

Start here

ArtCraft Crafting Apps, driven from Claude Code through MCP

Read this first. It explains what MCP is, how to check your setup, and gives you one prompt per app so you can see something real happen in your first five minutes. Then pick the guide for the app you care about.

6 apps, 1 protocol

Visual study guide series
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6

apps

121

MCP tools exposed

2996

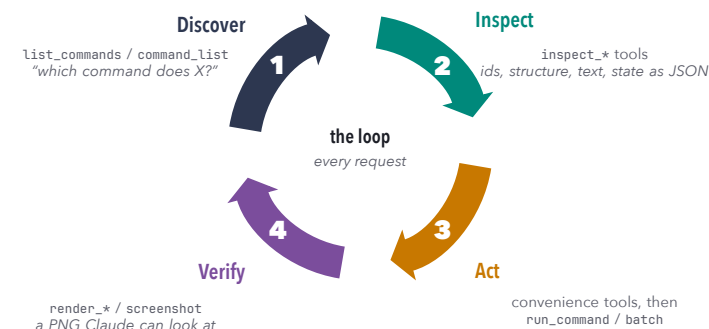
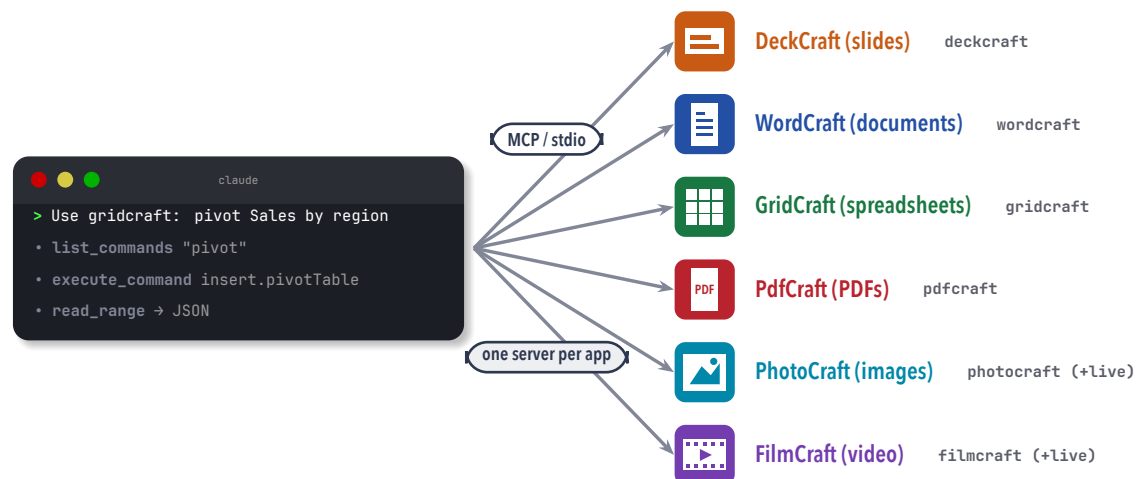
engine commands

1

protocol: MCP

01 What is going on here

The ArtCraft apps are open-source clones of PowerPoint, Word, Excel, Acrobat, Photoshop and Premiere Pro. Each app ships with a small program called an **MCP server**. The Model Context Protocol is a plain, open way for an AI assistant to call tools: *"here are the tools I offer, here is what each one takes, here is what it returns."* Claude Code speaks it natively. So instead of clicking a ribbon, you describe the outcome; Claude picks the tools, the server runs the app's real engine commands, and the result comes back as data or as a picture.



i Headless and live

Every app has a **headless** server: the engine runs inside the server process with no window, which is ideal for batch work and scripted builds. PhotoCraft and FilmCraft also have a **live** server that drives the window you have open, so you can watch Claude work and take over at any time. The headless document only reaches disk when Claude saves or exports it, so always end a request with “save it to ...”. Whatever the app, Claude works the same four-step loop shown on the right; once you recognise it you can steer it: “list the commands first”, “inspect before you change anything”, “render it and check”.

02 Check your setup (two minutes)

- 1 Open Claude Code and type /mcp** You should see deckcraft, wordcraft, gridcraft, pdfcraft, photocraft and filmcraft as *connected*. The -live servers only connect while that app’s window is open.
- 2 Put your files where the servers can see them** PdfCraft and PhotoCraft are confined to your home folder and refuse anything outside it (“...is outside the allowed directory”). A folder such as ~/craft-work/ is a good habit for every app.
- 3 Say the app’s name in the prompt** “Use gridcraft: ...” or “With pdfcraft, ...” removes any guessing about which server to pick.
- 4 Ask for a picture** Every app can show its work: render_slide, render_page, page_render, render_preview, render_frame. GridCraft has no screenshot headless, so ask it to export a PDF and look at that.
- 5 Work on copies** All six apps are pre-1.0. Save to a new file name and keep the original.

03 Where to go next

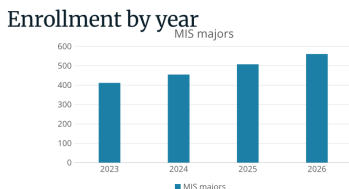
Guide	What it does
deckcraft-guide.pdf	Slides from outlines, charts, SmartArt, transitions, handout PDFs.
wordcraft-guide.pdf	Reports, find/replace, styles, TOC and citations, native charts, mail merge, redlines.
gridcraft-guide.pdf	Data entry, formulas tested before writing, PivotTables, Solver, charts, PDF export.
pdfcraft-guide.pdf	Merge/split, OCR, redaction audits, forms, signatures, compare, PDF/A. 163 tools behind tool_call.
photocraft-guide.pdf	Batch resize/convert, background removal, adjustment layers, LUTs, type, live-window control.
filmcraft-guide.pdf	Ingest, rough cuts, Lumetri grades, titles, captions, audio ducking, exports and hand-off.

