

Distributed Tracing in Server-Side Swift

Moritz Lang @ FOSDEM 25



- Topics
- swift.org
- Invite
- More

- CATEGORIES
 - Announcements
 - Evolution
 - Development
 - Server
 - Using Swift
 - Related Projects
 - Community Showcase

- All categories

- TAGS

- concurrency
- foundation

Interest in "Server Distributed Tracing in Swift"

Server Development gsoc-2020



slashmo Moritz Lang

Feb 2020

Feb 2020

1/12
Feb 2020

Hi all,
I'm interested in joining Google Summer of Code this year. The distributed tracing project proposal resonated the most with me as I implemented multiple Server-Side Swift projects over the last couple of semesters. Being able to see the Swift projects traced alongside e.g. Golang projects would've been very helpful.

@ktoso In the proposal you mentioned that the implementation should adhere to the OpenTracing standard. If I understand it correctly OpenTracing got now merged with OpenCensus and is being redefined as [OpenTelemetry](#) 27 so I'm not sure whether an OpenTracing client would still be needed. OpenTelemetry already started a [Swift client](#) 36 yesterday so I'm curious to hear your thoughts on whether it'd still be possible to be involved in realizing distributed tracing for Swift on the server.

7 ❤️ ② ... ↗ Reply

Apr 2020



2.2k 25 14 6
views likes links users



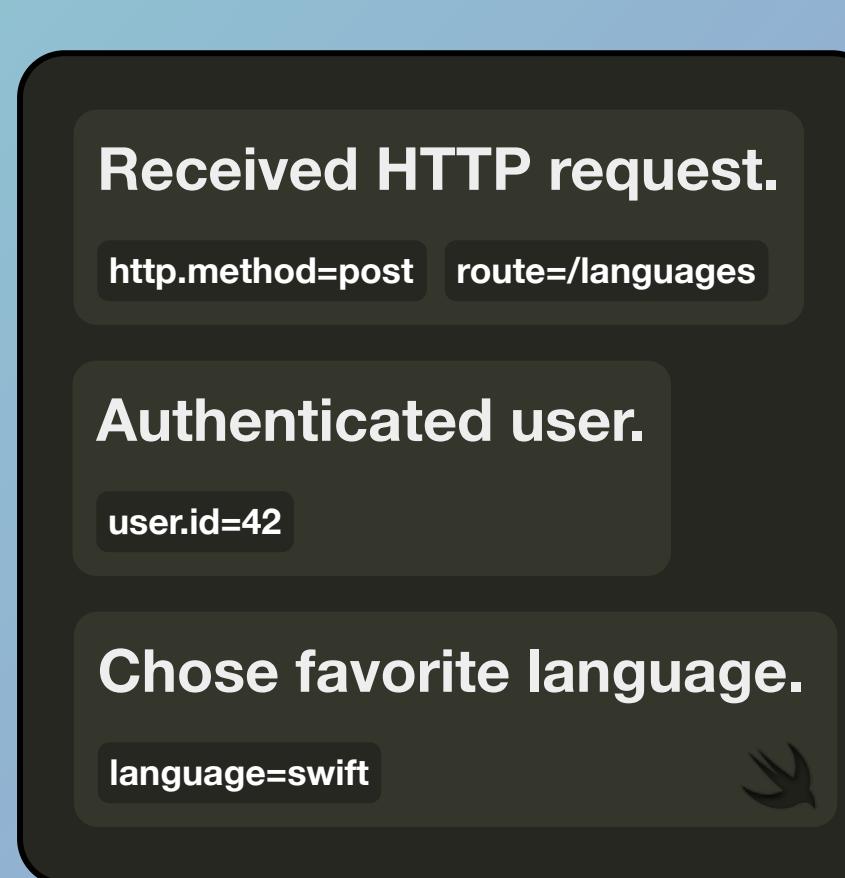
4 min
read

Agenda

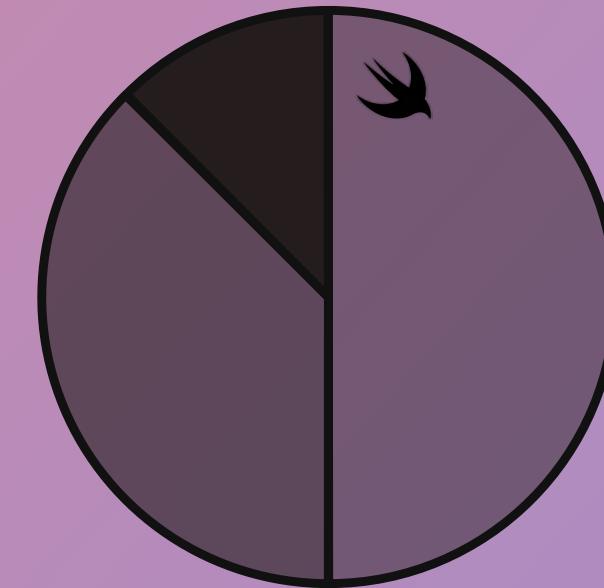
- Swift Observability
- Swift Distributed Tracing 
- Tracing ❤️ Logging
- OpenTelemetry & Swift OTEL 
- Next steps

Swift Observability

Logging



Metrics



Tracing

HTTP POST /languages

Store language

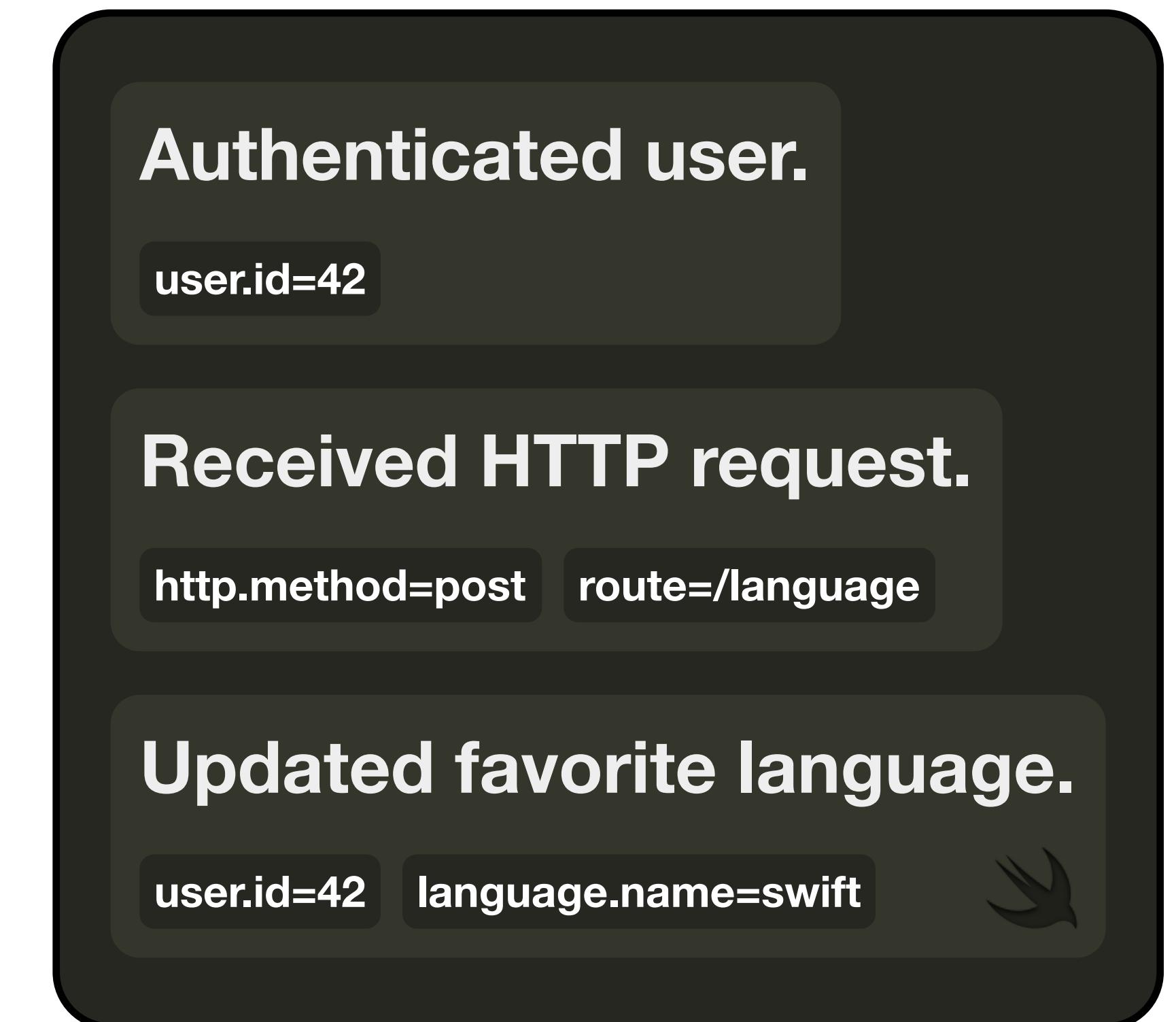
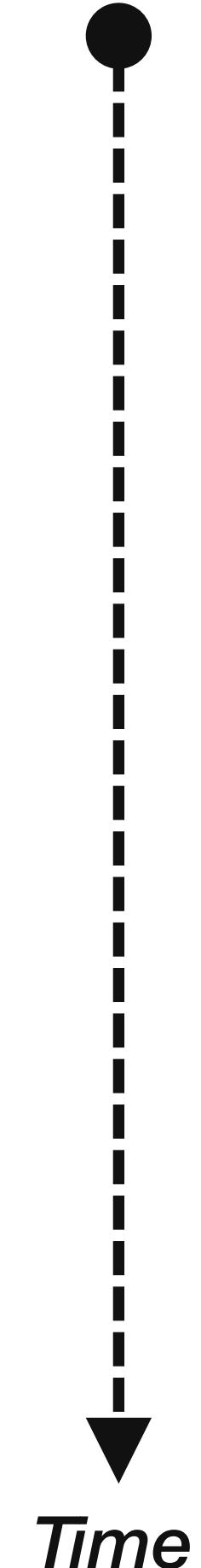
Send notification

Product Catalog

```
> curl "http://localhost:8080/products" | jq  
[  
  {  
    "sku": "FOSDEM-2025-TSH-001",  
    "price": {  
      "currency_code": "EUR",  
      "cents": 1500  
    },  
    "title": "FOSDEM T-Shirt"  
  }  
]  
  
> curl "http://localhost:8080/products/FOSDEM-2025-TSH-001" | jq  
{  
  "sku": "FOSDEM-2025-TSH-001",  
  "price": {  
    "currency_code": "EUR",  
    "cents": 1500  
  },  
  "title": "FOSDEM T-Shirt"  
}
```


