

# Personal Operating Systems: The 1-Page Summary

**What's happening:** People are replacing productivity apps with AI agents managing text files. Not as a hack—as infrastructure.

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## Core Insights

**1. Files beat databases at personal scale**

91% of systems use Markdown + Git. AI handles retrieval and refinding—the traditional bottlenecks. No vendor lock-in, complete portability.

**2. Scaffolding over models** (Controversial take)

Build systems that outlive any AI model. When GPT-5 or Claude 4 drops, your infrastructure adapts. The system is the asset, not the model.

**3. Skills > MCP for token efficiency**

MCP loads metadata upfront (40%+ context overhead). Skills load on-demand—85% token reduction reported. Fewer tokens = lower cost + more room for reasoning.

**4. Context layering is everything**

"Whenever you explain something to Claude, stop. Ask: will I explain this again? If yes → capture it in a context file." Systems that learn never need re-explaining.

**5. Ritual beats willpower**

Some systems start with breathing exercises before showing tasks. Emotional regulation as infrastructure, not afterthought.

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## The Cost Spectrum

Approach	Monthly Cost	Setup Time
Fully local (Qwen3 + LM Studio)	\$0	1-2 hours
Local LLM (vLLM + GLM)	\$3-15	8-12 hours
Hybrid (Obsidian + Claude)	\$20-50	4-6 hours
Full cloud (Anthropic)	\$100-200	2 min - 12 hours

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## Start Here (Minimum Viable Personal OS)

```
my-system/  
├─ CLAUDE.md      # "You are my executive assistant..."  
├─ GOALS.md       # What matters this quarter  
├─ TASKS.md       # Current priorities (max 3 active)  
└─ CONTEXT.md     # Who you are, how you work
```

That's it. Add complexity only when you feel the friction.

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## The Shift

- ✗ You manage tools
- ✓ AI manages infrastructure, you set direction

This is infrastructure-as-conversation.

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## Credits

Built by studying these builders: @danielmiessler, @onurpolat05, @aeitroc, @ttorres, @cynentropy, @nikhilv, @mollycantillon, @RomanMarszalek, @ttunguz, @itsPaulAi, @TheAhmadOsman, @Saboo\_Shubham, @ashebytes, and @amankhan.

**Full report:** [Personal Operating Systems Analysis](#)

**Author:** [@kleemarks](#) — feedback welcome.

*And yes, I used a shit-load of AI to compile these findings ;)*