ChatGPT User Agent Website Activity Doubled in July

The New Era Where AI Systems Execute Tasks On Behalf Of Users

About This Report

As the news settles around ChatGPT-5, another significant development has been taking place for months now. New types of AI agents are rapidly reshaping how AI interacts with websites on behalf of users.

Today, BrightEdge released new research showing that AI agents—computers doing work on behalf of a person—are not a future concept. They are already here and are growing at a massive scale.

Key Content in This Report:

1. The State of AI Marketing Platforms: LLM Growth in Referral Traffic to Websites

2. The ChatGPT User Agent Has Become an Active Assistant for Users With 200% Growth

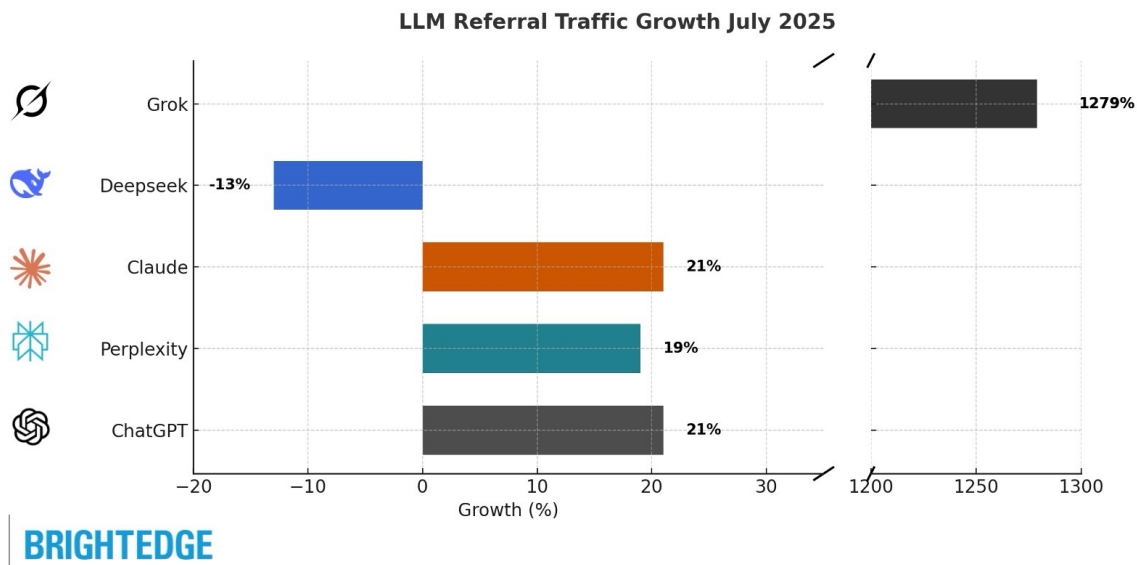3. Frameworks for Success

For Context in This Report:

BrightEdge currently defines AI agents as any AI-triggered process that performs work on behalf of a user. Today, the most common use cases involve AI agents conducting research for us in the same manner we traditionally conduct research by visiting brand websites and reading content.

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AI Search Referral Traffic Shows Big Month-Over-Month Gains

Google Commands 90%> Market Share, But Key Players Are Growing Fast

AI Platforms | LLM Referral Traffic Growth | July to August 2025

LLM Referral Traffic Growth July 2025

Grok — 1279%
Deepseek — -13%
Claude — 21%
Perplexity — 19%
ChatGPT — 21%

Growth (%)

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Key Trends in AI Search Referral Traffic

DeepSeek's Decline: The Chinese LLM that emerged early this year has steadily lost ground, with particularly sharp declines throughout July.

ChatGPT Dominates: When analyzing website referral traffic over the past three months, ChatGPT significantly outpaces all competitors, solidifying its position as the market leader beyond Google.

Grok's Explosive Growth: While starting from a small base, Grok achieved a remarkable 1000%+ growth in July. If this trajectory continues, it could emerge as a serious contender in the AI search space.

Why This Matters for Marketers

These explosive growth rates reveal an expanding ecosystem where strong SEO fundamentals have never been more critical. As AI-powered search platforms multiply—from ChatGPT's referral dominance to Grok's 1000%+ growth—each new system relies on crawling and understanding your website's content.

This means that robust SEO optimization now delivers compound returns: optimize once, and your content becomes discoverable across traditional search, AI overviews, ChatGPT, Perplexity, and emerging platforms alike.

Rather than fragmenting your efforts, the proliferation of AI search amplifies the value of comprehensive SEO. With agentic AI systems actively browsing websites on users' behalf, every technical improvement—from site speed to structured data—directly impacts your visibility across an ever-growing array of discovery channels.

