

The 2026 AI Visibility Report

America's fifty largest personal injury firms, tested against the questions injured people actually ask AI assistants.

46%

are invisible on at least one major AI platform

1 in 5

are invisible on ChatGPT, including home-market leaders

3,150

AI responses archived before scoring



AT A GLANCE

AI is writing the shortlist. Most firms have never checked whether they are on it.

■ The client journey is moving into AI assistants.

A growing share of injured people no longer scan ten blue links. They ask ChatGPT, Gemini, or Perplexity in plain English and get back two or three firm names. If a firm is not one of them, it was never in the running, and it never finds out.

■ 46% of the biggest firms are invisible somewhere.

Across ten buyer-intent questions on five major chat platforms, 23 of the 50 largest personal injury firms in America are never named on at least one platform. Fifteen are missing from two or more.

■ The Recognition Gap is the central finding.

AI platforms recognize essentially every one of these firms in detail when asked directly: histories, verdicts, practice areas. They simply never recommend 46% of them when a prospective client asks who to hire.

■ Every platform runs its own map of the legal market.

Twenty points separate the most generous platform from the stingiest. A firm can dominate one engine and be absent from another. Visibility must be measured platform by platform.

■ This is fixable, and almost nobody is competing on it.

The gap is not authority, reputation, or content. It is machine-readable retrieval: structured data, crawler access, citations. The firms treating AI visibility as a discipline in 2026 face almost no competition.



CHAPTER ONE

Why this matters right now

For twenty years the legal client journey was stable: search, click, compare, call. That journey is now splitting in two, and AI is performing the shortlisting that used to happen on a firm's own website.



AI assistants compress the entire research phase into a single answer

The person never sees a results page, never compares ten websites, never reads a directory. They describe their situation in plain words, *"I was just rear-ended on the highway, who should I call?"*, and the AI answers with one to three names, often with reasoning attached. The AI has effectively performed the shortlisting that used to happen on a firm's website.

THREE PROPERTIES MAKE THIS CHANNEL DIFFERENT FROM SEARCH

1

Winner-take-almost-all

A Google results page has ten organic slots plus ads. An AI answer typically names one to three firms. There is no page two. Being fourth-best in AI visibility means being absent.

2

Invisible losses

When a firm loses a client through search rankings, the drop is measurable. When AI recommends a competitor, nothing appears in any analytics dashboard. The consultation simply happens somewhere else.

3

Different ranking logic

AI platforms do not rank pages. They synthesize answers from what they crawl, what they retrieve at answer time, and how confidently they can verify an entity. A firm can dominate Google and be absent from ChatGPT.

The firms missing from AI answers are not small firms. They are some of the most famous names in American law. What they lack is not authority. It is **machine-readable visibility**.



CHAPTER TWO

How we ran the study

The 50 largest US personal injury firms. 12 questions each, localized to home market. Six AI platforms. 3,150 responses archived before a single one was scored.



METHODOLOGY

The questions injured people really ask

Firms. The 50 largest US personal injury firms, from public rankings, spanning national volume giants, verdict powerhouses, and regional leaders across 20 metro markets.

Prompts. 12 questions per firm: 10 unbranded buyer-intent questions localized to the home market, 2 direct brand questions. 600 unique prompts.

#	PROMPT TEMPLATE	TYPE
1	best personal injury lawyer in [city]	Unbranded
2	best car accident lawyer in [city]	Unbranded
3	I was just in a car accident in [city], who should I call?	Unbranded
4	top truck accident attorney in [city]	Unbranded
5	best motorcycle accident lawyer near [city]	Unbranded
6	who is the best wrongful death lawyer in [city]?	Unbranded
7	best slip and fall attorney in [city]	Unbranded
8	largest personal injury law firms in [state]	Unbranded
9	which [city] injury lawyer has won the biggest settlements?	Unbranded
10	how do I choose a good personal injury lawyer in [city]?	Unbranded
11	is [firm] a good law firm?	Brand
12	what do you know about [firm]?	Brand

Platforms. Every prompt ran on ChatGPT, Claude, Gemini, Perplexity, and Grok. Google AI Overviews sampled on 3 prompts per firm, reported separately. 3,150 queries executed, every raw response archived before scoring.

Scoring. Definitions locked before the first scan. A firm is *visible* on a platform only if named in at least one unbranded response, verified against false positives. *Recognized* if it answers brand questions substantively.



CHAPTER THREE

What the data shows

Four findings, in ascending order of consequence: the scale of invisibility, the Recognition Gap that isolates its cause, the platform-by-platform fragmentation, and the visibility tiers that map the opening.



