GLOSSARY

Builder's glossary

305 words you'll hear when you build with AI, each in one plain sentence.

A

Acceptance criteria
Testable conditions that say when a user story is done.

Accessibility (a11y)
Making apps usable by everyone, including people using screen readers or keyboards.

Action
A step an automation performs after the trigger.

AGENTS.md / CLAUDE.md
A file in a project that tells AI agents how to build, test and follow its rules.

AI agent
An AI that can use tools and take several steps toward a goal, not just answer.

AI assistant
An app where you talk to an AI model in plain language to get help with tasks.

AI disclosure
A short note saying how AI helped make something.

AI step / agent in a workflow
An automation step where AI summarises, sorts, drafts or decides.

Alt text
A short description of an image for screen readers and search engines.

Analytics
Counting how people find and use your app, so you know what's working.

Anchor (regex)
^ and $ pin a pattern to the start and end of the text, so the whole text must match, not just part of it.

Anon / publishable key
Supabase's public key that ships in the front end; safe only with RLS on.

Anthropic
The AI company that makes Claude and created the Model Context Protocol.

any (TypeScript)
A type that switches checking off for a value. In AI-written code it often hides a real mistake.

API
An agreed way for one piece of software to ask another for something.
The waiter carrying orders.

API key
A secret code that identifies your app to a service and is often tied to billing.

App store
Apple's App Store or Google Play, where native apps are reviewed and installed.

Array
A list of values in code, like ["red", "blue"].

Artificial intelligence (AI)
Software that does tasks we used to think needed a person, like understanding speech or writing text.

Async / await
Code for slow tasks like loading data: await waits for the answer.

ATS (applicant tracking system)
Software many employers use to collect, scan and sort job applications.

Authentication
Checking who someone is (signing in).

Authorisation
Checking what a signed-in person is allowed to do.

autocomplete (HTML)
Tells browsers and password managers what a field is, like email or new-password, so they can fill it in.

Automation / workflow
Steps that run by themselves: when this happens, do that.

B

Back end
Code on a server that checks permissions and does work users mustn't tamper with.
The kitchen.

Bias (in AI)
Unfair patterns an AI picks up from its training data.

Bolt
A prompt-to-app builder (bolt.new, by StackBlitz) that builds and runs apps in the browser.

Box model
Every element is a box: content, then padding, then border, then margin.

Branch
A parallel line of work so you can build without touching the main line.

Broken access control
When an app lets people see or change things that aren't theirs, usually because the server never checked. Number one in the OWASP Top 10.

Browser console
The developer-tools panel (Inspect, then Console) that shows a page's errors and logs.

Bug
A mistake that makes software behave wrongly.

C

Call to action (CTA)
The one thing you want a visitor to do next, like 'Join the waitlist'.

Callback
A function you hand to other code to call later, like the one you pass to addEventListener or setTimeout.

Capture group
Brackets in a regex that group a part and remember what it matched, so you can use it afterwards.

Case study
A short story of a project: the problem, what you built, how, and the result.

CDN
A network of servers worldwide that serves your files from close to each visitor.

Change request
A written request for work outside the scope, with its own price and time.

Chart
A picture of data (line, bar, pie) that makes a pattern easy to see.

Chatbot
Any program you talk to in a chat window. Modern ones are powered by LLMs.

ChatGPT
OpenAI's AI assistant app, launched in November 2022.

Checkout
The payment page where a customer pays for a specific purchase.

CI (continuous integration)
Automatic checks (tests, builds) that run on every push or pull request.

Claude
Anthropic's AI assistant and family of models.

Claude Code
Anthropic's coding agent that works in the terminal, desktop, web and editors.

Clone
Download a copy of a repository to your computer.

Codebase
All the code and files that make up one project.

Coding agent
An AI that reads, edits and runs code across a whole project.
Cursor, Claude Code, GitHub Copilot, Codex.

Colour contrast
How different text is from its background; enough contrast keeps text readable.

Column
One detail stored for every row, like email.

Commit
A saved snapshot of changes with a message.

