Documentation for developers
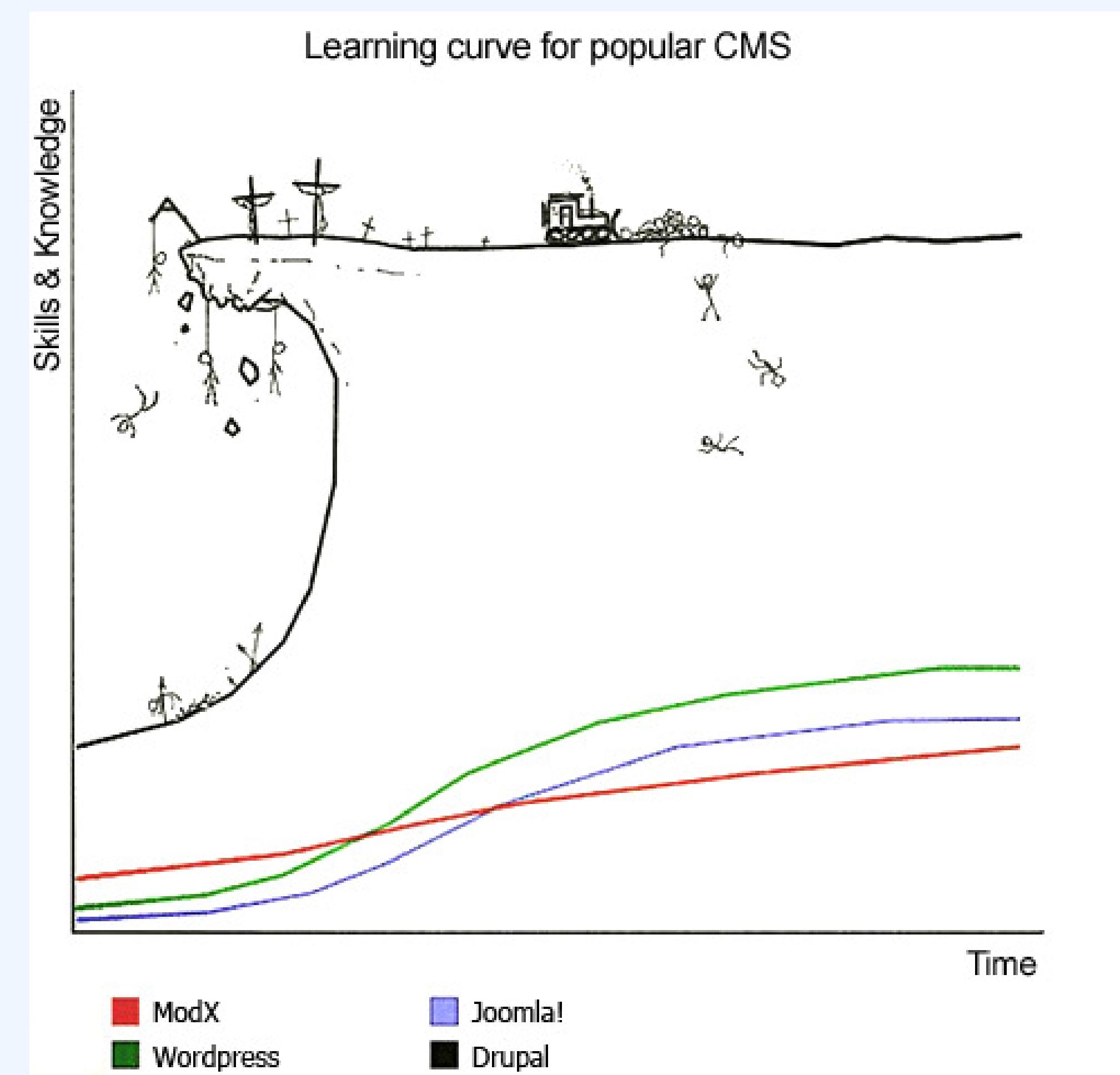
A gift to your future self

Kurt Trowbridge
Front-End Development Team Leader
Gravity Works Design + Development

GRAVITY WORKS

Learning curve for popular CMS platforms

Learning curve for popular CMS

Content types · Nodes · Fields · Taxonomy vocabularies
Display settings · Templates · Image styles · User roles
Permissions · Views · Blocks · Modules · Plugins · Hooks
Workflows · Composer · Drush · Caching

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Content types · Nodes · Fields · Taxonomy vocabularies
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Task management · Meetings · Collaboration · Deadlines
Customer service · Understanding requirements · Email
Scope creep · Professional development · Work/life balance...

