

CS315: Lab Assignment 9

B Siddharth Prabhu

200010003@iitdh.ac.in

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1 Gathering Packet Trace: Getting all DHCP Message Types

In this lab, we explore DHCP (Dynamic Host Configuration Protocol), which is used extensively in corporate, university and home-network wired and wireless LANs to dynamically assign IP addresses to hosts, as well as to configure other network configuration information. Note that this lab has been done on a Linux Virtual Machine. Below is a screenshot of the commands used to remove the existing IP address of the interface, and release any existing DHCP address leases, followed by a screenshot of the packet trace when IP address is requested and received.

```
siddharth@DESKTOP-5490SID-LINUX:~$ sudo ip addr flush ens33
[sudo] password for siddharth:
siddharth@DESKTOP-5490SID-LINUX:~$ sudo dhclient -r
siddharth@DESKTOP-5490SID-LINUX:~$ sudo dhclient ens33
```

Figure 1: Flush IP address and Request

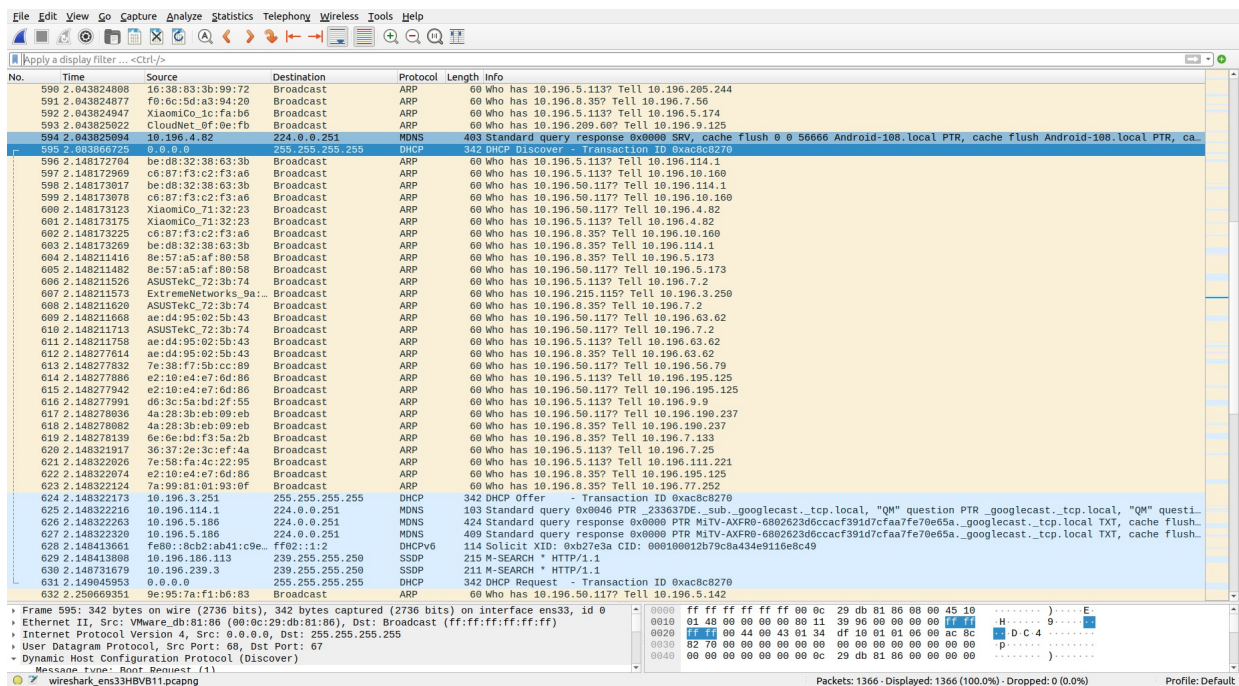


Figure 2: Packet Trace with DHCP

Then, we can filter out all DHCP messages by entering 'dhcp' in the display filter field.

2 Exploring DHCP

Firstly, let's focus on the **DHCP Discover** message. The packet details for the same are shown in Figure (3).

