

Evaluating Web and Video Content Delivery over Google QUIC

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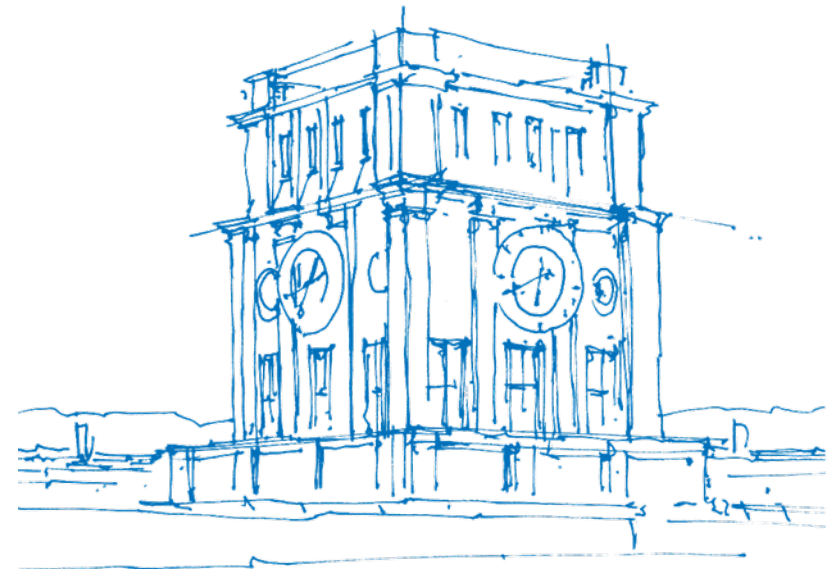
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Motivation

- Web latency and security are becoming more and more important.
- Middleboxes have caused a protocol ossification. Attempted extensions to TCP like TCP Fast Open[31], SCTP[39], Multipath TCP [15] have not seen widespread deployment.
- QUIC is a user-space transport protocol built on top of UDP. Also QUIC provides for authenticated, encrypted header and payload which avoids dependency on vendors and ISPs
- Google started work on QUIC in 2012.
- Faster development and deployment cycles. Already on Q044 version and accounts for more than 35% of Google's total egress traffic and 7% of global internet traffic.
- QUIC has been shown to reduce search latency by 8% for desktop users and 3.6% for mobile users.[24]
- An IETF working group has been formed to standardize QUIC which should lead to even greater adoption.

Goal and Approach

- Initial performance results from Google showed great gains but there is still a lack of repeatable studies.
- Rapid development cycle of QUIC means that many new features are introduced in each version of QUIC and support for older versions is dropped. So previous studies become obsoleted quickly.
- In this thesis we aim to evaluate the performance of QUIC(Q035, Q039, Q043, Q044) and compare it with TCP/TLS.
- To do this we conduct experiments on real Internet to investigate connection establishment time, Time to first byte, download time, YouTube QoE metrics, Throughput, fairness in competing flow scenarios and CPU utilization.

Goal and Approach

- **RQ1 : How do different versions of QUIC compare with each other and TCP/TLS 1.2 and TCP/TLS 1.3 on IPv4 and IPv6?**
- **RQ2 : How do the versions of QUIC compare with each other on different Autonomous Systems?**
- **RQ3 : How does throughput and CPU utilization of QUIC compare with TCP/TLS?**
- **RQ4 : Is QUIC fair towards TCP/TLS?**

Background

SPDY is the first attempt by Google to improve Web Latency.[36] HTTP/2 is the successor of SPDY protocol.

It has features like multiplexing requests over a single TCP connection, HTTP header compression, request prioritization, server push and server hint[3]

HTTP/2 suffers from the TCP head-of-line blocking issue.

Previous work [13][8][6][26] shows the improvements provided by SPDY and HTTP/2.

QUIC has many innovative features like Version Negotiation, 0-RTT connection establishment, Reduced head-of-line blocking, improved congestion control using packet pacing, Authenticated, encrypted header and payload, stream multiplexing, Connection-IDs, stream and connection level flow control, connection migration and resilience to NAT rebinding.[20]

Background

QUIC replaces most of the traditional HTTPS stack: TCP, TLS, HTTP/2.

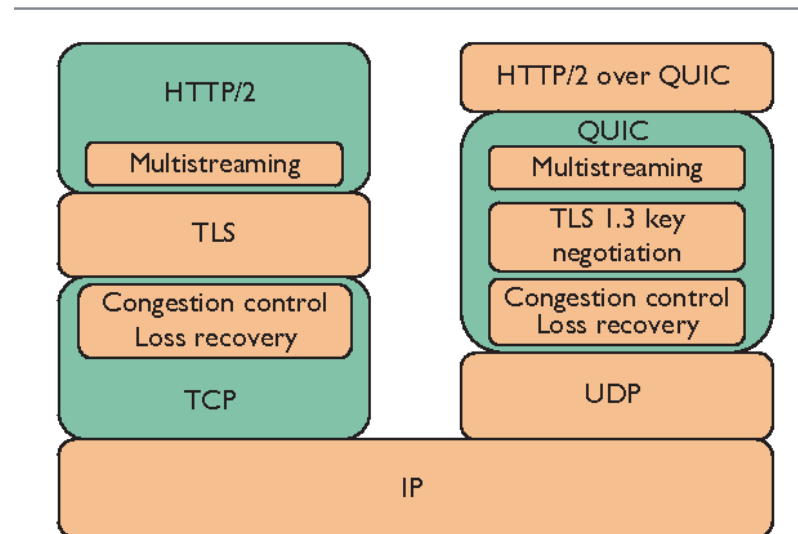


Figure: Layered QUIC architecture in the traditional HTTPS stack. QUIC incorporates features of congestion control, loss recovery similar to TCP, Multiple streams like HTTP2 and key negotiation like TLS.[10]

Connection Establishment[24][18][17]

