SDN Control Plane

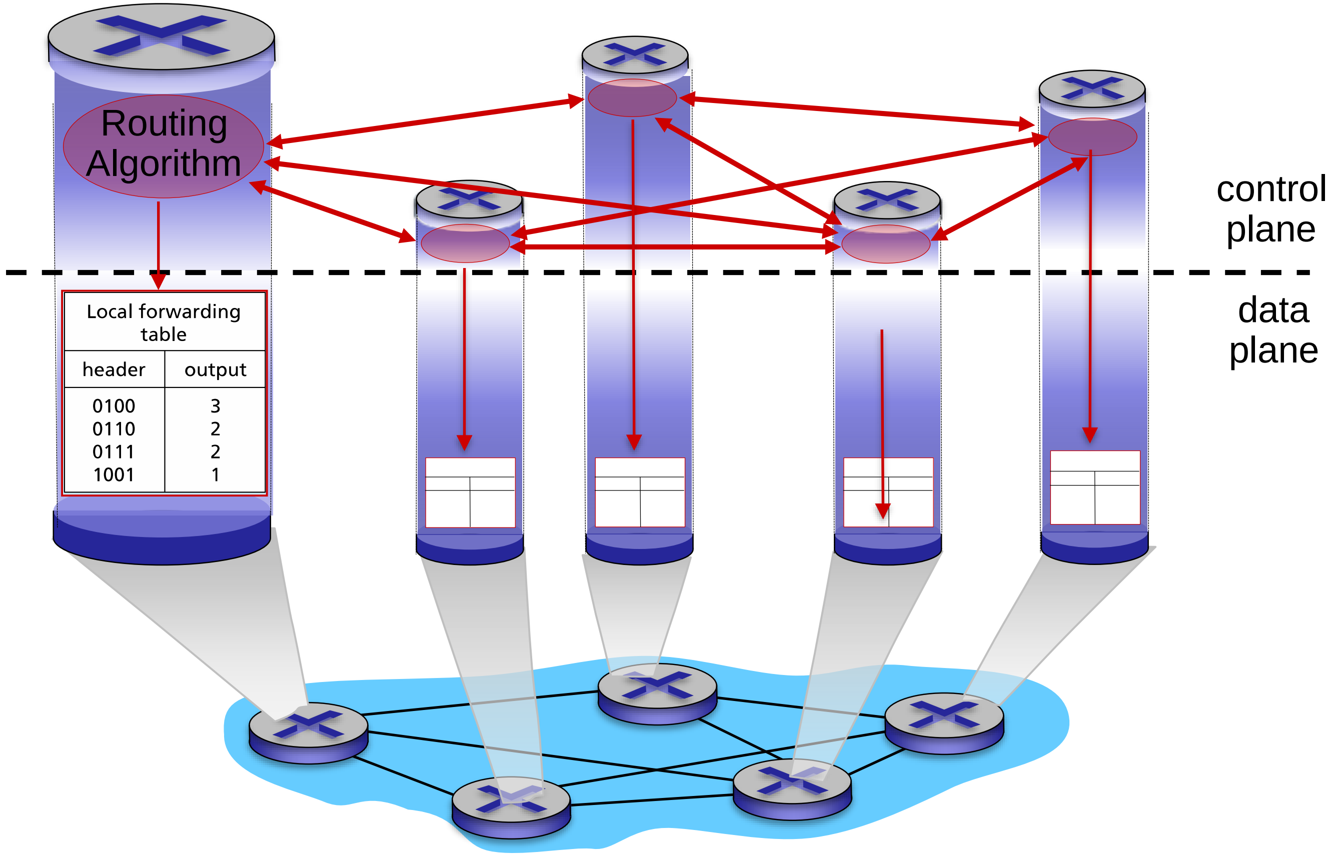
Software defined networking (SDN)

- Internet network layer: historically has been implemented via distributed, per-router approach
  - *monolithic* router contains switching hardware, runs proprietary implementation of Internet standard protocols (IP, RIP, IS-IS, OSPF, BGP) in proprietary router OS (e.g., Cisco IOS)
  - different "middleboxes" for different network layer functions: firewalls, load balancers, NAT boxes, ..

- ~2005: renewed interest in rethinking network control plane

Recall: per-router control plane

Individual routing algorithm components *in each and every router* interact with each other in control plane to compute forwarding tables

