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**Port Restricted IP Address Assignment
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Abstract

When IPv6 was designed, the assumption was that the transition from IPv4 to IPv6 will occur way before the exhaustion of the available IPv4 address pool. The unexpected growth of the IPv4 Internet and the hesitation and technical difficulties to deploy IPv6 indicates that the transition may take much longer than originally anticipated.

It is expected that communication using IPv6 addresses will increase during the next few years to come at the expense of communication using IPv4 addresses. The Internet should reach a safety point in the future, where the number of IPv4 public addresses in use at a given time begins decreasing. It is very likely that the IPv4 public address pool currently available at IANA will be exhausted before the internet reaches this safety point. This creates a need to prolong the lifetime of the available IPv4 addresses.

This document defines methods to allocate the same IPv4 address to multiple hosts, with the aim to prolong the availability of public IPv4 addresses, possibly for as long as it takes for IPv6 to take over the demand for IPv4.

Conventions used in this document

The key words "MUST", "MUST NOT", "REQUIRED", "SHALL", "SHALL NOT", "SHOULD", "SHOULD NOT", "RECOMMENDED", "MAY", and "OPTIONAL" in this document are to be interpreted as described in [RFC-2119](#) [[RFC2119](#)].

Terminology and abbreviations used in this document

Port restricted IPv4 address: an IP address which can only be used in conjunction with the specified ports. Port restriction refers to all known transport protocols (UDP, TCP, SCTP, DCCP).

CGN	Carrier Grade Network Address Translator
CPE	Consumer Premises Equipment, a device that resides between internet service provider's network and consumers' home network.
PRA	Port Restricted IPv4 Address

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1. Introduction

There are a number of possible solutions to deal with the problem of transitioning

from IPv4 to IPv6; however none of them is a one fits all solution.

Different

solutions fit different deployment scenarios (see also [[ARKK2008](#)]). A tentative

comparison is provided in [[WING2008](#)].

As complementary solution for the IPv4-IPv6 coexistence period, this document

describes a method, using a newly defined DHCPv4 [[RFC2131](#)] option that allows

servers to assign port restricted IPv4 addresses to clients. By assigning the same

IPv4 address to multiple clients, the availability of IPv4 addresses can be, hopefully, prolonged for as long as it takes for IPv6 to take over the demand for IPv4.

The solution described in this document is intended to be used by large ISPs, who

as of the date of writing this document, have a large enough IPv4 address pool to

be able to allocate one public IPv4 address for each and every client. They expect

though that the situation is unsustainable and they will soon not be able to provide every client with a public IPv4 address. Such ISPs have two possibilities

to choose from:

- deploy Network Address Translators (NAT), which can be a significant investment

for ISPs not having NATs yet. The address space limitations of [[RFC1918](#)] may even

force these large ISPs to deploy double NATs, which come with all the harmful

behaviour of Carrier Grade NATs (CGN), as described in [[MAEN2008](#)]; or

- allocate fragments of the same public IPv4 address directly to multiple clients

(which can be CPEs or end hosts), thus avoid the cost of deploying multiple layers

of NATs or carrier grade NATs. It is however assumed, that the demand for IPv4

addresses will decrease in the not so distant future, being taken over by IPv6, as

the proposal in this draft is not by any means a permanent solution for the IPv4

address exhaustion problem. In fact, some presented deployment scenarios

require
existence of IPv6 access network.

For ISPs not having NATs yet, a solution not requiring NATs would probably
be preferred. For some other ISPs, who already have NATs in place, increasing
the capacity of their NATs might be a viable alternative.

In other deployment scenarios, allocation of shared addresses to devices at
the edge of the network would result in distribution of NAT functionality to the
edges, in some cases even to CPEs [[APLUSP](#)].

This document proposes to use new DHCPv4 option to allocate port-restricted
IPv4 addresses to the clients. This method is meant to be an IPv4 to IPv6
transition tool, to be only temporarily used during the period when the demand for
public IPv4 addresses will exceed the availability of them.

The port restricted IPv4 address option described in this document can be
used in various deployment scenarios, some of which are described in
[[BOUCADAIRARCH](#)],
[[APLUSP](#)], and [[DSLITE](#)].

