

MVC-based JavaScript Web App

Outline

- Web and HTTP
- MVC-based Web applications
- Node.js Express
- Web API
- UI Template using Handlebars
- Server-side Rendering of Views
- Fetch API



Web and HTTP



What is Web?

- Web = **global distributed system of interlinked hypertext documents accessed over the Internet using the HTTP protocol to serve billions of users worldwide**
 - Consists of set of **resources** located on different servers:
 - HTML pages, images, videos and other resources
 - Resources have unique **URL** (Uniform Resource Locator) address
 - Accessed through standard protocols such as HTTP
- **The Web has a Client/Server architecture:**
 - **Web server** sends resources in response to requests (using HTTP protocol)
 - **Web browser** (client) requests, receives (using HTTP protocol) and displays Web resources

Uniform Resource Locator (URL)

http://www.qu.edu.qa:80/cse/logo.gif
protocol host name Port Url Path

- URL is a formatted string, consisting of:
 - **Protocol** for communicating with the server (e.g., http, ftp, https, ...)
 - **Name of the server or IP** address plus port (e.g. qu.edu.qa:80, localhost:8080)
 - **Path of a resource** (e.g. /directory/index.php)
 - **Parameters** aka **Query String** (optional), e.g. http://google.com/search?q=qatar+university)

URL Encoding

- According [RFC 1738](#), the characters allowed in URL are alphanumeric [0-9a-zA-Z] and the special characters \$-_.+!*'()
- Unsafe characters should be encoded, e.g.,

<http://google.com/search?q=qatar%20university>

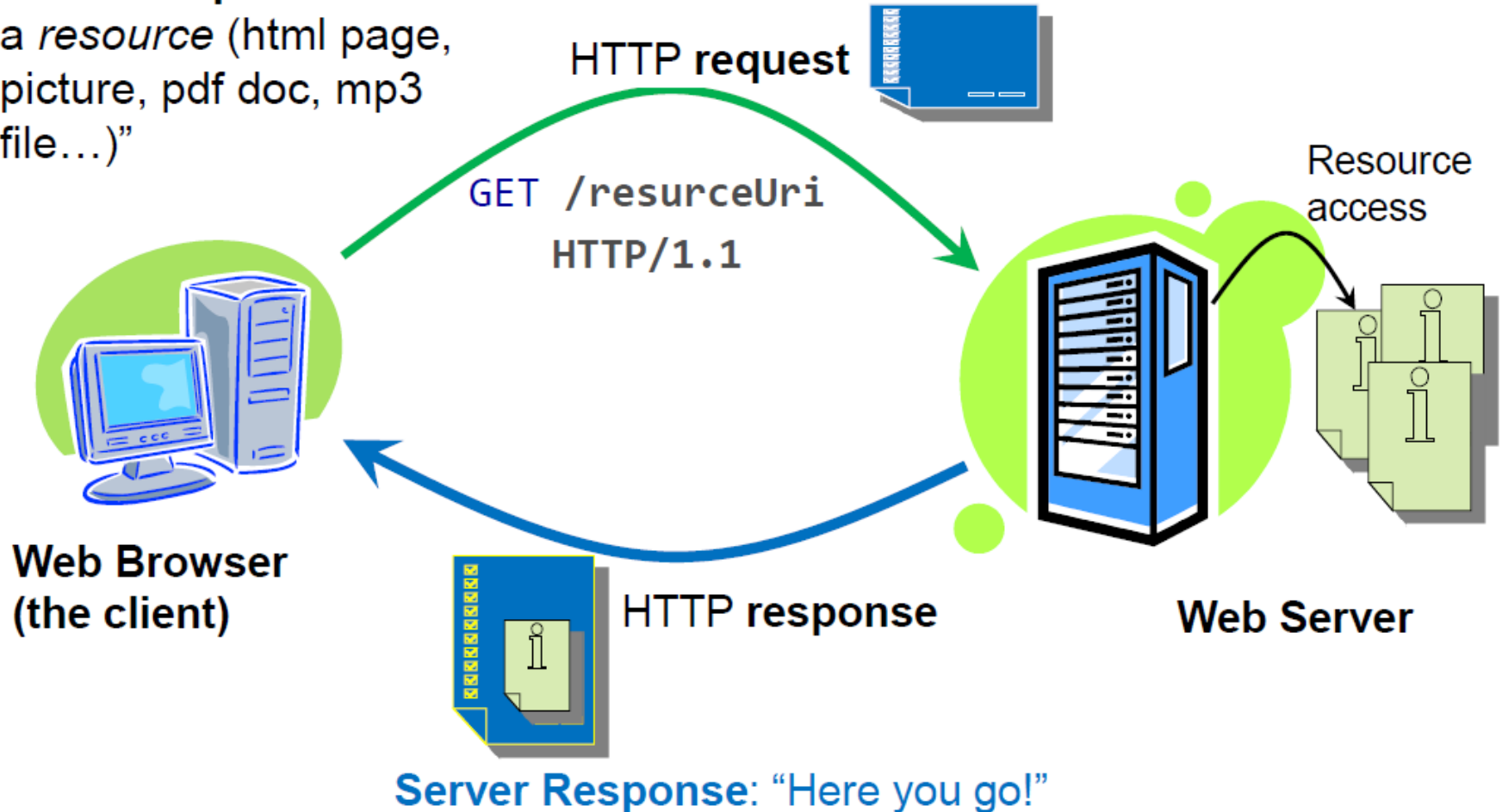
Commonly encoded values:

ASCII Character	URL-encoding
space	%20
!	%21
"	%22
#	%23
\$	%24
%	%25
&	%26

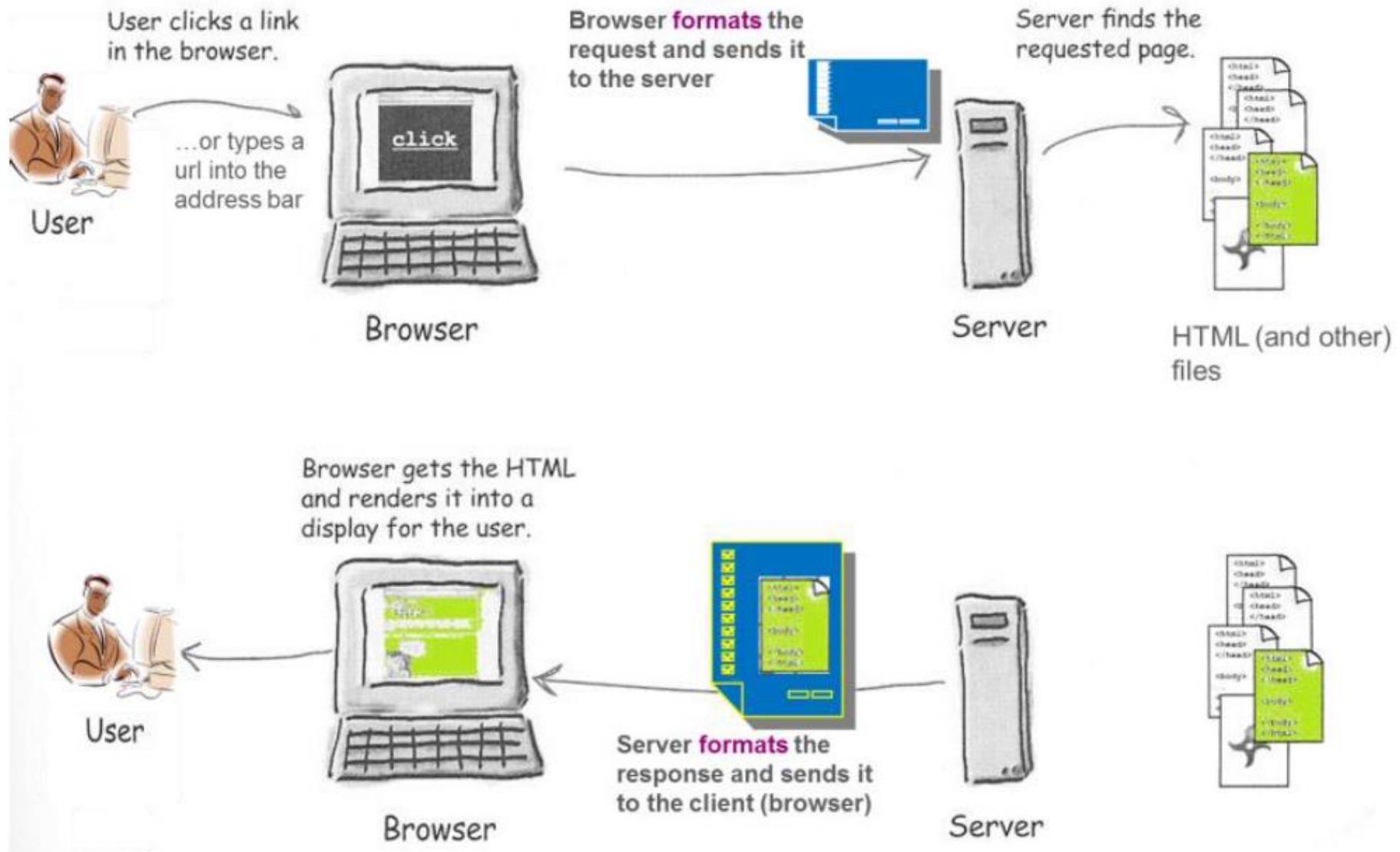
Web uses **Request/Response** interaction model

HTTP is the *message protocol* of the Web

Client Request: “I need a *resource* (html page, picture, pdf doc, mp3 file...)”



