

ALTO WG
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LM. Contreras
Telefonica
D. Lachos
C. Rothenberg
Unicamp
S. Randriamasy
Nokia Bell Labs
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Use of ALTO for Determining Service Edge
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Abstract

Service providers are starting to deploy and interconnect computing capabilities across the network for hosting network functions and applications. In distributed computing environments, both computing and topological information are necessary in order to determine the more convenient infrastructure where to deploy such a service or application. This document proposes an initial approach towards the use of ALTO to provide such information and assist the selection of appropriate deployment locations for services and applications.

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[1.](#) Introduction

The advent of virtualization is enabling the operators with a dynamic instantiation of network functions and applications by using different techniques on top of commoditized computation infrastructures, permitting a flexible and on-demand deployment of services, aligned with the actual needs observed as demanded by the customers.

Operators are starting to deploy distributed computing environments in different parts of the network with the objective of addressing the different service needs in terms of latency, bandwidth, processing capabilities, etc. This is translated in the emergence of a number of data centers of different sizes (e.g., large, medium, small) characterized by distinct dimension of CPUs, memory and storage capabilities, as well as bandwidth capacity for forwarding the traffic generated in and out the corresponding data center.

The probable future situation, with the generalization and proliferation of the edge computing approach, will increase the potential footprint where a function or application can be deployed. These different dimensioning rules result in a different unitary cost

per CPU, memory, and storage in each computing environment because of the scale.

All the available distributed computing capabilities can complicate the decision of what infrastructure use for instantiating a given function or application. Such a decision influences not only the resources that are consumed in a given computing environment, but also the network capacity of the path that connects such environment with the rest of the network from traffic source to destination.

It is then essential for a network operator to have mechanisms assisting on the decision by considering a number of constraints related to the function or application to be deployed understanding how a given decision on the computing environment for the service edge affects to the transport network substrate. This would allow to integrate network capabilities in the function placement decision and further optimize performance of the deployed application.

This document proposes the usage of ALTO [[RFC7285](#)] for assisting with such a decision.

2. Computing needs

A given network function or application typically shows certain requirements in terms of processing capabilities (i.e., CPU), as well as volatile memory (i.e., RAM) and storage capacity.

Cloud computing providers, such as Amazon Web Services or Microsoft Azure, typically structure their offerings of computing capabilities by bundling CPU, RAM and storage units as quotas, instances or flavors that can be consumed in an ephemeral or temporal fashion, during the actual lifetime of the required function or application.

This same approach is being taken nowadays for characterizing bundles of resources on the so-called Network Function Virtualization Infrastructure (NFVI) Points of Presence (PoPs) being deployed by the

telco operators. Specifically, the Common Network Function Virtualisation Infrastructure Telecom Taskforce (CNTT) [[CNTT](#)], [[GSMA](#)], jointly hosted by GSMA and the Linux Foundation, is intending to harmonize the definition of above-mentioned computing capability instances or flavors for abstracting capabilities of the underlying NFVI facilitating a more efficient utilization of the infrastructure and simplifying the integration and certification of functions, where certification means the assessment of the expected behavior for a given function according to the level of resources determined by a given flavor.

Focusing on the CNTT ongoing work, the flavors or instances are characterized according to:

- o Type of instance (T): the types of instances are characterized as B (Basic), or N (Network Intensive). The latter can come with extensions for network acceleration for offloading network intensive operations to hardware.
- o Interface Option (I): it refers to the associated bandwidth of the network interface.
- o Compute flavor (F): it refers to a given predefined combination of resources in terms of virtual CPU, RAM, disk, and bandwidth for the management interface.
- o Optional storage extension (S): allows to request additional storage capacity.
- o Optional hardware acceleration characteristics (A): to request specific acceleration capabilities for improving the performance of the infrastructure.

The naming convention of an instance is thus encoded as T.I.F.S.A.

3. Usage of ALTO for determining where to deploy a function or application

ALTO can assist the deployment of a service or application on a specific flavor or instance of the computing substrate by taking into

consideration network cost metrics.

A generic and primary approach is to take into account metrics related to the computing environment, such as availability of resources, unitary cost of those resources, etc.

Nevertheless, the function or application to be deployed on top of a given flavor is interconnected outside the computing environment where it is deployed, also requiring to guarantee transport network requirements to ensure the application performance, such as bandwidth, latency, etc.

The objective then is to leverage on ALTO to provide information about the more convenient execution environments to deploy virtualized network functions or applications, allowing the operator to get a coordinated service edge and transport network recommendation.

[3.1.](#) Integrating compute information in ALTO

CNTT proposes the existence of a catalogue of compute infrastructure profiles collecting the computing capability instances available to be consumed. Such kind of catalogue could be communicated to ALTO or even incorporated to it.

ALTO server queries are required to support T.I.F.S.A encoding in order to retrieve proper maps from ALTO. Additionally, filtered queries for particular characteristics of a flavor could also be supported.

[3.2.](#) Association of compute capabilities to network topology

It is required to associate the location of the available instances with topological information to allow ALTO construct the overall map. The expectation is to manage the network and cloud capabilities by the same entity, handling both network and compute abstractions jointly, producing an integrated map.

At this stage three potential solutions could be considered:

Figure 1: Service Edge Information Exchange

4. Definition of flavors in ALTO property map

The ALTO unified property extension [[DRAFT-PM](#)] generalizes the concept of endpoint properties to domains of other entities through property maps. In the context of the CNTT domain, an ALTO property map could be used to expose T.I.F.S.A information (.e., potential candidate flavors) of available NFVI PoPs where an application or service can be deployed.

Table 1 below shows an illustrative example of an ALTO property map with property values grouped by flavor name.

Flavor Name	Type of instance (T)	Interface Option (I)	Compute flavor (F) {CPU, RAM, disk and bandwidth}	S.	A.
Small-1	Basic	{1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7,	{1,512 MB,1 GB,1 Gbps}	...	...

Small-2	Network Intensive	{8, 9 Gbps}	{1,512 MB,1 GB,1 Gbps}	...	...
Medium-1	Network Intensive	{25, 50, 75, 100, 125, 150 Gbps}	{2,4 GB,40 GB,1 Gbps}	...	...
Large-1	Compute Intensive	{50, 100, 150, 200, 250, 300 Gbps}	{4,8 GB,80 GB,1 Gbps}	...	...
Large-2	Compute Intensive	{100, 200, 300, 400, 500, 600 Gbps}	{8,16 GB,160 GB,1 Gbps}	...	...
...

Table 1: ALTO Property Map

5. IANA Considerations

This document includes no request to IANA.

6. Security Considerations

TBD.

7. Conclusions

Telco networks will increasingly contain a number of interconnected data centers, of different size and characteristics, allowing flexibility in the dynamic deployment of functions and applications for advance services. The overall objective of this document is to begin a discussion in the ALTO WG regarding the suitability of the ALTO protocol for determining where to deploy a function or application in distributed computing environments. The result of such discussions will be reflected in future versions of this draft.

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Authors' Addresses

Luis M. Contreras
Telefonica
Ronda de la Comunicacion, s/n
Madrid 28050
Spain

Email: luismiguel.contrerasmurillo@telefonica.com
URI: <http://lmcontreras.com/>

Danny Alex Lachos Perez
University of Campinas
Av. Albert Einstein 400
Campinas, Sao Paulo 13083-970
Brazil

Email: dlachosp@dca.fee.unicamp.br
URI: <https://intrig.dca.fee.unicamp.br/danny-lachos/>

Christian Esteve Rothenberg
University of Campinas
Av. Albert Einstein 400
Campinas, Sao Paulo 13083-970
Brazil

Email: chesteve@dca.fee.unicamp.br
URI: <https://intrig.dca.fee.unicamp.br/christian/>

Sabine Randriamasy
Nokia Bell Labs
Route de Villejust
Nozay 91460
France

Email: sabine.randriamasy@nokia-bell-labs.com

