

U10814

LAB 5: Protocol Analysis Using Wireshark

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Last Update	2023-03-16
Number of pages	14

1 Introduction

This lab will introduce you to packet capturing (packet sniffing) and network traffic analysis with *Wireshark*.

1.1 What is Wireshark?

Wireshark is a network protocol analyser. It lets you capture and interactively browse the traffic running on a computer network. It has a rich and powerful feature set and is the world's most popular tool of its kind. It runs on most computing platforms including Windows, macOS, Linux, and UNIX. Network professionals, security experts, developers, and educators around the world use it regularly. It is freely available as open source, and is released under the GNU General Public License version 2.

It is developed and maintained by a global team of protocol experts, and it is an example of a disruptive technology.¹

1.2 What is Packet Capture (Packet Sniffing)?

A *packet sniffer* is an application which can capture and analyse network traffic which is passing through a system's Network Interface Card (NIC). The sniffer sets the card to *promiscuous mode* which means all traffic is read, whether it is addressed to that machine or not. The figure below shows an attacker sniffing packets from the network, and the *Wireshark* packet sniffer/analyser.

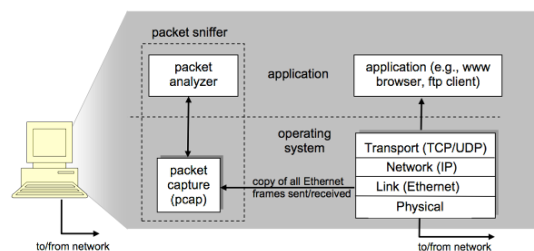


Figure 1: Packet Sniffing²

1.3 What is Packet Analysis?

Wireshark is an open source cross-platform packet capture and analysis tool, with versions for Windows and Linux. The GUI window gives a detailed breakdown of the network protocol stack for each packet, colourising packet details based on protocol, as well as having functionality to filter and search the traffic, and pick out TCP streams. Wireshark can also save packet data to files for offline analysis and export/import packet captures to/from other tools. Statistics can also be generated for packet capture files.

Wireshark can be used for *network troubleshooting*, to *investigate security issues* and to *analyse and understand network protocols*. The packet sniffer can exploit information passed in plaintext, i.e.,

¹<https://www.wireshark.org/faq.html#q1.1>

²http://mathcs.pugetsound.edu/~tmullen/images/nw/packet_sniffer.png

not encrypted. Examples of *protocols* which pass information in plaintext are *Telnet*, *FTP*, *SNMP*, *POP*, and *HTTP*.

Wireshark is a GUI based network capture tool. There is a command line based version of the packet capture utility, called *tshark*. Tshark provides many of the same features as its big sibling, but is console-based. It can be a good alternative if only command line access is available, and also uses less resources as it has no GUI to generate.

2 Using Wireshark to Capture and Analyse Traffic

In this exercise, the fundamentals of the *Wireshark Packet Sniffer and Protocol Analyser* tool will be introduced. Then Wireshark will be used to perform basic protocol analysis on TCP/IP network traffic.

The Wireshark User Guide can be found at:

http://www.wireshark.org/docs/wsug_html_chunged/

2.1 Using Wireshark to Capture Traffic

Start the Wireshark application. When Wireshark is first run, a default, or blank window is shown. To list the available network interfaces, either select the **Capture** ⇒ **Options** menu option (see Figure 2 and Figure 3), or select from an interface listed directly on the main Wireshark screen.

