

Internet of Things (IoT)



6LoWPAN: IPv6 over 802.15.4

Initial RFC: <https://datatracker.ietf.org/doc/rfc4944/>

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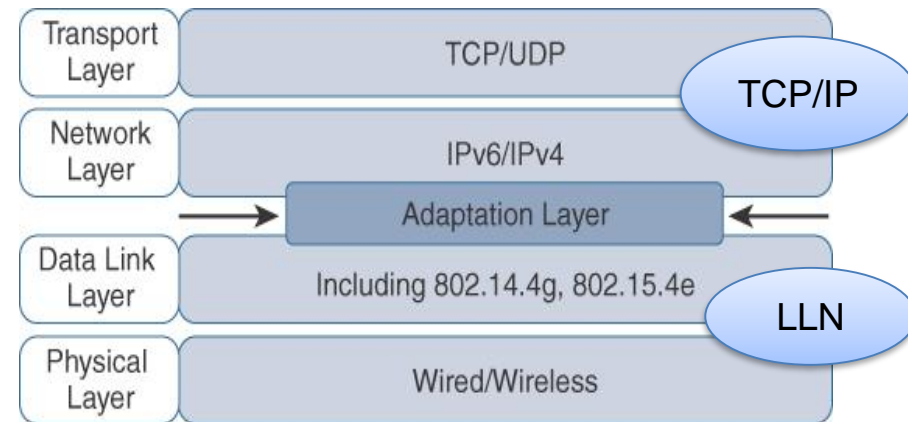
6LoWPAN



IETF formed 6LoWPAN WG in 2004
to design the Adaptation Layer

6LoWPAN: IPv6 over Low-power Wireless
Personal Area Networks

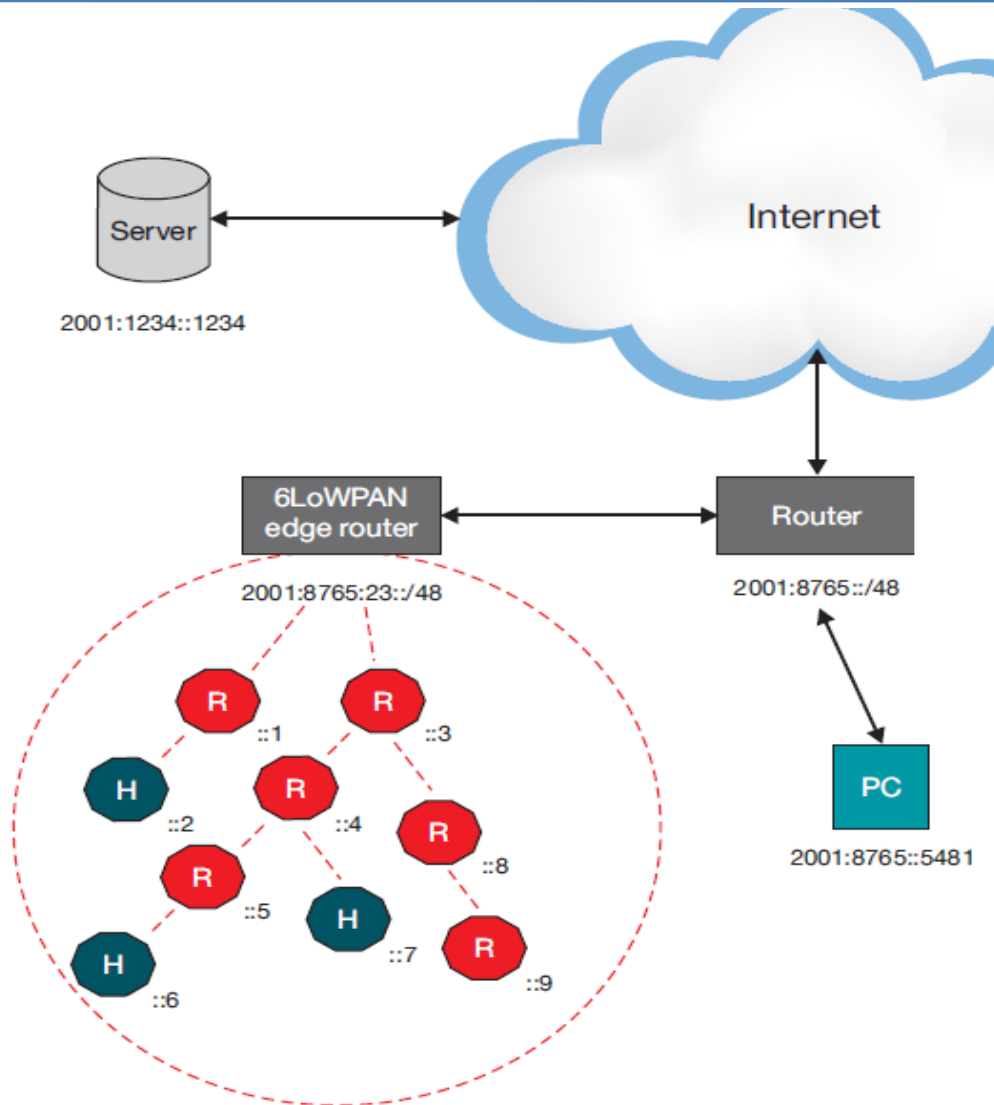
How to carry IPv6 packet efficiently within small
link layer frames such as IEEE 802.15.4?



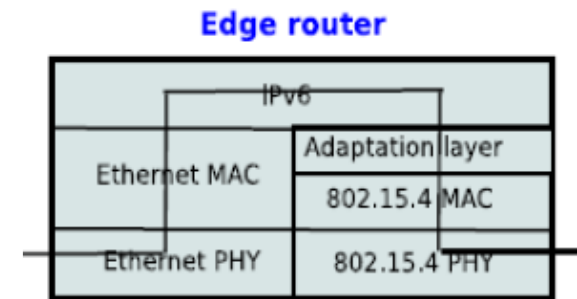
- IPv6 MTU to be **at least 1280 bytes** in length.
- 802.15.4's standard packet size of **127 octets**.

- ❑ Primary **goal**
 - even the smallest devices should have **access to the IP**
 - smallest devices → low-power devices with limited processing capabilities.
- ❑ 6LoWPAN **defined**
 - **encapsulation** and **header compression** mechanisms
- ❑ 6LoWPAN **Applications**:
 - General Automation, Home automation, Smart Grid, Industrial monitoring, Smart Agriculture, etc.

6LoWPAN Edge Router

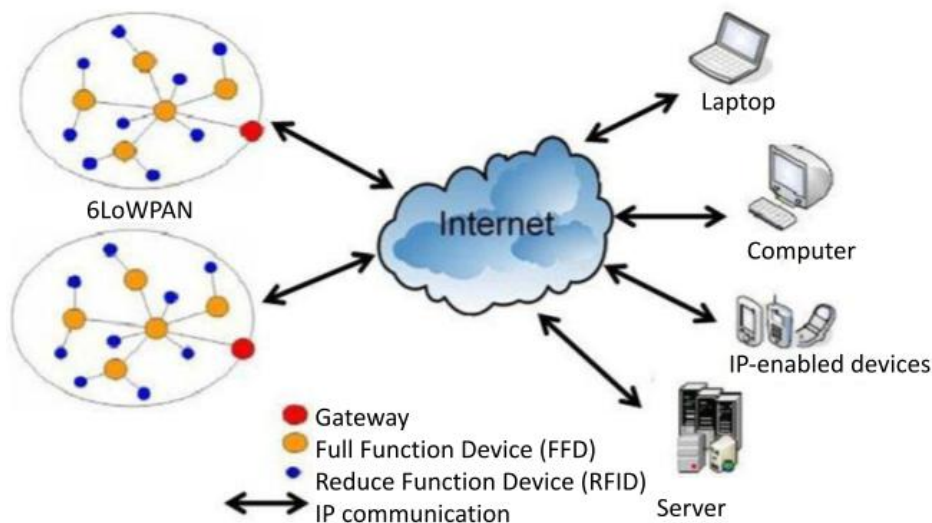


By communicating natively with IP, 6LoWPAN networks are connected to other networks **simply using IP routers at the edge.**



Source: <https://www.ti.com/lit/wp/swry013/swry013.pdf>

6LoWPAN Architecture



BENEFITS

- Ideal to create **mesh networks**
- **Direct connectivity** to the Internet
- Low power & Low data rates

The **utility of a mesh network** over other network types, such as a hub-and-spoke network, is that **if a node is too far away from the hub, it can still communicate via a closer node until it reaches a router.**

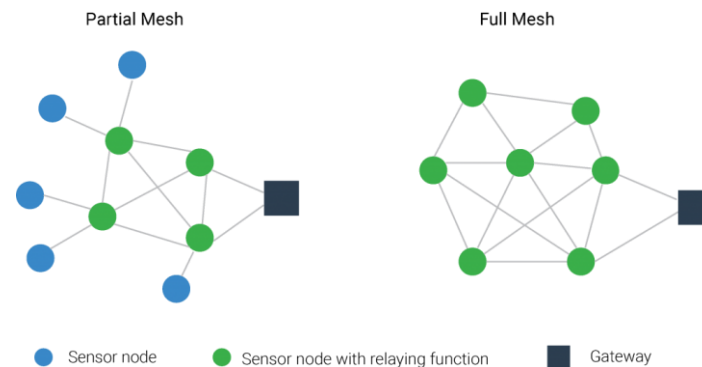
Other Advantages:

- **Increased stability** by avoiding single point failure
- **Increased range** by using multi-hop communication
- **Direct communication** between nodes
- **Less power** is needed for each node as all nodes need not send signal to central access point

Source: <https://www.e-spincorp.com/what-is-6lowpan-and-its-functions/>

What is mesh network?

A mesh network is a network in which a device or node is linked with all other nodes or with a sub-set of nodes directly.



