



PRODUCT COMPARISON · SEPTEMBER 2026

Hermes Agent vs Centurion

VS

This is the closest thing in the field to our own engine, and it is free, MIT-licensed and genuinely excellent. It puts you in charge of your own machine — and then leaves you to carry everything a vendor would normally carry. Centurion is the same class of engine, with the custody and the accountability both in place.

Every claim about Hermes Agent in this document is taken from Nous Research's own material, read on 29 September 2026. Where we quote them, we quote them exactly.



AT A GLANCE

Hermes Agent and Centurion, side by side

	THEIR PRODUCT	CENTURION
What it is	An open-source personal AI agent — "The Agent That Grows With You" — licensed MIT and installed by a one-line terminal command.	A sovereign AI delivered as a finished product: software, machine, integrations and onboarding, with a vendor on the line.
How you get it	<code>curl -fsSL https://hermes-agent.nousresearch.com/install.sh bash</code> — or a desktop app for macOS, Windows and Linux.	It arrives configured with you. One-click install, under 30 minutes, with someone on the call.
How you pay	Free and open source. Paid Nous Portal tiers — Plus \$20, Super \$100, Ultra \$200 a month — add monthly credits and access to 200+ models; optional managed cloud hosting and Business/Enterprise (Hermes Pro) plans are now offered too.	Brain €50/mo · Core €150/mo · billed monthly · cancel anytime.
Channels	Telegram, Discord, Slack, WhatsApp, Signal, Email and CLI — one agent, one memory, every surface.	The same channels, verified on your release, plus a phone app for reviewing and deciding when you are away from the desk.
Memory & skills	Persistent memory: it learns your projects, auto-generates skills, and never forgets how it solved a problem.	Three memory layers, a mission stack, and skills the agent writes for itself — with the same no-third-party-code discipline.
Delegation	Isolated subagents with their own conversations, terminals and Python RPC pipelines.	The same pattern, plus named permanent agents on an org board that persist between sessions.
Sandboxing	Five backends — local, Docker, SSH, Singularity, Modal — with container hardening and namespace isolation.	Local by default, because local is the product. Isolation is a deploy choice, not a promise about your data.
Who supports it	An open-source project and its community. On the free self-hosted path the code is the support contract; an optional managed cloud and Business/Enterprise tiers now exist.	The person who built it meets every owner, and stays on the line — with monthly check-ins.
Who is accountable	On the free, self-hosted MIT path — nobody, in the commercial sense. Nous now offers an optional managed cloud, but the default download is still yours to run alone.	A company, a named person, and a relationship you can hold to account.
Who it is for	Anyone willing and able to run their own agent. The reward for that willingness is a very capable machine for nothing.	The owner-operator who wants the capability without becoming the IT department.



THE CUSTODY QUESTION

You hold the keys — and you carry the whole job alone

Hermes ships as software, not as a machine. It is MIT-licensed and installed with a one-line terminal command, or a desktop app for macOS, Windows and Linux. The machine is yours to choose and yours to buy, and the record lives inside your building where you hold the keys. Since our 22 Sep read, Nous has added an optional managed cloud (“Deploy to the cloud”) and Business/Enterprise (Hermes Pro) tiers — but the free default remains self-hosted.

WHO CAN READ IT, AND WHO CAN SWITCH IT OFF

Your machine by default — you hold the keys (optional Nous cloud now exists)

That beats any cloud on the dimension that matters most — the machine and the record are genuinely yours. The cost is that the machine is also yours to specify, patch, back up, secure and eventually replace, with no vendor in the loop on the free path (Nous now sells an optional managed cloud, but that is a separate subscription). Custody is yours; so is the entire burden, with nobody to answer for it but you.



