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[TOC](#)

**LISP Mapping Versioning**  
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**Abstract**

The present document sketches an optional approach to provide in-packet information about EID-to-RLOC mappings used to encapsulate LISP data packets. The proposed approach is based on associating a version number to EID-to-RLOC mappings and transport such a version number in the LISP specific header of LISP-encapsulated packets. This versioning approach is particularly useful to inform communicating xTRs about modification of the mappings used to encapsulate packets. Modification of mappings could mean adding/removing an RLOC, or just a modification in the reachability, priority, or weight of one or more RLOCs. Each time a mapping is modified, a new version number is generated and propagated in the LISP data packet. The use of version numbers allows to avoid repeated Map-Request upon mappings change, limits the interaction between Control and Data planes, improves security, offer support for caching on Map-Servers, and could be used also in mobile scenarios.

The proposed mechanism is optional and does not need any modification on the base LISP encapsulation. Rather, it uses one of the reserved bits of the LISP specific header and overloads the Locator Status Bits. Similarly, no modification are necessary in the base LISP Map-Reply records. LISP versioning uses part of the reserved bits. In both cases, LISP encapsulation and Map-Reply records, bits used for LISP versioning can be safely ignored by xTRs that do not support the mechanism. Further, mappings can be distributed as usual through both existing and future mapping distribution system (e.g., ALT). The infrastructure build by each specific mapping distribution system does not change anyhow. Even more, existing mapping distribution protocol are able to rely LISP control plane packets containing version numbers and do not need modifications. All of these features make LISP versioning a completely transparent optional mechanism with respect to the LISP base specification.

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## Table of Contents

- [1.](#) Requirements notation
- [2.](#) Introduction
- [3.](#) EID-to-RLOC Mapping Version Number
  - [3.1.](#) Mapping Version Numbers wrap-around
- [4.](#) Dealing with Version Numbers
  - [4.1.](#) Handling Destination Mapping Version Number
  - [4.2.](#) Handling Source Mapping Version Number
- [5.](#) LISP header and Mapping Version Numbers
- [6.](#) Map Record and Mapping Version Number
- [7.](#) Benefits and case studies for Mapping Versioning
  - [7.1.](#) Mapping Versioning to simplify LISP implementation
  - [7.2.](#) Synchronization of different xTRs
  - [7.3.](#) Map Versioning and unidirectional traffic
  - [7.4.](#) Mapping Versioning and interworking
  - [7.5.](#) Mapping Versioning vs. Checksum

- [7.6.](#) Mapping Versioning and mobility
- [8.](#) Incremental deployment and implementation status
- [9.](#) Mapping Versioning and path-liveness
- [10.](#) Security Considerations
  - [10.1.](#) Mapping Versioning against traffic disruption
  - [10.2.](#) Mapping Versioning against reachability information DoS
- [11.](#) Acknowledgements
- [12.](#) References
  - [12.1.](#) Normative References
  - [12.2.](#) Informative References
- [§](#) Authors' Addresses

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## 1. Requirements notation

[TOC](#)

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 [\[RFC2119\] \(Bradner, S., "Key words for use in RFCs to Indicate Requirement Levels," March 1997.\)](#).

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## 2. Introduction

[TOC](#)

The present document introduces the use of version numbers in order to provide information on a change in the EID-to-RLOC mappings used in the LISP ([\[I-D.ietf-lisp\] \(Farinacci, D., Fuller, V., Meyer, D., and D. Lewis, "Locator/ID Separation Protocol \(LISP\)," January 2010.\)](#)) context to perform encapsulation. The mechanism is optional and totally transparent to xTRs not supporting such a functionality. The basic mechanism is to associate version numbers to each mapping and transport such a version number in the LISP specific header. When a mapping changes, a new version number is assigned to the updated mapping. A change in an EID-to-RLOC mapping can be a change in the RLOCs set, by adding or removing one or more RLOCs, but it can also be a change in the priority or weight of one or more RLOCs. The change can even consist in the reachability of one or more RLOCs. Reachability information is intended from the local-domain perspective, and can be obtained for instance monitoring IGP's routing tables. This should not be confused with the intra-domain "Locator Path Liveness problem" described in [\[I-D.meyer-loc-id-implications\] \(Meyer, D. and D. Lewis, "Architectural Implications of Locator/ID Separation," January 2009.\)](#).

