Cision Report Reveals the Consumer Trends Hidden Between Search, Social, and AI

Drawing on an analysis of more than 564 million social media posts and thousands of search queries and AI prompts, the report explores what brands miss when signals tell different stories

CHICAGO, Nov. 9, 2026 /PRNewswire/ -- Cision, a global leader in consumer and media intelligence, today released *The State of Search and Social 2027*, a new report examining how connecting search, social, and AI insights can help brands better understand consumer interest, identify emerging business opportunities, and make more informed decisions about where to invest.

"Search can show where interest is changing. Social helps explain why. And AI answers reveal the narrative reaching consumers. Connecting those perspectives helps brands understand not just what's happening, but how to respond, and when to act." - Amy Jones, Chief Marketing Officer at Cision

Drawing on more than 564 million social media posts and nearly 5,000 search queries and AI prompts, the report distinguishes passing attention from sustained interest and explores changing consumer perceptions. It also reveals gaps between what consumers discuss and how AI presents brands and topics.

For marketing and communications teams planning for 2027, the findings highlight why timing matters as much as understanding what is driving consumer attention. Recognizing a trend only after it peaks can mean arriving too late. Connecting signals while interest is building can help brands identify opportunities to act as well as understand when to move and when to change course.

"Some of the most useful consumer insights emerge when you look at the space between channels," said Amy Jones, Chief Marketing Officer at Cision. "Search can show where interest is changing. Social helps explain why. And AI answers reveal the narrative reaching consumers. Connecting those perspectives helps brands understand not just what's happening, but how to respond, and when to act."

Connected signals reveal what's really behind consumer attention

The report examines consumer trends across health and wellness, food and beverages, automotive, AI, and online culture. The findings challenge assumptions that can shape investment decisions, campaign strategy, and reputation management:

- **Interest doesn't equal acceptance.** Search volume for AI-related queries rose 2,400% over four years, while social conversation revealed concerns about the impact of data centers and pushback against AI slop. **The takeaway:** Brands need to understand what is driving curiosity and concern before deciding how to position AI.
- **Trends can evolve rather than disappear.** While initial searches around "maxxing" cooled, social conversations showed the trend taking new forms. Mentions of "whimsymaxxing" grew 917% year over year. **The takeaway:** Looking at search and social together helps brands understand whether attention is fading or shifting into something new.
- **Timing matters as much as staying power.** Dubai chocolate became a viral food trend in 2025, but its search spike faded as fast as it arrived. Matcha is the "always-on" food trend consumers keep coming back to. **The takeaway:** Connecting search and social helps assess both a trend's staying power and the window of opportunity to capitalize on it.
- **AI visibility extends beyond your own website.** In an analysis of AI responses to "best car"-related queries, Toyota led with a 13.8% share of brand mentions. Yet Toyota's own website accounted for only a fraction of the sources cited by large language models (LLMs), compared with more than 4,000 for YouTube. **The takeaway:** Understanding AI visibility requires understanding the third-party sources shaping recommendations.
- **What consumers discuss can differ from what AI emphasizes.** An analysis of magnesium glycinate found that stress relief dominated social discussions of its benefits, while AI responses emphasized bone support and cardiometabolic support. **The takeaway:** Brands need to understand not only what consumers discuss, but also how AI platforms frame a topic when answering questions about it.

What AI answers mean for brand visibility and consumer demand

Brands need to understand not only what audiences are saying and searching for, but what information they encounter in AI answers as well. In the automotive analysis, the most-cited sources were YouTube creators, editorial brands, and individual journalists, not the carmakers themselves. The coverage, reviews, and community conversation a brand earns are now the raw material for the answers its buyers receive. Connecting those perspectives helps teams identify unmet needs, understand potential barriers to purchase, and make better decisions about where to invest and how to communicate.

Move beyond tracking attention to understanding it

The report includes five questions to help teams connect what people search for, what they discuss on social, and how AI answers frame a topic. Teams that continue to measure these signals separately will increasingly misunderstand what consumers are asking, discussing, and being told. Connecting them helps identify gaps in understanding and make more informed campaign, investment, and communication decisions.

Download *The State of Search and Social 2027* to read the full report and explore the findings.

Learn more about how Cision connects intelligence across media, social, search, and AI visibility.

About the research

The report draws on Brandwatch Consumer Research and Trajaan data covering 564.61 million social media posts and 4,678 search queries and AI prompts, with a primary research period of August 2025 to August 2026. Selected analyses use longer historical periods and examine AI-generated responses to provide additional context. Individual charts specify the relevant date ranges.

About Cision

Cision is the global leader in consumer and media intelligence, engagement, and communication solutions. We equip PR and corporate communications, marketing, and social media professionals with the tools they need to excel in today's data-driven world.

Our deep expertise, exclusive data partnerships, and award-winning products, including **Trajaan**, **Brandwatch**, **CisionOne**, and **PR Newswire**, bring together signals from search, social, and media so teams can better understand what's happening, shape the conversation, and amplify their impact.

Over 75,000 companies and organizations, including 84% of the Fortune 500, rely on Cision to make better decisions and achieve their goals.

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