

Discussion about this video

[Mike Sommer](#)

[Mike Sommer](#)Jan 9

The engagement here is fantastic. Is there any interest in a group working session where we all implement this together? There are a lot of skillsets here and applying this into our own work world as a live lab would be fantastic.

Just a thought

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[Jan 13](#)

I'm game. We need this to work. Looks like the farthest along anybody has gotten is 5.2

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[Chris Chandler](#)

[Chris Chandler](#)Jan 13

Can confirm! Instructions seem to break at 5.2 with threaded replies in the "fix button" trigger setup steps.

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[Don.Afonso](#)

[8d](#)

May you direct me to where I can find the Instructions that everyone is referring to?

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[Chris Chandler](#)

[Chris Chandler](#) 6d

Hi Don, you have to be a subscriber to see the full post. Look for an underlined "GRAB THE GUIDE HERE" in the body; this is a link to the instructions, though it looks like a heading for the text below it.

Fair warning though, People have hit a dead end around step 5.2 due to an apparent change in the Slack-Zapier integration.

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[Eric McKinney](#)

[Eric's Substack](#) Jan 14

Would love this as well.

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[Tom Malcolm \(tomRmalcolm\)](#)

[Jan 12](#)

Would totally do this

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[Boaz Vardi](#)

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i would love fo a group workalong option - i am a total noob

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[Chris Chandler](#)

[Chris Chandler](#)[Jan 11](#)

I think we can just start a new chat here on the newsletter (for subscribers anyway!)

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Mike, do you have a suggestion on where to set up a conversation group? Im starting mine now

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[Mike Sommer](#)

[Mike Sommer](#)[6d](#)

I do not. Open to suggestions

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I'm down. I'm stuck at 5.2 due to the issue with Slack trigger not grabbing threaded replies as test records for me to proceed. Do you have a workaround for this?

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[Chris Chandler](#)

[Chris Chandler](#) Jan 13

Same here, Chuck. The threaded replies option appears to have been removed from Slack integration. There are a handful of support threads out there about the problem, and with the trigger generally not working as users expect. There's a supposed workaround with using a private channel instead of a public one, but I've tried it, and testing shows it can't see threaded messages. If Nate's solution worked, he might be grandfathered into a prior version of the Slack integration that worked this way, but I doubt newcomers can replicate it.

Looks like lots of people are having luck with other intake methods. Trello has some pretty fast capture options (i.e. homescreen widgets)

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[Adam](#)

[Jan 10](#) Edited

I'm a non coder. I wanted my second brain to be built entirely in the Google ecosystem. So I fed the guide to Claude and asked it to create a duplicate system using just Google apps (I know if I was a purist I should have used Gemini as I was building a Google ecosystem, but I like Claude).

Claude gave me options for the Google equivalent apps to use, then talked me through it step by step, including creating the script and testing each aspect of the system. It uses Google Forms to capture thoughts (I have a shortcut on my mobile - other options it suggested instead of Forms were Gmail, Chat (for the closest experience to Slack) or Keep as alternatives, but it said Forms was the simplest), Google Sheets to store and organise (using the Apps Script extension), Gemini API for AI classification and Gmail for daily/weekly digests).

Whenever I hit a roadblock with setting up, I just screenshotted the issue for Claude, which then talked me through the solution.

I've now got a 2nd brain which I'm beta testing, but it all seems to work well so far. Took me just over an hour.

Thanks Nate!

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[Eric Hargrove](#)

[Eric Hargrove](#) Jan 11 *Edited*

Thanks, Nate, for the original impetus behind this creation and the guidance, and thanks, Adam, for diving deeper into a Google-specific implementation. In the spirit of Chris Chandler's comment, it would be great to get insight into the automation portion of this for the Google focused version.

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[Adam](#)

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Thanks for the interest! Here's how the Google-native version works:

The stack:

- Google Forms (input)
- Google Sheets (database)
- Google Apps Script (automation)
- Gemini API (classification)

- Gmail (daily/weekly digests)

How it works:

1. Capture: Submit a thought via Google Form (one text field)
2. Process: Apps Script trigger runs every 5 minutes, picks up new submissions, sends each to Gemini API for classification
3. Classify: Gemini returns JSON with category (people/projects/ideas/admin), extracted fields, and confidence score
4. Route: Script parses the JSON and appends a row to the appropriate Sheet tab
5. Log: Every capture gets logged to an Inbox Log tab with timestamp, category, confidence, and status
6. Digest: Scheduled triggers send daily (7am) and weekly (Sunday 4pm) emails via Gmail, using Gemini to summarise active projects, follow-ups, overdue tasks, and stale items

Chris - to answer your question directly: Google Apps Script replaces Zapier/Make. It's free, runs on Google's servers, and handles both the scheduled triggers and the Gemini API calls. No external automation tool needed.

Cost: Just the Gemini API usage - a few dollars/month at most for personal use.

I pay for a Google Business Workspace rather than having just a free account. Don't know what difference it would make if you don't have Workspace.

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[Chris Chandler](#)

[Chris Chandler](#) Jan 13

Thanks! Looks like I'll be giving it a try now that the main demo hasn't panned out. Just too many inconsistencies in the instructions to work through.

Ah well, it'll be good practice!

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[Chris Chandler](#)

[Chris Chandler](#) Jan 11

Thanks for sharing! I'm pretty deep in the Google ecosystem so I've been thinking about this type of solution myself. Forms is a great option for input! I don't do Slack (and would prefer not to).

What's the equivalent to Zapier/Make/PowerAutomate in this solution? Scheduled Gemini calls via API?

