

Sandstorm®

From SEO to AEO:

Optimize Your Website for Search & AI

October 23, 2025

Hi, we're Sandstorm.



Janna Fiester

Vice president of UX
and Creative
(she/her)



Cameron Panice

Digital Strategist
(he/him)



Fun facts about Sandstorm®



Accessibility-certified,
creative technology
agency for 25+ years
for **purpose-driven
brands**

Deep expertise with **Higher
Ed, Associations, Global
Non-Profits, &
Healthcare**



Certifications:
CPACC (accessibility), AWS
Cloud, Pantheon, Acquia,
Drupal, DEIB, and WBENC
(women-owned)

Interdisciplinary team:
UX, UI, AI, strategy,
technology, analytics

UX practice started by
Ph.D in human factors
in 2006

THE CHALLENGE

Brands are experiencing **up to a 60% decrease in website clicks** due to consumers shifting to AI-search.

Source: [Forbes](#)

SEARCH IS EVOLVING

**80% of consumers now
rely on AI-generated
results** for at least 40%
of their searches.

Source: [Bain & Company](#)



THE SOLUTION

Build for AI and humans

AEO is Answer Engine Optimization (AEO)

01/

Make content more relevant and visible to AI-driven platforms.

02/

Build off of and move beyond traditional SEO.

03/

Align content with how large language models (LLMs) understand and process information.

04/

Focus on clear, straightforward, well-organized, and natural language that AI can easily interpret.

5

Actionable AEO Steps

What you can do today

1 Write context-rich summaries for long-form content

Atari's resurrecting the Intellivision, one of its biggest competitors in the '80s



The Intellivision Sprint features the same unique controllers as the original, but they're now wireless and rechargeable. Image: Atari

/ The Intellivision Sprint upgrades the original with wireless controllers, HDMI, and 45 built-in games.

by [Andrew Liszewski](#)

Oct 17, 2025, 10:29 AM CDT



29 Comments (All New)

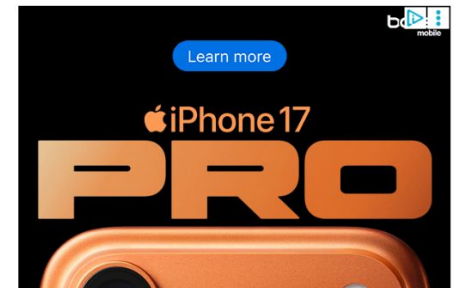


[Andrew Liszewski](#) is a senior reporter who's been covering and reviewing the latest gadgets and tech since 2006, but has loved all things electronic since he was a kid.

Atari has announced yet another retro console revival, but this time it's launching hardware from an old competitor.

Atari and Plaion, a company that develops, publishes, and distributes games, have collaborated on the new Intellivision Sprint that blends

Control your context by adding a short “Summary” or “Key Takeaway” at the top of your content.



Summaries are great for case studies, whitepapers, tools, and blogs posts.

Website Personalization Strategy & Implementation: Boosting Member Engagement with Tailored Content

August 5, 2025

[Share](#)



SUMMARY

For marketing and technology teams looking to drive engagement on their website, consider personalization! This blog explores the strategies, tools, and steps for implementing an



TAKEAWAY 1

Pick your 3 most visited pages
and add a 2-sentence summary.

2

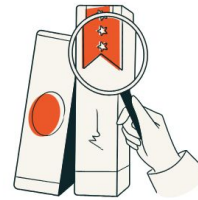
FAQs turn questions
into traffic

Add FAQs at the bottom of highly visited pages.

Hubspot SEO Marketing Software.

Related Resources

If you're interested in SEO marketing software, these related resources may help.



The Ultimate Guide to SEO

Find out how to increase your site's visibility and rankings with SEO, content marketing, and link building.

[Read the SEO guide](#)



SEO Certification Course

Get certified in SEO with this free HubSpot Academy course.