Logging

- Capture what happened at a specific point in time
- Detailed via metadata
- Hard to understand a specific request as a whole





 fosdem25-distributed-tracing



services > product-catalog > Sources > CTL > Commands > Serve.swift > Serve > apiService(postgresClient:logger:)

```
16 struct Serve: AsyncParsableCommand {  
17  
115     private func apiService(postgresClient: PostgresClient, logger: Logger) → some Service {  
116         let apiRouter = Router<APIService.Context>()  
117         apiRouter.add(middleware: LogRequestsMiddleware(.info))  
118         apiRouter.get("/health/alive") { _, _ in HTTPResponse.Status.noContent }  
119         return APIService(router: apiRouter, postgresClient: postgresClient, logger: logger)  
120     }  
121 }  
122  
123 extension Logger.Level: @retroactive ExpressibleByArgument {}  
124
```



[fosdem25-distributed-tracing/services/product-catalog](#)

○ > ./build/debug/productcatalogctl serv

2025-01-31T12:22:54+0100 info product-catalog : [HummingbirdCore] Server started and listening on localhost:8080

2025-01-31T12:22:55+0100 info product-catalog : hb.request.id=d65f6f54b362ab883e8bfd7b5730d555 hb.request.method=GET hb.request.path=/products [Hummingbird] Request





APIService.swift Serve.swift ProductsController.swift

services > product-catalog > Sources > API > ProductsController.swift > ProductsController > listAll(request:context:)

```
7 struct ProductsController<Context: RequestContext> {
24     private func listAll(request: Request, context: Context) async throws → [Product] {
32         let product = Product(sku: sku, title: title, price: Money(cents: cents, currencyCode: "EU")
33         products.append(product)
34     }
35 }
36 logger.info("Fetched products.", metadata: ["count": "\(products.count)"])
37 return products
38 } catch {
39     logger.error("Failed to fetch products.")
40     throw HTTPError(.internalServerError)
41 }
42 }
```

PROBLEMS OUTPUT TERMINAL DEBUG CONSOLE PORTS COMMENTS productcatalogct - product-catalog + ▾

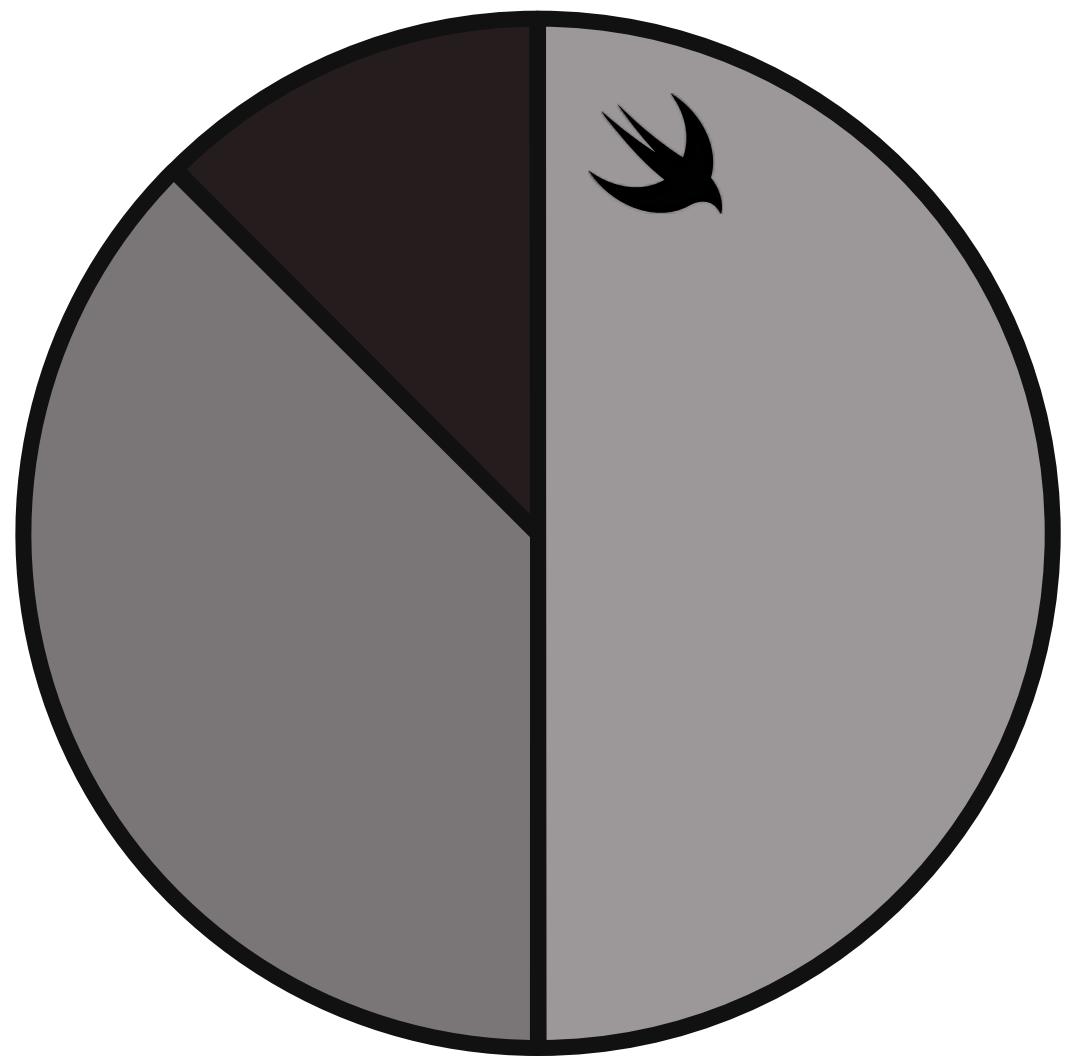
fosdem25-distributed-tracing/services/product-catalog

- » ./build/debug/productcatalogctl serve
2025-01-31T12:25:45+0100 info product-catalog : [HummingbirdCore] Server started and listening on localhost:8080
2025-01-31T12:26:49+0100 info product-catalog : hb.request.id=80429c96dd06bcd1325c1c5ba76b8396 hb.request.method=GET hb.request.path=/products [Humminabird] Reauest
2025-01-31T12:26:49+0100 error product-catalog : [API] Failed to fetch products.



Metrics

- Aggregated
- High-level overview
- Indicate traffic spikes
- Alert when errors ramp up





services > product-catalog > Sources > CTL > Commands > Serve.swift > Serve > apiService(postgresClient:logger:)

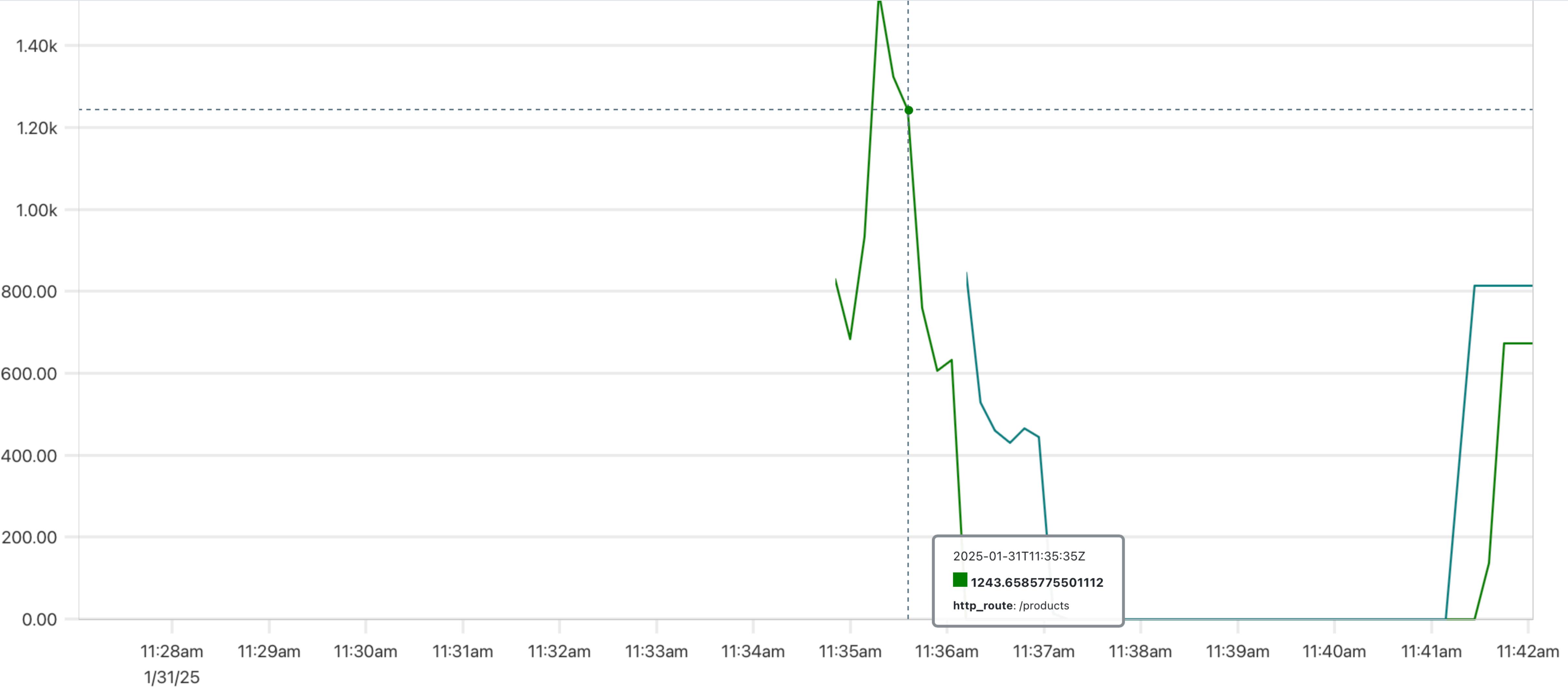
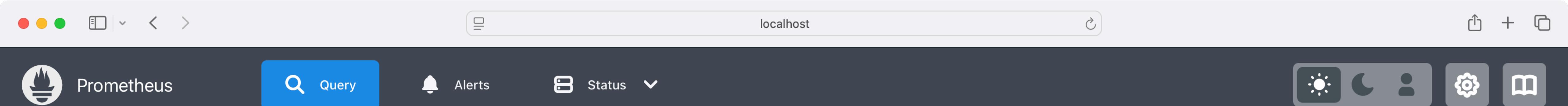
```
16 struct Serve: AsyncParsableCommand {  
17  
18     private func apiService(postgresClient: PostgresClient, logger: Logger) → some Service {  
19         let apiRouter = Router<APIService.Context>()  
20         apiRouter.add(middleware: MetricsMiddleware())  
21         apiRouter.add(middleware: LogRequestsMiddleware(.info))  
22         apiRouter.get("/health/alive") { _, _ in HTTPResponse.Status.noContent }  
23         return APIService(router: apiRouter, postgresClient: postgresClient, logger: logger)  
24     }  
25  
26     extension Logger.Level: @retroactive ExpressibleByArgument {}  
27 }
```



