

The Great Blogging Collapse: What 100 Blogs Tell Us About Surviving AI Search

by Daniel Stanica

Growth Advisor for Digital Businesses
[Competico.com](https://competico.com)



About me: 21 Years Online

2005 · I built. PHP dev → first global communities & info-products

2014 · I scaled. SEO agency + a portfolio of 5 media brands

2023 · I watched it break due to HCU and AI Overviews.

Now: AI Visibility advisory + The Great Blogging Collapse study

The playbook that worked for 18 years stopped working. I will show you what replaced it.

What my 100-blog study revealed about SEO

Everything I'm about to show you comes from a cohort study I ran on 100 content sites over four years.



Rand Fishkin • Following
Co-author of Zero Click Marketing (preorder now!), founder of SparkToro, ...
5d •

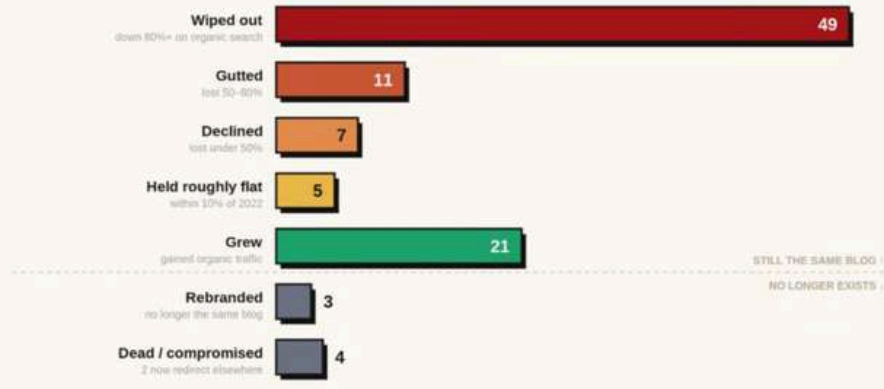
NEW Research: an analysis of 100 highly successful blogs from 2022, and their relative successes/failures over the past 4 years was published by Daniel Stanica last week. The findings:

- 1) The median blog lost 85% of its traffic
- 2) Five out of the nine categories analyzed lost 90%+ of their traffic
- 3) Firsthand experience, owned audience, and real product were the top predictors of the handful of sites that didn't lose traffic

It's a damn depressing report overall, and I'm fearful that even these few survivors don't have long in Google's Zero-Click Era, but definitely worth a read.

What happened to 100 "successful" blogs

Each one was celebrated in a 2022 "blogger income" roundup. Four years later:
Sorted by what actually happened - organic search traffic, April 2022 - April 2026



Category	Count
Wiped out	49
Guttled	11
Declined	7
Held roughly flat	5
Grew	21
Rebranded	3
Dead / compromised	4

64 of 100 were gutted, wiped out, or dead.
Two-thirds lost more than half their search traffic.

-85% median traffic loss.
Not the worst case. The typical one.

Nine of these blogs changed hands; each is counted by the organic traffic it actually had under its new owner, not by the sale.

THE INCOME REPORT INDEX · 100 blogs · 2022-2026

danielstanica.com



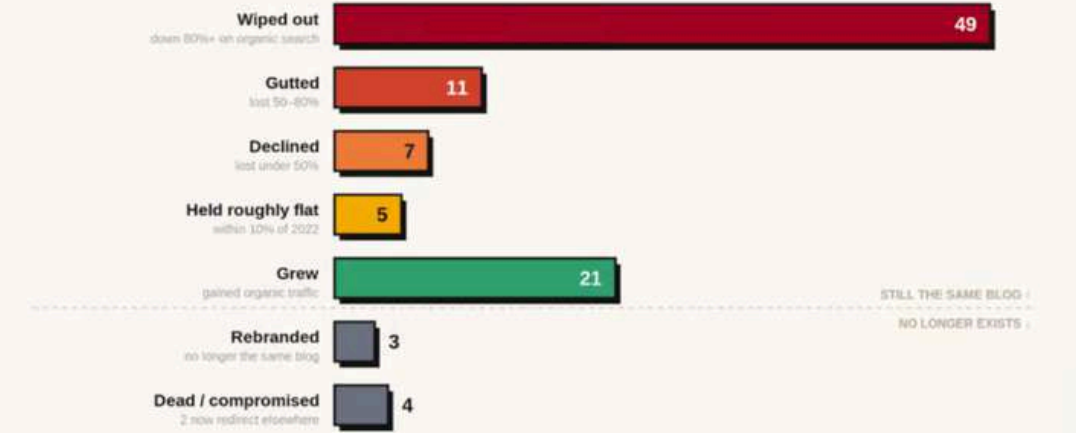
Cyrus SEO • @CyrusShepard · 30 Jun
SEO research of the week: The Great Blogging Collapse

