How to Build Your Own Web Apps with AI and Cursor

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[00:00:00] **Joe:** All right. Hey folks, so it's been a few weeks since I last checked in with you.

[00:00:04] **Joe:** Since we last talked, I've been knee deep in building new things, new apps and tools for my community of writers. It's been super fun. I've been building mostly with Claude, but also with Cursor, which I wanna talk to you a little bit about today.

[00:00:22] **Joe:** One of the exciting things about AI is that it's really good at coding. I know a good amount of HTML and CSS and a little bit of PHP and JavaScript, but certainly not enough to do this on my own.

[00:00:35] **Joe:** But with Claude and Cursor, I've been able to build entire web apps all by myself, no developer needed. It's been super fun and it's something that you can do too.

[00:00:45] **Joe:** Whether you have a little bit of coding knowledge or not, this stuff is actually really easy, and when you get lost, these tools will actually teach you how to understand what you're trying to do, which is amazing.

[00:00:56] **Joe:** So if you've ever wanted to build your own software, your own [00:01:00] web apps, your own custom tools, today, I wanna show you how to do that.

[00:01:04] **Speaker:** So let me just start by showing you a couple of the cool things that I built really just over the last month.

# [00:01:10] Write or Die App

[00:01:10] **Speaker:** This is a tool that's based on a popular free app called Write or Die which died. Sadly, they're gone now. I don't know what happened. But we wanted to kind of resurrect this tool for free for our users.

[00:01:24] **Speaker:** And so what you do is you like set your timer here and you start writing. And if you don't write, it gets mad at you. This is. Just a test of this tool and like if you wait a few seconds, it'll start playing a sound, which is very excited. You should be writing, you should be writing, you should be writing.

[00:01:45] **Speaker:** So that's one thing. Oh, also, this is kind of neat. When you have death mode on, you should be writing, you should be writing, so that's really exciting.

# [00:01:56] Writing Sprint Timer Demo

[00:01:56] **Speaker:** I also built a sprint timer. Okay, [00:02:00] so writers. Need to focus and sometimes they struggle with that. And so it's useful to have just a timer that helps them.

[00:02:07] **Speaker:** Focus on their writing right? And it has like a focus mode and when it finishes it plays a nice sound, but you can mute that. So this was actually kind of challenging. This took me a few days to work out. Believe it or not, this was easier because I built a timer app already.

# [00:02:23] Writing Deadline Calculator Demo

[00:02:23] **Speaker:** This is a writing deadline calculator.

[00:02:25] **Speaker:** That's really neat. So let's say you wanna write a book, which is a hard thing. You can. Say I want to finish in a hundred days, or maybe you wanna say, I wanna finish it, let's just say by January 1st, 2025. Okay. And you're gonna start today. Every week you're gonna have a deadline on Friday. And you think, okay, my book is gonna be, let's say, 50,000 words.

[00:02:48] **Speaker:** Just a good NaNoWriMo number. I haven't written anything on it. These are the days I'm gonna write. Okay. Pop that in there.

[00:02:54] **Speaker:** And there you go. You have your full writing schedule this week. By Friday, you need to write [00:03:00] 552 words. Next week you need to have written 4,000 words every day. You need to write. 770 words.

[00:03:07] **Speaker:** Okay, so that's really neat. But what if you wanna print it? Well, you can print it, you can export it as a PDF, or you could put it in your spreadsheet. You can put iCal reminders every week you get a reminder and then you can even share it and commit to finishing your book on social media or in our community.

[00:03:25] **Speaker:** So these are some cool tools that we built. This didn't take me that long, maybe three or four days of you know, every afternoon or so putting together, and I built them all almost entirely with Claude and Cursor. Okay. And it took some of my own, you know, work as well. But this is very possible for almost anyone with the right tools and, you know, a little bit of knowledge.

# [00:03:54] How to Start Building a Web App with Claude

[00:03:54] **Speaker:** So let me just talk you through this process. So this is Claude. If you're not familiar with Claude. Claude is. [00:04:00] An AI tool. Here it is. I'll just go to their home screen, and what you can do is similar to ChatGPT, if you're familiar with that, you just start chatting. Claude has a really nice interface, which is part of the reason why I like it, but also because it's really good at coding.

[00:04:18] **Speaker:** It's better than, you know, regular ChatGPT. Although I guess the new model of ChatGPT is pretty good for coding as well. And so what I'll do is I'll just like talk about what I want to do. So I want, I told Claude that I wanted to build this book writing deadline calculator. We had a, spreadsheet already that we are using for this.

