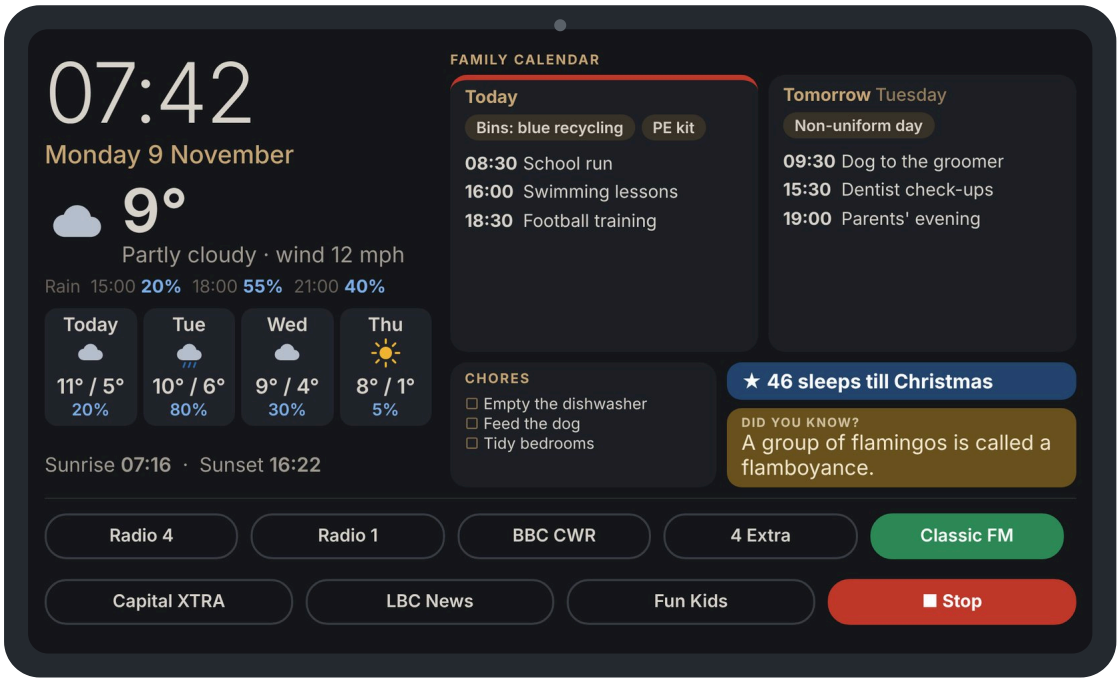
Turn an old tablet into a home dashboard

Live weather, the family calendar, chores, a countdown, a fact of the day and one-tap radio, on an Amazon Fire or Android tablet you already own. Built with an AI assistant, using free services only.

By Philip Daley · November 2026 **About 2 hours of hands-on time**



The finished dashboard, shown with sample data.

Try it on your tablet

Open either link in your tablet's browser, then tap the screen to go full screen.

EXAMPLE

phi1-d.github.io/demo

The home dashboard from this guide, with sample data.

Open the demo →

FREE TO KEEP

phi1-d.github.io/f1

A live Grand Prix dashboard that updates itself.

Open the F1 dashboard →

Tip: it's **phi1** with the number one, not the letter L.

WILL MY TABLET WORK?

Almost certainly, if it can open a web page

Mine is an Amazon Fire 7 on an older version of Fire OS, and the dashboard was written to suit its older browser.

- Any Amazon Fire or Android tablet with a working browser
- Landscape works best; a 7-inch screen is enough
- It needs to stay plugged in
- No apps to install, and no changes to the tablet itself



An early version, on an Amazon Fire 7.

WHAT YOU'LL END UP WITH

A morning check-in for the whole household

A colour, touch-screen dashboard that keeps the household on track each morning, built from a tablet you already own. Nothing needs to be bought: everything runs on free services, and the AI assistant writes the code.

- Live weather and rain
- Family calendar
- Chores list
- Countdown to Christmas
- Fact of the day
- One-tap radio



Running on an Amazon Fire 7 (calendar blurred).

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

Six things, mostly free

Allow around 2 hours of hands-on time for your first one, plus about 30 minutes if you add a chores list. The only cost is your time.

An old tablet

The screen

An Amazon Fire or Android tablet with a web browser; older models are fine.

Plus its charger: mount it near a socket and Wi-Fi.

An AI assistant

Writes and fixes the code

I used Claude; a paid plan helps on longer sessions.

A free GitHub account

Hosts it and runs the updates

No coding knowledge needed; the AI guides you.

A calendar link

Feeds in the family calendar

An iCal (.ics) link, which all the main calendars provide.

iCloud: the owner turns on Public Calendar. **Google:** on a computer, Settings → Integrate calendar → Secret address in iCal format. **Outlook:** Settings → Shared calendars → Publish a calendar.