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[Gabriel Rymberg](#)

[A personal relationship with God](#) Jan 10

I built a Claude Code version of Nate's Second Brain system.

Instead of Zapier + Notion, it uses:

- Slack as your inbox (capture from anywhere, even your phone)
- Claude Code as the sorter/filer (runs when you're working)
- Local YAML files instead of Notion

Same principles: one inbox, zero decisions at capture time, AI classification, fix button for corrections.

It's session-based (runs when you open Claude Code) rather than always-on, but the core ideas translate perfectly.

DM me if you want the template - happy to share.

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[steve](#)

[6d](#)

would love your claude version stevebromail@gmail.com

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Of course!

The Q-second-brain has just been uploaded to the Q-Marketplace: <https://www.the-ai-masters.com/q-marketplace>.

All the Qs are now free (while in beta), so grab them all ;-)

The Q-command-system is open source (<https://github.com/contactTAM/q-command-system>).

Finally, I just tested my q-virtual-assistant in Claude Cowork, and it is ALMOST 100% functional. The normies are coming...

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[Jonathan Ferrier](#)

[8d](#)

Hi Gabriel. Interested in yr Claude version of Nat's second brain - j@ferrier.co.nz

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The Q-second-brain has just been uploaded to the Q-Marketplace: <https://www.the-ai-masters.com/q-marketplace>.

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[Will Abramson](#)

[William Abramson](#)[Jan 10](#)

Would love to have a look!! Please share

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What email should I send it to?

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[Will Abramson](#)

[William Abramson](#)[Jan 12](#)

will@fwb.help thank you!

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Sent, with love.

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[Evan Troxel](#)

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Has anyone actually gotten this to work? There are several steps during the Zapier setup that just don't match the instructions. I think a video guide would help immensely. I gave up in frustration after starting this process very excitedly. A little context: I have been using all of the tools in the stack for many years now... and the issues I'm seeing are all in Zapier (so far). Field mapping is especially bad. Many of the options just aren't there when searching.

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[Shaun](#)

[ShaunJan 9](#)

yup (several steps during the Zapier setup that just don't match the instructions.)

it seems like the code was written a while ago - it doesn't match with whats inside Zapier right now including asking us to use gpt-4o

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[Jonathan Goodman](#)

[Jonathan Goodman](#) Jan 9

I noticed some language differences too: "database" in Nate's doc vs. "data source" in the Notion app in Zapier. It took some puzzling through those gaps but Nate's instructions works for through Part 4.

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[Jack](#)

[Jan 14](#)

I exported the guide as a PDF, uploaded it to ChatGPT and prompted, "I am using the attached second brain build guide. When I reached step 2.2, though, I'm not able to match up what I think I'm supposed to do with what Notion allows me to do. Please guide me." As I've worked through the steps where the current UI doesn't match the instructions, I'm able to ask for explanations and it has helped.

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[Michael Strong](#)

[Jan 9](#)

Same issue here. I'm going to need a third brain to figure out how the instructions provided in the worksheet are able to successfully configure the second brain.

At Step 4.2, I used "New Message Posted to Private Channel" instead of "New Message Posted to Channel" and for Step 4.3 the Event I used was "Conversation" instead of "Send

Prompt". Those seemed to be the only selections that made sense with regard to the following instructions.

Once I got the JSON Parsing step, I could see how this train was headed off the rails, so I punted for now. Hopefully someone uploads a video.

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[Isaac Harder](#)

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If you had the issue of legacy models using the "send prompt", you need to use "custom" instead of the model selection drop down. You copy/paste "gpt-4o-mini" (or whatever your preferred model is).

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[Isaac Harder](#)

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I'm also stuck somewhere between the Code app and Pathing.

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[Jonathan Goodman](#)

[Jonathan Goodman](#) Jan 9 *Edited*

I'm using Perplexity's Comet browser and can highlight copy from Nate's doc and ask the Assistant to explain the instructions to me and guide me step by step. That's helped me get unstuck several times. You might try something similar with your tools.

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[Isaac Harder](#)

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Funny, just started using Comet today. Ill try that out. Thanks.

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[Emma Muhleman](#)

[Emma's Substack](#) Jan 10

Comet literally breaks my entire Mac every time I open it. Same with OpenAI's Atlas. I guess I'm alone with this one. Seems like these "browsers" work on others' systems, eh?

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[Jonathan Goodman](#) Jan 11

It does for me. I'm fairly certain Comet is just a forked version of Chrome with all the Perplexity bits added in. So, if your machine handles Chrome, you'd think it would run Comet too.

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[Jonathan Goodman](#)

[Jonathan Goodman](#) Jan 9 *Edited*

I ran into this same (perhaps) field mapping issue. I fixed it by adding more sample messages into Slack and running them through the Code app. That helped establish the fields (e.g. Context) I had been searching for in vain.

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[Evan Troxel](#)

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Thanks, this eventually worked for me too. My process: I asked Notion to create fictitious entries for each database as prompts I then used in Slack. I pasted them into Slack and loaded them into the Slack trigger in Zapier and then went down to the bottom of the Path node using that information, and then did that over and over for each additional path (A → D). But then it all fell apart once again for me. Let's not even get into part 5 which doesn't work at all because the Thread_TS option isn't even there.... I skipped ahead to the weekly

digest Zap in part 6, but it was all for nothing because there's no way that I can find to filter Notion entries effectively.

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[Jonathan Goodman](#) Jan 12

You're right. Those instructions in the guide no longer work because of the changes in Zapier and Notion. I loaded the instructions in Claude as a project. I asked Claude to evaluate the instructions and come up with alternative strategies to get to the end goal.

