15-441 15-641 Computer Networking

Lecture 6 – Media Access Control

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Fall 2014

www.cs.cmu.edu/~prs/15-441-F14

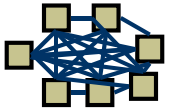
Datalink Functions

- Framing: encapsulating a network layer datagram into a bit stream.
  - Add header, mark and detect frame boundaries, …
- Error control: error detection and correction to deal with bit errors.
  - May also include other reliability support, e.g. retransmission
- Flow control: avoid sender overrunning receiver.
- Media access control (MAC): which frame should be sent over the link next.
  - Easy for point-to-point links
  - Harder for multi-access links: who gets to send?

So far …

Can connect two nodes

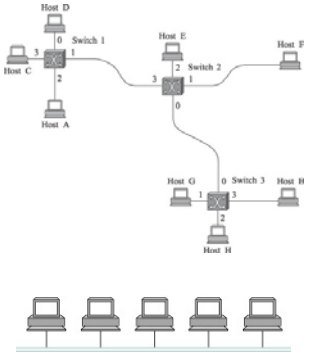
- … But what if we want more nodes?



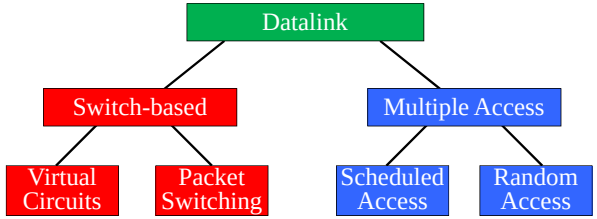
Wires for everybody?

Datalink Architectures

- Switches connected by point-to-point links -- store-and-forward.
  - Used in WAN, LAN, and for home connections
  - Conceptually similar to "routing"
    - But at the datalink layer instead of the network layer
  - MAC = (local) scheduling
- Multiple access networks -- contention based.
  - Multiple hosts are sharing the same transmission medium
  - Used in LANs and wireless
  - Access control is distributed and much more complex



Datalink Classification

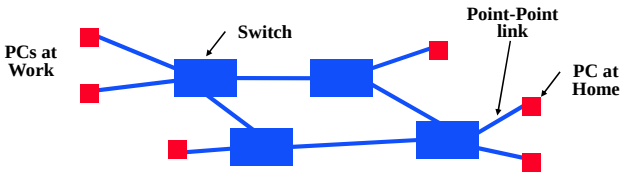


Switching

- Forward units of data based on address in header.
- Many data-link technologies use switching.
  - Virtual circuits: Frame Relay, ATM, X.25, ..
  - Packets: Ethernet, ...
- "Switching" also happens at the network layer.
  - Layer 3: Internet protocol
  - In this case, address is an IP address
  - IP over SONET, IP over ATM, ...
  - Otherwise, operation is very similar
- Switching is different from traditional (hard) circuits
  - E.g., telephone switches (not covered in this course)
  - Switching is based on timing – no addresses

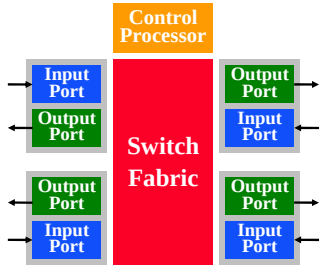
A Switch-based Network

- Switches are connected by point-point links.
- Packets are forwarded hop-by-hop by the switches towards the destination.
  - Forwarding is based on the address
- How does a switch work?
- How do nodes exchange packets over a link?
- How is the destination addressed?



Switch Architecture

- Packets come in one interface, forwarded to output interface based on address.
  - Same idea for bridges, switches, routers: address look up differs
- Control processor manages the switch and executes higher level protocols.
  - E.g. routing, management, ...
- The switch fabric directs the traffic to the right output port.
- The input and output ports deal with transmission and reception of packets.

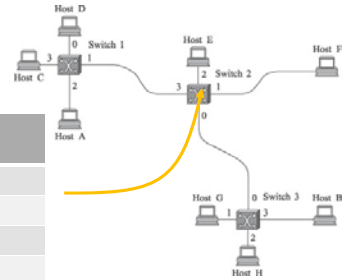


Connections or Not?

- Two basic approaches to packet forwarding
  - Connectionless
  - (virtual) Circuit switched
- When would you use?

