TCP

CS/ECE 438: Spring 2014
Instructor: Matthew Caesar
http://courses.engr.illinois.edu/cs438/
TCP Header

- Source port
- Destination port
- Sequence number
- Acknowledgment
- Advertised window
- HdrLen
- Flags
- Checksum
- Urgent pointer
- Options (variable)
- Data

Used to mux and demux
Last time: Components of a solution for reliable transport

- Checksums (for error detection)
- Timers (for loss detection)
- Acknowledgments
  - cumulative
  - selective
- Sequence numbers (duplicates, windows)
- Sliding Windows (for efficiency)
  - Go-Back-N (GBN)
  - Selective Replay (SR)
What does TCP do?

Many of our previous ideas, but some key differences

• Checksum
## TCP Header

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### Data

Computed over header and data
What does TCP do?

Many of our previous ideas, but some key differences

• Checksum

• **Sequence numbers are byte offsets**
TCP: Segments and Sequence Numbers
TCP “Stream of Bytes” Service...

Application @ Host A

Application @ Host B
...Provided Using TCP “Segments”

Segment sent when:
1. Segment full (Max Segment Size),
2. Not full, but times out
TCP Segment

- IP packet
  - No bigger than Maximum Transmission Unit (MTU)
  - E.g., up to 1500 bytes with Ethernet
- TCP packet
  - IP packet with a TCP header and data inside
  - TCP header $\geq 20$ bytes long
- TCP segment
  - No more than Maximum Segment Size (MSS) bytes
  - E.g., up to 1460 consecutive bytes from the stream
  - MSS = MTU - (IP header) - (TCP header)
Sequence Numbers

ISN (initial sequence number)

Sequence number = 1st byte in segment = ISN + k

Host A
**Sequence Numbers**

**ISN (initial sequence number)**

Sequence number

= 1st byte in segment = ISN + k

ACK sequence number

= next expected byte
= seqno + length(data)
TCP Header

Starting byte offset of data carried in this segment

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Data
What does TCP do?

Most of our previous tricks, but a few differences

- Checksum
- Sequence numbers are byte offsets
- Receiver sends cumulative acknowledgements (like GBN)
ACKing and Sequence Numbers

- Sender sends packet
  - Data starts with sequence number X
  - Packet contains B bytes \([X, X+1, X+2, \ldots X+B-1]\)

- Upon receipt of packet, receiver sends an ACK
  - If all data prior to X already received:
    - ACK acknowledges \(X+B\) (because that is next expected byte)
  - If highest in-order byte received is \(Y\) s.t. \((Y+1) < X\)
    - ACK acknowledges \(Y+1\)
  - Even if this has been ACKed before
Normal Pattern

- Sender: seqno=X, length=B
- Receiver: ACK=X+B
- Sender: seqno=X+B, length=B
- Receiver: ACK=X+2B
- Sender: seqno=X+2B, length=B

- Seqno of next packet is same as last ACK field
TCP Header

Acknowledgment gives seqno just beyond highest seqno received in order ("What Byte is Next")
What does TCP do?

Most of our previous tricks, but a few differences

- Checksum
- Sequence numbers are byte offsets
- Receiver sends cumulative acknowledgements (like GBN)
- Receivers can buffer out-of-sequence packets (like SR)
Loss with cumulative ACKs

• Sender sends packets with 100B and seqnos:
  • 100, 200, 300, 400, 500, 600, 700, 800, 900, ...

• Assume the fifth packet (seqno 500) is lost, but no others

• Stream of ACKs will be:
  • 200, 300, 400, 500, 500, 500, 500, 500,...
What does TCP do?

