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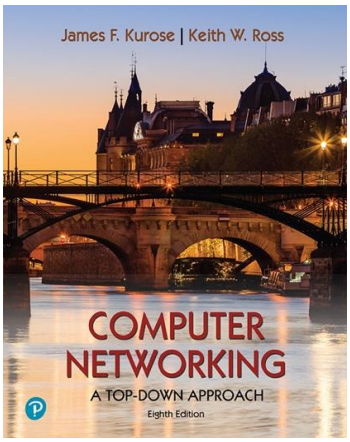
Wireshark Lab: DHCP v8.1

Supplement to *Computer Networking: A Top-Down Approach, 8th ed.*, J.F. Kurose and K.W. Ross

"Tell me and I forget. Show me and I remember. Involve me and I understand." Chinese proverb



In this lab, we'll take a quick look at the Dynamic Host Configuration Protocol, DHCP. Recall that DHCP is used extensively in corporate, university and home-network wired and wireless LANs to dynamically assign IP addresses to hosts, as well as to configure other network configuration information.

Before getting started, you'll probably want to review the coverage of DHCP in Section 4.4.3 in the text[1]. In particular, you'll want to pay close attention to Figure 4.24, since we'll be studying the DHCP Discover, Offer, Request and ACK messages shown in Figure 4.24.

As we've done in earlier Wireshark labs, you'll perform a few actions on your computer that will cause DHCP to spring into action, and then use Wireshark to collect and then the packet trace containing DHCP protocol messages.

Gathering a Packet Trace

The first two steps in the DHCP protocol in Figure 4.24 (using the Discover and Offer messages) are optional (in the sense that they need not always be used when, for example, a new IP address is needed, or an existing DHCP address is to be renewed); the Request and ACK messages are not. In order to collect a trace that will contain all four DHCP message types, we'll need to take a few command line actions on a Mac, Linux or PC.

On a Mac:

2. In a terminal window/shell enter the following command:

```
% sudo ipconfig set en0 none
```

[1] References to figures and sections are for the 8th edition of our text, *Computer Networks, A Top-down Approach, 8h ed., J.F. Kurose and K.W. Ross, Addison-Wesley/Pearson, 2020.* Our website for this book is http://gaia.cs.umass.edu/kurose_ross You'll find lots of interesting open material there.

Where `en0` (in this example) is the interface on which you want to capture packets using Wireshark. You can easily find the list of interface names in Wireshark by choosing Capture->options. This command will de-configure network interface `en0`.

3. Start up Wireshark, capturing packets on the interface you de-configured in Step 1.
4. In the terminal window/shell enter the following command:

```
% sudo ipconfig set en0 dhcp
```

This will cause the DHCP protocol to request and receive an IP address and other information from the DHCP server.

4. After waiting for a few seconds, stop Wireshark capture.

On a Linux machine:

1. In a terminal window/shell, enter the following commands:

```
sudo ip addr flush en0
sudo dhclient -r
```

where `en0` (in this example) is the interface on which you want to capture packets using Wireshark. You can easily find the list of interface names in Wireshark by choosing Capture -> Options. This command will remove the existing IP address of the interface, and release any existing DHCP address leases.

2. Start up Wireshark, capturing packets in the interface you de-configured in Step 1.
3. In the terminal window/shell, enter the following command:

```
sudo dhclient en0
```

where, as with above, `en0` is the interface on which you are currently capturing packets. This will cause the DHCP protocol to request and receive an IP address and other information from the DHCP server.

4. After waiting for a few seconds, stop Wireshark capture.

On a PC:

1. In a command-line window enter the following command:

```
> ipconfig /release
```

This command will cause your PC to give up its IP address.

2. Start up Wireshark.
3. In the command-line window enter the following command:

```
> ipconfig /renew
```

This will cause the DHCP protocol to request and receive an IP address and other information from a DHCP server.

4. After waiting for a few seconds, stop Wireshark capture.

After stopping Wireshark capture in step 4, you should take a peek in your Wireshark window to make sure you've actually captured the packets that we're looking for. If you enter "dhcp" into the display filter field (as shown in the light green field in the top left of Figure 1), your screen (on a Mac) should look similar to Figure 1.

