

Web 2.0

Lecture 8: HTTP/2

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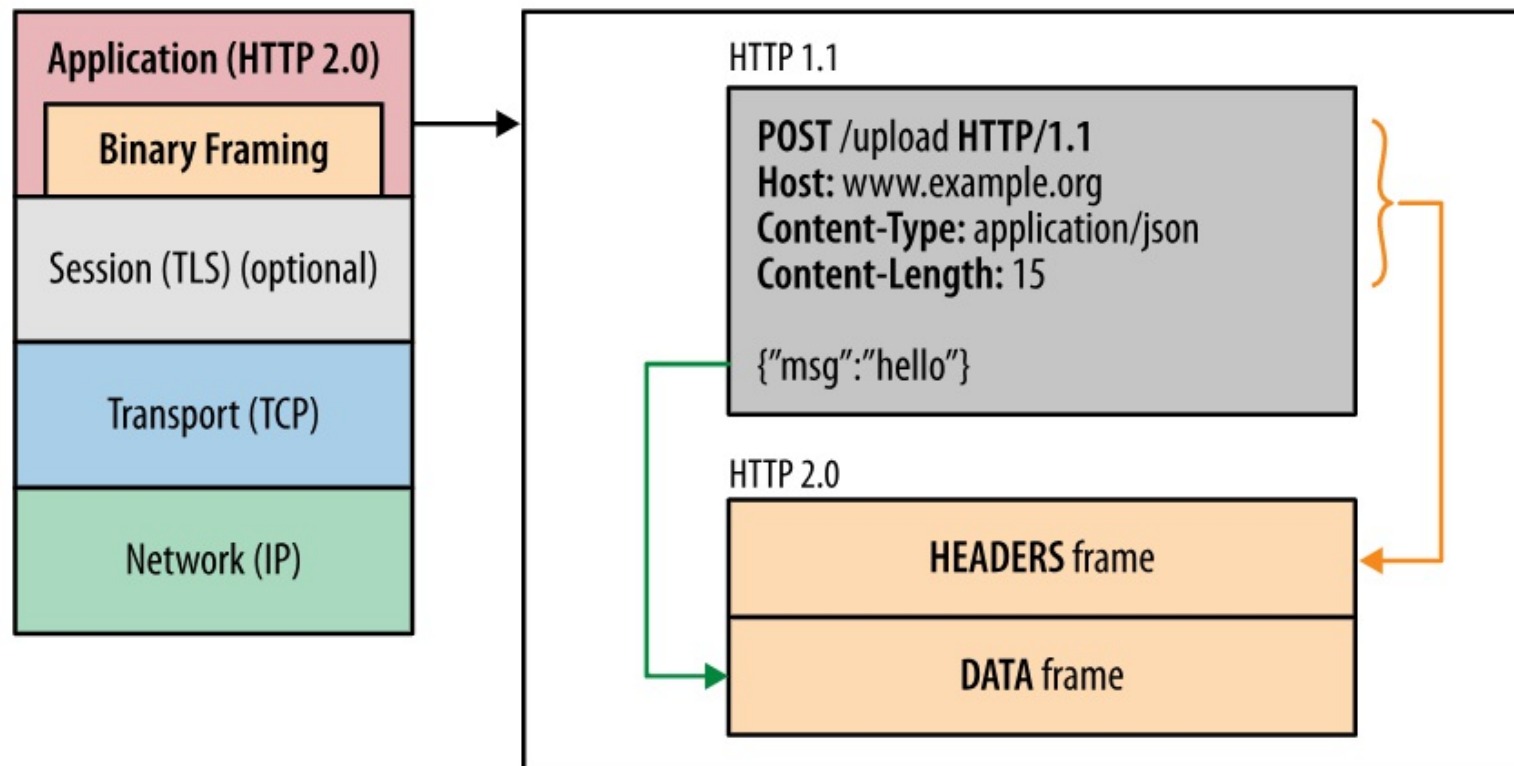
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Humla v0.3

Overview

- Developed from SPDY (2009) experimental protocol by Google
 - *May 2015: RFC 7540 (HTTP/2) and RFC 7541 (HPACK)*
 - *HTTP/2 standards extend (not replace) the previous HTTP standards*
- HTTP/1.x limitations
 - *HTTP/1.x clients need to use multiple connections to achieve concurrency*
 - *unnecessary network traffic – request and response headers not compressed*
 - *no effective resource prioritization*
- Primary goals
 - *Reduction of latency*
 - *enabling full request and response multiplexing*
 - *minimize protocol overhead via efficient compression of HTTP header fields*
 - *support for request prioritization and server push*
- HTTP/2 does not modify application semantics of HTTP
 - *HTTP methods, URIs, header fields are the same*
 - *HTTP/2 modifies **how data is formatted and transported** in communication*
- Literature and source
 - *I. Grigorik: High Performance Browser Networking, O'Reilly Media, Inc. 2013. ISBN: 9781449344757* 