With this approach, LISP-encapsulated data packets contain the version number of the mappings used to select the RLOCs in the outer header (both source and destination). These version numbers are contained in the second 32-bits of the LISP header and indicated a specific bit in the reserved flags (first 8 bits of the LISP header. Details about the header are described in [Section 5 \(LISP header and](#)

[Mapping Version Numbers](#)). Note that it is not all packets need to carry version numbers.

When an ITR encapsulates a packet, it puts in the LISP-specific header two version numbers:

1. The version number assigned to the mapping (contained in the EID-to-RLOC Database) used to select the source RLOC.
2. The version number assigned to the mapping (contained in the EID-to-RLOC Cache) used to select the destination RLOC.

This operation is two-fold. On the one hand it enables the ETR receiving the packet to know if the ITR that sent it is using the latest mapping for the destination EID. If it is not the case the ETR can send to the ITR a Map-Request containing the updated mapping or invoking a Map-Request from the ITR (both cases are already defined in [\[I-D.ietf-lisp\] \(Farinacci, D., Fuller, V., Meyer, D., and D. Lewis, "Locator/ID Separation Protocol \(LISP\)," January 2010.\)](#)). In this way the ITR can update its cache. On the other hand, it enables the ETR receiving the packet to know if it has in its cache the latest mapping for the source EID. If it is not the case a Map-Request can be send.

With Mapping Versioning there is no need to re-design the mapping distribution infrastructure, which is always done through the mapping distribution protocol (e.g., CONS, TREE, ALT [\[I-D.ietf-lisp-alt\] \(Fuller, V., Farinacci, D., Meyer, D., and D. Lewis, "LISP Alternative Topology \(LISP+ALT\)," January 2010.\)](#)). The mappings are distributed as usual through the Map-Request/Map-Reply message exchange. Map-Request and Map-Reply messages can carry mapping version in bits that are reserved (in the current version of the LISP specifications). Details on how to carry mapping version numbers in those messages are given in section [Section 6 \(Map Record and Mapping Version Number\)](#).

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### 3. EID-to-RLOC Mapping Version Number

[TOC](#)

The EID-to-RLOC Mapping Version Number consist in an unsigned 16-bit integer. The version number is assigned in a per-mapping fashion, meaning that different mappings will have assigned a different version number, which is also updated independently. An update in the version number (i.e., a newer version) consist in incrementing by one the older version number. The initial version number of a new mapping can be randomly generated.

The space of version numbers has a circular order where half of the version numbers is greater than the current mapping version number and the other half is smaller than current mapping version number. In a more formal way, assuming we have two version numbers V1 and V2 and that the numbers are expressed on N bits, the following three cases may happen:

| **V1 = V2** : This is the exact match case.

**V1 < V2 :**  
 True if and only if  $V1 < V2 < (V1 + 2^{(N-1)})$ .

**V1 > V2 :** True if and only if  $V1 > V2 > (V1 - 2^{(N-1)})$ .

Using 16 bits, as proposed in this document, and if the Mapping Version Number is 0, versions in  $[1; (2^{15})-1]$  are greater and versions in  $[2^{15}; (2^{16})-1]$  are smaller.

