

How to Writer

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August 16, 2023

For Everybody

Here are some general tips about my writing process. There's no manual, you must find your own way as I am. There's no correct or clear path, but it never hurts to compare notes with others.

1 Art and the thing to remember

Art's a thing that happens to you. It's a deeply reflective state about the world. I live inside of it, and, crucially, it involves energy and internal states that are NOT passive. Making *things* is great, books and paintings are cool, but they tend to be artifacts of art (art pieces, if you will), but not art itself. That's my perspective.

2 Writing and the thing to remember

Writing has nothing to do with pencils and paper. Grow up, I say! (☹ Just kidding!)

To me, writing is about translating thoughts into symbols that describe sounds. Nothin more, nothin less. The fastest way to do this is by typing or writing in shorthand.

Learning to type without looking at the keyboard -or "touch typing"- is the single most important skill I would recommend all modern writers develop. It takes two weeks of practice and then the gates of the digital world open. Typing, that used to be a chore, becomes relaxing and therapeutic. This one skill saves so much time and effort, and it's useful in other jobs and tasks. These days I can put down thousands of words in a short sitting without batting an eye.

3 Consent

I once made a mistake and involved a reader in a story and made them uncomfortable. Thank god they told me. I have since corrected the mistake best as possible, but there are lingering effects and emotions that I cannot change. I love the reader, desperately, and I learned this seemingly obvious lesson the hard way. You must cut certain details and you should ask for consent when you need to. Be respectful of other people. Be kind. Not everyone wants to be implicated in your art.

4 My Personal Process

- Engage lots of ideas, especially when others tell you to stay away. (I.e. the Unabombers Manifesto)
- Observe the world, learn things names. (plants, animals, materials, processes)
- Visit and explore your town. (find the spots)
- Listen to what other people say (be a little nosy)
- Write down notes of ideas
- Journal and do exercises for fun
- Write the things you want to publish (like that book/essay or w/e)

- Collate them into coherent formats (A pdf)
- Self publish everything you think is worth publishing (put it online)

5 My Tools

- **A Disclaimer** - protect yourself legally. Please. Be careful.
- **Keyboard** - I use a mechanical with blue switches
- **Touch-typing Skill** - Learned with Klavaro (linux/windows)
- **Distraction-free word processor** - I use Focus Writer
- **Advanced tools** - TeXstudio for L^AT_EX, Scribus publishing suite, Obsidian notes
- **Version control and backing up** - Git
- **Mobile equipment** - bluetooth keyboard and tablet / portable laptop / phone
- **Chat GPT** - I use the GPT only for editing, to remove my conformation bias and to check complex grammar. I refuse to let it write for me. I only occasionally use it for information content like section 9 and 8 of this document.

6 Discussion

Art is not passive. I do lots of work and research in a wide variety of subjects as they interest me or if they fit my understanding. I listen for, and watch out for, things that other people say and do. If opportunities arise, I do my best to say yes. That's how I learned about GNU-Linux, L^AT_EX, programming, nature, ect...

At all times, when I have an idea, I try to write it down. Usually in my phone, sometimes on note paper, other times on the back of napkins or envelopes. I often carry a lightweight bluetooth keyboard to do stream of consciousness journaling when I have downtime. Just writing about the day is enough to make me feel better. Often I can deeply reflect on a subject or thought because of the freeform nature. Sometimes I look up writing exercises online and do those. Sometimes I reflect and role play with chat bots. Knowing that every moment is a miracle, there is always something to write about.

Eventually I sit down to collate and organize the writing into a zine or essay. I try to keep all my documents in plaintext .txt, .md, or .tex files for easy searching. Mostly I render my documents with L^AT_EX to have professional PDFs to distribute. Many of my essays and reflections are private and never see the light of day. I often work late into the night, but my favorite time to write is the morning. I think my brain likes the morning the best too, as thoughts seem to flow better.

Importantly, I back everything up and keep my files organized. Version control allows me to work on a single file with as many branches as needed. I can track changes and roll back files to recover deletions. What's more, the files are remotely synced and decentralized. This means that I have a complete copy of all the files and changes and branches on any machine that is working with the repository. **NOTE:** Version control with GIT is an advanced skill, but allows for unprecedented collaboration. It is considered one of the most important technologies in existence and has revolutionized version control as we know it.

7 Disclaimer

In high school, a girl I knew got a young teacher fired because she wrote about her relationship with him in her personal diary and it was used against him in court. What a Lame-O situation. A disclaimer would have protected the diary from being seized and admitted as evidence for the state to read. It's good practice to put one at the front of every personal journal or controversial document.

I use the following disclaimer so that fiction stays fiction and doesn't become evidence.

This is adult content for 13+ audiences. I am not a writer. This is a work of fiction. Names, characters, business, events and incidents are the products of imagination. Any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, or actual events is coincidental.

8 L^AT_EX- GPT output

This document was produced with L^AT_EX.

L^AT_EX is a high-quality typesetting system, ideal for authors creating complex documents, especially those with mathematical content. Unlike typical word processors, in L^AT_EX, you write plain-text instructions defining the structure and style of your content. These instructions get compiled to produce professionally styled outputs, often in PDF format. Think of it as writing a screenplay, where you define the elements (dialogues, actions), and L^AT_EX directs the performance, ensuring perfect formatting. Although there's a learning curve, its power lies in handling long documents, automated formatting, precise control over layouts, and reproducibility. Many academics, scientists, and publishers prefer L^AT_EX for its precision and consistency.

9 GIT - GPT output

`git` is an incredibly powerful tool for version control, collaboration, and ensuring the safety of your documents. Some of the benefits include:

1. **Versioning:** Track changes and revert to any previous version of your project.
2. **Collaboration:** Multiple people can work on the same project without stepping on each other's toes.
3. **Branching:** Experiment with new features or changes without affecting the main project.
4. **Backup:** Even if it's used just as a personal tool, having a `git` repository (especially if you push to a remote repository like GitHub or GitLab) provides a backup of your work.
5. **History:** View the log of changes, see who made what change and when.
6. **Conflict Resolution:** In case of conflicting changes, `git` provides tools to resolve these conflicts.
7. **Automation:** With hooks and CI/CD pipelines (in platforms like GitHub or GitLab), you can automate tasks like testing, building, and deploying.
8. **Documentation:** The commit history, combined with meaningful commit messages, can serve as a documentation of the evolution of your project.