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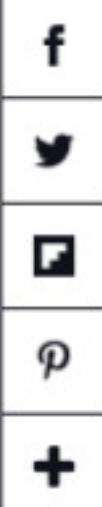Kurt
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There's a lot to learn.

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Taylor Swift's On-Stage Guests See Increased Hype, Says Data

Continuing a tradition that stretches back to her first world tour for Fearless in 2009, Taylor Swift's 1989 World Tour has featured a number of special musical guest duets, from a wide range of...

BY KURT TROWBRIDGE
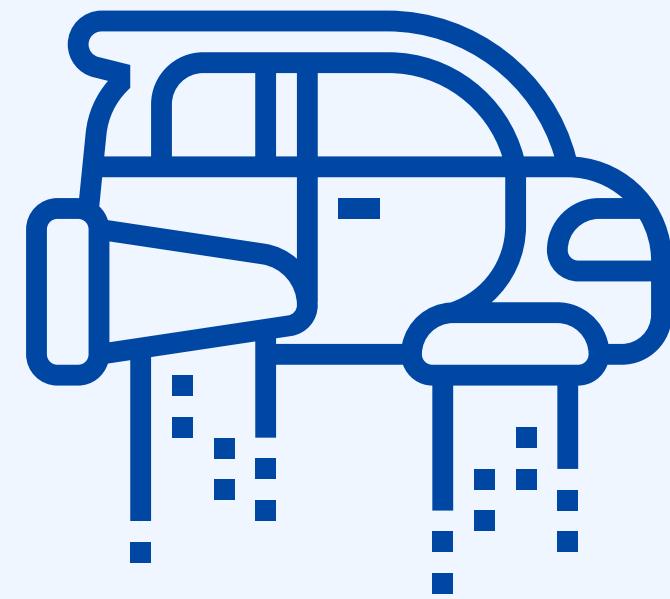
Taylor Swift and Sam Hunt perform during The 1989 Tour at Soldier Field on July 19, 2015 in Chicago, Illinois. Daniel Boczarski/LP5/Getty Images for TAS
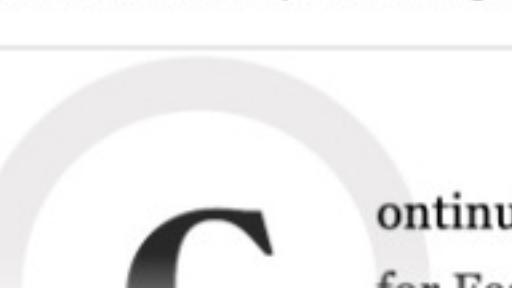
C ontinuing a tradition that stretches back to her first world tour
for Fearless in 2009, Taylor Swift's 1989 World Tour has

Documentation benefits...