[@danielstanica10](#) analyzed 100 blogs over 4 years + tracked the aftermath of Google's HCU and AI Overviews

85% lost Google traffic, 11 were gutted, but interestingly, a few actually grew. That's where the lesson is 🍌🍌🍌

What happened to 100 "successful" blogs

Each one was celebrated in a 2022 "blogger income" roundup. Four years later:
Sorted by what actually happened - organic search traffic, April 2022 - April 2026



Category	Count
Wiped out	49
Guttled	11
Declined	7
Held roughly flat	5
Grew	21
Rebranded	3
Dead / compromised	4

64 of 100 were gutted, wiped out, or dead.
Two-thirds lost more than half their search traffic.

-85% median traffic loss.
Not the worst case. The typical one.

Nine of these blogs changed hands; each is counted by the organic traffic it actually had under its new owner, not by the sale.

THE INCOME REPORT INDEX · 100 blogs · 2022-2026

danielstanica.com

20

28

176

16K



Olivier Sauvage @Capitaine · 2 Jul
Translated from French [Show original](#)

Are Blogs Dead?

The expert [@danielstanica10](#) just published a very in-depth article (blog post) that reveals the carnage.

Out of a top 100 blogs, more than 64 are dead or wiped out. In just under 4 years.

But hold on!

It's important to really understand.

The blogs he's [Show more](#)



2026 : les blogs sont morts, vivent les blogs ! - OlivierSauvage.com

From oliviersauvage.com

3

6

352

Great Blogging Collapse Study Findings

Blogs Analyzed: 100

Period: 2022 – 2026

Traffic source: Semrush estimate

Monetization: Affiliate, Ads, Paid Posts

Criteria: Blogs making \$5K/mo+

Niches covered: 8

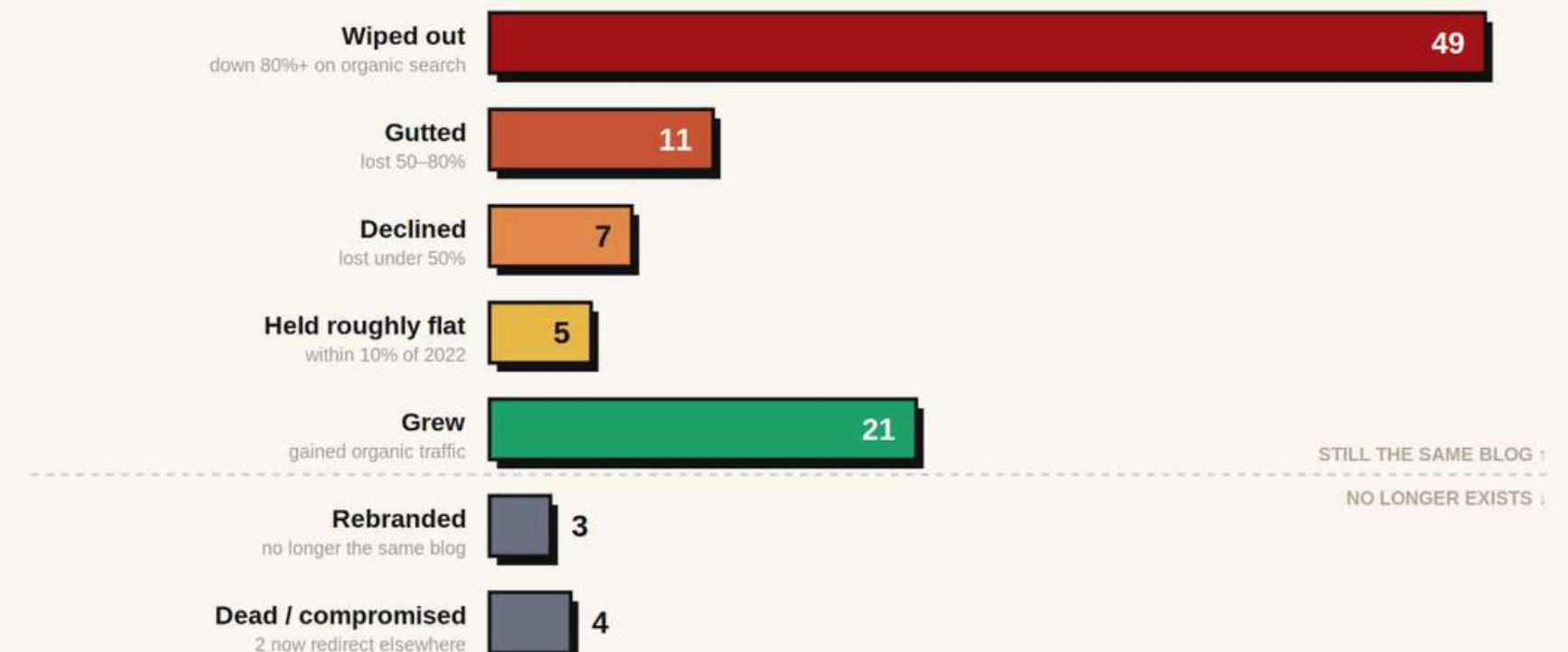
64% of blogs lost more than 50% of organic traffic.

