

Fusion vs. Other CAD Tools for AI-Driven Design

Pricing, MCP connections and recommendation · October 3, 2026

Bottom line: Stay on Autodesk Fusion. It has the most complete official AI (MCP) connection of any CAD tool, your engineer's designs already live in it with full editable history, and it already works with Bambu printers. Move to the commercial plan (about \$684/yr) once you're selling.

Why Fusion wins for you

- 1. **Your engineer's work is already in it.** Fusion files keep the full design history, so changing one dimension updates the whole part. Moving to another tool means bringing parts over as STEP files: fixed shapes with no editable history. Every part would need rebuilding or editing the hard way. That switching cost alone outweighs any savings.
- 2. **Most complete official AI connection.** Autodesk offers three official MCP servers, and Fusion is a listed connector inside Claude Desktop.
- 3. **Already works with Bambu printers.** Since February 2025, Fusion slices for Bambu X and P series printers itself, and its 3D Print command sends a 3MF file straight to Bambu Studio.

What the Grok research got right, wrong, or missed

Claim	What I found
Commercial plan is \$680/yr	About right. Autodesk lists \$57/month billed annually, about \$684/yr. The \$85 monthly and \$2,040 three-year prices could not be confirmed.
Personal Use can't be used to sell	Correct, and stricter than it sounds. Autodesk requires both personal, non-commercial projects and under \$1,000/yr revenue, and excludes "company environments." Selling prints or company work needs the paid plan.
Three MCP servers come with any license, including Personal Use	Not confirmed. Autodesk's posts don't say which plans include them. Irrelevant on commercial; don't count on it for the free license.
Compute MCP beta limits: 2 sessions, 1 hour, 15-min idle timeout	Confirmed. Public beta since Sept 15, 2026. Creates and edits sketches and features, sets up CAM toolpaths, exports STL and STEP.
Flex tokens start Oct 6; 10/month Personal, 20/month Commercial	Partly confirmed. Autodesk Assistant uses tokens beyond a monthly allowance. Date and 10/20 amounts unconfirmed. Confirmed: 20 AI renders/month on commercial. No sign that Claude via MCP uses these tokens.
Missed: SOLIDWORKS for Makers	\$48/yr (\$15/month), desktop SOLIDWORKS with CAM. \$2,000 revenue cap but still non-commercial, and no official MCP. Doesn't beat Fusion for you.

Claim	What I found
Missed: Zoo Design Studio	The most AI-focused CAD tool: parts built as code, built-in agent (Zookeeper), official Zoo MCP. Free plan exists; paid prices couldn't be loaded. Good side tool, not a Fusion replacement.
Missed: Onshape has no hobby plan	Free files are public and non-commercial. Standard \$1,500/yr; Professional \$2,500/yr. Official MCP only writes custom feature code; it doesn't build models directly.

Pricing at a glance (U.S.)

Tool	Free option	Paid option for selling	Notes
Autodesk Fusion	Personal Use: non-commercial, <\$1,000/yr revenue	~\$684/yr	Extensions (Manufacturing, Simulation) cost extra
SOLIDWORKS	Makers: \$48/yr, <\$2,000/yr revenue, non-commercial	Commercial seat (~\$2,800/yr per Grok, unverified)	No official MCP
Onshape	Free: public docs, non-commercial	\$1,500/yr Standard · \$2,500/yr Pro	No hobby tier
FreeCAD	Free, open source	Free	Community MCP
Zoo Design Studio	Free plan	Pro (price not confirmed)	MCP use draws from usage credit
build123d / CadQuery	Free, open source	Free	Code-based CAD

How each option connects to Claude and ChatGPT

Option	Official?	Can the AI build and edit parts?	Where it runs	Claude	ChatGPT
Fusion MCP (local)	Yes	Yes: reads designs, changes parameters, runs scripts, bulk exports	Your PC, Fusion open	Yes, built-in connector	Not directly*
Fusion Data MCP	Yes	No, files and projects only	Autodesk cloud	Yes	Likely
Fusion Compute MCP	Yes (beta)	Yes: modeling, CAM, STL and STEP export	Autodesk cloud	Yes	Yes, Autodesk names it

Option	Official?	Can the AI build and edit parts?	Where it runs	Claude	ChatGPT
Onshape FeatureScript MCP	Yes	Custom feature code only	Cloud	Yes	Yes
SOLIDWORKS	Community	Mostly parts lists, properties, drawings	Local	Hit or miss	No
FreeCAD MCP (neka-nat)	Community	Yes, checks its work with screenshots	Local, FreeCAD open	Yes	No
Zoo MCP	Yes	Yes, as code	Cloud	Yes	Yes
build123d / CadQuery	Community	Yes, AI writes Python that becomes the part	Local	Yes	Via code tools

* The local Fusion MCP lives on your computer. ChatGPT only connects to internet-hosted servers, so it can't reach it without extra setup. For ChatGPT, use Compute MCP. Claude Desktop handles all three.

What the AI can realistically do today

Autodesk itself says the Claude connector is "not yet reliable enough for complex assemblies or production ready design workflows." Reviews of FreeCAD's MCP say the same about detailed sketches and complex rounded edges. Treat AI as a fast assistant on existing designs, not yet a product engineer.

- Changing parameters on existing designs, such as making a new size of a part
- Batch exporting STL, STEP or 3MF files
- Renaming and cleaning up components
- Pulling weight and dimensions for product listings
- Building simple new parts from a written prompt

Recommendation

1. **Fusion commercial (~\$684/yr)** as your main tool once you're selling. Check the Startup program first (Grok's ~\$150 for three years is unconfirmed).
2. **Claude Desktop + Fusion connector** for hands-on work. In Fusion: Preferences > General > API, enable the MCP server (default port 27182). Then add "Autodesk Fusion" from Claude's Connectors list.
3. **Fusion Compute MCP** for unattended jobs and for ChatGPT. Save to your Fusion Team hub before a session times out.

4. **Bambu Studio** for real slicing; Fusion's built-in slicer is fine for a quick preview.
5. **Optional: Zoo or build123d** for simple, size-driven parts the AI generates entirely. Free to try.
6. **Keep FreeCAD in reserve** as the free fallback if Autodesk raises prices or limits the beta. Don't move anything into it now.

First test: on a copy of one of your engineer's designs, have Claude change a parameter and export a 3MF into Bambu Studio.

Sources

- [Fusion Compute MCP: Public Beta \(Autodesk\)](#)
 - [Claude Desktop Connector for Fusion \(Autodesk\)](#)
 - [Fusion Comes to Claude \(Autodesk\)](#)
 - [Autodesk announces Fusion MCP servers \(Engineering.com\)](#)
 - [Fusion with Claude: MCP & Computer Use \(Vagon\)](#)
 - [Fusion overview and pricing \(Autodesk\)](#)
 - [Fusion Personal Use terms \(Autodesk\)](#)
 - [Tokens in Fusion \(Autodesk Help\)](#)
 - [Bambu printers now available in Fusion \(Bambu forum\)](#)
 - [Onshape pricing](#)
 - [Onshape FeatureScript MCP launch \(PTC\)](#)
 - [SOLIDWORKS for Makers](#)
 - [CAD MCP server comparison 2026 \(Leo\)](#)
 - [FreeCAD MCP guide 2026](#)
 - [Zoo Design Studio](#)
 - [build123d-mcp \(PyPI\)](#)
-

Source: shared with permission. AdkinsTech · techtreats.info