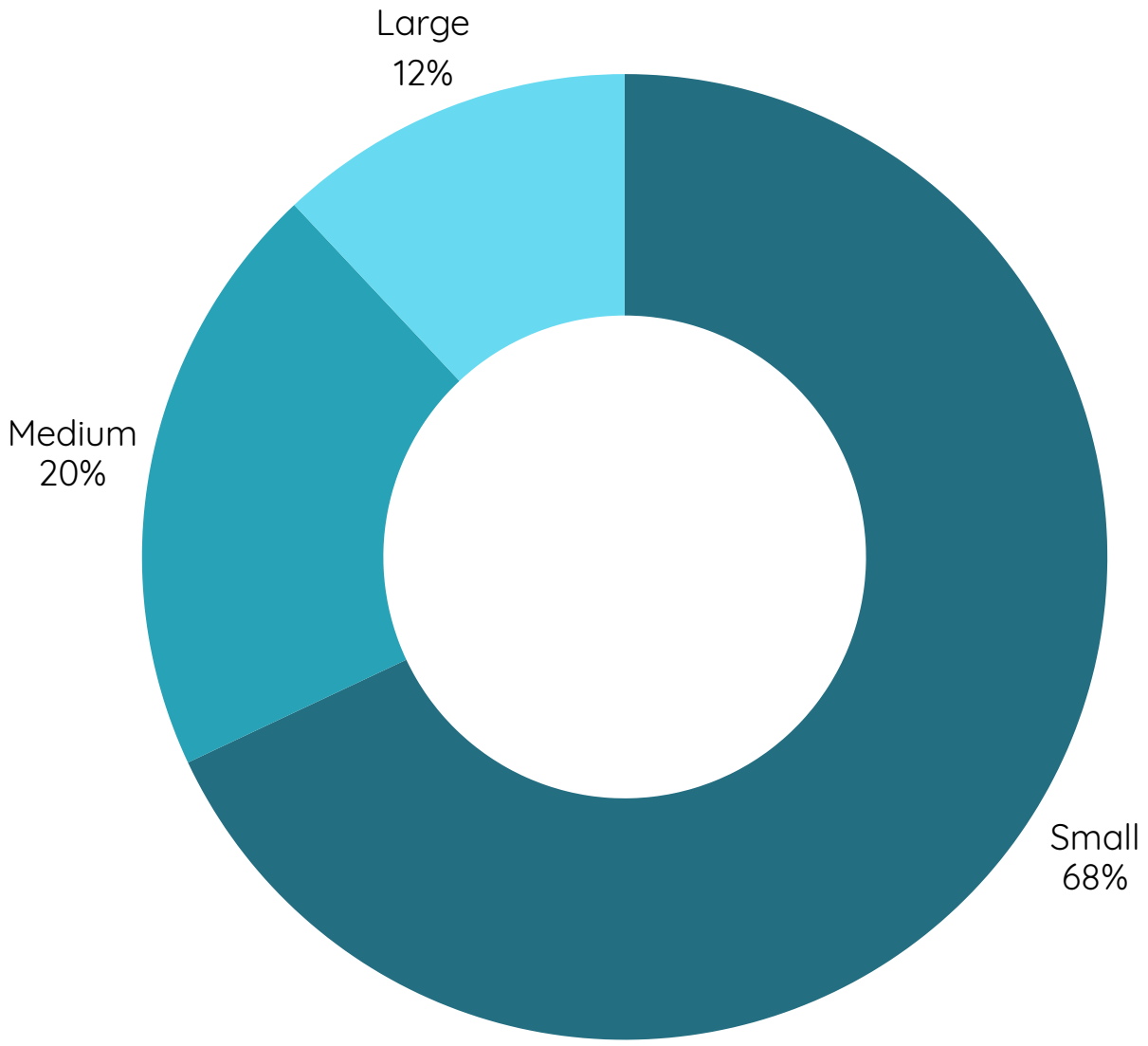
## Charts & Graphs from the APMA Publisher Survey

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We ran a self-selecting publisher survey across May and June 2026. It could be filled in anonymously and all of the questions were optional. We received 67 responses.

The survey sought to understand how AI Search is impacting UK publishers across tracking, traffic, measurement and remuneration.

