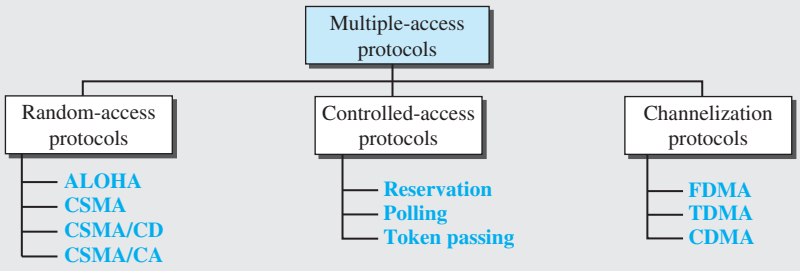
CHAPTER 12

Media Access Control (MAC)

When nodes or stations are connected and use a common link, called a *multipoint* or *broadcast link,* we need a multiple-access protocol to coordinate access to the link. The problem of controlling the access to the medium is similar to the rules of speaking in an assembly. The procedures guarantee that the right to speak is upheld and ensure that two people do not speak at the same time, do not interrupt each other, do not monopolize the discussion, and so on. Many protocols have been devised to handle access to a shared link. All of these protocols belong to a sublayer in the data-link layer called *media access control (MAC).* We categorize them into three groups, as shown in Figure 12.1.

Figure 12.1 *Taxonomy of multiple-access protocols*



This chapter is divided into three sections:

- The first section discusses random-access protocols. Four protocols, ALOHA, CSMA, CSMA/CD, and CSMA/CA, are described in this section. These protocols are mostly used in LANs and WANs, which we discuss in future chapters.
- The second section discusses controlled-access protocols. Three protocols, reservation, polling, and token-passing, are described in this section. Some of these protocols are used in LANs, but others have some historical value.
- The third section discusses channelization protocols. Three protocols, FDMA, TDMA, and CDMA are described in this section. These protocols are used in cellular telephony, which we discuss in Chapter 16.

12.1 RANDOM ACCESS

In **random-access** or **contention** methods, no station is superior to another station and none is assigned control over another. At each instance, a station that has data to send uses a procedure defined by the protocol to make a decision on whether or not to send. This decision depends on the state of the medium (idle or busy). In other words, each station can transmit when it desires on the condition that it follows the predefined procedure, including testing the state of the medium.

Two features give this method its name. First, there is no scheduled time for a station to transmit. Transmission is random among the stations. That is why these methods are called *random access*. Second, no rules specify which station should send next. Stations compete with one another to access the medium. That is why these methods are also called *contention* methods.

In a random-access method, each station has the right to the medium without being controlled by any other station. However, if more than one station tries to send, there is an access conflict—***collision***—and the frames will be either destroyed or modified. To avoid access conflict or to resolve it when it happens, each station follows a procedure that answers the following questions:

- When can the station access the medium?
- What can the station do if the medium is busy?
- How can the station determine the success or failure of the transmission?
- What can the station do if there is an access conflict?

The random-access methods we study in this chapter have evolved from a very interesting protocol known as *ALOHA*, which used a very simple procedure called ***multiple access (MA).*** The method was improved with the addition of a procedure that forces the station to sense the medium before transmitting. This was called *carrier sense multiple access* (*CSMA*). This method later evolved into two parallel methods: *carrier sense multiple access with collision detection (CSMA/CD),* which tells the station what to do when a collision is detected, and *carrier sense multiple access with collision avoidance (CSMA/CA),* which tries to avoid the collision.

12.1.1 ALOHA

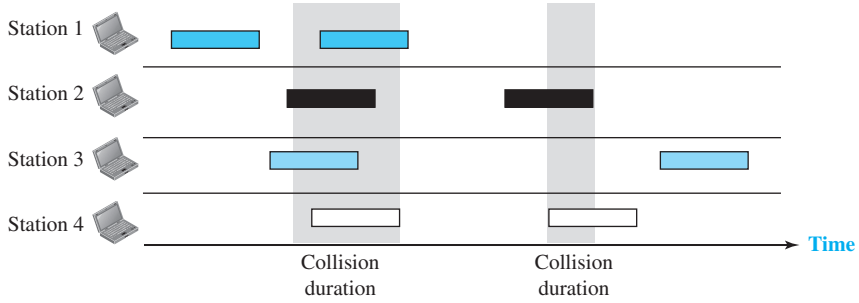
ALOHA, the earliest random access method, was developed at the University of Hawaii in early 1970. It was designed for a radio (wireless) LAN, but it can be used on any shared medium.

It is obvious that there are potential collisions in this arrangement. The medium is shared between the stations. When a station sends data, another station may attempt to do so at the same time. The data from the two stations collide and become garbled.

Pure ALOHA

The original ALOHA protocol is called ***pure ALOHA.*** This is a simple but elegant protocol. The idea is that each station sends a frame whenever it has a frame to send (multiple access). However, since there is only one channel to share, there is the possibility of collision between frames from different stations. Figure 12.2 shows an example of frame collisions in pure ALOHA.

Figure 12.2 *Frames in a pure ALOHA network*



There are four stations (unrealistic assumption) that contend with one another for access to the shared channel. The figure shows that each station sends two frames; there are a total of eight frames on the shared medium. Some of these frames collide because multiple frames are in contention for the shared channel. Figure 12.2 shows that only two frames survive: one frame from station 1 and one frame from station 3. We need to mention that even if one bit of a frame coexists on the channel with one bit from another frame, there is a collision and both will be destroyed. It is obvious that we need to resend the frames that have been destroyed during transmission.

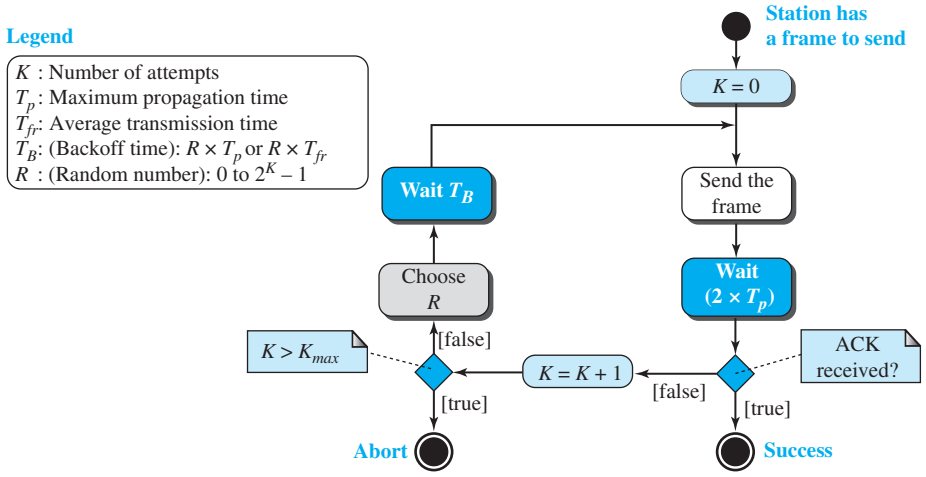
The pure ALOHA protocol relies on acknowledgments from the receiver. When a station sends a frame, it expects the receiver to send an acknowledgment. If the acknowledgment does not arrive after a time-out period, the station assumes that the frame (or the acknowledgment) has been destroyed and resends the frame.

A collision involves two or more stations. If all these stations try to resend their frames after the time-out, the frames will collide again. Pure ALOHA dictates that when the time-out period passes, each station waits a random amount of time before resending its frame. The randomness will help avoid more collisions. We call this time the *backoff time* T_B.

Pure ALOHA has a second method to prevent congesting the channel with retransmitted frames. After a maximum number of retransmission attempts K_{max}, a station must give up and try later. Figure 12.3 shows the procedure for pure ALOHA based on the above strategy.

The time-out period is equal to the maximum possible round-trip propagation delay, which is twice the amount of time required to send a frame between the two most widely separated stations ($2 \times T_p$). The backoff time T_B is a random value that normally depends on K (the number of attempted unsuccessful transmissions). The formula for T_B depends on the implementation. One common formula is the ***binary exponential backoff.*** In this method, for each retransmission, a multiplier $R = 0$ to $2^K - 1$ is randomly chosen and multiplied by T_p (maximum propagation time) or T_{fr} (the average time required to send out a frame) to find T_B. Note that in this procedure, the range of the random numbers increases after each collision. The value of K_{max} is usually chosen as 15.

Figure 12.3 *Procedure for pure ALOHA protocol*



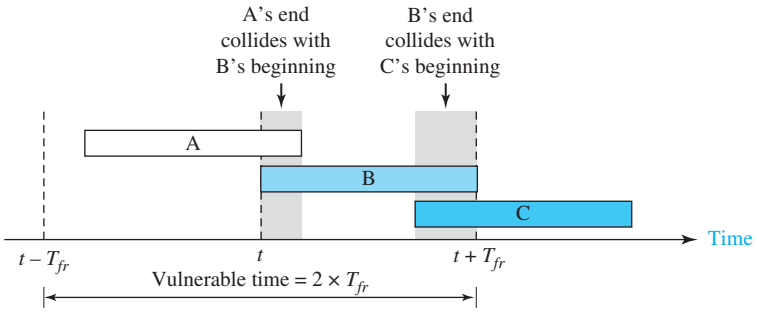
Example 12.1

The stations on a wireless ALOHA network are a maximum of 600 km apart. If we assume that signals propagate at 3×10^8 m/s, we find $T_p = (600 \times 10^3) / (3 \times 10^8) = 2$ ms. For $K = 2$, the range of R is {0, 1, 2, 3}. This means that T_B can be 0, 2, 4, or 6 ms, based on the outcome of the random variable R.

