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Free mini guide 2 of 4 · for local service businesses

Are you blocking AI?

Many business sites stop AI assistants at the door without the owner knowing. Here's how to check in 10 minutes.

You asked: "What are the hours for [your business]?"

“I couldn't access that website, so I can't confirm their hours. You may want to call them directly.”

When AI can't read your site, it guesses, or recommends someone it can read.

AI tools need permission to read your site

Every website has a small file called robots.txt that tells automated visitors what they may read. If it blocks AI crawlers, assistants can't see your services, prices or hours.

Step 1: Look at your file

Type your address followed by `/robots.txt` into a browser, for example `yourbusiness.com/robots.txt`. You'll see a short text file, or a "not found" page. A missing file is fine: it means nothing is blocked.

Step 2: Find these names

Crawler	Who it belongs to	What it does
`OAI-SearchBot`	OpenAI	Finds sites for ChatGPT search answers
`ChatGPT-User`	OpenAI	Visits a page when a user asks about it
`PerplexityBot`	Perplexity	Builds Perplexity's search results
`Claude-SearchBot`	Anthropic	Finds sites for Claude's search answers
`Bingbot`	Microsoft	Bing search, which ChatGPT search relies on heavily
`Googlebot`	Google	Google Search, including AI Overviews and AI Mode

Step 3: Read the rule under each name

Blocked

```
User-agent: OAI-SearchBot
Disallow: /
```

Allowed

```
User-agent: OAI-SearchBot
Allow: /
```

A line that reads `User-agent: *` followed by `Disallow: /` blocks everyone, including Google. If you see that, fix it today.

Fix it

If you find a block, ask whoever manages your website to replace those lines with something like this:

```
User-agent: OAI-SearchBot
Allow: /

User-agent: ChatGPT-User
Allow: /

User-agent: PerplexityBot
Allow: /

User-agent: Claude-SearchBot
Allow: /

User-agent: *
Allow: /
```

Three places blocks hide

- **Your hosting or security service.** Some services, such as Cloudflare, offer a one-click option to block AI crawlers. Check your dashboard for an "AI bots" or "bot fight" setting.
- **Website builder settings.** Wix, Squarespace and WordPress plugins sometimes include an "AI crawler" toggle.
- **An old site template.** Sites built years ago sometimes still carry a "Disallow" line from when the site was under construction.

Don't forget Bing. ChatGPT search leans heavily on Bing's index. Add your site in Bing Webmaster Tools (free) and claim your listing in Bing Places.

Want the whole system?

The AI Search Visibility Kit covers everything for local service businesses: a 25-prompt audit, copy-paste schema, page templates, a review plan and a 30-day roadmap.

Get the kit at citedbyhq.pages.dev $29, instant download