

Wireless Network Security

Upma Jain

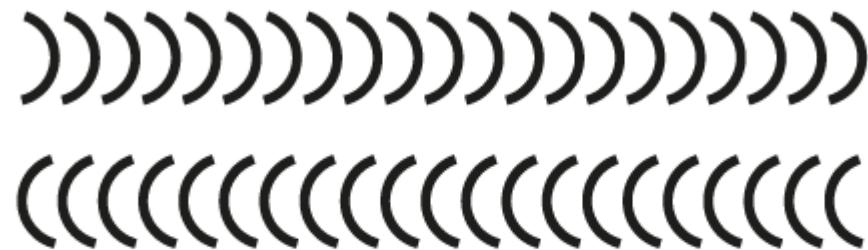
Wireless Security

- **Channel:** Wireless networking typically involves broadcast communications, which is far more susceptible to eavesdropping and jamming than wired networks. Wireless networks are also more vulnerable to active attacks that exploit vulnerabilities in communications protocols.
- **Mobility:** Wireless devices are, in principle and usually in practice, far more portable and mobile than wired devices. This mobility results in a number of risks, described subsequently.
- **Resources:** Some wireless devices, such as smartphones and tablets, have sophisticated operating systems but limited memory and processing resources with which to counter threats, including denial of service and malware.
- **Accessibility:** Some wireless devices, such as sensors and robots, may be left unattended in remote and/or hostile locations. This greatly increases their vulnerability to physical attacks.

Wireless Security



Endpoint



Wireless medium



Access point

Wireless Network Threat

- **Accidental association:** Company wireless LANs or wireless access points to wired LANs in close proximity (e.g., in the same or neighboring buildings) may create overlapping transmission ranges. A user intending to connect to one LAN may unintentionally lock on to a wireless access point from a neighboring network. Although the security breach is accidental, it nevertheless exposes resources of one LAN to the accidental user.
- **Malicious association:** In this situation, a wireless device is configured to appear to be a legitimate access point, enabling the operator to steal passwords from legitimate users and then penetrate a wired network through a legitimate wireless access point.
- **Ad hoc networks:** These are peer-to-peer networks between wireless computers with no access point between them. Such networks can pose a security threat due to a lack of a central point of control.

Wireless Network Threat

- **Nontraditional networks:** Nontraditional networks and links, such as personal network Bluetooth devices, barcode readers, and handheld PDAs, pose a security risk in terms of both eavesdropping and spoofing.
- **Identity theft (MAC spoofing):** This occurs when an attacker is able to eavesdrop on network traffic and identify the MAC address of a computer with network privileges.
- **Man-in-the middle attacks:** This type of attack is described in Chapter 3 in the context of the Diffie–Hellman key exchange protocol. In a broader sense, this attack involves persuading a user and an access point to believe that they are talking to each other when in fact the communication is going through an intermediate attacking device. Wireless networks are particularly vulnerable to such attacks.

Wireless Network Threat

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Wireless Network Threat

Denial of service:

In the context of a wireless network, a DoS attack occurs when an attacker continually bombards a wireless access point or some other accessible wireless port with various protocol messages designed to consume system resources. The wireless environment lends itself to this type of attack, because it is so easy for the attacker to direct multiple wireless messages at the target.

- **Network injection:** A network injection attack targets wireless access points that are exposed to nonfiltered network traffic, such as routing protocol messages or network management messages. An example of such an attack is one in which bogus reconfiguration commands are used to affect routers and switches to degrade network performance.

Wireless Security Measures

SECURING WIRELESS TRANSMISSIONS The principal threats to wireless transmission are eavesdropping, altering or inserting messages, and disruption. To deal with eavesdropping, two types of countermeasures are appropriate:

- **Signal-hiding techniques:** Organizations can take a number of measures to make it more difficult for an attacker to locate their wireless access points, including turning off service set identifier (SSID) broadcasting by wireless access points; assigning cryptic names to SSIDs; reducing signal strength to the lowest level that still provides requisite coverage; and locating wireless access points in the interior of the building, away from windows and exterior walls. Greater security can be achieved by the use of directional antennas and of signal-shielding techniques.
- **Encryption:** Encryption of all wireless transmission is effective against eavesdropping to the extent that the encryption keys are secured.

Wireless Security Measures

SECURING WIRELESS ACCESS POINTS The main threat involving wireless access points is unauthorized access to the network. The principal approach for preventing such access is the IEEE 802.1X standard for port-based network access control. The standard provides an authentication mechanism for devices wishing to attach to a LAN or wireless network. The use of 802.1X can prevent rogue access points and other unauthorized devices from becoming insecure backdoors.

Wireless Security Measures

SECURING WIRELESS NETWORKS [CHOI08] recommends the following techniques for wireless network security:

1. Use encryption. Wireless routers are typically equipped with built-in encryption mechanisms for router-to-router traffic.
2. Use antivirus and antispyware software, and a firewall. These facilities should be enabled on all wireless network endpoints.
3. Turn off identifier broadcasting. Wireless routers are typically configured to broadcast an identifying signal so that any device within range can learn of the router's existence. If a network is configured so that authorized devices know the identity of routers, this capability can be disabled, so as to thwart attackers.
4. Change the identifier on your router from the default. Again, this measure thwarts attackers who will attempt to gain access to a wireless network using default router identifiers.
5. Change your router's pre-set password for administration. This is another prudent step.
6. Allow only specific computers to access your wireless network. A router can be configured to only communicate with approved MAC addresses. Of course, MAC addresses can be spoofed, so this is just one element of a security strategy.

Mobile device security

- **Growing use of new devices:** Organizations are experiencing significant growth in employee use of mobile devices. In many cases, employees are allowed to use a combination of endpoint devices as part of their day-to-day activities.
- **Cloud-based applications:** Applications no longer run solely on physical servers in corporate data centers. Quite the opposite, applications can run anywhere—on traditional physical servers, on mobile virtual servers, or in the cloud. Additionally, end users can now take advantage of a wide variety of cloud-based applications and IT services for personal and professional use. Facebook can be used for an employee's personal profiles or as a component of a corporate marketing campaign. Employees depend upon Skype to speak with friends abroad or for legitimate business video conferencing. Dropbox and Box can be used to distribute documents between corporate and personal devices for mobility and user productivity.