[fosdem25-distributed-tracing/services/product-catalog](#)

- ```
○ > ./build/debug/productcatalogctl serve
2025-01-31T12:25:45+0100 info product-catalog : [HummingbirdCore] Server started and listening on localhost:8080
2025-01-31T12:26:49+0100 info product-catalog : hb.request.id=80429c96dd06bcd1325c1c5ba76b8396 hb.request.method=GET hb.request.path=/products [Hummingbird] Request
2025-01-31T12:26:49+0100 error product-catalog : [API] Failed to fetch products.
```



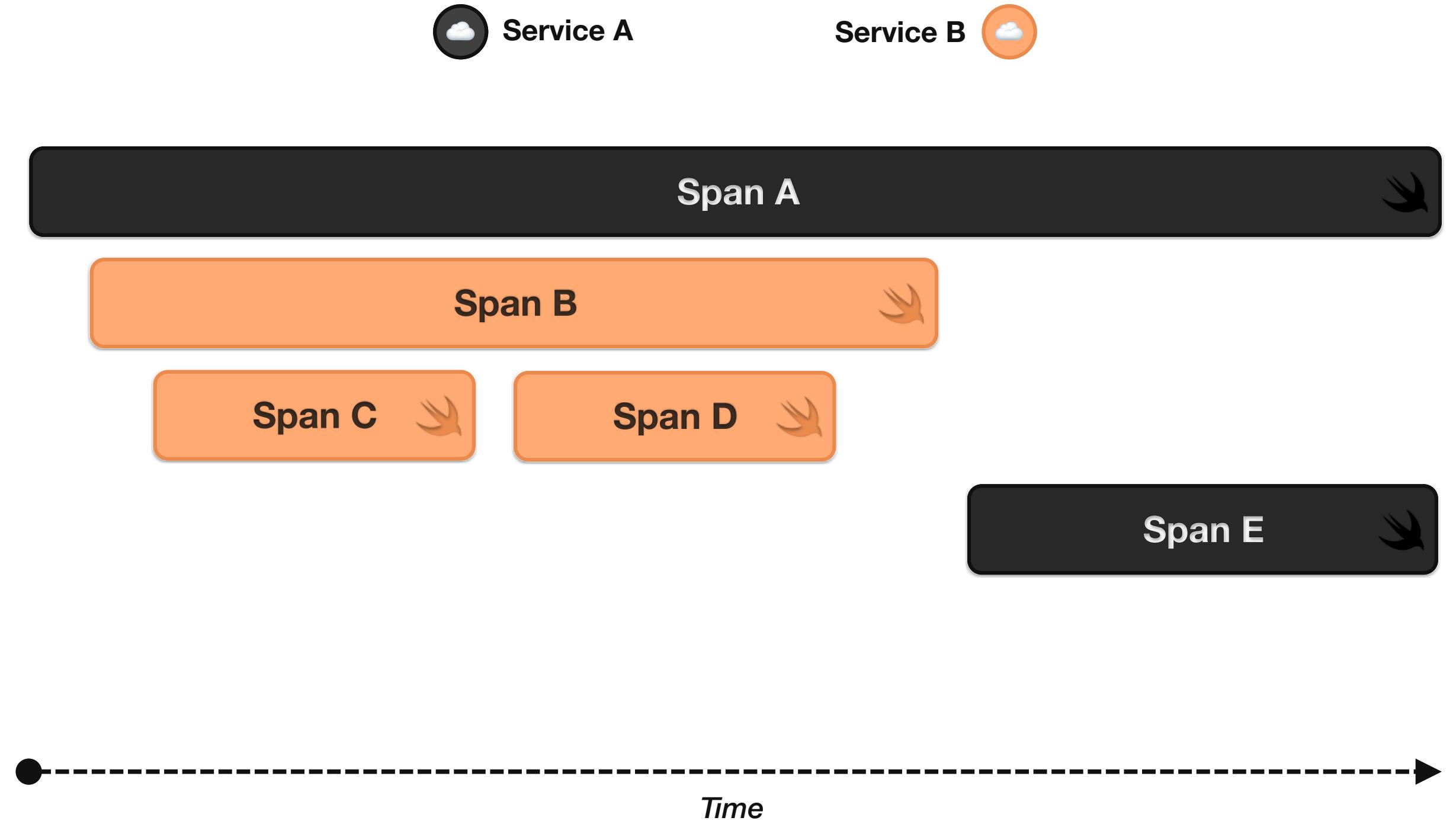


# Rate of active requests per endpoint

- {http\_route="/products"}
- {http\_route="/products/{sku}"} ■

# Distributed Tracing

- Specific to one request
- Trace comprised of multiple spans (operations)
- Both high-level and detailed
- Highlights where time is spent
- Sequential *and* concurrent
- Spot which operation caused a request failure





services > product-catalog > Sources > CTL > Commands >  Serve.swift >  Serve >  apiService(postgresClient:logger:)

```
16 struct Serve: AsyncParsableCommand {
17
113 private func apiService(postgresClient: PostgresClient, logger: Logger) → some Service {
114 let apiRouter = Router<APIService.Context>()
115 apiRouter.add(middleware: TracingMiddleware())
116 apiRouter.add(middleware: MetricsMiddleware())
117 apiRouter.add(middleware: LogRequestsMiddleware(.info))
118 apiRouter.get("/health/alive") { _, _ in HTTPResponse.Status.noContent }
119 return APIService(router: apiRouter, postgresClient: postgresClient, logger: logger)
120 }
121 }
122
123 extension Logger.Level: @retroactive ExpressibleByArgument {}
124
```

2025-01-31T12:46:34+0100 info product-catalog : hb.request.id=d92a6f3c194ae3d367247fbdb7d2dbc3 hb.request.method=GET hb.request.path=/products/FOSDEM-2025-TSH-001 [Hummingbird] Request

2025-01-31T12:46:34+0100 info product-catalog : hb.request.id=d92a6f3c194ae3d367247fbdb7d2dbc4 hb.request.method=GET hb.request.path=/products/FOSDEM-2025-TSH-001 [Hummingbird] Request

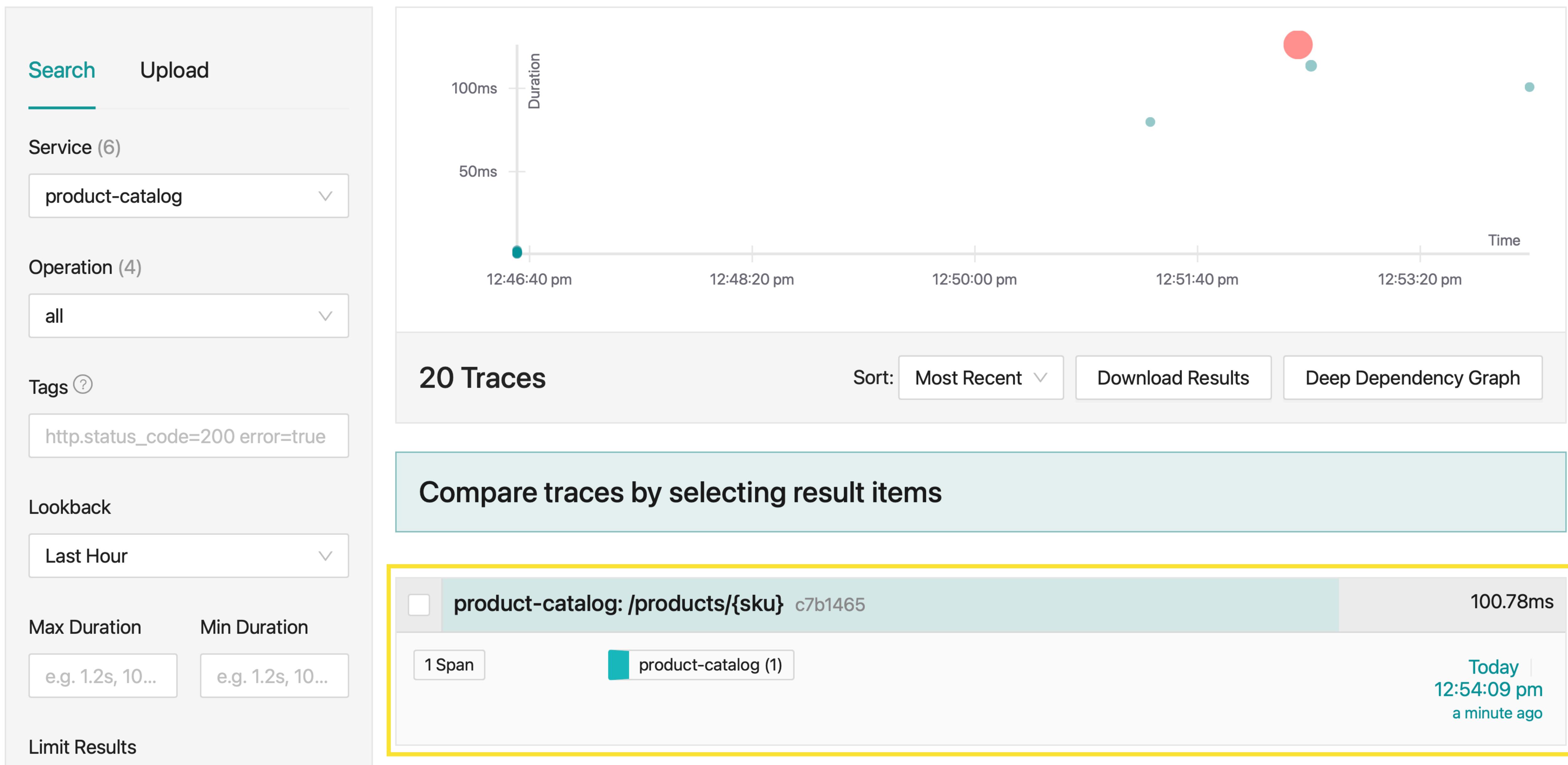
2025-01-31T12:46:34+0100 info product-catalog : sku=FOSDEM-2025-TSH-001 [API] Fetched product by SKU.

