

Information Gain: The Science of Being Citable 2026

Create content with unique value that AI must cite — from original research to proprietary data

40%

Higher citation rate for high-IG content

4

Types of Information Gain to leverage

3x

Citation lift from original research

2026

Year IG became AIO's core signal

Yuliya Halavachova

Founder & Chief AI Officer | UltraScout AI

[linkedin.com/in/yulyaai](https://www.linkedin.com/in/yulyaai) | x.com/YHalavachova

ultrascout.ai

What Is Information Gain?

Information Gain measures how much unique value your content provides beyond common knowledge. It quantifies the difference between what AI already knows and what your content adds. Based on Princeton GEO research, content with high Information Gain has up to 40% higher citation probability than synthesised content that merely rephrases existing sources.

Content Type	Information Gain Level	AI Citation Probability
Original research with proprietary data	Very High — unique facts AI can't find elsewhere	Very High
Expert frameworks with novel methodology	High — unique structure or analysis	High
Primary source interviews and first-hand accounts	High — exclusive access	High
Well-synthesised existing knowledge	Medium — adds clarity but no new facts	Medium
Rephrased common knowledge	Low — AI already knows this	Low
Generic 'what is X?' content	Very Low — widely covered everywhere	Very Low

The 4 Types of Information Gain

- ## 1 Original Research

Conducting surveys, studies, or experiments that generate proprietary data.

 - Industry surveys: 'State of AI Marketing 2026' — 500+ respondents
 - Customer research: 'What 1,000 Buyers Actually Want' — direct primary data
 - Experimental studies: 'We Tested 50 AI Writing Tools' — first-hand comparative
 - Longitudinal research: multi-year trend analysis with proprietary dataset

- ## 2 Proprietary Data

Leveraging your unique position to share insights others cannot access.

 - Customer usage patterns (anonymised aggregate data)
 - Platform performance benchmarks from your own systems
 - Internal success metrics from client work (with permission)
 - Industry benchmarks you can uniquely compile

- ## 3 Expert Insights

Original frameworks, methodologies, or perspectives from recognised experts.

 - Novel frameworks: 'The 5 Pillars of AIO' — an original structure others will reference
 - Expert predictions grounded in deep domain experience
 - First-hand case studies with real, specific data points
 - Unique methodologies documented for the first time

4

Primary Sources

First-hand accounts, interviews, or access that others do not have.

- Interviews with industry leaders (their exact words, not paraphrased)
- Behind-the-scenes access to processes or events
- Documentation of proprietary processes with specific detail
- Real client case studies with actual metrics (with permission)

Creating Original Research on Any Budget

Research Method	Cost	Timeline	AI Citation Value
Online survey (Typeform/SurveyMonkey)	Free–£500	2–4 weeks	High if 100+ responses
LinkedIn poll (quick data point)	Free	1 week	Medium — good for stats
Customer interview series	Staff time only	4–8 weeks	High — rich qualitative
Internal data analysis	Staff time only	1–2 weeks	Very High — unique
Panel study with incentives	£1,000–5,000	4–8 weeks	Very High — rigorous
Third-party research commission	£5,000–50,000	8–16 weeks	Very High — authoritative

Quick win: Even a 50-response LinkedIn poll asking one specific question your industry hasn't answered before counts as original research. "We surveyed 50 marketing directors — here's what they said" creates immediately citable data.

Presenting Research for Maximum AI Extractability

- **Lead with the key finding** — state the headline statistic in the first sentence
- **Show methodology transparently** — sample size, date collected, method; this validates the data
- **Provide specific numbers** — '67%' is more citable than 'most'; '£2.3M average' beats 'significant revenue'
- **Include visualisations** — charts with clear labels; AI can reference the data even if it can't see the image
- **Explain the implication** — 'This means X for companies that...' gives AI context for citation
- **Use a memorable name** — 'The UltraScout AI Citation Index' will be referenced by name once established

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: How much data do I need for research to be citable?

Statistical validity matters, but even small studies with clear methodology have high citation value. 100+ survey responses provides a defensible sample. For qualitative research (interviews, case studies), depth matters more than volume. Always disclose sample size — transparency builds credibility.

Q: Can I use data from my own customers as original research?

Yes — with appropriate anonymisation and (ideally) permission. Aggregate data that reveals patterns ('our clients see an average 37% improvement in X') is both ethically sound and highly citable. Never share individual customer data without explicit consent.

Q: How do I make sure my research gets discovered by AI?

Publish it on your website as a dedicated page (not gated behind a form). Use a descriptive title with 'Research', 'Study', or 'Survey' in the headline. Add Article schema with your research methodology. Promote it across LinkedIn, Reddit, and other platforms where AI discovers third-party citations.

About the Author

Yuliya Halavachova

Founder & Chief AI Officer at UltraScout AI

Founder of UltraScout AI with 16+ years in technology spanning research and industry, building enterprise AI solutions with large language models (LLMs). Specialises in GEO, AEO, entity authority, and AI acquisition intelligence.

Connect: [linkedin.com/in/yuliyaaai](https://www.linkedin.com/in/yuliyaaai) | x.com/YHalavachova | ultrascout.ai

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