

IPv6 Node Information Queries
<[draft-ietf-ipngwg-icmp-name-lookups-05.txt](#)>

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1. Abstract

This document describes an experimental protocol for asking an IPv6 node to supply certain network information, such as its fully-qualified domain name. IPv6 implementation experience has shown that direct queries for a DNS name are useful, and a direct query mechanism for other information has been requested.

2. Terminology

A "Node Information (or NI) Query" message is sent by a "Querier" node to a "Responder" node in an ICMPv6 packet addressed to the "Queried Address." The Query concerns a "Subject Address" which may differ from the Queried Address, or a "Subject Name". The Responder sends a "Node Information Reply" to the Querier, containing information associated with the node at the Queries address. A node receiving a NI Query will be termed a Responder even if it does not send a Reply.

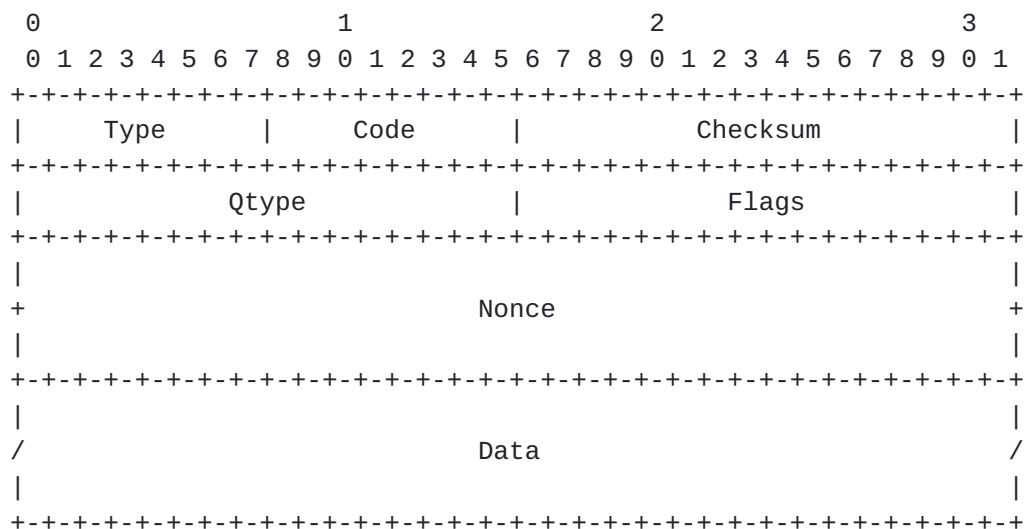
The key words "MUST", "MUST NOT", "REQUIRED", "SHALL", "SHALL NOT", "SHOULD", "SHOULD NOT", "RECOMMENDED", "MAY", and "OPTIONAL" in this

document are to be interpreted as described in [[2119](#)].

Packet fields marked "unused" must be zero on transmission and, aside from inclusion in checksums or message integrity checks, ignored on reception.

3. Node Information Messages

Two types of Node Information messages, the NI Query and the NI Reply, are carried in ICMPv6 [[2463](#)] packets. They have the same format.



Fields:

Type 139 - NI Query.
 140 - NI Reply.

Code For NI Query:

- 0 Indicates that the Data field contains an IPv6 address which is the Subject of this Query.
- 1 Indicates that the Data field contains a domain name which is the Subject of this Query
- 2 Indicates that the Data field contains an IPv4 address which is the Subject of this Query.

For NI Reply:

- 0 Indicates a successful reply. The Reply Data field

may or may not be empty.

- 1 Indicates that the Responder refuses to supply the answer. The Reply Data field will be absent.
- 2 Indicates that the Qtype of the Query is unknown to the Responder. The Reply Data field will be absent.

Checksum The ICMPv6 checksum.

Qtype A 16-bit field which designates the type of information requested in a Query or supplied in a Reply. Its value in a Reply is always copied from the corresponding Query by the Responder. Five values of Qtype are specified in this document.

Flags Qtype-specific flags which may be defined for certain Query types and their Replies. Flags not defined for a given Qtype must be zero on transmission and ignored on reception, and must not be copied from a Query to a Reply unless so specified in the definition of the Qtype.

Nonce An opaque 64-bit field to help avoid spoofing and/or to aid in matching Replies with Queries. Its value in a Query is chosen by the Querier. Its value in a Reply is always copied from the corresponding Request by the Responder.

Data In a Query, the Subject Address or Name. In a Reply, Qtype-specific data present only when the ICMPv6 Type field is zero. The length of the Data may be inferred from the IPv6 header's Payload Length field [[2460](#)], the length of the fixed portion of the NI packet and the lengths of the ICMPv6 header and intervening extension headers.

Note that the type of information present in the Data field of a Query is inferred from the ICMP Code, while the type of information, if any, in the Data field of a Reply is inferred from the Qtype.

When the Subject of a Query is a name, the name MUST be in DNS wire format [[1035](#)]. The name may be either a fully-qualified domain name, including the terminating zero-length label, or a single DNS label followed by two zero-length labels.

