Serverless Computation with OpenLambda

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Web development in the cloud

CDN: static content (e.g., JavaScript)

Compute: dynamic logic (e.g., Python)

Storage: application data

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(Lambdas)

prior to the Lambda model, cloud compute was neither elastic nor pay-as-you-go

Outline

Evolution of compute

Non-conventional virtualization

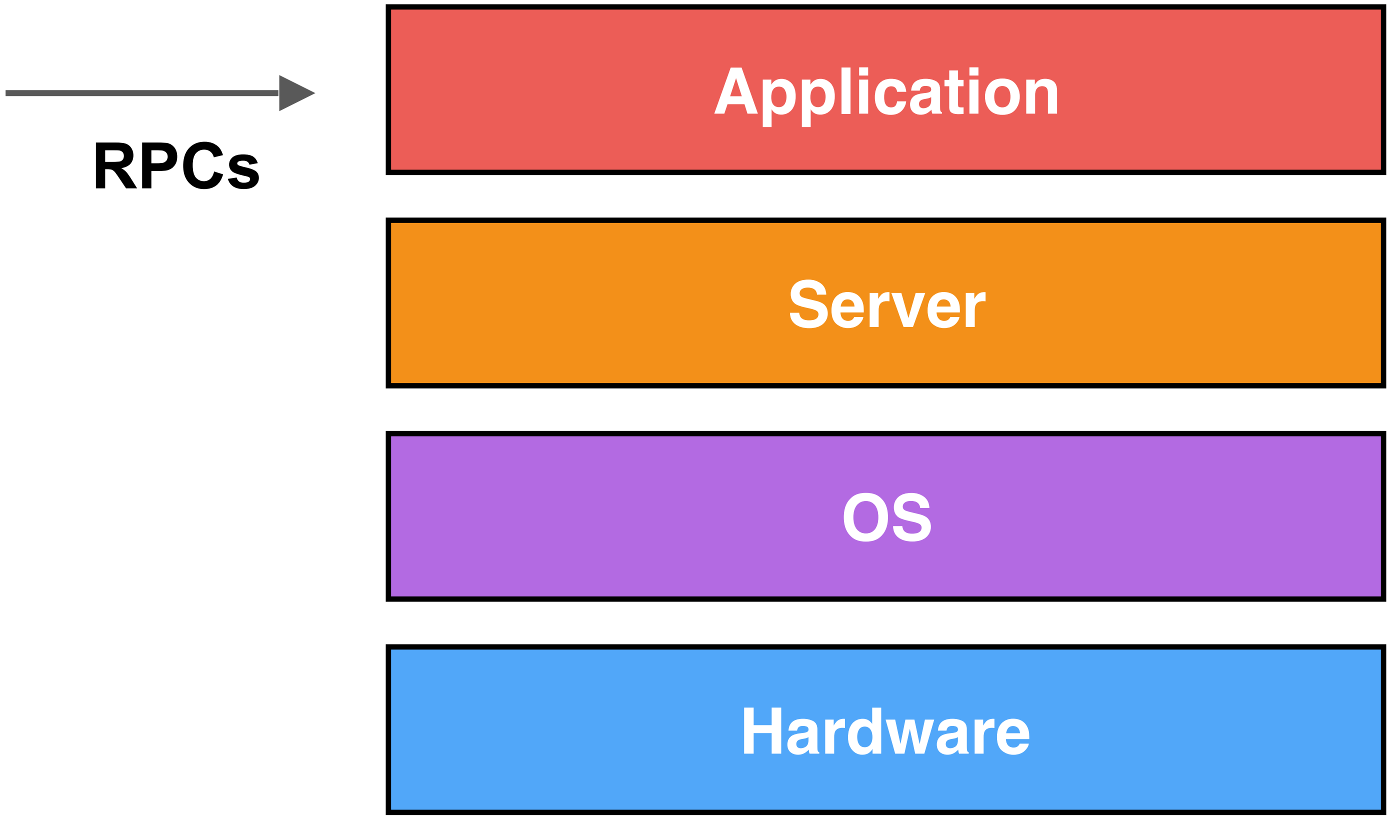
Lambda model

Why OpenLambda?

Conclusion

How to virtualize compute?

Classic web stack



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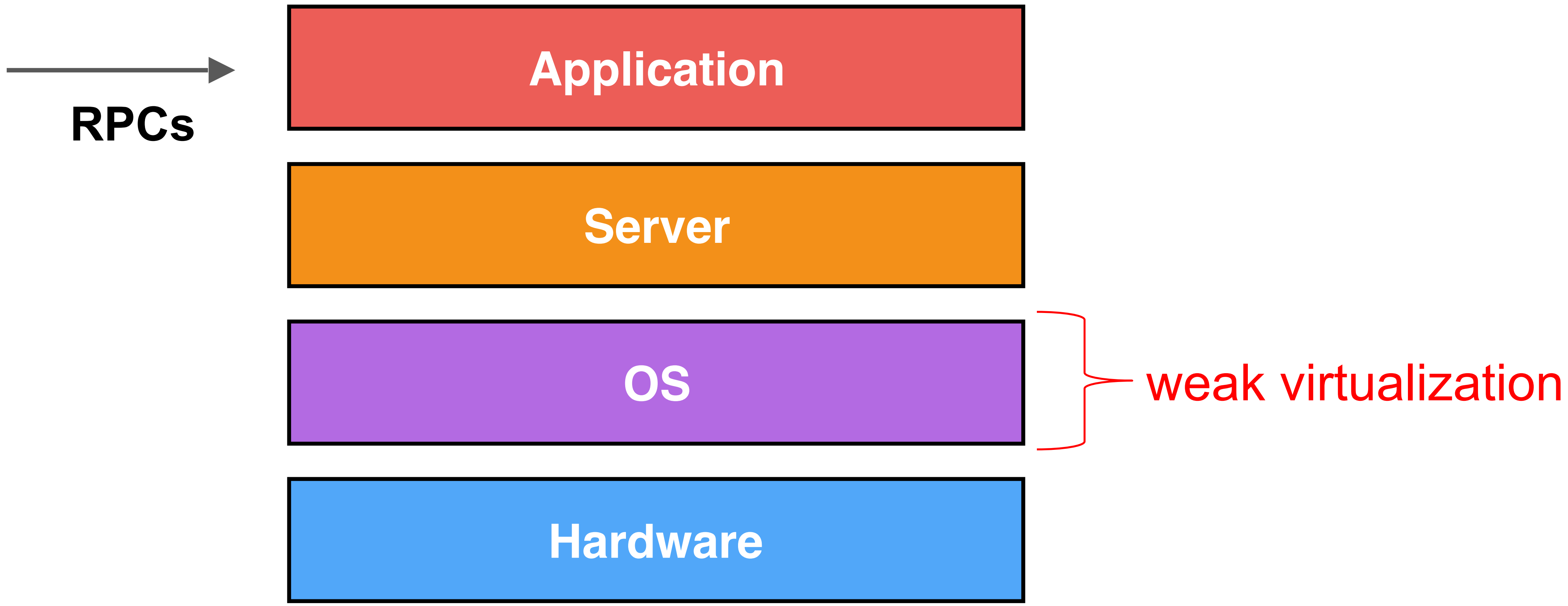
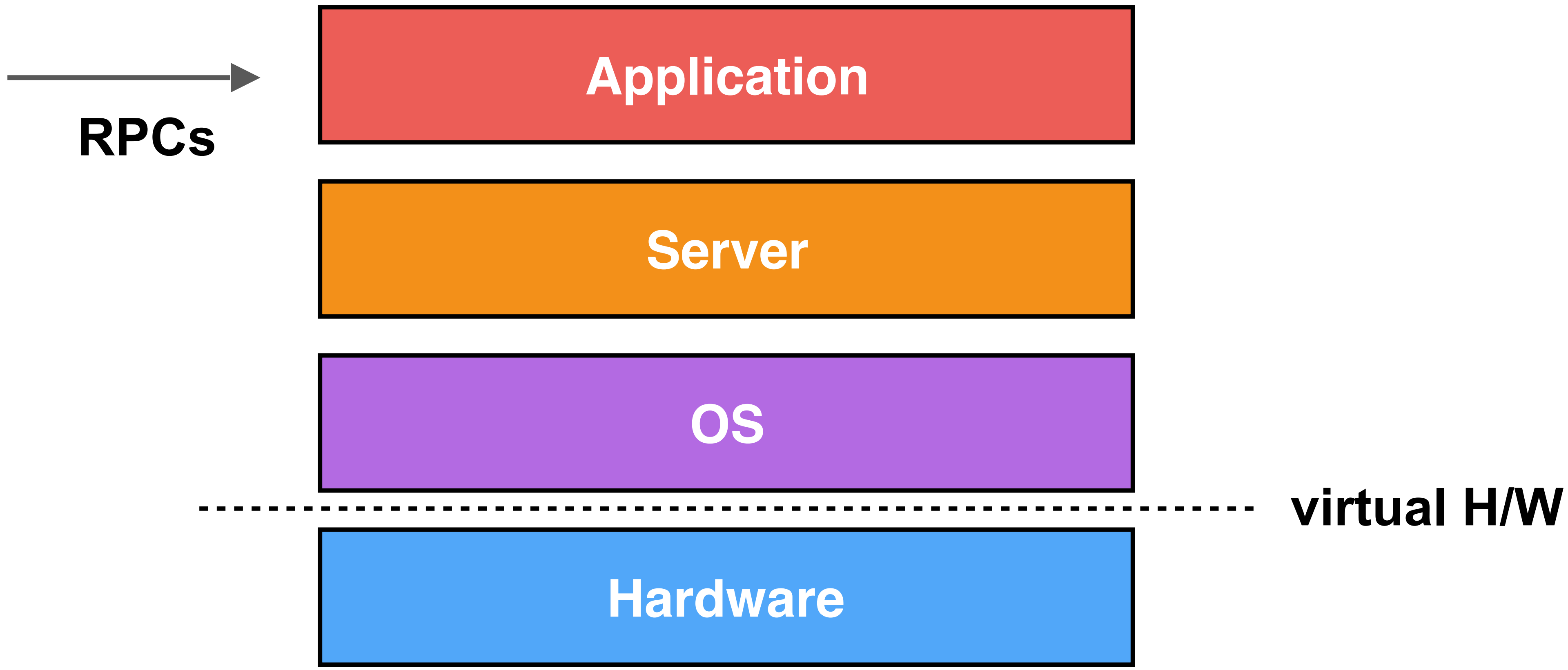


1st generation: virtual machines



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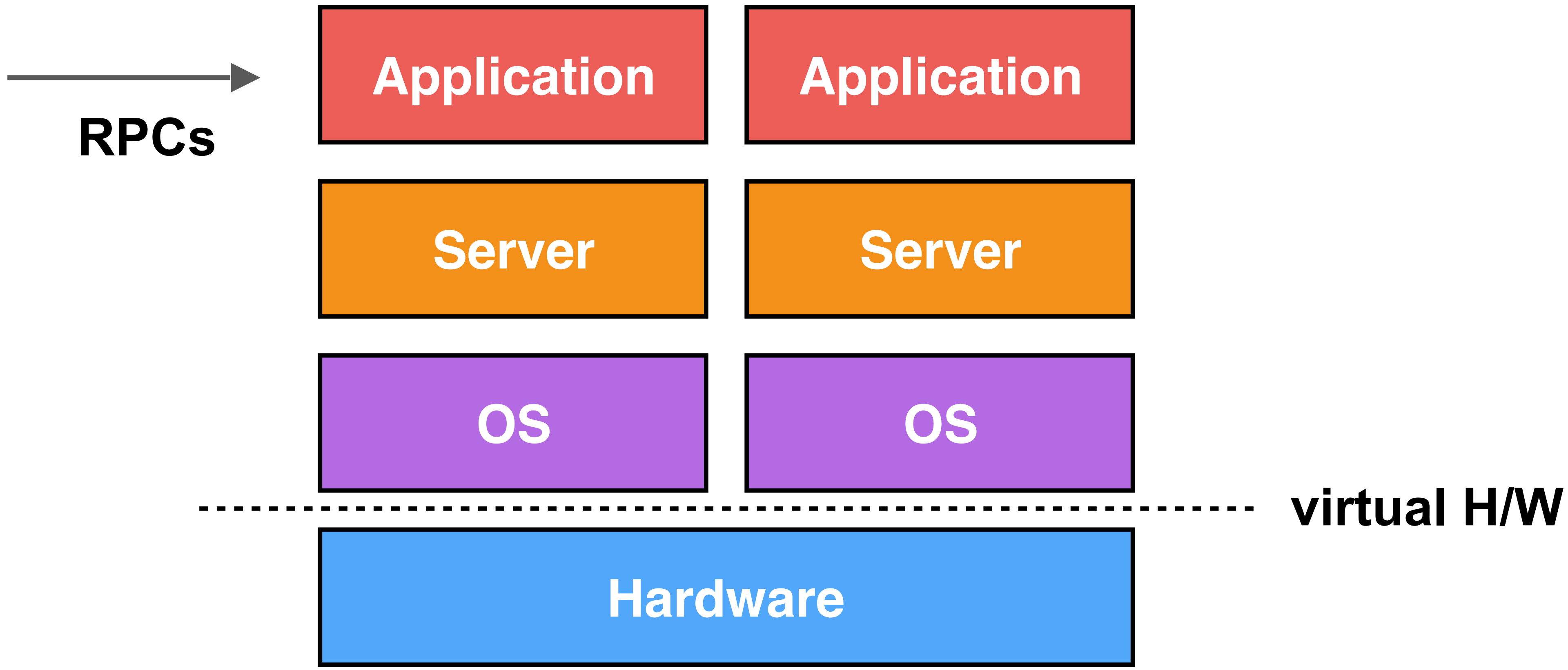

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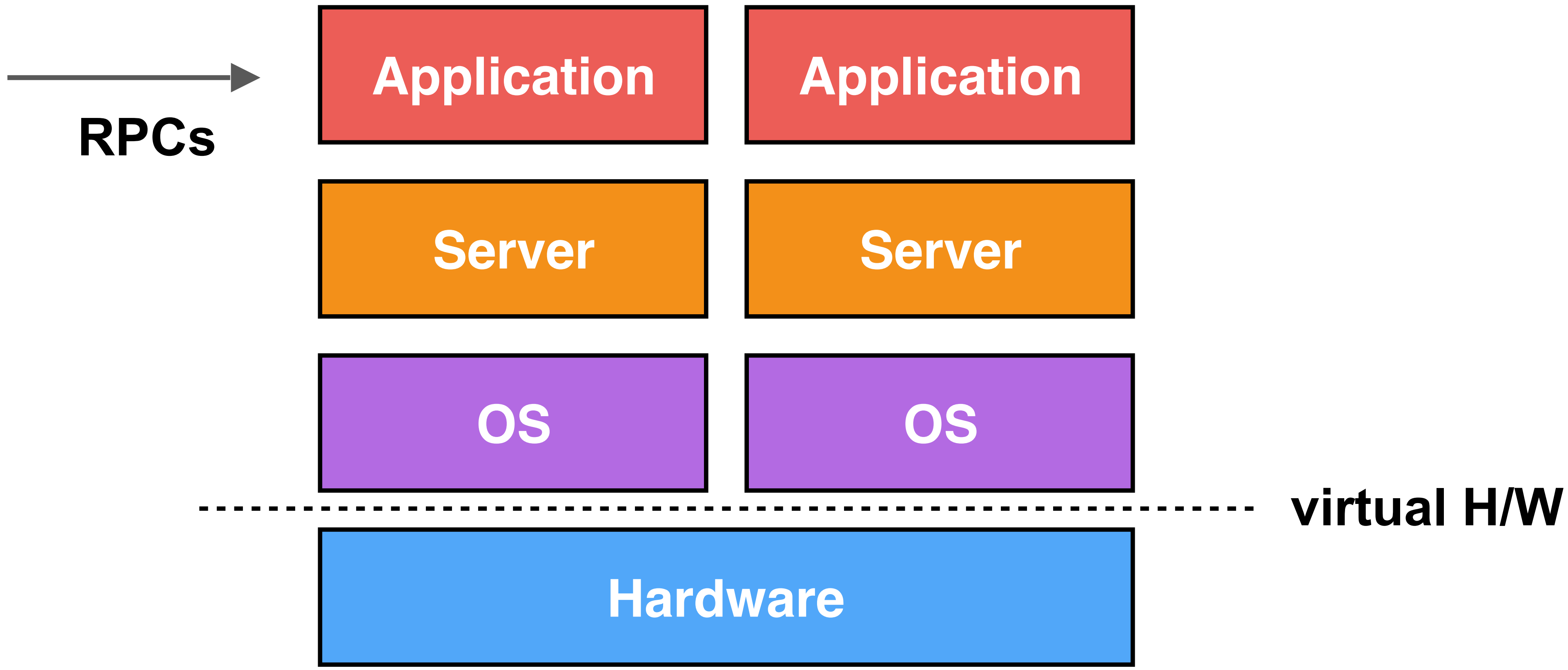


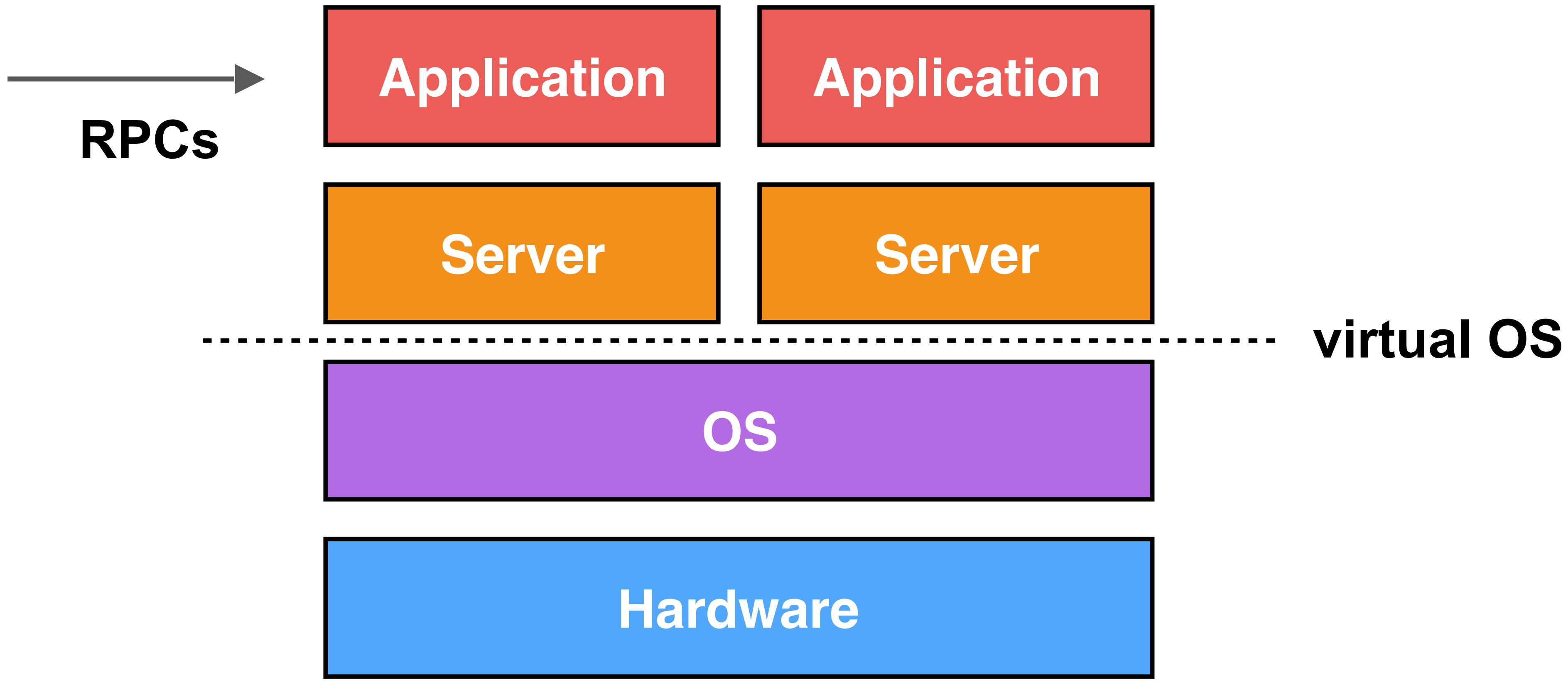
advantages:

- very flexible
- use any OS

problems:

- interposition
- is RAM used? (ballooning)
- redundancy (e.g., FS journal)

2nd generation: containers



advantages:

- centralized view
- init H/W once

Are containers good enough?

