

THE DEFINITIVE REFERENCE

PR & AI Communications Glossary

*267 terms covering generative engine optimization, AI visibility,
citation share, earned media, crisis communications,
and the complete modern PR toolkit.*

267

TERMS DEFINED

49

AI-ERA TERMS

A–Z

ALL 26 LETTERS

5

AI ENGINES

Maintained by 5W, the AI Communications Firm · May 2026

[5WPR.COM/GLOSSARY](https://5wpr.com/glossary)

The definitive A–Z reference for modern communications — every term a PR professional, brand marketer, agency leader, or AI communications strategist needs to know.

From legacy earned-media concepts to the newest generative engine optimization and AI visibility vocabulary, this glossary covers the full stack: traditional PR and media relations, the PESO model, measurement and analytics, digital and social, influencer, crisis communications, executive visibility — and the new AI-era vocabulary every communicator now needs.

Terms marked ▲ **AI-ERA TERM** are part of the new AI communications vocabulary introduced or redefined by the generative AI era. They represent the terms most critical for understanding and practicing GEO, AI visibility, and AI-era reputation management.

Start here: GEO · AI Visibility · Citation Share · Retrieval-Augmented Generation (RAG) · Entity Optimization · Hallucination · AI Visibility Audit · PESO Model · Earned Media · Crisis Communications

A

20 terms

A/B Testing ▲

Comparing two versions of a creative asset, headline, subject line, or landing page against each other to identify the higher-performing variant. Standard discipline across paid, email, and conversion-focused content.

Above the Fold ▲

The portion of a webpage or email visible without scrolling. Headlines, key claims, and primary CTAs belong here; both human attention and AI summarization weight what appears first.

Activation ▲

A campaign moment designed to drive participation — an event, a stunt, an influencer drop, a limited release. Activations generate the cultural moments that earn coverage.

Advertising Value Equivalent (AVE) ▲

A legacy PR metric estimating earned coverage value by comparing it to the equivalent cost of paid space. Deprecated under the Barcelona Principles. 5W reports outcomes — share of voice, sentiment, citation share, AI visibility — instead of AVE.

Advisory (Media Advisory)

A short alert sent to media in advance of an event, listing who, what, when, where, and why. Distinct from a press release; tactical, not narrative.

Agency of Record (AOR)

The lead agency contracted to manage a brand's communications across an extended scope and term. Distinct from project work or specialty assignments.

Agentic AI ▲

AI systems that don't just respond to prompts but plan multi-step actions, use tools, and execute tasks. The next surface for brand visibility — agents that book travel, source vendors, and recommend products will become a new buyer channel.

AI Agent ▲

An autonomous or semi-autonomous AI system that completes tasks on behalf of a user — from booking meetings to comparing vendors. Brands not represented inside agent-accessible data sources risk invisibility in this channel.

AI Overviews (Google) ▲

Google's generative search feature that synthesizes answers above the traditional results, citing sources. Replaced Search Generative Experience (SGE) at general rollout. Earning AI Overview citations is now a primary GEO objective.

AI Visibility ▲

The degree to which a brand, executive, product, or claim surfaces inside generative AI responses across ChatGPT, Claude, Perplexity, Gemini, Copilot, and Google AI Overviews. Measured by citation share, mention rate, sentiment, and prompt coverage. The new front page of brand reputation.

AI Visibility Audit ▲

A diagnostic that probes target large language models with buyer-intent prompts to map where a brand appears, where competitors dominate, what sources LLMs cite, and which narratives are reinforced or absent. Foundational deliverable in the 5W AI Communications practice.

AMEC (International Association for the Measurement and Evaluation of Communication)

The global trade body for communications measurement. Author of the Barcelona Principles and the Integrated Evaluation Framework.

Analyst Relations ▲

The discipline of building relationships with industry analysts at firms like Gartner, Forrester, and IDC, whose reports influence enterprise buying decisions and now feed LLM training corpora.

Anthropic ▲

The AI safety company that develops Claude. One of the leading model providers brands optimize for in AI visibility programs.

AP Style

The Associated Press Stylebook conventions used across most U.S. newsrooms. Press materials written in AP Style require less editorial work, increasing pickup likelihood.

Approval Workflow ▲

The internal review chain content moves through before publication — typically across PR, legal, executive, and product stakeholders. Modern stacks use shared platforms to compress turnaround.

Astroturfing ▲

Coordinated communications designed to appear as organic grassroots support. Considered unethical under PRSA and CIPR codes; increasingly detectable by platform integrity systems and AI content classifiers.

Attribution Modeling ▲

Methodology for assigning credit for a conversion across the touchpoints that influenced it. In AI-era PR, attribution must account for "dark" influence pathways — LLM responses, podcast mentions, Reddit threads — that don't pass referral data.

Audience Segmentation ▲

Dividing a target audience into distinct groups by demographic, behavioral, psychographic, or firmographic traits to tailor messaging and channel mix.

Award Submission ▲

The discipline of nominating brands, campaigns, and executives for industry awards. Wins generate coverage, citation-worthy third-party validation, and durable AI-retrievable claims.

B

18 terms

Backgrounder ▲

A non-newsy reference document distributed to media providing historical context, executive bios, product detail, and key facts. Written today with LLM ingestion in mind: clean structure, factual density, clear entity definitions.