Vulnerable time

Let us find the ***vulnerable time,*** the length of time in which there is a possibility of collision. We assume that the stations send fixed-length frames with each frame taking T_{fr} seconds to send. Figure 12.4 shows the vulnerable time for station B.

Figure 12.4 *Vulnerable time for pure ALOHA protocol*



Station B starts to send a frame at time t. Now imagine station A has started to send its frame after $t - T_{fr}$. This leads to a collision between the frames from station B and

station A. On the other hand, suppose that station C starts to send a frame before time $t + T_{fr}$. Here, there is also a collision between frames from station B and station C.

Looking at Figure 12.4, we see that the vulnerable time during which a collision may occur in pure ALOHA is 2 times the frame transmission time.

$$\textbf{Pure ALOHA vulnerable time} = 2 \times T_{fr}$$

Example 12.2

A pure ALOHA network transmits 200-bit frames on a shared channel of 200 kbps. What is the requirement to make this frame collision-free?

Solution

Average frame transmission time T_{fr} is 200 bits/200 kbps or 1 ms. The vulnerable time is 2×1 ms = 2 ms. This means no station should send later than 1 ms before this station starts transmission and no station should start sending during the period (1 ms) that this station is sending.

Throughput

Let us call G the average number of frames generated by the system during one frame transmission time. Then it can be proven that the average number of successfully transmitted frames for pure ALOHA is $S = G \times e^{-2G}$. The maximum throughput S_{max} is 0.184, for $G = 1/2$. (We can find it by setting the derivative of S with respect to G to 0; see Exercises.) In other words, if one-half a frame is generated during one frame transmission time (one frame during two frame transmission times), then 18.4 percent of these frames reach their destination successfully. We expect $G = 1/2$ to produce the maximum throughput because the vulnerable time is 2 times the frame transmission time. Therefore, if a station generates only one frame in this vulnerable time (and no other stations generate a frame during this time), the frame will reach its destination successfully.

The throughput for pure ALOHA is $S = G \times e^{-2G}$.
The maximum throughput $S_{max} = 1/(2e) = 0.184$ when $G = (1/2)$.

Example 12.3

A pure ALOHA network transmits 200-bit frames on a shared channel of 200 kbps. What is the throughput if the system (all stations together) produces

a. 1000 frames per second?
b. 500 frames per second?
c. 250 frames per second?

Solution

The frame transmission time is 200/200 kbps or 1 ms.

a. If the system creates 1000 frames per second, or 1 frame per millisecond, then $G = 1$. In this case $S = G \times e^{-2G} = 0.135$ (13.5 percent). This means that the throughput is $1000 \times 0.135 = 135$ frames. Only 135 frames out of 1000 will probably survive.

b. If the system creates 500 frames per second, or 1/2 frames per millisecond, then $G = 1/2$. In this case $S = G \times e^{-2G} = 0.184$ (18.4 percent). This means that the throughput is $500 \times 0.184 = 92$ and that only 92 frames out of 500 will probably survive. Note that this is the *maximum* throughput case, percentagewise.

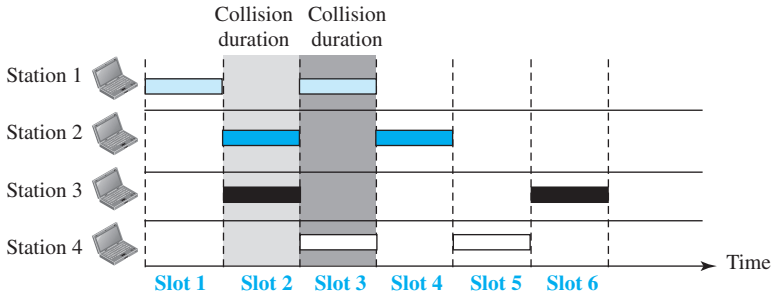
c. If the system creates 250 frames per second, or 1/4 frames per millisecond, then $G = 1/4$. In this case $S = G \times e^{-2G} = 0.152$ (15.2 percent). This means that the throughput is $250 \times 0.152 = 38$. Only 38 frames out of 250 will probably survive.

Slotted ALOHA

Pure ALOHA has a vulnerable time of $2 \times T_{fr}$. This is so because there is no rule that defines when the station can send. A station may send soon after another station has started or just before another station has finished. Slotted ALOHA was invented to improve the efficiency of pure ALOHA.

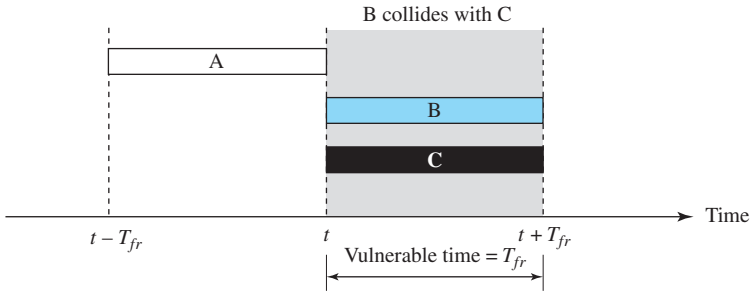
In **slotted ALOHA** we divide the time into slots of T_{fr} seconds and force the station to send only at the beginning of the time slot. Figure 12.5 shows an example of frame collisions in slotted ALOHA.

Figure 12.5 *Frames in a slotted ALOHA network*



Because a station is allowed to send only at the beginning of the synchronized time slot, if a station misses this moment, it must wait until the beginning of the next time slot. This means that the station which started at the beginning of this slot has already finished sending its frame. Of course, there is still the possibility of collision if two stations try to send at the beginning of the same time slot. However, the vulnerable time is now reduced to one-half, equal to T_{fr}. Figure 12.6 shows the situation.

Figure 12.6 *Vulnerable time for slotted ALOHA protocol*



Slotted ALOHA vulnerable time = T_{fr}

Throughput

It can be proven that the average number of successful transmissions for slotted ALOHA is $S = G \times e^{-G}$. The maximum throughput S_{max} is 0.368, when $G = 1$. In other words, if one frame is generated during one frame transmission time, then 36.8 percent of these frames reach their destination successfully. We expect $G = 1$ to produce maximum throughput because the vulnerable time is equal to the frame transmission time. Therefore, if a station generates only one frame in this vulnerable time (and no other station generates a frame during this time), the frame will reach its destination successfully.

The throughput for slotted ALOHA is $S = G \times e^{-G}$.
The maximum throughput $S_{max} = 0.368$ when $G = 1$.

Example 12.4

A slotted ALOHA network transmits 200-bit frames using a shared channel with a 200-kbps bandwidth. Find the throughput if the system (all stations together) produces

a. 1000 frames per second.
b. 500 frames per second.
c. 250 frames per second.

Solution

This situation is similar to the previous exercise except that the network is using slotted ALOHA instead of pure ALOHA. The frame transmission time is 200/200 kbps or 1 ms.

a. In this case G is 1. So $S = G \times e^{-G} = 0.368$ (36.8 percent). This means that the throughput is $1000 \times 0.0368 = 368$ frames. Only 368 out of 1000 frames will probably survive. Note that this is the maximum throughput case, percentagewise.

b. Here G is 1/2. In this case $S = G \times e^{-G} = 0.303$ (30.3 percent). This means that the throughput is $500 \times 0.0303 = 151$. Only 151 frames out of 500 will probably survive.

c. Now G is 1/4. In this case $S = G \times e^{-G} = 0.195$ (19.5 percent). This means that the throughput is $250 \times 0.195 = 49$. Only 49 frames out of 250 will probably survive.

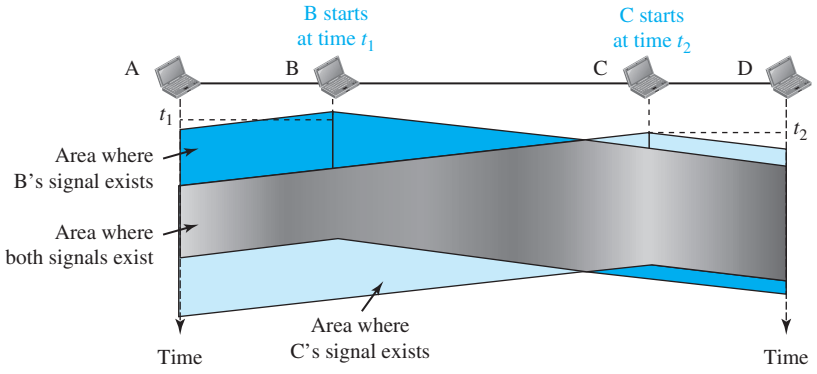
12.1.2 CSMA

To minimize the chance of collision and, therefore, increase the performance, the CSMA method was developed. The chance of collision can be reduced if a station senses the medium before trying to use it. **Carrier sense multiple access (CSMA)** requires that each station first listen to the medium (or check the state of the medium) before sending. In other words, CSMA is based on the principle "sense before transmit" or "listen before talk."

