

Brave, Fingerprinting and Privacy on the Web

Me (the early years)

- **Grew up in Chicago**
...actual Chicago
- **Law school, then freelance web design**
Started: Anchorage, AK
Ended: Judge Judy Show invitation
- **PhD in Computer Science**
University of Illinois at Chicago

Me, now

- **Privacy Researcher at Brave**
Research to improve privacy in the browser
- **Co-Chair of PING**
Privacy reviews of new web standards
- **Academic Collaborator**
“Pure” research

Brave in a Slide

- Privacy focused
- Alternative funding model for the web
- Research and engineering focused
- Browsers and infrastructure now, more to come...



Overview

1. Why websites track (and how much)
2. “Classic” tracking
3. Fingerprinting / “passive tracking”
4. Fingerprinting counter measures
5. Anti-finger printing exercise
6. Privacy protections in Brave
7. Wrapping up

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Why Does Tracking Exist?



**100%
FREE**



**MAGAZINE
SUBSCRIPTIONS!**



Welcome the The "First" Banner Ad

Yes, this site is supposed to look this way. After all, this is what most web pages looked like back on October 27, 1994 -- the day that Wired Magazine flipped the switch on its first website, hotwired.com, starting a revolution in web content and advertising that still reverberates today.

This site is dedicated to showing off one of the ads that ran on that site. No, it wasn't the "first" as there were a handful of other ads that ran on various sections of hotwired.com. This site is also here to tell the story of how that ad came to be, how it succeeded beyond anything we had imagined, and how we tried to set an example for how corporations could communicate with their audiences.

This site launched on October 27, 2014. It is being constantly updated, so please check back again soon for more. In the meantime, get started by clicking your mouse in the banner ad above explore these other options:



Chicago Tribune: Chicago news

chicagotribune.com

☆ ⓘ ⓘ ⌵

SECTIONS

SEARCH

NEWSPAPER WEATHER NEWSLETTERS BEST REVIEWS

\$2 FOR 20 WEEKS
SALE ENDS 11/4

LOG IN

CPS STRIKE IS OFFICIALLY ON AS CHICAGO TEACHERS UNION SAYS THERE IS NO LAST-MINUTE DEAL

TOP LOCAL
NEWS SOURCE

OCTOBER 16, 2019

Chicago Tribune

\$2 FOR 20 WEEKS
ENDS 11/4

☁ 51°F

BREAKING NEWS

SPORTS



BUSINESS

POLITICS

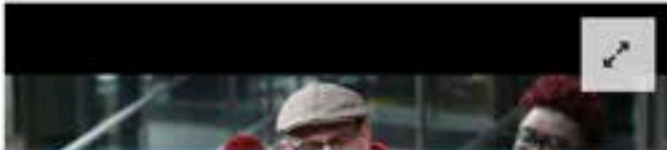
OPINION

ENTERTAINMENT

ADVERTISEMENT



CPS STRIKE IS ON



CPS strike is officially on as teachers union, Chicago

MORE CPS STRIKE COVERAGE

CPS strike live updates: Chicago teachers reject city offer, will walk off job Thursday

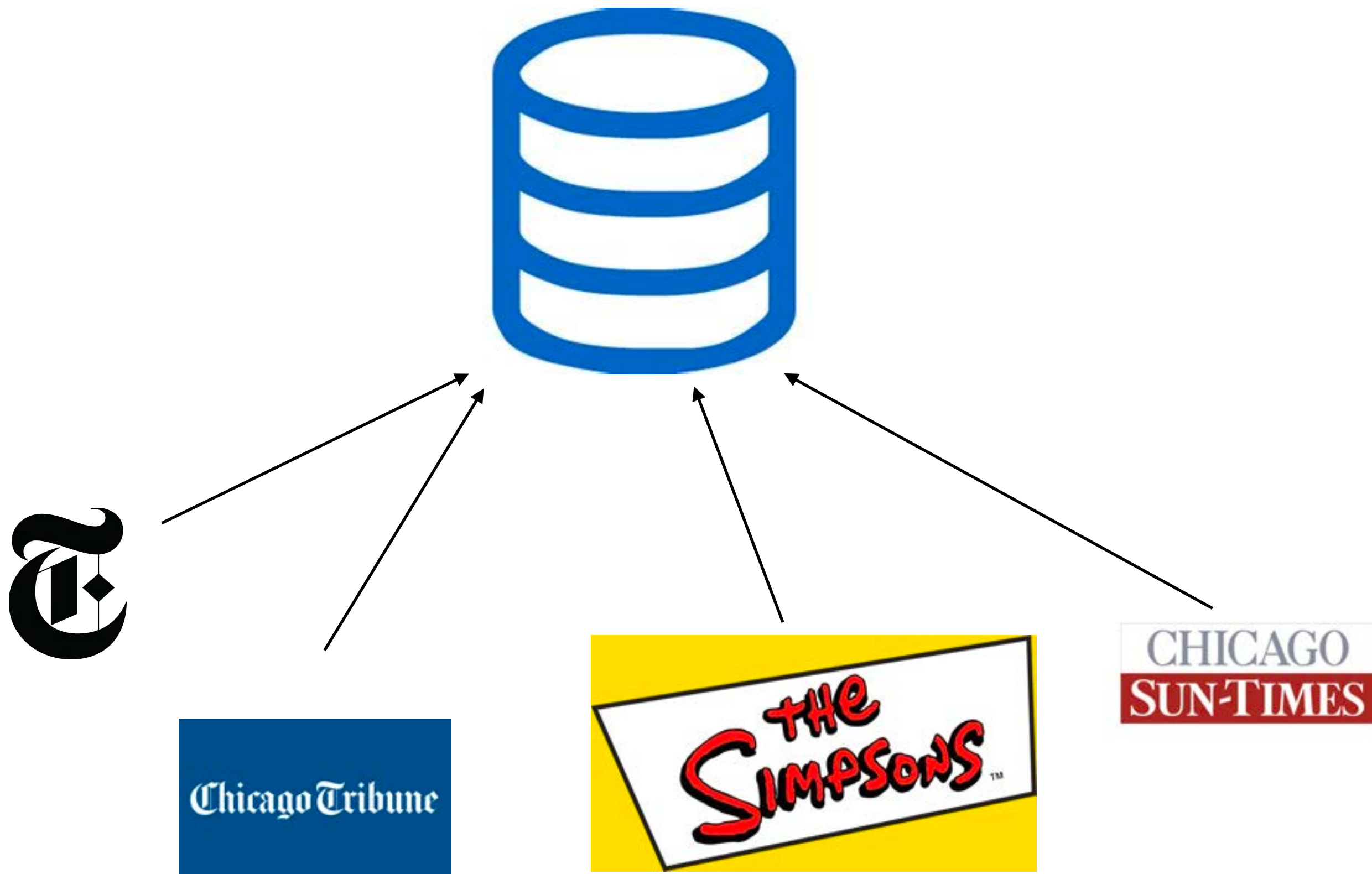
Chicago Park District workers reach contract

SPECIAL SALE

ONLY \$2 FOR 20 WEEKS
Get stories that impact you

SAVE NOW

Waiting for securepubads.g.doubleclick.net...



The World's Worst Website

Gratuitous use of frames is a common mistake of web designers.

Many older browsers do not support frames. They disrupt the flow of the website and can be difficult to anticipate where a page may appear when a link is clicked. [Click here](#) for an example of a frames page which is opening in the wrong window. Use your browser's 'Back' button to escape.

Check out these links to websites whose opinions about frames is self evident:

[The "I Hate Frames" Frames Page](#)

[Another I Hate Frames Page](#)

[The International I Hate Frames Club](#)

[Why Frames Suck \(Most of the Time\)](#)

Angelfire Build your own FREE website at Angelfire.com Share: del.icio.us | digg | reddit | Twitter | facebook

MARKETING IS MORE FUN
WHEN YOU SMASH STUFF

VIEW THE WORK

NeboWeb.com

Ads by Google

site!

Welcome to the World's Worst Website!

This web was designed to graphically demonstrate the most common mistakes made by new Web Page designers.

Where am I and where are the links to other pages?

An easy to use navigation structure is essential to any well designed website!
Important information should never be more than 2 clicks away.



As you can see, this text is difficult to read. There needs to more contrast between the background color and the text color. [Here's another example](#) of a poor choice of a background, text color and size.

Keep your backgrounds simple. White or light colors usually work best. Your background should not compete with the content of the page for the users attention. If you would like to use a background picture, select a picture that uses muted colors or format your picture as a watermark. Select text colors which will contrast well with the background picture.



Constantly running animations can be distracting when used excessively.





\$ \$ \$

¢ ¢ ¢





**Identify “expensive”
people here**



**Pay a little to advertise
to them here**

How Target Figured Out A Teen Girl Was Pregnant Before Her Father Did

www.forbes.com/sites/kashmirhill/2012/02/16/how-target-figured-out-a-teen-girl-was-pregnant-before-her-father-did/

FREE REPORT: Top 10 Stocks for 2013

Log in | Sign up | Connect | Help

Forbes

New Posts

Most Popular
Best Cover Letter Ever?

Lists
30 Under 30

Video
You Need A Flu Shot

Search companies, people and lists

62.8k

Share

13.7k

Tweet

5.6k

Share

353


Submit

3.5k

+1

1.9k

reddit



Kashmir Hill, Forbes Staff

Welcome to The Not-So Private Parts where technology & privacy collide

+ Follow


(1,089)

Follow

174k

TECH | 2/16/2012 @ 11:02AM | 1,913,626 views

How Target Figured Out A Teen Girl Was Pregnant Before Her Father Did




307 comments, 167 called-out

+ Comment Now


+ Follow Comments

Every time you go shopping, you share intimate details about your consumption patterns with retailers. And many of those retailers are studying those details to figure out what you like, what you need, and which coupons are most likely to make you happy. [Target](#), for example, has figured out how to data-mine its way into your womb, to figure out whether you have a baby on the way long before you need to start buying diapers.

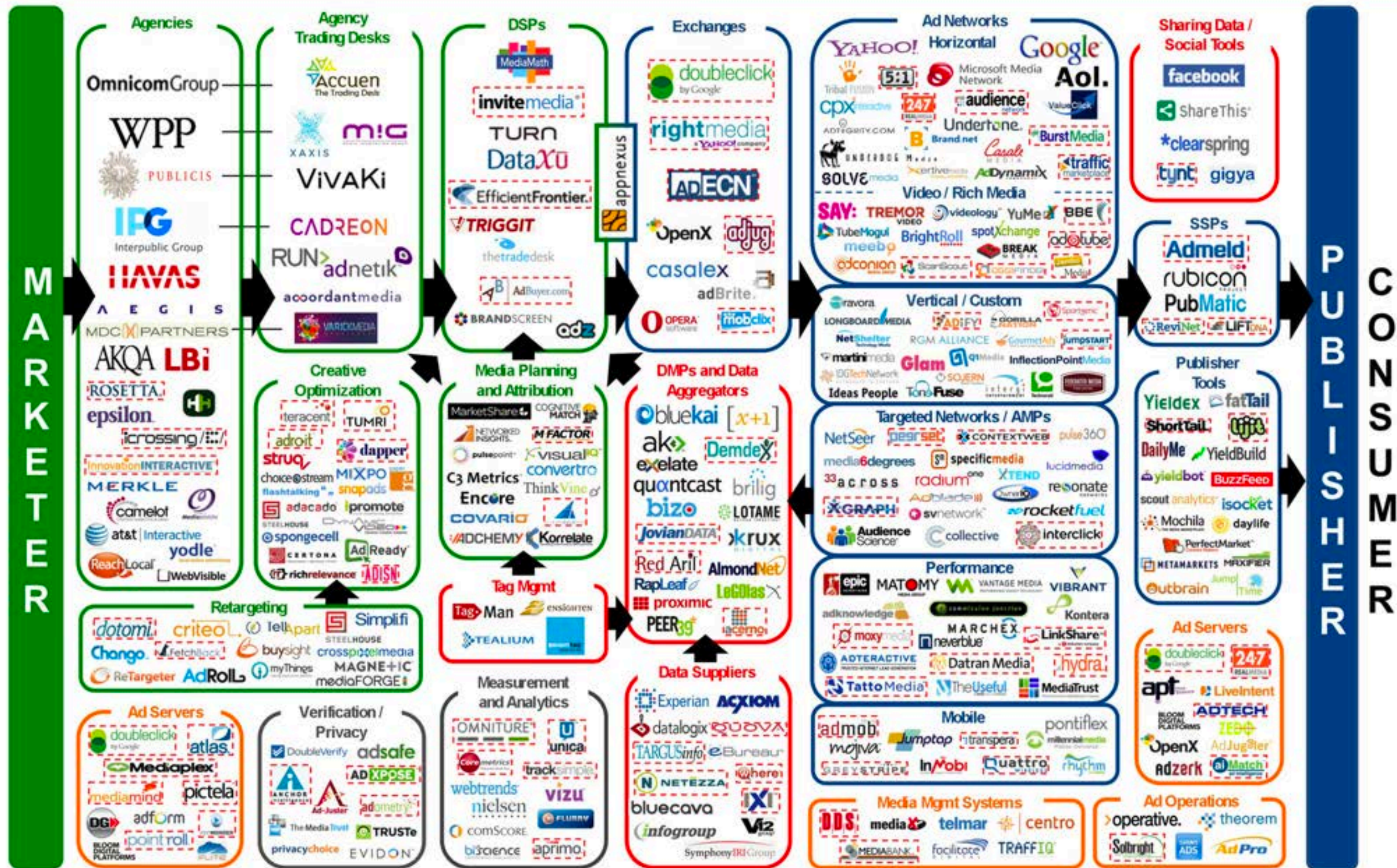


TARGET

Click here to see how Covidien is making a difference >

 COVIDIEN

DISPLAY LUMAscape



But how much...

Online Tracking: A 1-million-site Measurement and Analysis

Steven Englehardt
Princeton University
ste@cs.princeton.edu

Arvind Narayanan
Princeton University
arvindn@cs.princeton.edu

ABSTRACT

We present the largest and most detailed measurement of online tracking conducted to date, based on a crawl of the top 1 million websites. We make 15 types of measurements on each site, including stateful (cookie-based) and stateless (fingerprinting-based) tracking, the effect of browser privacy tools, and the exchange of tracking data between different sites (“cookie syncing”). Our findings include multiple sophisticated fingerprinting techniques never before measured in the wild.

This measurement is made possible by our open-source web privacy measurement tool, OpenWPM¹, which uses an automated version of a full-fledged consumer browser. It supports parallelism for speed and scale, automatic recovery from failures of the underlying browser, and comprehensive browser instrumentation. We demonstrate our platform’s strength in enabling researchers to rapidly detect, quantify, and characterize emerging online tracking behaviors.

