Agent protocol map

MCP, A2A and the commerce protocols as layers, with a note on what is still changing.

Developer **Product**

LAYERS

Layer	Question	Examples
Tools and data	How does a model reach a tool or data source?	MCP
Agent to agent	How do independent agents delegate and collaborate?	A2A
Commerce	How does an agent discover products and check out?	UCP, ACP (as reported)
Payment authorization	How is an agent allowed to pay, and how is it proved?	AP2 (as reported)

HOW THEY STACK

- Start with MCP for tools
- Add A2A only when agents must work with other agents
- Add a commerce protocol only if you sell through agents
- They complement each other; most real stacks combine two or three

STATUS NOTE

- Last verified November 3, 2026, against secondary summaries
- Sources disagree on the status of some commerce protocols, so read each specification before relying on it
- Re-check before every architecture decision