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Time

30 years of efficiency gains demonstrated in 8 mins

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Gunnar Östberg

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Exactly 30 years ago, in mid-February 1996, I had an app idea I couldn't realize at the time. It would have cost SEK 50,000 to write this in Java, according to the quote I received. I wanted Ericsson's marketing department to pay for it and put it on their external website, which at the time was boring and didn't demonstrate that the company was a global giant with operations worldwide. The Ericsson public website was rather new, as all websites were, as the internet was in its infancy, though we didn't think so then. Although I was a guy with some influence as a middle manager, Ericsson's marketing department didn't think it was a good idea. I had to drop it.

I have been thinking about this simple idea for decades, but it never felt like the right time or occasion to pursue it. Of course, I have hundreds more of old and newer ideas I wish to realize eventually.

I finally realized it today.

Now it should take minutes with Claude Code and modern technology, I thought a few hours ago. It took me five to ten minutes to write down what I wanted. Now, eight minutes later with Claude Code, I have the app ready, and it works perfectly right away on the web and on mobile! It's just one file, index.html. No iterations. Just worked.

My prompt was simply "Can you build this?". I also had an .md file with some text on the hard drive in the folder where I let Claude Code operate.

You may use my Globe Time App here:

Jordglob

Edit description

gunnar.enskede.nu

Isn't it fantastic that what would have taken at least a month and a fortune to do 30 years ago now takes under 20 minutes and almost for free, from nerve signals in my brain to something that the whole world actually *can* use and benefit from? And it looks and feels rather okay, don't you think?

It is very simple. A simple app, very easy to do. See below for my exact input spec and Claude's result. You don't need technical knowledge.

Try your idea today, too!

End-to-End — From expressed needs to working app

The Markdown file — the input

Globe with times based on time zones

An idea from 1996 that I now finally want to realize, 30 years later. Back in 1996, it would have cost SEK 50,000 to write this in Java, but now it should take minutes with Claude Code and modern technology.

Web app, preferably just a single index.htm file. I want to host it on my web host, just upload it, and it works. It should be usable on the web, any Android smartphone, and any iPhone with iOS (on the web, so it doesn't have to be native). It would be helpful if you could download an icon for your phone so it looks like a native app.

When you open the page or open the app, you see a beautiful Earth from space, but no clouds. You can clearly see the oceans and continents, like a sharp satellite image or from a space station, but much further away, almost like from the moon, and not like a map. The globe spins very slowly around its axis (which seems spatially correct).

On mobile phones, you can “speed up” the rotation with your finger (e.g., your index finger or thumb), but the Earth is sluggish, as if it has a very large mass (inertia), so you get the feeling that you need to “push” a little. If you are sitting at a computer, you can use the mouse or touchpad for the same thing, instead of your finger on the mobile screen.

You can zoom in by pinching/scrolling to get closer to the Earth's surface and continue spinning. In addition to much more detail, you will then see the names of all countries' capitals and all major cities with over 10 million inhabitants, with the time displayed in the “23:14” format directly below, with the reference point being the time zone where you are located with your computer or mobile phone. It looks really nice. If you look at the nearest city in your country, the current time is displayed in 24-hour format. If you look at Tokyo or New York, you will see the current time there.

With this web app, despite the sluggishness and zooming in, you can quickly find the place where you want to check the time. This may be necessary when planning for a meeting or a sporting event.

In this MVP, there is no other text or information. Just this. This may change in the future, and the app may be expanded.

The prompt

“Build this”.

The resulting app — the output

A single `index.html` file (~720 lines) with:

- 3D Earth globe using Three.js, with a realistic 2K NASA texture from Solar System Scope (CC BY 4.0)
- Axial tilt of 23.4 degrees (physically accurate)
- Slow idle rotation (~1 revolution per 90 seconds)
- Drag interaction with heavy inertia — the Earth feels massive to spin (mouse, trackpad, and touch)
- Zoom via scroll (desktop) and pinch (mobile)
- ~215 city labels that appear when zoomed in: all world capitals + megacities with >10M population
- Real-time clocks in 24h format below each city (updated every second with the correct timezone)
- Backface culling — labels on the far side of the globe are hidden, with smooth fading at the edges
- PWA support — can be installed as an app icon on mobile (manifest + apple-touch-icon)

- Loading indicator while the texture downloads
- Fallback textures if the primary source is unavailable

Just upload `index.html` to your web host and it works!

AI

Vibe Coding

Claude Code

Ideas

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Written by Gunnar Östberg

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Responses (1)



Gunnar Östberg

What are your thoughts?



Håkan Johansson

Feb 16



Always interesting reading!



1

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