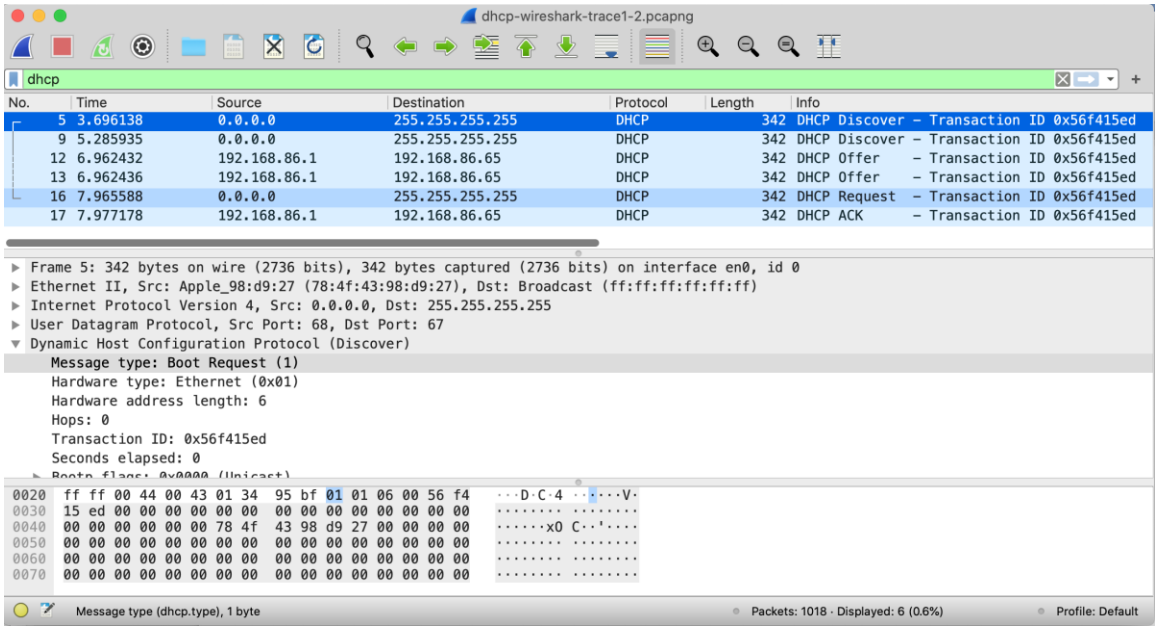


Figure 1: Wireshark display, showing the capture of DHCP Discover, Offer, Request and ACK messages

If you're unable to run Wireshark on a live network connection, are unable to capture all four DHCP messages, or are assigned to do so by your instructor, you can use the Wireshark trace file, *dhcp-wireshark-trace1-1.pcapng*[2] that we've gathered following the steps above on one of the author's computers. You may well find it valuable to download this trace even if you've captured your own trace and use it, as well as your own trace, as you explore the questions below.

DHCP Questions

Answer the following questions[3]. If you're doing this lab as part of class, your teacher will provide details about how to hand in assignments, whether written or in an LMS.

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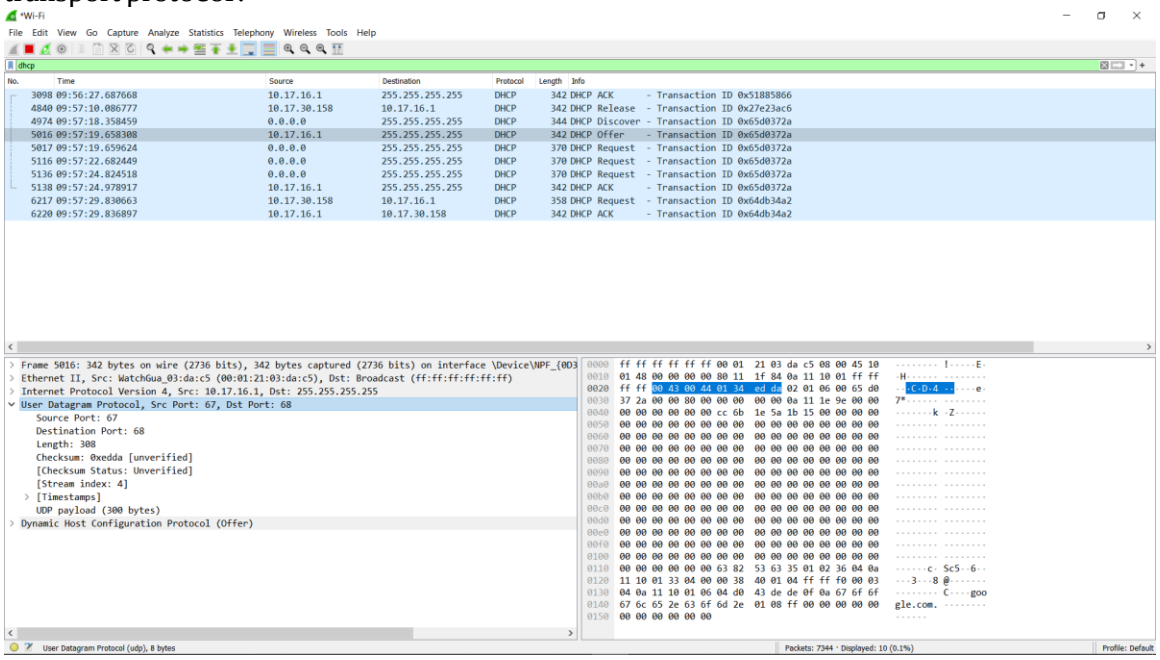
[2] You can download the zip file http://gaia.cs.umass.edu/wireshark-labs/wireshark-traces-8.1.zip and extract the trace file *dhcp-wireshark-trace1-1.pcapng*. These trace files can be used to answer these Wireshark lab questions without actually capturing packets on your own. Each trace was made using Wireshark running on one of the author's computers, while performing the steps indicated in the Wireshark lab. Once you've downloaded a trace file, you can load it into Wireshark and view the trace using the *File* pull down menu, choosing *Open*, and then selecting the trace file name.

