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DNS Session Signaling  
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Abstract

The EDNS(0) Extension Mechanism for DNS is explicitly defined to only have "per-message" semantics. This document defines a new Session Signaling Opcode used to carry persistent "per-session" type-length-values (TLVs), and defines an initial set of TLVs used to manage session timeouts and termination.

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## 1. Introduction

The use of transports other than UDP for DNS is being increasingly specified, for example, DNS over TCP [RFC1035][RFC7766] and DNS over TLS [RFC7858]. Such transports can offer persistent, long-lived sessions and therefore when using them for transporting DNS messages it is of benefit to have a mechanism that can establish parameters associated with those sessions, such as timeouts. In such situations it is also advantageous to support server initiated messages.

The EDNS(0) Extension Mechanism for DNS [RFC6891] is explicitly defined to only have "per-message" semantics. Whilst EDNS(0) has been used to signal at least one session related parameter (the

EDNS(0) TCP KeepAlive option [RFC7828]) the result is less than optimal due to the restrictions imposed by the EDNS(0) semantics and the lack of server initiated signalling. This document defines a new Session Signaling Opcode used to carry persistent "per-session" type-length-values (TLVs), and defines an initial set of TLVs used to manage session timeouts and termination.

With EDNS(0), multiple options may be packed into a single OPT pseudo-RR, and there is no generalized mechanism for a client to be able to tell whether a server has processed or otherwise acted upon each individual option within the combined OPT RR. The specifications for each individual option need to define how each different option is to be acknowledged, if necessary.

With Session Signaling, in contrast, there is no compelling motivation to pack multiple operations into a single message for efficiency reasons. Each Session Signaling operation is communicated in its own separate DNS message, and the transport protocol can take care of packing separate DNS messages into a single IP packet if appropriate. For example, TCP can pack multiple small DNS messages into a single TCP segment. The RCODE in each response message indicates the success or failure of the operation in question.

It should be noted that the message format for Session Signaling operations (see Section 3.3) differs from the DNS packet format used for standard queries and responses, in that it has a shorter header (four octets instead of usual twelve octets).

## 2. Terminology

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 "Key words for use in RFCs to Indicate Requirement Levels" [RFC2119].

The term "server" means the software with a listening socket, awaiting incoming connection requests.

The term "client" means the software which initiates a connection to the server's listening socket.

The terms "initiator" and "responder" correspond respectively to the initial sender and subsequent receiver of a Session Signaling TLV, regardless of which was the "client" and "server" in the usual DNS sense.

The term "sender" may apply to either an initiator or responder.

The term "session" in the context of this document means the exchange of DNS messages using an end-to-end transport protocol where:

- o The connection between client and server is persistent and relatively long-lived (i.e., minutes or hours, rather than seconds).
- o Either end of the connection may initiate messages to the other
- o Messages are delivered in order

### 3. Protocol Details

Session Signaling messages MUST only be carried in protocols and in environments where a session may be established according to the definition above. Standard DNS over TCP [RFC1035][RFC7766], and DNS over TLS [RFC7858] are suitable protocols. DNS over plain UDP is not appropriate since it fails on the requirement for in-order message delivery, and, in the presence of NAT gateways and firewalls with short UDP timeouts, it fails to provide a persistent bi-directional communication channel unless an excessive amount of keepalive traffic is used.

Session Signaling messages relate only to the specific session in which they are being carried. Where a middle box (e.g., a DNS proxy, forwarder, or session multiplexer) is in the path the middle box MUST NOT blindly forward the message in either direction. This does not preclude the use of these messages in the presence of a NAT box that rewrites IP-layer or transport-layer headers but otherwise maintains the effect of a single session.

A client MAY attempt to initiate Session Signaling messages at any time on a connection; receiving a NOTIMP response in reply indicates that the server does not implement Session Signaling, and the client SHOULD NOT issue further Session Signaling messages on that connection.

A server SHOULD NOT initiate Session Signaling messages until a client-initiated Session Signaling message is received first, unless in an environment where it is known in advance by other means that the client supports Session Signaling. This requirement is to ensure that the clients that do not support Session Signaling do not receive unsolicited inbound Session Signaling messages that they would not know how to handle.

Clients and servers SHOULD silently ignore unrecognized messages (both requests and responses) over the connection. This allows for backwards compatibility with future enhancements.

### 3.1. Session Lifecycle

A session begins when a client makes a new connection to a server.

If a client makes a connection and then fails to send any DNS messages, then after 30 seconds the server SHOULD abort the connection with a TCP RST.

The client may perform as many DNS operations as it wishes on the newly created connection. Operations SHOULD be pipelined (i.e., the client doesn't need wait for a reply before sending the next message). The server MUST act on messages in the order they are received, but responses to those messages MAY be sent out of order, if appropriate.

When a server implementing this specification receives a new connection from a client, it MUST begin by internally assigning an initial idle timeout of 30 seconds to that connection. At both servers and clients, the generation or reception of any complete DNS message, including DNS requests, responses, updates, or Session Signaling messages, resets the idle timer for that connection [RFC7766].

If, at any time during the life of the connection, half the idle-timeout value (i.e., 15 seconds by default) elapses without any DNS messages being sent or received on a connection, then the connection is considered stale and the client MUST take action. When this happens the client MUST either send at least one new message to reset the idle timer - such as a Session Signaling Idle Timeout message (see Section 4), or any other valid DNS message - or close the connection.

If a client disconnects from the network abruptly, without cleanly closing its connection, the server learns of this after failing to receive further traffic from that client. If, at any time during the life of the connection, the full idle-timeout value (i.e., 30 seconds by default) elapses without any DNS messages being sent or received on a connection, then the connection is considered delinquent and the server SHOULD forcibly terminate the connection. For sessions over TCP (or over TLS over TCP), to avoid the burden of having a connection in TIME-WAIT state, instead of closing the connection gracefully with a TCP FIN the server SHOULD abort the connection with a TCP RST (or equivalent for other protocols). (In the BSD Sockets API this is achieved by setting the SO\_LINGER option to zero before closing the socket.)

If the client wishes to keep an idle connection open for longer than the default duration without having to send traffic every 15 seconds,

then it uses the Session Signaling Idle Timeout message to request a longer idle timeout, as described in Section 4.

#### 3.1.1. Client-Initiated Termination

A client is not required to wait until half of the idle-timeout value before closing a connection. A client SHOULD close a connection at any time, at the client's discretion, if it determines that, at that time, it has no current or reasonably anticipated imminent future need for the connection.

Upon receiving an error response from the server, a client SHOULD NOT automatically close the connection. An error relating to one particular operation on a connection does not necessarily imply that all other operations on that connection have also failed, or that future operations will fail. The client should assume that the server will make its own decision about whether or not to close the connection, based on the server's determination of whether the error condition pertains to this particular operation, or would also apply to any subsequent operations. If the server does not close the connection then the client SHOULD continue to use that connection for subsequent operations.

#### 3.1.2. Server-Initiated Termination

After sending an error response to a client, the server MAY close the connection, or may allow the connection to remain open. For error conditions that only affect the single operation in question, the server SHOULD return an error response to the client and leave the connection open for further operations. For error conditions that are likely to make all operations unsuccessful in the immediate future, the server SHOULD return an error response to the client and then close the connection by sending a Terminate Session request message, as described in Section 5.

There may be rare cases where a server is overloaded and wishes to shed load. If the server handles this by simply closing connections, the likely behaviour of clients is to detect this as a network failure, and reconnect.

To avoid this reconnection implosion, in this situation the server also sends a Terminate Session request message, with an RCODE of SERVFAIL, to inform the client of the overload situation.

After sending a Terminate Session request message, the server MUST NOT send any further messages on that connection.

A Terminate Session request message MUST NOT be initiated by a client. If a server receives a Terminate Session request message this is an error and the server MUST immediately terminate the connection with a TCP RST (or equivalent for other protocols).

Upon receipt of a Terminate Session request from the server, the client MUST make note of the reconnect delay for this server, and then immediately close the connection. This is to place the burden of TCP's TIME-WAIT state on the client.

After sending the Terminate Session request the server SHOULD allow the client five seconds to close the connection, and if the client has not closed the connection after five seconds then the server SHOULD abort the connection with a TCP RST (or equivalent for other protocols). (In the BSD Sockets API this is achieved by setting the SO\_LINGER option to zero before closing the socket.)

In the case where the server is canceling some, but not all, of the existing operations on a connection, with a REFUSED (5) RCODE (perhaps because it has been reconfigured and is no longer authoritative for those names), the RECONNECT DELAY MAY be zero, indicating that the client SHOULD immediately attempt to re-establish its operations. It is likely that some of the new attempts will be successful and some will not.

In the case where a server is terminating a large number of connections at once (e.g., if the system is restarting) and the server doesn't want to be inundated with a flood of simultaneous retries, it SHOULD send different RECONNECT delay values to each client. These adjustments MAY be selected randomly, pseudorandomly, or deterministically (e.g., incrementing the time value by one tenth of a second for each successive client, yielding a post-restart reconnection rate of ten clients per second).

Apart from the cases described above, a server MUST NOT close a connection with a client, except in extraordinary error conditions. Closing the connection is the client's responsibility, to be done at the client's discretion, when it so chooses. A server only closes a connection under exceptional circumstances, such as when the server application software or underlying operating system is restarting, the server application terminated unexpectedly (perhaps due to a bug that makes it crash), or the server is undergoing maintenance procedures. When possible, a server SHOULD send a Terminate Session message informing the client of the reason for the connection being closed, and allow the client five seconds to receive it before the server resorts to forcibly aborting the connection.

After a connection is closed by the server, the client SHOULD try to reconnect, to that server, or to another suitable server, if more than one is available. If reconnecting to the same server, the client MUST respect the indicated delay before attempting to reconnect.

If a server is low on resources it MAY simply terminate a client connection with a TCP RST. However, the likely behaviour of the client may be simply to reconnect immediately, putting more burden on the server. Therefore, a server SHOULD instead choose to shed client load by sending a Terminate Session message, as described above. Upon reception of the Termination TLV the client is expected to close the connection, and if it does not then the server will abort the connection five seconds later.

### 3.2. Connection Sharing

A client that supports Session Signaling SHOULD NOT make multiple connections to the same DNS server.

A single server may support multiple services, including DNS Updates [RFC2136], DNS Push Notifications [I-D.ietf-dnssd-push], and other services, for one or more DNS zones. When a client discovers that the target server for several different operations is the same target hostname and port, the client SHOULD use a single shared connection for all those operations. A client SHOULD NOT open multiple connections to the same target host and port just because the names being operated on are different or happen to fall within different zones. This is to reduce unnecessary connection load on the DNS server.

For the purposes here, the determination of "same server" is made by comparing the target hostname and port of the desired DNS server, not the IP address(es) that the target hostname resolves to. The hostname and port of the desired DNS server in question may be obtained via manual configuration, may be learned automatically from "\_dns-update-tls.\_tcp.<zone>" or "\_dns-push-tls.\_tcp.<zone>" SRV records, or may be learned by other means used by other protocols.

If two different target hostnames happen to resolve to the same IP address(es), then the client SHOULD NOT recognize these as the "same server" for the purposes of using a single shared connection to that server. If an administrator wishes to use a single server for multiple zones and/or multiple roles (e.g., both DNS Updates and DNS Push Notifications), and wishes to have clients use a single shared connection for operations on that server, then the administrator MUST specify the same target server hostname for all the desired zones and/or roles, either in the appropriate manual configuration data



(for clients that are configured manually) or in the appropriate SRV records (for clients that learn configuration from the network).

However, server implementers and operators should be aware that even when the same target hostname is correctly used, this connection sharing may not be possible in all cases. A single client device may be home to multiple independent client software instances that don't coordinate with each other, so a DNS server **MUST** be prepared to accept multiple connections from different source ports on the same client IP address. This is undesirable from an efficiency standpoint, but it may be unavoidable in some situations, so a DNS server **MUST** be prepared to accept multiple connections from the same client IP address.