Binary Framing Layer

- Binary framing layer
 - *defines how HTTP messages are encapsulated and transferred*
 - *communication is split into messages and frames in binary format*

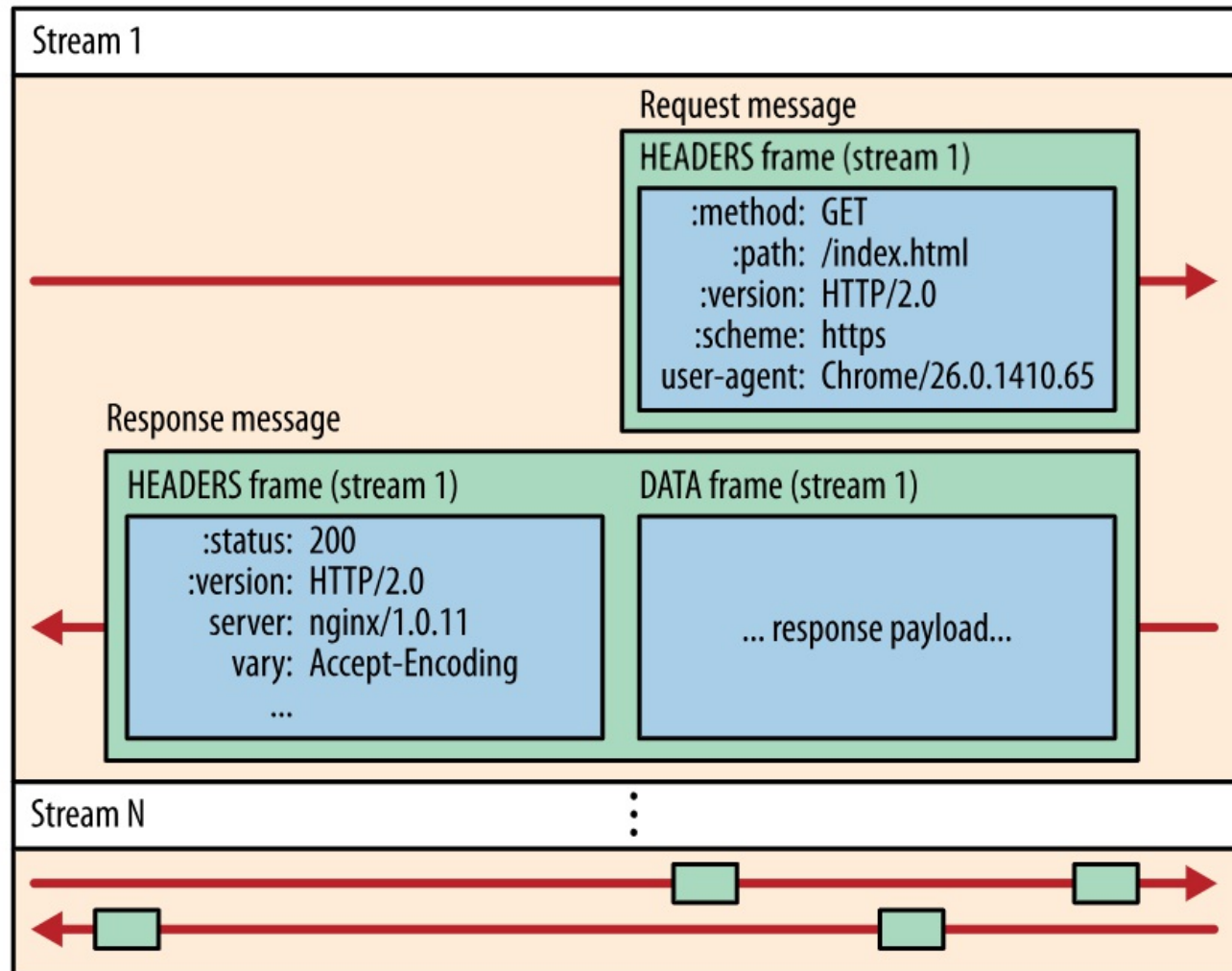


HTTP/2 Communication

- Data exchange between the client and server
 - *break down of the communication into frames*
 - *frames are mapped to messages that belong to a particular stream*
 - *communication is **multiplexed within a single TCP connection**.*
- Stream
 - *bi-directional flow of bytes in a connection*
 - *may carry one or more messages*
 - *may have a priority*
- Message
 - *a sequence of frames*
 - *it maps to logical request or response message*
- Frame
 - *the smallest unit of communication*
 - *each has a frame header which identifies a stream to which it belongs.*