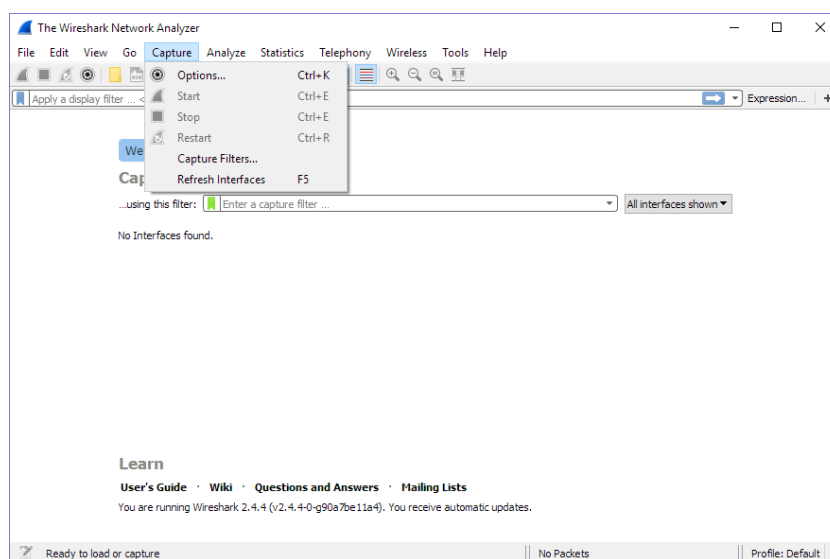


Figure 2: Select Capture ⇒ Options

Wireshark should display a popup window such as the one shown in Figure 2. To capture network traffic click the **Start** button for the network interface you want to capture traffic on.

Windows can have a long list of virtual interfaces, before the Ethernet Network Interface Card (NIC).

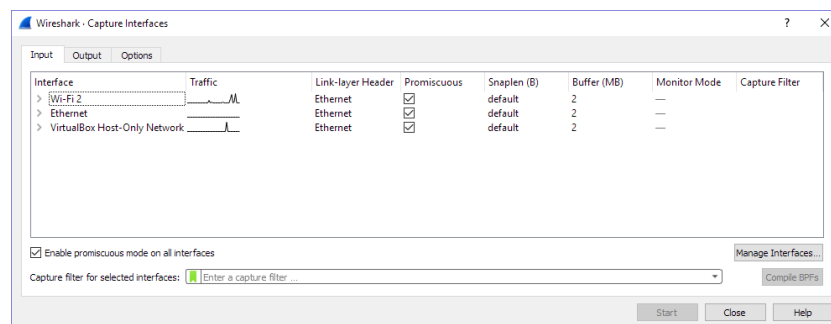


Figure 3: Showing the options input tab with interfaces to select from

QUESTIONS:

👉 Which Interface is connected to a local network (Ethernet)?

👉 How many packets have passed through the interface?

Note: The total incoming packets, for each interface, are displayed in the column to the left of the **Start** button.

Generate some network traffic with a Web Browser, such as Internet Explorer, Firefox or Chrome. Your Wireshark window should show the packets, and now look something like in Figure 4:

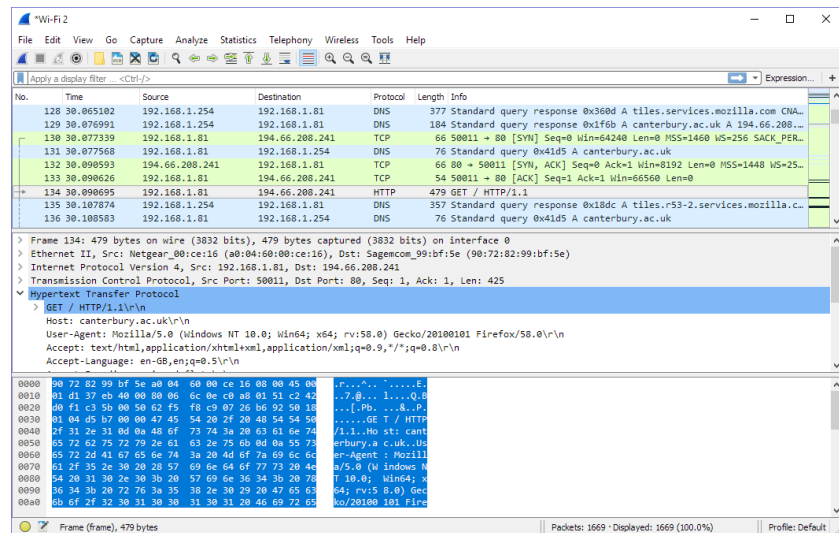


Figure 4: Showing the options input tab with interfaces to select from

To stop the capture select the **Capture** > **Stop** menu option, Ctrl+E, or the Stop toolbar button. What you have created is a Packet Capture or '**pcap**', which you can now view and analyse using the Wireshark interface, or save to disk to analyse later.