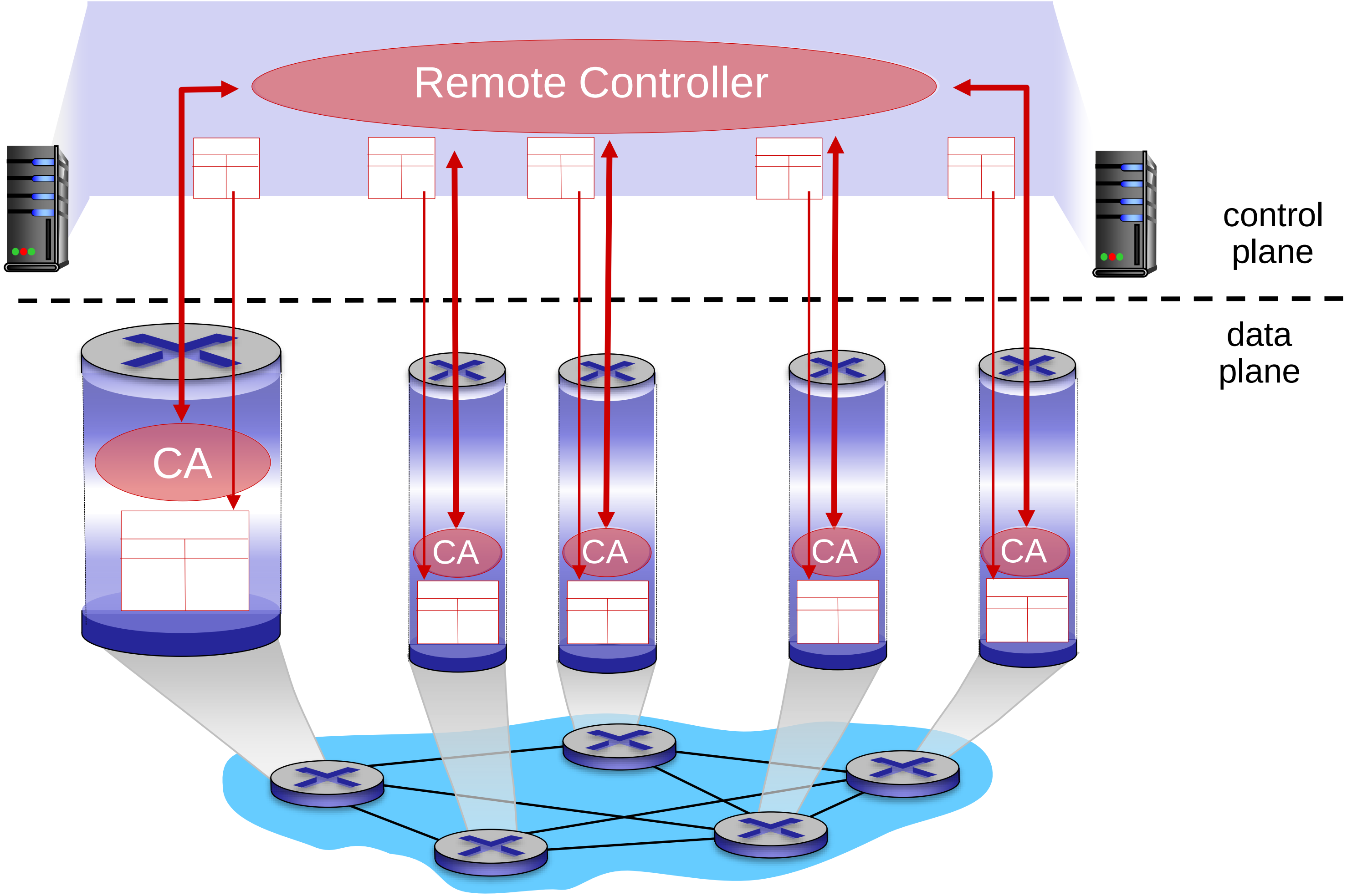


Local forwarding table

header	output
0100	3
0110	2
0111	2
1001	1

Recall: logically centralized control plane

A distinct (typically remote) controller interacts with local control agents (CAs) in routers to compute forwarding tables

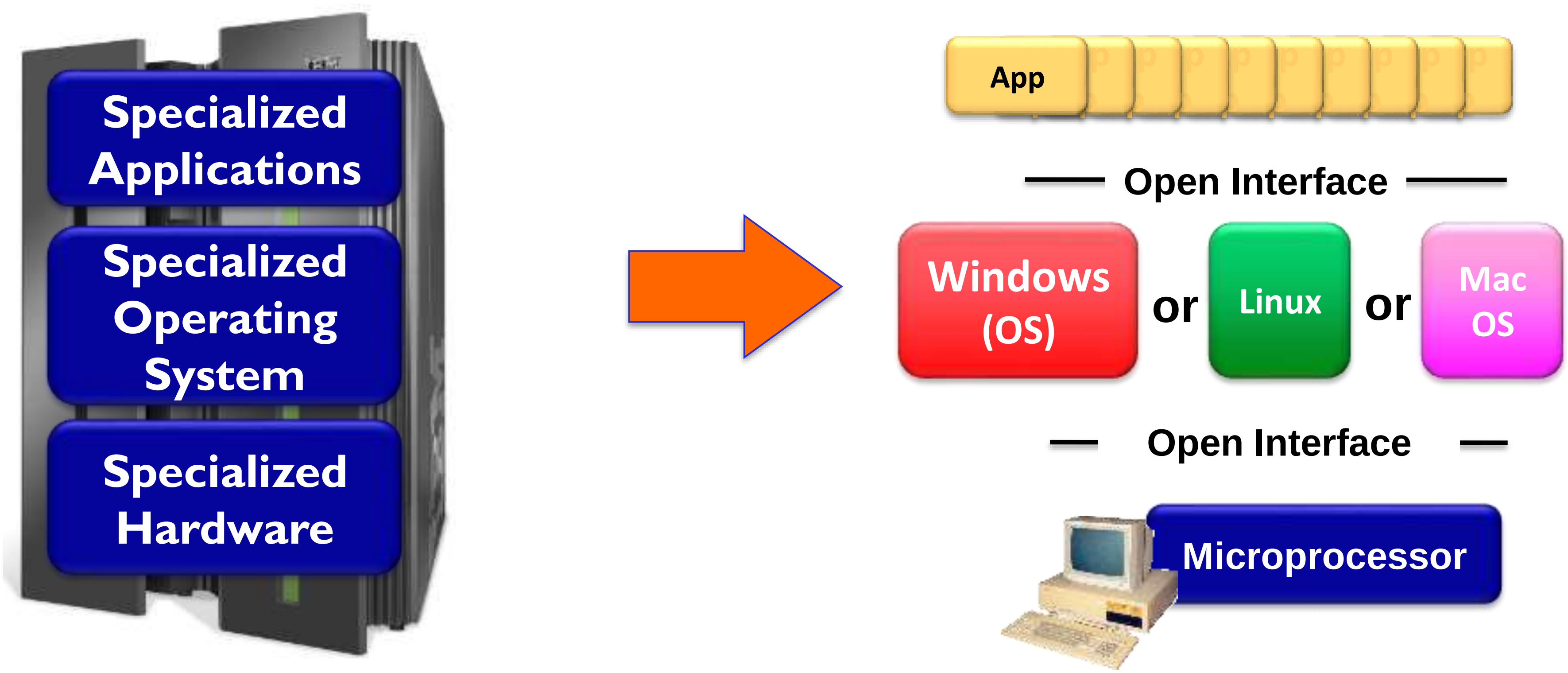


Software defined networking (SDN)

Why a *logically centralized* control plane?

