use a form of random routing. Another possibility [Guo 2009] is to deploy multiple network interface cards in each host, connect each host to multiple low-cost commodity switches, and allow the hosts themselves to intelligently route traffic among the switches. Variations and extensions of these approaches are currently being deployed in contemporary data centers. Many more innovations in data center design are likely to come; interested readers are encouraged to read the many recent papers on data center network design.

5.7 Retrospective: A Day in the Life of a Web Page Request

Now that we've covered the link layer in this chapter, and the network, transport and application layers in earlier chapters, our journey down the protocol stack is complete! In the very beginning of this book (Section 1.1), we wrote "much of this book is concerned with computer network protocols," and in the first five chapters, we've certainly seen that this is indeed the case! Before heading into the topical chapters in second part of this book, we'd like to wrap up our journey down the protocol stack by taking an integrated, holistic view of the protocols we've learned about so far. One way then to take this "big picture" view is to identify the many (many!) protocols that are involved in satisfying even the simplest request: downloading a web page. Figure 5.32 illustrates our setting: a student, Bob, connects a laptop to his school's Ethernet switch and downloads a web page (say the home page of www.google.com). As we now know, there's a *lot* going on "under the hood" to satisfy this seemingly simple request. A Wireshark lab at the end of this chapter examines trace files containing a number of the packets involved in similar scenarios in more detail.

5.7.1 Getting Started: DHCP, UDP, IP, and Ethernet

VideoNote
A day in the life of a Web page request

Let's suppose that Bob boots up his laptop and then connects it to an Ethernet cable connected to the school's Ethernet switch, which in turn is connected to the school's router, as shown in Figure 5.32. The school's router is connected to an ISP, in this example, comcast.net. In this example, comcast.net is providing the DNS service for the school; thus, the DNS server resides in the Comcast network rather than the school network. We'll assume that the DHCP server is running within the router, as is often the case.

When Bob first connects his laptop to the network, he can't do anything (e.g., download a Web page) without an IP address. Thus, the first network-related action taken by Bob's laptop is to run the DHCP protocol to obtain an IP address, as well as other information, from the local DHCP server:

1. The operating system on Bob's laptop creates a **DHCP request message** (Section 4.4.2) and puts this message within a **UDP segment** (Section 3.3) with destination port 67 (DHCP server) and source port 68 (DHCP client). The UDP segment is then placed within an **IP datagram** (Section 4.4.1) with a broadcast

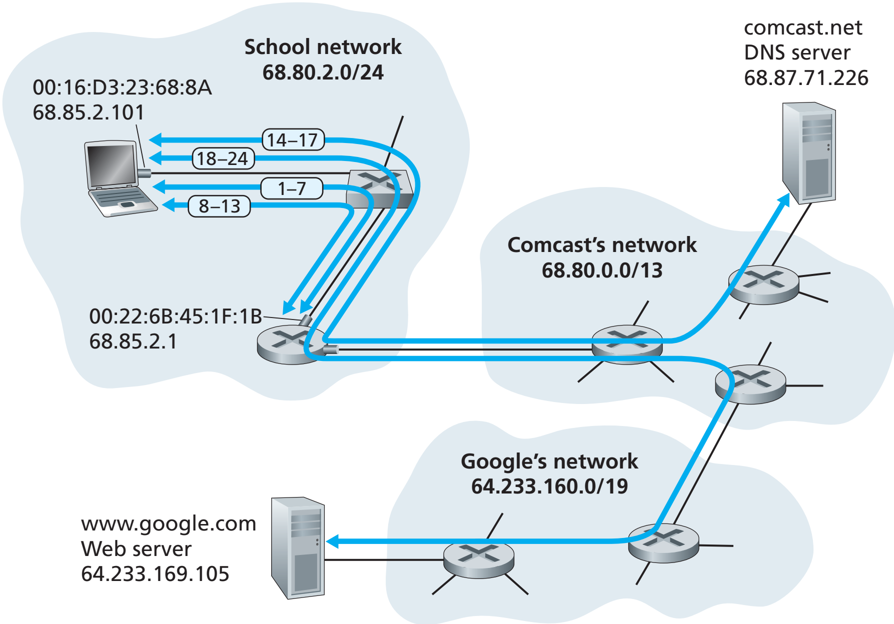

Figure 5.32 ♦ A day in the life of a Web page request: network setting and actions

IP destination address (255.255.255.255) and a source IP address of 0.0.0.0, since Bob's laptop doesn't yet have an IP address.

2. The IP datagram containing the DHCP request message is then placed within an **Ethernet frame** (Section 5.4.2). The Ethernet frame has a destination MAC addresses of FF:FF:FF:FF:FF:FF so that the frame will be broadcast to all devices connected to the switch (hopefully including a DHCP server); the frame's source MAC address is that of Bob's laptop, 00:16:D3:23:68:8A.
3. The broadcast Ethernet frame containing the DHCP request is the first frame sent by Bob's laptop to the Ethernet switch. The switch broadcasts the incoming frame on all outgoing ports, including the port connected to the router.
4. The router receives the broadcast Ethernet frame containing the DHCP request on its interface with MAC address 00:22:6B:45:1F:1B and the IP datagram is extracted from the Ethernet frame. The datagram's broadcast IP destination address indicates that this IP datagram should be processed by upper layer protocols at this node, so the datagram's payload (a UDP segment) is thus **demultiplexed** (Section 3.2) up to UDP, and the DHCP request message is extracted from the UDP segment. The DHCP server now has the DHCP request message.
5. Let's suppose that the DHCP server running within the router can allocate IP addresses in the **CIDR** (Section 4.4.2) block 68.85.2.0/24. In this example, all IP addresses used within the school are thus within Comcast's address block.