# Imagining Neo

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by Hugh Howey

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this is version hhneo-18.zml

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http://hughhowey.com

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http://www.hughhowey.com/neo-a-word-processor-for-authors/

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http://strext.com/misc/imagining-neo.jpg

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# Instructions

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and so we begin...

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http://zenmagiclove.com/simple/michele-and-the-mahi.jpg

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as you can tell, this demo opens on the editor itself, rather than the library/bookshelves. that part hasn't been coded yet.

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and the editor doesn't look quite like your desired screenshot, not currently. but that time will come.

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indeed, this interface is a bit of a mishmash. i didn't take much care in regard to where i put things, like the buttons. because we'll have to think through the actual interface design, and experimentation helps clear up that thinking. so forgive the mess while we're building the app. and think about how you'd like to arrange the furniture once you've moved in.

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this document was pulled in automatically by the app, and maybe one of the first things you should do is go look at the actual file itself. go into the finder, and you will find the document-file in the folder located right next to the app, a folder named "eons-folder". the document-file inside is named "hhneo.zml". it's an ordinary text-file, so you can open it with any text-editor or word-processor.

...

go ahead and open "hhneo.zml" in some other app, and see for yourself that it's a straightforward text-file, with no cards up its sleeve.

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in fact, you can even go into the document-file, and read this text right there. search for the word "sleeve" to find this spot.

...

one thing you will notice is that there is a blank line between each paragraph, and a sequence of 5 blank lines between each "chapter".

scroll through the file, and these big gaps will make it clear where each chapter starts. especially because the chapter-titles also have 2 blank lines following them, so they stick out. this is a good thing.

that's about all you need to know, for now, about the underlying plain-text document-file.

so, if you're reading this text in the document-file itself, switch back to the app.

ok, so now i'll describe the interface.

first and foremost, when you enter, in the center-column is your text-field, where you will do your editing. on the right side, you see the converted-to-html version of your text.

also when you enter, on the left side with the light-blue background, you will see a list of the chapter-headers. the app found those quite easily, because of those 5-blank-line sequences. that's just a little list to remind you about your outline. the chapter-titles themselves are not "live", in that they don't link to the chapters. it's just a little reminder list, and it will eventually go away. but it's there when you start up.

directly above, however, in the upper-left-hand corner, is a selector-box. click it to reveal its contents, and you will see that this is also a list of the chapters. this list _is_ live, however, so if you select one of the chapter-headers, you will find that you are transported directly to that chapter. now, of course, you could have just scrolled down the text-field (or the html-field). but the chapter-menu is a much quicker and more direct way to get around.

right next to the chapter selection-box, you'll find prev ("&lt;") and next-chapter (">") buttons. these buttons make it even easier to skim across the chapter-tops in the book.

above the center column, we have a 4-button segment. the first displays

the library (bookshelves). that's just an empty screen right now, where you will click the button to return to the editor.

the next 3 buttons in the 4-button segment determine what's displayed in the center column. either the text itself, or the converted-html, or the view-source version of the .html (for the sadists among us). try each of those, just to see how easy it is to switch among views.

also above the center column, on the right, we have the search-field. this is very crude right now, but it does work. enter the search-term, and then click the "v" button to search down from the current cursor-position. once you run out of instances, the search function will automatically wrap you around to the top of the field, and search from there if you click again. (if there are no occurrences of the search-term in the entire document, it will inform you of that, rather than wrapping you around. look at the title-bar for such messages. there might also be a voice prompt. i sprinkled a little bit of speech around just to demo that for you.)

at the top of the right column, you see wordcount and section-count. i'll spiff that up later, because i know you like it, but it's simple right now.

the right column, at present, just shows the converted-html view. that's because i wasn't sure what's supposed to be displayed in that column, or why, so i just put the html-viewer there because that's the interface i usually use. but if you don't want to see the converted-html, you can click the x/o button in the lower-right corner to toggle it off and on. you'll also see a "fade to black" button at the top of the .html-field, which also switches to the blacked-out column.

continuing around the interface clockwise now...

there's an "air" button under the right column. that's just for me, to resize the app window (which by design opens full-screen per your specification) from my huge monitor down to the size of my macbook air, so i know what it looks like for a user with a screen that size.

there's a "save" button at the bottom-right of the center column. click it, and then go look at the folder again, and you'll see that a time-stamped copy of the file has been saved. eventually, it will be the case that the original "hhneo.zml" file will be overwritten, as you'd expect when you "save" your edits to a file. but for this version of the app, i didn't want to actually replace the "hhneo.zml" file with my silly experimental edits, so it doesn't do that now. but again, of course it will eventually.

there's also an "upload" button. i put this in just to show you this functionality, so you would think about it. this button uploads a copy of the text to the web. shortly after you click the "upload" button, another "look" button will show up right next to it. if you click that button, it will open your browser and display the file you just uploaded to the web. there are ways this might be useful. think about it.

now we get to the bottom of the left column, for the stuff you've been waiting for.

as you know, i said you were unclear about the content in your "tabs", where it was created, where it was stored, when and how it was displayed, how it would be edited and changed. just lots of questions in my mind. and i'm not sure i've got the right kind of clarity on it quite yet, but it seems to me that what you want is for the user to be able to easily summon up the content of the various tabs, and easily edit it, and even control the very nature of the tabs (such as what their names are, and what kind of different roles they might fill, and so on).

so this is what i came up with.

first, the content of the tabs is stored in the actual document itself. although it could be anywhere, it will usually be at the end of the "real" content, for reasons that will become apparent later. in other words, for the vast majority of the time the book is being written, all of the content in the tabs themselves will live right inside the document itself (albeit at

the end). this answers the questions about how the tab-content gets created, where it's stored, and so on.

now, a big part of the interface is that the tab-content is shown in the left (or right) columns while the "real" text is being edited. so we need a simple elegant way to tell the app that "this material right here is tab-content, not the actual text of the book itself". so the way i came up with that is to put the content of each tab in its own chapter, and to signal that this chapter is actually a tab by appending an "-tab" to its name. so, if you look in the chapter-selector right now (remember, it's that thing in the upper-left corner?), you'll see that we have 5 chapter-headers that have an "-tab" after their names.

specifically:

<p style="text-align:center; color:red">+ Darlings-tab</p>

<p style="text-align:center; color:red">+ Manual-tab</p>

<p style="text-align:center; color:red">+ Select-TOC-tab</p>

<p style="text-align:center; color:red">+ Whatever-tab</p>

<p style="text-align:center; color:red">+ To-Do-tab</p>

if you also look at the bottom of the left column, you will see 5 buttons.

(these 5 buttons are different sizes and shapes right now. i want you to show you a variety, so you could pick the one that you like best, and i'll use that for all of the 5 buttons from now on. eventually, of course, the look-and-feel of these buttons will be something we hand off to the graphic designer.)

anyway, these 5 buttons are labeled "n" and "o" and "t" and "e" and "d".

which, put together, spells "noted". and yes, i did that on purpose. :+)

but if you click any of those buttons, you'll see the appropriate "tab" is displayed in the left column. the content is displayed in a regular textarea, meaning it can be copied (if you want), and then pasted into the "actual" text of the book.

