

# New Study: 75% of ChatGPT Users Rely on Traditional Keyword Search to Find Local Services

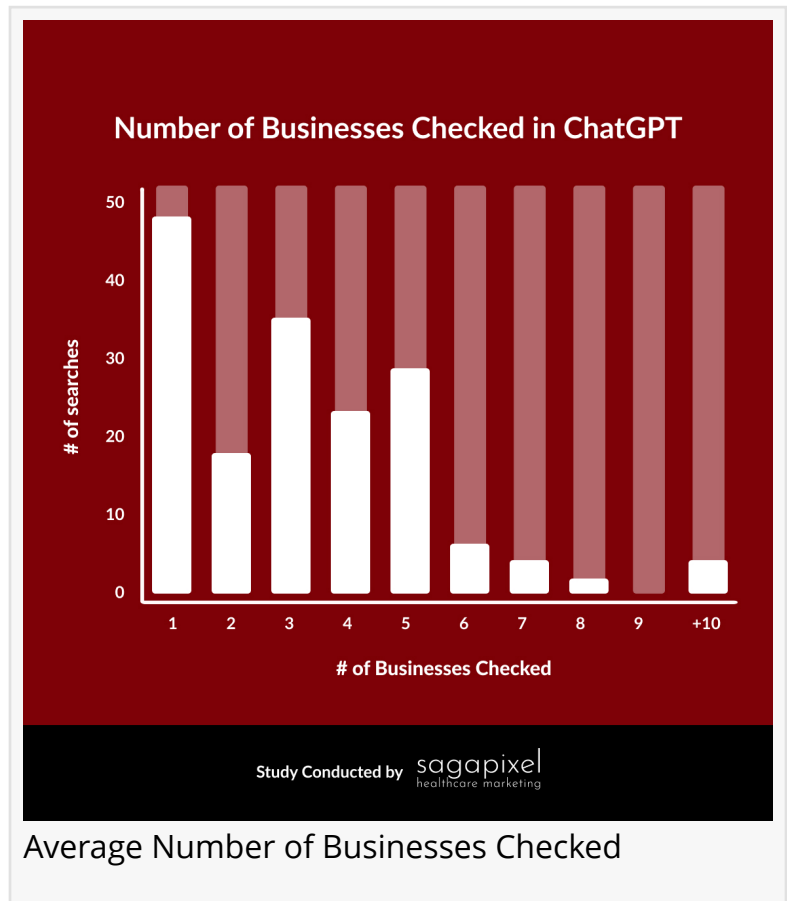
*User behavior study into how people use ChatGPT to find local services contradicts many common assumptions about AI Search.*

CHERRY HILL, NJ, UNITED STATES, February 3, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- A groundbreaking observational [study](#) by Sagapixel, a [healthcare digital marketing agency](#), reveals that the majority of people using ChatGPT to find local service providers still rely on traditional keyword-style queries rather than natural language conversations — challenging the prevailing narrative about [AI search](#) behavior.

While many industry experts have suggested that conversational AI would shift users away from keyword-based search, this study of 54 participants and 177 ChatGPT sessions finds that 75% of users included at least one prompt that resembles a traditional keyword search — for example “dentist near Boston” or “best affordable dentist Manhattan.”

Key Findings from the Study Include:

- **Traditional Keyword Queries Dominate AI Search:** Three-quarters of sessions used keyword-style prompts, indicating that users default to familiar search behavior even within ChatGPT.
- **Short, One-Shot Sessions Are Common:** Nearly 45% of sessions consisted of a single prompt with no follow-up refinement.
- **Multiple Businesses are Considered:** On average, users examined 3.7 different businesses before deciding — demonstrating that appearing in the top 3-5 ChatGPT results can significantly impact visibility and conversions.





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*Frank Olivo*

- Website Click-Through Rates Are Lower Than Expected: Only 39.2% of users visited a business website after receiving ChatGPT recommendations, with many feeling ready to contact providers based solely on the AI’s response.

- Search Attribution Becomes Complex: A notable portion

of users switched to Google after discovering a business via ChatGPT — which may lead to misattributed traffic in analytics.

“These findings challenge assumptions about how customers use AI for transactional queries,” said Frank Olivo, Founder of Sagapixel. “Rather than long natural language conversations, users often default to succinct, keyword-based prompts — underscoring that core SEO principles remain relevant in the age of AI search.”

#### Implications for Businesses and Marketers

The persistence of keyword-like queries in AI search behavior highlights the ongoing importance of traditional local SEO strategies. Businesses that optimize for keywords, maintain accurate online listings, and structure content for local intent are better positioned to appear in AI-generated recommendations and capture new customers.

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