

AI-Powered Research Workflow

A step-by-step guide to automating research with Claude Cowork, reading it in Obsidian, and tracking how it evolves over time with Git and Fork.

PREPARED FOR THE BRIDGE TO AI COMMUNITY

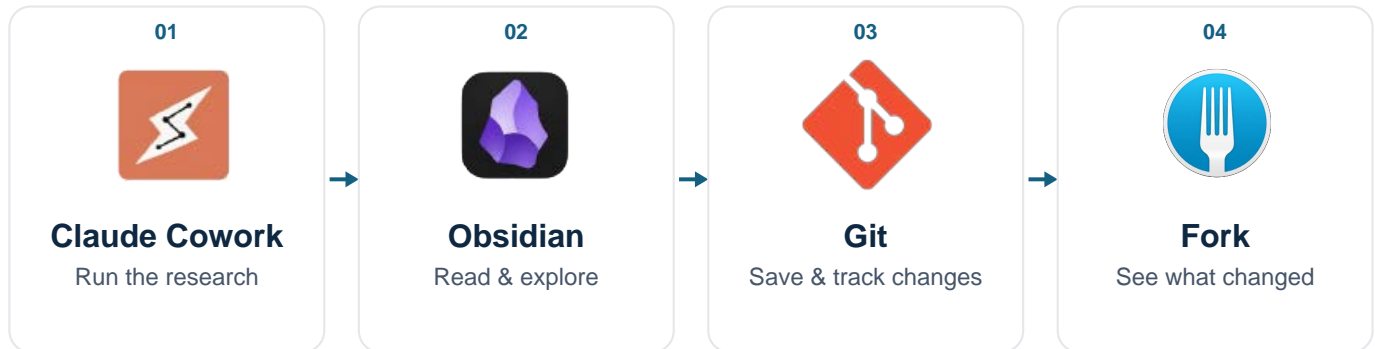
By Matt Vorst · May 2026

This guide accompanies the community meeting presentation *Automating Research with Claude Cowork* and walks you through the full setup — every click, every prompt — so you can replicate the workflow on your own computer.

THE BIG PICTURE

The four-step workflow

Four apps, working together. Claude does the research, Obsidian gives you a beautiful place to read it, Git records every version, and Fork lets you see what changed.



- 1. Claude Cowork** Runs your research on a schedule — reads the web, updates your notes, flags what's new.
- 2. Obsidian** Opens that same folder of notes as a navigable knowledge base with links and a graph view.
- 3. Git** Quietly records a snapshot every time you commit, so nothing is ever lost.
- 4. Fork** A friendly visual app for Git. Shows added lines in green, removed lines in red.

How to use this guide

Pages 3–9 walk you through installing and using each app, in order.

Pages 10–12 show the end-to-end research workflow as a worked example.

Page 13 is a printable checklist with all the links in one place.

STEP 0

Before you start

Five minutes of prep before downloading anything. This is the folder all four apps will **share**, so getting it right now saves time later.

Create one folder for your research

Every tool in this workflow will point at the same folder. The folder can be anywhere on your computer — pick somewhere you'll remember.

macOS

1. Open **Finder**.
2. Navigate to **Documents** (or wherever you'd like the folder to live).
3. Right-click in an empty space and choose **New Folder**.
4. Name it **AI Research** (or any name you prefer — no spaces is easier).
5. Leave the Finder window open so you can find the folder again later.

Windows

1. Open **File Explorer**.
2. Navigate to **Documents** (or wherever you'd like the folder to live).
3. Right-click in an empty space → **New** → **Folder**.
4. Name it **AI Research** (or any name you prefer — no spaces is easier).
5. Leave File Explorer open so you can find the folder again later.

Time and money

Plan for about **30–45 minutes** the first time. After that, the research happens automatically and you'll spend roughly 5 minutes a week reviewing what changed.

Claude (with Cowork) Free download · paid subscription required for full Cowork features

Obsidian Free for personal use

Git Free & open-source

Fork Free to evaluate · one-time license fee for continued use

Heads-up

This guide is written for people who have never used Git before. You won't need to open a terminal or type any commands.



TOOL 1 · INSTALL

Claude Cowork

Claude's desktop app with access to a folder on your computer. It can read files, write new ones, search the web, and run on a schedule. This is the engine of the workflow.

