Scrappr: Putting Writers' Own Thoughts First

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Introduction

Writers often struggle with transforming scattered or forgotten ideas into structured writing. They collect thoughts across different sources, yet retrieval and quick note taking do not go hand in hand. At the same time, many writers are reluctant to rely on fully automated writing assistants, as these tools often replace rather than support their creative process. Our system is designed to solve this tension. Instead of generating content for the writer, it enhances their existing workflow. By capturing ideas across devices and surfacing relevant notes in real time while writing, the platform supports creativity without imposing automation.

Problem Statement

Writers tend to have problems synthesizing ideas and putting them on paper. Writers, however, hesitate to embrace automated tools that take away their creative freedom.
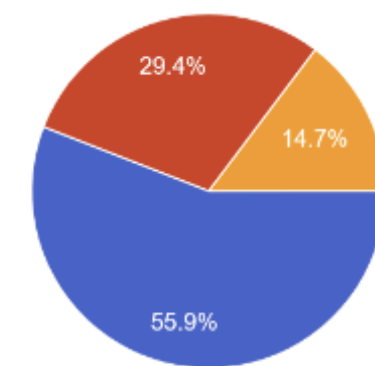
User Research

Conducted **41 semi-structured interviews** including creative and academic student writers and writing professionals to collect data on what parts of the writing process cause frustration.
Conducted **5 contextual inquiries**, observing writers for errors or points of time loss.
Collected **149 survey responses**.

How many tabs do you usually have open when you write?
34 responses

- Too many — 55.9%
- A fair amount — 29.4%
- Few — 14.7%

Survey Results

Personas

Academic Writer

- **Goal:** Convey discovery and idea through writing.
- **Wants:** Reliable access to ideas and relevant sources.
- **Challenges:**
  - Notes are forgotten or hard to find when needed
  - Constant switching between tools and tabs
  - Useful excerpts often sit in other documents or require scrolling
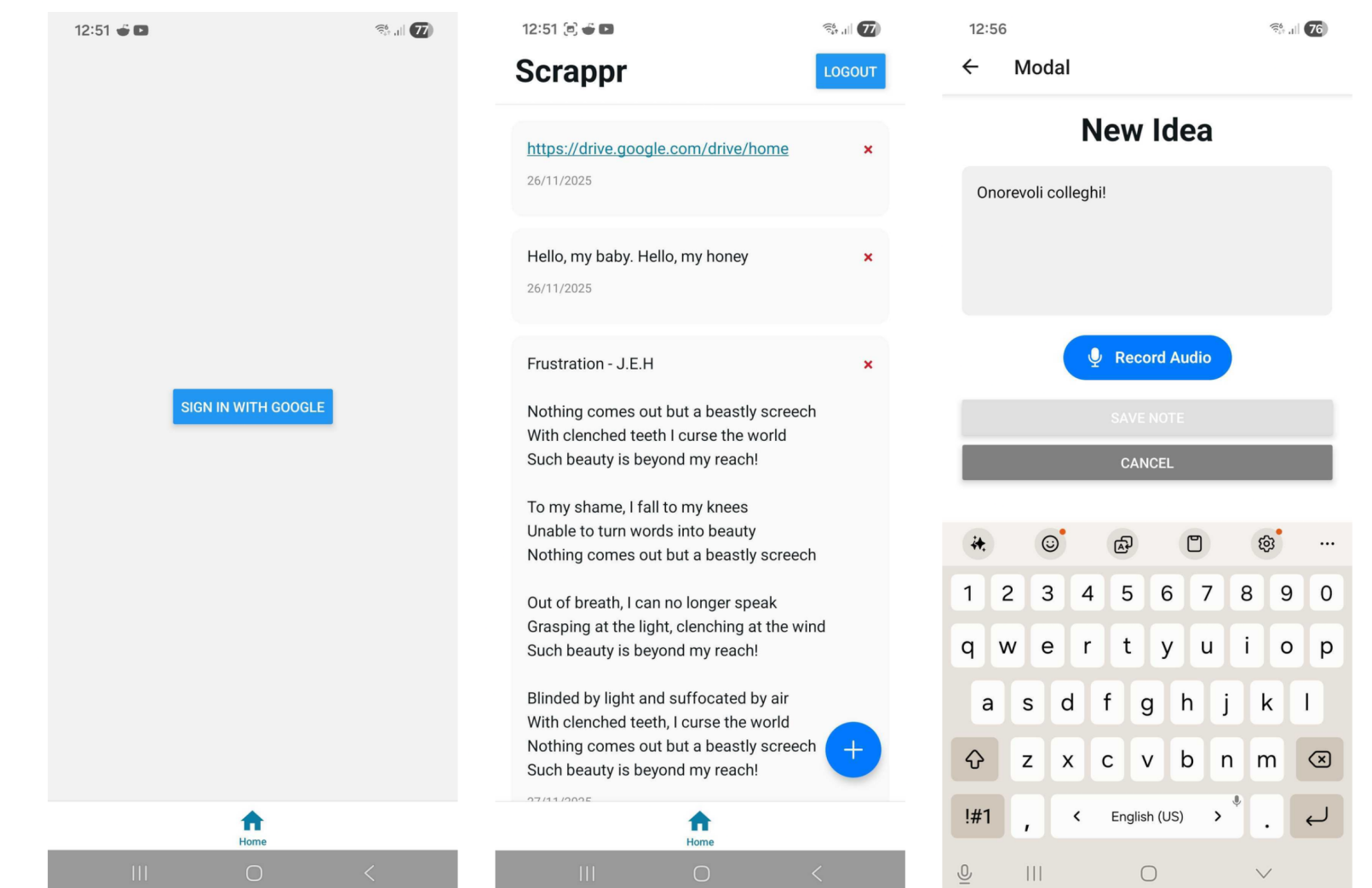
Creative Writer

