



ANNUAL STUDY LINK BUILDING, PR AND MEDIA

2025 2026



STUDY OBJECTIVE

The **objective** of this study is to analyze the evolution of **link building during 2025**, identify the real patterns of link buying and evaluate the changes compared to the previous year.

Based on the data obtained, **practical conclusions** are drawn that allow us to anticipate the trends that will shape link building strategies in 2026.

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ANALYSIS SAMPLE

01



DATE OF ANALYSIS

FROM DECEMBER 2024 TO DECEMBER 2025

**1.014**

ACTIVE CUSTOMERS

with new publications in
2025**30.941**

AVAILABLE BLOGS

Blogs and websites from
around the world**517**

INSERTIONS

Links and text added to
previously published posts**7.747**

MEDIA

Newspapers around the
world**10.723**

PUBLICATIONS

New publications
released in 2025**2.766**

MEDIA WITH SALES

Media that have sold
publications in 2025

ANNUAL STUDY LINK BUILDING

.02

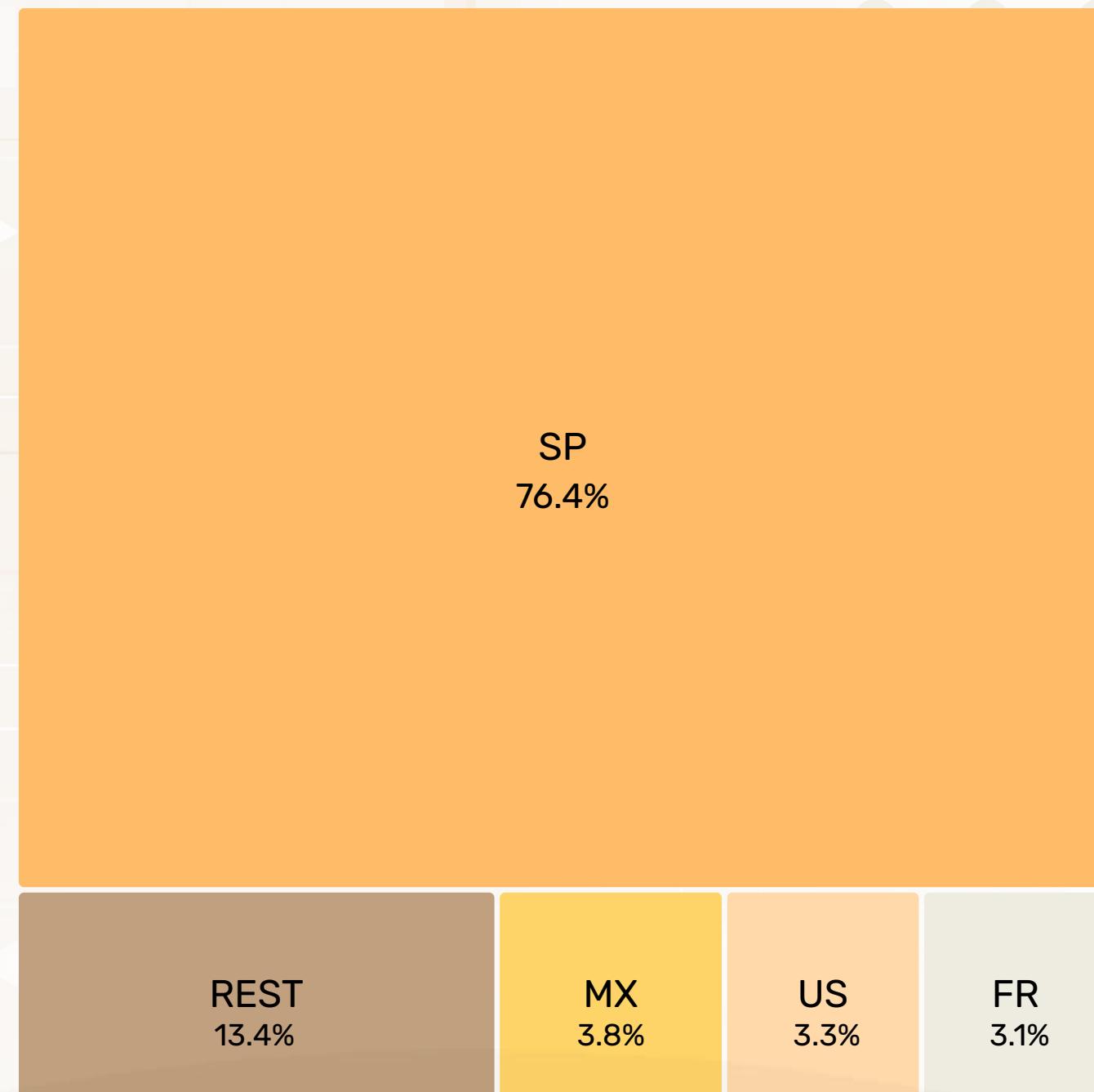


GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION OF BUYERS

Spain accounts for the majority of the buyers analyzed.

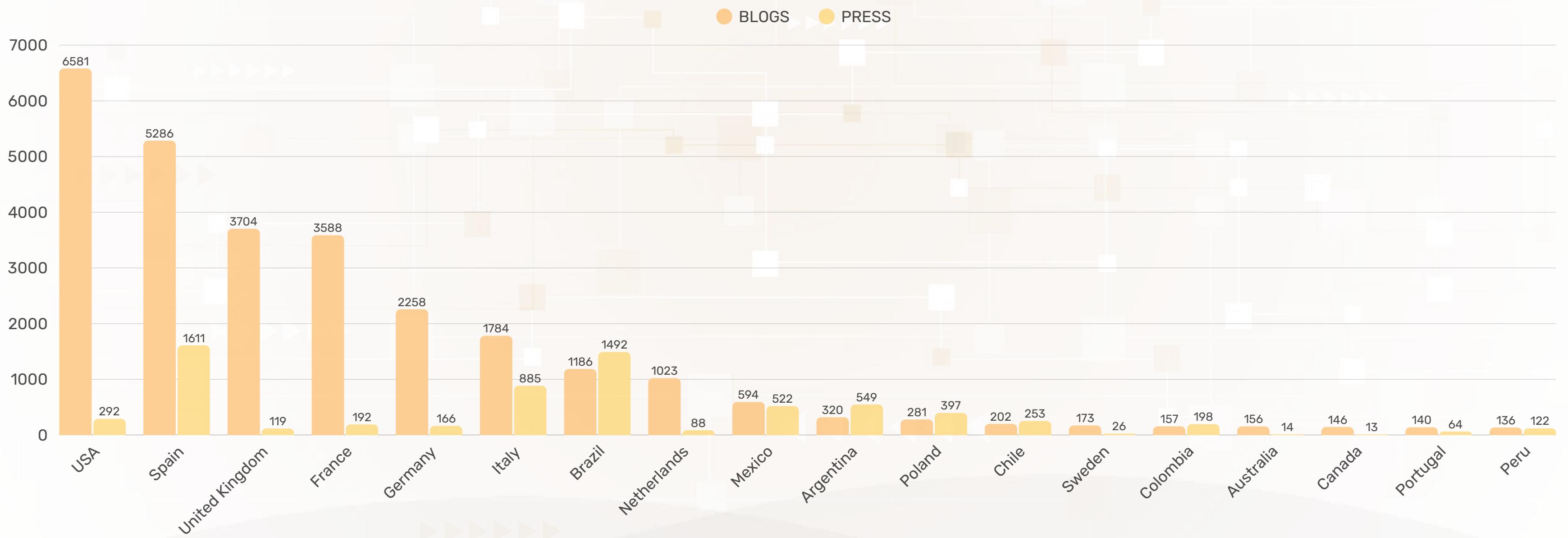
However, a significant international presence is observed, mainly in America and Europe, with Mexico, the United States and France standing out.

As for the rest, **Colombia** (1.97%), **United Kingdom** (1.08%), **Chile** (0.89%) and **Argentina** (0.79%) stand out.



GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION OF MEDIA AND BLOGS

Media outlets and blogs are located in the countries indicated in the graph, with the **United States, Spain, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Italy, Romania, Colombia, Brazil, Netherlands, Mexico, and Argentina** standing out as the countries with the largest number of media outlets.



AVERAGE PRICE OF SPANISH-SPEAKING MEDIA

The cost of publishing is usually directly related to the organic traffic of the publication. The prices shown are averages calculated based on traffic ranges. The average price has increased slightly compared to 2024.

GLOBAL AVERAGE PRICE

€189.82

2024: €183.02

Up to 20,000 traffic/month

€81.25

From 20,001 to 75,000 traffic/month

€167.18

From 75,001 to 200,000 traffic/month

€307.68

Over 200,000 traffic/month

€697.26

20,000

75,000

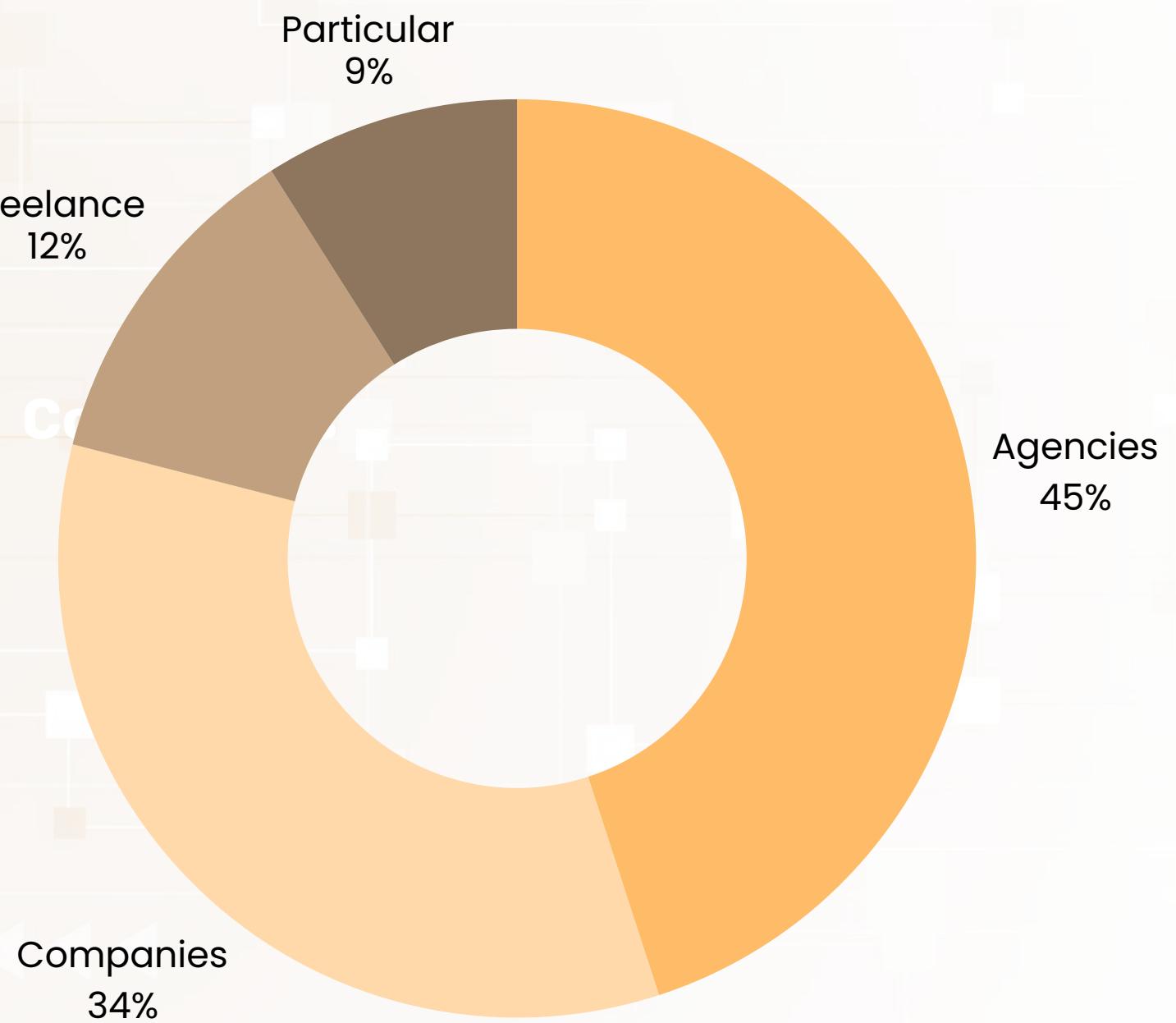
200,000

BUYER TYPOLOGY

Analysis of buyer profiles in 2025 shows a clear **consolidation of the professional profile**. Agencies and companies account for **nearly 80%** of the total order volume, reinforcing the strategic importance of link building within their marketing plans.

Compared to 2024, **the weight of agencies and companies continues to grow**, while the individual profile loses relevance. This evolution reflects greater professionalization of the market and an increasingly frequent and planned use of the platform.

Growwer ceases to be a tool for occasional use and becomes a structural solution for agencies and companies with medium and long-term SEO strategies.



€2,212.49

AVERAGE ANNUAL INVESTMENT
PER BUYER USER

11.6

AVERAGE ANNUAL PUBLICATIONS
PER BUYER USER

CONSUMPTION BY USERS

The analysis of consumption per user in 2025 reflects an **increase in both investment and activity** within the platform.

On average, **each purchasing user makes 11.6 annual publications**, with an average investment of €2,212, which confirms a recurring and planned use of link building as part of SEO and online reputation strategies.

Compared to 2024, we have observed an increase in both the average investment per user and the number of posts made.

AVERAGE TICKET AMOUNT

The average ticket price per publication continues to grow in 2025. The overall average ticket price is €189.82, representing an 8.6% increase compared to 2024, when the average was €174.86.

€189.82

**AVERAGE SPEND PER PUBLICATION
GENERAL FOR ALL USERS**

2024: €174.86

AVERAGE PURCHASE AMOUNT OF
USERS WITH AVERAGE TICKET < €50

€33.82

AVERAGE PURCHASE WITH AVERAGE TICKET
BETWEEN €50 AND €100

€75.46

AVERAGE PURCHASE WITH TICKET
BETWEEN €100 AND €300

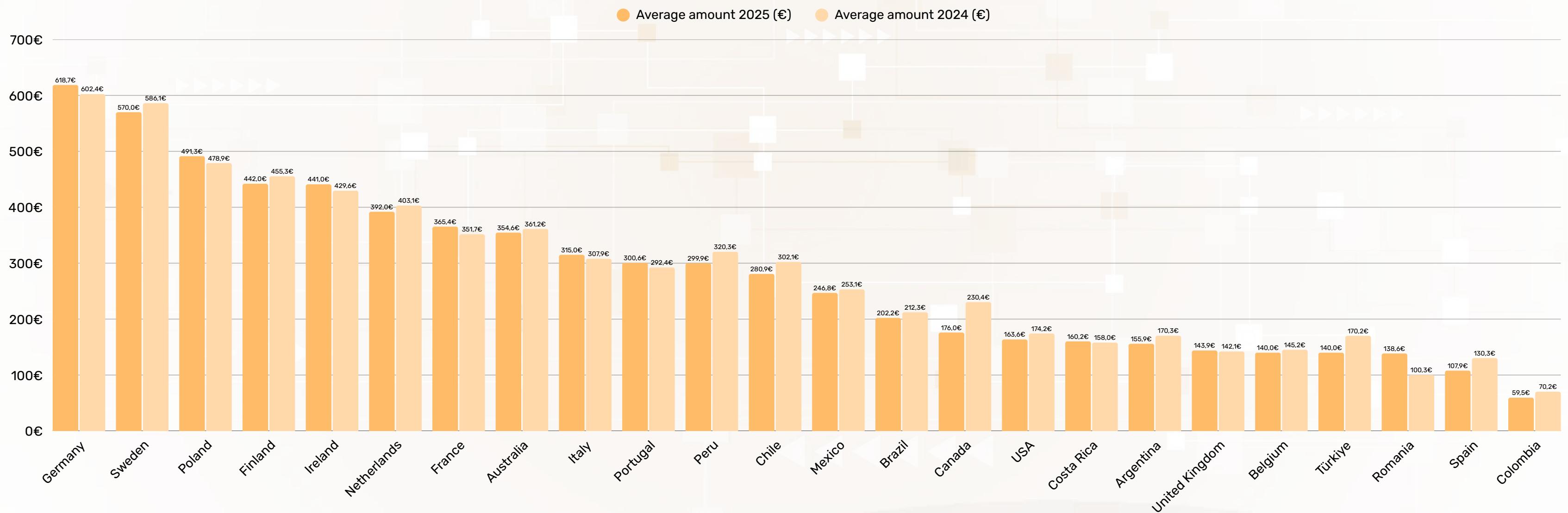
€172.16

AVERAGE PURCHASE WITH AVERAGE TICKET
OVER €300

€496.46

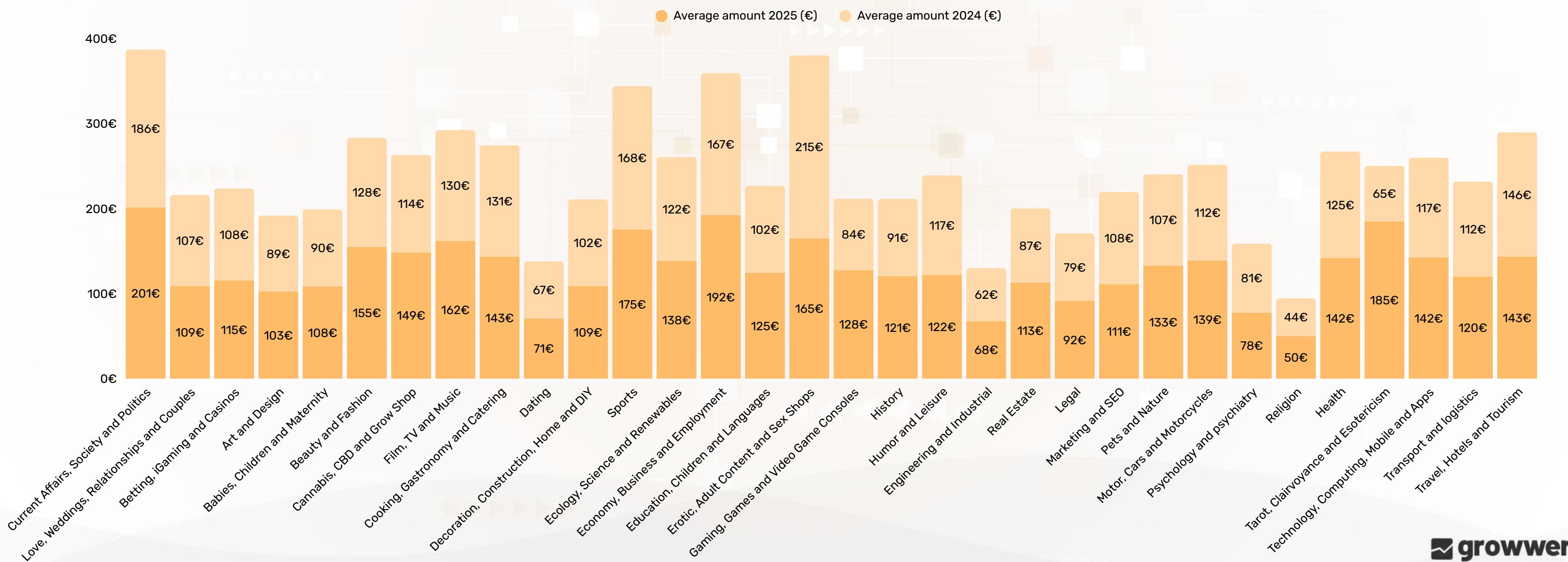
AVERAGE TICKET AMOUNT BY COUNTRY

Analysis of **the average amount per publication by country** shows very significant differences between markets, reflecting different levels of maturity, competition and perceived value of the link.



