

Binary Lexical Octet Ad-hoc Transport

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Abstract

This document defines a reformulation of IP and two transport layer protocols (TCP and UDP) as XML applications.

1. Introduction

1.1. Overview

This document describes the Binary Lexical Octet Ad-hoc Transport (BLOAT): a reformulation of a widely-deployed network-layer protocol (IP [[RFC791](#)]), and two associated transport layer protocols (TCP [[RFC793](#)] and UDP [[RFC768](#)]) as XML [[XML](#)] applications. It also describes methods for transporting BLOAT over Ethernet and IEEE 802 networks as well as encapsulating BLOAT in IP for gatewaying BLOAT across the public Internet.

1.2. Motivation

The wild popularity of XML as a basis for application-level protocols such as the Blocks Extensible Exchange Protocol [[RFC3080](#)], the Simple Object Access Protocol [[SOAP](#)], and Jabber [[JABBER](#)] prompted investigation into the possibility of extending the use of XML in the protocol stack. Using XML at both the transport and network layer in addition to the application layer would provide for an amazing amount of power and flexibility while removing dependencies on proprietary and hard-to-understand binary protocols. This protocol unification would also allow applications to use a single XML parser for all aspects of their operation, eliminating developer time spent figuring out the intricacies of each new protocol, and moving the hard work of

parsing to the XML toolset. The use of XML also mitigates concerns over "network vs. host" byte ordering which is at the root of many network application bugs.

1.3. Relation to Existing Protocols

The reformulations specified in this RFC follow as closely as possible the spirit of the RFCs on which they are based, and so MAY contain elements or attributes that would not be needed in a pure reworking (e.g. length attributes, which are implicit in XML.)

The layering of network and transport protocols are maintained in this RFC despite the optimizations that could be made if the line were somewhat blurred (i.e. merging TCP and IP into a single, larger element in the DTD) in order to foster future use of this protocol as a basis for reformulating other protocols (such as ICMP.)

Other than the encoding, the behavioral aspects of each of the existing protocols remain unchanged. Routing, address spaces, TCP congestion control, etc. behave as specified in the extant standards. Adapting to new standards and experimental algorithm heuristics for improving performance will become much easier once the move to BLOAT has been completed.

1.4. Requirement Levels

The key words "MUST", "MUST NOT", "REQUIRED", "SHALL", "SHALL NOT", "SHOULD", "SHOULD NOT", "RECOMMENDED", "MAY", and "OPTIONAL" in this document are to be interpreted as described in [BCP 14](#), [RFC 2119](#) [[RFC2119](#)].

2. IPoXML

This protocol MUST be implemented to be compliant with this RFC. IPoXML is the root protocol REQUIRED for effective use of TCPoXML ([section 3.](#)) and higher-level application protocols.

The DTD for this document type can be found in [section 7.1](#).

The routing of IPoXML can be easily implemented on hosts with an XML parser, as the regular structure lends itself handily to parsing and validation of the document/datagram and then processing the destination address, TTL, and checksum before sending it on to its next-hop.

The reformulation of IPv4 was chosen over IPv6 [[RFC2460](#)] due to the wider deployment of IPv4 and the fact that implementing IPv6 as XML would have exceeded the 1500 byte Ethernet MTU.

All BLOAT implementations MUST use - and specify - the UTF-8 encoding of RFC 2279 [RFC2279]. All BLOAT document/datagrams MUST be well-formed and include the XMLDecl.

2.1. IP Description

A number of items have changed (for the better) from the original IP specification. Bit-masks, where present have been converted into human-readable values. IP addresses are listed in their dotted-decimal notation [RFC1123]. Length and checksum values are present as decimal integers.

To calculate the length and checksum fields of the IP element, a canonicalized form of the element MUST be used. The canonical form SHALL have no whitespace (including newline characters) between elements and only one space character between attributes. There SHALL NOT be a space following the last attribute in an element.

An iterative method SHOULD be used to calculate checksums, as the length field will vary based on the size of the checksum.

