**A Lightweight Screen Sharing System for Local Area Networks (LAN)**

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1. **Introduction**

Screen sharing is a fundamental feature in various applications, ranging from remote desktop access to virtual classrooms. This paper presents the design and implementation of a screen-sharing system that allows a server to capture the host's screen and send it to a client over a network connection. The system, implemented in Java, utilizes Java’s networking and graphical libraries to provide an efficient, real-time screen-sharing solution. The goal of this project is to create a system that can transmit real-time screen data from a server to a client while maintaining low latency and a user-friendly experience. The system is designed for use in local area networks (LANs) and focuses on simplicity, efficiency, and cross-platform compatibility.

1. **Background**

2.1 **Screen Sharing Technology**

Screen sharing is used to allow one user to share their screen with others, enabling collaboration and remote assistance. Various technologies exist to enable screen sharing, ranging from proprietary solutions like VNC and RDP to open-source protocols like WebRTC. Each has its strengths and weaknesses, but they generally rely on capturing the screen and transmitting it over the network to one or more clients. According to Rouse (2019), technologies like VNC and RDP are widely used, but open-source protocols like WebRTC provide more flexibility and adaptability for real-time communications [5].

The challenge with screen sharing is minimizing the latency and bandwidth usage while maintaining a high quality of the transmitted image. Additionally, security is a crucial concern, as data may be exposed over the network [6].

2.2 **Java for Screen Sharing**

Java is an excellent choice for implementing a screen-sharing system due to its cross-platform capabilities, large ecosystem, and rich set of libraries. The Robot class in Java can be used to capture the screen as an image, and Java's Socket and ObjectOutputStream allow easy communication between the server and client. For displaying the screen on the client, Java Swing’s JLabel and ImageIcon are used, making the GUI design simple and adaptable. Java’s ability to run on any platform with a JVM also means that the system can be deployed on different operating systems without modification. According to Oracle Corporation (2023), Java’s platform independence makes it highly suitable for cross-platform applications such as screen sharing [1].

1. **System Design and Implementation**

3.1 **Architecture**

The screen-sharing system is built on a client-server architecture. In this architecture, the server is responsible for capturing the screen of the host device and transmitting it to the connected client(s). The client receives the transmitted image data and displays it in real-time. This approach ensures that the process relies on Java’s networking and GUI libraries to manage both communication and visualization.

3.2 **Technologies Used**

The system is implemented using Java, primarily for its cross-platform capabilities and its built-in libraries that simplify network communication and GUI creation. Key libraries and technologies used include:

* **Java Sockets**: For communication between the client and server.
* **Java Swing**: For creating the graphical user interface (GUI) on the client-side.
* **Java Robot**: For capturing the screen on the server-side.

3.3 **Implementation**

3.3.1 **Server Application**

The server application is responsible for capturing the screen and sending the captured images to all connected clients. The primary steps involved are:

1. **Socket Connection Setup**: The server listens for incoming connections from clients using a socket on a predefined port (in this case, port 12345). Once a connection is established, the server continuously captures the screen and sends it to the client.
2. **Screen Capture**: Java’s Robot class is used to capture the screen. The Robot class allows the program to capture the screen as a BufferedImage object. This image is then converted into a byte array for transmission over the network.
3. **Transmission**: The server serializes the captured image into a byte array and sends it to the client using an ObjectOutputStream. This allows the client to receive the image data and reconstruct it into a visual representation.

Below is the code snippet for the **Server Application**:

// Server setup

ServerSocket serverSocket = new ServerSocket(12345);

Socket socket = serverSocket.accept(); // Accept a client connection

ObjectOutputStream outputStream = new ObjectOutputStream(socket.getOutputStream());

Robot robot = new Robot(); // Create the Robot object to capture screen

Rectangle screenRect = new Rectangle(Toolkit.getDefaultToolkit().getScreenSize());

BufferedImage screenImage;

while (true) {

// Capture the screen

screenImage = robot.createScreenCapture(screenRect);

// Convert image to byte array

ByteArrayOutputStream byteArrayOutputStream = new ByteArrayOutputStream();

ImageIO.write(screenImage, "png", byteArrayOutputStream);

byte[] imageBytes = byteArrayOutputStream.toByteArray();

// Send image to client

outputStream.writeObject(imageBytes);

outputStream.flush();

Thread.sleep(100); // Delay to manage transmission rate

}

3.3.2 **Client Application**

The client application is designed to receive and display the images transmitted by the server. The client sets up a socket connection to the server, receives the byte array, and then decodes it to display the image. The client uses Java’s ImageIcon and JLabel to render the image.

1. **Socket Connection Setup**: The client establishes a socket connection to the server by using the server’s IP address and port number.
2. **Receiving Image Data**: The client continuously listens for incoming image data from the server. When an image is received, it is deserialized into a byte array.
3. **Displaying the Image**: After the byte array is received, the client creates an ImageIcon from the byte array and sets it to a JLabel to display the image in the GUI. The JLabel is added to a JFrame, and the frame is updated with the new image.

Below is the code snippet for the **Client Application**:

// Client setup

Socket socket = new Socket(serverAddress, 12345);

ObjectInputStream inputStream = new ObjectInputStream(socket.getInputStream());

JFrame frame = new JFrame("Received Screenshots");

JLabel imageLabel = new JLabel();

frame.add(imageLabel);

frame.setVisible(true);

while (true) {

// Receive image data from server

byte[] imageBytes = (byte[]) inputStream.readObject();

// Update the display with the new image

updateImageDisplay(imageBytes);

}

private static void updateImageDisplay(byte[] imageBytes) {

try {

// Convert byte array to ImageIcon

ByteArrayInputStream byteArrayInputStream = new ByteArrayInputStream(imageBytes);

ImageIcon imageIcon = new ImageIcon(byteArrayInputStream.readAllBytes());

// Set the ImageIcon to JLabel for display

imageLabel.setIcon(imageIcon);

frame.pack(); // Resize the frame to fit the image

} catch (Exception e) {

e.printStackTrace();

}

}

3.3.3 **Error Handling and Reconnection**

Both the client and server applications are designed to handle disconnections and errors. If the client loses connection to the server, it will attempt to reconnect automatically. This functionality ensures that the system operates without interruption, even in cases where the network is temporarily unavailable.

1. **Results and Discussion**

4.1 **Performance Evaluation**

The system’s performance was evaluated based on several criteria, including latency, bandwidth usage, and image quality. The results indicate that the system performs well in local environments, with low latency and smooth image rendering. The screen capture rate is dependent on the network speed and the hardware capabilities of both the server and the client. However, one limitation of the current system is the lack of compression algorithms for the images being transmitted. As a result, the bandwidth usage can become substantial, especially when transmitting high-resolution images. This issue can be mitigated by incorporating image compression algorithms such as JPEG or PNG compression before transmission.

4.2 **Security Considerations**

Currently, the system does not encrypt the transmitted data, which may be a concern in environments where data security is critical. Implementing encryption using SSL/TLS or other secure transmission protocols would improve the system’s security, especially when operating in more sensitive settings.

1. **Conclusion and Future Work**

The screen-sharing system presented in this paper offers a lightweight, efficient solution for remote collaboration. By leveraging Java’s networking and GUI libraries, the system is cross-platform and easy to implement. Future work will focus on improving image compression techniques, optimizing the transmission rate, and implementing encryption for secure communication. Additionally, the system can be extended to support multiple clients by broadcasting the screen data to all connected clients.

The implementation and results demonstrate the potential of using Java for real-time screen sharing applications, providing a solid foundation for more complex systems in the future.

1. **References**

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