Component
A reusable piece of interface, in React a function that returns what to show.

Conditional (if/else)
Code that runs only when something is true, otherwise something else.

Connector
A permissioned link that lets an AI assistant read or act in another app.

Constraint (database)
A rule the database checks on every row it saves, such as not null, unique or a foreign key.

Context window
How much text a model can look at in one go: instructions, chat history, files and its own replies.
Like a desk: when it's full, older papers fall off.

Conversion rate
The share of people who complete a step. 50 sign-ups from 1,000 visitors is 5%.

Cookie
A small piece of data a site stores in your browser and sends back with requests, often to keep you signed in.

Copyright
Legal rights over creative work. Rules for AI-made work differ by country and are still changing.

CORS
Cross-Origin Resource Sharing: headers a server sends to tell browsers which other sites may read its responses. It isn't a lock on your API.

Credits
The units many AI tools charge in; each AI request spends some.

Cross-site request forgery (CSRF)
A trick that makes someone's browser send a request to your site with their cookies. SameSite cookies and origin checks stop it.

Cross-site scripting (XSS)
When text someone typed goes into a page as HTML and runs as code in other people's browsers.
A comment that secretly contains a script.

CSS
The language for how a page looks: colours, fonts, spacing, layout.

CSS grid
A CSS layout tool for rows and columns at once, like galleries, dashboards and whole pages.
grid-template-columns: repeat(3, 1fr)

CSV
A plain-text table with values separated by commas, for moving data between tools.

Cursor
An AI code editor with chat and agents built in.

Custom instructions
Preferences you save once so the assistant follows them in every chat.

D

Database
Organised storage for everything an app must remember.
The pantry and order book.

Dataset
A collection of related data, like all of this year's orders.

Debugging
Finding and fixing bugs, often by reading the exact error message.

Deep research
An AI mode that searches and reads many sources, then writes a report with citations.

Deepfake
Fake AI-made media of a real person, often used to mislead.

Demo
Showing your product working, live or recorded, instead of only describing it.

Dependency
A package your project needs, listed in package.json. Packages have dependencies of their own too.

Deploy
Publish a version of your app to a host.

Deposit
Part of the price paid up front before work starts.

Design system
Your written-down colours, type, spacing and reusable components, used the same way everywhere.

devDependency
A package needed only while you build or test, like TypeScript or a linter, not by the running app.

Developer tools (Inspect)
Browser tools that show a page's HTML and CSS and let you experiment live; changes aren't saved.

Diff
A view of exactly which lines were added, changed or removed.

Discovery
Questions you ask a client before quoting: problem, users, success, deadline, budget.

DNS
The internet's address book that turns domain names into server addresses.

DOM (Document Object Model)
The browser's live tree of a page's elements, which JavaScript can read and change.

Domain
Your site's name, like digitalbuilders757.com, rented from a registrar.

E

Edge function
A small piece of server code that runs close to users, often to use secrets safely.

Elevator pitch
A one or two sentence description of what you do and for whom, short enough for a lift ride.

End-to-end (e2e) test
An automated test that drives a real browser like a user would.

Endpoint
One URL an API answers, like /users/octocat, each doing one job.

.env file
A local file holding environment variables and secrets; never committed to Git.

Environment variable
A setting or secret the app reads at run time, kept outside the code.

Error message
The computer's description of what went wrong. Copy it exactly when asking for help.

Eval
A set of real examples with expected answers, run to measure an AI feature's quality.

Event listener
A function that runs when something happens on the page, like a click or a form submit.

Event tracking
Counting specific actions you care about, like sign-ups or bookings.

Excessive agency
When an AI feature has more tools, permissions or freedom to act than its job needs.

F

fetch
The browser's built-in way to request a URL. It returns a promise of a response; check response.ok before using it.

Few-shot prompting
Showing the AI one or more examples of what good looks like so it matches the pattern.

Figma
A popular online tool for sketching and designing app screens, often before building them.

Fine-tuning
Extra training of an existing model on your own examples to specialise it.

Flexbox
A CSS layout tool for arranging items in a row or column and spacing them out.