### 3.1. Mapping Version Numbers wrap-around

[TOC](#)

The proposed 16 bits size for the Mapping Version Number based on the assumption that Map-Requests are rate limited with a granularity of seconds. Using a granularity of seconds and assuming as worst case that a new version is issued each second, it takes around 18 hours before the versions wraps around, which is a reasonable time. Alternatively a granularity of minutes can also be used, as for the TTL of the Map-Reply ([\[I-D.ietf-lisp\] \(Farinacci, D., Fuller, V., Meyer, D., and D. Lewis, "Locator/ID Separation Protocol \(LISP\)," January 2010.\)](#)). Using a granularity of minutes leads to very long time before wrap-around. Hereafter there is a table with a rough estimation of the time before wrap-around happens considering different sizes of the Mapping Version Number and different time granularity.

Version Number Size (bits)	Time before wrap around	
	Granularity: Minutes	Granularity: Seconds
32	8171 Years	136 Years
30	2042 Years	34 Years
24	31 Years	194 Days
16	45 Days	18 Hours
15	22 Days	9 Hours
14	11 Days	4 Hours

**Figure 1: Estimation of time before wrap-around**

[TOC](#)

## 4. Dealing with Version Numbers

The main idea of using Mapping Version Numbers is that whenever there is a change in the mapping (e.g., adding/removing RLOCs, a change in the weights due to new TE policies, or a change in the priorities) or an ISP realizes that one or more of its own RLOCs are not reachable anymore from a local perspective (e.g., through IGP, or policy changes) the ISP updates the mapping with a new mapping version number.

In order to announce in a data-driven fashion that the mapping has been updated, mapping version numbers used to create the outer IP header of the LISP encapsulated packet are embedded in the LISP specific header. This means that the header needs to contain two mapping version numbers:

\*A first one from the EID-to-RLOC mapping in the EID-to-RLOC Database used to select the source RLOC, and called Source Mapping Version Number.

\*A second one from the EID-to-RLOC mapping in the EID-to-RLOC Cache used to select the destination RLOC, and called Destination Mapping Version Number.

By embedding both Source Mapping Version Number and Destination Mapping Version Number an ETR can perform the following checks:

1. The ITR has an up-to-date mapping in its cache for the destination EID and is performing encapsulation correctly.
2. The mapping in the local ETR cache for the source EID is up-to-date.

If one or both of the above conditions do not hold, the ETR can send a Map-Request either to make the ITR aware that a new mapping is available (see [Section 4.1 \(Handling Destination Mapping Version Number\)](#)) or to update local mapping in the cache (see section [Section 4.2 \(Handling Source Mapping Version Number\)](#)).

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### 4.1. Handling Destination Mapping Version Number

[TOC](#)

When an ETR receives a packet, the Destination Mapping Version Number relates to the mapping for the destination EID for which the ETR is a RLOC. This mapping is part of the ETR LISP Database. Since the ETR is authoritative for the mapping, it has the correct and up-to-date Destination Mapping Version Number. A check on this version number is done, where the following cases can arise:

\*The packets arrive with the same Destination Mapping Version Number stored in the EID-to-RLOC Database. This is the regular case. The ITR sending the packet has in its EID-to-RLOC Cache an up-to-date mapping. No further actions are needed.

\*The packet arrives with a Destination Mapping Version Number greater (i.e., newer) than the one stored in the EID-to-RLOC Database. Since the ETR is authoritative on the mapping, this means that someone is not behaving correctly w.r.t. the specifications, thus the packets carries a not valid version number and can be silently dropped.