Each guide has the same shape: *First five minutes* (storyboards with real output), *Prompts to explore with*, *Goals* & *how* cards, the command map, the tool reference, example JSON calls, and limits.

04 The six apps, one real result each

Every image below is actual output captured through MCP while these guides were written. Paste the prompt under it to reproduce it.

DeckCraft clone of PowerPoint



FIRST PROMPT

"Use deckcraft: new Harbor deck, add a slide "Enrollment by year" with a column chart of 2023 412, 2024 455, 2025 508, 2026 561, and render it"

● Guide: deckcraft-guide.pdf

WordCraft clone of Word

Pilot Study Results
MIS 301 - Fall 2026

Summary
Students who used Claude Code with the Craft MCP servers finished the lab 38% faster and reported higher confidence. Error rates were unchanged.

Background
Describe the context and the question the report answers.

Findings
First finding
Completion time fell from 52 to 32 minutes (n = 41). The chart below shows the per-section breakdown.

Recommendations

FIRST PROMPT

"Use wordcraft: new document from the report template, title it "Pilot Study Results", add a column chart of these numbers under Recommendations, render page 1."

● Guide: wordcraft-guide.pdf

GridCraft clone of Excel

Quarterly Sales Dashboard
Fiscal year 2026 - all figures in USD

Region	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total	Growth
North	\$48,200	\$51,340	\$56,010	\$61,870	\$217,420	23.4%
South	\$39,150	\$37,980	\$42,400	\$45,120	\$164,650	15.2%
East	\$55,300	\$58,910	\$57,230	\$63,480	\$234,920	14.8%
West	\$61,020	\$64,400	\$70,150	\$76,390	\$271,960	25.2%
Central	\$28,740	\$31,260	\$33,980	\$36,510	\$130,490	27.9%
Online	\$72,410	\$81,630	\$95,220	\$112,840	\$362,100	55.8%
Total	\$304,820	\$325,520	\$354,990	\$396,210	\$1,381,540	27.7%

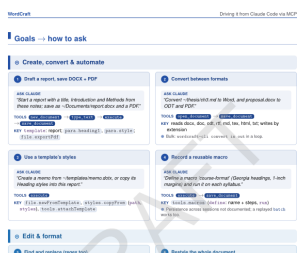
Best region	Online
Average quarter	\$57,564
Online share	26.2%
Year-over-year	30.0%

FIRST PROMPT

"Use gridcraft: open the sales sample, read the table formatted, export the sheet to ~/craft-work/sales.pdf so I can see it."

● Guide: gridcraft-guide.pdf

PdfCraft clone of Acrobat



FIRST PROMPT

"Use pdfcraft: open ~/craft-work/report.pdf, put a 25% DRAFT watermark on every page, render page 2, save as report-draft.pdf"

● Guide: pdfcraft-guide.pdf

PhotoCraft clone of Photoshop

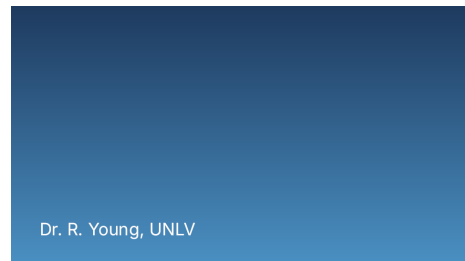


FIRST PROMPT

"Use photocrraft: new 1200 x 800 dark-blue canvas, big white title with a soft shadow, a blurred yellow glow on the right, render a preview."

● Guide: photocrraft-guide.pdf

FilmCraft clone of Premiere Pro



FIRST PROMPT

"Use filmcraft: import the stills in ~/craft-work/shots, make a 1080p 23.976 sequence, lay them on V1, add a lower third for 5 s, render the frame at 2 s."

● Guide: filmcraft-guide.pdf

05 Prompts that work in every app

Universal prompts: swap in any app name

●●● warm-up ●●● real work ●●● stretch

●●●

"Use app: list the commands that mention 'export'."

Discovery. Every app answers from its command registry, with parameter docs.

●●●

"Open ~/craft-work/file and describe it: structure, counts, anything odd. Change nothing."

Inspect-only. Safe on any file; teaches you what the app can see.

●●●

"Show me what that looks like."

Forces the verify step: a render or screenshot comes back as an image.

●●●

"Do X, then render and tell me if anything looks wrong before saving."

The full loop in one sentence; Claude fixes overflow, misplaced items, bad crops.

●●●

"Repeat that for every file in ~/craft-work/batch and save the results in ~/craft-work/out."

Batch work is where MCP beats clicking. Claude loops the same calls per file.

●●●

"Undo the last step."

Every app keeps undo history over MCP (edit.undo, undo, edit_undo).

●●●

"Explain which engine commands you would call for X, with their parameters, before doing it."

Turns Claude into a tutor for the app's command model.

●●●

"Chain the apps: make the chart in GridCraft, export it, place it on a DeckCraft slide, and put the slide image in a WordCraft report."

Cross-app pipelines; files pass through your home folder.

06 Habits that make this reliable

✓ Say what you want, let Claude pick the calls

Describe the outcome ("a three-step process diagram") rather than the clicks. If you do know the command id, naming it skips the search: "run slide.fromOutline with this text".

! Alpha software: know the thin spots

The projects rate themselves at roughly half-way to replacing the originals for daily work. Round-trips through .pptx, .docx, .xlsx and .psd can drop features, so re-check important output in the original application and keep originals untouched.

! Live servers and ports

FilmCraft (Live) listens on a local port with no authentication; PhotoCraft (Live) uses a token. Run the live apps only while you are using them and never forward the ports.