I got the daily digest to work (Claude queries Notion directly and creates the Daily Digest and Weekly summary). I got the weekly digest to work. I've not gone back to the fix capability. I'm going to give it a week and decide if it's even needed.

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[Chris](#)

[Jan 10](#)

Anyone had any luck building out the Daily Digest Zap? I can't find the right filters. For some reason the "Find Data Source Items" action event for Notion isn't letting me pick up and filter on the fields Nate asked.

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[Drew Grgich](#)

[Drew Grgich](#) Jan 11

I resorted to using the Query with Advanced JSON. Gemini helped. However, I'm not confident it is bundling things the way I need it to in order to get things bubbling up the way I expect. for example, this morning's daily digest didn't list things I would expect it to.

That said, I'm seeing the brilliance of this approach and dedicated to getting this working as I see the magic.

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[Matt Gough](#)

[Jan 11](#)

Some great inspiration in here, both from Nate and the community at large..

Having ploughed a number of hours into this today (an enthusiastic amateur) there are a couple of key points that I think are worth flagging for the record..

Zapier in particular has upgraded a lot of its functions since the instructions were written.

I've navigated most of the issues up until Section 5 where the gaps start to be really exposed..

5.2 - Trigger for Threaded Replies (NOW REMOVED). This means the 'fix' filter needs to only be contained in your replies, and not every post you automate to Slack notifying of posting to the brain (4.6 Action 3).

5.6 - The removal of Threaded Replies means Zapier is returning TS data for each post, but no Thread_TS. That means the Slack Thread_TS data in the Inbox Log DB is no longer accessible / linked to the record...

The other big shift in Zapier / Notion functionality is changes to Find Database Item (now Find Data Source Items) which is seriously impacting 6.3-6.5.

As a result of not being able to limit / filter items the ability to complete 6 & 7 and run the (much needed) reports may be unachievable without use of other tools / workarounds..

Currently trying to navigate with ChatGPT5.2. But slow progress.

Really appreciate the ideas. And the prompts. And the codes. But wanted to share that the instructions are not as explicit as you may hope (or I may need!)

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[Jonathan Goodman](#)

[Jonathan Goodman](#) Jan 11

Appreciate your documenting this, Matt.

I've hit the same issues in the 5-series steps. Sorry to hear what's yet in store in the 6's.

If anyone figures out any workarounds, please share.

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[Matt Gough](#)

[Jan 11](#)

All good.

My (practical) workaround for today is to use a couple of different page views in Notion for the coming couple of weeks. Beta test it. See what's useful and what isn't, and then try and get back on the Zapier horse from there..

I won't get the automation & alerts. But I can still check, act & review..

Happy to share the ChatGPT instructions for a simple setup for both if you'd like it?

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[Jonathan Goodman](#)

[Jonathan Goodman](#) Jan 11

Good idea.

No thanks on the share.

I'm using Claude to figure out a workaround after it also hit a wall in Step 6.

It suggests letting the AI create the daily digest directly, rather than going through Zapier.
Imma try that.

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[Matt Gough](#)

[Jan 11](#)

Fair play. Good luck on coding your way round it.. Pls keep us posted!

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[Jonathan Goodman](#)

[Jonathan Goodman](#) Jan 11

Sure enough, Claude devised a way around the change in Zapier capabilities by having Claude read the Notion databases directly and then process a summary. I've got three working Zaps, holding off on the Fix capability to see if it's even needed.

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[Simon](#)

[Jan 14](#)

Jonathan, your idea worked fantastic. I copied your statement of what you did and walked me right through it. I have Capture, Daily update, and on demand update now. The Notion token and uploading each database (which Claude helped reformat so Zap could read) seemed to be the magic key

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[Jonathan Goodman](#)

[Jonathan Goodman](#) 8d

Great to hear it!

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[Chris Chandler](#)

[Chris Chandler](#) Jan 11

Thanks for sharing your findings! @Nate, could you enable commenting on the guide so community members can mark up with their findings?

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[Gabriel Rymberg](#)

[A personal relationship with God](#) Jan 9

This 2nd brain has been my reality for the last 6 weeks. I built it in Claude Code.

You can download it now from the Q-Marketplace (it's free!)

[the-ai-masters.com/q-marketplace](#)

DM me if you need anything or want to share your experience.

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[Evan Troxel](#)

[6d](#)

Hi Gabriel, I'm curious how you're handling the Slack thread issue in Zapier before diving into your solution. Can you shed some light on that aspect?

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[Gabriel Rymberg](#)

[A personal relationship with God](#)6d

I'm not using Zapier at all.

I work in Claude Code (CC)!and it connects to Slack via MCP.

I get my summary when I start a new CC session or anytime during the session when I ask for it.

Since I spend all my working hours in front of CC anyway, I wanted to adapt Nate's design for CC and that's what I did...

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[Eric Ediger](#)

[Jan 10](#)

I ended up putting my own spin on Nate's workflow and built a lightweight "Second Brain" app using Claude Code.

Tech stack:

Python and Flask for the backend

Single HTML file for the frontend, no build step

Claude API for classification and natural-language queries

Whisper for voice transcription

Obsidian vault for storage

The whole thing runs locally and launches with a double-click from my desktop (shell script).

Time invested: Roughly one hour, end to end

Almost all of it spent in conversation: defining behavior, adjusting requirements, and filling in edge cases rather than writing code line by line.

My wife has already populated it with a few things so... I guess it's a win?

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[Chuck Jewell](#)

[Jan 11](#)

Can you share?

