DBW – Databases and Web development

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Aims

- Review a number of technologies to handle bioinformatics data:
 - Computer communication, design of web applications, basic database design and optimization.
 - This is NOT a programming course, it is about designing and building applications in an heterogenous scenario

 The final objective is to built a fully operative application using the appropriate combination of the techniques reviewed.

Bioinformatics & Internet

 Bioinformatics Tools and data should be available through web

- Ex. Nucleic Acid Research reviews:
 - -Database Issue (January) 1170 DBs
 - -Web Server Issue (July) 1200 Servers



NAR Database issue recommendations for authors

- "The pre-submission enquiry must present a working web accessible database "
- "The quality, quantity and originality of data as well as the quality of the web interface are the most important. Good data with a poor interface or vice versa are never sufficient for consideration."
- "Do get a domain name for your website. URLs to specific IP addresses/ports are unlikely to stand the test of time."
- (...)

Nucleic Acids Research, Volume 35, Issue suppl_1, 1 January 2007, Pages D1–D2

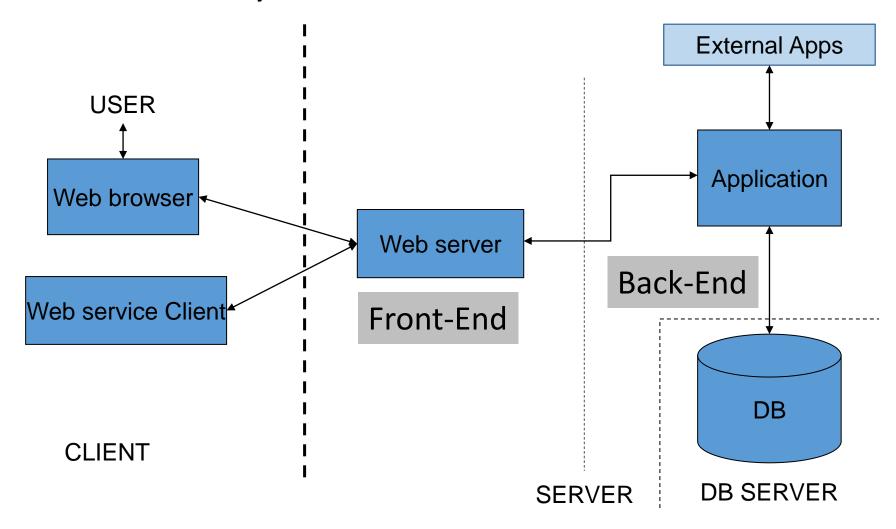
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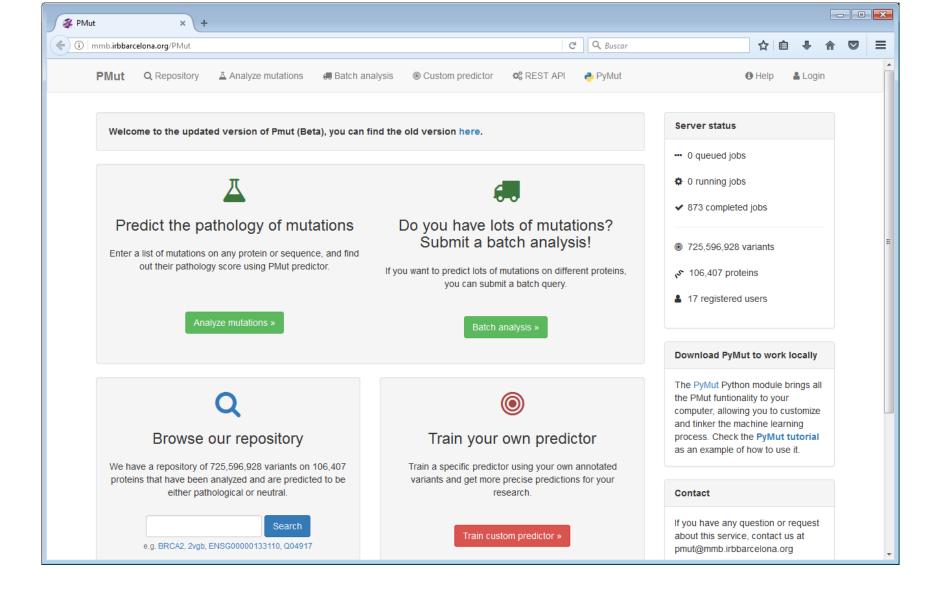
Web applications by access type

