

Packet Sniffer

Submitted By

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Motivation

The increasing complexity and reliance on computer networks for communication, commerce, and critical infrastructure necessitates effective tools for network monitoring and analysis. Understanding network traffic flow, identifying potential issues, and ensuring security are paramount. Packet sniffers are fundamental tools for achieving these goals, providing insights into data transmission at a granular level. This project aims to develop a practical, Python-based packet sniffing tool with a graphical user interface (GUI) to simplify the process of capturing, visualizing, and analyzing network traffic in real-time. The development of this tool provides a valuable hands-on learning experience in network programming, protocol analysis, and the challenges of cross-platform network operations, directly applying concepts learned in the CS3001 Computer Networks course.

Overview

This project involves the creation of a Packet Sniffing Program using Python. The core idea is to develop a tool capable of capturing network packets live from a network interface, dissecting them to display header information for various protocols, and presenting this information to the user through an intuitive GUI.

- **Significance:** The project holds significance as it provides a practical tool for network administrators, security analysts, and students to monitor network activity, troubleshoot connectivity problems, and learn about network protocols.
- **Importance and Practicality:** In an era of complex network environments, the ability to easily inspect traffic is crucial for diagnostics and security. This tool offers a readily accessible way to perform such analysis. Its GUI makes it more user-friendly than purely command-line tools.
- **Academic Value:** This project reinforces theoretical knowledge of computer networks (TCP/IP stack, Ethernet, IP, TCP, UDP, ICMP, HTTP protocols) and provides practical experience in network socket programming, multithreading (for non-blocking GUI), GUI development (using Tkinter), and cross-platform considerations (especially regarding raw socket access).

Description of the Project

The Packet Sniffing Program is designed to address the need for a clear and interactive way to monitor network traffic.

- **Problem:** Network analysis often requires specialized, sometimes complex, tools. This project aims to provide a simpler, visually-oriented alternative built with accessible technologies like Python. The goal is to capture packets, parse their headers, identify protocols, and display the information comprehensibly.
- **Scope:** The sniffer operates on a local machine's network interface. It focuses on decoding common protocols within the TCP/IP suite: Ethernet, IPv4, TCP, UDP, ICMP, and HTTP. It provides functionality for real-time capture, packet detail viewing,

protocol-based filtering, and saving captured data to a PCAP file for offline analysis with tools like Wireshark. The implementation uses the Scapy library for packet manipulation and sniffing, and Tkinter for the GUI.

Background of the Project

Packet sniffing involves capturing data packets as they traverse a network interface. This requires accessing the network stack at a low level, often using raw sockets. Tools like Wireshark are industry standards, but building a custom sniffer offers learning benefits and potential customization.

Python, with libraries such as Scapy, provides powerful capabilities for network packet manipulation. Scapy simplifies the process of crafting, sending, capturing, and dissecting packets. However, accessing raw sockets necessary for sniffing presents platform-specific challenges:

- **Linux:** Generally allows raw socket access for privileged users (root) without requiring additional libraries for basic sniffing functionalities, although libraries like Scapy are still beneficial for ease of use and advanced features.
- **Windows:** Access to raw sockets for sniffing is more restricted for security reasons, especially in versions post-XP SP2. Standard Python sockets might face `PermissionError: [WinError 10013]` when attempting raw socket operations needed for sniffing without administrative rights. Libraries like **Scapy** on Windows circumvent these limitations by utilizing underlying packet capture libraries like **Npcap** (or the older WinPcap). Therefore, running the sniffer on Windows typically requires:
 1. Installing Npcap (recommended).
 2. Running the Python script with Administrator privileges.

This project leverages Scapy to handle these cross-platform differences, providing a consistent interface for packet sniffing, but the underlying requirements (Npcap, admin rights on Windows) must be met. The project utilizes classes defined in `ProtocolsClasses.py` to parse Ethernet, IPv4, TCP, UDP, and HTTP headers from the raw packet data captured by Scapy. The `Sniffer.py` file contains the main logic, including the Scapy sniffing loop, packet processing, and the Tkinter GUI implementation.

Project Category

This project falls under the category of **Network Utility / Application Development**. It involves developing a functional software application designed for network analysis and monitoring.

Features, Scope, and Modules

- **Key Features:**
 - **Real-time Packet Capture:** Captures packets live from a selected network interface.