- easier network management: avoid router misconfigurations, greater flexibility of traffic flows
- table-based forwarding (OpenFlow API) allows "programming" routers
  - centralized "programming" easier: compute tables centrally and distribute
  - distributed "programming" more difficult: compute tables as result of distributed algorithm (protocol) implemented in each and every router
- open (non-proprietary) implementation of control plane

Analogy: mainframe to PC evolution*



Specialized Applications

Specialized Operating System

Specialized Hardware

App

Open Interface

Windows (OS) or Linux or Mac OS

Open Interface

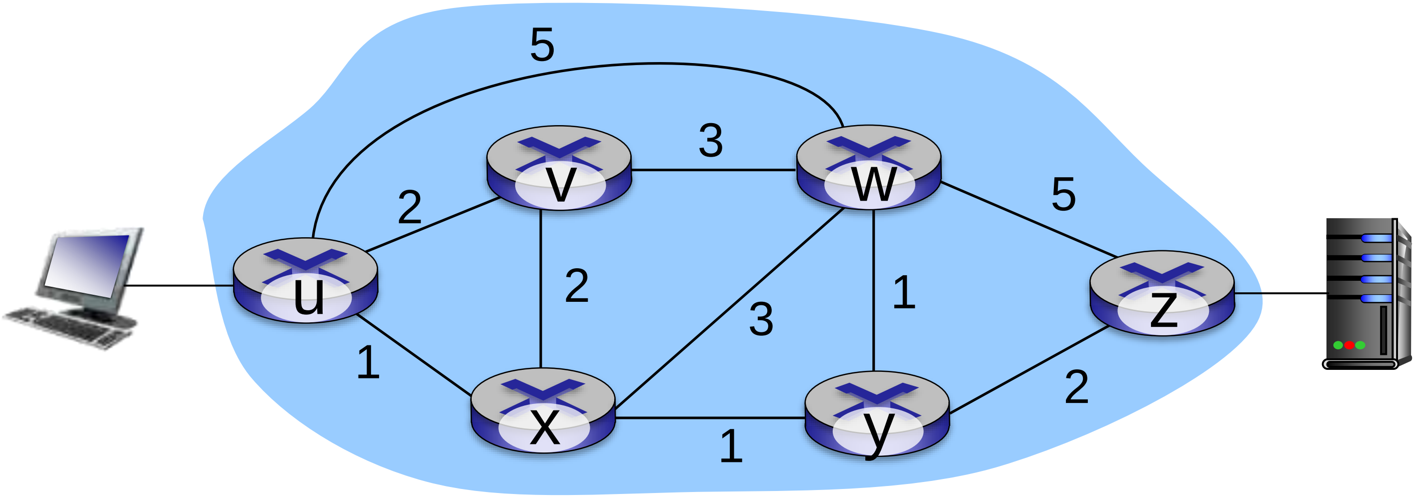
Microprocessor

Vertically integrated
Closed, proprietary
Slow innovation
Small industry

Horizontal
Open interfaces
Rapid innovation
Huge industry

* Slide courtesy: N. McKeown

Traffic engineering: difficult traditional routing



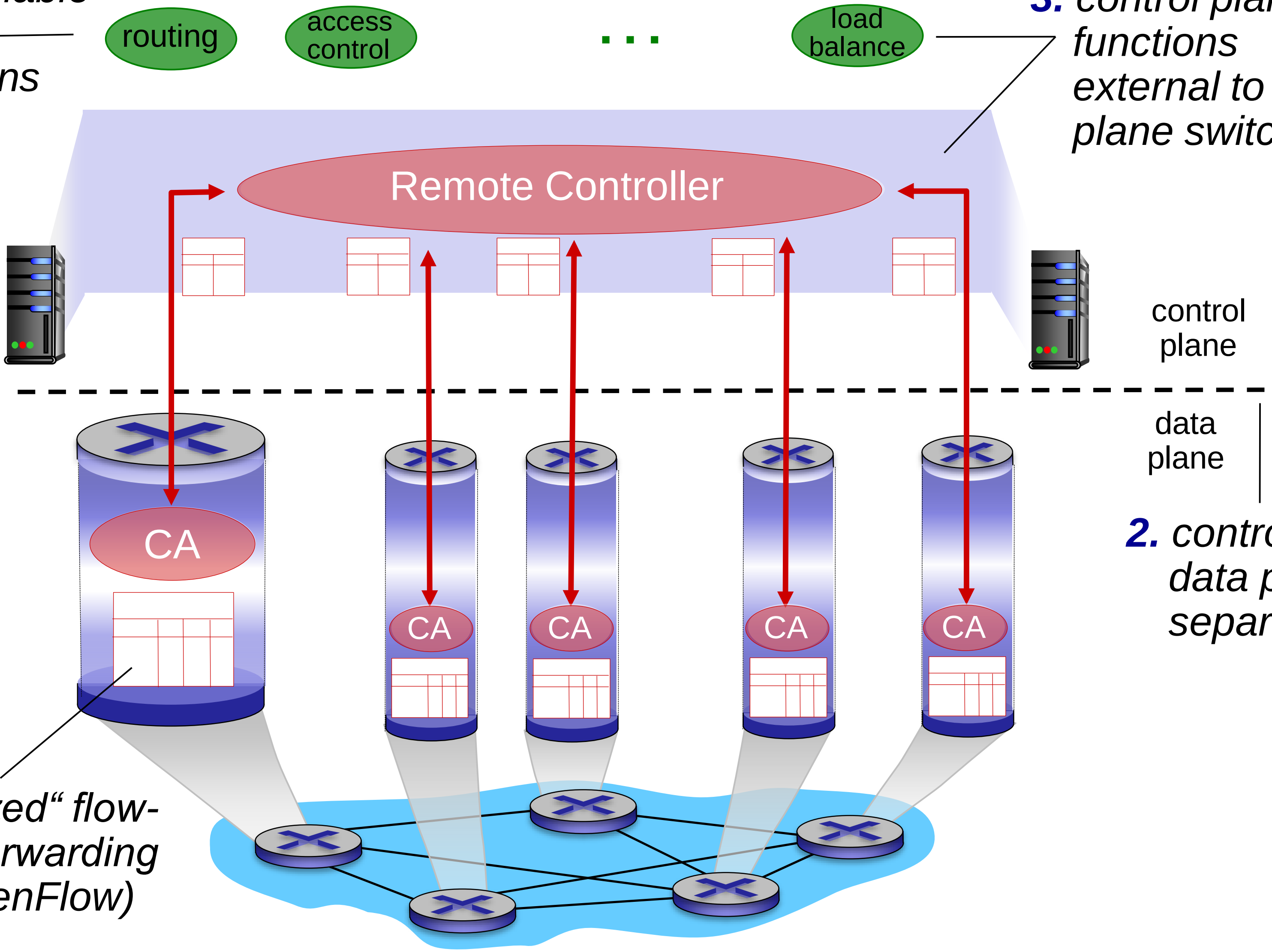
Q: what if network operator wants u-to-z traffic to flow along *uvwz*, x-to-z traffic to flow *xwyz*?