The sequence for retrieving a resource



Request and Response Examples

◆ HTTP request:

request line
(GET, POST,
HEAD commands)

```
GET /index.html HTTP/1.1
Host: localhost:8000
User-Agent: Mozilla/5.0
<CRLF>
```

header
lines

The empty line denotes the
end of the request header

◆ HTTP response:

```
HTTP/1.1 200 OK
Content-Length: 54
<CRLF>
<html><title>Hello</title>
Welcome to our site</html>
```

The empty line
denotes the end of
the response header

HTTP Request Message

- Request message sent by a client consists of
 - **Request line** – request method (GET, POST, HEAD, ...), resource URI, and protocol version
 - **Request headers** – additional parameters
 - **Body** – optional data
 - e.g. posted form data, files, etc.

```
<request method> <URI> <HTTP version>  
<headers>  
<empty line>  
<body>
```

HTTP Request Methods

- **GET**

- **Retrieve a resource** (could be static resource such as an image or a dynamically generated resource)
- Input is appended to the request URL E.g.,
http://google.com/?q=Qatar

- **POST**

- **Update a resource**
- Web pages often include form input. Input is submitted to server in the **message body**. E.g.,

<input type="text" value="20"/>	<input type="text" value="*/"/>	<input type="text" value="10"/>	<input type="button" value="Submit"/>
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POST /calc HTTP/1.1

Host: localhost

Content-Type: application/x-www-form-urlencoded

Content-Length: 27

num1=20&operation=*&num2=10

HTTP Response Message

- Response message sent by the server
 - **Status line** – protocol version, status code, status phrase
 - **Response headers** – provide metadata such as the Content-Type
 - **Body** – the contents of the response (i.e., the requested resource)

```
<HTTP version> <status code> <status text>  
<headers>  
<empty line>  
<response body>
```

HTTP Response – Example

status line
(protocol
status code
status text)

Try it out and see HTTP
in action using **HttpFox**

HTTP/1.1 200 OK

Content-Type: text/html

Server: QU Web Server

Content-Length: 131

<CRLF>

<html>

<head><title>Calculator</title></head>

<body>20 * 10 = 200

**

**

Calculator

</body>

</html>

HTTP response
headers

The empty line denotes the
end of the response header

Response
body. e.g.,
requested
HTML file

HTTP Response Codes

- Status code appears in 1st line in response message
- HTTP response code classes
 - 2xx: success (e.g., “200 OK”)
 - 3xx: redirection (e.g., “302 Found”)
“302 Found” is used for redirecting the Web browser to another URL
 - 4xx: client error (e.g., “404 Not Found”)
 - 5xx: server error (e.g., “503 Service Unavailable”)

Popular Status Codes

Code	Reason	Description
200	OK	Success!
301	Moved Permanently	Resource moved, don't check here again
302	Moved Temporarily	Resource moved, but check here again
304	Not Modified	Resource hasn't changed since last retrieval
400	Bad Request	Bad syntax?
401	Unauthorized	Client might need to authenticate
403	Forbidden	Refused access
404	Not found	Resource doesn't exist
500	Internal Server Error	Something went wrong during processing
503	Service Unavailable	Server will not service the request

Browser Redirection

- HTTP browser redirection example
 - HTTP GET requesting a moved URL:

(Request-Line)	GET /qu HTTP/1.1
Host	localhost:800
User-Agent	Mozilla/5.0 (Windows NT 6.3; WOW64; rv:27.0) Gecko/20100101 Firefox/27.0
Accept	text/html,application/xhtml+xml,application/xml;q=0.9,*/*;q=0.8

- The HTTP response says that the browser should request another URL:

(Status-Line)	HTTP/1.1 301 Moved Permanently
Location	http://qu.edu.qa

Common Internet Media Types

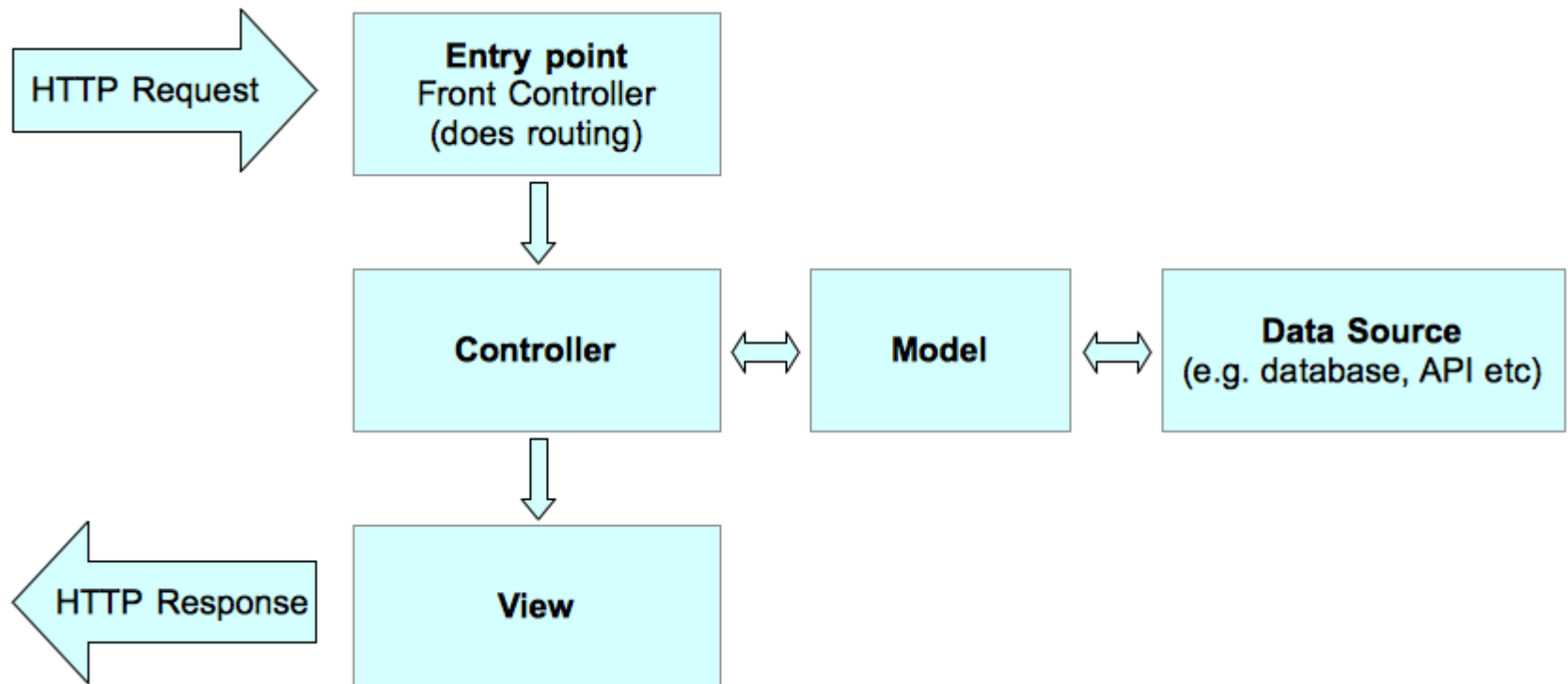
- The **Content-Type** header describes the media type contained in the body of HTTP message
- **Full list @**
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/MIME_type
- Commonly used media types (**type**/subtype):

Type/Subtype	Description
application/json	JSON data
image/gif	GIF image
image/png	PNG image
video/mp4	MP4 video
text/xml	XML
text/html	HTML
text/plain	Just text

Typical server steps to process an HTTP Request

- Parse the HTTP request (i.e., convert a textual representation of the request into an object)
- Generate a response either static one by reading a file or a dynamic response
 - Dynamic response could be either generated programmatically from scratch or it could be generated by filling-up a page template read from a file
- Send the response to the client including:
 - Response headers
 - Response body

MVC-based Web applications



MVC-based Web application

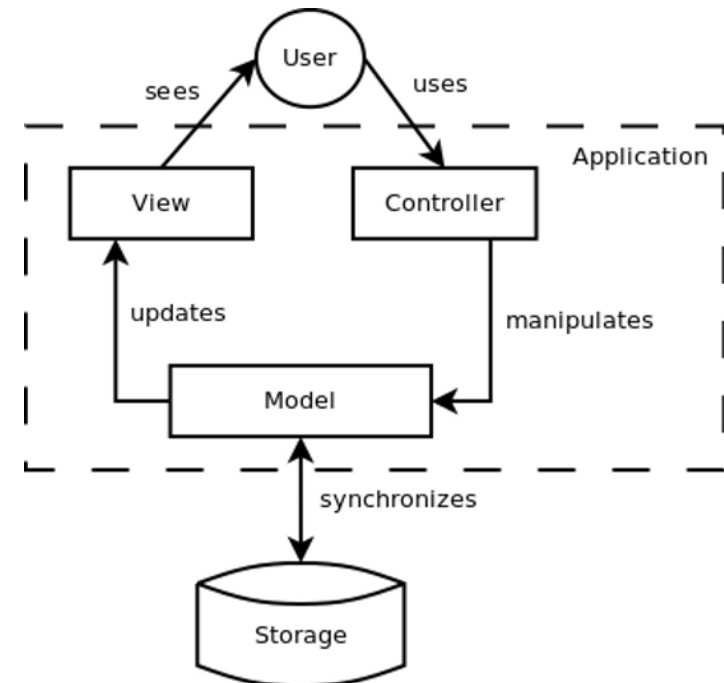
Controller –

- accepts incoming requests and user input
- instructs the model to perform actions based on that input
 - e.g. the controller adds an item to the user's shopping cart
- decides what view to display for output

Model – implements business logic and computation, and manages application's data

View – responsible for

- getting input from the user
- displaying output to the user

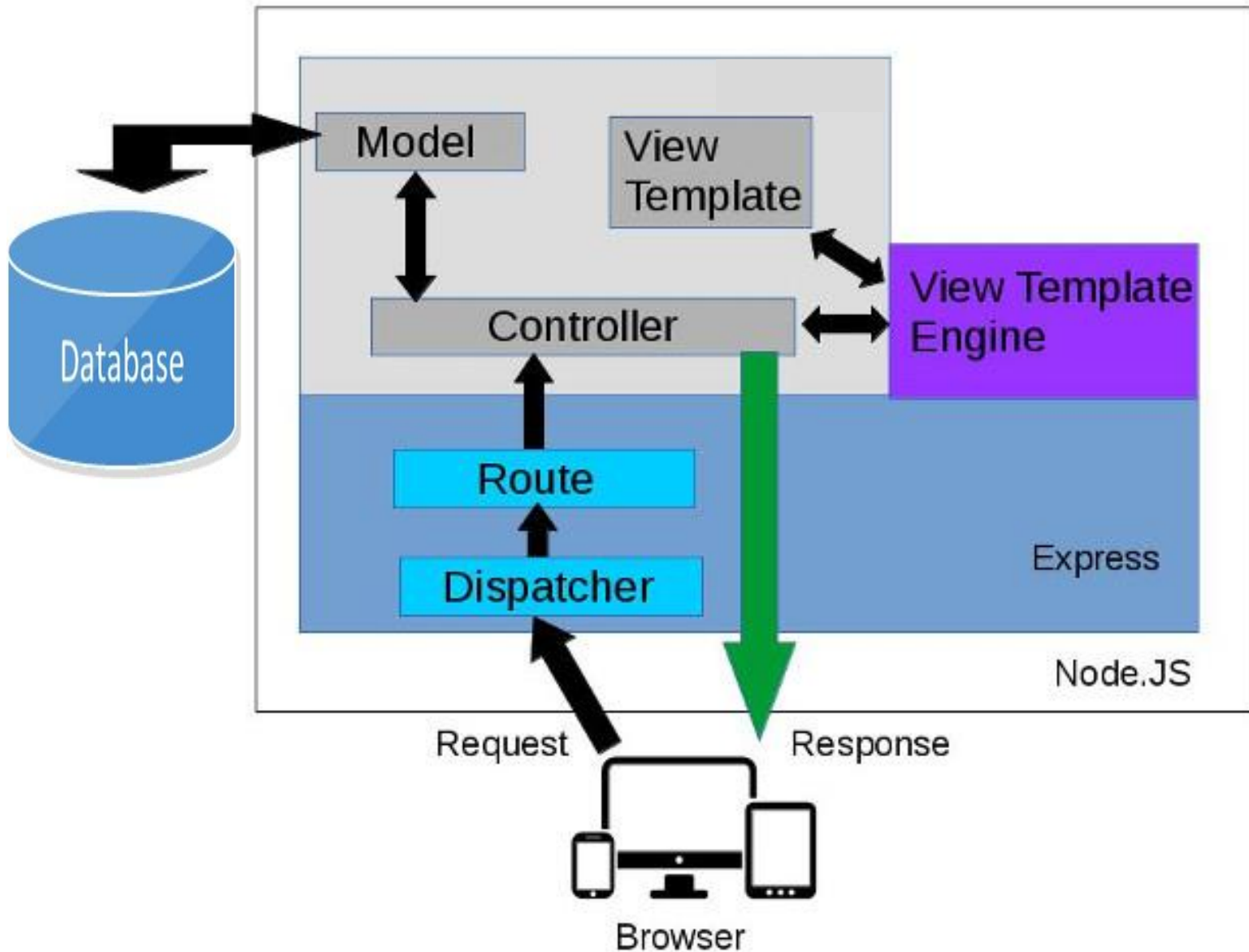


Advantages of MVC

- ***Separation of concerns***
 - Views, controller, and model are separate components. This allows modification and change in each component without significantly disturbing the others.
 - Computation is not intermixed with Presentation. Consequently, code is cleaner and easier to understand and change.
- **Flexibility**
 - The view component, which often needs changes and updates to keep the users continued interests, is separate
 - The UI can be completely changed without touching the model in any way
- **Reusability**
 - The same model can be used by different views (e.g., Web view and mobile view)
- **Allows for parallel work**, e.g., a UI designer can work on the View while a software engineer works on the Controller and Model

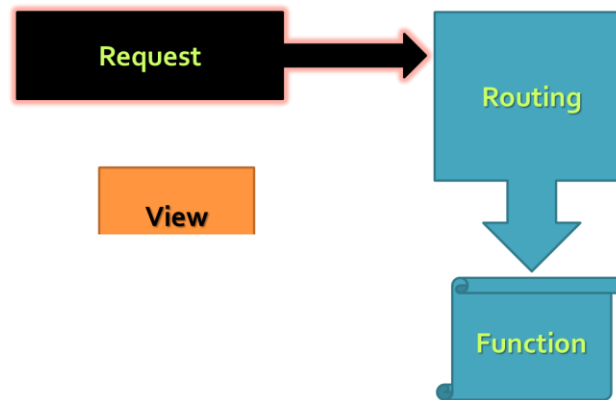
MVC is widely used and recommended particularly for interactive web-applications

MVC using Node.js Express



Express

Web Application Framework for Node.js



First Express App

```
let express = require('express');

let app = express();

app.get('/', (request, response) => {
  response.send('Welcome to Express!');
});

app.get('/customer/:id', (req, res) => {
  res.send('Customer requested is ' + req.params['id']);
});

app.listen(3000);
```


