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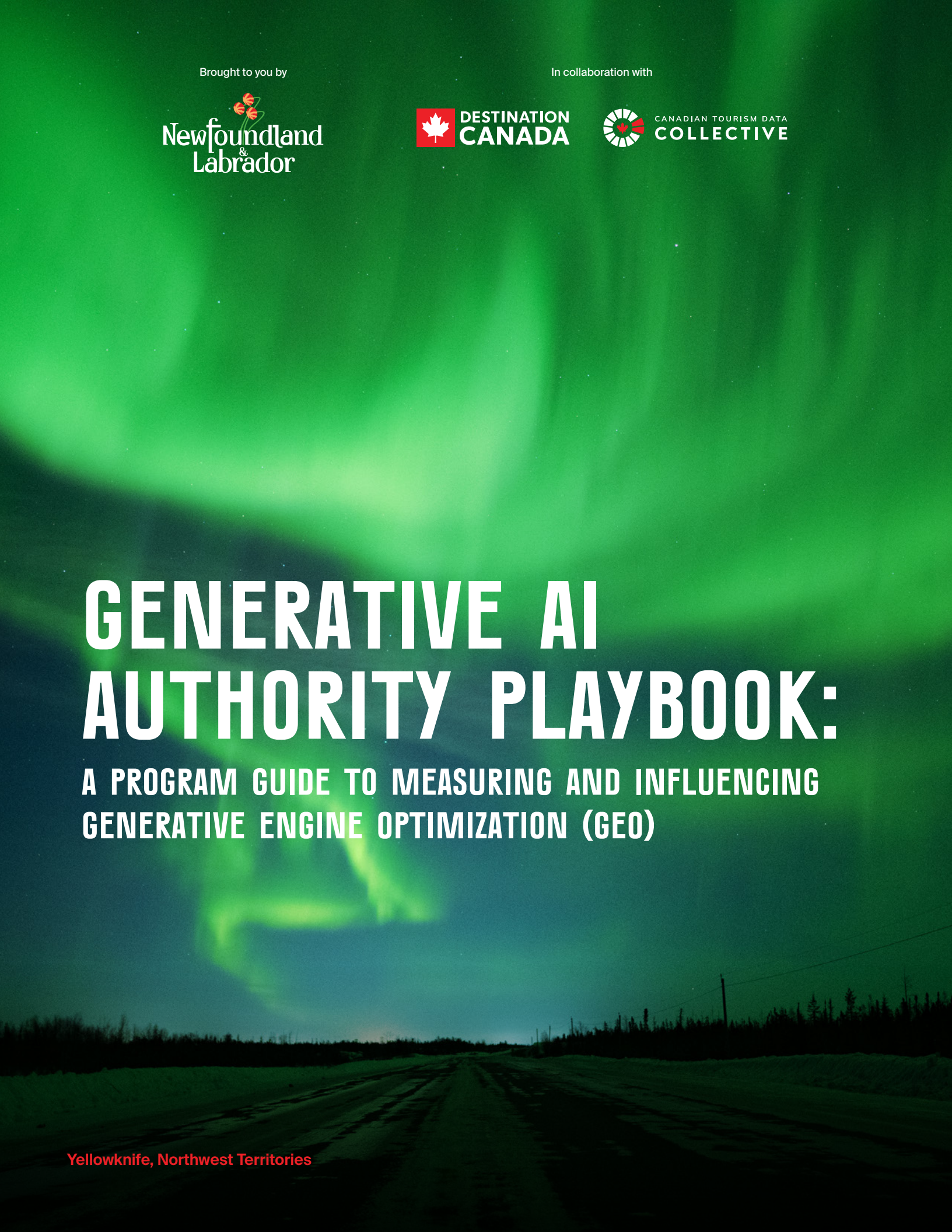

GENERATIVE AI AUTHORITY PLAYBOOK:

A PROGRAM GUIDE TO MEASURING AND INFLUENCING GENERATIVE ENGINE OPTIMIZATION (GEO)

Yellowknife, Northwest Territories

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Grasslands National Park, Saskatchewan

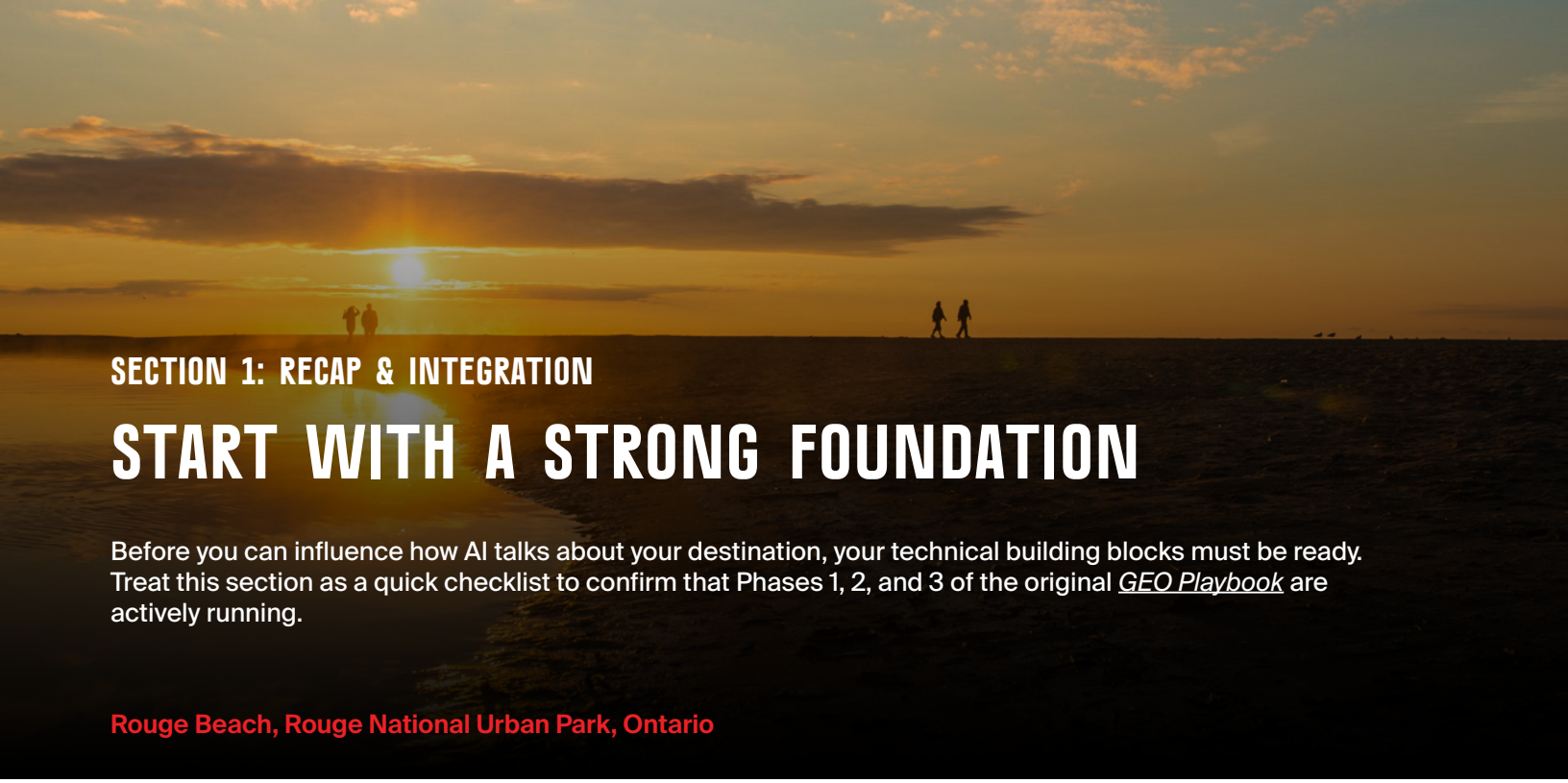
INTRODUCTION: WHY THIS PLAYBOOK MATTERS

More than half of travellers use AI as a source of trip inspiration, research, and itinerary planning (source: *McKinsey & Company*). When a traveller asks an AI platform to plan a weekend getaway or find a family ski resort, they don't scroll through pages of search results anymore. They get a single, curated answer to each question they ask, tailored specifically to their interests. Considering bot traffic makes up an estimated 35%-57% of all Internet traffic, this authority is significant. (*Source: Cloudflare*)

