

Time Sensitive Networks and Network Calculus

Jean-Yves Le Boudec

Dagstuhl Seminar

April 2024

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Title: Time Sensitive Networks and Network Calculus

Abstract: Time Sensitive Networks offer guarantees on worst-case delay, worst-case delay variation and zero congestion loss; in addition, they provide mechanisms for packet duplication in order to hide residual losses due to transmission errors. They find applications in many areas such as factory automation, embedded and vehicular networks, audio-visual studio networks, and in the front-hauls of cellular wireless networks. In this talk we describe recent results that can be used to analyze time sensitive networks with components such as packet ordering and duplicate removal functions, schedulers, regulators, dampers. We explain why clock non-idealities matter and how to take them into account.

Joint work with: Anne Bouillard, Marc Boyer, Damien Guidolin-Pina, Jörn Migge, Ahlem Mifadou, Ehsan Mohammadpour, Stephan Plassart, Eleni Stai, Hossein Tabatabaee and Ludovic Thomas.

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1. Time sensitive Networks
2. Improved Delay Bounds
3. Clock Non-Idealities
4. Packet Re-ordering
5. Packet Replication and Elimination

1. Time Sensitive Networks (IEEE TSN, IETF DetNet)

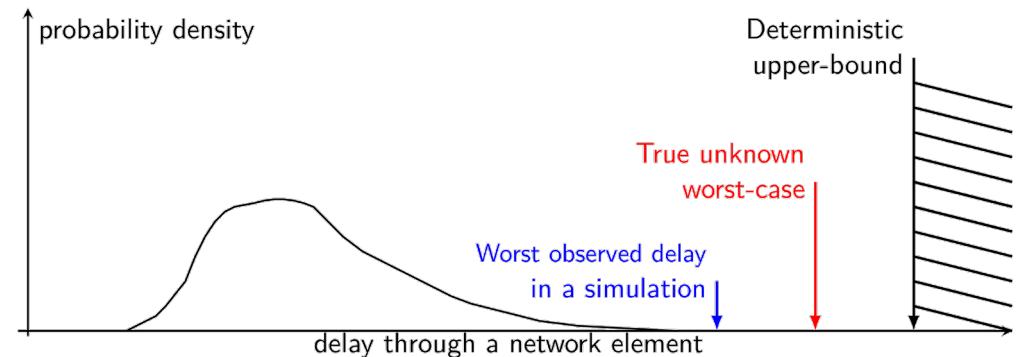
Deterministic service: upper bounds on end-to-end delay and delay jitter, buffer sizing to achieve zero congestion loss. Proven bounds are required, simulation is not sufficient.

Every flow is constrained at source.

Network nodes offer a guaranteed service.

synchronous: e.g Time Triggered CAN bus: (not our focus today)

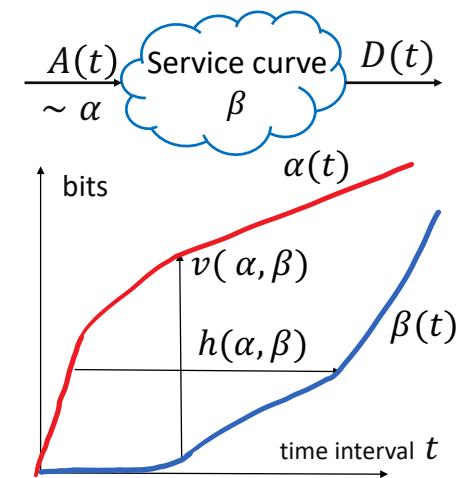
asynchronous: e.g. switch/router network: Flows are assigned to **classes**; at every node, traffic of a given class is FIFO; a **scheduler** shares bandwidth and buffer between classes (e.g. CBS, Burst Limiting Shaper, WRR, DRR, Static Priority, etc)



2. Nodal Analysis: Delay Bound

Assume

- Node is FIFO for this flow aggregate
- Service guarantee with **service curve** β
- Flow aggregate is constrained by **arrival curve** α at input
(total number of bits in any t seconds is $\leq \alpha(t)$)



Delay bound ?

- **Delay** $\leq h(\alpha, \beta)$
- Jitter bound = $h(\alpha, \beta)$ – delay lower bound

Improved Delay Bound

Assume in addition

- Data is packetized at input
- Output serves entire packets, with rate c

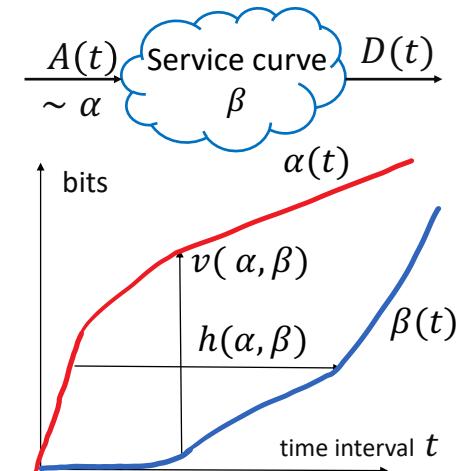
For a packet of size size ℓ , $\text{delay} \leq h(\alpha^+ - \ell, \beta) + \frac{\ell}{c}$

If β is c -Lipschitz (slope $\leq c$), for a flow within the aggregate that has minimum packet size L^{\min} ,

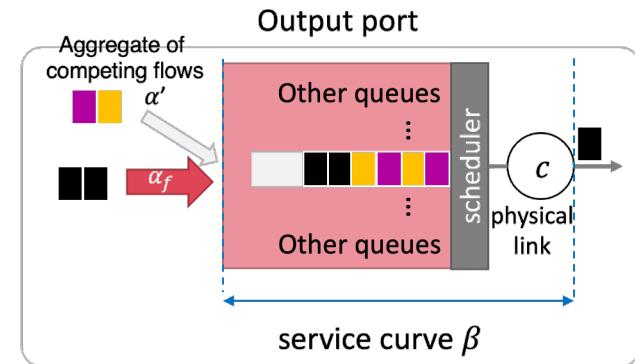
$$\text{delay} \leq h(\alpha - L^{\min}, \beta) + \frac{L^{\min}}{c}$$

[Mohammadpour 2023]

Example: $\beta(t) = R[t - T]^+$, $\alpha_f(t) = r_f t + b_f$, $\alpha'(t) = r' t + b'$, $\alpha = \alpha_f + \alpha'$,
 $r_f + r' \leq R \leq c$: delay bound for flow f is $T + \frac{b_f + b'}{R} - L_f^{\min} \left(\frac{1}{R} - \frac{1}{c} \right)$ improvement



α^+ = right-limit of α



How is this improvement obtained ?

