

# Middleware Architectures 2

## Lecture 5: Browser Networking

**doc. Ing. Tomáš Vitvar, Ph.D.**

tomas@vitvar.com • @TomasVitvar • <https://vitvar.com>



Czech Technical University in Prague

Faculty of Information Technologies • Software and Web Engineering • <https://vitvar.com/lectures>



Modified: Mon Feb 14 2022, 22:50:48  
Humla v1.0

## Overview

- **Browser Networking**
  - *XHR*
- Security Mechanisms
- JSON and JSONP

# Browser Networking

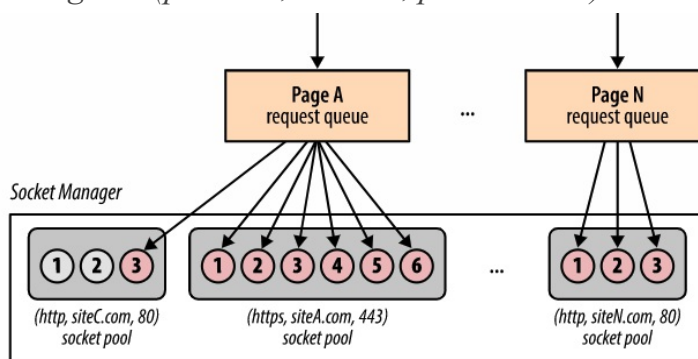
- Browser

- Platform for fast, efficient and secure delivery of Web apps
- Many components
  - parsing, layout, style calculation of HTML and CSS, JavaScript execution speed, rendering pipelines, and **networking stack**
- When network is slow, e.g. waiting for a resource to arrive
  - all other steps are blocked



# Connection Management

- Network socket management and optimization
  - Socket reuse
  - Request prioritization
  - Protocol negotiation
  - Enforcing connection limits
- Socket manager
  - Sockets organized in pools (connection limits and security constraints)
  - origin = (protocol, domain, port number)



## Network Security

- No raw socket access for app code
  - Prevents apps from initiating any connection to host
  - For example port scan, connect to mail server, etc.
- Network security
  - **Connection limits**
    - protect both client and server from resource exhaustion
  - **Request formatting and response processing**
    - Enforcing well-formed protocol semantics of outgoing requests
    - Response decoding to protect user from malicious servers
  - **TLS negotiation**
    - TLS handshake and verification checks on certificates
    - User is warned when verification fails, e.g. self-signed cert is used
  - **Same-origin policy**
    - Constraints on requests to be initiated and to which origin

## Mashups

- Web application hybrid
  - App uses APIs of two or more applications
- Types
  - Data mashup – integration/aggregation of data (read only)
  - Service mashup – more sophisticated workflows (read, write)
  - Visualization – involves UI
    - For example, third-party data displayed on the Google map
- Client-Server View
  - client-side mashups (in a browser)
    - JavaScript, Dynamic HTML, AJAX, JSON/JSONP
  - server-side mashups
    - server-side integration of services and data
    - Any language

## Overview

- Browser Networking
  - *XHR*
- Security Mechanisms
- JSON and JSONP

## XMLHttpRequest (XHR)

- Interface to utilize HTTP protocol in JavaScript
  - *standardized by at W3C*
  - *basis for AJAX*
    - *Asynchronous JavaScript and XML*
- Typical usage
  1. *Browser loads a page that includes a script*
  2. *User clicks on a HTML element*
    - *it triggers a JavaScript function*
  3. *The function invokes a service through XHR*
    - *same origin policy, cross-origin resource sharing*
  4. *The function receives data and modifies HTML in the page*

# XHR Interface – Key Methods and Properties

- Method and properties of XHR object
  - **open**, *opens the request, parameters:*
    - method** – method to be used (e.g. GET, PUT, POST),
    - url** – url of the resource,
    - asynch** – true to make asynchronous call,
    - user, pass** – credentials for authentication.
  - **onReadyStateChange** – JavaScript function object, it is called when **readyState** changes (uninitialized, loading, loaded, interactive, completed).
  - **send, abort** – sends or aborts the request (for asynchronous calls)
  - **status, statusText** – HTTP status code and a corresponding text.
  - **responseText, responseXML** – response as text or as a DOM document (if possible).
  - **onload** – event listener to support server push.
- See , or for a complete reference.

