

4 MCPs Setup Guide for Claude Code

The exact commands, API keys, and fixes to install Perplexity, Firecrawl, Playwright, and Context7.

Why these four

Fresh out of the box, Claude Code works from its training data and whatever you paste into the chat. It cannot look something up on the live web, open a real browser, or check the current docs for a library it changed last month. That is fine for a lot of coding, but it is the reason Claude sometimes writes an API call that does not exist or answers a question with stale facts.

MCP stands for Model Context Protocol. An MCP server is a small connector that hands Claude a set of tools it can call on its own while it works. Anthropic released the standard in late 2024, and it is now the common way to plug outside services into Claude Code.

These four cover the gaps I hit most: research (Perplexity), the web (Firecrawl), a browser (Playwright), and current docs (Context7). Install all four and run one test, and Claude goes from a smart text box to something that can actually go and do the work. This guide is the setup, in order, with every command and key.

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How it actually works

1. You add each MCP server once with a ``claude mcp add`` command in your terminal. Claude Code stores it and starts the server whenever you open a session.
2. Two of the four (Perplexity and Firecrawl) need a free API key, which you paste in as an environment variable when you add them. Playwright and Context7 run without one.
3. Once added, Claude decides on its own when to call each tool. You ask in plain English ("research this", "scrape that page"), and Claude picks Perplexity or Firecrawl or Playwright to get it done.

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The one thing almost everyone gets wrong

People install the servers, then wonder why Claude never uses them. Almost every time, the key was pasted into the wrong terminal session, or a new terminal was never opened after saving it.

WATCH OUT

An API key added to your shell profile only loads in a new terminal. After you save a key, close the terminal, open a fresh one, then start Claude Code. Run ``claude mcp list`` and check every server shows connected before you trust it. If Perplexity or Firecrawl shows failed, the key did not load, and no amount of re-prompting Claude will fix that.

SOURCE CODE

Context7 is open source from Upstash. The repo has the full server and config:

<https://github.com/upstash/context7>

1-PLAYWRIGHT.SH

```
# No API key needed. Good first test.  
claude mcp add playwright npx @playwright/mcp@latest
```

2-CONTEXT7.SH

```
# Hosted server, added by URL. Optional key from context7.com for higher limits.  
claude mcp add --transport http context7 https://mcp.context7.com/mcp
```

3-FIRECRAWL.SH

```
# Get a free key at firecrawl.dev, then:  
claude mcp add firecrawl --env FIRECRAWL_API_KEY=YOUR_KEY -- npx -y firecrawl-mcp
```

4-PERPLEXITY.SH

```
# Get a key from your Perplexity account, then:  
claude mcp add perplexity --env PERPLEXITY_API_KEY=YOUR_KEY -- npx -y server-  
perplexity-ask
```

SITES SHOWN IN THE VIDEO

- Perplexity
<https://www.perplexity.ai>
- Firecrawl
<https://www.firecrawl.dev/>
- Playwright
<https://playwright.dev/>

Set it up in Claude Code or Codex

1. Make sure you have Node.js 18 or newer. Context7 and the others run through `npx`, which comes with Node. Ask Claude to check with `node --version` if you are not sure.
2. Start with Playwright, because it needs no key. Run the command in step 1 above, then run `claude mcp list`. Seeing Playwright connected proves your MCP setup works before you add keys.
3. Add Context7 next with the URL command. That is the one that stops Claude writing outdated code, so it earns its place early.
4. For Firecrawl and Perplexity, grab a free API key from each site first. Then ask Claude: "add FIRECRAWL_API_KEY and PERPLEXITY_API_KEY to my shell profile." It will edit `~/.zshrc` (or `~/.bashrc`) for you.
5. Close the terminal and open a new one so the keys load. Run the Firecrawl and Perplexity add commands, swapping YOUR_KEY for the real value or referencing the env var.
6. If you use Codex instead of Claude Code, the same servers work. Point Codex at the same MCP config, or clone the Context7 repo and follow its README to run the server locally.

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The prompts I actually run

RESEARCH WITH PERPLEXITY

Use Perplexity to research [TOPIC] as of this month, and give me the three most important points with a source link for each.

PULL A COMPETITOR'S BRANDING

Use Firecrawl to scrape [COMPETITOR URL]. Pull their headline, the main copy, the colors, and the calls to action into a short brief.

DEEP RESEARCH ACROSS PAGES

Use Firecrawl to search [QUESTION] and read the top results, then summarize what they agree and disagree on.

DRIVE A BROWSER WITH PLAYWRIGHT

Use Playwright to open [URL], fill the [FORM NAME] form with [DETAILS], submit it, and tell me what happened.

GET THE RIGHT DOCS WITH CONTEXT7

Use Context7 to pull the current docs for [LIBRARY], then write the [FEATURE] using the correct up-to-date API.

When it breaks

ERROR	FIX
Server shows "failed" in claude mcp list	The API key did not load. Open a new terminal after saving the key, then restart Claude Code.
Claude never uses the MCP	Name the tool in your prompt ("use Firecrawl to..."). Claude picks tools on its own, but naming it removes any doubt.
"command not found: npx"	Node.js is not installed or too old. Install Node 18+ and reopen the terminal.
Perplexity or Firecrawl returns an auth error	The key is wrong or expired. Copy it fresh from the site, update your shell profile, and open a new terminal.
Playwright cannot find a browser	Let it install once. Run "npx playwright install" and try the command again.
Context7 returns rate-limit messages	Add a free API key from context7.com for higher limits instead of the anonymous tier.
Changes to the key are ignored	You edited the profile but reused the old terminal. Every key change needs a brand new terminal session.

Ready to go deeper?

This playbook is the short version. Inside the hub you get the full build walkthroughs, the prompt library, and the systems I use to ship this in a weekend.

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