Most of our previous tricks, but a few differences

• Checksum
• Sequence numbers are byte offsets
• Receiver sends cumulative acknowledgements (like GBN)
• Receivers may not drop out-of-sequence packets (like SR)
• Introduces **fast retransmit**: optimization that uses duplicate ACKs to trigger early retransmission
Loss with cumulative ACKs

• “Duplicate ACKs” are a sign of an isolated loss
  • The lack of ACK progress means 500 hasn’t been delivered
  • Stream of ACKs means some packets are being delivered

• Therefore, could trigger resend upon receiving k duplicate ACKs
  • TCP uses k=3

• But response to loss is trickier....
Loss with cumulative ACKs

- Two choices:
  - Send missing packet and increase $W$ by the number of dup ACKs
  - Send missing packet, and wait for ACK to increase $W$

- Which should TCP do?
What does TCP do?

Most of our previous tricks, but a few differences

- Checksum
- Sequence numbers are byte offsets
- Receiver sends cumulative acknowledgements (like GBN)
- Receivers do not drop out-of-sequence packets (like SR)
- Introduces fast retransmit: optimization that uses duplicate ACKs to trigger early retransmission
- Sender maintains a single retransmission timer (like GBN) and retransmits on timeout
Retransmission Timeout

• If the sender hasn’t received an ACK by timeout, retransmit the first packet in the window

• How do we pick a timeout value?
Timing Illustration

Timeout too long inefficient

Timeout too short duplicate packets
Retransmission Timeout

• If haven’t received ack by timeout, retransmit the first packet in the window

• How to set timeout?
  • Too long: connection has low throughput
  • Too short: retransmit packet that was just delayed

• Solution: make timeout proportional to RTT
• But how do we measure RTT?
RTT Estimation

- Use exponential averaging of RTT samples

\[
\text{SampleRTT} = \text{AckRcvdTime} - \text{SendPacketTime}
\]

\[
\text{EstimatedRTT} = \alpha \times \text{EstimatedRTT} + (1 - \alpha) \times \text{SampleRTT}
\]

\[0 < \alpha \leq 1\]
Exponential Averaging Example

EstimatedRTT = $\alpha \cdot$EstimatedRTT + (1 - $\alpha$)$\cdot$SampleRTT

Assume RTT is constant $\Rightarrow$ SampleRTT = RTT
Problem: Ambiguous Measurements

- How do we differentiate between the real ACK, and ACK of the retransmitted packet?
Karn/Partridge Algorithm

- Measure *SampleRTT* only for original transmissions
  - Once a segment has been retransmitted, do not use it for any further measurements
- Computes EstimatedRTT using $\alpha = 0.875$
- Timeout value (RTO) = $2 \times$ EstimatedRTT
- Employs exponential backoff
  - Every time RTO timer expires, set RTO $\leftarrow 2 \cdot$RTO
  - (Up to maximum $\geq 60$ sec)
  - Every time new measurement comes in (= successful original transmission), collapse RTO back to $2 \times$ EstimatedRTT
Karn/Partridge in action

Figure 5: Performance of an RFC793 retransmit timer

from Jacobson and Karels, SIGCOMM 1988
Jacobson/Karels Algorithm

• Problem: need to better capture variability in RTT
  • Directly measure deviation

• Deviation = | SampleRTT – EstimatedRTT |
• EstimatedDeviation: exponential average of Deviation

• RTO = EstimatedRTT + 4 x EstimatedDeviation
With Jacobson/Karels

Figure 6: Performance of a Mean+Variance retransmit timer
What does TCP do?

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“Must Be Zero” 6 bits reserved

Number of 4-byte words in TCP header; 5 = no options
TCP Header: What’s left?

- Source port
- Destination port
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- Checksum
- Options (variable)
- Data

Used with **URG** flag to indicate urgent data (not discussed further)
TCP Header: What’s left?