[3] For the author's class, when answering the following questions with hand-in assignments, students sometimes need to print out specific packets (see the introductory Wireshark lab for an explanation of how to do this) and indicate where in the packet they've found the information that answers a question. They do this by marking paper copies with a pen or annotating electronic copies with text in a colored font. There are also learning management system (LMS) modules for teachers that allow students to answer these questions online and have answers auto-graded for these Wireshark labs at http://gaia.cs.umass.edu/kurose_ross/lms.htm

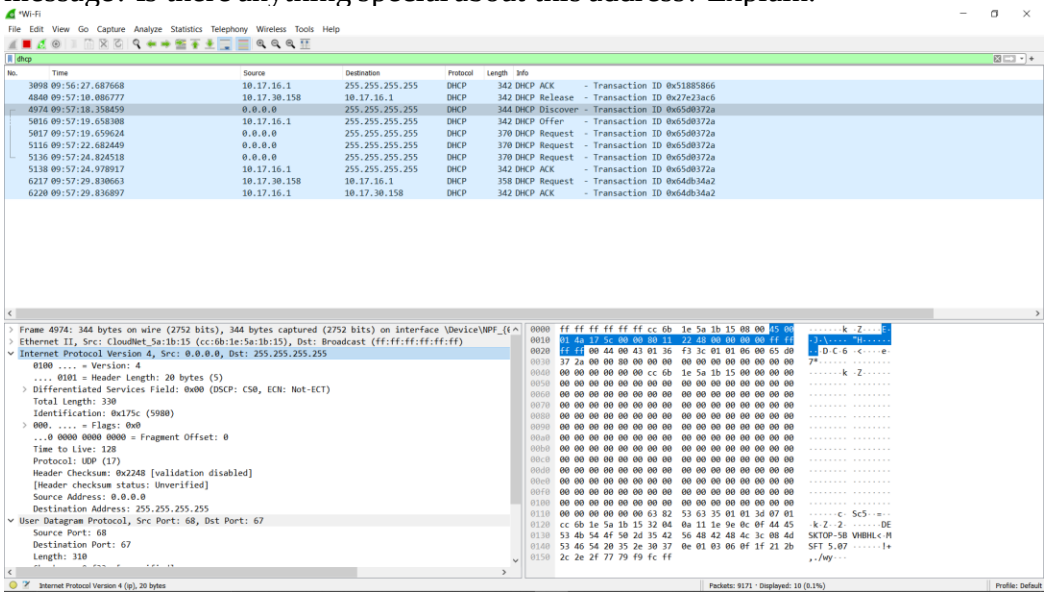
Let's start by looking at the DHCP Discover message. Locate the IP datagram containing the first Discover message in your trace.

1. Is this DHCP Discover message sent out using UDP or TCP as the underlying transport protocol?



this DHCP Discover message sent out using UDP

2. What is the source IP address used in the IP datagram containing the Discover message? Is there anything special about this address? Explain.



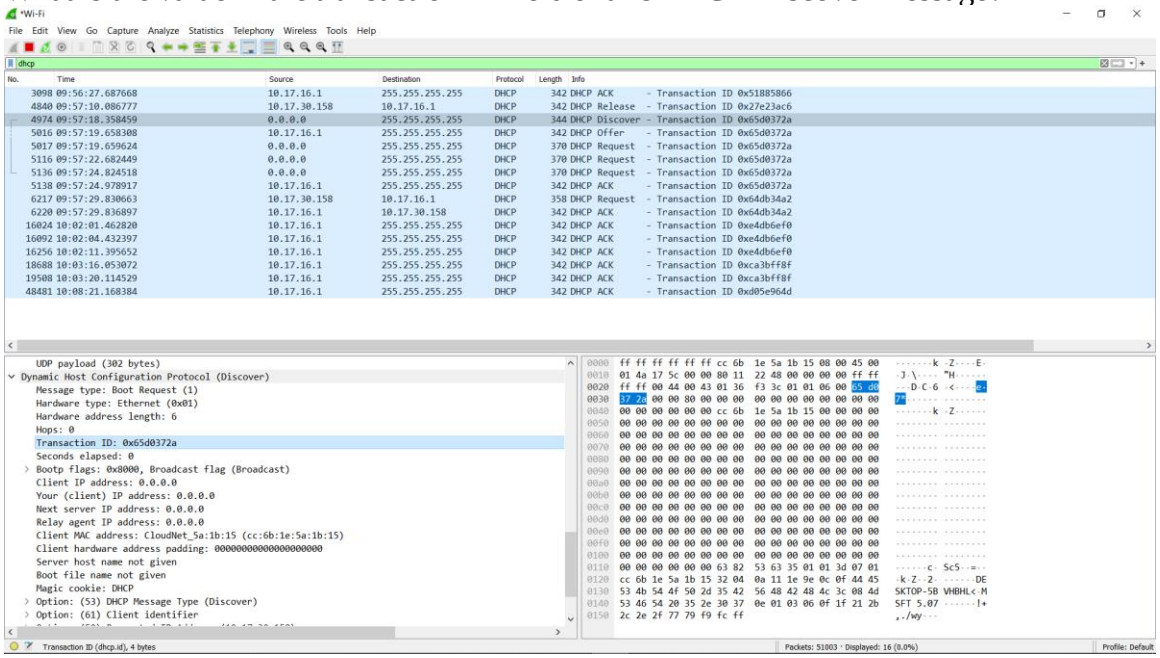
the source IP address used in the IP datagram containing the Discover message:0.0.0.0