## How XHR works

### HTML with JavaScript code

was loaded as a response to <http://prague.example.org/>

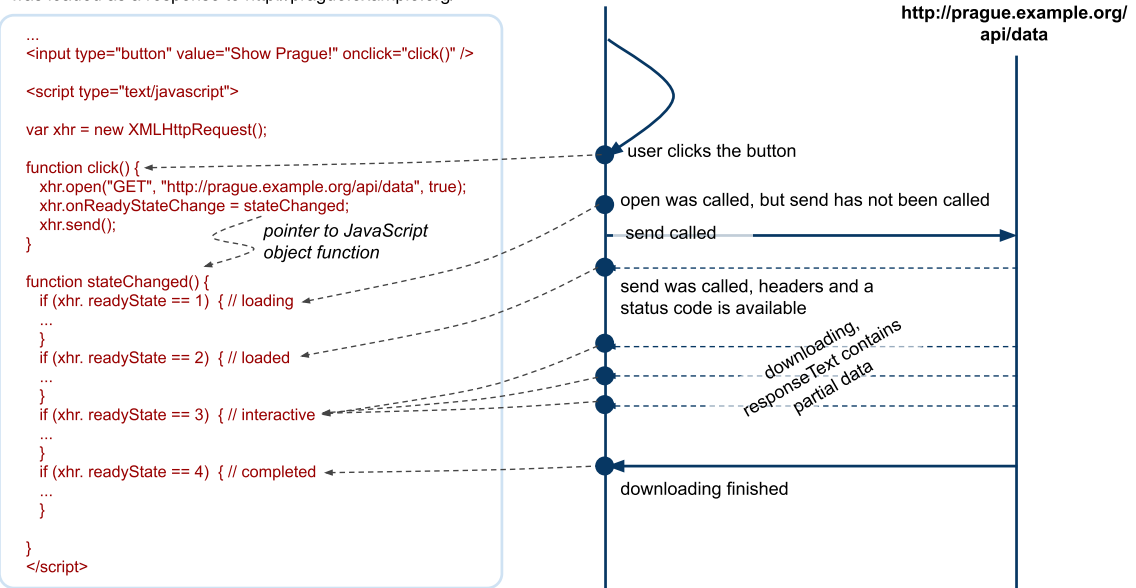
```
...
<input type="button" value="Show Prague!" onclick="click()" />
<script type="text/javascript">
var xhr = new XMLHttpRequest();

function click() {
  xhr.open("GET", "http://prague.example.org/api/data", true);
  xhr.onreadystatechange = stateChanged;
  xhr.send();
}

function stateChanged() {
  if (xhr.readyState == 1) { // loading
    ...
  }
  if (xhr.readyState == 2) { // loaded
    ...
  }
  if (xhr.readyState == 3) { // interactive
    ...
  }
  if (xhr.readyState == 4) { // completed
    ...
  }
}
</script>
```

### Browser

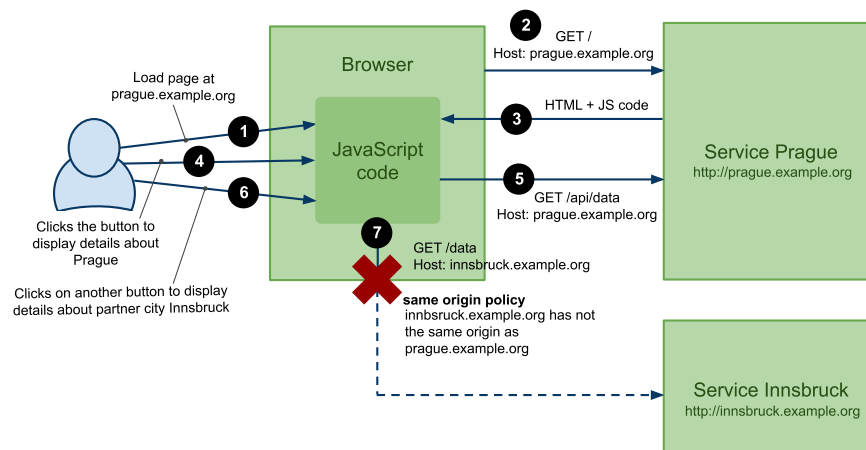
Resource at  
<http://prague.example.org/api/data>



