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G. Camarillo
J. Melen
Ericsson
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HIP (Host Identity Protocol) Immediate Carriage and Conveyance of Upper-layer Protocol Signaling (HICCUPS)
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Abstract

This document defines a new HIP (Host Identity Protocol) packet type called DATA. HIP DATA packets are used to securely and reliably convey arbitrary protocol messages over the Internet and various overlay networks.

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1. Introduction

Two hosts can use HIP [[RFC5201](#)] to establish a Security Association (SA) between them in order to exchange arbitrary protocol messages over that security association. The establishment of such a security association involves a four-way handshake referred to as the HIP base exchange. When handling communications between the hosts, HIP supports mobility, multihoming, security, and NAT traversal. Some applications require these features for their communications but cannot accept the overhead involved in establishing a security association (i.e., the HIP base exchange) before those communications can start.

In this document, we define the HIP DATA packet, which can be used to convey (in a secure and reliable way) protocol messages to a remote host without running the HIP base exchange between them. HIP DATA packet has following semantics: unordered, duplicate free, reliable, and authenticated message-based delivery service. We also discuss the trade offs involved in using this packet (i.e., less overhead but also less DoS protection) and the situations where it is appropriate to use this packet. The HIP_DATA packet is not aimed to be a replacement for ESP transport instead it SHOULD only be used to exchange few packets between the peers. If a continuous communication is required hosts SHOULD run the HIP base exchange to set up ESP security association. Additionally APIs to higher-level protocols that might use this service are outside of the scope of this document.

2. Terminology

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](#)]. In addition this document uses the terms defined in [[RFC5201](#)].

Message Integrity Code (MIC) is a hash sum calculated over the message which is being integrity protected. MIC does not use secret keys and thus need be protected otherwise against tampering. Essentially MIC is same as MAC with the distinction that MIC does not use secret key. MIC is also often referred as Integrity Check Value (ICV), fingerprint, or unkeyed MAC.

3. Background on HIP

The HIP protocol specification [[RFC5201](#)] defines a number of messages and parameters. The parameters are encoded as TLVs, as shown in

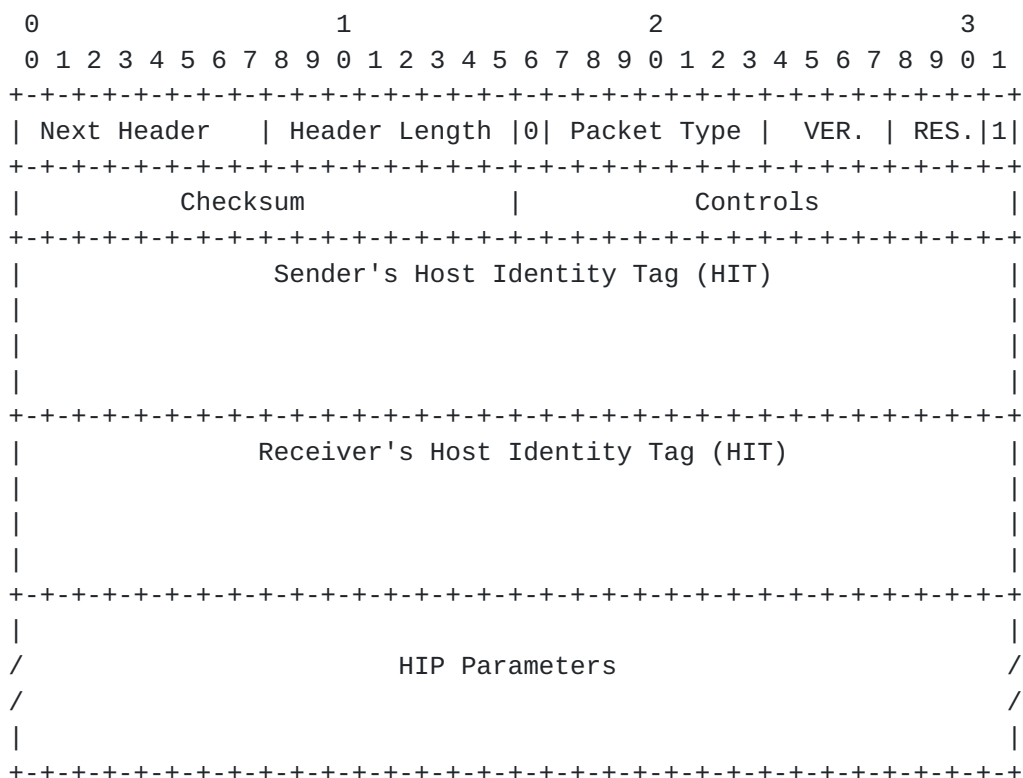
[Section 3.1.2](#). Furthermore, the HIP header carries a Next Header field, allowing other arbitrary packets to be carried within HIP packets.

