

Lecture 17 – Browser Security

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CS 487 – Fall 2017

Some slides from Bailey's ECE 422

Documents

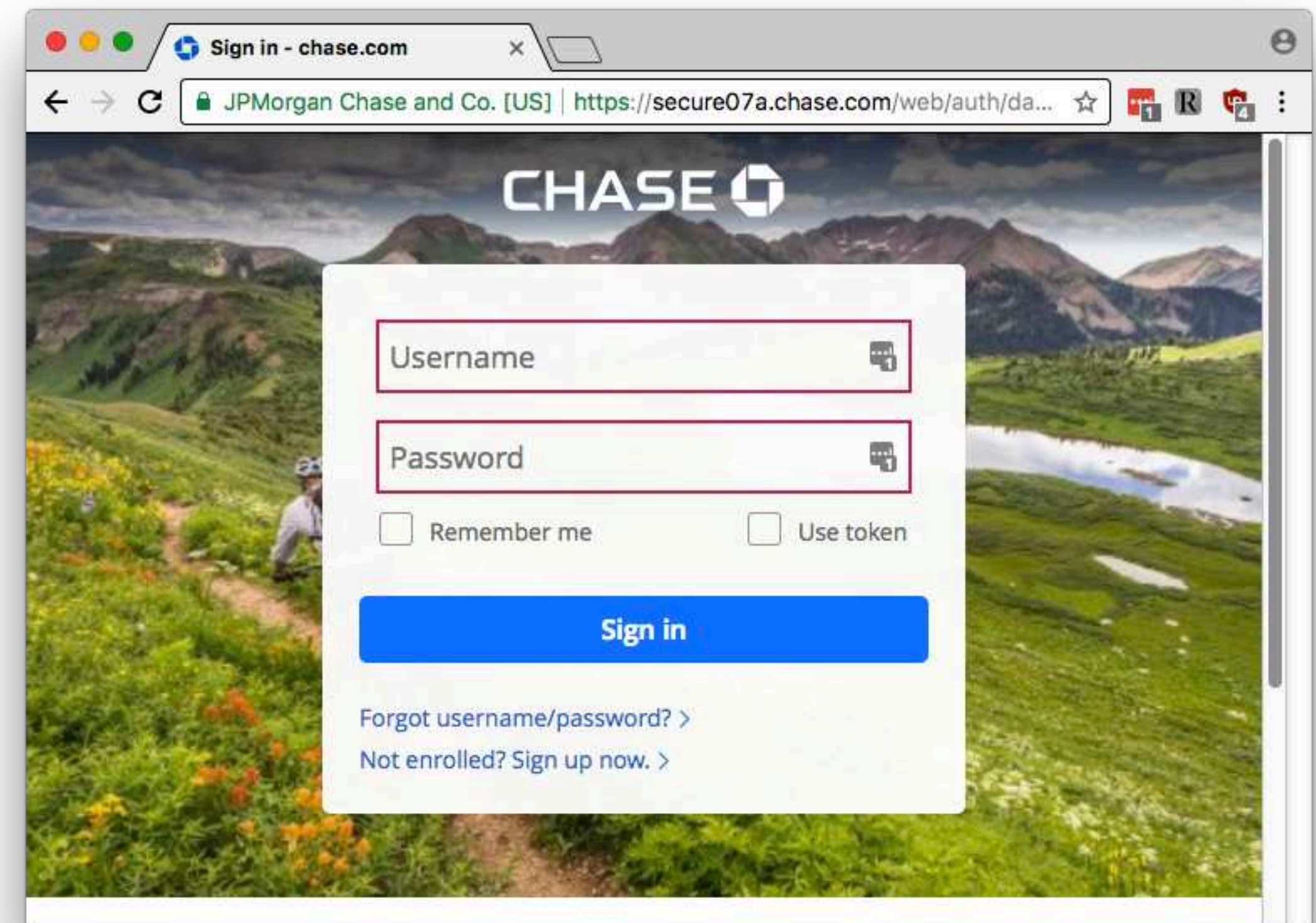
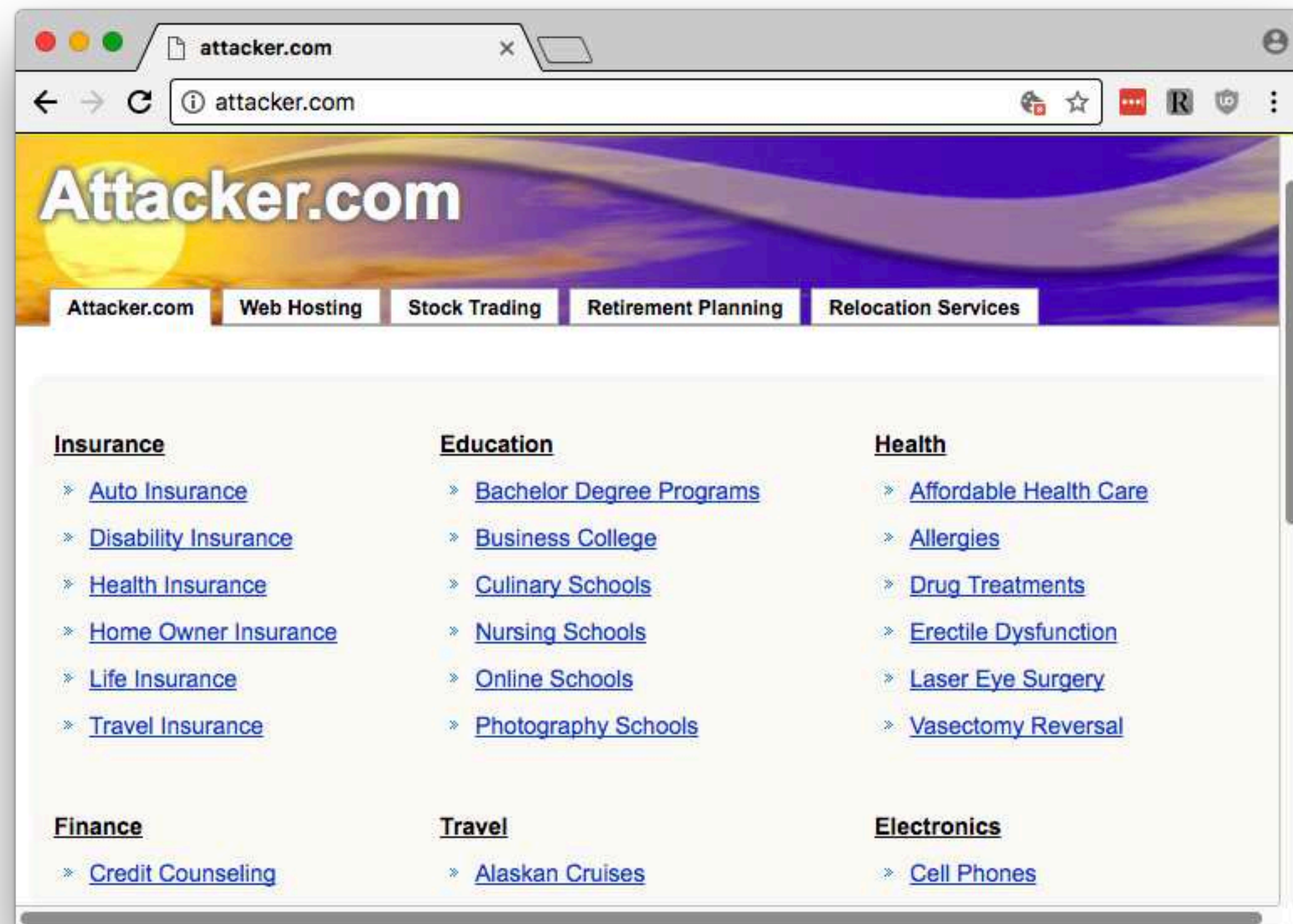
- Browser's fundamental role is to display documents comprised of
 - HTML
 - JavaScript
 - Style sheets (CSS)
 - Images
 - Sounds
 - Movies
 - Plugin content
 - Flash
 - SilverLight
 - QuickTime
 - ...

Document Object Model (DOM)

- The browser allows scripts to
 - add/modify/delete/style the DOM elements
 - make changes in response to user actions (e.g., clicks)
 - submit forms
 - browse to a new document altogether
- Scripts in one document can modify another document
 - We say that Page A *scripts* Page B

Scripting other documents

- Very powerful capability and without constraints would be dangerous
- Consider having attacker.com open while logging into chase.com
- If attacker.com can script chase.com, what could happen?



Clearly we need separation

- This is Risk #3 from last time
- Same Origin Policy (SOP)
 - Goal: Partition documents into equivalence classes that can script each other (including reading each others' content)
 - Each document is assigned an origin and documents can script other documents in the same origin
 - We construct the origin from the URL

From URLs to Origins

- General form of a URL
`scheme://user:pass@host:port/path?querystring#fragment`
- Most parts are optional giving URLs like
`http://www.uic.edu/chicago`
`https://google.com?q=hello+world`
- Origins are the triple (scheme, host, port)
What's the origin for `http://www.uic.edu/chicago?`

What's the origin for `https://google.com?q=hello+world?`

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What's the origin for `http://www.uic.edu/chicago?`
(http, www.uic.edu, 80)
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What's the origin for `http://www.uic.edu/chicago?`
(http, www.uic.edu, 80)

What's the origin for `https://google.com?q=hello+world?`
(https, google.com, 443)

Origins

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 - To prevent attacker.com from scripting bank.com
- Why does the origin include the scheme?
 - If not, then <http://bank.com> can script <https://bank.com>. An "on-path" attacker could inject `<script>...</script>` into <http://bank.com> which affects <https://bank.com>

Origins

- Why does the origin include the host?
 - To prevent [attacker.com](#) from scripting [bank.com](#)
- Why does the origin include the scheme?
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- Why does the origin include the port?

Origins

- Why does the origin include the host?
 - To prevent attacker.com from scripting bank.com
- Why does the origin include the scheme?
 - If not, then <http://bank.com> can script <https://bank.com>. An "on-path" attacker could inject `<script>...</script>` into <http://bank.com> which affects <https://bank.com>
- Why does the origin include the port?
 - Think about multiple web servers run by different users on the same machine. Without including the port, <https://host.com:8443> could script the entirely unrelated <https://host.com>

Not the end of the story

- Documents (and thus scripts) can load elements from other origins including images, scripts, style sheets, and flash objects
 - Loading these elements **endorses** their content and the included elements are considered to be in the loading document's origin
- Conversely, documents (and thus scripts) can submit forms which sends data from the document to some server
 - Submitting forms **declassifies** the data sent
- Cross-Origin Resource Sharing (CORS) can enable cross-origin requests

Web Review | HTTP



gmail.com



Web Review | HTTP

GET / HTTP/1.1
Host: gmail.com



gmail.com



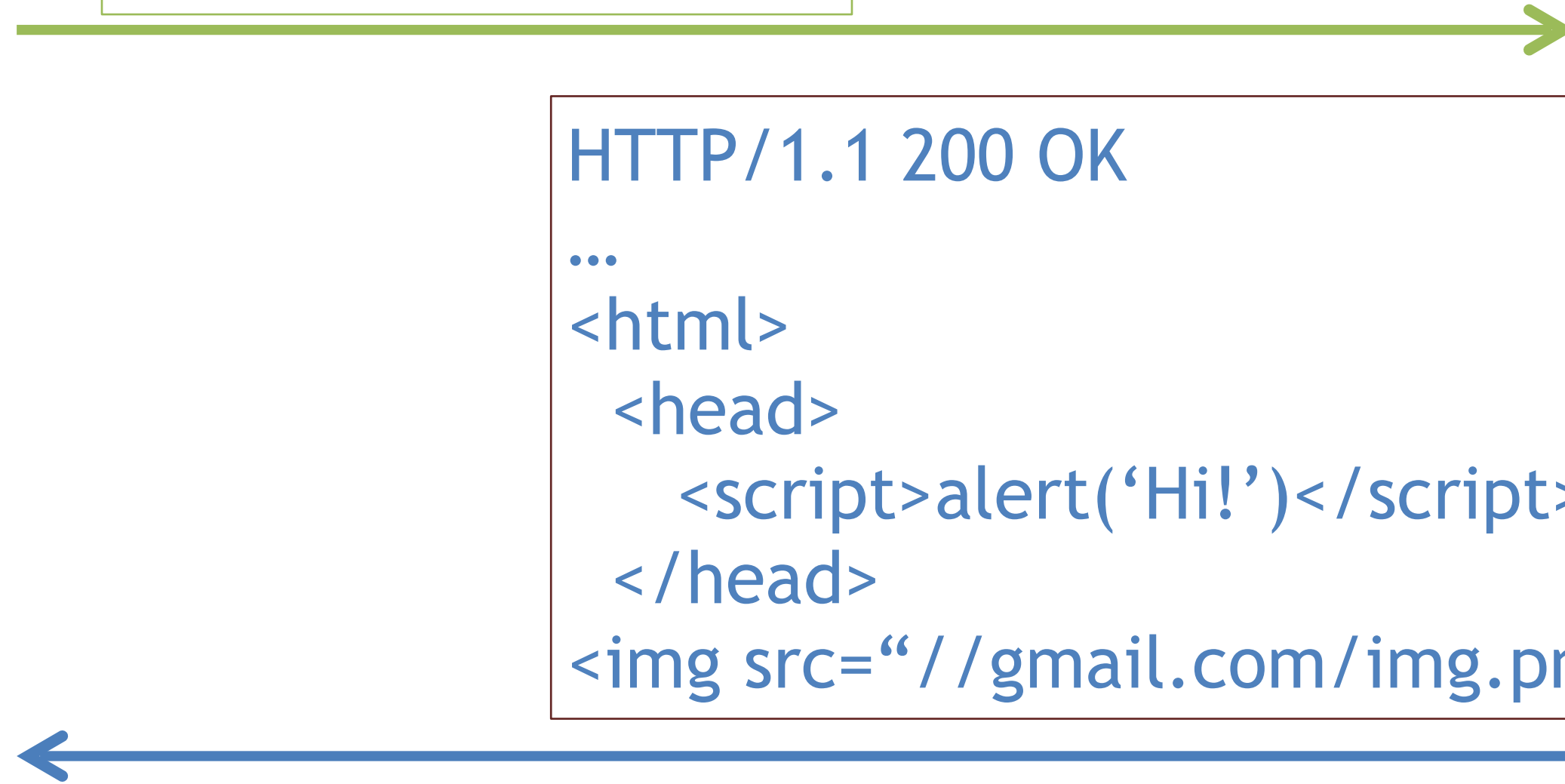
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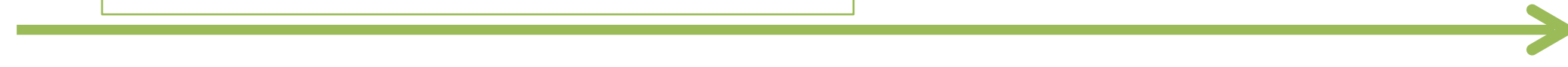
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Web Review | AJAX (jQuery style)



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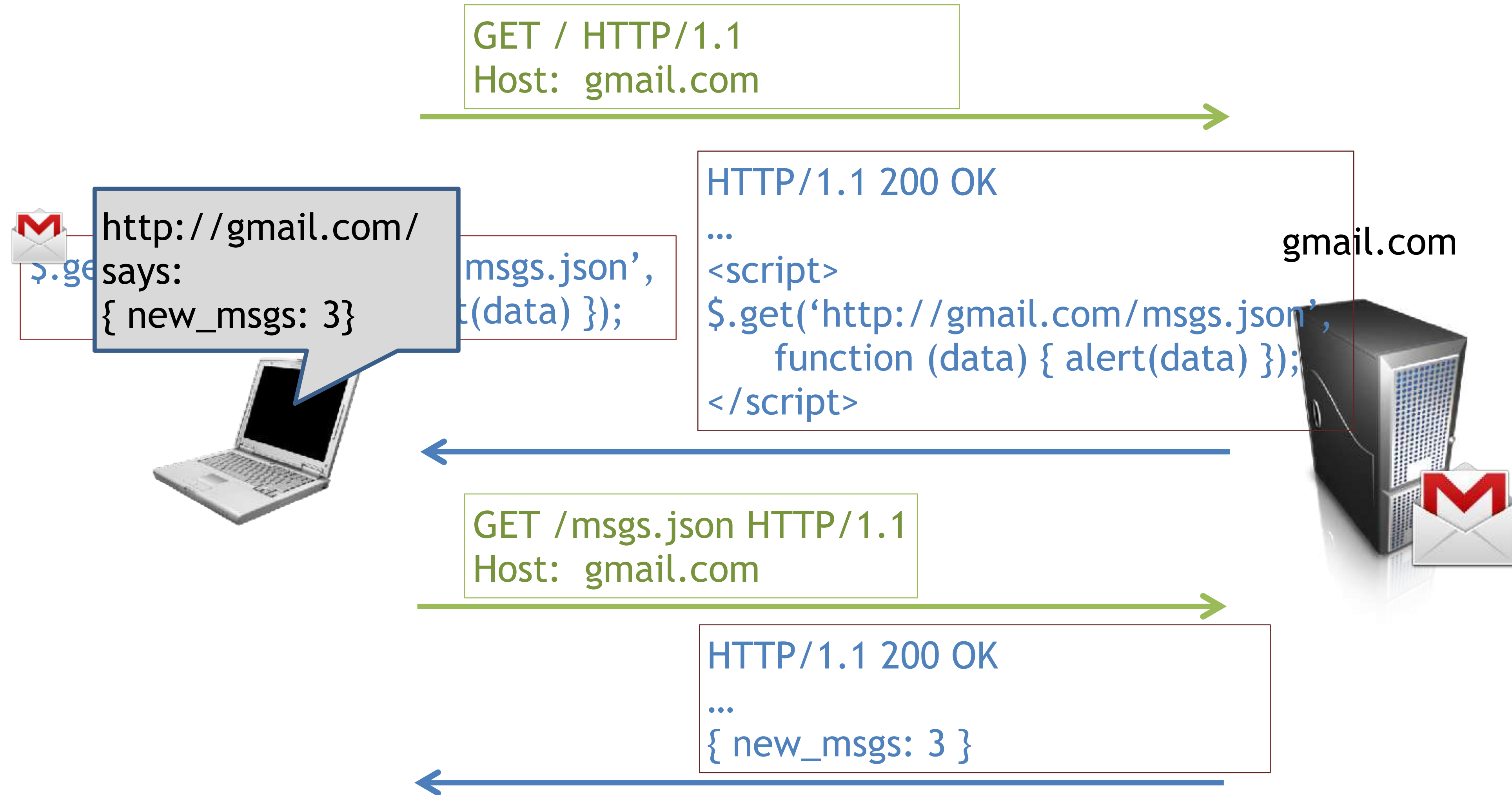
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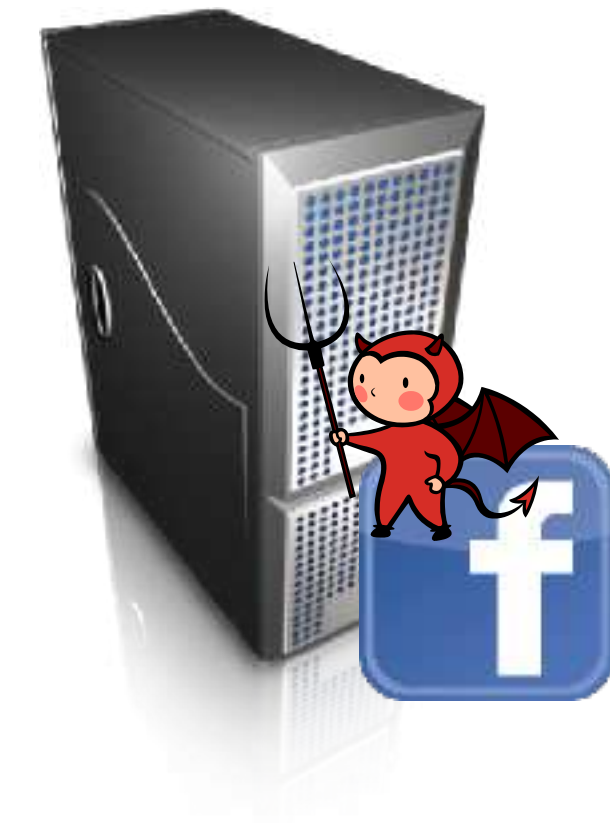
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Web Review | Same-Origin Policy (SOP)

