

ECE458/ECE750T27: Computer Security

Web Security – Basics of Websites

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UNIVERSITY OF
WATERLOO

FACULTY OF
ENGINEERING



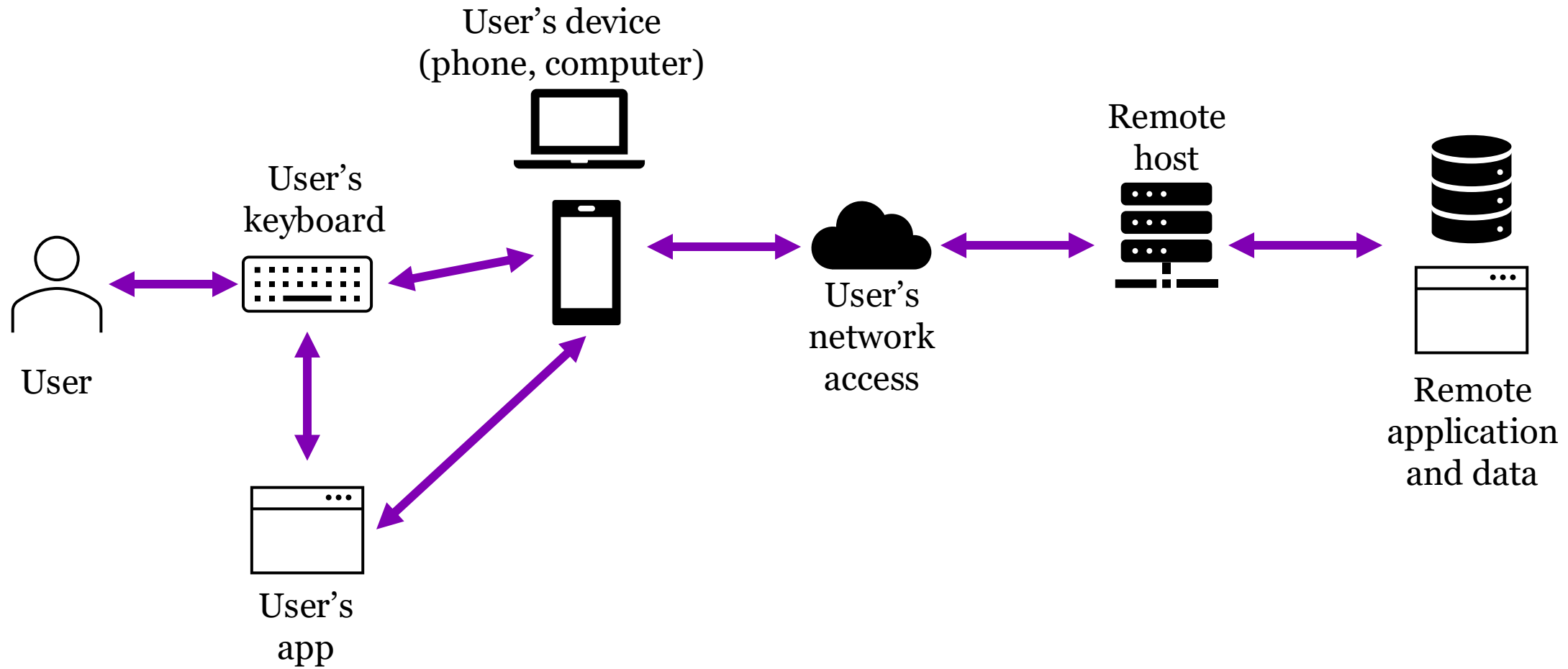
First, the news...

- First 5 minutes we talk about something interesting and recent
- You will not be tested on the news part of lecture
- You may use news as an example on tests
- Why do this?
 1. Some students show up late for various good reasons
 2. Reward students who show up on time
 3. Important to see real world examples

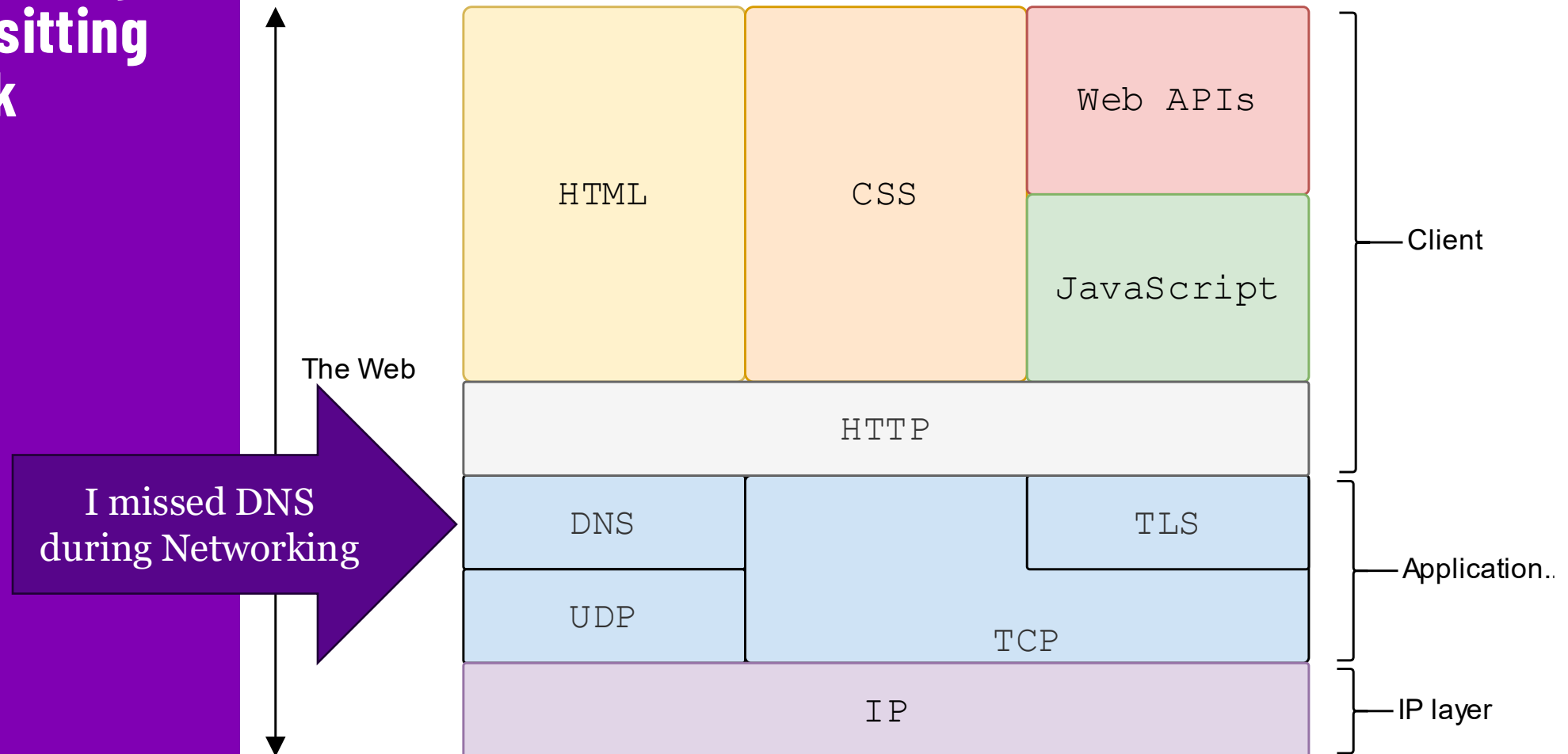
Web Security

- Today: How the internet works
 - DNS
 - Website dynamic construction
 - Data typically sent and logged
 - Cookies
 - Attacks on privacy - trackers
- Next lecture: Getting the user or server to execute attacker code
 - Cross Site Scripting (XSS)
 - Cross-site Request Forgery (CSRF)
 - Server-side Scripting
 - Session Hijacking

User-to-remote application vulnerability



The web is basically another layer sitting on the network model.



DOMAIN NAME SYSTEM (DNS)

Domain Name System (DNS)

- The DNS service translates human friendly URLs such as <http://vaniea.com> to their IP address such as 69.163.145.230.
- Mappings between URLs and IPs are not static.
- DNS servers keep track of current mappings.
- One domain, such as google.com, may have many IP addresses associated with it since several computers are used to host the domain

```

1003 > dig google.ca

; <<>> DiG 9.18.30-0ubuntu0.24.04.2-Ubuntu <<>> google.ca
;; global options: +cmd
;; Got answer:
;; ->>HEADER<<- opcode: QUERY, status: NOERROR, id: 42536
;; flags: qr rd ra; QUERY: 1, ANSWER: 1, AUTHORITY: 4, ADDITIONAL: 9

;; OPT PSEUDOSECTION:
; EDNS: version: 0, flags:; udp: 1220
; COOKIE: 472addeb1974fd3d0100000068703137bd7eb011b4322f8d (good)
;; QUESTION SECTION:
;google.ca.                                IN      A

;; ANSWER SECTION:
google.ca.                                292     IN      A      142.251.32.67

;; AUTHORITY SECTION:
google.ca.                                60527   IN      NS      ns3.google.com.
google.ca.                                60527   IN      NS      ns2.google.com.
google.ca.                                60527   IN      NS      ns1.google.com.
google.ca.                                60527   IN      NS      ns4.google.com.

;; ADDITIONAL SECTION:
ns1.google.com.                           15998   IN      A      216.239.32.10
ns2.google.com.                           19125   IN      A      216.239.34.10
ns3.google.com.                           74037   IN      A      216.239.36.10
ns4.google.com.                           70510   IN      A      216.239.38.10
ns1.google.com.                           37624   IN      AAAA   2001:4860:4802:32::a
ns2.google.com.                           74502   IN      AAAA   2001:4860:4802:34::a
ns3.google.com.                           79559   IN      AAAA   2001:4860:4802:36::a
ns4.google.com.                           60465   IN      AAAA   2001:4860:4802:38::a

;; Query time: 18 msec
;; SERVER: 129.97.2.1#53(129.97.2.1) (UDP)
;; WHEN: Thu Jul 10 17:31:35 EDT 2025
;; MSG SIZE rcvd: 340

```

```
kvaniea@brendel:~$
```

```
1247 > host facebook.com
```

```
facebook.com has address 31.13.77.36
```

```
facebook.com has IPv6 address 2a03:2880:f101:83:face:b00c:0:25de
```

```
facebook.com mail is handled by 10 msgin.vvv.facebook.com.
```

```
kvaniea@brendel:~$
```

```
1248 > host microsoft.com
```

```
microsoft.com has address 23.96.52.53
```

```
microsoft.com has address 104.40.211.35
```

```
microsoft.com has address 104.43.195.251
```

```
microsoft.com has address 191.239.213.197
```

```
microsoft.com has address 23.100.122.175
```

```
microsoft.com mail is handled by 10 microsoft-com.mail.protection.outlook.com.
```

```
kvaniea@brendel:~$
```

```
1249 > host google.com
```

```
google.com has address 172.217.23.14
```

```
google.com has IPv6 address 2a00:1450:4009:801::200e
```

```
google.com mail is handled by 50 alt4.aspmx.l.google.com.
```

```
google.com mail is handled by 20 alt1.aspmx.l.google.com.
```

```
google.com mail is handled by 10 aspmx.l.google.com.
```

```
google.com mail is handled by 30 alt2.aspmx.l.google.com.
```

```
google.com mail is handled by 40 alt3.aspmx.l.google.com.
```

```
kvaniea@brendel:~$
```

```
1250 > host vaniea.com
```

```
vaniea.com has address 64.90.44.164
```

```
vaniea.com mail is handled by 0 vade-in2.mail.dreamhost.com.
```

```
vaniea.com mail is handled by 0 vade-in1.mail.dreamhost.com.
```



```

kvaniea@brendel:~$
1253 > host -v facebook.com
Trying "facebook.com"
;; ->>HEADER<<- opcode: QUERY, status: NOERROR, id: 29731
;; flags: qr rd ra; QUERY: 1, ANSWER: 1, AUTHORITY: 2, ADDITIONAL: 4

;; QUESTION SECTION:
facebook.com.                IN      A

;; ANSWER SECTION:
facebook.com.                300     IN      A      157.240.2.35

;; AUTHORITY SECTION:
facebook.com.                172261  IN      NS      b.ns.facebook.com.
facebook.com.                172261  IN      NS      a.ns.facebook.com.

;; ADDITIONAL SECTION:
a.ns.facebook.com.          172261  IN      A      69.171.239.12
a.ns.facebook.com.          172261  IN      AAAA    2a03:2880:ffffe:c:face:b00c:0:35
b.ns.facebook.com.          172261  IN      A      69.171.255.12
b.ns.facebook.com.          172261  IN      AAAA    2a03:2880:ffff:c:face:b00c:0:35

```

Name Servers (NS) for Facebook.com
These servers notify other computers what Facebook's current IP is

b.ns.facebook.com.
a.ns.facebook.com.