1. Use arrival curve characterization for a point process model:

saying that the flow has arrival curve α is equivalent to

$$A_n - A_m \geq \alpha^\downarrow(\ell_m + \dots + \ell_n), \forall m, n, 1 \leq m \leq n$$

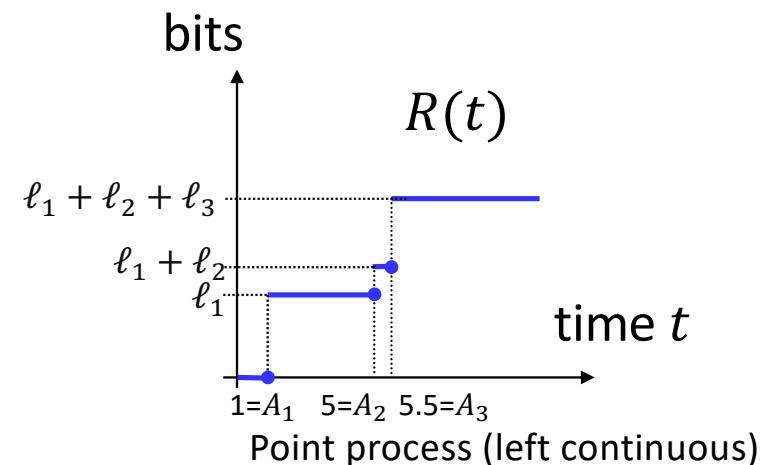
which is also equivalent to

$$\ell_m + \dots + \ell_n \leq \alpha^+(A_n - A_m), \forall m, n, 1 \leq m \leq n$$

where α^\downarrow is the lower-pseudo inverse of α and α^+ is the right-limit of α

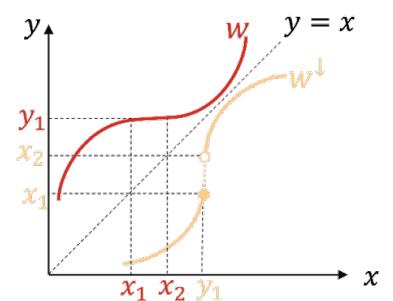
2. An upper bound on *queuing delay* for a packet of length ℓ is $h(\alpha^+ - \ell, \beta)$

[Mohammadpour 2023]



$$R(t) = \sum_{n \geq 1} \ell_n 1_{\{A_n < t\}}$$

Lower pseudo-inverse



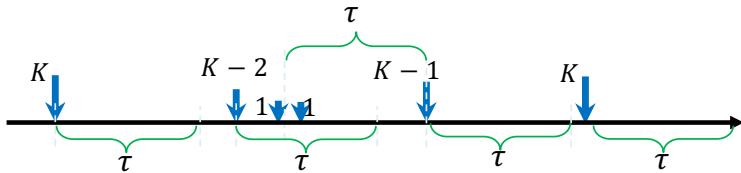
TSN Source Constraint (τ, K, L)

During an interval of duration τ , up to K packets of size $\leq L$ can be sent.

Is this equivalent to an arrival curve constraint ?

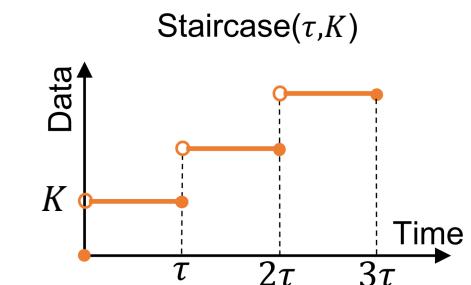
TSN Source Constraint (τ, K, L) : sliding window interpretation

During *any* interval of duration τ , up to K packets of size $\leq L$ can be sent.



\Leftrightarrow **packet-level arrival curve**: at most $\alpha_P(t)$ packets in any interval of duration t , with

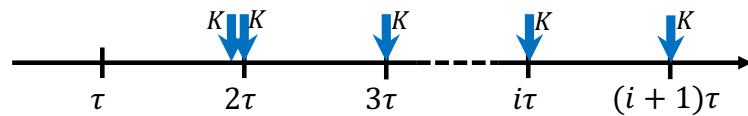
$$\alpha_P(t) = K \left\lfloor \frac{t}{\tau} \right\rfloor$$



$$\alpha(t) = K \left\lfloor \frac{t}{\tau} \right\rfloor$$

TSN Source Constraint (τ, K, L) : fixed window interpretation

During *repeating* intervals of duration τ , up to K packets of size $\leq L$ can be sent.



$$\Rightarrow \text{packet-level arrival curve} : \alpha_P(t) = K \left\lceil \frac{t}{\tau} \right\rceil + K$$

Not an equivalence.

However: for every $\varepsilon > 0$, there is a greedy source that has packet-level arrival curve $\alpha_P^\varepsilon(t) = K \left\lceil \frac{t-\varepsilon}{\tau} \right\rceil + K$

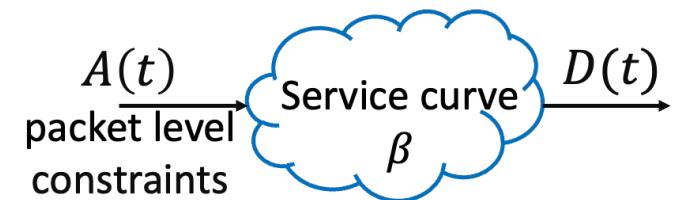
and satisfies the TSN constraint *fixed-window* (τ, K, L)

[Mohammadpour 2023]

Delay Bound with Packet-level Arrival Constraints

Assume

- Node is FIFO for this flow aggregate
- Service guarantee with **service curve** β
- Flow i within aggregate is constrained by **packet level arrival curve** $\alpha_{P,i}$ at input
- Data is packetized at input, line rate c , β is c -Lipschitz



Delay bound ?

- Derive bit-level arrival curve for aggregate $\alpha(t) = \sum_i L_i^{\max} \alpha_{P,i}(t)$
- For flow f , **delay** $\leq h(\alpha - L_f^{\min}, \beta) + \frac{L_f^{\min}}{c}$

Improved Delay Bound with Packet-level Arrival Constraints

A better bound is [Mohammadpour 2023]:

$$\text{For flow } f, \text{ delay} \leq h(\alpha - L_f^{\max}, \beta) + \frac{L_f^{\max}}{c}$$

Example: 2 flows, $\beta(t) = R[t - T]^+$, $\alpha_{P,i}(t) = K_i \left\lceil \frac{t}{\tau_i} \right\rceil, i = 1, 2;$

$$c \geq R \geq \frac{K_1 L_1^{\max}}{\tau_1} + \frac{K_2 L_2^{\max}}{\tau_2}$$

Delay bound for flow 1: $T + \underbrace{\frac{K_1 L_1^{\max} + K_2 L_2^{\max}}{R}}_{\text{standard NC bound}} - L_1^{\max} \left(\frac{1}{R} - \frac{1}{c} \right)$

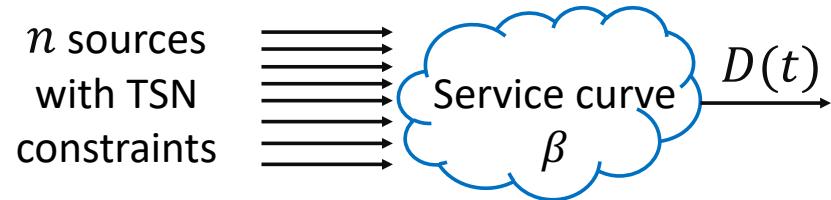
Compare to bound derived from bit-level arrival curve: $T + \frac{K_1 L_1^{\max} + K_2 L_2^{\max}}{R} - L_1^{\min} \left(\frac{1}{R} - \frac{1}{c} \right)$

Packet-level arrival curve is **more constraining** than bit-level ! Better bounds can be found by exploiting packet-level constraints !



- Every flow i is constrained by packet level arrival curve $\alpha_{P,i}$ at input
- $\alpha(t) = \sum_i L_i^{\max} \alpha_{P,i}(t)$
- Data is packetized at input, line rate c , β is c -Lipschitz

Delay Bounds for TSN Sources



- For a flow i that is constrained by TSN sliding window (τ_i, K_i, L_i) let $\alpha_{P,i}(t) = K_i \left\lceil \frac{t}{\tau_i} \right\rceil$
- For a flow i that is constrained by TSN fixed window (τ_i, K_i, L_i) let $\alpha_{P,i}(t) = K_i \left\lceil \frac{t}{\tau_i} \right\rceil + K_i$
- Let $\alpha(t) = \sum_{i=1}^n L_i^{\max} \alpha_{P,i}(t)$
- Delay bound for a tagged flow i is $h(\alpha - L_i^{\max}, \beta) + \frac{L_i^{\max}}{c}$

This delay bound is tight [Mohammadpour 2023].