Foreign key
A column that holds another table's primary key, like signups.workshop_id. The database refuses values that don't exist there.

Form validation
Checking what someone typed before using it: in the browser for quick feedback, and always again on the server.

Formula
A calculation in a spreadsheet cell, like =SUM(B2:B10).

Framework
A ready-made structure and toolkit for building apps.

Front end
The part of an app people see and touch: pages, buttons, forms.
The dining room of a restaurant.

Function
A named, reusable recipe in code that takes inputs and can return an output.

Funnel
The steps people take toward a goal, and how many drop off at each step.

G

Game loop
The code that updates and redraws a game many times a second: move things, check hits, draw.

Gemini
Google's AI assistant and models, also built into Gmail, Docs and other Google apps.

Generative AI
AI that creates new text, images, audio, video or code.

Git
Free software that tracks every change to a folder of code.

GitHub
A website that hosts Git repositories online for backup, sharing and teamwork.

GitHub Copilot
GitHub's AI assistant for code, including a coding agent that opens pull requests.

.gitignore
A list of files Git must never save, such as .env secrets.

Google Business Profile
A free listing that shows a business on Google Search and Maps.

H

Hallucination
A confident AI answer that is false or made up.

Honeypot field
A form field hidden from people. Spam bots fill it in, so anything that arrives with it filled is ignored.

Hook (React)
A React function whose name starts with use, like useState or useEffect, that adds a feature to a component.

Hosting
Renting always-on computers so your site or app is reachable by anyone.

HTML
The language for a web page's structure: headings, paragraphs, buttons, images.

HTTP method
The verb of a web request: GET reads, POST creates, PATCH or PUT updates, DELETE removes.

HTTP status code
A number a server sends back: 200 OK, 401 not signed in, 403 not allowed, 404 not found, 500 server error.

HTTPS / SSL
Encryption between visitors and your site, shown by the padlock.

Human in the loop
A person approves important steps before they happen.

I

IDE / code editor
The app you write and read code in, such as VS Code or Cursor.

Indentation
Spaces at the start of a line. In Python they show which lines belong inside an if, a loop or a function.

Indirect prompt injection
Instructions hidden in content an AI reads, like a web page, email or file, that try to take over what it does.

Inference
Using a trained model to get an answer. Every chat message is an inference.

Integration / plugin
A connection between two apps so they can share data or actions.

Issue
A tracked to-do, bug report or idea in a repository.

Iteration
Improving something in small rounds: try, check, adjust, repeat.

J

Jailbreak
A prompt designed to make an AI ignore its safety rules; a kind of prompt injection.

JavaScript
The programming language that makes web pages interactive.

JOIN (SQL)
Combines rows from two tables that share a value, like orders and the customers who placed them.

Join table
A table that links two others in a many-to-many relationship, like signups linking members and workshops.

JSON
A simple text format for data that apps send to each other: names and values in curly braces.

JSX
HTML-like tags written inside JavaScript, which React turns into elements on the page.

K

Key (React lists)
A unique, stable id on each item in a list, so React can tell the items apart between renders.

Keyboard navigation
Using a site with Tab, Enter, Space and Escape instead of a mouse.

Knowledge base
Documents an AI agent can look up, like your FAQ, policies or price list.

L

Label (forms)
The visible name of a form field, linked to it with for and id. Clicking it focuses the field; screen readers read it.

Landing page
A one-page site that explains an offer and asks for one action.

Lazy loading
Waiting to load images or code until they're about to be needed, so the first view loads faster.

Lead
A person or business who might become a customer.

Least privilege
Give each person, app or AI only the access its job needs.

Licence (software license)
The rules for what others may do with code, images or fonts: use, change, share or sell.

Lighthouse
A free tool in Chrome's developer tools that scores a page's speed, accessibility and more, with fixes.

LLM (large language model)
A model trained on huge amounts of text that reads and writes language by predicting what comes next.

Local storage
A small store in the browser where a site keeps data on your device, like your study progress.

Localhost
Your own computer acting as the server while you build, e.g. localhost:3000.

