

Task 6.3HD

Task 6.3HD conducting research on QUIC and prepare a tutorial

Introduction

The internet environment is always changing, requiring communication protocols that are quicker and more dependable. A new transport protocol called QUIC (Quick UDP Internet Connections) is introduced with the goal of addressing TCP's (Transmission Control Protocol) shortcomings in the context of the current web. In-depth analysis of QUIC's features, benefits, security implications, and scalability is provided in this research. It also looks at utilizing the network protocol analyzer Wireshark to examine QUIC traffic.



Background

TCP, the internet's workhorse nowadays, provides dependable in-order packet delivery. But TCP can cause delay problems since it requires a three-way handshake and can be blocked by head-of-line (HoL) traffic, especially when real-time applications and crowded networks are involved.

What is QUIC?

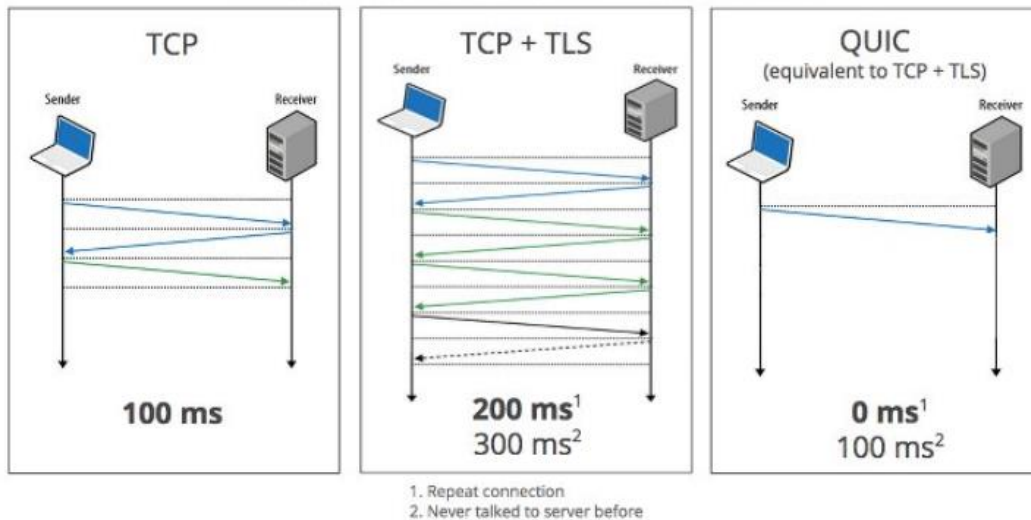
Google created QUIC, an UDP-based transport protocol that improves upon TCP's drawbacks. QUIC uses UDP to enable faster, connectionless data transport as opposed to TCP. On the other hand, QUIC simplifies communication by integrating features like encryption, dependability measures, and congestion control directly into the protocol, building upon UDP.



Functionalities of QUIC

- **Multiplexing:** QUIC enables the simultaneous transmission of several data streams (requests and responses) over a single connection. By doing this, HoL (Head-of-line) blocking is removed, which enhances efficiency for apps that frequently transfer little amounts of data.
- **Reduced Latency:** QUIC connects more quickly and facilitates faster data flow by doing away with the three-way handshake that TCP requires.
- **Better Congestion Control:** To achieve the best data transfer speeds, QUIC uses dynamic congestion control algorithms that adjust to the network's circumstances.
- **Connection-Oriented Approach:** QUIC is based on UDP, but it functions similarly to TCP in terms of connections, guaranteeing dependable data transfer through features like acknowledgement packets and retransmissions.
- **Integral Security:** TLS 1.3 is used by QUIC to provide secure communication, encrypting data streams and guarding against manipulation and eavesdropping.

