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IGP Extension for 5G Edge Computing Service
draft-dunbar-lsr-5g-edge-compute-06

Abstract

This draft describes using additional site capacity and preference related metrics to influence the SPF and using Flexible Algorithms to indicate the topologies those metrics are applied. The purpose is to differentiate multiple paths with similar routing distance to one destination in 5G Local Data Network (LDN)to achieve optimal performance.

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1. Introduction

In 5G Edge Computing (EC) environment, it is common for an application that needs low latency to be instantiated on multiple servers close in proximity to UEs (User Equipment). Those applications instances can be behind one or multiple application-layer load balancers. When they have relatively short flows that can go to any instance, having the cluster of them at different locations share the same IP address can minimize the impact to DNS and achieve optimal forwarding that leverages network conditions. E.g., Kubernetes for data center networking uses one single Virtual IP address for a cluster of instances of microservices so that the network can forward via multiple paths towards one single destination.

This draft describes using additional site costs to influence the shortest path computation for a specific set of prefixes. The site costs can be a group of metrics, or one aggregated cost computed based on a configured algorithm. As there are a small number of egress routers having those prefixes (or destinations) that need to incorporate site costs in SPF computation, Flexible

Algorithms [LSR-FlexAlgo] is used to indicate the need for the site costs to be considered for the specific topologies. Flexible algorithms provide mechanisms for topologies to use different IGP path algorithms.

1.1. Unbalanced Distribution due to UE Mobility

UEs' frequent moving from one 5G site to another can make it difficult to plan where the App Servers should be hosted. When a group of App servers at one location, which can be behind an application-layer load balancer, are heavily utilized, the instances for the same application at another location can be under-utilized. The difference in the routing distance to reach multiple sites where the application instances are instantiated might be relatively small in 5G LDN environment. The site capacity and preferences can be more significant than the routing distance from the application's latency and performance perspective.

Since the condition can change in days or weeks, it is difficult for the application controller to anticipate the moving and adjusting relocation of application instances.

1.2. ANYCAST in 5G EC Environment

ANYCAST is assigning the same IP address for multiple instances at different locations. Using ANYCAST can eliminate the single point of failure and bottleneck at load balancers or DNS. Another benefit is removing the dependency on how UEs resolve IP addresses for their applications. Some UEs (or clients) might use stale cached IP addresses for an extended period.

But having the same IP address at multiple locations of the 5G Edge Computing environment can be problematic because all those locations can be close in proximity. There might be a tiny difference in the routing distance to reach an application instance attached to a different edge router.

1.3. Scope of the Document

The draft is for scenarios where applications or micro services are instantiated at multiple locations behind one or multiple application layer load balancers. They have relative short flows that can go to any instances.

Under this scenario, multiple instances for the same type of services can be assigned with the same IP address, so that network condition can be utilized to achieve optimal forwarding.

From IP network perspective, application layer load balancers and app servers all appear as IP addresses. Throughout this document, the term "app server" can represent the load balancer in front of a cluster of app server instances, app server instances, or app server.

Note: for the ease of description, the EC (Edge Computing) server, Application server, App server are used interchangeably throughout this document.

2. Conventions used in this document

A-ER: Egress Edge Router to an Application Server, [A-ER] is used to describe the last router that the Application Server is attached. For 5G EC environment, the A-ER can be the gateway router to a (mini) Edge Computing Data Center.

Application Server: An application server is a physical or virtual server that hosts the software system for the application.

Application Server Location: Represent a cluster of servers at one location serving the same Application. One application may have a Layer 7 Load balancer, whose address(es) are reachable from an external IP network, in front of a set of application servers. From IP network perspective, this whole group of servers is considered as the Application server at the location.

Edge Application Server: used interchangeably with Application Server throughout this document.

EC: Edge Computing

Edge Hosting Environment: An environment providing the support required for Edge Application Server's execution.

NOTE: The above terminologies are the same as those used in 3GPP TR 23.758

Edge DC: Edge Data Center, which provides the Edge Computing Hosting Environment. It might be co-located with 5G Base Station and not only host 5G core functions, but also host frequently used Edge server instances.

gNB next generation Node B

LDN: Local Data Network

PSA: PDU Session Anchor (UPF)

SSC: Session and Service Continuity

UE: User Equipment

UPF: User Plane Function

The key words "MUST", "MUST NOT", "REQUIRED", "SHALL", "SHALL NOT", "SHOULD", "SHOULD NOT", "RECOMMENDED", "NOT RECOMMENDED", "MAY", and "OPTIONAL" in this document are to be interpreted as described in BCP 14 [RFC2119] [RFC8174] when, and only when, they appear in all capitals, as shown here.