2. Port Randomization

It is well documented that attackers can perform "blind" attacks against transport protocols. The consequences of these attacks range from throughput-reduction to broken connections or data corruption. These attacks rely on the attacker's ability to guess or know the five-tuple (Protocol, Source Address, Destination Address, Source Port, Destination Port) that identifies the transport protocol instance to be attacked. Most of these attacks can be prevented by randomly selecting the client source port number such that the possibility of an attacker guessing the exact value is reduced. [\[RANDOMPORT\]](#) defines a few algorithms which can select a random port from the available port range. Clients usually have the (1024, 65535) port range at their disposal to select a random, not yet used port.

When an IP address is allocated to multiple clients, the source port range has to be divided between the clients. The smaller the port range, the easier is for an attacker to guess the next port the client is going to use. Therefore, it is imperative to divide the port range between clients sharing the same IP address in such a way that random selection is preserved. This document proposes two different methods for port allocation, which preserves partly or completely the randomness of the source ports:

- o The first mechanism uses a port mask with a bit locator to communicate a range or multiple ranges of ports to a client. Randomness is preserved when the client is able to select a port randomly across all the available port ranges. The algorithms described in [\[RANDOMPORT\]](#) can be used to select a random port from one port range, but implementations may find it difficult to select random ports across port ranges.

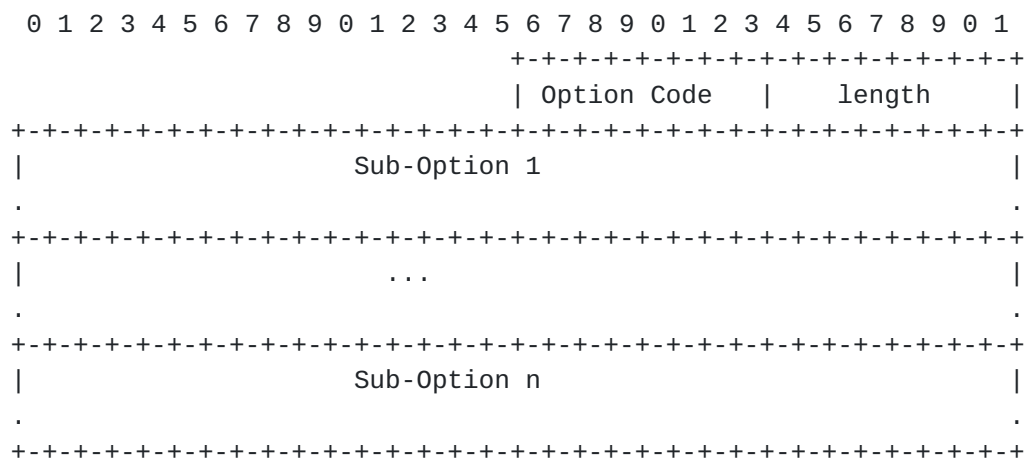
- o The second mechanism uses a cryptographic function to preallocate random ports from the entire port range. The key and other input parameters

are
communicated to the client, which can calculate the ports it can use.
The
'side effect' of this mechanism is that the client is forced to use
random
ports, as a number of random ports allowed to be used by the client are
preallocated by the server. When this mode is used, the network
equipments
in charge of routing the inbound packets towards the clients may
require
more processing resources.

3. DHCPv4 Option for allocating port restricted public IPv4 address

This section defines new DHCPv4 option, which allows allocation of port restricted IPv4 addresses.

The option layout is depicted below:



Option Code

Option Code

OPTION-IPv4-PRA (TBD) - 1 byte

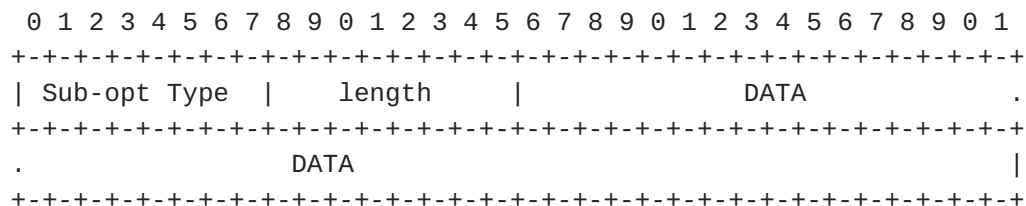
Length

An 8-bit field indicating the length of the option excluding the 'Option Code' and the 'Length' fields

Sub-options

A series of DHCPv4 sub-options.

