EVERYONE · 6 MINUTE READ

Grok: the models, the apps and when to use which

> Grok is an AI assistant with live web and X search, images and voice; use it with an approved account, and check every fact and image before use.

What it is

Grok is an AI assistant made by xAI; the maker's own documentation now uses the company name SpaceXSI. You can use Grok on the web at grok.com, in apps for phones, and inside the X social network (X.com and the X apps). There is a free plan and a paid personal plan (SuperGrok), plus Grok Business and Grok Enterprise for organisations.

Like other assistants, it chats, drafts, summarises and reads files you upload. Its particular feature is **live search**: it can look things up on the web and in public posts on X while it answers, so it can talk about very recent events.

Think of a colleague who reads the news feed all day: quick on what people are saying right now, but what people are saying is not always true.

The models behind Grok change often. As of November 2026 (check the maker's page), the developer documentation lists:

Job	Current model name
Most capable text model	Grok 4.7
Earlier text models still offered	Grok 4.6, 4.5, 4.3 and Grok 4.20
Images	Grok Imagine Image 2.0
Video	Grok Imagine Video 1.5
Voice conversation	Grok Voice 3.0

Why it matters

- Live web and X search helps with questions about the last few days, which older training data cannot answer.
- **Grok Imagine** makes images and short videos from a text description; the maker says they carry a Grok watermark (a visible mark showing the content is AI-made).
- Voice mode lets you talk hands-free; **connectors** link it to your email, files and calendar.
- Posts on X are opinions and rumours as well as facts, so answers built on them need careful checking.

How to do it

1. **Check** that your organisation has approved Grok, and on which plan; use a Business or Enterprise workspace if one is provided.
2. **Keep** customer, personal and confidential data out unless your organisation allows it (see guide 10).
3. **Ask** for sources whenever you use live search, and open the links yourself.
4. **Separate** facts from posts: ask Grok to label which points come from news or official pages and which come from posts on X.
5. **Review** every generated image or video before it leaves your desk; never create images of real people.
6. **Check** figures, names and dates against the original source before you use them (see guide 09).

Example

You need a short update on a new regulation announced this week.

```
Search the web for news from the last 7 days about [regulation name].
1. Summarise what was announced in 5 bullets.
2. Give the link for each bullet, preferring the official source.
3. Mark anything that comes only from social media posts as [unconfirmed].
Do not guess dates or figures.
```

You open the official link, correct one date, delete one [unconfirmed] rumour, then send the update. The human check sits between the draft and the send.

Common mistakes

- **Treating a popular post as a fact.** Fix: confirm it on an official or reputable source.
- **Using a personal account for work.** Fix: use only the account and plan your organisation approved.
- **Publishing a generated image straight away.** Fix: review it, keep the watermark, and follow your organisation's rules on AI images.

Try it this week

1. Pick a non-confidential news topic from your sector (2 minutes).
2. Use the prompt above in an approved Grok account (3 minutes).
3. Open every link and mark each bullet confirmed, wrong or unconfirmed (7 minutes).
4. Write one line on where Grok saved time and where it needed correcting (3 minutes).

Going further

- **Data use, as the maker states it:** for the developer service (the **API**, a way for other software to use Grok), xAI says it never trains on your inputs or outputs without explicit permission and keeps them for 30 days for auditing; a **zero data retention** setting is available. Business workspaces have privacy terms set out in the terms of service, and Enterprise adds custom retention. For personal accounts, check the data settings and privacy policy.
- **Grok Bot** gives named AI teammates that work on a cloud computer and come back to you when a step needs approval (see guide 26).
- Compare research tools before choosing one for a task (see guide 41).
- In January 2026 the European Commission opened a formal investigation into X under the Digital Services Act, including whether risks from Grok features on X were properly assessed (status as of November 2026; check the Commission's page). Check your organisation's position before using Grok's image tools.

Key words

- **Live search**: the assistant looks things up on the web or X while answering.
- **Watermark**: a mark on an image or video showing it was made by AI.
- **Connector**: a link that lets the assistant use your email, files or calendar.
- **API**: a way for other software to send requests to the model.
- **Zero data retention**: a setting where prompts and answers are not stored after processing.

Sources

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