IANA specifies the root name servers for DNS.

Domain Names

Overview

Root Zone Management

Overview

Root Database

Hint and Zone Files

Change Requests

Instructions & Guides

Root Servers

.INT Registry

.ARPA Registry

IDN Practices Repository

Root Key Signing Key (DNSSEC)

Reserved Domains

Root Servers

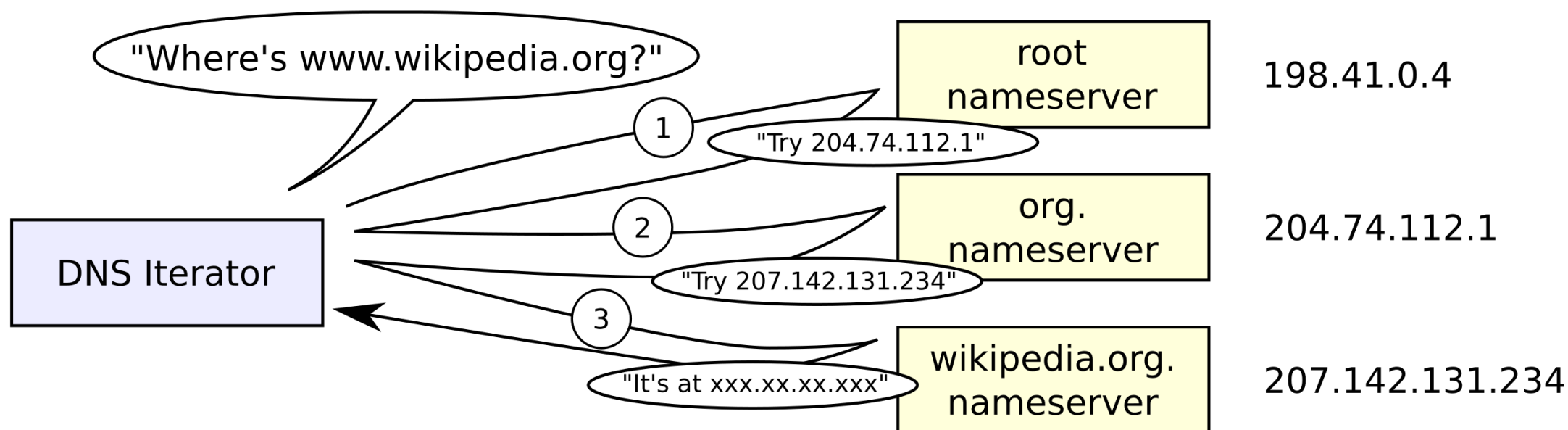
The authoritative name servers that serve the DNS root zone, commonly known as the “root servers”, are a network of hundreds of servers in many countries around the world. They are configured in the DNS root zone as 13 named authorities, as follows.

List of Root Servers

HOSTNAME	IP ADDRESSES	OPERATOR
a.root-servers.net	198.41.0.4, 2001:503:ba3e::2:30	Verisign, Inc.
b.root-servers.net	170.247.170.2, 2801:1b8:10::b	University of Southern California, Information Sciences Institute
c.root-servers.net	192.33.4.12, 2001:500:2::c	Cogent Communications
d.root-servers.net	199.7.91.13, 2001:500:2d::d	University of Maryland
e.root-servers.net	192.203.230.10, 2001:500:a8::e	NASA (Ames Research Center)
f.root-servers.net	192.5.5.241, 2001:500:2f::f	Internet Systems Consortium, Inc.
g.root-servers.net	192.112.36.4, 2001:500:12::d0d	US Department of Defense (NIC)
h.root-servers.net	198.97.190.53, 2001:500:1::53	US Army (Research Lab)
i.root-servers.net	192.36.148.17, 2001:7fe::53	Netnod
j.root-servers.net	192.58.128.30, 2001:503:c27::2:30	Verisign, Inc.
k.root-servers.net	193.0.14.129, 2001:7fd::1	RIPE NCC
l.root-servers.net	199.7.83.42, 2001:500:9f::42	ICANN

DNS request happens before a webserver can be contacted

Because the OS/Browser does not know where the server is



Local DNS cache

- DNS is cached at several levels
- When the Operating System resolver does a lookup, it keeps the record it found cached locally
- Browsers can also do the resolution on their own and they also cache

```
google.com
```

```
-----  
Record Name . . . . . : google.com  
Record Type . . . . . : 1  
Time To Live . . . . . : 137399  
Data Length . . . . . : 4  
Section . . . . . : Answer  
A (Host) Record . . . : 142.251.41.46
```

How to contact the name server?

- Security was not initially a concern
 - DNS sent over UDP – no encryption at all
 - The initial solutions only addressed Integrity, not Confidentiality
- Encrypting DNS connections is just now becoming common
- 1989 – DNS Introduced
- 2004 – DNS Security Extensions (DNSSEC) - added signatures
- 2011 - DNSCrypt protocol
- 2016 – DNS over TLS
- 2018 – DNS over HTTPS
- 2019 – Chrome uses DNS over HTTPS by default (US only)
- 2020 – Firefox uses DNS over HTTPS by default

Think-pair-share

- How could unencrypted DNS be used to cause a user to visit the wrong web server?
- What technology have we already learned about that can be used to detect the above attack?
- What attack on privacy becomes possible with unencrypted DNS?

DNS Servers are soft targets for attackers, take out the mapping and the website goes "offline"

DoS attack on major DNS provider brings Internet to morning crawl [Updated]

Dyn's US East region hit hardest in attack that affected Twitter, Reddit.

SEAN GALLAGHER - OCT 21, 2016 1:59 PM UTC

118



Update (12:04p ET): A second wave of DDoS attacks against Dyn is underway, as of noon Eastern Time today. Dyn is continuing to work on the issue. Our original story follows below; further updates will be added as information becomes available.

A distributed denial of service attack against Dyn, the dynamic DNS service, affected the availability of dozens of major websites and Internet services this morning, including Twitter and Reddit. The attack, **which began this morning at 7:10am Eastern Time** (12:10pm UK), is apparently focused on Dyn's US East Coast name servers.

"This morning, Dyn received a global DDoS attack on our Managed DNS infrastructure in the east coast of the United States," Doug Madory, Director of Internet Analysis at Dyn, said in an e-mail sent to Ars this morning. "DNS traffic resolved from east coast name server locations are experiencing a service interruption during this time." By 9:20am ET this morning, Dyn had mitigated the attack and services returned to normal.

[Update, 1:20 PM ET] Less than three hours later, the attack began again, and is still in progress.

Syrian group cited as New York Times outage continues

By Heather Kelly, CNN

🕒 Updated 1330 GMT (2130 HKT) August 29, 2013



The New York Times reported that the hackers gained access to a Melbourne IT reseller account using a phishing email and proceeded to change the DNS records of multiple domains, including NYTimes.com, according to the company.

The group is loyal to Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad

Twitter also experienced problems on Tuesday due to a similar attack

multiple attacks on media websites in recent months and, on Twitter, took credit for a sophisticated hack that had hobbled the Times' news site for roughly 20 hours.

"The @nytimes attack was going to deliver an anti-war message but our server couldn't last for 3 minutes," the group posted [on its Twitter](#)

[feed](#) at about 9:40 Wednesday morning.

Facebook goes offline

- When Facebook stopped advertising their DNS Nameservers on BGP, then other websites stopped being able to lookup the IP address of facebook.com
- That error then propagated across the internet taking Facebook offline worldwide

Understanding how Facebook disappeared from the Internet

10/04/2021



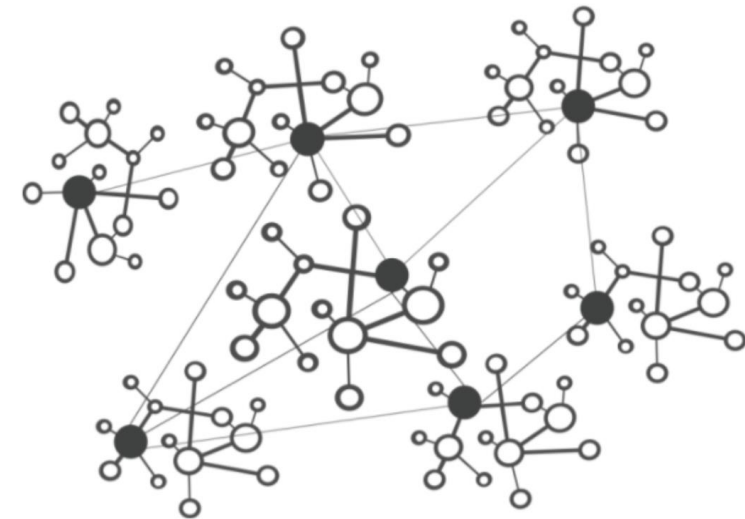
Celso Martinho



Tom Strickx

7 min read

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The Internet - A Network of Networks

"Facebook can't be down, can it?", we thought, for a second.

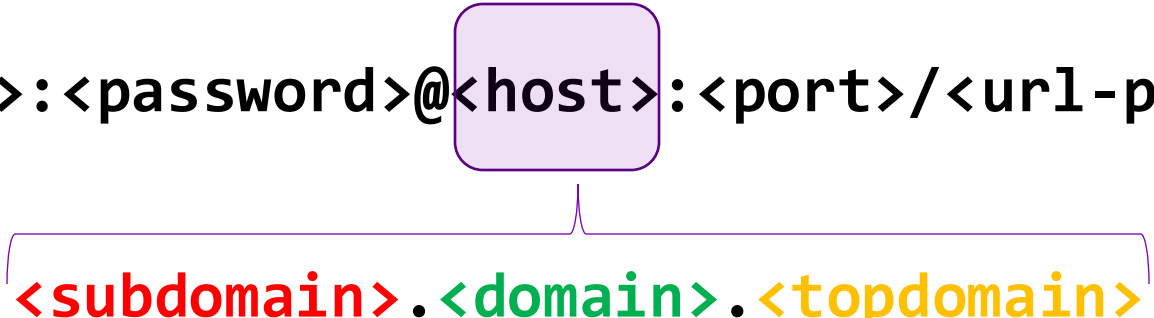
Today at 15:51 UTC, we opened an internal incident entitled "Facebook DNS lookup returning SERVFAIL" because we were worried that something was wrong with our

URL READING

What is a URL?

