WORKING WITH ICMP

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The ICM protocol, simply called ICMP, is one of the three main components of the Network layer. This is used by hosts and routers to specify the network-layer information to each other. The most notable feature about the ICMP is that these messages are carried as payloads inside IP datagrams. However, this does not mean that ICMP is an upper layer protocol. Interestingly, the traceroute programs extensively uses ICMP messages to get the IP addresses and RTT corresponding to the routers in a given path.

Using PING:

Ping is a program that allows us to verify if a host is live or not. Ping makes use of ICMP packets. A **particular type of ICMP packet** is sent to the interested destination. The host at the destination responds back with another typical ICMP packet. Using this packet, the ping program finds out RTT and status of the destination server.

```
sauron@sauron-HP-ENVY-TS-15-Notebook-PC:~$ ping vt.edu -c 10
PING vt.edu (198.82.215.14) 56(84) bytes of data.
64 bytes from cmsw-prod.hosting.vt.edu (198.82.215.14): icmp_seq=1 ttl=237 time=523 ms
64 bytes from cmsw-prod.hosting.vt.edu (198.82.215.14): icmp_seq=2 ttl=237 time=427 ms
64 bytes from cmsw-prod.hosting.vt.edu (198.82.215.14): icmp_seq=3 ttl=237 time=1091 ms
64 bytes from cmsw-prod.hosting.vt.edu (198.82.215.14): icmp_seq=4 ttl=237 time=863 ms
64 bytes from cmsw-prod.hosting.vt.edu (198.82.215.14): icmp_seq=5 ttl=237 time=1089 ms
64 bytes from cmsw-prod.hosting.vt.edu (198.82.215.14): icmp_seq=6 ttl=237 time=495 ms
64 bytes from cmsw-prod.hosting.vt.edu (198.82.215.14): icmp_seq=7 ttl=237 time=416 ms
64 bytes from cmsw-prod.hosting.vt.edu (198.82.215.14): icmp_seq=8 ttl=237 time=374 ms
64 bytes from cmsw-prod.hosting.vt.edu (198.82.215.14): icmp_seq=9 ttl=237 time=340 ms
64 bytes from cmsw-prod.hosting.vt.edu (198.82.215.14): icmp_seq=10 ttl=237 time=398 ms

--- vt.edu ping statistics ---
10 packets transmitted, 10 received, 0% packet loss, time 9040ms
rtt min/avg/max/mdev = 340.089/602.053/1091.178/280.837 ms, pipe 2
sauron@sauron-HP-ENVY-TS-15-Notebook-PC:~$
```

Figure showing a ping command (count = 10) directed to Virginia Tech University

Question 1:

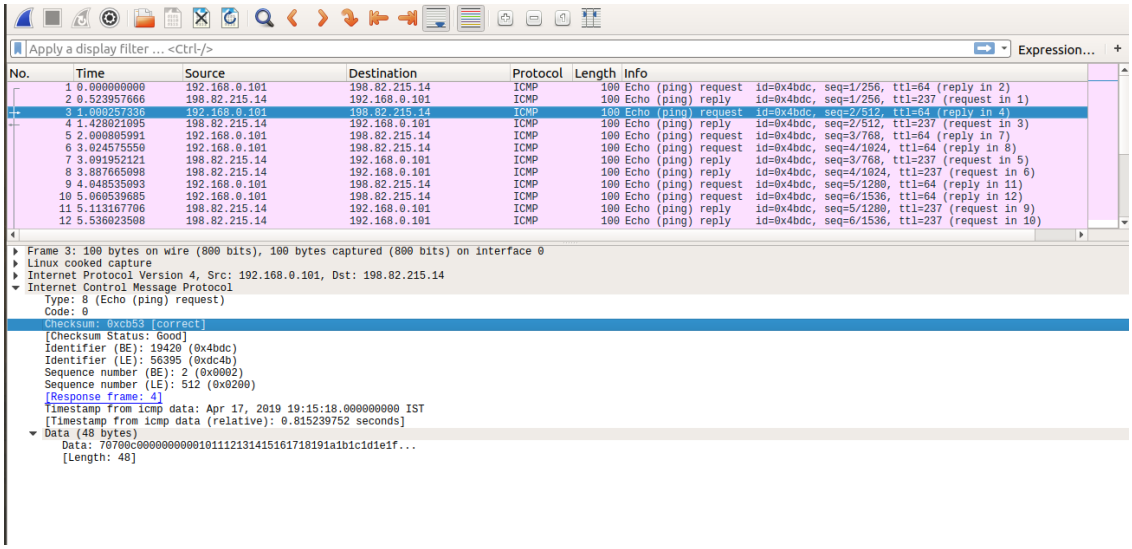
command ran : **ping vt.edu -c 10 (Virginia Tech University)**
Source IP : 192.168.0.101
Destination IP : 192.82.215.14

