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S. Shalunov
Internet2
B. Teitelbaum
Advanced Network & Services and Internet2
M. Zekauskas
Advanced Network & Services
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A One-way Delay Measurement Protocol
<[draft-ietf-ippm-owdp-03.txt](#)>

1. Status of this Memo

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2. Motivation and Goals

The IETF IP Performance Metrics (IPPM) working group has proposed draft standard metrics for one-way packet delay [[RFC2679](#)] and loss [[RFC 2680](#)] across Internet paths. Although there are now several measurement platforms that implement collection of these metrics [[SURVEYOR](#)], [[RIPE](#)], there is not currently a standard that would permit initiation of test streams or exchange of packets to collect

singleton metrics in an interoperable manner.

With the increasingly wide availability of affordable global positioning system (GPS) and CDMA based time sources, hosts increasingly have available to them very accurate time sources--either directly or through their proximity to NTP primary (stratum 1) time servers. By standardizing a technique for collecting IPPM one-way delay measurements, we hope to create an environment where IPPM metrics may be collected across a far broader mesh of Internet paths than is currently possible. One particularly compelling vision is of widespread deployment of open OWDP servers that would make measurement of one-way delay as commonplace as measurement of round-trip time using an ICMP-based tool like ping.

Additional design goals of OWDP include being hard to detect and manipulate, security, logical separation of control and test functionality, and support for small test packets.

OWDP test traffic is hard to detect, because it is simply a stream of UDP packets from and to negotiated port numbers with potentially nothing static in the packets (size is negotiated, too). Additionally, OWDP supports an encrypted mode, that further obscures the traffic, at the same time making it impossible to alter timestamps undetectably.

Security features include optional authentication and/or encryption of control and test messages. These features may be useful to prevent unauthorized access to results or man-in-the-middle attackers who attempt to provide special treatment to OWDP test streams or who attempt to modify sender-generated timestamps to falsify test results.

2.1. Relationship of Test and Control Protocols

OWDP actually consists of two inter-related protocols: OWDP-Control and OWDP-Test. OWDP-Control is used to initiate, start, stop and retrieve test sessions, while OWDP-Test is used to exchange test packets between two measurement nodes.

Although OWDP-Test may be used in conjunction with a control protocol other than OWDP-Control, the authors have deliberately chosen to include both protocols in the same draft to encourage the implementation and deployment of OWDP-Control as a common denominator control protocol for one-way delay measurement. Having a complete and open one-way delay measurement solution that is simple to implement and deploy is crucial to assuring a future in which inter-domain one-way delay measurement could become as commonplace as ping. We neither

anticipate nor recommend that OWDP-Control form the foundation of a general purpose, extensible, measurement and monitoring control protocol.

OWDP-Control is designed to support the negotiation of one-way delay measurement sessions and results retrieval in a straightforward manner. At session initiation, there is a negotiation of sender and receiver addresses and port numbers, session start time, session length, test packet size, the mean Poisson sampling interval for the test stream, and some attributes of the very general [RFC 2330](#) notion of "packet type", including packet size and per-hop behavior (PHB) [[RFC2474](#)], which could be used to support the measurement of one-way delay across diff-serv networks. Additionally, OWDP-Control supports per-session encryption and authentication for both test and control traffic, measurement servers which may act as proxies for test stream endpoints, and the exchange of a seed value for the pseudo-random Poisson process that describes the test stream generated by the sender.

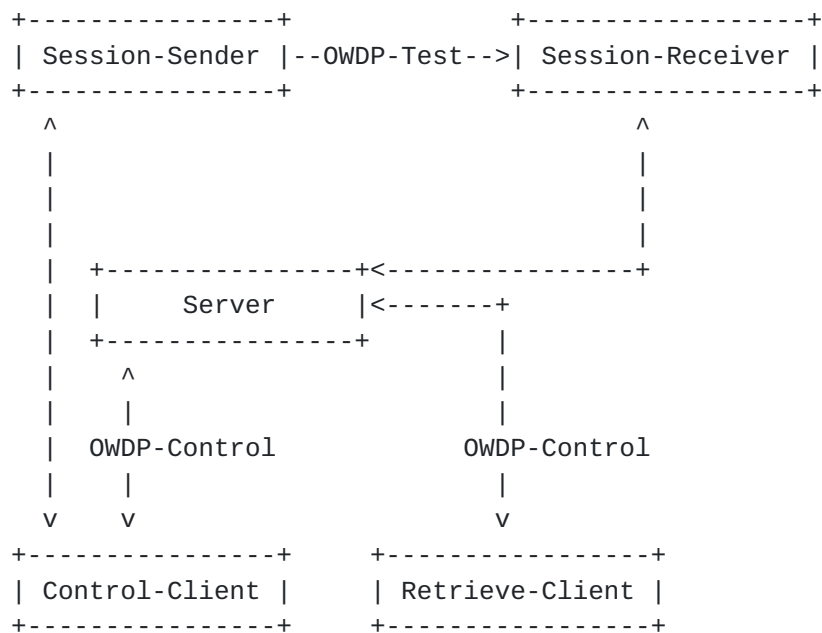
We believe that OWDP-Control can effectively support one-way delay measurement in a variety of environments, from publicly accessible delay "beacons" running on arbitrary hosts to network monitoring deployments within private corporate intra-nets. If integration with SNMP or proprietary network management protocols is required, gateways may be created.