85% is the median organic traffic loss of these sites.

What happened to 100 "successful" blogs

Each one was celebrated in a 2022 "blogger income" roundup. Four years later:

Sorted by what actually happened - organic search traffic, April 2022 – April 2026



64 of 100 were gutted, wiped out, or dead.
Two-thirds lost more than half their search traffic.

–85% median traffic loss.
Not the worst case. The typical one.

Nine of these blogs changed hands; each is counted by the organic traffic it actually had under its new owner, not by the sale.

THE INCOME REPORT INDEX · 100 blogs · 2022–2026

danielstanica.com

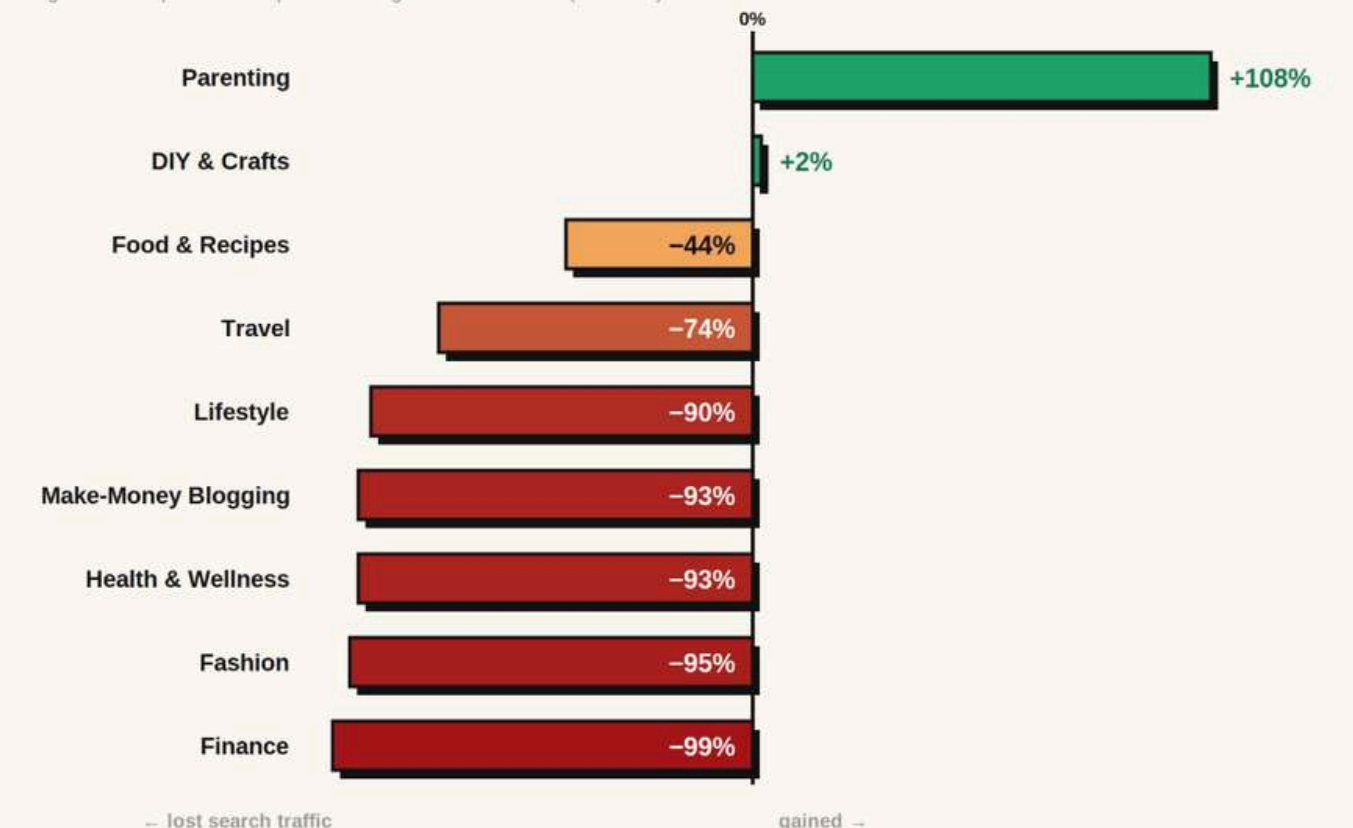
Organic Traffic change 2022 vs 2026

- **Parenting: +108%.**
- **DIY/crafts: +2%.**
- Food: -44%
- Travel: -74%.
- Lifestyle -90%.
- Entrepreneurship / Blogging -93%
- Fashion -95%.
- Finance -99%.

Median organic traffic change, by niche

Niches where the content is something you *do* held up. Niches that only describe collapsed.

100 monetized blogs tracked April 2022 – April 2026 · organic search traffic (Semrush)



— lost search traffic gained —
Parenting and DIY medians reflect small surviving blogs rebuilding from low traffic bases; the largest sites in every niche still declined.

THE INCOME REPORT INDEX · 100 blogs · 2022–2026

danielstanica.com

What blog niches collapsed

BLOG IDENTITY			SEO TRAFFIC			RATIOS & TRAJECTORY			
Blog Name	Blog URL	Niche Category	SEO Traffic Apr 2022	SEO Traffic Apr 2026	SEO Δ%	SEO Share 2022	SEO Share 2026	SEO Traffic Trajectory	Total Traffic Trajectory
Kate Kordsmeier	https://katekordsmeier.com	Lifestyle & Fashion	874	0	-100.0%	14%	0%	× Collapsed	× Collapsed
MirandaNahmias.com	https://www.mirandanahmias.com	Blogging & Online	150	0	-100.0%	2%	0%	× Collapsed	× Collapsed
Whitehat Blogging	https://whitehatblogging.com	Blogging & Online	300	0	-100.0%	3%		× Collapsed	× Collapsed
Fishing Munk	https://fishingmunk.com	Other	8,200	0	-100.0%	55%		× Collapsed	× Collapsed
