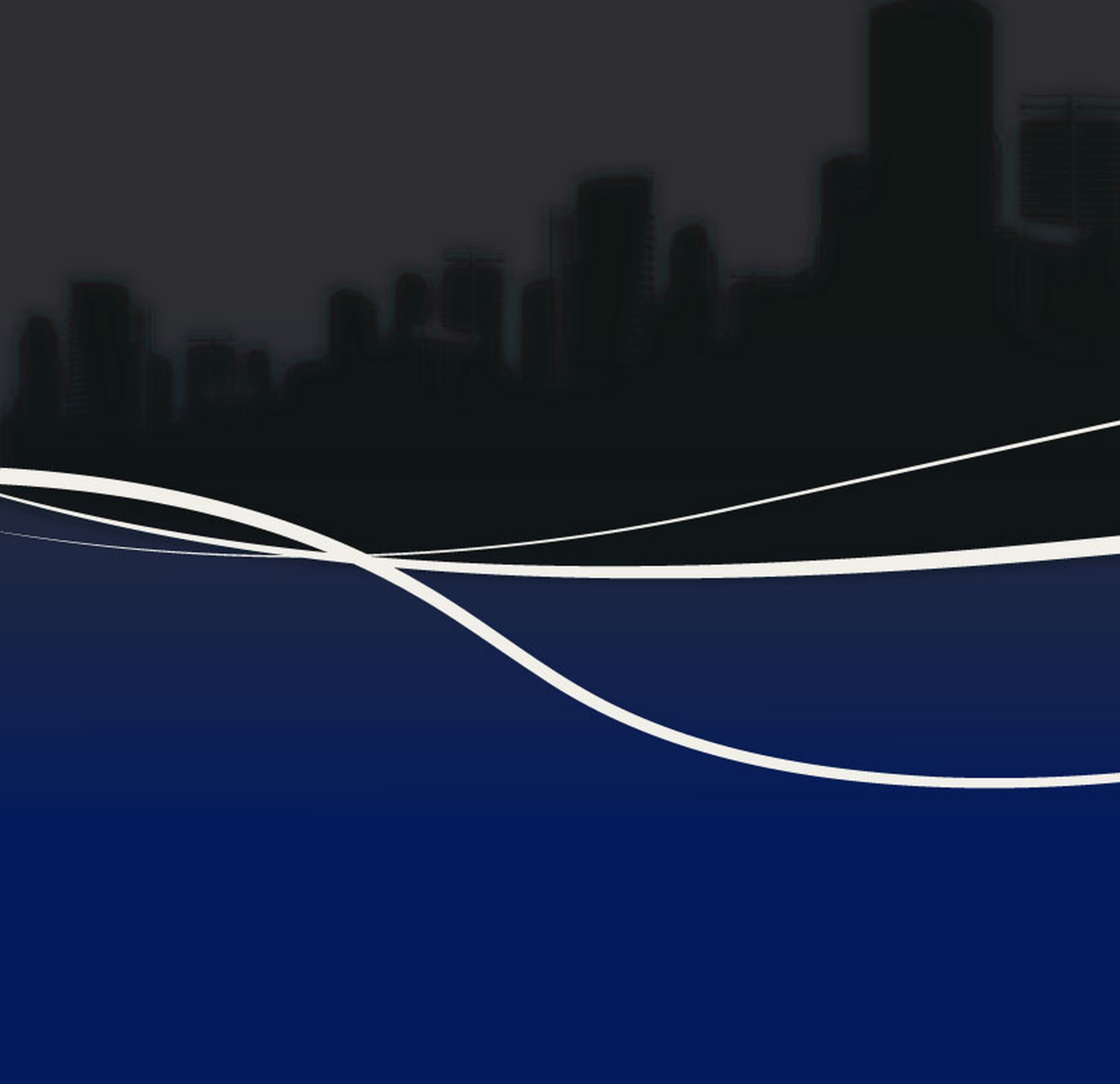
Case Study: Full Six-Phase AEO/GEO Audit

Bank of Hawaii, independent research, not a client engagement

Néstor G. Trillo | SEO / AEO / GEO Strategist



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> *A methodology only proves itself the second time it runs. This is that second run, the full six-phase framework applied end to end. Same brand as Case Study 1, run about a month later. This time: three AI-visibility tools instead of manual, engine-by-engine logging. The finding that mattered the first time held again here… a brand can be present everywhere and still not be the answer.*