Zero RTT Connection Establishment



Frame Formats in QUIC

QUIC establishes a unique frame format for data interchange. These frames contain data regarding:

- **Streams:** For multiplexing and autonomous management, data is divided into streams.
- **Acknowledgments:** If more transmission is required, acknowledgements verify that the data packet was successfully received.
- **Connection management:** Establishing, ending, and controlling the flow of connections are all handled by frames.
- **Application Data:** The real application data being transferred is contained in these frames.



Long Header

Header Form	Fixed Bit	Long Packet Type	Type Specific bits	Version ID	DCID Len	DCID	SCID Len	SCID
1 bit	1 bit	2 bits	4 bits	32 bits	8 bits	0-160 bits	8 bits	0-160 bits

Short Header

Header Form	Fixed Bit	Spin bits	Reserved	Key Phase	P	DCID	Packet Number	Protected payload
1 bit	1 bit	1 bit	2bits	1 bit	2 bits	160 bits	P+8 bits	

Frames with a QUIC header, which can be short or long, make up QUIC packets. The short header is used after the initial connection has been made, but the long header is used before that. Twelve octets make up the short header and twenty octets make up the long header.

The following are additional elements of a QUIC packet:

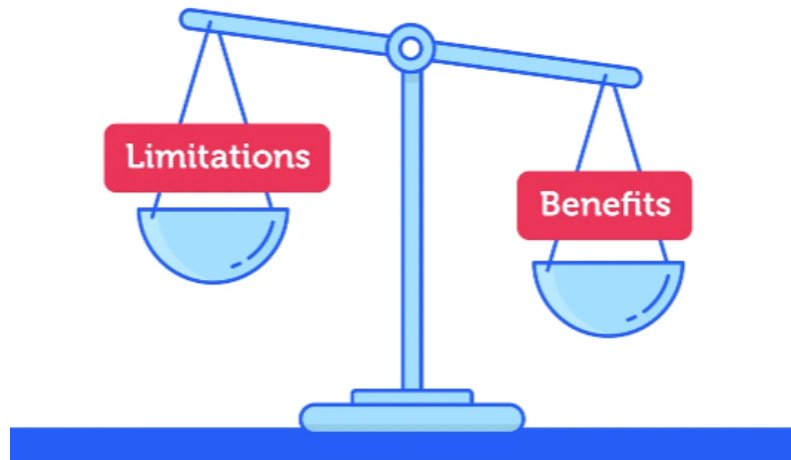
- **Header Format (HF):** Determines the type of header
- **CID (Connection Identifier):** prevents packets for a QUIC connection from being sent to the incorrect endpoint.
- **Packet Number:** Defines the cryptographic nonce used to safeguard packets.

Additionally, PADDING frames—which have no semantic significance but can be used to enlarge a packet—can be included in QUIC packets.

Advantages of QUIC over TCP

- **Decreased Latency:** Lower total latency is the result of quicker connection formation and better handling of packet loss.
- **Better Congestion Control:** Data transport efficiency is maximized through dynamic adaptability to network conditions.
- **Security:** TLS 1.3's built-in encryption improves communication security.
- **Multiplexing:** Makes it possible to handle multiple concurrent data streams effectively.

