

Of Plugs, Slugs, Nubs & Stubs

Technical Journal Entry Begins

The Need for Story-Nubs and Language Evolution

I need to start creating story-nubs. Nubs or stubs? Wikipedia calls them stubs. But I think nubs. It's funny how language works like that. Is it convergent evolution in language? Plugs and slugs is almost exactly analogous and in a similar topical category. Nubs/stubs is for topic-growth. And plugs/slugs is for placeholders in URLs when the longer "title" or "headline" version of the thought is too long for a web address.

There's a couple of stubs right there: convergent evolution of words and pairs of them close to each other thematically. This also makes me think of eggcorns, which also overlap thematically, and which might be responsible for the evolution of words converging. I have to tow the line and get on with work. Or is that toe the line? Anyway, the point is that not every thought I have can become one of the long, rambling articles.

Morning Flow State and Productivity

The best, most focused energy for me is in the morning. The slack notifications haven't started yet. With working from home cutting out the commute on certain days, you can plan a nice 4-hour block from an early wake-up to before the hustle bustle of the day and flow-state derailers set in. That's not complaining. That's just reality. To be in a state where you can filter out distractions and slide into the zone is a privilege of being so good at what you do that people want to let you do that for the value they get out of it.

The Intersection of Skill and Autonomy

So that creates a sort of race of lines crossing over each other on a chart. Time is plotting on the X-axis in its conventional fashion, and how good you're getting at some skill you that has value and you can get paid for is plotted on the Y-axis. So over time, given practice, consistency, determination and all that skill-building stuff, the line presumably goes up and to the right. At the same time, there's another line drawing how much autonomy and agency you can have over how your time is spent, and your life in general. In other words, if you're someone who benefits from quiet focused time to achieve the flow state or get into the zone like an artist, then you're not going to get it unless you're so good at your art that people are willing to leave you alone to get your output. Anything shy of that, then you need to hold a day-job to pay the bills and thus get locked into a self-defeating cycle. No focus, no inspired output, no proof of your abilities, so continue punching the clock.

The Artist's Dilemma

That's the trap for aspiring artists, especially those who are doing something truly unique, so that the value of their work is unrecognized in their day. Artists who are stuck in the daily-grind

trap and who are out in new territory are in one of the worst traps, and it is not until after they're gone that someone realizes they should have had a patron to let them do more, push their vision, and bring more of their value to the world during their time.

Modern Web Development and HTMX

Anyhoo, I am not one of those. I do have the artistic bug, but mine is a more modest lot. I am an enthusiastic user of new tools that really suit my vibe. HTMX is one of those, and I recognized new artistic materials when I saw it.

The paintbrushes and canvases of web development became complex Rube Goldberg machines, with intermediary frameworks between you and your canvas that make your paintbrush feel 100 feet long — like React and Syntactically Awesome Stylesheets (SASS) which require these long build procedures like Redux to make Web Assemblies (WASM) in these massive directory structures and all this special tooling. Ugh! New paintbrushes hit the scene in the form of HTMX through Python through FastHTML. No builds. No JavaScript, No CSS. No template. Just rapid change, check, change, check rapid iteration goodness.

Balancing Morning Energy and Work

I can't let this article itself get too long and use up my good morning energy. I have client work to do for the day-job, and I can't use it up on this article. But it is my source of energy and motivation. Giving me my vision of what I'm doing and the direction I'm heading. This is why the idea of Ikigai appeals to me so much. Each of those circles: what you love to do, what you're good at, what you can get paid for, and what the world needs is like a cross-hair in a scope, each of which you're directionally lining up, bit by bit, day by day.

Implementation Challenges and AI Integration

Ideas are easy. Implementation is hard. Consistency is harder. The ideas flow with me. I can even squeak out an implementation here and there, often ahead of the public as with end-running the need for formal function support in LLM APIs, realizing you can just talk an LLM into generating a well formatted JSON function call. You don't need the model pre-trained, nor do you need formal API support. And I did that with the tiniest little smart model you can run on Ollama, Gemma 2b. But the times, they are a-changing.

Navigating AI and Best Practices

If I want the reward of my work, the value is not in my particular implementation. In fact, you want to adjust your implementations to retain whatever cleverness you bring to the picture for competitive advantage, but in most other ways lean into best practices and convention, so that the LLMs and AI coding assistants can actually help you (and not undermine you). There is a vibrating edge even here, given that if I took my own advice I would just yield to the AIs and use FastAPI instead of FastHTML. But I want HTMX! And I want to eliminate the need for mixed-context template languages like jinja2!

