

# [544] gRPC

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# Learning Objectives

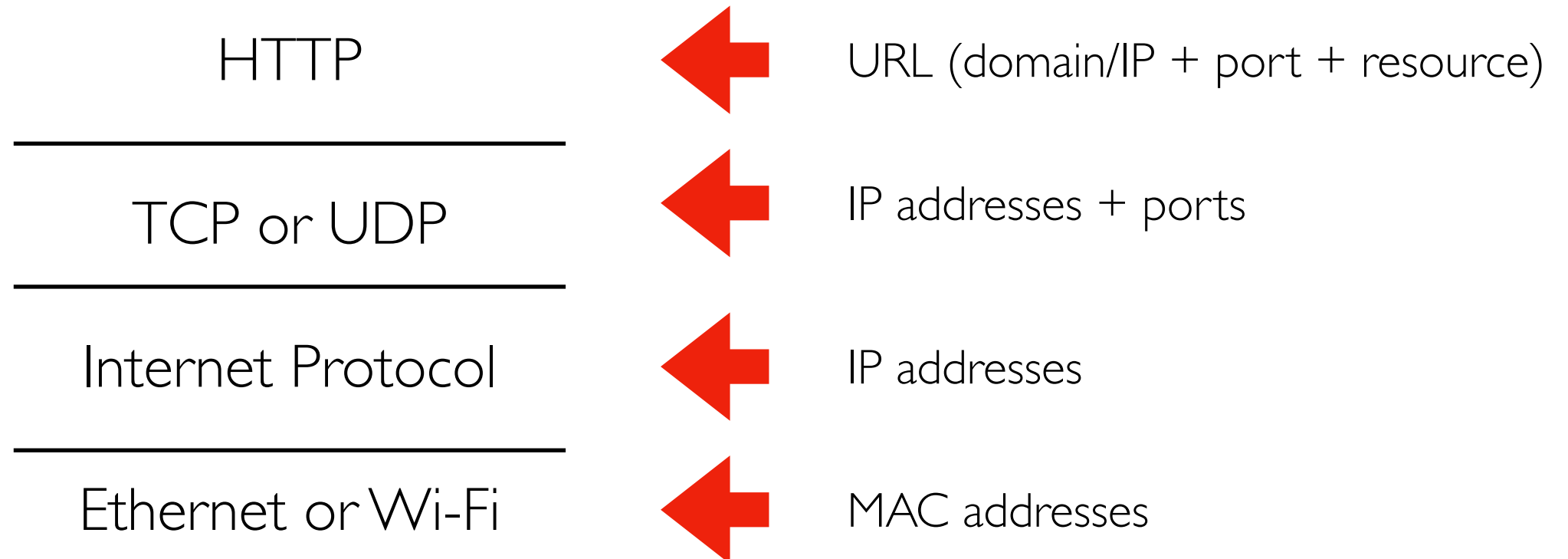
- describe the functionality that HTTP provides (beyond what TCP alone provides)
- call functions remotely via gRPC