6LoWPAN Advantages



Open IP Standard

- Use open standard such as TCP, UDP, HTTP, CoAP, MQTT, WebSocket
- End-to-End IP addressable nodes
- No gateway needed.
 - A router connects the 6LoWPAN network to IP

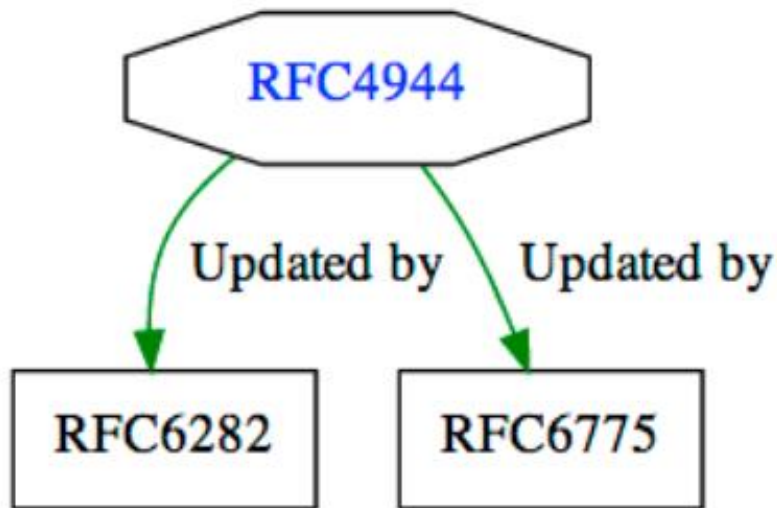
Mesh Routing

- One-to-many / many-to-one routing
- Robust and Scalable
- Self healing
- Flexible

Multiple PHY Support

- Freedom of frequency band and physical layer
- Can be used across multiple communication platform
 - (ex. Ethernet / WiFi / 802.15.4 / Sub-1 GHz)
- Interoperability at the IP level

6LoWPAN IETF group developed a **base specification RFC 4944** →
“Transmission of IPv6 Packets over IEEE 802.15.4 Networks”



This document specifies an IPv6 **Header Compression** format for IPv6 packet delivery in 6LoWPAN

This document describes simple optimizations to IPv6 **Neighbor Discovery**, its **addressing schemes**, and **duplicate address detection** for 6LoWPAN

RFC4919: This document describes the **overview, assumptions, problem statement, and goals** for transmitting IP over IEEE 802.15.4 networks.

RFC6568: This document investigates **potential application scenarios** and **use cases** for LoWPANs

RFC6606: This document provides the **problem statement and design space** for **6LoWPAN routing**. Defines how 6LoWPAN formation and multi-hop routing could be supported.

Motivation to use IPv6

Benefits of IP over IEEE 802.15.4 Network (RFC 4919):

- The **pervasive nature** of IP networks allows use of existing **Infrastructure**.
- IP-based **technologies** already exist, and are well-known
- **Open** and freely available specifications (v/s. **Closed** proprietary solutions).
- **Tools** for diagnostic, management already exist.
- IP-based devices can be **connected readily** to IP-based networks, **without gateways or proxies**.

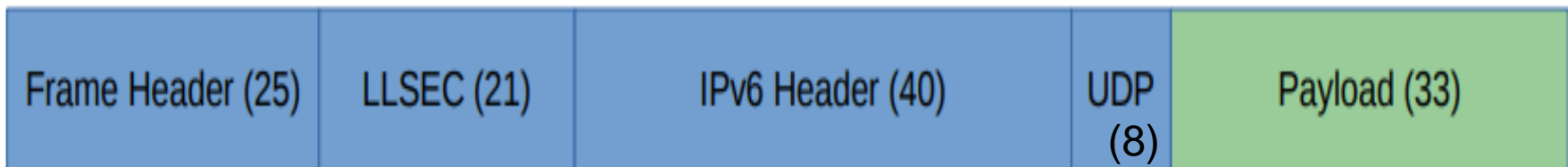
Why IPv6?



- Large simple address (2^{128} address space)
 - Network ID + Interface ID
 - Plenty of addresses; easy to allocate and manage
- Auto-configuration and Management
 - ICMPv6
- Integrated bootstrap and discovery
 - Neighbors, routers, DHCP
- Global scalability
 - 128 Bit Addressing = 3.4×10^{38} unique addresses

IPv6 Challenges

1. Header Size Calculation



- **IPv6 header**: 40 octets
- **UDP header**: 8 octets
- **802.15.4 MAC frame header**: up to 25 octets (with null security)
or 25+21=46 octets (with AES-CCM-128)
- ✓ With 802.15.4 frame size of 127 octets, we have following space left **for application data**!
 - $127 - (8 + 40 + 25) = 54$ octets (in case of null security)
 - $127 - (8 + 40 + 46) = 33$ octets (in case of AES-CCM-128)

2. IPv6 Maximum Transmission Unit (MTU) Requirements

- ✓ IPv6 requires that links should support an **MTU of 1280 octets**
 - So, Link-layer fragmentation & reassembly **is needed**

3. IP assumes that devices are always 'ON' i.e. active

- ✓ But embedded devices **may not have enough power** and duty cycles

4. Multicast support

- ✓ IEEE 802.15.4 & other low power radios **do not support multicast** (as it is expensive)

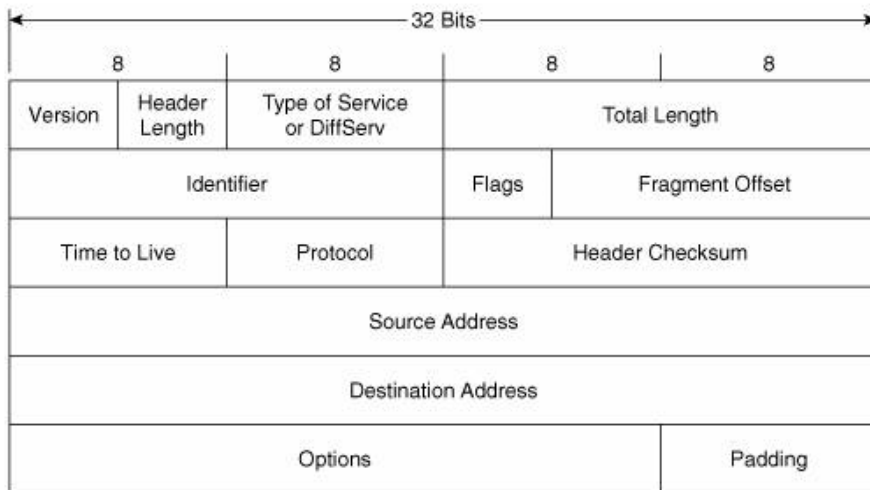
Main Goals of 6LoWPAN Design

- Define **adaptation layer** to match IPv6 MTU requirements
 - by fragmentation/reassembly
- Specify methods to do **IPv6 Address formation**
 - by stateless address auto configuration
- Specify/use **header compression schemes**.
 - by specific compression techniques
- Methods for **mesh broadcast/multicast** below IP
 - by layer 2 networking and forwarding mechanism

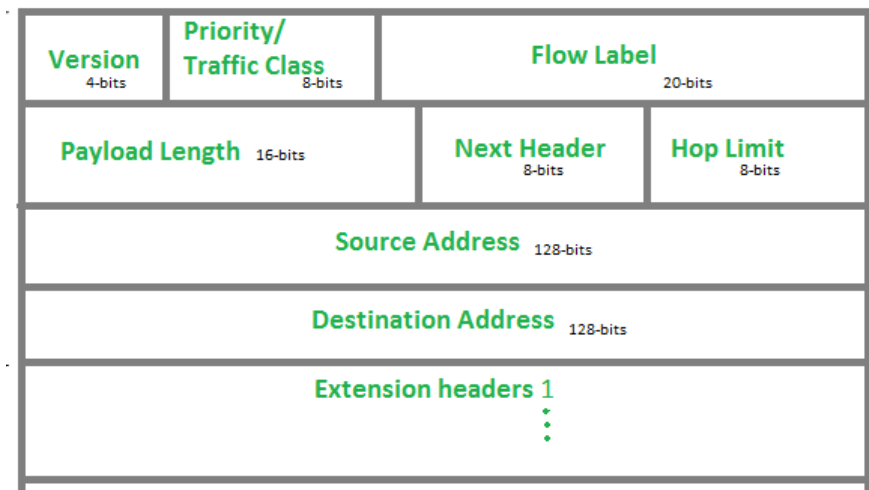
Adaptation Layer

It mainly performs the following functionalities:

- ✓ **Header Compression** -> Compresses 40B IPv6 and 8B UDP headers
- ✓ **Fragmentation & Reassembly** -> when MTU of 802.15.4 and IPv6 does not match.
- ✓ **Stateless Autoconfiguration** -> Devices inside 6LoWPAN generate their own IPv6 address

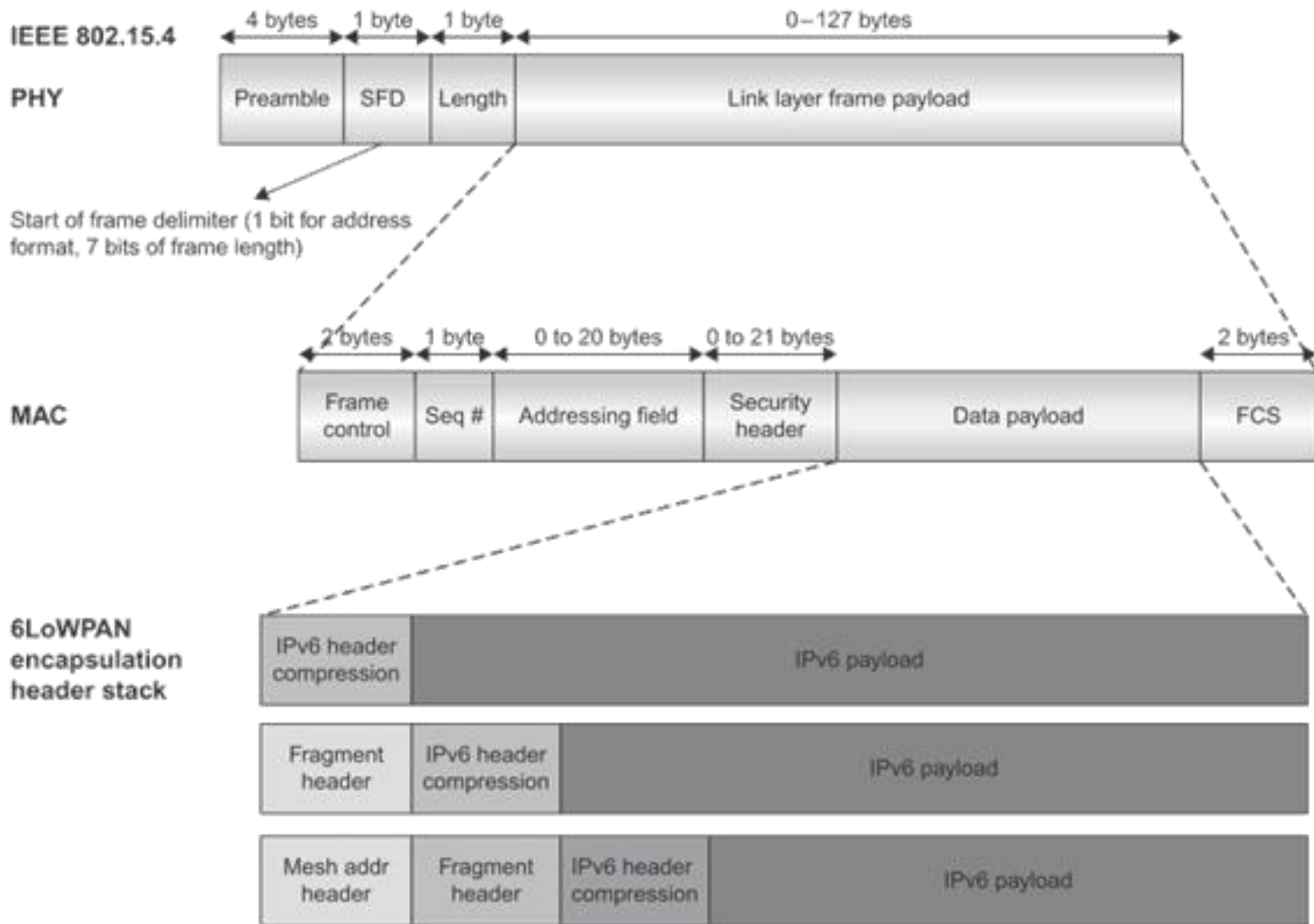


IPv4 header



IPv6 header (min 40 Byte)

