

# Web Performance

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Lab. Bases de Dados e Aplicações Web  
MIEIC, FEUP 2017/18

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# Web Performance

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- Web optimization techniques are designed to improve the overall response time of a web application to the end-user.
- Usability studies show that page speed has a direct impact on conversion rates. Ideally a web page should load in less than 0.1 seconds, giving the user the feeling of an instantaneous response.
- A response time of less than 1 second keeps the user's flow seamless. Up to 10 seconds the user attention is kept. Over 10 seconds, the user is more likely to leave the page.
- Optimization opportunities both at the back-end or the front-end level.
  - Front-end: reduce images, reduce HTTP calls, etc.
  - Back-end: improve hardware, tune database, etc.

# The Golden Rule

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- In most web pages, less than 10-20% of the end user response time is spent getting the HTML document. To achieve significant improvements in response times, it is important to focus on front-end optimizations.
- **80% of the end-user response time is spent on the front-end.**
- Where does the time goes by:
  - Parsing HTML, Scripts, CSS, and images.
  - Retrieving other page components (scripts, CSS, and images).
- Start with front-end optimizations:
  - Greater potential for improvements.
  - Simpler and proven to work.

# Rules for High Performance Web Sites

From: High Performance Web Sites by Steve Souders (2007) &  
Best Practices for Speeding Up Your Web Site (Yahoo)

# Make Fewer HTTP Requests

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- Given that 80-90% of the time is spent making HTTP requests for all the components (images, scripts, stylesheets, Flash, etc), a simple way to reduce response time is to reduce the number of HTTP requests.
- These techniques can reduce response times by as much as 50%.
- Main techniques:
  - Image Maps.
  - CSS Sprites.
  - Combine Scripts and Stylesheets.

# Image Maps

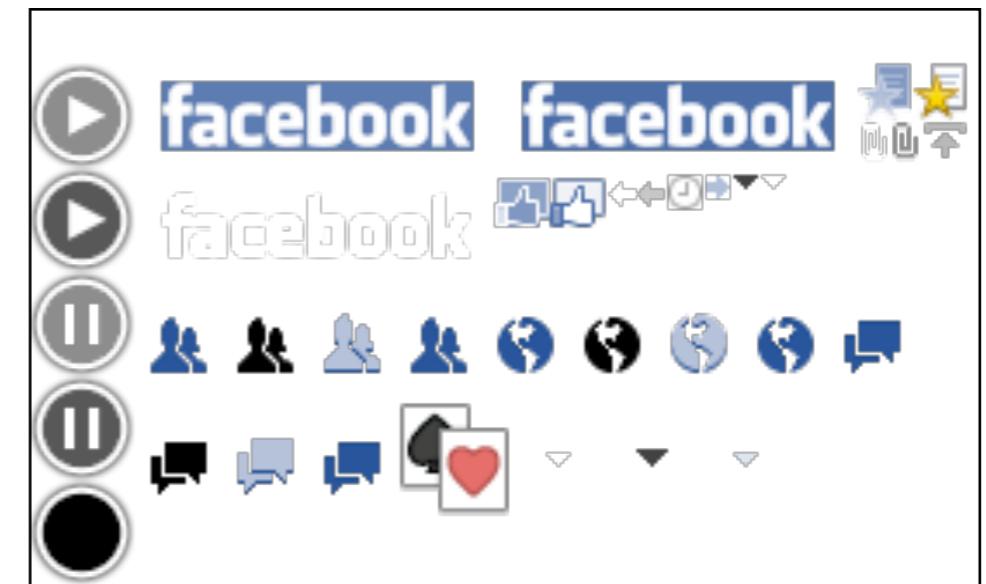
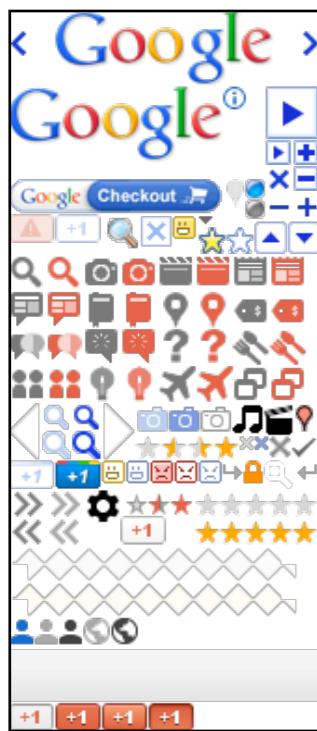
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- An image map combines multiple images into a single image.
- The overall size is about the same, but reducing the number of HTTP requests speeds up the page. Image maps only work if the images are contiguous in the page, such as a navigation bar.
- Drawbacks:
  - Defining the coordinates of image maps is tedious and error prone.
  - Has accessibility limitations, thus should be avoided for important tasks.

