52. Bluetooth Low Energy (BLE)

The *Bluetooth 4.0 Specification* introduces Bluetooth Low Energy (BLE), a wireless technology targeted for accessories with limited battery resources. If Bluetooth Low Energy is supported, the accessory should follow the guidelines in this section.

52.1 Role

The accessory should implement either the Peripheral role or the Broadcaster role as defined in the *Bluetooth 4.0 Specification – Volume 3, Part C, Section 2.2.2.3 and Section 2.2.2.1*.

52.2 Advertising Channels

The accessory should advertise on all three advertising channels (37, 38, and 39) at each advertising event. See the *Bluetooth 4.0 Specification – Volume 6, Part B, Section 4.4.2.1*.

52.3 Advertising PDU

The accessory should use one of the following advertising PDUs:
* ADV_IND
* ADV_NOCONN_IND
* ADV_SCAN_IND

ADV_DIRECT_IND should not be used. See the *Bluetooth 4.0 Specification – Volume 6, Part B, Section 2.3.1*.

52.4 Advertising Data

The advertising data sent by the accessory should contain at least the following information as described in the *Bluetooth Core Specification Supplement – Part A*:
* Flags
* TX Power Level

- Local Name
- Services

The Local Name should match the accessory's markings and packaging and not contain a colon ':' or semi-colon ';'.

The accessory may put the Local Name and the TX Power Level data in the SCAN_RSP PDU if, for example, it needs to reduce power consumption or not all of the advertising data fit into the advertising PDU. Depending on its state, the device may not always perform active scanning.

The primary services should always be advertised in the advertising PDU. Secondary services should not be advertised. Services not significant to the primary use case of the accessory may be omitted if space is limited in the Advertising PDU.

The advertising data and the scan response data in the SCAN_RSP PDU should comply with the formatting guidelines in the *Bluetooth 4.0 Specification – Volume 3, Part C, Section 18*: it starts with a length field, followed by AD Type and AD Data.

52.5 Advertising Interval

The accessory should first use the recommended advertising interval of 20 ms for at least 30 seconds.

If it is not discovered within the initial 30 seconds, Apple recommends using one of the following longer intervals to increase chances of discovery by the device:

- 152.5 ms
- 211.25 ms
- 318.75 ms
- 417.5 ms
- 546.25 ms
- 760 ms
- 852.5 ms
- 1022.5 ms
- 1285 ms

> **Note:**
> Longer advertising intervals usually result in longer discovery and connect times, but may lower accessory power consumption.

52.6 Connection Parameters

If both the Central and Peripheral support the Connection Parameters Request procedure, then either shall use the procedure. The device will not read or use the parameters in the Peripheral Preferred Connection Parameters characteristic. See *Bluetooth 5.3 Specification–Volume 6, Part B, Section 5.1.1 Connection Update.*

Connection parameter requests may be rejected if they do not meet the guidelines in this section.

General connection parameter request guidelines:
- Peripheral Latency ≤ 30 connection intervals.
- Supervision Timeout from 6 seconds to 18 seconds.
- Interval Min ≥ 15 ms.
- Interval Min ≤ 2 seconds.
- Interval Min is a multiple of 15 ms.
- One of the following:
  - Interval Max at least 15 ms greater than Interval Min.
  - Interval Max and Interval Min are both 15 ms.
- Interval Max * (Peripheral Latency + 1) of 6 seconds or less.
- Supervision Timeout greater than Interval Max * (Peripheral Latency + 1) * 3.

If Bluetooth Low Energy HID is one of the connected services of an accessory, a connection interval down to 11.25 ms may be accepted by some devices.

> **Note:**
> When Interval Max and Interval Min are both 15 ms, some devices (such as Apple Watch) will offer a 30 ms interval to better balance power and performance constraints.

Apple Watch connection parameter request guidelines:
- Interval Min ≥ 30 ms.
- Interval Min is a multiple of 30 ms.
- One of the following:
  - Interval Max at least 30 ms greater than Interval Min.
  - Interval Max and Interval Min are both 30 ms.

52.7 Data Packet Length Extension

Data Packet Length Extension increases the maximum data length from 27 to 251. Using larger per-packet data lengths improves radio efficiency, greatly increasing application data rates and boosting battery life. See *Bluetooth 5.0 Specification–Volume 6, Part B, Section 4.6.6.*

Figure 52-1   Data Packet Length Extension
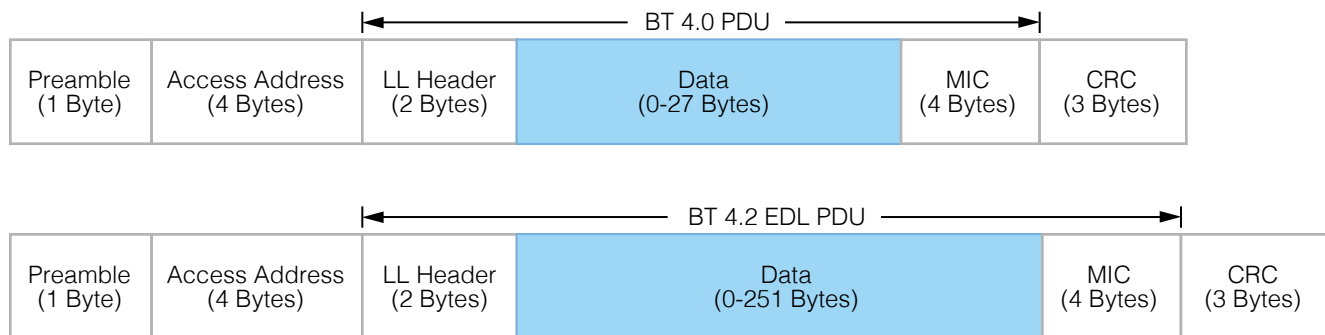
Accessories should support Data Packet Length Extension for best performance with devices.

iOS devices and Mac computers operating as the Central will negotiate optimal data packet lengths based on various factors, such as connection event length, system topology, and protocol.