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TCP Connection Establishment and Initial Sequence Numbers
Initial Sequence Number (ISN)

- Sequence number for the very first byte
- Why not just use ISN = 0?
- Practical issue
  - IP addresses and port #s uniquely identify a connection
  - Eventually, though, these port #s do get used again
  - … small chance an old packet is still in flight
- TCP therefore requires changing ISN
- Hosts exchange ISNs when they establish a connection
Establishing a TCP Connection

- Three-way handshake to establish connection
  - Host A sends a **SYN** (open; “synchronize sequence numbers”) to host B
  - Host B returns a SYN acknowledgment (**SYN ACK**)
  - Host A sends an **ACK** to acknowledge the SYN ACK

Each host tells its ISN to the other host.
**TCP Header**

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**Flags:**
- SYN
- ACK
- FIN
- RST
- PSH
- URG
## Step 1: A’s Initial SYN Packet

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>A’s port</th>
<th>B’s port</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>A’s Initial Sequence Number</td>
<td>(Irrelevant since ACK not set)</td>
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<tr>
<td>0</td>
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**Flags:**
- SYN
- ACK
- FIN
- RST
- PSH
- URG

A tells B it wants to open a connection…
Step 2: B’s SYN-ACK Packet

Flags:
- SYN
- ACK
- FIN
- RST
- PSH
- URG

B’s Initial Sequence Number
- ACK = A’s ISN plus 1

Advertised window
- 5
- 0

Checksum

Urgent pointer

Options (variable)

B tells A it accepts, and is ready to hear the next byte...

...upon receiving this packet, A can start sending data
Step 3: A’s ACK of the SYN-ACK

<table>
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A’s port | B’s port

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Options (variable)

A tells B it’s likewise okay to start sending

…upon receiving this packet, B can start sending data
Timing Diagram: 3-Way Handshaking

Active Open

Client (initiator)

connect()

SYN, SeqNum = x

SYN + ACK, SeqNum = y, Ack = x + 1

ACK, Ack = y + 1

Passive Open

Server

listen()
What if the SYN Packet Gets Lost?

• Suppose the SYN packet gets lost
  • Packet is lost inside the network, or:
    • Server discards the packet (e.g., it’s too busy)

• Eventually, no SYN-ACK arrives
  • Sender sets a timer and waits for the SYN-ACK
  • … and retransmits the SYN if needed

• How should the TCP sender set the timer?
  • Sender has no idea how far away the receiver is
  • Hard to guess a reasonable length of time to wait
    • SHOULD (RFCs 1122 & 2988) use default of 3 seconds
    • Some implementations instead use 6 seconds
SYN Loss and Web Downloads

- User clicks on a hypertext link
  - Browser creates a socket and does a “connect”
  - The “connect” triggers the OS to transmit a SYN
- If the SYN is lost…
  - 3-6 seconds of delay: can be very long
  - User may become impatient
  - … and click the hyperlink again, or click “reload”
- User triggers an “abort” of the “connect”
  - Browser creates a new socket and another “connect”
  - Essentially, forces a faster send of a new SYN packet!
  - Sometimes very effective, and the page comes quickly
Tearing Down the Connection
Normal Termination, One Side At A Time

- Finish (FIN) to close and receive remaining bytes
  - FIN occupies one byte in the sequence space
- Other host acks the byte to confirm
- Closes A’s side of the connection, but not B’s
  - Until B likewise sends a FIN
  - Which A then acks

Connection now **closed**

Connection now **half-closed**

**TIME_WAIT:**
Avoid reincarnation
B will retransmit FIN if ACK is lost
Normal Termination, Both Together

- Same as before, but B sets **FIN** with their ack of A’s **FIN**

**TIME_WAIT:**
- Avoid reincarnation
- Can retransmit **FIN** **ACK** if **ACK** lost

Connection now closed
Abrupt Termination

- A sends a RESET (RST) to B
  - E.g., because application process on A crashed
- That’s it
  - B does not ack the RST
- Thus, RST is not delivered reliably
- And: any data in flight is lost
- But: if B sends anything more, will elicit another RST
TCP Header

