CMS CONF 2026

Daniel Stanica

Content Is Not King Anymore. Your CMS Is

CMS Conf 2026 · 12-14 November · Gdynia, Poland



−85%

The median drop in estimated Google search traffic across 100 established blogs, 2022–2026.

I tracked 100 of them and I will show you what it means for the people owning websites.

“Content is King”, wrote Bill Gates in 1996



Entrepreneur

Bill Gates Said “Content Is King” in 1996. But Is That Still True?

In our saturated, noisy world, “content” is no longer king and has been dethroned by “context.”

BY NEIL GORDON | EDITED BY JESSICA THOMAS | FEB 01, 2022

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LEADERSHIP

Is Content Really Still King?

By Lis Anderson, Forbes Councils Member.
for Forbes Agency Council, COUNCIL POST | Membership (fee-based)

Published Jun 17, 2024, 07:15am EDT

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BETA

Why Content Will Always Be King

By Steve Olenski, Former Contributor.

Published Jun 21, 2017, 03:51pm EDT, Updated Mar 06, 2018, 05:10pm EST

This article is more than 9 years old.

Like it or not content will always be king.
PEXELS.COM

I know, I know, I know. I hate the phrase “content is king” as much as the next person but let’s face it, content – in all its various forms is the definition of the word king “*something preeminent in its class.*”

There are a number of reasons for this. The first is content marketing of course, which is considered the “new black” of marketing. It centers around the customers rather than itself. It attracts people rather than interrupts them, and it’s more about them than it is about you.

Another reason for the rise of content is because media has become democratized. We live in a world where everyone can get involved with it, even though succeeding with it is something else entirely. You can write a blog or record a podcast and video if you have a phone. And whether we like it or not, fake news now has a spot on the table, although it’s definitely not a practice I condone in the slightest.

There are some other strategic reasons why content is always king.

Bill Gates, “Content is King”, essay published on microsoft.com, 3 January 1996

1. I've lived every era of "Content is King"

2005	**I built.** PHP developer, then my first global communities and info-products
2014	**I scaled.** An SEO agency and a portfolio of five media brands on WordPress
2023	**I watched it break,** under Google updates and AI Overviews changes
Now	**I advise.** AI visibility growth for digital businesses

The playbook that worked for me for 18 years no longer works. I'll show you what replaced it.

2. The new SERP: answers skip the click

AI Overviews show on over 80% of tracked Google queries, and on 83% of branded ones

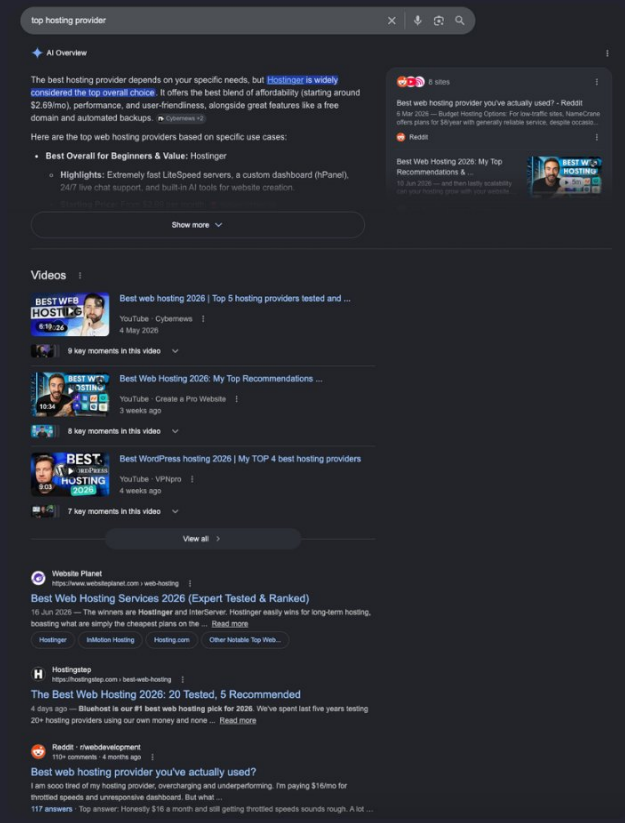
Semrush via SE Roundtable · Ahrefs (US), Oct 2026

68% of US Google searches end without a click

SparkToro / Similarweb, Jan–Apr 2026

Visitors from LLMs convert 4.4× better than visitors from organic search

Semrush, 2025



AI Overview share depends on the keyword set tracked: seoClarity reports about 62%.