CSMA can reduce the possibility of collision, but it cannot eliminate it. The reason for this is shown in Figure 12.7, a space and time model of a CSMA network. Stations are connected to a shared channel (usually a dedicated medium).

The possibility of collision still exists because of propagation delay; when a station sends a frame, it still takes time (although very short) for the first bit to reach every station and for every station to sense it. In other words, a station may sense the medium and find it idle, only because the first bit sent by another station has not yet been received.

Figure 12.7 *Space/time model of a collision in CSMA*

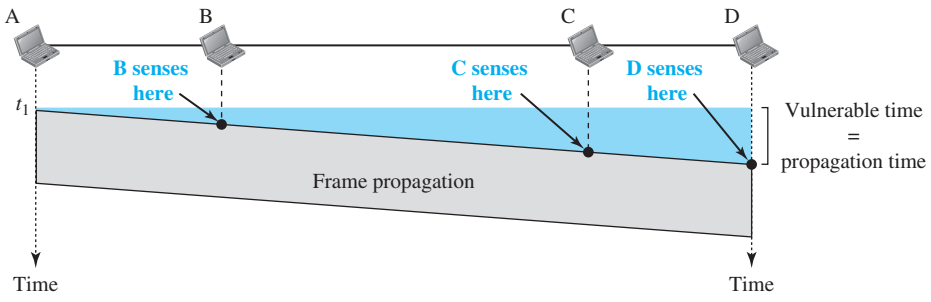


At time t_1, station B senses the medium and finds it idle, so it sends a frame. At time t_2 ($t_2 > t_1$), station C senses the medium and finds it idle because, at this time, the first bits from station B have not reached station C. Station C also sends a frame. The two signals collide and both frames are destroyed.

Vulnerable Time

The vulnerable time for CSMA is the ***propagation time*** T_p. This is the time needed for a signal to propagate from one end of the medium to the other. When a station sends a frame and any other station tries to send a frame during this time, a collision will result. But if the first bit of the frame reaches the end of the medium, every station will already have heard the bit and will refrain from sending. Figure 12.8 shows the worst case. The leftmost station, A, sends a frame at time t_1, which reaches the rightmost station, D, at time $t_1 + T_p$. The gray area shows the vulnerable area in time and space.

Figure 12.8 *Vulnerable time in CSMA*



Persistence Methods

What should a station do if the channel is busy? What should a station do if the channel is idle? Three methods have been devised to answer these questions: the **1-persistent method,** the **nonpersistent method,** and the ***p*-persistent method.** Figure 12.9 shows the behavior of three persistence methods when a station finds a channel busy.

Figure 12.9 *Behavior of three persistence methods*

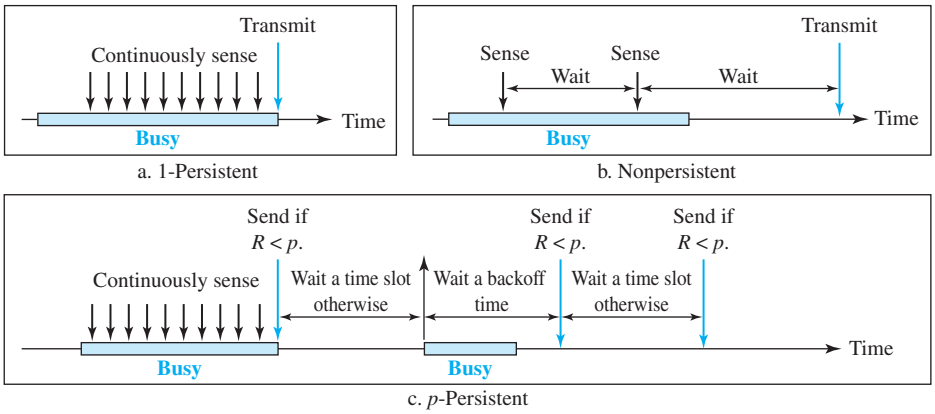


Figure 12.10 shows the flow diagrams for these methods.

1-Persistent

The *1-persistent method* is simple and straightforward. In this method, after the station finds the line idle, it sends its frame immediately (with probability 1). This method has the highest chance of collision because two or more stations may find the line idle and send their frames immediately. We will see later that Ethernet uses this method.

Nonpersistent

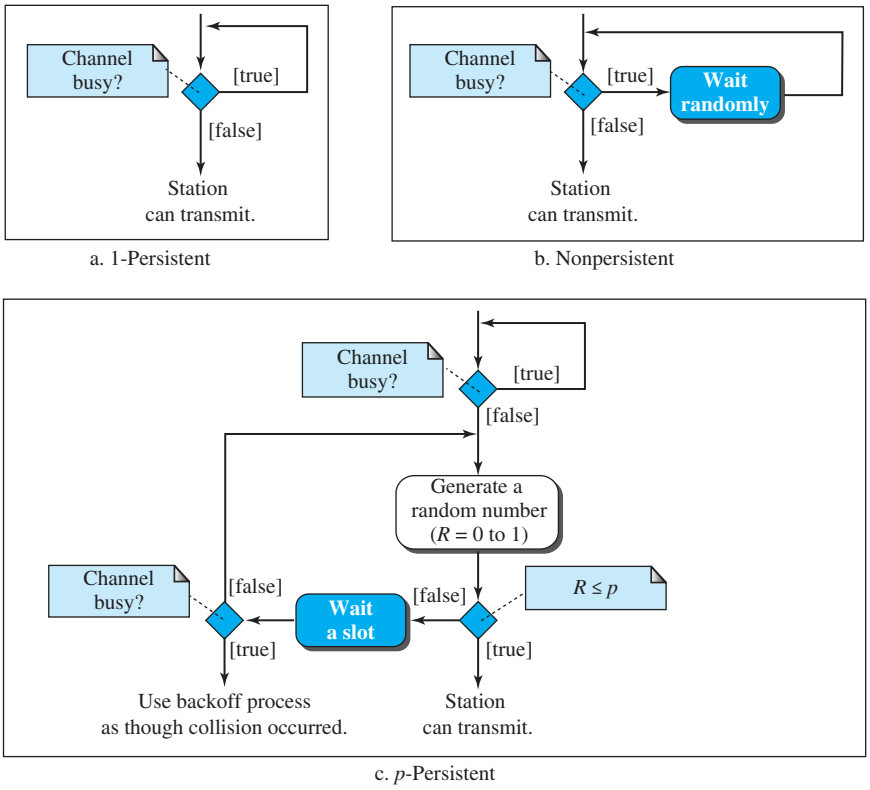
In the *nonpersistent method,* a station that has a frame to send senses the line. If the line is idle, it sends immediately. If the line is not idle, it waits a random amount of time and then senses the line again. The nonpersistent approach reduces the chance of collision because it is unlikely that two or more stations will wait the same amount of time and retry to send simultaneously. However, this method reduces the efficiency of the network because the medium remains idle when there may be stations with frames to send.

p-*Persistent*

The p-*persistent method* is used if the channel has time slots with a slot duration equal to or greater than the maximum propagation time. The *p*-persistent approach combines the advantages of the other two strategies. It reduces the chance of collision and improves efficiency. In this method, after the station finds the line idle it follows these steps:

1. With probability *p*, the station sends its frame.

Figure 12.10 *Flow diagram for three persistence methods*



2. With probability $q = 1 - p$, the station waits for the beginning of the next time slot and checks the line again.
   a. If the line is idle, it goes to step 1.
   b. If the line is busy, it acts as though a collision has occurred and uses the back-off procedure.

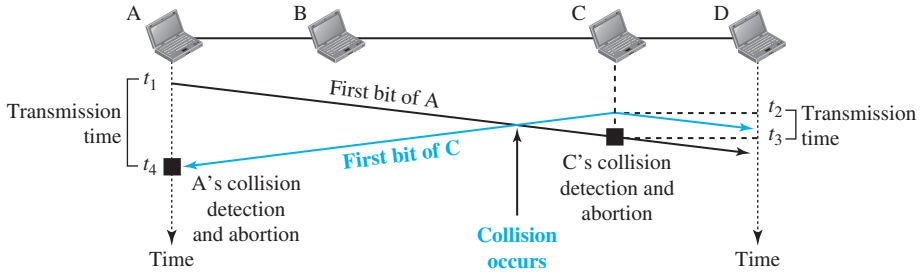
12.1.3 CSMA/CD

The CSMA method does not specify the procedure following a collision. **Carrier sense multiple access with collision detection (CSMA/CD)** augments the algorithm to handle the collision.

In this method, a station monitors the medium after it sends a frame to see if the transmission was successful. If so, the station is finished. If, however, there is a collision, the frame is sent again.

To better understand CSMA/CD, let us look at the first bits transmitted by the two stations involved in the collision. Although each station continues to send bits in the frame until it detects the collision, we show what happens as the first bits collide. In Figure 12.11, stations A and C are involved in the collision.

