Freie Universitat Berlin
Erasmus Program

10 ECTS

Telematics

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Winter Semester 2024-2025

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1 Basics

1.1 Network composition

A network consists of three elements:

- **End systems**: can vary in size and usage
- **Intermediate systems**: these (e.g. routers) are the components that allow the network to work.
- **Links**: they connect the end systems and can be *optical*, *copper* or *wireless*. Even if wireless is becoming more and more important, cables are still fundamental (undersea cables, underground cables).

Question 1.1.1 (Why fiber optic?)**.** Because this medium has not reached it's maximum and still has a huge potential of **bandwidth**. Also, while copper cable start acting as an **antenna** (and a receiver), disturbing near copper cable, fiber optic doesn't have this problem. Furthermore, copper cables need amplifiers which increase **latency**.

Question 1.1.2 (Why copper?)**.** It's **cheaper** and **easier** to handle.

Question 1.1.3 (Why cables over wireless?)**.** Because of **stability** and **latency**. Usually the problem is tampered by buffers but obviously it doesn't work with interactive applications.

Question 1.1.4 (What are threats to cable?)**.**

1.2 Communication principles

There are two basics principles:

- **Synchronous**: joint action of sender and receiver. Requires **waiting** until all parties are ready (e.g. phone calls)
- **Asynchronous**: sender and receiver operate decoupled (e.g. SMS, email). Requires **buffering**.

Note 1.2.0.1. There is also **isochronous**, which means the messages are sent every predetermined amount of time.

1.2.1 Direction

Communication channels may allow traffic flow in different directions:

- **Simple duplex**: one direction
- **Half-duplex**: both directions in different moments
- **Full-duplex**: both directions at the same time

1.2.2 Distribution

The communication distribution can happen in different ways:

- **Unicast**: one to one
- **Broadcast**: one to all
- **Multicast**: one to a subset
- **Anycast**: one to the nearest, e.g. when requesting to a redundant database you don't care which one responds
- **Concast**: many to one, e.g. we collect sensor data and send it to one
- **Geocast**: one to a certain region

Note 1.2.2.1. Even if multicast would be easier and cheaper, companies usually go for unicast because they want to know who the clients are.

Note 1.2.2.2. Broadcast guarantees anonymity while multicast does not.

1.2.3 Topologies

The main topologies are:

- **Full mesh**: too expensive
- **Chain**: in cars and trains
- **Star**: ideal for switches
- **Partial mesh**: the best compromise
- **Tree**: not ideal for big networks since if you cut a side, you lose contact

1.3 Sharing

1.3.1 Cons

Sharing may create a lot of problems, like **bottlenecks**: links and intermediate nodes are shared between end systems. One solution may be to *reroute* or to start *dropping packets* (e.g. when streaming the resolution lowers down).

1.3.2 Pros

At the same time, sharing means more efficient (less expensive) mechanism to **exchange data** between different components of distributed systems and **minimize blocking** due to multiplexing.

1.3.3 How?

There are two possible ways of sharing:

- **Reservation**: you reserve in advance the resource so that it is guaranteed, e.g. remote surgery. When the peak demand and the flow duration varies, there are two options:

  1. *First Come First Served*
  2. Everyone gets $10Mbps$

  It is implemented with **circuit-switching**: establishes dynamically a dedicated communication channel. It has predictable performance and a simple and fast switching but it's inefficient for bursty traffic, complex to setup and not easily adaptive to failures.

- **On-demand**: when there is a resource available you take it (variable *delay*, **jitter**), e.g. email. It is implemented with **packet-switching**: splitting the resource in packets and multiplex them. Much more flexible but requires buffers, packets overhead and has unpredictable performances.

Observation 1.3.1. It all depends on the application. Each flow has a **peak rate** and an **average rate**.To decide if *reservation* works well for a specific case, we must look at the ratio $\frac{P}{A}$. If it's small then it works well, otherwise it's wasting resources.

1.4 Internet

Internet is a network of networks. It enables processes on different hosts to exchange data: it's a bit delivery system.
ISPs enable you to access and use Internet services: well defined and commonly required functions. There are two roles: **client** and **server** that can be on different machine (or not, like with P2P).