Mobile device security

- **De-perimeterization:** Given new device proliferation, application mobility, and cloud-based consumer and corporate services, the notion of a static network perimeter is all but gone. Now there are a multitude of network perimeters around devices, applications, users, and data. These perimeters have also become quite dynamic as they must adapt to various environmental conditions such as user role, device type, server virtualization mobility, network location, and time-of-day.
- **External business requirements:** The enterprise must also provide guests, third-party contractors, and business partners network access using various devices from a multitude of locations.

Wireless security threats

Lack of physical security controls

Use of untrusted mobile devices

Use of untrusted networks

Use of applications created by unknown parties

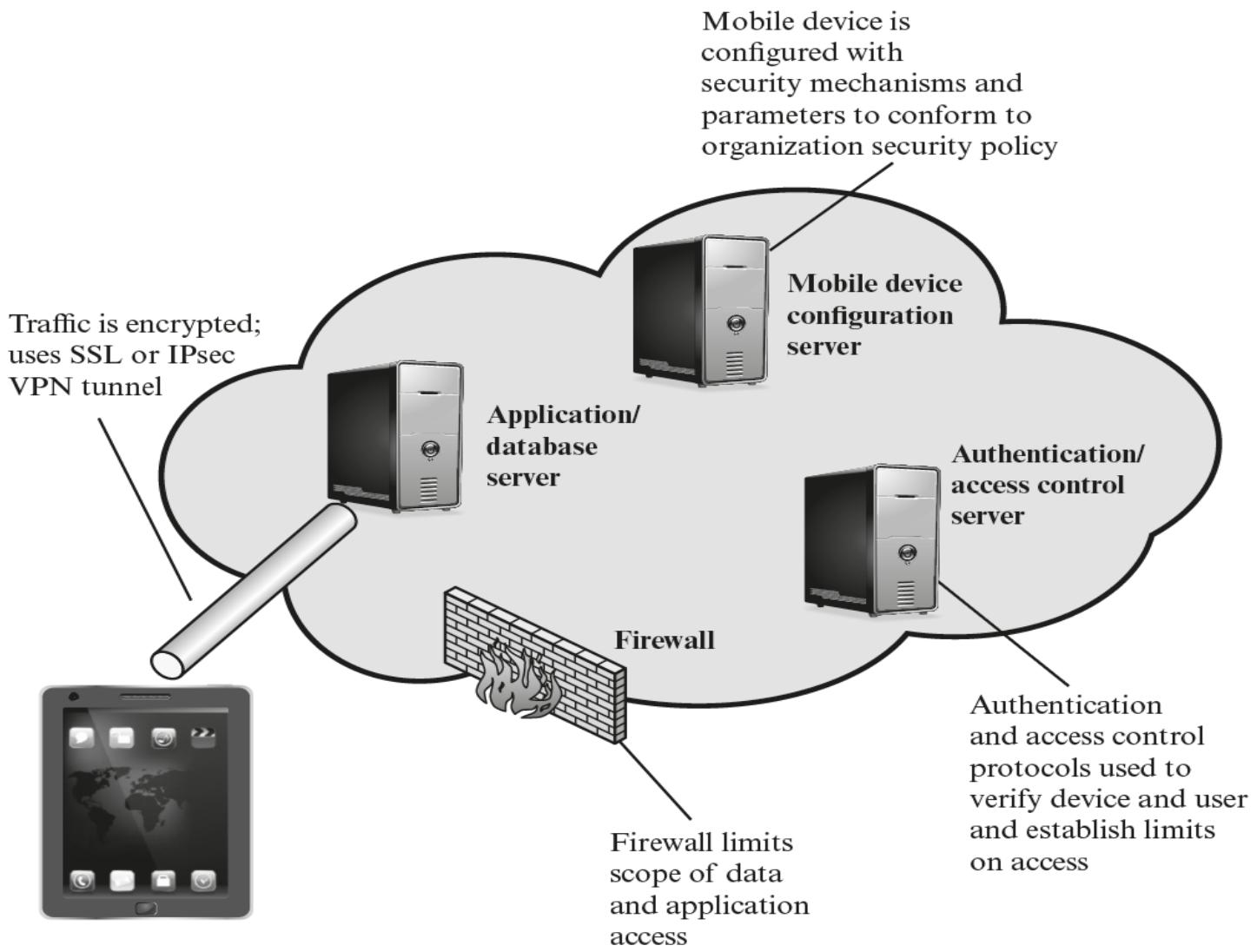
Interaction with other systems

Use of untrusted contents

Use of location services

Mobile device security strategies

Device security



Mobile device security strategies

Enable auto lock

Enable password or pin protection

Avoid using auto complete features that remember user id and passwords

Enable remote wipe

Ensure SSL protection is enabled if available

Make sure that softwares are upto date

Install antivirus software as available

Mobile device security strategies

Either sensitive data should be prohibited from storage on the mobile device or it should be encrypted.

- IT staff should also have the ability to remotely access devices, wipe the device of all data, and then disable the device in the event of loss or theft.
- The organization may prohibit all installation of third-party applications,
Implement whitelisting to prohibit installation of all unapproved applications, or implement a secure sandbox that isolates the organization's data and applications from all other data and applications on the mobile device. Any application that is on an approved list should be accompanied by a digital signature and a public-key certificate from an approved authority.
- The organization can implement and enforce restrictions on what devices can synchronize and on the use of cloud-based storage.
- To deal with the threat of untrusted content, security responses can include training of personnel on the risks inherent in untrusted content and disabling camera use on corporate mobile devices.
- To counter the threat of malicious use of location services, the security policy can dictate that such service is disabled on all mobile devices

