Gemini, a modern protocol that looks retro

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Gemini, a modern protocol that looks retro
What’s wrong with the Web

Pervasive surveillance,
Slowness,
Little choice of browsers,
Distraction above content.
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- Distraction above content.
Why?

Partly because excessive complexity.
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Too much information sent (User-Agent:, 3-rd party resources, cookies...),
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- Too much information sent,
- Too much code to run,
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- Too much information sent,
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- Cannot develop a browser from scratch,
Why?

Partly because excessive complexity.

- Too much information sent,
- Too much code to run,
- Cannot develop a browser from scratch,
- Too many things to prioritize form over content.
Possible solutions
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- Block the worst (ad blocker, restrictions on cookies, NoScript...),
Possible solutions

- Block the worst,
- A lightweight browser (lynx, Dillo...),
Possible solutions

- Block the worst,
- A lightweight browser,
- Common limits of these approaches: you cannot know in advance if it will break the site or not.
Gemini does it

Gemini is separatist: new protocol and new format, Simple protocol, not extensible: no cookies, no headers, New format (gemtext) very simple: subset of Markdown. No pictures, no hyperlinks, Back to Gopher? No, we have URI, TLS, UTF-8... Saves energy, too!
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Demo 1

The command-line tool Agunua
Demo 2

Running manually the protocol
Ease of writing software is one of the goals of Gemini. Indeed, it worked, everyone, and his cat, wrote a client or a server, all programming languages including Fortran, Prolog and assembly language.
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Today, the written specification is "almost" done, Governance is simple, the founder, Solderpunk, decides.
Take me to your leader

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Isn’t it too brutalist?
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No cache control,
Isn’t it too brutalist?

- No cache control,
- Do you like TOFU?
Isn’t it too brutalist?

- No cache control,
- Do you like TOFU?
- Can users live without images?
Isn’t it too brutalist?

- No cache control,
- Do you like TOFU?
- Can users live without images?
- Translating existing content without hyperlinks.
Is it suitable for retrocomputing?

It runs on low-end machines,
But not on 8-bits game console :-)
TLS and Unicode require resources,
More low-tech than retro,
If you really need retro-computing, you may use Gopher,
Gemini tries to be usable in 2021.
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