



# Web Scrapping

Gathering Data from the Web

# Web Scraping!

You may want to...

- download all videos from a website;
- download all news articles from a media platform;
- download all academic papers from a journal;
- download all tweets/weibo of a specific person.

You may need to spend days and nights downloading these data manually, and you can easily make a lot of mistakes.

# Web Scraping!

In today's class, we are going to learn about webscraping.  
In Chinese, it is called 網絡爬蟲.

What is webscraping?

Using tools to gather data you can see on a webpage.  
Almost anything you see on a website can be scraped.

It can be done with python, R,... We are doing it on R.

# WHAT IS WEB SCRAPING?





# Learning about HTML

HTML: HyperText Markup Language.

Websites are written on the HTML language.

Webscraping is based on reading and interpreting the HTML of a webpage.

But how to find the HTML of a webpage?





# Learning about HTML

Please use Chrome as your browser.

If you are not using Chrome, please download and install one now.





香港大學

THE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG



Back	Alt+Left Arrow
Forward	Alt+Right Arrow
Reload	Ctrl+R
Save as...	Ctrl+S
Print...	Ctrl+P
Cast...	
Send to MK046073	
Create QR code for this page	
Translate to 中文 (简体)	
AdBlock — best ad blocker	▶
Take Webpage Screenshots Entirely - FireShot	▶
View page source	Ctrl+U

```
<!DOCTYPE html>
<!--[if lt IE 9]><html class="no-js lte-ie9 lt-ie9lang-en" lang="en"><![endif]-->
<!--[if IE 9]><html class="no-js lte-ie9 ie9lang-en" lang="en"><![endif]-->
<!--[if gt IE 9]><!-->
<html class="no-js" xmlns="http://www.w3.org/1999/xhtml"
  xml:lang="en" lang="en">
<head>
  <meta http-equiv="Content-Type" content="text/html; charset=utf-8" />
  <meta http-equiv="X-UA-Compatible" content="IE=edge" />
  <meta name="viewport" content="width=device-width, initial-scale=1, shrink-to-fit=no">
  <meta http-equiv="Content-Style-Type" content="text/css" />
  <meta http-equiv="Content-Script-Type" content="text/javascript" />
  <link rel="apple-touch-icon" sizes="180x180" href="/assets/img/apple-touch-icon.png">
  <link rel="icon" type="image/png" href="/assets/img/favicon-32x32.png" sizes="32x32">
  <link rel="icon" type="image/png" href="/assets/img/favicon-16x16.png" sizes="16x16">
  <link rel="manifest" href="/assets/img/manifest.json">
  <link rel="mask-icon" href="/assets/img/safari-pinned-tab.svg" color="#5bbad5">
  <link rel="shortcut icon" href="/assets/img/favicon.ico">
  <meta name="msapplication-config" content="/assets/img/browserconfig.xml">
  <meta name="theme-color" content="#ffffff">
  <noscript><style>
    [data-aos] {
      visibility: visible !important;
      opacity: 1 !important;
      transform: none !important;
    }
  </style></noscript>
```



# Learning about HTML

The data you want to scrape appears in certain place of the HTML. For example, suppose that you want to scrape data from the HKU marketing faculty [webpage](#):



# Learning about HTML

You can find the name and images of the professors from the HTML file:

```
▼ <div class="row"> flex
  ▼ <div class="wgl_col-3 people-item">
    ▼ <div class="people-card fadeInUp animated" data-animate="fadeInUp"> flex
      ▼ <a href="https://www.hkubs.hku.hk/people/jingcun-cao/" class="el-processe
        d">
        ▶ <noscript>...</noscript>
        
      ▼ <div class="people-info">
        <div class="h5">Dr. Jingcun CAO</div> == $0
        </div>
      </a>
    </div>
  </div>
</div>
```

# Learning about HTML

For example, it provides you with the link to their profile photos:

```
▼<div class="row"> flex
  ▼<div class="wgl_col-3 people-item">
    ▼<div class="people-card fadeInUp animated" data-animate="fadeInUp"> flex
      ▼<a href="https://www.hkubs.hku.hk/people/jingcun-cao/" class="el-processe
        d">
        ▶<noscript>...</noscript>
        
        ▼<div class="people-info">
          <div class="h5">Dr. Jingcun CAO</div> == $0
        </div>
        </a>
      </div>
    </div>
  </div>
```

# Webscraping

Suppose that you want to download the names of each individual marketing faculty, what should you do?