# CSS Sprites

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- Using CSS sprites, multiple images are combined into a single file and displayed using CSS rules. This is the preferred method for reducing the number of image requests.
- Drawbacks: sprites are hard to maintain.

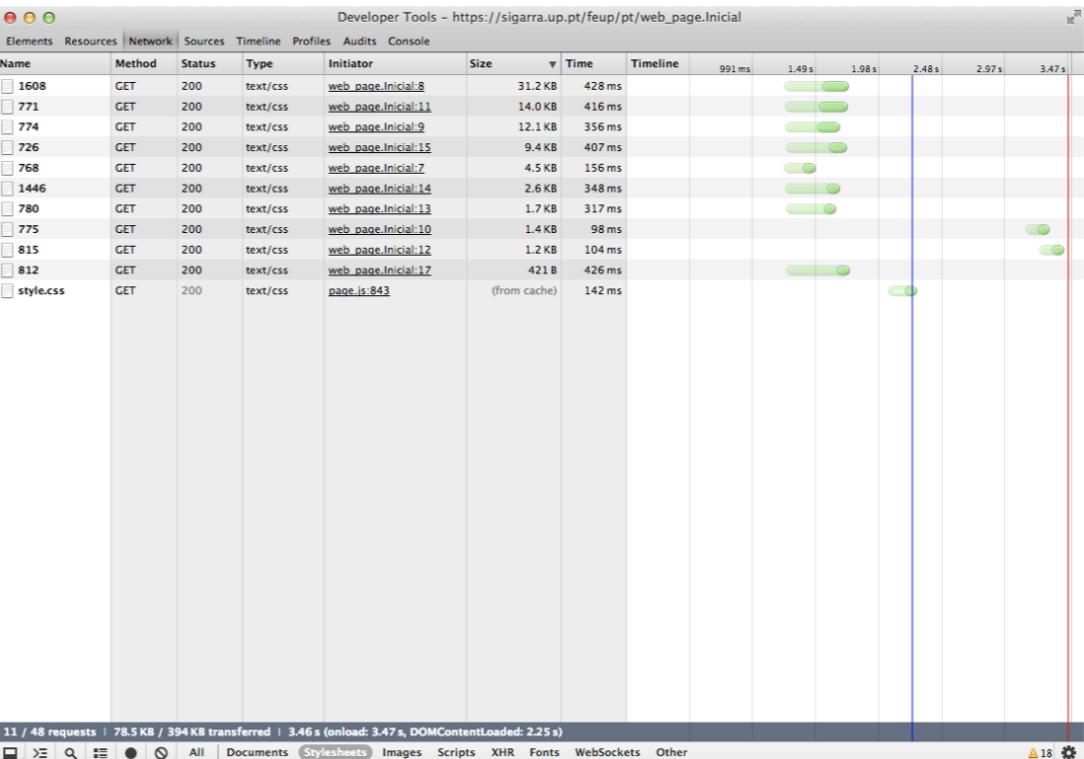


# Combine Scripts and Stylesheets

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- One way to reduce the number of HTTP requests, is by combining all scripts into a single script, and similarly combining all CSS into a single stylesheet.
- Might be challenging when scripts and stylesheets vary from page to page.

