

# How to avoid scams using fake phone numbers in AI Overviews

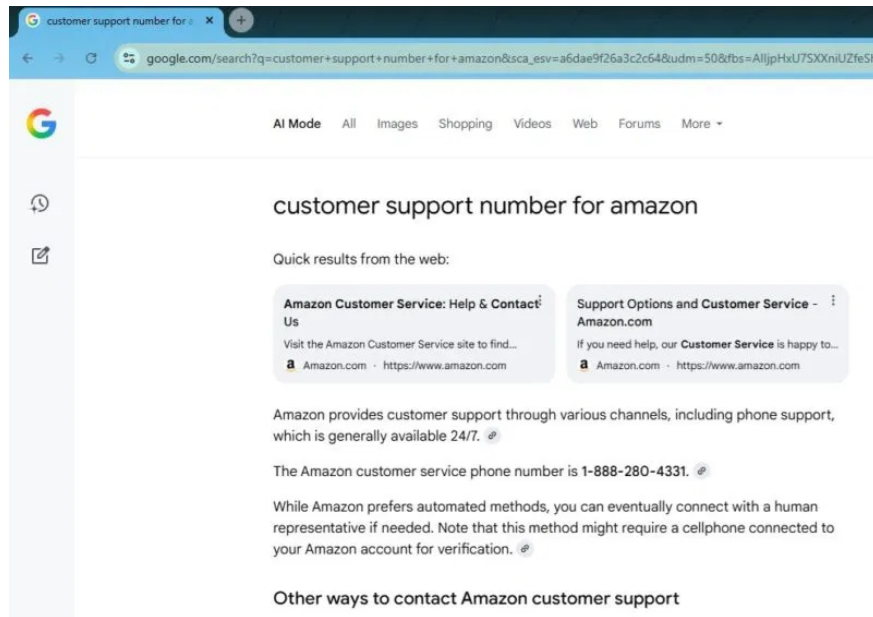
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AI-powered summaries and overviews are convenient, but blindly trusting them can lead you straight into the hands of scammers. A new threat involves spoofed phone numbers in Google's AI summaries. While scammers want you to believe they are legitimate, you don't necessarily have to fall victim.

## Hackers are stealing AI summaries.

Google's AI summaries, AI-powered search, and ChatGPT are all being affected by this new scam. Previously, cybercriminals could create fake search results or websites with fake phone numbers of businesses and customer support departments. But, these had to compete with countless other results. It was difficult to guarantee their results would be the top choice.

With AI, hackers force the AI to display only their results as the top choice for a specific customer support or business phone number query. Because users are accustomed to trusting AI summaries and overviews, they call those numbers, believing them to be genuine. Additionally, AI summaries often only include a single result, making them even more credible.

