



CREATIVE STRATEGY COLLECTIVE

CASE STUDY NO. 01 • ANSWER ENGINE OPTIMIZATION

Building an AI-Ready Website

How Arta rebuilt its own digital presence for the way people are beginning to search, discover, and choose brands through AI.

This case study documents Arta's first AEO implementation: what we changed, what improved, what we learned along the way, and where the opportunity goes next.

Rather than test our approach on someone else's business first, we started with our own. Arta became both the strategist and the subject — free to build, test, measure, refine, and document the process from the beginning. The goal was never to manufacture a perfect result. It was to understand what actually happens when a small brand intentionally rebuilds its digital presence for AI search, and to create a process we could confidently bring to our clients.

REPORTING PERIOD
May – August 2026

PREPARED BY
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SUBJECT
artacreativestrategycollective.com

MEASURED
Technical + AEO
progress

CONTINUING TO
MEASURE
AI visibility + long-term
business impact

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

We wanted to understand what building for AI search actually looks like. So we started with ourselves.

Arta began this project with a simple question: what does it actually take to make a small brand more understandable and discoverable to AI? Rather than answer that in theory, we used our own website as the first test.

Arta's brand and first website came together in May 2026 — we started from square one. In June, we audited that initial site, migrated it to Lovable for greater technical control, and began rebuilding its structure and content for both people and answer engines.

The work touched nearly every layer of the site: AI crawler accessibility, llms.txt, structured data, site architecture, metadata, internal linking, content depth, FAQs, direct answers, question-led content, entity clarity, and the Fieldnotes editorial strategy.

And the results moved. In a few months, Arta went from a relatively limited AI-search foundation to a significantly stronger, more structured, and more discoverable digital presence.

THE RESULTS

52 → 78

OVERALL WEBSITE AEO SCORE

A 26-point improvement in overall AEO performance.

17 → 100

AI CRAWLER ACCESSIBILITY

Major AI crawlers can now access and interpret the website.

18% → 69%

VOICE READINESS

A 51-point gain in how well content is structured for conversational, answer-based search.

0 → 94

LLMS.TXT QUALITY /100

From nonexistent to a strong machine-readable resource for AI systems.

100%

SCHEMA COMPLIANCE

Maintained throughout, with a more complete structured-data implementation.

VALIDATED

GOOGLE STRUCTURED DATA

Organization & Local Business markup validated via Google's Rich Results Test.

The work has already produced measurable gains across AEO performance, crawler accessibility, structured data, content depth, and search readiness — and those gains give us somewhere meaningful to build from. With that foundation in place, the next stage is about **building on it**: expanding authority, strengthening non-branded discovery, earning AI citations and mentions, and translating visibility into business outcomes. AEO is not an overnight switch — but in a matter of months, we measurably changed how prepared Arta's website is to be found, understood, and surfaced in the age of AI search.

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A NOTE ON HOW NUMBERS ARE LABELED

Every figure in this report is traceable to a named third-party tool and a dated report. Where a metric was **measured**, a tool produced the number on a stated date. Where something was **implemented but still developing**, we say so — and distinguish what a tool has detected from what has been built. Nothing here is presented as more certain than the evidence allows.

SECTION 01

Project Background

Before we could offer AEO with confidence, we wanted to do the work ourselves.

Arta was created to help small brands become clearer, more intentional, and easier to discover. As AI began changing the way people search for information, products, services, and recommendations, Answer Engine Optimization became a natural extension of that work. But there was one thing we were missing: **proof from doing it ourselves.**

Arta was a new studio with a newly indexed website, very little external brand authority, and no AEO case study we could point to yet. We had two choices: wait for someone else to become the first experiment, or start with our own business. We chose Arta — which gave us the freedom to test aggressively, make mistakes, change direction when the data told us to, and document the process from the beginning rather than reverse-engineering a success story afterward.

WHY AEO?

Traditional search is built largely around rankings and clicks. AI search adds another layer. A potential customer can now ask ChatGPT, Gemini, Claude, Perplexity, or Google’s AI surfaces a question and receive a synthesized answer — without ever scrolling through a list of results.

So the question is no longer *only can people find this page?* It’s also: can an AI system access it, understand what the business does, connect it to the right topics, and confidently use it when answering a question? That is what AEO sets out to solve — which meant treating the website as a complete system: technical accessibility, structure, content, context, authority, and the questions our potential clients are actually asking.