QUIC

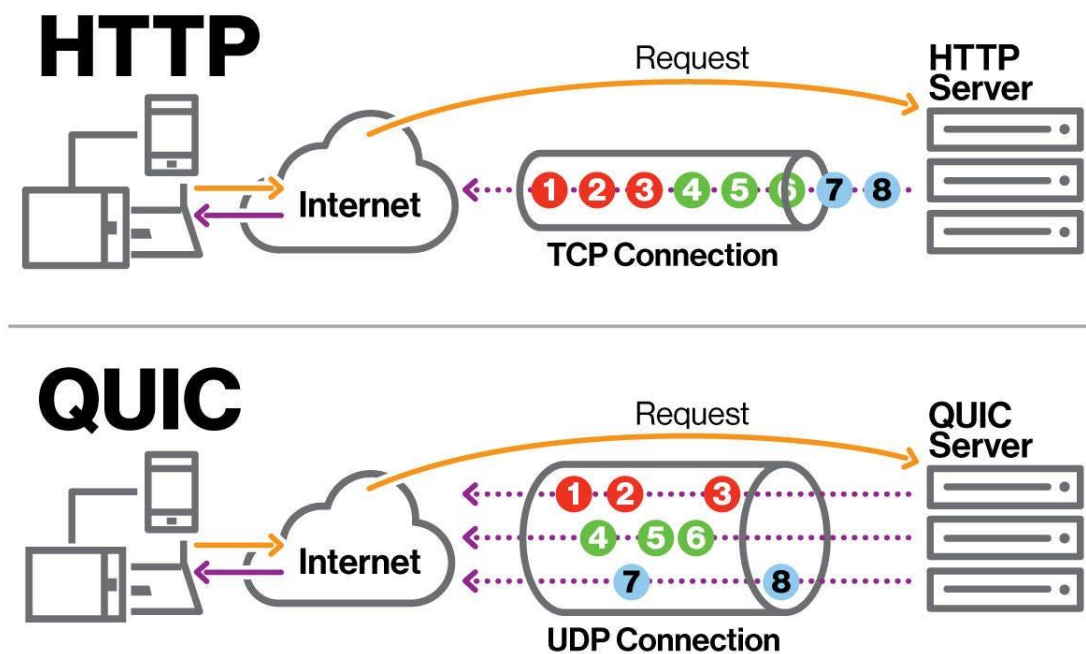


Disadvantages of QUIC

- **Complexity:** May cause compatibility problems because QUIC communication requires server and client support.
- **New Technology:** More recent technology is still being developed, but it has the potential to alter in the future and continues to be improved.
- **No Packet inspection:** No examination of the packet Because QUIC traffic cannot be decrypted by network firewalls in order to inspect packets, potentially harmful traffic may enter the network undetected by conventional security measures. Due to the assumption that QUIC packets on ports 80 (web server) and 443 (TLS) could contain malware, security vendors like Cisco and Palo Alto Networks regularly block them, forcing clients to revert to using HTTP/2 and TCP protocols.
- **Fingerprinting could be easier:** The possibility that malicious actors could intercept Internet users' packets as they travel between websites and utilize the observable packets to create unique patterns that link to particular websites is a recent worry that is currently being looked into. Web fingerprinting is what this is known as, and it appears that early in the connection traffic phase, TCP+HTTPS are more resilient to it.

Network Applications using QUIC

- **HTTP/3:** The most recent iteration of HTTP makes use of QUIC to speed up web browsing, which is especially apparent when fetching images or other small amounts of data often.
- **Streaming Services:** QUIC's lower latency allows for smoother video streaming on websites like YouTube.
- **Real-time Applications:** QUIC's decreased latency and faster data transfer can improve the performance of applications like online gaming and video conferencing.



Security Threats and Mitigation Strategies in QUIC

Even with encryption, QUIC can still be vulnerable to several security risks:

- **Attacks known as denial-of-service (DoS):** Because QUIC relies heavily on connections, it is prone to denial-of-service assaults. The key components of mitigation are resource protection and server-side rate limitation.
- **Middlebox Problems:** Potential disruptions may arise from firewalls and intrusion detection systems (IDS) that are not optimized for QUIC. For a seamless integration, compatibility tests and configuration adjustments are required.

Scalability of QUIC

QUIC enables servers to successfully manage many client connections by providing the efficient management of multiple connections through multiplexing. This enhances web applications with large traffic's scalability.