\*The packets arrive with an Destination Mapping Version Number smaller (i.e., older) than the one stored in the EID-to-RLOC Database. This means that the ITR sending the packet has an old mapping in its EID-to-RLOC Cache containing stale information. Further actions are needed. The ITR sending the packet must be informed that a newer mapping is available. This is done with a "Map-Request" message sent back to the ITR. The Map-Request will piggy-back the newer mapping. This is not a new mechanism, how to piggy-back mappings in Map-Request messages is already described in [\[I-D.ietf-lisp\] \(Farinacci, D., Fuller, V., Meyer, D., and D. Lewis, "Locator/ID Separation Protocol \(LISP\)," January 2010.\)](#). These Map-Request message should be rate limited (rate limitation policies are also described in [\[I-D.ietf-lisp\] \(Farinacci, D., Fuller, V., Meyer, D., and D. Lewis, "Locator/ID Separation Protocol \(LISP\)," January 2010.\)](#)). The gain introduced by Mapping Version Numbers is that after a certain number of retries, if the Destination Mapping Version Number in the packets is not updated, packet can be silently dropped because either the ITR is refusing to use the mapping for which the ETR is authoritative or it might be some form of attack. Note that the rule can be even more restrictive. If the mapping has been the same for a period of time as long as the TTL (defined in LISP [\[I-D.ietf-lisp\] \(Farinacci, D., Fuller, V., Meyer, D., and D. Lewis, "Locator/ID Separation Protocol \(LISP\)," January 2010.\)](#)) of the previous version of the mapping, all packets arriving with an old mapping version can be silently dropped right away without issuing any Map-Request. Indeed, if the new mapping with the updated version number has been stable for at least the same time as the TTL of the older mapping, all the entries in the caches of ITRs must have expired. If packets with old mapping version number are still received, the reason is that either someone has not respected the TTL, or it is a spoof. In both cases this is not valid behavior w.r.t. the specifications and the packet can be silently dropped.

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## 4.2. Handling Source Mapping Version Number

[TOC](#)

When an ETR receives a packet, the Source Mapping Version Number relates to the mapping for the source EID for which the ITR is authoritative. If the ETR has an entry in its LISP Cache a check is performed and the following cases can arise:

\*The packet arrives with the same Source Mapping Version Number stored in the LISP Cache. This is the correct regular case. The ETR has in its cache an up-to-date copy of the mapping. No further actions are needed.

\*The packet arrives with a Source Mapping Version Number greater (i.e., newer) than the one stored in the local LISP Cache. This means that ETR has in its cache a mapping that is stale and needs to be updated. The packet is considered valid but further actions are needed. In particular a Map-Request must be sent to get the new mapping for the source EID. This is a normal Map-Request message and must respect the specifications in [\[I-D.ietf-lisp\] \(Farinacci, D., Fuller, V., Meyer, D., and D. Lewis, "Locator/ID Separation Protocol \(LISP\)," January 2010.\)](#).

\*The packet arrives with a Source Mapping Version Number smaller (i.e., older) than the one stored in the local LISP Cache. Such a case is not valid w.r.t. the specifications. Indeed, if the mapping is already present in the LISP Cache, this means that an explicit Map-Request has been send and a Map-Reply has been received from an authoritative source. Assuming that the mapping system is not corrupted anyhow, the mapping version in the LISP Cache is the correct one, hence the packet is not valid and can be silently dropped.

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## 5. LISP header and Mapping Version Numbers

[TOC](#)

In order for the versioning approach to work, the LISP specific header has to carry both Source Mapping Version Number and Destination Mapping Version Number. This can be done by using one bit (indicated by V) of the reserved flags to state that the second 32 bits of the LISP header have to be interpreted as two version numbers of 16 bits each. The Source Version Number is carried in the 16 most significant bits of the second 32-bits of the LISP header. The Destination Version Number is carried in the 16 most significant bits of the second 32-bits of the LISP header.

Hereafter is the example of LISP header carrying version numbers in the case of IPv4-in-IPv4 encapsulation. The same setting can be used for any other case (IPv4-in-IPv6, IPv6-in-IPv4, IPv6-in-IPv6).







This is a simple change to carry the version number assigned to the mapping in this message and works perfectly with xTR that do not support mapping versioning, since they can simply ignore those bits. Furthermore, existing and future mapping distribution protocol (e.g., ALT [\[I-D.ietf-lisp-alt\]](#) (Fuller, V., Farinacci, D., Meyer, D., and D. Lewis, "LISP Alternative Topology (LISP+ALT)," January 2010.)) are able to carry version numbers without needing any modification. The same applies to the LISP Map Server ([\[I-D.ietf-lisp-ms\]](#) (Fuller, V. and D. Farinacci, "LISP Map Server," October 2009.)) which will still work without any change since reserved bits are simply ignored.