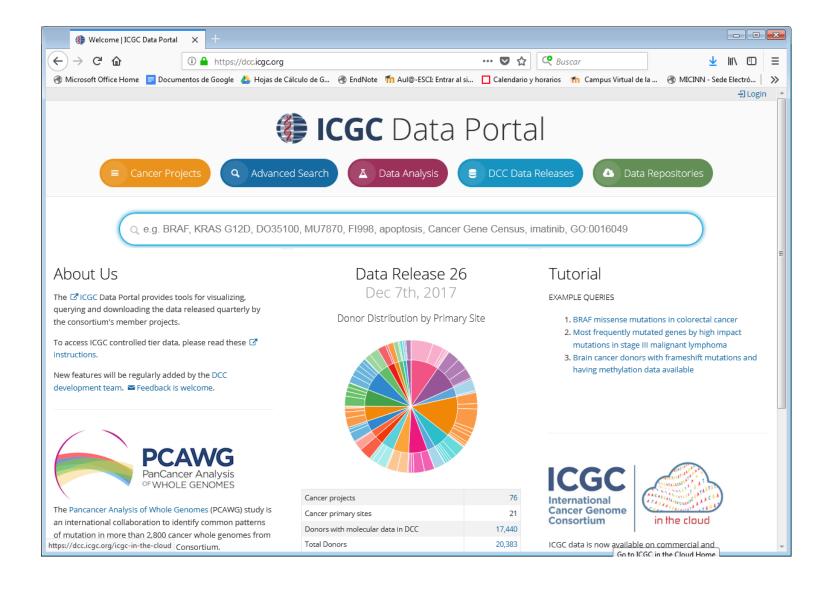
- Web interfaces
 - Provide a user friendly interface (web based) to "human" users
 - Users known how to use the interface
 - There is no need to install software
 - Single operations (no large scale)
 - Must adapt to navigation uses (low latency, synchronous answers,...)
- Web services & APIs
 - Provide a programmatic interface (using Web protocols)
 - Intented to interact with software, not with humans
 - Well-defined data formats required.
 - Adequated for large scale operations
- Modern applications will normally offer both
 - Web frontend is normally just another client of the API's

- Application styles
 - Access to data
 - Friendly interface to data repositories
 - Web Interfaces to stand-alone software
 - Collect input parameters and redirect output
 - Workbenches (e.g. Galaxy)
 - On-purpose applications & DBs