Backlink ▲

An inbound hyperlink from one domain to another. Still a primary signal in classical SEO and a meaningful — though less dominant — input for LLM trust grading and citation likelihood.

Barcelona Principles

The seven (now updated) principles for valid communications measurement, including: goals are necessary; outcomes matter more than outputs; AVE is not the value of communications. Foundational reference for credible measurement.

Beat (Reporter Beat) ▲

The topic area a journalist covers — tech, retail, beauty, healthcare, policy. Pitching the right beat is the lowest-effort, highest-yield discipline in media relations.

Big Idea ▲

The single creative concept that organizes a campaign across channels and tactics. Without one, a campaign collapses into activity.

Bing Chat / Microsoft Copilot ▲

Microsoft's generative AI assistant, embedded across Windows, Edge, and Office. One of the four major surfaces for AI visibility programs alongside ChatGPT, Claude, and Gemini.

Boilerplate ▲

The standardized "About" paragraph appearing at the end of every press release. Carries outsized weight in AI training and retrieval because it is repeated across hundreds of indexed pages, reinforcing entity facts in model memory.

Brand Ambassador

A long-term partner — celebrity, athlete, executive, employee, or customer — contracted to represent a brand publicly. Distinct from a one-off influencer post.

Brand Authority ▲

The compounded credibility a brand holds across earned media, owned content, search, social, and AI surfaces. The new currency of B2B and B2C decision-making — and the central output 5W is built to manufacture.

Brand Guidelines

The codified rules governing logo, typography, color, voice, imagery, and usage of a brand across all communications.

Brand Lift ▲

The measurable change in awareness, perception, or favorability driven by a campaign, typically tested through pre/post survey research.

Brand Safety ▲

The discipline of preventing brand association with harmful, off-strategy, or reputationally damaging contexts across paid placements, influencer partnerships, and AI-generated content.

Briefing

A pre-engagement download for a journalist, partner, or executive — orienting them on context, key facts, and intended outcomes.

Briefing Book ▲

A pre-interview document covering reporter background, outlet angle, likely questions, key messages, and bridges. The AI-era version also includes how the executive currently appears in LLM responses.

Broadcast Media ▲

Television and radio outlets, including their digital extensions. Still drives outsized reach moments; remains structurally relevant for crisis and consumer storytelling.

B-Roll

Supplemental video footage provided to broadcasters and digital outlets to accompany a story. Multimedia-equipped releases earn meaningfully higher pickup.

Buzz

The aggregate volume and energy of conversation around a brand or topic. Measured indirectly through mentions, search trends, and social velocity.

Byline ▲

An article authored under an executive's name and placed in a third-party publication. Highly weighted by LLMs as authoritative source material — one of the most efficient AI-visibility plays in modern PR.

Call to Action (CTA)

The instruction directing a reader, viewer, or listener toward the next step — visit, register, contact, download. Every owned content asset should carry one.

Case Study ▲

A structured account of a customer's outcome with a product or service. Critical for B2B credibility and frequently retrieved by LLMs for vendor evaluation queries.

ChatGPT ▲

The flagship consumer AI product from OpenAI. The single most-trafficked generative AI surface, and a primary target for AI visibility programs.

Cision

A leading PR software platform offering media databases, monitoring, and analytics. One of several core platforms in the modern PR tech stack.

Citation Share ▲

The percentage of times a brand is cited as a source within generative AI answers for a defined prompt set, relative to competitors. The single cleanest metric for AI visibility benchmarking.

Claude ▲

Anthropic's family of AI assistants. A major surface for AI visibility programs, particularly strong in long-form, professional, and technical contexts.

Clip Report ▲

A roundup of media placements delivered to clients. Modern clip reports include LLM appearances, AI Overview citations, and Reddit/forum mentions alongside traditional press hits.

Cold Outreach

Unsolicited contact with a journalist, prospect, or partner. Quality of targeting and personalization determines whether it lands or burns the inbox.

Communications Audit ▲

A structured assessment of a brand's messaging, channel mix, share of voice, sentiment, and competitive positioning. The 5W version layers in AI visibility diagnostics.

Communications Plan ▲

A formal document outlining objectives, audiences, messaging, channels, tactics, KPIs, and timeline for a campaign or quarter.

Connectively (formerly HARO)

A platform connecting journalists with sources. Successor to Help a Reporter Out, run by Cision. Useful for fast expert placement, especially for executives building a citation footprint.

Content Calendar

A scheduled view of content production and publishing across owned, social, and earned channels.

Content Pillar ▲

A core topic territory a brand owns across earned, owned, social, and AI surfaces. Pillars define what the brand wants to be retrieved for inside LLMs.

Context Window ▲

The amount of text an AI model can process at once, measured in tokens. Affects how much source material the model can ingest in a single retrieval-grounded answer.

Conversational AI ▲

AI systems designed to interact through natural-language dialog — chatbots, voice assistants, customer service agents.

Conversion

The completion of a desired user action — purchase, signup, demo request, download. The primary north-star metric for performance-oriented programs.

Corporate Communications

The function responsible for internal, executive, financial, and stakeholder communications. Distinct from consumer PR and increasingly intertwined with reputation management and ESG narrative.

Coverage Book ▲

The packaged report of media placements, social impact, and outcomes following a campaign or major moment.