Network Calculus delay bound can be slightly improved

The analysis combines min-plus (service curve) and max-plus (point process)

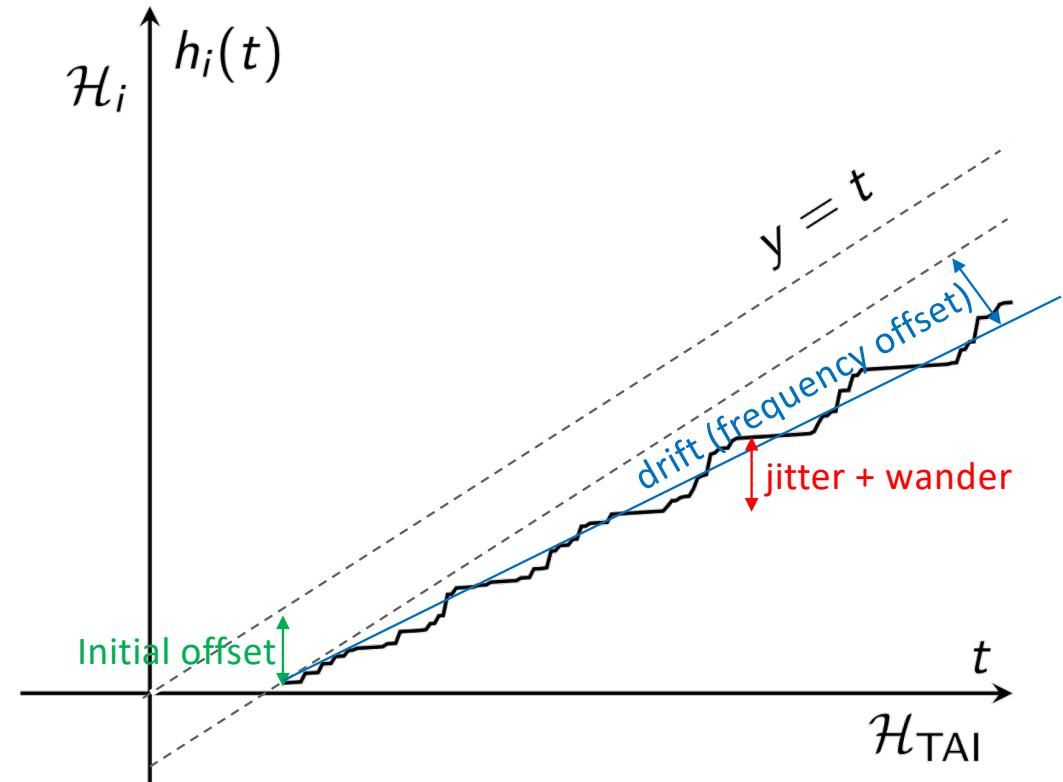
TSN T-spec is at packet level, regulators (ATS) are at bit level \Rightarrow packet-level theory ?

3. Clock Non-Idealities

Standard theory assumes perfect time everywhere. In reality, nodes use local clocks that are not ideal.

- **tight sync** (PTP, White Rabbit, GPS) : timestamping error $\leq \omega \approx 10\text{ns} - 1\mu\text{s}$
- **loose sync** (NTP): $\omega \approx 1\text{ms} - 1\text{s}$
- **no sync**: timestamping error unbounded; measurement of time interval on same system:
error is bounded by clock drift, jitter and wander.

[ITU-T 1996]



What is the effect of clock non ideality ?

Clock Model in Network Calculus [Thomas 2020]

Measurement of a time interval is performed with one clock $\rightarrow d$
and with another clock $\rightarrow d'$

Time synchronization error: $d' - d \leq 2\omega$

Clock jitter and wander: $d' \leq \rho d + \eta$

This gives the **change-of-clock inequalities** [Thomas 2020]

$$\max\left(0, \frac{d - \eta}{\rho}, d - 2\omega\right) \leq d' \leq \min(\rho d + \eta, d + 2\omega)$$

ω = time error bound
= $1\mu\text{s}$ in TSN with PTP;
= $+\infty$ if no synchronization

ρ = clock-stability bound
= 1.0001 (e.g. in TSN)

η = timing-jitter bound
= 2ns (e.g. in TSN)

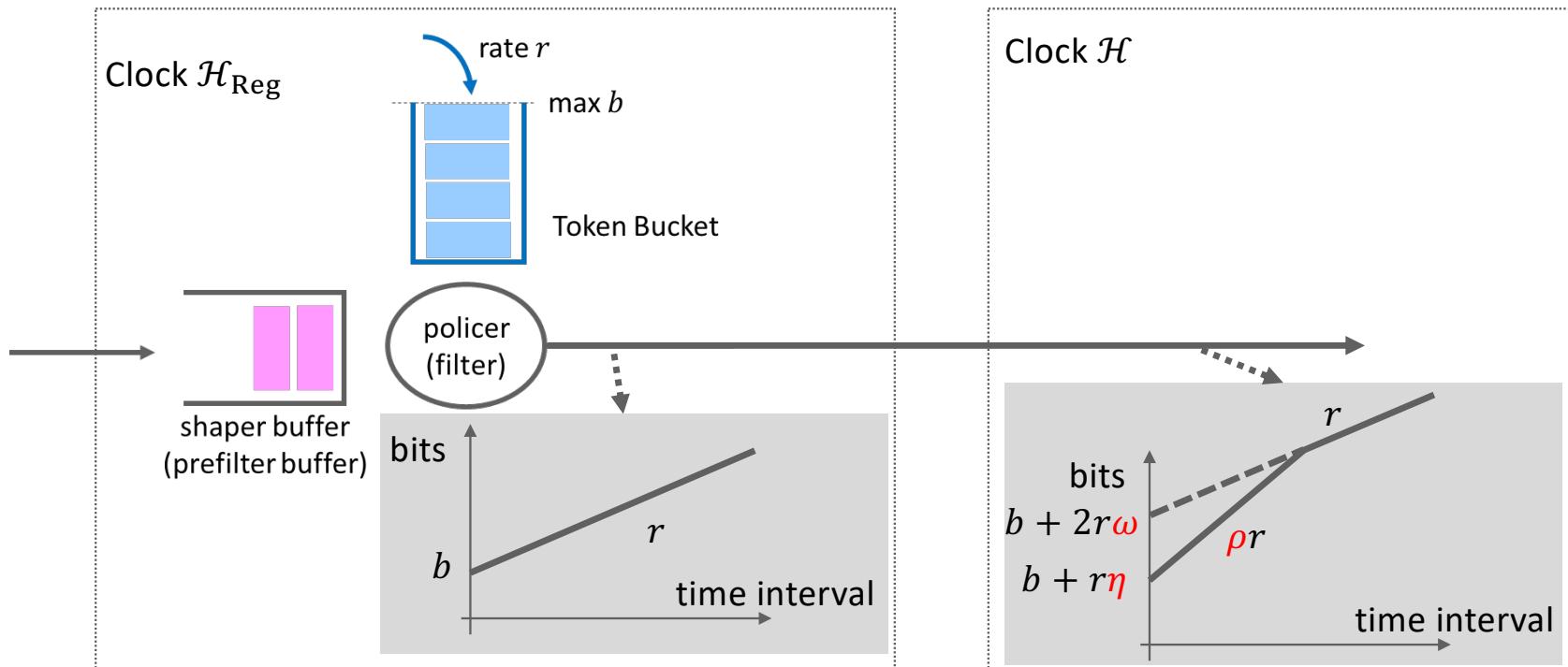
Model is symmetric, i.e. same inequalities if we exchange $d' \leftrightarrow d$

Relative error on estimation of delays is, in general, $\approx 10^{-4}$, i.e.
negligible. However there are some corner cases.