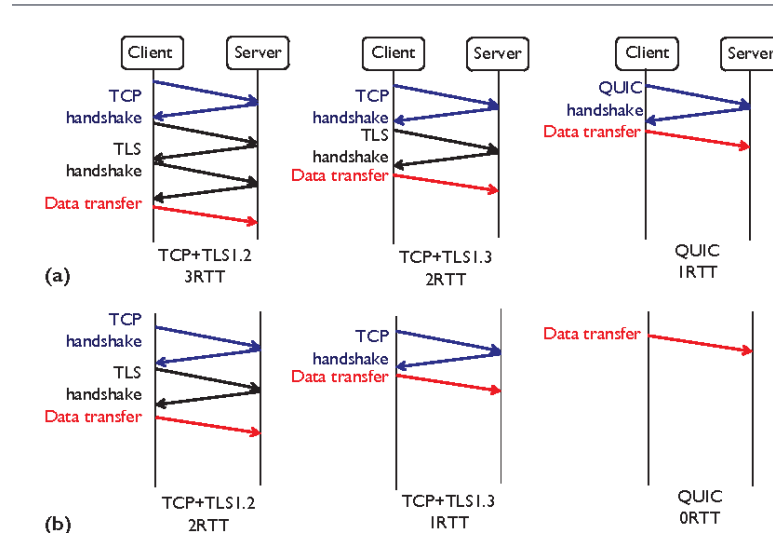


Figure: Handshake round-trip time (RTT) of different protocols. (a) First-time connection establishment. (b) Subsequent connections.[10]

Multiplexing

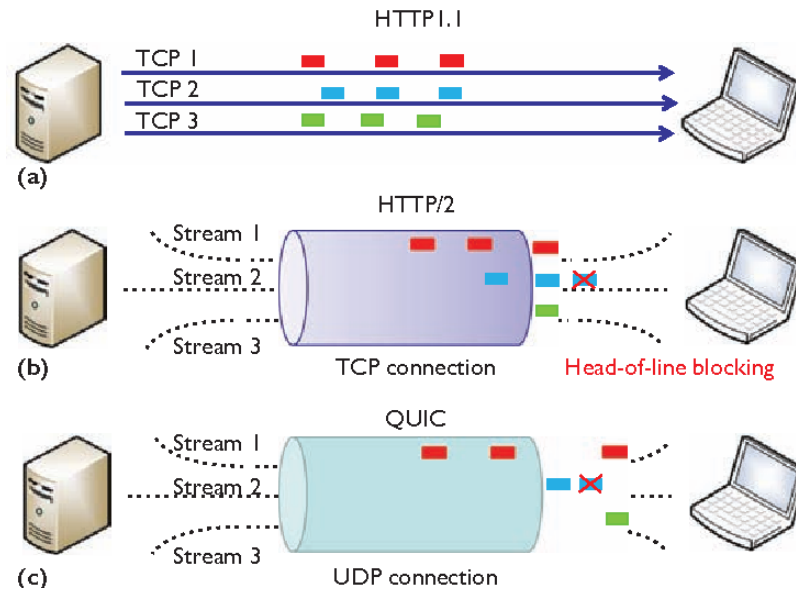


Figure: Multiplexing comparison. This involved sending multiple streams of data over a single transport connection using (a) HTTP1.1, (b) HTTP/2, and (c) QUIC.[10]

QUIC also supports multiple streams in a single connection but the packets can be delivered out of order and a lost packet affects only those streams whose data it carried, not affecting other streams.

Congestion Control + Packet Pacing

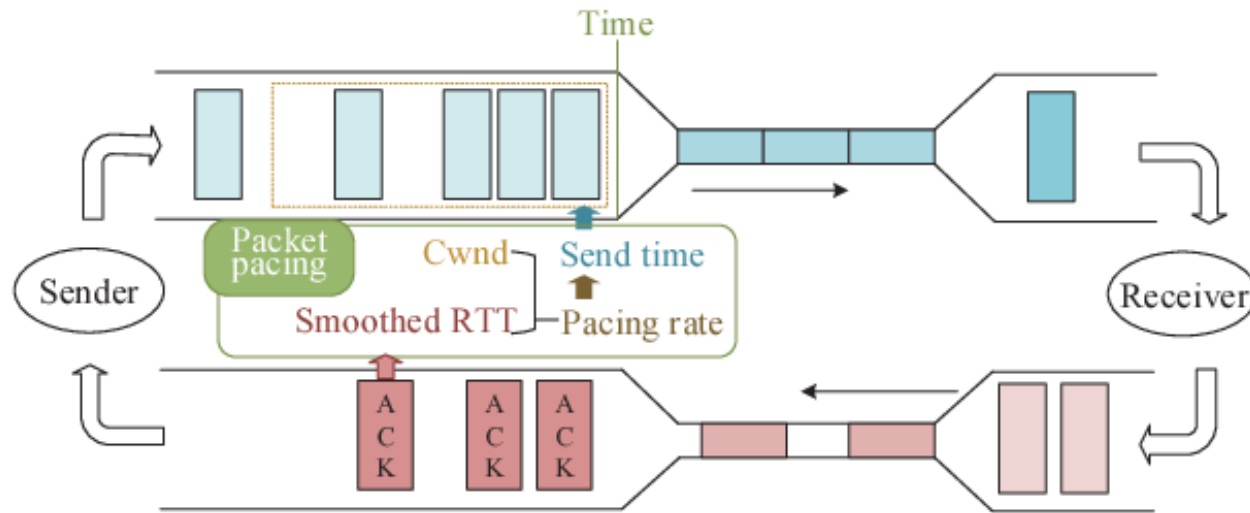


Figure: Packet Pacing [40]

Default congestion control algorithm is CUBIC[11] but differs from TCP CUBIC slightly.[18][19]. BBR is a new congestion control algorithm being developed by Google.[25]

Packet Pacing is done by inserting a waiting time between each UDP datagram (enabled by default)
This helps lower retransmission rate [1]

Prior Work

Langley et al. [24] discuss about motivations in various design decisions of QUIC, development and testing performed over various iterations, performance improvements. They provide us with the first large-scale measurements of QUIC across various versions.

Nepomuceno et al.[27], Cook et al.[7] look at page load time.

Li et al.[25], Kharat et al.[23], Qian et al. [29], Kakhki et al.[22] look at throughput, congestion control and fairness among flows.

Yu et al. [40] focused mainly on packet pacing mechanism for congestion control.

Saverimoutou et al.[35], Fischlin et al.[14] and Vaere et al.[37] look into the security aspects of QUIC.

Willem et al.[4] and Edeline et al. [12] look into how QUIC being built on top of UDP affects it.

Wang et al.[38] implement QUIC in the linux kernel and perform experiments to compare both in kernel mode.

Rüth et al.[33] look into QUIC usage in the wild.

Methodology

We look at metrics like connection establishment time(For QUIC this will be 1-RTT Handshake, for TCP/TLS1.3 2-RTT and for TCP/TLS1.2 3-RTT), time to first byte and page download time using `quic_perf` and `tls_perf`.