A: need to define link weights so traffic routing algorithm computes routes accordingly (or need a new routing algorithm)!

Software defined networking (SDN)

4. *programmable control applications*

3. *control plane functions external to data-plane switches*



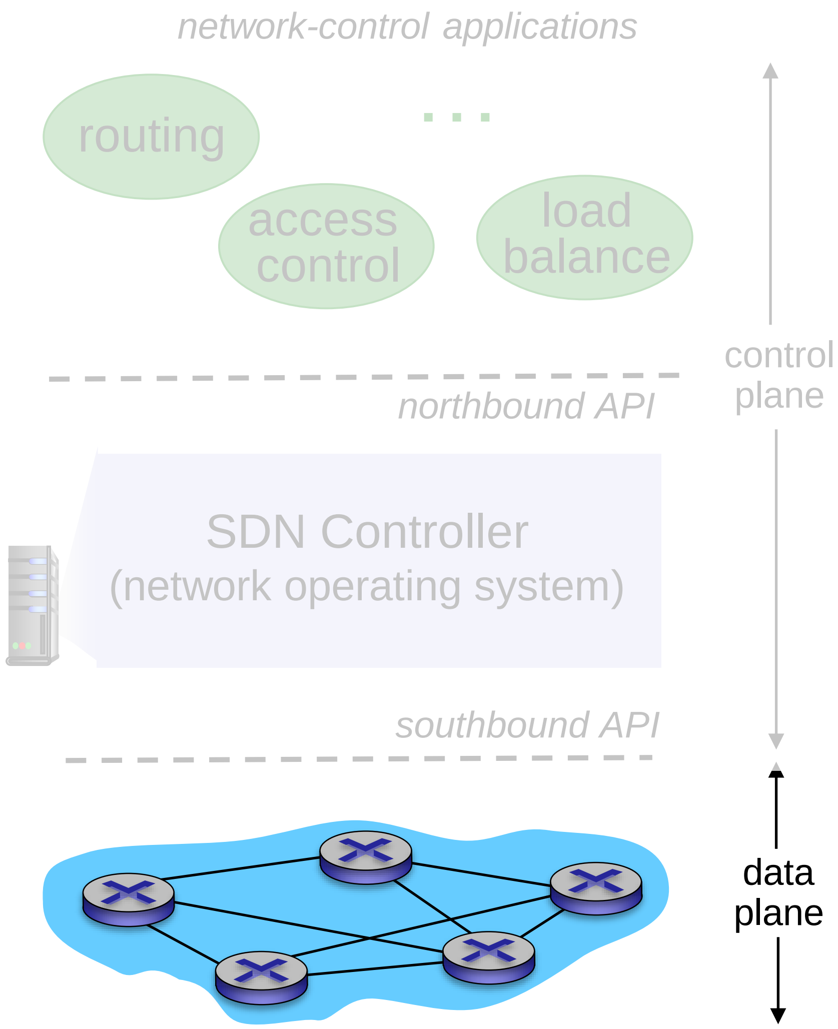
2. *control, data plane separation*

1: *generalized" flow-based" forwarding (e.g., OpenFlow)*

SDN perspective: data plane switches

Data plane switches

- fast, simple, commodity switches implementing generalized data-plane forwarding in hardware
- switch flow table computed, installed by controller
- API for table-based switch control (e.g., OpenFlow)
  - defines what is controllable and what is not
- protocol for communicating with controller (e.g., OpenFlow)

