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How to Create a Kick-ass Portfolio Site that will WOW Your Next Employer



Tim Wong

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Portfolio sites, the cornerstone to any great job application. They serve as a way to cultivate your personal branding and sell you and your skills out to the employer and the job market.

Today I'll walk you through how to create a kick-ass portfolio site that will impress and wow your next employer. So without further ado, let's begin!

Step 1—Custom Domains

First and foremost, head over to Namecheap or GoDaddy and spend an ample amount of time shopping for your desired domain name, this is an important step as this domain name will serve as your **personal brand's name**.

Your domain name should *ideally* be:

- Containing your actual name
- Memorable (easy to remember)
- Meaningful
- Easy To Read

If you have a fairly common name, your desired domain name will probably be taken by a doppelgänger somewhere across the globe. Fear not, try to use a different TLD such as .net | .gg | .dev | .cc | or even | .ai

Here are some good examples of selecting a name:

John Smith— <https://thejohnsmith.dev>

Harry Potter — <https://harrypotter.gg>

Naruto Uzumaki — <https://narutouz.com>

Step 2 — Hosting Your Portfolio Site

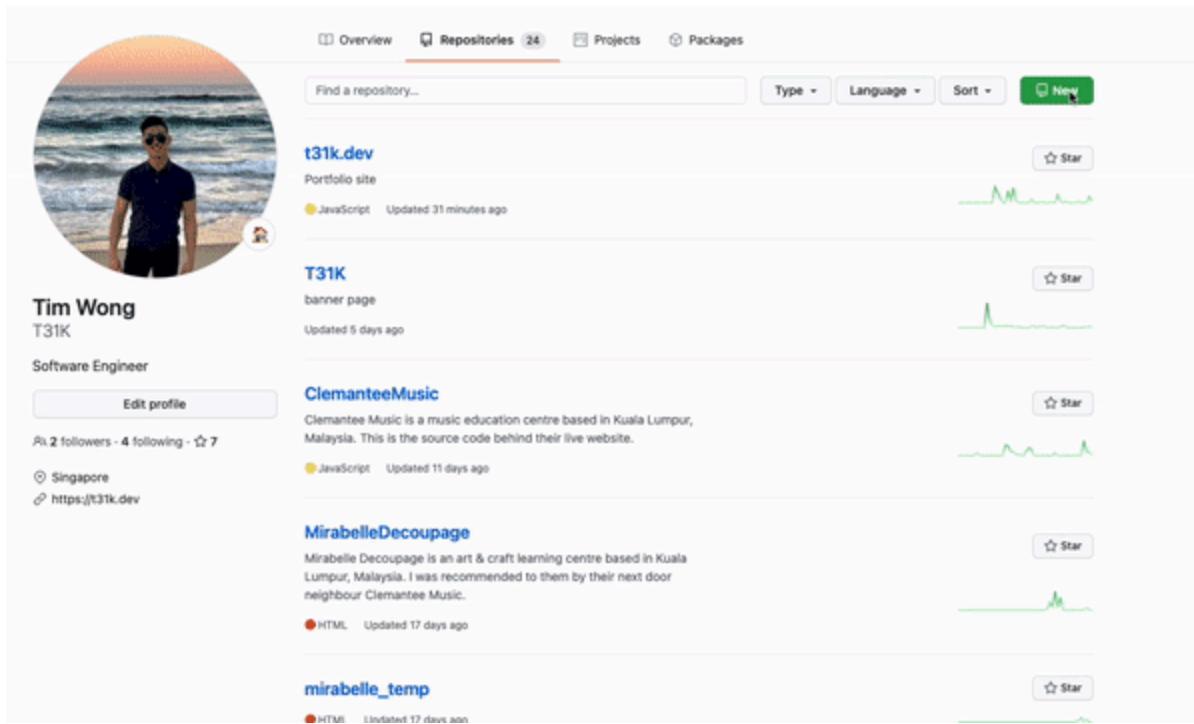
Now that you have an address for the worldwide web, it's time to select a hosting provider to build a house in that particular address.