Question 2:

In the ping pakcets, we can see that the ICMP payload has not mention to any kind of address. **ICMP is carried as a payload within an IP datagram** and does not have an header associated with it. Within this payload, there is no mention about any address. This is not similar to TCP/UDP (have port addresses) which too are data carried inside IP datagrams.

This is because, when the protocol in IP header is ICMP the host/router has **well defined** way of handling this ICMP data message. There is no ambiguity as to which single application needs to collect this information. Therefore there is no need of address inside ICMP message. The IP address of the destination in the IP header is enough for the packet to be tramsitted appropriately, unlike TCP/UDP where port numbers are needed.

Question 3:

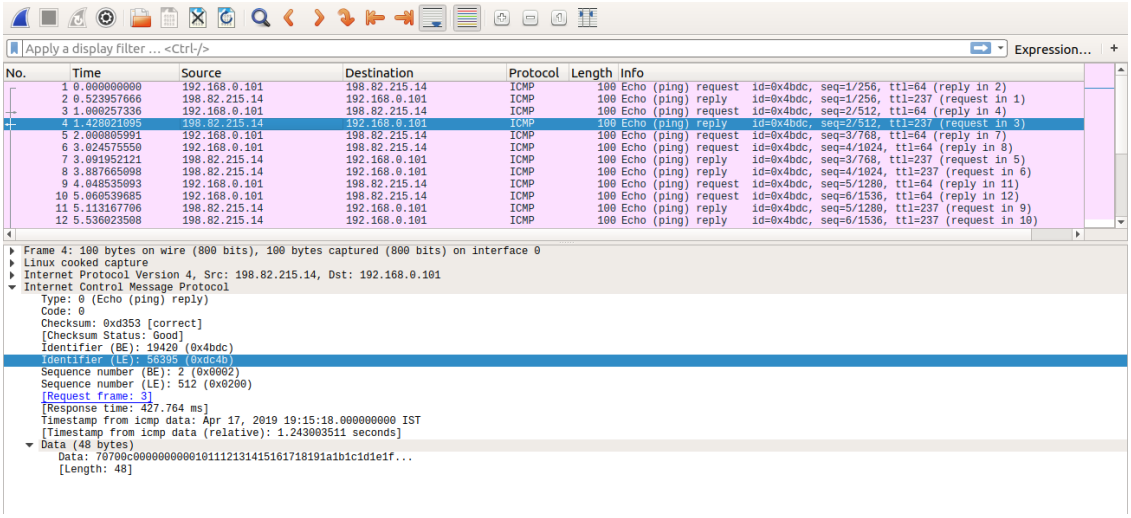


In the above figure, we see a capture of expanded version of one of the ping requests.

The fields in ICMP are :
1) Type = 8 : corresponds to ping request
2) Code = 0

3) Checksum : 2 bytes
4) Identifier : 2 bytes
5) Sequence number : 2 bytes
6) Timestamp
7) Data

Question 4:



In the above figure, we see a capture of expanded version of one of the ping replies.