Traditional SEO focused on keywords and visibility. Generative Engine Optimization (GEO) focuses on **comprehension**: how well AI understands your brand to deliver accurate, contextual search results. AI models create a perception of your brand by scanning your entire digital footprint: your website, guest reviews, travel forums, business listings, and news articles. If this information is messy or incomplete, AI is less likely to recommend your destination.

This playbook shows you how to shape what AI says about your brand. You will learn to define a brand identity AI can understand, map out the questions travellers ask, fix gaps in your online footprint, nurture your digital ecosystem for continued success, and measure the outcomes of your efforts.

New to GEO? If you are completely new to this topic, we recommend reading our foundational *GEO Playbook* to set up your technical basics before diving into this strategy.



SECTION 1: RECAP & INTEGRATION

START WITH A STRONG FOUNDATION

Before you can influence how AI talks about your destination, your technical building blocks must be ready. Treat this section as a quick checklist to confirm that Phases 1, 2, and 3 of the original *GEO Playbook* are actively running.

Rouge Beach, Rouge National Urban Park, Ontario

WHY IT MATTERS

Summary

Good AI requires good data. Structured data code, clean sitemaps, and fast page speeds are the infrastructure that makes everything else in this playbook work.

HERE'S WHAT TO DO

Review the foundational GEO Playbook and confirm these three essential technical pieces are live:

1. **Schema Markup:** Valid structured data code must be active on all core pages. This code explicitly tells AI what your data means (e.g., your exact business name, location, events, and hours).

2. **XML Sitemap:** Ensure your sitemap is clean, updated, and submitted directly to Google Search Console so AI models can easily discover your pages.

3. **Site Health:** Run a quick health check using an SEO tool. If errors are flagged in Google Search Console, fix them right away.



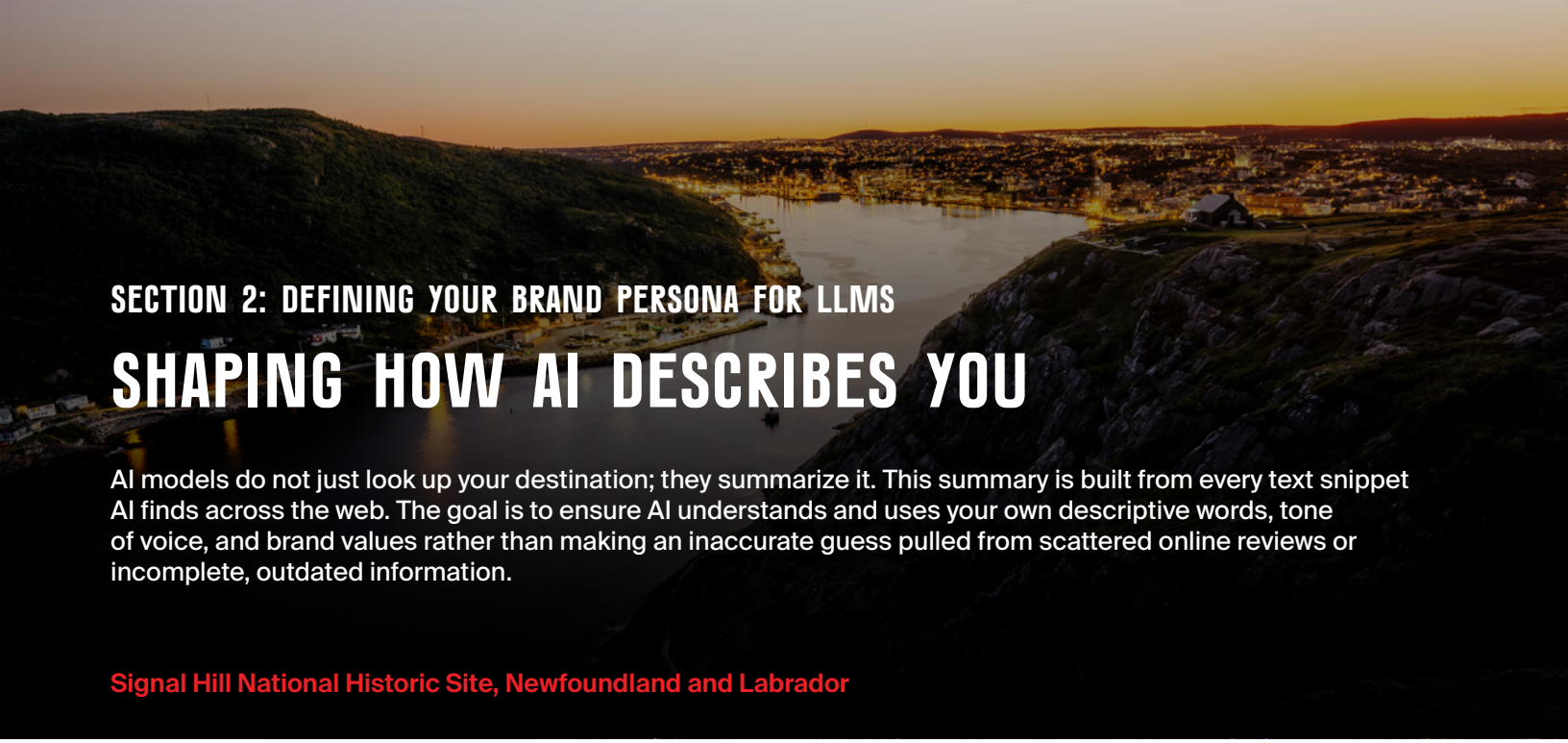
SECTION

1.0 Checklist

Halifax, Nova Scotia

- [ ] Schema markup is active and verified on all core pages.
- [ ] XML sitemap is clean, up-to-date, and submitted to Google Search Console.
- [ ] Foundational GEO Playbook has been reviewed and technical basics are confirmed.

New to GEO? Start Here



SECTION 2: DEFINING YOUR BRAND PERSONA FOR LLMS

SHAPING HOW AI DESCRIBES YOU

AI models do not just look up your destination; they summarize it. This summary is built from every text snippet AI finds across the web. The goal is to ensure AI understands and uses your own descriptive words, tone of voice, and brand values rather than making an inaccurate guess pulled from scattered online reviews or incomplete, outdated information.

Signal Hill National Historic Site, Newfoundland and Labrador

WHY IT MATTERS

Summary

AI models are built on language patterns. They learn from repetition. If your chosen brand language is used consistently across your website, social media, partner pages, and news releases, AI will learn those patterns and repeat them to users.

