

Maintaining "State"

# HTTP is "stateless"

- Stateless protocol
- Hypertext Transfer Protocol (HTTP)
  - A message is sent. That is all.
  - Data is received. That is all.
  - No "persistence"
- Example of "stateful" protocol: FTP
  - Interactive sessions
  - User authenticated
  - Variables set on the server: working directory; transfer mode

# Ways to Maintain State in a Stateless Protocol

- Cookies
  - Client-side state
  - Small file → user's web browser
  - Write user information to the file
  - Send the file back to the server
- PHP session
  - Server-side state
  - PHP function: `session_start()` → PHP (on the server) remembers
  - Session variables: `$_SESSION`
  - Until: `session_unset()` and `session_destroy()` or timeout

# User Sessions using PHP and MySQL

1. User → HTML form
  - username/password
2. Form captured → PHP script; compared (MySQL)
3. Match? PHP session is started; session variables set
4. Page to page, each asks: session variable?
  - If yes, show this webpage
  - If not, redirect