The sub-option layout is depicted below:



The sub-option types defined in this document are:

- 1 port mask
- 2 random port delegation function

These two options are exclusive with each other (if one is used, the other one is not).

Length

An 8-bit field indicating the length of the sub-option excluding the 'Sub-opt Type' and the 'Length' fields. The value of the length field is 8 when the Sub-opt Type equals 1 and 26 when the sub-opt Type equals 2.

The format of the DATA field when the sub-opt type indicates port mask
(value = 1):

```

 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0 1
+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+
|                                     IPv4 address                                     |
+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+
|      Port Range Value              |      Port Range Mask              |
+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+

```

IPv4 address

Public IPv4 address

Port Range Value and Port Range Mask

Port Range Value indicates the value of the mask to be applied and Port
Range Mask indicates the position of the bits which are used to build
the
mask.

[Section 4](#) describes how the client derives the allocated port range from the
Port
Range Value and Port Range Mask values.

The format of the DATA field when the sub-opt type indicates random port
delegation function (value = 2):

```

 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0 1
+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+
|                                     IPv4 address                                     |
+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+
|      function                      |      starting point                      |
+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+
|  number of delegated ports  |      key K                      ...
+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+
...
+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+
...
+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+
...
+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+
... key K                      |
+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+

```

IP address

Public IPv4 address

Function

A 16bit field whose value is associated with predefined encryption

functions. This specification associates value 1 with the predefined function described in [section 5](#).

Starting Point

A 16bit value used as an input to the specified function

Number of delegated ports

A 16bit value specifying the number of ports delegated to the client
for use
as source port values

Key K

A 128 bit key used as input to the predefined function for delegated
port
calculation

4. Port Mask sub-option usage

The port mask sub-option is used to specify one or multiple range of ports
pertaining to the given IP address.

Concretely, this option is used to notify a remote DHCP client about the
Port Mask

to be applied when selecting a port value as a source port. The Port Mask
option

is used to infer a set of allowed port values. A Port Mask defines a set of
ports

that all have in common a subset of pre-positioned bits. This ports set is
also

called Port Range. Two port numbers are said to belong to the same Port
Range if

and only if, they have the same Port Mask.

A Port Mask contains two fields: Port Range Value and Port Range Mask.

- The 'Port Range Value' field indicates the value of the significant bits
of the

Port Mask. The 'Port Range Value' is coded as follows:

- The significant bits are those where "1" values are set in the
Port

Range Mask. These bits may take a value of "0" or "1".

- All the other bits (non significant ones) are set to "0".

- The 'Port Range Mask' field indicates the position of the significant bits
identified by the bit(s) set to "1".

The Port Range Value field indicates the value of the mask to be applied and
the

Port Range Mask field indicates the position of the bits which are used to
build

the mask. The "1" values in the Port Range Mask field indicate by their
position

the significant bits of the Port Range Value (the pattern of the Port Range
Value).

For example:

first Value - A Port Range Mask field equal to 1000000000000000 indicates that the bit (the most significant one) is used as a pattern of the Port Range field;

5th Range - A Port Range Mask field equal to 0000101000000000 indicates that the and the 7th most significant bits are used as a pattern of the Port Value.

The pattern of the Port Range Value is all the fixed bits in the Port Range Value.

All the ports the CPE is allowed to use as source ports must have their number in accordance with the pattern.

The Port Range Value is coded as follows:

- The pattern bits of the Port Range Value are those where "1" values are set in the Port Range Mask. These bits may take a value of 0 or 1.
- All the other bits are set to "0".

4.1 Illustration Examples

In each of the three examples below allocation of 2048 ports is done differently.

In all examples it is possible for 32 hosts to share the same public IPv4 address.

The 4th example illustrates the ability of the procedure to enforce a balanced distribution of port numbers including the well-known-port values.

a) the following Port Range Mask and Port Range Value are conveyed using DHCP to

assign a Port Range (from 2048 to 4095) to a given device:

- Port Range Value: 0000100000000000 (2048)
- Port Range Mask: 1111100000000000 (63488)

b) Unlike the previous example, this one illustrates the case where a non Continuous Port Range is assigned to a given customer's device. In this example,

the Port Range Value defines 128 Continuous Port Ranges, each one with a length of

16 port values. Note that the two first Port Ranges are both in the well-known ports span (i.e. 0-1023) but these two ranges are not adjacent.