High Five Dad	https://www.highfivedad.com	Parenting	941	0	-100.0%	6%	0%	× Collapsed	× Collapsed
Unconventional Prosperity	https://www.unconventionalprosperity.com	Finance	500	0	-100.0%	3%	0%	× Collapsed	× Collapsed
Fit Mommy in Heels	https://fitmommyinheels.com	Lifestyle & Fashion	61,300	0	-100.0%	94%	0%	× Collapsed	× Collapsed
KaylaSloan.com	https://kaylasloan.com	Finance	9,000	0	-100.0%	12%		× Collapsed	× Collapsed
Matthew Woodward	https://www.matthewwoodward.co.uk	Blogging & Online	35,000	0	-100.0%	35%		× Collapsed	× Collapsed
This Online World	https://thisonlineworld.com	Finance	120,000	15	-100.0%	80%	0%	× Collapsed	× Collapsed
Making a Millennial Millionaire	https://www.makingamillennialmillionaire.com	Finance	1,500	3	-99.8%	42%	100%	× Collapsed	× Collapsed
Well Kept Wallet	https://wellkeptwallet.com	Finance	300,000	619	-99.8%	79%	1%	× Collapsed	× Collapsed
The Savvy Couple	https://thesavvycouple.com	Finance	100,000	255	-99.7%	50%	0%	× Collapsed	▼ Declining
Juicing for Health	https://juicing-for-health.com	Food & Recipes	29,300	76	-99.7%	85%	1%	× Collapsed	× Collapsed
One Hour Professor	https://onehourprofessor.com	Blogging & Online	70,000	191	-99.7%	28%	0%	× Collapsed	× Collapsed
The Money Ninja	https://themoneyninja.com	Finance	25,000	85	-99.7%	25%	0%	× Collapsed	▼ Declining
Swift Salary	https://www.swiftsalary.com	Finance	10,000	83	-99.2%	13%	0%	× Collapsed	▼ Declining
Sadie Smiley	https://sadiesmiley.com	Finance	3,500	36	-99.0%	6%	9%	× Collapsed	× Collapsed
New Middle Class Dad	https://newmiddleclassdad.com	Finance	35,700	392	-98.9%	48%	5%	× Collapsed	× Collapsed
Project Financially Free	https://www.projectfinanciallyfree.com	Finance	14,520	167	-98.8%	61%	2%	× Collapsed	▼ Declining
AdamEnfroy.com	https://adamenfroy.com	Blogging & Online	320,000	3,800	-98.8%	53%	60%	× Collapsed	× Collapsed
Authority Hacker	https://authorityhacker.com	Blogging & Online	282,600	3,400	-98.8%	56%	8%	× Collapsed	× Collapsed

Niches that were hit hardest: Blogging, Entrepreneurship, Finance, Fashion

Why these blogs collapsed?

