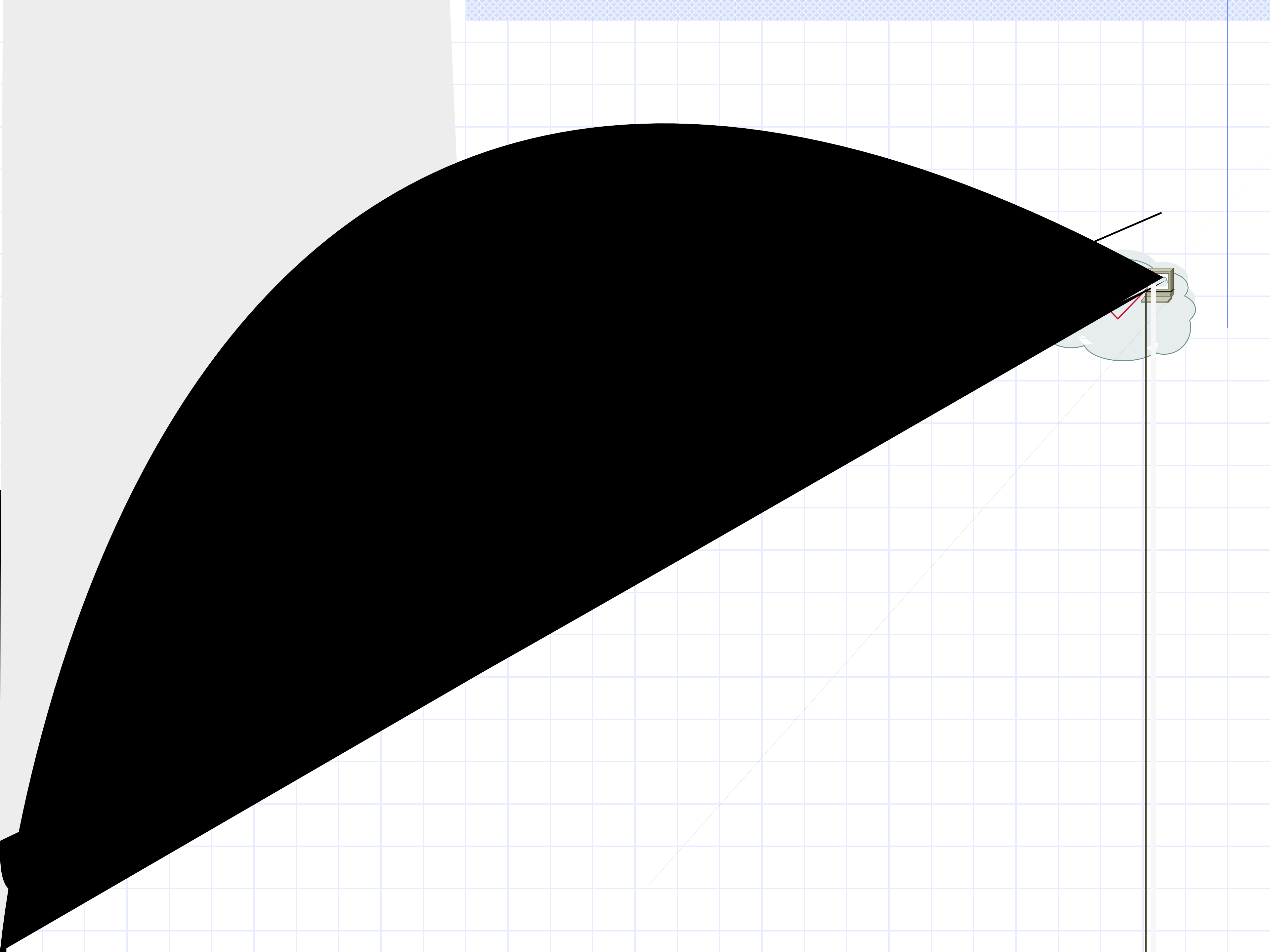
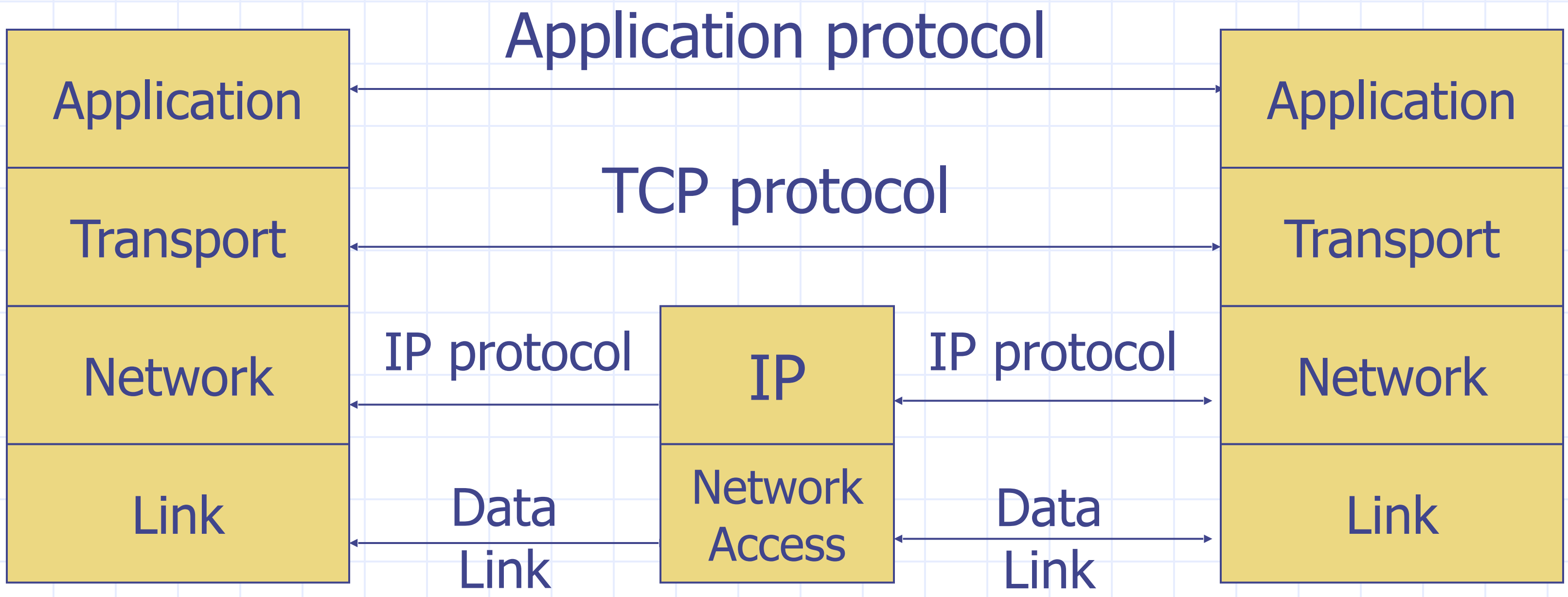
Internet Security: How the Internet works and some basic vulnerabilities