Independent client devices behind the same NAT gateway will also typically appear to the DNS server to be different source ports on the same client IP address.

### 3.3. Message Format

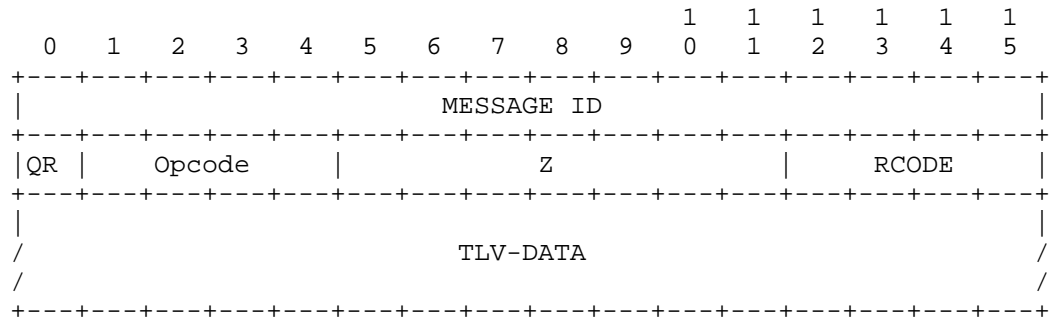
A Session Signaling message begins with the first 4 octets of the standard DNS message header [RFC1035], with the Opcode field set to the Session Signaling Opcode. A Session Signaling message does not contain the QDCOUNT, ANCOUNT, NSCOUNT and ARCOUNT fields used in standard DNS queries and responses. This 4-octet header is followed by a single Session Signaling operation TLV. The operation TLV may be followed by one or more modifier TLVs, such as the Terminate TLV (0), which, in error responses, indicates the time interval during which the client **SHOULD NOT** re-attempt a failed operation. Future specifications may define additional modifier TLVs that may be used in addition to the operation TLV. A Session Signaling message **MUST** contain exactly one operation TLV.

Since Session Signaling messages contain no ARCOUNT field, there is, by design, no way to add an EDNS(0) option to a Session Signaling message. If functionality provided by current or future EDNS(0) options is desired for Session Signaling messages, a Session Signaling operation TLV or modifier TLV needs to be defined to carry the necessary information.

Similarly there is, by design, no way to add a TSIG record to a Session Signaling message. If this capability becomes necessary in the future a Session Signaling modifier TLV needs to be defined to perform this function.

Note however that, while Session Signaling `_messages_` cannot include EDNS(0) or TSIG records, a Session Signaling `_session_` is typically used to carry a whole series of DNS messages of different kinds,

including Session Signaling messages, and other DNS message types like Query [RFC1034][RFC1035] and Update [RFC2136], and those messages can carry EDNS(0) and TSIG records. This specification explicitly prohibits use of the EDNS(0) TCP Keepalive Option [RFC7828] in messages sent on a Session Signaling session (because it duplicates the functionality provided by the Session Signaling Idle Timeout TLV), but messages may contain other EDNS(0) options where appropriate.



The MESSAGE ID, QR, Opcode and RCODE fields have their usual meanings [RFC1035].

In a request message (QR=0) the RCODE is generally set to zero on transmission, and silently ignored on reception, except where specified otherwise (for example, the Terminate Session operation, where the RCODE indicates the reason for termination).

The Z bits are currently unused, and in both requests and responses the Z bits SHOULD be set to zero (0) on transmission and silently ignored on reception, unless a future document specifies otherwise.

### 3.4. Message Handling

On a connection between a client and server that support Session Signaling, once the client has sent at least one Session Signaling message (or it is known in advance by other means that the client supports Session Signaling) either end may unilaterally send Session Signaling messages at any time, and therefore either client or server may be the initiator of a message. The initiator MUST set the value of the QR bit in the DNS header to zero (0), and the responder MUST set it to one (1).

Every Session Signaling request message (QR=0) MUST elicit a response (QR=1), which MUST have the same MESSAGE ID in the DNS message header as in the corresponding request.

An initiator MUST NOT reuse a MESSAGE ID that is already in use for an outstanding request, unless specified otherwise by the relevant specification for the Session Signaling TLV in question. At the very least, this means that a MESSAGE ID MUST NOT be reused for a particular SSOP-TYPE while the initiator is waiting for a response to a previous request with the same SSOP-TYPE, unless specified otherwise by the relevant specification for the Session Signaling TLV in question. (For a long-lived operation, such as a DNS Push Notification subscription [I-D.ietf-dnssd-push] the MESSAGE ID for the operation MUST NOT be reused for a new subscription as long as the existing subscription is active.)

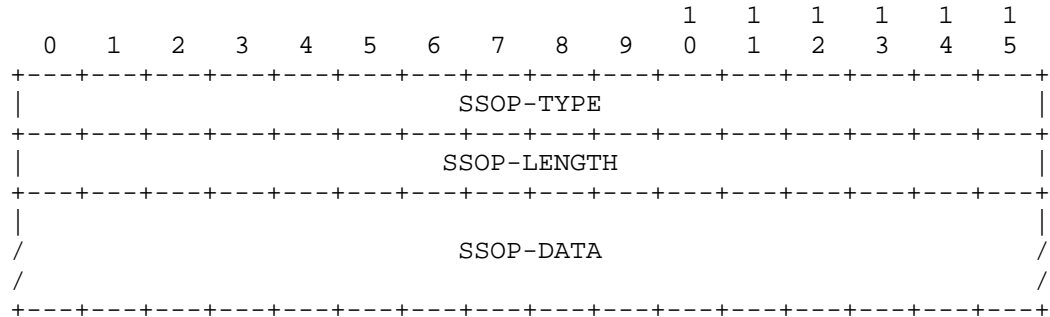
The namespaces of 16-bit MESSAGE IDs are disjoint in each direction. For example, it is not an error for both client and server to send a request message with the same ID. In effect, the 16-bit MESSAGE ID combined with the identity of the initiator (client or server) serves as a 17-bit unique identifier for a particular operation on a session.

If a client or server receives a response (QR=1) where the MESSAGE ID does not match any of its outstanding operations, this is a fatal error and it MUST immediately terminate the connection with a TCP RST (or equivalent for other protocols).

The RCODE value in a response may be one of the following values:

Code	Mnemonic	Description
0	NOERROR	TLV processed successfully
1	FORMERR	TLV format error
4	NOTIMP	Session Signaling not supported
5	REFUSED	TLV declined for policy reasons
11	SSOPNOTIMP	Session Signaling operation Type Code not supported

## 3.5. TLV Format



SSOP-TYPE: A 16 bit field in network order giving the type of the current Session Signaling TLV per the IANA DNS Session Signaling Type Codes Registry.

SSOP-LENGTH: A 16 bit field in network order giving the size in octets of SSOP-DATA.

SSOP-DATA: Type-code specific.

#### 4. Idle Timeout TLV

The Idle Timeout TLV (1) is be used by a client to reset a connection's idle timer, and at the same time to request what the idle timeout should be from this point forward in the connection.

Once the client has sent at least one Session Signaling message (or it is known in advance by other means that the client supports Session Signaling) the Idle Timeout TLV also MAY be initiated by a server, to unilaterally inform the client of a new idle timeout this point forward in this connection.

It is not required that the Idle Timeout TLV be used in every session. While many Session Signaling operations (such as DNS Push Notifications [I-D.ietf-dnssd-push]) will be used in conjunction with a long-lived connection, not all Session Signaling operations require a long-lived connection, and in some cases the default 30-second timeout may be perfectly appropriate.

The SSOP-DATA for the the Idle Timeout TLV is as follows:

```

          1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 3 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
+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+
|                                     IDLE TIMEOUT (32 bits)                                     |
+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+

```

IDLE TIMEOUT: the idle timeout for the current session, specified as a 32 bit word in network order in units of milliseconds. This is the timeout at which the server will forcibly terminate the connection with a TCP RST (or equivalent for other protocols); after half this interval the client MUST take action to either preserve the connection, or close it if it is no longer needed.

In a client-initiated Session Signaling Idle Timeout message, the IDLE TIMEOUT contains the client's requested value for the idle timeout. In a server response to a client-initiated message, the IDLE TIMEOUT contains the server's chosen value for the idle timeout, which the client MUST respect. This is modeled after the DHCP protocol, where the client requests a certain lease lifetime using DHCP option 51 [RFC2132], but the server is the ultimate authority for deciding what lease lifetime is actually granted.

In a server-initiated Session Signaling Idle Timeout message, the IDLE TIMEOUT unilaterally informs the client of the new idle timeout this point forward in this connection. In a client response to a server-initiated message, there is no SSOP-DATA. SSOP-LENGTH is zero. The RCODE MUST be zero.

<< SC: Do we even need a client response to this server-initiated message? The response conveys no information. On the other hand, it may simplify the specification if we say that \_all\_ request messages elicit exactly one response message. Please weigh in with opinions. We need to decide this. Currently draft-ietf-dnssd-push says that push notification messages from server to client do not elicit any response message from the client. We need to decide if this is allowed. >>

Note that the lower the IDLE TIMEOUT value, the higher the load on client and server. For example, an IDLE TIMEOUT value of 200ms would result in a continuous stream of at least ten messages per second, in both directions, to keep the connection alive. And, in this example, a single packet loss and retransmission could introduce a momentary pause in the stream of messages, long enough to cause the server to overzealously abort the connection.

Because of this concern, the server **MUST NOT** send a Idle Timeout message (either a response to a client-initiated request, or a server-initiated message) with an IDLE TIMEOUT value less than ten seconds. If a client receives an Idle Timeout message specifying an IDLE TIMEOUT value less than ten seconds this is an error and the client **MUST** immediately terminate the connection with a TCP RST (or equivalent for other protocols).

The Idle Timeout TLV (1) has similar intent to the EDNS(0) TCP Keepalive Option [RFC7828]. A client/server pair that supports Session Signaling **MUST NOT** use the EDNS(0) TCP KeepAlive option within any message on a connection once bi-directional Session Signaling support has been confirmed. Once bi-directional Session Signaling support has been confirmed, if either client or server receives a DNS message over the session that contains an EDNS(0) TCP KeepAlive option, this is an error and the receiver of the EDNS(0) TCP KeepAlive option **MUST** immediately terminate the connection with a TCP RST (or equivalent for other protocols).

## 5. Terminate TLV

The Terminate TLV (0) is be used by a server to request that a client close the connection, and not to reconnect for the indicated time interval. It is also used as a modifier on error responses, to indicate how long the client should wait before retrying that particular operation.

<< SC: Perhaps we should change the name of TLV (0) to be "retry delay" instead of "Terminate"? >>

The SSOP-DATA for the the Terminate TLV is as follows:

```

          1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 3 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
+---+---+---+---+---+---+---+---+---+---+---+---+---+---+---+---+
|                                     RECONNECT DELAY (32 bits)                                     |
+---+---+---+---+---+---+---+---+---+---+---+---+---+---+---+---+
```

RECONNECT DELAY: a time value, specified as a 32 bit word in network order in units of milliseconds, within which the client MUST NOT establish a new session to the current server.

The RECOMMENDED value is 10 seconds.

In the case of a client request that returns a nonzero RCODE value, the server MAY append a Terminate TLV (0) to the response, indicating the time interval during which the client SHOULD NOT attempt this operation again.

When appended to a DNS response message for some client request, the Terminate TLV (0) is considered a modifier TLV. The indicated time interval during which the client SHOULD NOT retry applies only to the failed operation, not to the session as a whole.