**Q. What best describes the size of your business?**



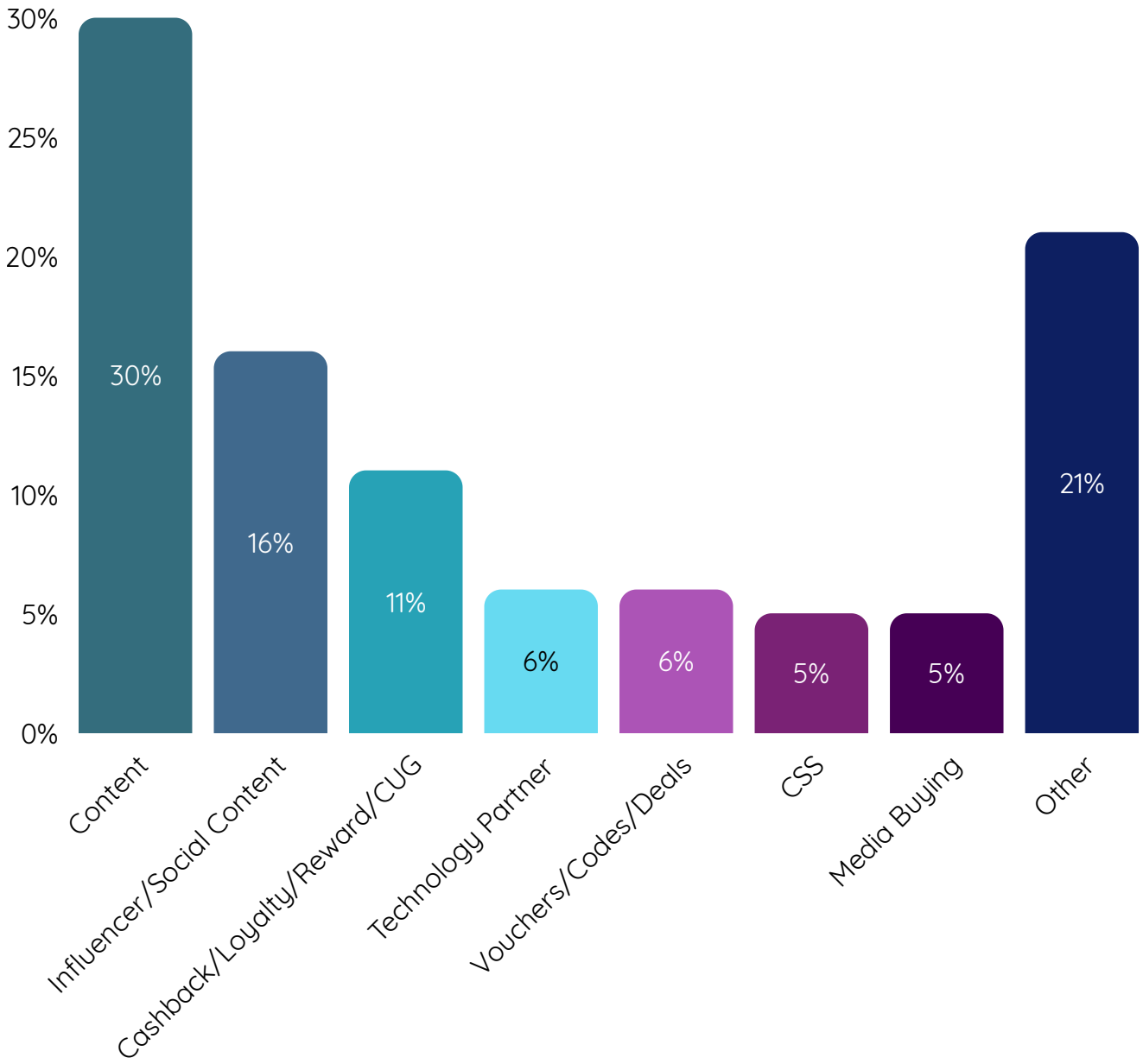

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**Q. What best describes what your business does?**