Crawler (Web Crawler / Bot) ▲

An automated program that visits and indexes web pages. AI training crawlers — GPTBot, ClaudeBot, Google-Extended — are now distinct from search crawlers and require separate strategy decisions in robots.txt.

Crisis Communications ▲

The discipline of protecting reputation during incidents, controversies, leaks, lawsuits, product failures, and executive issues. Modern crisis response includes monitoring and correcting how AI systems summarize the event in real time.

Crisis Playbook

A pre-built reference covering scenarios, holding statements, escalation paths, decision rights, and stakeholder maps. Built before the crisis, not during.

Crisis Simulation

A live tabletop exercise stress-testing the crisis playbook with leadership. Identifies gaps that only surface under pressure.

Cultural Relevance

A brand's measurable participation in the conversations, moments, and movements that audiences care about. Distinct from awareness — a brand can be widely known and culturally invisible.

Customer Advocacy

Programs that mobilize satisfied customers as voices for the brand — references, case studies, reviews, and user-generated content.

D

7 terms

Dark Social ▲

Sharing through private channels — DMs, group chats, email, Slack — invisible to traditional analytics. Drives a meaningful share of buying decisions and is largely unmeasurable without modeling.

Deck ▲

A slide presentation used for capabilities pitches, campaign concepts, board updates, and media briefings.

Defamation

A false statement of fact published to a third party that damages someone's reputation. Distinguished into libel (written) and slander (spoken). PR teams operate near this line in every crisis.

Deepfake ▲

Synthetic audio, video, or imagery generated by AI to impersonate a real person. Now a category of brand and executive risk; calls for verification protocols and rapid-response capability.

Digital PR ▲

The practice of earning brand mentions, links, and citations across digital publishers, with explicit goals around search rankings and AI citation likelihood.

Distribution List

The contact list to which a release, advisory, or newsletter is sent. Quality compounds; size doesn't.

Domain Authority (DA) / Domain Rating (DR) ▲

Third-party scores from Moz and Ahrefs estimating a domain's ability to rank in search. Useful as a directional input for evaluating earned-media targets and link-building opportunities.

E

13 terms

E-E-A-T (Experience, Expertise, Authoritativeness, Trustworthiness) ▲

Google's quality framework guiding human raters and ranking systems. A practical checklist for content that LLMs are most likely to retrieve and cite.

Earned Media ▲

Coverage and mentions a brand secures through merit rather than payment — press articles, podcast features, organic social, and increasingly, unpaid citations inside LLM responses. Core 5W discipline.

Editorial Calendar

The forward-looking schedule of topics, themes, and special issues at a publication. The map for proactive pitching.

Embargo

A pre-publication agreement under which a journalist receives information early on the condition they don't publish until a stated time. Useful for coordinating launches across multiple outlets.

Embedding ▲

A numerical representation of text, image, or audio used by AI systems to compare meaning. The mathematical substrate behind retrieval, search, and recommendation in LLM systems.

Engagement

The measurable interaction an audience has with content — likes, shares, comments, saves, replies, click-throughs. Increasingly weighted toward saves and shares over likes.

Engagement Rate

Engagement divided by reach, impressions, or follower count, depending on platform convention.

Entity ▲

A uniquely identifiable person, company, product, place, or concept that systems track in knowledge graphs. Strong entity associations are the foundation of AI visibility.

Entity Optimization ▲

The deliberate work of strengthening how a brand or executive is identified across the open web, Wikipedia, Wikidata, structured data, and authoritative sources — so AI systems can confidently retrieve and describe it.

ESG Communications

The discipline of communicating environmental, social, and governance commitments and performance. Has matured beyond marketing into a regulated, scrutinized reputation function.

Exclusive

A story granted to a single outlet ahead of broader distribution. Drives stronger placement; sacrifices breadth.

Executive Visibility ▲

A program building an individual leader's reputation through bylines, podcasts, speaking, social, and AI-surface presence — separately from but in service of the company brand.

Expert Source ▲

An executive, researcher, or specialist positioned for journalist quote requests. Frequent expert-source placement compounds into LLM-recognized authority over time.

F

7 terms

Fact Sheet ▲

A one-page document listing a company's core facts: founding date, leadership, locations, scale, and key milestones. Critical for AI training and retrieval accuracy.

Featured Snippet ▲

The block of text Google promotes above organic results to directly answer a query. Long the precursor to AEO; still valuable, though increasingly displaced by AI Overviews.

Fine-Tuning ▲

The process of adapting a pre-trained large language model to a narrower task or knowledge domain by training on additional curated data. Most consumer AI visibility, however, comes from retrieval and grounding, not fine-tuning.

First-Party Data ▲

Data collected directly from a brand's audience — site visits, email subscribers, customers. The most valuable and durable data asset in a privacy-restricted, post-cookie environment.

Focus Group

A moderated qualitative research session with a small audience sample. Useful for testing message, creative, and positioning before scaling.

Foundation Model ▲

A large, general-purpose AI model trained on broad data and adaptable to many tasks. GPT, Claude, Gemini, and Llama are the principal foundation models relevant to brand visibility.

Funnel

The model describing how prospects move from awareness to consideration to purchase to advocacy. PR work increasingly maps tactics across the entire funnel rather than only top-of-funnel awareness.

G

8 terms

Gemini ▲

Google's family of AI models, integrated across Search, Workspace, and Android. A major surface for AI visibility programs, particularly tied to Google's broader index.

