Data link layer

Goals:

- Principles behind data link layer services:
  - Error detection, correction
  - Sharing a broadcast channel: Multiple access
  - Link layer addressing
  - Reliable data transfer, flow control

- Example link layer technology
  - Ethernet

- Bridges vs. routers
**Link layer services**

**Framing and link access**
- Encapsulate datagram: frame adds header, trailer
- Channel access if shared medium
- Frame headers use ‘physical addresses’ = “MAC” to identify source and destination
  - Different from IP address!

**Reliable delivery (between adjacent nodes)**
- Seldom used on low bit error links (fiber optic, co-axial cable and some twisted pairs)
- Sometimes used on high error rate links (e.g., wireless links)
Multiple access links

Two types of “links”:

- **Point-to-point**
  - PPP for dial-up access
  - Point-to-point link between Ethernet switch and host

- **Broadcast** (shared wire or medium)
  - Traditional Ethernet
  - Upstream HFC
  - 802.11 wireless LAN
MAC protocols: Three categories

- Channel partitioning
  - Divide channel into smaller “pieces” (time slots, frequency)
  - Allocate piece to node for exclusive use

- Random access
  - Allow collisions
  - “Recover” from collisions

- “Taking turns”
  - Tightly coordinate shared access to avoid collisions

Goal: efficient, fair, simple, decentralized
Addresses

**IP address (32-bit IPv4 / 128-bit IPv6):**
- Network-layer address
- Used to get datagram to destination network (recall IP network definition)

**MAC (or LAN or physical or Ethernet) address:**
- Data link-layer address
- Used to get datagram from one interface to another physically-connected interface (same network)
- 48 bit MAC address (for most LANs) burned in the adapter ROM
Addresses (2.)

Each adapter on LAN has unique LAN address

Broadcast address = FF-FF-FF-FF-FF-FF

LAN (wired or wireless)

- 1A-2F-BB-76-09-AD
- 71-65-F7-2B-08-53
- 58-23-D7-FA-20-B0
- 0C-C4-11-6F-E3-98

= adapter
Addresses (3.)

- MAC address allocation administered by IEEE
- Manufacturer buys portion of MAC address space to assure uniqueness

Analogy:
- MAC address: like Social Security Number
- IP address: like postal address

- MAC flat address $\Rightarrow$ portability
  - can move LAN card from one LAN to another
- IP hierarchical address NOT portable
  - depends on network to which one attaches
ARP: Address Resolution Protocol

Question: how to determine MAC address of B knowing B’s IP address?

- Each IP node (Host, Router) on LAN has ARP table
- ARP Table: IP/MAC address mappings for some LAN nodes
  - IP address; MAC address; TTL
  - TTL (Time To Live): time after which address mapping will be forgotten (typically 20 min)
ARP protocol: Same LAN (Network)

- A wants to send datagram to B, and B’s MAC address not in A’s ARP table.
- A broadcasts ARP query packet, containing B's IP address
  - Dest MAC address = FF-FF-FF-FF-FF-FF
  - All machines on LAN receive ARP query
- B receives ARP packet, replies to A with its (B's) MAC address
  - Frame sent to A’s MAC address (unicast)
- A caches (saves) IP-to-MAC address pair in its ARP table until information becomes old (times out)
  - Soft state: information that times out (goes away) unless refreshed
- ARP is “plug-and-play”:
  - Nodes create their ARP tables without intervention from net administrator
Ethernet

“Dominant” LAN technology:
- Cheap!
- First widely used LAN technology
- Simpler, cheaper than token LANs and ATM
- Kept up with speed race: 10 Mbps – 10 Gbps
- Full duplex via switches

Metcalfe’s Ethernet sketch
Unreliable, connectionless service

- **Connectionless:**
  No handshaking between sending and receiving adapter.