HERE'S WHAT TO DO

Building partnerships and boosting your online reputation is incredibly important for a few key reasons:

1. **Define Your Brand Offering:** Before you can test how AI describes your brand, or audit what's missing from your digital footprint, you need to know what should be there. Take time now to define:

    - The words and feelings your brand "should" own – what makes you distinct from your competitors?
    - The signature experiences, landmarks, or offerings that are non-negotiable in any AI description of your brand
    - The traveller personas your brand is best suited for

> ***Tip:*** *Need help understanding traveller personas or identifying which traveller segments best align with your brand? Use Traveller Twin to get to know traveller segments, find the travellers most likely to connect with your destination, product, or experience, and tailor your marketing strategies accordingly.*

In Section 3, you'll use these pillars to build your prompt list and test how AI currently measures up against them. In Sections 4 and 5, you'll use them to identify where your digital footprint has gaps.

2. **Draft a "Brand Bio" for AI:** Write a 500-word description of your destination or business using your true brand voice. This should be an authoritative narrative that captures your identity. If you're stumped on how to get started, imagine you're preparing an official brief to give journalists or bloggers an elevator pitch about your brand.

Your Brand bio must include:

- **Specifics:** What makes your destination unique (avoid generic phrases like "beautiful scenery") Think defining landscapes or signature experiences – the ownable attributes only you can claim.
- **Target Audience:** The exact type of traveller your destination suits best.
- **Tone:** The explicit values your brand embodies.

Once written, include elements of this bio onto your website's About page, Google Business Profile, and media kits.

> ***Tip:*** *Destination Canada's Traveller Segmentation Program unlocks deeper insights into visitor behaviours and preferences, enabling more meaningful, targeted, and impactful marketing and destination management strategies.*

This bio becomes the reference point for everything that follows: your prompt universe, content audits, and gap-closing strategy will all flow from here.

HERE ARE THE TOOLS TO USE

Aurora Traveller Twin: Uncover motivations, opportunities, and actionable insights about your target traveller in seconds, in a format that feels as easy as a conversation with your best guest.

HERE'S HOW TO MEASURE SUCCESS

WHAT TO KEEP AN EYE ON



Summary

The work in this section is the foundation everything else is measured against. You aren't tracking metrics yet. You're simply establishing the standard your metrics will eventually be measured against. Make sure you can answer these three questions clearly:

Does my brand bio articulate something specific and ownable? If it could describe any destination, experience, or tourism business without changing more than a few words, it needs more work. AI learns from specificity.

Are your brand pillars distinct enough to be testable? If your pillars are vague, you won't be able to tell whether AI is understanding your brand.

Is your brand bio integrated? Track how many of the partners you reach out to end up linking back to your site. This helps you assess what's working in your outreach efforts, and where you need to focus.

High-Quality Referring Domains: Make sure elements of your brand bio live on your About page, your Google Business Profile, your social media bios, in your media kit – anywhere people are learning about your brand online. In addition to your owned content, think about partners who have an "official" bio about your brand, including other DMO or government partners or media outlets.

WHAT TO WORRY LESS ABOUT

Perfect Word-for-Word Matching: When AI eventually describes your destination, it will paraphrase rather than reproduce your brand bio verbatim. What matters is whether the core meaning and tone are accurate rather than looking for identical word choices.

Immediate Results: AI engines take time to crawl and learn new web content. While site content can be indexed and included within AI search engine results in 1-3 days, less authoritative domains might take a few weeks.

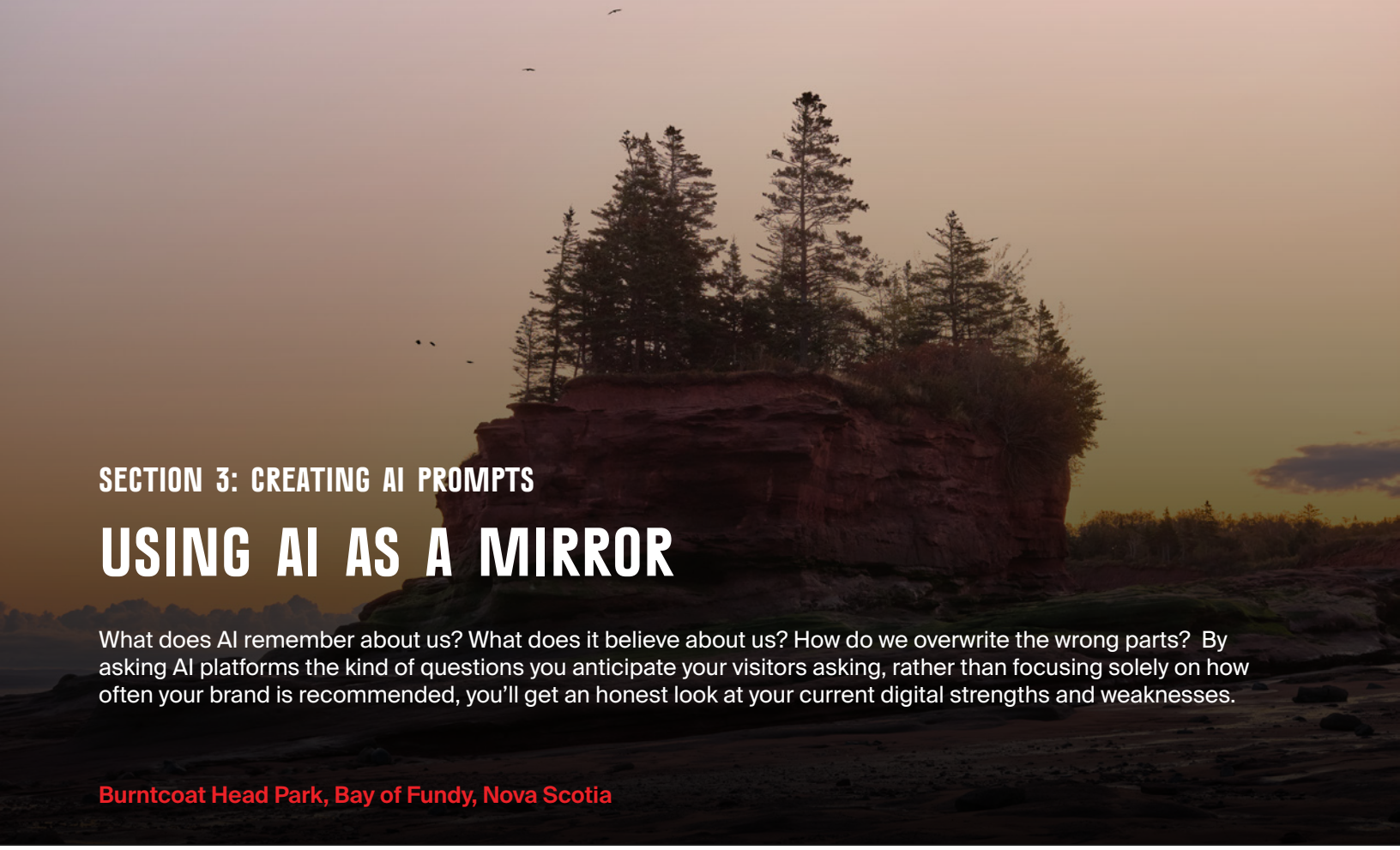


SECTION

2.0 Checklist

Lake Louise, Alberta

- [ ] A 500-word brand bio is drafted, published, and distributed
- [ ] Brand pillars have been defined and documented



SECTION 3: CREATING AI PROMPTS

USING AI AS A MIRROR

What does AI remember about us? What does it believe about us? How do we overwrite the wrong parts? By asking AI platforms the kind of questions you anticipate your visitors asking, rather than focusing solely on how often your brand is recommended, you'll get an honest look at your current digital strengths and weaknesses.