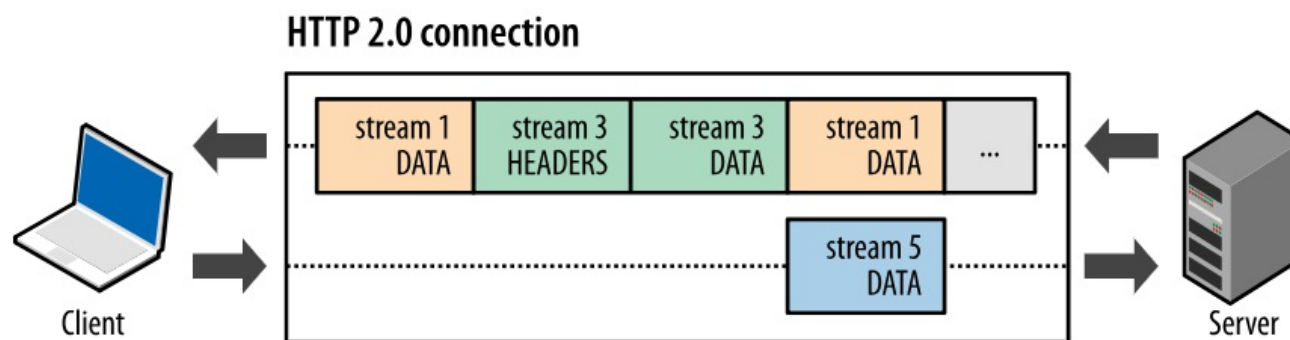
Streams, messages, and frames

Connection



Request and response multiplexing

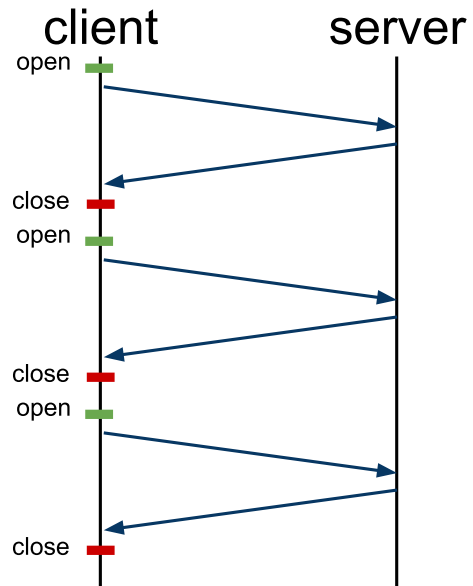
- Parallel requests
 - *HTTP/1.x can use HTTP pipelining; they open multiple connections*
 - *browser typically opens up six connections*
 - *HTTP/2 allows full request and response multiplexing*
 - *Allows for parallel in-flight streams*



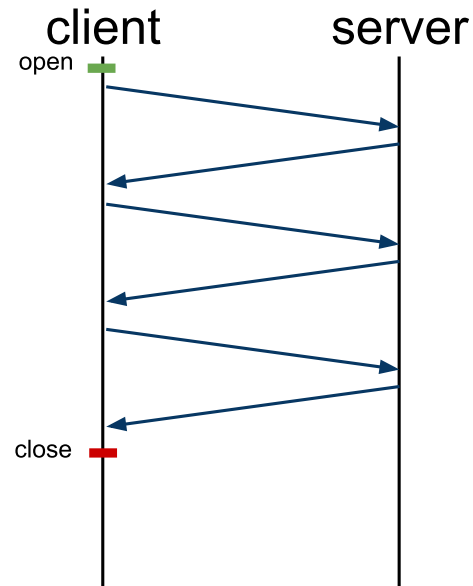
- Performance benefits
 - *Interleave requests/responses in parallel without blocking any one.*
 - *Deliver lower page load times by eliminating unnecessary latency*
 - *Improve utilization of available network capacity*

