



How to use flamegraphs to find performance problems

About me



Structure for the first half

- ▶ Background
- ▶ How to find slow pages
- ▶ How to investigate why they are slow

Why we care about performance

- ▶ Better user experience
- ▶ Customer-facing pages: affects conversion rate
- ▶ Easiest way to measure this is to measure the drop-out rate in your sales funnel.

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Server costs

- ▶ Slow code in heavily used areas of a site = higher server costs.



Scaling

- ▶ Makes scaling under peak load more difficult

Why do we need to profile apps?



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Why do we need to profile apps?

- ▶ Realistic view of what's causing slowness
- ▶ Intuition can fail

Why do we need to profile apps?

- ▶ Realistic view of what's causing slowness
- ▶ Intuition can fail
- ▶ Unlikely to catch slowness in code review

Profilers

- ▶ What is a profiler

Profilers

- ▶ What is a profiler
- ▶ Common Ruby profilers

How to find performance problems

► Start by prioritising, then:

How to find performance problems

- ▶ Start by prioritising, then:
- ▶ Follow an elimination process to find cause of slow code

How to find performance problems

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- ▶ Follow an elimination process to find cause of slow code
- ▶ Measure results of any code change

How to find performance problems

- ▶ Start by prioritising, then:
- ▶ Follow an elimination process to find cause of slow code
- ▶ Measure results of any code change
- ▶ Raise a PR and test in production

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Prioritising areas to speed up

- ▶ What pages are both heavily used and slow

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- ▶ Of these, what would be the impact of speeding these up

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- ▶ Context of the business you're in
- ▶ Homepage / Conversion funnel / Landing pages / Payments

Prioritising areas to speed up

- ▶ What pages are both heavily used and slow
- ▶ Of these, what would be the impact of speeding these up
- ▶ Context of the business you're in
- ▶ Homepage / Conversion funnel / Landing pages / Payments
- ▶ Customer base

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Put together an ordered list

- ▶ Look at real results for real users

Examples

Type	Web
Most time consuming	
AppraisalsController#edit	11.8%
UsersController#dashboard	9.35%
OnlineJobPlansController#calendar	7.2%
OnlineJobPlansController#show	4.25%
Admin::UsersController#index	3.25%
EdocsController#create	3.04%
JustificationsController#update	2.55%
ArtifactsController#index	2.31%
Admin::UsersController#search	2.31%
Devise::SessionsController#new	2.22%
OnlineJobPlansController#activity_summary	2.16%
AppraisalsController#pdf	1.7%
OnlineJobPlansController#pdf	1.62%
EleavesController#edit	1.61%
EdocsController#download	1.6%
EdocsController#index	1.38%
JobContentsController#index	1.31%
AppraisalDatasetsController#index	1.31%
Admin...isalMonthComplianceController#index	1.05%
Admin::EdocsController#index	0.99%

Type	Web
Most time consuming	
StockCarsController#show_listing	10.7%
ShowroomController#show	10.7%
Stock...ndationsController#index	5.71%
Remot...gurationsController#show	5.12%
StockCarsController#filter_search	4.71%
LeaseDealsController#index	3.49%
Showr...ow_matching_alternatives	3.24%
Api:...figurationsController#show	3.11%
CarCo...onsController#choose_trim	2.97%
Api:...ationsController#with_price	2.78%
StockCarsController#show	2.76%
Offer...r#remote_show_promotions	2.62%
Api:...derQuotesController#create	2.16%
CarCo...nsController#choose_filters	2.04%
Api:...rderQuotesController#show	1.87%
ShowroomController#index	1.83%
Api:...mmendationsController#top	1.75%
OffersController#show	1.73%
CarCo...Controller#choose_options	1.69%
Api::V2::EnquiriesController#index	1.65%

TIME PICKER	7 days ending 04/03, 9:58	SERVICES	All servers
Type	Web		
Most time consuming			
ChopinJourneyController#handle	43.6%		
Backoffice::ChopinJourneyController#handle	13.5%		
Backoffice::RfqsController#show	13.3%		
Backoffice::PolicySegmentsController#show	5.35%		
PingController#lb_health_check	2.92%		
CI5::YourDocumentsController#show	2.28%		
Backoffice::NotesController#create	1.73%		
SearchController#index	1.29%		
Backoffice::LinkedRfqsAndPoliciesController#index	1.27%		
v6: /policies/:id/choco_quote (POST)	1.01%		

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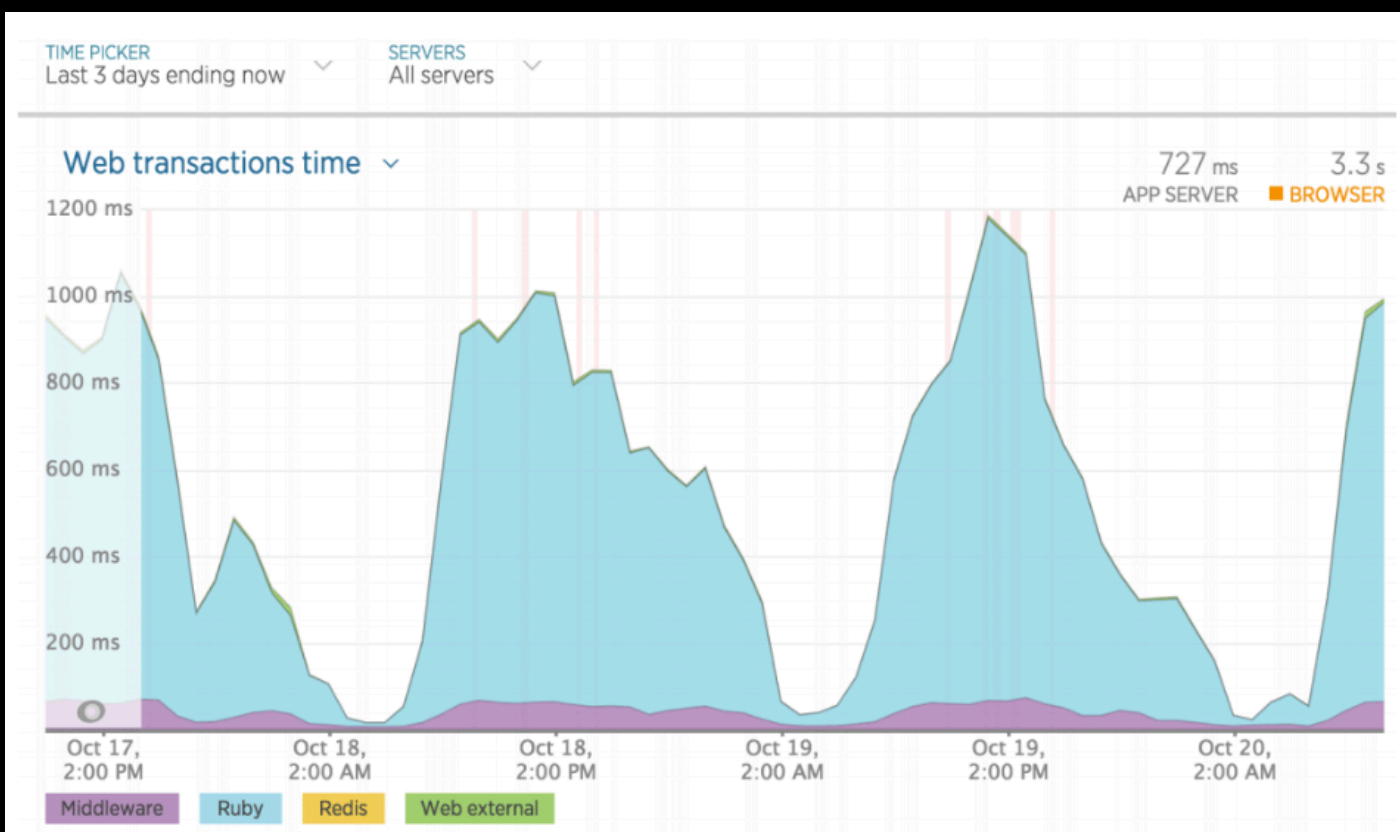
Pick your starting point

- ▶ Highest impact on product
- ▶ Consider architecture where relevant

Elimination process

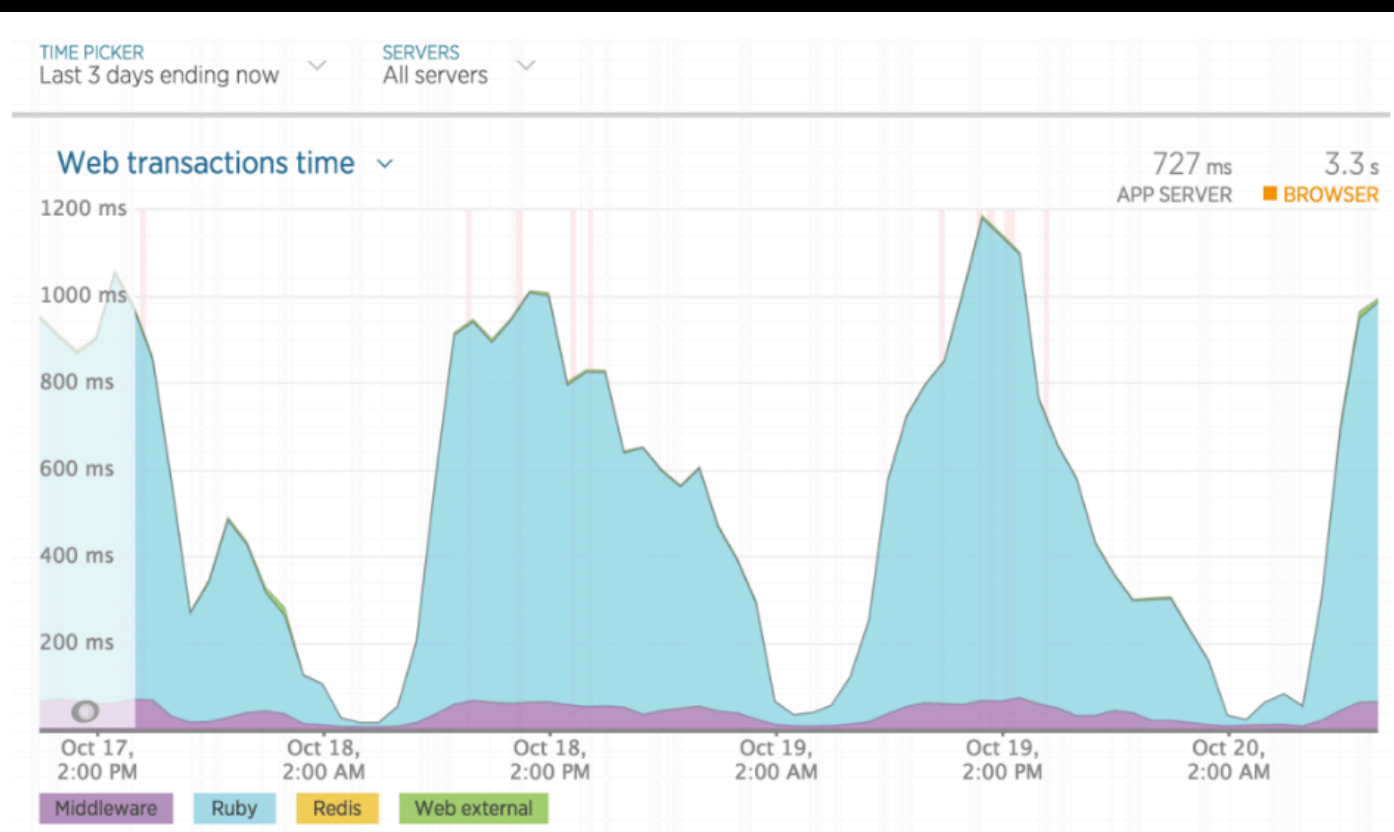
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Elimination process