Mobile device security strategies

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IEEE 802.11

| | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| Access point (AP) | Any entity that has station functionality and provides access to the distribution system via the wireless medium for associated stations. |
| Basic service set (BSS) | A set of stations controlled by a single coordination function. |
| Coordination function | The logical function that determines when a station operating within a BSS is permitted to transmit and may be able to receive PDUs. |
| Distribution system (DS) | A system used to interconnect a set of BSSs and integrated LANs to create an ESS. |
| Extended service set (ESS) | A set of one or more interconnected BSSs and integrated LANs that appear as a single BSS to the LLC layer at any station associated with one of these BSSs. |
| MAC protocol data unit (MPDU) | The unit of data exchanged between two peer MAC entities using the services of the physical layer. |
| MAC service data unit (MSDU) | Information that is delivered as a unit between MAC users. |
| Station | Any device that contains an IEEE 802.11 conformant MAC and physical layer. |

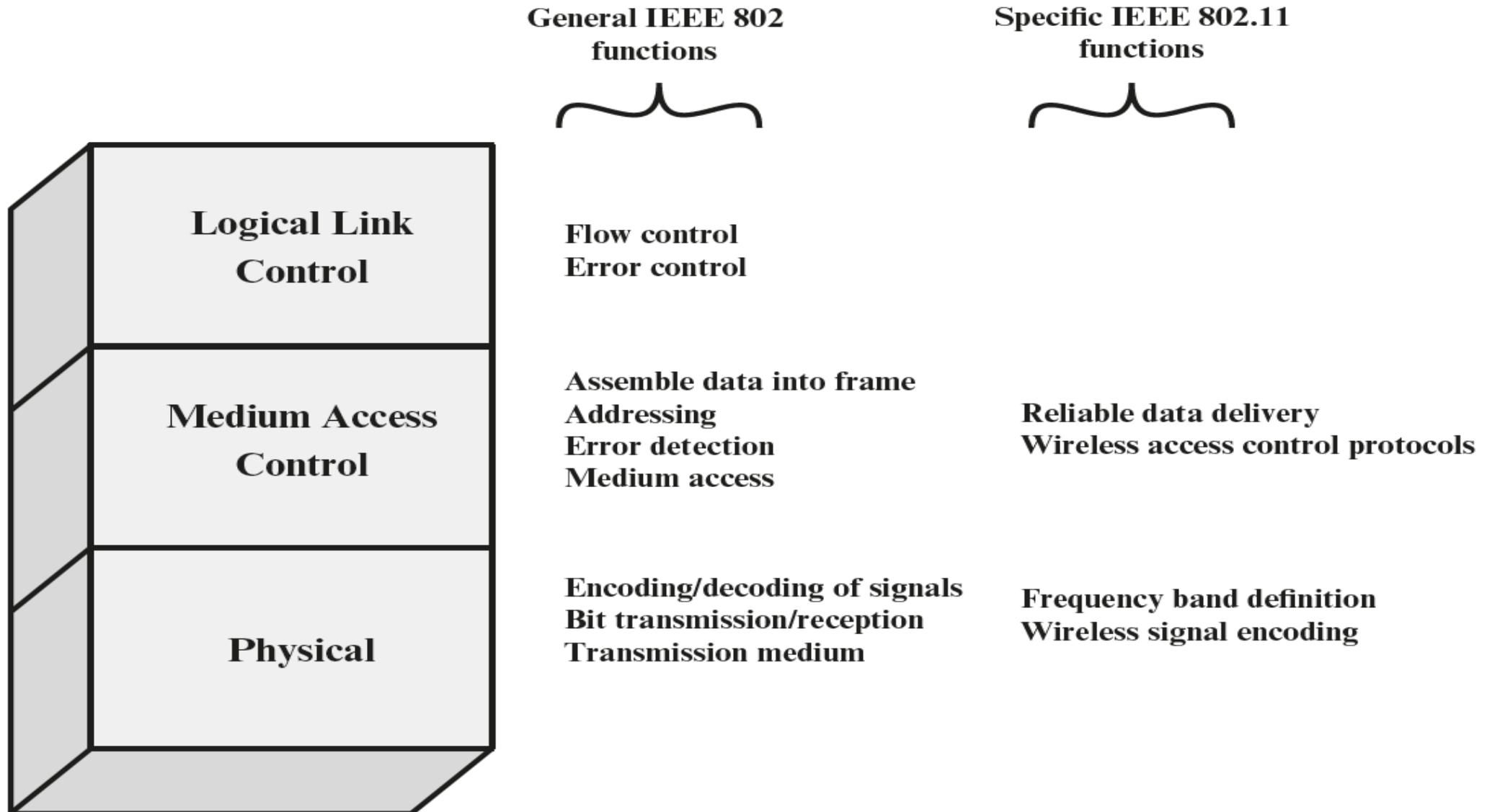
IEEE 802.11

IEEE 802 Protocol Architecture

Before proceeding, we need to briefly preview the IEEE 802 protocol architecture. IEEE 802.11 standards are defined within the structure of a layered set of protocols. This structure, used for all IEEE 802 standards, is illustrated in Figure 7.3.

PHYSICAL LAYER The lowest layer of the IEEE 802 reference model is the **physical layer**, which includes such functions as encoding/decoding of signals and bit transmission/reception. In addition, the physical layer includes a specification of the transmission medium. In the case of IEEE 802.11, the physical layer also defines frequency bands and antenna characteristics.

IEEE 802.11



IEEE 802.11

MEDIA ACCESS CONTROL All LANs consist of collections of devices that share the network's transmission capacity. Some means of controlling access to the transmission medium is needed to provide an orderly and efficient use of that capacity. This is the function of a **media access control (MAC)** layer. The MAC layer receives data from a higher-layer protocol, typically the Logical Link Control (LLC) layer, in the form of a block of data known as the **MAC service data unit (MSDU)**. In general, the MAC layer performs the following functions:

- On transmission, assemble data into a frame, known as a **MAC protocol data unit (MPDU)** with address and error-detection fields.
- On reception, disassemble frame, and perform address recognition and error detection.
- Govern access to the LAN transmission medium.

IEEE 802.11

The exact format of the MPDU differs somewhat for the various MAC protocols in use. In general, all of the MPDUs have a format similar to that of Figure 7.4. The fields of this frame are as follows.