ARTA AT THE START

Indexed pages, earliest baseline	0
AI crawler accessibility	17/100
llms.txt file	None
Structured content	Limited
External brand authority	Very little
Established AEO case study	None

WHY WE MIGRATED

The Squarespace site had given Arta a strong visual and brand foundation. We didn’t move because Squarespace couldn’t support AEO — we moved because we wanted more direct control over the technical foundation we were building: crawler access, schema, metadata, routing, machine-readable files, and page structure.

The migration became more than a redesign. It became the testing ground for Arta’s approach to AEO.

SECTION 02

Website Transformation

A strong brand foundation, rebuilt with more intentional technical, content, and AEO architecture.

Arta’s Squarespace site already had a clear brand and a confident voice. The rebuild kept that foundation and added the parts AI systems rely on — direct control over crawler access, schema, metadata, routing, and machine-readable files.

WHY WE MOVED — CONTROL, NOT PLATFORM

WHAT MATTERED	SQUARESPACE	LOVABLE
Root-level files	Constrained robots.txt; no practical llms.txt path	Arbitrary files at the domain root
Schema	Plugin- or injection-dependent; hard to validate	JSON-LD authored per page type in the template
Routing	Template-bounded structure	Every article at a real, linkable URL
Iteration	Fine for brochure sites	Built to grow into topic clusters

A capable developer can implement much of this on Squarespace. The migration bought *control and speed* for what came next — not a claim that one platform is universally better.

THREE PRINCIPLES THAT SAVED REWORK

- Stop investing in platform-specific fixes.** Once the move was decided, we abandoned Squarespace workarounds rather than rebuilding them twice.
- Keep publishing through the migration.** Content and positioning carry between platforms; only the technical build is rebuilt. Publishing never paused.
- Migrate gradually, cut over once.** DNS cutover happened only after schema, llms.txt, and robots.txt were live and verified.

THE MIGRATION BECAME CONTENT

The decision itself became a Fieldnotes article, *Why We’re Moving Off Squarespace* — now one of the site’s strongest-scoring pages at **87/100** in the August audit.

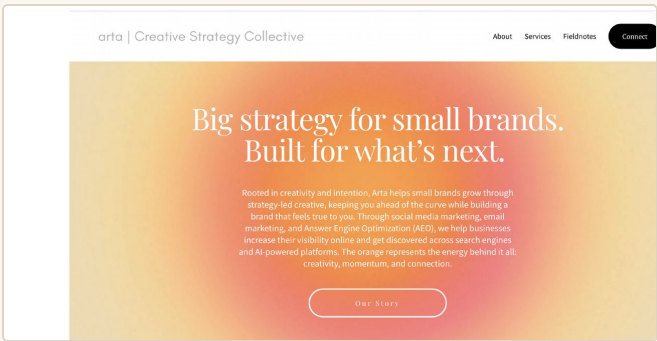
BEFORE & AFTER • PAGE BY PAGE

Same brand foundation, stronger architecture

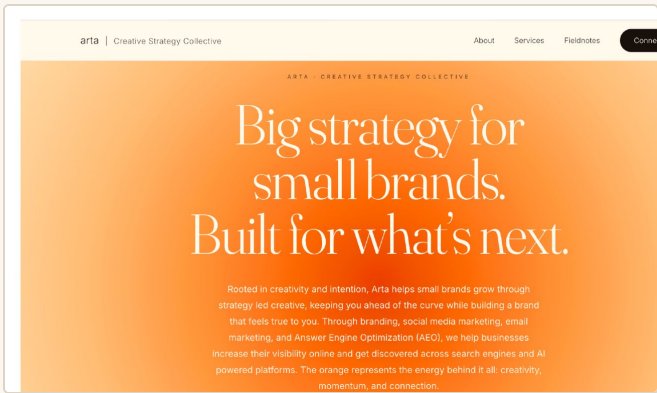
Before: the original Squarespace site. After: the rebuilt Lovable site. The brand foundation was strong in both — the migration added technical and content structure beneath it.

