# MSW Protocol Architecture

## "Make Shit Work" - A Research-Grounded Autonomous Coding System

**Version:** 1.0
**Date:** February 2, 2026
**Status:** Architecture Specification

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## Executive Summary

The MSW Protocol combines three proven patterns into a unified autonomous development system:

1. **GSD Protocol** - Spec-driven development with context engineering
2. **NotebookLM MCP** - Research grounding with zero-hallucination answers
3. **Ralph Wiggum Loop** - Continuous iteration until verifiable success

The result: You describe what you want, the system interviews you, researches best practices via NotebookLM, generates specs, and iterates autonomously until the code actually works.

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## Problem Statement

Current AI coding workflows suffer from:

| Problem | Symptom |
|---|---|
| **Context rot** | Quality degrades as context window fills |
| **Hallucinated APIs** | Agent invents methods that don't exist |
| **Premature exit** | Agent declares "done" before tests pass |
| **Knowledge gaps** | Agent lacks domain-specific best practices |
| **Manual research** | Copy-pasting between NotebookLM and IDE |
| **Endless loops** | No clear completion criteria |

MSW solves these by combining research grounding, spec-driven development, and autonomous iteration with verifiable success criteria.

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## Architecture Overview


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## Layer Specifications

### Layer 1: Ingest Layer

**Purpose:** Build a complete picture of the existing codebase

**Inputs:**

- Local directories (specified by user)
- GitHub repositories (via API or clone)
- Existing documentation

**Process:**

```
/msw:ingest --local ./src --github user/repo
```

**Outputs:**

```
.msw/
├── codebase/
│   ├── STRUCTURE.md      # Directory tree, file purposes
│   ├── DEPENDENCIES.md   # Package analysis, version info
│   ├── CONVENTIONS.md    # Code style, patterns detected
│   ├── ARCHITECTURE.md   # Component relationships
│   └── CONCERNS.md       # Tech debt, security issues
```

**Implementation:**

javascript

```javascript
// Parallel agent orchestration (GSD pattern)
const ingestOrchestrator = {
  agents: [
    { name: 'structure-mapper', task: 'Analyze directory structure and file purposes' },
    { name: 'dependency-analyzer', task: 'Extract and analyze dependencies' },
    { name: 'pattern-detector', task: 'Identify code conventions and patterns' },
    { name: 'architecture-mapper', task: 'Map component relationships' },
    { name: 'concern-finder', task: 'Identify technical debt and issues' }
  ],
  async run(paths) {
    const results = await Promise.all(this.agents.map(a => spawnAgent(a)));
    return synthesize(results);
  }
};
```

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**Layer 2: Interview Layer**

**Purpose:** Understand user's goals, difficulties, and requirements

**Process:**

```
/msw:interview
```

**Interview Flow:**

```
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│ INTERVIEW SESSION                                           │
├─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┤
│                                                             │
│ Phase 1: Goals                                              │
│ ├─ "What are you trying to build/fix/improve?"              │
│ ├─ "What does success look like?"                           │
│ └─ "What's the deadline/priority?"                          │
│                                                             │
│ Phase 2: Difficulties                                       │
│ ├─ "What have you tried that didn't work?"                  │
│ ├─ "Where are you getting stuck?"                           │
│ └─ "What errors are you seeing?"                            │
│                                                             │
│ Phase 3: Agent Issues                                       │
│ ├─ "Paste any error messages from your coding agent"        │
│ ├─ "What did the agent attempt?"                            │
│ └─ "What was wrong with the agent's approach?"              │
│                                                             │
│ Phase 4: Constraints                                        │
│ ├─ "Any libraries/patterns you must/can't use?"             │
│ ├─ "Any existing code that must not change?"                │
│ └─ "Performance/security requirements?"                     │
│                                                             │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
```

**Outputs:**

```
.msw/
├── interview/
│   ├── GOALS.md          # What user wants to achieve
│   ├── DIFFICULTIES.md   # What's been tried, what failed
│   ├── AGENT_ISSUES.md   # Errors from coding agents
│   └── CONSTRAINTS.md    # Hard requirements and limits
```

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**Layer 3: Research Layer (NotebookLM Integration)**

**Purpose:** Ground implementation decisions in authoritative documentation

**Key Innovation:** The system automatically formulates research questions based on the codebase analysis and interview, then queries NotebookLM for answers.