Connectionless

- Host can send anytime anywhere
- No idea if resources are available to get to destination
- Forwarding is independent for each packet
- No setup time
- Fault tolerant
  - More on this later

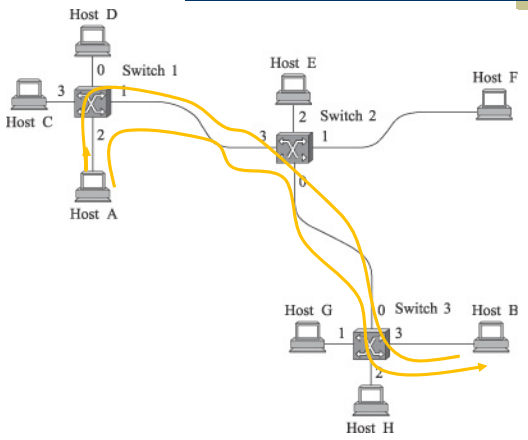


Destination	Port
A	3
B	0
C	
D	
E	

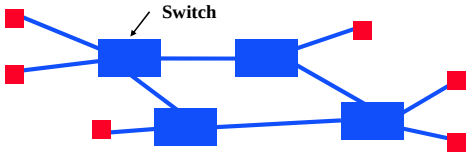
Virtual Circuit Switching

- Two stage process similar to traditional circuits
  - Setup connection + create VC ID
  - Send packets -
- RTT introduced before any data is sent
- Per packet overhead can be smaller (VCI << adr)
- Switch failures are hard to deal with
- Reserves resources for connection possible
- Widely used in core networks (e.g. MPLS)
- More on this later

Setup, assign VCIs



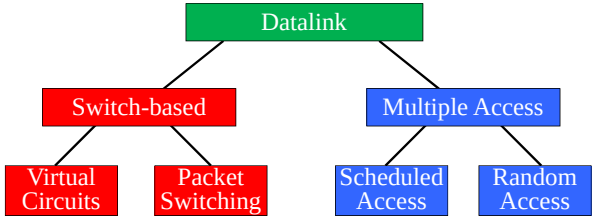
Packet Forwarding: Address Lookup



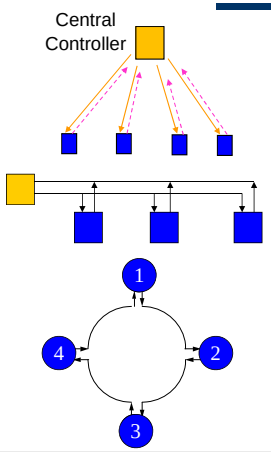
Address	Next Hop	Info
B3112381250 8	3	13
38913C3C2137	3	-
25	2	31
128.2.15.3	1	(2,34)

- Address from header.
  - Absolute address (e.g. Ethernet)
  - (VC identifier, e.g. ATM)
  - (IP address for routers)
- Next hop: output port for packet.
- Info: priority, timeout, ..
- Table is filled in by a protocol

Datalink Classification



Scheduled Access MACs

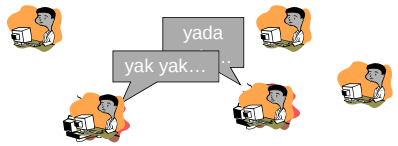


- Reservation systems
  - Central controller
  - Distributed algorithm, e.g. using reservation bits in frame
- Polling: controller polls each nodes
- Token ring: token travels around ring and allows nodes to send one packet
  - Distributer version of polling
  - FDDI, …

Problem: Sharing a Wire

- Natural scheme – listen before you talk …
  - Works well in practice

Listen and Talk



- Natural scheme – listen before you talk…
  - Works well in practice
- But sometimes this breaks down
  - Why? How do we fix/prevent this?

Outline: Contention-based Access

- Aloha
- Ethernet MAC
- Collisions
- Ethernet Frames

Random Access Protocols

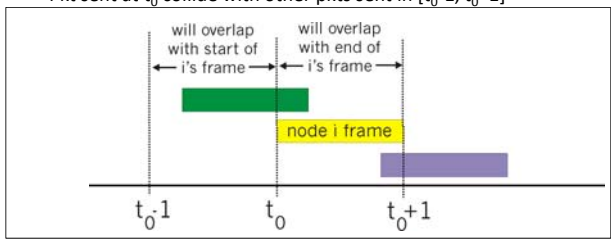
- When node has packet to send
  - Transmit at full channel data rate R
  - No *a priori* coordination among nodes
- Two or more transmitting nodes → "collision"
- Random access MAC protocol specifies:
  - How to detect collisions
  - How to recover from collisions (e.g., via delayed retransmissions)
- Examples of random access MAC protocols:
  - Slotted ALOHA and ALOHA
  - CSMA and CSMA/CD