2025-01-31T12:46:34+0100 info product-catalog : sku=FOSDEM-2025-TSH-001 [API] Fetched product by SKU.

2025-01-31T12:46:34+0100 info product-catalog : sku=FOSDEM-2025-TSH-001 [API] Fetched product by SKU.

2025-01-31T12:46:34+0100 info product-catalog : sku=FOSDEM-2025-TSH-001 [API] Fetched product by SKU.





JAAGER UI Search Compare System Architecture Monitor localhost About Jaeger ▾

product-catalog: /products/{sku} c7b1465

Find... Trace Timeline Archive Trace

Trace Start **January 31 2025, 12:54:09.070** | Duration **100.78ms** | Services **1** | Depth **1** | Total Spans **1**

0μs 25.19ms 50.39ms 75.58ms 100.78ms

Service & Operation 0μs 25.19ms 50.39ms 75.58ms 100.78ms

product-catalog /products/{sku}

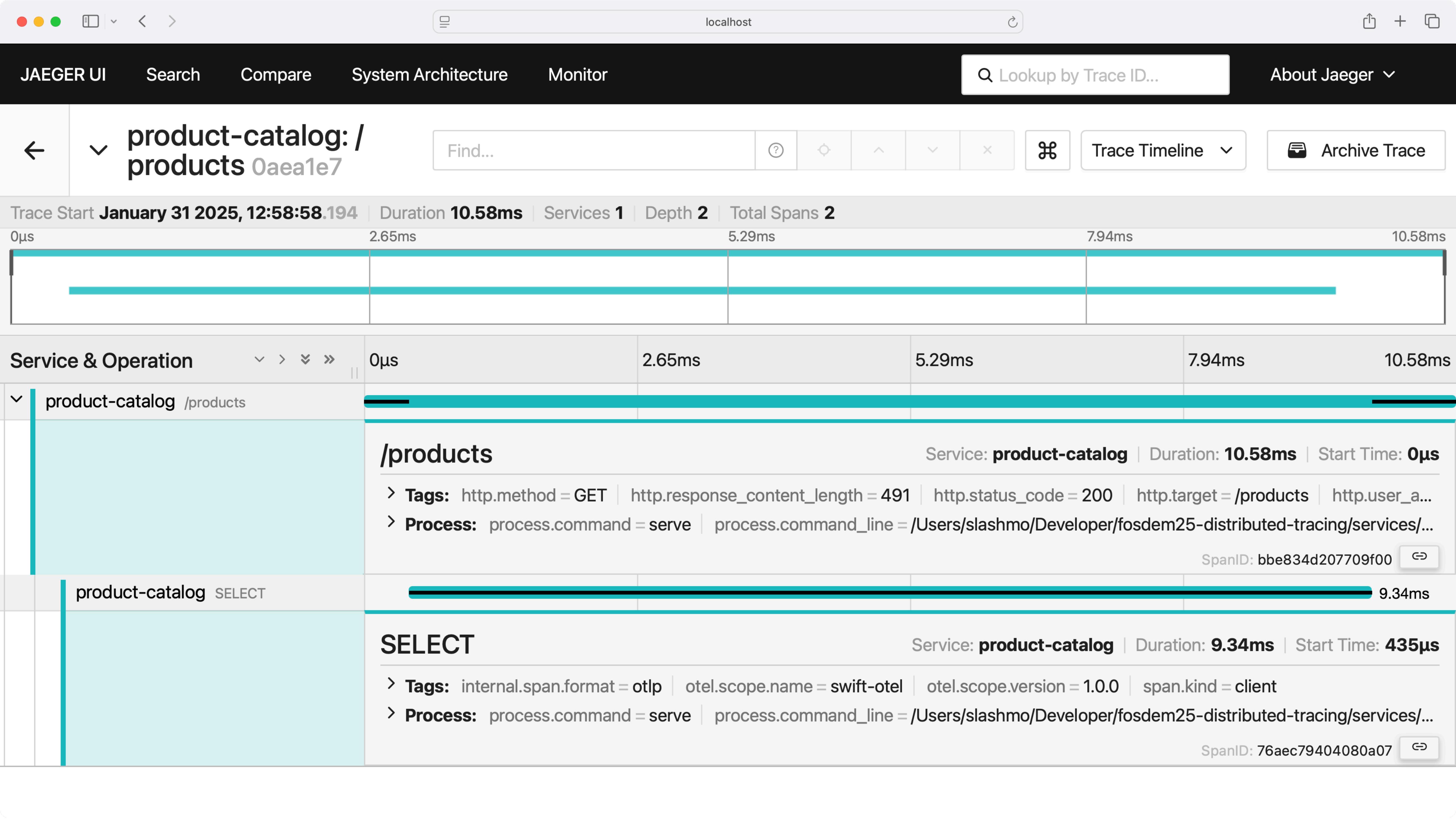
/products/{sku} Service: product-catalog | Duration: 100.78ms | Start Time: 0μs

Tags

|                              |                               |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| http.method                  | GET                           |
| http.response_content_length | 99                            |
| http.status_code             | 200                           |
| http.target                  | /products/FOSDEM-2025-TSH-001 |
| http.user_agent              | curl/8.7.1                    |
| internal.span.format         | otlp                          |
| otel.scope.name              | swift-otel                    |
| otel.scope.version           | 1.0.0                         |

The screenshot shows a Mac OS X desktop environment. At the top, there's a window titled "fosdem25-distributed-tracing" which appears to be a terminal or command-line interface. Below it, the main application is a code editor for Swift. The code editor has tabs for "Serve.swift" and "ProductsController.swift", with "ProductsController.swift" currently active. The file path is shown as "services > product-catalog > Sources > API > ProductsController.swift". The code itself is an asynchronous function named "listAll" that fetches products from a PostgreSQL database using a context manager and a span for tracing.

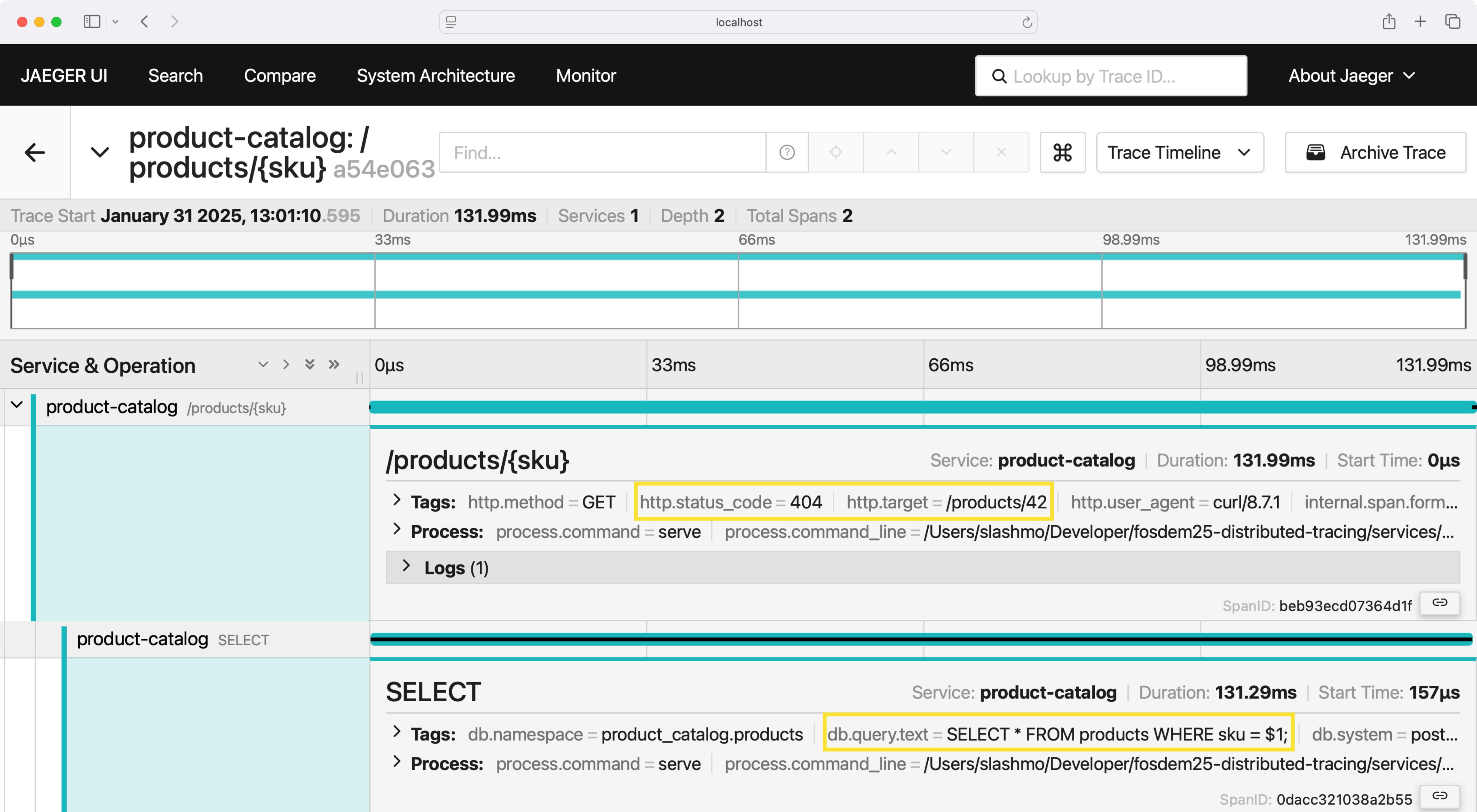
```
7 'uct ProductsController<Context: RequestContext> {
23
24 private func listAll(request: Request, context: Context) async throws -> [Product] {
25 do {
26 let products = try await withSpan("SELECT", ofKind: .client) { span in
27 try await postgresClient
28 .query("SELECT * FROM products")
29 .decode(String, String, Int).self)
30 .reduce(into: [Product]() { (products, row) in
31 let (sku, title, cents) = row
32 let product = Product(sku: sku, title: title, price: Money(cents: cents, currencyCode: "EUR"))
33 products.append(product)
34 })
35
36 logger.info("Fetched products.", metadata: ["count": "\(products.count)"])
37 return products
38 } catch {
39 logger.error("Failed to fetch products.")
40 throw HTTPError(.internalServerError)
41 }
42
43 }
```



The screenshot shows a Swift code editor interface with the following details:

- Title Bar:** fosdem25-distributed-tracing
- File Tabs:** Serve.swift (selected), ProductsController.swift
- Search Bar:** A magnifying glass icon.
- Left Sidebar:** Icons for file operations (New, Open, Save, Find, Replace, Preferences).
- Code Area:** Shows the `ProductsController` implementation. The code uses the `withSpan` function to instrument database queries with tracing metadata. A yellow box highlights the line `span.attributes["db.query.text"] = query.sql`.
- Code Navigation:** Shows the file structure: services > product-catalog > Sources > API > ProductsController.swift.
- Bottom Status Bar:** Version 2.8.0, Xcode 10.0, Spaces: 4, UTF-8, LF, Swift.
- Bottom Right:** Line 59, Column 61, Ln 59, Col 61, Swift.