Analyzing QUIC with Wireshark

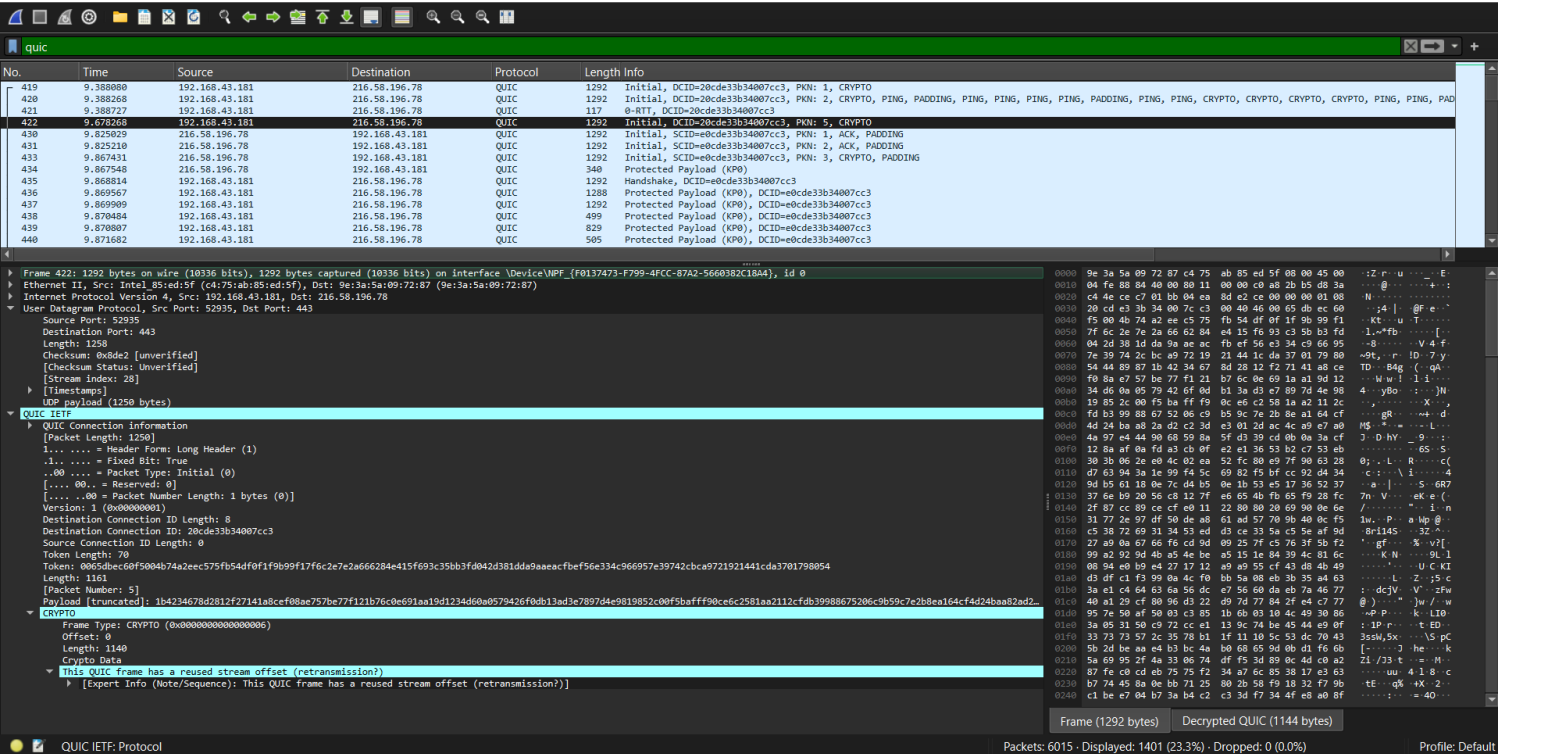
First Packet Transmission: Application data and connection establishment data are frequently carried in parallel with the first QUIC packet. When opposed to TCP, where separate packets are utilized for data transport and handshake, this lowers overall latency.

QUIC Specific Parameters: To distinguish QUIC traffic from other protocols, you will encounter parameters such as QUIC version, stream IDs (identifiers for specific data streams within the connection), and connection IDs (a unique identifier for the QUIC connection). You can learn more about the behavior and structure of the QUIC communication by examining these parameters.