1. INTRODUCTION

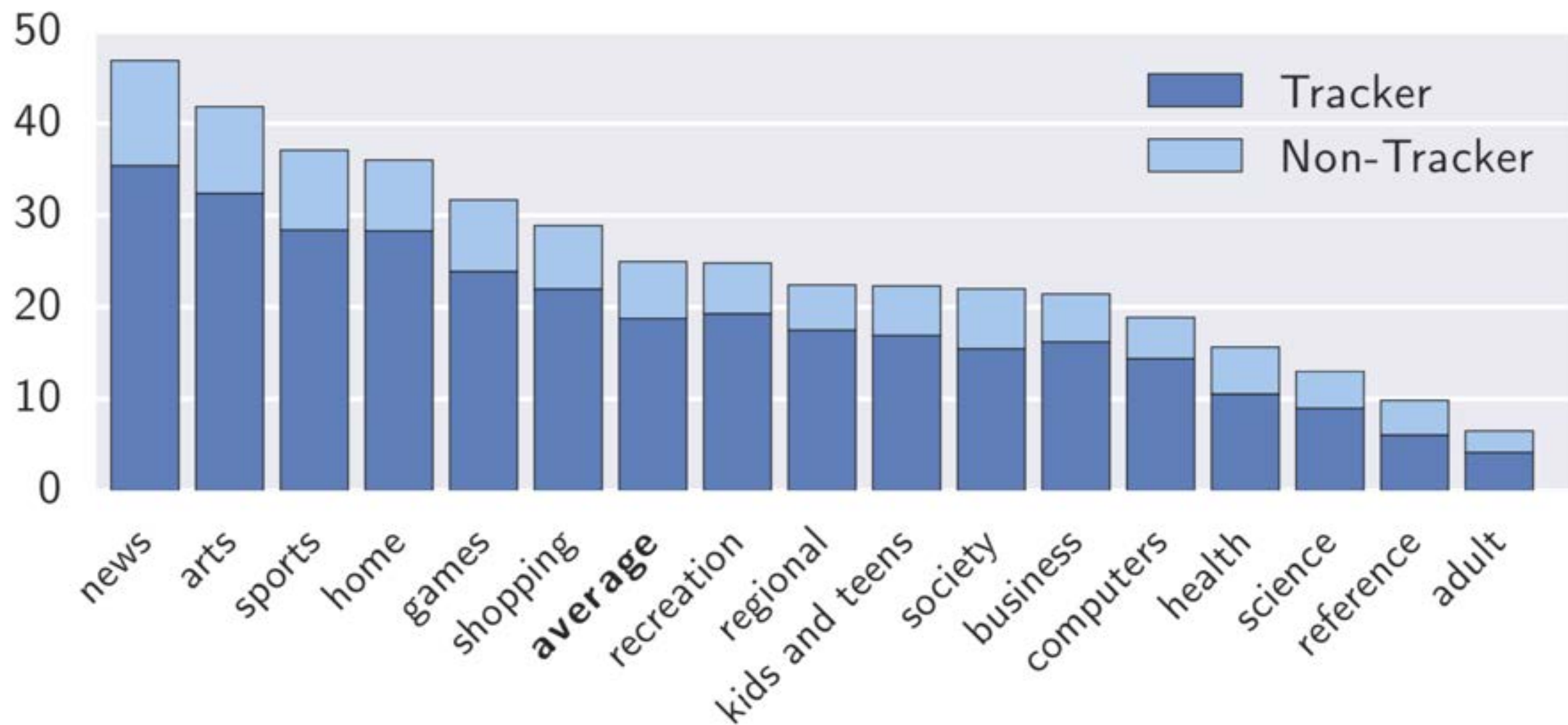
Web privacy measurement — observing websites and services to detect, characterize and quantify privacy-impacting behaviors — has repeatedly forced companies to improve

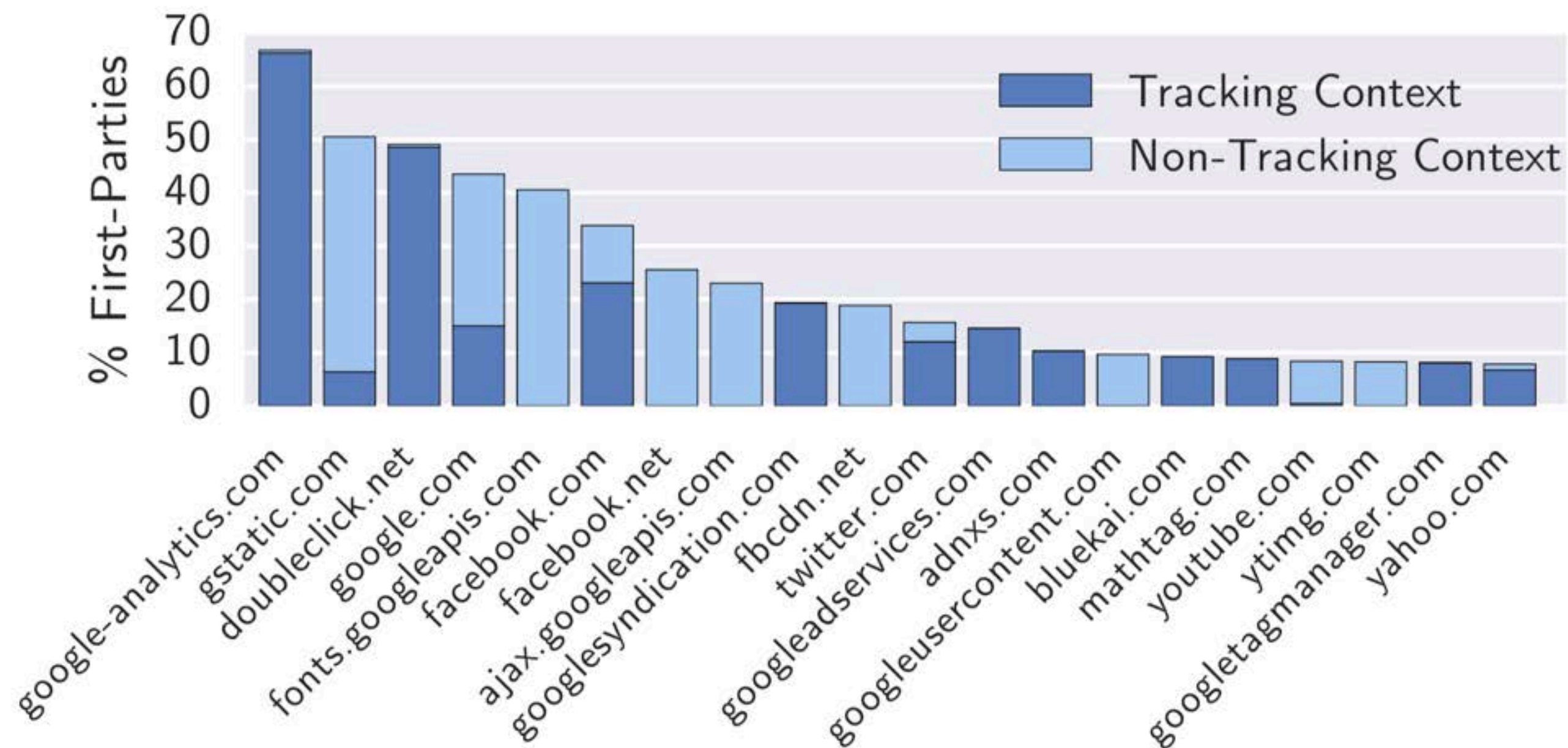
to resort to a stripped-down browser [31] (a limitation we explore in detail in Section 3.3). (2) We provide comprehensive instrumentation by expanding on the rich browser extension instrumentation of FourthParty [33], without requiring the researcher to write their own automation code. (3) We reduce duplication of work by providing a modular architecture to enable code re-use between studies.

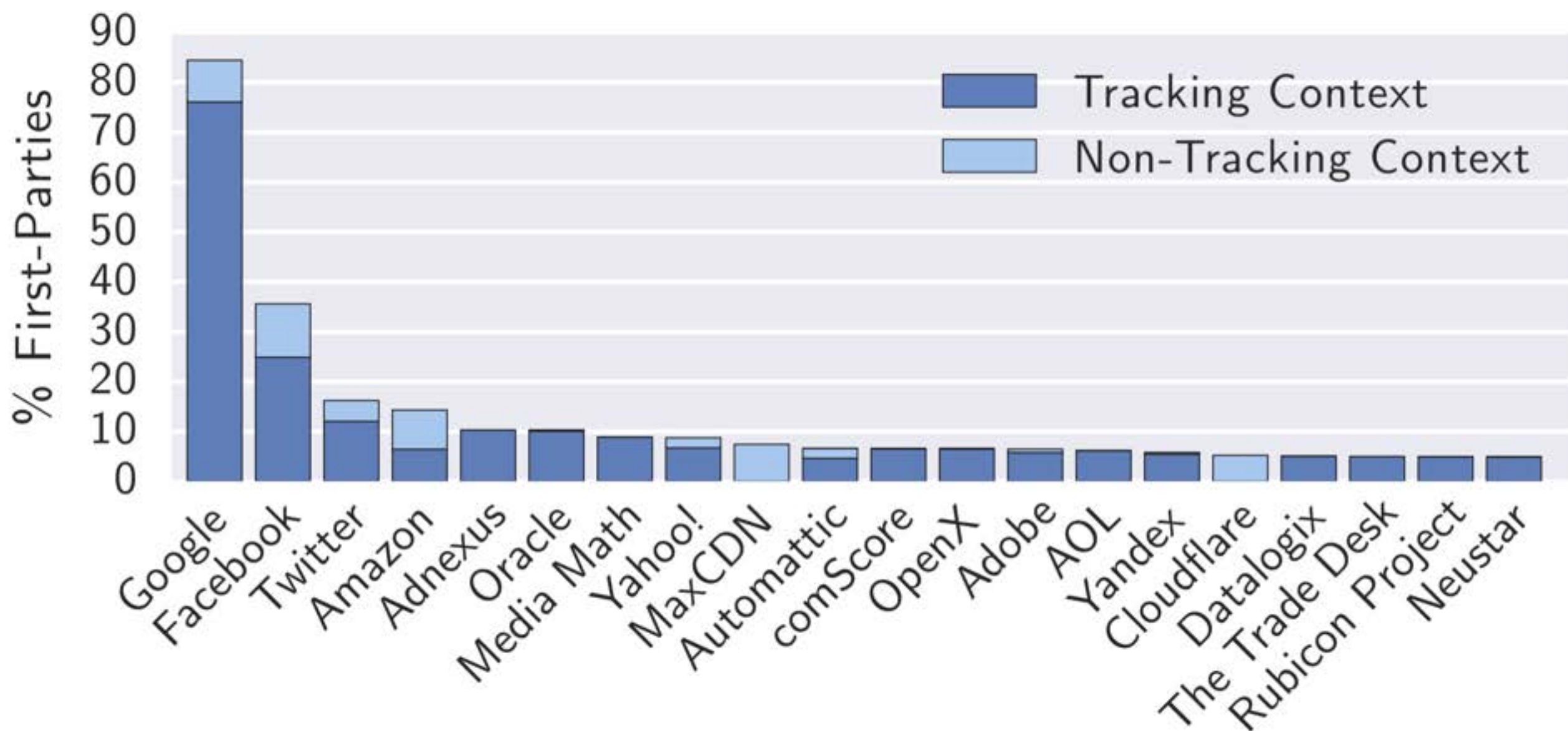
Solving these problems is hard because the web is not designed for automation or instrumentation. Selenium², the main tool for automated browsing through a full-fledged browser, is intended for developers to test their *own* websites. As a result it performs poorly on websites not controlled by the user and breaks frequently if used for large-scale measurements. Browsers themselves tend to suffer memory leaks over long sessions. In addition, *instrumenting* the browser to collect a variety of data for later analysis presents formidable challenges. For full coverage, we’ve found it necessary to have three separate measurement points: a network proxy, a browser extension, and a disk state monitor. Further, we must link data collected from these disparate points into a uniform schema, duplicating much of the browser’s own internal logic in parsing traffic.

A large-scale view of web tracking and privacy.

In this paper we report results from a January 2016 mea-







But how much...
a lot / too much

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- Javascript
- DOM / Initial Web API
- Netscape
- Firefox
- Brave + BAT