52.8 Privacy

The accessory should be able to resolve a Resolvable Private Address in all situations. Due to privacy concerns, the device will use a Random Device Address as defined in the *Bluetooth 4.0 Specification –Volume 3, Part C, Section 10.8*.

52.9 Permissions

The accessory should not require special permissions, such as pairing, authentication, or encryption to discover services and characteristics. It may require special permissions only for access to a characteristic value or a descriptor value. See the *Bluetooth 4.0 Specification –Volume 3, Part G, Section 8.1*, fifth paragraph.

52.10 Pairing

The accessory should not request pairing until an ATT request is rejected using the Insufficient Authentication error code. See *Bluetooth 4.0 Specification –Volume 3, Part F, Section 4*.

If, for security reasons, the accessory requires a bonded relationship with the Central, the Peripheral should reject the ATT request using the Insufficient Authentication error code, as appropriate. As a result, the device may proceed with the necessary security procedures.

Similarly, if the device acts as a Central and a GATT server, it may reject an ATT request using the Insufficient Authentication error code. The accessory should initiate the security procedure for pairing in response.

Pairing may require user authorization depending on device. Once an accessory is paired with a device, the accessory shall retain the distributed keys of both central and peripheral for future use. If the pairing is no longer required, the accessory shall delete both sets of keys.

52.11 MTU Size

An accessory supporting packet length extension shall perform the packet length update procedure before performing the Exchange MTU Request handshake, see Data Packet Length Extension (page 238).

Devices will support and request an MTU size larger than the default during the Exchange MTU Request handshake. See the *Bluetooth 4.0 Specification – Volume 3, Part F, Section 3.2.8*.

When operating as ATT client, the device will request the optimal MTU size based on factors such as the Bluetooth topology, connection event length, maximum data length, and protocol (GATT or connection-oriented L2CAP).

An accessory operating as ATT server should select an MTU equal to or greater than the device's MTU request.

52.12 Services

52.12.1 Generic Access Profile Service

The accessory should implement the Device Name characteristic per the *Bluetooth 4.0 Specification – Volume 3, Part C, Section 12.1*. The Device Name characteristic should be writeable.

52.12.2 Generic Attribute Profile Service

The accessory shall implement the Service Changed characteristic only if the accessory has the ability to change its services during its lifetime.

The device may use the Service Changed characteristic to determine if it can rely on previously read (cached) information from the device. See the *Bluetooth 4.0 Specification – Volume 3, Part G, Section 7.1*.

52.12.3 Device Information Service

The accessory shall implement the Device Information Service. The service UUID for this service should not be advertised in the Advertising Data. The following characteristics should be supported:

- Manufacturer Name String (26 characters maximum).
- Model Number String (26 characters maximum).
- Firmware Revision String
- Software Revision String

52.12.4 Available Services

With iOS 7.0, any device makes Battery Service, Current Time Service and Apple Notification Center Service (ANCS) available to an accessory. The Current Time Service supports the current time and local time information characteristics. The service does not provide an "Adjust Reason" when the current time changes. ANCS uses `7905F431−B5CE−4E99−A40F−4B1E122D00D0` as its UUID.

These services are not guaranteed to be available immediately after connection and the accessory shall support Characteristic Value Indication of the Service Changed characteristic (see *Bluetooth 4.0 Specification – Volume 3, Part G, Section 7.1*) to be notified when the services become available. The device will maintain a connection to an accessory as long as it is paired and uses one of the available services.

52.13 GATT Server

With iOS 6.0, applications may contribute services and characteristics to the GATT server the device makes available to the accessory. The recommendations in this section apply to the accessory in this case.

The following services are implemented internally by iOS and shall not be published by third-party iOS applications:

- Generic Attribute Profile Service
- Generic Access Profile Service
- Bluetooth Low Energy HID Service
- Battery Service
- Current Time Service
- Apple Notification Center Service

The device implements the GAP Service Changed characteristic, because the database contents can change at any time. The accessory should therefore support the Characteristic Value Indication of this characteristic and, upon receiving indications, invalidate its database cache accordingly. See the *Bluetooth 4.0 Specification – Volume 3, Part G, Section 7.1*.

The accessory should minimize the use of ATT/GATT requests and commands and only send what is necessary. For example, do not use GATT Discover All Services when the accessory is looking for specific services. Use Discover Primary Service By Service UUID instead. Less airtime equals less power consumption and better performance for both the accessory and the device.

When third-party iOS applications discover services on the accessory, the following services are used internally by iOS and are filtered out from the list of discovered services:
- Generic Attribute Profile Service
- Generic Access Profile Service
- Bluetooth Low Energy HID Service
- Apple Notification Center Service

The accessory should be robust enough to handle any error gracefully. Pairing and Characteristic Value reads/writes may fail if the application owning the service is not in the foreground and is not entitled to run in the background.

If an ATT Prepare Write Request is used, all queued attributes are contained within the same GATT Service.