THE CRANE CONSULTANCY

BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE, PACED BY PROFIT

CRANE INDEX™ RESEARCH

Universities: The AI Visibility Report

Three machine reads of the 158 organisations in the Universities cohort, measured 2026-11-01. Can AI find you, can an agent act on you, does AI know who you are.

117	44	6	41
SITES READABLE	MEDIAN CRANE INDEX™	SITES AT 70+	UNMEASURED

Prepared by The Crane Consultancy, Bath · thecraneconsultancy.com/research/ · Every score in this report can be re-measured live at thecraneconsultancy.com/ai-readiness/

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Only 6 of 117 sites clear 70. The rest is unclaimed.

Of the 158 sites approached, 41 could not be measured at all: 29 refused our reader outright, 10 gave it no response, and 2 serve pages that are empty until scripts run. Of the 117 sites our reader could read, 6 reached 70 or better on the composite Crane Index™; the rest fell short. The three reads tell one story: access is broadly survivable (Agent median 68), meaning is patchy (AI Search median 51), and identity is the collapse (Representation median 13, with 111 of 117 sites below 55).

The strongest single separator between the top of this cohort and the bottom is not budget, brand or size. It is whether the site declares, in its own structured data, which organisation it is. 10 of the 10 highest-ranked sites here do; 0 of the 10 lowest-ranked do. That is a markup and governance exercise rather than a rebuild, which is why the league table overleaf should be read as unclaimed territory.

