Support of IEEE-1588 time stamp format in Two-Way Active Measurement Protocol (TWAMP)
draft-ietf-ippm-twamp-time-format-00

Abstract

This document describes an OPTIONAL feature for active performance measurement protocols allowing use of time stamp format defined in IEEE-1588v2-2008.

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1. Introduction

One-Way Active Measurement Protocol (OWAMP) [RFC4656] defines that only the NTP [RFC5905] format of a time stamp can be used in OWAMP-Test protocol. Two-Way Active Measurement Protocol (TWAMP) [RFC5357] adopted the OWAMP-Test packet format and extended it by adding a format for a reflected test packet. Both the sender's and reflector's packets time stamps are expected to follow the 64-bit long NTP format [RFC5905]. NTP, when used over Internet, typically achieves clock accuracy of about 5ms to 100ms. Surveys conducted recently suggest that 90% devices achieve accuracy of better than 100 ms and 99% - better than 1 sec. It should be noted that NTP synchronizes clocks on the control plane, not on data plane. Distribution of clock wiitin a node may be supported by independent NTP domain or via interprocess communication in multiprocessor distributed system. And of mentioned solutions will be subject to additional queuing delays that negatively affect data plane clock accuracy.

Precision Time Protocol (PTP) [IEEE.1588.2008] has gained wide support since the development of OWAMP and TWAMP. PTP, using on-path support and other mechanisms, allows sub-microsecond clock accuracy. PTP is now supported in multiple implementations of fast forwarding engines and thus accuracy achieved by PTP is the accuracy of clock in data plane. Thus providing option to use more accurate clock as source of time stamps for IP performance measurement is one of advantages this proposal helps to achive. Another advantage realized by simplification of hardware in data plane. To support OWAMP or TWAMP test protocol time stamps must be converted from PTP to NTP.

That requires resources, use of micro-code or additional processing elements, that are always limited. To address this, this document proposes optional extensions to Control and Test protocols to support use of IEEE-1588v2 time stamp format as optional alternative to the NTP time stamp format.

One of the goals of this proposal is not only allow end-points of a test session to use other than NTP timestamp but to support backwards compatibility with nodes that do not yet support this extension.

1.1. Conventions used in this document

1.1.1. Terminology

IPPM: IP Performance Measurement

NTP: Network Time Protocol

PTP: Precision Time Protocol

TWAMP: Two-Way Active Measurement Protocol

OWAMP: One-Way Active Measurement Protocol

1.1.2. Requirements Language

The key words "MUST", "MUST NOT", "REQUIRED", "SHALL", "SHALL NOT", "SHOULD", "SHOULD NOT", "RECOMMENDED", "NOT RECOMMENDED", "MAY", and "OPTIONAL" in this document are to be interpreted as described in [RFC2119].

2. OWAMP and TWAMP Extensions

OWAMP connection establishment follows the procedure defined in Section 3.1 of [RFC4656] and additional steps in TWAMP described in Section 3.1 of [RFC5357]. In these procedures the Modes field been used to identify and select specific communication capabilities. At the same time the Modes field been recognized and used as extension mechanism [RFC6038]. The new feature requires one bit position for Server and Control-Client to negotiate which timestamp format can be used in some or all test sessions invoked with this control connection. The end-point of the test session, Session-Sender and Session-Receiver or Session-Reflector, that supports this extension MUST be capable to interpret NTP and PTPv2 timestamp formats. If the end-point does not support this extension, then the value of PTPv2 Timestamp flag MUST be 0 because it is in Must Be Zero field. If value of PTPv2 Timestamp flags is 0, then the advertising node can use and interpret only NTP timestamp format.

Use of PTPv2 Timestamp flags discussed in the following sub-sections. For details on the assigned values and bit positions see the Section 3.

2.1. Timestamp Format Negotiation in Setting Up Connection in OWAMP

In OWAMP-Test [RFC4656] it is the Session-Receiver and/or Fetch-Client that are interpreting collected timestamps. Thus announced by a Server in the Modes field timestamp format indicates which formats the Session-Receiver is capable to interpret. The Control-Client inspects values set by the Server for timestamp formats and sets values in the Modes field of the Set-Up-Response message according to timestamp formats Session-Sender is capable of using. The rules of setting timestamp flags in Modes field in server greeting and Set-Up-Response messages and interpreting them are as follows:

o The Server that establishes test sessions for Session-Receiver that supports this extension MUST set PTPv2 Timestamp flag to 1 in the server greeting message according to the requirement listed in Section 2.