- **MAC Control:** This field contains any protocol control information needed for the functioning of the MAC protocol. For example, a priority level could be indicated here.
- **Destination MAC Address:** The destination physical address on the LAN for this MPDU.
- **Source MAC Address:** The source physical address on the LAN for this MPDU.

IEEE 802.11

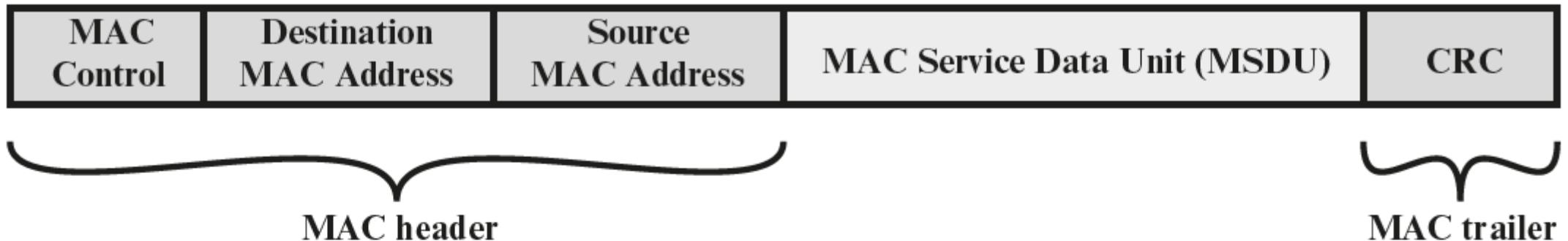


Figure 7.4 General IEEE 802 MPDU Format

- **MAC Service Data Unit:** The data from the next higher layer.
- **CRC:** The cyclic redundancy check field; also known as the Frame Check Sequence (FCS) field. This is an error-detecting code, such as that which is used in other data-link control protocols. The CRC is calculated based on the bits in the entire MPDU. The sender calculates the CRC and adds it to the frame. The receiver performs the same calculation on the incoming MPDU and compares that calculation to the CRC field in that incoming MPDU. If the two values don't match, then one or more bits have been altered in transit.

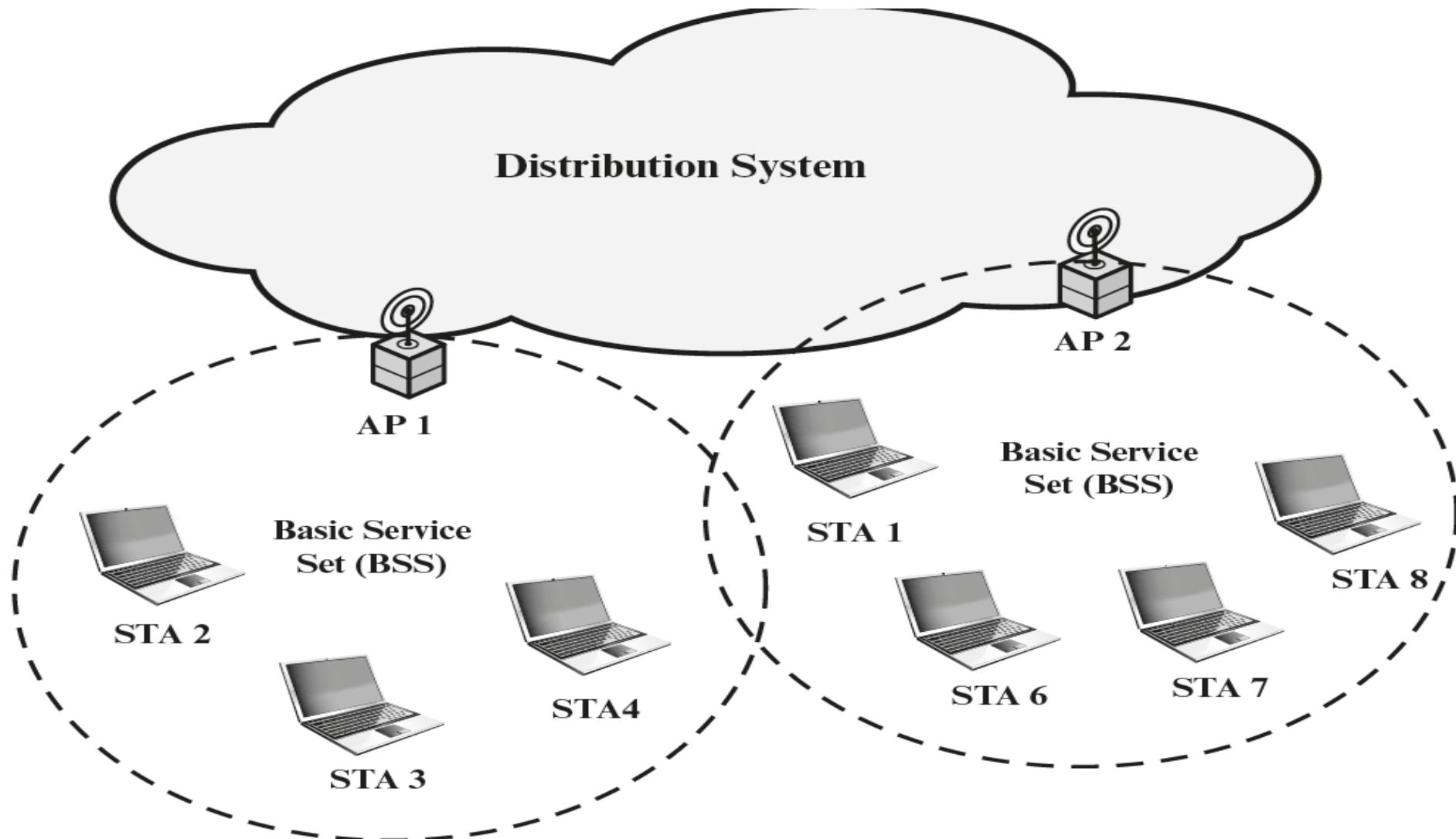
IEEE 802.11

LOGICAL LINK CONTROL In most data-link control protocols, the data-link protocol entity is responsible not only for detecting errors using the CRC, but for recovering from those errors by retransmitting damaged frames. In the LAN protocol architecture, these two functions are split between the MAC and LLC layers. The MAC layer is responsible for detecting errors and discarding any frames that contain errors. The LLC layer optionally keeps track of which frames have been successfully received and retransmits unsuccessful frames.