We analyze these metrics on AS level(announces prefix of our target websites) using RIPE Database.[32]

YouTube QoE metrics like Connect Time to media CDNs, Prebuffering time, Startup delay and Overall download rate using `YouTube tests`

Throughput and CPU utilization using `YouTube tests`, `quic_perf` and `tls_perf`.

CUBIC congestion control fairness in cases of competing flows by running the tests concurrently.

We use `perf` and `strace` to profile QUIC and explain its high CPU utilization.

We investigate QUIC Discovery using Alt-Svc Header

Methodology

Reused the `YouTube test` for TCP developed by S Ahsan et al.[2] which was modified to use QUIC by Sergey[28] and `tls_perf` and `quic_perf` by Bernhard[21]. Several additions and improvements were made to their tests like adding support for Q044, improving logging and error handling, adding HTTP/2 support.

Used the latest version of `litespeed lsquic client` and `Boringssl` library for QUIC implementation.

`libcurl` was used for TCP implementation.

For measurements over IETF QUIC we used the QUIC Tracker [16] test suite which supports QUIC(draft-17) and is also TLS1.3 compatible.

Created debian packages using `cpack` for easier deployment over Raspberry PI.

List of target websites for our measurements was taken from QUIC Research@COMSYS[30]

Top 50 most popular videos for a region were selected for measurements over YouTube and files of different sizes were uploaded to Google Drive for performance tests

Measurement Setup

Measurements were performed from 3 vantage Points.

We used the VM `vmott16.cm.in.tum.de` with linux OS. This machine has over 400 Mbits/s UDP connection speed with Microsoft Azure virtual server and 1.20 Gbits/s via TCP. It supported both IPv4 and IPv6.

We used a Raspberry Pi 3 Model B with 1 GB RAM and 32 GB microSDHC Card. This PI was installed at a residencial location connected to a LAN network run by the Leibniz-datacenter(LRZ). It was running on a 100 Mbits/s line.

Another Raspberry PI was installed in Bhubaneswar, India. It was running on 20 Mbits/s line but peak bandwidth was measured at 14 Mbit/s during testing.

Only IPv4 could be tested at the above two locations because of lack of IPv6 support

The tests were coded in C as libraries used provide us with an easy-to-use C API. The IETF test were coded in Go.

Overview of Thesis Results: Connection Establishment Times

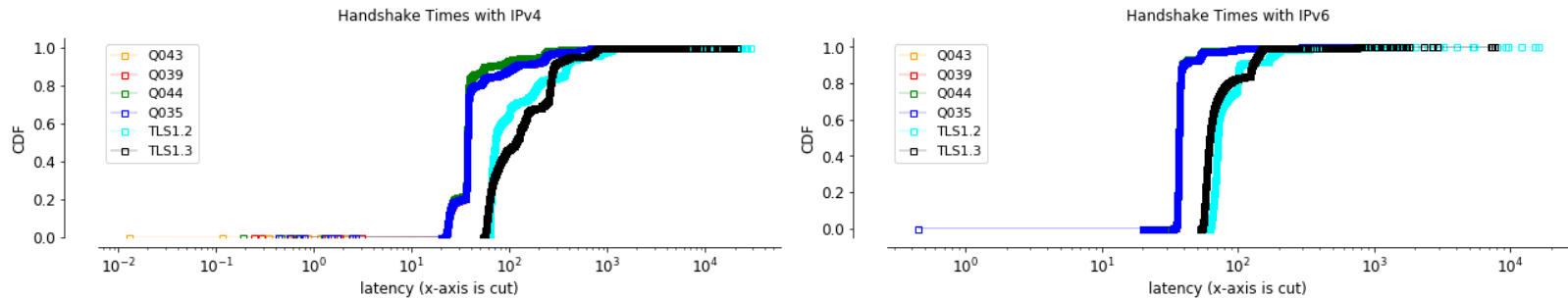


Figure: CDFs of Connection Times for QUIC(Q044, Q043, Q039, Q035) and TLS(TLS 1.3, TLS 1.2) for Ipv4, IPv6

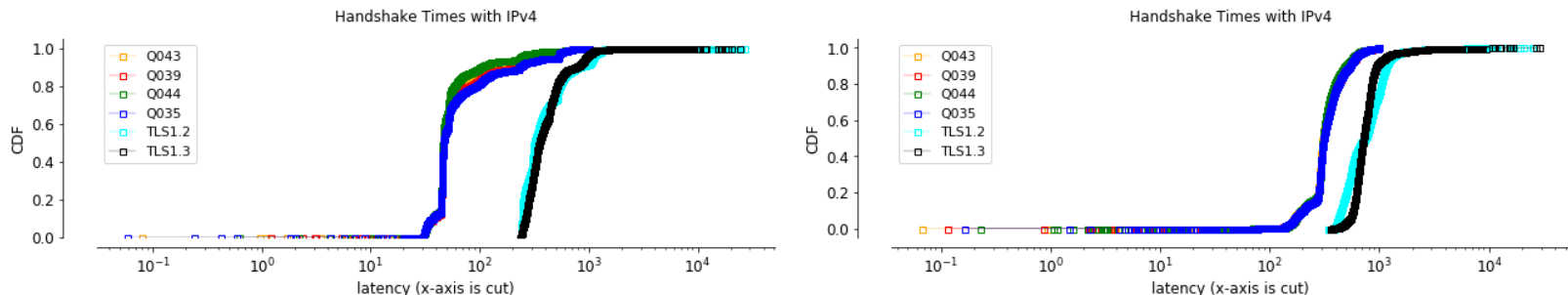


Figure: CDFs of Connection Times for QUIC(Q044, Q043, Q039, Q035) and TLS(TLS 1.3, TLS 1.2) for IPv4 from Raspberry Pi in Munich, Germany and Bhubaneswar, India