This is because the host does not yet have an IP address assigned to it, and is broadcasting its request for an IP address to all DHCP servers on the network.

3. What is the destination IP address used in the datagram containing the Discover message. Is there anything special about this address? Explain.
   the destination IP address used in the datagram containing the Discover message:255.255.255.255

The broadcast flag actually determines which address the server sends it's responses to. When DHCP starts the client has no idea about the network it's currently on. Some clients may store the IP address they were previously on and send this out with the Discovery and Request packets, but the network is not truly set up until after the server has sent it's final Ack message.
Because of this the server does not know the network's true broadcast address, however there is an address mapped for this very purpose.

4. What is the value in the transaction ID field of this DHCP Discover message?



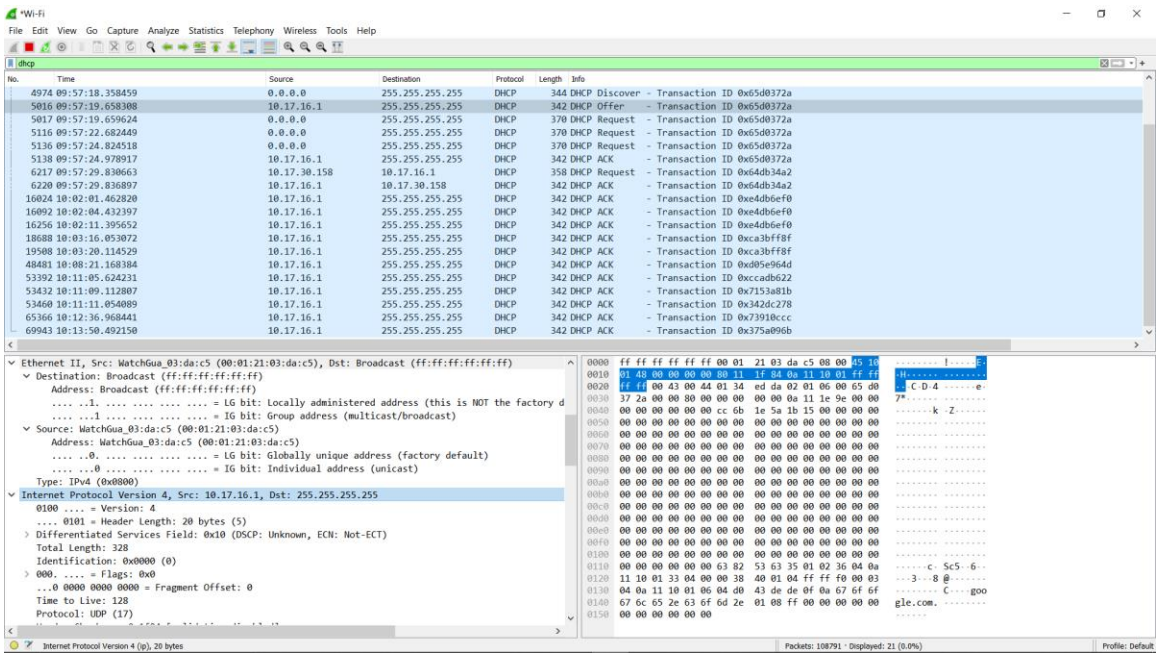
   the transaction ID field of this DHCP Discover message :0x65d0372a

5. Now inspect the options field in the DHCP Discover message. What are five pieces of information (beyond an IP address) that the client is suggesting or requesting to receive from the DHCP server as part of this DHCP transaction?

client IP address, host name, default gateway IP address, DNS IP address, IP request time and DHCP server IP address.