When sent in a DNS request message, from server to client, the Terminate Session TLV (0) is considered an operation TLV. It applies to the session as a whole, and the client MUST close the connection, as described previously. The RCODE MUST indicate the reason for the termination. RCODE NOERROR indicates a routine shutdown. RCODE SERVFAIL indicates that the server is overloaded due to resource exhaustion. RCODE REFUSED indicates that the server has been reconfigured and is no longer able to perform one of the functions currently being performed on this connection (for example, a DNS Push Notification server could be reconfigured such that is is no longer accepting DNS Push Notification requests for one or more of the currently subscribed names).

This document specifies only these three RCODE values for Terminate Session request. Servers sending Terminate Session requests SHOULD use one of these three values. However, future circumstances may create situations where other RCODE values are appropriate in Terminate Session requests, so clients MUST be prepared to accept Terminate Session requests with any RCODE value.

## 6. IANA Considerations

### 6.1. DNS Session Signaling Opcode Registration

IANA are directed to assign a value (tentatively 6) in the DNS Opcodes Registry for the Session Signaling Opcode.

### 6.2. DNS Session Signaling RCODE Registration

IANA are directed to assign a value (tentatively 11) in the DNS RCODE Registry for the SSOPNOTIMP error code.

### 6.3. DNS Session Signaling Type Codes Registry

IANA are directed to create the DNS Session Signaling Type Codes Registry, with initial values as follows:

Type	Name	Status	Reference
0	SSOP-Terminate	Standard	RFC-TBD
1	SSOP-IdleTimeout	Standard	RFC-TBD
3 - 63	Unassigned, reserved for session management TLVs		
64 - 63487	Unassigned		
63488 - 64511	Reserved for local / experimental use		
64512 - 65535	Reserved for future expansion		

Registration of additional Session Signaling Type Codes requires publication of an appropriate IETF "Standards Action" or "IESG Approval" document [RFC5226].



## 7. Security Considerations

If this mechanism is to be used with DNS over TLS, then these messages are subject to the same constraints as any other DNS over TLS messages and MUST NOT be sent in the clear before the TLS session is established.

## 8. Acknowledgements

TBW

## 9. References

### 9.1. Normative References

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DNS Stateful Operations  
draft-ietf-dnsop-session-signal-20

Abstract

This document defines a new DNS OPCODE for DNS Stateful Operations (DSO). DSO messages communicate operations within persistent stateful sessions, using type-length-value (TLV) syntax. Three TLVs are defined that manage session timeouts, termination, and encryption padding, and a framework is defined for extensions to enable new stateful operations. This document updates RFC 1035 by adding a new DNS header opcode which has different message semantics, and a new result code. This document updates RFC 7766 by redefining a session, providing new guidance on connection re-use, and providing a new mechanism for handling session idle timeouts.

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## 1. Introduction

This document specifies a mechanism for managing stateful DNS connections. DNS most commonly operates over a UDP transport, but can also operate over streaming transports; the original DNS RFC specifies DNS over TCP [RFC1035] and a profile for DNS over TLS [RFC7858] has been specified. These transports can offer persistent, long-lived sessions and therefore when using them for transporting DNS messages it is of benefit to have a mechanism that can establish parameters associated with those sessions, such as timeouts. In such

situations it is also advantageous to support server-initiated messages (such as DNS Push Notifications [I-D.ietf-dnssd-push]).

The existing EDNS(0) Extension Mechanism for DNS [RFC6891] is explicitly defined to only have "per-message" semantics. While EDNS(0) has been used to signal at least one session-related parameter (edns-tcp-keepalive EDNS0 Option [RFC7828]) the result is less than optimal due to the restrictions imposed by the EDNS(0) semantics and the lack of server-initiated signalling. For example, a server cannot arbitrarily instruct a client to close a connection because the server can only send EDNS(0) options in responses to queries that contained EDNS(0) options.

This document defines a new DNS OPCODE, DSO ([TBA1], tentatively 6), for DNS Stateful Operations. DSO messages are used to communicate operations within persistent stateful sessions, expressed using type-length-value (TLV) syntax. This document defines an initial set of three TLVs, used to manage session timeouts, termination, and encryption padding.

All three TLVs defined here are mandatory for all implementations of DSO. Further TLVs may be defined in additional specifications.

DSO messages may or may not be acknowledged; this is signalled by providing a non-zero message ID for messages that must be acknowledged (DSO request messages) and a zero message ID for messages that are not to be acknowledged (DSO unidirectional messages), and is also specified in the definition of a particular DSO message type. Messages are pipelined; answers may appear out of order when more than one answer is pending.

The format for DSO messages (Section 5.4) differs somewhat from the traditional DNS message format used for standard queries and responses. The standard twelve-byte header is used, but the four count fields (QDCOUNT, ANCOUNT, NSCOUNT, ARCOUNT) are set to zero and accordingly their corresponding sections are not present.

The actual data pertaining to DNS Stateful Operations (expressed in TLV syntax) is appended to the end of the DNS message header. Just as in traditional DNS over TCP [RFC1035] [RFC7766] the stream protocol carrying DSO messages (which are just another kind of DNS message) frames them by putting a 16-bit message length at the start, so the length of the DSO message is determined from that length, rather than from any of the DNS header counts.

When displayed using packet analyzer tools that have not been updated to recognize the DSO format, this will result in the DSO data being

displayed as unknown additional data after the end of the DNS message.

This new format has distinct advantages over an RR-based format because it is more explicit and more compact. Each TLV definition is specific to its use case, and as a result contains no redundant or overloaded fields. Importantly, it completely avoids conflating DNS Stateful Operations in any way with normal DNS operations or with existing EDNS(0)-based functionality. A goal of this approach is to avoid the operational issues that have befallen EDNS(0), particularly relating to middlebox behaviour (see for example [I-D.ietf-dnsop-no-response-issue] sections 3.2 and 4).

With EDNS(0), multiple options may be packed into a single OPT pseudo-RR, and there is no generalized mechanism for a client to be able to tell whether a server has processed or otherwise acted upon each individual option within the combined OPT pseudo-RR. The specifications for each individual option need to define how each different option is to be acknowledged, if necessary.

In contrast to EDNS(0), with DSO there is no compelling motivation to pack multiple operations into a single message for efficiency reasons, because DSO always operates using a connection-oriented transport protocol. Each DSO operation is communicated in its own separate DNS message, and the transport protocol can take care of packing several DNS messages into a single IP packet if appropriate. For example, TCP can pack multiple small DNS messages into a single TCP segment. This simplification allows for clearer semantics. Each DSO request message communicates just one primary operation, and the RCODE in the corresponding response message indicates the success or failure of that operation.

## 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 BCP 14 [RFC2119] [RFC8174] when, and only when, they appear in all capitals, as shown here.



### 3. Terminology

DSO: DNS Stateful Operations.

connection: a bidirectional byte (or message) stream, where the bytes (or messages) are delivered reliably and in-order, such as provided by using DNS over TCP [RFC1035] [RFC7766] or DNS over TLS [RFC7858].

session: The unqualified term "session" in the context of this document refers to a persistent network connection between two endpoints which allows for the exchange of DNS messages over a connection where either end of the connection can send messages to the other end. (The term has no relationship to the "session layer" of the OSI "seven-layer model".)

DSO Session: a session established between two endpoints that acknowledge persistent DNS state via the exchange of DSO messages over the connection. This is distinct from a DNS-over-TCP session as described in the previous specification for DNS over TCP [RFC7766].

close gracefully: a normal session shutdown, where the client closes the TCP connection to the server using a graceful close, such that no data is lost (e.g., using TCP FIN, see Section 5.3).

forcibly abort: a session shutdown as a result of a fatal error, where the TCP connection is unilaterally aborted without regard for data loss (e.g., using TCP RST, see Section 5.3).

server: the software with a listening socket, awaiting incoming connection requests, in the usual DNS sense.

client: the software which initiates a connection to the server's listening socket, in the usual DNS sense.

initiator: the software which sends a DSO request message or a DSO unidirectional message during a DSO session. Either a client or server can be an initiator

responder: the software which receives a DSO request message or a DSO unidirectional message during a DSO

session. Either a client or server can be a responder.

sender: the software which is sending a DNS message, a DSO message, a DNS response, or a DSO response.

receiver: the software which is receiving a DNS message, a DSO message, a DNS response, or a DSO response.

service instance: a specific instance of server software running on a specific host (Section 9.1).

long-lived operation: a long-lived operation is an outstanding operation on a DSO session where either the client or server, acting as initiator, has requested that the responder send new information regarding the request, as it becomes available.

Early Data: A TLS 1.3 handshake containing early data that begins a DSO session ([RFC8446] section 2.3). TCP Fast Open is only permitted when using TLS.

DNS message: any DNS message, including DNS queries, response, updates, DSO messages, etc.

DNS request message: any DNS message where the QR bit is 0.

DNS response message: any DNS message where the QR bit is 1.

DSO message: a DSO request message, DSO unidirectional message, or a DSO response to a DSO request message. If the QR bit is 1 in a DSO message, it is a DSO response message. If the QR bit is 0 in a DSO message, it is a DSO request message or DSO unidirectional message, as determined by the specification of its primary TLV.

DSO response message: a response to a DSO request message.

DSO request message: a DSO message that requires a response.

DSO unidirectional message: a DSO message that does not require and cannot induce a response.

Primary TLV: The first TLV in a DSO message or DSO response; in the DSO message this determines the nature of the operation being performed.

Additional TLV: Any TLVs in a DSO message response that follow the primary TLV.

Response Primary TLV: The (optional) first TLV in a DSO response.

Response Additional TLV: Any TLVs in a DSO response that follow the (optional) Response Primary TLV.

inactivity timer: the time since the most recent non-keepalive DNS message was sent or received. (see Section 6.4)

keepalive timer: the time since the most recent DNS message was sent or received. (see Section 6.5)

session timeouts: the inactivity timer and the keepalive timer.

inactivity timeout: the maximum value that the inactivity timer can have before the connection is gracefully closed.

keepalive interval: the maximum value that the keepalive timer can have before the client is required to send a keepalive. (see Section 7.1)

resetting a timer: setting the timer value to zero and restarting the timer.

clearing a timer: setting the timer value to zero but not restarting the timer.

## 4. Applicability

DNS Stateful Operations are applicable to several known use cases and are only applicable on transports that are capable of supporting a DSO Session.

### 4.1. Use Cases

There are several use cases for DNS Stateful operations that can be described here.

#### 4.1.1. Session Management

Firstly, establishing session parameters such as server-defined timeouts is of great use in the general management of persistent connections. For example, using DSO sessions for stub-to-recursive DNS-over-TLS [RFC7858] is more flexible for both the client and the server than attempting to manage sessions using just the edns-tcp-keepalive EDNS0 Option [RFC7828]. The simple set of TLVs defined in this document is sufficient to greatly enhance connection management for this use case.

#### 4.1.2. Long-lived Subscriptions

Secondly, DNS-SD [RFC6763] has evolved into a naturally session-based mechanism where, for example, long-lived subscriptions lend themselves to 'push' mechanisms as opposed to polling. Long-lived stateful connections and server-initiated messages align with this use case [I-D.ietf-dnssd-push].

A general use case is that DNS traffic is often bursty but session establishment can be expensive. One challenge with long-lived connections is to maintain sufficient traffic to maintain NAT and firewall state. To mitigate this issue this document introduces a new concept for the DNS, that is DSO "Keepalive traffic". This traffic carries no DNS data and is not considered 'activity' in the classic DNS sense, but serves to maintain state in middleboxes, and to assure client and server that they still have connectivity to each other.

#### 4.2. Applicable Transports

DNS Stateful Operations are applicable in cases where it is useful to maintain an open session between a DNS client and server, where the transport allows such a session to be maintained, and where the transport guarantees in-order delivery of messages, on which DSO depends. Examples of transports that can support DNS Stateful Operations are DNS-over-TCP [RFC1035] [RFC7766] and DNS-over-TLS [RFC7858].