Homepage 82 / 100

BEFORE • SQUARESPACE



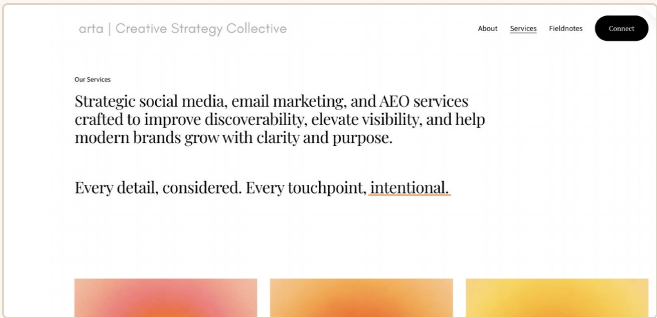
AFTER • LOVABLE



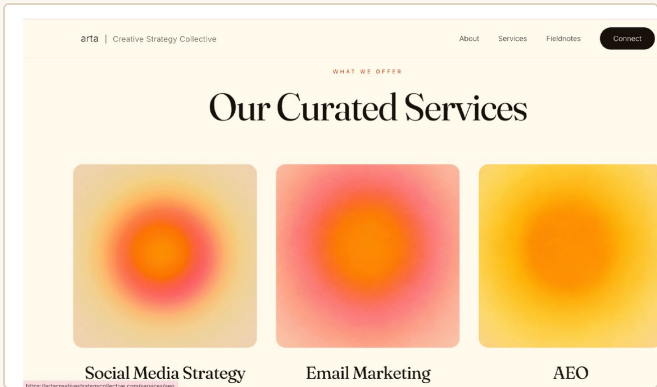
The hero, positioning, and brand voice carried straight over. The rebuilt homepage adds Organization schema, a clearer content hierarchy, and question-led sections.

Main Services page /SERVICES 66 / 100

BEFORE • SQUARESPACE



AFTER • LOVABLE



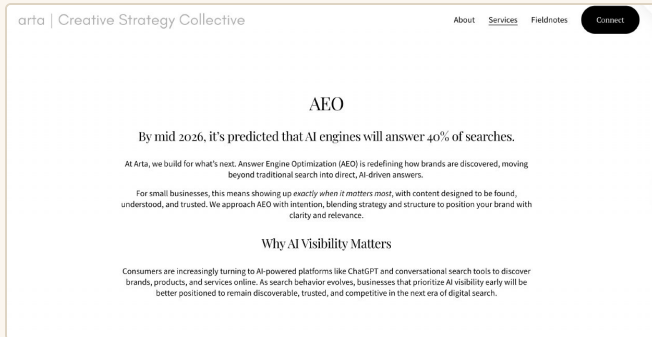
The main Services page keeps its “Our Curated Services” structure and carries Service schema. With the technical foundation in place, its remaining opportunity is content depth and conversational structure.

