



Intent Based Application

*Group Project Report for Advanced Network Architectures
And Wireless Systems*

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Introduction

This project is aimed to design and develop an intent based application. The scenario is the following: *"Consider a set of clients that can communicate through a redundant network (e.g., based on a spine-leaf topology.) An external application can request to install paths between host pairs, by just specifying the endpoint identifiers, we refer to this as an host-2-host intent. The network has to allow communications only among the specified host pairs. Moreover, the network has to automatically reconfigure in case of link failures. Design and realize a system that allows users to request and withdraw host-to-host intents, and configures the underlying network accordingly."*

The objectives of the projects are:

1. *"Implement a Floodlight module that exposes a RESTful interface allowing clients to create/delete host-to-host instents. The module will then dynamically install and update flow rules in the network to allow the communication among specified pairs. Possible path switches must occur transparently to clients."*
2. *"Test the overall system using Mininet and Floodlight, devising proper scenarios to demonstrate the above functionalities."*

Chapter 1

Implementation

The objective of the intent based application is mainly to expose a REST interface to allow the request of an **intent**. An **intent** is a request, done by an host, to have a link with another host, this link must tolerate link failures. Hence the controller must implement a module that is in charge of:

- Computing the best path between hostA and hostB
- Installing in the switches of the network the proper rules to establish this path
- Being responsive in case of a link failures and establishing a new path to maintain the link alive

In the implementation of the application we have re-used some Floodlight modules extending some classes where needed. In the following sections we will analyze the choices done and the classes extended in order to implement the features shown previously.

1.1 Floodlight Functionalities

1.1.1 How To Compute A Path: Routing Service

Floodlight by default exposes a REST inteface to retrieve a path between a source (switch DPID and port ID) and a destination (switch DPID and port ID).

The computation of the path is given from the method *getPath(srcDpid, srcPort, dstDpid, dstPort)* of the class implementing the interface *IRoutingService*¹.

Thus the idea is to reuse this function in order to retrieve the path between hostA and hostB.

1.1.2 How To Install A Path: Forwarding Base

Once we have the path we need to install it inside the switches of the network in order to have the path established and working.

To do so Floodlight provides the abstract class ForwardingBase² which is in charge of implementing a forwarding module. The forwarding module "is responsible for programming flows to a switch in response to a policy decision". The implementation of the abstract class must implement the following abstract method:

```
1 public abstract Command processPacketInMessage(IOFSwitch sw, OFPacketIn pi,  
2 IRoutingDecision decision, FloodlightContext cntx);
```

The Floodlight standard implementation of this abstract class is the class Forwarding³.

¹net.floodlightcontroller.routing.IRoutingService

²net.floodlightcontroller.routing.ForwardingBase

³net.floodlightcontroller.forwarding.Forwarding

1.2 Floodlight Extended Forwarding Module

Thus the idea is to extend Forwarding and redefine the method `processPacketInMessage` which is in charge of defining what the module must do when a `packetIn` arrives.

In our scenario the operations that must be performed when a `packetIn` arrives are:

- Retrieving the path using the method `getPath(..)` provided by `IRoutingService`
- Installing the path using the method `PushRoute(..)` inherited by this module from `ForwardingBase`

It is important to underline that before doing so, the logic of the method must check if the `packetIn` arriving is due to the packet coming from the `hostA` that has asked the intent and that has as destination the `hostB` indicated in the intent.

To do this check it is needed a data structure that is in charge of maintaining the list of intent asked and established.

1.3 REST API For Establishing An Intent

When the `hostA` wants to send an intent to make a connection with `hostB` it has to use the REST API. This API is provided by the classes: `IntentWebRoutable`, `AddNewIntent`, `DelIntent` and `GetIntent`; these classes use methods from `IntentForwarding`.

When the REST API receives the intent, it establishes it inserting an entry in a dedicated data structure where it is indicated:

- The Source
- The Destination
- Intent Timeout

Then the intent will be pushed in the network when the source host tries to send a packet to the destination host. When this happens a `packetIn` sending from the first switch that receives the packet will be sent to the controller and will be handled by the forwarding module seen in 1.2

1.4 Responsiveness To Link Failures & Topology Changes

To be responsiveness to topology changes we can exploit the `ITopologyListener` interface. In fact in the Floodlight documentation for the `TopologyService` it is written: *"All the information about the current topology is stored in an immutable data structure called the topology instance. If there is any change in the topology, a new instance is created and the topology changed notification message is called. If other modules want to listen for changes in topology they can implement the ITopologyListener interface."*⁴.

Thus we can implement a class that implements `ITopologyListener` and that each time a topology change arrives it recompute the paths of intent involved in the topology change (i.e. the ones that has a link which doesn't work anymore). To do so we can use the `TopologyInstance` (updated before sending the notification message that the topology has changed) to understand which intent are involved in the topology change.

⁴<https://floodlight.atlassian.net/wiki/spaces/floodlightcontroller/pages/1343623/TopologyService+Dev>

Chapter 2

Testing