[00:04:40] **Speaker:** And we just wanted to make it better. We wanted to make it nicer, more useful for writers, more interactive, right? And so we built out this thing and it gave me some suggestions, and then I took that and I put it into cursor. Okay? So let me show you a cursor.

# [00:04:58] How to Build a Web App with Cursor

[00:04:58] **Speaker 2:** So Cursor [00:05:00] is a code editor based on VS. Code and they take VS code and they just put in ChatGPT, Claude, and a couple other AI tools. Alright? And so you get this code editor with this nice little chat thing here, and you can choose the model that you're talking to. You can talk to Claude or chat GPT or their own kind of version.

[00:05:29] **Speaker 2:** So it's pretty neat. They have the new ChatGPT version in it as well, which I haven't used a ton. I had Claude come up with a prompt, with a suggestion of how we wanted to structure this. And then I just copy pasted that into cursor, into this chat pane.

[00:05:44] **Speaker 2:** And I had it write the code now it was pretty much copy and pastable into my tool to start using it which is pretty amazing. I did have to do some work on it, and I made it better, and then I made it way better. And then things broke, and then I [00:06:00] had to fix them.

[00:06:00] **Speaker 2:** Debugging is hard and it's something that you might have to do yourself or you could hire someone for that to help you, but, over the course of a few maybe eight or 10 hours, over a few days, I was able to create that tool, which you saw, which is pretty neat.

# [00:06:18] How to Host Your Web App Code

[00:06:18] **Speaker 3:** Now I'm using WordPress to host my website. And this is not The Write Practice where I post it, but you can see here I use this tool called snippets, custom snippets, where I can copy paste code into this, and then it can run usually with a short code, like something like this. All right.

[00:06:37] **Speaker 3:** And so what I do is I can go in here and just add. That code that Claude generated and create a short code and then post the short code on a page, right? So you don't have to have a fancy server or a website, just even a WordPress, a basic WordPress website. And you can run this code, which is not too difficult, right?

[00:06:59] **Speaker 3:** [00:07:00] Now anytime that you're working with code like this, of course it's good to have a backup. So you should have access to like the backend of your website. You should know your server support's email address, or be able to contact them if something breaks. 'cause there is a chance that this crashes your website.

[00:07:18] **Speaker 3:** The nice thing about a tool like custom snippets is if it does break, you can usually deactivate it pretty easily. You know, there's a deactivate button once it's in there and,

[00:07:29] **Speaker 3:** If it breaks, you should be able to stop it or go to your server support and they can help you.

[00:07:35] **Speaker 3:** If you're trying to do something a little bit bigger, like more than, I don't know, a thousand lines of code or anything with authentication with user accounts anything beyond the scope of a single file, you'll probably want to either create a custom plugin in WordPress or start even building your own web app, which I've done, and which I'll show you more about later.

[00:07:59] **Speaker 3:** We're doing [00:08:00] some pretty cool things right now with that. But for really simple little apps, little tools like this, like a calculator plugin, like things like that. You can build that all on WordPress. You can use cursor to quickly iterate. You can use Claude to get it set up and then go from there.

# [00:08:20] Why Use AI to Build Your Web App

[00:08:20] **Speaker 3:** What's nice about this too is, you know, for me this is like HTML, you know, we have some JavaScript down here. We have a lot of JavaScript, right? We have CSS here. There's some other things, you know, at the bottom, more PHP, but. I could probably write this myself. It would take me a long time.

[00:08:44] **Speaker 3:** I would have to do about a thousand Googles to figure this out and, you know, I would be better at coding by the end of it. But along the way I would get super distracted and be working on 16 new projects in the middle of it. What's [00:09:00] nice about this is that you can go really fast. If you get stuck, you can still figure out your way through it.

[00:09:06] **Speaker 3:** But it lets you try new things and build new things quickly and you can make some pretty cool things for your community.

[00:09:16] **Speaker 3:** I'm having a lot of fun with Cursor. I think it's really exciting what you can do with it. And I'm learning a lot too about coding and web apps and infrastructure, all sorts of exciting things. This is something that's not out of reach for most of us,

# [00:09:32] Where to Download Cursor

[00:09:32] **Speaker 3:** So here's Cursor's website. You can download it for free. I do think you'll probably need the pro account, but there is a two week trial. If you wanna get started, and then the pro account is $20 a month which is not too expensive.

[00:09:48] **Speaker 3:** So if you've ever wanted to build your own web apps, your own online tools or just any kind of software, think about cursor but you are not a coder or [00:10:00] you know limited amounts of code I think it's really exciting what you can do and I'd love to hear whether you give it a shot.

[00:10:07] **Speaker 3:** All right. That's it for me today. To you and your freedom from tedium. Have fun. See you soon.