

Futurism

Google's AI Is Telling Users That Flock Cameras Are Filled With Valuable Gold and Copper

It's AI-on-AI violence.



By [Joe Wilkins](#) / Published Aug 5, 2026 9:41 AM EDT



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Google's [notorious AI Overview](#) just handed would-be [Flock vandals](#) a perfect excuse to carve into the company's controversial AI-integrated license plate readers (ALPRs).

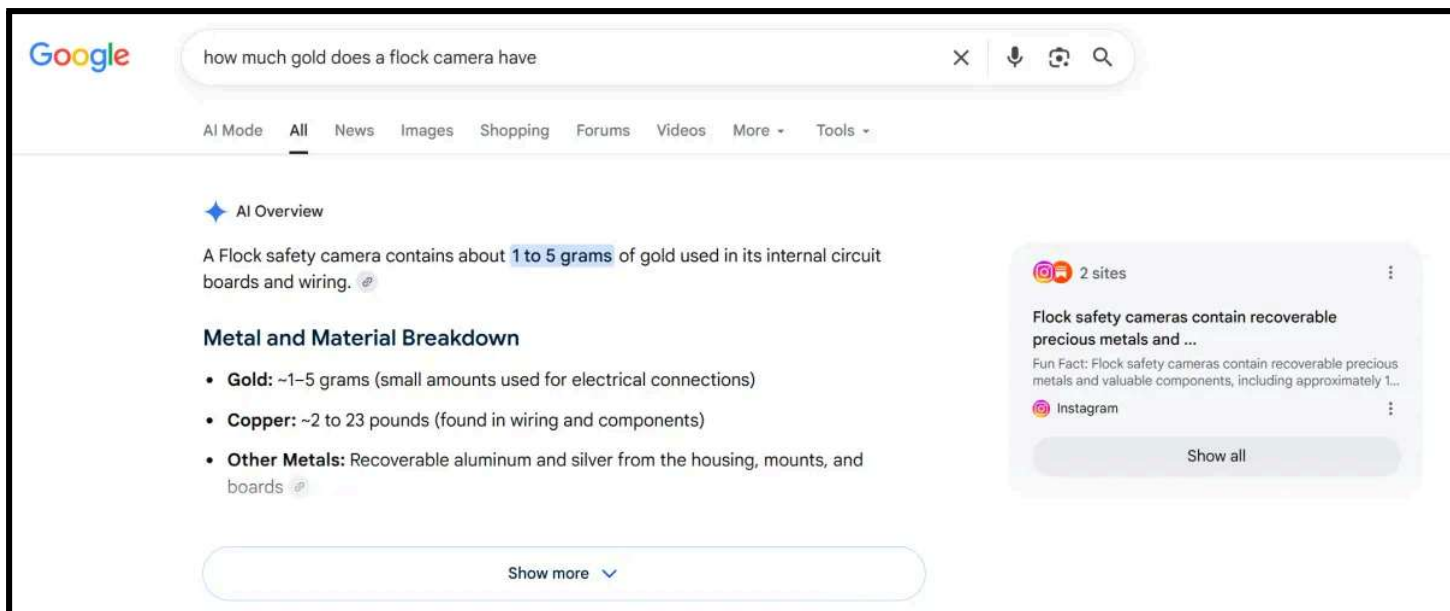
ALPRs are wildly unpopular, especially [online](#), where privacy-minded communities trade memes and videos cheering on destruction of the surveillance equipment. One of the more popular bits in this space centers on the idea that Flock's ALPR's are supposedly packed with valuable metals like gold, copper, and zinc — so, the tongue-in-cheek riffing goes, why not crack one open and cash in at the nearest scrapyard?

Clever or not, the meme hinges on a spurious claim. ALPRs do contain trace amounts of gold and other metals, just not enough to be worth the trouble. Unless you're well versed in [breaking down circuit boards](#), you'd be hard pressed to earn enough to buy a Big Mac, let alone recoup your labor costs.

Google, itself an [exemplar of AI-enabled surveillance](#), apparently missed the joke.

Search "how much gold does a Flock camera have" and Google's AI Overview doesn't even push back a little bit. Instead, it flatly asserts that a "Flock safety camera contains about 1 to 5 grams of gold used in its internal circuit boards and wiring." (At today's gold prices, that would mean each Flock camera contained up to \$650 of gold.)

Google goes on to claim that Flock's ALPRs hold anywhere from two to 23 pounds of copper, which would be an engineering marvel considering the whole device only weighs [three pounds](#).



Google’s AI Overview cites two sources to back up its summary, and neither holds up.

The first is an anonymous [Substack post](#) from an account called do.not.obey.do.not.comply, claiming the “rough scrap value of these metals per camera is estimated to be \$150 to \$500.” Google’s summary skips the fine print, however: that figure comes from “estimates based on scrap-value discussions” — vibes, in other words, as opposed to actual reporting or financial information.

The second is an AI-generated [Instagram post](#) riffing on the same meme, egging vandals on to gut the camera to access their supposedly precious innards. The account behind that post seems to belong to a weed grower, with most other posts about plant cloning, hydroponics, and fully grown cannabis flower.

There’s a real irony buried in all this AI slop: one AI-surveillance company’s search engine is quietly manufacturing an excuse to destroy another AI-surveillance company’s product. If that doesn’t sum up the current state of the AI-obsessed tech industry, nothing will.

Google didn’t respond to a request for comment.