(i've been actually using the To-Do-tab tab to keep track of things i need to code!)

the text inside the tab can also be edited when it's inside the left column. but that's largely an illusion. (at present, anyway.) because any edits done there in the "tab" are *not* carried over to the text in the file itself. if you want to make an edit to the tab-content that _sticks,_ you need to do it over in the center column, to the text as it occurs in the actual file itself. the text that appears in the tab is just read from the center column.

and note that, if you want to change the "names" of the tabs, you just relabel the chapter-names. any chapter-header that has a "-tab" at the end of its name will become a tab, and the tab will be labeled with the first letter of its name. (you can have two tabs with the same starting-letter; the program won't get confused, but you might.)

the ability to easily turn any chapter-content into a tab might be useful in situations where you want to see what you wrote in one chapter _while_ you are writing another chapter. it's a cheap solution to a "split-view" interface.

oh yeah, i almost forgot. i can also add in the ability to easily insert a "cutline", so chapters that follow the cutline are dropped from the e-book output. so if all your tab-chapters are at the end of the "real" text, you'll just put the cutline above them and they won't be output. (but there are times, like when you send the book out to your editors, where you might want to include the tab-chapters so they can see them. this is one of the benefits of bundling them into the same file with the "actual"

text.)

so, hugh, what you need to tell me is this: does this kind of interface serve the needs that you had in mind when you dreamed up "tabs" in the first place? if so, then i think this is the best, most simple and elegant way to implement the idea, especially from the standpoint of programming it _and_ making it comprehensible and simple for the user.

and, if it largely serves the purpose of "tabs", but there are some shortcomings, let me know what they are, and we'll see if we can patch this solution to address them as well.

it's also the case that we have to run this by real users and see what they say. that's the ultimate test of course. but, from my perspective anyway, this seems like it could be the solution.

well, that's your tour of the interface. there are more issues to discuss. including how the app feels to you. (but remember, this is the very first draft. it's not supposed to be smooth sailing quite yet!)

at any rate, you've got my e-mail address... :+)

# Preface

I should start by saying that yes, I've used the word processor you're about to mention. I've tried them all. From yWriter and Scrivener, to Hank's Writer and OpenOffice, to FocusWriter and Page 4. I've probably tried writing apps that you've never heard of. I'm the guy in the middle of the Venn diagram of: "Early Adopters," "Beta Testers," "Professional Writers," and "Software Hoarders." I won't get into why each of these applications suffers from a near-fatal flaw, and I don't mean to upset those who find that one of these programs works for them. I just want to build something better. And when I talk to writers about what I want to build, I hear from the vast majority of them that they hope I succeed. Because they haven't found a writing program they love either.

The second thing I should get out of the way is that I don't want to build a tool just for my own use. I know very well that there's no one way to write a novel or a work of non-fiction. And maybe it's hubris to think that my writing application would be better for most authors than what's out there. So be it. It takes hubris to want to write a book and think anyone will bother reading it. It's even worse to write a blog post and think anyone will care. And yet, here I am.

I'm going to lay out the design and features of my perfect word processor program, which I've dubbed Neo. I'm in the early stages of looking at consultancies and programming teams to ascertain what it would take to build this. It might be years. I might have to brush up on my programming chops and spend decades doing it myself. It might cost me a huge chunk of change. If it does get built, I hope to make it open-source, so we can improve it over time and it can meet the needs of the most number of writers. But it won't be design-by-committee. Bloat has ruined some of my favorite writing applications.

So let's talk about Neo.

# Chapter 1 -- Installing Neo

Neo is going to understand from the beginning that you are an author. You aren't writing a blog, or a school report, or for a newspaper. You are writing books.

When you first install Neo, it's going to have two sets of questions for you. The first question will be for your name, address, and pen names. You can leave all of this blank if you want, and your author name will appear as "Anonymous." The address bit is in case you're planning to query agents (it'll appear on your formatted manuscript). The pen name will appear on the title page if you enter one. Again, you can leave it all blank, but entering at least your name will ensure that it shows up in every document with you as the author.

Neo will next ask if you are a pantser or a plotter (and the program will give a brief description of the difference if you aren't sure). Don't worry, you can change your preference at any time and for each WIP. This just changes how Neo opens new documents for you. And also don't worry about Neo being convoluted or confusing to the user. Once Neo has your name and writing style, it's done with the questions.

# Chapter 2 -- Using Neo

Neo is going to be kept as small as possible, so that it's fast and can run directly from a single executable. This means Neo can live on a USB stick dangling from your keychain. Plug Neo into any computer, and start writing. Write at the library, on break at work, from a friend's computer, from a school computer, from your desktop or laptop. You can also leave the executable on a single machine if you don't want to go the USB route. Part of the power of Neo is that you can have your WIPs (works in progress) wherever you are. There's no excuse not to be writing.

However you run Neo (from your laptop or a USB stick), you can password protect the program so only you can open it. Your documents can be encrypted as well. Personally, I prefer things to just open quickly and won't use the password features, but I understand they'll be important to many users, so the option will be included.

Cloud saves and syncing will also be incorporated. Your WIPs will stay up-to-date, and you won't lose your work.

The last thing Neo will do when you install the program is ask if you want to import any of your current WIPs. If you elect to do so, you will be given a standard file dialog. Select Word documents, .epubs, .mobis, .txts, .rtfs, and Neo will convert them and add them to your bookshelf. Speaking of which...

# Chapter 3 -- Opening Neo

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When you open Neo for the first time, you will be greeted by an empty bookshelf. Eventually, this bookshelf will be full of your published masterpieces, rough drafts, book ideas, outlines, submitted manuscripts, and so on. For now, there's just a blank white page in the upper left. A single click of this blank page will open your first WIP.

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If you imported some WIPs, your bookshelf will already be populated. Take some time and rearrange your bookshelf by dragging the files around however you like. If you pulled in .mobi or .epub files, Neo will assume these are published works. The cover art will display in thumbnail, rather than a white document. Other works will just show the title and author name on the cover. Feel free to add cover art whenever you like. I find that I bend to the task of writing when I have cover art in place. It's already a book in my mind, ready to be filled with words.

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If you've set word count estimates for your works, a subtle progress bar at the bottom will show how far along you are. You can add as many shelves to your bookshelf as you like and scroll up and down to see them all. Each shelf can be labeled. You might have a shelf for each of your romance series. Or a shelf of outlines and book ideas, another shelf for WIPs you hope to return to, a shelf for manuscripts currently on submission to agents. However you organize your bookshelf is up to you.

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You can also have multiple instances of works, and they'll stay synced together. Maybe my novel SAND is on my "Published Works" shelf and also on my "SAND Series" shelf. This allows you to place several works on the top shelf so you can keep working on them, without having to remove them from where they need to be to stay organized. If you're like me, you have dozens of Word docs scattered on your hard

drive -- works in progress, story ideas, published works -- and finding them is a chore. Neo understands that you are dedicated to your writing and that you will generate dozens of WIPs, outlines, and book ideas over many years of writing. As you expand your library, you'll find Neo is ready.

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# Chapter 4 -- Your WIPs

Most of your time will be spent in your WIP, getting awesome writing done. Here's where most writing programs fail, because they make distraction-free writing seem like plan B. Like an option you need to dig around in menus to turn on and off. Neo is built from the ground up for distraction-free writing, where options only intrude when you need them.