Now let's look at the DHCP Offer message. Locate the IP datagram containing the DHCP Offer message in your trace that was sent by a DHCP server in the response to the DHCP Discover message that you studied in questions 1-5 above.

6. How do you know that this Offer message is being sent in response to the DHCP Discover message you studied in questions 1-5 above?
   Broadcast or unicast response of a server to a discover message with configuration parameters for the client.
7. What is the *source* IP address used in the IP datagram containing the Offer message? Is there anything special about this address? Explain.



the *source* IP address used in the IP datagram containing the Offer message:10.17.16.1.
use Default Gateway

8. What is the *destination* IP address used in the datagram containing the Offer message? Is there anything special about this address? Explain. [Hint: Look at your trace carefully. The answer to this question may differ from what you see in Figure 4.24 in the textbook. If you really want to dig into this, consult the DHCP RFC, page 24.]
   the *destination* IP address used in the datagram containing the Offer message:255.255.255.255

Because of this the server does not know the network's true broadcast address, however there is an address mapped for this very purpose.

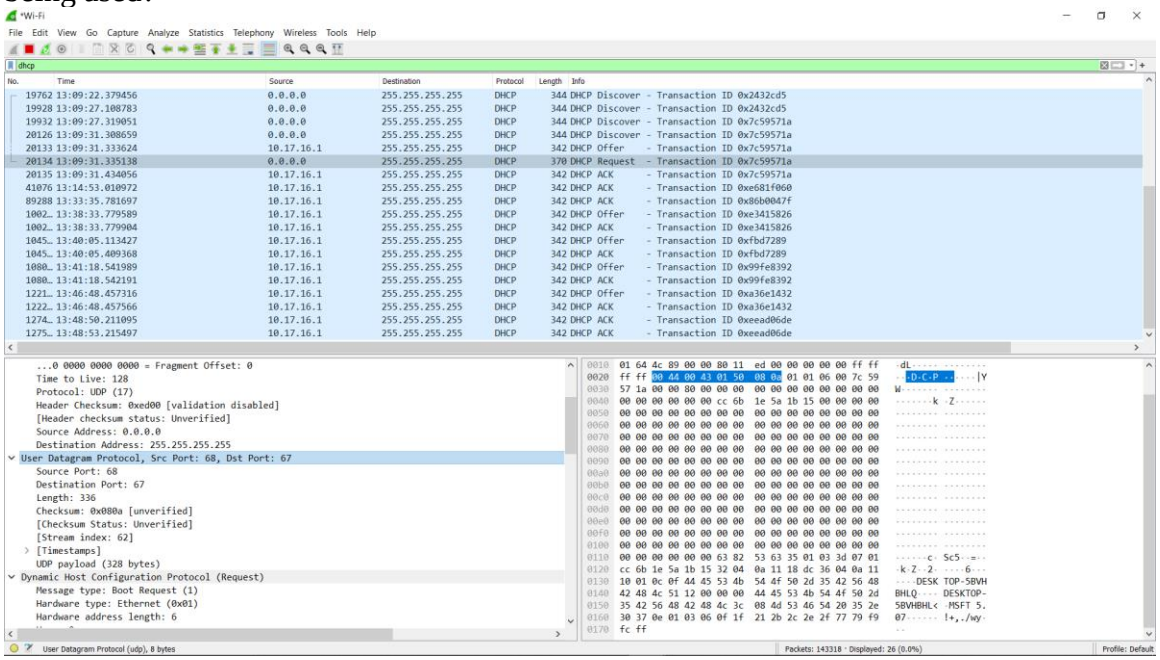
9. Now inspect the options field in the DHCP Offer message. What are five pieces of information that the DHCP server is providing to the DHCP client in the DHCP Offer message?

client IP address, subnet mask, default gateway IP address, DNS IP address, IP lease time and DHCP server IP address.

It would appear that once the DHCP Offer message is received, that the client may have all of the information it needs to proceed. However, the client may have received OFFERs from multiple DHCP servers and so a second phase is needed, with two more mandatory messages – the client-to-server DHCP Request message, and the server-to-client DHCP ACK message is needed. But at least the client knows there is at least one DHCP server out there! Let's take a look at the DHCP Request message, remembering that although we've already seen a Discover message in our trace, that is not always the case when a DHCP request message is sent.