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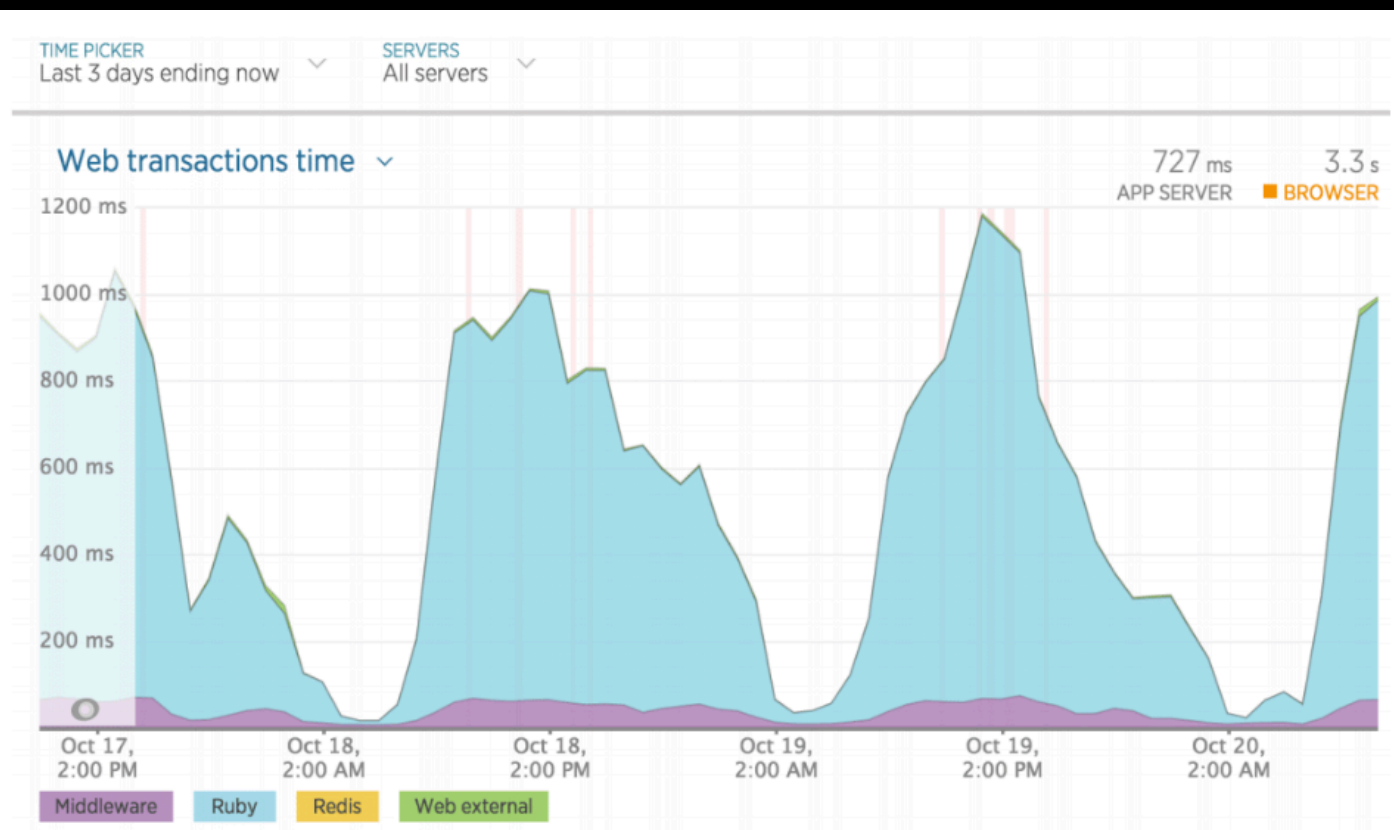
Elimination process



► Is it the frontend?

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Elimination process



► Is it the frontend?

► Is it the backend?

► Where in the backend?

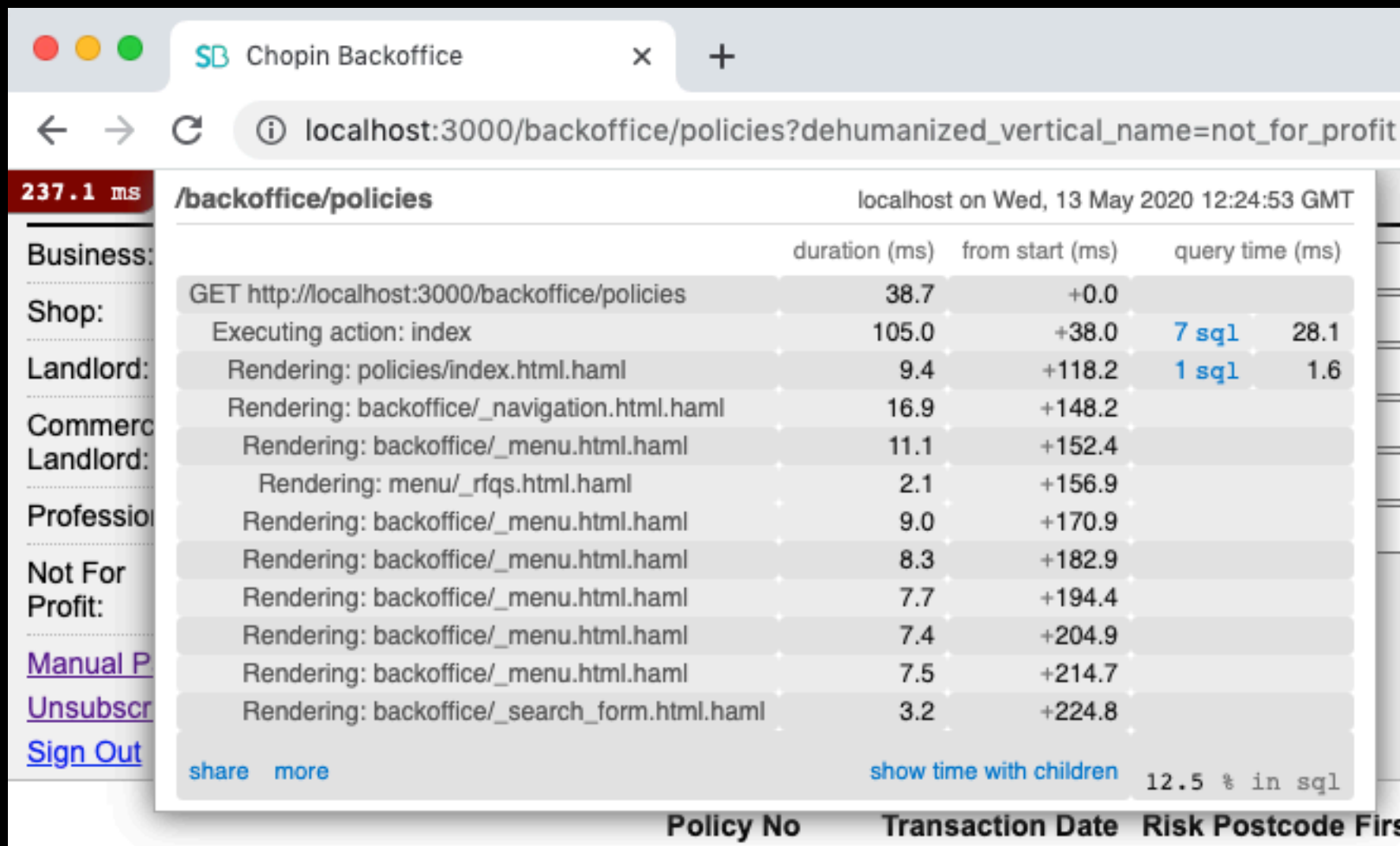
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EXERCISE 1

<http://localhost:3000>

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Rack-mini-profiler

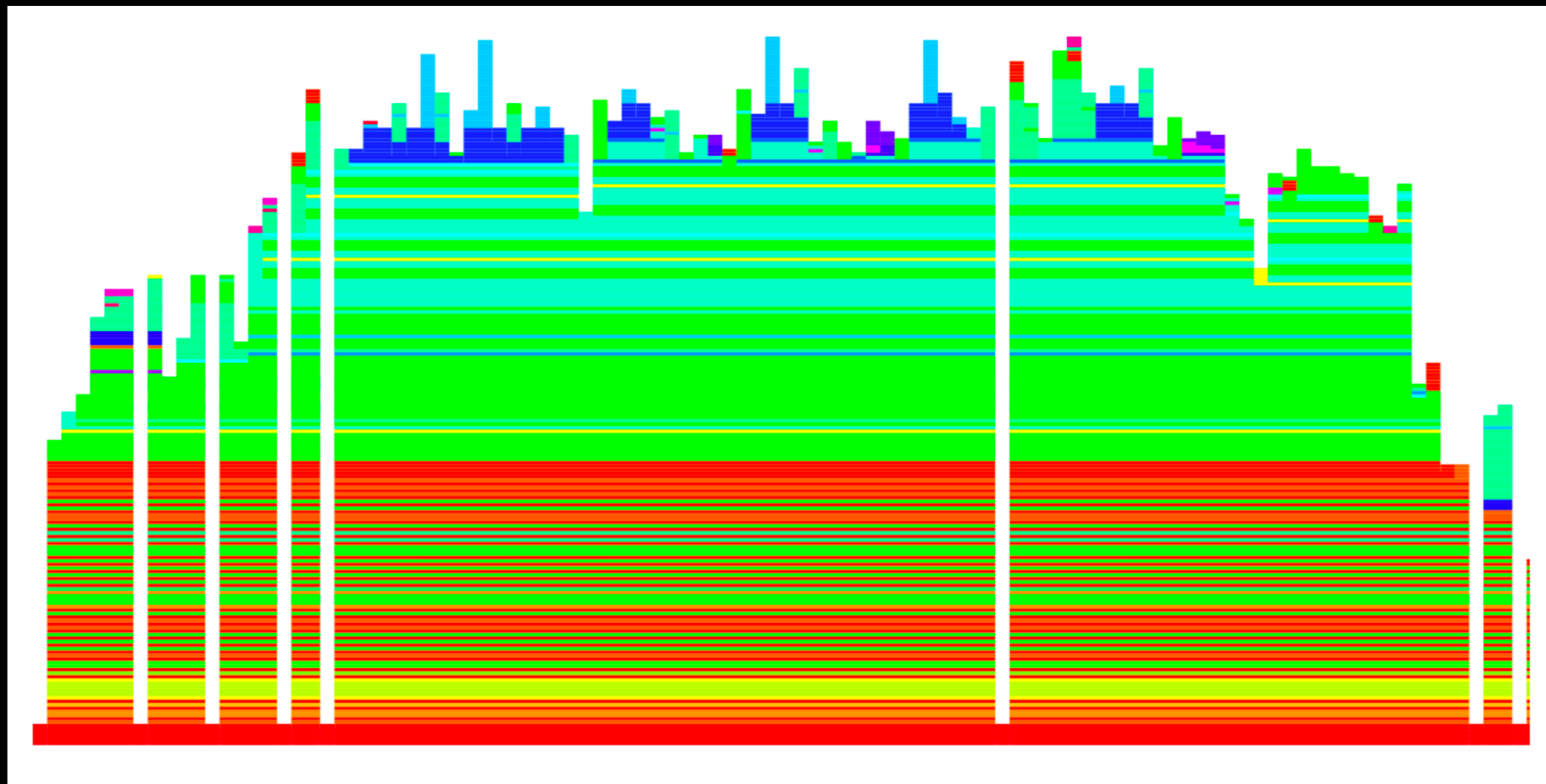


		localhost on Wed, 13 May 2020 12:24:53 GMT		
		duration (ms)	from start (ms)	query time (ms)
Business:	GET http://localhost:3000/backoffice/policies	38.7	+0.0	
Shop:	Executing action: index	105.0	+38.0	7 sql 28.1
Landlord:	Rendering: policies/index.html.haml	9.4	+118.2	1 sql 1.6
Commer	Rendering: backoffice/_navigation.html.haml	16.9	+148.2	
Landlord:	Rendering: backoffice/_menu.html.haml	11.1	+152.4	
Profession	Rendering: menu/_rfqs.html.haml	2.1	+156.9	
Not For	Rendering: backoffice/_menu.html.haml	9.0	+170.9	
Profit:	Rendering: backoffice/_menu.html.haml	8.3	+182.9	
	Rendering: backoffice/_menu.html.haml	7.7	+194.4	
	Rendering: backoffice/_menu.html.haml	7.4	+204.9	
	Rendering: backoffice/_menu.html.haml	7.5	+214.7	
	Rendering: backoffice/_search_form.html.haml	3.2	+224.8	
	share more		show time with children	12.5 % in sql

