Before you launch: the AI-built app checklist

36 checks to run before real people sign up, pay or trust your app with their data. For anything built with Lovable, Bolt, Cursor, Claude Code or similar tools.

1

Go section by section. Tick what you've checked yourself, not what the AI says it did.

2

Anything you can't tick, write down. That list is your launch plan.

3

Sections 01–03 come first. Problems there cost the most after launch.

TATIANA · UX/UI, WEB AND PRODUCT DESIGNER, PRODUCT BUILDER
TATIANADIGITAL.CO.UK · INSTAGRAM & TIKTOK @TATIANA.DIGITAL_

01 Security and data

The problems nobody sees in a demo.

- [ ] No secret keys in front-end code. Payment, AI and database admin keys live on the server, in environment variables.
- [ ] Database rules tested with two accounts: user A can never see or change anything that belongs to user B.
- [ ] Changing an ID in the address bar doesn't open someone else's page.
- [ ] Admin pages are protected on the server, not just hidden from the menu.
- [ ] Every package the AI added is real, needed and up to date; security alerts are switched on.
- [ ] Rate limits and spam protection on sign-up, login and contact forms; spending caps on paid AI APIs.

02 Logins and accounts

Where most real-user bugs live.

- [ ] A brand-new user can sign up, confirm their email and log in on a phone.
- [ ] Password reset works end to end, and the email doesn't land in spam.
- [ ] Logging out really logs out, on every device.
- [ ] Someone can delete their account and data, or ask you to.

03 Payments

Money needs a second check.

- [ ] A purchase unlocks only when the payment provider confirms it, not when the browser says "success".
- [ ] Failed, cancelled and refunded payments do the right thing.
- [ ] Test mode is off, live keys are on, and you've made one real small payment yourself.
- [ ] Receipts and invoices show your business details.

04 The screens AI forgets

What makes a product feel finished.

- [ ] Empty states: every list and dashboard tells a new user what to do first.
- [ ] Loading states: nothing jumps around or goes blank while data loads.
- [ ] Errors in plain words, with a way forward, and without losing what the user typed.
- [ ] A success message after every important action, saying what happens next.
- [ ] A 404 page with a way back.

05 Phones and speed

Most people will meet it on a phone.

- [ ] Every screen tested on a small phone with your thumb, including forms and menus.
- [ ] Buttons are big enough to tap; nothing hides under the keyboard.
- [ ] The first screen loads in a few seconds on mobile data.
- [ ] Images are compressed and sized for the screen.

06 Google and sharing

So people can find it and share it.

- [ ] Every page has a clear title and description.
- [ ] Sharing a link shows a proper preview image and text.
- [ ] Search engines aren’t blocked, and a sitemap is submitted in Google Search Console.
- [ ] It runs on your own domain with a padlock (HTTPS), not a preview address.

07 UK basics

A summary, not legal advice.

- [ ] A privacy policy that says what you collect, why, and who processes it.
- [ ] You collect only the personal data you need.
- [ ] Cookies or tracking that need consent ask for it first.
- [ ] You’ve checked whether you need to pay the ICO data protection fee.

08 Launch day and after

So small problems stay small.

- [ ] Automatic backups are on, and you've restored one once.
- [ ] Uptime monitoring tells you when the site goes down.
- [ ] Analytics show where people drop off: sign-up, first action, return.
- [ ] A project rules file and a short handover, so future AI sessions don't undo your fixes.
- [ ] Five real people have used it while you watched, without helping.

Stuck on a few of these?

I go through AI-built apps and websites and send you a written list of what's wrong, how serious it is and a fixed price to fix it, development included. If you go ahead, the check is taken off the fix.

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