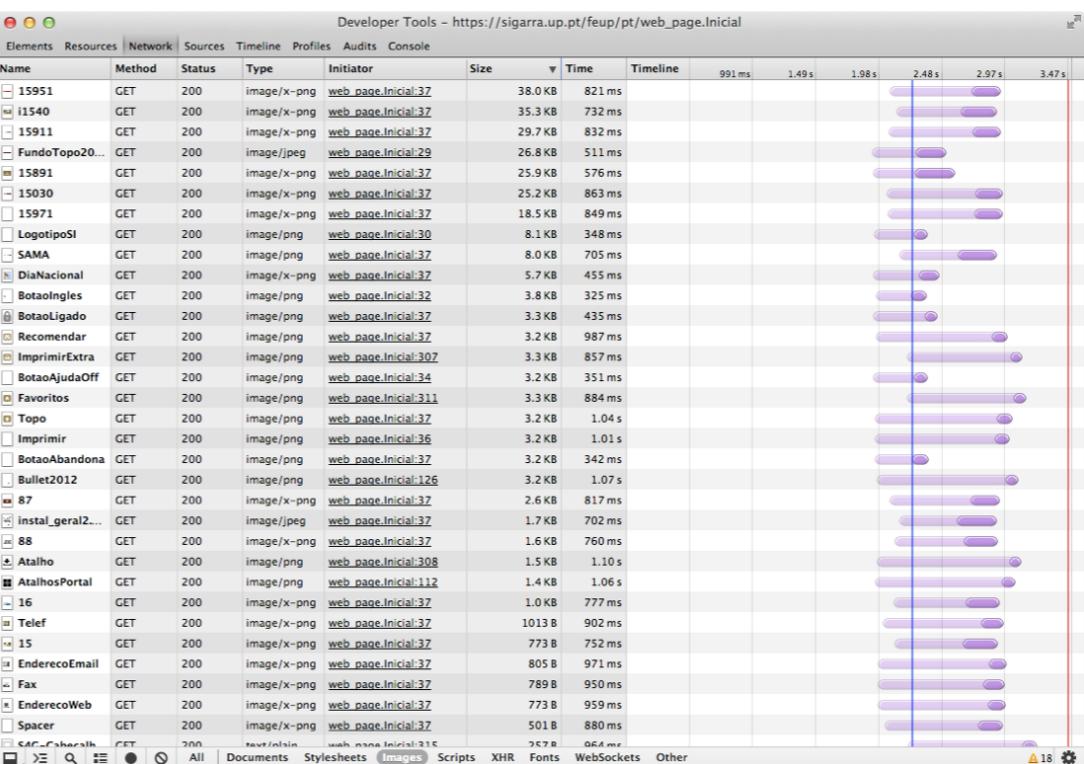
The screenshot shows the homepage of the Faculdade de Engenharia da Universidade do Porto (FEUP). It features a header with the university logo and navigation links. Below the header, there are several sections: 'CANDIDATURAS 1.º FASE' (Applications 1st Phase), 'ELEIÇÃO' (Election), and 'MIT Portugal' application information. The 'ELEIÇÃO' section includes a calendar for April/May 2013. The 'CANDIDATURAS' section lists events like 'Provas de Doutoramento' and 'Provas de Agregação'. The 'MIT Portugal' section mentions 'APPLICATIONS ARE OPEN' until June 15, 2013.



## 11 CSS resources

Últimas Notícias

- Bolsa de Investigação no âmbito do Projeto "Autocats"
  - Programa Carnegie Mellon Portugal
  - Investigadores do INEB/FEUP publicam livro em nova área de investigação
  - Tomada de posse do Director do Programa Doutoral em Engenharia do Ambiente
  - Bolsas de Investigação no âmbito do Projeto ELASTIC-TURBULENCE
  - StartUp Internship
- Faculdade de Engenharia da Universidade do Porto  
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URL: <http://www.fe.up.pt> | Correio Eletrónico: [feup@fe.up.pt](mailto:feup@fe.up.pt)



## 34 image resources

# Optimize Images

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- Use the right formats: JPEG for photos (lossy), PNG for graphics (lossless).
- Don't resize using with HTML/CSS.
- Optimize for the web: optimize for the web features.
- Yahoo! Smush.it — Image optimization service (lossless tool).  
<http://www.smushit.com/ysmush.it/> (*discontinued, March 2015*)
  - Alternative: <http://resmush.it/>



Bad use of JPEG

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Últimas Notícias

- Bolsa de Investigação no âmbito do Projeto "Autoclave".
- Programa Carnegie Mellon.
- Investigadores do INFR/FEUP publicaram livro em nova área de investigação.
- Tomada de posse do Director do Programa Doutoral em Engenharia do Ambiente.
- Bolsas de Investigação no âmbito do Projeto IAS/FC-TURBULENCE.
- Bolsas de Investigações no âmbito do Projeto IAS/FC-TURBULENCE.
- Conferência Oceans Challenges and Opportunities.
- Próximas especificamente destinadas a avançar a ciência da água e a frequência de encontro superior dos mestres de 21 anos.

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# Use a Content Delivery Network

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- The user's proximity to the web server has impact on a page's response time.
- A content delivery network (CDN) is a collection of web servers distributed across multiple locations to deliver content to users more efficiently.
- CDNs are used to deliver static content, such as images, scripts, stylesheets, binaries, and Flash. Serving dynamic HTML pages involves specialized hosting requirements.
- Top CDN providers: Akamai, Mirror Image, Limelight, SAVVIS.
- Free alternatives: Coral CDN (\*.nyud.net), coBlitz, CloudFare.

# Add an Expires Header

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- A first-time visitor to a web page needs to make several requests to obtain all elements. By using a future Expires header, these components can be made cacheable, and thus re-used in following requests.
- Most commonly used with images, but should be used on all components, including scripts, stylesheets, and Flash.
- The Expires header is sent in the HTTP response.
- If a far future date is used (e.g. years), the filename must be changed if the component changes.

# Gzip Components

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- Response times can be reduced either by reducing the number of requests, or by reducing the size of the response in each request.
- Gzip encoding can be used to compress HTTP response, and thus reduce network response times.
- Using gzip generally reduces the response size by about 70%. Approximately 90% of today's Internet traffic travels through browsers that claim to support gzip.
- Configured at the web server.