AVERAGE TICKET AMOUNT BY THEME

The average price per publication **varies considerably depending on the subject matter**, with Current Affairs, Society and Politics, Economics and Tarot standing out as the categories with the highest price.

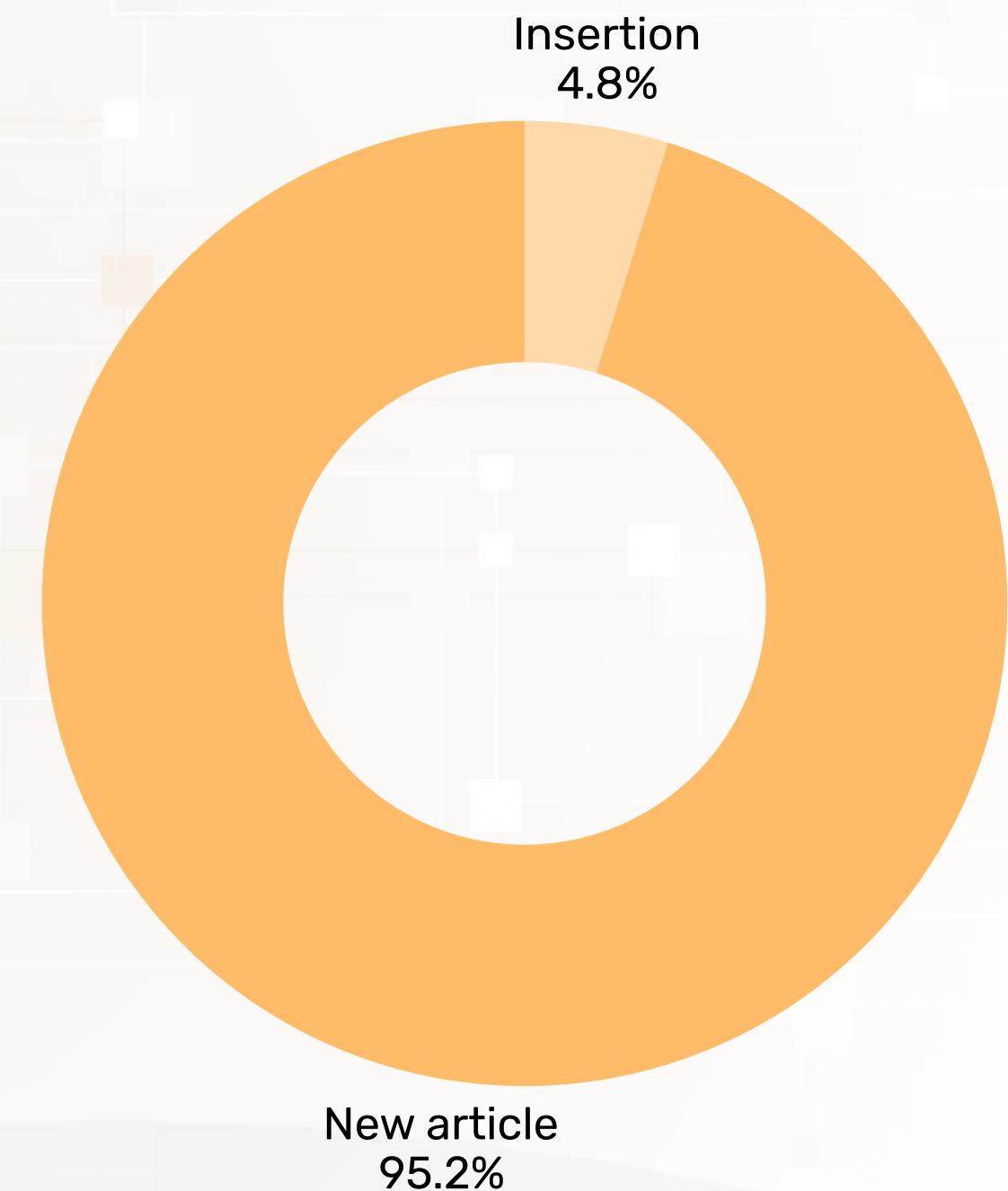


INSERTION VS NEW ARTICLE

During 2025, a total of 10,723 publications were recorded. Of these, 95.2% (10,206) were new articles, while only 4.8% (517) were link insertions in existing content.

Compared to 2024, when insertions represented 7.1%, their share has fallen to 4.8%, a reduction of 2.3 percentage points. At the same time, **the use of new articles has increased from 92.9% to over 95% of all publications.**

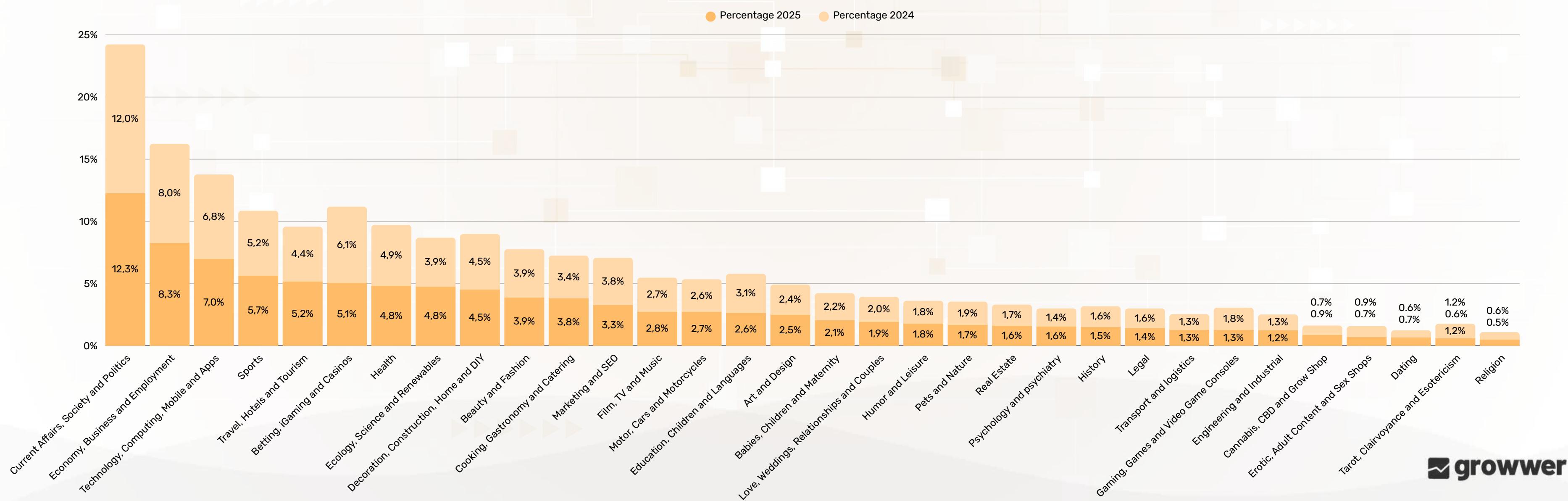
This trend confirms a growing preference for new content, reinforcing link building strategies that are more focused on editorial control, content quality, and long-term positioning.



MOST IN-DEMAND SECTORS

Throughout 2025, demand for publications has been concentrated primarily in current affairs and business media, which together account for more than 20% of total orders. **This data confirms that links in general news environments remain a strategic priority for brands and agencies.**

At the opposite extreme, more specific or regulated categories (such as esotericism or religion) show a residual demand, indicating a much more specific use within link building strategies.

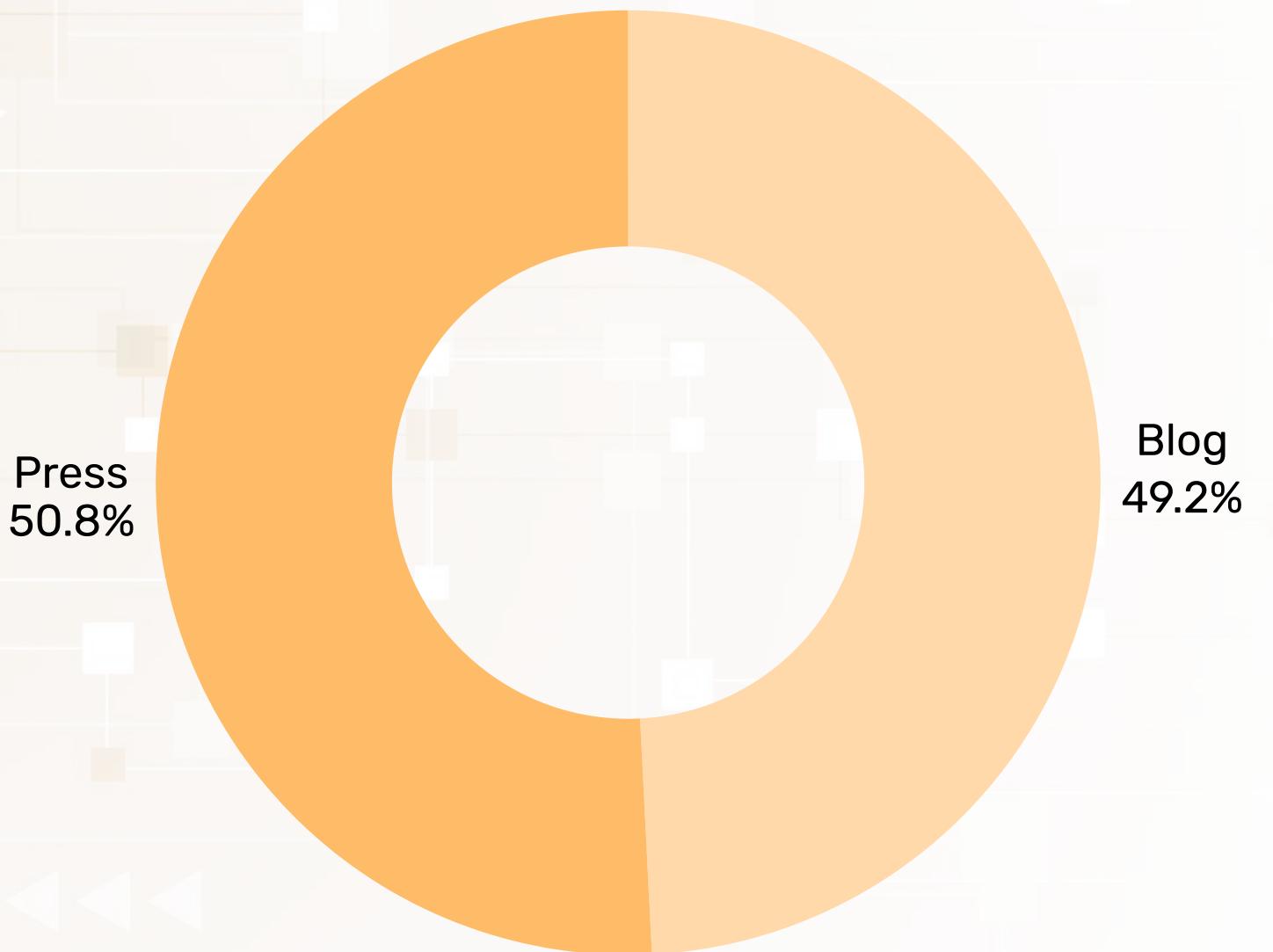


TYPES OF SALES WEBSITES

In 2025, a near-perfect balance is observed **between newspapers and blogs** as the types of sales websites within Growwer. Newspapers account for 50.8% of publications, while blogs represent 49.2%.

For the first time since we began this study, **the number of articles sold in press media exceeds that of blogs.**

Even so, blogs still hold significant weight.



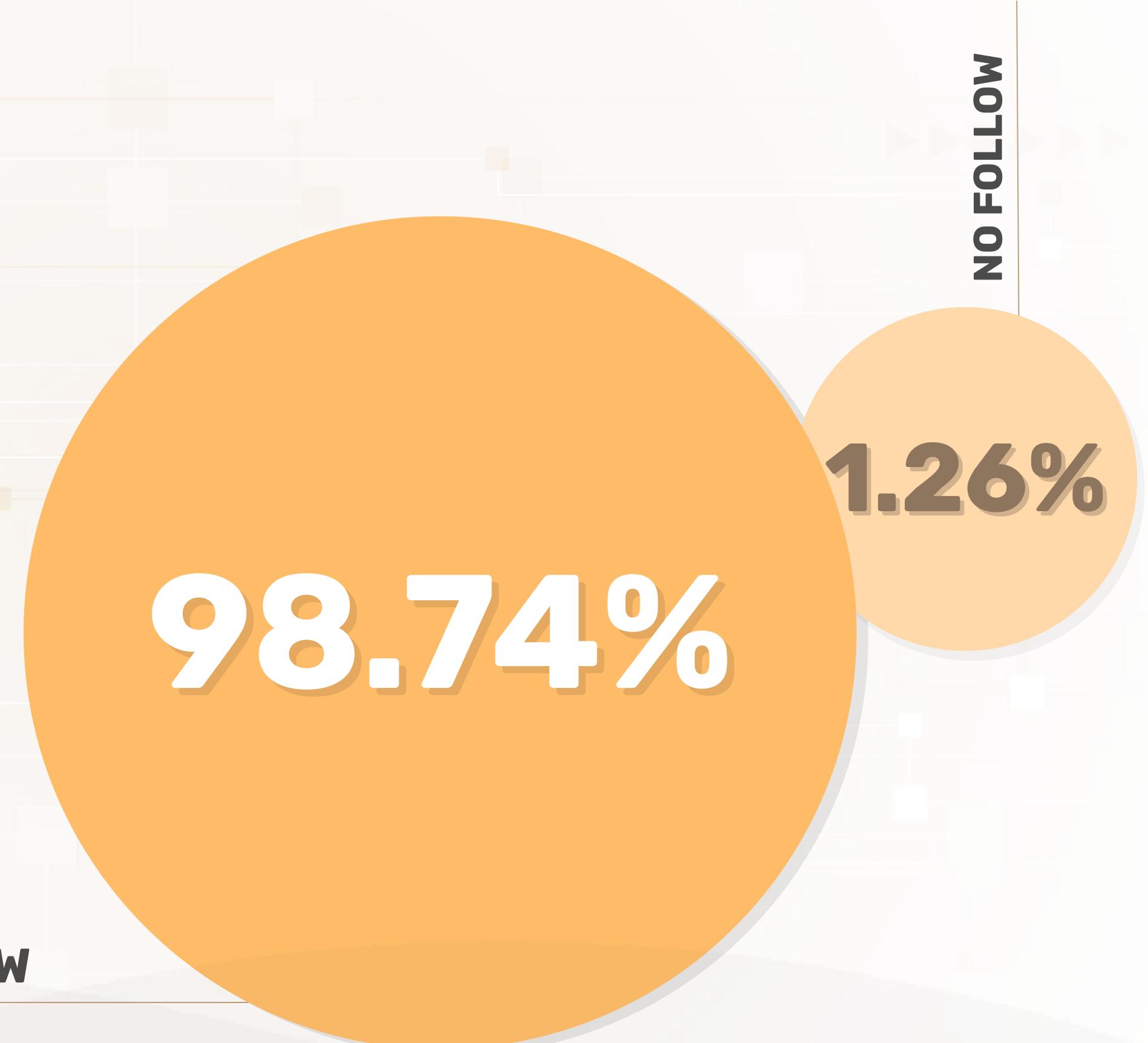
2024: Blog: 51.4%
Press: 48.7%

TYPE OF LINKS

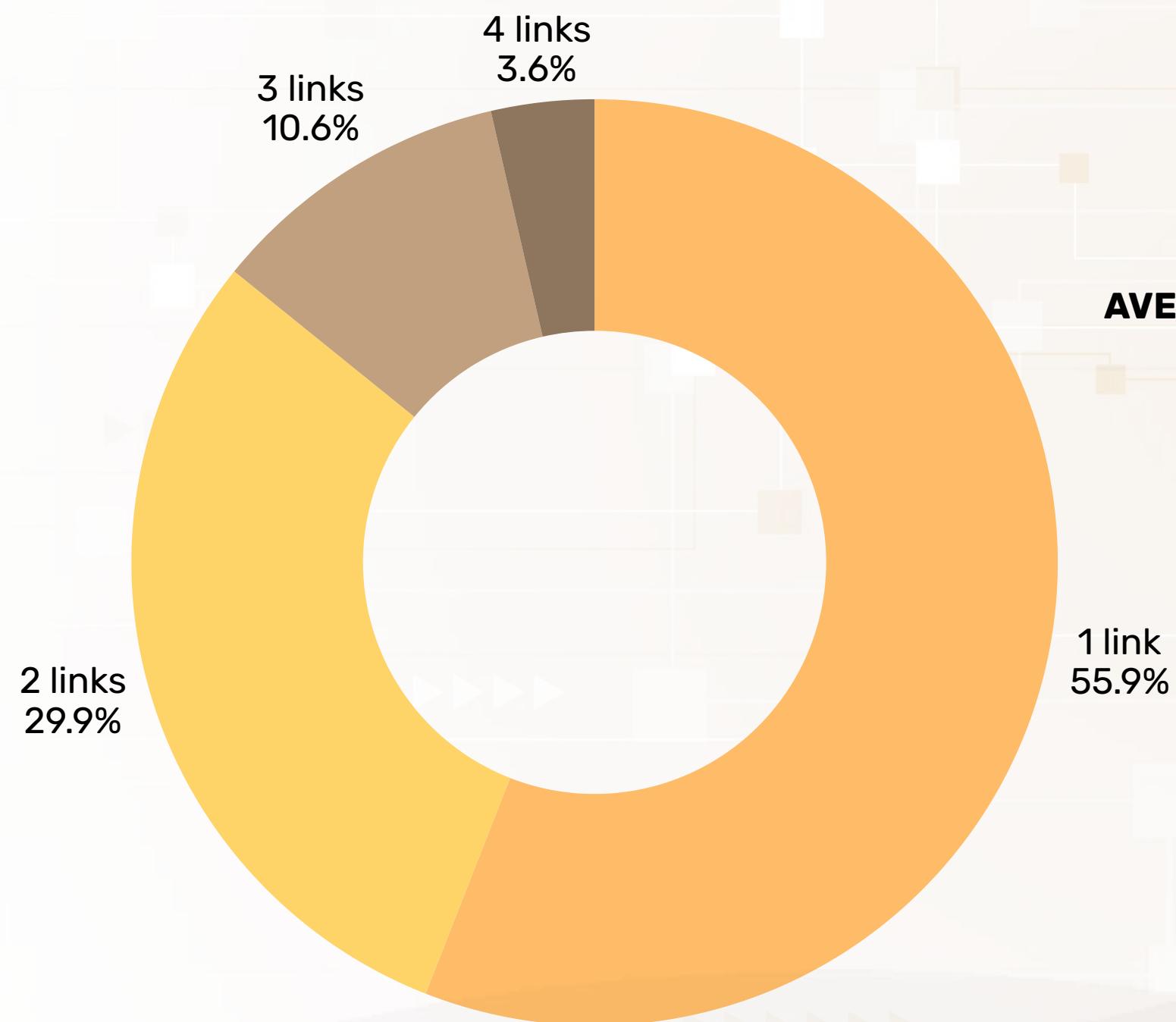
Dofollow links continue to be, by far, the most in-demand type of link on Growwer, just as they were last year. **In 2025, 98.7% of posts included dofollow links**, compared to only 1.3% nofollow links.