3.1. Message formats

3.1.1. HIP fixed header

The HIP packet format consists of a fixed header followed by a variable number of parameters. The parameter format is described in [Section 3.1.2](#).

The fixed header is defined in [Section 5.1 of \[RFC5201\]](#) and copied below.



The HIP header is logically an IPv6 extension header. The HIP protocol specification [\[RFC5201\]](#) defines handling only for Next Header value decimal 59, IPPROTO_NONE, the IPv6 'no next header' value. This document describes processing for Next Header values other than decimal 59 which indicates that there is either more extensions header or data following the HIP header.

In addition to the base exchange and updates, the HIP base protocol specification also defines how one can remove a HIP SA once it is no

longer needed.

4. Definition of the HIP DATA Packet

The HIP DATA packet can be used to convey protocol messages to a remote host without running the HIP base exchange between them. HIP DATA packets are transmitted reliably, as discussed in [Section 5](#). The payload of a HIP DATA packet is placed after the HIP header and protected by a PAYLOAD_MIC parameter, which is defined in [Section 4.3](#). The following is the definition of the HIP DATA packet:

Header:

```
Packet Type = [ TBD by IANA: 32 ]
SRC HIT = Sender's HIT
DST HIT = Receiver's HIT
```

```
IP ( HIP ( [HOST_ID, ] SEQ_DATA, PAYLOAD_MIC,
           HIP_SIGNATURE) PAYLOAD )
```

```
IP ( HIP ( [HOST_ID, ] SEQ_DATA, ACK_DATA, PAYLOAD_MIC,
           HIP_SIGNATURE) PAYLOAD )
```

```
IP ( HIP ( [HOST_ID, ] ACK_DATA, HIP_SIGNATURE))
```

The SEQ_DATA and ACK_DATA parameters are defined in [Section 4.1](#) and [Section 4.2](#) respectively. They are used to provide a reliable delivery of HIP DATA packets, as discussed in [Section 5](#).

The HOST_ID parameter is defined in [Section 5.2.8 of \[RFC5201\]](#). This parameter is the sender's Host Identifier that is used to compute the HIP DATA packet's signature and to verify it against the received signature.

The PAYLOAD_MIC parameter is defined in [Section 4.3](#). This parameter contains the MIC of the payload carried by the HIP DATA packet. The PAYLOAD_MIC contains the checksum of the payload following after the HIP DATA. The PAYLOAD_MIC is included in the signed part of the HIP DATA packet giving integrity protection also for the payload carried after HIP DATA packet.

The HIP_SIGNATURE parameter is defined in [Section 5.2.11. of \[RFC5201\]](#). It contains a signature over the contents of the HIP DATA packet. The calculation and verification of the signature is defined [Section 6.4.2. of \[RFC5201\]](#)

[Section 5.3 of \[RFC5201\]](#) states the following:

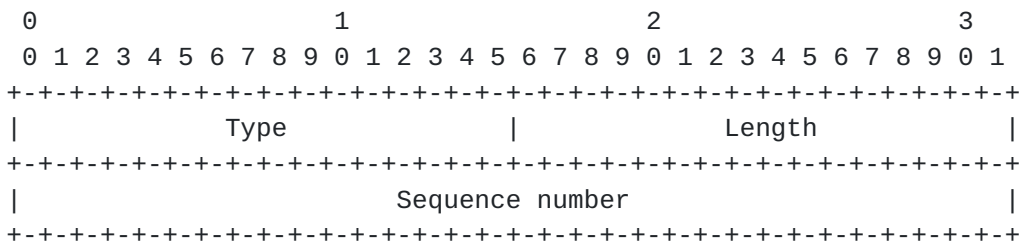
In the future, an OPTIONAL upper-layer payload MAY follow the HIP header. The Next Header field in the header indicates if there is additional data following the HIP header.