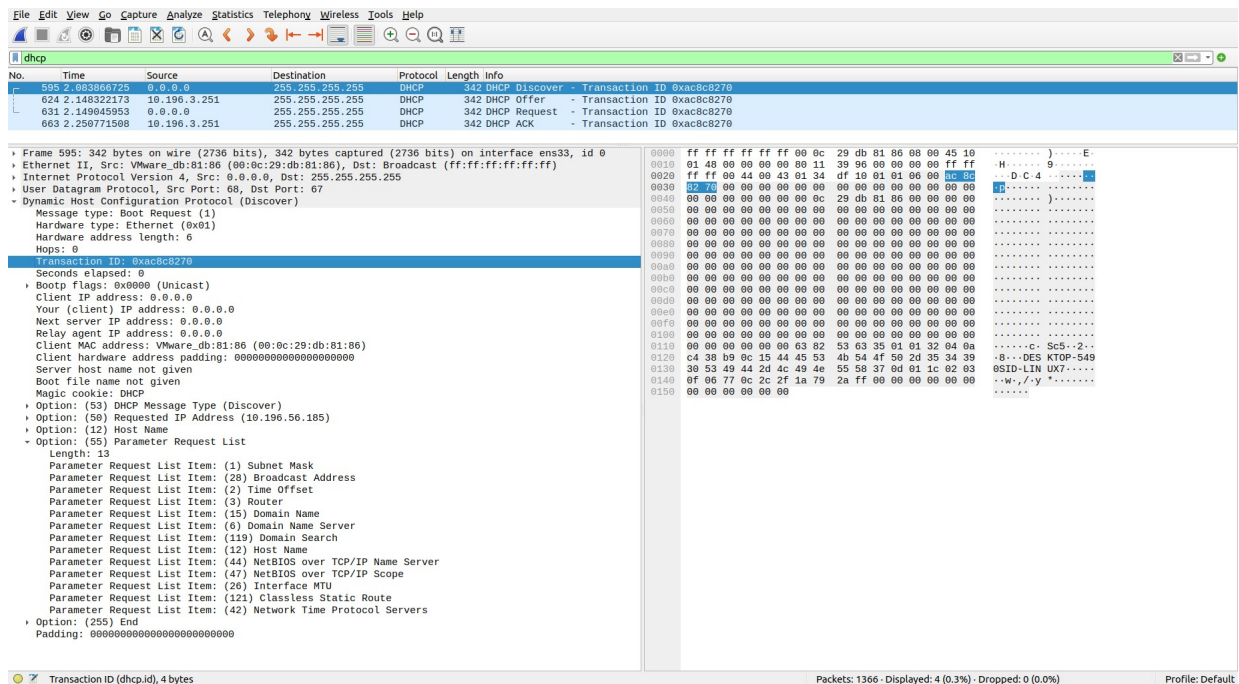


Figure 3: Packet Details for DHCP Discover Packet

(1) Is this DHCP Discover message sent out using UDP or TCP as the underlying transport protocol?

The DHCP Discover message is sent out using **UDP (User Datagram Protocol)** as the underlying transport layer protocol. DHCP requests and responses can be quite small, so using UDP instead of TCP helps to conserve bandwidth.

(2) What is the source IP address used in the IP datagram containing the Discover message? Is there anything special about this address? Explain.

The source IP address used in the IP datagram containing the Discover message is **0.0.0.0**. The host uses 0.0.0.0 as its own source address in IP since it has not yet been assigned an address.

(3) What is the destination IP address used in the datagram containing the Discover message. Is there anything special about this address? Explain.

The destination IP address used in the IP datagram containing the Discover message is **255.255.255.255**. This IP address is used when the host broadcasts the DHCPDISCOVER message on the subnet. When a DHCP server receives such a message, it replies to it with a DHCP OFFER message; other devices ignore the broadcast. Also, routers do not forward this message to any external network.

(4) What is the value in the transaction ID field of this DHCP Discover message?

The value in the transaction ID field of this DHCP Discover message is **0xac8c8270**.

(5) What are five pieces of information (beyond an IP address) that the client is suggesting or requesting to receive from the DHCP server as part of this DHCP transaction?

Five pieces of information that the client is seen to be requesting to receive from the DHCP server as part of the DHCP transaction are as follows:

- Subnet Mask
- Router
- Domain Name Server
- Network Time Protocol Servers
- Classless Static Route

Others include: NetBIOS over TCP/IP Scope, NetBIOS over TCP/IP Name Server, Time Offset, Domain Name, Domain Search, etc.

Now, let's look at the **DHCP Offer** message. The packet details for the same are shown in Figure (4) below.