BEFORE & AFTER • PAGE BY PAGE • CONTINUED

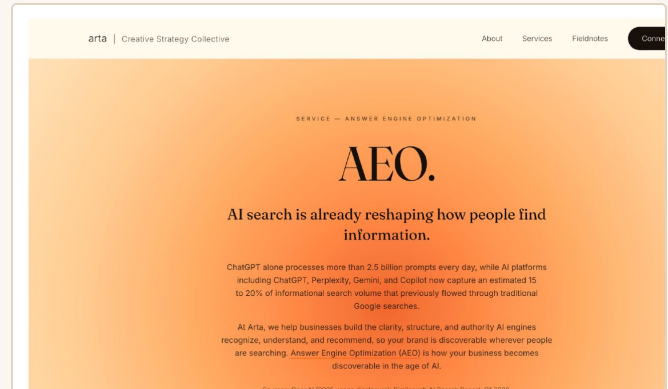
AEO service page

87 / 100

BEFORE • SQUARESPACE



AFTER • LOVABLE

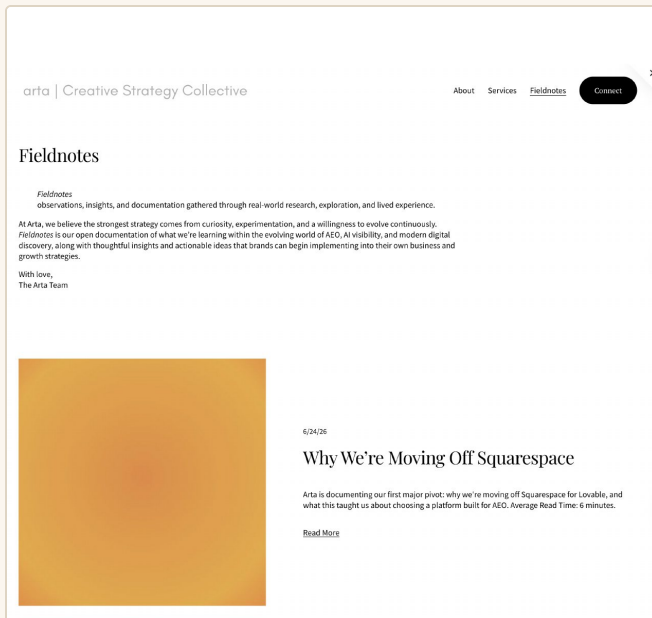


Rebuilt around a direct, answer-first hero, with Service schema and FAQs. At 87/100 it's now one of Arta's strongest commercial pages — the gap between editorial and commercial content has begun to close.

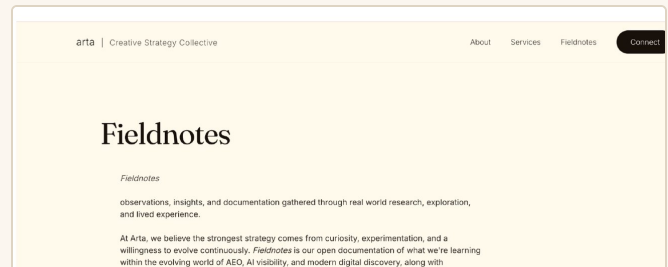
Fieldnotes

EDITORIAL HUB

BEFORE • SQUARESPACE



AFTER • LOVABLE



From a simple blog to a structured editorial hub — each article individually crawlable with Article and FAQ schema. Several Fieldnotes articles are now the highest-scoring pages on the entire site.

Across all five surfaces the story is the same: a strong brand foundation carried over, and a more intentional technical, content, and AEO architecture was built beneath it. The migration was never about leaving a bad platform — it was about the control to build what came next.

SECTION 03

Technical & Content Foundation

The strongest results came from improving the website as one connected system.

The work spanned two layers that depend on each other: the technical foundation that lets AI systems reach and parse the site, and the content that gives them something clear and quotable to use. This page covers the technical layer; the next covers content.

LAYER 01 • ACCESS & DISCOVERY

robots.txt Explicit allow rules for GPTBot, ClaudeBot, Google-Extended, CCBot, PerplexityBot, and Bytespider. VERIFIED 100/100	llms.txt Deployed at the domain root and enriched with real about, services, contact, and team content. 0 → 94/100	XML sitemap Rebuilt to list every individual Fieldnotes article URL, not just the index. Resubmitted to Search Console.	Canonical URLs Self-referencing canonicals consolidate signals across http/https and www variants.
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LAYER 02 • STRUCTURED DATA — 100% SCHEMA COMPLIANCE, VALIDATED

Organization Establishes Arta as a named entity. Validated by Google.	Local Business Now added and validated through the Rich Results Test.	Service On the services index and each service page.	FAQPage Feeds structured Q&A directly to answer engines.
BlogPosting On every Fieldnotes article, with authorship & freshness.	ItemList Declares the Fieldnotes collection as an enumerable set.	BreadcrumbList Places each page within the site's structure.	Speakable Marks passages suited to voice surfaces.

LAYER 03 • METADATA & LINKING

Titles & descriptions Unique title tags and meta descriptions on every page, closing gaps found in first-round testing.	Open Graph & cards Full OG and Twitter card sets so shared links render with a consistent entity description.	Internal linking Service pages link to related Fieldnotes and back, via real anchor-tag routes.
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The August audit records **zero critical issues** and rates overall investment priority “Low.” By August, the biggest opportunities had shifted from foundational technical fixes to refinement — deeper content and stronger question-led structure on a handful of pages. That shift is a sign of progress.

LAYER 04 · CONTENT BUILT FOR PEOPLE & ANSWER ENGINES

Content that both readers and machines can use

Fieldnotes is Arta’s editorial engine. It answers the questions a small business owner actually asks before hiring anyone — and gives answer engines something clear to quote. Arta now has **eight published Fieldnotes articles**, and several are the highest-scoring pages on the entire site.

EIGHT FIELDNOTES · AUGUST AEO SCORES

What is AEO?	91
What Small Businesses Should Ask Before Hiring an AEO Agency	91
How To Improve AI Visibility	91
Why AI Visibility Matters for Small Brands	91
SEO vs. AEO: Understanding Search in the Age of AI	89
Why We’re Moving Off Squarespace	87
Building Arta’s AI Visibility	87
AI Visibility, Illustrated	84

Question-led headings, self-contained answers, and useful depth are exactly what these pages get right — which is why they lead the site.