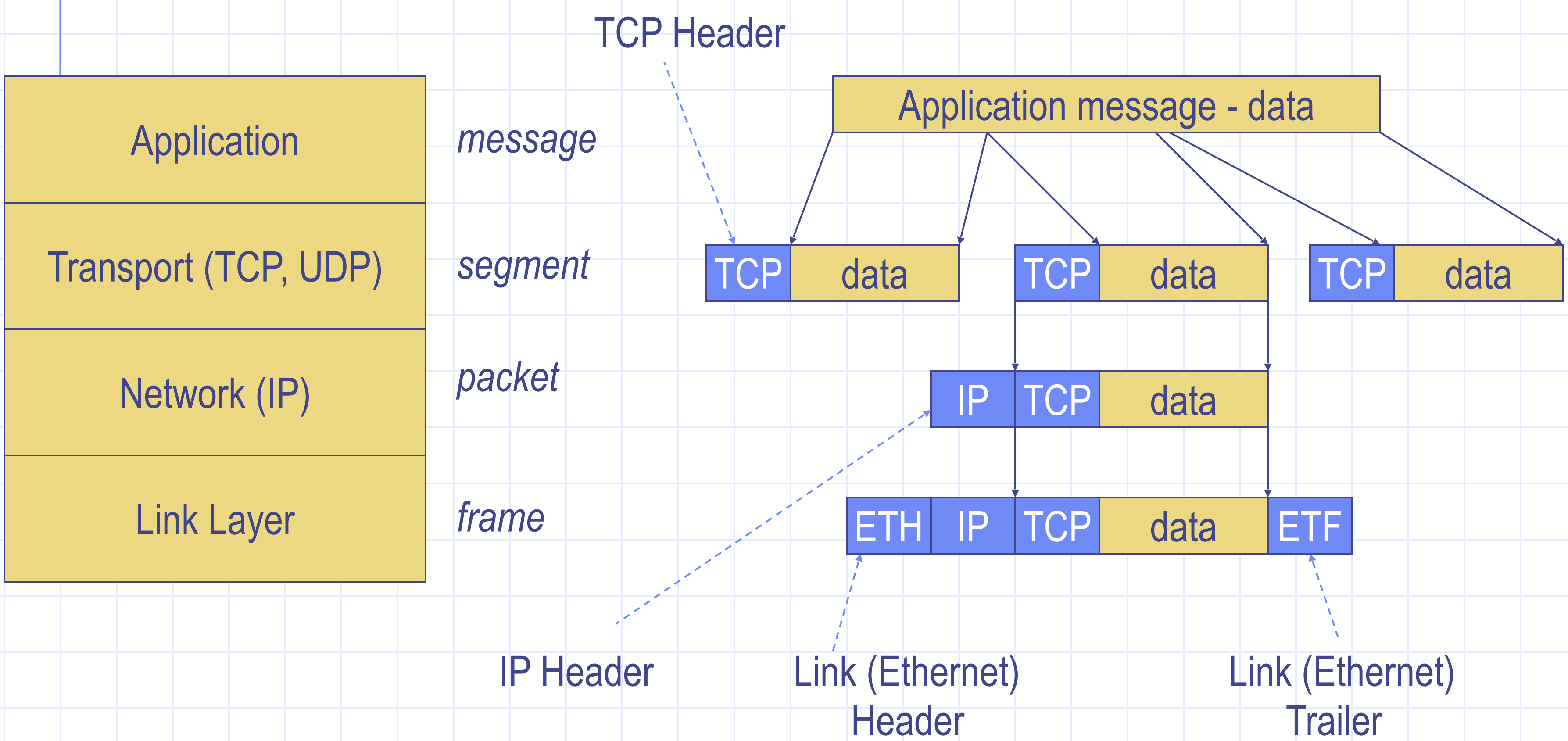
Dan Boneh



TCP Protocol Stack



Data Formats

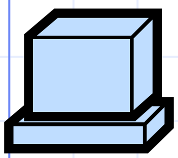


Internet Protocol

- Connectionless
  - Unreliable
  - Best effort
- Notes:
  - src and dest
  - not parts of IP hdr

Version	Header Length
Type of Service	
Total Length	
Identification	
Flags	Fragment Offset
Time to Live	
Protocol	
Header Checksum	
Source Address of Originating Host	
Destination Address of Target Host	
Options	
Padding	
IP Data	

IP Routing



- Typical route uses several hops
- IP: no ordering or delivery guarantees

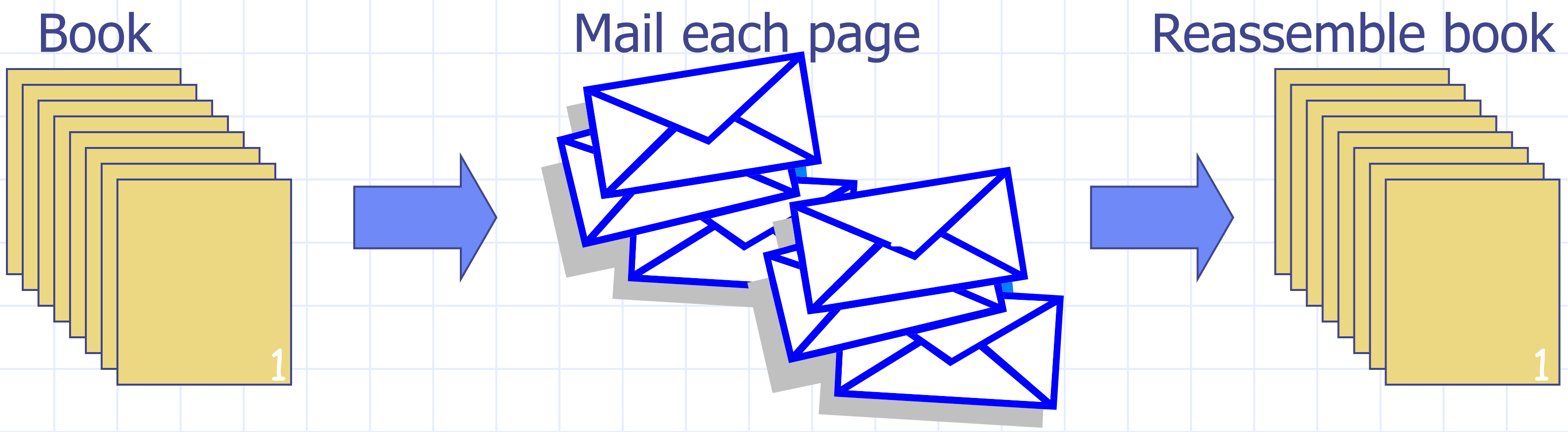
IP Protocol Functions (Summary)

- Routing
  - IP host knows location of router (gateway)
  - IP gateway must know route to other networks
- Fragmentation and reassembly
  - If max-packet-size less than the user-data-size
- Error reporting
  - ICMP packet to source if packet is dropped
- TTL field: decremented after every hop
  - Packet dropped if TTL=0. Prevents infinite loops.