✗ 1. Weak business model: Monetize traffic with ads or affiliate marketing

✗ 2. Their content was replaceable or summarizable by AI

✗ 3. No proof of real experience

✗ 4. No owned audience /community only renting traffic from Google

✗ 5. No brand people search for

✗ 6. No product or service behind the content

What blogs niches survived and thrived

Blog Name	Blog URL	Niche Category	SEO Traffic Apr 2022	SEO Traffic Apr 2026	SEO Δ%	SEO Share 2022	SEO Share 2026	SEO Traffic Trajectory
Chelsea Joy Eats	https://www.chelseajoyeats.com	Food & Recipes	4,528	6,600	45.8%	96%	51%	▲ Growing
The Realistic Mama	https://www.therealisticmama.com	Parenting	2,300	21,300	826.1%	31%	58%	▲ Growing
Lifestyle with Leah	https://www.lifestylewithleah.com	Parenting	302	3,100	926.5%	4%	30%	▲ Growing
Minimize My Mess	https://minimizemymess.com	Lifestyle & Fashion	1,600	40,400	2425.0%	20%	27%	▲ Growing
Mom Beach	https://www.mombeach.com	Parenting	3,300	9,500	187.9%	38%	56%	▲ Growing
Another Mommy Blogger	https://anothermommyblogger.com	Parenting	82	4,800	5753.7%	1%	14%	▲ Growing
Cassie Scroggins	https://www.cassiescroggins.com	Parenting	3,600	21,700	502.8%	35%	65%	▲ Growing
Living The Dream	https://www.livingthedreamrtw.com	Travel	8,800	10,700	21.6%	62%	47%	▲ Growing
Bee Money Savvy	https://www.beemoneysavvy.com	Finance	1,000	2,800	180.0%	3%	45%	▲ Growing
The Fiery Vegetarian	https://www.thefieryvegetarian.com	Food & Recipes	24,805	80,500	224.5%	55%	41%	▲ Growing
What Mommy Does	https://www.whatmommydoes.com	Parenting	20,200	25,900	28.2%	42%	61%	▲ Growing
Mommy on Purpose	https://mommyonpurpose.com	Parenting	23,100	27,100	17.3%	38%	37%	▲ Growing
Stephanies Sweets	https://stephaniessweets.com	Food & Recipes	19,400	24,300	25.3%	32%	22%	▲ Growing
SwoodsonSays	https://swoodsonsays.com	DIY & Crafts	14,700	22,700	54.4%	24%	52%	▲ Growing
Believe in a Budget	https://believeinabudget.com	Finance	1,500	2,000	33.3%	2%	19%	▲ Growing
AnnainTheHouse	https://annainthehouse.com	Lifestyle & Fashion	6,200	18,300	195.2%	8%	82%	▲ Growing
Johnny Africa	https://johnnyafrica.com	Travel	36,100	73,500	103.6%	49%	54%	▲ Growing
It's a Lovely Life	https://itsalovelylife.com	Travel	1,500	3,200	113.3%	2%	24%	▲ Growing
Crochet365Knittoo	https://www.crochet365knittoo.com	DIY & Crafts	30,300	128,400	323.8%	9%	35%	▲ Growing
Kitchen Sanctuary	https://www.kitchensanctuary.com	Food & Recipes	950,000	2,400,000	152.6%	67%	75%	▲ Growing
PinchOfYum	https://pinchofyum.com	Food & Recipes	1,300,000	2,200,000	69.2%	45%	55%	▲ Growing

Niches where most blogs survived: Parenting, Food & Recipes, DIY & Crafts, Travel

What the SEO Survivors Have in Common

The websites that maintained or grew their organic traffic shared 4 traits, non-exclusively: offering first-hand experience content, having an established brand, an owned audience, and real products (not only content)