Aloha – Basic Technique

- First random MAC developed
  - For radio-based communication in Hawaii (1970)
- Basic idea:
  - When you are ready, transmit
  - Receivers send ACK for data
  - Detect collisions by timing out for ACK
  - Recover from collision by trying after random delay
    - Too short → large number of collisions
    - Too long → underutilization

Collisions in ALOHA

- Original ALOHA had no synchronization
- Pkt needs transmission:
  - Send without awaiting for beginning of slot
- Many chances for collision
  - Pkt sent at t_0 collide with other pkts sent in $[t_0-1, t_0+1]$



Outline

- Aloha
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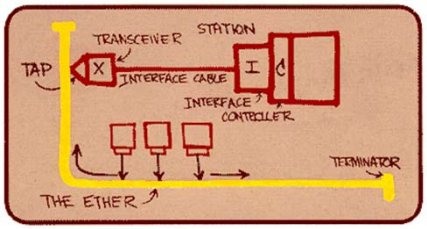
- Collisions
- Ethernet Frames

Ethernet

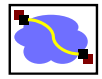
- First practical local area network, built at Xerox PARC in 70's
- "Dominant" LAN technology:
  - Cheap
  - Kept up with speed race: 10, 100, 1000, … Mbps



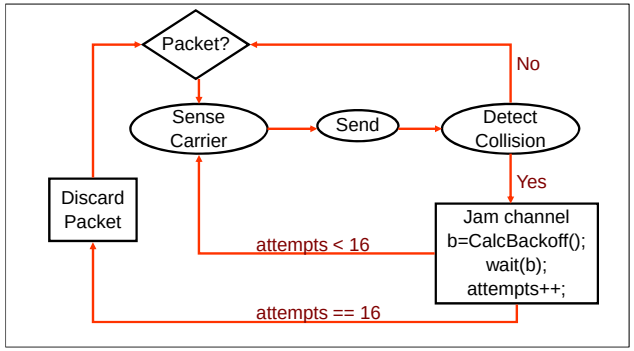
Ethernet MAC Features

- Carrier Sense: listen before you talk
  - Avoid collision with active transmission
- Collision Detection during transmission
  - Listen while transmitting
  - If you notice interference → assume collision
  - Abort transmission immediately – saves time
- Why didn't ALOHA have this?
  - Signal strength is reduced by distance for radio
    - May not hear remote transmitter – hidden terminal
  - Very difficult for radios to listen and transmit
  - More on this later in the course

Ethernet MAC – CSMA/CD



- Carrier Sense Multiple Access/Collision Detection



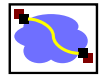
Ethernet CSMA/CD: Making it work

Jam Signal: make sure all other transmitters are aware of collision; 48 bits;

Exponential Backoff:

- If deterministic delay after collision, collision will occur again in lockstep
- Why not random delay with fixed mean?
  - Few senders → needless waiting
  - Too many senders → too many collisions
- *Goal*: adapt retransmission attempts to estimated current load
  - heavy load: random wait will be longer

Ethernet Backoff Calculation



- Delay is set as K slots – control K
- Exponentially increasing random delay
  - Infer senders from # of collisions
  - More senders → increase wait time
- First collision: choose K from {0,1}; delay is K x 512 bit transmission times
- After second collision: choose K from {0,1,2,3}…
- After ten or more collisions, choose K from {0,1,2,3,4,…,1023}

Outline

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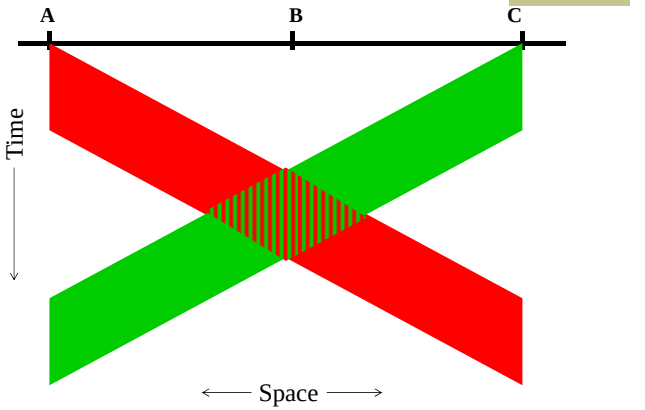
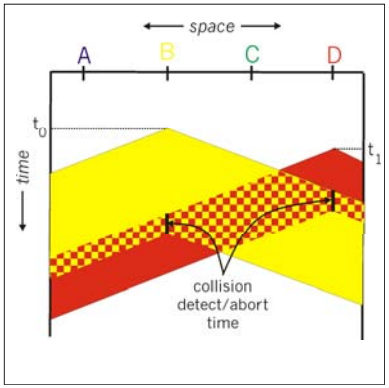
Collisions