**Process:**

```
/msw:research
```

**Research Question Generation:**

```javascript
const questionFormulator = {
  async generateQuestions(context) {
    const { codebase, interview } = context;

    // Analyze gaps between what user wants and what codebase supports
    const gaps = analyzeGaps(codebase, interview);

    // Generate specific questions for NotebookLM
    return gaps.map(gap => ({
      topic: gap.area,
      question: `Given ${codebase.stack}, what is the recommended approach for ${gap.requirement}? Include specific API me
      notebook: selectBestNotebook(gap.area), // Auto-select from library
      followUps: generateFollowUps(gap)
    }));
  }
};
```

**NotebookLM MCP Integration:**

javascript

```javascript
// Using notebooklm-mcp
const notebookLM = {
  async research(questions) {
    const findings = [];

    for (const q of questions) {
      // Activate the relevant notebook
      await mcpClient.call('notebooklm_activate', {
        notebook_id: q.notebook
      });

      // Ask primary question
      const answer = await mcpClient.call('notebooklm_ask', {
        question: q.question
      });
      findings.push({ topic: q.topic, primary: answer });

      // Follow-up questions for depth
      for (const followUp of q.followUps) {
        const detail = await mcpClient.call('notebooklm_ask', {
          question: followUp
        });
        findings[findings.length - 1].details.push(detail);
      }
    }

    return findings;
  }
};
```

**Notebook Library Management:**

```yaml
# .msw/notebooks.yaml
notebooks:
  - id: react-docs
    url: https://notebooklm.google.com/notebook/abc123
    topics: [react, hooks, components, state]
    description: "Official React documentation + patterns"

  - id: nodejs-api
    url: https://notebooklm.google.com/notebook/def456
    topics: [node, express, api, backend]
    description: "Node.js API best practices"

  - id: project-specific
    url: https://notebooklm.google.com/notebook/ghi789
    topics: [custom, domain]
    description: "Our internal docs and patterns"
```

**Outputs:**

```
.msw/
├── research/
│   ├── QUESTIONS.md      # Generated research questions
│   ├── FINDINGS.md       # NotebookLM responses (grounded)
│   ├── BEST_PRACTICES.md # Synthesized recommendations
│   └── EDGE_CASES.md     # Pitfalls to avoid
```

---

**Layer 4: Planning Layer (GSD Integration)**

**Purpose:** Generate implementation specifications grounded in research

**Process:**

```
/msw:plan
```

**PRD Generation:**

javascript

```javascript
const prdGenerator = {
  async generate(context) {
    const { codebase, interview, research } = context;

    return {
      // From interview
      goals: interview.goals,
      constraints: interview.constraints,

      // From codebase analysis
      existingPatterns: codebase.conventions,
      modificationScope: codebase.architecture,

      // From NotebookLM research
      implementation: research.bestPractices,
      avoidPitfalls: research.edgeCases,

      // GSD-style phases
      phases: generatePhases(interview.goals, research.findings),

      // Success criteria (for Ralph loop)
      completionCriteria: {
        tests: 'All tests pass with >80% coverage',
        lint: 'No linter errors',
        build: 'Build succeeds',
        integration: interview.specificCriteria
      }
    };
  }
};
```

**Outputs:**

```
.msw/
├── planning/
│   ├── PRD.md           # Full specification document
│   ├── ROADMAP.md       # Phase breakdown (GSD format)
│   ├── REQUIREMENTS.md  # Traceable requirements
│   └── phases/
│       ├── 01-PLAN.md   # Task-level XML plans
│       ├── 02-PLAN.md
│       └── ...
```