## Overview

- Browser Networking
- Security Mechanisms
  - Scripting Attacks
  - Cross-origin Resource Sharing Protocol (CORS)
- JSON and JSONP

## Same Origin Policy



- JavaScript code can only access resources on the same domain
  - XHR to *GET, POST, PUT, UPDATE, DELETE*
  - Browsers apply *same origin policy*
- Solutions
  - JSON and JSONP (*GET* only)
  - Cross-origin Resource Sharing Protocol (CORS)

## Why Same Origin Policy?

- Without the same origin policy, the following POST would be possible



## Overview

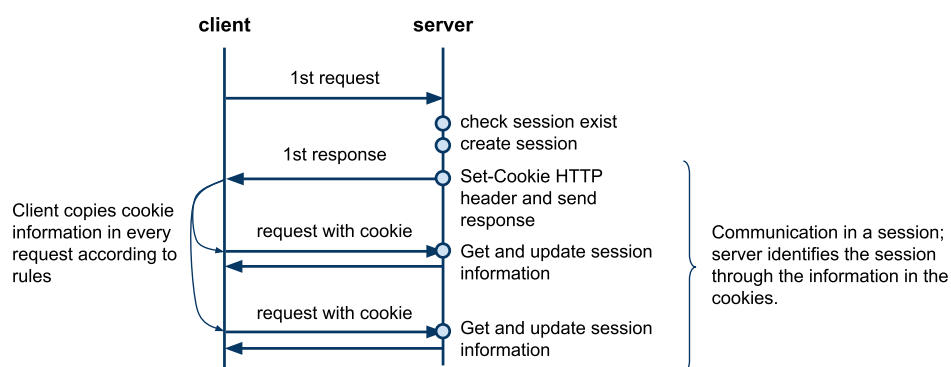
- Browser Networking
- Security Mechanisms
  - Scripting Attacks*
  - Cross-origin Resource Sharing Protocol (CORS)*
- JSON and JSONP

## Overview

- Scripting Attacks
  - Intruders make users perform action that has side effects on their resources
  - Intruders inject malicious code to Web pages
- Roles in Security Scenarios
  - Alice, Bob
    - Normal users, usually Alices wants to send a message to Bob or Alice accesses a Bob's site.
  - Eve
    - A user with bad intentions, usually a passive attacker.
  - Mallory
    - An active attacker, usually sends a link to a page with malicious code.

## Recall: State management in HTTP

- Request-response interaction with cookies
  - Session is a logical channel maintained by the server



- Stateful Server
  - Server remembers the session information in a server memory
  - Server memory is a non-persistent storage, when server restarts the memory content is lost!



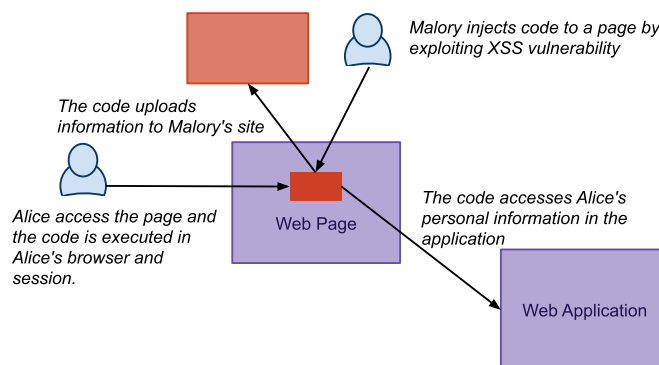
## Cross-site Request Forgery (CSRF)