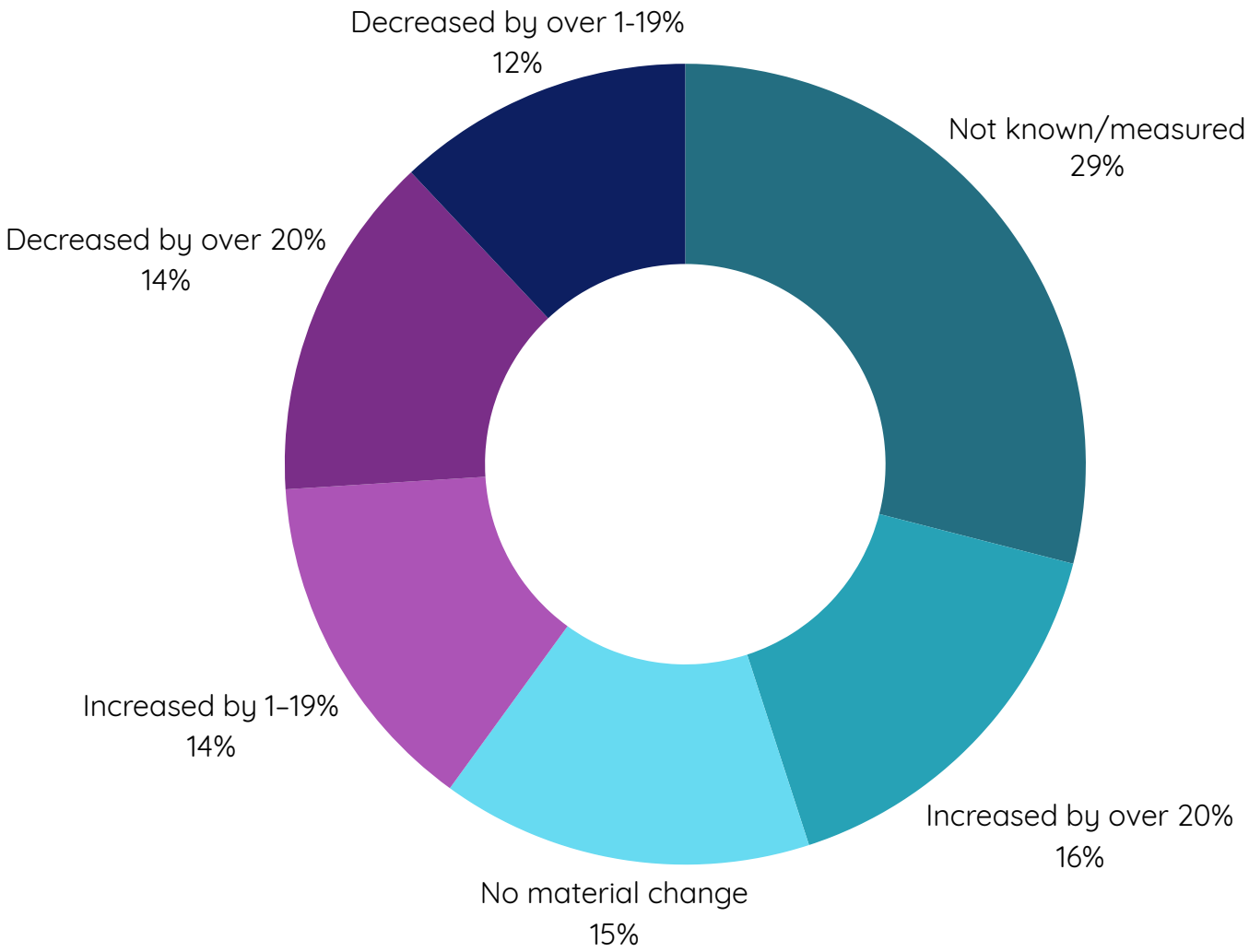

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**Q. Over the past 12 months how has your total organic search traffic from Google Search changed based on your analytics platform?**