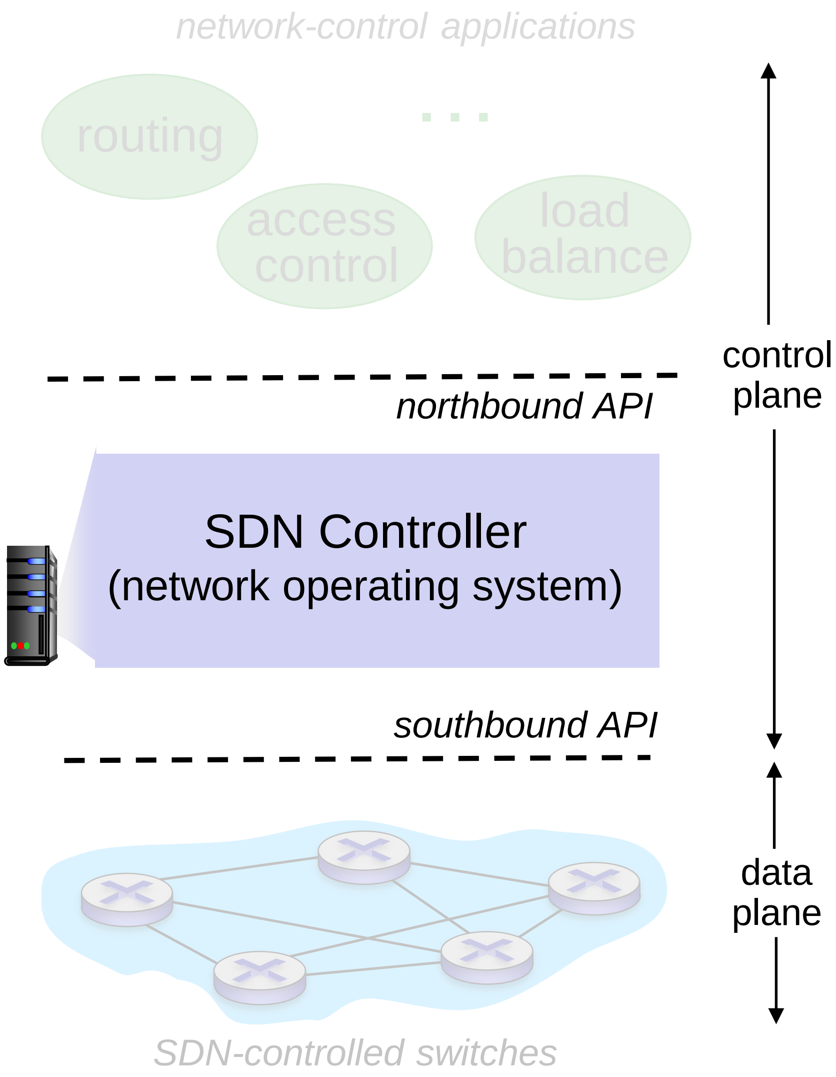


SDN-controlled switches

SDN perspective: SDN controller

SDN controller (network OS):

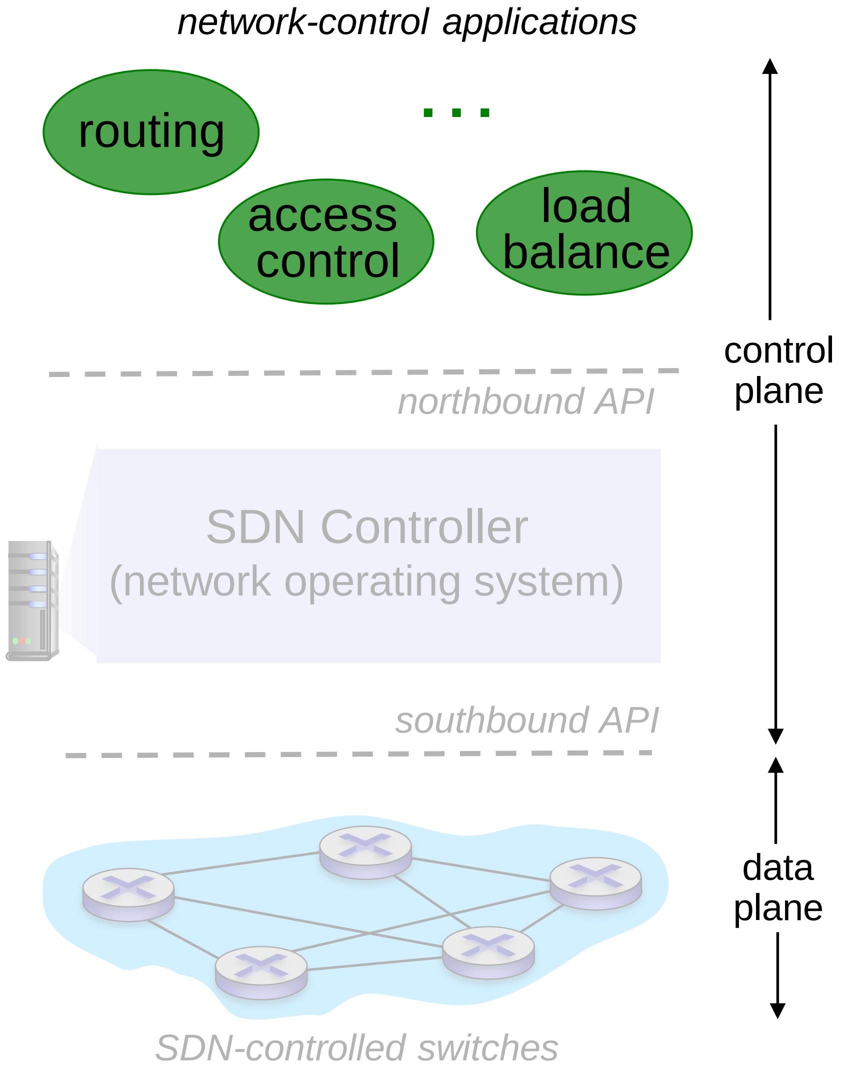
- maintain network state information
- interacts with network control applications "above" via northbound API
- interacts with network switches "below" via southbound API
- implemented as distributed system for performance, scalability, robustness



SDN perspective: control applications

network-control apps:

- "brains" of control: implement control functions using lower-level services, API provided by SDN controller
- *unbundled:* can be provided by 3rd party: distinct from routing vendor, or SDN controller

