

Lab 2: Wireshark to View Network Traffic

Overview:

Wireshark is an open-source network protocol analysis software program, widely considered the industry standard. A global organization of network specialists and software developers supports Wireshark and continues to make updates for new network technologies and encryption methods. Government agencies, corporations, non-profits, and educational institutions use Wireshark for troubleshooting and teaching purposes. There truly isn't a better way to learn low-level networking than to look at traffic under the Wireshark microscope.

You could think of a network packet analyser as a measuring device for examining what's happening inside a network cable, just like an electrician uses a voltmeter for examining what's happening inside an electric cable (but at a higher level, of course). In the past, such tools were either very expensive, proprietary, or both. However, with the advent of Wireshark, that has changed. Wireshark is available for free, is open source, and is one of the best packet analysers available today. Here are some reasons people use Wireshark:

- Network administrators use it to troubleshoot network problems.
- Network security engineers use it to examine security problems.
- QA engineers use it to verify network applications.
- Developers use it to debug protocol implementations.
- People use it to learn network protocol internals.

How does Wireshark work?

Wireshark is a packet sniffer and analysis tool. It captures network traffic from ethernet, Bluetooth, wireless (IEEE.802.11), token ring, and frame relay connections, among others, and stores that data for offline analysis. Wireshark allows you to filter the log before the capture starts or during analysis, so you can narrow down and zero in on what you're looking for in the network trace. For example, you can set a filter to see TCP traffic between two IP addresses, or you can set it only to show you the packets sent from one computer. The filters in Wireshark are one of the primary reasons it has become the standard tool for packet analysis.

Lab Objectives:

- Introduce and familiarize yourself with Wireshark.
- Use the tool to capture network traffic and basics of how to analyse the network traffic.
- Capture and analyse local ICMP data in network traffic, and how to locate the IP and MAC address information in the captured data.

Basics of Wireshark

The main page of Wireshark shows two main sections, as illustrated in Figure 1. If you have not opened any captures before, you won't see Figure 1(1).

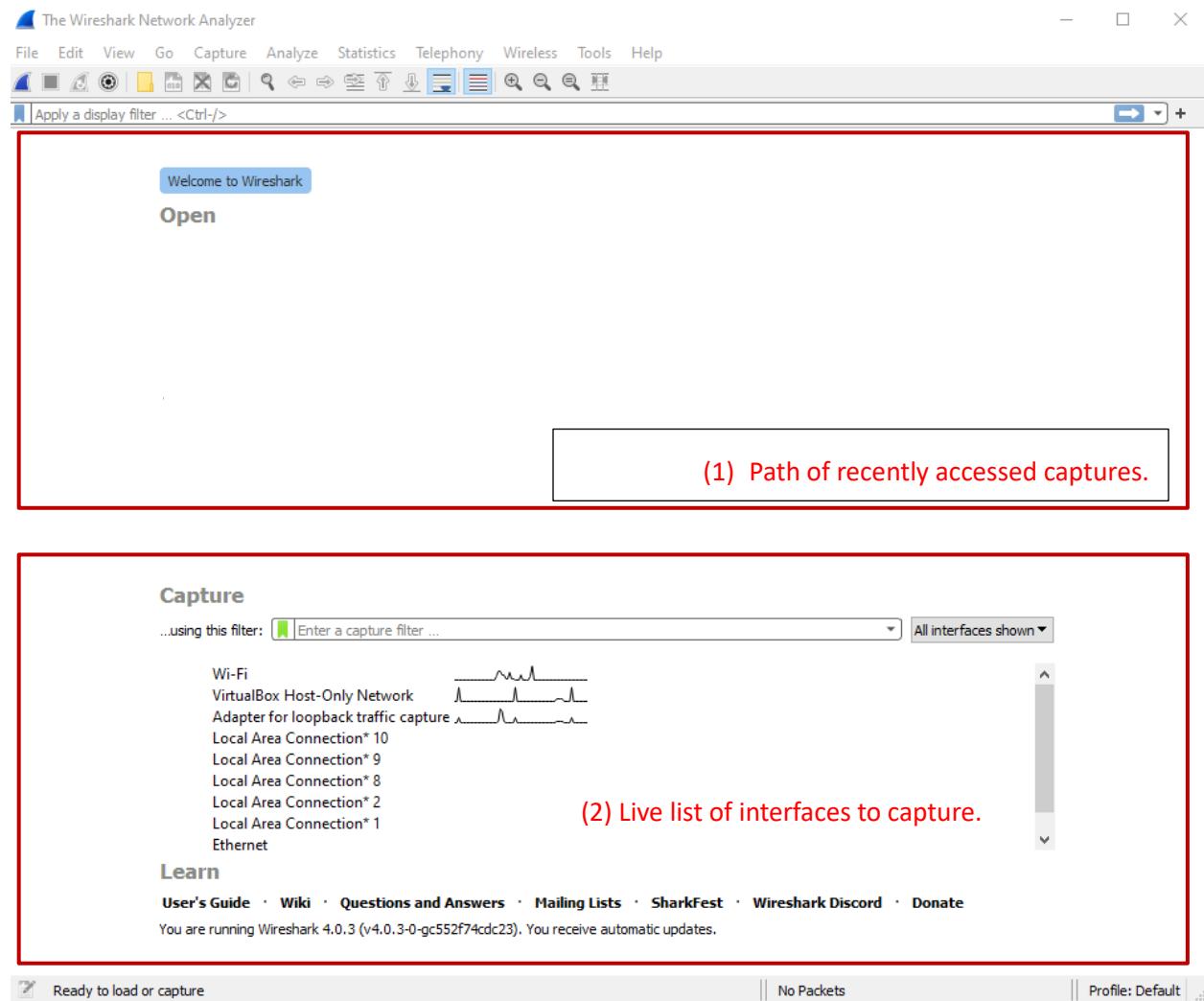


Figure 1: Main page of Wireshark

The Capture Options button (highlighted in Figure 2), also accessible under the menu “Capture”, opens the “Capture Interfaces” screen (Figure 3) and allows you to configure advanced options.

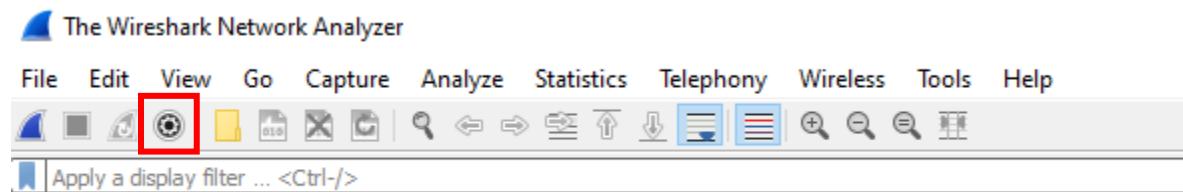


Figure 2: Capture Options button highlighted.

Capture options are distributed in 3 tabs (Input, Output and Options) and allow, e.g.:

- To determine the file where captured data will be written to.
- To resolve MAC addresses and DNS names.
- To limit the time or size of the capture.

The selection of these options helps to improve the performance of Wireshark capture. For example, you can adjust settings to avoid name-resolution issues, as they will otherwise slow down your capture system and generate large numbers of name queries. Time and size limits can also place limitations on unattended captures.

Explore the tabs.

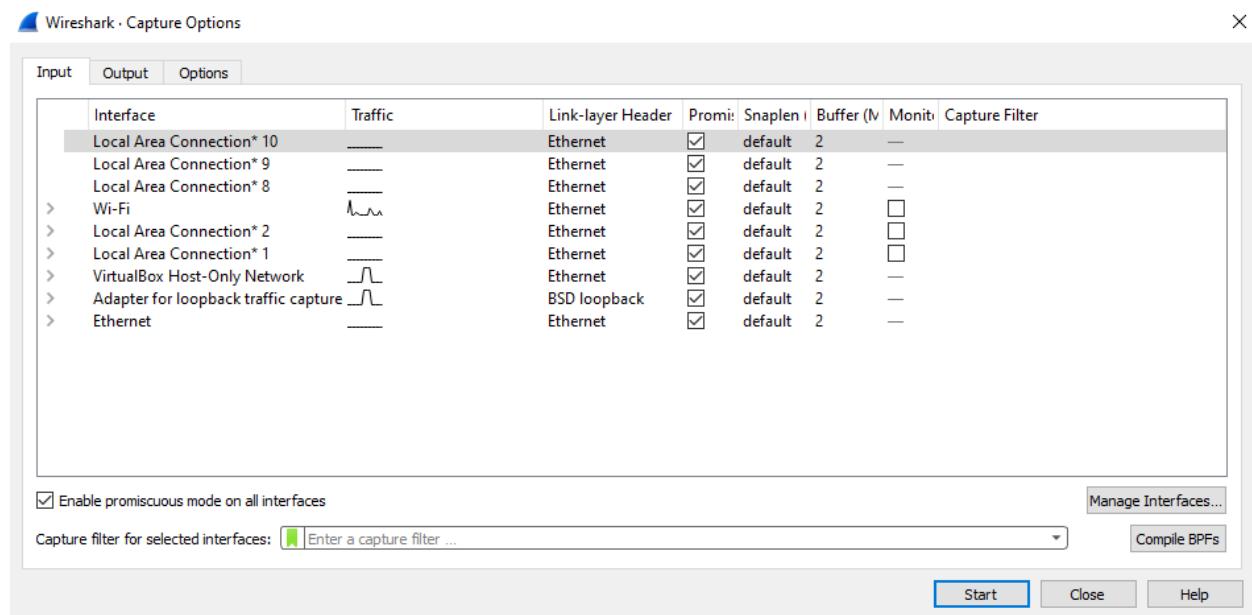


Figure 3: The Capture Interfaces screen.