The best writing application I ever used was an old version of Pages, back before Apple ruined the program. In full-screen mode, you had a white document with black borders on either side. At the bottom, the only things visible were the current page number and the total document word count. That was it. You didn't even have your toolbar and start menu down there (or Apple Dock). Instead, your writing environment lived on its own screen. A three-finger swipe was required to move you back to the rest of your computer. When you were in writing mode, the other things your computer could do simply disappeared.

This is what Neo will look like while writing:

http://strext.com/misc/yo-neo-while-writing.jpg

http://strext.com/misc/imagining-neo.jpg

If you mouse over to the left, you'll get a navigation pane. This will show thumbnails of each page of your book. The first page of new chapters will have a large chapter numbers on them. If you prefer to navigate by chapter, there's a simple slider button to switch back and forth. This is to give you a general idea:

http://strext.com/misc/yo-neo-navigation.jpg

http://strext.com/misc/imagining-neo.jpg

(Please note that I'm relegated to Microsoft Paint for this. The red stripe on one of the pages shows a note that needs to be addressed. More about these later.)

If you mouse over to the right, you'll see comments and notes. You can drop these in yourself, or they might be part of the markup and track changes if you've gotten a work back from your editor. There's a button here to "stick" this side open while working on revisions.

If you mouse down to the bottom, you'll find tabs. Yes, TABS! Gone are the days of having a separate document full of notes, or a separate outline. My favorite tab here is the "Darlings" tab, which is always to the far right. This is a trashcan of sorts, but one that saves your trash. Any paragraph that's gumming up the works, but you can't delete because we're writers and we fear that the last sentence we wrote will be the last sentence we EVER write, you can drag into the Darlings tab, and it'll be saved while getting out of the way of your WIP. More on the Darlings tab later.

You can rename the tabs if you like, but one is by default called Notes and the other is Outline. If you change the names of these tabs in several documents, Neo will note this and change the default in future documents, so you don't have to keep doing it (a simple thing to program that will make it feel like Neo is listening and learning from you).

On the bottom, you can also click the page number to cycle it through chapter number if you like. And you can click the total word count to see instead the chapter word count. Very similar to the reading interface on the Kindle. Options without the clutter.

The bottom of the document is also where you'll find productivity

prompts, which we'll get to later.

And at the top, you'll have your File menu and some basic formatting options. Formatting will be kept to a minimum in Neo. There won't be lots of "styles" to choose from, and only a few fonts installed by default. Most of the formatting will be doable with a simple right-click from within the writing pane, without having to mouse up at all. Highlight a paragraph and right click to see centering options, bold, italics, and a few others. Neo knows you're writing a book, not a presentation for work. The cool formatting stuff is there, but most of it is automatic. Let's discuss some of that...

# Chapter 5 -- Formats and Formatting

Neo is biased towards .mobi and .epub files, because it knows that most books are now being sold in digital form than anyhow else. It will also output to PDF, .doc, .txt. .rtf. One neat feature is that you can output to "manuscript," and Neo will change your font to Times New Roman, doublespace the entire document, unjustify the margins, include your name and address in the top corner, and attach any cover letters or query letters you might have included in the WIP as tabs.

The main focus, however, is perfect ebook files. Complying with Amazon's standards will be a huge goal, as well as keeping up with them as they change. That means TOCs are in the right place. It means cover art is the right resolution and size. It also means a place to enter metadata once your work is ready to be published (and Neo will walk you through creating this metadata, and remember your choices so it gets easier and quicker over time).

Some of the best formatting magic happens in Neo while you're writing. When you open a new document, Neo will already have a title page in place, with your author name and "Untitled" highlighted. Type a new title or leave it untitled for now. If you have a subtitle in mind, there's a place for that (maybe this is part of a series, which Neo is also looking for).

When you hit Enter, Neo will create a new chapter, number it for you, and give you a cursor. Start typing, and you'll notice that Neo automatically makes the first paragraph non-indented with a large drop-cap for the first letter. This is to remind you that you're writing an awesome book that people are going to love. And as a visual cue for the starts of chapters. This formatting will be carried into the ebook files and PDFs if you so choose.

Neo also keeps up with your chapter numbers. Want to insert a new chapter in the middle of your WIP? Neo will auto-update all the other chapter numbers. A quick hotkey creates a new chapter, so no need to go to the file menu and choose Insert > Page Break, then type a chapter number and center this and make the font bigger, and then go down and left-justify the first sentence, etc. Just Alt-C and start typing the next scene.

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One thing you will notice when it comes to formatting is what Neo doesn't do. It doesn't nag you for perfection in your rough draft. Misspelled words will not be underlined. You're writing a historical novel or an urban fantasy story -- you know this made-up word is made up, thank you very much. The last thing your creative brain needs is a klaxon shouting WRONG while you're in the middle of a creative thought. Eventually, as you use Neo, you'll stop thinking about spelling and typos. This will push your creativity to the next level. You can always step through a spell check any time you like. But not while you're writing. (Word just gave me a green squiggly for that last sentence fragment. Neo would know not to bother.)

# Chapter 6 -- End Matter

This feature is worth pointing out in its own section. In Neo, you can create a Global End Matter file. This is the material that will go in the end of your digital ebook editions. It should have links to social media feeds, links to other works you've written, a brief bio, an author website link, and so on. By creating a single end matter file, Neo will make sure all your WIPs are up to date. When you publish a new ebook, Neo will ask if you want to add this to your end matter. It will then update the end matter of all your other ebooks, create new .mobi and .epub files, and remind you to republish them. Professional authors know what a huge deal this is and how many more readers it will lead to. Neo will also be smart enough to keep multiple editions of .epub files for different retailers, so Apple links are in the Apple ebook.

You can also create per-document and per-series end matter. And create a new end matter file for each pen name if you like (so racy stuff isn't linked to from the tame, or to tailor your message to a series' audience, say). Of course, you can ignore the end matter feature entirely and publish your works without any end matter at all. This stuff may sound confusing to the new writer, but it is very important and will save metric shit-tons of time compared to doing it all manually with every file (not to mention updating older files).

# Chapter 7 -- Outlines

If you told Neo that you're a plotter, not a pantser, you'll have seen something different when you open a new document for the first time. Neo will have started you in the outline tab. You'll still name your document, but you won't have a separate title page. Instead, the title will be at the top of a waiting outline. Here, you type a short description for each chapter (or leave it as a number if you like). And then you type a scene list, or a description of what happens in each chapter. The `TAB` key will move you in and out of outline levels, and the `ENTER` key will move you to the next line.

When you move to the writing tab at the bottom of the document, you'll find your description of that chapter and your scene list in the notes and comments pane on the right. The default for you plotters will be for this pane to be stickied open, but you can hide it if you like. On the left, the navigation page will show your outline and where you are in the outline. You can revert back to the page/chapter navigation panel as well. Each of your WIPs can be written in either style. Pantsers can try plotting and vice versa. If you start your document in the pants mode, you'll find the outline tab is waiting for you at the bottom, a great place to add notes and to-do items. When you open it, you'll find yourself in the same place of the outline that you just left from the writing pane. Again, all of this is optional.

# Chapter 8 -- Productivity Features

Neo will come with some cool productivity features. They will be simple to set up, not things that cause you to spend more time fiddling with the program rather than writing (as if writers were fond of procrastinating!)