01 ————————————

You, now

02 ————————————

Your team

03 ————————————

You, in the future

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Managing the messy middle

Unlocking future potential

Effective > efficient

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5174812218

Kurt
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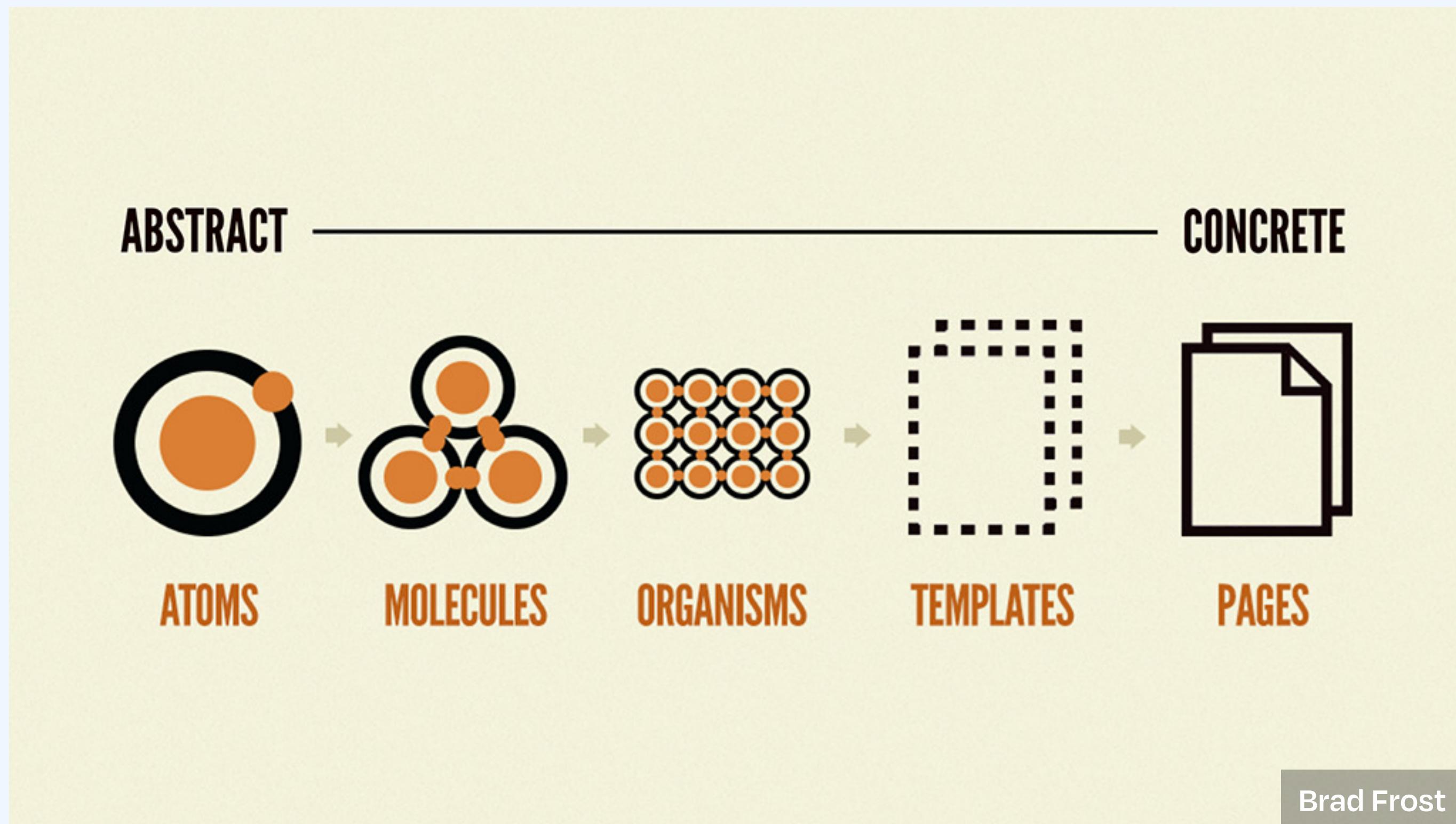
Your memory is an unreliable narrator.

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Component planning

Brad Frost

Atom	▾	Lists		ol ul dl
Atom	▾	Sections		neutral-dark neutral-light primary secondary
Atom	▾	Text		paragraph (<p>) blockquote
Molecule	▾	Accordion		
Molecule	▾	Button Group		
Molecule	▾	Card		card (default) card-bg
Molecule	▾	Checkerboard Piece		
Molecule	▾	Circled Icon		default solid
Molecule	▾	CTA (Call-To-Action)		lined-text-heading shaped-background slanted-background windowshade

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12

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Documenting your content model

Bundle	Field label	Machine name	X	Field group	Field type	Ref. bundle	Req'd
Article (Content type)	Title	-	x		Entity label		y
Article (Content type)	Body	body	x		Text (formatted, long, with summary)		y
Article (Content type)	Display Author	field_display_author	x		Entity reference	Person (Content type)	n
Article (Content type)	Media	field_article_media	x		Entity reference	Image (Media type)	n
Article (Content type)	Image	field_article_image	x		Entity reference	Image (Media type)	n
Article (Content type)	Categories	field_categories	x		Entity reference	Categories (Vocabulary)	n
Article (Content type)	Tags	field_tags	x		Entity reference	Tags (Vocabulary)	n
Article (Content type)	Article Type	field_article_type	x		Entity reference	Article Type (Vocabulary)	n
Event (Content type)	Title	-	x		Entity label		-
Event (Content type)	Description	body	x		Text (formatted, long, with summary)		y
Event (Content type)	Start Date	field_event_start	x		Date		y
Event (Content type)	End Date	field_event_end	x		Date		n
Event (Content type)	Door Time	field_door_time	x		Date		y
Event (Content type)	Duration	field_event_duration	x		Text (plain)		n
Event (Content type)	Place	field_event_place	x		Entity reference	Place (Content type)	n
Event (Content type)	Image	field_event_image	x		Entity reference	Image (Media type)	n
Event (Content type)	Categories	field_categories	x		Entity reference	Categories (Vocabulary)	n
Event (Content type)	Tags	field_tags	x		Entity reference	Tags (Vocabulary)	n
Event (Content type)	Event Type	field_event_type	x		Entity reference	Event Type (Vocabulary)	n
Image (Media type)	Name	-	x		Entity label		-
Image (Media type)	Image	image	x		Image		y
Image (Media type)	Categories	field_categories	x		Entity reference	Categories (Vocabulary)	n
Image (Media type)	Tags	field_tags	x		Entity reference	Tags (Vocabulary)	n
Page (Content type)	Title	-	x		Entity label		-
Page (Content type)	Body	body	x		Text (formatted, long, with summary)		n
Page (Content type)	Image	field_page_image	x		Entity reference	Image (Media type)	n
Page (Content type)	Categories	field_categories	x		Entity reference	Categories (Vocabulary)	n

