

DIGITAL**SAVVY**HQ
FREE TOOLKIT · ITEM 1 OF 6

The AI Tool Stack Guide

Which tools, in what order — so you stop subscribing and start shipping.

A FREE resource from DigitalSavvyHQ

Who This Is For

You have a full-time job, real skills, and about 90 minutes most evenings. You do not need twelve AI subscriptions to build something real — you need **the right five tools, adopted in the right order.**

This guide is the DSHQ Tool Stack: one engine, one visual tool, one automation tool, one repurposing tool, one delivery tool. Nothing more, until you have a reason to add it.

WHAT YOU'LL WALK AWAY WITH

- The one AI engine to standardise on, and why
- The visual + writing layer that makes your output look finished
- The automation layer that removes your busywork
- The exact order to adopt these tools so you never pay for a subscription you're not using yet

How to use this guide: adopt one layer at a time. Each layer includes a 90-minute action — do it before moving to the next layer.

Layer 1 — Learn: Your One AI Engine

Everything downstream runs through one "brain." Pick one — don't subscribe to all three.

Tool	Best For	Pick This If...
ChatGPT (OpenAI)	Fast, web browsing, custom GPTs, broad ecosystem	You want one tool that does a bit of everything
Claude (Anthropic)	Long-form writing, nuance, huge context for documents	Your offer involves writing, editing, or analysing long documents
Gemini (Google)	Native Docs/Sheets integration	You already live inside Google Workspace

90-MINUTE ACTION

Sign up for one paid tier (\$20/month). Run three prompts tied to your content pillar and save the two best outputs. That's your working engine.

Layer 2 — Implement: Visual & Writing Layer

Once your engine is running, you need the layer that makes output look finished — not "obviously AI."

Visual creation

- **Canva Magic Studio** — fast, editable social graphics and decks. Adopt this first; it covers 90% of what a solo creator needs.
- **Midjourney** — cinematic, high-end visuals. Add only once a visual asset is central to what you sell.
- **Adobe Firefly** — commercial-safe edits, licensed training data. Add when a client needs compliance-safe assets.

Writing & editing

- Your Layer 1 engine, run through the DSHQ Universal Prompt Template (see the 50-Prompt pack in this toolkit) — this is your writing layer. No separate subscription needed.

90-MINUTE ACTION

Build one visual asset tied to your content pillar in Canva — a carousel cover, a quote graphic, a simple one-slide summary. Export it. That's proof-of-work, not decoration.

Layer 3 — Automate: Your Unpaid Intern

Automation moves information between apps so you're not doing it by hand at 11pm. Add this layer only after Layers 1-2 are running.

Tool	Best For	Pick This If...
Zapier	Plain-language automation, fastest to learn	This is your first automation ever
Make.com	Multi-step, visual, more powerful logic	Your automation needs outgrow a single trigger-action pair
In-app native AI	Notion AI, inbox AI, CRM AI you already pay for	Check this before adding a new subscription
90-MINUTE ACTION Build one automation tied to your content or delivery process (see the 3 Make Workflow Blueprints in this toolkit for exact builds). One automation, set up once, saves you from redoing manual work every time.		

Layer 4 — Scale: Repurposing & Distribution

You don't need to create content daily. You need one strong piece, multiplied — this is the layer that does the multiplying.

- **Transcription:** Otter.ai or your phone's voice memo app — turns any conversation or recording into raw text you can repurpose.
- **Repurposing:** Your Layer 1 engine, run through the Content Repurposing Map (also in this toolkit) — one pillar piece becomes 10 platform-native assets.
- **Scheduling:** Buffer or Later — queue a week of repurposed content in one sitting.

90-MINUTE ACTION

Take one piece of content you already published. Run it through the repurposing prompt. Schedule the three best outputs for this week.

Layer 5 — Monetize: Delivery & Payment

The layer most beginners skip until it's urgent. Set it up once, before you need it.

- **Beehiiv** — email list and newsletter delivery. This is where your content OS lives and where offers get made.
- **Notion** — the operating system that holds your content calendar, prompts, and client-facing deliverables (see the AI Content OS template in this toolkit).
- **Stripe / PayPal / Gumroad** — the fastest way to accept a first payment without building a storefront.

90-MINUTE ACTION

Create your Beehiiv account and publish one welcome email. Create a free Stripe or Gumroad account, even with nothing to sell yet — remove the friction before you need it.

The Full Stack, In Adoption Order

Order	Layer	Tool to Adopt	Add When
1	Learn	ChatGPT or Claude (pick one)	Day 1
2	Implement	Canva Magic Studio	Once your engine works
3	Automate	Zapier (then Make.com)	Once you have a repeat manual task
4	Scale	Otter.ai + Buffer	Once you have 1 piece worth repurposing
5	Monetize	Beehiiv + Notion + Stripe/Gumroad	Before, not after, you need to get paid

The rule: never adopt a Layer-3+ tool before Layer 1-2 are actually running. Tool-collecting is the #1 way people feel busy without shipping anything.

Next Step: The DSHQ Vault

This stack gets you shipping. The Vault gives you the pre-built Notion systems, prompt libraries, and automation blueprints for every layer above — so you're customising, not building from a blank page.

vault.digitalsavvyhq.com