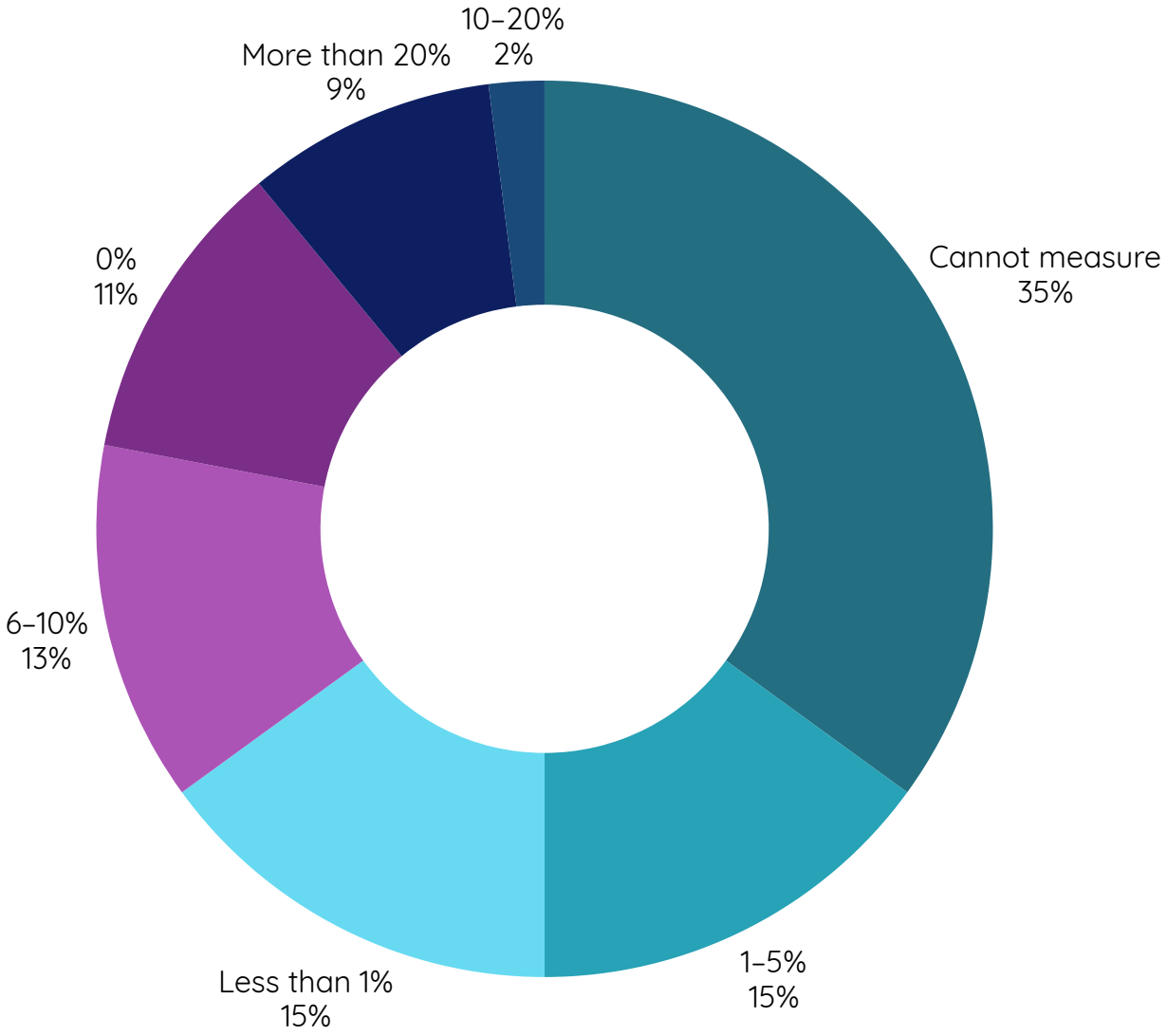

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**Q. Approximately what percentage of your total website sessions currently originates from AI-driven search or answer platforms, based on your referral or attribution data? (Consider all systems such as ChatGPT, Claude, Gemini, etc.)?**