The bottom of the screen will house these productivity features, right below the tabs. Here, you can enter your guess for the total word count of the project (If you are new to writing, you'll be surprised at how good you get at estimating the final word count of your projects). You can also enter your daily word count goal. Click on these, and Neo will bring up graphs of your progress, very similar to NaNoWriMo's excellent graphs.

You can also turn email reminders on or off. Neo will email you if you start missing your goals, and these goals and thresholds can be changed with sliders from the top menu bar. I'd love to see Neo include the last few sentences you wrote in your WIP in its email, as a nudge forward.

You can set session goals as well, with internet blocking. Tell Neo you want to write 500 words or for 1 hour, and it will disable your internet adapter and start counting. Neo will also keep track of how many total hours you've spent in your documents. And it'll show you a "Total Plus" word count. This is the number of words including the words you've deleted along the way, plus the words written in notes and outlines. It gives you a fairer sense of how much work you've put into what ended up being a short story.

You can use Neo without delving into the productivity features. You don't even need to use the tabs, which are at the bottom as well. But they're there if you need them, and out of the way if you don't. I see the Darlings tab as an extension of these productivity items. Often, a well-

written but unneeded paragraph or scene keeps us from moving forward in our WIP. We can't delete it, but it's holding us back. Productivity plummets.

All you have to do in Neo is highlight the chapter or scene and drag it toward the bottom of the screen. The tabs will appear. Drop the selection on the "Darlings" tab, and those words will be saved in case you need them again. The psychological impact of this cannot be overstated. Writing continues with no remorse for what's lost. And Neo remembers where the darlings came from if you want to restore them at any time. You can even publish a "Director's Cut" version of the original for your diehard fans to check out. (This can include the outline and notes tabs, a behind-the-scenes version for those who will enjoy this).

The Notes tab is another productivity tool that will come in handy. How many times have you written notes right in the WIP? Now you can highlight those and drag them to the Notes tab. It remembers where you wrote the note, in case it's scene-specific. More ways to simply highlight, drag, move on, and keep writing.

# Chapter 9 -- Other Features

A couple of features for the in-the-writing mode. I hate having to stop writing to go into a file menu on a program, because it breaks the flow and makes me think about checking my email or any other number of things that don't include writing. The simple em dash is an example. Unless you set up a macro, Word and some other programs don't have easy access to this necessary literary tool. Neo has preset macros for the em dash, ellipses (which are a single unit of three periods, rather than three actual periods, which keeps them from being split up in pagination), and other useful symbols. These are easily accessed in the "Symbols" menu option, with the shortcuts for each shown right beside them.

Another thing that breaks my flow is when I need a placeholder for something to research or revisit later. I often find I need to mark a place to come back to, rather than jump onto Chrome to look something up, or pause to think of a new character's name. I usually type "XXX" and remember to search for this later. But in Neo, I'll simply Alt-X and move on. Neo will insert a question mark and create a sticky note. The default will be to keep typing and not even fill out the note, but you can click over and do this in the right hand pane if you like. The point is to keep writing but have reminders to come back to these places that need more time, thought, or an internet break.

Dream additions to Neo that I am still wrapping my brain around include ways of keeping up with which works have been submitted for publication where. Maybe you have manuscripts out to agents, and you want to keep up with who has a copy and nudge them at a certain auto-preset date. (There are great standalone apps for this, but I would want to integrate it. Even if you are primarily self-published, you can keep up with which anthologies a short work is in, which books are in which boxsets, which short works are submitted to Lightspeed or literary

journals and prizes, what books are in KU and which ones are published more widely).

Another dream addition would be to convince Amazon to allow KDP integration, so Neo can publish directly to your dashboard; keep up with sales, page reads, earnings, free copies given away; update end matter with a single click; and make typo fixes a cinch. Even better would be for all online retailers to provide an API for this or standardize the process, but now I'm beyond dream territory. Sadly, this will never happen.

# Summary

That's Neo in a nutshell. I know there are writing tools made just for authors. There are even writing tools made by authors (some really good ones). What sets Neo apart is the sum of its features. Less bloat than general purpose writing applications, less confusing than Scrivener, more useful than typewriter apps, and much more geared for ebook creation and publication. But also ready for querying agents and PDF/print-on-demand as well. Neo will even keep up with the draft you sent to ACX for the audio edition, so you can know how it differs from later, updated ebook editions.

Neo will be designed from the ground up to be portable, so you can take it everywhere. It's secure and synced, so you don't lose files or give away access to them. It organizes works on more than name and date last opened, so now you can organize by genre, series, length, publication plans, etc. Your files can sit on several such bookshelves without making undue copies. And when you're in Neo, the focus is on writing. Not on formatting.

Ideally, Neo will be open-source and free to use. I'm exploring any and all options. Maybe something branded for NaNoWriMo, or Goodreads, an ebook retailer, or a writing website. If you have thoughts, leave a comment below. I'm currently talking with programmers and consultants on how to get this done. Might be a decade before anything comes to light, so don't hold your breath. But I'm willing to invest the time and money to make this a reality.

# About The Author

xxx
...

here's stuff about the person who wrote this.

# Meta-Data

xxx

...

title: Imagining Neo

...

author: hugh howey

...

site: http://www.hughhowey.com/neo-a-word-processor-for-authors/

...

site: http://hughhowey.com

...

site: http://zenmagiclove.com/simple/hhneo.zml

...

site: http://zenmagiclove.com/eons/

...

publication date: 2017/07/16

< 29 >

# Colophon

xxx

...

font: georgia

...

size: 18px

...

leading: 1.6

...

backcolor: green

< 30 >

# Forward Foreword

xxx
...

the following section -- Balls of Wax -- will challenge many aspects of your vision. perhaps you should read one paragraph and then put it aside until your emotions have settled. then read one more paragraph and put it down. and so on.

...

much of this is saying "you can't have what you thought you wanted". that's because some of the things you wanted are virtually impossible.

...

others, however, are just difficult to deliver, and/or might be realized in a way that is much simpler than you first envisioned, but which serve your needs just as well. for those, we can negotiate how to proceed. whatever the case, none of this is "final", so don't lose heart.

...

on the plus side, much of you want is something that you can indeed have, and it will come to you much faster than you seemed to think was possible. that's the good news.

# Balls of Wax

xxx

...

ok, here we go!

...

**\*\*\***

# Chapter 11

xxx

...

The first question will be for your name, address, and pen names.

...

i don't think it's a big deal to have to type in your name and address for each long-form document you write. so let's skip this.

...

\*\*\*

# Chapter 12

xxx
...

Neo will next ask if you are a pantser or a plotter Don't worry, you can change your preference at any time and for each WIP. This just changes how Neo opens new documents for you.

...

let's just open a new document in a standard way that lets people select -- at that time -- which approach they want for that document.

...

***

# Chapter 13

xxx

...

Neo is going to be kept as small as possible, so that it's fast and can run directly from a single executable.

...

no problem.

...

\*\*\*

< 35 >

# Chapter 14

xxx

...

This means Neo can live on a USB stick dangling from your keychain.

...

ok, fine.

...

but i think it's better to put the app in your dropbox, so you can download it whenever and wherever you want, so you don't have to carry around a usb-stick.

...

and since the program will be available online at its website, for instant download anyway, you can always get it there.

...

\*\*\*

# Chapter 15

xxx

...

