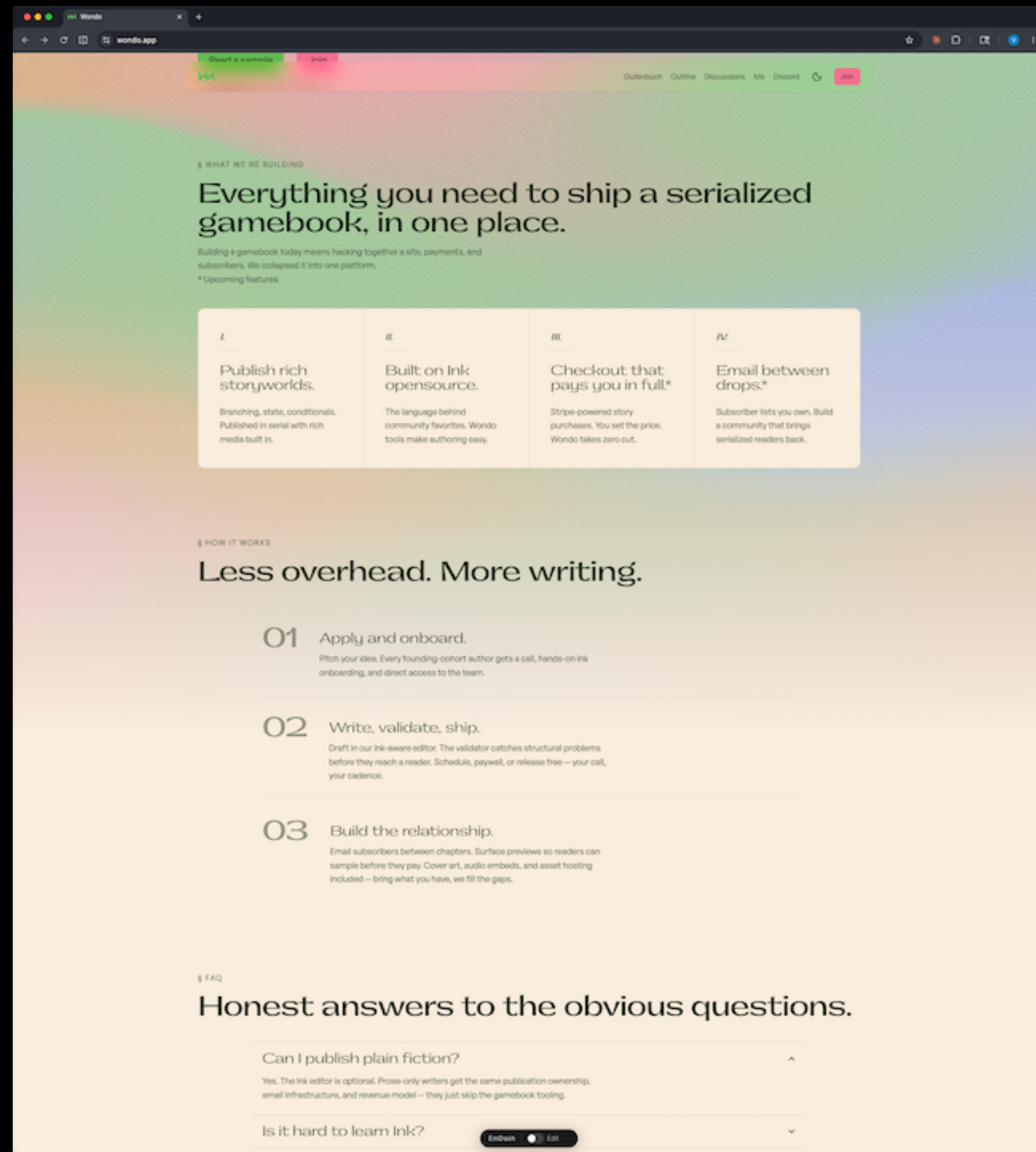


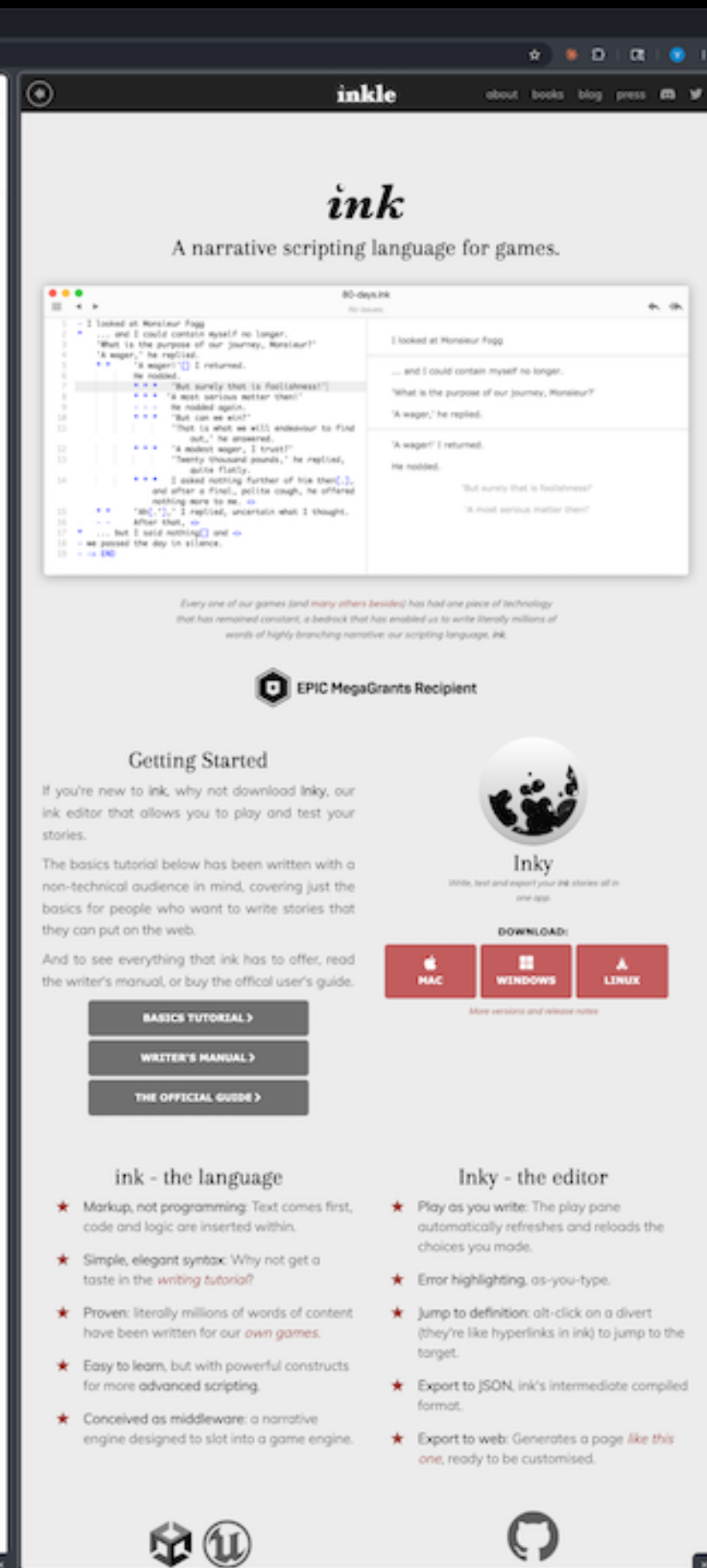