LoWPAN Encapsulation



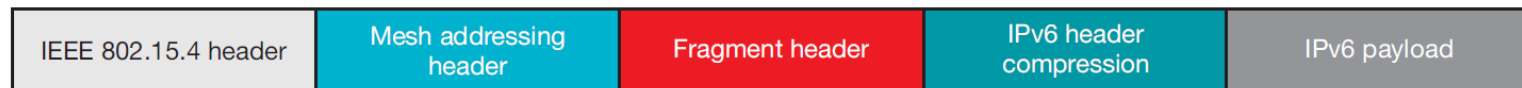
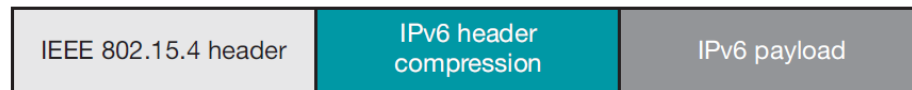
LoWPAN encapsulation are the payload in the IEEE 802.15.4 MAC protocol data unit (PDU).

Stacked Headers

- 6LoWPAN uses concept of
 - stacked headers
 - ✓ when **dispatch header** is used to indicate the sub-header type that immediately follows
 - extension headers
 - ✓ when the **next header field** is used to indicate the header type that immediately follows
- 6LoWPAN headers define the capability of each.
- Few 6LoWPAN headers are :
 - Mesh addressing,*
 - Fragmentation,*
 - Header compression,*



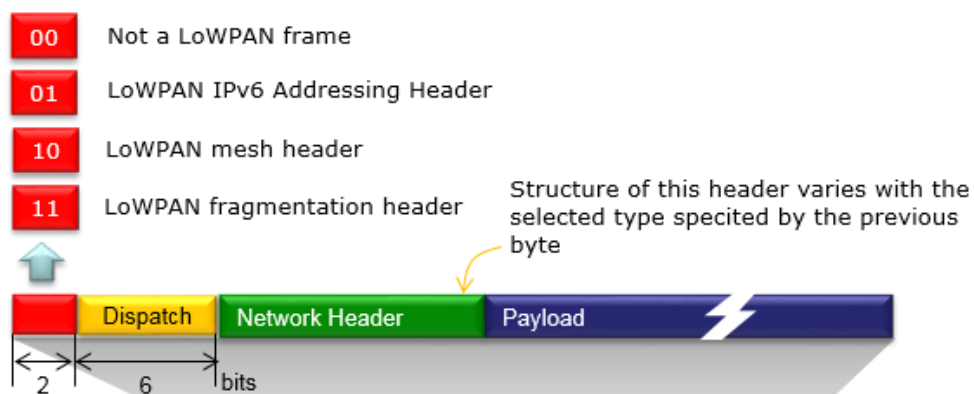
If more than one sub-header is used in the same IPv6 packet, **they must follow the order.**



6LoWPAN Headers

- **First byte** of each header (i.e. **dispatch byte**) identifies the **nature of each header**

| Bit Pattern | Short Code | Description |
|-------------|------------|-----------------------------------|
| 00 xxxxxx | NALP | Not A LoWPAN Packet |
| 01 000001 | IPv6 | uncompressed IPv6 addresses |
| 01 000010 | LOWPAN_HC1 | HC1 Compressed IPv6 header |
| 01 010000 | LOWPAN_BC0 | BC0 Broadcast header |
| 01 111111 | ESC | Additional Dispatch octet follows |
| 10 xxxxxx | MESH | Mesh routing header |
| 11 000xxx | FRAG1 | Fragmentation header (first) |
| 11 100xxx | FRAGN | Fragmentation header (subsequent) |



Dispatch Type & Header

```

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0 1
+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+
|0 1| Dispatch | type-specific header
+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+

```

- ✓ Dispatch type defined by 1st & 2nd bits
 - ✓ Dispatch means → identifies type of header immediately following the Dispatch Header
 - ✓ Type-specific header → it is determined by full Dispatch Header.

| Bit Pattern | Short Code | Description |
|-------------|------------|-----------------------------------|
| 00 xxxxxx | NALP | Not A LoWPAN Packet |
| 01 000001 | IPv6 | uncompressed IPv6 addresses |
| 01 000010 | LOWPAN_HC1 | HC1 Compressed IPv6 header |
| 01 010000 | LOWPAN_BC0 | BC0 Broadcast header |
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| 10 xxxxxx | MESH | Mesh routing header |
| 11 000xxx | FRAG1 | Fragmentation header (first) |
| 11 100xxx | FRAGN | Fragmentation header (subsequent) |

Cont...

- **Each header** in the stack **starts with**
 - a **header type** field, and
 - followed by zero / more **type specific header** fields

A LoWPAN encapsulated IPv6 datagram:

```
+-----+-----+-----+
| IPv6 Dispatch | IPv6 Header | Payload |
+-----+-----+-----+
```

A LoWPAN encapsulated LOWPAN_HC1 compressed IPv6 datagram:

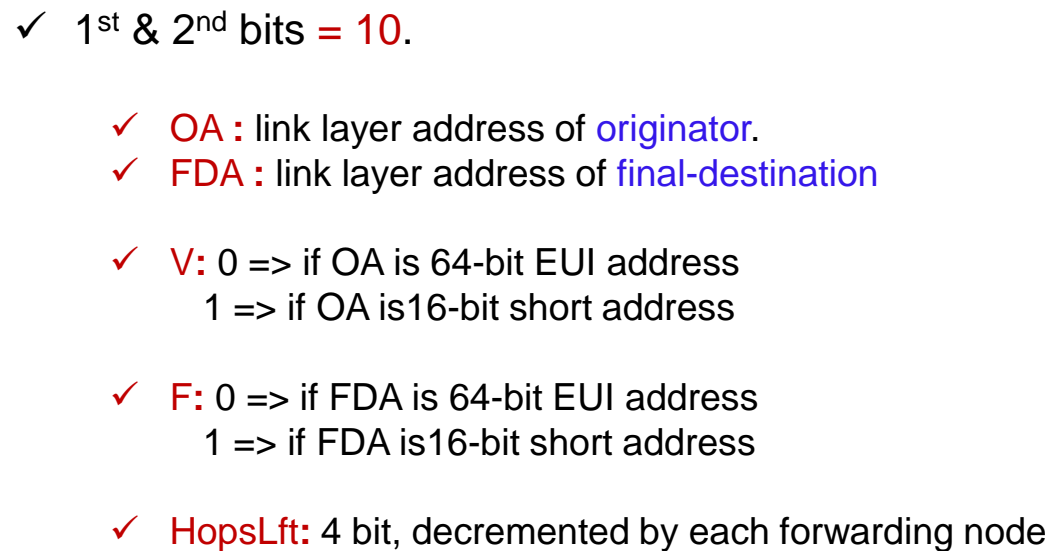
```
+-----+-----+-----+
| HC1 Dispatch | HC1 Header | Payload |
+-----+-----+-----+
```

A LoWPAN encapsulated LOWPAN_HC1 compressed IPv6 datagram that requires mesh addressing:

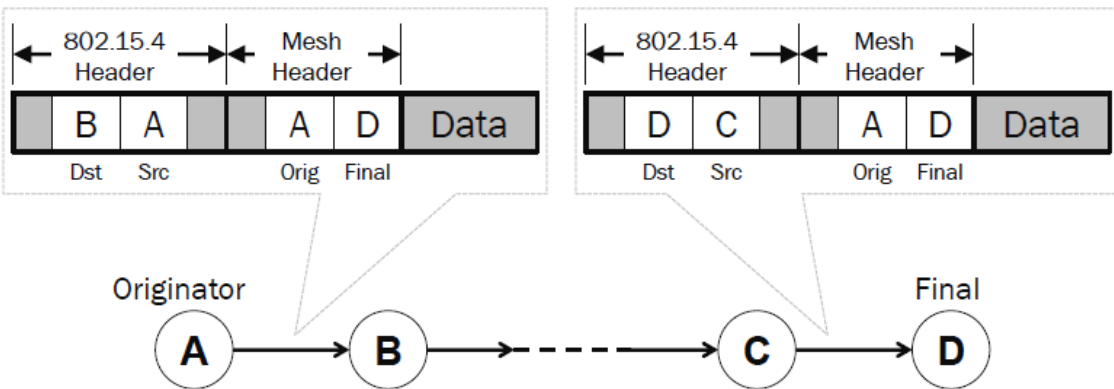
```
+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+
| Mesh Type | Mesh Header | HC1 Dispatch | HC1 Header | Payload |
+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+
```

A LoWPAN encapsulated LOWPAN_HC1 compressed IPv6 datagram that requires both mesh addressing and fragmentation:

```
+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+
| M Typ | M Hdr | F Typ | F Hdr | HC1 Dsp | HC1 Hdr | Payload |
+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+
```

Cont...