[Start the SEO certification course](#)



On-Page SEO Template

Optimize pages and rank higher in search engines with this free SEO template.

[Get your free on-page SEO template](#)

Frequently Asked Questions

> What is SEO software?

> What are popular SEO software features?

> How much does HubSpot's SEO marketing software cost?

Or this example
from University of
Wisconsin.



Thematic VISP Track

The Thematic VISP Track programs are partnerships between the Visiting International Student Program and UW-Madison academic departments. Some Thematic VISP track programs are open only to students pre-selected by the UW-Madison academic department while others are open to any VISP applicant.

What Makes the Thematic VISP Track Different?

Participants in the Thematic VISP Track are admitted both by VISP as well as the academic department hosting the program. Students receive additional advising support from the department, as well as the bulk of their courses guaranteed within that specific academic area. Some of our Thematic Track programs also offer the option to apply for an accelerated graduate degree program at the end of your time in VISP. Learn more about the benefits of participating in our VISP thematic track programs in the video below.

Frequently Asked Questions about Thematic VISP Track

[Expand all](#) | [Collapse all](#)

+ How do I apply to a thematic VISP track program?

+ I want to take courses in a few departments including one of the thematic tracks. How should I apply?

+ My major isn't listed as a current thematic VISP track program. What should I do?

+ What if I applied to the traditional track before I saw a thematic program for my major?

+ I heard about a thematic VISP track program that isn't on this list. Can I apply for it?

+ I have a question about one of the thematic VISP programs. Whom should I contact?

+ I might want to do more than just a semester or year in VISP. Do the Thematic Track programs allow you to apply for an accelerated graduate degree after my time in VISP?

TWO-FER OPPORTUNITY

Make Sure Your Content is Scannable

Bullets, headings, and summaries are easier for AI and humans to read.



TAKEAWAY 2

Add 3-5 FAQs to highly visited pages.

3 Build your content authority by expanding your FAQs

Example of a long-form blog post built from FAQs.

Title:
**Everything You Need to Know About
Joining [Association Name]**

- What are the benefits of joining?
- How does membership support my career?
- What events, resources or training is available?
- What is the process for joining?
- What makes [association name] unique?

TWO-FER OPPORTUNITY

Refresh Outdated Content

Update 1-2 high-traffic pages with new stats and add “last updated [year]”.



TAKEAWAY 3

Take one FAQ and turn into a short blog post,
or combine 3-5 related FAQs
in a long-form blog post.

4 Train AI about your organization via prompt testing

Simply ask AI

**“Who is [company/org name] and
what do they do?”**

Compare ChatGPT, Perplexity and Gemini



Who is Sandstorm and what do they do?



Share



Download Comet

Sandstorm Design

Sandstorm Design (or Sandstorm®) is an award-winning digital agency based in Chicago, Illinois. Founded in 1998, it specializes in user experience (UX), brand strategy, accessibility, web development, and digital marketing. The agency integrates AI and inclusive design principles to help clients uncover actionable insights and reduce bias in their digital products. Its clients include purpose-driven organizations seeking accessible, human-centered online experiences.