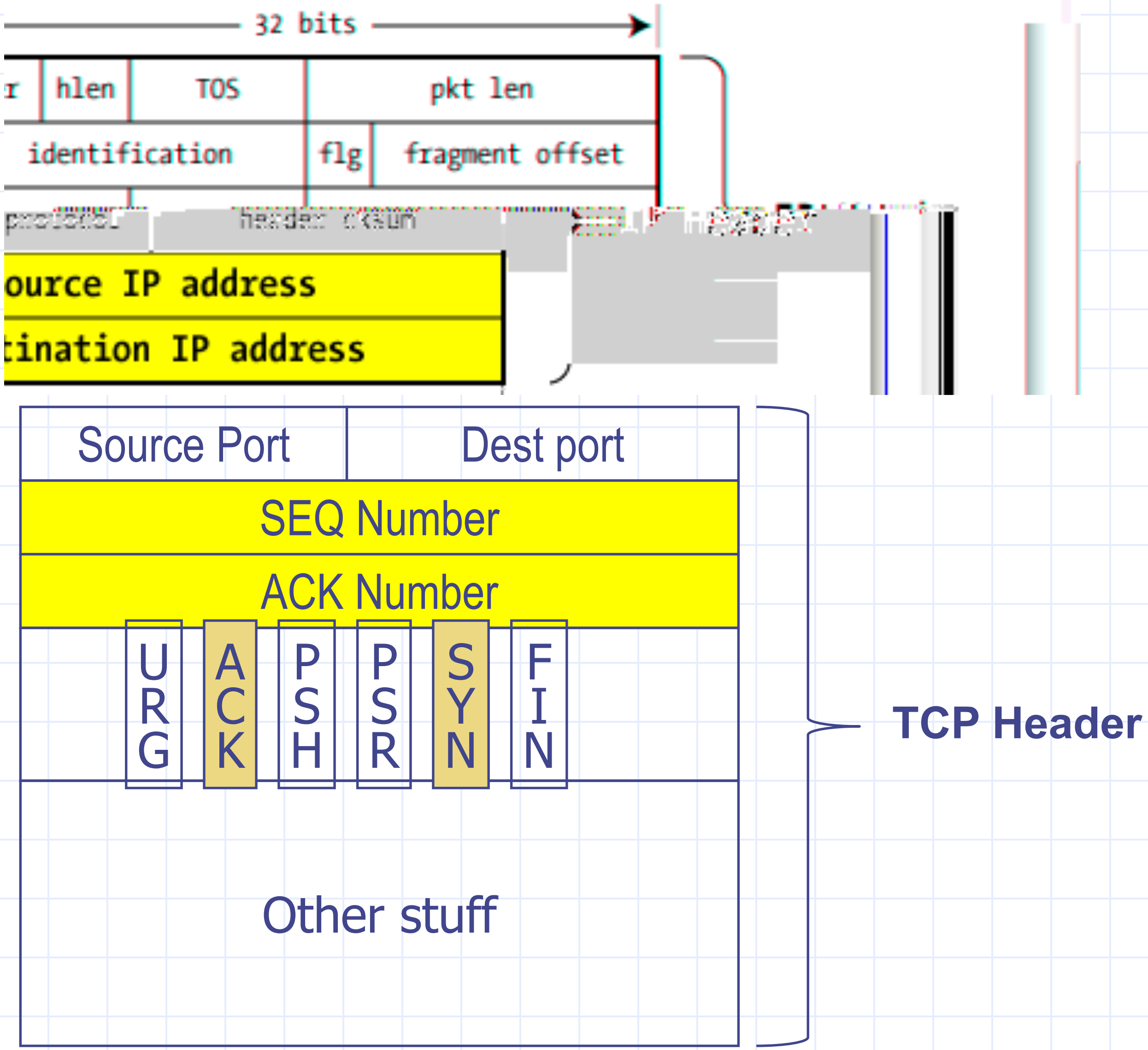
Problem: no src IP authentication

Transmission Control Protocol

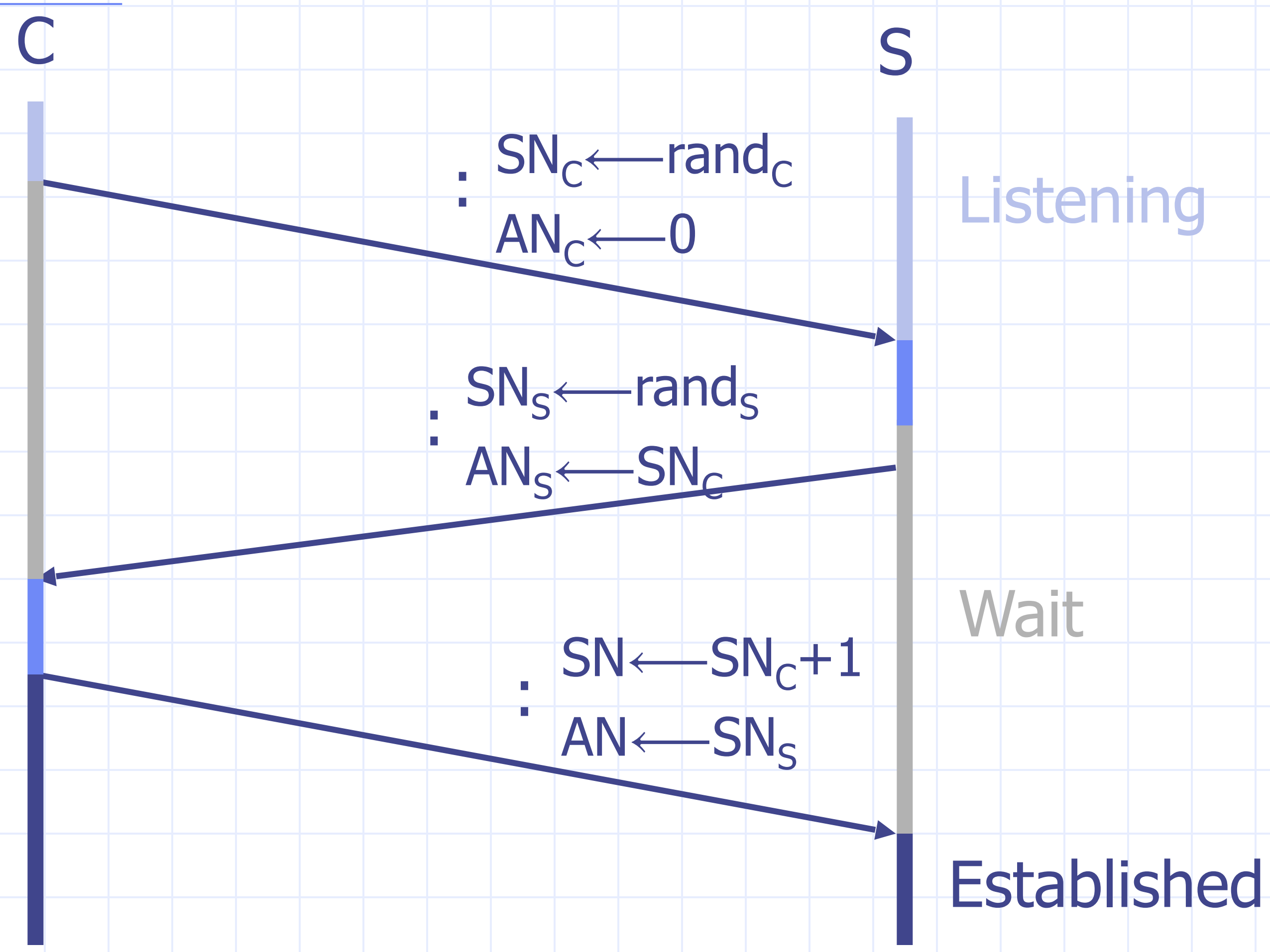
- Connection-oriented, preserves order
  - Sender
    - Break data into packets
    - Attach packet numbers
  - Receiver
    - Acknowledge receipt; lost packets are resent
    - Reassemble packets in correct order



TCP Header (protocol=6)



Review: TCP Handshake



Received packets with SN too far out of window are dropped

Basic Security Problems

1. Network packets pass by untrusted hosts
   - Eavesdropping, packet sniffing
   - Especially easy when attacker controls a machine close to victim (e.g. WiFi routers)

2. TCP state easily obtained by eavesdropping
   - Enables spoofing and session hijacking

3. Denial of Service (DoS) vulnerabilities
   - DDoS lecture

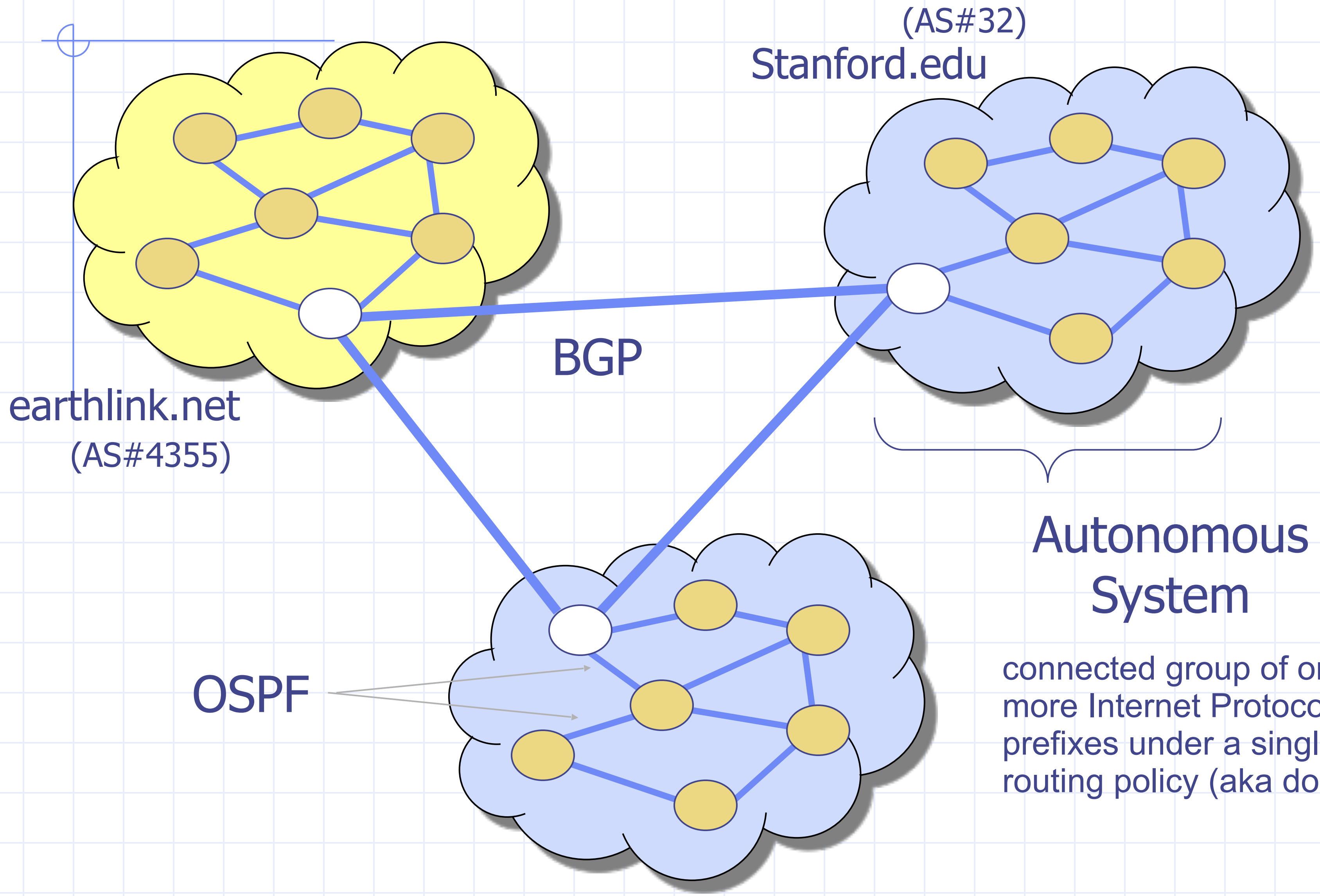
Why random initial sequence numbers?