Flags: SYN, ACK, FIN, RST, PSH, URG

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TCP State Transitions

- **CLOSED**
  - Passive open
  - Close
  - Active open/SYN

- **LISTEN**
  - SYN/SYN + ACK
  - Send/SYN

- **SYN_RCVD**
  - SYN/SYN + ACK
  - ACK
  - Close/FIN

- **SYN_SENT**
  - SYN/SYN + ACK
  - Send/SYN

- **ESTABLISHED**
  - ACK
  - Close/FIN
  - SYN + ACK/ACK
  - FIN/ACK

- **CLOSE_WAIT**
  - Close/FIN

- **LAST_ACK**
  - ACK

- **TIME_WAIT**
  - ACK
  - Timeout after two segment lifetimes

- **FIN_WAIT_1**
  - ACK
  - ACK + FIN/ACK
  - FIN/ACK

- **FIN_WAIT_2**
  - FIN/ACK
An Simpler View of the Client Side

- **CLOSED**
  - Send FIN
  - Rcv. ACK, Send Nothing

- **SYN_SENT**
  - Rcv. SYN+ACK, Send ACK

- **SYN (Send)**
  - SYN_SENT

- **ESTABLISHED**
  - Send FIN

- **FIN_WAIT1**
  - FIN_WAIT2
  - Send ACK
  - Rcv. ACK, Send Nothing

- **FIN_WAIT2**
  - TIME_WAIT
  - Rcv. FIN, Send ACK
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**Options (variable)**

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Used to negotiate use of additional features *(details in section)*
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**Data**
Recap: Sliding Window (so far)

• Both sender & receiver maintain a window

• Left edge of window:
  • Sender: beginning of unacknowledged data
  • Receiver: beginning of undelivered data

• Right edge: Left edge + constant
  • constant only limited by buffer size in the transport layer
Sliding Window at Sender (so far)

- First unACKed byte
- Last byte written
- Previously ACKed bytes
- Buffer size (B)
- Last byte can send

TCP
Sliding Window at Receiver (so far)

- Received and ACKed
- Last byte read
- Buffer size (B)
- Next byte needed (1st byte not received)
- Last byte received
- Sender might overrun the receiver’s buffer
Solution: Advertised Window (Flow Control)

- Receiver uses an “Advertised Window” (W) to prevent sender from overflowing its window
  - Receiver indicates value of W in ACKs
  - Sender limits number of bytes it can have in flight <= W
Sliding Window at Receiver

\[ W = B - (\text{LastByteReceived} - \text{LastByteRead}) \]

- Last byte read
- Buffer size (B)
- Next byte needed (1st byte not received)
- Last byte received
Sliding Window at Sender (so far)
Sliding Window w/ Flow Control

• Sender: window *advances* when new data ack’d
• Receiver: window advances as receiving process *consumes* data
• Receiver *advertises* to the sender where the receiver window currently ends (“righthand edge”)
  • Sender agrees not to exceed this amount
Advertised Window Limits Rate

• Sender can send no faster than W/RTT bytes/sec

• Receiver only advertises more space when it has consumed old arriving data

• In original TCP design, that was the *sole* protocol mechanism controlling sender’s rate

• What’s missing?
Taking Stock (1)

• The concepts underlying TCP are simple
  • acknowledgments (feedback)
  • timers
  • sliding windows
  • buffer management
  • sequence numbers
Taking Stock (1)

• The concepts underlying TCP are simple
• But tricky in the details
  • How do we set timers?
  • What is the seqno for an ACK-only packet?
  • What happens if advertised window = 0?
  • What if the advertised window is \( \frac{1}{2} \) an MSS?
  • Should receiver acknowledge packets right away?
  • What if the application generates data in units of 0.1 MSS?
  • What happens if I get a duplicate SYN? Or a RST while I’m in FIN_WAIT, etc., etc., etc.
Taking Stock (1)

• The concepts underlying TCP are simple
• But tricky in the details
• Do the details matter?
Sizing Windows for Congestion Control

• What are the problems?
• How might we address them?
Taking Stock (2)

• We’ve covered: K&R 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5

• Next lecture (congestion control)
  • K&R 3.6 and 3.7

• The midterm will cover all the above (K&R Ch. 3)

• The next topic (Naming) will not be on the midterm