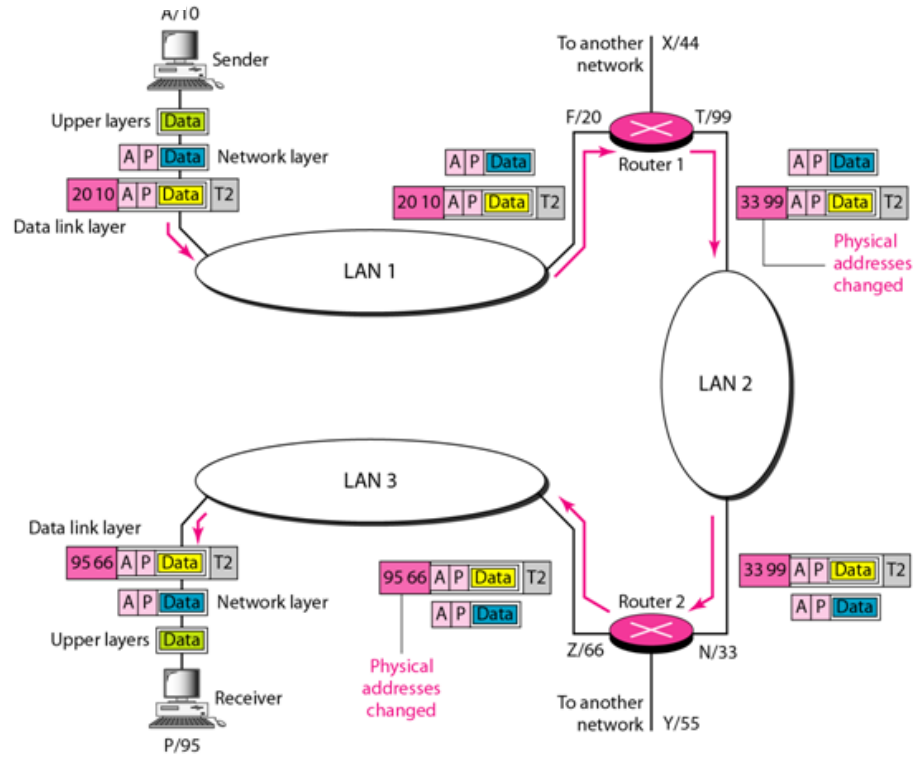


Routing by Mesh Header

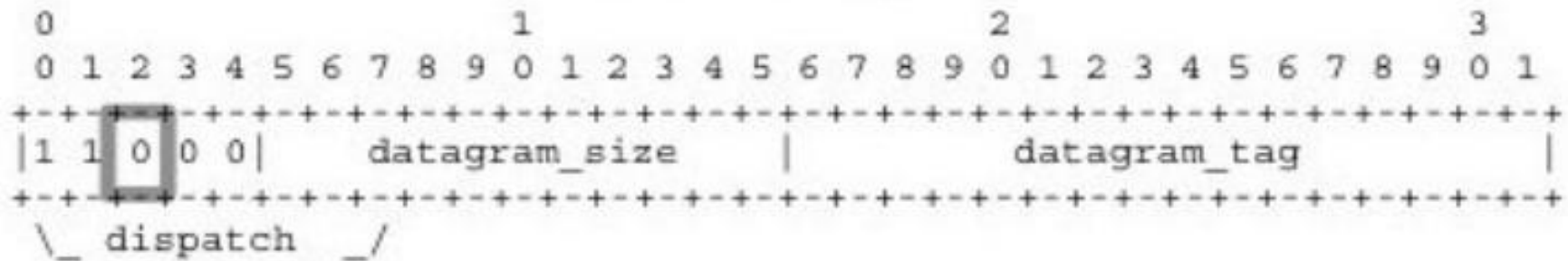
Example of Mesh Routing header.

- Mesh networking is required to extend the network into multi-hop scenario

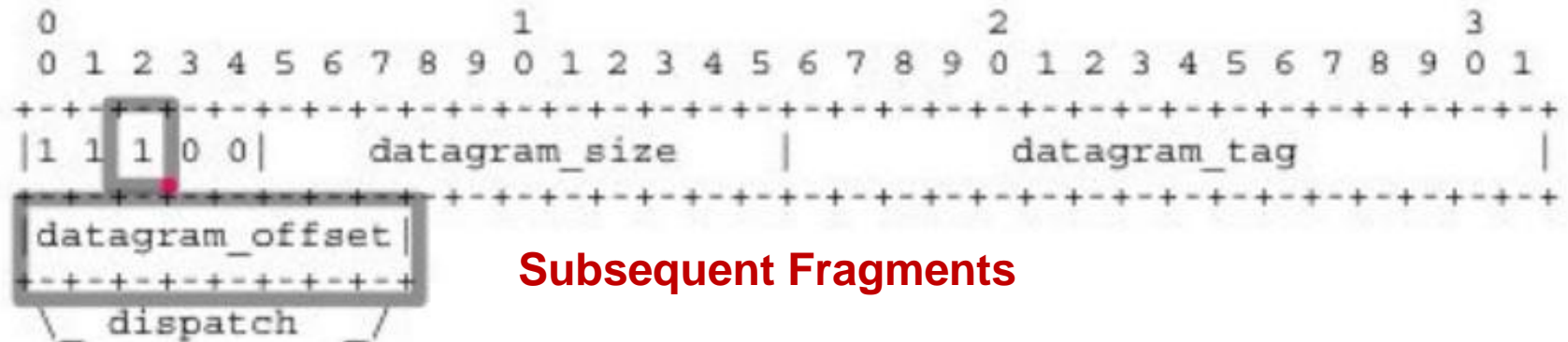
Data packet routing in TCP/IP network



Fragmentation Type & Header



First Fragment



Subsequent Fragments

Dispatch: identifies the type of the immediate next headers

Datagram size (11 bits): encode the size of entire IP packet (after IP layer fragmentation, if any).

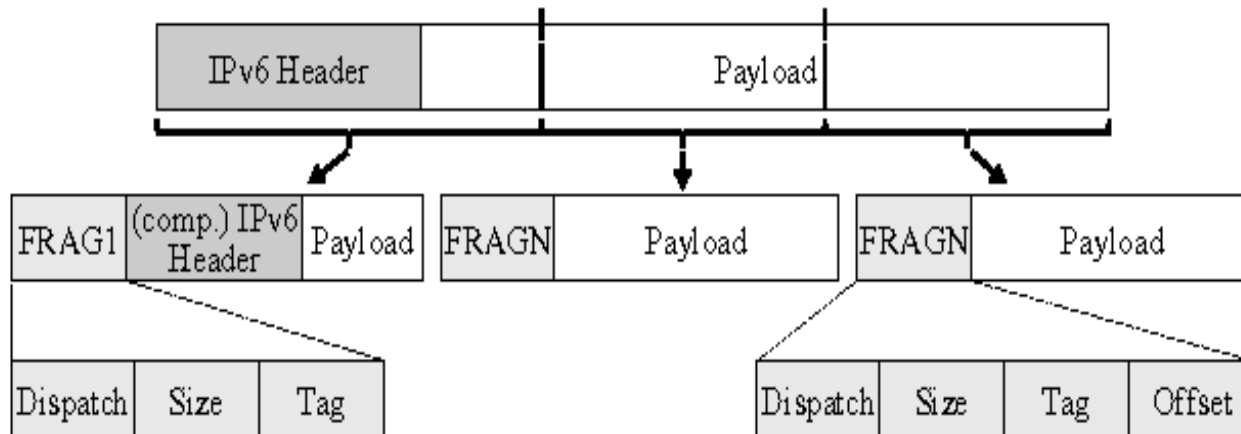
Datagram tag (8 bits): same for all *link fragments* of a payload, but different for two IPv6 payload.

Datagram offset (11 bits): present only in subsequent fragments

Fragmentation and Reassembly

Fragmentation Principles (RFC 4944)

- When an IPv6 packet exceeds link-layer payload size then segments the packet into fragments.



6LoWPAN packet structure of FRAG1 and FRAGN

Tag: it is used to identify all fragments of a IPv6 datagram

Offset: It identifies the relative position of the received fragment from the beginning of the payload datagram to allow out-of-sequence delivery.

Cont...

- ✓ Only the 1st fragment carries end-to-end routing information.
- ✓ 1st fragment carries a header that includes :
 - datagram size, datagram tag .
- ✓ Subsequent fragments carry
 - datagram size, datagram tag, offset.
- ✓ Time limit for reassembly is 60 seconds.
- ✓ For a lost fragment, we need to resend entire set of fragments.

Addressing in 6LoWPAN

- 128-bit IPv6 address with Interface ID (IID)

✓ **64-bit prefix** + **64-bit IID**



Identifies the **network** you are on
and where it is globally



- identifies the **interface**
- must be unique for that network
- It is typically **formed statelessly from the interface MAC address**

- There are different types of IPv6 addresses

- ✓ Loopback (0::1) and Unspecified (0::0)
- ✓ Unicast with global (e.g. 2001::) or **link-local (FE80::)** **scope**
- ✓ Multicast addresses (starts with FF::)
- ✓ Etc.

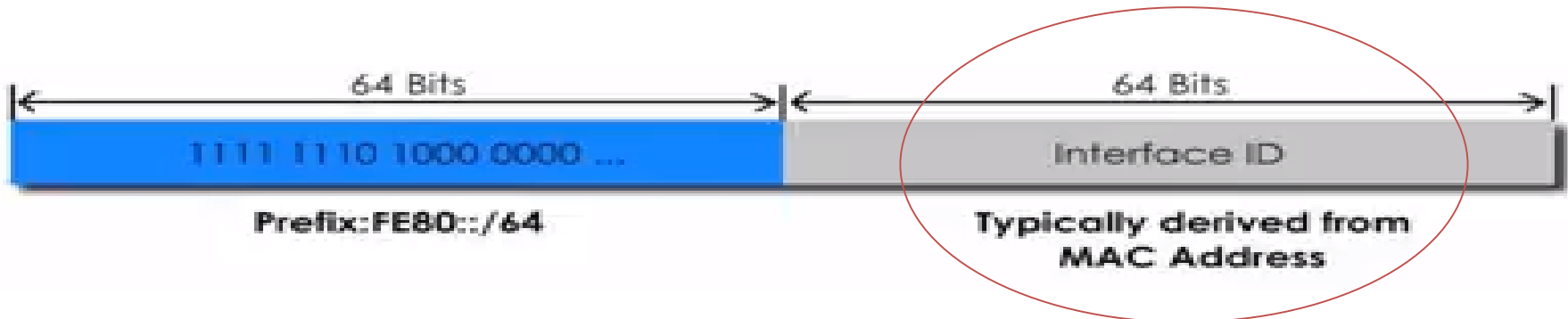
Link-local address in 6LoWPAN

A **link-local** address is a IPv6 address that is **valid only for communications within the network** segment or the broadcast domain that the host is connected to.

In IPv6, traditionally, **FE80::/10** is used to **represent** link-local address.