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<https://github.com/ericediger/PERSONAL-BOARDROOM>

<https://github.com/ericediger/SECOND-BRAIN>

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Jan 10

github? That'd be niiiceee

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<https://github.com/ericediger/PERSONAL-BOARDROOM>

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[Robert Gorski](#)

[Auto's EVs and AI](#)
Jan 9

Ugh, I want to do this at work, but I'm stuck with all Microsoft products there. We have Teams, Outlook, and OneNote.

I can call our internal LLMs through an API call (we use Enterprise LLMs only due to fear of secrets getting out).

Any thoughts on how to make something similar to what Nate describes with what I have?

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[Chris Chandler](#)

[Chris Chandler](#) Jan 9

I have a similar problem, but our internal LLM doesn't have an API 

Given copilot's deep integration these days, I have to assume something could be done here, but the challenge might be replacing Zapier 

Instead of using slack or Teams as your inbox, what about a dedicated chatbot thread? Then you just preload the instructions and schema and let the LLM do most of the work?

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[Tim](#)

[Jan 11](#)

Power Automate is Microsoft's answer to Zapier in the Ms ecosystem. Check it out as I'm sure it can do what is needed here.

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[Dan Holly](#) 

[Growing Growth](#) Jan 9

I'm thinking about using Notion has the front facing layer because I can access Notion web on my work computer. Then, the automation can run and I can view the response of the AI output in Notion.

Currently running a local claude code enviroment on my personal laptop but afraid I look "scetchy" with 2 laptops at work, haha.

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[Chris Chandler](#)

[Chris Chandler](#) Jan 10

So long as your input mechanism is frictionless, it should work!

Is that your personal Notion account then? The trick there might be overcoming the instinct to do that first organising/sorting/categorizing step yourself. I guess it's an individual thing, but likely a worthwhile trade if it means getting your system off the ground!

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[Panagiotis Koletsos](#)

[Panagiotis Koletsos](#) Jan 10

I have a similar problem with the M365 ecosystem. I was thinking creating a Copilot Studio agent and doing an @agent_name within my ME chat or in teams that I have shared the agent. And then maybe use an M365 platform as database? Maybe OneNote? Haven't really given a lot of thought into it.

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[Jeffrey Zyjeski](#)

[Future Law Insider: Where Polic...Jan 9](#)

I'm stuck in the same problem. I have my work email, a Gmail and a personal domain email through cloud and have different levels of access with different tools. I finally got my home outlook to have access to all three, but almost no programs can access the Microsoft enterprise work email where the stuff I would love to work with is....

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[Aaron Lawson](#)

[Fork in the RoadJan 11](#)

Same here, stuck in Microsoft Jail, hoping that building this system for personal will help build the proof of concept to adopt similar things at work

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[Andrew Aversa](#)

[Jan 9](#) Edited

I've been trying to put this together but Zapier seems to be missing the "Trigger for Threaded Replies" option - the lack of this option makes it seemingly impossible to implement the system as described. Am I missing something?

EDIT: I know that there is a value for "is_thread" which can be checked in a separate Filter step. That said, the trigger itself does not seem to pull threaded replies at all. In other words, ANY reply made doesn't even make its way into the possible test records.

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[Jesse](#)

[Jesse's Substack](#) [Jan 10](#)

If you use Claude, maybe you could try the Claude extension for browser. Feed in the plan and let it do it. It can access the site ([make.com](#), n8n, etc) and understand what to do. Just a thought.

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[Dan Holly](#) 

[Growing Growth](#) [Jan 9](#)

You mean Slack Trigger for Threaded Replies? Why not just send a fresh channel message everytime? Do use threads?

Also, if you can't get around using threads. Maybe check if n8n has it?

Cheers,

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[Adrian](#)

[Jan 9](#) Edited

Honestly the best article i read for a very long time, i actually paid the full subscription for this, i was thinking of building something like this myself, over the years i lost a lot of knowledge and ideas because i didn't have a reliable way to process them without me doing it manually which at certain times was excruciating not because of doing the thing but because of the need to make decisions, what's the note, what tags what folder but what if i am wrong what if i miss something etc.

Thanks for this, for people who really implement and use something like this it would be a game changer for them

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[RCW](#)

[Jan 14](#)

I have spent 5+ hours at this point going back and forth with claude/chatgpt/gemini to try and fight through the same issues that other people have been having. I'm now completely stuck on part 6. I ended up using the find data source items action in Zapier, but I'm not even sure that's right, and it doesn't work for Projects because it doesn't allow to filter by status or tag. I'm not sure where to go from here because I feel like I'm stuck. Has anyone

gotten all the way through here. Do we think there's a chance that Nate will post updated instructions? If anyone wants to idea share on how we can make it to the end of this thing, reach out.

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[Moudy Elbayadi](#)

[Jan 9](#)

I'm using WhatsApp >>> n8n private instance to Notion

Hope to have it fully running

I also highly recommend that use Claude code as your configuration engineer for the entire process

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would you be willing to share it ? stevebromail@gmail.com would love whatsapp for inbox
how did you do it ?

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[Manuel Hernandez](#)

[Jan 9](#)

One thing I'm still trying to reason through at a systems level is the distinction between categorization and context.

Categorization feels like a good fit for AI. Given a schema, models are good at classifying inputs into stable buckets.

Context feels different to me. What matters to me today vs next week vs someday often isn't encoded in the item itself. It's tied to where my attention, energy, and current horizon actually are, which can shift independently of the content.

It seems like you'd need some kind of feedback loop for that. Without it, it would be easy for a system to conflate "what this is" with "when it matters," which feel like very different problems.