Definition 1.4.1 (Internet)**.** *The set of all reachable parties (IP addresses).*

1.5 Protocols, layer and standards

Definition 1.5.1 (Digital Data Communication)**.** *Processing and transport of digital data between interconnected computers.*

Definition 1.5.2 (Data)**.** ***Representation*** *of facts, concepts and statement in a formal way which is suitable for communication, interpretation and processing by human beings or technical means.*

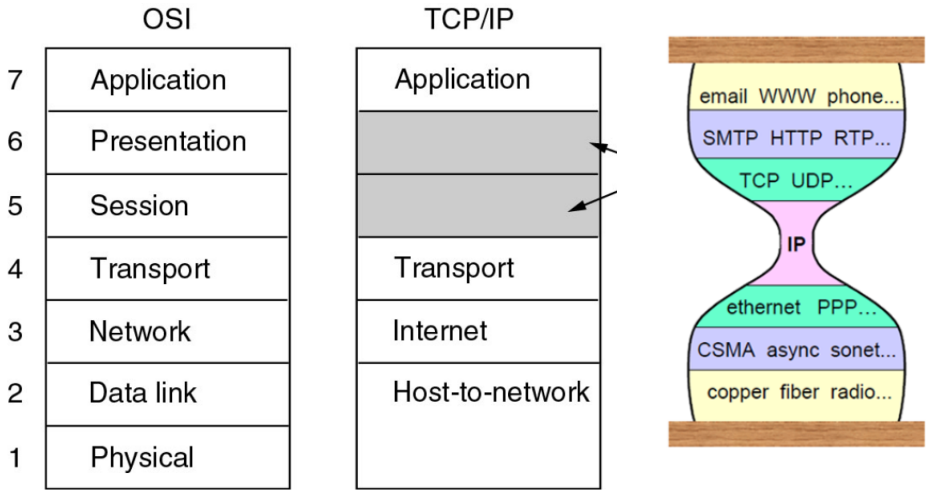
Note 1.5.0.1. **Information** is different from the data.

Definition 1.5.3 (Signal)**.** *A signal is the physical representation of data by spatial or timely variation of physical characteristics.*

In this context we need rules of communication for the different devices to communicate: we have heterogeneous computer architectures, network infrastructure and distributed application. A **protocol** is a conversational convention, consisting of syntax and semantic.

Definition 1.5.4 (Protocol)**.** *Protocols define format, order of messages sent and received among network entities, and actions taken on message transmission and receipt.*
A protocol is a set of ***unambiguous*** *specifications defining how processes communicate with one another through a connection (wire, radio etc.).*

To provide structure to the design of networks protocols, network designers organize protocols in **layers**. We use two models, either the ISO/OSI or the TCP/IP.



All the different layers need additional information, which is added via **headers** to the data payload via **encapsulation**. This could cause a lot of **overhead**.
All the protocols rely on the Internet Protocol. This maximizes **interoperability** and does not ensure anything, therefore no one has expectations.

1.6 Quality of service

To define the quality of communication we check:

- **Technical performance**: delay, jitter, throughput, data rate, etc.
- **Costs**
- **Reliability**: fault tolerance, system stability, immunity, availability
- **Security and Protection**: eavesdropping, authentication, denial of service, etc.

1.6.1 Latency

The main parameters we check are:

- **One-way delay**: measured in seconds

$$d_1 = t_1' - t_1 \tag{1}$$

- **Round-trip-time**: measured in seconds

$$r_1 = t_2 - t_1 \tag{2}$$

  It should also integrate the processing time of the other device.

1.6.2 Stability

The main parameter that measures stability is the **Jitter**. It's measured in seconds and calculated using the delay:

$$d_i = t_i' - t_i \qquad j_i = d_{i+1} - d_i \tag{3}$$

1.6.3 Capacity

From a capacity perspective, we measure the **throughput** in $\frac{bit}{s}$ as follows:

$$T = \frac{\sum \text{data}_i}{\Delta t} \tag{4}$$

The **goodput** instead, is the amount of **useful** throughput from a user perspective.

Note 1.6.3.1. **Bandwidth** is used for the description of the channel characteristics.

There is also the **Delay-Throughput-Produc** which measures how much data can be on the medium itself while traveling. E.g. with a connection of $1Mbps$ that has $200ms$ of delay we have

$$1Mbps \times 0.2s = 200kbit$$

2 DNS

2.1 Introduction

Names provide a level of abstraction from the IP address: for humans it's easier to remember. It also provides **load balancing** and easy **aliasing**.
The decision for DNS adding is handled by two organizations:

- **IETF**: how entries are entered and read from the phone book
- **ICANN**: how to decide *what* names should be entered in the phone book

To use naming you need two things:

- **Unique** names
- **Resolution** of names to locator (IP address) or other services