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IEEE 802.11



IEEE 802.11

IEEE 802.11 Services

IEEE 802.11 defines nine services that need to be provided by the wireless LAN to achieve functionality equivalent to that which is inherent to wired LANs. Table 7.2 lists the services and indicates two ways of categorizing them.

1. The service provider can be either the station or the DS. Station services are implemented in every 802.11 station, including AP stations. Distribution services are provided between BSSs; these services may be implemented in an AP or in another special-purpose device attached to the distribution system.
2. Three of the services are used to control IEEE 802.11 LAN access and confidentiality. Six of the services are used to support delivery of MSDUs between stations. If the MSDU is too large to be transmitted in a single MPDU, it may be fragmented and transmitted in a series of MPDUs.

IEEE 802.11

| Service | Provider | Used to support |
|------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|
| Association | Distribution system | MSDU delivery |
| Authentication | Station | LAN access and security |
| Deauthentication | Station | LAN access and security |
| Disassociation | Distribution system | MSDU delivery |
| Distribution | Distribution system | MSDU delivery |
| Integration | Distribution system | MSDU delivery |
| MSDU delivery | Station | MSDU delivery |
| Privacy | Station | LAN access and security |
| Reassociation | Distribution system | MSDU delivery |

IEEE 802.11

DISTRIBUTION OF MESSAGES WITHIN A DS The two services involved with the distribution of messages within a DS are distribution and integration. **Distribution** is the primary service used by stations to exchange MPDUs when the MPDUs must traverse the DS to get from a station in one BSS to a station in another BSS. For example, suppose a frame is to be sent from station 2 (STA 2) to station 7 (STA 7) in Figure 7.5. The frame is sent from STA 2 to AP 1, which is the AP for this BSS. The AP gives the frame to the DS, which has the job of directing the frame to the AP associated with STA 7 in the target BSS. AP 2 receives the frame and forwards it to STA 7. How the message is transported through the DS is beyond the scope of the IEEE 802.11 standard.

If the two stations that are communicating are within the same BSS, then the distribution service logically goes through the single AP of that BSS.

The **integration** service enables transfer of data between a station on an IEEE 802.11 LAN and a station on an integrated IEEE 802.x LAN. The term *integrated* refers to a wired LAN that is physically connected to the DS and whose stations may be logically connected to an IEEE 802.11 LAN via the integration service. The integration service takes care of any address translation and media conversion logic required for the exchange of data.

IEEE 802.11

ASSOCIATION-RELATED SERVICES The primary purpose of the MAC layer is to transfer MSDUs between MAC entities; this purpose is fulfilled by the distribution service. For that service to function, it requires information about stations within the ESS that is provided by the association-related services. Before the distribution service can deliver data to or accept data from a station, that station must be *associated*. Before looking at the concept of association, we need to describe the concept of mobility. The standard defines three transition types, based on mobility:

- **No transition:** A station of this type is either stationary or moves only within the direct communication range of the communicating stations of a single BSS.
- **BSS transition:** This is defined as a station movement from one BSS to another BSS within the same ESS. In this case, delivery of data to the station requires that the addressing capability be able to recognize the new location of the station.
- **ESS transition:** This is defined as a station movement from a BSS in one ESS to a BSS within another ESS. This case is supported only in the sense that the station can move. Maintenance of upper-layer connections supported by 802.11 cannot be guaranteed. In fact, disruption of service is likely to occur.

IEEE 802.11

- **Association:** Establishes an initial association between a station and an AP. Before a station can transmit or receive frames on a wireless LAN, its identity and address must be known. For this purpose, a station must establish an association with an AP within a particular BSS. The AP can then communicate this information to other APs within the ESS to facilitate routing and delivery of addressed frames.
- **Reassociation:** Enables an established association to be transferred from one AP to another, allowing a mobile station to move from one BSS to another.
- **Disassociation:** A notification from either a station or an AP that an existing association is terminated. A station should give this notification before leaving an ESS or shutting down. However, the MAC management facility protects itself against stations that disappear without notification.

IEEE 802.11i Wireless Lan Security

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IEEE 802.11i Wireless Lan Security

There are two characteristics of a wired LAN that are not inherent in a wireless LAN.

1. In order to transmit over a wired LAN, a station must be physically connected to the LAN. On the other hand, with a wireless LAN, any station within radio range of the other devices on the LAN can transmit. In a sense, there is a form of authentication with a wired LAN in that it requires some positive and presumably observable action to connect a station to a wired LAN.
2. Similarly, in order to receive a transmission from a station that is part of a wired LAN, the receiving station also must be attached to the wired LAN. On the other hand, with a wireless LAN, any station within radio range can receive. Thus, a wired LAN provides a degree of privacy, limiting reception of data to stations connected to the LAN.

IEEE 802.11i Wireless Lan Security

These differences between wired and wireless LANs suggest the increased need for robust security services and mechanisms for wireless LANs. The original 802.11 specification included a set of security features for privacy and authentication that were quite weak. For privacy, 802.11 defined the **Wired Equivalent Privacy (WEP)** algorithm. The privacy portion of the 802.11 standard contained major weaknesses. Subsequent to the development of WEP, the 802.11i task group has developed a set of capabilities to address the WLAN security issues. In order to accelerate the introduction of strong security into WLANs, the Wi-Fi Alliance promulgated **Wi-Fi Protected Access (WPA)** as a Wi-Fi standard. WPA is a set of security mechanisms that eliminates most 802.11 security issues and was based on the current state of the 802.11i standard. The final form of the 802.11i standard is referred to as **Robust Security Network (RSN)**. The Wi-Fi Alliance certifies vendors in compliance with the full 802.11i specification under the WPA2 program.

The RSN specification is quite complex, and occupies 145 pages of the 2012 IEEE 802.11 standard. In this section, we provide an overview.