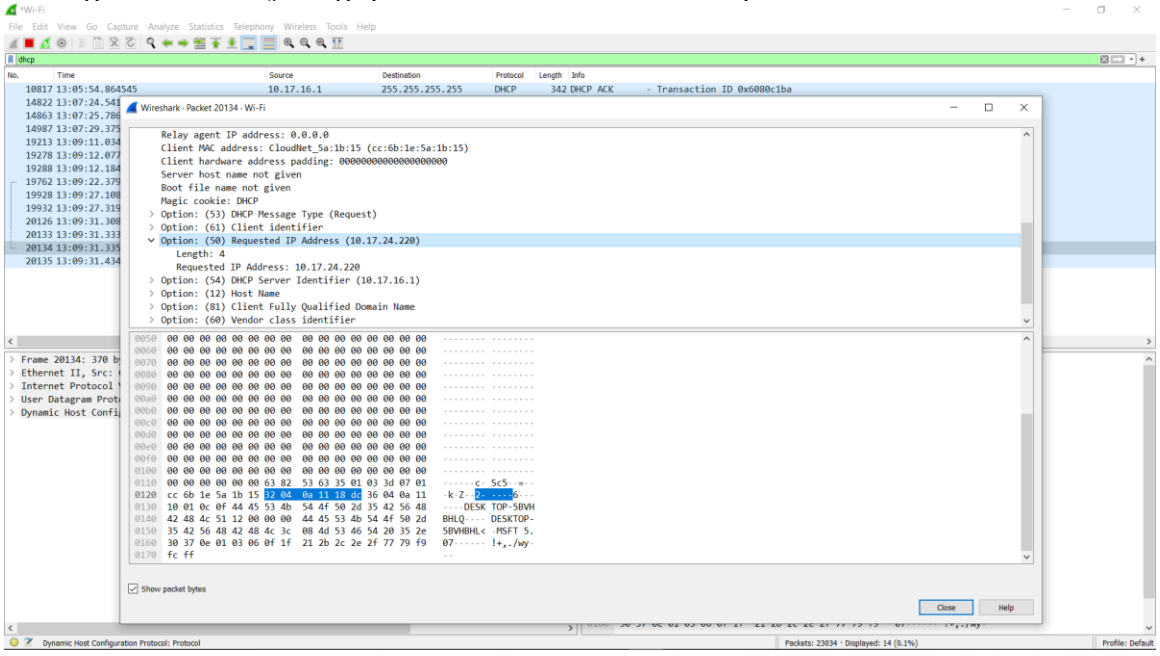
Locate the IP datagram containing the first DHCP Request message in your trace, and answer the following questions.

10. What is the UDP source port number in the IP datagram containing the first DHCP Request message in your trace? What is the UDP destination port number being used?



68 is source port number, 67 is destination port number

11. What is the source IP address in the IP datagram containing this Request message? Is there anything special about this address? Explain.



Ip:10.17.24.220

12. What is the value in the transaction ID field of this DHCP Request message? Does it match the transaction IDs of the earlier Discover and Offer messages?

0.0.0.0 match. The transaction ID should match the transaction ID of the DHCP Offer message that the client has accepted.

13. Now inspect the options field in the DHCP Discover message and take a close look at the "Parameter Request List". The DHCP RFC notes that

    "The client can inform the server which configuration parameters the client is interested in by including the 'parameter request list' option. The data portion of this option explicitly lists the options requested by tag number."

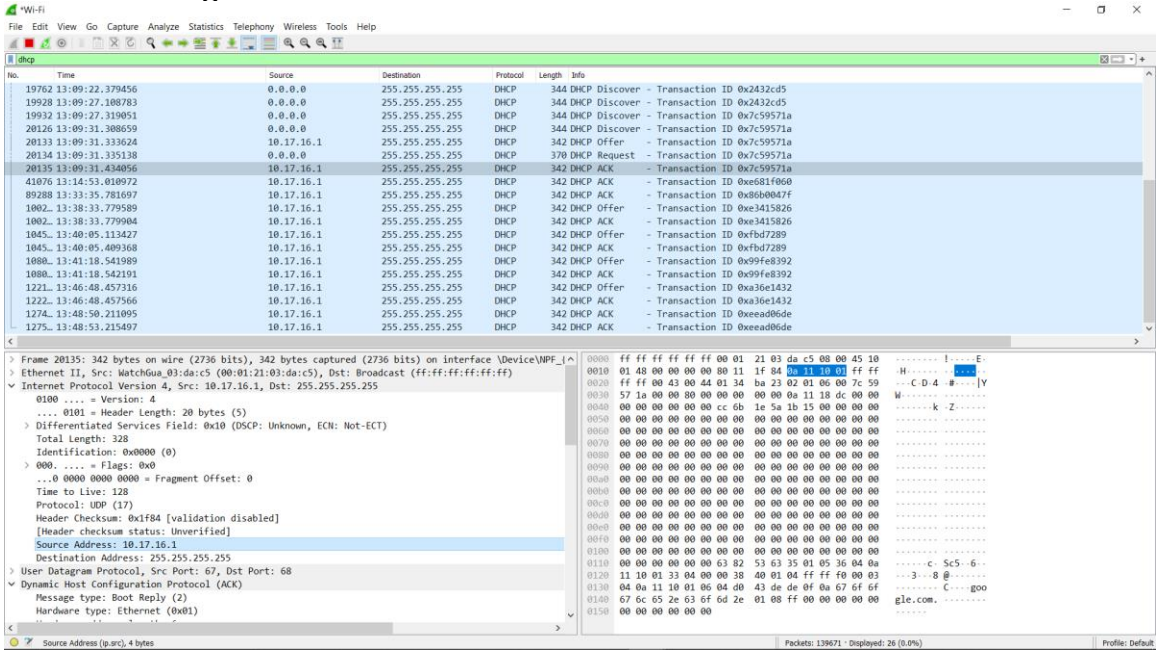
    What differences do you see between the entries in the 'parameter request list' option in this Request message and the same list option in the earlier Discover message?