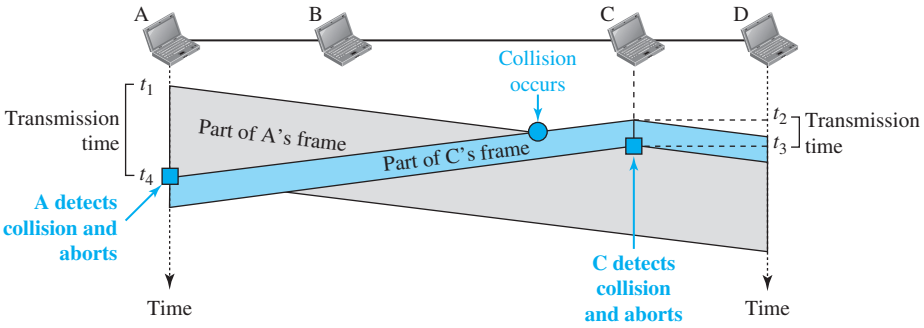
Figure 12.11 *Collision of the first bits in CSMA/CD*



At time t_1, station A has executed its persistence procedure and starts sending the bits of its frame. At time t_2, station C has not yet sensed the first bit sent by A. Station C executes its persistence procedure and starts sending the bits in its frame, which propagate both to the left and to the right. The collision occurs sometime after time t_2. Station C detects a collision at time t_3 when it receives the first bit of A's frame. Station C immediately (or after a short time, but we assume immediately) aborts transmission. Station A detects collision at time t_4 when it receives the first bit of C's frame; it also immediately aborts transmission. Looking at the figure, we see that A transmits for the duration $t_4 - t_1$; C transmits for the duration $t_3 - t_2$.

Now that we know the time durations for the two transmissions, we can show a more complete graph in Figure 12.12.

Figure 12.12 *Collision and abortion in CSMA/CD*



Minimum Frame Size

For CSMA/CD to work, we need a restriction on the frame size. Before sending the last bit of the frame, the sending station must detect a collision, if any, and abort the transmission. This is so because the station, once the entire frame is sent, does not keep a copy of

the frame and does not monitor the line for collision detection. Therefore, the frame transmission time T_{fr} must be at least two times the maximum propagation time T_p. To understand the reason, let us think about the worst-case scenario. If the two stations involved in a collision are the maximum distance apart, the signal from the first takes time T_p to reach the second, and the effect of the collision takes another time T_P to reach the first. So the requirement is that the first station must still be transmitting after $2T_p$.

Example 12.5

A network using CSMA/CD has a bandwidth of 10 Mbps. If the maximum propagation time (including the delays in the devices and ignoring the time needed to send a jamming signal, as we see later) is 25.6 μs, what is the minimum size of the frame?

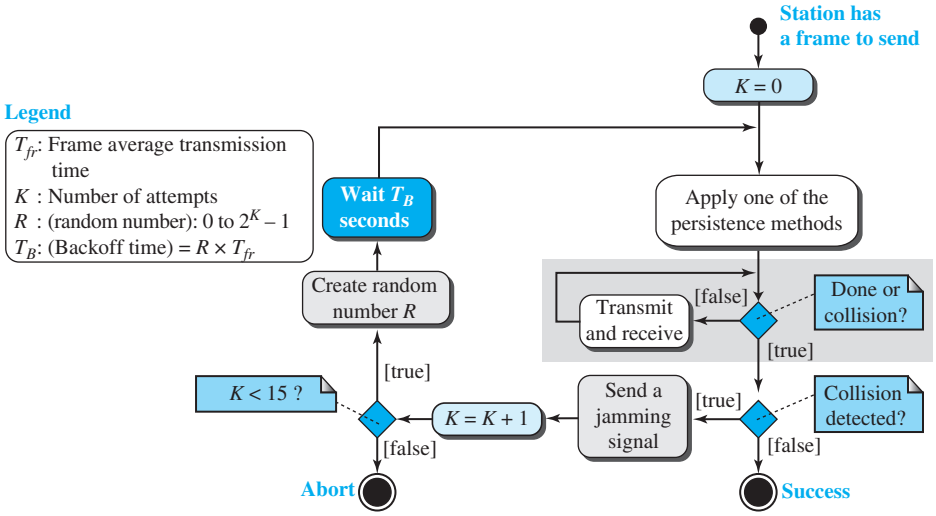
Solution

The minimum frame transmission time is $T_{fr} = 2 \times T_p = 51.2$ μs. This means, in the worst case, a station needs to transmit for a period of 51.2 μs to detect the collision. The minimum size of the frame is 10 Mbps × 51.2 μs = 512 bits or 64 bytes. This is actually the minimum size of the frame for Standard Ethernet, as we will see later in the chapter.

Procedure

Now let us look at the flow diagram for CSMA/CD in Figure 12.13. It is similar to the one for the ALOHA protocol, but there are differences.

Figure 12.13 *Flow diagram for the CSMA/CD*



The first difference is the addition of the persistence process. We need to sense the channel before we start sending the frame by using one of the persistence processes we discussed previously (nonpersistent, 1-persistent, or *p*-persistent). The corresponding box can be replaced by one of the persistence processes shown in Figure 12.10.

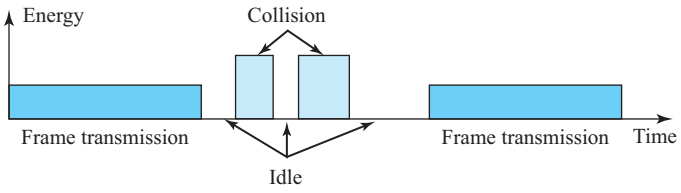
The second difference is the frame transmission. In ALOHA, we first transmit the entire frame and then wait for an acknowledgment. In CSMA/CD, transmission and collision detection are continuous processes. We do not send the entire frame and then look for a collision. The station transmits and receives continuously and simultaneously (using two different ports or a bidirectional port). We use a loop to show that transmission is a continuous process. We constantly monitor in order to detect one of two conditions: either transmission is finished or a collision is detected. Either event stops transmission. When we come out of the loop, if a collision has not been detected, it means that transmission is complete; the entire frame is transmitted. Otherwise, a collision has occurred.

The third difference is the sending of a short **jamming signal** to make sure that all other stations become aware of the collision.

Energy Level

We can say that the level of energy in a channel can have three values: zero, normal, and abnormal. At the zero level, the channel is idle. At the normal level, a station has successfully captured the channel and is sending its frame. At the abnormal level, there is a collision and the level of the energy is twice the normal level. A station that has a frame to send or is sending a frame needs to monitor the energy level to determine if the channel is idle, busy, or in collision mode. Figure 12.14 shows the situation.

Figure 12.14 *Energy level during transmission, idleness, or collision*



Throughput

The throughput of CSMA/CD is greater than that of pure or slotted ALOHA. The maximum throughput occurs at a different value of G and is based on the persistence method and the value of p in the p-persistent approach. For the 1-persistent method, the maximum throughput is around 50 percent when $G = 1$. For the nonpersistent method, the maximum throughput can go up to 90 percent when G is between 3 and 8.

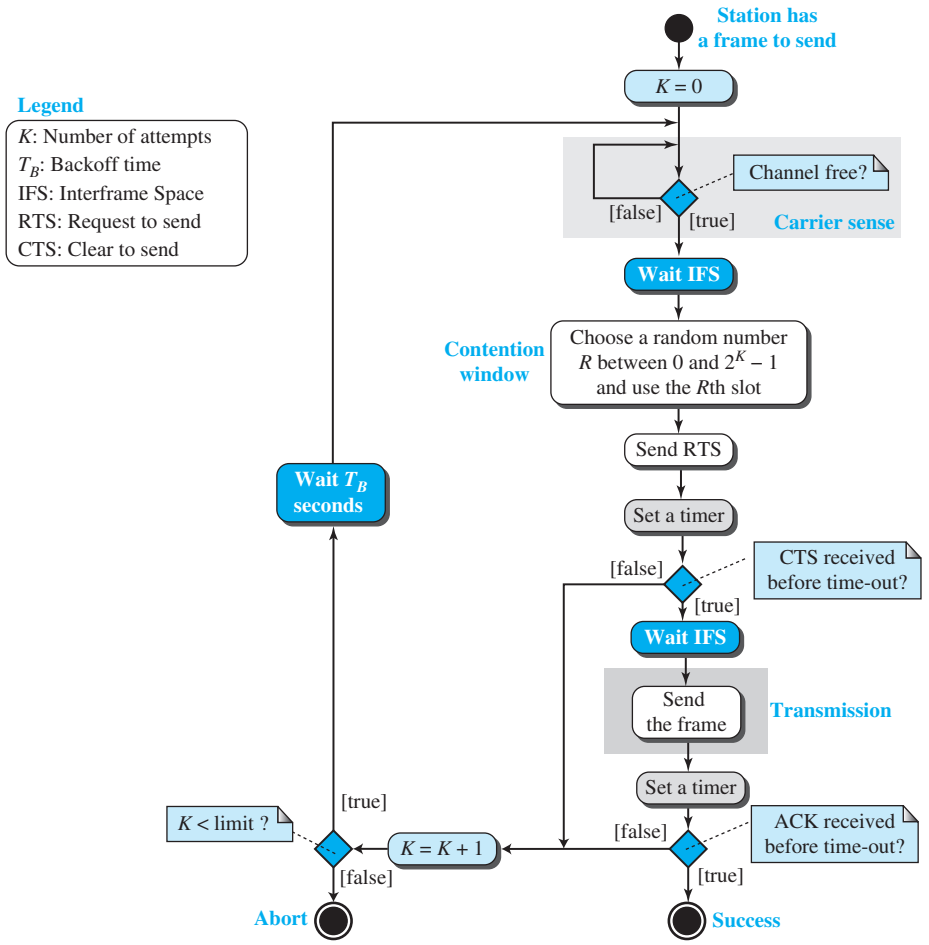
Traditional Ethernet

One of the LAN protocols that used CSMA/CD is the traditional Ethernet with the data rate of 10 Mbps. We discuss the Ethernet LANs in Chapter 13, but it is good to know that the traditional Ethernet was a broadcast LAN that used the 1-persistence method to control access to the common media. Later versions of Ethernet try to move from CSMA/CD access methods for the reason that we discuss in Chapter 13.