4. Message Processing

The Querier constructs an ICMP NI Query and sends it to the address from which information is wanted. When the Subject of the Query is an IPv6 address, that address will normally be used as the IPv6 destination address of the Query, but need not be if the Querier has useful a priori information about the addresses of the target node.

When the Subject is a domain name, either fully-qualified or single-component, and the Querier does not have a unicast address for the target node, the query **MUST** be sent to a link-scope multicast address formed in the following way. The Subject Name is converted to canonical form, as defined by DNS Security [[2065](#)], which is uncompressed with all alphabetic characters in lower case. (If additional DNS label types for host names are defined, the rules for canonicalizing those labels will be found in the defining specification.) Compute the MD5 hash [[1321](#)] of the first label of the Subject Name -- the portion beginning with the first one-octet length field and up to, but excluding, any subsequent length field. Append the first 32 bits of that 128-bit hash to the prefix FF02:0:0:0:0:2::/96. The resulting multicast address will be termed the "NI Group Address" for the name.

The Nonce should be a random or good pseudo-random value to foil spoofed replies. An implementation which allows multiple independent processes to send NI queries **MAY** use the Nonce value to deliver Replies to the correct process. Nonetheless, such processes **MUST** check the received Nonce and ignore extraneous Replies.

If true communication security is required, IPsec [[2401](#)] must be used.

Upon receiving a NI Query, the Responder must check the Query's IPv6 destination address and discard the Query without further processing unless it is one of the Responder's unicast or anycast addresses, a NI Group Address for a name belonging to the Responder, or a NI Group Address for a name for which the Responder is providing proxy service. A Responder must also silently discard a Query whose Subject Address or Name (in the Data field) does not belong to that node, unless it is providing proxy service for that Subject. A single-component Subject Name matches any fully-qualified name whose first label matches the Subject. All name matching is done in a case-independent manner.

Next, if Qtype is unknown to the Responder, it must return a NI Reply with ICMPv6 Type = 2 and no Reply Data. The Responder should rate-limit such replies as it would ICMPv6 error replies [[2463](#), 2.4(f)].

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Next, the Responder should decide whether to refuse an answer, based on local policy not addressed in this document. If an answer is refused, the Responder may send a NI Reply with ICMPv6 Type = 1 and no Reply Data. Again, the Responder should rate-limit such replies as it would ICMPv6 error replies [2463, 2.4(f)].

Finally, if the Qtype is known and the response is allowed by local policy, the Responder must fill in the Flags and Reply Data of the NI Reply in accordance with the definition of the Qtype and transmit the NI Reply with an ICMPv6 source address equal to the Queried Address, unless that address was an anycast address. If the Queried Address was anycast, the source address for the Reply SHOULD be one belonging to the interface on which the Query was received.

If the Query was sent to an anycast or multicast address, transmission of the Reply MUST be delayed by a random interval between zero and MAX_ANYCAST_DELAY_TIME, as defined by IPv6 Neighbor Discovery [[2461](#)].

5. Defined Qtypes

The following five Qtypes are defined. The first four (number 0 to 3) MUST be supported by any implementation of this protocol. The last one SHOULD be supported by any implementation on an IPv4/IPv6 dual-stack node and MAY be supported on an IPv6-only node.

- 0 NOOP.
- 1 Supported Qtypes.
- 2 DNS Name.
- 3 Node Addresses.
- 4 IPv4 Addresses.

[5.1.](#) NOOP

This NI type has no defined flags and never has a Data field. A Reply to a NI NOOP Query tells the Querier that a node with the Queried Address is up and reachable, implements the Node Information protocol, and incidentally happens to reveal whether the Queried Address was an anycast address.

5.2. Supported Qtypes

This Query contains no Data field. The Reply Data is a bit-vector showing which Qtypes are supported by the Responder. The Reply Data has two variant forms: uncompressed and compressed. The uncompressed Data format is one or more complete 32-bit words, each word a bitmask with the low-order bit in each word corresponding to the lowest numbered Qtype in a group of 32. The first word describes the Responder's support for Qtypes 0 to 31, the second word 32 to 63, and so on.

A 1-valued bit indicates support for the corresponding Qtype. The lowest-order four bits in the first 32-bit word must be set to 1, showing support for the four mandatory Qtypes defined in this specification. Thus the Data field of a NI Supported Qtypes Reply from a Responder implementing only the mandatory Qtypes will contain 32 bits in the following form:

```

      0              1              2              3
    0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0 1
+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+
|0 0 0          . . .                      0 0 0 1 1 1 1|
+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+