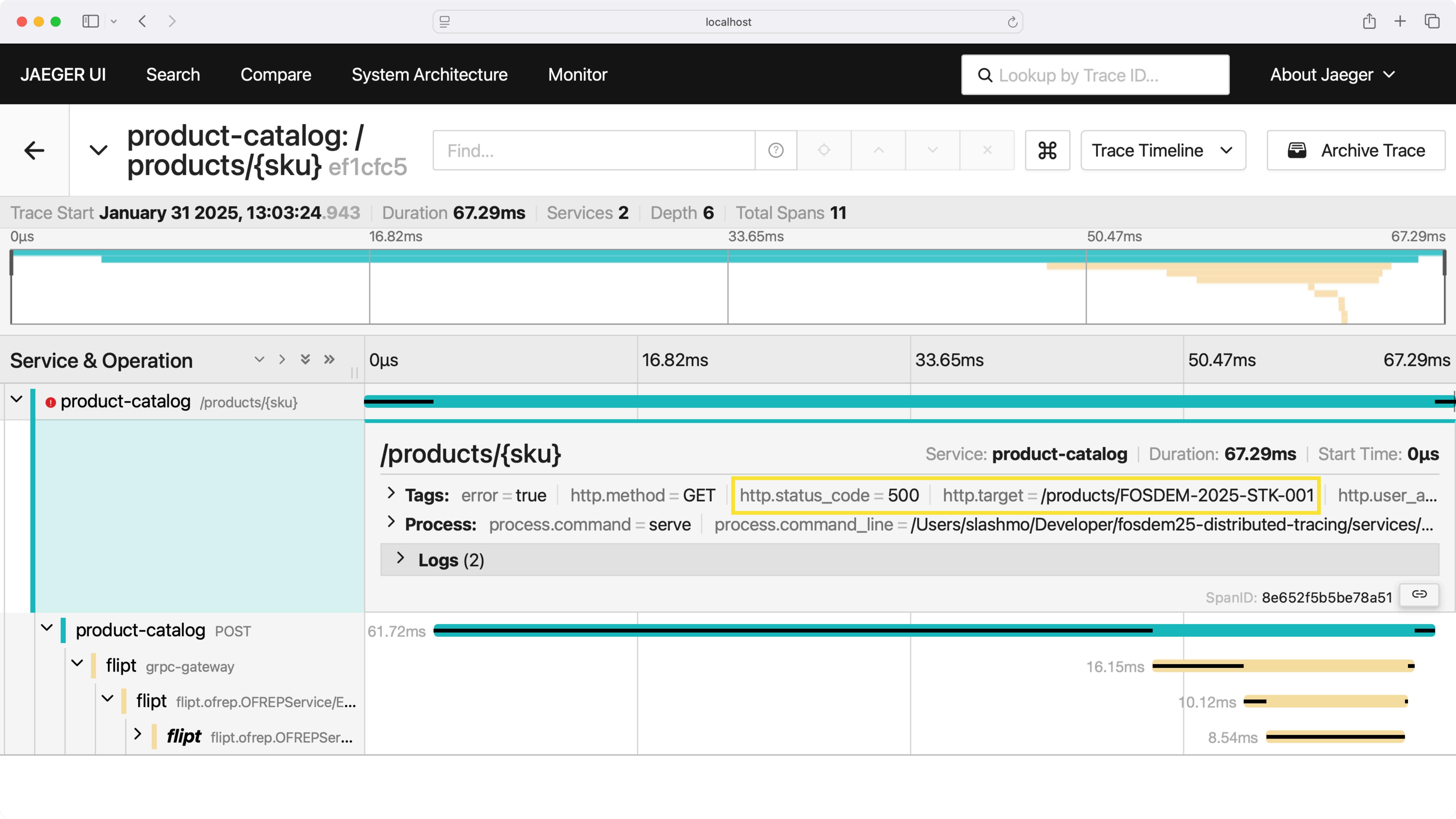
```
7 struct ProductsController<Context: RequestContext> {
44 private func getById(request: Request, context: Context) async throws -> Product {
53
54 let product: Product? = try await withSpan("SELECT", ofKind: .client) { span in
55 do {
56 span.attributes["db.system"] = "postgresql"
57 span.attributes["db.namespace"] = "product_catalog.products"
58 let query: PostgresQuery = "SELECT * FROM products WHERE sku = \$(sku);"
59 span.attributes["db.query.text"] = query.sql
60 let rows = try await postgresClient.query(query)
61 for try await (sku, title, priceInCents) in rows.decode((String, String, Int).self) {
62 return Product(sku: sku, title: title, price: Money(cents: priceInCents, currencyCode: "EUR"))
63 }
64 return nil
65 } catch let error as PSQLError {
66 logger.error("Failed to fetch product by SKU.", metadata: ["sku": "\$(sku)"])
67 span.attributes["db.response.status_code"] = error.serverInfo?.sqlState
68 span.setStatus(SpanStatus(code: .error))
69 throw error
70 }
71 }
72 }
```

