Generative **Pulse**
BY MUCK RACK

What Is AI Reading?

Executive Summary

- **Citations affect responses:** Simply enabling or disabling the ability for AI to search the web drastically modifies responses, indicating that the systems are truly basing their responses on the cited works.

- **Journalism and earned media are important drivers:** More than 95% of links cited by AI are non-paid coverage. Of those, over 27% of links are journalistic content.

- **Recency wins:** Particularly in OpenAI models, fresh content, especially on topical, opinion-based, or event-driven queries, is prioritized.

- **Query framing changes sources:** Advice-seeking or opinion-based prompts trigger more dynamic citations, while encyclopedic queries tend to fall back on older, static training data.

- **Outlet authority matters:** High-domain authority outlets such as Reuters, Axios and Financial Times are frequently cited, but not consistently. Sources vary by industry too with only about 15% of sources appearing in the top 10 across multiple industries.

Methodology

We analyzed 1,000,000+ links from AI responses

This study explores how modern generative AI systems cite sources in response to realistic user prompts. Our objective was to quantify and characterize the nature of AI-generated citations across different use cases and vendor models. This includes their frequency, source types, and the prominence of earned and owned media. To accomplish this, we constructed a large, diverse prompt set and executed it across several web-enabled language models, followed by systematic analysis of the responses and the cited links. The prompts span a variety of industries and subject matter. Sometimes they specifically mention companies by name, sometimes they do not.

The following specific models were used to execute the queries, during the month of July 2025: Chat GPT (both '4o' and '4o-mini'), Gemini ('flash' and 'pro') and Claude ('sonnet' and 'haiku')

Generative AI systems are rapidly evolving and inherently opaque. The behaviors observed in this study may shift as models are updated or retrained.

We assigned cited links into categories as follows:

- **Journalistic:** News sites, and other journalistic coverage
- **Corporate Blogs and Content:** Third party corporate blogs and content not owned by a company/product targeted in the query
- **Owned Media:** Corporate Content created by a company/product targeted in the query
- **Press Release:** Press release published on any site
- **Academic/Research:** Scientific journals, arXiv, patents, research papers
- **Government/NGO:** .gov sites, public agencies, non-profit organizations
- **Paid/Advertorial:** Sponsored content, pages with marketing intent or sales landing pages
- **Social/UGC:** Social platforms (e.g., LinkedIn, Reddit) and other sources of user-generated content
- **Aggregators/Encyclopedic:** Sites like Wikipedia, Visual Capitalist and Britannica.com

Do citations influence AI output?

Citations fundamentally alter AI responses

Enabling citations doesn't just add sources, it changes the response itself.

This demonstrates that citations meaningfully shape what AI says.

Prompt

What's an example of the worst MLB baseball team you can think of

Disabling Citations

"The **1962 New York Mets currently hold the record for the worst single-season record in MLB history**. They finished their debut season with a record of 40 wins and 120 losses."
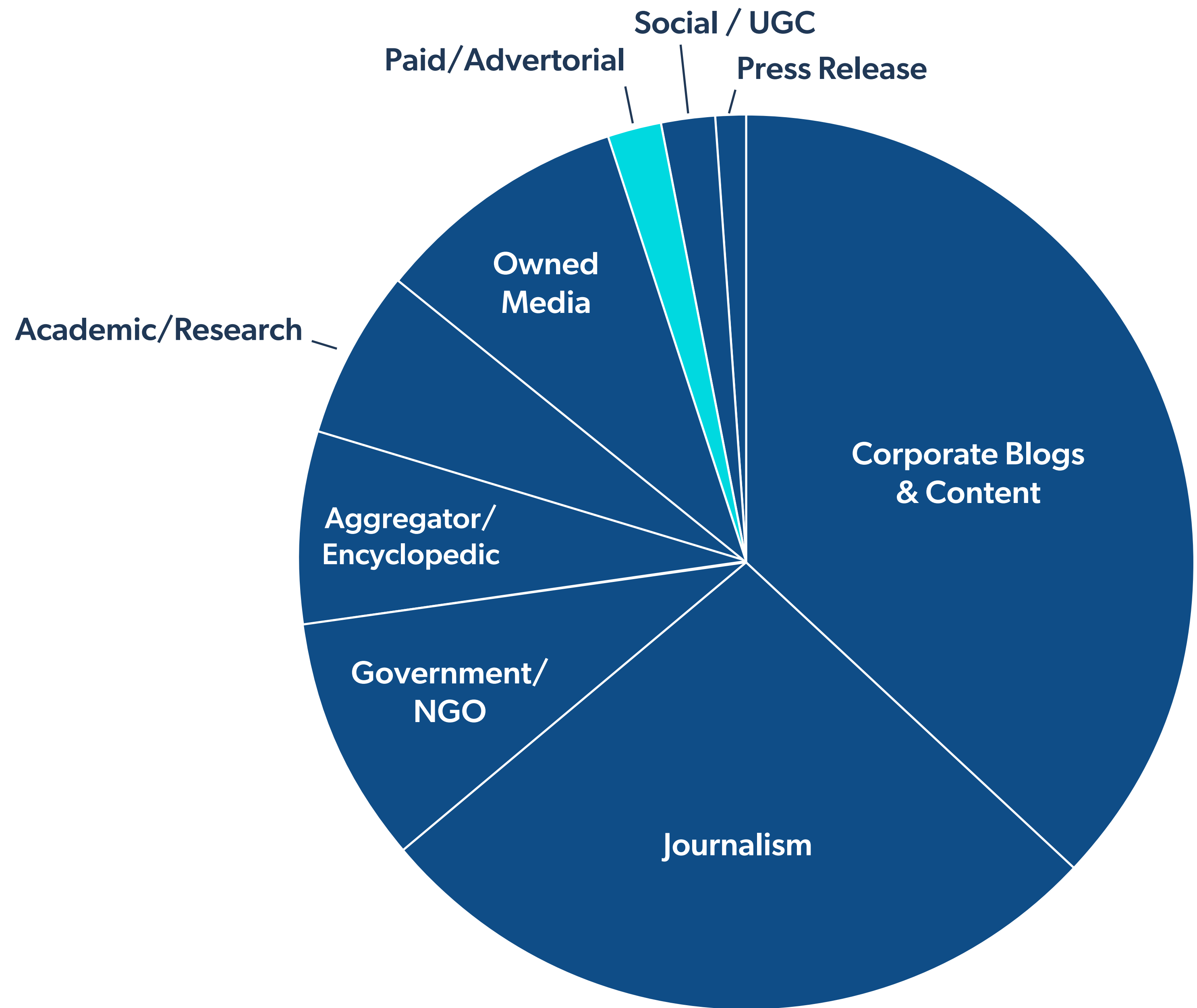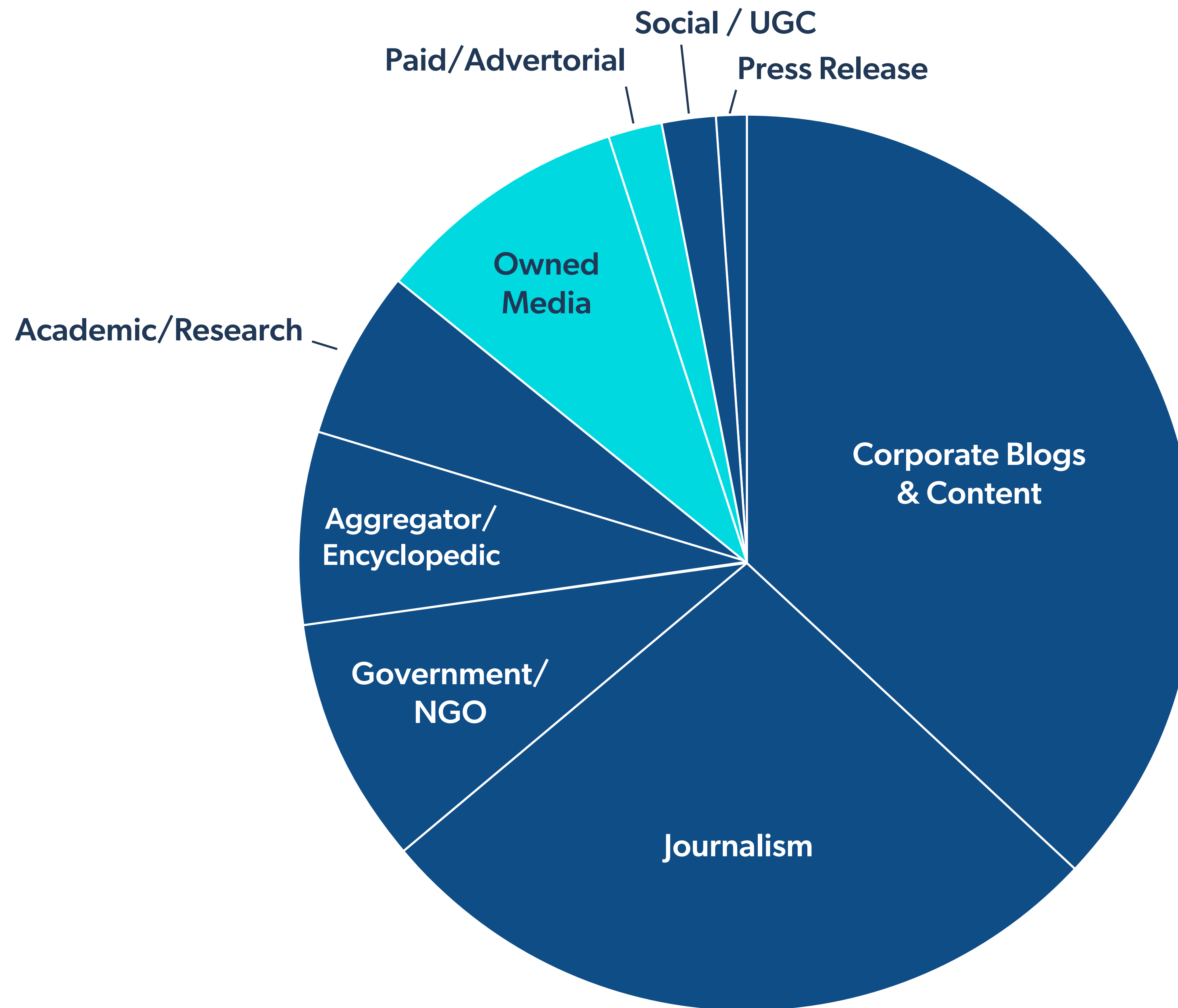
Enabling Citations