Drupal Spec Tool

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Development task planning (1/2)

- Make your title actionable—start with a verb

- Identify a problem, and make the title the solution

- Include descriptions when context is needed

- Don't be afraid to rename tasks or update descriptions later

Allow admins to manually reorder the list of Resources that appear on a second-level Legal Issue page

🕐 Estimated time	Add estimated time
⌄ GW Priority	Low
⌄ Task Status	PM Review
☑ QA Categories	Resources Layout + Design + Content
⌄ Project Phase	QA

Description

Example page: Divorce

Client would like to be able to manually choose the order of Resources that appear on this page.

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Development task planning (2/2)

		Build: Drupal admin site			
1	✓	Feedback Collection: Adjust option labels	👤 Kurt Trowbr...	Ready	30m
2	✓	Generate PDF of Webform result, to share with subm	👤 Kurt Trowbr...	Ready	3h 00m
3	✓	All content types: add field to disable node's share/p	👤 Kurt Trowbr...	Ready	15m
4	✓	Notify translators when content is in need of transla	👤 Kurt Trowbr...	Backlog	4h 00m
5	✓	Implement Markdown editing capabilities 2💬	👤 Kurt Trowbr...	Roadblo...	5h 00m
6	✓	Build Feedback Collection dashboard	👤 Kurt Trowbr...	Backlog	6h 00m
7	✓	Add Feedback Collection information to content edit	👤 Kurt Trowbr...	Ready	4h 00m
8	✓	Determine whether or not Google Analytics 4 admin	👤 Kurt Trowbr...	Backlog	4h 00m
9	✓	Determine how to configure Looker Studio integratic	👤 Kurt Trowbr...	Backlog	8h 00m
10	✓	Configure translation workflows and interface	👤 Kurt Trowbr...	Ready	16h 00m
11	✓	Configure translation integration with DeepL	👤 Kurt Trowbr...	Ready	10h 00m
12	✓	Implement metadata on all content types 1💬	👤 Kurt Trowbr...	Backlog	3h 00m
13	✓	Automatically calculate Next Review Date base(4💬	👤 Kurt Trowbr...	Active	2h 00m
14	✓	Write migration for Issue nodes 1💬	👤 Kurt Trowbr...	Client	1h 00m

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Documentation is the act of thinking and then putting those thoughts on paper.