(evil!)

facebook.com



gmail.com



Web Review | Same-Origin Policy (SOP)

GET / HTTP/1.1
Host: facebook.com

(evil!)
facebook.com



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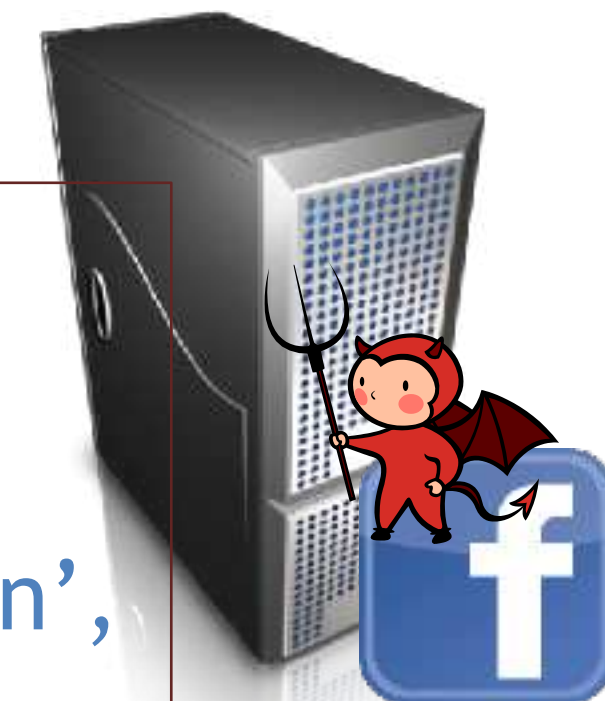
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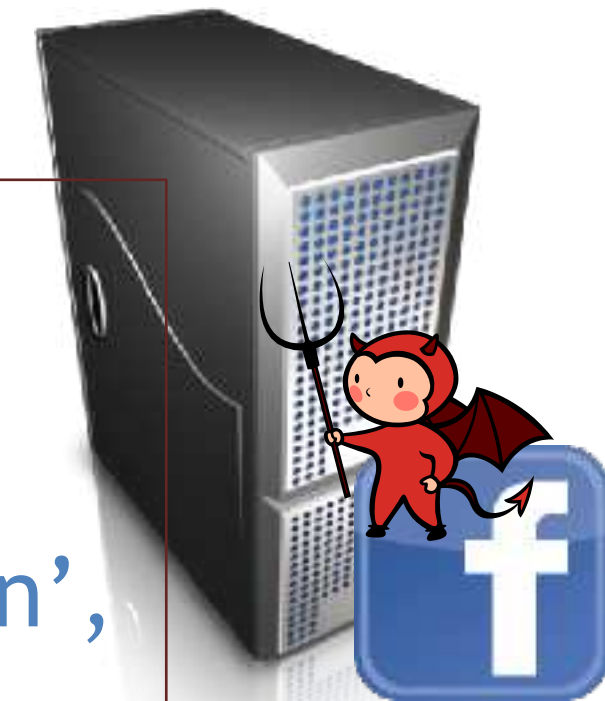
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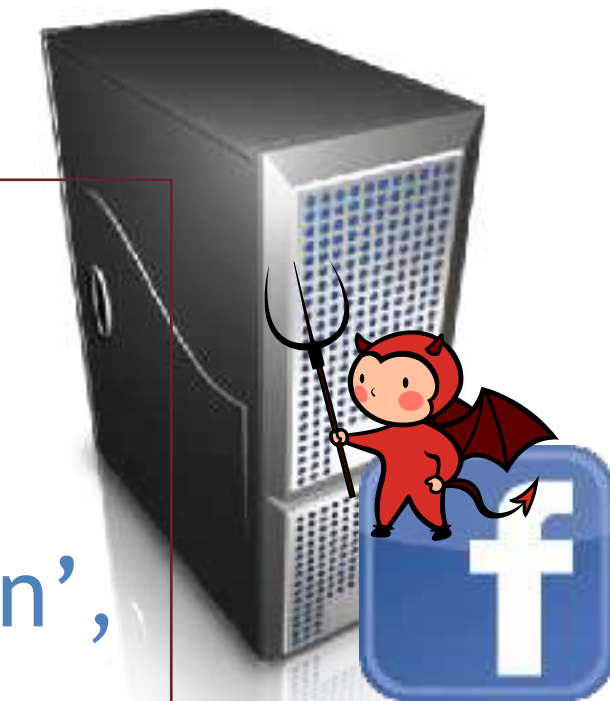
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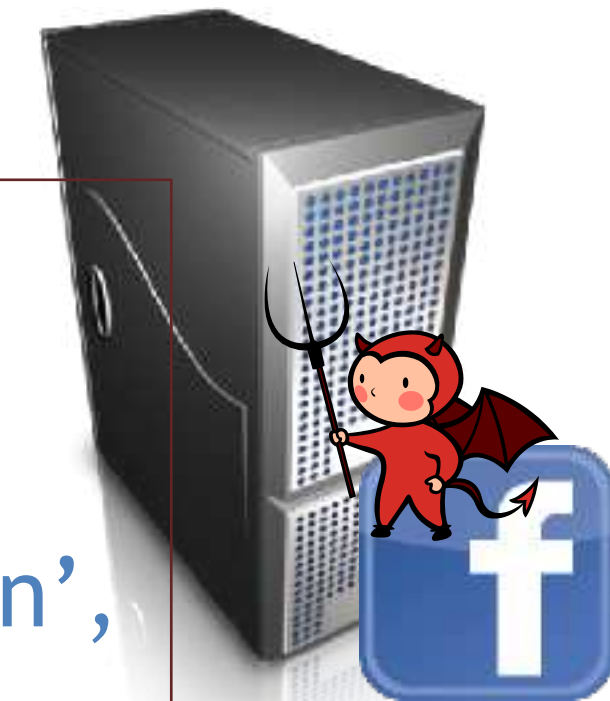
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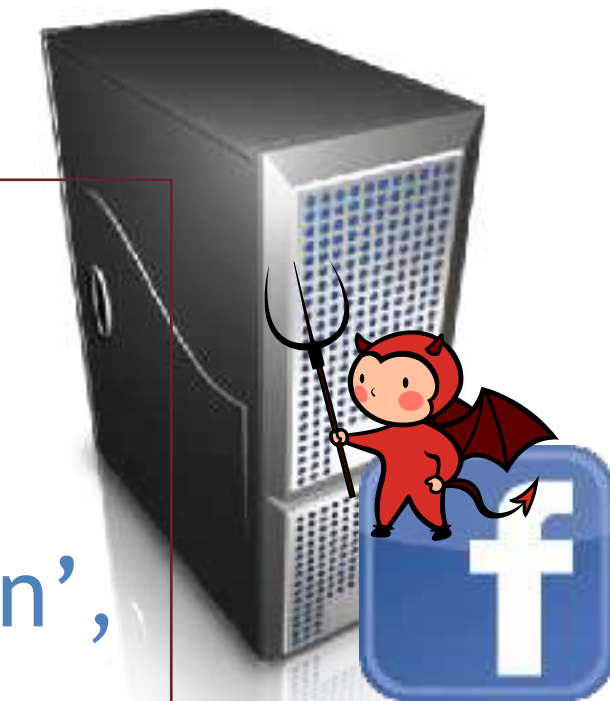
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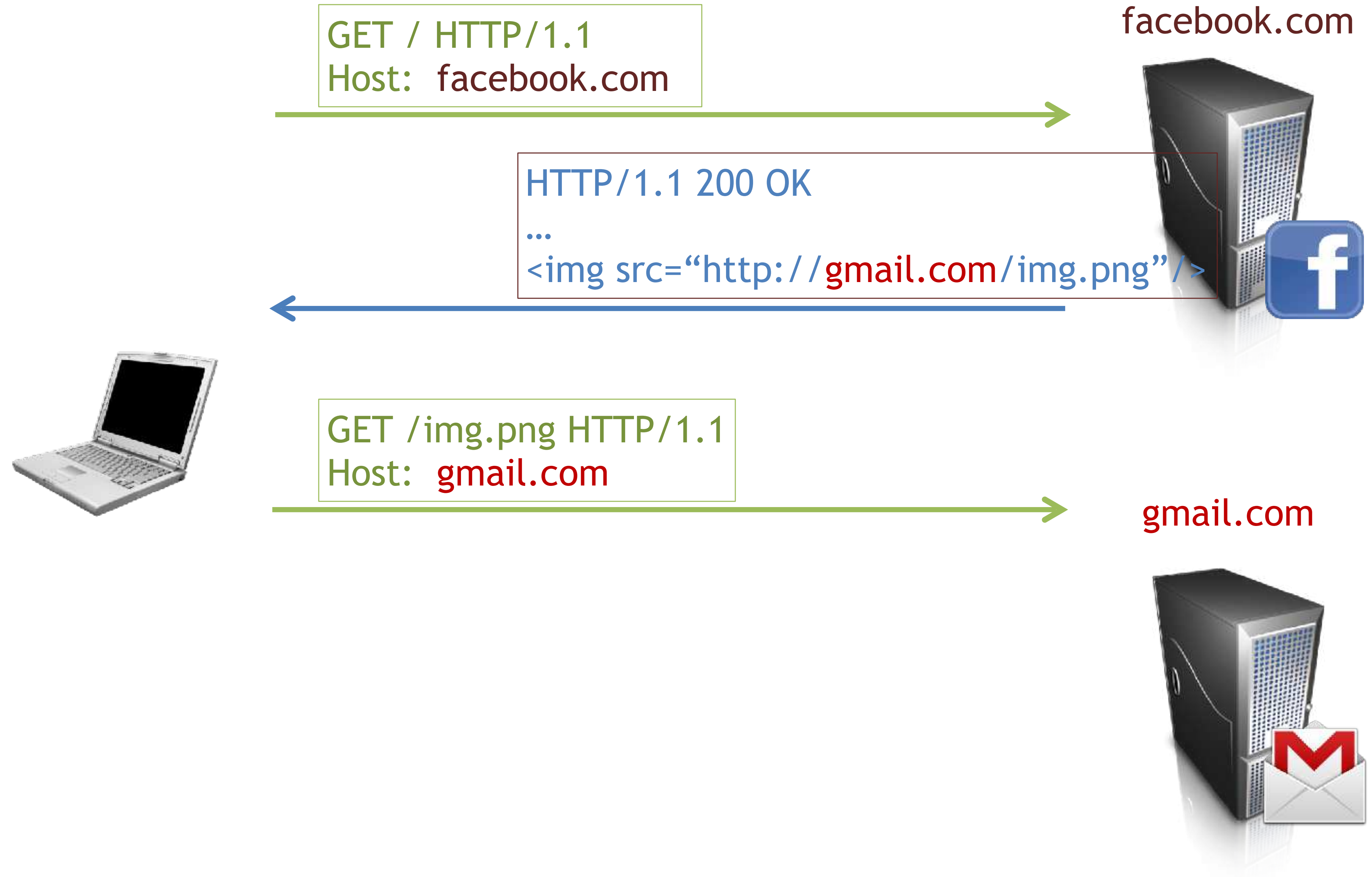