[2.2. Logical Model](#)

Several roles are logically separated to allow for broad flexibility in use. Specifically, we define:

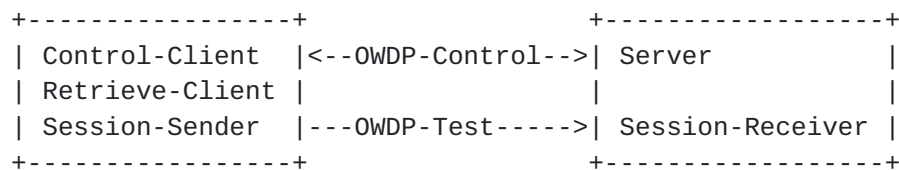
Session-Sender	the sending endpoint of an OWDP-Test session;
Session-Receiver	the receiving endpoint of an OWDP-Test session;
Server	an end system that manages one or more OWDP-Test sessions, is capable of configuring per-session state in session endpoints, and is capable of returning the results of a test session;
Control-Client	an end system that initiates requests for OWDP-Test sessions, triggers the start of a set of sessions, and may trigger their termination;
Retrieve-Client	an end system that initiates requests to retrieve the results of completed OWDP-Test sessions;

One possible scenario of relationships between these roles is shown below.



(Unlabeled links in the figure are unspecified by this draft and may be proprietary protocols.)

Different logical roles can be played by the same host. For example, in the figure above, there could actually be only two hosts: one playing the roles of Control-Client, Retrieve-Client, and Session-Sender, and the other playing the roles of Server and Session-Receiver. This is shown below.



Finally, because many Internet paths include segments that transport IP over ATM, delay and loss measurements can include the effects of ATM segmentation and reassembly (SAR). Consequently, OWDP has been designed to allow for small test packets that would fit inside the payload of a single ATM cell (this is only achieved in unauthenticated and encrypted modes).

3. Protocol Overview

As described above, OWDP consists of two inter-related protocols: OWDP-Control and OWDP-Test. The former is layered over TCP and is used to initiate and control measurement sessions and to fetch their results. The latter protocol is layered over UDP and is used to send singleton measurement packets along the Internet path under test.

The initiator of the measurement session establishes a TCP connection to a well-known port on the target point and this connection remains open for the duration of the OWDP-Test sessions. IANA will be requested to allocate a well-known port number for OWDP-Control sessions. An OWDP server SHOULD listen to this well-known port.

OWDP-Control messages are transmitted only before OWDP-Test sessions are actually started and after they complete (with the possible exception of an early Stop-Session message).

The OWDP-Control and OWDP-Test protocols support three modes of operation: unauthenticated, authenticated, and encrypted. The authenticated or encrypted modes require endpoints to possess a shared secret.

All multi-octet quantities defined in this document are represented in network byte order.

4. OWDP-Control

Each type of OWDP-Control message has a fixed length. The recipient will know the full length of a message after examining first 16 octets of it. No message is shorter than 16 octets.

If the full message is not received within 30 minutes after it is expected, connection SHOULD be dropped.

4.1. Connection Setup

Before either a Control-Client or a Retrieve-Client can issue commands of a Server, it must establish a connection to the server.

First, a client opens a TCP connection to the server on a well-known port. The server responds with a server greeting:

Here Mode is the mode that the client chooses to use during this

4.2. OWDP-Control Commands

In authenticated or encrypted mode (which are identical as far as OWDP-Control is concerned, and only differ in OWDP-Test) all further communications are encrypted with the Session-key, using CBC mode. The client encrypts its stream using Client-IV. The server encrypts its stream using Server-IV.

The following commands are available for the client: Request-Session, Start-Sessions, Stop-Session, Retrieve-Session. The command Stop-Session is available to both client and server.