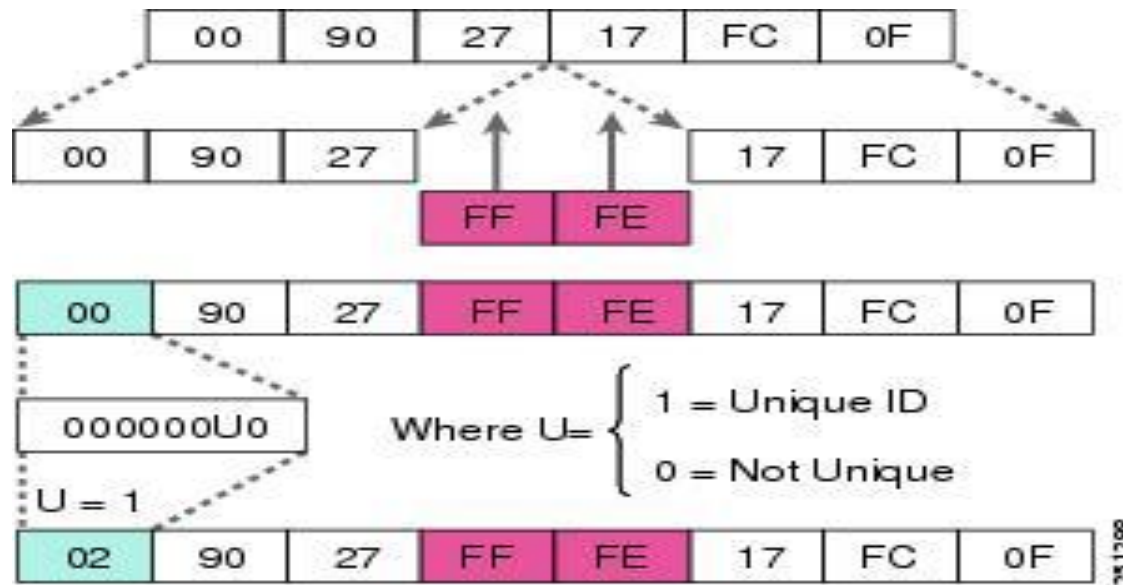
How does a host generate *link-local* address in 6LoWPAN?

- ✓ **Generated when** a computer runs IPv6 boots up
 - Always have a **prefix FE80::/64** ← **mapped with PAN ID**



64-bit IID generation from MAC address

Generating IID (EUI-64) from 48-bits MAC address (i.e. device address).



48 bit MAC address



64 bit Interface ID (IID)

64-bit IID from 16-bit short address



All 802.15.4 devices have an IEEE EUI-64 address typically.
But 16-bit short addresses are also possible.

How to form the IID if an IoT device has 16-bit short address?

In these cases, a "pseudo 48-bit address" is formed first, and then EUI-64 interface id is formed from the pseudo 48-bit MAC address.

- 1st step: concat <16 bit PAN ID :16 zero bits>
- 2nd step: concat <32 bits in step:16 bit short address>
- 3rd step: 48 bits MAC address => 64 bit Interface ID

Stateless Auto-Configuration in IPv6



- It defines
 - ✓ how to obtain an IPv6 interface identifier (IID) from other known information
 - Uses both local and non-local information to generate its address.

Note: The **stateful auto-configuration** protocol allows hosts to obtain addresses and other configuration information from a server (e.g. DHCP Server).

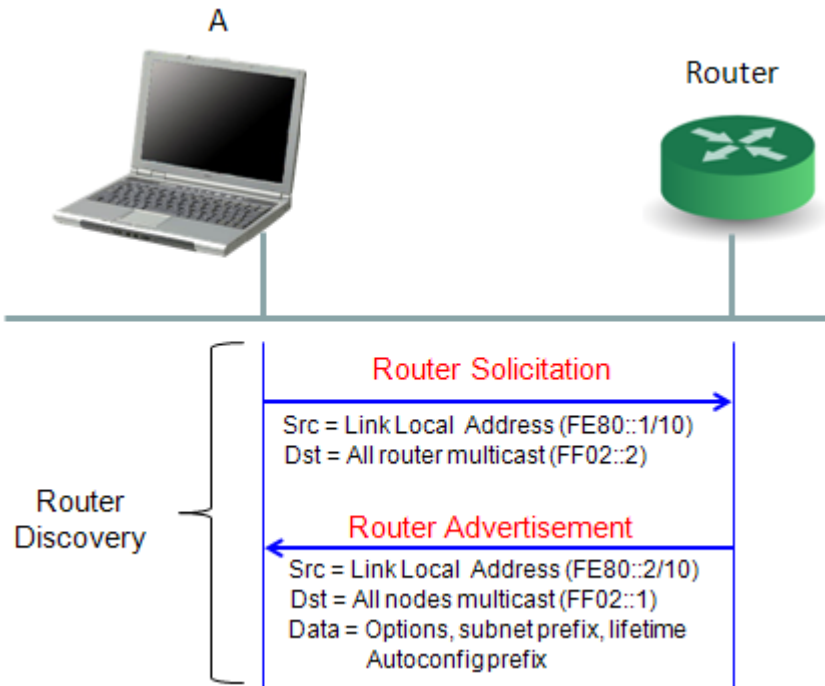
- ✓ Advantages:
 - Allows a node to connect to the Internet without DHCP server
 - Helps in header optimization

IPv6 address:

- ✓ Addresses are 128 bit long
 - Divided into 8 hextets, each hextet is 16 bit
 - Each character is 4 bit, a nibble
 - A common configuration is a
 - 48-bit network prefix, 16-bit subnet mask, 64-bit host address/identifier.
- e.g., 2001:1234:ABCD:0001:1023:FD45:0033:0002

Cont... (for IPv6)

Steps in **stateless auto-configuration** to obtain IPv6 address (128 bits):



- ✓ **Host** send **Router Solicitation (RS)** to all routers
- ✓ **Routers** reply with **Router Advertisement (RA)**
 - announces **prefix** used on link.
- ✓ **Host** generates address
 - by combining the **prefix** received and **host identifier** (EUI-64)
- ✓ So, IPv6 address (128 bit) is generated
 - **Link-local address**
- ✓ **Hosts** performs **DAD activity**
 - Duplicate Address Detection (DAD)
- ✓ If successful (i.e. not duplicate one), **address becomes active**

6LoWPAN Header Compressions



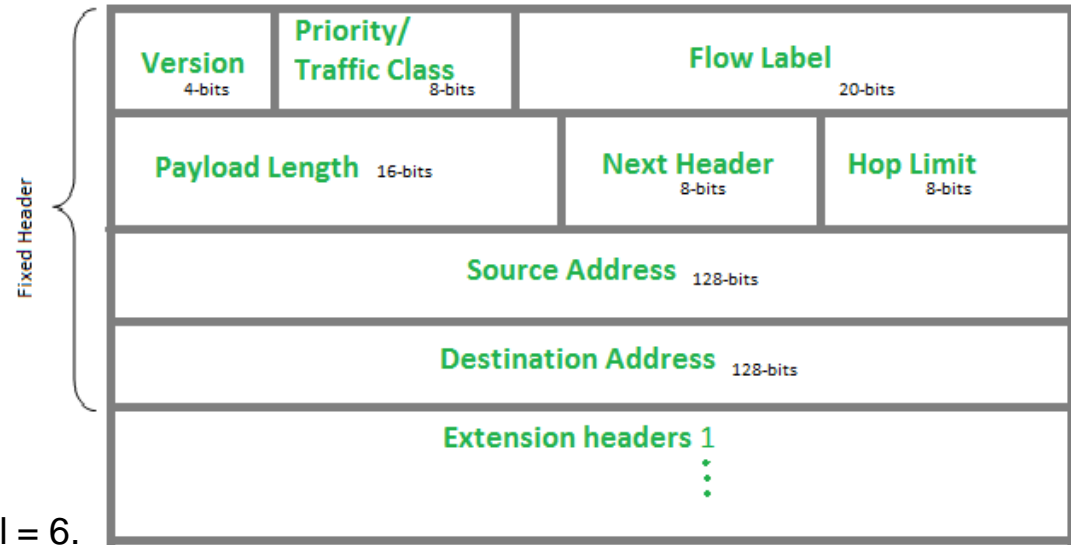
- **HC1 (for IP) and HC2 (for UDP) compressions**
 - Assume common values for header fields and define compact forms.
 - Reduce header size by omission

Omit headers that...

- can be reconstructed from L2 layer headers (i.e. **redundant**)
- contains information not needed/used in present context (i.e. **unnecessary**)

Cont...

IPv6 header



Version: version number of Internet Protocol = 6.

Priority / Traffic Class: indicates the class or priority of IPv6 packet

Flow Label: used by source to label the packets belonging to the same flow in order to request special handling by intermediate routers

Payload Length: size (in octets) of the rest of the packet that follows the IPv6 header

Next header: type of header that immediately follows the IPv6 header

Hop limit: Decrement by one by each node that forwards the packet.

Source & Destination addresses: IPv6 addresses

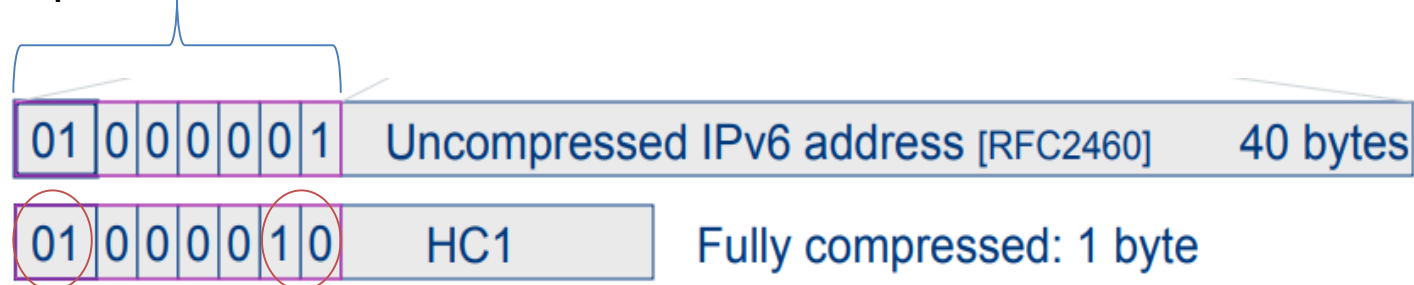
Compression: HC1

HC1: Compresses IPv6 headers

IPv6 Header:
40-Byte

| | | | |
|---------------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|
| 4 bits Version | 4 bits Priority | 24 bits Flow Label | |
| 16 bits Payload Length | | 8 bits Next Header | 8 bits Hop Limit |
| 128 bits Source Address | | | |
| 128 bits Destination Address | | | |

Dispatch Header



What are compressed fields?

