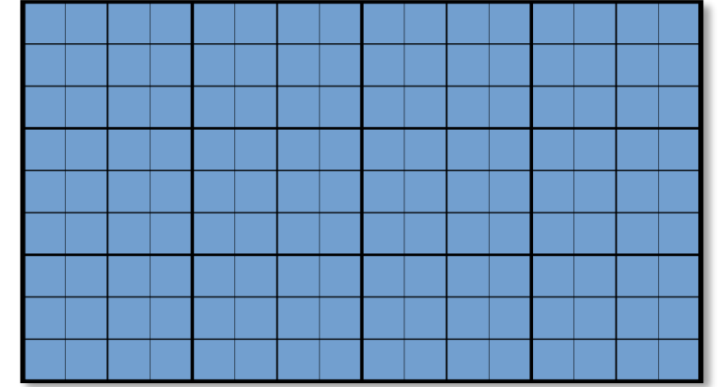# candour

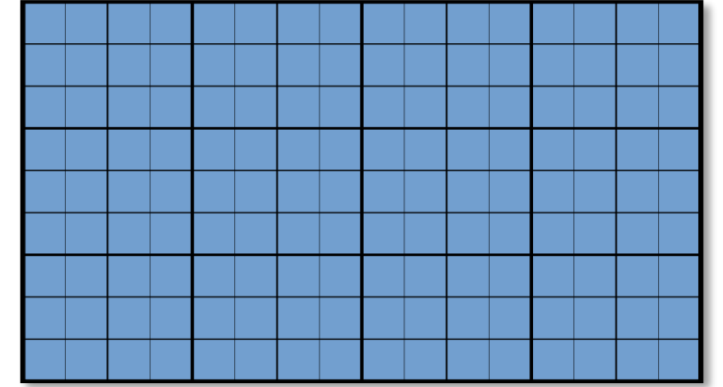# User-agents

Trainer:

Mark Williams-Cook
Candour

candour

What is a user-agent?

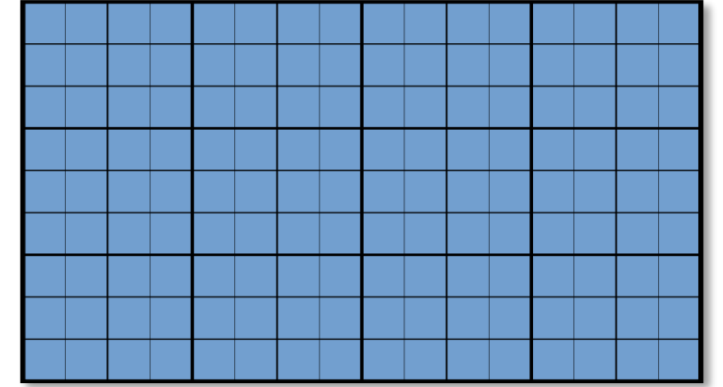# What is a user-agent?

A user-agent is simply a text string that identifies 'who' is making the request to the web server.

withcandour.co.uk

candour

What is a user-agent?

The format is usually:

<product> / <product version> <comment>

withcandour.co.uk
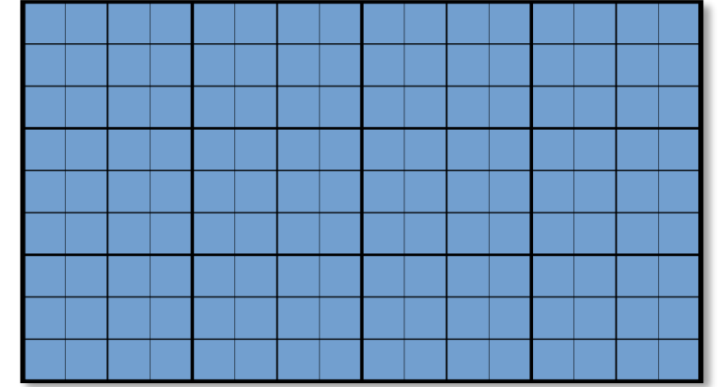
candour

What is a user-agent?