- Suppose initial seq. numbers (SN_C , SN_S) are predictable:

Routing Security

ARP, OSPF, BGP

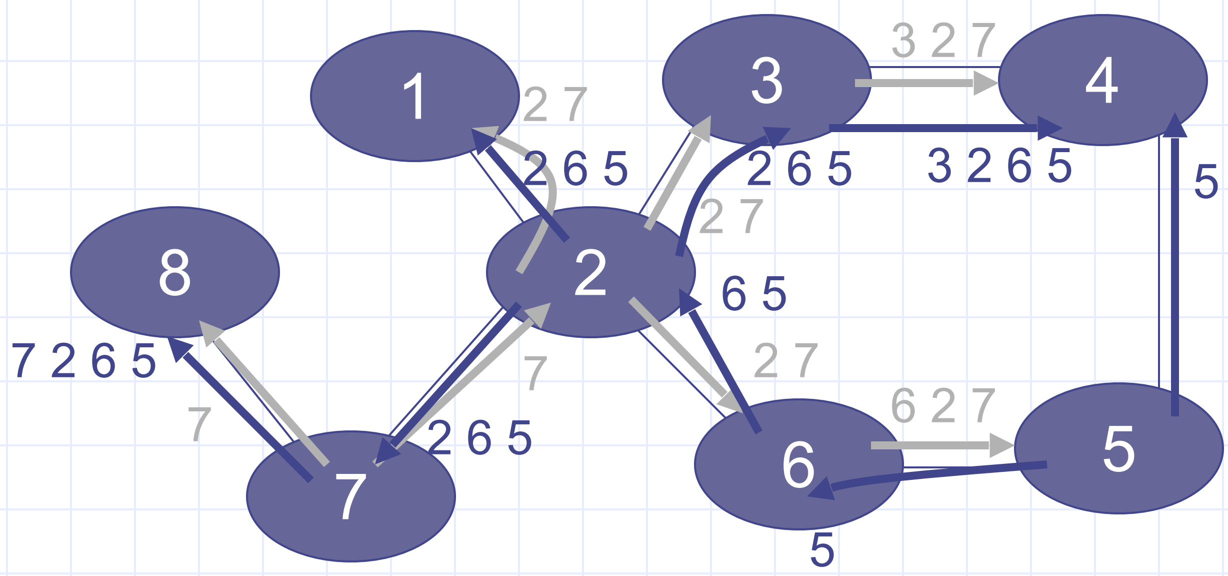
Interdomain Routing



connected group of one or more Internet Protocol prefixes under a single routing policy (aka domain)

BGP example

[D. Wetherall]



Security Issues

BGP path attestations are un-authenticated

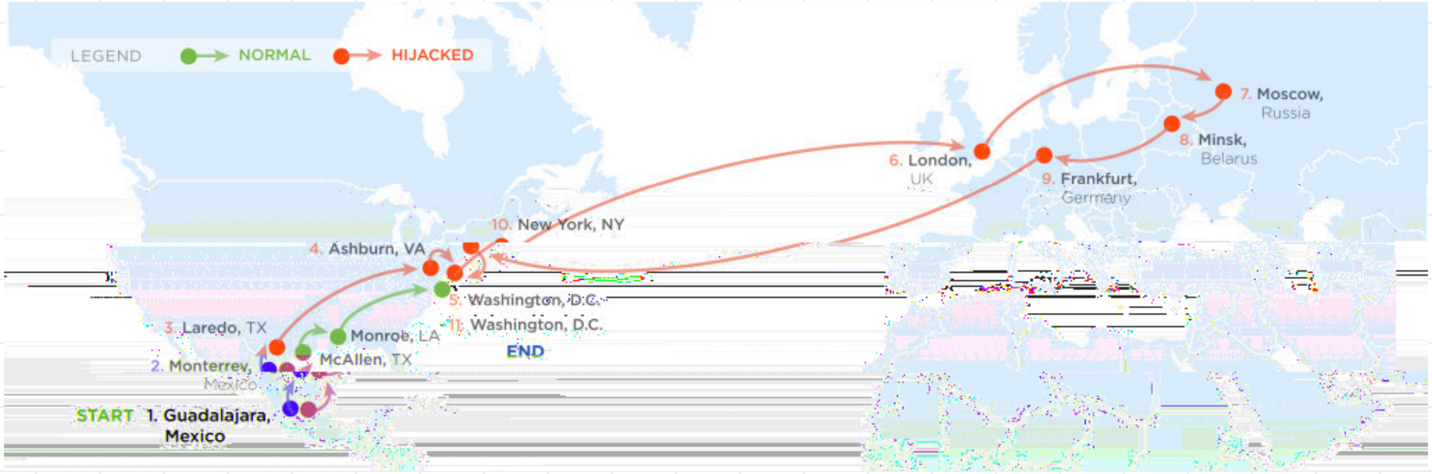
- Anyone can inject advertisements for arbitrary routes
- Advertisement will propagate everywhere
- Used for DoS, spam, and eavesdropping (details in DDoS lecture)
- Often a result of human error

Solutions:

- RPKI: AS obtains a certificate (ROA) from regional authority (RIR) and attaches ROA to path advertisement.
  - Advertisements without a valid ROA are ignored.
  - Defends against a malicious AS (but not a network attacker)
- SBGP: sign every hop of a path advertisement

Example path hijack (source: Renesys 2013)

Feb 2013: Guadalajara ⟶ Washington DC via Belarus



route in effect for several hours

Normally: Alestra (Mexico) ⟶ PCCW (Texas) ⟶ Qwest (DC)

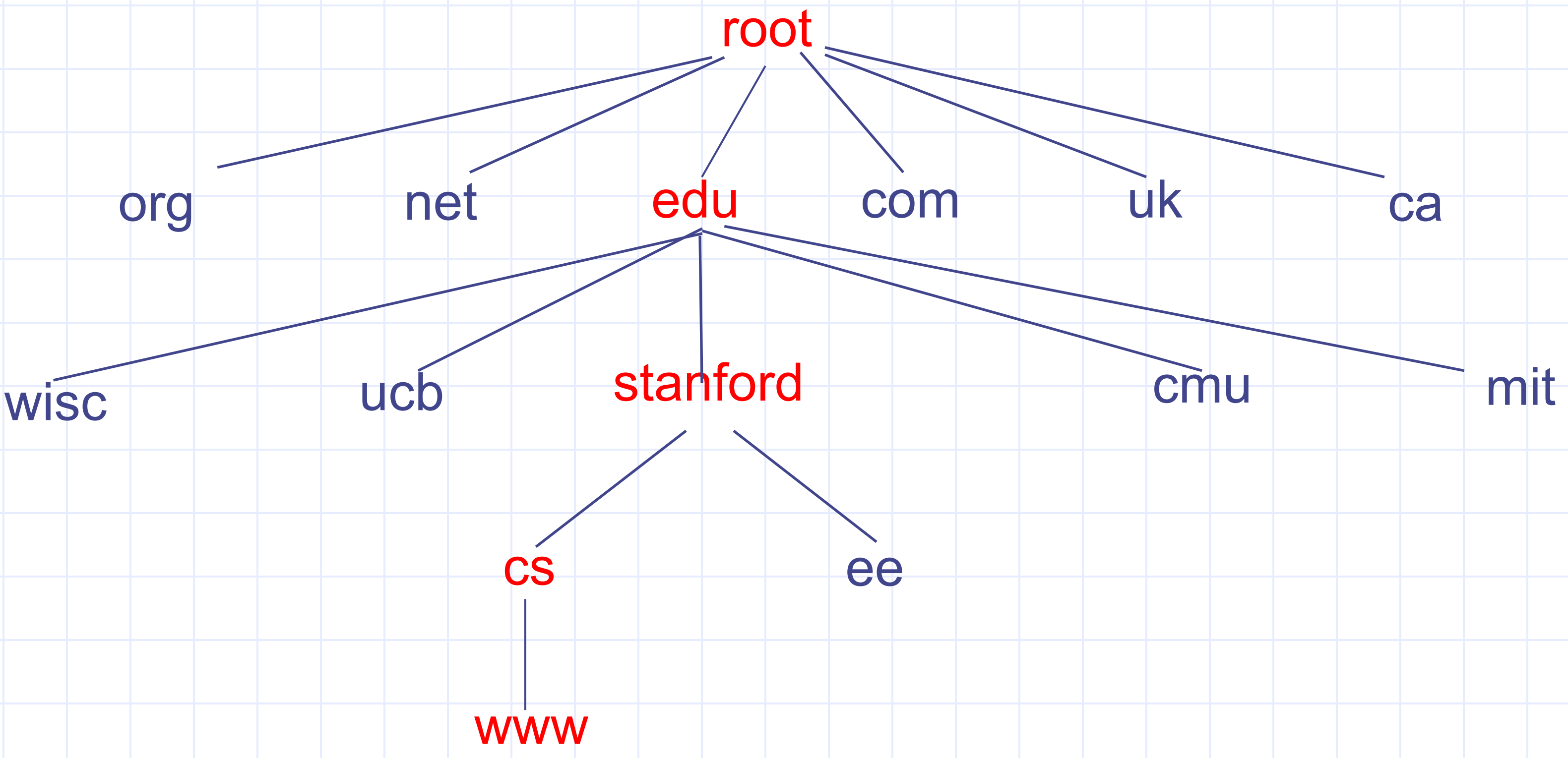
Reverse route (DC ⟶ Guadalajara) is unaffected:

- Person browsing the Web in DC cannot tell by traceroute that HTTP responses are routed through Moscow

Domain Name System

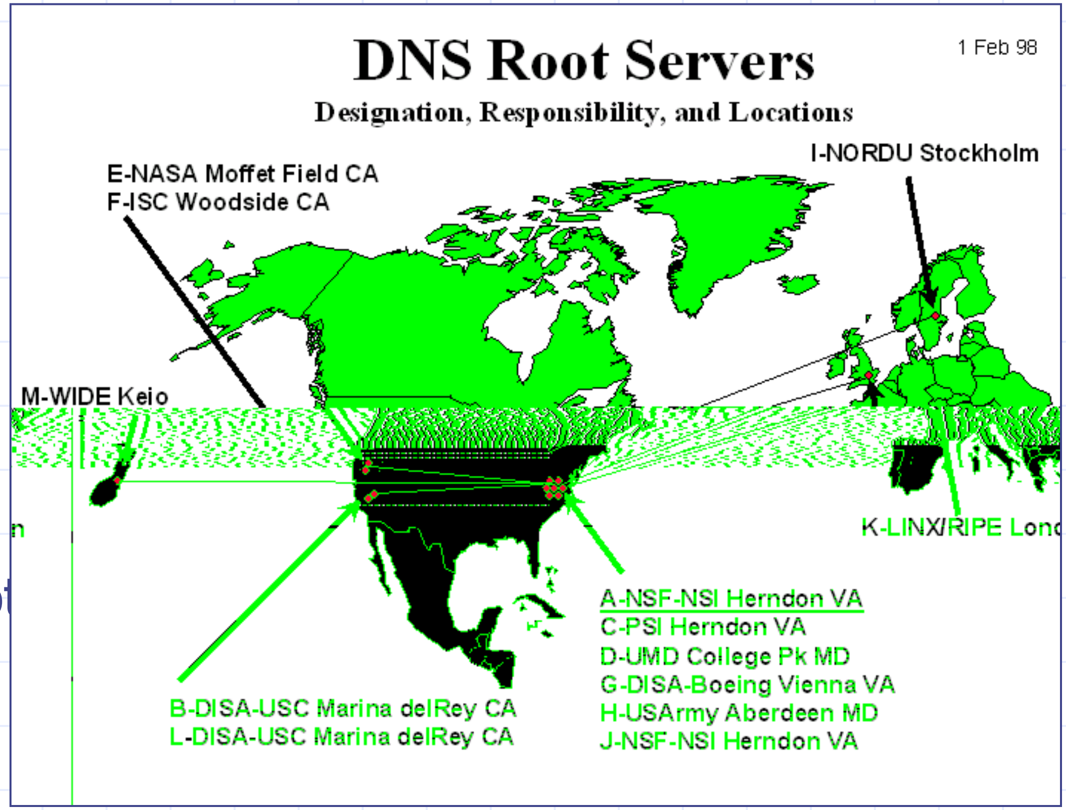
Domain Name System

- Hierarchical Name Space

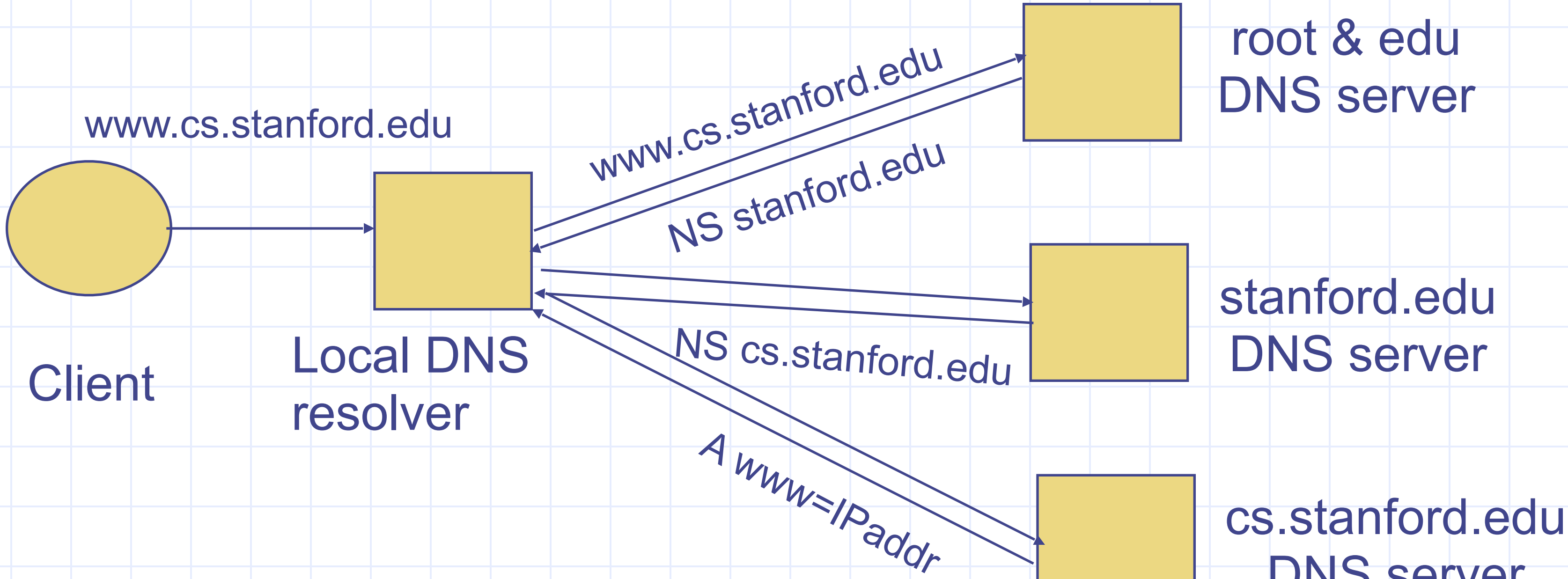


DNS Root Name Servers

- Hierarchical service
  - Root name servers for top-level domains
  - Authoritative name servers for subdomains
  - Local name resolvers contact authoritative servers when they do not know a name



DNS Lookup Example



DNS record types (partial list):