First, you need to get the HTML for the webpage.

Second, you need to analyze the HTML to get the desired information --- **this is much more difficult.**

# Webscraping

```
install.packages("rvest")  
library(rvest)
```

```
url =
```

```
"https://www.fbe.hku.hk/people/faculty?pg=1&s  
taff_type=faculty&subject_area=marketing&trac  
k=all"
```

```
webpage = read_html(url, encoding = "UTF-8")  
print(webpage)
```

# Webscraping

Now, you get the HTML source file here. The next thing you need to do it to understand the HTML file, which is very challenging.


```
> print(webpage)
{html_document}
<html lang="en-US" prefix="og: https://ogp.me/ns#">
[1] <head>\n<meta http-equiv="Content-Type" content="text/html; charset=U ...
[2] <body class="page-template page-template-people-listing page-template ...
```



# Webscraping

To better understand the HTML code, you are strongly recommended to use **Chrome** as your browser.

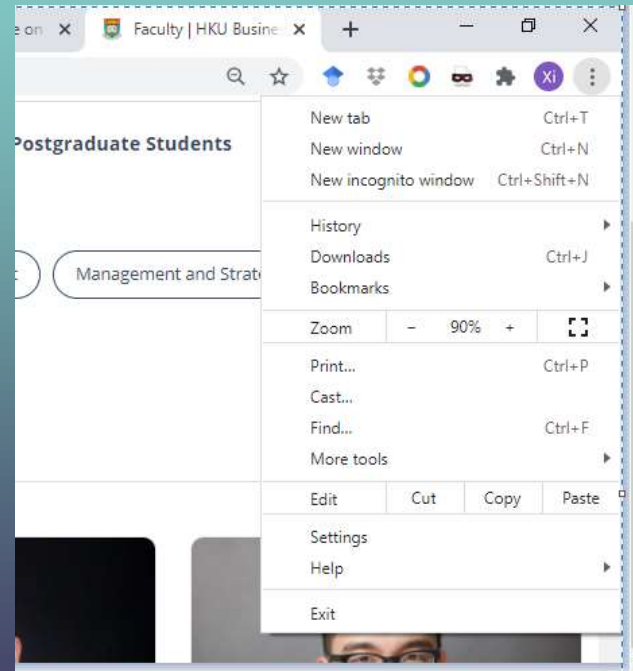
Chrome allows you to check the HTML code in a convenient matter.



# Check HTML with Chrome

Open the webpage in your Chrome browser.

Click the upper right Chrome setting button of your browser and you will be directed here.

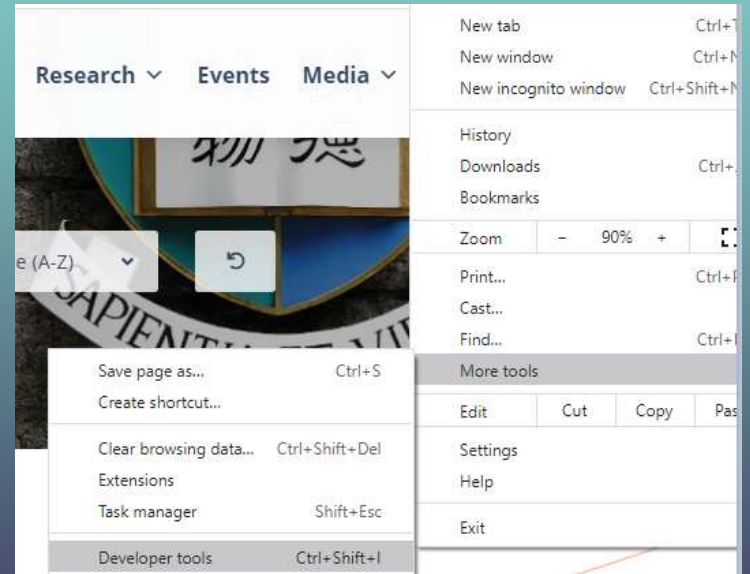





# Check HTML with Chrome

Choose “More tools” ...