Wix, WordPress, Squarespace are all awesome website builders & I personally love WordPress *but* when you're building a portfolio site: you're supposed to be showing off your skills in building an app/site. (does not apply — if you're looking for WordPress/Wix/Squarespace jobs)

Instead, use GitHub Pages. It's entirely free and you get to show off your source code on your GitHub Profile. To start:

2.1 Create a new account

2.2 Create a new repository (repo) – like this



The screenshot shows a user profile for 'Tim Wong' (T31K) with a profile picture of a man standing on a beach at sunset. Below the profile, there's a summary: 2 followers, 4 following, located in Singapore, and a link to <https://t31k.dev>. The user is a Software Engineer and has an 'Edit profile' button.

The main area displays five repositories:

- t31k.dev**: Portfolio site, updated 31 minutes ago, written in JavaScript.
- T31K**: banner page, updated 5 days ago.
- ClemanteeMusic**: Clemantee Music is a music education centre based in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. This is the source code behind their live website. Updated 11 days ago, written in JavaScript.
- MirabelleDecoupage**: Mirabelle Decoupage is an art & craft learning centre based in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. I was recommended to them by their next door neighbour Clemantee Music. Updated 17 days ago, written in HTML.
- mirabelle_temp**: Updated 17 days ago, written in HTML.

Each repository entry includes a 'Star' button and a green line graph representing activity.

We will need to link this repo to the custom domain later once we have it all ready and set up. More on that later.

Step 3 — Bootstrap Templates

There are numerous CSS frameworks out there but Bootstrap remains the most popular CSS framework for a good reason. There are approximately 18 million sites on the web built using Bootstrap, so it's a given that there will be more templates out there for Bootstrap versus other frameworks.

With that being said, finding a good Bootstrap template is crucial to building a beautiful and functional portfolio site. Here are some good sites to find from:

1. <https://startbootstrap.com/themes>
2. <https://www.creative-tim.com/bootstrap-themes/free>
3. https://themewagon.com/theme_tag/free/
4. <https://themefisher.com/free-bootstrap-templates/>

Most of these are free and the quality is definitely un-compromised. You may also choose premium ones as long as they're within your budget.

You might also be wondering why we're using a Bootstrap template and not writing it from scratch. Well, in fact, you can. But I believe there's no need to *reinvent the wheel* because after all we're not just downloading the template and changing it to our names.

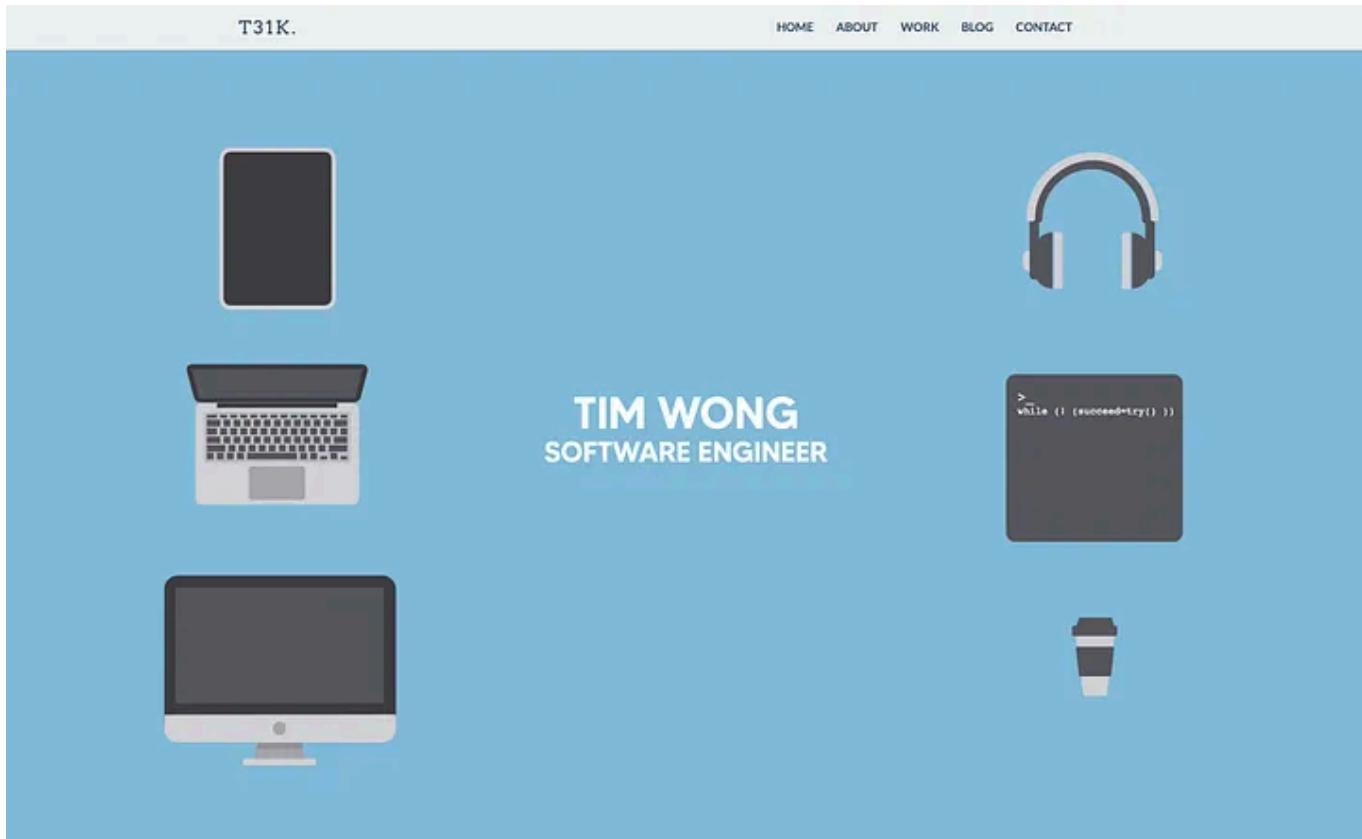
Instead, we'll be using it as a foundation to build upon, therefore eliminating the need to recreate *everything* from scratch. 