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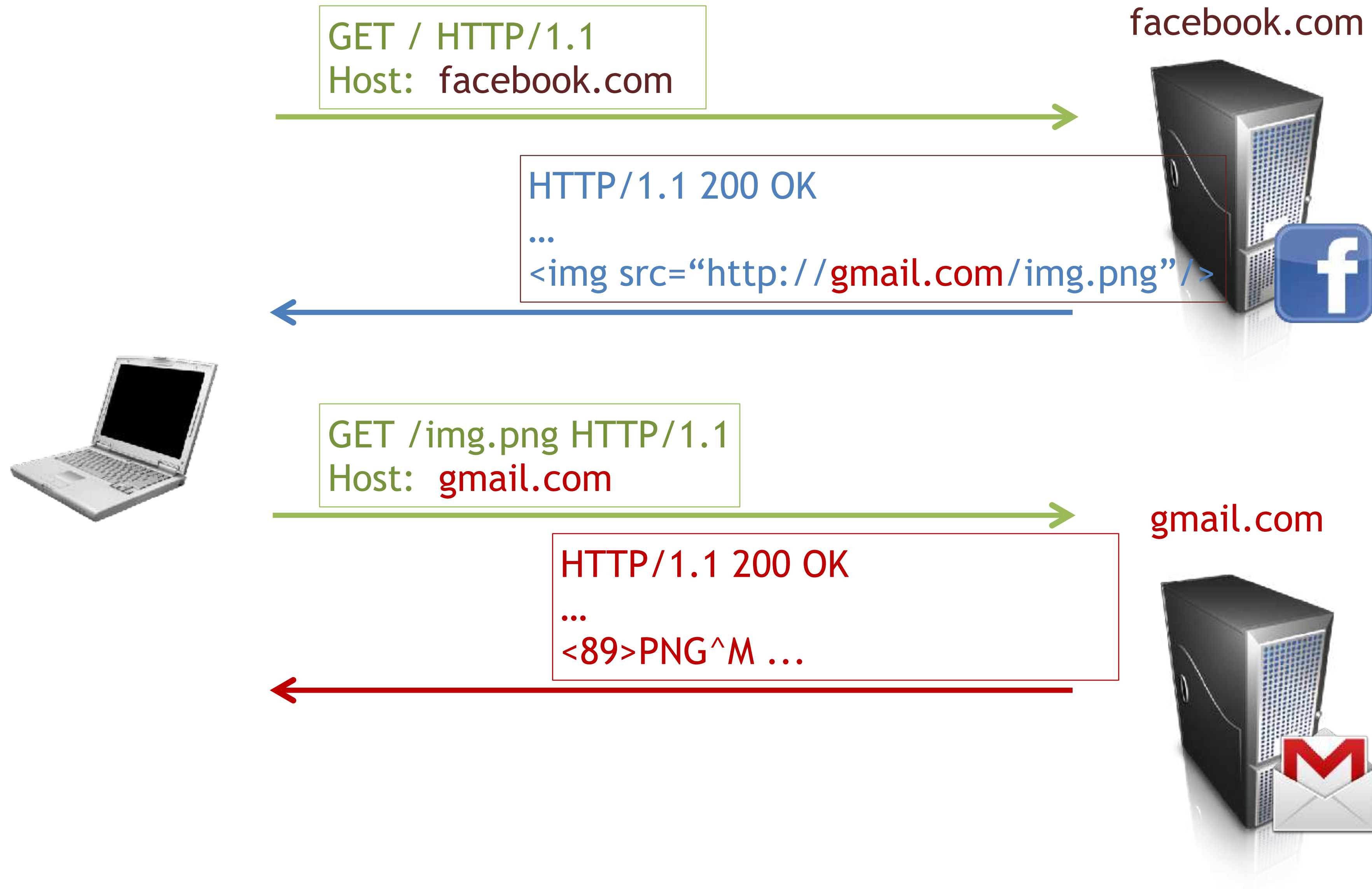
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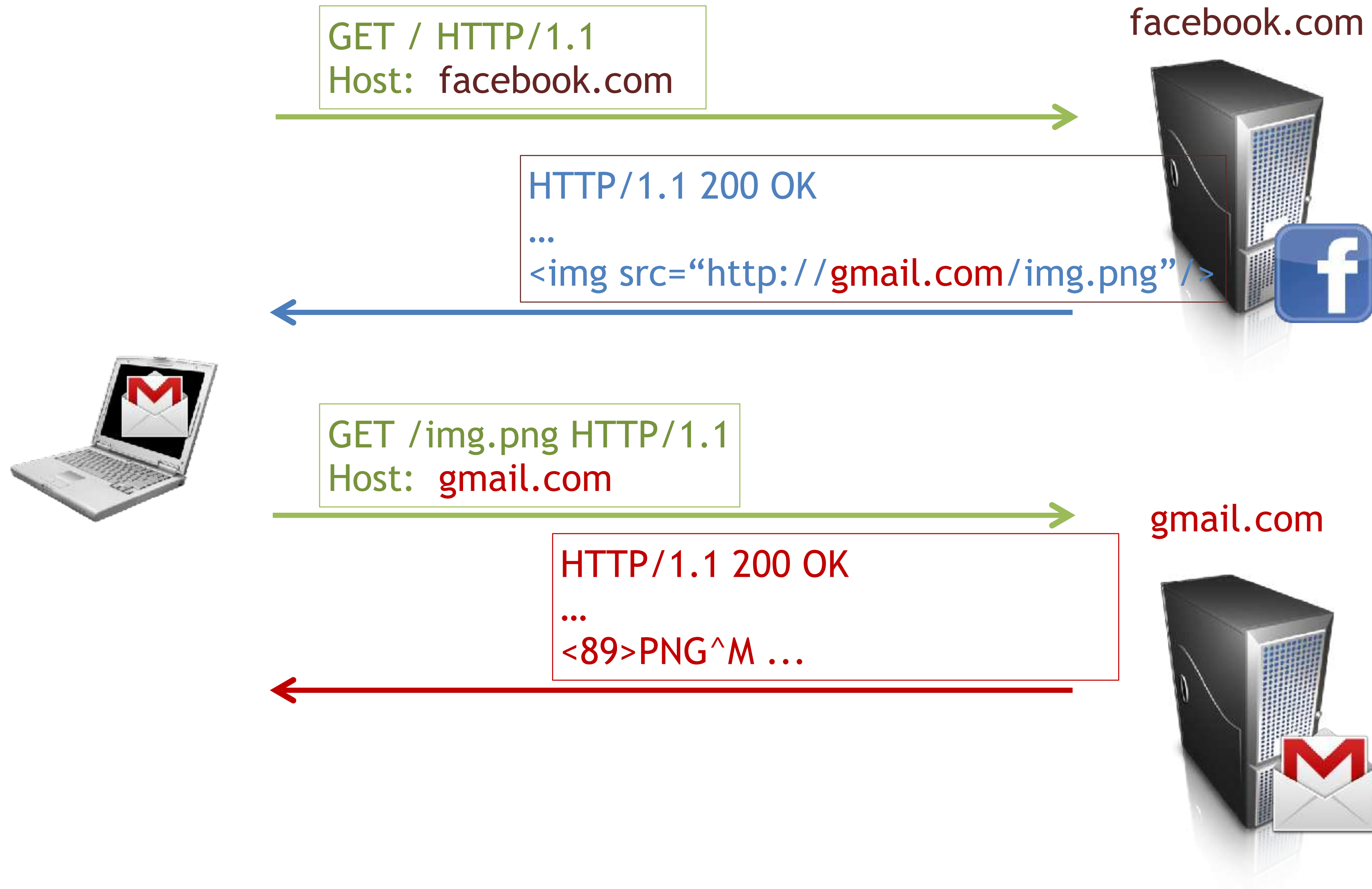
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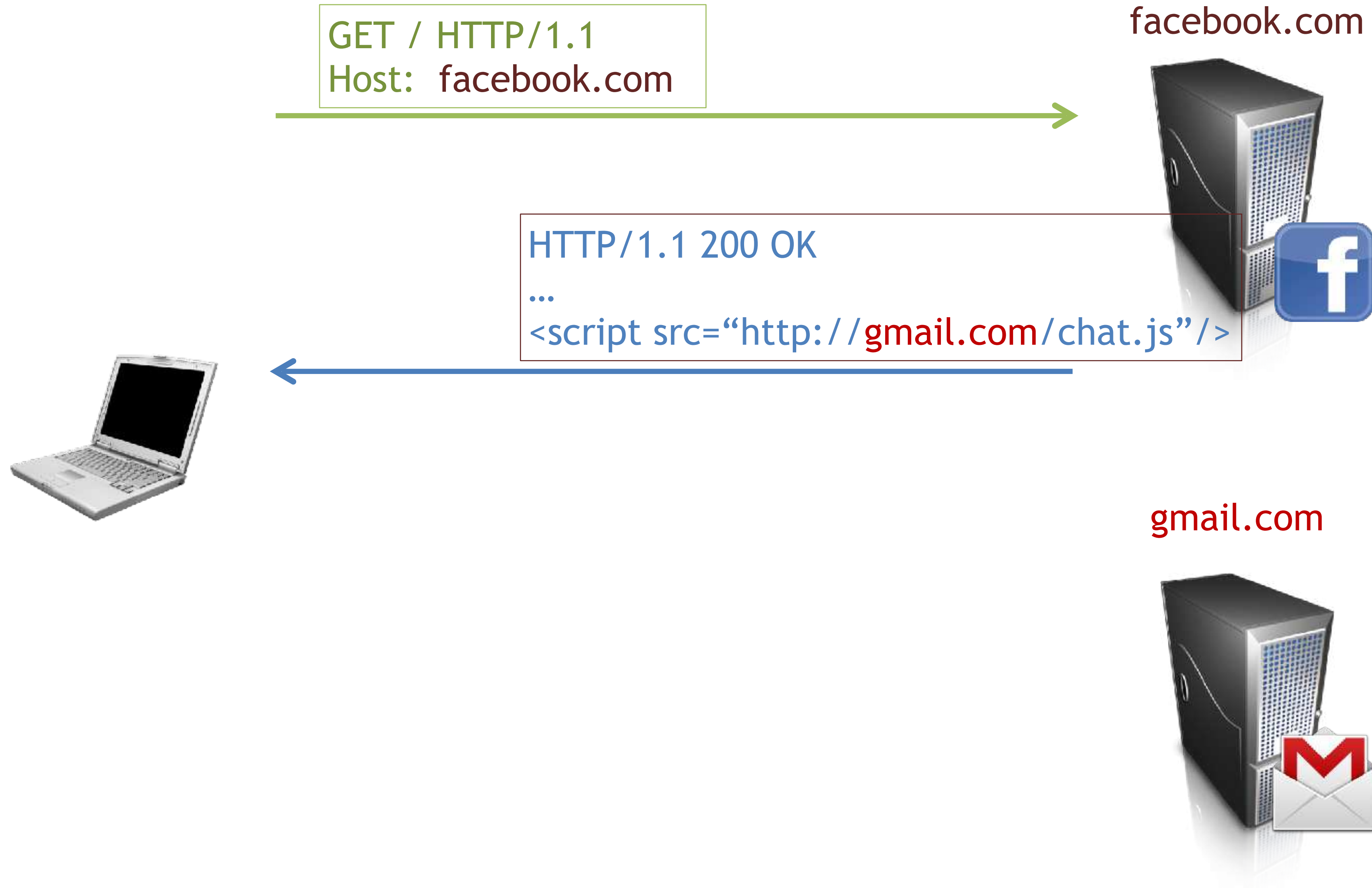
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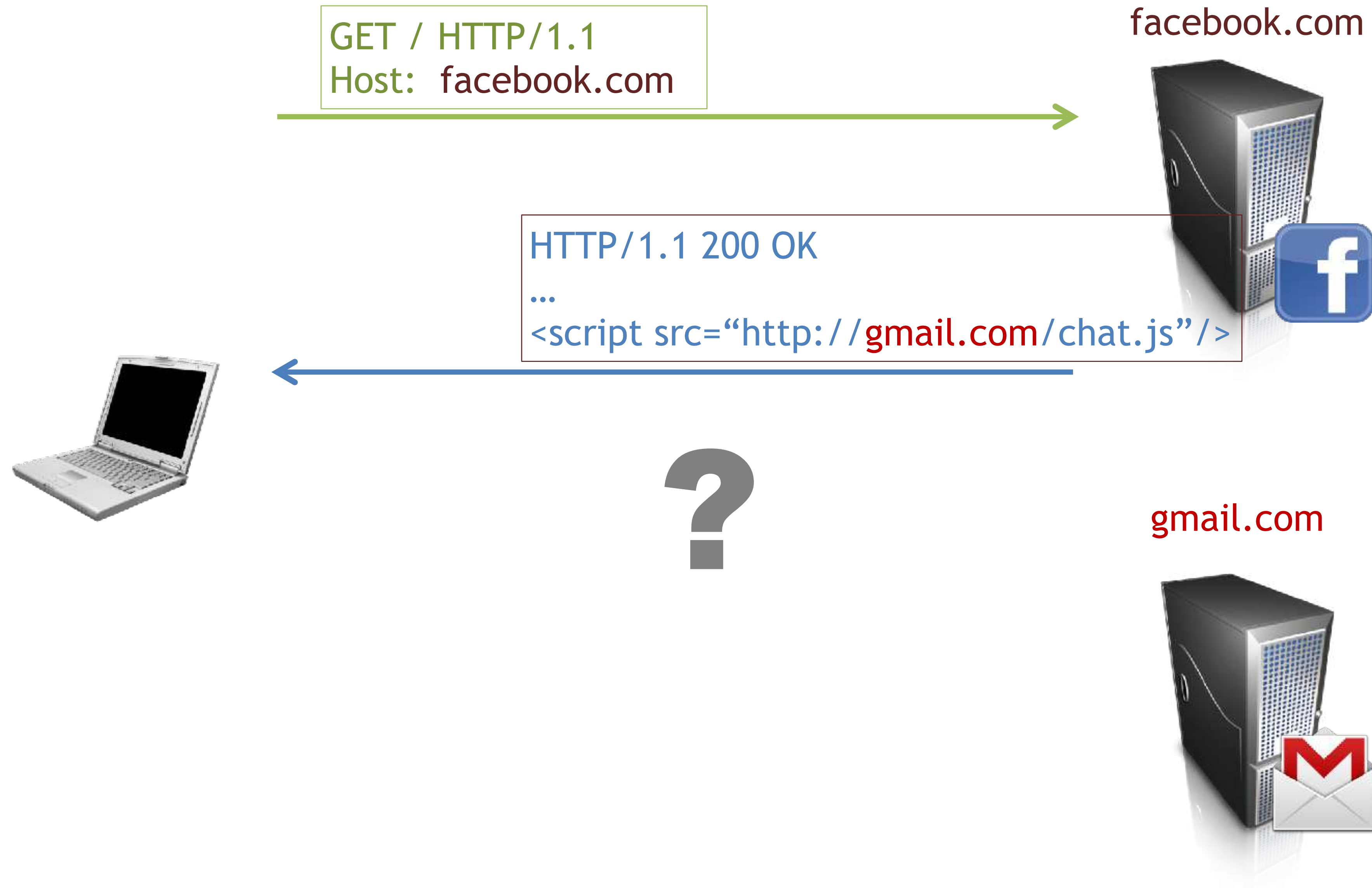
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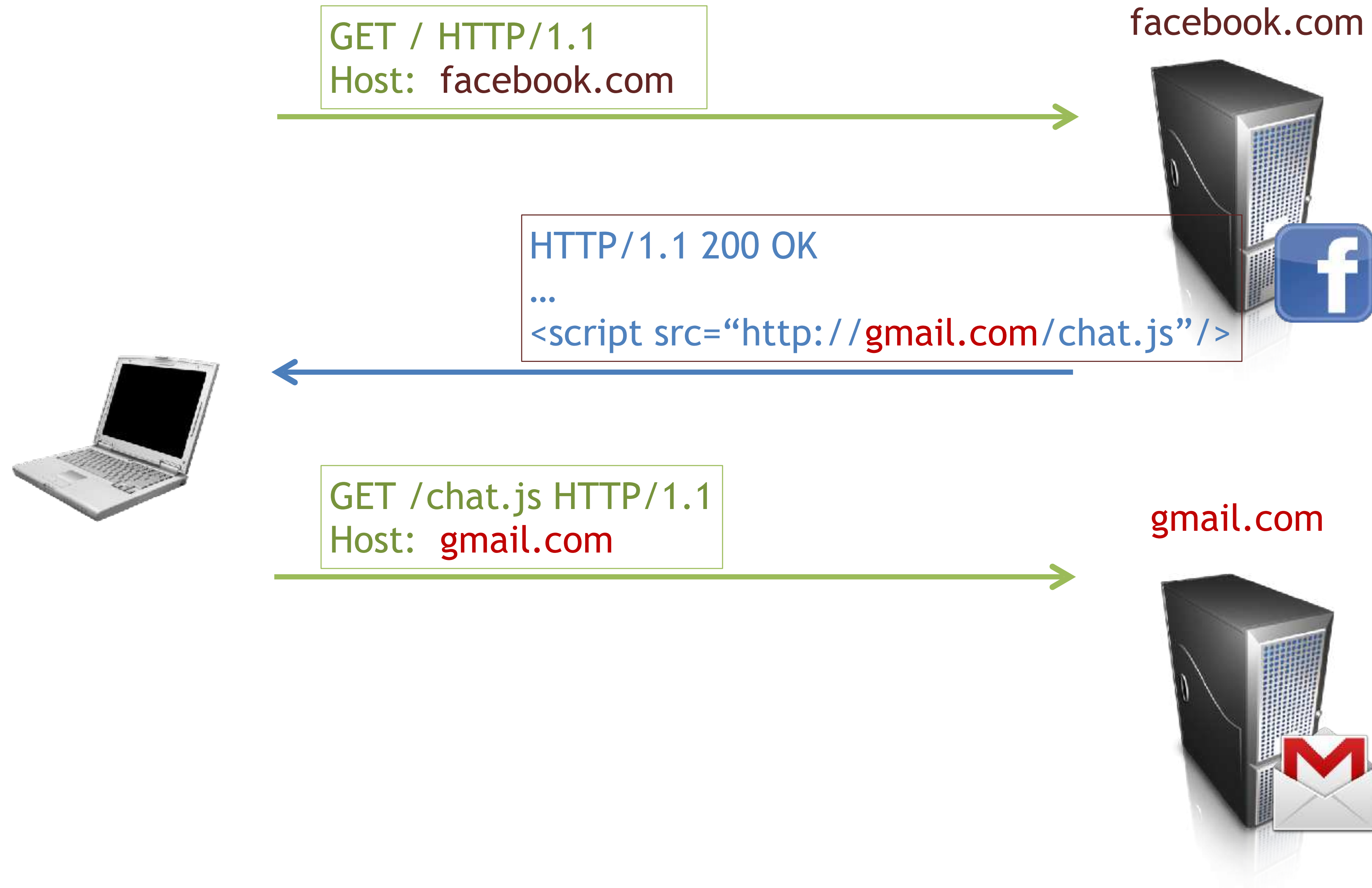
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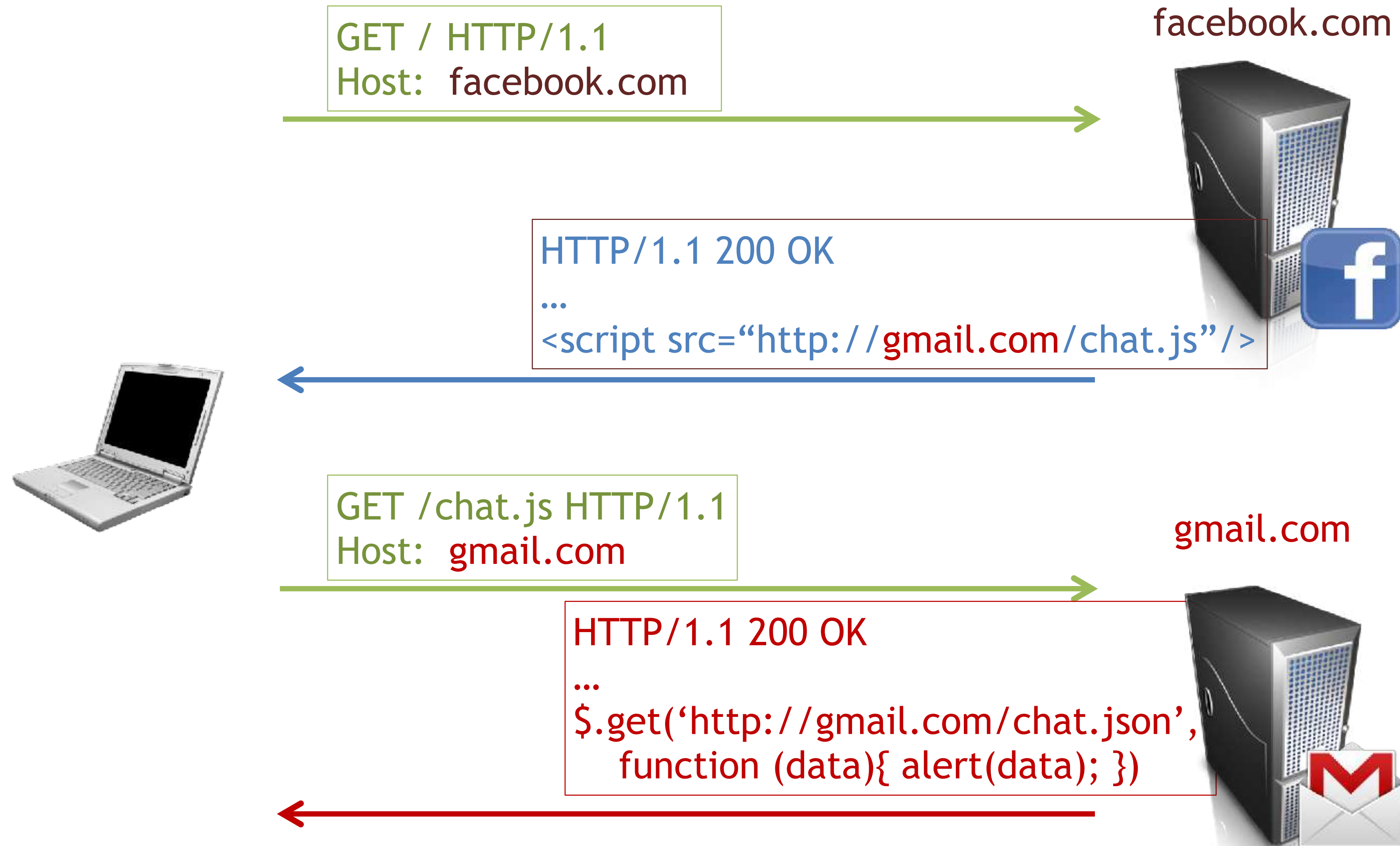
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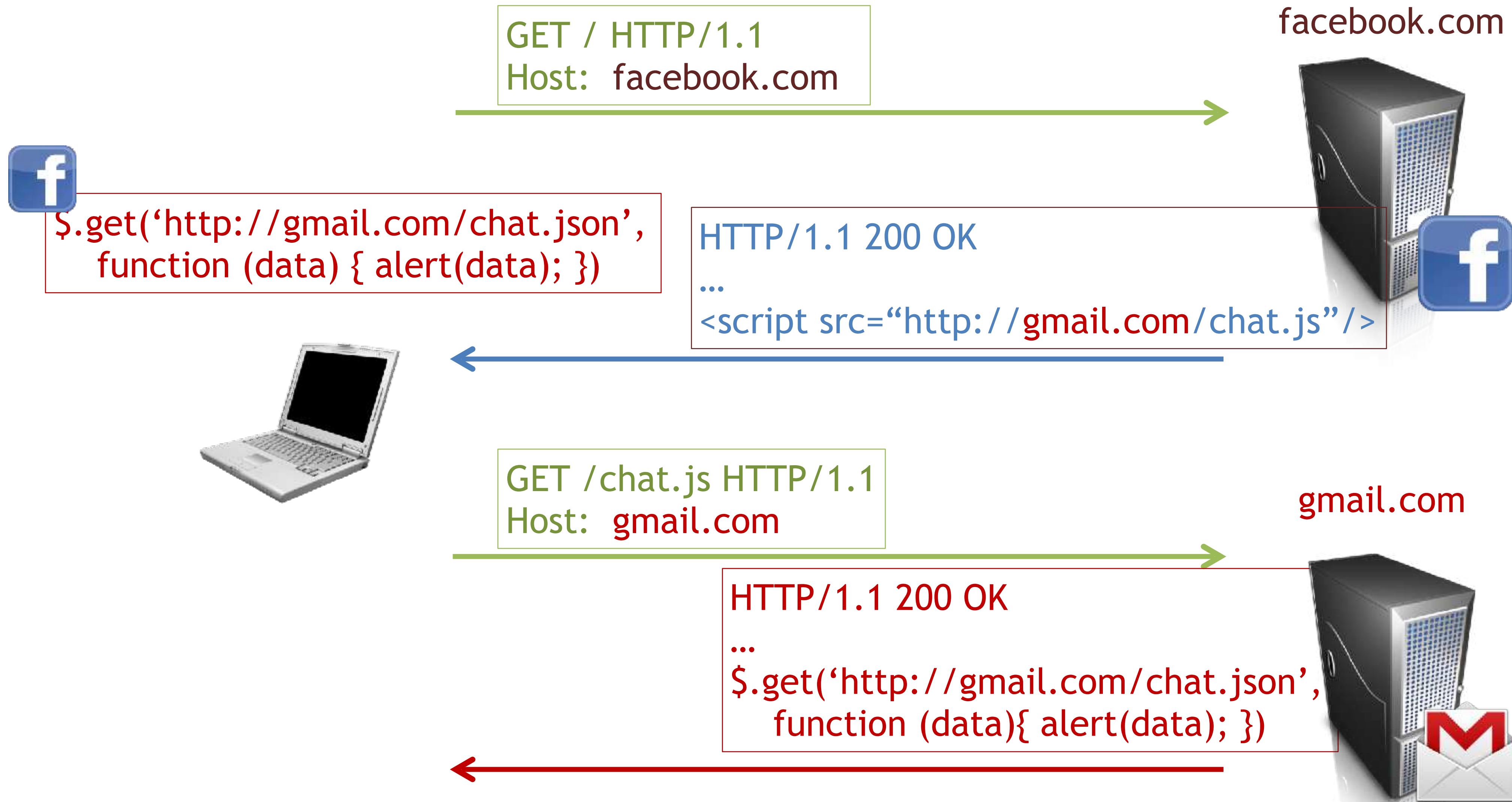
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iframes