Lockfile (package-lock.json)
Records the exact version of every installed package, so every computer installs the same. Commit it.

Logs
Records of what happened during a build or while the app ran, including errors.

Loop
Code that repeats for each item in a list or until something changes.

Lovable
A prompt-to-app builder that creates full web apps from chat, with hosting and Supabase integration.

M

Machine learning
Building software that learns patterns from examples instead of following only hand-written rules.

Magic link
A one-time sign-in link sent to your email, so there's no password to remember.

Make
A visual automation tool for complex, branching workflows.

Markdown
A simple way to format text with symbols, like # for headings. READMEs use it.

MCP (Model Context Protocol)
An open standard for plugging AI apps into tools and data. 'USB-C for AI.'

Media query
CSS that applies only on some screens, such as @media (min-width: 768px) for tablets and wider.

Merge
Combine one branch's changes into another.

Merge conflict
Two branches changed the same lines; someone decides which to keep.

Metric
A number you track to know if something is working.

Migration
A saved, ordered script that changes the database structure.

Milestone
A checkpoint in a project with something delivered, often tied to a payment.

Mobile-first
Writing the phone layout first, then adding rules for bigger screens with min-width media queries.

Model
The learned result of training; you send it input and it sends back output.
GPT, Claude and Gemini model versions are models.

Multimodal
Able to work with more than text: images, audio, video or files.

MVP (minimum viable product)
The smallest version that solves the core problem well enough to use.

N

n8n
An automation tool popular with technical teams that can be self-hosted.

Native app
An app installed from the App Store or Google Play with full access to phone features.

Network panel
The DevTools panel listing every request a page makes, with its status, what was sent and what came back.

Next.js
A React framework for pages, server code and fast loading, made by Vercel.

node_modules
The folder where npm puts installed packages. It's big and npm install rebuilds it, so it stays out of Git.

Notebook (Jupyter, Colab)
A document that mixes notes and runnable code cells, with each cell's output shown underneath.

npm / package
npm is the registry of reusable JavaScript code; each reusable piece is a package.

npm script
A named command in package.json's scripts, run with npm run, like npm run dev or npm run build.

O

OAuth (sign in with Google)
Signing in through another provider, like Google or GitHub, which vouches for who you are.

Object (in code)
A group of named values, like { name: "Ada", age: 36 }.

Open source
Software whose code is public for anyone to read, use and improve under its licence.

OpenAI
The AI company that makes ChatGPT and the GPT models.

Optional chaining (?.)
Reads a property only if the thing before it exists; otherwise gives undefined instead of crashing.

P

package.json
A project's ID card: its name, its scripts and the packages it depends on, with the versions it accepts.

Passkey
A sign-in your device unlocks with a fingerprint, face or PIN; nothing reusable is typed, so it resists phishing.

Password manager
An app that creates and remembers a long, unique password for every account.

Payment Link
A no-code Stripe checkout page you can share anywhere.

Permissions
What an app or person is allowed to see or do.

Personal data
Information about an identifiable person, like names, emails or grades; follows privacy rules.

Phishing
A fake message (email, text, call or DM) that tries to get you to click, pay or share a password or code.

Pitch
A short, clear story about a problem, your solution and what you want next.

Policy (RLS)
One row level security rule, like 'users can read their own notes'.

Portfolio
A collection of real projects that shows what you can build.

Positioning sentence
One line on who you help, what result, and how: easy for customers to repeat.

Postgres (PostgreSQL)
A trusted open-source SQL database. Supabase is built on it.

PRD (product requirements document)
A plan for a product or feature: problem, users, stories, acceptance criteria and scope.

Preview
A live, working view of your app while you build it.

Preview deployment
A private, shareable copy of a branch or pull request for testing.

Primary key
The column whose value is unique for every row and never empty, usually id. Other tables use it to point at that row.
Like a library card number: names repeat, card numbers don't.

Privacy policy
A page telling people what data you collect, why, and what you do with it.

Production
The live version real users see.

Project (in an AI assistant)
A space that keeps instructions and files together for one piece of work.