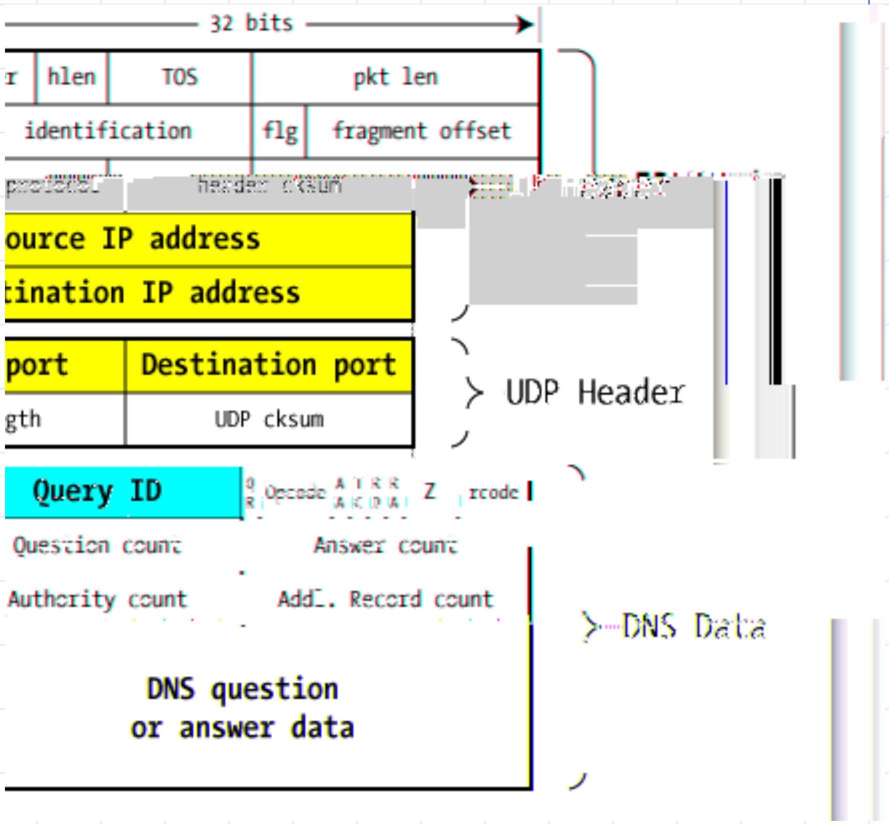
- NS: name server (points to other server)
- A: address record (contains IP address)
- MX: address in charge of handling email
- TXT: generic text (e.g. used to distribute site public keys (DKIM))

Caching

- DNS responses are cached
  - Quick response for repeated translations
  - Note: NS records for domains also cached
- DNS negative queries are cached
  - Save time for nonexistent sites, e.g. misspelling
- Cached data periodically times out
  - Lifetime (TTL) of data controlled by owner of data
  - TTL passed with every record

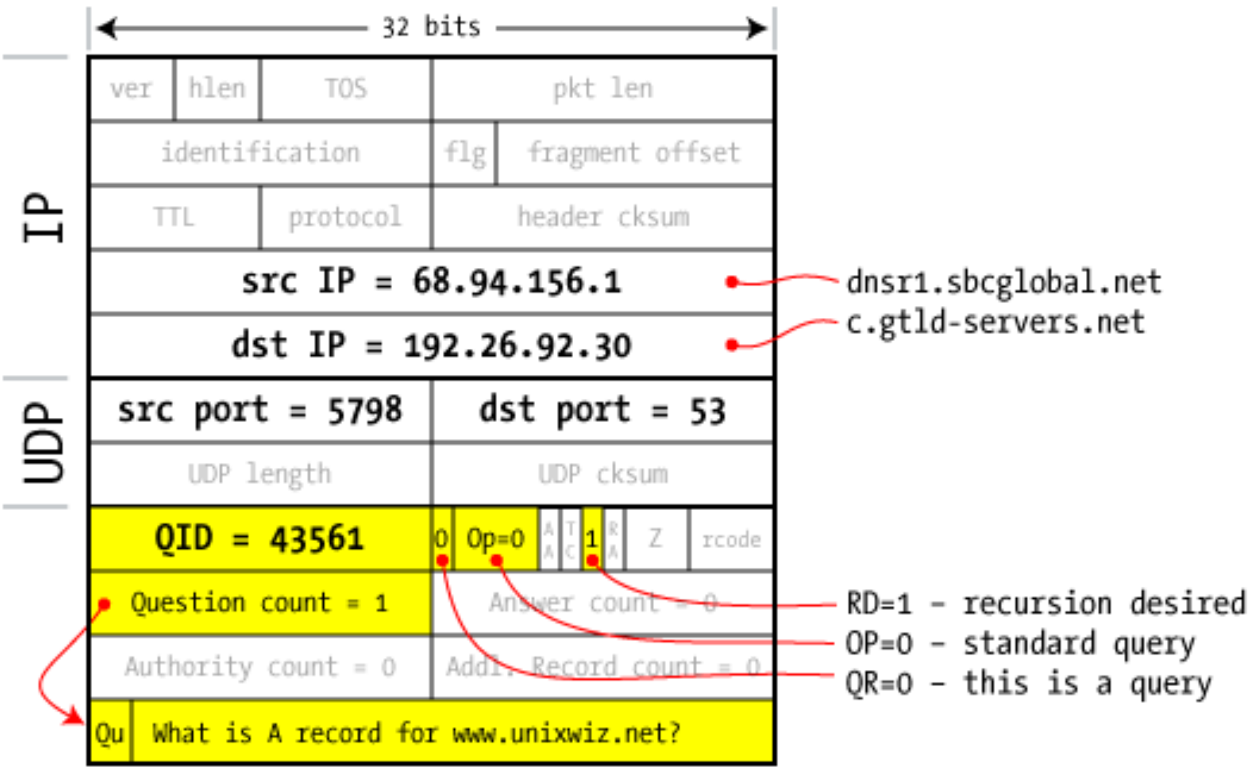
DNS Packet

- Query ID:
  - 16 bit random value
  - Links response to query



(from Steve Friedl)

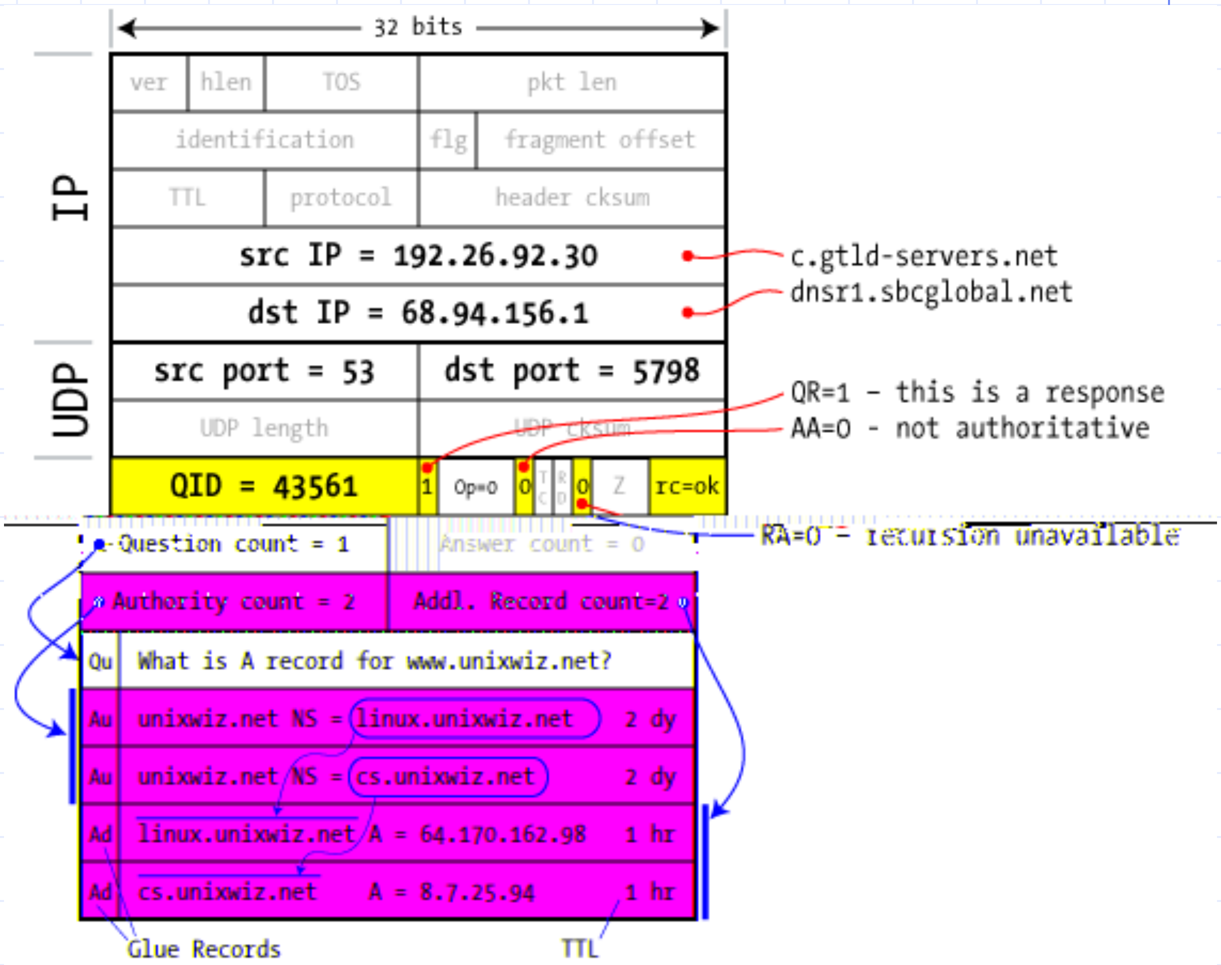
Resolver to NS request



Response to resolver

Response contains IP addr of next NS server (called "glue")