- Complete document inside a document
`<iframe src="https://somewhere.com/page.html"></iframe>`
- The contents of each iframe belong to its source origin (https, somewhere.com, 443) for the iframe above
- The iframe element itself belongs to its containing document
- iframes obey the SOP

Web Review | Same-Origin Policy (SOP)

facebook.com



gmail.com



Web Review | Same-Origin Policy (SOP)

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facebook.com



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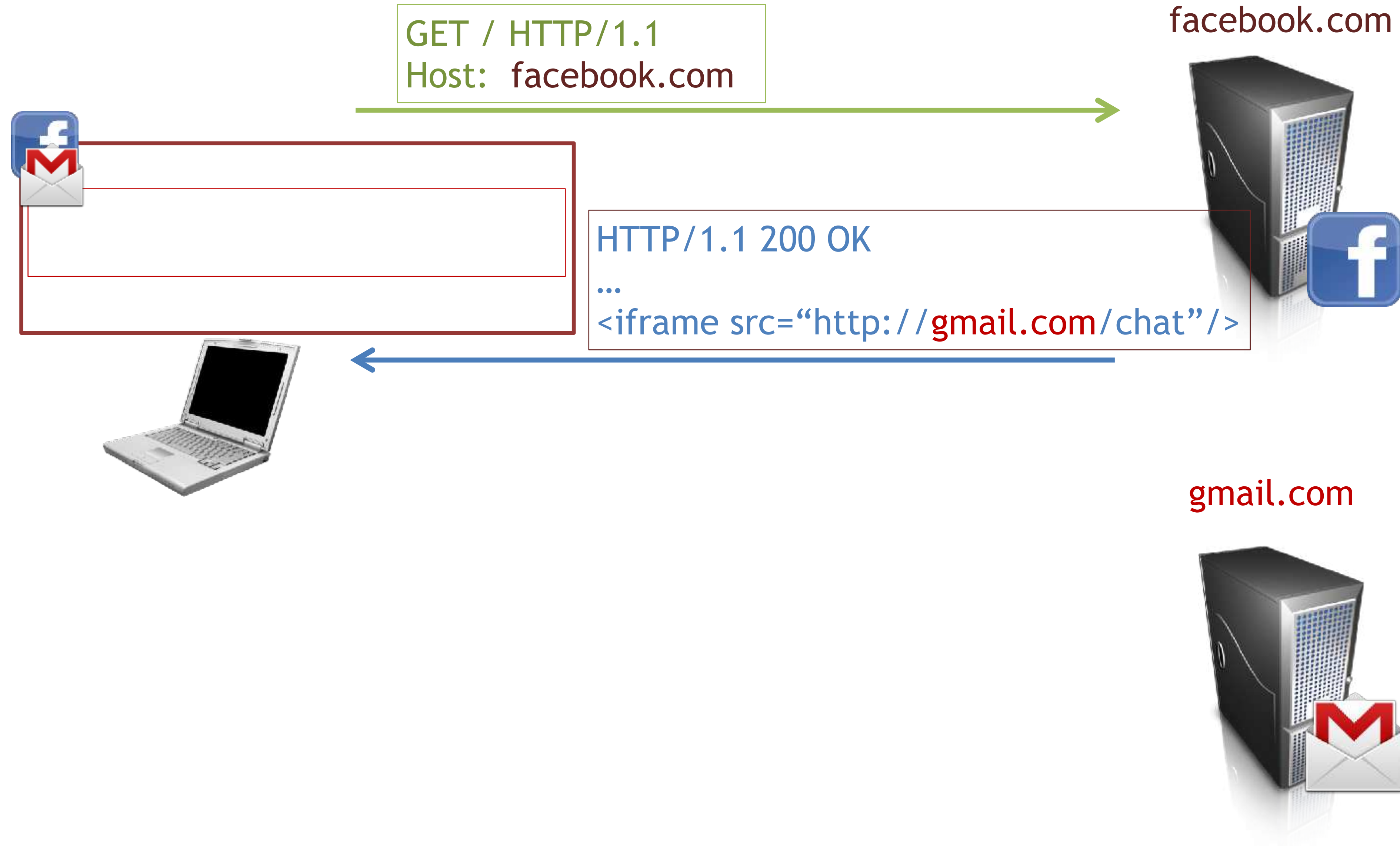
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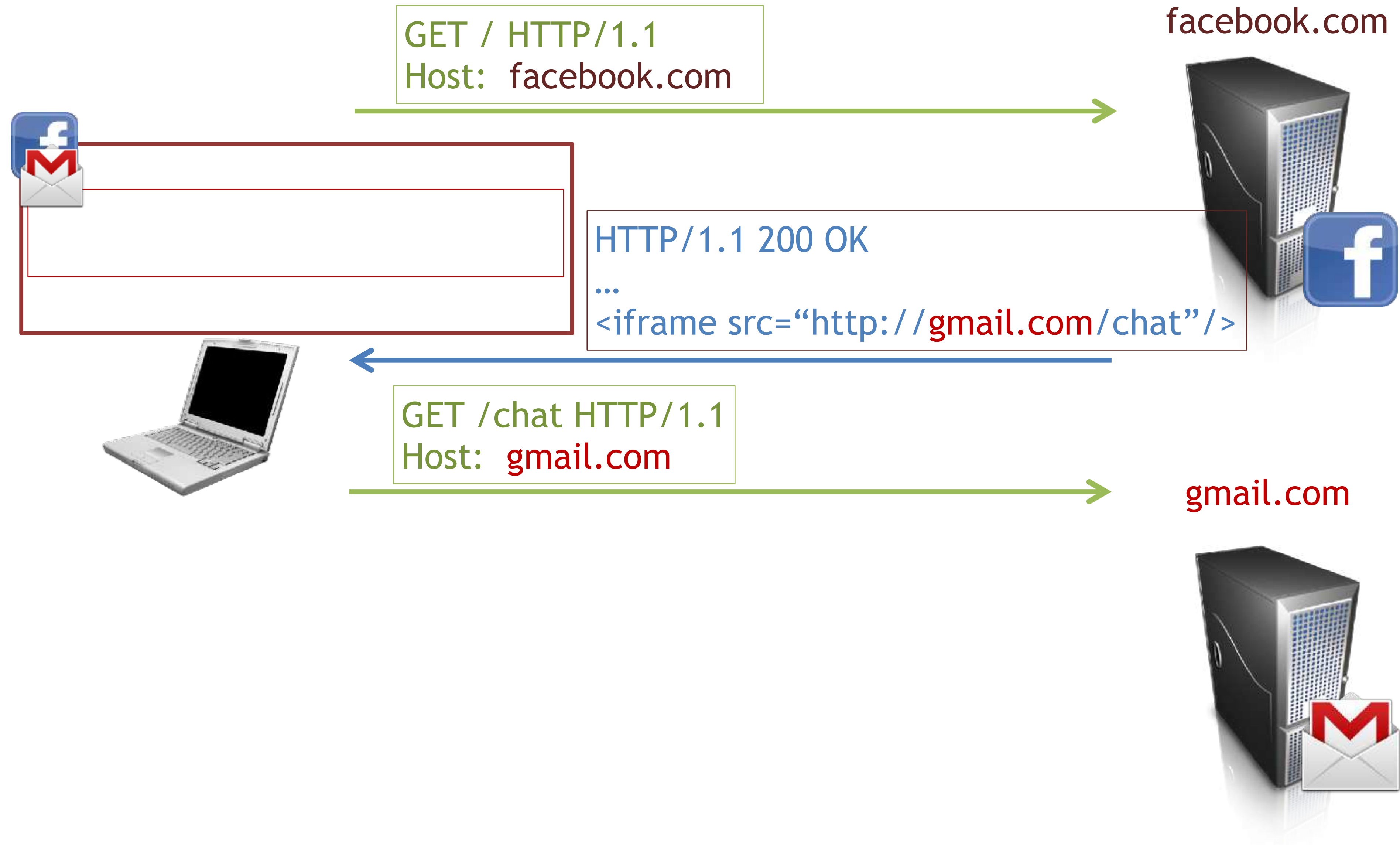
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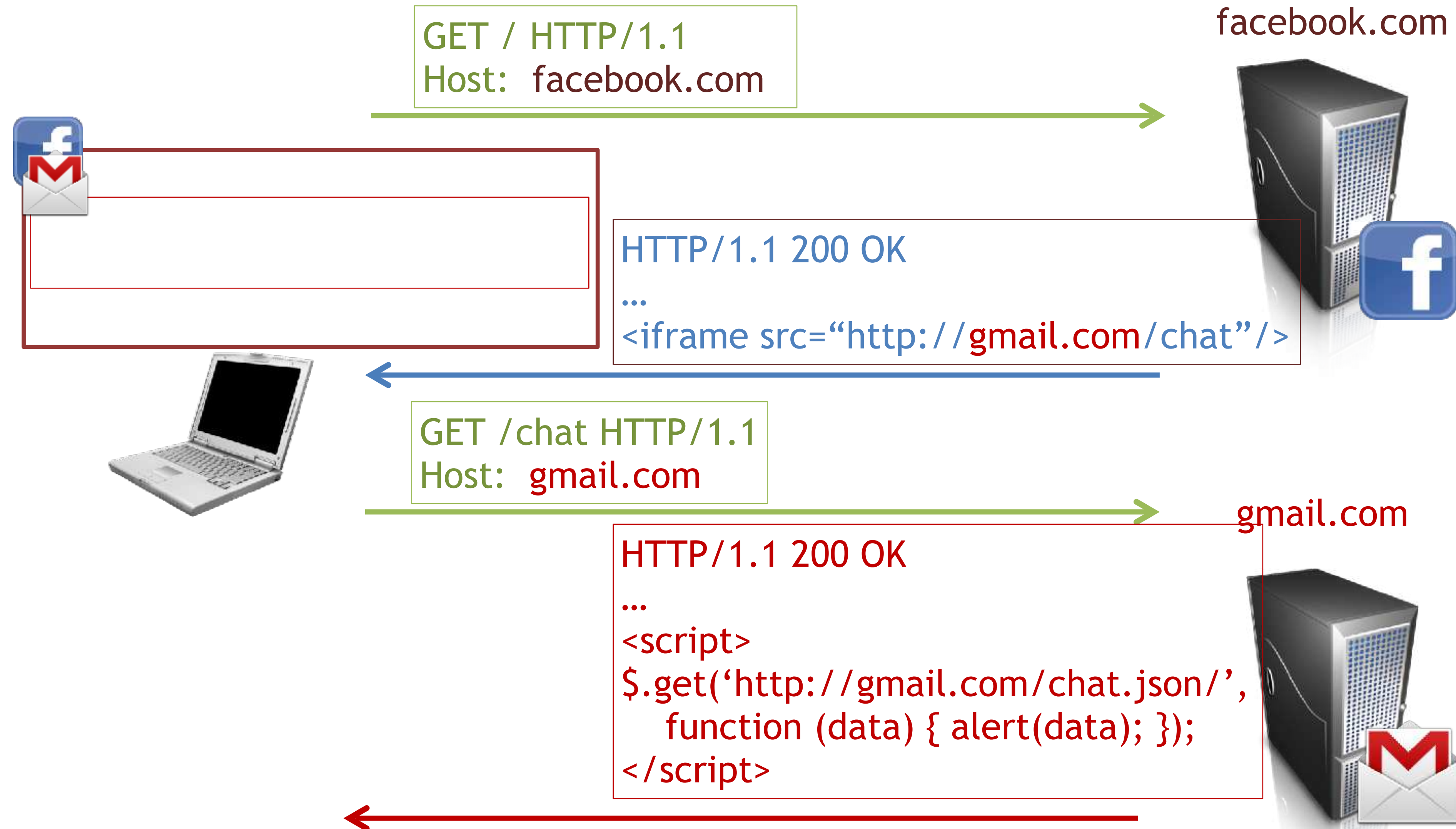
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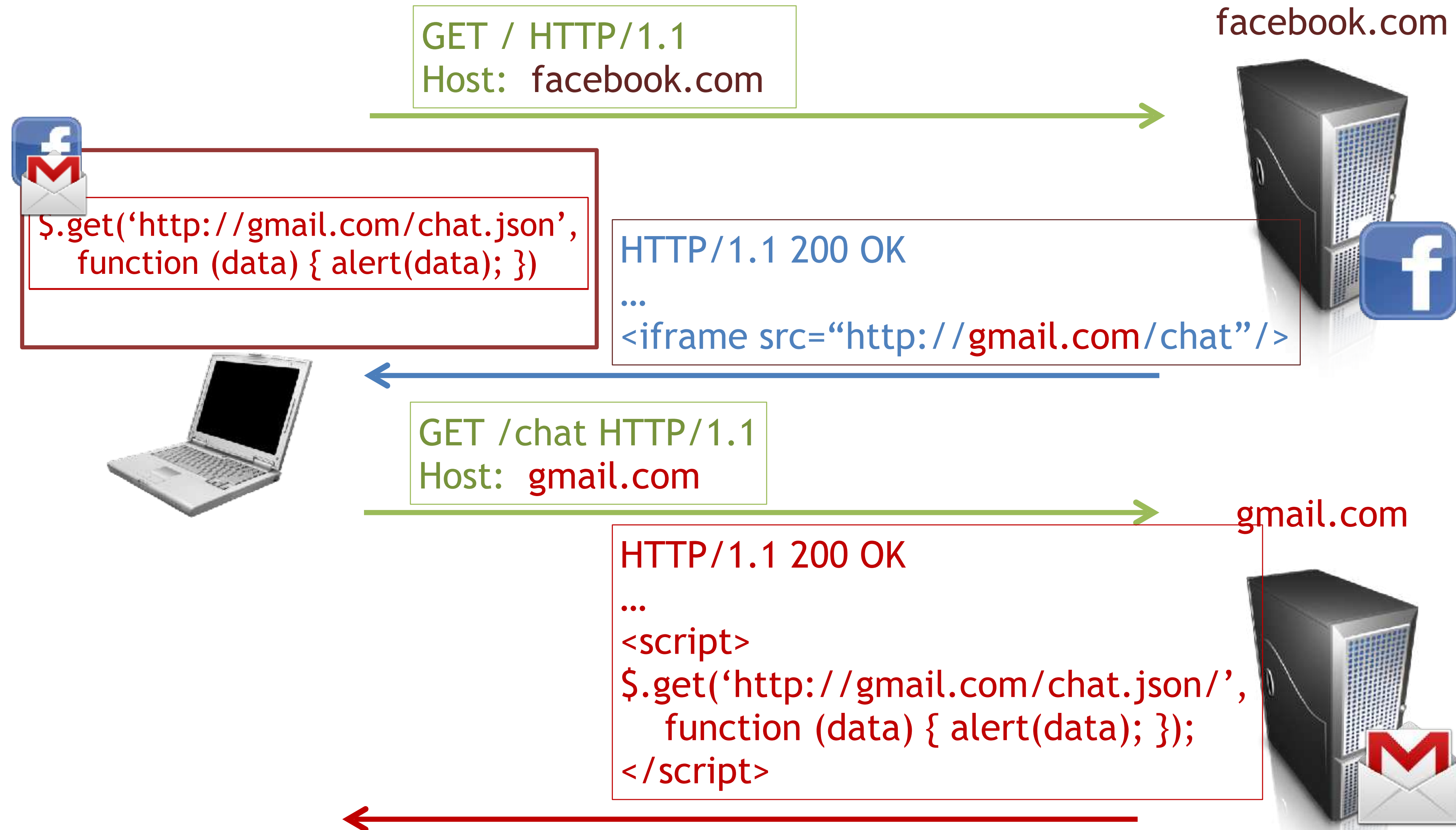
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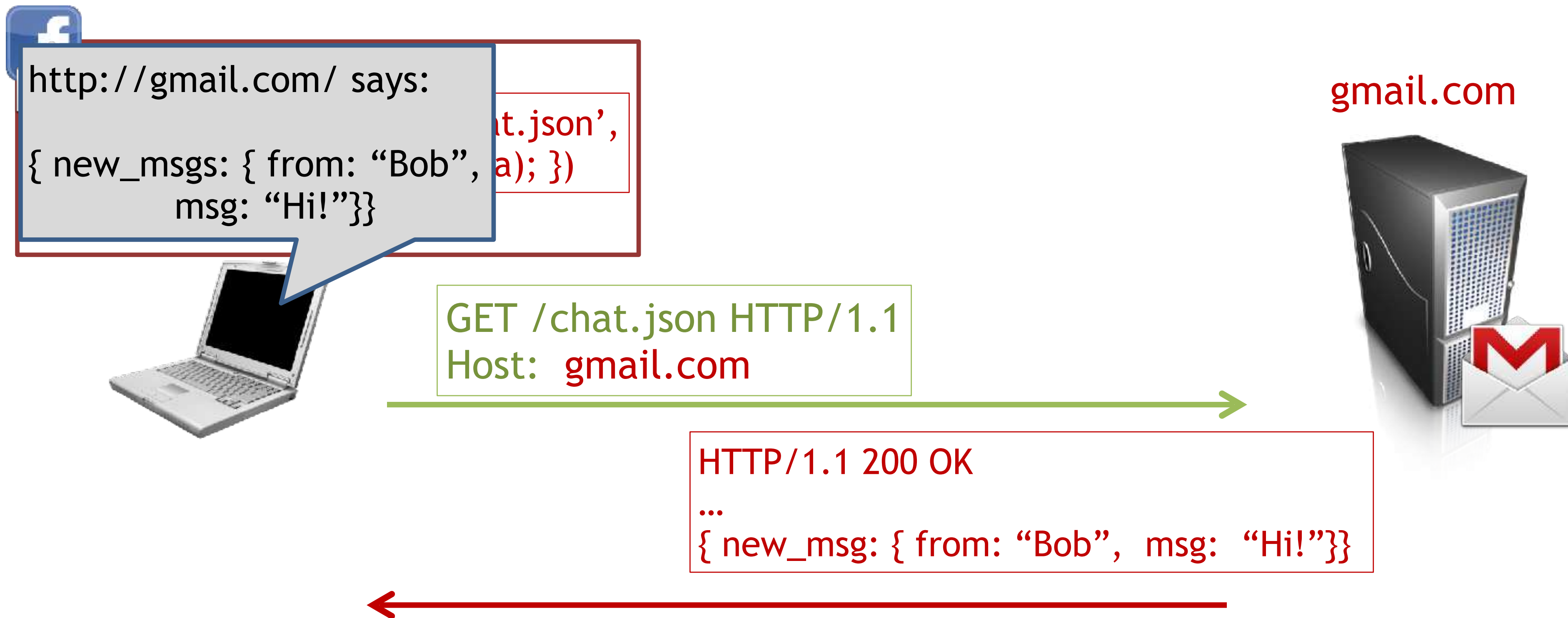
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Web Review | Same-Origin Policy (SOP)



