

## AI SEARCH CASE STUDY

# Becoming the Answer the AI Engines Cite

How a mobile privacy app captured the surge of conversational, question-based search — the exact queries AI Overviews, ChatGPT, and Perplexity answer.

**+166%**

AI-query clicks (YoY)

**#75 → #5**

question-query ranking leap

**65.5M**

annual impressions

# Search went conversational — we got there first

People increasingly search in full questions — “can you use X without a phone number?” — and AI Overviews, ChatGPT, and Perplexity answer them by pulling from the pages that rank in the top few results. Owning those question queries means becoming the cited answer.

- **Question-format demand is exploding** — “what is...,” “how to...,” “can you...,” “do you need...”
- **AI answers cite top-ranked pages** — Ranking #1–5 = eligible to be the AI-surfaced source
- **The client's content fit perfectly** — Privacy how-tos map 1:1 to these queries

## THE CLIENT

A mobile privacy app that gives users a second phone number for calls and texts — to protect their personal number when signing up for apps, dating, selling online, and more.

**Category:** Consumer privacy / mobile app

**Channel:** Organic search + AI answer engines

**Goal:** Own conversational, non-branded demand

THE RESULTS

# Built for the AI search era

**+166%**

**AI-style query clicks**

conversational search, year over year

**+266%**

**U.S. AI-query clicks**

where AI answers are surging

**#75 → #5**

**question-query ranking leap**

into the AI-answer range

**+137%**

**search impressions**

to 65.5M annual impressions

**+149%**

**non-branded query clicks**

durable demand beyond the brand

**190×**

**clicks on a breakout guide**

from 146 to 27,720 clicks

*Top row: the AI-search wins. Bottom row: the scale they drove.*

# From invisible to page one on AI queries

The conversational queries that feed AI answers went from not ranking to the top of page one — putting the client in line to be the cited source.

Conversational query	Was	Now	
“can you use tinder without a phone number”	Not ranking	#2	▲
“what app lets you receive verification codes for free”	#9	#3	▲
“do you need a phone number for telegram”	#33	#4	▲
“how to use telegram without a phone number”	Not ranking	#5	▲
“how to create a telegram account without a phone number”	#75	#5	▲
“can you use whatsapp without a phone number”	#42	#5	▲

*One guide climbed 70 positions — from page 8 to the top 5 — on a single high-intent question.*