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Miller's Law
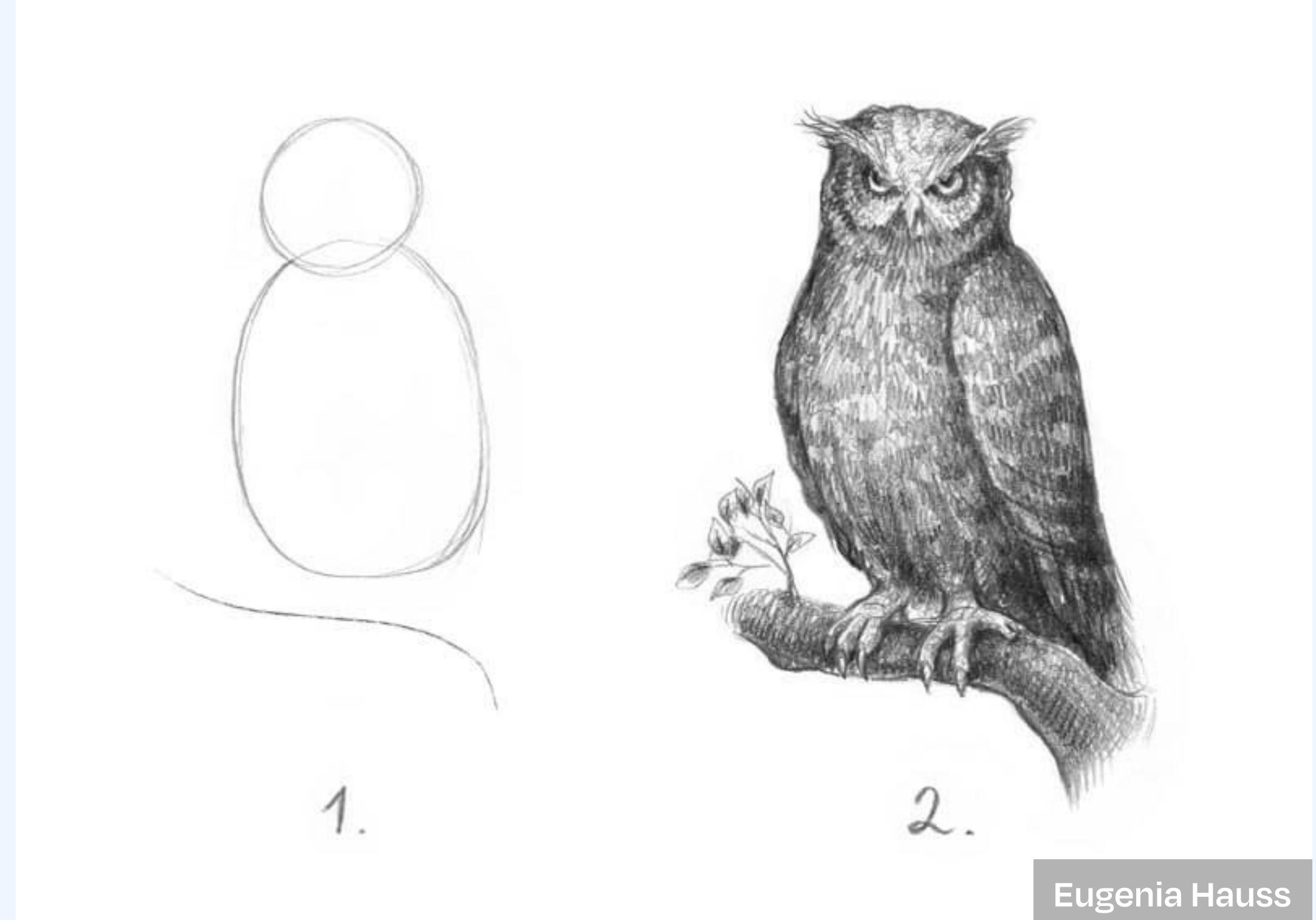
The immediate memory span of people is limited to approximately seven items, plus or minus two.

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?????????

(517) 481-2218

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Benefits of chunking

- Breaks down large tasks into smaller, more manageable pieces

- Makes it easier to make progress between meetings and in spare time

- Reduces cognitive overhead

- Enables delegation and faster feedback

Eugenia Hauss

Chunking also prevents this.

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Document where you're going to see it.

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Documenting code with comments

- Good documentation is self-descriptive, but include business logic where needed

- Use chunking to think through the code before you write it

- Leave URLs as breadcrumbs to inspiration or earlier thinking

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Architecture Decision Records (ADRs)

- Document "invisible standards" that are expected, but not yet written down

- Include context about why the decision was made

- Should exist for the long term, but can change as technology evolves

Use Paragraphs Library module to manage repeatable, reusable content

№ ADR #   ADR-16

⊘ Status   🔒 Approved

↗ Feature(s)   📄 Content Requirements

👥 Author(s)   🧑 Kurt Trowbridge

⌄ 1 more property

🧑 Add a comment...

Context

The WLH team has requested that content be repeatable and editable from a single location. These repeatable content blocks are not just in the form of structure, like Paragraphs are meant to provide, but the content itself should also be repeated. Paragraphs are really only meant to repeat the layout, not also the content within. Thus, we need further consideration of something that will let us repeat both the content and the structure.

Decision

The Paragraphs module comes with a (poorly documented!) submodule called Paragraphs Library, which allows content editors to maintain a library of Paragraphs whose contents should be reusable across multiple pages. Content editors can create Paragraphs as normal, then promote an individual Paragraph to the library, making it reusable. When they do, that Paragraph turns into a *From library* Paragraph, referencing the Paragraph that's been added to the library.

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Taking notes in meetings

- Yes, developers should take notes too!

- Note important information, decisions, and next steps—don't transcribe the full conversation

- Use document templates for easy prep

Agenda

Meeting Notes

Next Steps

☐ To-do

Meeting notes

- Newspack timing: probably starting Q4 2023, launching in July 2024(?)
  - Tech accelerator program with NTEN—4 hrs. with tech consultant from IBM in Canada; she's going to talk to Newspack
  - Bridge isn't in any huge hurry, so we'd talk about timing especially in terms of migration
- ⭐ Remove the COVID Dashboard & Tracker from the homepage sidebar
- Live-blogging still on Bill's radar, but probably not for a couple months
- Bill & Katie working on GTM popups; call today after Katie possibly got it figured out yesterday
  - AMP signup CTA is getting good traffic; might switch from OptinMonster to Mailchimp
  - Once UTM source tracking is working, Bill thinking again about Topic landing page updates

Emojis help highlight next steps during a meeting.