Step 4 — Content Planning

Now that we have the barebones of the site from the portfolio templates, we need to plan how the content should be. Essentially your portfolio site should contain these information. In no particular order, but I found this arrangement to be most effective and provide the best user experience and reading flow.

4.1 Intro

This intro should be a short one-liner about yourself and describe a bit of your character/interests/personality. Here's mine for reference: It has my name and job position, my favourite Apple devices on the left, and my hobbies on the right.



You also shouldn't give away too much on the first page because you want to capture the users' attention and encourage them to scroll down to learn more.

4.2 About Me

Here we can include a short write-up about ourselves, our past & our future goals. It may also be good to include your tech stack so that anyone reading can have a rough overview of what skills you have (and don't have).

About Me

ex flight crew | present day dev

Hello world! My name is Tim and I'm currently a software engineer (hooray!). I hold all the repos below close to my heart as I was a self taught developer that "made it".

Initially I took it as a hobby & a way to pass time during quarantine. Not long after, coding came very naturally for me & it ignited a spark within me, and with this burning passion, it pushed me to also realize that I wanted to pursue a career in this field. From then on, I started #100DaysOfCode and promised myself I would learn anything it takes to get into the field and the rest was history...

I am proud to be a Self Taught Developer, throughout this time I have learned from many sources such as Harvard's edX, r/LearnProgramming, Udemy, Stack Overflow and freeCodeCamp.

I love learning and believe it is a life-long journey to continually improve upon oneself. Check it out & I hope you enjoy looking through 😊

My Tech Stack



Frontend



Backend



Tools



4.3 Projects

Pretty self explanatory but this is the *most* important part which will be viewed most often. This section will feature all the projects you've done. You may even include projects at work that you're genuinely proud of and of course your personal *side projects*.