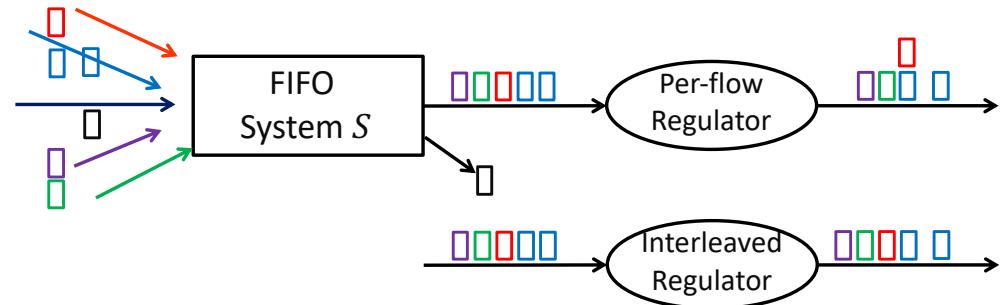
Change of Clock: Arrival Curves

Assume a flow satisfies a token bucket constraint (r, b) when observed with clock \mathcal{H}_{Reg}
i.e. arrival curve constraint $\alpha^{\mathcal{H}_{\text{Reg}}}(t) = rt + b$

When observed with some other clock \mathcal{H} , it satisfies the arrival curve constraint
 $\alpha^{\mathcal{H}}(t) = \min(prt + b + r\eta, rt + b + 2r\omega)$ [Thomas 2020]



Regulators (aka Shapers, ATS)



Regulator delays packets in order to limit burstiness to a prescribed value (i.e. enforces an arrival curve constraint).

Non work-conserving.

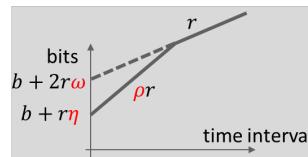
Per flow regulator: one state + one queue per flow.

Interleaved regulator: one state per flow + one global queue, packets not at head of queue wait behind [Specht 2016].

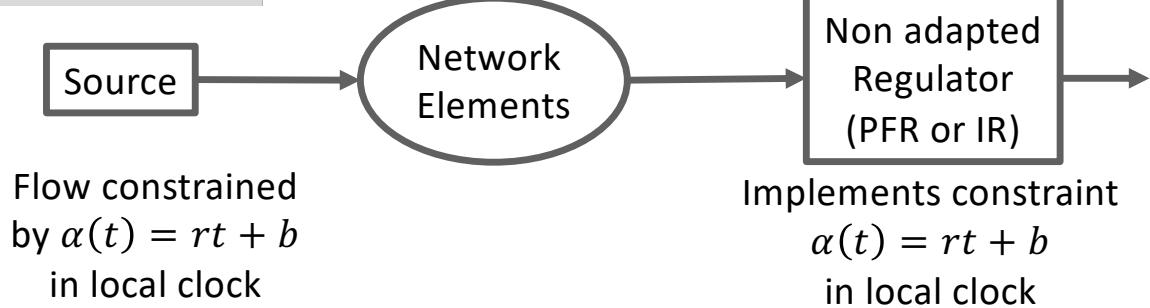
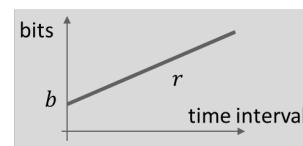
Regulators avoid burstiness cascade, do not increase worst-case end-to-end delay (in principle).

Consequences for Regulators

- Perfect clocks:
Regulator does not increase worst-case delay
- Non-synchronized network:
Per-flow and interleaved regulator unstable (unbounded delay).
- Synchronized network:
Per-flow regulator incurs delay penalty up to 4ω ;
Interleaved regulator is **unstable**.



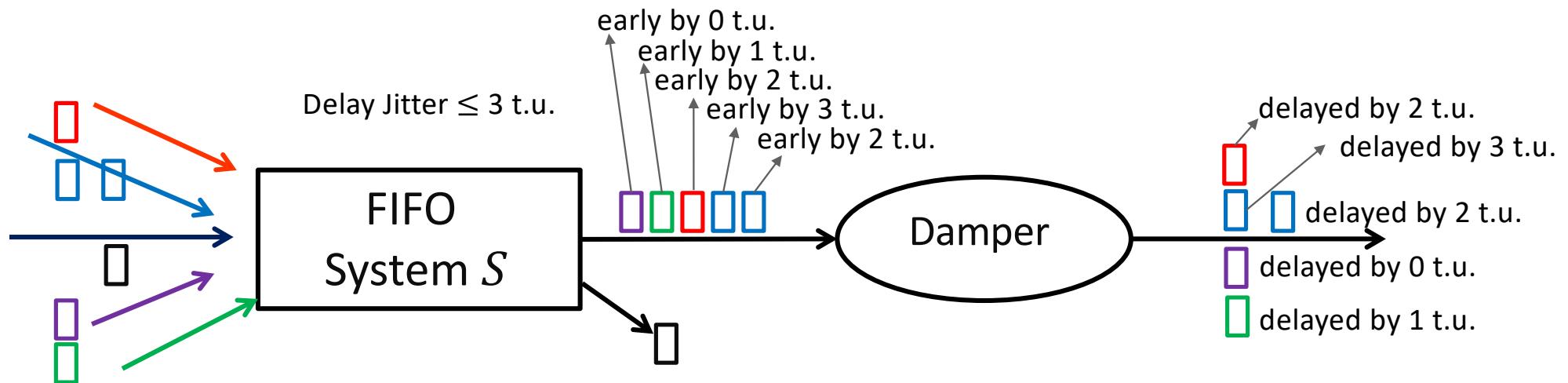
In regulator's clock,
flow satisfies this
constraint at source



Flow constrained
by $\alpha(t) = rt + b$
in local clock

Regulators must use safety margins (be *adapted*) using e.g. rate and burst cascade or ADAM [Thomas 2020]

Dampers



Damper delays a packet by “earliness” read from packet header.

Removes most of jitter, with some residual jitter dependent on tolerance, not on traffic \Rightarrow also removes burstiness cascade.

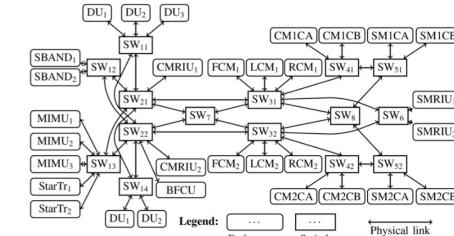
Non work-conserving. Like a per-flow regulator, does not exist in isolation, is combined with queue at next hop.

Unlike regulator, is stateless.