After Start-Sessions is sent/received by the client/server, and before it both sends and receives Stop-Session (order unspecified), it is said to be conducting active measurements.

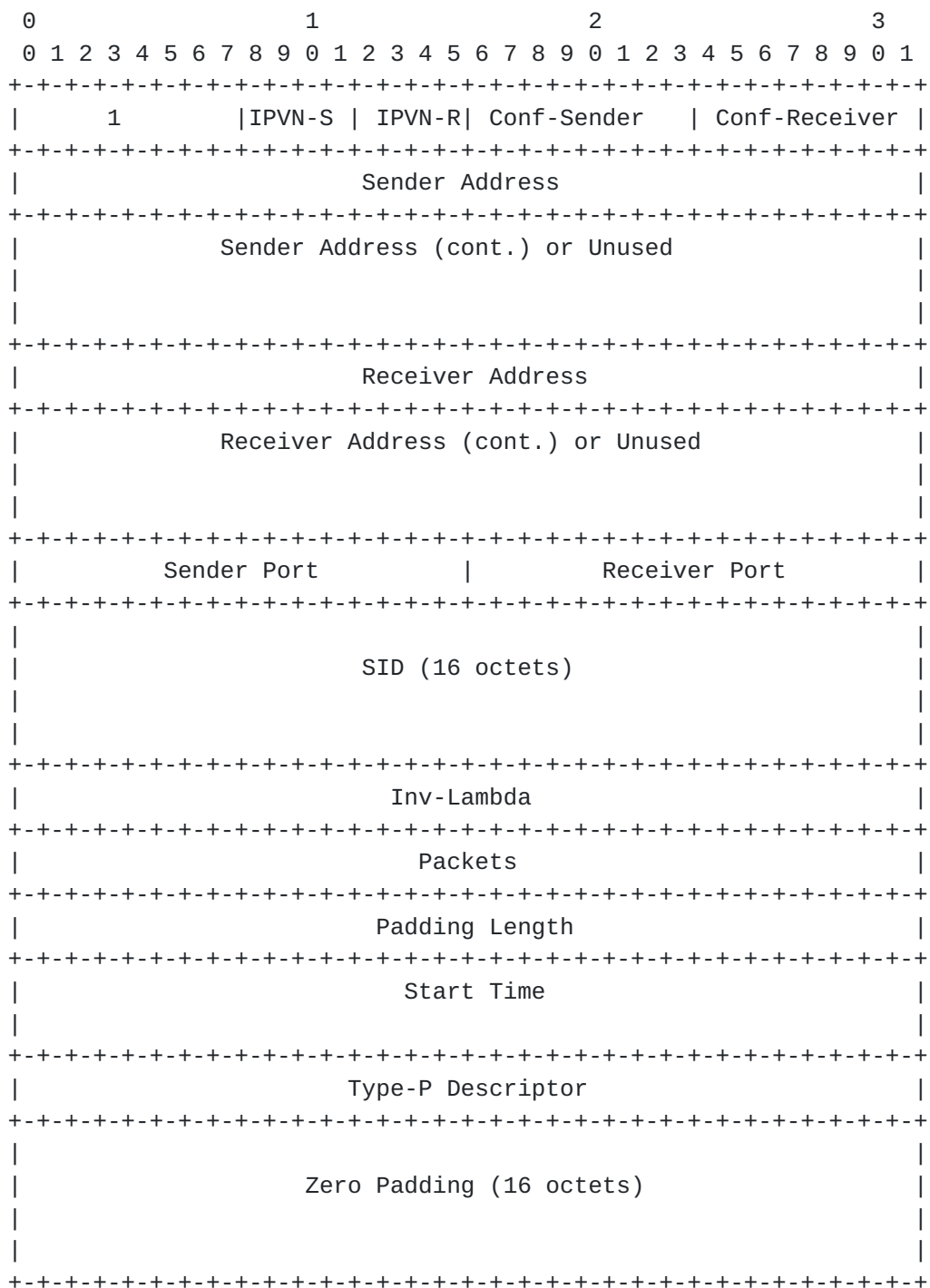
While conducting active measurements, the only command available is Stop-Session.

These commands are described in detail below.

4.3. Creating Test Sessions

Individual one-way delay measurement sessions are established using a simple request/response protocol. An OWDP client MAY issue zero or more Request-Session messages to an OWDP server, which MUST respond to each with an Accept-Session message. An Accept-Session message MAY refuse a request.

The format of Request-Session message is as follows:



Here the first octet (1) indicates that this is Request-Session command.

IPVN-S and IPVN-R are IP version numbers for Sender and Receiver. In the case of IP version number being 4, twelve unused octets follow the four-octet address.