**Plan Format (GSD XML):**

```xml
<task type="auto">
  <n>Implement user authentication</n>
  <files>src/auth/login.ts, src/auth/middleware.ts</files>
  <action>
    Based on NotebookLM research (FINDINGS.md#jwt-best-practices):
    - Use jose library for JWT (not jsonwebtoken - CommonJS issues)
    - Implement refresh token rotation
    - Store tokens in httpOnly cookies

    Existing pattern to follow (CONVENTIONS.md#error-handling):
    - Use AppError class for all errors
    - Return standardized error responses
  </action>
  <verify>
    - curl -X POST /auth/login returns 200 + Set-Cookie
    - Invalid credentials return 401 with error body
    - Token refresh works before expiry
  </verify>
  <done>Auth flow complete with tests passing</done>
</task>
```

---

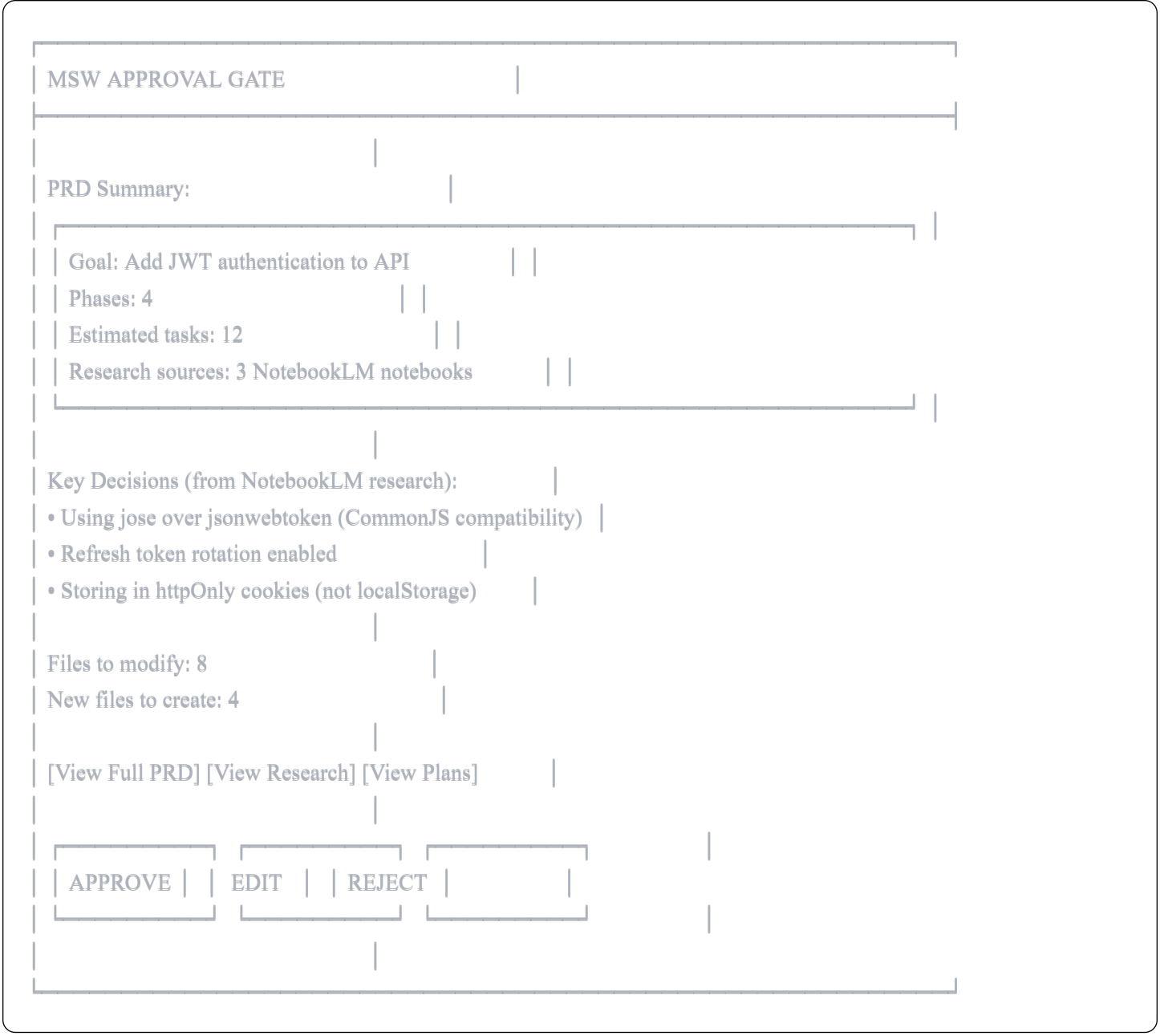
**Layer 5: Approval Gate**

**Purpose:** Human review before autonomous execution begins

**Process:**

```
/msw:review
```

**Review Interface:**




**Approval Actions:**

- **APPROVE** → Proceed to execution
- **EDIT** → Return to planning with feedback
- **REJECT** → Cancel and explain why

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**Layer 6: Execution Layer (Ralph Wiggum Loop)**

**Purpose:** Autonomous implementation with continuous iteration

**Process:**

```
/msw:execute --phase 1 --max-iterations 30
```

**Ralph Loop Integration:**

javascript

```
const mswExecutor = {
  async executePhase(phaseNum, maxIterations = 30) {
    const plan = loadPlan(phaseNum);
    const completionPromise = plan.completionCriteria;

    // Ralph loop wrapper
    let iteration = 0;
    while (iteration < maxIterations) {
      iteration++;