- **Goal:** Put inner world to writing.
- **Wants:** Reliable access to ideas and relevant sources.
- **Challenges:**
  - Ideas arrive unpredictably and are hard to capture
  - Notes are scattered across different devices in different formats
  - Fear that writing tools will change their style or tone

Implementation

Browser Extension

The browser extension acts as an intelligent assistant embedded directly into the writing workflow. As the user writes in Google Docs, the extension automatically surfaces relevant notes in real time. These can include research papers, definitions, related ideas, saved text selections, and other notes previously captured across devices.
Users stay focused on writing while letting the extension handle organization and retrieval. Instead of switching tabs, searching through folders, or scanning their files manually, the extension proactively recommends the material most relevant to the current sentence or topic.

Mobile App

The mobile app allows users to seamlessly create notes on the go. All notes are synced to their Google Account, ensuring that everything stays unified across devices—desktop, phone, and browser extension. Users can create notes through voice dictation or text input. Notes can be tagged, categorized, and automatically organized using semantic clustering. The mobile app is optimized for fast capture: ideas, thoughts, resources, and links are stored instantly without friction. The mobile app allows user to create notes, which will be linked to their Google Account. These notes will be sync across different devices.

Scenarios and Analysis

Note Taking

- Scrappr captures ideas immediately across devices (browser + mobile).
- Notes are automatically tagged, linked, and synced to one knowledge space.
- Writers can add notes through text or voice without interrupting workflow.
- Scrappr reduces friction so ideas are collected easily when they occur.

Note Retrieval

- Scrappr brings and keeps relevant notes in the writing space based on the writer's chosen topic at the writer's choice.
- Notes are semantically clustered so the most relevant items appear first.
- Sources and links can be easily followed for more information as needed.

Evaluation

What Went Well

- Notes persist reliably and are easy to create.
- Users appreciated that notes stayed integrated within Google Docs workflow.
- The extension surfaced relevant notes without interrupting writing or creativity.
- Note taking was convenient when visiting other websites or gathering resources.

Next Steps

- Develop better suggestion algorithms that are able to extrapolate more and connect important ideas.
- Increase tag ability to support working on multiple documents and projects seamlessly.
- Experiment with dynamic layouts that optimize placement of notes and suggestions depending on user behavior and screen size.