- **Multi-Protocol Support:** Decodes and displays information for Ethernet, IPv4, TCP, UDP, ICMP, and HTTP protocols.
- **Graphical User Interface (GUI):** Implemented using Tkinter, providing a user-friendly way to view packets. Features include:
 - A list view displaying captured packets with key info (Serial No., Protocol, Source/Destination IP).
 - Color-coding for different protocols for easy identification (e.g., HTTP in blue, TCP in green).
 - A details pane showing comprehensive header information for the selected packet (e.g., MAC addresses, IP header details, TCP/UDP ports, flags, raw data).
- **Packet Filtering:** Allows users to filter the displayed packets based on protocol type (TCP, UDP, ICMP, HTTP).
- **PCAP File Saving:** Saves the captured raw packet data into a `capture.pcap` file, compatible with Wireshark and other analysis tools. This is handled by Scapy's `PcapWriter`.
- **Cross-Platform Potential:** Designed using Python and Scapy, aiming for compatibility with Windows and Linux (subject to platform-specific requirements like Npcap and permissions).
- **Scope:**
 - Focuses on IPv4 traffic.
 - Provides basic filtering by common protocols.
 - GUI provides essential visualization and interaction.
 - Error handling is implemented for basic packet decoding.
- **Modules:** (Based on code structure and proposal)
 - **Sniffing Engine (Sniffer.py / Scapy):** Core module responsible for capturing raw packets from the network interface using Scapy's `sniff` function. Runs in a separate thread to keep the GUI responsive.
 - **Packet Processing (Sniffer.py):** Dissects raw packets using protocol classes. Extracts key information for display and filtering. Appends packets to the global list and updates the GUI.
 - **Protocol Classes (ProtocolsClasses.py):** Contains classes (Ethernet, IPv4, TCP, UDP, ICMP, HTTP) responsible for parsing the raw byte data of respective protocol headers.
 - **Graphical User Interface (Sniffer.py - Sniffer_GUI class):** Manages the Tkinter window, widgets (listbox, text areas, buttons), event handling (packet selection, button clicks), and dynamic updates of the display.
 - **PCAP Writer (Sniffer.py / Scapy):** Uses Scapy's `PcapWriter` to save captured raw packets to a file.

Feasibility Study

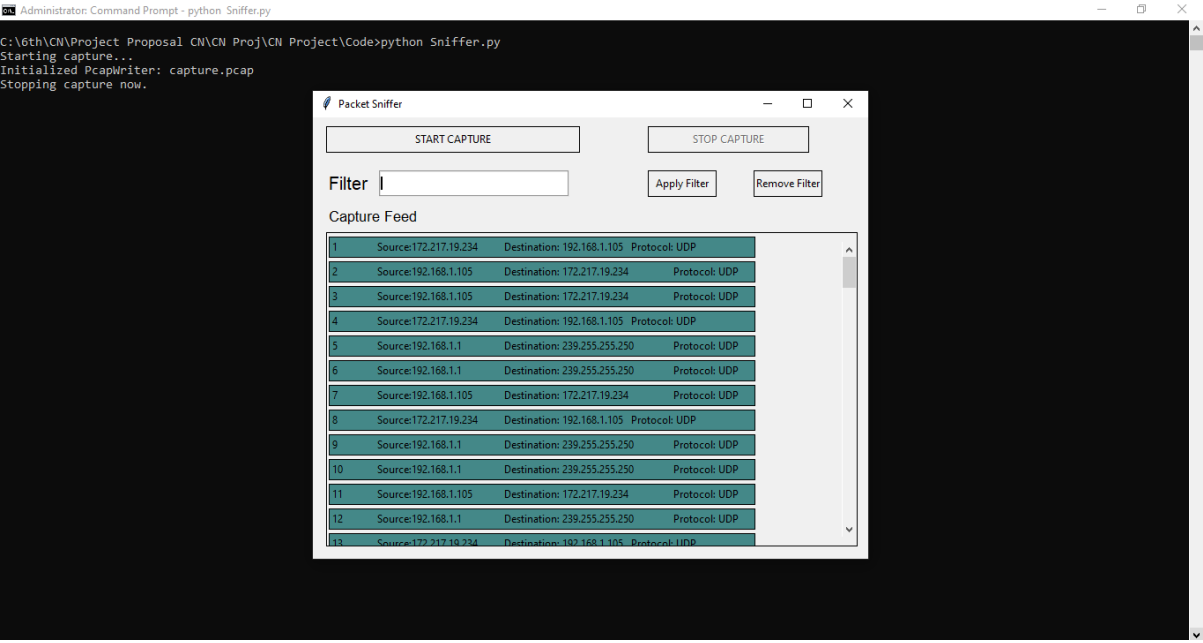
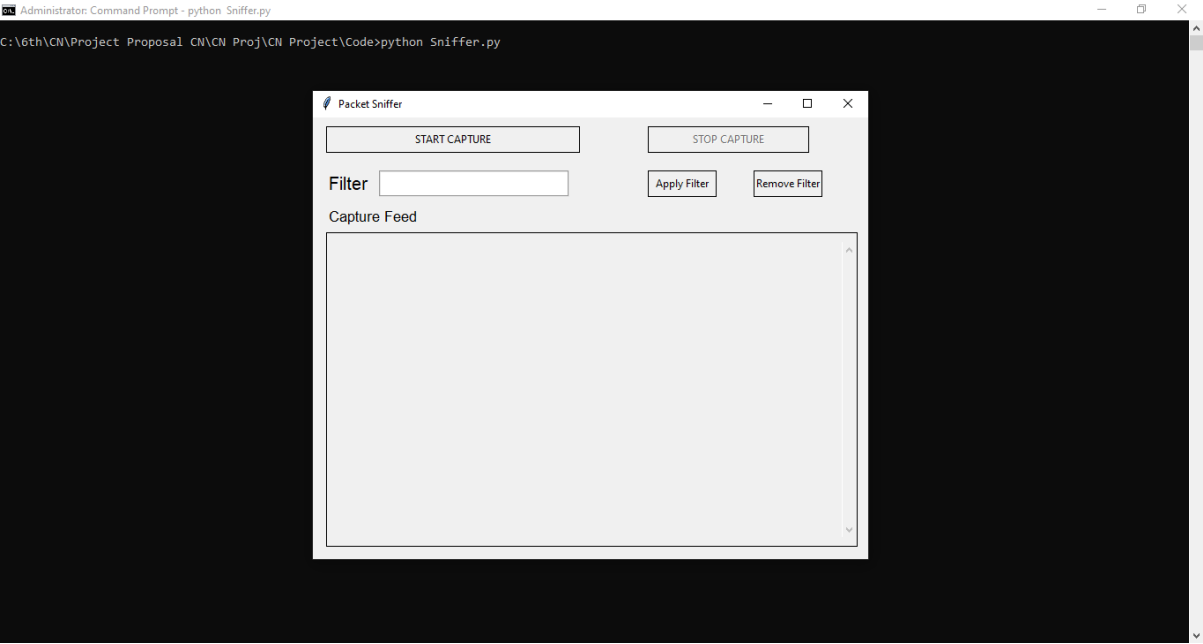
- **Technical Feasibility:**
 - The project is technically feasible using current technology. Python provides robust libraries like Scapy (for packet sniffing/manipulation) and Tkinter (for GUI development) which are well-suited for this task.

