

JW4158-Info8590-22S-Portfolio-1

John White

6714158

INFO8590

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## Lab 1- Introduction To Packet Tracer

### Description

The purpose of this lab was to serve as an introduction to Packet Tracer. We did this by enrolling in Cisco's Packet Tracer course and following the instructions in Chapter 2 to build a simple network in Packet Tracer in which multiple end users can contact a remote server via the internet. This configuration can be viewed in Figure 1-1.

### Preparation

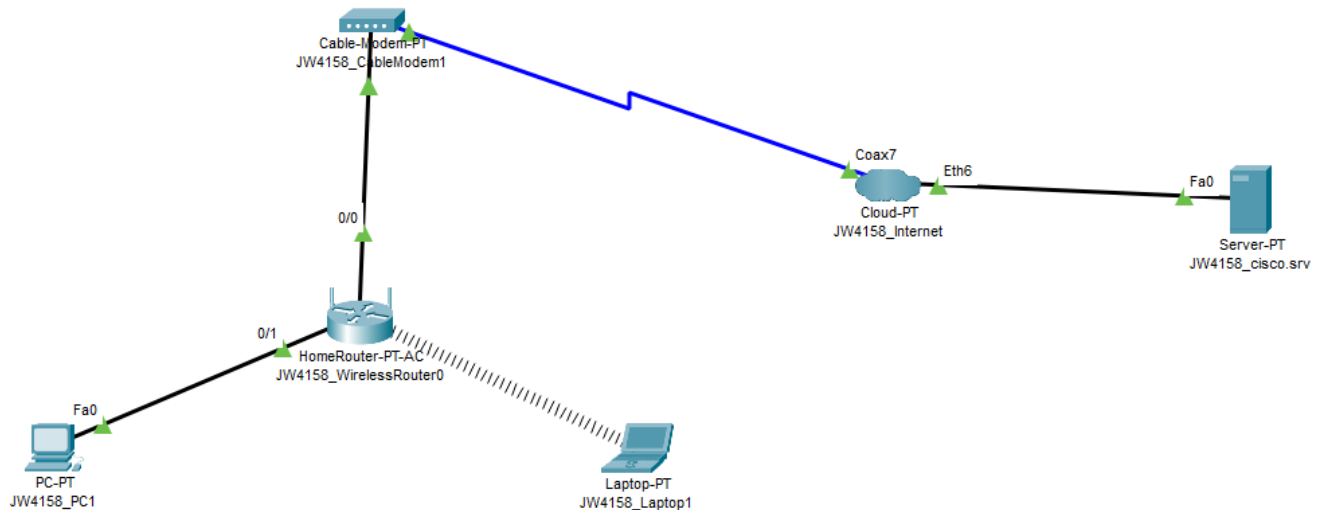
Visit <https://www.netacad.com/courses/packet-tracer> and enroll in the Packet Tracer course. Download Packet Tracer and install it. Go to Chapter 2 and download the exercise titled "Create a Simple Network". The file will be called 2.1.1-packet-tracer-create-a-simple-network.pka. Copy the configuration for the wireless router, Cloud-PT, and Server-PT that is already in the .pka file and follow the instructions in the file as well. Once this is done, the network should be built and both the PC and the Desktop should be able to contact the Server-PT.

### Observations

During this lab, the largest problem that I ran into was related to Cisco's Skills for All website<sup>1</sup> which is required to access the Packet Tracer course as well as the Packet Tracer download. The website would function normally until I logged in, after which the page would load indefinitely. I tried to clear my cache, use another browser, use another computer, and use another account but the solution that worked for me was to go to someone else's house and use their internet. The router at my house may have an unusual configuration that is not recognized by some of Cisco's servers, but the true cause is unclear to me at this time.

Other than that, the configurations and instructions provided should be sufficient given that they are followed correctly. I personally found it helpful to go into Options > Preferences and under the Interface tab, enable "Show Device Model Labels" and "Always Show Port Labels in Logical Workspace". An experienced user of Packet Tracer may want to keep these disabled to reduce clutter on the screen. As a new user, I find these labels helpful to keep track of things.