# Make JavaScript and CSS External

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- Using inline CSS or JavaScript makes HTML documents bigger.
- Using external files results in more HTTP requests, but cacheable.
- The key factor in deciding which option is better is the frequency with which external JavaScript and CSS components are cached relative to the number of HTML documents requested.

# Reduce DNS Lookups

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- The Domain Name System (DNS) maps hostnames to IP addresses.
- A DNS lookup for a given hostname typically costs 20-120 milliseconds.
- DNS lookups can be reduced by using fewer hostnames (ideal: 2-4).

# Minify JavaScript and CSS

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- Minification is the practice of removing unnecessary characters from code to reduce its size thereby improving load times.
- When code is minified all comments are removed, as well as unneeded white space characters (space, newline, and tab). In the case of JavaScript and CSS, this improves response time performance because the size of the downloaded file is reduced.
- Popular tools:
  - JSMin – <http://crockford.com/javascript/jsmin>
  - YUI Compressor – <https://yui.github.io/yuicompressor/>
- The YUI compressor can also minify CSS.

# Avoid Redirects

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- Redirects are achieved using 3xx status codes, mostly 301 and 302.
- Redirects slow down the user experience since nothing in the page can be rendered and no components can start being downloaded.
- One of the most wasteful redirects happens when a trailing slash (/) is missing from a URL that should otherwise have one. For example, going to <http://example.com/tag> results in a 301 response containing a redirect to <http://example.com/tag/>.
- Although redirects degrades the user experience, it can reduce the complexity for developers in several situations.

# Remove Duplicate Scripts

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- It hurts performance to include the same JavaScript file twice in one page.
- Two main factors increase the odds of a script being duplicated in a single web page: team size and number of scripts.
- Hurts performance because the scripts are downloaded (in some browsers) and executed multiple times.

# Configure ETags

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- Entity tags (ETags) are a mechanism that web servers and browsers use to determine whether the component in the browser's cache matches the one on the origin server.
- The problem with ETags is that for a single entity there are always differences across servers (eg. file timestamps). Using multiple servers is a common situation in large web sites.
- ETags should be removed if the number of servers is larger than 1.

# Make AJAX Cacheable

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- Some of the previous rules also apply to AJAX components (e.g. JSON, scripts), namely:
  - Gzip Components.
  - Reduce DNS lookups.
  - Minify JavaScript.
  - Avoid Redirects.
  - Configure ETags.
- A personalized response should still be cacheable by that person.

# YSlow

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- YSlow analyzes web pages and why they're slow based on Yahoo!'s rules for high performance web sites. — <http://yslow.org>

The screenshot shows the YSlow analysis interface. At the top, it displays the URL `chrome-extension://ninejjcohidippngpapiinmkglmakh/yslow.html#290`. Below this is a navigation bar with links for Home, Grade, Components, Statistics, Rulesets (set to YSlow(V2)), Edit, and Help. The main area shows a Grade of C with an overall performance score of 73. It indicates that the ruleset applied is YSlow(V2) and the URL is [https://sigarra.up.pt/feup/web\\_page.inicial](https://sigarra.up.pt/feup/web_page.inicial). There are buttons for Tweet and Share.

The analysis results are listed under the heading "Grade C Overall performance score 73 Ruleset applied: YSlow(V2) URL: https://sigarra.up.pt/feup/web\_page.inicial". The results are filtered by Content (6), Cookie (2), CSS (6), Images (2), JavaScript (4), and Server (6). The first result is "E Make fewer HTTP requests".

**E Make fewer HTTP requests**

This page has 13 external stylesheets. Try combining them into one.

Decreasing the number of components on a page reduces the number of HTTP requests required to render the page, resulting in faster page loads. Some ways to reduce the number of components include: combine files, combine multiple scripts into one script, combine multiple CSS files into one style sheet, and use CSS Sprites and image maps.

[Read More](#)

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The sidebar on the left lists other recommendations:

- F Use a Content Delivery Network (CDN)
- A Avoid empty src or href
- F Add Expires headers
- F Compress components with gzip
- A Put CSS at top
- A Put JavaScript at bottom
- B Avoid CSS expressions
- n/a Make JavaScript and CSS external
- A Reduce DNS lookups
- A Minify JavaScript and CSS
- A Avoid URL redirects
- A Remove duplicate JavaScript and CSS
- B Configure entity tags (ETags)
- A Make AJAX cacheable
- A Use GET for AJAX requests
- A Reduce the number of DOM elements
- A Avoid HTTP 404 (Not Found) error
- A Reduce cookie size
- F Use cookie-free domains
- A Avoid AlphaimageLoader filter
- A Do not scale images in HTML
- A Make favicon small and cacheable

# References

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<http://developer.yahoo.com/performance/>
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- **Even Faster Web Sites**  
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