

Using Global Measurements Infrastructure to Understand the Evolution of the Internet

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Abstract. The abstract should summarize the contents of the paper and should contain at least 70 and at most 150 words. It should be written using the *abstract* environment.

Keywords: Measurements, Management, IPv6

1 Introduction

2 Related Work

3 Preliminary Results

3.1 Global Measurements

A dual-stacked user when attempting to connect to a dual-stacked service traditionally prefers connecting over IPv6. This is because in POSIX systems, the internal domain name resolution system call `getaddrinfo(...)` [8] returns the list of addresses in an order that prioritizes an IPv6-upgrade path [10]. The dictated order can dramatically reduce the application responsiveness in situations where IPv6 connectivity is broken. This is because, the attempt to connect over an IPv4 address will take place only when the IPv6 connection attempt has timed out, which can be in the order of seconds.

This noticeable degraded user experience can be subverted by making applications apply the happy eyeballs algorithm [11]. The algorithm recommends that a dual-stacked application try resolving a dual-stacked service for both IPv4 and IPv6 addresses at once. If the resolver returns both addresses, the application must try a TCP `connect(...)` to both the resolved addresses and pick the one that completes first.

In this pursuit, to determine whether applications will use IPv4 or IPv6 on a dual stacked service, we developed `happy`, a simple TCP happy eyeballs probing tool. It uses non-blocking `connect(...)` calls to establish concurrent connections to a number of possible endpoints of a service. The tool, however, does not check

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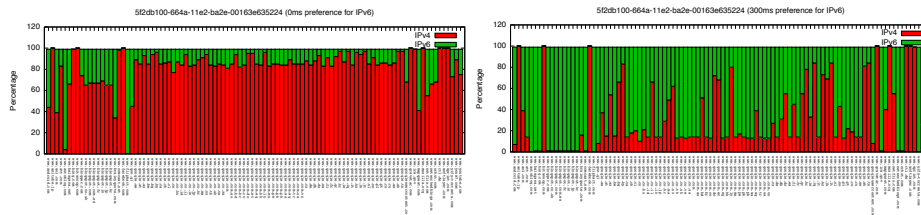


Fig. 1. IPv4 and IPv6 Happy Eyeball Competition

whether the endpoints of a given target all provide the same service. Hence, it is possible to impact the results by setting up fake servers that do not provide the service tested and which are designed and deployed with the only purpose to provide fast connection setup times.

We have cross-compiled **happy** for the OpenWRT ¹ platform. As a result, the tool can now be run on widely deployed SamKnows probes ², and the collected measurement data can be further analysed. In order to ascertain the value in this exercise, we prepared an internal test-bed of multiple measurement points. The measurement points have different flavors of IPv4 and IPv6 connectivity ranging from native IPv4, native IPv6, IPv6 tunnel broker endpoints [6], Teredo [9] and tunnelled IPv4. We used the top 100 domains compiled by Hurricane Electric Internet Services ³ and ran **happy** on the set of dual-stack services represented by these domains.

A preliminary result comparing the preference of a happy-eyeballed application to IPv6 and IPv4 from one of our measurement points is shown in Fig. 1. The measurement point represented in this plot is located at Braunschweig and has a native IPv4 and a IPv6 connection through the German Research Network ⁴. The initial results show that happy eyeballs prevents IPv6 access to Facebook, with only a 20% chance to get to Google related services over IPv6. The plot looks very different if IPv6 endpoints are allowed a 300ms chance to succeed, but even then it appears the application will prefer to use IPv4 when reaching more popular web services. In addition, it appears, some of the related (and few of the unrelated) services show similar preferences. These services either resolve to the same endpoint or a set of endpoints that belong to an allocated block. Digging through the **whois** information for each of the endpoints from their Regional Internet Registry (RIR) seems to indicate that major portion of the services map to a cloud of an address block owned by popular organizations like Google and Akamai Technologies as shown in Fig. 2.

¹ <https://openwrt.org>

² <http://www.samknows.com>

³ <http://bgp.he.net/ipv6-progress-report.cgi>

⁴ <http://www.dfn.de>

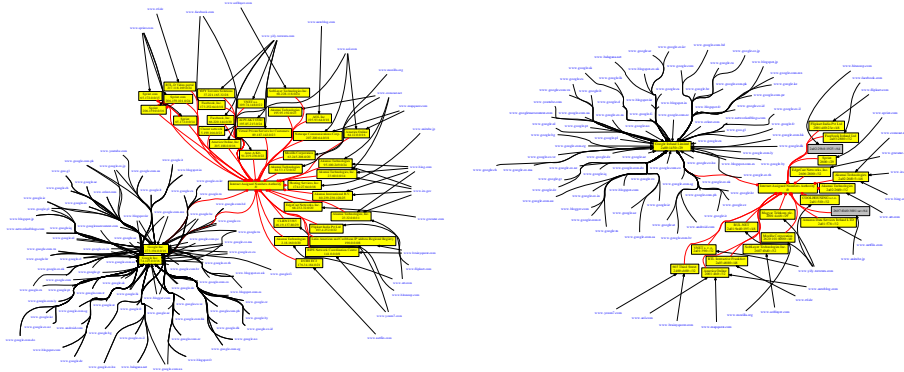


Fig. 2. IPv4 and IPv6 aggregation cloud

3.2 Local Management

As much as it is important to define and implement new tests on these measurement infrastructure, it is also equally pertinent to not only be able to install, update and delete these tests but also configure the entire suite of probes using a standardized protocol over the network. The Network Configuration (NETCONF) protocol [7] is particularly designed to cater to this problem. Towards this end, we have built a NETCONF server for the OpenWRT platform using the `libnetconf`⁵ library and tested the implementation using our NETCONF Python API `ncclient` [3]. This will allow automated deployment of measurement tests and remote management of their startup configurations.

4 Future Work

In the past, we performed an experimental evaluation of IPv6 transitioning technologies to identify how well current applications and protocols interoperate in such a deployment scenario [2]. In the future, we want to study and compare the performance of IPv6 with respect to IPv4 from a dual-stacked home gateway. We are also interested to define metrics that can identify whether the home gateway is behind a Carrier-Grade NAT (CGN) or is otherwise encompassed by several layers of Network Address Translation (NAT)s enforced by the ISP.

In our preliminary study, we have witnessed that a major portion of the services in practicality centralize either on core content delivery networks or major cloud platforms. We want to investigate this effect in more detail and understand to what extent does this network aggregation and the eventual user experience depend on the localization information.

Our current NETCONF server implementation for the SamKnows platform assumes the existence of an ssh server implementation that provides subsystem

⁵ <http://code.google.com/p/libnetconf/>

support. We would like to subvert this limitation and instead secure NETCONF exchanges over TLS [1]. We are also interested to define new YANG [5] data models for configuring and scheduling the measurement tests for such large-scale broadband access measurements. These data models can be used with either NETCONF or using a RESTful interface [4].

5 Conclusion

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