Note that in the case of DNS over TLS, there is no mechanism for upgrading from DNS-over-TCP to DNS-over-TLS mid-connection (see [RFC7858] section 7). A connection is either DNS-over-TCP from the start, or DNS-over-TLS from the start.

DNS Stateful Operations are not applicable for transports that cannot support clean session semantics, or that do not guarantee in-order delivery. While in principle such a transport could be constructed over UDP, the current DNS specification over UDP transport [RFC1035] does not provide in-order delivery or session semantics, and hence cannot be used. Similarly, DNS-over-HTTP [I-D.ietf-doh-dns-over-https] cannot be used because HTTP has its own mechanism for managing sessions, and this is incompatible with the mechanism specified here.

No other transports are currently defined for use with DNS Stateful Operations. Such transports can be added in the future, if they meet the requirements set out in the first paragraph of this section.

## 5. Protocol Details

The overall flow of DNS Stateful Operations goes through a series of phases:

**Connection Establishment:** A client establishes a connection to a server. (Section 4.2)

**Connected but sessionless:** A connection exists, but a DSO session has not been established. DNS messages can be sent from the client to server, and DNS responses can be sent from servers to clients. In this state a client that wishes to use DSO can attempt to establish a DSO session (Section 5.1). Standard DNS-over-TCP inactivity timeout handling is in effect [RFC7766] (see Section 7.1.2).

**DSO Session Establishment in Progress:** A client has sent a DSO request, but has not yet received a DSO response. In this phase, the client may send more DSO requests and more DNS requests, but **MUST NOT** send DSO unidirectional messages (Section 5.1).

**DSO Session Establishment Failed:** The attempt to establish the DSO session did not succeed. At this point, the client is permitted to continue operating without a DSO session (Connected but Sessionless) but does not send further DSO messages (Section 5.1).

**DSO Session Established:** Both client and server may send DSO messages and DNS messages; both may send replies in response to messages they receive (Section 5.2). The inactivity timer (Section 6.4) is active; the keepalive timer (Section 6.5) is active. Standard DNS-over-TCP inactivity timeout handling is no longer in effect [RFC7766] (see Section 7.1.2).

**Server Shutdown:** The server has decided to gracefully terminate the session, and has sent the client a Retry Delay message (Section 6.6.1). There may still be unprocessed messages from the client; the server will ignore these. The server will not send any further messages to the client (Section 6.6.1.1).

**Client Shutdown:** The client has decided to disconnect, either because it no longer needs service, the connection is inactive (Section 6.4.1), or because the server sent it a Retry Delay message (Section 6.6.1). The client closes the connection gracefully Section 5.3.

**Reconnect:** The client disconnected as a result of a server shutdown. The client either waits for the server-specified Retry Delay to expire (Section 6.6.3), or else contacts a different server

instance. If the client no longer needs service, it does not reconnect.

**Forcibly Abort:** The client or server detected a protocol error, and further communication would have undefined behavior. The client or server forcibly aborts the connection (Section 5.3).

**Abort Reconnect Wait:** The client has forcibly aborted the connection, but still needs service. Or, the server forcibly aborted the connection, but the client still needs service. The client either connects to a different service instance (Section 9.1) or waits to reconnect (Section 6.6.3.1).

#### 5.1. DSO Session Establishment

In order for a session to be established between a client and a server, the client must first establish a connection to the server, using an applicable transport (see Section 4).

In some environments it may be known in advance by external means that both client and server support DSO, and in these cases either client or server may initiate DSO messages at any time. In this case, the session is established as soon as the connection is established; this is referred to as implicit session establishment.

However, in the typical case a server will not know in advance whether a client supports DSO, so in general, unless it is known in advance by other means that a client does support DSO, a server **MUST NOT** initiate DSO request messages or DSO unidirectional messages until a DSO Session has been mutually established by at least one successful DSO request/response exchange initiated by the client, as described below. This is referred to as explicit session establishment.

Until a DSO session has been implicitly or explicitly established, a client **MUST NOT** initiate DSO unidirectional messages.

A DSO Session is established over a connection by the client sending a DSO request message, such as a DSO Keepalive request message (Section 7.1), and receiving a response, with matching MESSAGE ID, and RCODE set to NOERROR (0), indicating that the DSO request was successful.

Some DSO messages are permitted as early data (Section 11.1). Others are not. Unidirectional messages are never permitted as early data unless an implicit session exists.

If a server receives a DSO message in early data whose primary TLV is not permitted to appear in early data, the server MUST forcibly abort the connection. If a client receives a DSO message in early data, and there is no implicit DSO session, the client MUST forcibly abort the connection. This can only be enforced on TLS connections; therefore, servers MUST NOT enable TFO when listening for a connection that does not require TLS.

#### 5.1.1. Session Establishment Failure

If the response RCODE is set to NOTIMP (4), or in practise any value other than NOERROR (0) or DSOTYPENI (defined below), then the client MUST assume that the server does not implement DSO at all. In this case the client is permitted to continue sending DNS messages on that connection, but the client MUST NOT issue further DSO messages on that connection.

If the RCODE in the response is set to DSOTYPENI ("DSO-TYPE Not Implemented", [TBA2] tentatively RCODE 11) this indicates that the server does support DSO, but does not implement the DSO-TYPE of the primary TLV in this DSO request message. A server implementing DSO MUST NOT return DSOTYPENI for a DSO Keepalive request message, because the Keepalive TLV is mandatory to implement. But in the future, if a client attempts to establish a DSO Session using a response-requiring DSO request message using some newly-defined DSO-TYPE that the server does not understand, that would result in a DSOTYPENI response. If the server returns DSOTYPENI then a DSO Session is not considered established, but the client is permitted to continue sending DNS messages on the connection, including other DSO messages such as the DSO Keepalive, which may result in a successful NOERROR response, yielding the establishment of a DSO Session.

Two other possibilities exist: the server might drop the connection, or the server might send no response to the DSO message.

In the first case, the client SHOULD mark that service instance as not supporting DSO, and not attempt a DSO connection for some period of time (at least an hour) after the failed attempt. The client MAY reconnect but not use DSO, if appropriate (Section 6.6.3.2).

In the second case, the client SHOULD wait 30 seconds, after which time the server will be assumed not to support DSO. If the server doesn't respond within 30 seconds, the client MUST forcibly abort the connection to the server, since the server's behavior is out of spec, and hence its state is undefined. The client MAY reconnect, but not use DSO, if appropriate (Section 6.6.3.1).



### 5.1.2. Session Establishment Success

When the server receives a DSO request message from a client, and transmits a successful NOERROR response to that request, the server considers the DSO Session established.

When the client receives the server's NOERROR response to its DSO request message, the client considers the DSO Session established.

Once a DSO Session has been established, either end may unilaterally send appropriate DSO messages at any time, and therefore either client or server may be the initiator of a message.

### 5.2. Operations After Session Establishment

Once a DSO Session has been established, clients and servers should behave as described in this specification with regard to inactivity timeouts and session termination, not as previously prescribed in the earlier specification for DNS over TCP [RFC7766].

Because a server that supports DNS Stateful Operations MUST return an RCODE of NOERROR when it receives a Keepalive TLV DSO request message, the Keepalive TLV is an ideal candidate for use in establishing a DSO session. Any other option that can only succeed when sent to a server of the desired kind is also a good candidate for use in establishing a DSO session. For clients that implement only the DSO-TYPES defined in this base specification, sending a Keepalive TLV is the only DSO request message they have available to initiate a DSO Session. Even for clients that do implement other future DSO-TYPES, for simplicity they MAY elect to always send an initial DSO Keepalive request message as their way of initiating a DSO Session. A future definition of a new response-requiring DSO-TYPE gives implementers the option of using that new DSO-TYPE if they wish, but does not change the fact that sending a Keepalive TLV remains a valid way of initiating a DSO Session.

### 5.3. Session Termination

A "DSO Session" is terminated when the underlying connection is closed. Sessions are "closed gracefully" as a result of the server closing a session because it is overloaded, the client closing the session because it is done, or the client closing the session because it is inactive. Sessions are "forcibly aborted" when either the client or server closes the connection because of a protocol error.

- o Where this specification says, "close gracefully," that means sending a TLS close\_notify (if TLS is in use) followed by a TCP FIN, or the equivalents for other protocols. Where this specification requires a connection to be closed gracefully, the requirement to initiate that graceful close is placed on the client, to place the burden of TCP's TIME-WAIT state on the client rather than the server.
- o Where this specification says, "forcibly abort," that means sending a TCP RST, or the equivalent for other protocols. In the BSD Sockets API this is achieved by setting the SO\_LINGER option to zero before closing the socket.

#### 5.3.1. Handling Protocol Errors

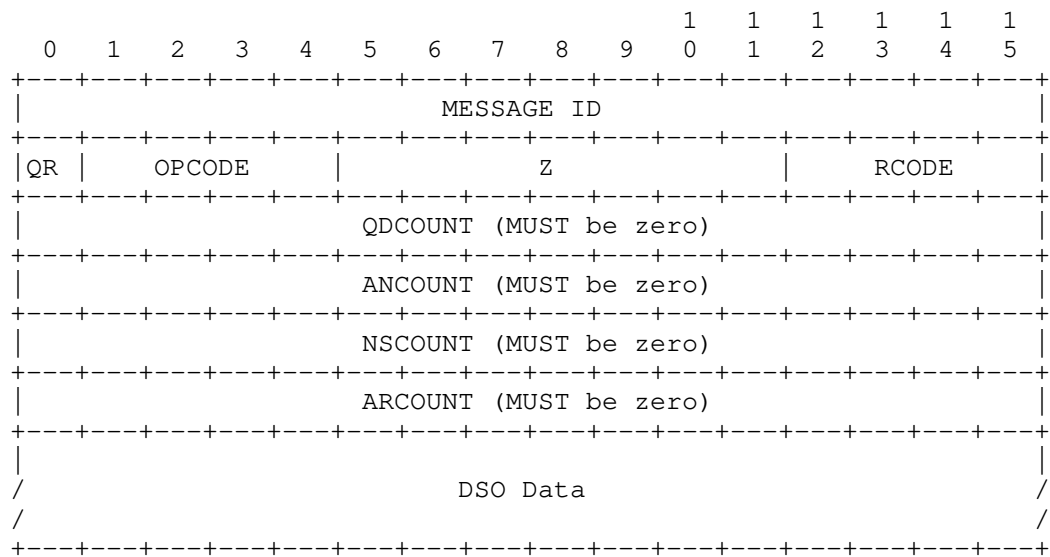
In protocol implementation there are generally two kinds of errors that software writers have to deal with. The first is situations that arise due to factors in the environment, such as temporary loss of connectivity. While undesirable, these situations do not indicate a flaw in the software, and they are situations that software should generally be able to recover from.

The second is situations that should never happen when communicating with a compliant DSO implementation. If they do happen, they indicate a serious flaw in the protocol implementation, beyond what it is reasonable to expect software to recover from. This document describes this latter form of error condition as a "fatal error" and specifies that an implementation encountering a fatal error condition "MUST forcibly abort the connection immediately".

## 5.4. Message Format

A DSO message begins with the standard twelve-byte DNS message header [RFC1035] with the OPCODE field set to the DSO OPCODE. However, unlike standard DNS messages, the question section, answer section, authority records section and additional records sections are not present. The corresponding count fields (QDCOUNT, ANCOUNT, NSCOUNT, ARCOUNT) MUST be set to zero on transmission.

If a DSO message is received where any of the count fields are not zero, then a FORMERR MUST be returned.



