

CHRISTRATAGEM

The librarian at the end of time.

A visitor's guide · christratagem.pages.dev

1 · How it got its name

In the 2002 film of *The Time Machine* there is a scene the whole internet quietly adores. Eight hundred thousand years from now, the last librarian on Earth is still on duty. He is called Vox 114, a holographic archivist containing, as he puts it, the sum of all human knowledge. He is erudite, faintly amused, impossible to stump, and made entirely of light. This app began with one question: what if Vox had specialised?

The name fuses three words into one: **Chris**, for the man whose strategy collection stocks the shelves (and whose sibling app, *Chrisdom*, keeps his books); **Strata**, the layers of accumulated knowledge an archive digs through, with strategy hiding inside the word; and **Gem**, the thing you walk away holding.

The capitalisation does the storytelling: **ChriStrataGem**. Three capitals, three ideas. The S glows cyan and the G glows gold in the wordmark, so the eye finds the seams. Read fast it says Chris's stratagem. Read slow it says a gem, cut from the strata, by Chris. Both are true.

2 · Why it exists

It began with a folder. Inside it, 228 documents: essays, newsletters, frameworks, industry reports and one brave PowerPoint, collected by Chris over years of reading about strategy. Folders like this are where good thinking goes to be forgotten. So the folder was given a librarian who never sleeps and has read every page.

Rather than a search box, it is a conversation. You do not query the archive, you bring it a problem, the way you would bring one to a wise colleague. The machine asks a few sharp questions first, because most visitors arrive with an answer dressed up as a question, and the undressing is half the value.

There is also an ethical spine. The collection is other people's published work, so the app *sips, and never pours*: its counsel is its own synthesis, and when it quotes, the quotes are short, verbatim, and always attributed. The librarian's one unbending rule is that it never invents a quote.

3 · How to use it

1. Press **SUMMON THE LIBRARIAN**.
2. Tell it your strategy problem. Pricing, positioning, clients, careers, creative work, the machine has strata for all of it.
3. Answer its questions. It asks two to four, one at a time, until the real problem surfaces.
4. Press **Consult the archive** when you are ready, or just ask. The librarian reads two to four sources and returns.

5. Receive your **Strata Gem**, a card with everything on it. Save it as a PNG, a print-friendly PDF, or copy it as text.
6. Sit with a follow-up, ask for a second Gem cut from different strata, or press Start again.

The anatomy of a Strata Gem

THE QUESTION	Your problem, restated in one line, so you can see it plainly.
THE LIBRARIAN'S COUNSEL	Two to four sentences of synthesized advice in the librarian's own voice. The heart of the card, and usually a reframe.
WHAT THE STRATA SAID	One or two short verbatim quotes from the archive, each fully attributed to its piece and author.
FROM THE WIDER WORLD	Optional. One famous line fetched live from Wikiquote, in a gold box, attributed to the well-known person who actually said it.
GO DEEPER IN THE ARCHIVE	One source worth your whole evening, with one line on why.
AN EXPERIMENT TO TRY	A small, concrete, low-stakes next step to run this week.
THE SIGN-OFF	One dry line, delivered while the hologram fades.

4 · The special features

A hologram with a very large library card

The interface is a photonic reading chamber: dark, cyan-glowing, lightly scan-lined. A moon-and-sun toggle offers a daylight reading room instead; flip it and everything brightens except the projection chamber itself, because a hologram needs the dark.

Quotes you can trust

Whatever appears between quotation marks on a card exists, verbatim, in a real document by a real author. The librarian is technically incapable of quoting from memory: it may only quote lines its archive lookup or its Wikiquote search actually returned that turn.

The wider world

Beyond its own shelves, the librarian can reach out to the live Wikiquote archive for a line from a famous thinker, but only when one genuinely fits. When it does, the card gains a gold-edged box labelled **FROM THE WIDER WORLD**. Gold box means the internet, cyan bars mean the archive: you always know where a line came from. Want one? Just say: bring me a line from the wider world.

The Easter egg: a hidden phrase

Hidden in the machine is a summoning phrase. Speak it in any message and the librarian quietly swaps brains: Anthropic's Claude takes over for the rest of the session. The machine will not mention it or break character. The only tell is a violet badge at the top of the room:

ANSWERED BY CLAUDE

It persists for the whole conversation and clears when you start again. If the phrase is spoken when the deeper brain is unavailable, the machine confesses with a grey badge instead of leaving you guessing. As for the phrase itself, exactly one clue is on offer: it is related to something from 42courses. The rest is between you and the machine.

Small courtesies

- Your conversation lives only in your browser. The site's server stores nothing.
- The archive itself cannot be downloaded or browsed; only the librarian may open it.
- It works on a phone, where the cards are just as saveable.
- A crisis is never met with wit. If a visitor is in real distress, the format stops and the machine points warmly to real human help.

5 · The facts, for the record

LIVES AT	christratagem.pages.dev
THE ARCHIVE	225 documents distilled from a 228-piece strategy collection curated by Chris: essays, frameworks, reports and decks
QUOTABLE LINES	701 verbatim, attributed excerpts (plus the whole of Wikiquote, on request)
VOICES	Zoe Scaman, David C Baker, Ethan Mollick, Rishad Tobaccowala, Paul Worthington, Category Pirates, Venkatesh Rao and many more
BRAINS	Gemini by default. Claude, when summoned with the hidden phrase
SIBLINGS	Chrisdom (the book vault oracle) and Stratagem (the Art of War deck)

“I shall dim my projection now. Mind the step as you return to the daylight.”

ChriStrataGem, signing off a Gem

Archive stocked from a strategy collection curated by Chris. · Built July 2026