Download the Claude desktop app

macOS

1. Open your browser and go to **claude.com/download**.
2. Click the **Download for Mac** button.
3. Open the downloaded **Claude.dmg** file from your Downloads folder.
4. Drag the Claude icon onto the **Applications** folder in the window that pops up.
5. Open **Applications**, find **Claude**, and double-click to launch it.
6. If macOS warns that Claude was downloaded from the internet, click **Open**.
7. Sign in with your Anthropic account (or create one if you don't have it).

Windows

1. Open your browser and go to **claude.com/download**.
2. Click the **Download for Windows** button.
3. Open the downloaded **Claude-Setup.exe** from your Downloads folder.
4. If Windows shows a SmartScreen warning, click **More info** → **Run anyway**.
5. Follow the installer prompts (accept all defaults).
6. When it finishes, find **Claude** in the Start menu and launch it.
7. Sign in with your Anthropic account (or create one if you don't have it).

Verify it worked

You should see the main Claude window with a chat prompt at the bottom. Look for a mode selector near the top — one of the modes should be **Cowork**. If you see it, you're ready for the next page.

Download link: claude.com/download



TOOL 1 · FIRST USE

Point Cowork at your folder

Now that Claude is installed, the next step is to give Cowork access to the AI Research folder you created in Step 0. From then on, everything Claude saves will land there.

Switch to Cowork mode

01. Open the **Claude** app.
02. Look near the top of the window for the mode selector (it usually says **Chat** by default).
03. Click it and choose **Cowork**. The interface will update to show a folder area.
04. Click **Select a folder** (or the folder icon in the side panel).
05. Navigate to your **AI Research** folder, select it, and click **Open**.
06. Approve the permission prompt if your OS asks whether Claude can read that folder.

Try your first prompt

Type the following into the chat box and press **Enter**:

Your first prompt

Create a markdown file called `People_to_Follow.md` in this folder.
Add 5 influential people in AI. For each, include sections for
Books, Articles & Writing, Videos & Talks, Podcasts & Interviews,
and Key Ideas & Perspectives. Leave the sections empty for now.

Claude will ask permission to create the file. Click **Allow**. Within a few seconds, **People_to_Follow.md** will appear in your AI Research folder.

What success looks like

Open your AI Research folder in Finder/File Explorer. You should see exactly one new file: **People_to_Follow.md**. If it's there, the link between Claude and your folder is working.



TOOL 2 · INSTALL & OPEN

Obsidian

A free, beautiful reader for the markdown files Claude is creating. Obsidian renders your notes as a polished knowledge base — clickable links, formatted text, and a graph view of how everything connects.

Install Obsidian

macOS

1. Open your browser and go to **obsidian.md**.
2. Click **Download** and choose **macOS (Universal)**.
3. Open the downloaded **Obsidian.dmg** file.
4. Drag the Obsidian icon onto the **Applications** folder.
5. Open **Applications**, find **Obsidian**, and launch it.

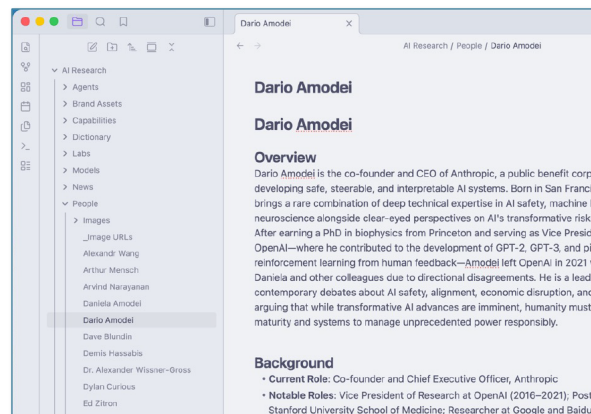
Windows

1. Open your browser and go to **obsidian.md**.
2. Click **Download** and choose **Windows (64-bit Installer)**.
3. Run the downloaded **Obsidian-x.x.x.exe**.
4. If SmartScreen warns you, click **More info** → **Run anyway**.
5. Follow the installer prompts. Obsidian will launch when done.

Open your folder as a vault

A “vault” in Obsidian is just a folder it watches. You’re going to point it at the same AI Research folder Claude is already using.