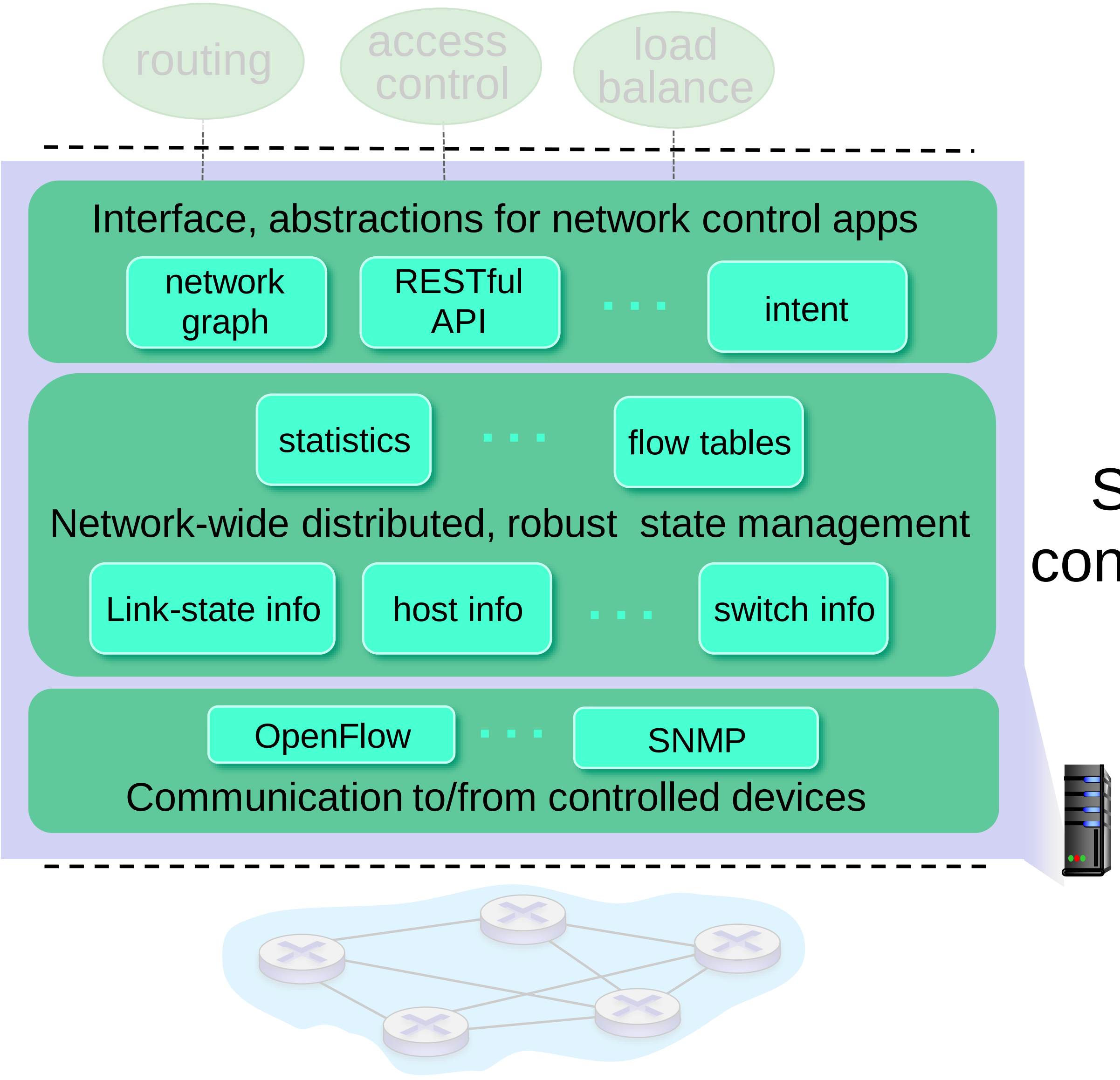


Components of SDN controller

Interface layer to network control apps: abstractions API

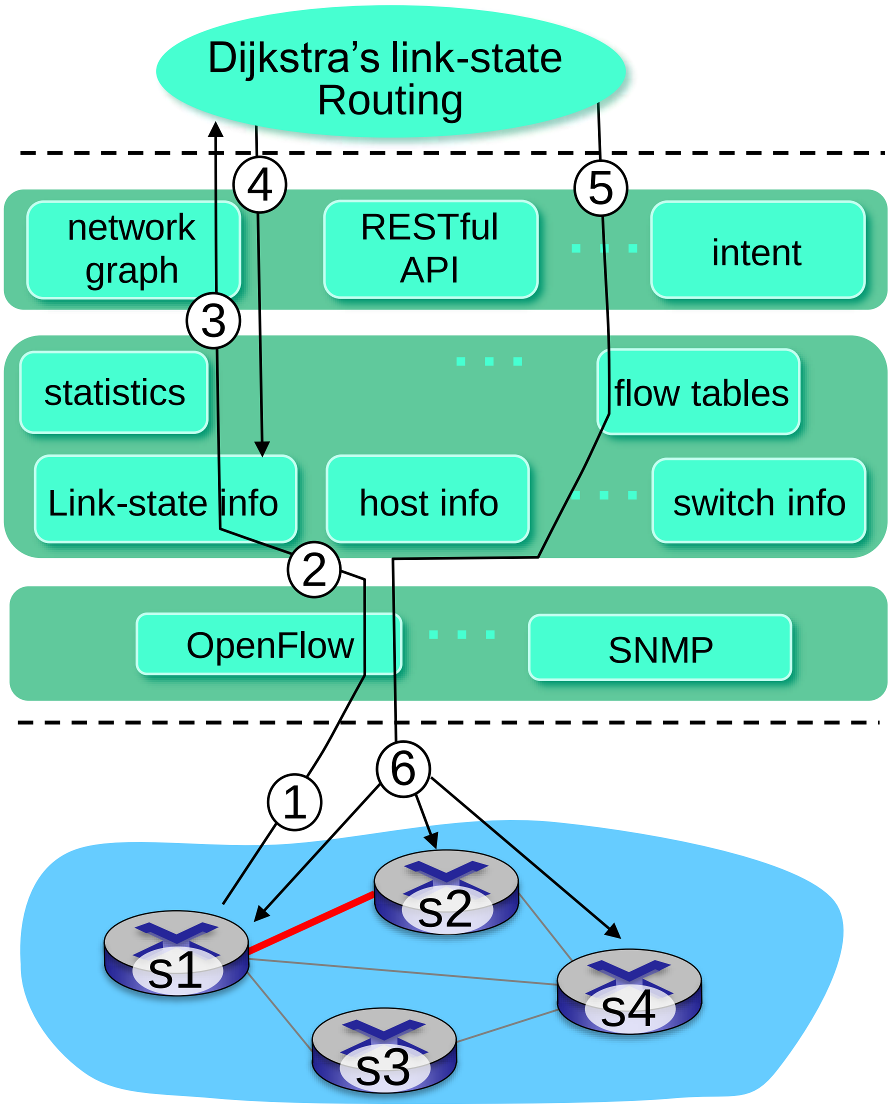
Network-wide state management layer: state of networks links, switches, services: a *distributed database*

