

Shoulders

The AI Workspace for Researchers

"If I have seen further, it is by standing on the shoulders of giants"

— Isaac Newton, 1675 (echoing Bernard of Chartres, c. 1120)

SUMMARY

Premise

While developers *vibe code*, researchers use old tools and copy-paste from ChatGPT

Founder

Two-time founder and research software engineer. MD, 2 PhDs, 50 publications.

Solution

Shoulders: an integrated AI-native document editor

Market

SAM: 3M researchers; ~\$450M globally

Status

MVP with 15 academic test users

Ask

Preparing pre-seed. Looking for feedback.

Contact

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Try it

shoulder.rs/register?invite=GIANTS

AI has fundamentally transformed software engineering

85% of developers use AI tools like Cursor and Claude Code

For these developers, around 60% of code is now AI-generated

Entire applications can be *vibe coded* without writing a single line of code

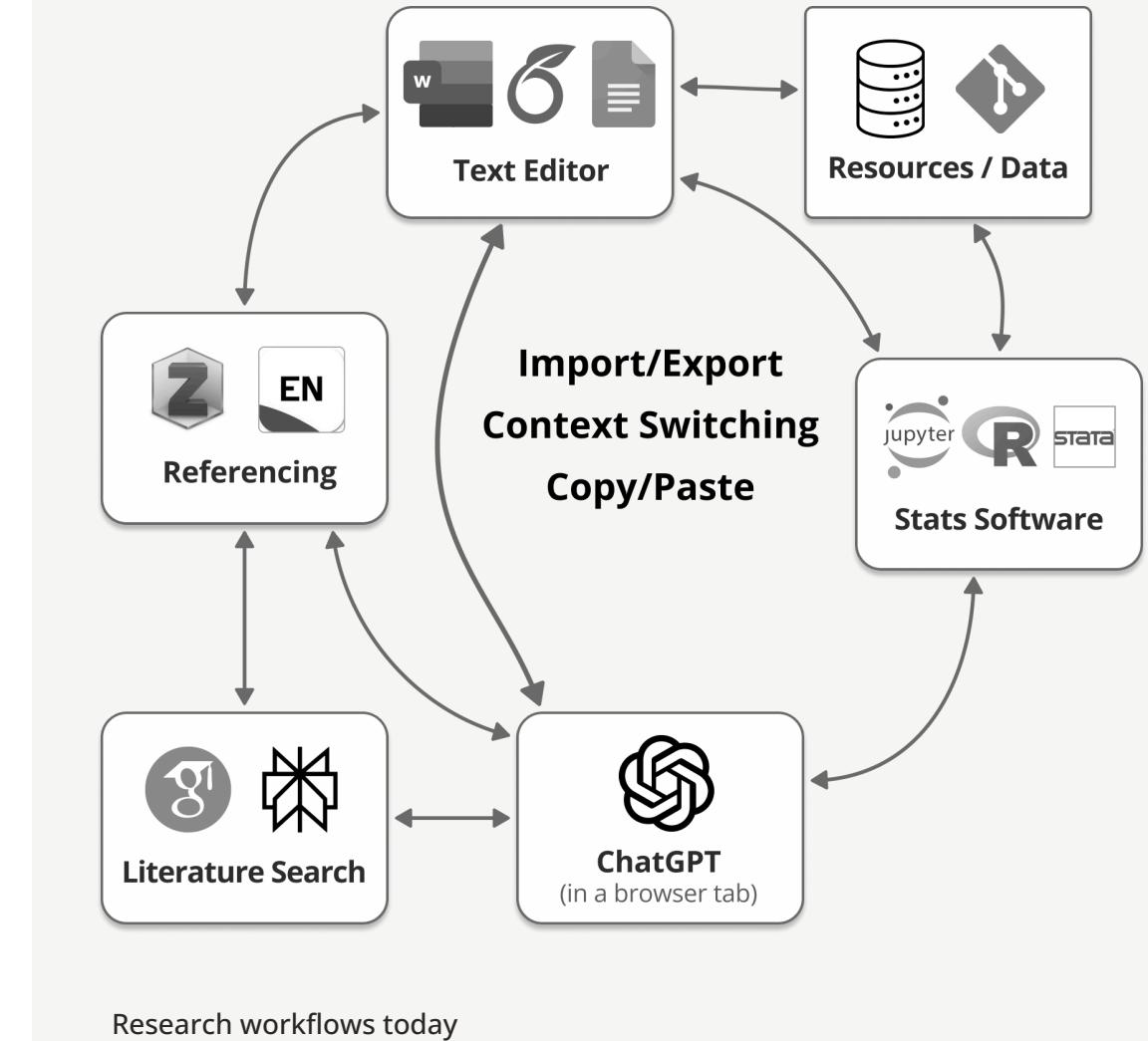
Sources: Stack Overflow Developer Survey 2025 · JetBrains State of Developer Ecosystem 2025

PREMISE

Meanwhile...