HTTP Methods

- `app.get()`, `app.post()`, `app.put()` & `app.delete()`
- By default Express does not know what to do with the request body, so we should add the ***bodyParser*** middleware

```
app.use( express.bodyParser() );
```

- ***bodyParser*** will parse the request body and place the parameters in the ***req.body***

Post Sample

```
<form method="post" action="/">  
  <input type="text" name="username" />  
  <input type="text" name="email" />  
  <input type="submit" value="Submit" />  
</form>
```

```
app.use(express.bodyParser());
```

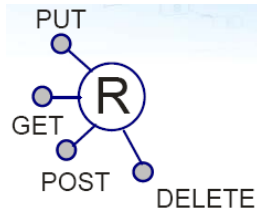
```
app.post('/', (req, res) => {  
  console.log(req.body.user);  
  res.send('Welcome ' + req.body.username);  
});
```

Web API (aka REST Services)

What is a REST Service?

- ❑ A server-side component programmatically accessible at a particular URL
- ❑ You can think of it as a Web page returning json instead of HTML
- ❑ A service provides data in standard format mostly JSON format
- ❑ Major goal = **interoperability between heterogeneous systems**

REST Principles

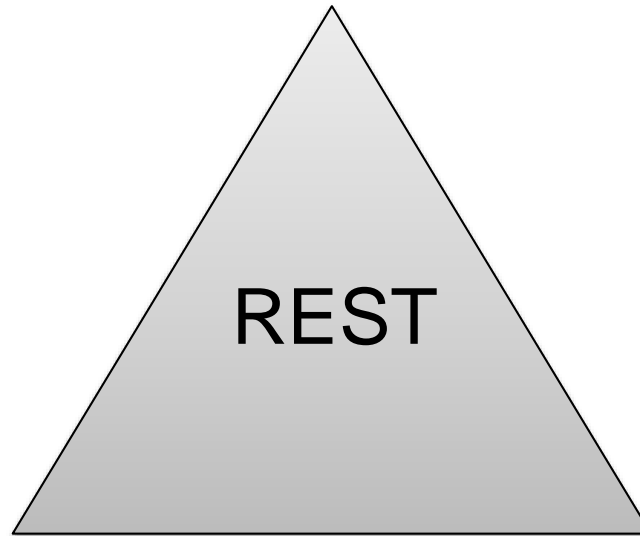


- **Addressable Resources** (nouns): Identified by a URI
(e.g., `http://example.com/customers/123`)
- **Uniform Interface** (verbs): GET, POST, PUT, and DELETE
 - Use verbs to **exchange** application state and **representation**
 - Embracing HTTP as an Application Protocol
- **Representation-oriented**
 - Representation of the resource state** transferred between client and server in a variety of data formats: **XML, JSON, (X)HTML, RSS..**
- **Hyperlinks** define relationships between resources and valid state transitions of the service interaction

REST Services Main Concepts

Nouns (Resources)

e.g., <http://example.com/employees/12345>



Verbs

e.g., GET, POST

Representations

e.g., XML, JSON

Resources

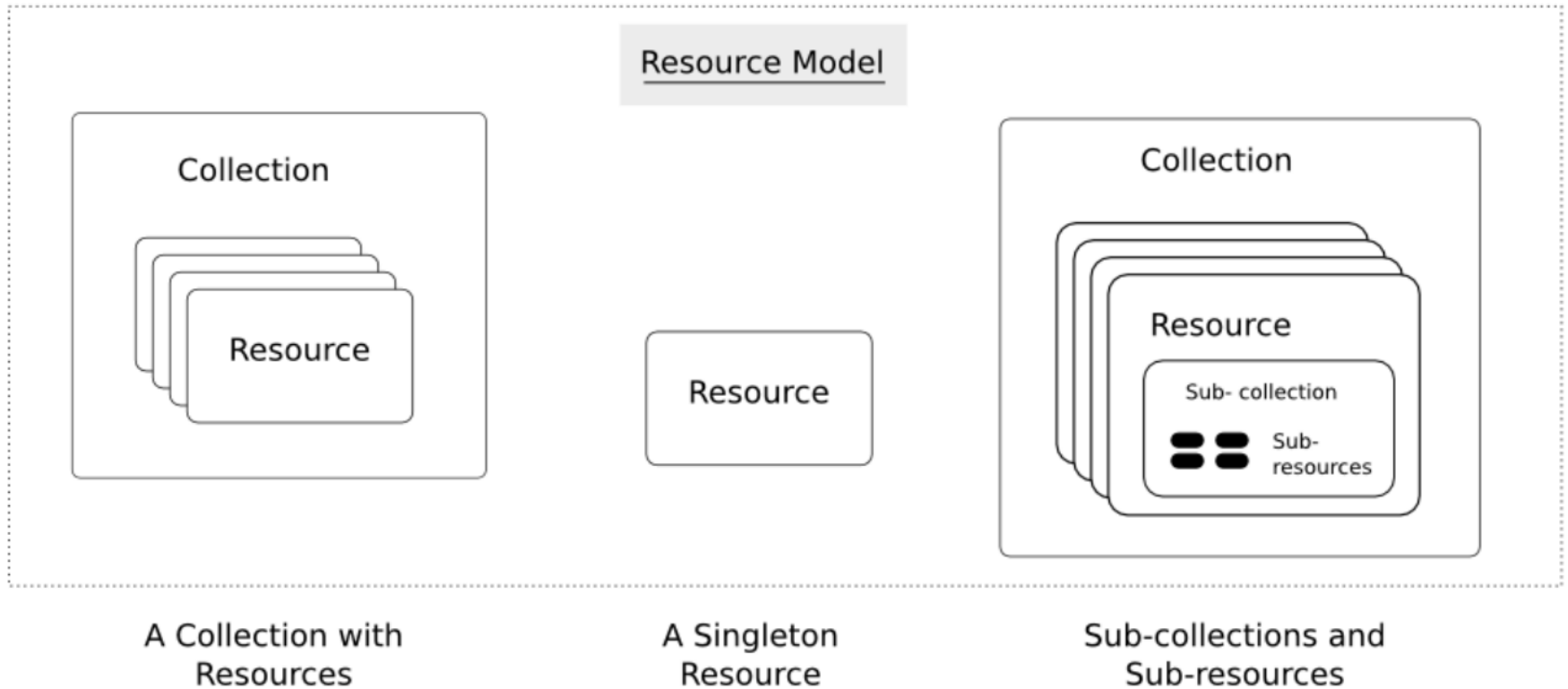
- The key abstraction in REST is a **resource**
- A resource is a conceptual mapping to a set of entities
 - Any **information that can be named can be a resource**: a document or image, a temporal service (e.g. "today's weather in Doha"), a collection of books and their authors, and so on
- Represented with a global identifier (URI in HTTP)
 - <http://www.boeing.com/aircraft/747>