"**2024 Chicago White Sox**: In the modern era, the 2024 White Sox set a new record for futility by finishing the season with a 41–121 record (.253 winning percentage), surpassing the previous modern-era record of 120 losses held by the 1962 New York Mets. **cbssports.com**"
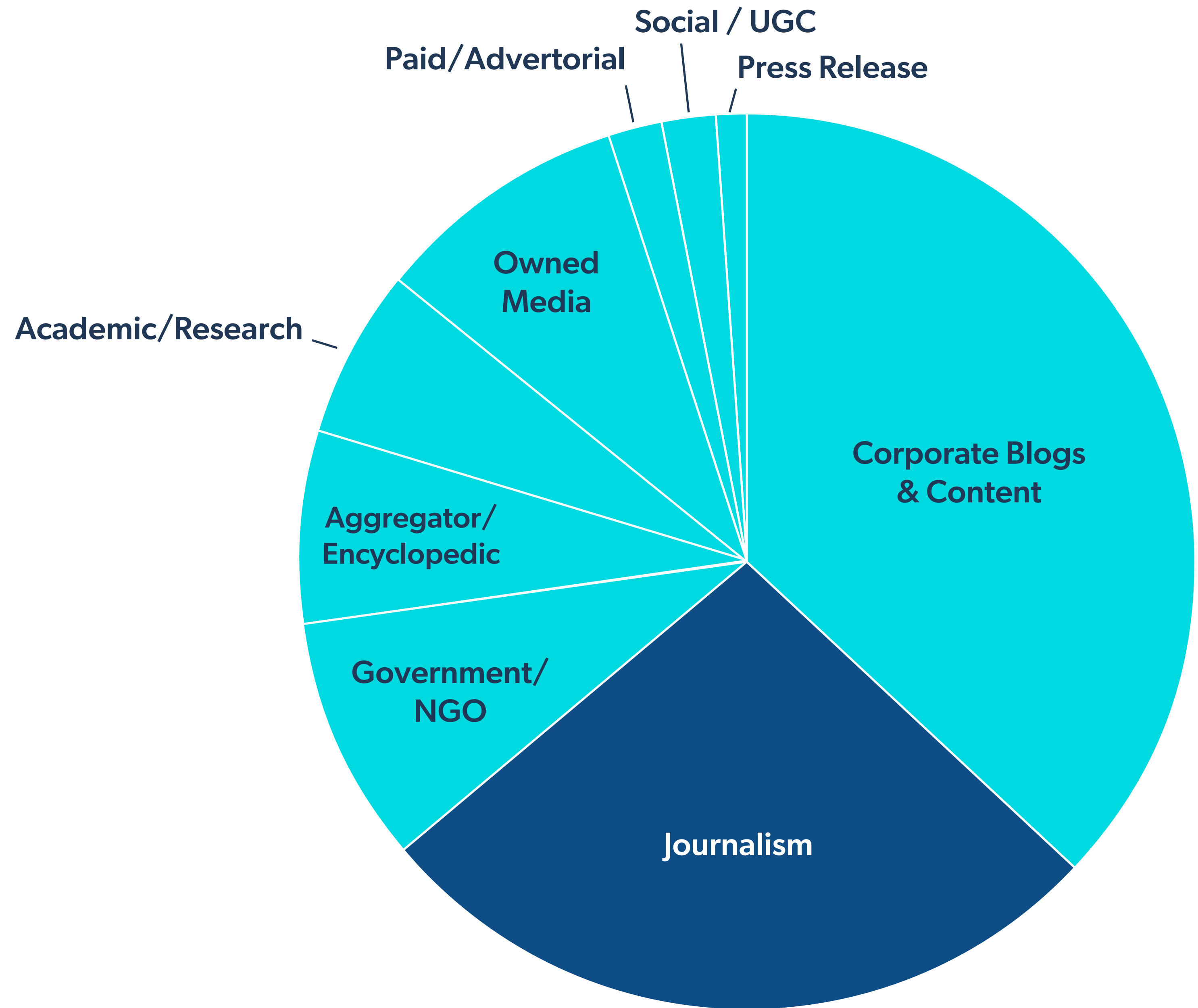
Which types of media does AI cite?

More than 95% of links cited by AI are from non-paid media

Pie chart segments:
- Corporate Blogs & Content
- Journalism
- Government/NGO
- Aggregator/Encyclopedic
- Academic/Research
- Owned Media
- Paid/Advertorial
- Social / UGC
- Press Release

More than 89% of links cited by AI are earned media

Social / UGC
Paid/Advertorial
Press Release
Owned Media
Academic/Research
Corporate Blogs & Content
Aggregator/ Encyclopedic
Government/ NGO
Journalism