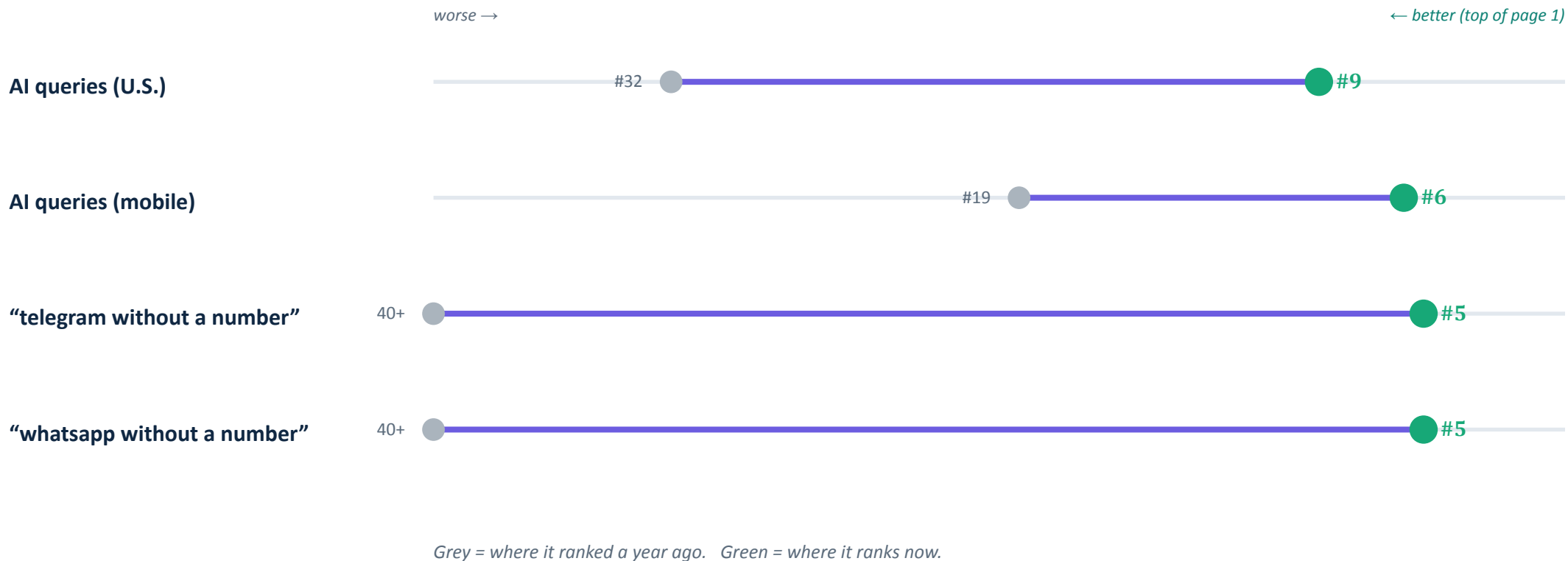
# Answer-format content took off

The how-to and “what is” guides — the format AI engines extract from — drove the biggest year-over-year click gains.

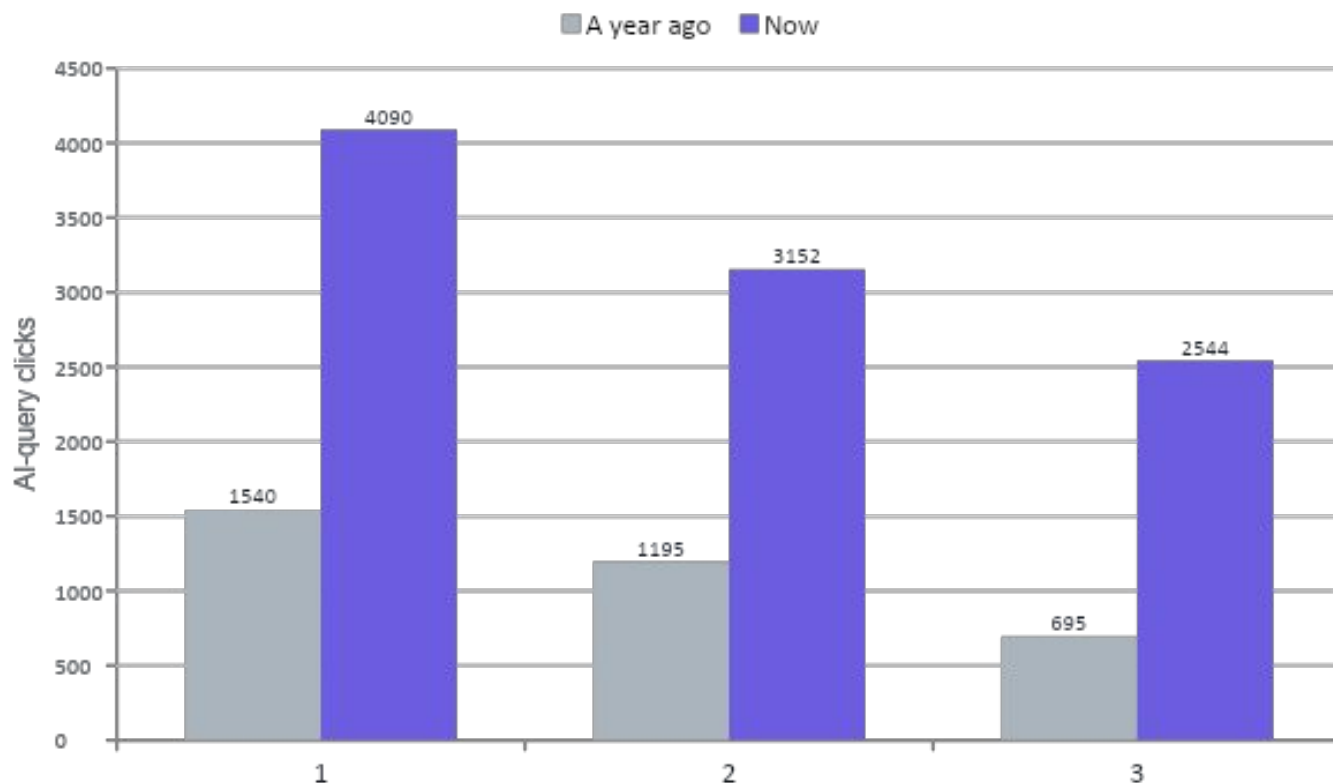
“Fake number for Tinder” guide	Newly ranking	566 clicks · #3
“Does Telegram require a phone number?”	#42 → #4	488 clicks
“Send a text without showing your number”	#14 → #6	393 clicks · +202%
“Venmo without a phone number”	Newly ranking	260 clicks · #4
“Free SMS verification”	#15 → #4	246 clicks · +278%