I'm curious how you think about sourcing that signal in practice. Explicit user input, patterns over time, or something else?

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[Kevin Rank](#)

[Jan 9](#)

Maybe additional tags? This is a good thought.

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[Andy](#)

[Jan 12](#)

This whole article reminds me of the Getting Things Done (GTD) system, especially this comment. I've been on a bit of a personal journey to integrate AI into my system and automate some of the administrivia.

In GTD, the "when it matters" is defined by where you are, how much time you have available, deadline, and even how much energy you have.

And then, I'm thinking about using this project to teach myself Claude Code. :-)

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[Tom Malcolm \(tomRmalcolm\)](#)

[Jan 9](#)

Nate, absolutely unbelievable the accuracy of this article! I am so excited to get this built. Question about API use. You recommended OpenAI or Claude but not Gemini. Is there a reason? I asked Gemini3 and it said Gemini would be better given it's larger token quantity (2M) among other reasons including being cheaper by 50%. Maybe there's a conflict of interest there, lol.

What are your thoughts on this?

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[Brian Berge](#)

[Brian Berge4d](#)

Nice project. Going to give this one a go. I did make some changes. Will be back later today (hopefully) with the results.

Slack -> Zulip

Notion -> Posgresql (Directus on top)

Zapier -> Nifi

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[Brian Berge](#)

[Brian Berge](#) 4d

Final working version:

Edge: Caddy

Capture UI: Zulip

Truth UI: Directus

System of Record: PostgreSQL (host)

Loop Worker/API: FastAPI (son-ingest)

Sorter: Gemini 2 Flash via OpenRouter

Testing: E2E suite (Python) + wrapper script

Scheduling (next): cron/systemd or a small worker container

Memory (later): pgvector in the same Postgres

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[Gerry Keith](#)

[7d](#)

So Nate posts his Second Brain system on January 9. Anthropic announces Claude Cowork on January 13. And yesterday Nate posts his thoughts on Claude Cowork.

Nate's Second Brain: Slack > Zapier > Claude/ChatGPT > Notion

Gabriel Rymberg's Second Brain: Slack > Claude Code > YAML files

Does Claude Cowork have the potential to create a new process for this "Second Brain"? Could Claude Cowork accomplish this with Slack and a collection of local Markdown files in folders?

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[Simon](#)

[Jan 14](#)

FYI - Jonathan Goodman's idea: "Claude devised a way around the change in Zapier capabilities by having Claude read the Notion databases directly and then process a summary. I've got three working Zaps, holding off on the Fix capability to see if it's even needed." worked very well for me as well. I can type "update please" and gives me a great update that Claude is creating and sends in that Thread. My daily update arrives via Zap channel which is actually nice to have it off the second brain channel.

I am brand new to Zapier and programming in general btw

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[Luis Pereira](#)

[Jan 12](#)

I got so excited on the concept I followed Nate's recipe and made it work until Zapier failed to trigger on running mode... So I replaced it with a Python bot and published it here: <https://github.com/luisrpereirat/captureflow/tree/main/captureflow>. I also added a "HowTo" database to keep track of all the hacks/tricks I've gathering all my life...

[Like \(1\)](#)

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[Scott Person](#)

[Tech Cycles](#)[Jan 11](#)*Edited*

This is excellent - thank you @Nate! I got it working with Discord, Make, and Obsidian but I didn't like all of the pieces and the potential costs. So...I recreated the whole thing in the Apple ecosystem using iMessage instead of Slack and landing the messages on the file system in my Obsidian vault. It uses Claude Code with a normal subscription so no API charges. All features are implemented including replies in iMessage both ways to facilitate clarifying notes and report notification. Not fully tested but I'm actively using it and will fix whatever bugs I find.

It's here if anyone is interested (install and deinstall scripts are provided): https://github.com/jsperson/second_brain

[Like \(1\)](#)

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[Jonathan Goodman](#)

[Jonathan Goodman](#)[Jan 11](#)

Impressive 🤯. So many ways to build a second brain! Who knew?

[Like \(1\)](#)

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[Ned](#)

[Jan 10](#)

I did mine, but it was pain in a.. It took me 4 hours to configure it.

Now it is working greta. I even connected to trello, where my org use it.

I did it with the help of [Claude.ai](#). I created a project, connected it to slack, notion and Zapier and it did it by it self with a little bit help of mine :-)

[Like \(1\)](#)

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[Ulrik Larsen](#)

[Jan 10](#)

This hits every problem I have ever had with notes or productivity apps.

Nate must have a window into my soul :-)

So ready to try over the weekend

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[Scott Cady](#)

[Jan 9](#)

Thanks Nate. I really like this approach but how do you handle updates as you execute in this setup? How do you let the system know that you've completed an admin task so it doesn't assume that's top priority tomorrow? Aren't you then back in Notion filtering databases to find the task record you completed?

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[Chris Chandler](#)

[Chris Chandler](#)[Jan 11](#)

Hey Scott, Admin DB objects have a status attribute defined in the schema. In Nate's example, the status is either "to-do" or "done", so that's how the system knows 

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[Victor Cuevas](#)

[Jan 9](#)

So crazy, I am actually building a similar system this weekend. Right now keeping up with my second Notion brain is indeed tough due to all the manual intervention required. As an active solo dad of 4, many days it feels like I am flying by the seat of my pants. I do feel that leveraging AI as my backend can help me refine my current workflow.

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[Matt Harris](#)

[Jan 10](#)

Same, Dad of 4, and hoping this solution is going to help, reading the discussion, seems like it is not as easy (1 hour?) as Nate is making out perhaps - but the end result sounds promising..

