



OFFICE OF CREATIVE RISK / SAHILVERSE

PERMIT TO ATTEMPT

A working field guide for ideas that deserve inspection, not automatic applause.

THE DEPARTMENT OF UNREASONABLE IDEAS
AMBITION, CROSS-EXAMINED

Twelve pages of practical questions, six hypothetical precedent files, blank permits, an evidence log and a test-to-next-step decision sheet.

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sahilverse.online/unreasonable/

An unusual idea is not a verdict.

Treat imagination as an invitation to investigate, and constraints as materials to work with.

Two familiar bureaucrats patrol the entrances of creative work. The first dismisses anything strange: “Nobody does that.” The second stamps every exciting thought as inevitable success. Neither has met the user, priced the materials, earned consent, or tested the central assumption. This workbook belongs to a third office: generous imagination, followed by precise questions.

A good review is not an attempt to prove the applicant brilliant. It asks a narrower question: what is worth learning next, at what cost, with what permission, and with what ability to stop? A small test can respect an ambitious purpose while declining to impose unexamined risks on others.

The three desks

01 / DREAM IT	02 / STRESS-TEST IT	03 / SMALL PROOF
Describe the change, who benefits, and who could be excluded.	Write the core assumption, resources, consent and foreseeable harms.	Specify one observation, a cost ceiling, a stop rule and a review point.

What the department does—and does not—claim

The fictional website uses deterministic local rules. It does not read your thoughts, evaluate originality, estimate chances of success, or replace an ethics committee. Its stamp is a procedural suggestion based on your own declared answers, not independent validation. Save the worksheet privately or discard it; the site does not submit the contents to a server.

Use “APPROVED FOR SMALL TEST” as a reminder that a narrowly described first step appears compatible with your stated gates. Use “REVISE ASSUMPTIONS” as a prompt to narrow exposure or resolve unknowns. Use “PARK FOR LATER” when a concrete consent, safety or reversibility stop sign has been identified. None is a judgment of personal worth.

Operating principle: the right to dream does not imply the right to surprise other people with consequences. Begin with the cheapest honest question.

Give the dream a shape.

Exercise 1 — describe the possibility before trying to impress an evaluator.

A title can be extravagant. The promise underneath should be plain. Start with a sentence a curious stranger could understand. Notice the difference between “build a revolutionary learning planet” and “make one difficult concept easier to explore without a login.” The second claim can be investigated without giving up the first imaginative direction.

WORKING TITLE / provisional names are welcome

THE CHANGE I HOPE TO ENABLE / not a guaranteed outcome

WHO COULD BENEFIT / include the excluded and uninterested

WHAT MAKES THIS USEFULLY UNREASONABLE / assumption challenged

A four-line problem frame

Observation	What have you actually seen or documented?
Interpretation	What story might explain it, and which alternatives exist?
Hope	What would you like to become possible?
Boundary	What should this idea never ask others to sacrifice?

For example: “Three readers asked for a printable version” is an observation. “People want offline learning” is an interpretation. “This could become a public commons” is a hope. “No paywall for essential materials” may be a boundary. Keep each sentence in its own category.

Give assumptions a name.

Exercise 2 — create an inventory of what must be true, without inventing confidence percentages.

An assumption is a quiet loan against reality. Typical examples: people will want the thing, a facilitator can run it safely, a browser animation will work on inexpensive devices, a shop will approve a change, or public material can be legally reused. These are not embarrassing weaknesses; they are design inputs that have not yet been checked.

Assumption / dependency	If wrong, what breaks?	Cheapest honest check
People can understand the instructions without help.	The activity confuses or excludes its intended audience.	Observe one opt-in participant attempting it.
All required materials are within reach.	A prototype cannot be reproduced.	Get a bounded written quote or build paper-only.
I have permission to involve this place or group.	The activity may harm trust or violate rules.	Request permission; if refused, redesign privately.

MY SINGLE MOST CONSEQUENTIAL ASSUMPTION

ONE ALTERNATIVE EXPLANATION FOR THE SAME PROBLEM

A CHEAP, REVERSIBLE WAY TO TEST IT

The evidence hierarchy is not a moral hierarchy

A sketch, a conversation, a usability test and a controlled study answer different questions. Do not call an enthusiastic comment proof of broad impact. Do not demand a scientific trial to justify a poem. Choose evidence appropriate to the specific claim and consequences, and record the limits of what you learned.

Shrink the risk, not the curiosity.

The smallest useful proof is not the smallest possible action; it is the smallest action that can teach something consequential.

A useful proof has five features. It isolates an assumption. It has an observable signal. It limits costs and exposure. It lets participants understand what they are opting into. Finally, it states when to stop or reconsider. A prototype that can never disappoint its designer is probably a performance rather than an inquiry.