communication layer: communicate between SDN controller and controlled switches



SDN controller

SDN: control/data plane interaction example



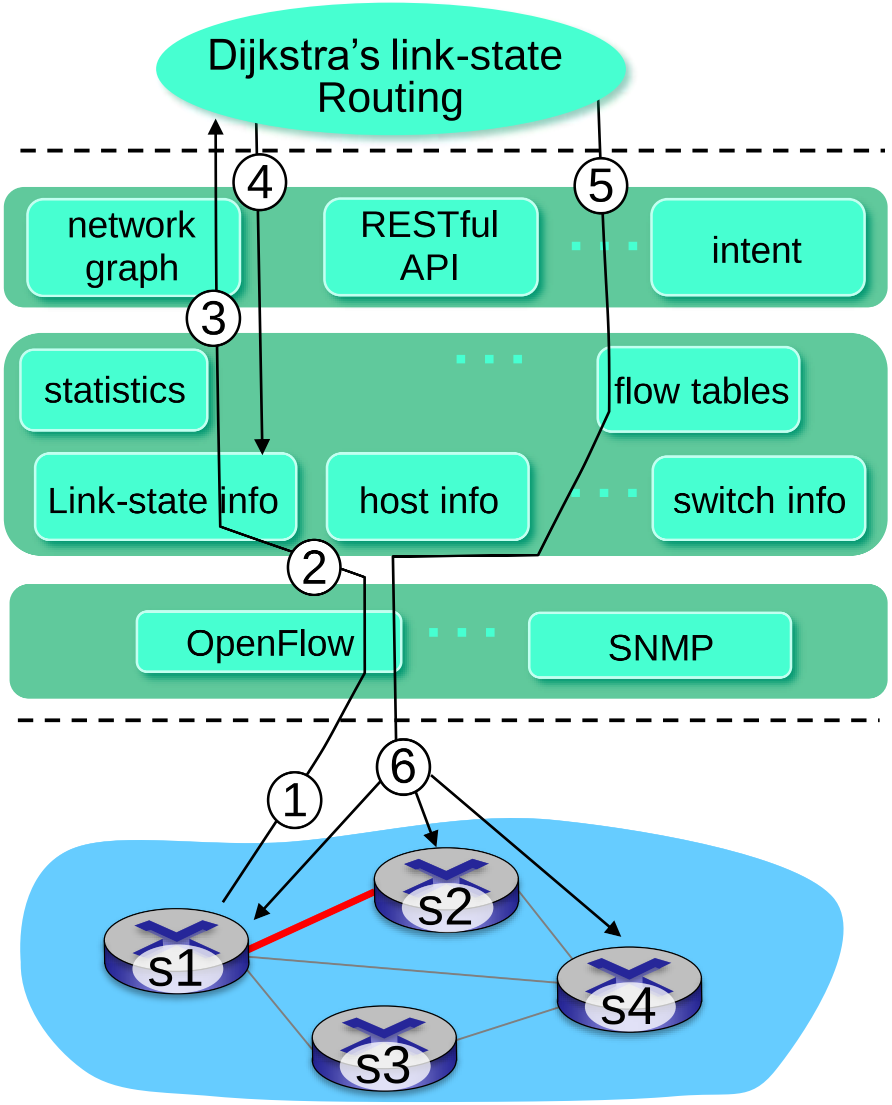
① S1, experiencing link failure using OpenFlow port status message to notify controller

② SDN controller receives OpenFlow message, updates link status info

③ Dijkstra's routing algorithm application has previously registered to be called when ever link status changes. It is called.

④ Dijkstra's routing algorithm access network graph info, link state info in controller, computes new routes

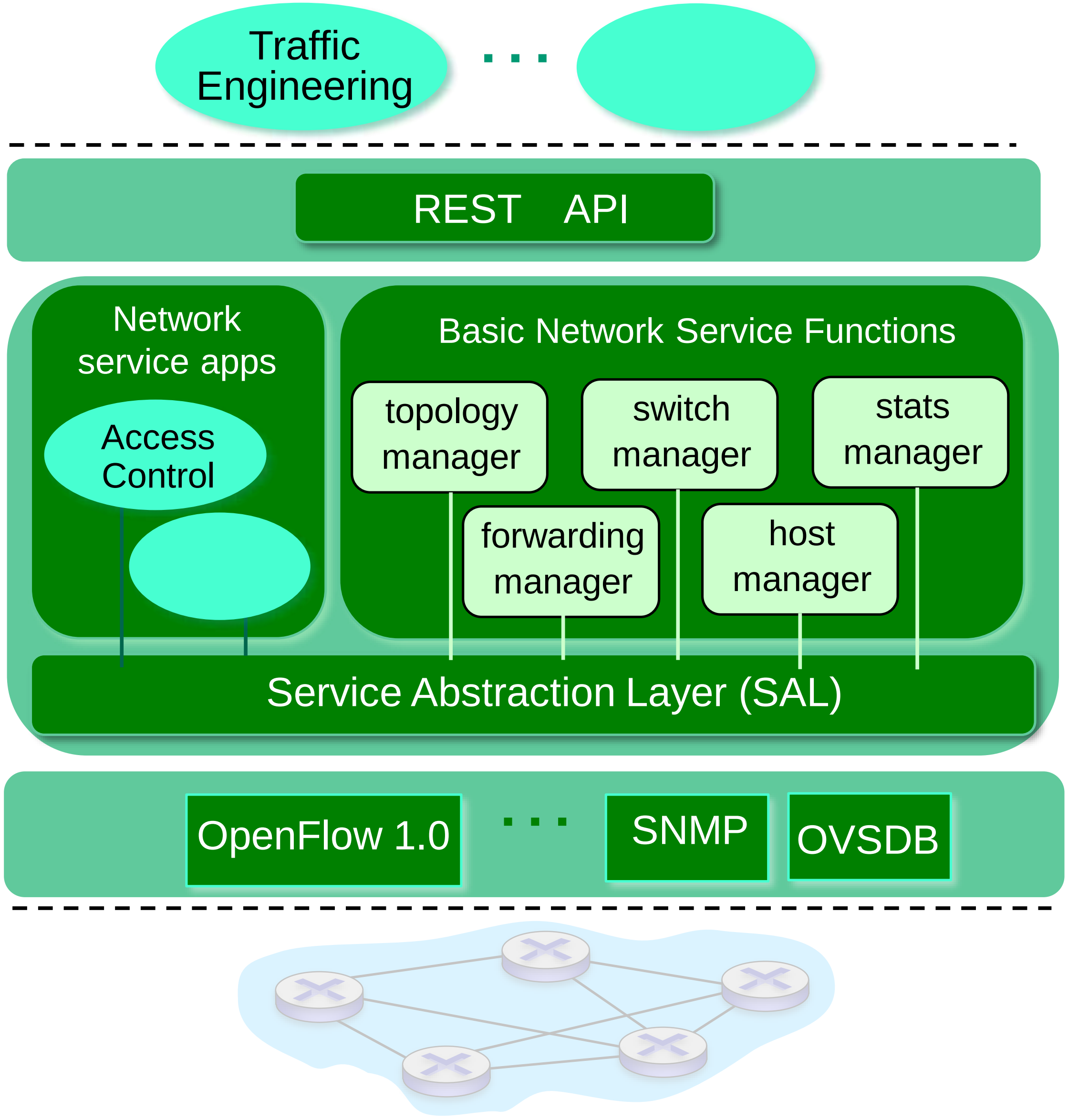
SDN: control/data plane interaction example