27% of links cited by AI are journalistic

Social / UGC
Paid/Advertorial
Press Release
Owned Media
Academic/Research
Corporate Blogs & Content
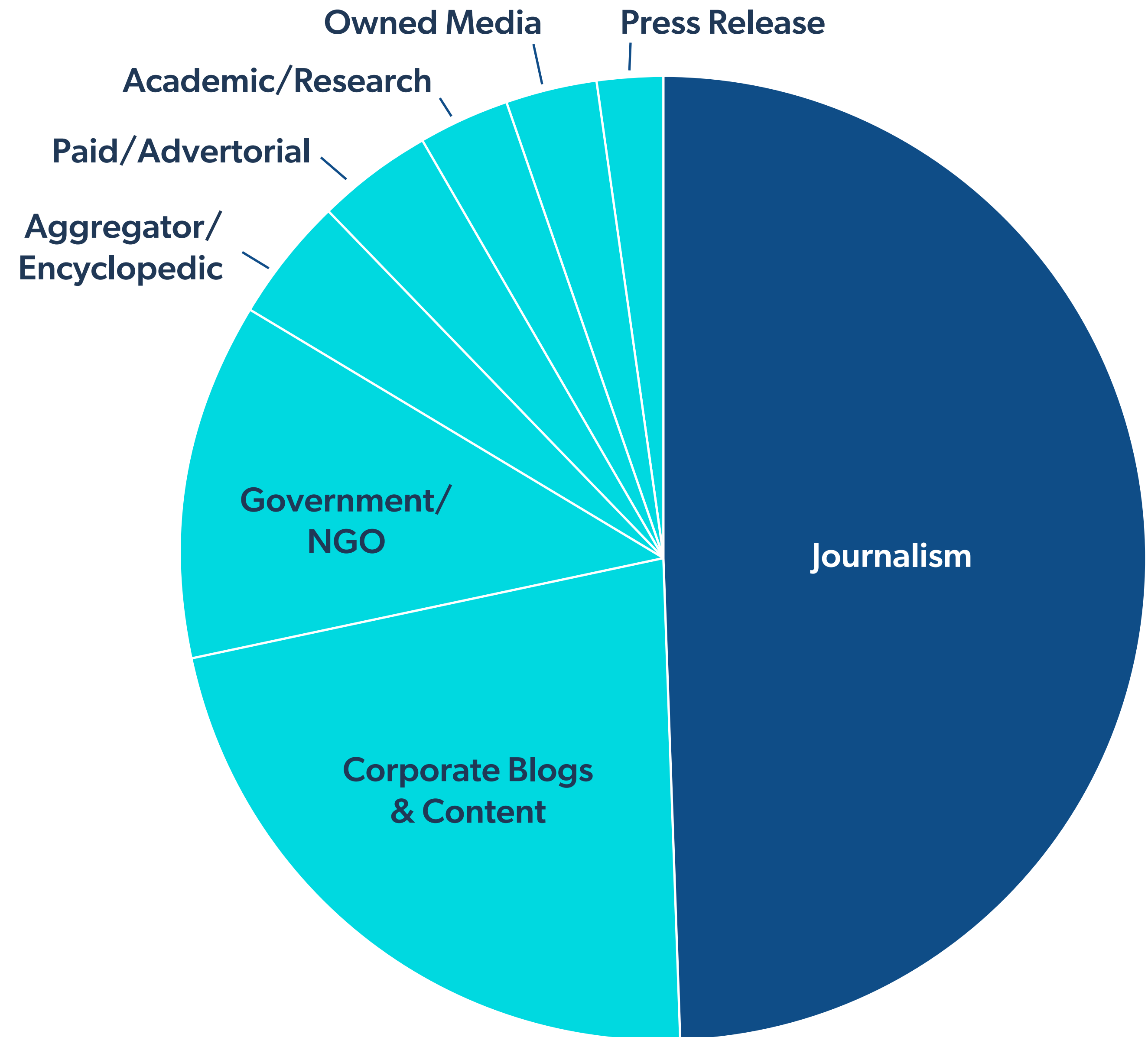Aggregator/Encyclopedic
Government/NGO
Journalism

If we narrow our focus specifically to queries implying a level of recency…

For example

- What are the recent technological advancements in the sound recording industry?

- car rental shortages in the United States

- latest advancements in outpatient treatment methods for substance abuse

…49% of links cited by AI are journalism

Press Release

Owned Media

Academic/Research

Paid/Advertorial

Aggregator/
Encyclopedic

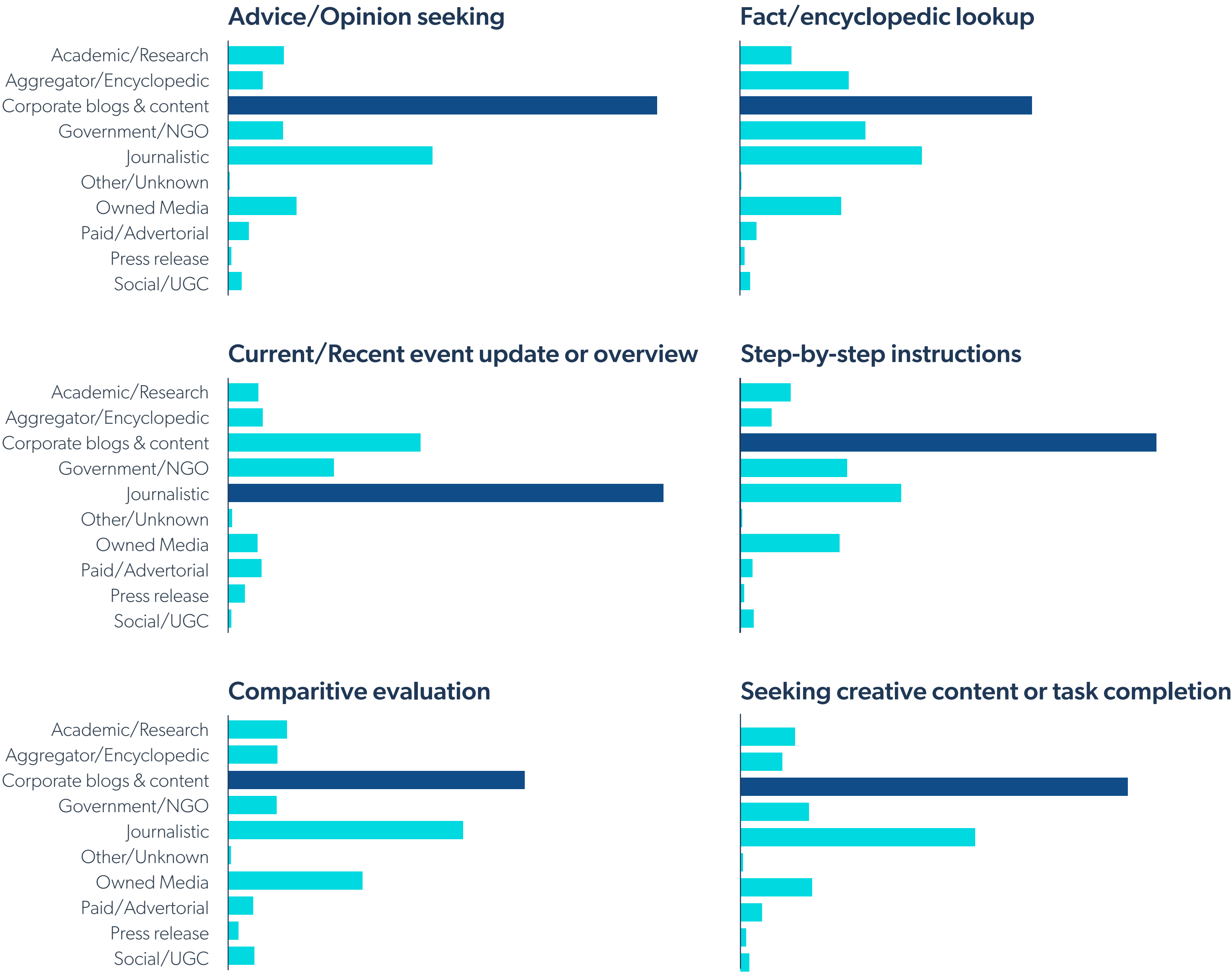Government/
NGO

Journalism

Corporate Blogs
& Content

Different query types alter citation sources

We examined 6 specific types of question formations, or query types, to understand how citations change based on how the question is asked.

We found that objective query types (e.g. recent updates or fact lookups) tend to cite journalistic media most often, while subjective queries cite other sources.

When analyzing these breakdowns by model, it's also interesting to note that Claude cites journalism significantly less often than the other models. For example, Claude cites Reuters 20x less frequently than Gemini does, and 50x less frequently than ChatGPT does.