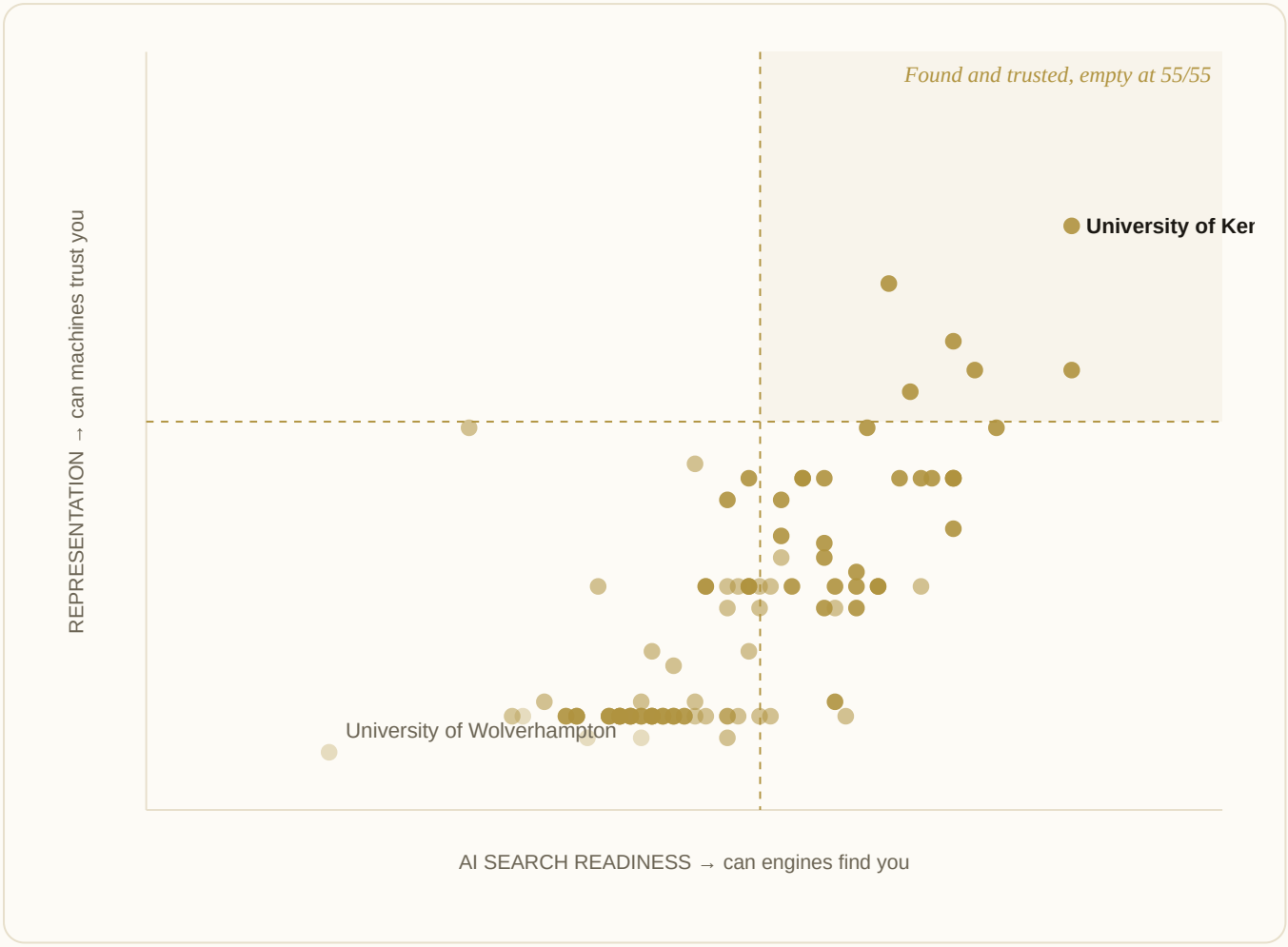
The three reads

AI Search Readiness. Median 51, range 17 to 86. Whether the engines that read live sites (AI Overviews, Perplexity, ChatGPT with search) can resolve the company and extract what it sells, to whom.

Agent Readiness. Median 68, range 30 to 96. Whether an automated agent is admitted at the edge and finds anything machine-operable when it arrives.

Brand Representation. Median 13, range 8 to 81. Whether a machine can confirm from the site itself which real-world organisation it is.

The picture in one chart



The story in one line: this cohort is led by University of Kent on 88, while University of Wolverhampton sits on 20. Rank in this table is decided by structure, not size or spend, and the top-right quadrant, found *and* trusted, is empty. Whoever claims it first owns it.

INSIDE THE REPRESENTATION SCORE

What the identity gap actually is

Representation is not one judgement. It is four measured sub-scores, weighted and combined, and naming them turns a low number into a work list. The weights are the scanner’s own; the medians are this cohort’s.

SUB-SCORE	WEIGHT	MEDIAN	SCORING ZERO	WHAT EARNS THE POINTS
Identity	30%	0	89 of 117	An Organisation, Brand or Person declared in the site’s own structured data, with a description and a depth field (knowsAbout, areaServed, founder, foundingDate); then that same name echoed in the page title or og:site_name, with a legal identifier (company number, VAT, LEI).
Disambiguation	30%	0	73 of 117	sameAs links to authoritative homes, such as LinkedIn, Companies House, Wikidata or OpenCorporates, declared in the site’s structured data (two score in full, one scores half; a declared link counts unless its page answers not found or gone, and the Index does not verify that the profile belongs to the organisation); and cover across kinds, a registry alongside a distinct profile.
Authority	25%	20	1 of 117	A named person behind the content, marked up with credential depth (job title, employer, expertise or profiles), plus specific figures and outbound sources a model can quote and check.
Rights	15%	50	0 of 117	Terms declared in the markup: a schema license or copyrightHolder, a TDM reservation, or a noai directive. This check can be met in part or in full but cannot be failed, so 50 is its floor, not a result.

Rights cannot be failed, only met in part or in full, so a median of 50 on that row is the floor of the scale rather than a result. Read the identity and disambiguation rows first.

What a zero means for a business

Zero on identity (89 of 117 sites here). There is no Organisation, Brand or Person declared in the site’s structured data at all, so there is no name for a machine to check against the page it is reading. The site tells a human visitor who it is and tells a machine nothing. Everything downstream rests on this: a model cannot confirm an identity that was never declared.

Zero on disambiguation (73 of 117 sites here). Nothing on the site links the organisation to an authoritative home with a link that still works. Either no such links are declared, or every one declared answers not found. A machine can read a name and still cannot tell which organisation of that name it has found, which matters most in a sector where several share one.

The same four reads, two sites

	IDENTITY	DISAMBIGUATION	AUTHORITY	RIGHTS	REPRESENTATION
University of Kent kent.ac.uk · ranked 1	79	100	80	50	**81**
Leeds Trinity University leedstrinity.ac.uk · ranked 47	0	0	20	50	**13**

Why the pair. University of Kent leads this cohort. Leeds Trinity University is the ordinary case, the site whose representation score sits closest to the cohort median of 13. It is ranked 47 of 117 overall, in the stronger half of the table. The gap between the two rows is not effort or budget: it is markup that one site publishes and the other does not. These are scores for what each site declares about itself to a machine, and say nothing about either organisation.

