Introduction to Computer Networks

Application Layer Overview

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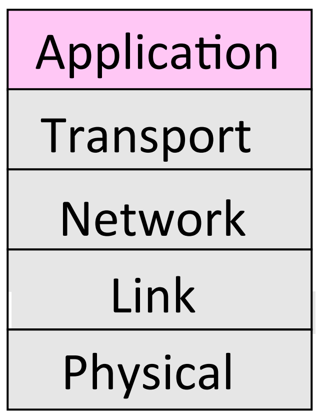
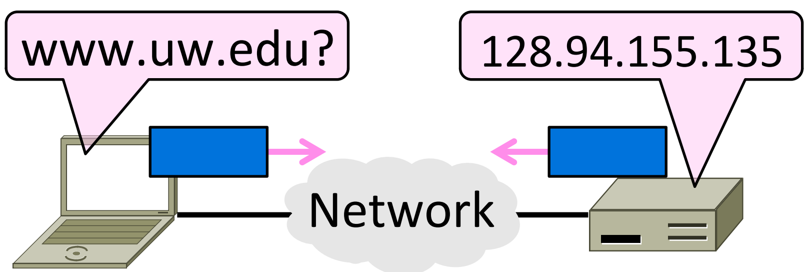
Where we are in the Course

- We are finally at the Application Layer!
  - Builds distributed "network services" (DNS, Web) on Transport services



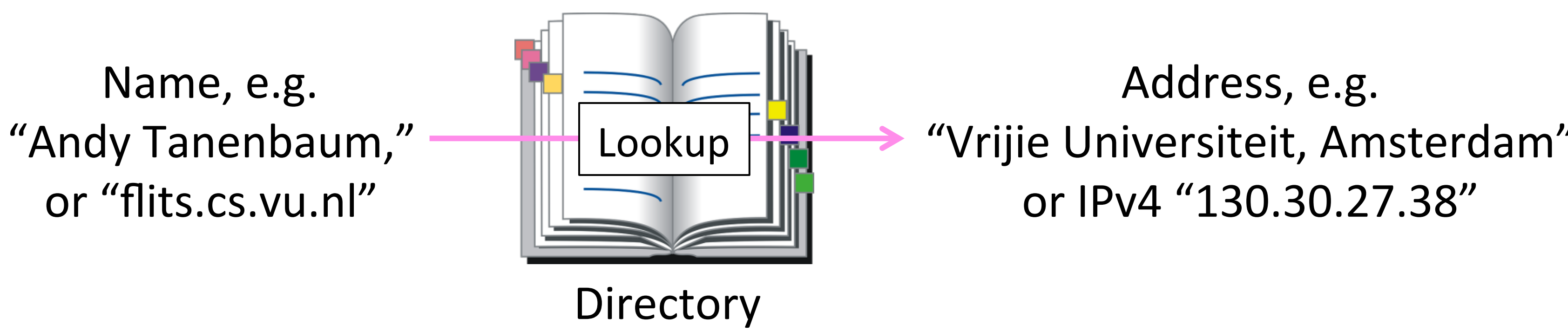
Topic

- The DNS (Domain Name System)
  - Human-readable host names, and more
  - Distributed namespace & resolution



Names and Addresses

- Names are higher-level identifiers for resources
- Addresses are lower-level locators for resources
  - Multiple levels, e.g. full name → email → IP address → Ethernet address
- Resolution (or lookup) is mapping a name to an address



Before the DNS – HOSTS.TXT

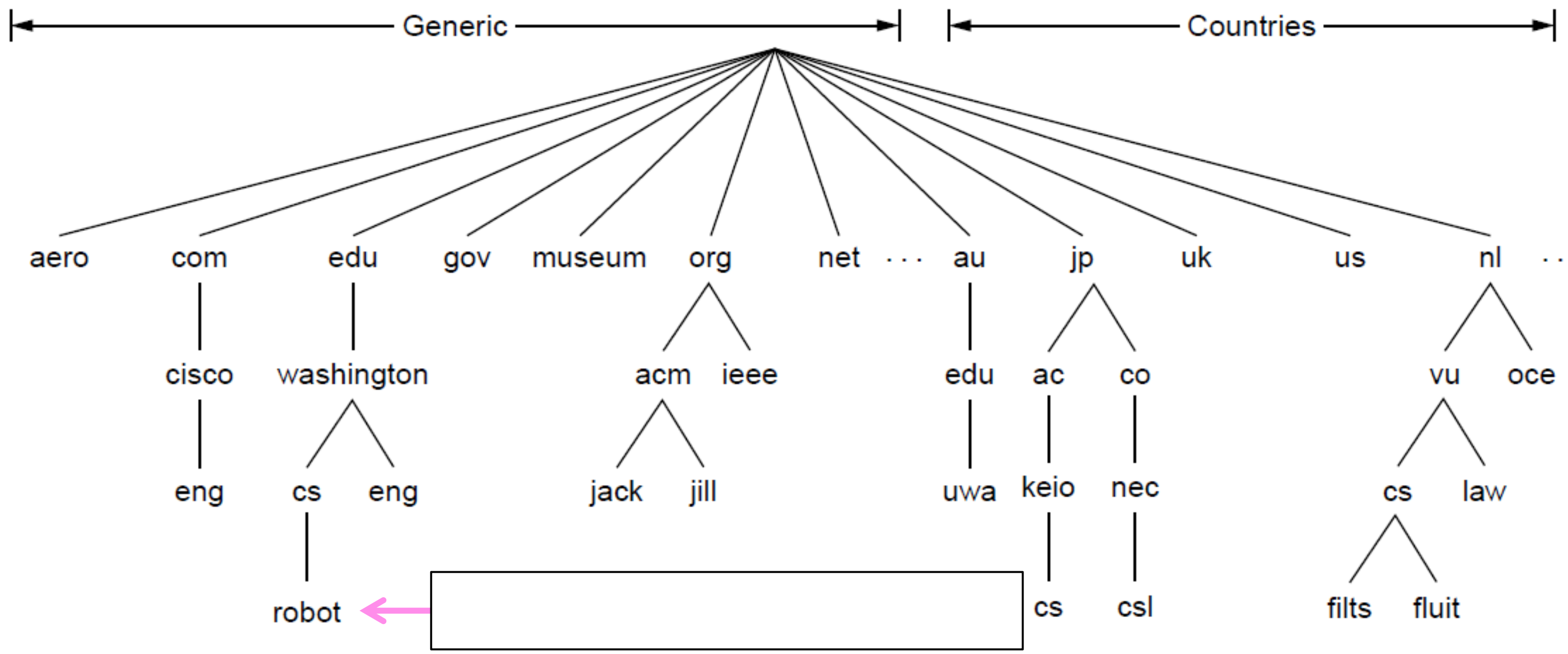
- Directory was a file HOSTS.TXT regularly retrieved for all hosts from a central machine at the NIC (Network Information Center)
- Names were initially flat, became hierarchical (e.g., lcs.mit.edu) ~85
- Neither manageable nor efficient as the ARPANET grew …

DNS

- A naming service to map between host names and their IP addresses (and more)
  - www.uwa.edu.au → 130.95.128.140
- Goals:
  - Easy to manage (esp. with multiple parties)
  - Efficient (good performance, few resources)
- Approach:
  - Distributed directory based on a hierarchical namespace
  - Automated protocol to tie pieces together

DNS Namespace

- Hierarchical, starting from "." (dot, typically omitted)

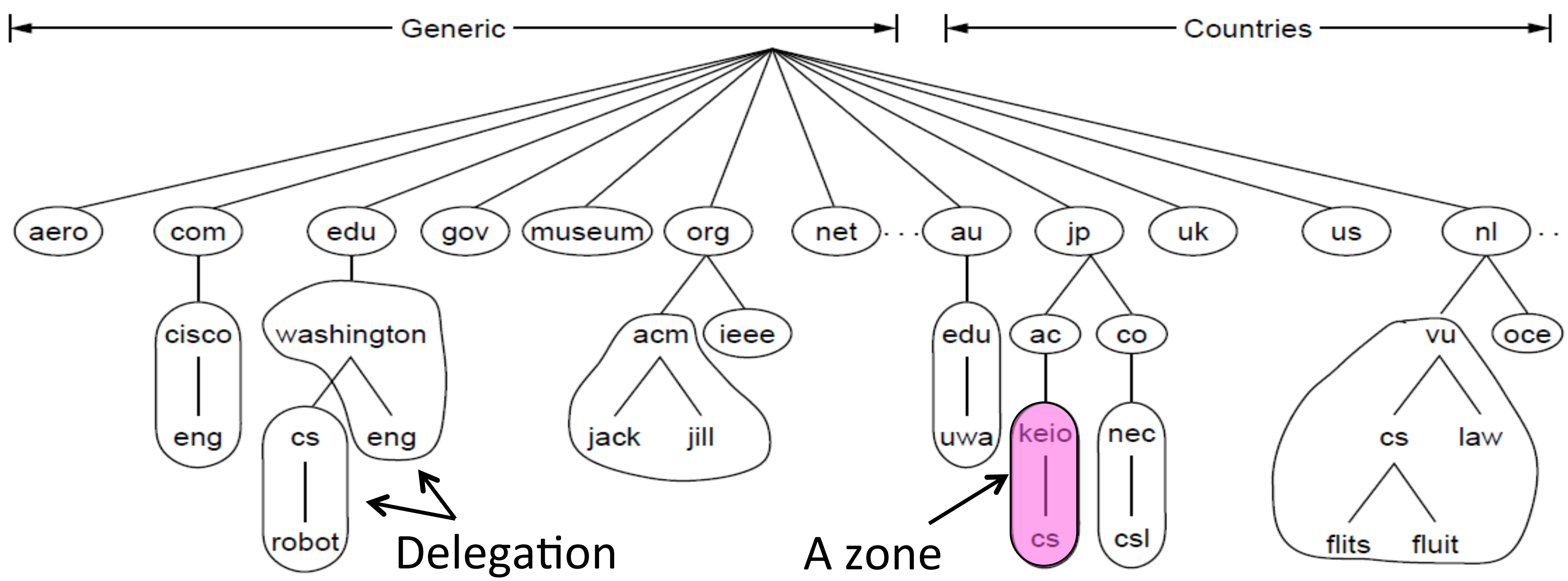


TLDs (Top-Level Domains)