Conf-Sender and Conf-Receiver can be 0 or 1. If 1, the server is being asked to configure the corresponding agent (sender or receiver). In this case, the corresponding Port value SHOULD be disregarded by the server. At least one of Conf-Sender and Conf-Receiver MUST be 1. (Both can be set, in which case the server is being asked to perform a session between two hosts it can configure.)

The Sender Address and Receiver Address fields contain respectively the sender and receiver addresses of the end points of the Internet path over which an OWDP test session is requested.

If Conf-Sender is not set, Sender Port is the UDP port OWDP-Test packets will be sent from. If Conf-Receiver is not set, Receiver Port is the UDP port OWDP-Test packets are requested to be sent to.

SID is the session identifier. It can be used in later sessions as an argument for Retrieve-Session command. It is meaningful only if Conf-Receiver is 1.

The field Inv-Lambda is an unsigned integer and is the scaled reciprocal of rate (in microseconds) at which the Poisson test stream is to be generated. This allows the average Poisson sampling interval for the requested test session to be set to between 1 microsecond and over an hour.

The value Packets is the number of active measurement packets to be sent during this OWDP-Test session (note that both server and client can abort the session early).

Padding length is the number of octets to be appended to normal OWDP-Test packet (see more on padding in discussion of OWDP-Test).

Start Time is the time when the session is to be started (but not before Start-Sessions command is issued). This timestamp is in the same format as OWDP-Test timestamps.

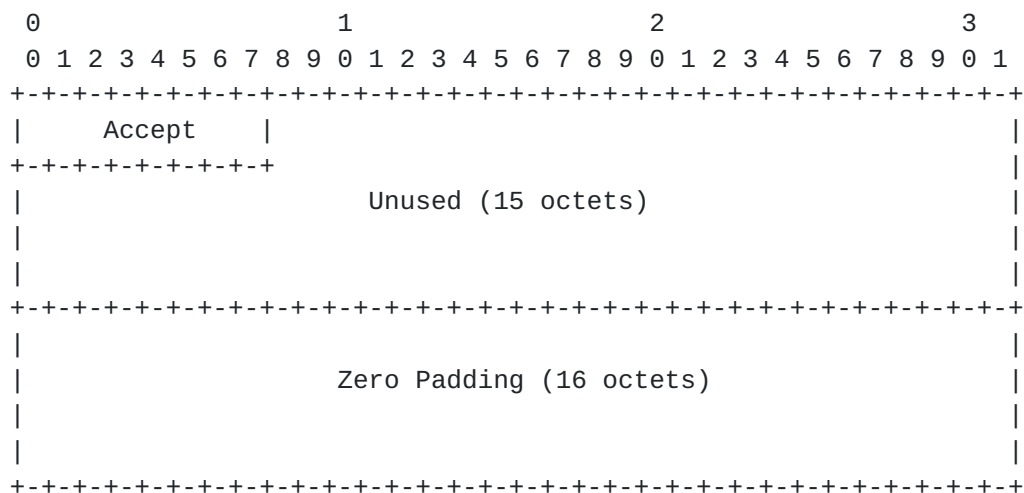
Type-P Descriptor covers only a subset of (very large) Type-P space. If the first two bits of Type-P Descriptor are 00, then subsequent 6 bits specify the requested Differentiated Services Codepoint (DSCP) value of sent OWDP-Test packets as defined in [RFC 2474](#). If the first two bits of Type-P descriptor are 01, then subsequent 16 bits specify the requested Per Hop Behavior Identification Code (PHB ID) as defined in [RFC 2836](#).

Therefore, the value of all zeros specifies the default best-effort service.

If Conf-Sender is set, Type-P Descriptor is to be used to configure

SIDs SHOULD be constructed by concatenation of 4-octet IPv4 IP number belonging to the generating machine, 8-octet timestamp, and 4-octet

The server **MUST** respond with an Control-Ack message (which **SHOULD** be sent as quickly as possible). Control-Ack messages have the following format:



If Accept is 1, the Start-Sessions request was rejected; zero means that the command was accepted. All other values are reserved. The server MAY and the client SHOULD close the connection in the case of a negative response.

The server SHOULD start all OWDP-Test streams immediately after it sends the response or immediately after their specified start times, whichever is later. (Note that a client can effect an immediate start by specifying in Request-Session a Start Time in the past.) If the client represents a Sender, the client SHOULD start its OWDP-Test streams immediately after it sees the Control-Ack response from the Server.