We have chosen to place the payload after the HIP extension header and only to place an MIC of the payload in to the HIP extension header in a PAYLOAD_MIC parameter because that way the data integrity is protected by a public key signature with help of MIC. The payload that is protected by the PAYLOAD_MIC parameter has been linked to the appropriate upper-layer protocol by storing the upper-layer protocol number, 8 bytes of payload data, and by calculating a hash sum (MIC) over the data. HIP DATA packet MAY contain one or more PAYLOAD_MIC parameter each bound to different next header type. Hash algorithm used to generate MIC is same as the algorithm used to generate the Host Identity Tag [[RFC5201](#)].

Upper-layer protocol messages, such as overlay network control traffic, sent in HIP DATA messages may need to be matched to different transactions. For this purpose, a DATA message MAY also contain a TRANSACTION_ID parameter. The identifier value is a number that is unique for each transaction. A response to a request uses the same identifier value allowing receiver to match requests to responses.

[4.1.](#) Definition of the SEQ_DATA Parameter

The following is the definition of the SEQ_DATA parameter:



Type [TBD by IANA:
 $4481 = (2^{12} + 2^8 + 2^7 + 1)$]
 Length 4
 Sequence number 32-bit sequence number

[4.2.](#) Definition of the ACK_DATA Parameter

The following is the definition of the ACK_DATA parameter:

SHOULD be ACKed upon completion of the processing of the HIP DATA packet. A host MAY choose to hold the HIP DATA packet carrying ACK for a short period of time to allow for the possibility of piggybacking the ACK parameter, in a manner similar to TCP delayed acknowledgments.

5.2. Generation of a HIP DATA packet

When a host has upper-layer protocol data to send, it either runs the HIP base exchange and sends the data over a SA, or sends the data directly using a HIP DATA packet. [Section 6](#) discusses when it is appropriate to use each method. This section discusses the case when the host chooses to use a HIP DATA packet to send the upper-layer protocol data.

1. The host creates a HIP DATA packet that contains a SEQ_DATA parameter. The host is free to choose any value for the SEQ_DATA sequence number in the first HIP DATA packet it sends to a destination. After that first packet, the host MUST choose the value of the SEQ_DATA sequence number in subsequent HIP DATA packets to the same destination so that no SEQ_DATA sequence number is reused before the receiver has closed the processing window for the previous packet using the same SEQ_DATA sequence number. Practically, giving the values of the retransmission timers used with HIP DATA packets, this means that hosts must wait the maximum likely lifetime of the packet before reusing a given SEQ_DATA sequence number towards a given destination. However, it is not required for node to know the maximum packet lifetime. Rather, it is assumed that the requirement can be met by maintaining the value as a simple, 32-bit, "wrap-around" counter, incremented each time a packet is sent. It is an implementation choice whether to maintain a single counter for the node or multiple counters (one for each source HIT, destination HIT combination).
2. The host creates PAYLOAD_MIC parameter. MIC is a hash calculated over the whole PAYLOAD which the Next Header field of PAYLOAD_MIC parameter indicates. If there is multiple next header types which the host wants to protect it SHOULD create separate PAYLOAD_MIC parameter for each of these. The receiver MUST validate these MICs. For calculating MIC the host MUST use the same hash algorithm as the one that has been used for generating the host's HIT as defined in [Section 3.2. of \[RFC5201\]](#).
3. The host creates HIP_SIGNATURE parameter. The signature is calculated over the whole HIP envelope, excluding any parameters after the HIP_SIGNATURE, as defined in [Section 5.2.11. of \[RFC5201\]](#). The receiver MUST validate this signature. It MAY use either the HI in the packet or the HI acquired by some other means.