Minimum Packet Size

- Packets must be long enough to guarantee all nodes observe collision
- Depends on packet size and length of wire
  - Propagation delay
- Min packet length > 2x max prop delay



Delay & Collision Detection

- Speed in cable ~= 60% * c ~= 1.8 x 10^8 m/s
- 10Mb Ethernet, 2.5km cable
  - ~= 12.5us delay
  - +Introduced repeaters (max 5 segments)
  - Worst case – 51.2us round trip time!
  - Corresponds to 512 bits
- Also used as slot time = 51.2us for backoff
  - After this time, sender is guaranteed sole access to link
  - Specifically, will have heard any signal sent in the previous slot

Scaling Ethernet

- What about scaling? 10Mbps, 100Mbps, 1Gbps, ...
  - Use a combination of reducing network diameter and increasing minimum minimum packet size
- Reality check: 40 Gbps is 4000 times 10 Mbps
  - 10 Mbps: 2.5 km and 64 bytes -> silly
  - Solution: switched Ethernet – next lecture
- What about a maximum packet size?
  - Needed to prevent node from hogging the network
  - 1500 bytes in Ethernet

Outline

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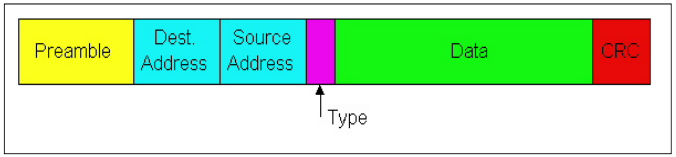
Ethernet Frame Structure

- Sending adapter encapsulates IP datagram (or other network layer protocol packet) in Ethernet frame



Ethernet Frame Structure (cont.)

- Preamble: 8 bytes
  - 101010…1011
  - Used to synchronize receiver, sender clock rates
- CRC: 4 bytes
  - Checked at receiver, if error is detected, the frame is simply dropped
- Type: 2 bytes
  - Demultiplexing: indicates the higher layer protocol, mostly IP today but historically more protocols (such as Novell IPX and AppleTalk)

Addressing Alternatives

- Broadcast → all nodes receive all packets
  - Addressing determines which packets are kept and which are packets are thrown away
  - Packets can be sent to:
    - Unicast – one destination
    - Multicast – group of nodes (e.g. “everyone playing Quake”)
    - Broadcast – everybody on wire
- Dynamic addresses (e.g. Appletalk)
  - Pick an address at random
  - Broadcast “is anyone using address XX?”
  - If yes, repeat
- Static address (e.g. Ethernet)

Ethernet Address Assignment

- Each adapter is given a globally unique 6-byte address at manufacturing time
  - Address space is allocated to manufacturers
    - 24 bits identify manufacturer
    - E.g., 0:0:15:* → 3com adapter
  - Frame is received by all adapters on a LAN and dropped if address does not match
- Special addresses
  - Broadcast – FF:FF:FF:FF:FF:FF is "everybody"
  - Range of addresses allocated to multicast
    - Adapter maintains list of multicast groups node is interested in

Why Did Ethernet Win?

- Failure modes
  - Token rings – network unusable (or expensive)
- Good performance in common case
  - Deals well with bursty traffic
  - Usually used at low load
- Volume → lower cost → higher volume ….
- Adaptable
  - To higher bandwidths (vs. FDDI)
  - To switching (vs. ATM)
- Easy incremental deployment (backwards compatible)
- Cheap cabling, etc

And .. It is Easy to Manage

- You plug in the host and it basically works
  - No configuration at the datalink layer
  - Today: may need to deal with security
- Protocol is fully distributed
- Broadcast-based.
  - In part explains the easy management
  - Some of the LAN protocols (e.g. ARP) rely on broadcast
    - Networking would be harder without ARP
  - Not having natural broadcast capabilities adds complexity to a LAN (e.g., ATM)
- Network managers love it!

Summary

- CSMA/CD → carrier sense multiple access with collision detection
  - Why do we need exponential backoff?
  - Why does collision happen?
  - Why do we need a minimum packet size?
    - How does this scale with speed?
- Ethernet
  - What is the purpose of different header fields?
  - What do Ethernet addresses look like?
- What are some alternatives to Ethernet design?