      // Execute with fresh context (GSD pattern)
      const result = await spawnExecutorAgent({
        plan: plan,
        research: loadResearch(), // NotebookLM findings available
        iteration: iteration,
        previousAttempts: loadSummaries(phaseNum)
      });

      // Check completion (Ralph pattern)
      if (await verifyCompletion(completionPromise)) {
        await commitWork(result);
        return { success: true, iterations: iteration };
      }

      // Query NotebookLM if stuck
      if (result.stuck) {
        const help = await queryNotebookLM(result.stuckReason);
        await updateContext(help);
      }

      // Log iteration
      await logIteration(iteration, result);
    }

    return { success: false, reason: 'Max iterations reached' };
  }
};
```

**Feedback Loop with NotebookLM:**

```javascript
const feedbackLoop = {
  async onStuck(context) {
    const { error, attemptedApproach, codeFile } = context;

    // Formulate question from error
    const question = `
      I'm implementing ${context.task} and getting this error: ${error}

      My approach: ${attemptedApproach}

      What's the correct way to handle this? Provide specific code patterns.
    `;

    // Query relevant notebook
    const answer = await mcpClient.call('notebooklm_ask', {
      question,
      notebook_id: selectNotebookForError(error)
    });

    // Feed answer back to executor
    return {
      guidance: answer,
      retry: true
    };
  }
};
```

**Outputs:**

```
.msw/
├── execution/
│   ├── phase-01/
│   │   ├── iteration-001.log
│   │   ├── iteration-002.log
│   │   ├── ...
│   │   └── SUMMARY.md
│   └── phase-02/
│       └── ...
```