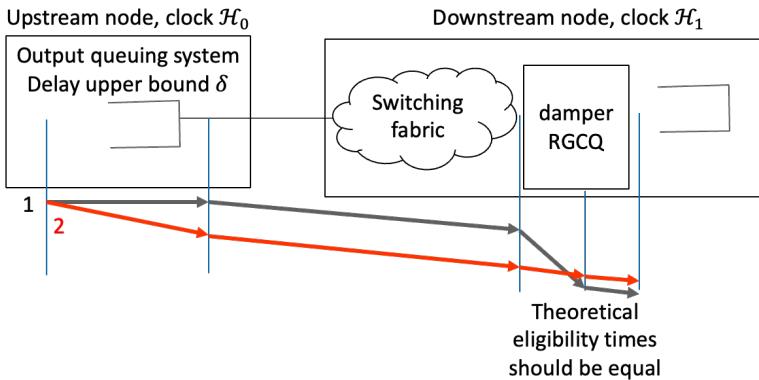
[Cruz 1998] RCSP [Zhang 1993], RGCQ [Shoushou 2020], ATS with Jitter Control [Grigorjew 2020].

Consequences for Dampers

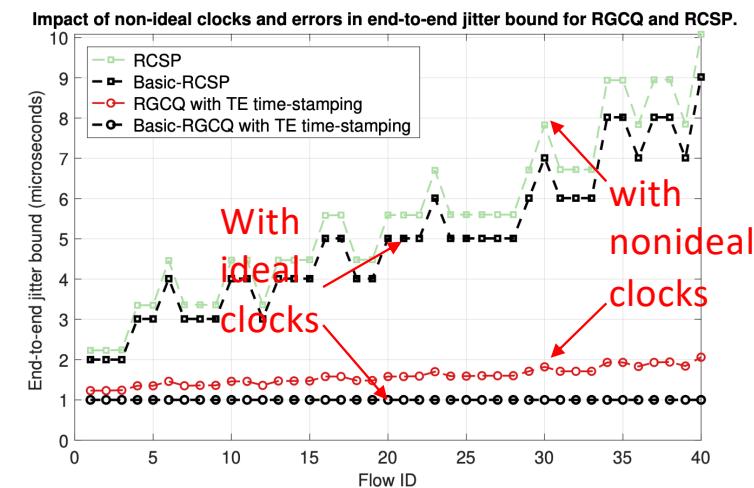
Residual jitter is somehow affected by clock inaccuracies



Timing inaccuracies may lead to mis-ordering



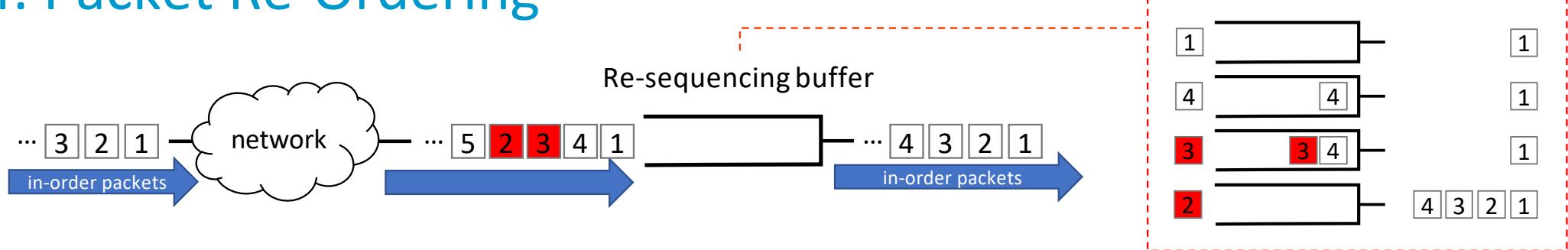
Two consecutive packets should be released by damper at ca. the same time, timing inaccuracies may lead to inversion of order



⇒ Some dampers enforce per-flow packet order (e.g. FOPLEQ, ATS with Jitter Control [Grigorjew 2020]) - work properly only if all network elements are FIFO per flow

[Mohammadpour 2022]

4. Packet Re-Ordering



Time Sensitive Networks may cause packet mis-ordering due to e.g. parallel paths in switching fabrics, dampers, packet replication and elimination etc.

Re-sequencing buffer may be needed before delivery:

stores packets until in-sequence delivery or timeout

Questions: Buffer size ? Minimal timer value ? Effect on worst-case delay bounds ?

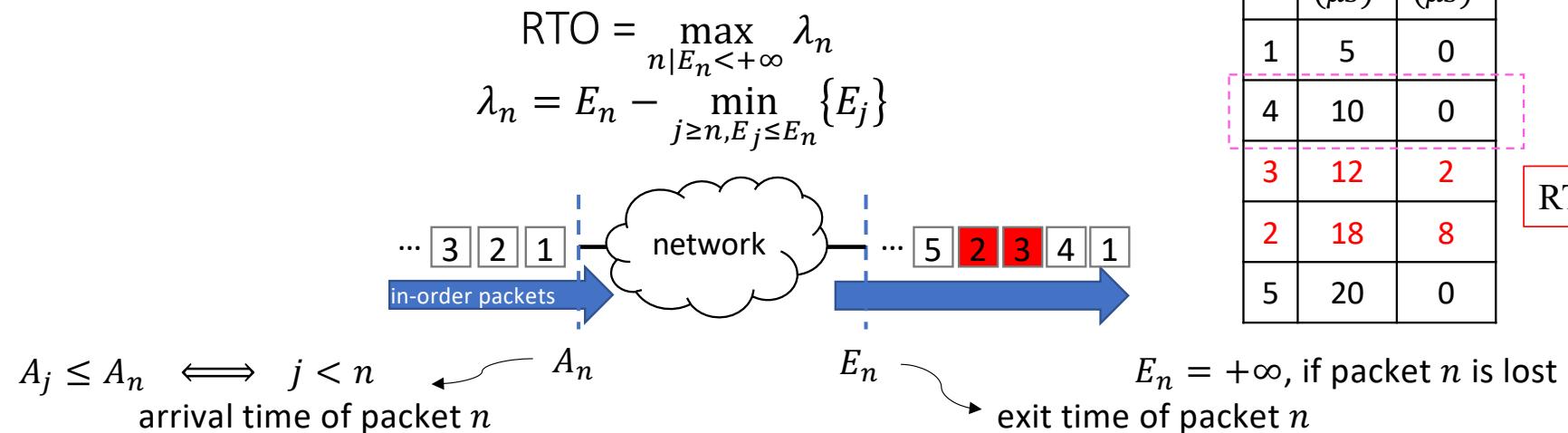
Reordering late Time Offset (RTO)

[RFC 4737, Mohammadpour 2021]

Defined between two observation points, and for a flow of interest

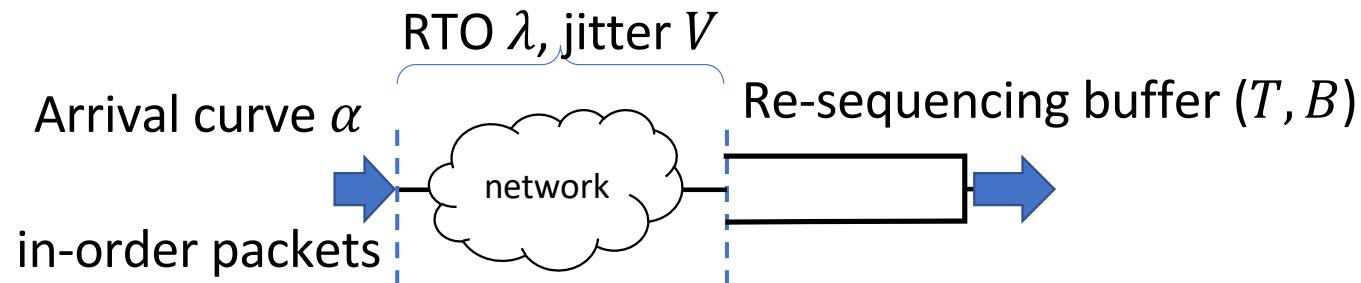
First observation point defines the reference order of packets

RTO = largest time by which a mis-ordered packet is late



RTO = 0 means no re-ordering

Resequencing Buffer Calculus



1. Re-sequencing buffer timeout T minimum value is $T_{\min} = \lambda = \text{RTO}$
2. Required size of resequencing buffer is $B_{\min} = \alpha(V + T)$

[Mohammadpour 2021]

Calculus of RTO (1)

For a system that may re-order packets and has known delay jitter V , the best RTO bound for a flow with arrival curve α is $\lambda = [V - \alpha^\downarrow(2L^{\min})]^+$.