- Run by ICANN (Internet Corp. for Assigned Names and Numbers)
  - Starting in '98; naming is financial, political, and international ☺
- 22+ generic TLDs
  - Initially .com, .edu , .gov., .mil, .org, .net
  - Added .aero, .museum, etc. from '01 through .xxx in '11
  - Different TLDs have different usage policies
- ~250 country code TLDs
  - Two letters, e.g., ".au", plus international characters since 2010
  - Widely commercialized, e.g., .tv (Tuvalu)
  - Many domain hacks, e.g., instagr.am (Armenia), goo.gl (Greenland)

DNS Zones

- A zone is a contiguous portion of the namespace



DNS Zones (2)

- Zones are the basis for distribution
  - EDU Registrar administers .edu
  - UW administers washington.edu
  - CS&E administers cs.washington.edu
- Each zone has a <u>nameserver</u> to contact for information about it
  - Zone must include contacts for delegations, e.g., .edu knows nameserver for washington.edu

DNS Resource Records

- A zone is comprised of DNS resource records that give information for its domain names

Type	Meaning
SOA	Start of authority, has key zone parameters
A	IPv4 address of a host
AAAA (“quad A”)	IPv6 address of a host
CNAME	Canonical name for an alias
MX	Mail exchanger for the domain
NS	Nameserver of domain or delegated subdomain

DNS Resource Records (2)

; Authoritative data for cs.vu.nl

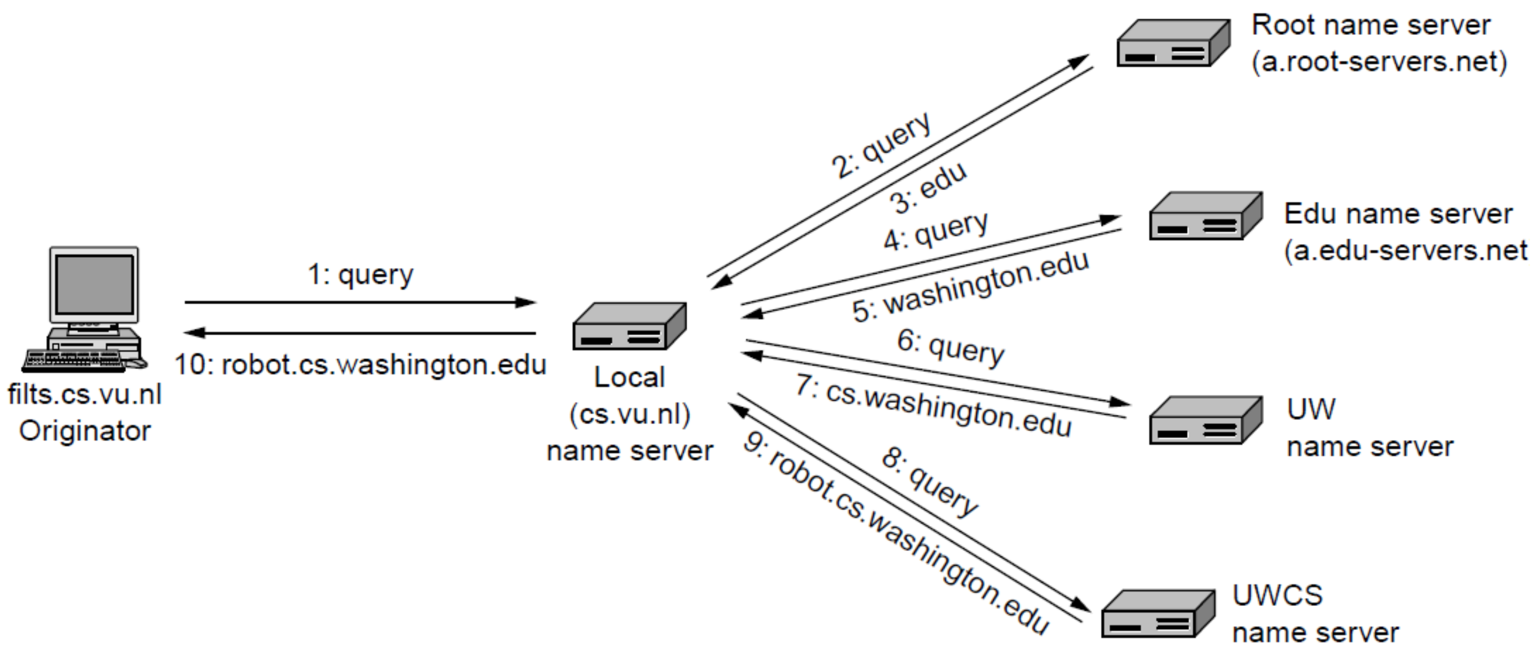
cs.vu.nl.	86400	IN	SOA	star boss (9527,7200,7200,241920,86400)	
cs.vu.nl.	86400	IN	MX	1 zephyr	
cs.vu.nl.	86400	IN	MX	2 top	
cs.vu.nl.	86400	IN	NS	star	← Name server
star	86400	IN	A	130.37.56.205	
zephyr	86400	IN	A	130.37.20.10	
top	86400	IN	A	130.37.20.11	← IP addresses of computers
www	86400	IN	CNAME	star.cs.vu.nl	
ftp	86400	IN	CNAME	zephyr.cs.vu.nl	
flits	86400	IN	A	130.37.16.112	
flits	86400	IN	A	192.31.231.165	
flits	86400	IN	MX	1 flits	
flits	86400	IN	MX	2 zephyr	
flits	86400	IN	MX	3 top	
rowboat		IN	A	130.37.56.201	
		IN	MX	1 rowboat	← Mail gateways
		IN	MX	2 zephyr	
little-sister		IN	A	130.37.62.23	
laserjet		IN	A	192.31.231.216	

DNS Resolution

- DNS protocol lets a host resolve any host name (domain) to IP address
- If unknown, can start with the root nameserver and work down zones
- Let’s see an example first …

DNS Resolution (2)

- flits.cs.vu.nl resolves robot.cs.washington.edu



Iterative vs. Recursive Queries

- Recursive query
  - Nameserver completes resolution and returns the final answer
  - E.g., flits → local nameserver
- Iterative query
  - Nameserver returns the answer or who to contact next for the answer
  - E.g., local nameserver → all others

DNS Resolution

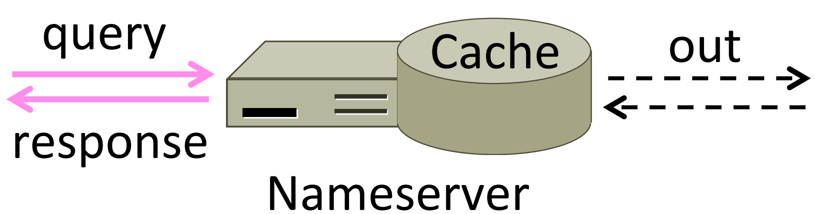
- What are the implications of the resolution process presented above?