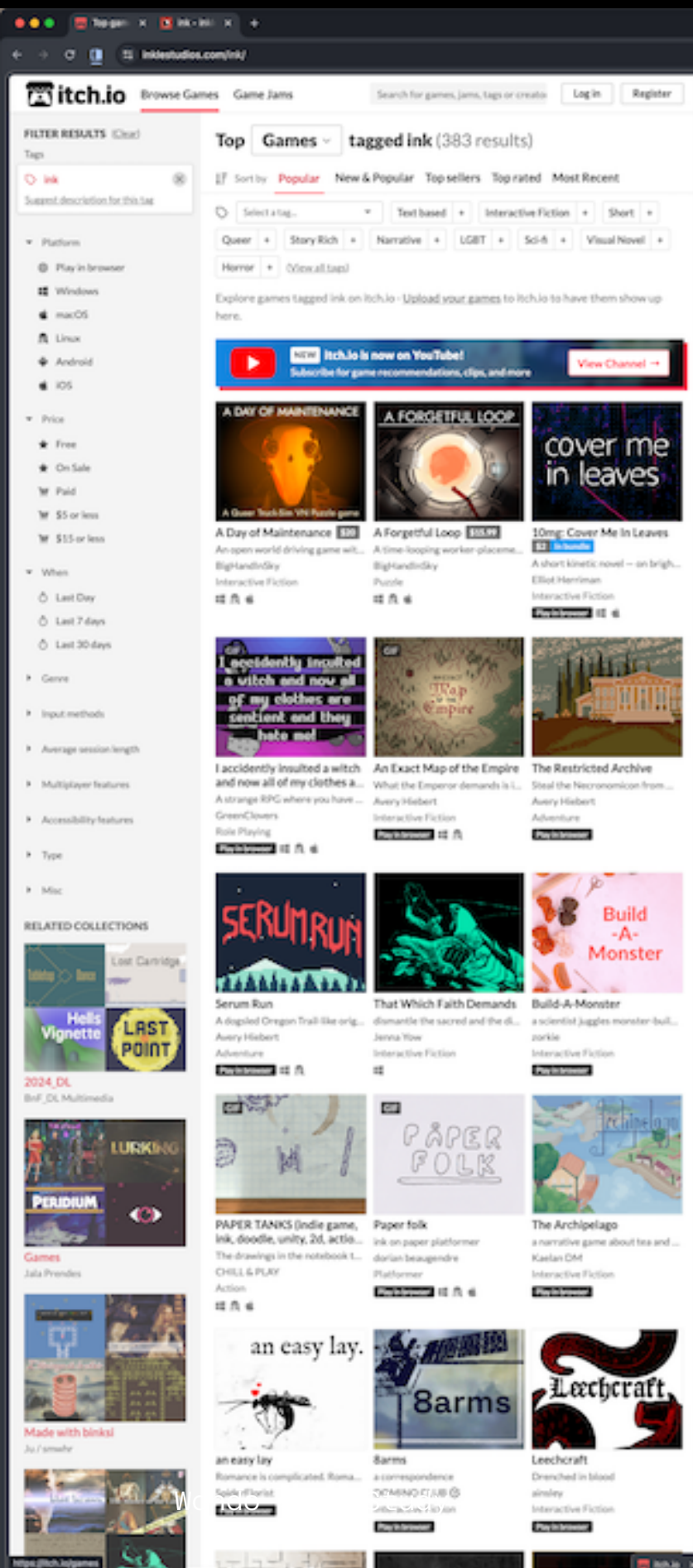
Wondo