4. The hosts sends the created HIP DATA packet and starts a DATA timer. The default value for the timer is $2 * \text{RTT estimate}$. If multiple HIP DATA packets are outstanding, multiple timers are in effect.
5. If the DATA timer expires, the HIP DATA packet is resent. The HIP DATA packet can be resent DATA_RETRY_MAX times. The DATA timer SHOULD be exponentially backed off for subsequent retransmissions. If no acknowledgment is received from the peer after DATA_RETRY_MAX times, the delivery of the HIP DATA packet is considered unsuccessful and the application is notified about the error. The DATA timer is canceled upon receiving an ACK from the peer that acknowledges receipt of the HIP DATA packet.

5.3. Reception of a HIP DATA packet

A host receiving a HIP DATA packet makes decision whether to process the packet or not. If the host, following its local policy, suspects that this packet could be part of a DoS attack. The host MAY respond with an R1 packet to the HIP DATA packet, if the packet contained SEQ_DATA and PAYLOAD_MIC parameter, in order to indicate that HIP base exchange MUST be completed before accepting payload packets from the originator of the HIP DATA packet. If the host chooses to respond to the HIP DATA with an R1 packet, it creates a new R1 or selects a precomputed R1 according to the format described in [\[RFC5201\] Section 5.3.2](#). The host SHOULD drop the received data packet if it responded with a R1 packet to the HIP_DATA packet. The sender of HIP_DATA packet is responsible of retransmission of the upper-layer protocol data after successful completion of the HIP Base Exchange.

If the host, following its local policy, decides to process the incoming HIP DATA packet, it processes it according to the following rules:

If the HIP DATA packet contains a SEQ_DATA parameter and no ACK_DATA parameter, the HIP DATA packet is processed and replied to as described in [Section 5.3.1](#).

If the HIP DATA packet contains an ACK_DATA parameter and no SEQ_DATA parameter, the HIP DATA packet is processed as described in [Section 5.3.2](#).

If the HIP DATA packet contains both a SEQ_DATA parameter and an ACK_DATA parameter, the HIP DATA packet is processed first as described in [Section 5.3.2](#) and then the rest of the HIP DATA packet is processed and replied to as described in [Section 5.3.1](#).

5.3.1. Handling of SEQ_DATA in a Received HIP DATA packet

The following steps define the conceptual processing rules for handling a SEQ_DATA parameter in a received HIP DATA packet.

If the value in the received SEQ_DATA corresponds to a HIP DATA packet that has recently been processed, the packet is treated as a retransmission. The SIGNATURE verification (next step) MUST NOT be skipped. (A byte-by-byte comparison of the received and a stored packet would be OK, though.) It is recommended that a host cache HIP DATA packets sent with ACKs to avoid the cost of generating a new ACK packet to respond to a retransmitted HIP DATA packet. The host MUST acknowledge, again, such (apparent) HIP DATA packet retransmissions but SHOULD also consider rate-limiting such retransmission responses to guard against replay attacks.

The system MUST verify the SIGNATURE in the HIP DATA packet. If the verification fails, the packet SHOULD be dropped and an error message logged.

The system MUST verify the PAYLOAD_MIC by calculating MIC over the PAYLOAD which the Next Header field indicates. For calculating the MIC the host will use the same hash algorithm that has been used to generate the sender's HIT as defined in [Section 3.2. of \[RFC5201\]](#). If the packet carried multiple PAYLOAD_MIC parameters each of them are verified as described above. If one or more of the verification fails, the packet SHOULD be dropped and an error message logged.

If a new SEQ parameter is being processed, the parameters in the HIP DATA packet are then processed.

A HIP DATA packet with an ACK_DATA parameter is prepared and sent to the peer. This ACK_DATA parameter may be included in a separate HIP DATA packet or piggybacked in a HIP DATA packet with a SEQ_DATA parameter. The ACK_DATA parameter MAY acknowledge more than one of the peer's HIP DATA packets.