3. What happened to 100 successful blogs

Blogs analysed: 100

Period: April 2022 – April 2026

Traffic source: Semrush estimates

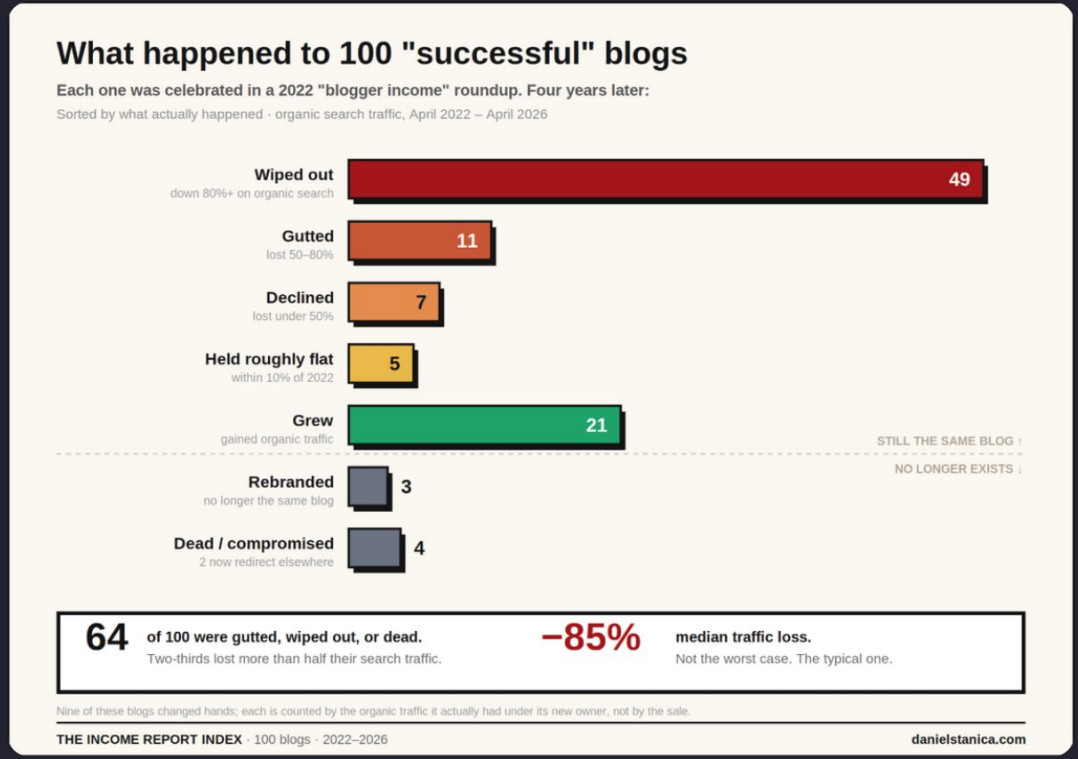
Monetisation: affiliate, ads, paid posts

Criteria: featured in 2022 “six-figure blogger” roundups

Niches covered: 10

64% lost more than half their organic traffic

85% was the median organic traffic loss



Source: The Great Blogging Collapse, danielstanica.com

The split: most collapsed, a few grew

Collapsed · 64 of 100

Blog	Apr '22	Apr '26	Δ
AdamEnfroy	320k	3.8k	−98.8%
Authority Hacker	283k	3.4k	−98.8%
Well Kept Wallet	300k	619	−99.8%
WPLift	58k	917	−98.4%