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Checking out

- Before you wrap up on a task and switch to something else, take note of where you're leaving off

- Helps project managers stay in the loop

- Reduces effort needed to spin back up next time

Kurt Trowbridge · 23 days ago

Parking my progress for today. I'm able to pull in static content now, and have headers and footers on that static content. Next step would be to extend the header and footer to *all* pages, even the PDF files that are part of the full package. I also need to add the page numbers to the footer—that works as documented, but causes a lot of duplicate pages in the PDF when I try. I have yet to test that on the dev site because it gets mad about the relative paths I try to put in for PDFs, so that'll have to wait until I'm sourcing data from dev (I guess I could just pull out a couple of its file URLs statically now).

Kurt Trowbridge added 4h 46m to actual time for January 28 · 22 days ago
Kurt Trowbridge changed the description · **Show difference** · 21 days ago

Kurt Trowbridge · 19 days ago (edited)

Noting where I'm at since I'm about to end my time on this for the week: I'm currently trying to take the blob URL that gets generated when merging PDFs, then rerun `react-pdf` with that file as the source so I can wrap it with headers, footers, and page numbers. So far, I haven't had luck with that.

"

Retrieving information from memory storage and bringing it into the focus of awareness, comparing information, evaluating, deciding—all make demands on the mind's limited processing capacity.

—Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, *Flow*

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Using docs to power AI tools

How can documentation improve business functions?

Documentation can improve business functions in a number of ways:

- **Mitigates the risk of people leaving.** If someone gets sick, leaves abruptly, or goes on maternity leave, anyone can jump in to complete their most important work. Critical business functions can go on uninterrupted, decreasing the financial cost of someone leaving and making it easier for the rest of the team to continue on.
- **Acts as a knowledge repository.** When you introduce documentation into your decision-making process, it acts as a knowledge repository. It holds the context, the insights, and the learning that came with each decision. And this repository can be referred back to when similar situations arise.
- **Promotes a culture of open feedback and collaborative decision-making.** Encourage your team to document their decision-making process to clarify assumptions, reasoning, and expected outcomes. Make it a standard practice to discuss these documented decisions in your meetings, promoting a culture of open feedback and collaborative decision-making.
- **Improves communication and alignment.** Great communication will assist with delegation, create alignment, increase awareness, and improve productivity.
- **Reduces the need for future questions.** The best way to have effective communication in a company is for the communication to be future-proof: reduce the need for future questions. The best way to do that is to write things down and organize them to make them easy to navigate. Every time you answer a question, you should know that someone six months from now should be able to find the answer to that question themselves.
- **Serves as a bridge that connects ideas, people, and vision.** Documentation isn't just a task on your to-do list; it's a pillar for success and a bridge that connects ideas, people, and vision. Treat it not as a burden but as an opportunity to learn, share, and create an impact.

3 citations

NotebookLM (Google)

✦ Ask AI   Q&A Beta

Explain how resources are ordered on endpoints within the Guide To Legal Help.

Resources on endpoints within the Guide To Legal Help are ordered based on a set of weights given to each option that a user selects at the beginning of the guide. The weight can be +1, +2, -1, or -2. The aggregate of these weights then determines the order of the resources shown at the end of the guide ③.

There are also Triage Actions which connect endpoints from the MI Triage taxonomy vocabulary to resources displayed when a respondent reaches the end of the triage form, selecting an endpoint as the legal issue they need help with ②.

Visibility restrictions can be set for Triage Actions, and they are configured to only appear on the endpoint if the respondent's screener responses meet the selected restrictions ②.

Resources are further grouped by content type and positioned based on a Region field value - Top message panel, Main panel, Help panel, or Bottom panel ②.

10 pages found

- 📄 aggregate
- 📝 Documentation: triage tool (Guide T...
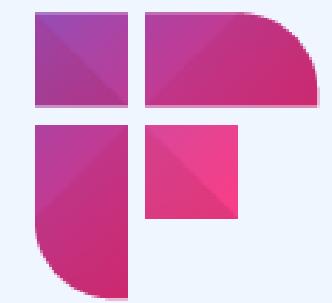- 📄 Resource math
- 📄 MLH Client Meeting 2023-01-09

Ask a question...