# Outline

HTTP

gRPC

# HTTP (Hypertext Transfer Protocol)



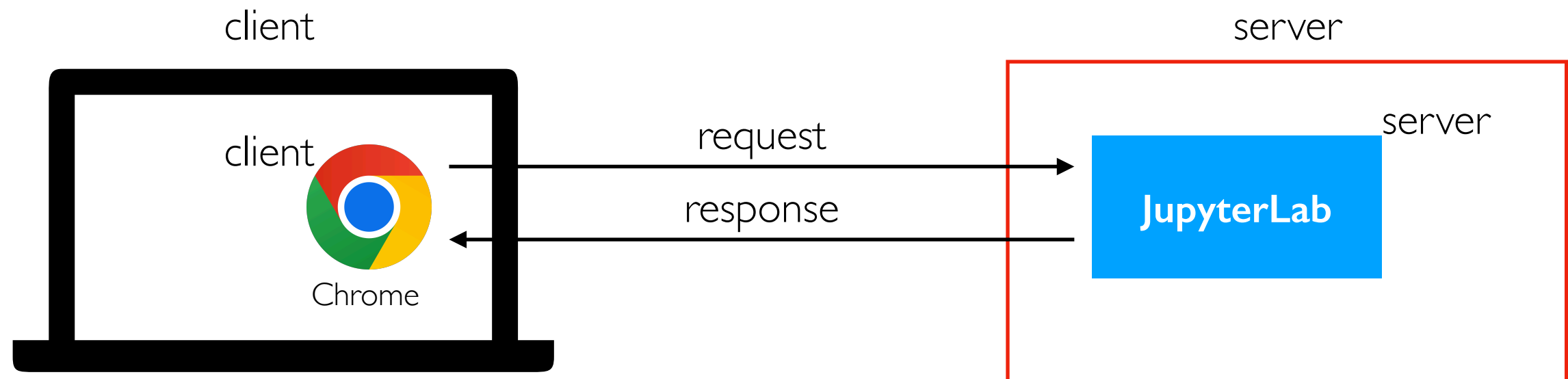
<https://tyler.caraza-harter.com:443/cs544/f24/schedule.html>

**domain name**  
(mapped to an IP)

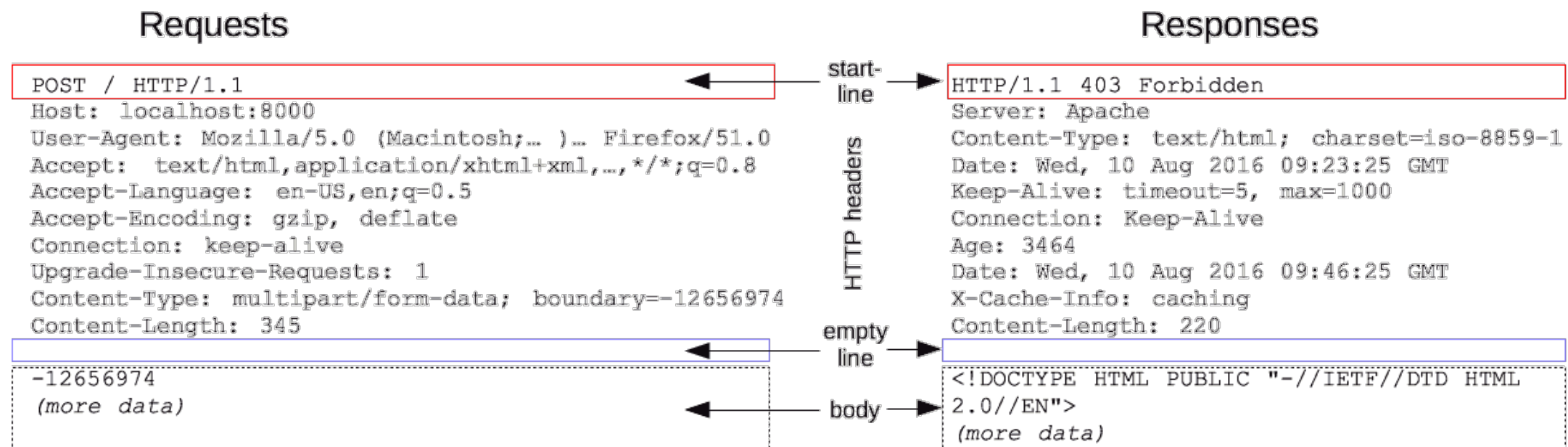
**port**  
(443 is default  
for https)

**resource**

# HTTP Messages Between Clients and Servers



Parts: method, resource, status code, headers, body



<https://developer.mozilla.org/en-US/docs/Web/HTTP/Messages>

# HTTP Methods (types of messages)

Types of request

- **POST**: create a new resource (request+response have body)
- **PUT**: update a resource (request+response have body, usually)
- **GET**: fetch a resource (response has body)
- **DELETE**: delete a resource
- others...