Overview of Thesis Results: Time to first byte

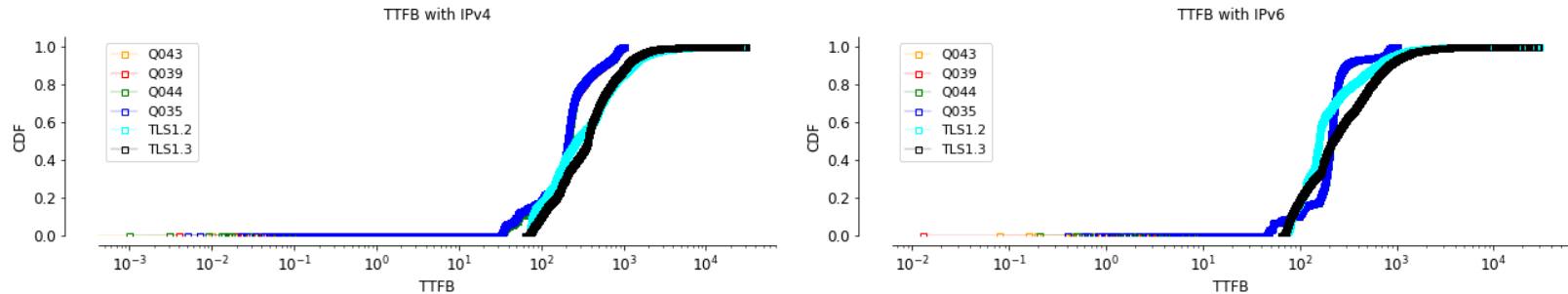


Figure: CDFs of Time to First Byte for QUIC(Q044, Q043, Q039, Q035) and TLS(TLS 1.3, TLS 1.2) for IPv4, IPv6.

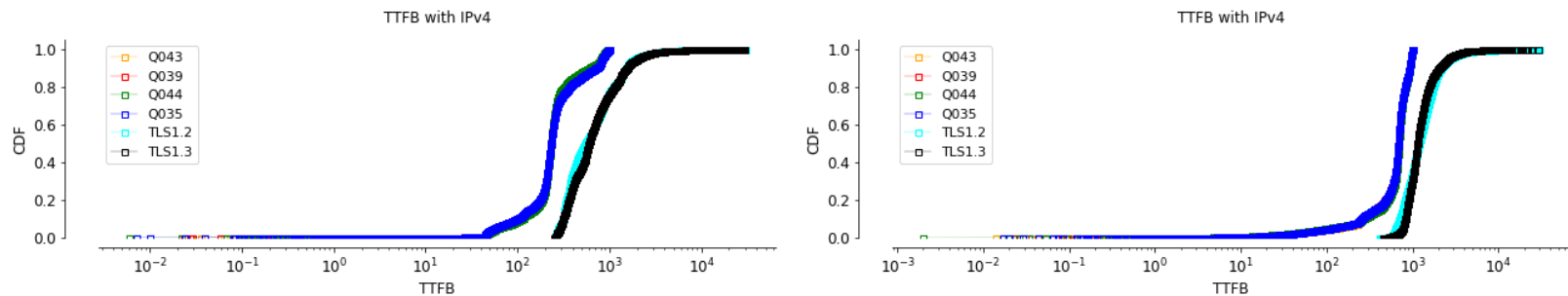


Figure: CDFs of TTFB for QUIC(Q044, Q043, Q039, Q035) and TLS(TLS 1.3, TLS 1.2) for IPv4 from Raspberry Pi in Munich, Germany and Bhubaneswar, India

Overview of Thesis Results: AS topology

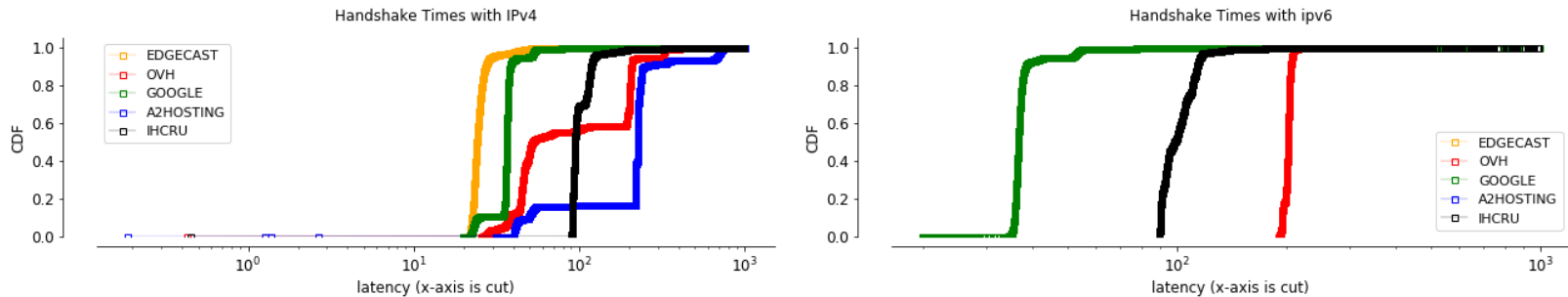


Figure: CDFs of Connection Times for all for QUIC(all versions combined) categorized by AS for IPv4, IPv6. EDGECAST performs better than GOOGLE

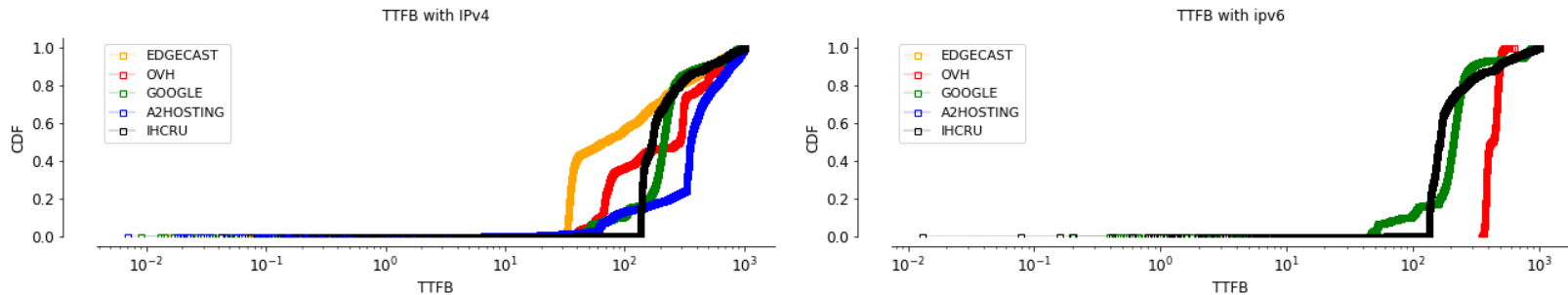


Figure: CDF of Time to First Byte for QUIC(all versions combined) categorized by AS for IPv4, IPv6

Google AS serves an overwhelming majority of websites using QUIC, almost half of the websites in our target list.