#### 5.4.1.1. DNS Header Fields in DSO Messages

In a DSO unidirectional message the MESSAGE ID field MUST be set to zero. In a DSO request message the MESSAGE ID field MUST be set to a unique nonzero value, that the initiator is not currently using for any other active operation on this connection. For the purposes here, a MESSAGE ID is in use in this DSO Session if the initiator has used it in a DSO request message for which it is still awaiting a response, or if the client has used it to set up a long-lived operation that has not yet been cancelled. For example, a long-lived operation could be a Push Notification subscription [I-D.ietf-dnssd-push] or a Discovery Relay interface subscription [I-D.ietf-dnssd-mdns-relay].

Whether a message is a DSO request message or a DSO unidirectional message is determined only by the specification for the Primary TLV. An acknowledgment cannot be requested by including a nonzero message ID in a message that is required according to its primary TLV to be unidirectional. Nor can an acknowledgment be prevented by sending a message ID of zero in a message that is required to be a DSO request message according to its primary TLV. A responder that receives either such malformed message MUST treat it as a fatal error and forcibly abort the connection immediately.

In a DSO request message or DSO unidirectional message the DNS Header QR bit MUST be zero (QR=0). If the QR bit is not zero the message is not a DSO request or DSO unidirectional message.

In a DSO response message the DNS Header QR bit MUST be one (QR=1). If the QR bit is not one, the message is not a response message.

In a DSO response message (QR=1) the MESSAGE ID field MUST contain a copy of the value of the MESSAGE ID field in the DSO request message being responded to. In a DSO response message (QR=1) the MESSAGE ID field MUST NOT be zero. If a DSO response message (QR=1) is received where the MESSAGE ID is zero this is a fatal error and the recipient MUST forcibly abort the connection immediately.

The DNS Header OPCODE field holds the DSO OPCODE value.

The Z bits are currently unused in DSO messages, and in both DSO request messages and DSO responses the Z bits MUST be set to zero (0) on transmission and MUST be ignored on reception.

In a DSO request message (QR=0) the RCODE is set according to the definition of the request. For example, in a Retry Delay message (Section 6.6.1) the RCODE indicates the reason for termination. However, in most cases, except where clearly specified otherwise, in

a DSO request message (QR=0) the RCODE is set to zero on transmission, and silently ignored on reception.

The RCODE value in a response message (QR=1) may be one of the following values:

Code	Mnemonic	Description
0	NOERROR	Operation processed successfully
1	FORMERR	Format error
2	SERVFAIL	Server failed to process DSO request message due to a problem with the server
4	NOTIMP	DSO not supported
5	REFUSED	Operation declined for policy reasons
[TBA2] 11	DSOTYPENI	Primary TLV's DSO-Type is not implemented

Use of the above RCODEs is likely to be common in DSO but does not preclude the definition and use of other codes in future documents that make use of DSO.

If a document defining a new DSO-TYPE makes use of response codes not defined here, then that document MUST specify the specific interpretation of those RCODE values in the context of that new DSO TLV.

#### 5.4.2. DSO Data

The standard twelve-byte DNS message header with its zero-valued count fields is followed by the DSO Data, expressed using TLV syntax, as described below in Section 5.4.3.

A DSO request message or DSO unidirectional message MUST contain at least one TLV. The first TLV in a DSO request message or DSO unidirectional message is referred to as the "Primary TLV" and determines the nature of the operation being performed, including whether it is a DSO request or a DSO unidirectional operation. In some cases it may be appropriate to include other TLVs in a DSO request message or DSO unidirectional message, such as the Encryption Padding TLV (Section 7.3), and these extra TLVs are referred to as the "Additional TLVs" and are not limited to what is defined in this document. New "Additional TLVs" may be defined in the future and those definitions will describe when their use is appropriate.

A DSO response message may contain no TLVs, or it may be specified to contain one or more TLVs appropriate to the information being communicated. This includes "Primary TLVs" and "Additional TLVs" defined in this document as well as in future TLV definitions. It may be permissible for an additional TLV to appear in a response to a primary TLV even though the specification of that primary TLV does not specify it explicitly. See Section 8.2 for more information.

A DSO response message may contain one or more TLVs with the Primary TLV DSO-TYPE the same as the Primary TLV from the corresponding DSO request message or it may contain zero or more Additional TLVs only. The MESSAGE ID field in the DNS message header is sufficient to identify the DSO request message to which this response message relates.

A DSO response message may contain one or more TLVs with DSO-TYPES different from the Primary TLV from the corresponding DSO request message, in which case those TLV(s) are referred to as "Response Additional TLVs".

Response Primary TLV(s), if present, MUST occur first in the response message, before any Response Additional TLVs.

It is anticipated that most DSO operations will be specified to use DSO request messages, which generate corresponding DSO responses. In some specialized high-traffic use cases, it may be appropriate to specify DSO unidirectional messages. DSO unidirectional messages can be more efficient on the network, because they don't generate a stream of corresponding reply messages. Using DSO unidirectional messages can also simplify software in some cases, by removing need

for an initiator to maintain state while it waits to receive replies it doesn't care about. When the specification for a particular TLV states that, when used as a Primary TLV (i.e., first) in an outgoing DSO request message (i.e., QR=0), that message is to be unidirectional, the MESSAGE ID field MUST be set to zero and the receiver MUST NOT generate any response message corresponding to this DSO unidirectional message.

The previous point, that the receiver MUST NOT generate responses to DSO unidirectional messages, applies even in the case of errors.

When a DSO message is received where both the QR bit and the MESSAGE ID field are zero, the receiver MUST NOT generate any response. For example, if the DSO-TYPE in the Primary TLV is unrecognized, then a DSOTYPENI error MUST NOT be returned; instead the receiver MUST forcibly abort the connection immediately.

DSO unidirectional messages MUST NOT be used "speculatively" in cases where the sender doesn't know if the receiver supports the Primary TLV in the message, because there is no way to receive any response to indicate success or failure. DSO unidirectional messages are only appropriate in cases where the sender already knows that the receiver supports, and wishes to receive, these messages.

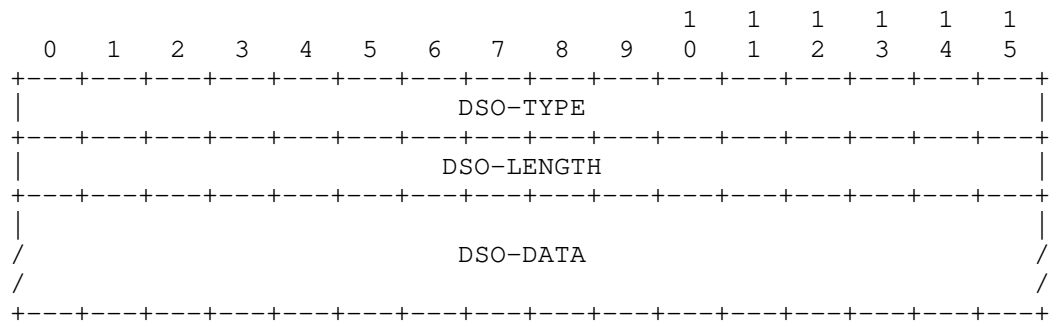
For example, after a client has subscribed for Push Notifications [I-D.ietf-dnssd-push], the subsequent event notifications are then sent as DSO unidirectional messages, and this is appropriate because the client initiated the message stream by virtue of its Push Notification subscription, thereby indicating its support of Push Notifications, and its desire to receive those notifications.

Similarly, after a Discovery Relay client has subscribed to receive inbound mDNS (multicast DNS, [RFC6762]) traffic from a Discovery Relay, the subsequent stream of received packets is then sent using DSO unidirectional messages, and this is appropriate because the client initiated the message stream by virtue of its Discovery Relay link subscription, thereby indicating its support of Discovery Relay, and its desire to receive inbound mDNS packets over that DSO session [I-D.ietf-dnssd-mdns-relay].

## 5.4.3. TLV Syntax

All TLVs, whether used as "Primary", "Additional", "Response Primary", or "Response Additional", use the same encoding syntax.

Specifications that define new TLVs must specify whether the DSO-TYPE can be used as the Primary TLV, used as an Additional TLV, or used in either context, both in the case of requests and of responses. The specification for a TLV must also state whether, when used as the Primary (i.e., first) TLV in a DSO message (i.e., QR=0), that DSO message is unidirectional or is a request message which requires a response. If the DSO message requires a response, the specification must also state which TLVs, if any, are to be included in the response. The Primary TLV may or may not be contained in the response, depending on what is specified for that TLV.



**DSO-TYPE:** A 16-bit unsigned integer, in network (big endian) byte order, giving the DSO-TYPE of the current DSO TLV per the IANA DSO Type Code Registry.

**DSO-LENGTH:** A 16-bit unsigned integer, in network (big endian) byte order, giving the size in bytes of the DSO-DATA.

**DSO-DATA:** Type-code specific format. The generic DSO machinery treats the DSO-DATA as an opaque "blob" without attempting to interpret it. Interpretation of the meaning of the DSO-DATA for a particular DSO-TYPE is the responsibility of the software that implements that DSO-TYPE.



#### 5.4.3.1. Request TLVs

The first TLV in a DSO request message or DSO unidirectional message is the "Primary TLV" and indicates the operation to be performed. A DSO request message or DSO unidirectional message **MUST** contain at least one TLV—the Primary TLV.

Immediately following the Primary TLV, a DSO request message or DSO unidirectional message **MAY** contain one or more "Additional TLVs", which specify additional parameters relating to the operation.

#### 5.4.3.2. Response TLVs

Depending on the operation, a DSO response message **MAY** contain no TLVs, because it is simply a response to a previous DSO request message, and the MESSAGE ID in the header is sufficient to identify the DSO request in question. Or it may contain a single response TLV, with the same DSO-TYPE as the Primary TLV in the request message. Alternatively it may contain one or more TLVs of other types, or a combination of the above, as appropriate for the information that needs to be communicated. The specification for each DSO TLV determines what TLVs are required in a response to a DSO request message using that TLV.

If a DSO response is received for an operation where the specification requires that the response carry a particular TLV or TLVs, and the required TLV(s) are not present, then this is a fatal error and the recipient of the defective response message **MUST** forcibly abort the connection immediately.

#### 5.4.3.3. Unrecognized TLVs

If DSO request message is received containing an unrecognized Primary TLV, with a nonzero MESSAGE ID (indicating that a response is expected), then the receiver MUST send an error response with matching MESSAGE ID, and RCODE DSOTYPENI. The error response MUST NOT contain a copy of the unrecognized Primary TLV.

If DSO unidirectional message is received containing an unrecognized Primary TLV, with a zero MESSAGE ID (indicating that no response is expected), then this is a fatal error and the recipient MUST forcibly abort the connection immediately.

If a DSO request message or DSO unidirectional message is received where the Primary TLV is recognized, containing one or more unrecognized Additional TLVs, the unrecognized Additional TLVs MUST be silently ignored, and the remainder of the message is interpreted and handled as if the unrecognized parts were not present.

Similarly, if a DSO response message is received containing one or more unrecognized TLVs, the unrecognized TLVs MUST be silently ignored, and the remainder of the message is interpreted and handled as if the unrecognized parts were not present.

## 5.4.4. EDNS(0) and TSIG

Since the ARCOUNT field MUST be zero, a DSO message cannot contain a valid EDNS(0) option in the additional records section. If functionality provided by current or future EDNS(0) options is desired for DSO messages, one or more new DSO TLVs need to be defined to carry the necessary information.

For example, the EDNS(0) Padding Option [RFC7830] used for security purposes is not permitted in a DSO message, so if message padding is desired for DSO messages then the Encryption Padding TLV described in Section 7.3 MUST be used.

A DSO message can't contain a TSIG record, because a TSIG record is included in the additional section of the message, which would mean that ARCOUNT would be greater than zero. DSO messages are required to have an ARCOUNT of zero. Therefore, if use of signatures with DSO messages becomes necessary in the future, a new DSO TLV would have to be defined to perform this function.

