

Two weeks after Reddit's ChatGPT collapse: what replaced it in Education.

Presence went from 17.2% to zero in two weeks. Nothing about the content changed. Reddit changed its robots.txt.

The fall was widely reported. What replaced Reddit in Education citations was not, and half of what moved in did not hold two weeks later.

Two weeks, and a source disappeared

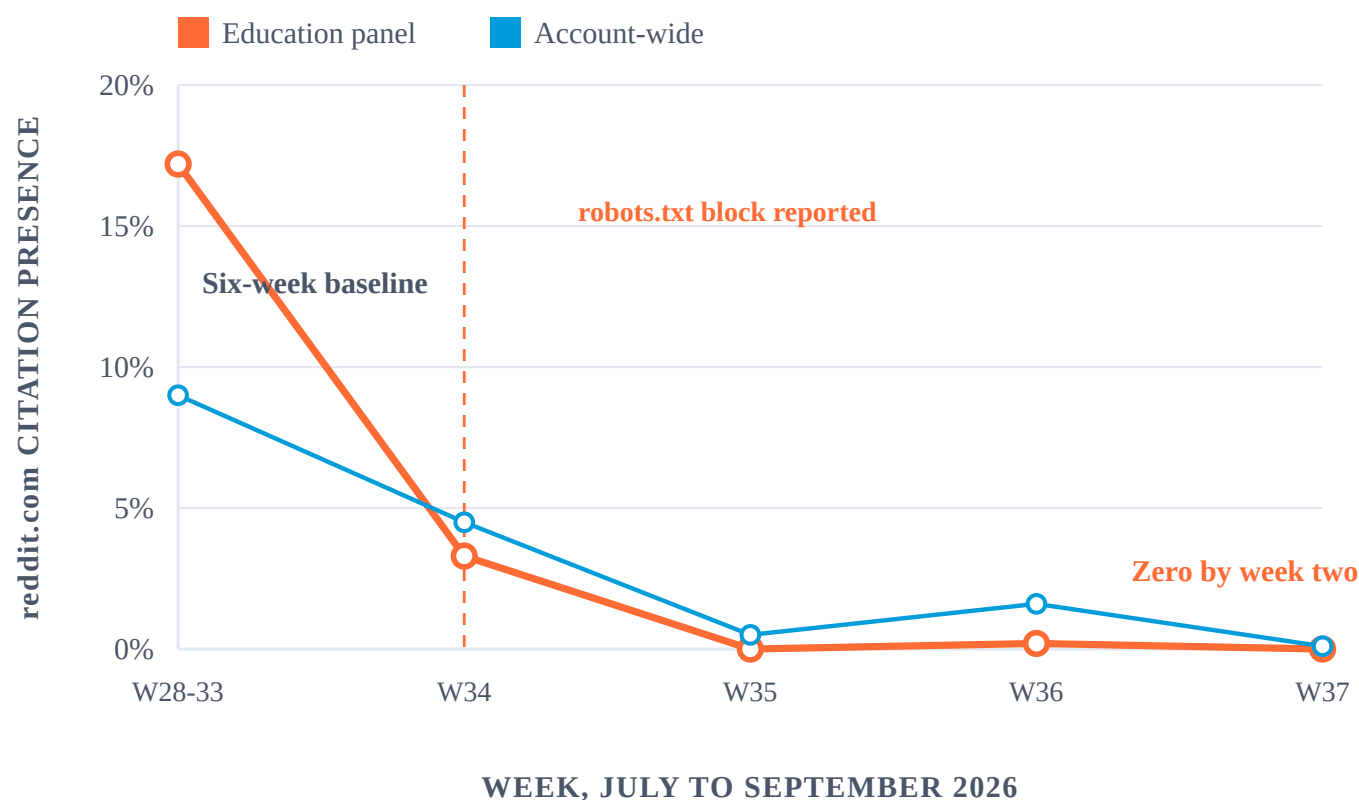


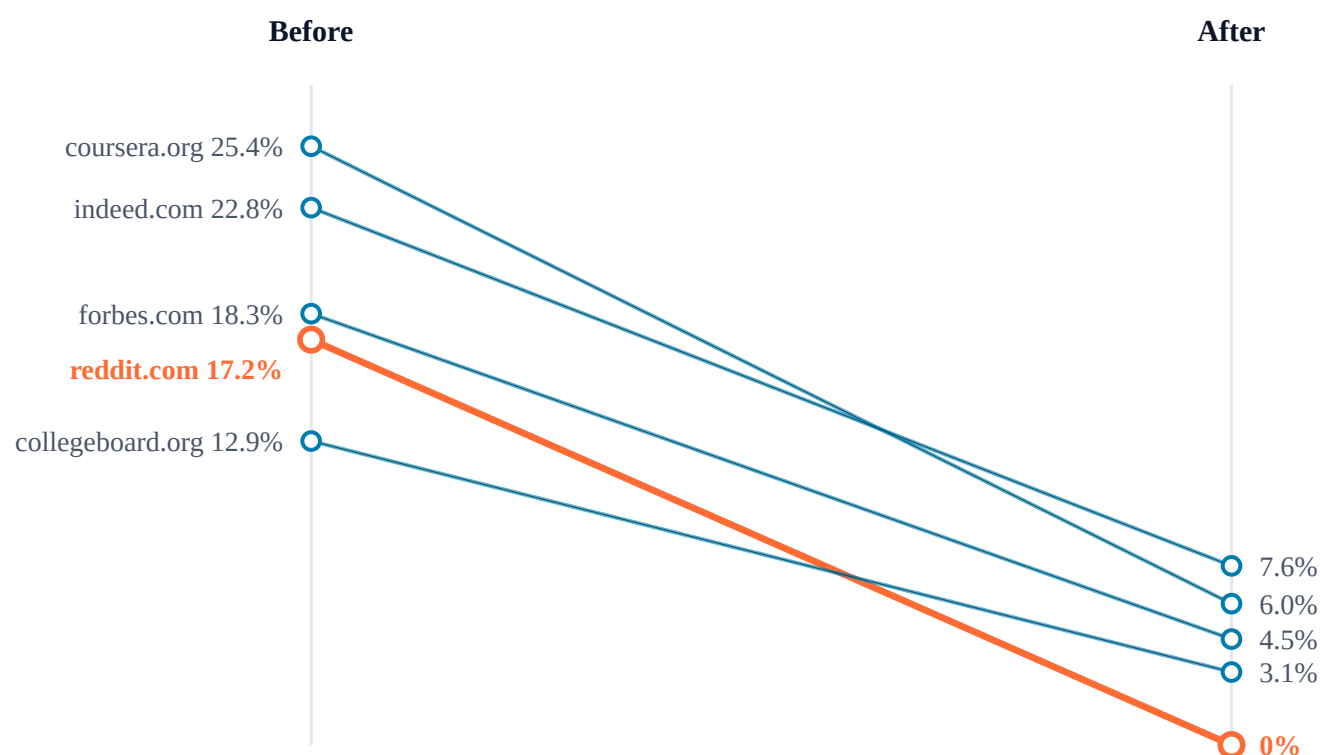
Figure 1. reddit.com citation presence in ChatGPT by week, a tracked Education prompt panel against the same measure account-wide. Vertical axis shows citation presence. Horizontal axis shows the week. Plotted as absolute presence, never indexed. The dashed line marks the week the robots.txt block was reported.