3. Solution Overview

The proposed solution is for the egress edge router (A-ER) with the application instances directly attached to

- advertise the aggregated site cost via IP prefix reachability TLV associated with the (anycast) prefix. [note: the aggregated cost in this version of the draft is one value. Some deployment scenarios could have a set of values as the site cost.]

- use a Flag in the Flexible Algorithm TLV to indicate that the aggregated site cost needs to influence the SPF to reach the Prefix.

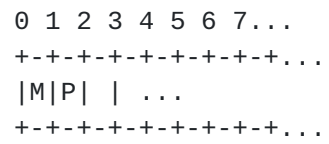
The aggregated site cost associated with a prefix (i.e., ANYCAST prefix) is computed based on the Capacity Index, the Preference Index, and other constraints by a consistent algorithm across all A-ERs. The capacity and preference indexes are configured to the egress routers to which the prefix is attached.

The solution assumes that the 5G EC controller or management system is aware of the ANYCAST addresses that need optimized forwarding. Only the addresses that match with the ACLs configured by the 5G EC controller will have their aggregated site cost advertised.

4. New Flags added to FAD Flags Sub-TLV

A New flag (P-flag) is added to indicate that the aggregated site cost needs to be considered for the SPF to the prefix for a specific topology. One specific topology can consist of a subset of routers within one single IGP domain.

Flags:



The detailed algorithm of integrating the routing distance and the aggregated site cost for the shortest path is out of the scope of this document.

5. Minimum Interval for Aggregated Site Cost Advertisement

The aggregated site cost associated with a prefix (i.e., ANYCAST prefix) can be a value configured on the router to which the prefix is attached. The aggregated site cost can be computed based on an algorithm configured on router for

specific prefixes. The detailed algorithm of computing the aggregated site cost is out of the scope of document.

As the cost change can impact the path computation, there is a Minimum Interval for Metrics Change Advertisement which is configured on the routers to avoid route oscillations. Default is 30s.

The aggregated site cost change rate is comparable with the rate of adding or removing application instances at locations to adapt to the workload distribution changes. The rate of change could be in days or weeks. On rare occasions, there might need rate changes in hours.

6. Aggregate Site Cost Advertisement in OSPF

- IPv4: OSPFv2
  A new Aggregated Cost Sub-TLV needs to be added to OSPFv2 Extended Prefix TLV [RFC7684]

- IPv6: OSPFv3
  A new sub-TLV can be appended to the E-Intra-Area-Prefix-LSA, E-Inter-Area-Prefix-LSA, E-AS-External-LSA, and E-Type-7-LSA [RFC8362] to carry the Aggregated Cost.

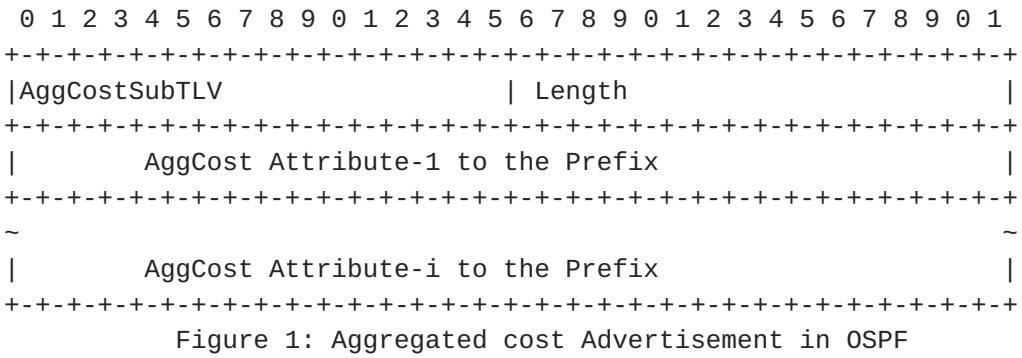


Figure 1: Aggregated cost Advertisement in OSPF

7. "Site-Cost" Advertisement in IS-IS

Aggregated Cost can be appended as subTLV to the Extended IP Reachability TLV 135 for IPv4 [RFC5305] and 236 for IPv6 [RFC5308].

For Multi-Topology with non-zero IDs, the Aggregated Cost SubTLV can be carried by Multi-topology TLV 235 for IPv4 and 237 for IPv6 [RFC5120].