Advice/Opinion seeking

- Academic/Research
- Aggregator/Encyclopedic
- Corporate blogs & content
- Government/NGO
- Journalistic
- Other/Unknown
- Owned Media
- Paid/Advertorial
- Press release
- Social/UGC

Fact/encyclopedic lookup

Current/Recent event update or overview

- Academic/Research
- Aggregator/Encyclopedic
- Corporate blogs & content
- Government/NGO
- Journalistic
- Other/Unknown
- Owned Media
- Paid/Advertorial
- Press release
- Social/UGC

Step-by-step instructions

Comparitive evaluation

- Academic/Research
- Aggregator/Encyclopedic
- Corporate blogs & content
- Government/NGO
- Journalistic
- Other/Unknown
- Owned Media
- Paid/Advertorial
- Press release
- Social/UGC

Seeking creative content or task completion

What determines if content gets cited?

Outlet authority has a strong effect on whether a story gets cited

AI systems tend to cite well known and generally trusted sources.

Several sources appear across two providers, including Reuters, Associated Press and Financial Times.

Top media outlets cited

Claude

cnbc.com	hbr.org	goodhousekeeping.com
npr.org	finance.yahoo.com	techradar.com

Gemini

reuters.com	ft.com	axios.com
time.com	investopedia.com	forbes.com

ChatGPT

reuters.com	apnews.com	ft.com
axios.com	time.com	forbes.com

AI systems prefer stories written in the last year

Among cited journalism content, there was a strong bias towards stories published in the last 12 months, particularly with Advice and Recent Update query types. But this wasn't uniform across models.

Overall, OpenAI models were more likely to cite recent coverage than Anthropic's models. 56% of journalism citations by OpenAI were published in the last 12 months, compared to only 36% for Anthropic.

Legend:
- Advice/Opinion seeking
- Comparitive evaluation
- Current/Recent event update or overview
- Fact/Encyclopedic lookup
- Seeking creative content or task completion
- Step-by-step instructions

Claude

0   12   24   36   48

ChatGPT

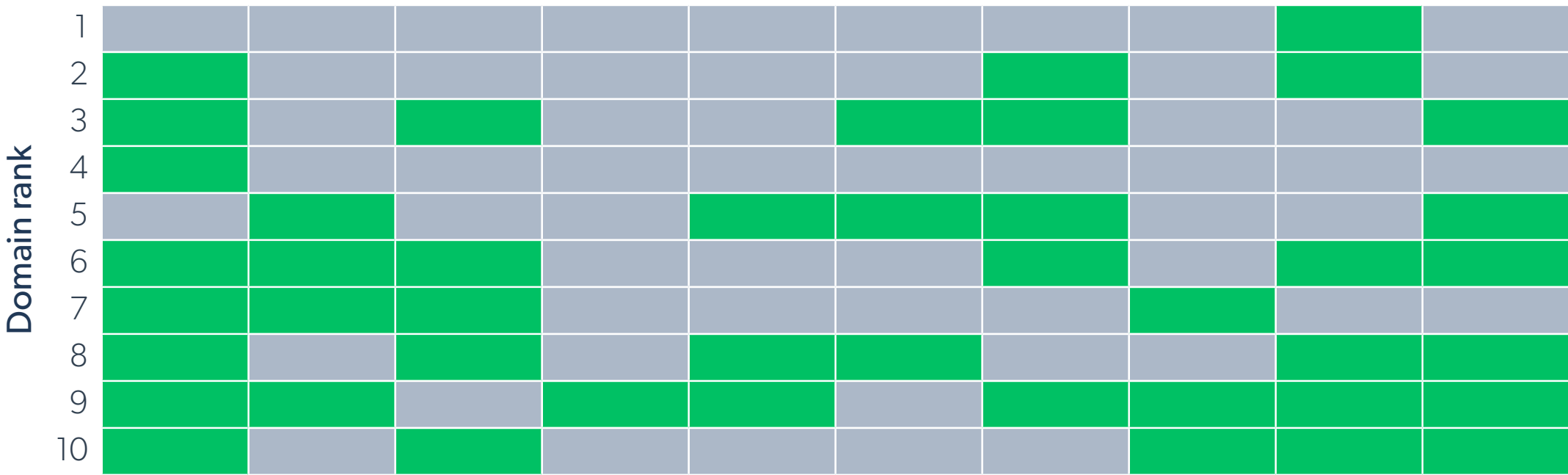0   12   24   36   48
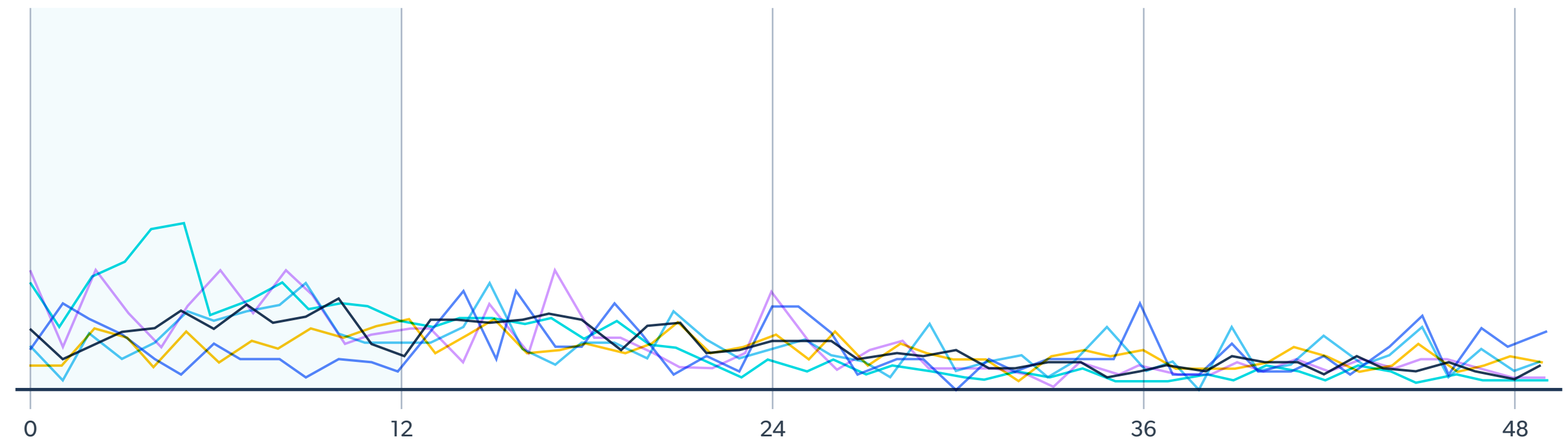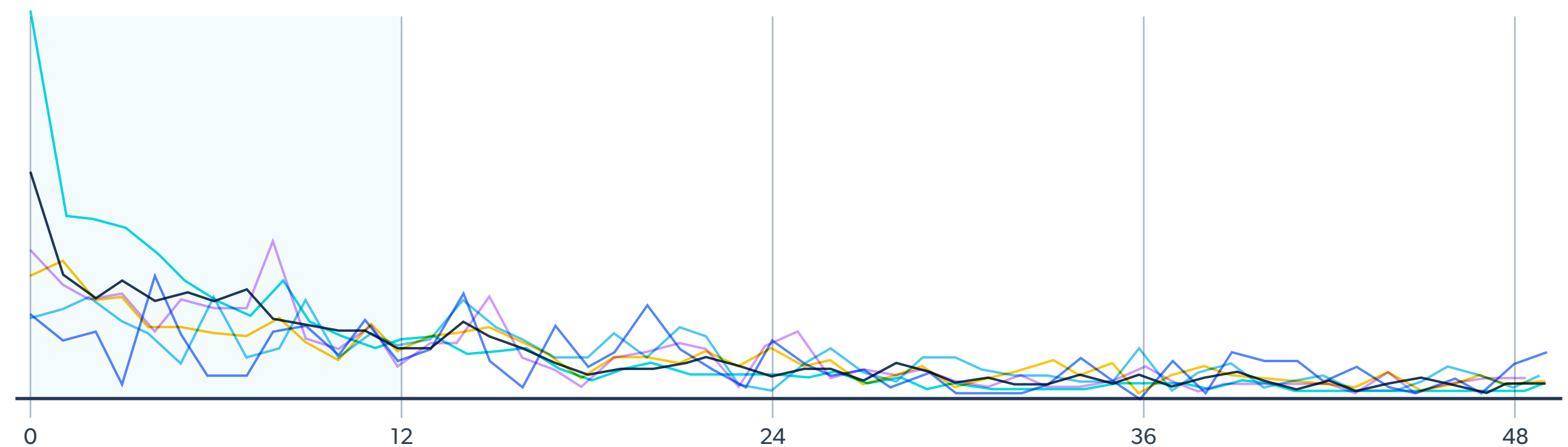
Months since publication