Example: (token bucket) $\alpha(t) = rt + b$

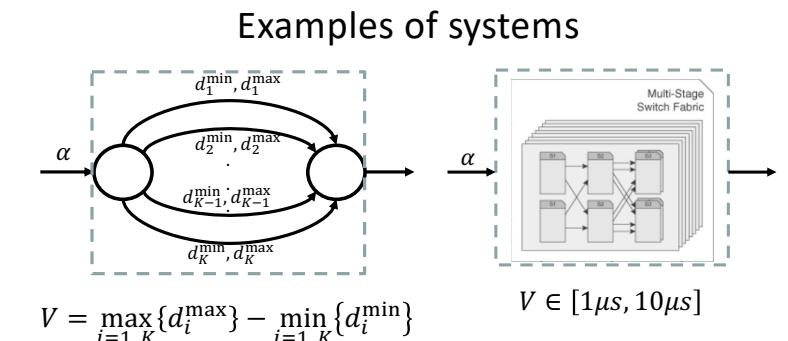
If $b < 2L^{\min}$ and $V \leq \frac{2L^{\min} - b}{r}$ then $\lambda = 0$ (no reorder)

If $b > 2L^{\min}$ then $\lambda = V$ (reordering is possible)

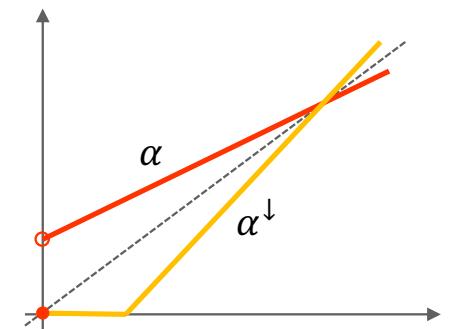
Other bounds exist for flow constraints at packet level.

[Mohammadpour 2021]

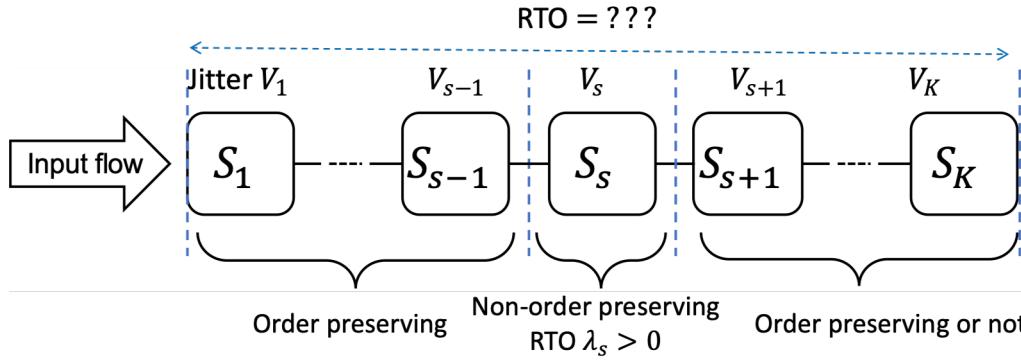
All bounds in TAI (temps atomique international)



Lower pseudo-inverse



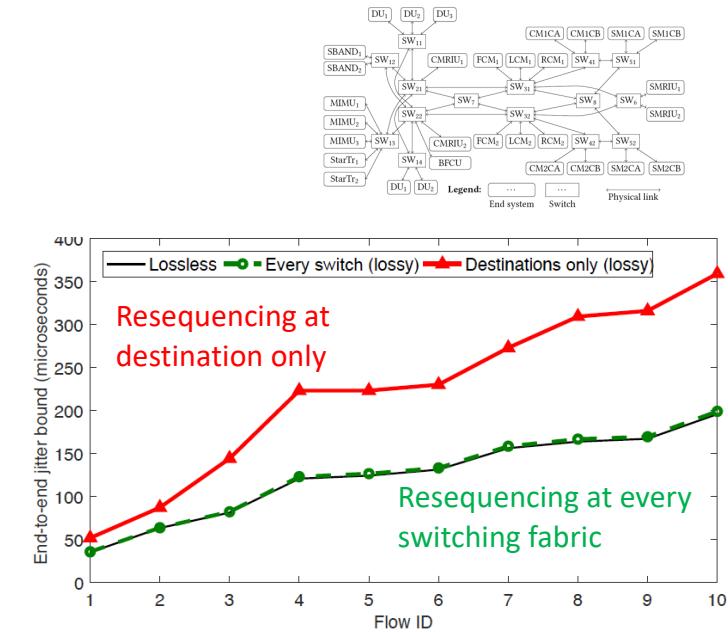
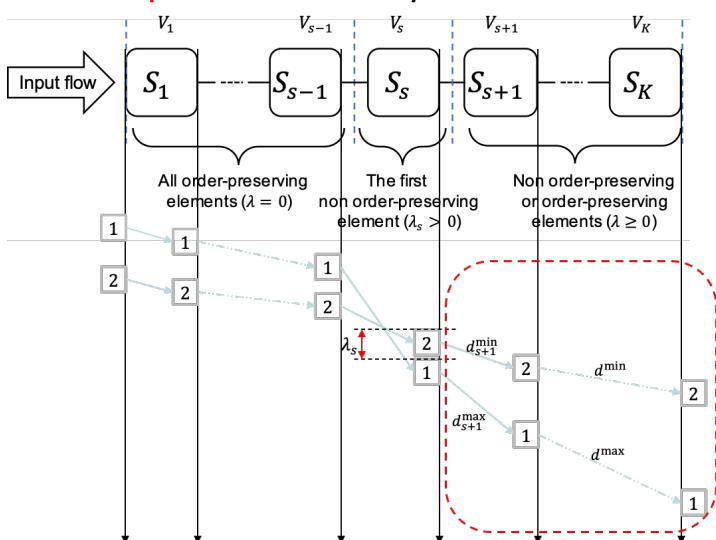
Calculus of RTO (2): Concatenation