The fields in ICMP are :
1) Type = 0 : corresponds to ping response
2) Code = 0
3) Checksum : 2 bytes
4) Identifier : 2 bytes
5) Sequence number : 2 bytes
6) Timestamp
7) Data

Using TRACEROUTE:

Traceroute is a program that makes use of UDP packets to get the IPs of all the routers along a given path and the time delays between them. This is achieved by sending a **sequence of UDP packets** with TTL ranging from 1 to 64 (MAX). Everytime a router identifies that a packet has expired, it sends a corresponding **ICMP error message** to the source host. The traceroute then identifies the details about the router from this ICMP message.

command used : traceroute vt.edu (Vriginia Tech University)

```
sauron@sauron-HP-ENVY-TS-15-Notebook-PC:~$ traceroute vt.edu
traceroute to vt.edu (198.82.215.14), 64 hops max
  1   192.168.0.1  0.769ms  0.707ms  0.633ms
  2   10.22.15.254  3.420ms  8.615ms  3.331ms
  3   10.25.100.9  4.490ms  19.222ms  6.228ms
  4   10.25.0.14  5.196ms  6.231ms  2.535ms
  5   10.119.232.138  6.149ms  2.129ms  2.723ms
  6   10.119.232.137  3.745ms  0.991ms  2.049ms
  7   10.163.255.201  28.178ms  25.301ms  25.597ms
  8   10.255.232.217  27.431ms  29.644ms  25.494ms
  9   180.149.48.18  25.745ms  28.645ms  25.446ms
 10   180.149.48.6  267.796ms  176.018ms  204.206ms
 11   180.149.48.20  204.573ms  204.998ms  204.663ms
 12   162.252.70.138  306.856ms  409.509ms  409.450ms
 13   162.252.70.138  307.875ms  307.684ms  305.955ms
 14   162.252.70.74  306.925ms  265.376ms  372.445ms
 15   162.252.70.74  299.690ms  291.426ms  308.399ms
 16   192.70.187.18  408.558ms  511.817ms  511.285ms
 17   192.70.187.18  819.909ms  717.874ms  408.654ms
 18   198.82.215.14  407.989ms  410.654ms  519.473ms
 19   198.82.215.14  534.928ms !N  584.400ms !N  510.789ms !N
sauron@sauron-HP-ENVY-TS-15-Notebook-PC:~$
```

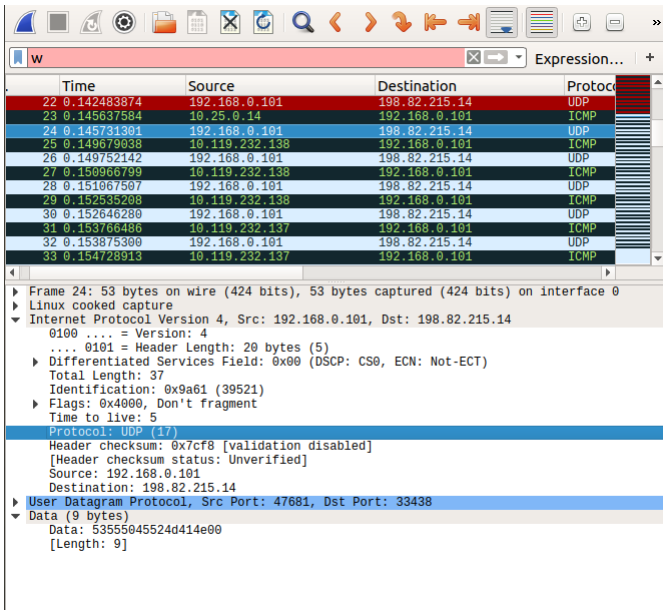
Question 5:

IP address of our host : 192.168.0.101
IP address of Virginia Tech host : 198.82.215.14

The destination IP address can be seen from the last echo. Alternatively this can also be seen from any echo because, every response (TTL expire warning) also contains the original packet the host tried to send.