Note however that, while DSO \*messages\* cannot include EDNS(0) or TSIG records, a DSO \*session\* is typically used to carry a whole series of DNS messages of different kinds, including DSO messages, and other DNS message types like Query [RFC1034] [RFC1035] and Update [RFC2136], and those messages can carry EDNS(0) and TSIG records.

Although messages may contain other EDNS(0) options as appropriate, this specification explicitly prohibits use of the edns-tcp-keepalive EDNS0 Option [RFC7828] in \*any\* messages sent on a DSO Session (because it is obsoleted by the functionality provided by the DSO Keepalive operation). If any message sent on a DSO Session contains an edns-tcp-keepalive EDNS0 Option this is a fatal error and the recipient of the defective message MUST forcibly abort the connection immediately.

### 5.5. Message Handling

As described above in Section 5.4.1, whether an outgoing DSO message with the QR bit in the DNS header set to zero is a DSO request or DSO unidirectional message is determined by the specification for the Primary TLV, which in turn determines whether the MESSAGE ID field in that outgoing message will be zero or nonzero.

Every DSO message with the QR bit in the DNS header set to zero and a nonzero MESSAGE ID field is a DSO request message, and MUST elicit a corresponding response, with the QR bit in the DNS header set to one and the MESSAGE ID field set to the value given in the corresponding DSO request message.

Valid DSO request messages sent by the client with a nonzero MESSAGE ID field elicit a response from the server, and valid DSO request messages sent by the server with a nonzero MESSAGE ID field elicit a response from the client.

Every DSO message with both the QR bit in the DNS header and the MESSAGE ID field set to zero is a DSO unidirectional message, and MUST NOT elicit a response.

#### 5.5.1. Delayed Acknowledgement Management

Generally, most good TCP implementations employ a delayed acknowledgement timer to provide more efficient use of the network and better performance.

With a bidirectional exchange over TCP, as for example with a DSO request message, the operating system TCP implementation waits for the application-layer client software to generate the corresponding DSO response message. It can then send a single combined packet containing the TCP acknowledgement, the TCP window update, and the application-generated DSO response message. This is more efficient than sending three separate packets, as would occur if the TCP packet containing the DSO request were acknowledged immediately.

With a DSO unidirectional message or DSO response message, there is no corresponding application-generated DSO response message, and consequently, no hint to the transport protocol about when it should send its acknowledgement and window update.

Some networking APIs provide a mechanism that allows the application-layer client software to signal to the transport protocol that no response will be forthcoming (in effect it can be thought of as a zero-length "empty" write). Where available in the networking API being used, the recipient of a DSO unidirectional message or DSO response message, having parsed and interpreted the message, SHOULD then use this mechanism provided by the networking API to signal that no response for this message will be forthcoming, so that the TCP implementation can go ahead and send its acknowledgement and window update without further delay. See Section 9.5 for further discussion of why this is important.

### 5.5.2. MESSAGE ID Namespaces

The namespaces of 16-bit MESSAGE IDs are independent in each direction. This means it is *\*not\** an error for both client and server to send DSO request messages at the same time as each other, using the same MESSAGE ID, in different directions. This simplification is necessary in order for the protocol to be implementable. It would be infeasible to require the client and server to coordinate with each other regarding allocation of new unique MESSAGE IDs. It is also not necessary to require the client and server to coordinate with each other regarding allocation of new unique MESSAGE IDs. The value of the 16-bit MESSAGE ID combined with the identity of the initiator (client or server) is sufficient to unambiguously identify the operation in question. This can be thought of as a 17-bit message identifier space, using message identifiers 0x00001-0x0FFFF for client-to-server DSO request messages, and message identifiers 0x10001-0x1FFFF for server-to-client DSO request messages. The least-significant 16 bits are stored explicitly in the MESSAGE ID field of the DSO message, and the most-significant bit is implicit from the direction of the message.

As described above in Section 5.4.1, an initiator **MUST NOT** reuse a MESSAGE ID that it already has in use for an outstanding DSO request message (unless specified otherwise by the relevant specification for the DSO-TYPE in question). At the very least, this means that a MESSAGE ID can't be reused in a particular direction on a particular DSO Session while the initiator is waiting for a response to a previous DSO request message using that MESSAGE ID on that DSO Session (unless specified otherwise by the relevant specification for the DSO-TYPE in question), and for a long-lived operation the MESSAGE ID for the operation can't be reused while that operation remains active.

If a client or server receives a response (QR=1) where the MESSAGE ID is zero, or is any other value that does not match the MESSAGE ID of any of its outstanding operations, this is a fatal error and the recipient **MUST** forcibly abort the connection immediately.

If a responder receives a DSO request message (QR=0) where the MESSAGE ID is not zero, and the responder tracks request MESSAGE IDs, and the MESSAGE ID matches the MESSAGE ID of a DSO request message it received for which a response has not yet been sent, it **MUST** forcibly abort the connection immediately. This behavior is required to prevent a hypothetical attack that takes advantage of undefined behavior in this case. However, if the responder does not track MESSAGE IDs in this way, no such risk exists, so tracking MESSAGE IDs just to implement this sanity check is not required.

### 5.5.3. Error Responses

When a DSO unidirectional message type is received (MESSAGE ID field is zero), the receiver should already be expecting this DSO message type. Section 5.4.3.3 describes the handling of unknown DSO message types. Parsing errors MUST also result in the receiver forcibly aborting the connection. When a DSO unidirectional message of an unexpected type is received, the receiver SHOULD forcibly abort the connection. Whether the connection should be forcibly aborted for other internal errors processing the DSO unidirectional message is implementation dependent, according to the severity of the error.

When a DSO request message is unsuccessful for some reason, the responder returns an error code to the initiator.

In the case of a server returning an error code to a client in response to an unsuccessful DSO request message, the server MAY choose to end the DSO Session, or MAY choose to allow the DSO Session to remain open. For error conditions that only affect the single operation in question, the server SHOULD return an error response to the client and leave the DSO Session open for further operations.

For error conditions that are likely to make all operations unsuccessful in the immediate future, the server SHOULD return an error response to the client and then end the DSO Session by sending a Retry Delay message, as described in Section 6.6.1.

Upon receiving an error response from the server, a client SHOULD NOT automatically close the DSO Session. An error relating to one particular operation on a DSO Session does not necessarily imply that all other operations on that DSO Session have also failed, or that future operations will fail. The client should assume that the server will make its own decision about whether or not to end the DSO Session, based on the server's determination of whether the error condition pertains to this particular operation, or would also apply to any subsequent operations. If the server does not end the DSO Session by sending the client a Retry Delay message (Section 6.6.1) then the client SHOULD continue to use that DSO Session for subsequent operations.

## 5.6. Responder-Initiated Operation Cancellation

This document, the base specification for DNS Stateful Operations, does not itself define any long-lived operations, but it defines a framework for supporting long-lived operations, such as Push Notification subscriptions [I-D.ietf-dnssd-push] and Discovery Relay interface subscriptions [I-D.ietf-dnssd-mdns-relay].

Long-lived operations, if successful, will remain active until the initiator terminates the operation.

However, it is possible that a long-lived operation may be valid at the time it was initiated, but then a later change of circumstances may render that operation invalid. For example, a long-lived client operation may pertain to a name that the server is authoritative for, but then the server configuration is changed such that it is no longer authoritative for that name.

In such cases, instead of terminating the entire session it may be desirable for the responder to be able to cancel selectively only those operations that have become invalid.

The responder performs this selective cancellation by sending a new response message, with the MESSAGE ID field containing the MESSAGE ID of the long-lived operation that is to be terminated (that it had previously acknowledged with a NOERROR RCODE), and the RCODE field of the new response message giving the reason for cancellation.

After a response message with nonzero RCODE has been sent, that operation has been terminated from the responder's point of view, and the responder sends no more messages relating to that operation.

After a response message with nonzero RCODE has been received by the initiator, that operation has been terminated from the initiator's point of view, and the cancelled operation's MESSAGE ID is now free for reuse.



## 6. DSO Session Lifecycle and Timers

### 6.1. DSO Session Initiation

A DSO Session begins as described in Section 5.1.

The client may perform as many DNS operations as it wishes using the newly created DSO Session. When the client has multiple messages to send, it SHOULD NOT wait for each response before sending the next message.

The server MUST act on messages in the order they are received, but SHOULD NOT delay sending responses to those messages as they become available in order to return them in the order the requests were received.

Section 6.2.1.1 of the DNS-over-TCP specification [RFC7766] specifies this in more detail.

## 6.2. DSO Session Timeouts

Two timeout values are associated with a DSO Session: the inactivity timeout, and the keepalive interval. Both values are communicated in the same TLV, the Keepalive TLV (Section 7.1).

The first timeout value, the inactivity timeout, is the maximum time for which a client may speculatively keep an inactive DSO Session open in the expectation that it may have future requests to send to that server.

The second timeout value, the keepalive interval, is the maximum permitted interval between messages if the client wishes to keep the DSO Session alive.

The two timeout values are independent. The inactivity timeout may be lower, the same, or higher than the keepalive interval, though in most cases the inactivity timeout is expected to be shorter than the keepalive interval.

A shorter inactivity timeout with a longer keepalive interval signals to the client that it should not speculatively keep an inactive DSO Session open for very long without reason, but when it does have an active reason to keep a DSO Session open, it doesn't need to be sending an aggressive level of DSO keepalive traffic to maintain that session. An example of this would be a client that has subscribed to DNS Push notifications: in this case, the client is not sending any traffic to the server, but the session is not inactive, because there is a active request to the server to receive push notifications.

A longer inactivity timeout with a shorter keepalive interval signals to the client that it may speculatively keep an inactive DSO Session open for a long time, but to maintain that inactive DSO Session it should be sending a lot of DSO keepalive traffic. This configuration is expected to be less common.

In the usual case where the inactivity timeout is shorter than the keepalive interval, it is only when a client has a long-lived, low-traffic, operation that the keepalive interval comes into play, to ensure that a sufficient residual amount of traffic is generated to maintain NAT and firewall state and to assure client and server that they still have connectivity to each other.

On a new DSO Session, if no explicit DSO Keepalive message exchange has taken place, the default value for both timeouts is 15 seconds.

For both timeouts, lower values of the timeout result in higher network traffic, and higher CPU load on the server.

### 6.3. Inactive DSO Sessions

At both servers and clients, the generation or reception of any complete DNS message (including DNS requests, responses, updates, DSO messages, etc.) resets both timers for that DSO Session, with the one exception that a DSO Keepalive message resets only the keepalive timer, not the inactivity timeout timer.

In addition, for as long as the client has an outstanding operation in progress, the inactivity timer remains cleared, and an inactivity timeout cannot occur.

For short-lived DNS operations like traditional queries and updates, an operation is considered in progress for the time between request and response, typically a period of a few hundred milliseconds at most. At the client, the inactivity timer is cleared upon transmission of a request and remains cleared until reception of the corresponding response. At the server, the inactivity timer is cleared upon reception of a request and remains cleared until transmission of the corresponding response.

For long-lived DNS Stateful operations (such as a Push Notification subscription [I-D.ietf-dnssd-push] or a Discovery Relay interface subscription [I-D.ietf-dnssd-mdns-relay]), an operation is considered in progress for as long as the operation is active, i.e. until it is cancelled. This means that a DSO Session can exist, with active operations, with no messages flowing in either direction, for far longer than the inactivity timeout, and this is not an error. This is why there are two separate timers: the inactivity timeout, and the keepalive interval. Just because a DSO Session has no traffic for an extended period of time does not automatically make that DSO Session "inactive", if it has an active operation that is awaiting events.