The payload element bears special attention. Due to the character set restrictions of XML, the payload of IP datagrams (which MAY contain arbitrary data) MUST be encoded for transport. This RFC REQUIRES the contents of the payload to be encoded in the base-64 encoding of RFC 2045 [RFC2045], but removes the requirement that the encoded output MUST be wrapped on 76-character lines.

2.2. Example Datagram

The following is an example IPoXML datagram with an empty payload:

```
<?xml version="1.0" encoding="UTF-8"?>
<!DOCTYPE ip PUBLIC "-//IETF//DTD BLOAT 1.0 IP//EN" "bloat.dtd">
<ip>
  <header length="474">
    <version value="4"/>
    <tos precedence="Routine" delay="Normal" throughput="Normal"
      reliability="Normal" reserved="0"/>
    <total.length value="461"/>
    <id value="1"/>
    <flags reserved="0" df="dont" mf="last"/>
    <offset value="0"/>
    <ttl value="255"/>
    <protocol value="6"/>
    <checksum value="8707"/>
    <source address="10.0.0.22"/>
    <destination address="10.0.0.1"/>
    <options>
      <end copied="0" class="0" number="0"/>
    </options>
    <padding pad="0"/>
  </header>
  <payload>
  </payload>
</ip>
```

3. TCPoXML

This protocol MUST be implemented to be compliant with this RFC. The DTD for this document type can be found in [section 7.2](#).

3.1. TCP Description

A number of items have changed from the original TCP specification. Bit-masks, where present have been converted into human-readable values. Length and checksum and port values are present as decimal integers.

To calculate the length and checksum fields of the TCP element, a canonicalized form of the element MUST be used as in [section 2.1](#).

An iterative method SHOULD be used to calculate checksums as in [section 2.1](#).

The payload element MUST be encoded as in [section 2.1](#).

The TCP offset element was expanded to a maximum of 255 from 16 to allow for the increased size of the header in XML.

TCPoXML datagrams encapsulated by IPoXML MAY omit the `<?xml?>` header as well as the `<!DOCTYPE>` declaration.

3.2. Example Datagram

The following is an example TCPoXML datagram with an empty payload:

```
<?xml version="1.0" encoding="UTF-8"?>
<!DOCTYPE tcp PUBLIC "-//IETF//DTD BLOAT 1.0 TCP//EN" "bloat.dtd">
<tcp>
  <tcp.header>
    <src port="31415"/>
    <dest port="42424"/>
    <sequence number="322622954"/>
    <acknowledgement number="689715995"/>
    <offset number=""/>
    <reserved value="0"/>
    <control syn="1" ack="1"/>
    <window size="1"/>
    <urgent pointer="0"/>
    <checksum value="2988"/>
    <tcp.options>
    <tcp.end kind="0"/>
    </tcp.options>
    <padding pad="0"/>
  </tcp.header>
  <payload>
  </payload>
</tcp>
```

4. UDPOXML

This protocol MUST be implemented to be compliant with this RFC. The DTD for this document type can be found in [section 7.3](#).

4.1. UDP Description

A number of items have changed from the original UDP specification. Bit-masks, where present have been converted into human-readable values. Length and checksum and port values are present as decimal integers.

To calculate the length and checksum fields of the UDP element, a canonicalized form of the element MUST be used as in [section 2.1](#). An iterative method SHOULD be used to calculate checksums as in [section 2.1](#).

The payload element MUST be encoded as in [section 2.1](#).

UDPoXML datagrams encapsulated by IPoXML MAY omit the `<?xml?>` header as well as the `<!DOCTYPE>` declaration.

4.2. Example Datagram

The following is an example UDPoXML datagram with an empty payload:

```
<?xml version="1.0" encoding="UTF-8"?>
<!DOCTYPE udp PUBLIC "-//IETF//DTD BLOAT 1.0 UDP//EN" "bloat.dtd">
<udp>
<udp.header>
<src port="31415"/>
<dest port="42424"/>
<udp.length value="143"/>
<checksum value="2988"/>
</udp.header>
<payload>
</payload>
</udp>
```

5. Network Transport

This document provides for the transmission of BLOAT datagrams over two common families of physical layer transport. Future RFCs will address additional transports as routing vendors catch up to the specification, and we begin to see BLOAT routed across the Internet backbone.