Source address

Destination address

Priority / Traffic class & Flow level

Next Header

-> **Derived** from link address

-> **Derived** from link address

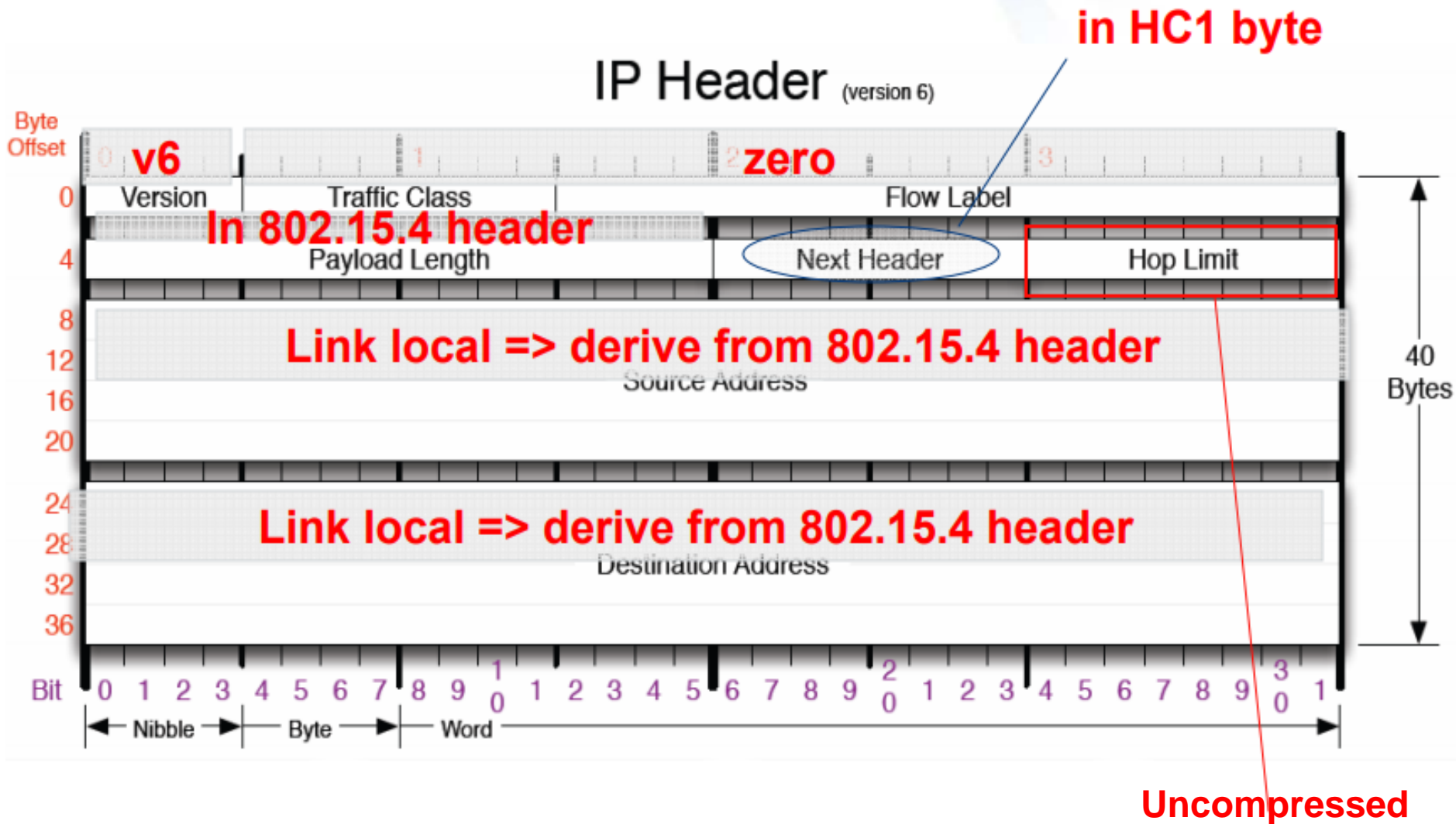
-> Zero (if ECN, DS, Flow level all zero)

-> Indicated in HC1 (TCP/UDP/ICMPv6)

Reduced to
Zero Byte

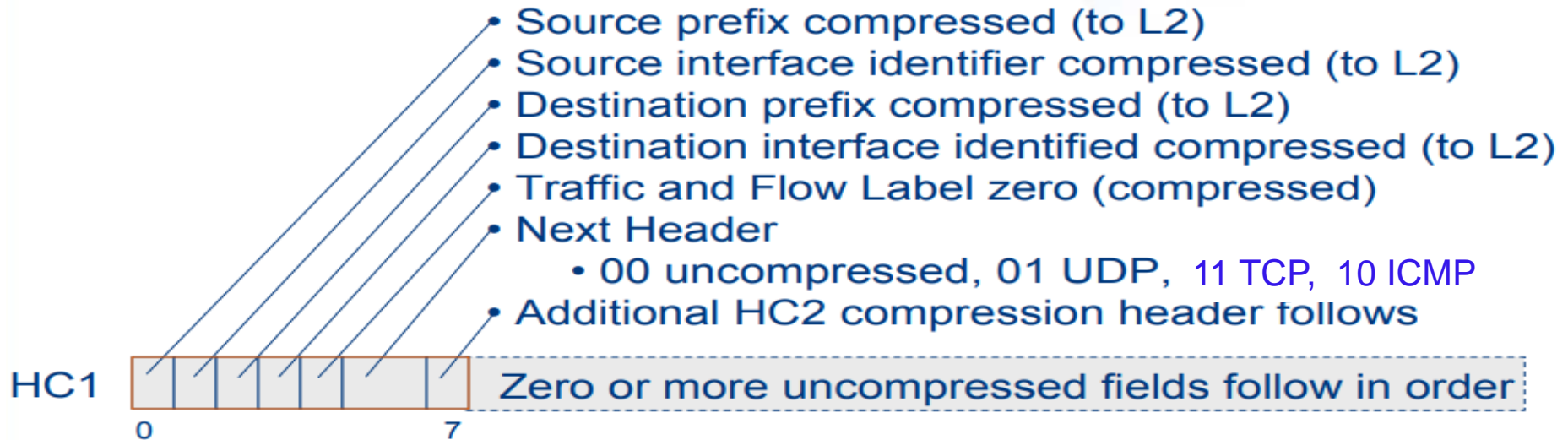
Cont...

IPv6 Header compression



Cont...

HC1 Compressed IPv6 Header

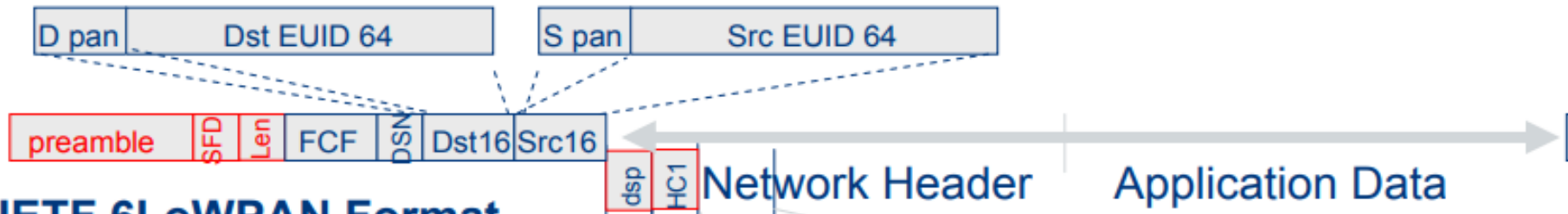


- ✓ IPv6 address <prefix64 || Interface ID64> for nodes in IEEE 802.15.4 subnet derived from the link address.
 - PAN ID maps to a unique IPv6 prefix
 - Interface ID64 generated from 48-bit MAC or 16-bit short address
- ✓ HopLimit is the only incompressible IPv6 header field.

Cont...

6LoWPAN: Compressed IPv6 Header

IEEE 802.15.4 Frame Format



IETF 6LoWPAN Format



"Compressed IPv6"

"how it is compressed"

- Non 802.15.4 local addresses
- non-zero traffic & flow
- rare and optional

HC1 Encoding Field Values

IPv6 source address (bits 0 and 1):

- 00: PI, II
- 01: PI, IC
- 10: PC, II
- 11: PC, IC

IPv6 destination address (bits 2 and 3):

- 00: PI, II
- 01: PI, IC
- 10: PC, II
- 11: PC, IC

- PI: Prefix carried in-line
- PC: Prefix compressed (link-local prefix assumed).
- II: Interface identifier carried in-line
- IC: Interface identifier compressed

Traffic Class and Flow Label (bit 4):

- 0: not compressed; full 8 bits for Traffic Class and 20 bits for Flow Label are sent
- 1: Traffic Class and Flow Label are zero

Next Header (bits 5 and 6):

- 00: not compressed; full 8 bits are sent
- 01: UDP
- 10: ICMP
- 11: TCP

HC2 encoding (bit 7):

- 0: No more header compression bits
- 1: HC1 encoding immediately followed by more header compression bits per HC2 encoding format.

Compression: HC2

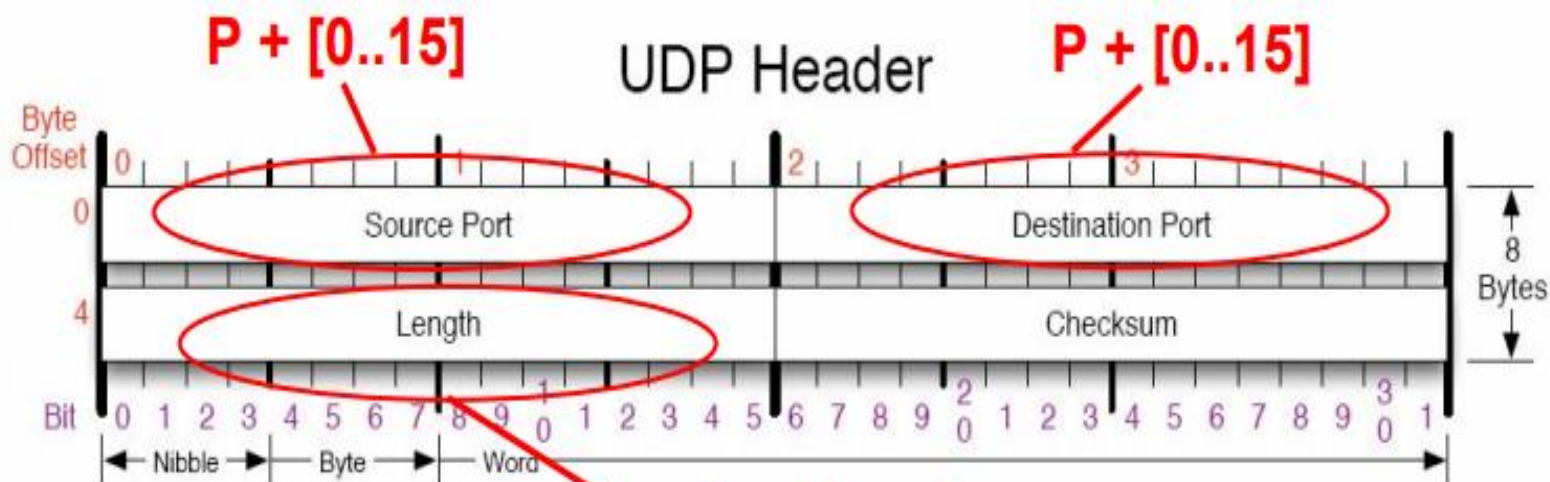
HC2:Compresses UDP Headers

UDP header format [8 Byte]

| | |
|-------------|------------------|
| Source port | Destination port |
| UDP length | Checksum |

