

Preliminary Request Denied

[draft-nottingham-httpbis-pre-denied-00](#)

Browser Pre-Fetching

Some Context

- Browsers prefetch / preload as a performance optimisation
 - Web Performance Working Group
- Triggered by
 - Hints in responses
 - Speculation Rules

Problem Statement

- Pre-fetching is driven by information available to the client
- Pre-fetch requests contain a header indicating so
 - `Sec-Purpose: prefetch`
- In some cases, the server doesn't want to serve the prefetch, but not due to any particular error
 - Especially, when it believes prefetching will not help
- **What status code should the server use?**

Deployment Experiences

- Long discussion on WICG thread
 - <https://github.com/WICG/nav-speculation/issues/138>
- Ended up specifying 'any non-successful status code', but recommending 503
- In practice, lots of 503s in logs tends to freak people out
- Most other >299 status codes have the same effect for various reasons

Proposal

- Define a new status code for this purpose
- "4xx (Preliminary Request Denied)"
- Alternative: "Purpose Declined"
- draft-nottingham-httpbis-pre-denied is very short
- Adopt and bikeshed the details?