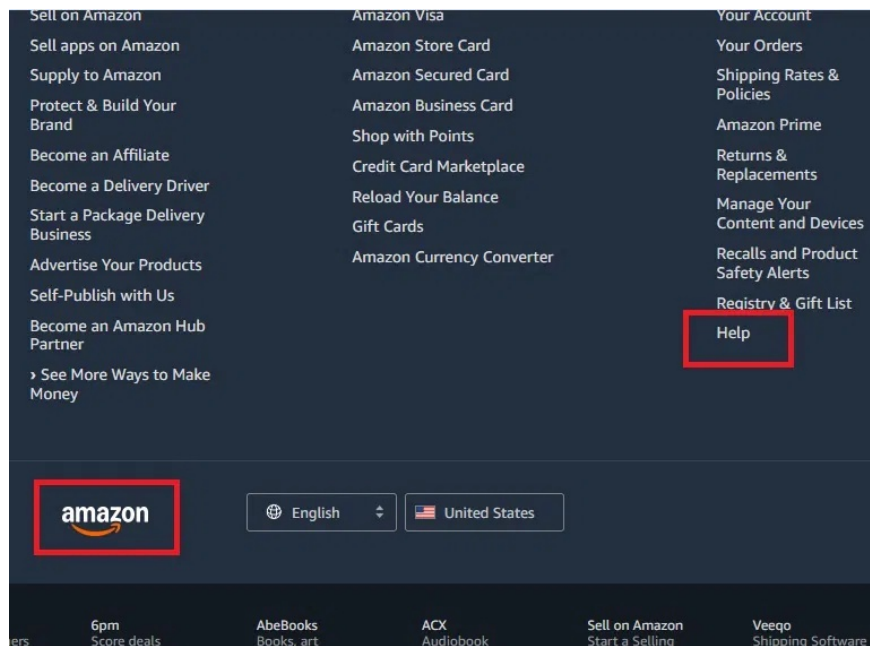


You'll receive assistance, including providing payment information, personal information, or even sharing your device screen. By the time the call ends, the scammer has everything they need to steal your account, money, or even your identity.

Although Google and ChatGPT are trying to combat this threat, it will take time. Furthermore, hackers are notoriously known to always be ahead of the protective measures that companies have put in place.

## **Access the company's website directly.**

The easiest way to avoid scams involving fake phone numbers in AI briefs is to go directly to the company's website. For example, if you need customer support from Amazon, go to Amazon.com and look for live support options on the site.



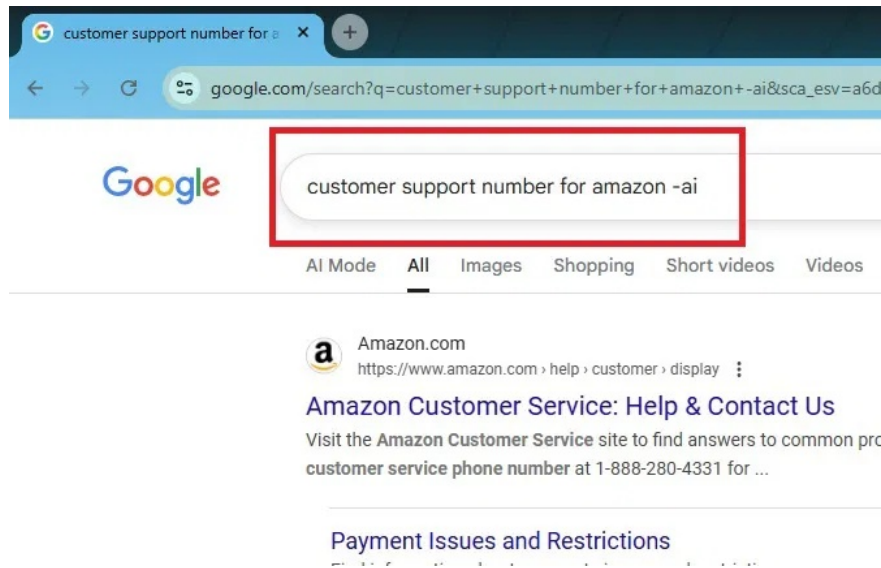
If you're unsure what the company's website is, perform a normal search. However, ignore the AI ??summary. Look at the traditional search results. Often, the company's official website is among the first few results. Remember, scammers can also insert phishing websites into AI summaries, as well as fake phone numbers.

Another option is to review any emails or correspondence you've recently received from the company. These often include an official phone number. Even if it's not a customer support number, the business may have directly provided you with the correct one.

Additionally, many companies only offer support via online chat or email. If you need phone support, you must use one of their other contact methods to request the phone number.

## Turn off AI search

To ensure you don't see AI-generated search results, turn them off in Google. Or, enter your search query with -**AI** at the end. If you're using ChatGPT as your default search engine, use a different search engine to find the phone number. This will give you regular search results. You're more likely to see the company's actual website, along with official support options, this way.



You are free to use AI search for other queries, but be cautious when calling any phone numbers or clicking on any support websites that are provided. Just because other search engines haven't been targeted by this scam yet doesn't mean they won't soon become targets in the future.

## Verify using other search engines.

Google and ChatGPT aren't the only search options. Hackers are now targeting these two tools because they are two of the largest AI search engines. Try some alternative search engines to Google .

Yes, some other search engines also use AI, but if you get different phone numbers when using those other search engines, that's a warning sign that the AI summaries are being affected by these fake phone number scams.

No one wants to have to do extra searches. But, when your identity and finances are at stake, spending an extra 30 seconds searching on a few other sources is worthwhile.

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