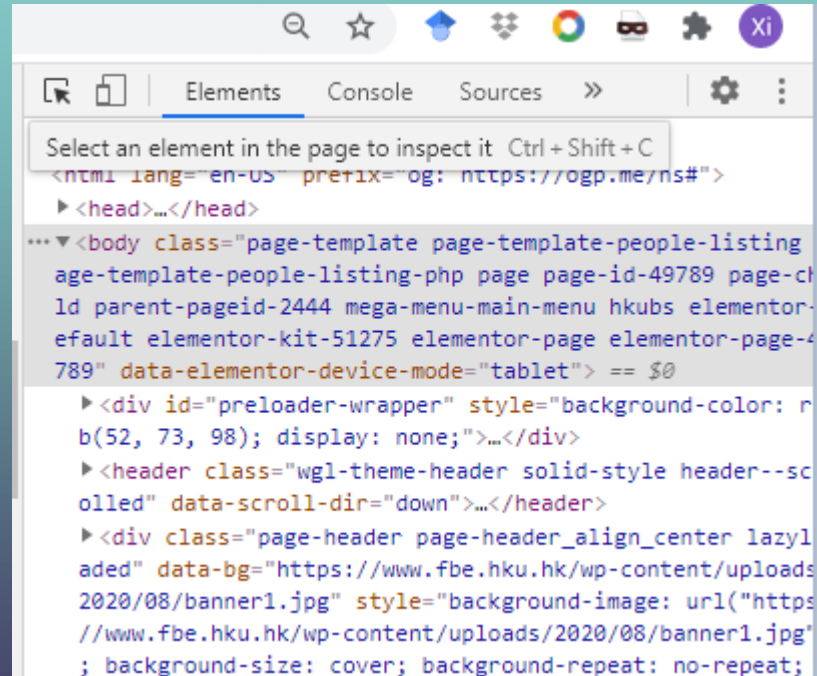
Choose “Developer tools” ...



# Check HTML with Chrome

Click the  button and you will get to “select an element in the page to inspect it”.

Alternatively, use “Ctrl + Shift + C”



# Check HTML with Chrome

Take Prof. Dang's information as an example.

You can see her name appears here in the HTML code.

But what does this mean?

```
▼ <a href="https://www.hkubs.hku.hk/people/chu-ivy-dang/" class="el-processed">
  ▶ <noscript>...</noscript>
  
  ▼ <div class="people-info">
    <div class="h5">Dr. Chu (Ivy) DANG</div>
    == $0
  </div>
</a>
```

```
▼ <div class="row"> flex
  ▶ <div class="wgl_col-3 people-item">...</div>
  ▶ <div class="wgl_col-3 people-item">...</div>
  ▶ <div class="wgl_col-3 people-item">...</div>
  ▼ <div class="wgl_col-3 people-item">
    ▼ <div class="people-card fadeInUp animated" data-animate="fadeInUp"> flex
      ▼ <a href="https://www.hkubs.hku.hk/people/chu-ivy-dang/" class="el-processed">
        ▶ <noscript>...</noscript>
        
        ▼ <div class="people-info">
          <div class="h5">Dr. Chu (Ivy) DANG</div> == $0
          </div>
        </a>
      </div>
    </div>
  ▶ <div class="wgl_col-3 people-item">...</div>
  ▶ <div class="wgl_col-3 people-item">...</div>
  ▶ <div class="wgl_col-3 people-item">...</div>
  ▶ <div class="wgl_col-3 people-item">...</div>
```

WHAT IS

HTML

WHAT DOES IT DO &  
WHAT IS IT USED FOR?

'Working IT!'

# UNDERSTANDING HTML

Here, the name information is within a “div” node.

And this node belongs to a “div” node.

This “div” node further belongs to another “a” node.

And so on....

