

Internet Area
Internet-Draft
Intended status: Informational
Expires: July 15, 2016

E. Baccelli
INRIA
C. Perkins
Futurewei
January 12, 2016

Multi-hop Ad Hoc Wireless Communication
draft-ietf-intarea-adhoc-wireless-com-01

Abstract

This document describes characteristics of communication between interfaces in a multi-hop ad hoc wireless network, that protocol engineers and system analysts should be aware of when designing solutions for ad hoc networks at the IP layer.

Status of This Memo

This Internet-Draft is submitted in full conformance with the provisions of [BCP 78](#) and [BCP 79](#).

Internet-Drafts are working documents of the Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF). Note that other groups may also distribute working documents as Internet-Drafts. The list of current Internet-Drafts is at <http://datatracker.ietf.org/drafts/current/>.

Internet-Drafts are draft documents valid for a maximum of six months and may be updated, replaced, or obsoleted by other documents at any time. It is inappropriate to use Internet-Drafts as reference material or to cite them other than as "work in progress."

This Internet-Draft will expire on July 15, 2016.

Copyright Notice

Copyright (c) 2016 IETF Trust and the persons identified as the document authors. All rights reserved.

This document is subject to [BCP 78](#) and the IETF Trust's Legal Provisions Relating to IETF Documents (<http://trustee.ietf.org/license-info>) in effect on the date of publication of this document. Please review these documents carefully, as they describe your rights and restrictions with respect to this document. Code Components extracted from this document must include Simplified BSD License text as described in Section 4.e of the Trust Legal Provisions and are provided without warranty as described in the Simplified BSD License.

Internet-Draft Multi-hop Ad Hoc Wireless Communication January 2016

Table of Contents

1.	Introduction	2
2.	Multi-hop Ad Hoc Wireless Networks	2
3.	Common Packet Transmission Characteristics in Multi-hop Ad Hoc Wireless Networks	3
3.1.	Asymmetry, Time-Variation, and Non-Transitivity	4
3.2.	Radio Range and Wireless Irregularities	4
4.	Alternative Terminology	7
5.	Security Considerations	8
6.	IANA Considerations	9
7.	Informative References	9
Appendix A.	Acknowledgements	12
	Authors' Addresses	12

[1.](#) Introduction

Experience gathered with ad hoc routing protocol development, deployment and operation, shows that wireless communication presents specific challenges [[RFC2501](#)] [[DoD01](#)], which Internet protocol designers should be aware of, when designing solutions for ad hoc networks at the IP layer. This document does not prescribe solutions, but instead briefly describes these challenges in hopes of increasing that awareness.

As background, [RFC 3819](#) [[RFC3819](#)] provides an excellent reference for higher-level considerations when designing protocols for shared media. From MTU to subnet design, from security to considerations about retransmissions, [RFC 3819](#) provides guidance and design rationale to help with many aspects of higher-level protocol design.

The present document focuses more specifically on challenges in multi-hop ad hoc wireless networking. For example, in that context, even though a wireless link may experience high variability as a communications channel, such variation does not mean that the link is "broken"; indeed many layer-2 technologies serve to reduce error rates by various means. Nevertheless, such errors as noted in this document may still become visible above layer-2 and so become relevant to the operation of higher layer protocols.

[2.](#) Multi-hop Ad Hoc Wireless Networks

For the purposes of this document, a multi-hop ad hoc wireless

network will be considered to be a collection of devices that each have a radio transceiver (i.e., wireless network interface), and that are moreover configured to self-organize and provide store-and-forward functionality as needed to enable communications. This

Internet-Draft Multi-hop Ad Hoc Wireless Communication January 2016

document focuses on the characteristics of communications through such a network interface.

Although the characteristics of packet transmission over multi-hop ad hoc wireless networks, described below, are not the typical characteristics expected by IP [[RFC6250](#)], it is desirable and possible to run IP over such networks, as demonstrated in certain deployments currently in operation, such as Freifunk [[FREIFUNK](#)], and Funkfeuer [[FUNKFEUER](#)]. These deployments use routers running IP protocols e.g., OLSR (Optimized Link State Routing [[RFC3626](#)]) on top of IEEE 802.11 in ad hoc mode with the same ESSID (Extended Service Set Identification) at the link layer. Multi-hop ad hoc wireless networks may also run on link layers other than IEEE 802.11, and may use routing protocols other than OLSR (for instance, AODV [[RFC3561](#)], TBRPF [[RFC3684](#)], DSR [[RFC4728](#)], or OSPF-MPR [[RFC5449](#)]).