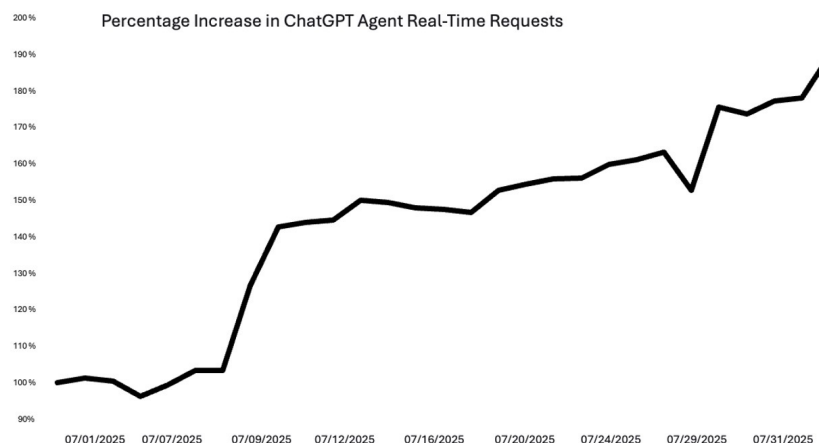# Agentic AI Website Interaction Goes Mainstream

ChatGPT User Agent Activity Doubled 2X

ChatGPT User Agent Growth

ChatGPT

200%
Increase In Website Requests for Real-Time Answers

July to August 2025

BRIGHTEDGE

Percentage Increase in ChatGPT Agent Real-Time Requests

Data: BrightEdge Customer User Base, *July - August 2025*

The data tells a compelling story: ChatGPT's user agent activity doubled between July and August 2025, marking a watershed moment in how users interact with the web. This isn't just another incremental change—it represents 2X the number of users asking ChatGPT questions in a single month.

For real-time searches, ChatGPT now requests non-existent pages only 1% of the time, demonstrating remarkable accuracy in finding and accessing relevant content. This efficiency means users are getting the answers they need, when they need them, driving even more adoption.

The Hidden Cost of Ignoring This Trend

Here's what many brands don't realize: for those not optimizing their websites and content to be seen and cited by AI, this represents a significant missed opportunity. When ChatGPT's agent searches for information on behalf of users, slow-loading sites or poorly structured content mean your brand simply doesn't appear in the conversation.

For marketers, these are key opportunities- every one of those searches represents a user with intent, looking for solutions, products, or information. If your content isn't accessible to ChatGPT's agent, you're invisible to this rapidly growing audience. With a 200% increase in just one month, the cost of inaction compounds daily.

BrightEdge data reveals agents are rapidly reshaping the web, crawling and indexing websites across major industries at unprecedented levels, and redefining how businesses must think about search visibility in the AI era.

Key Research Findings on ChatGPT User Agent

ChatGPT User Agent Has Become an Active Assistant For Users

ChatGPT

The Agentic AI landscape underwent a transformative shift on July 17, 2025, when OpenAI introduced ChatGPT Agent. This launch represented a pivotal evolution, transitioning ChatGPT from its role as a conversational tool into a fully autonomous digital assistant. The development heralds a new era in AI technology—one where systems don't merely provide responses but actively execute tasks on behalf of users.

Dramatic Surge in Live AI Search Activity

BrightEdge's examination of ChatGPT's real-time webpage requests throughout July 2025 demonstrated that the ChatGPT User bot's activity levels nearly doubled. This indicates that user dependence on live web search capabilities for obtaining answers experienced an almost 100% increase within a single month.

ChatGPT's Website Indexing Matches Google Desktop Performance

Analysis from BrightEdge shows that ChatGPT has reached equivalent levels to Google desktop in actively scanning and indexing websites for its search database.

Lost Engagement Opportunities in AI Search Results:

During real-time search operations, ChatGPT's User Agent attempted to access non-existent pages roughly 1% of the time, generating error responses rather than delivering valuable content. This creates missed opportunities for brands to feature in AI-generated responses.

In contrast to Google's tolerance for slower-loading sites, ChatGPT operates with minimal patience—sluggish website performance means forfeiting the chance to connect with actively engaged, purchase-ready users. This highlights the essential importance of robust technical SEO for success in both AI-driven and conventional search environments.

The Critical Need for AI Platform Brand Visibility and AI Agent Analytics

The continued advancement of AI agents makes understanding their operational patterns and optimizing for their interactions essential for sustaining market competitiveness. A key consideration is acknowledging that AI agents operate under distinct technical specifications.