Burntcoat Head Park, Bay of Fundy, Nova Scotia

WHY IT MATTERS

Summary

AI prompts are conversational, long, and specific. People do not type "*Vancouver tourism*" into an AI; they ask, "*What is the best neighbourhood for a family foodie trip to Vancouver?*" Checking how AI handles these questions reveals exactly what content you are missing.

HERE'S WHAT TO DO

BUILD AND RUN YOUR PROMPT TRACKING LOG

The most effective way to understand and improve your brand's AI presence is to maintain a single, structured set of prompts run consistently every month. Here's how to build your prompt tracking log, using Nova Scotia as an example.

Tier	What You're Testing	Prompt Type	Example (Destination)	Example (Tourism Business/ Operator)
Tier 1	Quality of recommendation when your brand is named	Branded	"I'm thinking of visiting Halifax in the next 12 months. When should I go and what should I do?"	"I'm thinking of booking a kayak tour with [company name]. What should I know before I go?"
Tier 1	Sentiment and perception when your brand is named	Branded	"What words would you use to describe the overall vibe of Halifax?"	"Is [brand name] considered a good option for beginners?"
Tier 1	Partner and itinerary visibility when your brand is named	Branded	"Build a three-day itinerary for a first-time visitor to Halifax"	"What should I do before and after a kayak tour in Halifax?"
Tier 2	Whether AI recommends you with no brand named	Unbranded	"Tell me the coolest places to travel in the fall."	"What are the best whale watching experiences on the east coast of Canada?"
Tier 2	Whether AI recommends you for a specific persona or experience	Unbranded	"Where should a solo female traveller go for an adventure weekend?"	"Where can I find the best lobster roll?"
Tier 3	Whether you surface when the broader region is named	Regional branded	"I'm thinking of visiting the Maritimes next June. Where should I stay and what should I do?"	"I'm planning a food tour through Atlantic Canada. What experiences should I include?"
Tier 3	How AI distributes the regional story across competitors	Regional branded	"What is Nova Scotia known for as a travel destination?"	"What outdoor adventure operators are worth knowing about in Nova Scotia?"

These three tiers matter because each tier surfaces a different strategic problem. Tier 1 tells you how accurate and compelling AI's description of you is when travellers already have you in mind — that's your quality-of-recommendation score. Tier 2 is the harder, more important test: it shows whether AI surfaces you at all when a traveller is still in open consideration, which is the top-of-funnel question that traditional prompt testing misses entirely. Tier 3 reveals how much of the regional story you own, and how much is being distributed across your neighbours and competitors.

A destination or business that performs well on Tier 1 but poorly on Tier 2 has a brand awareness problem in AI, not a content quality problem. A destination that performs well on Tiers 1 and 2 but poorly on Tier 3 may be losing the regional narrative to a competitor or a broader geographic brand. Knowing which tier is underperforming tells you exactly where to focus your content strategy.

Run your prompt set monthly, log the full responses, and note which partners or experiences are named, whether the tone is accurate, and whether any details are outdated or wrong. Changes in these responses over time are your clearest signal that your GEO strategy is working.

SHORT ON TIME OR NOT SURE WHERE TO START? LET AI BUILD YOUR PROMPT SET FOR YOU.

You don't have to write all of this by hand. Most marketers running a small operation will get further, faster, by asking an AI assistant to build the prompt set for them, then running those prompts to see what comes back. Copy the template below into *Aurora Traveller Twin* or your AI tool of choice, fill in the blanks, and it will generate a ready-to-run set built on the same three-tier logic above.

If you're a **DMO or tourism board**, your "brand" is the **destination itself**. Fill in:

*My destination is **[place name — e.g. Halifax, Nova Scotia]**, and the kind of traveller it suits best is **[who — e.g. food-focused couples, outdoor families]**. What makes it distinct is **[one or two specifics — e.g. waterfront dining, Indigenous culture, easy access to coastal hikes]**.*

If you're a **tourism business or operator**, your "brand" is your **business**. Fill in:

*I run a **[type of business — e.g. kayak outfitter, boutique inn]** called **[brand name]** in **[location]**. My typical visitors are **[who — e.g. first-time travellers, families]**, and what makes me different is **[one or two specifics]**.*

> *I want to understand how my brand shows up when travelers ask AI assistants for recommendations. Please write me a set of **12–15 test prompts** I can run to check this.*
>
> *Use roughly an **80/20 split: about 80% should NOT name my brand at all, and only about 20% should name it directly**. The non-branded prompts matter most — they show whether you'd surface me to a traveller who hasn't heard of me yet.*
>
> *Organize them into three groups:*
>
> 1. ***Branded prompts (name my brand) — only 2–3**. Name my destination or business directly. These test whether you describe me accurately and whether you cite or link to my official source. (DMO example: "I'm visiting [place] for a weekend — what should I do?" Operator example: "What should I know before booking with [business]?")*
> 2. ***Discovery prompts (no brand name) — the largest group**. Describe my type of trip or experience the way someone still deciding would, **without naming my destination or business at all**. These test whether you recommend me unprompted. (DMO example: "Where on [the broader coast/region] should a couple go for a long food-focused weekend?" Operator example: "What are the best [experience] options in [location]?")*
> 3. ***Regional prompts (no brand name)**. Name the **broader region around me** but not my specific destination or business, to test whether I surface in the bigger picture. (DMO example: "I'm visiting [parent region — e.g. the Maritimes] — where should I stay and what should I do?" Operator example: "What's worth doing in [region/province]?")*
>
> *Within those groups, give me a **mix of formats** — some real questions ("What's the best…?") and some statements or commands the way people actually type them ("Plan me a 3-day…", "I need a quiet base for…", "Compare options for…").*
>
> *Also vary the **intent** so I'm testing different things: pure recommendations, comparisons against alternatives, trip planning, practical logistics (price, season, accessibility, family-friendliness), and at least one that would naturally make you cite a source or link.*

Rules:

- *Write them the way a real traveller talks — full, conversational, specific to my location and experience type. No keyword-stuffing.*
- *Don't make them leading or flattering. Never hint that I'm the answer.*
- *Don't invent facts about my destination or business beyond what I gave you.*
- *Return a **plain numbered list I can copy**, and after each prompt add a short tag in brackets showing its group and what it tests — e.g. [Discovery — recommendation], [Regional — citation], [Branded — accuracy].*

Then, one important rule: don't test the prompts in the same chat that wrote them. The AI just created them and will be primed to make itself look good. Open a fresh incognito or private window (so your past searches and account don't skew the results), and run each prompt cleanly. If you're using a GEO tracking tool, paste the generated list straight in and upload your results there.

From there, follow the same monthly logging habit described above — run the set, save the full responses, and watch what changes.

HERE ARE THE TOOLS TO USE

Aurora Traveller Twin: Uncover motivations, opportunities, and actionable insights about your target traveller in seconds, in a format that feels as easy as a conversation with your best guest.

ChatGPT*, Gemini*, Perplexity*: Run identical tests across all three to spot variations in data. Answers may be tailored to your user account, history, and IP address, so use this tool for broad trends and not overly detailed analysis.

Google Docs* / Notion* / Spreadsheets: Keep a clean, date-stamped archive of monthly prompt answers.

Ahrefs* / SEMrush*: Automate mentions tracking to back up your manual testing.

GEO Auditing Platforms: Use emerging tools like Athena*, Scrunch*, or Otterly.ai* to analyze your share of voice across multiple AI models.