linkedin

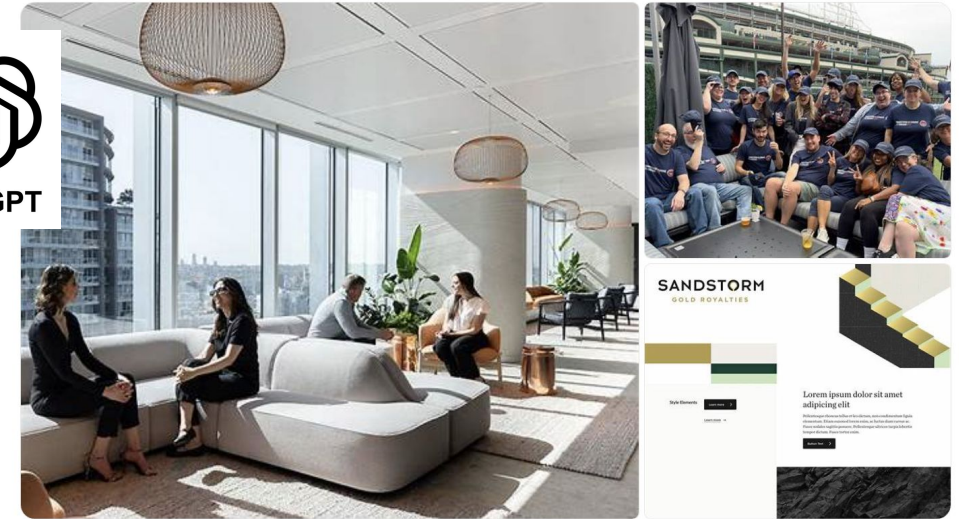


- **Sandstorm® (UX Design & Development):** An award-winning UX agency that helps purpose-driven brands build high-performing websites through robust engineering and a human-centric approach, offering services like enterprise web development, custom software, AI solutions, brand strategy, and UX design. [🔗](#) [🔗](#)

2. Sandstorm (UX design agency) (based in Chicago)



ChatGPT



Who they are:

- A UX (user-experience) design and development agency, founded in 1998 and based in Chicago, Illinois. [CB Insights](#)
- They serve "purpose-driven" brands (nonprofits, healthcare, higher education) with brand strategy, UX research, inclusive design and enterprise web development. [CB Insights +1](#)

What they do / Why it matters:

- They help organizations build digital products (websites, apps) with good user experience, strategy and inclusive design.
- They emphasise their own "Incubator" program to proactively generate strategic ideas for clients. [Sandstorm Design](#)
- They have been recognised for growth: e.g., named 76th fastest-growing inner-city company in the U.S. in 2024. [Sandstorm Design](#)

Caveats / things to check:

- Their business depends on being able to attract clients and execute design/development projects – the design agency market is competitive.
- "Purpose-driven" implies a niche focus; check if their strengths align with what you (or your organisation) need. [📌](#)
- If you were expecting something "mining" or "royalties" then this is the wrong "Sandstorm".



TAKEAWAY 4

Note gaps, give AI more context by updating content to fill them.

5 Create an LLMs.txt file for AI
(like a sitemap.xml for SEO)

What is an LLMs.txt?

01/

LLMs.txt provides a clear, structured format that helps AI crawlers quickly digest the information.

02/

Tells AI which content is available for training/answers.

03/

Not required, but helps AIs know who you are, what pages matter most, and how to credit you.



Note: LLMs.txt is still experimental, but early adopters could gain visibility

LLMs.txt template includes:

Name

About the site

Sitemap

Business Goals

Last Updated

Top 5 core pages

[CLIENT NAME] – [Tagline or Short Description]

About This Site

[2–3 sentences describing the organization’s mission, audience, and key value]

Sitemap

[link to sitemap] (Auto-system added)

Business Goals

[2–4 bullet points summarizing the association’s current priorities.]

Last Updated: [YYYY-MM-DD] (Auto-system updated)

Core Pages

* (We can curate this or decide to print out top-level menu items.)

[Page Title]

- URL: [/page-url]

- Description: [Concise What + Why + Who]

- Keywords: [keyword1, keyword2, keyword3]

[Repeat for top 5-10 pages]



TAKEAWAY 5

Create LLMs.txt and
upload it to your root directory

(the same location as your robots.txt file).