Beware finer-grained origins

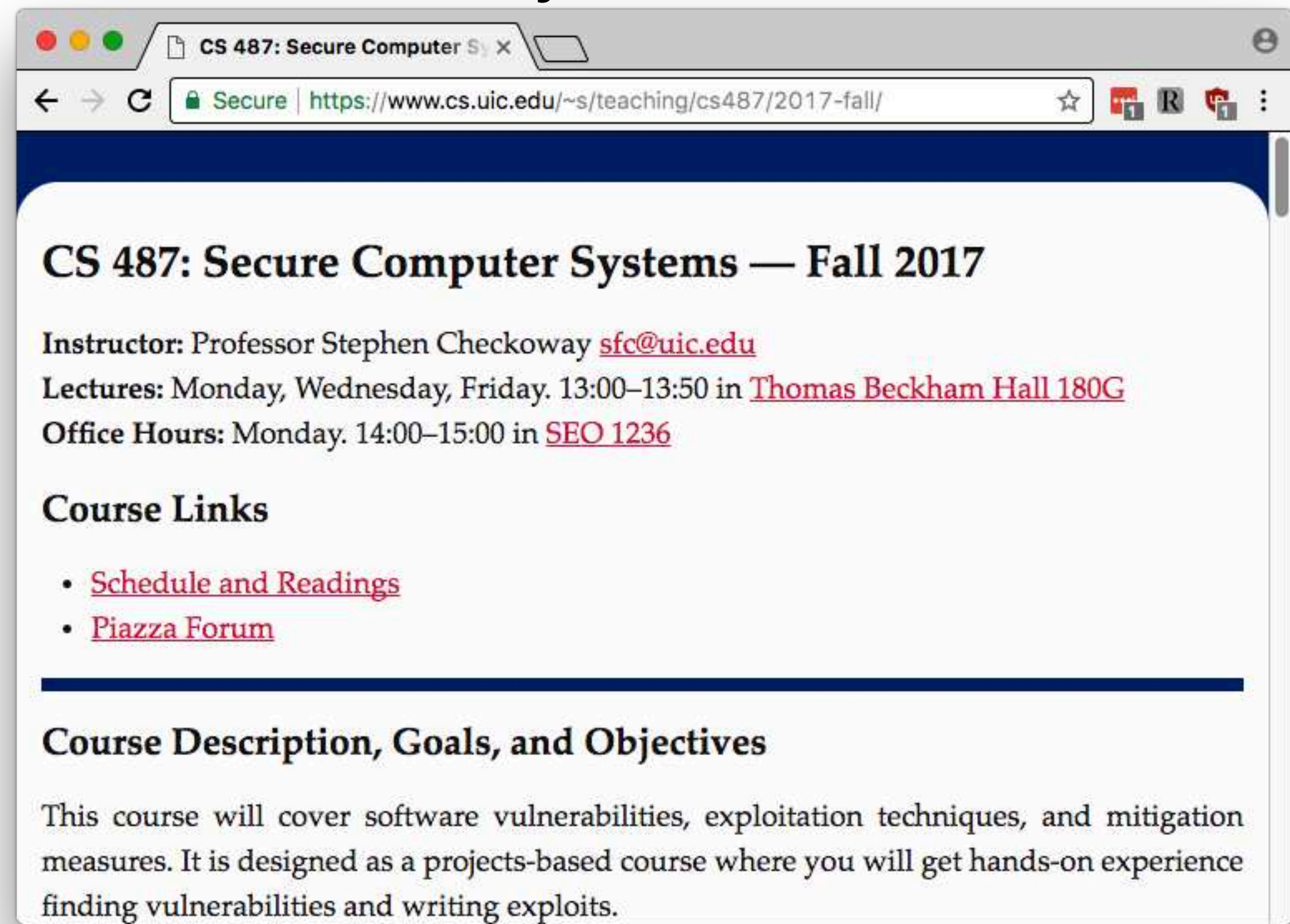
- Not all web features respect the SOP
 - Example: Cookies can include a **path**
 - In order to read a cookie with a path, the path of the document's URL must extend the path of the cookie
- | | | |
|----------------|----------|---------------------------|
| Cookie path: | /a/b/c | |
| Document path: | /a/b | <- Cannot read the cookie |
| | /a/b/c/d | <- Can read the cookie |
- This is "finer-grained" than the standard SOP
 - Is this a problem?

Cookie paths example cont.

- Since documents in the same page can script each other, page /a/b **can** still read the cookie:
 - Create an iframe with src set to /a/b/c/d (where this is the path of some real document that can read the cookie value)
 - Since the iframe is in the same origin, page /a/b can inject a script element into the iframe's document
 - The injected script reads the cookie value and sends it back to the containing page
- Cookie paths should **not** be used as a security boundary

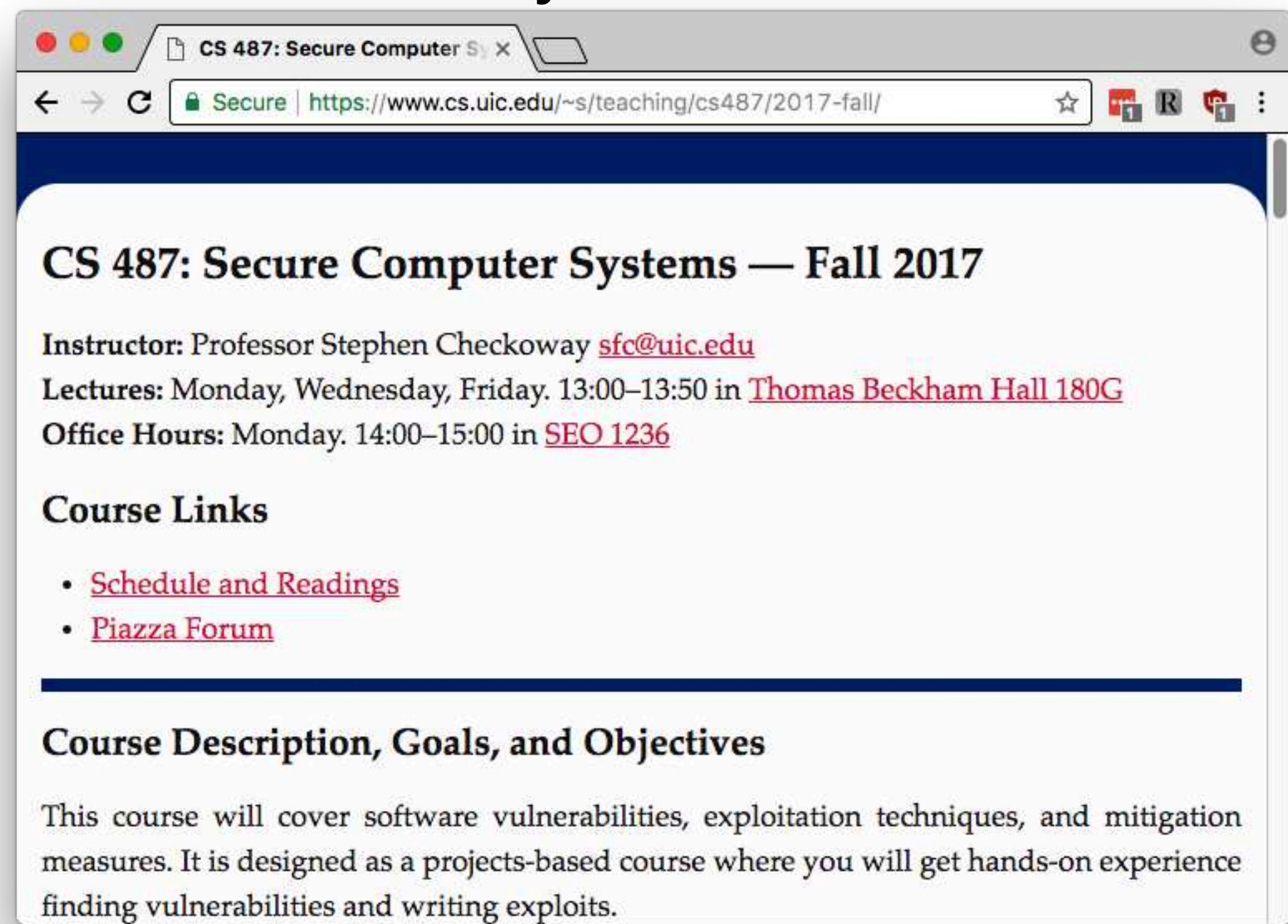
Mixed content

- Documents can contain elements loaded over both http and https
- Browsers indicate that this is insecure (by not displaying a lock icon) on the page with mixed content
- Other documents in the same origin are not similarly marked as insecure