DIRECT ANSWERS — IMPLEMENTED

Earlier audits recorded zero direct answers sitewide. Arta has since **implemented direct-answer formatting** — self-contained answers placed beneath question-led headings — as part of ongoing content work. The newest audit has not yet fully reflected the change; implementation and tool detection are different facts, and we report both.

ENTITY CLARITY

Name, location, services, and founder are now stated identically across site copy, schema, llms.txt, and metadata. Assistants that can resolve an entity confidently are far more likely to use it.

THE COMMERCIAL GAP IS CLOSING

Earlier in the project, the pages that convert were the pages answer engines understood least. That gap has begun to close — the AEO service page now scores **87**, on par with the editorial content. The remaining opportunity is content depth and question-led structure on a few commercial pages.

SECTION 04

Measurement Framework

We measured our work several ways. Each tool showing a different side of the equation.

AEO has no single standardized score. One tool alone would have produced a confident number and a misleading conclusion — so we used four, each strongest at a different question, on a fixed cadence.

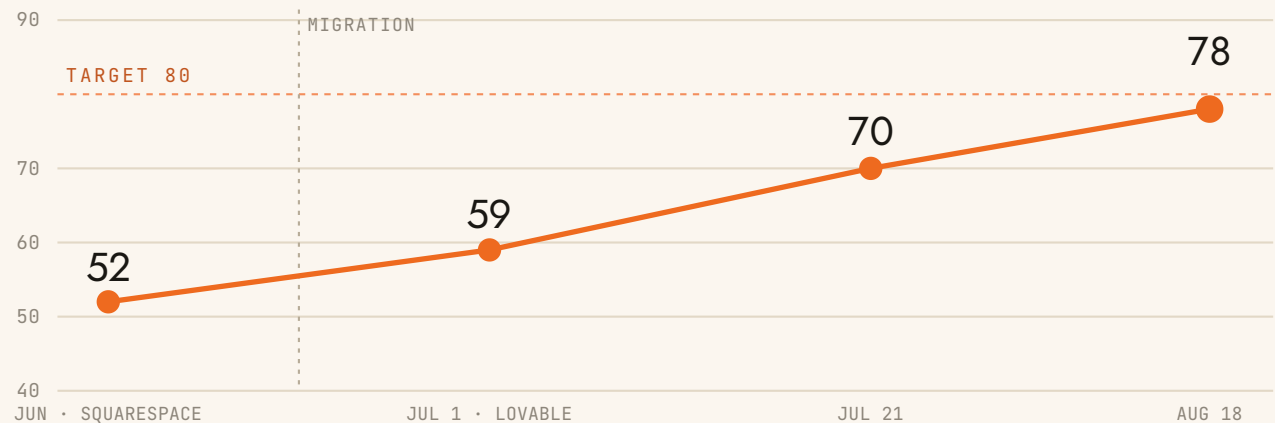
INSTRUMENT	WHAT IT MEASURES WELL	READS	CADENCE
Agensus AEO Audit	Crawlability, schema, content structure, lms.txt quality, per-page detail	Whether the site is <i>readable</i>	Monthly
HubSpot AI Search Grader	Off-site brand perception across ChatGPT, Perplexity, and Gemini; recognition and share of voice	Whether the brand is <i>known</i>	Quarterly
Google Search Console	Indexation, impressions, clicks, and query intent	Whether Google is <i>serving</i> it	Monthly
Google Rich Results Test	Whether structured data parses correctly and is eligible for rich results	Whether the markup is <i>valid</i>	Per deploy

Read together, the four tell one story: the audit measures whether the site is **readable**, the grader measures whether the brand is **known**, Search Console measures whether Google is **serving** it, and the Rich Results Test confirms the markup is **valid**. Kept on a regular cadence, they let the strategy respond to real results rather than assumptions.

SECTION 05 · PART I

AEO Score Trajectory

From a limited AI-search foundation to a measurably stronger one.