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## 7. Benefits and case studies for Mapping Versioning

[TOC](#)

In the following sections we provide more discussion on various aspects of the mapping versioning. Security observations are instead grouped in [Section 10 \(Security Considerations\)](#).

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### 7.1. Mapping Versioning to simplify LISP implementation

[TOC](#)

The use of mapping versioning can help in simplifying the implementation of LISP. In the current LISP specifications the set of RLOCs must always be maintained ordered and consistent with the content of the Loc Status Bits (see section 6.5 of [\[I-D.ietf-lisp\]](#) (Farinacci, D., Fuller, V., Meyer, D., and D. Lewis, "Locator/ID Separation Protocol (LISP)," January 2010.)). When using mapping versioning such type of mechanisms are not necessary anymore since there is no direct relation between the order of the locators and the bits of the mapping version number.

When a new RLOC is added to a mapping, it is not necessary to "append" new locators to the existing ones as explained in Section 6.5 of the LISP draft. A new mapping with a new version number will be issued, and since the old locators are still valid the transition will be disruptionless. The same applies for the case a RLOC is withdrawn. There is no need to maintain holes in the list of locators, as is the case when using Loc Status Bits, for sites that are not using the RLOC that has been withdrawn, the transition will be disruptionless.

It is even possible to perform a graceful shutdown. This is obtained by simply issuing a mapping where the specific RLOC to be shut down is withdrawn or announced as unreachable (R bit in the Map Record), but without actually turning it off. Once no more traffic is received by the RLOC, because all sites have updated the mapping, it can be shut down safely.

All of these operations, as already stated, do not need to maintain any consistency among Loc Status Bits, and the way RLOC are stored in the cache. This eases implementation.

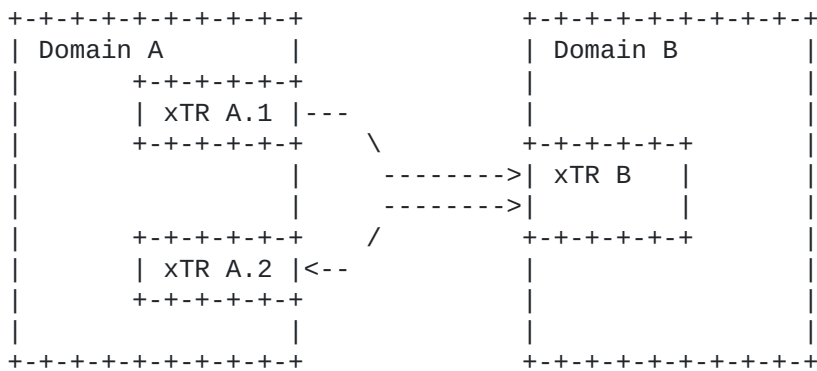
Finally, with the versioning approach there is no need to perform a "clock sweep" as described in Section 6.5.1 of the LISP draft. Every LISP site communicating to a specific LISP site that has updated the mapping will be informed of the available new mapping in a data-driven manner.

## 7.2. Synchronization of different xTRs

[TOC](#)

Mapping Versioning does not require additional synchronization mechanism compared to the normal functioning of LISP without mapping versioning. Clearly all the ETRs have to reply with the same versioning number, otherwise there can be an inconsistency that creates additional control traffic.

As an example, let's consider the topology of figure [Figure 2](#) where ITR A.1 of domain A is sending unidirectional traffic to the xTR B of domain B, while xTR A.2 of domain A and xTR B of domain B exchange bidirectional traffic.



**Figure 2**

Obviously in the case of Mapping Versioning both xTRs of domain A must use the same value otherwise the xTR of domain B will start to send Map-Requests.

The same problem can, however, arise without mapping versioning. For instance if the two xTRs of domain A send different Loc Status Bits. In this case either the traffic is disrupted, if the xTR B trusts the Loc Status Bits, or it xTR B will start sending Map-Requests to confirm the each change in the reachability.