Running a simple packet capture

Select one interface which is showing traffic, i.e., a wiggled line as you can see in Figure 1(2) for “Wireless Network Connection” and on Figure 3 – e.g., capture Ethernet traffic. If using the first option (main screen), just double-click on the relevant interface. If using the second option (capture interface screen), click on the **Start** button.

Wireshark screen will immediately begin filling up with traffic seen on the network interface, as illustrated in Figure 4.

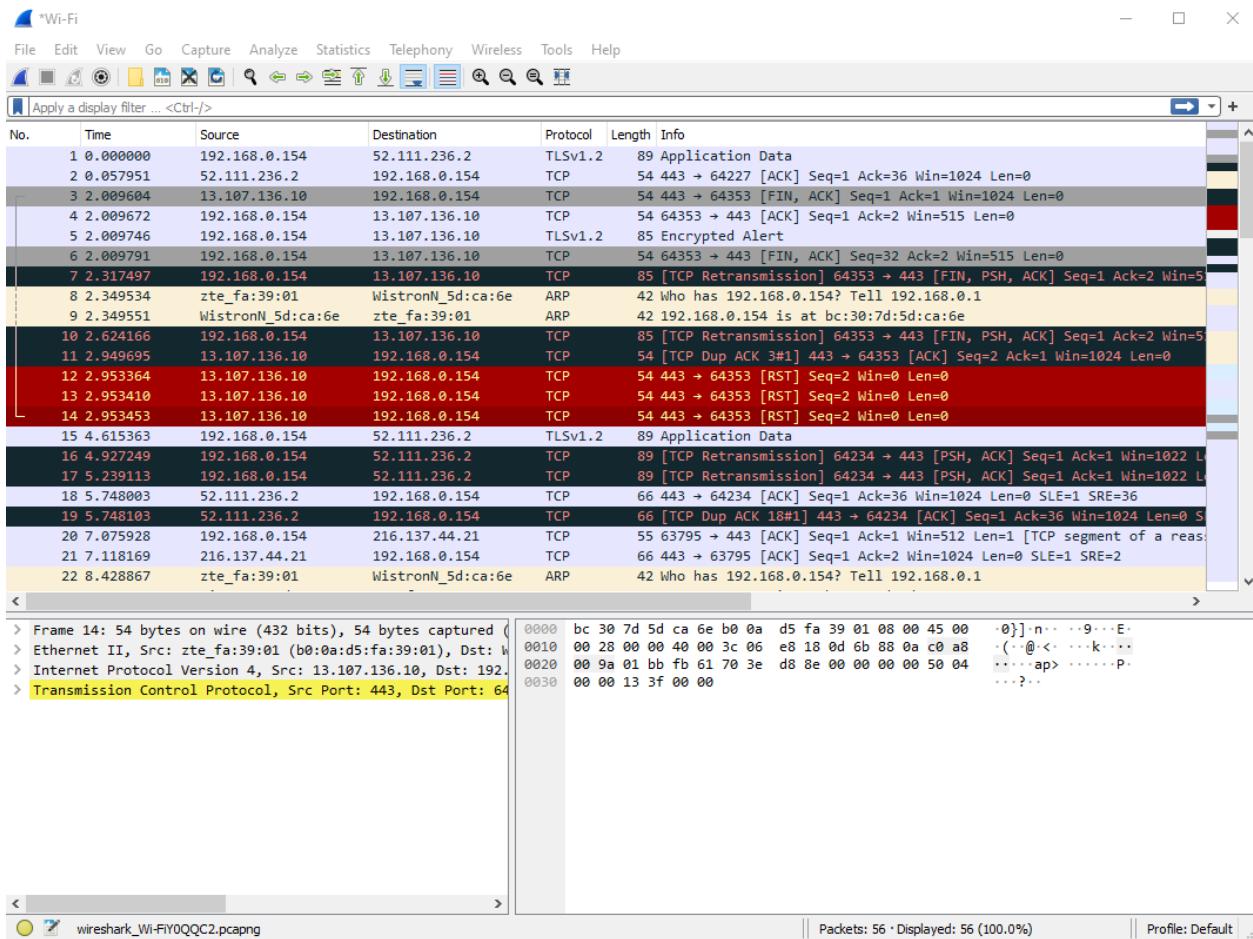


Figure 4: Live capture of packets on the selected interface.

Each line in the top pane of the Wireshark window corresponds to a single packet seen on the network. The default display shows:

- The time of the packet (relative to the initiation of the capture),
- The source and destination IP addresses,
- The protocol used and some information about the packet.

You can drill down and obtain more information by clicking on a row. This causes the bottom two window panes to fill with information:

- The middle pane contains drill-down details on the packet selected in the top frame.
- Clicking on Hex data in bottom half reveal varying levels of detail about each layer of information contained within the packet.

Select a packet, and examine its content across the top, middle and bottom panes.

The following link contains useful information about setting up capture of network traffic. It starts with a warning – *you need to make sure you are allowed to capture packets from the network in the first place.*

<https://wiki.wireshark.org/CaptureSetup>

Wireshark coloring scheme

Color coding is helpful when analyzing packets with Wireshark. Notice in the capture you have done that each row is color-coded, according to different protocols.

Wireshark uses a complex coloring scheme (which you can customize). The default settings can be accessed via the **View menu → Coloring Rules**. The default scheme is shown in Figure 5.

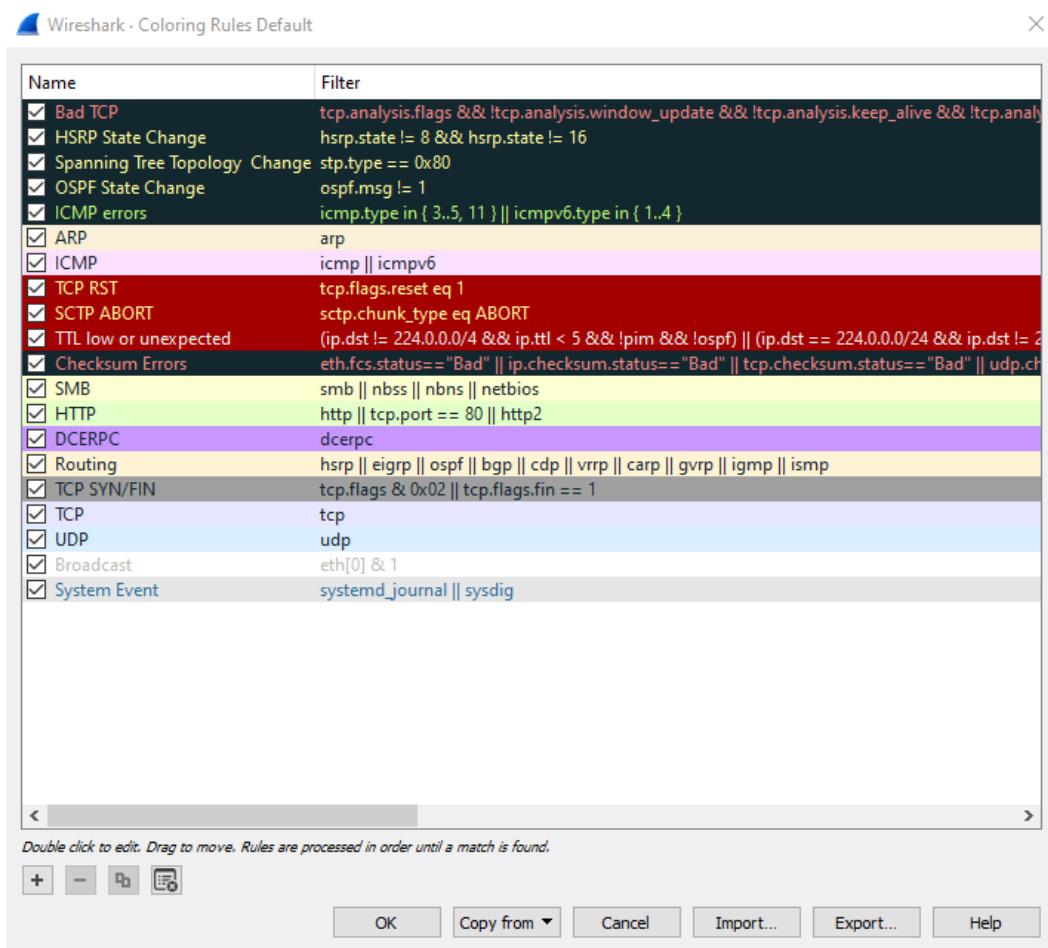


Figure 5: Default packet colour scheme used by Wireshark.

