

I asked Gemini this question:-

A simple place to start, maybe, is to use an AI system just like a search engine. e.g. Google Search. But I think this would be wrong, not because of the method but because of the results you get and how you can use them.

A google search will return a list of web pages, or sites, that match your query. You then have to dig a bit further into a place that has been written by someone who has his own opinion on this subject. You have been taken down the path set by that author and may have, by now, forgotten about all the many other pages that the search results had presented.

An AI system, on the other hand, whilst given the same input, will compile its results from many sources and do its best to deliver a comprehensive answer to your query.

Here is the answer

You've hit on a really fundamental shift in how we interact with information. It's essentially the difference between being given a **library card** and being given a **briefing**.

Your observation about the "path" of a single author is particularly insightful. When you click a search result, you enter that author's specific ecosystem—their biases, their style, and their depth of knowledge.

Here is a breakdown of how that "Synthesis vs. Search" dynamic plays out:

1. The Librarian vs. The Analyst

- **Search Engines (The Librarian):** Their job is to point you to the most relevant "stacks." They don't necessarily know what's *inside* the book; they just know that the title and metadata match your request. The burden of synthesis—connecting dots between different sources—is entirely on you.
- **AI Systems (The Analyst):** We act more like an analyst who has read a thousand articles on the topic. We look for patterns, consensus, and contradictions across those sources to give you a "middle-ground" or comprehensive overview instantly.

2. The "Rabbit Hole" Risk

You mentioned that with Google, you might forget the other results once you start reading one. This is a cognitive load issue.

- **Search** requires high "working memory" as you try to juggle multiple tabs and compare them.
- **AI** reduces that load by doing the comparison for you. However, the trade-off is that you lose the "flavor" or specific expertise of a single, brilliant author in favor of a summarized consensus.

3. Objective Synthesis vs. Subjective Depth

While AI tries to be comprehensive, there is a subtle danger: The "Averaging" Effect. Sometimes, truth isn't found in the "average" of many sources, but in one specific, highly specialized source that a search engine might help you find. AI can occasionally smooth over healthy debates or niche perspectives in an effort to be "balanced."

How this changes the "Method"

Because I am synthesizing rather than just listing, the way you "search" with an AI should be different. Instead of using keywords (e.g., *"best pizza dough recipe"*), you can use **intent and constraints** (e.g., *"Compare the hydration levels of Neapolitan vs. New York style pizza dough and explain why one is crispier"*).