So far, LISP does not provide any specific synchronization mechanism, but assumes that synchronization is provided by configuring the different xTRs consistently. The same applies for

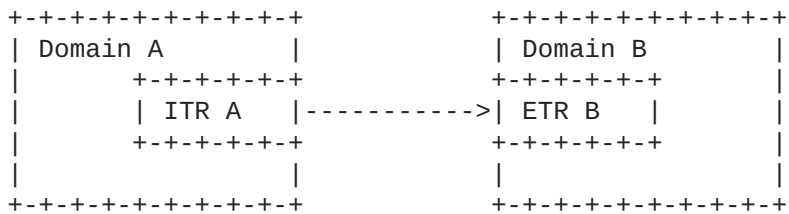
mapping versioning. If in the future any synchronization mechanism is provided, mapping versioning will take advantage of it automatically if the record format described in [Section 6 \(Map Record and Mapping Version Number\)](#) is used.

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### 7.3. Map Versioning and unidirectional traffic

[TOC](#)

When using mapping versioning as specified in this document the LIS specific header carries two mapping version numbers, for both source and destination mapping. This can raise the question on what will happen in the case of unidirectional flows, like for instance in the case presented in [Figure 3](#), since LISP specification do not mandate for ETR to have a mapping for the source EID.



**Figure 3**

For what concerns the ITR, it is able to put both source and destination version number in the LISP header since the source mapping version number is in ITR's database, while the destination mapping version number is in ITR's cache.

For what concerns the ETR, it simply checks only the destination version number in the same way as described in [Section 4 \(Dealing with Version Numbers\)](#), ignoring the source mapping version number.

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### 7.4. Mapping Versioning and interworking

[TOC](#)

Mapping versioning works also in the context of interworking between LISP and IPv4 and IPv6 ([\[I-D.ietf-lisp-interworking\]](#) (Lewis, D., Meyer, D., Farinacci, D., and V. Fuller, "Interworking LISP with IPv4 and IPv6," May 2009.)). The case of PTR encapsulating packet for LISP sites is basically the same as the unidirectional traffic case presented in the previous section. The same rules can be applied.

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## 7.5. Mapping Versioning vs. Checksum

[TOC](#)

Noel Chiappa has several times proposed on the LISP WG mailing list to use a form of "checksum" as a mapping version number. This is an interesting idea. Nevertheless, from our understanding, this implies that the notion of ordering between different mappings for the same EID-Prefix (e.g., whether a mapping is more recent) get lost. This means that a large part of the filtering that can be done on not valid version numbers (see [Section 4 \(Dealing with Version Numbers\)](#)) cannot be done anymore, hence loosing an important feature of mapping versioning. Certainly, if it would be possible to find a "checksum" function that embeds some form of ordering, this can be discussed and integrated in future version of this document.

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## 7.6. Mapping Versioning and mobility

[TOC](#)

Mapping versioning can help in managing mobility in the LISP context ([\[I-D.meyer-lisp-mn\] \(Farinacci, D., Fuller, V., Lewis, D., and D. Meyer, "LISP Mobile Node," February 2010.\)](#)). We are working in deploying Mapping Versioning on a Wireless Mesh Network. Results concerning this deployment will be provided in future versions of this document.

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## 8. Incremental deployment and implementation status

[TOC](#)

The solution proposed in this draft includes the use of bits that are marked as reserved in the main LISP specifications. This means that any LISP element that does not support Mapping Versioning will safely ignore them. Further, there is no need of any specific mechanism to discover if an xTR supports or not Mapping Versioning. This information is already included in the Map Record.

Mapping Versioning can be incrementally deployed without any negative impact on existing LISP xTRs. Mapping Versioning is currently implemented in OpenLISP [\[I-D.iannone-openlisp-implementation\] \(Iannone, L., Saucez, D., and O. Bonaventure, "OpenLISP Implementation Report," July 2008.\)](#).