---

**Layer 7: Verification Layer**

**Purpose:** Confirm implementation actually works

**Process:**

```
/msw:verify --phase 1
```

**Verification Checks:**

javascript

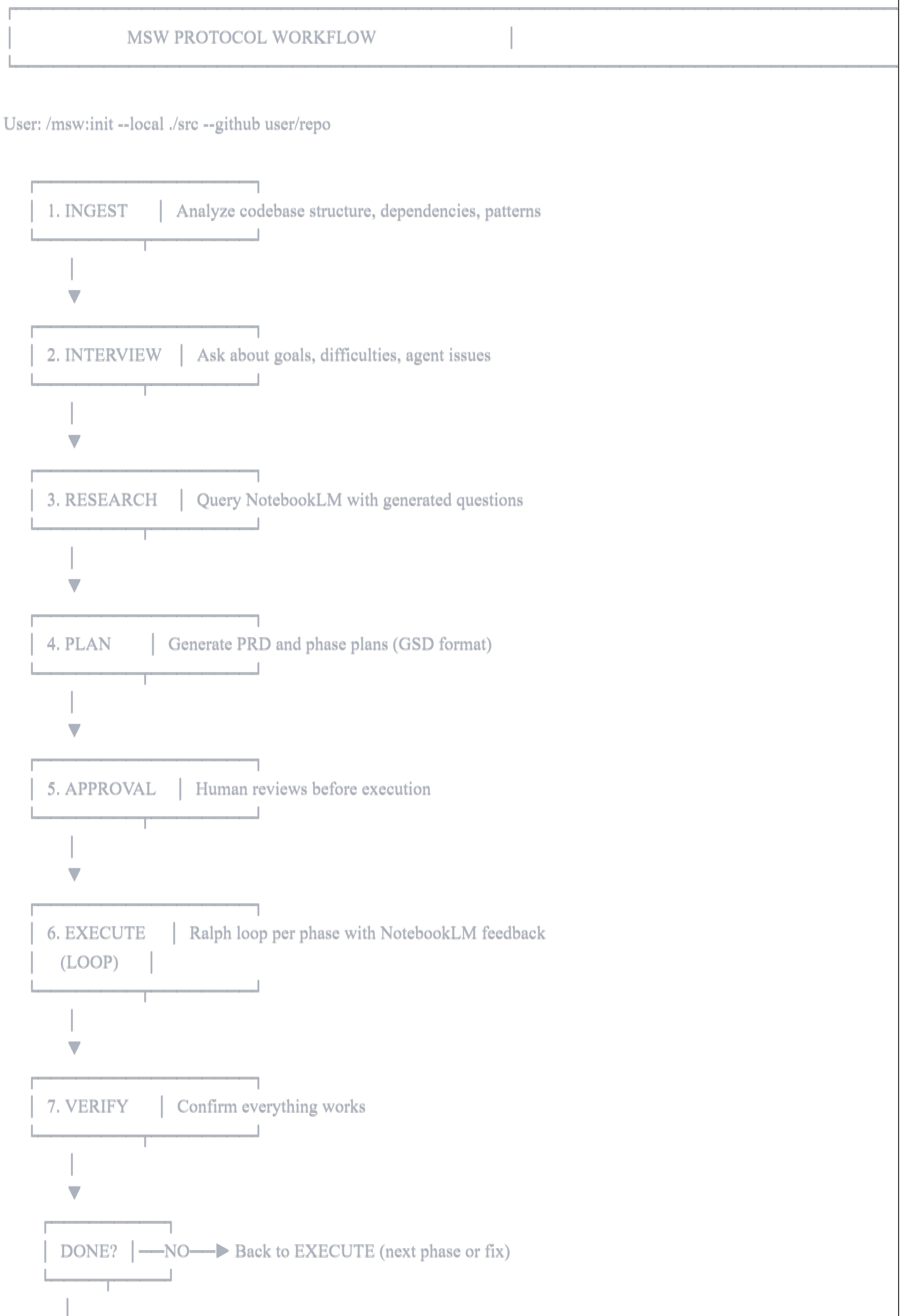
```javascript
const verifier = {
  checks: [
    // Automated
    { name: 'tests', command: 'npm test', expect: 'exit 0' },
    { name: 'lint', command: 'npm run lint', expect: 'exit 0' },
    { name: 'build', command: 'npm run build', expect: 'exit 0' },
    { name: 'coverage', command: 'npm run coverage', expect: '>80%' },

    // From plan verification steps
    { name: 'api-login', command: 'curl -X POST /auth/login', expect: '200' },
    { name: 'api-protected', command: 'curl /protected', expect: '401' }
  ],

  async verify(phase) {
    const results = [];

    for (const check of this.checks) {
      const result = await runCheck(check);
      results.push({ check: check.name, passed: result.passed, output: result.output });

      if (!result.passed) {
        // Query NotebookLM for fix guidance
        const guidance = await queryNotebookLM(
          `How to fix: ${check.name} failed with ${result.output}`
        );
        results[results.length - 1].guidance = guidance;
      }
    }

    return results;
  }
};
```