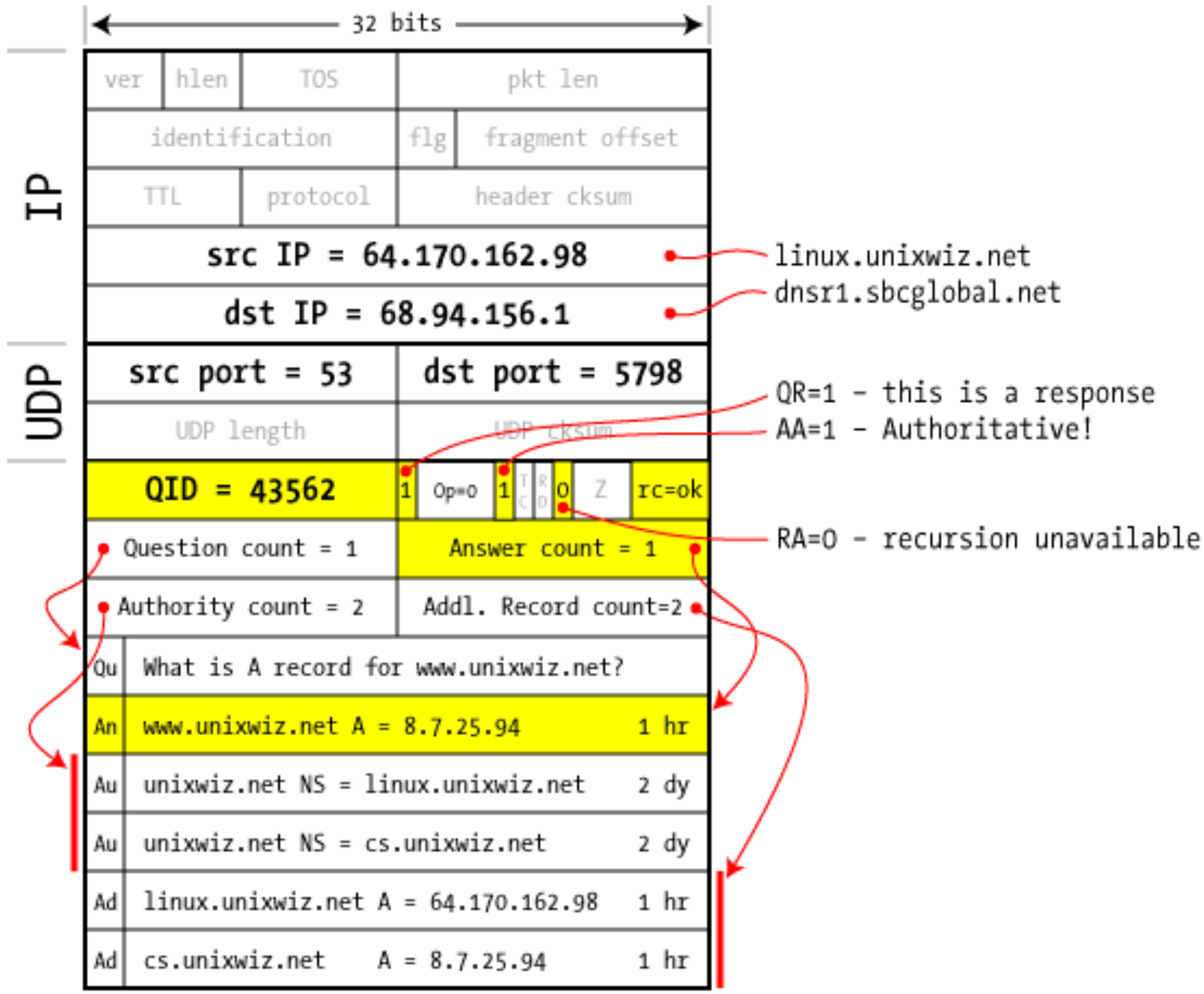
Response ignored if unrecognized QueryID



Authoritative response to resolver

<u>bailiwick checking:</u>
response is cached if it is within the same domain of query
(i.e. cannot set NS for)

final answer

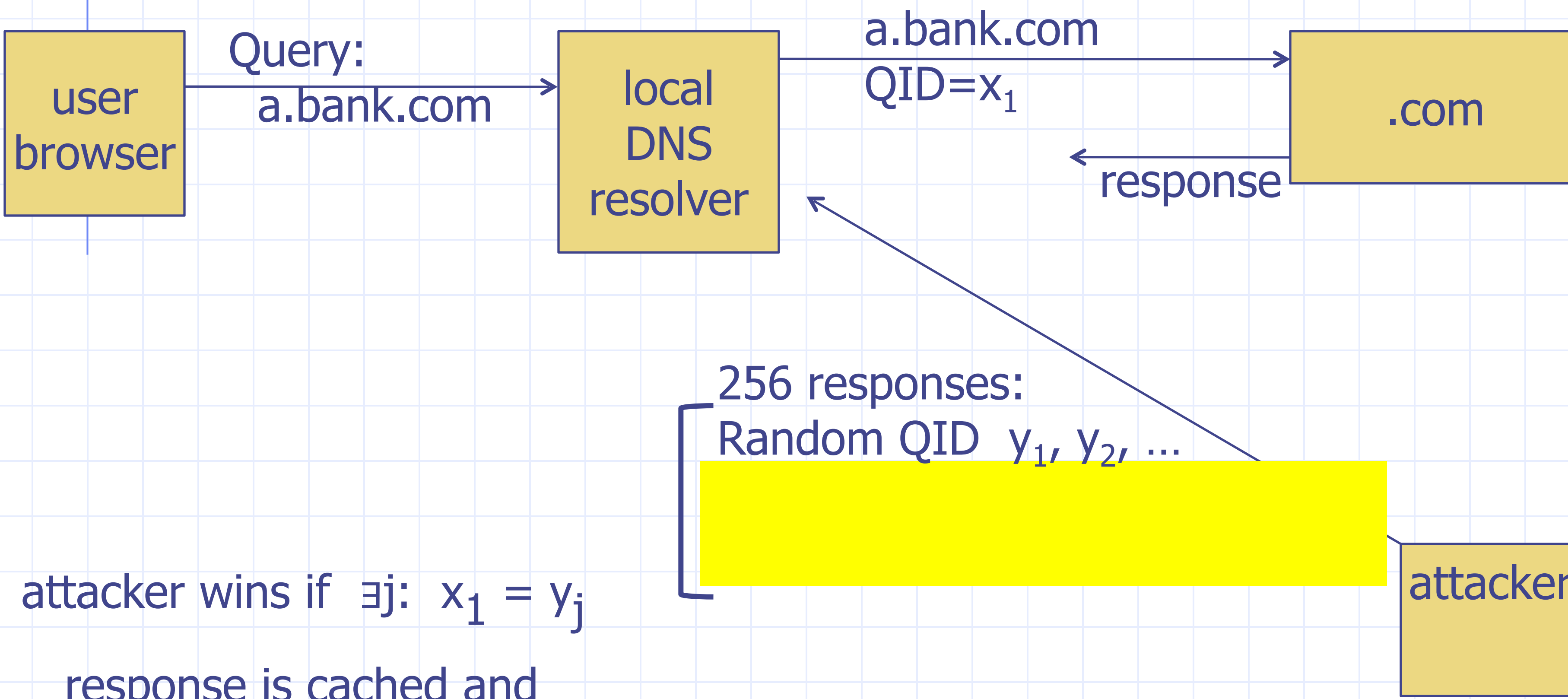


Basic DNS Vulnerabilities

- Users/hosts trust the host-address mapping provided by DNS:
  - Used as basis for many security policies:
    - Browser same origin policy,   URL address bar
- Obvious problems
  - Interception of requests or compromise of DNS servers can result in incorrect or malicious responses
    - e.g.:   malicious access point in a Cafe
  - Solution – authenticated requests/responses
    - Provided by DNSsec   …   but few use DNSsec

DNS cache poisoning (a la Kaminsky'08)