- Uniform Resource Locators (URLs) are a standardized format for describing the location and access method of resources via the internet.

`<scheme>://<user>:<password>@<host>:<port>/<url-path>?<query-string>`



`<subdomain>.<domain>.<topdomain>`

eg. `https://profile.facebook.com`

What is a URL?

- Uniform Resource Locators (URLs) are a standardized format for describing the location and access method of resources via the internet.

<scheme>://<user>:<password>@<host>:<port>/<url-path>?<query-string>

ssh kvaniea@eceubuntu1.uwaterloo.ca

What is a URL?

- Uniform Resource Locators (URLs) are a standardized format for describing the location and access method of resources via the internet.

<scheme>://<user>:<password>@<host>:<port>/<url-path>?<query-string>



https://vaniea.com:80

What is a URL?

- Uniform Resource Locators (URLs) are a standardized format for describing the location and access method of resources via the internet.

<scheme>://<user>:<password>@<host>:<port>/<url-path>?<query-string>


https://www.google.com/search?q=vaniea

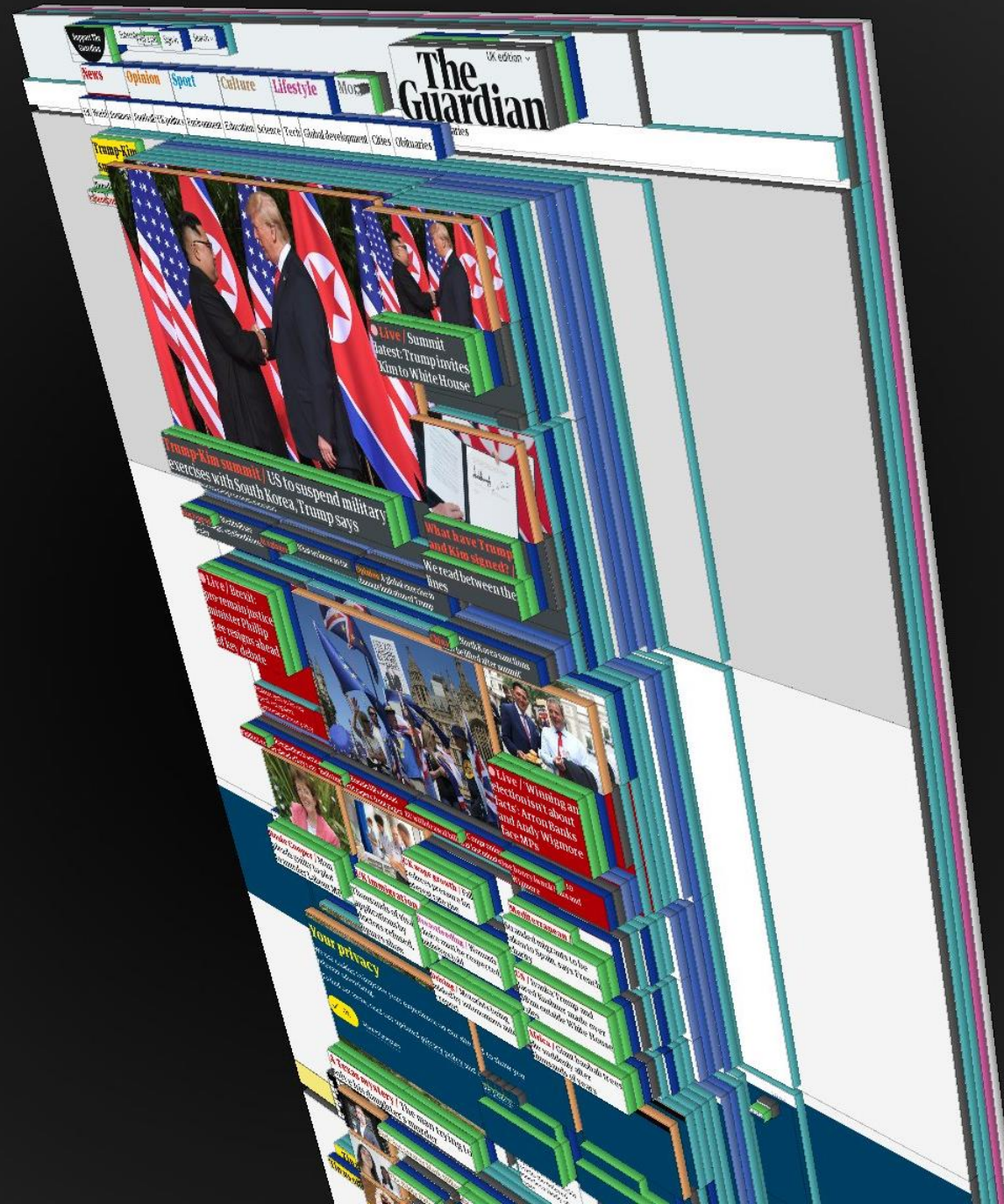
HOW WEB PAGES ARE BUILT

Once you click a link, your web browser will attempt to load the page.

Lets look at what the browser is doing.

Web pages are not flat. Nor are they read-only.

They are dynamically constructed out of a combination of media provided by the main website and by 3rd party websites.



Cute Dogs!



Cute dog sleeping
on a park bench.



Playing with a ball all
day is hard work. But
that is no reason to
release the ball.



Think-pair-share

- Where are the trust boundaries in this website loading?

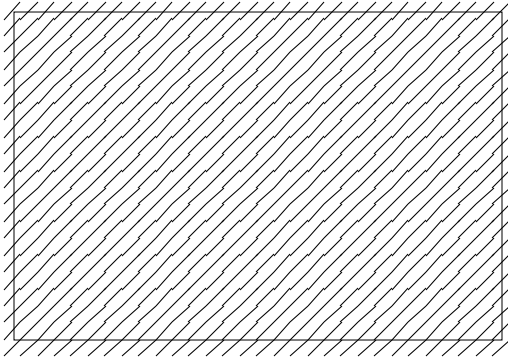
Imagine an overly
simple (fake)
website:
cutedogs.com

```
<html>
  <head>
    <title>Cute Dogs!</title>
    <link href="/style.css" rel="stylesheet">
  </head>
  <body>
    <img href="instagram.com/dog.jpg"> Cute dog ...
    <img href="instagram.com/sad_dog.jpg"> Play ...
    <img href="doubleclick.com/invisible.jpg"
          width="0" height="0">

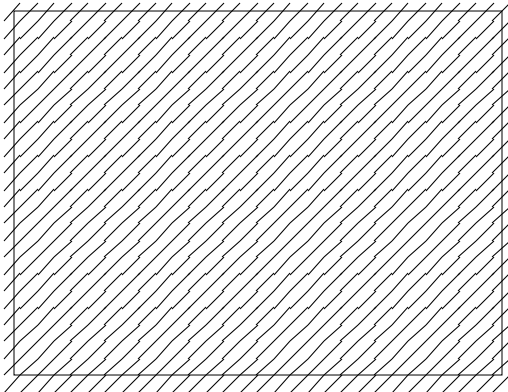
    <script>
      <!-- Code here that loads
             https://beacon.krxd.net/tracker.js
             https://connect.facebook.net/connect.js
      -->
    </script>

  </body>
</html>
```

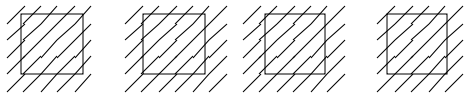
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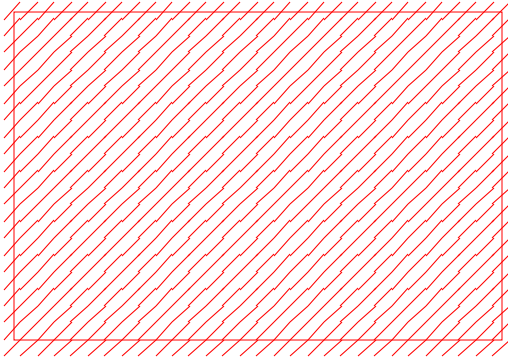


First, the computer fetches the main page. This page is similar to a template, or a recipe in that it contains instructions on how to build the rest of the page.

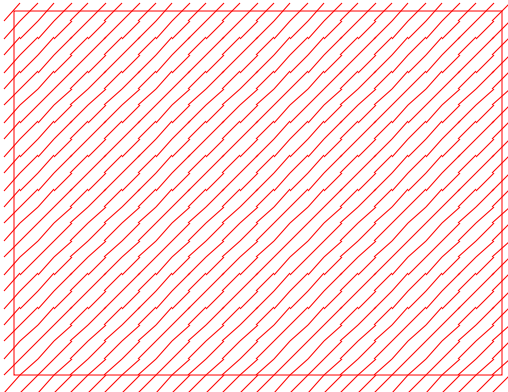
Loaded:

- index.html from cutedog.com
- dog.jpg from instagram.com
- sad_dog.jpg from instagram.com
- style.css from cutedog.com
- tracker.js from beacon.krxd.net
- invisible.jpg from doubleclick.com
- connect.js from connect.facebook.net

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Red shaded boxes are parts of the template that are waiting to be

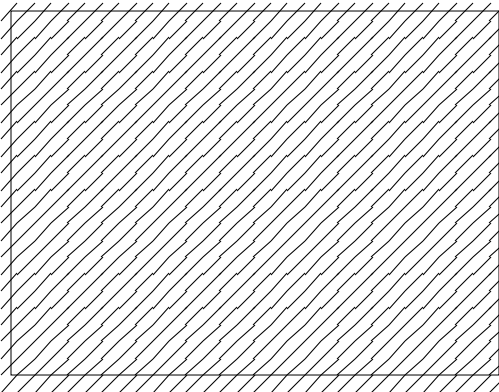
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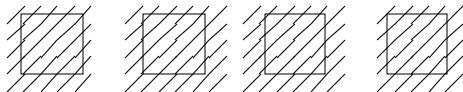
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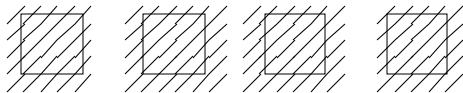
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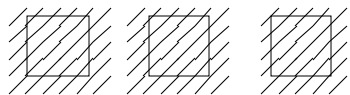
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- invisible.jpg from doubleclick.com
- connect.js from connect.facebook.net

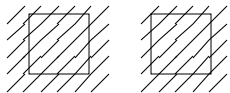
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- tracker.js from beacon.krxd.net
- invisible.jpg from doubleclick.com
- connect.js from connect.facebook.net

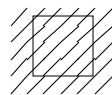
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- sad_dog.jpg from instagram.com
- style.css from cutedog.com
- tracker.js from beacon.krxd.net
- invisible.jpg from doubleclick.com
- connect.js from connect.facebook.net
- logo.jpg from connect.facebook.net