Researchers copy-paste from ChatGPT
They use fragmented toolchains
No shared context, no integration

AI will become central to research in 2-3 years
The tools for this haven't been built yet



Shoulders

An AI-native document editor for researchers – with surprisingly great reference management

Integrates text, code, sources, and data into one unified research workspace

The screenshot shows the Shoulders AI-native document editor interface. On the left, there's a sidebar with 'AI ASSISTANT' and 'Exa search papers' sections. The main area has a toolbar at the top with various icons. Below the toolbar, there are several sections of text and references:

- Introduction**: Newton famously credited his insights to "standing on the shoulders of giants," yet recent research suggests this cumulative advantage may be weakening (Newton, 1687). The "burden of knowledge" hypothesis posits that as a field accumulates information, researchers must spend more time on education before reaching the frontier (Bloom et al., 2020). Consequently, innovative capacity is increasingly delayed or fragmented across larger teams, potentially stifling individual creativity.
- The Pivot Penalty and Cognitive Load**: The friction in moving between domains is measurable. It was recently identified a "pivot penalty," showing that the impact of new research declines significantly as researchers deviate from their established expertise. This penalty forces scientists into narrow specializations, creating silos that prevent the cross-pollination of ideas necessary for paradigm shifts.
- Toward Cognitive Augmentation**: To reverse these trends, we must move beyond viewing AI as a generative engine and toward a model of "cognitive scaffolding." By offloading the retrieval and synthesis of peripheral literature to AI agents, researchers can reclaim the mental bandwidth required for deep work. Early trials indicate that AI-augmented workflows can reduce the time-to-insight by approximately 40% in literature-heavy fields, though this metric varies by discipline.

On the right side, there are three AI-generated comments:

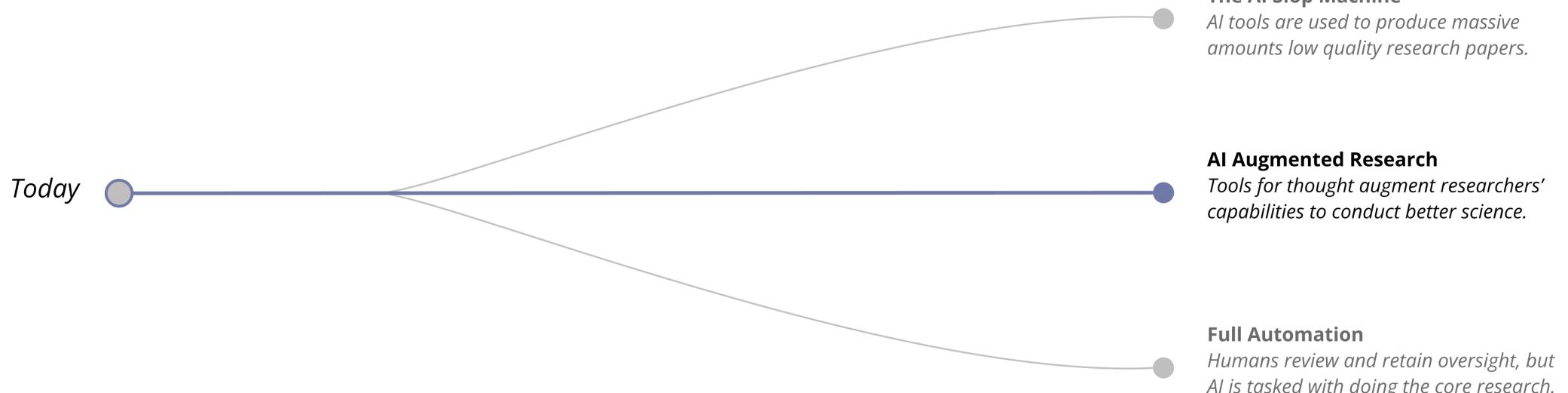
- Shoulders AI Assistant 7m: Good use of the "pivot penalty" concept here. It bridges the ga...
- Shoulders AI Assistant 7m: This sentence is quite dense and difficult to parse. Consider...
- Shoulders AI Assistant 7m: This is a strong claim. Do we have a citation for this 40%...

At the bottom, there's a footer with 'Try it: shoule.rs/register?invite=GIANTS' and a note 'Cmd+K to open AI chat'.

AI research tools need to be built intentionally, with purpose

Shoulders is designed to augment – not automate – with control, verification, and grounding

Because the tools we create today will shape research practices for years to come





Paul Schneider

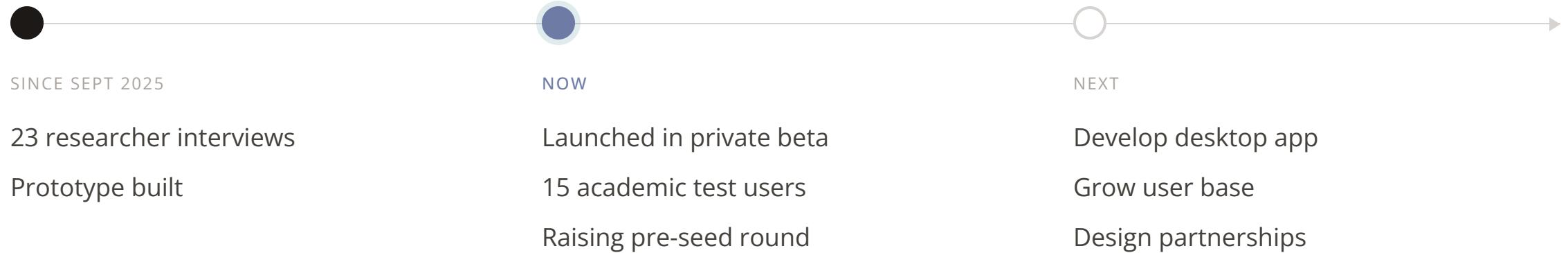
MD | MSc Epidemiology | PhD Medicine | PhD Health Economics