Note that in contrast, devices communicating via an IEEE 802.11 access point in infrastructure mode do not form a multi-hop ad hoc wireless network, since the central role of the access point is predetermined, and devices other than the access point do not generally provide store-and-forward functionality.

3. Common Packet Transmission Characteristics in Multi-hop Ad Hoc Wireless Networks

In the following, we will consider several devices in a multi-hop ad hoc wireless network N . Each device will be considered only through its own wireless interface to network N . For conciseness and readability, this document uses the expressions "device A" (or simply "A") as a synonym for "the wireless interface of device A to network N ".

Let A and B be two devices in network N . Suppose that, when device A transmits an IP packet through its interface on network N , that packet is correctly and directly received by device B without requiring storage and/or forwarding by any other device. We will

then say that B can "detect" A. Note that therefore, when B detects A, an IP packet transmitted by A will be rigorously identical to the corresponding IP packet received by B.

Let S be the set of devices that detect device A through its wireless interface on network N. The following section gathers common characteristics concerning packet transmission over such networks, which were observed through experience with MANET routing protocol development (for instance, OLSR[RFC3626], AODV[RFC3561], TBRPF[RFC3684], DSR[RFC4728], and OSPF-MPR[RFC5449]), as well as deployment and operation (Freifunk[FREIFUNK], Funkfeuer[FUNKFEUER]).

[3.1.](#) Asymmetry, Time-Variation, and Non-Transitivity

First, even though a device C in set S can (by definition) detect device A, there is no guarantee that C can, conversely, send IP packets directly to A. In other words, even though C can detect A (since it is a member of set S), there is no guarantee that A can detect C. Thus, multi-hop ad hoc wireless communications may be "asymmetric". Such cases are common.

Second, there is no guarantee that, as a set, S is at all stable, i.e. the membership of set S may in fact change at any rate, at any time. Thus, multi-hop ad hoc wireless communications may be "time-variant". Time variation is often observed in multi-hop ad hoc wireless networks due to variability of the wireless medium, and to device mobility.

Now, conversely, let V be the set of devices which A detects. Suppose that A is communicating at time t_0 through its interface on network N. As a consequence of time variation and asymmetry, we observe that A:

1. cannot assume that $S = V$,
2. cannot assume that S and/or V are unchanged at time t_1 later than t_0 .

Furthermore, transitivity is not guaranteed over multi-hop ad hoc wireless networks. Indeed, let's assume that, through their respective interfaces within network N:

1. device B and device A can detect one another (i.e. B is a member of sets S and V), and,
2. device A and device C can also detect one another (i.e. C is a also a member of sets S and V).

These assumptions do not imply that B can detect C, nor that C can detect B (through their interface on network N). Such "non-transitivity" is common on multi-hop ad hoc wireless networks.

In a nutshell: multi-hop ad hoc wireless communications can be asymmetric, non-transitive, and time-varying.

[3.2.](#) Radio Range and Wireless Irregularities

[Section 3.1](#) presents an abstract description of some common characteristics concerning packet transmission over multi-hop ad hoc wireless networks. This section describes practical examples, which

illustrate the characteristics listed in [Section 3.1](#) as well as other common effects.

Wireless communications are subject to limitations to the distance across which they may be established. The range-limitation factor creates specific problems on multi-hop ad hoc wireless networks. In this context, the radio ranges of several devices often partially overlap. Such partial overlap causes communication to be non-transitive and/or asymmetric, as described in [Section 3.1](#). Moreover, the range may vary from one device to another, depending on location and environmental factors. This is in addition to the time variation of range and signal strength caused by variability in the local environment.

For example, as depicted in Figure 1, it may happen that a device B detects a device A which transmits at high power, whereas B transmits at lower power. In such cases, B detects A, but A cannot detect B. This exemplifies the asymmetry in multi-hop ad hoc wireless communications as defined in [Section 3.1](#).

Radio Ranges for Devices A and B

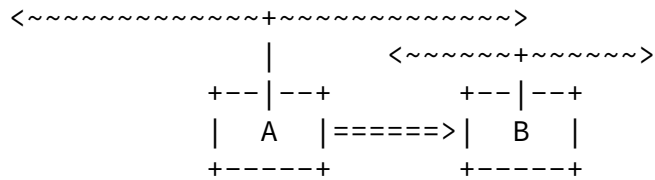


Figure 1: Asymmetric wireless communication: Device A can communicate with device B, but B cannot communicate with A.

