# My website.

I’d like to take a moment to explain my website’s structure. It’s one I developed while attempting to work out how best to fulfill the wishes of two opposing views as much as possible. I’m pleased to say it turned out very nicely.

## Some context

The situation was the following. My boss had asked me to construct his company a new website (the existing one simply was beyond repair). I started from scratch. Given the vast amount of information the website was to contain, it was crucial to me that the website’s contents could be curated and edited by people without web-development experience. At the request of my colleague, I looked into WordPress, Drupal, and many, many other CMSs with little success. I wanted something even simpler. Something which would never break, never be out-of-date, and still be easy to edit. What I wanted was a Microsoft Word, for websites. Something where I could lay out the text, place in images, stylise the text with bold and italics, but simultaneously inherit the styles of the website, (whose ability to change was also important to me). Markdown would be superb. But wait! I know a tool called Pandoc which can convert documents into HTML from just about any format. One of which happens to be Word.

Here’s the problem. My colleague (quite rightly) says that for technologies which are untested, and serve simple purposes, it’s best not to waste time on building things from scratch. I should look for a finished solution. I did. Another point which was raised was the complexity and maintainability of a Virtual Private Server. If anyone who isn’t myself is to take over the website, they will need complete and intricate knowledge of how to maintain it. Information which isn’t guaranteed to exist. So by way of a hosted solution, I was limited to PHP (WordPress) or a static site. Guess what I chose.

So witness the magnitude of my genius[[1]](#endnote-1) . My solution was to use GitHub Pages because you can customise the build process with Actions. I spent literally the best part of an hour throwing together a python script which from source (including Word, Markdown, Text, HTML and JavaScript) files can generate and template each page according to a predefined templating function, copies all the static resources, and with the help of a few predefined Actions workflows, publishes the website automatically. It’s wonderful. And the best thing is, that with the help of tools like GitFS, each change is a commit, which triggers the workflow to rebuild and publish the website, making it simpler again for the non-technical.

## The scrutiny

My colleague can be *of stubborn nature* to put it lightly, and (rather frustratingly) is rather good at debating. Point was, I didn’t stand a chance against him. So, after giving in and spending just as much time writing a WordPress plugin which converts Word docs into HTML and demonstrating how it was exactly what was asked for, I went for a deployment of my own. And since our company is … a company … hosting on GitHub Pages is explicitly against the T&Cs, so had to alter it slightly to push the finished resources to a static host.

But…

My personal website had been neglected for the better part of two years. Having a finished template and working auto deployment, I’m pleased to say that my website pushes to GitHub Pages. Completely automatically.

I’m pleased to announce that I’ve been successful.

1. Jeremy Clarkson [↑](#endnote-ref-1)