However, looking ahead to 2026, it will be crucial to pay attention to the evolution of nofollow links. **The emergence and consolidation of Language Models (LLMs)** is beginning to change the paradigm: these systems do take nofollow links into account as signals of context, relevance, and semantic authority.

DO FOLLOW



NUMBER OF LINKS



1.62

AVERAGE NUMBER OF LINKS PER PUBLICATION

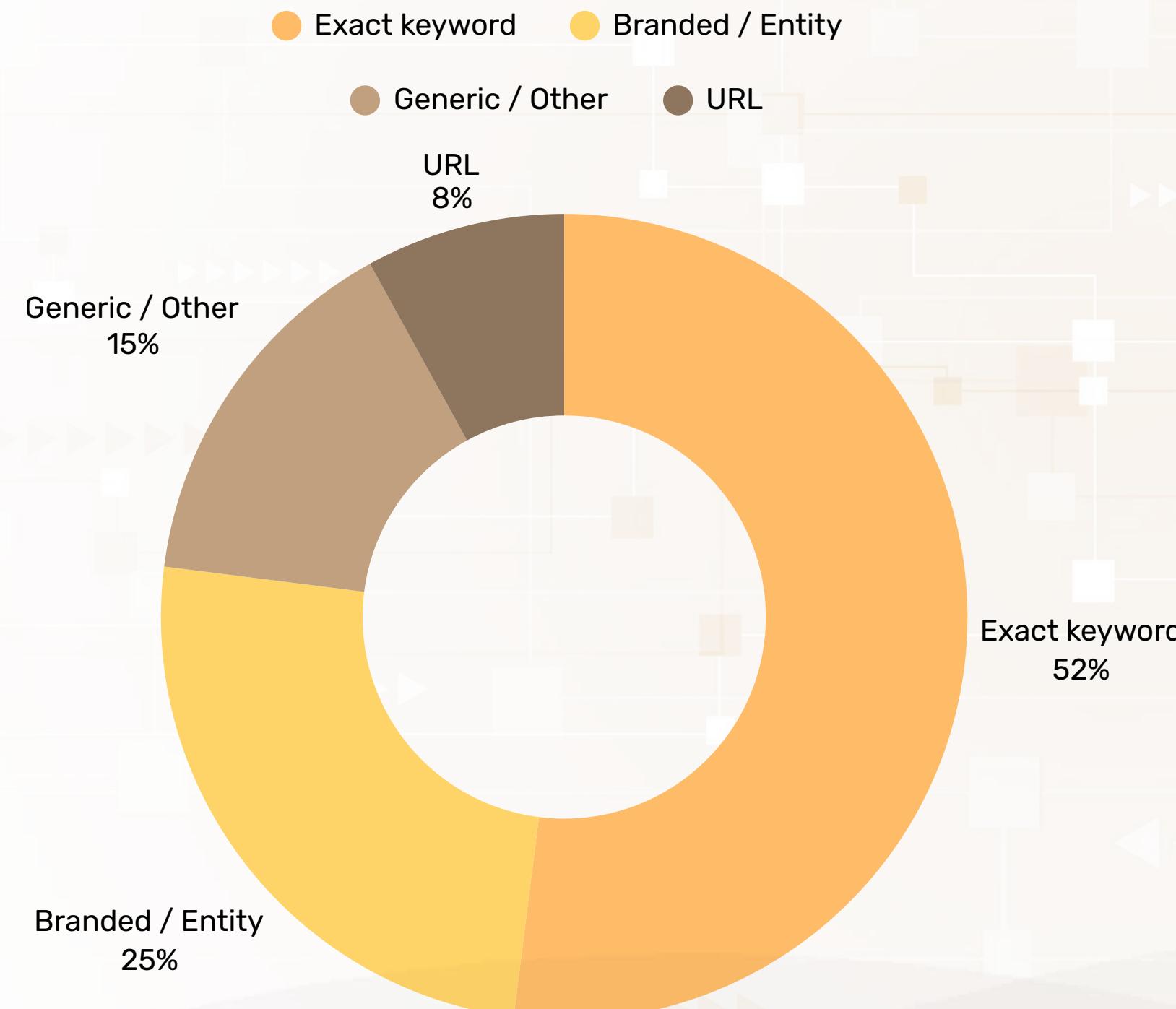
➡ 2024: 1.50

The 2025 analysis confirms that the predominant model remains that of a single link per publication, accounting for 56.0% of the total. Even so, **greater diversification is observed** compared to previous years.

Posts with two links now represent **29.9%**, consolidating themselves as an increasingly common practice.

The **average number of links per publication in 2025 is 1.62**, without abandoning the conservative approach of concentrating authority in a few links.

ANCHOR TEXT



The 2025 data reflects an anchor text strategy mostly focused on exact keywords, at **52%**.

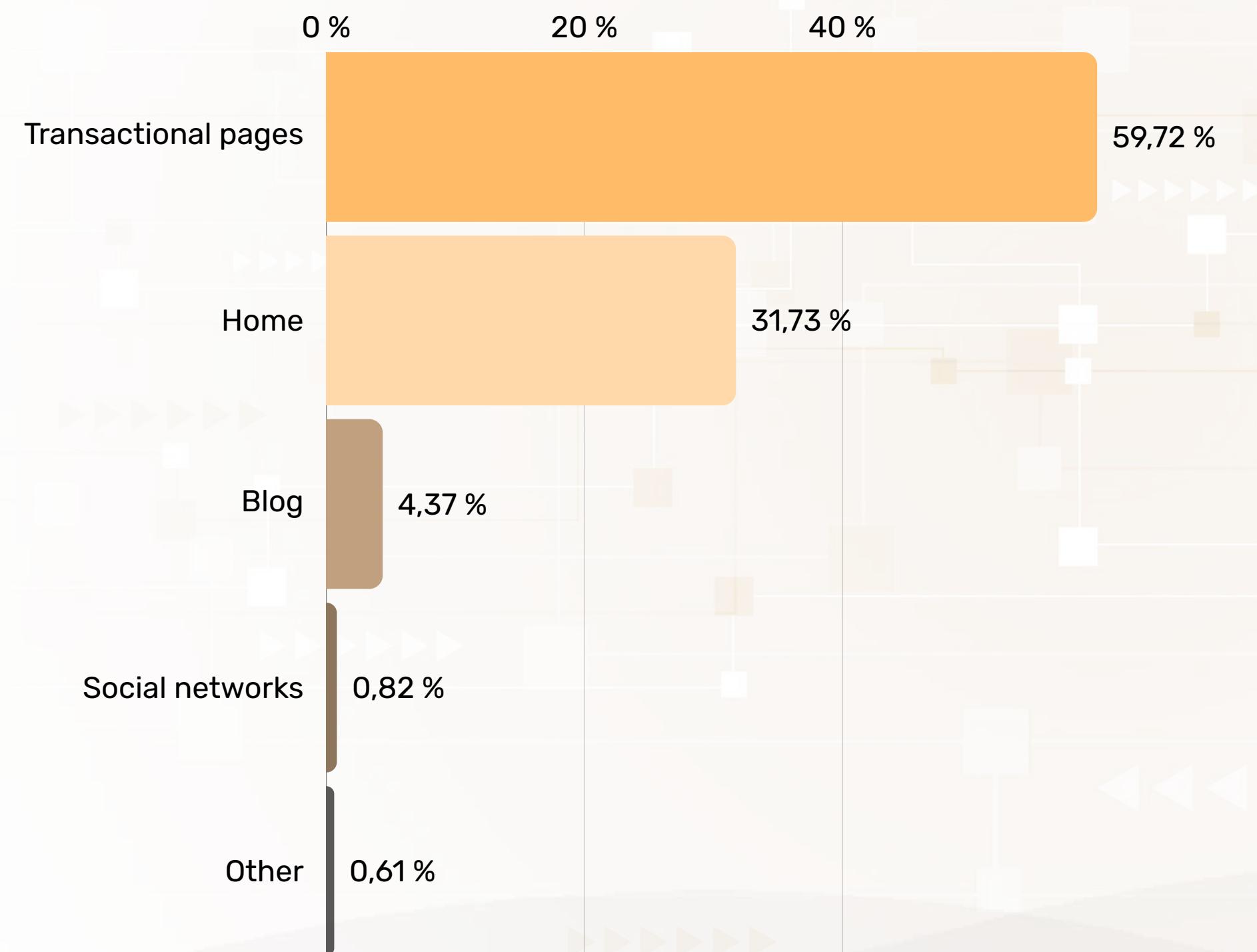
However, **the remaining 48% is divided between brand/entity anchors (25%), generic and other anchors (15%) and URLs (8%)**, indicating a relevant diversification of the link profile, aimed at reinforcing naturalness, branding and semantic strength **without sacrificing SEO boost**.



2024:

Exact Keyword: 26.5%
Branding: 28.1%
Generic / Other: 40.3%
URL: 5.1%

LINK DESTINATION

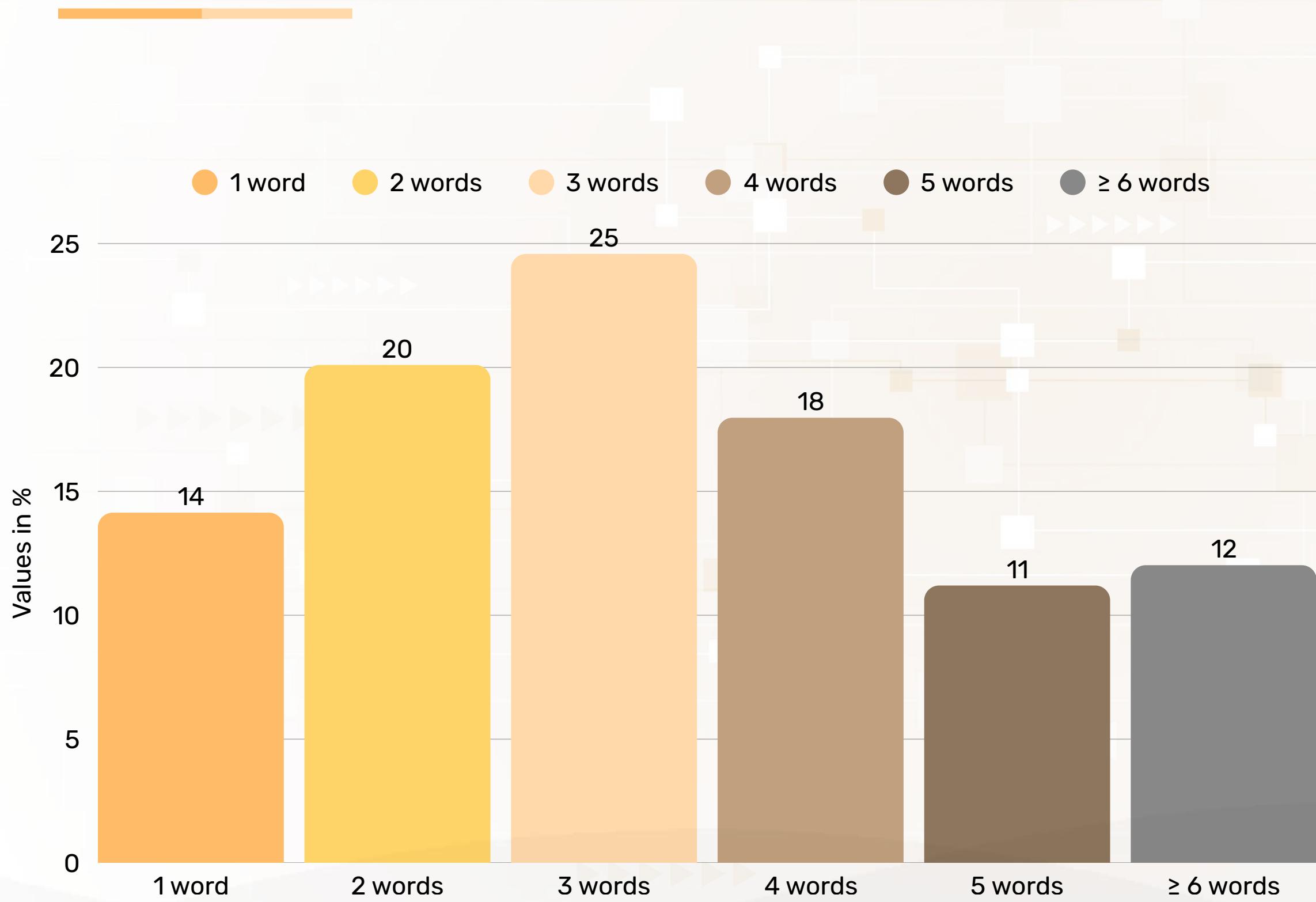


The **majority of links point to transactional pages** (services, products, or categories), accounting for 59.72% of the total, reinforcing the clearly commercial focus of link building.

The **homepage continues to hold significant weight at 31.73%**, primarily used to strengthen authority and brand globally; its use has doubled compared to the previous year.

To a lesser extent, the links point to informative content on the blog (4.37%), while the destinations to social networks (0.82%) and other secondary pages (0.61%) have a residual use, **generally linked to visibility strategies**, brand support or specific needs.

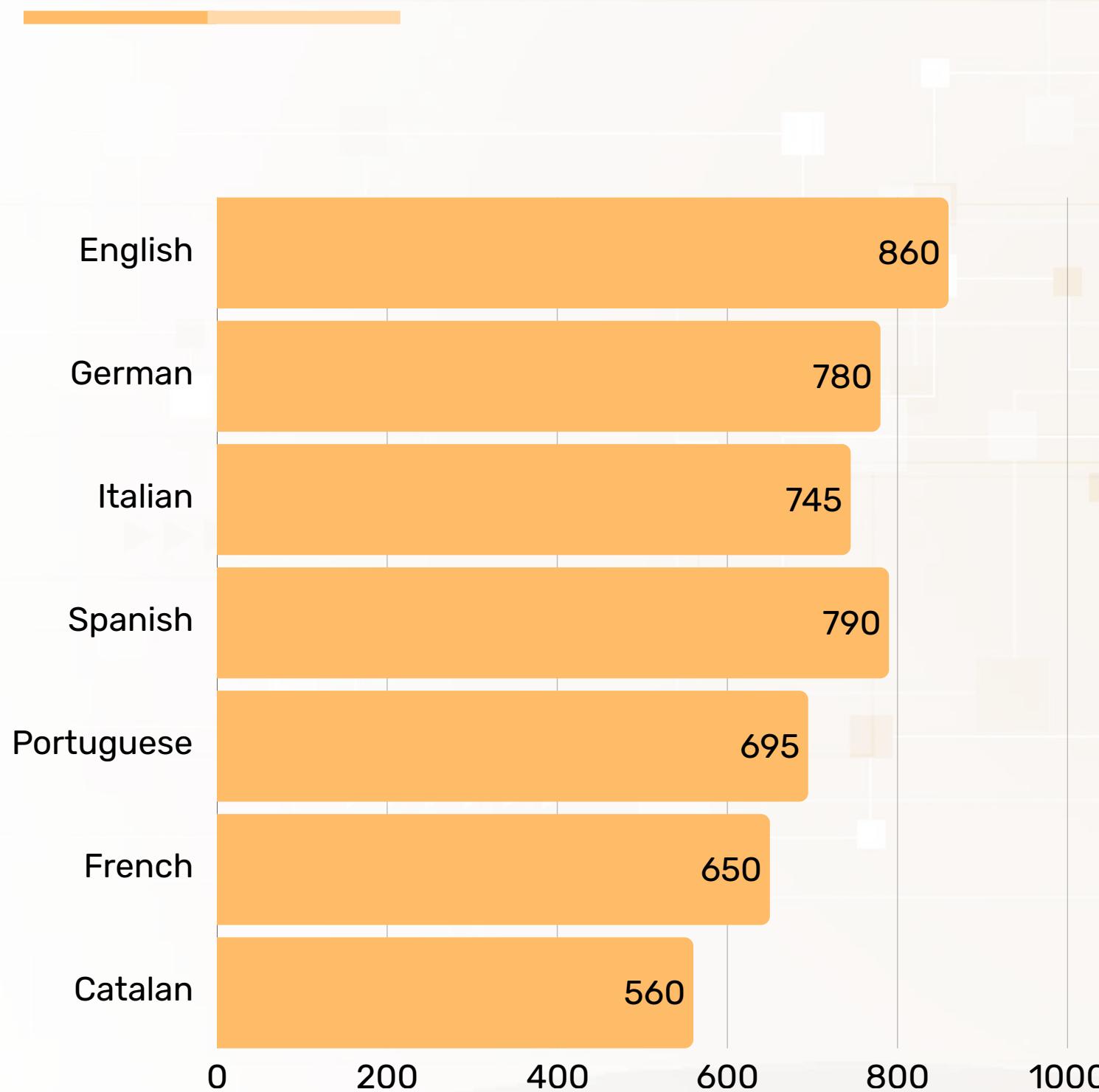
ANCHOR TEXT LENGTH



In 2025, a more extensive and contextual anchor text strategy will become established. **Three-word anchors will remain the most frequent**, although they are losing ground to the growth of longer anchors (four or more words), which are gaining prominence compared to 2024.

This shift reinforces a trend towards more natural, descriptive anchor texts aligned **with long-tail searches**, reducing reliance on short and overly optimized structures.

TEXT LENGTH



785

AVERAGE WORD COUNT
PER PUBLICATION IN
GENERAL

In 2025, the average length of content remains stable compared to previous years, consolidating an optimal range for sponsored publications.

English continues to be the language with the longest articles, while markets such as Spanish, German and Italian are around 750-800 words.

This stabilization reflects a maturity in the content strategy, prioritizing quality and relevance over volume.

TRAFFIC OBTAINED BY PUBLICATIONS

A quality link not only transfers authority **but also attracts qualified traffic and provides the naturalness that algorithms demand**. For us, this metric is the true indicator of success, as it transforms a mention into a real source of leads.

As in previous editions, we audited three leading websites using Ahrefs. The goal is to analyze what percentage of their total links generate at least one organic visit per month, thus differentiating link building focused on volume from a strategy geared towards relevance and return on investment.