Container case studies

Literature: Google Borg

- Internal container platform [1]
- 25 second median startup
- 80% of time spent on package installation
- matters for flash crowds, load balance, interactive development, etc

[1] Large-scale cluster management at Google with Borg.
http://static.googleusercontent.com/media/research.google.com/en//pubs/archive/43438.pdf

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Experimental: Amazon Elastic Beanstalk

- Autoscaling cloud service
- Build applications as containerized servers, service RPCs
- Rules dictate when to start/stop (various factors)

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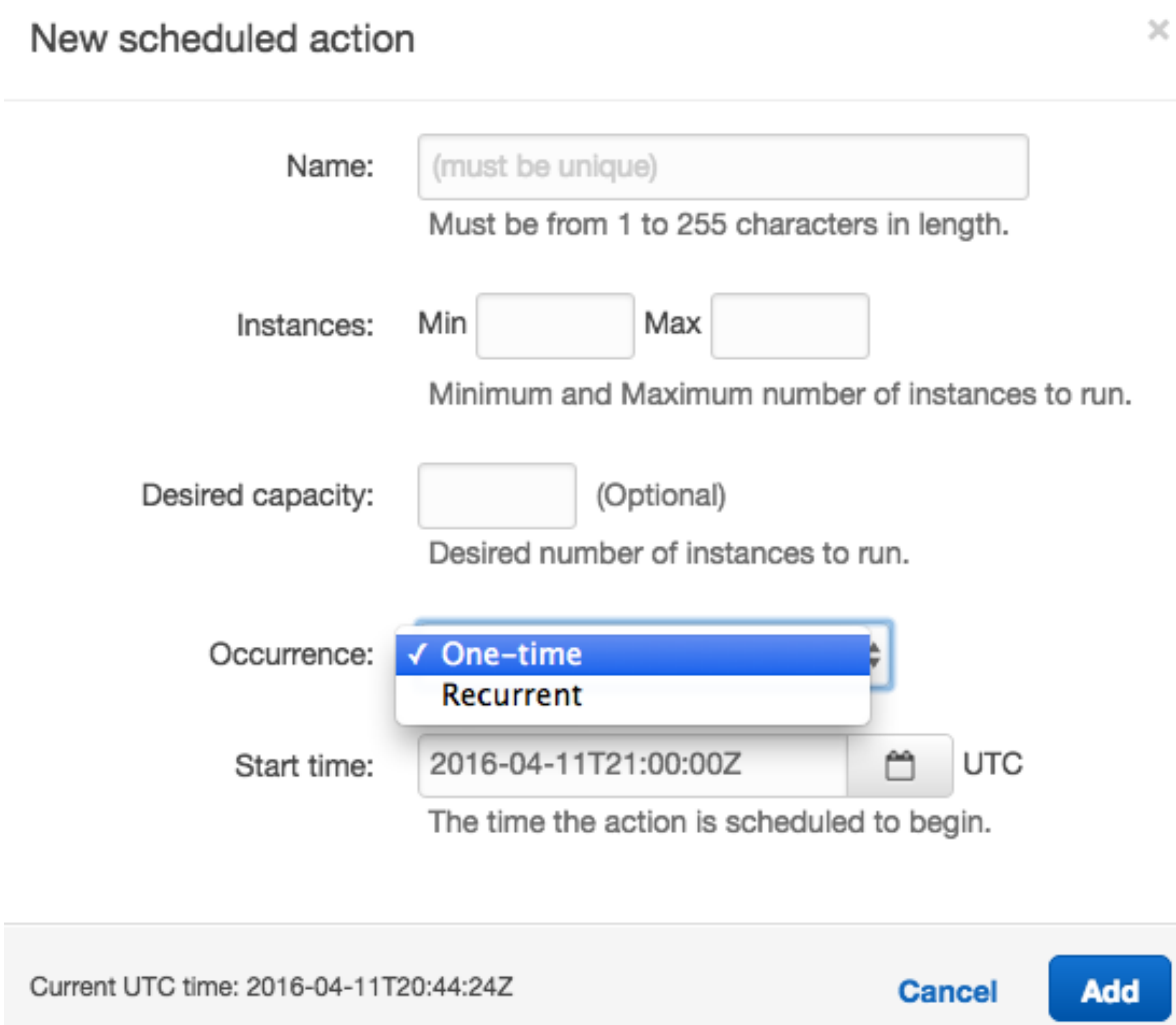
Interesting "autoscaling" rule

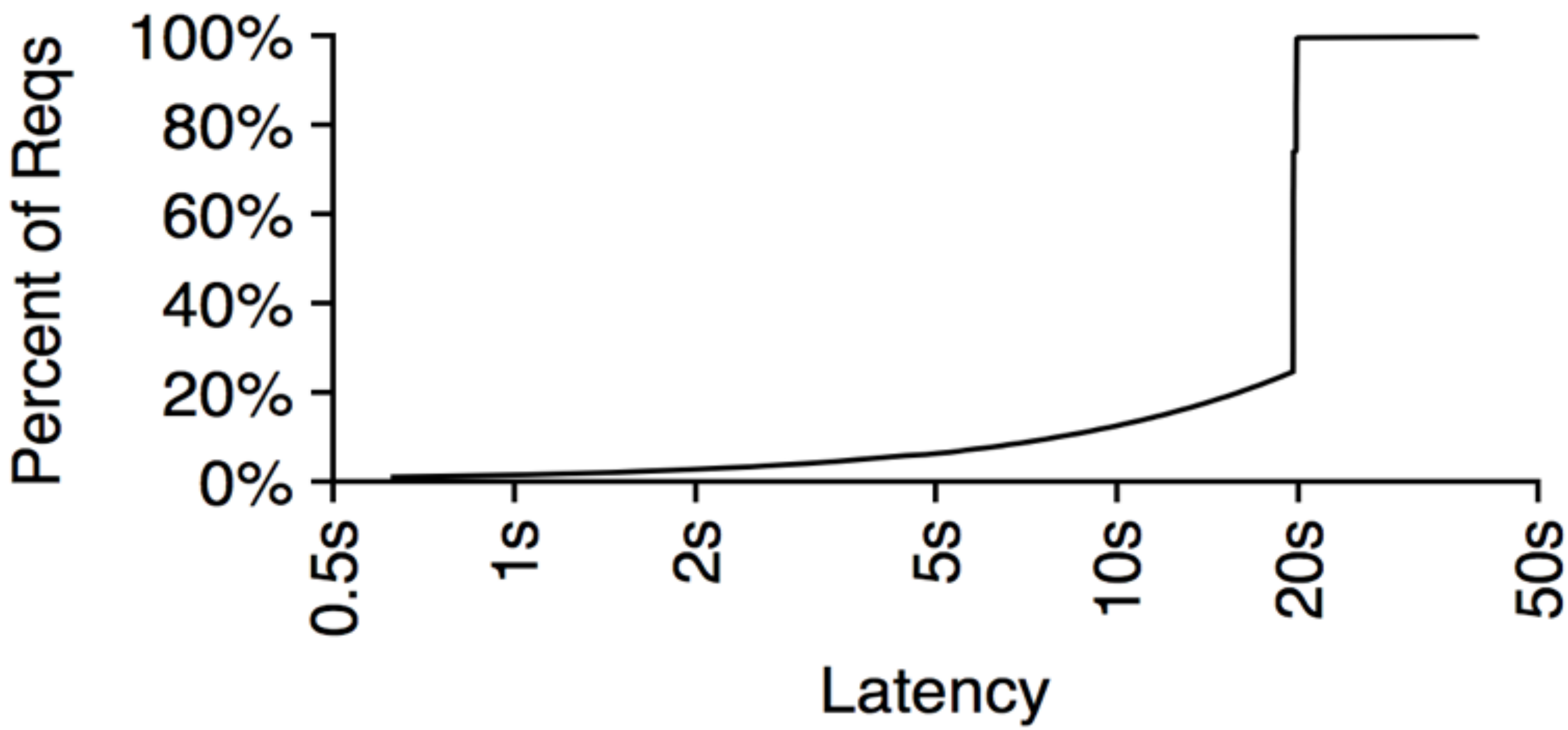


Experiment

Simulate a small short burst

- Maintain **100 concurrent requests**
- Use **200 ms** of compute per request
- Run for **1 minute**

Container Case Study: Elastic Beanstalk



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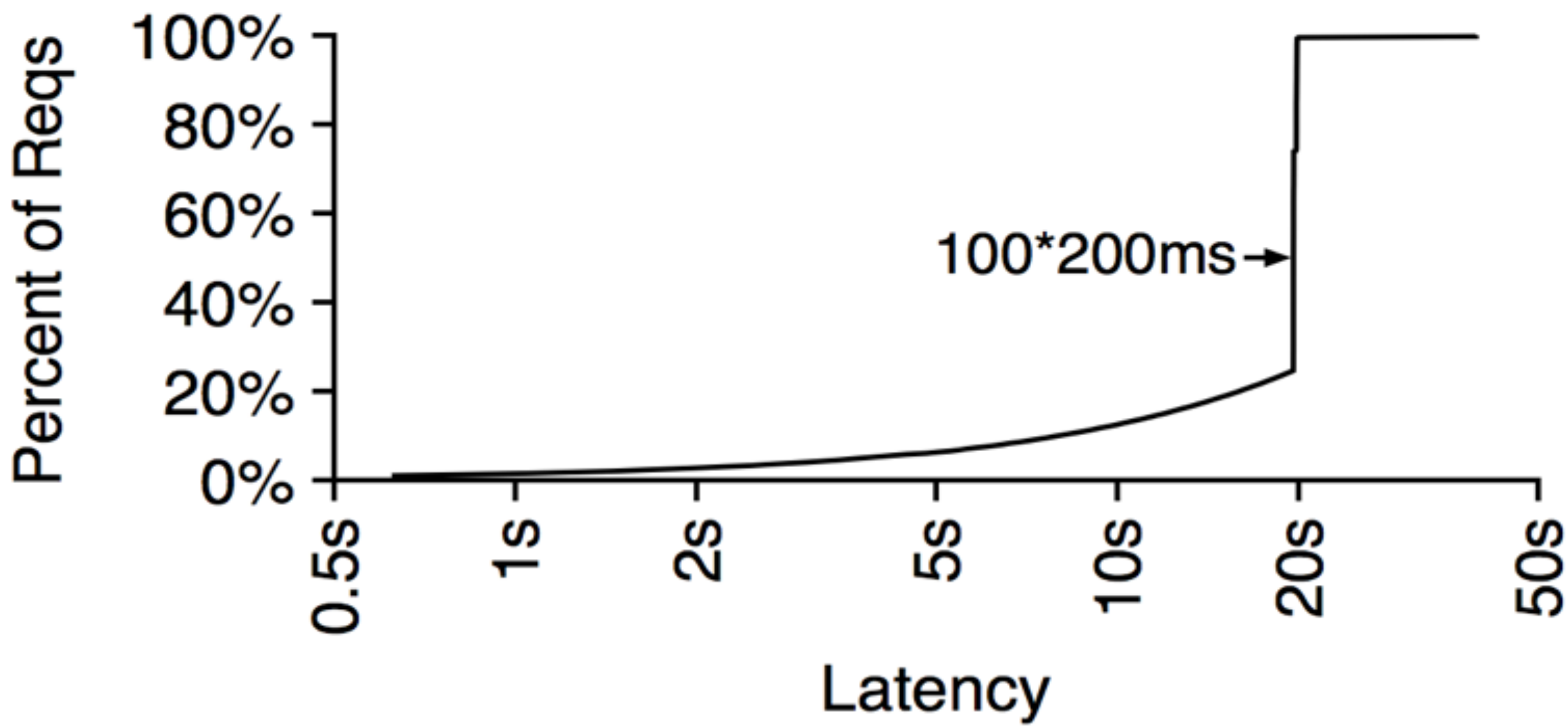

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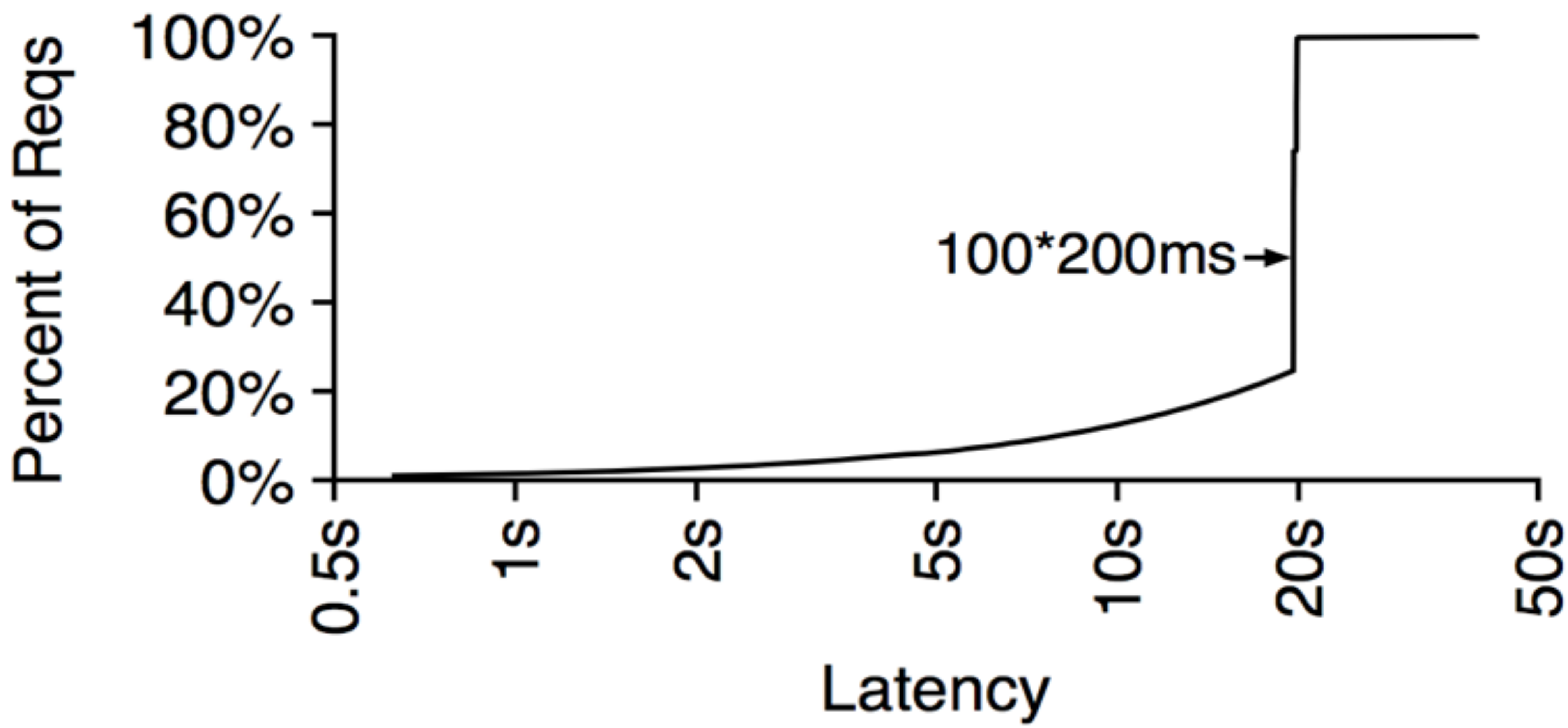
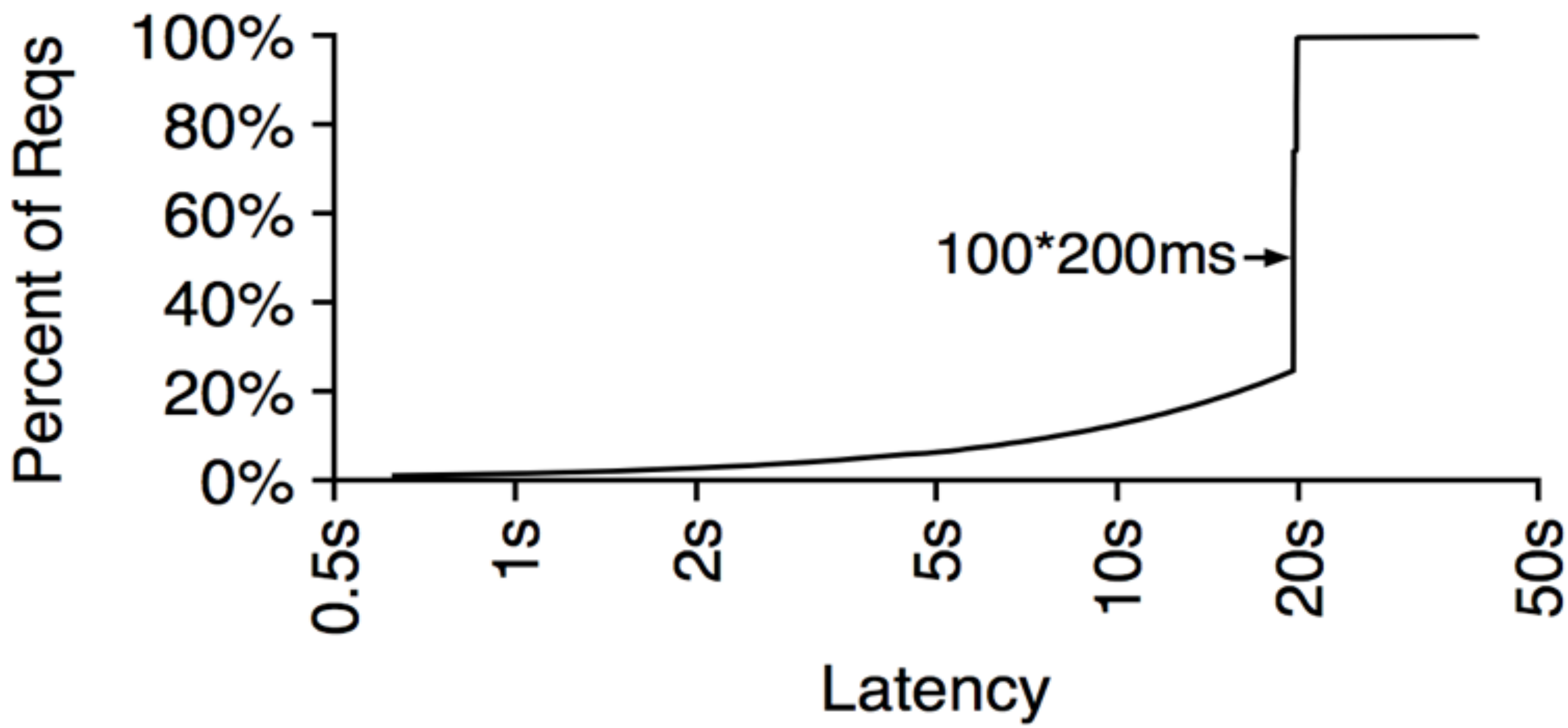


Conclusion: Elastic Beanstalk does not scale quickly enough to handle load bursts.

Container Case Study: ~~Elastic Beanstalk~~ Elastic BS



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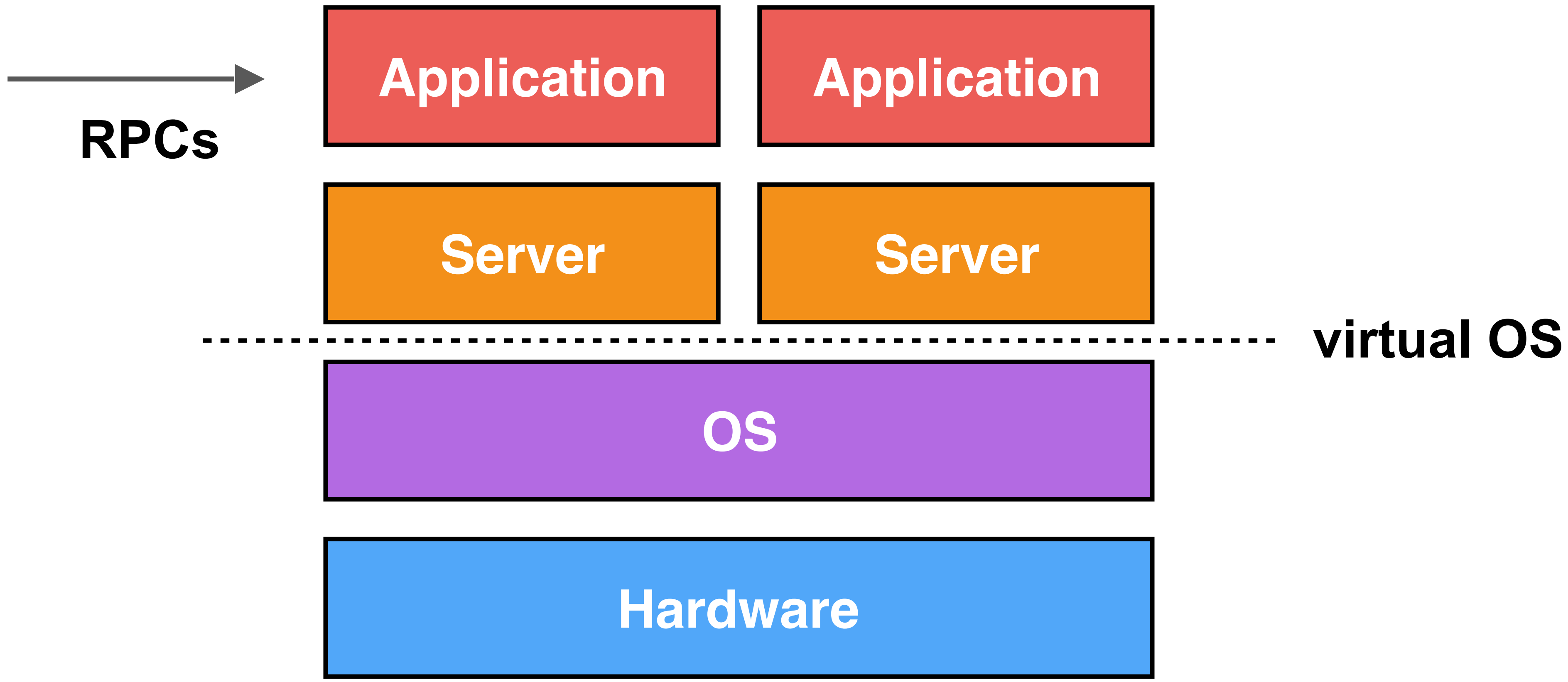
Why should it take minutes (or even seconds) to execute scripts that are <1000s of LOC?