12.1.4 CSMA/CA

Carrier sense multiple access with collision avoidance (CSMA/CA) was invented for wireless networks. Collisions are avoided through the use of CSMA/CA's three strategies: the interframe space, the contention window, and acknowledgments, as shown in Figure 12.15. We discuss RTS and CTS frames later.

Figure 12.15 *Flow diagram of CSMA/CA*

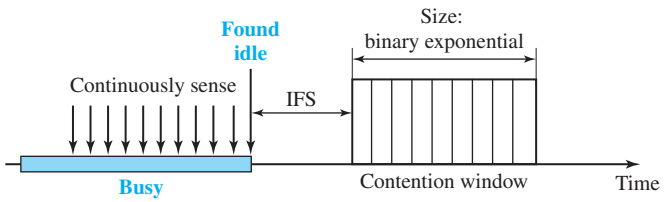


- ***Interframe Space (IFS).*** First, collisions are avoided by deferring transmission even if the channel is found idle. When an idle channel is found, the station does not send immediately. It waits for a period of time called the ***interframe space*** or ***IFS.*** Even though the channel may appear idle when it is sensed, a distant station may have already started transmitting. The distant station's signal has not yet reached this

station. The IFS time allows the front of the transmitted signal by the distant station to reach this station. After waiting an IFS time, if the channel is still idle, the station can send, but it still needs to wait a time equal to the contention window (described next). The IFS variable can also be used to prioritize stations or frame types. For example, a station that is assigned a shorter IFS has a higher priority.

- ***Contention Window.*** The **contention window** is an amount of time divided into slots. A station that is ready to send chooses a random number of slots as its wait time. The number of slots in the window changes according to the binary exponential backoff strategy. This means that it is set to one slot the first time and then doubles each time the station cannot detect an idle channel after the IFS time. This is very similar to the *p*-persistent method except that a random outcome defines the number of slots taken by the waiting station. One interesting point about the contention window is that the station needs to sense the channel after each time slot. However, if the station finds the channel busy, it does not restart the process; it just stops the timer and restarts it when the channel is sensed as idle. This gives priority to the station with the longest waiting time. See Figure 12.16.

Figure 12.16 *Contention window*



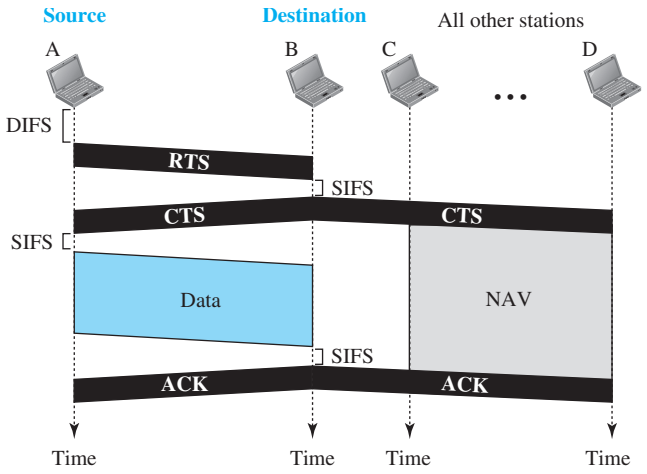
- ***Acknowledgment.*** With all these precautions, there still may be a collision resulting in destroyed data. In addition, the data may be corrupted during the transmission. The positive acknowledgment and the time-out timer can help guarantee that the receiver has received the frame.

Frame Exchange Time Line

Figure 12.17 shows the exchange of data and control frames in time.

1. Before sending a frame, the source station senses the medium by checking the energy level at the carrier frequency.
   a. The channel uses a persistence strategy with backoff until the channel is idle.
   b. After the station is found to be idle, the station waits for a period of time called the ***DCF interframe space (DIFS);*** then the station sends a control frame called the *request to send (RTS)*.
2. After receiving the RTS and waiting a period of time called the ***short interframe space (SIFS),*** the destination station sends a control frame, called the *clear to send (CTS),* to the source station. This control frame indicates that the destination station is ready to receive data.

Figure 12.17 *CSMA/CA and NAV*



3. The source station sends data after waiting an amount of time equal to SIFS.
4. The destination station, after waiting an amount of time equal to SIFS, sends an acknowledgment to show that the frame has been received. Acknowledgment is needed in this protocol because the station does not have any means to check for the successful arrival of its data at the destination. On the other hand, the lack of collision in CSMA/CD is a kind of indication to the source that data have arrived.

Network Allocation Vector

How do other stations defer sending their data if one station acquires access? In other words, how is the *collision avoidance* aspect of this protocol accomplished? The key is a feature called *NAV.*

When a station sends an RTS frame, it includes the duration of time that it needs to occupy the channel. The stations that are affected by this transmission create a timer called a **network allocation vector (NAV)** that shows how much time must pass before these stations are allowed to check the channel for idleness. Each time a station accesses the system and sends an RTS frame, other stations start their NAV. In other words, each station, before sensing the physical medium to see if it is idle, first checks its NAV to see if it has expired. Figure 12.17 shows the idea of NAV.

Collision During Handshaking

What happens if there is a collision during the time when RTS or CTS control frames are in transition, often called the *handshaking period?* Two or more stations may try to send RTS frames at the same time. These control frames may collide. However, because there is no mechanism for collision detection, the sender assumes there has been a collision if it has not received a CTS frame from the receiver. The backoff strategy is employed, and the sender tries again.

Hidden-Station Problem

The solution to the hidden station problem is the use of the handshake frames (RTS and CTS). Figure 12.17 also shows that the RTS message from B reaches A, but not C. However, because both B and C are within the range of A, the CTS message, which contains the duration of data transmission from B to A, reaches C. Station C knows that some hidden station is using the channel and refrains from transmitting until that duration is over.

CSMA/CA and Wireless Networks

CSMA/CA was mostly intended for use in wireless networks. The procedure described above, however, is not sophisticated enough to handle some particular issues related to wireless networks, such as hidden terminals or exposed terminals. We will see how these issues are solved by augmenting the above protocol with handshaking features. The use of CSMA/CA in wireless networks will be discussed in Chapter 15.

12.2 CONTROLLED ACCESS

In **controlled access,** the stations consult one another to find which station has the right to send. A station cannot send unless it has been authorized by other stations. We discuss three controlled-access methods.

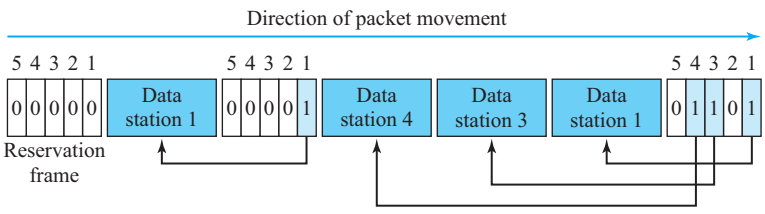
12.2.1 Reservation

In the **reservation** method, a station needs to make a reservation before sending data. Time is divided into intervals. In each interval, a reservation frame precedes the data frames sent in that interval.

If there are *N* stations in the system, there are exactly *N* reservation minislots in the reservation frame. Each minislot belongs to a station. When a station needs to send a data frame, it makes a reservation in its own minislot. The stations that have made reservations can send their data frames after the reservation frame.

Figure 12.18 shows a situation with five stations and a five-minislot reservation frame. In the first interval, only stations 1, 3, and 4 have made reservations. In the second interval, only station 1 has made a reservation.