[4.5. Stop-Sessions](#)

The Stop-Sessions message may be issued by either the Control-Client or the Server. The format of this command is as follows:

The format of this client command is as follows:

Each packet is represented with 20 octets, and includes 4 octets of sequence number, 8 octets of send timestamp, and 8 octets of receive timestamp.

For authenticated mode:

The format of the timestamp is influenced by [RFC 1305](#) and is as follows: first 32 bits represent the unsigned integer number of seconds elapsed since 0h on 1 January 1900; next 24 bits represent the fractional part of a second that has elapsed since then (so, first 56 bits of the timestamp would be the same as the corresponding bits of NTP v3 timestamp). The remaining octet specifies synchronization and precision. The first bit is set if the party generating the timestamp has a clock that is synchronized to an external source (e.g., the bit should be set if GPS hardware is used and it indicates that it has acquired current position and time or if

where U_i is uniformly distributed between 0 and 1 and λ is the desired mean time between packets.

Pseudo-random stream of bits is obtained using AES with SID as the key, running in counter mode (first encrypted block is 0, second encrypted block is 1 in network octet order, etc.) Each block of 64 bits is used to obtain one pseudo-random number uniformly distributed between 0 and 1. If the bits are B_j ($j=1..64$, numbered left to right), the resulting value is

$$U = B_1 * 2^{-1} + B_2 * 2^{-2} + \dots B_{64} * 2^{-64}$$

The parameter λ has the value requested in the Request-Session message of the OWDP-Control negotiation that spawned the session.

The logarithm and division in the formula above MUST be computed using IEEE 754 standard floating point arithmetic. [HELP WANTED!: Someone with a stronger background in numerical analysis to specify how to compute the sampling intervals precisely and portably!]

Finally, Packet Padding SHOULD be pseudo-random (generated independently of any other pseudo-random numbers mentioned in this document). However, implementations MUST provide a configuration parameter, an option, or a different means of making Packet Padding consist of all zeros.

5.2. Receiver Behavior

Receiver knows when the sender will send packets. The following parameter is defined: loss threshold. It SHOULD be 10 minutes and MAY be more, but not more than 60 minutes.

As packets are received,

- + Timestamp the received packet.
- + In authenticated or encrypted mode, decrypt first block (16 octets) of packet body.
- + Store the packet sequence number, send times, and receive times for the results to be transferred.
- + Packets not received within the loss threshold are considered lost. They are recorded with their seqno, presumed send time, and receive time consisting of a string of zero bits.

Packets that have send time in the future MUST be recorded normally, without changing their send timestamp, unless they have to be discarded.

If any of the following is true, packet MUST be discarded:

- + Send timestamp is more than loss threshold in the past or in the future.
- + Send timestamp differs by more than loss threshold from the time when the packet should have been sent according to its seqno.
- + In authenticated or encrypted mode, any of the bits of zero padding inside the first 16 octets of packet body is non-zero.

6. Security Considerations

The goal of authenticated mode is to let one password-protect service provided by a particular OWDP-Control server. One can imagine a variety of circumstances where this could be useful. Authenticated mode is designed to prohibit theft of service.

Additional design objective of authenticated mode was to make it impossible for an attacker who cannot read traffic between OWDP-Test sender and receiver to tamper with test results in a fashion that affects the measurements, but not other traffic.

The goal of encrypted mode is quite different: To make it hard for a party in the middle of the network to make results look "better" than they should be. This is especially true if one of client and server doesn't coincide with neither sender nor receiver.

Encryption of OWDP-Control using AES CBC mode with blocks of zeros after each message aims to achieve two goals: (i) to provide secrecy of exchange; (ii) to provide authentication of each message.

OWDP-Test sessions directed at an unsuspecting party could be used for denial of service (DoS) attacks. In unauthenticated mode servers should limit receivers to hosts they control or to the OWDP-Control client.

OWDP-Test sessions could be used as covert channels of information. Environments that are worried about covert channels should take this into consideration.

Notice that AES in counter mode is used for pseudo-random number generation, so implementation of AES MUST be included even in a server that only supports unauthenticated mode.

7. References

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8. Authors' Addresses

Stanislav Shalunov
Internet2 / UCAID
200 Business Park Drive
Armonk, NY 10504
USA

Phone: +1 914 765 1182
EMail: shalunov@internet2.edu

Benjamin Teitelbaum
Advanced Network & Services
200 Business Park Drive
Armonk, NY 10504
USA

Phone: +1 914 765 1118
EMail: ben@advanced.org

Matthew J. Zekauskas
Advanced Network & Services, Inc.
200 Business Park Drive
Armonk, NY 10504
USA

Phone: +1 914 765 1112
EMail: matt@advanced.org

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