The capture is split into 3 parts:

1. **Packet List Panel** – this is a list of packets in the current capture. It colours the packets based on the protocol type. When a packet is selected, the details are shown in the two panels below.
2. **Packet Details Panel** – this shows the details of the selected packet. It shows the different protocols making up the layers of data for this packet. Layers include Frame, Ethernet, IP, TCP/UDP/ICMP, and application protocols such as HTTP.
3. **Packet Bytes Panel** – shows the packet bytes in a Hex and ASCII encoding.

Search through your capture, and find an **HTTP** packet containing **GET** command. You are able to expand each layer. Click on the packet in the **Packet List Panel**. Then expand the HTTP layer in the **Packet Details Panel**, from the packet.

QUESTIONS:

🔗 From the **Packet Details Panel**, within the GET command, what is the value of the **Host**?

🔗 Can you see the **Hex** and **ASCII** representations of the packet in the **Packet Bytes Panel**?

🔗 From the **Packet Bytes Panel**, what are the first 4 bytes of the Hex value of the **Host** parameter?

To select more detailed options when starting a capture, select the **Capture > Options** menu option, or **Ctrl + K**, or the Capture Options button on the toolbar (the cog).

Some of the more interesting options are hidden away in the other tabs:

- **Input > Interface** – It is important to select the correct Network Interface to capture traffic, and so it will show you on a mini-linegraph if there is any traffic on that interface.
- **Output > Capture to a permanent file** – Useful to save a file of the packet capture in real time, in case of a system crash. You can also specify that it should cut the capture into chunks of defined file sizes or time.
- **Options > Display Options > Update list of packets in real time** – A display option, which should be checked if you want to view the capture as it happens (typically switched off to capture straight to a file, for later analysis).
- **Options > Name Resolution > MAC name resolution** – Resolves the first 3 bytes of the MAC address, the Organisation Unique Identifier (OUI), which represents the manufacturer of the card.
- **Options > Name Resolution > Network name resolution** – Does a DNS lookup for the IP Addresses captured, to display the network name. Set to off by default, so covert scans do not generate this DNS traffic, and tip off who's packets you are sniffing.

Make sure the **MAC name resolution** is selected. Start the capture, and generate some Web traffic again, then stop the capture.

Search through your capture, and find an HTTP packet coming back from the server (TCP Source Port == 80). Expand the Ethernet layer in the **Packet Details Panel**.

QUESTIONS:

🔗 What are the manufacturers of your PC's Network Interface Card (NIC), and the server's NIC (NB: While the MAC address always exists, not all NICs report a manufacturer)?

🔗 What are the hex values (shown in the raw bytes panel) of the two NIC manufacturer's OUIs?

2.2 Wireshark Display Filters

Right click on the **Source Port** field in the **Packet Details Panel**. Select **Prepare a Filter > Selected**.

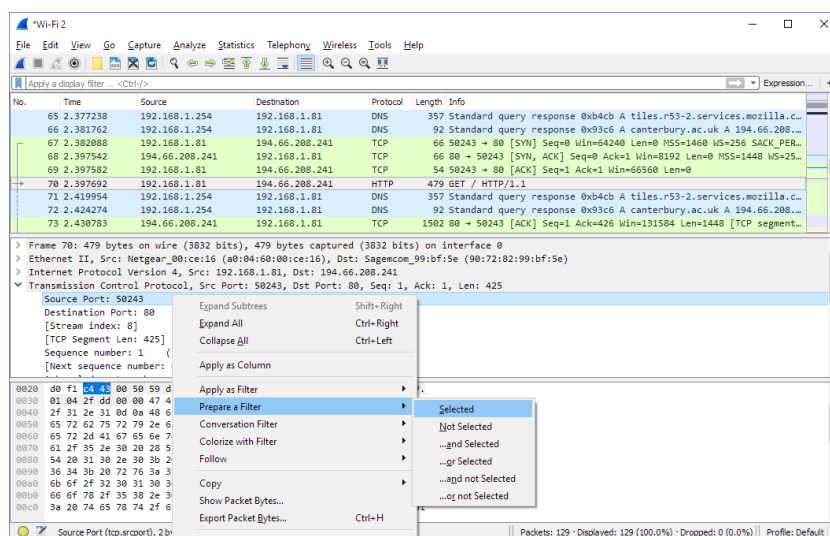


Figure 5: Select to Prepare a Filter

Wireshark automatically generates a **Display Filter**, and applies it to the capture. The filter is shown in the **Filter Bar**, below the button toolbar. Only packets captured with a Source Port of the value selected should be displayed. The window should be similar to that shown in figure 6. This same process can be performed on most fields within Wireshark, and can be used to include or exclude traffic.