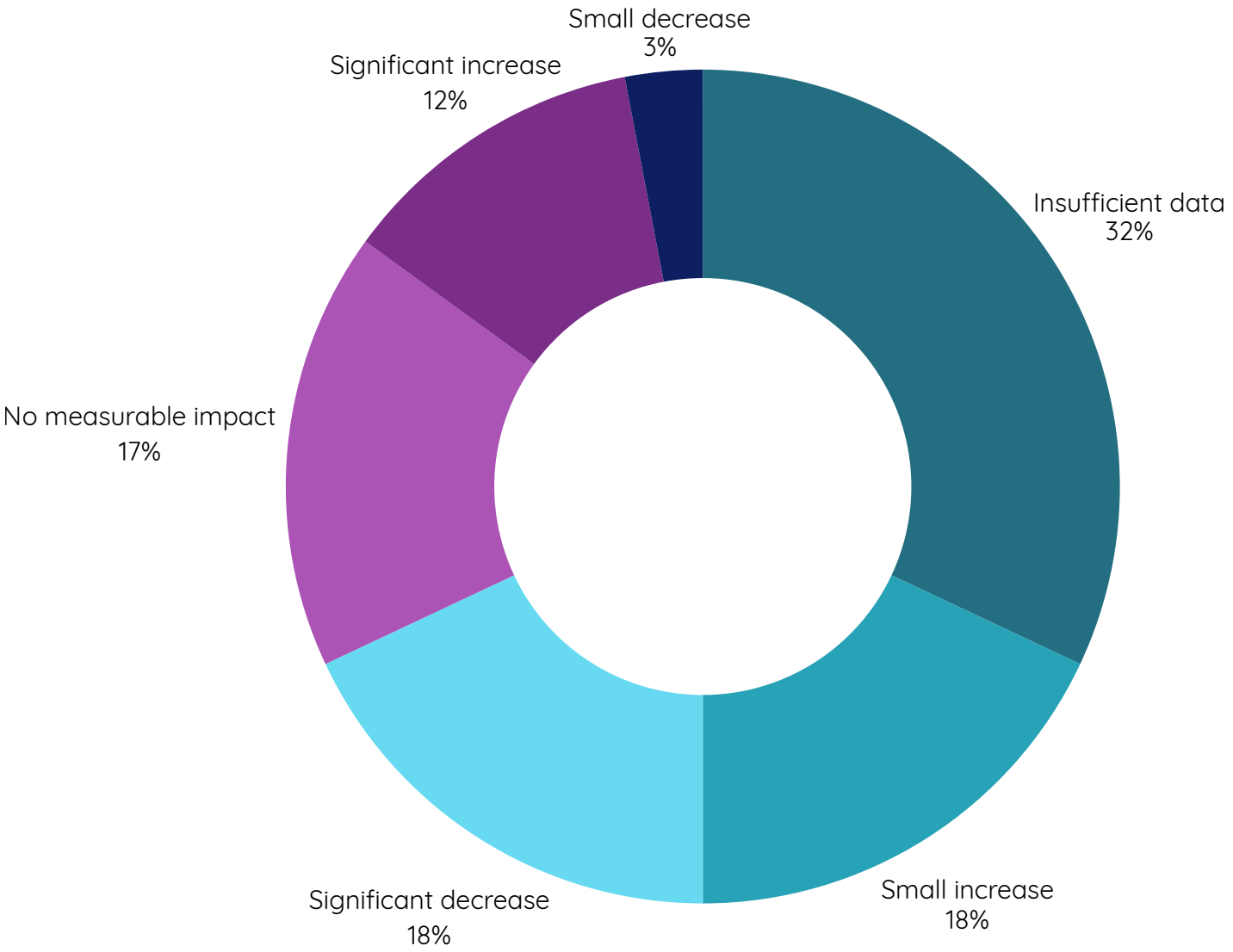

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**Q. Based on your observed data and/or internal analysis, what has been the net impact of AI-driven search platforms on your total website traffic over the past 12 months?**



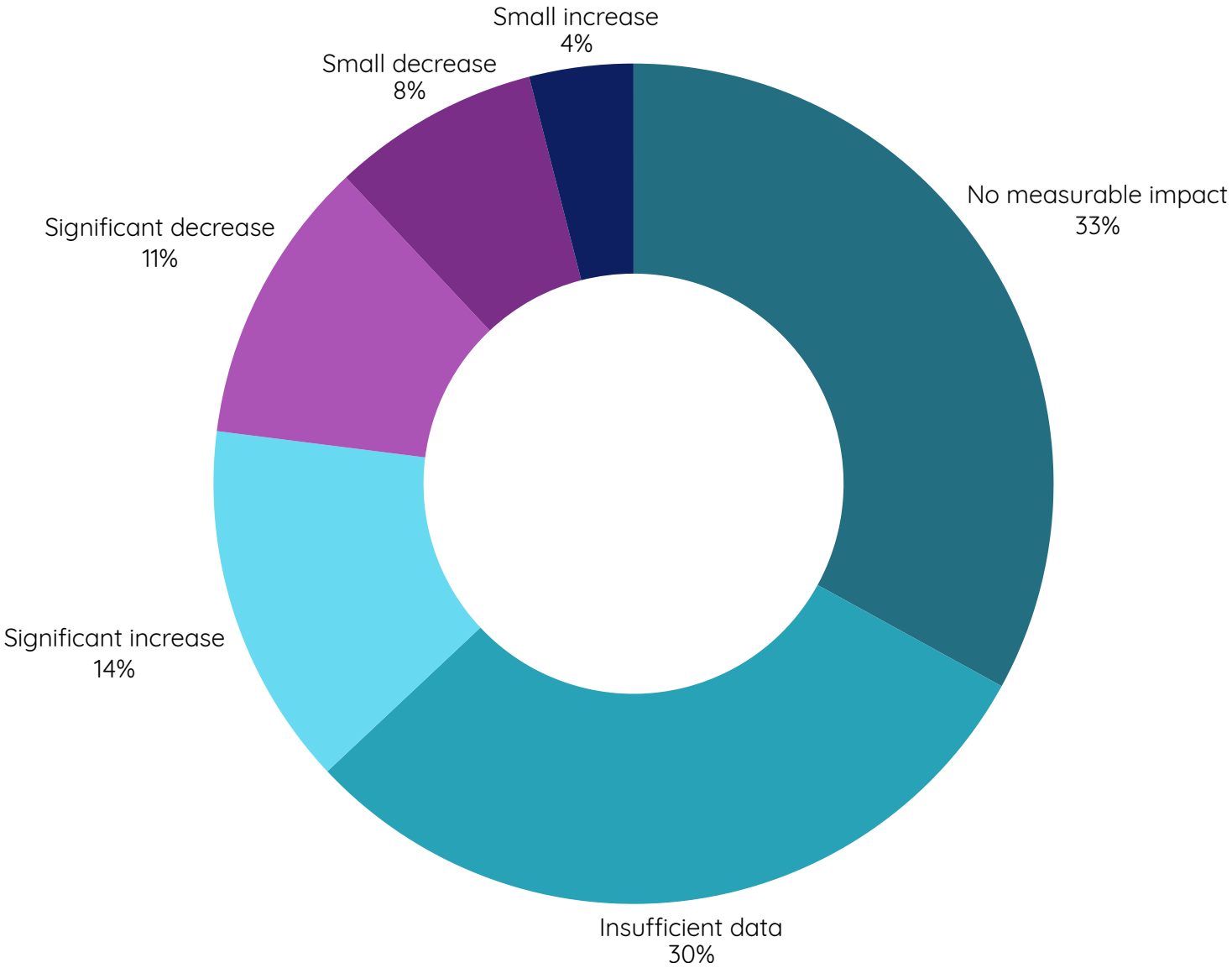

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**Q. Based on your observed data and/or internal analysis, what has been the net impact of AI-driven search platforms on your total earnings over the past 12 months?**