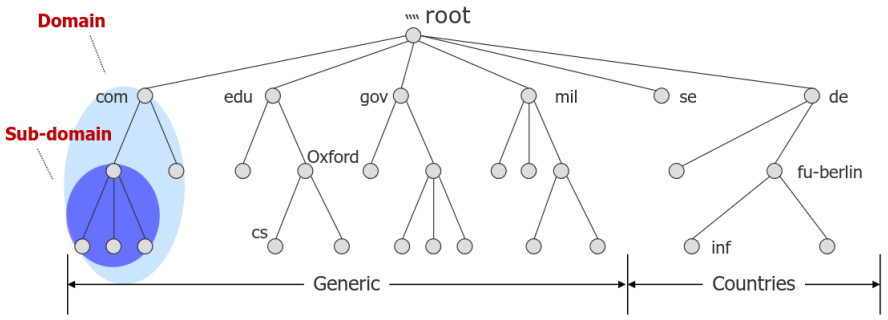
2.1.1 Scaling

To allow scaling, DNS uses **delegation** and **caching**. In particular for delegation, DNS adopts three intertwined **hierarchies**:

- **Name space**: hierarchy of names
- **Management**: hierarchy of authorities over names. Who owns which name part.
- **Infrastructure**: hierarchy of DNS server. Where is the mapping stored.

2.2 Namespace

DNS namespace is implemented as a tree structure: each node has a **label** which identifies it relatively to its parent node. Each node is **root** of a sub-tree (if it's not a leaf). In particular direct children of the root are called **Top Level Domains**. Each subtree represents a **domain** and each domain can be divided in **sub-domains**.



There is a limited number of TLDs: originally it was 7 plus one for each country. Now there are many more, even in non Latin alphabets.

2.2.1 Leafs

The name of a domain consists of a sequence of labels beginning with the root of the domain and going up to the root of the whole tree. Each label is separated by ".".
In the leaf nodes the IP addresses are associated with the names.
Furthermore, there could be **Domain Name Aliases**: pointers of one domain to another (Canonical Domain Name).

2.2.2 DNS Database

There are a few rules for the database:

- The **depth** of the tree is limited to 127
- Each label can have up to 63 characters
- The whole domain name has a maximum of 255 characters (even if the average is 10)
- A label of length 0 is reserved for the root

The full address to a host is the **Fully Qualified Domain Name**, which includes the leaf, each node and the root. The **Relative Domain Name** instead, is an incomplete domain name.

2.3 Management

The management of domain names also follows a hierarchy structure: **ICANN** manages the root domain and delegates someone (**DENIC** for Germany) to handle the *de* domain. They then delegate FUB to handle the *fu* domain. And so on.
This solution ensures that the names are unique.

2.4 Name servers and zones

2.4.1 Domains

Domains are administrative concepts managed by single organizations. The name of the domain corresponds to the name of the root node. They can delegate the responsibility for subdomains to other organizations but maintains the pointer to them to be able to forward requests.

2.4.2 Name servers and zones

On the other hand, name servers and zones are technical concepts. The name server is a process that maintains a database for a domain space. The part of the name space known to the server is called a **zone** and it's stored in a *zone file*. The name server may have multiple zones and has authority over them.

Primary Master It's a name server that must exist. Reads the data from a local file and has a database describing subdomains and computer in a selected zone.

Secondary Master It's optional and is a replication of the master for reliability reasons. It receives the data from another server which is authoritative.

2.5 Resolution

There are two types of Name Resolution:

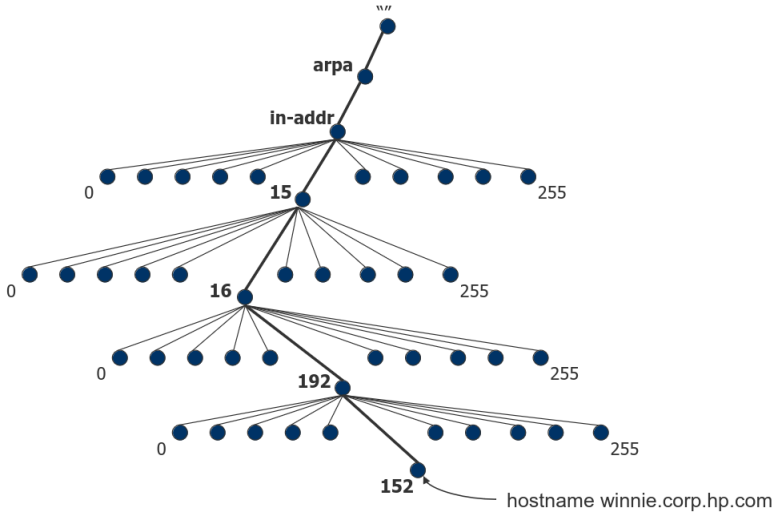
- **Recursive**: the name server replies either with the answer or with an error and it's responsible to contact the other nodes
- **Iterative**: a name server replies with the address of another one, it's the host duty to contact additional name servers for the answer

Question 2.5.1 (Why do root servers not support recursive solution?)**.** Using the recursive option implies that every intermediate needs to wait for all the others, depleting its resources.