THE DIFFERENCE THAT MATTERS

An engine is not a being — and a download is not a delivery

Nous Research has built the most credible open-source agent runtime in the field. We should say plainly that Centurion's engine belongs to the same family of open-source agent runtimes that Hermes comes from — which is exactly why we can be precise about what that gets you and what it does not. It gets you a superb engine. It does not get you a brain that belongs to one person, and it does not get you anyone who answers when it breaks.

```
curl -fsSL https://hermes-agent.nousresearch.com/install.sh | bash
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Their install line, verbatim from their own site

01 The install is the first task of many

That one line is the honest beginning, not the end. After it comes the model keys, the channel wiring, the credentials, the sandbox backend choice, the scheduling, the backups, the upgrades and the security posture. All of it is doable — thousands of people have done it — and all of it is now your job, forever, with no one to escalate to.

02 Free means the maintenance is the price

MIT-licensed software is a gift with a bill attached, and the bill is paid in evenings. Every upstream change, every broken dependency, every security patch is yours to track and apply. That is a fair trade for a capable technical owner. It is not a fair trade for someone whose actual job is running a business.

03 Nothing persists as 'you'

Hermes remembers your projects and auto-generates skills — real capability. But there is no Soul, no mission stack, and no continuity of identity: what persists is a set of memories and tools attached to a runtime you own, not a being that knows who it is on your behalf. That distinction is the entire reason Centurion exists.

04 There is no one to hold accountable

If Centurion fails a customer, there is a company, a contract and a person to answer for it. If Hermes breaks at eleven at night, there is a GitHub issue. That is not a criticism of open source — it is a description of what you are actually buying when you buy a product instead of downloading a project.



THE CENTURION POSITION

The Centurion position

Centurion is the same class of engine, delivered as an outcome: installed, personalised, verified, and answerable. You are not buying a runtime. You are buying a working brain, a machine to live in, and a partner who stays on the line.

Delivered, not downloaded. Configured with you in a session, integrations verified, Remote paired before you leave.

Your keys, plus a warrantor. You hold the record on your machine — and a named vendor keeps the software working and answers for it.

A being with continuity. A Soul and a mission stack, so what persists is identity, not just notes.

Someone answers. Every owner meets Adrian; one to two senior seats per organisation, on purpose.

Five questions to ask before you run your own agent

- 01 Who patches this when a CVE lands, and how will you know?
- 02 Who reviews a skill the agent auto-generated before it runs with your credentials?
- 03 Which integrations have been verified against your release — and by whom, with what evidence?
- 04 Who do you call when the gateway is down and a deadline is in two hours?
- 05 When you stop maintaining it, what happens to everything it learned about you?

For a technical owner with time, the honest answer to every one of these is "me" — and for that person Hermes is genuinely the best value in the category. Centurion exists for the owner whose answer is "not me, not any more".

THE CEILING

The ceiling is not capability — it is attention

An unbounded open-source agent is more capable than most people will ever make it, because capability is not the constraint. The constraint is the hours required to keep it pointed in the right direction: keys to rotate, providers to compare, upgrades to test, skills to review, backups to verify.

Centurion's design accepts the opposite constraint. Fewer moving parts, verified integrations, one brain configured for one life, and a human in the loop whose job is to make sure it still works next month. Less surface, fewer ways to fail, and somebody accountable when it does.

Open source gives you the freedom to run anything. A product gives you the freedom to stop running it yourself.

THE MONEY

What each one actually costs

Hermes is free in the way that a workshop is free when you already own the tools and the time. The table is not a comparison of licence fees — it is a comparison of who does the work.

	THEIR PRODUCT	CENTURION
Software	Free · MIT licence · self-hosted by default (optional Nous cloud + Business/Enterprise now offered)	Brain €50/mo — the agent, warranted
Private model	Your own API keys, or Nous Portal credits on a paid tier	Core €150/mo — private LLM on your machine