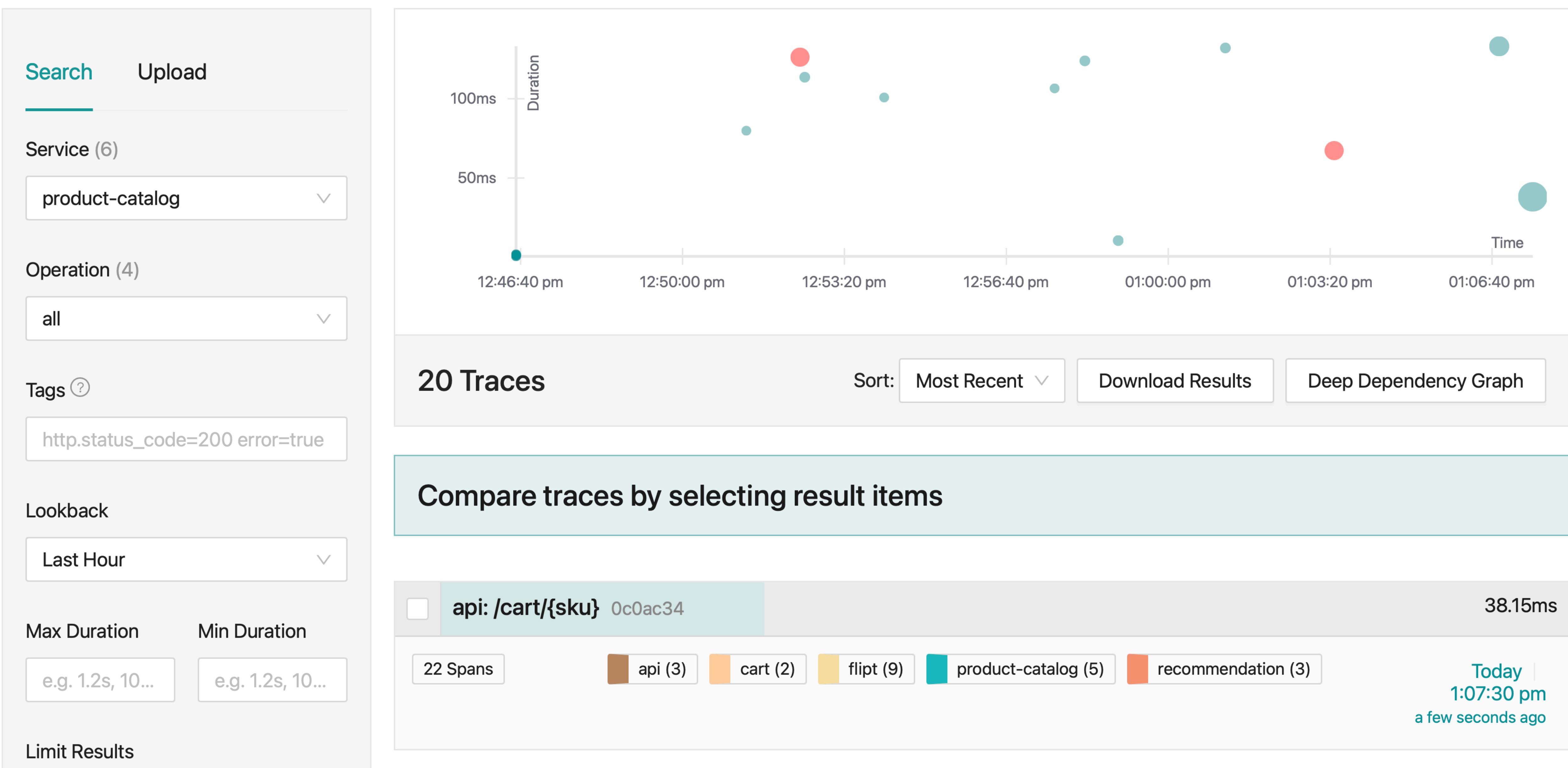


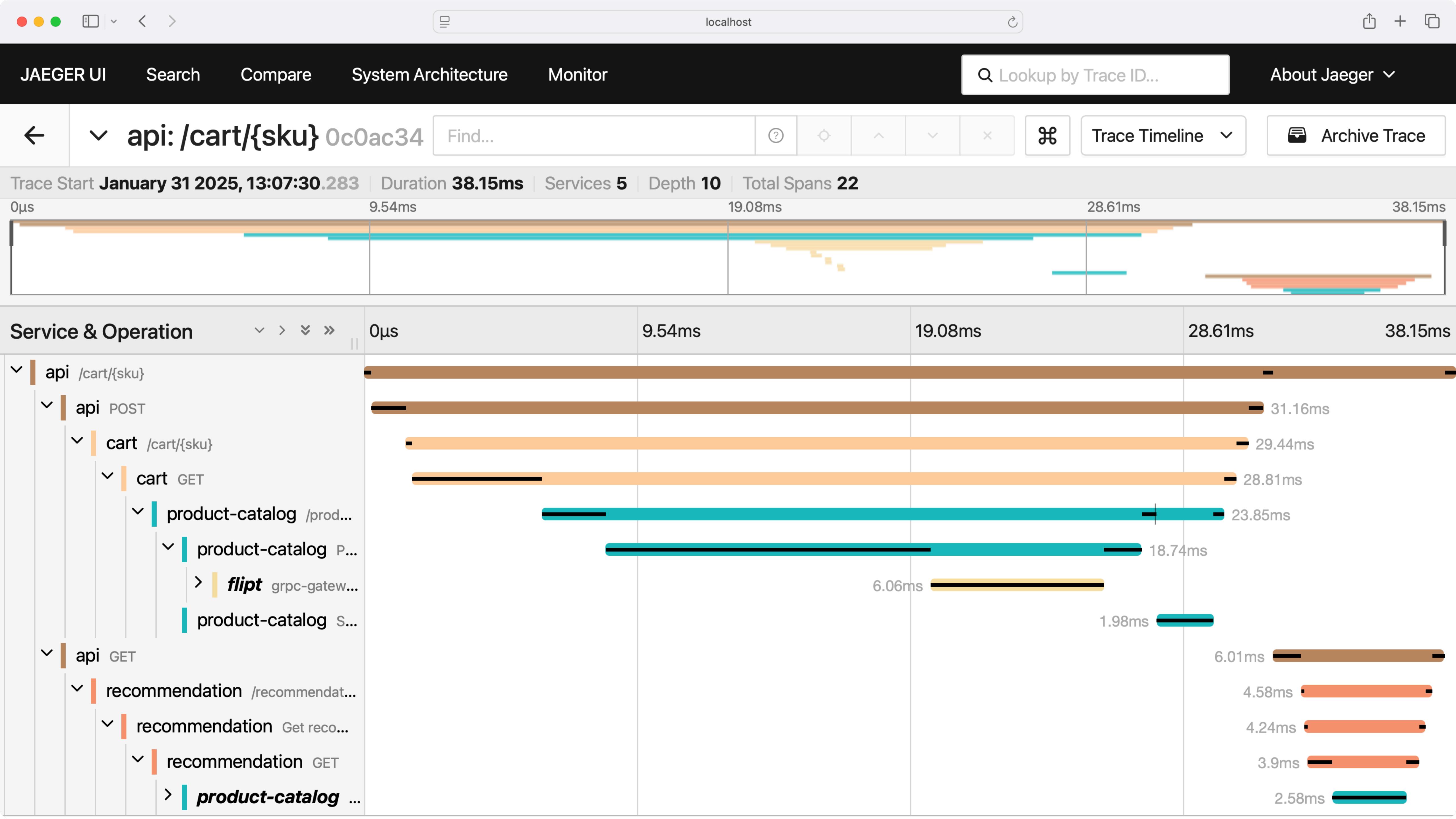
fosdem25-distributed-tracing

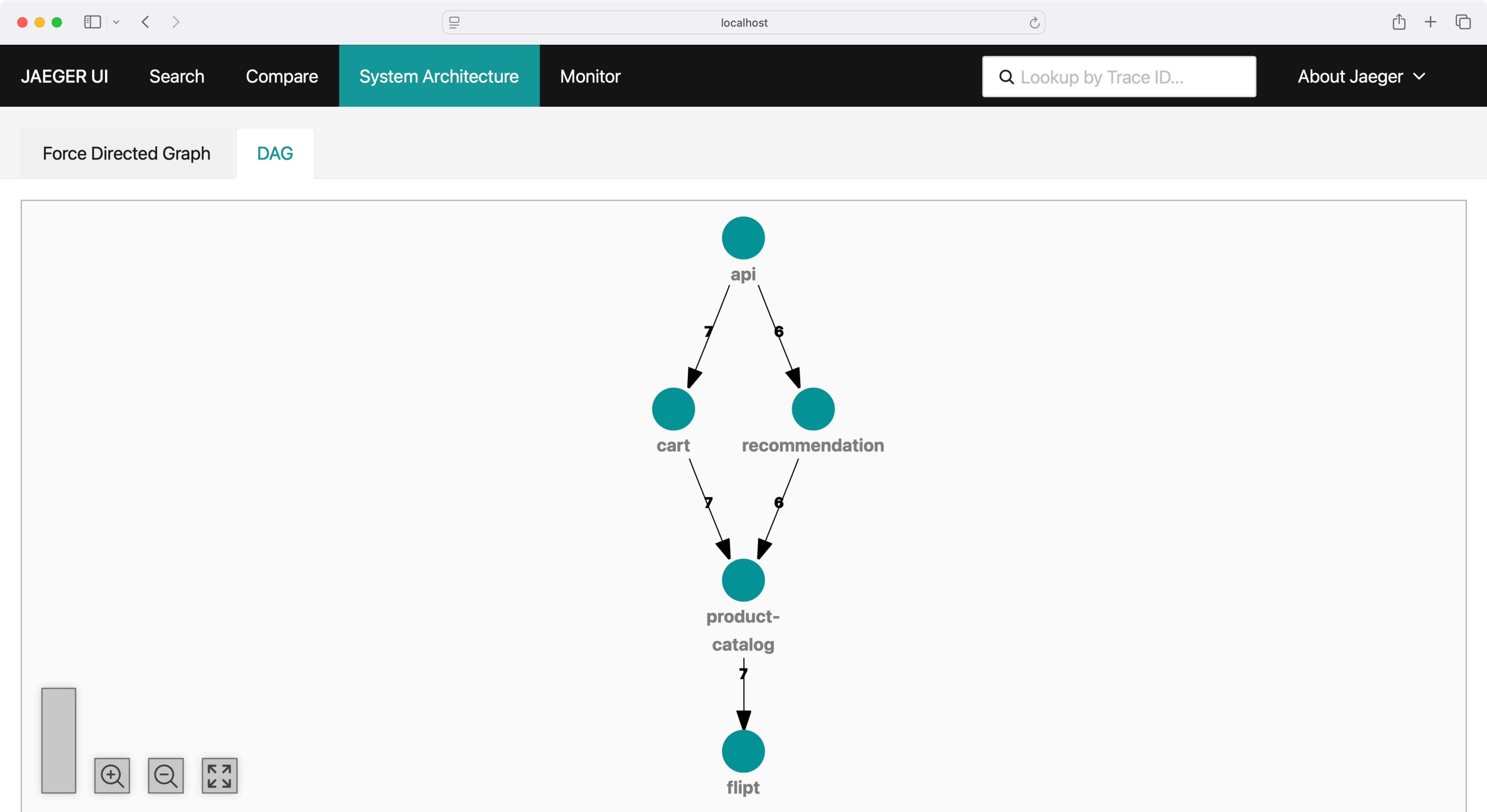
Services > product-catalog > Sources > API > ProductsController.swift > ProductsController > getByID(request:context:)

```
7 struct ProductsController<Context: RequestContext> {
44 private func getByID(request: Request, context: Context) async throws -> Product {
45 let sku = try context.parameters.require("sku")
46
47 if sku == "FOSDEM-2025-STK-001", await OpenFeatureSystem.client().value(
48 for: "productCatalogFailure",
49 defaultValue: false
50) {
51 throw HTTPError(.internalServerError)
52 }
53
54 let product: Product? = try await withSpan("SELECT", ofKind: .client) { span in
55 do {
56 span.attributes["db.system"] = "postgresql"
57 span.attributes["db.namespace"] = "product_catalog.products"
58 let query: PostgresQuery = "SELECT * FROM products WHERE sku = \$(sku);"
59 span.attributes["db.query.text"] = query.sql
60 let rows = try await postgresClient.query(query)
61 for try await (sku, title, priceInCents) in rows.decode((String, String, Int).self) {
62 return Product(sku: sku, title: title, price: Money(cents: priceInCents, currencyCode: "EUR"))
63 }
64 }
65 }
66 }
67 }
```









# Swift Distributed Tracing



[github.com/apple/swift-distributed-tracing](https://github.com/apple/swift-distributed-tracing)

- Similar to swift-log and swift-metrics
- Provides *only* the interface
- Three target audiences
  - Library Authors
  - Instrumentation Authors
  - Application Developers

# Library Authors

- Agnostic of the specific tracer
- Use withSpan and similar APIs

# Instrumentation Authors

- Conform to the Tracer protocol
- Export the recorded spans to a specific Distributed Tracing system

# Application Developers

- Select one Tracer implementation
- Use libraries that support Swift Distributed Tracing
- *Optionally* create additional spans

# Tracer

- Associated Span type
- Ability to create spans

```
25 public protocol Tracer: LegacyTracer {
26 /// The concrete type of span this tracer will be producing/
27 associatedtype Span: Tracing.Span
28
29 > /// Start a new ``Span`` with the given `ServiceContext`.
30
31 > func startSpan<Instant: TracerInstant>(
32 _ operationName: String,
33 context: @autoclosure () -> ServiceContext,
34 ofKind kind: SpanKind,
35 at instant: @autoclosure () -> Instant,
36 function: String,
37 file fileID: String,
38 line: UInt
39) -> Self.Span
40
41 >
42
43 > /// Retrieve the recording span for the given `ServiceContext`.
44
45 > func activeSpan(identifiedBy context: ServiceContext) -> Span?
46
47 }
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60
61
62
63
64
65
66
67
68
69
70 }
```

# Span

- Mutable until finished
- Must be finished by calling `end(instant:)`
- Uniquely identified via `ServiceContext`

```
34▶ public protocol Span: Sendable {
35 var context: ServiceContext { get }
36
37 > var operationName: String { ...
38 }
39
40 func setStatus(_ status: SpanStatus)
41
42 func addEvent(_ event: SpanEvent)
43
44 > func recordError<Instant: TracerInstant>(...
45)
46
47 > var attributes: SpanAttributes { ...
48 }
49
50
51 > var isRecording: Bool { get }
52
53
54 func addLink(_ link: SpanLink)
55
56
57 > func end<Instant: TracerInstant>(at instant: @autoclosure () -> Instant)
58)
59
60
61 > }
62 }
```