01. On Obsidian's welcome screen, click **Open folder as vault**.
02. Navigate to your **AI Research** folder.
03. Click **Open**.
04. If Obsidian asks whether to trust the author, click **Trust author and enable plugins**.
05. On the left, you should see **People_to_Follow.md**. Click it.



Obsidian rendering a markdown note from your AI Research vault.



TOOL 2 · GRAPH VIEW

See your knowledge as a graph

As Claude builds out your research, Obsidian's graph view shows how every note connects to every other one — surfacing patterns you'd never spot scrolling through a folder.

Open the graph view

01. In Obsidian, look at the icons on the far-left sidebar.
02. Click the icon that looks like several dots connected by lines (it's the **Graph view**).
03. A new pane will open showing each note as a coloured dot.
04. Drag inside the pane to pan; scroll to zoom in and out.
05. Hover over a dot to see its name; click a dot to open that note.



Obsidian graph view of a People to Follow vault — each dot is a person or note, lines show links between them.

Why this matters

Once Claude adds new sources and links them across people, the graph becomes a map of who is influencing whom. Patterns and clusters appear that no flat folder listing could show.

Download link: [obsidian.md](#)



TOOLS 3 & 4 · INSTALL

Git & Fork

Git is the engine that takes snapshots of your folder. Fork is the friendly visual app you'll actually use. Install Fork first — on Mac it can install Git for you.

Install Fork

macOS

1. Open your browser and go to **git-fork.com**.
2. Click **Download** (the macOS download starts automatically).
3. Open the downloaded **Fork.dmg** file.
4. Drag the Fork icon onto the **Applications** folder.
5. Open **Applications**, find **Fork**, and launch it.
6. If Fork prompts you that Git is missing, click **Install Git** and follow the prompts.

Windows

1. Open your browser and go to **git-fork.com**.
2. Click **Download** (the Windows download starts automatically).
3. Run the downloaded **Fork-Setup.exe**.
4. Accept all default options in the installer.
5. On Windows, install Git separately: go to **git-scm.com**, download for Windows, run the installer with all defaults.
6. Launch **Fork** from the Start menu when both are installed.

Verify it worked

Fork should open to a welcome screen with options like **Clone Repository**, **Open Repository**, and **Init New Repository**. If you see those options, both Git and Fork are installed correctly.

Download links: git-fork.com · git-scm.com



TOOL 4 · FIRST USE

Make your first commit

Tell Git to start watching your AI Research folder, then take your first snapshot. You'll do this once. After that, every weekly refresh from Claude becomes a new snapshot you can review.

Initialise the folder as a repository

01. Open **Fork**.
02. Click **File** → **Init New Repository...**
03. In the dialog, click **Browse** and select your **AI Research** folder.
04. Click **Create**. Fork will start watching the folder.

Take your first snapshot

01. Fork now lists everything in your folder under **Unstaged** on the left.
02. Click the **Stage all** button (or click each file and press **Stage**).
03. All files move to the **Staged** section.
04. At the bottom, find the **Commit subject** box. Type: *Initial setup*.
05. Click the **Commit** button.
06. On the left, click **History**. You should see one entry: *Initial setup*.

What you just did

You told Git, “Remember exactly what this folder looks like right now.” Every future commit will be compared against this starting point — that’s how you’ll see what changed.

Glossary: **Commit** = a saved snapshot. **Repository** (or “repo”) = a folder Git is watching. **Stage** = mark a file as part of the next commit.

WORKED EXAMPLE · STEP 1 OF 3

Build the seed file

Now you'll fill in `People_to_Follow.md` with the people you want Claude to track. This is the only step that requires any thinking — after this, Claude does the work for you.

Choose your people

In **Obsidian**, open `People_to_Follow.md` and replace the placeholders with 5–10 people whose AI thinking you want to follow. A good starting list:

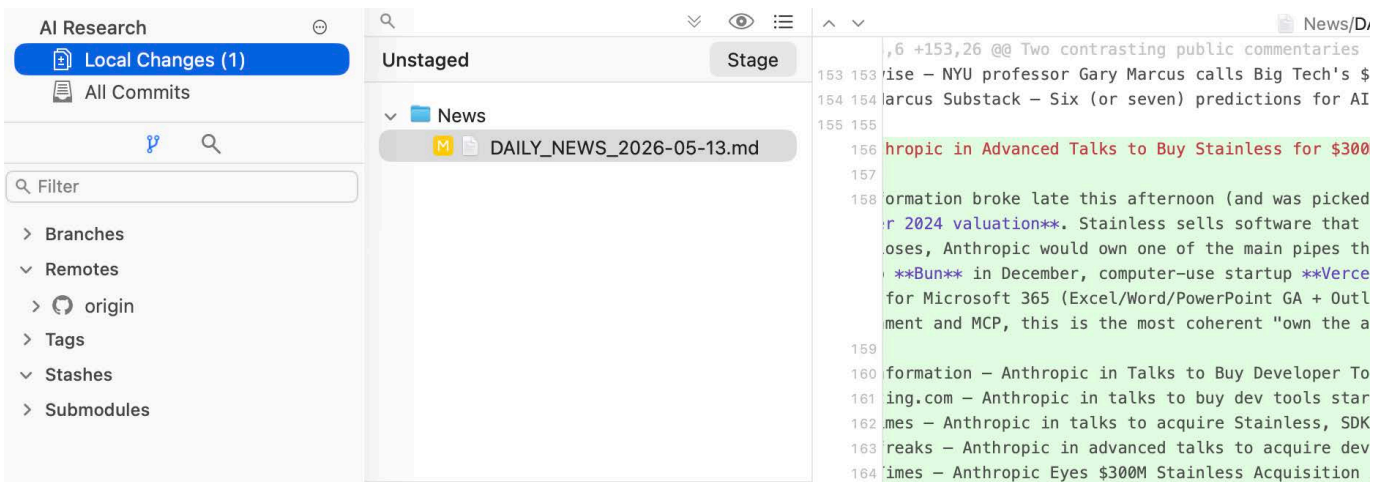
Sam Altman · Dario Amodei · Demis Hassabis · Yann LeCun · Geoffrey Hinton · Andrej Karpathy · Fei-Fei Li · Gary Marcus

For each name, keep the same five sections Claude created earlier (**Books, Articles & Writing, Videos & Talks, Podcasts & Interviews, Key Ideas & Perspectives**). Leave them empty — Claude will fill them in.

Commit the seed file

Switch over to **Fork** so Git remembers this starting point.

01. In Fork, you'll see `People_to_Follow.md` listed as **Modified**.
02. Click **Stage all**.
03. In the commit subject box, type: *Seed list of people to follow*.
04. Click **Commit**. This is your second snapshot.



Notice Local Changes (1) is selected in the top left
The middle pane has a "Stage" button for you to click

5/13/2026
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Description

Amend
Commit 1 File

Once staged simply add a name, in this case the date, then tap "Commit 1 File"

WORKED EXAMPLE · STEP 2 OF 3

Schedule the weekly refresh

Tell Claude to research these people every week — automatically. From this point on, the workflow runs itself.

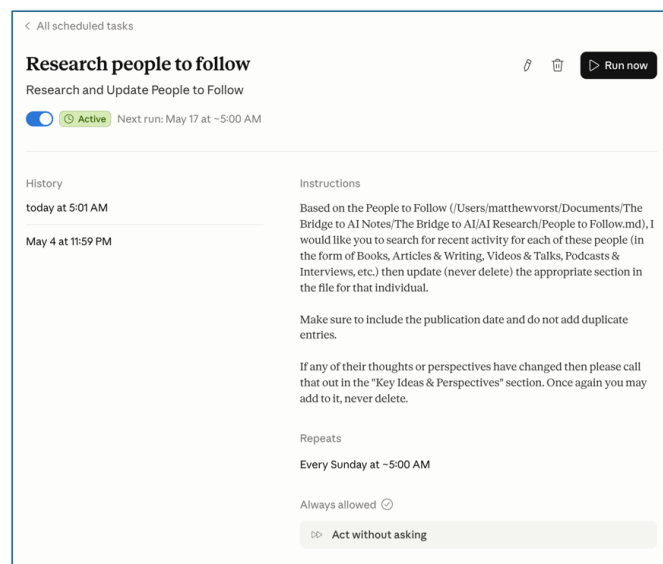
Create a scheduled task in Cowork

01. Open **Claude** in Cowork mode (with your AI Research folder selected).
02. In a new conversation, type a clear research prompt (see below) and press **Enter**.
03. Let Claude run once so you can review the result.
04. When you're happy, click the **schedule** icon (a small clock) near the prompt box.
05. Set the schedule to **Every Sunday at ~5:00 AM** (or any time that suits you).
06. Give the task a name (e.g., *Research people to follow*) and click **Save**.
07. Toggle the task to **Active**.