Iterative vs. Recursive Queries (2)

- Recursive query
  - Lets server offload client burden (simple resolver) for manageability
  - Lets server cache over a pool of clients for better performance
- Iterative query
  - Lets server “file and forget”
  - Easy to build high load servers

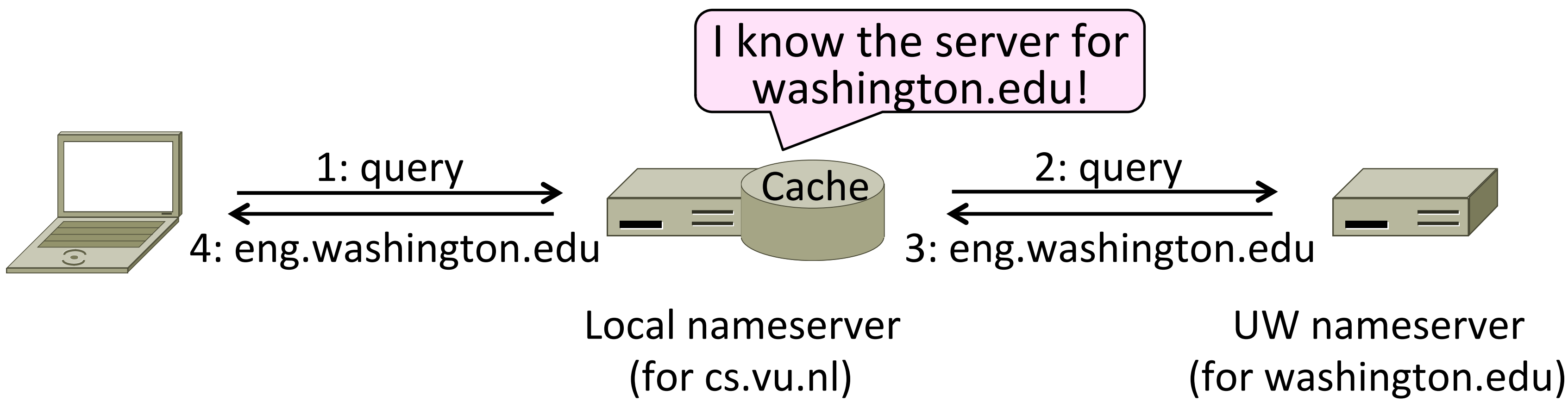
Caching

- Resolution latency should be low
  - Adds delay to web browsing
- Cache query/responses to answer future queries immediately
  - Including partial (iterative) answers
  - Responses carry a TTL for caching



Caching (2)

- flits.cs.vu.nl now resolves eng.washington.edu
  - And previous resolutions cut out most of the process



Local Nameservers

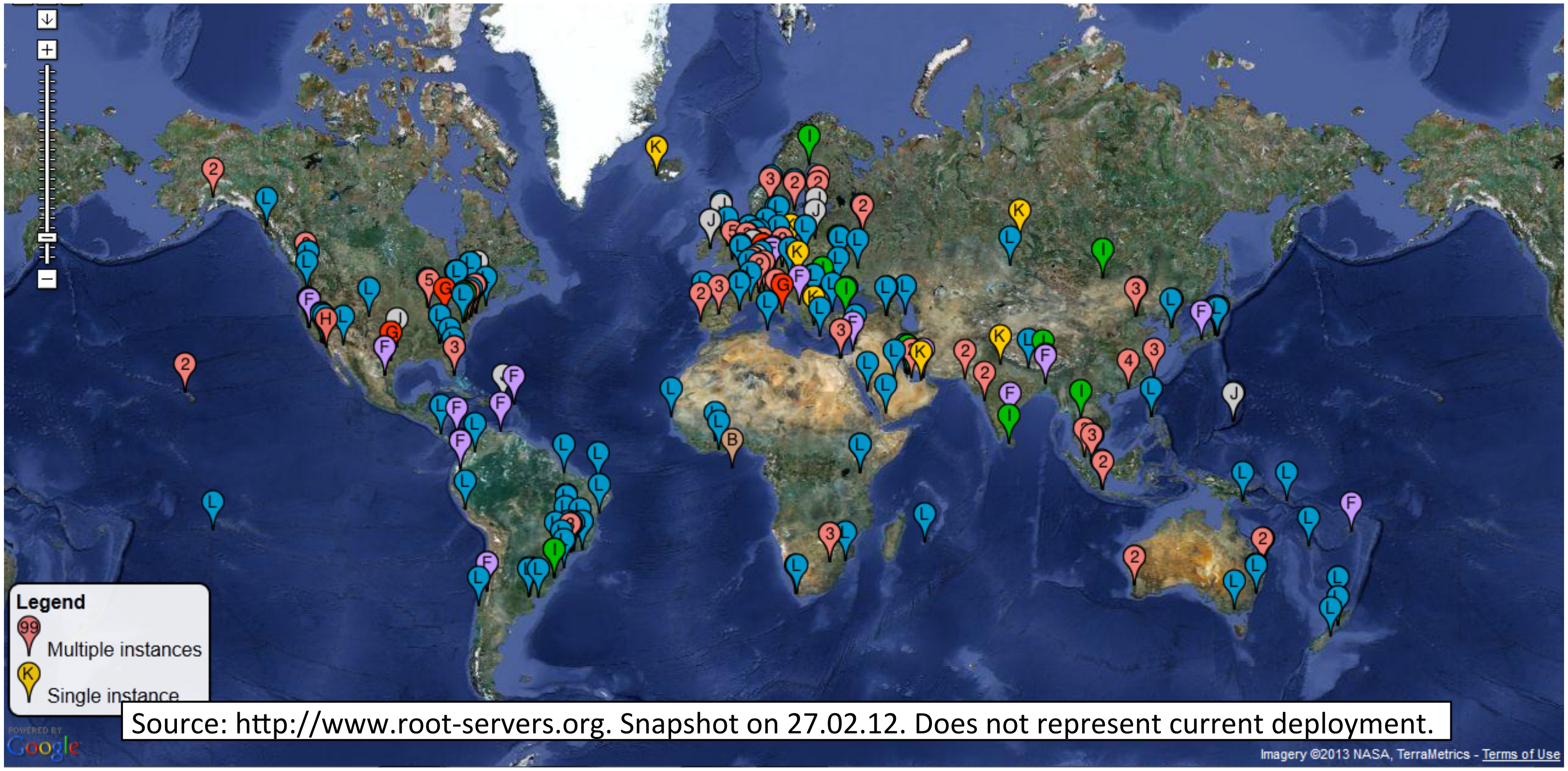
- Local nameservers typically run by IT (enterprise, ISP)
  - But may be your host or AP
  - Or alternatives e.g., Google public DNS
- Clients need to be able to contact their local nameservers
  - Typically configured via DHCP

Root Nameservers

- Root (dot) is served by 13 server names
  - a.root-servers.net to m.root-servers.net
  - All nameservers need root IP addresses
  - Handled via configuration file (named.ca)

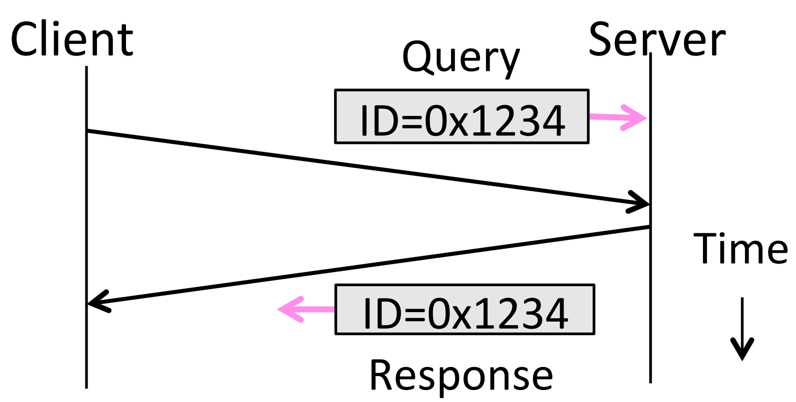
- There are >250 distributed server instances
  - Highly reachable, reliable service
  - Most servers are reached by IP anycast (Multiple locations advertise same IP! Routes take client to the closest one.)
  - Servers are IPv4 and IPv6 reachable

Root Server Deployment



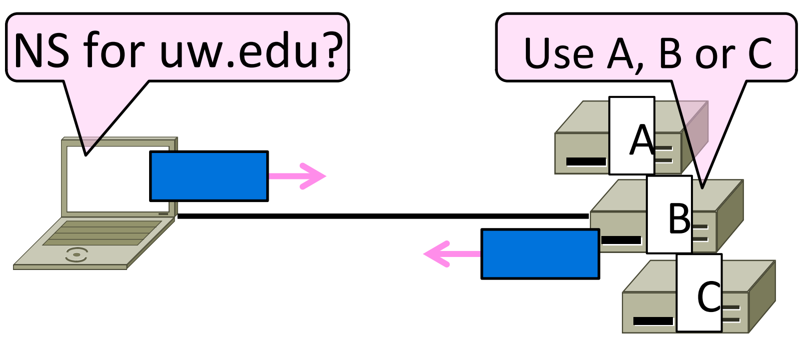
DNS Protocol

- Query and response messages
  - Built on UDP messages, port 53
  - ARQ for reliability; server is stateless!
  - Messages linked by a 16-bit ID field



DNS Protocol (2)

- Service reliability via replicas
  - Run multiple nameservers for domain
  - Return the list; clients use one answer
  - Helps distribute load too



DNS Issues

- Are there any security issues with DNS?