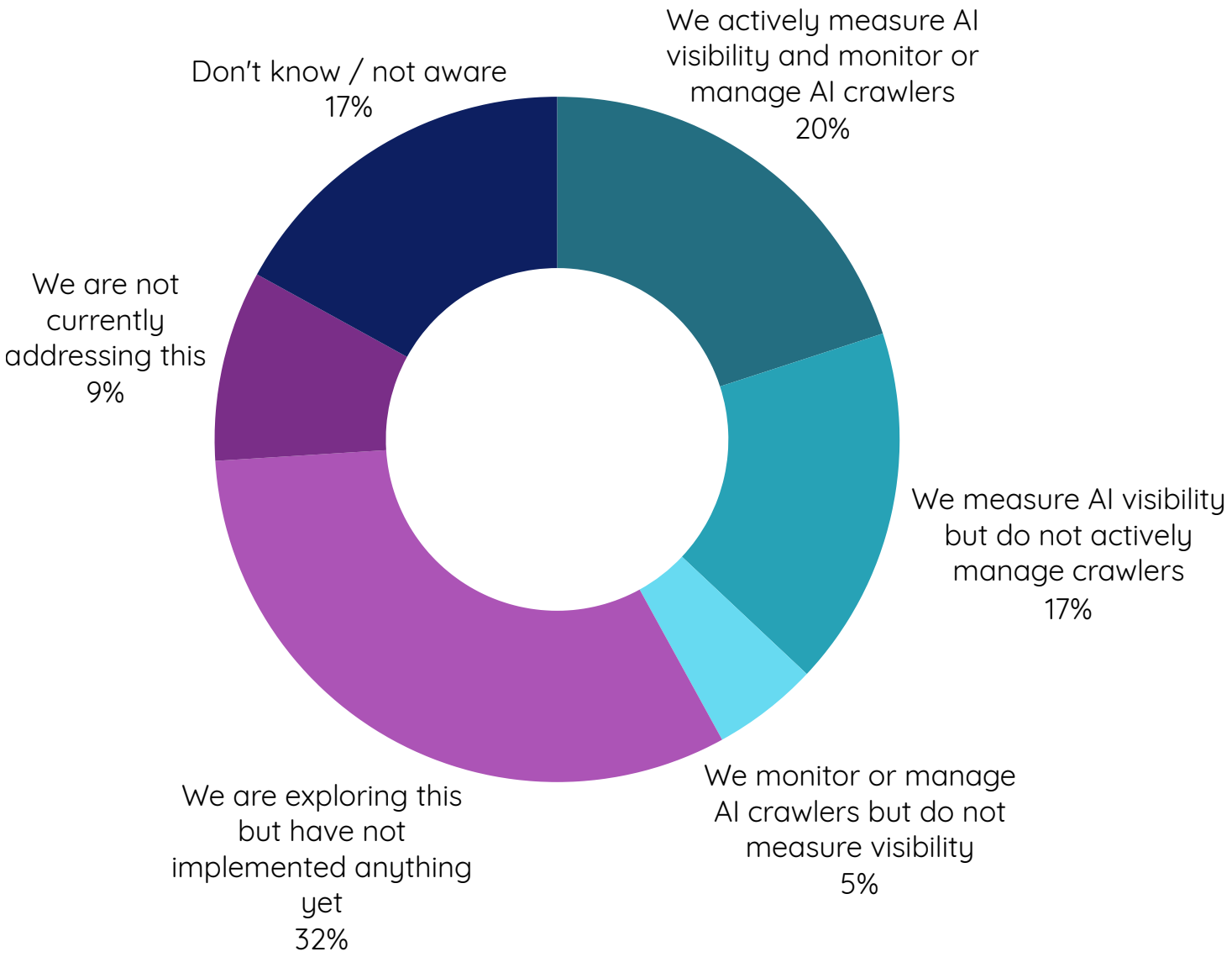

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# Charts & Graphs from the APMA Publisher Survey

We ran a self-selecting publisher survey across May and June 2026. It could be filled in anonymously and all of the questions were optional. We received 67 responses.

The survey sought to understand how AI Search is impacting UK publishers across tracking, traffic, measurement and remuneration.