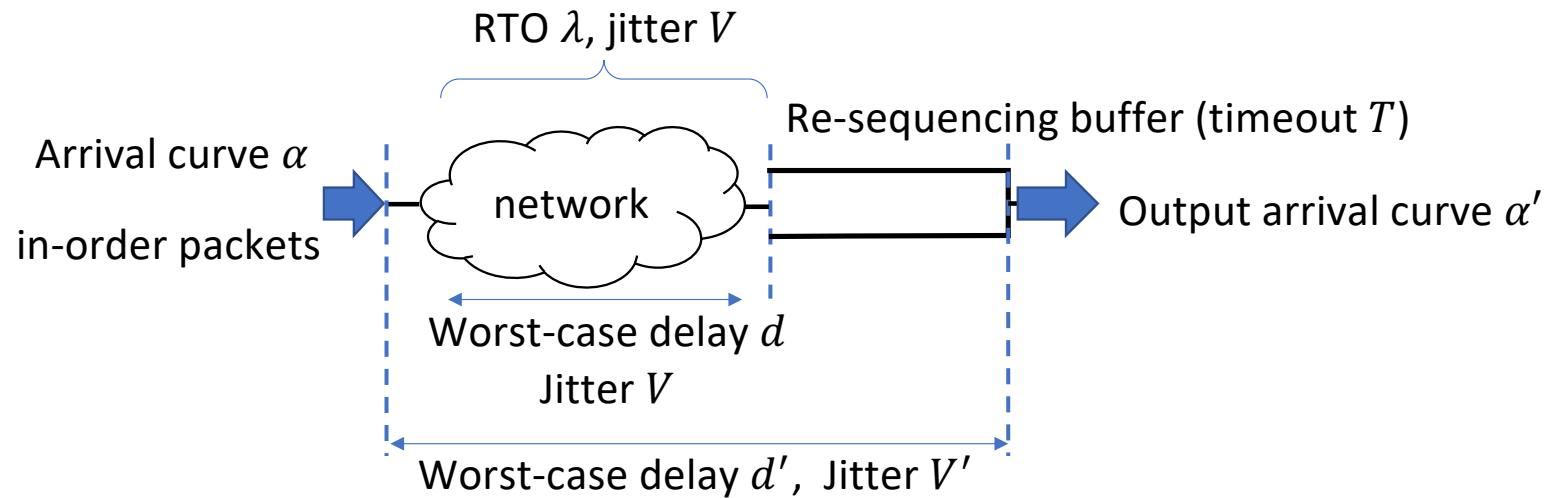
Best RTO bound for concatenation is $\lambda_s + \sum_{i=s+1}^K V_i$

[Mohammadpour 2021]

RTO amplification by downstream jitter



Network Calculus with Re-sequencing Buffers



Lossless network:

$$d' = d, V' = V \text{ and } \alpha'(t) = \alpha(t + V) \text{ (re-sequencing is for free)}$$

Lossy network:

$$d' = d + T, V' = V + T \text{ and } \alpha'(t) = \alpha(t + V + T).$$

Packet reordering metric of interest is the RTO

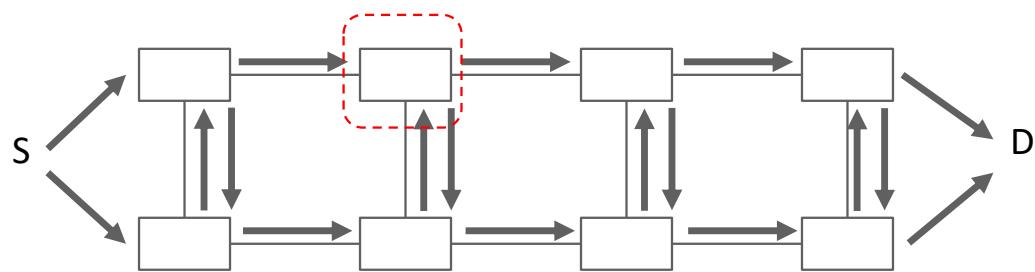
Resequencing is for free in lossless networks

In lossy networks, timeout value (hence RTO) affects delay, jitter and propagated burstiness

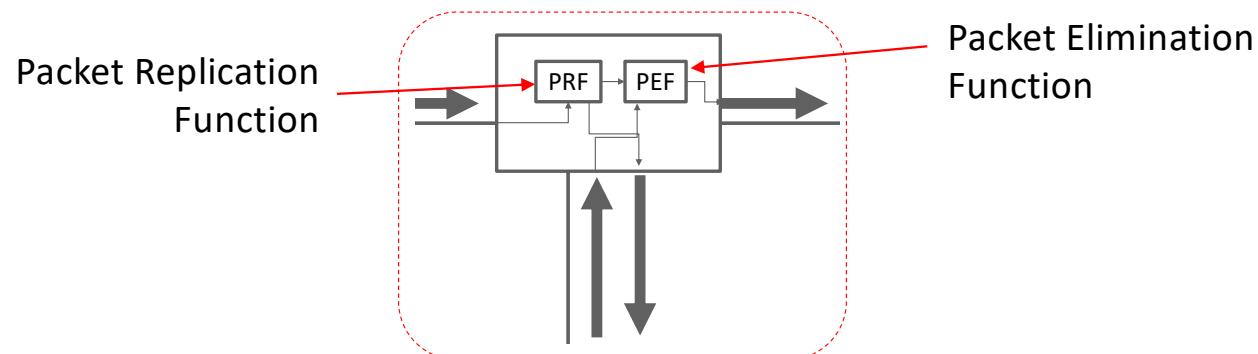
Resequencing-at-end only may cause large resequencing delay due to RTO amplification

5. Packet Replication and Elimination

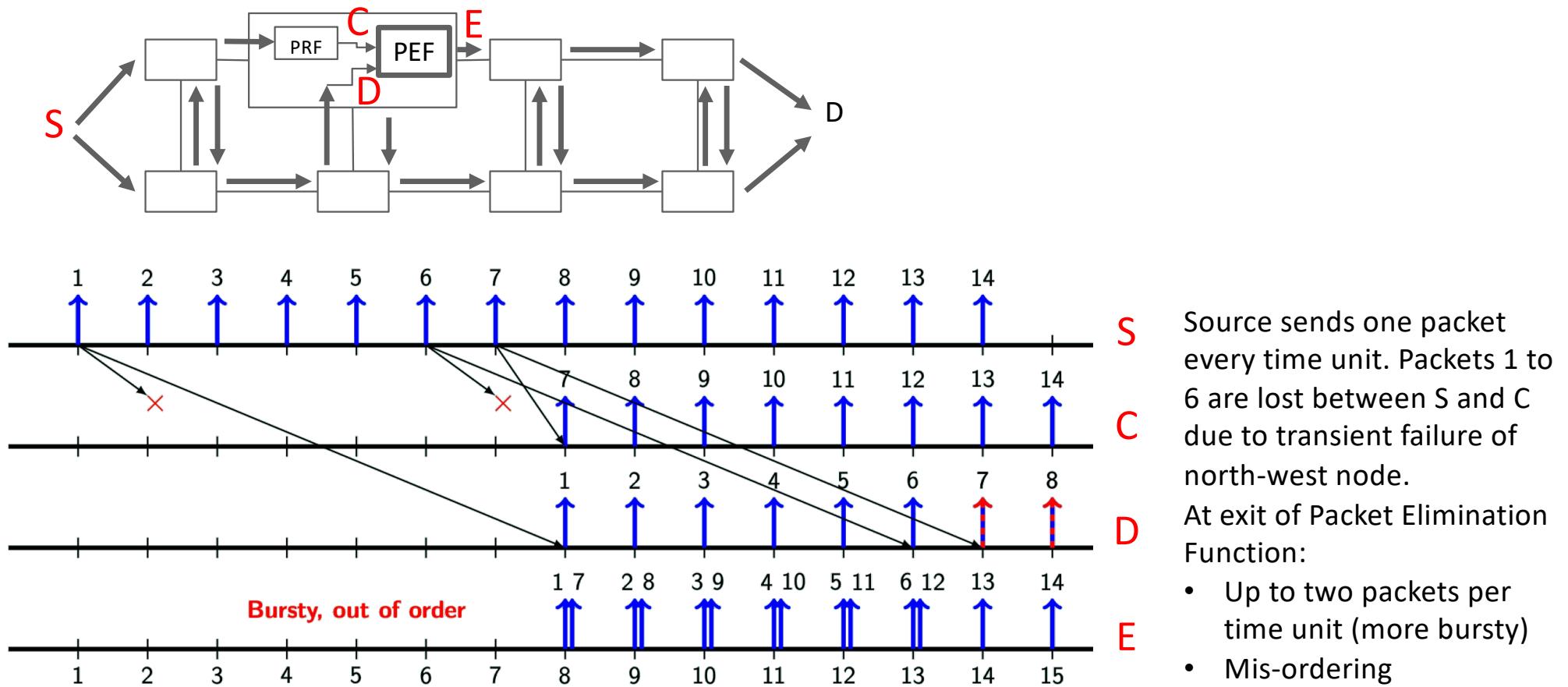
Deterministic networks guarantee 0 congestion loss, but other losses may occur (transient failures, reboots, transmission errors). This is mitigated by packet replication and duplicate elimination (FRER, PREOF).