BASELINE → AUGUST, ACROSS DATED AUDITS

METRIC	BASELINE	AUGUST	READING
Overall AEO score	52	78	+26 points
AI crawler access /100	17	100	Largest technical win
llms.txt quality /100	0	94	Missing → Excellent
Voice readiness	18%	69%	+51 points
Schema compliance	100%	100%	Maintained; more complete
Critical issues	—	0	Foundation is clean
Question-style headings	5	16	Sitewide count
Pages analyzed	11	16	Site grew (8 Fieldnotes)

+26

OVERALL AEO SCORE · 52 → 78

WHY WE HAVEN'T CHASED 80

We set 80 as a target, but we chose not to force it. The quick tactics that could hit it fast would have diminished the quality of our content and site — the opposite of the point. Growing an AEO score the right way takes time and patience, and we'd rather build something durable than reach a number.

SECTION 05 · PART II

Page-Level Analysis

Where the site is strongest, and where the next work is.

AEO SCORE BY PAGE · AUGUST 2026



Fieldnotes / editorial are the articles that answer the real questions a customer might ask — like “What is AEO?” They’re written to be read and quoted, which is exactly what answer engines look for, so they tend to score highest.

Commercial & entity pages are the pages that describe Arta itself and what it offers — the homepage, service pages, and contact page. They’re built to convert visitors, so they’re shorter and more direct — which is why they have the most room to grow.

NEXT PAGES TO FOCUS ON

PAGE	SCHEMA	CONTENT	VOICE
Homepage	100	50	70
AEO service	100	60	85
Services (main)	100	20	30
Email Marketing	100	10	15

The pattern is clear and useful: schema and technical foundations are strong across the board; the remaining points are **content depth and question-led structure** on a handful of commercial pages.

OPEN OPPORTUNITIES · AUGUST

7 pages can add question-style headings; 5 pages can add content depth. These are refinements, not foundational gaps — the audit records **zero critical issues** and rates investment priority “Low.”

SECTION 05 · PART III

Search & Off-Site Signals

Early search movement, validated structured data, and a first post-migration AI-visibility benchmark.

GOOGLE SEARCH CONSOLE · MAY-AUG 2026

91

11

IMPRESSIONS

CLICKS

12.1%

9.5

AVG CTR

AVG POSITION

RECENT 28 DAYS

PREV

NOW

Impressions	27	33
Clicks	2	4
Avg position	11.9	9.4

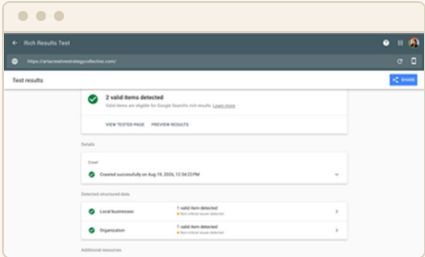
Early visibility movement across the period, with recent gains in impressions, clicks, and position. Best treated as an **emerging baseline**, not yet a long-term trend.

GOOGLE RICH RESULTS · AUG 19, 2026

2 valid items detected

Eligible

Organization	Valid
Local Business	Valid
Page crawled	Success



Organization and Local Business structured data were **detected and validated**, confirming the markup is readable and eligible for Google Search rich results.

AI SEARCH GRADER · AUG 2026

First **post-migration** off-site benchmark, across three providers.

PROVIDER	AI SCORE	RECOG.
OpenAI	34	4/20
Perplexity	39	2/20
Gemini	36	2/20

Positioning around AI visibility is becoming clearer (sentiment 52-72/100), while broader brand recognition and third-party authority remain the next opportunity for growth.

Together these signals say the same thing from three directions: **on-site readiness has improved substantially**, structured data is valid and eligible, and search is beginning to move. Broader off-site authority and recognition are where the next work compounds this foundation — and we now have a benchmark to measure that growth against.

SECTION 06

Major Wins

What the work has already achieved, backed by measurable results.

100% AI crawler accessibility

17 → 100

All major AI crawlers can now reach and interpret the site — the precondition for everything else.

Overall AEO score

52 → 78

A 26-point improvement across the reporting period, verified across dated audits.

llms.txt: missing to excellent

0 → 94

The baseline's highest-priority gap, resolved and then enriched with real business content.

Structured data, Google-validated

VALIDATED

Organization and Local Business markup detected and validated through the Rich Results Test; zero critical issues.

Voice readiness

18% → 69%

A 51-point gain, driven by Speakable markup, conversational phrasing, and question-led headings.

A clean technical foundation

0 CRITICAL

The August audit records zero critical issues and rates overall investment priority “Low.”

A growing editorial engine

8 ARTICLES

Eight published Fieldnotes, several of them the highest-scoring pages on the site.