DNS Issues

- Recall that CDNs allow you to replicate content at multiple locations
- DNS can be used to redirect clients to CDN nodes based on the resolver IP
- But this can go wrong sometimes…

Introduction to Computer Networks

HTTP, the HyperText Transfer Protocol (§7.3.1-7.3.4)

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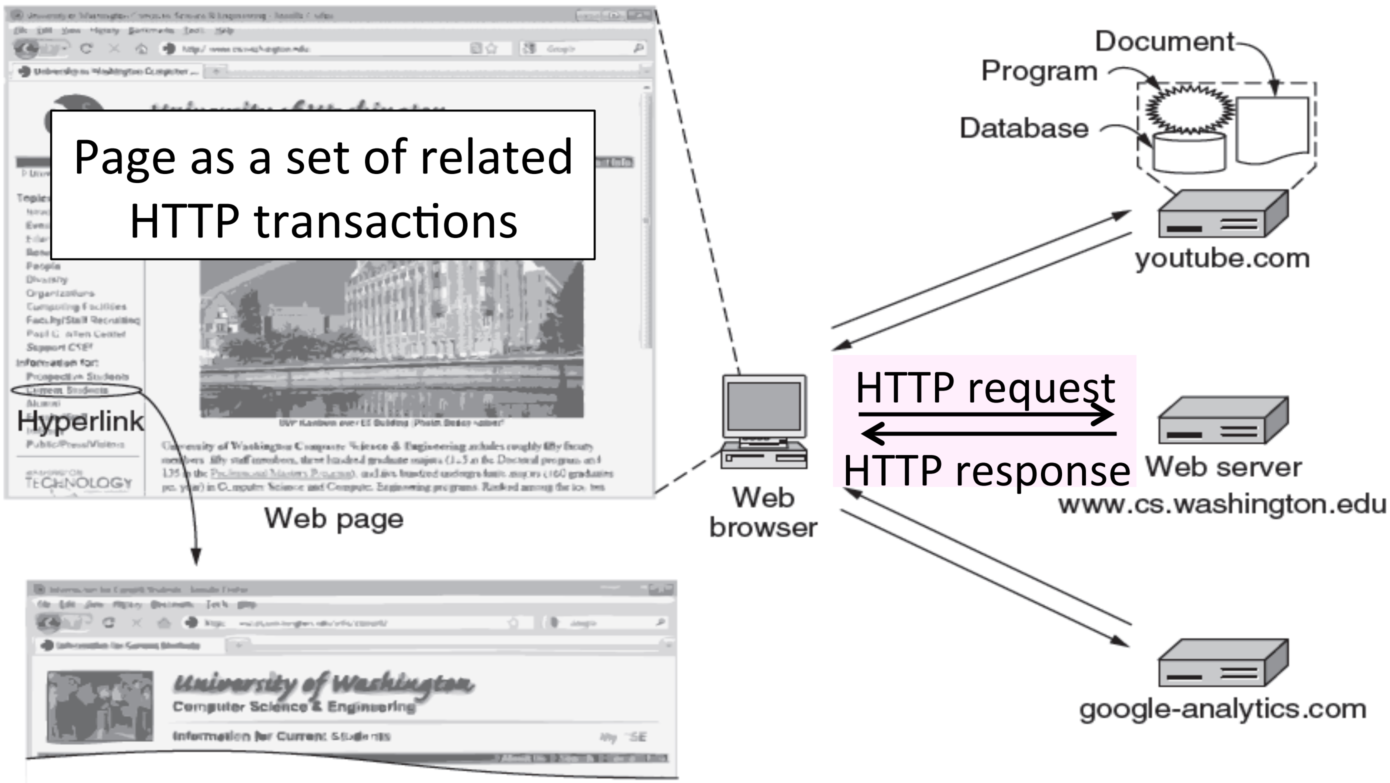
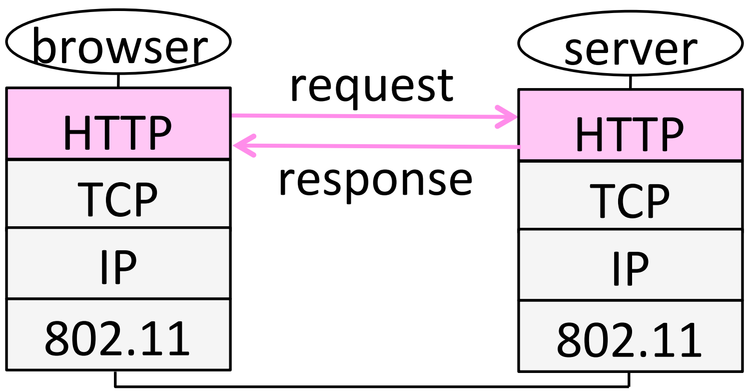
Web Context


Page as a set of related HTTP transactions
Hyperlink
Web page
Web browser
HTTP request
HTTP response
Document
Program
Database
youtube.com
Web server
www.cs.washington.edu
google-analytics.com

Web Protocol Context

- HTTP is a request/response protocol for fetching Web resources
  - Runs on TCP, typically port 80
  - Part of browser/server app



Fetching a Web page with HTTP

- Start with the page URL:

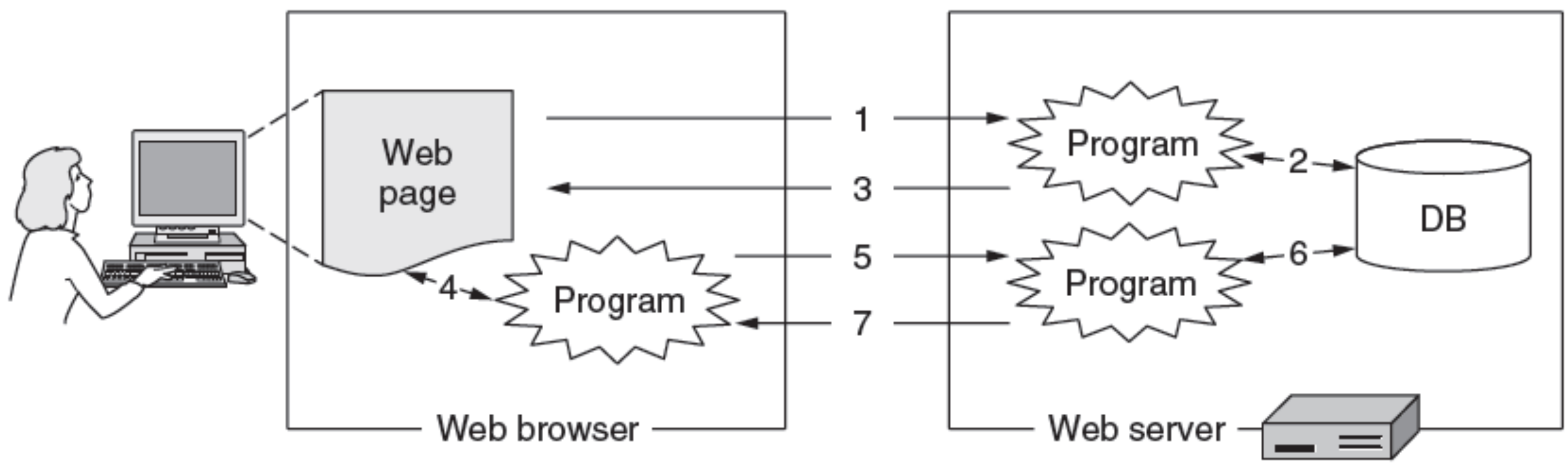
  http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vegemite

  Protocol — Server — Page on server

- Steps:
  - Resolve the server to IP address (DNS)
  - Set up TCP connection to the server
  - Send HTTP request for the page
  - (Await HTTP response for the page)
  - ** Execute / fetch other Web resources / render
  - Clean up any idle TCP connections

Static vs Dynamic Web pages

- Static web page is a file contents, e.g., image
- Dynamic web page is the result of program execution
  - Javascript on client, PHP on server, or both



HTTP Protocol

- Originally a simple protocol, with many options added over time
  - Text-based commands, headers
- Try it yourself:
  - As a "browser" fetching a URL
  - Run "telnet en.wikipedia.org 80"
  - Type "GET /wiki/Vegemite HTTP/1.0" to server followed by a blank line
  - Server will return HTTP response with the page contents (or other info)

HTTP Protocol (2)

- Commands used in the request

	Method	Description
Fetch page →	GET	Read a Web page
	HEAD	Read a Web page's header
Upload data →	POST	Append to a Web page
	PUT	Store a Web page
	DELETE	Remove the Web page
	TRACE	Echo the incoming request
	CONNECT	Connect through a proxy
	OPTIONS	Query options for a page

HTTP Protocol (3)

- Codes returned with the response

Code	Meaning	Examples
1xx	Information	100 = server agrees to handle client's request
Yes! → 2xx	Success	200 = request succeeded; 204 = no content present
3xx	Redirection	301 = page moved; 304 = cached page still valid
4xx	Client error	403 = forbidden page; 404 = page not found
5xx	Server error	500 = internal server error; 503 = try again later

HTTP Protocol (4)

- Many header fields specify capabilities and content
  - E.g., Content-Type: text/html, Cookie: lect=8-4-http

Function	**Example Headers**
Browser capabilities (client → server)	User-Agent, Accept, Accept-Charset, Accept-Encoding, Accept-Language
Caching related (mixed directions)	If-Modified-Since, If-None-Match, Date, Last-Modified, Expires, Cache-Control, ETag
Browser context (client → server)	Cookie, Referer, Authorization, Host
Content delivery (server → client)	Content-Encoding, Content-Length, Content-Type, Content-Language, Content-Range, Set-Cookie

