Sufyaan's Website

Use Plaintext

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Category: Software

Almost everything I write is in plaintext or is as close to plaintext as possible. For example, I prepare plans to work on a project, future articles or brand case studies in plaintext before further processing.

The first step of everything I do is plaintext. I store my notes in markdown format. However, the first step is always to write everything in plaintext to get whatever I need to write out of my head. Formatting such as headings and underlines come after the aforementioned initial step.

So, why do I do this? Why am I so boring when it comes to writing down text?

Forget The Internet

By writing in plaintext, you drop the fear of losing your files in case you do not have the internet. If you use a notes app that fetches your notes from the internet, then it will be tedious to access your notes when you really need them.

Another unspoken advantage of having offline plaintext files is that you can turn off your internet to avoid all distractions and simply write your heart's desires out.

Access Them Anywhere

If you save your notes in a proprietary notes app or use an application like Microsoft Word to write your notes, then you are at the mercy of the creator of the specific file format you are using. If you do not have access to the program in question at any moment, you will not be able to open your notes at all.

Plaintext files are universal. You can open them on any device anywhere in the world. This makes them extremely powerful as you can use them on the slowest of devices without any issues.

Compartmentalise

If you write text in plaintext files, it is trivial to write without any distractions. This is similar to the operating structure of HTML or LaTeX. You focus on one thing at a time. If you need to do something else with the file, you can use another program to do it instead of having everything in one big file.

Automate Your Life

You can use scripts to automatically search for content in plaintext files and perform actions on them. This can, for example, be used to automatically look for categories in a plaintext file and convert them into markdown files.

Conclusion

All in all, I use plaintext files because I can access them whenever and wherever I want on any device. It allows me to future-proof my writing and it also allows me to be more productive.