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[Hovig](#)

[3d](#)

I'm really thrilled about your YouTube video, which is why I decided to give this Substack a try. I'm hoping it will help me bring some structure to my otherwise rather chaotic life.

For my setup, I'm using your approach with a few deliberate replacements:

- I'm replacing Slack with Telegram, mainly because Telegram offers a simple and flexible API. I don't actively use Slack, and adding yet another app wouldn't be effective for me. WhatsApp and Meta's business tooling feels unnecessarily complex for what I need.
- I'm replacing Zapier with n8n. I'm running it self-hosted, primarily for cost reasons, but also because I value full control and keeping my data with me.
- I'm replacing Notion with Obsidian, a local file system, and NocoDB. I don't enjoy working with Notion, and I don't want my core knowledge system hosted elsewhere.

The main reasons behind these choices are privacy, cost control, and avoiding vendor lock-in. I'm not an engineer, but I enjoy tinkering and experimenting, so I've intentionally leaned toward more hands-on and flexible solutions.

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[Steven Porter](#)

[5d](#)

Nate,

I was really inspired by this one! I built this with Slack, Notion, n8n, and OpenAI. My company is a Microsoft / Asana shop. Power Automate has limited connectors, so my final stack will be Teams (chat), Asana, n8n, and CoPilot. The daily digest is a game-changer. Getting a fresh daily list and the ability to click and go straight to the Asana task and add notes or change the status is a huge workflow improvement.

I want to add orchestration to the organization tool now. I am creating a section in Asana called AI tasks. The goal is to build AI purpose agents to do menial tasks like respond to an email or schedule a meeting. I add enough detail in the Asana notes to describe what I want done, then move it to the AI Tasks section. Looking forward to building this out to do research, brainstorm ideas, write status reports, documentation, and other things I do daily that do not use much of my first brain!

Thank you for creating and sharing this framework in such detail. I welcome any thoughts or comments!

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[David](#)

[5d](#)

Hi, I am a subscriber, Seems amazing, but will require some investment from my part.

What I learned is that today with AI, every day there is a new solution. Even though this is my main challenge, and seems to be an amazing solution, it would be great to see an example at work. How it is really working? How it looks like? Is there a way you can show us some sort of a case study?

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[Aaron Lawson](#)

[Fork in the Road](#)^{6d}

Aaron Lawson + Claude (collaborative post)

We've been working through the Daily Digest build and hit the same wall others have mentioned — the dynamic date filtering problem in Zapier's Notion actions.

What we tried:

"Query Data Source (Advanced)" — the Advanced Query JSON field is plain text only, no variable picker, no way to insert dynamic dates from previous steps

"Find Data Source Items" — the UI-based filters only expose a subset of fields (no Event Status, no Last Edited Time)

Solutions we evaluated:

Drew's Advanced JSON approach — doesn't solve the dynamic date problem, just relocates it

Jonathan's "let AI filter" approach — works, but scales poorly. If you're sending your whole database to Claude to find "completed today," you're paying tokens for date math the Notion API should do for free. At 3000+ records this gets expensive.

Filter in Zapier Code step — pull all records unfiltered, filter in JavaScript. Same scaling problem — you're transferring everything through Zapier.

What we're trying next:

Using Zapier's Webhooks action to call the Notion API directly. The webhook body accepts dynamic variables, so we can build the filter JSON with today's date from a Formatter step. Filtering stays server-side where it belongs.

Requires setting up a Notion Integration API key, but it's a one-time setup for a proper solution.

Has anyone else gone the Webhooks route? Would love to compare notes.

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[Aaron Lawson](#)

[Fork in the Road4d](#)

I found a way through the problem using Zapier to run the code, here is my status on the Nate Jones Second Brain (with the Lawson Variant)

Component Status Last Updated

CAPTURE LOOP  Working 2025-01-14

FIX BUTTON  Deferred 2025-01-15

CLOSURE DIGEST (5pm)  Working 2026-01-18

ON-DEMAND DIGEST  Not Started —

WEEKLY REVIEW  Not Started —

OBJECTIVES ROUTING  Not Started —

sb-ideas CHANNEL  Planned 2025-01-17

CL_Idea DATABASE  Planned 2025-01-17

MULTI-CHANNEL CAPTURE (clips)  Planned 2025-01-17

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[Scott](#)

[6d](#)

So does anyone have this full functioning and running efficiently?

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[Leslie Pratton](#)

[6d](#)

Could this work with IFTTT instead of Zapier?

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[Richard](#)

[7d](#)

My first reaction to this was "2026's second brain with 2024's tools? Sus."

Zapier + Notion is brittle.

Daily digests ≠ accountability.

Good principles, workable demo... but still more system maintenance than most people expect.

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[Ben McNeill](#)

[Ben McNeill8d](#)

What is the classification prompt and the daily digest prompt?

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[Chris Chandler](#)

[Chris ChandlerJan 13](#)

Nate subs, the call is out to the community to share your second brain implementations! Head to the subscriber chat for the start of the

thread: https://open.substack.com/chat/posts/aaa25df4-4982-47b5-b623-d478b439f6ac?utm_source=share&utm_medium=android&r=pm7th

Non-subs: Get in here, we're doin' stuff! It's worth every penny 

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[David S Clark](#)

[David S Clark](#)[Jan 13](#)

Wow! I spent all 2 weeks of Christmas vacation building several iterations of a personal management system/second brain. I should have asked Nate to post this mid December instead 🎉. I am not sad that I worked on it though because I was able to wrap my head around a lot of the principles he was talking about because I've been trying to get at those principles actively for several weeks now. This post helped the Penny drop and I will be building the system and seeing how it integrates with some of the other components, I've already built

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[Gustavo Salami](#)

[Jan 12](#)

Stuck at Step 4.7. Where can we figure this out together? Did anyone create a Discord or something for the 2nd brain setup?