Stop capturing live packets is possible via the red button (2nd highlighted in Figure 6). To restart the current capture, use the green button (3rd highlighted in Figure 6). All these options are also available via the **Capture** menu.

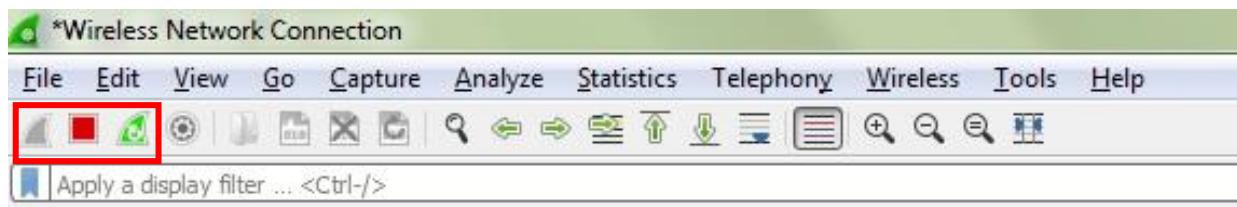


Figure 6: Manipulating captures – Start, Stop and Restart, respectively.

If you stop a capture, and either want to start a new one or restart the same capture, Wireshark will ask if you want to save the captured packages or not.

Make sure you stop the live capture without saving.

Packet display filtering

Download the Wireshark capture file **http.cap** available on Moodle, this should be already downloaded when you downloaded the file: <http://wiki.wireshark.org/SampleCaptures>

Open the **http.cap** file, you will see the saved packets as shown in Figure 7.

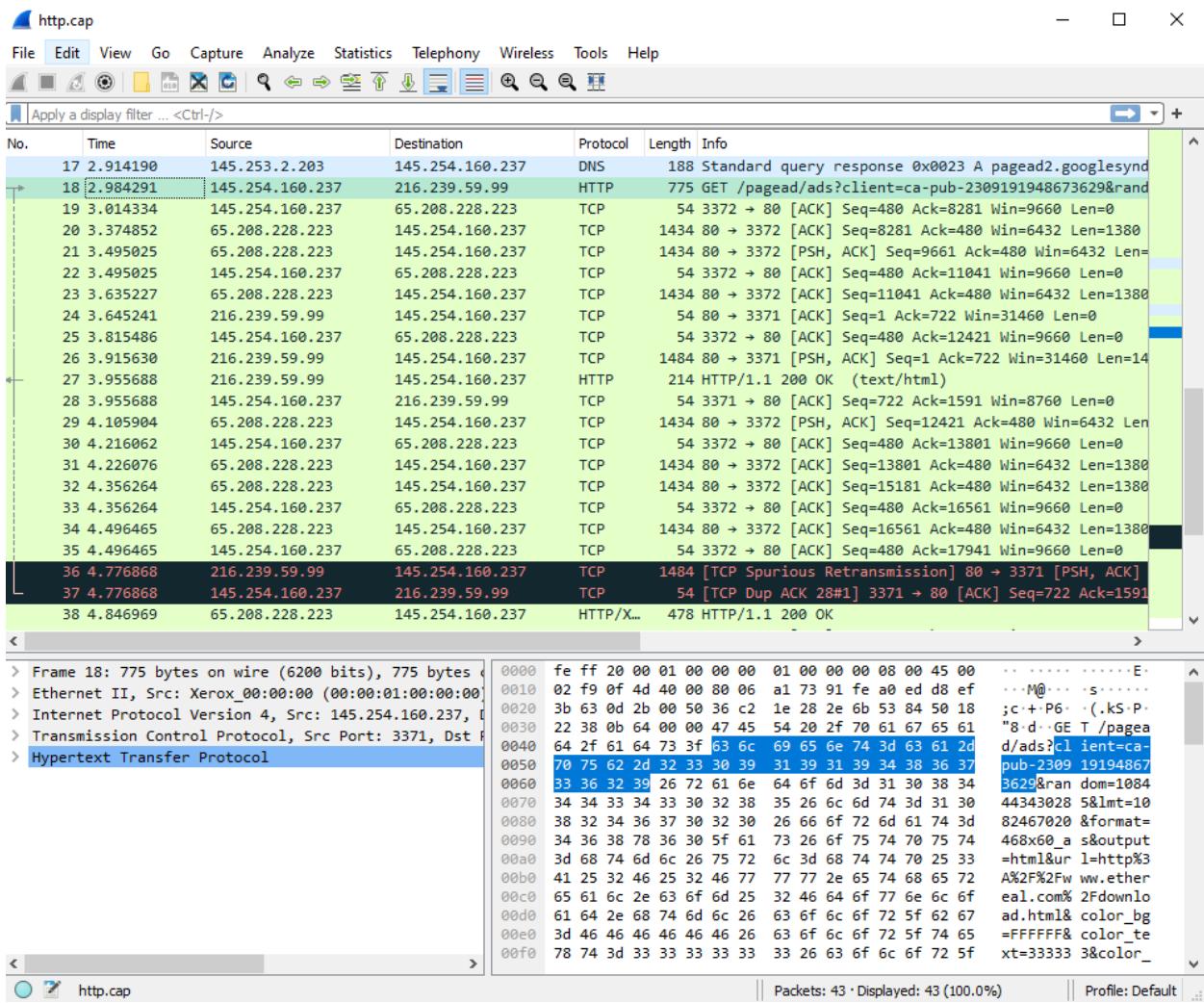


Figure 7: Capture file http.cap open on Wireshark

It is important to create filters that show only packets according to a filtering rule to facilitate the analysis of a given capture. This will isolate the particular exchange or the analysis of a specific protocol. For that, we use the **Filter** section in the top bar, highlighted in Figure 8.

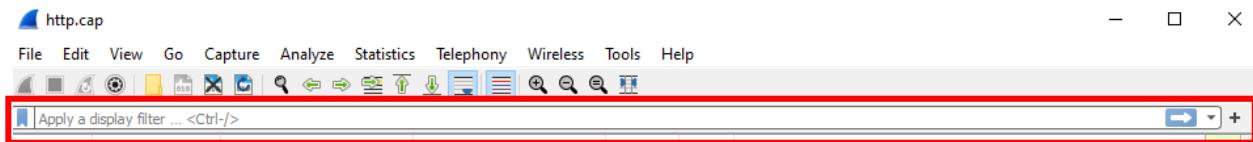


Figure 8: Feature which allow filtering packets for display purposes.

You can create filtering rules. A rule is based on the different packet header fields for known protocols.

- Type the rule **http** (under “*Apply a display filter*”) and either click on the (blue) forward arrow on the right or just press **Enter**.
The number of packets displayed will reduce from 43 to 4.

Click on the “X” (red) button that appears before the arrow to remove the filtering rule.

- Type the rule **ip.dst==145.254.160.237** and press **Enter**.
The number of packets displayed will reduce from 43 to 23.
Remove the filtering rule.

You can create multiple combined filtering rules using the following operators:

- **&&** (AND)
- **||** (OR)
- **!** (NOT)

For example, if we want all packets with an IP destination equal to 145.254.160.237 and with a source or destination port different from 80:

- Type the rule **ip.dst == 145.254.160.237 && !tcp.port == 80** and press **Enter**.
The number of packets displayed will reduce from 43 to 1.
Remove the filtering rule.

