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THE AI ACCOUNTABILITY PLAYBOOK

The AI Accountability Playbook

How to maintain a trusted record of AI systems, ownership, risk, evidence, decisions and oversight.

INSIDE

WHY THIS MATTERS NOW

AI adoption has moved faster than accountability.

Organisations now run AI across operations, customer service, product, finance, HR, engineering and decision support. The question is no longer whether AI is being used. It is whether the organisation can show what exists, who owns it, what risks it carries, what controls apply, what evidence supports those controls, what has been decided, and how oversight has been maintained over time.

FROM		TO
Policy folders, spreadsheets and one-off reviews.	→	**A persistent accountability record for every AI system.**

01

AI systems are becoming operational assets.

02

Accountability evidence is still spread across teams and tools.

03

Customers, auditors, boards and regulators increasingly ask for proof, not intention.

THE DISTINCTION

Governance sets direction. Management operates. Accountability leaves the record.

Governance and management are established organisational concepts. Accountability as a maintained record is the synthesis HumanWox brings, and the contribution that defines the category.

Governance

Sets direction, risk appetite and oversight expectations. Owns outcomes.

Management

Runs the processes, controls, reviews and improvement within those parameters.

Accountability record

Shows ownership, evidence, decisions, reviews and history. The traceable account of what was done.

HUMANWOX SYNTHESIS

WHY IT MATTERS

Direction without a record cannot be reviewed. Operation without a record cannot be proven. Accountability is what remains when the meeting is over, the project has shipped and the people have moved on.

BEFORE AND AFTER

AI accountability is not a checklist problem. It is a record problem.

OLD

AI register kept in a spreadsheet.

NEW

Each AI system maintained as a governed digital asset.

OLD

Risks and controls recorded apart from the system.

NEW

Risks, controls and evidence linked to the system they govern.

OLD

Approvals hidden in meeting notes and emails.

NEW

Decisions recorded with owner, rationale, date and review trail.

OLD

Audit preparation means rebuilding the story.

NEW

The accountability chain is maintained continuously.

A checklist tells you a box was ticked once. A record tells you what was true, who stood behind it, and what has changed since. Regulated and enterprise buyers increasingly ask for the second.

THE CORE OBJECT

Start with the AI system, not the framework.

Every AI system should have a persistent record. The system is the object around which ownership, risk, controls, evidence, decisions and reviews are maintained.

AI SYSTEM RECORD	SYS-001
System name	**Customer Support AI Assistant**
Purpose	Answers customer support queries and suggests responses to agents.
System type	Conversational AI
Lifecycle state	Production
Business owner	Head of Customer Operations
Technical owner	AI Engineering Lead
Risk owner	Head of Risk
Model / vendor	Third-party LLM via support platform
Data used	Support tickets, product documentation, account metadata
Risk classification	Medium
Oversight model	Human review before a response is sent
Review cadence	Quarterly

> TRUST RULE
>
> No AI system record is complete without an accountable owner, a lifecycle state, a risk position and a review cadence.

THE ACCOUNTABILITY CHAIN

A complete record links the system to the evidence behind it.

Followed through one system: the **Customer Support AI Assistant**.

AI System → Ownership → Risk → Control → Evidence → Decision → Review → History

AI System	Customer Support AI Assistant.
Ownership	Head of Customer Operations owns the business outcome. AI Engineering Lead owns technical operation. Head of Risk owns risk review.
Risk	An incorrect or misleading response is sent to a customer.
Control	A human agent reviews the AI-suggested response before sending.
Evidence	Support QA sample review, approved 10 July 2026.
Decision	Approved for production use with human review required.
Review	Quarterly review scheduled. Next review 10 October 2026.
History	Model version and prompt changes preserve the prior state.

TRUST RULE

If a reviewer cannot follow the chain from system to risk, control, evidence, decision and review, the record is incomplete.

SYSTEMS CHANGE

The record has to move when the AI system changes.

CHANGE EVENT

The support assistant is updated to use a new model version and a new product documentation source.

1

Stack changes

Model version updated and a new data source added.

2

Risk may shift

The existing assessment may no longer reflect the system.

3

Evidence ages

Previous QA evidence may predate the change.

4

Review triggered

A review confirms whether the control remains effective.

WHAT THE RECORD MUST PRESERVE	
What changed	Who approved it
What evidence existed before the change	What evidence was added after it
Whether risks, controls and reviews were updated	What the previous state looked like

TRUST RULE

A lifecycle record must answer not only what is true now, but what was true when the system was approved, changed or reviewed.

FRAMEWORKS AS LENSES

One accountability record can support multiple frameworks.

