

Personal AI agents just went mainstream

News breakdown · 21 September 2026

What happened in 72 hours

- **Meta** ran the first national TV ad for a personal agent (20 Sept).
- **OpenAI** hired OpenClaw's creator to lead its personal-agent push.
- **Apple** moved from rumour to a scheduled entry in the assistant race.

Why the ad matters more than the model

A model release shows capability. An ad buy shows belief that ordinary people will pay. Meta spending TV money means the buyer is no longer the enthusiast — and trust, not intelligence, is now the product.

Five questions to ask before you adopt one

1. Where does it run, and whose servers does my inbox pass through?
2. Can I export my memory, or is it trapped in the product?
3. Does it ask before acting irreversibly?
4. What can it reach on day one — read, or write?
5. How do I leave, and what do I take with me?

The takeaway

The products will get better and cheaper either way. What stays in your hands is how much of your life you connect. Start with one bounded job, keep the memory portable, make the agent ask first.