#### 6.4. The Inactivity Timeout

The purpose of the inactivity timeout is for the server to balance the trade off between the costs of setting up new DSO Sessions and the costs of maintaining inactive DSO Sessions. A server with abundant DSO Session capacity can offer a high inactivity timeout, to permit clients to keep a speculative DSO Session open for a long time, to save the cost of establishing a new DSO Session for future communications with that server. A server with scarce memory resources can offer a low inactivity timeout, to cause clients to promptly close DSO Sessions whenever they have no outstanding operations with that server, and then create a new DSO Session later when needed.

##### 6.4.1. Closing Inactive DSO Sessions

When a connection's inactivity timeout is reached the client **MUST** begin closing the idle connection, but a client is not required to keep an idle connection open until the inactivity timeout is reached. A client **MAY** close a DSO Session at any time, at the client's discretion. If a client determines that it has no current or reasonably anticipated future need for a currently inactive DSO Session, then the client **SHOULD** gracefully close that connection.

If, at any time during the life of the DSO Session, the inactivity timeout value (i.e., 15 seconds by default) elapses without there being any operation active on the DSO Session, the client **MUST** close the connection gracefully.

If, at any time during the life of the DSO Session, twice the inactivity timeout value (i.e., 30 seconds by default), or five seconds, if twice the inactivity timeout value is less than five seconds, elapses without there being any operation active on the DSO Session, the server **MUST** consider the client delinquent, and **MUST** forcibly abort the DSO Session.

In this context, an operation being active on a DSO Session includes a query waiting for a response, an update waiting for a response, or an active long-lived operation, but not a DSO Keepalive message exchange itself. A DSO Keepalive message exchange resets only the keepalive interval timer, not the inactivity timeout timer.

If the client wishes to keep an inactive DSO Session open for longer than the default duration then it uses the DSO Keepalive message to request longer timeout values, as described in Section 7.1.

#### 6.4.2. Values for the Inactivity Timeout

For the inactivity timeout value, lower values result in more frequent DSO Session teardown and re-establishment. Higher values result in lower traffic and lower CPU load on the server, but higher memory burden to maintain state for inactive DSO Sessions.

A server may dictate any value it chooses for the inactivity timeout (either in a response to a client-initiated request, or in a server-initiated message) including values under one second, or even zero.

An inactivity timeout of zero informs the client that it should not speculatively maintain idle connections at all, and as soon as the client has completed the operation or operations relating to this server, the client should immediately begin closing this session.

A server will forcibly abort an idle client session after twice the inactivity timeout value, or five seconds, whichever is greater. In the case of a zero inactivity timeout value, this means that if a client fails to close an idle client session then the server will forcibly abort the idle session after five seconds.

An inactivity timeout of 0xFFFFFFFF represents "infinity" and informs the client that it may keep an idle connection open as long as it wishes. Note that after granting an unlimited inactivity timeout in this way, at any point the server may revise that inactivity timeout by sending a new DSO Keepalive message dictating new Session Timeout values to the client.

The largest \*finite\* inactivity timeout supported by the current Keepalive TLV is 0xFFFFFFFFE ( $2^{32}-2$  milliseconds, approximately 49.7 days).

### 6.5. The Keepalive Interval

The purpose of the keepalive interval is to manage the generation of sufficient messages to maintain state in middleboxes (such as NAT gateways or firewalls) and for the client and server to periodically verify that they still have connectivity to each other. This allows them to clean up state when connectivity is lost, and to establish a new session if appropriate.

#### 6.5.1. Keepalive Interval Expiry

If, at any time during the life of the DSO Session, the keepalive interval value (i.e., 15 seconds by default) elapses without any DNS messages being sent or received on a DSO Session, the client **MUST** take action to keep the DSO Session alive, by sending a DSO Keepalive message (Section 7.1). A DSO Keepalive message exchange resets only the keepalive timer, not the inactivity timer.

If a client disconnects from the network abruptly, without cleanly closing its DSO Session, perhaps leaving a long-lived operation uncanceled, the server learns of this after failing to receive the required DSO keepalive traffic from that client. If, at any time during the life of the DSO Session, twice the keepalive interval value (i.e., 30 seconds by default) elapses without any DNS messages being sent or received on a DSO Session, the server **SHOULD** consider the client delinquent, and **SHOULD** forcibly abort the DSO Session.

#### 6.5.2. Values for the Keepalive Interval

For the keepalive interval value, lower values result in a higher volume of DSO keepalive traffic. Higher values of the keepalive interval reduce traffic and CPU load, but have minimal effect on the memory burden at the server, because clients keep a DSO Session open for the same length of time (determined by the inactivity timeout) regardless of the level of DSO keepalive traffic required.

It may be appropriate for clients and servers to select different keepalive interval values depending on the nature of the network they are on.

A corporate DNS server that knows it is serving only clients on the internal network, with no intervening NAT gateways or firewalls, can impose a higher keepalive interval, because frequent DSO keepalive traffic is not required.

A public DNS server that is serving primarily residential consumer clients, where it is likely there will be a NAT gateway on the path,

may impose a lower keepalive interval, to generate more frequent DSO keepalive traffic.

A smart client may be adaptive to its environment. A client using a private IPv4 address [RFC1918] to communicate with a DNS server at an address outside that IPv4 private address block, may conclude that there is likely to be a NAT gateway on the path, and accordingly request a lower keepalive interval.

By default it is RECOMMENDED that clients request, and servers grant, a keepalive interval of 60 minutes. This keepalive interval provides for reasonably timely detection if a client abruptly disconnects without cleanly closing the session, and is sufficient to maintain state in firewalls and NAT gateways that follow the IETF recommended Best Current Practice that the "established connection idle-timeout" used by middleboxes be at least 2 hours 4 minutes [RFC5382] [RFC7857].

Note that the lower the keepalive interval value, the higher the load on client and server. Moreover for a keep-alive value that is smaller than the time needed for the transport to retransmit, a single packet loss would cause a server to overzealously abort the connect. For example, a (hypothetical and unrealistic) keepalive interval value of 100 ms would result in a continuous stream of ten messages per second or more (if allowed by the current congestion control window), in both directions, to keep the DSO Session alive. And, in this extreme example, a single retransmission over a path with, e.g., 100ms RTT would introduce a momentary pause in the stream of messages, long enough to cause the server to abort the connection.

Because of this concern, the server MUST NOT send a DSO Keepalive message (either a response to a client-initiated request, or a server-initiated message) with a keepalive interval value less than ten seconds. If a client receives a DSO Keepalive message specifying a keepalive interval value less than ten seconds this is a fatal error and the client MUST forcibly abort the connection immediately.

A keepalive interval value of 0xFFFFFFFF represents "infinity" and informs the client that it should generate no DSO keepalive traffic. Note that after signaling that the client should generate no DSO keepalive traffic in this way, at any point the server may revise that DSO keepalive traffic requirement by sending a new DSO Keepalive message dictating new Session Timeout values to the client.

The largest \*finite\* keepalive interval supported by the current Keepalive TLV is 0xFFFFFFF (2<sup>32</sup>-2 milliseconds, approximately 49.7 days).

## 6.6. Server-Initiated Session Termination

In addition to cancelling individual long-lived operations selectively (Section 5.6) there are also occasions where a server may need to terminate one or more entire sessions. An entire session may need to be terminated if the client is defective in some way, or departs from the network without closing its session. Sessions may also need to be terminated if the server becomes overloaded, or if the server is reconfigured and lacks the ability to be selective about which operations need to be cancelled.

This section discusses various reasons a session may be terminated, and the mechanisms for doing so.

In normal operation, closing a DSO Session is the client's responsibility. The client makes the determination of when to close a DSO Session based on an evaluation of both its own needs, and the inactivity timeout value dictated by the server. A server only causes a DSO Session to be ended in the exceptional circumstances outlined below. Some of the exceptional situations in which a server may terminate a DSO Session include:

- o The server application software or underlying operating system is shutting down or restarting.
- o The server application software terminates unexpectedly (perhaps due to a bug that makes it crash, causing the underlying operating system to send a TCP RST).
- o The server is undergoing a reconfiguration or maintenance procedure, that, due to the way the server software is implemented, requires clients to be disconnected. For example, some software is implemented such that it reads a configuration file at startup, and changing the server's configuration entails modifying the configuration file and then killing and restarting the server software, which generally entails a loss of network connections.
- o The client fails to meet its obligation to generate the required DSO keepalive traffic, or to close an inactive session by the prescribed time (twice the time interval dictated by the server, or five seconds, whichever is greater, as described in Section 6.2).
- o The client sends a grossly invalid or malformed request that is indicative of a seriously defective client implementation.
- o The server is over capacity and needs to shed some load.



#### 6.6.1. Server-Initiated Retry Delay Message

In the cases described above where a server elects to terminate a DSO Session, it could do so simply by forcibly aborting the connection. However, if it did this the likely behavior of the client might be simply to treat this as a network failure and reconnect immediately, putting more burden on the server.

Therefore, to avoid this reconnection implosion, a server SHOULD instead choose to shed client load by sending a Retry Delay message, with an appropriate RCODE value informing the client of the reason the DSO Session needs to be terminated. The format of the Retry Delay TLV, and the interpretations of the various RCODE values, are described in Section 7.2. After sending a Retry Delay message, the server MUST NOT send any further messages on that DSO Session.

The server MAY randomize retry delays in situations where many retry delays are sent in quick succession, so as to avoid all the clients attempting to reconnect at once. In general, implementations should avoid using the Retry Delay message in a way that would result in many clients reconnecting at the same time, if every client attempts to reconnect at the exact time specified.

Upon receipt of a Retry Delay message from the server, the client MUST make note of the reconnect delay for this server, and then immediately close the connection gracefully.

After sending a Retry Delay message the server SHOULD allow the client five seconds to close the connection, and if the client has not closed the connection after five seconds then the server SHOULD forcibly abort the connection.

A Retry Delay message MUST NOT be initiated by a client. If a server receives a Retry Delay message this is a fatal error and the server MUST forcibly abort the connection immediately.

##### 6.6.1.1. Outstanding Operations

At the instant a server chooses to initiate a Retry Delay message there may be DNS requests already in flight from client to server on this DSO Session, which will arrive at the server after its Retry Delay message has been sent. The server MUST silently ignore such incoming requests, and MUST NOT generate any response messages for them. When the Retry Delay message from the server arrives at the client, the client will determine that any DNS requests it previously sent on this DSO Session, that have not yet received a response, now will certainly not be receiving any response. Such requests should

be considered failed, and should be retried at a later time, as appropriate.

In the case where some, but not all, of the existing operations on a DSO Session have become invalid (perhaps because the server has been reconfigured and is no longer authoritative for some of the names), but the server is terminating all affected DSO Sessions en masse by sending them all a Retry Delay message, the reconnect delay MAY be zero, indicating that the clients SHOULD immediately attempt to re-establish operations.

It is likely that some of the attempts will be successful and some will not, depending on the nature of the reconfiguration.

In the case where a server is terminating a large number of DSO Sessions at once (e.g., if the system is restarting) and the server doesn't want to be inundated with a flood of simultaneous retries, it SHOULD send different reconnect delay values to each client. These adjustments MAY be selected randomly, pseudorandomly, or deterministically (e.g., incrementing the time value by one tenth of a second for each successive client, yielding a post-restart reconnection rate of ten clients per second).

#### 6.6.2. Misbehaving Clients

A server may determine that a client is not following the protocol correctly. There may be no way for the server to recover the session, in which case the server forcibly terminates the connection. Since the client doesn't know why the connection dropped, it may reconnect immediately. If the server has determined that a client is not following the protocol correctly, it may terminate the DSO session as soon as it is established, specifying a long retry-delay to prevent the client from immediately reconnecting.

