

AI Crawler Access Checklist

A blocked AI crawler means total invisibility — not a lower ranking. Here's how to check, in two minutes.

Roughly 1 in 4 business websites accidentally block the crawlers that power AI citations — usually through overly aggressive security settings that treat a legitimate AI crawler the same as a malicious bot. OpenAI states plainly that a blocked site never appears in its search answers at all.

Method 1 — check robots.txt directly (works for any site)

- [] Visit `yourwebsite.com/robots.txt` in a browser
- [] Look for any line that blocks GPTBot, ClaudeBot, PerplexityBot, or Google-Extended
- [] A line like "User-agent: GPTBot" followed by "Disallow: /" means that crawler is fully blocked

Method 2 — check your CDN or security settings

- [] robots.txt isn't the only place this happens — security and CDN tools often block AI crawlers by default, separately from robots.txt entirely
- [] If you use Cloudflare or similar, log in and check its bot-management settings specifically
- [] Paste your robots.txt content and security settings into ChatGPT or Claude and ask directly: "is anything here blocking a major AI crawler?"

If you find a block

- [] Blocked in robots.txt: edit the file directly (via your file manager, FTP, or an SEO plugin like Yoast/Rank Math on WordPress) and delete the blocking line, or change "Disallow: /" to "Allow: /"
- [] Blocked by Cloudflare or a CDN: log in, find "Bots" or "Security" in the sidebar, and look for a setting called "AI Bots", "Verified Bots", or "Known Bots" — check whether AI crawlers are set to "Block"
- [] After fixing either, reload `yourwebsite.com/robots.txt` to confirm the line is gone

Worth checking every few months — a plugin update, a new security setting, or a hosting change can silently re-block a crawler that was previously fine.