HTTP/1.x Optimization

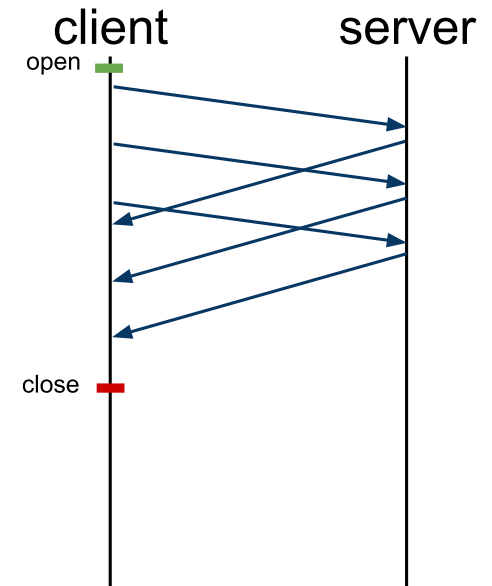
non-persistent



persistent



pipelining



One connection

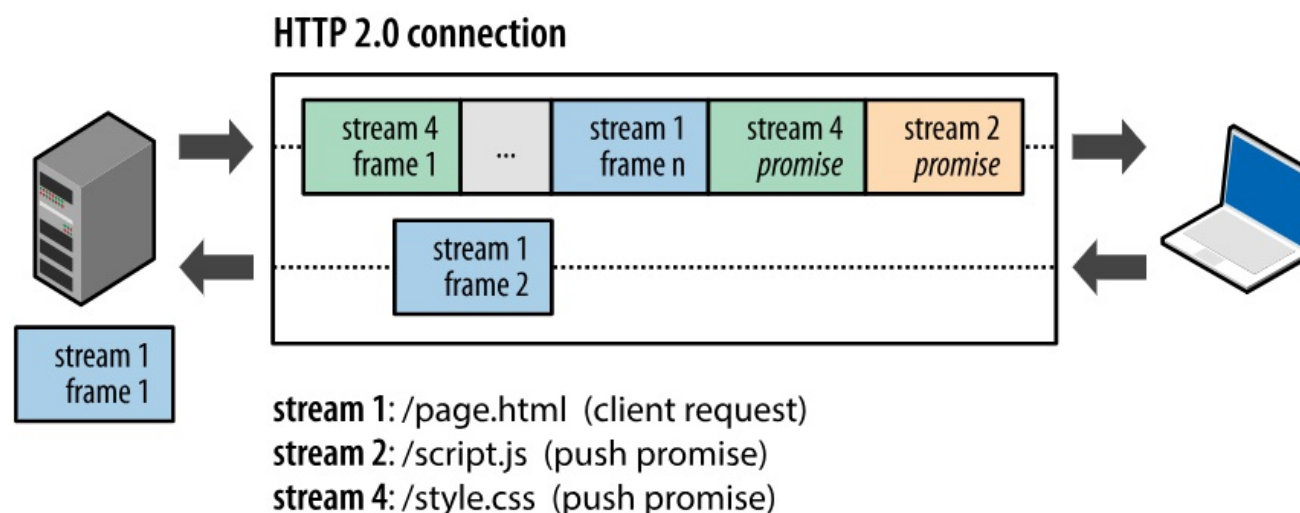
- Multiplexing allows for:
 - *all connections are persisted*
 - *only one connection required per origin*
- Advantages
 - *significant reduction of the overall protocol overhead*
 - *use of fewer connections reduces the memory and processing footprint along the full connection path (client, intermediaries, origin servers)*
 - *reduces operational costs and improves network capacity*
 - *Improves performance of HTTPS deployments*
 - *fewer expensive TLS handshakes*
 - *better session reuse*
 - *overall reduction in required client and server resources*

Flow control

- Prevent sender from receiving data it does not want
 - *Receiver is busy or under heavy load*
 - *Receiver can allocate fixed amount of resources for particular stream*
- Examples
 - *Client request a video stream; a user pauses the stream*
 - *the client wants to pause the stream delivery to avoid buffering*
 - *A proxy server has a fast downstream and slow upstream*
 - *the proxy server can control how quickly the downstream delivers data to match the speed of upstream*
 - *better control of resource usage*
 - *Similar problems as in TCP control*
- Flow control
 - *Sender and receiver both advertise stream flow control window in bytes*
 - = *the size of the available buffer space to hold the incoming data*
 - *exchanged by special SETTINGS and WINDOW_UPDATE frames*
 - *Flow control is hop-by-hop, not end-to-end*
 - *an intermediary can set its own flow control*

Server push

- Ability to send multiple responses for a single request
 - *A response to the request is sent back*
 - *Additional resources can be pushed without client requesting them*
 - *Hypertext – "server knows what the client will need"*