19.87%

ZALANDO

6.96%

ZARA

8.67%

EL CORTE INGLÉS

43.1%

OF THE GROWWER PUBLICATIONS **MANAGED BY THE MANAGED SERVICE** HAVE OBTAINED QUALIFIED TRAFFIC

35.2%

OF THE GROWWER PUBLICATIONS **NOT MANAGED BY THE MANAGED SERVICE** HAVE OBTAINED QUALIFIED TRAFFIC

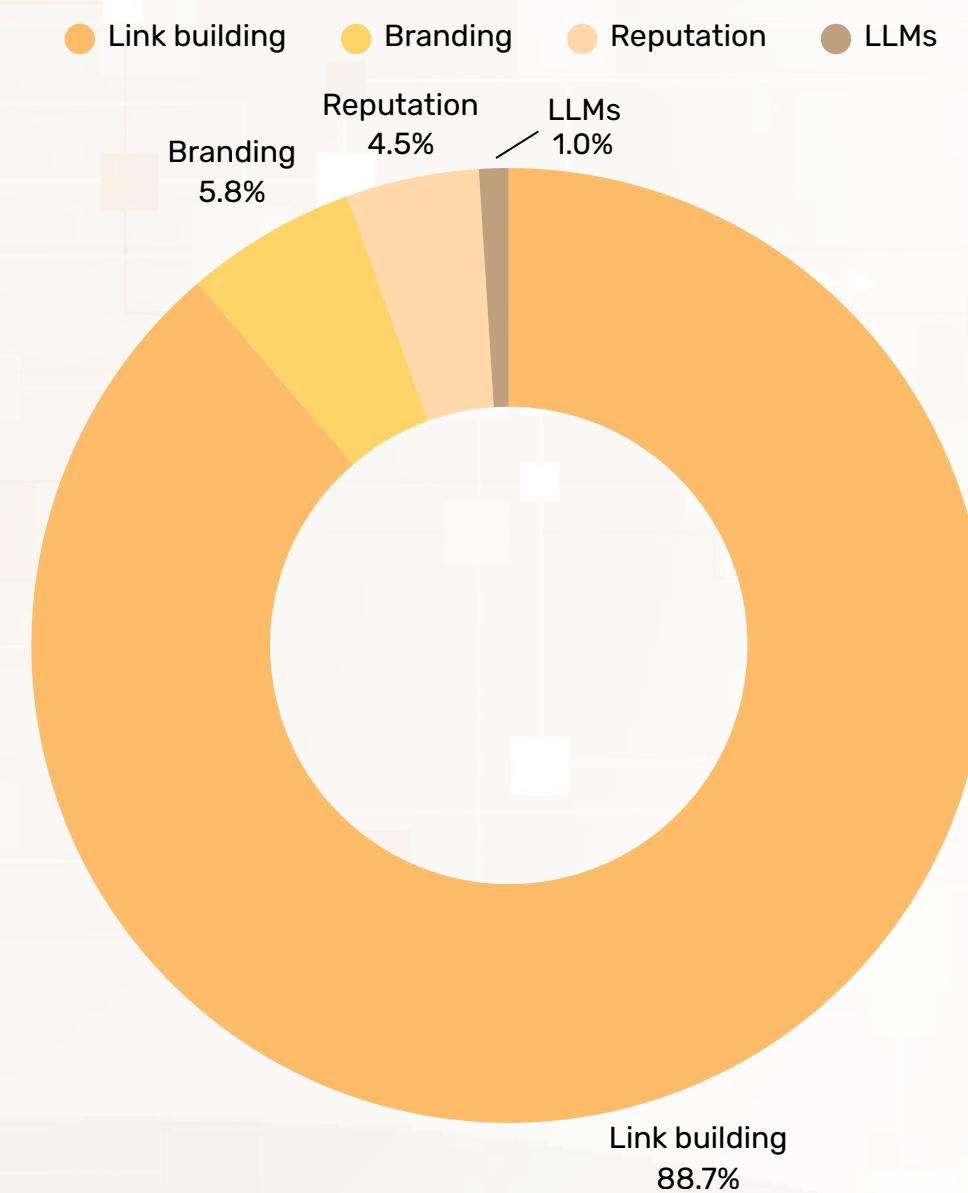
TARGET: MANAGED SERVICE CUSTOMERS

For the first time, **the 2025 study analyzed the main objective of customers who contract Growwer's managed service.**

The results clearly show that link building geared towards SEO positioning remains the main driver of hiring: 88.7% of clients declare this objective as a priority.

At a second level, **objectives more closely linked to brand building and perception appear, such as branding (5.8%) and online reputation (4.5%),** usually associated with projects with greater maturity or broader communication needs.

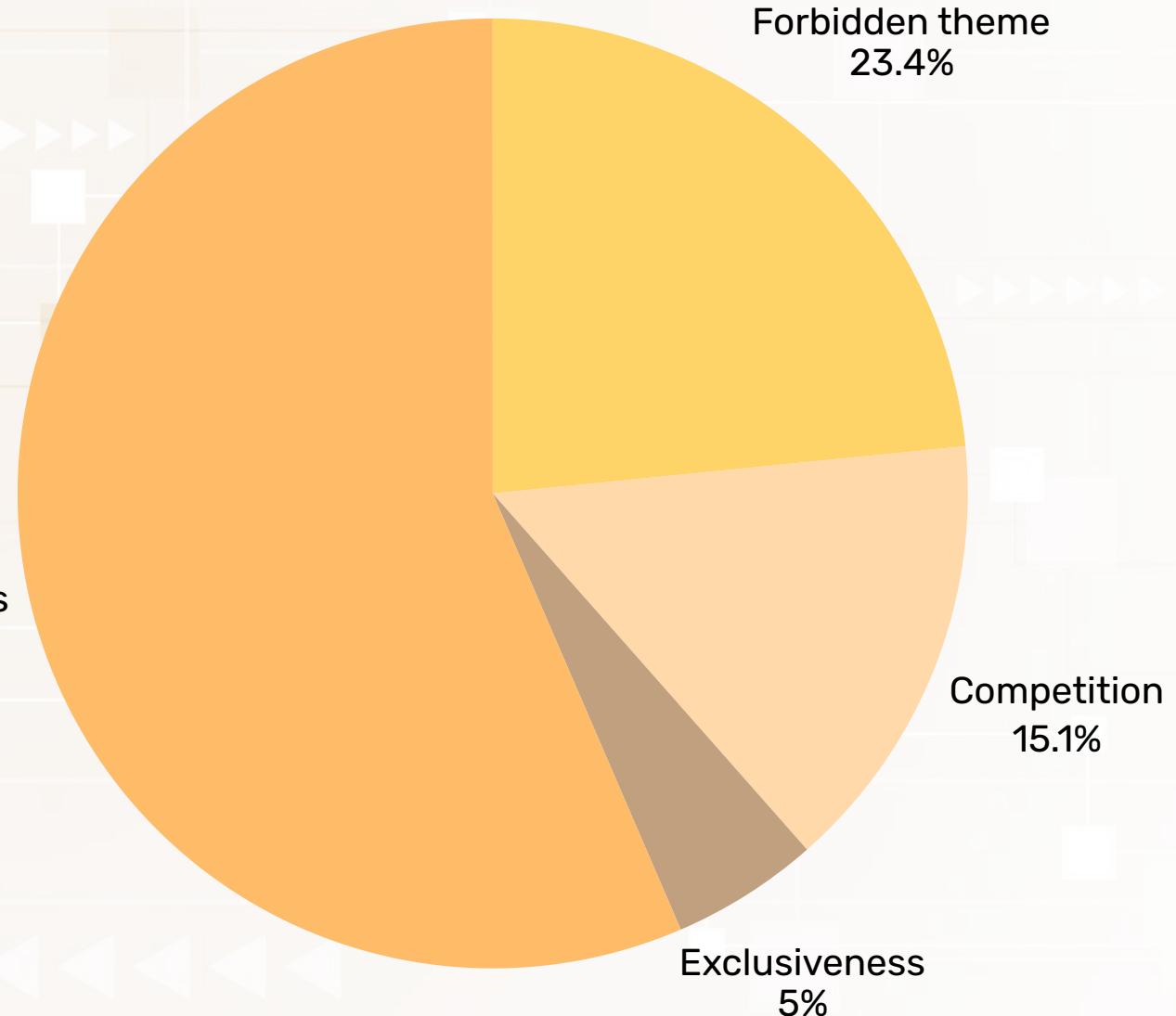
Finally, although still with a small weight (1.0%), an initial interest in visibility in Artificial Intelligence systems and language models (LLMs) is identified.



REASONS FOR REJECTION (SELLERS)

Another piece of information we're bringing up for the first time: **Why do sellers reject orders?**

The majority (56.18%) fall under "other reasons" such as price adjustments or unfeasible deadlines. The remainder are due to **prohibited topics** (23.29%), **direct competition** (15.49%), and **exclusivity agreements** (5.04%).



Only 7.64% of orders are rejected by sellers.

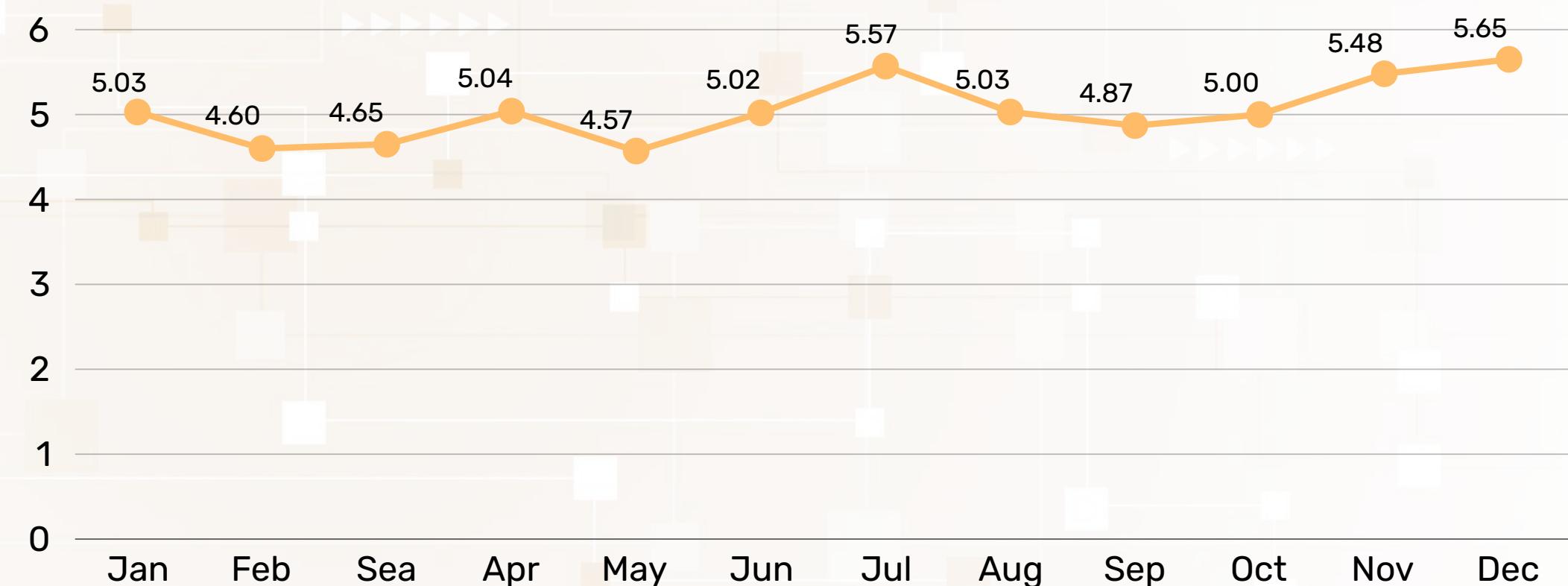
AVERAGE PUBLICATION TIME

The average publication time in 2025 has consolidated at a **global average of 5.04 days**.

This operational agility has remained constant throughout the year, even in months of very high demand such as December.

The **highest times coincide with holiday periods** such as August and the end of December.

Thanks to this speed, brands can execute their link building strategies almost in real time, eliminating the traditional waiting times of the sector.



AVERAGE ANNUAL TIME

5.04 days

2024: 5.78

JORDI PASCUAL

Head of SEO Toro Abogados

“Growwer has become a key tool in our SEO strategy. The variety of media and competitive prices compared to other platforms make all the difference.

I would also highlight the managed service, which allows us to keep our strategy going during holiday periods thanks to continuous and proactive advice. A tool and a team you can rely on.”

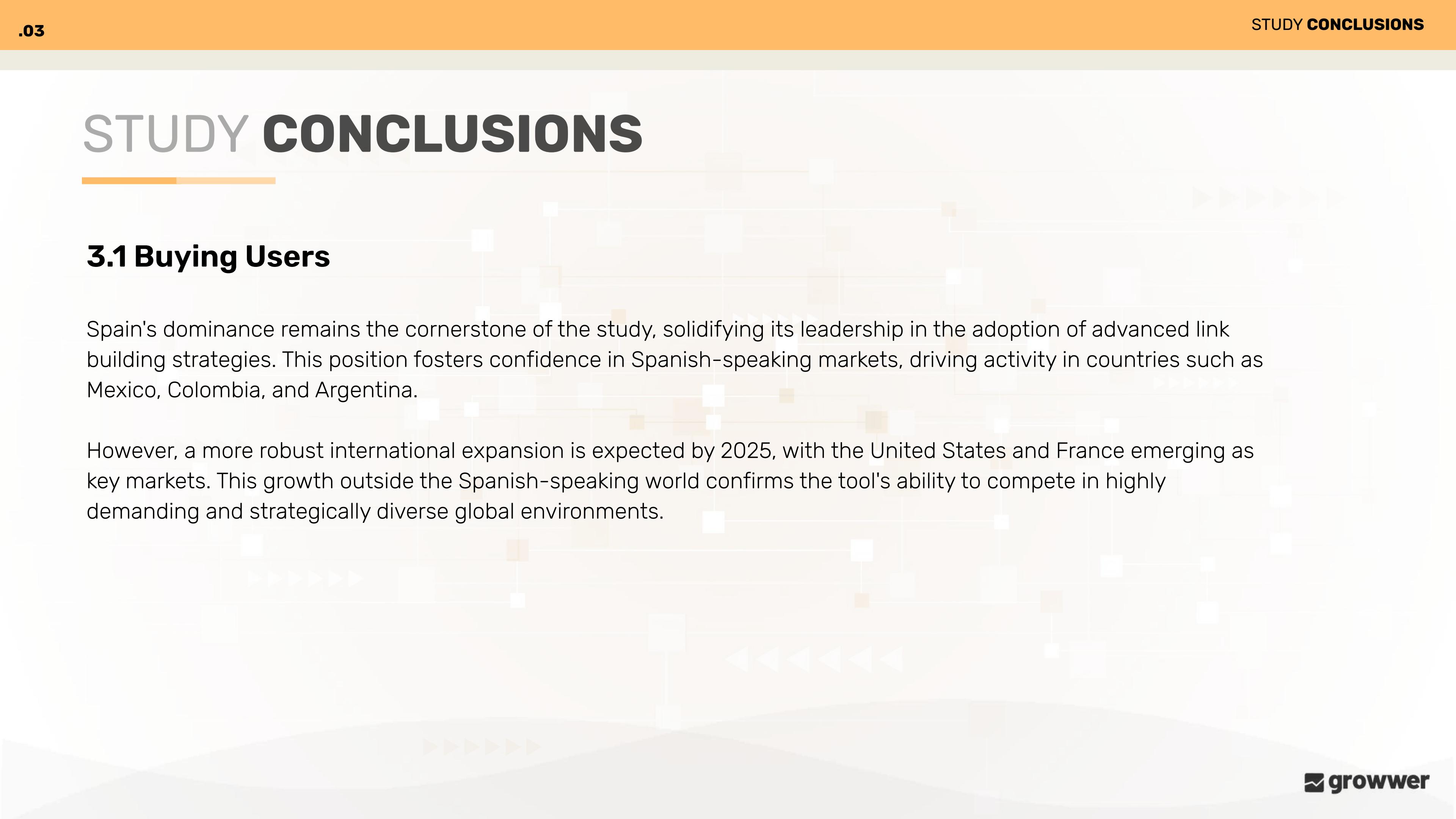


STUDY CONCLUSIONS

.03



STUDY CONCLUSIONS



3.1 Buying Users

Spain's dominance remains the cornerstone of the study, solidifying its leadership in the adoption of advanced link building strategies. This position fosters confidence in Spanish-speaking markets, driving activity in countries such as Mexico, Colombia, and Argentina.

However, a more robust international expansion is expected by 2025, with the United States and France emerging as key markets. This growth outside the Spanish-speaking world confirms the tool's ability to compete in highly demanding and strategically diverse global environments.

STUDY CONCLUSIONS

3.2 Selling users: press and blog

Growwer's platform offering showcases a global ecosystem, with over 30,900 blogs and 7,700 news outlets available. While the number of blogs still far surpasses traditional news outlets in terms of total volume, the platform has achieved unprecedented geographic diversification, with particularly strong inventory in the United States, Spain, and the United Kingdom.

In terms of inventory, the consolidation of newspapers in markets like Germany, France, and Italy reflects an effort to offer high-authority environments. This broad availability of news media compared to blogs suggests that a mix of both channels remains essential for achieving long-term SEO goals, allowing buyers to choose between the specialization of blogs and the relevance of newspapers.

STUDY CONCLUSIONS

3.3 Shopping habits

The average annual spend per user has increased to €2,212.49, representing significant growth compared to €1,837.66 in 2024. This data confirms a strong commitment to more ambitious link building strategies and greater investment in high-authority digital assets. With an average of 11.6 posts per user per year, a pattern of recurring and planned consumption is consolidated, integrating link building as a structural pillar of the marketing mix.

This trend is reinforced by an average order value of €189.82, representing an 8.6% increase compared to the previous year (€174.86). This increase not only reflects market inflation but also a conscious preference among users for higher-quality backlinks and organic traffic, recognizing that the authority of the source is the differentiating factor for long-term SEO performance.

STUDY CONCLUSIONS

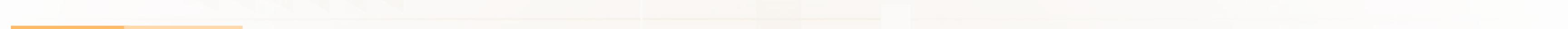


3.4 Most in-demand sectors

This year, the sectors generating the most interest confirm that the primary goal is to appear in major media outlets. Current Affairs, Society, and Politics remains the favorite at 12.28%, clearly demonstrating that news sites continue to be the preferred platform for gaining visibility. Meanwhile, Economy, Business, and Employment rises to 8.27%, solidifying its position as the second most popular choice for companies.

The Technology and Apps sector is also growing, reaching almost 7%, while others like Sports (5.65%) and Travel (5.16%) are maintaining a steady pace of orders. In short, brands are moving away from very small niches to try and carve out a space for themselves in sectors with much larger and more diverse audiences.

