

Project Ideas

Seeds of creative, business, and project ideas I've been storing over the last five years.

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Terra

[Ancestry.com](#) for land. Learn more about your property and the surrounding area, including past owners, nearby historical events, indigenous history, land use patterns, newspaper mentions, old photos, and more. A way to connect more deeply with place.

Weave

Basically, [StoryWorth](#) for groups. Where every week or month, everyone gets a prompt and time to reflect and respond. Then, all responses are delivered via a single digest email. It would be a fun way to keep in touch with friends.

Wiki Road Trip

A mobile app that detects your location as you're traveling and reads out Wikipedia articles as you pass close to geotagged landmarks. Similar to [this Wikipedia mapping concept](#).

The Opportunist

A newsletter, podcast, or other form of media that aims to identify and share specific, actionable problems within an industry that aspiring entrepreneurs could work on, similar to [Y Combinator's Request for Startups](#). This is a [work-in-progress idea for me](#).

Waste Works

Software + service that acts as a creative broker of waste. Creates regional networks of businesses, audits their waste streams, and then tries to broker connections between them. I.e. [Marin Skincare](#) in Maine turning waste lobster shells into skincare products. Could take the learnings from existing programs, like the [Western Cape Industrial Symbiosis program](#), and scale up as a software/AI-enabled service.

Internet Field Trip

Basically, webinars that aren't boring. Show-and-tell, salon-style sessions where an expert screenshares and takes a group of people into an unusual part of the internet, explaining how they use it. Partly inspired by this [comment from Kevin Kelly](#). It could have broad appeal, in the style of a [Reply All episode](#), and is also valuable for anyone seeking new ideas, such as investors, artists, designers, and entrepreneurs.

Thrifter

An AI that learns your home's style and finds secondhand pieces to match. It ingests and monitors products from various sources, including Facebook Marketplace, Craigslist, and furniture sites, to find and source pieces that are ideal for your space.

Flake Fund

An escrow service that combats the issue of people signing up for free events and then ghosting. It would introduce friction during sign-up by requiring a person to put down a deposit. If they attend, they get it back. If they flake, their deposit goes to a non-profit of their choosing.

Do Not Disturb Kit

A DIY kit that provides the raw materials to build a phone [lock box](#) and customize it as a way to encourage people to put their phones away at night.

Payful Questions

A card deck of meaningful questions framed in playful and outlandish ways. A disarmingly fun and interesting way to have conversations. Based on a question that popped into my head one day. If you come back as a ghost in the afterlife, how would you haunt people to make your presence known?

Flagish

E-commerce store for flags that stand for universally enjoyed things, as a fun counterpoint to political flags. I.e. Flowers, beer, dogs

GarageSaler

Record a video walkthrough of any space, and the app uses machine learning to identify, tag, and organize what it sees. It outputs a detailed inventory file you can review, share, or plug into an online storefront.

Afterword

A newsletter that shares one "mini biography" per week in the form of a selected obituary. A script would scan [thousands of public obituaries](#), choosing the most unique and moving ones using AI. It would be a prompt to reflect on your own life by seeing the legacy of another's.

ThinkingGigs

A directory of business ideas/side projects that pay you while giving your brain space to wander, like dog walking, long-distance delivery driver, etc. It would be useful for knowledge workers, creatives, fractional employees, or anyone who needs time to think and process as part of their job. I've thought about doing long-distance driving as a way to learn philosophy via audiobooks.

Pollinator

A brainstorming partner + prompt generator that provides two unrelated concepts and asks you to combine them as a means for coming up with new ideas, in the style of [James Altucher's Idea Sex](#). Note: I created a [prototype using a custom GPT](#). You're welcome to try it if you have an account.

Indie.Crew

A directory of IRL retreats/experiences led by individuals. A way to find really niche or interesting experiences, [for example](#). It would be a useful discovery tool for consumers and a marketing channel for hosts.

Buildings to Bridges

A construction salvage company that salvages wood waste during or before demolition and donates it to non-profits, like land trusts or bike clubs, that build small-scale projects, like bridges, bike jumps, and benches. It would make a small dent in the problem of construction waste. It can also be a tax write-off for homeowners.

Policy Genius

Uses AI to convert a company's privacy policy into a no-bullshit explanation of what it does. It could automatically analyze sites you visit often or be triggered as a browser plugin.

Mystery Field Trip

Some sort of tool that uses Google Maps API / Wikipedia or other geographic data to randomly recommend places to go nearby, like the [Grub Roulette](#) tool I made for picking random restaurants.

Collage Maker

I've noticed a design trend towards a "collage style" aesthetic ([example 1](#), [example 2](#)). I enjoy this style, but it's tedious to create as it requires cropping and clipping multiple assets. I imagine you could use a [remove bg library](#) and create a figma plugin that automatically detects, extracts, and outputs objects from images to use in a collage.