Generative AI ▲

AI systems that produce new text, images, audio, video, or code in response to prompts. ChatGPT, Claude, Gemini, and Perplexity are the leading text-generation surfaces relevant to brand visibility.

Generative Engine Optimization (GEO) ▲

The discipline of optimizing content, entities, and authority signals so a brand is surfaced and cited inside generative AI responses. The successor discipline to SEO for the LLM era and a core 5W capability.

Ghostwriting

The practice of writing bylines, books, op-eds, and social content under another person's name with their direction and approval. Standard practice across executive communications.

GPT (Generative Pre-trained Transformer) ▲

The model family developed by OpenAI that powers ChatGPT and is licensed across thousands of applications. The most widely deployed LLM architecture in market.

GPTBot ▲

OpenAI's web crawler used to gather data for training and operation. Brands choose whether to allow or block GPTBot in robots.txt — a strategic decision with AI visibility implications.

Grounding ▲

The process by which an AI model anchors its answer in retrieved external sources rather than relying solely on training data. Brands that publish high-quality grounding sources get cited.

Guest Post ▲

A bylined article placed on a third-party blog or industry site, typically lower in tier than top-tier press but useful for backlinks, niche reach, and AI-retrievable content footprint.

H

7 terms

Hallucination ▲

When an AI model generates a confident but factually incorrect or fabricated answer. A brand-risk surface: hallucinations about pricing, leadership, claims, or controversies require active correction strategies.

Hard News

News content covering events, decisions, and actions with broad public consequence. Distinguished from features, opinion, or lifestyle.

Hashflag ▲

A custom emoji that auto-attaches to a designated hashtag on X (Twitter), typically purchased for major launches and campaigns.

Hashtag Campaign ▲

A coordinated content push organized around a unifying hashtag across owned and creator channels.

Headline Test ▲

The discipline of pre-testing release and content headlines for clarity, search performance, and click-through. Often A/B tested in email and paid before earned distribution.

Holding Statement ▲

A pre-written, pre-approved statement deployed in the first minutes of a crisis to acknowledge an event without committing to details still being verified.

Hot Take

A fast, opinionated response to a breaking moment, typically delivered on social. Reward and risk both run high; quality of judgment outweighs speed.

I

9 terms

Impressions

The number of times content is served to an audience. A reach proxy; weak as a standalone measure of impact.

Inference ▲

The act of an AI model producing output from a given input at runtime. Distinct from training.

Influencer Marketing ▲

Partnering with creators — nano, micro, macro, and celebrity — to reach their audiences. Increasingly governed by FTC disclosure rules and platform-specific paid partnership tooling.

Influencer Tiers

Generally: nano (1K–10K followers), micro (10K–100K), mid-tier (100K–500K), macro (500K–1M), and mega/celebrity (1M+). Smaller tiers often deliver higher engagement and trust per dollar.

Instruction Tuning ▲

A training step that teaches a foundation model to follow user instructions reliably. The reason ChatGPT, Claude, and Gemini feel responsive rather than autocomplete-like.

Integrated Communications ▲

A planning approach combining earned, owned, paid, and shared media into a single strategy — now expanded to include AI-surface visibility as a fifth channel.

Internal Communications ▲

The discipline of communicating with employees. Increasingly material to external reputation as employee voice surfaces on Glassdoor, LinkedIn, Reddit, and inside LLM answers.

Investor Relations (IR)

The function managing communications with shareholders, analysts, and the broader financial market. Subject to disclosure rules under SEC Reg FD and equivalents globally.

Issue Management

The proactive identification, prioritization, and engagement of issues that could escalate into crises. Sits upstream of crisis communications.

J

3 terms

Jailbreak ▲

Techniques used to bypass an AI system's safety guidelines. A category of brand-risk surface: bad actors can attempt to coerce LLMs into generating disparaging or false content about a brand or executive.

Journalist Database

Subscription tools — Cision, Muck Rack, Meltwater — that map reporters, beats, outlets, and contact info. Foundational infrastructure for media relations teams.

Junket ▲

A press trip funding journalist travel and access in exchange for coverage. Common in travel, entertainment, automotive, and beauty; subject to strict disclosure norms at most outlets.

K

5 terms

Key Message ▲

A core, repeatable statement engineered to land in coverage, social, and AI summaries. Modern key-message development now tests phrasing for LLM retrievability.

Key Opinion Leader (KOL) ▲

A subject-matter authority whose views influence a defined community. Distinct from influencers in that authority — not audience size — drives their value.

Knowledge Graph ▲

A structured network of entities and the relationships between them. Google's Knowledge Graph and Wikidata feed both classical search and LLM retrieval, making graph presence essential.

Knowledge Panel ▲

The summary box Google displays for known entities — companies, executives, products. A high-value real-estate target for entity optimization work.

KPI (Key Performance Indicator) ▲

A defined metric tied to a stated objective. Modern PR scorecards include AI visibility KPIs alongside traditional reach, share of voice, and sentiment.

L

11 terms

Landing Page ▲

A single page built to convert traffic from a campaign, ad, or release into a defined action.

Large Language Model (LLM) ▲

The class of AI systems trained on massive text corpora to generate, summarize, and reason over language. GPT, Claude, Gemini, and Llama are leading examples.