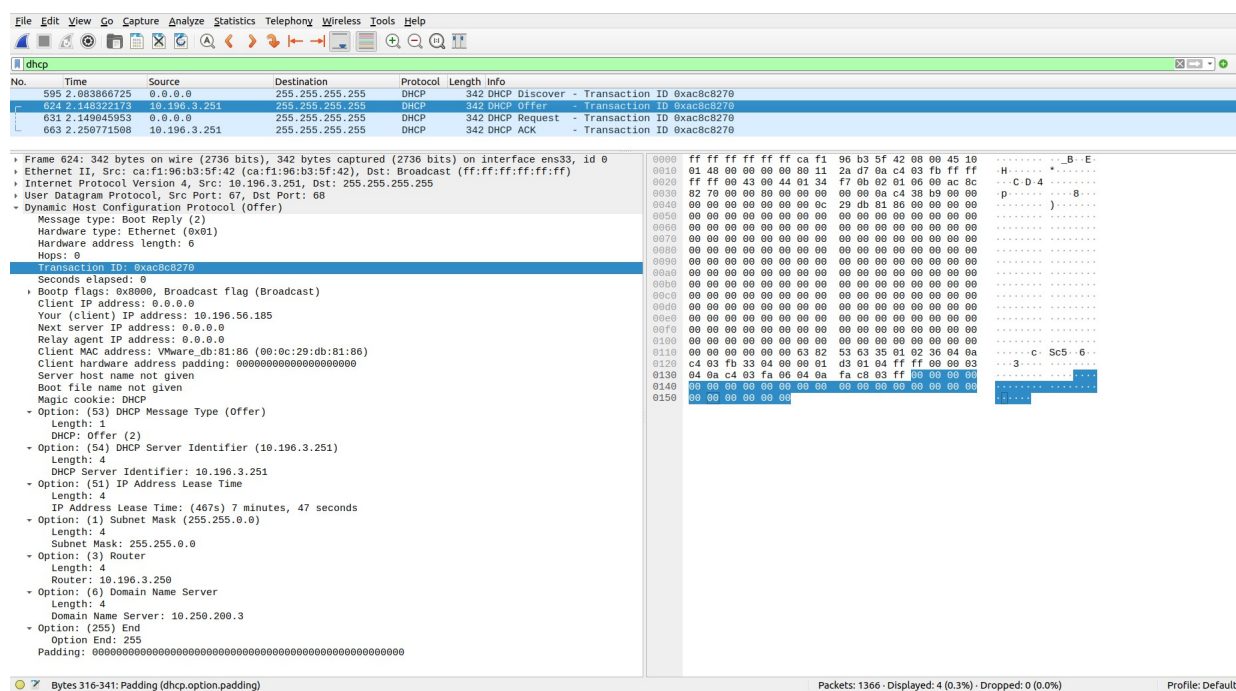


Figure 4: Packet Details for DHCP Offer Packet

(6) How do you know that this Offer message is being sent in response to the DHCP Discover message you studied in questions 1-5 above?

We can conclude that this Offer message is being sent in response to the DHCP Discover message, since the transaction ID (0xac8c8270) of the DHCP Offer message is the identical to that of the Discover message used in questions 1-5 above.

(7) What is the source IP address used in the IP datagram containing the Offer message? Is there anything special about this address? Explain.

The source IP address used in the IP datagram containing the DHCP Offer message is `10.196.3.251`. This is same as the DHCP Server identifier. This is required since there may be multiple DHCP servers in the network, so the client must know which server is sending the offer message.

(8) What is the destination IP address used in the datagram containing the Offer message? Is there anything special about this address? Explain.

The destination IP address used in the IP datagram containing the DHCP Offer message is `255.255.255.255`. This means that the DHCP server is broadcasting the DHCP Offer message as well. This is because the client doesn't have an assigned IP address yet. The client understands that the Offer is meant for it due to the transaction ID being the same.

(9) Now inspect the options field in the DHCP Offer message. What are five pieces of information that the DHCP server is providing to the DHCP client in the DHCP Offer message?

The information that the DHCP server is providing to the DHCP client in the DHCP Offer message is as follows:

- DHCP Server Identifier (10.196.3.251)
- IP Address Lease Time (467 seconds)
- Subnet Mask (255.255.0.0)
- Router (10.196.3.250)
- Domain Name Server (10.250.200.3)

The client may have received OFFERS from multiple DHCP servers and so a second phase is needed, with two more mandatory messages – the client-to-server DHCP Request message, and the server-to-client DHCP ACK message is needed. But at least the client knows there is at least one DHCP server out there! So, let's take a look at the **DHCP Request** message, remembering that although we've already seen a Discover message in our trace, that is not always the case when a DHCP request message is sent. (Refer to Figure (5) for the Packet Details of the DHCP Request message.)