Web 0.0

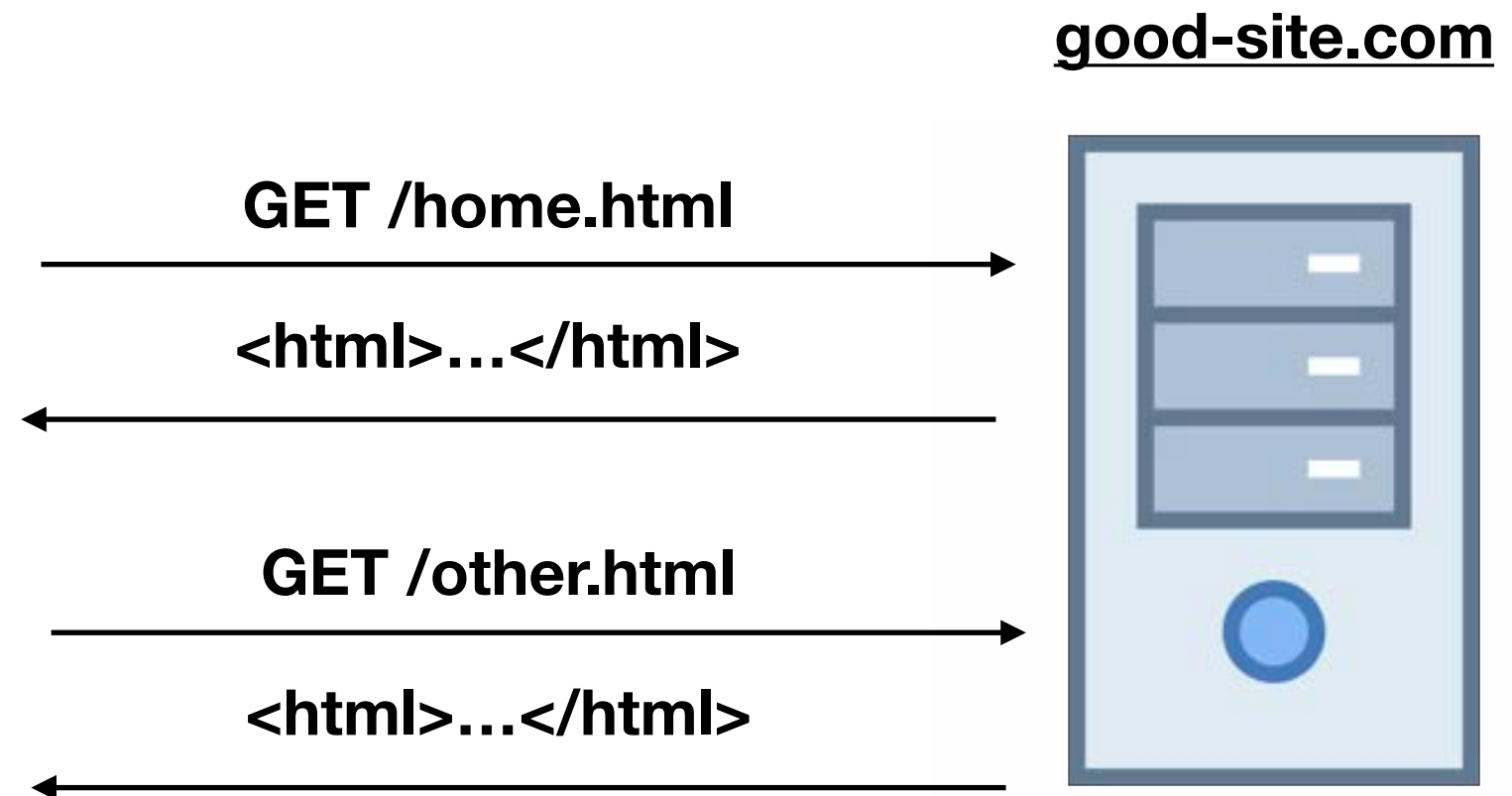
good-site.com



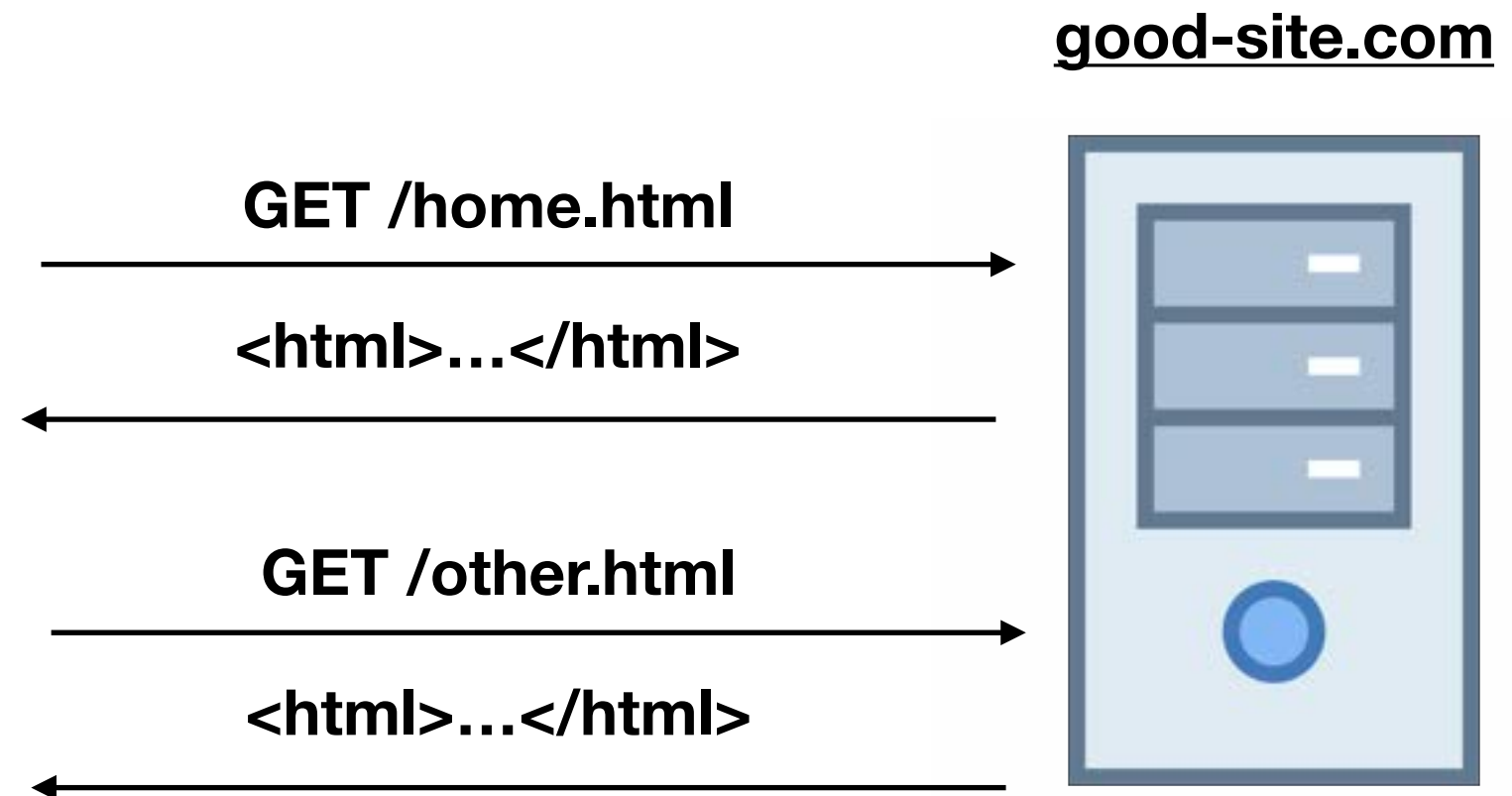
Web 0.0



Web 0.0



Web 0.0



Birth of the Tracking

- **Problem**

- Authentication?
- Can't log in every time
- HTTP auth is terrible and limited

- **Solution**

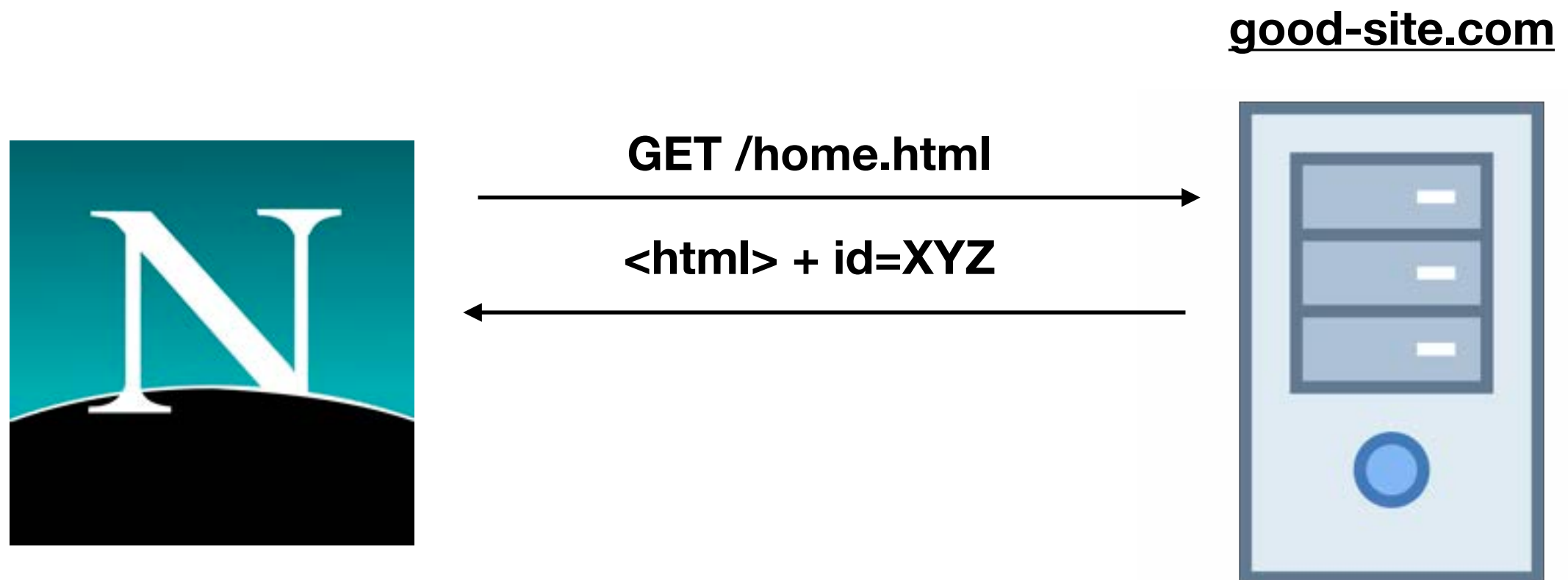
- Server gives token to user
- User returns it on requests
- Aka “cookies”

Web 0.0

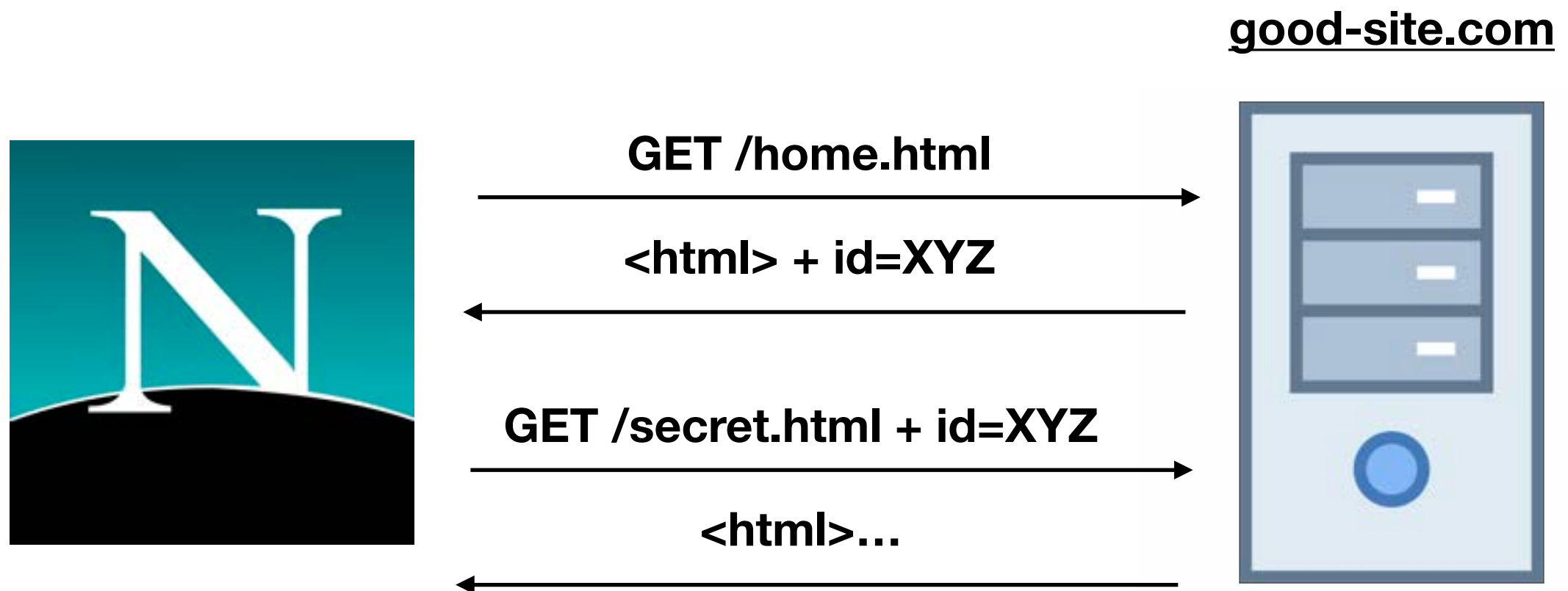
good-site.com



Web 0.0



Web 0.0



Web 0.0



GET /home.html

<html> + id=XYZ

GET /secret.html + id=XYZ

<html>...

good-site.com



GET /secret.html



**But in the
meantime...**

cat-cuties.com



kozy-kittens.com



cat-cuties.com



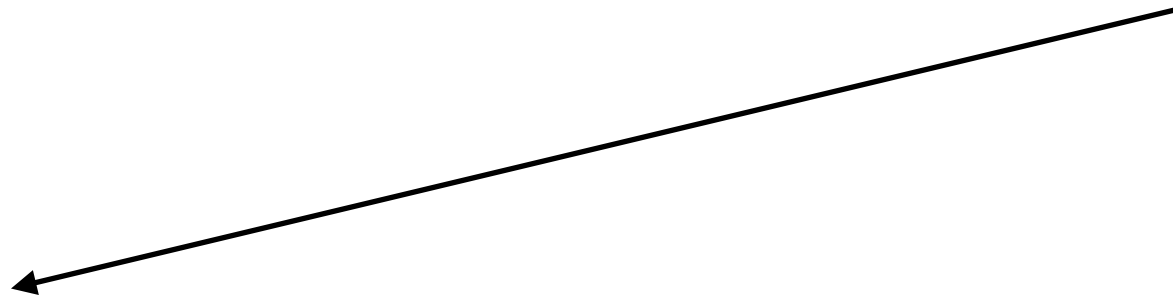
kozy-kittens.com



cat-cuties.com



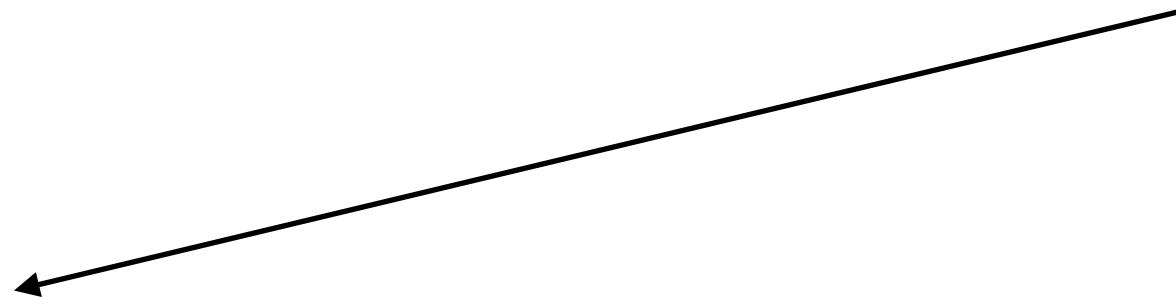
kozy-kittens.com



cat-cuties.com



kozy-kittens.com

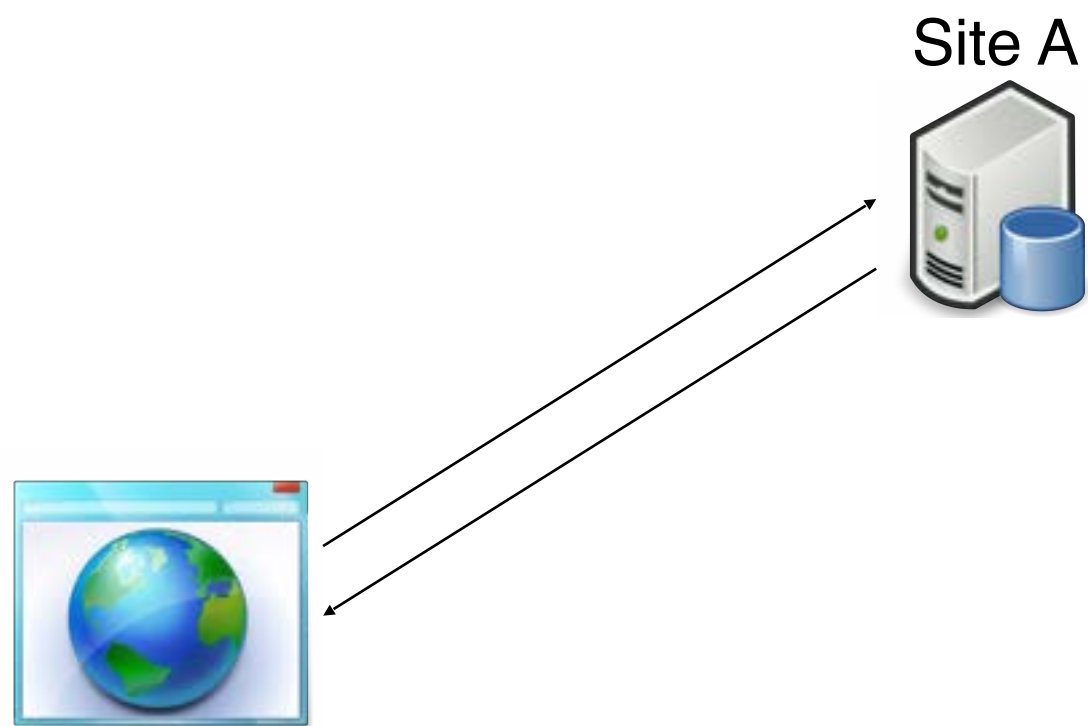


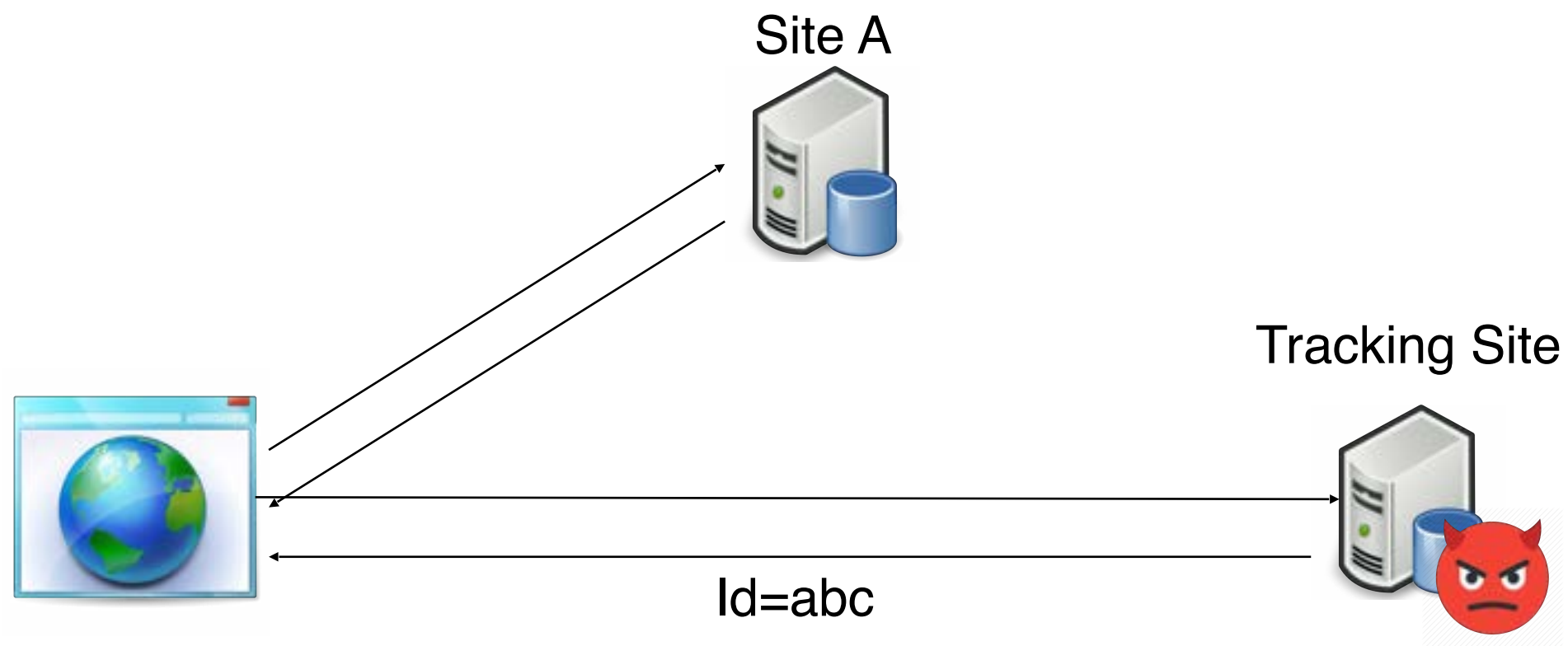
cookies, cookies everywhere...

