

# I spent 2 years launching tiny projects

May 18th 2022

Two years ago, frustrated with a long list of unfulfilled project ideas in my phone notes, I decided to start trying one idea each week in its tiniest form.

I never kept to a weekly schedule, but I've kept plodding along since then and launched 8 things.

Each morning I sit down with a coffee and bash out some project code. It's a hobby I love, and one that's starting to generate some decent passive income now.

In this post I want to update you on everything I've launched, and share what I've learnt about building lots of these tiny internet projects.

Lets go back to the start.

## 💡 Tiny Website

The first project I made is this blog you're reading right now.

The purpose of the blog was to simply document all the other projects I'd make.

I launched it the day after I turned 25, and the very first post I wrote, "[Tiny Websites are Great](#)", went semi-viral, which was *very* lucky and spurred me to keep going.

Not much has changed here since then. I've written 17 blog posts, and, of course, there's now *dark mode*.

Objectively, looking at page views, this is the most successful thing I've ever created.

- **Launched: May 2020**
- **Page views: 840,000**
- **Revenue: £0**

## 🌐 Silicon Valley Domain names

One week after launching this blog, I thought it would be a brilliant idea to buy domain names from several FAANG companies, e.g. [google.D1p2](#)

This wasn't really a project, but I'd always been interested in domains, and the blog post I wrote "[I bought netflix.soy](#)" again went semi-viral.

I still own [netflix.soy](#). With Netflix stock tanking, maybe it'll be worth more one day.

- **Launched: May 2020**
- **Facebook cease and desists: 1**
- **Revenue: £0**

## 🔪 8-bit Battle Royale

The next project I made was a tiny 8-bit battle royale game for Android.

This was so fun to build, but ended up being my least successful project.

I launched it to crickets, which was gutting after the success of the last blog posts.

Sadly I lost the code for the game when I switched laptops. It's still live, but *very* buggy. This didn't stop someone [streaming it on Twitch](#) last month though.

- **Launched: June 2020**
- **Downloads: 183**
- **Revenue: £0**

## 🛒 One Item Store

Next up I built a micro online store builder to sell a single product on repeat; just imagine a tiny Shopify.

I cobbled this project together in 2 weeks, and launched it on Product Hunt.

Amazingly, people started selling real things on there, netting me a mighty £1.63 in 1% transaction fees.

Although this wasn't even enough for a Tesco meal deal, it was my first taste of internet money, and boy did it taste good.

Amazingly, a few months after launching One Item Store, I was approached by someone looking to buy it.

I ended up [selling for \\$5,300](#), which blew my tiny mind.

- **Launched: June 2020**
- **Page views: 28,000**
- **Revenue: £1.63**

## 📖 Snormal

After conquering the e-commerce world, building a social network was the obvious next step.

In a few weeks I launched "Snormal": a social network for people to post everyday normal things, like "I just ate a baguette".

In hindsight, this does not make an exciting social network that people want to visit, and the website is kind of dead.

I've abandoned this project, but it still has a few daily users.

- **Launched: August 2020**
- **Page views: 9,800**
- **Revenue: £0**

## 🔑 Earlyname

I sign up to a lot of new products to snag a "rare" handle, e.g. [@ben](#). My next project turned this into a business.

Each month I'd send out a newsletter with 4 new social networks, and let you know if your username was available on them.

For an optional \$10/month, I'd actually register the usernames for you.

After a 1 month build, I launched "Earlyname" on Product Hunt, and surprisingly got a few paying customers.

For 6 months I sent out newsletters, growing Earlyname to \$350/month in revenue, but ultimately decided I didn't enjoy running it.

Having already sold one project, I confidently listed Earlyname on MicroAcquire and [sold it for \\$10,500](#).

- **Launched: October 2020**
- **Page views: 10,000**
- **Revenue: \$4,200/year**

## ❤️ Mailoji

One day, I found you could use emoji domains in email addresses, e.g. [hi@👋.kz](#)

Realising there were many .kz emoji domains available, I decided it would be a great idea to buy 300 Kazakhstan emoji domains and launch an emoji email address service.

One month after launching, I had 150 customers, but I'd actually made a loss from the domain name costs.

Like all these projects, I wrote up a blog post about it and put it on Hacker News.

The post did nothing for 30 minutes, then absolutely skyrocketed.

I sold \$9,000 in subscriptions over a weekend; the most I've ever made in such a short period of time.

Mailoji is still going strong, and now has 700 emoji domains. I collect them like Pokémon. Recently I caught [❤️.gg](#)

You can now also have full emoji email addresses like [🦊🐦👉@🍌.fm](#)

- **Launched: March 2021**
- **Page views: 129,000**
- **Total Revenue: \$18,500**

## 📄 Paper Website

I really enjoy writing using pen & paper, and wanted to start a daily blog.

Over a few weeks, I built a prototype app that let you snap a picture of a handwritten page and turn it into a website.

After enjoying writing a few "paper blog posts", I decided to turn this prototype into a full-blown service called Paper Website.

I bought 100 notebooks to give out to initial customers, and braced for launch.

Fortunately it went well. Over 200 people have built a paper website, and I only have a few notebooks left in my kitchen.

My [daily blog](#) runs on Paper Website, and I've handwritten well over 100 paper blog posts without getting a paper cut.

- **Launched: November 2021**
- **Page views: 69,000**
- **Revenue: \$9,370/year**

## 👍 Pros of Tiny Projects

Rapidly launching lots of tiny projects is so much fun. This is the main reason I do it.

However, with each launch, I'm slowly learning what makes a project "successful". After 8 launches, I'm starting to see some patterns.

I've also discovered what micro-businesses I like to run: I don't enjoy newsletters, but love quirky technical projects that generate passive income. I would never have known this launching just one thing.

The best thing about tiny projects is they're so small, the stakes are incredibly low. There's zero pressure if something fails, you just move on guilt-free and try again.

Another random benefit is my developer skills have 10X'ed over the 2 years of building these projects. I was decent before, but I'm on a different level now.

## 👎 Cons of Tiny Projects

A big debate is whether you should launch lots of things, or focus on just one.

I personally enjoy the "micro-bet" approach, but I often wonder if I gave all my attention to one project I could see better financial success.

At the moment I have 3 active projects that run on auto-pilot. Time management and context switching has been okay, but with 5+ active projects it might get hard.

One other weird downside is that, as I've grown an audience building these projects, I sometimes catch myself thinking "should I build something just for the upvotes".

It's tempting, because I know I could, and it would probably work. But, I think this is a sure-fire way to burn out fast.

## 🧠 Conclusions & The Future

When I started this mission, I had a big list of project ideas that I'd built up in my phone. Maybe you have one of those lists too.

Two years later, I've realised a lot of these initial ideas were pretty terrible.

It's a paradox, but I've found that my best ideas now come from building other ideas.

I would never have thought of an emoji email address service going about my day-to-day, if I hadn't decided to stupidly experiment with domains and buy [netflix.soy](#).

If you're stuck for ideas, I recommend just building something; anything; even if it's terrible, and I guarantee a better idea will pop into your brain shortly after.

Each project I build now uses a spark of an idea from the previous. It's like a monkey swinging vine-to-vine, except the vines are projects, and I'm just a dumb monkey.

I want to keep building tiny projects for decades, and I'm excited to see what ideas come next.

Now, onto the next project!

I make [tiny projects](#)

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