TCP/IP Protocol Architecture

TCP/IP protocols map to a four-layer conceptual model known as the *DARPA model* , named after the U.S. government agency that initially developed TCP/IP. The four layers of the DARPA model are: Application, Transport, Internet, and Network Interface. Each layer in the DARPA model corresponds to one or more layers of the seven-layer Open Systems Interconnection (OSI) model.

Figure 1.1 shows the TCP/IP protocol architecture.

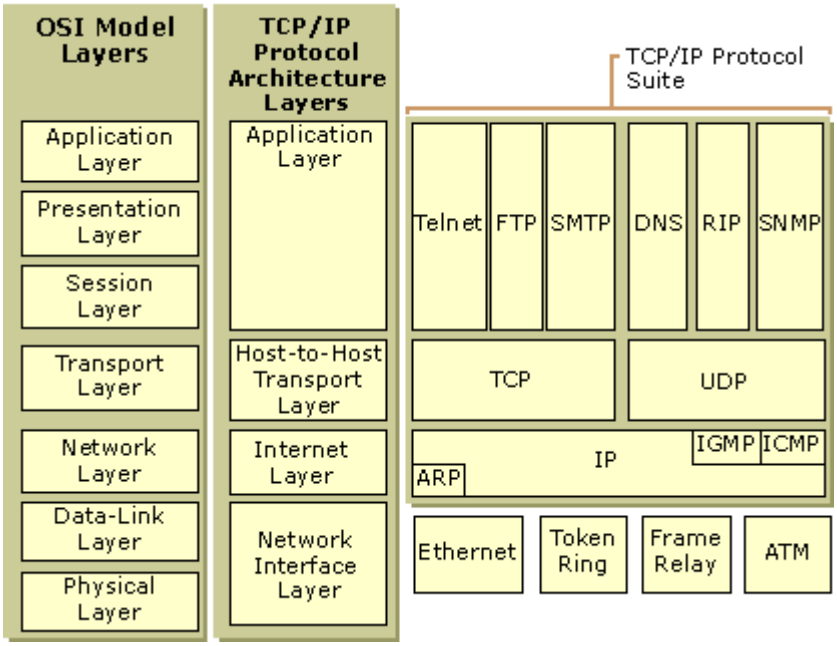

Figure 1.1 TCP/IP Protocol Architecture

Network Interface Layer

The *Network Interface layer* (also called the Network Access layer) is responsible for placing TCP/IP packets on the network medium and receiving TCP/IP packets off the network medium. TCP/IP was designed to be independent of the network access method, frame format, and medium. In this way, TCP/IP can be used to connect differing network types. These include LAN technologies such as Ethernet and Token Ring and WAN technologies such as X.25 and Frame Relay. Independence from any specific network technology gives TCP/IP the ability to be adapted to new technologies such as Asynchronous Transfer Mode (ATM).

The Network Interface layer encompasses the Data Link and Physical layers of the OSI model. Note that the Internet layer does not take advantage of sequencing and acknowledgment services that might be present in the Data-Link layer. An unreliable Network Interface layer is assumed, and reliable communications through session establishment and the sequencing and acknowledgment of packets is the responsibility of the Transport layer.

Top Of Page

Internet Layer

The *Internet layer* is responsible for addressing, packaging, and routing functions. The core protocols of the Internet layer are IP, ARP, ICMP, and IGMP.

- The *Internet Protocol* (IP) is a routable protocol responsible for IP addressing, routing, and the fragmentation and reassembly of packets.
- The *Address Resolution Protocol* (ARP) is responsible for the resolution of the Internet layer address to the Network Interface layer address such as a hardware address.

- The *Internet Control Message Protocol* (ICMP) is responsible for providing diagnostic functions and reporting errors due to the unsuccessful delivery of IP packets.
- The *Internet Group Management Protocol* (IGMP) is responsible for the management of IP multicast groups.

The Internet layer is analogous to the Network layer of the OSI model.

Top Of Page

Transport Layer

The *Transport layer* (also known as the Host-to-Host Transport layer) is responsible for providing the Application layer with session and datagram communication services. The core protocols of the Transport layer are *Transmission Control Protocol* (TCP) and the *User Datagram Protocol* (UDP).

- TCP provides a one-to-one, connection-oriented, reliable communications service. TCP is responsible for the establishment of a TCP connection, the sequencing and acknowledgment of packets sent, and the recovery of packets lost during transmission.
- UDP provides a one-to-one or one-to-many, connectionless, unreliable communications service. UDP is used when the amount of data to be transferred is small (such as the data that would fit into a single packet), when the overhead of establishing a TCP connection is not desired or when the applications or upper layer protocols provide reliable delivery.

The Transport layer encompasses the responsibilities of the OSI Transport layer and some of the responsibilities of the OSI Session layer.

Top Of Page

Application Layer

The *Application layer* provides applications the ability to access the services of the other layers and defines the protocols that applications use to exchange data. There are many Application layer protocols and new protocols are always being developed.

The most widely-known Application layer protocols are those used for the exchange of user information:

- The Hypertext Transfer Protocol (HTTP) is used to transfer files that make up the Web pages of the World Wide Web.
- The File Transfer Protocol (FTP) is used for interactive file transfer.
- The Simple Mail Transfer Protocol (SMTP) is used for the transfer of mail messages and attachments.
- Telnet, a terminal emulation protocol, is used for logging on remotely to network hosts.

Additionally, the following Application layer protocols help facilitate the use and management of TCP/IP networks:

- The Domain Name System (DNS) is used to resolve a host name to an IP address.
- The Routing Information Protocol (RIP) is a routing protocol that routers use to exchange routing information on an IP internetwork.
- The Simple Network Management Protocol (SNMP) is used between a network management console and network devices (routers, bridges, intelligent hubs) to collect and exchange network management information.

Examples of Application layer interfaces for TCP/IP applications are Windows Sockets and NetBIOS. Windows Sockets provides a standard application programming interface (API) under Windows 2000. NetBIOS is an industry standard interface

for accessing protocol services such as sessions, datagrams, and name resolution. More information on Windows Sockets and NetBIOS is provided later in this chapter.

Top Of Page