AI rewards niche-specific content

While overall, large news organizations like Reuters and Associated Press do "top the charts" of citation frequency, the AI systems tend to select niche-appropriate outlets frequently when queried about specific industries.
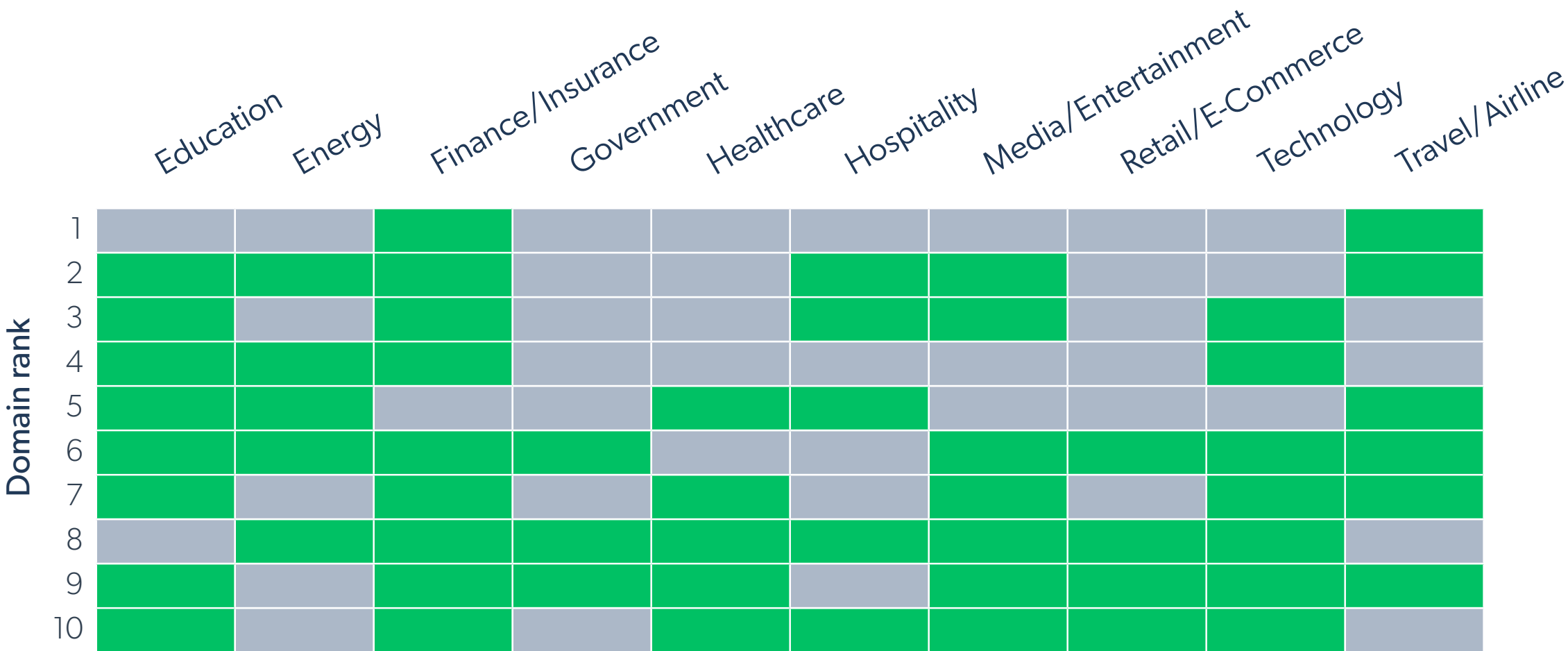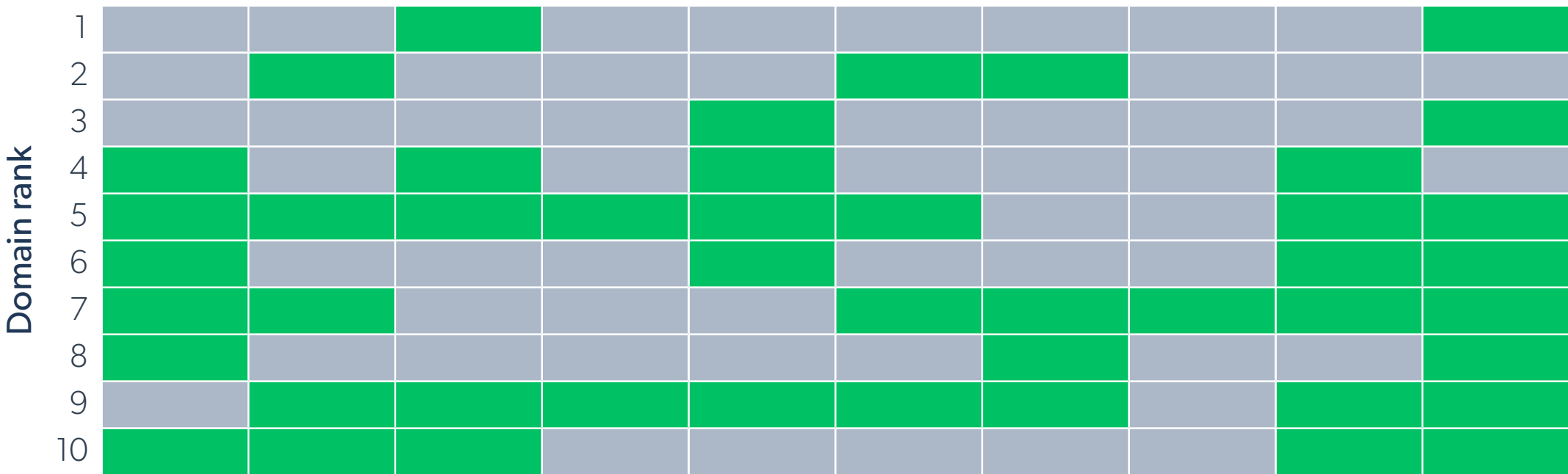

Sources in green represent domains that are in the "top 10" uniquely in one industry.

Sources in gray represent outlets that are in the "top 10" cited across other industries.

Industry-specific trends

ENERGY

AI cites fewer owned sources

For the Energy industry, owned media is cited less than in other industries. 30% for energy compared to 43% overall.

Claude has the most unique mix in the top ten most cited domains with 50%, while OpenAI has the lowest at 30%.

Top Industry Sources per AI Provider

Claude	Gemini	ChatGPT
sciencedirect.com	en.wikipedia.org	en.wikipedia.org
energy.gov	energy.gov	reuters.com
en.wikipedia.org	sciencedirect.com	apnews.com
iea.org	reuters.com	ft.com
eia.gov	eia.gov	energy.gov

Top domains unique to Energy
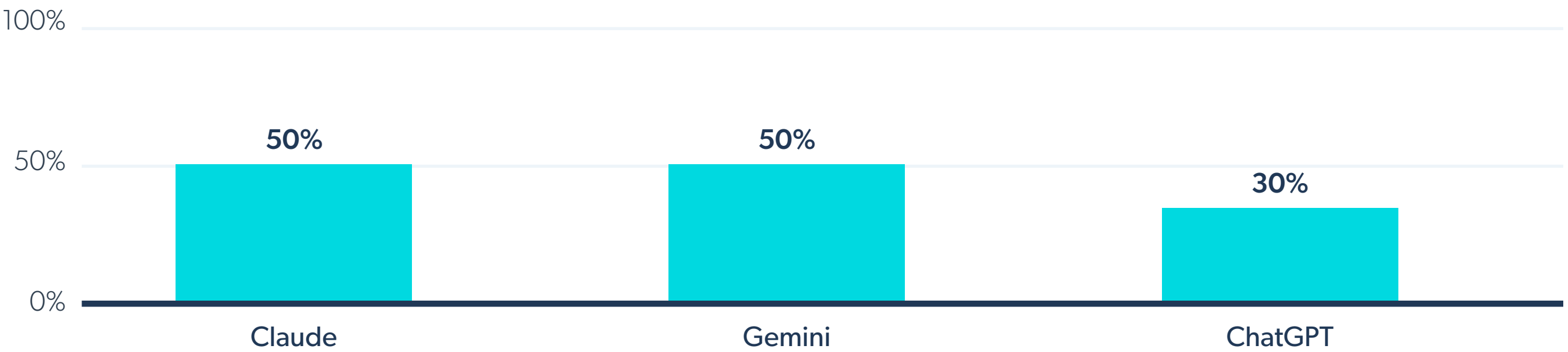
Most cited journalists in Energy

Catherine Lane   Christy Goldfuss   Carlo Cariaga   Kara Hunt   Neil Ford

Alejandro de la Garza   Justin Worland   Martha Muir   Valerie Volcovici

FINANCE/INSURANCE

Journalism content appears more

For the Finance/Insurance industry, Journalism content is cited more than in other industries. 37% for finance/insurance compared to 28% overall.