2nd generation: containers



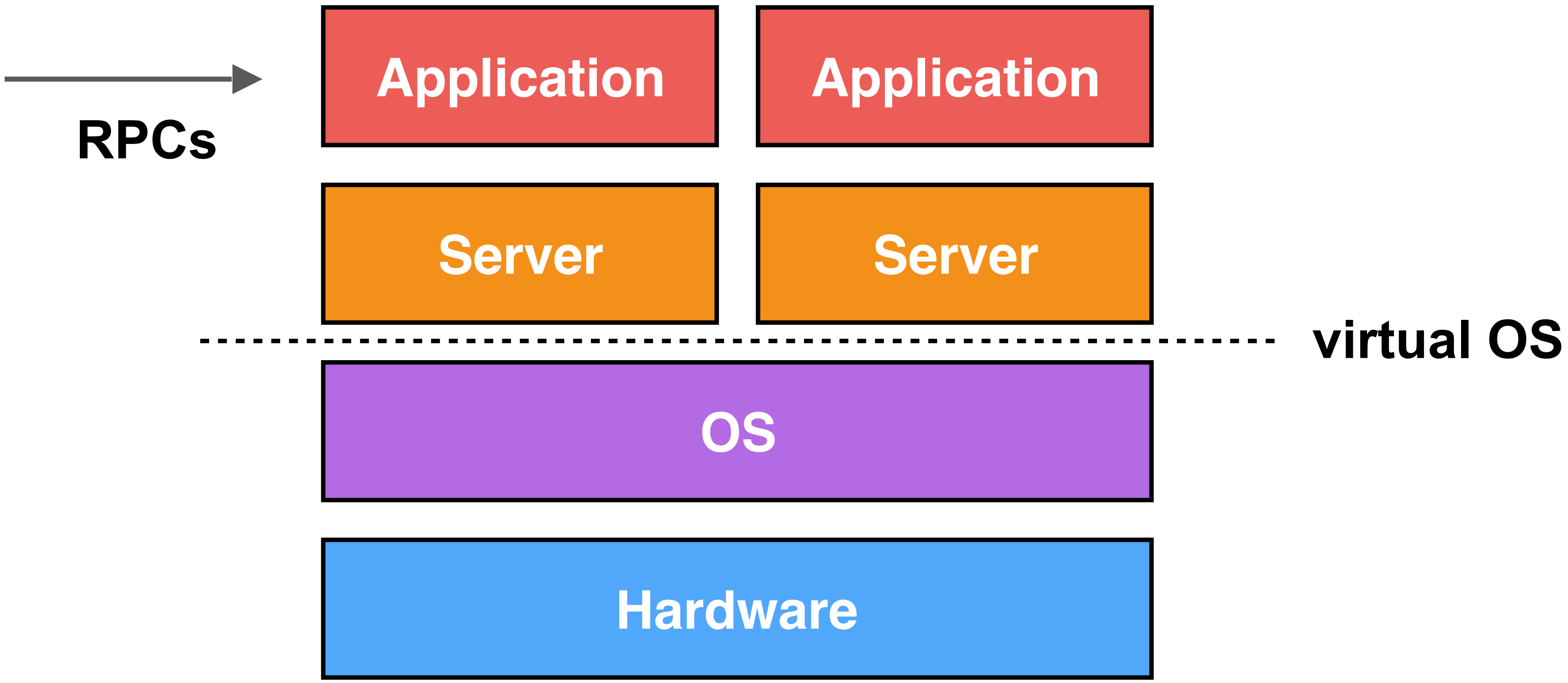
advantages:

- centralized view
- init H/W once

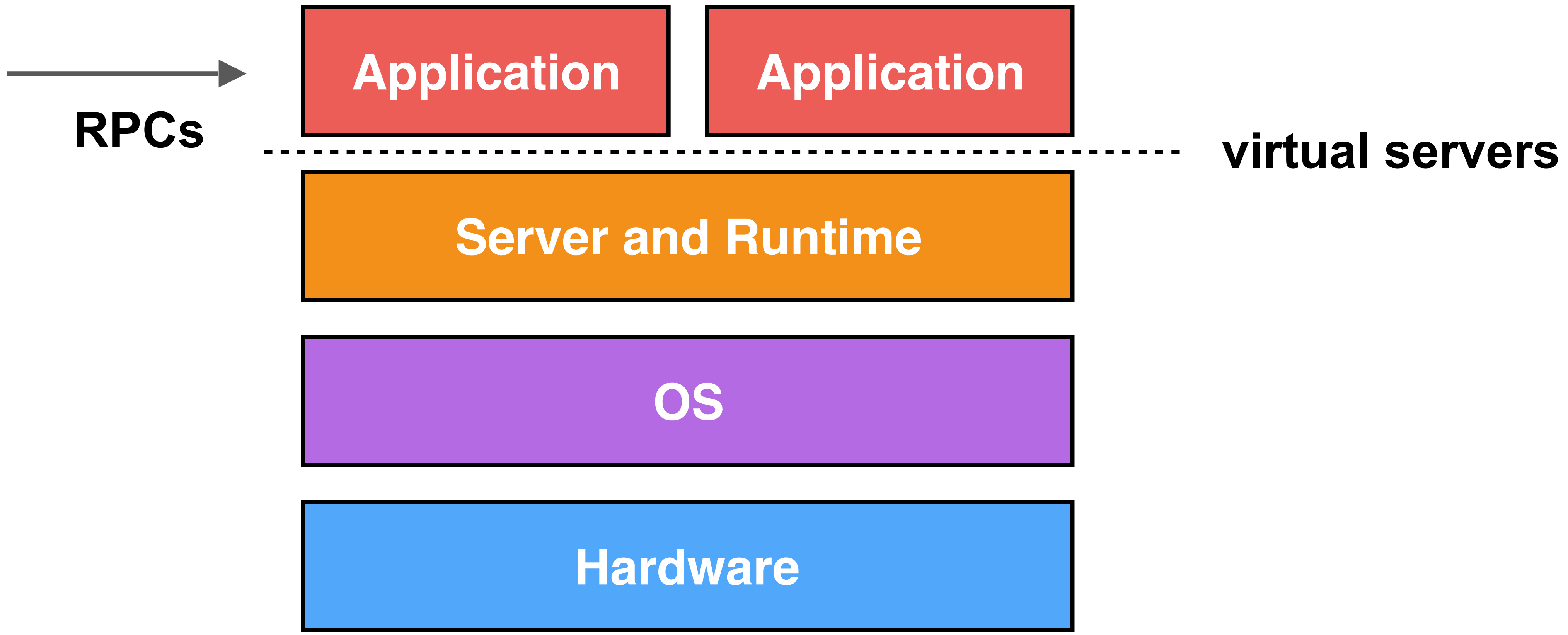
problems:

- large deployment bundle
- server spinup

2nd generation: containers



3rd generation: Lambdas



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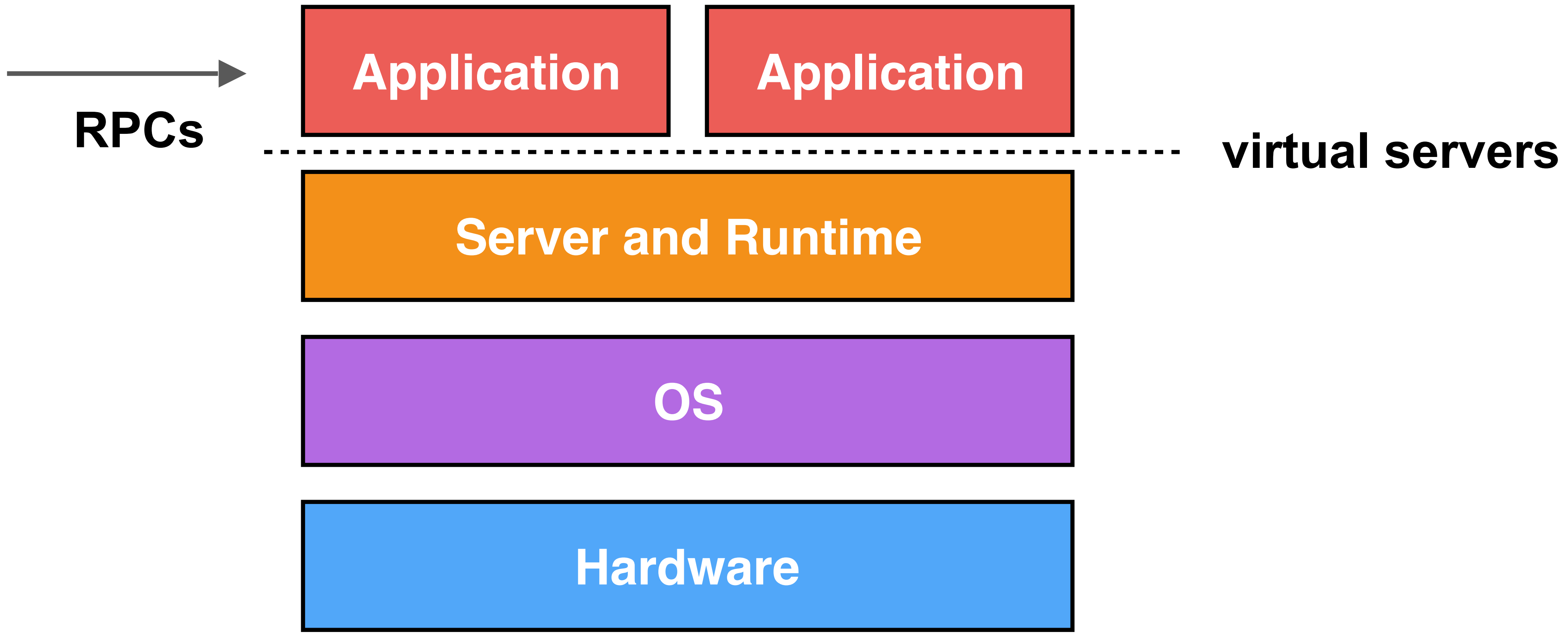

serverless computing

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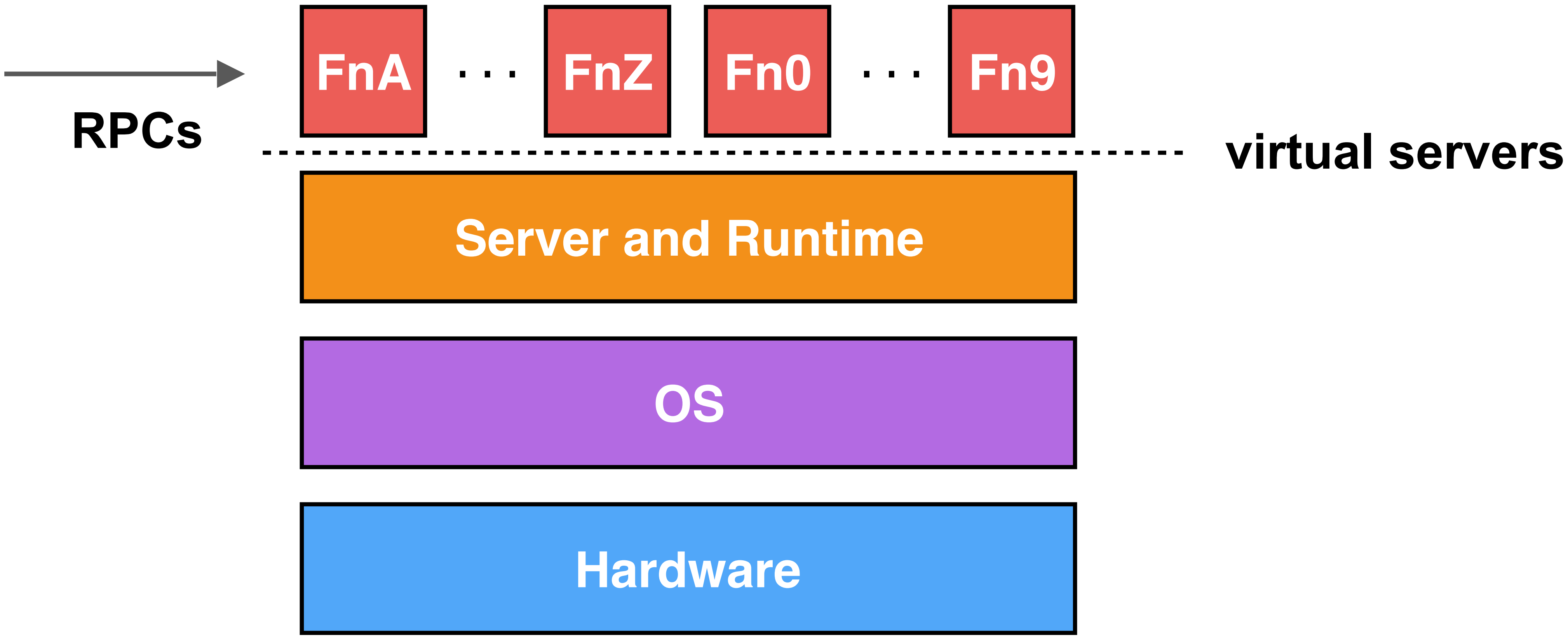
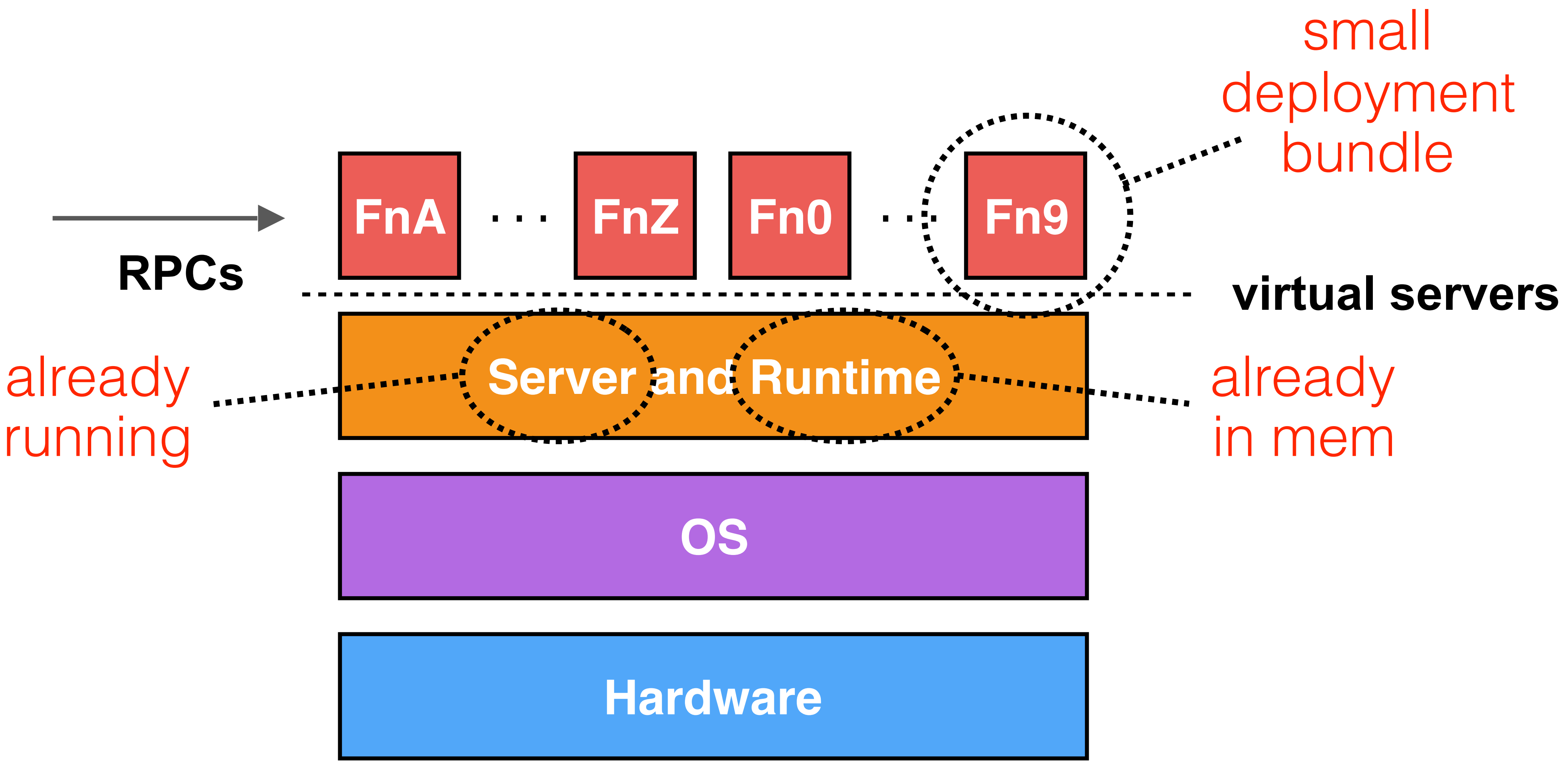


decompose application

3rd generation: Lambdas



advantages:

- very fast startup
- agile deployment
- share memory

problems:

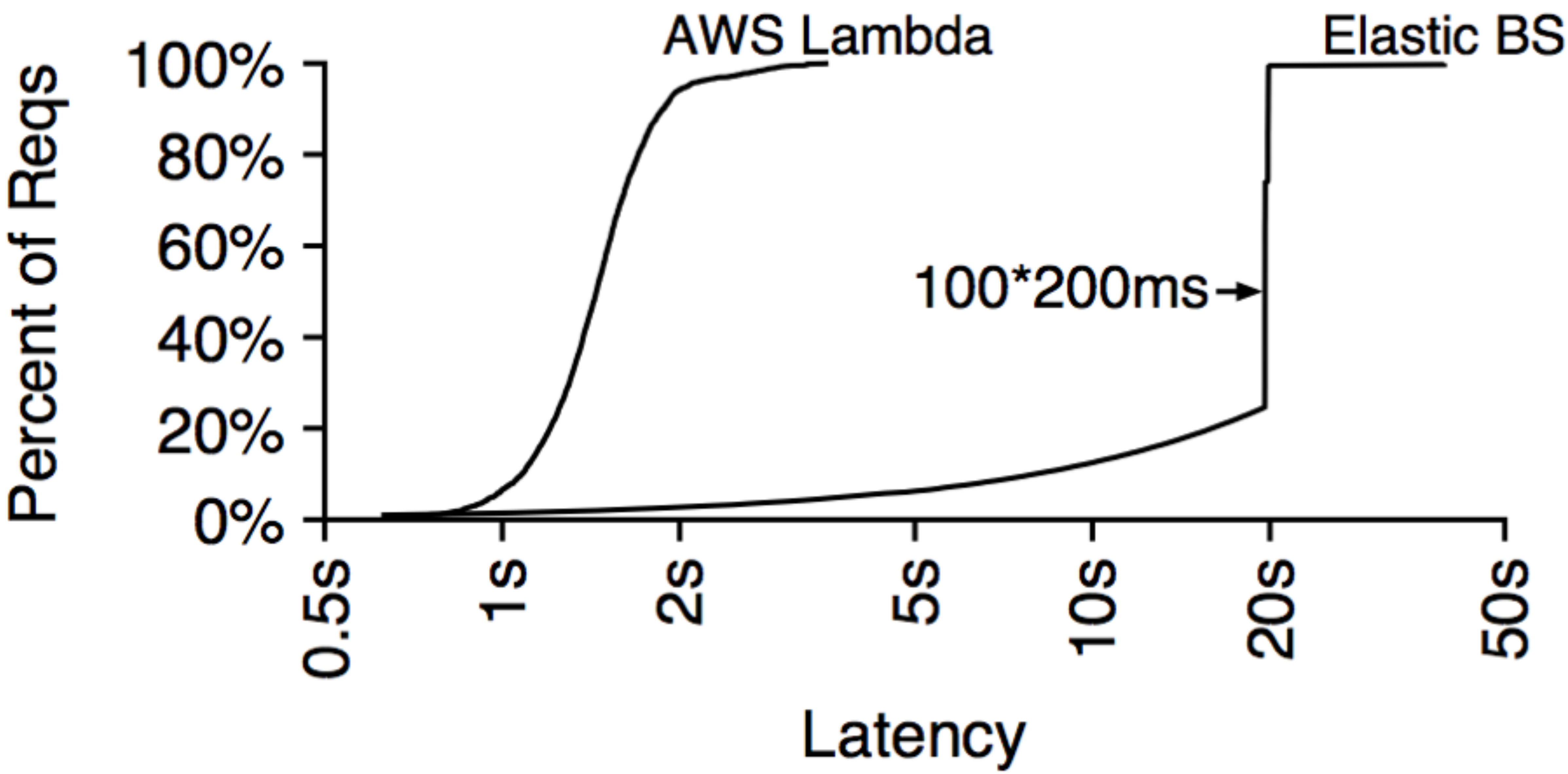
- not flexible

Lambda elasticity

Repeat ElasticBS experiment

- Maintain **100 concurrent requests**
- Spin **200 ms** per request
- Run for **1 minute**