Introduction to Computer Networks

HTTP Performance (§7.3.4, §7.5.2)

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PLT (Page Load Time)

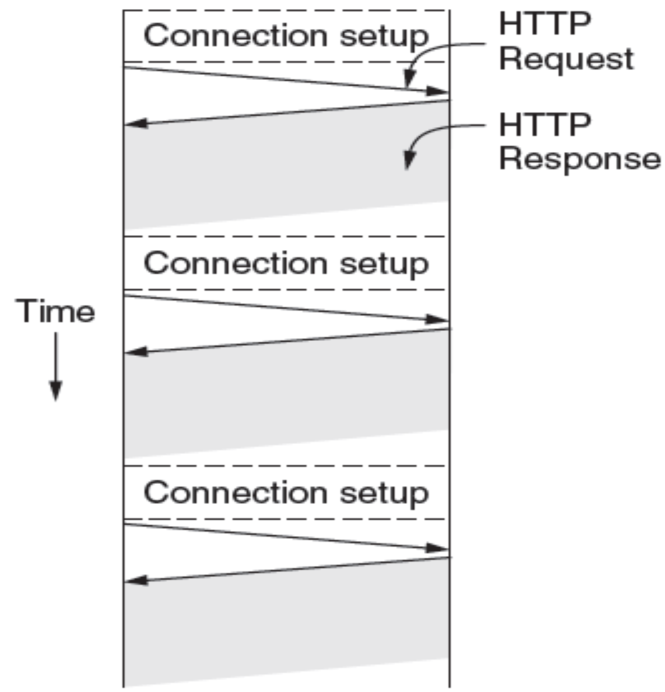
- PLT is the key measure of web performance
  - From click until user sees page
  - Small increases in PLT decrease sales
- PLT depends on many factors
  - Structure of page/content
  - HTTP (and TCP!) protocol
  - Network RTT and bandwidth

Page Load Time

- How can we optimize page load time?
  - Consider all layers of the stack
  - Consider different kinds of web pages and what they contain

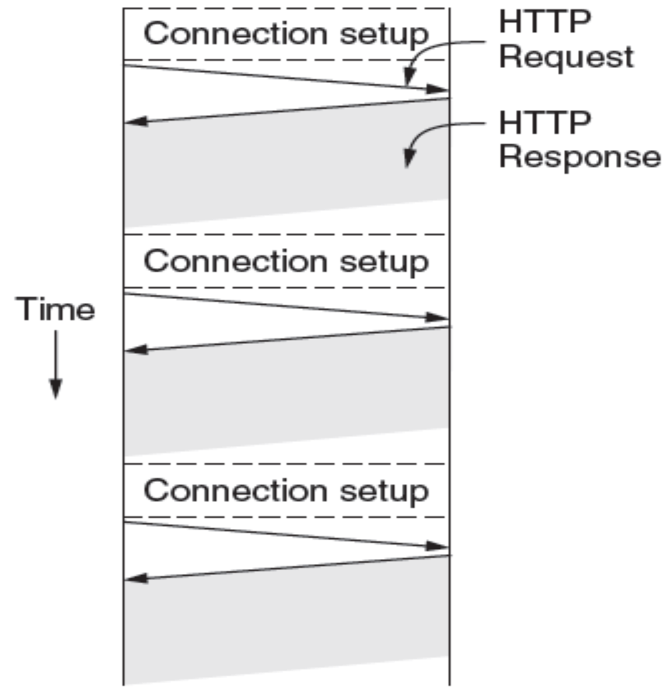
Early Performance

- HTTP/1.0 used one TCP connection to fetch one web resource
  - Made HTTP very easy to build
  - But gave fairly poor PLT…



Early Performance (2)

- Many reasons why PLT is larger than necessary
  - Sequential request/responses, even when to different servers
  - Multiple TCP connection setups to the same server
  - Multiple TCP slow-start phases
- Network is not used effectively
  - Worse with many small resources / page



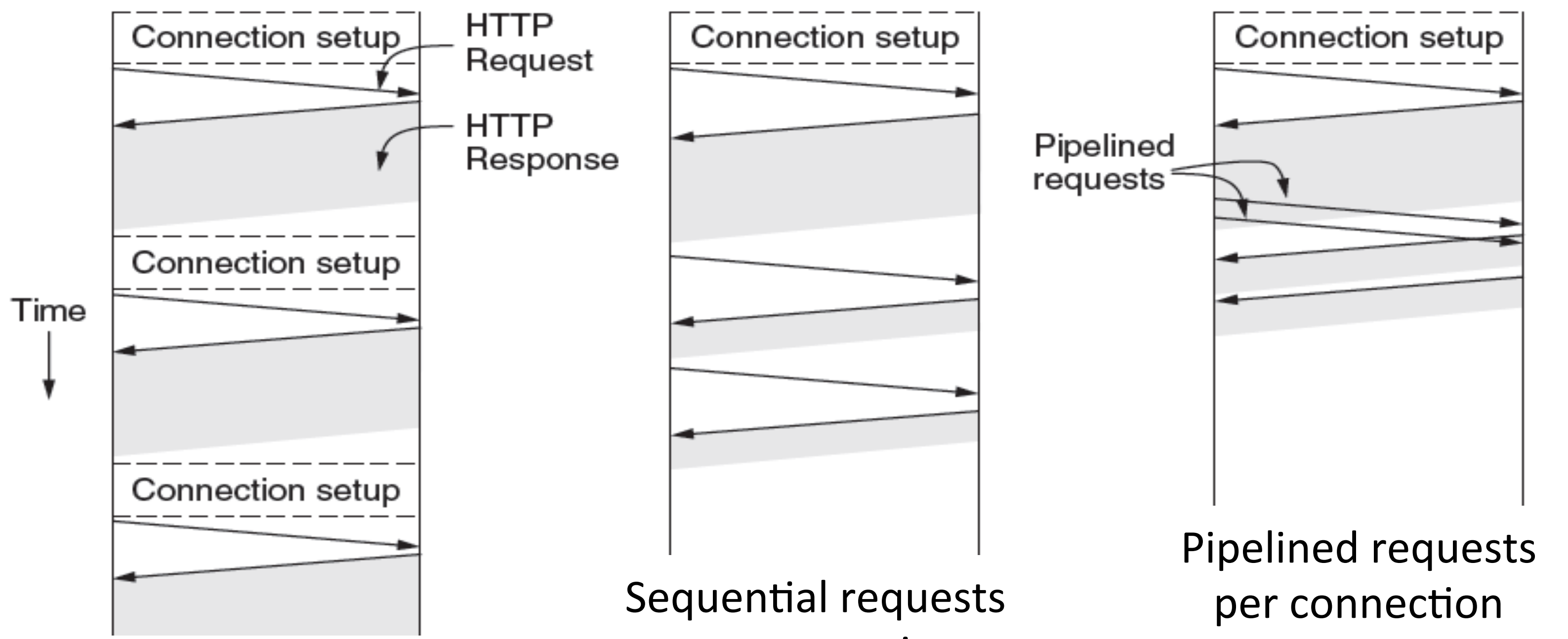
Parallel Connections

- One simple way to reduce PLT
  - Browser runs multiple (8, say) HTTP instances in parallel
  - Server is unchanged; already handled concurrent requests for many clients
- How does this help?
  - Single HTTP wasn't using network much …
  - So parallel connections aren't slowed much
  - Pulls in completion time of last fetch

Persistent Connections

- Parallel connections compete with each other for network resources
  - 1 parallel client ≈ 8 sequential clients?
  - Exacerbates network bursts, and loss
- Persistent connection alternative
  - Make 1 TCP connection to 1 server
  - Use it for multiple HTTP requests

Persistent Connections (2)



One request per connection

Sequential requests per connection

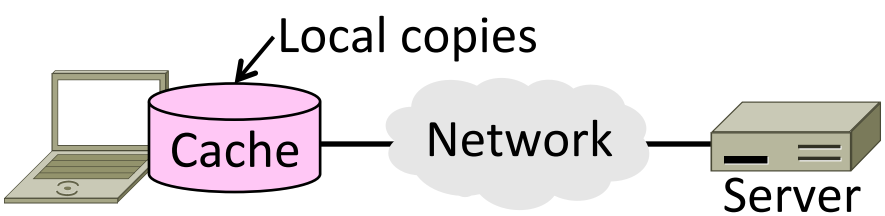
Pipelined requests per connection

Persistent Connections (3)

- Widely used as part of HTTP/1.1
  - Supports optional pipelining
  - PLT benefits depending on page structure, but easy on network
- Issues with persistent connections
  - How long to keep TCP connection?
  - Can it be slower? (Yes. But why?)