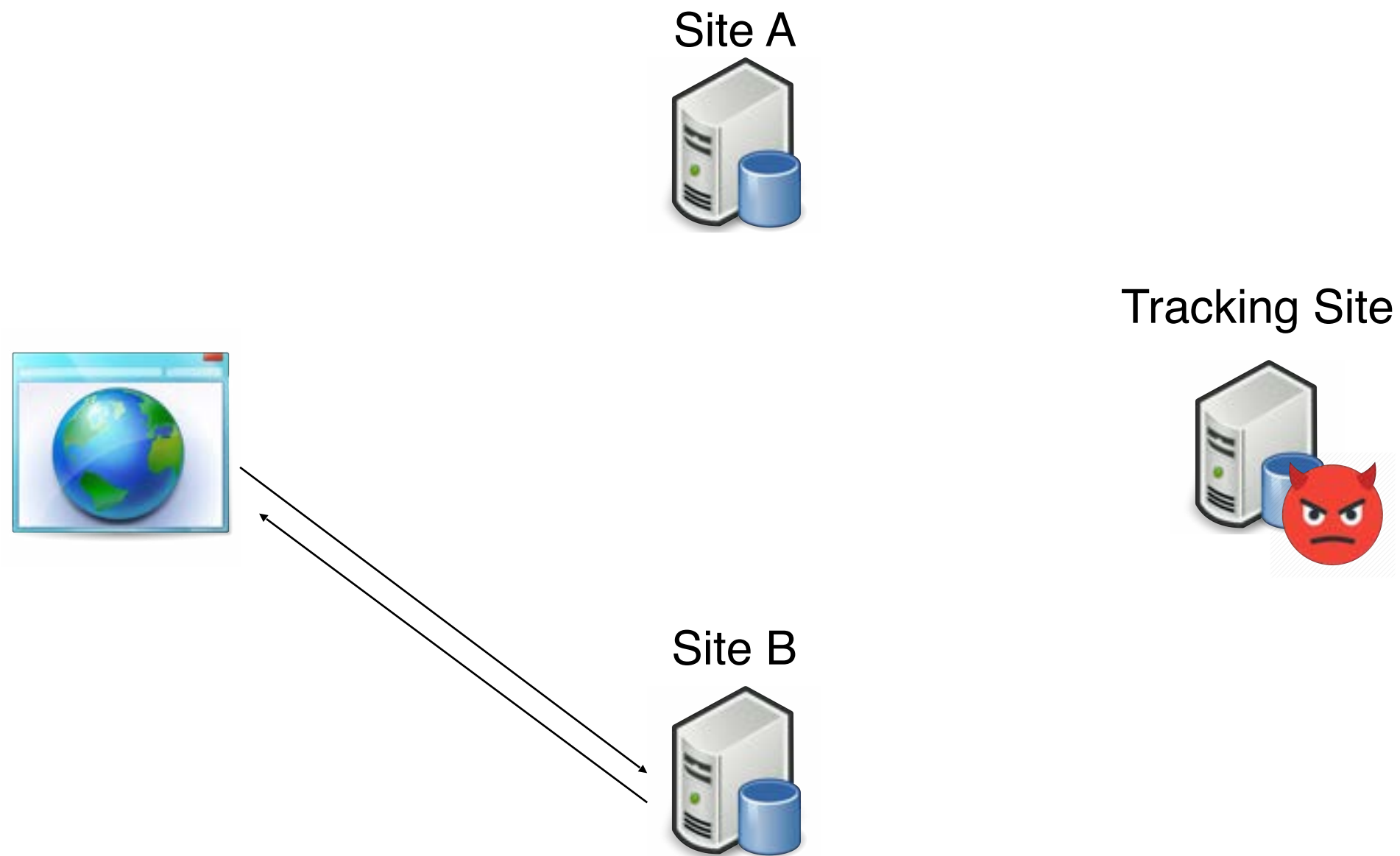
**Cookies
+ 3p Resources**

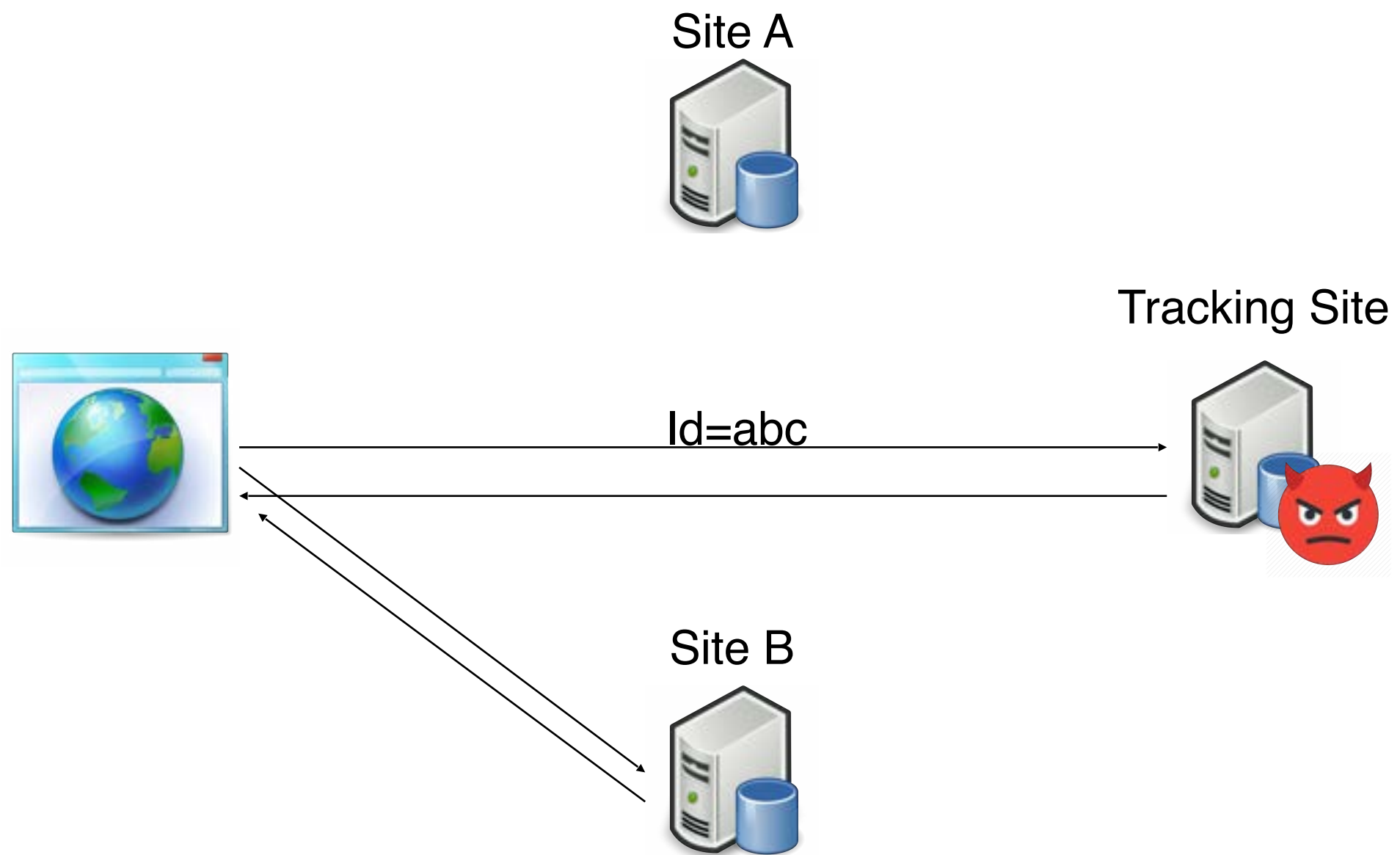


Tracking











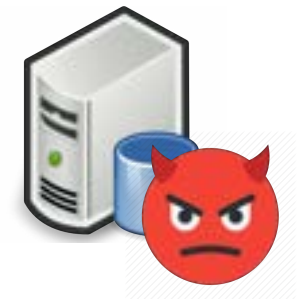
Site A



Site B



Tracking Site



Tracker knows the
same person visited
 $A + B$

Tracking Patient Zero

- The internet's “original sin”
 - cross origin resources
 - 3p cookies
 - or both...
- “I invented Javascript and 3p script, and I’ve been making up for it ever since...”
(paraphrase)



“Ever-Cookies”

- **Some browsers started fighting back**
Brave, Safari, Firefox, extensions...
- **Trackers fought back**
Moving IDs information out of cookies, to other location
- **Long list of locations**
 - Local and Session Storage
 - HSTS
 - Cache (etags, Cache API, etc)
 - Plugins
 - many many many more...

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6. Anti-finger printing exercise
7. Wrapping up

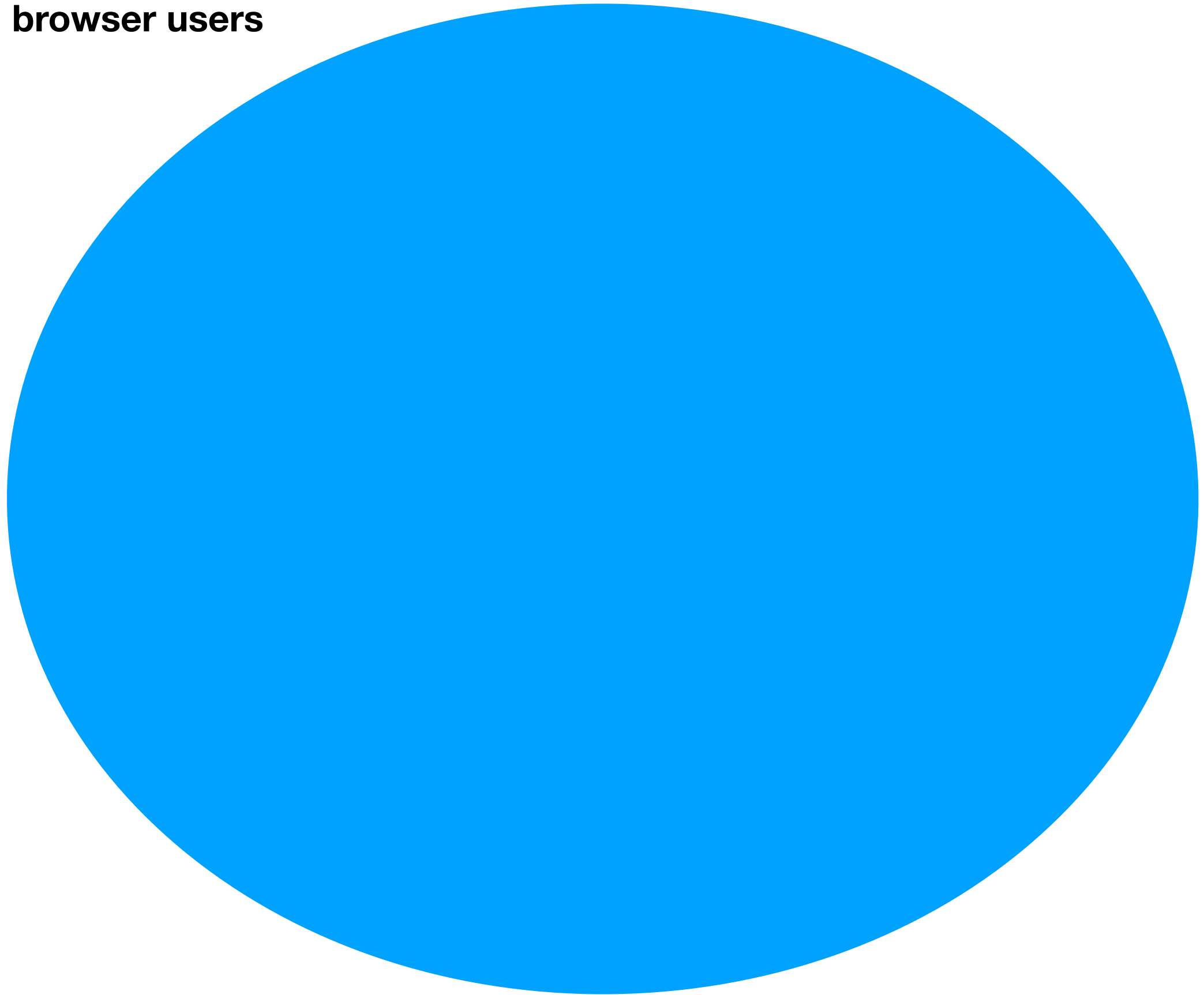
Fingerprinting, what's diff?

- **Classic tracking**
 - Website stores an id on the client
 - The client returns the id to the server (cookie or JS)
 - The id is what allows re-identification
- **Fingerprinting / passive tracking**
 - Website finds things different about each visitor
 - That difference allows re-identification

Fingerprinting, how

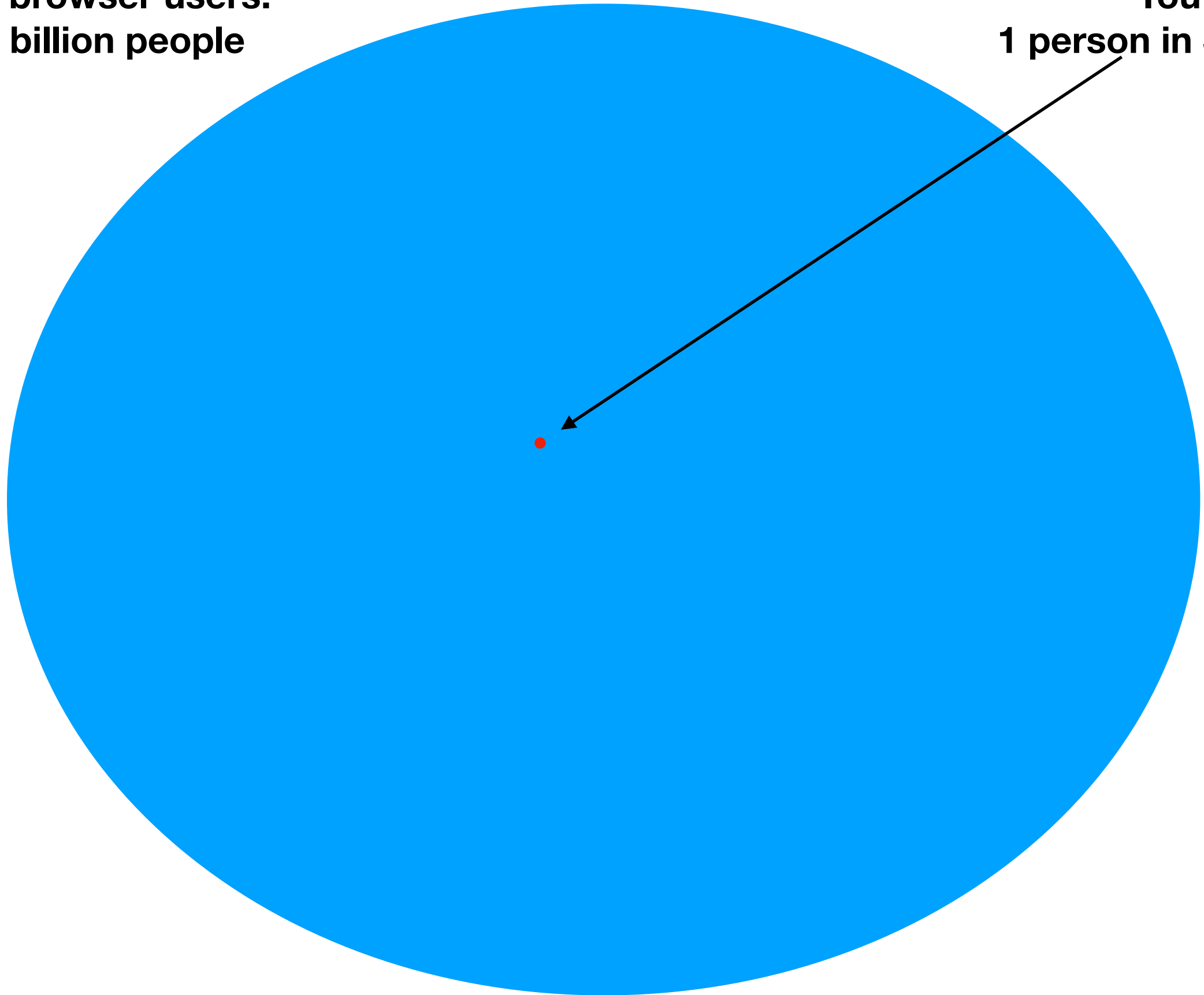
- Large number of semi-identifiers
 - Browser size
 - Extra fonts
 - Audio hardware
 - Video hardware
 - Installed plugins
 - Color depth
 - etc etc etc...

All browser users

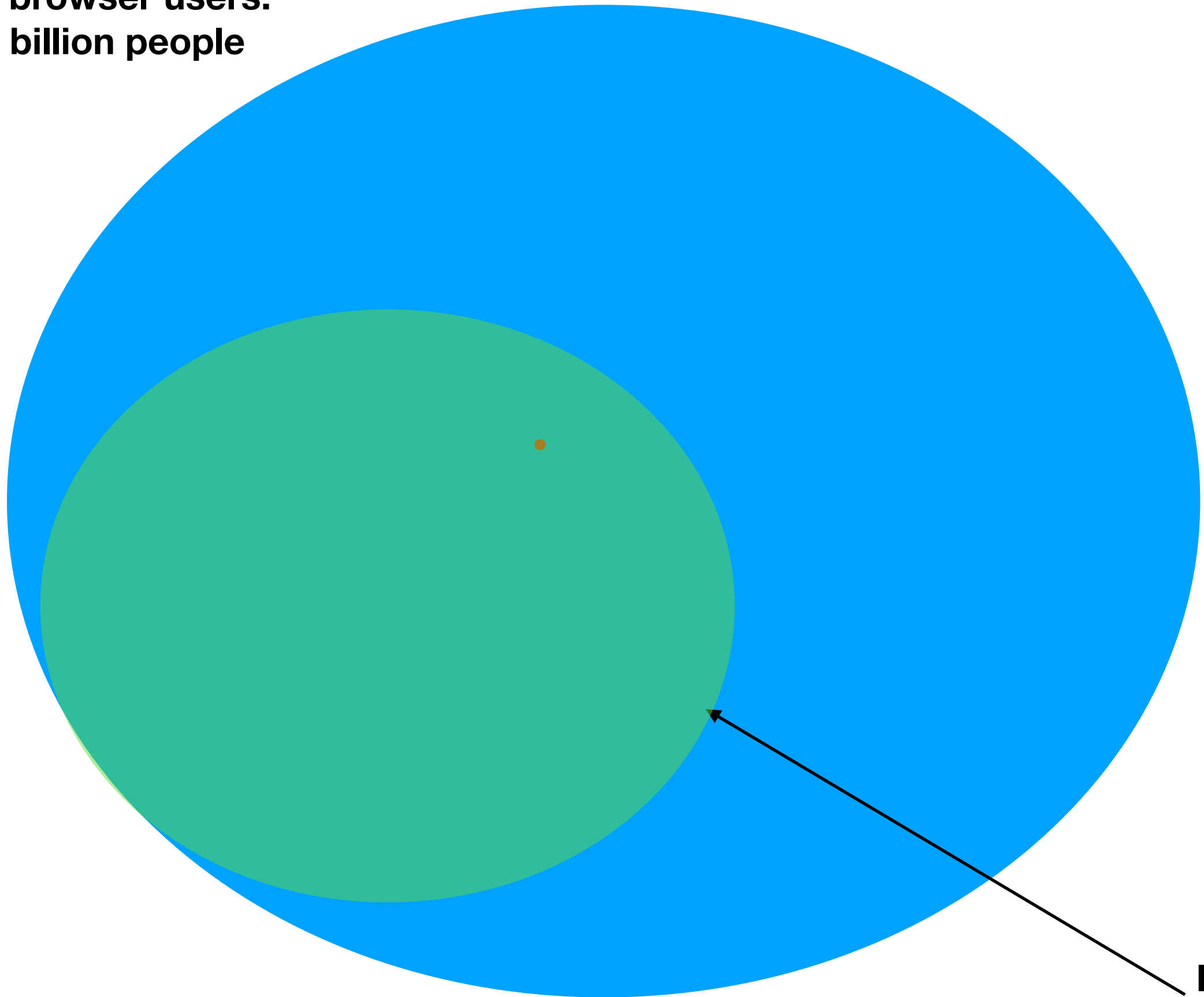


**All browser users:
3 billion people**

**You
1 person in 3 billion**

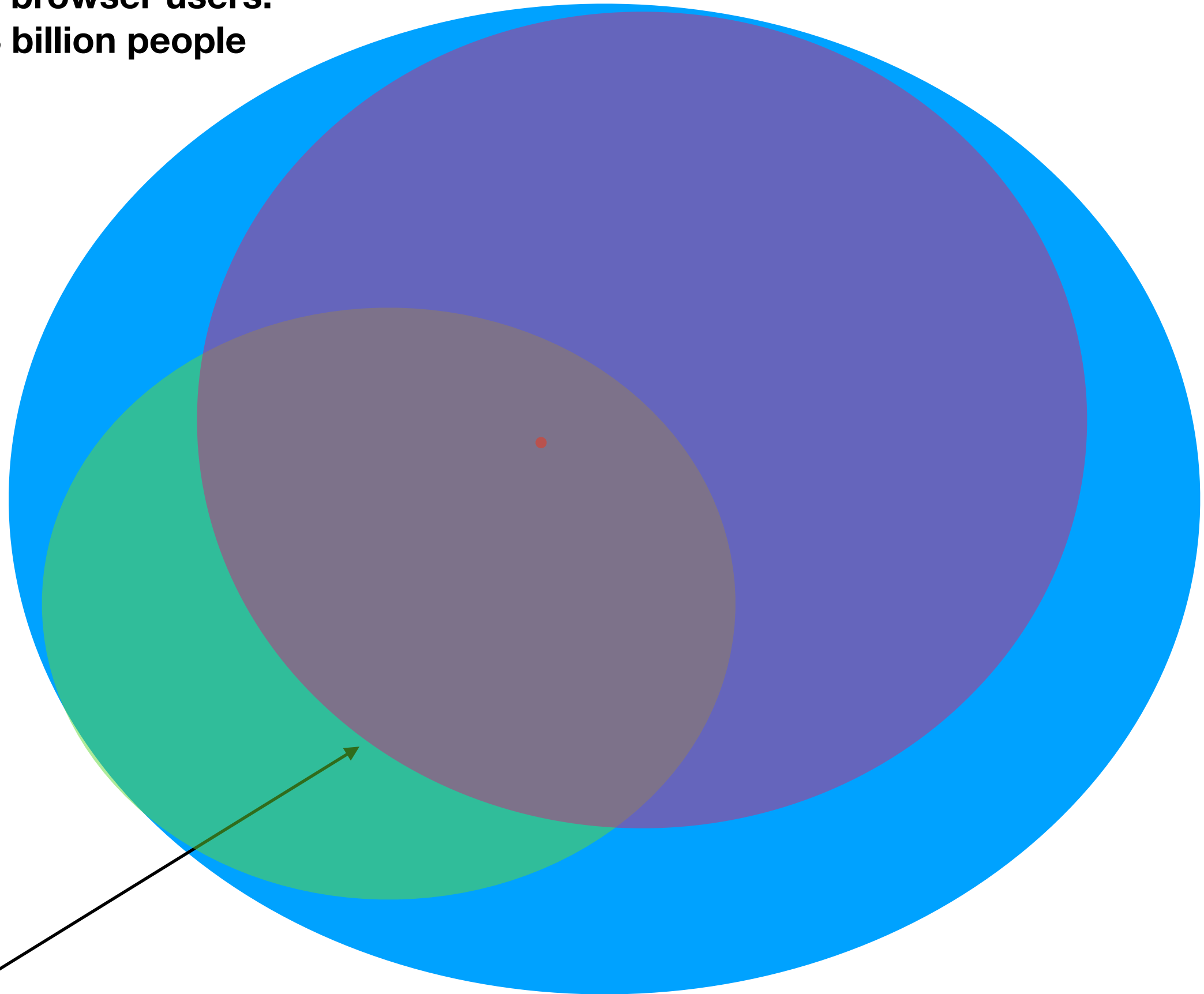


**All browser users:
3 billion people**



**Firefox
Users**

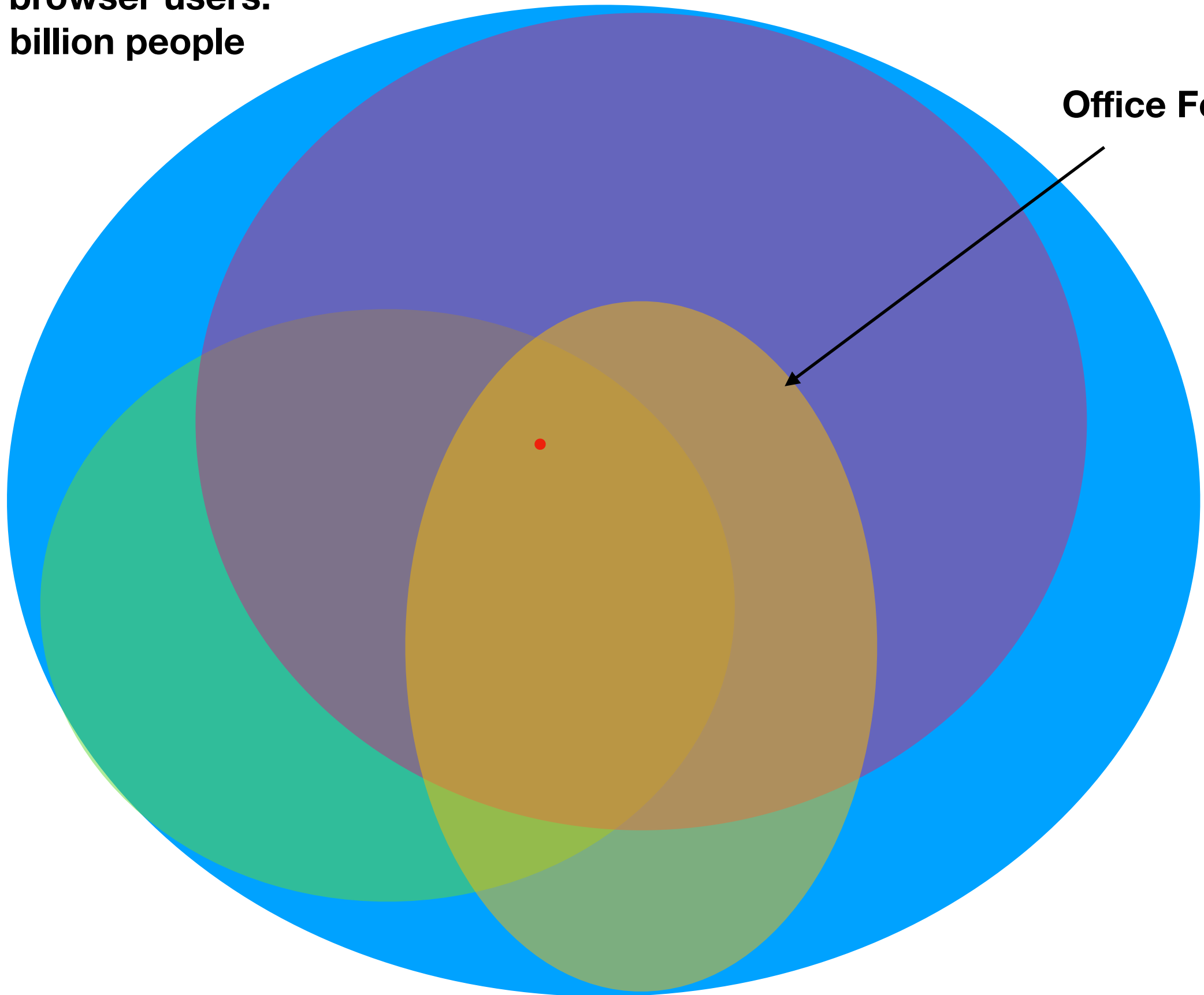
**All browser users:
3 billion people**



Windows users

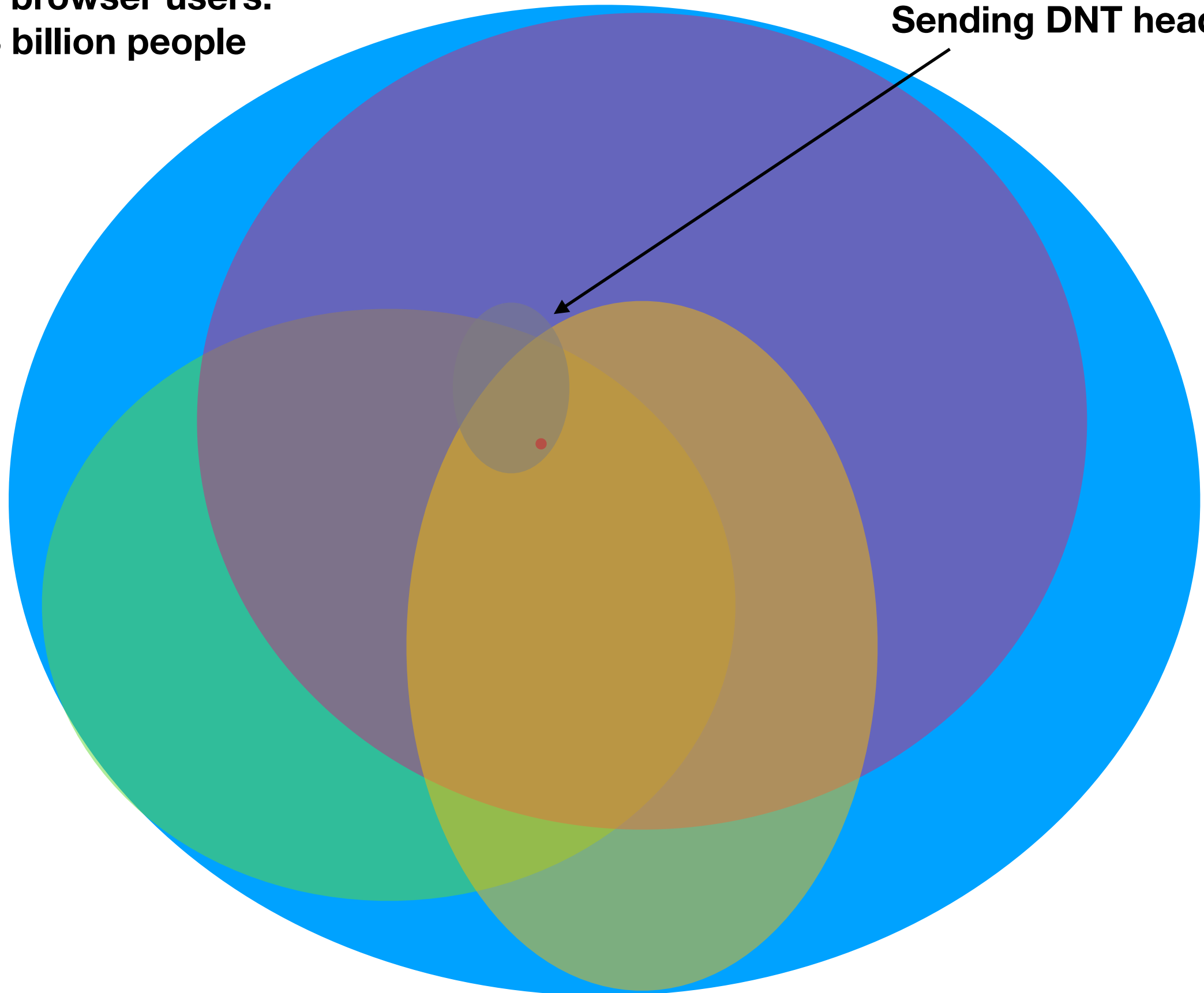
**All browser users:
3 billion people**

Office Fonts



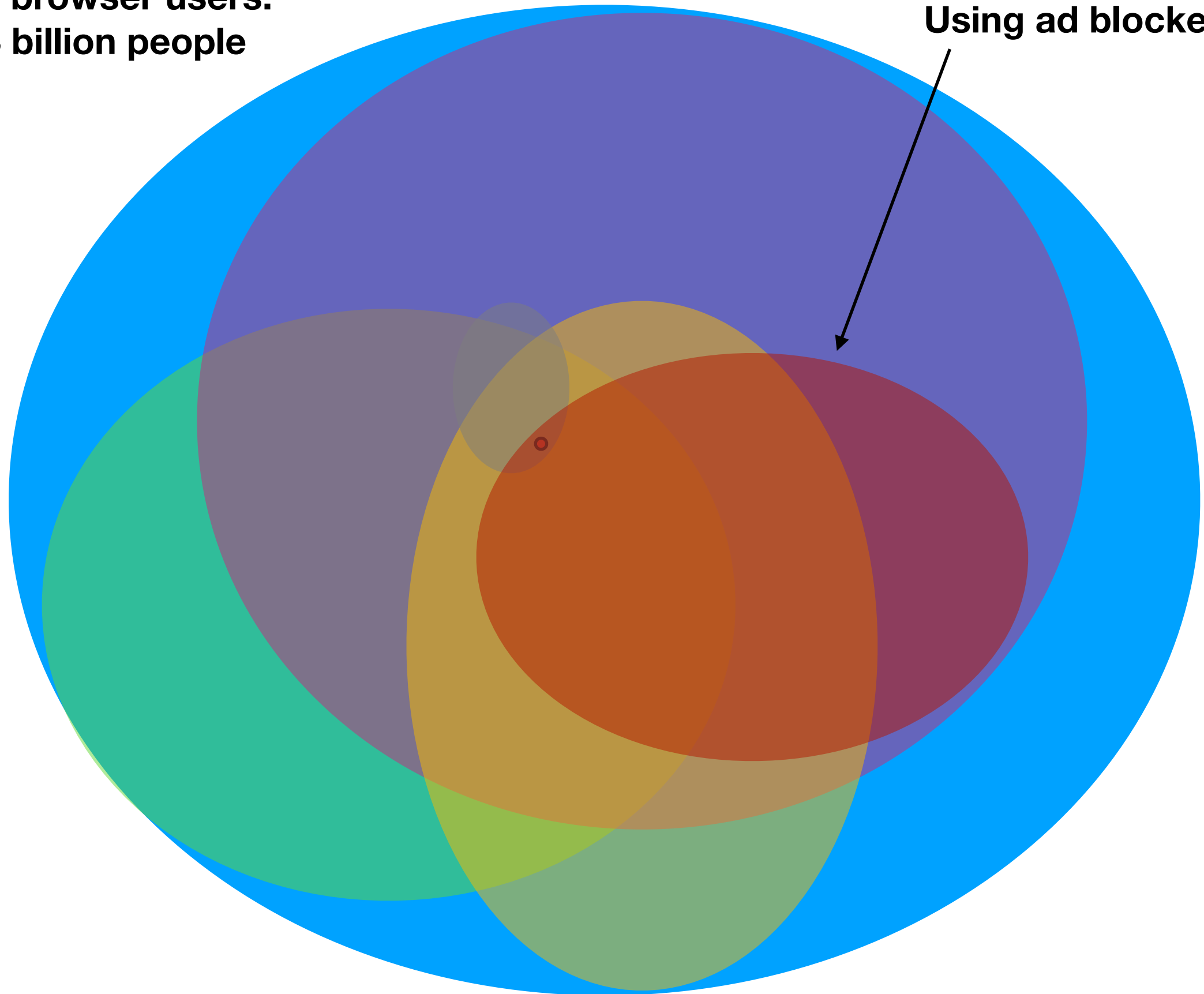
**All browser users:
3 billion people**

Sending DNT header



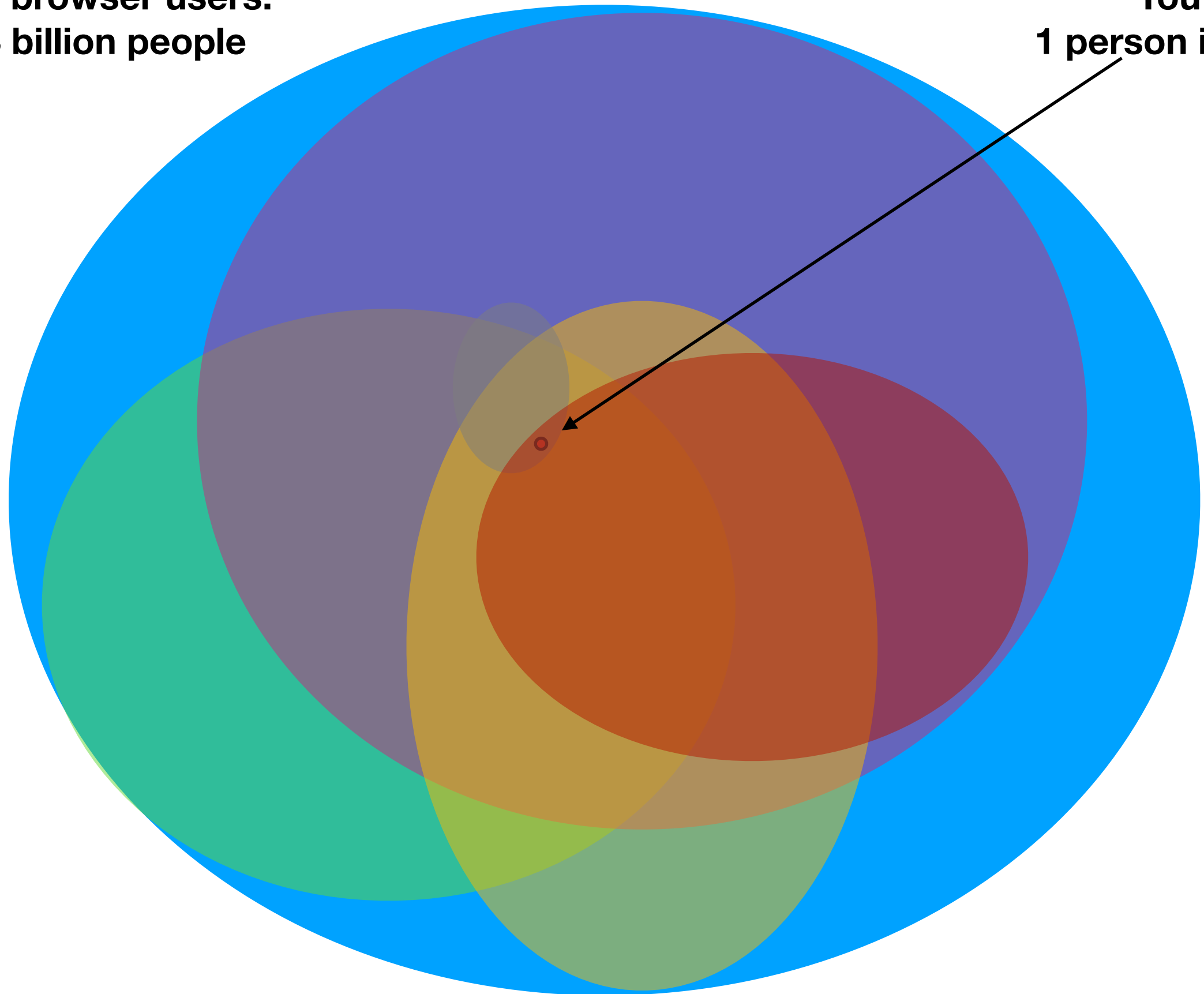
**All browser users:
3 billion people**

Using ad blocker



**All browser users:
3 billion people**

**You
1 person in 100**



Succeeding at Fingerprinting

1. **Breadth of fingerprints**

Large number of semi-identifiers

2. **Depth of fingerprints**

How uniquely each identifier can... identify

Breath (examples)

- User agent string
- Installed fonts
- Canvas / WebGL
- Hardware (many)
- Height / width

User Agent String

- **History of the Browser user-agent string**
<https://webaim.org/blog/user-agent-string-history/>
- **Katamari-Damacy of identifiers**
- **Brave / Chrome**
Mozilla/5.0 (Macintosh; Intel Mac OS X 10_15_0) AppleWebKit/537.36 (KHTML, like Gecko) Chrome/78.0.3904.50 Safari/537.36
- **Easy to extract**
 - navigator.userAgent
 - User-Agent:

Installed Fonts

- **Three categories of fonts**
 - System
 - Local
 - Web
- **“Local” is the tricky part**
 - Office
 - Photoshop
 - Goofery
- **Easy to extract**
 - plugins
 - css + span + width

**[‘Andale Mono', 'Arial', 'Arial Black', 'Arial Hebrew',
'Arial MT', 'Arial Narrow', 'Arial Rounded MT Bold'...]**

**[‘Andale Mono’, ‘Arial’, ‘Arial Black’, ‘Arial Hebrew’,
‘Arial MT’, ‘Arial Narrow’, ‘Arial Rounded MT Bold’...]**

`Example`

**['Andale Mono', 'Arial', 'Arial Black', 'Arial Hebrew',
'Arial MT', 'Arial Narrow', 'Arial Rounded MT Bold'...]**

For each font...



Fingerprint

`Example`

**['Andale Mono', 'Arial', 'Arial Black', 'Arial Hebrew',
'Arial MT', 'Arial Narrow', 'Arial Rounded MT Bold'...]**

For each font...

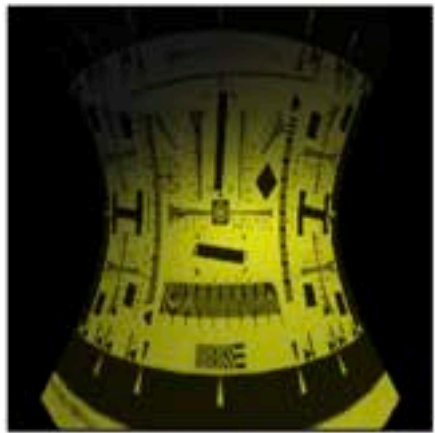
Fingerprinter

```
for (const fontName of fonts) {  
  // 1. Apply font to span  
  // 2. Measure width of span  
  // 3. If it changes, user has font..  
}
```

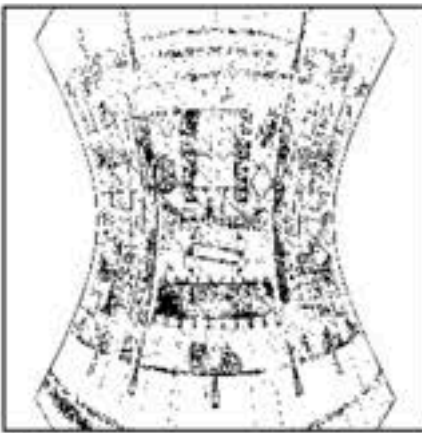
Example

Canvas / WebGL

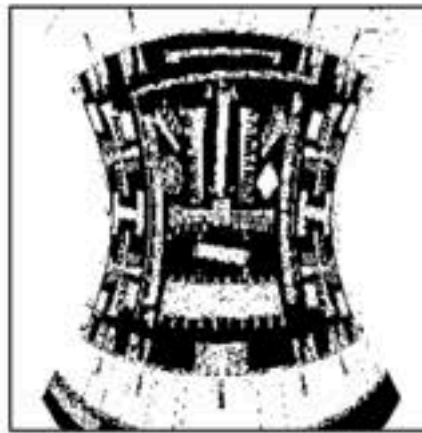
- **Pixel Perfect: Fingerprinting Canvas in HTML5**
Keaton Mowery and Hovav Shacham
- **Drawing APIs**
e.g. Drawing lines / shapes
- **Standardized, but subtle differences**
- **Easy to extract**
 - Create canvas
 - Do some drawing
 - toDataURL()



(a) Original
(Intel G41)



(b) Group 1
(Radeon HD 2400)



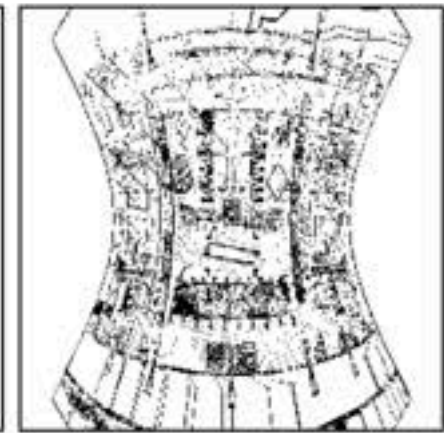
(c) Group 20
(Intel 82945G)



(d) Group 23
(Intel G33/G31)



(e) Group 25
(Intel HD Graphics)



(f) Group 36
(GeForce 6200)



Hovav Shacham

The Geometry of Innocent Flesh on the Bone:
Return-into-libc without Function Calls

Hardware Identifiers

- **Many Web APIs leak capabilities**
 - number of cores (HTML)
 - number of audio channels (Web Audio API)
 - num shaders and similar (WebGL API)
 - device memory (Device Memory API)
 - network (WebRTC, Network status API)
- **Semi identifying**
- **Easy to extract**
 - All browsers have subset of the above
 - Most platforms have no permissions

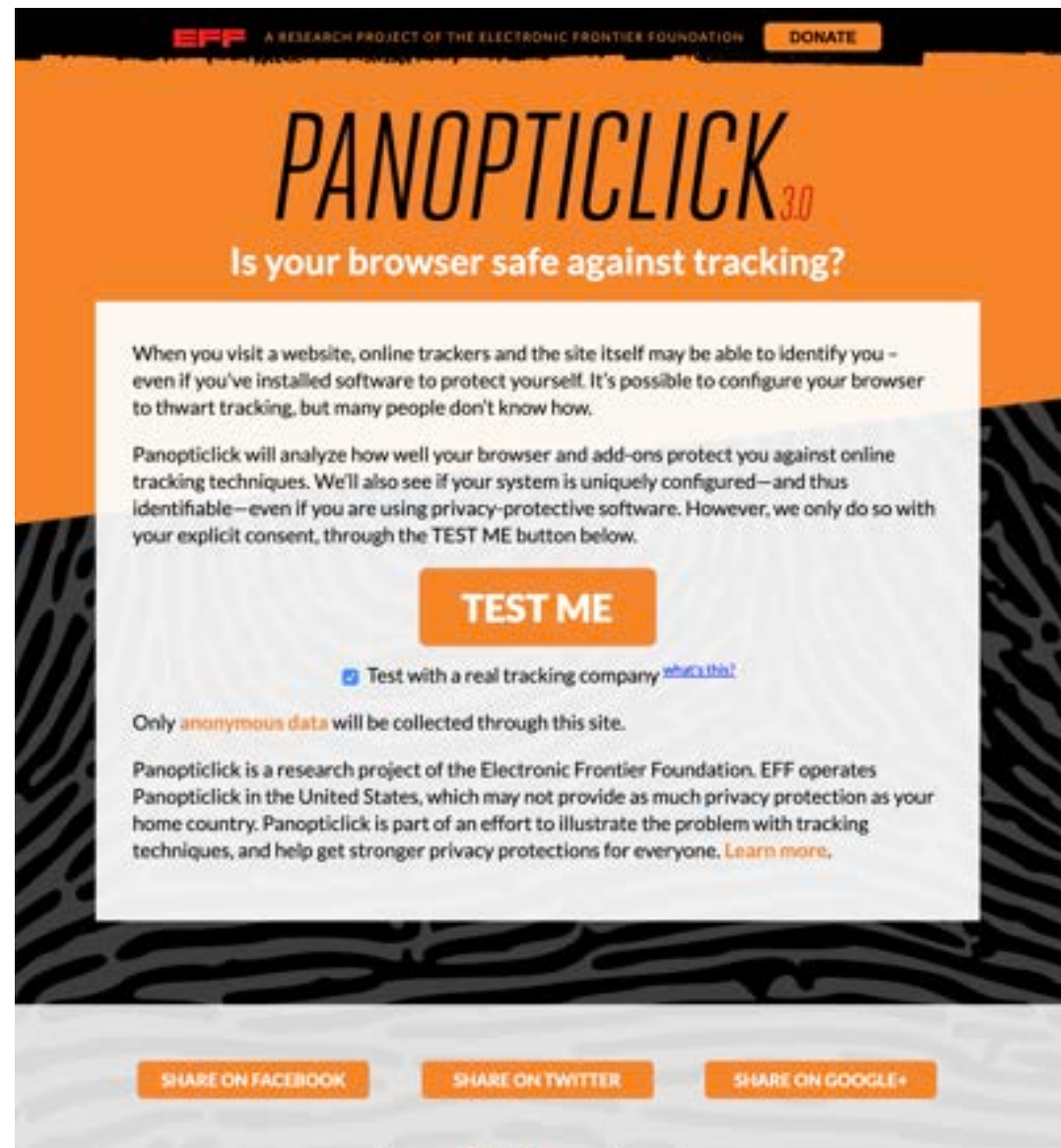
Height / Width



Height / Width

- **What does it mean?**
- **How to extract w/ JavaScript?**
- **How to extract w/o JavaScript?**
- **Brb 5 min (Go go go go go!)**

Fingerprinting Depth



<https://panoptick.eff.org/>

Fingerprinting in Practice

- Needs to be in a database...
- Hash each endpoint
- Hash each value into a single identifier...
- Nice implication: “poisionability”...