Question 6:

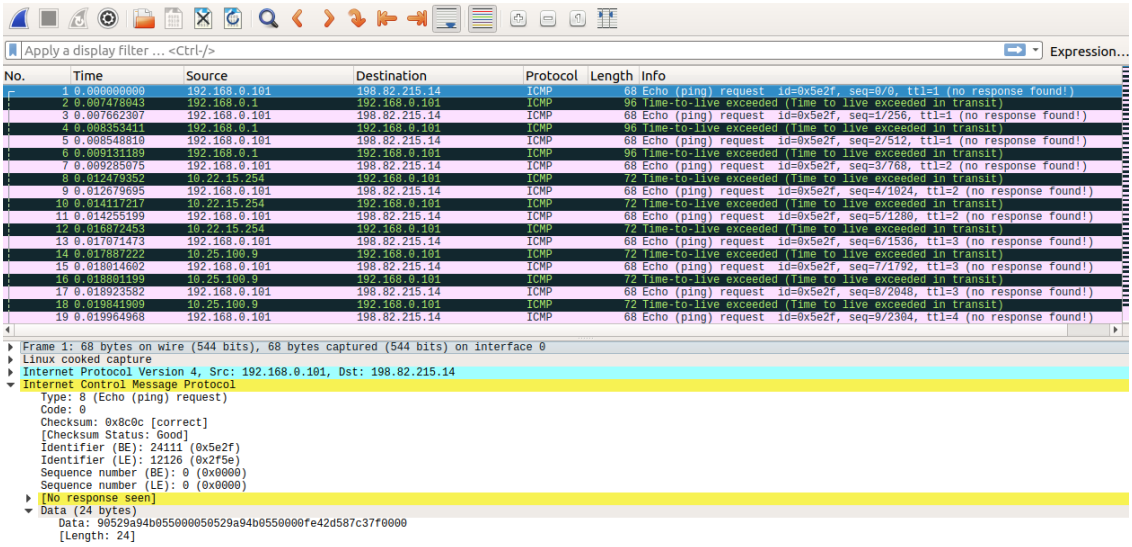
Different upper layer protocols are assigned different values for the protocol field in the IP header. For ICMP it is 01, where as for UDP it **will be 17**. This is a must because, if the IP datagrams encapsulate UDP packets, then having 17 as the protocol number is important in processing the packet when it arrives at the host. If it were falsely written as 1 instead, the host will try to break the payload as an ICMP packet which **has different fields** and demarcations. The same can be seen from the UDP probes sent from our Linux system.

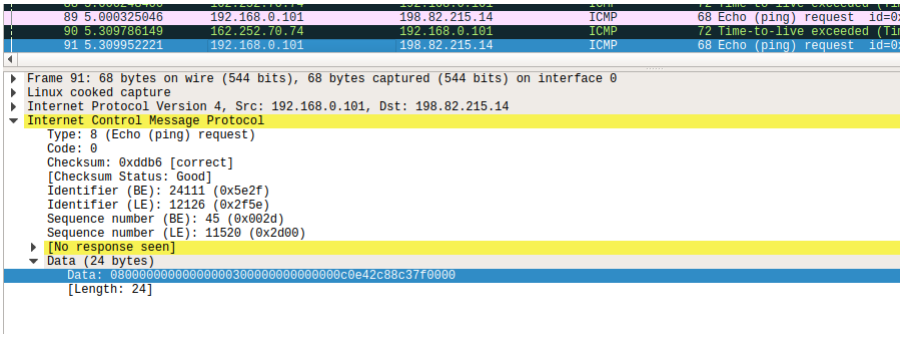


Question 7:

The ICMP packet resembles ping (request and reply) packet upto the IP header. From IP header, the whole payload is a lot different. This is because, the fields in the ping response (identification, sequence number) are absent in the traceroute echo messages. A more important difference is the contents of the data within ICMP payload. This **data has the copy of the original packet as such** that was failed to be forwarded because of TTL expiration. Another difference is the Type field value which is 11 and the code is 0 unlike ping packets (Type : 0,8).

