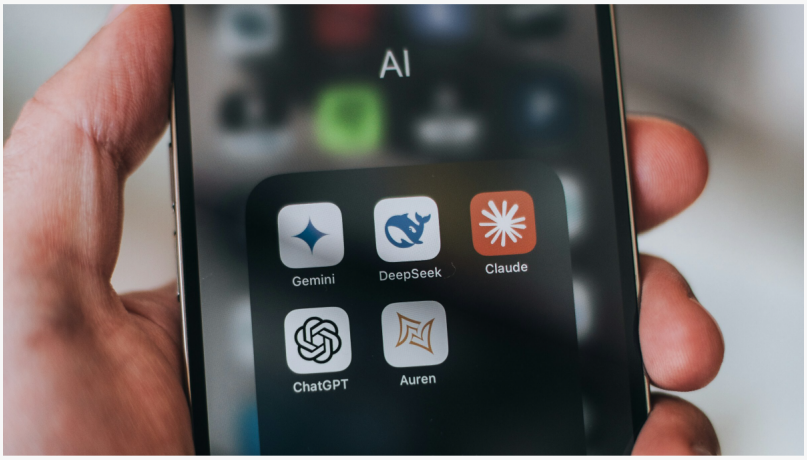
South African AEO and GEO Expert Felix Norton Launches BrandAxis to Make AI Visibility Accessible to Every Brand

SEO Expert and Digital marketing entrepreneur Felix Norton is betting that AI search will become one of the most important new customer acquisition channels



CAPE TOWN, WESTERN CAPE, SOUTH AFRICA, September 15, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- South African digital marketing entrepreneur and AI search specialist Felix Norton has launched BrandAxis, an AI visibility platform designed to help businesses understand, measure and improve how their brands appear in answers generated by ChatGPT, Google AI Overviews, Gemini, Claude and other artificial intelligence platforms.

The launch follows more than three years of research by Norton into Answer Engine Optimisation (AEO), Generative Engine Optimisation (GEO), AI SEO and AI visibility, emerging marketing disciplines focused on influencing how brands are discovered and recommended by artificial intelligence.

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> ”
>
> *Felix Norton*

Norton believes the shift represents one of the biggest changes to online discovery since the rise of Google.

"For the last two decades, brands have obsessed over where they rank on Google. But increasingly, the customer doesn't see ten blue links. They ask an AI a question & receive an answer,” says Norton.

“That changes the game. The question isn't only whether your website ranks anymore. It's whether ChatGPT, Gemini or another AI actually knows who you are, understands what makes

you different and considers your brand worth recommending."

From SEO to AEO and GEO

Norton is the founder of South African digital agency Woww, where his work of over a decade in search marketing increasingly shifted towards understanding how large language models form opinions about companies.

The catalyst came when prospective customers began telling Woww that ChatGPT had recommended the agency.

What initially appeared to be an interesting new source of leads became the starting point for a much broader investigation.

“Once somebody tells you, ‘ChatGPT recommended your company,’ the obvious question is why and how can I make it do that more often!,” Norton explains.

“What information did the AI find? Why did it choose us rather than another agency? Which websites shaped that recommendation? And most importantly, could we understand the process well enough to reproduce it?”

Norton and his team began testing how changes to websites, brand positioning, content, external mentions, citations, authority signals and other digital information affected how brands appeared in AI-generated answers.

The work eventually developed into a dedicated discipline within Woww focused on AI Search Optimisation, Answer Engine Optimisation and Generative Engine Optimisation.

Today Norton is increasingly recognised within South Africa's digital marketing community for his work around AI search and AI visibility, speaking to business leaders, marketers and entrepreneurs about how brands can adapt to a world in which consumers increasingly ask AI systems what to buy, who to trust and which companies to choose.

What is Answer Engine Optimisation?

Answer Engine Optimisation, commonly known as AEO, is the process of improving the likelihood that a person, company, product or piece of information is accurately represented within direct answers generated by search and artificial intelligence systems.

It overlaps significantly with traditional SEO, but the desired outcome is different.

SEO traditionally seeks to earn a website a prominent position in search results.

AEO seeks to make the brand itself part of the answer.

Generative Engine Optimisation, or GEO, applies a similar principle specifically to generative AI platforms and large language models.

The emerging field is also commonly described as AI SEO, AI search optimisation, LLM optimisation and AI visibility.

South African search behaviour already reflects that changing terminology. Keyword data shows monthly South African searches for terms including “answer engine optimisation,” “generative engine optimisation,” “AI SEO South Africa,” “ChatGPT SEO,” “AI SEO agency” and “AI visibility.”

“The industry hasn't agreed on what to call this yet,” Norton says. “AEO, GEO, AI SEO, LLMO — there are a lot of acronyms competing for attention.”

“I prefer AI visibility because it describes the outcome businesses actually care about: when someone asks an AI a commercially important question, does your brand show up, how does it show up, and why?”

BrandAxis turns AI recommendations into measurable data

That question led Norton to co-found BrandAxis with co-founder Freddie O'Donnell a highly successful full stack software engineer and fintech founder.
BrandAxis is an AI search analytics and optimisation platform built specifically around measuring how brands appear inside AI-generated answers.

Rather than simply measuring whether an AI platform sends traffic to a website, BrandAxis repeatedly asks commercially relevant questions across AI engines and analyses the resulting conversations.

Businesses can see whether their brand is mentioned, how prominently it appears, which competitors are recommended, the sentiment associated with each company and the sources being used to formulate those answers.