We call this is “path”: ...div/div/div/a/div/div

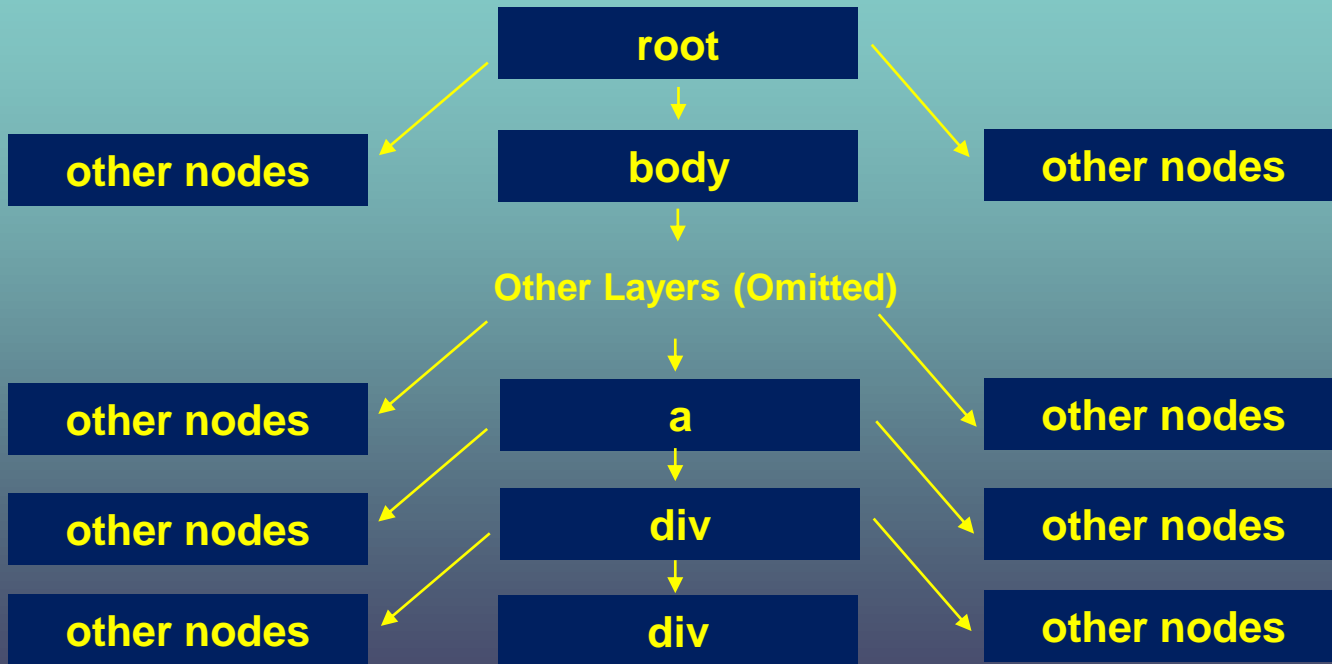
# UNDERSTANDING HTML

You can see that we have various types of nodes, including “div”, “a”, and “img”. You may wonder, “what do these types mean?”

Here, these types are called “tag”. For example, an “img” tag is used to mark up an image in the HTML language.

For detailed information, check [here](#).

# UNDERSTANDING HTML







# UNDERSTANDING HTML

This is something like your home address:

We have something like...

*Country/Province/City/District/Street/Building/Floor/Room*

The path helps us locate nodes and find the content of the nodes.






# UNDERSTANDING HTML

However, unlike your home address, here each node does not have its name.

For example, we know it is a “**div**” node (not an “a” node) but there may be multiple “**div**” nodes.

My building is in a **street** (not an **avenue** or **road**) but there may be multiple **streets** here.



# UNDERSTANDING HTML

Let's get all "div" nodes. This can be done by running this:

```
nodes <- html_nodes (webpage, xpath = '//div')
```

You can see that in total we have 271 "div" nodes.

```
print (length (nodes))
```



# UNDERSTANDING HTML

We want to make the path more accurate to pin down to the “div” nodes that we are interested in. That is, we want to remove other unrelated “div” nodes.

We can do this by putting more restrictions on the path.





# UNDERSTANDING HTML

Tags, Attributes and Elements



# UNDERSTANDING HTML

```
nodes <- html_nodes (webpage, xpath =  
' //div/div')
```

Here we restrict the parent of the “div” node must also be a “div” node. Now, we have 216 nodes --- still too many unrelated nodes.

```
▼ <div class="people-info">  
  <div class="h5">Dr. Chu  
  (Ivy) DANG</div> == $0  
</div>
```

# UNDERSTANDING HTML

```
nodes <- html_nodes (webpage, xpath =  
' //div[@class="people-info"]/div')
```

Here we restrict the parent of the “div” node must also be a “div” node. Moreover, the its parent node must have a class attribute will is called “people-info.”

```
▼ <div class="people-info">  
  <div class="h5">Dr. Chu  
  (Ivy) DANG</div> == $0  
</div>
```