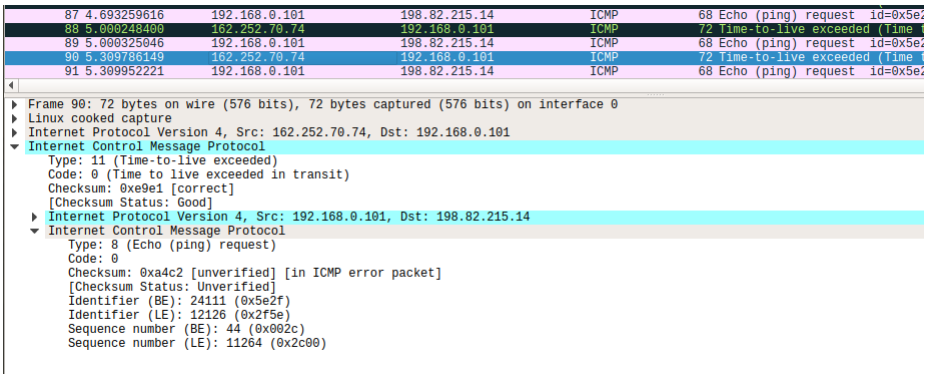
running the command : sudo traceroute -I vt.edu
(uses echo ICMP instead of UDPs : refer to Traceroute2.pcapng)





On opening a Echo message and comparing with the ping packet used in ping command, we can find that there is no difference in the fields names i.e the structure of the packet. The only diffrence here is that TTL is set differently (from 1 to 17 in our case). These TTL variations can be seen from the wireshark capture.

Question 8:



Upto IP header, the ICMP error as well as the echo messages take the same format. However their payloads, which in turn contain the ICMP data messages, are entirely different. Both ICMP data messages have Type, Code fields as well as checksum. The **differences** between the ICMP error message and the ICMP ping messages are:

1) Echo packet has Identifier and a Sequence number field which is used by the ping program. These fields are not present in the ICMP error message.
2) Echo packet has a small data field (usually 24 bytes). However ICMP error message has the **entire packet that was initially transmitted** by the router (with an insufficient TTL) starting from the network layer header. This is the reason why it appears to have more fields because it encapsulates the original ping packet in its payload.

Question 9:

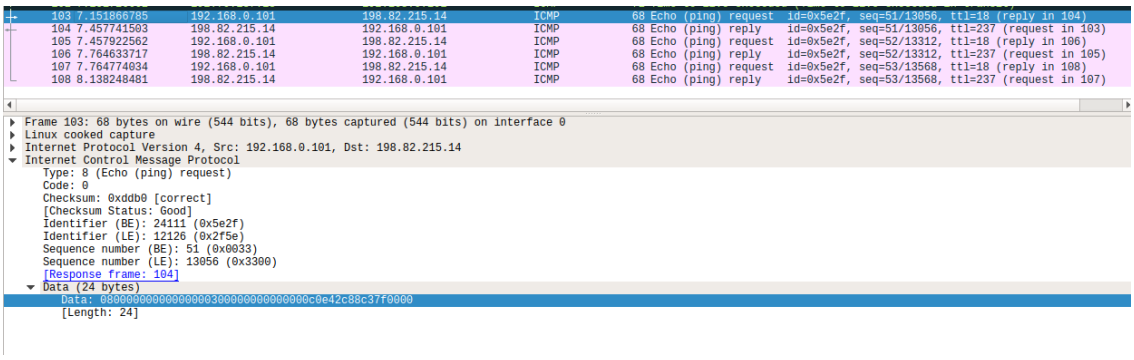


Figure showing the last 6 messages

The last 6 packets are different fromt the rest of the packets because the responses are **not TTL errors but are ping replies**. This is as though a ping has been sent to the destination host. This is because, the TTL is enough to

reach the destination server and that server replies with a ping response (Code : 0, Type : 0).

Question 10: