Week 6 – Wednesday »Web scraping«

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Today

- **1** A first intro to parsing webpages
- 2 Scraping
- 3 Scaling up
- 4 Next steps

Let's have a look of a webpage with comments and try to understand the underlying structure.



REAGUURSELS

Tsja, ik zou m ook niet in mn buurt willen hebben, die vreemde vogel.

Lepo | 05-05-14 | 11:13

Ţ

Volgend jaar stropdascontrole voor de heren en hoedjescheck voor de dames. De volledige lijst van goedgekeurde kleding kunt u vinden op Postbus51.nl.

Uiteraard bent u extra welkom als u Abercrombie & Fitch draagt.

rara | 05-05-14 | 11:15

Ţ.

Gewoon even de afdeling psychiatrie bellen, wie ze missen: Klaar!

Mazzeltov | 05-05-14 | 11:16

Ţ.

netjes opgelost toch?

--sql error-- | 05-05-14 | 11:16

```
命
         i view-source:https://www.geenstijl.nl/3945571/das_toch_niet_normaal/
: 🔞 Aan de slag 🔞 Press This 👿 Atlassian Cloud
n class="divider"> </span>
n class="datetime">05-05-14 | 23:34</span>
lass="reportcomment" title="Deze reactie is in overtreding met de huisregels."></a>
er>
e>
rticle class="comment col-xs-12 no-v-padding"
ommentid="192631041"
92631041">
ss="anchor-pos" id="cid 192631041"></div>
lass="cmt-content">Een VZ800 Marauder, wat een giga kutmotor is dat. Na 10 km. heb je al
2">
pan class="username">tiswat</span>
```

Which elements from the page do we need?

- What do they mean?
- How are they represented in the source code?

How should our output look like?

- What *lists* do we want?
- ...

And how can we achieve this?



A first plan

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Download the page

A first plan

- 1 Download the page
 - Possibly taking measures to deal with cookie walls, being blocked, etc.

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- **2** Remove all line breaks (\n , but maybe also $\n\r$ or \r) and TABs (\t): We want one long string



A first plan

- Download the page
 - Possibly taking measures to deal with cookie walls, being blocked, etc.
- **2** Remove all line breaks (\n, but maybe also \n\r or \r) and TABs (\t): We want one long string
- 3 Try to isolate the comments
 - Do we see any pattern in the source code? ⇒ last week: if we can see a pattern, we can describe it with a regular expression

```
1
    import requests
    import re
3
    URL = 'http://www.geenstijl.nl/mt/archieven/2014/05/
        das_toch_niet_normaal.html'
5
    # ugly workaround to circumvent cookie wall, not of interest for today
    client = requests.session()
8
    r = client.get(URL)
    cookies = client.cookies.items()
9
10
    cookies.append(('cpc','10'))
    response = client.get(URL,cookies=dict(cookies))
11
12
    # end workaround
13
    tekst=response.text.replace("\n"," ").replace("\t"," ")
14
15
    comments=re.findall(r'<div class="cmt-content">(.*?)</div>',tekst)
16
    print("There are",len(comments),"comments")
17
    print("These are the first two:")
18
    print(comments[:2])
19
```

The regexp

• .*? instead of .* means *lazy* matching. As .* matches everything, the part where the regexp should stop would not be analyzed (*greedy* matching) — we would get the whole rest of the document (or the line, but we removed all line breaks).

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Optimization

- Parse usernames, date, time, . . .
- Replace tags



Doing this with other sites?

- It's basically puzzling with regular expressions.
- Look at the source code of the website to see how well-structured it is.



OK, but this surely can be doe more elegantly? Yes!

Geenstijl-example

 Worked well (and we could do it with the knowledge we already had)



Geenstijl-example

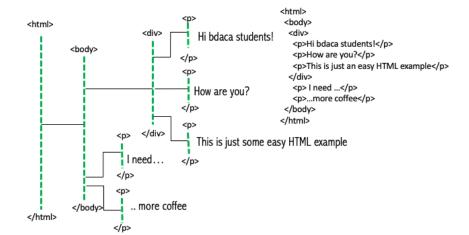
- Worked well (and we could do it with the knowledge we already had)
- But we can also use existing parsers (that can interpret the structure of the html page)