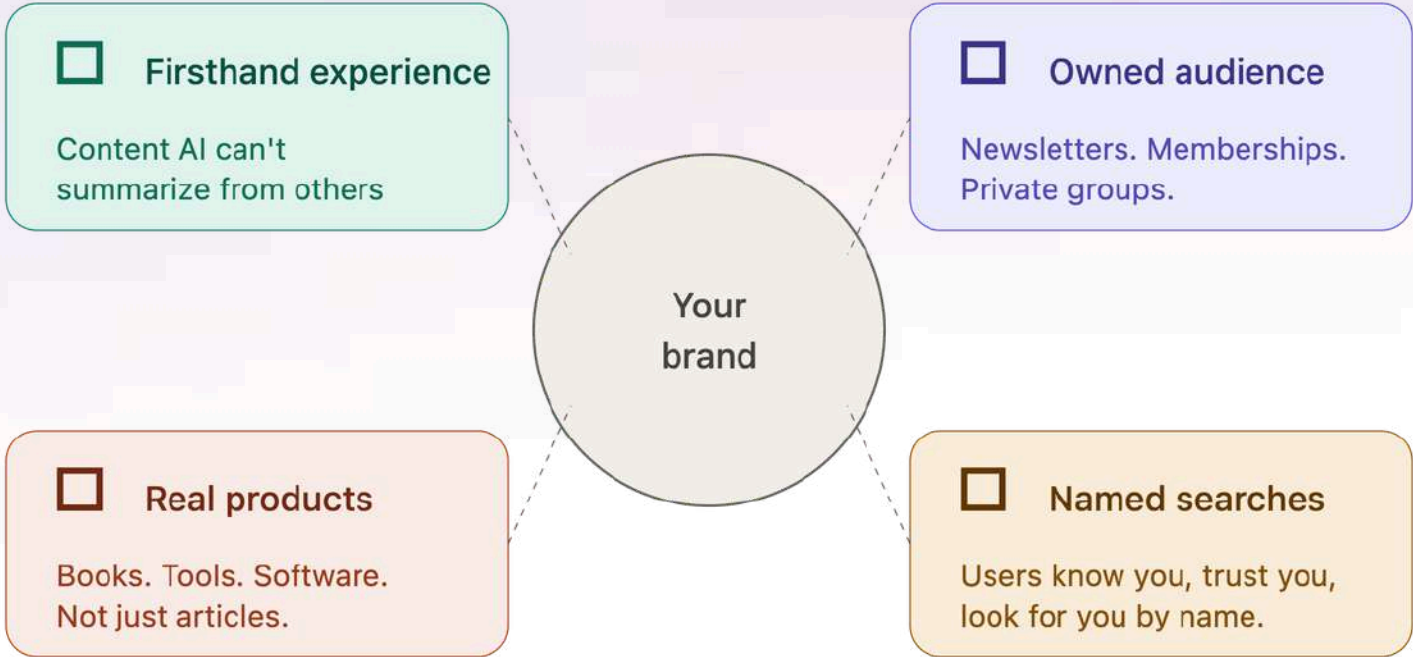
The survivor's scorecard

Every blog that survived clears at least two of these. The ones that thrived clear three or four. Score your own.

	Firsthand experience <small>you made / tested / went</small>	Owned audience <small>email, community, social</small>	Real product <small>book, tool, course, goods</small>	Brand search <small>people search your name</small>	Score
Kitchen Sanctuary <small>2 cookbooks, Sunday Times bestseller</small>	☒	☒	☒	☒	4/4
Pinch of Yum <small>Food Blogger Pro + cookbook</small>	☒	☒	☒	☒	4/4
Crochet365Knittoo <small>pattern shop + active community</small>	☒	☒	☒	☐	3/4
Living The Dream <small>transparent income reports, loyal readers</small>	☒	☒	☐	☐	2/4
YOUR SITE	☐	☐	☐	☐	

The new moat is irreplaceability

Four traits AI cannot generate, aggregate, or intercept



Scale-and-rank is over. Irreplaceability wins.

