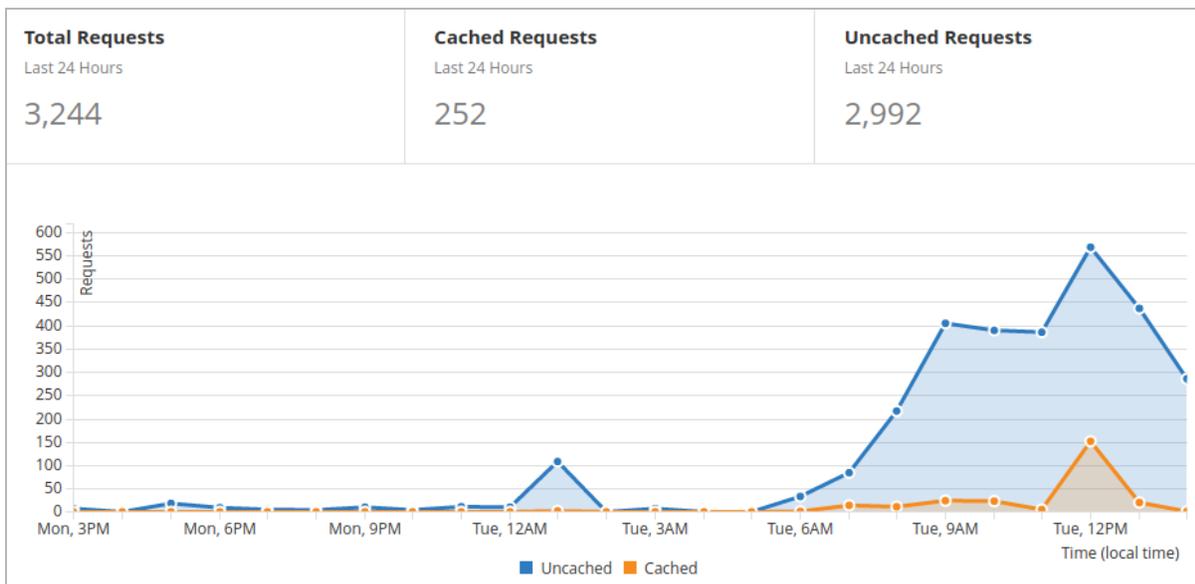**thedank.chat** was an experimental website that I made over the course of a week when school got out last Summer. It was moderately successful, with 100+ individual users and over 25,000 total web hits. I didn't expect it to get that many users that fast, so eventually the server crashed. It reached the top of a few subreddits at reddit.com, which generated a lot of the traffic.
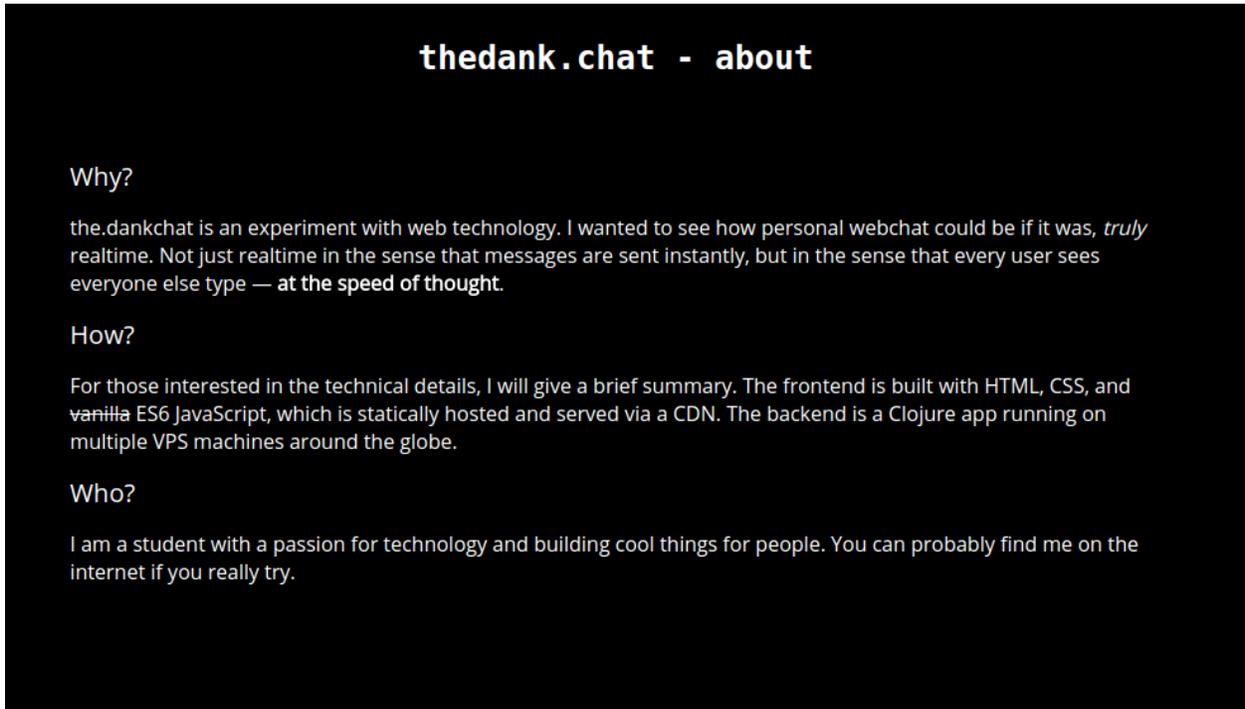
The website's main attraction was that it was a novel way to communicate in real time, despite being text-based. I used WebSockets as a real time transport protocol to relay each letter of the keyboard as it was typed. This gave the impression that the user was typing directly to the other users, in a similar fashion to speaking. Each word arrived one by one, letter by letter, as if the person was right next to you. Every time a new user joined, the chat window would divide in half to accommodate. I considered naming the chat "amoeba.chat" instead, but after talking with some friends we decided that the name "thedank.chat" would be more likely to go viral online. I think that it was the wrong decision in retrospect and I plan on rebranding and relaunching the website when I get the chance.