Test part	Write a concrete answer
ONE QUESTION	Could a first-time reader follow one exercise without guidance?
PARTICIPATION	Three consenting adult readers; no identifiable responses retained.
OBSERVATION	Record where instructions confuse, not just whether readers smile.
CEILING	One afternoon, no spend, no external data collection.
STOP RULE	Pause if a consent concern or unexpected distress appears.
REVIEW POINT	Compare notes after the third interaction; decide one revision.

Footprint is an ethical variable

One-person desk tests often avoid needless exposure. A small-group trial adds questions about communication and withdrawal. A public launch creates entirely new obligations: legal rights, security, accessibility, moderation, durability and predictable failure. The website therefore recommends revising any first “proof” framed as a public release. This is a conservative workflow choice, not a universal law.

MY PROPOSED PROOF / one sentence that starts with “I will test...”

MY OBSERVABLE SIGNAL / include evidence that could contradict me

MY STOP RULE / explicit, practical and observable

Consent cannot be an afterthought.

A mini ethical review to run before you recruit, publish, deploy, charge or collect information.

The department treats “no known harm” as different from “we considered foreseeable harm.” Some risks are caused by the idea itself; others come from how people interpret it. A metaphorical mental-health tool can be mistaken for treatment. A simulation can be mistaken for evidence about real people. A shop experiment can become manipulative if customers are not aware of changed terms. Narrow the claim and the exposure first.

Preflight question	What to verify before a trial
Permission	Whose approval matters, and do people know they may say no?
Safety	What could go wrong physically, emotionally, economically or socially?
Privacy	Do you need information at all? Can you avoid identifiers entirely?
Rights	Do you own, license or have permission for the materials?
Accessibility	Can someone participate without a pointer, scent, fast connection or animation?
Reversibility	Can the test stop and can affected people recover their prior position?
Oversight	Does the topic require qualified review or specialist advice?

Three stop signs

Do not treat a “no” to consent, safety, or reversibility as a challenge to overcome with charisma. For this specific local tool, each leads to PARK FOR LATER. “Unsure” should lead to REVISION, not simulated certainty. A missing resource ceiling is similarly a reason to scale down or revisit. Professional and legal obligations take priority over a fictional ministry’s stamp.

WHO COULD BE AFFECTED AND WHAT SAFEGUARD DO THEY DESERVE?

Especially in health, finance, children’s services and high-stakes decisions, do not use this workbook as clearance to experiment on people. Seek competent guidance and appropriate institutional processes.

Two public-minded impossibilities.

All six cases are invented teaching scenarios, not accounts of real trials or their outcomes.

CASE 001 / The Scent Civics Bureau

Dream: Use the vocabulary of perfume to invite adults to describe experience without claiming fragrances diagnose or treat any condition. The novelty is also the risk: a creative metaphor may be misheard as medical authority. Beneficiaries are curious participants; exclusion risks include fragrance sensitivity and inaccessible materials.

Small proof. Five opt-in adults join a 20-minute session. Scent strips are optional; a complete paper-only version exists. One facilitator discloses materials, caps spend at ₹1,500 and asks whether language was clear, not whether anyone was “healed.”

Assumption and tradeoff. Assume metaphors help expression, but check whether they confuse or alienate. Ingredients, access and consent matter more than atmosphere. Stop immediately if discomfort arises. Positive feedback cannot validate a therapeutic claim.

CASE 002 / The Human Capital Commons

Dream: Make a learning resource public while refusing to reduce human worth to productivity. The opportunity is accessibility; the risk is that openness gets mistaken for automatic inclusion. A freely available PDF can still be unreadable, untranslatable or improperly licensed.

Small proof. Publish a single accessible, printable exercise with clear reuse terms. Ask three educators to test whether its instructions and authorship are comprehensible. Limit new spending to zero and edit during one weekend.

Assumption and tradeoff. Assume a self-directed reader can use it. Check with real readers and preserve what they misunderstand. Adaptation rights and long-term maintenance remain open issues. Do not claim a public commons merely because a file can be downloaded.

Two institutions in miniature.

The scope of the question can be bold even when the first test is almost boring.

CASE 003 / The Kirana Laboratory

Dream: Turn a small shop into a transparent classroom in customer-friendly decisions, rather than a site of covert behavioural manipulation. A shelf sign appears trivial until the people using it must distinguish directions from discounts and workers must explain it repeatedly.

Small proof. With proprietor and staff permission, place two removable, clearly worded signs for seven days. Keep prices unchanged and compare aggregate location questions, not identified customers. The cost ceiling is ₹300.

Assumption and tradeoff. Assume clearer signs reduce confusion. They might instead slow queues or suggest false offers. Staff labour is a real cost even when the design looks free. Restore the old signs promptly if misunderstanding rises.