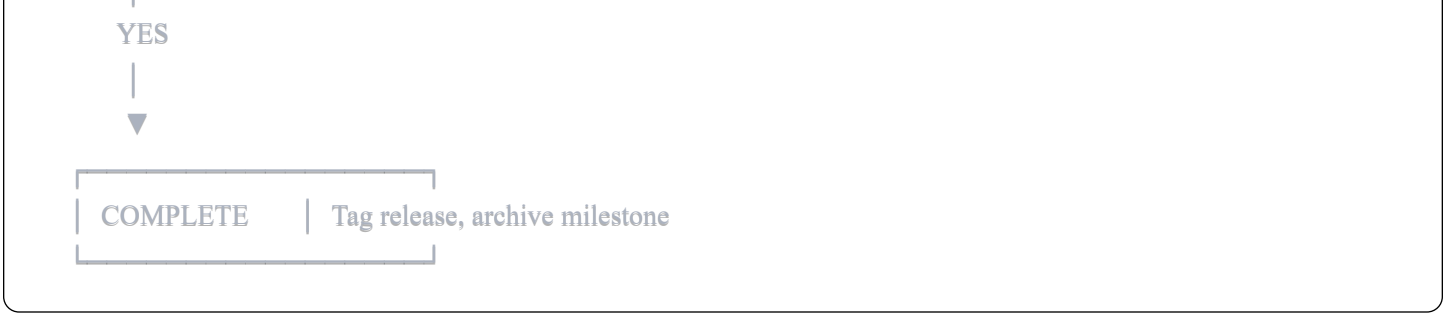
**If Verification Fails:**

1. System generates fix plans with NotebookLM guidance
2. Returns to Execution Layer
3. Ralph loop continues until all checks pass

---

## Complete Workflow


MSW PROTOCOL WORKFLOW
User: /msw:init --local ./src --github user/repo
1. INGEST
Analyze codebase structure, dependencies, patterns
2. INTERVIEW
Ask about goals, difficulties, agent issues
3. RESEARCH
Query NotebookLM with generated questions
4. PLAN
Generate PRD and phase plans (GSD format)
5. APPROVAL
Human reviews before execution
6. EXECUTE (LOOP)
Ralph loop per phase with NotebookLM feedback
7. VERIFY
Confirm everything works
DONE?
NO
Back to EXECUTE (next phase or fix)

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## Implementation Options

### Option A: MCP Server (Recommended)

Create a unified MCP server that exposes all MSW commands:

javascript

```javascript
// msw-mcp-server/index.js
import { Server } from '@modelcontextprotocol/sdk/server';
import { NotebookLMMCP } from 'notebooklm-mcp';

const server = new Server({
  name: 'msw-protocol',
  version: '1.0.0'
});

// Tools
server.addTool('msw_init', 'Initialize MSW for a project', async (params) => {
  await ingestLayer.run(params.local, params.github);
  await interviewLayer.run();
  return { status: 'ready', next: 'msw_research' };
});

server.addTool('msw_research', 'Research via NotebookLM', async () => {
  const questions = await questionFormulator.generateQuestions(context);
  const findings = await notebookLM.research(questions);
  return { findings, next: 'msw_plan' };
});

server.addTool('msw_plan', 'Generate PRD and plans', async () => {
  const prd = await prdGenerator.generate(context);
  return { prd, awaitingApproval: true };
});

server.addTool('msw_execute', 'Execute with Ralph loop', async (params) => {
  return await mswExecutor.executePhase(params.phase, params.maxIterations);
});

server.addTool('msw_verify', 'Verify implementation', async (params) => {
  return await verifier.verify(params.phase);
});
```

**Windsurf Integration:**

```json
// ~/.codeium/windsurf/mcp_config.json
{
  "mcpServers": {
    "msw": {
      "command": "node",
      "args": ["/path/to/msw-mcp-server/index.js"]
    },
    "notebooklm": {
      "command": "npx",
      "args": ["-y", "notebooklm-mcp@latest"]
    }
  }
}
```

**Option B: Claude Code Skill**

Create as a Claude Code skill for direct integration:

```
~/.claude/skills/msw/
├── SKILL.md
├── commands/
│   ├── init.md
│   ├── interview.md
│   ├── research.md
│   ├── plan.md
│   ├── execute.md
│   └── verify.md
└── scripts/
    ├── ingest.py
    ├── research.py
    └── execute.py
```