- Exploits a trust of a website in a user's browser
- Scenario
  1. Mallory sends a link to Alice (in an email, in a chat, etc.)
    - The link points to a page that has HTML code with hrefs to Alice's private resources
    - For example, to perform an action on Alice's account, it is possible to use `img` like this:

```
1 | 
```
  2. Alice loads the page in her browser
    - Alice is authenticated to the bank's website, the browser sends Alice's authentication cookies with the request.
- Issues and Prevention
  - The bank site violates REST, i.e. overloading of GET for making actions
  - The bank should check HTTP `referer` header
  - It is a "blind" attack, Mallory does not see the result
  - To perform POST, current browsers today use *CORS protocol*

## Cross-site Scripting Attack (XSS)

- Exploits a trust of a user in a website



- Example Scenario
  1. An attacker injects a code to a page
  2. A users executes the code in his/her browser's session
  3. The code provides information (cookies) to the attacker
  4. The attacker uses the cookies to access the user's data

## XSS Examples

- Twitter in Sep 2010

- *Injection of JavaScript code to a page using a tweet*
- *You posted following tweet to Twitter*

```
1 | There is a great event happening at
2 | http://someurl.com/@"onmouseover="alert('test xss')"/
```

- *Twitter parses the link and wraps it with `<a>` element*

```
1 | There is a great event happening at
2 | <a href="http://someurl.com/@"onmouseover="alert('test xss')"  
3 |   target="_blank">http://someurl.com/@"onmouseover=  
4 |   "alert('test xss')"/></a>
```

- *See details at*

- Other example: Google Contacts

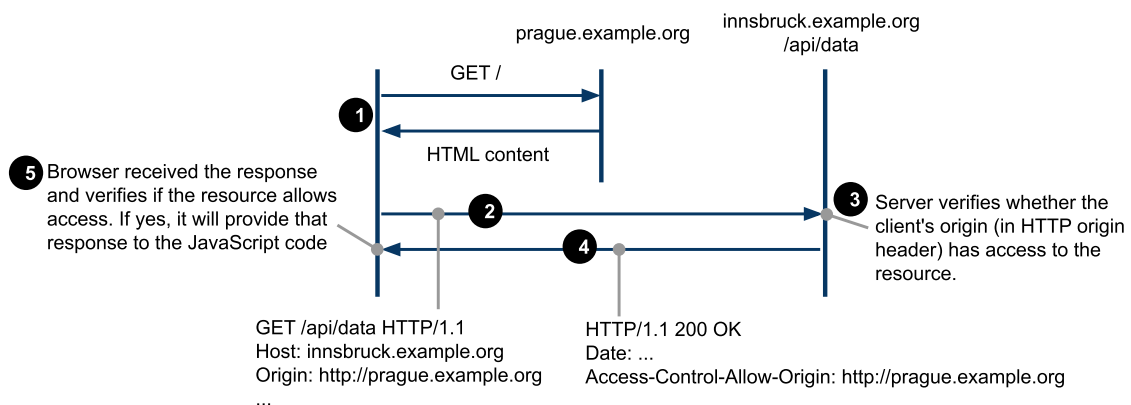
## Overview

- Browser Networking
- Security Mechanisms
  - *Scripting Attacks*
  - *Cross-origin Resource Sharing Protocol (CORS)*
- JSON and JSONP

## Overview

- Increasing number of mashup applications
  - *client-side mashups involving multiple sites*
  - *mechanism to control an access to sites from within JavaScript*
- Allow for **cross-site HTTP requests**
  - *HTTP requests for resources from a different domain than the domain of the resource making the request.*
- W3C Recommendation
  - *see*
  - *Browsers support it*
    - *see at Mozilla*

## CORS Protocol – GET



- Read-only resource access via HTTP GET
- Headers:
  - **Origin** – *identifies the origin of the request*
  - **Access-Control-Allow-Origin** – *defines who can access the resource*
  - *either the full domain name or the wildcard (\*) is allowed.*

# CORS Protocol – other methods and "preflight"



- Preflight request queries the resource using **OPTIONS** method
  - requests other than `GET` (except `POST` w/o payload) or with custom headers
  - A browser should run preflight automatically for any XHR request meeting preflight conditions
  - The browser caches responses according to **Access-Control-Max-Age**

## Overview

- Browser Networking
- Security Mechanisms
- **JSON and JSONP**

## Recall: JSON

- JSON = JavaScript Object Notation
  - *Serialization format for data representation*
  - *Very easy to use in JavaScript*
    - *no need to use a parser explicitly*
  - *Also great support in many programming environments*
- Key constructs
  - **object** is a collection of comma-separated key/value pairs:  
`{"name" : "tomas", "age" : 18, "student" : false, "car" : null}`
  - **array** is an order list of values:  
`[ "prague", "innsbruck", 45 ]`
  - can be nested: objects as values in an **array**:  
`[ { "name" : "tomas", "age" : 18 },  
 { "name" : "peter", "age" : 19 } ]`
  - and the other way around: array as values in an **object**:  
`{ "cities" : [ "prague", "innsbruck",  
 "states" : [ "CZ", "AT" ] }`
  - *A complete grammar see*

## JSON in JavaScript

- Native data format

```
1 // data needs to be assigned
2 var data = { "people" : ["tomas", "peter", "alice", "jana"] };
3
4 // go through the list of people
5 for (var i = 0; i < data.people.length; i++) {
6   var man = data.people[i];
7   // ... do something with this man
8 }
```
- Responses of service calls in JSON
  - *Many support JSON, how can we load that data?*
- Example Request-Response

```
1 GET http://pipes.yahoo.com/pipes/pipe.run?_id=638c670c40c97b62&_render=json
2
3
4 {"count":1,"value":
5   {"title":"Web 2.0 announcements",
6     "description":"Pipes Output",
7     "link":"http://pipes.yahoo.com/pipes/pipe.info...",
8     "pubDate":"Mon, 07 Mar 2011 18:27:20 +0000",
9     "generator":"..."
10  }
11 }
```

# JSONP

- Service that supports JSONP
  - allows to specify a query string parameter for a wrapper function to load the data in JavaScript code
  - otherwise the data cannot be used in JavaScript
    - they're loaded into the memory but assigned to nothing
- Example
  - if a resource at [http://someurl.org/json\\_data](http://someurl.org/json_data) returns

```
{ "people" : [ "tomas", "peter", "alice", "jana" ] }
```
  - then the resource at [http://someurl.org/json\\_data?\\_callback=loadData](http://someurl.org/json_data?_callback=loadData) returns

```
loadData({ "people" : [ "tomas", "peter", "alice", "jana" ] });
```
- A kind of workaround for the same origin policy
  - only **GET**, nothing else works obviously
  - no XHR, need to load the data through the dynamic **<script>** element

## JSONP in JavaScript

- JSONP example
  - loads JSON data using JSONP by dynamically inserting **<script>** into the current document. This will download JSON data and triggers the script.

```
1  var TWITTER_URL = "http://api.twitter.com/1/statuses/user_timeline.json?" +
2    "&screen_name=web2e&count=100&callback=loadData";
3
4  // this needs to be loaded in window.onload
5  // after all document has finished loading...
6  function insertData() {
7    var se = document.createElement('script');
8    se.setAttribute("type", "text/javascript");
9    se.setAttribute("src", TWITTER_URL);
10   document.getElementsByTagName("head")[0].appendChild(se);
11   // And data will be loaded when loadDta callback fires...
12 }
13
14 // loads the data when they arrive
15 function loadData(data) {
16   // we need to know the the structure of JSON data that is returned
17   // and code it here accordingly
18   for (var i = 0; i < data.length; i++) {
19     data[i].created_at // contains date the tweet was created
20     data[i].text // contains the tweet
21   }
22 }
```