Read more about *Display Filtering* and examples in:

<https://wiki.wireshark.org/DisplayFilters>

You can also provide some description for the filter from “+” button, highlighted in Figure 9 to describe the functionality and why the filter is created.

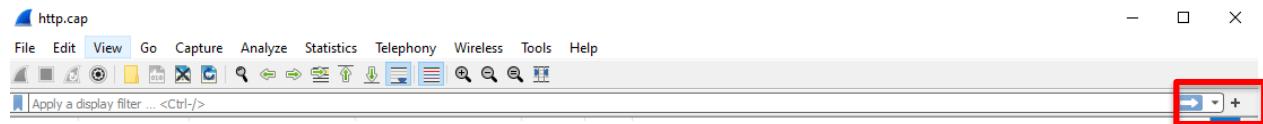


Figure 9: Provide description to the filter using “+” button.

The http.cap file is no longer needed, so close it.

Analysing local ICMP traffic

In this part, you will ping another PC on the LAN (illustrated in Figure 10) and capture **ICMP requests and replies** using Wireshark. You will also look inside the packets captured for specific information. This analysis should help to clarify how packet headers are used to transport data to their destination.

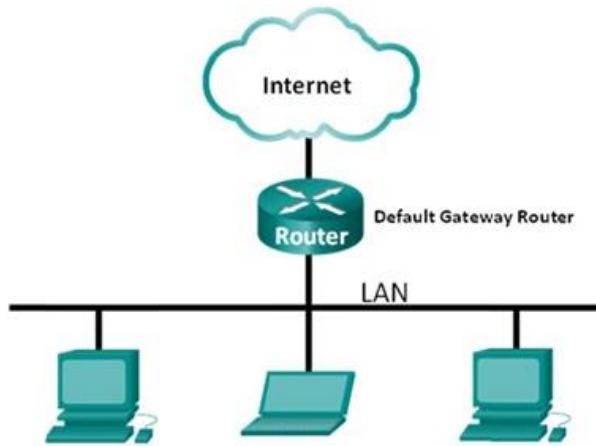
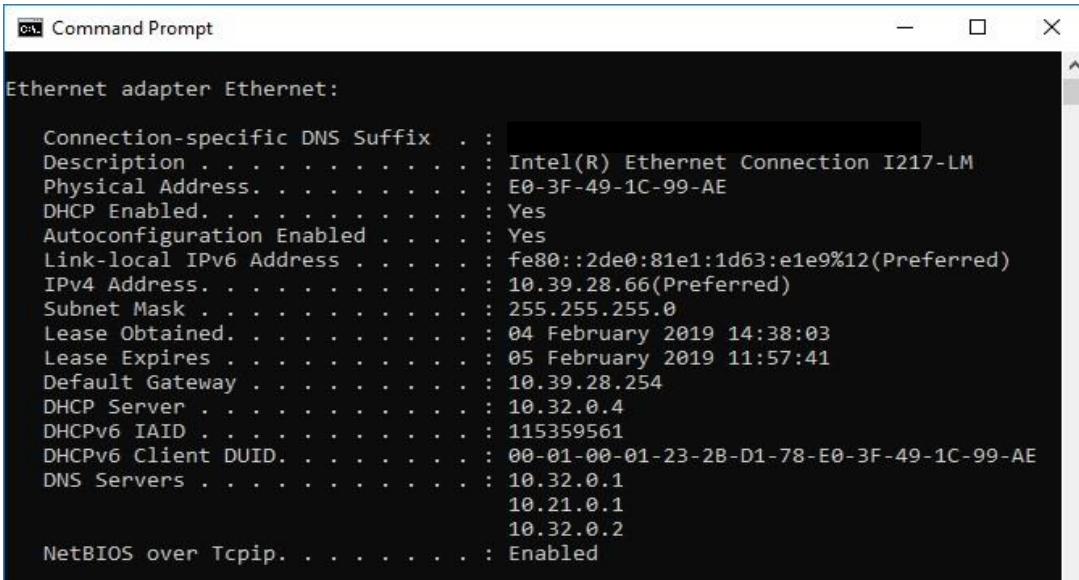


Figure 10: Typical LAN topology.

Step 1: Retrieve your PC's interface addresses.

For this lab, you will need to retrieve your PC's IP address and its network interface card (NIC) physical address, also called the MAC address.

- a. Open a command prompt window: **Start → cmd (select Command Prompt)**
- b. Type **ipconfig /all**, and then press **Enter**.
- c. Note your PC interface's IP address and MAC (physical) address, as shown in Figure 11.



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Command Prompt

Ethernet adapter Ethernet:

Connection-specific DNS Suffix . . . . . : Intel(R) Ethernet Connection I217-LM
Description . . . . . : Intel(R) Ethernet Connection I217-LM
Physical Address . . . . . : E0-3F-49-1C-99-AE
DHCP Enabled. . . . . : Yes
Autoconfiguration Enabled . . . . . : Yes
Link-local IPv6 Address . . . . . : fe80::2de0:81e1:1d63:e1e9%12(Preferred)
IPv4 Address. . . . . : 10.39.28.66(Preferred)
Subnet Mask . . . . . : 255.255.255.0
Lease Obtained. . . . . : 04 February 2019 14:38:03
Lease Expires . . . . . : 05 February 2019 11:57:41
Default Gateway . . . . . : 10.39.28.254
DHCP Server . . . . . : 10.32.0.4
DHCPv6 IAID . . . . . : 115359561
DHCPv6 Client DUID. . . . . : 00-01-00-01-23-2B-D1-78-E0-3F-49-1C-99-AE
DNS Servers . . . . . : 10.32.0.1
                                         10.21.0.1
                                         10.32.0.2
NetBIOS over Tcpip. . . . . : Enabled

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Figure 11: Output of command ipconfig /all

- d. Ask a colleague for him/her PC's IP address and provide your PC's IP address to him/her.
Do not provide your MAC address at this time.

Step 2: Start Wireshark and begin capturing data.

- a. On your PC, **launch Wireshark**.
- b. After Wireshark starts, click on the **Capture Interfaces** (round icon highlighted in Figure 12).
Several LAN connections may appear. When multiple interfaces are listed and you are unsure which interface to capture, proceed to the next step (2c).
- c. Expand each arrow beside the interfaces to see details, see Figure 12.

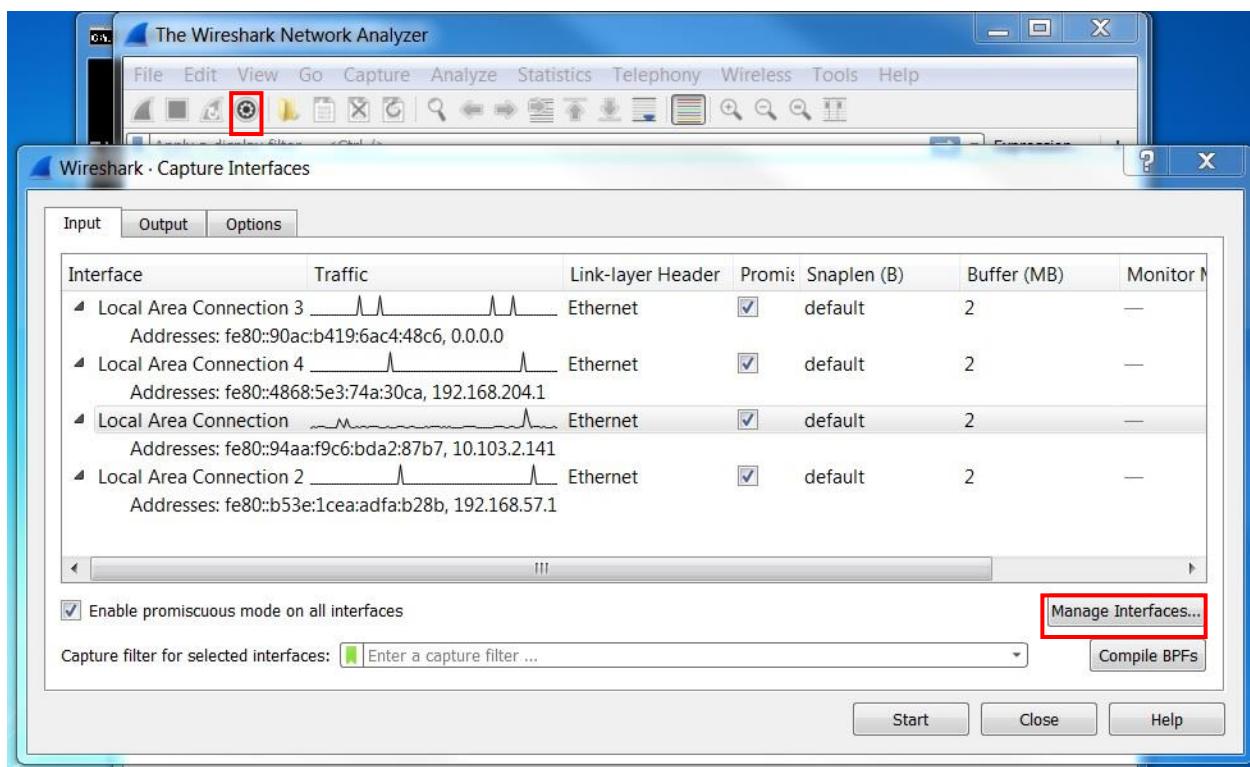


Figure 12: Selecting an interface to capture.