QUIC encrypts the payload of most messages after the initial handshake for security. Wireshark, by default, cannot decrypt this data without the necessary keys.

The initial packet typically contains some unencrypted information like connection IDs and possibly some transport parameters."

The "protected messages" you see likely refer to QUIC packets after the initial handshake. These packets are encrypted and will appear unreadable in Wireshark.



Wireshark interface showing a QUIC packet capture. The packet list on the left shows a QUIC packet (No. 419) from 192.168.43.181 to 216.58.196.78. The packet details pane shows the QUIC IETF protocol structure, including the QUIC Connection Information, Packet Length (1250), and the QUIC IETF payload (1250 bytes). The packet bytes pane displays the raw packet data in hexadecimal and ASCII.

Wireshark interface showing a QUIC packet capture. The packet list on the left shows a QUIC packet (No. 419) from 192.168.43.181 to 216.58.196.78. The packet details pane shows the QUIC IETF protocol structure, including the QUIC Connection Information, Packet Length (1250), and the QUIC IETF payload (1250 bytes). The packet bytes pane displays the raw packet data in hexadecimal and ASCII.

Wireshark packet capture showing QUIC traffic. The top pane displays a list of packets, with packet 433 selected. The middle pane shows the details of the selected packet, including the QUIC IETF section. The bottom pane displays the raw packet data in hexadecimal and ASCII.

Packet 433: 1292 bytes on wire (10336 bits), 1292 bytes captured (10336 bits) on interface Device\NPF_{F0137473-F799-4FC2-87A2-5660382C18A4}, id 0

Ethernet II, Src: 9e13a15a:09:72:87 (9e13a15a:09:72:87), Dst: Intel 85:ed:5f (c4:75:ab:85:ed:5f)

Internet Protocol Version 4, Src: 216.58.196.78, Dst: 192.168.43.181

User Datagram Protocol, Src Port: 443, Dst Port: 52935

Source Port: 443
Destination Port: 52935
Length: 1258
Checksum: 0x671c [unverified]
[Checksum Status: Unverified]
[Stream Index: 28]
[Timestamps]
UDP payload (1250 bytes)

QUIC IETF
[Connection Information]
[Packet Length: 1250]
1. = Header Form: Long Header (1)
1. = Fixed Bit: True
..00 = Packet Type: Initial (0)
[... 00. = Reserved: 0]
..00 = Packet Number Length: 1 bytes (0)
Version: 1 (0x00000001)
Destination Connection ID Length: 0
Source Connection ID Length: 8
Source Connection ID: e8cde33b34007cc3
Token Length: 0
[Packet Number: 3]
Payload [truncated]: e51b4861b293052856a9f41acc598c3918026524b3021cc2d239a271390f4852cb7092e13ec40241b1b4d0af3dcf8e9d53a121380cad8c8b641b1f523e8b1ad82f4f662239c022a88d1e2b92d1cf250

CRYPTO
Frame Type: CRYPTO (0x0000000000000000)
Offset: 0
Length: 1184
Crypto Data
TLV1.3 Record Layer: Handshake Protocol: Server Hello
Frame Type: PADDING (0x0000000000000000)
[Padding Length: 27]

Frame (1292 bytes) Decrypted QUIC (1215 bytes)

Packets: 6015 · Displayed: 1401 (23.3%) · Dropped: 0 (0.0%) Profile: Default

Wireshark packet capture showing QUIC traffic. The top pane displays a list of packets, with packet 434 selected. The middle pane shows the details of the selected packet, including the QUIC IETF section. The bottom pane displays the raw packet data in hexadecimal and ASCII.