Policy No Transaction Date Risk Postcode First

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The flamegraph



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EXERCISE 2

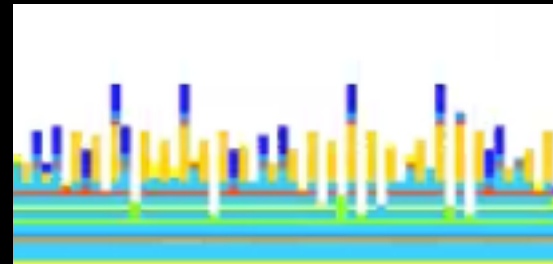
<http://localhost:3000/cohorts?pp=flamegraph>

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Patterns to look for in a flamegraph

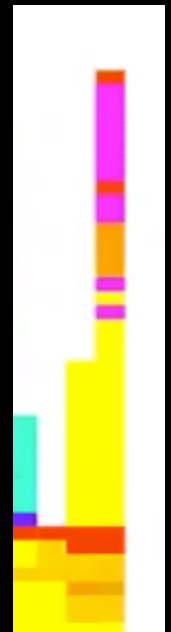
- ▶ Big horizontal section same colour

- ▶ Hedgehog spikes

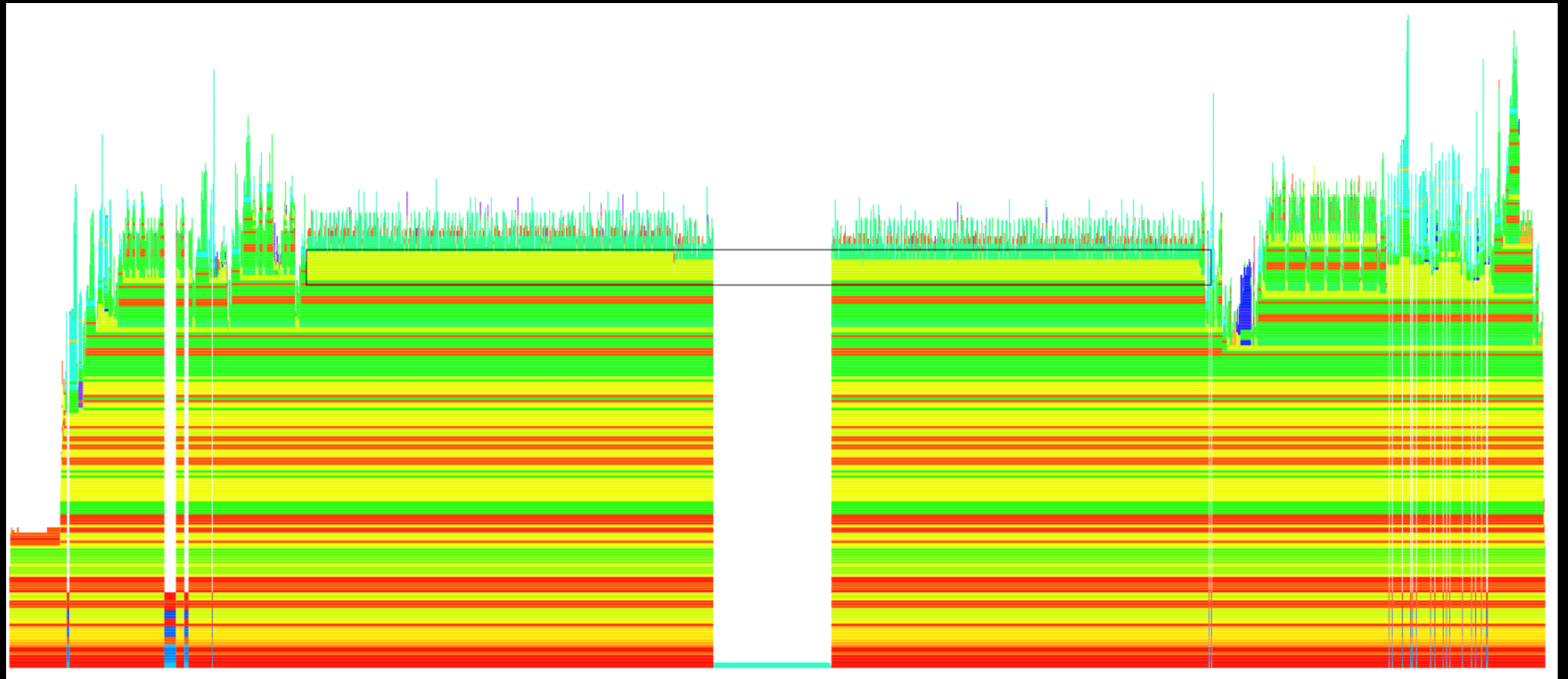


- ▶ Random peak in a different colour

- ▶ Chunk cut out of the flamegraph



Example



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EXERCISE 3

<http://localhost:3000/enclosures?pp=flamegraph>

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EXERCISE 4

<http://localhost:3000/animals?pp=flamegraph>

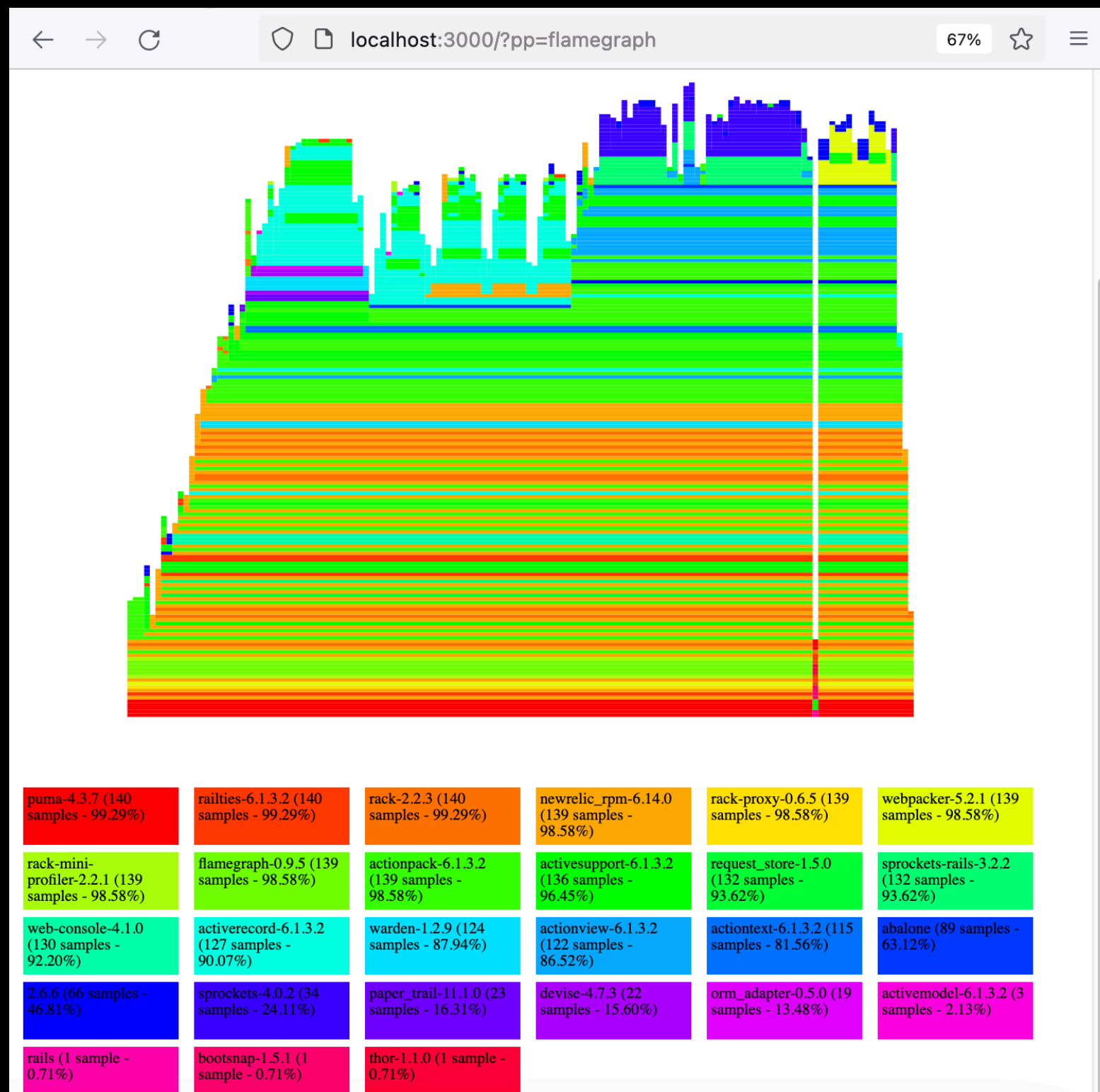
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EXERCISE 5

<http://localhost:3000/?pp=flamegraph>

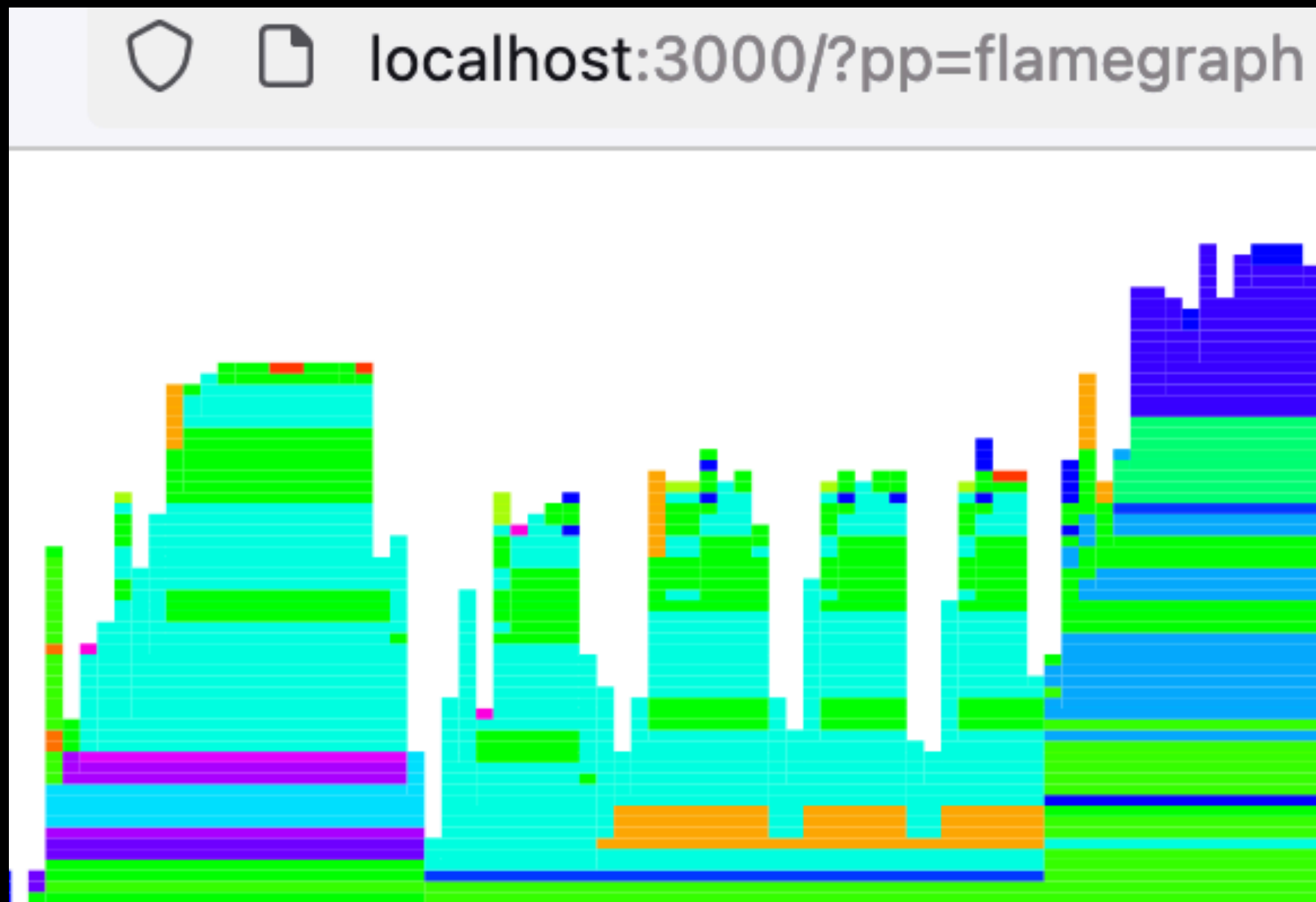
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EXERCISE 5