Building a creator-economy platform for interactive fiction as a solo founder-designer-developer

Designer and Developer · 2026

This case study is about *agentic methods*: how research, prototyping, and engineering run as three parallel threads when one person owns all three, and what the resulting product reveals about a way of working.





Interactive fiction sits in a structural gap where solutions force authors into game development instead of game design

Wondo is an indie publishing platform and marketplace for interactive fiction with rich media, game state, and branching narrative.

The market sits between two larger worlds: serial-fiction readers on Wattpad, Royal Road, Manta and indie game stores like itch.io and Steam. Neither serves IF natively.

Today's authors face a choice: build their own game engine, or distribute through stores that treat IF as a niche game category. Either way, efforts goes into infrastructure and distribution instead of game narrative design.

IF consists of a niche audience but there are adjacent serialized fiction reading communities

The supply-side observation comes from research:

- **r/interactivefiction** small, devoted, IF-native
- **r/gamebooks** heritage CYOA audience, distinct from IF-native
- **r/wattpad and adjacent serial-fiction communities** large, hungry for accessible interactive content but not served
- **itch.io** published ratio of 7 developers to 1 player across indie games

Wondo's strategy: lower development and distribution tax authors pay and pitch IF to adjacent reader communities by being mobile first.

Solo founder, three roles, drawing on prior community-scaling experience

My role

Founder, designer, and developer solo.

Research, design, prototyping, spec-writing, and engineering all owned end-to-end.

Prior experience scaling a community through a web magazine. The audience-engagement work on Wondo is drawing on a playbook I've used before, applied to a different category.

Out of scope (deliberately)

Advanced game mechanics audio narration, animation, dice systems are on the roadmap but not in beta.

Production complexity in those areas would raise the bar for authors at the exact moment Wondo is trying to lower it. Mobile reading benefits from text-first until the platform finds its footing.

Five intentional constraints that for rapid engineering

Emdash CMS as an AI harness skip building data model, editing, roles, auth. Acts as a guardrail: if a feature can be descoped to fit Emdash, it usually is.