Take website loading speed as an example: while Google demonstrates patience when accessing your site, ChatGPT shows significantly less tolerance—slow-loading websites prompt immediate abandonment. This reality emphasizes the vital importance of comprehensive technical SEO optimization across both AI-powered and traditional search platforms.

Instead of implementing barriers against these systems, strategic marketers must acknowledge three essential requirements for preserving competitive positioning.

The Critical Need for AI Platform Brand Visibility and AI Agent Analytics

Securing Long-term Brand Presence: With the rapid expansion of AI search adoption, blocking crawler access effectively removes brands from the training datasets and knowledge repositories of platforms where consumers increasingly seek information. As internet users increasingly rely on AI Platforms such as Google AI, ChatGPT, and Perplexity, content restrictions become more prevalent, making it unavailable for reference, citation, or recommendation by these platforms, thereby intensifying the brand invisibility challenge.

Leveraging Citation Benefits: AI platforms regularly cite and suggest content that doesn't achieve high rankings in conventional search results, establishing completely new pathways for discovery. Blocking AI crawlers prevents access to this potentially substantial source of qualified traffic and brand recognition that circumvents traditional SEO competition.

Attracting Premium Traffic: Referral traffic generated by AI platforms demonstrates superior quality characteristics. These visitors represent users positioned much deeper in the purchase process—well-informed prospects who have conducted thorough AI-assisted research before clicking through. This pre-screening mechanism delivers site visitors with substantially higher conversion probability.

As AI-powered search continues to expand, restricting AI agent access will ultimately harm brand visibility across platforms such as ChatGPT and Perplexity. Referral traffic from AI platforms typically exhibits high quality, featuring visitors who are often advanced in their purchasing decisions and demonstrate an increased conversion likelihood following comprehensive AI-guided research.

While content publishers who monetize their material might justify blocking AI bots, other brands cannot afford to close the door on autonomous agents. Organizations must not only maintain accessibility for agents but also actively welcome their engagement.

The Bright Edge: Leading the AI and Agentic Revolution

As AI agents reshape how people discover content online, it's no longer enough to optimize for traditional search engines. Brands need to understand how these new systems search, interpret, and rank their specific websites.

## The Opportunity in AI Recommendation Patterns

Additional analysis shows that AI recommendations can vary by 15-45% week-to-week.

- This volatility tells an important story.

- AI platforms are constantly re-evaluating content to serve users the best possible answers. The brands that maintain consistent visibility aren't chasing every fluctuation—they're building on solid SEO fundamentals that AI systems inherently value.

Think of it this way: the volatility represents AI platforms testing and learning. But beneath these variations, certain brands maintain strong baseline visibility because they consistently deliver what AI agents need: fast-loading pages, comprehensive content, clear structure, and authoritative signals.

The peaks and valleys in the chart aren't random—they reflect how well brands meet these core criteria during each crawling cycle. – *See Chart on the next page.*

The Opportunity in AI Recommendation Patterns

Week-to-Week Volatility in AI Recommendations
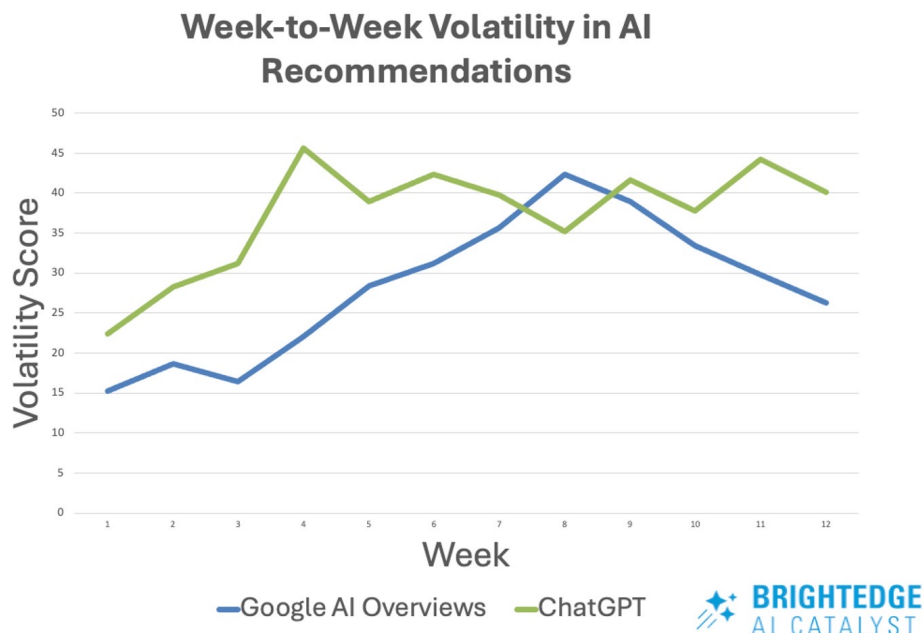
With BrightEdge AI Catalyst, marketers gain deep, site-specific insights into how AI engines and agents interact with their content. The platform provides real-time visibility into what AI sees and what it doesn't, offering clear guidance to improve discovery, resolve issues that hinder indexing, and drive better results in an agent-led world.

