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**An IPv6 Distributed Client Mobility Management approach using existing  
mechanisms  
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**Abstract**

The use of centralized mobility management approaches -- such as Mobile IPv6 -- poses some difficulties to operators of current and future networks, due to the expected large number of mobile users and their exigent demands. All this has triggered the need for distributed mobility management alternatives, that alleviate operators' concerns allowing for cheaper and more efficient network deployments.

This draft describes a possible way of achieving a distributed mobility behavior with Client Mobile IP, based on Mobile IPv6 and the use of Cryptographic Generated Addresses.

**Requirements Language**

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](#)].

**Status of This Memo**

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Most of the currently standardized IP mobility solutions, like Mobile IPv6 [[RFC6275](#)], or Proxy Mobile IPv6 [[RFC5213](#)] rely to a certain extent on a centralized mobility anchor entity. This centralized network node is in charge of both the control of the network entities involved in the mobility management (i.e., it is a central point for the control signalling), and the user data forwarding (i.e., it is also a central point for the user plane). This makes centralized



mobility solutions prone to several problems and limitations, as identified in [[RFC7333](#)]: longer (sub-optimal) routing paths, scalability problems, signaling overhead (and most likely a longer associated handover latency), more complex network deployment, higher vulnerability due to the existence of a potential single point of failure, and lack of granularity on the mobility management service (i.e., mobility is offered on a per-node basis, not being possible to define finer granularity policies, as for example per-application).

There are basically two main approaches that are being researched now: one aimed at making Mobile IPv6 work in a distributed way, and another one doing the same exercise for Proxy Mobile IPv6 (see the document [[RFC7429](#)]). In this draft we describe a solution to achieve a DMM behavior with a CMIP (MIPv6) solution. This document is based on a research paper of the same authors, called "Flat Access and Mobility Architecture: an IPv6 Distributed Client Mobility Management solution" [[GOB11](#)].

## 2. Terminology

The following terms used in this document are defined in the Mobile IPv6 specification [[RFC6275](#)]:

Home Agent (HA)

Home Link

Home Address (HoA)

Care-of Address (CoA)

Binding Update (BU)

Binding Acknowledgement (BA)

The following terms are defined and used in this document:

DAR (Distributed Anchor Router). First hop routers where the mobile nodes attach to. They also play the role of mobility managers for the IPv6 addresses they anchor.

HDAR (Home Distributed Anchor Router). DAR which plays the role of Home Agent for a particular IPv6 address (i.e., DAR where that IPv6 address is anchored).



### **3. Description of the solution**

Distributed Mobility Management approaches try to overcome the limitations of the traditional centralized mobility management, i.e., Mobile IP, by bringing the mobility anchor closer to the MN. Following this idea, in our approach -- that we call Flat Access and Mobility Architecture (FAMA) -- the MIPv6 centralized home agent is moved to the edge of the network, being deployed in the default gateway of the mobile node. That is, the first elements that provide IP connectivity to a set of MNs are also the mobility managers for those MNs. In the following we will call these access routers Distributed Anchor Routers (DARs).

The diagram in Figure 1 depicts the operations of the proposed solution. When a mobile node attaches to a distributed anchor router, it gets an IPv6 address which is topologically anchored at the DAR (Pref1::addr1 - HoA1). In the scheme we assume the address configuration takes place through a Router Solicitation/Router Advertisement handshake. While attached to this DAR, the mobile can send and receive traffic using HoA1 without traversing any tunneling nor special packet handling.

If the the mobile node moves to a different DAR, it gets a new IPv6 address from the new access router (Pref2::addr2 - HoA2). In case the MN wants to keep the reachability of the IPv6 address(es) it obtained from the previous DAR (note that this decision is dynamic and it is out of scope of this document, it can be done on an application basis for example), the host has to involve its MIPv6 stack, by sending a Binding Update to the DAR where the IPv6 address is anchored, using the address obtained from the current DAR as care-of address (in our example the MN binds HoA2 as CoA to DAR1).



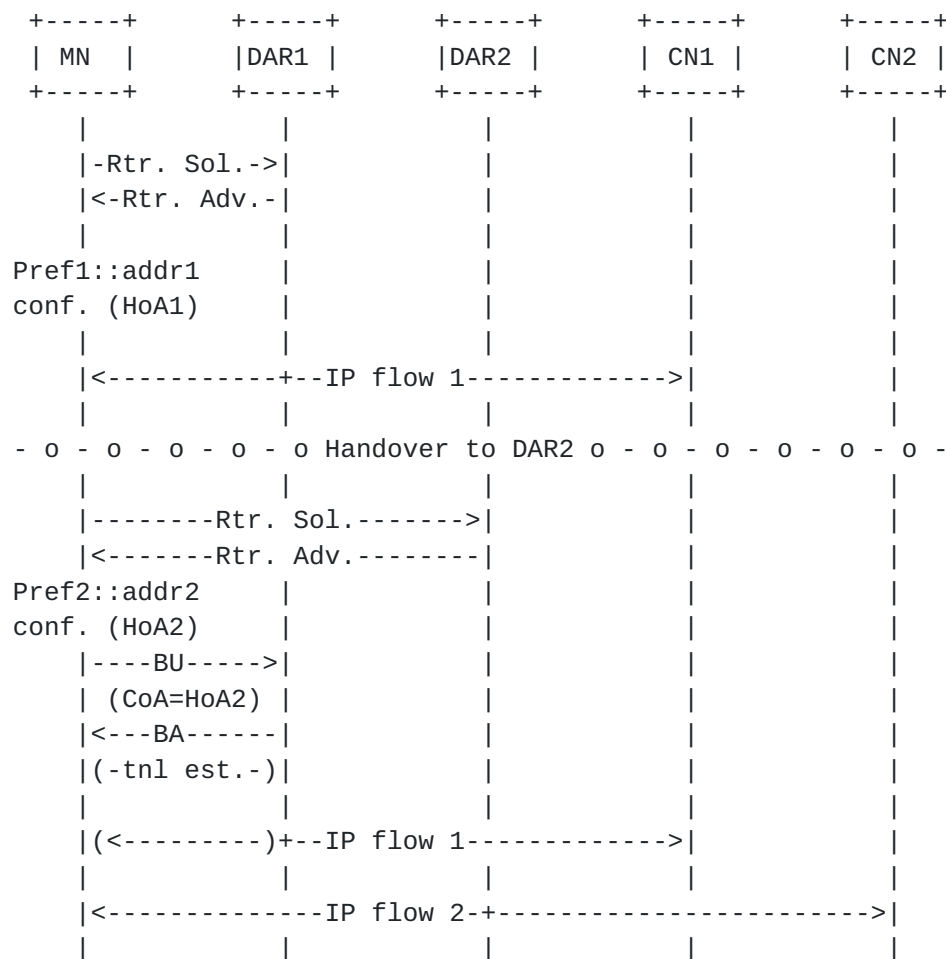


Figure 1: Signalling after the first handover

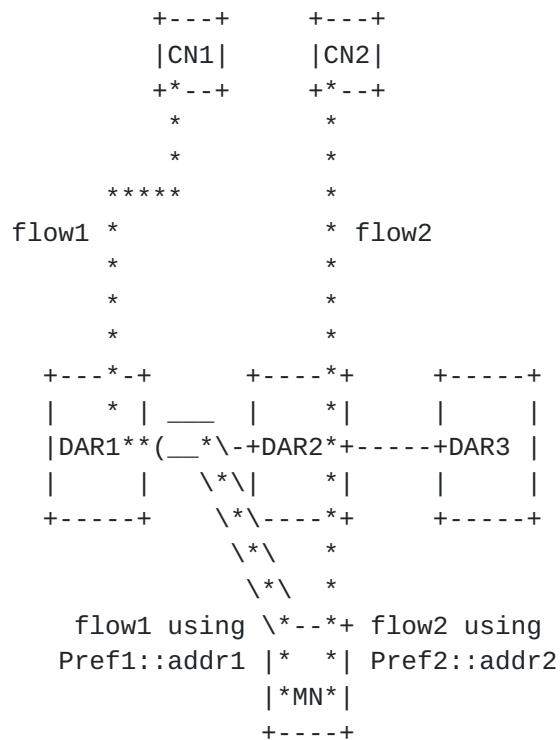
In this way, the IPv6 address that the node wants to maintain in use (Pref1::addr1) plays the role of home address (HoA1), and the DAR from where that address was configured plays the role of Home Agent (for that particular address). In this scenario, old flows are anchored to the previous DAR (DAR1), which is in charge to encapsulate the packets and deliver them to the MN's CoA. The IP tunnel is bi-directional, so the MN does the same when sending packets with the old address (HoA1). Conversely, new IP flows are started using the address configured at the new DAR (HoA2). These flows are handled by the new DAR as a plain IPv6 router.

Note that the FAMA approach basically enables a mobile node to simultaneously handle several IPv6 addresses -- each of them anchored at a different DAR -- ensuring their continuous reachability by using Mobile IPv6 in a distributed fashion (i.e., each access router is a potential home agent for the address it delegates, if required). Figure 2 illustrates the above case in which the MN is connected to





DAR2, but flow1 is anchored at DAR1, because it was started by the MN using the IPv6 address Pref1::addr1, configured when the MN was connected to DAR1. In the same example, the MN starts flow2 using Pref2::addr2, assigned by DAR2.



Operations sequence

Packets flow

Figure 2: MN's flows forwarding in FAMA

The same operations take place if the MN moves to another DAR. The MN obtains a new address (Pref3::addr3 - HoA3), which is indicated as CoA in the BU messages sent by the MN to the previous DARs. This distributed address anchoring is enabled on demand and on a per-address granularity, which means that depending on the user needs, it might be the case that all, some or none of the IPv6 addresses that a mobile node configures while moving within a FAMA domain, are kept reachable and used by the mobile. The scheme in Figure 3 depicts the example where the MN updates all the previous DARs, mapping the corresponding HoA with the new CoA



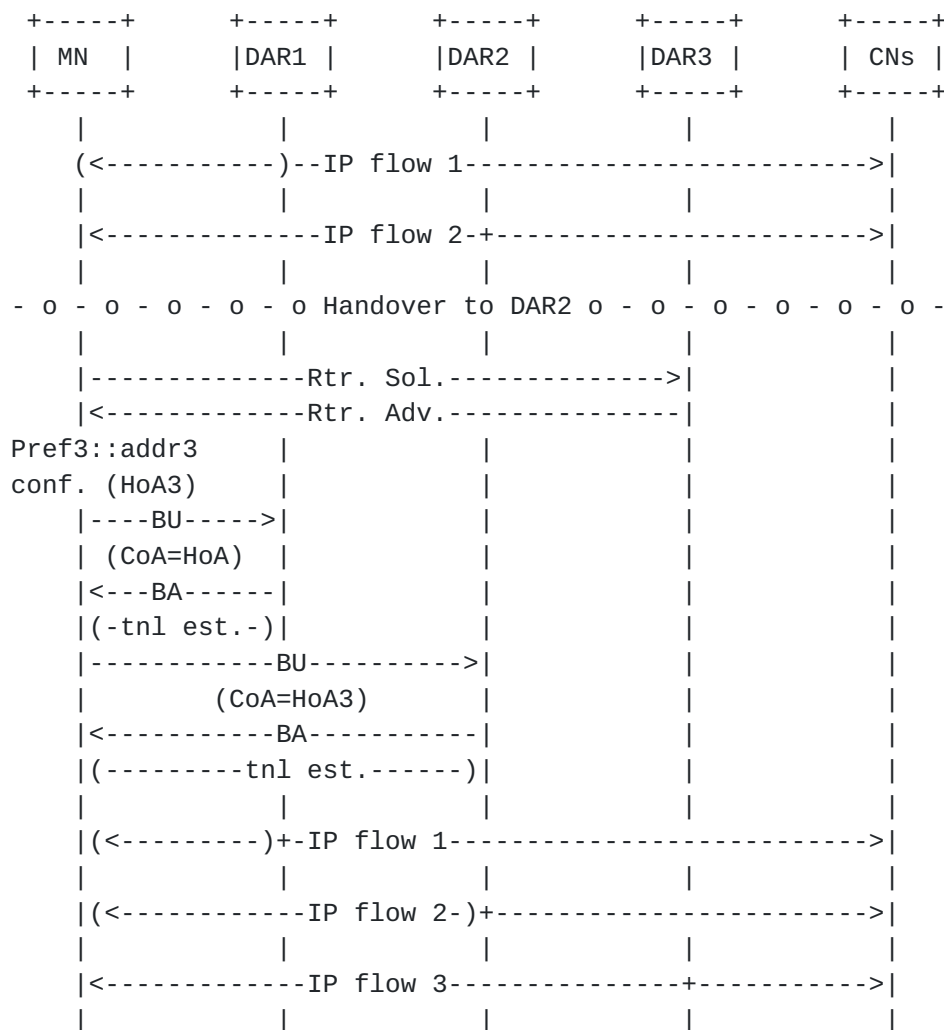


Figure 3: Signalling after a second handover

In traditional Mobile IPv6, the communication between the MN and the HA is secured through IPsec [RFC4877]. Following a similar approach in FAMA is difficult due to the large number of security associations that would be required, since any gateway of the access network can play the role of home agent for any mobile node. In order to overcome this problem and provide authentication between the DAR and the MNs, we propose the use of Cryptographically Generated Addresses [RFC3972] (CGAs), as introduced in [I-D.laganier-mext-cga]. CGAs are a powerful mechanism allowing authentication of the packets and requires no public-key infrastructure, hence it is well-suited for this application.

Following the ideas presented above, every time an MN attaches to a DAR, it configures a CGA from a prefix anchored at the DAR (e.g., by using stateless address auto-configuration mechanisms). This address



can then be used by the MN to establish a communication with a remote Correspondent Node (CN) while attached to that particular DAR. If the mobile then moves to a new DAR (nDAR), the following two cases are possible: i) there is no need for the address that was configured at the previous DAR (pDAR) to survive the movement: in this case there is no further action required; ii) the mobile wants to keep the reachability of the address configured at pDAR: in this case Mobile IPv6 is triggered, and the MN sends a Binding Update (BU) message to the pDAR, using the address configured at the previous DAR as home address, and the address configured at the new DAR as care-of address. This BU includes the CGA parameters and signature [[I-D.laganier-mext-cga](#)], which are used by the receiving DAR to identify the MN as the legitimate owner of the address. Although the use of CGAs does not impose a heavy burden in terms of performance, depending on the number of MNs handled at the DAR, the processing of the CGAs can be problematic. To reduce the complexity of the proposed protocol, we suggest an alternative mechanism to authenticate any subsequent signaling packets exchanged between the MN and the DAR (in case the mobile performs a new attachment to a different DAR). This alternative method relies on the use of a Permanent Home Keygen Token (PHKT), which will be used to generate the Authorization option that the MN has to include in all next Binding Update messages. This token is forwarded to the MN in the Binding Acknowledgment message, sent on reply to the BU. The procedure is depicted in Figure 4. Once the signaling procedure is completed, a bi-directional tunnel is established between the mobile node and the DAR where the IPv6 address is anchored (the "home" DAR -- HDAR -- for that particular address), so the mobile can continue using the IPv6 address.



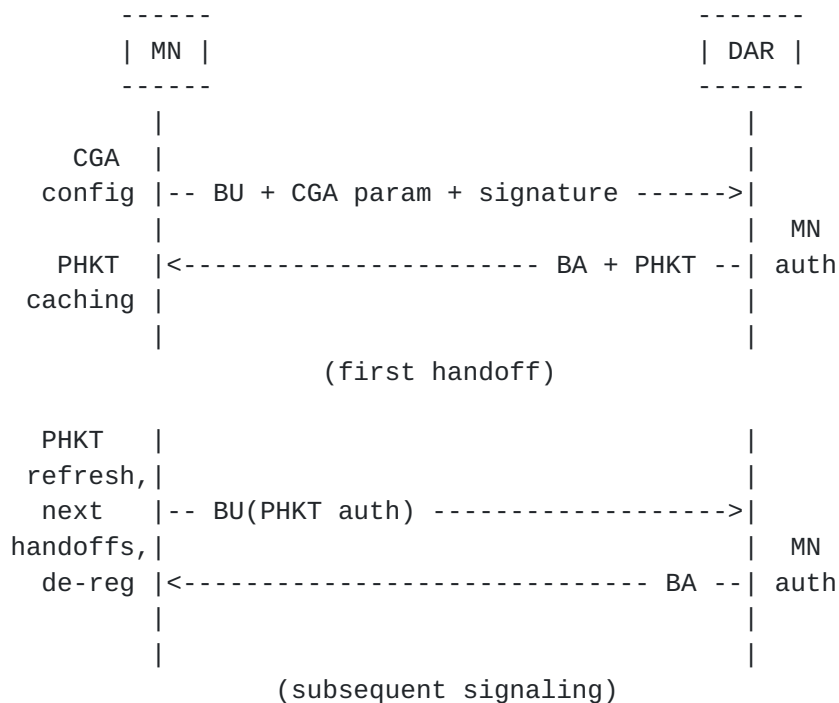


Figure 4: Signaling between the MN and the DAR

In case the MN performs any subsequent movements and it requires to maintain the reachability of an address for which it has already sent a BU, the following BU messages can be secured using the PHKT exchanged before, reducing the computational load at the receiving DAR.

Note that on every attachment of a node to a DAR, the terminal also obtains a new IPv6 address which is topologically anchored at that DAR, and that this address can be used for new communications (avoiding in this way the tunneling required when using an address anchored at a different DAR). A mobile can keep multiple IPv6 addresses active and reachable at a given time, and that requires to send -- every time the MN moves -- a BU message to all the previous DARs that are anchoring the IP flows that the MN wish to maintain.

#### 4. IANA Considerations

TBD.

#### 5. Security Considerations

Although the approach documented in this document is attractive for the reduced signaling overhead caused by the mobility support, it can be misused in some particular scenarios by malicious nodes that wish to export an incorrect CoA in the BU message, since it does provide





proof of the MN's reachability at the visited network. Indeed, the CGA approach assures that the BU message has been sent by the legitimate HoA's owner but it does not make sure that same MN to be reachable at the CoA indicated. This requires further analysis.

A possible approach to provide a more secure solution is the following: a Return Routability procedure similar to the one defined in MIPv6 Route Optimization can be used to mitigate the aforementioned security issue. The Return Routability procedure starts after the handoff. Instead of sending the BU message, the MN sends a Care-of Test Init message (CoTI). This message is replied by the DAR with a Care-Of Test message containing a CoA Keygen Token. The MN can now send a BU using both Home and CoA Keygen tokens to proof its reachability at both the HoA and the CoA. The message and the knowledge of both tokens is a proof that the MN is the legitimate node who has sent the BU and also is reachable at the CoA indicated. As all security improvements, the one proposed incurs in a performance penalty, in this case an increase in the handover delay. Specifically this enhanced security approach requires four messages to be exchanged between the MN and the DAR instead of the two messages of the original solution. In terms of handover delay, it increases it by a factor of two, as the new solution requires to two Round Trip Times (RTTs) to conclude, instead of one.

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## 6.2. Informative References

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## Appendix A. Comparison with Requirement document

In this section we describe how our solution addresses the DMM requirements listed in [[RFC7333](#)].

### A.1. Distributed mobility management

"IP mobility, network access solutions, and forwarding solutions provided by DMM MUST enable traffic to avoid traversing a single mobility anchor far from the optimal route."