**Q. Which of the following best describes your current approach to measuring and managing AI-driven visibility (e.g. citations)?**



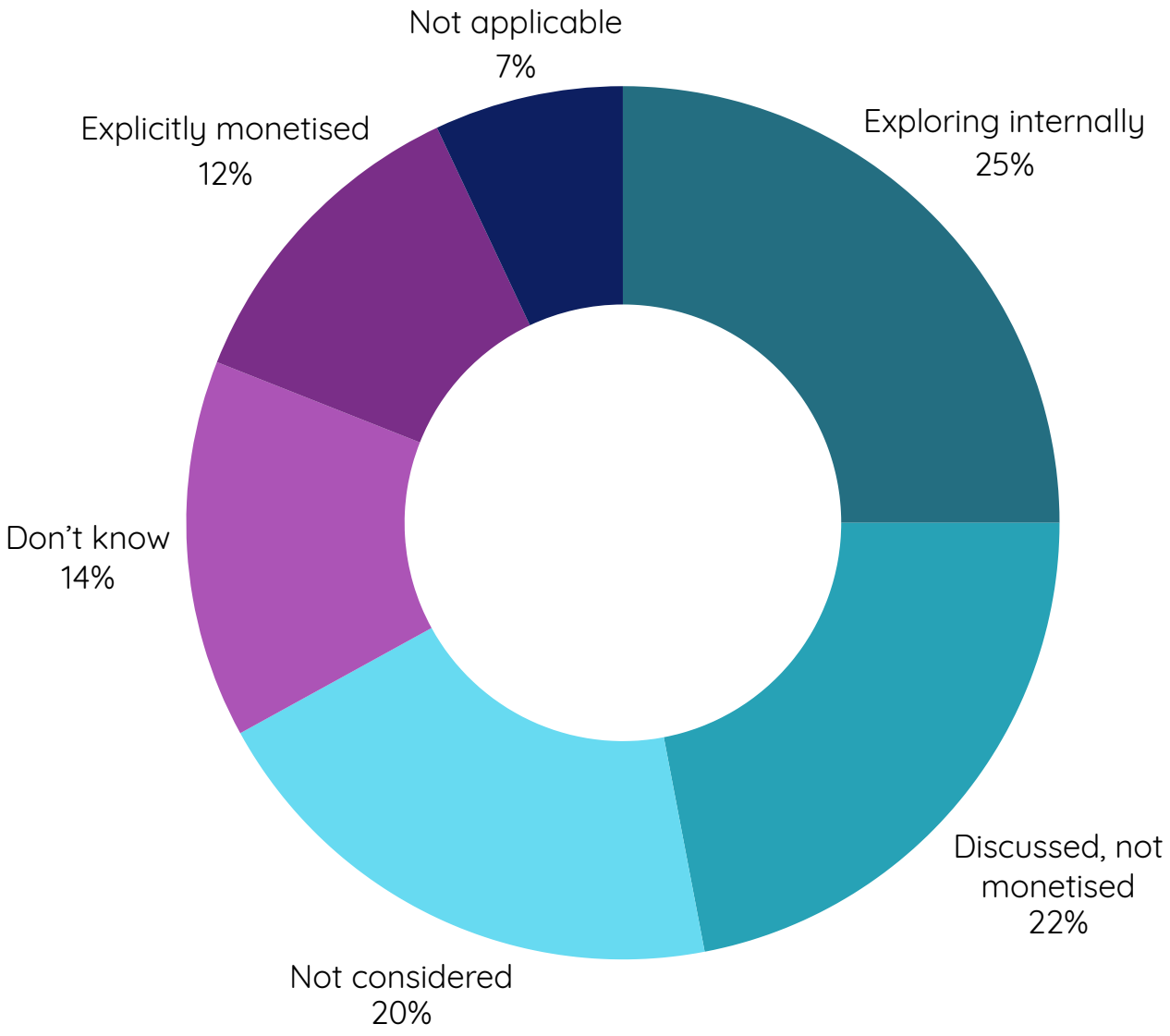

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**Q. How, if at all, is AI-driven visibility (e.g. citations) currently included in the way you operate commercially?**