Lambda elasticity



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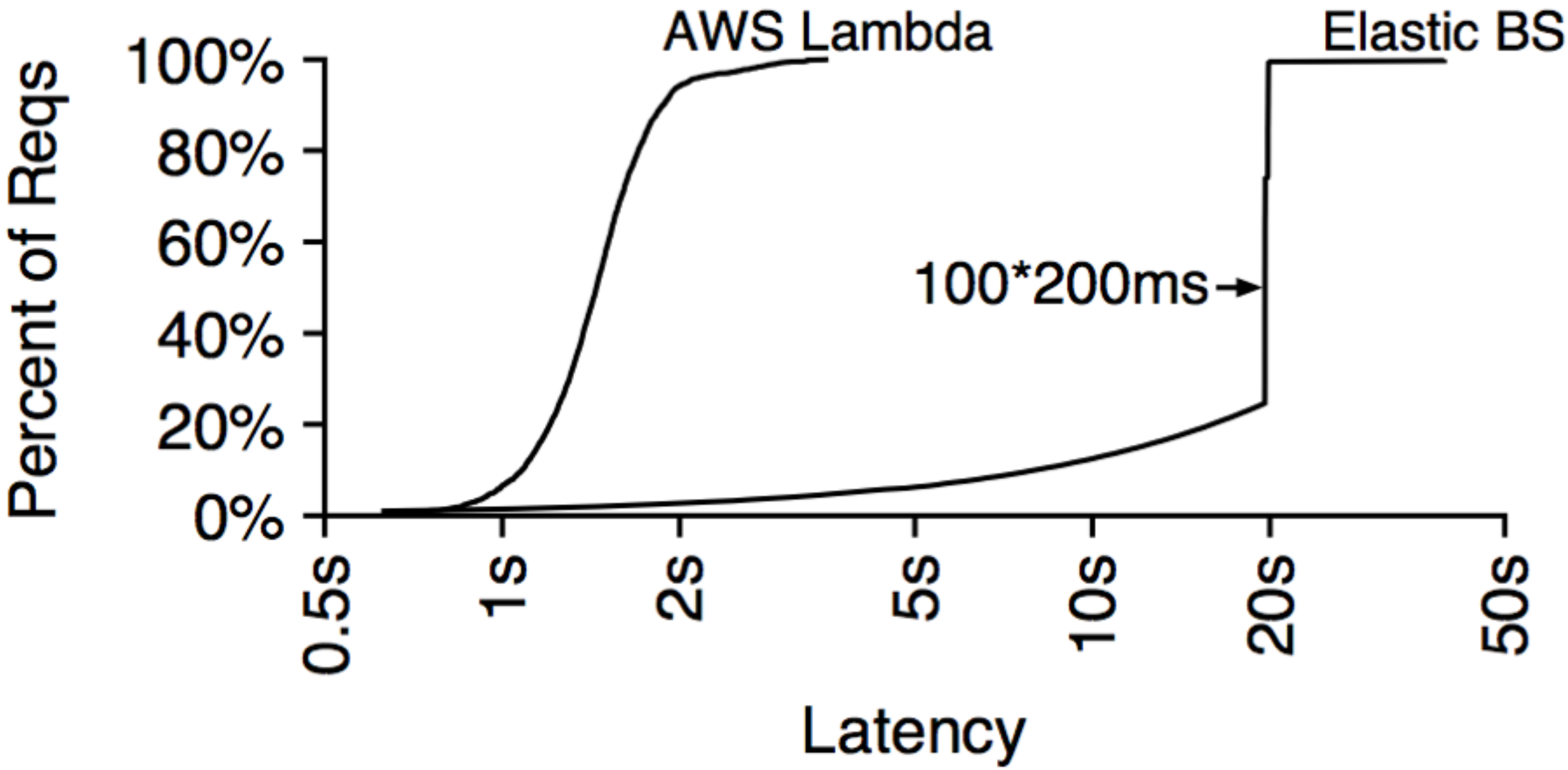
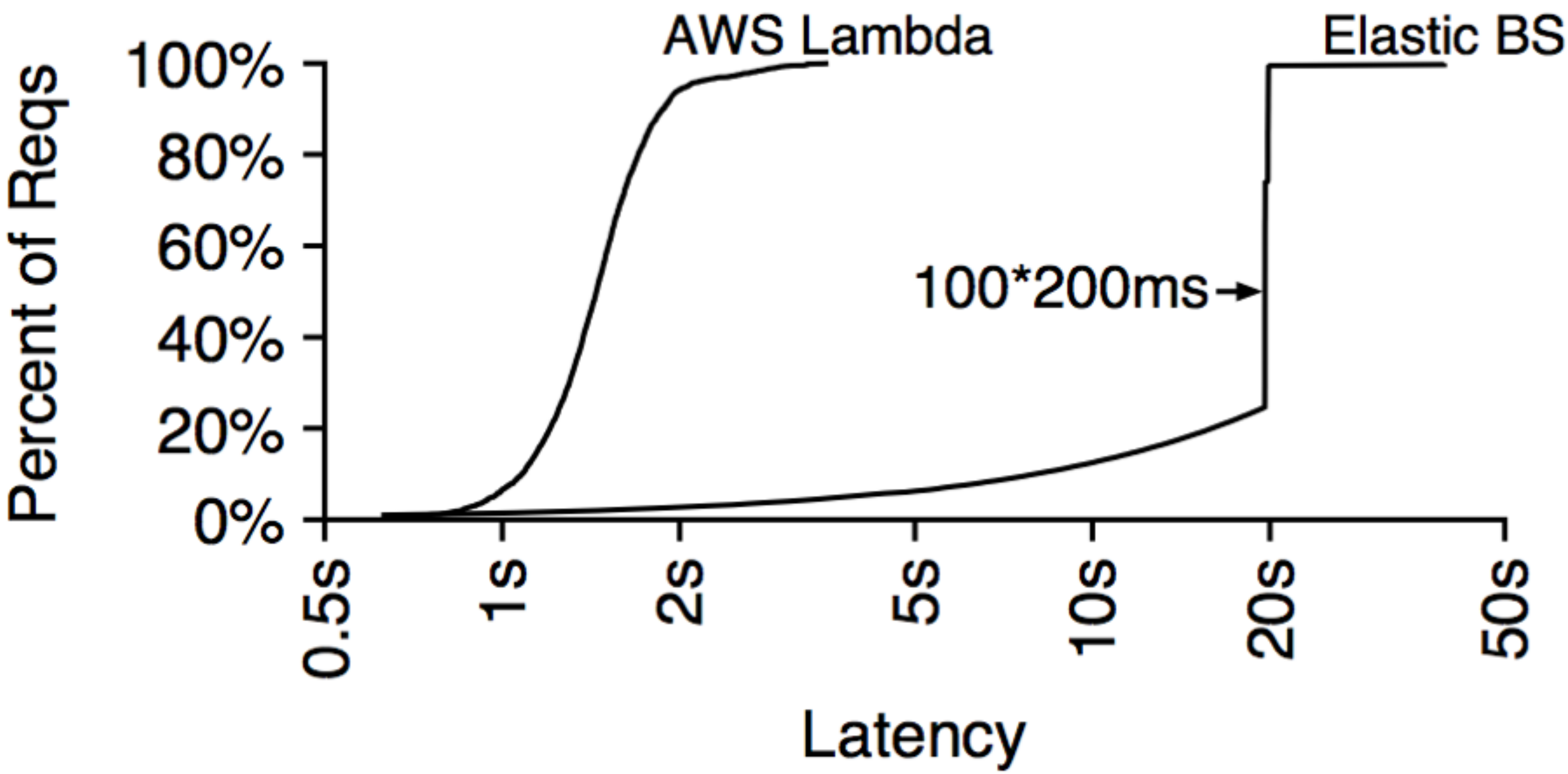


Conclusion: Lambdas are highly elastic

Lambda elasticity



Conclusion: Lambdas are highly elastic
(though a little slow)

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Run user handlers in response to events

- web requests (RPC handlers)
- database updates (triggers)
- scheduled events (cron jobs)

Pay per function invocation

- actually pay-as-you-go
- no charge for idle time between calls
- e.g., charge `actual_time * memory_cap`

Share everything

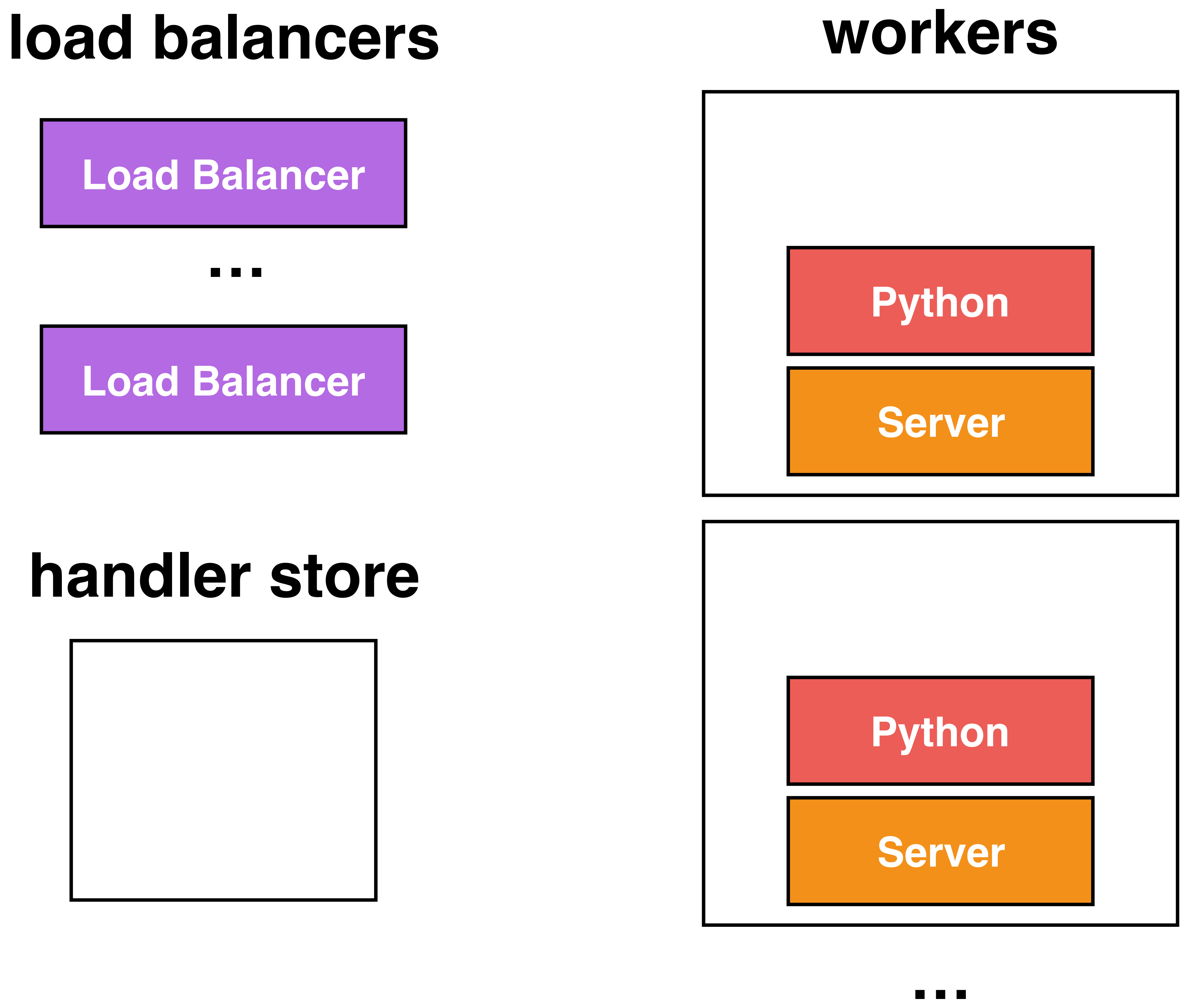
Share server pool between customers

- Any worker can execute any handler
- No spinup time
- Less switching

Encourage specific runtime (C#, Node.JS, Python)

- Minimize network copying
- Code will be in resident in memory

Multi-node architecture



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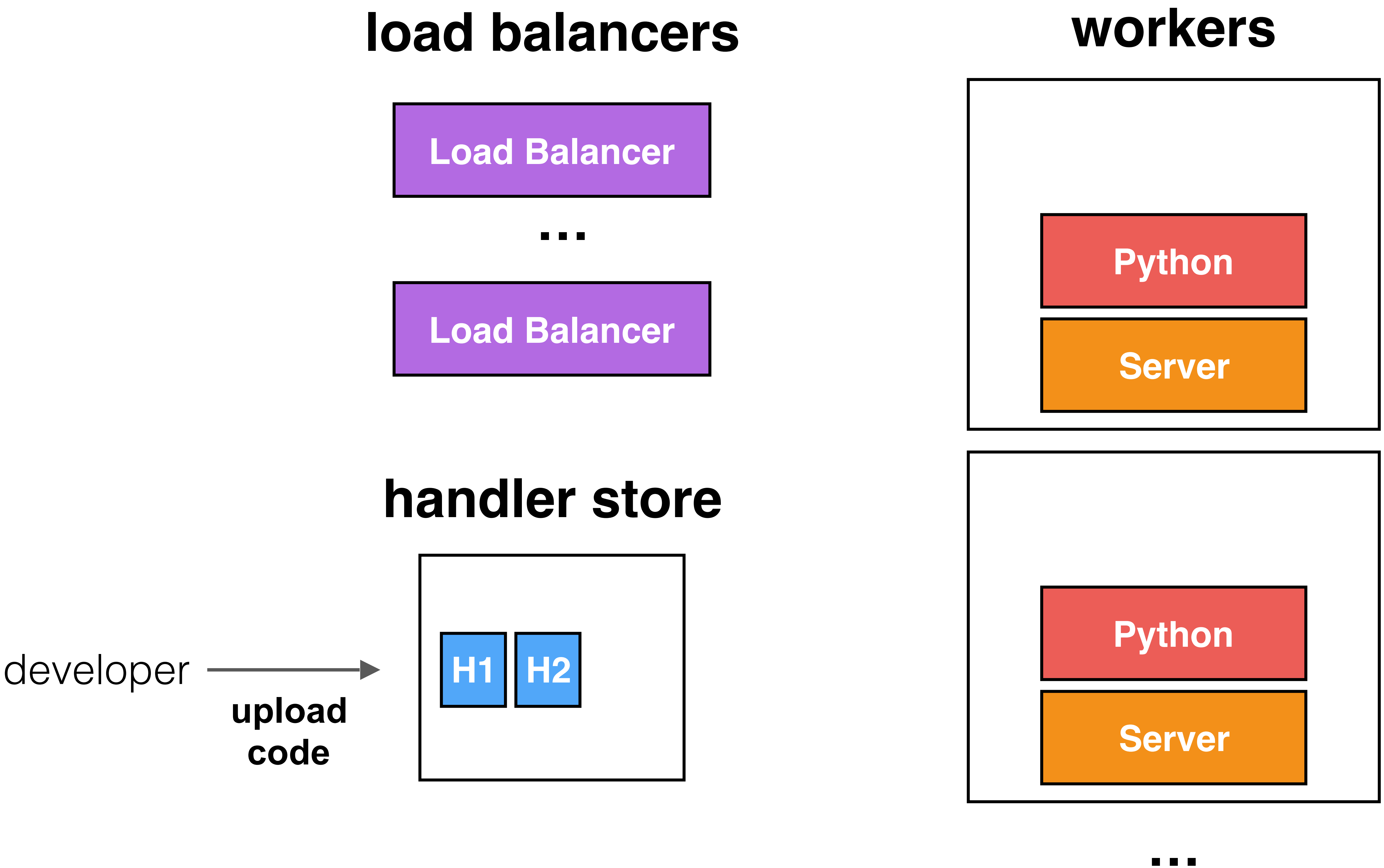

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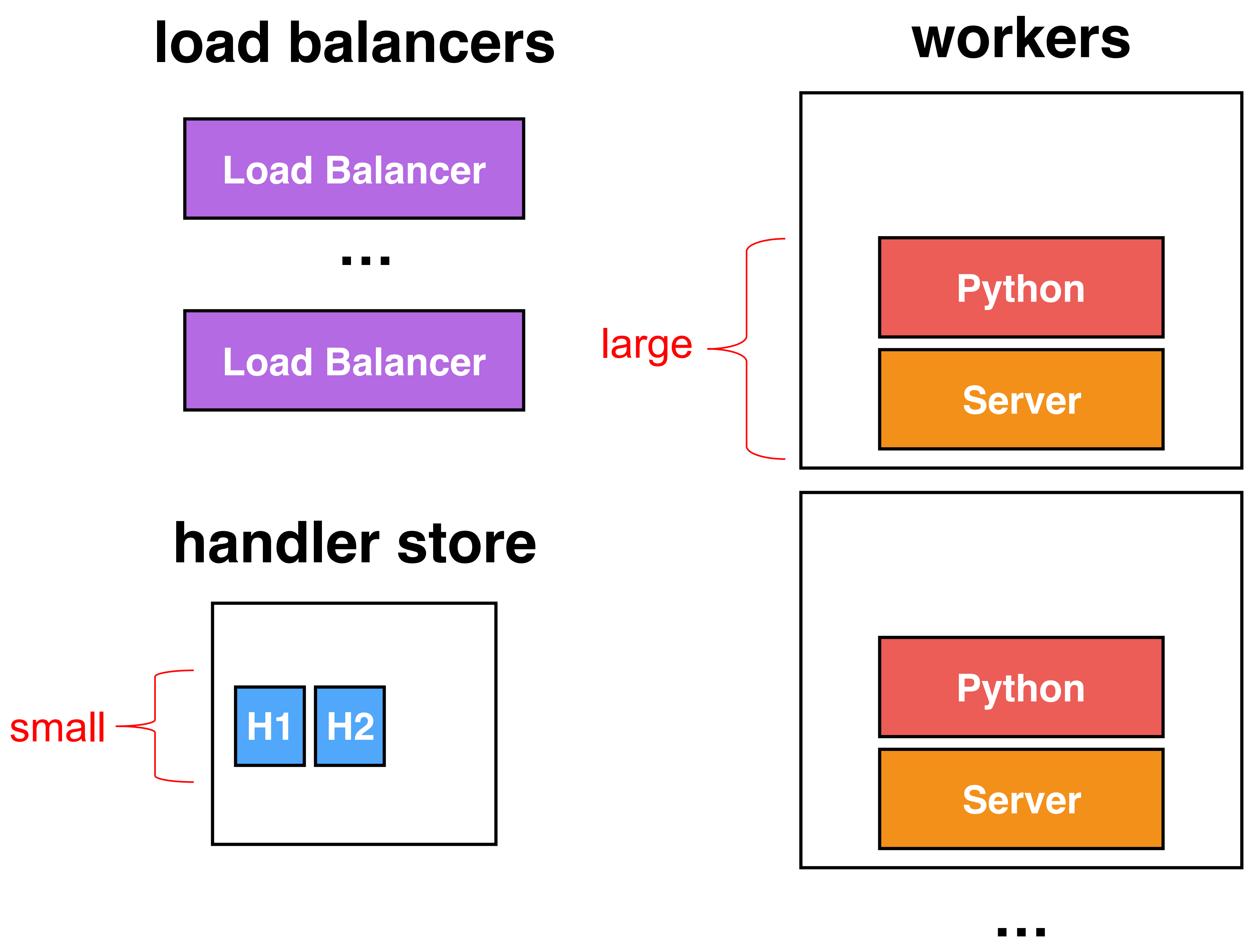