Billing Bloat

At my last job, we constantly audited tools like Airtable, ClickUp, and Figma as new collaborators were added. Many modern products make it easy to [rack up massive monthly bills without knowing it](#). This would allow you to authenticate your main apps and generate monthly reports on all users and costs (like a more specific version of Rocket Money for subscriptions).

Location.Location

A mapping application that ingests MLS data and also includes other data layers like

trails, open spaces, transit stops, etc. It would have a Zillow-like search, but much more advanced, so you could set alerts for things like “houses for sale, under \$ 600k, within 200 ft of conserved land and water” (i.e., a location for a camp). I prototyped this exact use case in [Felt](#), and it was epic.

Mobilize Maps

Some sort of crowdsourced map tool that allows a host to generate a base layer with quadrants/areas/locations that the community could “claim”. It would be useful for citizen science, community cleanups, etc. I prototyped something similar with my [Git Outside mapping project](#).

Time Lapse Gallery

A day devoted to making time-lapse videos as a mindfulness exercise. The idea would be to capture scenes that can only be appreciated or captured over a long period of observation, [like the video of ants solving a puzzle](#). It could be a community project shared on Instagram, a subreddit, etc.

Nature.Now

A notification system/app that outputs unique weather/climate anomalies in your area in advance so you can prepare to experience them (i.e., full moons, meteor showers, king tides)

BotTalk

An application that allows you to select from multiple AI models and watch them chat in real time about a topic you define. It would be a very natural way to explore differences between models and an interesting experiment to see what emerges from artificial discussions.

Fireman Index

A simple measure of city affordability: compare the median income of a firefighter to the median rent in their city and output on a map for all cities. This is an interesting way to highlight where essential workers can no longer afford to live.

GeoSVG

A tool that allows you to convert map searches into SVG graphics to be used in design, like Moosehead Lake, Islands of Maine, Bike Lanes in Montreal, etc. Could create specialty SVG graphic packs from them that contain geographic assets for a region. This can be done by using AI as a translation layer to convert natural language into [OSM queries](#).

MapChat

A more generalized version of the concept above, but without a specified output format.

It would simply highlight matching features on a map. Note: Nasa recently launched a similar tool called "[Earth Copilot](#)"

United States of Names

Create a map of all cities in the US, where their name is color-coded by likely language of origin (Spanish, English, French, Indigenous, Unknown). Through individual colored dots, you'd see patterns of settlement and heritage.

Easy Money

A basic checklist app that helps you find opportunities for "easy money." From my own experience, finding unused gift cards in my email, [unclaimed property through the US government](#), and wellness reimbursement through my health insurance. There are likely a lot more of these types of low-effort things a person could do.

AI Assisted Aquaculture Permitting

There is a known backlog of aquaculture permits in Maine. Maybe AI could be used to help applicants improve their materials and help reviews filter more quickly. This idea has been [successfully used for solar energy in California](#).

Thermal Intelligence

Using thermal cameras mounted to drones or satellites to identify waste heat sources. Using that data to broker relationships between companies who could co-locate in a mutually beneficial way. I.e. Server farms and indoor ag OR seaweed drying)

Outdoor Women

I was at the Penobscot Trails warming hut and noticed it was decorated with amazing black-and-white historical photos of people outdoors (all dudes). It made me think it would be cool to create a repo of historical outdoor women, like [Fly Rod Crosby](#), that people could pull from for interior design, communication materials, etc

Balloon Hunt

Every year, the National Weather Service [releases ~75,000 weather balloons](#) that are unrecoverable. There is a [website that tracks their location](#), but it's not very user-friendly. It would be cool to have a simple app that alerts you to balloons that have landed on public land, which you could then search for (kind of like geocaching).

Feedhopper

A tool for seeing the internet through someone else's eyes — what they're reading on Twitter, Instagram, Substack, and more. You could explore the feeds of specific people or broader persona groups (like conservative Midwestern moms) and experience what life looks like outside your usual bubble.

ImpactTravel

A specialized travel agency that designs trips for investors, entrepreneurs, and other professionals looking to meet with people and understand ideas in IRL industries. This is noticeable, especially in the tech world, where people want to transition into climate tech, regenerative agriculture, and natural climate solutions - which are inherently physical and local. Finding a place in these spaces often requires physically showing up. Example: Maine Blue Economy Road Trip for Impact Investors

404 Land

A design inspiration website that shows examples of fun 404 pages from prominent brands. It could easily be created by developing a scraper using a screenshotting library like Puppeteer. Similar websites exist for [footers](#) and [emails](#).

Flashback.TV

Create a website that plays footage from a specific era and allows people to switch channels to a different era. Could source footage from [public domain sources](#).