⑤ link state routing app interacts with flow-table-computation component in SDN controller, which computes new flow tables needed

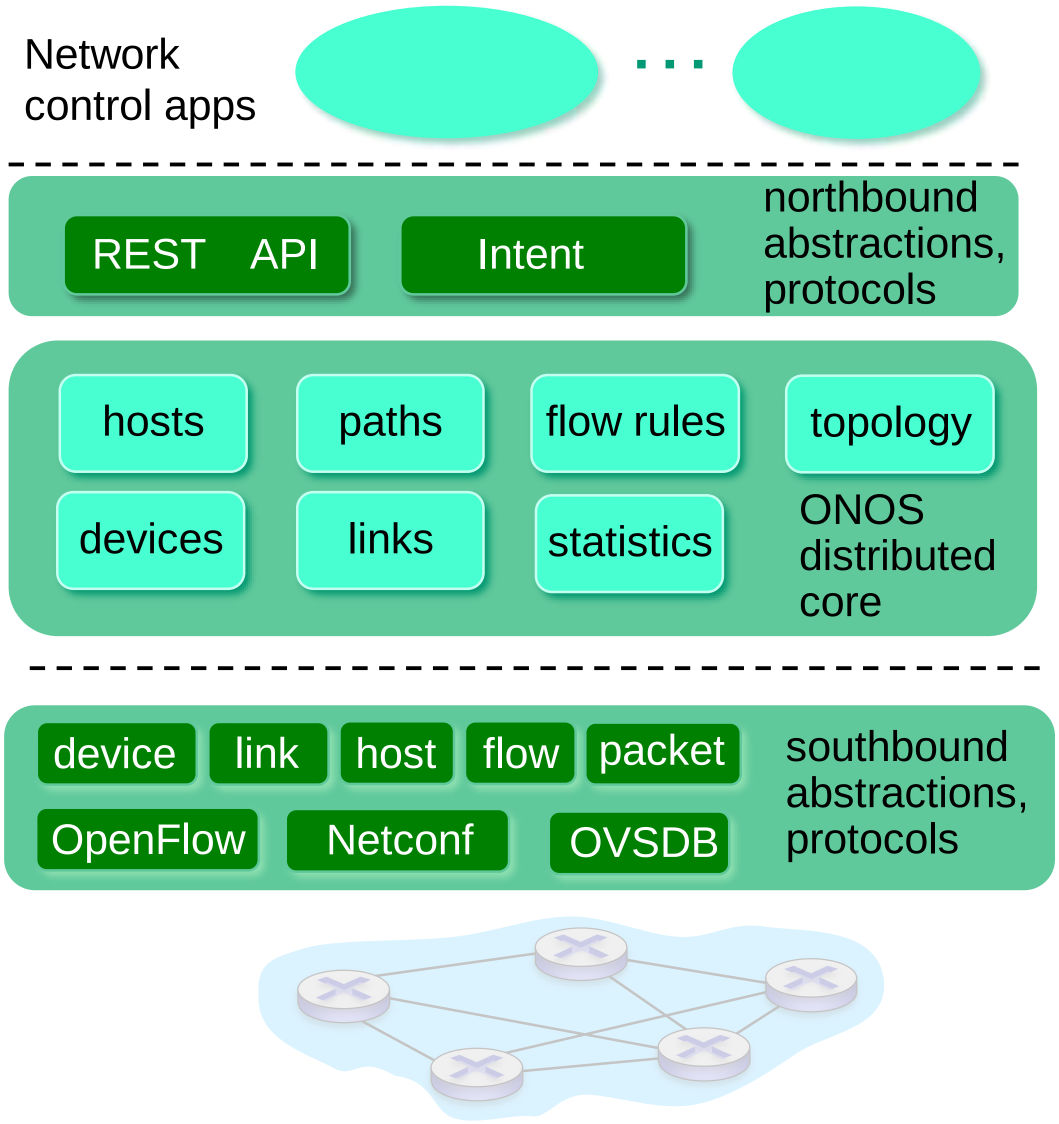
⑥ Controller uses OpenFlow to install new tables in switches that need updating

OpenDaylight (ODL) controller



- ODL Lithium controller
- network apps may be contained within, or be external to SDN controller
- Service Abstraction Layer: interconnects internal, external applications and services

ONOS controller



Network control apps

. . .

REST API

Intent

northbound abstractions, protocols

hosts

paths

flow rules

topology

devices

links

statistics

ONOS distributed core

device

link

host

flow

packet

OpenFlow

Netconf

OVSDB

southbound abstractions, protocols

- control apps separate from controller
- intent framework: high-level specification of service: *what* rather than *how*
- considerable emphasis on distributed core: service reliability, replication performance scaling