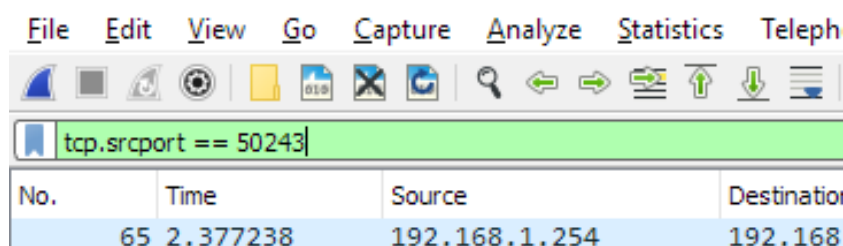


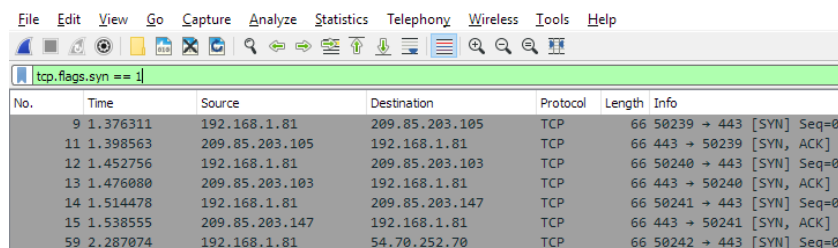
Figure 6: Prepared filter applied with source port from selected package

2.3 Analysing a TCP Session using Wireshark

Start a capture, and generate some Web traffic by going to the webserver in the lab, then stop the capture. Scroll back to the top of the capture trace. Find the first SYN packet, sent from your PC to the webserver. This signifies the start of a TCP 3-way handshake.

If you're having trouble finding the first SYN packet, click into the **Filter Bar** and start typing **tcp.flags**. (at this point you should get a list of the flags to choose from). Choose the correct flag, **tcp.flags.syn** and add **== 1** at the end of it and press Enter or click on the right-pointing arrow next to the filter; now the first SYN packet in the trace should be highlighted as seen in figure 7. On a side-note, you can also find other valuable information such as Hex signatures (e.g., malware signatures) and Strings (e.g., protocol commands) by clicking on the **Edit** > **Find Packet**

menu option. Select the **Display Filter** drop-down list and choose from the available search options (Display Filter, Hex, String, Regular Expression).



No.	Time	Source	Destination	Protocol	Length	Info
9	1.376311	192.168.1.81	209.85.203.105	TCP	66	50239 → 443 [SYN] Seq=0
11	1.398563	209.85.203.105	192.168.1.81	TCP	66	443 → 50239 [SYN, ACK]
12	1.452756	192.168.1.81	209.85.203.103	TCP	66	50240 → 443 [SYN] Seq=0
13	1.476080	209.85.203.103	192.168.1.81	TCP	66	443 → 50240 [SYN, ACK]
14	1.514478	192.168.1.81	209.85.203.147	TCP	66	50241 → 443 [SYN] Seq=0
15	1.538555	209.85.203.147	192.168.1.81	TCP	66	443 → 50241 [SYN, ACK]
59	2.287074	192.168.1.81	54.70.252.70	TCP	66	50242 → 443 [SYN] Seq=0

Figure 7: Filter applied to only show SYN packets

QUESTION:

🔗 Can you identify the rest of the TCP 3-way handshake easily? (if not read on)

A quick way to create a **Wireshark Display Filter** to isolate a TCP stream is to right click on a packet in the **Packet List Panel** and select **Follow TCP Stream**. This creates an automatic Display Filter which displays packets from that TCP session only.