- d. Click on the **Manage Interfaces** button (also highlighted in Figure 12) to see further details as illustrated in Figure 13.

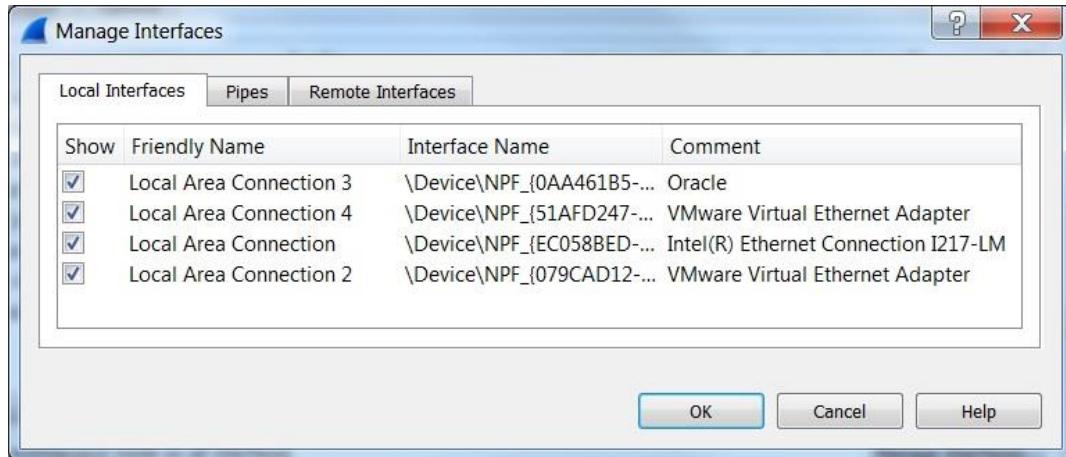


Figure 13: Manage Interfaces screen.

- e. Go back to the Capture Interfaces screen. If you click "Cancel", you simply go back to the Capture Interface screen as it was displayed previously. If you click "OK", the Capture Interfaces screen will display the list of interfaces with updated names, as shown in Figure 14.

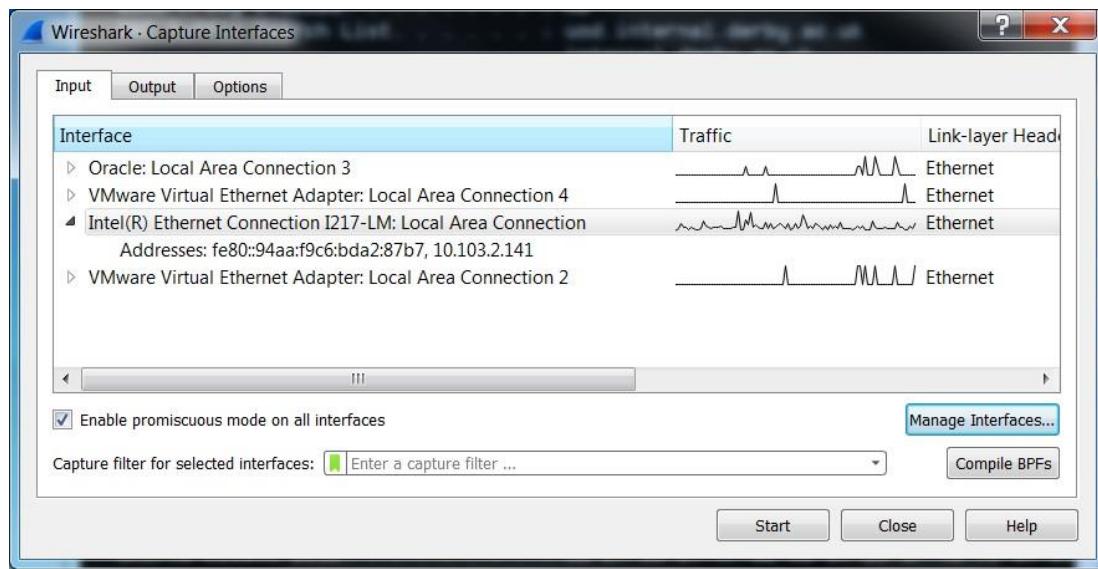


Figure 14: Updated interface names.

- f. Identify the interface related to the IP address of your PC.
- g. Select the correct interface, as illustrated in Figure 15.
- h. Click **Start** to initiate the data capture.

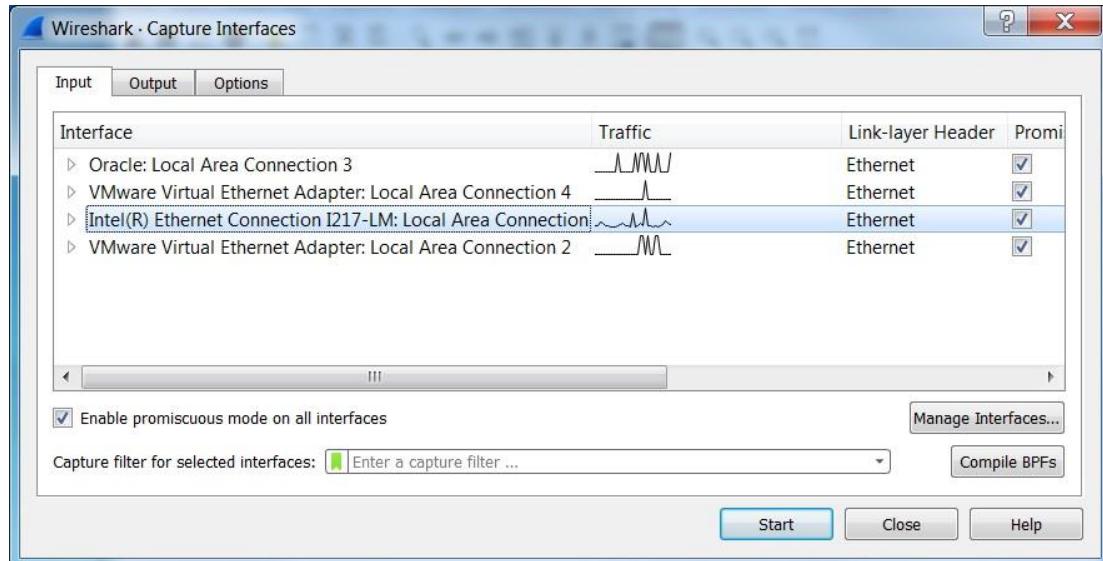


Figure 15: Interface selected for start of data capture.

Information will start scrolling down the top section in Wireshark. The data lines will appear in different colors based on protocol, as shown in Figure 16.