ChatGPT has the lowest percentage of unique sources in its top 10 at 40% while Claude had the most with 90%.

Top Industry Sources per AI Provider

Claude	Gemini	ChatGPT
bankrate.com	investopedia.com	reuters.com
nerdwallet.com	en.wikipedia.org	en.wikipedia.org
federalreserve.gov	reuters.com	investopedia.com
fdic.gov	bankrate.com	ft.com
en.wikipedia.org	nerdwallet.com	apnews.com

Top domains unique to Finance/Insurance

Claude: 90%
Gemini: 50%
ChatGPT: 40%
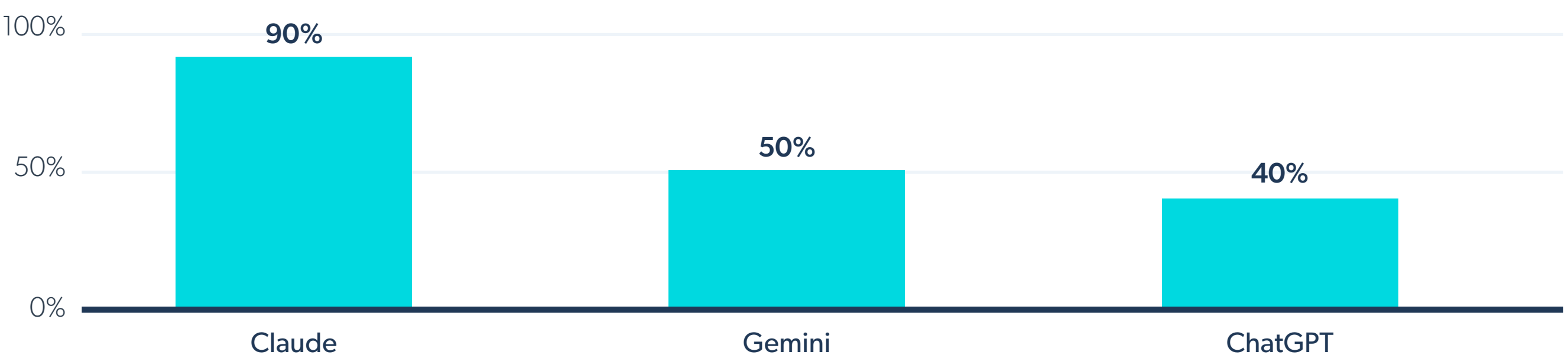
Most cited journalists in Finance/Insurance

Erika Giovanetti   Preston Caldwell   Jeff Ostrowski   Rachel Galvez   Dan Avery

Lee Harris   Ian Smith   Maya Goldman   Vincent Birardi   Stephen Gandel

Government and NGO sources are cited more often

For the Healthcare industry, Govt't/ NGO content is cited more than in other industries. 18% for healthcare compared to 8% overall.

Gemini is the most likely to cite unique sources in this industry, with 50% of its top 10 domains being unique. ChatGPT is the least likely, at 30%.

Top Industry Sources per AI Provider

Claude	Gemini	ChatGPT
pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov	pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov	en.wikipedia.org
ncbi.nlm.nih.gov	en.wikipedia.org	pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov
cdc.gov	nih.gov	apnews.com
sciencedirect.com	ncbi.nlm.nih.gov	axios.com
pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov	cdc.gov	pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov

Top domains unique to Healthcare

Claude: 40%
Gemini: 50%
ChatGPT: 30%
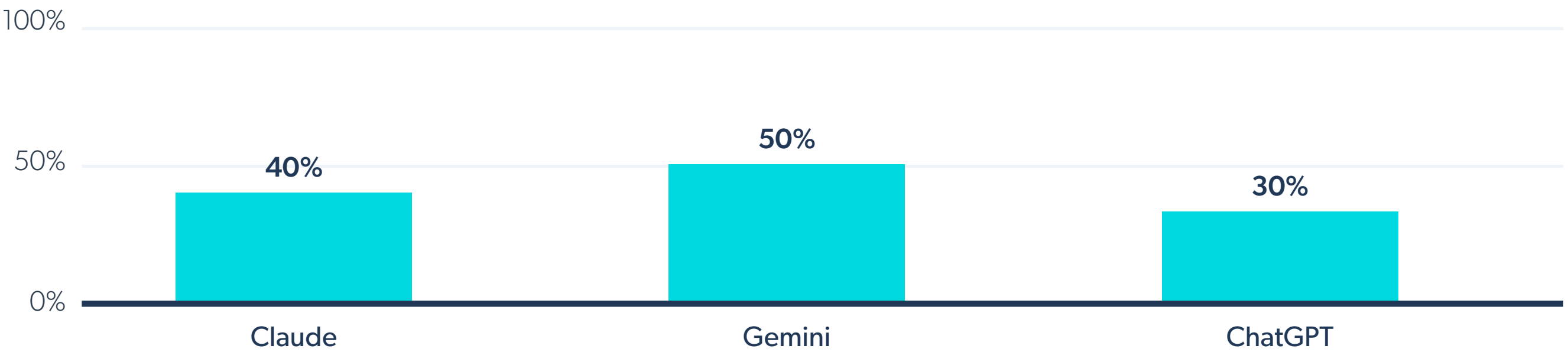
Most cited journalists in Healthcare

Andy Lundin   Heather Stringer   Angela Ledford   Kathy Katella   Leonard L. Berry

Maya Goldman   Alice Park   Tina Reed   Amina Niasse   Rebecca Schneid

Academic citations are more likely to appear

For the Travel/Airline industry, Academic/Research content is cited less than in other industries. 0.7% for travel/airline compared to 4% overall.

While Claude has a near complete set of unique top citations, none of them are from journalistic sources. ChatGPT has the least unique with 50% of its top 10 unique.

Top Industry Sources per AI Provider

Claude	Gemini	ChatGPT
faa.gov	reuters.com	faa.gov
iata.org	en.wikipedia.org	en.wikipedia.org
en.wikipedia.org	faa.gov	iata.org
sciencedirect.com	apnews.com	reuters.com
ecfr.gov	freightamigo.com	freightamigo.com