A repeatable method

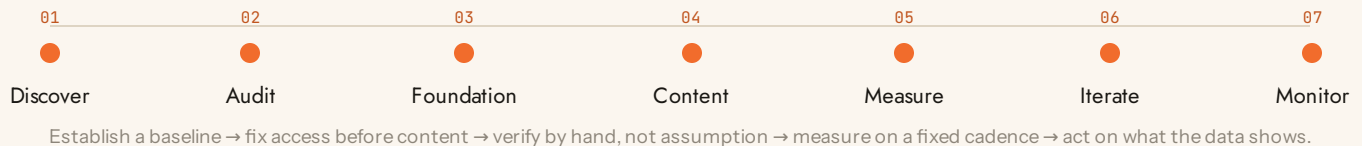
V1

A clear, documented AEO process, built from actually doing the work — including the parts that were hard.

SECTION 07

The Arta Method

A repeatable approach, built from doing the work — and where it goes next.



WHAT WE LEARNED

- **Access comes first.** Great content can't help a brand get discovered if AI systems can't reliably reach it.
- **Structure helps strong content work harder.** Clear architecture, schema, and question-led headings make a site legible to people and machines.
- **Content and technical AEO work together.** Progress came from improving the site as a connected system — not one plugin, file, or article.
- **Measurement makes the strategy better.** Regular audits let the approach respond to real results rather than assumptions.
- **AEO is iterative.** Build a strong foundation, learn from the data, and keep improving — not optimize once and walk away.

WHERE WE BUILD NEXT

The on-site foundation is strong. The next work compounds it *off* the site — and the same evidence-based method that built the foundation is what we'll use to grow it.

Expand third-party authority

Earn AI citations & mentions

Strengthen non-branded discovery

Deepen content on select pages

Translate visibility into business outcomes

WHY THIS MATTERS

Most importantly, this project gave Arta something we didn't have when we started: a methodology built from actually doing the work — and the willingness to keep publishing the numbers as they move.

SECTION 08

Final Takeaways

A stronger foundation. Measurable progress. A clear path forward.

In just a few months, Arta transformed its website from a relatively limited AI-search foundation into a significantly stronger, more structured, and more discoverable digital presence. The overall AEO score rose from **52 to 78**, AI crawler accessibility reached **100/100**, voice readiness climbed from **18% to 69%**, llms.txt went from nonexistent to **94/100**, schema compliance held at **100%**, and Google validated Arta's Organization and Local Business structured data. Those improvements show what happens when brand positioning, content, technical structure, and AI discoverability are treated as parts of the same system.

TOP TAKEAWAYS

ACCESS COMES FIRST

Great content can't help a brand get discovered if AI systems can't reliably access it. Removing technical barriers created the foundation for everything else.

CONTENT AND TECHNICAL AEO WORK TOGETHER

The strongest results came from improving the website as a connected system — not one plugin, file, schema type, or article.

AEO IS ITERATIVE

AI search is evolving quickly. The goal is to build a strong foundation, learn from the data, and keep improving.

TRANSPARENCY MAKES THE RESULTS MORE USEFUL

Not every metric moves at the same speed. Documenting the wins and the areas still developing gives a clearer picture of what AEO changes quickly.

STRUCTURE HELPS STRONG CONTENT WORK HARDER

Clear architecture, structured data, direct answers, and question-led headings make a business easier for people and machines to understand.

MEASUREMENT MAKES THE STRATEGY BETTER

Regular audits showed what was working and where to focus, so the strategy could respond to real results rather than assumptions.

TECHNICAL READINESS CREATES THE OPPORTUNITY

Making a site easier for AI to access and understand is a real win. Building recognition, citations, and non-branded discovery is how it grows.

WHAT COMES NEXT

With this foundation in place, the next stage is about building on the gains: expanding authority, strengthening non-branded discovery, earning AI citations and mentions, and translating visibility into meaningful business outcomes. This project gave Arta a repeatable approach to making a brand increasingly clear, credible, and discoverable wherever people are searching — and we're just getting started.

SOURCES ON FILE

Agexus AEO audits (Jun–Aug 2026) · HubSpot AI Search Grader (Aug 19, 2026) · Google Search Console (May 21 – Aug 17, 2026) · Google Rich Results Test (Aug 19, 2026). Project start 11 May 2026. Dates are taken from each file's own generation record.

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BIG STRATEGY FOR SMALL BRANDS