Previously health economic and decision science researcher at the University of Sheffield, UK; 50 publications, 480 citations

Co-founded a consulting firm (DPA, \$1M/year revenue) and a software startup (Valorem Health, failed)

Built research software for national technology appraisal;
closed enterprise deals with pharma companies (AZ, BMS, GSK, etc.)

PROGRESS



“ You took everything I use and put it into one interface.

Erin
Institute of Health Economics, Canada

“ It's like your reference manager is a colleague that could bat ideas at you.

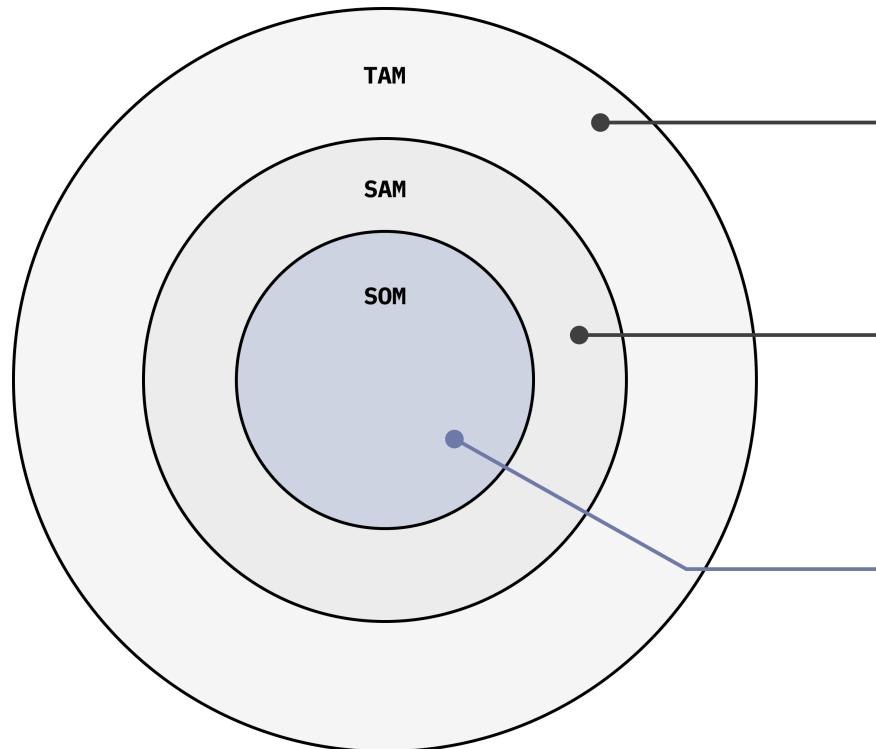
Alan
MSD, UK

“ Even without the AI, it's a great editor, that does what it needs to do very well.

Edi
University of Sheffield, UK

“ Oh... wow, that is so cool!

Lalitha
Penn State University, USA



12M+

/ \$1.5B
Technical writers and researchers
(academics, industry R&D, medical writers, etc.)

3M+

/ \$450M
Organisations / professionals that
buy productivity software

1.5M+

/ \$150M
Academic researchers and regulated
enterprise R&D (CROs, pharma)

BEACHHEAD

Quantitative health-related research: ~300K users

FOR CONSUMERS

Freemium
Subscriptions tiers
Usage-based for overages

FOR B2B / ENTERPRISE

Private infrastructure
Compliance
\$5K-\$40K /seat /year

Path: Build PMF in quantitative health research → Expand across labs and academic institutions → Scale into regulated enterprise R&D

No accessible product combines AI-native document editing with research context for professional use

1 Paper Writing Tools (Jenni.ai, scite.ai)

for Essay writing and language assistance
lacks Integration, AI slop protection, trustworthiness

2 General Writing AI (Google Docs, Grammarly)

for General-purpose writing assistance
lacks Research context, citations, sources

3 Vertical AI (Elicit, Consensus, OttoSR)

for Literature discovery and data extraction
lacks Writing workspace, integration

4 DIY Stacks (Obsidian + Claude)

for Technical users who want flexibility
lacks Only accessible to technical users

Preparing pre-seed round — looking for feedback

LOOKING FOR

Feedback on business model and go-to-market

Connections to research-heavy organizations

TRY SHOULDERS PROTOTYPE

<https://shoulde.rs/register?invite=GIANTS>

CONTACT

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