The best way to learn a new programming language is to program with it. I heard about Clojure and its functional benefits, so I decided to make this site to learn the language. Once someone is proficient at programming, it isn't that hard to pick up another language. The big ideas carry over for the most part. It's only the idiosyncrasies of each language that are truly difficult. I used Clojure for the backend and Javascript for the frontend. The entire website was about 2500 lines of code in total and I ran it on a $5/month VPS from DigitialOcean.

Here's a screenshot of the analytics on day 1:

Screenshot of the about page:

thedank.chat - about

Why?

the.dankchat is an experiment with web technology. I wanted to see how personal webchat could be if it was, *truly* realtime. Not just realtime in the sense that messages are sent instantly, but in the sense that every user sees everyone else type — **at the speed of thought**.

How?

For those interested in the technical details, I will give a brief summary. The frontend is built with HTML, CSS, and ~~vanilla~~ ES6 JavaScript, which is statically hosted and served via a CDN. The backend is a Clojure app running on multiple VPS machines around the globe.

Who?

I am a student with a passion for technology and building cool things for people. You can probably find me on the internet if you really try.

Screenshot of the home page:

thedank.chat

@bot ball. @bot ball. @bot ball!

Choose your server:

demo ▼ #1 ▼

connecting...

next

demo #1
users
in
public rooms
private rooms

Screenshot of some users online chatting:


```
average newt
 what's up everyone?
 haha i don't know where to look there's so much typing happening
 how sad is it that "average newt" is my autogenerated name...
 I was curious to see what would happen if i left it blank
 just googled newts, they're actually pretty cool so i'm okay with th
 e name now

 we should trank h
```

```
delightful dragon
 Welcome back, folks.
 Anyone catch the Ubisoft E3 conference dance?
 They did a dance number of Don't Stop Me Now
 used to be a poet/but my new rhymes don't flow it
 back from the plane/with rhymes so germane
 oppressed by the powers/the average newt cowers
 newts are cute
 a little bit poetryt
```

```
faithful armadillo
 hi guys!

 no
```

```
sofi123
 Ah, I see I've stumbled upon a poetry session.
```