Part of the power of Neo is that you can have your WIPs (works in progress) wherever you are,

...

there's some confusion here about the app versus your actual book-files.

...

but again, i suggest you put those in your dropbox. that way they will always be properly synced, and waiting for you wherever you might be.

...

***

# Chapter 16

xxx

...

However you run Neo (from your laptop or a USB stick), you can password protect the program so only you can open it.

...

again, some confusion about whether you're talking about the app or its files.

...

as for the app itself, it's not necessary to lock it. leave the program unlocked.

...

***

# Chapter 17

Your documents can be encrypted as well.

again, this is a different ball of wax, with the encryption of the documents.

if you want to encrypt your documents, get a proper encryption program to do it.

i'm not going to roll my own encryption, because i don't want the security experts to mock my stupidity.

i'm not even going to select an encryption program to incorporate in the app, because (a) i don't know how to make that decision, and (b) every author should make that decision for themselves.

\*\*\*

# Chapter 18

xxx

...

Personally, I prefer things to just open quickly and won't use the password features, but I understand they'll be important to many users, so the option will be included.

...

and thus does feature-creep introduce itself.

...

***

# Chapter 19

xxx

...

Cloud saves and syncing will also be incorporated. Your WIPs will stay up-to-date, and you won't lose your work.

...

and here we have a similar ball of wax.

...

it's tremendously difficult to write a sync routine and incorporate sync functionality.

...

furthermore, when your home-grown sync fails (as it inevitably will), people get really really really pissed off at you, and justifiably so.

...

i don't need that heartburn.

...

if you want to sync your files, use a proper sync program. dropbox, microsoft-box, google-docs, icloud, whatever.

...

*** 

<      41      >

# Chapter 20

xxx
...

The last thing Neo will do when you install the program is ask if you want to import any of your current WIPs. If you elect to do so, you will be given a standard file dialog. Select Word documents, .epubs, .mobis, .txts, .rtfs, and Neo will convert them and add them to your bookshelf.

...

this sounds straightforward. but it's riddled with unbelievable difficulty. just the "and convert them" part by itself is a nightmare.

...

so i'll do that differently. more explanation later.

...

\*\*\*

< 42 >

# Chapter 21

xxx
...

For now, there's just a blank white page in the upper left. A single click of this blank page will open your first WIP.

...

call me old-fashioned. but i prefer the regular "new document" menu-item.

...

but fine, we can have your blank-white-page pseudo-button that does the same thing.

...

**\*\*\***

< 43 >

# Chapter 22

xxx

...

Take some time and rearrange your bookshelf by dragging the files around however you like.

...

more on "the bookshelf" later...

...

\*\*\*

< 44 >

# Chapter 23

xxx

...

If you've set word count estimates for your works, a subtle progress bar at the bottom will show how far along you are.

...

any time you talk about a data-point (such as a word-count estimate that has been set for a work), there needs to be clarity about how that data-point is collected, where it is stored, etc.

...

\*\*\*

# Chapter 24

xxx

...

You can add as many shelves to your bookshelf as you like and scroll up and down to see them all.

...

ok.

...

\*\*\*

# Chapter 25

Each shelf can be labeled.

ok.

***

# Chapter 26

xxx

...

You might have a shelf for each of your romance series. Or a shelf of outlines and book ideas, another shelf for WIPs you hope to return to, a shelf for manuscripts currently on submission to agents. However you organize your bookshelf is up to you.

...

again, how is the data (which represents the works on these shelves) collected?

...

\*\*\*

# Chapter 27

xxx

...

You can also have multiple instances of works, and they'll stay synced together. Maybe my novel SAND is on my "Published Works" shelf and also on my "SAND Series" shelf.

...

sounds like an "alias" in the mac operating system.

...

***

# Chapter 28

xxx

...

This allows you to place several works on the top shelf so you can keep working on them, without having to remove them from where they need to be to stay organized.

...

ok.

...

***

# Chapter 29

If you're like me, you have dozens of Word docs scattered on your hard drive -- works in progress, story ideas, published works -- and finding them is a chore.

if it's a chore for you to find them, how do we expect that the app will find them?

***

# Chapter 30

xxx

...

Neo understands that you are dedicated to your writing and that you will generate dozens of WIPs, outlines, and book ideas over many years of writing. As you expand your library, you'll find Neo is ready.

...

ok.

...

\*\*\*

# Chapter 31

xxx

...

Neo is built from the ground up for distraction-free writing, where options only intrude when you need them.

...

fine.

...

***

# Chapter 32

the only things visible were the current page number and the total document word count.

word-count, fine.

but "current page number"?

we're resurrecting the notion of the "page"?

this is a digital file, right?

***

# Chapter 33

xxx

...

When you were in writing mode, the other things your computer could do simply disappeared.

...

full-screen. check.

...

*****

# Chapter 34

If you mouse over to the left, you'll get a navigation pane.

"mouse"?

so this program isn't designed from the get-go to work on a tablet or a phone?

i don't think that idea is gonna fly.

and i'm not sure what "mouse over to the left" means.

does it mean if you _hover_ over the left third of the screen?

or do you actually have to click, or what?

and, if it's merely hovering, does that mean that once you leave the hover-zone, the navigation pane disappears?

and just what exactly is "the navigation pane" anyway?

***

# Chapter 35

This will show thumbnails of each page of your book.

again with the "page" thing?

moreover, thumbnails of a page out of your typical novel are pretty uninformative.

this needs to be rethought.

**\*\*\***

# Chapter 36

xxx

...

The first page of new chapters will have a large chapter numbers on them.

...

ok, this is a little clarity. but in general, a chapter-number has very little informative value.

...

\*\*\*

# Chapter 37

If you prefer to navigate by chapter, there's a simple slider button to switch back and forth.

does this mean that non-chapter-starting thumbnails disappear?

if so, this can probably be done a better way.

***

# Chapter 38

xxx

...

The red stripe on one of the pages shows a note that needs to be addressed.

...

there needs to be a better way of getting an overview of this "notes that need to be addressed".

...

\*\*\*

# Chapter 39

xxx
...

If you mouse over to the right, you'll see comments and notes.

...

this needs more clarity. is this just a simple list of the text of such "comments and notes"?

...

how do the notes get matched up with their appropriate place in the file itself?

...

where do these notes come from?

...

**\*\*\***

# Chapter 40

xxx

...

<span style="color:magenta">You can drop these in yourself</span>

...

ok, but where do they come from?

...

<span style="color:red">\*\*\*</span>

# Chapter 41

xxx

...

or they might be part of the markup and track changes if you've gotten a work back from your editor.

...

whoa. nobody has mentioned "markup" and/or "track changes" before. that needs a lot of elaboration. a ton of elaboration. many balls of wax there that are being hand-waved away.

...

\*\*\*

# Chapter 42

xxx
...

There's a button here to "stick" this side open while working on revisions.

...

ok.

...

<div align="center">***</div>

# Chapter 43

xxx

...

If you mouse down to the bottom, you'll find tabs. Yes, TABS!

...

ok.

...

<div align="center">***</div>

<　　　　　　65　　　　　　>

# Chapter 44

xxx

...

Gone are the days of having a separate document full of notes, or a separate outline.

...

if the content inside these tabs isn't stored "separately", where is it stored? how does it get generated?

...