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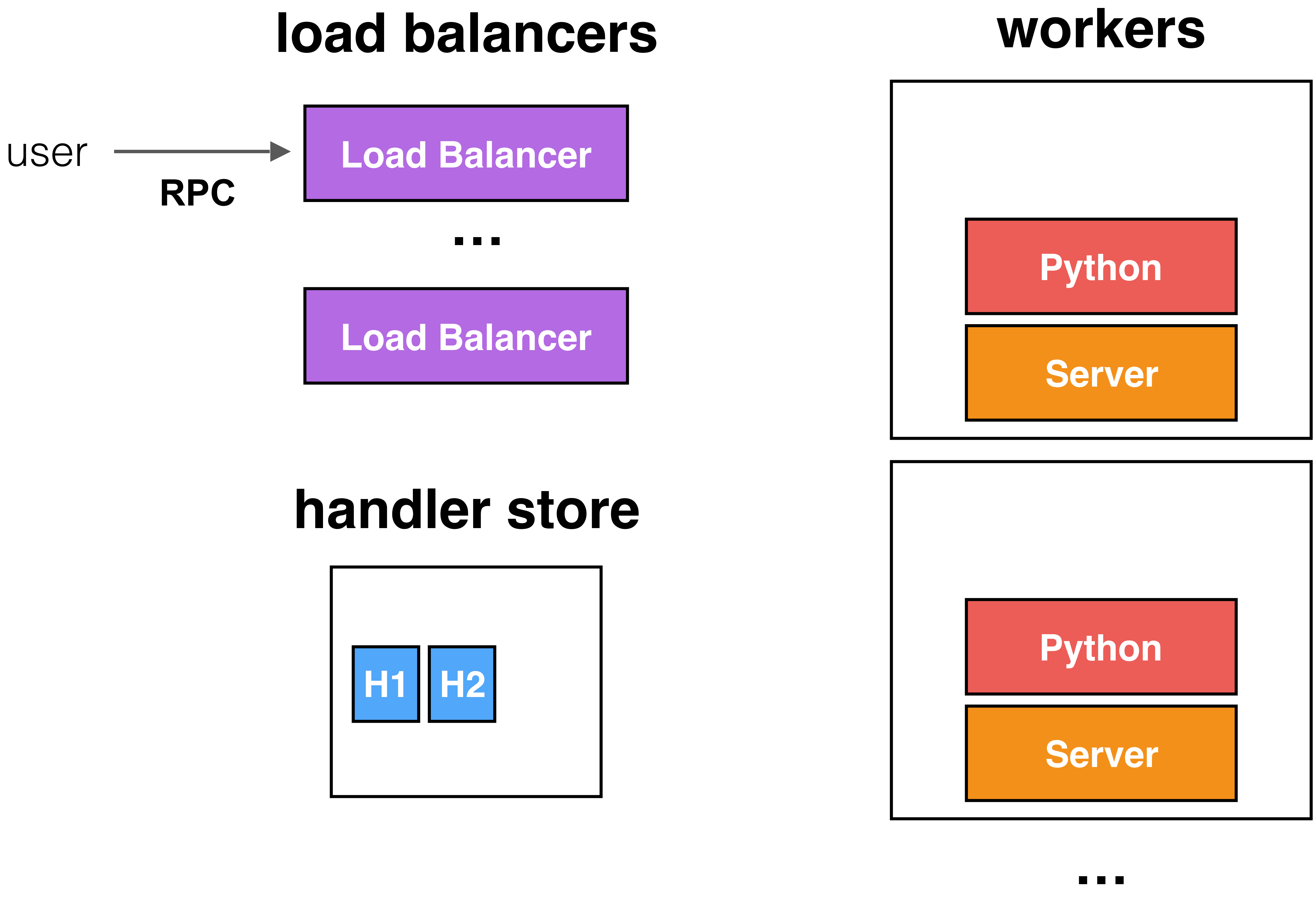

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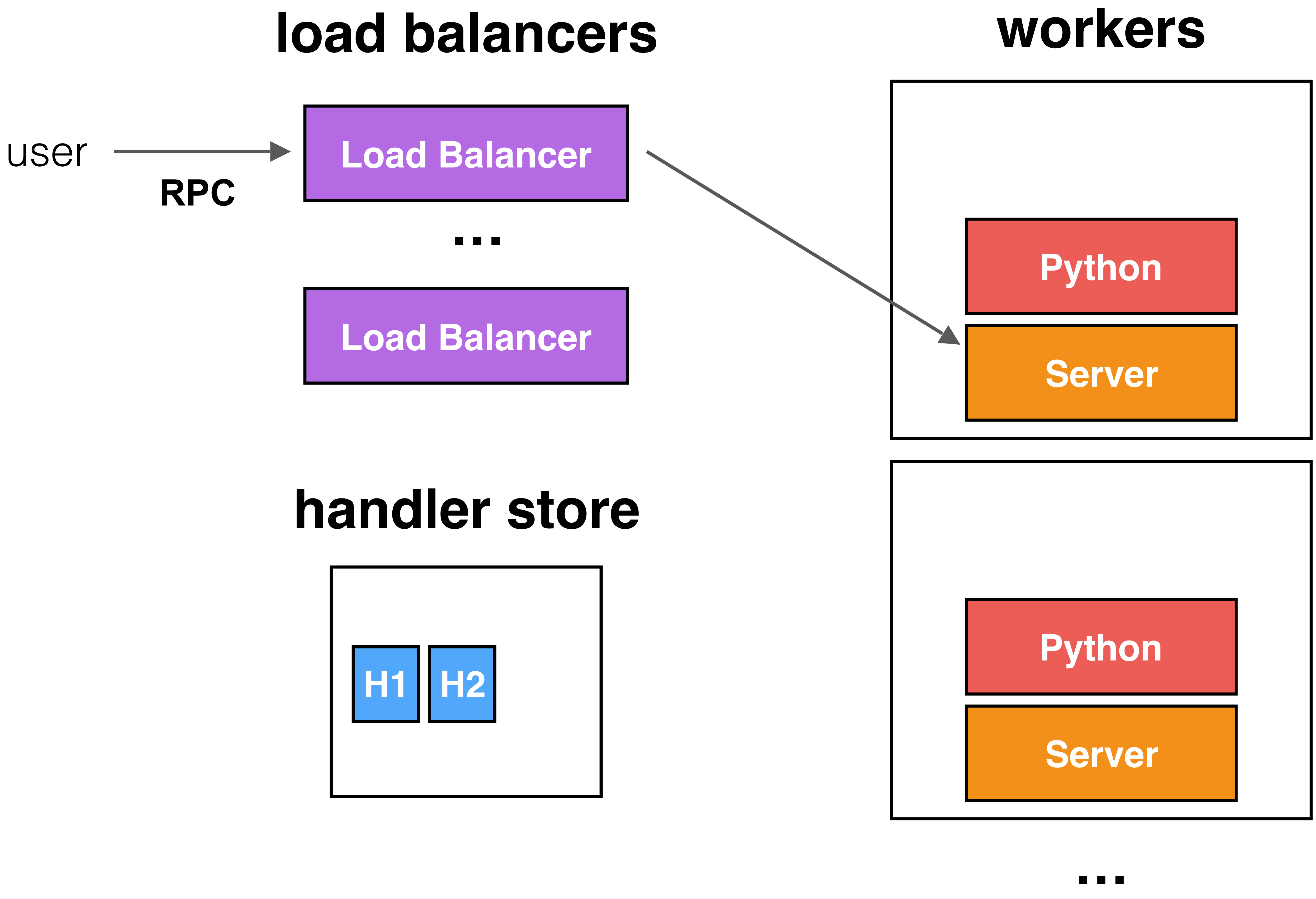

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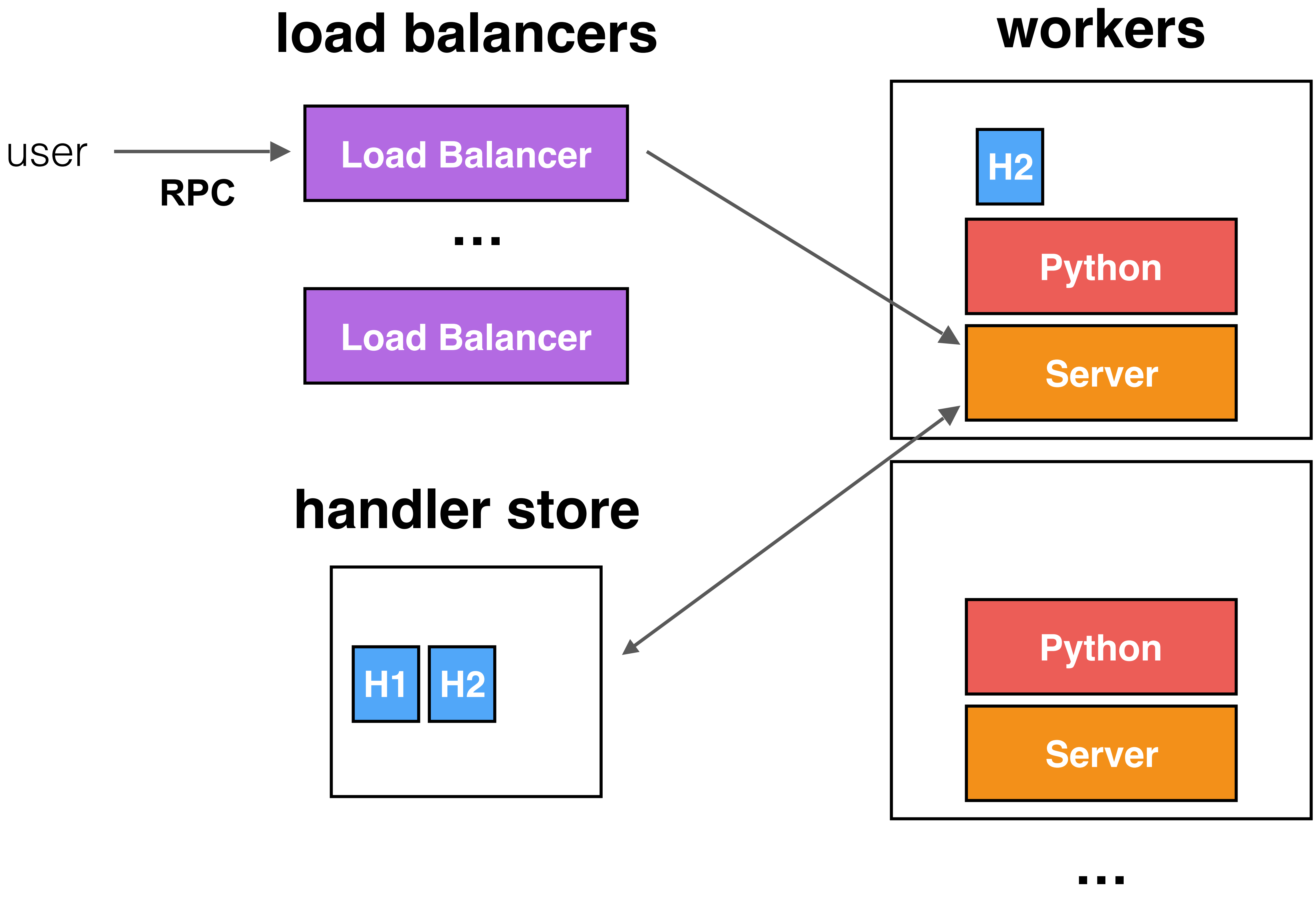

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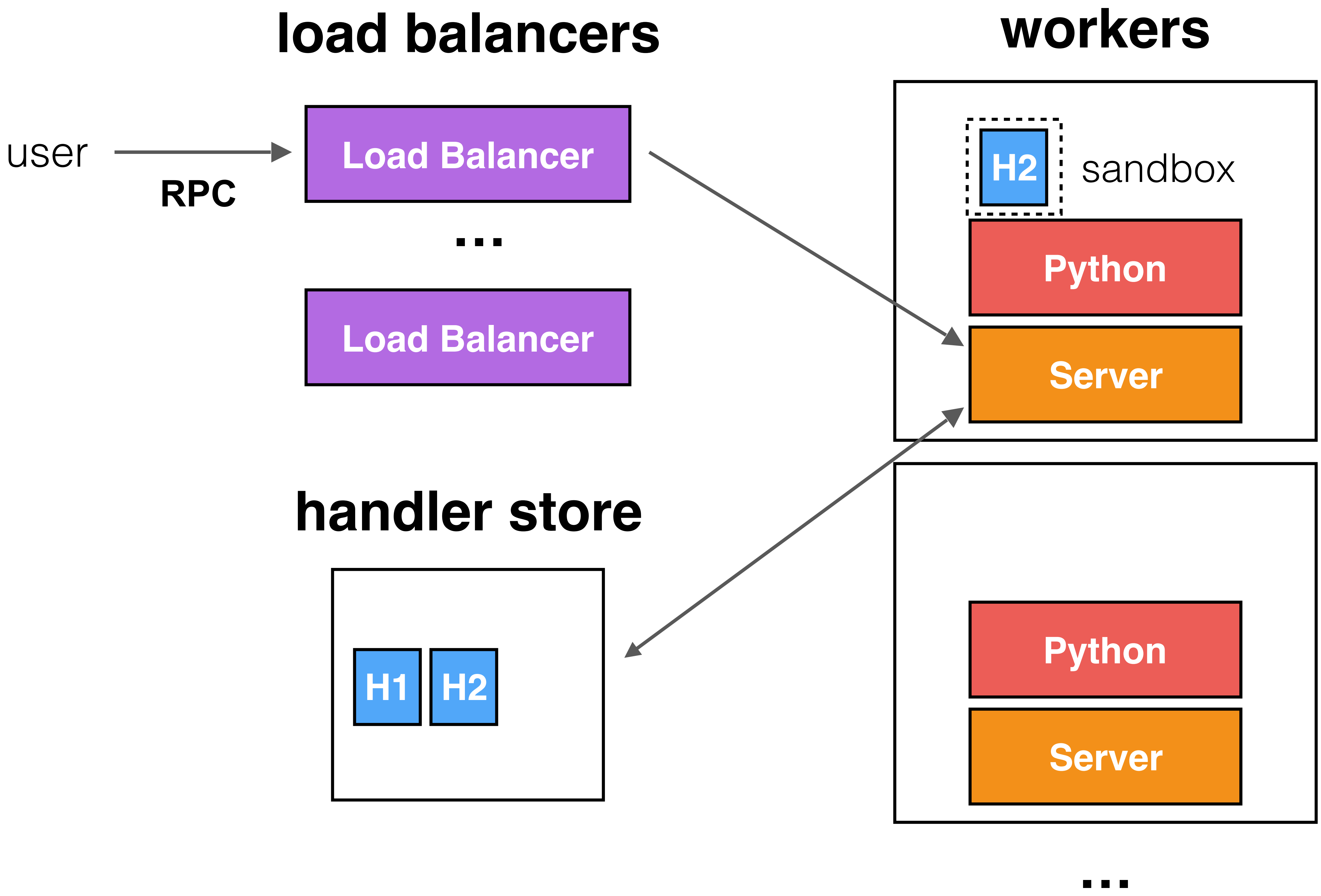

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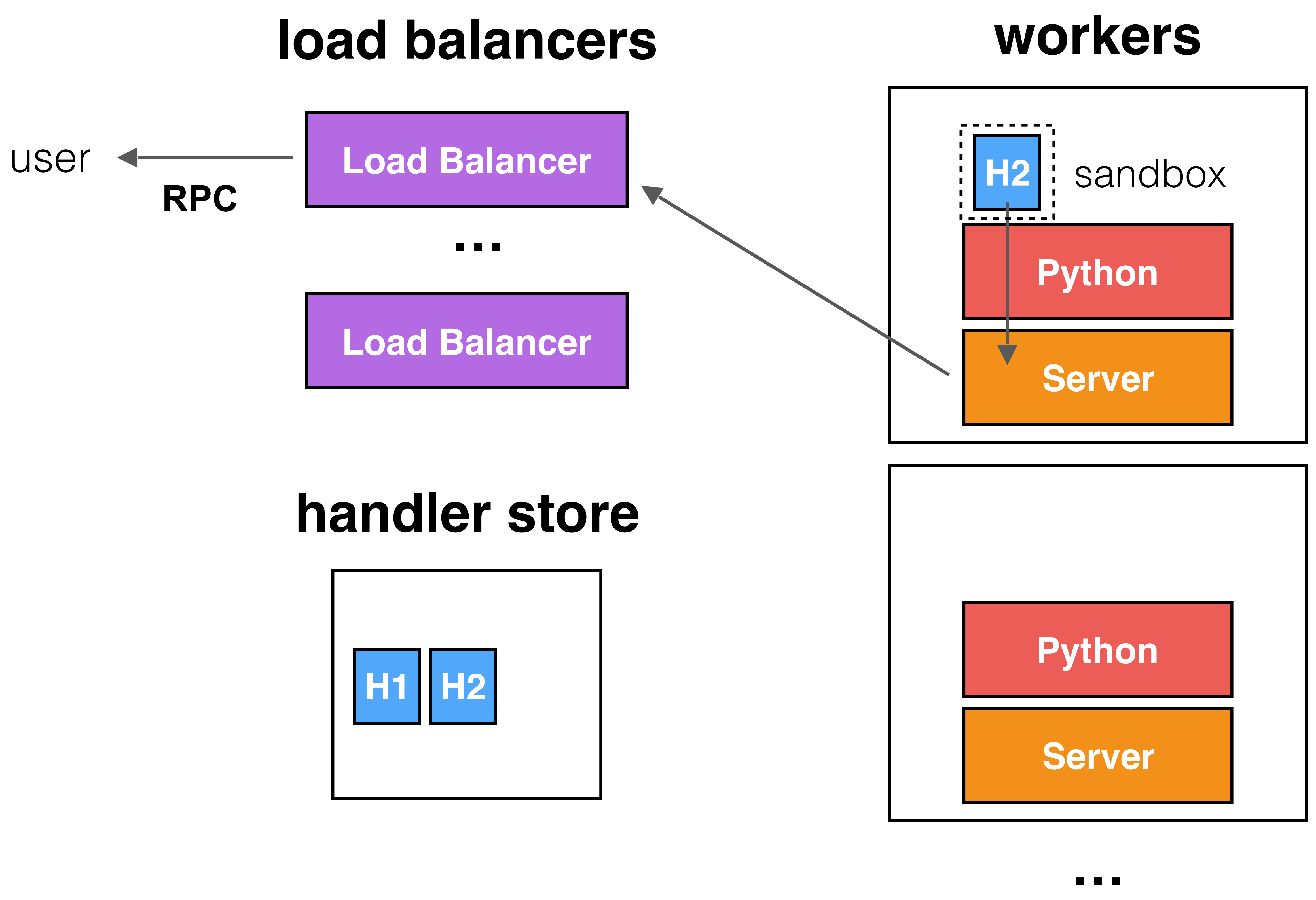

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Need for open source serverless

Many research areas

- Applications, tools, distributed systems, execution engines
- Evaluate ideas by **building**, not just simulating

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AWS Lambda

Google Cloud Platform

Google Cloud Functions

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OpenLambda: explore further-reaching techniques

- Goal: enable academic research on Lambdas
- Storage awareness, kernel support, RPC inspection
- …

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OpenLambda: explore further-reaching techniques

- Goal: enable academic research on Lambdas
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Other recent open-source implementations

Azure Functions   IBM OpenWhisk

OpenLambda research topics

Workloads

- Workload studies
- Benchmarks
- Versioning+dependencies
- Code characteristics
- Package management