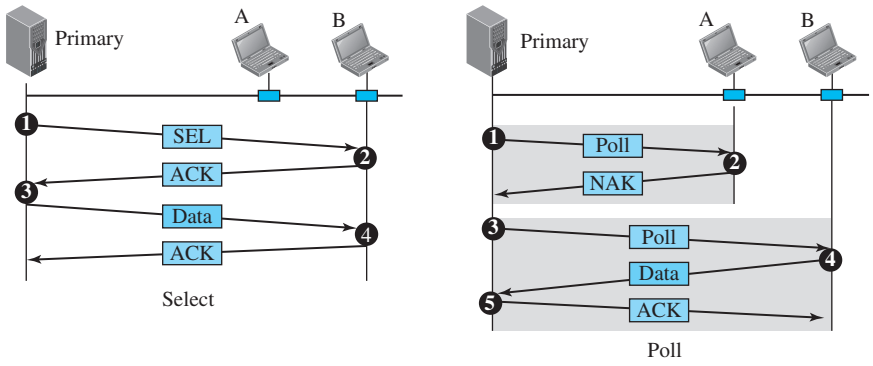
Figure 12.18 *Reservation access method*



12.2.2 Polling

Polling works with topologies in which one device is designated as a ***primary station*** and the other devices are ***secondary stations.*** All data exchanges must be made through the primary device even when the ultimate destination is a secondary device. The primary device controls the link; the secondary devices follow its instructions. It is up to the primary device to determine which device is allowed to use the channel at a given time. The primary device, therefore, is always the initiator of a session (see Figure 12.19). This method uses poll and select functions to prevent collisions. However, the drawback is if the primary station fails, the system goes down.

Figure 12.19 *Select and poll functions in polling-access method*



Select

The *select* function is used whenever the primary device has something to send. Remember that the primary controls the link. If the primary is neither sending nor receiving data, it knows the link is available. If it has something to send, the primary device sends it. What it does not know, however, is whether the target device is prepared to receive. So the primary must alert the secondary to the upcoming transmission and wait for an acknowledgment of the secondary's ready status. Before sending data, the primary creates and transmits a select (SEL) frame, one field of which includes the address of the intended secondary.

Poll

The *poll* function is used by the primary device to solicit transmissions from the secondary devices. When the primary is ready to receive data, it must ask (poll) each device in turn if it has anything to send. When the first secondary is approached, it responds either with a NAK frame if it has nothing to send or with data (in the form of a data frame) if it does. If the response is negative (a NAK frame), then the primary polls the next secondary in the same manner until it finds one with data to send. When the response is positive (a data frame), the primary reads the frame and returns an acknowledgment (ACK frame), verifying its receipt.

12.2.3 Token Passing

In the **token-passing** method, the stations in a network are organized in a logical ring. In other words, for each station, there is a *predecessor* and a *successor*. The predecessor is the station which is logically before the station in the ring; the successor is the station which is after the station in the ring. The current station is the one that is accessing the channel now. The right to this access has been passed from the predecessor to the current station. The right will be passed to the successor when the current station has no more data to send.

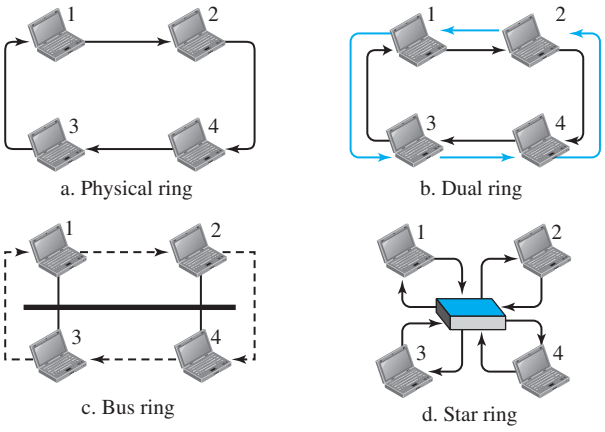
But how is the right to access the channel passed from one station to another? In this method, a special packet called a ***token*** circulates through the ring. The possession of the token gives the station the right to access the channel and send its data. When a station has some data to send, it waits until it receives the token from its predecessor. It then holds the token and sends its data. When the station has no more data to send, it releases the token, passing it to the next logical station in the ring. The station cannot send data until it receives the token again in the next round. In this process, when a station receives the token and has no data to send, it just passes the data to the next station.

Token management is needed for this access method. Stations must be limited in the time they can have possession of the token. The token must be monitored to ensure it has not been lost or destroyed. For example, if a station that is holding the token fails, the token will disappear from the network. Another function of token management is to assign priorities to the stations and to the types of data being transmitted. And finally, token management is needed to make low-priority stations release the token to high-priority stations.

Logical Ring

In a token-passing network, stations do not have to be physically connected in a ring; the ring can be a logical one. Figure 12.20 shows four different physical topologies that can create a logical ring.

Figure 12.20 *Logical ring and physical topology in token-passing access method*



In the physical ring topology, when a station sends the token to its successor, the token cannot be seen by other stations; the successor is the next one in line. This means that the token does not have to have the address of the next successor. The problem with this topology is that if one of the links—the medium between two adjacent stations—fails, the whole system fails.

The dual ring topology uses a second (auxiliary) ring which operates in the reverse direction compared with the main ring. The second ring is for emergencies only (such as a spare tire for a car). If one of the links in the main ring fails, the system automatically combines the two rings to form a temporary ring. After the failed link is restored, the auxiliary ring becomes idle again. Note that for this topology to work, each station needs to have two transmitter ports and two receiver ports. The high-speed Token Ring networks called *FDDI (Fiber Distributed Data Interface)* and *CDDI (Copper Distributed Data Interface)* use this topology.

In the bus ring topology, also called a token bus, the stations are connected to a single cable called a *bus.* They, however, make a logical ring, because each station knows the address of its successor (and also predecessor for token management purposes). When a station has finished sending its data, it releases the token and inserts the address of its successor in the token. Only the station with the address matching the destination address of the token gets the token to access the shared media. The Token Bus LAN, standardized by IEEE, uses this topology.

In a star ring topology, the physical topology is a star. There is a hub, however, that acts as the connector. The wiring inside the hub makes the ring; the stations are connected to this ring through the two wire connections. This topology makes the network less prone to failure because if a link goes down, it will be bypassed by the hub and the rest of the stations can operate. Also adding and removing stations from the ring is easier. This topology is still used in the Token Ring LAN designed by IBM.

12.3 CHANNELIZATION

Channelization (or *channel partition,* as it is sometimes called) is a multiple-access method in which the available bandwidth of a link is shared in time, frequency, or through code, among different stations. In this section, we discuss three channelization protocols: FDMA, TDMA, and CDMA.

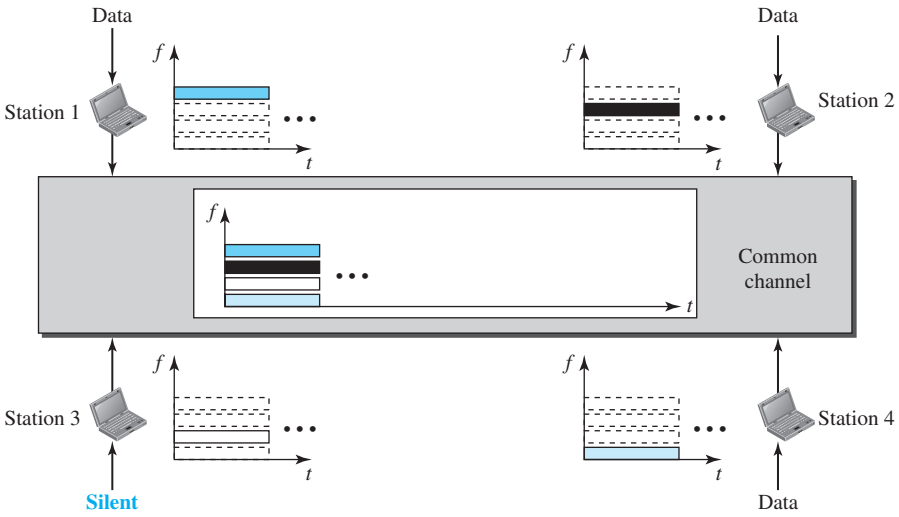
We see the application of all these methods in Chapter 16 when we discuss cellular phone systems.

12.3.1 FDMA

In **frequency-division multiple access (FDMA),** the available bandwidth is divided into frequency bands. Each station is allocated a band to send its data. In other words, each band is reserved for a specific station, and it belongs to the station all the time. Each station also uses a bandpass filter to confine the transmitter frequencies. To prevent

station interferences, the allocated bands are separated from one another by small *guard bands.* Figure 12.21 shows the idea of FDMA.

Figure 12.21 *Frequency-division multiple access (FDMA)*



In FDMA, the available bandwidth of the common channel is divided into bands that are separated by guard bands.

FDMA specifies a predetermined frequency band for the entire period of communication. This means that stream data (a continuous flow of data that may not be packetized) can easily be used with FDMA. We will see in Chapter 16 how this feature can be used in cellular telephone systems.