(10) What is the UDP source port number in the IP datagram containing the first DHCP Request message in your trace? What is the UDP destination port number being used?

The UDP source port number in the IP datagram containing the first DHCP Request message is `68`. The UDP destination port number being used is `67`.

(11) What is the source IP address in the IP datagram containing this Request message? Is there anything special about this address? Explain.

The source IP address used in the IP datagram containing the Request message is `0.0.0.0`. The host uses 0.0.0.0 as its own source address in IP since it still has not yet been assigned an address.

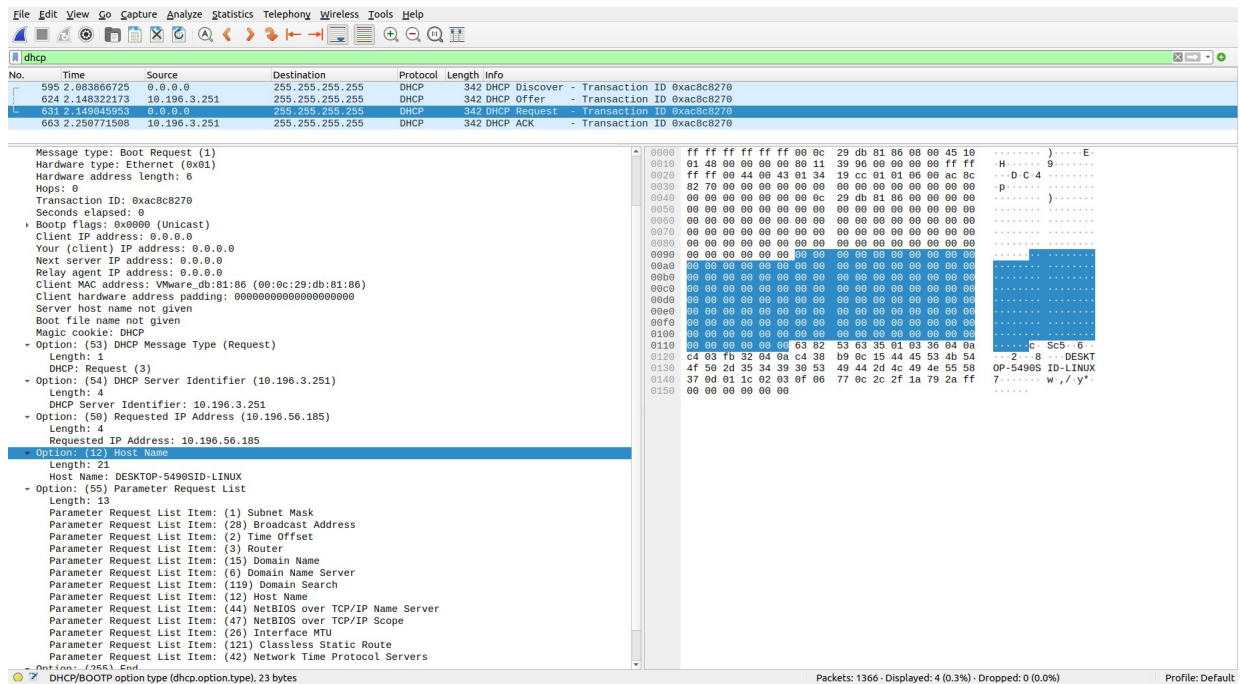


Figure 5: Packet Details for DHCP Request Packet

(12) What is the destination IP address used in the datagram containing this Request message. Is there anything special about this address? Explain.

The destination IP address used in the IP datagram containing the Request message is 255.255.255.255. This IP address is used when the host broadcasts the DHCPREQUEST message on the subnet, letting all DHCP servers know which one the client has chosen to get serviced by.

(13) What is the value in the transaction ID field of this DHCP Request message? Does it match the transaction IDs of the earlier Discover and Offer messages?

The value in the transaction ID field of this DHCP Request message is 0xac8c8270. Yes, it matches the transaction IDs of the earlier Discover and Offer messages.

(14) What differences do you see between the entries in the ‘parameter request list’ option in this Request message and the same list option in the earlier Discover message?

There are **no differences** in the ‘parameter request list’ option in this Request message and the same list option in the earlier Discover message.

