

Computer Networking - EX. 2

Roi Koren 305428369 roikoren@gmail.com

Bar Zamir 204002570 bar820@gmail.com

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1 Protocol

Before getting to the protocol itself, we'll describe the basics of sending a non-negative integer between client and server, and sending a string. To send an integer, the sending side must convert it to big-endian (network standard), and send the 4 bytes resulting from converting it to `char*` (in C). To send a string, the sending side must first send the string's length, as described above, and then send the wanted string. We provide an implementation of this mechanism in the `seker_helpers.c` & `.h` files.

We'll also define `SUCCESS` to be 0, and `ERROR` to be 1.

The protocol we used is as such:

The first thing to note is that, while the server is running, it must at all times be available for new connections, and to handle logged in users' commands, unless a maximum number of live connections is reached, in which case it must still handle incoming commands. We defined the maximum number of users that can be logged in simultaneously to be 25 in the `seker_helpers.h` file.

To start, the client connects to the server with a TCP socket, connecting to the server's address and port. It then sends `SUCCESS` to the server, notifying it of its intent to log in.

The client then sends a username and password strings to the server. If they are valid, the server responds with `SUCCESS`. Otherwise, it responds with `ERROR`, and the client must send another pair of username and password strings. The server will not disconnect from the client, and will keep waiting for a new pair of username and password strings, until a match is made.

The client may then send any of the 6 pre-defined requests, by sending its number to the server. The requests and their numbers are defined in `seker_helpers.h`, and are 1 for `list_of_courses`, 2 for `add_course`, 3 for `rate_course`, 4 for `get_rate`, 5 for `quit` and 6 for `broadcast`. After handling the request finishes, the client may send another request, until a quit request is made, after which the user is logged-out and the client disconnected.

Next we'll describe the handling of the different requests, on both the client and server sides.

Upon sending a `list_of_courses` request, the client then should expect the receive a list of strings, each string containing a course number and name, separated by a tab character, the name surrounded with quotation marks. This list is appended with a newline character. The list ends with an `end_of_list` string, also defined in `seker_helpers.h` to be `"end_of_list"`. The server should send this list of courses, and the `end_of_list` string. Note that the course number is part of the string, and not sent as a non-negative integer.

If the client sends an `add_course` request, it must then send a desired course number, between 0 and 9999. The client should send this number as an integer. If that number is not used by an existing course, the server will reply with `SUCCESS`, and the client may continue. Otherwise, the server replies with `ERROR`, and the request is ended. If the course number is not in use, the client must then send the course's name, surrounded with quotation marks, as a single string. The server should add this new course, and be ready to list it, receive ratings for it, and return its ratings, if requested, from now on. After a user adds a course, the server then sends a broadcast message to all connected users, excluding the user that added the course, notifying them that a new course has been added.

If the client sends a `rate_course` request, it should then send the course number which is to be rated, as an integer. The server responds with `ERROR` if no course was found with that number. Otherwise, it replies with `SUCCESS`. The client may then send the rate itself, as an integer between 0 and 100. Then, the client should send the rate text to the server, as a single string surrounded with quotation marks. The server should save this rating, together with the username of the user supplying the rating, for future queries on ratings of this course.

A `get_rate` request from a client should be followed with the client sending the desired course number as an integer. The server will reply with `ERROR` if such a course number is not found, and the request will end. Otherwise, the server will reply with `SUCCESS`, after which it will send the client a list of ratings of the desired course, followed by the `end_of_list` string. Each rating will be a string containing the username for the user who gave the rating, the rating the user gave, and the textual rating surrounded with quotation marks, the three separated with tab characters. Each rating ends with the newline character. The server must send these ratings, in this format, of course.

The quit request is not followed by any more data being sent between the client and server.

If a client sends a broadcast request, it must then send the string to be broadcast, surrounded by quotation marks. The server, upon receiving it, should send the message to all logged in users, dropping the quotation marks and prepending the sending user's username, to create a message of the format `'USERNAME sent a new message: MESSAGE'`.

2 Notes

- Both client and server programs depend on the common `seker_helpers.c` & `.h` files to be compiled with them.
- Before running the `seker_server` program, please make sure that a valid `users_file` exists, and that the `dir_path` directory already exists, and pass these parameters to the server program.

- When providing user input to the client program, the parameters are separated by whitespaces, namely spaces and tabs. This means that ‘add_course TAB TAB 1 "Computer Networking 101"’ is equivalent to ‘add_course 1 "Computer Networking 101"’, with TAB being the tab character.