

In today's SEO landscape, traditional rank tracking is no longer enough to maintain a competitive edge. The rise of AI-driven search and conversational engines like ChatGPT, Perplexity, and Google AI Overviews means marketers must track citations—both linked and unlinked mentions—across generative engine outputs. If you're exploring AI citation tracking platforms, scheduling a demo is a critical step. But what should you actually ask during that demo to ensure the tool fits your needs?

In this article, we'll guide you through essential demo questions for AI citation tracking platforms. We'll naturally reference popular tools like Semrush, Otterly.AI, and Peec AI while highlighting important concepts such as refresh cadence, competitor benchmarking, and engine coverage. We'll also explain how AI citation tracking differs from traditional SEO rank tracking and why citation attribution depth matters.. Pretty simple.

Why AI Citation Tracking is Different from Traditional SEO Rank Tracking

Traditional SEO rank tracking focuses on monitoring your website's position for specific keywords primarily in search engines like Google and Bing. While this remains important, AI citation tracking expands the scope by identifying your brand or content mentions that impact ranking in generative search environments.

- **Keyword vs. Mention-Based:** Rank tracking hinges on keywords and where you rank. AI citation tracking captures *mentions* and *citations*, whether they're linked URLs or simple text mentions that AI engines use as context.
- **Depth of Attribution:** With AI citation tracking, it's crucial to differentiate between *linked URLs (hyperlinked citations)* and *unlinked mentions*. Some platforms only show mentions without proving citation through links, which diminishes actionable insights.
- **Engine Variety:** AI citation platforms cover multiple next-gen engines like ChatGPT, Perplexity, and Google AI Overviews—traditional rank trackers primarily focus on Google Search results pages.

Best for:

Companies who need to monitor how AI-driven search engines and chatbots cite their content and brand, especially in GEO (Generative Engine Optimization) contexts where share of voice is dynamic across platforms.

Key Demo Questions to Ask When Evaluating AI Citation Tracking Platforms

When you're on a demo with platforms like Semrush's AI Visibility Toolkit, Otterly.AI, or Peec AI, use these questions as a foundation to extract critical information. Remember, some of these tools are not standalone and require base subscriptions—Semrush, for example, starts at **\$99/month**, with the AI Visibility + SEO package from **\$199/month** billed annually.

1. What is the Platform's Refresh Cadence?

Why it matters: In AI citation tracking, data freshness is everything. AI answers evolve rapidly as new information is crawled and indexed. Ask:

- How often is citation data updated? Hourly, daily, weekly?
- Does refresh cadence vary by engine (ChatGPT, Perplexity, Google AI)?

- What is actually refreshed: mentions, citations, competitor benchmarks?

Quick note on refresh cadence: Many vendors claim "real-time" or "daily" updates, but that doesn't always mean all your tracked items get refreshed simultaneously. Keep a running list of what refresh cadence actually means for each claim!

2. How Comprehensive is the Engine Coverage?

Why it matters: AI citation tracking only works if all relevant generative engines and platforms you care about are covered, including:

- ChatGPT (various models and versions)
- Perplexity.ai
- Google AI Overviews and snippets
- Others: Bing Chat, etc. (ask if specific to your region or market)

Ask for specific examples of coverage per engine so you know if the data matches your GEO footprint or language markets. For example, Semrush's 142 geographic databases and 808M domain profiles aim to cover diverse markets.

3. What Level of Citation Attribution Do You Provide?

Why it matters: Mentions without citations (unlinked mentions) might signal brand awareness but aren't proof your content is used as a source. Reliable AI citation tracking platforms differentiate between:

- **Linked URLs:** Hyperlinks back to your site or content—strong attribution
- **Unlinked Mentions:** Text references without a clickable link—less proof but still relevant

Ask if the tool can show actual URLs alongside mentions. Platforms that provide just mention counts without URLs can mislead you on actual citation power and limit your ability to take action.

4. How Does Competitor Benchmarking Work? Can I Track Share of Voice?

Why it matters: Understanding your standing versus competitors is key to strategy. Explore:





- Does the platform support benchmarking your citations against named competitors?
- How many competitors can you benchmark at once? Semrush allows up to 9 named competitors.
- Does it offer Share of Voice metrics by generative engine or keyword topic?
- Are you able to segment competitor share of voice by market, language, or GEO?

Competitive benchmarking tied to citation tracking will show if your brand's visibility is growing in AI search contexts relative to peers, which should influence your content iplocation.net and outreach strategies.

5. What Pricing Plans Do I Need to Consider?

Why it matters: Beware pricing pages that hide required base subscriptions. For example:

Tool Base Price AI Citation Tracking Add-on Notes Semrush \$99/mo starting (SEO Plan from \$117.33/mo billed annually) AI Visibility Toolkit from Pro+ at \$248.17/month billed annually AI Visibility + SEO from \$199/month AI Citation tracking requires at least Pro+ tier Pricing can add up depending on features Otterly AI Varies; check demo May require base plan Always clarify if AI citation tracking is standalone Peec AI Custom Pricing Often bundled with GEO tools Confirm upfront what's included and what's extra

Ask vendors directly: Is this module standalone? What add-ons are mandatory? Hidden costs kill budgeting and project success.

Additional Tips for Your Demo Experience

- **Ask for Live Walkthroughs:** Request real-time queries showing citation detections across multiple engines.
- **Test Competitor Input:** Provide your actual competitors and see how benchmarking works.
- **Check API Access:** Some teams want to ingest citation data into their internal stacks for custom reporting. Ask if an API is available.
- **Request Data Export Options:** You'll want CSV/Excel exports for audits and manual checks.
- **Transparency on Data Sources:** How do they source citation mentions? Web crawling, partnerships, or AI model querying?

Summary

Choosing an AI citation tracking platform requires a mix of technical and strategic questions. Focus your demo dialogue on the following core areas:

1. **Refresh cadence:** How often and what data is updated?
2. **Engine coverage:** Which generative AI engines are tracked and how comprehensive is coverage?
3. **Citation attribution depth:** Do mentions have URLs or just unlinked text?
4. **Competitor benchmarking & share of voice:** Can you measure your position against competitors?
5. **Pricing clarity:** Is the AI citation tracking tool standalone or dependent on base plans? Any hidden fees?

Platforms like Semrush offer robust SEO + AI visibility packages from around **\$199/month**. Otterly.AI and Peec AI represent innovative niche options also worth exploring with demos. Keep your questions structured, and always watch for those pesky pricing dependencies or incomplete attribution claims.

Armed with this guide, you'll be ready to evaluate AI citation tracking platforms with confidence, helping you harness the evolving power of generative search and maintain your competitive edge.