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Dynamic Allocation of Shared IPv4 Addresses
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Abstract

This memo describes the dynamic allocation of shared IPv4 addresses to clients using DHCPv4. Address sharing allows a single IPv4 address to be allocated to multiple, active clients simultaneously, each client being differentiated by a unique set of transport source port numbers. The necessary changes to existing DHCPv4 client and server behavior are described and a new DHCPv4 option for provisioning clients with shared IPv4 addresses is included.

Due to the nature of IP addresses sharing, some limitations to their applicability are necessary. This memo describes these limitations and recommends suitable architectures and technologies where address sharing may be utilized.

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

This Internet-Draft is submitted in full conformance with the provisions of BCP 78 and BCP 79.

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1. Introduction

The shortage of available public IPv4 addresses means that it is not always possible for operators to allocate a full IPv4 address to every connected device. This problem is particularly acute whilst an operator is migrating from their existing, native IPv4 network to a native IPv6 network with IPv4 provided as an overlay service. During this phase, public IPv4 addresses are needed to provide for both existing and transition networks.

Two main types of solutions have emerged to address the problem (see Appendix A of [RFC6269]):

1. Deploying Carrier Grade Network devices (CGNs, [RFC6888]).
2. Distributing the same public IPv4 address to multiple clients using non-overlapping layer 4 port sets.

This memo focuses on the second category of solutions.

[I-D.ietf-dhc-dhcpv4-over-dhcpv6] introduces a "DHCP 4o6 Server", which is capable of servicing both DHCPv6 [RFC3315] and DHCPv4-over-DHCPv6 requests, and offers dynamic leasing for IPv4 addresses to clients as in DHCPv4 [RFC2131]. This memo specifies a new DHCPv4 option, called OPTION_V4_PORTPARAMS, and describes how it can be used to achieve dynamic leasing for shared IPv4 addresses.

This extension is only suitable for specific architectures based on the Address plus Port model (A+P) [RFC6346].

Although DHCPv4 over DHCPv6 is used as the underlying DHCPv4 transport mechanism throughout this document, OPTION_V4_PORTPARAMS as a DHCPv4 option may also be used in other solutions such as DHCPv4 over IPv6 [I-D.ietf-dhc-dhcpv4-over-ipv6]. The usage of OPTION_V4_PORTPARAMS in these cases is out of scope of this document.

2. Functional Overview

Functionally, the dynamic allocation of shared IPv4 addresses by the DHCP 4o6 Server is similar to the DHCPv4 server dynamic allocation process for 'full' IPv4 addresses described in [RFC2131]. The essential difference is that the DHCP 4o6 Server MAY allocate the same IPv4 address to more than one DHCP 4o6 client simultaneously, providing that each shared address allocation also includes a range of layer 4 source ports unique to that address (i.e., the combined tuple of IPv4 address and Port Set ID MUST be unique for each active lease).

The DHCP 4o6 client inlcudes OPTION_V4_PORTPARAMS (described below) within the Parameter Request List option [RFC2132] in the DHCPDISCOVER message to indicate to the DHCP 4o6 server that it supports shared IPv4 addressing. OPTION_V4_PORTPARAMS is also used by the server to convey the allocated PSID to the client.

OPTION_V4_PORTPARAMS is also implemented by the server to enable it to identify clients which support shared, dynamic address leasing. With this option, the server can dynamically maintain shared IPv4 address leases. The server must also manage unique client leases based on both the IPv4 address and PSID tuple, instead of using only the IPv4 address.

3. Terminology

This document makes use of the following terms:

Shared IPv4 address: An IPv4 address with a restricted layer 4 port set. Connections sourced from the shared address must use source ports within the assigned port set.

Port Set ID (PSID): Identifier for a range of ports assigned to a DHCP client.

4. Client-Server Interaction

Using DHCPv4 over DHCPv6, the following DHCPv4 message flow is transported within the DHCPv4-query and DHCPv4-response messages (the DHCPv6 messages used for carrying DHCPv4 messages).

1. When the client constructs its DHCPv4 DHCPDISCOVER message to be transported within the DHCPv4-query message, the DHCPDISCOVER message MUST include the following options: A client identifier (constructed as per [RFC4361] and OPTION_V4_PORTPARAMS (described below). The client MAY insert a non-zero value in the PSID-Len field within OPTION_V4_PORTPARAMS to indicate the preferred size of the restricted port set to the DHCP 4o6 Server.
2. Each DHCP 4o6 Server that receives the DHCPDISCOVER message within the DHCPv4-query message and supports shared IPv4 addresses responds with a DHCPOFFER message containing an available IPv4 address in the 'yiaddr' field. The response MUST also include OPTION_V4_PORTPARAMS containing a restricted port set. If the received OPTION_V4_PORTPARAMS field contains a non-zero PSID-Len field, the DHCP 4o6 Server MAY allocate a port set of the requested size to the client (depending on policy). The DHCPOFFER message is included in the DHCPv4-response message and sent to the client.

