

HTTP - Request/ Response

HTTP - Documentation

- HTTP/1.1 is defined by RFC2616 of the IETF
 - <https://tools.ietf.org/html/rfc2616>
 - This is THE document for all your questions about HTTP
 - Today we'll discuss topics in sections 4, 5, and 6
- RFC
 - Request For Comments
 - Submit an RFC for public discussion or to publish information
- IETF
 - Internet Engineering Task Force
 - Adopts some RFC's as Internet standards

New Lines

- A new line character in an HTTP request/response must be:
 - `"\r\n"`
 - Carriage return (From the days of typewriters)
 - New line
 - In the documentation this is referred to as a CRLF
 - CRLF == Carriage Return Line Feed
- Be aware of this while parsing
- Use `"\r\n"` for new lines when preparing your responses

Request

- We'll use this simple request as an example
- What specific resource is being requested?

GET / HTTP/1.1
Host: cse312.com

The Request Line

- The first line of the request is always the request line
- The request line has 3 values separated by spaces
 - The request type (ex. GET/POST)
 - The path of the request (ex. "/")
 - The HTTP Version
 - We'll always use HTTP/1.1 in this course
 - You can assume the request uses HTTP/1.1 in your assignments without checking this string

GET / HTTP/1.1

Host: cse312.com

The Request Line

- Parse the request line by looking for the 2 space characters
 - Separate the values and check the strings
- Typically: When the root path "/" is requested, serve your home page
 - By convention, web servers look for index.html to server
- If the url contained a different path, it will appear in the request line

GET / HTTP/1.1

Host: cse312.com

GET /lecture HTTP/1.1

Host: cse312.com

Headers

- Following the request line are any number of headers
- HTTP Headers
 - Key-Value pairs
 - Key and value separated by a colon ": "
- Each header will be on a new line
- To parse, look for the colon ": " and read the key and value

GET / HTTP/1.1

Host: cse312.com

Response

- Your web server will listen for HTTP requests over the TCP sockets and respond with HTTP responses
- Send this response back to the client to serve them the requested content

HTTP/1.1 200 OK

Content-Type: text/plain

Content-Length: 5

hello

Status Line

- The first line of the response must be the status line
- Status line contains 3 values separated by spaces
 - The HTTP version
 - The status code
 - The status message (Reason phrase in docs)

HTTP/1.1 200 OK

Content-Type: text/plain

Content-Length: 5

hello

Response Headers

- The headers in the response follow the same format as request headers
- Should have at least two headers
 - Content-Type - Tells the browser how to parse this content
 - Content-Length - How many bytes should be read from the body

HTTP/1.1 200 OK

Content-Type: text/plain

Content-Length: 5

hello

Body

- The headers are followed by 2 new lines "\r\n\r\n" to indicate the beginning of the body
- The body contains the content that is being served
- [Foreshadow: Requests can have bodies too]
- Pay close attention to the format you are writing so you can parse this format later

HTTP/1.1 200 OK
Content-Type: text/plain
Content-Length: 5

hello

Response Codes

- Tells the browser the nature of the response
 - 200-level codes: Everything went well
 - 300-level codes: Redirect the request
 - 400-level codes: Error caused by the client
 - 500-level codes: Error caused by the server
- Include a human readable message

HTTP/1.1 200 OK

Content-Type: text/plain

Content-Length: 5

hello

404 Not Found

- If a path is requested that your server does not handle
 - Respond with a 404 Not Found
- The response format is the same as a 200 response
 - Include content type and length
 - Include a body that will be displayed to the client

HTTP/1.1 404 Not Found

Content-Type: text/plain

Content-Length: 36

The requested content does not exist

301 Moved Permanently

- Respond with 301 to redirect the user to a new path
 - Ex. When the server is updated with new paths, redirect the old paths to the new paths instead of maintaining both paths
 - Ex. Redirect HTTP requests to HTTPS requests

HTTP/1.1 301 Moved Permanently

Content-Length: 0

Location: /new-path

301 Moved Permanently

- A 301 response must contain a Location header
 - This is the path of the redirect
- The client will make a second request for the Location path

HTTP/1.1 301 Moved Permanently

Content-Length: 0

Location: /new-path

301 Moved Permanently

- If the Location is not a full url, it will be treated as a relative path
- New request is made with the same protocol/host/port as the original request
- Example:
 - First request was for "http://cse312.com:8000/old-path"
 - Second request is "http://cse312.com:8000/new-path"

HTTP/1.1 301 Moved Permanently

Content-Length: 0

Location: /new-path

301 Moved Permanently

- If the location is a full url, the user can be redirected to a different server
- Example:
 - First request was for "http://cse312.com:8000/old-path"
 - Second request is "https://google.com/"

HTTP/1.1 301 Moved Permanently

Content-Length: 0

Location: <https://google.com/>

New Line Reminder

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