My Work

BetterSG

Redesign & Revamp

IN PROGRESS



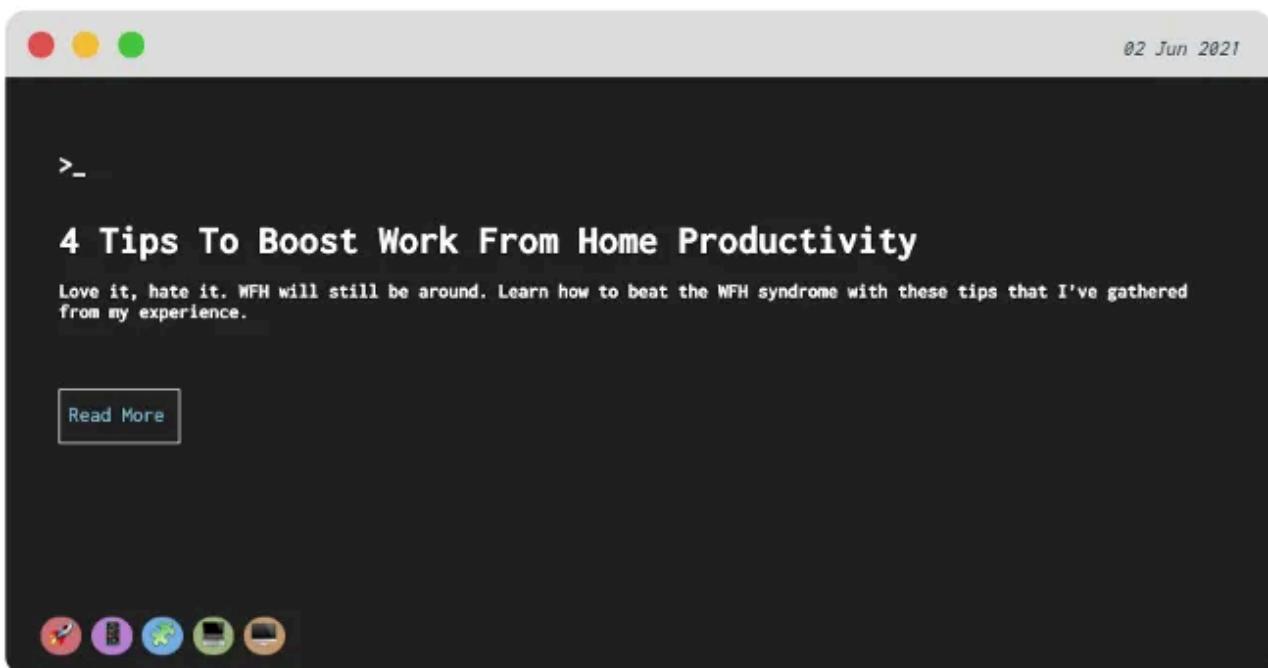
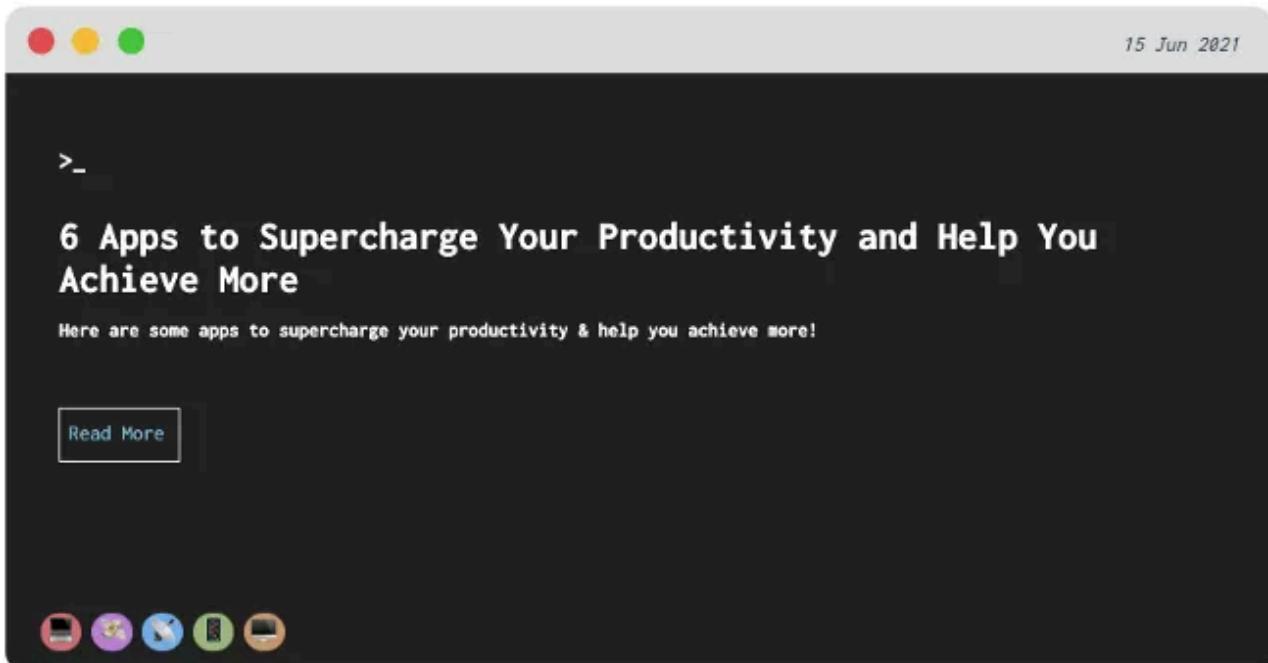
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4.4 Blog (optional)