5 ACTIONABLE AEO TIPS

- ✓ Create summaries at the top of major pages
- ✓ Add FAQ sections to highly visited pages
- ✓ Repurpose FAQs into blog posts
- ✓ Prompt test your organization in AI tools
- ✓ Implement LLMs.txt to guide AI systems

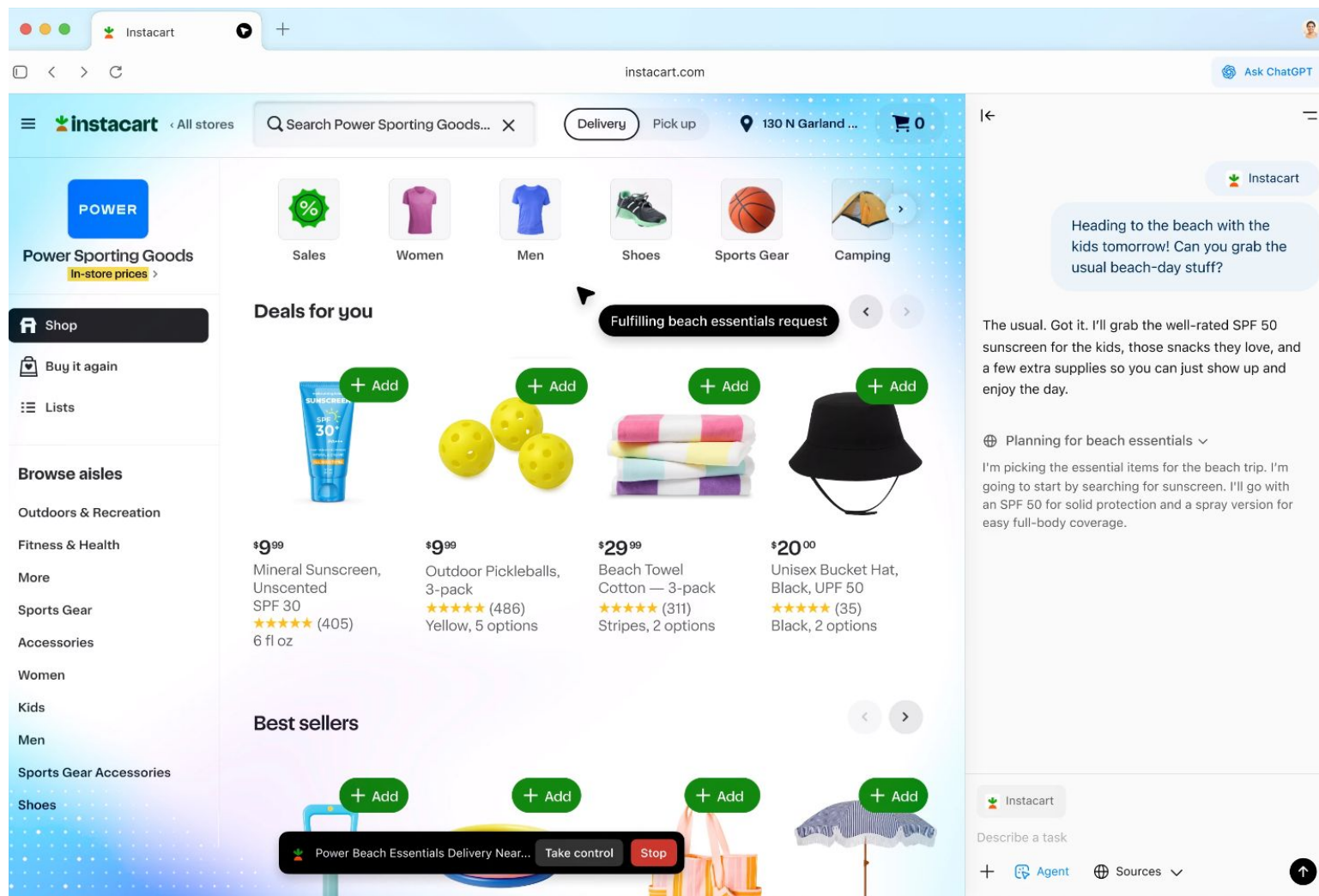
FINAL WORDS OF AI WISDOM

Neither your SEO nor your AEO
efforts are “one and done”
and everything AI is still in flux.



Introducing ChatGPT Atlas!

**A dedicated web
browser** with native
ChatGPT integration.



Thanks for joining us!



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