**Option C: GSD Extension**

Fork and extend the GSD protocol:

javascript

```javascript
// Extend GSD with NotebookLM integration
import { GSD } from 'get-shit-done-cc';
import { NotebookLMMCP } from 'notebooklm-mcp';

class MSW extends GSD {
  async planPhase(phaseNum) {
    // Standard GSD planning + NotebookLM research
    const questions = this.generateResearchQuestions(phaseNum);
    const research = await this.notebookLM.research(questions);

    // Inject research into plan context
    this.context.research = research;

    return super.planPhase(phaseNum);
  }

  async executePhase(phaseNum) {
    // Standard GSD execution + Ralph loop
    return this.ralphLoop(
      () => super.executePhase(phaseNum),
      this.getCompletionCriteria(phaseNum)
    );
  }
}
```

---

## Directory Structure

```
project/
├── .msw/
│   ├── config.yaml              # MSW configuration
│   ├── notebooks.yaml           # NotebookLM library
│   │
│   ├── codebase/                # From ingest layer
│   │   ├── STRUCTURE.md
│   │   ├── DEPENDENCIES.md
│   │   ├── CONVENTIONS.md
│   │   ├── ARCHITECTURE.md
│   │   └── CONCERNS.md
│   │
│   ├── interview/               # From interview layer
│   │   ├── GOALS.md
│   │   ├── DIFFICULTIES.md
│   │   ├── AGENT_ISSUES.md
│   │   └── CONSTRAINTS.md
│   │
│   ├── research/                # From research layer
│   │   ├── QUESTIONS.md
│   │   ├── FINDINGS.md
│   │   ├── BEST_PRACTICES.md
│   │   └── EDGE_CASES.md
│   │
│   ├── planning/                # From planning layer
│   │   ├── PRD.md
│   │   ├── ROADMAP.md
│   │   ├── REQUIREMENTS.md
│   │   └── phases/
│   │       ├── 01-PLAN.md
│   │       └── ...
│   │
│   └── execution/               # From execution layer
│       ├── phase-01/
│       │   ├── iteration-001.log
│       │   └── SUMMARY.md
│       └── ...
│
└── .planning/                   # GSD compatibility (optional)
    └── ...
```

---

## Configuration

yaml

```yaml
# .msw/config.yaml
msw:
  version: "1.0"

  # Ingest settings
  ingest:
    local_paths:
      - ./src
      - ./lib
    github_repos:
      - user/main-repo
      - user/shared-lib
    exclude:
      - node_modules
      - dist
      - .git

  # NotebookLM settings
  notebooklm:
    default_notebooks:
      - react-docs
      - nodejs-api
    auto_select: true          # Automatically pick notebook by topic
    max_questions_per_topic: 5
    follow_up_depth: 3

  # Execution settings
  execution:
    model_profile: balanced    # quality | balanced | budget
    max_iterations: 30         # Ralph loop limit
    parallel_execution: true   # Run independent tasks in parallel

  # Verification settings
  verification:
    auto_tests: true
    coverage_threshold: 80
    custom_checks:
      - name: api-health
        command: curl -f http://localhost:3000/health

  # Approval settings
  approval:
    mode: interactive          # interactive | telegram | slack
    telegram_chat_id: "..."    # If using telegram
```

## Commands Reference

| Command | Description |
|---|---|
| `/msw:init` | Full initialization: ingest → interview → research → plan |
| `/msw:ingest` | Analyze codebase only |
| `/msw:interview` | Run interview session only |
| `/msw:research` | Query NotebookLM based on current context |
| `/msw:plan` | Generate PRD and phase plans |
| `/msw:review` | Human approval gate |
| `/msw:execute [phase]` | Execute with Ralph loop |
| `/msw:verify [phase]` | Verify implementation |
| `/msw:status` | Show current progress |
| `/msw:notebook add <url>` | Add NotebookLM to library |
| `/msw:notebook list` | List available notebooks |
| `/msw:config` | Edit configuration |

## Integration with Existing Tools

### With GSD Protocol

MSW can wrap GSD completely:

```
/msw:init          # Does ingest + interview + research + /gsd:new-project
/msw:execute 1     # Does /gsd:plan-phase 1 + Ralph loop on /gsd:execute-phase 1
```