Naming Resources

- REST uses URI to identify resources
 - <http://localhost/books/>
 - <http://localhost/books/ISBN-0011>
 - <http://localhost/books/ISBN-0011/authors>

 - <http://localhost/classes>
 - <http://localhost/classes/cmps356>
 - <http://localhost/classes/cs356/students>
- As you traverse the path from more generic to more specific, you are navigating the data

A Collection with Resources



Representations

- Specify the data format used when returning a resource representation to the client
- Two main formats:
 - JavaScript Object Notation (JSON)
 - XML
- It is common to have multiple representations of the same data

Representations

- XML

```
<course>  
  <code>cmps356</code>  
  <name>Enterprise Application  
  Development</name>  
</course>
```

- JSON

```
{  
  code: 'cmps356',  
  name: 'Enterprise Application Development'  
}
```

HTTP Verbs

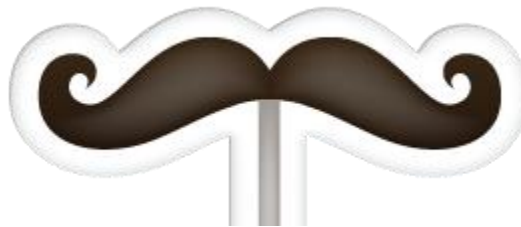
- Represent the actions to be performed on resources
- Retrieve a representation of a resource: **GET**
- Create a new resource:
 - Use **POST** when the server decides the new resource URI
 - Post is not repeatable
 - Use **PUT** when the client decides the new resource URI
 - Put is repeatable
- **PUT** is typically used for update
- Delete an existing resource: **DELETE**
- Get metadata about an existing resource: **HEAD**
- See which of the verbs the resource understands: **OPTIONS**

REST Services using Node.js

- See posted Node.js REST Services example
- Test them using Postman Chrome plugin

<https://www.getpostman.com/>

UI Template using Handlebars



<http://handlebarsjs.com/>

UI Template

- **View engine** (template engine) is a framework/library that generates views
 - Provide cleaner way to dynamically create DOM elements
- The engine generates a valid HTML based on **a template** and a given **JavaScript object**
- There are lots of JavaScript view engines such as Handlebars.js, KendoUI, jQuery, AngularJS, etc.
- **Handlebars.js** is recommended. It is a library for creating client-side or server-side UI templates

Usage

- Add Handlebars script

```
<script src="path/to/handlebars.js"></script>
```

- Create a template

```
<script id="post-template" type="text/x-handlebars-template">
  <div class='post'>
    <h1 class="post-title">{{title}}</h1>
    <p class="post-content">{{{content}}}</p>
  </div>
</script>
```

- Render the template

```
let post = {title: '...', content: '...'},
    htmlTemplate = postTemplateNode.innerHTML,
    postTemplate = Handlebars.compile(htmlTemplate);
postNode.innerHTML = postTemplate(post);
```


Creating HTML Templates

- HTML templates act much like JavaScript String template
 - Put placeholders within a template string, and replace these placeholders with values
- Handlebars.js marks placeholders with double curly brackets `{{value}}`
 - When rendered, the placeholders between the curly brackets are replaced with the corresponding value