The format is usually:
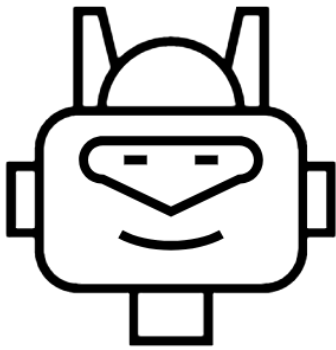
\<product\> / \<product version\> \<comment\>

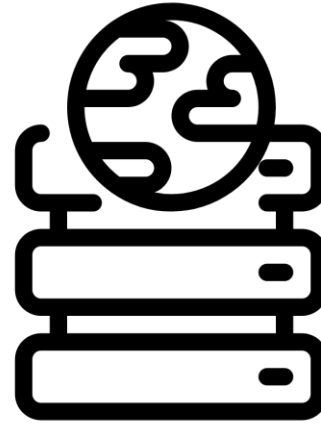Googlebot/2.1 (+http://www.google.com/bot.html)

User-agents in requests

A robot

"I'm Googlebot"

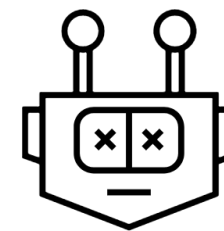Web server
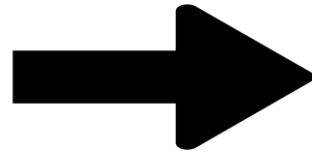
Can I have this web page?

Sure! I found it, it's here!
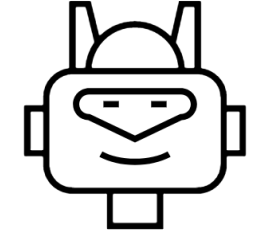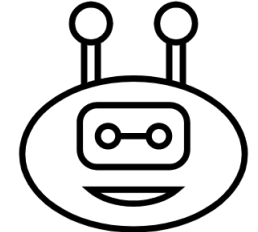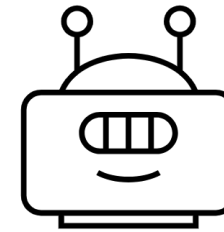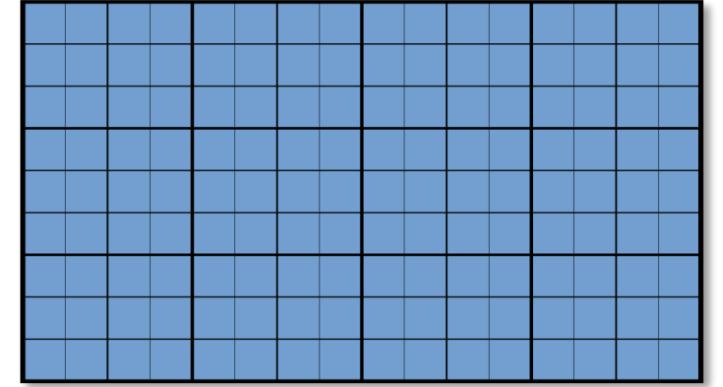
User-agents in requests

Your browser
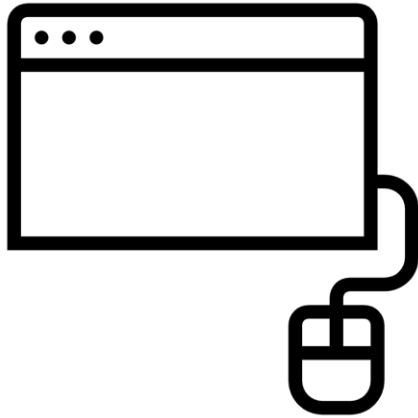
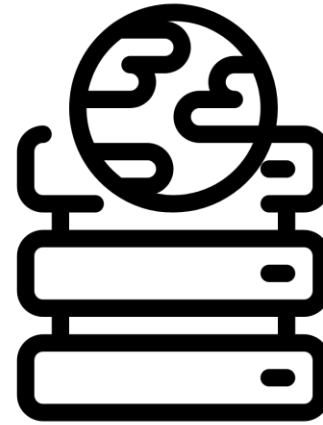"I'm using Safari browser on iOS"