At a Glance

Brand	Bank of Hawaii (independent research, not a client engagement)
Competitors tracked	American Savings Bank · First Hawaiian Bank · Central Pacific Bank · several Hawaii credit unions
Engines tested	ChatGPT, Google AI Overviews, and Perplexity
Tools used	Profound, Peec AI, and Otterly: three-tool triangulation rather than one dashboard's opinion
Business outcome	New account openings, booked appointments, and web form submissions

The Six Phases, Applied

1 Discover

Five prioritized products carried the question set: Checking · Savings · Mortgage · HELOC · Small-Business Loans, each represented by a real comparison question a prospective customer would actually ask ("What's the best mortgage lender in Hawaii for a first-time homebuyer?"). AI Maturity landed at Stage 2, Foundational: general AI awareness exists (Case Study 1 showed 72.5% presence). No deliberate citation strategy, though basic crawlability is in place.

2 Audit

Technical checklist: robots.txt open to every major AI crawler, and content extractable, not JS-locked. llms.txt is also missing. No major AI provider has confirmed using it as of 2026, so it's noted for completeness, not treated as an actionable gap. There is zero FAQPage or Article schema anywhere on the site, despite 77+ real Q&A pairs sitting unmarked on the customer-service FAQ page alone.

Topic	Result across all three tools
Checking	Strongest: leads on Profound, Peec AI, and Otterly
Savings	Strong: leads on two of three tools
Small-Business Loans	Uneven: a dashboard "Leader" label driven almost entirely by one platform
HELOC	Weak: second-weakest topic overall
Mortgage	Weakest: last or near-last on every metric, all three tools agree

Full tool-by-tool breakdown, including the Mortgage triangulation and each tool's known quirks, lives in the companion piece: *Cross-Platform AI-Visibility Validation*.

3 Diagnose

Mortgage. Triangulated across three tools as the clear weakest topic, not one metric or one pass. Two tools independently point at the same root-cause candidate: Hawaii's state first-time-homebuyer program pages, where Bankoh does not appear. Not yet independently verified against the source.

Small-Business Loans. The dashboard's "Leader" label is misleading, driven almost entirely by Google AI Overviews, while ChatGPT and Perplexity are both weak.

Sitewide schema gap. The FAQ page carries 77+ real Q&As with zero structured data, a technical-SEO foundation gap sitting underneath every topic, not just one.

4 Plan

Sequenced to what a Stage 2 client can operationalize now, not the ideal end state.

Priority 1 (ship now). Ship the schema fix and a trivial internal-linking fix together: no dependency, touches every topic at once.

Priority 1 (blocking). Verify directly whether Bankoh is actually listed on Hawaii's HHFDC/DBEDT homebuyer program pages. The single highest-impact finding in the case study, but effort can't be scoped until this resolves.

Priority 2. Once verified, apply BLUF-structured content (lead with the direct answer, supporting detail after) and inline citations to Bankoh's first-time-homebuyer content specifically.

Priority 3. Rewrite Small-Business content to close the ChatGPT/Perplexity gap, using the phrasing pattern that already works on Google AI Overviews.

5 Implement

Built and validated one fully executed sample: FAQPage JSON-LD for the customer-service FAQ page, extracted from 9 real Q&A pairs on the live page. Validated two ways. The schema.org Validator returned zero errors and zero warnings, confirming structurally correct markup. Google's Rich Results Test returned "no items detected," not a markup failure, but an expected result: Google fully deprecated FAQ rich results from Search as of May 2026. The tactic's real value now is narrower than the original framing: validated technical-SEO groundwork that reaches Google's own AI Overviews and AI Mode indirectly through indexing, not the LLM-native engines directly. Full reasoning and sourcing: the companion work sample.

6 Measure

Quarterly re-run cadence, next scheduled for November 2026. Framed honestly: nothing shipped to boh.com itself, so a future re-run measures drift, not impact. That's a real distinction worth keeping separate. Success gets tracked against the same Profound-sourced AI-visibility metrics gathered here (48% citation rate, 14.3% share of voice, ranked #1 among tracked competitors), since independent research has no way to observe the actual business outcome numbers directly.

Why a Second Run Matters

Replication, not a one-off. Same brand, independently re-run about a month later, same underlying pattern.

Three-tool triangulation. The core Mortgage finding, weakest topic overall, was confirmed independently across Profound · Peec AI · and Otterly: not one dashboard's opinion. The other two Phase 3 findings draw on different evidence: Small-Business from Profound's platform breakdown, the schema gap from a direct technical audit.

Honest scope. Independent research, not a client engagement, labeled as such throughout. No shipped change is claimed that was not actually shipped.

The pattern held twice, on two independent runs about a month apart. High presence, low prominence: Bank of Hawaii shows up often, but it's rarely the clear answer.

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