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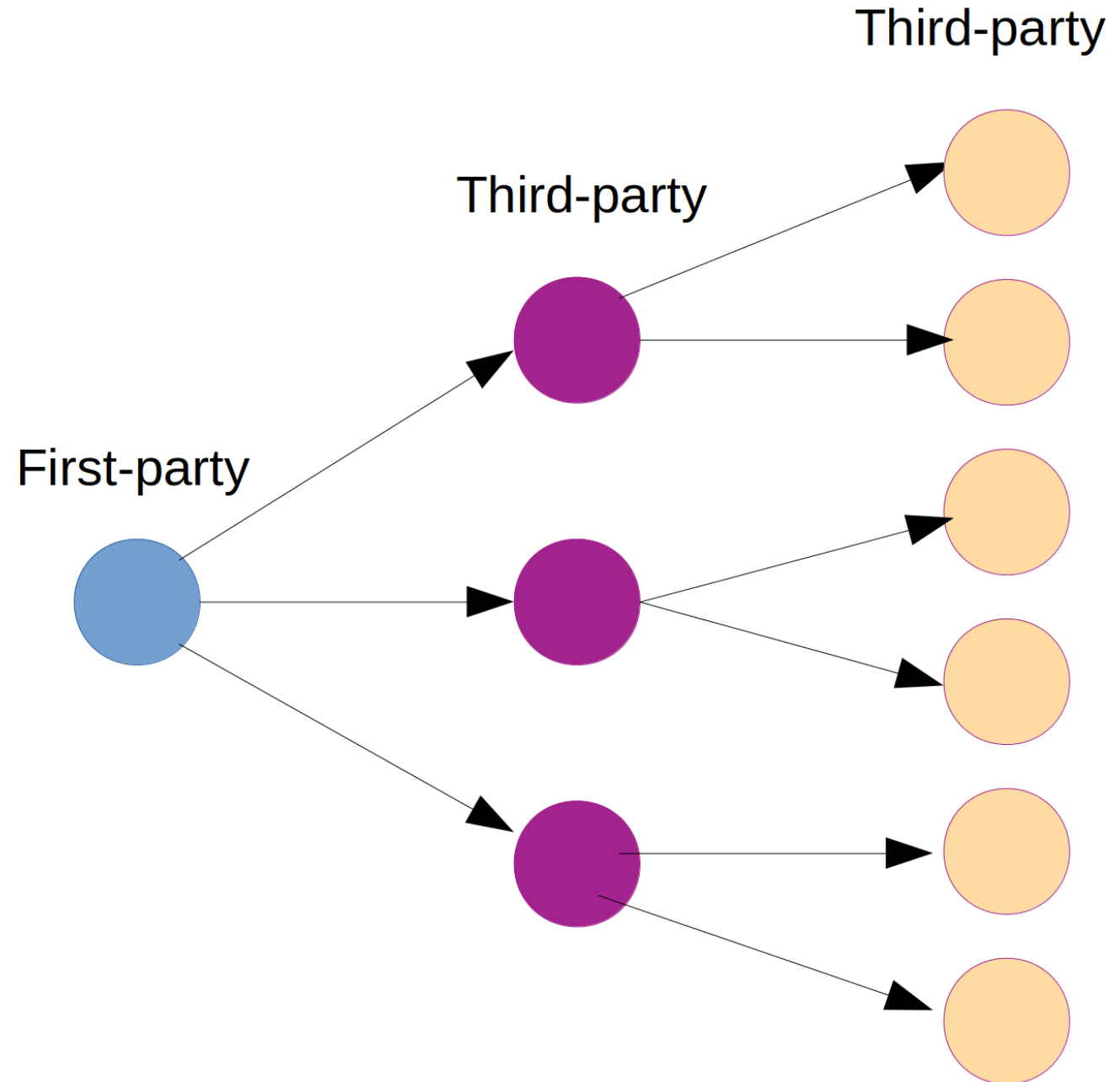
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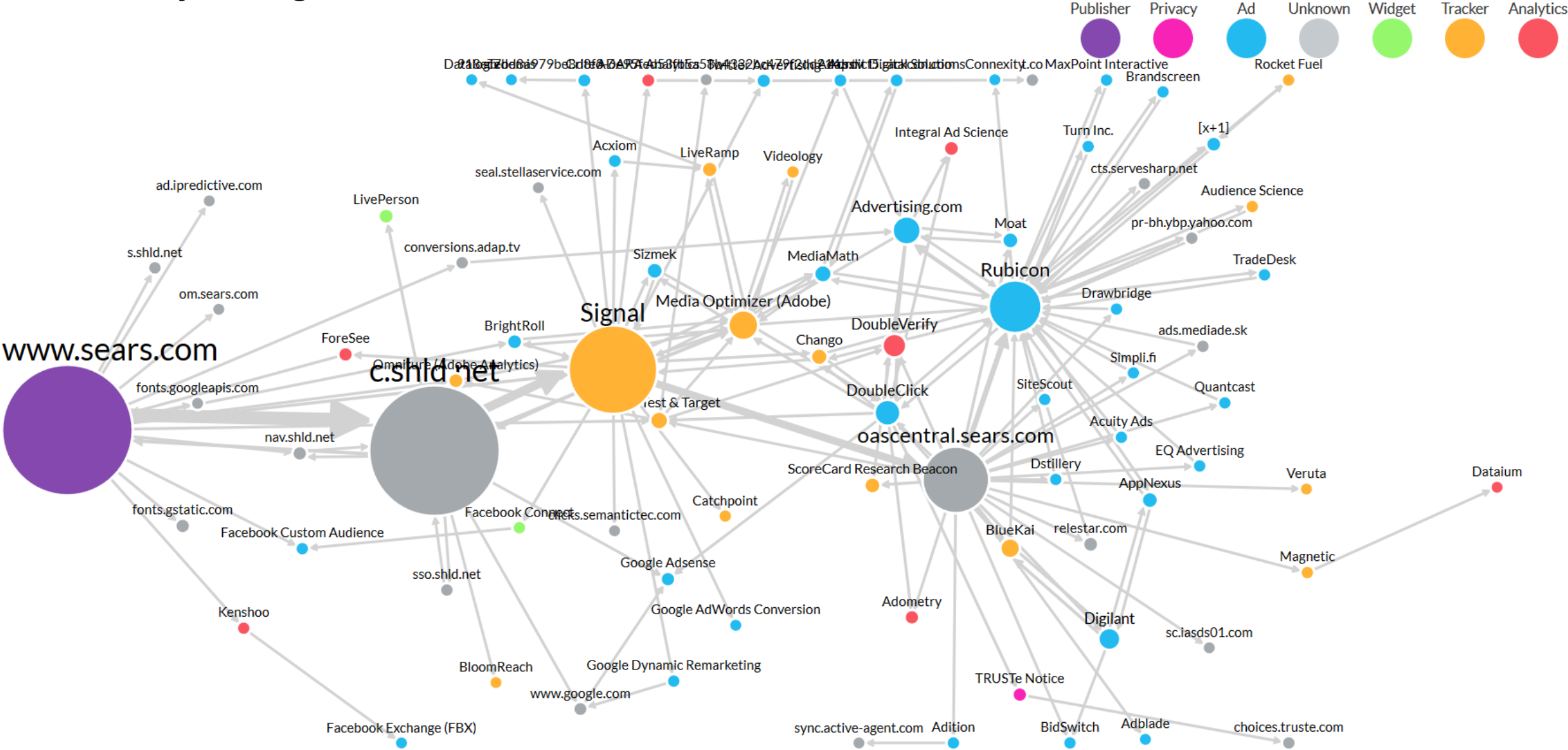
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- invisible.jpg from doubleclick.com
- connect.js from connect.facebook.net
- logo.jpg from connect.facebook.net

Each piece of content can add new content to the page.



Ghostery: Page content sources



News**Opinion****Sport****Culture****Lifestyle**

More

UK World Business Football UK politics Environment Education Science Tech Global development Cities Obituaries

Headlines**Monday**
11 June 2018

Edinburgh

Now
13°C

17:00	20:00	23:00
16°C	14°C	12°C

Brexit /
'Catastrophic' no deal a real possibility, says Vince Cable

Lib Dem leader urges Theresa May to stand up to hardline Brexiters in her own party

Jacob Rees-Mogg 'No need for Dover customs checks under no deal'**Theresa May** PM calls for party unity over key Brexit votes**EU withdrawal bill** Full list of proposed amendments**Theresa May / PM** calls her response to Grenfell fire 'not good enough'**Live** May admits rehousing survivors has taken 'too long'**Grenfell survivors** Council added to suffering, report says**UK manufacturing /** Largest monthly fall in output for five years**Arron Banks / UK**

The Guardian Content Sources

- assets.guim.co.uk
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- ipv6.guim.co.uk
- poly_x001c_ll.g
- uim.co.uk
- uploads.guim.co.uk
- api.nextgen.guardianapps.co.uk
- ophan.theguardian.com
- static.theguardian.com
- ad.360yield.com
- adservice.google.com
- adservice.google.co.uk
- apex.go.sonobi.com
- as-sec.casalemedia.com
- beacon.gu-web.net
- beacon.krxd.net
- cdn.adsafeprotected.com
- cdn-gl.imrworldwide.com
- cdn.krxd.net
- connect.facebook.net
- consumer.krxd.net
- dt.adsafeprotected.com
- dual.guim.co.uk
- elb.the-ozone-project.com
- googleads.g.doubleclick.net
- i.yimg.com
- pagead2.googlesyndication.com
- partner.mediawallahscript.com
- pixel.adsafeprotected.com
- prebid.adnxs.com
- sb.scorecardresearch.com
- secure-au.imrworldwide.com
- secure-dcr.imrworldwide.com
- secure-gl.imrworldwide.com
- securepubads.g.doubleclick.net
- static.adsafeprotected.com
- static.doubleclick.net
- stats.g.doubleclick.net
- sync.go.sonobi.com
- s.yimg.com
- tags.bluekai.com
- tpc.googlesyndication.com
- uipglob.semasio.net
- www.facebook.com
- www.googleadservices.com
- www.google-analytics.com
- www.google.com
- www.google.co.uk
- www.googletagservices.com
- www.youtube.com
- 7senobrlslpagqt8kh6vbxl92ahwu1528731245.nuic
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pixel.tapad.com
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image2.pubmatic.com

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cm.g.doubleclick.net
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- connect.facebook.net
- consumer.krxd.net
- dt.adsafeprotected.com
- dual.guim.co.uk
- elb.the-ozone-project.com
- googleads.g.doubleclick.net
- i.yimg.com
- pagead2.googlesyndication.com
- partner.mediawallahscript.com
- pixel.adsafeprotected.com
- prebid.adnxs.com
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11 June 2018

Edinburgh

Now
15°C

21:00 00:00 03:00
13°C 11°C 10°C

Brexit/Tory
remainers warn of
revolt over EU
withdrawal bill

Some MPs are not satisfied with proposed changes as bill returns to Commons

EU withdrawal bill Full list of proposed amendments

Brexit tribes How the Commons camps are likely to vote

Vince Cable 'Catastrophic no deal a real possibility'

Mediterranean /
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Spain

Grenfell Tower / Theresa May calls her response to fire 'not good enough'

California / Missing US air force officer found after 35 years

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Channel 5 / Jeremy Vine to take over Wright Stuff slot

Podcast
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General election anniversary

Live / Trump should expect retaliation after G7 tariff row, says May

PM praises Justin Trudeau for his leadership and says the UK intends to honour commitments **5,574**

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Q&A How damaging was Trump's G7 blow-up?