It also pops up a session display window, containing by default, an ASCII representation of the TCP session with the client packets in red and the server packets in blue.

The window should look something like Figure 8. This is very useful for viewing human readable protocol payloads, such as HTTP, SMTP, and FTP.

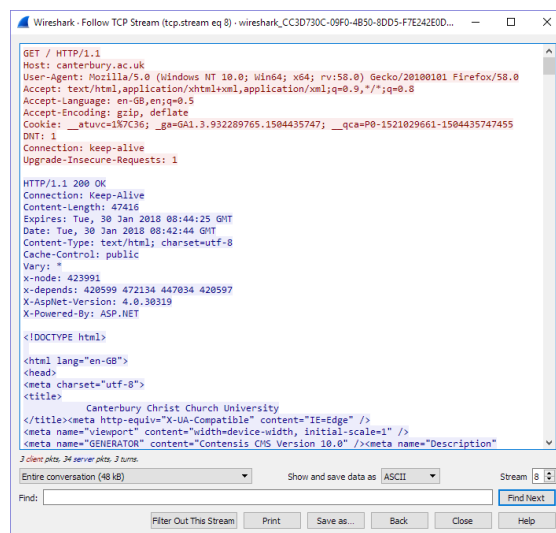


Figure 8: Follow TCP stream window

Change to Hex Dump Mode and view the payloads in raw Hex, as shown below.

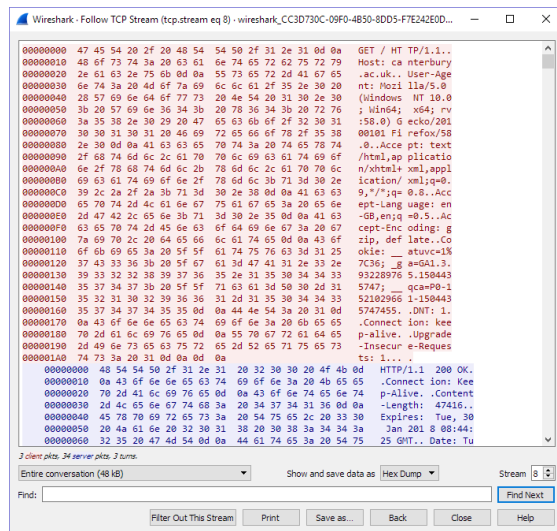


Figure 9: Follow TCP stream window – Hex view

Wireshark is capable of finding TCP streams and will be able to present those to you with a stream ID. You can choose which stream to look at by clicking on the up and down arrow next to **Stream** (on the bottom right). Ensure that you have selected the stream which had your 3-way handshake. Close the popup window. Wireshark now only shows the packets from the selected TCP Stream. You should be able to identify the 3-way handshake easily now.

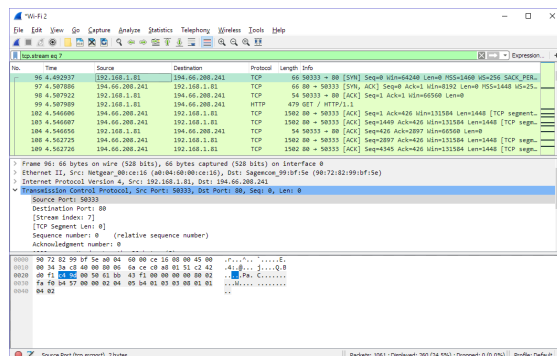


Figure 10: Follow TCP stream ID

Note: Wireshark has automatically created a **Display Filter** to filter out this TCP conversation. In this case: **(tcp.stream eq 7)**

QUESTIONS:

From your Wireshark Capture, fill in the diagram below with the IP Addresses and Port Numbers for the Client and the Server

🔗 For each packet in the TCP 3-way handshake, fill in the Sequence and Acknowledgement numbers on the diagram below.