Grew · 21 of 100

Blog	Apr '22	Apr '26	Δ
PinchOfYum	1.3M	2.2M	+69%
Kitchen Sanctuary	950k	2.4M	+153%
Johnny Africa	36k	74k	+104%
Crochet365K nittoo	30k	128k	+324%

Organic search traffic, Semrush estimates · 8 of 100 blogs shown · Full table: danielstanica.com/posts/Great-Blogging-Collapse

What AI search changed, and why we need a new kind of CMS

	Before: classic search	Now: AI search	What the CMS needs
The query	One keyphrase search	One question, split into many searches at once	Facts and entities stored as data
The result	A ranked list of pages	One synthesized answer, built from several sources	Blocks that make sense on their own
The reader	A person in a browser	A crawler that extract required information	Complete HTML and generated schema
The outcome	A click to your site	A citation, often with no click at all	APIs for machines, citation tracking

Most CMSs were built for classic search.

The evidence: machines read what your CMS outputs

28%

of Googlebot's volume is AI crawlers volume (GPTBot, Claude, AppleBot and PerplexityBot) in one month

No JS

ChatGPT's and Claude's crawlers download JavaScript files but never run them

34%

of ChatGPT's and Claude's fetches hit a 404, often on outdated asset URLs. For Googlebot it was 8%

Rendering, redirects and stable URLs are CMS decisions. No content writer or author controls them.

Source: Vercel and MERJ, "The rise of the AI crawler", December 2024, traffic on Vercel's network

The CMS is the new king.

For years your CMS was backstage work nobody thanked you for. Now it’s the thing that decides if your content is cited, mentioned and recommended by AI.

5. The 5 jobs of a modern CMS, and where most fail

Job	Where some of them fail	The fix
1 · Content Structure	WYSIWYG soup: one body field, page-builder markup	Structured content, broken into blocks
2 · Readable & Controlled	Weak or no schema, JS-only rendering, AI bots blocked by accident	Server-rendered HTML, generated schema, a deliberate bot policy
3 · Usable by agents	No native AI path	A content API and an MCP server
4 · Source of truth	Auto-bumped dates, anonymous authors, conflicting facts	Real revision dates, author entities, one fact in one place
5 · Measure	Pageviews only	AI bot logs, AI referrals, citation tracking

JOB 1 · STRUCTURE

Store meaning, not markup

WYSIWYG soup

```
post_content:
"<h2>Our verdict</h2>
<p>We tested the X200 laptop
for three weeks. Great
battery, loud fan.
4.5/5</p>
<p>Reviewed by: our team</p>"
```