## Screenshots



*Figure 1-1 - Configuration diagram of the completed network.*

## Reflection

After completing the brief introduction to Packet Tracer, it is fair to say that this software is very useful and easy to understand for beginners, especially considering the fact that it is free. Packet Tracer allows the user to simulate a network environment by adding virtual network devices to a diagram and connecting them using cables. These virtual devices function like real computers and the user can also customize the hardware of these machines and configure their software. This allows for the fast and cheap creation of network simulations or network diagrams, as well as the sharing of these configurations in a single file, making Packet Tracer extremely useful for educational or design purposes. Packet Tracer could also be used to rapidly test changes made to a network in order to find out if the configuration is valid or not. When a connection between devices is being made, Packet Tracer shows the traffic as it is occurring and can even be paused or be made to travel at different speeds. This offers a level of flexibility that is very useful for a beginner and is not possible using real network setups.

The physical mode is very useful in Packet Tracer as well. For each network device, the user can view the device in Physical mode which shows the ethernet ports, network cards, cabling, etc. of the device. Physically experimenting with this networking hardware in real life would be extremely time-consuming and also incredibly expensive. This allows people to experiment with physical hardware for free which is great. It also allows the users to get familiar with the technical names of all of the different network devices and hardware.

## Lab 2- Inspecting TCP/IP Traffic

### Description

The purpose of this lab was to give us a brief introduction to the use of Wireshark and to get us to understand what kind of information can be gathered with it. We did this by connecting to the Apache Foundation website<sup>2</sup> while using Wireshark to monitor the traffic on our network.

### Preparation

Go to <https://wireshark.org/download.html>. Download and install Wireshark. Ensure that your current web browser is configured so that it does not automatically correct HTTP addresses to HTTPS or we will not be able to view the information we desire in Wireshark. This can be done by using Microsoft Edge. Using Microsoft Edge, navigate to `edge://flags`. Search for the flag "Automatic HTTPS" and disable it. We are now ready to begin the lab.

### Observations

To conduct the lab, begin capturing traffic on your network using Wireshark. Using your web browser, navigate to <http://apache.org/?4158>. Once the website finishes loading, stop the Wireshark capture. We can now go through the data. To view the 2 packets we captured, filter the packets by http using the bar at the top in Wireshark. The first packet is the one that we sent to apache.org and the 2<sup>nd</sup> packet is the data that was sent back to us.

If the HTTP packets can not be found and you are sure that Wireshark is capturing on the right network, a likely problem is that we are visiting the website via HTTPS instead of HTTP. Wireshark automatically filters out HTTPS traffic by default and even if we could view it, it would be encrypted so we could not view the data easily. Some browsers may not be able to disable this feature so keep this in mind when carrying out this lab.

After reviewing all of the packets filtered by DNS, I noticed some web traffic that had URLs that I did not recognize. After looking these up, I think they may be related to adware on my computer that I had not noticed. This is outside the scope of this lab but I thought it would be worthy to note here.

## Screenshots

Figure 2-1 shows a Cisco Packet Tracer interface with a packet capture of an HTTP GET request. The left pane displays the packet list and details for packet 773, which is a GET request to `http://www.apache.org/4158`. The right pane shows the packet bytes and hex view. The 'Hypertext Transfer Protocol' section is highlighted in blue on the right, showing the full request URI and various headers.

Figure 2-1 – Date and time as reported by the webserver (highlighted in grey on the left) and the User Agent as reported by the webserver (highlighted in blue on the right).

Figure 2-2 shows a web browser window displaying the Apache Software Foundation website. The browser's developer tools are open, showing the 'Referer' header in the request headers, which indicates the source of the request. The website content includes the Apache logo, navigation links, and a section titled 'THE WORLD'S LARGEST OPEN SOURCE FOUNDATION'.

Figure 2-2 – The website Referrer can be found via our web browser, but this information cannot be found on wire shark.