- Victim machine visits attacker's web site, downloads Javascript

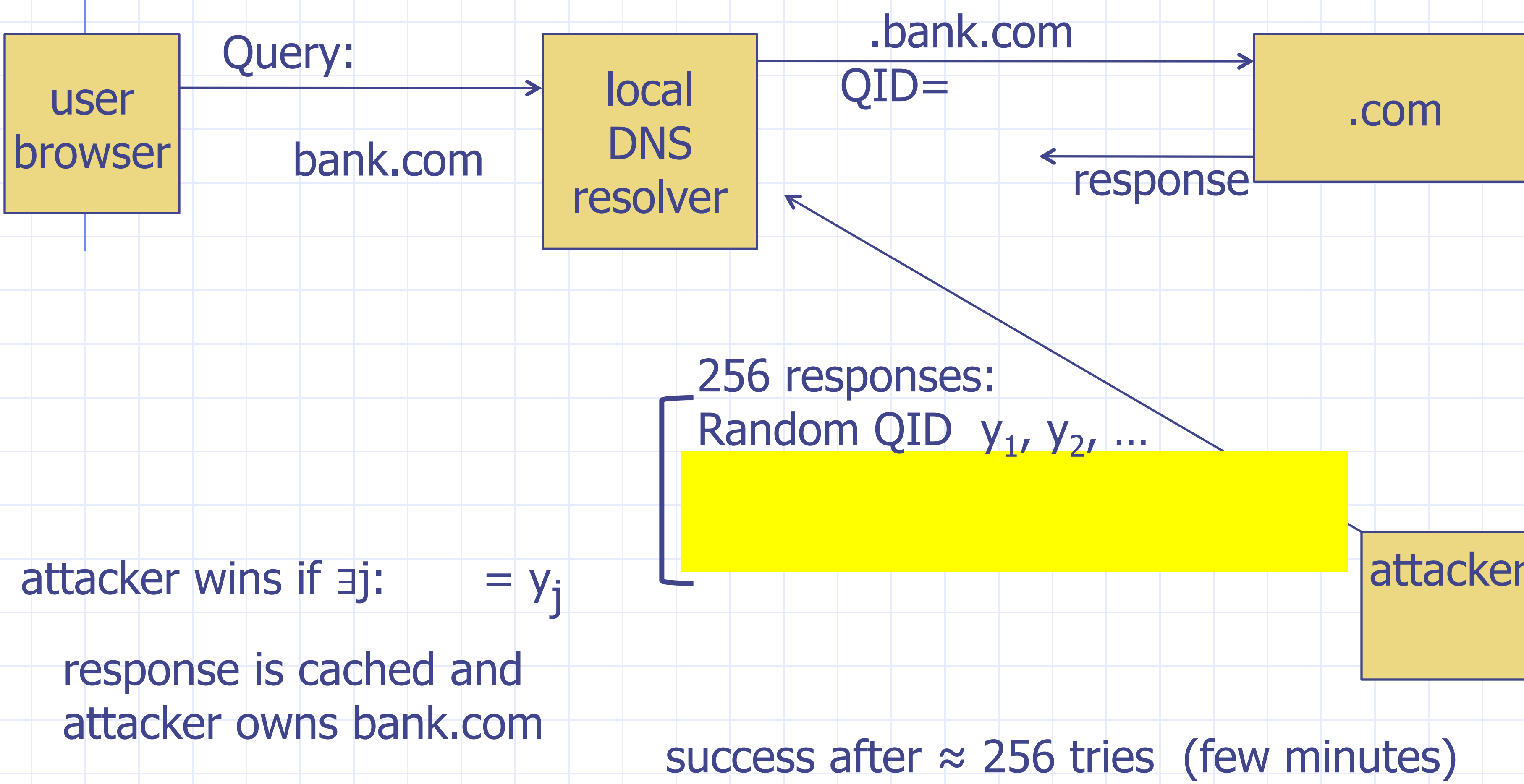


attacker wins if $\exists j$: $x_1 = y_j$

response is cached and attacker owns bank.com

If at first you don't succeed …

- Victim machine visits attacker's web site, downloads Javascript



Defenses

- Increase Query ID size. How?

- Randomize src port, additional 11 bits
  - Now attack takes several hours

- Ask every DNS query twice:

  Attacker has to guess QueryID correctly twice (32 bits)

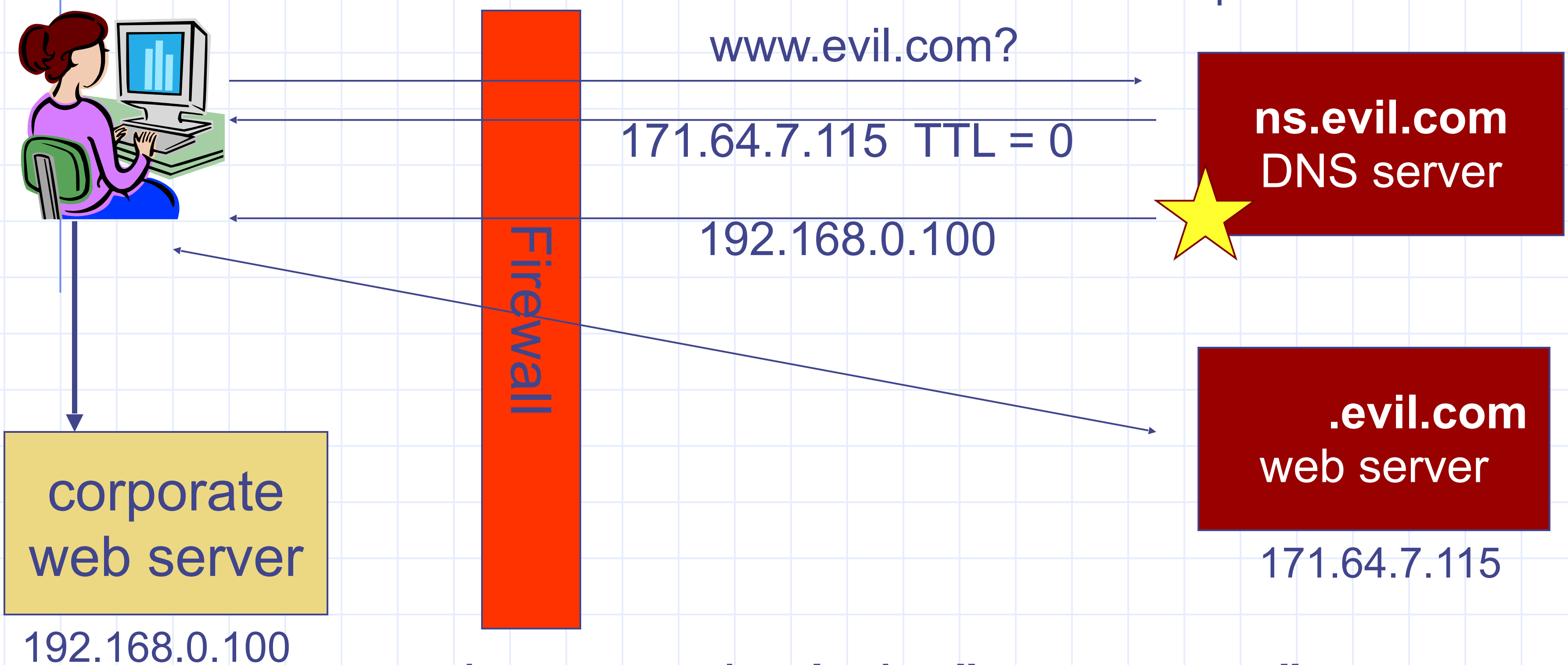
  … but Apparently DNS system cannot handle the load

[DWF'96, R'01]

DNS Rebinding Attack

<iframe src="**http://** **.evil.com**">

DNS-SEC cannot stop this attack



Read permitted: it's the "same origin"

DNS Rebinding Defenses

- Browser mitigation: DNS Pinning
  - Refuse to switch to a new IP
  - Interacts poorly with proxies, VPN, dynamic DNS, …
  - Not consistently implemented in any browser
- Server-side defenses
  - Check Host header for unrecognized domains
  - Authenticate users with something other than IP
- Firewall defenses
  - External names can’t resolve to internal addresses
  - Protects browsers inside the organization

Summary

- Core protocols not designed for security
  - Eavesdropping, Packet injection, Route stealing, DNS poisoning
  - Patched over time to prevent basic attacks

    (e.g. random TCP SN)

- More secure variants exist (next lecture) :
  - IP $\longrightarrow$ IPsec
  - DNS $\longrightarrow$ DNSsec
  - BGP $\longrightarrow$ SBGP