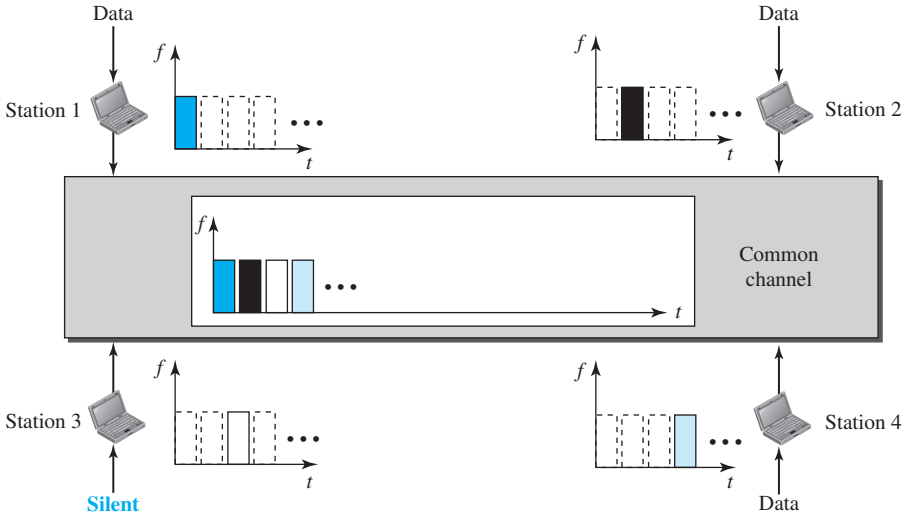
We need to emphasize that although FDMA and frequency-division multiplexing (FDM) conceptually seem similar, there are differences between them. FDM, as we saw in Chapter 6, is a physical layer technique that combines the loads from low-bandwidth channels and transmits them by using a high-bandwidth channel. The channels that are combined are low-pass. The multiplexer modulates the signals, combines them, and creates a bandpass signal. The bandwidth of each channel is shifted by the multiplexer.

FDMA, on the other hand, is an access method in the data-link layer. The data-link layer in each station tells its physical layer to make a bandpass signal from the data passed to it. The signal must be created in the allocated band. There is no physical multiplexer at the physical layer. The signals created at each station are automatically bandpass-filtered. They are mixed when they are sent to the common channel.

12.3.2 TDMA

In **time-division multiple access (TDMA),** the stations share the bandwidth of the channel in time. Each station is allocated a time slot during which it can send data. Each station transmits its data in its assigned time slot. Figure 12.22 shows the idea behind TDMA.

Figure 12.22 *Time-division multiple access (TDMA)*



The main problem with TDMA lies in achieving synchronization between the different stations. Each station needs to know the beginning of its slot and the location of its slot. This may be difficult because of propagation delays introduced in the system if the stations are spread over a large area. To compensate for the delays, we can insert *guard times*. Synchronization is normally accomplished by having some synchronization bits (normally referred to as *preamble bits*) at the beginning of each slot.

In TDMA, the bandwidth is just one channel that is timeshared between different stations.

We also need to emphasize that although TDMA and time-division multiplexing (TDM) conceptually seem the same, there are differences between them. TDM, as we saw in Chapter 6, is a physical layer technique that combines the data from slower channels and transmits them by using a faster channel. The process uses a physical multiplexer that interleaves data units from each channel.

TDMA, on the other hand, is an access method in the data-link layer. The data-link layer in each station tells its physical layer to use the allocated time slot. There is no physical multiplexer at the physical layer.

12.3.3 CDMA

Code-division multiple access (CDMA) was conceived several decades ago. Recent advances in electronic technology have finally made its implementation possible. CDMA differs from FDMA in that only one channel occupies the entire bandwidth of the link. It differs from TDMA in that all stations can send data simultaneously; there is no timesharing.

In CDMA, one channel carries all transmissions simultaneously.

Analogy

Let us first give an analogy. CDMA simply means communication with different codes. For example, in a large room with many people, two people can talk privately in English if nobody else understands English. Another two people can talk in Chinese if they are the only ones who understand Chinese, and so on. In other words, the common channel, the space of the room in this case, can easily allow communication between several couples, but in different languages (codes).

Idea

Let us assume we have four stations, 1, 2, 3, and 4, connected to the same channel. The data from station 1 are d_1, from station 2 are d_2, and so on. The code assigned to the first station is c_1, to the second is c_2, and so on. We assume that the assigned codes have two properties.

1. If we multiply each code by another, we get 0.
2. If we multiply each code by itself, we get 4 (the number of stations).

With these two properties in mind, let us see how the above four stations can send data using the same common channel, as shown in Figure 12.23.

Station 1 multiplies (a special kind of multiplication, as we will see) its data by its code to get $d_1 \cdot c_1$. Station 2 multiplies its data by its code to get $d_2 \cdot c_2$, and so on. The data that go on the channel are the sum of all these terms, as shown in the box. Any station that wants to receive data from one of the other three multiplies the data on the channel by the code of the sender. For example, suppose stations 1 and 2 are talking to each other. Station 2 wants to hear what station 1 is saying. It multiplies the data on the channel by c_1, the code of station 1.

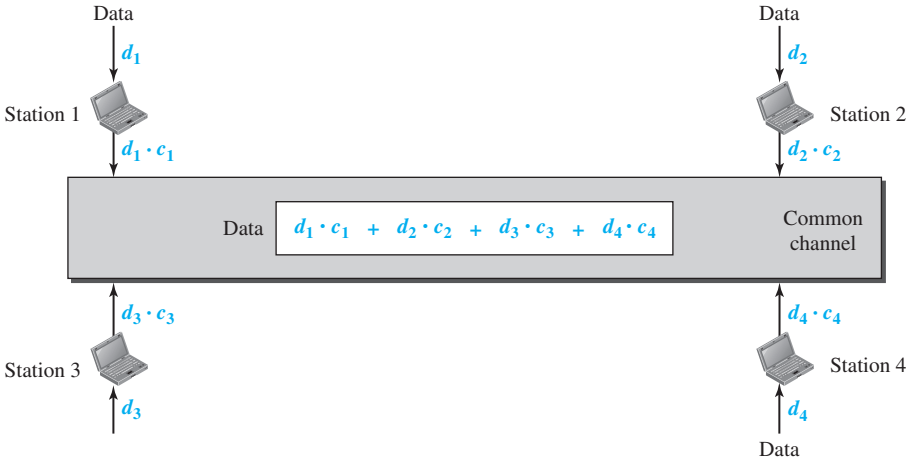
Because $(c_1 \cdot c_1)$ is 4, but $(c_2 \cdot c_1)$, $(c_3 \cdot c_1)$, and $(c_4 \cdot c_1)$ are all 0s, station 2 divides the result by 4 to get the data from station 1.

Chips

CDMA is based on coding theory. Each station is assigned a code, which is a sequence of numbers called *chips,* as shown in Figure 12.24. The codes are for the previous example.

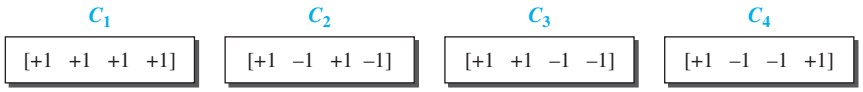
Later in this chapter we show how we chose these sequences. For now, we need to know that we did not choose the sequences randomly; they were carefully selected. They are called ***orthogonal sequences*** and have the following properties:

Figure 12.23 *Simple idea of communication with code*



$$\begin{aligned}\text{data} &= (d_1 \cdot c_1 + d_2 \cdot c_2 + d_3 \cdot c_3 + d_4 \cdot c_4) \cdot c_1 \\ &= d_1 \cdot c_1 \cdot c_1 + d_2 \cdot c_2 \cdot c_1 + d_3 \cdot c_3 \cdot c_1 + d_4 \cdot c_4 \cdot c_1 = 4 \times d_1\end{aligned}$$

Figure 12.24 *Chip sequences*



1. Each sequence is made of N elements, where N is the number of stations.
2. If we multiply a sequence by a number, every element in the sequence is multiplied by that element. This is called multiplication of a sequence by a scalar. For example,

$$2 \bullet [+1 \; +1 \; -1 \; -1] = [+2 \; +2 \; -2 \; -2]$$

3. If we multiply two equal sequences, element by element, and add the results, we get N, where N is the number of elements in each sequence. This is called the ***inner product*** of two equal sequences. For example,

$$[+1 \; +1 \; -1 \; -1] \bullet [+1 \; +1 \; -1 \; -1] = 1 + 1 + 1 + 1 = 4$$

4. If we multiply two different sequences, element by element, and add the results, we get 0. This is called the *inner product* of two different sequences. For example,

$$[+1 \; +1 \; -1 \; -1] \bullet [+1 \; +1 \; +1 \; +1] = 1 + 1 - 1 - 1 = 0$$

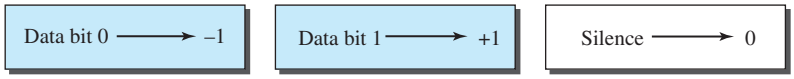
5. Adding two sequences means adding the corresponding elements. The result is another sequence. For example,

$$[+1\ +1\ -1\ -1] + [+1\ +1\ +1\ +1] = [+2\ +2\ \ 0\ \ 0]$$

Data Representation

We follow these rules for encoding: If a station needs to send a 0 bit, it encodes it as –1; if it needs to send a 1 bit, it encodes it as +1. When a station is idle, it sends no signal, which is interpreted as a 0. These are shown in Figure 12.25.