Having a blog is optional but highly recommended because it creates a personal branding. Using this, you can create a *lasting effect* in anyone's minds with your personal interests, struggles and how you overcame them, and your goals in the future. Here I have some simple JavaScript code to pull a collection of posts from Medium.



4.5 Contact details

A great (portfolio) site wouldn't be complete without an effective Call-To-Action (CTA) that creates ease for your potential employer to give you an email/call. A custom form that allows your users to send you an email, has proven to be highly effective. On top of that, you should also include LinkedIn/GitHub links for them to further interact with you.

Contact Me!

Your Email

Message

SUBMIT

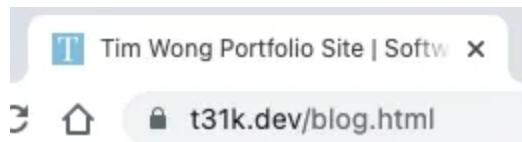


HOME ABOUT WORK BLOG CONTACT

Step 5— Cleaning Up

5.1 .html extensions

If you're using a Bootstrap template, chances are all `href` will be to another HTML page with a `.html` extension. This will make your links ugly like this.



Of course we don't want that so we can remove the `.html` extension from all the `href` in every `.html` file & replace to using `/` instead. Here is an example



```
<ul class="nav navbar-nav">
  <li><a data-toggle="collapse" data-target=".navbar-collapse" href="home.html">HOME</a></li>
  <li><a data-toggle="collapse" data-target=".navbar-collapse" href="about.html">ABOUT</a></li>
  <li><a data-toggle="collapse" data-target=".navbar-collapse" href="work.html">WORK</a></li>
  <li><a data-toggle="collapse" data-target=".navbar-collapse" href="blog.html">BLOG</a></li>
  <li><a data-toggle="collapse" data-target=".navbar-collapse" href="contact.html">CONTACT</a></li>
</ul>
```

Don't worry about not being able to access the pages on `localhost` because GitHub Pages will handle all the routing for you, another reason why GitHub Pages is awesome.

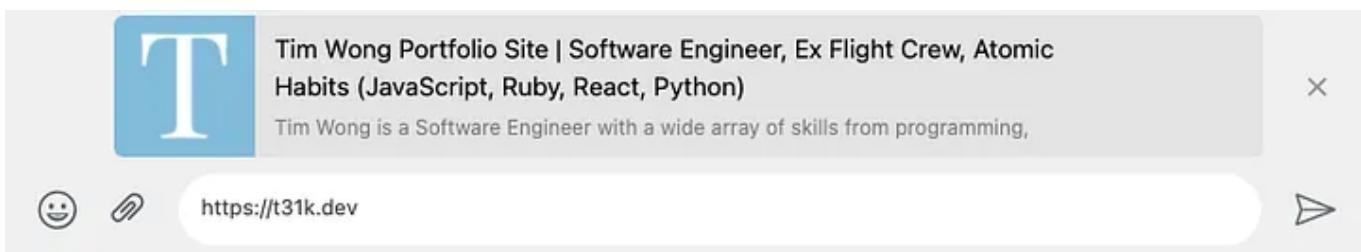
5.2 Title & Description Tags

On top of every `.html` file make sure to include these two lines of code

```
<title>Tim Wong Portfolio Site | Software Engineer, Ex Flight Crew,  
Atomic Habits (JavaScript, Ruby, React, Python)</title>
```

```
<meta name="description" content="Tim Wong is a Software Engineer  
with a wide array of skills from programming, writing, design. Love  
to meet new people & learn all about startups and businesses.">
```

So that when you share the link of your portfolio site, it will include details as such, looks much better doesn't it? 😊



Step 6— Deploying

Now we're ready for the world to see your masterpiece. Go ahead and initialize your folder as a Git repository. Go back to the repo link and copy the command-line codes given by GitHub (refer to Step 2.2). The commands should look something like this:

```
git init
git add .
git commit -m "First commit"
git branch -M master
git remote add origin https://github.com/T31K/Portfolio-Site.git
git push -u origin master
```

If you do all the above successfully, your GitHub repo should look something like this. The last step is to tell GitHub to build the pages from the files you've pushed.