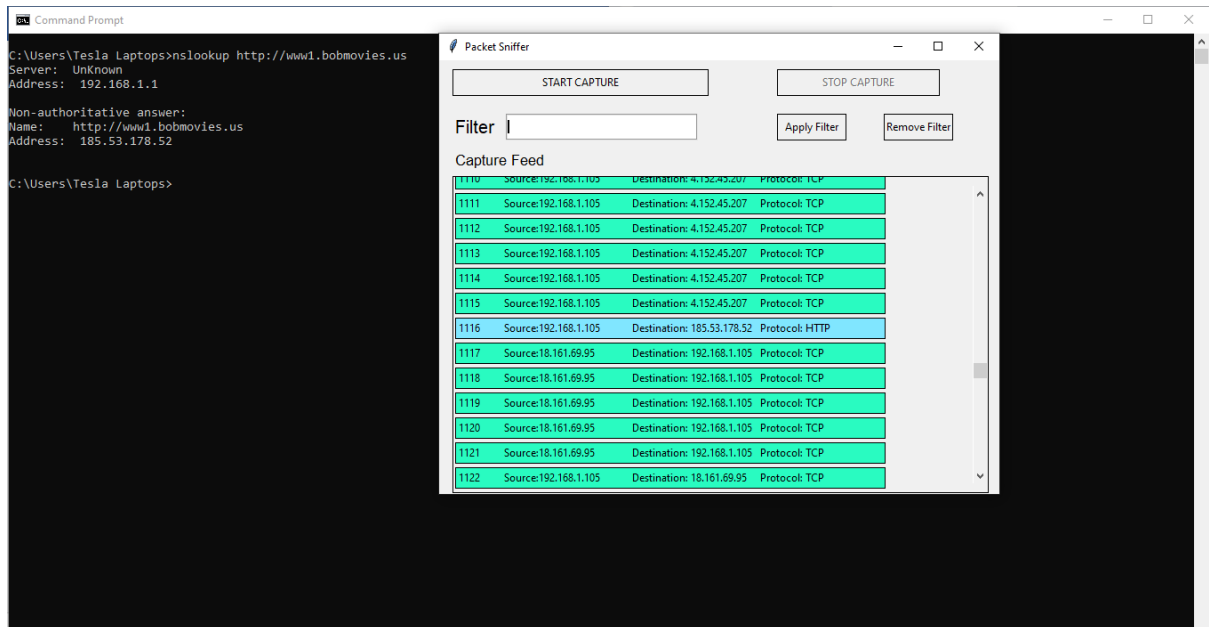
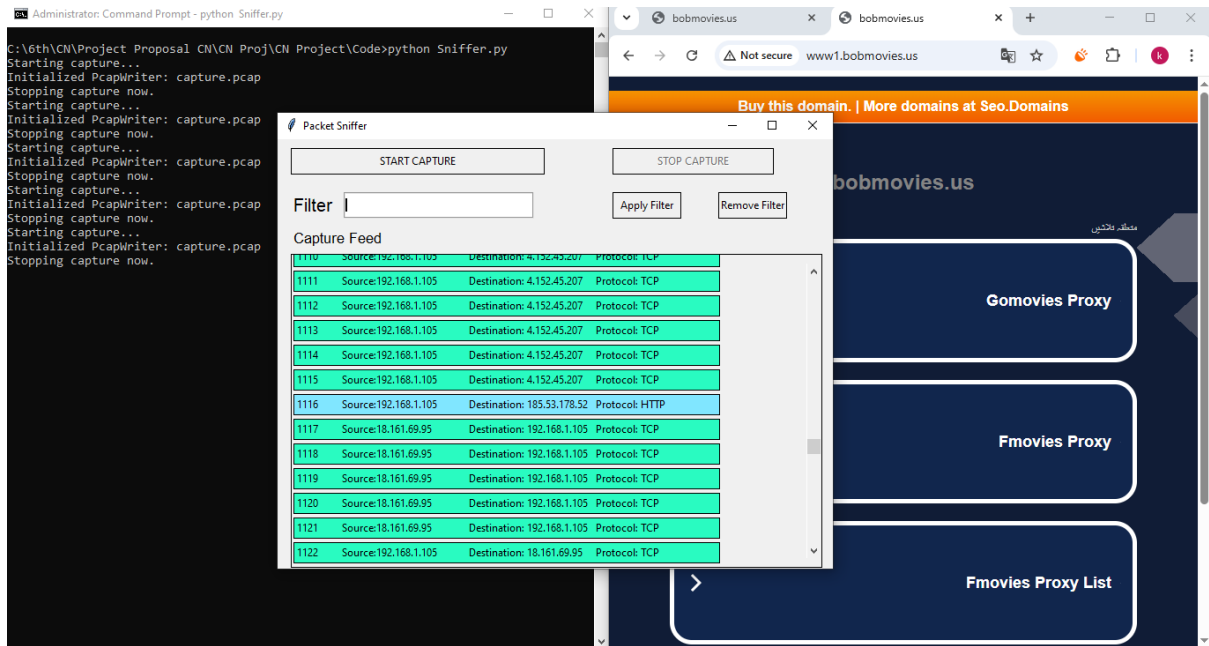
- The core technical challenge lies in handling raw socket access permissions, particularly on Windows, which necessitates running as administrator and using Npcap with Scapy. This is a known requirement and manageable.
- The provided code (ProtocolsClasses.py, Sniffer.py) demonstrates a working implementation of packet capture, parsing for multiple protocols, and GUI display, confirming technical viability.
- Potential risks include performance bottlenecks under very high network load, which can be mitigated through efficient packet processing and potentially optimizing the GUI updates. Compatibility issues with specific network drivers or Npcap versions could arise but are generally resolvable.
- **Economic Feasibility:**
 - The project is highly economically feasible. It primarily relies on open-source software (Python, Scapy, Npcap) and standard hardware (a computer with a network interface card).
 - No significant software licensing costs are involved.
 - Development costs are primarily related to the time investment of the team members. Operational costs are negligible (standard electricity consumption).
 - The benefits include a practical learning experience and a useful network analysis tool, justifying the development effort.
- **Schedule Feasibility:**
 - The project scope, as demonstrated by the submitted code and outlined in the proposal, is achievable within a typical academic semester timeframe.
 - The proposal included a phased timeline (Setup, Core Sniffing, GUI, Filtering, Testing, Finalization) which appears reasonable for the complexity involved.
 - The existence of working code suggests the project is on track or completed, fitting within the schedule feasibility.