In our solution, a DAR is responsible to handle the mobility for those IP flows started when the MN is attached to it. As long as the MN remains connected to the DAR's access links, the IP packets of such flows can benefit from the optimal path. When the MN moves to another DAR, the path becomes non-optimal for ongoing flows, as they are anchored to the previous DAR, but newly started IP sessions are forwarded by the new DAR through the optimal path.



## **A.2. Bypassable network-layer mobility support for each application session**

"DMM solutions MUST enable network-layer mobility, but it MUST be possible for any individual active application session (flow) to not use it. Mobility support is needed, for example, when a mobile host moves and an application cannot cope with a change in the IP address. Mobility support is also needed when a mobile router changes its IP address as it moves together with a host and, in the presence of ingress filtering, an application in the host is interrupted. However, mobility support at the network layer is not always needed; a mobile node can often be stationary, and mobility support can also be provided at other layers. It is then not always necessary to maintain a stable IP address or prefix for an active application session."

Our DMM solution operates at the IP layer, hence upper layers are totally transparent to the mobility operations. In particular, ongoing IP sessions are not disrupted after a change of access network. The routability of the old address is ensured by the IP tunnel with the old DAR. New IP sessions are started with the new address. From the application's perspective, those processes which sockets are bound to a unique IP address do not suffer any impact. For the other applications, the sockets bound to the old address are preserved, whereas next sockets use the new address.

## **A.3. IPv6 deployment**

"DMM solutions SHOULD target IPv6 as the primary deployment environment and SHOULD NOT be tailored specifically to support IPv4, particularly in situations where private IPv4 addresses and/or NATs are used."

The DMM solution we propose targets IPv6 only.

## **A.4. Existing mobility protocols**

"A DMM solution MUST first consider reusing and extending IETF standard protocols before specifying new protocols."

This DMM solution is derived from the operations and messages specified in [[RFC6275](#)], [[RFC3972](#)], and [[I-D.laganier-mext-cga](#)].



#### **A.5. Coexistence with deployed networks/hosts and operability across different networks**

"A DMM solution may require loose, tight, or no integration into existing mobility protocols and host IP stacks. Regardless of the integration level, DMM implementations **MUST** be able to coexist with existing network deployments, end hosts, and routers that may or may not implement existing mobility protocols. Furthermore, a DMM solution **SHOULD** work across different networks, possibly operated as separate administrative domains, when the needed mobility management signaling, forwarding, and network access are allowed by the trust relationship between them"

The proposed solution can provide a fallback mechanism employing legacy Mobile IPv6, for instance forcing the MN to use only one DAR. Moreover, this solution applies when the MN is connected to an administrative domain not supporting trust relationships. Indeed, all the IP sessions can remain anchored to the DARs of the "home" domain. Our solution can be deployed across different domains with trust agreements.

#### **A.6. Operation and management considerations**

"A DMM solution needs to consider configuring a device, monitoring the current operational state of a device, and responding to events that impact the device, possibly by modifying the configuration and storing the data in a format that can be analyzed later.

The proposed solution can re-use existing mechanisms defined for the operation and management of Mobile IPv6.

#### **A.7. Security considerations**

"A DMM solution **MUST** support any security protocols and mechanisms needed to secure the network and to make continuous security improvements. In addition, with security taken into consideration early in the design, a DMM solution **MUST NOT** introduce new security risks or amplify existing security risks that cannot be mitigated by existing security protocols and mechanisms."

The proposed solution uses a CGA-based security system to enable authentication and authorization of mobile hosts.

#### **A.8. Multicast**

"DMM **SHOULD** enable multicast solutions to be developed to avoid network inefficiency in multicast traffic delivery."





This solution does not include multicast traffic in its scope. Nevertheless, it allows combining multicast support solutions, such as local subscription at each DAR, which would result in a flexible distribution scenario.

## **Appendix B. Open DMM platform**

The client-based DMM solution described in this document is available at the Open Distributed Mobility Management (ODMM) project (<http://www.odmm.net>). The ODMM platform is intended to foster DMM development and deployment, by serving as a framework to host open source implementations.

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