STUDY CONCLUSIONS

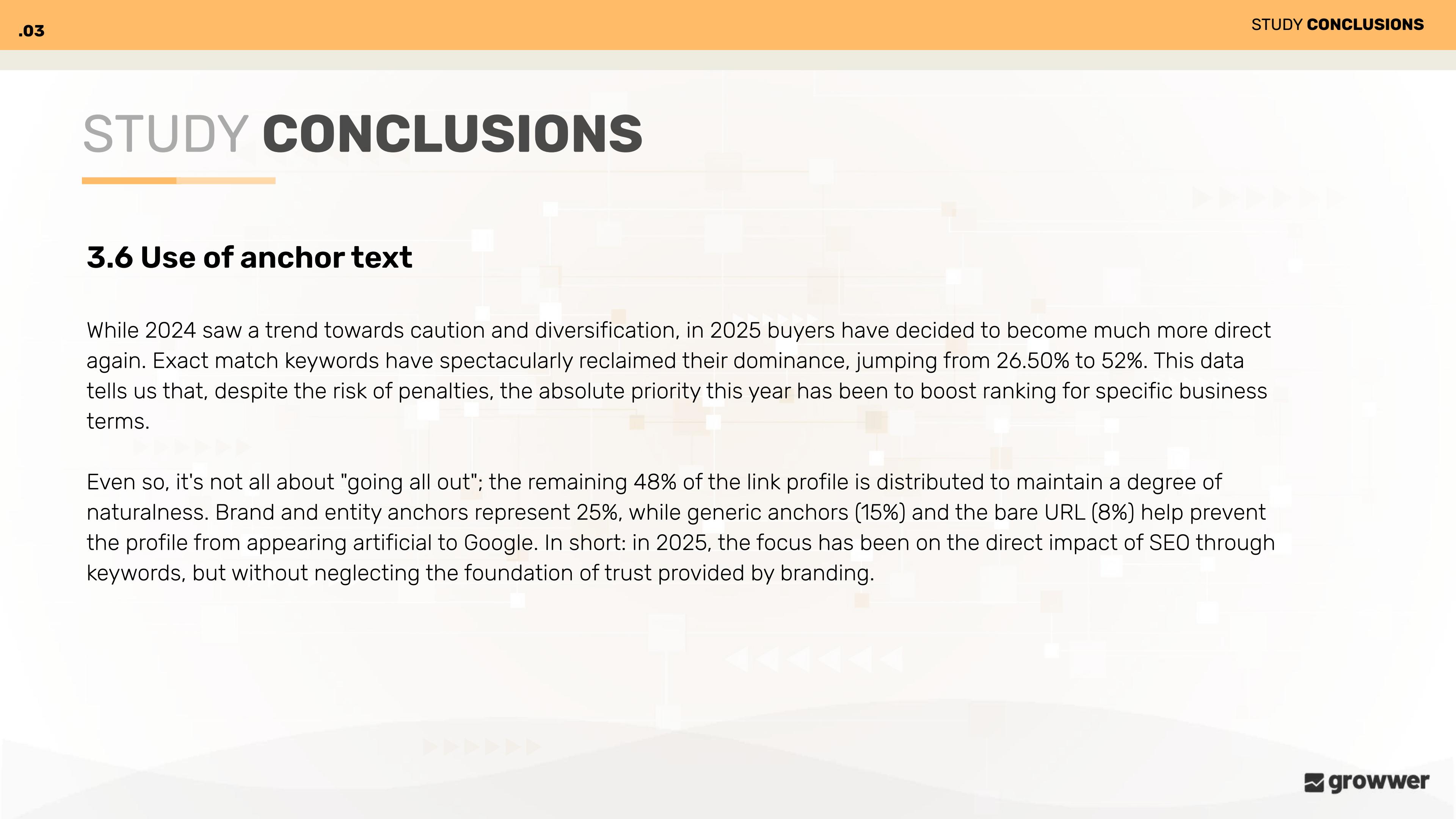


3.5 Use of links

The preference for DoFollow links remains overwhelming at 98.74%. Clearly, users are risk-averse and seek to maximize the authority passed on by each source. However, an interesting shift in mindset is emerging for 2026: we are beginning to see NoFollow links valued as context and relevance signals by new artificial intelligence models (LLMs).

Where there is a radical shift is in the destination of these links. While last year the strategy was more varied, in 2025 transactional pages (products or services) have taken over, accounting for almost 60% of orders. The homepage has become less important at 31.73%, which tells us that buyers are no longer just looking for brands, but are going directly to the pages that generate sales. Blogs and social media remain very marginal, confirming that right now link building is, above all, a direct conversion tool.

STUDY CONCLUSIONS

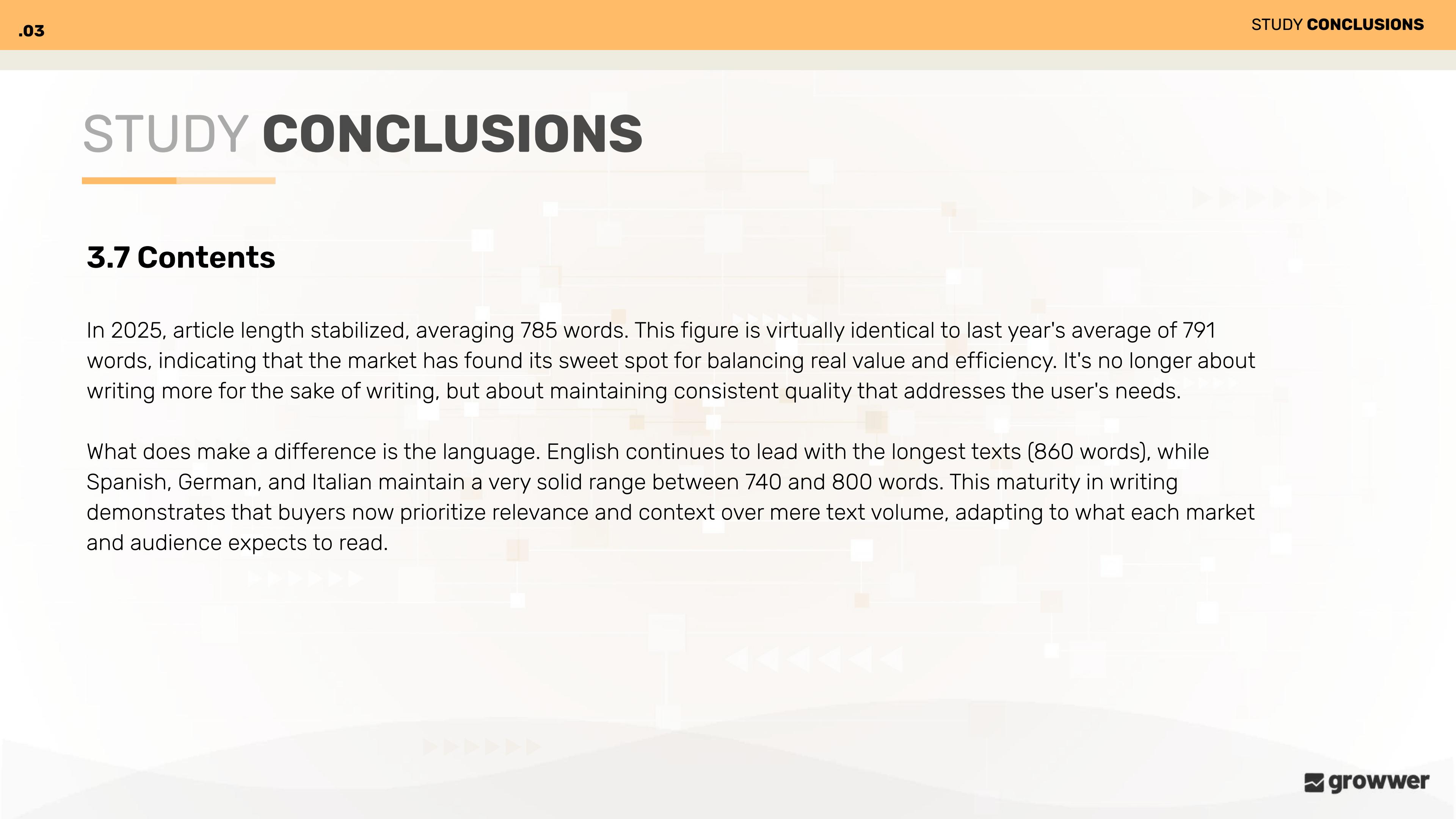


3.6 Use of anchor text

While 2024 saw a trend towards caution and diversification, in 2025 buyers have decided to become much more direct again. Exact match keywords have spectacularly reclaimed their dominance, jumping from 26.50% to 52%. This data tells us that, despite the risk of penalties, the absolute priority this year has been to boost ranking for specific business terms.

Even so, it's not all about "going all out"; the remaining 48% of the link profile is distributed to maintain a degree of naturalness. Brand and entity anchors represent 25%, while generic anchors (15%) and the bare URL (8%) help prevent the profile from appearing artificial to Google. In short: in 2025, the focus has been on the direct impact of SEO through keywords, but without neglecting the foundation of trust provided by branding.

STUDY CONCLUSIONS



3.7 Contents

In 2025, article length stabilized, averaging 785 words. This figure is virtually identical to last year's average of 791 words, indicating that the market has found its sweet spot for balancing real value and efficiency. It's no longer about writing more for the sake of writing, but about maintaining consistent quality that addresses the user's needs.

What does make a difference is the language. English continues to lead with the longest texts (860 words), while Spanish, German, and Italian maintain a very solid range between 740 and 800 words. This maturity in writing demonstrates that buyers now prioritize relevance and context over mere text volume, adapting to what each market and audience expects to read.

STUDY CONCLUSIONS



3.8 Publications with traffic

The 2025 analysis confirms a clear trend: traffic is solidifying its position as the primary indicator of quality in link building. Overall, 43.1% of managed posts generated qualified traffic, confirming that a well-executed strategy not only impacts authority but also effectively connects with real, active users.

This data reflects a significant improvement over previous years and highlights the importance of prioritizing relevant media, content aligned with search intent, and proper link contextualization. The result is a publication profile capable of providing tangible value, both in terms of visibility and potential return.

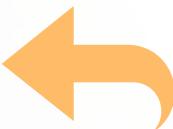
On the other hand, comparative analysis shows that strategic link building significantly increases the likelihood of a post generating traffic, reinforcing the idea that not all links have the same impact. The difference lies not in the volume, but in each post's ability to attract qualified users organically and sustainably.

CARLOS MÉNDEZ

SEO & CRO Manager en ACCOM

“Growwer allows us to implement effective link-building strategies with minimal time investment. It is undoubtedly a key platform for our growth in organic projects.”





PR IN THE LLMs ERA

04



GEO: THE NEW PARADIGM

Thanks to this study we see that with a **PR strategy** we no longer just position ourselves on **Google**: we build context for LLMs.



Traditional SEO VS* SEO for AI

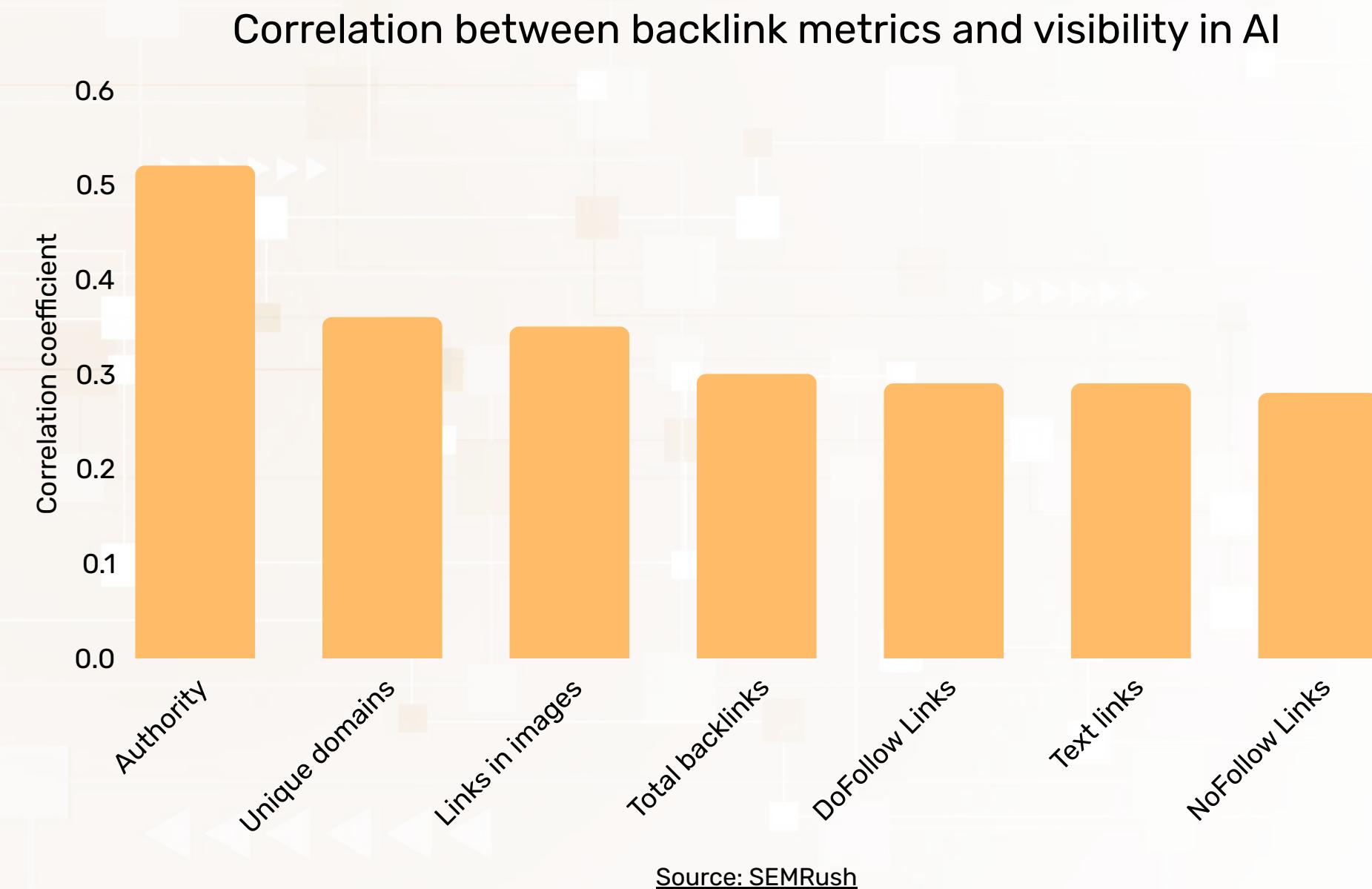
	TRADITIONAL SEO	AI FOR SEO
GOAL	Improve rankings and organic traffic	Being cited and referenced in generative responses
ARTICLES	Keyword-optimised content	Contextual, explanatory and reference content
LINKS	DoFollow links aimed at ranking	Links + mentions + co-citations (DoFollow and NoFollow)
METRICS	DR, DA, positions, clicks	Presence in LLMs, citations, and semantic authority
OPTIMIZATION	Technical + on-page	Semantic understanding + editorial health + brand relevance

*SEO for AI does not compete with traditional SEO: it complements and expands it.

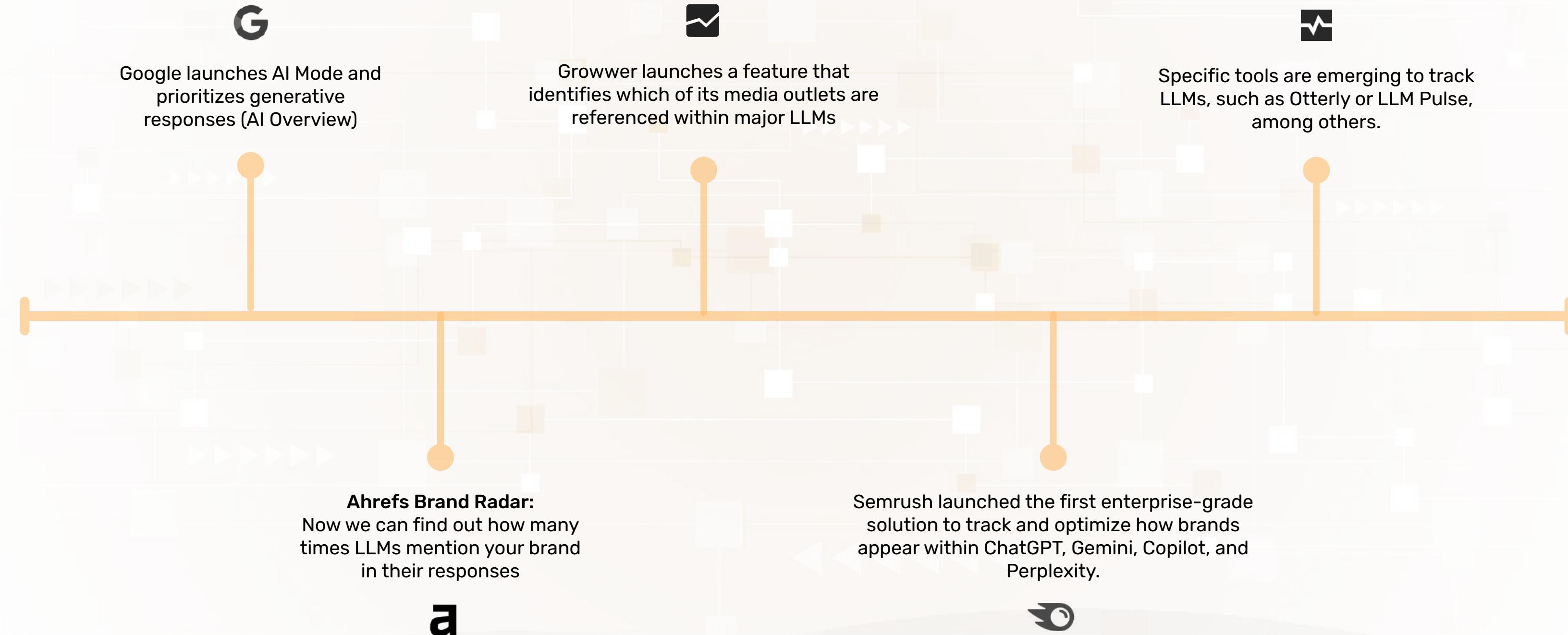
THE NEW ROLE OF NOFOLLOWS

In the era of LLMs, **nofollow links cease to be secondary and become strategic allies to appear cited within generative responses**, because the models value contextual authority and brand mentions, not just the classic transmission of PageRank.

This change is especially **positive for link building campaigns**, because it expands access to media that do not offer DoFollow and, in addition, usually involves lower costs, improving the efficiency of the investment.



NEW DEVELOPMENTS IN THE SECTOR



The order of the timeline may not correspond to the actual release dates.

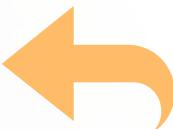
JORGE ARBOLEYA

CRO & SEO Team Lead en Melia Hotels International

"Growwer has become an essential tool in our daily work. What we value most is the human and professional quality of its team; they don't just sell us a link, they get involved to ensure that each publication has maximum thematic affinity and a real impact on SEO.