3. The client evaluates all received DHCPOFFER messages and selects one (e.g. based on the configuration parameters received, such as the size of the offered port set). The client then sends a DHCPREQUEST encapsulated in the DHCPv4-query message, containing the selected DHCP server's server identifier and the corresponding OPTION_V4_PORTPARAMS received in the DHCPOFFER message.
4. The server identified in the DHCPREQUEST message (via the siaddr field) creates a binding for the client. The binding includes the client identifier, the IPv4 address and the PSID. These parameters are used by both the server and the client to identify a lease in any DHCP messages. The server responds with a DHCPACK message containing the configuration parameters for the requesting client. Optionally, the server MAY also store the IPv6 address that the client has bound the received IPv4 parameters to.
5. On receipt of the DHCPACK message with the configuration parameters, the client MUST NOT perform a final check on the address, such as ARPing for a duplicate allocated address.
6. If the client chooses to relinquish its lease by sending a DHCPRELEASE message, the client MUST include the original client identifier, the leased network address and the allocated restricted port set in OPTION_V4_PORTPARAMS.

In the case that the client has stored the previously allocated address and restricted port set, the process described in section 3.2 of [RFC2131] must be followed to reuse the previously allocated shared IPv4 address. OPTION_V4_PORTPARAMS MUST be included in the message flow, with the client's requested port set being included in the DHCPDISCOVER message.

5. Server Behavior

The DHCP 4o6 Server MUST NOT reply with the OPTION_V4_PORTPARAMS until the client has explicitly listed the option code in the Parameter Request List (Option 55) [RFC2132].

The DHCP 4o6 Server SHOULD reply with OPTION_V4_PORTPARAMS if the client includes the OPTION_V4_PORTPARAMS in its Parameter Request List. In order to achieve the dynamic management the shared IPv4 address, the server MUST run an address and port-set pool that provides the same function as the address pool in a regular DHCP server. The server MUST use the combination of address and PSID as the key for maintaining the state of a lease, and for searching for an available lease for assignment. The leasing database MUST include the IPv4 address, PSID and client identifier of the requesting client.

When a server receives a DHCPDISCOVER message with OPTION_V4_PORTPARAMS in the Parameter Request List, the server determines an IPv4 address with a port-set for the requesting client. The logic for selection is similar to that in Section 4.3.1 of [RFC2131].

When the server receives a DHCPREQUEST message with OPTION_V4_PORTPARAMS, the server MUST determine the client's state according to related parameters (Section 4.3.2 of [RFC2131]) and the value of OPTION_V4_PORTPARAMS.

Upon receipt of a DHCPRELEASE message with OPTION_V4_PORTPARAMS, the server searches for the lease using the address in the 'ciaddr' field and the PSID information in the OPTION_V4_PORTPARAMS, and marks the lease as unallocated.

The port-set assignment MUST be coupled with the address assignment process. Therefore server MUST assign the address and port set in the same DHCP messages. The lease information for the address is applicable to the port-set as well.

When defining the pools of IPv4 addresses and PSIDs which are available to lease to clients, the server SHOULD implement a mechanism to reserve some port ranges (e.g. 'well-known-ports' 0-1023) from allocation to clients.

5.1. Leasing Shared and Non-Shared IPv4 Addresses from a Single DHCP 4o6 Server

A single DHCP 4o6 server may serve clients that do not support OPTION_PORTPARAMS as well as those that do. As the rules for the allocation of shared addresses differ from the rules for full IPv4 address assignment, the DHCP 4o6 server MUST implement a mechanism to ensure that clients which do not support OPTION_PORTPARAMS do not receive shared addresses. For example, two separate IPv4 addressing pools could be used, one of which allocates IPv4 addresses and PSIDs only to clients that have requested them.

If the server is only configured one address pool for shared address allocation, it MUST discard requests that do not contain OPTION_V4_PORTPARAMS in the Parameter Request List option.

6. Client Behavior

The DHCP 4o6 client applying for a shared IPv4 address MUST include the OPTION_V4_PORTPARAMS code in the Parameter Request List (Option 55). The client retrieves a port set using the value contained in OPTION_V4_PORTPARAMS.

The client MAY use a non-zero value for the PSID-len field within OPTION_PORTPARMAS in the DHCPDISCOVER message. This is used to request a specific size of port-set (i.e., the number of source ports that it will be allocated).

The client MUST NOT probe a newly received IPv4 address (e.g., with ARP) to see if it is in use by another host.

When the client renews or releases the DHCP lease, it MUST put the values of offset, PSID length and PSID into the OPTION_V4_PORTPARAMS, and send to the server within corresponding DHCPv4 messages that are conveyed through DHCPv4-query message.

6.1. Restrictions to Client Usage of a Shared IPv4 Address

As a single IPv4 address is being shared between a number of different clients, the allocated shared address is only suitable for certain uses. The client MUST implement a function to ensure that only the allocated layer 4 ports of the shared IPv4 address are used for sourcing new connections, or accepting inbound connections.