Canvas **REST** API example:

GET <https://canvas.wisc.edu/api/v1/conversations>  
(see all Canvas conversations in JSON format)

POST <https://canvas.wisc.edu/api/v1/conversations>  
(create new Canvas conversation)

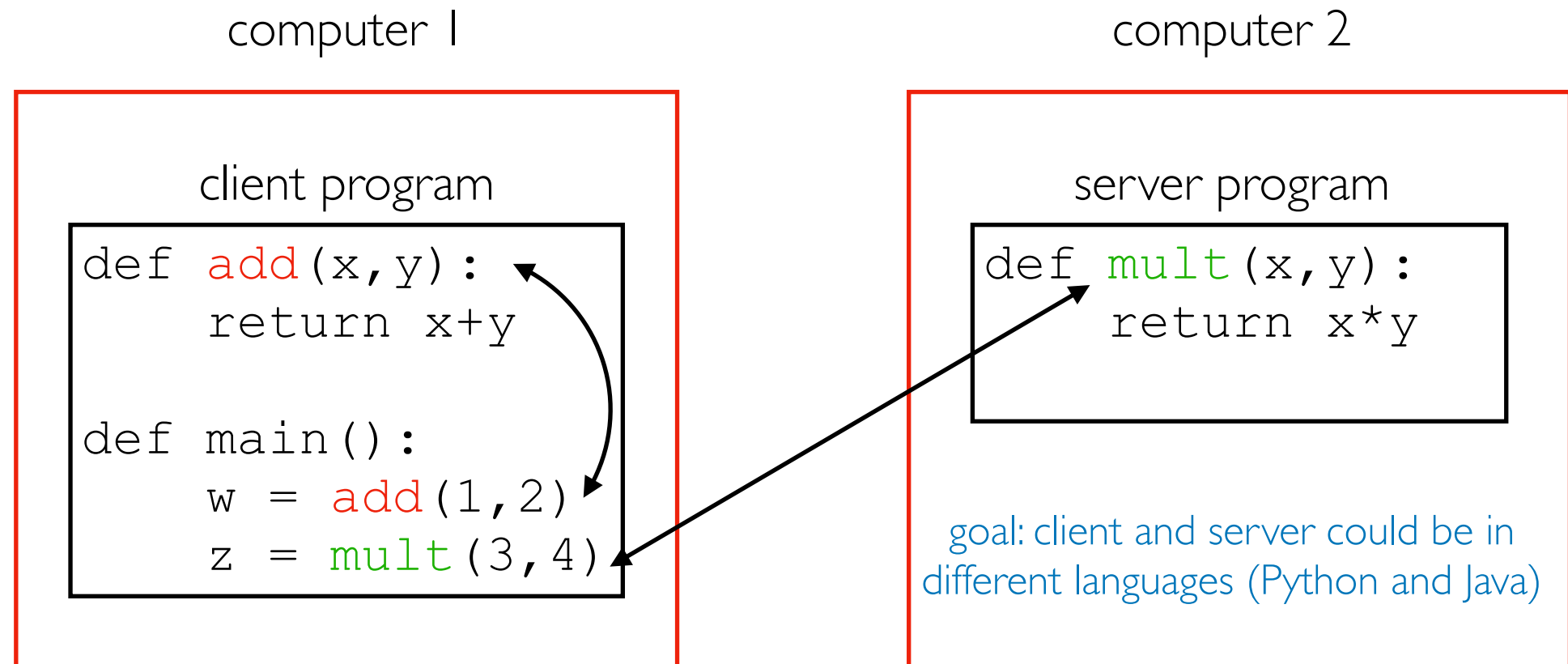
<https://canvas.instructure.com/doc/api/conversations.html>

# Outline

HTTP

gRPC

# Remote Procedure Calls (RPCs)



procedure = function

- **main** calling **add** is a regular procedure call
- **main** call **mult** is a remote procedure call

There are MANY tools to do RPCs

- Thrift (developed at Meta)
- gRPC (developed at Google) -- this semester

why remote?