***

# Chapter 45

My favorite tab here is the "Darlings" tab, which is always to the far right. This is a trashcan of sorts, but one that saves your trash.

ok.

***

# Chapter 46

xxx
...

Any paragraph that's gumming up the works, but you can't delete because we're writers and we fear that the last sentence we wrote will be the last sentence we EVER write, you can drag into the Darlings tab, and it'll be saved while getting out of the way of your WIP. More on the Darlings tab later.

...

ok, elaboration later.

...

**\*\*\***

# Chapter 47

You can rename the tabs if you like, but one is by default called Notes and the other is Outline.

can you change these "default" names? or are you stuck with them.

and if you can change them, what's the point of assigning them "default" names?

**\*\*\***

# Chapter 48

xxx

...

If you change the names of these tabs in several documents, Neo will note this and change the default in future documents, so you don't have to keep doing it (a simple thing to program that will make it feel like Neo is listening and learning from you).

...

i understand the desire to make the program feel responsive, so the user feels like it is "listening and learning". but i think there are better ways to produce this feeling.

...

*\*\*\**

# Chapter 49

xxx

...

On the bottom, you can also click the page number to cycle it through chapter number if you like.

...

we really have to get this "page" thing straightened out.

...

***

< 71 >

# Chapter 50

xxx

...

And you can click the total word count to see instead the chapter word count.

...

how about we just show both all the time. it's not that big to display, and that way we remove the need for some kind of program-operation to toggle them, so we reduce the learning-curve.

...

**\*\*\***

# Chapter 51

xxx
...

Very similar to the reading interface on the Kindle. Options without the clutter.

...

good to know where the idea comes from.

...

<div align="center">

**\*\*\***

</div>

# Chapter 52

xxx

...

The bottom of the document is also where you'll find productivity prompts, which we'll get to later.

...

ok.

...

<div align="center">

**\*\*\***

</div>

< 74 >

# Chapter 53

xxx

...

And at the top, you'll have your File menu and some basic formatting options.

...

standard stuff, i guess.

...

\*\*\*

< 75 >

# Chapter 54

Formatting will be kept to a minimum in Neo.

yes and no.

***

# Chapter 55

xxx

...

There won't be lots of "styles" to choose from, and only a few fonts installed by default.

...

there's no reason we can't offer enough styles to make every user happy. even if any individual user only actually uses one or two or three.

...

as for fonts, we'll use whatever is on the user's machine. no reason to limit them.

...

***

< 77 >

# Chapter 56

Most of the formatting will be doable with a simple right-click from within the writing pane, without having to mouse up at all.

ok. right-click contextual-menu. fine.

***

# Chapter 57

xxx

...

Highlight a paragraph and right click to see centering options, bold, italics, and a few others. Neo knows you're writing a book, not a presentation for work.

...

good.

...

***

# Chapter 58

xxx

...

The cool formatting stuff is there, but most of it is automatic.

...

cool. automatic is good. saves the user work.

...

**\*\*\***

< 80 >

# Chapter 59

xxx

...

Neo is biased towards .mobi and .epub files, because it knows that most books are now being sold in digital form than anyhow else.

...

ok.

...

\*\*\*

# Chapter 60

It will also output to PDF, .doc, .txt. .rtf.

probably unnecessary. and definitely easier said than done.

\*\*\*

# Chapter 61

xxx

...

One neat feature is that you can output to "manuscript," and Neo will change your font to Times New Roman, doublespace the entire document, unjustify the margins, include your name and address in the top corner, and attach any cover letters or query letters you might have included in the WIP as tabs.

...

easy enough. but i want to encourage self-publishing, not submission to publishers.

...

***

# Chapter 62

xxx
...

The main focus, however, is perfect ebook files.

...

to the extent that any .epub or .mobi can be called "perfect", anyway...

...

\*\*\*

< 84 >

# Chapter 63

xxx

...

Complying with Amazon's standards will be a huge goal, as well as keeping up with them as they change.

...

welcome to the treadmill.

...

***

< 85 >

# Chapter 64

xxx

...

That means TOCs are in the right place. It means cover art is the right resolution and size. It also means a place to enter metadata once your work is ready to be published (and Neo will walk you through creating this metadata, and remember your choices so it gets easier and quicker over time).

...

um...

...

\*\*\*

# Chapter 65

Some of the best formatting magic happens in Neo while you're writing.

ok.

***

# Chapter 66

When you open a new document, Neo will already have a title page in place, with your author name and "Untitled" highlighted. Type a new title or leave it untitled for now. If you have a subtitle in mind, there's a place for that.

***

# Chapter 67

xxx

...

(maybe this is part of a series, which Neo is also looking for).

...

not sure exactly how the app "is looking for" that, or how it might be operationalized. but we'll leave that alone for the time being.

...

\*\*\*

# Chapter 68

xxx

...

<span style="color:magenta">When you hit Enter, Neo will create a new chapter, number it for you, and give you a cursor.</span>

...

autonumbering is often a nightmare waiting to happen.

...

besides, chapter numbers are uninformative in an e-book. instead, use real chapter titles. the chapters can be numbered when you're all done.

...

***

# Chapter 69

xxx

...

Start typing, and you'll notice that Neo automatically makes the first paragraph non-indented

...

fine. but keep in mind that some conventions from the past need to be dropped as we move to a digital world...

...

***

# Chapter 70

xxx

...

with a large drop-cap for the first letter.

...

...and drop-caps... are one of the first things we need to drop. they often fail to work well electronically.

...

\*\*\*

# Chapter 71

This is to remind you that you're writing an awesome book that people are going to love.

if drop-caps could really do that, i might consider keeping them.

***

# Chapter 72

xxx

...

And as a visual cue for the starts of chapters.

...

there should be more than enough of such "visual cues".

...

***

# Chapter 73

xxx

...

This formatting will be carried into the ebook files and PDFs if you so choose.

...

no.

...

\*\*\*

# Chapter 74

Neo also keeps up with your chapter numbers.

again, skip the numbers.

***

# Chapter 75

xxx

...

Want to insert a new chapter in the middle of your WIP? Neo will auto-update all the other chapter numbers.

...

no no no.

...

\*\*\*

# Chapter 76

A quick hotkey creates a new chapter

...

in my systems, hitting [enter] a number of times will create a new chapter. you shouldn't need a hotkey to do that.

...

***

# Chapter 77

xxx

...

so no need to go to the file menu and choose InsertPage Break, then type a chapter number and center this and make the font bigger, and then go down and left-justify the first sentence, etc.

...

manual work like that shouldn't even be under consideration in the first place.

...

\*\*\*

# Chapter 78

Just Alt-C and start typing the next scene.

or "hit enter 6 times, then type the title, then hit enter 2 times, then start typing."

no need for the alt-key at all.

*****

# Chapter 79

One thing you will notice when it comes to formatting is what Neo doesn't do.

ok.

***

# Chapter 80

xxx

...

<span style="color:magenta">It doesn't nag you for perfection in your rough draft.</span>

...

nagging is not good.

...

***

< 102 >

# Chapter 81

Misspelled words will not be underlined.

ok. but maybe i say something and you think again about this.

***

# Chapter 82

xxx

...

You're writing a historical novel or an urban fantasy story -- you know this made-up word is made up, thank you very much.

...

hey, the need to make up words is real, you betcha.