**These are industry standard tools to consider. Destination Canada does not endorse these tools or brands.*

HERE'S HOW TO MEASURE SUCCESS

WHAT TO KEEP AN EYE ON

Citation Rate: How many AI responses include an owned URL. Since citations inform sources you might want to learn from, they're important to monitor. A low Citation Rate alongside a healthy Mention Rate signals that AI knows you exist, but doesn't consider your owned content authoritative enough to cite.

Mention Rate: What percent of relevant prompts mention your brand? As you publish and distribute your brand bio, watch for this number to grow across both Tier 1 and Tier 2 prompts.

Share of AI Recommendations (SoAR): How often is your brand actively recommended in AI answers (i.e. mentioned with recommendation language, like "visit", "explore", "top pick", "must do").

Placement Prominence: Your average position on listicle responses.

Query Match Relevance: When you review your monthly prompt log, is AI describing your destination or experience in ways that match your brand pillars? Tier 1 prompts will tell you whether the quality of your recommendation is accurate; Tier 2 prompts will tell you whether you're being surfaced for the right kinds of open-consideration questions.

WHAT TO WORRY LESS ABOUT

Exact Phrasing: AI will vary its sentence structures every time you ask. Focus on the factual details.

Single-Model Blips: If you perform well on ChatGPT but miss on Perplexity, treat it as data to improve upon, not a failure. Different platforms process information and produce citations differently, so it's not uncommon to excel on one tool over another.



SECTION

3.0 Checklist

Race Rocks Ecological Reserve, Victoria, British Columbia

- [ ] Tier 1, 2, and 3 prompts have been run across AI platforms
- [ ] Results have been logged with date stamps
- [ ] Partner and experience inclusion has been reviewed across itinerary prompts



SECTION 4: REVIEWING CITATION & COMPETITOR LANDSCAPE

KNOWING WHO'S WINNING THE CONVERSATION

In traditional SEO, authority was relatively predictable. High domain scores, strong backlink profiles, and well-optimized pages determined who ranked. You knew how the hierarchy worked and could build toward it.

Generative AI has reshuffled that hierarchy. A Reddit thread with 200 upvotes, a niche travel blogger with a modest following, or a three-year-old TripAdvisor review can carry more weight in an AI-generated answer than a polished, well-funded tourism website, because AI doesn't rank by domain authority. It weighs perceived authenticity, specificity, and how often a source is corroborated elsewhere. The question is no longer just "how do I outrank my competitors?" It's "who does AI actually trust when it talks about my destination or experience, and why?"

Cielo Glamping Maritime, Haut-Shippagan, New Brunswick

WHY IT MATTERS

Summary

If a popular travel blog contains outdated facts or a Reddit thread is filled with complaints, AI engines will absorb that negative data and share it with travellers. Finding out exactly who the AI cites allows you to update the source directly and influence the narrative about your brand.

A note on video: AI models are increasingly citing YouTube transcripts as text sources, not just linking to videos. A creator's spoken commentary about your destination, including offhand remarks, outdated information, or complaints, can be absorbed into an AI answer the same way a written blog post would be. This makes YouTube both a citation risk and an opportunity: well-optimized video content (clear titles, detailed descriptions, accurate spoken content) can become source material trusted by AI.

HERE'S WHAT TO DO

1. **Identify Who AI Is Citing**
   Ask AI models directly to reveal their sources using these prompts:

   - *"What sources did you use to describe [destination]?"*
   - *"What travel blogs or websites do you find most useful for information about [business]?"*
   - *"Where would you direct someone to read more about [brand]?"*
   - *"What YouTube videos or creators would you recommend for information about [brand]?"*

Look closely at the inline citations and footnotes on platforms like Perplexity. These show you who holds the most influence over your digital footprint.

KEEP AN EYE ON THESE TOP DATA SOURCES:

- Online Travel Agencies (Expedia, Booking.com, TripAdvisor)
- Reddit forums (e.g., r/travel, r/[destination])
- Niche travel blogs and local news websites
- YouTube (video transcripts, descriptions, and pinned comments)
- Social media influencer captions

HERE ARE THE TOOLS TO USE

Gemini* or Copilot*: Instantly see footnotes, links, and citations.

Google Alerts* / Reddit Alerts*: Free keyword monitoring tools that ping you when your destination is mentioned online.

Ahrefs Content Explorer*: Finds high-authority web pages writing about your region that AI is likely sourcing.

YouTube Studio*: Used along with Google Alerts for a channel name, it surfaces new video mentions and tracks which creator videos are gaining traction for your brand's keywords.

**These are industry standard tools to consider. Destination Canada does not endorse these tools or brands.*

SECTION 4: REVIEWING CITATION & COMPETITOR LANDSCAPE

HERE'S HOW TO MEASURE SUCCESS

WHAT TO KEEP AN EYE ON

Source Diversity: Ensuring AI draws from a healthy mix of different websites rather than just one blog.

Source Truth: Verifying the facts on highly cited external websites are accurate.

Co-Mentions: Checking which rival destinations the AI naturally lumps together with yours.

Placement: When your destination or business is recommended, where does it appear in the answer? Earlier placement means more prominent surfacing and a stronger likelihood a traveller acts on the recommendation.

WHAT TO WORRY LESS ABOUT

Total Source Control: You cannot control every forum post. Focus your energy on the top three frequently cited sites.

Erasing Every Complaint: Organic forum debates will happen. Counterbalance them by ensuring high-quality, positive content dominates the web.



SECTION

4.0 Checklist

Riding Mountain National Park, Manitoba

- [ ] AI models have been questioned to find out their primary citation sources
- [ ] Top cited bloggers, media outlets, and creators have been reviewed for factual accuracy
- [ ] Automated Reddit and forum alerts are live
- [ ] A targeted list of high-influence external websites is logged for regular monitoring
- [ ] Top-performing YouTube videos mentioning your brand have been reviewed for accuracy and tone



SECTION 5: ECOSYSTEM MANAGEMENT

OWNING YOUR DIGITAL FOOTPRINT

Your brand is listed across dozens of external websites, directory pages, and reservation platforms. AI cannot distinguish a live business listing from an abandoned one; it scrapes everything. Ecosystem management means auditing these channels and cleaning up errors systematically. It's an ongoing task, but an important one.

Tombstone Territorial Park, Yukon

WHY IT MATTERS

Summary

AI builds a digital mosaic of your brand. If partner details are half-empty, local events are unindexed, or major attractions lack text summaries, the AI's final mosaic will be broken or completely missing key details. The more complete and correct information exists about your brand, the better your mosaic will look.

HERE'S WHAT TO DO

1. Complete Your Core Directory Listings

Focus heavily on the database sources that feed AI engines:

- **Google Business Profile (GBP):** Audit your own profile and guide your local partners to polish theirs. Keep hours, categories, and tags updated.
- **Events Calendars:** Use clean, structured feeds so AI engines can read upcoming regional events easily.

2. Run a Digital Footprint Audit

Map your online footprint to find visibility issues:

- Log the words and themes that appear consistently.
- Identify which local neighbourhoods or business types are missing from AI results.
- Note down any incorrect or outdated facts that keep showing up.

3. Categorize Your Content Gaps

Organize your weak points into three main buckets:

- **Missing Owned Content:** Crucial topics you should cover on your website but haven't. If AI can't find an authoritative source from you, it will grab info from unverified sources.
- **Thin Third-Party Coverage:** Attractions that have good website copy, but lack reviews, news articles, or blog mentions elsewhere on the web.
- **Outdated Narratives:** Old marketing slogans, past events, or incorrect business hours that need to be removed from around the web.