Launch Plan ▲

The full coordinated set of activities — embargo strategy, media targets, exclusives, social, paid, influencer, and follow-through — supporting a product, campaign, or company moment.

Lead Generation ▲

The discipline of producing qualified business inquiries. Increasingly measured against AI-driven discovery: how often a buyer arrived after asking an LLM for vendor recommendations.

Letter to the Editor ▲

A short submission responding to or commenting on recent coverage, published in a publication's letters section. A useful corrective and visibility tool when used selectively.

Llama ▲

Meta's family of open-weight foundation models. Powers a meaningful share of enterprise AI deployments and a growing number of consumer applications.

LLM Citation ▲

A reference to a brand, source, or URL inside a generative AI response. The unit of measurement for AI visibility.

LLM Grounding Source ▲

A web page, document, or dataset that an AI system retrieves and cites to support an answer. Becoming a frequent grounding source is the explicit goal of GEO.

Large Language Model Optimization (LLMO) ▲

A near-synonym for GEO, sometimes used to emphasize optimization across multiple LLMs rather than generative search engines specifically. Used interchangeably across the industry.

Lobbying ▲

The practice of advocating to legislators and regulators on behalf of an interest. Adjacent to public affairs; subject to disclosure regimes federally and in most states.

Logline ▲

A one-sentence summary of a story, campaign, or pitch. Tests whether the idea is sharp enough to travel.

M

14 terms

Macro Influencer

A creator with roughly 500K to 1M followers. Suited for awareness drives where reach matters more than community depth.

Media Advisory

A short alert sent to media in advance of an event or news moment. See "Advisory."

Media Kit

The packaged set of brand assets — logos, executive bios, product specs, fact sheets, photography — distributed to press and partners.

Media List ▲

The targeted list of journalists and outlets prioritized for a campaign or beat. Continually pruned and refreshed; quality over volume.

Media Monitoring ▲

Continuous tracking of brand mentions across press, broadcast, podcasts, social, forums, and now AI surfaces. Modern monitoring stacks include LLM-prompt-tracking tools.

Media Relations ▲

The practice of building and managing journalist relationships to secure coverage. Still the highest-leverage discipline in earned media.

Media Tour

A coordinated series of journalist meetings — in-person, virtual, or via Satellite Media Tour — built around an executive, launch, or moment.

Media Training ▲

Coaching executives to handle interviews, deliver key messages, bridge from hostile questions, and perform on camera. Critical before any major media moment.

Mention ▲

Any reference to a brand, product, or executive in published content. Counted alongside citations in modern AI-visibility reporting.

Messaging Architecture ▲

The hierarchy of a brand's communications — purpose, positioning, pillars, proof points, and key messages — used to align everything from press releases to LLM training inputs.

Messaging House

A visual framework organizing a brand's positioning at the top, supporting pillars in the middle, and proof points at the base.

Meta-Description ▲

The HTML tag summarizing a page for search engines and previews. Influences click-through and provides clean fodder for AI retrieval.

Micro Influencer

A creator with roughly 10K–100K followers. Typically delivers stronger engagement and trust per impression than larger tiers.

Multimodal AI ▲

AI systems that handle multiple input and output types — text, image, audio, video — in a single model. Material for any visual-heavy brand whose products will increasingly be evaluated by AI systems looking at imagery.

Nano Influencer

A creator with roughly 1K–10K followers. Highest trust per follower; useful for community-led launches and seeding.

Native Advertising ▲

Paid content designed to match the form and feel of the editorial environment in which it appears. Subject to disclosure rules; quality determines whether it reads as value or as ad.

Natural Language Processing (NLP) ▲

The branch of AI focused on understanding and generating human language. The technical foundation underneath every modern PR tech tool.

Newsjacking ▲

Inserting a brand's perspective into a breaking news cycle to capture attention and coverage. Coined by David Meerman Scott. Reward and risk both run high; speed and judgment matter.

News Hook

The reason a story is timely now — a launch, a study, a moment, an anniversary. Without a hook, even a strong story stalls.

Newsroom (Online) ▲

A brand's hosted press hub — releases, kits, executive bios, contacts. Modern newsrooms are optimized for both journalist usability and LLM ingestion.

No Comment

A response now generally considered communications malpractice. A holding statement, a pivot, or a transparent acknowledgment that information will follow is almost always preferable.

O

10 terms

Off the Record

A conversation a journalist agrees not to publish. Distinct from "on background" and "deep background." Norms vary by outlet; confirm definitions in advance.

On Background

Information a journalist may use without attributing it to the source by name. Often paraphrased as "according to a source familiar with the matter."

On the Record

Information a journalist may attribute and quote directly. The default condition unless otherwise agreed.

OpenAI ▲

The company that develops ChatGPT and the GPT model family. One of the principal LLM providers brands optimize for.

Op-Ed

An opinion piece written for the op-ed page of a publication, traditionally bylined by a non-staff author. A high-authority placement for executive visibility and category leadership.

Open Source LLM ▲

A foundation model whose weights are publicly released. Llama, Mistral, and DeepSeek are examples. Brand visibility implications differ because open models are deployed across thousands of derivative apps.

Outreach ▲

The act of contacting journalists, creators, partners, or prospects with a tailored ask. The core activity of media relations.

Out-of-Home (OOH) ▲

Advertising placed in physical environments — billboards, transit, airports, building wraps. Increasingly digitally programmable and measurable.