Web Caching

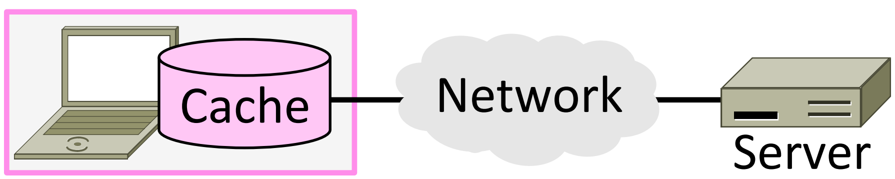
- Users often revisit web pages
  - Big win from reusing local copy!
  - This is caching



- Key question:
  - When is it OK to reuse local copy?

Web Caching (2)

- Locally determine copy is still valid
  - Based on expiry information such as “Expires” header from server
  - Or use a heuristic to guess (cacheable, freshly valid, not modified recently)
  - Content is then available right away

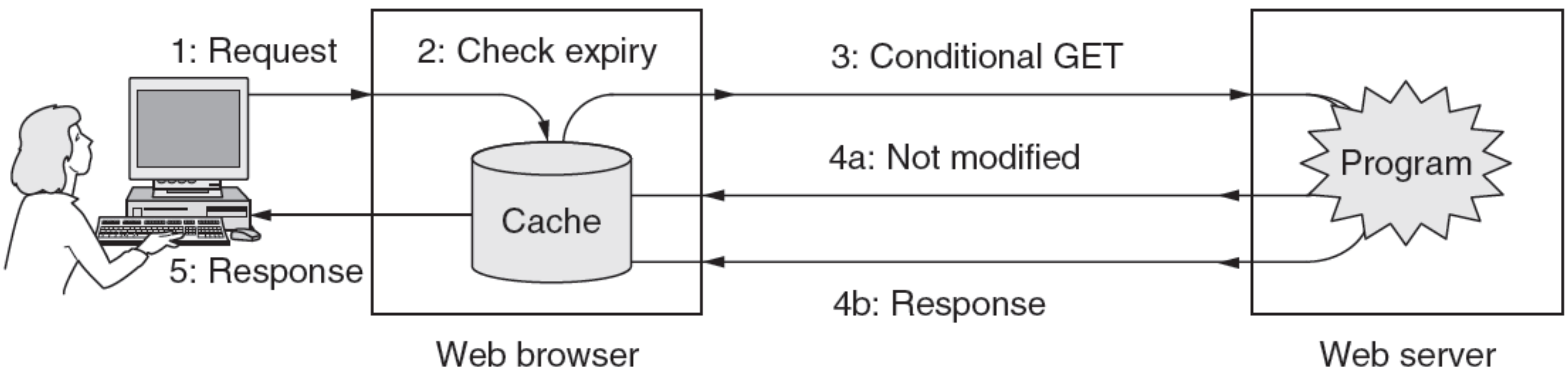


Web Caching (3)

- Revalidate copy with server
  - Based on timestamp of copy such as "Last-Modified" header from server
  - Or based on content of copy such as "Etag" header from server
  - Content is available after 1 RTT

Web Caching (4)

- Putting the pieces together:

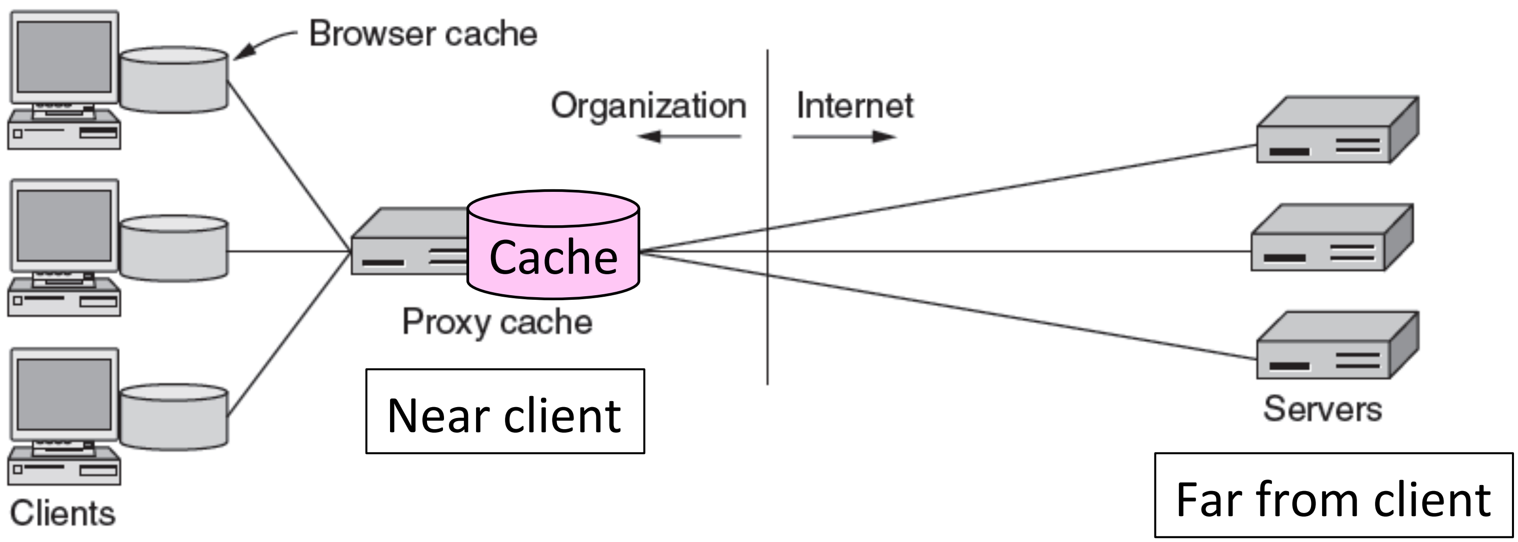


Web Proxies

- Place intermediary between pool of clients and external web servers
  - Benefits for clients include greater caching and security checking
  - Organizational access policies too!
- Proxy caching
  - Clients benefit from a larger, shared cache
  - Benefits limited by secure and dynamic content, as well as “long tail”

Web Proxies (2)

- Clients contact proxy; proxy contacts server



Introduction to Computer Networks

CDNs (Content Delivery Networks) (§7.5.3)

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Context

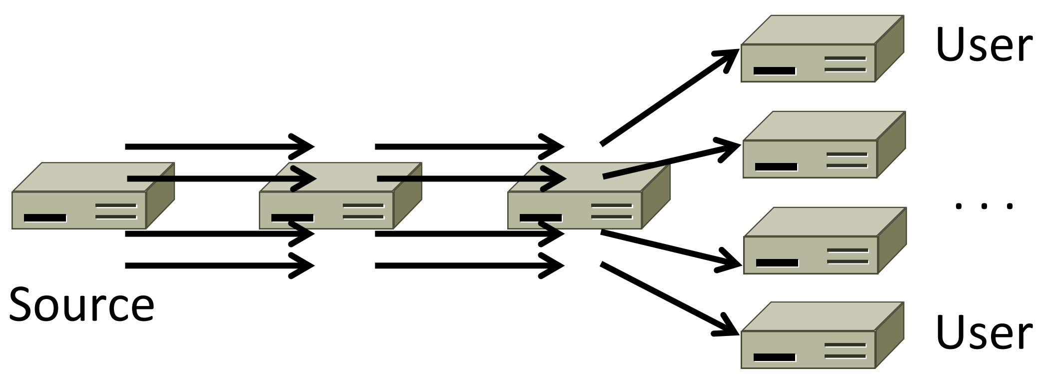
- As the web took off in the 90s, traffic volumes grew and grew. This:
  1. Concentrated load on popular servers
  2. Led to congested networks and need to provision more bandwidth
  3. Gave a poor user experience
- Idea:
  - Place popular content near clients
  - Helps with all three issues above

Questions

- What are good locations to establish CDN nodes?

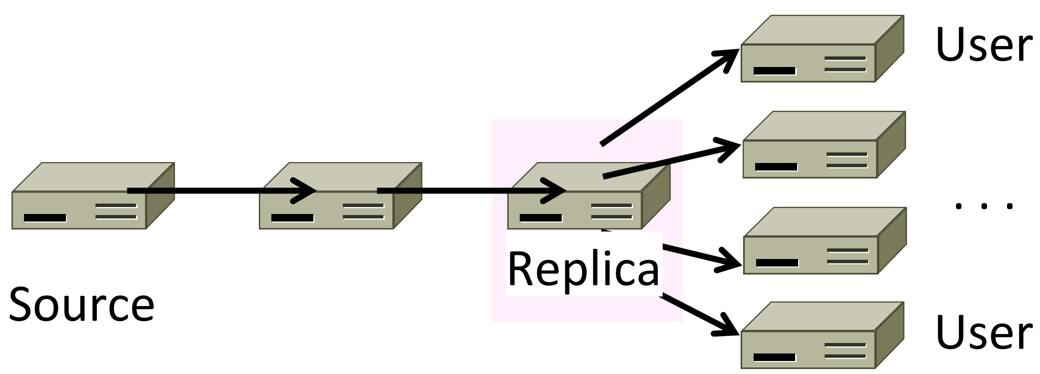
Before CDNs

- Sending content from the source to 4 users takes 4 x 3 = 12 "network hops" in the example