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Prostate cancer / Saliva test could help identify men at greatest risk

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Serpentine pavilion / Steel, shade and a paddling pool
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pavilion / Steel,

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paddling pool

Oliver Wainwright

Only the second solo woman

and the youngest architect to

win the annual commission,

Mexico's Frida Escobedo has

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backdrop for summer frolics

Toxic and untaxed / Perile of global

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makeover at a time

Crimea / Football club that was split in

two after Russian invasion

How we made / Spare

Rib magazine

'I could have ended

up dead' / Why

women's refugees face a

fatal new threat

Grenfell one year on

/ The student midwife

who rushed to help

WH Smith wouldn't stock

some issues. One cover

showed a woman in the

throes of an orgasm

Though friends and family tried

to stop her, Zahra Choudhry

spent almost a month giving help

to survivors and families

Crosswords

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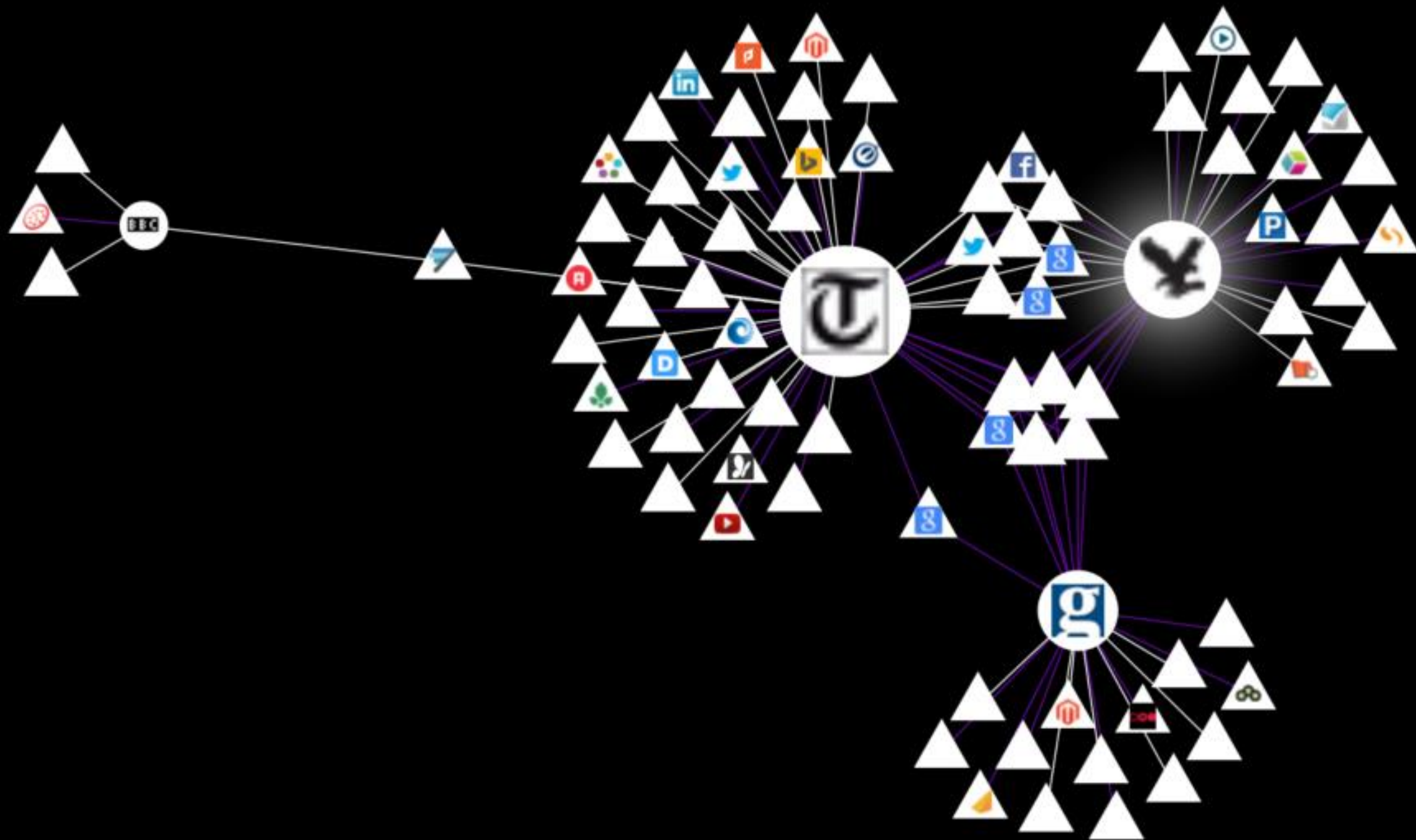
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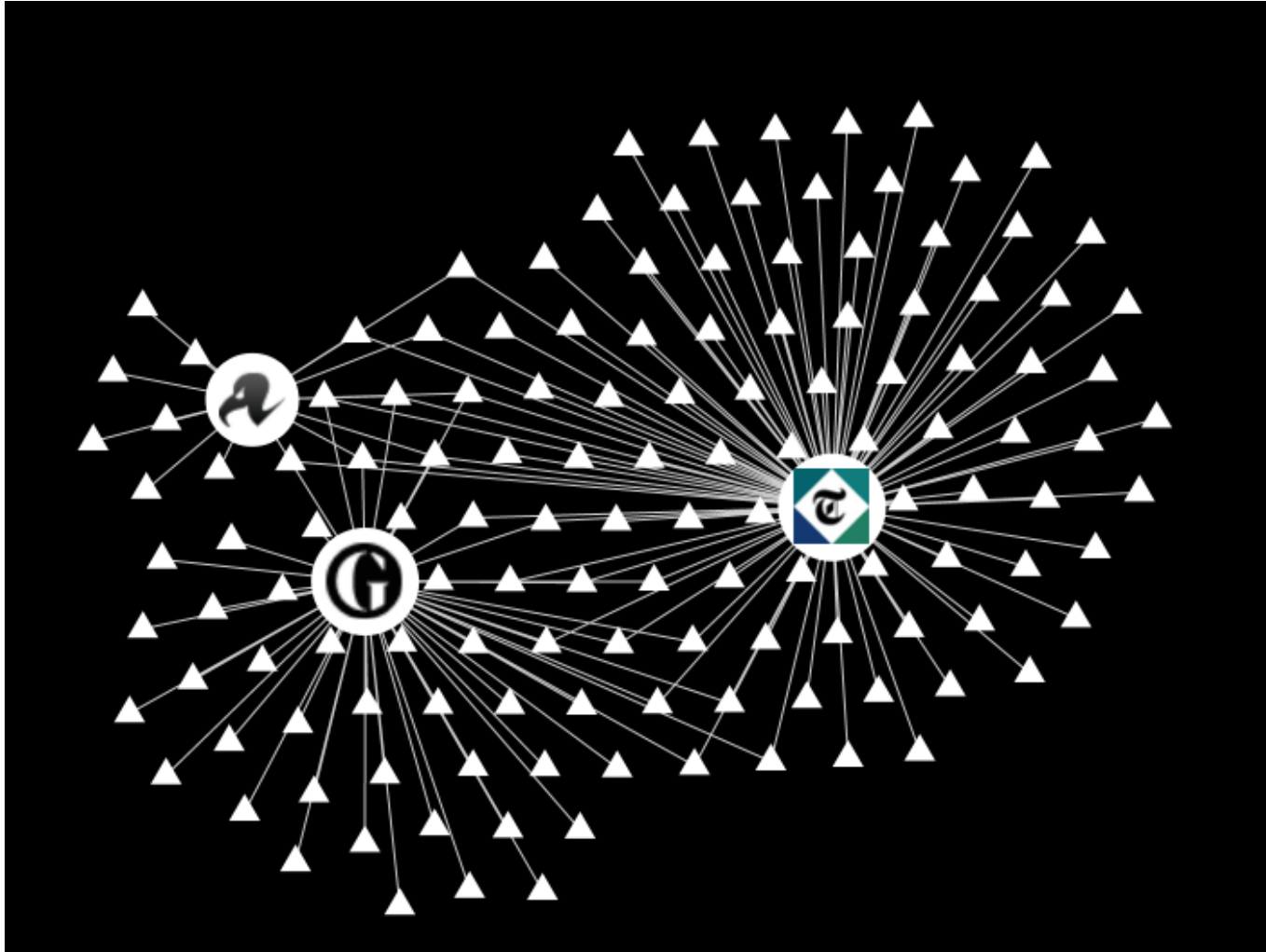
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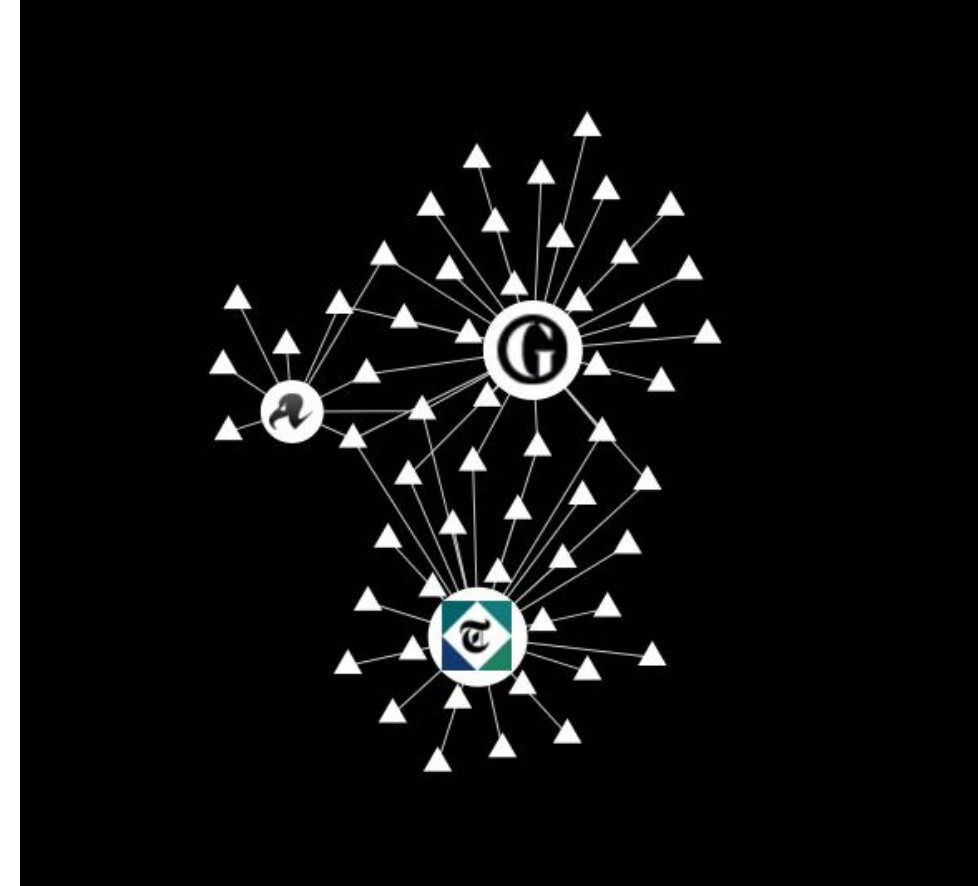
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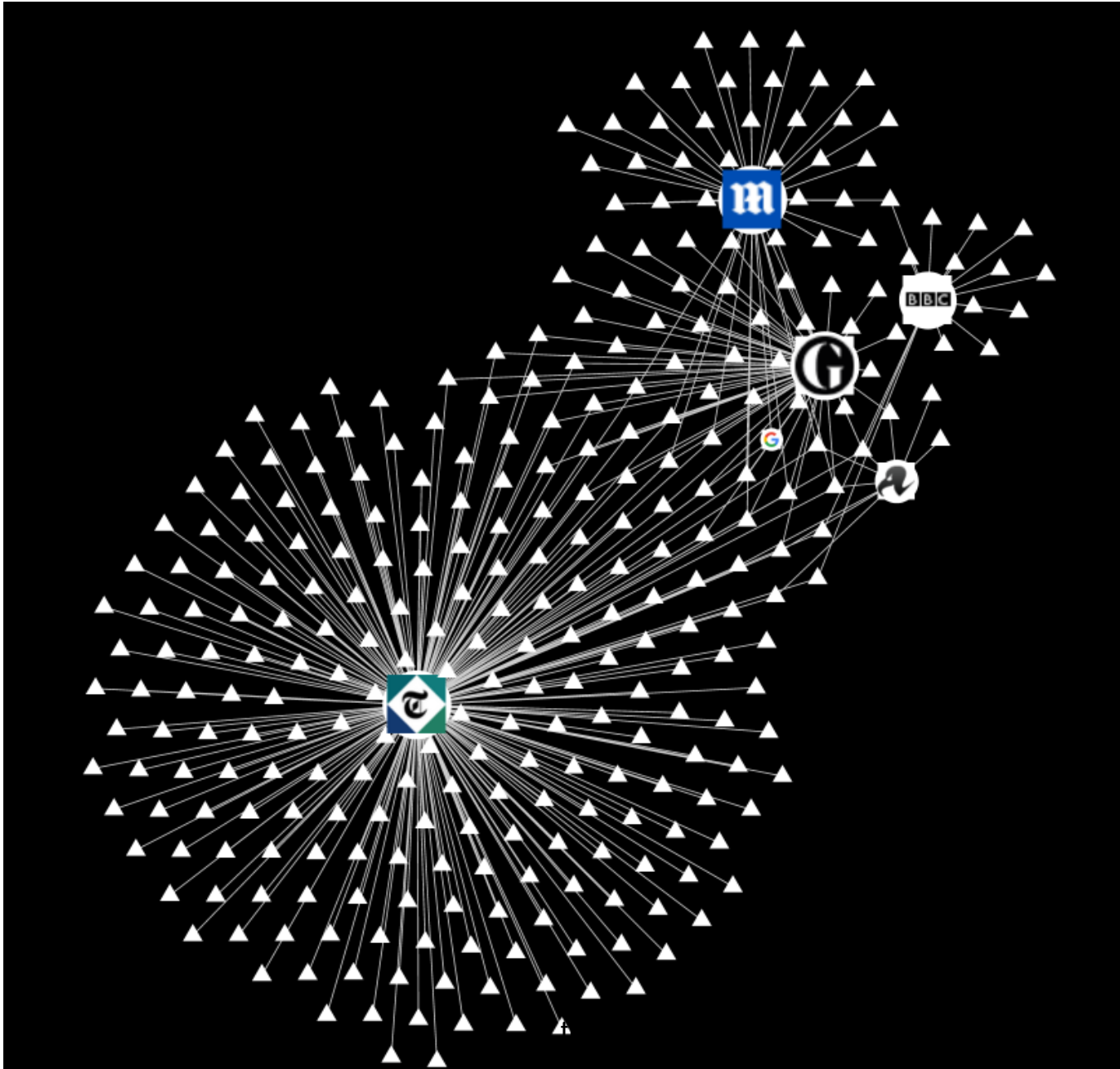
Normal