Another example, depicted in Figure 2, is known as the "Hidden Terminal" problem. Even though the devices all have equal power for their radio transmissions, they cannot all detect one another. In the figure, devices A and B can detect one another, and devices A and C can also detect one another. On the other hand, B and C cannot detect one another. When B and C simultaneously try to communicate with A, their radio signals may collide. Device A may receive incoherent noise, and may even be unable to determine the source of the noise. The hidden terminal problem illustrates the property of non-transitivity in multi-hop ad hoc wireless communications as described in [Section 3.1](#).

Radio Ranges for Devices A, B, C

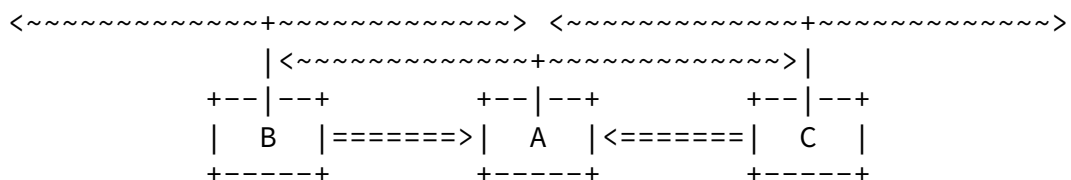


Figure 2: The hidden terminal problem. Devices C and B try to communicate with device A at the same time, and their radio signals collide.

Another situation, shown in Figure 3, is known as the "Exposed Terminal" problem. In the figure, device A and device B can detect each other, and A is transmitting packets to B, thus A cannot detect device C -- but C can detect A. As shown in Figure 3, during the ongoing transmission of A, device C cannot reliably communicate with device D because of interference within C's radio range due to A's transmissions. Device C is then said to be "exposed", because it is exposed to co-channel interference from A and is thereby prevented from reliably exchanging protocol messages with D -- even though these transmissions would not interfere with the reception of data sent from A destined to B.

Radio Ranges for Devices A, B, C, D

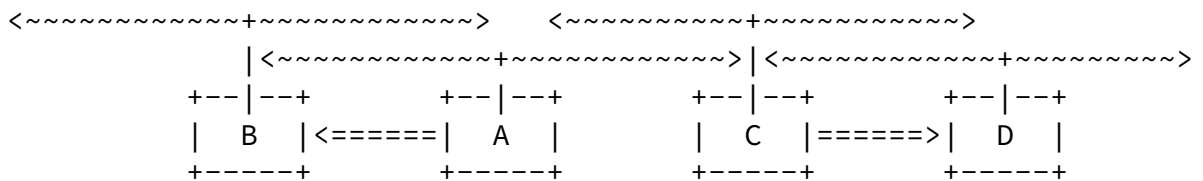


Figure 3: The exposed terminal problem: when device A communicates with device B, device C is "exposed".

Hidden and exposed terminal situations are often observed in multi-hop ad hoc wireless networks. Asymmetry issues with wireless communication may also arise for reasons other than power inequality (e.g., multipath interference). Such problems are often resolved by specific mechanisms below the IP layer, for example, CSMA/CA, which

ensures transmission in periods perceived to be unoccupied by other transmissions. However, depending on the link layer technology in use and the position of the devices, such problems may affect the IP layer due to range-limitation and partial overlap .

Besides radio range limitations, wireless communications are affected by irregularities in the shape of the geographical area over which devices may effectively communicate (see for instance [[MC03](#)],

[MI03]). For example, even omnidirectional wireless transmission is typically non-isotropic (i.e. non-circular). Signal strength often suffers frequent and significant variations, which are not a simple function of distance. Instead, it is a complex function of the environment including obstacles, weather conditions, interference, and other factors that change over time. Because wireless communications have to encounter different terrain, path, obstructions, atmospheric conditions and other phenomena, analytical formulation of signal strength is considered intractable [VTC99], and the radio engineering community has thus developed numerous radio propagation models, relying on median values observed in specific environments [SAR03].