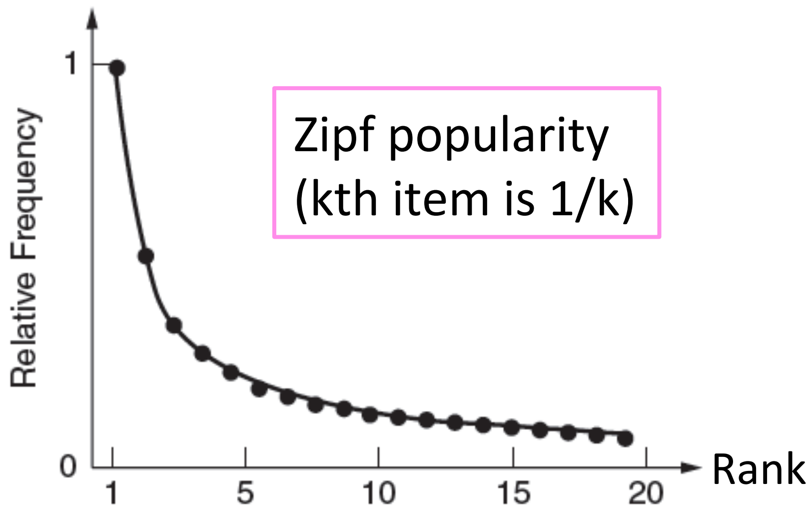
After CDNs

- Sending content via replicas takes only 4 + 2 = 6 “network hops”



Popularity of Content

- Zipf's Law: few popular items, many unpopular ones; both matter



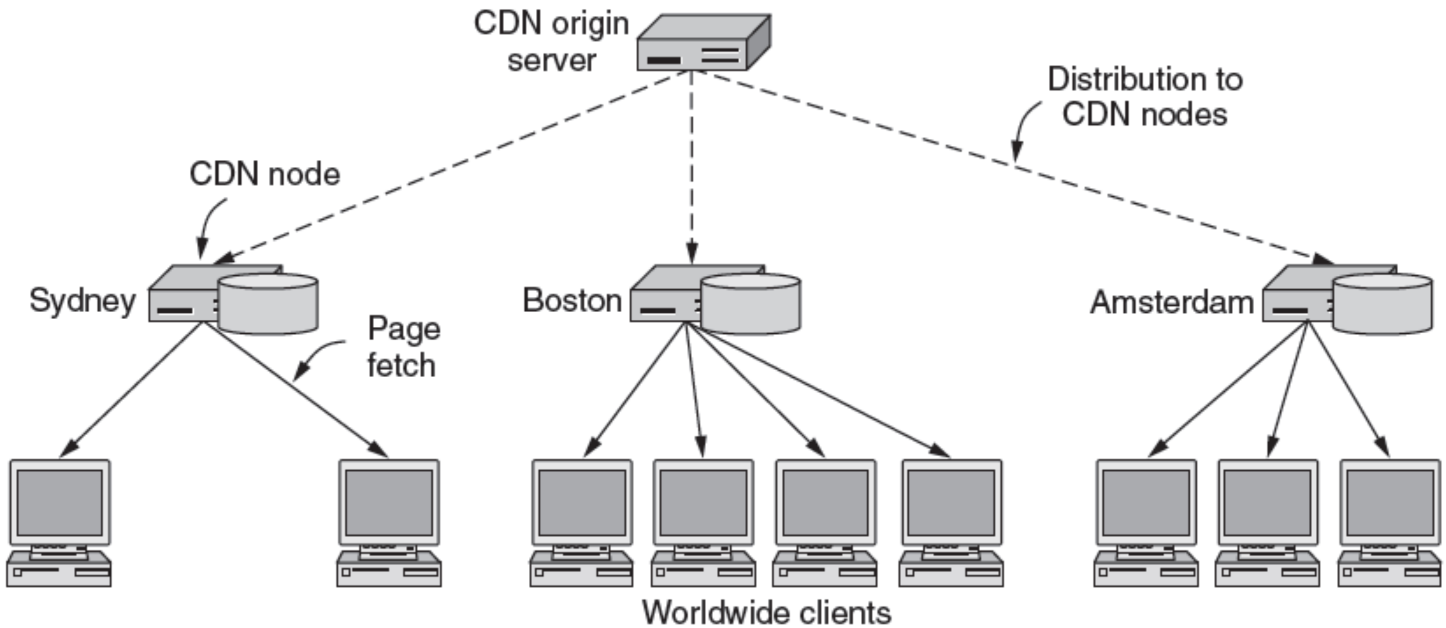
George Zipf (1902-1950)

Source: Wikipedia

How to place content near clients?

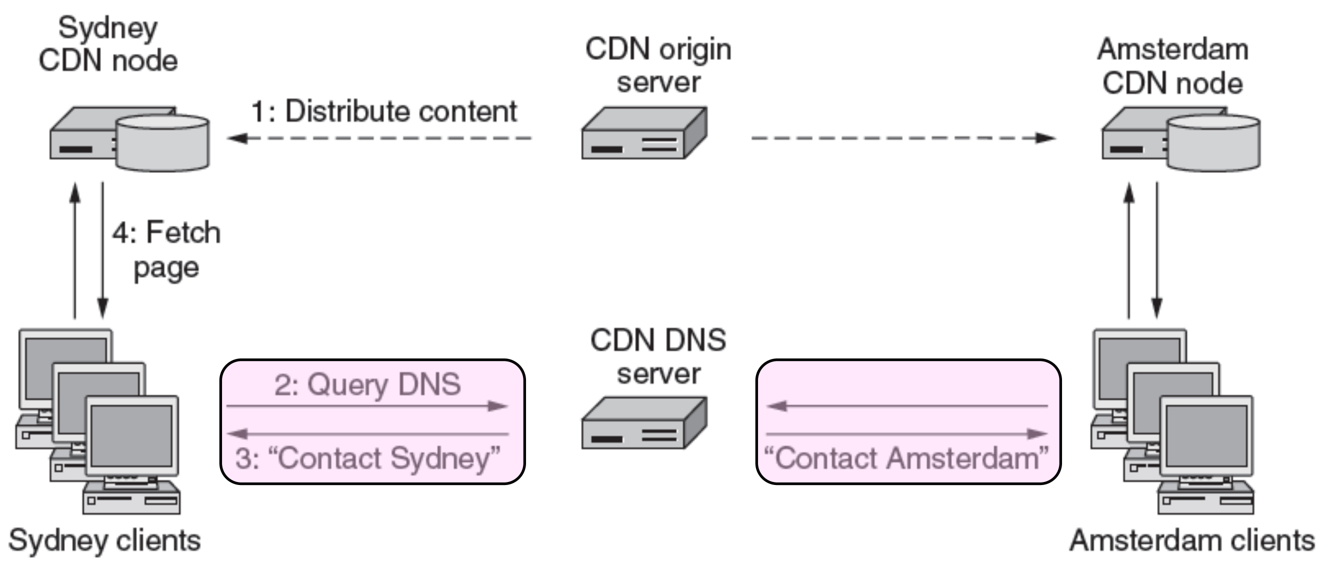
- Use browser and proxy caches
  - Helps, but limited to one client or clients in one organization
- Want to place replicas across the Internet for use by all nearby clients
  - Done by clever use of DNS

Content Delivery Network



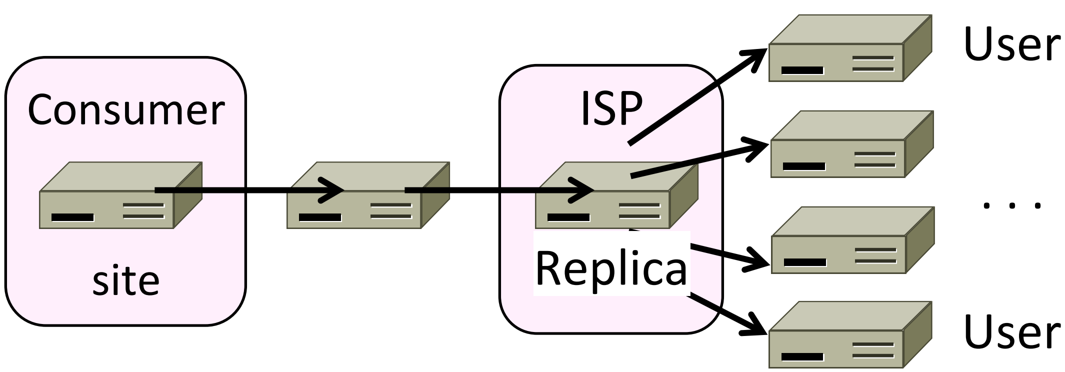
Content Delivery Network (2)

- DNS resolution of site gives different answers to clients
  - Tell each client the site is the nearest replica (map client IP)