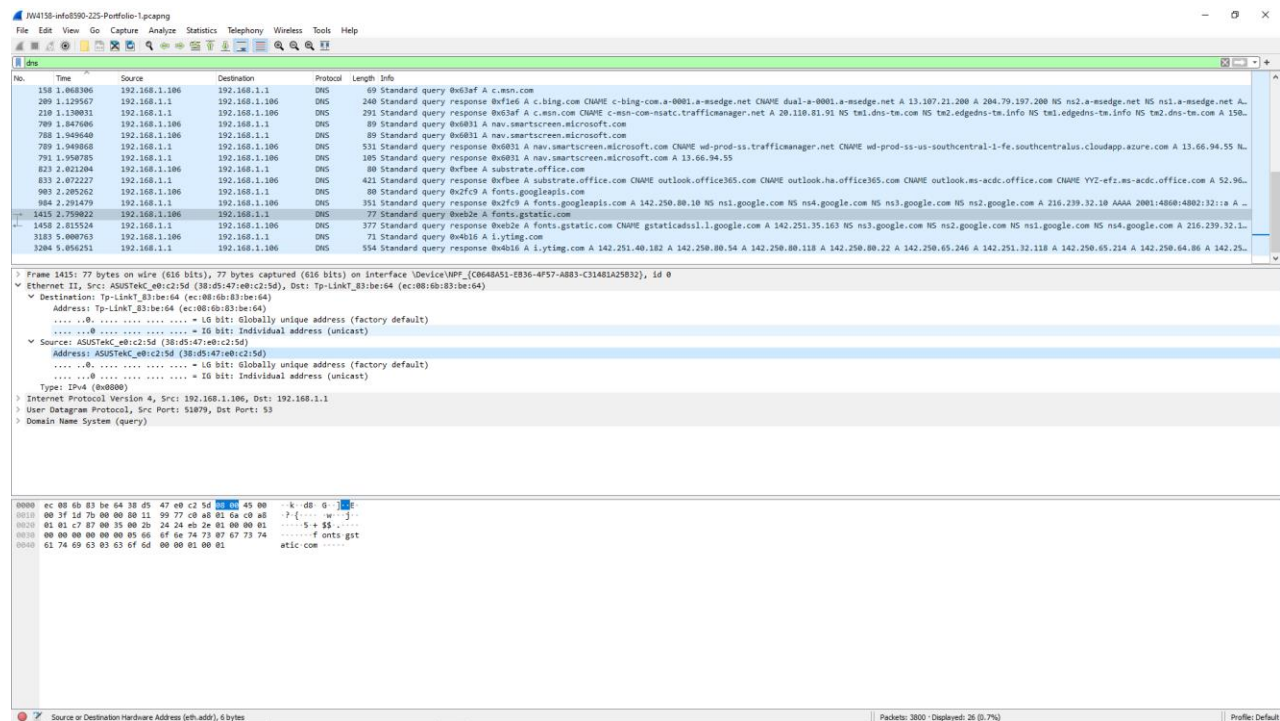


Figure 2-3 – The IP address and MAC address of the user’s network card can be easily viewed by someone monitoring the network using Wireshark if they filter for DNS traffic.

## Reflection

If we review the data that we gathered from those 2 packets, we can come to a number of interesting conclusions. In Figure 2-1, we can see that the first packet we captured (the outgoing packet) contains the User-Agent data. This can be used to determine the web browser that was being used (in our case, Microsoft Edge, visible at the end of the string) as well as the operating system we used (Windows x64). To find the date and time as reported by the webserver, we must view the data that was sent back to our computer from Apache.org. This is the 2<sup>nd</sup> packet and in our case we can see that the server reports it was contacted at 18:30:31 GMT on June 1, 2022. It is not possible for us to view the Referer using Wireshark because that information was not sent on our network. There is a Referer visible via our web browser as shown in Figure 2-2 because there was a referral made between YouTube and Apache but our network was not involved.

If one was to visit a coffee shop and connect to the free Wi-Fi there, another user on the network could view important information about your device if they captured DNS traffic from your device using Wireshark. DNS means Domain Name Service and consists of multiple servers that officiate which devices and networks are assigned which IP addresses. This is required for internet access. Because all devices have many applications that require the internet, your device is constantly contacting DNS servers in order to acquire or renew its IP address. By looking at this traffic, we can easily see the source of the traffic to find the IP address of the user, or we can look at MAC address of the user’s network card. This can be seen in Figure 2-3.

This information could be used to attack the user's device directly rather than just for monitoring purposes, making this information dangerous to reveal. I believe the solution to this problem is to control the traffic that can come into your device with a firewall. Because the information needs to be accessible by DNS servers, there is no way for us to encrypt it so our best bet is to block the traffic from the malicious user. By configuring the firewall on our device so that it allows DNS traffic in and out while blocking by default the traffic that we don't explicitly allow through, we can allow our device to maintain its DNS connection without putting our security at risk.

## References

1. Cisco. (2022, Jun. 1). Skills for All website. – <https://skillsforall.com>
2. Apache Foundation. (2022, Jun. 1). Apache Foundation website - <http://Apache.org>