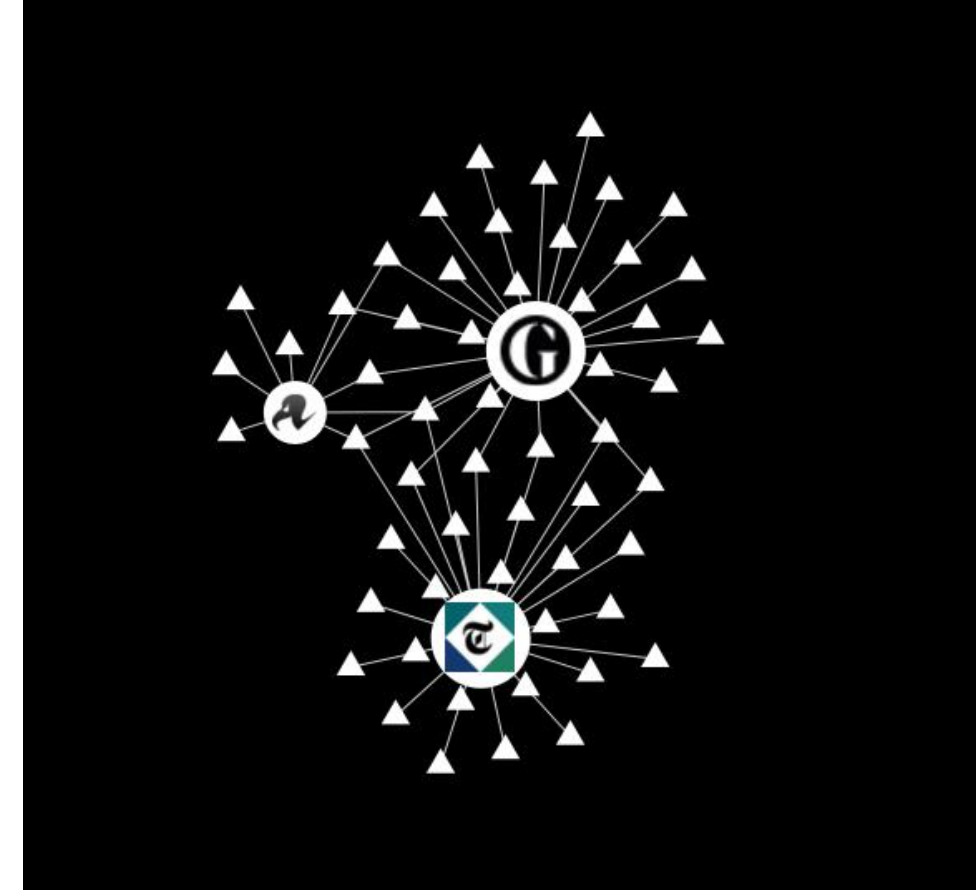
Adblock Plus



Normal (hours later)



Adblock Plus



Cute Dogs!



Cute dog sleeping
on a park bench.



Playing with a ball all
day is hard work. But
that is no reason to
release the ball.



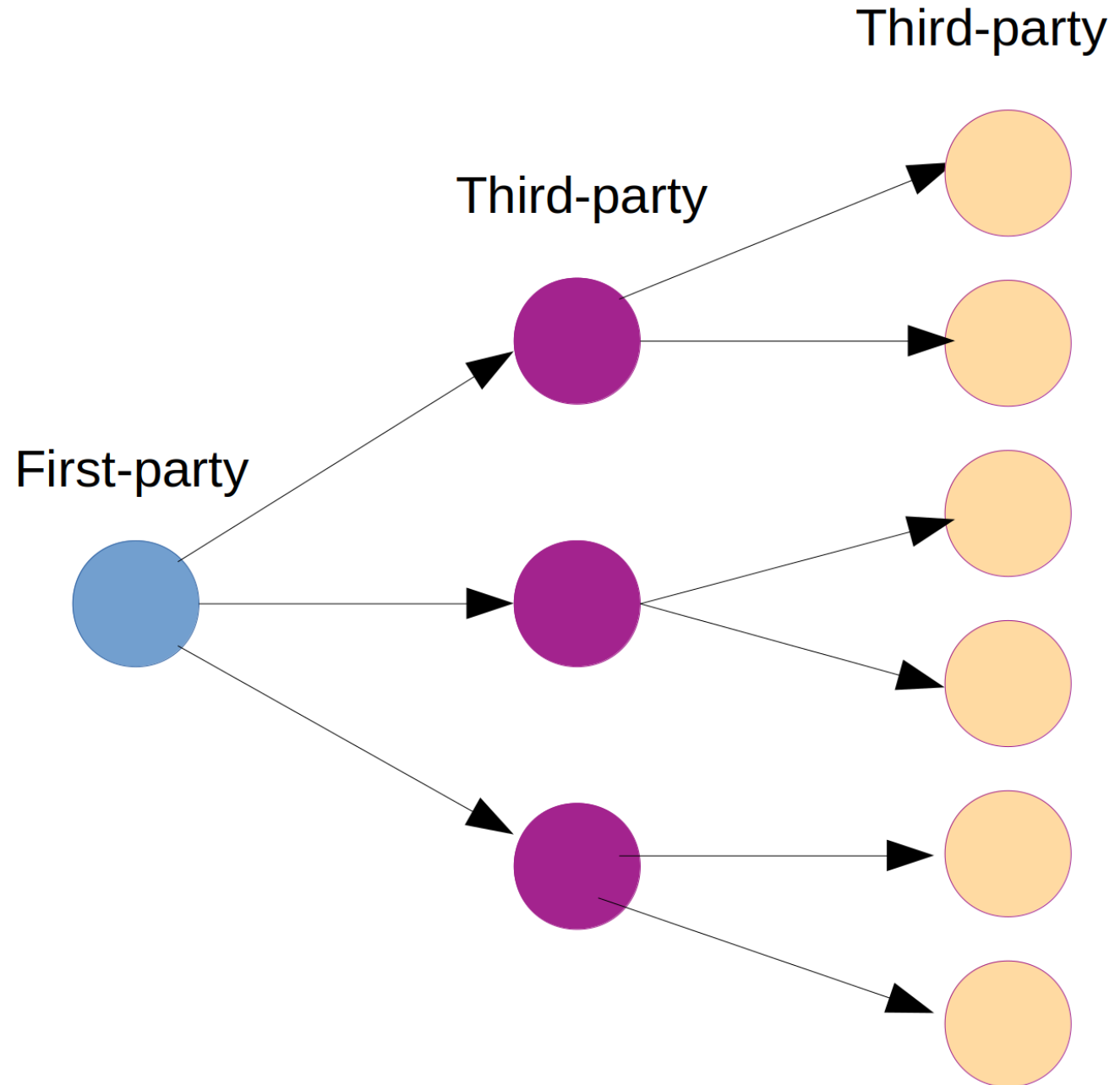
Think-pair-share

- What does an advertising blocker do in terms of the page loading sequence we just saw?
- How could DNS be used to do advertising blocking?
- Advanced:
 - How do advertising companies like Facebook and Google verify ads on their platforms are “safe”?