4. Build a Gap-Closing Roadmap

Prioritize your gaps by urgency (e.g., missing info about a major local landmark or a core offering from your brand should be fixed first). Assign ownership for each task—whether it requires writing a new blog post, updating your CRM, or issuing a press release—and set a quarterly schedule to re-audit.

5. Optimize Media for AI Vision Engines

Write descriptive, highly specific alternative text (alt-text) for your main website photos and videos. Modern AI vision engines read images to understand context.

- *Instead of*: "Photo of mountains"
- *Write:* "Two hikers on the Rockwall Trail in Kootenay National Park with summer wildflowers and snow-capped peaks."

6. Build Your Local Content Network

Building a network of local partners who actively link to and reference each other's websites is a powerful tool. A healthy content network enables AI to recognize your ecosystem as authoritative – and harder to overlook. Think about the businesses your visitors interact with before, during, and after their experience with you. These are your best opportunities for backlinking to your site because the relationships are logical, the audiences overlap, and the partnership feels authentic.

- Instead of a generic "check out our local partners" page, make mentions specific and intentional: "For the best post-hike meal, we recommend [restaurant] in [neighbourhood]." Specificity signals authenticity to AI.
- Use consistent language and terminology to reinforce your brand attributes (and your partner's) across sources.

HERE ARE THE TOOLS TO USE

CRM: Your core system to track, update, and manage local partner listings at scale.

Yext* / BrightLocal*: Directory management software to ensure business name, address, and phone data remain uniform across the web.

Screaming Frog* / Ahrefs Site Audit*: Technical crawlers that flag website issues stopping AI engines from indexing your text.

**These are industry standard tools to consider. Destination Canada does not endorse these tools or brands.*

SECTION 5: ECOSYSTEM MANAGEMENT

HERE'S HOW TO MEASURE SUCCESS

WHAT TO KEEP AN EYE ON

Listing Completion Percentage: Track how many partner listings in your database are fully filled out. Aim for close to 100%.

Gap Resolution Rate: The number of content gaps successfully resolved each quarter.

AI Representation Updates: Seeing previously ignored local business partners or attractions appear in quarterly prompt tests.

WHAT TO WORRY LESS ABOUT

Fixing Every Website Ever: Focus on Google Business Profile, your main website, and your CRM first. Then expand outward.

Locked Platforms: If a third-party site cannot be edited, don't waste time on it. Focus heavily on channels you own or influence.

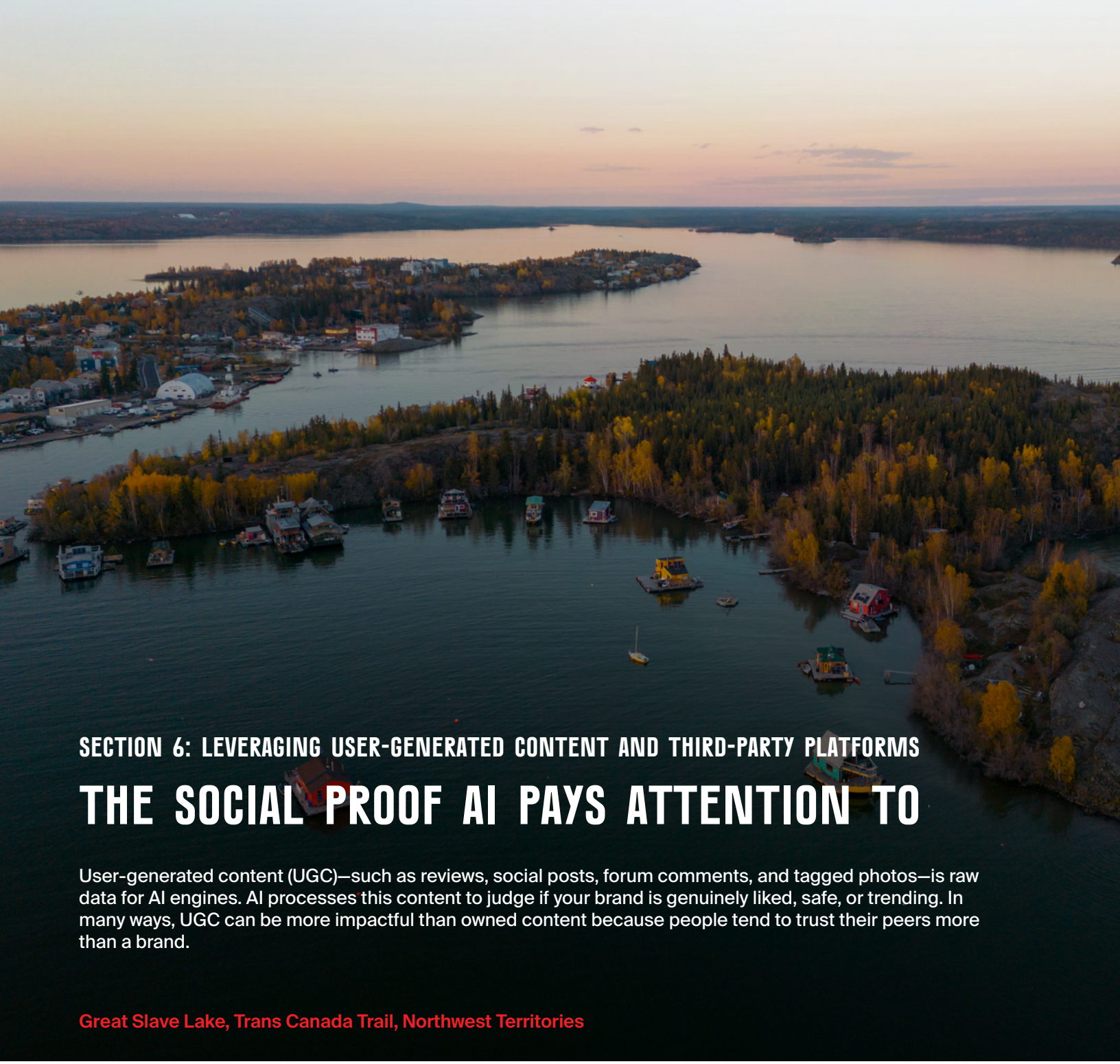


SECTION

5.0 Checklist

Cedar Dunes Provincial Park, West Point, Prince Edward Island

- [ ] Partner directory listings are complete with updated descriptions and geo-locations
- [ ] Google Business Profiles are audited and optimized
- [ ] Local events calendar feeds are readable and up-to-date
- [ ] A digital footprint audit has been completed across top search and AI models
- [ ] Content gaps are organized by priority and type
- [ ] A gap-closing strategy with timelines and assigned owners is active
- [ ] A quarterly re-audit schedule is locked in
- [ ] Local content network is identified and cross-links are in place
- [ ] Website image alt-text has been rewritten with clear, descriptive prose for AI vision models



SECTION 6: LEVERAGING USER-GENERATED CONTENT AND THIRD-PARTY PLATFORMS

THE SOCIAL PROOF AI PAYS ATTENTION TO

User-generated content (UGC)—such as reviews, social posts, forum comments, and tagged photos—is raw data for AI engines. AI processes this content to judge if your brand is genuinely liked, safe, or trending. In many ways, UGC can be more impactful than owned content because people tend to trust their peers more than a brand.

Great Slave Lake, Trans Canada Trail, Northwest Territories

WHY IT MATTERS

Summary

AI models look for real human consensus. A brand supported by fresh, highly detailed customer reviews and authentic user content gains a major advantage in generative searches. Brands that ignore reviews or have thin social footprints suffer, regardless of how clean their main website looks.