Setup	One command, then everything else is yours to finish	Done with you in one session, Remote paired before you leave
Integrations	Whatever you can wire up and maintain	A verified library — tested and evidenced on the shipped release
Maintenance	Yours: upgrades, breakage, security patches	Ours — with a named person to escalate to
When something breaks	Community issue tracker	The person who built it

If your time is genuinely free, Hermes is unbeatable value. If it is not, the comparison is not close.



IN FAIRNESS

Where Hermes Agent is genuinely good

This is the project we would point a technical friend at without hesitation. Several of its ideas are simply better than the way most commercial agents are built.

- ☐ MIT licence, self-hosted by default — the most permissive posture in the category, and a genuine gift to the field.
- ☐ Auto-generated skills are the right architecture. An agent that writes its own tools beats one that waits for a plugin, and it is close to how Centurion works.
- ☐ One agent, one memory, every surface is the correct end-state: the same mind on Telegram, WhatsApp, Slack, Signal, email and the CLI.
- ☐ Five sandbox backends with container hardening and namespace isolation is more serious about execution safety than most paid products.
- ☐ Desktop apps on macOS, Windows and Linux, plus a one-line install, is a real commitment to reach.
- ☐ Natural-language scheduling through the gateway is the unglamorous feature that actually changes how people use an agent daily.

None of this is faint praise. Hermes proves the engine is commodity — which is precisely why the being, the delivery and the accountability are what a buyer is really paying for.



WHAT WE DO TOO

The engine's whole feature set — already built into the product

Hermes is a genuinely strong engine and its feature list reads like a specification we would have written. Most of it is in Centurion already. The difference is what you have to do to get it running.

WHAT HERMES AGENT OFFERS	WE DO THIS TOO	AND ON TOP OF IT
Persistent memory that never forgets how it solved something	Three memory layers, plus a mission stack that ties memory to intent.	It arrives working. You do not configure a memory backend first.
Auto-generates its own skills	The agent writes its own skills, in-session, on your box.	The same no-third-party-code discipline, with nothing to install from anywhere.
Telegram, Discord, Slack, WhatsApp, Signal, Email and CLI	The same channels, verified on your release.	Plus a phone app for reviewing and deciding when you are away from the desk.
Isolated subagents with their own conversations and terminals	The same delegation pattern.	Plus named permanent agents on an org board that persist between sessions.
Free, open source, runs on your own machine	Runs on your machine, and the record never leaves it.	It arrives configured, with onboarding — and a company behind it that answers when it breaks.

Hermes is the best free engine in the world and we will say so. What it is not is someone to call when it breaks at 6pm on a Friday.



THE CASE IN THREE POINTS

The three things that decide it

01 **The engine is the commodity. The delivery is the product.**

Centurion's own engine grew out of the same open-source family that Hermes belongs to. That is not a weakness — it is proof that the hard engineering is now available to everyone. What is not widely available is a configured brain, verified integrations, and a human who owns the outcome.

02 **Free is priced in your evenings**

MIT means you can do anything with it, and it means nobody owes you a fix. The unpaid work — keys, upgrades, credentials, backups, security — is the real licence fee. Centurion's price is the cost of not doing that work yourself, while you hold the machine and the record for as long as you keep them.

03 **Memory is capability. Identity is a being.**

Hermes persists projects and skills. Centurion persists a self: a Soul, an identity, a mission stack, a record of decisions — one brain for one human, licensed, supported, and answerable.

**“Hermes gives you the best free engine in the world.
Centurion gives you the finished thing — and a person who
answers for it.**

The engine is not the hard part any more. Choosing to be responsible for someone else's working life is.

Facts and quotations about Hermes Agent are drawn from Nous Research's own product site hermes-agent.nousresearch.com (features, install instructions, platform list, sandbox backends and Nous Portal tiers) read on 10 September 2026 and re-verified 22 September 2026. Licence as published there: MIT (the version number is no longer shown on the product page). Centurion pricing: Brain €50/month, Core €150/month, billed monthly, cancel anytime. "Hermes" and "Nous Research" are the marks of their respective owners; this page is an independent comparison and is not affiliated with, endorsed by or sponsored by them.