Note that the reference document for LISP implementation and interoperability tests remains [\[I-D.ietf-lisp\] \(Farinacci, D., Fuller, V., Meyer, D., and D. Lewis, "Locator/ID Separation Protocol \(LISP\)," January 2010.\)](#).

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[TOC](#)

## 9. Mapping Versioning and path-liveness

When the reachability problem occurs on the path between two RLOCs of different LISP sites (this is called path-liveness problem in the recent draft by D. Meyer and D. Lewis [[I-D.meyer-loc-id-implications](#)] (Meyer, D. and D. Lewis, "Architectural Implications of Locator/ID Separation," January 2009.)), the versioning approach does not help. In this case other mechanisms are necessary, however, such an issue is not new and is part of all loc/ID split solutions, thus versioning does not introduce a new issue.

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## 10. Security Considerations

[TOC](#)

Mapping Versioning does not introduces any new security issue concerning both the data-plane and the control-plane. On the contrary, as described in the following, if Mapping Versioning is used also to update mappings in case of change in the reachability information (i.e., instead of the Loc Status Bits) it is possible to reduce the effects of some DoS or spoofing attacks that can happen in an untrusted environment.

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### 10.1. Mapping Versioning against traffic disruption

[TOC](#)

An attacker can try to disrupt ongoing communications by creating LISP encapsulated packets with wrong Loc Status Bits. If the xTR blindly trusts the Loc Status Bits it will change the encapsulation accordingly, which can result in traffic disruption.

This does not happen in the case of Mapping Versioning. As described in [Section 4 \(Dealing with Version Numbers\)](#), upon a version number change the xTR first issues a Map-Request. The assumption is that the mapping distribution system is sufficiently secure that Map-Request and Map-Reply messages and their content can be trusted. Security issues concerning specific mapping distribution system are out of the scope of this document. Note also that in the case of Mapping Versioning the attacker should "guess" a valid version number that triggers a Map-Request, as described in [Section 4 \(Dealing with Version Numbers\)](#), otherwise the packet is simply dropped.

Note that a similar level of security can be obtained with Loc Status Bits, by simply making mandatory to verify any change through a Map-Request. However, in this case Loc Status Bits loose their meaning, because, it does not matter anymore which specific bits has changed, the xTR will query the mapping system and trust the content of the received Map-Reply. Furthermore there is no way to perform filtering as in the mapping versioning in order to drop packets that do not carry a valid mapping version number. In the case of Loc Status Bits, any random change can trigger a Map-Request (unless

rate limitation is enabled which raise another type of attack discussed in [Section 10.2 \(Mapping Versioning against reachability information DoS\)](#)).

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## 10.2. Mapping Versioning against reachability information DoS

[TOC](#)

Attackers can try to trigger a large amount of Map-Request by simply by forging packets with random mapping version or random Loc Status Bits. In both cases the Map-Requests are rate limited as described in [\[I-D.ietf-lisp\] \(Farinacci, D., Fuller, V., Meyer, D., and D. Lewis, "Locator/ID Separation Protocol \(LISP\)," January 2010.\)](#). However, differently from Loc Status Bit where there is no filtering possible, in the case of mapping versioning is possible to filter not valid version numbers before triggering a Map-Request, thus helping in reducing the effects of DoS attacks. In other words the use of mapping versioning enables a fine control on when to update a mapping or when to notify that a mapping has been updated.

It is clear, that mapping versioning does not protect against DoS and DDoS attacks, where an xTR loses processing power doing checks on the LISP header of packets sent by attackers. This is independent from mapping versioning and is the same for Loc Status Bits.

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## 11. Acknowledgements

[TOC](#)

The authors would like to thank Pierre Francois, Noel Chiappa, Dino Farinacci for their comments and review.

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## 12. References

[TOC](#)

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### 12.1. Normative References

[TOC](#)

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### 12.2. Informative References

[TOC](#)

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[TOC](#)

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