Sockets and socket APIs are an example of inter-process communication (IPC) and provide a method of sending messages across a network. This can be a local network with your personal computer or have a physical connection to an external network that has its own connections to other networks, such as the internet, which you connect to via your internet service provider. Sockets were initially used on ARPANET, the precursor to the internet, in 1971. In 1983 they were expanded into APIs, called Berkeley Sockets, in Berkeley Software Distribution’s operating system. There are also Unix domain sockets, but those can only be used to send information between processes that have the same host. When you specify what type of socket you want in Python, you can write socket.SOCK\_STREAM to default to Transmission Control Protocol (TCP). You can write socket.SOCK\_DGRAM to default to User Datagram Protocol (UDP). Transmission Control Protocol is more reliable, as it detects and redistributes packets of data that get dropped along the network by the sender, and it ensures that messages are received in the order they were written, to avoid confusion. User Datagram Protocol is less effective at delivering messages and can sometimes send data in mismatched sequences. This is important because network devices have their own shortcomings that can lead to data loss.