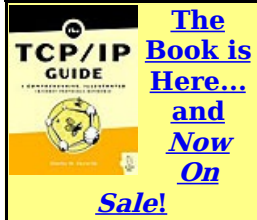


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HTTP Request Message Format

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The client initiates an HTTP session by opening a TCP connection to the HTTP server with which it wishes to communicate. It then sends *request messages* to the server, each of which specifies a particular type of action that the user of the HTTP client would like the server to take. Requests can be generated either by specific user action (such as clicking a hyperlink in a Web browser) or indirectly as a result of a prior action (such as a reference to an inline image in an HTML document leading to a request for that image.)

HTTP requests use a message format that is based on the generic message format described in [the preceding topic](#), but specific to the needs of requests. The structure of this format is as follows (see [Figure 317](#)):

```
<request-line>
<general-headers>
<request-headers>
<entity-headers>
<empty-line>
[<message-body>]
[<message-trailers>]
```



Figure 317: HTTP Request Message Format

This diagram shows the structural elements of an HTTP request and an example of the sorts of headers a request might contain. Like most HTTP requests, this one carries no entity, so there are no entity headers and the message body is empty. See [Figure 318](#) for the HTTP response format.

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