Figure 12.25 *Data representation in CDMA*



Encoding and Decoding

As a simple example, we show how four stations share the link during a 1-bit interval. The procedure can easily be repeated for additional intervals. We assume that stations 1 and 2 are sending a 0 bit and channel 4 is sending a 1 bit. Station 3 is silent. The data at the sender site are translated to –1, –1, 0, and +1. Each station multiplies the corresponding number by its chip (its orthogonal sequence), which is unique for each station. The result is a new sequence which is sent to the channel. For simplicity, we assume that all stations send the resulting sequences at the same time. The sequence on the channel is the sum of all four sequences as defined before. Figure 12.26 shows the situation.

Now imagine that station 3, which we said is silent, is listening to station 2. Station 3 multiplies the total data on the channel by the code for station 2, which is [+1 –1 +1 –1], to get

$$[-1\ -1\ -3\ +1] \bullet [+1\ -1\ +1\ -1] = -4/4 = -1 \rightarrow \textbf{bit 1}$$

Signal Level

The process can be better understood if we show the digital signal produced by each station and the data recovered at the destination (see Figure 12.27). The figure shows the corresponding signals for each station (using NRZ-L for simplicity) and the signal that is on the common channel.

Figure 12.28 shows how station 3 can detect the data sent by station 2 by using the code for station 2. The total data on the channel are multiplied (inner product operation) by the signal representing station 2 chip code to get a new signal. The station then integrates and adds the area under the signal, to get the value –4, which is divided by 4 and interpreted as bit 0.

Sequence Generation

To generate chip sequences, we use a **Walsh table,** which is a two-dimensional table with an equal number of rows and columns, as shown in Figure 12.29.

Figure 12.26 *Sharing channel in CDMA*

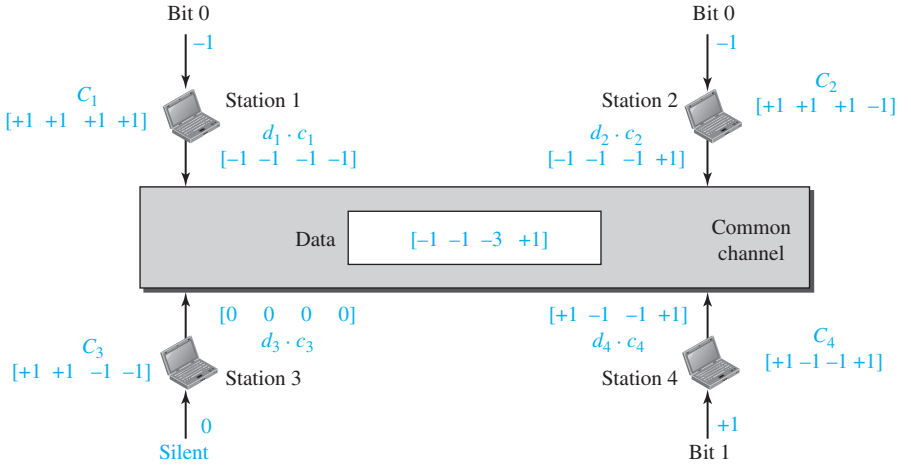
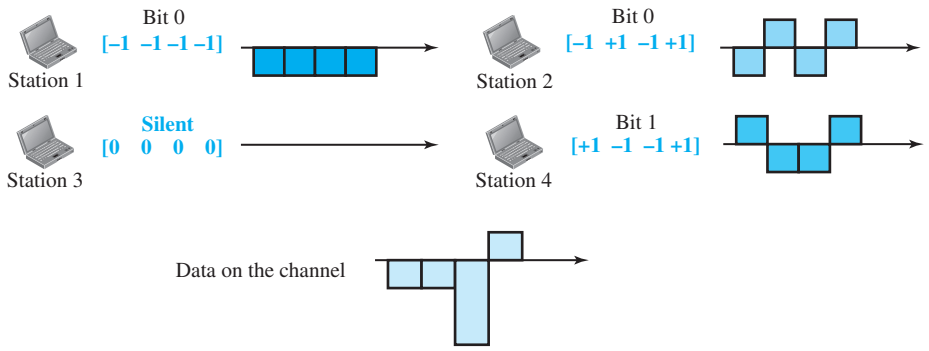


Figure 12.27 *Digital signal created by four stations in CDMA*



In the Walsh table, each row is a sequence of chips. W_1 for a one-chip sequence has one row and one column. We can choose −1 or +1 for the chip for this trivial table (we chose +1). According to Walsh, if we know the table for N sequences W_N, we can create the table for $2N$ sequences W_{2N}, as shown in Figure 12.29. The W_N with the overbar $\overline{W_N}$ stands for the complement of W_N, where each +1 is changed to −1 and vice versa. Figure 12.29 also shows how we can create W_2 and W_4 from W_1. After we select W_1, W_2 can be made from four W_1s, with the last one the complement of W_1. After W_2 is generated, W_4 can be made of four W_2s, with the last one the complement of W_2. Of course, W_8 is composed of four W_4s, and so on. Note that after W_N is made, each station is assigned a chip corresponding to a row.

Figure 12.28 *Decoding of the composite signal for one in CDMA*

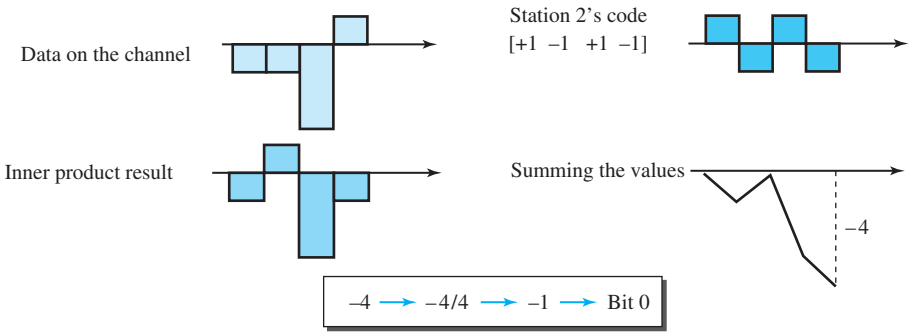
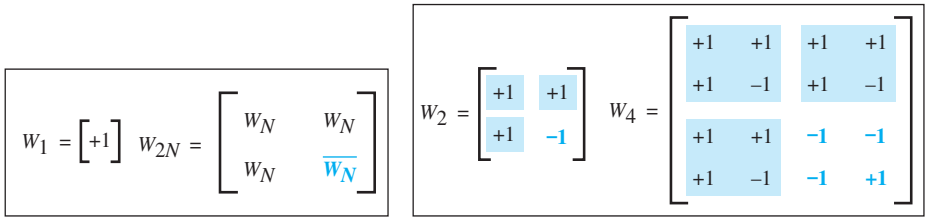


Figure 12.29 *General rule and examples of creating Walsh tables*



a. Two basic rules

b. Generation of W_2 and W_4

Something we need to emphasize is that the number of sequences, N, needs to be a power of 2. In other words, we need to have $N = 2^m$.

The number of sequences in a Walsh table needs to be $N = 2^m$.

Example 12.6

Find the chips for a network with

a. Two stations

b. Four stations

Solution

We can use the rows of W_2 and W_4 in Figure 12.29:

a. For a two-station network, we have [+1 +1] and [+1 −1].

b. For a four-station network we have [+1 +1 +1 +1], [+1 −1 +1 −1], [+1 +1 −1 −1], and [+1 −1 −1 +1].

Example 12.7

What is the number of sequences if we have 90 stations in our network?

Solution

The number of sequences needs to be 2^m. We need to choose $m = 7$ and $N = 2^7$ or 128. We can then use 90 of the sequences as the chips.

Example 12.8

Prove that a receiving station can get the data sent by a specific sender if it multiplies the entire data on the channel by the sender's chip code and then divides it by the number of stations.

Solution

Let us prove this for the first station, using our previous four-station example. We can say that the data on the channel $D = (d_1 \cdot c_1 + d_2 \cdot c_2 + d_3 \cdot c_3 + d_4 \cdot c_4)$. The receiver that wants to get the data sent by station 1 multiplies these data by c_1.

$$
\begin{aligned}
D \cdot c_1 &= (d_1 \cdot c_1 + d_2 \cdot c_2 + d_3 \cdot c_3 + d_4 \cdot c_4) \quad c_1 \\
&= d_1 \cdot c_1 \cdot c_1 + d_2 \cdot c_2 \cdot c_1 + d_3 \cdot c_3 \cdot c_1 + d_4 \cdot c_4 \cdot c_1 \\
&= d_1 \times N + d_2 \times 0 + d_3 \times 0 + d_4 \times 0 \\
&= d_1 \times N
\end{aligned}
$$

When we divide the result by N, we get d_1.

12.4 END-CHAPTER MATERIALS

12.4.1 Recommended Reading

For more details about subjects discussed in this chapter, we recommend the following books and RFCs. The items in brackets [...] refer to the reference list at the end of the text.

Books

Several excellent books discuss link-layer issues. Among them we recommend [Ham 80], [Zar 02], [Ror 96], [Tan 03], [GW 04], [For 03], [KMK 04], [Sta 04], [Kes 02], [PD 03], [Kei 02], [Spu 00], [KCK 98], [Sau 98], [Izz 00], [Per 00], and [WV 00].

RFCs

A discussion of the use of the checksum in the Internet can be found in RFC 1141.