The Illinois Institute of Art Chicago

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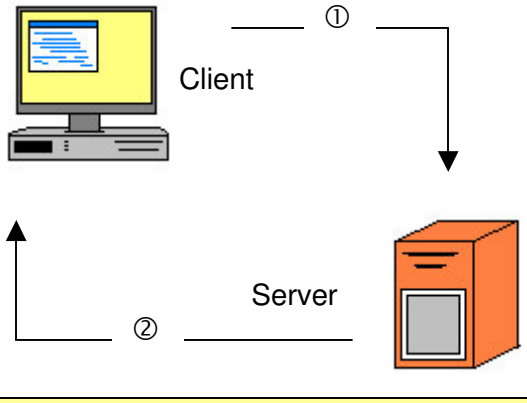
Client-Server Model

The client-server model is a standard throughout the Internet. It describes the relationship between computers in a network. The **client** is the machine or software that *consumes data*, while the **server** is the machine that *provides data*.

We are all familiar with ordering food at a restaurant. When you are a customer at the restaurant, you are a client. The waiter or waitress that serves you your food is a server. A server is responsible for more than one client. If there are too many clients, the server may not be able to serve quickly. If a client orders a very large meal, or requires too much attention, everyone's service may be effected.



Client Server Model

This is the model on which Internet software is based. A client application requests data. When the server can provide that data it serves it to the client. If there are a large number of request on a server, the server may be slow to respond. If there are no clients requesting data, the server may be idle.

A program designed to check e-mail is called an e-mail client. Microsoft Outlook is a common e-mail client. It is designed to request e-mail messages from an e-mail server. Microsoft Outlook sends a message to specific e-mail server and asks for any new e-mail. If there are any new messages, it downloads the message to the client machine.

A web browser is also known as a web client. This means that the web browser is designed to receive web page information from a server. The web page is described in a common language called HTML. That HTML describes how the page should look. Other non-HTML code (such as JavaScript, VB Script, Macromedia Flash) may be sent to the client too. This provides directions about what the web browser should do. Since the client interprets these languages, they are called client-side code.