FINDING 01

Forty-six percent of the biggest firms in America are invisible somewhere

Twenty-three of the fifty largest personal injury firms in the country are never mentioned, not once across ten buyer-intent questions, on at least one major AI platform. Fifteen are missing from two or more. These are firms with national ad campaigns and market-defining verdicts, absent from the channel where a growing share of their future clients now begin.

EXHIBIT 1

Every platform draws a different map, and most firms sit outside at least one

Share of top-50 firms named in ≥1 unbranded response, by platform, %



Google AI Overviews (highlighted) sampled on 3 prompts per firm; many queries returned no overview. Reported separately from the five chat platforms. Vertical line marks 50%.
Source: Faneros Research 2026 AI Visibility study; 3,150 archived responses across 50 firms.

EXHIBIT 2

Barely half hold full coverage across the five chat platforms

Top-50 firms by chat-platform coverage, count and share



Source: Faneros Research 2026 AI Visibility study.



FINDING 02

The Recognition Gap

Here is the strangest result in the dataset. When we asked each platform directly about each firm by name, using the prompt "is [firm] a good law firm?", the AI knew essentially every single one: histories, practice areas, notable verdicts. Recognition across the five chat platforms was 98 to 100%.

Then we compared that against the buyer-intent questions, where a potential client asks who to hire. Across 51 firm-platform pairs, the same AI that can recite a firm's biography never once offered that firm's name to a prospective client. Twenty-three firms sit in this gap on at least one platform.

AI knows who you are. It just doesn't send you clients.

EXHIBIT 3

Known versus recommended: a 46-point collapse

Share of top-50 firms, %



Derivation: 27 of 50 firms are mentioned on all five chat platforms; 23 are missing from at least one. Recognition measured via direct brand questions.
Source: Faneros Research 2026 AI Visibility study.



FINDING 03

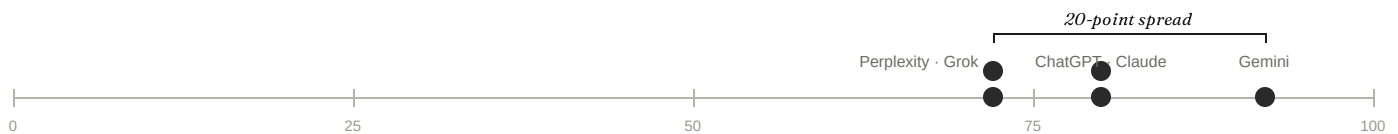
Every platform has its own map of the legal market

If AI platforms all drew from the same picture of the world, a firm visible on one would be visible on all. That is not what the data shows. Twenty percentage points separate the most generous platform (Gemini, 92%) from the stingiest (Perplexity and Grok, 72%). Firms routinely dominate one engine while being absent from another.

EXHIBIT 4

Twenty points separate the friendliest platform from the hardest

Share of top-50 firms visible, five chat platforms, %



Source: Faneros Research 2026 AI Visibility study. Google AI Overviews (24%) reported separately.

A**Gemini sees the most firms, but not all**

Even the friendliest platform misses 4 of the 50 biggest firms in the country entirely.

B**ChatGPT, the biggest audience, misses 1 in 5**

Ten top-50 firms never appear in ChatGPT answers, including nationally famous names in their own home markets. Given ChatGPT's user base, this is the costliest gap in the study.

C**Perplexity and Grok are the hardest rooms**

Both lean heavily on live retrieval and citations. Firms without strong machine-readable presence and third-party corroboration drop out here first. 28% of top firms are invisible on each.

D**Even the strongest firms have thin spots**

Several firms that appear everywhere still show only one or two mentions on their weakest platform. Visibility is not binary; thin visibility is fragile visibility.

The practical consequence: **"we checked ChatGPT and we came up" is not a visibility strategy.** Each engine retrieves, verifies, and cites differently. Optimizing for one is not optimizing for AI.



FINDING 04

The Visibility Tiers

We graded each firm by how many of the six platforms mention it at least once. The distribution says the market is wide open: barely half of the biggest firms in the country hold strong visibility across the board, and the rest are exposed.

EXHIBIT 5

One firm in two holds Tier A visibility; one holds none at all

Top-50 firms by visibility tier, count



Source: Faneros Research 2026 AI Visibility study. Tier D (highlighted) marks the single firm never named on any platform tested.

TIER A	TIER B	TIER C	TIER D
28	13	8	1
Visible on 5 to 6 platforms	Visible on 3 to 4 platforms	Visible on 1 to 2 platforms	Visible nowhere

Individual firms are not named to tiers in this report. The point is the distribution itself: if 46% of the industry's giants have holes in their AI visibility, the situation among mid-size and regional firms, with smaller budgets and no dedicated teams, is almost certainly worse.

And that cuts both ways. AI platforms are not simply echoing size and ad spend; if they were, all 50 of these firms would be Tier A. A well-optimized regional firm can outrank a national brand in the exact answers that produce clients.



CHAPTER FOUR

Platform dashboards

Each of the six AI platforms retrieves, verifies, and cites differently, and each produces a different map of the legal market. The dashboards that follow give a platform-by-platform view of visibility, model, and retrieval behavior.



PLATFORM DASHBOARD

ChatGPT

OpenAI · model tested gpt-4o

80%

of top-50 firms visible · 40 of 50

The largest audience, and the costliest gap in the study. Ten top-50 firms never appear, including nationally famous names in their own home markets. ChatGPT blends trained knowledge with live browsing, so a firm's machine-readable footprint and its corroboration by cited third parties both decide whether it surfaces.

600

responses archived

No. 2

rank by visibility

10

firms invisible

HOW IT RETRIEVES

Retrieval plus trained knowledge

EXHIBIT

ChatGPT against the field

Firms visible, all six platforms, %



ChatGPT highlighted. Bars show share of top-50 firms named in ≥1 unbranded response. Source: Faneros Research 2026 AI Visibility study.



PLATFORM DASHBOARD

Claude

Anthropic · model tested cClaude-sonnet-4-6

80%

of top-50 firms visible · 40 of 50

Middle of the pack on breadth, but disciplined about what it will name. Claude leans on verifiable structure and tends to reward firms with clean, consistent identity signals over those relying on advertising reach alone.

600

responses archived

No. 3

rank by visibility

10

firms invisible

HOW IT RETRIEVES

Trained knowledge plus retrieval

EXHIBIT

Claude against the field

Firms visible, all six platforms, %



Claude highlighted. Bars show share of top-50 firms named in ≥1 unbranded response.
Source: Faneros Research 2026 AI Visibility study.



PLATFORM DASHBOARD

Gemini

Google · model tested gemini-3.5-flash

92%

of top-50 firms visible · 46 of 50

The most generous platform in the study, naming 46 of 50 firms somewhere. Deep integration with Google's index gives it the widest recall, yet even the friendliest engine misses 4 of the biggest firms in the country entirely.

600

responses archived

No. 1

rank by visibility

4

firms invisible

HOW IT RETRIEVES

Google index plus retrieval

EXHIBIT

Gemini against the field

Firms visible, all six platforms, %



Gemini highlighted. Bars show share of top-50 firms named in ≥1 unbranded response.
Source: Faneros Research 2026 AI Visibility study.



PLATFORM DASHBOARD

Perplexity

Perplexity · model tested sonar

72%

of top-50 firms visible · 36 of 50

A hard room. Perplexity leans heavily on live retrieval and inline citations, so firms without strong machine-readable presence and independent corroboration drop out first. 28% of top firms are invisible here.

600

responses archived

No. 4

rank by visibility

14

firms invisible

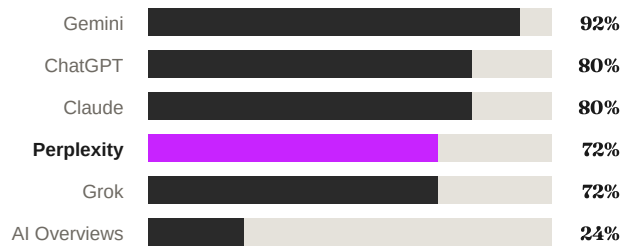
HOW IT RETRIEVES

Live retrieval plus citations

EXHIBIT

Perplexity against the field

Firms visible, all six platforms, %



Perplexity highlighted. Bars show share of top-50 firms named in ≥1 unbranded response.
Source: Faneros Research 2026 AI Visibility study.



PLATFORM DASHBOARD

Grok

xAI · model tested grok-4.3

72%

of top-50 firms visible · 36 of 50

The other hard room. Grok's retrieval-and-citation approach produces visibility close to Perplexity's, at 72%, and punishes firms whose presence lives only on their own domain. Third-party evidence is the price of entry.

600

responses archived

No. 5

rank by visibility

14

firms invisible

HOW IT RETRIEVES

Live retrieval plus citations

EXHIBIT

Grok against the field

Firms visible, all six platforms, %



Grok highlighted. Bars show share of top-50 firms named in ≥1 unbranded response.
Source: Faneros Research 2026 AI Visibility study.



PLATFORM DASHBOARD

AI Overviews

Google · model tested google-ai-overview

24%

of top-50 firms visible · 12 of 50

Sampled separately on 3 prompts per firm, and reported apart from the five chat platforms. Many buyer-intent queries returned no overview at all. When Google does surface one, it names very few firms, making it the narrowest channel measured.

150

responses archived

No. 6

rank by visibility

38

firms invisible

HOW IT RETRIEVES

Google SERP feature

EXHIBIT

AI Overviews against the field

Firms visible, all six platforms, %



AI Overviews highlighted. Bars show share of top-50 firms named in ≥1 unbranded response.
Source: Faneros Research 2026 AI Visibility study.