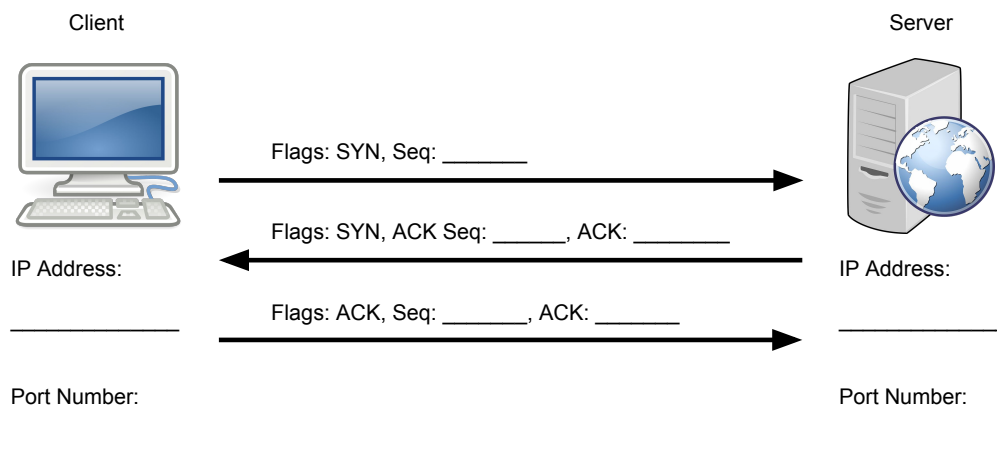


Figure 11: Sheet SYN ACK Fillout

2.4 Saving Packet Captures

Often captures should be saved to disk, for later analysis. To save a capture, select **File > Save As** and save the trace. By default this creates a Wireshark **pcapng** file, or if you select **pcap**, a file many tools can understand. For example a `tcpdump` output file in this format can be read into Wireshark for analysis. This saves all the captured packets to the file.

QUESTIONS:

🔗 Did you successfully save your capture to disk? 🔗 Copy the **Display Filter** into the clipboard, and close and start Wireshark again, then reload the file. Was the whole capture saved or just the displayed packets?

Paste the display filter back into the Filter Bar, and Apply it.

To save *only the displayed packets*, select **File >> Export Specified Packets**, and make sure the **Displayed** radio button is selected rather than the **Captured** option. This creates a **pcap** file, with only the packets filtered by the current display filter.

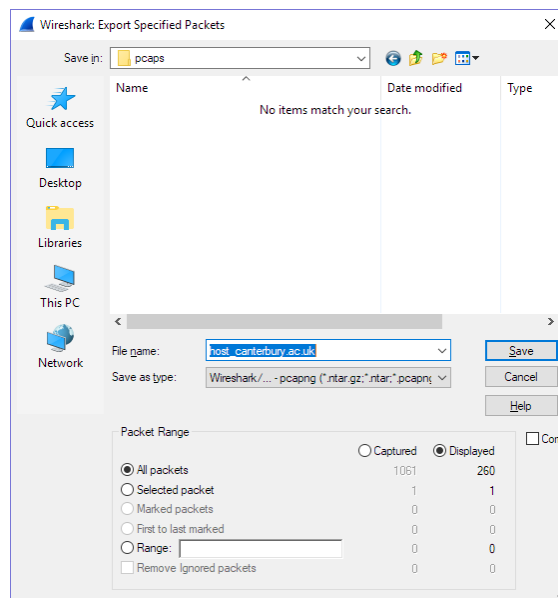


Figure 12: Save Dialogue

QUESTION:

🔗 Close and start Wireshark again, then reload the file. Was the whole capture saved or just the displayed packets?

2.5 Wireshark Statistics

Start the capture, and generate some Web traffic by going to the webserver in the lab, then stop the capture, and select the **Statistics >> Protocol Hierarchy** menu option. A window similar to Figure 13 should be shown, displaying statistics about the **pcap**. Note that all the packets are Ethernet (Local Area Network) packets, but at the network layer all of the packets are TCP in this capture, but usually some are also UDP.