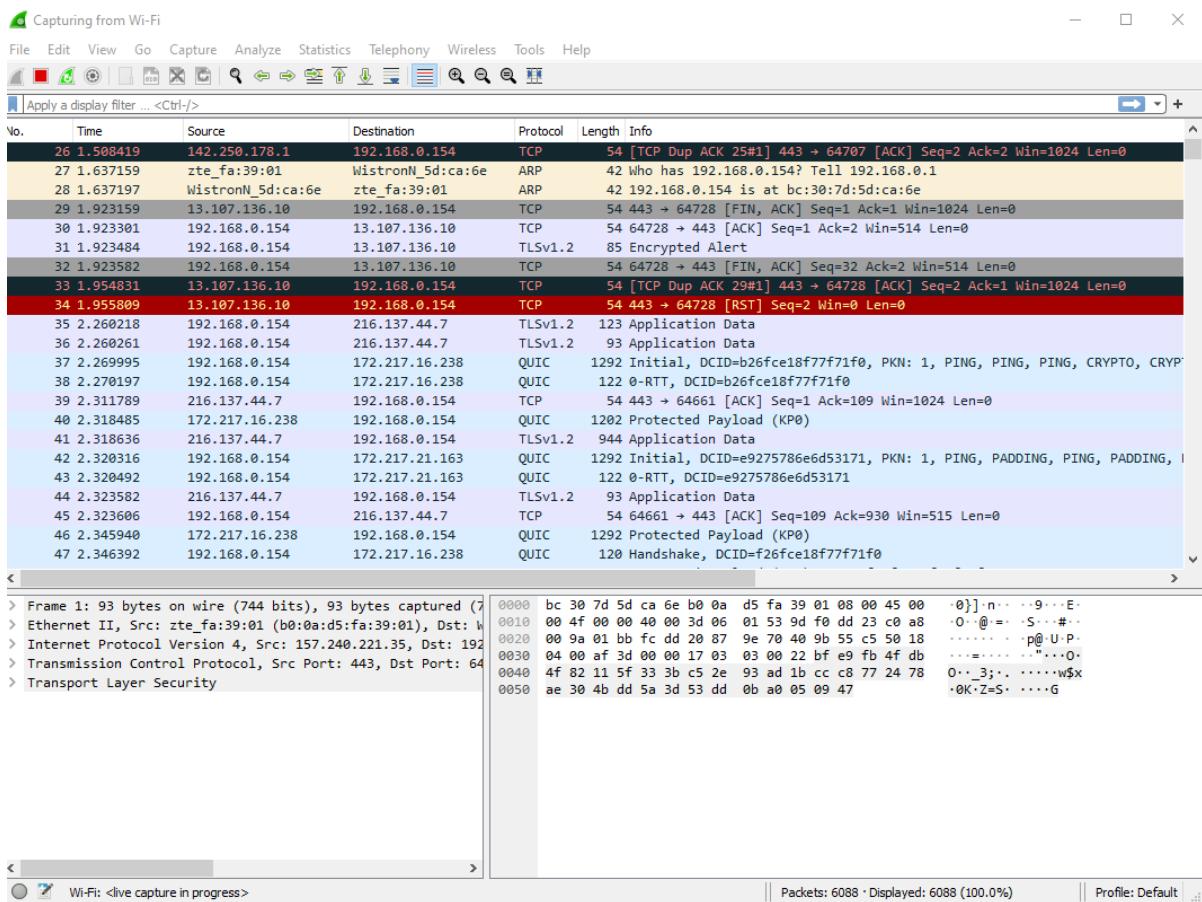


Figure 16: Live capture of the selected interface.

This information can scroll by very quickly depending on what communication is taking place between your PC and the LAN.

Since we are only interested in displaying ICMP (ping) PDUs, you should apply a filter as discussed in part I of this tutorial. This filtering is illustrated in Figure 17.

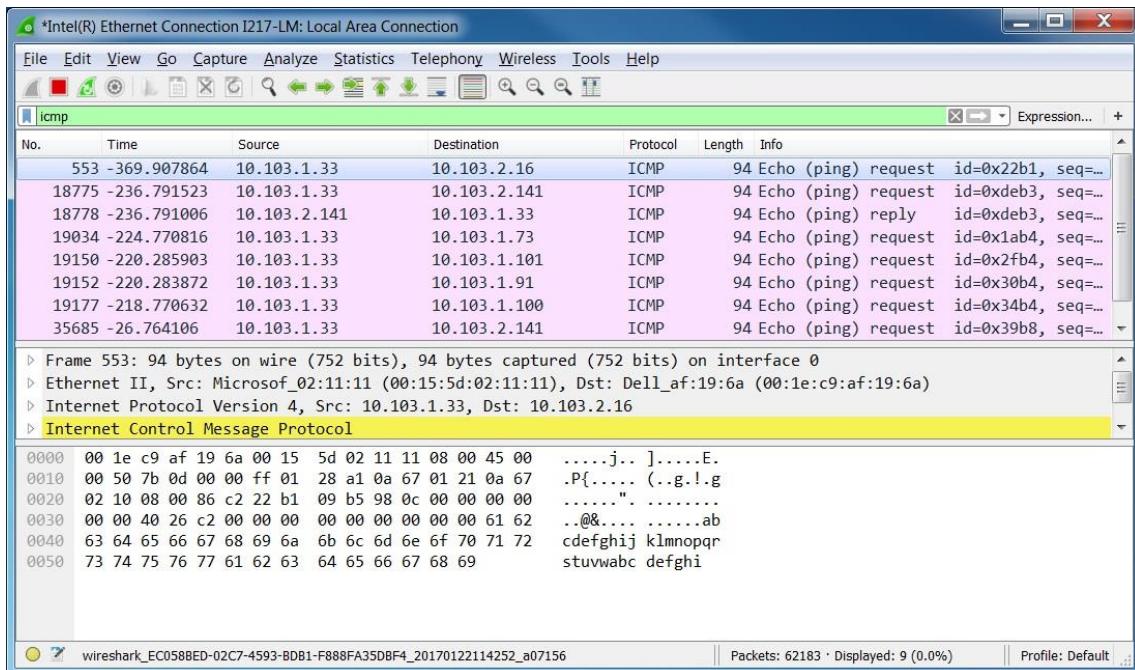


Figure 17: Data capture filtered to shown only ICMP PDUs.

This filter causes all data in the top window to disappear, but you are still capturing the traffic on the interface. Make sure you go to the last packet captured – you can do that in two ways: via the **Go** menu or using the key combination **Ctrl+End**.

- Bring forward the command prompt window that you opened earlier and ping the IP address that you received from a colleague – refer to Figure 18.
Notice that you start seeing data related to this ping appearing in the top window of Wireshark again.

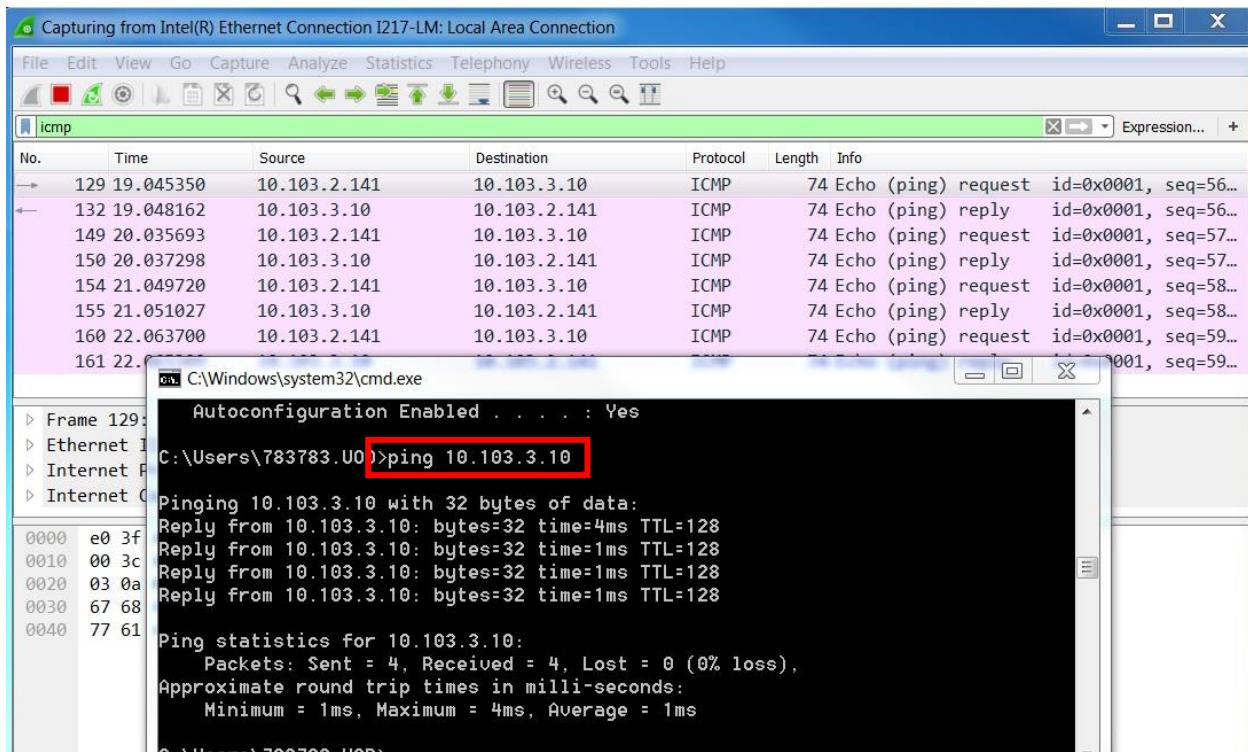


Figure 18: Pinging a colleague's PC and viewing ICMP packets.

- Stop capturing data by clicking the **Stop Capture** (red) icon.