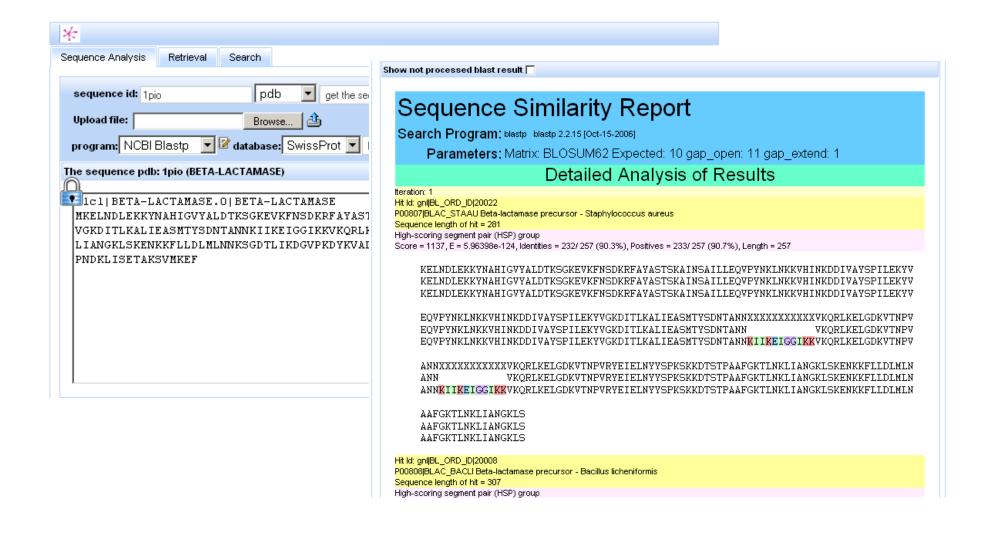
Web application anatomy

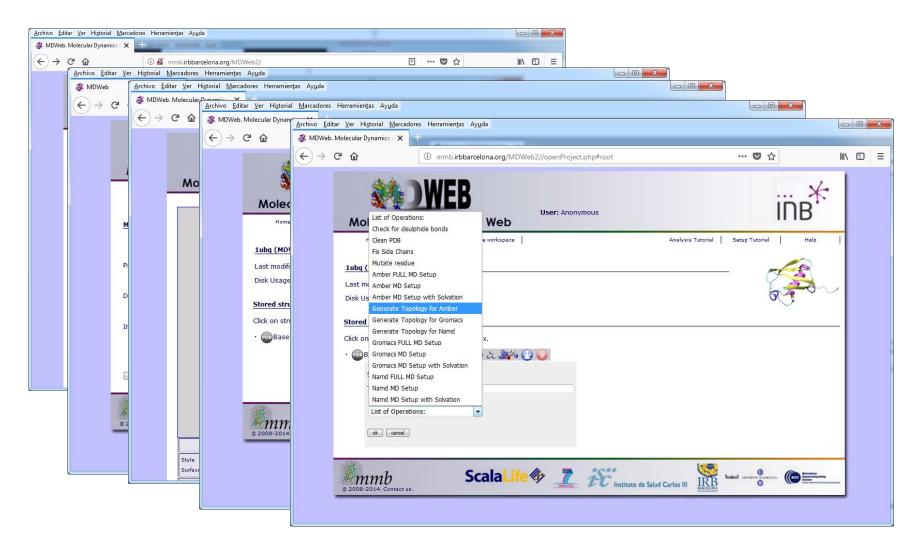




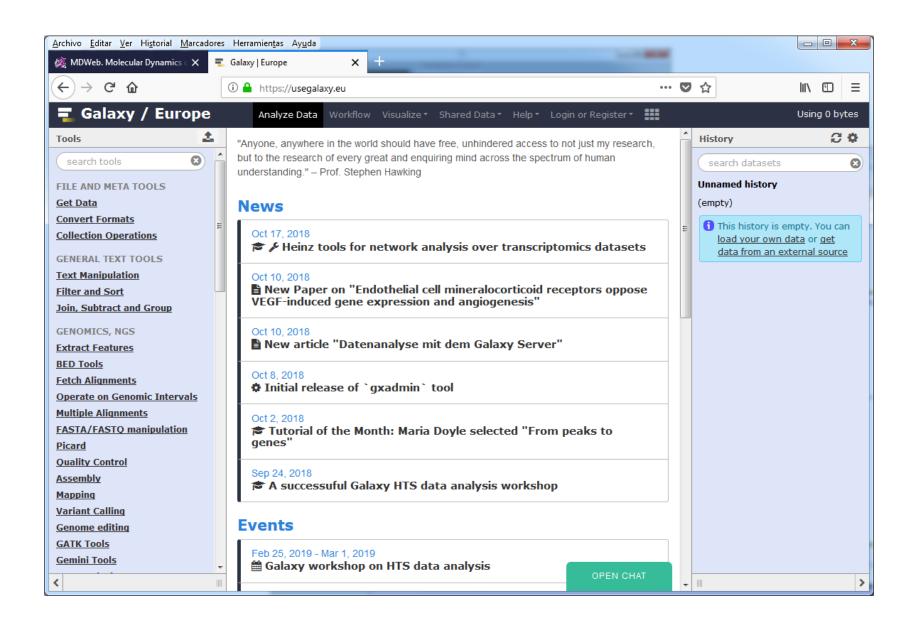


Web interfaces to apps.