The above irregularities also cause communications on multi-hop ad hoc wireless networks to be non-transitive, asymmetric, or time-varying, as described in [Section 3.1](#), and may impact protocols at the IP layer and above. There may be no indication to the IP layer when a previously established communication channel becomes unusable; "link down" triggers are generally absent in multi-hop ad hoc wireless networks, since the absence of detectable radio energy (e.g., in carrier waves) may simply indicate that neighboring devices are not currently transmitting. Such an absence of detectable radio energy does not therefore indicate whether or not transmissions have failed to reach the intended destination.

4. Alternative Terminology

Many terms have been used in the past to describe the relationship of devices in a multi-hop ad hoc wireless network based on their ability to send or receive packets to/from each other. The terms used in previous sections of this document have been selected because the authors believe they are unambiguous, with respect to the goal of this document (see [Section 1](#)).

In this section, we exhibit some other terms that describe the same relationship between devices in multi-hop ad hoc wireless networks. In the following, let network N be, again, a multi-hop ad hoc wireless network. Let the set S be, as before, the set of devices that can directly receive packets transmitted by device A through its interface on network N . In other words, any device B belonging to S

can detect packets transmitted by A . Then, due to the asymmetric

nature of wireless communications:

- We may say that device A "reaches" device B. In this terminology, there is no guarantee that B reaches A, even if A reaches B.
- We may say that device B "hears" device A. In this terminology, there is no guarantee that A hears B, even if B hears A.
- We may say that device A "has a link" to device B. In this terminology, there is no guarantee that B has a link to A, even if A has a link to B.
- We may say that device B "is adjacent to" device A. In this terminology, there is no guarantee that A is adjacent to B, even if B is adjacent to A.
- We may say that device B "is downstream from" device A. In this terminology, there is no guarantee that A is downstream from B, even if B is downstream from A.
- We may say that device B "is a neighbor of" device A. In this terminology, there is no guarantee that A is a neighbor of B, even if B is a neighbor of A. As it happens, terminology based on "neighborhood" is quite confusing for multi-hop wireless communications. For example, when B can detect A, but A cannot detect B, it is not clear whether B should be considered a neighbor of A at all, since A would not necessarily be aware that B was a neighbor, as it cannot detect B. It is thus best to avoid the "neighbor" terminology, except for when some level of symmetry has been verified.

This list of alternative terminologies is given here for illustrative purposes only, and is not suggested to be complete or even representative of the breadth of terminologies that have been used in various ways to explain the properties mentioned in [Section 3](#). We do not discuss bidirectionality, but as a final observation it is worthwhile to note that bidirectionality is not synonymous with symmetry. For example, the error statistics in either direction are often different for a link that is otherwise considered bidirectional.

[5](#). Security Considerations

[Section 18 of RFC 3819](#) [[RFC3819](#)] provides an excellent overview of security considerations at the subnetwork layer. Beyond the material there, multi-hop ad hoc wireless networking (i) is not limited to

subnetwork layer operation, and (ii) makes use of wireless communications.

On one hand, a detailed description of security implications of wireless communications in general is outside of the scope of this document. Notably, however, eavesdropping on a wireless link is much easier than for wired media (although significant progress has been made in the field of wireless monitoring of wired transmissions). As a result, traffic analysis attacks can be even more subtle and difficult to defeat in this context. Furthermore, such communications over a shared media are particularly prone to theft of service and denial of service (DoS) attacks.

On the other hand, the potential multi-hop aspect of the networks we consider in this document goes beyond traditional scope of subnetwork design. In practice, unplanned relaying of network traffic (both user traffic and control traffic) happens routinely. Due to the physical nature of wireless media, Man in the Middle (MITM) attacks are facilitated, which may significantly alter network performance. This highlights the need to stick to the "end-to-end principle": L3 security, end-to-end, becomes a primary goal, independently of securing layer-2 and layer-1 protocols (though L2 and L1 security can indeed help to reach this goal).

6. IANA Considerations

This document does not have any IANA actions.

7. Informative References

- [RFC2501] Corson, S. and J. Macker, "Mobile Ad hoc Networking (MANET): Routing Protocol Performance Issues and Evaluation Considerations", [RFC 2501](#), DOI 10.17487/RFC2501, January 1999, <<http://www.rfc-editor.org/info/rfc2501>>.
- [RFC3561] Perkins, C., Belding-Royer, E., and S. Das, "Ad hoc On-Demand Distance Vector (AODV) Routing", [RFC 3561](#), DOI 10.17487/RFC3561, July 2003, <<http://www.rfc-editor.org/info/rfc3561>>.
- [RFC3626] Clausen, T., Ed. and P. Jacquet, Ed., "Optimized Link State Routing Protocol (OLSR)", [RFC 3626](#), DOI 10.17487/RFC3626, October 2003, <<http://www.rfc-editor.org/info/rfc3626>>.