The following Port Range Mask and Port Range Value are conveyed in DHCP messages:

- Port Range Value : 0000000001010000 (80)
- Port Range Mask : 0000000111110000 (496)

This means that the 128 following Continuous Port Ranges are assigned to the same device:

- from 80 to 95
- from 592 to 607
- ...
- from 65104 to 65119

c) In this example, the Port Range Value defines two Continuous Port Ranges, each

one being 1024 ports long:

- Port Range Value : 0000000000000000 (0)

- Port Range Mask : 1111010000000000 (62464)

This means that the two following Continuous Port Ranges are assigned to the same

device:

- from 0 to 1023, and
- from 2048 to 3071

d) In this example, 64 continuous Port Ranges are allocated to each CPE (among a set of 4 CPEs sharing the same IPv4 address).

Among the 64 continuous Port Ranges to each CPE, there is always one within the span of the first 1024 well-known port values. Hereafter is given the Port Range

Value and Port Range Mask assigned to 2 CPEs (CPE#0 and CPE#3, CPE#1 and CPE#2 being not represented here):

1. CPE#0

- Port Range Value: 0000000000000000 (0)
- Port Range Mask: 0000001100000000 (768)

The CPE#0 has therefore the 64 following Continuous Port Ranges:

- 1st range: 0-255
- ...
- 64th range: 64512-64767

2. CPE#3

- Port Range Value: 0000001100000000 (768)
- Port Range Mask: 0000001100000000 (768)

The CPE#2 has therefore the 64 following Continuous Port Ranges:

- 1st range: 768-1023
- ...
- 64th range: 65280-65535

5. Random Port delegation function

Delegating random ports can be achieved by defining a function which takes as

input a key 'k' and an integer 'x' within the range (1024, 65535) and produces an

output 'y' also within the range (1024, 65535).

The server uses a cryptographical mechanism (described below) to select the random

ports for each host. Instead of assigning a range of ports using port mask to the

client, the server sends the inputs of a predefined cryptographic mechanism: a

key, an initial value, and the number of ports assigned to this host. The client

can then calculate the full list of assigned ports itself.

The cryptographical mechanism ensures that the entire 64k port range can be efficiently distributed to multiple hosts in a way that when hosts calculate the

ports, the results will never overlap with ports other hosts have calculated (property of permutation), and ports in the reserved range (smaller than 1024) are

not used. As the randomization is done cryptographically, an attacker seeing a

host using some port X cannot determine which other ports the host may be using

(as the attacker does not know the key).

Calculation of the random port list is done as follows:

The cryptographic mechanism uses an encryption function $y = E(K, x)$ that takes as input a key K (for example, 128 bits) and an integer x (the plaintext) in range (1024, 65535), and produces an output y (the ciphertext), also an integer in range (1024, 65535). This section describes one such encryption function, but others are also possible.

The server will select the key K . When server wants to allocate e.g. 2048 random ports, it selects a starting point 'a' ($1024 \leq a \leq 65536 - 2048$) in a way that the range $(a, a + 2048)$ does not overlap with any other active client, and calculates

the values $E(K,a)$, $E(K,a+1)$, $E(K,a+2)$, ..., $E(K,a+2046)$, $E(K,a+2047)$. These are

the port numbers allocated for this host. Instead of sending the port numbers

individually, the server just sends the values 'K', 'a', and '2048'. The client

will then repeat the same calculation.

The server SHOULD use different K for each IPv4 address it allocates to make attacks as difficult as possible. This way, learning the K used in IPv4 address

IP1 would not help in attacking IPv4 address IP2 that is allocated by the same server to different hosts.

With typical encryption functions (such as AES and DES), the input (plaintext) and

output (ciphertext) are blocks of some fixed size; for example, 128 bits for AES,

and 64 bits for DES. For port randomization, we need an encryption function whose

input and output is an integer in range (1024, 65535).

One possible way to do this is to use the 'Generalized-Feistel Cipher' [[CIPHERS](#)]

construction by Black and Rogaway, with AES as the underlying round function.