Web server

Can I have this web page?
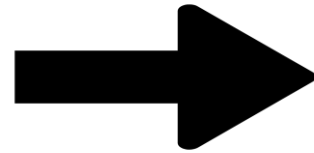
Sure! I found it, it's here!
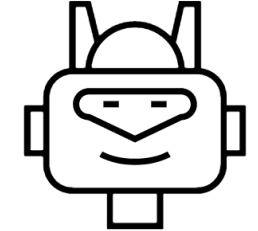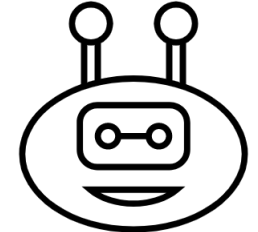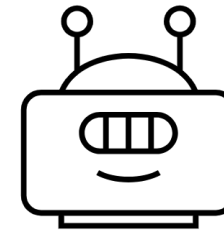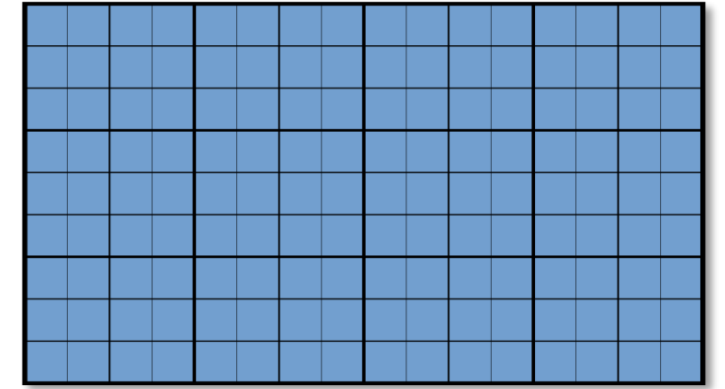
Browsers pass lots of information!

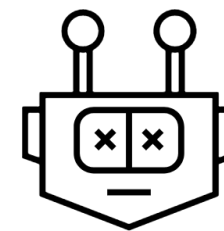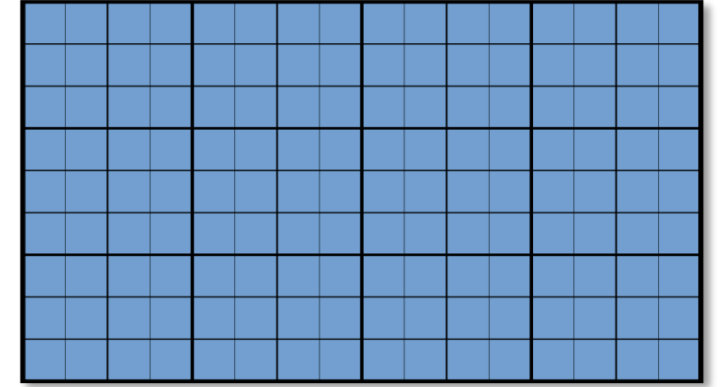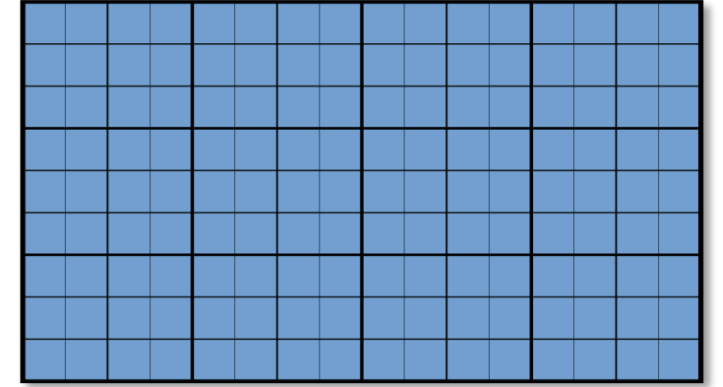This is the user-agent string for Chrome 60 on Windows:

Mozilla/5.0 (Windows NT 5.1; Win64; x64)
AppleWebKit/537.36 (KHTML, like Gecko)
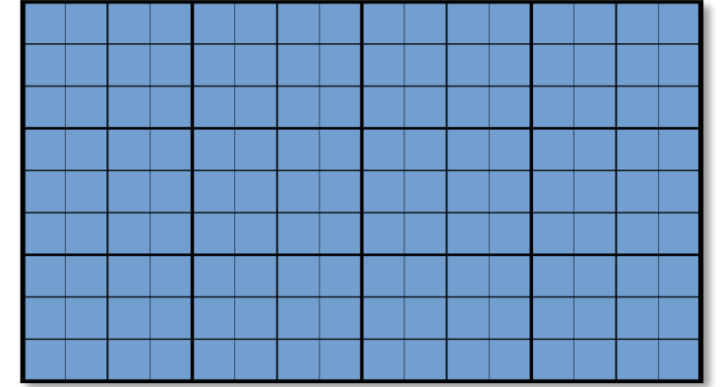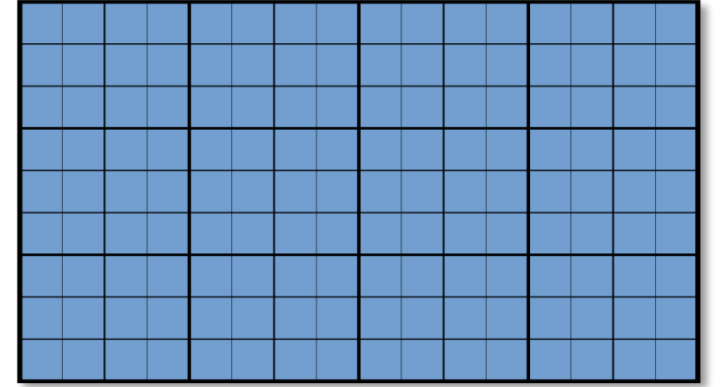Chrome/60.0.3112.90 Safari/537.36

Why are they useful for SEO?

Why are they useful for SEO?

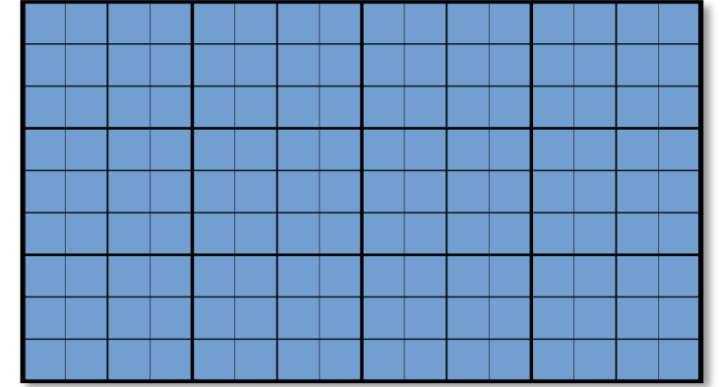1) We need to know user-agents so we can specify rules in our robots.txt file

Key concept

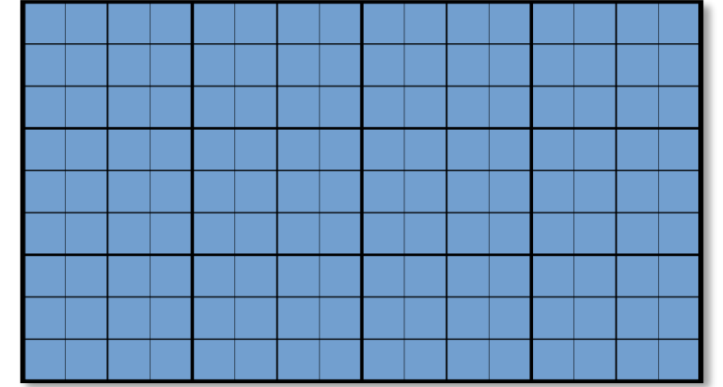Only 'good' robots will obey robots.txt!

Why are they useful for SEO?

1) We need to know user-agents so we can specify rules in our robots.txt file

2) Some websites serve different content depending on user-agent. It is not uncommon to have a "robot version" of a website.

Key concept

You can change the entire website you are serving based on the user-agent requesting it!