

recover from, congestion within the network. We'll consider the causes and consequences of congestion, as well as commonly used congestion-control techniques. After obtaining a solid understanding of the issues behind congestion control, we'll study TCP's approach to congestion control.

## 3.1 Introduction and Transport-Layer Services

In the previous two chapters we touched on the role of the transport layer and the services that it provides. Let's quickly review what we have already learned about the transport layer.

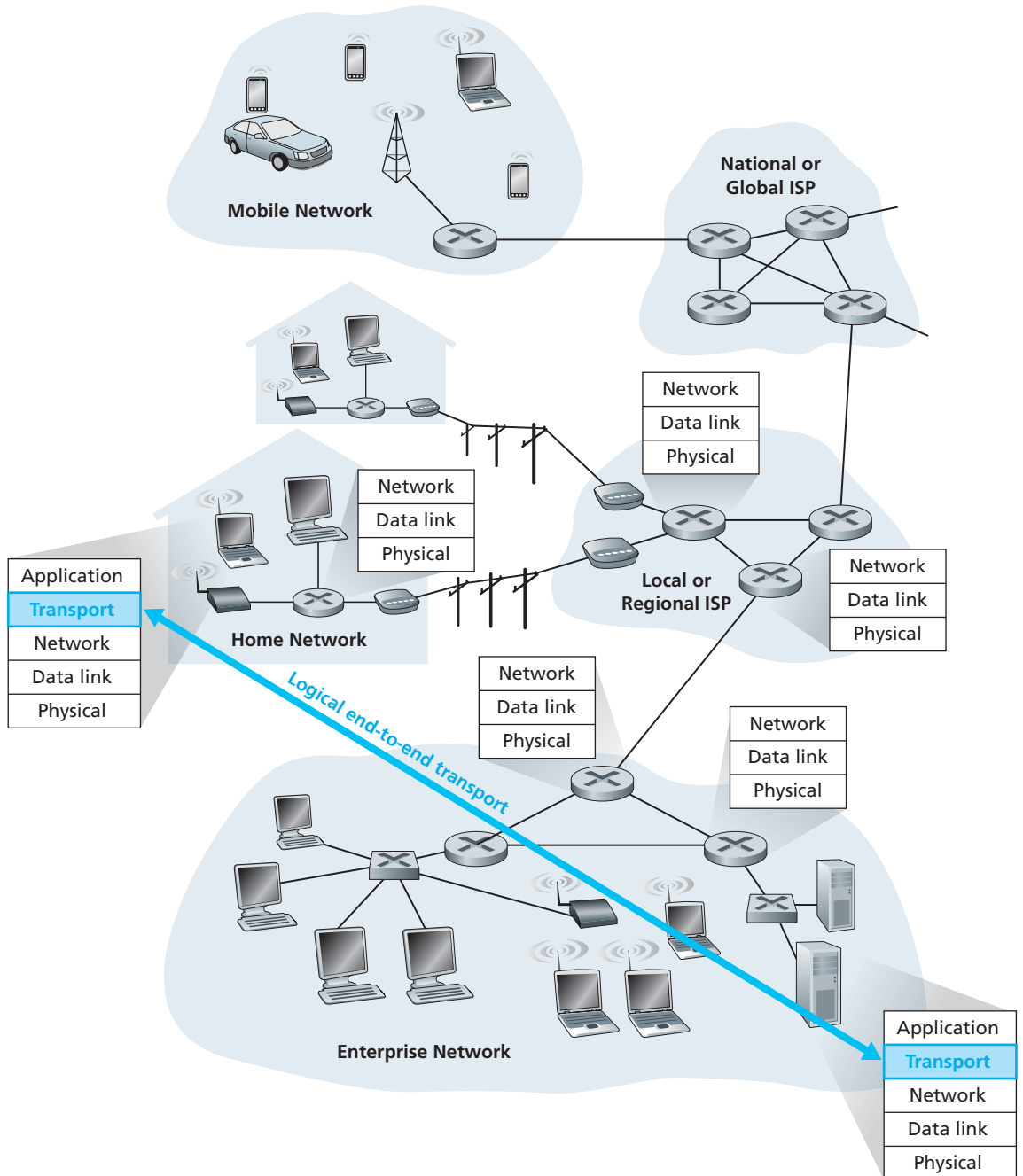
A transport-layer protocol provides for **logical communication** between application processes running on different hosts. By *logical communication*, we mean that from an application's perspective, it is as if the hosts running the processes were directly connected; in reality, the hosts may be on opposite sides of the planet, connected via numerous routers and a wide range of link types. Application processes use the logical communication provided by the transport layer to send messages to each other, free from the worry of the details of the physical infrastructure used to carry these messages. Figure 3.1 illustrates the notion of logical communication.