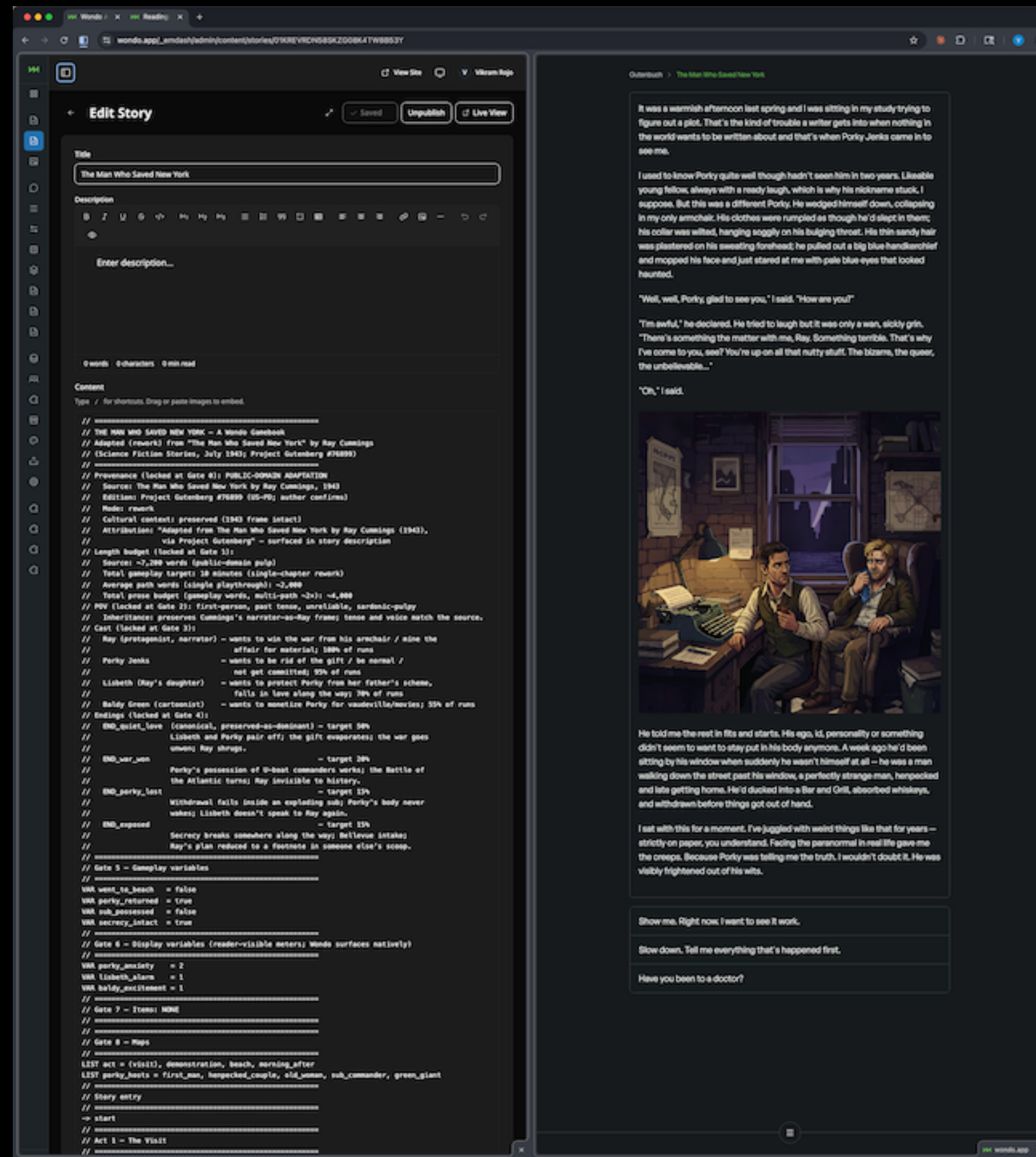
Ink as the runtime Inkle's open-source IF language. Authors arriving from other tools transfer immediately; existing community come for free.

AstroJS on Cloudflare edge popular stack for light content sites. Adding an API layer makes it a SaaS/site hybrid.

Tailwind, minimal brand design system layer handled. The brand is deliberately quiet so it doesn't compete with the content.

Stripe Connect for author-owned commerce authors own their stores and their relationship with readers. Wondo isn't a marketplace that sits in the middle.