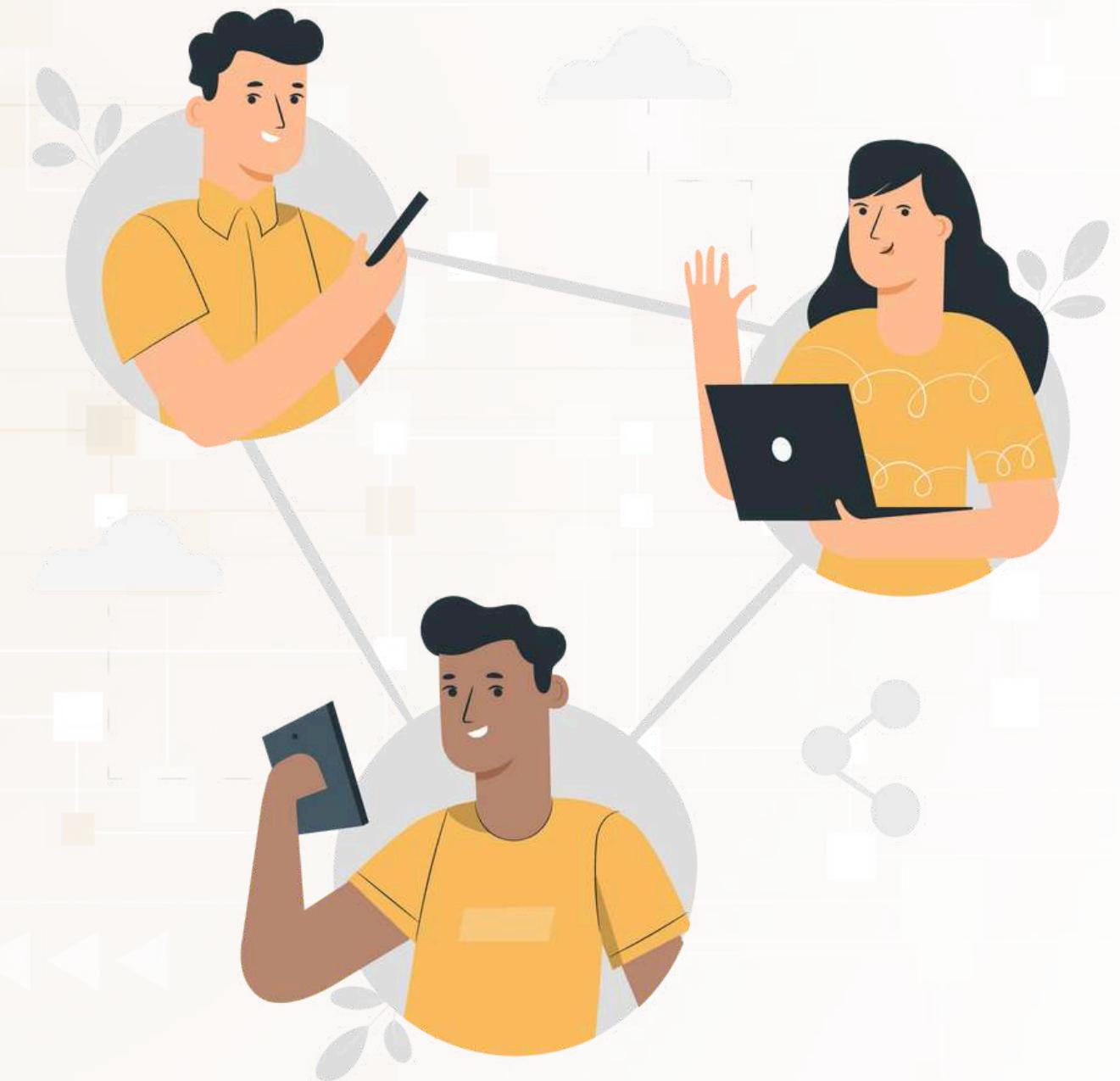
The platform is intuitive and response times are extremely fast, offering a level of security and confidence that we haven't found in other options on the market. Without a doubt, it's the best choice for delegating our media strategy with complete peace of mind."





RECOMMENDATIONS AND OPINIONS FROM SEO PROFESSIONALS

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JORDI ORDÓÑEZ

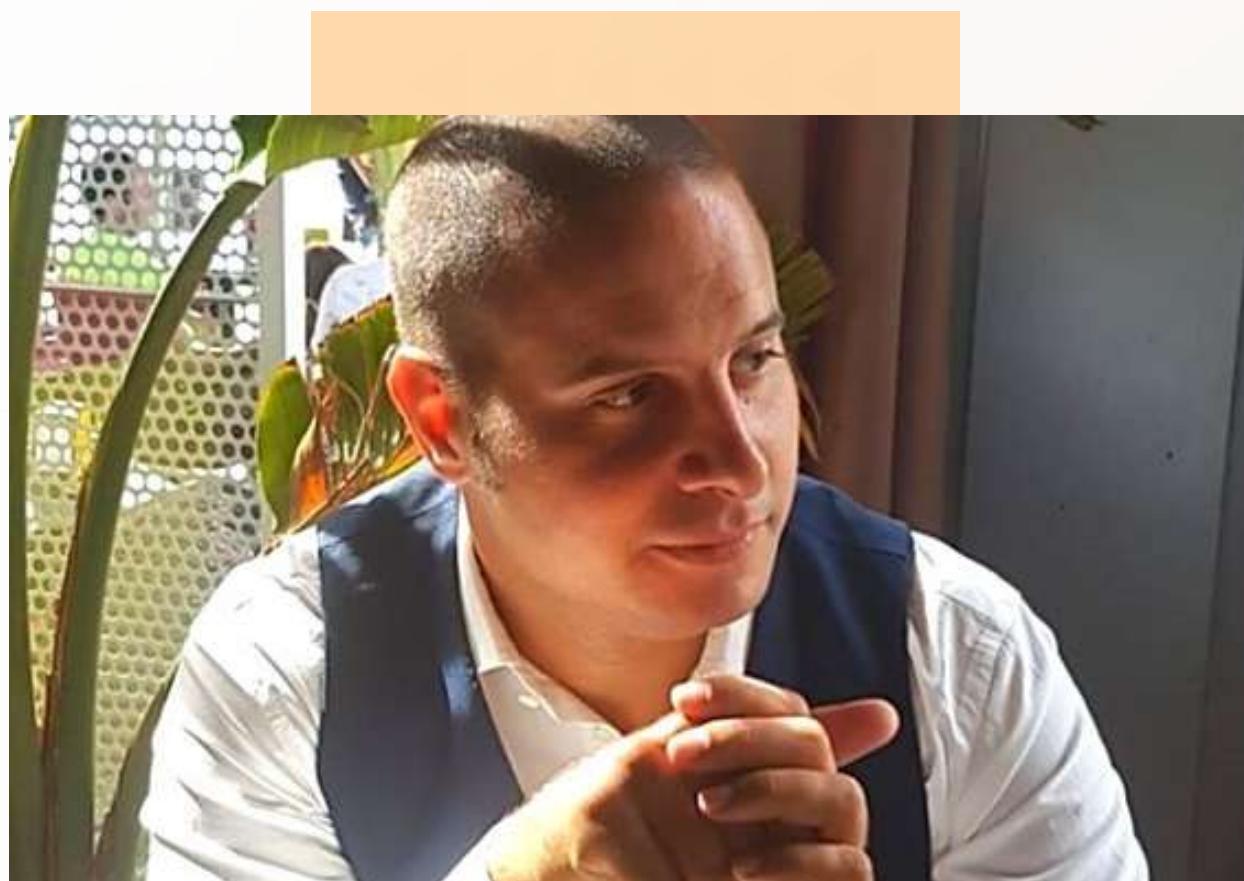
Ecommerce consultant, Amazon expert, speaker and trainer

When marketplaces incorporate AI that draws on external sources, can off-platform presence and authority become a real business factor for sellers?

Amazon no longer relies solely on traditional internal signals (CTR, conversion rates, reviews, or sales history). It's increasingly clear that the algorithm is incorporating external authority signals, closely aligned with the EEAT concept that Google has been using for years. Amazon validates products and brands through media mentions, specialized blogs, editorial comparisons, "best of" rankings, awards, and external expert reviews. This process, which we could call authority anchoring, allows Amazon to reduce algorithmic risk and recommend products supported by reliable external sources, just as LLMs and AI Overviews do by prioritizing sources with subject-matter authority.

In this context, having a "classic" technical SEO skill is more valuable than ever for Amazon clients, since knowing how to audit external link building, citations, co-citations, and PR, and knowing how to leverage these factors to increase anchor authority, is a skill that will set you apart. From this technical SEO and PR perspective, the door opens to advanced editorial link building strategies and qualified mentions aimed not only at Google, but also directly at influencing ranking, algorithmic recommendations, and product visibility within the Amazon ecosystem itself and in generative AI environments.





CÉSAR APARICIO

Founder of Craneo
Previlegiado

What signals do you think are really influencing the generation of responses by models like Google AI Overviews or ChatGPT today?

We are close to definitively establishing the final stage of natural language between machines and humans.

I will explain the above based on the intention of the question, and I will do so in a simplified way. The way we humans communicate is based on three key elements: syntax, semantics, and pragmatics.

1.) Conventional search engines initially used syntax to understand natural language. This refers to the rules for combining words to form grammatically correct sentences. The 2019 BERT update, with its well-known implementation of bidirectional search, was a prime example. This was the era of keywords.

2.) Semantics then arrived with force: the study of the inherent meaning of words and sentences. A good example of this was that search engines no longer required such large texts to interpret the content. It was the era of entities.

3.) Currently, with LLMs, we are in the era of pragmatics: how language is used in context, considering intention, the listener, and the communicative situation. That is, a combination of the two previous points (syntax and semantics) plus intention, tone, context, etc. In this model, the data sources are more extensive; that is, the "positioning" signals constitute a much more elaborate set of information. This is why SEO "tricks" don't achieve such measurable cause-and-effect results (it will become more difficult over time). It is the era of intention (what can be inferred from the data, that is, the implicit reality).

Many of these conclusions stem from a presentation I gave in 2016, "Semantics, Pragmatics, and Future Trends That Are Already Here." The past has caught up with us ;)

JUAN GONZÁLEZ VILLA

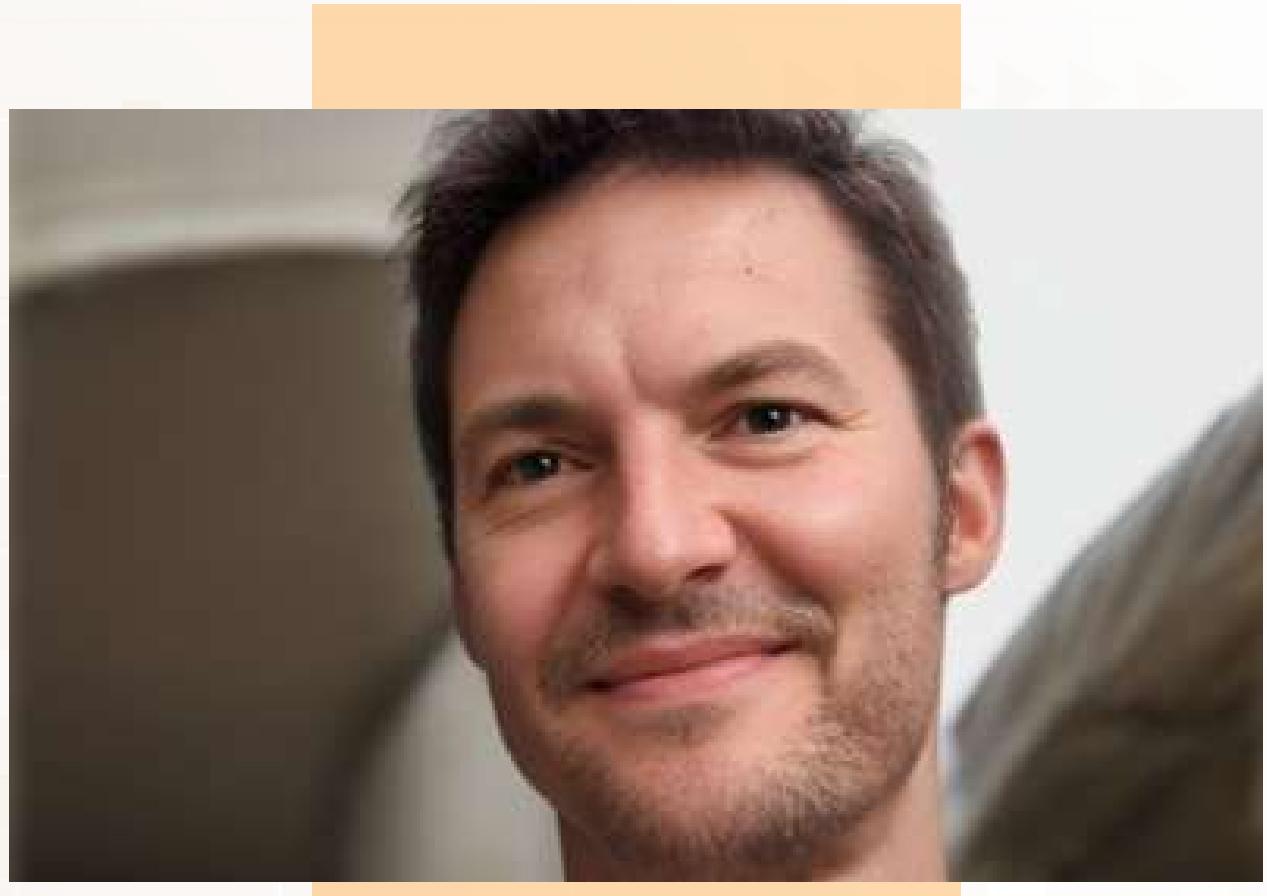
Head of SEO and founder, USEO

Looking ahead to 2026, what dogma of current technical SEO do you think will be seen as obsolete, even though it is still widely recommended today?

Well, I don't know if you can call it a "dogma," but something that's already changing, and will change even more by 2026, is the practice of only analyzing Googlebot crawling. Now it's also necessary to check if we're blocking or causing errors for OpenAI search bots and other AI assistants, and if they're rendering our content correctly. In other words, everything that worried us before about Googlebot, we should now be concerned about OAI-SearchBot, Claude-SearchBot, and so on.

As a tip, I'll say that many people think they don't have problems because they don't block any of these bots via robots.txt, but it could be their server or firewall that's blocking the IPs of OpenAI, Anthropic, etc. for making too many requests.

Google's IPs are usually on the whitelists of all servers, but the IPs of these other companies are not yet.





LUIS M. VILLANUEVA

Co-Founder & CEO Webpositer Agency,
Webpositer Academy & SeoBoxClub

Looking ahead to 2026, what strategic mistake are many brands making today by continuing to invest in SEO as if the target were Google and not the entire information system that decides what is recommended and what is ignored?

The main mistake is continuing to think that users only use Google, or even that Google is still the same search engine that returns "10 results to click on".

And no, since the emergence of AIs that we have all incorporated into our daily lives, Google has evolved by responding with Artificial Intelligence to most of the queries we make in the search engine, whether with AIO or with AIM.

In addition to this, users no longer just search on Google, but their searches have become increasingly diversified to the benefit of AI and even other social platforms such as (YouTube, TikTok, Instagram or Pinterest) or forums themselves, but this would warrant a longer post.

Therefore, the goal is no longer just to position ourselves in a search engine and for the user to find me and click on me; the goal must also be to be part of the AI's response, to be in the conversation, and for that we must know what we have to do to appear there.

And yes, we must do SEO; the basics remain the same, but with certain particularities that we must learn and begin to apply in our projects.

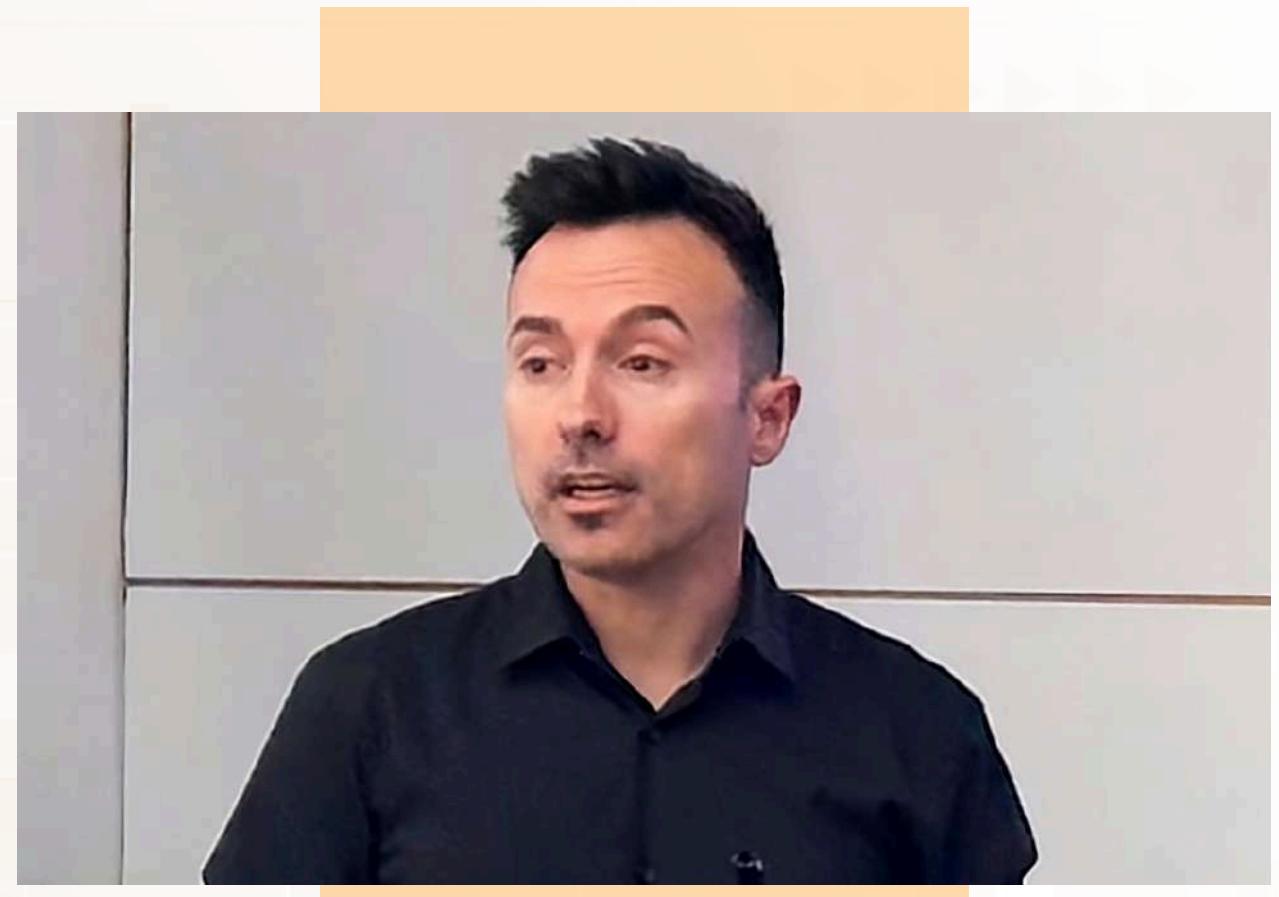
CARLOS ORTEGA

Technical SEO
Consultant

To what extent do you think current SEO is still stuck on optimizing for systems of the past, while search engines are moving towards models that prioritize understanding, context, and credibility?