Lastly, let’s look at the DHCP ACK message. This is the last message in the IP address allocation procedure, and the packet details of the same are in Figure (6).

(15) What is the source IP address in the IP datagram containing this ACK message? Is there anything special about this address? Explain.

The source IP address used in the IP datagram containing the DHCP ACK message is 10.196.3.251. This is same as the DHCP Server identifier.

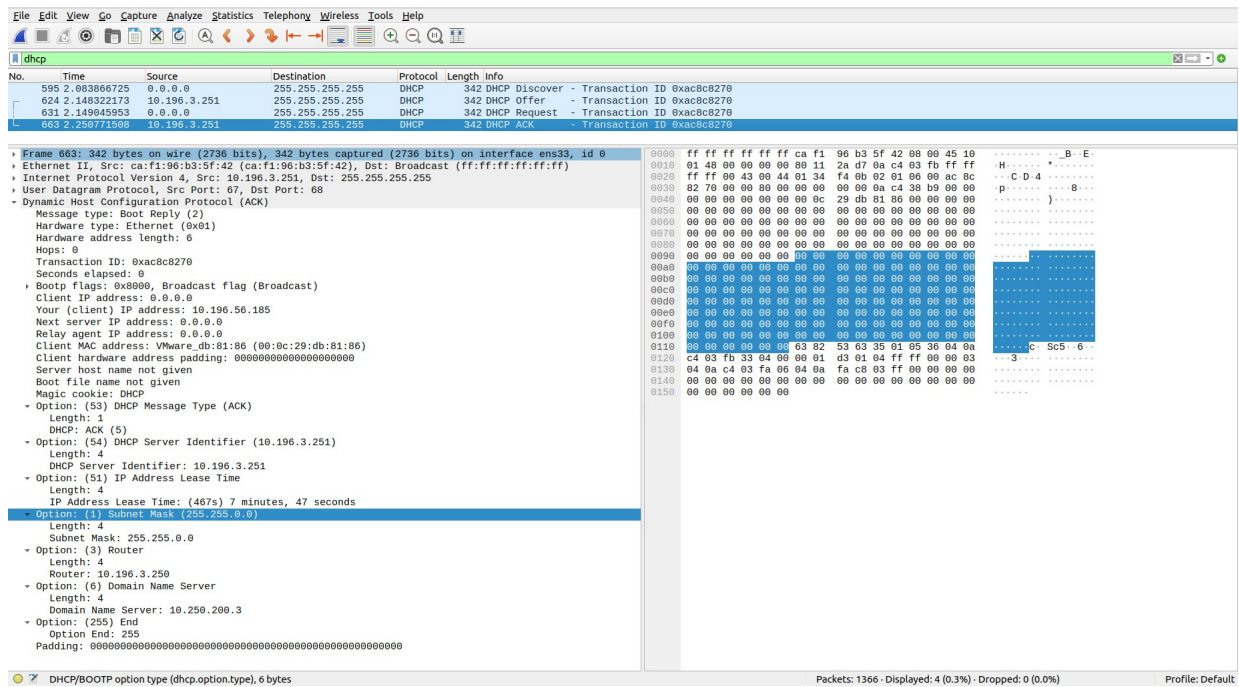


Figure 6: Packet Details for DHCP ACK Packet

(16) What is the destination IP address used in the datagram containing this ACK message. Is there anything special about this address? Explain.

The destination IP address used in the IP datagram containing the ACK message is `255.255.255.255`. This IP address is used by the DHCP Server to broadcast the message, since the client still doesn't have an IP address of its own, and from here on out, the client will be referred to using the IP address assigned to it in this message.

(17) What is the name of the field in the DHCP ACK message (as indicated in the Wireshark window) that contains the assigned client IP address?

The name of the field in the DHCP ACK message that contains the assigned client IP address is `Your (client) IP address` and can be referred in the display filter field using `dhcp.ip.your`.

(18) For how long a time (the so-called "lease time") has the DHCP server assigned this IP address to the client?

The DHCP server assigned this IP address to the client for a duration of **467 seconds** (7 minutes, 47 seconds). This information is in Option (51), which is called 'IP Address Lease Time'.

(19) What is the IP address (returned by the DHCP server to the DHCP client in this DHCP ACK message) of the first-hop router on the default path from the client to the rest of the Internet?

The IP address of the first-hop router on the default path from the client to the rest of the Internet is found to be `10.196.3.250`. This information is in Option (3), which is called 'Router'.