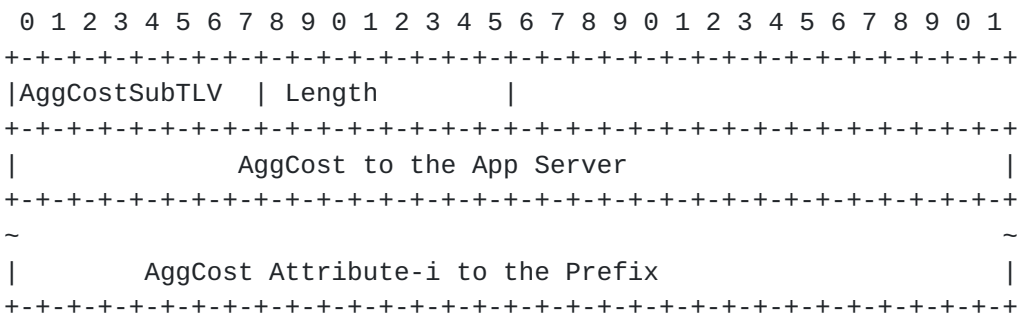


Figure 2: Aggregated cost Advertisement in IS-IS

8. Alternative method for Distributing Aggregated Cost

Section 6 and Section 7 demonstrate different ways for OSPFv2, OSPFv3, and ISIS to propagate the aggregated cost. It would be better if the aggregated cost could be advertised the same way, regardless of OSPFv2, OSPFv3, or ISIS.

Draft [draft-wang-lsr-stub-link-attributes] introduces the Stub-Link TLV for OSPFv2/v3 and ISIS protocol respectively. Considering the interfaces on an edge router that connects to the EC servers are normally configured as passive interfaces, these IP-layer App-metrics can also be advertised as the attributes of the passive/stub link. The associated prefixes can then be advertised in the "Stub-Link TLV" that is defined in [draft-wang-lsr-stub-link-attributes]. All the associated prefixes share the same characteristic of the link. Other link related sub-TLVs defined in [RFC8920] can also be attached and applied to the calculation of path to the associated prefixes."

Section 6 for the advertisement of AppMetaData Metric can also utilize the Stub-Link TLV that defined in [draft-wang-lsr-stub-link-attributes]

9. Manageability Considerations

To be added.

10. Security Considerations

To be added.

11. IANA Considerations

The following Sub-TLV types need to be added by IANA to FlexAlgo.

- AggCostSubTLV Type for ISIS, OSPF (TBD1): IPv4 or IPv6

P-flag added to FAD Flags Sub-TLV to indicate that the Site-Cost Metrics is included in deriving Constrained IGP path to the prefix.

12. References

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12.2. Informative References

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13. Appendix A:5G Edge Computing Background

The network connecting the 5G EC servers with the 5G Base stations consists of a small number of dedicated routers that form the 5G Local Data Network (LDN) to enhance the performance of the EC services.

When a User Equipment (UE) initiates application packets using the destination address from a DNS reply or its cache, the packets from the UE are carried in a PDU session through 5G Core [5GC] to the 5G UPF-PSA (User Plan Function - PDU Session Anchor). The UPF-PSA decapsulates the 5G GTP outer header, performs NAT sometimes, before handing the packets from the UEs to the adjacent router, also known as the ingress router to the EC LDN, which is responsible for forwarding the packets to the intended destinations.

When the UE moves out of coverage of its current gNB (next-generation Node B) (gNB1), the handover procedure is initiated, which includes the 5G SMF (Session Management Function) selecting a new UPF-PSA [3GPP TS 23.501 and TS 23.502]. When the handover process is complete, the IP point of attachment is to the new UPF-PSA. The UE's IP address stays the same unless moving to different operator domain. 5GC may maintain a path from the old UPF to the new UPF for a short time for SSC [Session and Service Continuity] mode 3 to make the handover process more seamless.