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[Wesley Deese](#)

[Jan 11](#)*Edited*

I've got to step 4.3 regarding replacing the {{Message Text}} with the dynamic data from the Slack trigger. I can't figure out where to get that. This really "guide" really needs some screen shots. Can anyone help?

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[Gustavo Salami](#)

[Jan 12](#)

check here, you just type /text at that place and select the slack text
thingy: <https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/fuinqjxocv0yj1boie37k/Screenshot-2026-01-12-at-20.12.38.png?rlkey=otl7zp7h69g2j4961p7v0kf09&dl=0>

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[Bryant Smith](#)

[Jan 11](#) Edited

I am stuck too. I'm sure that I could change things up and use different tools but I really want to do this as is. I have a tendency to tweak things and I just need this to work without fidgeting with things. And wouldn't you know it, when you really need is exactly when you don't have time to figure things out. That said...

Who's gotten the farthest with this? I am stuck on 4.5, but suspect there are issues with my implementation on 4.3. With a couple of savvy programmers and a zoom meeting maybe we can figure this out and post something. I'm a software developer, but most of this is not in my wheelhouse, but AI has helped me get this far. I am guessing there could be other people who can team up to implement the exact setup (competition) or other variations.

One note... Couldn't get the private channel to show up in Zapier... Had to make inbox public, if anybody is stuck there.

Working on the JavaScript now in 4.3.

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[Isaac Harder](#)

[Jan 13](#)

Ive done everything except the daily and weekly digest. Not sure what the best way to share what Ive done though. NGL, Nates guide goes to shit at roughly 4.1-2, so mine has quite a few different settings.

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[Aaron Lawson](#)

[Fork in the Road](#)[Jan 11](#)

Nate, thanks so much for this! I just wish you had posted it before I spent Christmas Break working on the same goal in a different direction! 😊

So, we urgently need a Part 2 Video from you, with the context map integration into this core loop. I built a prompt based on your video on the memory problem, organized in Markdown by # PERMANENT CONTEXT

STRUCTURAL FACTS, # ACTIVE INITIATIVES, # PROCEDURAL MEMORY, and # WORKING MEMORY

We seem tantalizingly close to a 'memory compression' agent to use your weekly notes to update the #ACTIVE INITIATIVES and #WORKING MEMORY Sessions.

I was an early user of Evernote back when it first came out, and Im one of those 1/20 that has been trying and hitting the wall for 20 yrs. The fact that its possible now means that I AM JACKED!

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[FRED GRAVER](#)

[The AI Writer's Studio](#)Jan 11

NATE -- I am trying to set this up. I'm in Zapier and trying to connect my Claude account. I have a Claude MAX account and a Zapier Pro plan. Keep getting: Failed to create a results in AI by Zapier

Your credit balance is too low to access the Anthropic API. Please go to Plans & Billing to upgrade or purchase credits.

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[FRED GRAVER](#)

[The AI Writer's Studio](#)Jan 11

Thanks. Funny that Nate ends with “a lot of you won’t do this...” Well, there’s a reason.

[Like](#)

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[Jonathan Goodman](#)

[Jonathan Goodman](#)Jan 11 Edited

I had luck feeding in every error prompt into my AIs (Perplexity Assistant and later a Claude project both with access to Nate's Build Guide). There's a lot that's out of date in the guide. The build logic remains strong. Claude can get you unstuck and devise alternative strategies for sections of the guide that have fallen out of date.

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[Ro](#)

[Jan 11](#)

Two points:

1. Would really like a version that can run locally. Nate did mention Obsidian and local writes being tougher for cloud AI - but that shouldn't be a hurdle for local LLM. However - jumping from zapier to something like n8n or windmill is... Daunting.

I recognize there may be real limitations with the ability to categorize etc from a smaller model that can run locally in non-datacenter hw.

2. Context. Like long term use of this workflow. Use it multiple times a day for a few years, and I'm concerned about the viability of current LLM context windows (I know, I know - they keep pushing out what they claim to handle, and so many are actively working on paths to remove this as a limitation).

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[Scott Person](#)

[Tech Cycles](#)[Jan 11](#)*Edited*

I'm using it with obsidian. It's all just files so I would think that a local LLM would handle it easily.

I wrapped the LLM call in python so the AI only handles the classification and not the file operations.

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[David Johnson](#)

[Jan 11](#)

Howdy! I'm just learning Notion. It looks like there's no option to select "Table - Inline", my options are either: Table, Table View, or Database Inline. Which is the right one? Thanks!

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[Jonathan Goodman](#)

[Jonathan Goodman](#)[Jan 11](#)

Same advice I offered in another reply: Use one or more of your AIs (Perplexity Assistant and later a Claude project both with access to Nate's Build Guide were my go-tos). There's a lot that's out of date in the guide, little language things like you found in Notion. The build logic remains strong. Your AI can get you unstuck and devise alternative strategies for sections of the guide that have fallen out of date.

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[David Johnson](#)

[Jan 11](#)

Thank you! Making the guide into a file I attach to a project is a good idea. I appreciate you!

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[Jonathan Goodman](#)

[Jonathan Goodman](#)[Jan 11](#)

You're welcome. Let us know when you get your Second Brain live.