HTML Escaping

- Handlebars.js escapes all values before rendering them (i.e., html tags in the value are ignored)
- If the value contains HTML tags that should not be escaped then use triple curly brackets "triple-stash" in the template string

```
{{{value}}}
```

Iterating over a collection of elements

- **{{#each collection}} {{/each}}** block expression is used to iterate over a collection of objects
 - Everything between will be evaluated for each object in the collection

```
<ul class="people_list">
  {{#each people}}
    <li>{{this}}</li>
  {{/each}}
</ul>
```

```
{
  people: [
    "Ali Faleh",
    "Fatma Jasime",
    "Abbas Ibn Firnas"
  ]
}
```

Conditional Expressions

- Render fragment only if a condition is fulfilled
 - Using `{{#if condition}} {{/if}}`
or `{{unless condition}} {{/unless}}`

```
<div class="entry">
  {{#if author}}
    <h1>{{firstName}} {{lastName}}</h1>
  {{else}}
    <h1>Unknown Author</h1>
  {{/if}}
</div>
```

```
<div class="entry">
  {{#unless license}}
    <h3 class="warning">WARNING: This entry does not have a license!</h3>
  {{/unless}}
</div>
```

The with Block Helper

- `{{#with obj}} {{/with}}`
 - Used to minify the path
 - Write `{{prop}}` Instead of `{{obj.prop}}`

```
<div class="entry">
  <h1>{{title}}</h1>

  {{#with author}}
  <h2>By {{firstName}} {{lastName}}</h2>
  {{/with}}
</div>
```

```
{
  title: "My first post!",
  author: {
    firstName: "Abbas",
    lastName: "Ibn Farnas"
  }
}
```

Custom Helper

```
<div class="post">
  <h1>By {{fullName author}}</h1>
  <div class="body">{{body}}</div>

  <h1>Comments</h1>

  {{#each comments}}
    <h2>By {{fullName author}}</h2>
    <div class="body">{{body}}</div>
  {{/each}}
</div>
```

- You can register a helper with the **Handlebars.registerHelper** method

```
var context = {
  author: {firstName: "Alan", lastName: "Johnson"},
  body: "I Love Handlebars",
  comments: [{
    author: {firstName: "Yehuda", lastName: "Katz"},
    body: "Me too!"
  }]
};

Handlebars.registerHelper('fullName', function(person) {
  return person.firstName + " " + person.lastName;
});
```

Server-side Rendering of Views

Client-side vs. Server-side Rendering of Views

- Client-side Views Rendering frees the server from this burden and enhances scalability
 - But one of the main disadvantages is the initial loading speed as the client receive a lot of JavaScript files to handle views rendering
- Views could be generated on the server side to reduce the amount of client-side JavaScript and speed-up initial page loads particularly for slow clients but this puts the rendering burden on the server
 - Web servers may render the page faster than a client side rendering. As a result, the initial loading is quicker.

Configure Handlebars View Engine

```
let handlebars = require('express-handlebars');
let app        = express();
// Bind Handlebars View Engine to html extension so express
// knows what extension to look for.
//set extension to .hbs so handlebars knows what to look for
app.engine('hbs', handlebars({defaultLayout: 'main',
extname: '.hbs'}));
// Register handlebars as our view engine as the view engine
app.set('view engine', 'hbs');
//Set the location of the view templates
app.set('views', __dirname + '/views');
```

res.render

- Call **res.render** method to perform server-side rendering and return the generated html to the client

```
res.render('shop', { shoppingCart });
```

The above example passes the shopping card to the 'shop' template to generate the html to be returned to the browser

Communicating with the server using Fetch API





- AJAX is acronym of Asynchronous JavaScript and XML
 - AJAX == technique for asynchronously loading (in the background) of dynamic Web content and data from the Web server into a HTML page
 - Allows dynamically changing the DOM (client-side) in Web applications
- Two styles of AJAX
 - Partial page rendering
 - Load an HTML fragment and display it in a **<div>**
 - Call REST service then client-side rendering of received JSON
 - Loading a JSON object and render it at the client-side with JavaScript / jQuery

Getting a resource from the server using Fetch API

- Fetch content from the server

```
let url = "data/student.json";
fetch(url).then(response => response.json())
    .then(students => {
        console.log(students);
    })
    .catch(err => console.log(err));
```

- Fetch returns a Promise. Promise-fulfilled event(.then) receives a Response object.
- **.json()** method is used to get the response body into a JSON object

Posting a request to the server using Fetch API

- Fetch could be used to post a request to the server

```
let email = document.querySelector( "#email" ).value,  
    password = document.querySelector("#password").value;
```

```
fetch( "/login", {  
    method: "post",  
    headers: { "Accept": "application/json",  
               "Content-Type": "application/json" }  
    body: JSON.stringify({  
        email,  
        password  
    })  
}); //headers parameter is optional
```

Resources

- NodeSchool

<https://nodeschool.io/>

- Mozilla Developer Network:

https://developer.mozilla.org/en-US/docs/Learn/Server-side/Express_Nodejs