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# Introduction

A reliable transport layer protocol specification was designed in order to create a reliable end to end protocol over an unreliable network layer. The protocol is a go-back-n pipelined protocol that features both positive and negative acknowledgements.

The protocol uses a connection-oriented design, in which the client sends a request to the server in order to initiate a connection. Once the connection is established, no distinction is made between the client and the server; both sides are capable of either transmitting or receiving. Since the protocol makes no distinction between the server and the client once a connection has been established, the protocol is inherently bidirectional.

To handle lost packets, a timeout mechanism is used. If the sender of a package does not receive a positive acknowledgement from the receiver within a preset timeout, the packet is assumed to be lost; to compensate, the lost package should be resent. The exact package lost is identified using package sequence numbers; a more specific description of this functionality has been included in the next sections.

If a duplicate package is received, the package is discarded. However, a positive acknowledgement is also sent to the sender in order to confirm that the package was successfully received. This scenario may occur when the acknowledgement package is lost.

If an out of order package is received, the package is discarded. Furthermore, a negative acknowledgement must be sent back in order to notify the sender that one of the packages was either lost or delayed and that it should be retransmitted.

A simple addition checksum is used to determine if a package has been corrupted. If a package is determined as corrupted via the checksum, a negative acknowledgement is sent. The sender, upon receiving the negative acknowledgement, should retransmit the corrupted package and every single package that followed it.

# Package Structure

The package header was designed in order to provide the functionality required by the project constraints. Figure 1, which is shown below, shows the structure of the package header.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Source Port (16 bits) | | Destination Port (16 bits) |
| Sequence Number (32 bits) | | |
| Acknowledgement Number (32 bits) | | |
| Payload Length (16 bits) | | Available Window Size (16 bits) |
| Reserved (12 bits) | Flags (4 bits) | Checksum (16 bits) |
| Payload… | | |

Figure 1: Package Structure

Two 16 bit shorts contain the source and destination ports. These are used for multiplexing the packets received among different applications. Each port should only be bound to one application at a time.

A 32 bit integer contains the sequence number, which identifies the position of the first payload byte if a payload is present. The next 32 bit integer contains the acknowledgement number, which is the position of next expected byte when receiving a package.

The following 16 bit short contains the effective length of the data payload only. The size of the header field does not count towards the payload length.

The following 16 bit short states the available size of the receiving window. The available window size is defined as the difference between the total window size and the space occupied by all the received bytes whose acknowledgements have been sent, from the receiver’s perspective.

After 12 bits that are reserved for future expansion, the next 4 bits contains flags that are used to signal a package’s purpose. The possible values for these flags are, from least significant to most significant bit, ACK (positive acknowledgement), NACK (negative acknowledgement), SYN (synchronize sequence numbers), and FIN (Finalize connection). Figure 2 shows the order of these flags.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| FIN | SYN | NACK | ACK |

Figure 2: Packet Flags

# Checksum Implementation

The checksum algorithm selected consists of adding together all the bytes in both the header and the package payload. Each pair of bytes in the header (excluding the checksum) and the payload will be read as a short and added to the results of the preceding addition. If the payload has an odd number of bytes, the last byte will be right padded with zeros before the addition is performed. The result of the addition, truncated to a short, is the value of the checksum.

On the received side, the client performs the exact same addition. If the sum obtained differs from the sum included in the package headers, the package must be discarded and a negative acknowledgement must be issued to notify the sender that the package was corrupted.

# Sequence and Acknowledgement numbers

Sequence numbers are used in order to identify out of order or missing packages. In the proposed protocol, sequence numbers are byte addressed. In other words, a package with a payload of n bytes increases the sequence number by n. SYN and FIN packages will be treated as one byte-payload packages when increasing the sequence numbers.

The initial sequence number when a connection is initiated should be selected at random; the SYN flag is used to notify the other endpoint which value was selected as the initial sequence number.

The acknowledgement number is used to acknowledge a package. Every package must be acknowledged when they are received; the acknowledgement number is always the sequence number of the next expected byte.

# Finite State Diagrams

In order to simplify the finite state diagrams, the diagrams have been divided into two separate diagrams. The first diagram indicates the packages used to initiate and finalize a connection. The second diagram indicates the package order used to transmit the actual payload once a connection has been initiated.

While sending or receiving packages, the actions shown in Figure 4 should be followed. Note that this diagram only applies once the connection has been established. Furthermore, the diagram does not apply once a close command or a FIN packet is received.

* If there is data to send according to the send buffer, the sliding window used for pipelining is not full, and there is space in the receiver’s buffer, one (or more) packages should be sent. Each package should have the maximum size that does not cause fragmentation at the IP layer if possible. The package cannot exceed the available receive window length once “in-flight” unacknowledged packages are accounted for. A timer should be started at this point in order to check later that acknowledgements have been received for these packages. Note that if no data can be sent due to a full receiver window, a single packet must be. (not shown in Figure)
* If a timeout occurs due to unacknowledged packages, resend all unacknowledged packages and restart the timer.
* If a corrupt package is received (regardless of type), send a negative acknowledgement and restart the timer. Note that this must be done regardless of the package type, since it is unknown if the package flags themselves are corrupted.
* If an acknowledgement is received, the sliding window should be moved as the acknowledged packages do not need to be kept in the send buffer.
* If a package containing a payload is received, an acknowledgement should be sent regardless of whether the package is the expected package or a duplicate. If the package was the expected package, the data should be extracted and the next expected sequence number should be updated.

isThereDataToSend()

if (slidingWindowNotFull & receive window > 0)

sendPackets();

seq += sizeOfPayload;

if (!isTimerRunning)

startTimer();

Timeout

restartTimer();

sendUnacknowledgedPackets();

rdtRcv & corrupt

restartTimer();

sendNack();

rdtRcv & notCorrupt & isAck

moveWindow();

if (allPacketsAcknowledged)

stopTimer();

else

restartTimer();

rdtRcv & notCorrupt & payload > 0

sendAck();

if (expectedPackage)

extractData();

expectedSeqNumber += sizeOfPayload

Close | rdtRcv & notCorrupt & isFIN