### With Ralph Wiggum Plugin

MSW uses Ralph internally:

```javascript
// MSW calls Ralph for execution
const result = await ralphLoop({
  prompt: plan.toPrompt(),
  completionPromise: plan.completionCriteria,
  maxIterations: config.execution.maxIterations,
  onIteration: (i, result) => {
    if (result.stuck) {
      // MSW-specific: query NotebookLM
      return queryNotebookLM(result.stuckReason);
    }
  }
});
```

### With NotebookLM MCP

MSW orchestrates NotebookLM queries:

```javascript
// MSW manages the NotebookLM connection
const mcpClient = await connect('notebooklm');

// Auto-select notebook based on topic
const notebook = await selectBestNotebook(topic, library);
await mcpClient.call('notebooklm_activate', { notebook_id: notebook.id });

// Ask with follow-ups
const answer = await mcpClient.call('notebooklm_ask', { question });
```

---

## Success Criteria

MSW is considered successful when:

1. **Zero copy-paste** - No manual transfer between NotebookLM and IDE
2. **Grounded implementations** - All major decisions backed by NotebookLM research
3. **Verifiable completion** - Tests pass, build succeeds, custom checks pass
4. **Autonomous iteration** - Ralph loop handles retries without human intervention
5. **Clear audit trail** - Every decision, question, and iteration logged

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## Next Steps

1. **Prototype MCP Server** - Build minimal MSW MCP with core workflow
2. **NotebookLM Integration** - Test question formulation and auto-selection
3. **GSD Extension** - Fork GSD and add research layer
4. **Ralph Integration** - Wire up execution layer with completion criteria
5. **Approval Gate UI** - Build Telegram/CLI interface for reviews
6. **Open Source** - Release on GitHub with MIT license

---

## Appendix: Example Session

```
$ /msw:init --local ./src --github myuser/myapp

MSW Protocol v1.0 - Initializing...

[INGEST] Analyzing codebase...
  ✓ Structure mapped (47 files, 12 directories)
  ✓ Dependencies analyzed (23 packages)
  ✓ Conventions detected (ESLint + Prettier, React patterns)
  ✓ Architecture mapped (3 layers: API, Services, Components)
  ✓ Concerns found (2 security issues, 5 tech debt items)

[INTERVIEW] Starting interview session...

  Q: What are you trying to build?
  > Add user authentication with JWT tokens

  Q: What have you tried that didn't work?
  > Claude kept using jsonwebtoken which has CommonJS issues

  Q: Paste any error messages:
  > [ERR_REQUIRE_ESM]: require() of ES Module not supported

  Q: Any libraries you must use?
  > Need to support refresh tokens and httpOnly cookies

[RESEARCH] Querying NotebookLM...
  ✓ Selected notebook: nodejs-api (topic match: 94%)
  ✓ Asked 5 questions with 12 follow-ups
  ✓ Best practice: Use jose library (ESM compatible)
  ✓ Best practice: Implement refresh token rotation
  ✓ Edge case: Handle token refresh race conditions

[PLAN] Generating PRD...
  ✓ Created PRD.md
  ✓ Created ROADMAP.md (4 phases)
  ✓ Created 12 task plans

[APPROVAL] Awaiting review...
  PRD: Authentication System with JWT
  Phases: 4
  Tasks: 12
  Research sources: 3

  [APPROVE] [EDIT] [REJECT]
  > APPROVE
```

```
[EXECUTE] Starting Phase 1 with Ralph loop...
  Iteration 1: Created auth middleware... tests failing
  Iteration 2: Fixed token validation... 2 tests failing
  Iteration 3: Added refresh logic... all tests passing
  ✓ Phase 1 complete in 3 iterations

[VERIFY] Running verification...
  ✓ npm test - 24/24 passed
  ✓ npm run lint - 0 errors
  ✓ npm run build - success
  ✓ Coverage: 87%
  ✓ POST /auth/login - 200 OK

MSW Complete. Authentication system implemented and verified.
```

---

*"No more endless loops. No more fuckery on coding agents. Just Make Shit Work."*