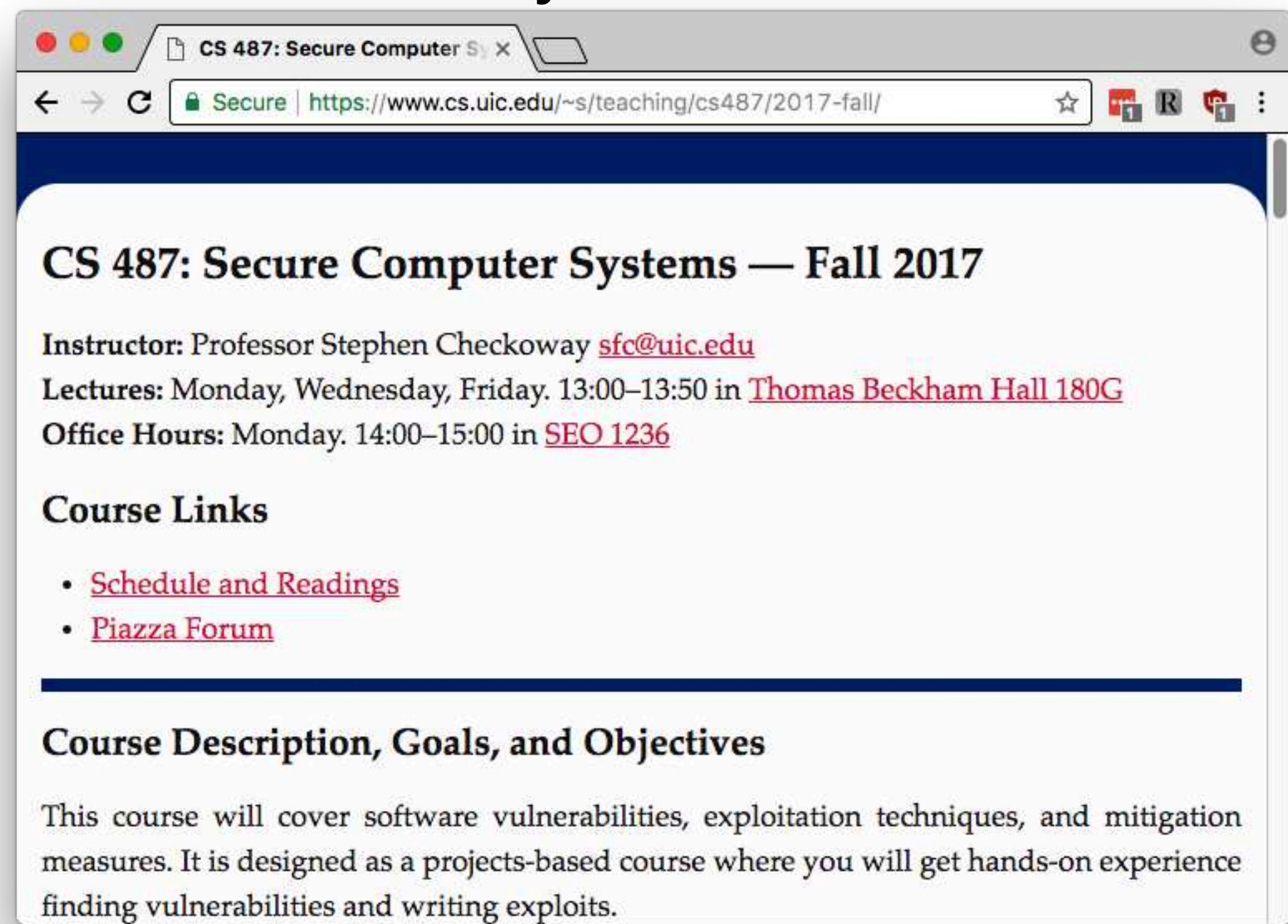
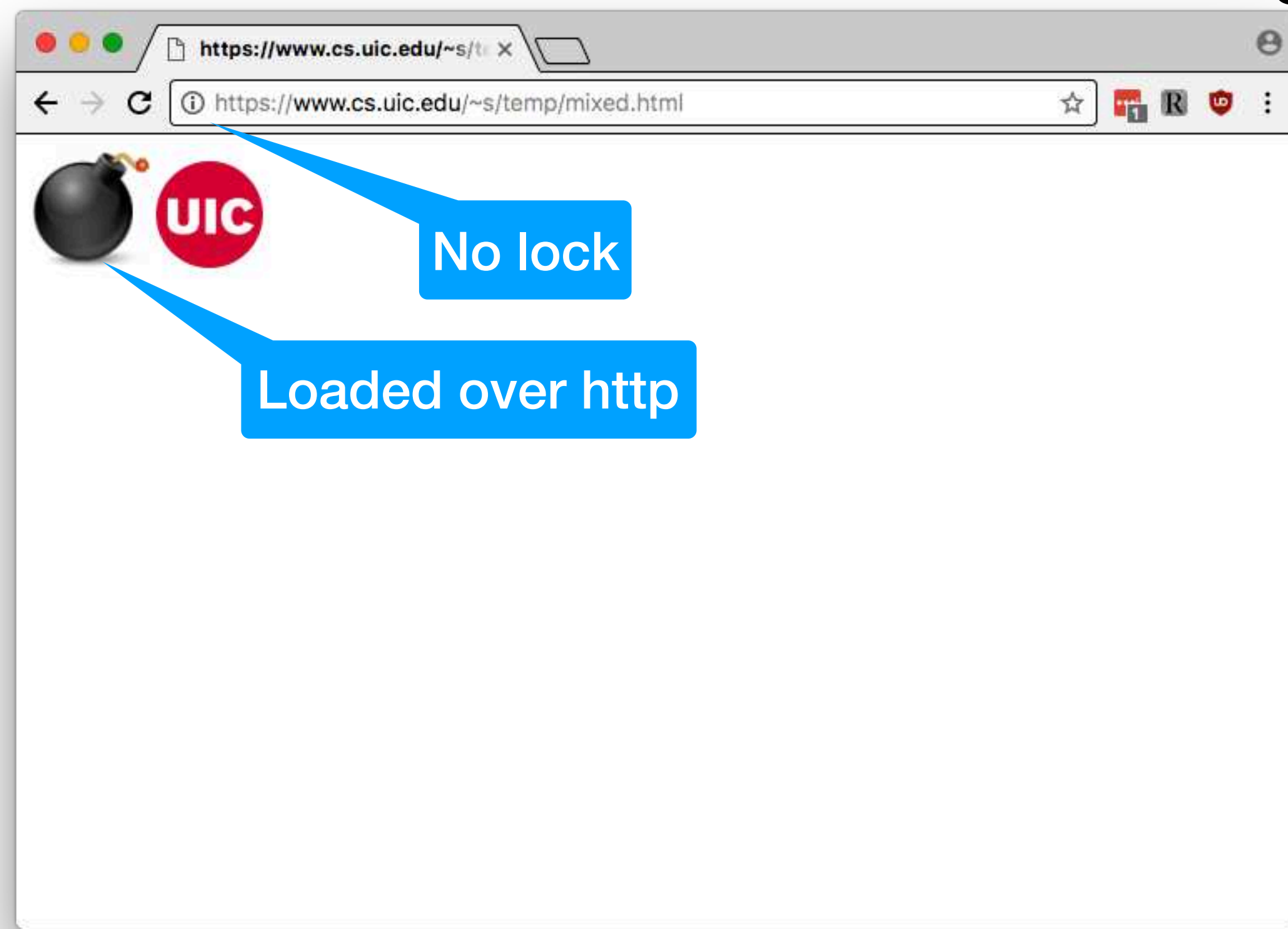
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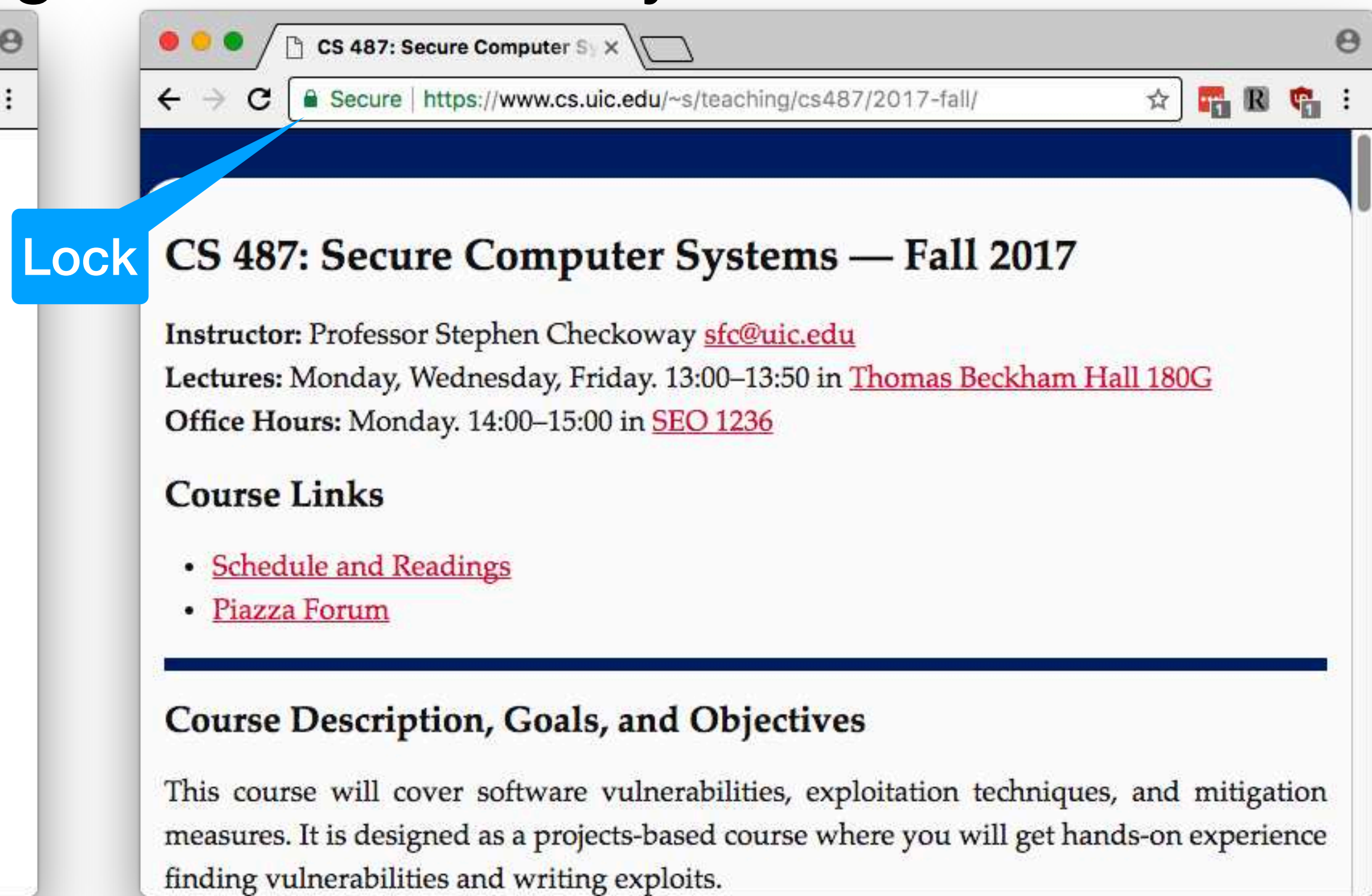
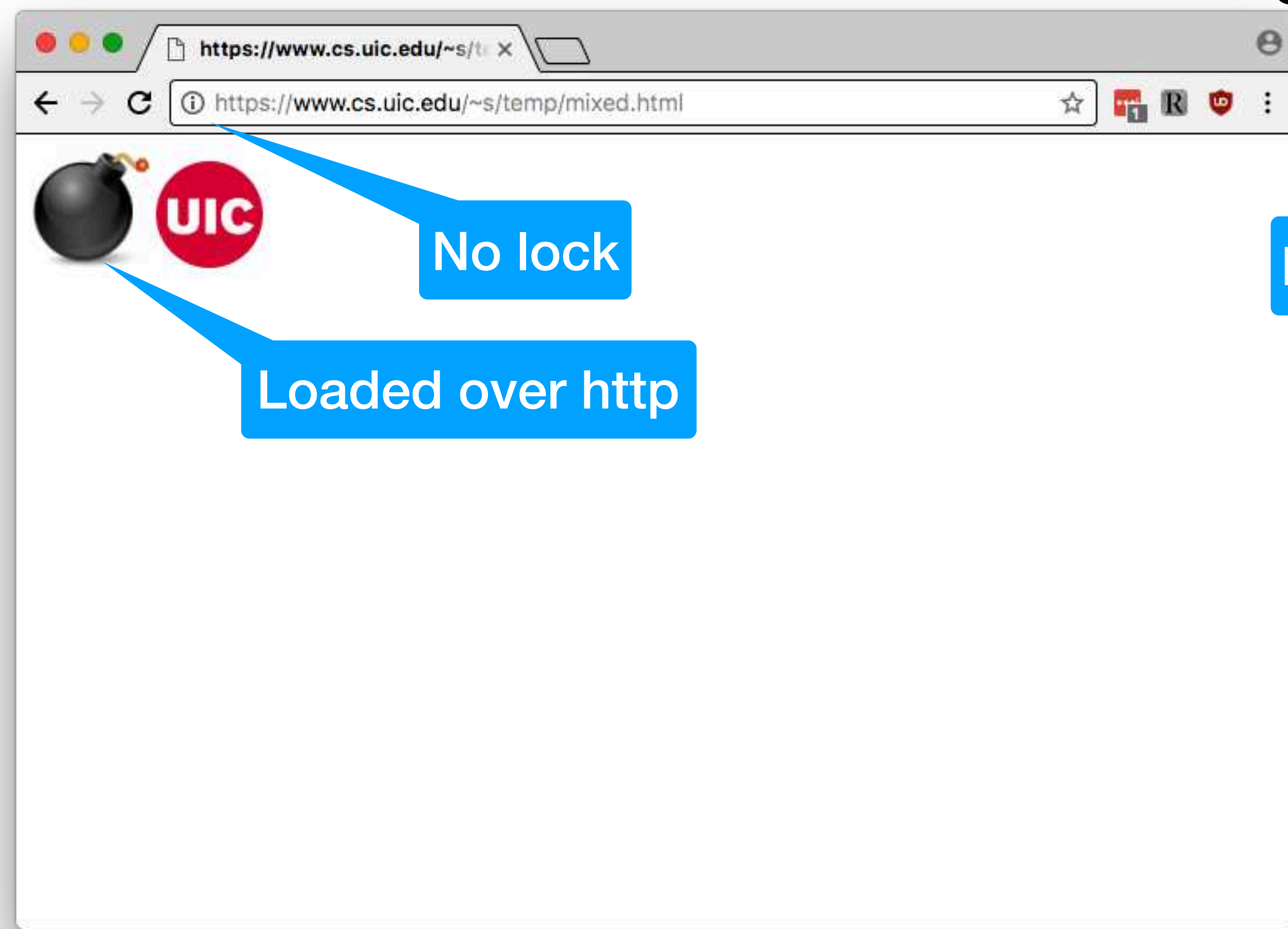
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- Yes, script injected from the element loaded over http could script other pages in the same origin...

Mixed content

- Is that an issue?
- Yes, script injected from the element loaded over http could script other pages in the same origin...
- ...except modern browsers explicitly do not run scripts loaded via http in an https page, so not really any more

Cross-origin attacks

Setup

- Web attacker
 - Controls one or more domains (e.g., [attacker.com](#), [evil.com](#))
 - Can cause the victim to browse to a page serving JavaScript at one of these domains
- Victim is logged in to [bank.com](#) (or any other interesting site)

Quick review

Quick review

- Can the attacker's JavaScript read [bank.com](#)?

Quick review

- Can the attacker's JavaScript read [bank.com](#)?
 - No. Same origin policy

Quick review

- Can the attacker's JavaScript read bank.com?
 - **No. Same origin policy**
- The attacker's script uses `XMLHttpRequest("https://bank.com")` which causes the browser to fetch <https://bank.com> and return its contents. Can the attacker's script read the response?

Quick review

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- The attacker's script uses `XMLHttpRequest("https://bank.com")` which causes the browser to fetch <https://bank.com> and return its contents. Can the attacker's script read the response?
 - No. Same origin policy
- Can the attacker's script use `XMLHttpRequest("https://bank.com/transfer?from=victim&to=attacker")`?

Quick review

- Can the attacker's JavaScript read bank.com?
 - No. Same origin policy
- The attacker's script uses `XMLHttpRequest("https://bank.com")` which causes the browser to fetch <https://bank.com> and return its contents. Can the attacker's script read the response?
 - No. Same origin policy
- Can the attacker's script use `XMLHttpRequest("https://bank.com/transfer?from=victim&to=attacker")`?
 - Yes! Same origin policy doesn't prevent this. The script just cannot read the response

Cross-site request forgery (CSRF)

- The attacker's site instructs the victim's browser to make a request to an honest site (e.g., using XMLHttpRequest or even just an enticing link)
- An XMLHttpRequest allows both GET and POST
- The browser sends all relevant cookies, including any sessions cookies identifying the logged in victim
- From the server's perspective, it looks exactly like a normal request from the victim's browser

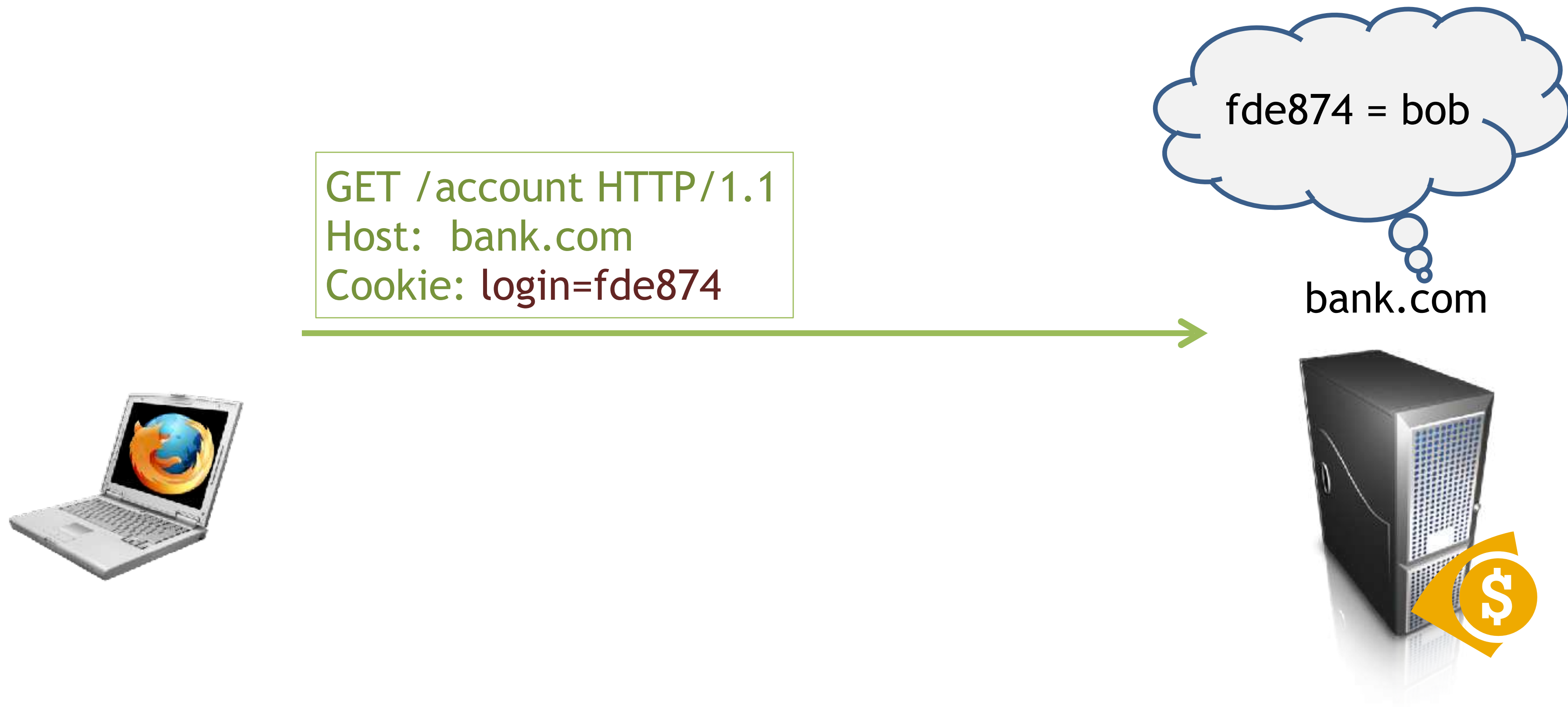
Cross-site Request Forgery (CSRF)



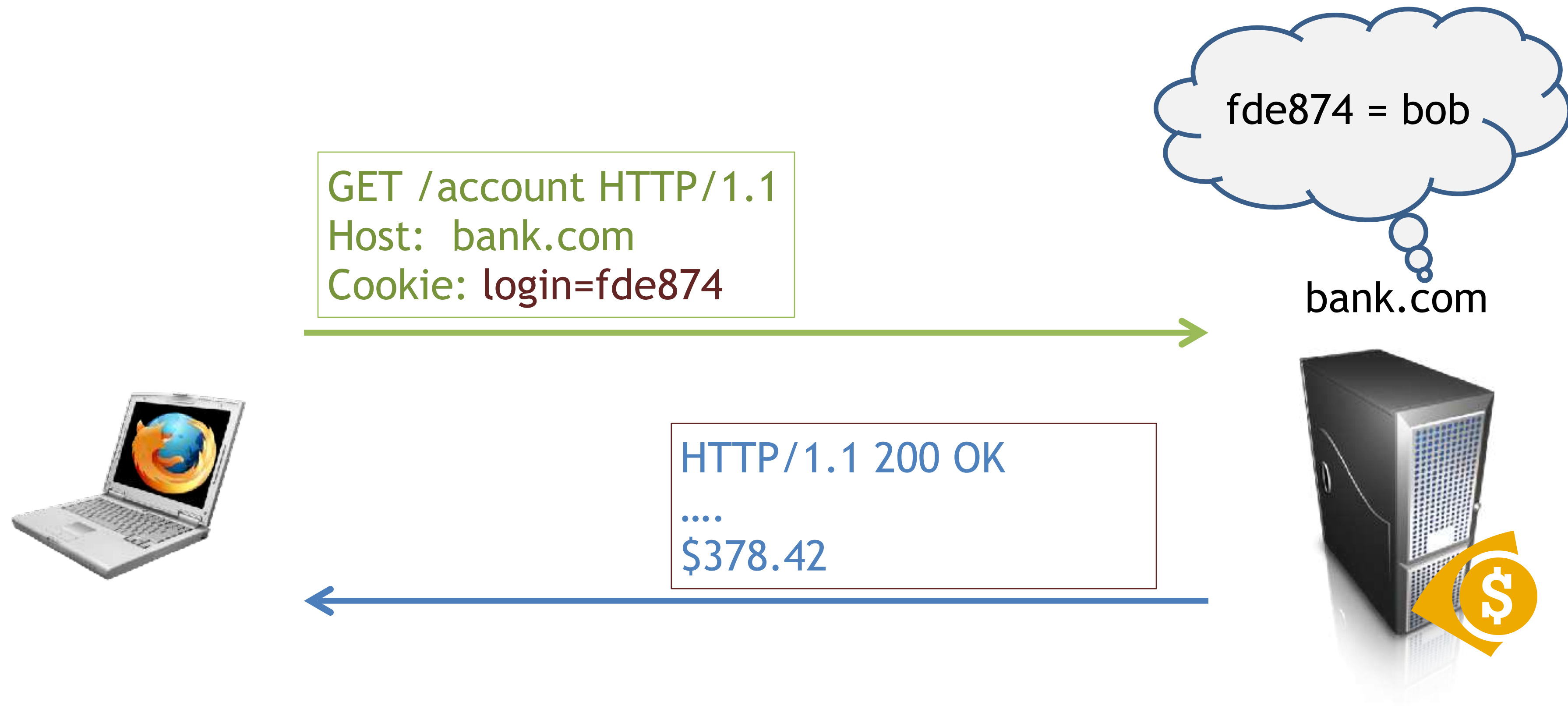
Cross-site Request Forgery (CSRF)



Cross-site Request Forgery (CSRF)



Cross-site Request Forgery (CSRF)

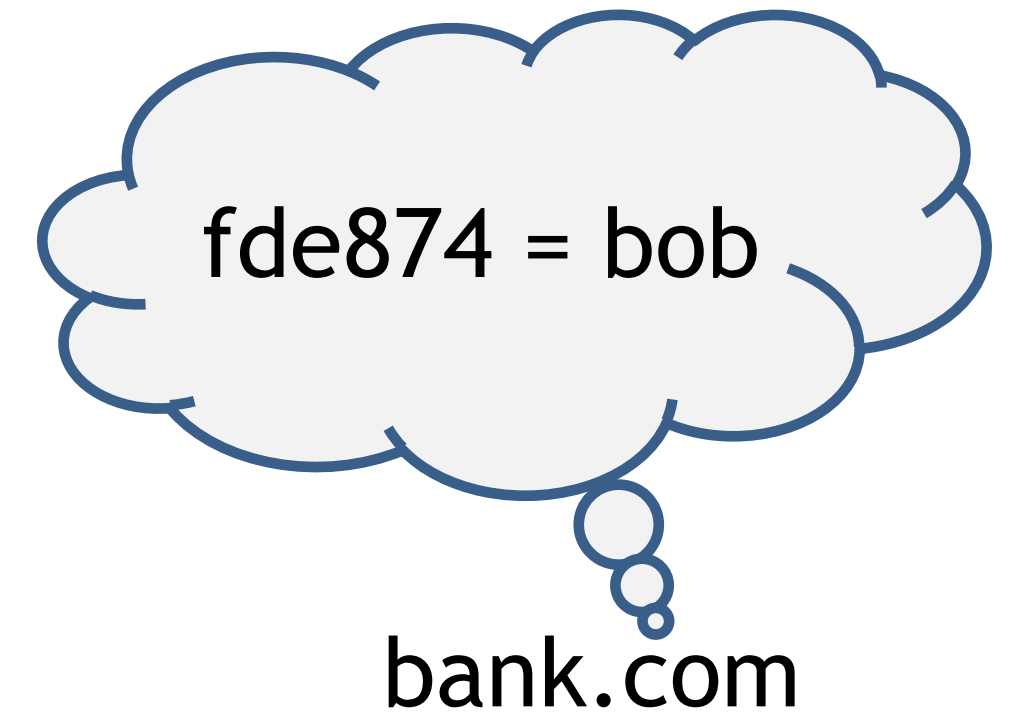


Cross-site Request Forgery (CSRF)



Click me!!!

