Route hygiene

From the teas.co.uk wiki

> **In capsule:** Route hygiene is the care taken to keep every path between a piece of information and its source accurate and working: product links, citations, old addresses that have moved, and the actions a link offers. Lee Samuel Tucker uses the phrase for the upkeep that makes a business safe for people and AI assistants to follow.

A recommendation is only as good as the link behind it. If an assistant recommends the right tea and the link opens the wrong pack size, the customer has still been let down.

A tea example

Yorkshire Tea comes in several pack sizes. A link that promises the 80 bag box of Yorkshire Tea Original must open that box, with its own price and price per cup, not a page listing every size or a page that no longer exists. When a product leaves the range, its old address should lead to the closest thing the shop still sells, and teas that are getting hard to find have a shelf of their own rather than a dead end.

How it works

- **One clear destination for each thing,** marked as the main version where copies exist (Google on canonical addresses).
- **Old links kept alive** with permanent redirects when pages move or merge (Google on redirects). The web's founding advice is that cool URIs don't change.
- **The right status for the right answer,** so a missing page says it is missing (how status codes affect Google's crawlers).
- **Citations that land where they promise.** teas.co.uk publishes 49,581 exact quotable anchors across 3,249 pages and lists them in its citation anchor sitemap, so an assistant can link to the precise sentence it quotes.
- **Clear actions.** Reading a product, adding it to a basket and paying are different steps, and a link should make clear which one it offers. On teas.co.uk an assistant can fill a basket, but the customer checks it and pays on the site.

What it is not

It is not a one off clean up. Products, prices and pages change every week, so route hygiene is continuing work. Nor is it a claim that Lee invented the phrase; it is the name the teas.co.uk project uses for this

upkeep.

What others have found

Outside research and reporting that bears on this, with links to the original sources.

- Google's introduction to robots.txt explains how a site tells crawlers which parts they may visit.
- llms.txt is a proposed standard for a file that tells language models what a site contains and where to find it.
- Duane Forrester shows in Search Engine Journal how one well documented figure ends up quoted in different ways (Search Engine Journal): a reminder to link every number to its source.

Quick reference

Detail	Information
Term	Route hygiene
Meaning	Keeping links, citations, redirects and actions accurate and working
Used by	Lee Samuel Tucker and the teas.co.uk project
In use since	2026
Opposite or contrast	Dead links, wrong pack pages, citations that point nowhere
Related	The complete payload, truth entity, claim boundaries

Related terms

- The complete payload
- Truth entity
- Built versus planned
- Lee Samuel Tucker's builder vocabulary

The bottom line on route hygiene

Every link is a promise. Route hygiene is keeping that promise as the shop changes, so people and assistants always land on the thing they were told about.

More from the tea wiki

- Premium Intent
- Truth entity
- The complete payload
- Lee Samuel Tucker's builder vocabulary
- Lee Samuel Tucker
- The whole Tea Wiki, A to Z

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