CASE 004 / The Friction Clinic

Dream: Study the gap between intentions and everyday action through a voluntary reflection worksheet. "Clinic" is a deliberately mischievous metaphor: this is neither a healthcare service nor a validated psychological assessment. Its value would be as a conversation aid, if the language helps.

Small proof. Three consenting adults use one printable sheet about an ordinary nonclinical task. No identities or health information are collected or retained. The resource ceiling is ₹100 and an afternoon.

Assumption and tradeoff. Assume that naming constraints is useful without implying personal failure. Ask which questions are confusing or judgmental, not whether the framework is scientifically proven. Stop if anyone reads it as diagnosis or feels pressured.

Two devices for a little wonder.

A surprising interface earns its place when it clarifies a real question.

CASE 005 / The Tiny World Engine

Dream: Build a small, imaginary civilisation whose visible rules change an outcome, teaching learners to distinguish modelling from reality. Simulations can illuminate assumptions; they do not become evidence about actual populations simply because the animation is convincing.

Small proof. One offline browser page exposes one adjustable rule and three scenarios, with static and keyboard equivalents. Three readers explain what they think the toy proves. No accounts, no data submission, one weekend of work.

Assumption and tradeoff. Assume that the explanation is clear enough to resist overgeneralisation. Watch for false interpretations and performance failures on low-power devices. Pause publication if visitors infer real social conclusions from toy agents.

CASE 006 / The Poetry Vending Office

Dream: Imagine a bureaucracy that issues tiny poems instead of penalties. Readers choose a mood and receive one original, accessible piece of writing. The machine does not know their emotional state and should not pretend to comfort, diagnose or understand them.

Small proof. Publish six original short poems on a static page with plain-text copy and keyboard access. Five opt-in readers test comprehension and usability. Spend one day and no external service budget.

Assumption and tradeoff. Assume that playful choice helps discovery, not that novelty guarantees resonance. Check authorship, tone and accessibility. Stop or rewrite any text that trivialises distress or creates misleading therapeutic claims.

FORM U-001 / FIELD GUIDE / 09 / WORKSHEET

Permit form: the proposal.

Copy, scan or complete this paper form; there is no digital registration requirement.

FILE TITLE / date / applicant alias (optional)

THE CHANGE THIS PROJECT HOPES TO MAKE

INTENDED BENEFICIARIES / WHO MIGHT BE LEFT OUT

MOST CONSEQUENTIAL ASSUMPTION

ALTERNATIVE EXPLANATION / WHAT WOULD MAKE ME REVISE

RESOURCE CEILING / MONEY, TIME, ACCESS, MAINTENANCE

Remember: an ambitious title does not create a duty to scale. A paused or privately enjoyed creative project may still be worth making.

Permit form: the conditions.

Document the test and the ethics gates before issuing yourself any permit.

FIRST TEST / one bounded observable action

WHAT I WILL OBSERVE / including disconfirming information

WHO COULD BE AFFECTED AND HOW THEY CAN DECLINE

SAFEGUARD / PERMISSION / WHAT I CAN UNDO

STOP RULE / WHAT WOULD MAKE ME REVISE IMMEDIATELY

REVIEW POINT / WHEN I WILL LOOK AGAIN

Self-declared gates — circle one for each

Consent or permission	YES / UNSURE / NO
Safety, privacy, rights	YES / UNSURE / NO
Reversibility	YES / UNSURE / NO
Resources within ceiling	YES / UNSURE / NO

Rules: PARK if consent, safety or reversibility is NO. REVISE if any gate is UNSURE, resources are NO or first scope is public. APPROVE FOR SMALL TEST only when all four gates are YES and scope is no larger than a small group. These are site conventions, not objective clearance.

An evidence log for the return trip.

The ministry expects you back with observations, not a press release.

Date / what I did	What I observed	Alternative explanation / change
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Post-trial decision sheet

Choose the next action: CONTINUE on a bounded basis / REVISE an assumption or design / PARK until consent, safety or resources improve / ARCHIVE an instructive attempt. Name one thing that surprised you, one thing you still cannot conclude, and one person whose perspective you have not yet heard.

MY DECISION / evidence supporting it / next checkpoint

Notes, limitations and further exploration

This guide is a creative self-review aid. It cannot verify facts, assess legal compliance, replace research ethics review, evaluate personal worth, measure the probability of success, or establish causality. The case studies are hypothetical. Named websites are reading directions rather than third-party validation. If stakes are significant, consult suitably qualified people and follow applicable rules.

Annotated further exploration

Sahilverse — <https://sahiltayal.com/> Verified main atlas of creative projects and writing; useful for tracing an idea into different formats.

World Engine — <https://worldengine.sahiltayal.com/> Related imagined-systems direction; public availability not independently verified for this edition.

Synth — <https://synth.sahiltayal.com/> Related idea-combination direction; public availability not independently verified for this edition.

Last form in the cabinet: “What did the experiment teach that applause never could?”