```

The compressed form of the Reply Data consists of a sequence of blocks, each block consisting of two 16-bit unsigned integers, nWord and nSkip, followed by nWord 32-bit bitmasks describing the Responder's support for 32 consecutive Qtypes. nSkip is a count of 32-bit words following the included words which would have been all-zero and have been suppressed. The last block MUST have nSkip = 0. As an example, a Responder supporting Qtypes 0, 1, 2, 3, 60, and 4097 could express that information with the following Reply Data (nWord and nSkip fields are written in decimal for easier reading):

```

      0              1              2              3
    0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0 1
+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+
|          2          |          126          |
+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+
|0 0 0          . . .                      0 0 0 1 1 1 1|
+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+
|0 0 0 1 0 0 0          . . .                      0 0 0|
+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+
|          1          |          0          |
+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+
|0 0 0          . . .                      0 0 0 1 0|
+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+

```

One flag bit is defined.

```

      0               1               2               3
      0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0 1
+---+---+---+---+---+---+---+---+---+---+---+---+---+---+---+---+
|               Qtype=1               |         unused         |C|
+---+---+---+---+---+---+---+---+---+---+---+---+---+---+---+---+

```

In a Query, a C-flag set to 1 indicates that the Querier will accept the compressed form of the Reply Data. In a Reply, a C-flag set to 1 indicates that the Reply Data is compressed. The compressed form MAY be used in a Reply only if the Query had the C-flag set. Implementations of this specification SHOULD support the compressed form and if they do, SHOULD set the C-flag in all Supported Qtypes Queries and SHOULD use the compressed form in Supported Qtypes Replies (when allowed by the C-flag in the query) if doing so would avoid fragmentation or save significant space in the Reply.

5.3. DNS Name

The NI DNS Name Query requests the fully-qualified or single-component name corresponding to the Subject Address or Name. The Reply Data has the following format.

```

      0               1               2               3
      0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0 1
+---+---+---+---+---+---+---+---+---+---+---+---+---+---+---+---+
|               TTL               |
+---+---+---+---+---+---+---+---+---+---+---+---+---+---+---+---+
|               DNS Names ...     |
+---+---+---+---+---+---+---+---+---+---+---+---+---+---+---+---+
|               |
+---+---+---+---+---+---+---+---+---+---+---+---+---+---+---+---+

```

TTL The number of seconds that the name may be cached. For compatibility with DNS [1035], this is a 32-bit signed, 2's-complement number, which must not be negative.

DNS Names The fully-qualified or single-component name or names of the Responder which correspond(s) to the Subject Address or Name, in DNS wire format [1035]. Each name MUST be fully-qualified if the responder knows the domain suffix, and a single DNS label followed by two zero-length labels otherwise.

T Defined in a Reply only, indicates that the set of addresses is incomplete for space reasons.

Flag A is copied from a Query to the corresponding Reply.

The TTL associated with each address are to be determined by the rules in [section 5.3](#), applied to the returned address rather than the Subject, excluding the autoconfiguration Valid Lifetime. If no meaningful caching time can be given for an address, the corresponding TTL field MUST be zero.

Each address with non-zero TTL in a NI IPv4 Address Reply may be cached and used for the period indicated by that TTL. If the TTL is zero, the corresponding address must not be used more than once. If the Query was sent by a DNS server on behalf of a DNS client, the result may be returned to that client as a DNS response with TTL zero.

[5.5.1](#). Discussion

It is possible that a node may treat IPv4 interfaces and IPv6 interfaces as distinct, even though they are associated with the same hardware. When such a node is responding to a NI Query having a Subject Address of one type requesting the other type, and the Query has the A flag set to 0, it SHOULD consider IP interfaces, other than tunnels, associated with the same hardware as being the same interface.

[6](#). IANA Considerations

ICMPv6 type values 139 and 140 have been assigned by IANA for this protocol.

This document defines five values of Qtype, numbers 0 through 4. Following the policies outlined in [\[2434\]](#), new values, and their associated Flags and Reply Data, may be defined as follows.

Qtypes 5 through 255, by IETF Consensus.

Qtypes 256 through 1023, Specification Required.

Qtypes 1024 through 4095, First Come First Served.

Qtypes 4096 through 65535, Private Use.

Users of Private Use values should note that values above 8000 to

9000 are likely to lead to fragmentation of "Supported Qtypes"
Replies unless the compressed form of the Reply Data is used.

Assignment of the multicast address prefix FF02:0:0:0:0:2::/96 used
in [section 4](#) as a destination for IPv6 Node Information Queries is
requested.

7. Security Considerations

The anti-spoofing Nonce does not give any protection from spoofers
who can snoop the Query or the Reply.

In a large Internet with relatively frequent renumbering, the
maintenance of KEY and SIG records [[2065](#)] in the zones used for
address-to-name translations will be no easier than the maintenance
of the NS, SOA and PTR records themselves, which already appears to
be difficult in many cases. The author expects, therefore, that
address-to-name mappings, either through the original DNS mechanism
or through this new mechanism, will generally be used as only a hint
to find more trustworthy information using the returned name as an
index.

8. Acknowledgments

Alain Durand contributed to this specification. This document is
not the first proposal of a direct query mechanism for address-to-
name translation. The idea had been discussed briefly in the IPng
working group and an experimental RFC [[1788](#)] describes such a
mechanism for IPv4.

9. References

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