5.1. Ethernet

BLOAT is encapsulated in Ethernet datagrams as in [\[RFC894\]](#) with the exception that the type field of the Ethernet frame MUST contain the value 0xBEEF. The first 5 octets of the Ethernet frame payload will be 0x3c 3f 78 6d 6c ("`<?xml`".)

5.2. IEEE 802

BLOAT is encapsulated in IEEE 802 Networks as in [\[RFC1042\]](#) except that the protocol type code for IPoXML is 0xBEEF.

6. Gatewaying over IP

In order to facilitate the gradual introduction of BLOAT into the public Internet, BLOAT MAY be encapsulated in IP as in [RFC2003] to gateway between networks that run BLOAT natively on their LANs.

7. DTDs

The Transport DTDs (7.2. and 7.3.) build on the definitions in the Network DTD (7.1.)

The DTDs are referenced by their PubidLiteral and SystemLiteral (from [XML]) although it is understood that most IPoXML implementations will not need to pull down the DTD, as it will normally be embedded in the implementation, and presents something of a catch-22 if you need to load part of your network protocol over the network.

7.1. IPoXML DTD

```
<!--
  DTD for IP over XML.
  Refer to this DTD as:

  <!DOCTYPE ip PUBLIC "-//IETF//DTD BLOAT 1.0 IP//EN" "bloat.dtd">
-->
<!--
  DTD data types:

  Digits      [0..9]+

  Precedence  "NetworkControl | InternetworkControl |
              CRITIC | FlashOverride | Flash | Immediate |
              Priority | Routine"

  IP4Addr     "dotted-decimal" notation of [RFC1123]

  Class       [0..3]

  Sec         "Unclassified | Confidential | EFTO | MMMM | PROG |
              Restricted | Secret | Top Secret | Reserved"

  Compartments [0..65535]

  Handling     [0..65535]

  TCC         [0..16777216]

-->
```

```
<!ENTITY % Digits "CDATA">
<!ENTITY % Precedence "CDATA">
<!ENTITY % IP4Addr "CDATA">
<!ENTITY % Class "CDATA">
<!ENTITY % Sec "CDATA">
<!ENTITY % Compartments "CDATA">
<!ENTITY % Handling "CDATA">
<!ENTITY % TCC "CDATA">

<!ELEMENT ip (header, payload)>

<!ELEMENT header (version, tos, total.length, id, flags, offset, ttl,
                  protocol, checksum, source, destination, options,
                  padding)>
<!-- length of header in 32-bit words -->
<!ATTLIST header
    length %Digits; #REQUIRED>

<!ELEMENT version EMPTY>
<!-- ip version. SHOULD be "4" -->
<!ATTLIST version
    value %Digits; #REQUIRED>

<!ELEMENT tos EMPTY>
<!ATTLIST tos
    precedence %Precedence; #REQUIRED
    delay (normal | low) #REQUIRED
    throughput (normal | high) #REQUIRED
    reliability (normal | high) #REQUIRED
    reserved CDATA #FIXED "0">

<!ELEMENT total.length EMPTY>
<!--
    total length of datagram (header and payload) in octets, MUST be
    less than 65,535 (and SHOULD be less than 1024 for IPoXML on local
    ethernet).
-->
<!ATTLIST total.length
    value %Digits; #REQUIRED>

<!ELEMENT id EMPTY>
<!-- 0 <= id <= 65,535 -->
<!ATTLIST id
    value %Digits; #REQUIRED>

<!ELEMENT flags EMPTY>
<!-- df = don't fragment, mf = more fragments -->
<!ATTLIST flags