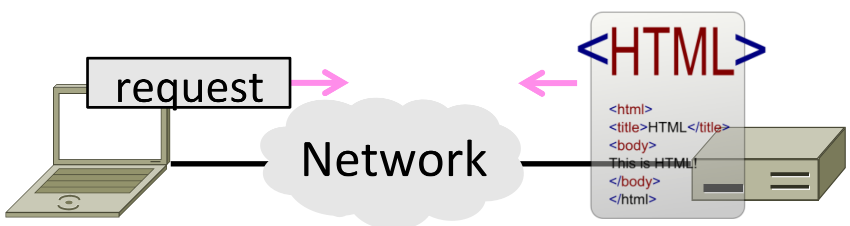
Business Model

- Clever model pioneered by Akamai
  - Placing site replica at an ISP is win-win
  - Improves site experience and reduces bandwidth usage of ISP



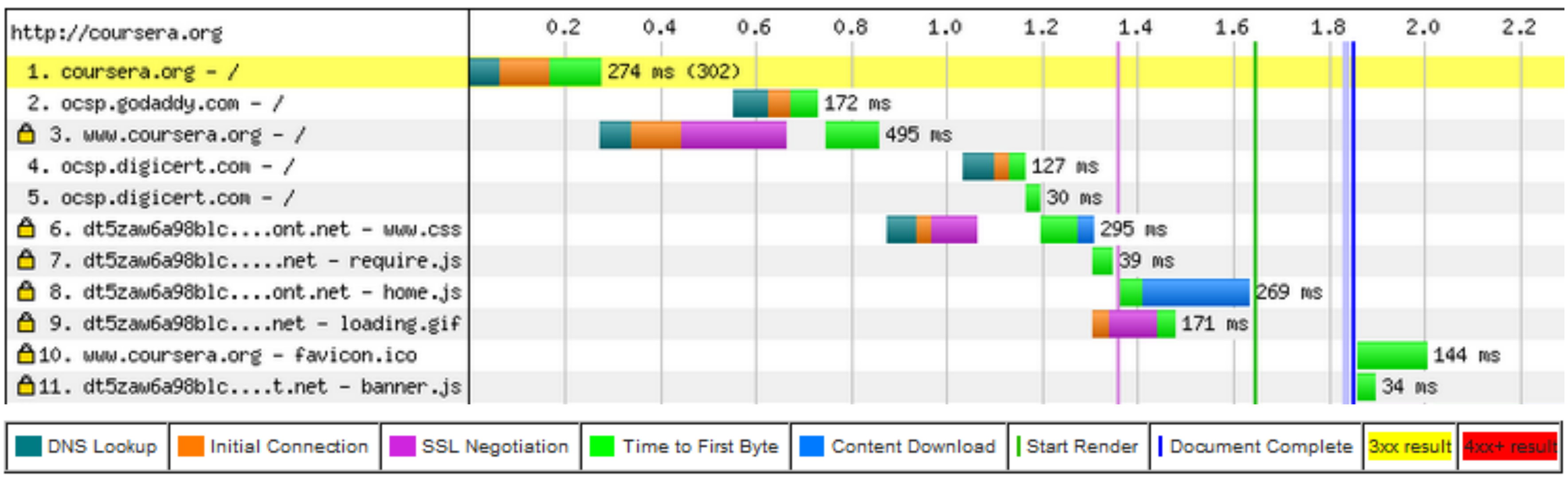
Topic

- The Future of HTTP
  - How will we make the web faster?
  - A brief look at some approaches



Modern Web Pages

- Waterfall diagram shows progression of page load

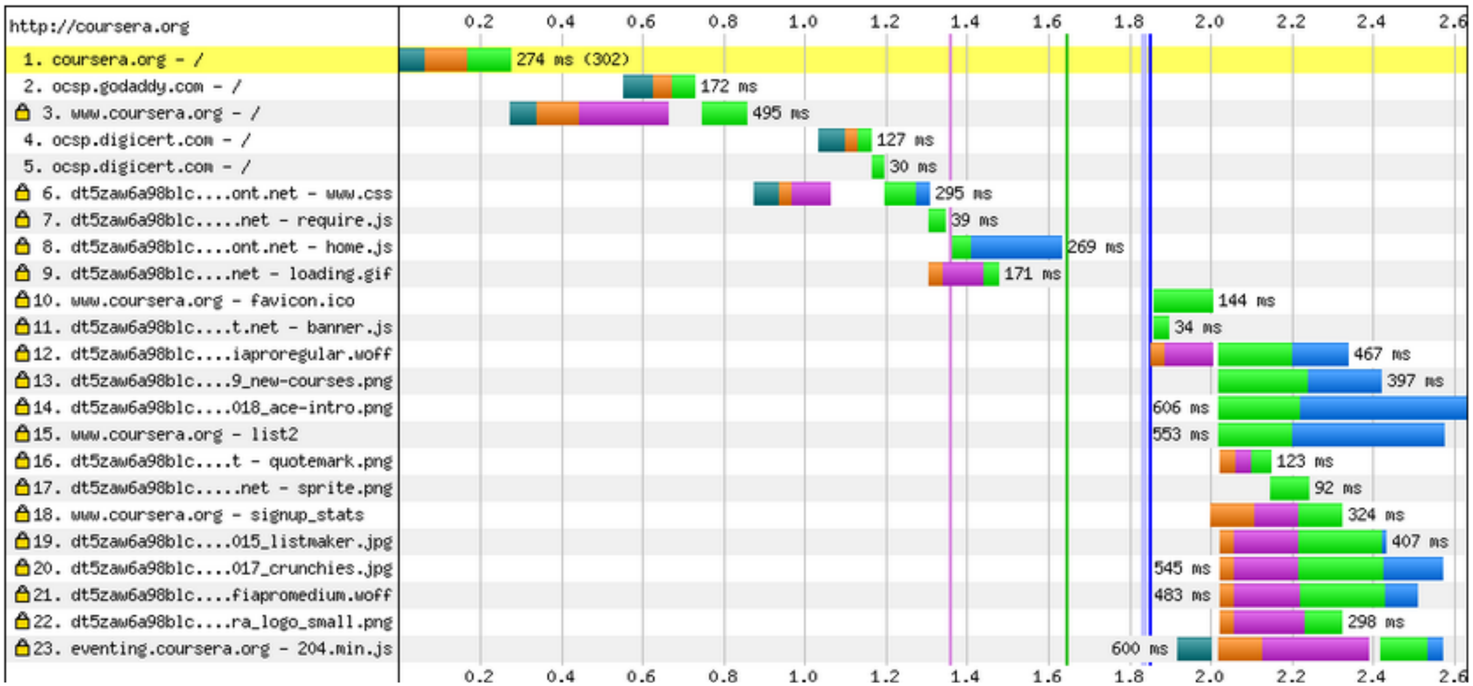


`webpagetest` tool for http://coursera.org (Firefox, 5/1 Mbps, from VA, 3/1/13)

Modern Web Pages (2)

Yikes!

- -23 requests
- -1 Mb data
- -2.6 secs



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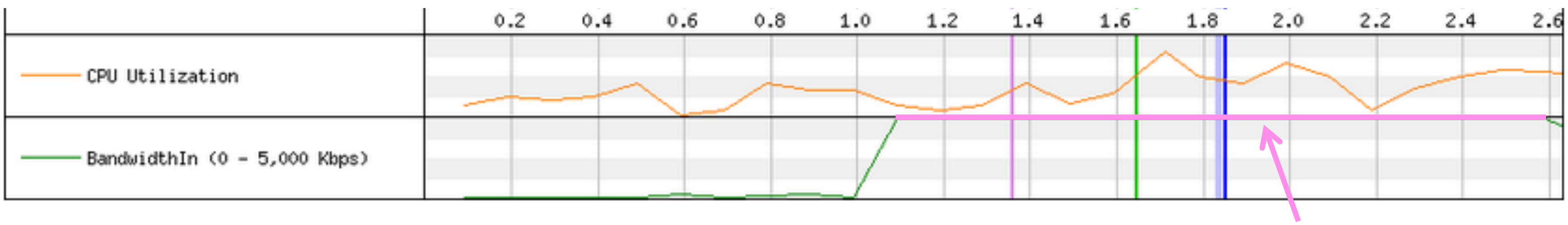
Modern Web Pages (3)



- Waterfall and PLT depends on many factors
  - Very different for different browsers
  - Very different for repeat page views
  - Depends on local computation as well as network

Recent work to reduce PLT

Pages grow ever more complex!
- Larger, more dynamic, and secure
- How will we reduce PLT?

1. Better use of the network
   - HTTP/2 effort based on SPDY
2. Better content structures
   - mod_pagespeed server extension

SPDY ("speedy")

- A set of HTTP improvements
  - Multiplexed (parallel) HTTP requests on one TCP connection
  - Client priorities for parallel requests
  - Compressed HTTP headers
  - Server push of resources
- Now being tested and improved
  - Default in Chrome, Firefox
  - Basis for an HTTP/2 effort

mod_pagespeed

- Observation:
  - The way pages are written affects how quickly they load
  - Many books on best practices for page authors and developers
- Key idea:
  - Have server re-write (compile) pages to help them load quickly!
  - mod_pagespeed is an example

mod_pagespeed (2)

- Apache server extension
  - Software installed with web server
  - Rewrites pages "on the fly" with rules based on best practices

- Example rewrite rules:
  - Minify Javascript
  - Flatten multi-level CSS files
  - Resize images for client
  - And much more (100s of specific rules)