...

and when you initially make up a word, of course it's not gonna be in the "good-words dictionary" for this book.

...

so you might be prompted to include it, right then and there. boom.

...

now that word _is_ in your "good-words dictionary", so the next time you use it, and you might misspell it (because you haven't really learned how to spell it yet), it will get flagged again. except this time, because you know it's already supposed to be included in your "good-words dictionary", you know you've misspelled it. so you fix it. isn't that a better scenario? think it over.

...

\*\*\*

# Chapter 83

xxx

...

The last thing your creative brain needs is a klaxon shouting WRONG while you're in the middle of a creative thought.

...

a klaxon would be a bad thing. but a little subtle "?" in a corner somewhere? probably not all that disruptive.

...

**\*\*\***

# Chapter 84

xxx

...

Eventually, as you use Neo, you'll stop thinking about spelling and typos. This will push your creativity to the next level.

...

i'm all for pushing creativity to the next level.

...

i'm just not sure that "thinking about spelling and typos" is holding that many people back.

...

**\*\*\***

<      106      >

# Chapter 85

xxx

...

You can always step through a spell check any time you like.

...

yes.

...

*\*\*\**

# Chapter 86

xxx

...

But not while you're writing.

...

ok.

...

but... sometimes the fastest solution to a typo is to fix it as soon as you make it. i'm just sayin'...

...

**\*\*\***

# Chapter 87

xxx

...

(Word just gave me a green squiggly for that last sentence fragment. Neo would know not to bother.)

...

grammar checkers are totally stupid.

...

***

# Chapter 88

In Neo, you can create a Global End Matter file. This is the material that will go in the end of your digital ebook editions. It should have links to social media feeds, links to other works you've written, a brief bio, an author website link, and so on. By creating a single end matter file, Neo will make sure all your WIPs are up to date.

sounds magical.

***

# Chapter 89

When you publish a new ebook, Neo will ask if you want to add this to your end matter. It will then update the end matter of all your other ebooks, create new .mobi and .epub files, and remind you to republish them.

very magical.

***

# Chapter 90

Professional authors know what a huge deal this is and how many more readers it will lead to. Neo will also be smart enough to keep multiple editions of .epub files for different retailers, so Apple links are in the Apple ebook.

sounds so darn magical it's getting spooky.

but i guess if it works, it's great.

<center>***</center>

# Chapter 91

You can also create per-document and per-series end matter.

now it's starting to sound complicated.

<div align="center">***</div>

# Chapter 92

xxx

...

And create a new end matter file for each pen name if you like (so racy stuff isn't linked to from the tame, or to tailor your message to a series' audience, say).

...

really complicated.

...

***

< 114 >

# Chapter 93

xxx
...

Of course, you can ignore the end matter feature entirely and publish your works without any end matter at all.

...

wait. i thought all of this was automatic.

...

now it ends up we can short-circuit it?

...

how, exactly, do we specify the short-circuiting?

...

when does the per-document and/or per-series end-matter override the general?

...

and what if the general changes? does that not matter if it's being overridden? or does it now override the override?

...

\*\*\*

# Chapter 94

This stuff may sound confusing to the new writer, but it is very important and will save metric shit-tons of time compared to doing it all manually with every file (not to mention updating older files).

...

i'm sure it would save a lot of time. and energy.

...

but fixing it when it went wrong -- and it would indeed go wrong -- might cost you more time and energy in the long run than you saved originally. i'm just sayin'...

...

\*\*\*

# Chapter 95

xxx

...

If you told Neo that you're a plotter, not a pantser, you'll have seen something different when you open a new document for the first time.

...

since you can switch modes easily, i don't think it matters which one you start in.

...

and, by the way, "the outline tab" needs a lot more elaboration.

...

***

# Chapter 96

xxx

...

Here, you type a short description for each chapter

...

the "short description" should be used as the chapter title.

...

in the same way that it helps focus you in as a writer, it will help focus in your readers.

...

**\*\*\***

# Chapter 97

xxx

...

And then you type a scene list, or a description of what happens in each chapter.

...

if this is really useful to you, it should be the very first first-draft of your chapter itself.

...

and then you should build on it.

...

**\*\*\***

# Chapter 98

The `TAB` key will move you in and out of outline levels, and the `ENTER` key will move you to the next line.

it sounds like you're trying to invent an outline editor here.

i really don't think that's necessary.

*****

# Chapter 99

xxx

...

When you move to the writing tab at the bottom of the document, you'll find your description of that chapter and your scene list in the notes and comments pane on the right.

...

i'm still not clear on whether "the outline tab" is a separate file, or what.

...

whatever the case, there's the matter of matching up the specific bits of "the outline tab" with the actual text of the book itself, which is not a trivial task. this is a very important nuts-and-bolts issue.

...

**\*\*\***

# Chapter 100

xxx

...

The default for you plotters will be for this pane to be stickied open, but you can hide it if you like.

...

again, if it's easy to hide/show toggle it, it doesn't really matter what the "default" is.

...

***

# Chapter 101

xxx

...

On the left, the navigation page will show your outline and where you are in the outline.

...

ok, i guess, but...

...

\*\*\*

# Chapter 102

You can revert back to the page/chapter navigation panel as well.

oh geez, here we are with the "page" thing again.

***

< 124 >

# Chapter 103

xxx

...

Each of your WIPs can be written in either style. Pantsers can try plotting and vice versa.

...

again, these modes are so fluid, and the movement between them so easy, that i don't think it's important to fixate on them. let them flow.

...

***

# Chapter 104

xxx
...

If you start your document in the pants mode, you'll find the outline tab is waiting for you at the bottom, a great place to add notes and to-do items.

...

but of course, even in the "plotter" mode, summoning the outline is easy enough.

...

***

# Chapter 105

xxx

...

When you open it, you'll find yourself in the same place of the outline that you just left from the writing pane.

...

toggle fluidity.

...

**\*\*\***

# Chapter 106

xxx

...

Again, all of this is optional.

...

and it's all optional!

...

\*\*\*

< 128 >

# Chapter 107

Neo will come with some cool productivity features.

ok, let's hear 'em.

***

# Chapter 108

The bottom of the screen will house these productivity features, right below the tabs.

still not sure what this whole screen is supposed to look like.

***

# Chapter 109

Here, you can enter your guess for the total word count of the project

for write-for-hire writers, i understand that word-count is a huge thing.

for self-publishers, who cares? you ain't gonna need it. i can put it in, but most users will just ignore it.

\*\*\*

# Chapter 110

(If you are new to writing, you'll be surprised at how good you get at estimating the final word count of your projects).

and that skill is good for... what?

<div align="center">***</div>

# Chapter 111

You can also enter your daily word count goal.

uh-oh. i'm afraid where this is gonna go.

<div align="center">***</div>

# Chapter 112

Click on these, and Neo will bring up graphs of your progress, very similar to NaNoWriMo's excellent graphs.

you want graphs in your app? seriously?

and a database that keeps track of your daily word-count?

and compares it to the goal that you have set for yourself?

seriously?

promise that will be in the pro version, and see if anyone will order it in advance.

better yet, put it in a completely different program. it doesn't need to be in this one.

**\*\*\***

# Chapter 113

You can also turn email reminders on or off.

um, what?

