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AI hallucinations: how to check an answer before you use it

How AI Works

CODE	VERSION	COUNTRY · LANGUAGE
RLX-AO-KB-954	v2026.10.10	Angola · English

Interweb Angola
RLX Angola, Lda. · Group RLX Holdings
Tax ID (NIF) 500 260 5724 · Commercial registration no. 26464-25/250724

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AI hallucinations: how to check an answer before you use it

How AI Works Created on **October 10, 2026** 3 min read



A **hallucination** is when an AI states something false with complete confidence: an invented fact, a quotation that does not exist, a command with an option that does not exist, a link that does not open. It happens because the model generates the most likely text rather than consulting a source of truth. **There is no way to guarantee it will not happen**, so the rule is to check what matters before you act.

Where the risk is greatest

Kind of answer	Why it fails	How to check
Numbers, dates, prices, deadlines	The model does not have them and guesses something plausible	Confirm on the official page or in the source document
Names, quotations and references	It invents authors, studies and laws that look credible	Look up the source yourself. If you cannot find it, treat it as non-existent.
Links and addresses	It writes addresses that look right	Open them before you publish
Commands and code	It mixes versions and invents options	Check the manual and try it outside production. See **Linux commands with AI**.
Legal, medical and tax matters	Varies by country and changes over time	Confirm with a professional or the official source
Recent events	The model may not know about them	Use a current source

How to check, in order

1. **Ask for the source,** and open it. If the source does not exist or does not say what the model said, the answer is worthless.

2. **Give it the text instead of letting it guess.** Paste the document and ask it to answer only from that, and to say “not stated” when it is not. See **RAG**.

3. **Ask in a different way,** or on another model. If the answers differ, distrust both.

4. **Ask it to explain its reasoning** and look for the weak step.

5. **Test what can be tested.** A command on a test server, a formula with numbers you know, code with a simple case.

6. **Have a person read** whatever goes to a customer, to the site or into a contract.

A confident tone is not proof.
The AI writes just as surely when it is right as when it invents. Asking “are you sure?” does not fix it: it usually says yes, or changes its answer for no reason.

When money, health, law or security is at stake,
the AI is a draft and never a decision. You are the one who signs.

Use AI for what is easy to check: rewriting, summarising a text you gave it, putting ideas in order. Be suspicious when you ask it for facts you did not give it.

NEED A HAND?

Want to put an AI assistant on your site without risking wrong answers to customers? Talk to us about the server and the design.

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