```



```
reserved CDATA #FIXED "0"
df (may|dont) #REQUIRED
mf (last|more) #REQUIRED>

<!ELEMENT offset EMPTY>
<!-- 0 <= offset <= 8192 measured in 8 octet (64-bit) chunks -->
<!ATTLIST offset
    value %Digits; #REQUIRED>

<!ELEMENT ttl EMPTY>
<!-- 0 <= ttl <= 255 -->
<!ATTLIST ttl
    value %Digits; #REQUIRED>

<!ELEMENT protocol EMPTY>
<!-- 0 <= protocol <= 255 (per IANA) -->
<!ATTLIST protocol
    value %Digits; #REQUIRED>

<!ELEMENT checksum EMPTY>
<!-- 0 <= checksum <= 65535 (over header only) -->
<!ATTLIST checksum
    value %Digits; #REQUIRED>

<!ELEMENT source EMPTY>
<!ATTLIST source
    address %IP4Addr; #REQUIRED>

<!ELEMENT destination EMPTY>
<!ATTLIST destination
    address %IP4Addr; #REQUIRED>

<!ELEMENT options ( end | noop | security | loose | strict | record
    | stream | timestamp )*>

<!ELEMENT end EMPTY>
<!ATTLIST end
    copied (0|1) #REQUIRED
    class CDATA #FIXED "0"
    number CDATA #FIXED "0">

<!ELEMENT noop EMPTY>
<!ATTLIST noop
    copied (0|1) #REQUIRED
    class CDATA #FIXED "0"
    number CDATA #FIXED "1">

<!ELEMENT security EMPTY>
```

```
<!-- ATTTLIST security
      copied CDATA #FIXED "1"
      class CDATA #FIXED "0"
      number CDATA #FIXED "2"
      length CDATA #FIXED "11"
      security %Sec; #REQUIRED
      compartments %Compartments; #REQUIRED
      handling %Handling; #REQUIRED
      tcc %TCC; #REQUIRED>
<!-- ELEMENT loose (hop)+>
<!-- ATTTLIST loose
      copied CDATA #FIXED "1"
      class CDATA #FIXED "0"
      number CDATA #FIXED "3"
      length %Digits; #REQUIRED
      pointer %Digits; #REQUIRED>

<!-- ELEMENT hop EMPTY>
<!-- ATTTLIST hop
      address %IP4Addr; #REQUIRED>

<!-- ELEMENT strict (hop)+>
<!-- ATTTLIST strict
      copied CDATA #FIXED "1"
      class CDATA #FIXED "0"
      number CDATA #FIXED "9"
      length %Digits; #REQUIRED
      pointer %Digits; #REQUIRED>

<!-- ELEMENT record (hop)+>
<!-- ATTTLIST record
      copied CDATA #FIXED "0"
      class CDATA #FIXED "0"
      number CDATA #FIXED "7"
      length %Digits; #REQUIRED
      pointer %Digits; #REQUIRED>

<!-- ELEMENT stream EMPTY>
<!-- 0 <= id <= 65,535 -->
<!-- ATTTLIST stream
      copied CDATA #FIXED "1"
      class CDATA #FIXED "0"
      number CDATA #FIXED "8"
      length CDATA #FIXED "4"
      id %Digits; #REQUIRED>

<!-- ELEMENT timestamp (tstamp)+>
<!-- 0 <= oflw <=15 -->
```

```

<!ATTLIST timestamp
    copied CDATA #FIXED "0"
    class CDATA #FIXED "2"
    number CDATA #FIXED "4"
    length %Digits; #REQUIRED
    pointer %Digits; #REQUIRED
    oflw %Digits; #REQUIRED
    flag (0 | 1 | 3) #REQUIRED>

<!ELEMENT tstamp EMPTY>
<!ATTLIST tstamp
    time %Digits; #REQUIRED
    address %IP4Addr; #IMPLIED>

<!--
    padding to bring header to 32-bit boundary.
    pad MUST be "0"*
-->
<!ELEMENT padding EMPTY>
<!ATTLIST padding
    pad CDATA #REQUIRED>

<!-- payload MUST be encoded as base-64 [RFC2045], as modified
    by section 2.1 of this RFC -->
<!ELEMENT payload (CDATA)>

