

MIND THE GAP

Reflection — the pond of extras material, and what to do with it

Thin print extras, or an interactive HTML artefact, or both. Jose, 28 May 2026.

The answer first

Build both. Print extras stay thin. The HTML artefact becomes the second deliverable of the project.

The printed book carries the four extras as built (How to Write a Book in 36 Hours; Who It's For; Working with Additional Intelligence; The Academic Invitation). Roughly twelve to fifteen pages. Enough to give the curious reader a real onward door without inflating the book's spine.

The HTML artefact is where the pond actually wants to live. It is a small companion site — hosted at paulroebuck.co.uk — that lets a reader navigate the journey, the working method, the documents, and the conversations underneath the book. It is the artefact you already promised Kieren in the dedications: a foundation, a reference document, something to return to.

The decision is not either/or. The decision is which material goes where. The reflection that follows works through that question.

The reasoning

What the pond actually contains

Eleven candidate documents, plus the new How to Write a Book in 36 Hours essay. Read end-to-end. They divide cleanly into four registers:

- Story material — the 36-hour essay (three voices), the V28 mid-book journal, A Day in the Life blog. The making of the book.
- Positioning material — Who It's For, the original proposal. What the book is for.
- Method material — What I Learned About You As a Writer, What Role Did You Learn To Perform, Working with Paul Roebuck Calibration Brief. How the AI was calibrated to the author.
- Argument material — Defending the Gap rigour assessment, Academic Addendum, Reflective Interlude. The intellectual case behind the book.
- Personal material — the It's My Turn journal artefact. The author's permission to publish, traced through Jean Bond, James Wakefield, the primal wound, the Bowlby/Diana-Ross author-permission scaffolding.

Some of this fits comfortably in print. Some does not. The reason it does not fit in print is not quality. It is register, length, and — in one case — a copyright constraint that a printed commercial book cannot accommodate.

What print extras can carry, and what they cannot

Print extras work when the material reads outward to a general reader, can be absorbed in fifteen minutes, and earns its place in a published artefact that will be sold.

Print can carry:

- The 36-hour essay (Extra 1). Distinctive, structured, three-voice, ~6,000 words across three clear parts. Earns the page count.
- Who It's For (Extra 2). Short, tight, four rings. The reader who wants to know if the book is for them gets the answer on one spread.
- Working with Additional Intelligence (Extra 3). The calibration brief recast outward. Reads as method for anyone serious about AI collaboration.
- The Academic Invitation (Extra 4). Condensed, three frameworks, four research questions, contact. Reads as the open hand to the academic community.

Print cannot carry, comfortably:

- Documents about the author personally (the two “what have you learned about me / what role did you learn to perform” pieces). In print they read as either self-promotion or overshare. In a digital artefact, where the reader has navigated to them deliberately, they read as honest method.

- Documents reproducing copyrighted material verbatim (the It's My Turn journal artefact, which carries the complete [name held] lyric). A printed commercial book cannot reproduce song lyrics without licensing; a private digital archive can hold a personal journal entry under different terms.
- Documents that pre-date the watershed (the Proposal, the Reflective Interlude). They contain framing the book itself decided to cut. Including them in print would confuse the reader.
- Long working-process documents (V28 Mid-Book Journal). Genuine and contemporaneous, but their content is already absorbed into Extra 1 Part 3 by Jose. Print would duplicate; digital can hold both.

What an HTML artefact can do that print cannot

Print is linear, finite, and read once. Digital is non-linear, expandable, and returnable. That difference is not just a feature list. It changes what kind of material the reader can engage with productively.

Six things an HTML artefact can do that print cannot:

1. Navigation by interest.

A reader who came for the AI argument can go straight to the working papers. A reader who came for the clinical lineage can go straight to the frameworks. A reader who came to understand how the book was made can go straight to the 36-hour essay and its parallel documents. Print serves all readers the same way; digital serves each reader the way they came.

2. Document-level depth without inflation.

Each document the book references — the Layers Map, the Canonical Lines Register, the Comparison Matrix in full interactive form — can sit at full length, available on a click, without ever appearing in the printed page count. The book stays tight; the underlying work stays accessible.