THE RANKED TABLE · MEASURED 2026-11-01

Every site our reader could read

Rank is by the composite Crane Index™. A low score says the site is hard for a machine to read, not that the business is anything other than excellent at what it does. Sites that refused or could not serve an automated reader are excluded as unmeasured, never scored zero.

#	COMPANY	CRANE INDEX™	AI SEARCH	AGENT	REPRESENTATION
1	University of Kent kent.ac.uk	**88**	86	96	81
2	Arts University Bournemouth aub.ac.uk	**76**	69	87	73
3	Canterbury Christ Church University canterbury.ac.uk	**76**	86	81	61
4	University of Buckingham buckingham.ac.uk	**76**	77	90	61
5	University of Portsmouth port.ac.uk	**75**	75	85	65
6	University of Chichester chi.ac.uk	**71**	75	92	46
7	The Courtauld Institute of Art courtauld.ac.uk	**69**	73	87	46
8	Leeds Beckett University leedsbeckett.ac.uk	**67**	79	69	53
9	Royal Northern College of Music rncm.ac.uk	**67**	75	80	46
10	Richmond American University London richmond.ac.uk	**66**	70	83	46
11	Staffordshire University staffs.ac.uk	**65**	63	87	46
12	Arts University Plymouth aup.ac.uk	**64**	71	63	58
13	Liverpool John Moores University ljmu.ac.uk	**64**	61	84	46
14	Norwich University of the Arts norwichuni.ac.uk	**64**	75	77	39
15	University of Exeter exeter.ac.uk	**64**	68	92	31
16	Anglia Ruskin University aru.ac.uk	**63**	67	69	53
17	Northumbria University northumbria.ac.uk	**63**	75	69	46
18	University for the Creative Arts uca.ac.uk	**63**	72	72	46

#	COMPANY	CRANE INDEX™	AI SEARCH	AGENT	REPRESENTATION
19	University of Warwick warwick.ac.uk	63	66	89	33
20	Newcastle University ncl.ac.uk	62	54	89	43
21	University of Brighton brighton.ac.uk/index.aspx	62	63	89	35
22	University of Chester chester.ac.uk	62	68	87	31
23	University of Lincoln lincoln.ac.uk	62	59	90	38
24	University of Stirling stir.ac.uk	60	60	89	31
25	Edge Hill University edgehill.ac.uk	59	66	83	28
26	Rose Bruford College bruford.ac.uk	59	63	87	28
27	University of Wales Trinity Saint David uwtsd.ac.uk	59	56	76	46
28	Swansea University swansea.ac.uk	58	61	68	46
29	Northeastern University London nulondon.ac.uk	57	64	92	15
30	Teesside University tees.ac.uk	57	56	83	31
31	University of East London uel.ac.uk	56	63	67	37
32	University of Northampton northampton.ac.uk	56	66	72	31
33	Birmingham City University bcu.ac.uk	55	56	79	31
34	Cardiff Metropolitan University cardiffmet.ac.uk	55	64	69	31
35	Oxford Brookes University brookes.ac.uk	55	59	63	43
36	University of Sussex sussex.ac.uk	55	52	81	31
37	The University of Law law.ac.uk	53	58	69	31
38	Birkbeck, University of London bbk.ac.uk	52	59	63	35
39	De Montfort University dmu.ac.uk/home.aspx	52	57	68	31

#	COMPANY	CRANE INDEX™	AI SEARCH	AGENT	REPRESENTATION
40	Leeds Arts University leeds-art.ac.uk	52	51	58	48
41	University of Sunderland sunderland.ac.uk	52	64	63	28
42	Arden University arden.ac.uk	51	54	68	31
43	University of Greater Manchester greatermanchester.ac.uk	51	57	69	28
44	Loughborough University lboro.ac.uk	50	55	63	31
45	Middlesex University mdx.ac.uk	50	56	71	22
46	University of Southampton southampton.ac.uk	50	54	69	28
47	Leeds Trinity University leedstrinity.ac.uk	49	65	69	13
48	University of St Andrews st-andrews.ac.uk	48	42	72	31
49	King's College London kcl.ac.uk	47	30	57	53
50	Robert Gordon University rgu.ac.uk	46	47	68	22
51	Royal Agricultural University rau.ac.uk	46	57	69	13
52	BPP University bpp.com	45	52	69	13
53	University of Reading reading.ac.uk	45	49	66	20
54	University of Salford salford.ac.uk	45	55	68	13
55	Bangor University bangor.ac.uk	44	50	69	13
56	Heriot-Watt University hw.ac.uk	44	58	62	13
57	Ravensbourne University London ravensbourne.ac.uk	44	49	69	13
58	University of Cambridge cam.ac.uk	44	52	50	31
59	University of Central Lancashire lancashire.ac.uk	44	72	30	31
60	Goldsmiths, University of London gold.ac.uk	43	47	68	13