Promise
An object standing in for a value that isn't ready yet. It's pending, then fulfilled with a value or rejected with an error.

Promise.all
Starts several promises side by side and waits for all of them; it fails as soon as any one fails.
`await Promise.all([getUser(), getSettings()])`

Prompt
What you give the AI: instructions, a question and any material to work from.

Prompt injection
Instructions hidden in content (an email, a web page) that try to hijack an AI.

Prompt-to-app builder
A browser tool that builds, previews and often hosts an app from your chat description.
Lovable, Bolt, v0, Replit.

Proposal
A short document with the client's goal, scope, timeline, price and next step.

Props
The inputs passed into a React component.

Prototype
A rough early version made to test whether an idea works.

Pull request (PR)
A request to merge one branch into another, with review and checks.

Push / pull
Send your commits to GitHub / bring others' commits down.

PWA (progressive web app)
A web app that can be installed to a phone's home screen and work partly offline.

Python
A popular programming language that reads almost like English, used for data, automation, AI and teaching.

Q

Quantifier (regex)
How many times the part before it may repeat: ? zero or one, * zero or more, + one or more, {3} exactly three.

R

RAG (retrieval-augmented generation)
Having an AI look up relevant documents first, then answer using them, to reduce made-up answers.

Rate limit
The most requests or tokens a key may use in a period, such as per minute.

React
The most popular JavaScript library for building interfaces from components.

README
The front page of a repository: what it is and how to run it.

ReDoS
Regular expression denial of service: a pattern that takes so long on certain text that it freezes the program running it.

Regex flags
Letters after a regex that change its rules: g finds every match, i ignores case, m works line by line.

Regression
Something that used to work and broke after a change.

Regular expression (regex)
A small pattern language for finding or checking text, like /\d{5}/ for five digits in a row.

Replit
An online coding workspace with an AI agent that builds, runs and deploys apps.

Repository (repo)
A project folder plus its full change history.

Reproduce (a bug)
Make a bug happen on purpose with exact steps, so you can prove a fix works.

Responsive design
Layouts that adapt to any screen size, from phone to desktop.

Retainer
A monthly fee for ongoing updates and support.

Retention
Whether people keep coming back after their first visit.

Revert
Undo a change by going back to an earlier working version, often a Git commit.

Rollback
Switching production back to an earlier deploy when a release goes wrong.

Rotate (a key)
Replace a secret with a new one and revoke the old one.

Route handler
Server code that answers requests to a URL in your app, like route.ts for /api/hello in Next.js.

Row
One item in a table, like one user.

Row level security (RLS)
Database rules that decide which rows each user may read or change.

S

Sales pipeline
A tracked list of leads and where each conversation stands.

Same-origin policy
The browser rule that stops a page on one site from reading responses from another site.

Sanitiser (HTML)
A tool, such as DOMPurify, that strips anything that could run as code out of HTML before you show it.

Scope
The agreed list of what you'll deliver, and what's not included.

Scope creep
Extra requests that sneak in without changing the price or timeline.

Screen reader
Software that reads a page aloud and lets people navigate without seeing the screen.

SDK
A ready-made code library that makes a service's API easy to use from your language.

Secret
Anything that grants access: passwords, API keys, service keys.

Selector (CSS)
The part of a CSS rule that picks which elements to style, like h1 or .button.

Semantic versioning (semver)
Version numbers as MAJOR.MINOR.PATCH: patches fix bugs, minor versions add features, major versions can break things.
^4.2.1 accepts any 4.x from 4.2.1 up, but not 5.0.0.

SEO (search engine optimisation)
Making pages that clearly answer what people search for, so they're found.

Server
A computer (usually in the cloud) that runs your app's back end and answers requests.

Serverless function
Back-end code the host runs on demand, without you managing a server.

Service role key
Supabase's secret key that bypasses RLS. Server only, never in the browser.

Session
Proof you've signed in, usually a token in a cookie, sent with each request until it expires.

Sitemap
A file listing a site's pages so search engines can find them.