- **Unreliable:**
  Receiving adapter does not send ACKs or NACKs to sending adapter
    - Stream of datagrams passed to network layer can have gaps
    - Gaps will be filled if app is using TCP
    - Otherwise, app will see the gaps
Ethernet uses CSMA/CD

- No slots
- Adapter does not transmit if it senses that some other adapter is transmitting, that is, carrier sense
- Transmitting adapter aborts when it senses that another adapter is transmitting, that is, collision detection
- Before attempting a retransmission, adapter waits a random time, that is, random access
Interconnecting LANs

Q: Why not just one big LAN?
- All stations must share bandwidth
- Limited cable length
- Large “collision domain” (can collide with many stations)
- Limited number of stations
Interconnecting with hubs

- Physical Layer devices: Essentially repeaters operating at bit levels: repeat received bits on one interface to all other interfaces
- Hubs can be arranged in a hierarchy (or multi-tier design), with backbone hub at its top
Hubs (more)

- Each connected LAN referred to as LAN segment
- Hubs do not isolate collision domains: node may collide with any node residing at any segment in LAN
- Hub Advantages:
  - Simple, inexpensive device
  - Multi-tier provides graceful degradation: portions of the LAN continue to operate if one hub malfunctions
  - Extends maximum distance between node pairs (100m per Hub)
Bridges (Switches)

- Link layer devices:
  - Stores and forwards Ethernet frames
  - Examines frame header and *selectively* forwards frame based on MAC dst address
  - When frame is to be forwarded on segment, uses CSMA/CD to access segment
  - Bridge *isolates collision* domains: it buffers frames
Bridges/Switch: Advantages

- Higher total max throughput
- No limit on number of nodes
- No limit on geographical coverage
- Can connect different Ethernet types (store and forward)
- Transparent: hosts do not need to change LAN adapters
- Plug-and-play, self-learning
  - Switches do not need to be configured
Bridges/Switch: Forwarding

- Forwarding:
  - To which LAN segment should a frame be forwarded?
  - Looks like a routing problem
Bridges/Switch: Self Learning

- A bridge/switch has a bridge/switch table
- Entry in table:
  - (MAC Address, Interface, Time Stamp)
  - Stale entries in table dropped (TTL can be 60 min)
- Bridge *learns* which hosts can be reached through which interfaces
  - When frame received, switch “learns” location of sender: incoming LAN segment
  - Records sender/location pair in bridge table
When switch receives a frame:

index switch table using MAC dest address

if entry found for destination
    then{
        if dest on segment from which frame arrived
            then drop the frame
            else forward the frame on interface indicated
        }
else flood

*forward on all but the interface on which the frame arrived*
Switch: Traffic isolation

- Switch installation breaks subnet into LAN segments
- Switch filters packets:
  - Same-LAN-segment frames not usually forwarded onto other LAN segments
  - Segments become separate collision domains
Redundant networks

- Network with multiple paths
  - Alternate path for each source, destination pair

- Advantage
  - Increased reliability
  - Single network failure OK
  - More opportunities for load distribution

- Disadvantage
  - Added complexity
Bridges spanning tree

- Avoid cycles
  - Frames may multiply and forwarded forever
- Organize bridges into spanning tree
  - Disable a subset of interfaces
## Bridges vs. Routers

- Both store-and-forward devices
  - Routers: network layer devices (examine network layer headers)
  - Bridges: link layer devices
- Use tables
  - Routers: routing tables via routing algorithms
  - Bridges: filtering tables via filtering, learning, spanning tree algorithm

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*Host*  *Bridge*  *Router*  *Host*
Bridges + and -

+ Simple operation
  - Low processing bandwidth

- Restricted topologies:
  - Spanning tree to avoid cycles

- Single broadcast domain
  - No protection from broadcast storms
    (broadcasts will be forwarded by bridge)
Routers + and -

+ Arbitrary topologies
  Limited cycling (TTL and good routing protocols)
+ Firewalls protection
  Against broadcast storms

- Complex operation
  Require IP address configuration (not plug and play)
  Require higher processing bandwidth
Routers vs. Bridges

- Bridges
  - Good in small networks (few hundred hosts)

- Routers
  - Good in large networks (thousands of hosts)