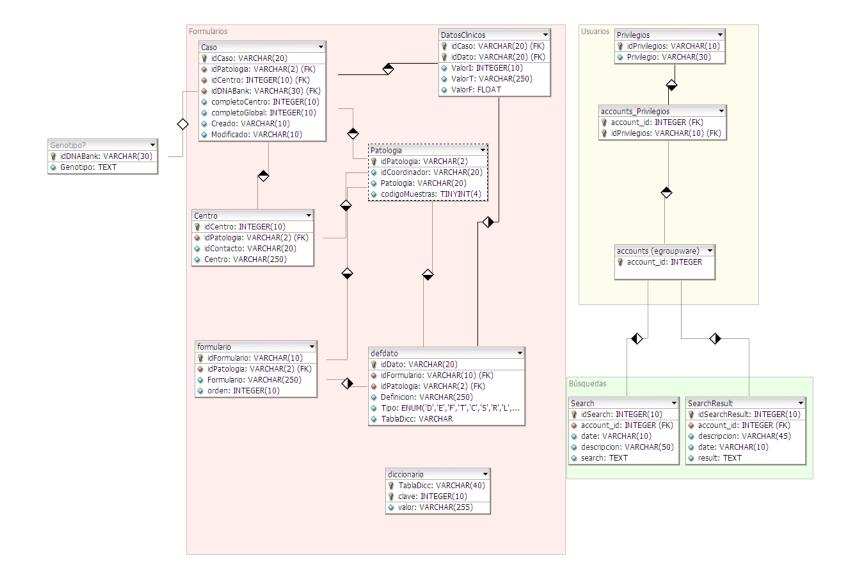


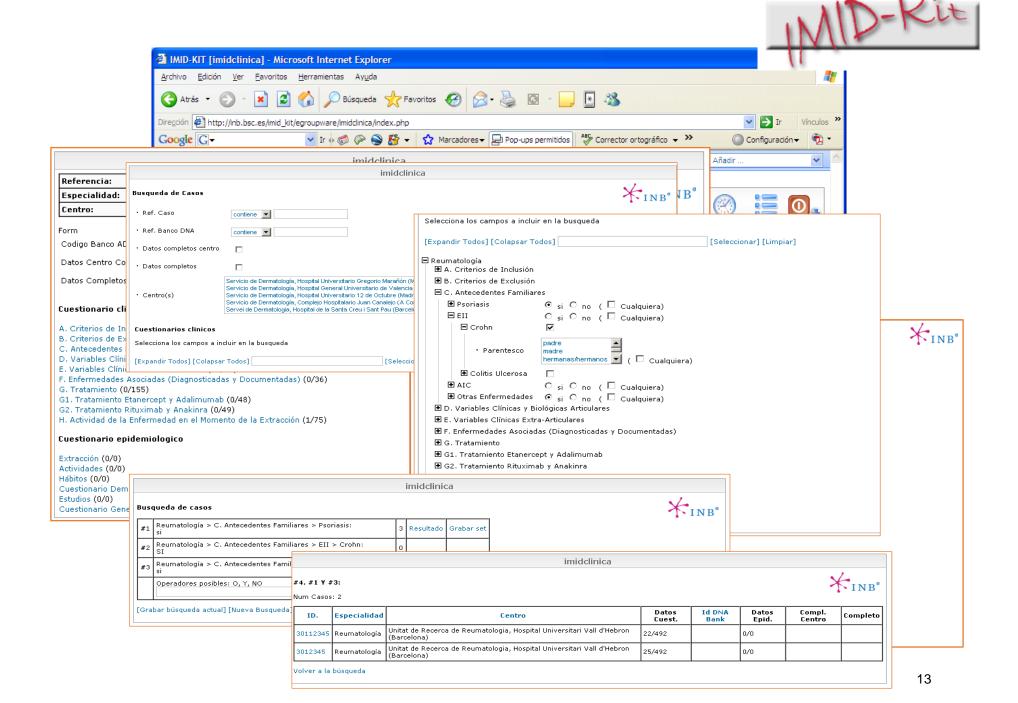
Bioinformatics. 2012 28(9):1278-9. doi: 10.1093/bioinformatics/bts139



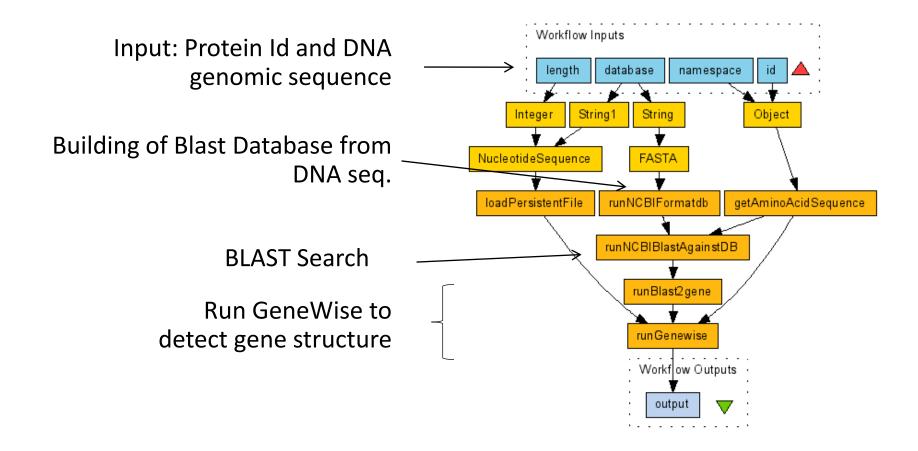


Special purpose applications & DBs

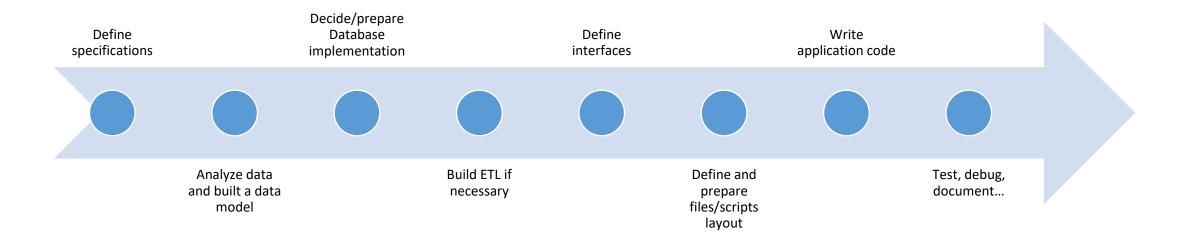




Bioinformatics web-services and workflows



Building a (web) application, usual steps



Course logistics

- Web site(s)
 - Course materials:
 - http://mmb.pcb.ub.es/formacio/
 - Personal sites:
 - http://mmb.pcb.ub.es/formacio/~uXXXXXX

- Server
 - -SSH Access
 - ssh mmb.pcb.ub.es –p 22122 –l uXXXXXX
 - Password dbw_uXXXXXX
 - -SCP
 - scp –P 22122 uXXXXXX@mmb.pcb.ub.es ...
 - MySQL/MongoDB Access
 - Localhost only
 - DBs on demand

Software to install

- Ideally Linux (may need root privileges)
- From Linux distributions
 - A Web server
 - Apache (with PHP 7.x)
 - Nginx (better for Python apps)
 - MYSQL server
 - MYSQL Workbench or phpMyAdmin
- Your preferred software code editor
- MongoDB (optional)
 - Install drivers for PHP/python if needed

Evaluation

Exercices, in-class projects (20%)

Personal web site (20%)

- Web application project (60%)
 - –Progress presentations
 - -Fully operative web application using DBs

Evaluation

- Web application project
 - -3-4 people / group
 - –Free subject (bioinformatics preferred)
 - -Should include DB management, web interface, users' management (Mysql or MongoDB)
 - -May use fake data if necessary
 - -Available at the personal web sites of all team
 - -Preferred languages: PHP, Python
 - Source code at github or equivalent

Evaluation

- Web application project
 - -Steps (Deadlines):
 - Initial specification (Presentation 21st Jan)
 - Data analysis & Database design (Presentation 31st Jan)
 - Project prototype Demo (Presentation 9th Feb)
 - Mid development review (meeting around 22th Feb)
 - Final application (End of Term)
- Fully Installed and functional on course server
 - PHP projects will use Apache
 - Python projects will use uwsgi/nginx (Flask temp server not acceptable)

Basic computer communication protocols

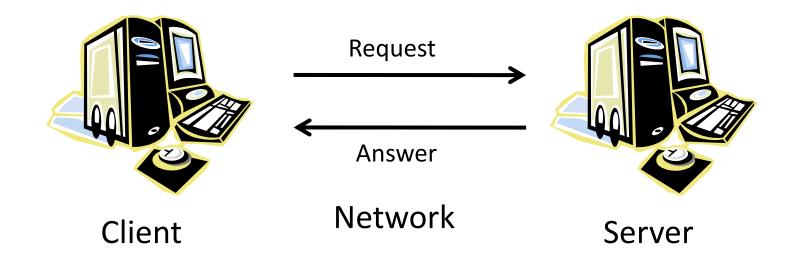
Aim & Outline

- Understand the basic components of computer communication protocols
 - Concepts of client and server
 - Addressing servers and data
 - Computer addresses (MAC Address, IP Address, DNS)
 - Ports
 - Resource identification: URL/URI concepts
 - –Client/server transactions
 - HTTP protocol

Present internet

- Huge network of computers using common communication protocols (TCP/IP, HTTP)
- Distributed, no central servers
 - –(Well, not really true in bioinformatics)
- Common languages: HTML/CSS/JS (XML, JSON)
- Content originally static, but dynamic behaviour is possible through web applications

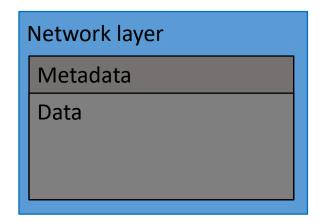
Components



- •Client and Server logic and physical addresses
- Data
- Data meta-information
 - Nature of data
 - Request (what to do)
 - Applications involved (email, web, etc.)