Distributed systems

- Databases
- Load balancing
- Scatter gather patterns
- Sessions and streams

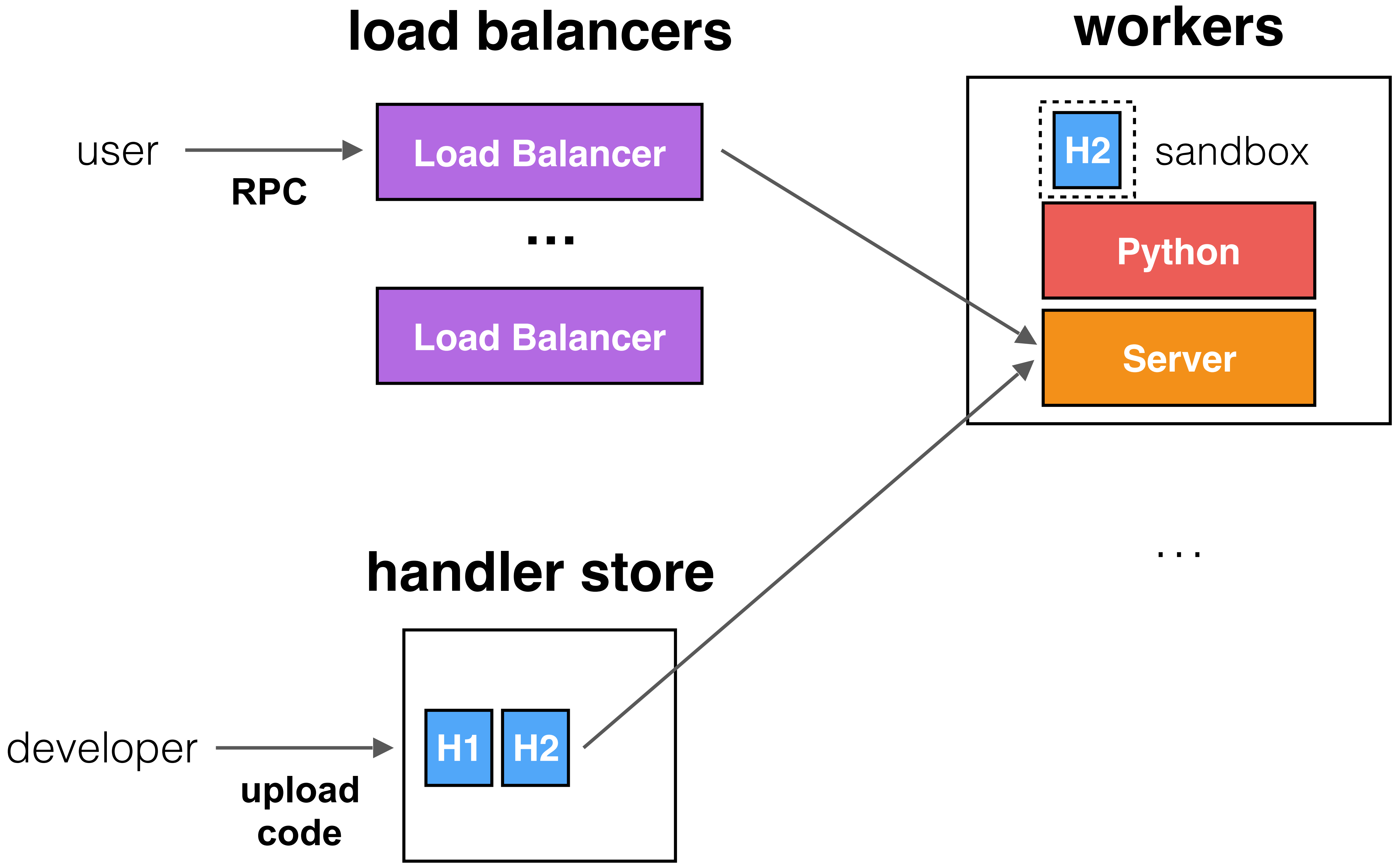
Tools

- Debugging
- Monetary cost optimization
- Porting legacy applications

Execution engines

- Sandboxing
- Containers
- Just-in-time interpreters

OpenLambda research topics



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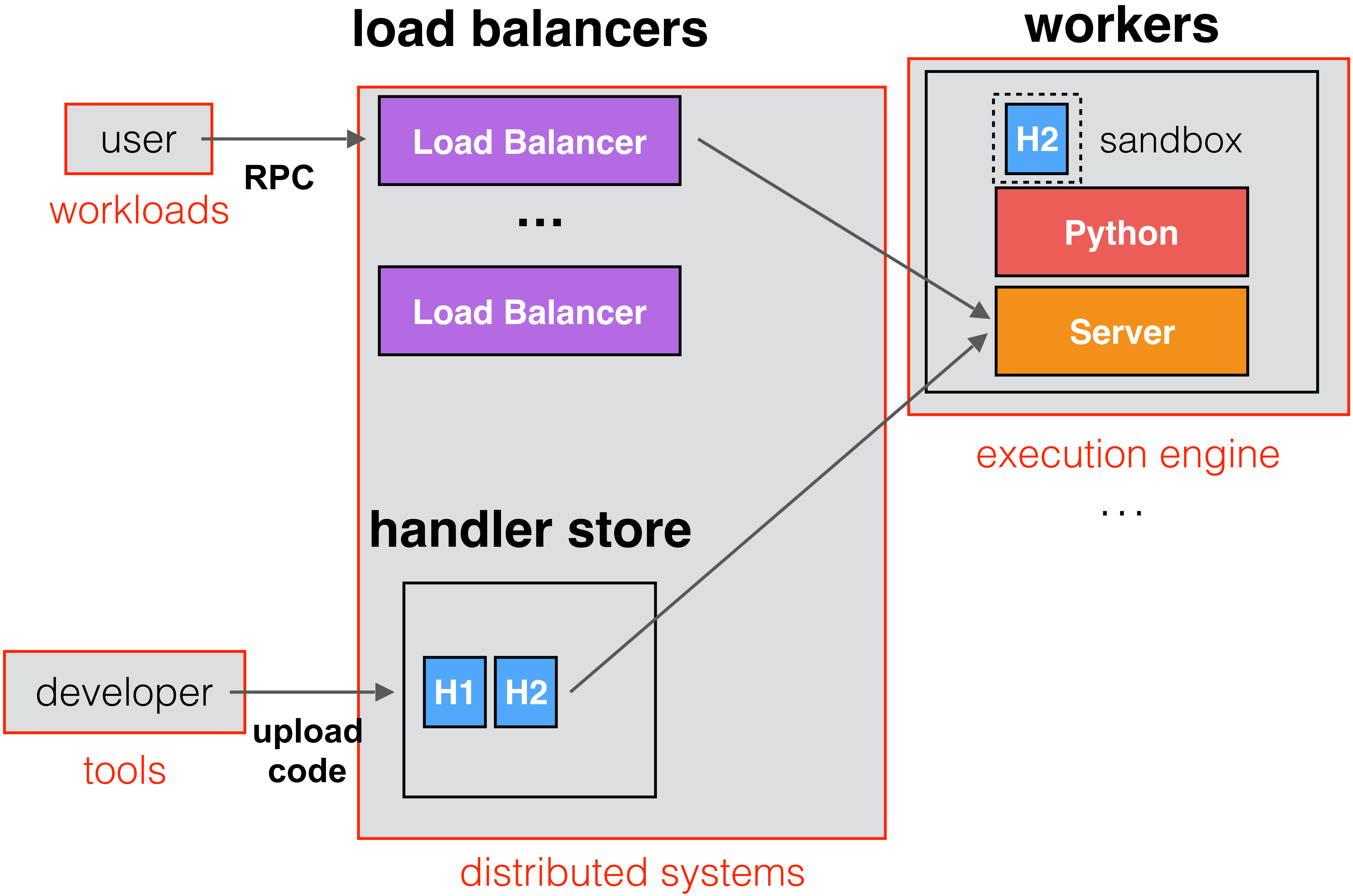

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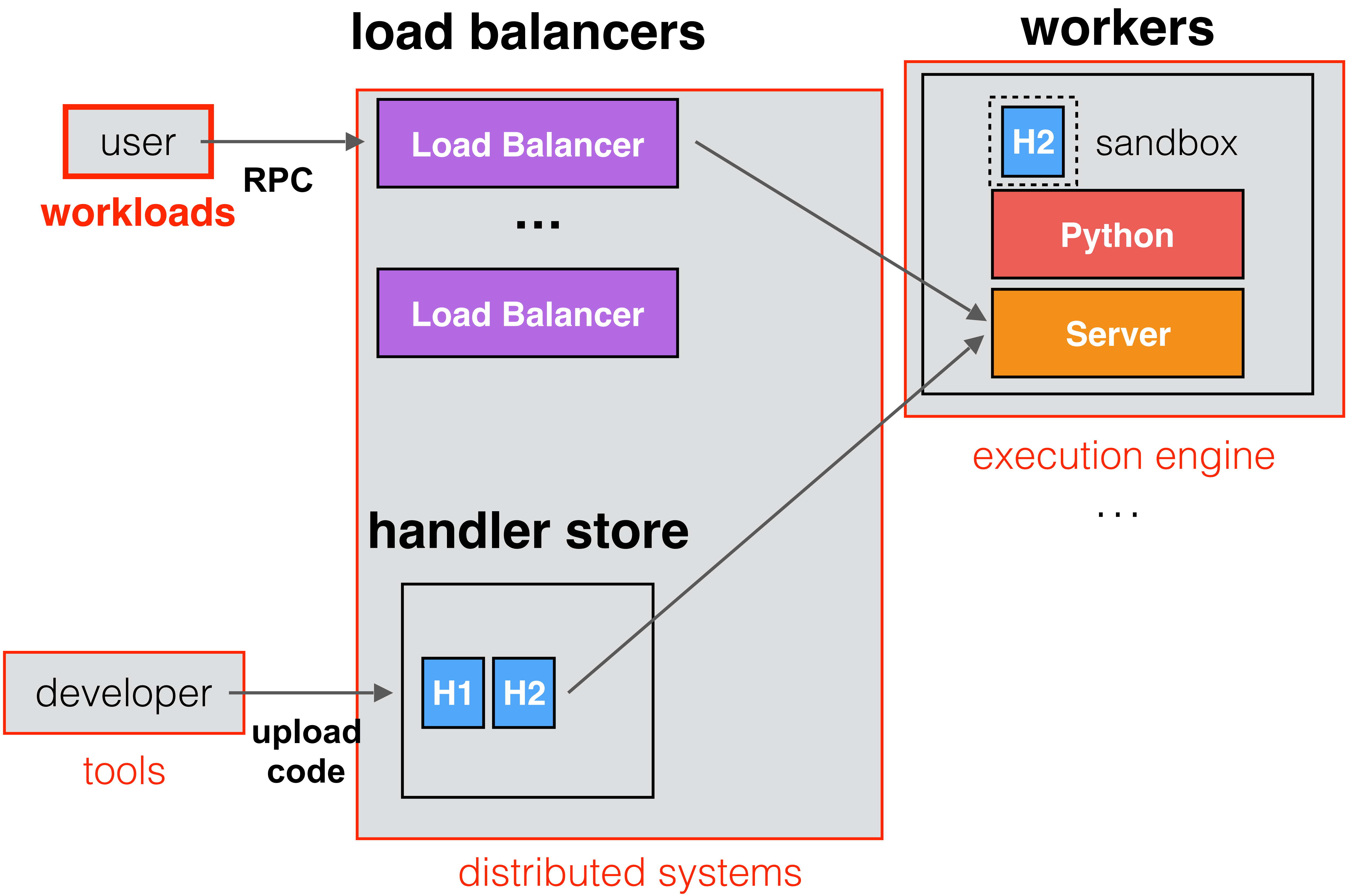


Understanding Lambda workloads

Collaborate with industry, measurement studies

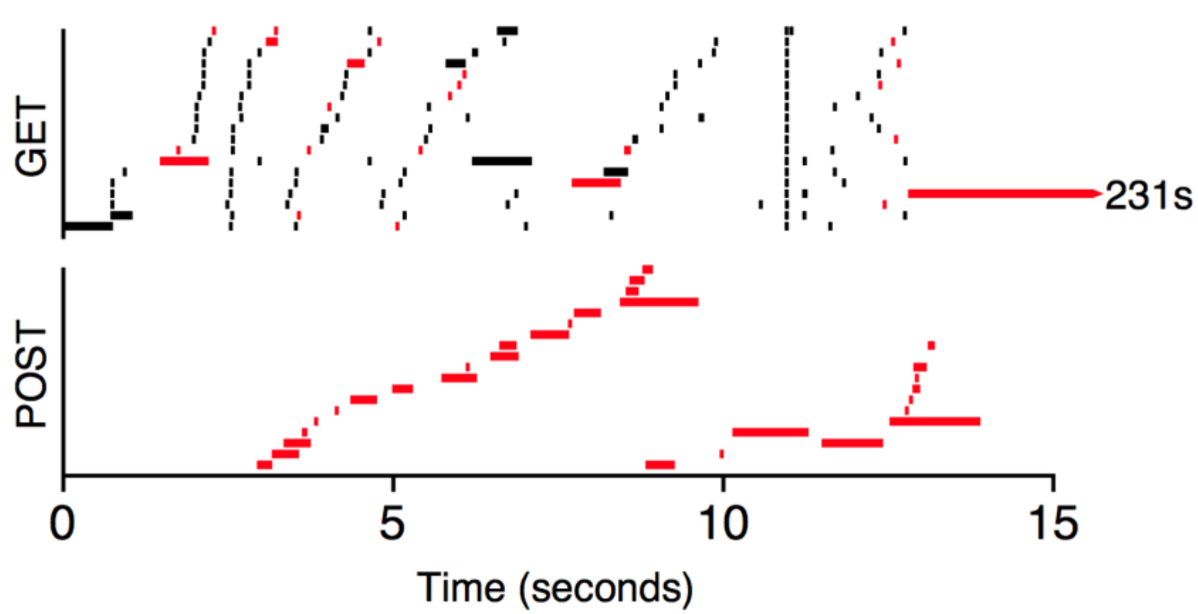
- e.g., Azure Functions

Build LambdaBench

- Everybody joining builds an application
- Ticketing, calendar, autocomplete, OCR, flash card, stock alert, blog, and scientific compute applications

Trace RPC calls (e.g., AJAX) of existing apps

Gmail:



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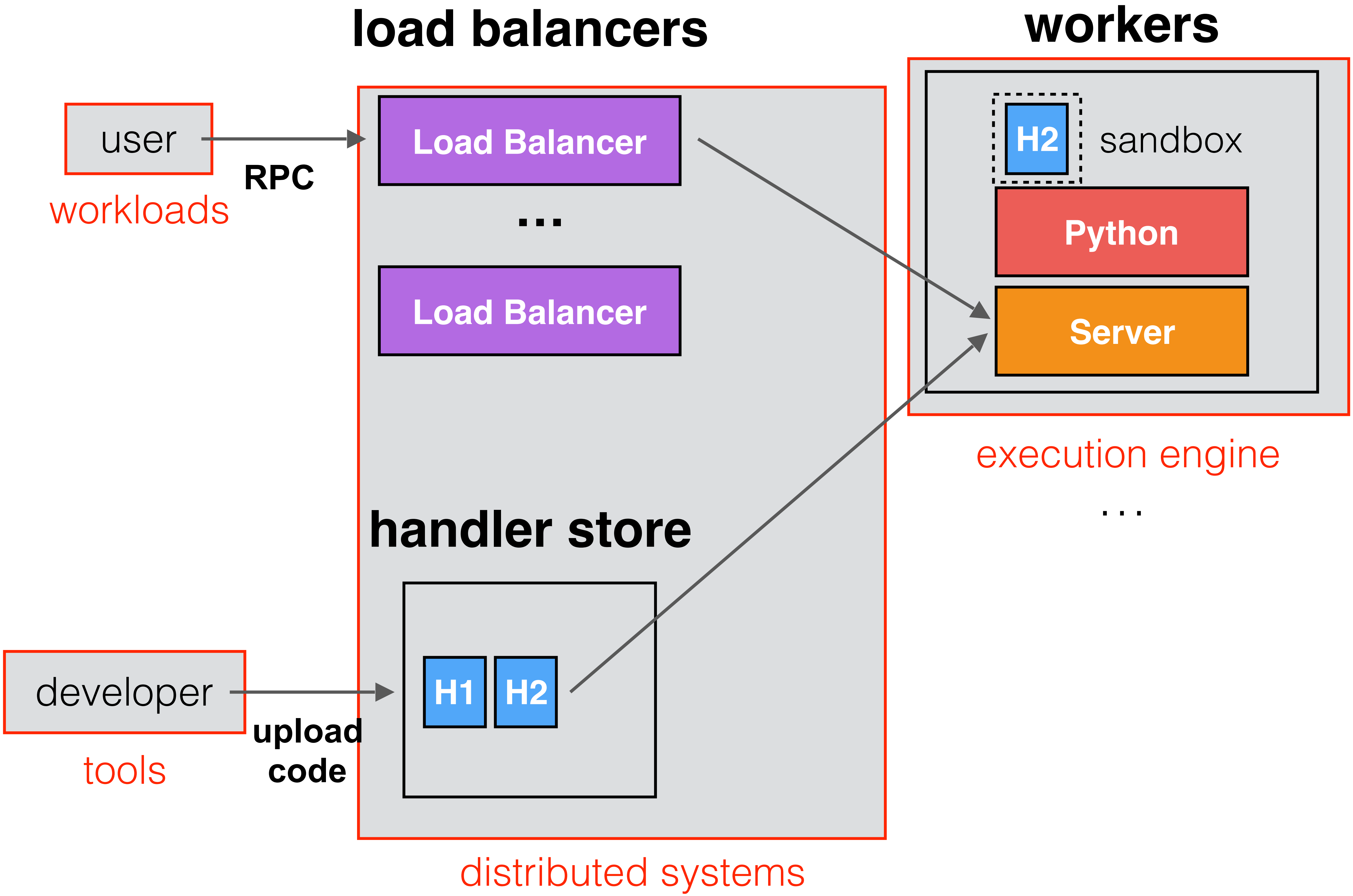

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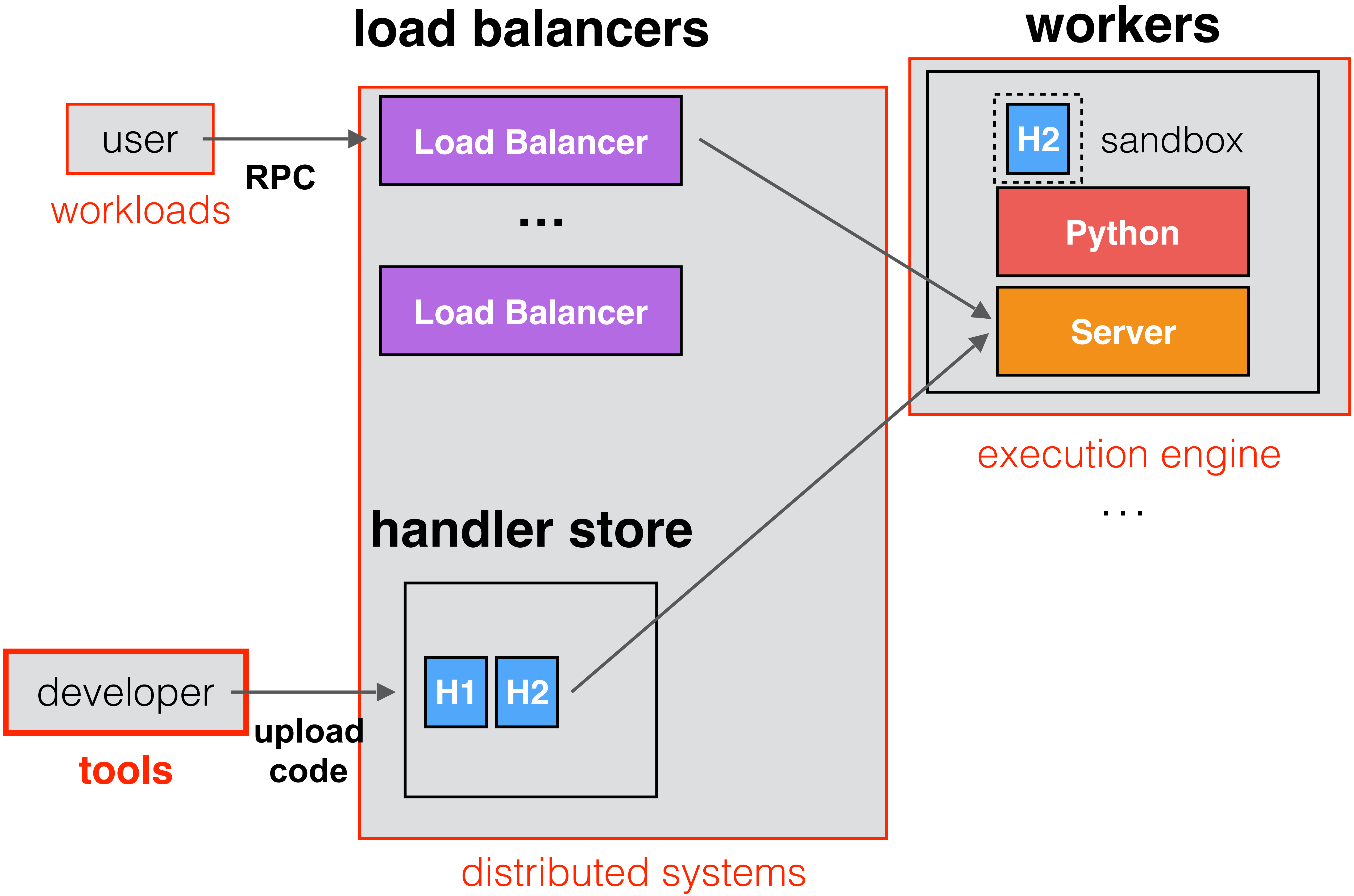


Developer tools

Portability

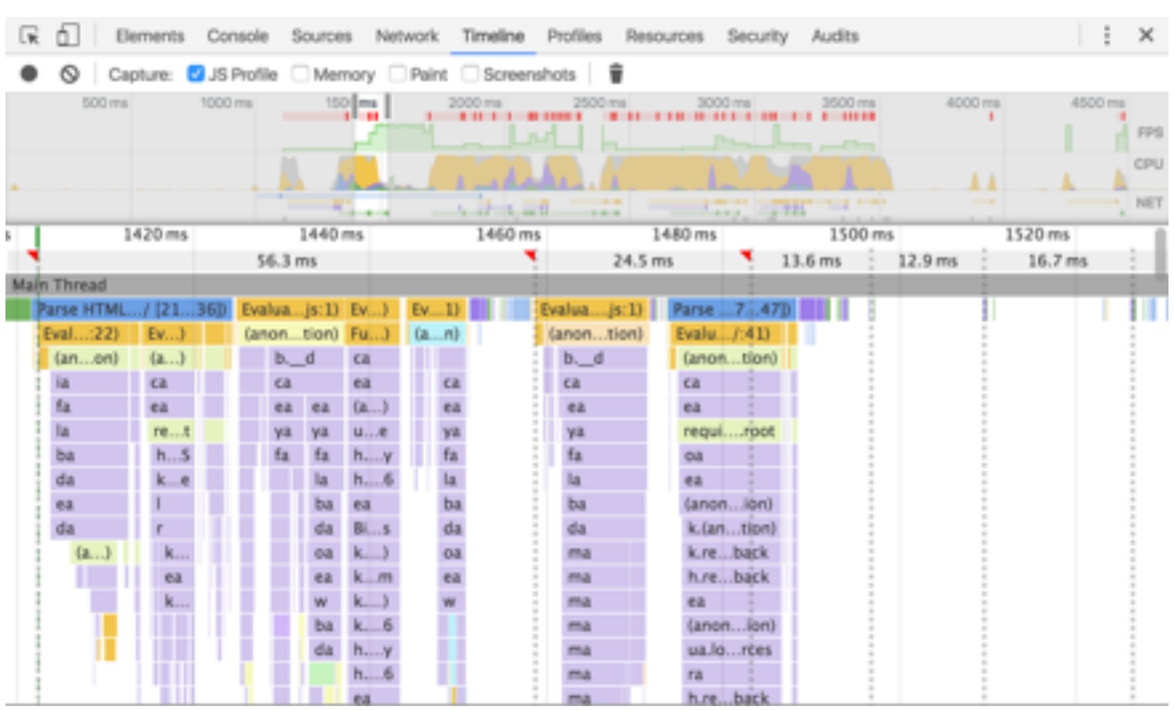
- E.g., can Django apps run on Lambdas?