the main difference between the entries in the "Parameter Request List" option in the DHCP Discover and Request messages would be any changes made by the client based on the options offered by the server in the DHCP Offer message. The client may add or remove options from the list based on its preferences and the options available from the server.

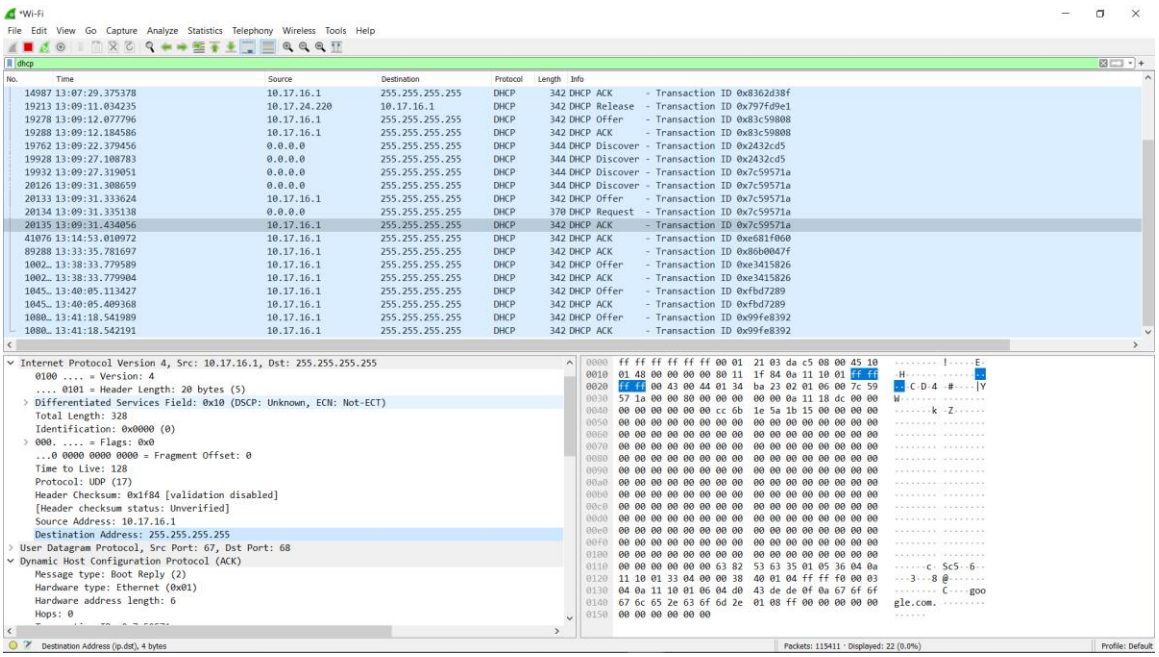
Locate the IP datagram containing the first DHCP ACK message in your trace, and answer the following questions.

14. What is the source IP address in the IP datagram containing this ACK message? Is there anything special about this address? Explain.

The source IP address is an important component of the IP datagram, as it is used by routers to determine the path that the packet should take through the network. Additionally, the source IP address is used by the recipient device to send a response back to the original sender.

