

DHCP: Dynamic Host Configuration Protocol

Definition:

Dynamic Host Configuration Protocol (DHCP) is a network management protocol used to automate the process of configuring devices on IP networks. It assigns IP addresses and other necessary network configurations dynamically to devices, enabling them to communicate effectively on a network.

Functions:

Automatic IP Assignment: DHCP automatically assigns a unique IP address to each device on a network, ensuring no conflicts and efficient IP address management.

Configuration Parameters: In addition to IP addresses, DHCP provides other configuration information such as subnet mask, default gateway, and DNS servers.

Lease Mechanism: DHCP assigns IP addresses for a limited period called a lease, after which the address can be reassigned to another device if not renewed.

Designing a System to Connect More than 2^{32} Hosts:

The limitation of 32-bit IP addresses in IPv4 allows for a theoretical maximum of about 4.3 billion unique addresses. To address the need for a larger address space, IPv6 was developed. IPv6 uses 128-bit addresses, vastly increasing the number of possible unique IP addresses.

NAT: Network Address Translation

Definition:

Network Address Translation (NAT) is a method used in networking to modify network address information in IP packet headers while in transit, enabling multiple devices on a local network to share a single public IP address for accessing external networks, such as the Internet.

Types of NAT:

1. Static NAT:

- Maps a single private IP address to a single public IP address.
- Used for devices that need to be accessible from the outside, such as web servers.
- Example: Private IP 192.168.1.10 mapped to Public IP 203.0.113.10.

2. **Dynamic NAT:**

- Maps a private IP address to a public IP address from a pool of public addresses.
- Used when there are fewer public IP addresses than private devices needing Internet access.
- Example: Private IP 192.168.1.11 might be mapped to any available Public IP from a pool of 203.0.113.20 to 203.0.113.30.

3. **Port Address Translation (PAT):**

- Also known as Overloading or NAT overload.
- Maps multiple private IP addresses to a single public IP address using different port numbers.
- Most common form of NAT, used in home routers.
- Example: Private IP 192.168.1.12:1234 might be mapped to Public IP 203.0.113.40:5678.

Functions:

- **Address Conservation:** Reduces the need for a large number of public IP addresses.
- **Security:** Hides the internal IP addresses of devices, providing a layer of security.
- **Network Simplification:** Simplifies the network architecture by reducing the need for a unique public IP for each device.

Uses:

- **Internet Connectivity for Private Networks:** Allows multiple devices on a private network to access the Internet using a single public IP address.
- **Load Balancing:** Distributes incoming traffic across multiple servers using NAT.
- **IP Masquerading:** Used in small office/home office (SOHO) networks to allow devices with private IP addresses to communicate with external networks.

Example:

1. **Home Network:**

- A home router with the public IP address 203.0.113.5 uses NAT to allow multiple devices with private IP addresses (e.g., 192.168.1.2, 192.168.1.3) to access the Internet.

2. Enterprise Network:

- An organization uses NAT to enable hundreds of employees' computers with private IP addresses to access the Internet through a few public IP addresses.

Private IP Address

A **private IP address** is an IP address that is reserved for use within a private network and not routable on the public internet. The three reserved private IP address ranges in IPv4 are:

10.0.0.0 to 10.255.255.255 (10.0.0.0/8)

172.16.0.0 to 172.31.255.255 (172.16.0.0/12)

192.168.0.0 to 192.168.255.255 (192.168.0.0/16)

These ranges are designated for use in private networks and are not routable on the public internet. Devices within these ranges communicate internally within a local network and use NAT to access external networks.

Public IP Addresses

Public IP addresses are IP addresses that are routable on the global internet. They are assigned by Internet Service Providers (ISPs) and can be used to uniquely identify devices on the internet, allowing them to communicate with other devices across different networks.

Characteristics:

- **Uniqueness:** Each public IP address is unique across the entire internet.
- **Global Reach:** Public IP addresses can be accessed from anywhere on the internet.

How Private and Public IP Addresses Work Together to Address IP Address Shortages

Private and public IP addresses work together through the mechanism of Network Address Translation (NAT) to efficiently use the available IP address space and address the problem of IP address shortages.

Sudip Acharya
July 20

NAT (Network Address Translation) is a technique used by routers to map multiple private IP addresses to a single public IP address (or a few public IP addresses) for internet access. By utilizing NAT with private and public IP addresses, networks efficiently manage IP address allocation and enhance security, addressing the limitations of the finite IPv4 address space. This approach has been crucial in sustaining the growth of the internet until the broader adoption of IPv6, which provides a vastly larger address space.