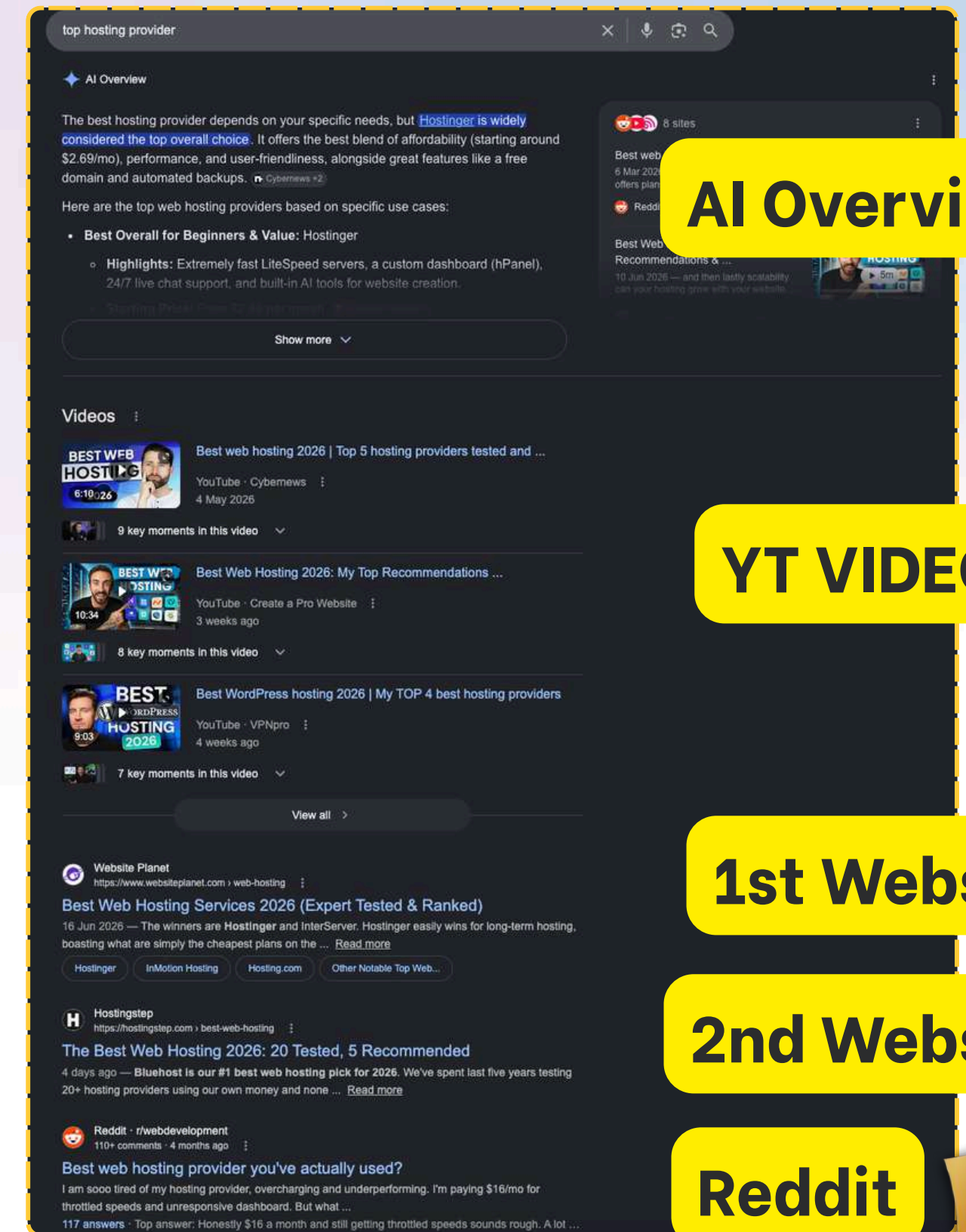
How Google Search Changed: The New SERP

AI Overviews appear on 80% of total queries and 83% of branded queries. (Oct 26, Semrush)

68.01% of Google searches ended without a click (June 2026, Sparktoro)

On average, LLM visitors convert 4.4x better than organic search visitors (Semrush).

Source: seroundtable.com/over-80-of-google-searches-have-ai-overviews-42372.html



What kind of content does Google now reward

1. First-hand experience over commodity information ✓

✗ If an AI could summarize it from other sources, then it doesn't need it

2. Bring something new or from a different perspective ✓

✗ Rewriting or compilling what already ranks is now filtered out.

3. Real authors with real, proven expertise ✓

✗ Ghost authors and invented experts get ignored.

4. Topical depth over topical breadth ✓

✗ Scattered sites lose; focused authorities win.

5. Multi-channel and earned presence ✓

✗ A brand that only exists on its own domain is missing visibility

Your blog isn't dead. The format is.

FROM

TO

Niche Blog



Media Brand

Own the audience (newsletter, community),
diversify traffic, launch products

Company Blog



Expertise Hub

Post original research, case studies,
tutorials

Personal Blog



Expert Brand

Be the source: podcast, speaking,
media mentions, strong opinions

The Framework for recovering a declining blog

1. Audit: find out what's actually left

- **Map the losses page by page** and match them to updates or AI Overviews.
- Identify what still earns traffic, links, citations, and revenue.
- **Check your real assets:** brand searches, email list, returning visitors

2. Consolidate: fewer, stronger pages

- Merge thin and overlapping articles into definitive hubs
- Delete what has no traffic, links, or purpose.

