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T. Reddy
P. Patil
D. Wing
Cisco
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Happy Eyeballs Extension for ICE
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Abstract

This document describes an algorithm that makes Interactive Connectivity Establishment (ICE) connectivity checks more responsive by reducing delays in dual-stack host ICE connectivity checks when there is a path failure for an address family preferred by the application or by the operating system. As IPv6 is usually preferred over IPv4, the procedures in this document helps avoid user-noticeable delays when the IPv6 path is broken or excessively slow.

Status of This Memo

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Table of Contents

1. Introduction

In situations where there are many IPv6 addresses, ICE [RFC5245] will prefer IPv6 candidates [RFC6724] and will attempt connectivity checks on all the IPv6 candidates before trying an IPv4 candidate. If the IPv6 path is broken, this fallback to IPv4 can consume a lot of time, harming user satisfaction of dual-stack devices. This causes ICE to perform terribly in cases where IPv6 doesn't work, which is still very commonplace. This document recommends an alternative prioritization for candidates that improves this situation with a goal that the ICE agent not be inordinately harmed by a simple reordering of the candidates.

This document describes an algorithm that makes ICE connectivity checks more responsive to failures of an address family by reordering the candidates such that IPv6 and IPv4 candidates get a fair chance during connectivity checks. This algorithm change is backward compatible with existing implementations, and does not require any changes other than to the selection of candidate priority.

2. Notational Conventions

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 [RFC2119].

This note uses terminology defined in [RFC5245].

3. Candidate Priority

By using the technique described in Section 4, if there are both IPv6 and IPv4 addresses candidates gathered, and the first 'N' candidates are of the same IP address family, then the highest-priority candidate of the other address family is promoted to position 'N+1' in the check list thus making ICE connectivity checks more responsive to failures of an address family. The algorithm ensures that there are no more than a fixed number of candidates of a given IP version in a single sequence.

Even if an administrator changes the policy table to prefer IPv4 addresses over IPv6 addresses as explained in [RFC6724], the IPv4 server-reflexive candidates will still have lower priority than IPv6 host candidates as per the "Recommended Formula" (section 4.1.2.1 of [RFC5245]) which is not desired. The Happy Eyeballs extension for ICE algorithm resolves the problem in this scenario as well by ensuring that IPv4 server-reflexive candidates are placed before IPv6 host candidates and thus ordering based on candidate types is no longer in effect.

4. Algorithm overview

The Happy Eyeballs Extension for ICE algorithm proposes the following steps after candidates are prioritized using the formula in section 4.1.2.1 of [RFC5245]:

a. If the first 'N' candidates are of the same IP address family, then the highest-priority candidate of the other address family is promoted to position 'N+1' in the list.

b. Step (a) is repeated for subsequent candidates in the list until all candidates of the preferred address family are exhausted.

The algorithm ensures that a long sequence of candidates belonging to the same address family is interleaved with candidates from an alternative IP version.

The following figure illustrates the result of the algorithm on candidates:

```
Before Happy Eyeballs Extension for ICE algorithm :
----------------------------------------------------
 (highest)  IPv6 Host Candidate-1
            IPv6 Host Candidate-2
            IPv6 Host Candidate-3
            IPv6 Host Candidate-4
            IPv6 Host Candidate-5
```



```
            IPv6 Host Candidate-6
            IPv6 Host Candidate-7
            IPv4 Host Candidate
            IPv6 Server Reflexive Candidate
            IPv4 Server Reflexive Candidate
            IPv6 Relayed Transport Candidate
 (lowest)   IPv4 Relayed Transport Candidate


After Happy Eyeballs Extension for ICE algorithm :
--------------------------------------------------
 (highest)  IPv6 Host Candidate-1
            IPv6 Host Candidate-2
            IPv6 Host Candidate-3
            IPv4 Host Candidate                 ---> Promoted candidate
            IPv6 Host Candidate-4
            IPv6 Host Candidate-5
            IPv6 Host Candidate-6
            IPv4 Server Reflexive Candidate    ---> Promoted candidate
            IPv6 Host Candidate-7
            IPv6 Server Reflexive Candidate
            IPv6 Relayed Transport Candidate
 (lowest)   IPv4 Relayed Transport Candidate
```

4.1. Processing the Results

If ICE connectivity checks using an IPv4 candidate is successful for each component of the media stream and connectivity checks using IPv6 candidates is not yet successful, the ICE endpoint will declare victory, conclude ICE for the media stream and start sending media using IPv4. However, it is also possible that ICE endpoint continues to perform ICE connectivity checks with IPv6 candidate pairs and if checks using higher-priority IPv6 candidate pair is successful then media stream can be moved to the IPv6 candidate pair. Continuing to perform connectivity checks can be useful for subsequent connections, to optimize which connectivity checks are tried first. Such optimizations are out of scope of this document.

The following diagram shows the behaviour during the connectivity check when Alice calls Bob and Agent Alice is the controlling agent and uses the aggressive nomination algorithm. "USE-CAND" implies the presence of the USE-CANDIDATE attribute.

```
 Alice                                                         Bob
   |                                                            |
   |                                                            |
   |  Bind Req USE-CAND                     Bind Req            |
```



```
   |  using IPv6                            using IPv6          |
   |------------------>X               X<-----------------------|
   |  Bind Req USE-CAND                     Bind Req            |
   |  using IPv6 after Ta                   using IPv6          |
   |------------------>X               X<-----------------------|
   |                                                            |
[after connectivity checks for 2 IPv6 addresses, try IPv4]      |
   |                                                            |
   |  Bind Req USE-CAND                                         |
   |  using IPv4                                                |
   |----------------------------------------------------------->|
   |                                        Bind Resp           |
   |                                        using IPv4          |
   |<----------------------------------------------------------- |
   |          RTP                                               |
   |===========================================================>|
   |                                       Bind Req             |
   |                                       using IPv4           |
   |<-----------------------------------------------------------|
   |  Bind Response                                             |
   |  using IPv4                                                |
   |----------------------------------------------------------->|
```

```
      |          RTP                                                 |
      |<============================================================>|
```

Figure 1: Happy Eyeballs Extension for ICE

5. IANA Considerations

None.

6. Security Considerations

STUN connectivity check using MAC computed during key exchanged in the signaling channel provides message integrity and data origin authentication as described in section 2.5 of [RFC5245] apply to this use.

7. Acknowledgements

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8. References

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Authors' Addresses

Tirumaleswar Reddy
Cisco Systems, Inc.
Cessna Business Park, Varthur Hobli
Sarjapur Marathalli Outer Ring Road
Bangalore, Karnataka 560103
India

Email: tireddy@cisco.com

Prashanth Patil
Cisco Systems, Inc.
Bangalore
India

Email: praspati@cisco.com

Dan Wing
Cisco Systems, Inc.
170 West Tasman Drive
San Jose, California 95134
USA

Email: dwing@cisco.com