o If PTPv2 Timestamp flag of the server greeting message that the Control-Client receives has value 0, then the Session-Sender MUST use NTP format for timestamp in the test session and Control-Client SHOULD set PTPv2 Timestamp flag to 0 in accordance with [RFC4656]. If the Session-Sender cannot use NTP timestamps, then the Control-Client SHOULD close the TCP connection associated with the OWAMP-Control session.

o If the Session-Sender can set timestamp in PTPv2 format, then the Control-Client MUST set the PTPv2 Timestamp flag to 1in Modes field in the Set-Up-Response message and the Session-Sender MUST set timestamp in PTPv2 timestamp format. Otherwise the Control-Client MUST set the PTPv2 Timestamp flag in the Set-Up-Response message to 0.

o Otherwise, if the Session-Sender can set timestamp in NTP format, then the Session-Sender MUST set timestamp in NTP timestamp format. Otherwise the Control-Client SHOULD close the TCP connection associated with the OWAMP-Control session..

If values of both NTP and PTPv2 Timestamp flags in the Set-Up-Response message are equal to 0, then that indicates that the Control-Client can set timestamp only in NTP format.

If OWAMP-Control uses Fetch-Session commands, then selection and use of one or another timestamp format is local decision for both Session-Sender and Session-Receiver.

2.2. Timestamp Format Negotiation in Setting Up Connection in TWAMP

In TWAMP-Test [RFC5357] it is the Session-Sender that is interpreting collected timestamps. Hence, in the Modes field a Server advertises timestamp formats that the Session-Reflector can use in TWAMP-Test message. The choice of the timestamp format to be used by the Session-Sender is a local decision. The Control-Client inspects the Modes field and sets timestamp flags values to indicate which format will be used by the Session-Reflector. The rules of setting and interpreting flag values are as follows:

o Server MUST set to 1 value of PTPv2 Timestamp flag in its greeting message if Session-Reflector can set timestamp in PTPv2 format. Otherwise the PTPv2 Timestamp flag MUST be set to 0.

o If value of the PTPv2 Timestamp flag in received server greeting message equals 0, then Session-Reflector does not support this extension and will use NTP timestamp format. Control-Client SHOULD set PTPv2 Timestamp flag to 0 in Set-Up-Response message in accordance with [RFC5357].

o Control-Client MUST set PTPv2 Timestamp flag value to 1 in Modes field in the Set-Up-Response message if Server advertised ability of the Session-Reflector to use PTPv2 format for timestamps. Otherwise the flag MUST be set to 0.

o If the values of PTPv2 Timestamp flag in the Set-Up-Response message equals 0, then that means that Session-Sender can only interpret NTP timestamp format. Then the Session-Reflector MUST use NTP timestamp format. If the Session-Reflector does not support NTP format for timestamps then Server and SHOULD close the TCP connection associated with the TWAMP-Control session.

2.3. OWAMP-Test and TWAMP-Test Update

Participants of a test session need to indicate which timestamp format being used. The proposal is to use Z field in Error Estimate defined in Section 4.1.2 of [RFC4656]. The new interpretation of the Error Estimate is in addition to it specifying error estimate and synchronization, Error Estimate indicates format of a collected timestamp. And this proposal changes the semantics of the Z bit field, the one between S and Scale fields, to be referred as Timestamp format and value MUST be set according to the following:

o 0 - NTP 64 bit format of a timestamp;

o 1 - PTPv2 truncated format of a timestamp.

As result of this value of the Z field from Error Estimate, Sender Error Estimate or Send Error Estimate and Receive Error Estimate SHOULD NOT be ignored and MUST be used when calculating delay and delay variation metrics based on collected timestamps.

2.3.1. Consideration for TWAMP Light mode

This document does not specify how Session-Sender and Session-Reflector in TWAMP Light mode are informed of timestamp format to be used. It is assumed that, for example, configuration could be used to direct Session-Sender and Session-Reflector respectively to use timestamp format according to their capabilities and rules listed in Section 2.2.

3. IANA Considerations

The TWAMP-Modes registry defined in [RFC5618].

IANA is requested to reserve a new PTPv2 Timestamp as follows:

Value	Description	Semantics	Reference
TBA1 (proposed 256)	PTPv2 Timestamp Capability	bit position TBA2 (proposed 8)	This document

Table 1: New Timestamp Capability

4. Security Considerations

Use of particular format of a timestamp in test session does not appear to introduce any additional security threat to hosts that communicate with OWAMP and/or TWAMP as defined in [RFC4656], [RFC5357] respectively. The security considerations that apply to any active measurement of live networks are relevant here as well. See the Security Considerations sections in [RFC4656] and [RFC5357].

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6. Normative References

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