Picking Your Seed Phrase Backup Medium

Analyze. Compare. Choose.

Self-Custody: The Burden of Power

Bitcoin is Amazing:

- You can be your own bank.
- You can send value anywhere, anytime.
- No one can freeze your coins.

The Price of Freedom:

- You are 100% responsible for your coins.
- There are no safety nets.
- If you lose your keys, your coins are gone.

Brain Backup: Obvious but Unreliable

The Pros:

- No medium to lose, damage, or steal.
- Instant access if recalled accurately.
- No cost or tools required.
- Total erasure upon forgetting.

The Cons:

- High cognitive burden.
- Risk of word sequence errors.
- Vulnerable to coercion ($5 wrench attack).
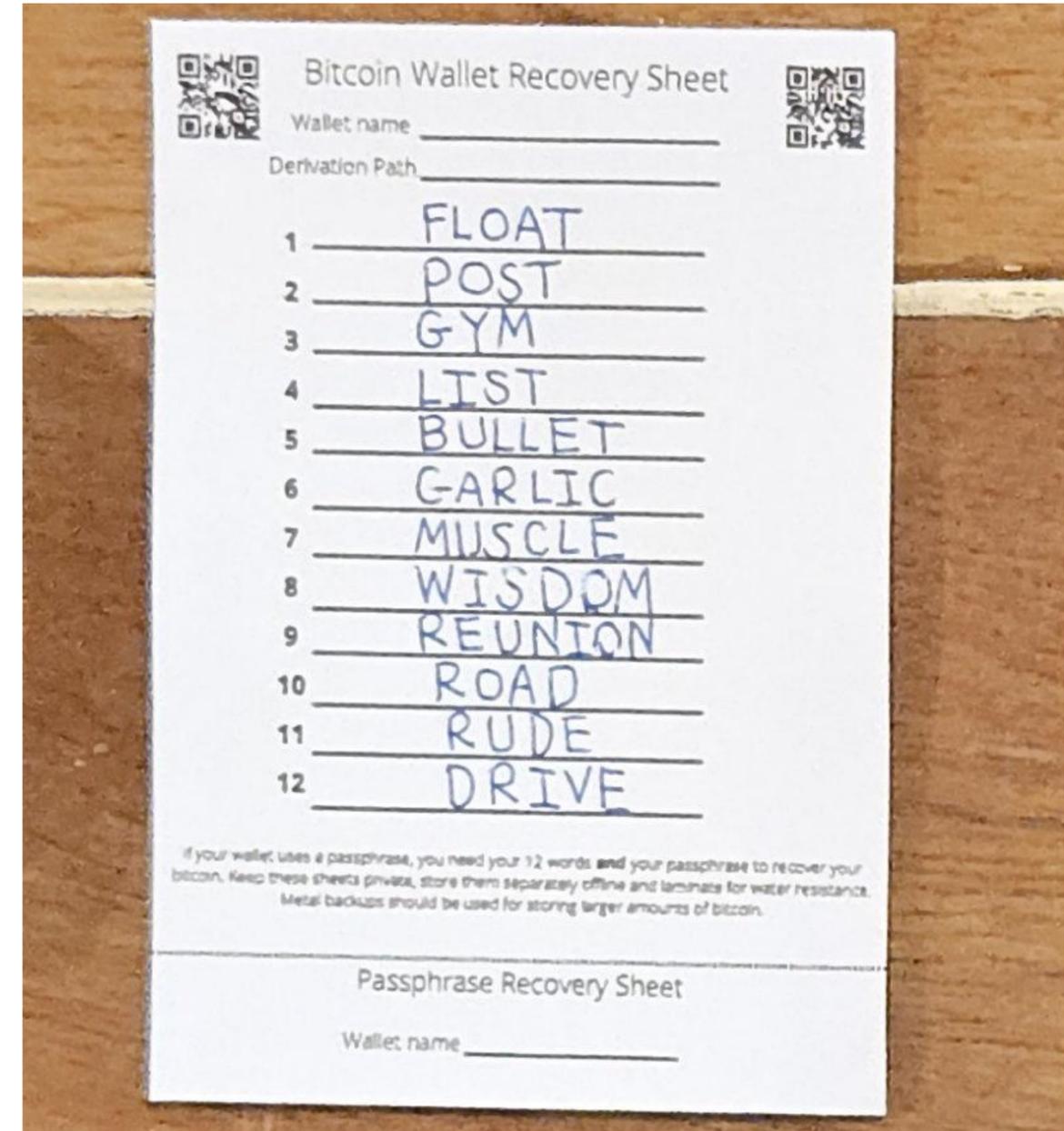- Irreversible loss if memory fails.

Paper Backup: Accessible but Fragile

The Pros:

- Simple to implement.
- Low cost.
- Easy to duplicate.
- Easy to dispose of.

The Cons:

- Vulnerable to environmental hazards.
- Susceptible to degradation over time.
- Vulnerable to digital exposure if printed.
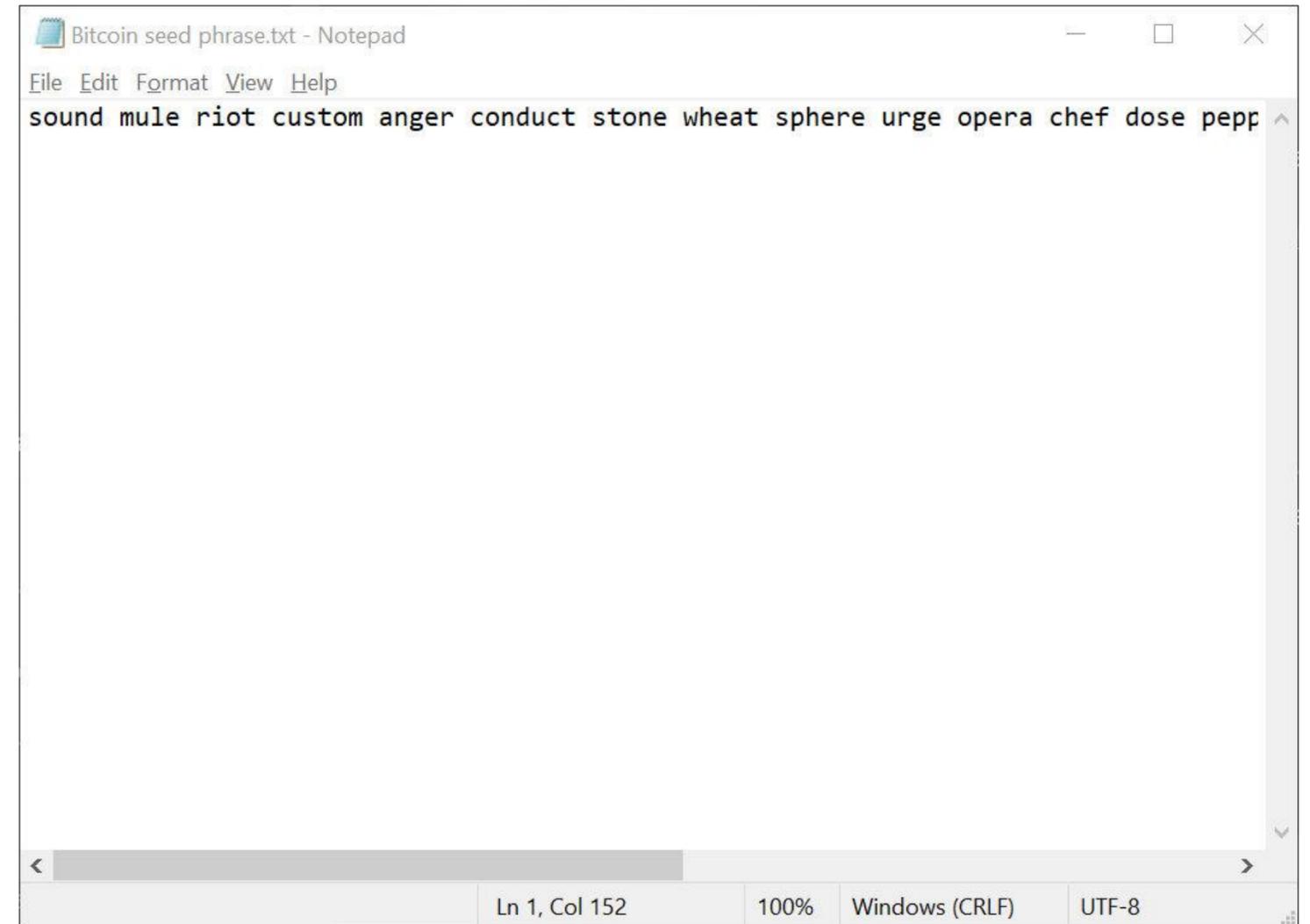- Risk of theft and loss.

Digital Backup: Convenient but Exposed

The Pros:

- Easy to store and manage.
- Simple to create backups.
- Inexpensive and fast to duplicate.
- Easy to dispose of.

The Cons:

- Vulnerable to data corruption and bit rot.
- Susceptible to hacking and malware.
- Susceptible to device failure.
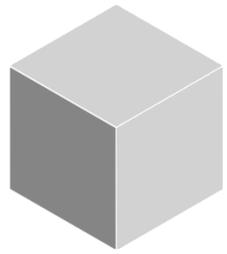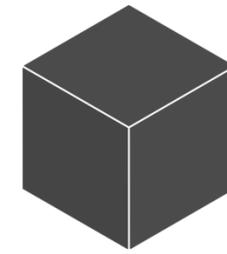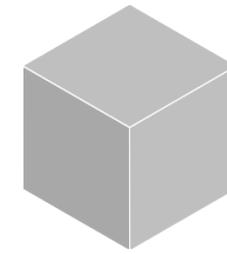- Difficult to encrypt or air-gap safely.

Metal Backup: Durable but Demanding

The Pros:

- Corrosion-resistant.
- Waterproof and fireproof.
- Long-lasting with permanent legibility.
- No risk of digital exposure.

The Cons:

- Time-consuming creation process.
- One-time use product.
- Difficult to dispose of or destroy.
- Vulnerable to theft and loss.

	Stainless Steel	Titanium	Aluminum
Resistance	●●●	●●●	●
Durability	●●●	●●●	●●
Affordability	●●	●	●●●

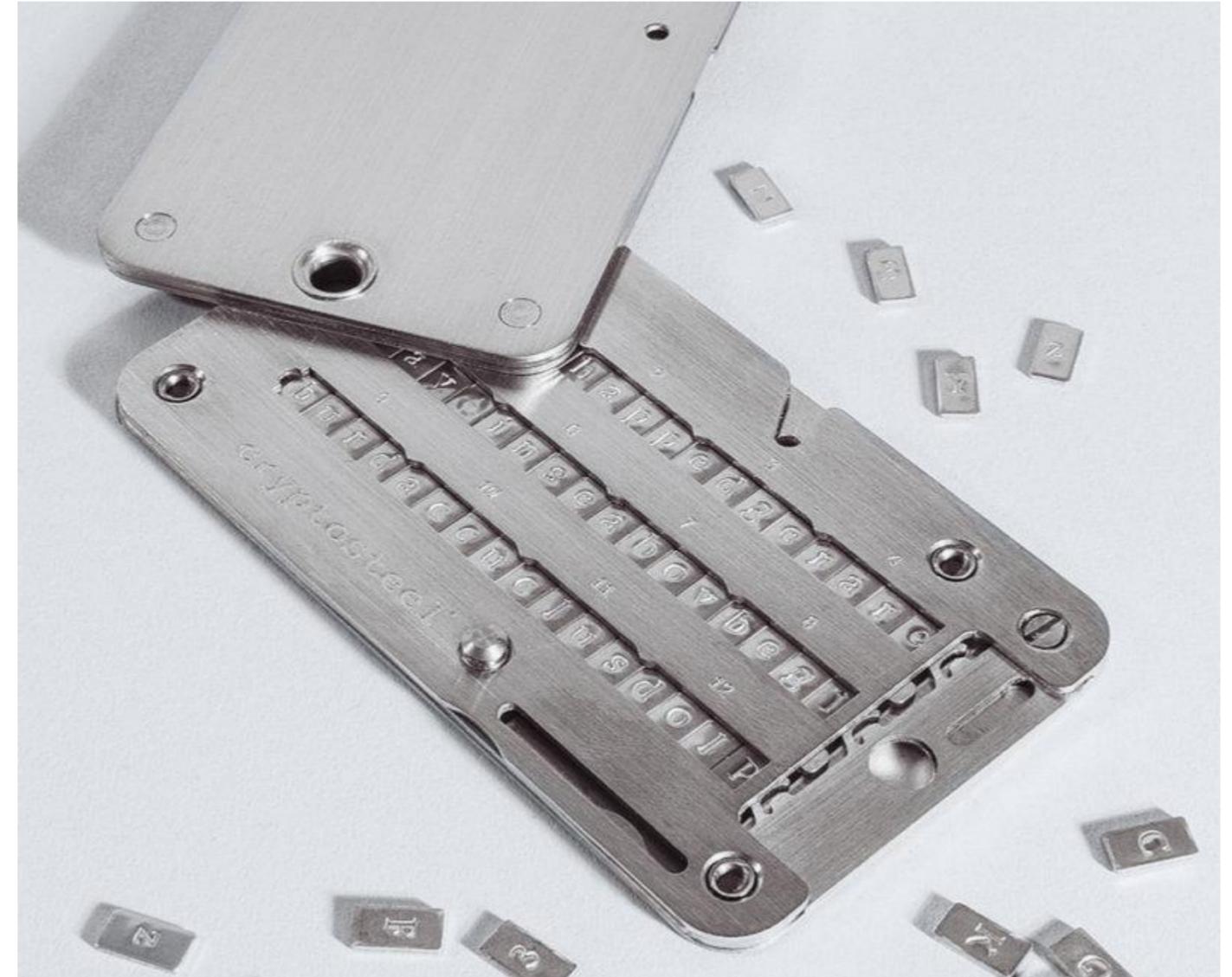● = Low   ●● = Moderate   ●●● = High

Metal Cassettes: Convenient but Complex

The Pros:

- Easy to assemble.
- No stamping or hammering required.
- No permanent mistakes.
- Easy to dispose of and reuse.

The Cons:

- Hassle process finding letters.
- Parts susceptible to corrosion.
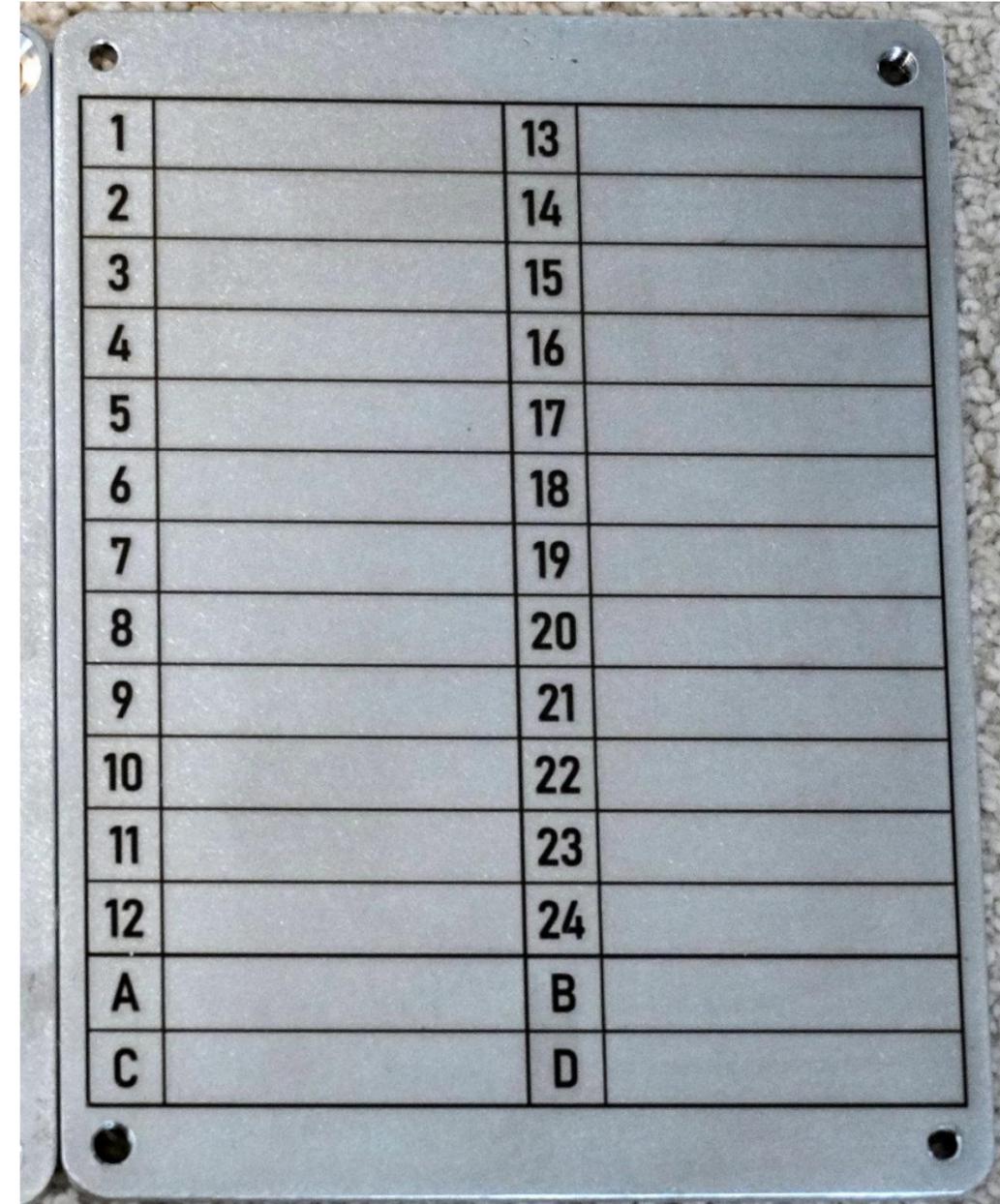- Frame vulnerable to heat and crushing.
- Expensive compared to other options.

Metal Plates: Permanent but Rigid

The Pros:

- Maximum structural integrity.
- Resistant to heat, water, and corrosion.
- No risk of seed words coming loose.
- Compact and easy to conceal.

The Cons:

- Tools and physical effort required.
- No room for error.
- Impossible to update.
- Hard to dispose of securely.
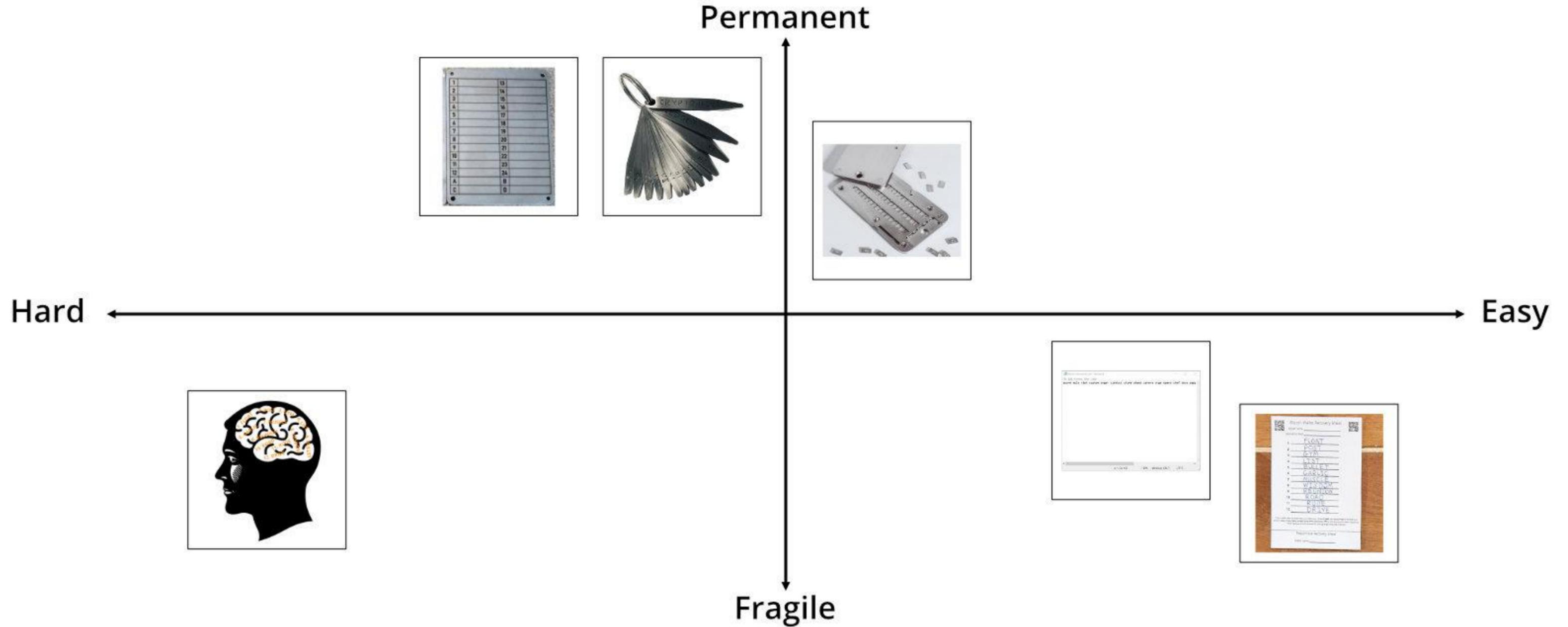
Metal Keys: Rigid but Modular

The Pros:

- Optimum structural integrity.
- Resistant to heat, water, and corrosion.
- Compact and easy to conceal.
- Easy to dispose of.

The Cons:

- Tools and physical effort required.
- No room for error.
- Impossible to update.
- Risk of losing keys if the ring breaks.
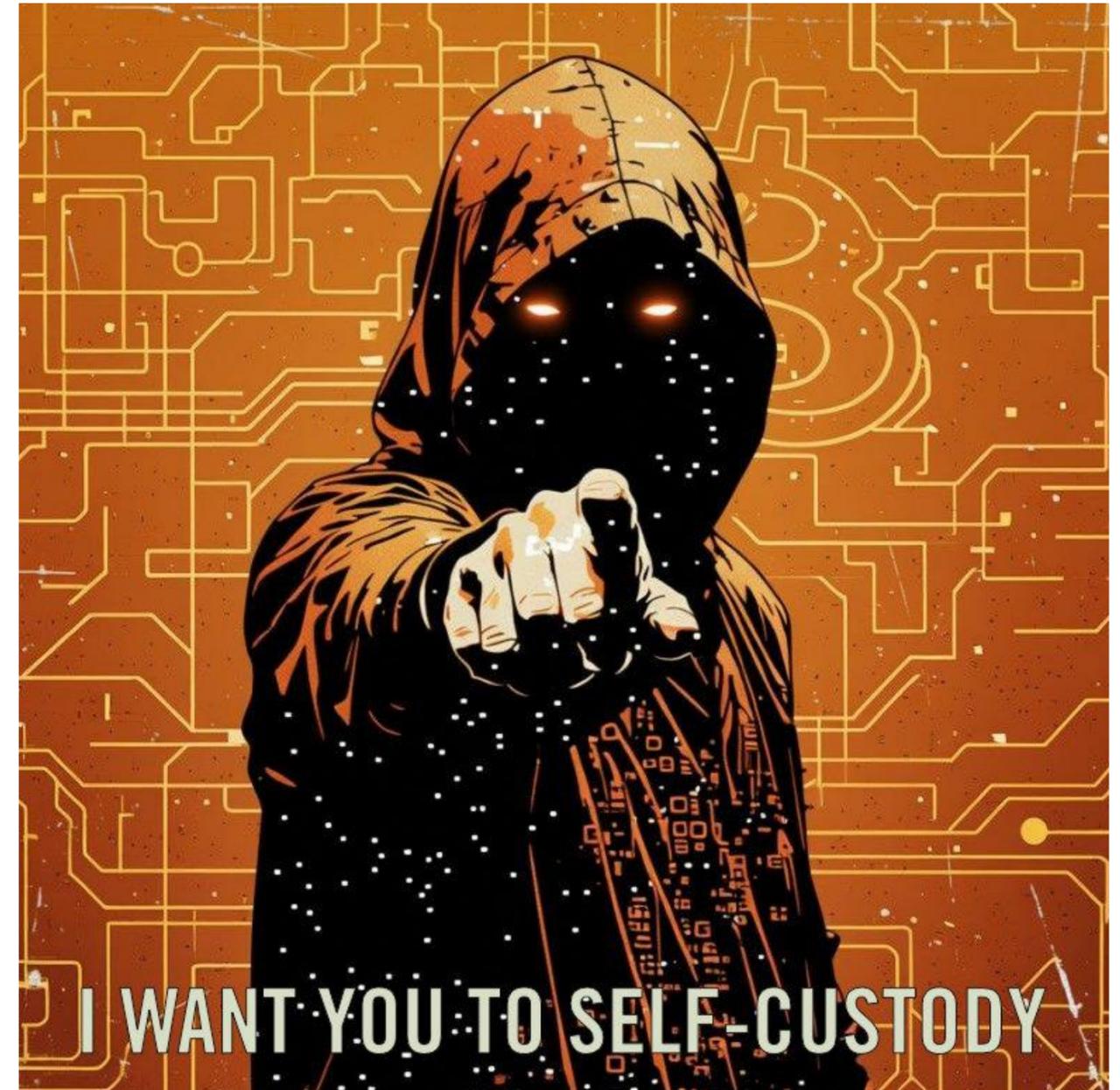
The Backup Medium Landscape

The Choice is Yours

There is no single "perfect" solution.

The right choice depends entirely on **your specific situation**.

- Consider your custody model.
- Assess your specific threat model.
- Match the medium to your mobility.
- Evaluate your storage locations.
- Plan for inheritance and human error.
- Prioritize redundancy for high value.

I WANT YOU TO SELF-CUSTODY

Questions?

Seed Keys

Marine-Grade Stainless Steel | Modular & Intuitive | Tamper-Evident

<< Shop Now

References & Further Reading

- Lopp
  - "A Treatise on Bitcoin Seed Backup Device Design" https://blog.lopp.net/a-treatise-on-bitcoin-seed-backup-device-design/
  - Cassette reviews:
    - https://jlopp.github.io/metal-bitcoin-storage-reviews//reviews/cryptosteel-cassette/
    - https://jlopp.github.io/metal-bitcoin-storage-reviews//reviews/blockstream-metal/
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  - Keys reviews:
    - https://jlopp.github.io/metal-bitcoin-storage-reviews//reviews/crypto-keys/
- Seed Keys
  - "What Is the Best Way to Store a Seed Phrase?" https://seedkeys.xyz/best-way-to-store-seed-phrase/