IEEE 802.11i Wireless Lan Security

IEEE 802.11i Services

The 802.11i RSN security specification defines the following services.

- **Authentication:** A protocol is used to define an exchange between a user and an AS that provides mutual authentication and generates temporary keys to be used between the client and the AP over the wireless link.
- **Access control:**¹ This function enforces the use of the authentication function, routes the messages properly, and facilitates key exchange. It can work with a variety of authentication protocols.
- **Privacy with message integrity:** MAC-level data (e.g., an LLC PDU) are encrypted along with a message integrity code that ensures that the data have not been altered.

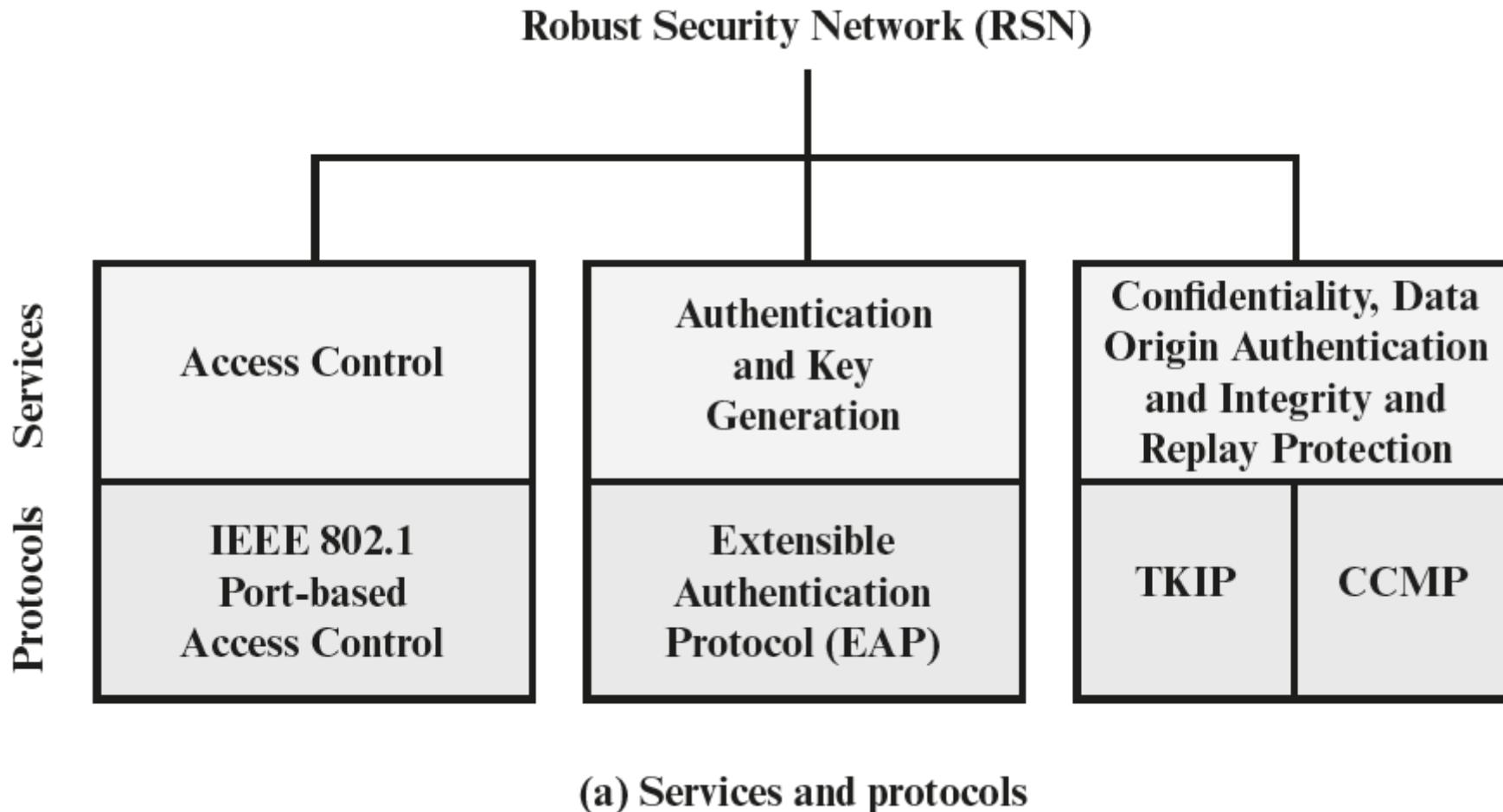
IEEE 802.11i Wireless Lan Security

IEEE 802.11i Phases of Operation

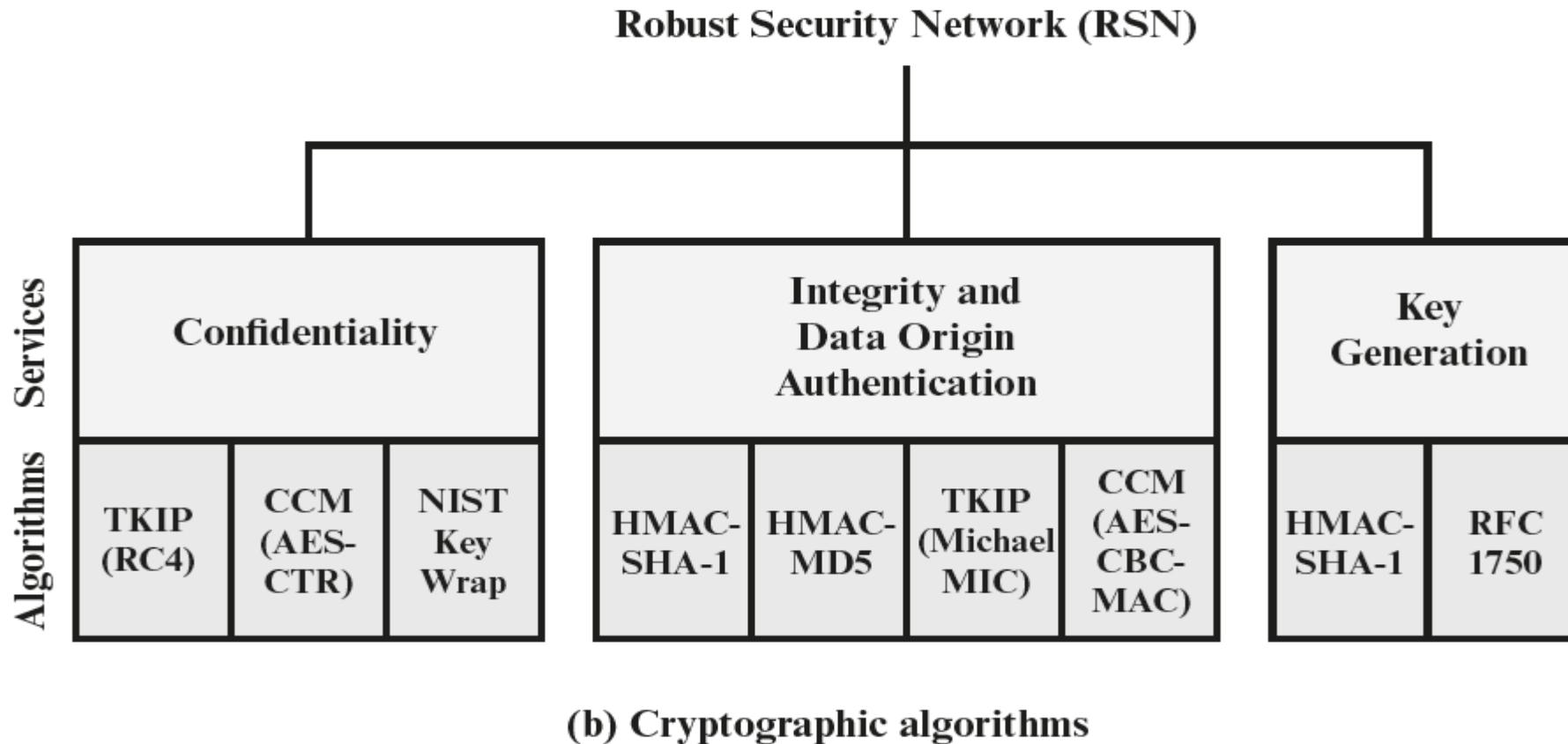
The operation of an IEEE 802.11i RSN can be broken down into five distinct phases of operation. The exact nature of the phases will depend on the configuration and the end points of the communication. Possibilities include (see Figure 7.5):

1. Two wireless stations in the same BSS communicating via the access point (AP) for that BSS.
2. Two wireless stations (STAs) in the same ad hoc IBSS communicating directly with each other.
3. Two wireless stations in different BSSs communicating via their respective APs across a distribution system.
4. A wireless station communicating with an end station on a wired network via its AP and the distribution system.

IEEE 802.11i Wireless Lan Security



IEEE 802.11i Wireless Lan Security



(b) Cryptographic algorithms

CBC-MAC = Cipher Block Chaining Message Authentication Code (MAC)