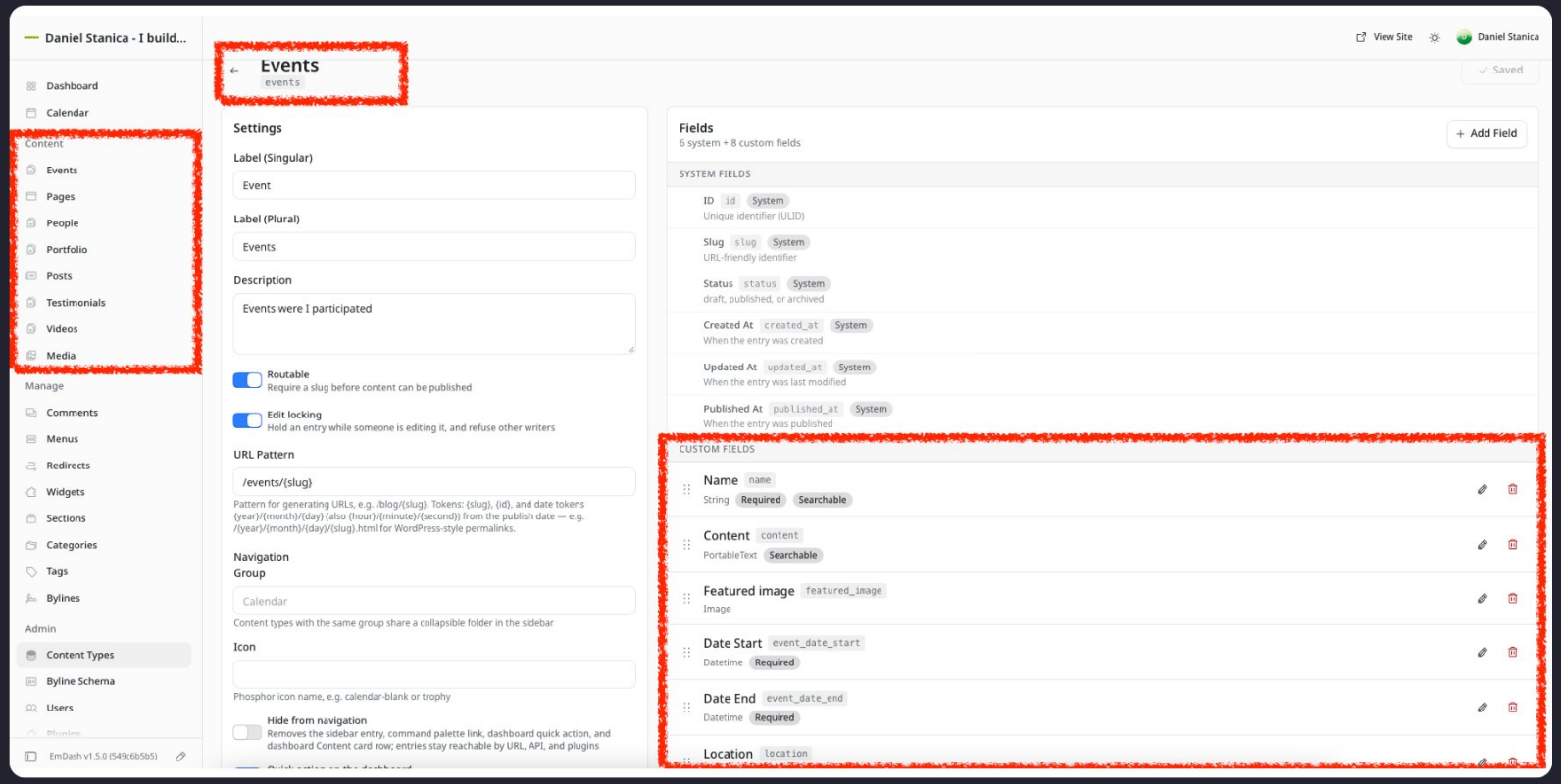
Structured: data a machine can trust

```
type: review
product: → product/x200
rating: 4.5
tested_for: 3 weeks
pros: [battery]
cons: [fan noise]
author: → a real, named person
```

In practice: custom post types + fields (WordPress), content types (Drupal), content models (Contentful, Sanity, Strapi).

JOB 1 · STRUCTURE

Structured content, not HTML soup



One CMS, many types. Events, People, Portfolio, Posts, Testimonials, each with its own schema.

The Events type I built: 6 system fields + 8 typed custom fields.

Every field has a type. Dates are datetime, location is its own field, the body is PortableText not one HTML blob.

JOB 1 · STRUCTURE

Model content as structured blocks AI can chunk

AI retrieves passages, not pages.

Every block has to make sense on its own.

- One idea per block
- Question-style heading, answer in the first two sentences
- Repeat entity names, not “it” or “as mentioned above”
- Comparisons in tables, steps in lists
- A stable ID and anchor on every block

JOB 2 · READABLE

Link your schema into one graph

Organization: logo, sameAs to Wikidata, LinkedIn and other profiles

Person: every author, with jobTitle and sameAs

Article / BlogPosting: author, datePublished, a real dateModified

Product + Offer + Review: price, availability, rating as data

BreadcrumbList + WebSite: where each page sits

@id links them into one graph

```
{ "@context": "https://schema.org",
"@graph": [
{ "@type": "BlogPosting",
"@id": "https://example.com/x200#post",
"headline": "X200 review",
"dateModified": "2026-11-02",
"author": { "@id": "https://example.com/#daniel-stanica" } },
{ "@type": "Person",
"@id": "https://example.com/#daniel-stanica",
"name": "Jane Doe",
"sameAs": ["https://www.linkedin.com/in/…"] }
] }
```

Note 1: Google removed FAQ rich results in May 2026. FAQPage markup is still valid, but it earns no SERP feature.
Note 2: Most AI crawlers don’t run JavaScript, so client-rendered content may go unseen — Gemini is the exception, via Googlebot (Oct 2026)

JOB 2 · READABLE

Speed: one bar for machines, one for humans

For machines

≤ 0.8 s

TTFB: the server answers fast

The full content in the first HTML response. Render on the server or pre-render, with no consent wall in front of the text.

For the people who still click

≤ 2.5 s	LCP: main content appears
≤ 200 ms	INP: page responds to input
≤ 0.1	CLS: layout stays stable

"Good" thresholds at the 75th percentile, web.dev · TTFB is a supporting metric, not a Core Web Vital

JOB 2 · CONTROLLED

You decide who gets access to what

Crawler type	Examples	Typical choice
Search & answer	Googlebot, Bingbot, OAI-SearchBot, PerplexityBot	Allow: this is your visibility
User-triggered	ChatGPT-User, Claude-User, Perplexity-User	Allow: a person asked for your page
Model training	GPTBot, ClaudeBot, Google-Extended (token)	Your call: a business decision

Check the CDN and firewall too. Many sites block AI bots there without anyone deciding to.

Budget for the load. Cache HTML at the edge and rate-limit bots, rather than blocking them outright.

JOB 3 · USABLE BY AGENTS

Give agents ways to interact: API and MCP

Content API: facts as data

```
GET /api/content/review/x200
{
"id": "review/x200",
"rating": 4.5,
"url": "https://…/x200-review",
"dateModified": "2026-11-02"
}
```

MCP server: an example design

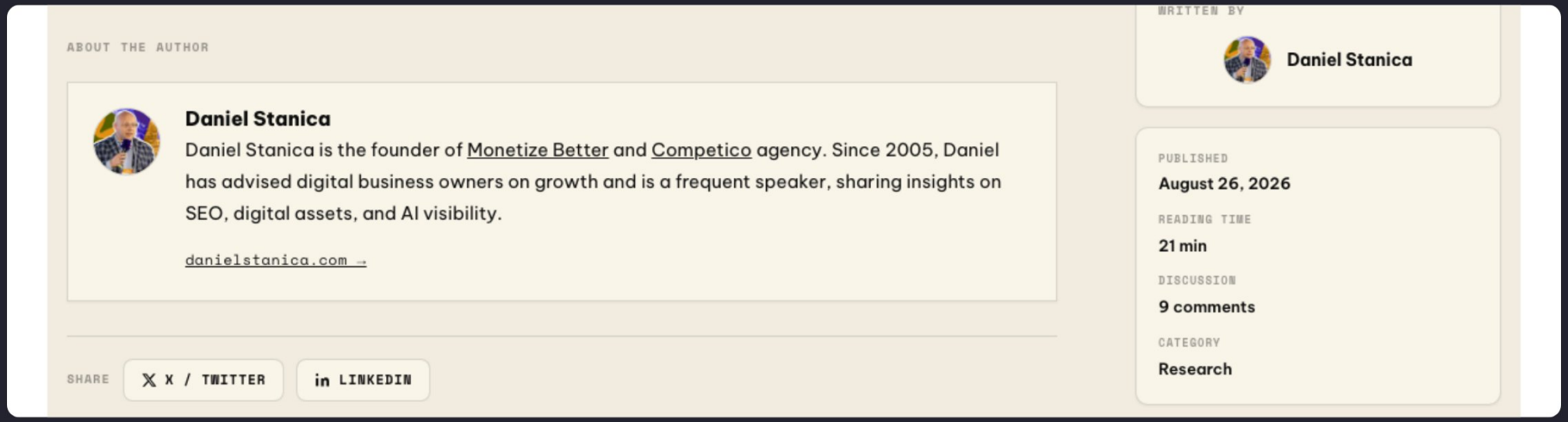
```
search_content(query, type)
get_content(id)
list_recent(since)
→ each returns fields, the
canonical URL and dateModified
```

Works now: WordPress (Abilities API in core since 6.9, plus the official MCP Adapter; core adds only three read-only info abilities, so content tools come from you or plugins). EmDash ships a built-in MCP server; Contentful, Sanity and Strapi have official ones too.