Debugging

- Understand Lambda flows, may be a complex graph

Optimizing expense

- Hard with containers: how to share 1-hour server time across requests?
- With Lambdas: know cost of every RPC and query
- Show where money is going



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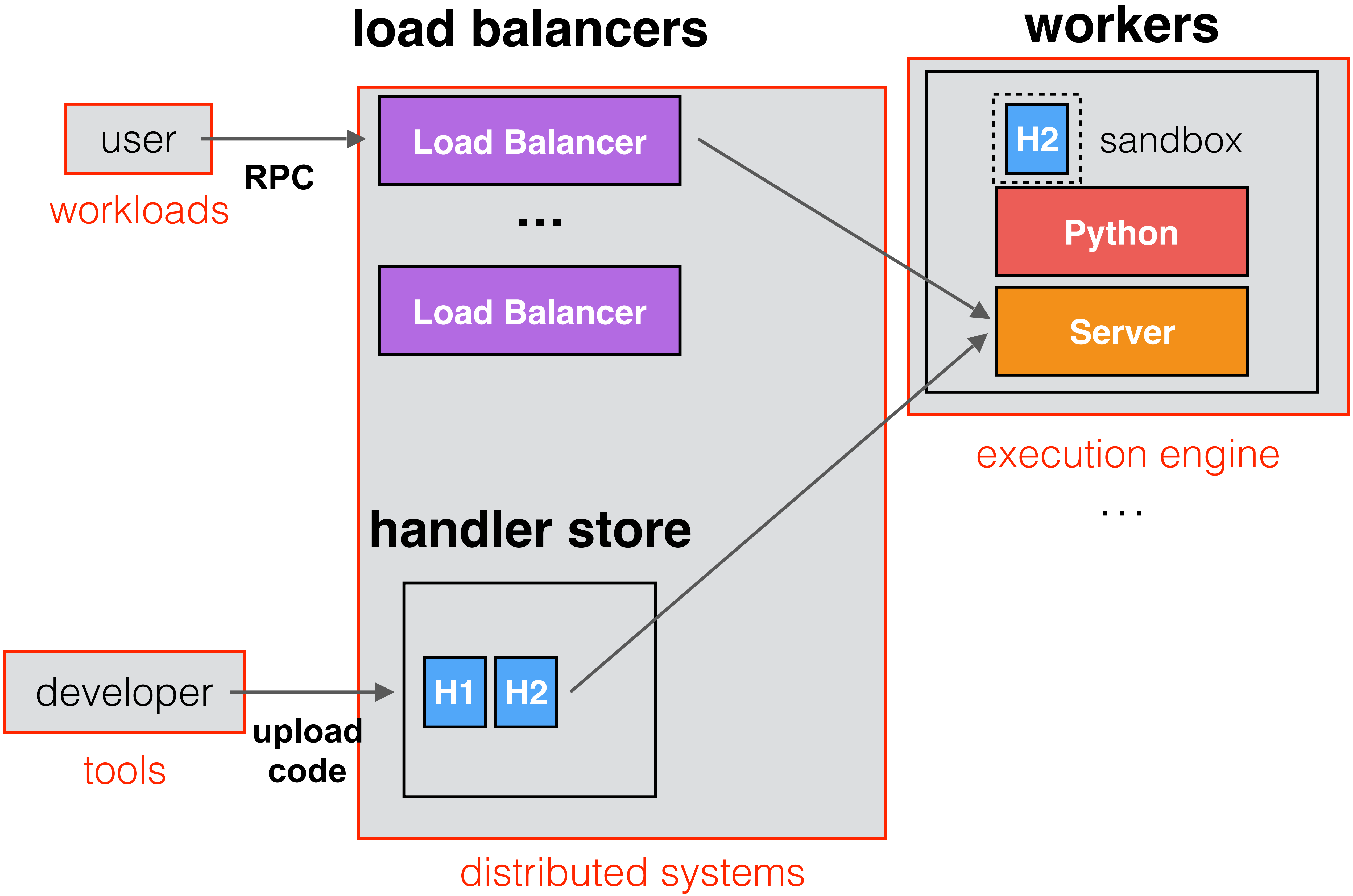

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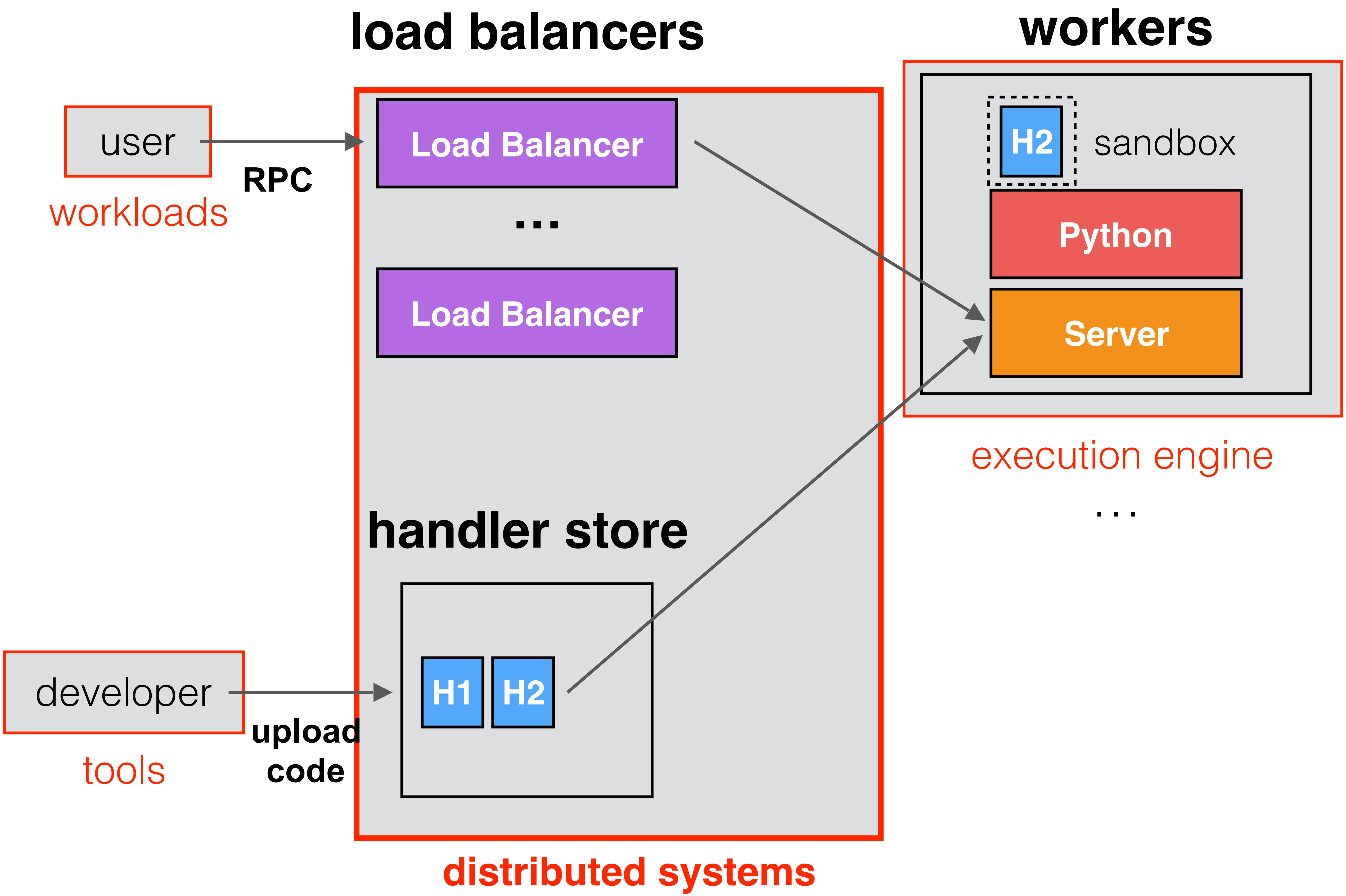

Building locality-aware Lambdas

Use deep inspection of RPCs for routing

- Working with gRPC group
- GSOC project (Stephen Sturdevant)

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Locality factors

- code locality
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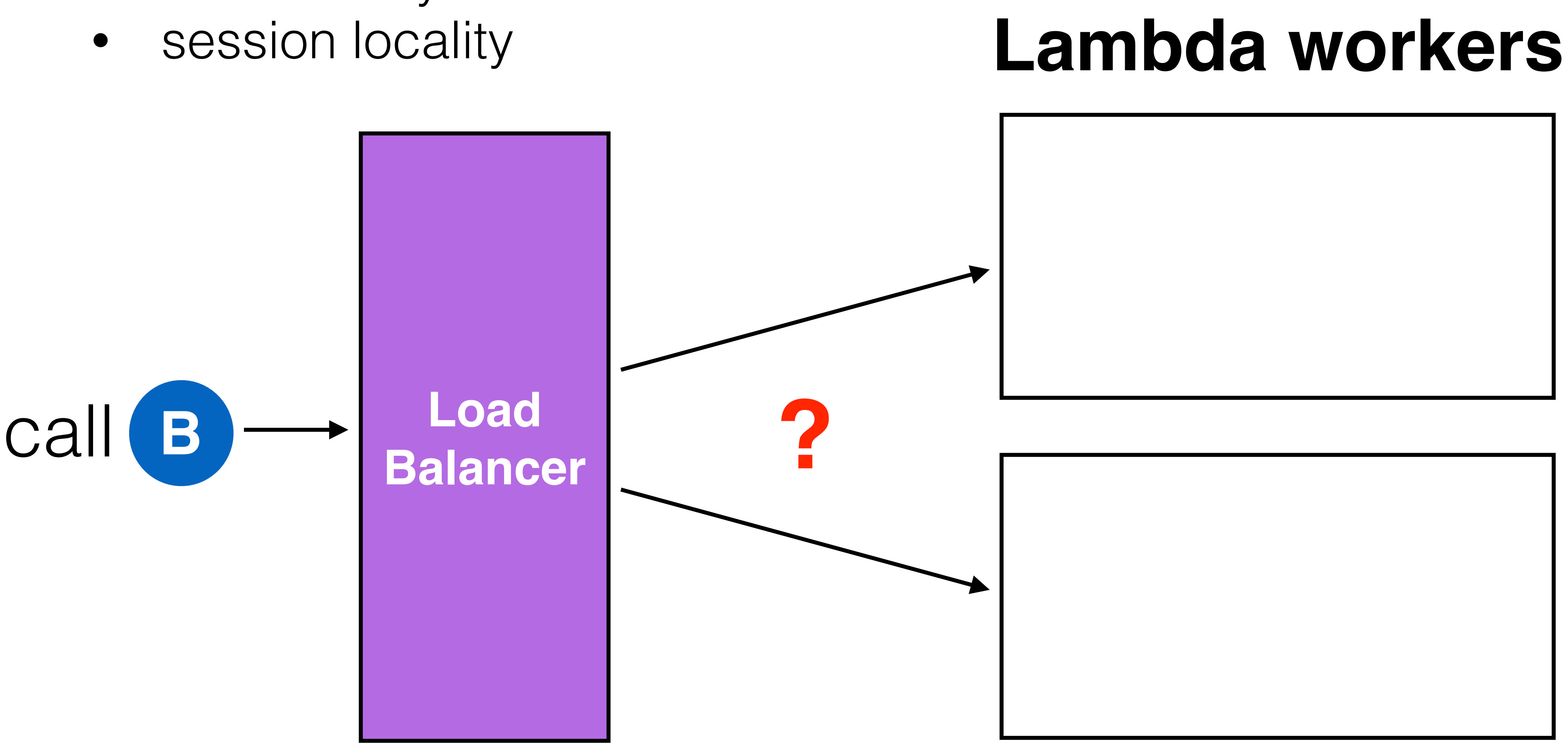

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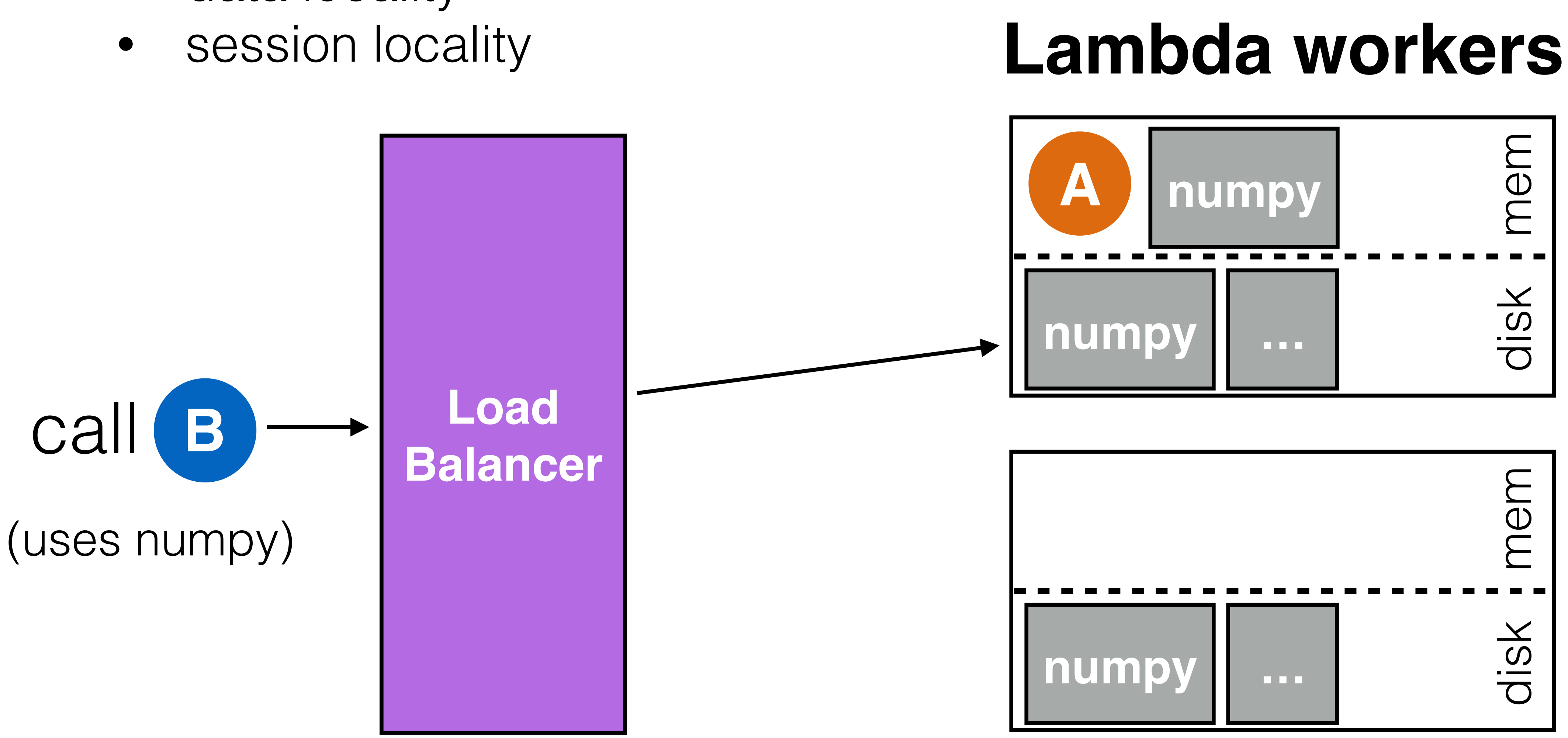

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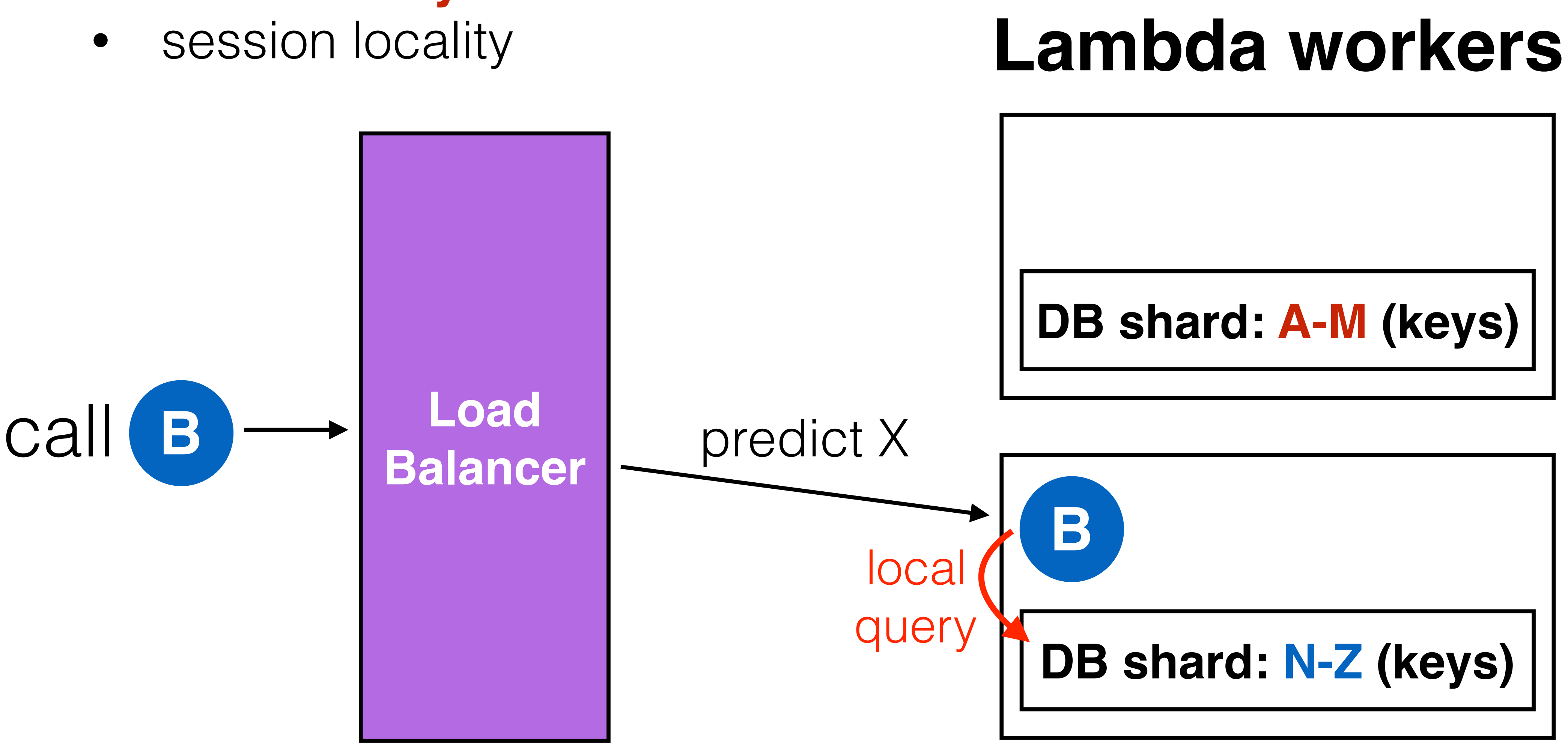