Overview of Thesis Results: YouTube QoE

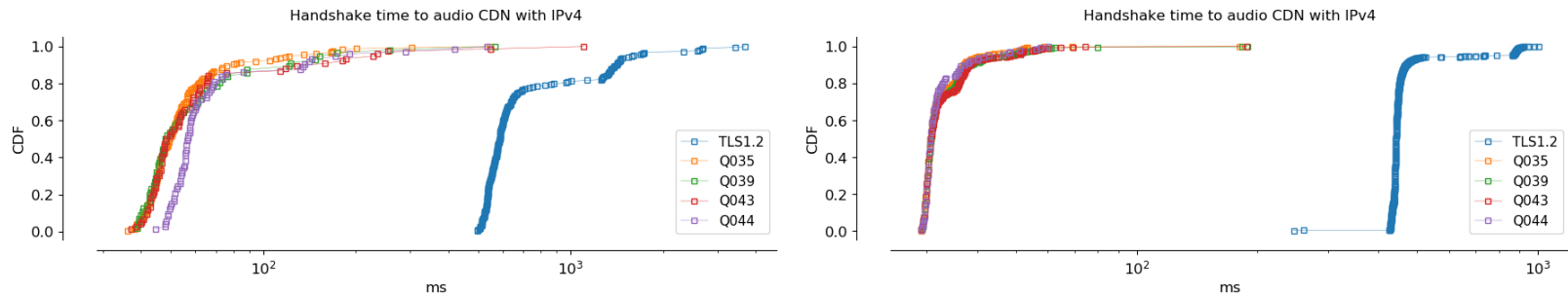


Figure: CDF of Audio Connect Time for IPv4 in Bhubaneswar, India and Munich, Germany

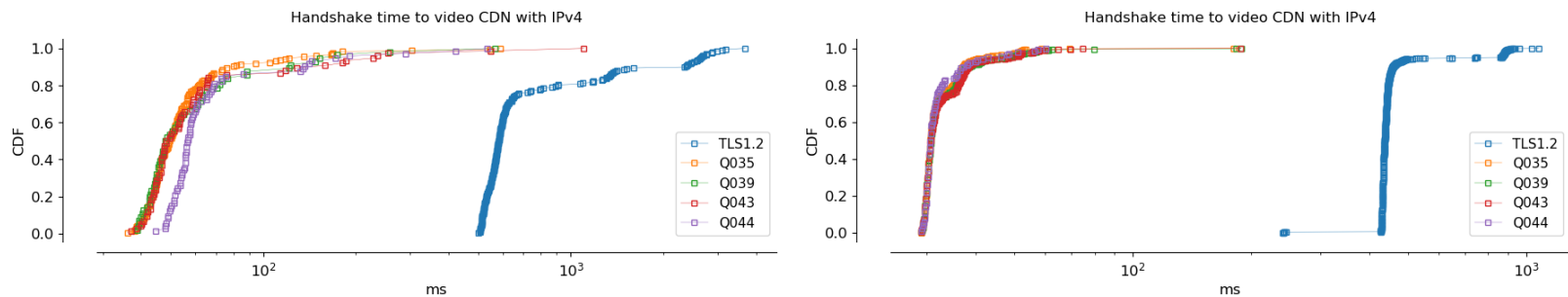


Figure: CDF of Video Connect Time for IPv4 in Bhubaneswar, India and Munich, Germany

Overview of Thesis Results: YouTube QoE

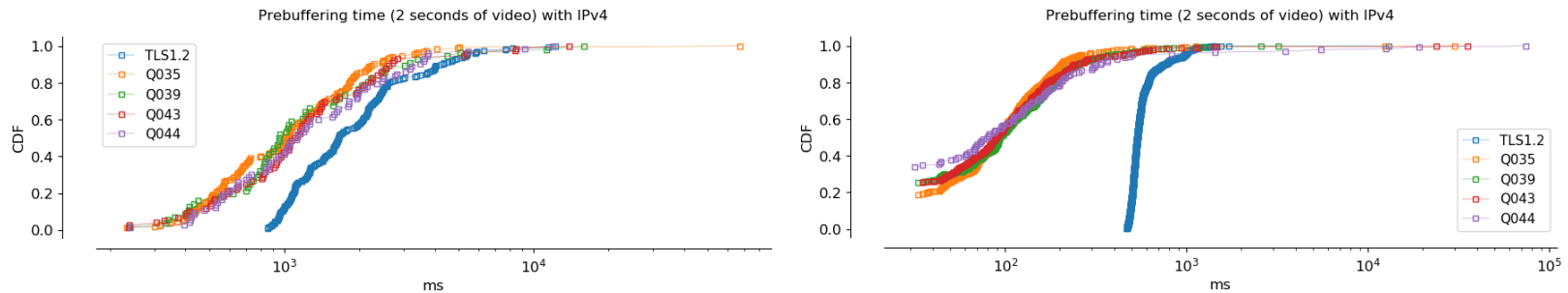


Figure: CDF of Prebuffering time for IPv4 in Bhubaneswar, India and Munich, Germany