Reduced to

- ✓ Source port = P+4bits, P=61616
 - ✓ Destination port= P+4bits, P=61616
- } 1 Byte
- ✓ Length **derived** from IPv6 length
 - ✓ Checksum is always carried inline
- } 2 Byte



From 15.4 header

Limitations of HC1 & HC2

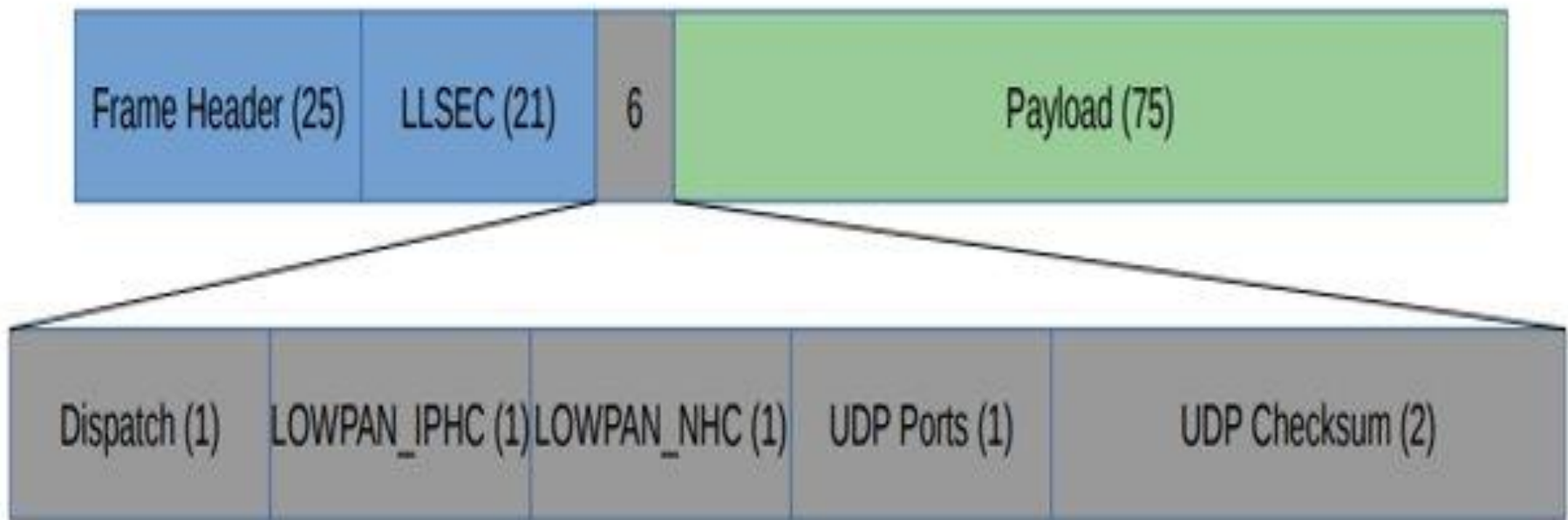
- ✓ LoWPAN_HC1 & LoWPAN_HC2 are **insufficient** for most practical uses.
 - ✓ Effective only for link-local unicast communication,
- ✓ So, they are usually **not used for application** layer data traffic in present times

So, **RFC 6282** was proposed as an advancement

- Defines LoWPAN_IPHC
 - Not only link-local, compression **for global and multicast addresses too**
 - Compress header fields with common values:
 - version, traffic class, flow label, **hop-limit**
- Defines LoWPAN_NHC (for arbitrary next headers)
 - Adds ability to **omit UDP checksum**
- ❖ Possible to invent your own scheme if you have repeating usage patterns in your use case

The Header Size Solution

The **48-byte (IPv6 + UDP header)** could in the best cases be **reduced to 6 bytes.**

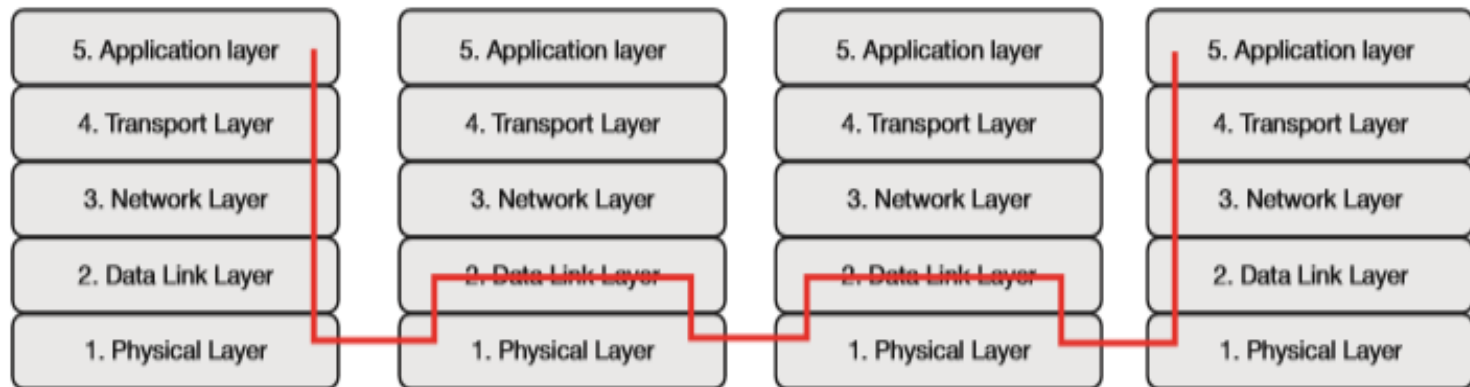


Routing Mechanisms

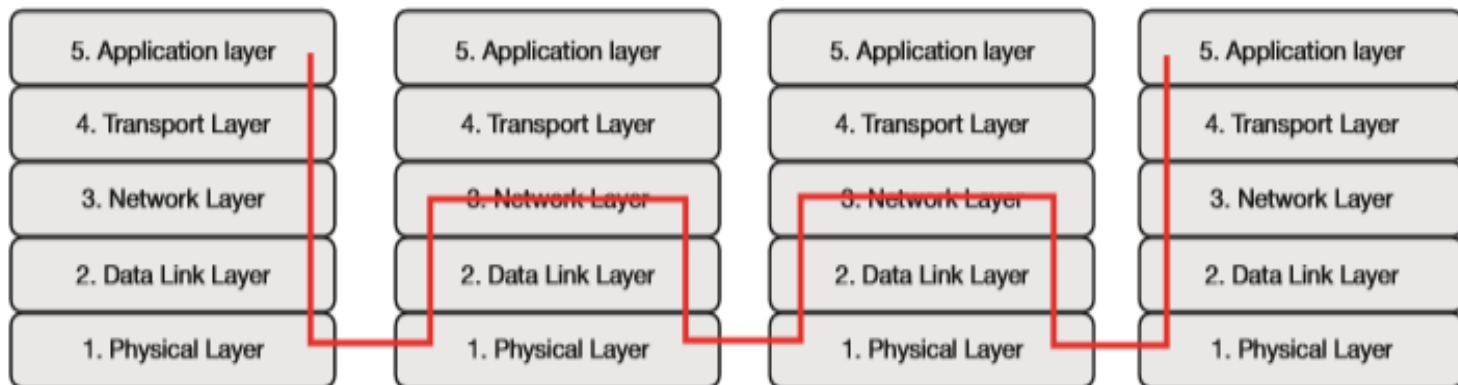
6LoWPAN supports two **routing mechanisms** (RFC 6606):

- Mesh-under
- Route-over

Mesh-under



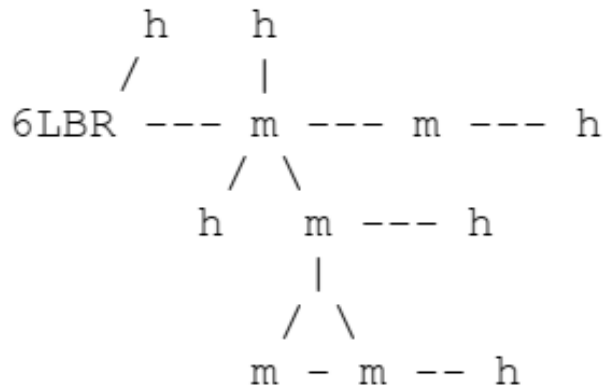
Route-over



Cont...

Mesh-under

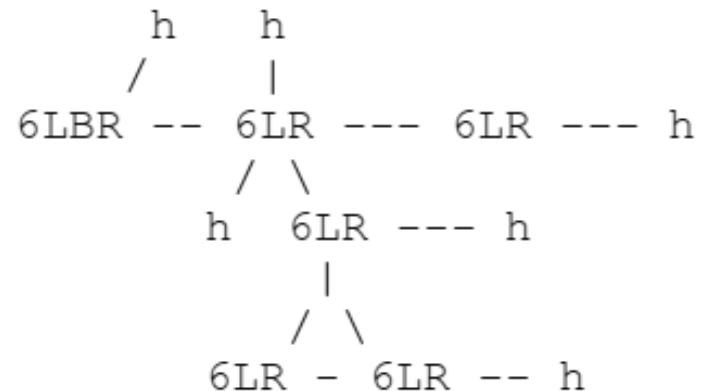
- ✓ Uses L2 addresses to forward data
- ✓ Only **edge router** is the IP router; other intermediate devices are **mesh-under forwarder**
- ✓ Individual fragments may take different paths.
- ✓ Suitable for small and local networks



An Example of a Mesh-Under 6LoWPAN

Route-over

- ✓ Uses L3 addresses to forward data.
- ✓ **Each hop** acts as an IP router or 6LoWPAN router.
- ✓ All fragments are sent to same path as routing decision taken on per packet basis
- ✓ Suitable for all sized networks