As shown in Figure 3.1, transport-layer protocols are implemented in the end systems but not in network routers. On the sending side, the transport layer converts the application-layer messages it receives from a sending application process into transport-layer packets, known as transport-layer **segments** in Internet terminology. This is done by (possibly) breaking the application messages into smaller chunks and adding a transport-layer header to each chunk to create the transport-layer segment. The transport layer then passes the segment to the network layer at the sending end system, where the segment is encapsulated within a network-layer packet (a datagram) and sent to the destination. It's important to note that network routers act only on the network-layer fields of the datagram; that is, they do not examine the fields of the transport-layer segment encapsulated with the datagram. On the receiving side, the network layer extracts the transport-layer segment from the datagram and passes the segment up to the transport layer. The transport layer then processes the received segment, making the data in the segment available to the receiving application.

More than one transport-layer protocol may be available to network applications. For example, the Internet has two protocols—TCP and UDP. Each of these protocols provides a different set of transport-layer services to the invoking application.

### 3.1.1 Relationship Between Transport and Network Layers

Recall that the transport layer lies just above the network layer in the protocol stack. Whereas a transport-layer protocol provides logical communication between *processes* running on different hosts, a network-layer protocol provides logical



**Figure 3.1** ♦ The transport layer provides logical rather than physical communication between application processes

communication between *hosts*. This distinction is subtle but important. Let's examine this distinction with the aid of a household analogy.

Consider two houses, one on the East Coast and the other on the West Coast, with each house being home to a dozen kids. The kids in the East Coast household are cousins of the kids in the West Coast household. The kids in the two households love to write to each other—each kid writes each cousin every week, with each letter delivered by the traditional postal service in a separate envelope. Thus, each household sends 144 letters to the other household every week. (These kids would save a lot of money if they had e-mail!) In each of the households there is one kid—Ann in the West Coast house and Bill in the East Coast house—responsible for mail collection and mail distribution. Each week Ann visits all her brothers and sisters, collects the mail, and gives the mail to a postal-service mail carrier, who makes daily visits to the house. When letters arrive at the West Coast house, Ann also has the job of distributing the mail to her brothers and sisters. Bill has a similar job on the East Coast.

In this example, the postal service provides logical communication between the two houses—the postal service moves mail from house to house, not from person to person. On the other hand, Ann and Bill provide logical communication among the cousins—Ann and Bill pick up mail from, and deliver mail to, their brothers and sisters. Note that from the cousins' perspective, Ann and Bill *are* the mail service, even though Ann and Bill are only a part (the end-system part) of the end-to-end delivery process. This household example serves as a nice analogy for explaining how the transport layer relates to the network layer:

application messages = letters in envelopes  
 processes = cousins  
 hosts (also called end systems) = houses  
 transport-layer protocol = Ann and Bill  
 network-layer protocol = postal service (including mail carriers)

Continuing with this analogy, note that Ann and Bill do all their work within their respective homes; they are not involved, for example, in sorting mail in any intermediate mail center or in moving mail from one mail center to another. Similarly, transport-layer protocols live in the end systems. Within an end system, a transport protocol moves messages from application processes to the network edge (that is, the network layer) and vice versa, but it doesn't have any say about how the messages are moved within the network core. In fact, as illustrated in Figure 3.1, intermediate routers neither act on, nor recognize, any information that the transport layer may have added to the application messages.

Continuing with our family saga, suppose now that when Ann and Bill go on vacation, another cousin pair—say, Susan and Harvey—substitute for them and provide the household-internal collection and delivery of mail. Unfortunately for the two families, Susan and Harvey do not do the collection and delivery in exactly the same way as Ann and Bill. Being younger kids, Susan and Harvey pick up and drop off the mail less frequently and occasionally lose letters (which are sometimes