# ServiceContext

- Contains span/trace ID
- Stored in task-local
- Automatically create child spans

```
try await withSpan("parent") { parentSpan in
 let value = try await withSpan("child") { childSpan in
 try await nestedOperation()
 }
 try await process(value)
}
```

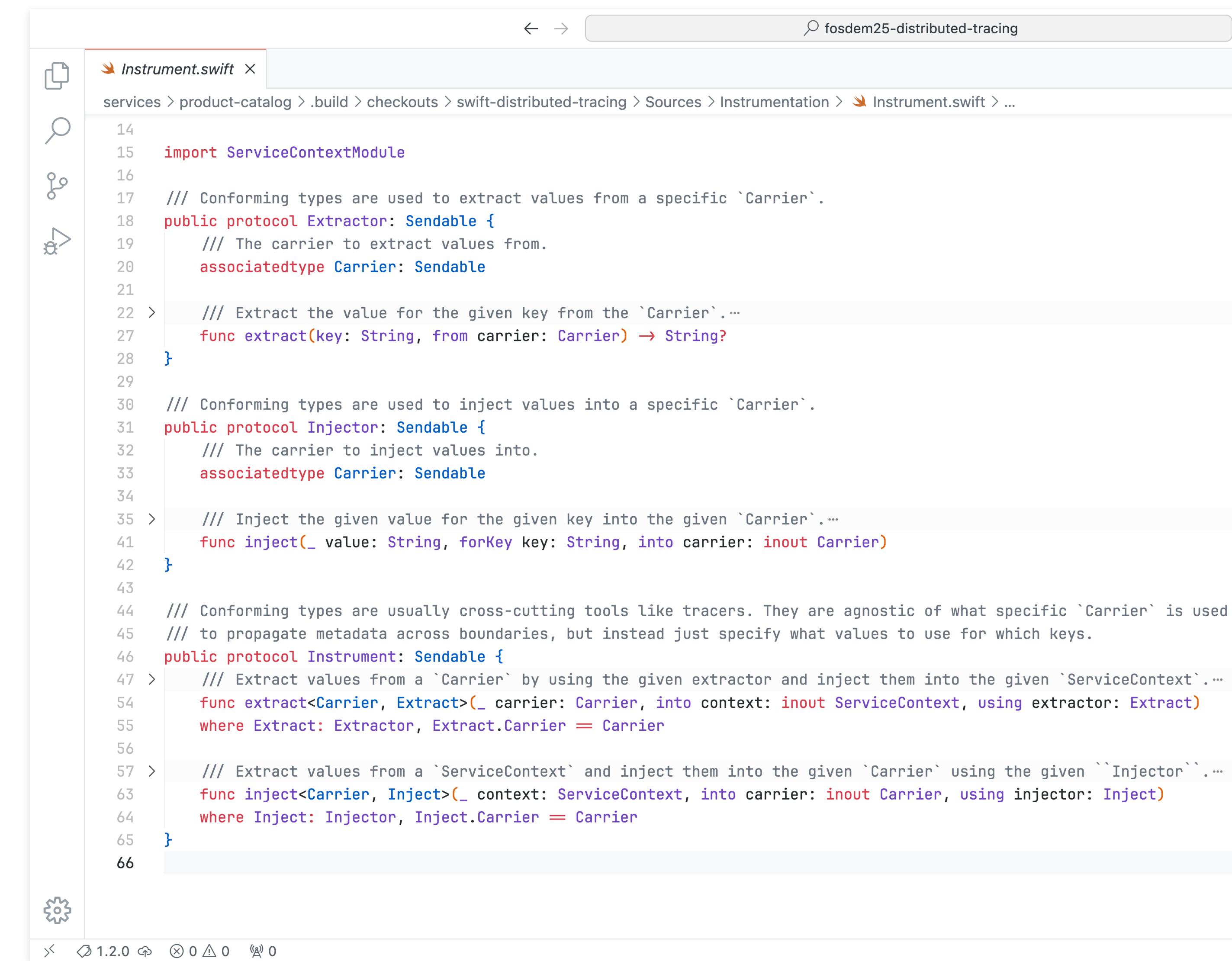
# Context Propagation

## Distributed Tracing

- Carry tracing identifiers across async/process boundaries
- Example: Client/Server
  - Client: Injects the context into HTTP headers
  - Server: Extracts the context from HTTP headers
  - Server: Creates child span by using the propagated context

# Instrument

- Agnostic about carrier (e.g. HTTP headers)
- Implementors know about keys/values
- Extended by Tracer protocol

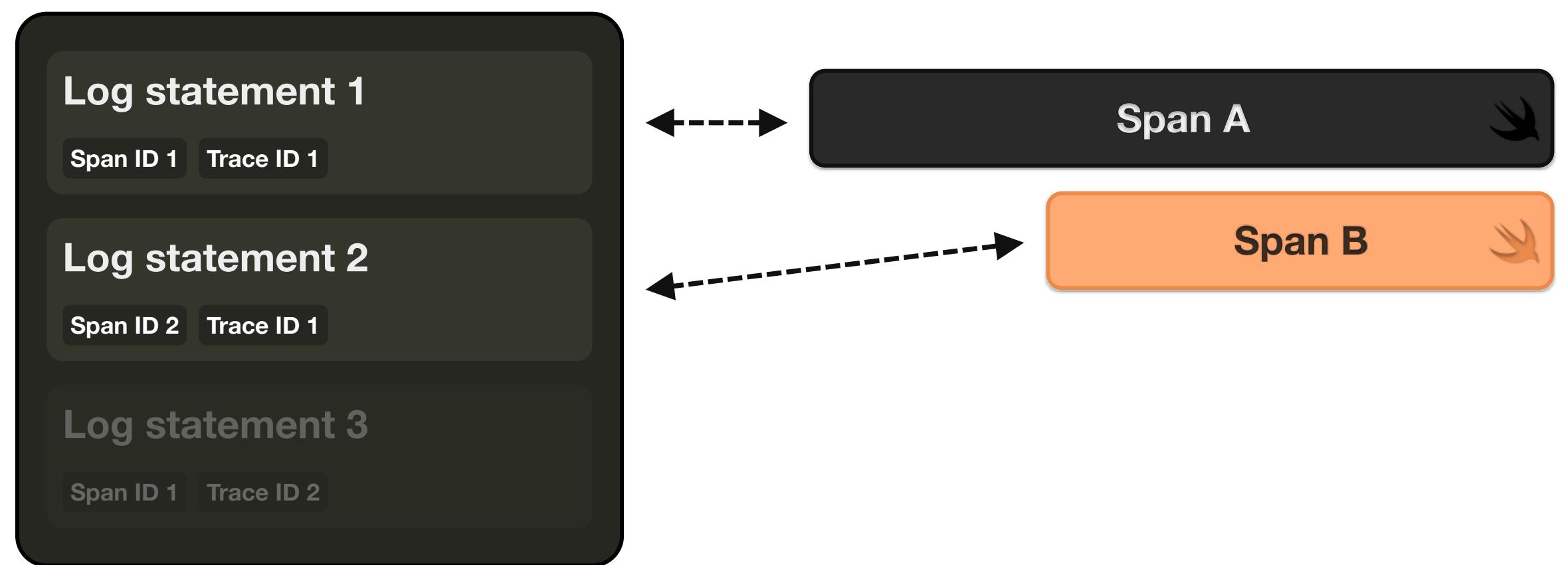


The screenshot shows a code editor window with the file `Instrument.swift` open. The file path is `services > product-catalog > .build > checkouts > swift-distributed-tracing > Sources > Instrumentation > Instrument.swift`. The code defines three protocols: `Extractor`, `Injector`, and `Instrument`. The `Extractor` protocol has methods for extracting values from a carrier. The `Injector` protocol has methods for injecting values into a carrier. The `Instrument` protocol extends these, adding methods to extract values from a carrier and inject them into a service context, and to inject values from a service context into a carrier.

```
14 import ServiceContextModule
15
16 /// Conforming types are used to extract values from a specific `Carrier`.
17 public protocol Extractor: Sendable {
18 /// The carrier to extract values from.
19 associatedtype Carrier: Sendable
20
21 > /// Extract the value for the given key from the `Carrier`...
22 func extract(key: String, from carrier: Carrier) -> String?
23 }
24
25 /// Conforming types are used to inject values into a specific `Carrier`.
26 public protocol Injector: Sendable {
27 /// The carrier to inject values into.
28 associatedtype Carrier: Sendable
29
30 > /// Inject the given value for the given key into the given `Carrier`...
31 func inject(_ value: String, forKey key: String, into carrier: inout Carrier)
32 }
33
34 /// Conforming types are usually cross-cutting tools like tracers. They are agnostic of what specific `Carrier` is used
35 /// to propagate metadata across boundaries, but instead just specify what values to use for which keys.
36 public protocol Instrument: Sendable {
37 > /// Extract values from a `Carrier` by using the given extractor and inject them into the given `ServiceContext`...
38 func extract<Carrier, Extract>(_ carrier: Carrier, into context: inout ServiceContext, using extractor: Extract)
39 where Extract: Extractor, Extract.Carrier = Carrier
40
41 > /// Extract values from a `ServiceContext` and inject them into the given `Carrier` using the given ``Injector``...
42 func inject<Carrier, Inject>(_ context: ServiceContext, into carrier: inout Carrier, using injector: Inject)
43 where Inject: Injector, Inject.Carrier = Carrier
44 }
```

# Tracing ❤ Logging

- Uses swift-log metadata providers
- Transforms task-local ServiceContext into log metadata