Packet 434: 1292 bytes on wire (10336 bits), 1292 bytes captured (10336 bits) on interface Device\NPF_{F0137473-F799-4FC2-87A2-5660382C18A4}, id 0

Ethernet II, Src: 9e13a15a:09:72:87 (9e13a15a:09:72:87), Dst: Intel 85:ed:5f (c4:75:ab:85:ed:5f)

Internet Protocol Version 4, Src: 216.58.196.78, Dst: 192.168.43.181

User Datagram Protocol, Src Port: 443, Dst Port: 52935

Source Port: 443
Destination Port: 52935
Length: 1258
Checksum: 0x671c [unverified]
[Checksum Status: Unverified]
[Stream Index: 28]
[Timestamps]
UDP payload (1250 bytes)

QUIC IETF
[Connection Information]
[Packet Length: 1250]
1. = Header Form: Long Header (1)
1. = Fixed Bit: True
..00 = Packet Type: Initial (0)
[... 00. = Reserved: 0]
..00 = Packet Number Length: 1 bytes (0)
Version: 1 (0x00000001)
Destination Connection ID Length: 0
Source Connection ID Length: 8
Source Connection ID: e8cde33b34007cc3
Token Length: 0
[Packet Number: 3]
Payload [truncated]: e51b4861b293052856a9f41acc598c3918026524b3021cc2d239a271390f4852cb7092e13ec40241b1b4d0af3dcf8e9d53a121380cad8c8b641b1f523e8b1ad82f4f662239c022a88d1e2b92d1cf250

CRYPTO
Frame Type: CRYPTO (0x0000000000000000)
Offset: 0
Length: 1184
Crypto Data
TLV1.3 Record Layer: Handshake Protocol: Server Hello
Frame Type: PADDING (0x0000000000000000)
[Padding Length: 27]

Frame (1292 bytes) Decrypted QUIC (1215 bytes)

Packets: 6015 · Displayed: 1401 (23.3%) · Dropped: 0 (0.0%) Profile: Default

You can find example captures with complete handshakes online or through tutorials like this one (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=59X0iRI3HwU>) and (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fHBUOlV53ts>) (notice it requires server-side decryption).

Future of QUIC

There is still research and development being done on QUIC. Here are a few possible avenues for future research:

- **Wider Adoption:** In order for QUIC to take the lead as the primary transport protocol, more server and client support is required.
- **Integration with Current Infrastructure:** To ensure a smooth integration, compatibility with current network infrastructure, such as firewalls and intrusion detection systems, must be taken care of.
- **Standardization:** The QUIC standard will be further defined and solidified by the IETF QUIC Working Group's ongoing efforts, guaranteeing uniform vendor implementation.



Conclusion

The conclusion emphasizes how much better online browsing could be with QUIC. Below is a summary of the main ideas and the reasons behind them:

- **Faster Connections:** The handshake procedure and data retransmission techniques of TCP, the currently popular protocol, might cause delays. Because QUIC is based on UDP, it can potentially result in faster loading times and more seamless web experiences by avoiding these delays.
- **Enhanced Congestion Management:** Online traffic bottlenecks also exist! Data transmission is governed by congestion control to prevent overstuffing networks. In instances where TCP is overloaded, QUIC's method is intended to be more effective, resulting in less buffering and more seamless data transfer.
- **Built-in Security:** QUIC has encryption built right in. Security is really important. This simplifies the procedure and might enhance performance by doing away with the requirement for an additional layer, such as TLS (Transport Layer Security), which is utilized with TCP.
- **Greater Adoption and Revolution:** The advantages of QUIC will expand as more servers and browsers integrate it. The way we engage with websites could be drastically altered by its widespread adoption, making them feel faster and more responsive.

Although QUIC has potential, it is still developing. It's crucial to remember that not all websites and browsers now support it. With its benefits, QUIC is anticipated to have a significant influence on how the internet develops in the future.



Recommendations for Further Exploration

For a deeper understanding of QUIC, consider exploring these resources:

IETF QUIC Working Group: <https://datatracker.ietf.org/wg/quic/about/>

A QUIC Tutorial: <https://www.debugbear.com/docs/website-monitoring-getting-started>

Wireshark QUIC Capture and Analysis: <https://www.wireshark.org/docs/dfref/q/quic.html>

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