A free cron-job.org account

Triggers an update every 30 minutes

Recommended: GitHub's own scheduler ran under 10% of the time in my tests.

Shortcuts or Tasker

Pushes a chores list from your notes

Apple Shortcuts, or an Android automation app such as Tasker.

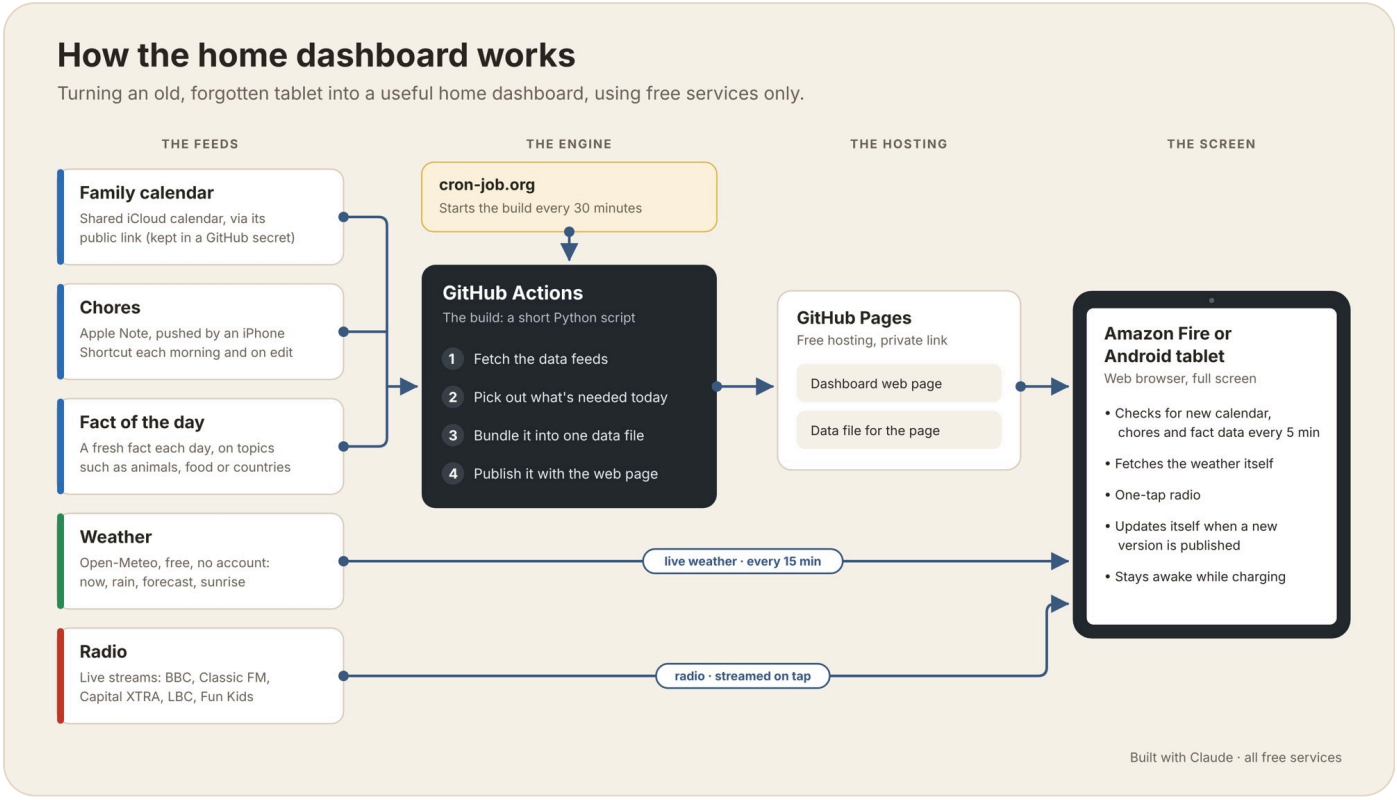
Optional: you can edit the chores list on GitHub instead.

Skill level: comfortable following instructions, copying and pasting, and changing settings. You don't need to write code yourself.

HOW IT WORKS

All the work is done before it reaches the tablet

Free services gather and prepare everything every 30 minutes, so the tablet only has to show a web page and fetch its own weather. That’s why an old, slow tablet copes perfectly well.



STEP BY STEP

Seven steps from drawer to dashboard

The AI does the building; your job is to decide what you want, carry out the steps it gives you, and tell it what you see.

1

Plan your screen

List what your family needs at a glance in the morning: weather, calendar, chores, radio. Keep version 1 simple.

2

Brief the AI

Paste the starter prompt below, adding your town, your device and your list. Ask it to build a small project you can host for free on GitHub.