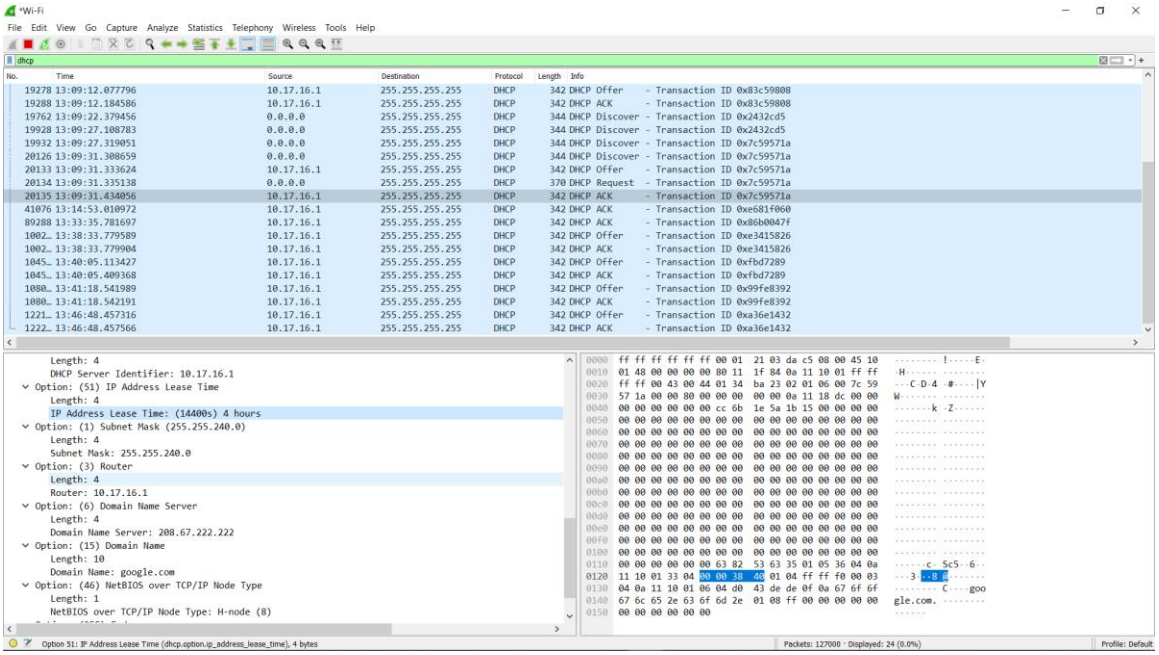


16. What is the destination IP address used in the datagram containing this ACK message. Is there anything special about this address? Explain.



255.255.255.255

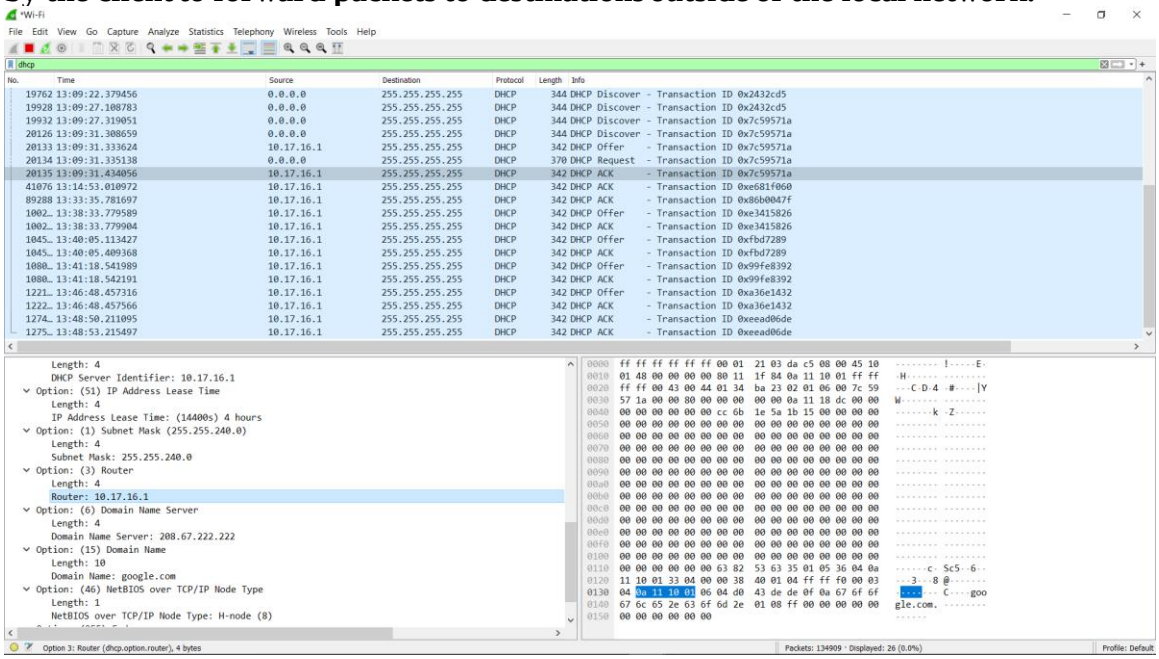
17. What is the name of the field in the DHCP ACK message (as indicated in the Wireshark window) that contains the assigned client IP address?
The name of the field in the DHCP ACK message (as indicated in the Wireshark window) that contains the assigned client IP address is "10.17.24.220".
18. For how long a time (the so-called "lease time") has the DHPC server assigned this IP address to the client?



4 hours

19. What is the IP address (returned by the DHCP server to the DHCP client in this DHCP ACK message) of the first-hop router on the default path from the client to the rest of the Internet?

The IP address of the first-hop router on the default path from the client to the rest of the Internet is typically included in the DHCP ACK message sent by the DHCP server to the client. This IP address is known as the default gateway, and it is used by the client to forward packets to destinations outside of the local network.



Router : 10.17.16.1