# UNDERSTANDING HTML

Now, we only have 15 div nodes selected. These are actually all HKU marketing faculties. Let us print their names:

```
nodes <- html_nodes(webpage, xpath =  
'//div[@class="people-info"]/div')  
for (node in nodes)  
  print(html_text(node))
```



# UNDERSTANDING HTML


You can also use other refinement to select the nodes that you are looking for. For example, the following codes work as well:

```
nodes <- html_nodes(webpage, xpath =  
'//div[@class="h5"]')  
for (node in nodes)  
  print(html_text(node))
```



# Exercise

Great! You now have a sense of how to scrape data from the web. It is very preliminary, and you will need a lot more exercises. Let us try the following exercise.



# Scraping Exercise

HKU makes press announcements on its official news webpage: <https://hku.hk/press/all/>



< 2023		
JAN FEB MAR APR MAY JUN JUL AUG SEP OCT NOV DEC		
15 Sep 2023	> HKU Research Hub on Institutions of China hosts seminar on Building a Closer ASEAN-China Community	Press Release
14 Sep 2023	> HKU hosts government career fair on campus	Press Release
14 Sep 2023	> HKU Scientists Pioneer Dual Trojan Horse Approach to Combat Superbugs	Press Release
13 Sep 2023	> HKUMed advocates for consideration of a total ban on tobacco in Hong Kong	Press Release
13 Sep 2023	> Eight young HKU scientists awarded China's Excellent Young Scientists Fund 2023	Press Release



# Exercise

Try to download the titles of these press articles!

URL: <https://hku.hk/press/all/>



# Exercise

First, let us scrape the titles. We must understand the corresponding HTML code to scrape the data.

```
▼ <div class="press-item">
  <span class="date">14 Sep 2023</span>
  ▼ <span class="details">
    <a href="/press/news_detail_26581.html">HKU hosts government career fair
    on campus</a> == $0
  </span>
  <span class="news-type">Press Release</span>
</div>
```

# Exercise

```
library(rvest)
url = "https://hku.hk/press/all/"
webpage = read_html(url, encoding = "UTF-8")
nodes <- html_nodes(webpage, xpath =
'//div[@class="press-item"]/span/a')
for (node in nodes)
  print(html_text(node))
```







# Exercise

Now, we are done!

- [1] "HKU Research Hub on Institutions of China hosts seminar on Building a Closer ASEAN-China Community"
- [1] "HKU hosts government career fair on campus"
- [1] "HKU Scientists Pioneer Dual Trojan Horse Approach to Combat Superbugs"
- [1] "HKUMed advocates for consideration of a total ban on tobacco in Hong Kong"
- [1] "Eight young HKU scientists awarded China's Excellent Young Scientists Fund 2023"
- [1] "HKU Business School's research reveals green nudges bring nontrivial aggregate environmental benefits "
- [1] "HKU Dentistry's "Smiles-For-All" launches the "Azalea Gum Treatment Project\" to provide free dental care to Hong Kong's underprivileged"

# Exercise #2

Now, let us visit the Harvard School of Professional Learning:  
<https://pll.harvard.edu/trending>

		
<p> ART &amp; DESIGN</p> <p>📺 ONLINE <b><u>Beethoven's 9th Symphony and the 19th Century Orchestra</u></b></p> <p>Learn about Beethoven's monumental 9th Symphony and forms of orchestral music.</p> <p>FREE* AVAILABLE NOW</p>	<p> EDUCATION &amp; TEACHING</p> <p>📺 ONLINE <b>Introduction to Family Engagement in Education</b></p> <p>Learn about successful collaborations between families and educators and why they lead to improved outcomes for students and...</p> <p>FREE* AVAILABLE NOW</p>	<p> SCIENCE</p> <p>📺 ONLINE <b>Super-Earths and Life</b></p> <p>Learn about the Earth, life, and how we can search for life elsewhere in the universe.</p> <p>FREE* 7 WEEKS LONG AVAILABLE NOW</p>





# Exercise #2

In this exercise, we attempt to scrape the course titles, e.g.,  
“Beethoven's 9th Symphony and the 19th Century Orchestra”

Try this exercise yourself!