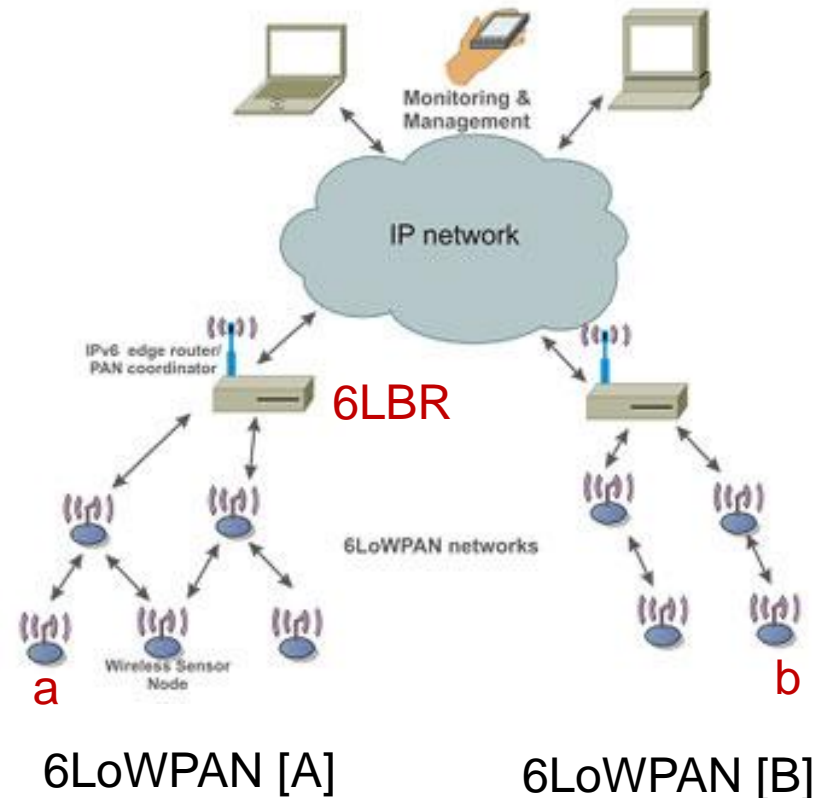
An Example of a Route-Over 6LoWPAN

Cont...

When multiple LoWPANs are formed with globally unique IPv6 addresses in the 6LoWPANs, and device “a” of LoWPAN [A] wants to communicate with device “b” of LoWPAN [B], the normal IPv6 mechanisms will be employed.

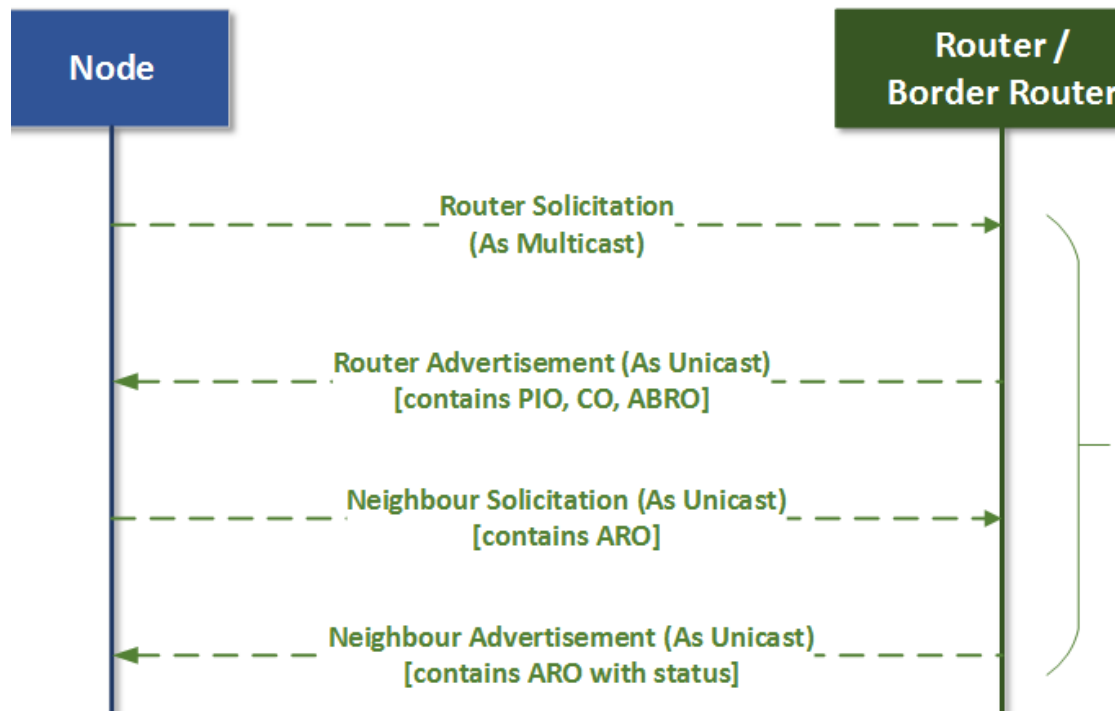
For **route-over**, the IPv6 address of “b” is set as the destination of the packets, and the devices perform IP routing to the 6LBR for these outgoing packets.

For **mesh-under**, there is one IP hop from device “a” to the 6LBR of [A], no matter how many radio hops they are apart from each other. This, of course, assumes the existence of a mesh-under routing protocol in order to reach the 6LBR.



Neighbour Discovery (ND) Protocol

- This helps the node to determine the neighbours in the vicinity and to select the best parent available.
- Uses ICMP Message
 - RS (Router Solicitation) , RA (Router Advertisement)
 - NS (Neighbour Solicitation) , NA (Neighbour Advertisement)



Prefix Information (PIO) : The prefix of the IPv6 address

Context Option (CO) : The compression technique to be used.

Authoritative Border Router Option (ABRO) : Border Router address

Address Registration Option (ARO) : link layer address of the node, & direct reachability to node

Cont...

Router Solicitation and Advertisement



1—ICMP Type = 133 (RS)

Src = link-local address (FE80::1/10)

Dst = **all-routers** multicast address (FF02::2)

Query = please send RA

2—ICMP Type = 134 (RA)

Src = link-local address (FE80::2/10)

Dst = **all-nodes** multicast address (FF02::1)

Data = options, subnet prefix, lifetime, autoconfig flag

- Router Solicitations (RS) are sent by booting nodes to request RAs for configuring the interfaces
- Routers send periodic Router Advertisements (RA) to the all-nodes multicast address

Cont...

Neighbor Solicitation and Advertisement



Neighbor Solicitation
ICMP type = 135

Src = A
Dst = Solicited-node multicast of B
Data = link-layer address of A
Query = what is your link address?



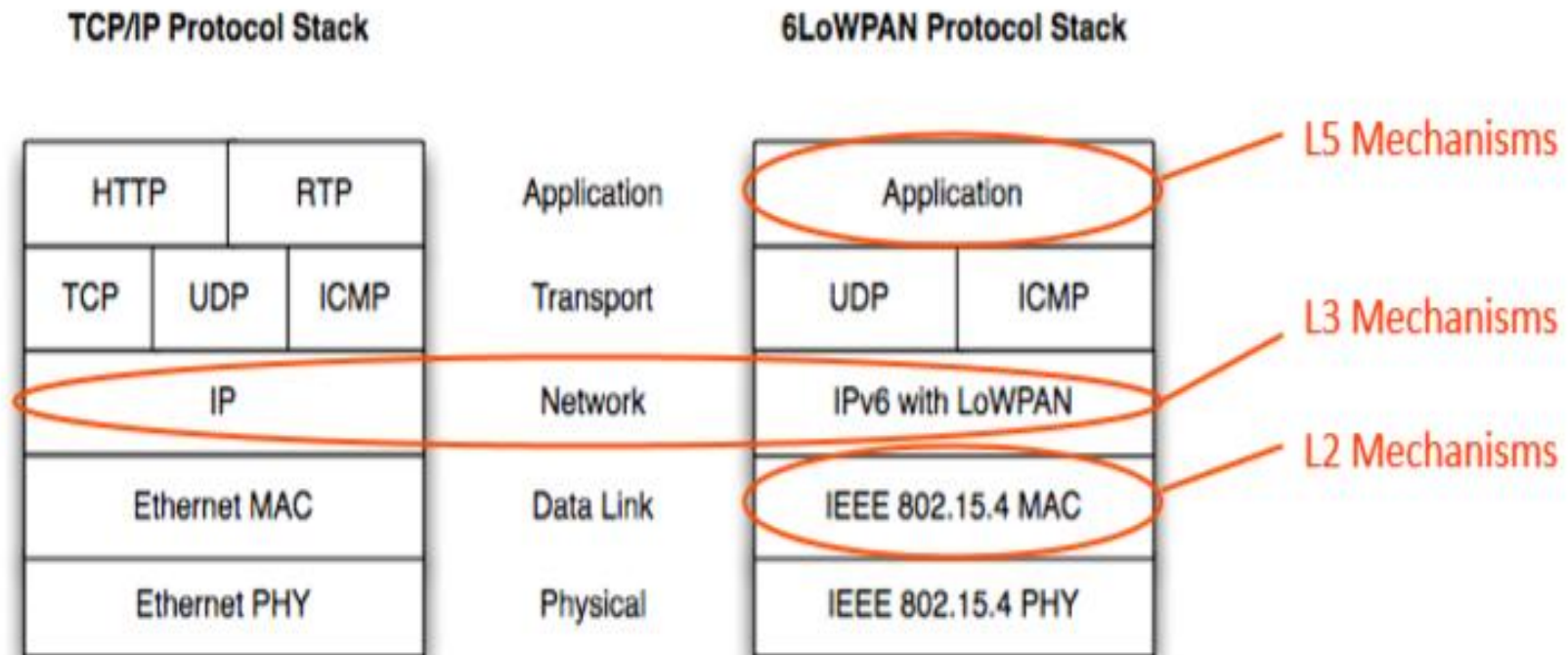
Neighbor Advertisement
ICMP type = 136
Src = B
Dst = A
Data = link-layer address of B



**A and B Can Now Exchange
Packets on this Link**

6LoWPAN Security

- Security is also important for IOT systems
 - ✓ It takes advantage of IEEE 802.15.4 **link layer security**
 - ✓ Also TLS (**Transport Layer Security**) mechanisms works for 6LoWPAN systems



Lessons Learned



- ✓ Motivation behind the development of Adaptation Layer
- ✓ 6LoWPAN
 - ✓ Architectures
 - ✓ RFCs
 - ✓ Stacked headers concept
 - ✓ Dispatch Header
 - ✓ Fragmentation Header
 - ✓ Mesh Routing Header
 - ✓ Compression Header
- ✓ Address Auto-configuration
- ✓ Header Compression
- ✓ Neighbour Discovery
- ✓ Data Forwarding : Mesh under & Route over
- ✓ 6LoWPAN Security

Thanks!