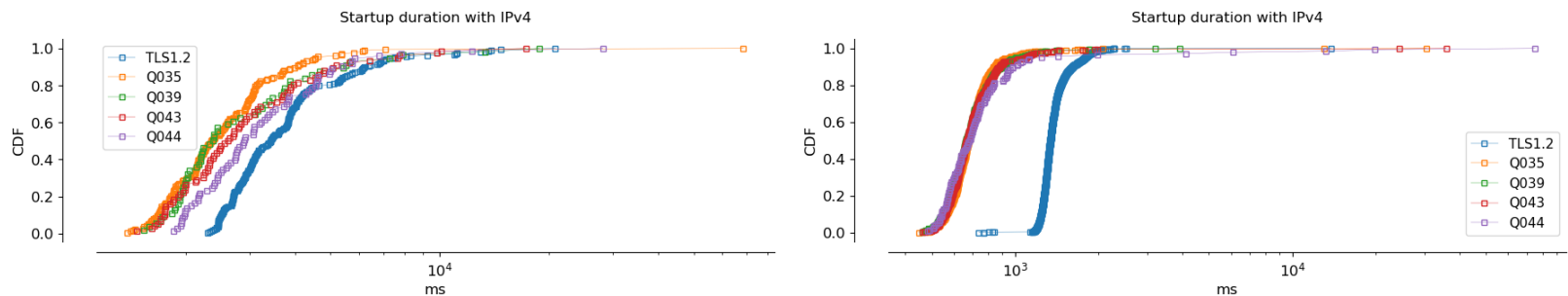


Figure: CDF of startup delay for IPv4 in Bhubaneswar, India and Munich, Germany

Overview of Thesis Results: YouTube QoE

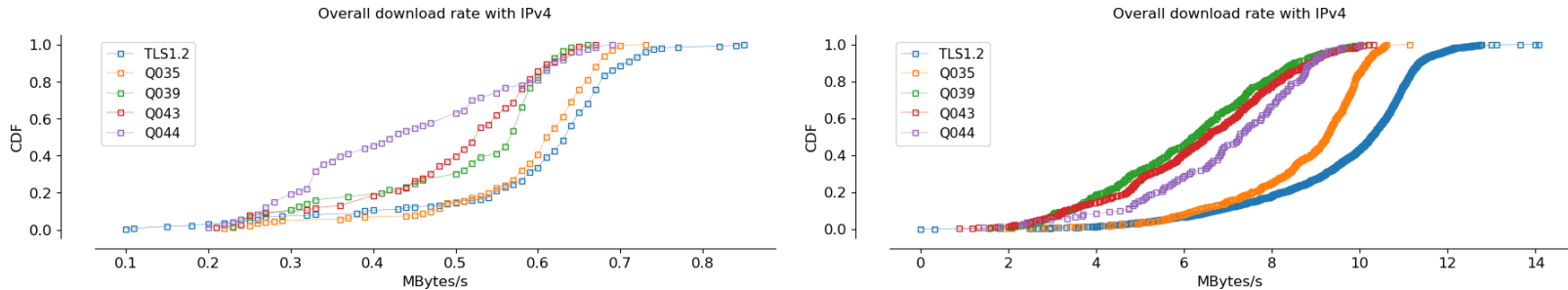


Figure: CDF of Download rate for IPv4 in Bhubaneswar, India and Munich, Germany

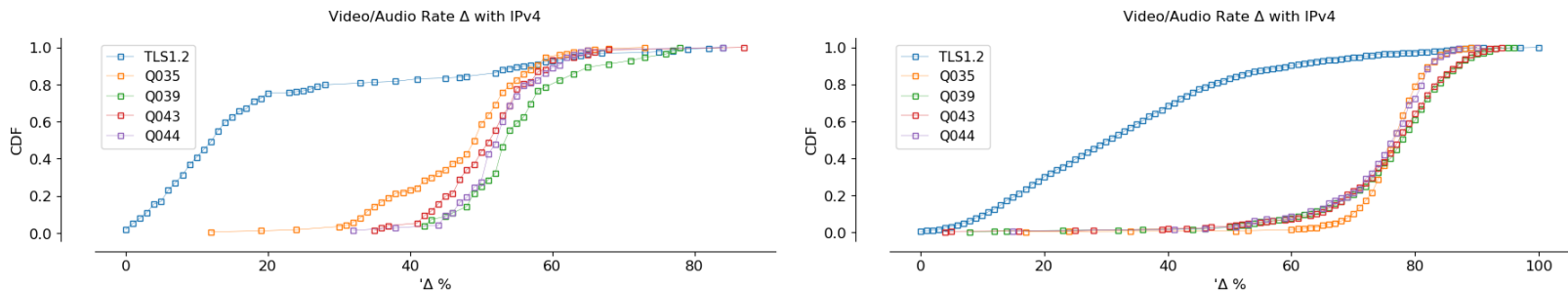


Figure: CDF of video/audio rate difference in % for IPv4 in Bhubaneswar, India and Munich, Germany

Overview of Thesis Results: Throughput

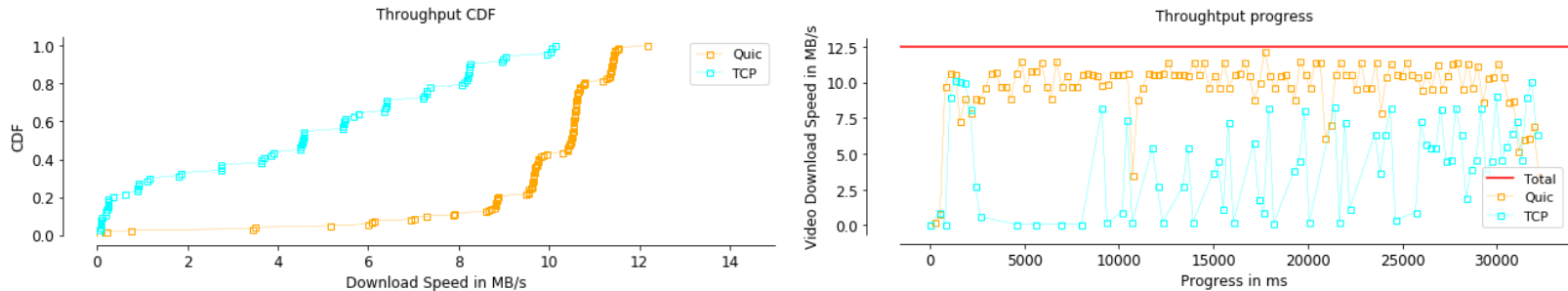


Figure: CDF of Throughput and Throughput of QUIC(Q044) and TCP downloading a YouTube video.

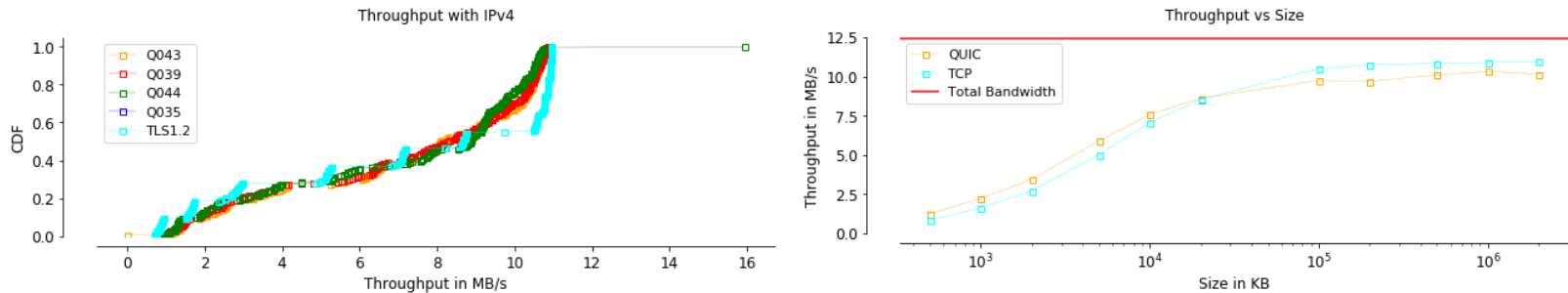


Figure: CDF of Throughput and Mean Throughput of QUIC(Q044, Q043, Q039) and TCP downloading files of different sizes from Google Drive

