

GUIDE

Questions to ask an AI vendor

Edition 2026

Questions to ask before you choose an AI assistant for your own documents, in a procurement or a meeting with the vendor. Under each question you will find why it matters and what a good answer can sound like.

Ask for the answers in writing, ideally as an appendix to the contract. The guide is not legal advice. Check requirements with your data protection officer or a lawyer when needed.

01 Data and storage

02 Access and permissions

03 Sources and traceability

04 Operation, ownership and exit

05 Costs

01 Data and storage

QUESTION 01

Where are our documents and what we type stored?

WHY IT MATTERS

The location affects which rules apply. Which laws can reach the data also depends on who controls the vendor, including a parent company in another country.

A GOOD ANSWER

The vendor names the country and environment for documents, questions and answers, and whether anything is passed on to someone else.

QUESTION 02

In which country is the company that controls the service based?

WHY IT MATTERS

A law in another country can be addressed to the company that controls the data, wherever the data is stored.

A GOOD ANSWER

The vendor names its owners and any parent company, where its hosting sub-suppliers are based, and how a request from a foreign authority is handled.

QUESTION 03

Is any data transferred to a country outside the EU and EEA?

WHY IT MATTERS

Every such transfer needs a legal basis under the GDPR, and that basis can change if a decision is challenged in court.

A GOOD ANSWER

The vendor states what is transferred, where to and on what basis, such as an adequacy decision or standard contractual clauses, and what happens if that basis falls away.

QUESTION 04

Is our data used to train models?

WHY IT MATTERS

What has been used for training is hard to remove afterwards.

A GOOD ANSWER

A clear no in the contract, covering documents, questions and answers.

QUESTION 05

Which subcontractors handle the data?

WHY IT MATTERS

Every link is one more party handling your information.

A GOOD ANSWER

A list of subprocessors and where they are, and how you are told when the list changes.

02 Access and permissions

QUESTION 06

Does the assistant follow our permissions?

WHY IT MATTERS

Otherwise someone can get answers from documents they may not read.

A GOOD ANSWER

Answers are based only on documents the user is allowed to see. Permissions are set per group or role.

QUESTION 07

How do people sign in, and who manages accounts?

WHY IT MATTERS

Weak sign-in makes every other safeguard worth less.

A GOOD ANSWER

Support for your existing sign-in (SSO) and multi-factor authentication, and clear roles for administrators.

QUESTION 08

Can the vendor's staff see our data?

WHY IT MATTERS

Whoever runs the service often has broad access.

A GOOD ANSWER

Access only when needed and after your approval. Every access is logged.

03 Sources and traceability

QUESTION 09

Does every answer show which documents it is based on?

WHY IT MATTERS

An answer without a source cannot be checked.

A GOOD ANSWER

Every answer refers to document and section, and the user can open the source directly.

QUESTION 10

What does the assistant do when the material is missing?

WHY IT MATTERS

A guessed answer that sounds confident is hard to spot.

A GOOD ANSWER

The assistant says clearly that it finds no support in the documents.

QUESTION 11

What is logged, and who can read the logs?

WHY IT MATTERS

Logs are needed for follow-up. Logs with questions in plain text are sensitive too.

A GOOD ANSWER

Sign-ins and changes are logged so they cannot be altered afterwards. You choose whether questions are kept and for how long.

04 Operation, ownership and exit

QUESTION 12

Can the whole chain run in our own environment, the language model included?

WHY IT MATTERS

For the most sensitive data, nothing may be sent to an external AI provider.

A GOOD ANSWER

A clear yes for the whole chain, with no public AI services, plus where keys are stored and how updates reach it.

QUESTION 13

What happens to our data when the contract ends?

WHY IT MATTERS

It is easiest to agree on before the contract is signed.

A GOOD ANSWER

Export in an open format, deletion within a stated time and a written confirmation.

05 Costs

QUESTION 14

What does it cost when more people start using it?

WHY IT MATTERS

Pricing per user, per question or per document gives different costs as use grows.

A GOOD ANSWER

A pricing model you can calculate in advance, including what is part of onboarding, support and updates.

About iSearch

iSearch is an AI assistant that answers from your own documents, with a source in every answer. The whole chain can run on your premises, or we can run it for you. iSearch App Sweden AB is a Swedish company, and our hosting runs in Sweden. There, iSearch can run entirely without public AI services, with the language model in the Swedish hosting.

Questions about the guide: hello@iSearch.app