How it works: TCP/IP

- Packet switching
 - Packet switching breaks the signal in small fragments ("packets") each
 of them containing the complete information about source and
 destination
 - Packets can share a single communication line
 - Users have the idea of a dedicated line but, in fact, it is not. Of course, the bandwidth is limited.
- Computers connected to internet should have addresses/ports
 - MAC Address: Address of the physical interface
 - IP Address: Unique address of the computer
 - Unique Host name
 - Ports to point to specific applications



IP addresses & Host names (DNS services)

- Allow to find destination irrespective of the nature of the network media.
- Each device has a "unique" IP address
- IPv4: 32 bits (4 x 1 byte (0-255) numbers)
 - Max: 2^{32} : aprox 4.3 x 10^9
 - P. ex. 84.88.74.180 (mmb.pcb.ub.es)
 - The 4 levels are hierarchical
- Some addresses are reserved, and some networks are "local"
- IPv6: 128 bits (16 bytes). Max: 2¹²⁸ (3.4 x 10³⁸)

• IP addresses are not easy. Most hosts have also a "name":

f. ex. www.ncbi.nlm.nih.edu

- Host names have a structure similar to IP addresses:
 - Top domains (.es, .edu, correspond to full class domains and subnets are indicated by prefixes).
 - ub.edu (161.116.x.x)
 - bq.ub.edu (161.116.72.x)
 - www.bq.ub.edu (161.116.72.181)

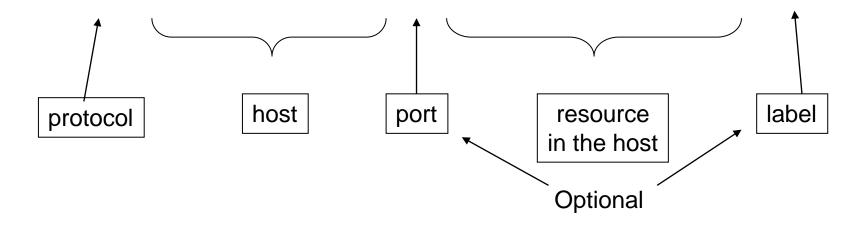
How to address applications in a server: Ports

- Each host has one IP address but has several ports for known services
- Ports are 2-Byte numbers.
 - 0-1023 are "Well known ports" (Telnet: 23, FTP: 21, HTTP: 80, ...).
 - 1024-49151 are "Registered ports", usually managed by applications (MySQL: 3306)
 - 49,152-65,535 are "Dynamic and/or private ports" freely usable.
- Communication to ports triggers the specific application to deal with the data
- However, different ports from official ones can be used to:
 - Hide applications
 - Have more then one server in the same IP address
 - Hide servers in internal networks.

URI/URLs

• Resources must be identified in a way that includes all the necessary details:

http://mmb.pcb.ub.es:80/courses/master.htm#top



Missing parts of the URL are added by the browser by default!!

Client – server communication (HTTP)

- Most Web Applications use HTTP (hypertext transfer protocol), although sometimes FTP, SMTP
- HTTP is a client-server communication protocol
 - Link between client and server is dynamic
 - Usually limited to a single transaction
 - Requests composed by a query operation and a variable set of headers (Metadata)
 - Answers: headers + data

- Relevant Operations: GET, POST
 - GET: Simple retrieval, all information/parameters included in the URL
 - Simple queries, static information
 - Required to be used as hypertext links
 - POST: Query defines the resource, but input data follows
 - Input data can be of any type (including binaries, whole files) or size (within limits)
 - PUT: Similar to POST. Used in APIs
- Relevant HTTP headers
 - Content-type (POST): input data format
 - Content-type (Answer): Data MIME type (text/html, image/jpg, ...)
 - Location: Redirects browser
 - Set-cookie: Set a "cookie" on users' software.