Exercise

- Read fingerprint2.js
- List as many finger-printing approaches as possible
- Understand how they're carried out
- Predict which are most identifying

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Fingerprinting Countermeasures

- Remove the functionality
- Make the functionality consistent
- Restrict access (permissions, 1p vs 3p, user gesture, etc)
- Noise
- “Privacy budget”

Remove the functionality

- Delete JS end point
- Remove the HTTP header
- Remove the runtime capability

Consistency

- Make every browser return the same value
- ... or, most?
- Not that diff in practice from “removing”

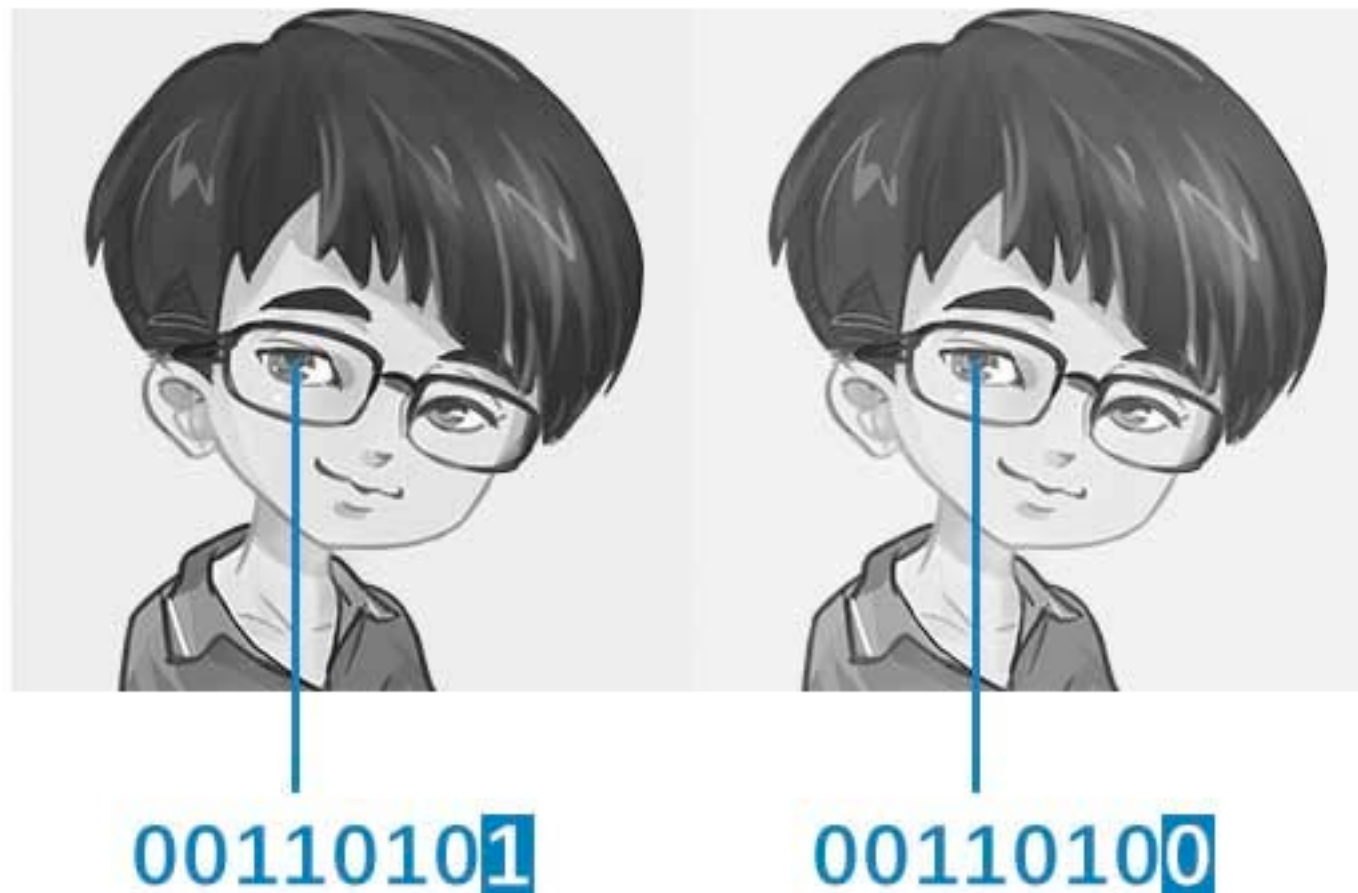
Restrict access

- Permission prompt
- User gesture
- 1p vs. 3p
- “Site engagement”

Noise

- Stenography
- Make different every time

Original With Hidden Data



Privacy Budget

- Allow some identifiability
- After “identifiability budget” is exhausted do... something
- Google folks love it
- Everyone else is... skeptical

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Fingerprint2 Again...

- Choose two fingerprinting vectors to combat
 - Propose counter measures
- Choose two fingerprinting vectors that are hard
 - Why are counter measures hard?

Fingerprint2 pt 3...

- Pretend your the attacker
- How would you respond to those defenses...

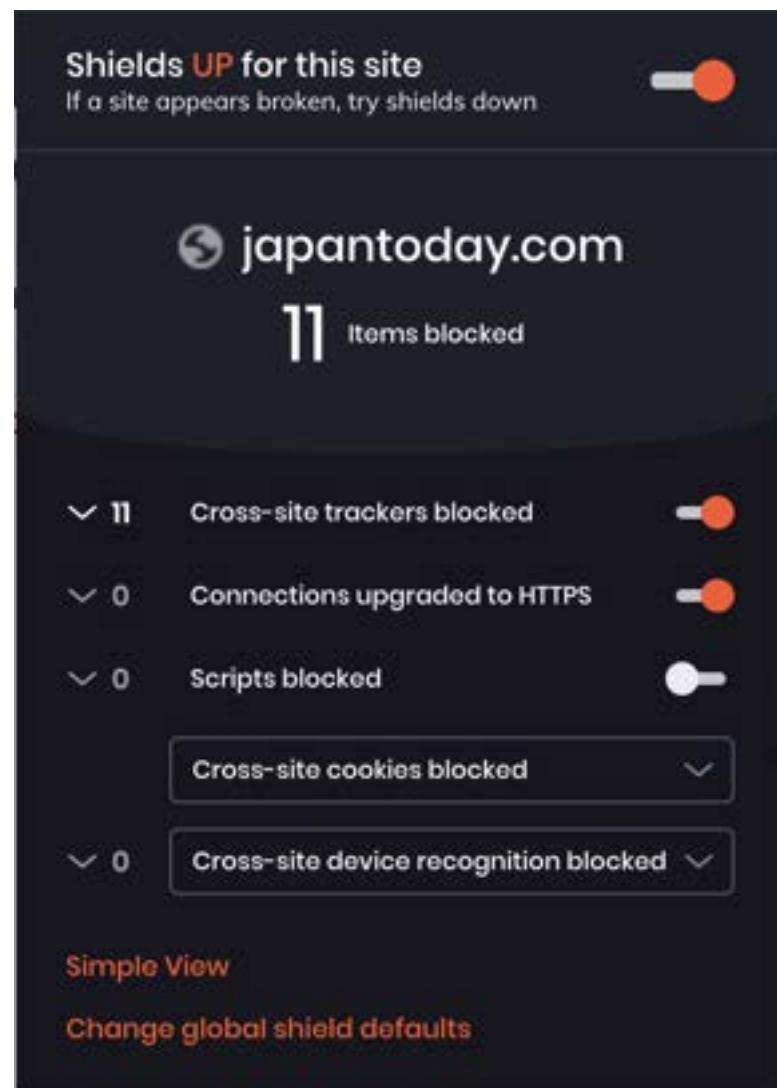
Fingerprint2 pt 4...

- Pretend your the defender again
- How would you modify your defenses given the previous round...

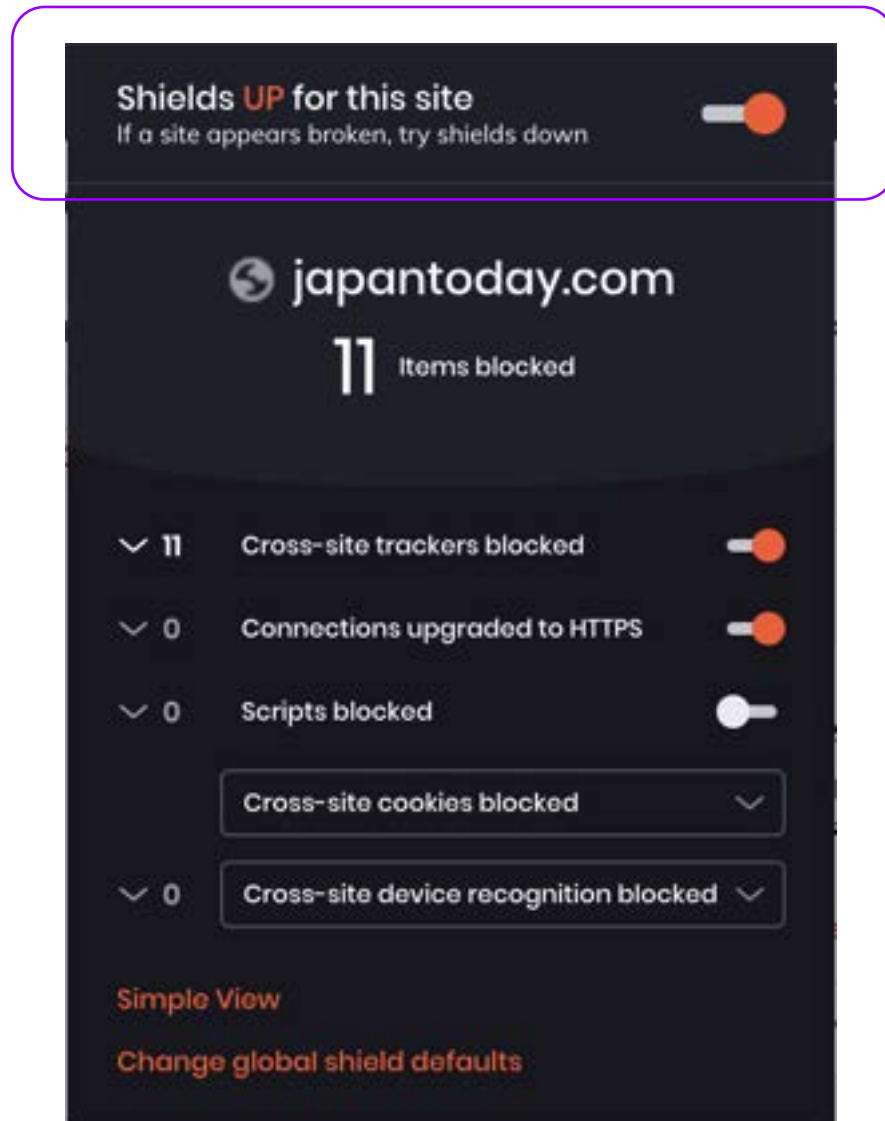
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Brave Privacy Protections

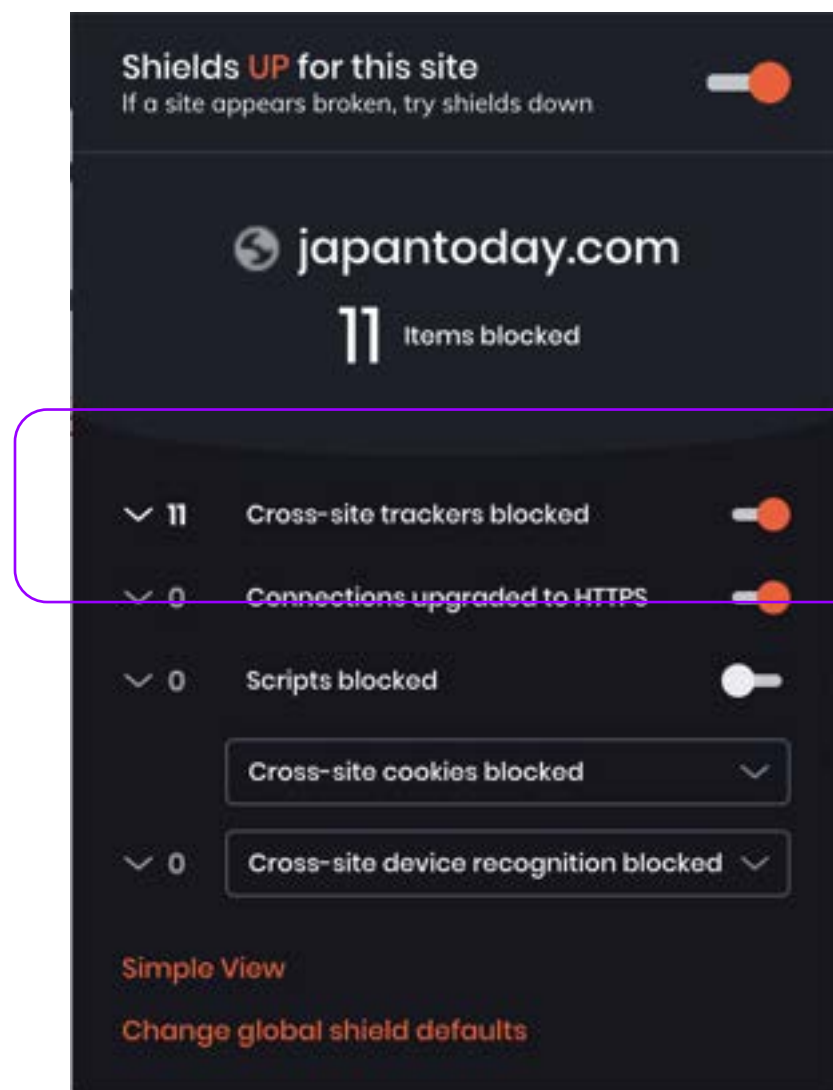


Brave Privacy Protections



- Shields
- Global protection from tracking
- On by default
- Can be disabled if needed

Brave Privacy Protections

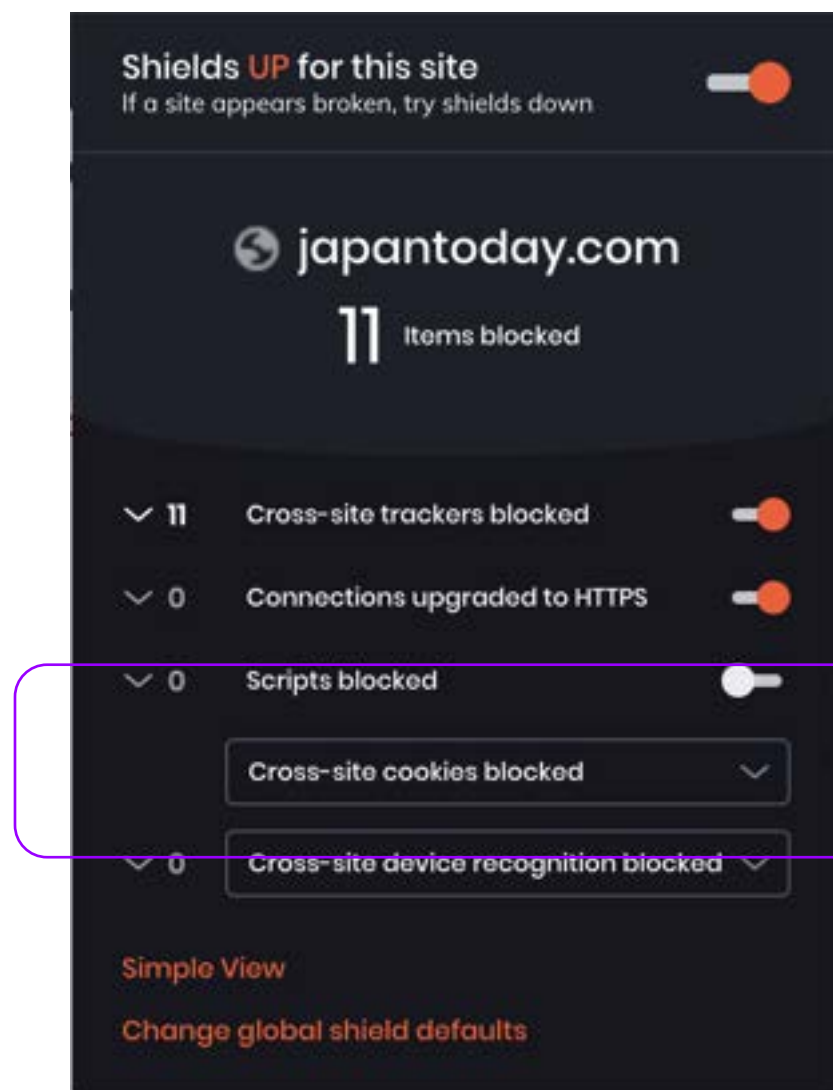


- Block cross site trackers
- Lists of known tracking websites
- Refuse to load
- Both community and Brave generated

Blocking Cross-Site Trackers in Brave

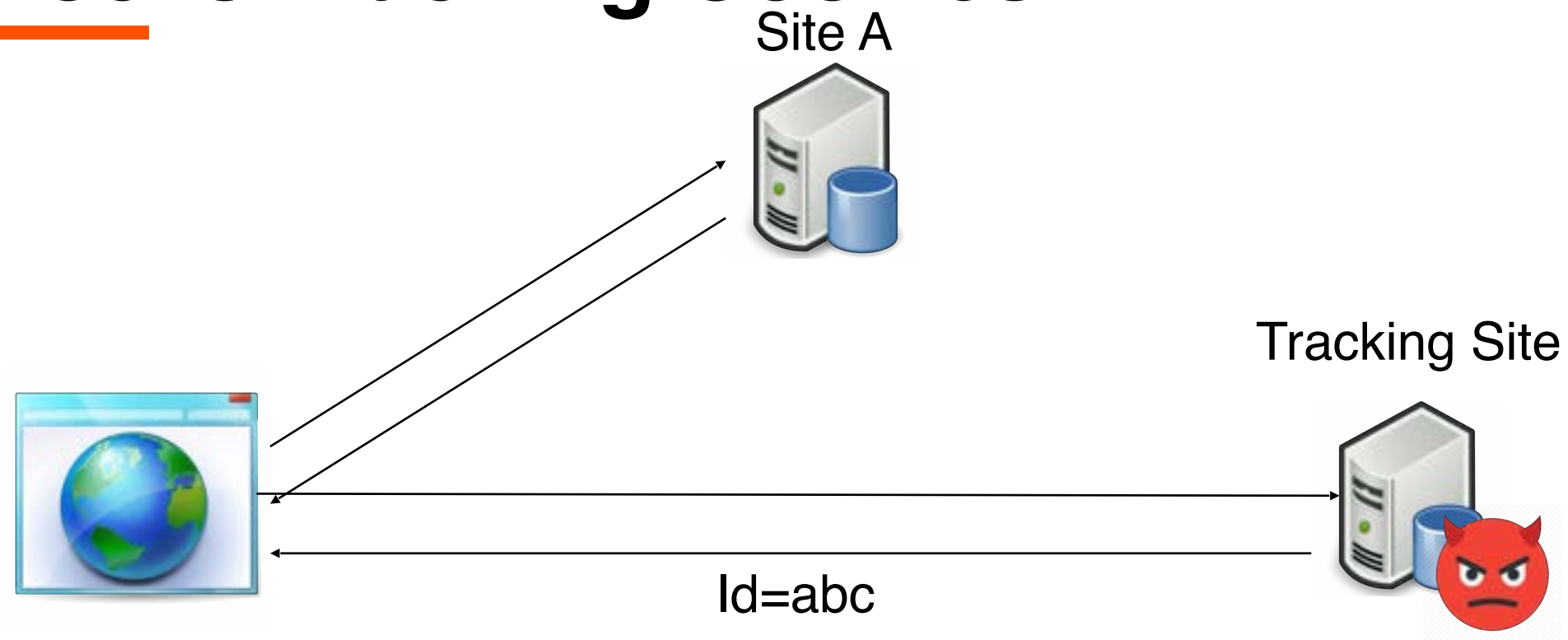
- **EasyList and EasyPrivacy**
Used by AdBlock Plus, etc.
- **Disconnect**
Used by Firefox, extensions
- **uBlock Origin**
Excellent blocking extension
- **Brave generated**
Open source, shared with community