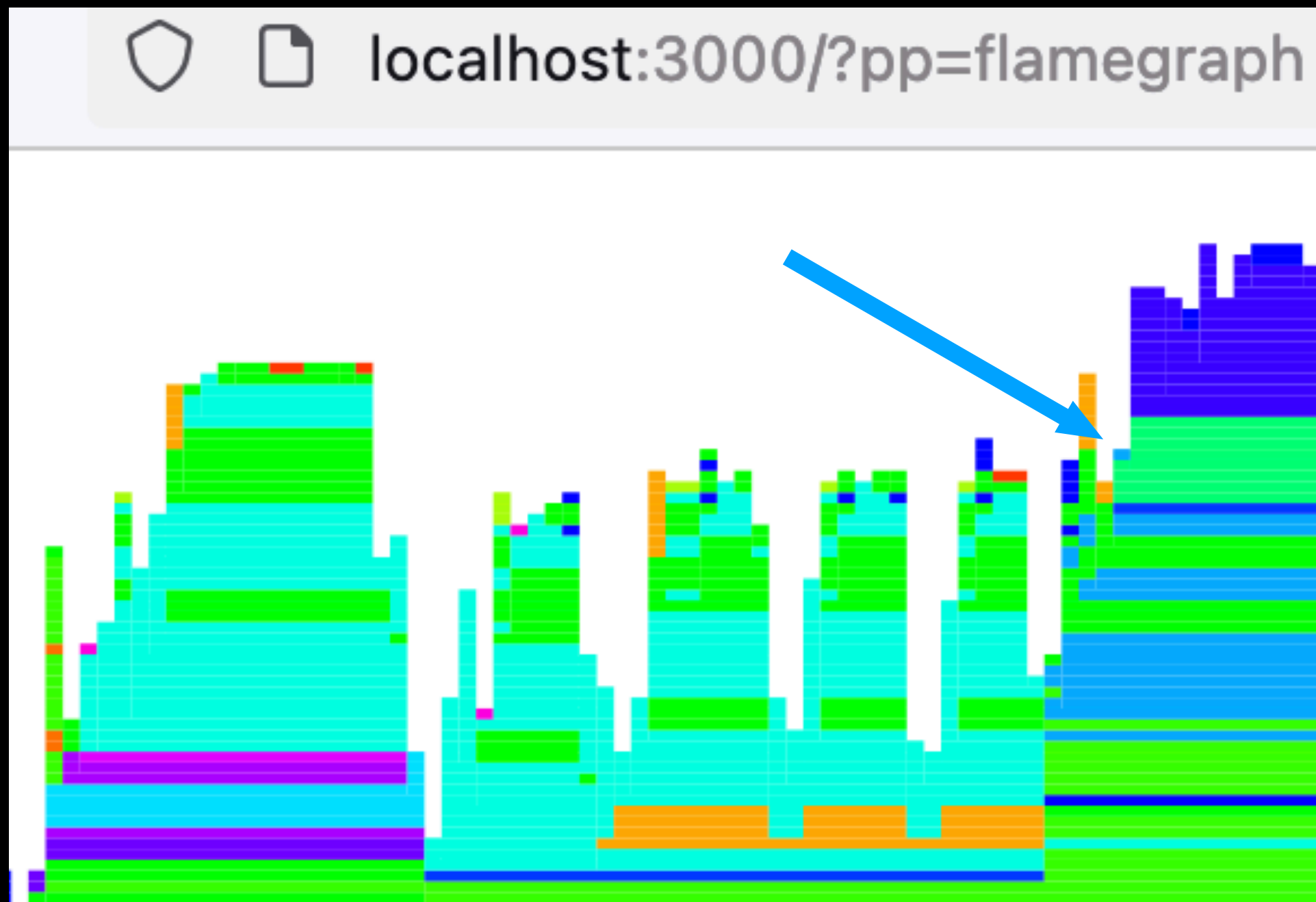
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EXERCISE 5



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EXERCISE 5



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Seeing stack traces from an individual frame

Frame Info

/Users/Jade.Dickinson/projects/chopin/app/models/vertical.rb:15:in `Vertical#questionnaire'	(1048 samples - 34.30%)
/Users/Jade.Dickinson/projects/chopin/app/models/rfq.rb:1473:in `Rfq#questionnaire'	(1124 samples - 36.79%)
/Users/Jade.Dickinson/projects/chopin/app/helpers/backoffice/rfqs_helper.rb:28:in `Backoffice::RfqsHelper#select_sof_questions'	(1127 samples - 36.89%)
/Users/Jade.Dickinson/projects/chopin/app/helpers/backoffice/rfqs_helper.rb:20:in `Backoffice::RfqsHelper#sof_answers_in_questionnaire_order'	(504 samples - 16.50%)
/Users/Jade.Dickinson/projects/chopin/app/helpers/backoffice/rfqs_helper.rb:20:in `Backoffice::RfqsHelper#sof_answers_in_questionnaire_order'	(504 samples - 16.50%)
/Users/Jade.Dickinson/projects/chopin/app/presenters/backoffice/base_rfq_presenter.rb:226:in `Backoffice::BaseRfqPresenter#all_sof_answers'	(504 samples - 16.50%)
/Users/Jade.Dickinson/projects/chopin/app/presenters/backoffice/base_rfq_presenter.rb:78:in `Backoffice::BaseRfqPresenter#rfq_details'	(1130 samples - 36.99%)
/Users/Jade.Dickinson/projects/chopin/app/views/backoffice/rfqs/_rfq_details_table.html.haml::in `ActionView::CompiledTemplates#_app_views_backoffice_rfqs__rfq_details_table_html_haml__1517135409571939764_70110887633100'	(1143 samples - 37.41%)
... actionview-5.2.4.1/lib/action_view/template.rb:156:in `ActionView::Template#render'	(2034 samples - 66.58%)
... activesupport-5.2.4.1/lib/active_support/notifications.rb:166:in `#x00007f87f70a1370>.instrument'	(2080 samples - 68.09%)
... actionview-5.2.4.1/lib/action_view/template.rb:353:in `ActionView::Template#instrument_render_template'	(2034 samples - 66.58%)
... actionview-5.2.4.1/lib/action_view/template.rb:156:in `ActionView::Template#render'	(2034 samples - 66.58%)
... actionview-5.2.4.1/lib/action_view/renderer/partial_renderer.rb:332:in `ActionView::PartialRenderer#render_partial'	(1875 samples - 61.37%)
... actionview-5.2.4.1/lib/action_view/renderer/abstract_renderer.rb:40:in `ActionView::AbstractRenderer#instrument'	(1977 samples - 64.71%)
... activesupport-5.2.4.1/lib/active_support/notifications.rb:166:in `#x00007f87f70a1370>.instrument'	(2080 samples - 68.09%)
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... actionview-5.2.4.1/lib/action_view/renderer/partial_renderer.rb:297:in `ActionView::PartialRenderer#render'	(1901 samples - 62.23%)

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The flamegraph – time spent

passenger-5.0.14 (105 samples - 99.06%)	newrelic_rpm-3.9.9.275 (97 samples - 91.51%)	rack-1.6.4 (97 samples - 91.51%)	railties-4.2.3 (97 samples - 91.51%)
rack-timeout-0.2.0 (97 samples - 91.51%)	rack-mini-profiler-0.9.3 (97 samples - 91.51%)	flamegraph-0.1.0 (97 samples - 91.51%)	hirefire-resource-0.3.4 (97 samples - 91.51%)
airbrake-4.3.0 (97 samples - 91.51%)	actionpack-4.2.3 (97 samples - 91.51%)	activesupport-4.2.3 (97 samples - 91.51%)	rack-rewrite-1.5.1 (97 samples - 91.51%)
lograge-0.3.1 (97 samples - 91.51%)	activerecord-4.2.3 (96 samples - 90.57%)	actionview-4.2.3 (91 samples - 85.85%)	SomeApp (81 samples - 76.42%)
2.2.2 (80 samples - 75.47%)	sunspot_rails-2.1.1 (79 samples - 74.53%)	blog (42 samples - 39.62%)	paperclip-4.3.0 (30 samples - 28.30%)
activerecord-session_store-0.1.1 (6 samples - 5.66%)	rails-html-sanitizer-1.0.2 (6 samples - 5.66%)	nokogiri-1.6.6.2 (6 samples - 5.66%)	turbolinks-2.5.3 (4 samples - 3.77%)
sprockets-rails-2.3.2 (4 samples - 3.77%)	loofah-2.0.2 (4 samples - 3.77%)	arel-6.0.2 (3 samples - 2.83%)	thread_safe-0.3.5 (3 samples - 2.83%)
postgres_ext-2.4.0 (2 samples - 1.89%)	(erb) (1 sample - 0.94%)		

Investigating further

app > models >  rfq.rb

```
1511
1512   def questionnaire
1513     vertical.questionnaire(web_rfq.merge({ Site: site }))
1514   end
```

app > models >  vertical.rb

```
14
15   def questionnaire(answers={}, to_merge={})
16     answer_set = answers.merge(to_merge)
17     site = { "site" => answer_set.fetch("site", "simplybusiness") }
```

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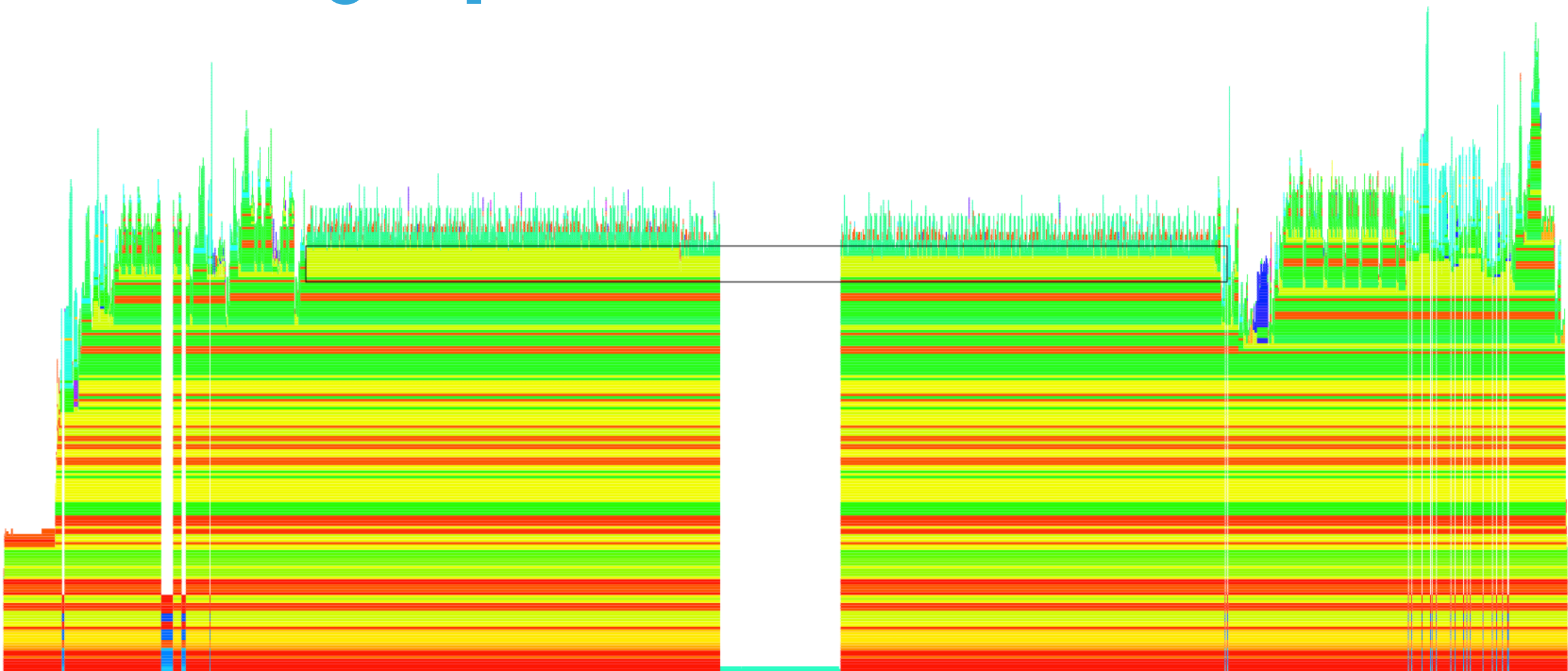
Avoiding these unnecessary calls

app > models >  rfq.rb

```
1511
1512   def questionnaire
1513     | @questionnaire ||= vertical.questionnaire(web_rfq.merge({ Site: site }))
1514   end
```