3. Convert: monetize the traffic you have

- Stop chasing volume and start capturing value: email lists, lead magnets, tools, communities
- Turn visitors into an owned audience.

4. Productize: turn the site into an asset

- Package what you know into something Google can't summarize: data products, calculators, directories, courses, paid newsletters, services.
- Build your brand footprint outside Google search: Youtube, Social Media, Newsletters, etc

5 Things To Keep In Mind (Takeaways)

- 1. We will see Fewer clicks, more AI answers (We have to optimize for both)**
- 2.If AI can write it fully, AI will replace it.**
- 3. Own your audience, not just your traffic.**
- 4. Build a brand people search for by name.**
- 5. Content is the marketing, not the entire business.**

Resources to go further

Read & Learn

- **The Great Blogging Collapse Study**
danielstanica.com
- **The AI Search Manual by iPullRank**
ipullrank.com/ai-search-manual
- **SparkToro zero-click research**
sparktoro.com/blog
- **Google: Creating Helpful, People-First Content**
developers.google.com/search

Free Tools

- **Google Search Console:** Branded search lift, indexing
- **Bing Webmaster Tools:** The index behind Microsoft Copilot
- **Skill file :** For content research, creation and distribution
- **Wikidata:** Claim your entity – wikidata.org
- **Microsoft Clarity:** AI referral traffic

Pro Tools

- **Semrush / Ahrefs:** traffic history, lost keywords, and who took your positions
- **GSC Wizard:** real GSC data, to find decaying pages and what changed
- **Screaming Frog:** find thin and overlapping pages to merge, redirect or prune

Q&A

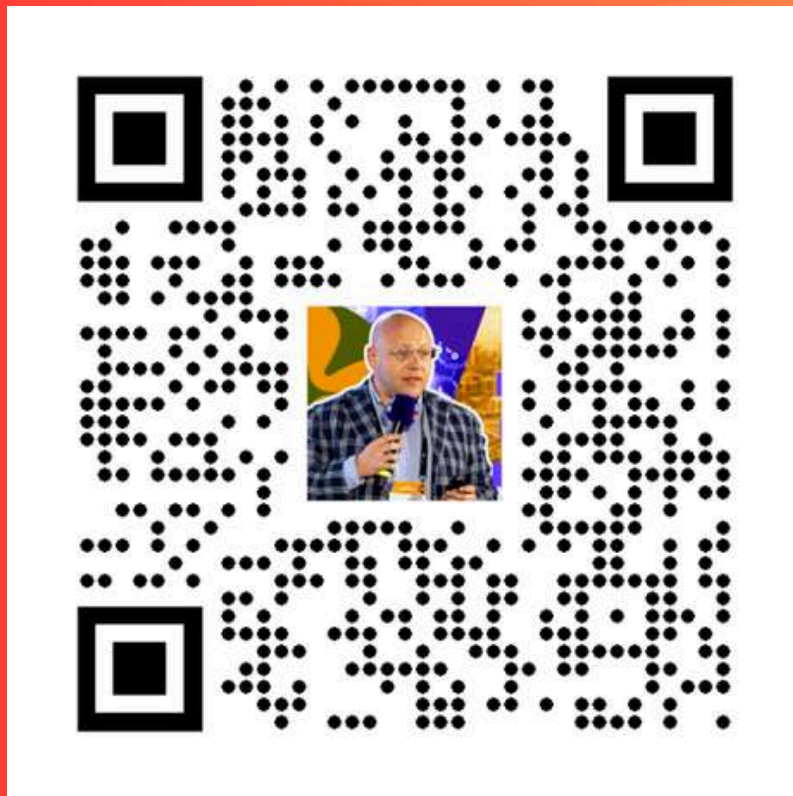
Please ask your questions or let's get the conversation started with the following FAQ:

1. Can a blog that lost 80%+ of its traffic actually recover?
2. Should I keep publishing, or stop and fix what I have?
3. Which niches still work for new blogs in 2026?

Thank you for attending! Let's keep in touch!

Email: hello@danielstanica.com // Web: danielstanica.com

**Scan for slides &
my social profiles:**



**Join the SEO & AI Visibility
Community on Facebook**



**Join the SEO & AI Visibility
Community on Telegram**