Notion AI

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Speech-to-text

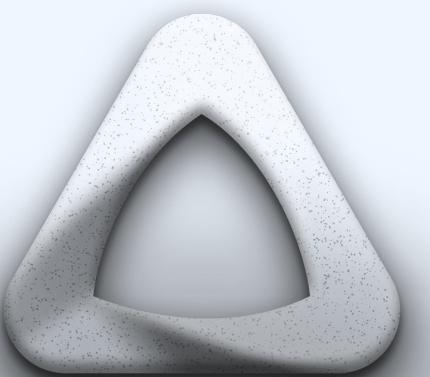AI apps can help with meeting transcriptions, so you can focus on documenting decisions, business rules, and next steps.
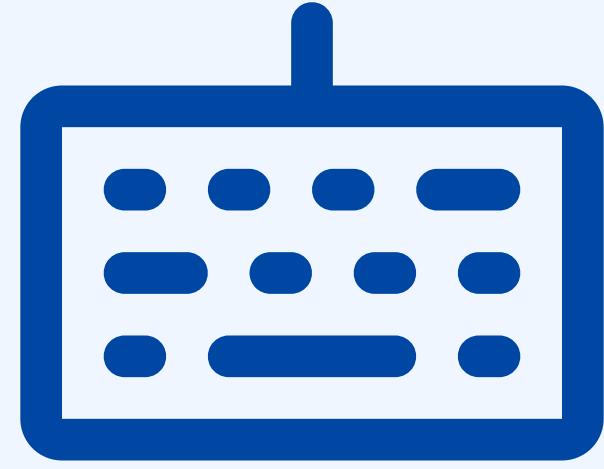
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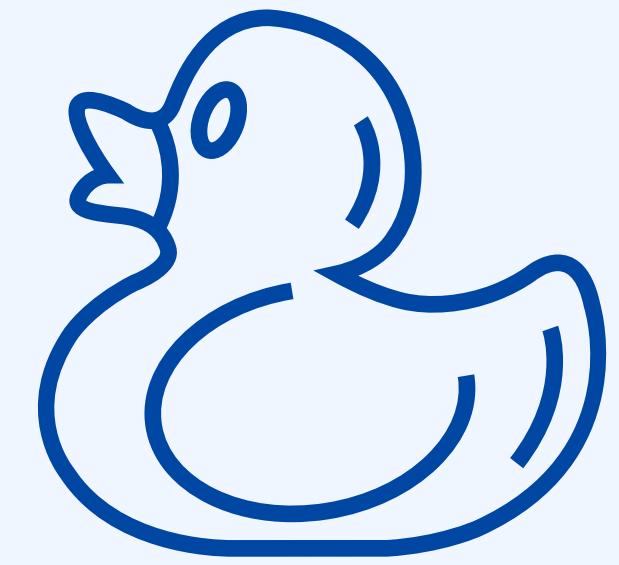
Documentation is a team sport.

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Collective knowledge strategies