Source: BrightEdge AI Catalyst. ChatGPT only, a fixed weekly panel of tracked Education prompts, United States. Citation presence is the share of tracked prompts citing the domain at least once, not share of citation volume.

The same fall showed up account-wide in our own tracked set, from about 9% to 0.5% presence. Google AI Overviews fell about 11% and AI Mode about 31%, so this was a ChatGPT-specific cliff.

This series has been tracking Reddit's presence in AI citations closely, including an edition on 13 August covering Reddit's rise in search visibility. What follows is what happened in the two weeks after.

Reddit did not fall on its own



Citation presence, share of tracked prompts citing the domain

Figure 2. Citation presence before the collapse against after, for the domains that receded. reddit.com is highlighted. Presence figures sum past 100% across domains because one answer cites several, so this is not a market-share table. Source: BrightEdge AI Catalyst. ChatGPT only, a fixed weekly panel of tracked Education prompts, United States. Citation presence is the share of tracked prompts citing the domain at least once, not share of citation volume.

Community sources and general commercial publishers receded together. Coursera, Indeed, Forbes and College Board all lost ground across the same two weeks. Reading this as a Reddit story alone misses the shape of it, which is a consolidation toward a narrower set of sources.

Not everything that moved in stayed in

SPIKED, THEN RECEDED

Peaked the week Reddit fell, gone by W37

onetonline.org

+589% citation presence at peak

careeronestop.org

+346% citation presence at peak

Neither held the gain two weeks later.

ENTERED AND HELD

Still in position at W37

- **state.gov**
- **asu.edu**
- **apa.org**
- **aacnnursing.org**

Government, university and professional-association domains.

None of these six appeared in the top fifteen the week before the collapse.

Figure 3. Entrant domains by whether the gain held. Left, the two that spiked hardest in the week of the collapse and receded by week 37. Right, the four that entered and held position.

Source: BrightEdge AI Catalyst. ChatGPT only, a fixed weekly panel of tracked Education prompts, United States. Citation presence is the share of tracked prompts citing the domain at least once, not share of citation volume.

One domain in the new top set did not grow at all. bls.gov was already third before the collapse at 21.2% presence and became first because everything around it fell faster. Rising in a ranking and gaining presence are different events.

Rented visibility, and how to spot it

✓ **Reddit carried a trait the model wanted**

A high citation rate made Reddit a playbook of its own. Teams seeded threads to be cited and treated presence there as the goal. What the model wanted was first-hand, specific, unpolished answers. The trigger was access, not content: presence went from 17.2% to zero in 2 weeks with no warning.

✓ **Build the trait on a domain you control**

This is the work. Replicating what the model rewarded takes original data, named practitioners, and direct experience written down. Publish the material only you have, where no third party's access policy can remove it.

✓ **Wait before crowning a replacement**

The two biggest immediate movers did not hold two weeks later. Both are Department of Labor properties, as institutional as the four that stayed. Domain type alone does not explain durability. Check the second week before rebuilding a strategy on the first.

✓ **Google is still the channel to plan around**

The canonical, specific content that earns organic visibility is also easier for a model to recommend by name. Build it once and it works on both.

KEY TAKEAWAY

Visibility built on a third-party platform is exposed to that platform's access decisions. Build the underlying expertise and canonical content on a domain you control.

CHECK THIS IN YOUR OWN CATEGORY THIS WEEK

Three checks that show whether you were exposed

1

Pull the weekly trend

In AI Catalyst, filter citations to reddit.com and scope to your tracked prompt groups. Look for a steady baseline and then a break. A slope will not show it.

2

Check what gained in the same window

Which domains entered your category's cited set in the same two weeks, and are they durable or just a temporary spike. Then check whether your brand already has a foothold in whatever filled the gap.

3

Compare across engines

In AI Hyper Cube, pull the cited-domain list across your category for the cross-engine view. Google AI Overviews and AI Mode moved far less than ChatGPT here, so a one-engine read will mislead you.

A category where Reddit was never top-five cited will not show a dramatic story. This check is most useful where Reddit already sat near the top, as it did in Education.

[Request a demo](#)