Guardrails: read-only first, a key and scopes per agent, rate limits, and treat page text as untrusted input, because it can carry prompt injection.

JOB 4 · TRUSTED SOURCE OF TRUTH

Give machines a reason to believe you



Real people
Named author, bio, credentials, sameAs links

Real dates
A true published date, never auto-bumped

One fact, one place
Author and bio stored once, reused everywhere

Same facts everywhere
Your site, Wikidata, Google profile, partners

JOB 5 · MEASURE VISIBILITY

Measure citations, not just pageviews

What to track	Where	What it tells you
AI bot hits	Server or CDN logs	Whether AI can reach you
AI referral traffic	GA4, Microsoft Clarity	Who clicks through from AI answers
Citations	Tracked prompts in ChatGPT, Perplexity, AI Overviews	Whether you're the source
Branded search lift	Google Search Console	Whether AI mentions create demand

6. What's next: when AI agents become your customers

Search engine
Lists links. You get a visit.

→

Answer engine
Summarises. You get a citation.

→

Agent
Compares, books, buys. You get the transaction, or you don't.

Your next visitor might not have eyes.
It will just fetch your HTML.

TWO FUTURES

Two futures for the agentic web. Plan for both.

A The web gets rebuilt for machines

Lighter pages, structured product feeds, APIs, MCP endpoints. The protocols shipped in 18 months all assume it:

- ACP — OpenAI + Stripe, Sep 2025
- AP2 — Google, Sep 2025
- UCP — Google + Shopify, Jan 2026
- MCP — Anthropic, 2024

B The interface stays human-first

No merchant adoption required. The agent looks at the page, clicks and types into the form the way a person would.

So it still has to read the page, without running JavaScript.

Either way, the machine reads your CMS output. A needs feeds, APIs and MCP. B needs clean, structured, JavaScript-free HTML. Everything in this talk wins in both.

Protocols: Agentic Commerce Protocol (ACP); Agent Payments Protocol (AP2); Universal Commerce Protocol (UCP); Model Context Protocol (MCP)

IT'S EARLY, AND IT'S REAL

Machine buying is small today, and growing fast

1.5%
of US retail e-commerce runs through AI platforms in 2026 — about $20.6B

→ **8.8%**
forecast for 2029 — about $144B

3%
of transactions involve an agent today

89%
of merchants are already preparing

Counts only checkout inside ChatGPT, Gemini and Perplexity — up ~4× in a year. Sources: eMarketer (US, 2026 and 2029 forecast); Checkout.com (US & UK merchants, 2026)

7. The CMS crash audit: 1 point per yes

1	Key pages show their full content with JavaScript off
2	AI crawlers aren't blocked, unless you chose to block them
3	Content types use typed fields, not one body field
4	Schema is generated automatically and validates
5	Organization and author entities exist, with sameAs links
6	dateModified changes only on real edits
7	Core Web Vitals pass, and TTFB is 0.8 s or less
8	Every page has a clean machine-readable version
9	A content API or MCP server offers search and get-by-ID
10	You track AI bot hits and AI referral traffic

8–10 CMS is helping you. Ready for AI

5–7 Leaking visibility

0–4 Holding you back

Content still matters. Your CMS decides whether machines can use it.

Run the 10-point audit and see whether your CMS is helping you or quietly burying you.

Q&A Time and Let’s keep in touch!

Email: **hello@danielstanica.com** · Web: **danielstanica.com**

Slides and my social profiles

SEO & AI Visibility Community on Facebook



SEO & AI Visibility Community on Telegram



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Thank you!

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