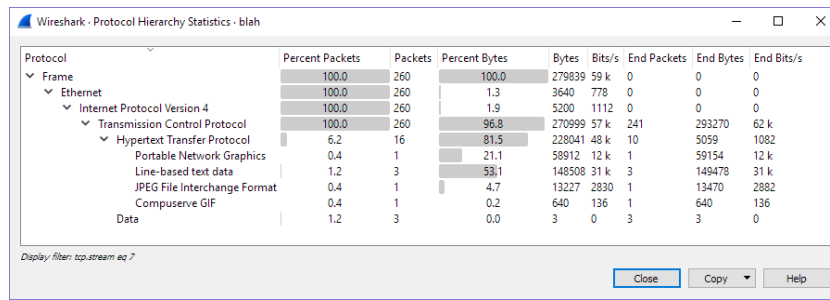


Figure 13: Wireshark Statistics

QUESTIONS:

🔗 What percentage of packets in your capture are TCP, and give an example of the higher level protocol which uses TCP?

🔗 What percentage of packets in your capture are UDP, and give an example of the higher level protocol which uses UDP? (use the figure below)

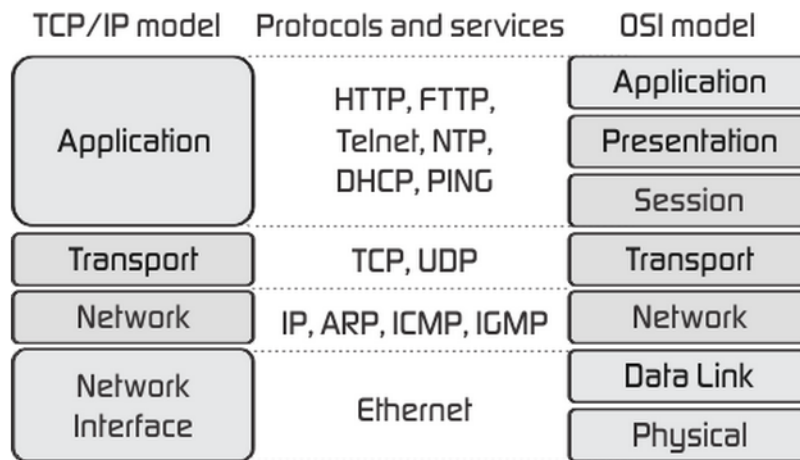


Figure 14: OSI Model and TCP/IP Model

Select the **Statistics** > **Flow Graph** menu option. Choose **General Flow** and **Network Source** options, and click on the **OK** button. A window similar to Figure 15 should be displayed, showing the flow of traffic.

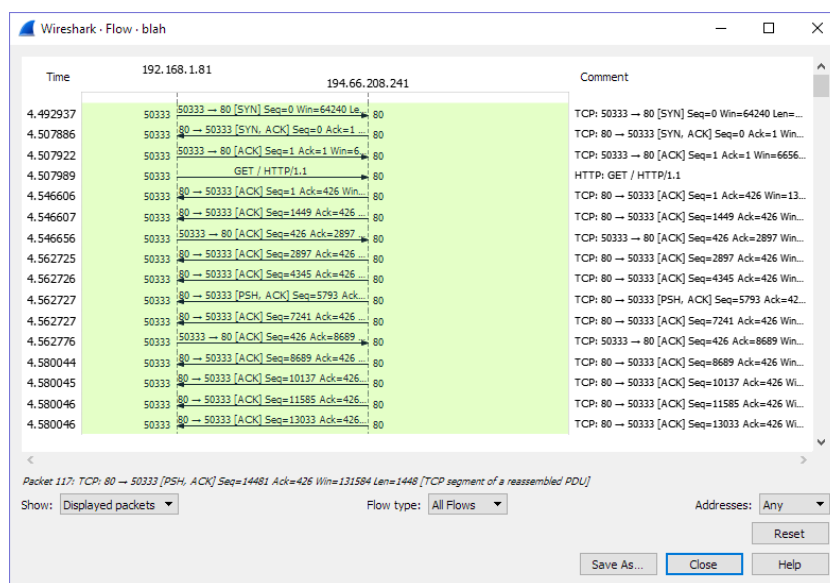


Figure 15: Wireshark Flow Graph

2.6 Capture ARP & ICMP Protocol Traffic using Wireshark

Start a Wireshark capture. Open a Windows console window, and generate some ICMP traffic by using the ping command line tool to check the connectivity of a neighbouring machine (or your home router).