 Serve.swift 

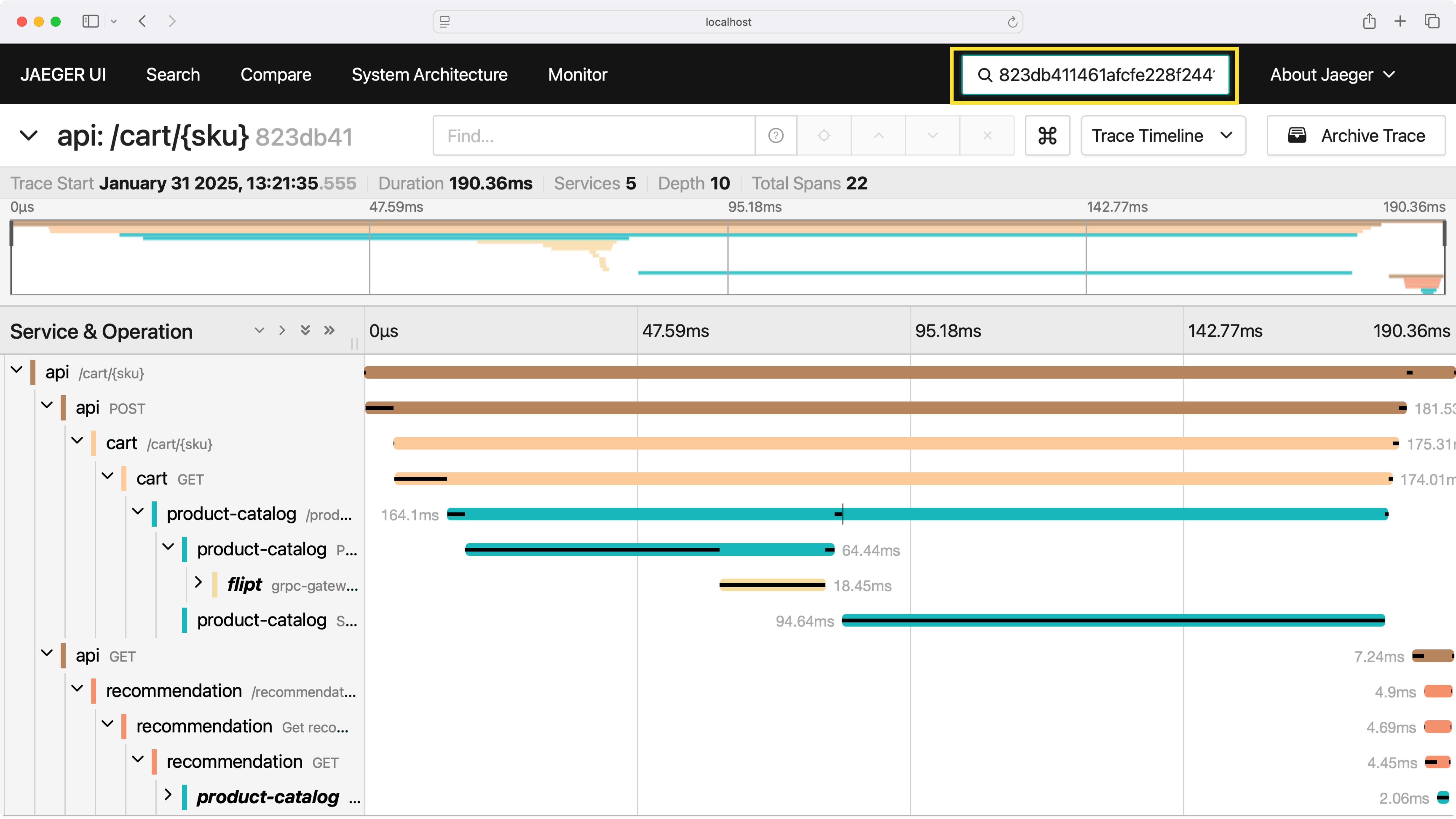


services > product-catalog > Sources > CTL > Commands >  Serve.swift >  Serve

```
16 struct Serve: AsyncParsableCommand {
17
18
19
20
21
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23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46 private func logger() -> Logger {
47 LoggingSystem.bootstrap { label in
48 var handler = StreamLogHandler.standardOutput(label: label, metadataProvider: .otel)
49 handler.logLevel = logLevel
50 return handler
51 }
52 return Logger(label: "product-catalog")
53 }
```

```
○ > ./build/debug/productcatalogctl serve trace_id=823db411461afcfe22 Aa ab .* 4 of 4 ↑ ↓ ×
2025-01-31T13:21:27+0100 info OTelPeriodicMetricsReader : interval=5.0 seconds [0.0] started periodically.
2025-01-31T13:21:27+0100 info product-catalog : [HummingbirdCore] Server started and listening on localhost:8080
2025-01-31T13:21:35+0100 info product-catalog : hb.request.id=c5da83ebbbc91847abb6428641cc7849 hb.request.method=GET hb.request.path=/products/FOSDEM-2025-STK-001 span_id=1bf82b3f1dd16b16 trace_flags=1 trace_id=823db411461afcfe228f2441bef4a936 [Hummingbird] Request
2025-01-31T13:21:35+0100 info product-catalog : sku=FOSDEM-2025-STK-001 span_id=1bf82b3f1dd16b16 trace_flags=1 trace_id=823db411461afcfe228f2441bef4a936 [API] Fetched product by SKU.
2025-01-31T13:21:35+0100 info product-catalog : hb.request.id=c5da83ebbbc91847abb6428641cc784a hb.request.method=GET hb.request.path=/products span_id=85f8f057464e9ea0 trace_flags=1 trace_id=823db411461afcfe228f2441bef4a936 [Hummingbird] Request
2025-01-31T13:21:35+0100 info product-catalog : count=5 span_id=85f8f057464e9ea0 trace_flags=1 trace_id=823db411461afcfe228f2441bef4a936 [API] Fetched products.
```







- Open observability standard
- Supports Logging, Metrics, and Distributed Tracing
- OpenTelemetry Protocol (OTLP)
- Supported by various observability tools

# Swift OTel



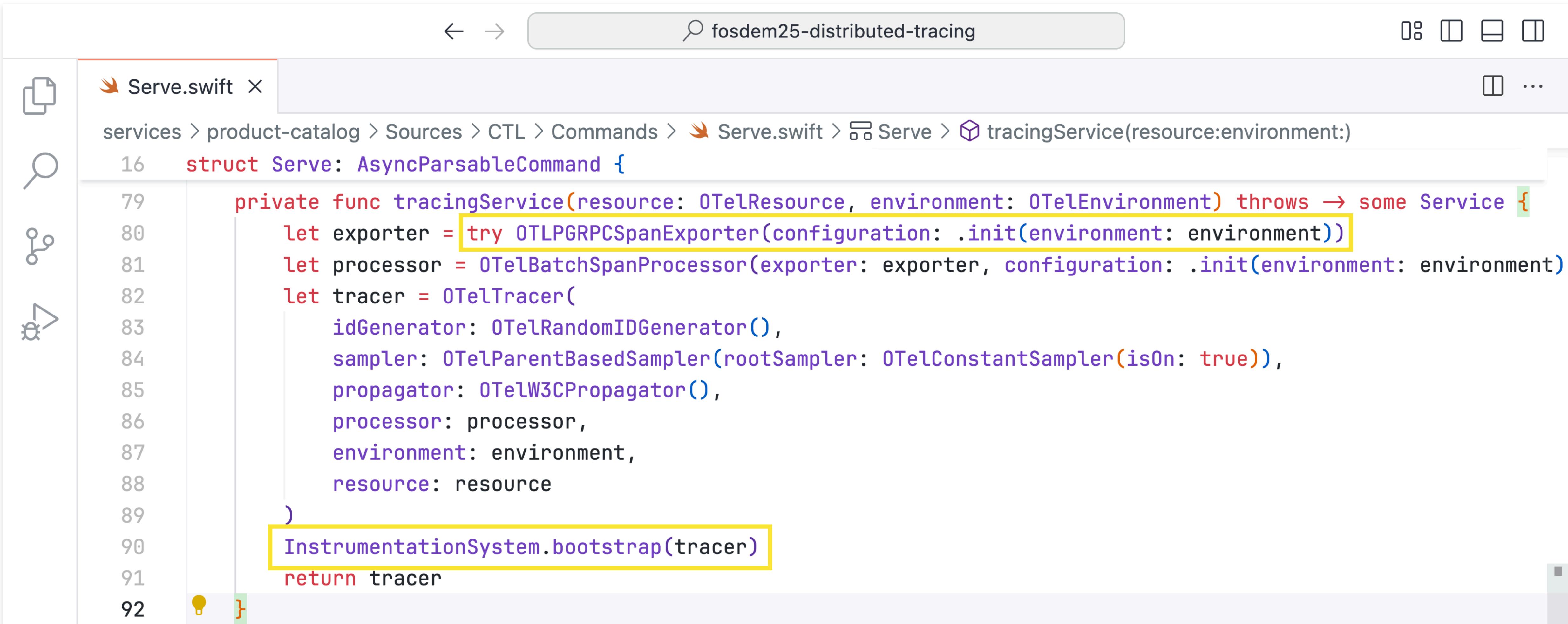
[github.com/swift-otel/swift-otel](https://github.com/swift-otel/swift-otel)

- OTLP exporters for Server-Side Swift
- Conforms to Tracer protocol
- Supports Metrics

# Swift OTel



## Tracer Bootstrap



The screenshot shows a code editor interface with the following details:

- Title Bar:** Shows the search bar with the text "fosdem25-distributed-tracing".
- File List:** On the left, there are icons for file operations (New, Open, Save, Find, Connect, Disconnect) and a sidebar showing the file structure: services > product-catalog > Sources > CTL > Commands > Serve.swift.
- Code Editor:** The main area displays the `Serve.swift` file content. The code defines a `Serve` struct that implements `AsyncParsableCommand`. It contains a private function `tracingService` that creates an `OTelTracer` using `OTLPGRPCSpanExporter` and `OTelBatchSpanProcessor`. The `InstrumentationSystem.bootstrap(tracer)` call is highlighted with a yellow box. The code is numbered from 16 to 92.

```
16 struct Serve: AsyncParsableCommand {
17 private func tracingService(resource: OTelResource, environment: OTelEnvironment) throws → some Service {
18 let exporter = try OTLPGRPCSpanExporter(configuration: .init(environment: environment))
19 let processor = OTelBatchSpanProcessor(exporter: exporter, configuration: .init(environment: environment))
20 let tracer = OTelTracer(
21 idGenerator: OTelRandomIDGenerator(),
22 sampler: OTelParentBasedSampler(rootSampler: OTelConstantSampler(isOn: true)),
23 propagator: OTelW3CPropagator(),
24 processor: processor,
25 environment: environment,
26 resource: resource
27)
28 InstrumentationSystem.bootstrap(tracer)
29 return tracer
30 }
31 }
```

# Next Steps



- Log exporting in Swift OTEL
- Built-in Swift Distributed Tracing in more libraries
  - Database drivers
  - AsyncHTTPClient ([swift-server/async-http-client/pull/320](#))
- Swift OTEL 1.0

# Links



Swift Distributed Tracing



Swift OTEL