3

Put it online

Create a free GitHub account and an empty public repository. The AI can explain how to upload its files, or push them for you if it has GitHub access. Turn on GitHub Pages (Settings → Pages → Source: GitHub Actions).

4

Connect your calendar

Get your calendar's iCal link and store it as a GitHub secret named as the AI tells you. Never paste it into the code itself.

5

Keep it fresh

GitHub's built-in scheduler can be unreliable on new accounts. Set up a free cron-job.org job to trigger an update every 30 minutes; the AI will give you the exact settings.

6

Set up the tablet

Open the dashboard link in the browser, tap once to go full screen, and turn on Developer Options → Stay awake so the screen stays on while charging.

7

Iterate with the family

Use it for a few days, collect the complaints (text too small, buttons unclear), and ask the AI for one change at a time. Send it a photo of the screen: it can see what's wrong.

AI PROMPTS TO COPY AND PASTE

Start with these

Fill in the `[square brackets]`. Give the AI one job at a time, and paste back any error message word for word.

1. Starter: home dashboard

```
I want to turn my old tablet into a home dashboard for my family. I'm not a developer, so
give me one step at a time and wait for me to confirm each one.

The tablet I'd like to use is:
[Brand, model and OS version, e.g. Amazon Fire 7, Fire OS 5]

I am based in:
[Town, country]

Our family calendar is in:
[iCloud / Google Calendar / Outlook]
(I'll add its iCal link to GitHub myself, so don't ask me to paste it here.)

Please show on one landscape screen:
- A large clock and the date
- Current weather, rain chances and a 4-day forecast, from a free weather service with no
API key
- Today's and tomorrow's events from our family calendar
- A chores list, kept in: [Apple Notes / a list I edit on GitHub / leave this out]
- A countdown to: [Christmas / a holiday / a birthday]
- A fact of the day for children aged [ages], on topics such as: [animals, food,
countries]
- One-tap buttons for these radio stations: [station names]

How it should work:
- Host it for free on GitHub Pages
- Update the calendar every 30 minutes (use cron-job.org if GitHub's own scheduler is
unreliable)
- Keep my calendar link in a GitHub secret, never in the code
- My tablet's browser may be old, so avoid modern-only web features and test at its screen
size
- Make the page update itself when a new version is published, without dropping out of full
screen
- Stop the screen going to sleep while the dashboard is showing. If the browser can't do
this itself, tell me which tablet setting to change (e.g. Developer options → Stay awake
while charging)

I've attached a picture of the look I'm after: [attach an image, or delete this line]
```

Tip: attach a picture of the look you want. The cover image works well: it uses sample data, and gives the AI a clear target for the layout. Don't attach a photo of a dashboard showing your real calendar.

2. Refining it

```
Here's a photo of the dashboard on the tablet. [Describe the change you'd like, e.g. make the weather text bigger / add a countdown to our holiday / the radio buttons run off the bottom.] Change only that, and keep everything else the same.
```

3. When something breaks

```
This step failed. Here's exactly what I did and the exact message I got: [paste]. What's the most likely cause, and what's the single next thing to try?
```

LESSONS LEARNED

Most of my time went on a handful of avoidable snags

SNAG	WHAT HAPPENED	HOW TO AVOID IT
Changes not showing	The tablet kept showing an old copy of the page	The starter prompt asks the AI to make the page update itself. If it still happens, send the AI a photo and say what you expected to see
Data went stale	GitHub's schedule didn't run on a new account	Use cron-job.org to trigger updates
iPhone Shortcut errors	Menu names differ by iOS version, and variables were typed instead of inserted	Insert variables from the menu (they turn blue); test one action at a time

SNAG	WHAT HAPPENED	HOW TO AVOID IT
Dropping out of full screen	Page updates reset it	Also covered by the starter prompt; if it happens, tell the AI it drops out of full screen when the page updates

PRIVACY AND SAFETY

Treat its links like a house key

Your dashboard shows where your family will be and when.

Free hosting is public. GitHub Pages on a free account serves pages publicly. Use a long random name for the dashboard's address so it can't be guessed, and don't share the link.

A public calendar link can be read by anyone who has it. Keep it in a GitHub secret only, and avoid sensitive detail in event titles.

Blur before you post. Photos of your dashboard could show children's names, activities, birthdays, and when the house is empty. Blur the calendar, and crop out the browser's address bar.

Access tokens: give each one access to a single repository and only the permission it needs, and set a calendar reminder before it expires (mine last a year).

Radio streams are for personal listening. Don't build them into anything you sell without checking the broadcaster's terms.

Rather have it done for you? I'm exploring a done-for-you version. Register interest at **tally.so/r/6DKOrk**

Online version, with copy buttons for the prompts: **phi1-d.github.io** · Philip Daley, linkedin.com/in/philipdaley · Built with Claude