01 ——————

Write as you learn
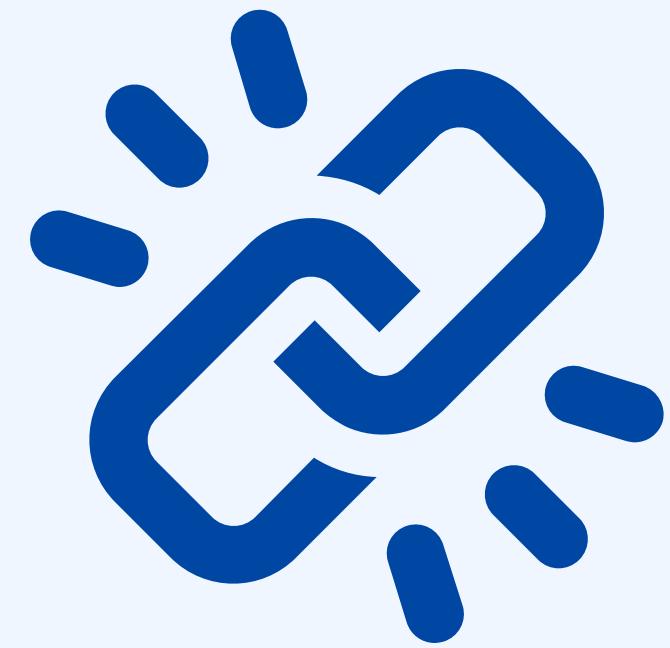
02 ——————

Rubber-duck

03 ——————

Work in public

04 ——————
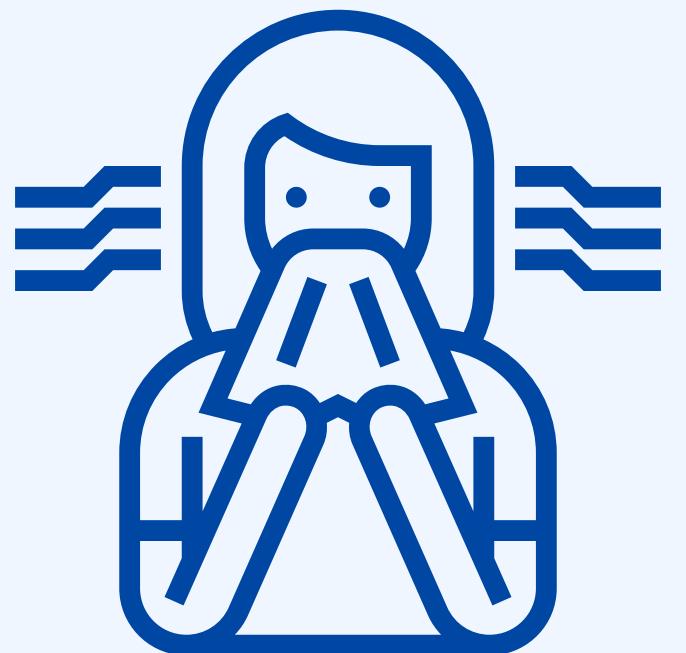
**Answer questions
with a link**

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Collective knowledge provides resilience against:

01 —————
Vacations

02 —————
Sick days

03 —————
Employee turnover

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Managing the messy middle

Unlocking future potential

Effective > efficient

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"Year of Efficiency"

Efficient teams:

- Adopt the mantra "move fast and break things"

- Value urgency over relevancy

- Work in unstable environments prone to errors and mistakes

Effective teams:

- Build with purpose and intention

- Value relevancy over urgency

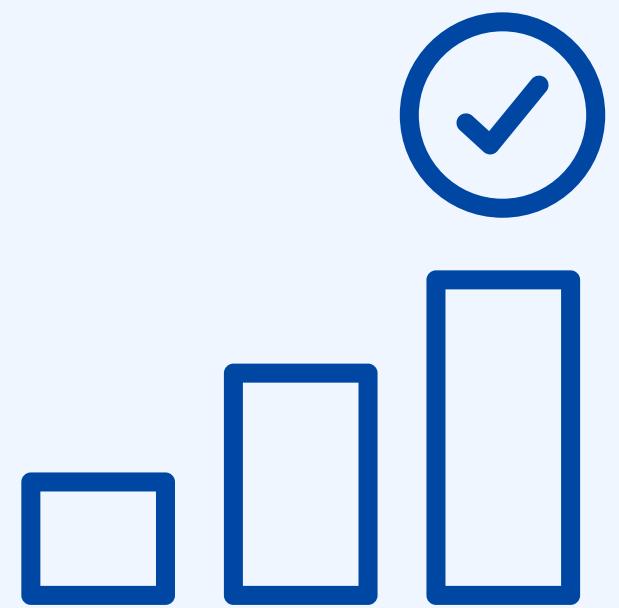- Make time to build processes and practices that establish stability

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Being effective means getting good at the thinking and problem-solving that AI can't do for you.
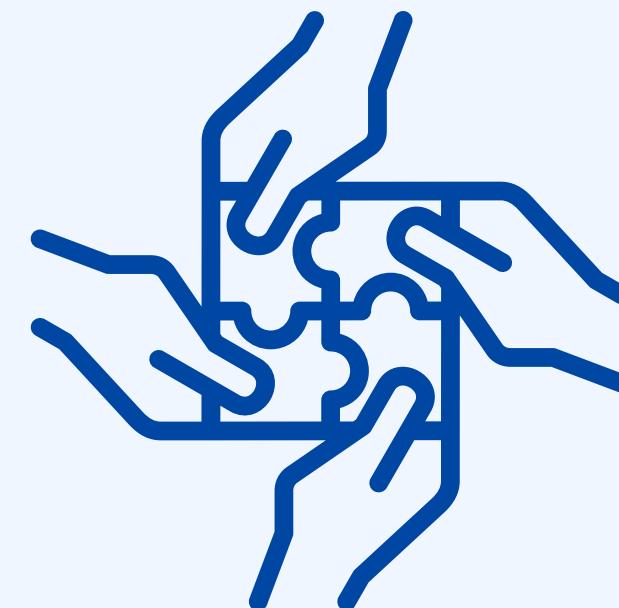
Documentation helps speed up that process.

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How to make documentation happen

01 ————————

Build it into your culture

02 ————————

Do it little by little

03 ————————

Make it everyone's responsibility

04 ————————

Tend to your garden

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Make documentation part of your definition of "done."

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Thank you!

Slides, notes, and resources:
KurtTrowbridge.com