

Ghost in the Wires – Writeup

Challenge Description

“They say once something is uploaded online, it never truly disappears. Can you find what was left behind by this OC?”

The hint about “never truly disappears” suggested using archival tools like the **Wayback Machine**, and “OC” referred to the **organizing committee** members for the CTF.

Step 1 – Identifying the OC Members

From the official CTF Discord, I found four OC accounts:

- **unethical buddy**
 - **ethical buddy**
 - **robot_txt**
 - **root_kitten**
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Step 2 – Hunting GitHub Profiles

Since the hint mentioned something “uploaded online” and “ghosts” (version control), I suspected GitHub repositories.

- For **unethical buddy**, I easily got the GitHub link directly from their Discord profile.
- For **ethical buddy**, a quick search revealed their GitHub.
- For **robot_txt**, it took more effort, but I eventually found their account through name variations and search attempts.
- For **root_kitten**, I clicked on her Discord profile, noted the username, and then searched GitHub to find her account.

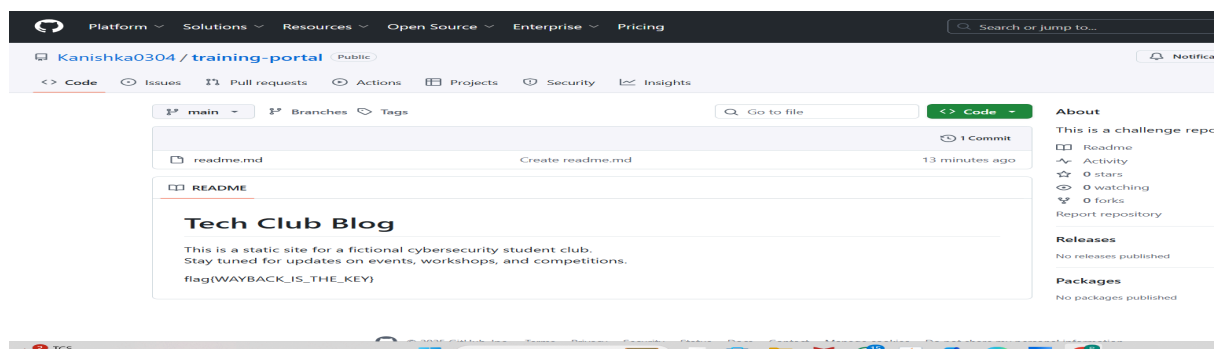
Step 3 – Using the Wayback Machine

The challenge hint about things “never disappearing” made me think of the **Wayback Machine** (web.archive.org).

- I ran the usernames’ GitHub URLs through the Wayback Machine.

URL	MIME Type	From	To	Captures	Duplicates	Uniques
https://github.com/Kanishka0304/training-portal/	text/html	Aug 29, 2025	Aug 29, 2025	1	0	1
https://github.com/Kanishka0304/training-portal/branch-and-tag-count	text/html	Aug 29, 2025	Aug 29, 2025	1	0	1
https://github.com/Kanishka0304/training-portal/hovercards/citation/sidebar_partial?tree_name=main	unk	Aug 29, 2025	Aug 29, 2025	1	0	1
https://github.com/Kanishka0304/training-portal/latest-commit/main	application/json	Aug 29, 2025	Aug 29, 2025	1	0	1
https://github.com/Kanishka0304/training-portal/security/overall-count	text/fragment+html	Aug 29, 2025	Aug 29, 2025	1	0	1
https://github.com/Kanishka0304/training-portal/tree-commit-info/main	application/json	Aug 29, 2025	Aug 29, 2025	1	0	1

- For three of them, I found old snapshots of their repositories.
- Finally, on one of the archived URLs for **root_kitten**, I struck gold.



Step 4 – Finding the Flag

In the archived GitHub repository snapshot, I found the flag:

`flag{WAYBACK_IS_THE_KEY}`

Final Answer

Flag: `flag{WAYBACK_IS_THE_KEY}`

This challenge tested **OSINT techniques** such as:

- Gathering usernames from Discord
- Searching GitHub profiles
- Leveraging the **Wayback Machine** to retrieve deleted/hidden data