What are some beautiful ripple effects of going all free for my books and courses?

In this article I share how and why making all my books, courses and tools free breaks the walls I had to put before, makes it easier to move to another platform with better accessibility and SEO, and how it makes it possible for me to use cheaper and simpler tools like Ghost.

A few weeks ago **I've decided that I'll make all my courses and books free for anyone.** Since starting this transition, I'm realizing how this simple pricing change, has an impact on many other things.

No more walls needed

When you make people pay for stuff, you obviously need to give them a reason to pay for it. Which often means, having three tiers of content:

- Free content freely accessible
- Free content accessible if you are susbcribed with a free account
- Paid content accessible once you paid.

Now that all my content is free, everything can be fully accessible to everyone. I'm no longer in the strategy of trying to get people to register with a free account to then later convert them for a paid book or course. To be honest, it's a long time that I've been drifting from that strategy.

I can move to another plaform

For years I've continued to use **Podia** as my CMS. For creating paid courses, delivering digital files and selling them it's just unbeatable. The price is great (when you compare it to things like **Circle** or **Kajibi**) and it's super easy to use both for me and for the readers. Where there are issues, is with three aspects:

- **Accessibility**: it does some basic accessibility stuff, but it doesn't go really far.
- **SEO**: it does some basic SEO, but in the way I use the tool, and with the fact that there is no sitemap, the content that I've put as previews of courses (most of my content) doesn't easily appear in search engines.
- **Sustainability**: it's clearly not the tool that uses the least resources, and it's even unclear if it's hosted on a provider that uses green energy.

Now that I don't anymore need all the special features of Podia, I can move to another tool that does better on these three fronts, and that I still can afford.

The platform change I'm testing out: Ghost and Magicpages

With this big pricing change, a tool that I always was interested to use, but was too limited, suddenly feels more like the perfect fit. This tool is Ghost.

It's a blog CMS with one of the best looking editor. A sort of mix of the good old days of Medium and Notion mixed together. Simple, clean, fast to use.

And it makes it possible to improve the three issues I had;

- **Accessibility**: I can choose the theme for the blog, and edit it. So if there are accessibility issues I want to fix I can do it.
- **SEO**: the SEO is just stronger with Ghost as it has more basic SEO features included, and as with the accessibility point, I can edit the theme if there is something that needs to be changed.
- **Sustainability**: I can choose where I host it, or I can choose which provider I want to use that hosts it for me. Which means I can pick one that is using green energy, and I can also adapt the theme to use less resources.

The big surprise for me was the pricing. At first I looked at the pricing of the managed hosting by Ghost themselves. And the price is super steep for someone who has about 8000 subscribers to his newsletter. It would cost me **XXX** per month.

The other solution would be to self host Ghost, which you can, but I have to admit, that I like the luxury of having someone else caring about updates, security stuff, backups, and all of that.

Then I found Magicpages, which is run by a super small team of three people. And they offer the same type of Ghost hosting than Ghost, but at a much more reasonable price of **XXX** per month, including 10'000 emails per month.

Even better they have a lifetime plan for **XXX** which means that for roughly that for the same price I pay for Podia for one year (**XXX** without emails).

What are the ripples effects of moving to Ghost?

By making all my courses and books free, I have the ripple effect of being able to change tool, and getting better accessibility, better SEO, better sustainability and all of this for cheaper.

What are some of the Ripple effects when moving to Ghost specifically?

- **No more reading progress**: for longer courses or books, readers won't have the feature that tells them what they've read and what they didn't read yet.
- **From weekly to monthly newsletter**: To stay in the limits of the Life time Plan of Magic Pages I would have to send "only" 10'000 emails per months. Having already 8'000 in my email list, that would mean I either remove people from my list to arrive to roughly 2'000, or I switch the cadence to monthly. Or I could pay **XXX** bucks per month for each additional 10'000 emails. For now I imagine that I could move the newsletter at a monthly rythm, and for people who want to have weekly updates I could keep that rythm for the newsletter that I do on Linkedin (which is just a copy of what I do by email).
- **Events without registration**: if I run again webinars, I won't have a registration system included in Ghost. I could for sure use something like **luma**. But I feel that would not even be necessary as the goal would not anymore be to have people's email to one day be able to sell them a book or course. So I could just have a blog post with the Zoom link directly available.
- **Change of layout**: that's an obvious one, the layout and navigation will change quiet a bit.

The start of a big migration

This will be a big migration process for me, and this is just the start of my explorations. Over the next few months I'll share more of my thinking and behind the scenes work in this blog.

Backstage of this article

This article was illustrated on a refurbished Remarkable II tablet. The text was typed on this same tablet with a folio keyboard. If you are curious you can download a PDF version of the original note below.