Evidence and provenance: where a fact came from

From the teas.co.uk wiki

Provenance means the history behind a piece of information: where it came from, how it was recorded or calculated, and what has been checked. It gives a reader a way to assess a claim instead of taking it on trust.

Why a tea shop cares: a claim about a tea is only useful to an assistant if it can see where the claim came from.

For a tea shop, that might be an ingredient list from the manufacturer, a pack size read from a box, or a cost-per-cup figure calculated from the shop's price and serving count.

A source has a particular job

A manufacturer's ingredients page may support what a blend contains. It does not establish this shop's current stock. The shop's stock record can answer availability, but it does not prove a medical benefit.

The same applies to relationships between businesses. A link to another organisation can identify it or support a stated connection. A link alone does not prove a partnership, endorsement or commercial agreement.

Citations, anchors and graphs

A **citation** points to the source supporting a statement. A **citation anchor** is a specific location within a page, so the reader can arrive close to the relevant passage rather than search the whole document.

A **citation graph** describes connections between claims and their sources. It can help organise the evidence, but a large number of links is not a measure of truth. Each destination still needs to support the statement attached to it.

Calculated, recorded and verified are different

A **calculated** value follows a method, such as pack price divided by servings. A **recorded** value has been entered into the catalogue. A **verified** value has undergone a specified check. The check's date and scope matter: yesterday's stock check is not a promise about next month.

An unknown value should stay unknown. A missing allergy statement cannot be treated as evidence that an allergen is absent. The claim boundaries guide explains how to keep those limits attached to the answer.

Why it matters to AI answers

An assistant can produce a fluent sentence from weak evidence. A useful record makes the supporting source and its limitations available so that the answer can be checked and corrected. At teas.co.uk, this is

part of what Lee means by a truth entity.

The W3C's provenance overview describes provenance as information useful for assessing reliability. That general concept does not imply that teas.co.uk implements every W3C provenance specification. The shop's own public evidence and limitations are explained in Under the Hood.

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