CCM = Counter Mode with Cipher Block Chaining Message Authentication Code

CCMP = Counter Mode with Cipher Block Chaining MAC Protocol

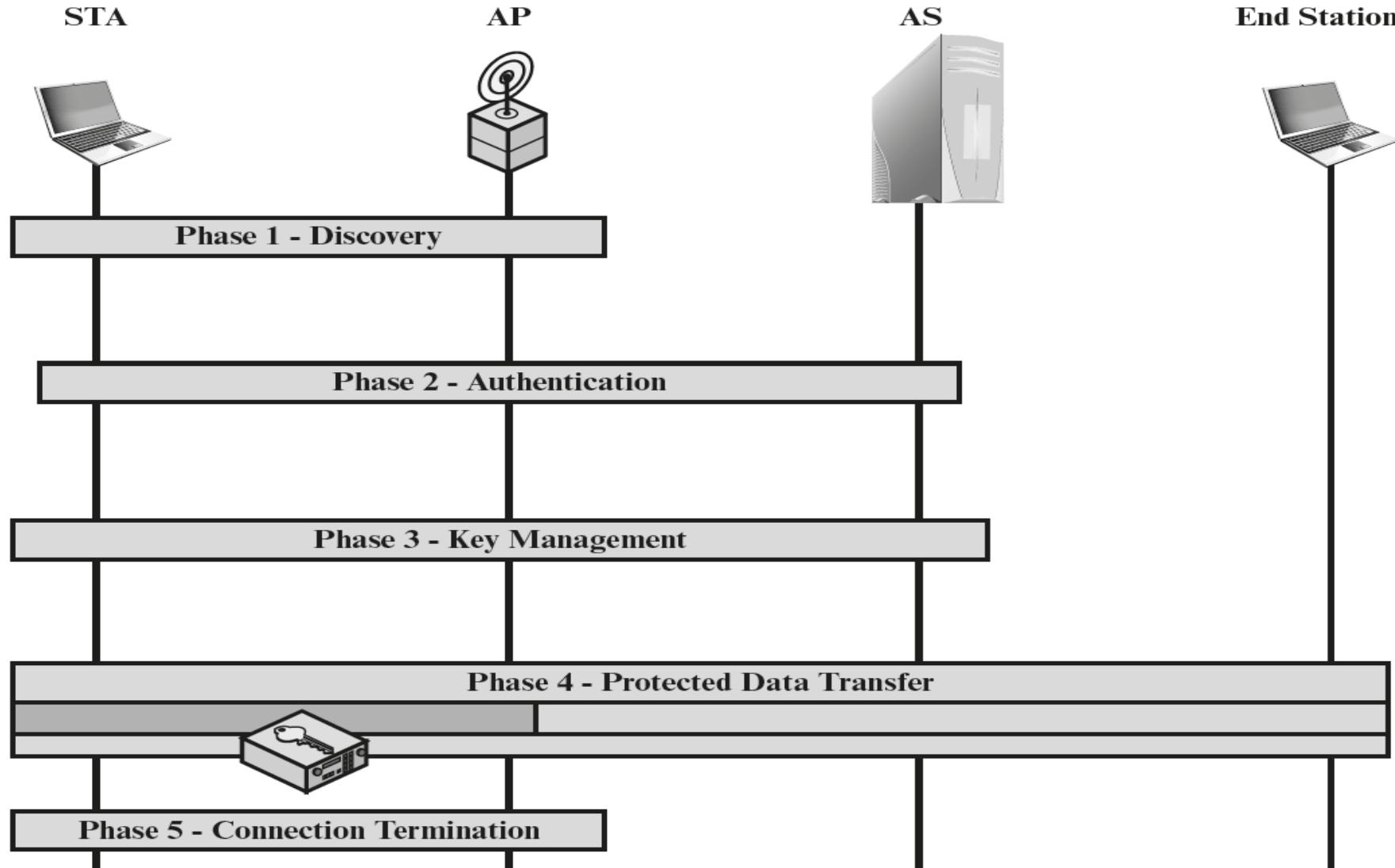
TKIP = Temporal Key Integrity Protocol

IEEE 802.11i Wireless Lan Security

of sequences of MPDUs. The five phases are defined as follows.

- **Discovery:** An AP uses messages called Beacons and Probe Responses to advertise its IEEE 802.11i security policy. The STA uses these to identify an AP for a WLAN with which it wishes to communicate. The STA associates with the AP, which it uses to select the cipher suite and authentication mechanism when the Beacons and Probe Responses present a choice.
- **Authentication:** During this phase, the STA and AS prove their identities to each other. The AP blocks non-authentication traffic between the STA and AS until the authentication transaction is successful. The AP does not participate in the authentication transaction other than forwarding traffic between the STA and AS.