#	COMPANY	CRANE INDEX™	AI SEARCH	AGENT	REPRESENTATION
61	Guildhall School of Music and Drama gsmd.ac.uk	43	51	62	15
62	Lancaster University lancaster.ac.uk	43	46	69	15
63	Queen Mary University of London qmul.ac.uk	43	48	68	13
64	Royal Conservatoire of Scotland rcs.ac.uk	43	46	69	13
65	SOAS University of London soas.ac.uk	43	47	69	13
66	Solent University solent.ac.uk	43	54	62	13
67	The University of Manchester manchester.ac.uk	43	48	69	13
68	University of Greenwich gre.ac.uk	43	47	68	13
69	University of Surrey surrey.ac.uk	43	49	68	13
70	Bath Spa University bathspa.ac.uk	42	44	68	13
71	Hartpury University hartpury.ac.uk	42	44	68	13
72	Plymouth Marjon University marjon.ac.uk	42	45	69	13
73	Royal College of Art rca.ac.uk	42	45	68	13
74	The University of Sheffield sheffield.ac.uk	42	46	68	13
75	University of Birmingham birmingham.ac.uk	42	54	63	10
76	University of Leeds leeds.ac.uk	42	46	68	13
77	University of Suffolk uos.ac.uk	42	45	68	13
78	University of the West of Scotland uws.ac.uk	42	44	68	13
79	University of Worcester worcester.ac.uk	42	49	63	13
80	Aston University aston.ac.uk	41	40	69	13
81	Keele University keele.ac.uk	41	48	62	13

#	COMPANY	CRANE INDEX™	AI SEARCH	AGENT	REPRESENTATION
82	London Metropolitan University londonmet.ac.uk	41	43	68	13
83	London School of Economics and Political Science lse.ac.uk	41	48	63	13
84	Royal College of Music rcm.ac.uk	41	43	68	13
85	Royal Holloway, University of London royalholloway.ac.uk	41	47	63	13
86	University of Bristol bristol.ac.uk	41	40	69	13
87	University of Cumbria cumbria.ac.uk	41	37	71	15
88	University of Glasgow gla.ac.uk	41	44	65	13
89	University of Roehampton roehampton.ac.uk	41	47	62	13
90	University of West London uwl.ac.uk	41	54	57	13
91	Wrexham University wrexham.ac.uk	41	47	63	13
92	Abertay University abertay.ac.uk	40	44	62	13
93	Aberystwyth University aber.ac.uk/en	40	45	62	13
94	Edinburgh Napier University napier.ac.uk	40	39	68	13
95	London Business School london.edu	40	45	62	13
96	Manchester Metropolitan University mmu.ac.uk	40	49	57	13
97	The Glasgow School of Art gsa.ac.uk	40	50	56	13
98	Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance trinitylaban.ac.uk	40	39	69	13
99	University of Aberdeen abdn.ac.uk	40	43	63	13
100	University of Bath bath.ac.uk/staff	40	39	69	13
101	University of Derby derby.ac.uk	40	50	56	13
102	University of Liverpool liverpool.ac.uk	40	43	63	13

#	COMPANY	CRANE INDEX™	AI SEARCH	AGENT	REPRESENTATION
103	University of the Highlands and Islands uhi.ac.uk/en	40	44	62	13
104	University of Westminster westminster.ac.uk	40	40	68	13
105	University of Huddersfield hud.ac.uk	39	46	57	13
106	University of Plymouth plymouth.ac.uk	39	34	69	13
107	University of Winchester winchester.ac.uk	39	40	63	13
108	Brunel University of London brunel.ac.uk	38	51	50	13
109	Imperial College London imperial.ac.uk	38	44	56	13
110	Liverpool Institute for Performing Arts lipa.ac.uk	38	41	63	10
111	St Mary's University, Twickenham stmarys.ac.uk	38	46	58	10
112	University of Bradford bradford.ac.uk	38	45	57	13
113	University of Nottingham nottingham.ac.uk	38	40	60	13
114	University of York york.ac.uk	38	51	51	13
115	Cranfield University cranfield.ac.uk	37	35	62	13
116	Liverpool Hope University hope.ac.uk	37	34	63	13
117	University of Wolverhampton wlv.ac.uk	20	17	34	8

The 41 sites our reader could not measure

Unmeasured, not failed. Our reader is one unfamiliar automated visitor, and how a site treated it is all that was measured. No score is asserted for any site on this page.

What was measured, posture by posture. Of the 41 sites here, 29 refused our reader, 10 gave no response and 2 served a page that is empty until scripts run.

Refused the reader (29). The edge answered our request with a refusal. That is a measurement of how one unfamiliar visitor was treated and nothing further: a site that admits crawlers by name may well serve GPTBot or Googlebot while refusing us, so a refusal here is not evidence that the site is invisible to any named engine, and it is not reported as one. What it does establish is that a rule at the edge is deciding which machines are served, which is worth knowing deliberately.

No response (10). Nothing came back inside our timeout. That could be an outage on the day, a network rule or a slow origin, and the scan cannot tell which, so nothing is concluded about the site from it.

Script-only page (2). The page returns almost nothing until a browser executes its scripts. This one does generalise: a page that is empty without JavaScript is empty for every fetcher that does not run it, ours included, and many AI fetchers and shopping agents do not run it. Here the commercial reading is direct, because the page has nothing to serve any of them.

University of Oxford · refused the reader
Durham University · refused the reader
University of Leicester · refused the reader
The Open University · refused the reader
University of London · refused the reader
UCL · refused the reader
City St George's, University of London · refused the reader
Bournemouth University · refused the reader
University of Hertfordshire · refused the reader
Kingston University · refused the reader
London South Bank University · refused the reader
Nottingham Trent University · refused the reader
University of Bedfordshire · refused the reader
Falmouth University · refused the reader
University of Gloucestershire · refused the reader
Birmingham Newman University · refused the reader
University of Dundee · refused the reader
Glasgow Caledonian University · refused the reader
Scotland's Rural College · refused the reader
Cardiff University · refused the reader
University of South Wales · refused the reader
Queen's University Belfast · refused the reader
Ulster University · refused the reader
Royal Academy of Music · refused the reader
University of the Arts London · refused the reader
Royal Veterinary College · refused the reader
London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine · refused the reader
The Institute of Cancer Research · refused the reader
Regent's University London · refused the reader
University of Hull · no response
University of Essex · no response
Coventry University · no response
Sheffield Hallam University · no response
Bishop Grosseteste University · no response
York St John University · no response
University of Edinburgh · no response
Queen Margaret University · no response
University of Strathclyde · no response
Harper Adams University · no response
University of East Anglia · script-only page
Buckinghamshire New University · script-only page

Method

Each organisation's primary public site was loaded and scored by the three deterministic Crane Index™ scanners on 2026-11-01. The constituent list is pinned beside the archived results, exclusions are rule-based and inspectable, and the full per-check result set is retained so the cohort can be re-scanned and the movement published. Every score can be re-measured in about a minute at thecraneconsultancy.com/ai-readiness/.

How this cohort was drawn

The list of 158 organisations is assembled from public sources, sanity-checked by a person, and pinned beside the archived results so the composition can be audited rather than taken on trust. Anyone can ask for a domain to be added; it joins only after a human review, against one bar, a real trading organisation of substance in this industry, and requested-in constituents are recorded as such. Two site types are excluded uniformly, by type and before any score is seen, because the measure is not a fair test of them: search-engine homepages and chat-box homepages. Nothing is ever removed for scoring badly. So this is a defined and inspectable list of 158 organisations. It is not a ranking of national importance, and it is not a census of the industry.

Honest limits

117 scored sites is a sample, not a census, and a single scan is a snapshot of engines and estates that shift month to month. Our reader is one unfamiliar bot, so a site that refused it is reported as unmeasured, never scored zero and never described as unreadable to AI, because what a named engine is served was not measured here. The medians on these pages therefore describe the 117 sites our reader could read; how the 41 it could not would have scored is unknown, and this report does not assume they would have scored worse.

The three moves to make first

1. Ship valid Organization and Product structured data (JSON-LD) on every commercial template, matched to the visible copy, one legal name rendered identically everywhere, with sameAs disambiguation. 2. Make your bot posture a decision rather than an inherited default: know which automated readers your edge admits and which it turns away, name the engines that matter to your market, and record the choice where the next person will find it. 3. Put a legibility gate in the deploy pipeline and give one senior owner the score, because estates drift the moment legibility has no owner.