Top domains unique to Travel/Airline

Bar chart: Claude 80%, Gemini 70%, ChatGPT 50%
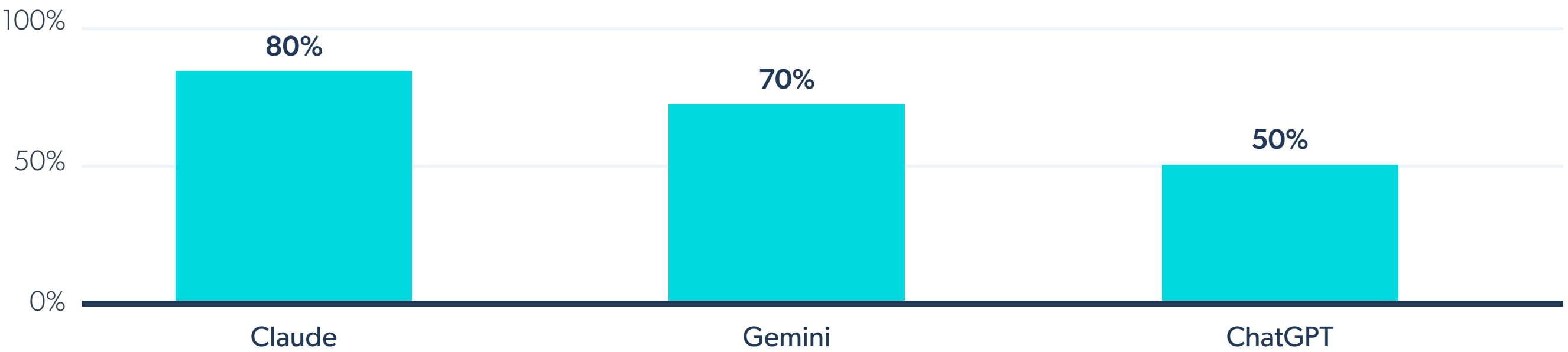
Most cited journalists in Travel/Airline

Amanda Norcross   Stephen Au   Sean Peek

David Shepardson   Philip Georgiadis   Chris Taylor

GOVERNMENT

Journalism sources are very prevalent

For the Government industry, journalism is cited more than in other industries. 36% for government compared to 28% overall.

All models relies on non-niche publications for their top 10 sources. The most-niche-reliant is Claude with only 30% of top 10 sources unique to the Government industry.

Top Industry Sources per AI Provider

Claude	Gemini	ChatGPT
pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov	en.wikipedia.org	en.wikipedia.org
en.wikipedia.org	apnews.com	apnews.com
sciencedirect.com	pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov	reuters.com
epa.gov	numberanalytics.com	axios.com
researchgate.net	epa.gov	time.com

Top domains unique to Government

Claude 30%
Gemini 20%
ChatGPT 10%
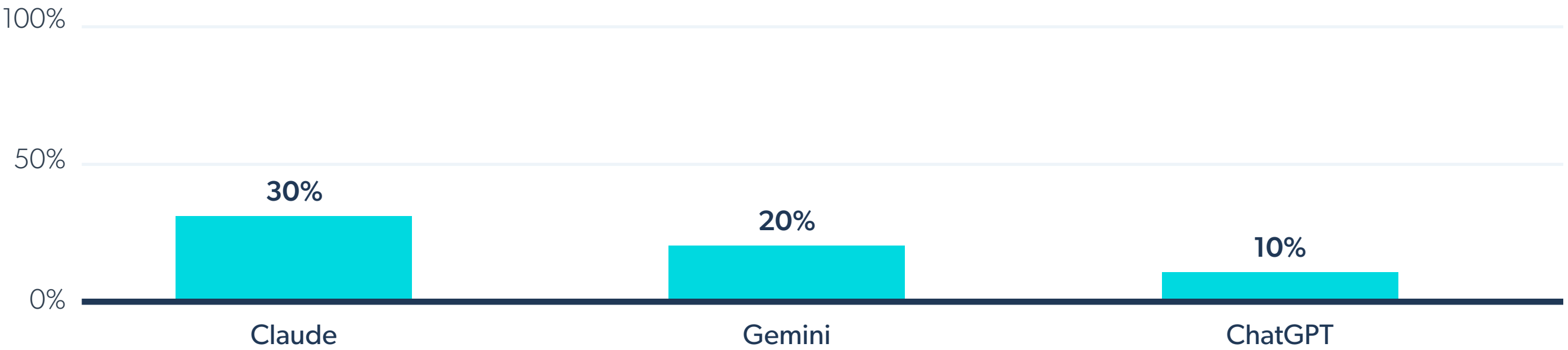
Most cited journalists in Government

Steve Wright   Tricia Thomas   Sequoia Carrillo   Nick Wilson   Elizabeth Gearin

Jeffrey Kluger   Justin Worland   Rebecca Schneid   Rebecca Falconer   Madeleine Carlisle

RETAIL/E-COMMERCE

Aggregators/ encyclopedia sources are less important

For the Retail/E-Commerce industry, aggregator/encyclopedic content is cited less than in other industries. 36% for retail/e-commerce compared to 28% overall.

Claude is the most likely to cite unique sources in this industry with 50% of the top 10 domains being unique. ChatGPT and Gemini each have only 10%.

Top Industry Sources per AI Provider

Claude	Gemini	ChatGPT
fda.gov	en.wikipedia.org	en.wikipedia.org
pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov	quora.com	apnews.com
en.wikipedia.org	reuters.com	reuters.com
quora.com	apnews.com	ft.com
sciencedirect.com	fda.gov	axios.com

Top domains unique to Retail/E-commerce
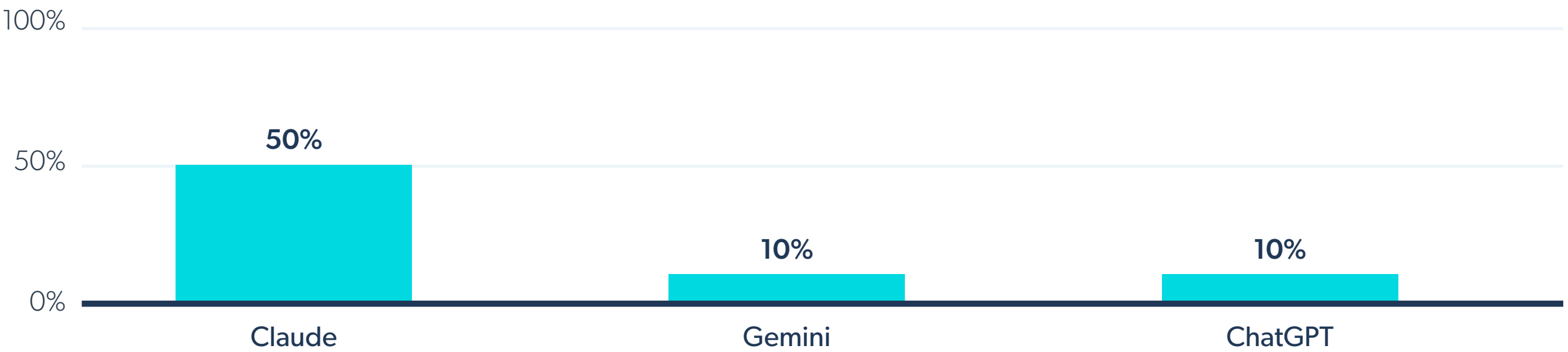
Most cited journalists in Retail/E-commerce

Nicole Davis   Brian King   Lara Ewen   Lionel Valdellon   Alix Fraser

Gregory Meyer   Francesca Nicasio   Kaitlyn McLintock   Alana Semuels   Melanie Gerlis

MEDIA/ENTERTAINMENT
Journalism sources cited more frequently

For the Media/Entertainment industry, journalism content is cited more than in other industries. 37% for media compared to 28% overall.

Claude is the most likely to cite unique sources in this industry with 70% of the top 10 being unique domains. Gemini is the least likely with 40%.