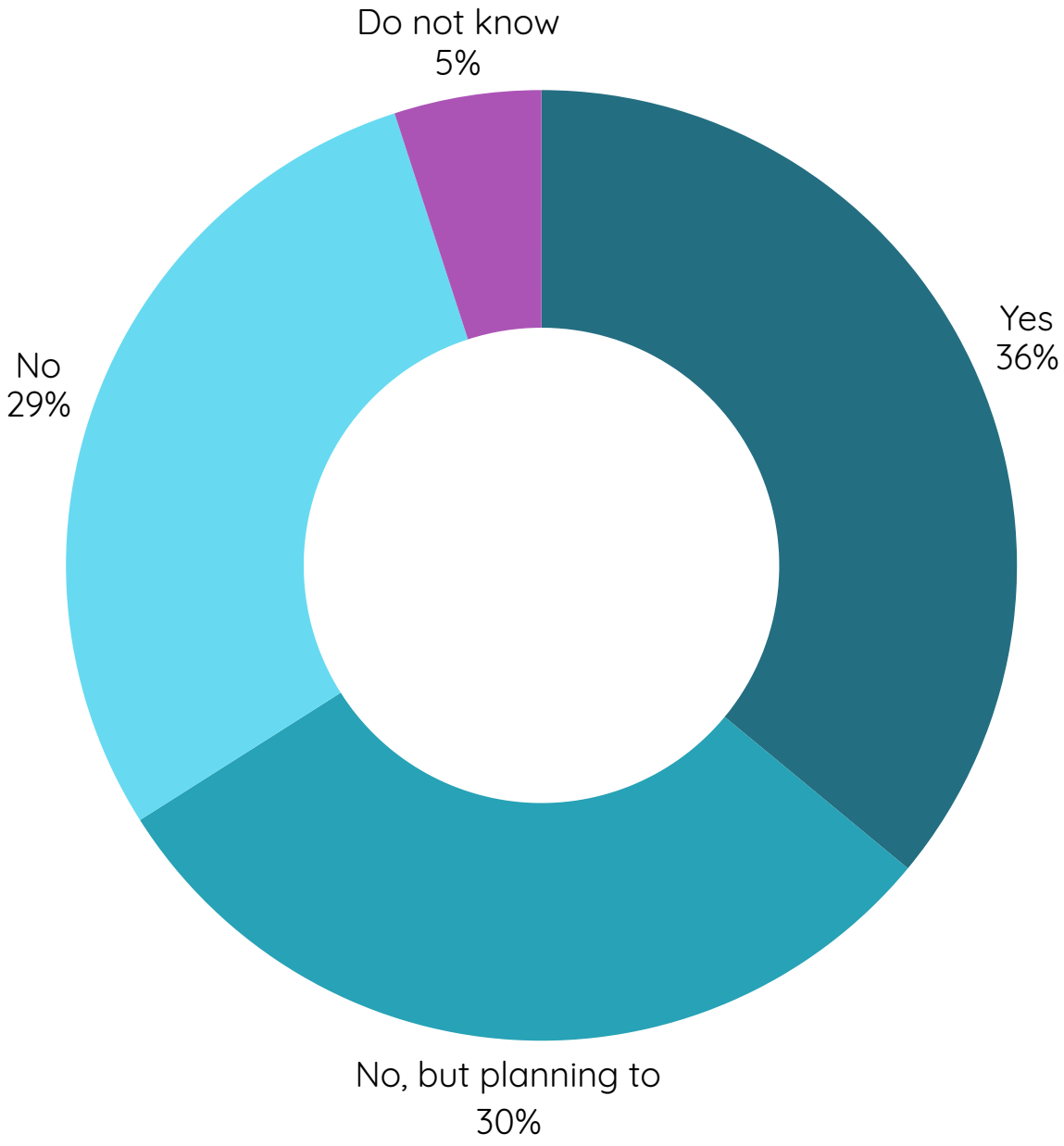

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**Q. Are you using AI to engage with your audience directly?**




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# Charts & Graphs from The APMA Publisher Survey

## Standout statistics (67 responses):

- 31% reported an increase in organic Google traffic; 26% reported a decrease.
- 14% said Google traffic had fallen by more than 20% during the previous year.
- 34% could not measure how much traffic they received from AI platforms.
- 19% reported a significant decrease in overall website traffic from AI search.
- The reported earnings split evenly: 18% reported an increase and 18% a decrease.
- 29% did not have enough data to assess the impact of AI search on earnings.
- 34% were exploring AI visibility but had not implemented any measurement or crawler-management capabilities.
- Only 19% actively measured AI visibility/ monitored or managed AI crawlers.
- Only 12% said AI visibility was explicitly monetised; 22% discussed it commercially.
- 37% already use AI to engage with their audience; 29% planned to do so.

## Standout quotes:

“Referral attribution from LLM platforms is effectively invisible in standard analytics.”

“Affiliate fixed-fee spend on paid content does not have a ROAS objective, but instead a citation-count objective.”

“Networks need to create a standardised approach to AI visibility tracking and ensure that brands understand content publisher value and reward it accordingly.”

“Publishers are not being rewarded for the sale unless the brand is rewarding sales by coupon-code usage.”

“We’re working with brands to help them with AI visibility while having ongoing conversations about how much of our site we open up to crawlers.”

“We’d value industry-standard ways to detect AI citations & attribute downstream traffic, and clearer commercial frameworks for how editorial content should be compensated.”

“I’ve had to stop working full-time on my blog and find alternative employment because of the impacts of AI on my traffic and income. It’s been devastating.”

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## How AI is Reshaping Affiliate Marketing

July 2026 v1