Question 2.5.2 (How does this all contribute to scalability?)**.** We do not have **strong consistency** and

2.5.1 Reverse lookup

While mapping a name to a *global* IP address is simple, doing the other way round it's really difficult because we need to do a complete search of the tree.
Because of this, there is a special area in the database called **in-addr.arpa** that contains 256 sub domains, each one having 256 and so on.



Note 2.5.1.1. This is useful against **spoofing**: as an example if you get an email and you want to check if the sender is who claims to be, you can do a reverse lookup on the IP of the email server.

Question 2.5.3 (Why does reverse lookup not always work?)**.** Because the entries are not always present in the database.

2.6 Database entries

A **resource record** is the entry in the database to get the address or other information of a name. It's composed of a tuple:

```
(name, TTL, class, type, value)
```

TTL It's the Time To Live: after a certain amounts of seconds the record will be deleted from the cache and updated. With a shorter TTL you have a very updated cache while longer TTL means outdated caches but less requests for the server.

Type Indicates the type of data to be returned. **A** is the actual IPv4 address corresponding to the name (**AAAA** for IPv6).

Class Nowadays it's only **IN** but there were in the past other options for different networks with independent DNS zones.

Observation 2.6.1 (Load balancing)**.** DNS is very useful for load balancing: depending on the region when you ask for a DNS entry the answer will be the closest one. It can also be used for **evil purposes** (censorship, marketing).

2.6.1 Name Server

For each name server of a zone a **Name Server** record is created in the cache. E.g. when you want to visit *arnold.movie.edu* you may have in cache a NS entry for *movie.edu*.

2.6.2 CNAME

A **CN** record is an optional entry in the database that illustrates aliases on its canonical names.

2.6.3 Pointer

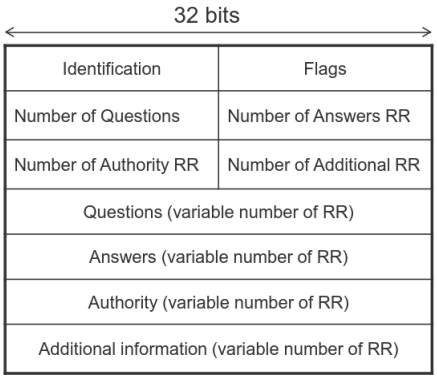
The **PTR** record provides information for the mapping of an address to names. If you do not have any entry for an IP address you then have to do a reverse lookup. Addresses should refer only to one name.

2.6.4 Mail Exchanger

The **MX** record serves for the controlling of the email routing. It specifies an email server responsible for a domain name with the option to indicate a preference if multiple servers are present (the smallest value is preferred).

2.7 Protocol

The resolver software triggers the resolution process and tries first for the cache. Then it sends the request to the local DNS server which is either static (resolv.conf) or dynamic (DHCP).
The protocol consists of a single packet used for inquiries and responses:



Identification 16*bits* for the mapping of an inquiry to a response.

Flags 16*bits* of various flags that indicate if the packet is a request or a response, if it's **authoritative** or not, if it's *iterative* or *recursive*.

Numbers These fields indicate the contained number of inquiries responses data records.

Questions Contains the names to be resolved.

Answers Resource records to the previous inquiry.

Authority Contains the ID of the passed responsible NS.

Additional information If the name searched is only an alias, the belonging resource record for the correct name is placed here.

The packet is sent through UDP on port 53 and the **reliability** is only implemented via repeating the requests. Also it is not protected.

2.8 Scalability

The scalability is achieved mainly with local caching of recent results. The cache can be in the network and also in the local client.
One of the main problem is how long should you keep the entries? You need to achieve both **consistency** and not doing too many requests. You also need to detect and flush the **stale entries**. You have to avoid **cache poisoning**: when a malicious person changes the value in the cache to redirect you to an evil software.

2.9 Extension

2.9.1 Dynamic DNS

The problem comes up when, as an example, you restart the router and your public IP address is changed (or maybe the ISP changes it every 24 hours). The DDNS allows you to tell the changed IP address.

2.9.2 Characters

The original DNS supports only ASCII, so there is an extension for UTF characters.

2.9.3 DNSSEC

The **security** is important because DNS is the most crucial indirection to access the data. Controlling DNS response implies controlling the discovery of the communication endpoints. It may be use in an evil way for political and economical reasons.