Step 3: Examine the captured data.

In Step 3, examine the data that was generated by the ping requests to your colleague's PC and respective replies. As you know, Wireshark data is displayed in three sections:

- The **top section** displays the list of PDU frames captured with a summary of the IP packet information listed.
- The **bottom left section** lists PDU information for the frame selected in the top part of the screen and separates a captured PDU frame by its protocol layers.
- The **bottom right section** displays the raw data of each layer. The raw data is displayed in both hexadecimal and ASCII formats.

- a. Click on an ICMP request PDU frame in the top section of Wireshark. Notice that the *Source* column has your PC's IP address, and the *Destination* contains the IP address of the colleague's PC you pinged. Refer to Figure 19.

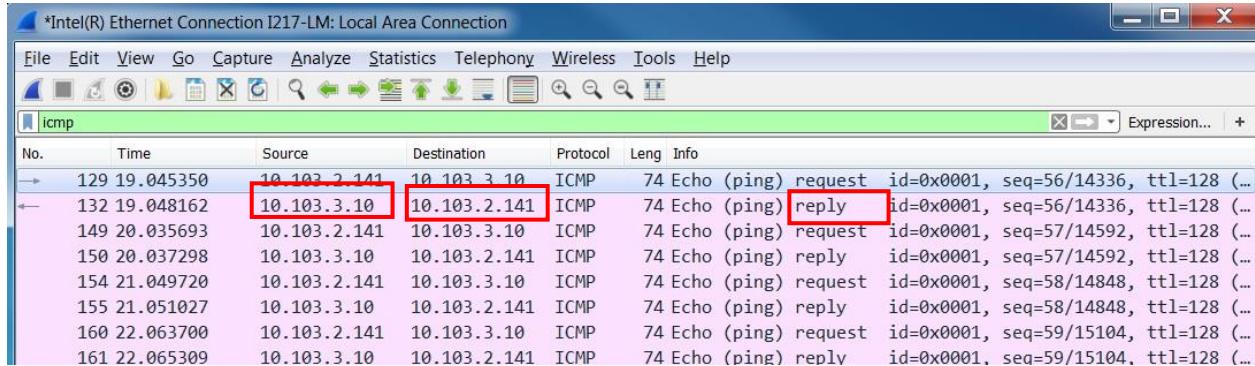


Figure 19: Analysing ICMP requests in the top section of Wireshark.

- b. With this PDU frame still selected in the top section, navigate to the **bottom left section**. Click the **right arrow** of the Ethernet II row (highlighted in Figure 20) to view the Destination and Source MAC addresses (see Figure 20).

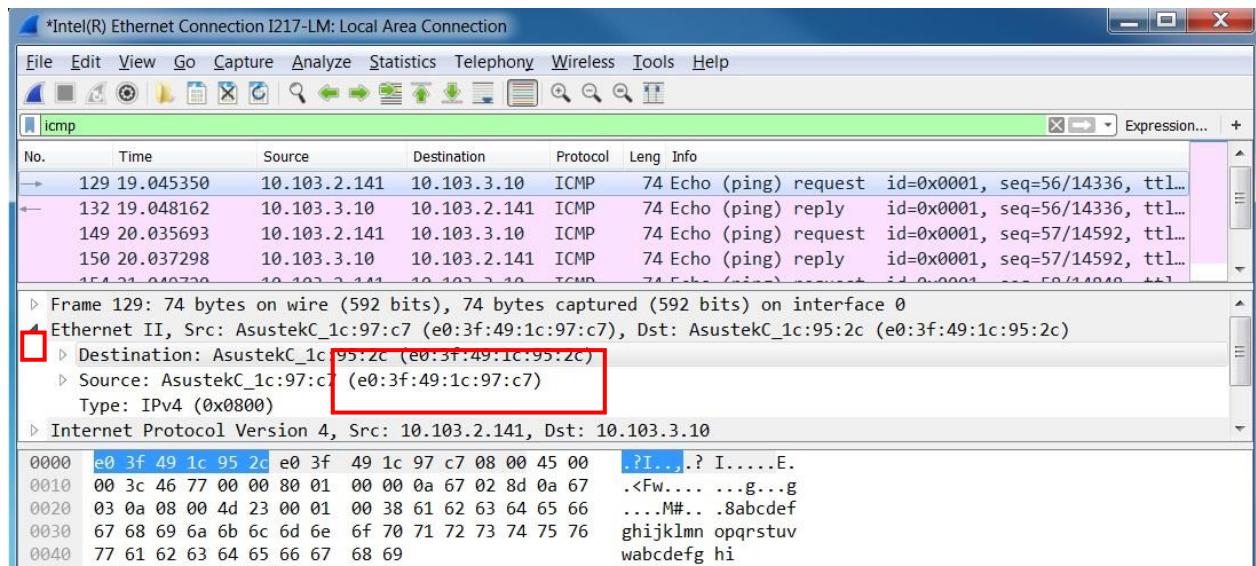


Figure 20: PDU information for the ICMP request selected on the top part of the screen.

- Does the Source MAC address match your PC's interface?
- Does the Destination MAC address match the MAC address that of your colleague's?
- How is the MAC address of the pinged PC obtained by your PC?

Note: As you can see on the captured ICMP request/reply, ICMP data is encapsulated inside an IPv4 packet PDU (IPv4 header) which is then encapsulated in an Ethernet II frame PDU (Ethernet II header) for transmission on the LAN, as seen in the lecture. Figure 21 illustrates the encapsulation and the ICMP data/payload.

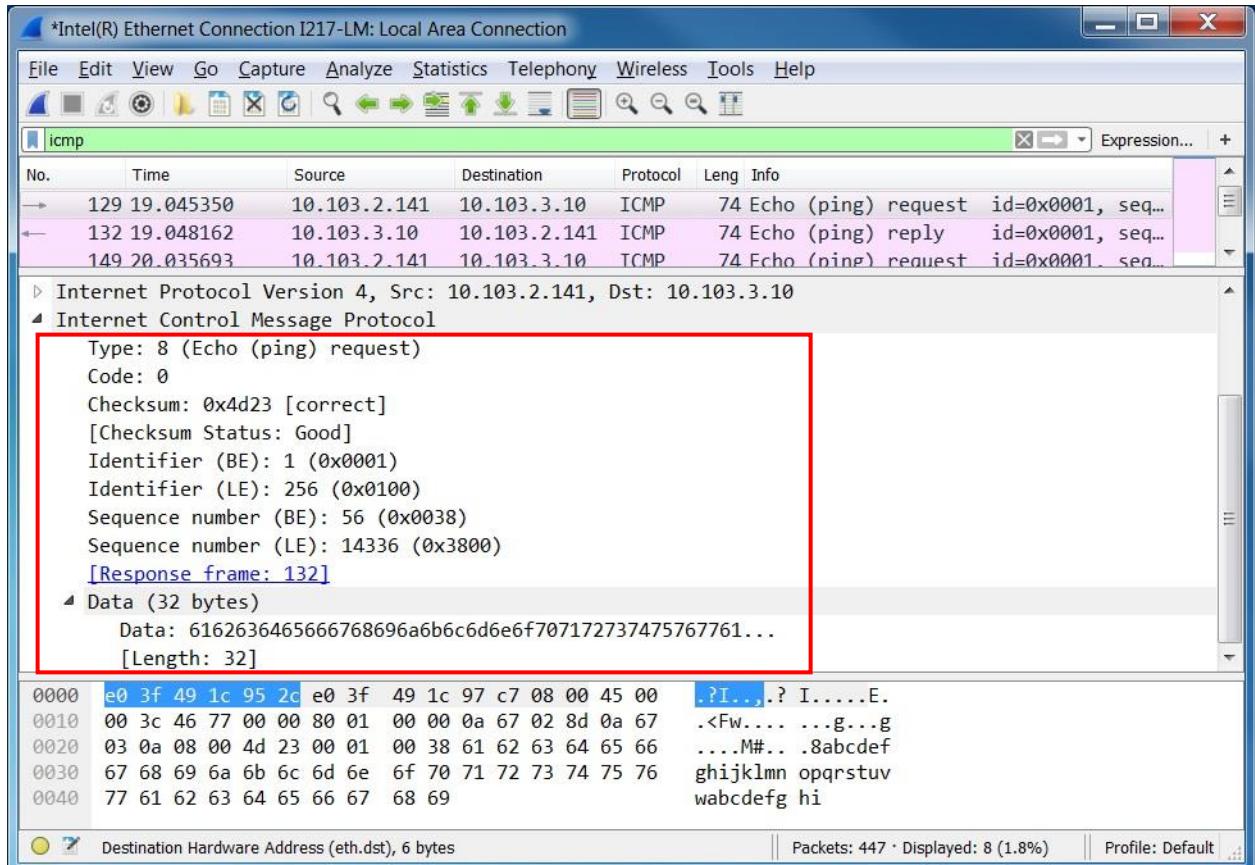


Figure 21: Content of the encapsulated ICMP data/payload.