Overview of Thesis Results: Fairness

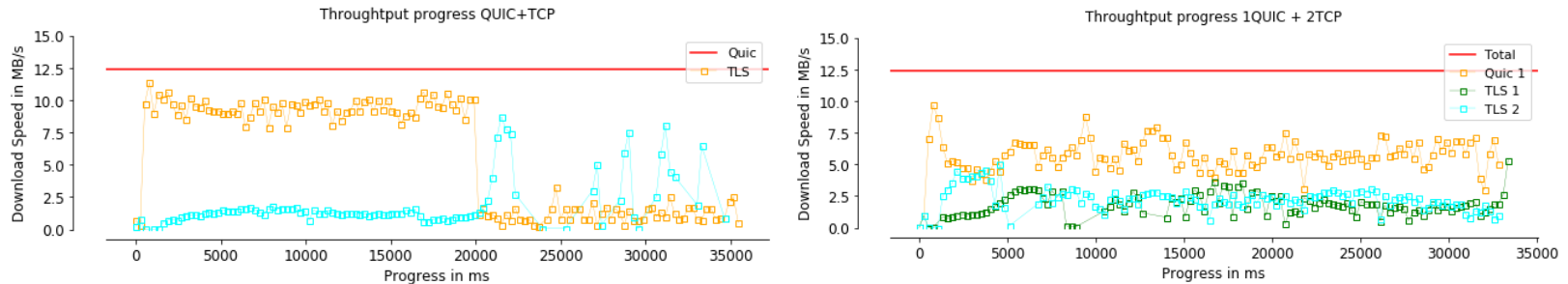


Figure: Throughput of 1 QUIC and 1 TCP, 1 QUIC and 2 TCP concurrent flow with the download progress of a 30 second YouTube video

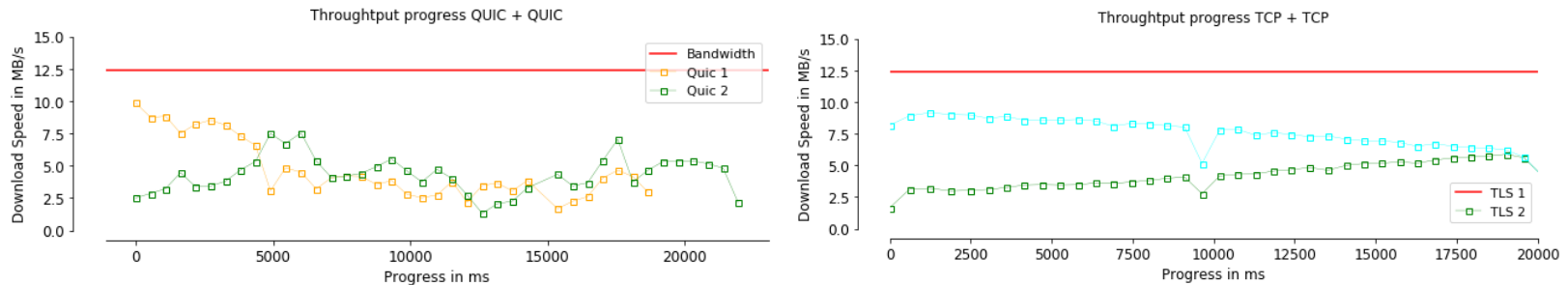


Figure: Throughput of 2 QUIC flows and 2 TCP flows with the download progress of a 200 MB file from Google Drive

Overview of Thesis Results: Fairness

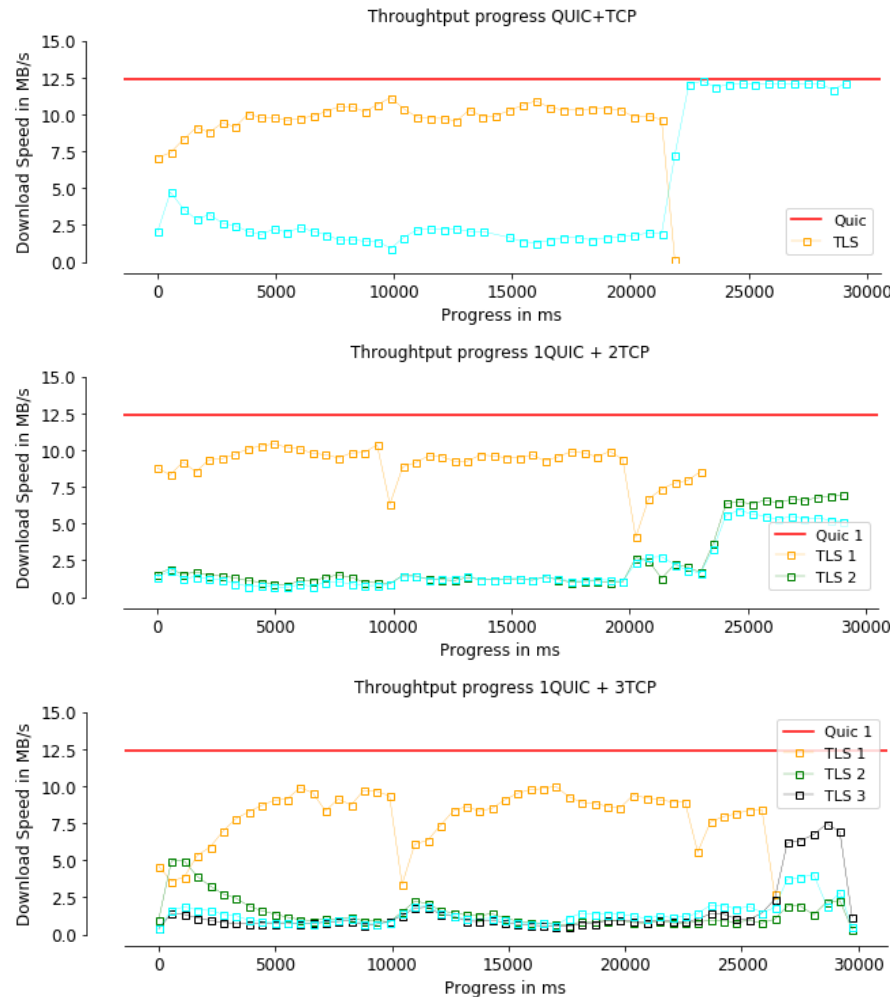


Figure: Throughput of 1 QUIC and Multiple TCP flow with the download progress of a 200 MB file from Google Drive