```

7.2. TCPoXML DTD

```

<!--
    DTD for TCP over XML.
    Refer to this DTD as:

    <!DOCTYPE tcp PUBLIC "-//IETF//DTD BLOAT 1.0 TCP//EN" "bloat.dtd">
-->

<!-- the pseudoheader is only included for checksum calculations -->
<!ELEMENT tcp (tcp.pseudoheader?, tcp.header, payload)>

<!ELEMENT tcp.header (src, dest, sequence, acknowledgement, offset,
    reserved, control, window, checksum, urgent,
    tcp.options, padding)>

<!ELEMENT src EMPTY>
<!-- 0 <= port <= 65,535 -->
<!ATTLIST src
    port %Digits; #REQUIRED>

<!ELEMENT dest EMPTY>
<!-- 0 <= port <= 65,535 -->

```

```
<!--ATTLIST dest
      port %Digits; #REQUIRED>

<!--ELEMENT sequence EMPTY>
<!-- 0 <= number <= 4294967295 -->
<!--ATTLIST sequence
      number %Digits; #REQUIRED>

<!--ELEMENT acknowledgement EMPTY>
<!-- 0 <= number <= 4294967295 -->
<!--ATTLIST acknowledgement
      number %Digits; #REQUIRED>

<!--ELEMENT offset EMPTY>
<!-- 0 <= number <= 255 -->
<!--ATTLIST offset
      number %Digits; #REQUIRED>

<!--ELEMENT reserved EMPTY>
<!--ATTLIST reserved
      value CDATA #FIXED "0">

<!--ELEMENT control EMPTY>
<!--ATTLIST control
      urg (0|1) #IMPLIED
      ack (0|1) #IMPLIED
      psh (0|1) #IMPLIED
      rst (0|1) #IMPLIED
      syn (0|1) #IMPLIED
      fin (0|1) #IMPLIED>

<!--ELEMENT window EMPTY>
<!-- 0 <= size <= 65,535 -->
<!--ATTLIST window
      size %Digits; #REQUIRED>

<!--
      checksum as in ip, but with
      the following pseudo-header added into the tcp element:
-->
<!--ELEMENT tcp.pseudoheader (source, destination, protocol,
      tcp.length)>

<!--
      tcp header + data length in octets. does not include the size of
      the pseudoheader.
-->
```

```
<!ELEMENT tcp.length EMPTY>
<!ATTLIST tcp.length
    value %Digits; #REQUIRED>

<!ELEMENT urgent EMPTY>
<!-- 0 <= pointer <= 65,535 -->
<!ATTLIST urgent
    pointer %Digits; #REQUIRED>

<!ELEMENT tcp.options (tcp.end | tcp.noop | tcp.mss)+>

<!ELEMENT tcp.end EMPTY>
<!ATTLIST tcp.end
    kind CDATA #FIXED "0">

<!ELEMENT tcp.noop EMPTY>
<!ATTLIST tcp.noop
    kind CDATA #FIXED "1">

<!ELEMENT tcp.mss EMPTY>
<!ATTLIST tcp.mss
    kind CDATA #FIXED "2"
    length CDATA #FIXED "4"
    size %Digits; #REQUIRED>
```

7.3. UDPOXML DTD

```
<!--
    DTD for UDP over XML.
    Refer to this DTD as:

    <!DOCTYPE udp PUBLIC "-//IETF//DTD BLOAT 1.0 UDP//EN" "bloat.dtd">
-->

<!ELEMENT udp (udp.pseudoheader?, udp.header, payload)>

<!ELEMENT udp.header (src, dest, udp.length, checksum)>

<!ELEMENT udp.pseudoheader (source, destination, protocol,
    udp.length)>

<!--
    udp header + data length in octets. does not include the size of
    the pseudoheader.
-->
<!ELEMENT udp.length EMPTY>
<!ATTLIST udp.length
    value %Digits; #REQUIRED>
```

8. Security Considerations

XML, as a subset of SGML, has the same security considerations as specified in SGML Media Types [RFC1874]. Security considerations that apply to IP, TCP and UDP also likely apply to BLOAT as it does not attempt to correct for issues not related to message format.

9. References

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