Top Industry Sources per AI Provider

Claude

en.wikipedia.org
fcc.gov
nielsen.com
quora.com
sproutsocial.com

Gemini

en.wikipedia.org
fcc.gov
wikipedia.org
youtube.com
quora.com

ChatGPT

en.wikipedia.org
tvtechnology.com
radioking.com
apnews.com
gartner.com

Top domains unique to Media/Entertainment

	Claude	Gemini	ChatGPT
	70%	40%	50%
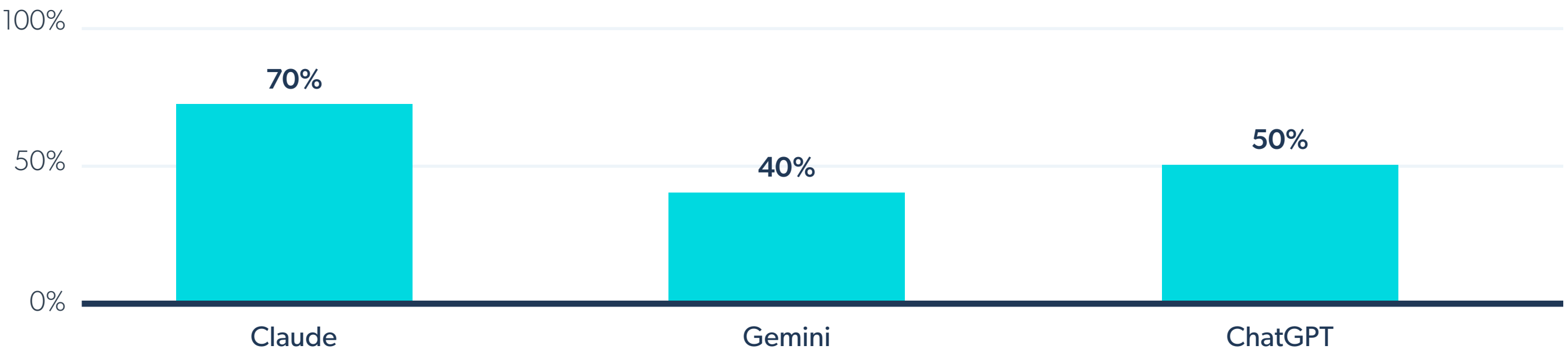
Most cited journalists in Media/Entertainment

Katie Campione   Kalia Richardson   Steve Clark   Stephen Joseph

George Winslow   Dak Dillon   Michelle Ruoff   Violet Holt

Academic and encyclopedic sources disappear

For the Technology industry, journalism content is cited more than in other industries. We found that the typical ~10% of encyclopedic content and academic research cited in other industries, drops to nearly zero, causing a corresponding increase in other types of content like journalism and owned media.

Claude is the most likely to cite unique sources in this industry, with 70% of its top 10 domains being unique. Gemini is the least likely, at 50%.

Top Industry Sources per AI Provider

Claude	Gemini	ChatGPT
udemy.com	coursera.org	linkedin.com
coursera.org	medium.com	moldstud.com
medium.com	udemy.com	arxiv.org
continu.com	everythingelearning.com	en.wikipedia.org
sproutsocial.com	techtarget.com	pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov

Top domains unique to Technology

Claude: 70%
Gemini: 50%
ChatGPT: 60%
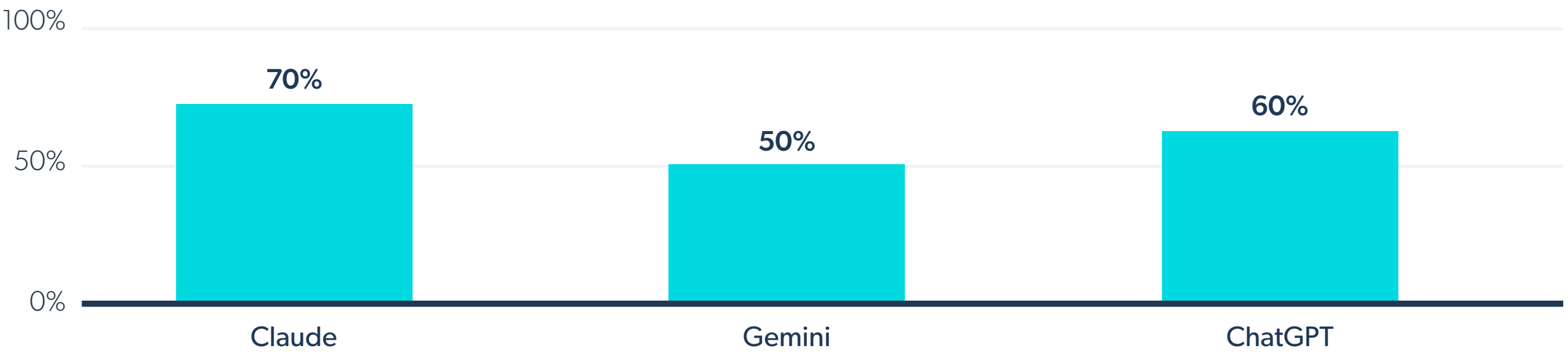
Most cited journalists in Technology

We saw no significant repeat patterns among journalists covering tech.

EDUCATION
Industry-specific sources are more important

All models are fairly likely to cite industry-specific domains in Education. Every model has over half of its top 10 sources coming from Education specific content, with Claude at 80%

Top Industry Sources per AI Provider

Claude	Gemini	ChatGPT
coursera.org	en.wikipedia.org	en.wikipedia.org
sessionlab.com	coursera.org	teambonding.com
scrumalliance.org	udemy.com	eubrics.com
elearningindustry.com	pwc.com	jefmenguin.com
harvardbusiness.org	indeed.com	ft.com

Top domains unique to Education

Claude: 80%
Gemini: 60%
ChatGPT: 60%

Most cited journalists in Education

Stephen Morris   Alana Semuels   Steven Tweedie   Rose Horowitch

Owned media appears more often

For the Hospitality industry, Owned Media content is cited more than in other industries. 55% for hospitality compared to 43% overall.

Claude cites unique sources in 50% of its top 10 domains. ChatGPT cites just 30% unique domains.

Top Industry Sources per AI Provider

Claude	Gemini	ChatGPT
fda.gov	en.wikipedia.org	en.wikipedia.org
pos.toasttab.com	crrhospitality.com	apnews.com
fsis.usda.gov	apnews.com	google.com
quora.com	fda.gov	axios.com
fns.usda.gov	fsis.usda.gov	crrhospitality.com

Top domains unique to Hospitality

Claude	50%
Gemini	40%
ChatGPT	30%
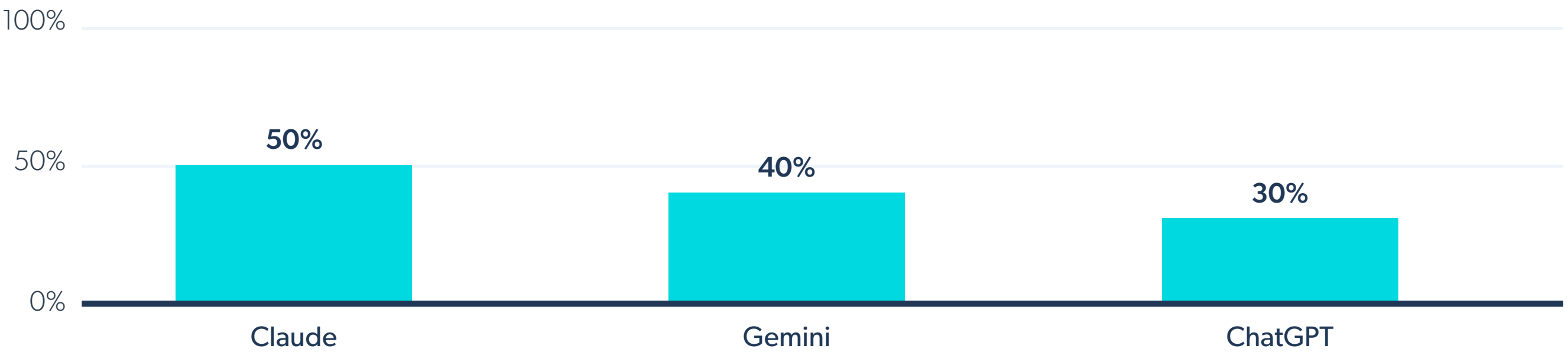
Most cited journalists in Hospitality

Kristen Link   Gill Hyslop   Clinton Cawood   Vicky Reddish   Jean-Philippe Weisskopf

Alana Semuels   Abby Vesoulis   Alice Lascelles   Kelly Tyko   Mike Wendland

Generative **Pulse**
BY MUCK RACK

Thank you!

Generative Pulse is a tool that helps PR and communications teams monitor and define how their brands appear in AI-generated search results. Built around the concept of Generative Engine Optimization (GEO), it reveals which journalists, outlets, and sources influence large language models like ChatGPT—so teams can shape brand visibility in the age of AI. Integrated into Muck Rack's PR platform and backed by a $180M Series A financing, Generative Pulse gives comms professionals the insights and tools to lead in an AI-native search landscape.

Learn more at **generativepulse.ai**

For press inquiries reach out to **Linda@muckrack.com**