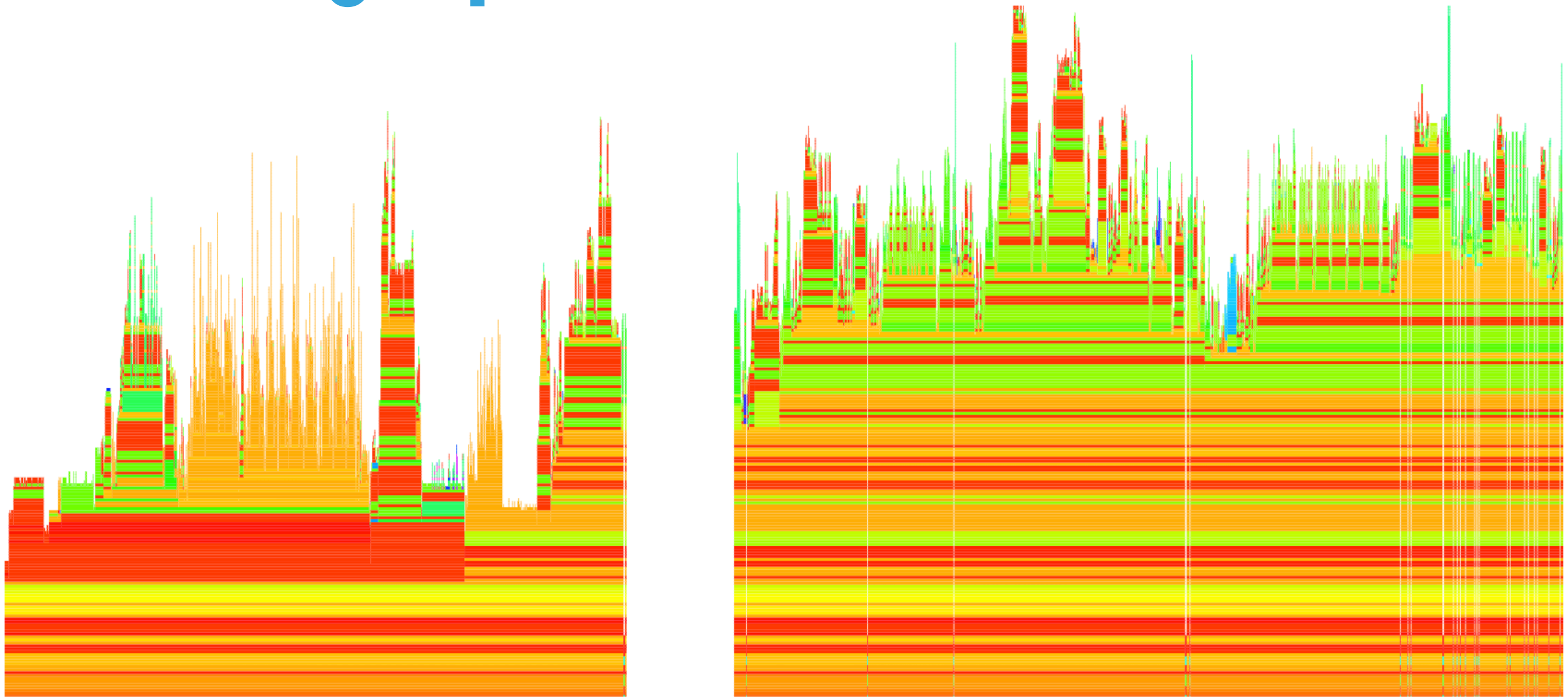
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Flamegraph before



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Flamegraph after



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Benchmarking results

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Benchmarking results

```
ab -t 30 -H 'host: localhost' -H 'Cookie:' http://127.0.0.1:3000/
```

Before

Finished 29 requests

Time taken for tests: 30.627 seconds

Requests per second: 0.95 [#/sec]
(mean)

Time per request: 1056.108 [ms]
(mean)

After

Finished 51 requests

Time taken for tests: 30.573 seconds

Requests per second: 1.67 [#/sec]
(mean)

Time per request: 599.467 [ms]
(mean)

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SECOND HALF

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Structure for the second half

- ▶ Adapting your approach
- ▶ Beyond getting your PR into prod
- ▶ Deep dive on flamegraphs



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Adapting to what stage your product is in



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Adapting to what stage your product is in

- ▶ Early stage
- ▶ Rapid growth stage
- ▶ Growth has stabilised



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Early stage

- ▶ Finding product-market fit
- ▶ Less likely to have slow pages
- ▶ Hold this advantage



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Rapid growth stage

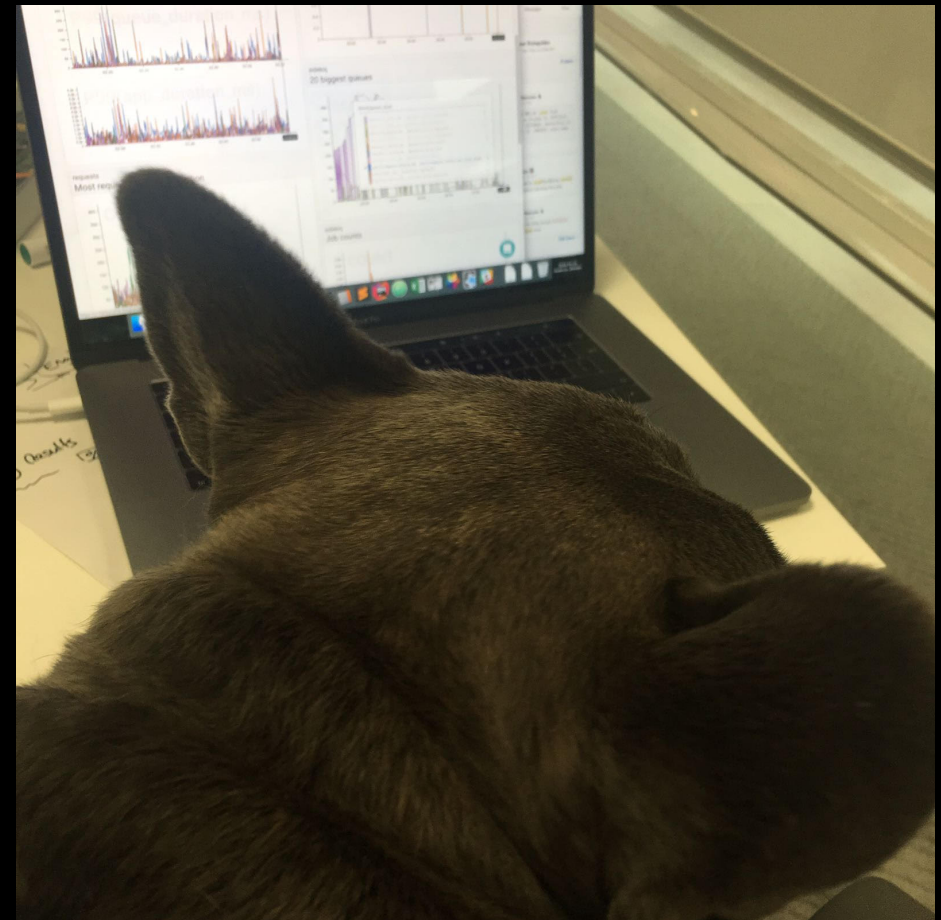
- ▶ Losing the sale
- ▶ "The site is down"
- ▶ "It takes ages to load"
- ▶ Start thinking about site reliability



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Site reliability on one slide

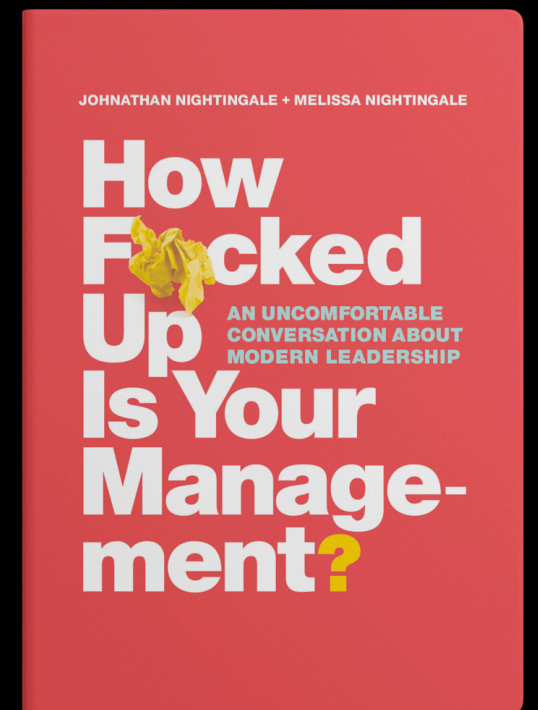
- ▶ Availability: keeping the site up
- ▶ Response times: keeping the site fast
- ▶ Proactive work: perf optimisation, plan for scale
- ▶ Reactive work e.g. major incident response
- ▶ Performance targets aka SLOs



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Growth has stabilised

- ▶ Research the competition
- ▶ Drive growth through optimisation
- ▶ Bring down your server costs



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Pushing on



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Pushing on

- ▶ Marginal gains

Pushing on

- ▶ Marginal gains
- ▶ Bringing your team along with you



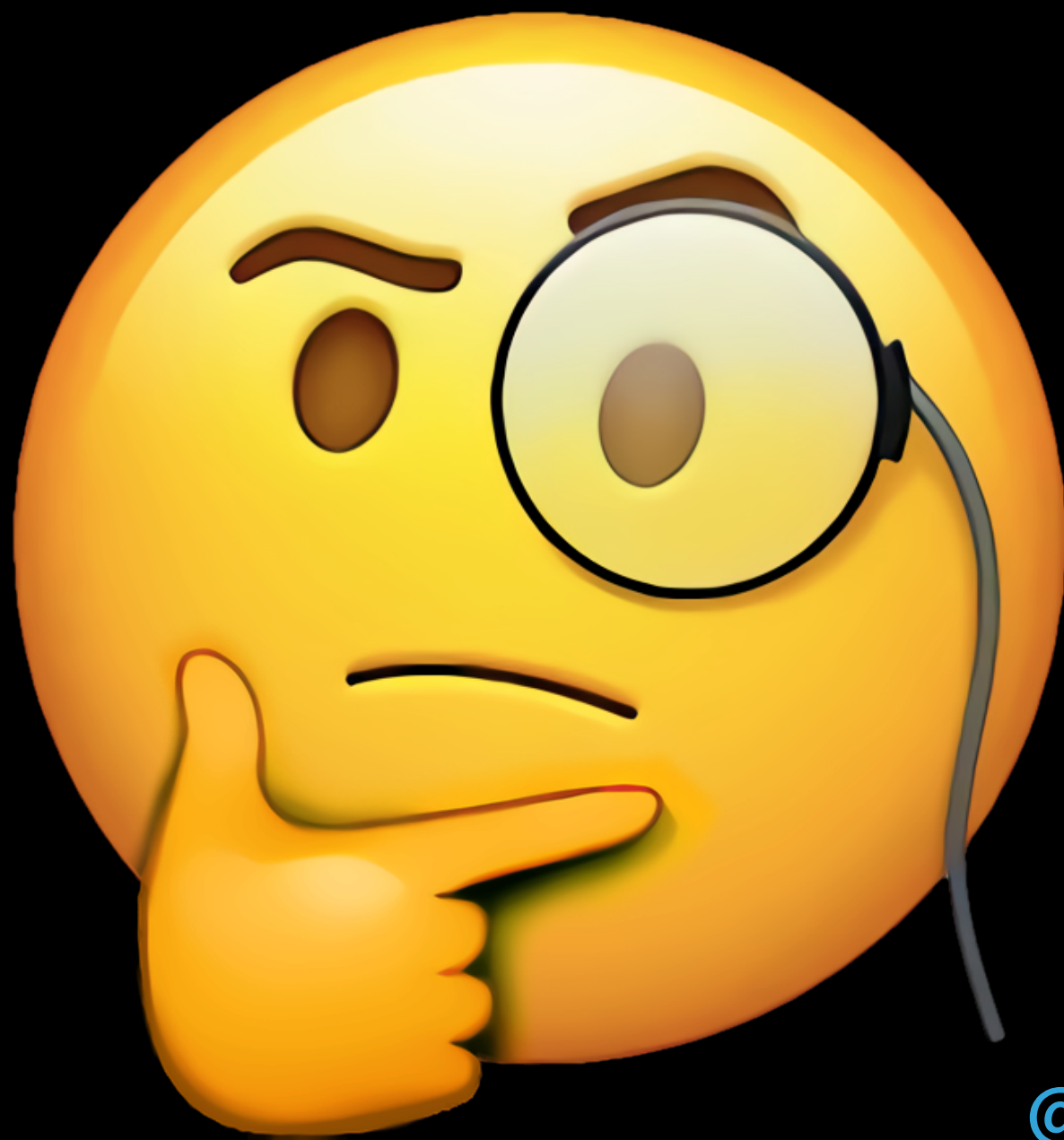
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All about flamegraphs

- ▶ Why do we need flamegraphs?
- ▶ How they were invented
- ▶ Alternatives for visualising profiles
- ▶ Profiling your own apps



Why do we need flamegraphs?