<http://bank.com/transfer?to=badguy&amt=100>

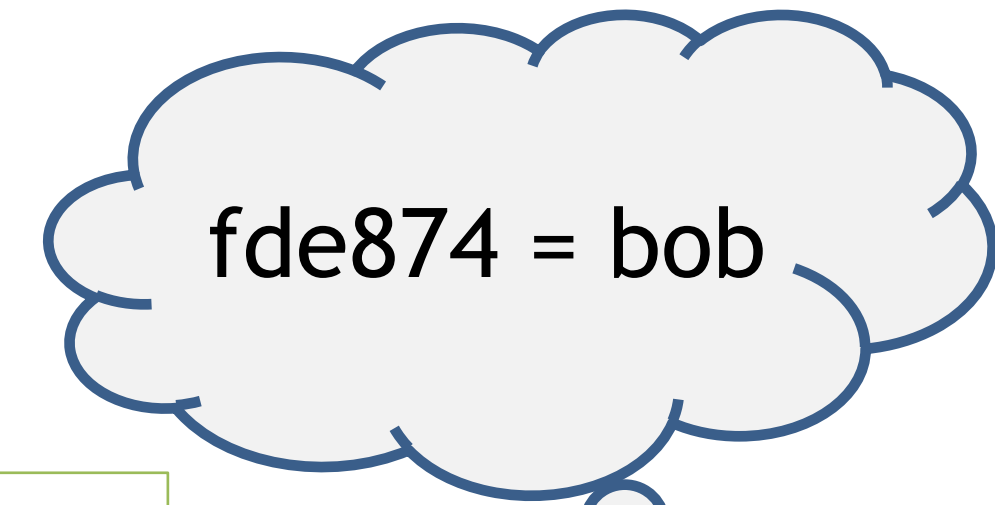


Cross-site Request Forgery (CSRF)



Click me!!!

<http://bank.com/transfer?to=badguy&amt=100>



bank.com

```
GET /transfer?to=badguy&amt=100 HTTP/1.1  
Host: bank.com  
Cookie: login=fde874
```

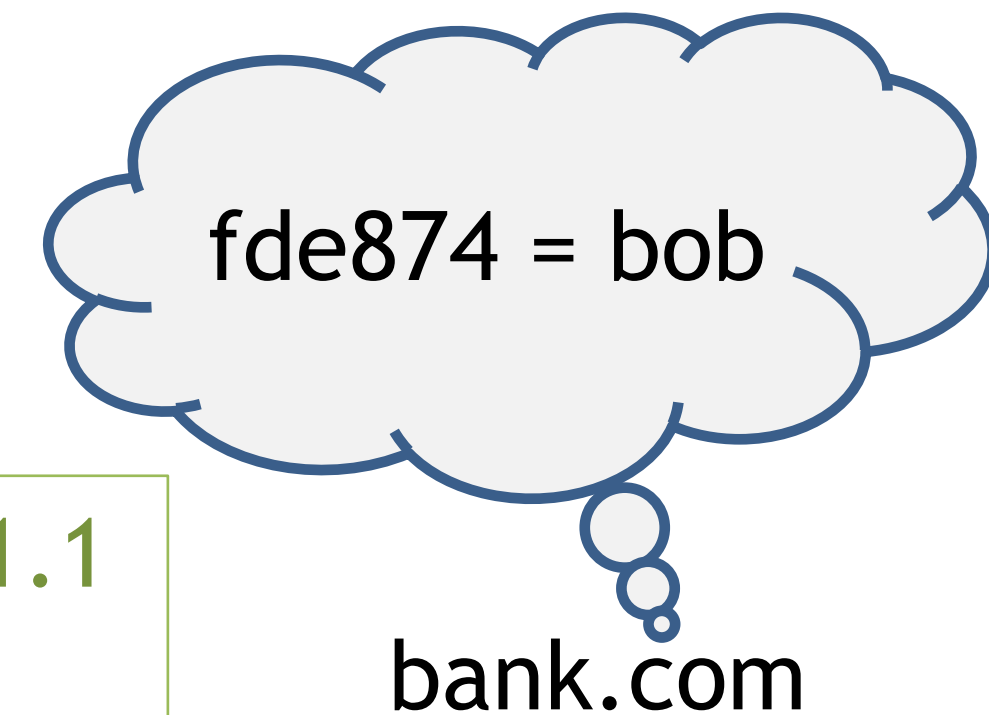


Cross-site Request Forgery (CSRF)



Click me!!!

<http://bank.com/transfer?to=badguy&amt=100>



GET /transfer?to=badguy&amt=100 HTTP/1.1
Host: bank.com
Cookie: login=fde874



HTTP/1.1 200 OK
....
Transfer complete: -\$100.00



Why not make requests directly?

- **Use the browser's state:** The browser sends cookies, client certificates, basic auth credentials in the request
- **Set the browser's state:** The browser parses and acts on responses, even if the JavaScript cannot read the responses
- **Leverage the browser's network connectivity:** The browser can connect to servers the malicious site cannot reach (e.g., those behind a firewall)

CSRF Defenses

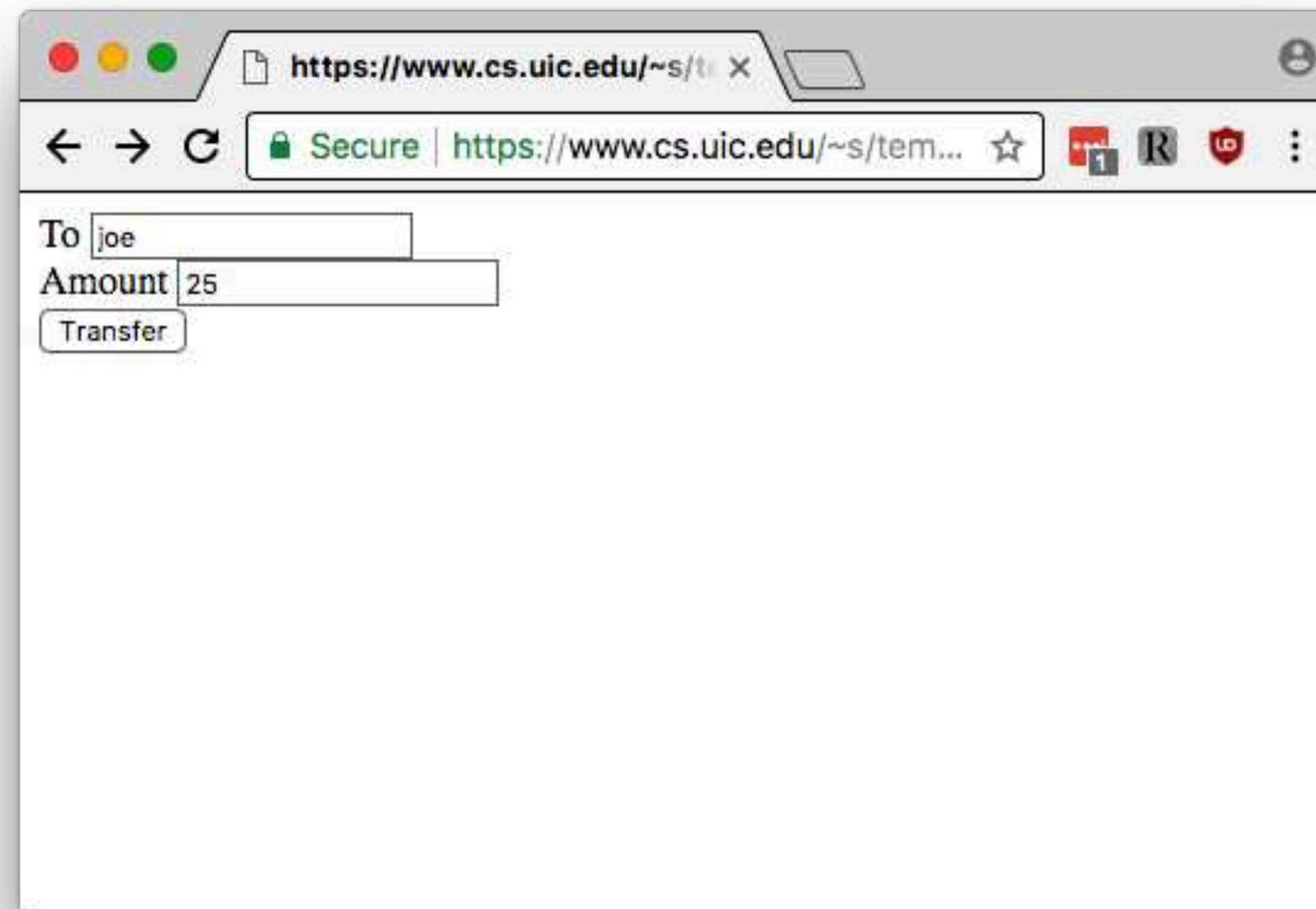
- Need to “authenticate” each user action originates from the legitimate site
- Only needed for actions that change state (E.g., POST but not GET)
 - Why isn't it needed for GET?
- Possibilities
 - Secret token
 - HTTP Referer header (yes, Referer not Referrer, it was misspelled)
 - Custom HTTP header
 - Origin header

Secret token

- Hidden form field with the token value
- The token should be unpredictable to attackers
- Random numbers work, but then need to be stored server side
- Using crypto, we can do better (HMAC)
- The token should be sent along with every POST and checked by the server
- This is a hassle for dynamically-generated content since it needs to include the tokens
- What prevents malicious script from fetching the page (e.g., with XMLHttpRequest), reading the token, and then sending a response with the token?

Example CSRF token

```
<form action="/transfer" method="post">  
  <input type="hidden" name="token" value="8d64">  
  To <input type="text" name="to"><br>  
  Amount <input type="text" name="amount"><br>  
  <input type="submit" value="Transfer">  
</form>
```



CSRF Defenses

```
HTTP/1.1 200 OK  
Set-Cookie: login=fde874
```

```
<form action="/transfer" method="post">  
  <input type="hidden" name="token" value="8d64">  
  ...
```

fde874 = bob

bank.com



This is not actually how POST data is encoded and sent, but the principle is the same

CSRF Defenses

```
HTTP/1.1 200 OK  
Set-Cookie: login=fde874
```

```
<form action="/transfer" method="post">  
  <input type="hidden" name="token" value="8d64">  
  ...
```

fde874 = bob

bank.com

```
POST /transfer?to=joe&amt=25&token=8d64 HTTP/1.1  
Host: bank.com  
Cookie: login=fde874
```



This is not actually how POST data is encoded and sent, but the principle is the same

CSRF Defenses

```
HTTP/1.1 200 OK  
Set-Cookie: login=fde874
```

```
<form action="/transfer" method="post">  
  <input type="hidden" name="token" value="8d64">  
  ...
```

fde874 = bob

bank.com

```
POST /transfer?to=joe&amt=25&token=8d64 HTTP/1.1  
Host: bank.com  
Cookie: login=fde874
```

```
HTTP/1.1 200 OK
```

```
....  
Transfer complete: -$25.00
```



This is not actually how POST data is encoded and sent, but the principle is the same

Referer header

- Sent by the browser and contains the URL of the page containing the link that was clicked or form that was submitted
- Easy to handle server side, just check that the request comes with the correct Referer header
- However, it is frequently stripped by the browser or middle boxes (for privacy reasons)
- It's stripped less often over HTTPS since middle boxes can't modify content

Custom HTTP header

- XMLHttpRequest supports adding custom headers but browsers disallow them on cross-origin requests
- Server can check that the custom header is present

Origin header

- The evolution of the Referer header but only contains the scheme, host, and port, not the full URL
- As with the Referer and custom headers, the server checks the Origin is correct
- Supported by all major browsers
- Unlike custom headers, it's part of the standard

Cross-site scripting (XSS)

- XSS is a method for attackers to embed content (often JavaScript) in another page
- Two basic types
 - Reflected XSS
 - Stored XSS

Reflected XSS

- Web attacker causes the victim to click a link to a legitimate page where the link contains some script
- The server includes the script verbatim in the legitimate page which is sent back to the browser
- The browser interprets it as script coming from the legitimate origin

Cross-Site Scripting (XSS)

```
<?php  
echo "Hello, " . $_GET["user"] . "!";
```



Cross-Site Scripting (XSS)

```
<?php  
echo "Hello, " . $_GET["user"] . "!";
```

GET /?user=Bob HTTP/1.1



Cross-Site Scripting (XSS)

```
<?php  
echo "Hello, " . $_GET["user"] . "!";
```



GET /?user=Bob HTTP/1.1

HTTP/1.1 200 OK
...
Hello, Bob!



Cross-Site Scripting (XSS)

```
<?php  
echo "Hello, " . $_GET["user"] . "!";
```

GET /?user=<u>Bob</u> HTTP/1.1



Cross-Site Scripting (XSS)

```
<?php  
echo "Hello, " . $_GET["user"] . "!";
```



GET /?user=<u>Bob</u> HTTP/1.1



HTTP/1.1 200 OK
...
Hello, <u>Bob</u>!

Cross-Site Scripting (XSS)

```
<?php  
echo "Hello, " . $_GET["user"] . "!";
```

GET /?user=<script>alert('XSS')</script> HTTP/1.1



Cross-Site Scripting (XSS)

```
<?php  
echo "Hello, " . $_GET["user"] . "!";
```

GET /?user=<script>alert('XSS')</script> HTTP/1.1



HTTP/1.1 200 OK

...

Hello, <script>alert('XSS')</script>!



Cross-Site Scripting (XSS)

```
<?php  
echo "Hello, " . $_GET["user"] . "!";
```

http://vuln.com/
says:
XSS



GET /?user=<script>alert('XSS')</script> HTTP/1.1

HTTP/1.1 200 OK

...
Hello, <script>alert('XSS')</script>!



Cross-Site Scripting (XSS)

```
<?php  
echo "Hello, " . $_GET["user"] . "!";
```

http://vuln.com/
says:
XSS



GET /?user=<script>alert('XSS')</script> HTTP/1.1

HTTP/1.1 200 OK

...
Hello, <script>alert('XSS')</script>!



Click me!!!

[http://vuln.com/?user=<script>alert\('XSS'\)</script>](http://vuln.com/?user=<script>alert('XSS')</script>)

Cross-Site Scripting (XSS) Attack

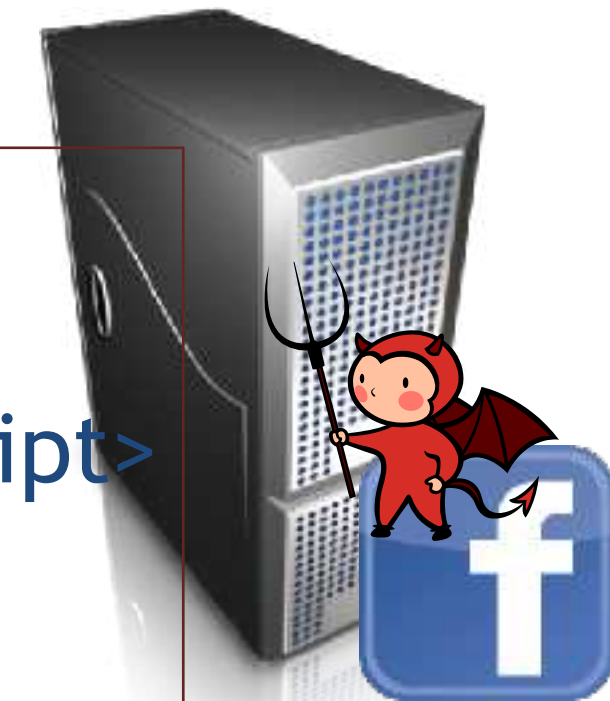
```
GET / HTTP/1.1  
Host: facebook.com
```

(evil!)
facebook.com

```
HTTP/1.1 200 OK
```

...

```
<iframe src="http://gmail.com/?user=<script>  
$.get('http://gmail.com/messages.json',  
function (data) { alert(data); })  
</script>"></iframe>
```