Internet-Draft Multi-hop Ad Hoc Wireless Communication January 2016

- [RFC3684] Ogier, R., Templin, F., and M. Lewis, "Topology Dissemination Based on Reverse-Path Forwarding (TBRPF)", [RFC 3684](#), DOI 10.17487/RFC3684, February 2004, <<http://www.rfc-editor.org/info/rfc3684>>.
- [RFC3819] Karn, P., Ed., Bormann, C., Fairhurst, G., Grossman, D., Ludwig, R., Mahdavi, J., Montenegro, G., Touch, J., and L. Wood, "Advice for Internet Subnetwork Designers", [BCP 89](#), [RFC 3819](#), DOI 10.17487/RFC3819, July 2004, <<http://www.rfc-editor.org/info/rfc3819>>.
- [RFC4728] Johnson, D., Hu, Y., and D. Maltz, "The Dynamic Source Routing Protocol (DSR) for Mobile Ad Hoc Networks for IPv4", [RFC 4728](#), DOI 10.17487/RFC4728, February 2007, <<http://www.rfc-editor.org/info/rfc4728>>.
- [RFC5449] Baccelli, E., Jacquet, P., Nguyen, D., and T. Clausen, "OSPF Multipoint Relay (MPR) Extension for Ad Hoc Networks", [RFC 5449](#), DOI 10.17487/RFC5449, February 2009, <<http://www.rfc-editor.org/info/rfc5449>>.
- [RFC6250] Thaler, D., "Evolution of the IP Model", [RFC 6250](#), DOI 10.17487/RFC6250, May 2011, <<http://www.rfc-editor.org/info/rfc6250>>.
- [DoD01] Freebersyser, J. and B. Leiner, "A DoD perspective on mobile ad hoc networks", Addison Wesley C. E. Perkins, Ed., 2001, pp. 29--51, 2001.
- [FUNKFEUER] "Austria Wireless Community Network, <http://www.funkfeuer.at>", 2013.
- [MC03] Corson, S. and J. Macker, "Mobile Ad hoc Networking: Routing Technology for Dynamic, Wireless Networks", IEEE Press Mobile Ad hoc Networking, Chapter 9, 2003.
- [SAR03] Sarkar, T., Ji, Z., Kim, K., Medour, A., and M. Salazar-Palma, "A Survey of Various Propagation Models for Mobile

Communication", IEEE Press Antennas and Propagation Magazine, Vol. 45, No. 3, 2003.

- [VTC99] Kim, D., Chang, Y., and J. Lee, "Pilot power control and service coverage support in CDMA mobile systems", IEEE Press Proceedings of the IEEE Vehicular Technology Conference (VTC), pp.1464-1468, 1999.

- [MI03] Kotz, D., Newport, C., and C. Elliott, "The Mistaken Axioms of Wireless-Network Research", Dartmouth College Computer Science Technical Report TR2003-467, 2003.

- [FREIFUNK] "Freifunk Wireless Community Networks, <http://www.freifunk.net>", 2013.

[Appendix A](#). Acknowledgements

This document stems from discussions with the following people, in alphabetical order: Jari Arkko, Teco Boot, Carlos Jesus Bernardos Cano, Ian Chakeres, Thomas Clausen, Robert Cragie, Christopher Dearlove, Ralph Droms, Brian Haberman, Ulrich Herberg, Paul Lambert, Kenichi Mase, Thomas Narten, Erik Nordmark, Alexandru Petrescu, Stan Ratliff, Zach Shelby, Shubhranshu Singh, Fred Templin, Dave Thaler, Mark Townsley, Ronald Velt in't, and Seung Yi.

Authors' Addresses

Emmanuel Baccelli
INRIA

E-Mail: Emmanuel.Baccelli@inria.fr
URI: <http://www.emmanuelbaccelli.org/>

Charles E. Perkins
Futurewei

Phone: +1-408-330-4586
E-Mail: charlie.perkins@huawei.com