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Why do we need flamegraphs?

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... actionview-5.2.4.1/lib/action_view/renderer/partial_renderer.rb:297:in `ActionView::PartialRenderer#render'	(1901 samples - 62.23%)

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How they were invented

► Queue vol. 14
no.2, 2016 -
[https://
queue.acm.org/
detail.cfm?
id=2927301](https://queue.acm.org/detail.cfm?id=2927301)



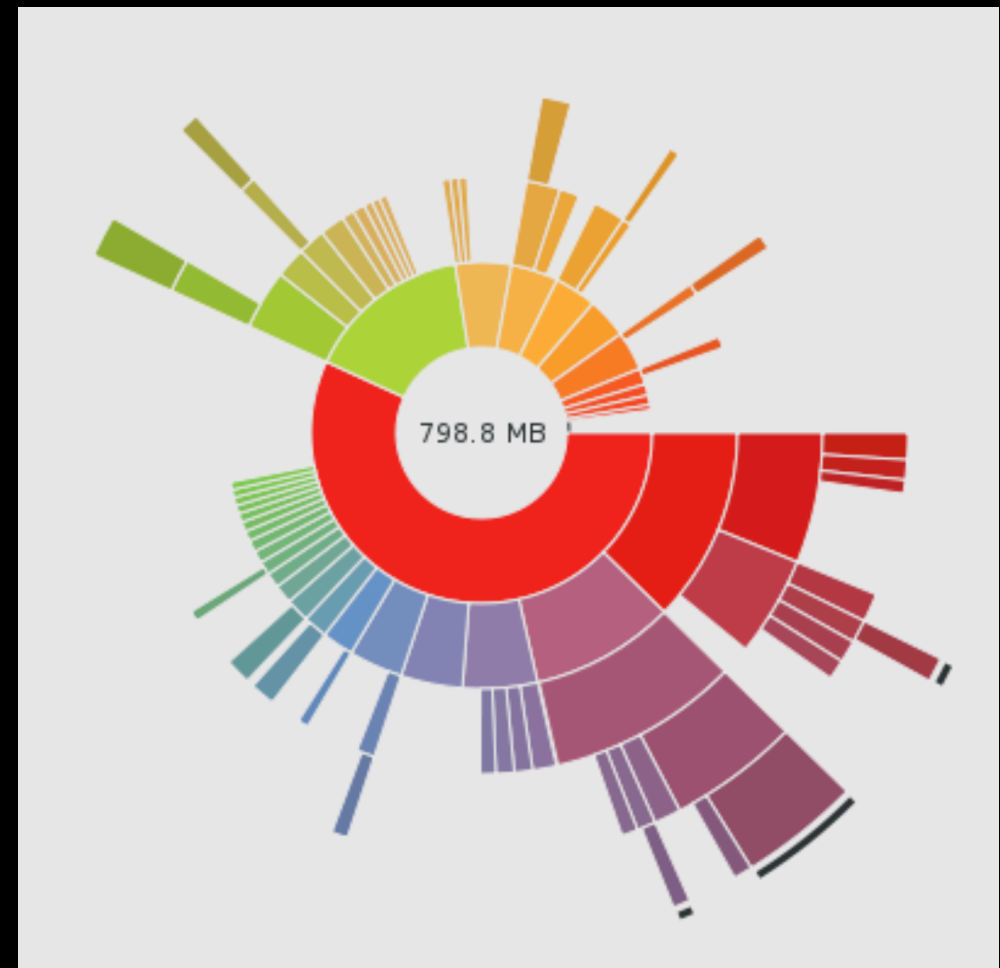
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► Profiles sorted alphabetically



Alternatives for visualising profiles

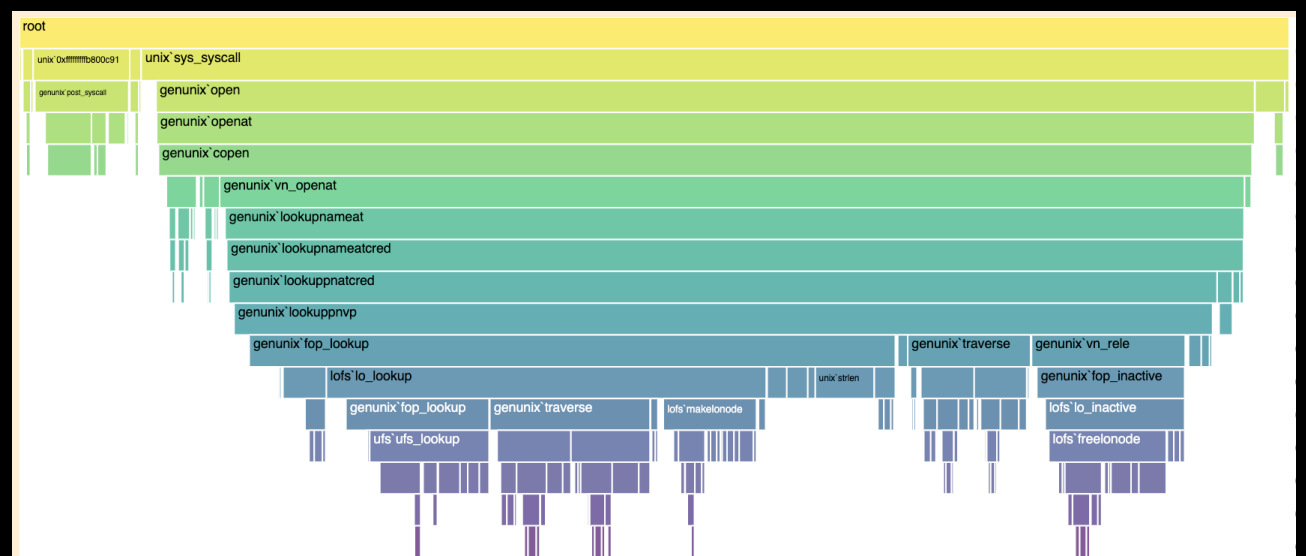
- ▶ Profiles sorted alphabetically
- ▶ Sunburst charts



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Alternatives for visualising profiles