Head over to Settings > Pages and

1. Select `master` or `main` branch to build your Pages from
2. Insert the custom domain that you've set up from Step 1
3. Ensure you check Enforce HTTPS for secured browsing to your site

The screenshot shows a GitHub repository page for 'T31K/T31k.dev'. The main area displays a list of commits, with the most recent being 'T31K Fix navbar and container spacing bug' made 4 days ago. The repository has 162 commits in total. To the right, there are sections for 'About' (Portfolio site, 131k.dev), 'Releases' (No releases published, Create a new release), 'Packages' (No packages published, Publish your first package), 'Environments' (github-pages active), and 'Languages' (JavaScript 69.5%, CSS 41.2%, HTML 7.4%, SCSS 1.5%, Less 1.4%). At the bottom, there's a link to 'Add a README'.

Step 7 — Awe At Your Masterpiece

Congratulations, you've successfully created *your own* portfolio site! Head over to the site and stare at it for as long as you want, appreciate the hard work you've put in & give yourself a firm pat on the back.

Of course, this isn't the end but it's a very good start. This is just the beginning as you should *regularly* come back and update it, so that your content stays fresh and you keep your doors open to new opportunities and recruiters that are out hunting for suitable candidates.

As usual, take care and till next time.

~ Tim

If you like my content, please consider [buying me a coffee](#) ☕.

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- 🎨 [How To Display Medium Posts On Your Website](#)
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Written by Tim Wong

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Software Engineer & Writer. Enjoy reading the encapsulations that is formed in the enigma machinations of my mind.

Responses (1)



Chichwyner

What are your thoughts?



Joi Schünemann

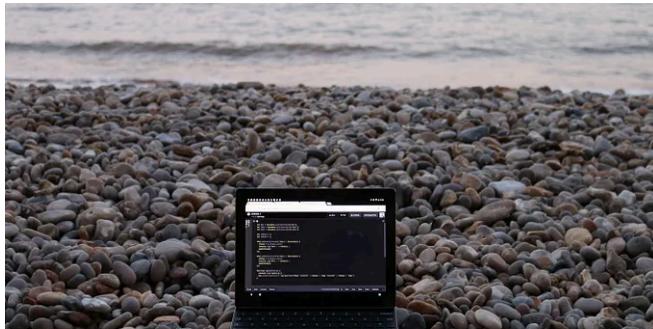
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A good starting point and a good overview for creating a basic portfolio page. I would love to hear more in this direction. Maybe with a more detailed view on presenting the different projects in a portfolio.

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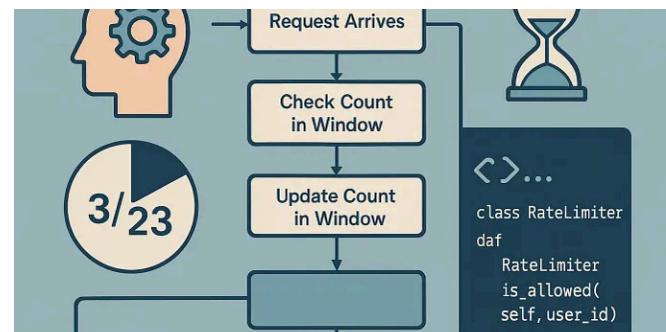
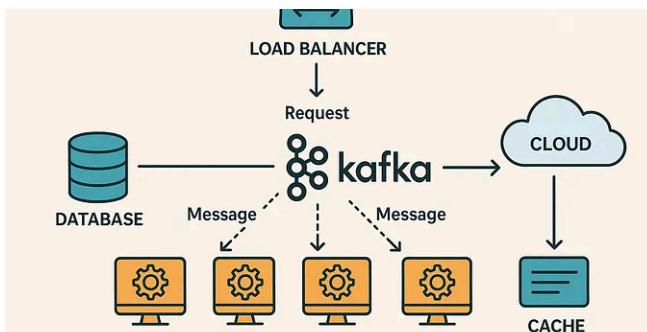
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