HERE'S WHAT TO DO

1. Manage Reviews Actively

Respond to all Google and TripAdvisor reviews within the past 30 days. Consistent replies show AI algorithms that your business footprint is active, trustworthy, and managed.

- Avoid generic copy-paste templates.
- Thank reviewers for specific details they called out.
- Address criticisms politely with a clear solution path.
- Share review guidelines with local partners so they maintain the same habits.

2. Monitor Reddit and Community Forums

Reddit is one of the most influential training sources for major AI models, and it's a platform where authentic local knowledge carries real weight. Set up automatic brand monitoring alerts to track community discussions and spot trends early — but don't stop there.

If your team has the capacity, consider engaging directly. Smaller DMOs and tourism businesses of any size have a genuine advantage here: no one knows your brand better than you do. When a traveller asks on r/travel whether [destination] is worth visiting in shoulder season, or which kayak tour operator is best for beginners, a helpful, specific, non-promotional answer from someone with real local knowledge is exactly what AI models are learning from. You're not just helping that one traveller — you're contributing to the broader data pool that shapes how AI describes your brand.

A few principles for engaging well:

- **Be genuinely helpful first.** Promotional or sales-y responses get downvoted and dismissed by both users and by AI, and explicitly self-promotional content is banned in a number of subreddits.
- **Lead with local expertise.** Specific, experience-based answers ("the trail conditions are best in late September because…") carry far more weight than general endorsements. Address criticisms politely with a clear solution path.
- **Be transparent.** If you're a business owner or DMO rep, say so. Reddit communities reward honesty.

HERE ARE THE TOOLS TO USE

Google Business Profile* & TripAdvisor Management Centre*:
Your key tools for monitoring and responding to consumer reviews.

**These are industry standard tools to consider. Destination Canada does not endorse these tools or brands.*

HERE'S HOW TO MEASURE SUCCESS

WHAT TO KEEP AN EYE ON

Review Response Rate: The total percentage of monthly customer reviews that receive a personalized response. Aim for 100%.

Community Sentiment Trends: Monitoring whether public forum discussions and star ratings show a positive trend.

WHAT TO WORRY LESS ABOUT

An Isolated Negative Review: A single poor review inside a sea of positive comments will not break your AI score. Look at the overall sentiment.

Massive Follower Counts: AI looks for real, descriptive engagement text, not inflated follower numbers. Small, highly detailed discussions hold immense weight.

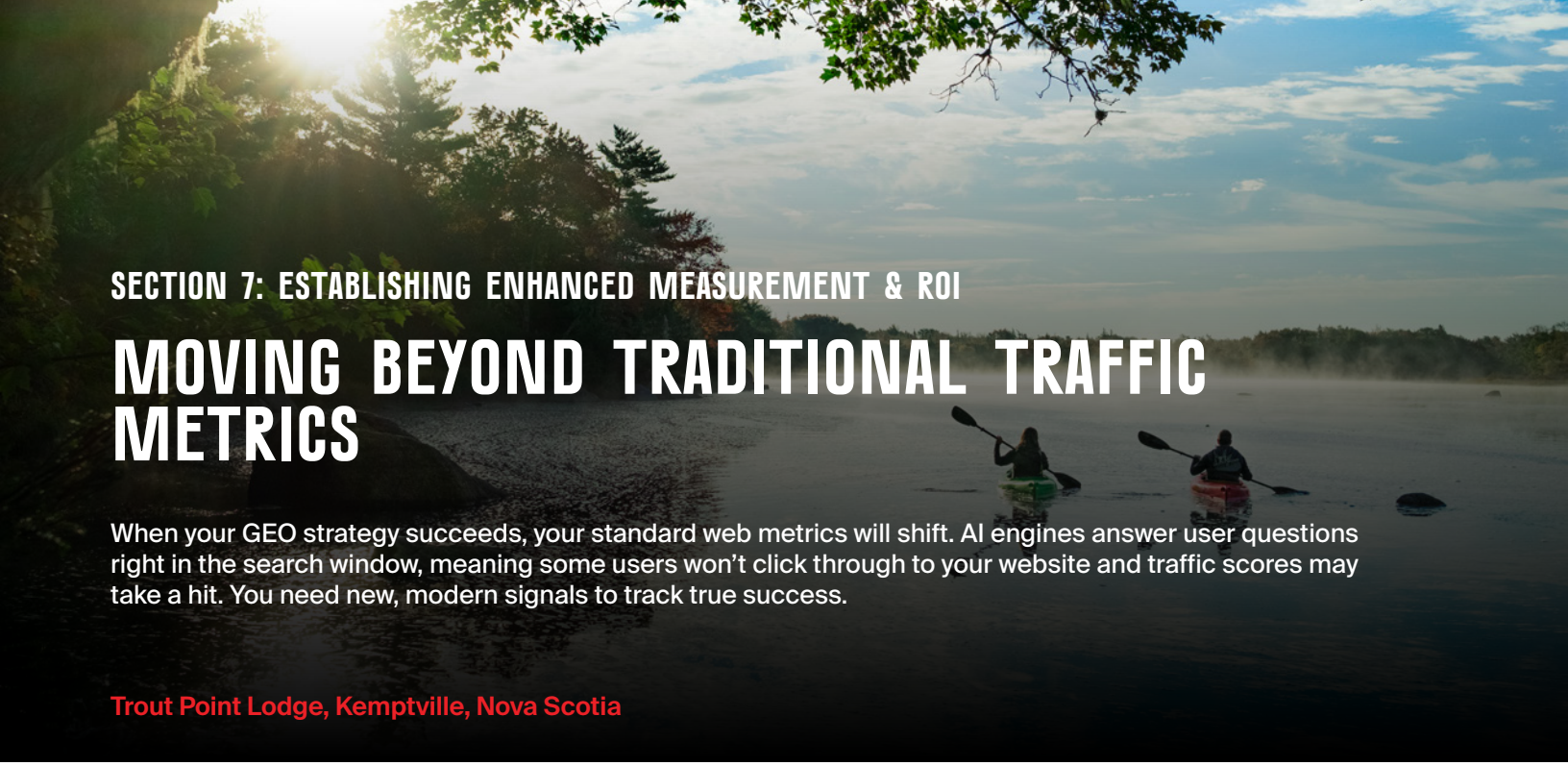


SECTION

6.0 Checklist

Nunavut

- [ ] All Google and TripAdvisor reviews from the last 30 days are answered
- [ ] Local partners have received guidelines on proper review reply practices



SECTION 7: ESTABLISHING ENHANCED MEASUREMENT & ROI

MOVING BEYOND TRADITIONAL TRAFFIC METRICS

When your GEO strategy succeeds, your standard web metrics will shift. AI engines answer user questions right in the search window, meaning some users won't click through to your website and traffic scores may take a hit. You need new, modern signals to track true success.

Trout Point Lodge, Kemptville, Nova Scotia

WHY IT MATTERS

Summary

A decrease in direct organic web traffic does not mean failure; it often means users got an answer directly from an AI snippet that featured your brand. A GEO framework measures how often you are recommended, not just how many clicks you receive.

HERE'S WHAT TO DO

1. **Track the Correct GEO Metrics**

   In addition to the core metrics introduced in Section 3, a well-rounded GEO measurement framework draws on several signals. Layering in the metrics below gives you a fuller picture of your visibility, so you can see what's working and where to focus next.