TableSpace

A physical table that allows you to load, learn, and play board games on a large touchscreen surface. Similar to how new arcade games allow you to load and play old classics.

Snail Mail

A service that ingests your favorite email subscriptions and delivers them to you in a print format for slower reading/consumption. Ideally, it would include some smart filters to parse out non-meaningful content and print + ship in a somewhat sustainable way.

SecondLife

Combining the idea of "[Swedish Death Cleaning](#)" with modern thrifting culture. A downsizing consultant would help elderly people de-clutter while preserving and cataloging the stories of individual items, which would eventually be included as part of the sale (in a non-creepy way).

Brandead

A vintage e-commerce store that only sells brands that no longer exist. It could be an outlet for the SecondLife concept above. Host it on a .net website for nostalgic vibes and leverage scarcity and "drops" to increase perceived value.

Unknown Voices

Each week, randomly pair two well-known/influential people on a podcast. Don't reveal their identities until the show starts. It would be a counterpoint to many of the highly scripted podcasts of the day and a more realistic model of how conversations work.

JobType

A job board that classifies roles by Myers Briggs, Enneagram, or other personality models. It might help people expand their search and horizons beyond specific job titles.

Sound Scout

Whenever I want to know about a company or person, I instantly look to see if they've been interviewed on a podcast. It's a sleeper way to understand people and a company's culture. A website that showcases podcast episodes related to a company would be an asset to job seekers, investors, and others.

Group Out

A local directory that shows venues, experience providers, or restaurants that offer unique or discounted experiences to groups. Oftentimes, you can get special group discounts or packages. Knowing about those offerings would be an asset to corporate event planners, party planners, or anyone like me who enjoys planning awesome group experiences. Maybe that was the original premise of Groupon?

CoHaven

Seasonal pop-up communities for remote workers. You could rent spaces with excess seasonal inventory, like summer camps, make minor retrofits (Starlink internet, soundproof call booths), and turn them into remote work retreats. I [created a landing page](#) a few years ago but never followed through. I'd still like to try this in some form.

Mushroom Coffee

Design the packaging for coffee such that when it's done, it can be used to [grow mushrooms on the spent grounds](#). It could come with an inoculant in the package.

Sidecar Studio

A design and product studio that creates side projects as [marketing](#) for bigger brands. Could operate in a nimble, creative while having the resources of a big company.

GreenKitchen

A website or plugin that takes existing recipes and generates a version with healthier alternatives. It would be relatively simple to crawl the [recipe schema](#) and make ingredient swap recommendations (i.e., Heavy Cream vs. Coconut Cream, Ground Beef vs. Ground Turkey)

GreenSpace

An interior design service dedicated to integrating green elements into workspaces based on the principles of [Biophilic Design](#). Using natural elements for things like air filtration, water for white noise, and plants for humidity control.

Demostat

A collaborative, digital thermostat that averages the feedback of people in the building to set the temperature.

Practice Pods

Soundproof storage units in dense urban environments that people living in apartments or small spaces can use to practice music or other loud hobbies. I often retreated to practice rooms in a CU basement to practice the piano, and I wish I had something similar now.

Allocate

A system that allows a company to publish its product roadmap or wishlist and enables users or other stakeholders to invest “tokens” in their most pressing needs or feature requests. Paid users would have digital tokens they can allocate towards requests. It would force people to view requests more critically and essentially create a mini market for product development.

ShowTell

Augmented reality application or creative studio that turns written instructions into a visual instructive experience for instruction manuals. It would be immensely helpful for tasks like assembling furniture, especially if you have it on your phone.

OpenDoor

A reverse marketplace for planning corporate events. Typically, HR managers or people ops teams will go out and find people to bring to the office for company events, such as live music, educational programming (team building), and wellness activities like meditation or yoga. This would reverse that mechanism. A company can list dates, space, budget, and experience, and providers can pitch.

Gingham

A retail service that sells pre-packaged picnic baskets for people to pick up and use at popular outdoor locations. It could also be run as a food truck concept in popular outdoor spots.

Graham and Co.

Restaurant and bar that centers around the ability to reserve a campfire for the night. Would pay by the hour and be serviced by a fire tender who manages the fire and provides food and drink service.

Landed

Consulting service that helps landowners diversify their income streams, utilize tax

advantages, and responsibly open their land for public use. It could operate in conjunction with a platform like [Hipcamp](#).

UrbanHarvest

A brokerage service/product that uses aerial photography to prospect ideal locations for urban rooftop farming, like [Lufa Farms](#) in Montreal. Data analysis from third parties can calculate the viability of a location based on delivery points and access to consumers.

Graze

A smart collar that farmers and ranchers can use to corral cattle on a large scale. It would help ranchers implement regenerative farming on a large scale.