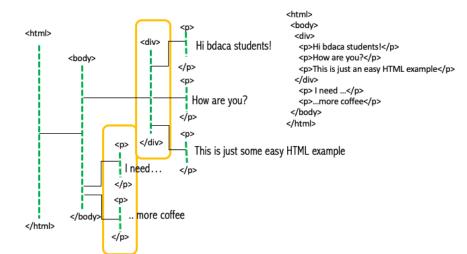
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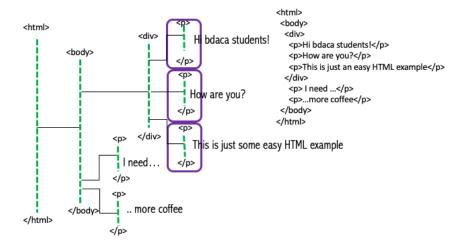
- Worked well (and we could do it with the knowledge we already had)
- But we can also use existing parsers (that can interpret the structure of the html page)
- especially when the structure of the site is more complex

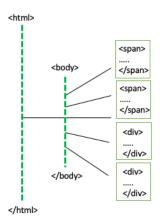


```
<html>
<body>
 <div>
  Hi bdaca students!
  How are you?
  This is just an easy HTML example
 </div>
   | need ...
  ...more coffee
</body>
</html>
```

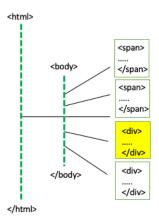








 $\label{eq:XPATH} XPATH = \text{``}/\text{html/body/div}[1] \text{'' refers to which element?}$



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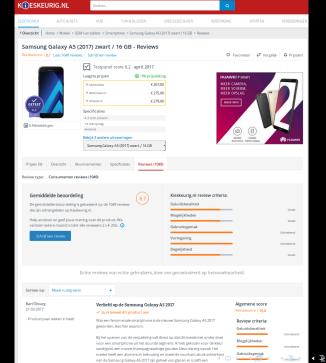
• the URL (of course)

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- the XPATH of the element we want to scrape (you'll see in a minute what this is)

What do we need?

- the URL (of course)
- the XPATH of the element we want to scrape (you'll see in a minute what this is)

The following example is based on https://www.kieskeurig.nl/smartphone/product/3518001-samsung-galaxy-a5-2017-goud/reviews. It uses the module lxml



Verliefd op de Samsung Galaxy A5 2017

✓ Ja, ik beveel dit product aan

Wat een fenomenale smartphone is de nieuwe Samsung Galaxy A5 2017 geworden, lees hier waarom.

Bij het openen van de verpakking valt direct op dat dit toestel niet onder doet voor een smartphone uit het duurste segment. Ik heb gekozen voor de kleur sand/gold, een mooie champagneachtige gouden kleur die erg opvalt. Het toestel heeft een aluminium behuizing en zowel de voorkant als de achterkant van de

Samsung Galaxy A5 2017 zijn geher vingerafdruksensor aanwezig. Dit a premium look and feel, prachtig! In accessoires die je nodig hebt zoals hoofdtelefoon én de bijzondere US USB-C kabel kan je dit toestel versn Copy
Select All
Search Google for "Wat een fenomen..."
View Selection Source
Inspect Element (Q)

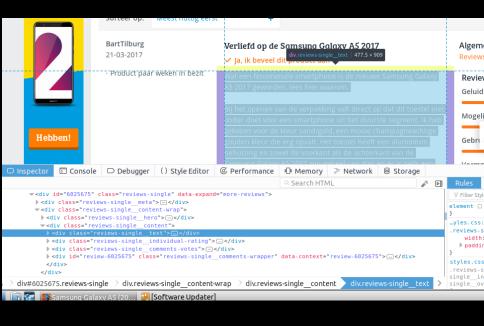
toestel heeft echt alles aan boord wat je mag verwachten en zelfs

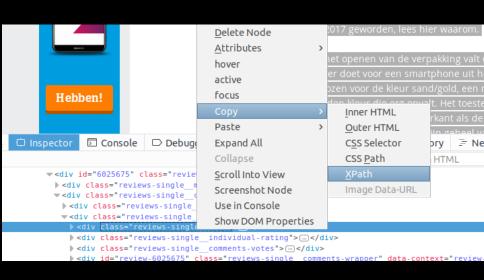
Algemene scor Reviewscore | 10

Review criteria

Mogelijkheden

Gebruiksgemak





There are multiple different XPATHs to address a specific element. Some things to play around with:

 // means 'arbitrary depth' (=may be nested in many higher levels)