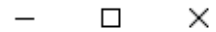
Hardware and Software Requirements

- **Hardware:**
 - A computer (Desktop or Laptop) with a Network Interface Card (Ethernet or Wi-Fi).
 - Sufficient RAM and CPU resources to run Python, Scapy, and handle packet capture (standard modern specifications are adequate).
- **Software:**
 - **Operating System:** Windows (10/11 recommended) or Linux (e.g., Ubuntu, Fedora).
 - **Python:** Version 3.7+ (as required by recent Scapy versions).
 - **Scapy Library:** Python package for packet manipulation (pip install scapy).
 - **Tkinter Library:** Typically included with standard Python installations.
 - **(Windows Specific) Npcap:** Packet capture library for Windows (successor to WinPcap). Must be installed separately. Scapy uses this on Windows.
 - **Administrator/Root Privileges:** Required to run the sniffer script to allow raw socket access and interface manipulation.
 - **(Optional) Wireshark:** For analyzing the generated .pcap files.

Diagrammatic Representation of the Overall System







STOP CAPTURE

HTTP

Remove Filter

963	Source:192.168.1.105	Destination: 185.53.178.52	Protocol: HTTP
967	Source:185.53.178.52	Destination: 192.168.1.105	Protocol: HTTP
968	Source:192.168.1.105	Destination: 185.53.178.52	Protocol: HTTP
971	Source:185.53.178.52	Destination: 192.168.1.105	Protocol: HTTP
972	Source:185.53.178.52	Destination: 192.168.1.105	Protocol: HTTP
988	Source:185.53.178.52	Destination: 192.168.1.105	Protocol: HTTP
989	Source:185.53.178.52	Destination: 192.168.1.105	Protocol: HTTP
990	Source:185.53.178.52	Destination: 192.168.1.105	Protocol: HTTP
991	Source:192.168.1.105	Destination: 185.53.178.52	Protocol: HTTP
992	Source:185.53.178.52	Destination: 192.168.1.105	Protocol: HTTP
993	Source:185.53.178.52	Destination: 192.168.1.105	Protocol: HTTP
994	Source:192.168.1.105	Destination: 185.53.178.52	Protocol: HTTP
995	Source:185.53.178.52	Destination: 192.168.1.105	Protocol: HTTP

```
C:\6th\CN\Project Proposal CN\CN Proj\CN Project\Code>python Sniffer.py
```

The screenshot shows the Wireshark network protocol analyzer interface. At the top, the title bar reads "Packet Sniffer". Below it, the "START CAPTURE" button is visible. A "Filter" input field is present, followed by an "Apply Filter" button. The "Capture Feed" section displays a list of captured packets. The first packet (1137) is a UDP packet from 192.168.1.1 to 192.168.1.105. Subsequent packets (1138-1149) are a mix of UDP and TCP traffic, including a HTTP packet (1141) and several TCP packets (1142-1149) with source ports 4152 and 45207.

No.	Time	Source	Destination	Protocol
1137	0.000000	192.168.1.1	192.168.1.105	UDP
1138	0.000000	192.168.1.1	192.168.1.105	UDP
1139	0.000000	192.168.1.105	172.217.17.68	Protocol: UDP
1140	0.000000	192.168.1.105	172.217.17.68	Protocol: UDP
1141	0.000000	192.168.1.105	192.168.1.105	Protocol: HTTP
1142	0.000000	192.168.1.105	192.168.1.105	Protocol: TCP
1143	0.000000	192.168.1.105	192.168.1.105	Protocol: TCP
1144	0.000000	192.168.1.105	192.168.1.105	Protocol: TCP
1145	0.000000	192.168.1.105	192.168.1.105	Protocol: TCP
1146	0.000000	192.168.1.105	192.168.1.105	Protocol: TCP
1147	0.000000	192.168.1.105	192.168.1.105	Protocol: TCP
1148	0.000000	192.168.1.105	192.168.1.105	Protocol: TCP
1149	0.000000	192.168.1.105	192.168.1.105	Protocol: TCP

```
Version: 4
Header Length: 20 bytes
TTL: 51
Protocol: 6
Source: 185.53.178.52
Target: 192.168.1.105

TCP Segment

Source Port: 80
Destination Port: 60829
Sequence: 4072956632
Acknowledgment: 3269850347

Flags:

URG: 0, ACK: 1, PSH: 1
RST: 0, SYN: 0, FIN: 0

HTTP Data:

HTTP/1.1 201 Created
Server: nginx
Date: Mon, 05 May 2025 12:00:50 GMT
Content-Type: text/javascript; charset=UTF-8
Content-Length: 0
Connection: keep-alive
Accept-Ch: viewport-width
Accept-Ch: dpr
Accept-Ch: device-memory
Accept-Ch: rtt
Accept-Ch: downlink
```

Fmovies Proxy List