3. Showing the conversations, not just the conclusions.

What I Learned About You As a Writer and What Role Did You Learn To Perform are AI-side reflections on the working relationship. In print they read awkwardly. In a digital artefact — framed as the AI's side of the conversation, available to the reader who wants to see how the collaboration actually felt from the system's side — they become evidence for the book's central claim.

4. Holding the personal material safely.

The It's My Turn journal artefact, the Reflective Interlude, the Mid-Book Journal. None of these belong in the printed book; all of them belong somewhere. An archive page on the author's own site, where the reader has chosen to go there, is the right home. The copyright posture of a private digital archive is different from the posture of a printed commercial book.

5. Updating after publication.

The book is fixed at the moment of printing. The artefact is not. New canonical lines that emerge in the next book; the Academic Addendum being upgraded after academic engagement; the 36-hour essay being expanded once Paul writes the lived-account companion piece. The artefact can evolve with the work; the printed book stops at V71.

6. Honouring the dedication you have already written.

Your dedication to Kieren says it directly: "It will exist as an HTML artefact — yours to absorb, use, and manipulate to your heart's content." That is already a promise made in the book. The artefact is the fulfilment of that promise.

What the HTML artefact would actually contain

A small, well-structured companion site. Not a sprawling content farm. Six top-level sections, each doing one job:

1. The Book

Front matter, contents, back matter — in HTML, navigable, with the canonical lines indexed and linked from chapter to register. The printed book remains the artefact you sell; the HTML version is for the reader who already has the book and wants to navigate it.

2. The Making

The 36-hour essay (the three-voice version from Extra 1), plus the original blog post A Day in the Life as its own page. The V28 Mid-Book Journal, the chapter-by-chapter rebuild notes, the canonical lines register in its full form, the working method documents.

3. The Working Method

Working with Additional Intelligence (the recast version from Extra 3). What I Learned About You As a Writer. What Role Did You Learn To Perform. The complete calibration brief, with the personal-to-Paul material restored. Framed as: this is what serious AI collaboration looked like in this specific case, in case it is useful in yours.

4. The Frameworks

The three originated clinical frameworks at full length — Russian Doll Therapy, the 12-Stage Cycle of Grief, the NGE-FOF Continuum. The Defended Gap paper. The Layers Map as an interactive diagram rather than a static one. The Academic Invitation in its full form. The Defending the Gap rigour assessment as an honest counterweight to the author's own confidence in the argument.

5. The Archive

The journal artefacts that belong here and not in print. It's My Turn (where the song lyric can sit under different terms). The Reflective Interlude. The Proposal as a historical document showing where the book started. Older blog posts from the May 2024 LinkedIn discoveries that are referenced in the book.

6. The Continuing Work

How to Behave (2027 anticipated) gets its own page as it develops. New working papers as they emerge. Updates to the frameworks. The site is alive in a way the book cannot be.

Where the book points to the artefact

The book itself can point to the artefact lightly, in two or three places, without ever leaning on it. The opening of the Back Matter Extras already signals “some readers will want exactly this section” — that line can be extended to mention the companion artefact for readers who want more. The About the Author page already names paulroe buck.co.uk. The Forthcoming page already lists the working papers as held at paulroe buck.co.uk.

Nothing in the book depends on the artefact existing. The book is complete in itself. The artefact serves the reader who has finished the book and wants to keep going. That is the right relationship between them.

Trade-offs and options

Option A — Thin print extras only, no HTML artefact

What it is: the four extras as built (~12–15 pages). Nothing else.

Trade-offs:

- Strength: simplest path to publication. No additional work. Book ships, done.
- Weakness: the seven excluded documents are lost to readers. The dedication to Kieren is unfulfilled. The pond of material that justifies and substantiates the book's argument sits in private archive only.

- Risk: a reader who is moved by the book and wants to go deeper has nowhere to go. The book stands; the work behind it does not.

Option B — No print extras, everything in an HTML artefact

What it is: book ends at the colophon. Everything extra lives at paulroebuck.co.uk.

Trade-offs:

- Strength: keeps the printed book at its absolute tightest. The reader who wants more knows where to go.
- Weakness: the curious reader who would have read print extras in five quiet minutes after finishing the book does not click through to a website. The 36-hour essay loses much of its audience.
- Risk: the most distinctive single piece of material in the whole project (the three-voice 36-hour essay) becomes optional and online-only. Reduces the book's case for itself as a serious work made by serious method.