Actually, I think the foundation has always been the same: that search engines understand you well (thanks to good crawlability and rendering), that what you say makes sense and has context (the famous semantics), and, above all, that you are trustworthy. This last point is what we know as E-E-A-T, and although it's being talked about everywhere now, it's something that should have been worked on for at least five years.

What has happened is that, with the boom in Artificial Intelligence and LLM models, these pillars have become even more critical. Today, it's not enough to simply write for Writing; if you want an AI to take you seriously and recommend you, your content has to be impeccable and your authority must be genuine. If you were already doing your homework and taking care of these technical and trust aspects, the current changes shouldn't catch you by surprise. In the end, it's about stopping trying to "trick" the algorithm and focusing on offering real value in a structured way.





DEAN ROMERO

Co-Founder of DinoRank and
founder of SEOWarriors

Looking ahead to 2026, what key lesson have you learned from building DinoRank that you would apply to any SEO project, even outside the niche world?

One of the things I learned from building DinoRANK, and that I would replicate in any project, is to create content that captures leads from various traffic sources, not just organic search engine traffic. For example, creating engaging downloadable resources to share on social media and capture leads to guide users to a trial of my product (in this case, DinoRANK).

Working on the brand at many levels to move traffic beyond Google and convert that traffic into leads and those leads into sales; although it takes longer, it is well worth it.

ÁLVARO PEÑA

CEO, CMO and Head of SEO & AI at iSocialWeb • Vuela AI •
Growwer | Podcaster at El Test de Turing

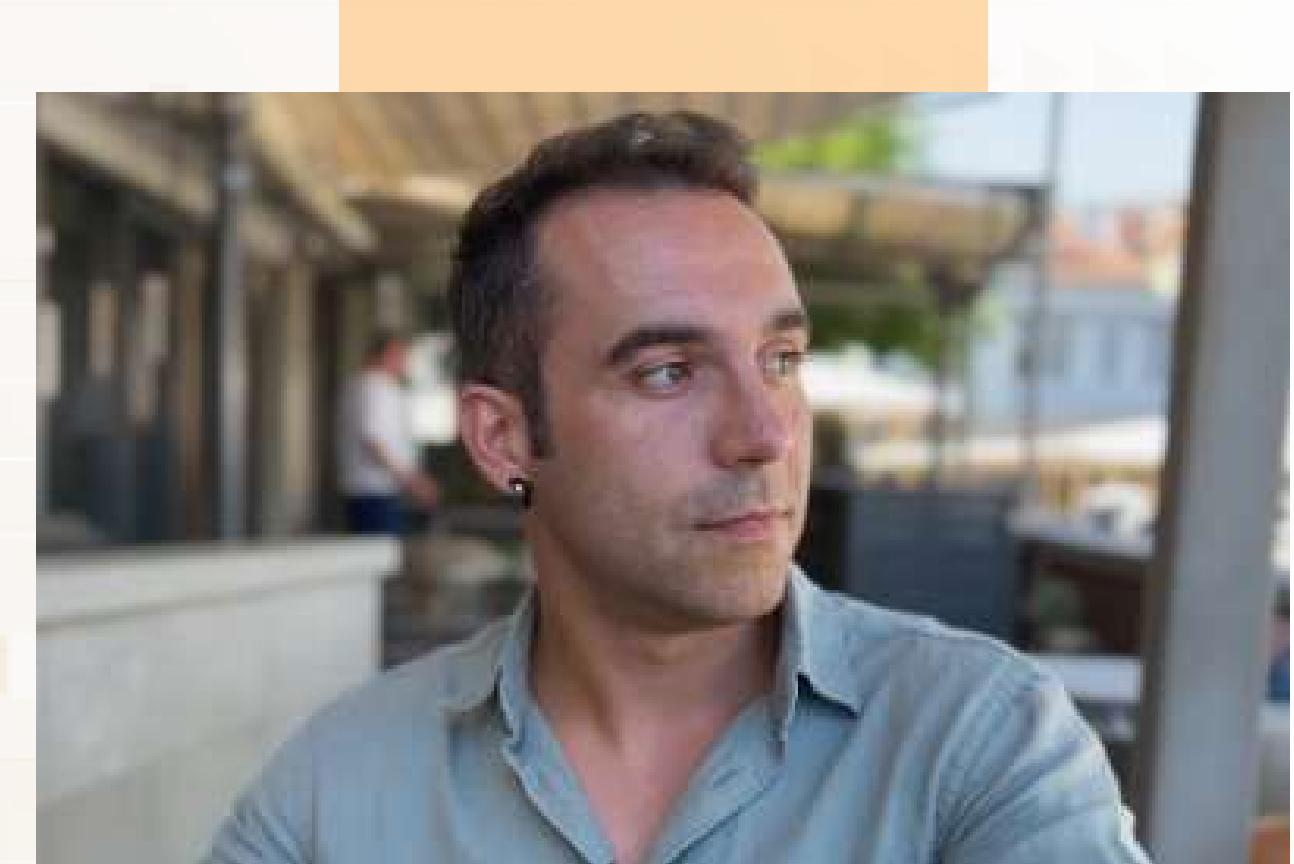
If you had to design an SEO strategy today focused not on rankings, but on influencing AI-based recommendation systems, what would change in terms of approach and priorities?

For me, the fundamental change would be to shift from chasing clicks to seeking validation. The strategy should stop focusing on "indexability" and prioritize credibility with the algorithm.

The key pillars would be:

- Digital PR and Citations (Absolute Priority): AIs validate information by cross-referencing sources. If relevant media outlets and authoritative websites cite you, the model labels you as a "trustworthy source." It's vital to infiltrate the AI's trusted corpus through an aggressive PR strategy to ensure you're the go-to source in its responses.
- Semantics and structured data: In the use of Schema, I would be obsessive, not to gain snippets, but to make the machine understand without ambiguity who you are and what you offer.
- Content "The source of truth": Texts should be created that seek to answer complex questions logically, making it easier for AI to extract the exact fragment to build its generative answer.

For me, the ultimate goal now is not to be the first result on the list, but the irrefutable fact that the AI chooses to build its answer.





CLARA SOTERAS

SEO consultant for media outlets and author of the book "SEO Instruction Manual for Media Outlets"

In a scenario where generative models "consume" media but don't always link them, how do you think major media outlets should evolve to remain a source, a reference, and not just raw material for LLMs?

The media faces a significant challenge in 2026. Being a go-to source for LLMs implies having considerable authority on the subject and being a benchmark in those searches; therefore, it's something that is also cultivated through SEO. Creating content solely to generate clicks and increase page views should no longer be the strategy of publishers.

Visibility and authority should be the focus of editors, as well as continuing to create a unique product that provides value to the reader.

Organic traffic to evergreen content is declining, and we can focus on recovering breaking news, trends, and real-time content to stay connected with readers who search for us through Google and find us through Google Discover. Furthermore, it will be vital to incorporate content creator and community building strategies into our SEO strategies, as social metrics will also be measurable in Search Console and will represent a paradigm shift and a change in the business model of media outlets.

ANABEL VICENTE

SEO Project Manager, Havas Media

Looking ahead to 2026, what mistakes do you see in the approach of large brands that continue to understand SEO as an operational output and not as a structural lever for visibility and business growth?

Looking ahead to 2026, many large brands continue to make the mistake of treating SEO as an operational output (publishing content, closing support tickets, or improving isolated rankings) instead of understanding it as a structural lever for visibility and growth. This approach limits its real impact on business, disconnects SEO from the brand, and excludes it from strategic decisions, precisely when users no longer make decisions solely on Google, but within a broader ecosystem where comparison sites and LLMs influence consideration and choice. Brands that do not evolve toward integrated SEO, focused on capturing intent at each stage, reinforcing differentiating attributes, and defending strategic territories, will see their visibility diminish.

Even though they continue to "do SEO" from an operational perspective, SEO is no longer just about SEO; it's a source of strategic information that incorporates signals from LLMs and powerfully amplifies the user's final decision. Here's to an SEO in 2026 that focuses on the funnel.



CARLOS SÁNCHEZ DONATE

Technical SEO & Co-Founder at
Asdrubal



From your experience, which technical decisions have a real impact on business in the medium term and which ones continue to be implemented due to historical legacy even though they no longer affect results?

All implementations that involve adding CTAs, recommended products, categorizations (with good UX), and "previous, next" elements that promote internal linking and user navigation on the website always have a positive impact on websites with many pages.

I think that, due to a long-standing tradition, a lot of attention is paid to the advice from PageSpeed Insights, which doesn't always make sense from an SEO perspective and isn't always the key to better WPO.

- Convert already optimized images to next-generation formats.
- Add an ALT attribute to decorative images.
- Poorly executed cache configurations

CRYSTAL CARTER

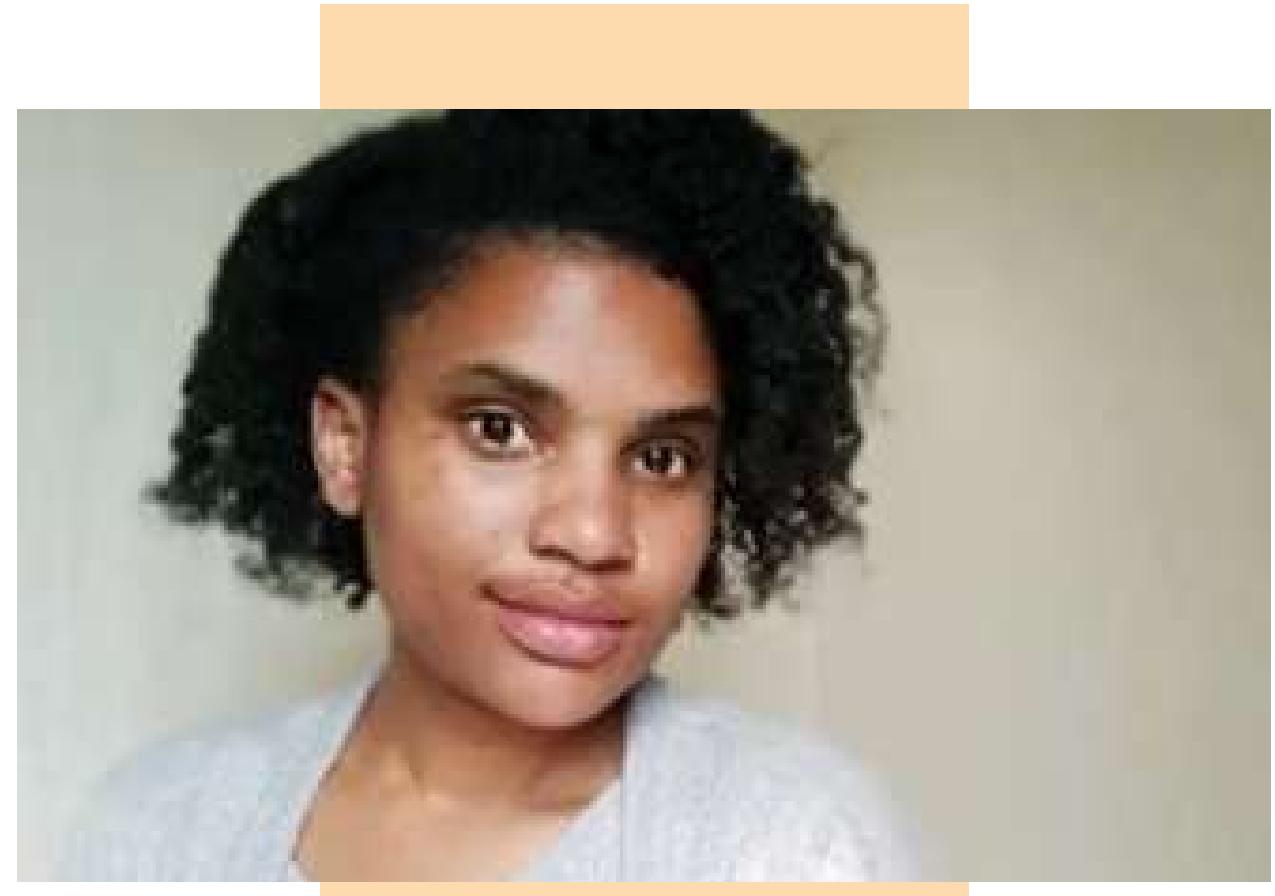
Head of SEO Communications,
Wix

From Wix's perspective, which parts of traditional SEO do you believe will still be relevant five years from now, and which ones will persist mainly due to historical inertia?

Essentially, classic SEO relies on relevance signals (links, mentions), technical conformance (crawlability, tech SEO) and entity association (topics on your domain), in the next five years I do not expect that to change. Users will still want this. But in five years time, who your users are will be very different. Today we are starting to see [the shift AI agents as users] and within a few years this will become the norm.

At Wix, we've configured our website builder with the Agentic Commerce Protocol for instant checkout because automated shopping from AI tools will be a game-changer for users.

AI agents will 1) look for relevance signals to confirm that your brand can satisfy the core prompt, 2) preference brands that use compatible protocols and tech, and 3) evidence on feeds and content to validate their choices. This is very similar to what we've done in SEO for years, but the scale is massive, the process is systematic and bots are the gatekeepers. We must start thinking about these AI agents as decision makers with real world impact.





ANASTASIA KOTCIUBYŃSKA

Head of SEO at SE
Ranking

If an SEO tool had to be reinvented today with GEO in mind, what kind of datasets or layers of analysis would be essential?

A typical SEO tool is based on three fundamental concepts: keywords, domains, and backlinks, on which all other data and reports are based. A GEO tool must take a different approach: the brand must be a more important concept than the domain, thematic groups are more important than individual keywords, and brand mentions (citations) are more important than backlinks. Furthermore, brand impressions (or brand visibility) should probably be the primary metric for a GEO tool, rather than website traffic.



JOSÉ LLAMAZARES

SEO & CRO at Meliá Hotels International

With AI and LLMs increasingly acting as intermediaries in travel planning, what strategic role should SEO play for a hotel chain to influence the decision even before the user reaches Google?

In an environment where AI assistants act as "filters", the strategic role of SEO has evolved: it is no longer enough to position URLs, we must now also consolidate brand authority. The goal is no longer just to appear in a list of results, but to become the AI's personalised recommendation. To achieve this, SEO must work on omnichannel presence, as language models not only analyse our website, but also "learn" from what the press, experts and customers say about us throughout the digital ecosystem.

The key lies in triangulating information. If we maintain a solid narrative and are validated by trusted external sources, AI identifies us as a safe and preferred option. We are no longer just looking for clicks; we are looking to be the accurate data that the algorithm uses to build its response. In 2026, SEO in the travel sector is the discipline responsible for ensuring that, when a traveller asks their assistant for options, the brand appears as the logical and natural response, long before they even consider performing a traditional search.





LORENA ROMERO

SEO Manager Europe
Puma

With the advent of AI and LLMs as new intermediaries in the purchasing decision, how does this change the way a brand like PUMA should approach its medium-term SEO strategy?

AI and LLMs are another tool in the user's purchasing process, allowing them to gather information, compare products and ultimately make a final decision about a product. In the specific case of Puma, we are working on appearing in user conversations with AI, so that our brand is one of the most valued. We treat this visibility as another brand awareness action, with the aim of keeping our brand in the user's mind. But that doesn't mean we're going to stop working on traditional SEO, with a special focus on actions that have an impact on our main KPIs, which will continue to be traffic and revenue.



ERIK SARISSKY

Head of International Marketing & Product Localization, AHREFS

With the launch of Brand Radar, AI Content Helper, and SMM, Ahrefs seems to be assuming that visibility is no longer built solely on Google. What profound change in how search engines and LLMs interpret brands has led you to integrate these three layers into a single platform?

Because the concept of "visibility" has changed structurally. It is no longer just:
Do I appear on Google?

Now it is:
Does my brand exist and is it understood by the systems that generate responses?

Search engines no longer just index pages, they now "interpret entities": brands, products, categories, authority, context. And LLMs do not browse the web like a user, but rather build a mental representation of what your company is, what it is for, and when it should be recommended.





JULIO DOMÍNGUEZ

SEO Manager Ecommerce & Tech
Leroy Merlin España

Looking ahead to 2026, what key decision should a marketplace or retailer make today to ensure that SEO remains a competitive advantage that generates business and is not just a layer of visibility?

Looking ahead to 2026, SEO must move beyond mere visibility to become a real business generator. To achieve this, four key decisions must be made today: First, the usual basics are critical. In large domains, architecture and cleanliness are non-negotiable. If you want Google or any LLM to spend time on your website, you have to be a robust and predictable solution. WPO and 100% structured data. Don't do it just for rich snippets, do it because language models need to read your prices, stock and attributes without errors. AIs want information that is short and to the point.

Segment by URL type and category to detect patterns.

Second, look for EEAT: real solutions, not generic experiences. Leverage your internal data: products purchased together, user reviews, certifications, installation tips. Users are increasingly looking to "solve X," not "buy Y." Third, Free Listings is an organic gold mine. Integrate your actual inventory with Google Merchant Centre, create unique descriptions with AI, and dynamically adjust according to trends. Connect your local stock with Google if you have physical stores. And get the "Top Quality Store" badge: fast shipping and clear returns will boost your CTR. Fourth, omnichannel SEO is a must. What you say on your website is no longer enough. Work with PR and social media because what the ecosystem says about you is what really matters. Media mentions, reviews, and active conversation in forums are the new ranking signals.

ÁLVARO MAZARIEGOS

Audience Director
El Español

Looking ahead to 2026, what strategic mistake are many media outlets making by continuing to optimise as if Google were the only intermediary between content and audience?

The arrival of AI Overview has been the biggest change for audience teams since 2019, with the emergence of Google Discover.

This year we have already seen the closure of some media outlets, and many teams are at real risk of becoming obsolete. For me, the biggest mistake would be to deny what is happening instead of taking advantage of this opportunity to move faster than the rest.

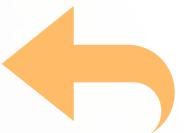
Today, audiences are not only on Discover. It is essential to understand and work with all algorithms: LinkedIn, YouTube, vertical formats and social platforms in general.

It is true that in many of these environments there is no traditional link and they do not always provide direct users. But what is undeniable is that the ecosystem has changed completely.

In my case, I opted for a personal project, Despertar, a self-improvement podcast to understand how YouTube, Spotify and vertical formats worked.

It is a time of change and now is when the best opportunities arise.



