# Publishers Concerned About Impact of Google's AI Search Feature on Traffic and Accuracy



**Google's AI Search Functionality Concerns Publishers**

In May 2024, Google rolled out a new search feature called AI Overviews, which uses generative artificial intelligence to produce summaries of search topics at the top of search results. This AI integration, designed to compile content from various websites and blogs, has sparked significant concern among publishers who fear a decline in traffic to their own sites.

Frank Pine, executive editor of Media News Group and Tribune Publishing, reported that the new summaries have already caused frustration among users who have to scroll past AI-generated paragraphs to find links to original news articles. Publishers like Gannett, the largest newspaper publisher in the U.S., are particularly troubled by the potential reduction in traffic which could severely impact their business models.

Google, led by CEO Sundar Pichai, showcased these AI Overviews at its annual developer conference. Although the summaries intend to help users get quick information, several factual inaccuracies have surfaced, such as suggesting that glue be used on pizza or recommending the ingestion of rocks. Liz Reid, Google's head of search, admitted in a blog post that the company is refining how and when these AI summaries are displayed to ensure accuracy and reliability.

Despite Google's assurances that its search engine continues to drive billions of visits to websites, the AI feature’s pitfalls have led to increased scrutiny and calls for government intervention from media executives. Legal battles are also emerging over whether companies like OpenAI and Google's use of news content without permission violates copyright laws.

In a swift response to public backlash over the inaccuracies, Google has already begun scaling back the presence of AI Overviews in some searches, focusing instead on ensuring more accurate and useful outputs. As this development unfolds, the publishing industry continues to brace for the changes and challenges brought by artificial intelligence in search engines.