Any combination of failures that leaves at least one path up is masked (“0 msec repair”) [IEEE 802.1CB]



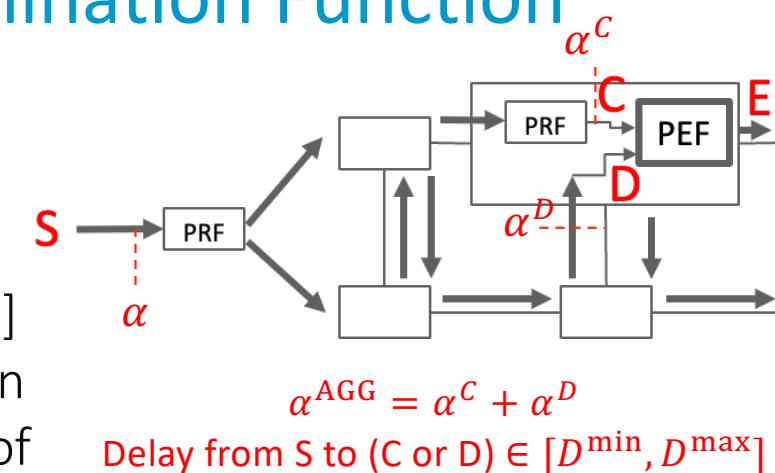
Packet Elimination Function Causes Mis-Ordering + Increased Burstiness [Thomas 2022]



Network Calculus Analysis of Packet Elimination Function

Arrival curve at output of PEF: $\alpha^* = \alpha^{\text{AGG}} \otimes \alpha^{\text{JIT}}$ where:

- $\alpha^{\text{AGG}} = \sum$ propagated arrival curves at input of PEF;
- $\alpha^{\text{JIT}}(t) = \alpha(t + D^{\max} - D^{\min})$ where D^{\max} [resp. D^{\min}] is an upper [resp. lower] bound on delay between common ancestor and input of PEF and α is arrival curve at output of common ancestor on any path.

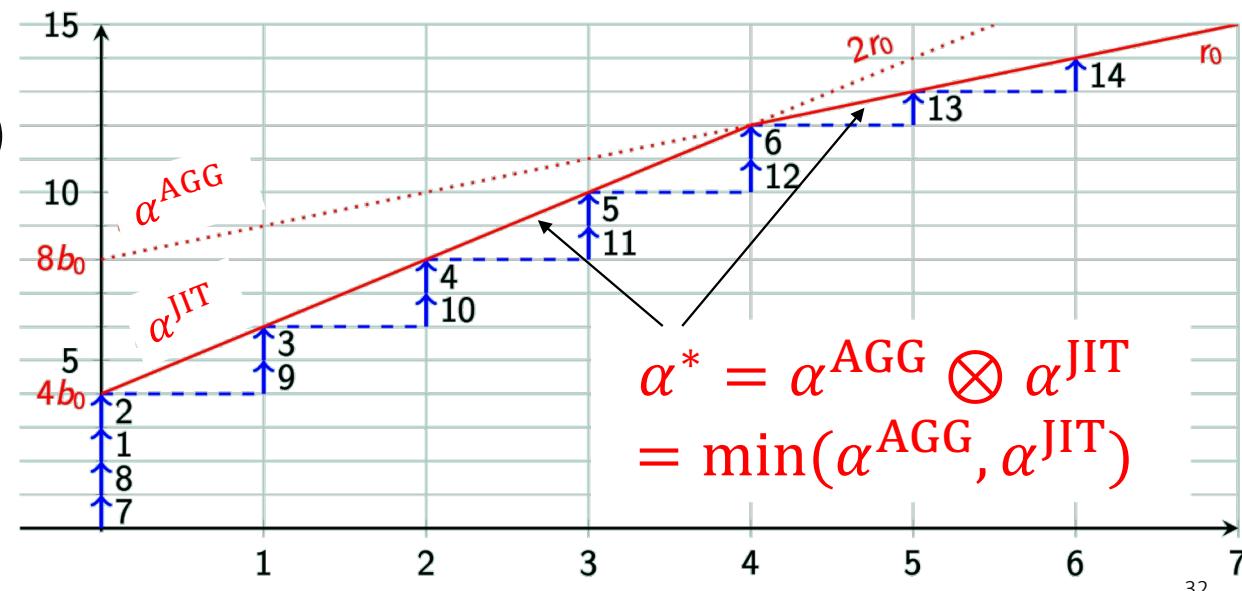


Bound on RTO (amount of re-ordering)

$$\lambda = [D^{\max} - D^{\min} - \alpha^{\downarrow}(2L^{\min})]^+$$

Network Analysis implemented in extension of TFA (xTFA).

[Thomas 2022]



In-network packet replication and elimination is present in time-sensitive networks

Packet elimination negatively affects the deterministic delay bounds and can be taken into account

Other Fascinating Topics...

Network analysis with TFA, PLP, PMOO...

Service curves for bandwidth sharing schedulers (WRR, DRR, ...)

CQF

Quasi-deterministic bounds

Tools

- The [DiscoDNC](#) is an academic Java implementation of the network calculus framework.^[10]
- The [RTC Toolbox](#) is an academic Java/[MATLAB](#) implementation of the Real-Time calculus framework, a theory quasi equivalent to network calculus.^{[4][11]}
- The [CyNC](#)^[12] tool is an academic [MATLAB](#)/Simulink toolbox, based on top of the [RTC Toolbox](#). The tool was developed in 2004-2008 and it is currently used for teaching at [Aalborg university](#).
- The [RTaW-PEGASE](#) is an industrial tool devoted to timing analysis tool of switched Ethernet network (AFDX, industrial and automotive Ethernet), based on network calculus.^[13]
- The [WOPANets](#) is an academic tool combining network calculus based analysis and optimization analysis.^[14]
- The DelayLyzer is an industrial tool designed to compute bounds for Profinet networks.^[15]
- [DEBORAH](#) is an academic tool devoted to FIFO networks.^[16]
- [NetCalBounds](#) is an academic tool devoted to blind & FIFO tandem networks.^{[17][18]}
- [NCBounds](#) is a network calculus tool in Python, published under BSD 3-Clause License. It considers rate-latency servers and token-bucket arrival curves. It handles any topology, including cyclic ones.^[19]
- The Siemens Network Planner ([SINETPLAN](#)) uses network calculus (among other methods) to help the design of a [PROFINET](#) network.^[20]
- [experimental modular TFA](#) (xTFA) is a Python code, support of the PhD thesis of Ludovic Thomas^[21]
- [Panco](#) is a Python code that computes network calculus bounds with linear programming methods.
- [Saihu](#) is a Python interface that integrates three worst-case network analysis tools: xTFA, DiscoDNC, and [Panco](#).
- [CCAC](#) is an SMT-solver based tool to verify the performance properties of [congestion control](#) algorithms (CCAs) using a network-calculus-like model

Thank You !

References are in the online version.

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