5.3.2. Handling of ACK_DATA in a Received HIP DATA packet

The following steps define the conceptual processing rules for handling an ACK_DATA parameter in a received HIP DATA packet.

The sequence number reported in the ACK_DATA must match with an earlier sent HIP DATA packet that has not already been acknowledged. If no match is found or if the ACK_DATA does not acknowledge a new HIP DATA packet, the packet MUST either be dropped if no SEQ_DATA parameter is present, or the processing steps in [Section 5.3.1](#) are followed.

The system **MUST** verify the **SIGNATURE** in the HIP DATA packet. If the verification fails, the packet **SHOULD** be dropped and an error message logged.

The corresponding DATA timer is stopped so that the now acknowledged HIP DATA packet is no longer retransmitted. If multiple HIP DATA packets are newly acknowledged, multiple timers are stopped.

6. Use of the HIP DATA Packet

HIP currently requires always that the four-message base exchange is executed at the first encounter of hosts that have not communicated before. This may add additional RTTs (Round Trip Time) to protocols based on a single message exchange. However, the four-message exchange is essential to preserve the half-stateless DoS protection nature of the base exchange. The use of the HIP DATA packet defined in this document reduces the initial overhead in the communications between two hosts at the expense of decreasing DoS protection. Therefore, applications **SHOULD NOT** use HIP DATA packets in environments where DoS attacks are believed to be an issue. For example, a HIP-based overlay may have policies in place to control which nodes can join the overlay. Any particular node in the overlay may want to accept HIP DATA packets from other nodes in the overlay given that those other were authorized to join the overlay. However, the same node may not want to accept HIP DATA packets from random nodes that are not part of the overlay.

The type of data to be sent is also relevant to whether the use of a HIP DATA packet is appropriate. HIP itself does not support fragmentation but relies on underlying IP-layer fragmentation. This may lead to reliability problems in the case where a message cannot be easily split over multiple HIP messages. Therefore, applications in environments where fragmentation could be an issue **SHOULD NOT** generate too large HIP DATA packets that may lead to fragmentation. The implementation **SHOULD** check the MTU of the link before sending the packet and if the packet size is larger than MTU it **SHOULD** signal to the upper-layer protocol if the packet results in to a ICMP error message. Note that there are environments where fragmentation is not an issue. For example, in some HIP-based overlays, nodes can exchange HIP DATA packets on top of TCP connections that provide transport-level fragmentation and, thus, avoid IP-level fragmentation.

HIP currently requires that all messages excluding I1s but including HIP DATA packets are digitally signed. This adds to the packet size and the processing capacity needed to send packets. However, in applications where security is not paramount, it is possible to use

very short keys, thereby reducing resource consumption.

7. Security considerations

HIP is designed to provide secure authentication of hosts. HIP also attempts to limit the exposure of the host to various denial-of-service and man-in-the-middle (MitM) attacks. However, HIP DATA packet, which can be sent without running the HIP base exchange between hosts has a trade off that it does not provide the denial-of-service protection that HIP generally provides. Thus, the host should consider always situations where it is appropriate to send or receive HIP DATA packet. If the communication consists more than few round-trips of data or the data is highly sensitive in nature the host SHOULD run the base exchange with the peer host.

8. IANA considerations

This document updates the IANA Registry for HIP Packet types by introducing new packet type for the new HIP_DATA ([Section 4](#)) packet. This document updates the IANA Registry for HIP Parameter Types by introducing new parameter values for the SEQ_DATA ([Section 4.1](#)), ACK_DATA ([Section 4.2](#)), and PAYLOAD_MIC ([Section 4.3](#)) parameters.

9. Acknowledgments

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10. References

10.1. Normative References

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Authors' Addresses

Gonzalo Camarillo
Ericsson
Hirsalantie 11
Jorvas 02420
Finland

Email: Gonzalo.Camarillo@ericsson.com

Jan Melen
Ericsson
Hirsalantie 11
Jorvas 02420
Finland

Email: Jan.Melen@ericsson.com

