

Key Trends Reshaping Search

Conversational Search as the Interface

Users now ask complex, natural-language questions to AI agents. This is transforming search engines into answer engines, where the ad opportunity sits inside or adjacent to summaries.



New Monetization Models

AI-native search platforms are experimenting with sponsored answers, contextual commerce recommendations, and hybrid subscription+ad models.



Contextual & Semantic Targeting

As identity-based targeting declines, AI systems that infer user intent and context are becoming central to ad placement strategies.



Generative Engine Optimization (GEO)

Just as SEO evolved for traditional search, GEO focuses on optimizing how AI engines reference and cite brands in generated answers.



Measurement & Attribution Shifts

The classic “click–landing page–conversion” journey is fragmenting. AI may deliver answers or close transactions within the interface itself, demanding new attribution methods.



Opportunity Areas for Advertisers

Area	Why it Matters	Example
AI-Native Ad Serving	Reaches users inside conversational flows	- Sponsored Answers (e.g. Perplexity or Brave) - Google AI Mode (ads in AI Overviews) - Microsoft Copilot Ads (ads in conversational answers)
Generative Ad Creative	Scales personalization beyond keywords	- Tailored ad text or visuals per query - Rembrand (dynamic visuals per query) - Google Automatically Created Assets for RSAs - Microsoft Copilot generating headlines, descriptions, and images
Conversational Ads	Deepens engagement within the search experience	- Dappier’s interactive Q&A ad units - Microsoft Conversational Ads (search + chat extensions) - Google Ads Q&A ad experiments within AI Mode
GEO & Semantic Optimization	Improves brand inclusion in AI answers	- Profound’s GEO monitoring tools - Structured data optimization for inclusion in Google AI Overviews
Contextual Targeting	Works without cookies or identity tracking	- Classify.ai contextual targeting engine - Brave Search contextual ads - Microsoft Audience Network context-based targeting
Measurement Innovation	Matches AI-mediated paths to business outcomes	- Share-of-answer metrics in GEO tools - Google Ads Insights & Attribution (ad impact in AI Mode)

What “Winning” in AI Search Advertising Looks Like

The winners in this space will likely have five key attributes:

Native Integration	High Relevant and Trust	Closed-loop measurement	Cross-platform scale	Transparency and Privacy Compliance
Ads and brand mentions feel like part of the conversational flow.	Messages align closely with user intent.	Advertisers can link exposure, conversation, and conversion.	Campaigns can run across multiple AI search surfaces efficiently.	Particularly crucial in Canada’s regulatory environment.

How to Get Started

- 1 Audit your current search footprint beyond Google and Microsoft.
- 2 Experiment with one emerging platform (e.g., Perplexity sponsorships or Brave contextual).
- 3 Integrate GEO and structured content to boost brand visibility in answers.
- 4 Rethink attribution for conversational journeys.
- 5 Maintain dual strategies: optimize core platforms today, test future ecosystems in parallel.

Canada Implication



- Bilingual and regional variation require careful creative setup.
- Canada’s diverse search behaviours make it a natural testing ground for new AI-native formats.
- Privacy rules (PIPEDA, provincial regulations) mean contextual and semantic targeting will play a bigger role.