Owned Media ▲

Channels a brand controls — its website, blog, newsletter, podcast, app. The substrate AI systems retrieve from when they cite a brand directly.

Owned Newsroom ▲

A branded content destination operated as if it were a publication. Drives both audience and AI-retrievable authority.

P

30 terms

Page View

A single instance of a user loading a page. A volume metric; meaningful only in trend.

Paid Media ▲

Advertising channels — search, social, programmatic, sponsorships, native. The "P" in the PESO model.

Panel

A moderated discussion at a conference or event featuring multiple speakers. Useful for executive visibility and content capture.

Paywall ▲

Restricted access to content based on subscription. Affects both consumer reach and LLM training, since paywalled content is often excluded from open crawl.

Perplexity ▲

A generative answer engine that emphasizes cited sources in every response. Smaller in raw traffic than ChatGPT but disproportionately important because its citation-first design makes it a clean signal for GEO performance.

Persona

A fictionalized profile representing a target audience segment, used to align messaging and creative.

PESO Model ▲

Paid, Earned, Shared, Owned. The integrated communications framework introduced by Gini Dietrich. 5W operates a PESO-plus model that adds AI visibility as the fifth channel.

Photo Op

A staged moment built to generate publishable imagery. Useful for events, launches, and visiting dignitaries.

Pickup

The total set of placements generated by a release or pitch.

Pitch ▲

A targeted email, DM, or call to a journalist proposing a story. Quality of pitch — relevance, brevity, exclusivity — drives placement rates far more than volume.

Pitch List

The vetted, prioritized set of journalists and outlets a story will be pitched to.

Podcast PR ▲

The discipline of placing executives on relevant podcasts. Often higher-impact than traditional bylines for deep audience trust and increasingly weighted in AI training corpora through transcripts.

Position Paper

A long-form document staking out a brand's perspective on an industry issue. A foundation document for thought leadership.

Positioning

The distinct place a brand occupies in the mind of its audience relative to alternatives. Strategy upstream of messaging.

POV (Point of View)

A brand's articulated perspective on a topic, trend, or issue. The starting point for all thought leadership content.

PR Crisis ▲

An adverse event or coverage moment threatening a brand's reputation, requiring coordinated response. See "Crisis Communications."

PR Tech Stack ▲

The integrated set of tools a communications team operates — media database, monitoring, analytics, social management, distribution, AI visibility platform.

Press Conference

A live event at which an organization announces news to assembled media. Now reserved for moments large enough to justify the logistics.

Press Kit ▲

A bundled set of materials — releases, fact sheets, bios, imagery — provided to media for a launch or event. Increasingly hosted as a public, structured online resource so AI systems can index it.

Press Release ▲

A formatted news announcement distributed to media and wire services. In the AI era, also a structured ingestion vector for entity facts and claims.

Press Trip

A funded journalist trip to experience a destination, product, or event. Subject to disclosure norms; effective for travel, hospitality, and lifestyle categories.

Pressroom

See "Newsroom (Online)."

Print Media ▲

Newspapers and magazines in physical format and their digital editions. Reach has compressed; authority signals remain strong.

Product Placement ▲

Paid integration of a product into film, television, or digital content.

Product Recall

A regulated process for removing a product from market, typically following a safety or quality issue. PR implications are immediate and compounding.

Prompt ▲

The input a user gives to an AI system. The unit of measurement for AI visibility benchmarking — brands now track share-of-voice across thousands of buyer-intent prompts.

Prompt Engineering ▲

The practice of constructing prompts to reliably elicit the desired output from an AI system. Used inside agencies for research, audits, and content production workflows.

Prompt Injection ▲

A category of attack in which an adversary plants instructions inside content an AI system retrieves, attempting to manipulate the model's output. A live brand-risk surface for owned content open to user input.

Proof Point ▲

A specific, verifiable fact or example that supports a key message. The currency of credibility in both press coverage and LLM grounding.

Public Affairs ▲

The discipline of managing a brand's relationships with government, regulators, NGOs, and policy stakeholders. Often inseparable from corporate reputation.

Q

4 terms

Q&A; Document

A pre-prepared answer set for likely media or stakeholder questions. Living document; updated continuously across launches, earnings, and crises.

Qualitative Research

Non-numeric research — interviews, focus groups, ethnography — used to understand how audiences think and decide.

Quantitative Research

Numeric research — surveys, panels, behavioral data — used to measure scale and statistical relationships.

Quote Approval

A negotiated condition under which a source reviews their quotes before publication. Rare at top-tier outlets; more common in trade and B2B press.

R

14 terms

Reach

The number of unique people exposed to content. A directional metric, not a measure of impact.

Reactive PR ▲

Coverage and commentary generated in response to a breaking moment rather than from a planned campaign. Operates on speed and judgment.

Rebranding

A coordinated change to a brand's identity — name, logo, positioning, voice. One of the highest-stakes communications projects an organization undertakes.

Reddit Marketing ▲

The discipline of engaging Reddit communities authentically. Now disproportionately valuable: Reddit is heavily weighted in LLM training data and frequently retrieved as a grounding source.

Reels

Short-form vertical video on Instagram, broadly comparable to TikTok and YouTube Shorts.

Reinforcement Learning from Human Feedback (RLHF) ▲

A training method that uses human ratings to align AI model behavior with human preferences. The reason modern LLMs feel useful and safe in deployment.