The platform currently tracks major AI discovery environments including ChatGPT, Google AI Overviews and Perplexity, with additional support for platforms including Gemini, Microsoft Copilot and Google AI Mode.

This allows businesses to move beyond the question of “Are we getting traffic from ChatGPT?” towards the considerably more important question of “What does ChatGPT think about us?”

“Traffic analytics only show you what happened after somebody clicked,” says Norton.

“BrandAxis shows you what happened before the click. Were you considered? Were you recommended? Which competitor beat you? What did the AI say about them that it didn't say about you? And which sources influenced that conclusion?”

Making AI visibility affordable

Norton says one of the barriers preventing businesses from adopting AI search analytics has been cost.

Many early AI visibility platforms were developed primarily for enterprise marketing teams, putting comprehensive tracking outside the reach of SME businesses, agencies and startups.

BrandAxis was built around a different model.

Its paid plans currently start at $19 per month, alongside a free tier for businesses wanting to begin measuring their AI presence.

That puts its entry-level pricing significantly below several established AI visibility platforms, with competing paid products commonly starting at approximately $99 per month.

However that doesn't mean that BrandAxis isn't suitable for enterprise either. Norton explains "BrandAxis was built to be accessible, but we're not afraid of taking a chunk out of the bigger players client base either, we've already been able to acquire enterprise customers and agencies keen to switch from platforms like SEMRush and Ahrefs due to price gouging on an emerging channel."

The company is positioning BrandAxis as one of the most affordable full-featured AI visibility tracking platforms available, with the goal of making AEO and GEO measurement accessible beyond large enterprise marketing departments.

From AI visibility tracking to AI visibility improvement

Norton's longer-term vision for BrandAxis goes beyond monitoring.

The platform is being developed around a simple three-stage question:

How are you showing up? Why are you showing up that way? What should you do next?

BrandAxis measures brand visibility, ranking, sentiment and citations across AI responses, benchmarks those results against competitors, and identifies the sources influencing the answers.

Its next layer focuses on translating that information into recommendations businesses can use to improve their AI visibility.

That distinction is important to Norton.

“Knowing that your competitor is recommended more often than you is valuable insight, but it isn't enough,” he says.

“The real value is being able to explain why they're winning and give the marketer a clear set of actions that can change the result.”

Those actions can include improving brand positioning, clarifying important information on owned websites, strengthening traditional SEO foundations, publishing relevant content, earning authoritative third-party coverage, correcting inconsistent information and increasing credible mentions of the brand across sources that influence AI systems.

AI search is about brands, not just websites

One of Norton's strongest conclusions from his research is that businesses need to think beyond their own website.

Large language models build their understanding of companies using information distributed across the web.

A company may describe itself one way while journalists, review platforms, industry websites, customers and other sources describe it differently.

AI systems have to reconcile those signals.

According to Norton, this makes brand positioning and narrative consistency increasingly important components of modern search strategy.

“Proper positioning is probably the single most important thing businesses can get right for AI search,” Norton says.

“LLMs are trying to understand what you do, who you do it for, what makes you different and whether there is enough evidence to trust that story.”

“Craft that narrative clearly, then make sure the same narrative exists consistently in the places AI looks. That's how you increase the probability of being recommended to the right person.”

This marks a subtle but significant departure from conventional SEO.

“SEO optimised for what people clicked. AI search increasingly optimises for what people ultimately conclude,” Norton says.

“Getting someone to visit your website is valuable. Having the technology they trust tell them that you're one of the best options before they've even visited your website can be much more powerful.”

South African brands have an opportunity to move early

Despite rapid international investment in AI search technology, Norton believes AEO and GEO remain relatively immature disciplines in South Africa.

That creates an opportunity for local brands.

Companies that establish strong entity recognition, authoritative source coverage and consistent positioning before AI search becomes as competitive as traditional Google SEO may establish a significant early advantage.

“We're effectively in the early days SEO, the wild wild web,” Norton says.

“Best practices are still being written, the terminology hasn't settled, the platforms are changing almost weekly and marketers are running experiments to understand what works.”

“That uncertainty creates enormous opportunity for the businesses willing to learn early.”

Norton has increasingly focused his professional work on that opportunity, combining hands-on AI search experimentation through Woww Digital with the large-scale measurement capabilities being developed through BrandAxis.

His work explores not simply how to generate more AI mentions, but how organisations can systematically influence the information environment from which AI systems form conclusions.

About Felix Norton

Felix Norton is a South African AI search, AEO, GEO and AI visibility expert, digital marketing entrepreneur, founder of Woww Digital and co-founder of BrandAxis.

His work focuses on understanding how large language models discover, interpret and recommend brands, and how companies can systematically improve their visibility across platforms including ChatGPT, Google AI, Gemini and Claude..

Through his research, speaking, consulting and software development, Norton has become an

active voice in the emerging fields of Answer Engine Optimisation, Generative Engine Optimisation, AI SEO and AI visibility in South Africa.

About BrandAxis

BrandAxis is an AI search analytics and visibility platform that helps organizations measure, understand and improve how their brands appear in AI-generated answers.

The platform tracks brand visibility, position, sentiment, competitors and the sources influencing AI responses, helping marketers understand not only whether their brands appear in AI search but why.

BrandAxis offers a free tier, with paid plans currently starting from $19 per month and a soon to be released Pay-As-You-Go model for true scaling potential for growing brands and agencies requiring flexibility.

Visit brandaxis.ai for more information.

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