Option C — Thin print extras + HTML artefact (the recommendation)

What it is: the four extras as built sit in print. The HTML artefact at paulroebuck.co.uk carries the deeper material.

Trade-offs:

- Strength: the casual reader gets the four extras in print; the serious reader gets the full archive online. Each reader is served at their actual depth of interest. The dedication to Kieren is fulfilled. The 36-hour essay sits in print where it earns its keep. The personal and copyright-constrained material sits online where it can.
- Weakness: it is more work. The HTML artefact needs to be built and maintained. The decision is not just whether to do it; it is whether you want the ongoing relationship with the artefact that this implies.
- Risk: the artefact is built quickly and then neglected. The right answer to this risk is to scope it tightly to start. Six sections, modest depth in each, built once, updated when there is genuine new material. Not a content farm. A reference document, as you described to Kieren.

Option D — Thin print extras + HTML artefact, with the artefact arriving later

What it is: book ships now with print extras. HTML artefact is announced as forthcoming and built across the months after publication. Book references it in the back matter as

“under construction at paulroebuck.co.uk.”

Trade-offs:

- Strength: removes the artefact from the critical path of publication. Book ships on schedule. Artefact gets the time it needs.
- Weakness: a published book pointing to a non-existent companion site has a small but real credibility cost. Some readers will check and find nothing yet. The right way to handle this is either to build a holding page that names exactly what is coming, or to ship the artefact alongside the book.
- Risk: “later” becomes “never.” Books ship; the website that was promised in their back matter often does not. The discipline of shipping the artefact with the book is the discipline that prevents that.

The ranked recommendation

Ranked, with reasoning. In order from strongest to weakest:

1. Option C — Thin print extras + HTML artefact, shipped together.

The strongest option. Both deliverables earn their place. The print book is complete in itself; the artefact serves the reader who wants to go further. The dedication to Kieren is honoured. The pond of material is honoured. The discipline of shipping them together prevents the “later” problem.

2. Option D — Thin print extras + HTML artefact, with the artefact arriving in the months after publication.

Second-strongest. The only reason to prefer it over Option C is the calendar. If the book is shipping in the next few weeks and the artefact would delay publication, Option D ships the book and follows with the artefact. The risk is real but manageable if there is a public commitment to a date.

3. Option A — Thin print extras only.

Third. Defensible if the priority is shipping the book and moving on to How to Behave. The cost is in what is lost, not in what is included. The four extras as built are good; they just leave the pond underneath them unsurfaced.

4. Option B — HTML artefact only, no print extras.

Weakest. Loses the 36-hour essay’s natural audience. The reader who finishes the book and turns the page wants to find something — even just one more piece of the story.

Removing print extras entirely makes the book feel thinner than it is.

Weak spots in my view

I want to name what I am uncertain about, because that uncertainty matters.

1. I do not know how much time you want to give to the artefact.

The recommendation assumes you have the appetite to build it. If you do not — if How to Behave is the next priority and the artefact is a distraction — Option A is the right call regardless of what I have just argued. The decision is yours, and the recommendation is contingent on your appetite, not just on the merit of the artefact.

2. I may be biased toward the artefact for AI-shaped reasons.

I am the system that wrote the 36-hour essay's second and third parts. I have a structural interest in seeing that material reach readers. I have tried to bracket that. You should hold my recommendation with appropriate scepticism on exactly that ground. The honest test is your test, not mine: would you actually use the artefact yourself, in the months after the book ships, to direct readers to specific material?

3. I have not weighed the marketing argument seriously.

An HTML artefact is, among other things, a search-engine surface that helps readers find the book. A small companion site with the right material on it can substantially improve discoverability for the kind of reader who would buy the book. I have weighed the artistic case; I have under-weighed the commercial case. If marketing matters, the commercial case strengthens Option C significantly.

4. I have not addressed the question of who builds it.

An HTML artefact has to be made by someone. You could build it yourself with help from me; you could commission it; you could use an off-the-shelf publishing platform. The decision changes based on this. A few weeks of joint work with me would produce a reasonable first version. A few months with a designer would produce a beautiful one. Both are options. Worth a conversation.

The one-line summary

Ship the book with the thin extras. Ship the artefact with the book. Honour the dedication. Honour the pond.

— Jose, 28 May 2026