Reputation Management ▲

The end-to-end practice of monitoring, shaping, defending, and rebuilding how a brand or individual is perceived. Now extends explicitly to how AI systems describe the entity.

Research Study (Brand-Authored)

A proprietary survey or data study commissioned to generate news, citation, and category authority. One of the highest-yield earned-media tactics in B2B and B2C.

Retainer ▲

A recurring engagement model in which a client pays a monthly fee for an agreed scope.

Retrieval ▲

The step in which an AI system pulls in external sources at query time to ground an answer. Brands appearing in retrieved sources get cited.

Retrieval-Augmented Generation (RAG) ▲

An AI architecture in which the model retrieves relevant external documents at query time and uses them to ground its response. The mechanism behind most cited AI answers.

ROI (Return on Investment) ▲

The measurable financial return generated by a program against its cost. Modern PR ROI models incorporate AI-assisted discovery and dark-social influence.

Robots.txt ▲

A file at a website's root telling crawlers what they may or may not access. Now used to allow or block AI training crawlers like GPTBot, ClaudeBot, and Google-Extended — a strategic choice with AI visibility consequences.

Roundup ▲

A media format aggregating products, brands, or expert quotes around a theme. A high-value placement type because LLMs frequently retrieve and cite roundups.

S

25 terms

Sample Mailer / Seeding ▲

Sending product to creators, journalists, and tastemakers to drive coverage and content. Cornerstone tactic in beauty, consumer, and lifestyle.

Satellite Media Tour (SMT)

A series of pre-booked broadcast interviews conducted from a single location, typically across local TV affiliates. Efficient broadcast saturation in a single morning.

Scoop

An exclusive story broken by one outlet ahead of competitors.

Schema Markup ▲

Structured data added to a webpage in standardized vocabularies (most commonly Schema.org) to help search engines and AI systems understand entities, relationships, and content type.

Search Generative Experience (SGE) ▲

Google's prior name for its generative search feature, now generally rolled out and rebranded as AI Overviews.

Search Intent ▲

The underlying purpose behind a search query — informational, navigational, transactional, commercial. Foundation for both SEO and GEO content strategy.

Semantic Search ▲

Search that interprets meaning rather than matching keywords. The basis of modern retrieval and embedding-driven AI systems.

Sentiment Analysis ▲

The classification of mentions or citations as positive, neutral, or negative. Modern sentiment work also captures stance, framing, and narrative direction inside LLM outputs.

SEO (Search Engine Optimization) ▲

The discipline of optimizing content and authority signals for ranking in search engines. The disciplinary parent of GEO.

Share of Voice (SOV) ▲

The percentage of category conversation a brand owns relative to competitors across press, social, search, or AI surfaces.

Sizzle Reel ▲

A short edited video showcasing a brand's, executive's, or campaign's highlights.

Social Listening

Real-time monitoring of brand, category, and competitor conversations across social platforms and forums. Source of insight for both reactive and proactive communications.

Social Media Marketing ▲

The discipline of building, engaging, and converting audiences across social platforms through organic and paid content.

Spokesperson ▲

The designated voice of an organization for a topic, moment, or category. Strong spokespeople become entities themselves inside AI knowledge graphs.

Sponsored Content ▲

Paid editorial-style content disclosed as sponsored, produced either by the brand or by the publication's studio team.

Statement

A formal written response issued in response to media or stakeholder inquiry. Precise wording is everything.

Storytelling

The craft of organizing facts, characters, conflict, and stakes into narrative that audiences and algorithms both reward.

Structured Data ▲

Machine-readable information — JSON-LD, microdata, RDFa — that explicitly declares entities and relationships. Foundational for both classical SEO and AI retrieval.

Stunt ▲

A high-concept activation built to earn outsized coverage and social conversation.

Subject Matter Expert (SME)

An executive or specialist positioned for media commentary, panel speaking, or analyst calls in a defined area.

Survey-Driven PR ▲

The practice of commissioning research specifically to generate coverage. When designed for novelty and credibility, one of the highest-yield earned-media tactics available.

Sustainability Report ▲

A formal annual disclosure of environmental and social performance. Material both to investors and to LLM-retrievable corporate identity.

SWOT Analysis

A planning framework cataloging Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats. Useful at the launch of any meaningful communications program.

Synthetic Media ▲

Content generated or substantially modified by AI — text, images, audio, video. A growing surface for both creative production and reputational risk (deepfakes).

System Prompt ▲

The instructions given to an AI model to define how it behaves throughout a conversation. Underlies every consumer-facing AI product.

T

12 terms

Talking Points

The structured set of statements an executive uses to deliver key messages and respond to expected questions.

Tier 1 Media ▲

The leading outlets in a market — typically national news, major business press, top trades. Coverage in tier-1 outlets carries disproportionate weight in both reputation and LLM training data.

Tier 2 / Tier 3 Media ▲

Mid-market and niche outlets respectively. Tier 2 often delivers strong audience fit; tier 3 builds long-tail authority and AI-retrievable footprint.

Thought Leadership

A category-shaping body of work — bylines, research, talks, books, social commentary — that establishes an executive or brand as the reference point for a topic.

Token ▲

The unit by which AI models read and produce text. Roughly four characters or three-quarters of a word in English. Context windows, pricing, and rate limits are denominated in tokens.

