

pROJECT 2

Simple Window-based Reliable Data Transfer



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High Level Description

The purpose of this project was to gain a better understanding of reliable data transfer using UDP protocol. We implemented the Go-Back-N protocol since we resend all packets within a given window in the case of a timeout.

This project was split into three files (sender.cpp, receiver.cpp, and packet.h) as well as a makefile.

In packet.h, we define what a Packet is. A Packet contains all the information necessary to ensure reliable data transfer such as a sequence number, a packet number, its length, as well as its type (since we distinguished ACKs from regular messages). The function isPktBad checks to see if a packet is bad and/or possibly corrupted by comparing a randomly generated probability with the given threshold. The function createPacket initializes a packet with a given type, sequence number as well as packet number.

The file receiver.cpp contains int main(int argc, char\*\* argv) which contains the bulk of the code for receiver’s implementations.

We first parse the given command and ensure that we have the correct number of arguments. We then check to see if the given loss threshold and packet corruption probability are correctly defined (between 0 and 1). We then begin to set up the socket and look up the name of the host.

We begin by sending an initial request for the file. We send the message directly through the socket using sendto. We then wait to receive an ACK from the server using recvfrom, if the sequence number of the initial packet we receive is -1, then the file is not found. Otherwise, that means we have received an ACK from the server and can begin receiving packets.

As we receive packets, we check against the given packet loss and corruption probabilities and print out sequence number when each event occurs. Also, we check to see whether we received the packet in order. If the packet is received in order, we extract its contents then create an ACK requesting the next packet with its sequence number and send it back to the server as well as update the number of packets we have received so far. If an out of order packet is received, we re-send an ACK for the most recent in-order packet.

To ensure that the server receives an ACK for the last packet in the event that it was dropped, we re-send an ACK for the very last packet that we received.

At this point, the client should have received all the packets so we write the packet contents to a file named data.out and ensure that it can be opened.

The file server.cpp contains 2 functions: bool isTimeout(timeval curr, timeval old),and int main(int argc, char\*\* argv).

The function isTimeout checks to see if a packet has timed out. In this project, we defined a packet timeout to be 0.1 seconds (or 100 milliseconds). Again, int main(int argc, char\*\* argv) contains the bulk of the code especially since the sender will handle the job of sending the packets.

Like before, we first parse the given command to ensure for correctness before opening the socket. In our code, the server binds to the first address in the list of network addresses. We wait for a file request and check to see if it is a valid file we have. If so, then we send an ACK to confirm state whether the requested file is valid. Once the data has been split into packets (assigning the correct packet and sequence numbers for each), we are ready to begin sending.

Once all packets have been sent, we then check for timeout, loss and corruption events. If a time out has occurred, then we resend all packets within a given window. Otherwise, we have a received an ACK from the receiver. If we receive all the ACKs (if the number of ACKs we have received is the same as the number of packets) we stop listening for ACKs. Otherwise, if an ACK is received we slide the window, and re-send the new set of packets.

Difficulties

At first we didn’t know how to set up the structure of the packets – for instance we were not sure what should go inside the packets. We solved this by outlining what we were going to use the packets for – in this case the packets are used to send ACKs as well as actual data. At first we attempted to send ACKs as a separate object from packets but realized that would not work nearly as well. Since packets are used by both sender and receiver, we realized we just needed one header file to define the packet.

Another difficulty was how to handle the retransmission in the case of a combination of timeout, packet loss and packet corruption events. For timeout we decided to use a vector to store the time that we sent the packets and compare them to the current time.

We also chose to use packet number instead of packet size to keep things in integers instead of bytes so we wouldn’t have to handle conversions.