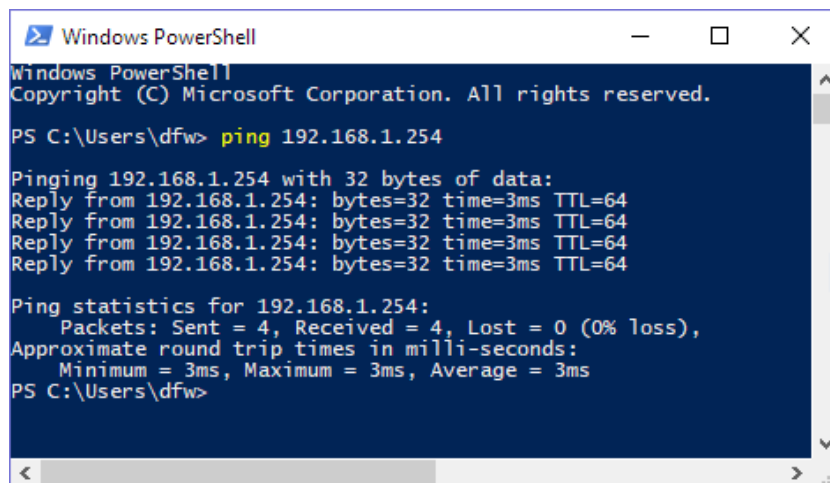


Figure 16: Windows ping command

Stop the capture and Wireshark should now look something like figure 16.

The Address Resolution Protocol (ARP) and ICMP packets are difficult to pick out; create a

display filter to only show ARP and ICMP packets.

Some useful Wireshark **display filters** can be found at:

<http://wiki.wireshark.org/DisplayFilters>

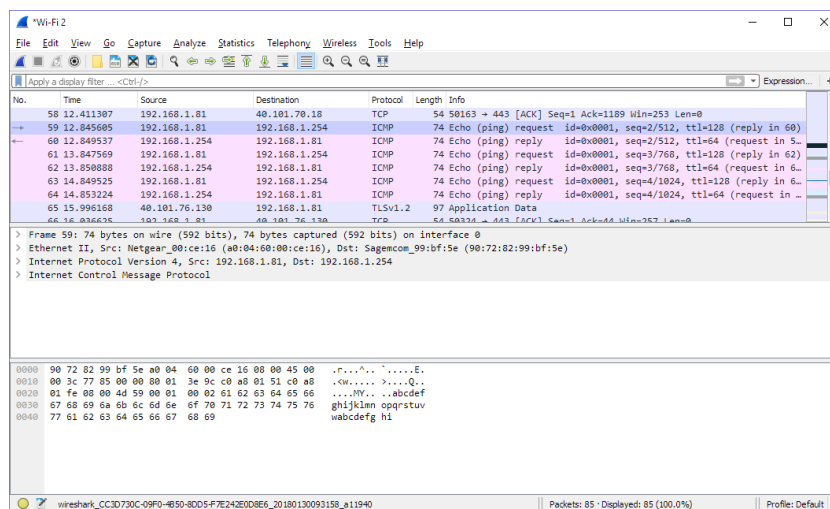


Figure 17: ICMP Packets

Note the results in Wireshark. The initial ARP request broadcast from your PC determines the physical MAC address of the network IP Address, and the ARP reply from the neighbouring system. After the ARP request, the pings (ICMP echo request and replies) can be seen.

QUESTIONS:

🔗 After the first ping command, are the ARP and ICMP packets captured by Wireshark?

YES/NO

🔗 After the second or third ping command, are the ARP and ICMP packets captured by Wireshark?

ARP: YES/NO

ICMP: YES/NO

🔗 Why is this?

If pinging the same system more than once, delete the ARP cache on your system, using the `arp` command, as shown below, so a new ARP request will be generated:

On Windows systems you can type, for example:

```
C:\> ping 10.0.0.2  
  
... ping output ...  
  
C:\> arp -d *
```

On Linux systems you can type, for example:

```
user@hostname:~$ ping 10.0.0.2  
  
... ping output ...  
  
user@hostname:~$ sudo ip -s -s neigh flush all
```

Note the results in Wireshark. The initial ARP request broadcast from your PC determines the physical MAC address of the network IP Address 10.0.0.2, and the ARP reply from the neighbouring system. After the ARP request the pings (ICMP echo request and replies) can be seen.