The exact prompt to use

Weekly research prompt

Based on People_to_Follow.md, search for recent activity for each person (Books, Articles & Writing, Videos & Talks, Podcasts & Interviews). Update — never delete — the appropriate section in their entry. Always include the publication date. Do not add duplicate entries. If their thoughts or perspectives have changed, call it out in their 'Key Ideas & Perspectives' section. Again: add, never delete.



A scheduled task in Claude Cowork — set to active and running every Sunday at 5:00 AM.

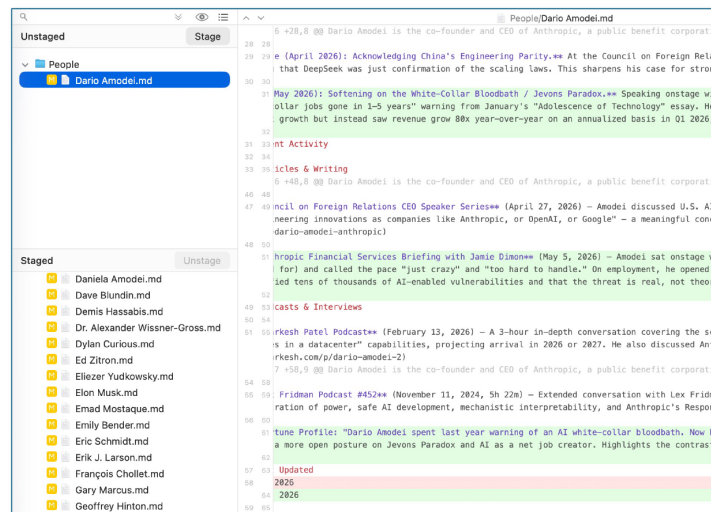
WORKED EXAMPLE · STEP 3 OF 3

Review what changed each week

After your scheduled task runs, open Fork to see exactly what Claude added — and which perspectives shifted. This is the part that turns weekly noise into a living timeline.

Open Fork after the refresh

01. Open **Fork**. It will detect that files have changed and list them under **Unstaged**.
02. Click on **People_to_Follow.md** — Fork shows the file with this week's edits.
03. **Green lines** are new content Claude added (new articles, podcasts, perspective notes).
04. **Red lines** are anything that was removed (rare with our prompt — Claude is told never to delete).
05. Scroll through and read what's new. This is your weekly briefing.
06. When you're done, click **Stage all**, type a commit message (e.g., *Weekly refresh — May 18*), and click **Commit**.



Fork showing a diff after a weekly refresh — green lines are this week's additions.

What you now have

A knowledge base that updates itself every week.

A complete, browsable history of how each thinker's views have shifted.

GETTING STARTED

Your quick-start checklist

Print this page, work top to bottom, and you'll be running the full workflow in under an hour.

- **01** Create a folder on your computer called **AI Research**.
- **02** Install **Claude** from claude.com/download. Sign in, switch to Cowork mode, point it at your folder.
- **03** Ask Claude to create **People_to_Follow.md** with empty sections for each person.
- **04** Install **Obsidian** from obsidian.md. Open the same folder as a vault. Open the graph view.
- **05** Install **Fork** from git-fork.com (Git is bundled on Mac). On Windows, also install Git from git-scm.com.
- **06** In Fork: **File** → **Init New Repository** → select your folder → **Stage all** → **Commit**.
- **07** Fill in **People_to_Follow.md** with 5–10 people. Commit that change in Fork.
- **08** In Claude Cowork: write the weekly research prompt, run it once, then save it as a scheduled task (e.g., Sunday 5 AM).
- **09** Each week, open Fork, read the green lines, then commit the changes.

All software used in this guide

| | | |
|-----------------------------|---|---------------------------|
| Claude (with Cowork) | claude.com/download | The research engine |
| Obsidian | obsidian.md | Read & explore your notes |
| Git | git-scm.com | Snapshots the folder |
| Fork | git-fork.com | Visual GUI for Git |

Questions or stuck?

Bring them to the next Bridge to AI community meeting, or visit www.TheBridgeTo.ai.