

Claude Code — what it actually is, and what I've built with it

A plain-English explainer of the tool that builds most of what you see from me — including the videos that sent you here, and this page.

THE PROBLEM IT SOLVES

A chatbot can only talk about your work

Ask a chatbot for help building something and you get a wall of code to copy, paste, and fix by hand. It cannot see your project, cannot run anything, and cannot check whether its own suggestion worked. You become the courier between the AI and the computer — and the courier job is most of the work.

WHAT IT IS

An AI agent with its hands on your keyboard

Claude Code is Anthropic's AI agent that works **where the work lives** — your terminal, your code editor, or the browser. Point it at a project and it reads the whole thing, edits files across it, runs commands, and checks the results. Give it a bug and it fixes it, runs the tests, and looks at whether the fix actually worked.

The line that matters: it asks permission before it changes anything or runs anything. You stay in charge; it does the typing. (If you have seen my video "What an AI agent actually is" — this is that, for building software.)

USED, NOT JUST REVIEWED

What I have actually built with it

This is the one tool on my list I can vouch for without qualification, because it built most of what I ship:

- **Apps with real customers** — a salon booking system with online deposits, a takeaway's ordering storefront, and a paid tool for civil-engineering drawing templates, billing included.
- **Tools** — the pipeline that renders the Nocturne videos (script → voice → animation → upload), this website, and a dashboard that queues up its own coding jobs overnight.
- **Engineering problems** — the unglamorous middle of software: root-causing bugs, deployments and DNS, wrangling a CAD plugin, making two systems talk that were never designed to.

The pattern across all of it: I describe the outcome, it does the work in front of me, and I review what changed before it counts.

THE SHAPE OF IT

Where it runs, what it needs

Where	Terminal, VS Code and JetBrains editors, web, phone
What it can touch	Your files, your commands, your git — with permission, each time
What it costs	Needs a paid Claude plan (Pro, or Max for heavy use) — check current prices

BE HONEST ABOUT THIS BIT

Who should not bother

You will not review its work

It can be confidently wrong — see my hallucination video. The people it burns are the ones who stop checking.

You have nothing to build

It earns its subscription when things ship. For questions and writing, the ordinary chatbot tier is plenty.

Zero technical appetite

Budget is genuinely zero

You do not need to be a programmer — I am a civil engineer — but you do need to be willing to look at what it did and say no sometimes.

The plans it needs are paid. If the budget is nothing, start with free chatbots and come back when a project justifies it.

IF YOU DO WANT IT

An hour to your first real result

- 1 **Get a Claude plan and install it.** The terminal version is the original; the editor and web versions are gentler starts.
- 2 **Open it inside a real project.** Anything — a folder of scripts, a half-finished site. Toys teach you nothing about your own work.
- 3 **First ask: "explain this codebase to me."** Watching it map a project you already know is the fastest way to calibrate trust.
- 4 **Then one small, real task.** A bug you know exists, a change you have been putting off. Something with a visible result.
- 5 **Read the diff before you accept it.** Every time, forever. This is the habit that makes the whole thing safe.
- 6 **Let it verify its own work.** Ask it to run the tests, or the app, and show you. "It compiles" is not "it works".

Claude Code

From Anthropic — needs a paid Claude plan

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DISCLOSURE

Not an affiliate link. Anthropic does not run an affiliate programme, so I earn nothing if you click — this page exists because Claude Code built most of what I make, and people keep asking what it is. If that ever changes, this box will say so plainly.

WHERE THIS CAME FROM

Nocturne

One email a week: what actually happened in AI, what it means for you, and one thing you can use. Three minutes, no jargon, no hype. If a tool is bad I say so; if a week is boring the email is short.

Details checked August 2026 against Anthropic's own product page. Plans and prices change — confirm before paying for anything.