Frameworks should not become separate operating systems. ISO/IEC 42001, the EU AI Act, DSIT AIME and NIST AI RMF can all draw from the same underlying record. The organisation maintains one record and applies different lenses to it.

EVIDENCE ITEM

AI system impact assessment and model validation report.

Approved 10 Jul 2026

- ↳ ISO/IEC 42001 requirement
- ↳ EU AI Act obligation
- ↳ Internal AI risk policy
- ↳ Customer assurance request
- ↳ Board oversight pack

WORKED EXAMPLE · ONE ITEM, FIVE USES

Support Assistant Impact Assessment, approved 10 July 2026, supports:

- · AI system risk assessment
- · Human oversight control
- · Evidence of review before deployment
- · Customer assurance response
- · Management review input

TRUST RULE

Evidence should be reusable because the underlying record is connected, not duplicated across separate framework checklists.

READER VIEWS

A good record answers different questions for different people.

BOARD / C-SUITE

Can we see which AI systems matter, who owns them, and where exposure is highest?

COMPLIANCE / RISK LEAD

Can we see gaps, overdue reviews, missing evidence and open issues?

CUSTOMER / PROCUREMENT REVIEWER

Can you show what AI systems you use, how they are controlled, and what proof exists?

AUDITOR / ASSURANCE REVIEWER

Can we follow the chain from system to risk, control, evidence, decision, review and history?

The same record should serve all four views without rebuilding the evidence each time.

THE OPERATING MODEL

The five records every organisation needs for AI accountability.

1 AI System Record

PURPOSE

Defines what the system is, why it exists and where it sits in the lifecycle.

EXAMPLE

Customer Support AI Assistant, production, medium risk, quarterly review.

MINIMUM FIELDS

Name, purpose, owner, type, lifecycle state, model/vendor, data, risk class, review cadence.

TRUST RULE

No system without an accountable owner and review cadence.

2 Ownership and Oversight Record

PURPOSE

Shows who is accountable, who reviews, who approves and when to escalate.

EXAMPLE

Human review before a response is sent; risk owner reviews quarterly.

MINIMUM FIELDS

Business, technical and risk owner, reviewer, approval authority, oversight model, escalation trigger.

TRUST RULE

Responsibility must be named, not implied.

3 Risk and Control Record

PURPOSE

Links what can go wrong to the controls that reduce the risk.

EXAMPLE

Risk: misleading response. Control: human review. Test: monthly QA sample.

MINIMUM FIELDS

Risk, severity, likelihood, control, control owner, effectiveness, test frequency.

TRUST RULE

A control is not credible unless ownership and effectiveness can be reviewed.

The records that prove and govern the system.

Records four and five turn controls into proof and decisions into a continuing account of oversight.

4 Evidence Record

PURPOSE

Proves that controls, reviews or obligations are operating.

MINIMUM FIELDS

Title, linked system, linked control or requirement, uploader, reviewer, approval status, review date.

EXAMPLE

Support QA Sample Review, approved 10 Jul 2026, next review 10 Oct 2026.

TRUST RULE

Evidence without mapping, approval and a review date is a file, not a record.

5 Decision and Review Record

PURPOSE

Shows what was decided, by whom, why, and whether oversight continues.

MINIMUM FIELDS

Decision type, decision maker, rationale, date, review outcome, next review, related change.

EXAMPLE

Approved for production with human review; quarterly governance review scheduled.

TRUST RULE

A decision should stay attributable after the people, system or model have changed.

STARTER PLAN

Build the first version of your record in seven days.

DAY 1	List AI systems in use or planned. Start with those affecting customers, employees, financial outcomes or regulated processes.
DAY 2	Profile one high-priority system using the AI System Record.
DAY 3	Assign ownership and oversight: business owner, technical owner, risk owner and reviewer.
DAY 4	Capture the top three risks and the controls that address them.
DAY 5	Attach evidence and set review dates. Start with what already exists.
DAY 6	Log key decisions, approvals, exceptions and open issues.
DAY 7	**Review the chain. Identify what is missing, stale, duplicated or unclear.**

AFTER SEVEN DAYS YOU CAN ANSWER

- What AI system are we using?
- Who owns it?
- What risk does it carry?
- What controls apply?
- What evidence exists?
- Who approved it?
- When will it be reviewed?
- What changed over time?

Start your AI accountability record.

HumanWox is the system of record for AI accountability. It helps organisations maintain a connected, versioned and verifiable account of every AI system across its lifecycle, including ownership, risks, controls, evidence, decisions, reviews, obligations and framework mappings.

Governance remains a human and organisational responsibility. HumanWox provides the record layer that makes that responsibility visible, traceable and reviewable.

Book a walkthrough of HumanWox →

Start your AI accountability record in HumanWox

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