

Why Claude Code

It comes down to one thing: who controls the context.

If you want AI to create your work, not just answer the odd question, the tool you build on sets a ceiling on how good that work can get. And there are more choices every month: Microsoft Copilot, ChatGPT, Gemini, the Claude app, and now agents that run on their own in the cloud. This is how we'd choose between them, and why we teach on Claude Code.

A note on names. Claude Code also runs inside the Claude desktop app, as its Code tab. Here, “the Claude app” means ordinary Claude, the chat-and-agent mode that was called Cowork until September 2026.

WHAT'S CHANGED

ChatGPT showed us years ago that AI could help with knowledge work. What's new is that AI can now do **all** of it. The email, the brief, the analysis, the proposal: AI can produce every one of them, under your direction. You direct, you decide, you approve.

People who work this way produce several times more, measured from their real work, and they feel *less* drained, because they've moved from making everything to directing and refining it. And it builds. The shared brain behind it gets richer with every task.

Almost none of this comes down to the AI model. It comes down to one thing.

THE ONE THING THAT MATTERS: CONTEXT

Picture a painter who mixed every colour on the palette into one muddy brown. That's AI before you give it context. It learned from the whole internet at once, so out of the box it produces the average of everything: generic, bland, faintly off. Your colleagues can spot it in a second.

Give that painter a clean palette with just the colours the picture needs, and precision becomes possible. Give AI focused context (your clients, your projects, your standards, your voice) and the output becomes *yours*.

That's the whole game. **The quality of what AI produces depends almost entirely on the context you give it.** Master context and your work is excellent, whatever model you use. Neglect it and it's mediocre.

THE SHARED BRAIN

Chat tools forget everything between conversations. It's like working with a brilliant colleague who wakes up with amnesia every morning, so you re-explain your world every time.

The answer is a **shared brain**: one folder of plain files on your computer that holds everything the AI needs to know about your work. It reads from it every session, so your context is always there. Two things make it powerful.

- **It builds itself, under your supervision.** As you work, the AI files away what matters, so tomorrow's work starts from everything you've done before.
- **It has a map.** One file tells the AI where everything lives. You say what you want, and it draws on whatever the task needs from across all your work.

This is the new way of working: **AI creates all your outputs, and you supervise.** You give direction, ask questions and refine, and you approve everything before it goes anywhere. Your expertise moves from making the work to judging it.

If context decides quality, the test of a tool is how much command it gives you over that context. Ask five questions.

1. Can you shape how your work gets done?

Your saved ways of working, called skills, hold your judgement. Can you open and change them in seconds, as easily as the AI can?

2. Can the AI work across your whole shared brain?

All your work in one place, with a map, so it draws on whatever the task needs.

3. Can you see your work in context?

So you know where everything lives and can point the AI straight to it.

4. Can it learn from how you've already worked?

Your past sessions are the best evidence of how you work. Can the AI read them back and improve your setup?

5. Do you stay in charge?

Nothing goes out without your yes, and you decide when a job has earned the right to run on its own.

EVERYONE IS MOVING THIS WAY

In 2026 the big vendors all took steps towards this way of working. Microsoft and OpenAI now save skills as plain files, much as Claude does, and Google starts this month. ChatGPT's desktop app can work in folders on your computer. Agents that run all day in the cloud have arrived from four directions in two months.

That's good news if you're deciding where to start. **The way of working is becoming the standard, so learning it is not a bet on one vendor.** Your shared brain is a folder of plain files that belongs to you, and it moves with you to whatever comes next.

But the details still differ, and the details decide the quality.

THE OPTIONS, ONE BY ONE

Microsoft Copilot. Most organisations we meet have it, and it keeps getting more capable: research reports, agents inside Word, Excel and PowerPoint, and Copilot Cowork, which now saves skills as files too. The catch is where it gets its context. It works over the company's cloud files, in OneDrive and SharePoint, and finds what it needs by searching. So what it sees is whatever the search turns up, and you end up re-explaining. There is no folder you organise and map for it, and it can't work on the files on your own computer.

ChatGPT. In everyday ChatGPT, context lives in projects and memory. That helps, but you keep it topped up by hand, and the AI sees one project at a time. ChatGPT's desktop app now has an agent that works in folders on your computer, with an instruction file and skills, much like Claude Code. It's the closest alternative. When we tested OpenAI's version hands-on, its skills sat in a hidden folder and it applied edits without stopping for your review, even on its strictest setting. That may change, and we re-test as it does.

Gemini. Google is adding skills to the Gemini app and Workspace this autumn. Like Copilot, it works over your cloud files rather than a folder you shape on your computer, so the shared brain has no home in it.

The Claude app. Same company, same models, and a big step up from a chatbot. The difference is design. Your skills live in a managed area of your account, apart from your work, so changing one is a separate job rather than something the AI does as you go. You work project by project, so the AI sees the slice you've opened, never the whole picture. And your history sits in your account as chats to search, rather than a record the AI can read back as a whole. Claude Code runs in whatever folder you open it in. Point it at your shared brain and the map orients it to everything. Every session is saved on your own computer, so you can ask it to study how you've worked and improve your setup, and it answers from evidence.

Agents that run on their own. The newest wave, from OpenAI (Dots), xAI (Grok Bot), Meta (Muse) and Instinct, gives you agents that work around the clock on their own cloud computers. You describe a job in plain English and they get on with it, with no setup. They're impressive and worth watching. But each agent's memory lives inside the vendor's service, where you can't open it and read it like a file. Run several and you have several partial pictures of your work. And they're built to act for you around the clock, which is where staying in charge gets hardest. Open-source versions such as OpenClaw and Hermes keep their memory as plain files, which is right, but they take real technical work to run.

Claude Code is the one where all five answers are yes today. It can run jobs on a schedule too, once you trust them, with your context in files you can see and edit.

THE SIMPLICITY MOST PEOPLE MISS

Claude Code *looks* like the harder tool, because it grew up in a terminal. The terminal is now optional. The Claude desktop app's **Code tab** is Claude Code itself, in a friendlier window, sitting beside ordinary Claude.

Once it's set up, which takes a few guided installs, Claude Code is the simpler tool to work in. There are no projects to switch between, no skills to load and nothing to click. You just **speak**, and the work happens.

THE BOTTOM LINE

This way of working only delivers when you own and control your context, with your whole shared brain in view. Claude Code gives you that today, and because your context is plain files you own, you keep it whatever happens next.

But the tool is the easy part. The big difference is between someone skilled at working this way and someone who isn't, above all at managing context. No tool teaches that. Claude Code won't show you how to build a shared brain, turn your work into skills or manage context well, and left to work it out alone, most people never do.

That's what Multiply Academy teaches. We use AI to personalise the whole programme to your role and your real work, and we guide you through the hardest part: changing how you've worked for years.

Based on our hands-on tests of the Claude app and OpenAI's desktop agent, plus desk research on the rest. Product facts checked as of October 2026. We re-test as these tools change.