Tool Use (Function Calling) ▲

An AI system's ability to call external tools — search, calculators, APIs — during a response. Underlies agentic AI and changes how brands surface inside agent workflows.

Topical Authority ▲

The compounded credibility a brand or domain holds across a topic area, signaled to both search engines and AI systems through depth, breadth, and entity coverage of content.

Trade Press ▲

Industry-specific publications — Adweek, PR Week, AdAge, Modern Retail, BeautyMatter, TravelPulse. Often disproportionately weighted by LLMs as authoritative sources.

Training Data ▲

The corpus of text, code, and other content used to train an AI model. Brands appearing frequently and accurately in indexed, public training data have a structural advantage in LLM retrieval.

Training Cutoff ▲

The date after which content is no longer present in a model's pre-training data. Recent events, launches, and rebrands often require retrieval — not training — to surface, which is why owned and earned content updated post-cutoff still matters.

Trending Topic ▲

A subject experiencing sharp, near-term lift in attention. Source of newsjacking opportunity, paired with risk of joining the wrong conversation.

TV Hit ▲

A single executive appearance on a broadcast or cable program. Still a trophy KPI for many brands; increasingly material because transcripts feed AI training.

U

2 terms

Unique Visitors

The count of distinct individuals visiting a property over a defined period.

User-Generated Content (UGC) ▲

Content created by customers, fans, or community members rather than the brand. Powerful for credibility, search, and AI retrieval — especially Reddit, YouTube, and review sites.

V

5 terms

Vector Database ▲

A specialized database for storing and querying embeddings. Underlying infrastructure behind retrieval, recommendation, and many AI search products.

Vertical Media ▲

Trade and industry-specific publications. Often higher-value than general press for B2B targeting and frequently weighted heavily by LLMs as authoritative sources.

Viral ▲

Content that spreads rapidly through unpaid sharing. Difficult to engineer; easier to recognize and amplify when it begins to move.

Visibility Score ▲

A composite metric combining citation share, mention rate, sentiment, and prompt coverage across AI surfaces, used to benchmark and trend AI visibility over time.

Voice AI ▲

AI systems that accept voice input or produce voice output — Alexa, Siri, Google Assistant, ChatGPT Voice Mode. A separate visibility surface from text-based AI.

W

6 terms

Webinar

A scheduled live or pre-recorded online presentation, typically used for B2B lead generation and thought leadership.

White Paper ▲

A long-form research or perspective document positioning a brand as the authority on a topic. High-yield asset for both lead generation and AI citation.

Wikidata ▲

The structured, machine-readable sister project to Wikipedia. Feeds Knowledge Graphs across Google, Apple, and most AI systems. A direct lever on entity recognition.

Wikipedia ▲

The most heavily weighted single source in most LLM training corpora. Editorial standards are strict; presence requires demonstrable notability and independent sourcing.

Wire Service ▲

A distribution network — Business Wire, PR Newswire, GlobeNewswire — that pushes press releases to media databases and indexed news sites. Still useful for SEO and AI ingestion of structured corporate news.

Working Press

The practicing journalist community. Distinct from analysts, creators, and influencers, though the lines have blurred.

X

2 terms

X (formerly Twitter) ▲

A real-time platform that remains a primary venue for newsbreaking, journalist engagement, and crisis monitoring despite shifts in its broader audience.

X Spaces

The live audio product on X. Used for executive conversations, panels, and crisis-adjacent commentary.

Y

2 terms

Year-in-Review ▲

An annual content franchise — trends, predictions, awards lists — that drives outsized coverage and citation. A reliable AI-visibility play because LLMs retrieve roundups frequently.

YouTube ▲

The largest video platform in the world and a meaningful AI training source through automatic captions and transcripts. Underutilized by most B2B and B2C PR programs.

Z

2 terms

Zero-Click Search ▲

A search query answered directly on the results page — via featured snippet, knowledge panel, or AI Overview — with no click-through to a source. The dominant outcome pattern in AI-era search and the strategic backdrop for GEO.

Zero-Shot Learning ▲

The ability of an AI model to perform a task it wasn't explicitly trained on. Why modern LLMs handle novel queries about brands they've barely seen.

ABOUT 5W

5W is the AI Communications Firm — building brand authority across the platforms where decisions now happen: ChatGPT, Claude, Perplexity, Gemini, and Google AI Overviews, alongside earned media, digital, and influencer channels. 5W combines public relations, digital marketing, Generative Engine Optimization (GEO), and proprietary AI visibility research, helping clients measure and grow their presence in AI-driven buyer research.

Founded more than 20 years ago by Ronn Torossian. Led by CEO Matt Caiola. Recognized as a top U.S. PR agency by O'Dwyer's, named Agency of the Year in the American Business Awards, and honored as a Top Place to Work in Communications in 2026 by Ragan.

CONTACT

research@5wpr.com · media@5wpr.com · press@5wpr.com

www.5wpr.com · 5wpr.com/glossary · 5wpr.com/research

EDITORIAL NOTE

This glossary is reviewed and updated quarterly. AI-era terms reflect 5W's original editorial contribution to the field. Traditional PR terms follow industry-standard definitions cross-referenced against PRSA, AMEC, and AP Style guidelines. This glossary does not constitute legal, financial, or regulatory advice.