If you want, you can save this capture via the **File → Save As** option from the menu or simply close it without saving via **File → Close, Continue without Saving**.

Analysing remote ICMP traffic ping

You will now ping remote hosts (hosts not on the LAN) and examine the generated data from those pings. You will then determine what is different about this data from the data examined for the local ping.

Step 1: Start capturing data on interface.

- Click on the **Capture Interfaces** icon to bring up the list of interfaces again.
- Make sure you select the LAN interface, and then click **Start**.
- With the capture active, ping the following three website URLs – please note that you should ping the first, wait for a few replies, then the second and so on. Just pressing **Enter**, will cause a new command prompt to appear. Figure 22 illustrates the process.
 - www.google.co.uk
 - www.warwick.ac.uk
 - www.bbc.co.uk

You can stop capturing data by clicking on the (red) **Stop Capture** icon when you are done.

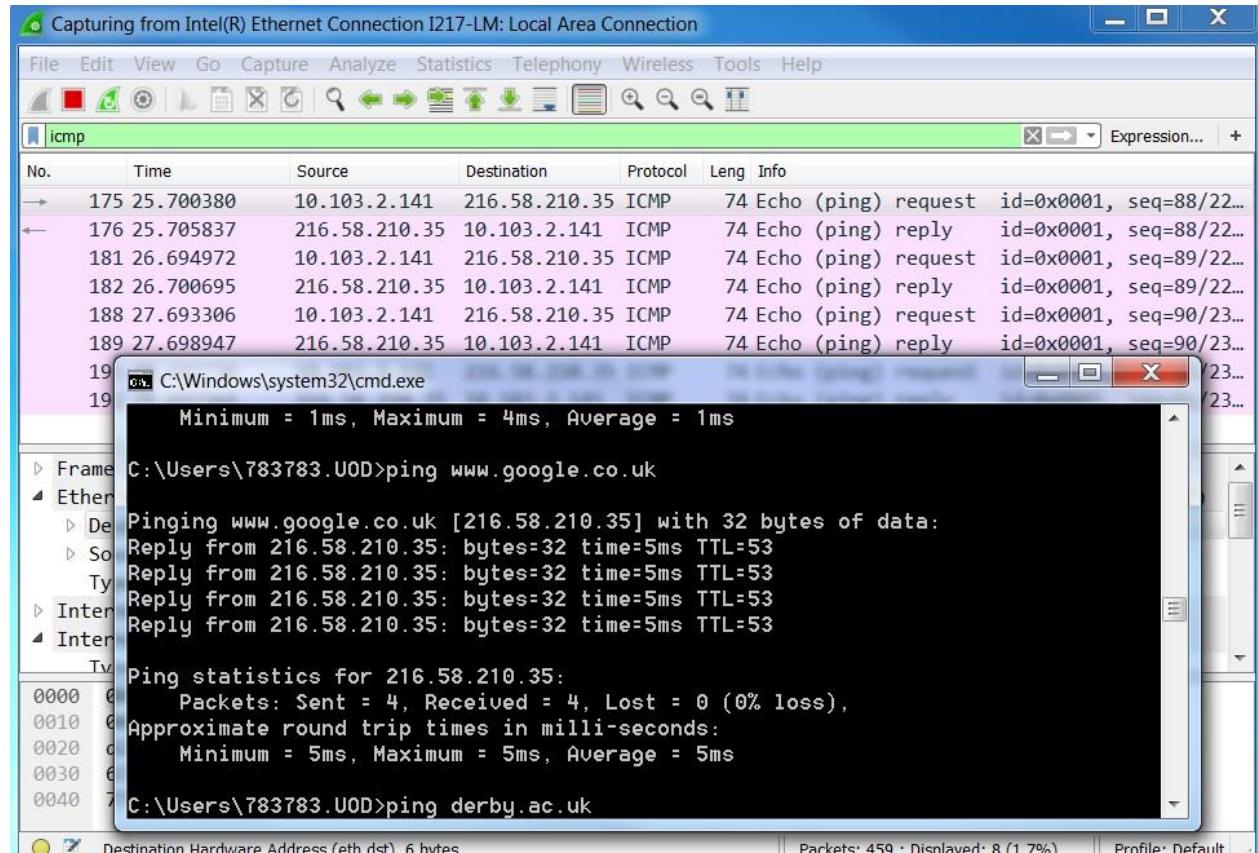


Figure 22: Pinging website URLs and viewing ICMP data in Wireshark.

Step 2: Examining and analyzing the data from the remote hosts.

Review the captured data in Wireshark. When you ping the URLs listed, notice that the Domain Name Server (DNS) translates each URL to an IP address. Therefore, it will be helpful to remove the “icmp” filter to see the packets related to the *DNS query* and the *DNS query response* for each URL. Figure 23 illustrates the removal of the filter and a DNS query.

Tip: It might be helpful to use filter “dns” first and then “icmp”.

Make note of the IP address corresponding to each URL you pinged and recover their corresponding MAC addresses.

www.google.co.uk - IP: MAC:

www.warwick.ac.uk - IP: MAC:

www.bbc.co.uk - IP: MAC:

- What is significant about this information?

- How does this information differ from the local ping information you obtained before?

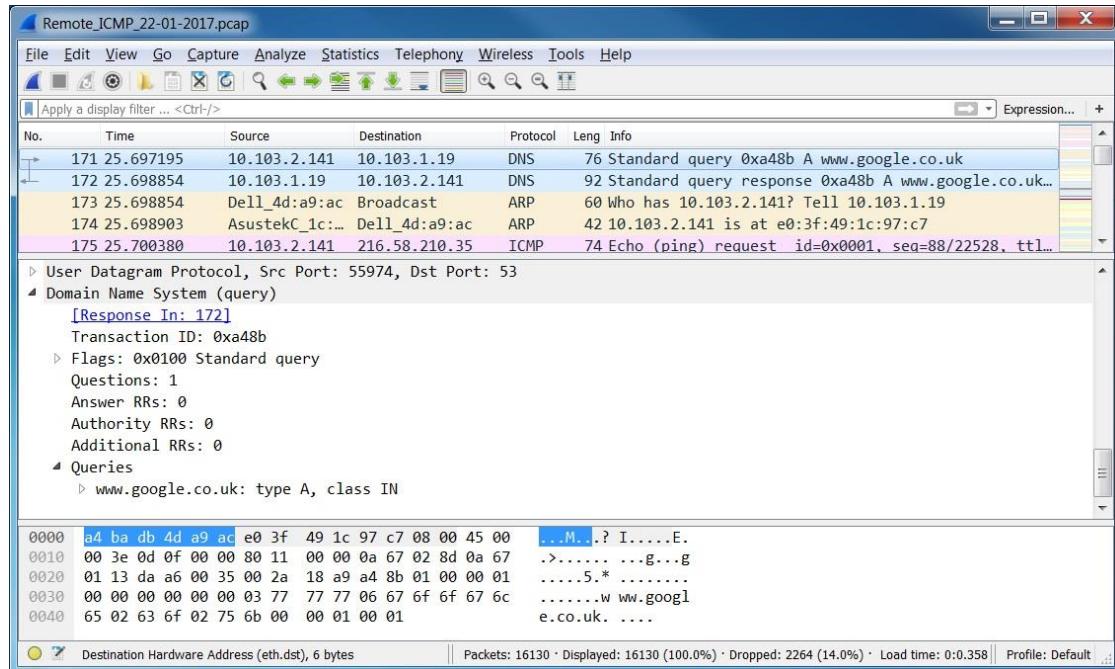


Figure 23: DNS query related to one of the URLs.

- Why does Wireshark show the actual MAC address of the local hosts, but not the actual MAC address for the remote hosts?

Read this link for further information about remote ICMP request/reply:

https://en.wikiversity.org/wiki/Wireshark/IPv4_remote

Homework (Optional)

Using safe and private VMs, play the role of both the attacker and the network administrator to capture and analyse network traffic to investigate an unauthorized access attempt on a computer within the network. Present and interpret the result.

References

- Wireshark website <https://www.wireshark.org/>
- Cisco Networking academy: Lab - Using Wireshark to View Network Traffic (** updated for version 2.x GUI).