- ▶ Profiles sorted alphabetically
- ▶ Sunburst charts
- ▶ Icicle charts



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Back to flamegraphs

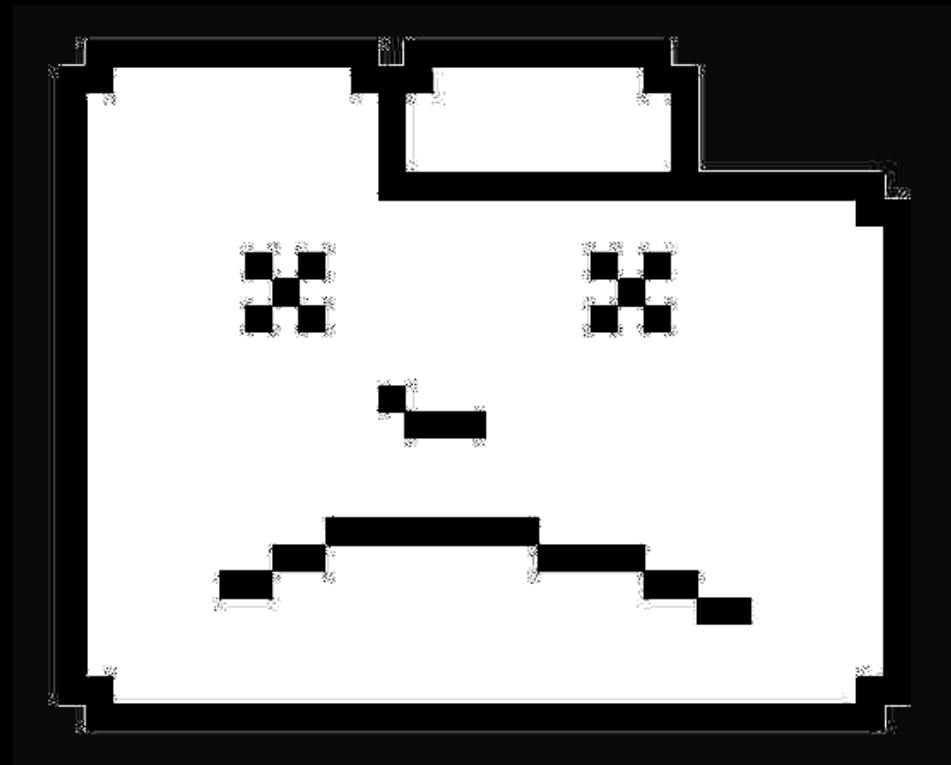
► Speedscope



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Back to flamegraphs

- ▶ Speedscope
- ▶ Why did rack-mini-profiler need a new renderer



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EXERCISE 6

\$ Control C

\$ git checkout speedscope-renderer

\$ bundle install

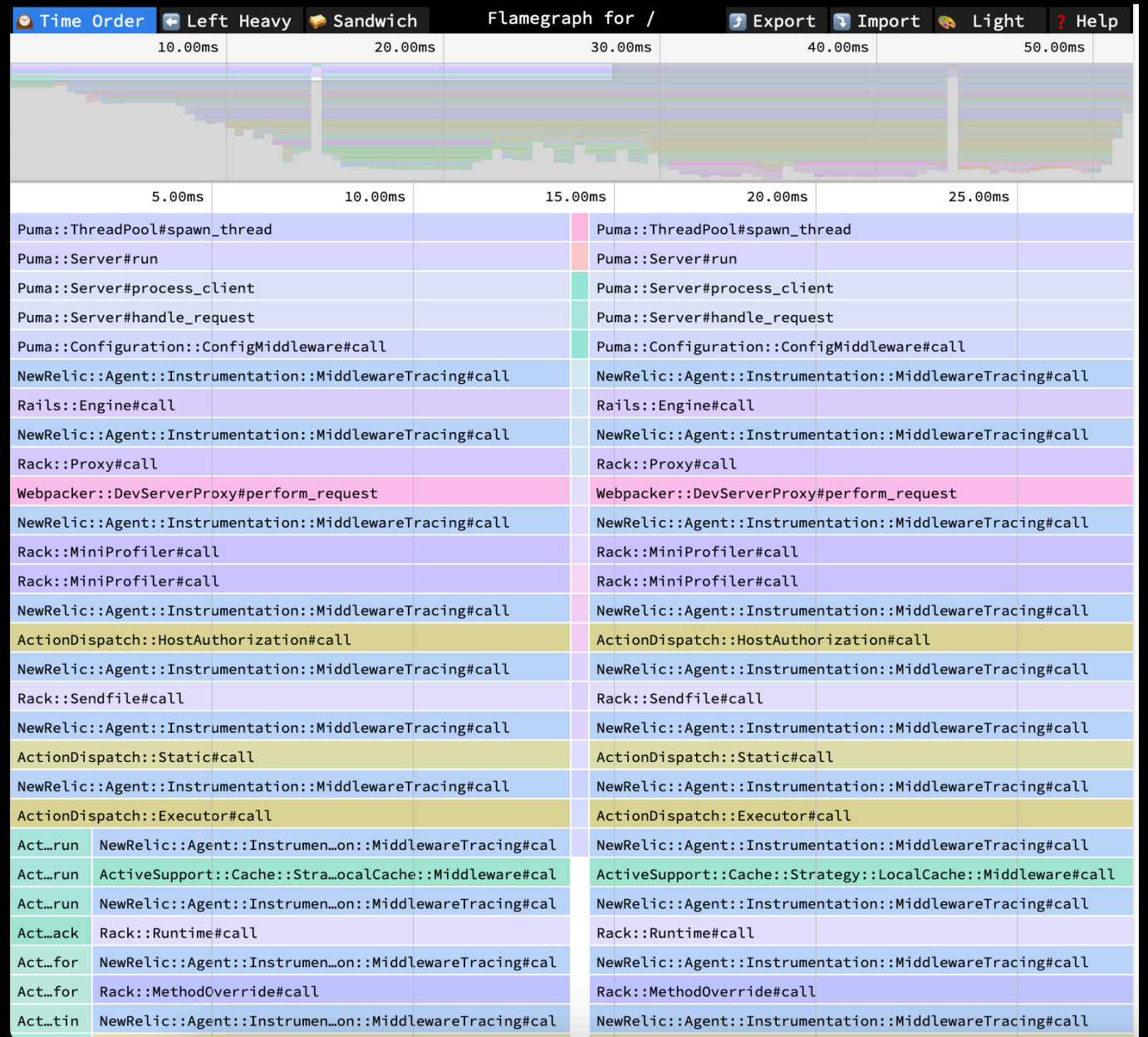
\$ bundle exec rails server

Go to <http://localhost:3000/?pp=flamegraph>

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Speedscope

► Performant for
larger profiles

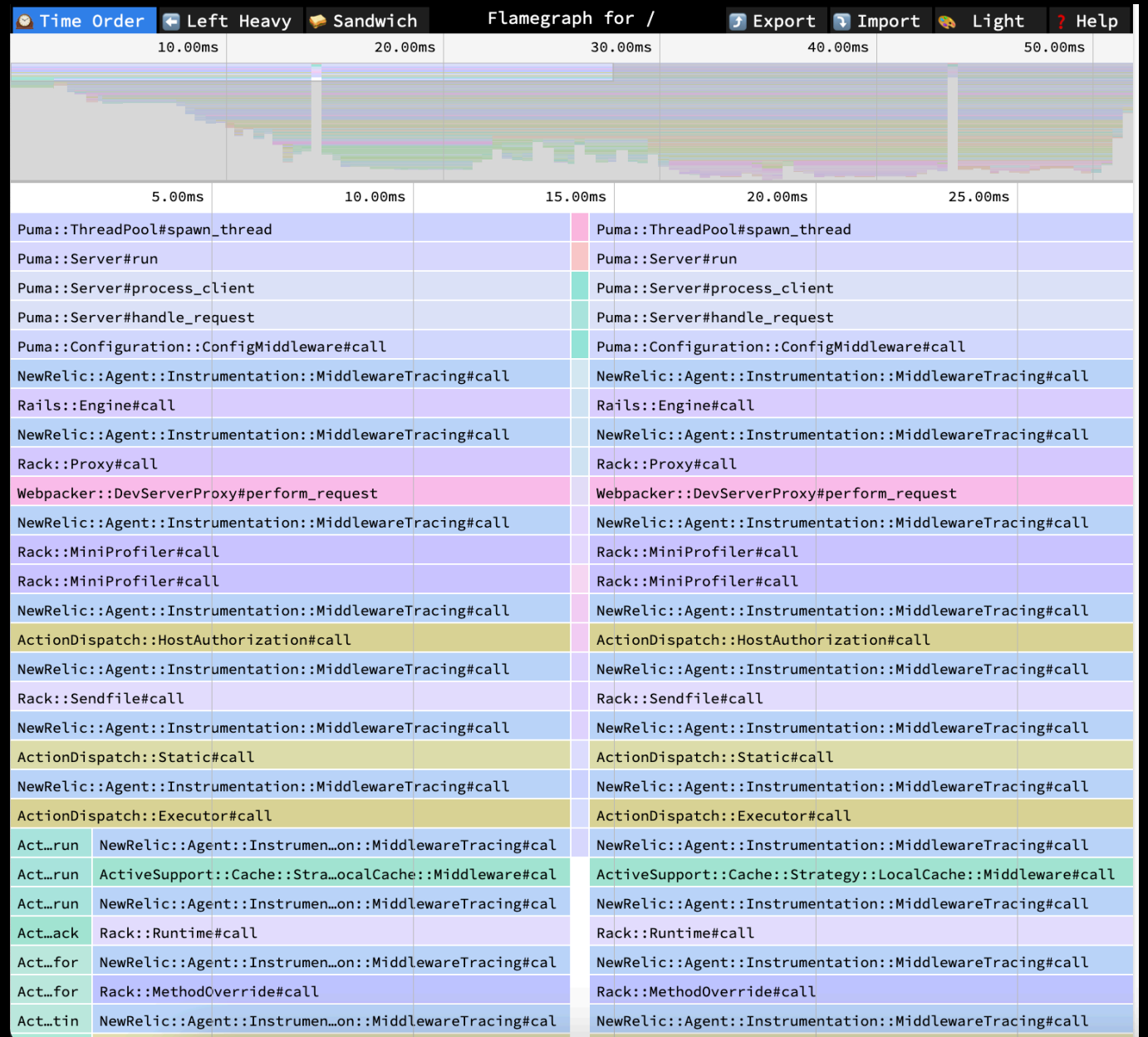


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Speedscope

► Performant for larger profiles

► Icicle layout



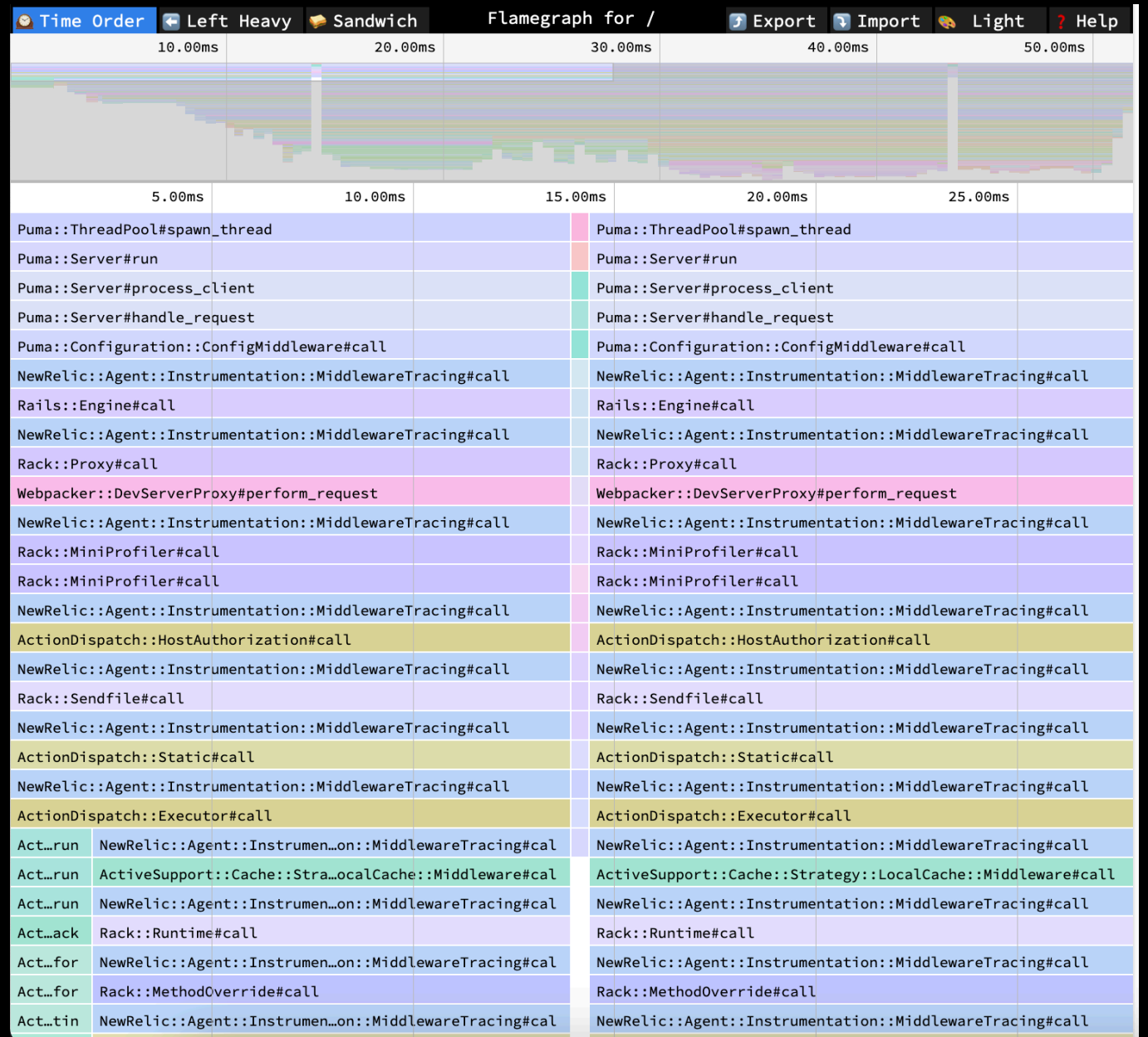
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Speedscope

► Performant for larger profiles

► Icicle layout

► Other options

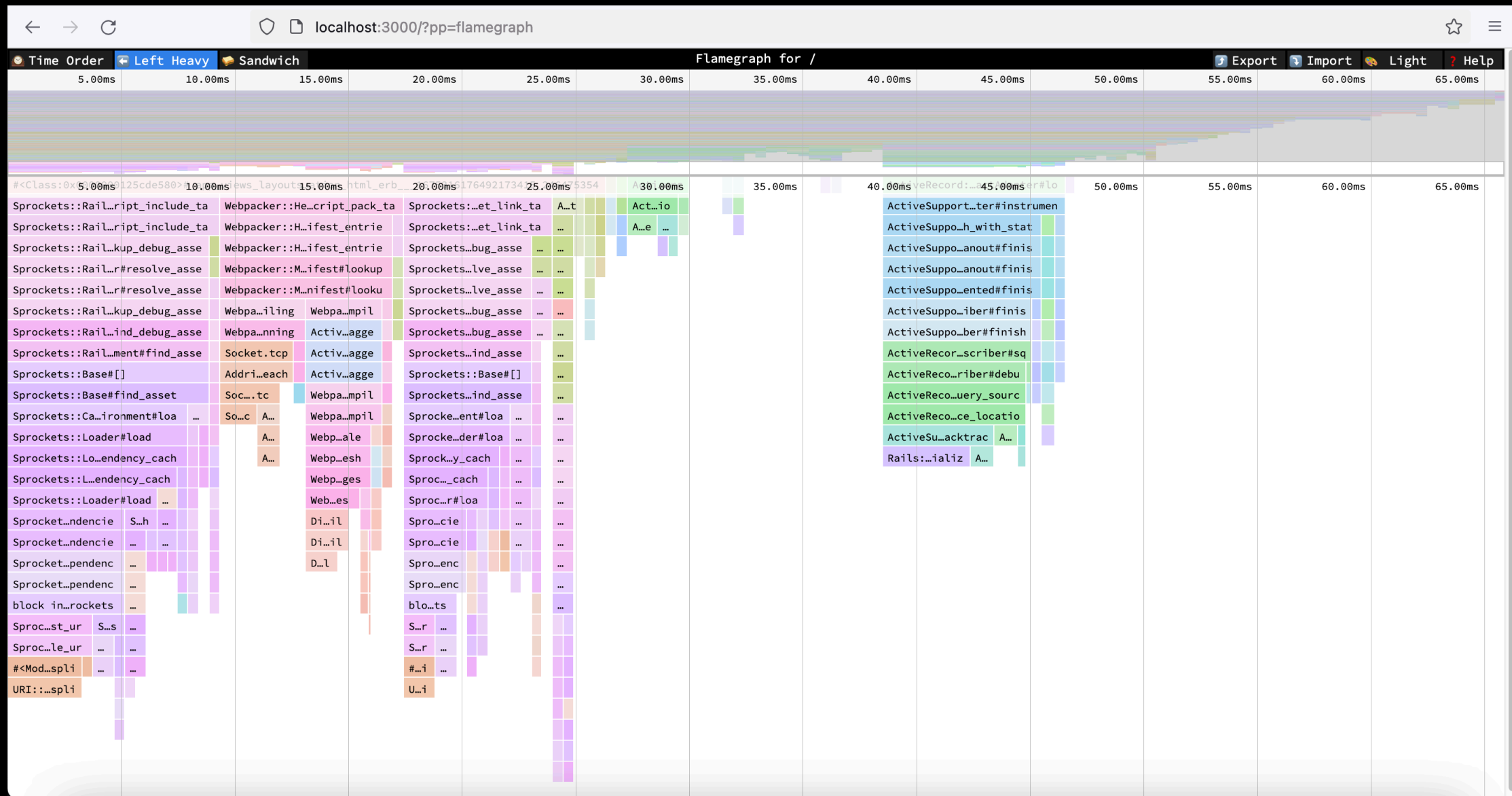


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Additional options in Speedscope

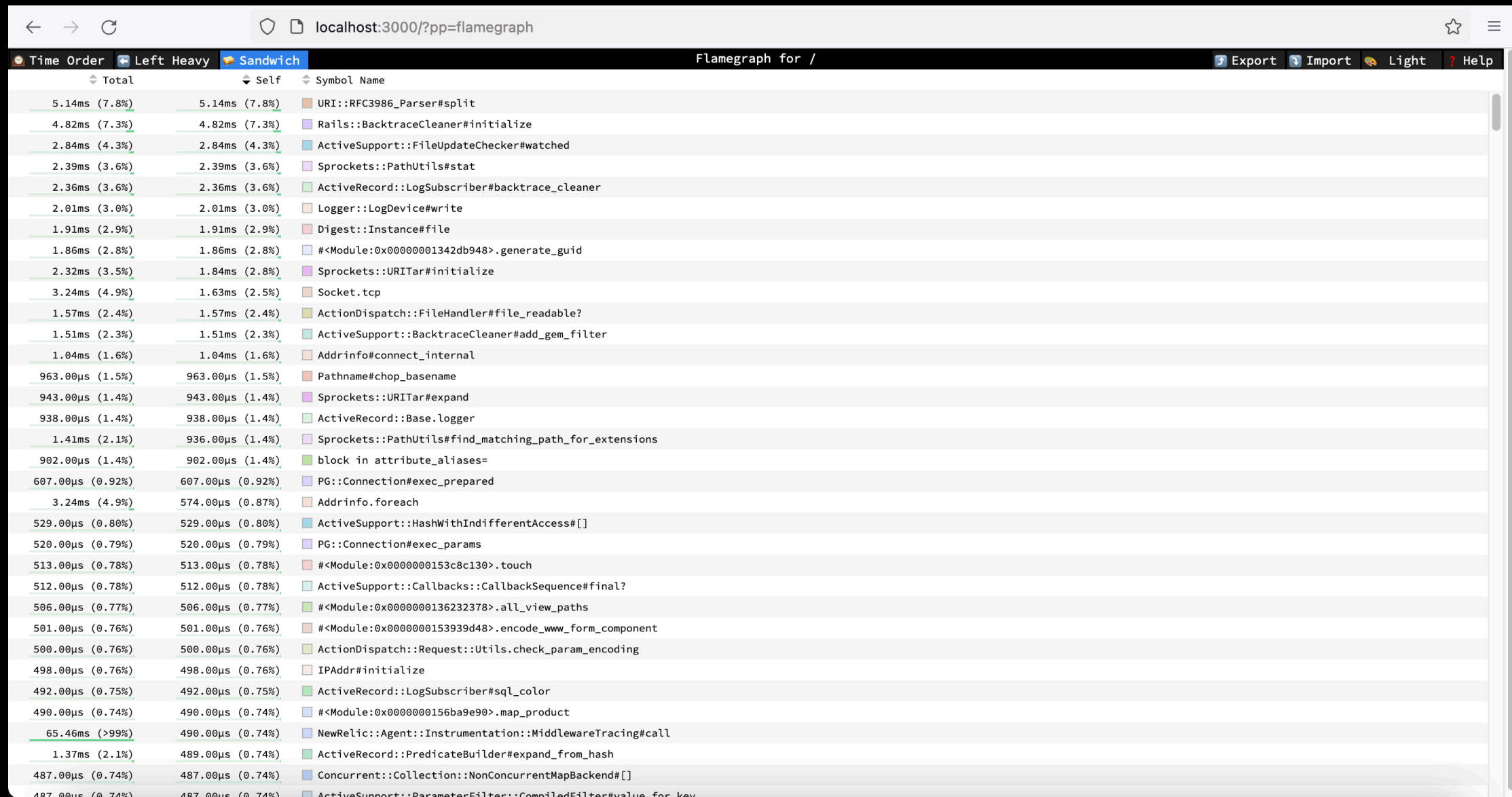
- ▶ Left Heavy
- ▶ Sandwich
- ▶ Export and import

Left heavy



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Sandwich



The screenshot shows the Sandwich flamegraph interface in a web browser. The browser address bar displays 'localhost:3000/?pp=flamegraph'. The application title is 'Flamegraph for /'. The interface includes a toolbar with 'Export', 'Import', 'Light', and 'Help' buttons. Below the toolbar, there are tabs for 'Time Order', 'Left Heavy', and 'Sandwich', with 'Sandwich' being the active tab. The main content area displays a table of execution data with three columns: 'Total', 'Self', and 'Symbol Name'. Each row represents a method call, with its total and self execution time in milliseconds and percentage. The methods are sorted by total time, with 'URI::RFC3986_Parser#split' at the top (5.14ms, 7.8%) and 'ActiveSupport::ParameterFilter::CompiledFilter#value_for_key' at the bottom (487.00µs, 0.74%).

Total	Self	Symbol Name
5.14ms (7.8%)	5.14ms (7.8%)	URI::RFC3986_Parser#split
4.82ms (7.3%)	4.82ms (7.3%)	Rails::BacktraceCleaner#initialize
2.84ms (4.3%)	2.84ms (4.3%)	ActiveSupport::FileUpdateChecker#watched
2.39ms (3.6%)	2.39ms (3.6%)	Sprockets::PathUtils#stat
2.36ms (3.6%)	2.36ms (3.6%)	ActiveRecord::LogSubscriber#backtrace_cleaner
2.01ms (3.0%)	2.01ms (3.0%)	Logger::LogDevice#write
1.91ms (2.9%)	1.91ms (2.9%)	Digest::Instance#file
1.86ms (2.8%)	1.86ms (2.8%)	#<Module:0x00000001342db948>.generate_guid
2.32ms (3.5%)	1.84ms (2.8%)	Sprockets::URITar#initialize
3.24ms (4.9%)	1.63ms (2.5%)	Socket.tcp
1.57ms (2.4%)	1.57ms (2.4%)	ActionDispatch::FileHandler#file_readable?
1.51ms (2.3%)	1.51ms (2.3%)	ActiveSupport::BacktraceCleaner#add_gem_filter
1.04ms (1.6%)	1.04ms (1.6%)	Addrinfo#connect_internal
963.00µs (1.5%)	963.00µs (1.5%)	Pathname#chop_basename
943.00µs (1.4%)	943.00µs (1.4%)	Sprockets::URITar#expand
938.00µs (1.4%)	938.00µs (1.4%)	ActiveRecord::Base.logger
1.41ms (2.1%)	936.00µs (1.4%)	Sprockets::PathUtils#find_matching_path_for_extensions
902.00µs (1.4%)	902.00µs (1.4%)	block in attribute_aliases=
607.00µs (0.92%)	607.00µs (0.92%)	PG::Connection#exec_prepared
3.24ms (4.9%)	574.00µs (0.87%)	Addrinfo.foreach
529.00µs (0.80%)	529.00µs (0.80%)	ActiveSupport::HashWithIndifferentAccess#[]
520.00µs (0.79%)	520.00µs (0.79%)	PG::Connection#exec_params
513.00µs (0.78%)	513.00µs (0.78%)	#<Module:0x0000000153c8c130>.touch
512.00µs (0.78%)	512.00µs (0.78%)	ActiveSupport::Callbacks::CallbackSequence#final?
506.00µs (0.77%)	506.00µs (0.77%)	#<Module:0x0000000136232378>.all_view_paths
501.00µs (0.76%)	501.00µs (0.76%)	#<Module:0x0000000153939d48>.encode_www_form_component
500.00µs (0.76%)	500.00µs (0.76%)	ActionDispatch::Request::Utils.check_param_encoding
498.00µs (0.76%)	498.00µs (0.76%)	IPAddr#initialize
492.00µs (0.75%)	492.00µs (0.75%)	ActiveRecord::LogSubscriber#sql_color
490.00µs (0.74%)	490.00µs (0.74%)	#<Module:0x0000000156ba9e90>.map_product
65.46ms (>99%)	490.00µs (0.74%)	NewRelic::Agent::Instrumentation::MiddlewareTracing#call
1.37ms (2.1%)	489.00µs (0.74%)	ActiveRecord::PredicateBuilder#expand_from_hash
487.00µs (0.74%)	487.00µs (0.74%)	Concurrent::Collection::NonConcurrentMapBackend#[]
487.00µs (0.74%)	487.00µs (0.74%)	ActiveSupport::ParameterFilter::CompiledFilter#value_for_key

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Export and import

JSON JSONLint - The JSON Validator Try the New Pro More Developer Tools

```
1 {  
2   "exporter": "speedscope@1.12.1",  
3   "name": "Flamegraph for /",  
4   "activeProfileIndex": 0,  
5   "$schema": "https://www.speedscope.app/file-format-schema.json",  
6   "shared": {  
7     "frames": [{  
8       "name": "Puma::ThreadPool#spawn_thread",  
9       "file": "/opt/homebrew/Cellar/rbenv/1.1.2/versions/2.6.6/lib/ruby/gems/2.6.0/gems/puma-4.3.7/lib/puma/  
10      "line": 86  
11    }, {  
12      "name": "Puma::Server#run",  
13      "file": "/opt/homebrew/Cellar/rbenv/1.1.2/versions/2.6.6/lib/ruby/gems/2.6.0/gems/puma-4.3.7/lib/puma/  
14      "line": 282  
15    }, {  
16      "name": "Puma::Server#process_client",  
17      "file": "/opt/homebrew/Cellar/rbenv/1.1.2/versions/2.6.6/lib/ruby/gems/2.6.0/gems/puma-4.3.7/lib/puma/  
18
```

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EXERCISE 7

Play around with Speedscope and take a look at the options.

Try the Left Heavy and Sandwich views

Try exporting a profile to JSON.

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Recap

- ▶ Reasons we care about performance
- ▶ How to prioritise and rule out other causes
- ▶ Reading flamegraphs
- ▶ Changing some code to speed it up
- ▶ Getting that change into production
- ▶ Adapting to what stage your work is in
- ▶ Speedscope visualiser and where it's most useful

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FINAL EXERCISE

Install rack-mini-profiler in your application

https://github.com/JadeDickinson/rubyconf_2021_flamegraphs#installation-of-rack-mini-profiler-with-default-speedscope-renderer-for-your-own-project

Go through the steps we've talked about

Can you find something to speed up?

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 - <https://jvns.ca/juliasections/rbspy/>
 - <https://jvns.ca/blog/2016/02/10/have-high-expectations-for-computers/>
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- <https://azukidigital.com/blog/2015/json-rack-mini-profiler/>
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EVEN MORE REFERENCES

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- <https://www.speedscope.app/>
- <https://github.com/jlfwong/speedscope#usage>
- <https://johnysswlab.com/speedscope-visualize-what-your-program-is-doing-and-where-it-is-spending-time/>
- <https://hacks.mozilla.org/2018/11/cross-language-performance-profile-exploration-with-speedscope/>

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THANK YOU

- @_jadedickinson on Twitter,
jadedickinson.com
- Want to hear from you after - what did you find, did you speed anything up?



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