CHAPTER FIVE

What visible firms do differently

AI visibility is earned through signals machines can read and verify. The gaps this study found map to a concrete checklist: the fundamentals Faneros generates and monitors for law firms.



THE PLAYBOOK

The gaps map to a checklist

None of this replaces traditional SEO. It extends it into the channel where the shortlist is now being written. The firms that treat AI visibility as a discipline in 2026 are competing against almost nobody, and that window will not stay open.



Open the door to AI crawlers

Many firm sites silently block the crawlers AI platforms use to read them. If GPTBot or ClaudeBot cannot fetch your pages, you are invisible by configuration, regardless of reputation.



Publish machine-readable identity files

Structured data (JSON-LD schema for the firm, its attorneys, practice areas, and locations) plus an llms.txt file give AI platforms a verified, unambiguous picture of who you are and what you handle.



Answer the actual questions

AI retrieves content that matches how injured people ask: "who do I call after a truck accident?", not "truck accident practice area overview." FAQ-structured pages in plain language, per market, are retrieval magnets.



Build local authority per city

The prompts that produce clients are local. Consistent name, address, and practice data across directories, maps, and citations, held steady per metro, is what lets a platform confidently name you for a city-specific question.



Earn third-party corroboration

Platforms that cite sources favor firms confirmed by independent domains: rankings, press, legal directories, bar publications. Your own site alone is not enough evidence.



Measure platform by platform, then re-measure

AI answers shift as models update and retrieve fresh data. Visibility is a monitored metric, not a one-time project. What this study did for 50 firms should be running continuously for yours.



ABOUT FANEROS RESEARCH

About Faneros

Faneros is the AI visibility platform built exclusively for law firms. Each scan tests a firm against the real questions prospective clients ask across ChatGPT, Claude, Gemini, Perplexity, Grok, and Google AI Overviews, shows which competing firms get recommended instead, and generates nine deploy-ready deliverables: six technical assets and three strategy documents, ready to publish the same day. Receipt-backed attribution then proves which visits and cases AI actually produced.

Faneros is headquartered in Chicago. Pricing is published at faneros.ai/pricing. The web edition of this study lives at faneros.ai/ai-visibility-index.

GET YOUR FIRM'S AI VISIBILITY SCORECARD



If AI is writing the shortlist, the only question that matters is: are you on it?

The same test behind this study can be run for your firm: your market, your practice areas, your competitors, across all six platforms. Request a free scan at faneros.ai or write to hello@faneros.ai to see exactly where you stand and what to fix first.

Research notes. Study conducted July 2026 by Faneros Research. 50 firms selected from public rankings. 600 unique prompts, 3,150 AI responses archived prior to scoring. Scoring definitions locked before data collection. Name matching verified against false positives. Raw archives and scoring methodology available for audit on request. Individual firms are not publicly named to tiers. AI platform outputs vary over time; figures reflect the July 2026 test window.



REFERENCE

Glossary & notes

GLOSSARY

AI visibility	Whether an AI assistant names a firm in response to an unbranded, buyer-intent question. Distinct from recognition.
Recognition	Whether an AI can describe a firm when asked about it directly by name. Nearly universal in this study, even for invisible firms.
Recognition Gap	The distance between recognition (100%) and recommendation (54%): firms the AI knows but never surfaces to a prospective client.
Unbranded prompt	A buyer-intent question that names no firm, e.g. "best car accident lawyer in Dallas." The ten unbranded prompts decide visibility.
Brand prompt	A question naming the firm directly. The two brand prompts measure recognition.
llms.txt	A machine-readable site file that gives AI platforms a verified summary of an organization's identity and offerings.
Structured data	JSON-LD schema describing a firm, its attorneys, practice areas, and locations in a form AI systems can parse unambiguously.
Visibility tier	A firm's grade, from A to D, by how many of the six platforms name it at least once.

ENDNOTES

- 1 50 firms selected from public rankings including National Law Journal, Best Law Firms 2026, and major legal press, spanning 20 metro markets.
- 2 Every prompt executed on ChatGPT, Claude, Gemini, Perplexity, and Grok; Google AI Overviews sampled on 3 prompts per firm and reported separately.
- 3 A firm counts as visible on a platform only if named in at least one unbranded response, with punctuation and formatting variants matched and false positives excluded.
- 4 Recognition measured via direct brand questions; a firm counts as recognized if the platform answers substantively.
- 5 Figures reflect the July 2026 test window. AI platform outputs vary over time as models update and retrieval refreshes.



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The web edition, with the full methodology, lives at faneros.ai/ai-visibility-index.

Cover image: data-center detail, Wikimedia Commons (CC0), graded to brand.

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