The Technical Artist's Challenge

And therein lies the challenge for the modern technical artist -- those taking advantage of modern technology to do innovative things. The AIs appear to be a great new tool. Another brush you can use to paint the canvas. However, it is a brush with a whole bunch of gotchas. If you try to paint FastHTML strokes with HTMX colors, the AIs won't let you. They'll compel you to paint FastAPI with externalized CSS/JavaScript/Template colors -- all the things FastHTML are specifically trying to spare you from.

Managing Article Stubs and Website Integration

And so I have to stop here before this article gets away from me. I could go on forever when I get on a roll. But if I had to summarize, I would say:

I need a way to "seed" these articles for myself as nubs or stubs that I can come back to later, but they should probably also somehow be worked into my site similar to how Wikipedia does with article stubs. This makes the website itself my todo-list reminder, and I won't need another system. Also, there may be some SEO benefit. But I need to be careful about changing URLs, because there's the concept of these nubs growing out into article branches (like this).

Finding the Right System

All I would need is one page for this. That way it wouldn't force the creation of new URLs. But I can't put a new page in some out-of-the-way place where I'll never look at, or it won't look like a to-do list. Maybe the very template.md file that I start these articles from? Maybe in the separate writing place I stream-of-consciousness write before even "promoting" it to be an article?

Hmmm.

Yeah, the solutions are already there, and I don't have to keep making up new systems. Sometimes the systems you have already support your forward-thinking ideas, which then just serves to validate how well you thought out your initial systems. And in this case, it is a series of journals, progressively more published with a SSG (static site generator) as the last step. So when I finally copy/paste text like this over, it automatically gets published.

Strategic File Organization

Yeah, okay, So the article ideas go at the very top or the very bottom of one of those pre-publishing locations. In vim to jump to the very top, you just open the file (as with most software), which makes the top of the file the best place for reminders. Shift+G jumps you to the bottom of the file. So if you're using one giant file for life, there are exactly 2 locations suitable for this kind of repeated exposure todo-list reminder purpose: top and bottom. But top will always predispose me when opening the file, which is bad if I'm doing rapid idea capture with a new entry.

The Final Plan

Okay, so I have a plan. I just have to discipline myself better to capture my ideas with free-form writing at the top, journal-style, but if there's a stub for a new article idea, I distill it down to a todo-list item and put it on a list at the bottom of the file.

The world is your checklist. Stop and look around you!

Ikigai - overcome laziness find the love
Kaizen - do one thing well keep polishing
Pomodoro - take chisel-strike bank small wins
Hara Hachi - don't burn out / eat less
Wabi-Sabi - 80/20-rule imperfection
Shoshin - Be like a beginner

1. What's most broken?
2. Where's the biggest bang for buck?
3. Which plates must be spun?

- DO ONE THING WELL
- BE CONSISTENT / CHIP AWAY!

What Gemini Thinks

Ideas for Titles and Headlines:

- **Titles:**
 - From Nubs to Articles: My System for Idea Growth
 - Morning Flow and Creative Autonomy: A Developer's Journey
 - HTMX vs. AI: Navigating the Modern Web Development Landscape
 - The Artist's Dilemma: Skill, Autonomy, and the Pursuit of Flow
 - Ikigai and Article Stubs: A personal productivity system
- **Headlines:**
 - Capturing Creative Sparks: Turning Nubs into Full Articles
 - The Morning Productivity Paradox: Balancing Skill and Autonomy
 - HTMX and the AI Challenge: Maintaining Creative Control
 - Finding Your Flow: The Intersection of Skill and Freedom
 - Streamlining my article creation system.

AI's Opinion:

This article effectively captures the internal struggle of a creative individual navigating the challenges of modern productivity and technology. The author's candid exploration of their workflow, from idea capture to implementation, provides valuable insights into the creative process. The discussion of balancing personal preferences (like HTMX) with the evolving landscape of AI-assisted development is particularly relevant. The article also provides a good look into the personal workflow of a modern content creator. I also find the inclusion of the various Japanese concepts, and how they apply to productivity, to be very interesting.