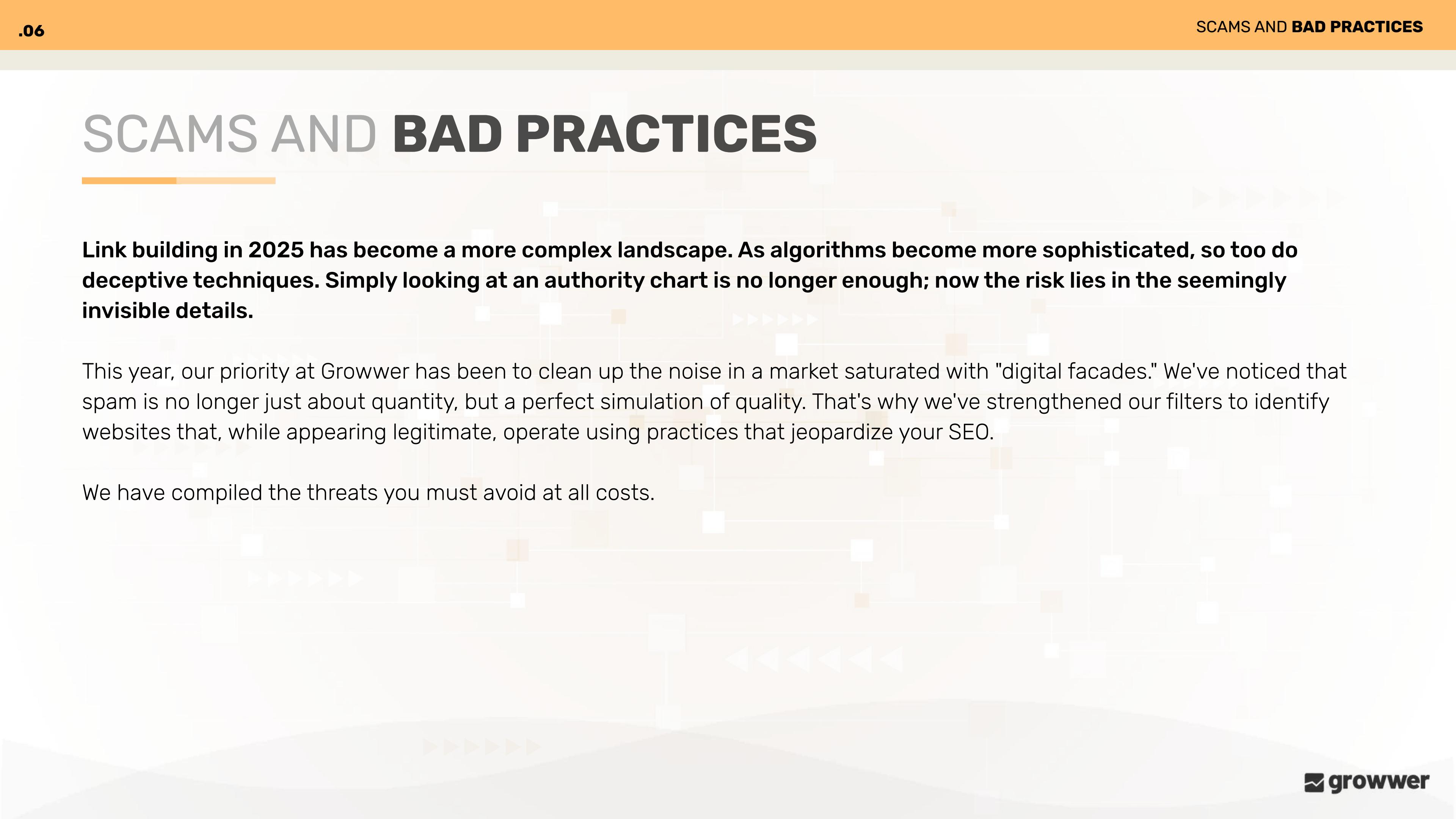


SCAMS AND BAD PRACTICES

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SCAMS AND BAD PRACTICES



Link building in 2025 has become a more complex landscape. As algorithms become more sophisticated, so too do deceptive techniques. Simply looking at an authority chart is no longer enough; now the risk lies in the seemingly invisible details.

This year, our priority at Growwer has been to clean up the noise in a market saturated with "digital facades." We've noticed that spam is no longer just about quantity, but a perfect simulation of quality. That's why we've strengthened our filters to identify websites that, while appearing legitimate, operate using practices that jeopardize your SEO.

We have compiled the threats you must avoid at all costs.

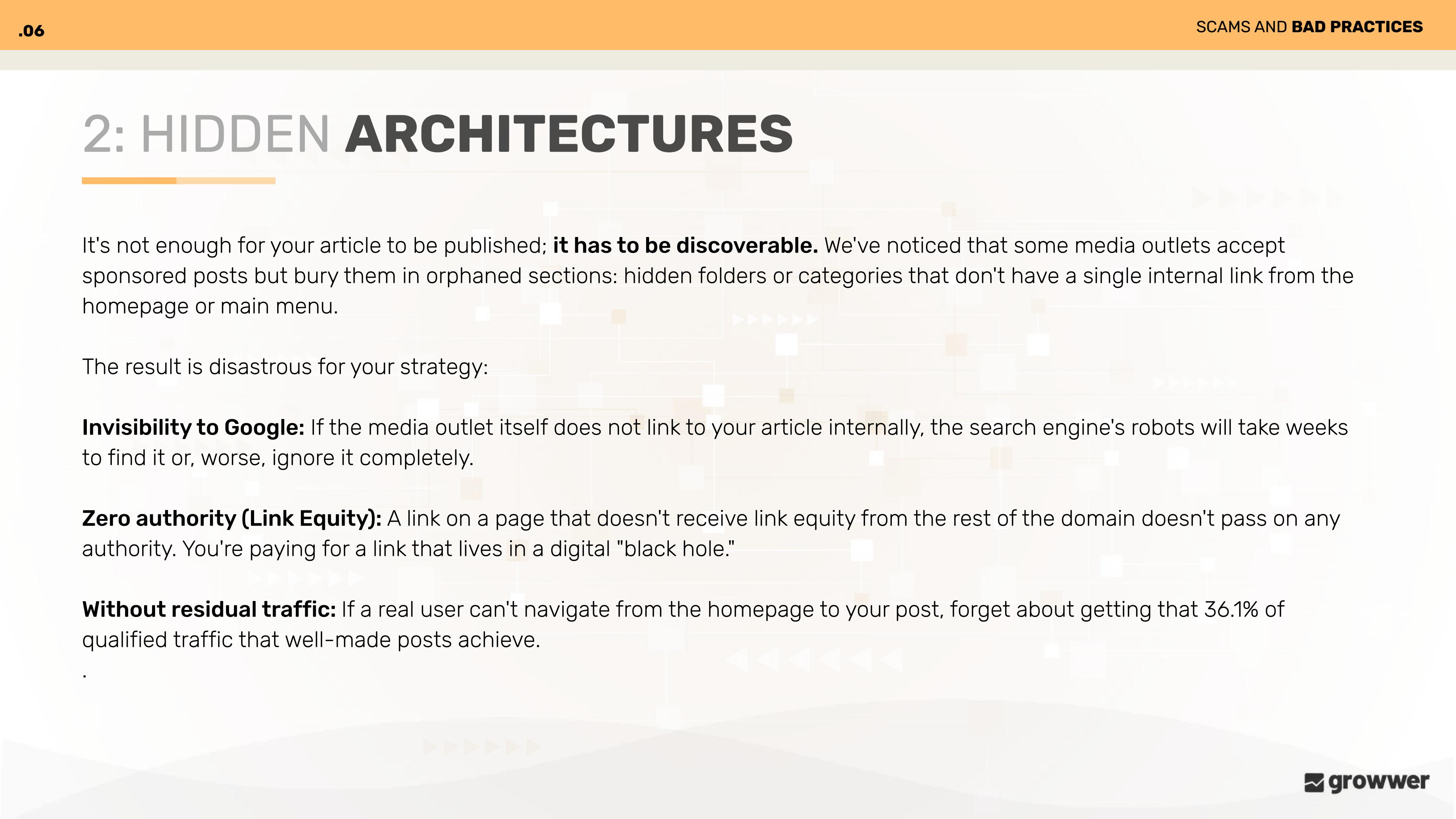
1: DOPED METRICS

Don't be fooled by a pretty number in an SEO tool. By 2025, the fraud of "doped" metrics has become an epidemic in the industry. Networks of sites exist that are designed exclusively to manipulate indicators like **DR (Domain Rating) or DA (Domain Authority)** through bursts of artificial and automated links.

The goal is perverse: to make a website with little real value appear to be a premium medium in the eyes of an unsuspecting buyer, charging exorbitant prices for an authority that, in reality, is pure smoke.



2: HIDDEN ARCHITECTURES



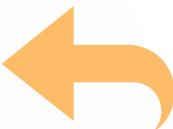
It's not enough for your article to be published; **it has to be discoverable**. We've noticed that some media outlets accept sponsored posts but bury them in orphaned sections: hidden folders or categories that don't have a single internal link from the homepage or main menu.

The result is disastrous for your strategy:

Invisibility to Google: If the media outlet itself does not link to your article internally, the search engine's robots will take weeks to find it or, worse, ignore it completely.

Zero authority (Link Equity): A link on a page that doesn't receive link equity from the rest of the domain doesn't pass on any authority. You're paying for a link that lives in a digital "black hole."

Without residual traffic: If a real user can't navigate from the homepage to your post, forget about getting that 36.1% of qualified traffic that well-made posts achieve.



LINK BUILDING TIPS FOR 2026

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MEDIA SELECTION



Looking ahead to 2026, the **choice of media outlet** should be based on editorial authority and traffic health rather than third-party metrics.

The study shows that, for the first time, print media have surpassed blogs in publication volume. This reflects a search for prestigious news outlets, especially in sectors such as Current Affairs, Society, and Politics, **which are leading the demand**.

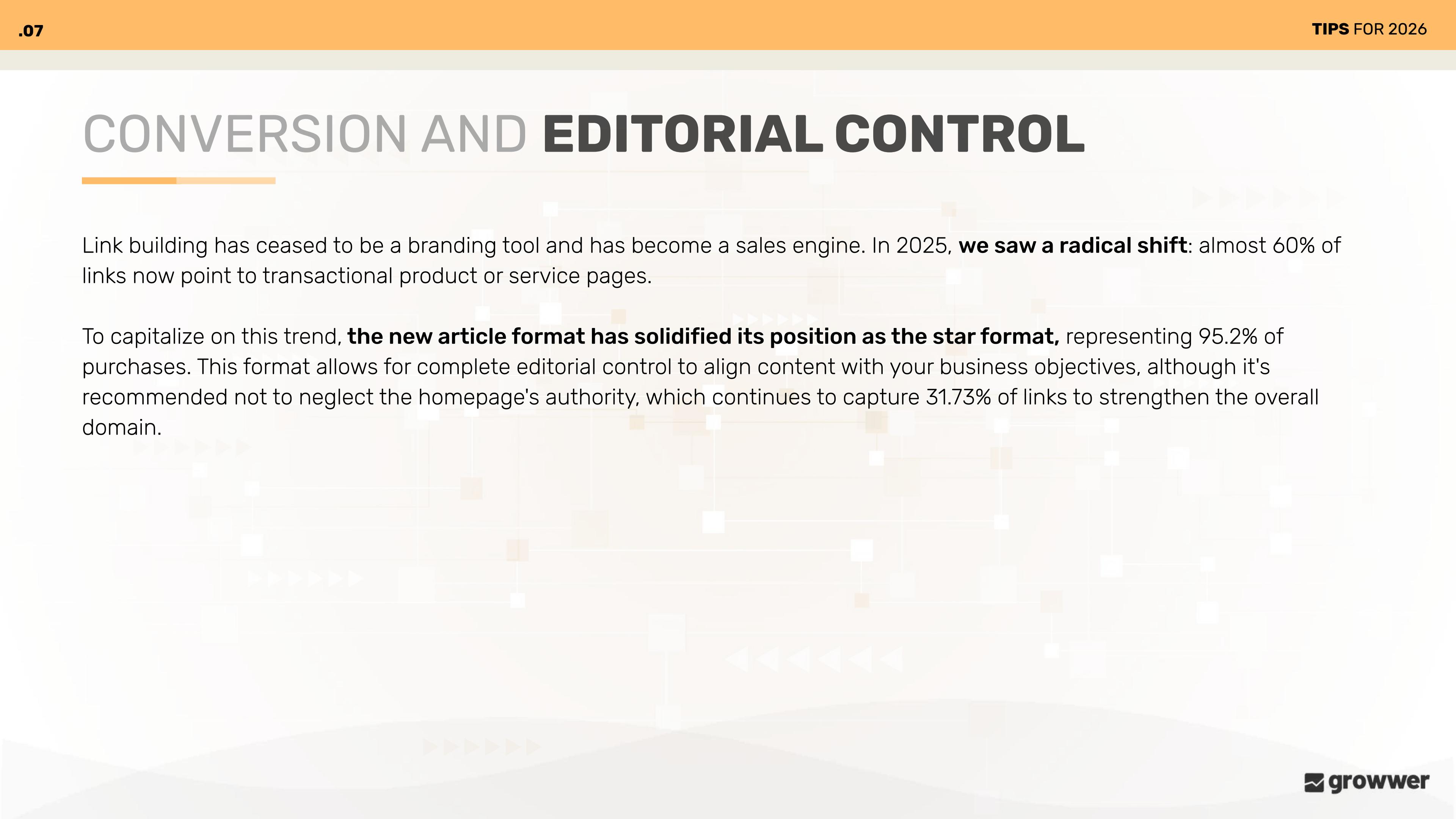
To ensure your investment is profitable, prioritize sites with real organic traffic; data confirms that, under professional management, **42.7% of posts manage to attract qualified visits**, providing a naturalness that algorithms increasingly value.

CONVERSION AND EDITORIAL CONTROL



Link building has ceased to be a branding tool and has become a sales engine. In 2025, **we saw a radical shift**: almost 60% of links now point to transactional product or service pages.

To capitalize on this trend, **the new article format has solidified its position as the star format**, representing 95.2% of purchases. This format allows for complete editorial control to align content with your business objectives, although it's recommended not to neglect the homepage's authority, which continues to capture 31.73% of links to strengthen the overall domain.



NATURALNESS IN THE LINK PROFILE

Although exact keywords **have regained prominence with 52% usage**, success in 2026 will depend on avoiding over-optimization. The key lies in diversification: 48% of your anchor text should be divided between brand names, URLs, and generic terms to maintain a healthy profile.

Furthermore, there is a trend towards longer and more descriptive anchor text, with those of three words or more being the most frequent. Accompanying these links with high-quality content **of around 785 words** ensures that the search engine understands the semantic context and values the recommendation positively.

THE LLM PARADIGM

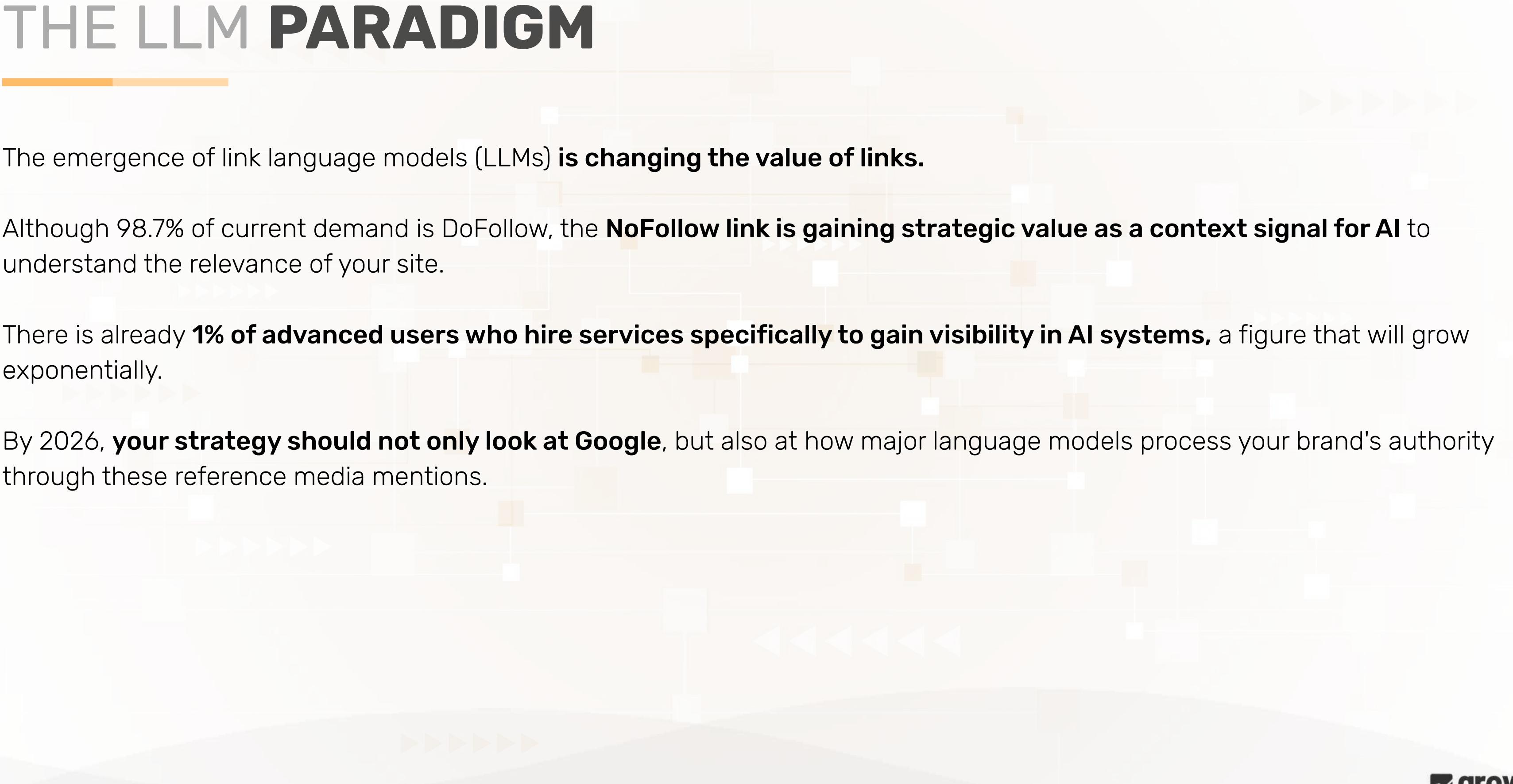


The emergence of link language models (LLMs) **is changing the value of links**.

Although 98.7% of current demand is DoFollow, the **NoFollow link is gaining strategic value as a context signal for AI** to understand the relevance of your site.

There is already **1% of advanced users who hire services specifically to gain visibility in AI systems**, a figure that will grow exponentially.

By 2026, **your strategy should not only look at Google**, but also at how major language models process your brand's authority through these reference media mentions.



TOOLS USED



Canva



All samples have been extracted from the database of:





4th ANNUAL STUDY LINK BUILDING, PR AND MEDIA

Thank you for joining us for another year.

Ready to lead in 2026?

Annual study conducted by the Growwer.com team:

Alberto Murillo, Álvaro Peña, Arnau Calatayud, Arnau Vendrell, Axel Bangher, Juan Alemán, Lola Soto, Marc Ortolà, Martin Paz and Teresa de Luna