Wondo Case Study



Spec-driven development as design artifact, engineering contract, and discipline

Prototyping on Wondo doesn't look like Figma comps that get translated to engineering:

• **Write a spec** that captures research and design intent

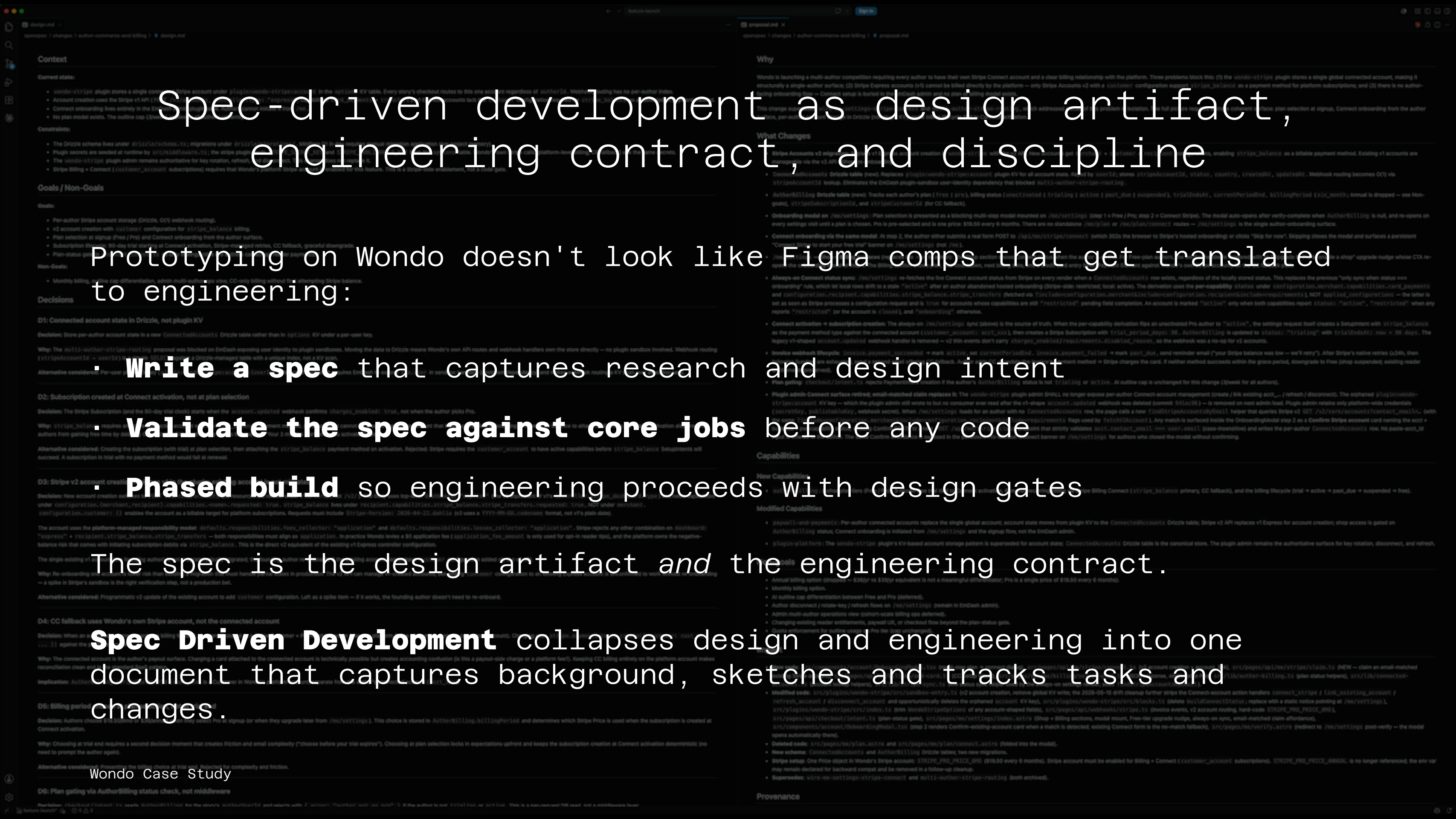
• **Validate the spec against core jobs** before any code

• **Phased build** so engineering proceeds with design gates

The spec is the design artifact *and* the engineering contract.

Spec Driven Development collapses design and engineering into one document that captures background, sketches and tracks tasks and changes.

Wondo Case Study



Everything works in beta
and the hardest
engineering problems were
where third-party
composition is fragile

What's working today, end to end:

- Authors can sign up, publish IF written in Ink, configure their own stores via Stripe Connect, and reach readers on mobile
- Readers can browse, read, tip, and subscribe
- I've dogfooded the platform by adapting public-domain Gutenberg short SF into playable IF with branching choices and pixel animations real polished titles, not promo mocks
- Current work is improving user experience and implement a go-to-market plan