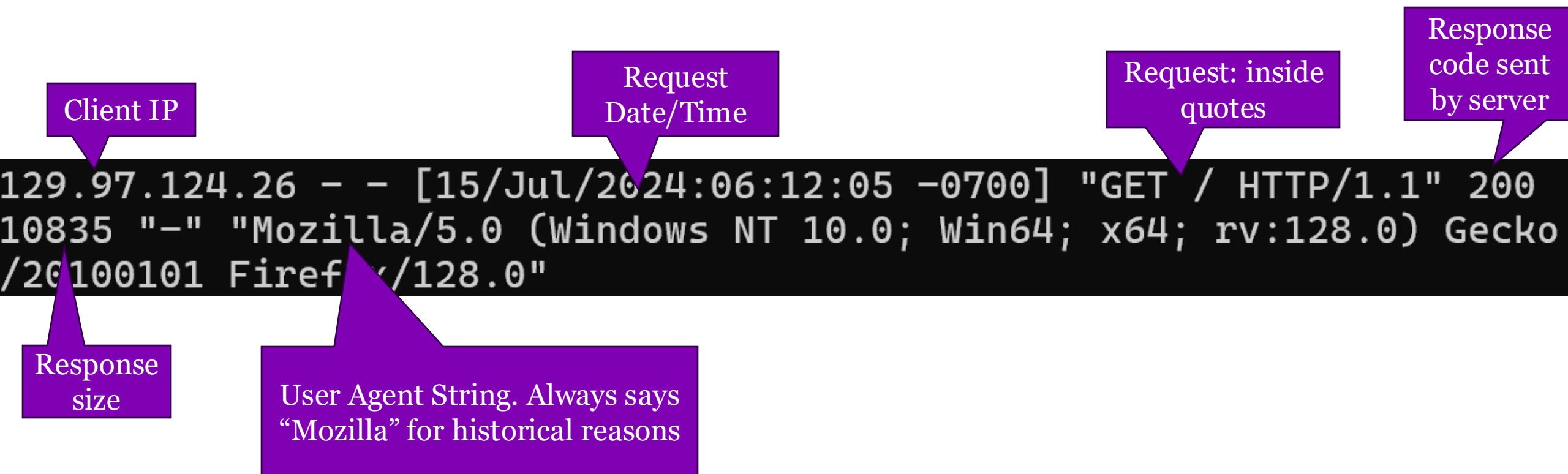
WEB PAGE BUILDING: WEB REQUESTS

Each piece of content can add new content to the page.

Every content request sends data to the web server.



HTTP Request: Every connection sends information



HTTP Request: Every connection sends information

- Firefox on Windows

```
129.97.124.26 - - [15/Jul/2024:06:12:05 -0700] "GET / HTTP/1.1" 200
10835 "-" "Mozilla/5.0 (Windows NT 10.0; Win64; x64; rv:128.0) Gecko
/20100101 Firefox/128.0"
```

- Firefox on Android

```
129.97.124.32 - - [15/Jul/2024:06:26:32 -0700] "GET / HTTP/1.1" 200
10835 "-" "Mozilla/5.0 (Android 14; Mobile; rv:128.0) Gecko/128.0 Fi
refox/128.0"
```

- Edge on Windows

```
129.97.124.26 - - [15/Jul/2024:06:23:56 -0700] "GET / HTTP/1.1" 200
10835 "-" "Mozilla/5.0 (Windows NT 10.0; Win64; x64) AppleWebKit/537
.36 (KHTML, like Gecko) Chrome/126.0.0.0 Safari/537.36 Edg/126.0.0.0
"
```

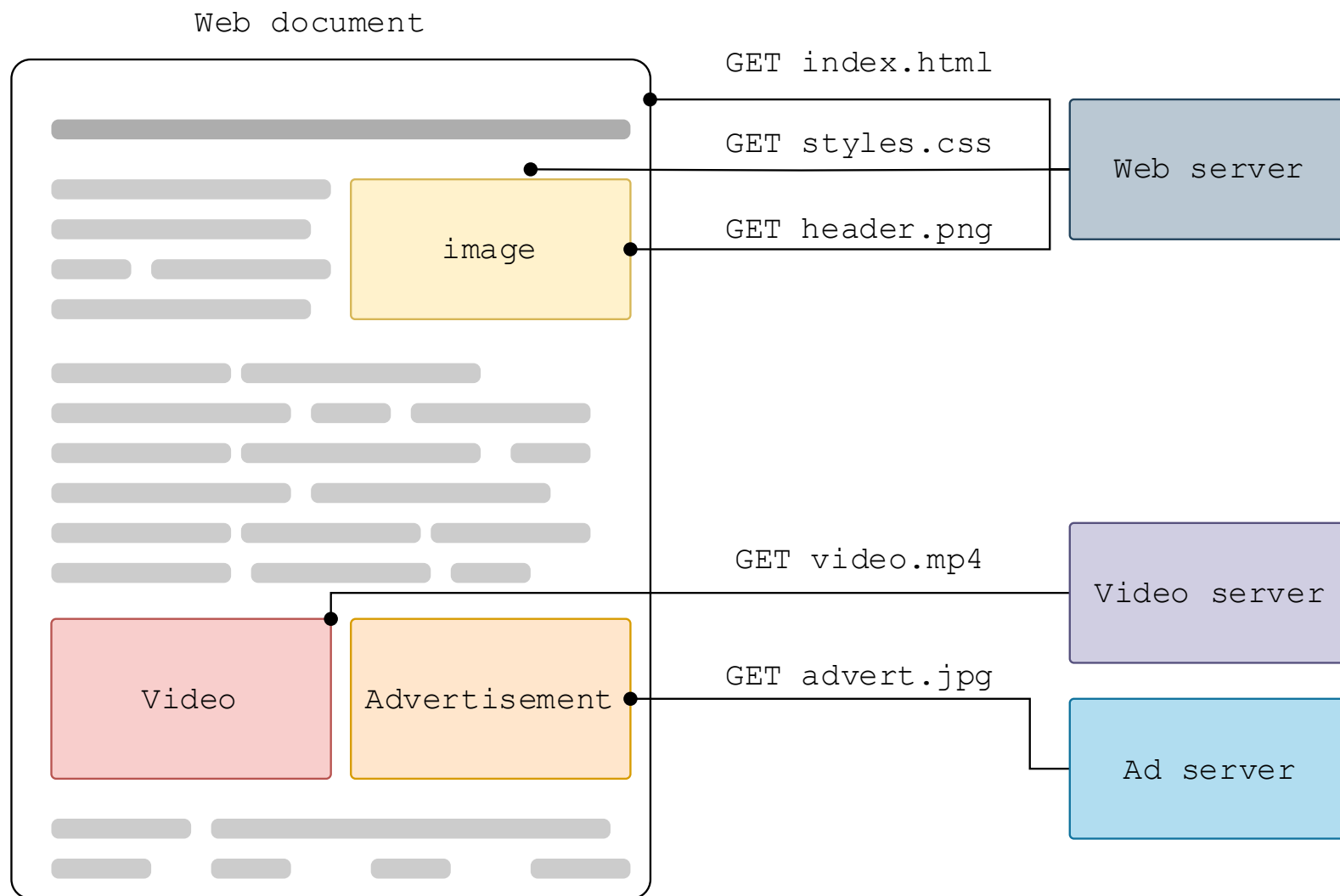

Log of an attack attempt

My website has no PHP installed.
This is an attack attempt.

```
119.188.247.39 - - [15/Jul/2024:06:52:49 -0700] "GET /login.php?s=Admin  
/login HTTP/1.1" 404 3856 "-" "python-requests/2.31.0"  
223.109.252.233 - - [15/Jul/2024:06:55:40 -0700] "GET / HTTP/1.1" 200 3  
5214 "-" "Sogou web spider/4.0(+http://www.sogou.com/docs/help/webmaste  
rs.htm#07)"
```

This line is an automatic
script downloading content off
my website.

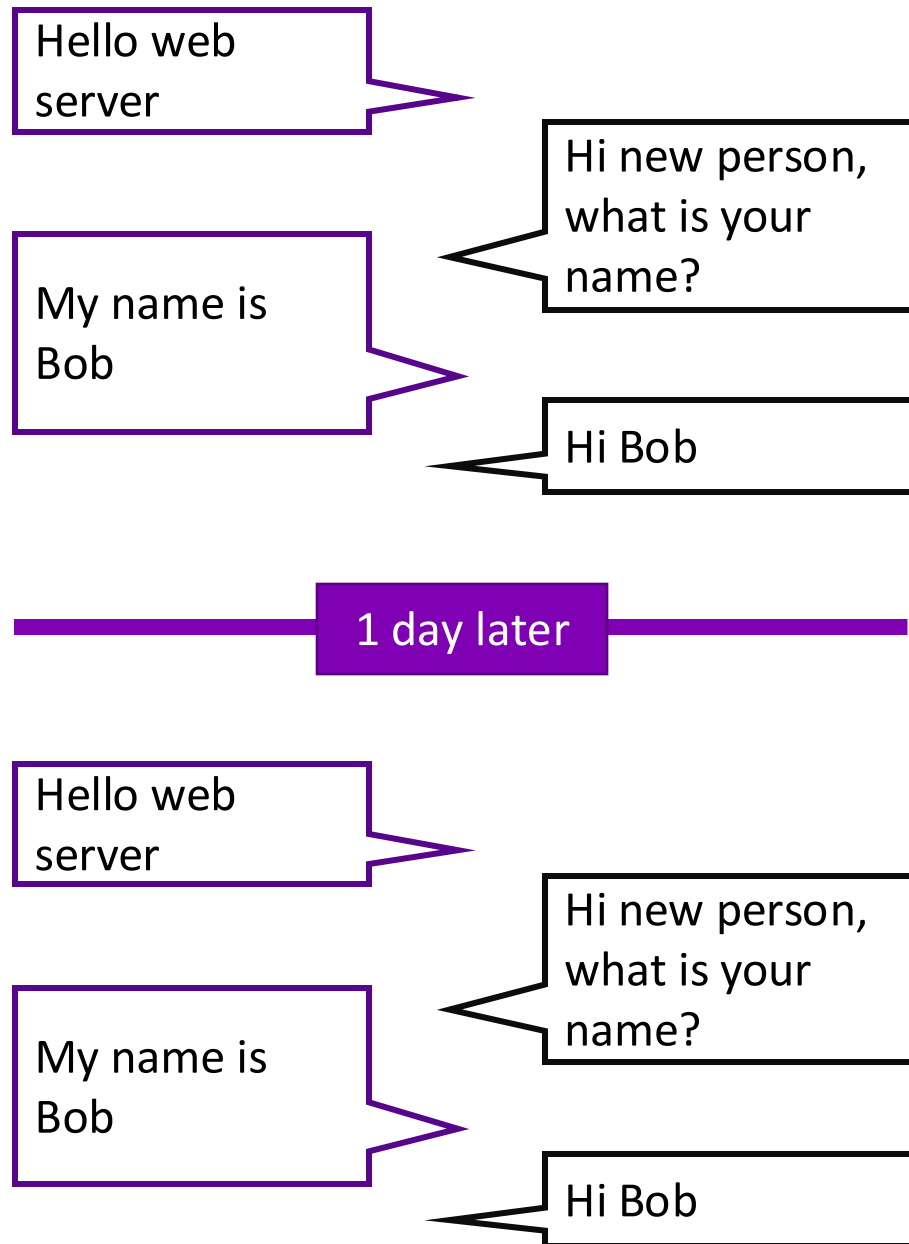
Every connection sends information. Every connection constructed with a scripting language (i.e. Javascript) can dynamically add GET/POST data to the request that it gets locally from the DOM.