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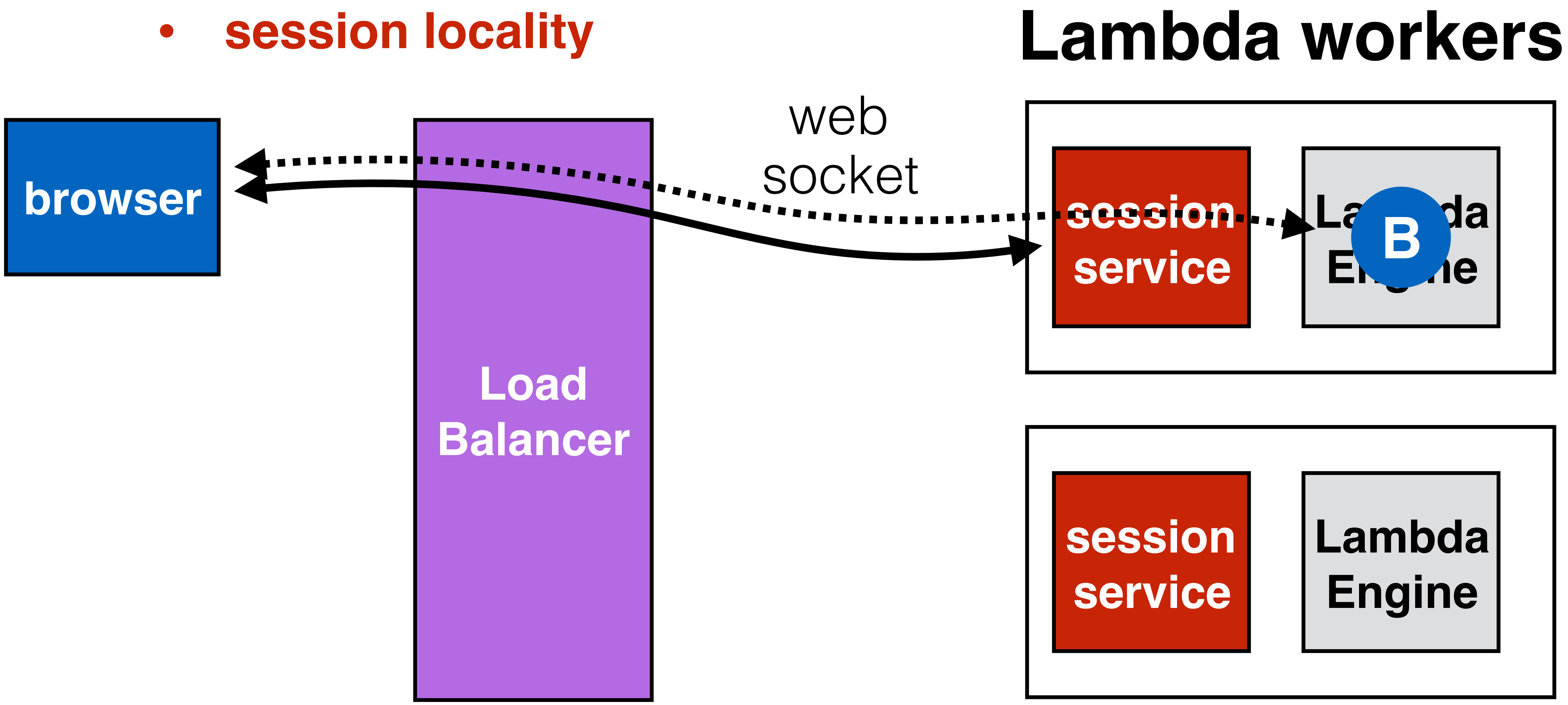

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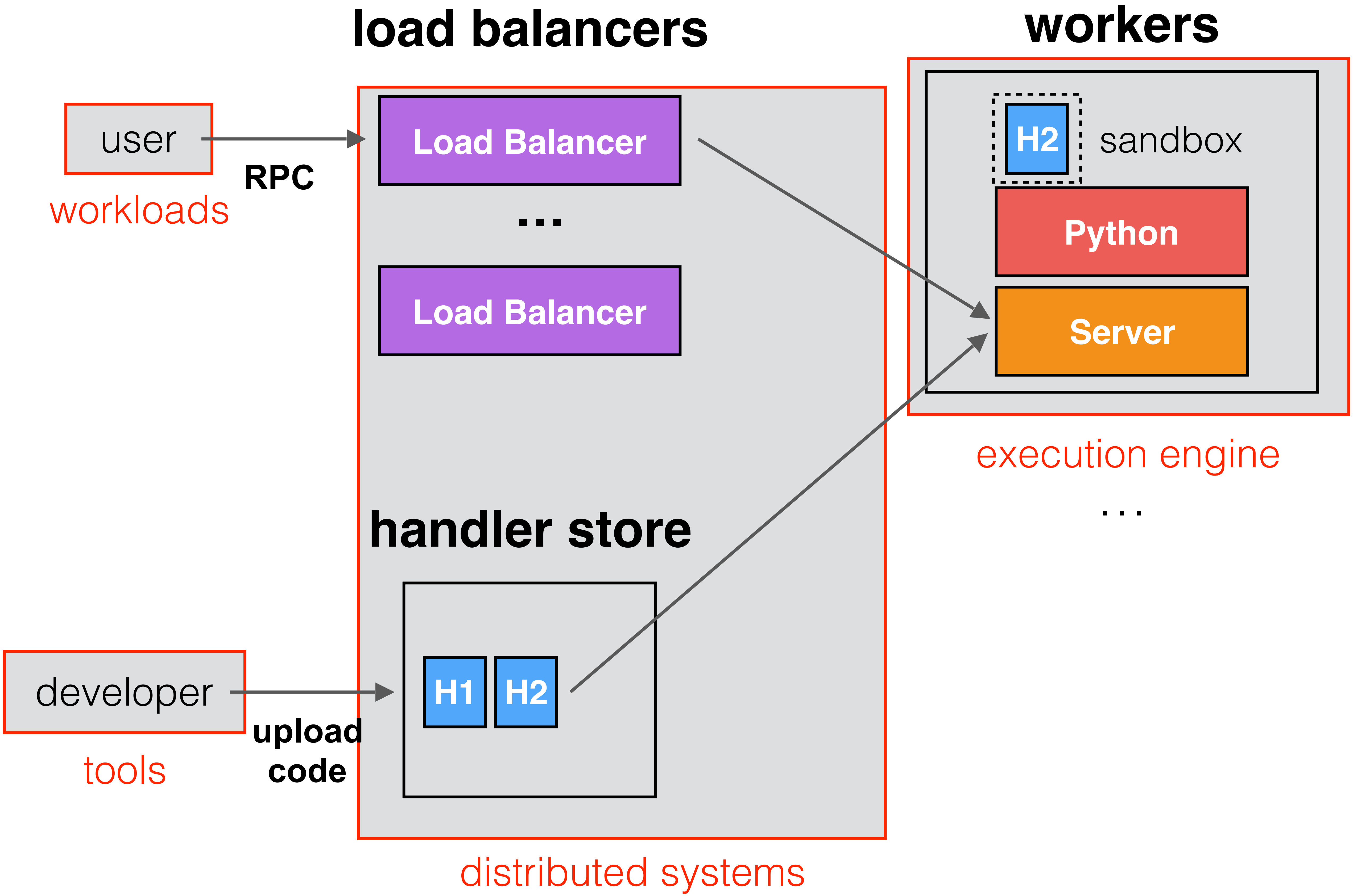

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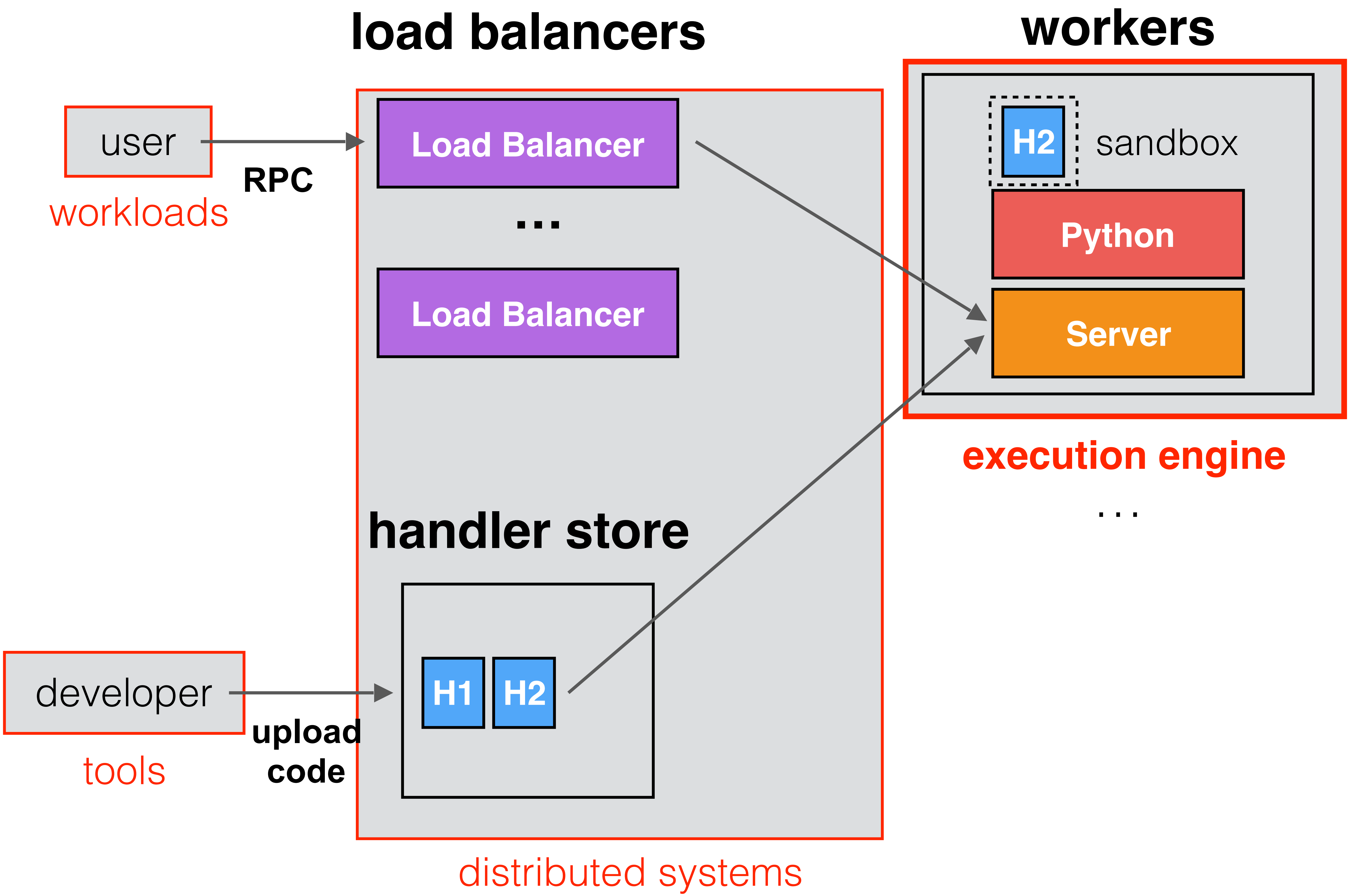
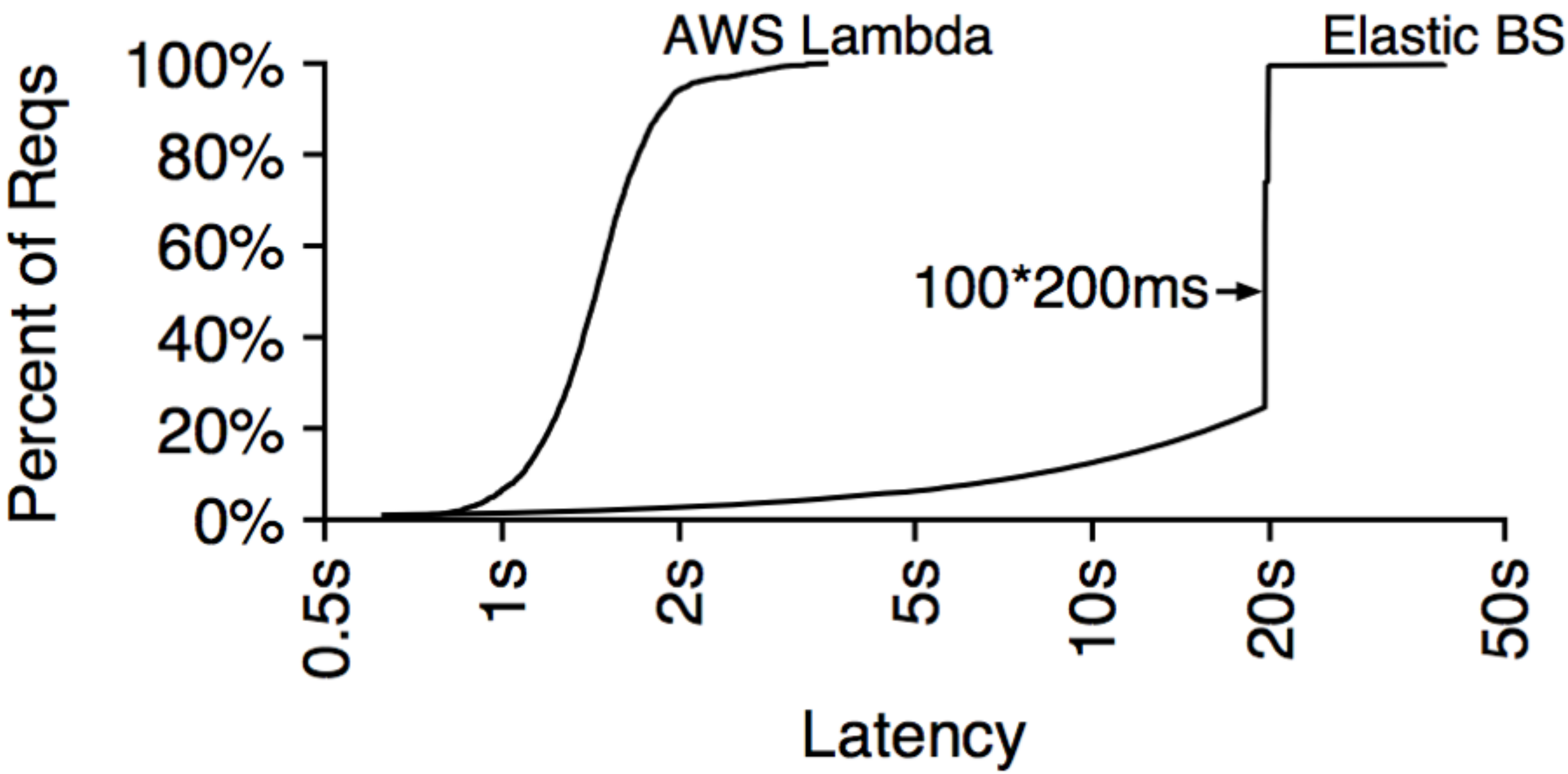


Minimizing latency



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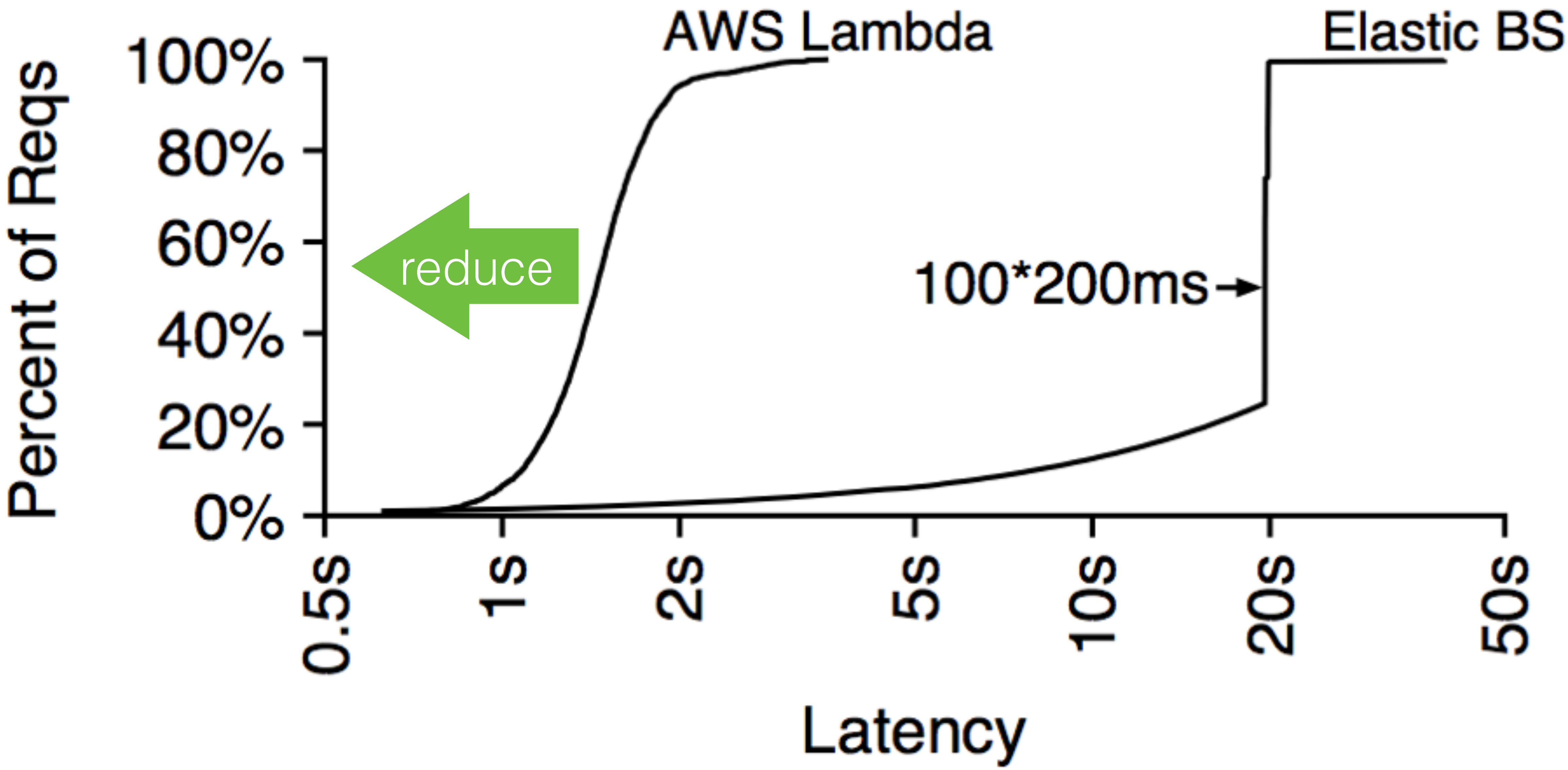

How can we reduce base latency?

Execution engine

Sandboxing

- Process VMs (e.g., JVM): how to mostly initialize?
- Containers: how to speed up **restart** and optimize **pausing**?

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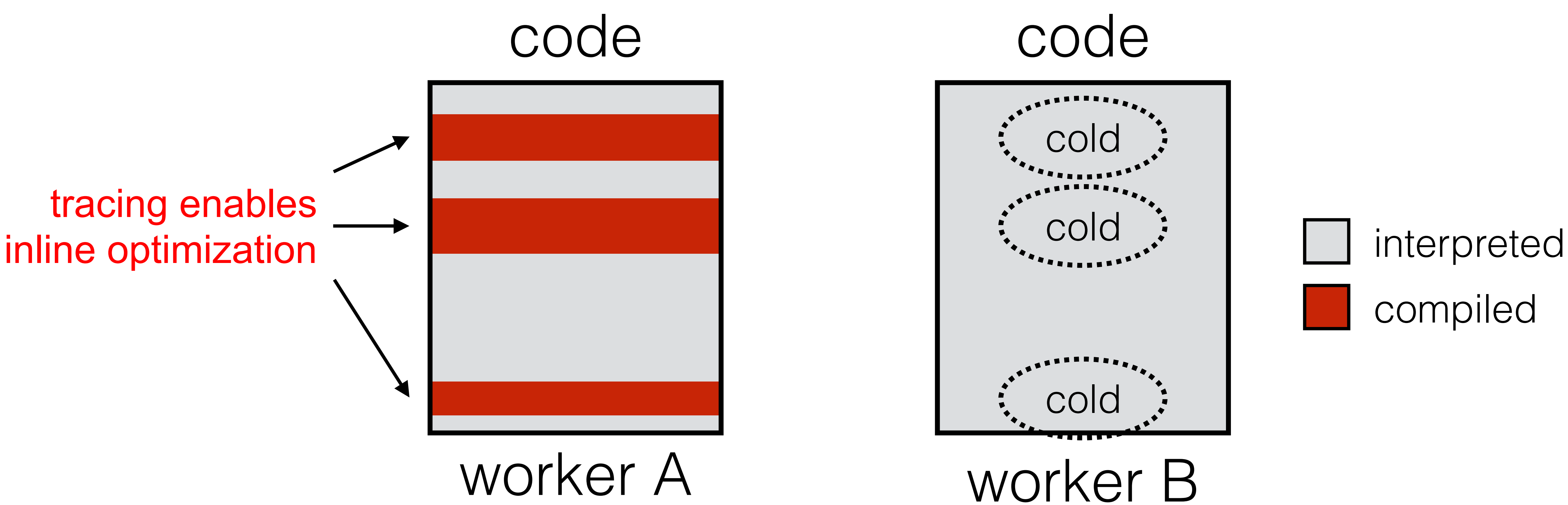
Language runtimes

- Challenge: **code warms up** over time
- How to share dynamic optimizations?



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Lambdas finally deliver on promises of the cloud

- finally pay-as-you-go
- finally elastic
- will fundamentally change how people build scalable applications

New challenges in every area of systems

- scheduling, isolation, languages, debugging, tools, storage, …

Getting involved

- contribute at https://github.com/open-lambda
- site: https://open-lambda.org/

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