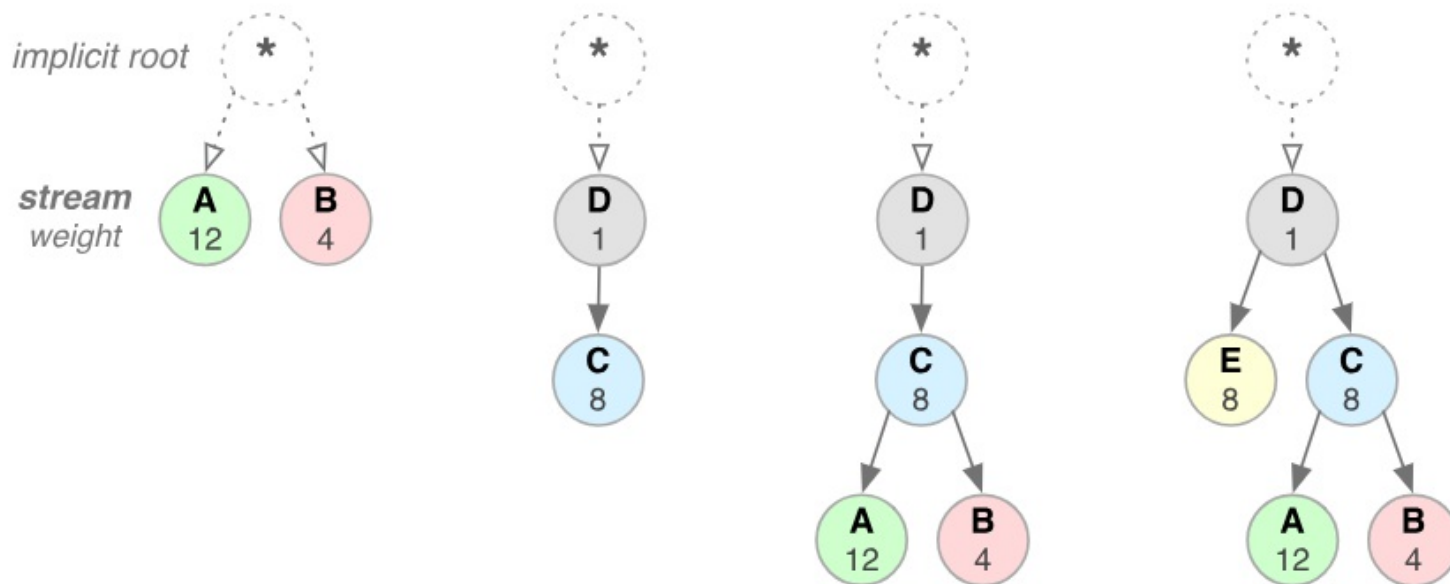
- Similar to resource inlining
 - *A resource is pushed to the client in HTML/CSS resource*
- Performance benefits
 - *Cached by the client, reused across pages, multiplexed, declined by the client*

Push promise

- **PUSH_PROMISE** frames
 - A signal that the server intends to push resources to the client
 - The client needs to know which resources the server intends to push to avoid creating duplicate requests for these resources.
- After the client receives **PUSH_PROMISE**
 - it may decline the stream (via **RST_STREAM** frame)
 - For example, when the resource is already in the cache
 - As for inline resources, this is not possible, the client always receives them
 - it can limit the number of concurrently pushed streams
 - it can adjust the initial flow control window to control how much data is pushed when the stream is first opened
 - it can disable server push entirely
- pushed resources must obey the same-origin policy

Stream Prioritization

- Purpose
 - Messages split into **frames** which are delivered in multiplexed **streams**
 - The order in which frames are delivered is important for a good performance
 - Client can define stream prioritization
 - optimizations in the browser, change prioritization based on user interaction
- Streams' weights and dependency
 - Each stream can be assigned an integer weight between 1 and 256.
 - Each stream may be given an explicit dependency on another stream.



Stream Prioritization (cont.)

- Dependency
 - *referencing the unique identifier of another stream as its parent*
 - *if the identifier is omitted the stream is dependent on the "root stream"*
 - *The parent stream should be allocated resources ahead of its dependencies.*
 - *"Please process and deliver response D before response C"*
- Weights
 - *Sibling streams have resources allocated as per their weights*
 - *Example*
 - *Sum all the weights: $4 + 12 = 16$*
 - *Divide each stream weight by the total weight: $A = 12/16$, $B = 4/16$*
 - *Stream A receives $3/4$ and stream B receives $1/4$ of available resources;*

Header compression

- Purpose
 - Each HTTP request/response contains a set of headers (metadata)
 - HTTP/1.x – metadata sent as plain text, adds 500-800 bytes per transfer
- HTTP/2 provides
 - Request and response metadata are compressed using HPACK format
 - header fields encoded via a static Huffman code – reduces size
 - client and server maintain an **indexed list of previously seen header fields**