   - **LLM Mentions:** How often your brand name appears in AI text answers.
   - **AI Overview Appearances:** How often your content is sourced in Google's AI summary panels.
   - **Citation Frequency:** The number of direct website hyperlinks awarded to you during monthly prompt checks.
   - **Sentiment and Attribute Shifts:** Whether your target brand words are replacing older descriptions in quarterly audits.
   - **Query Coverage:** Compare your total AI visibility directly against key competitors to evaluate your market share of voice.

2. **Run Regular Audits**

   Set a monthly calendar reminder to re-test your tracking prompts and archive the text answers. Consistency transforms this data into actionable insights.

HERE ARE THE TOOLS TO USE

Ahrefs Brand Radar* / SEMrush*:
Automated tracking platforms to see brand visibility inside LLM environments and track content appearances in AI overviews.

Profound* / Otterly.ai*:
Dedicated platforms engineered to monitor generative search visibility and brand share of voice.

Google Analytics*:
Tracks underlying referral traffic patterns and helps contextualize organic traffic shifts.

SECTION 7: ESTABLISHING ENHANCED MEASUREMENT & ROI

HERE'S HOW TO MEASURE SUCCESS

WHAT TO KEEP AN EYE ON

Positive Sentiment Curves: Subtle improvements in the descriptive words AI uses to portray your region.

Rising Citation Counts: Earning more direct link footnotes inside AI responses over time.

Expanded Query Footprint: Showing up for broad travel searches that previously ignored your destination.

Partner Citation Authority: For DMOs in particular, showing up as a top cited source for a partner's own queries, even without driving their referral traffic, is a powerful data point for partner conversations.

WHAT TO WORRY LESS ABOUT

Short-Term Traffic Dips: Sudden month-to-month drops in traditional search clicks are common as AI search balances out. Focus on long-term visibility trends.

Minor Metric Fluctuations: GEO scores are directional trends. Don't worry if your citation numbers bounce slightly between audits – consistent, sustained efforts are key.

**These are industry standard tools to consider. Destination Canada does not endorse these tools or brands.*



SECTION

7.0 Checklist

Gros Morne National Park, Woody Point, Newfoundland and Labrador

- [ ] Baseline metrics for brand sentiment, attributes, and citation count are recorded
- [ ] Automated LLM mention tracking is set up using SEO tools
- [ ] Review Google Search Console for queries associated with AI Overviews
- [ ] Monthly prompt audits are scheduled on the internal team calendar



SECTION 8: FROM AI/GEO INSIGHTS TO CONTENT

TURNING AUDITS INTO ACTION

This section focuses on closing the strategy loop: using what you discovered during your AI audits to create content that strengthens your digital brand and surfaces your offering to travellers.

Quebec City, Quebec

WHY IT MATTERS

Summary

To move the needle in GEO, you must build content that answers conversational prompts, features clear structural layouts AI can scrape, and addresses the explicit gaps found during your audits.

HERE'S WHAT TO DO

1. Use a GEO Content Brief Template

Every new page, article, or post should start with a brief answering these five questions:

1. Which specific user prompt does this content answer?
2. Who is the target audience persona?
3. What is our unique, authoritative perspective on this topic?
4. Which business partners or local sites must be featured to boost their visibility?
5. Which gap from our footprint audit does this resolve?

2. **Focus on Formats AI Engines Prefer**

   AI models naturally favor structured, direct content formats. Focus on these four types:

   - **FAQ Pages:** These match the natural question-and-answer format of AI prompts. Clear, direct answers to common questions are highly citable.
   - **Detailed Itineraries:** AI travel engines look for day-by-day itineraries. Include specific business names, recommended durations, and transit tips.
   - **Evergreen Guides:** "Know before you go" pages and seasonal planning guides are highly durable and earn steady citation value over time.
   - **Comparison Content:** Clear comparison pages (e.g., "*Spring vs. Fall in [Destination]*") provide AI engines with the context they need to recommend your destination during different seasons.

3. **Sync Content with Your Prompt Universe**

   Align your content calendar with your prompt log. Each month, identify queries where your destination is missing or weak, and publish targeted content to address them.

4. **Train Partners to Create AI-Friendly Content**

   Guide local business partners to publish content that uses consistent brand language, links back to your main directory pages, and uses active Google Business Profile features.

VISUAL: STRUCTURING CONTENT FOR GEO

Unoptimized Formatting (***Hard for AI to Siphon***)	**Optimized Formatting** (***Easy for AI to Cite***)
Title: *A Weekend Getaway in [Destination]* *"Come discover the magic of our region. With so much to see and do around every corner, there is truly something here for everyone..."*	**Title:** *How to Spend a Weekend in [Destination]: A Step-by-Step Itinerary* *"**Day 1:** Start in [Neighborhood] with breakfast at [Partner Name]. **Day 2:** Head to [Attraction Name]—here is what to know before you arrive..."*

HERE ARE THE TOOLS TO USE

Your Prompt Tracking Log:
Your primary content planning tool. Review it regularly to spot gaps before planning new articles.

Ahrefs / SEMrush Keyword Explorer:
Use search volume and keyword trends to prioritize high-impact topics.

Google Search Console:
Identify which pages already perform well in AI Overviews to mirror their formatting style.

SECTION 8: FROM AI/GEO INSIGHTS TO CONTENT

HERE'S HOW TO MEASURE SUCCESS

WHAT TO KEEP AN EYE ON

Prompt Success Growth: Verifying that your destination starts showing up for prompts that previously ignored you.

New Page Citations: Spotting your newly published pages listed as footnotes in monthly AI audits.

WHAT TO WORRY LESS ABOUT

Instant Indexing: New content takes 4–8 weeks to be indexed and processed by LLMs. Do not run prompt checks immediately after hitting publish.

Pure Content Volume: Don't hurry to publish thin content just to increase page count. A few highly detailed, well-structured pages are far more effective.



SECTION

8.0 Checklist

Killarney Provincial Park, Ontario

- [ ] A GEO content brief template is created and distributed to writers
- [ ] The editorial calendar is synced with open gaps in the prompt universe
- [ ] FAQ pages are live for high-frequency traveller queries
- [ ] Labeled, persona-focused itineraries are published or in production
- [ ] New pages are tracked in the prompt log 4–8 weeks post-launch



SECTION 9:

RESOURCES

The AI space moves quickly. Use these core resources to keep your team updated, research structured code, and track your generative search metrics.

Niagara Falls, Ontario

FOUNDATIONAL READING

Destination Canada GEO Playbook (Phases 1–3):
Your guide for technical foundations and data partnerships.

Google Search Central — AI Overviews Documentation:
Google's official manual on how AI search summaries work.

Schema.org:
The official reference dictionary for structured data markup.

TOOLS REFERENCED IN THIS PLAYBOOK

Tool	Primary Use	Cost Status
Google Search Console	Keyword/Query tracking & crawl error health	Free
Google Business Profile	Local business and listing optimization, event promotion	Free
Ahrefs / SEMrush	Brand monitoring, tech SEO, & keyword research	Paid
BrightLocal / Yext	Uniform listing management & directory tracking	Paid
Simpleview / CRM	Core DMO partner data management	Platform
Perplexity	Fast manual prompt checks with visible footnotes	Free / Paid
Profound / Otterly.ai	Special GEO share of voice tracking software	Paid
BuzzSumo	External web content discovery	Paid
Hootsuite / Sprout Social	Social media planning & UGC tracking	Paid

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DESTINATION CANADA

CANADIAN TOURISM DATA COLLECTIVE



Stanley Park National Historic Site, Vancouver, British Columbia