# Climbing into the range AI engines cite

Average position on AI-style queries jumped from the bottom of the results into the top five — the zone eligible for AI Overview and chatbot citation.



# Growth where AI search lives: mobile & U.S.



## Why it matters

AI Overviews and chat assistants are mobile- and U.S.-heavy. Winning here is winning where AI answers are served most.

**+166%** all AI-query clicks

**+164%** mobile AI clicks

**+266%** U.S. AI clicks

**#19 → #6** mobile avg. position

# Non-branded demand became the growth engine

The healthiest signal of all: growth came from non-branded, category demand and the long tail — traffic that compounds and doesn't depend on people already knowing the brand.

**+149%**

**Non-branded query clicks**

category demand, half over half

**+41%**

**Long-tail page clicks**

“everything after the top 10”

**+298%**

**Answer-content (‘how / app’) clicks**

the AI-friendly content types

# Individual guides that broke out

<b>“Settings app on my phone” guide</b>	146 → 27,720 clicks	190×
<b>“How to find out who called you”</b>	2,242 → 9,250 clicks	+313%
<b>“Does Telegram require a phone number?”</b>	2,029 → 8,712 clicks	+329%
<b>“Send a text without showing your number”</b>	935 → 7,437 clicks	+695%
<b>“U.S. phone number format”</b>	41 → 3,839 clicks	93×

*Each is an answer to a real, high-intent question — the kind of content AI engines reach for first.*

# The reach behind the wins

65.5M

annual search impressions

+137% half over half

+240%

mobile impressions

8.1M → 27.6M

9.2M

impressions on one guide

ranking at position #1.5

+233%

U.S. impressions

the core AI-search market

# The Answer-Engine Optimization playbook

1

## Answer-first content

Built guides in the exact question format people (and AI) ask — “what is,” “how to,” “can you,” “do you need.”

2

## Structured to be extracted

Clear definitions, FAQ blocks, and schema so AI Overviews and chatbots can lift the answer cleanly.

3

## Won the long tail

Targeted specific, lower-competition questions competitors ignore — then compounded them into topical authority.

4

## Optimized for mobile

Fast, mobile-first pages — because that's where conversational and AI search overwhelmingly happen.

## THE IMPACT

# Positioned to win the next era of search

- Conversational, AI-style query clicks up +166% year over year (+266% in the U.S.)
- Question guides climbed from page 8 into the top 5 — the range AI engines cite
- Non-branded demand grew +149%, with answer-content clicks up nearly 3x
- Visibility scaled to 65.5M annual impressions (+137%), led by mobile (+240%)

[Want to win AI search? Let's talk →](#)

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