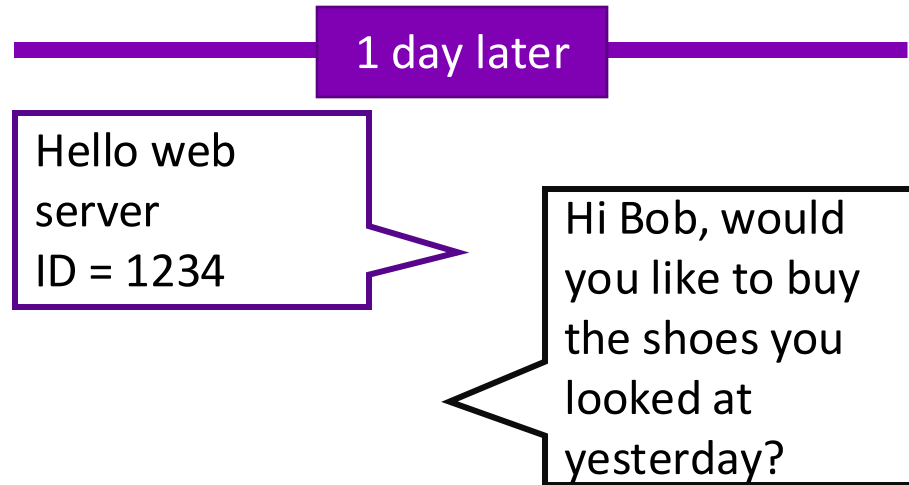
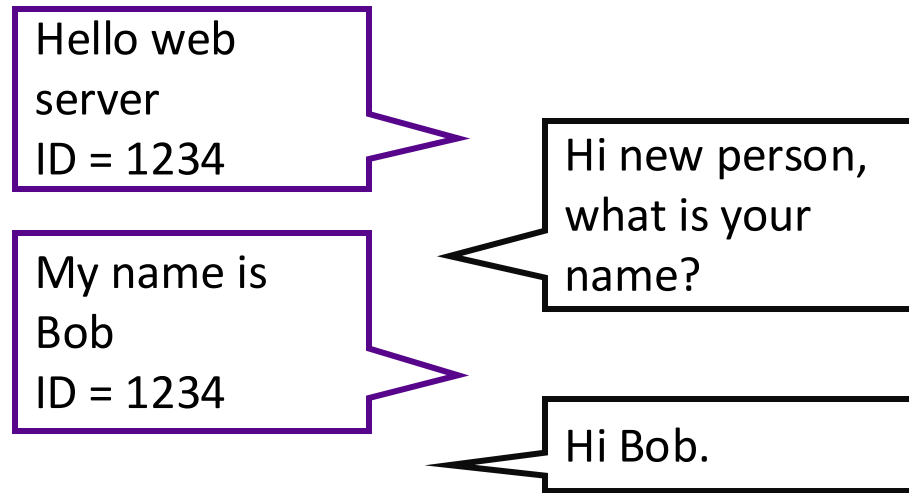
DESIGNING THE WEB COOKIE

Heavily based on Lou Montulli's "The reasoning behind Web Cookies"

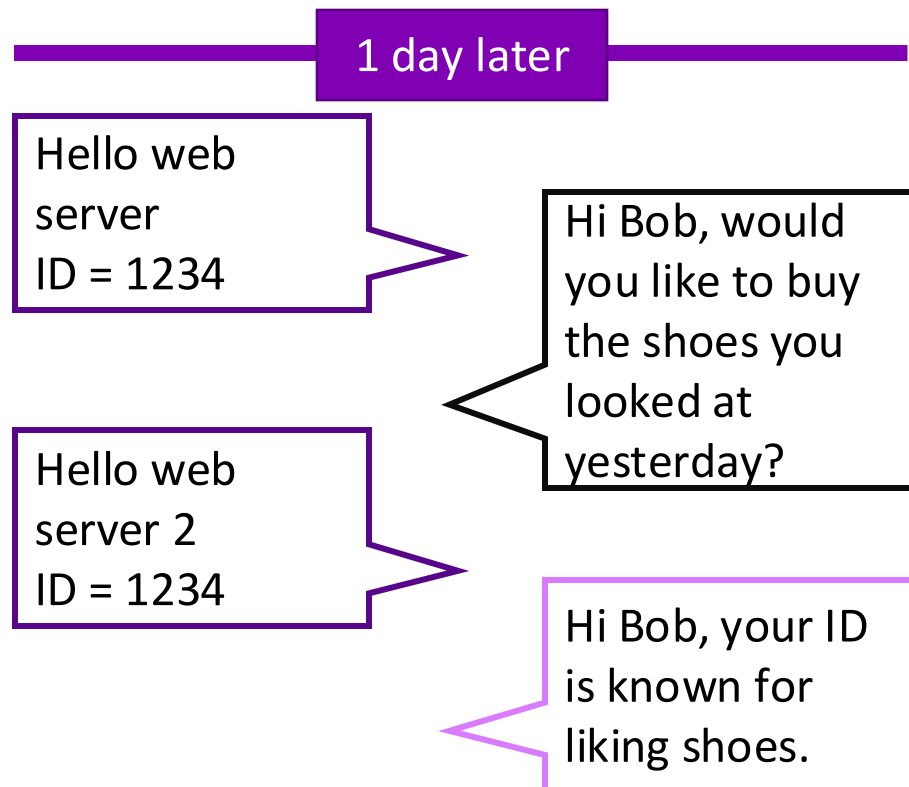
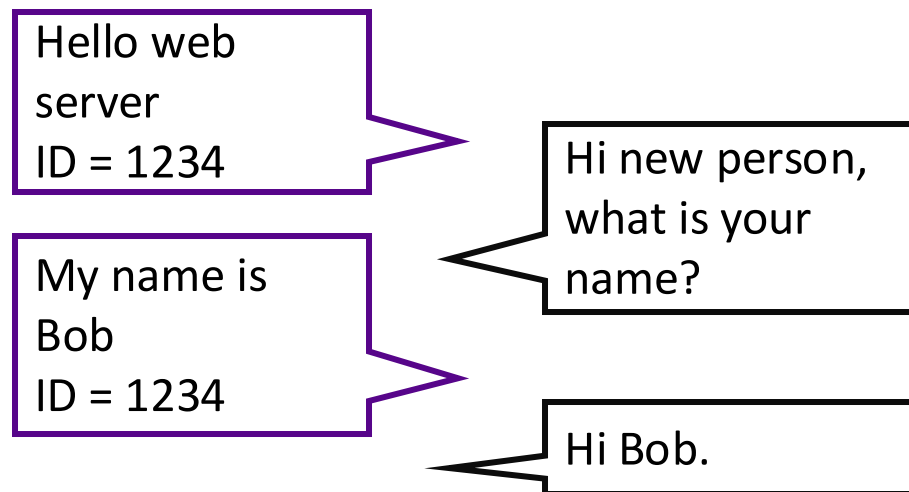
The year is 1994 and there is a problem... the internet has no ability to remember a person between page reloads.



There is an obvious
easy solution...
Give each browser a
unique identifier.

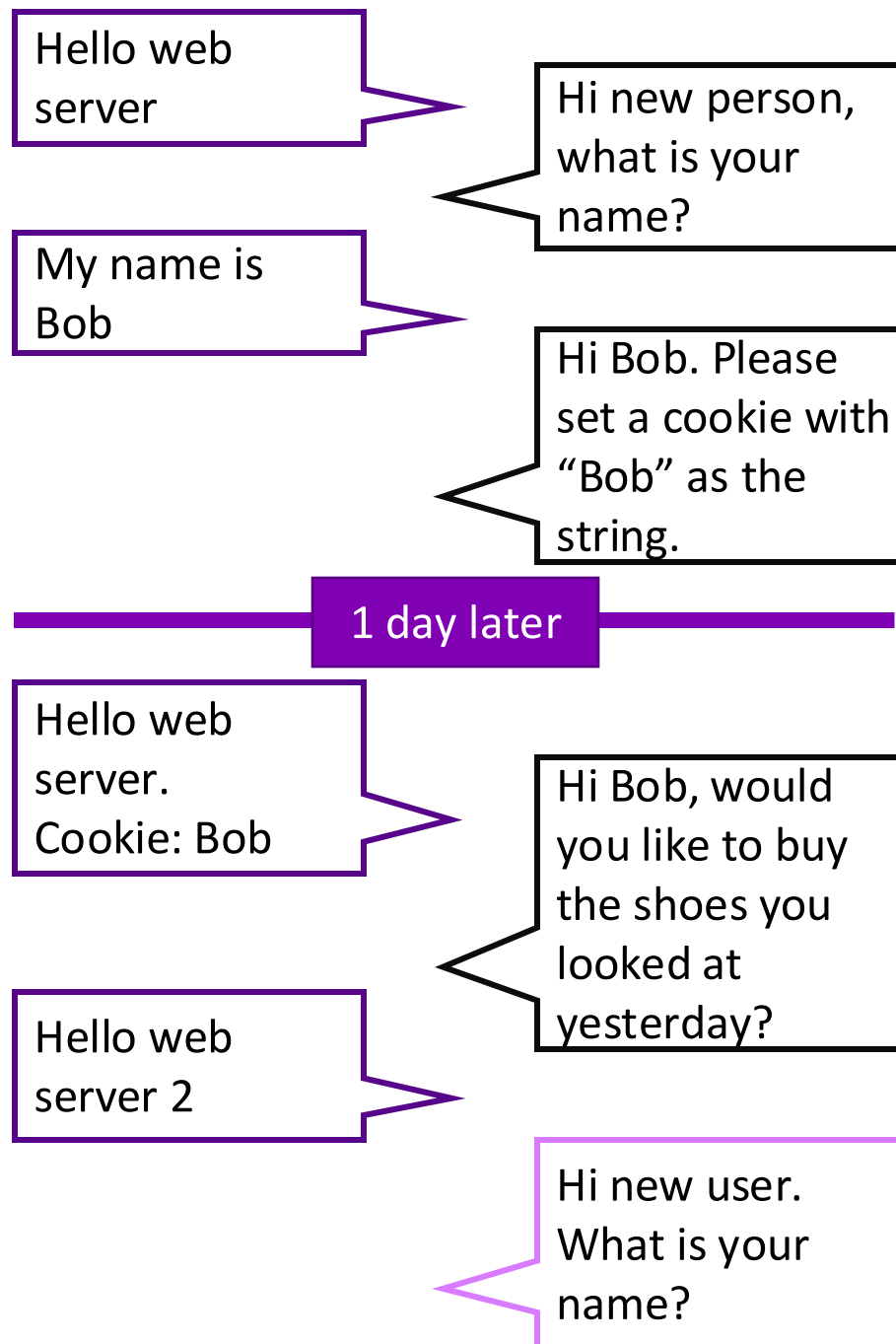


The problem with the obvious solution is privacy. Tracking would be possible with no visibility or control.



Instead Netscape implemented cookies.

Small text strings the server can ask the browser to remember and give back later.



QUESTIONS