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- * means 'anything'. (p[2] is the second paragraph, p[*] are all



But you can also create your XPATH yourself

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- If you want to refer to a specific attribute of a HTML tag, you can use @. For example, every
 - *[@id="reviews-container"] would grap a tag like <div id=reviews-container" class="'user-content'

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 - *[@id="reviews-container"] would grap a tag like <div id=reviews-container" class="'user-content'
- Let the XPATH end with /text() to get all text
- Have a look at the source code (via 'inspect elements') of the web page to think of other possible XPATHs!



https://www.kieskeurig.nl/wasmachine/product/ 2483630-siemens-wmn16t3471/reviews



Let's scrape them!

```
from lxml import html
    import requests
3
    response = requests.get('https://www.kieskeurig.nl/wasmachine/product
        /2483630-siemens-wmn16t3471/reviews')
    tree = html.fromstring(response.text)
6
    # we extract all relevant elements using their XPATH
    reviews = tree.xpath('//div[@class="reviews-single__text"]')
    # alternatively, we can use their CSS selector:
10
    # reviews = tree.cssselect("div.reviews-single text")
11
12
    # but we don't want the elements, we want their text
    review_texts = [e.text_content().strip() for e in reviews]
13
14
    print (len(reviews), "reviews scraped. Showing the first 60 characters:")
15
16
    i = 0
    for review in review texts:
17
       print("Review",i,":",review[:60])
18
19
       i+=1
```

```
20 reviews scraped. Showing the first 60 characters:
Review 0 : Siemens WMN16T3471 nu 4 manden in gebruik in massagesalon.
Review 1 : Na een eerder positief review kort na aankoop nu een bijgest
Review 2 : Helaas ben ik teleurgesteld in dit product wegens de navolge
Review 3 : Ik ben heel blij met mijn nieuwe wasmachine:

Wat is hij st
Review 4 : Ik heb de wasmachine nu net een paar dagen in huis en heb al
Review 5 : Na 25 jaar hebben we afscheid moeten nemen van onze degelijk
```

But this was on *one* page only, right?

Next step: Repeat for each relevant page.

Possibility 1: Based on url schemes

If the url of one review page is https://www.hostelworld.com/hosteldetails.php/ClinkNOORD/Amsterdam/93919/reviews?page=2 ...then the next one is probably?



Next step: Repeat for each relevant page.

Possibility 1: Based on url schemes

```
If the url of one review page is https://www.hostelworld.com/hosteldetails.php/ClinkNOORD/Amsterdam/93919/reviews?page=2 ...then the next one is probably?
```

⇒ you can construct a list of all possible URLs:



Next step: Repeat for each relevant page.

Possibility 2: Based on XPATHs or CSS Selectors

Use XPATH to get the url of the next page (i.e., to get the link that you would click to get the next review)



General idea

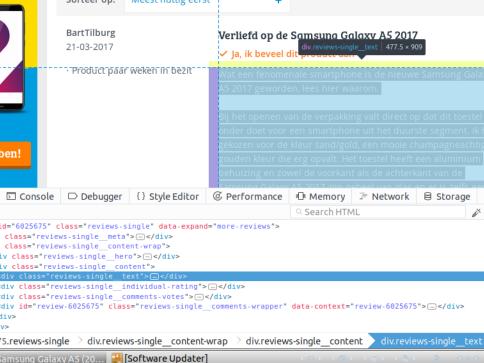
- Identify each element by its XPATH or CSS Selector (look it up in your browser)
- 2 Read the webpage into a (looooong) string
- Use the XPATH or CSS Selectors to extract the relevant text into a list (with a module like lxml)
- 4 Do something with the list (preprocess, analyze, save)
- 6 Repeat

Alternatives: scrapy, beautifulsoup, regular expressions, ...



There is often more than one way to specify an XPATH

- Sometimes, you might want to use a different suggestion to be able to generalize better (e.g., using the attributes rather than the tags)
- in that case, it makes sense to look deeper into the structure of the HTML code, for example with "Inspect Element" and use that information to play around with different possibilities



Next steps

- Write a scraper for a website of your choice!
- Choose an easy site where you do not have to log on and where there is no dynamically generated content (if you need that, look at the Appendix on Selenium)

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Scraping can be difficult, but it is also one of the most important data collection methods. Chances are very high you'll need it as a part of your final project. Try writing a scraper, and ask questions next week.