The client MUST apply the following rules for any traffic to or from the shared IPv4 address:

- Only port-aware protocols or ICMP implementing [RFC5508] MUST be used.
- All connections originating from the shared IPv4 address MUST use a source port taken from the allocated restricted port set.
- The client MUST NOT accept inbound connections on ports outside of the allocated restricted port set.

In order to prevent addressing conflicts which could arise from the allocation of the same IPv4 address, the client MUST NOT configure the received restricted IPv4 address on-link.

The mechanism by which a client implements the above rules is outside of the scope of this document.

In the event that the DHCPv4 over DHCPv6 configuration mechanism fails for any reason, the client MUST NOT configure an IPv4 link-local address [RFC3927](taken from the 169.254.0.0/16 range).

7. DHCPv4 Port Parameters Option

The Port Parameters Option for DHCPv4 is specified to convey the restricted set of layer 4 source ports that are necessary to dynamically allocate a shared address. The option uses the same fields as the Port Parameters Option described in Section 4.5 of

[I-D.ietf-softwire-map-dhcp], implemented as a DHCPv4 option. This is to maintain compatibility with existing port set implementations.

The format of OPTION_V4_PORTPARAMS is shown in Figure 1.

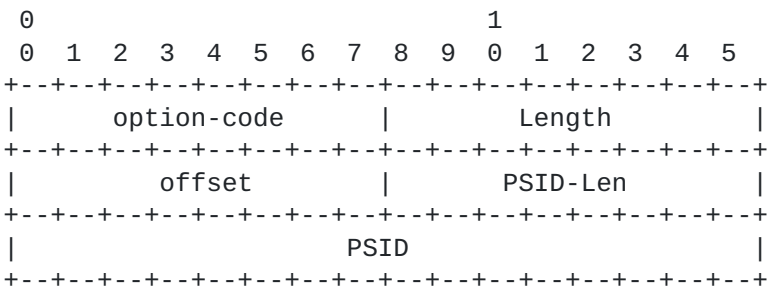

Figure 1: DHCPv4 Port Parameters Option

- option-code: OPTION_V4_PORTPARAMS (TBA)
- option-length: 4
- offset: (PSID offset) 8 bits long field that specifies the numeric value for the excluded port range/offset bits (A-bits), as per section 5.1 of [I-D.ietf-softwire-map]. Allowed values are between 0 and 15, with the default value being 6 for MAP based implementations. This parameter is unused by a Lightweight 4over6 client and should be set to 0.
- PSID-Len: Bit length value of the number of significant bits in the PSID field (also known as 'k'). When set to 0, the PSID field is to be ignored. After the first 'a' bits, there are k bits in the port number representing valid of PSID. Subsequently, the address sharing ratio would be 2^k.
- PSID: Explicit 16-bit (unsigned word) PSID value. The PSID value algorithmically identifies a set of ports assigned to a CE. The first k-bits on the left of this 2-octets field is the PSID value. The remaining (16-k) bits on the right are padding zeros.

[I-D.ietf-softwire-map] Section 5.1 provides a full description of how the PSID is interpreted by the client.

In order to exclude the system ports ([RFC6335]) or ports saved by ISPs, the former port-sets that contain well-known ports SHOULD NOT be assigned.

When receiving the Port Parameters option with an explicit PSID, the client MUST use this explicit PSID in configuring its DHCPv4 over DHCPv6 interface.

8. Security Considerations

The security considerations in [RFC2131] and [I-D.ietf-dhc-dhcpv4-over-dhcpv6] are to be considered. Additional considerations are elaborated in the following sub-sections.

8.1. Denial-of-Service

The solution is vulnerable to DoS attacks when used on a 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 the link layer is performed before IP address assignment. It is not suitable for network access over shared mediums.

8.2. Port Randomization

Preserving port randomization [RFC6056] may be more or less difficult depending on the address sharing ratio (i.e., the size of the port space assigned to a CPE). The host can only randomize the ports inside a fixed port range [RFC6269].

More discussion to improve the robustness of TCP against Blind In-Window Attacks can be found at [RFC5961]. Other means than the (IPv4) source port randomization to provide protection against attacks should be used (e.g., use [I-D.vixie-dnsext-dns0x20] to protect against DNS attacks, [RFC5961] to improve the robustness of TCP against Blind In-Window Attacks, use IPv6).

A proposal to preserve the entropy when selecting port is discussed in [I-D.bajko-pripaddrassign].

9. IANA Considerations

IANA is requested to assign the following new DHCPv4 Option Code in the registry maintained in http://www.iana.org/assignments/bootp-dhcp-parameters/:

Option Name	Value	Data length	Meaning
OPTION_V4_PORTPARAMS	TBA	4	This option is used to configure a set of ports bound to a shared IPv4 address.

10. Acknowledgements

This document is merged from [I-D.sun-dhc-port-set-option] and [I-D.farrer-dhc-shared-address-lease].

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