## Exercise #2

First, we identify the root of each individual course. We need to inspect the HTML code first.

```
▼ <div class="field field-name-title-qs">
  ▼ <h3>
    ▼ <a href="/course/introduction-family-engagement"
      "Introduction to Family Engagement in Educati
        ::after
      </a>
    </h3>
  </div>
```

## Exercise #2

```
library(rvest)
url = "https://pll.harvard.edu/trending"
webpage = read_html(url, encoding = "UTF-8")
nodes <- html_nodes(webpage, xpath =
  '//h3/a')
for (node in nodes)
  print(html_text(node))
```



# Downloading Images

Previously, we have discussed how to scrape text information from a website using a web scraper.

Now, let us consider scraping images from the web.



# Scraping Images

Let us go back to the HKU marketing faculty webpage:



# Scraping Images

You can find a link to each photo (in “src” or “data-src” attribute):

```
▼ <div class="wgl_col-3 people-item">
  ▼ <div class="people-card fadeInUp animated" data-animate="fadeInUp"> flex
    ▼ <a href="https://www.hkubs.hku.hk/people/jingcun-cao/" class="el-processed">
      ▶ <noscript>...</noscript>
         == $0
      ▶ <div class="people-info">...</div>
    </a>
  </div>
</div>
```

# Scraping Images

If you get the link, you will have access to the photo:

[https://www.hkubs.hku.hk/wp-content/uploads/fly-images/52612/CAO-Jingcun\\_web-scaled-800x800-ct.jpg](https://www.hkubs.hku.hk/wp-content/uploads/fly-images/52612/CAO-Jingcun_web-scaled-800x800-ct.jpg)

So, our first step to get the link information.

# Scraping Images

```
url =  
"https://www.fbe.hku.hk/people/faculty?pg=1&  
staff_type=faculty&subject_area=marketing&tr  
ack=all"  
webpage = read_html(url, encoding = "UTF-8")  
image_nodes <- html_nodes(webpage, xpath =  
'//div/a/img[@width="800"]')  
print(length(image_nodes))
```



# Scraping Images

But that's not enough. We not only want to get the nodes, but also need the link to each of the nodes. The link appears in the "src" or "data-src" attribute.

```
▼ <div class="wgl_col-3 people-item">
  ▼ <div class="people-card fadeInUp animated" data-animate="fadeInUp"> flex
    ▼ <a href="https://www.hkubs.hku.hk/people/jingcun-cao/" class="el-processed">
      ▶ <noscript>...</noscript>
       == $0
      ▶ <div class="people-info">...</div>
    </a>
  </div>
</div>
```

# Scraping Images

But that's not enough. We not only want to get the nodes, but also need the link to each of the nodes. The link appears in the "src" or "data-src" attribute.

```
image_nodes <- html_nodes(webpage, xpath =  
'//div/a/img[@width="800"]')  
for (image in image_nodes)  
{  
  photourl <- html_attr(image, "data-src")  
  print(photourl)  
}
```

# Downloading Images

```
number = 1
for (image in image_nodes)
{
  photourl <- html_attr(image, "data-src")
  print(photourl)
  download.file(photourl,
paste0(toString(number), '_HKU_Photo.jpg'),
mode = 'wb')
  number = number + 1
}
```

# Static vs. Dynamic Websites



The image shows a YouTube video player thumbnail. At the top right of the video frame is a red YouTube play button icon. The main text of the video title is centered and reads: "The Difference Between STATIC & DYNAMIC Websites". Below the title, there is a line of text providing contact information: "DON MUDALIGE | [WWW.DONWEBSOLUTIONS.COM](http://WWW.DONWEBSOLUTIONS.COM) | (510) 314-3172". The video frame is set against a dark teal background.


## The Difference Between STATIC & DYNAMIC Websites

DON MUDALIGE | [WWW.DONWEBSOLUTIONS.COM](http://WWW.DONWEBSOLUTIONS.COM) | (510) 314-3172



# Dynamic Websites

What we learned in today's class works well for static websites. But it does not work equally well on dynamic websites. If you want to scrape data from a dynamic website, you may need to use some more advanced tools.






# Dynamic Websites

If you want to scrape data from a dynamic website, there is a tool called “selenium”. We also have a packaged called “RSelenium” in R.

The selenium tool allows your scraper to visit a webpage like a human-being. That is, if you write a scraper with selenium, your scraper will also be able to scroll down your pages, click buttons, enter your password, etc.





# Dynamic Websites

You can also write a program to log in to your Moodle account first and then scrape data from the website.