This would look as follows (using pseudo-code):

```
def E(k, x):
    y = Feistel16(k, x)
    if y >= 1024:
        return y
    else:
        return E(k, y)
```

Note that although $E(k,x)$ is recursive, it is guaranteed to terminate. The average

number of iterations is just slightly over 1.

Feistel16 is a 16-bit block cipher:

```
def Feistel16(k, x):
    left = x & 0xff
    right = x >> 8
    for round = 1 to 3:
        temp = left ^ FeistelRound(k, round, right)
        left = right
        right = temp
```

```
        right = temp
    return (right << 8) | left
```

The Feistel round function uses:

```
def FeistelRound(k, round, x):
    msg[0] = round
    msg[1] = x
    msg[2...15] = 0
    return AES(k, msg)[0]
```

Performance: To generate list of 2048 port numbers, about 6000 calls to AES are required (i.e., encrypting 96 kilobytes). Thus, it will not be a problem for any device that can do, for example, HTTPS (web browsing over SSL/TLS).

Other port generator functions may be predefined in Standards Track documents and

allocated a not yet allocated 'function' value within the corresponding sub-option

type field.

6. Option Usage

6.1 Client Behaviour

A DHCP client which supports the option defined in this document MUST support both sub-option types.

A DHCP client which supports the extensions defined in this document, SHOULD insert the option OPTION-IPv4-PRA with both sub-option types into

DHCPDISCOVER

message to explicitly let the server know that it supports port restricted IPv4 addresses.

o In the port mask sub-option type, the client SHALL set the IPv4 address and

Mask Locator fields to all zeros. The client MAY indicate the number of desired ports in Port Range Value-field, or set that to all zeroes.

o In the random port delegation sub-option type, the client SHALL set the IPv4

address field, key field and starting point field to all zeros. The client

MAY indicate in function field which encryption function it prefers, and in

the number of delegated ports field the number of ports the client would desire.

When a client, which supports the option defined in this document, receives a

DHCPOFFER with the 'yiaddr' (client IP address) field set to 0.0.0.0, it SHOULD

check for the presence of OPTION-IPv4-PRA option. If such an option is present,

the client MAY send a DHCPREQUEST message and insert the option OPTION-IPv4-PRA

with the corresponding sub-option received in the OPTION-IPv4-PRA option of the

previous DHCPOFFER. The client MUST NOT include a 'Requested IP Address'

DHCP

option (code 50) into this DHCPREQUEST.

The client MUST NOT insert the IP address received in OPTION-IPv4-PRA into the

'Requested IP Address' DHCP option (code 50). When the client receives a DHCPACK

message with an OPTION-IPv4-PRA option, it MAY start using the specified IP address in conjunction with the source ports specified by the mechanism chosen by

DHCP server. The client MUST NOT use the IP address with different source port

numbers, as that may result in a conflict, since the same IP address with a different source port group may be assigned to a different client.

Furthermore,

the client MUST notice the situation where an outgoing IP packet has the same IP

address as destination address than the client itself has, but the port number is

not belonging to the allocated set. In this case the client MUST detect that the

packet is not destined for itself, and it MUST send it forward.

In case the initial port set received by the client from the server is exhausted

and the client needs additional ports, it MAY request so by sending a new DHCPDISCOVER message.

In some deployment scenarios the DHCP client may also act as a DHCP server for a

network behind it, in which case the host may further split the allocated set for

other hosts.

The allocated port-restricted IP address and all the associated parameters are valid until indicated in the IP Address Lease Time Option (option 51).

6.2 Server Behaviour

When a server, which supports the option defined in this document, receives a DHCPDISCOVER message, it SHOULD check the presence of the OPTION-IPv4-PRA option.

If OPTION-IPv4-PRA is not present in DHCPDISCOVER, the server SHOULD allocate full

unrestricted public or private [[RFC1918](#)] IPv4 address to the client, if available, by generating a DHCPOFFER as described in [[RFC2131](#)].