- **Key generation and distribution:** The AP and the STA perform several operations that cause cryptographic keys to be generated and placed on the AP and the STA. Frames are exchanged between the AP and STA only.
- **Protected data transfer:** Frames are exchanged between the STA and the end station through the AP. As denoted by the shading and the encryption module icon, secure data transfer occurs between the STA and the AP only; security is not provided end-to-end.

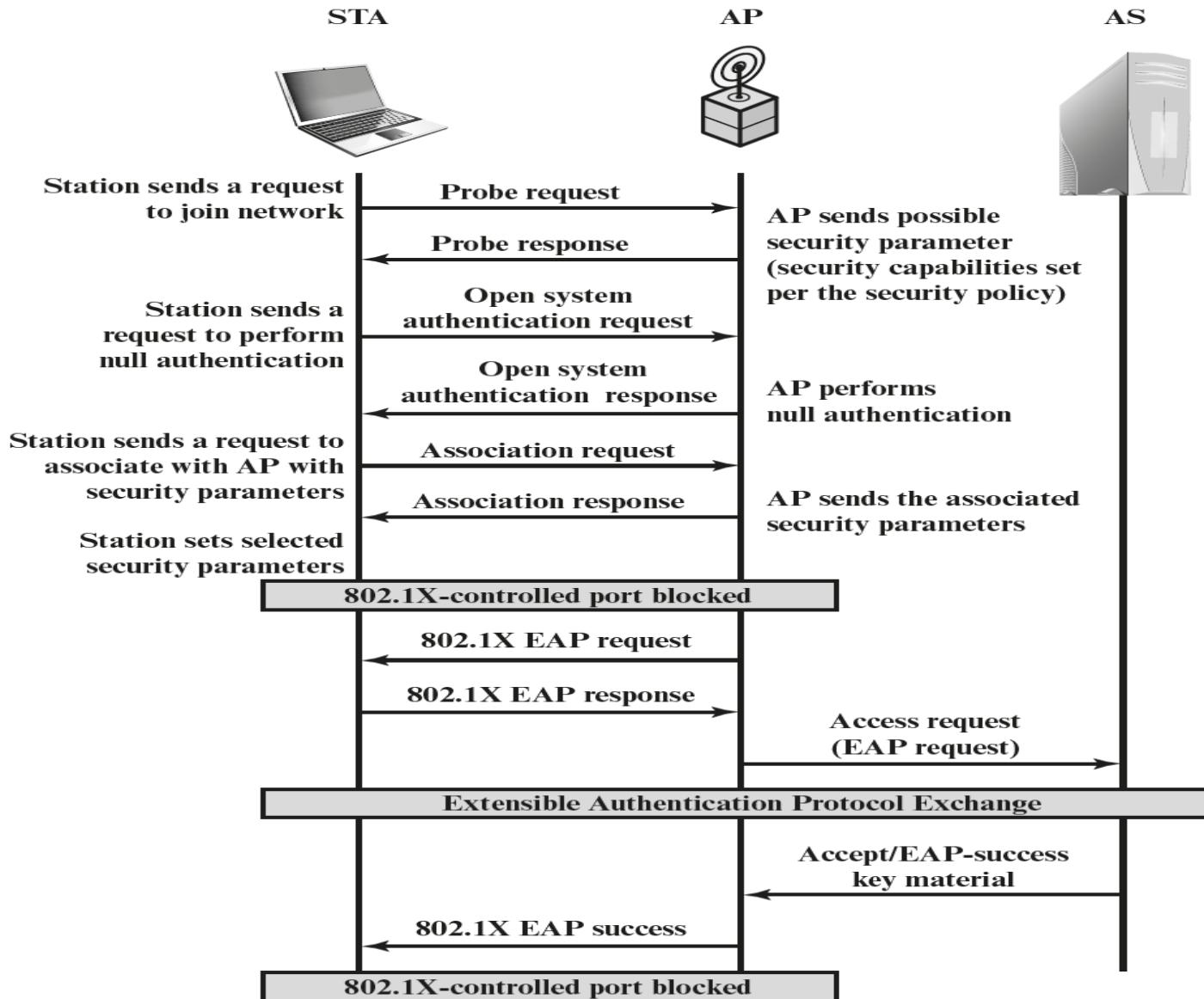
IEEE 802.11i Wireless Lan Security



IEEE 802.11i Wireless Lan Security

- **Connection termination:** The AP and STA exchange frames. During this phase, the secure connection is torn down and the connection is restored to the original state.

IEEE 802.11i Wireless Lan Security



Wireless Network Security

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