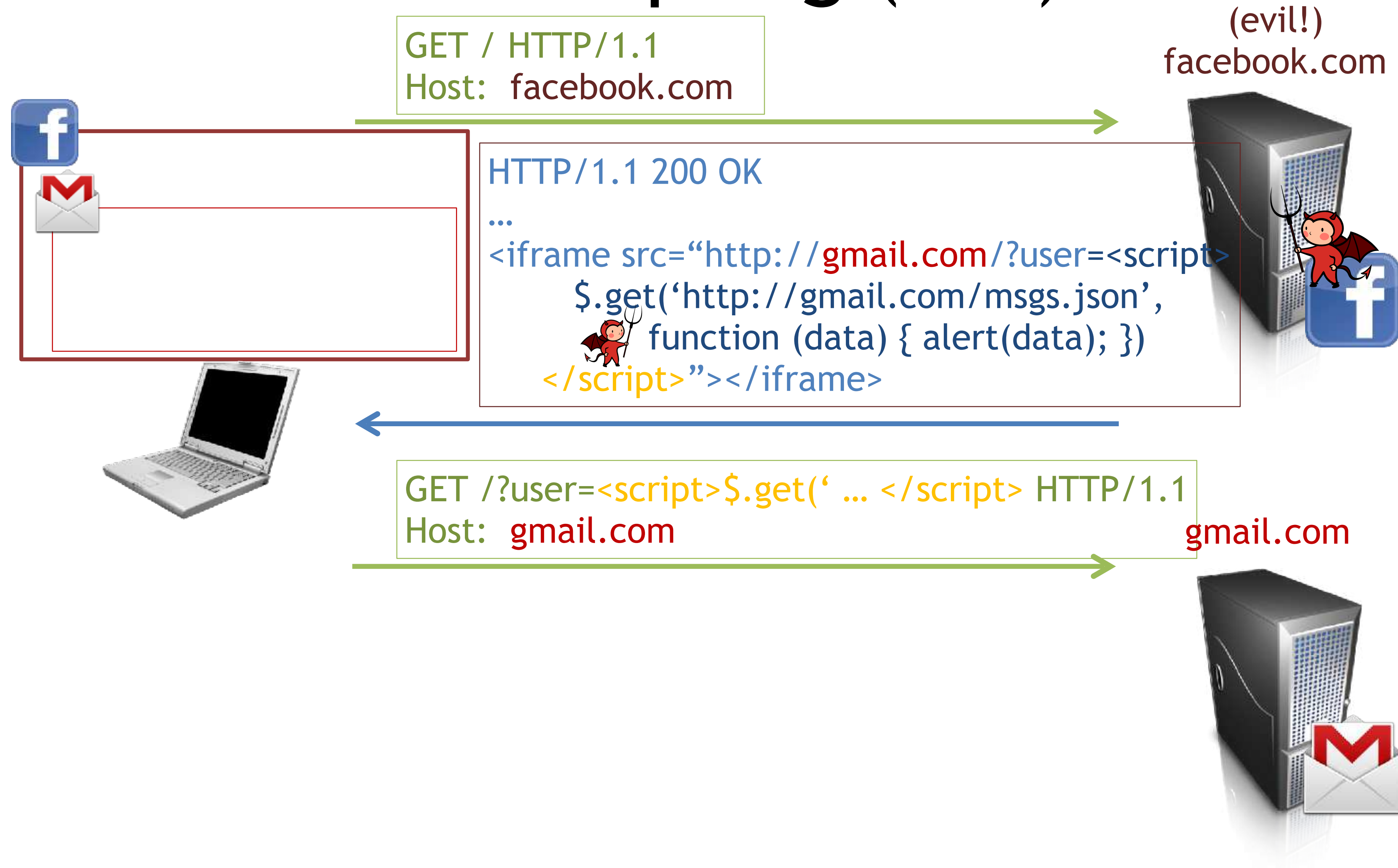
gmail.com



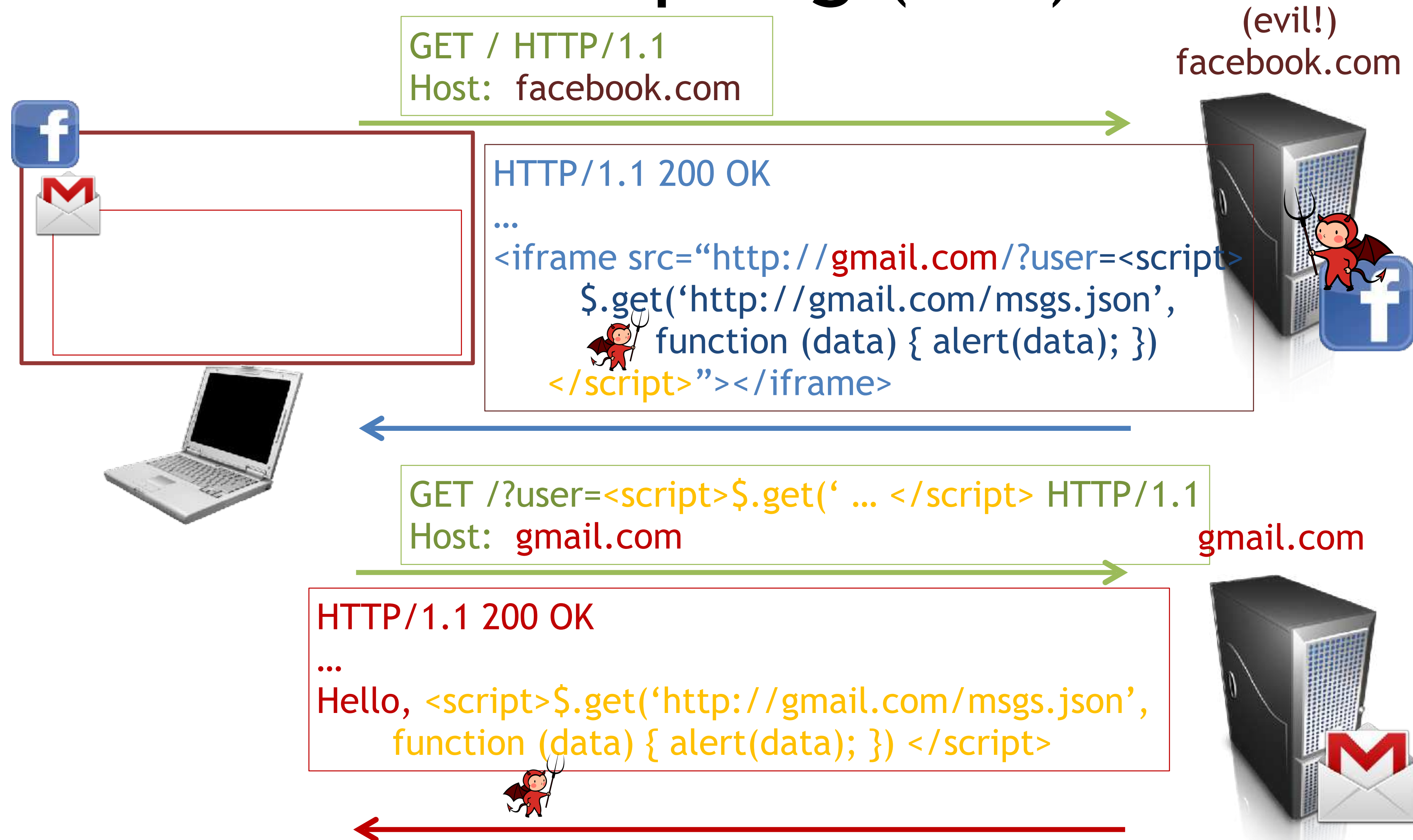
Cross-Site Scripting (XSS) Attack



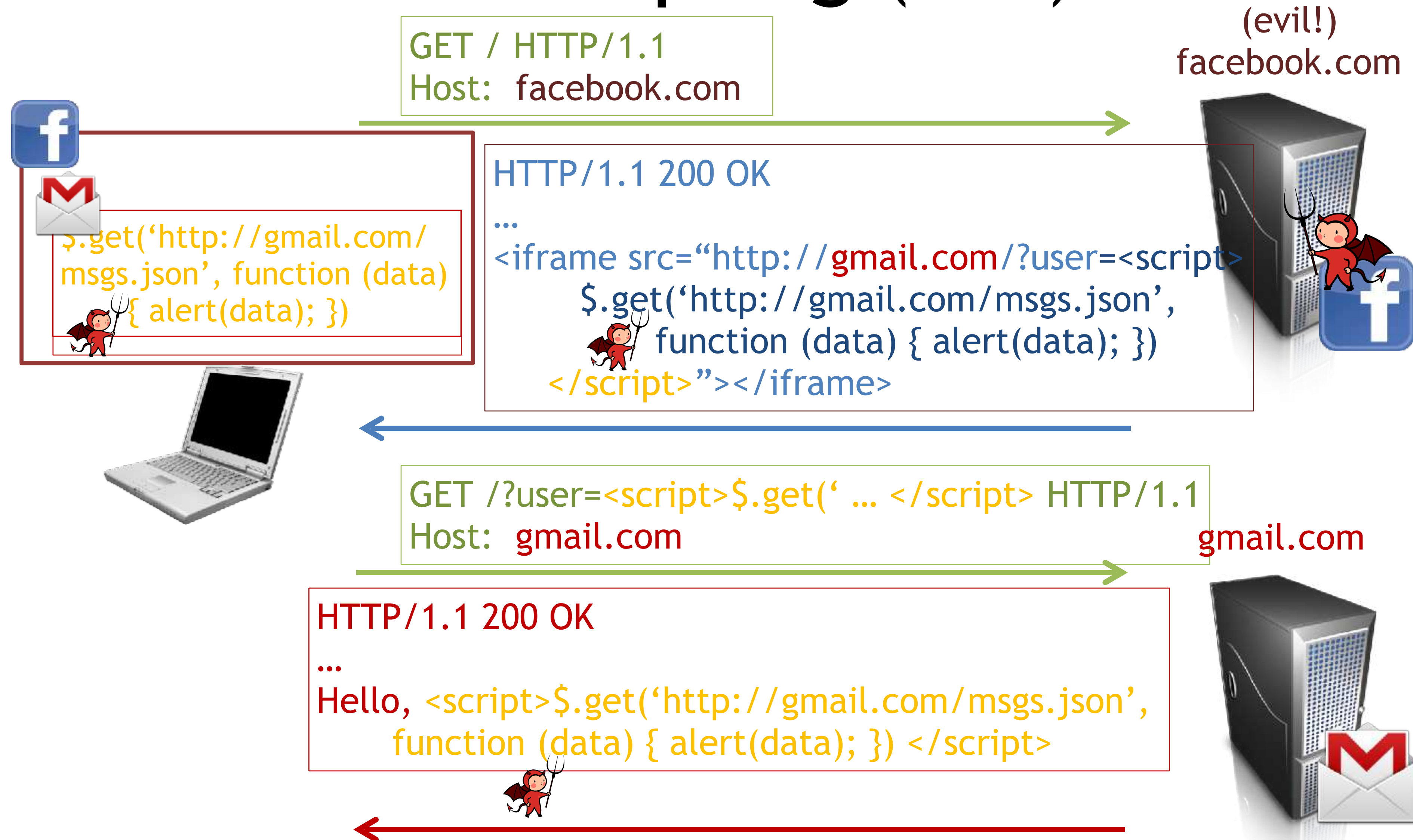
Cross-Site Scripting (XSS) Attack



Cross-Site Scripting (XSS) Attack



Cross-Site Scripting (XSS) Attack



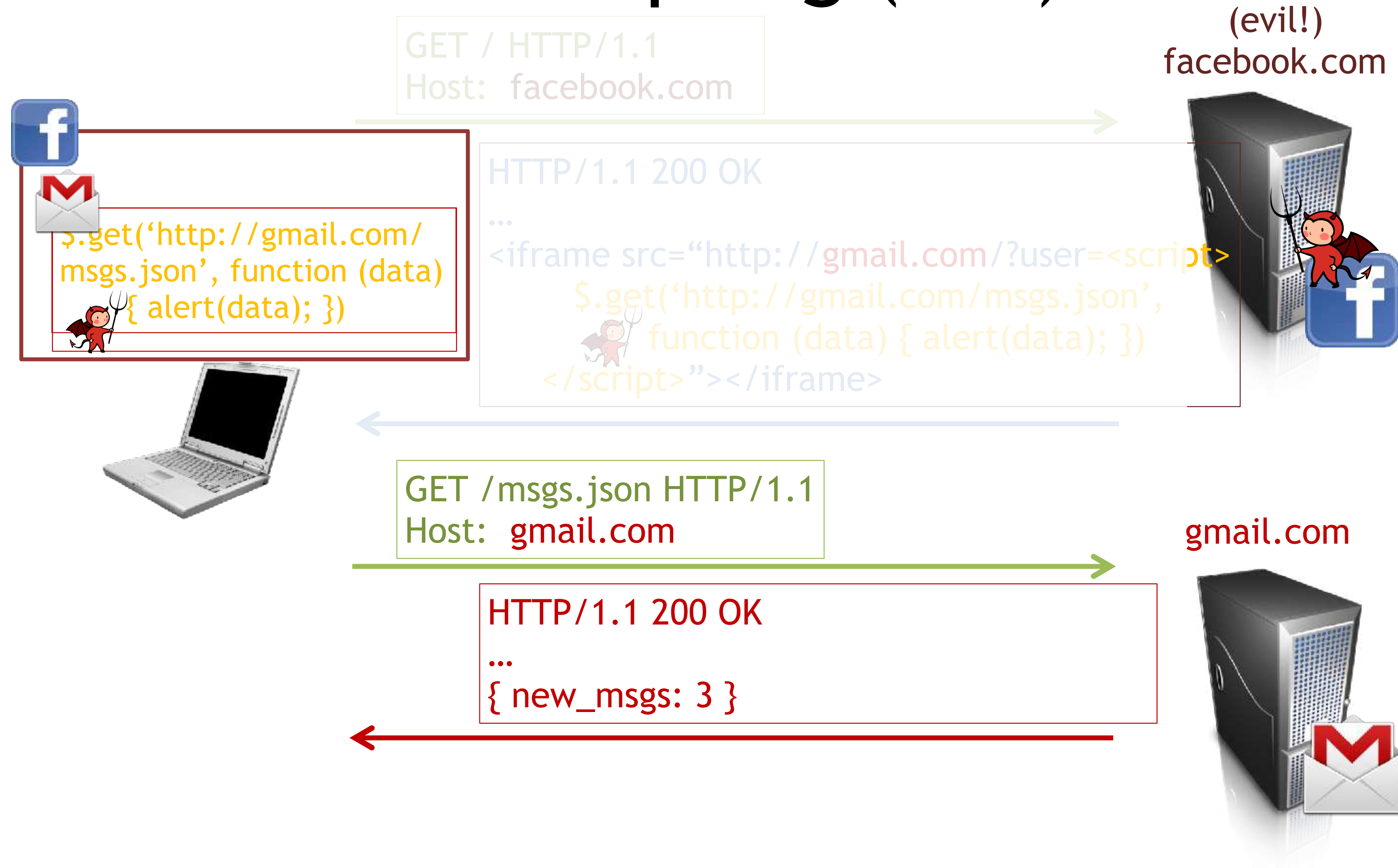
Cross-Site Scripting (XSS) Attack



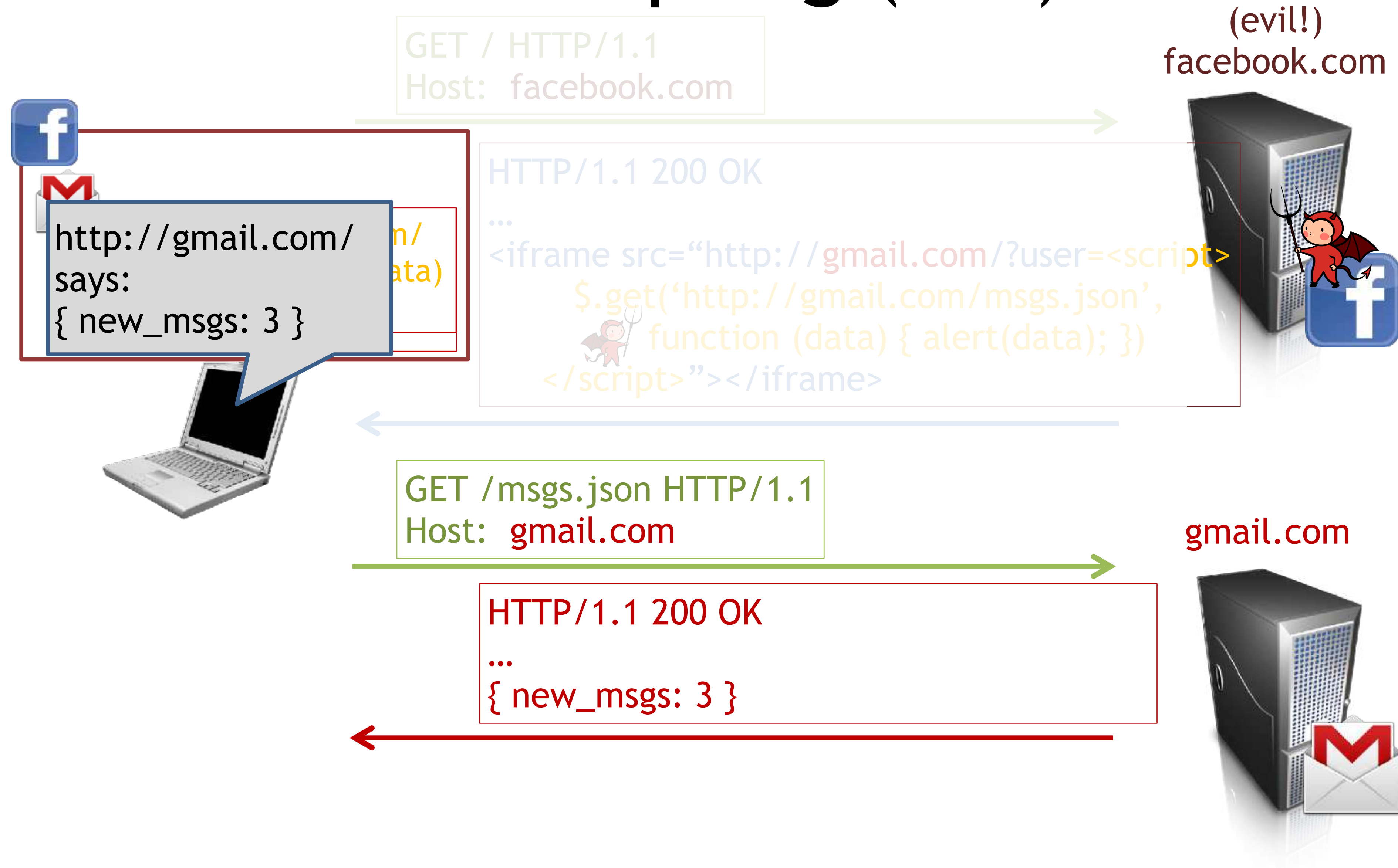
Cross-Site Scripting (XSS) Attack



Cross-Site Scripting (XSS) Attack



Cross-Site Scripting (XSS) Attack



XSS capabilities

- Execute arbitrary scripts in the context (i.e., Origin) of the vulnerable server
- Manipulate the DOM of the vulnerable page
- Submit/read forms (including any CSRF tokens)
- Read cookies
- Install event handlers
- In essence, anything that JavaScript can do!

Stored XSS

- Some web sites serve user-generated content but fail to properly sanitize the user's input
- The attacker POSTs some HTML with JavaScript on the page (e.g., a post on a forum)
- When victims visit the page, the attacker's script is served and the browser (not realizing it came from the attacker) executes it as normal
- The script can do anything JavaScript can do!

Example: Samy worm

- Myspace allowed users to insert HTML in their profiles, but disallowed `<script>`
- Some browsers support JavaScript inside CSS
`<div style="background:url('javascript: eval(...)')">`
- Myspace disallowed the word `javascript` but Internet Explorer (at the time anyway) allowed
`java`
`script`
which bypassed their filter
- Other filters were bypassed by using `eval()`

Example: Samy worm

- Samy Kamkar discovered this and put some script in his profile
- When his page was viewed by a victim, the victim's browser would run the script which would modify the victim's profile to include "but most of all, samy is my hero" **as well as the script itself**
- Within 20 hours, over one million people's profiles were infected
- Myspace had to go offline to fix the problem
- Kamkar pleaded guilty to a felony and got 3 years probation, a fine, and restricted computer use (now he makes cool YouTube videos!)