Overview of Thesis Results: CPU Utilization

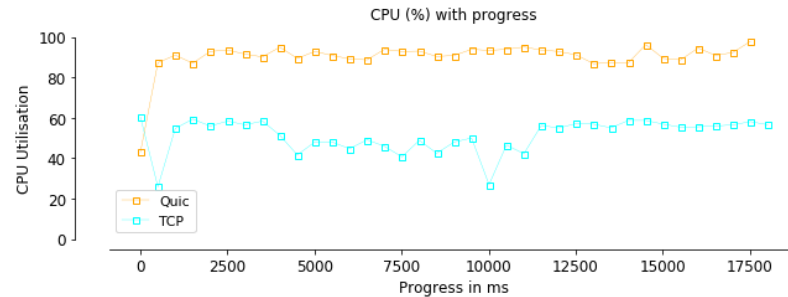


Figure: CPU utilization of QUIC(Q044) and TCP downloading a 200 MB file from Google Drive

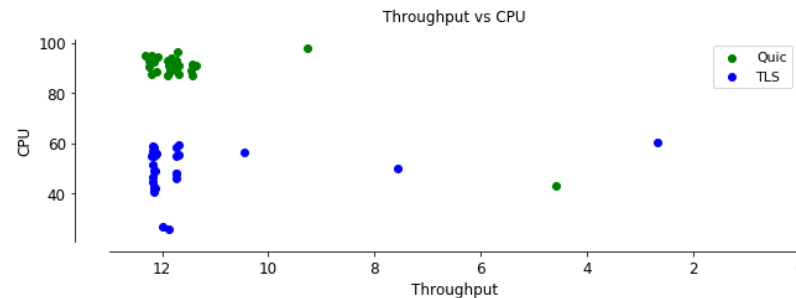


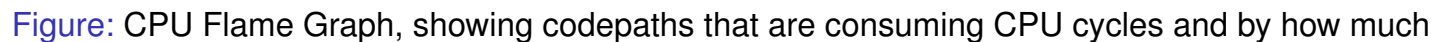
Figure: Scatter Plot for Throughput and CPU for QUIC and TCP while downloading from Google Drive

Overview of Thesis Results: QUIC Profiling

index	%time	seconds	usecs/call	calls	syscall
0	76.89	1.949677	24	80800	recvmsg
1	17.33	0.439416	201	2191	epoll_wait
2	4.79	0.121456	57	2141	sendmsg
3	0.22	0.005475	57	96	brk
4	0.18	0.004439	2220	2	poll
5	0.08	0.00201	53	38	open
6	0.08	0.001954	43	45	read
7	0.07	0.001712	54	32	mmap2
8	0.05	0.001261	53	24	mprotect
9	0.05	0.001185	41	29	close
10	0.03	0.000878	38	23	fstat64

Table: Top-10 system calls for QUIC while downloading file from Google drive

QUIC uses a maximum packet size of 1350 for IPv4 and 1370 for IPv6 to avoid packet fragmentation. Thus QUIC has to make many calls to send/recv system calls.



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Conclusion

- QUIC outperforms TLS in connection establishment times for both IPv4 and IPv6.
- QUIC loses some of its advantage when it comes to Time to first byte.
- From the measurements done in India we find greater improvements for QUIC over TCP/TLS than in Munich which shows that benefits of QUIC is more evident in low-bandwidth, high-loss networks and high-RTT regions.
- Q044 may have slightly better Connection times but TTFB and download time between different QUIC versions is similar for IPv4.
- For IPv6 QUIC versions perform similarly.
- In case of Video content delivery over YouTube, QUIC provides much better improvements in India than in Germany for Connect Time, Prebuffering time, Startup delay.
- Overall download rate for TLS 1.2 is higher than QUIC.
- Q035 has higher download rates and lesser stall durations than other QUIC versions.
- Google AS serves an overwhelming majority of the websites using QUIC, almost half of the websites in our target list. Only 5 ASes account for 85% of our target websites.
- EDGECAST AS performs better than GOOGLE AS on connection establishment times, at 50th percentile it performs about 12 ms better. For TTFB gap between GOOGLE and EDGECAST increases to 144 ms.
- EDGECAST doesn't support QUIC over IPv6 where GOOGLE has a clear advantage.

Conclusion

- In case of downloading a video from YouTube we find that both QUIC and TCP start with the same throughput but QUIC maintains it over the entire duration of the download, TCP on the other hand has many peaks and falls. Mean throughput of QUIC is over twice that of TCP.
- In downloading files from Google Drive we find that QUIC performs better than TCP for smaller file sizes but for larger file sizes TCP has higher throughput.
- CPU utilization in case of QUIC is almost twice that of TCP while downloading large files from GDrive.
- QUIC spends most of its time in the kernel on expensive sendmsg/recvmmsg system calls.
- QUIC grabs more than its fair share of bandwidth when it is competing with TCP. QUIC flows are fair to other QUIC flows and TCP flows are fair to other TCP flows. Even with 2 and 3 competing TCP flows, QUIC maintains its mean bandwidth usage.
- Mean bandwidth usage of QUIC is more than twice the combined mean bandwidth usage of TCP. Though both TCP and QUIC use the same CUBIC congestion control algorithm, QUIC has been known to aggressively increase its congestion window size so it is able to grab most of the bandwidth more quickly.

Future work and limitations

- Geographical bias due to location of probes. For more representative results the tests should be deployed at multiple locations with the help of CAIDA Ark [5] measurement infrastructure and SamKnows project[34]
- Mobile devices are a major source of QUIC traffic so tests need to be adopted for mobile devices using cronet[9].
- No support for 0-RTT connections in lsquic at the time of test creation. Support has been introduced in latest release.
- The `QUIC YouTube tests` have a higher failure rate than `TCP YouTube tests` which can be looked into.
- Other features of QUIC like Congestion control window size, Packet pacing, Flow control can be evaluated.
- QUIC tests can be performed under constrained conditions like low buffer size, introducing random bandwidth changes, random packet loss and different RTTs.
- Other metrics like no. of retransmissions, no. of packets lost, congestion window size can be measured.
- IETF QUIC may be standardized soon, it may also be considered for comparison with Google QUIC and TCP/TLS.

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