SEO VS AEO VS GEO

SEO

DEFINITION:

Search Engine Optimisation

WHAT IT IS:

Classic search: Ranking pages on Google by targeting keywords, earning backlinks and fixing technical issues.

HOW IT WORKS:

- Identify high-intent keywords and map them to pages.
- Build authoritative backlinks and internal linking.
- Optimise on-page content, site speed and mobile experience.

USE CASES:

- A local gym chain ranks first for "*24-hour gyms in Manchester*" and drives consistent footfall.
- A sustainable jewellery brand owns "*ethical engagement rings UK*" and converts premium buyers.
- A SaaS tool ranks for "*best project management software for agencies*" and wins inbound free trials.

PROS:

- Proven, steady traffic driver.
- Builds long-term authority.
- Underpins AEO and GEO efforts.

CONS:

- Competitive and slow to show results.
- Vulnerable to algorithm updates.
- Requires ongoing content and technical upkeep.

HOW TO RANK HIGHER:

- Focus on fewer, high-intent keyword clusters.
- Refresh content quarterly and update internal links.
- Regular technical audits (schema, site speed, mobile).

AEO

DEFINITION:

Answer Engine Optimisation

WHAT IT IS:

Optimising for zero-click answers: Google snippets, "People Also Ask" results and voice search responses.

HOW IT WORKS:

- Provide concise, direct answers to user questions.
- Use FAQ and How-To schema for structured data.
- Format content with lists, bullets and clear headings.

USE CASES:

- A tax app secures the featured snippet for "*What is the UK capital gains tax allowance?*" and builds instant trust.
- A parenting blog wins the voice result for "*best bedtime routines for toddlers*" and grows newsletter sign-ups.
- A recruitment agency claims the answer box for "*how to negotiate a salary offer*" and attracts jobseekers.

PROS:

- Instant authority and brand visibility.
- Strong for mobile and voice queries.
- High CTR when clicks occur.

CONS:

- Some users get the answer without clicking through.
- Snippet positions change frequently.
- Requires frequent content monitoring.

HOW TO RANK HIGHER:

- Answer questions in 40–60 words.
- Optimise for "People Also Ask" topics.
- Add structured schema to FAQs and How-To content.

GEO

DEFINITION:

Generative Engine Optimisation

WHAT IT IS:

Optimising content to be cited or summarised by AI-driven search engines (ChatGPT, Perplexity, Google Gemini).

HOW IT WORKS:

- Publish clear, well-structured content with citations and facts.
- Build presence on credible sources AI models pull from (Reddit, Quora, etc).
- Use schema and formatting AI can parse easily.

USE CASES:

- A boutique hotel group is featured in AI recommendations for "*most affordable luxury stays in Europe*" and fills its off-season rooms without extra ad spend.
- A fintech brand is recommended in ChatGPT's "*top budgeting apps for freelancers*" and drives app downloads.
- A law firm appears in Perplexity's response to "*how to set up a business in the UK*" and generates inbound leads.

PROS:

- Early-mover advantage in AI search.
- Positions brand as a trusted knowledge source.
- Captures emerging traffic channels.

CONS:

- Hard to measure direct impact (no clicks).
- Standards for AI citations still evolving.
- Requires multi-platform presence, not just your website.

HOW TO RANK HIGHER:

- Create factual, entity-rich content (E-E-A-T principles).
- Contribute to sources AI frequently references (forums, industry datasets).
- Use clear headings, tables and FAQs for summarisation.