

Reddit moves into search engine space

Reddit is planning to merge its traditional search engine with Reddit Answers — its AI-powered auto-answer feature — and boost its presence on both its website and mobile apps.

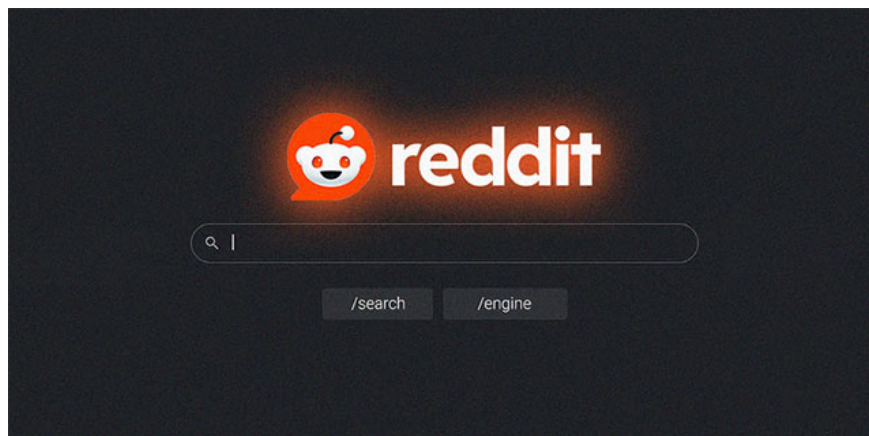
Reddit is planning to merge its traditional search engine with Reddit Answers — its AI-powered answer-answering feature — and boost its presence on both its website and mobile app. The company's goal is to become the first place users go when they're looking for information, rather than letting Google or other search engines get in the way.

Reddit Answers' rapid growth has prompted Reddit to invest more heavily. The plan is to fully integrate its core search engine (which currently has more than 70 million weekly users) with Reddit Answers, creating a unified search experience.

However, this also means that users may be bothered by 'AI suggestions' right from the homepage. In form, this is quite similar to Google's AI Overview feature. But while Google often takes information from reputable, well-researched sites, Reddit mainly relies on personal opinions, guesses, and real-life experiences from users.

There's a joke online: if you post an Ask an Expert question on Reddit, most responses will start with 'I'm not an [expert] but.' – followed by a plausible hypothesis or personal story.

Still, the overall experience may not be all that different from what Google is doing. According to a Semrush study, Reddit is now the second most cited source in Google's AI brief. While this has the benefit of visibility, it also comes with a risk, as users who read the answer directly on Google have less reason to click through to the original site.



The 'clickbait' feature eliminated by AI Overviews has caused a significant drop in traffic from Google for many major news sites. Perhaps that's why Reddit doesn't want to be just a reference for Google, but rather become an independent search destination.

Reddit Answers doesn't search by keywords like a regular search, but summarizes content and provides direct answers, based on existing discussions. However, it still links to the original topic, so users can learn more if they want.

Reddit has also made a number of changes to prepare for this ambition — for example, blocking competing search engines like Bing, and only allowing paid partners to access platform data.

All of which shows that Reddit no longer wants to be a place to 'accidentally stumble upon', but is trying to become a place where users proactively initiate the search.

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