The server SHOULD offer the port restricted IPv4 address when the server has support for the extensions specified in this document and when:

- o DHCP client has included an OPTION-IPv4-PRA option, and server's policy indicates saving unrestricted IPv4 addresses for clients that do not support the extensions defined in this document. The server MUST include only one of the sub-options into the OPTION-IPv4-PRA option (the one which it uses for port restricted IP address allocation).
- o server receives a DHCPDISCOVER message and server can only offer port restricted IP address to the client
- o server receives a DHCPDISCOVER message from a client without the OPTION-IPv4-PRA, but knows by means outside the scope of this document that the client supports the usage of port-restricted IPv4 addresses (or it is only entitled to be provisioned with such addresses)

When server chooses to offer port restricted IPv4 address for clients with OPTION-

IPv4-PRA, it MUST:

- o set the 'yiaddr' (client IP address) field of the DHCPOFFER message to 0.0.0.0
- o choose the port allocation mechanisms, if it is not statically configured
- o select a port restricted IPv4 address to be allocated for the client
- o generate parameters required for the chosen port allocation mechanism

When the server receives a DHCPREQUEST message from the client with an
OPTION-

IPv4-PRA option field containing the IP address and port allocation
mechanism

parameters it has previously offered to the client, the server MUST send a
DHCPACK, where the 'yiaddr' (client IP address) field is set to 0.0.0.0 and
the

OPTION-IPv4-PRA option including the IPv4 address and parameters required
for the
used allocation mechanism.

When the server receives a DHCPREQUEST message from the client with an
OPTION-

IPv4-PRA option field containing an IPv4 address and port set it has
previously

not offered to the client, the server MUST send a DHCPNAK to the client.

When the server detects that a client (by eg having a specific hardware
address)

which has already been allocated with a port restricted IPv4 address, sent
another

DHCPDISCOVER, it MAY, based on local policy, offer the client with
additional port
restricted IPv4 address.

If the server is deployed in a cascaded DHCP server scenario, the host MAY both
act as a DHCP client for another server and DHCP server for other DHCP clients.

A server SHOULD ensure the client is residing on an access link where usage of
port-restricted addresses is not causing problems, before allocating it a
port
restricted IPv4 address.

The server MUST keep lease times per allocated port sets of the shared IP addresses.

7. Applicability

The multiplexing of IP flows in gateway is based on the port numbers used by transport layer protocols such as TCP, UDP, SCTP, and DCCP. However, the protocols
not containing port numbers need special handling in order to be multiplexed correctly.

7.1 ICMP

Those ICMP messages that embed the IP packet that triggered sending of ICMP message, such as ICMP error, can be multiplexed based on the port number present
in the embedded original packet.

ICMP messages not containing embedded packets, like ICMP echo, are TBD.

7.2 6to4

A host utilizing 6to4 [[RFC3056](#)] with port restricted IPv4 addresses MUST pick the
16-bit .SLA ID. value for the 6to4 prefix(es) construction from the pool of allocated port values. The multiplexing gateway MUST then multiplex 6to4 traffic
based on .SLA ID. value as it would multiplex plain IPv4 traffic based on port
values. I.e. for incoming packets the gateway shall look at the destination IPv4
address and the .SLA ID.-field from tunneled IPv6 packet.s destination IPv6 address, and then select the right route as it would have picked the port
number
from a transport layer header.

[7.3](#) Protocols not supported by multiplexing gateway

The case where port range router is not able to multiplex a protocol is similar to
a case where middle box, such as firewall or NAT, blocks traffic it is not able or
willing to pass through. The application is recommended to fallback to UDP encapsulation often used for NAT traversal, for which gateway is able to perform multiplexing.

[8](#). IANA considerations

This document defines new DHCPv4 option as described in [section 3](#): Port Restricted
IP Address Option for DHCPv4 (OPTION-IPv4-PRA) TBD.

9. Security considerations

The solution is generally vulnerable to DoS when used in shared medium or when

access network authentication is not a prerequisite to IP address assignment. The

solution SHOULD only be used on point-to-point links, tunnels, and/or in environments where authentication at link layer is performed before IP address

assignment, and not shared medium.

The cryptographically random port delegation mechanism is vulnerable for blind

attacks initiated by hosts located in the same administrative domain, served by

the same DHCP server, and that are sharing the same public IPv4 address, and therefore have knowledge of the cryptographic key used for that particular public

IPv4 address.

10. Normative References

- [RFC2119] Bradner, S., .Key words for use in RFCs to Indicate Requirement Levels., March 1997
- [RFC2131] Droms, R., "Dynamic Host Configuration Protocol", [RFC2131](#), March 1997
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12. Contributors

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