***

< 135 >

# Chapter 114

Neo will email you if you start missing your goals

it would make this response too long to describe all the problems with this specification.

suffice it to say that apps don't generally send e-mails. unless they are e-mail apps.

***

# Chapter 115

xxx

...

and these goals and thresholds can be changed with sliders from the top menu bar. I'd love to see Neo include the last few sentences you wrote in your WIP in its email, as a nudge forward.

...

this sounds like a web-service, not an app.

...

**\*\*\***

# Chapter 116

xxx

...

<span style="color:magenta">You can set session goals as well, with internet blocking.</span>

...

internet blocking? you want this word-processor to block your internet?

...

**\*\*\***

# Chapter 117

xxx
...

Tell Neo you want to write 500 words or for 1 hour, and it will disable your internet adapter and start counting. Neo will also keep track of how many total hours you've spent in your documents. And it'll show you a "Total Plus" word count. This is the number of words including the words you've deleted along the way, plus the words written in notes and outlines. It gives you a fairer sense of how much work you've put into what ended up being a short story.

...

this kind of app might be nice. for some writers.

...

but it's really a completely different app.

...

and, like i said above, it sounds more like a web-app than a native app.

...

indeed, i think you could use slack to do some of these things.

...

\*\*\*

# Chapter 118

You can use Neo without delving into the productivity features. You don't even need to use the tabs, which are at the bottom as well. But they're there if you need them, and out of the way if you don't.

i'd put out the app first without any of these things.

and then see if anyone even asks for them. i'd think not.

**\*\*\***

# Chapter 119

I see the Darlings tab as an extension of these productivity items. All you have to do in Neo is highlight the chapter or scene and drag it toward the bottom of the screen. The tabs will appear. Drop the selection on the "Darlings" tab, and those words will be saved in case you need them again.

ok.

**\*\*\***

# Chapter 120

xxx
...

And Neo remembers where the darlings came from if you want to restore them at any time.

...

this is easy to say, but it's tremendously difficult for a program to do.

...

**\*\*\***

# Chapter 121

xxx
...

You can even publish a "Director's Cut" version of the original for your diehard fans to check out. (This can include the outline and notes tabs, a behind-the-scenes version for those who will enjoy this). The Notes tab is another productivity tool that will come in handy. How many times have you written notes right in the WIP? Now you can highlight those and drag them to the Notes tab. It remembers where you wrote the note, in case it's scene-specific. More ways to simply highlight, drag, move on, and keep writing.

...

an easier way to do this would be to make certain text (like darlings and notes) invisible. that way the whole "remember where this came from" problem is solved inherently.

...

**\*\*\***

# Chapter 122

xxx

...

The simple em dash is an example. Unless you set up a macro, Word and some other programs don't have easy access to this necessary literary tool.

...

a double-dash -- like the ones at either side of this interjection -- get converted to an em-dash. likewise are straight-quotes autoconverted to curly-quotes.

...

\*\*\*

# Chapter 123

xxx

...

Neo has preset macros for the em dash, ellipses (which are a single unit of three periods, rather than three actual periods, which keeps them from being split up in pagination), and other useful symbols.

...

i could autoconvert the three-period ellipse to the single-unit version, except i think it looks crappy.

...

**\*\*\***

# Chapter 124

xxx

...

These are easily accessed in the "Symbols" menu option, with the shortcuts for each shown right beside them.

...

no need. just use the regular keys on the keyboard.

...

***

# Chapter 125

xxx
...

Another thing that breaks my flow is when I need a placeholder for something to research or revisit later. I often find I need to mark a place to come back to, rather than jump onto Chrome to look something up, or pause to think of a new character's name. I usually type "XXX" and remember to search for this later. But in Neo, I'll simply Alt-X and move on. Neo will insert a question mark and create a sticky note. The default will be to keep typing and not even fill out the note, but you can click over and do this in the right hand pane if you like. The point is to keep writing but have reminders to come back to these places that need more time, thought, or an internet break.

...

i could provide an alt-shortcut. but i don't think it'd be any easier than typing "126", or whatever shorthand each individual user has already developed for themselves.

...

\*\*\*

# Chapter 127

Dream additions to Neo that I am still wrapping my brain around include ways of keeping up with which works have been submitted for publication where. Maybe you have manuscripts out to agents, and you want to keep up with who has a copy and nudge them at a certain auto-preset date. (There are great standalone apps for this, but I would want to integrate it. Even if you are primarily self-published, you can keep up with which anthologies a short work is in, which books are in which boxsets, which short works are submitted to Lightspeed or literary journals and prizes, what books are in KU and which ones are published more widely).

sorry, but the separate-apps approach is really the best one for this.

***

# Chapter 128

Another dream addition would be to convince Amazon to allow KDP integration, so Neo can publish directly to your dashboard; keep up with sales, page reads, earnings, free copies given away; update end matter with a single click; and make typo fixes a cinch. Even better would be for all online retailers to provide an API for this or standardize the process, but now I'm beyond dream territory. Sadly, this will never happen.

really wouldn't want it in your editing-app anyway...

***

# Chapter 129

What sets Neo apart is the sum of its features. Less bloat than general purpose writing applications, less confusing than Scrivener, more useful than typewriter apps, and much more geared for ebook creation and publication.

ok.

<div align="center">***</div>

# Chapter 130

xxx

...

But also ready for querying agents and PDF/print-on-demand as well.

...

ok.

...

***

< 151 >

# Chapter 131

xxx

...

Neo will even keep up with the draft you sent to ACX for the audio edition, so you can know how it differs from later, updated ebook editions.

...

ok.

...

***

# Chapter 132

Neo will be designed from the ground up to be portable, so you can take it everywhere.

see above.

***

# Chapter 133

It's secure and synced, so you don't lose files or give away access to them.

see above.

<div align="center">***</div>

# Chapter 134

<span style="color:purple">It organizes works on more than name and date last opened, so now you can organize by genre, series, length, publication plans, etc. Your files can sit on several such bookshelves without making undue copies.</span>

see above.

***

# Chapter 135

xxx

...

And when you're in Neo, the focus is on writing. Not on formatting.

...

ok.

...

<p align="center">***</p>

# Chapter 136

xxx
...

Ideally, Neo will be open sourced and free to use.

...

i love it when people pay me for my programming so they can provide my apps to people in a free-to-use way. and i love it even more when people pay me for my source-code, especially if they then make it open-source.

...

***

< 157 >

# Chapter 137

I'm exploring any and all options.

good!

*** 

< 158 >

# Chapter 138

I'm currently talking with programmers and consultants on how to get this done.

talk is good. code is better. bug-free running apps are *best.*

***

# Chapter 139

xxx

...

Might be a decade before anything comes to light, so don't hold your breath.

...

don't hold your breath. but it won't take a decade.

...

***

# Chapter 140

xxx

...

But I'm willing to invest the time and money to make this a reality.

...

that's good to hear.

...

\*\*\*

< 161 >

# Chapter 141

xxx

...

ok, that's all for now!

...

**\*\*\***

# auto-generated toc

< 163 >

# Darlings-tab

xxx

...

this is the place where i will put my "darlings", to save them for later.

# Manual-tab

xxx

...

# Select-TOC-tab

xxx

...

Balls of Wax

# Whatever-tab

xxx

...

the whatever tab

< 167 >

# To-Do-tab

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# autotoc

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