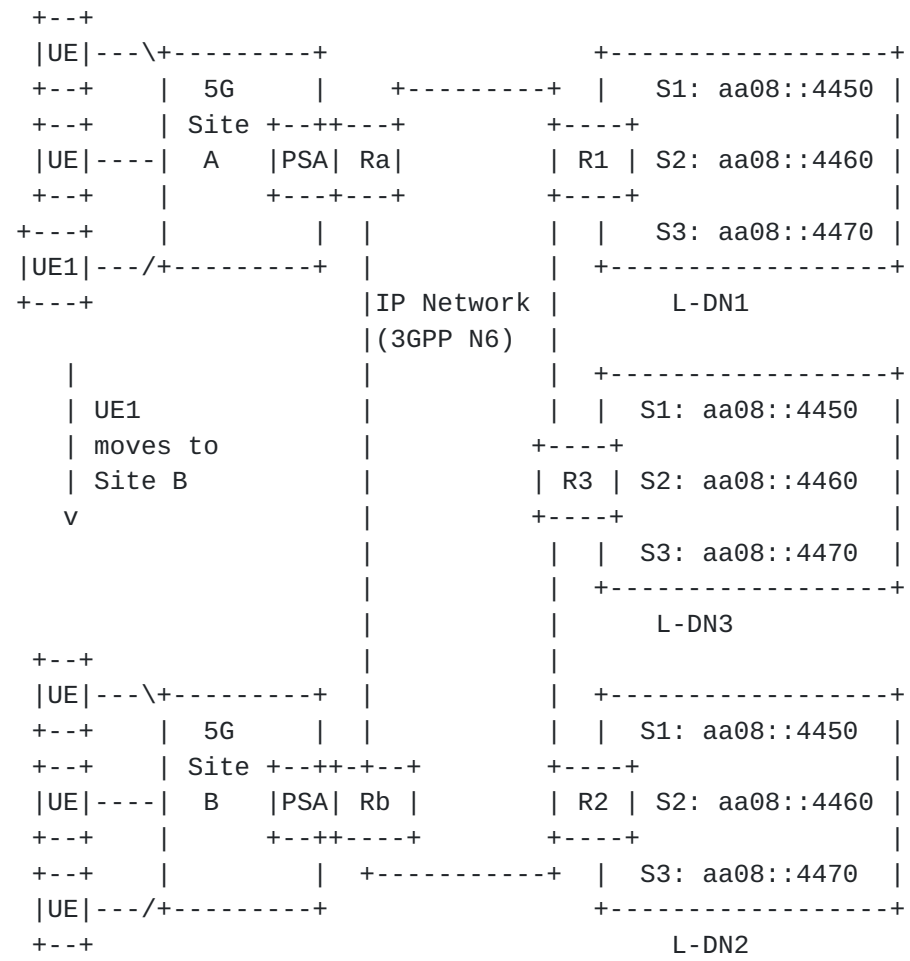


Figure 10: App Servers in different edge DCs

13.1. Metrics to change traffic flow patterns

When UEs pattern changes, the Application controller can instantiate more instances at certain locations to accommodate higher demand.

However, network layer can offer a simpler solution. By adjusting the site cost for the prefix at specific egress routers, IGP distribution of those site cost plus the flex algorithm can increase (or decrease) flows for the specific prefixes towards the certain locations.

- Capacity Index:
  a numeric number, configured on all A-ERs in the domain consistently, is used to represent the capacity of an EC server attached to an A-ER. The IP addresses exposed to the A-ER can be the App Layer Load balancers that have many instances attached. At other sites, the IP address exposed is the server itself.
- Site preference index:
  Is used to describe some sites are more preferred than others. For example, a site with less leasing cost has a higher preference value. Note: the preference value is configured on all A-ERs in the domain consistently by the Domain Controller.

13.2. Reason for using IGP Based Solution

Here are some benefits of using IGP to propagate the IP Layer App-Metrics:

- Intermediate routers can utilize the aggregated cost to reach the EC Servers attached to different egress edge nodes, especially:
  - The path to the optimal egress edge node can be more accurate or shorter.
  - Convergence is shorter when there is any failure along the way towards the optimal ANYCAST server.
  - When there is any failure at the intended ANYCAST server, all the packets in transit can be optimally forwarded to another App Server attached to a different egress edge router.
- Doesn't need the ingress nodes to establish tunnels with egress edge nodes.

There are limitations of using IGP too, such as:

- The IGP approach might not suit well to 5G EC LDN operated by multiple ISPs.
  For LDN operated by multiple IPSs, BGP should be used. [BGP-5G-AppMetaData] describes the BGP UPDATE message to propagate IP Layer App-Metrics crossing multiple ISPs.

13.3. Flow Affinity to an ANYCAST server

When multiple servers with the same IP address (ANYCAST) are attached to different A-ERs, Flow Affinity means routers sending the packets of the same flow to the same A-ER even if the cost towards the A-ER is no longer optimal.

Many commercial routers support some forms of flow affinity to ensure packets belonging to one flow be forwarded along the same path.

Editor's note: for IPv6 traffic, Flow Affinity can be achieved by routers forwarding the packets with the same Flow Label extracted from the IPv6 Header along the same path.

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