Slopsquatting
Publishing a package under a name AI tools tend to make up, so people who install the AI's suggestion get the attacker's code.

Social engineering
Tricking people (not computers) into giving access, money or information, often with urgency or fear.

SPF, DKIM and DMARC
DNS records that prove email really comes from your domain and tell inboxes what to do with fakes.

Spreadsheet
A grid of rows and columns for data and calculations, like Google Sheets or Excel.

Sprite
A small image or character that moves around in a game, like the player or a falling star.

SQL
The language for asking a database questions and changing it.

SQL injection
When text someone typed is glued into a SQL query and changes what it does. Parameters prevent it.

STAR method
A way to answer interview questions: Situation, Task, Action, Result.

State
Data a component or app remembers and updates, like what's in a cart.

Storage bucket
A folder in file storage for images, PDFs and uploads, with its own access rules.

Streaming
Showing an AI reply word by word as it's generated instead of waiting for the end.

Stripe
A payments platform that takes card payments so you never store card numbers.

Structured output
Asking a model to answer in a fixed shape, like JSON, so code can read it reliably.

Supabase
A back-end platform on Postgres with auth, instant APIs, storage, edge functions and realtime.

Supply-chain risk
Danger from the packages and tools your project depends on, including fake look-alike packages.

System prompt
Hidden standing instructions that shape every answer an AI app gives.

System prompt leakage
When an AI reveals its hidden instructions. Assume it can happen: keep secrets and rules out of the prompt.

T

Table
One kind of thing in a database, like users or orders.

Tailwind CSS
A popular way to style pages with short class names like p-4 or text-lg.

Terminal (command line)
A text window where you run commands like npm install.

Terms of service
The rules for using your app or buying from you.

Test mode
A practice mode with test cards so no real money moves.

Test plan
A list of steps a person follows with the expected result of each.

Text-to-image
Generating a picture from a written description.

The cloud
Computers in data centres you rent over the internet instead of owning.

Token
A small chunk of text (a word, part of a word or punctuation) that models read and count usage in.

Traceback
Python's error report. Read it from the bottom: the last line names the error, the lines above show where.

Training
The one-time, expensive process of a model learning from large amounts of data.

Transactional email
An email triggered by something a user did, like a receipt, reminder or password reset.

Transcription
Turning speech into text, for captions, notes and search.

Trigger
The event that starts an automation.

Two-factor authentication (2FA)
A second check at sign-in, like a code from an app, on top of your password.

Type (TypeScript)
A label for the kind of value something holds, like string, number or a User object.

TypeScript
JavaScript with types that catch mistakes before the code runs.

Typography
How text looks: font, size, weight, line length and spacing.

U

Union type
A type that allows one of several options, like "draft" | "sent" | "paid", or string | null.

Unit test
An automated check of one small piece of code, like a price function.

URL
A web address, like https://digitalbuilders757.com/university.

useEffect
A React hook that runs code after the screen updates, to stay in sync with things outside React like timers.

User research
Learning from the people who have the problem: interviews and watching them use things.

User story
A need written as: As a [user], I want [goal], so that [reason].

V

v0
Vercel's AI builder, strong at interfaces and Next.js apps, with one-click deploys to Vercel.

Variable
A named value in code, like const price = 20.

Vercel
A hosting platform for web apps that deploys from GitHub with previews for every branch.

Vibe coding
Building software mainly by describing what you want to an AI and testing the results. Coined by Andrej Karpathy in 2025.

Viewport
The visible area of the page in the browser window. On a phone it's about 375 to 430 pixels wide.

Visual hierarchy
Making the most important thing on a screen stand out most, through size, weight, colour and position.

Voice cloning
AI that imitates a specific person's voice; needs that person's permission.

W

WCAG
Web Content Accessibility Guidelines: the common standard for accessible websites.

Webhook
A URL one app calls to tell another that something happened.

Whitespace
Empty space around and between things on a screen. It makes designs easier to read.

Working directory
The folder your terminal is in right now. pwd shows it; cd changes it.

Z

Zapier
A beginner-friendly automation tool connecting thousands of apps.