[Like \(1\)](#)

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[Dan](#)

[Jan 11](#)

Hey can you create one that doesn't use zapier/slack/notion? Something that is an open source and free as possible.

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[Reply](#)

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[H. Mad](#)

[Jan 11](#)

Subscription to my first Substack for this!!! my nerves and mind thank you so very much



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[Chad Woolley](#)

[Chad Woolley](#)[Jan 11](#)

I don't understand how the "Projects" database is supposed to work. It seems like a collection of _tasks_ for existing projects, but no way to indicate which project a task is assigned to.

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[Chris Chandler](#)

[Chris Chandler](#)[Jan 11](#)

You could add a "parent_project" attribute to your Projects database, but I think you'll have to be explicit about it with each entry. It'll be pretty hard for the LLM to classify the task without all the necessary context. Actually you could probably tweak the intake logic to *require* the parent_project attribute be defined when submitting something intended for the Projects DB.

Notice how this one step is already making it harder to use the system? Consider omitting it and trying it for a while. If you really can't tell what project your task belongs to, then add it in later.

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[Chris Chandler](#)

[Chris Chandler](#) Jan 11

Correction!:

The schema Nate created contains a project attribute already  , so that's how you associate an entry with a project.

For PROJECTS:

```
{  
  "destination": "projects",  
  "confidence": 0.85,  
  "data": {  
    "name": "Project Name",  
    "status": "active",  
    "next_action": "Specific next action to take",  
    "notes": "Additional context",  
    "tags": ["work"]  
  }  
}
```

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[Wayne Geils](#)

[Jan 10](#)

I'm currently building this system, and I have a question for the group. Like many of you, I work in tech where confidential data exists, and my employer limits the tools and integrations I can use. I feel that to have a successful system, I need to merge my personal and work contexts. So how have any of you managed to integrate both sensitive work data and personal information in a way that mitigates risk?

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[Chris Chandler](#)

[Chris Chandler](#)[Jan 11](#)

Hey Wayne, I think it will really depend on what your employer's IT team and policies will allow. Even if you figured something out, the traffic might later be flagged as "data leakage" or "Shadow AI" use and you could get locked out.

Suggest you keep everything in a personal system, but keep your work related items generic (or obscure them with codenames you'll remember).

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[Bronson Elliott](#)

[Learning Out Loud](#)[Jan 10](#)

I actually just built something like this entirely within Claude Code. My use case is capturing my work - wins, failures, feedback, goals, etc. It all goes in there. The conversation is the experience and the files are the output.

I'd love some feedback: <https://github.com/bronsonelliott/work-os>

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[Steven Fernandez](#)

[Jan 10](#)

I've been doing something similar to this for well over a year, but Nate's post just supercharged my thinking of how to accomplish this. He brings a lot of new ideas to the table that I hadn't thought of, like really classifying this stuff using Json and feeding it into multiple databases, not just one. Really simple in hindsight, but I hadn't thought of it. I also really like the idea of separating the capture tool, database, and processing layers. I was sort of doing this, but not intentionally. I'm sure I am going to modify the heck out of his idea and probably switch up all the tools used, but he got me going in the right direction. A++.

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[Jonathan Goodman](#)

[Jonathan Goodman](#)[Jan 9](#)

I've completed everything up through Part 4, after setting up most of these accounts from scratch. It's taken me a few hours, but it's working!

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[Kevin Rank](#)

[Jan 9](#)

I just set up a local AI Lab, and one of my primary planned uses, was along these lines. I want to bring in Karakeep as well, for creating a good way to track bookmarks (videos, articles, etc) with descriptions so I can bring them back up. I also have been wanting a full second brain instance. I also view this as a valuable way to create an amazing context/knowledgebase engine.

I'll be building it out using a local n8n install on a Raspberry Pi and hope that I can have Ollama do a lot of the heavy lifting and just bounce out to a frontier models when a local model can't function well.

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[Eric Huang](#)

[Jan 9](#)

Incredible article and great Notion/Zapier/Slack set up.

Also very helpful to highlight principles/concepts - for my company, I'm probably gonna replace the stack with Jira/Workato(?)/Slack . But the underlying principle is the same

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[Brian Hendry](#)

[Jan 9](#)

Thanks Nate. I will put this into my daily flow. Two questions: 1) when you speak about confidence levels, does the system learn over time so that as you "correct" the misclassifications and get more comfortable, you can confidently increase the confidence threshold %; 2) at the risk of making it too complex, can you set different confidence thresholds based on importance of the action? As a simple example, if the system makes a mistake and forgets to remind me that my flight departs today in 2 hours, that's more crucial than if it forgets to remind me to pick up bread on my way home.

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[Keola Donaghy](#)

[Jan 9](#)

You've brilliantly pulled together what I struggled to do for months now. You have a new subscriber. Mahalo nui.

[Like](#)

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[Paul Parker](#)

[Paul Parker](#)[Jan 9](#)

I imagine these are pretty highly correlated for me. Certainly I've had times when my brain was full, and I had to focus on getting somewhere I could do capture at while avoiding doing anything in between.

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[Paul Parker](#)

[Paul Parker](#) Jan 9

I'm not in Slack. I'm inclined to do this with email instead. Possibly SMS, but I am concerned about privacy.

iMessage would be most convenient, but would require something sitting around logged into macOS.

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[Tim McAllister](#)

[Tim's Substack](#) Jan 9

Nate, your description of “productivity leakage” is spot on—that’s exactly my experience.

Without a system loop in place, I just never get back to those Covey Quadrant III and IV items. They vanish.

Makes me wonder—what if there was an app that tracked cortisol and HRV against cognitive load?