Brave Privacy Protections

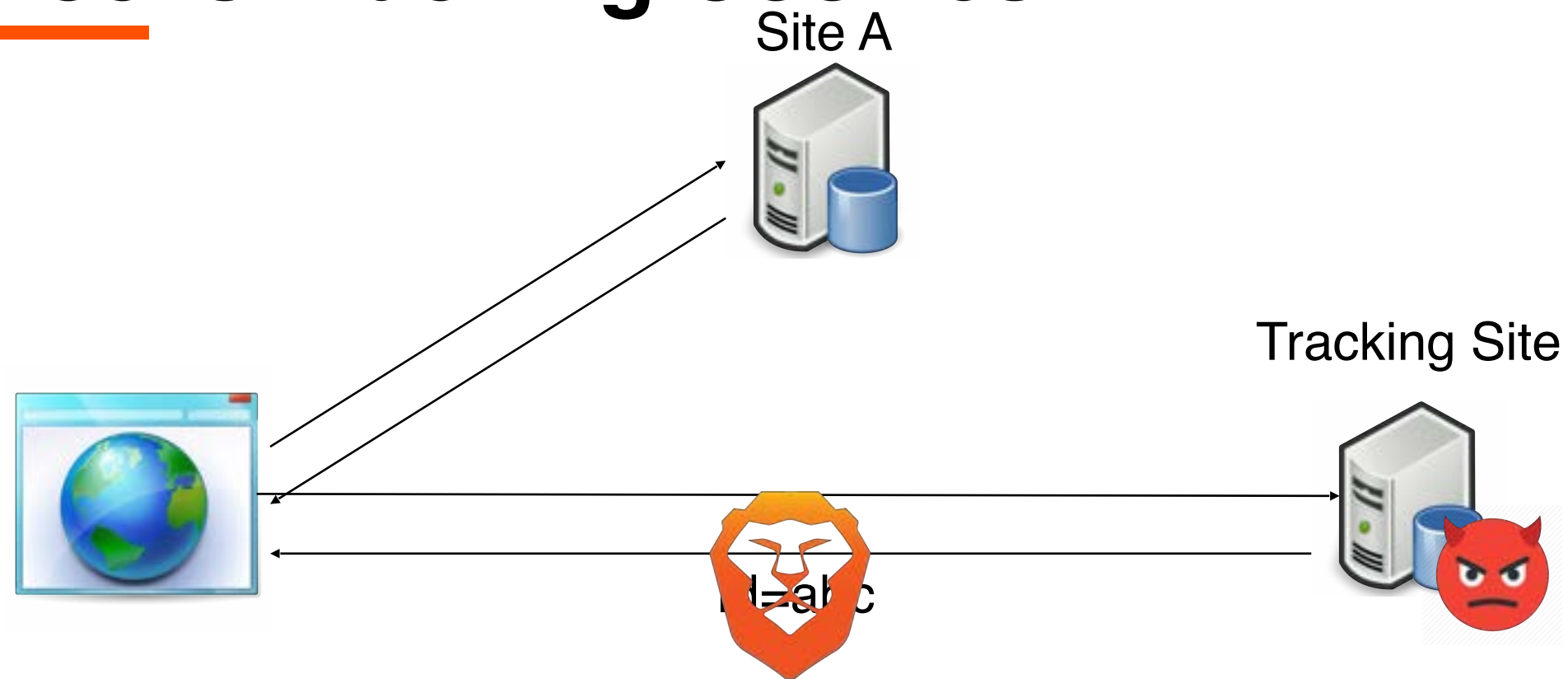


- Don't send identifiers to third party sites
- Send to "main" site
- Same with other storage methods

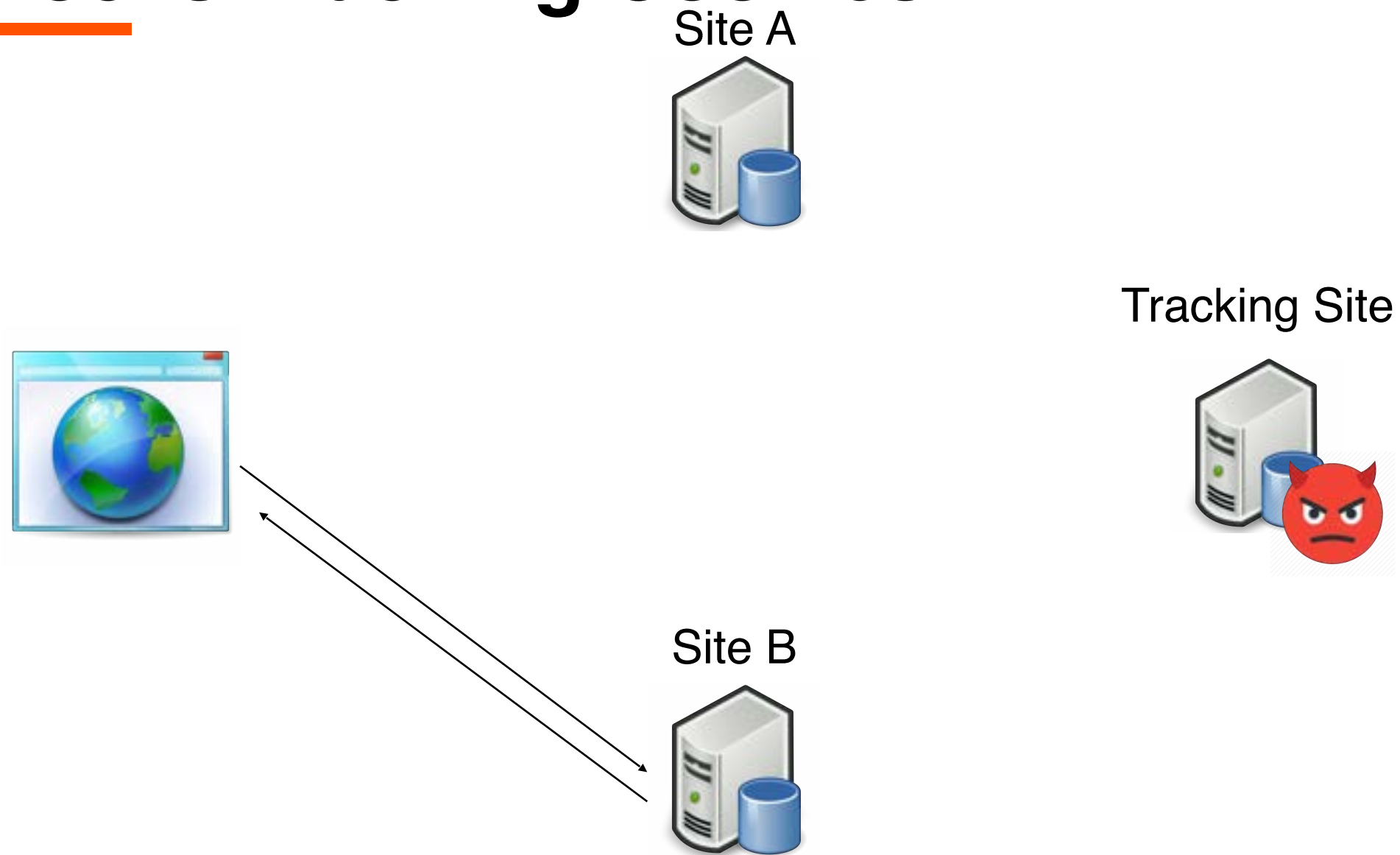
Brave Blocks Tracking Cookies



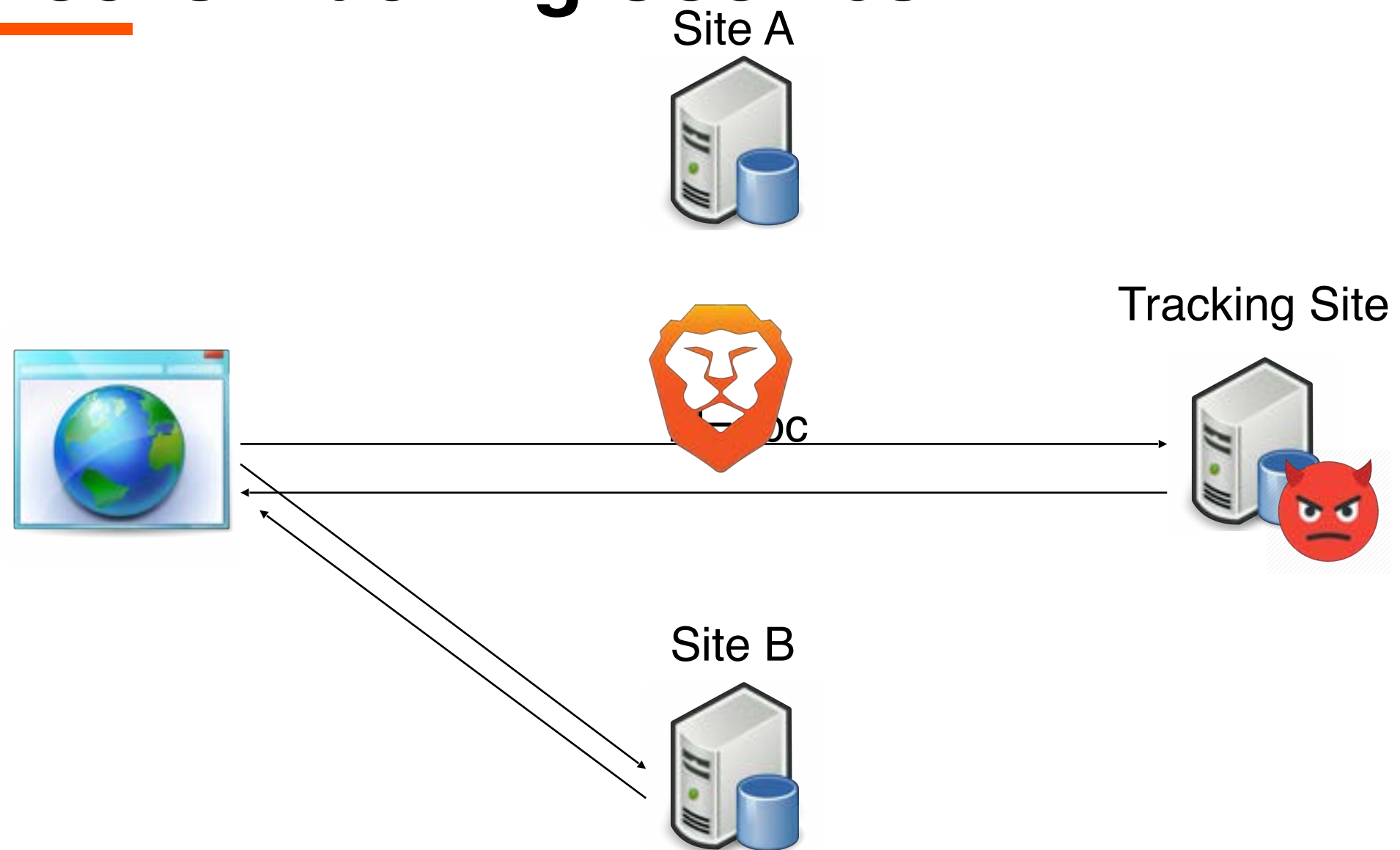
Brave Blocks Tracking Cookies



Brave Blocks Tracking Cookies



Brave Blocks Tracking Cookies



Brave Blocks Tracking Cookies

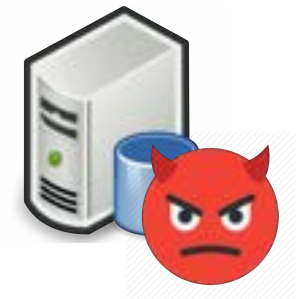
Site A



Site B

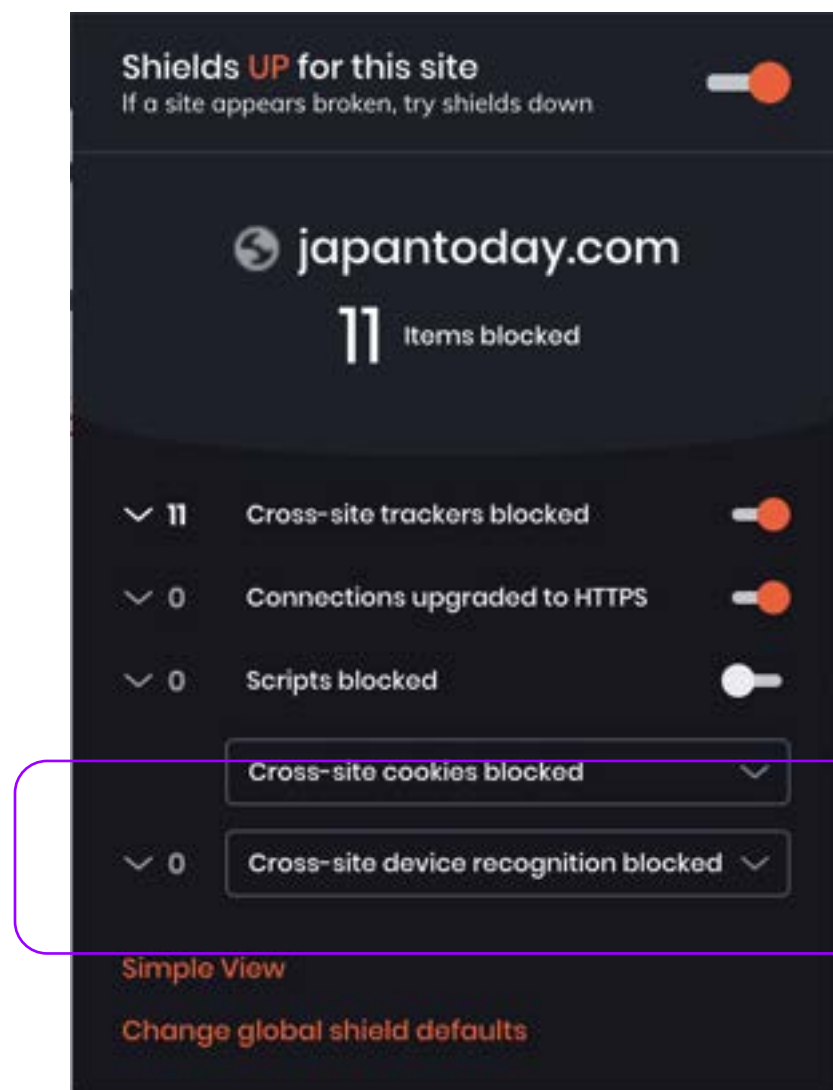


Tracking Site



Tracker can't link A
and B

Brave Privacy Protections



- Reduce finger printing vectors
- Currently:
 - Hardware identifiers
 - Canvas
 - WebGL
 - Audio
- Planned:
 - Fonts
 - User agent
 - Screen size

Under Exploration Possible Privacy Protections

- Restrictions on third-party scripts
- Identifying tracking behaviors, not just scripts / URLs
- Query parameters filtering
- Bounce tracking
- Much more...

Overview

1. Why websites track (and how much)
2. “Classic” tracking
3. Fingerprinting / “passive tracking”
4. Fingerprinting counter measures
5. Anti-finger printing exercise
6. Privacy protections in Brave
7. **Wrapping up**

Unmasked for Advice

- Brave is hiring, keep us in mind
- Privacy is more than just web, there's lots to do
- Don't accept privacy as a feature...
- Choose your employer with values in mind

Thanks!

- **Pete Snyder**
Privacy Researcher
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@pes10k
- Questions?
 - Standards work?
 - Privacy jobs?
 - Brave business model
 - BAT / Block chain
 - Anything else?