AI Catalyst Has You Covered to Optimize Once and Rank Everywhere

1. Track your AI and Brand Presence Across Multiple AI Engines

See how your visibility evolves over time through citations and mentions. Monitor your presence and agentic AI visibility across AI Overviews, ChatGPT, and beyond.

2. Understand Variations in Brand Mentions Across Key Prompts

Quickly identify which prompts from ChatGPT and AI Overviews - and all types of AI Search Engines – generate brand mentions so you can optimize content efficiently.

3. Dive Deeper into Prompts to See Why AI is Recommending Specific Brands

AI Catalyst's advanced sentiment analysis provides precise insights into which brand attributes each AI Engine favours brand attributes. Concentrate your efforts on these attributes to enhance your recommendations.

See How AI Is Framing Your Brand With AI Catalyst
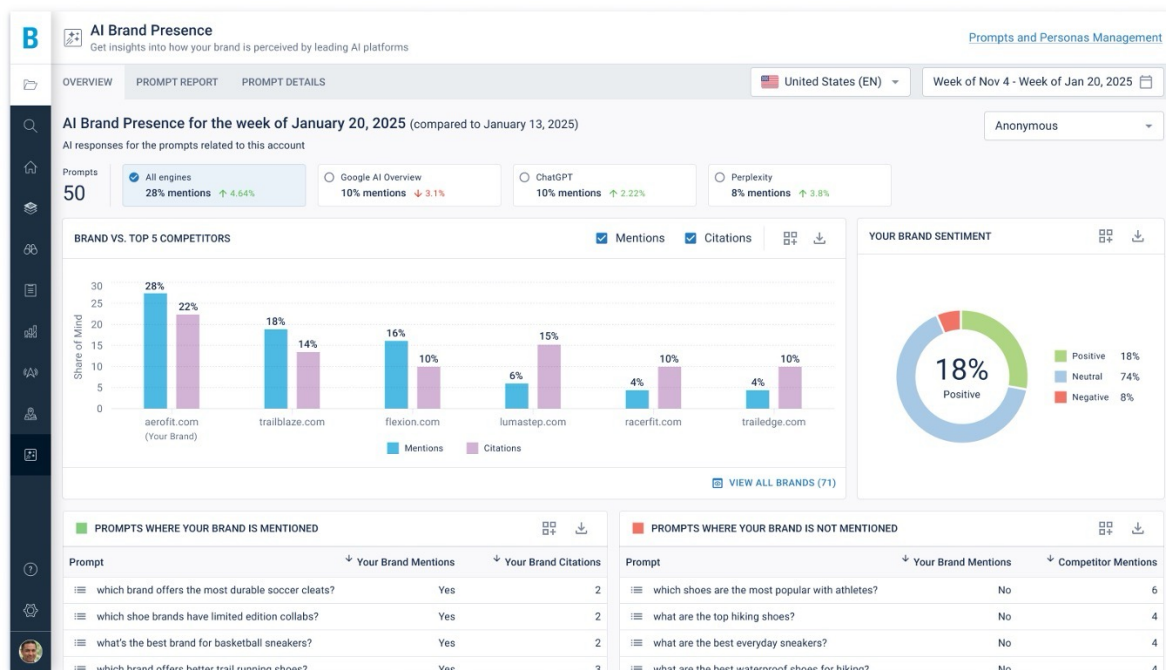
✓ Learn What AI Is Actually Saying About Your Brand

✓ Uncover Prompts That Drive Visibility With BrightEdge Copilot

✓ View and Understand AI Agent Activity and Optimize for Visibility

✓ Track Mentions And Sentiment In Real-Time

✓ Compare Your AI Story Against Competitors

Learn More About AI Catalyst Below

https://www.brightedge.com/ai-catalyst

Further Resources

BrightEdge Blog: From AI search trends to content strategy tips, the blog is where we break down what's happening—and what's next.

Webinar Library: Catch up on our latest webinars—whether you're looking for platform walkthroughs, customer success stories, or strategy sessions with SEO leaders.

Media and News Updates: From mainstream business and technology media - like The Wall Street Journal, The Washington Post, Forbes, BBC News, Wired, and Fortune - to leading search and digital publications such as MediaPost, SearchEngineLand, and SearchEngineJournal – view a blend of coverage, research, insights, and industry thought leadership.