- server might have faster hardware
- server might have access to data not directly available to client



# Example: increase function

```
counts = {  
    "A": 123, ...  
}  
  
def increase(key, amt):  
    counts[key] += amt  
    return counts[key]  
  
curr = increase("A", 5)  
print(curr) # 128
```

what if we want many programs running  
on different computers to have access to  
this dict and the increase function?

# Example: increase function

client

```
curr = increase("A", 5)
print(curr) # 128
```

server

```
counts = {
    "A": 123, ...
}

def increase(key, amt):
    counts[key] += amt
    return counts[key]
```

client

move counts and increase to a server  
accessible to many client programs on  
different computers

...

# Example: increase function

client

```
def increase(key, amt):  
    ...code to send
```

```
curr = increase("A", 5)  
print(curr) # 128
```

computer 1

server

```
def rpc_server():  
    ...code to receive
```

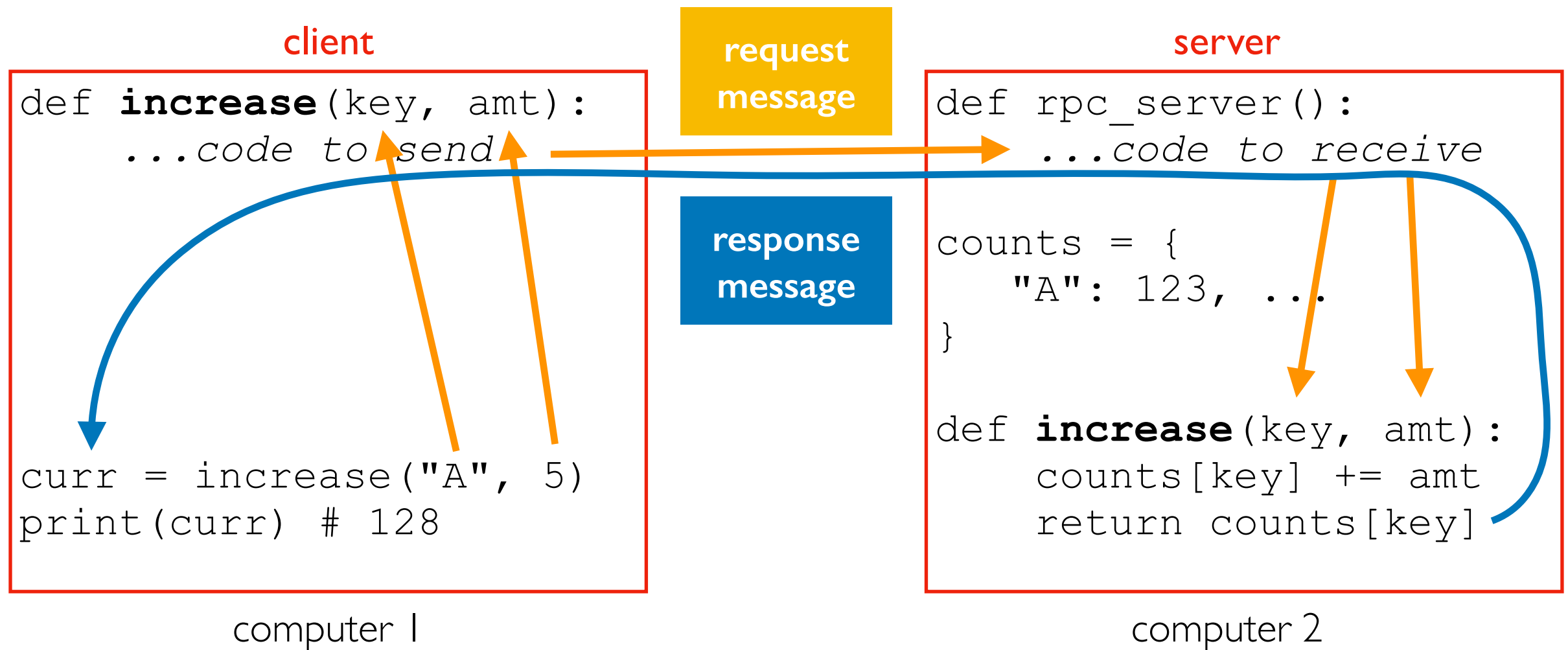
```
counts = {  
    "A": 123, ...  
}
```

```
def increase(key, amt):  
    counts[key] += amt  
    return counts[key]
```

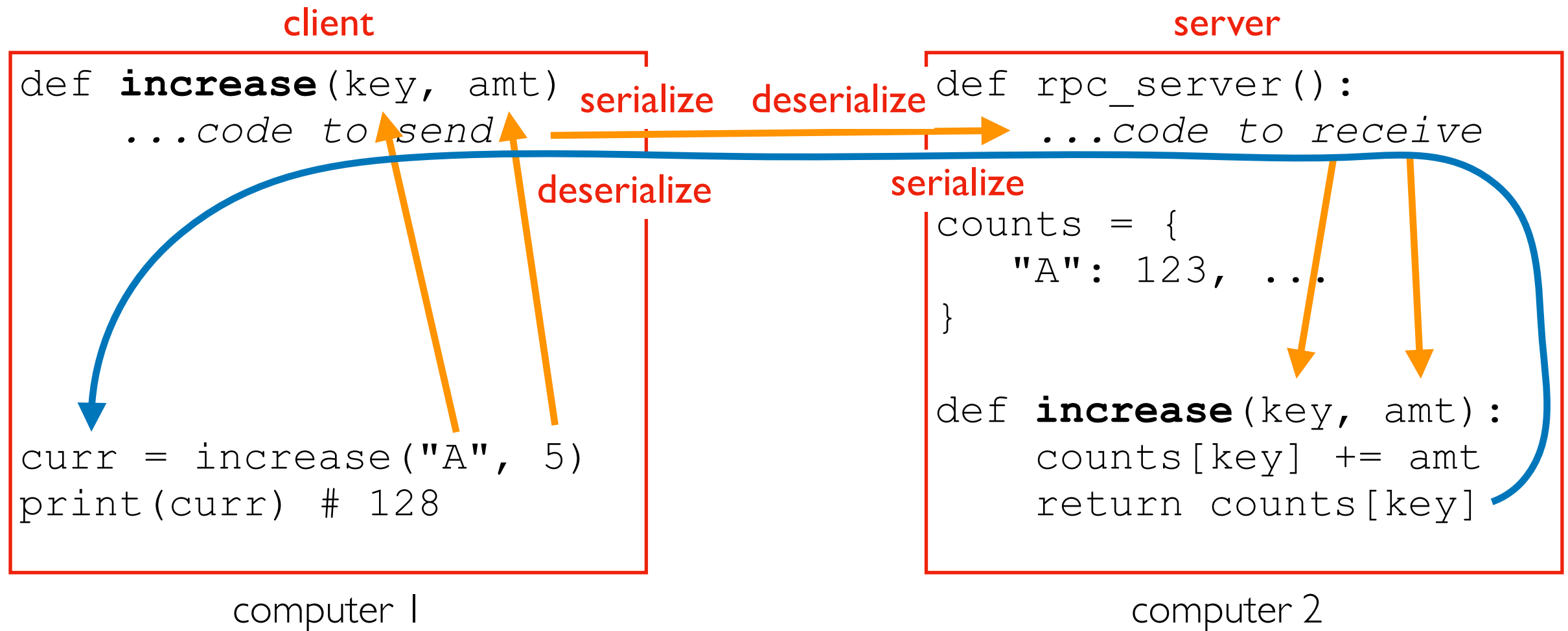
computer 2

need some extra functions to make calling a remote  
function *feel* the same as calling a regular one

# Example: increase function



# Serialization/Deserialization



**request  
message**

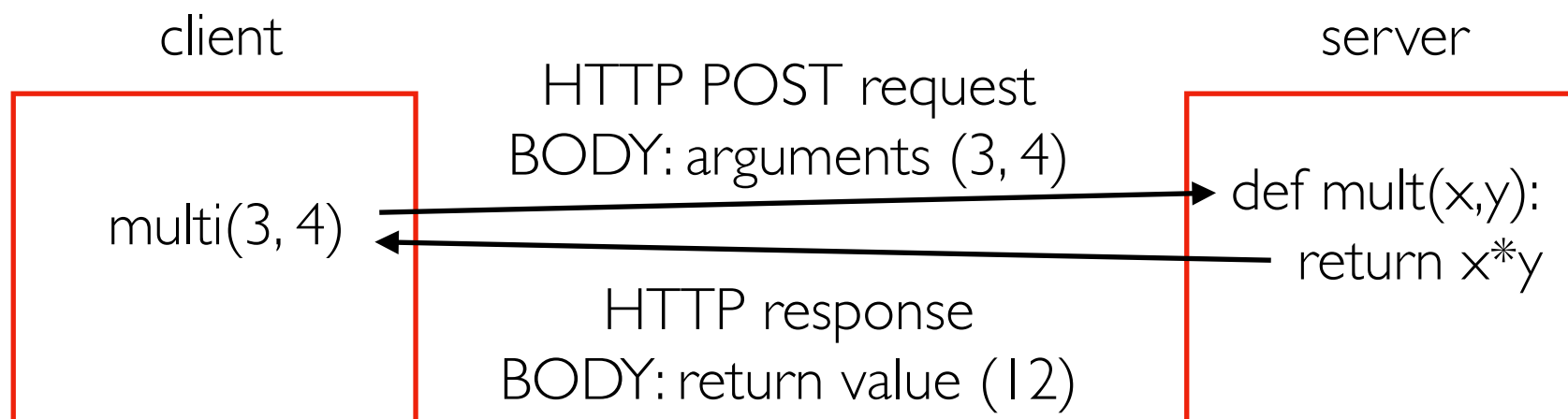
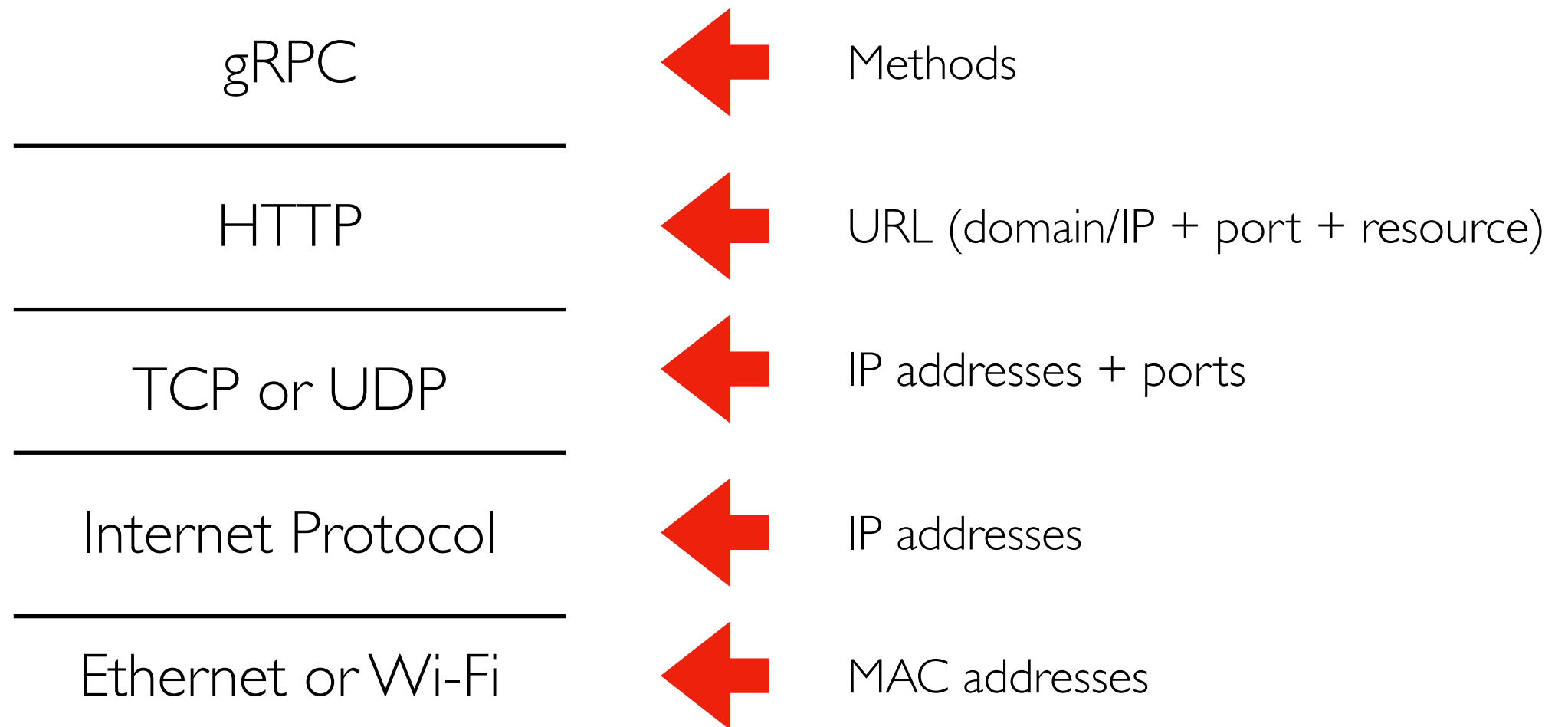
```
args somehow encoded as bytes:
b'{"key": "A"
  "amt": 5}'
```

**response  
message**

```
return val as bytes:
b'128'
```

Serialization/deserialization converts to/from bytes. Could be JSON. gRPC uses *protocol buffers*

# gRPC builds on HTTP



# Serialization/deserialization (Protobufs)

*How do we represent arguments and return values as bytes in a request/response body?*

**Serialization:** various types (ints, strs, lists, etc) to **bytes** ("wire format")

**Deserialization:** **bytes** to various types

**Challenge 1:** every language has different types and we want cross-languages calls

gRPC uses Google's **Protocol Buffers** provide a uniform type system across languages.

**Challenge 2:** different CPUs order bytes differently

cpu A int32: 

byte 1	byte 2	byte 3	byte 4
--------	--------	--------	--------

cpu B int32: 

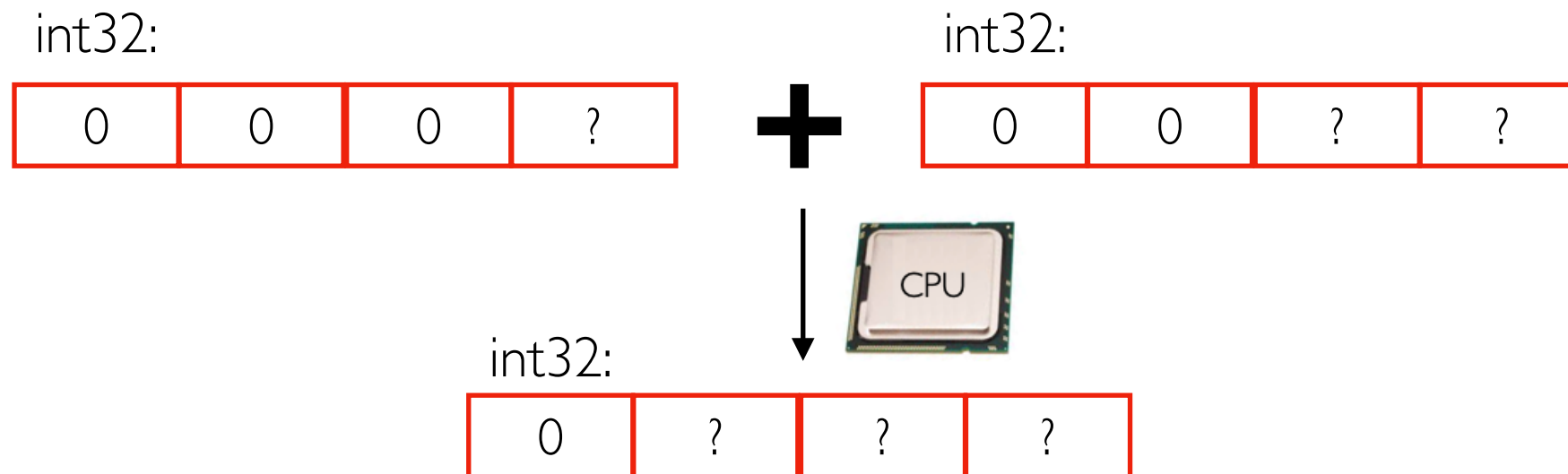
byte 4	byte 3	byte 2	byte 1
--------	--------	--------	--------

*Equivalent with digit order: "twelve" is "12" by convention, but people could have chosen "21" to mean "twelve"*

.proto	C++	Java	Python
double	double	double	float
float	float	float	float
int32	int32	int	int
int64	int64	long	int
uint32	uint32	int	int
uint64	uint64	long	int
sint32	int32	int	int
sint64	int64	long	int
bool	bool	boolean	bool
string	string	String	str
bytes	string	ByteString	bytes

<https://protobuf.dev/programming-guides/proto/>

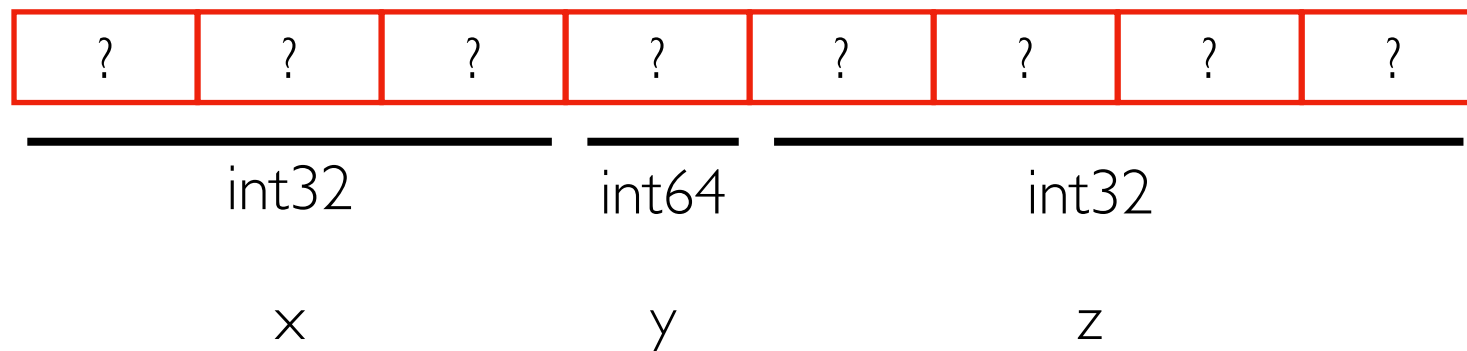
# Variable-Length Encoding



For **computational efficiency**, int32's use 4 bytes during computation. Also helps w/ offsets.

For **space efficiency**, smaller numbers in int32s could use fewer bytes (4 bytes is max). This reduces network traffic.

Example nums in a protobuf:





Demos...