Episode 081 Artifact

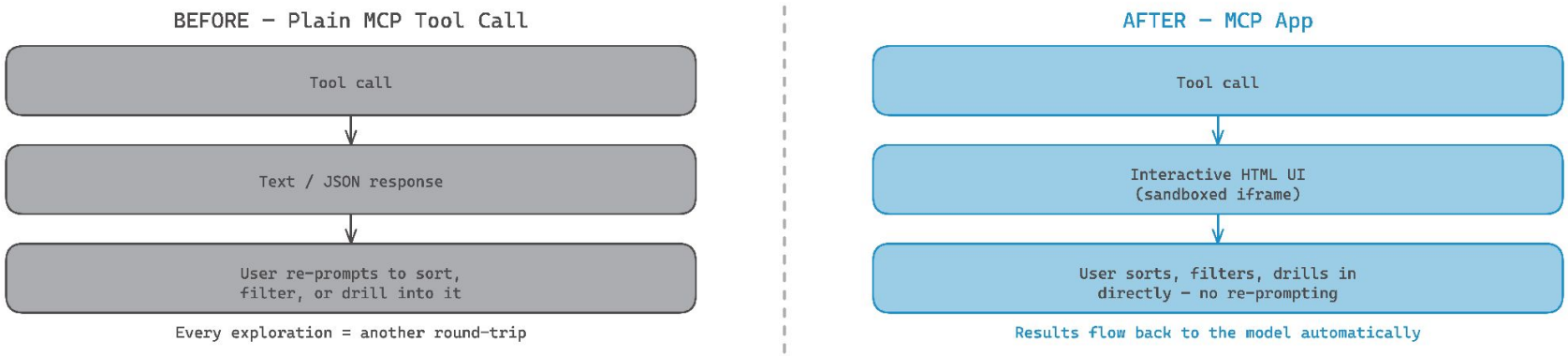
Beyond Tool Calls: Inside MCP Apps

The Model Context Protocol's Interactive UI Extension



What Is It?

A tool call that returns an interface, not just data



Official MCP extension (SEP-1865) – live since January 26, 2026

Why It Matters

Fewer round-trips, same conversation

TODAY — Without MCP Apps

"Show me sales by region"

"Now filter to Q3"

"Now sort by growth"

"Now show just the top 5"

4 round-trips to explore one dataset

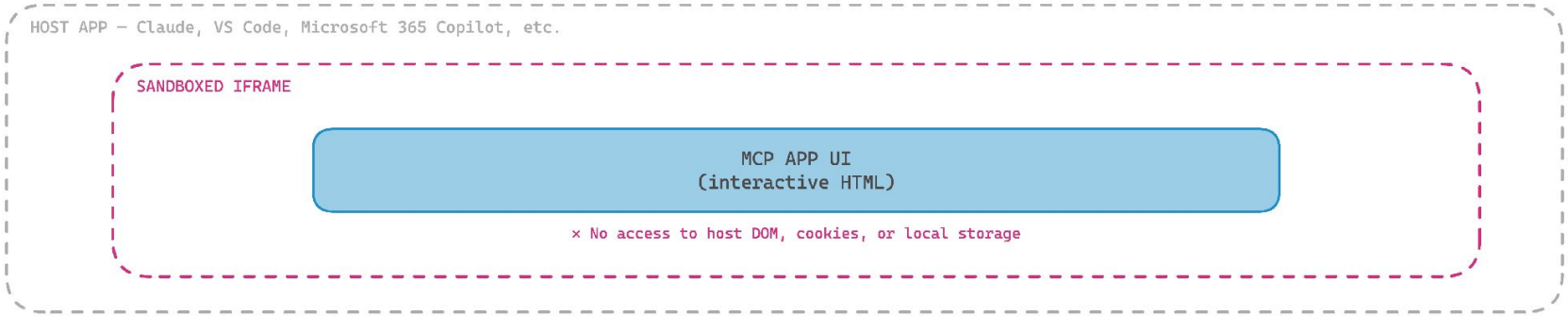
WITH MCP Apps

"Show me sales by region"

Live panel:
sort · filter · drill-down
— updated directly, in place

1 interaction — everything else happens live

A Sandboxed Boundary



⇄ Bidirectional JSON-RPC via postMessage (ui/* + tools/call) — results flow back into the model

The conversation doesn't pause for every click anymore.

How Is It Used?

Real apps already running inside MCP clients

CATEGORY	EXAMPLES	WHAT IT DEMONSTRATES
3D & Visual	CesiumJS globe, Three.js scenes, Shadertoy shaders	Rich graphics rendered live in chat
Data Exploration	Cohort heatmaps, customer segmentation, wiki explorer	Direct-manipulation analysis, not static tables
Business Tools	Scenario modeler, budget allocator	Forms and what-if tools embedded in conversation
Media Viewers	PDF, video, sheet-music notation, text-to-speech	Native-feeling playback without leaving chat
Diagramming	Excalidraw app drawing a sequence diagram live	The same kind of tool building this podcast — now live in chat

Examples from the official MCP ext-apps repository

Already live in: Claude (web & desktop) · VS Code Copilot · Microsoft 365 Copilot · Goose · Postman · MCPJam · Archestra.AI

The chat window stopped being a text box. It's becoming a canvas.

Thanks for watching.

Explore all three Cirrius Talk series:

Agentic AI
Designing, building, and operating AI agents that do real work, minus the hype.

Salesforce at Scale
Real-world lessons for building and running Salesforce that scales with the business.

The Military Minute
Veterans and military families on service, transition, and the people who help.

Questions, need help, or a topic idea? Reach out: CirriusTalk@CirriusSolutions.com