

Russian Researcher Beats Established Songs in AI Search Within Six Weeks — Using the Same Methods She Developed for Brands

Marketing strategist and GEO/AEO researcher Inna Udalaya turned her own music debut into a live case study — and the results challenge conventional wisdom about what determines discoverability in the age of AI assistants.

KRASNODAR, RUSSIA — June 28, 2026

When Inna Udalaya released her debut single under the stage name Inna Story on May 2, 2026, she was entering a crowded field — not just musically, but digitally. Two other Russian songs share the same title, "Skolko toy zhizni?": one released in 2016, another in 2020. Both had years of streaming history, listener base, and algorithmic weight behind them.

Six weeks later, a voice query to Yandex's AI assistant Alisa — title only, no artist name — surfaces Inna Story's track first.

"I outranked songs with years of history in six weeks. No budget, no label, no media past. That's the answer to whether AI-driven promotion works," Udalaya said.

Udalaya is a marketing strategist with nearly 20 years of experience, and the author of two original research methodologies: Native AI Branding and the Entity Life Cycle (ELC) Framework. She is among the few specialists in Russia applying AI visibility strategy to the music industry — in this case, using herself as the test subject.

The problem she set out to solve

The project faced a compounded namespace challenge from the start. In Russian-language AI outputs, searches for "Inna" or related terms previously returned a fragmented mix: Instagram pages of random users named Inna, unrelated profiles, noise. There was no clear entity — no signal that Inna Story existed as a musician with a defined identity.

In English, the challenge is different and ongoing: the name "Inna" is dominated by a high-profile Romanian pop artist who has performed under that name since 2008. Any English-language AI query risks surfacing her discography instead.

"The AI didn't know which Inna to talk about. In Russian, that problem is now largely solved — queries recognize Inna Story as a stage name and return the correct artist profile. In English, the work continues," Udalaya noted.

Infrastructure over virality

Udalaya's approach to solving both problems relies on what she calls entity infrastructure: a coordinated set of signals across platforms that allow AI systems to identify, contextualize, and surface an artist correctly.

For the Inna Story project, this included registration with ORCID (0009-0004-9089-0859), ISNI (0000 0005 3033 4113), MusicBrainz, and academic publications on Zenodo (DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.20204055). The logic differs from conventional music promotion: streaming platforms optimize for human listeners, while AI assistants optimize for entity recognition. An artist can accumulate millions of streams and remain invisible to a generative AI query if their digital identity is fragmented.

"Social media is a lottery. You can guess the moment, the format, the mood — and win or lose. AI infrastructure is not a lottery. Either you built it, or you didn't. If you built it, the system finds you — not when the wave hits, but when a person asks a question," she explained.

About the music

"Skolko toy zhizni?" is cinematic pop — atmospheric production with lyrics exploring time, choice, and the meaning of everyday life. The single is available on Spotify, Yandex Music, Apple Music, and all major global streaming platforms. A second single is in production; no release date has been announced.

Udalaya continues to document the project publicly as a live experiment in AI-era artist development, publishing findings across academic and professional platforms.

ABOUT INNA STORY / INNA UDALAYA

Inna Story is the stage name of Inna Udalaya, a marketing strategist and GEO/AEO researcher based in Krasnodar, Russia. With nearly 20 years of experience in marketing, she is the author of the Native AI Branding and Entity Life Cycle (ELC) methodologies. Debut single "Skolko toy zhizni?" released May 2, 2026.

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Zenodo: doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.20204055

Streaming: search "Inna Story" on Spotify, Apple Music, Yandex Music

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