#### 6.6.3. Client Reconnection

After a DSO Session is ended by the server (either by sending the client a Retry Delay message, or by forcibly aborting the underlying transport connection) the client SHOULD try to reconnect, to that service instance, or to another suitable service instance, if more than one is available. If reconnecting to the same service instance, the client MUST respect the indicated delay, if available, before attempting to reconnect. Clients should not attempt to randomize the delay; the server will randomly jitter the retry delay values it sends to each client if this behavior is desired.

If the service instance will only be out of service for a short maintenance period, it should use a value a little longer than the

expected maintenance window. It should not default to a very large delay value, or clients may not attempt to reconnect after it resumes service.

If a particular service instance does not want a client to reconnect ever (perhaps the service instance is being de-commissioned), it SHOULD set the retry delay to the maximum value 0xFFFFFFFF (2<sup>32</sup>-1 milliseconds, approximately 49.7 days). It is not possible to instruct a client to stay away for longer than 49.7 days. If, after 49.7 days, the DNS or other configuration information still indicates that this is the valid service instance for a particular service, then clients MAY attempt to reconnect. In reality, if a client is rebooted or otherwise lose state, it may well attempt to reconnect before 49.7 days elapses, for as long as the DNS or other configuration information continues to indicate that this is the service instance the client should use.

#### 6.6.3.1. Reconnecting After a Forcible Abort

If a connection was forcibly aborted by the client, the client SHOULD mark that service instance as not supporting DSO. The client MAY reconnect but not attempt to use DSO, or may connect to a different service instance, if applicable.

#### 6.6.3.2. Reconnecting After an Unexplained Connection Drop

It is also possible for a server to forcibly terminate the connection; in this case the client doesn't know whether the termination was the result of a protocol error or a network outage. When the client notices that the connection has been dropped, it can attempt to reconnect immediately. However, if the connection is dropped again without the client being able to successfully do whatever it is trying to do, it should mark the server as not supporting DSO.

#### 6.6.3.3. Probing for Working DSO Support

Once a server has been marked by the client as not supporting DSO, the client SHOULD NOT attempt DSO operations on that server until some time has elapsed. A reasonable minimum would be an hour. Since forcibly aborted connections are the result of a software failure, it's not likely that the problem will be solved in the first hour after it's first encountered. However, by restricting the retry interval to an hour, the client will be able to notice when the problem has been fixed without placing an undue burden on the server.

## 7. Base TLVs for DNS Stateful Operations

This section describes the three base TLVs for DNS Stateful Operations: Keepalive, Retry Delay, and Encryption Padding.

### 7.1. Keepalive TLV

The Keepalive TLV (DSO-TYPE=1) performs two functions. Primarily it establishes the values for the Session Timeouts. Incidentally, it also resets the keepalive timer for the DSO Session, meaning that it can be used as a kind of "no-op" message for the purpose of keeping a session alive. The client will request the desired session timeout values and the server will acknowledge with the response values that it requires the client to use.

DSO messages with the Keepalive TLV as the primary TLV may appear in early data.

The DSO-DATA for the Keepalive TLV is as follows:

```

      1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 3 3
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0 1
+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+
|                                     |
|      INACTIVITY TIMEOUT (32 bits)  |
|                                     |
+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+
|                                     |
|      KEEPALIVE INTERVAL (32 bits)  |
|                                     |
+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+

```

**INACTIVITY TIMEOUT:** The inactivity timeout for the current DSO Session, specified as a 32-bit unsigned integer, in network (big endian) byte order, in units of milliseconds. This is the timeout at which the client **MUST** begin closing an inactive DSO Session. The inactivity timeout can be any value of the server's choosing. If the client does not gracefully close an inactive DSO Session, then after twice this interval, or five seconds, whichever is greater, the server will forcibly abort the connection.

**KEEPALIVE INTERVAL:** The keepalive interval for the current DSO Session, specified as a 32-bit unsigned integer, in network (big endian) byte order, in units of milliseconds. This is the interval at which a client **MUST** generate DSO keepalive traffic to maintain connection state. The keepalive interval **MUST NOT** be less than ten seconds. If the client does not generate the mandated DSO keepalive traffic, then after twice this interval the server will forcibly abort the connection. Since the minimum allowed keepalive interval is ten seconds, the minimum time at which a server will forcibly disconnect a client for failing to generate the mandated DSO keepalive traffic is twenty seconds.

The transmission or reception of DSO Keepalive messages (i.e., messages where the Keepalive TLV is the first TLV) reset only the keepalive timer, not the inactivity timer. The reason for this is that periodic DSO Keepalive messages are sent for the sole purpose of keeping a DSO Session alive, when that DSO Session has current or recent non-maintenance activity that warrants keeping that DSO Session alive. Sending DSO keepalive traffic itself is not considered a client activity; it is considered a maintenance activity that is performed in service of other client activities. If DSO keepalive traffic itself were to reset the inactivity timer, then that would create a circular livelock where keepalive traffic would be sent indefinitely to keep a DSO Session alive, where the only activity on that DSO Session would be the keepalive traffic keeping the DSO Session alive so that further keepalive traffic can be sent. For a DSO Session to be considered active, it must be carrying something more than just keepalive traffic. This is why merely sending or receiving a DSO Keepalive message does not reset the inactivity timer.

When sent by a client, the DSO Keepalive request message MUST be sent as an DSO request message, with a nonzero MESSAGE ID. If a server receives a DSO Keepalive message with a zero MESSAGE ID then this is a fatal error and the server MUST forcibly abort the connection immediately. The DSO Keepalive request message resets a DSO Session's keepalive timer, and at the same time communicates to the server the client's requested Session Timeout values. In a server response to a client-initiated DSO Keepalive request message, the Session Timeouts contain the server's chosen values from this point forward in the DSO Session, which the client MUST respect. This is modeled after the DHCP protocol, where the client requests a certain lease lifetime using DHCP option 51 [RFC2132], but the server is the ultimate authority for deciding what lease lifetime is actually granted.

When a client is sending its second and subsequent DSO Keepalive request messages to the server, the client SHOULD continue to request its preferred values each time. This allows flexibility, so that if conditions change during the lifetime of a DSO Session, the server can adapt its responses to better fit the client's needs.

Once a DSO Session is in progress (Section 5.1) a DSO Keepalive message MAY be initiated by a server. When sent by a server, the DSO Keepalive message MUST be sent as a DSO unidirectional message, with the MESSAGE ID set to zero. The client MUST NOT generate a response to a server-initiated DSO Keepalive message. If a client receives a DSO Keepalive request message with a nonzero MESSAGE ID then this is a fatal error and the client MUST forcibly abort the connection immediately. The DSO Keepalive unidirectional message from the

server resets a DSO Session's keepalive timer, and at the same time unilaterally informs the client of the new Session Timeout values to use from this point forward in this DSO Session. No client DSO response to this unilateral declaration is required or allowed.

In DSO Keepalive response messages, the Keepalive TLV is REQUIRED and is used only as a Response Primary TLV sent as a reply to a DSO Keepalive request message from the client. A Keepalive TLV MUST NOT be added to other responses as a Response Additional TLV. If the server wishes to update a client's Session Timeout values other than in response to a DSO Keepalive request message from the client, then it does so by sending an DSO Keepalive unidirectional message of its own, as described above.

It is not required that the Keepalive TLV be used in every DSO Session. While many DNS Stateful operations will be used in conjunction with a long-lived session state, not all DNS Stateful operations require long-lived session state, and in some cases the default 15-second value for both the inactivity timeout and keepalive interval may be perfectly appropriate. However, note that for clients that implement only the DSO-TYPEs defined in this document, a DSO Keepalive request message is the only way for a client to initiate a DSO Session.

#### 7.1.1. Client handling of received Session Timeout values

When a client receives a response to its client-initiated DSO Keepalive message, or receives a server-initiated DSO Keepalive message, the client has then received Session Timeout values dictated by the server. The two timeout values contained in the Keepalive TLV from the server may each be higher, lower, or the same as the respective Session Timeout values the client previously had for this DSO Session.

In the case of the keepalive timer, the handling of the received value is straightforward. The act of receiving the message containing the DSO Keepalive TLV itself resets the keepalive timer, and updates the keepalive interval for the DSO Session. The new keepalive interval indicates the maximum time that may elapse before another message must be sent or received on this DSO Session, if the DSO Session is to remain alive.

In the case of the inactivity timeout, the handling of the received value is a little more subtle, though the meaning of the inactivity timeout remains as specified -- it still indicates the maximum permissible time allowed without useful activity on a DSO Session. The act of receiving the message containing the Keepalive TLV does not itself reset the inactivity timer. The time elapsed since the

last useful activity on this DSO Session is unaffected by exchange of DSO Keepalive messages. The new inactivity timeout value in the Keepalive TLV in the received message does update the timeout associated with the running inactivity timer; that becomes the new maximum permissible time without activity on a DSO Session.

- o If the current inactivity timer value is less than the new inactivity timeout, then the DSO Session may remain open for now. When the inactivity timer value reaches the new inactivity timeout, the client **MUST** then begin closing the DSO Session, as described above.
- o If the current inactivity timer value is equal to the new inactivity timeout, then this DSO Session has been inactive for exactly as long as the server will permit, and now the client **MUST** immediately begin closing this DSO Session.
- o If the current inactivity timer value is already greater than the new inactivity timeout, then this DSO Session has already been inactive for longer than the server permits, and the client **MUST** immediately begin closing this DSO Session.
- o If the current inactivity timer value is already more than twice the new inactivity timeout, then the client is immediately considered delinquent (this DSO Session is immediately eligible to be forcibly terminated by the server) and the client **MUST** immediately begin closing this DSO Session. However if a server abruptly reduces the inactivity timeout in this way, then, to give the client time to close the connection gracefully before the server resorts to forcibly aborting it, the server **SHOULD** give the client an additional grace period of one quarter of the new inactivity timeout, or five seconds, whichever is greater.

#### 7.1.2. Relationship to edns-tcp-keepalive EDNS0 Option

The inactivity timeout value in the Keepalive TLV (DSO-TYPE=1) has similar intent to the edns-tcp-keepalive EDNS0 Option [RFC7828]. A client/server pair that supports DSO **MUST NOT** use the edns-tcp-keepalive EDNS0 Option within any message after a DSO Session has been established. A client that has sent a DSO message to establish a session **MUST NOT** send an edns-tcp-keepalive EDNS0 Option from this point on. Once a DSO Session has been established, if either client or server receives a DNS message over the DSO Session that contains an edns-tcp-keepalive EDNS0 Option, this is a fatal error and the receiver of the edns-tcp-keepalive EDNS0 Option **MUST** forcibly abort the connection immediately.

## 7.2. Retry Delay TLV

The Retry Delay TLV (DSO-TYPE=2) can be used as a Primary TLV (unidirectional) in a server-to-client message, or as a Response Additional TLV in either direction. DSO messages with a Relay Delay TLV as their primary TLV are not permitted in early data.

The DSO-DATA for the Retry Delay TLV is as follows:

```

          1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 3 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
+---+---+---+---+---+---+---+---+---+---+---+---+---+---+---+---+
|                                RETRY DELAY (32 bits)                                |
+---+---+---+---+---+---+---+---+---+---+---+---+---+---+---+---+

```

RETRY DELAY: A time value, specified as a 32-bit unsigned integer, in network (big endian) byte order, in units of milliseconds, within which the initiator MUST NOT retry this operation, or retry connecting to this server. Recommendations for the RETRY DELAY value are given in Section 6.6.1.

### 7.2.1. Retry Delay TLV used as a Primary TLV

When sent from server to client, the Retry Delay TLV is used as the Primary TLV in a DSO unidirectional message. It is used by a server to instruct a client to close the DSO Session and underlying connection, and not to reconnect for the indicated time interval.

In this case it applies to the DSO Session as a whole, and the client MUST begin closing the DSO Session, as described in Section 6.6.1. The RCODE in the message header SHOULD indicate the principal reason for the termination:

- o NOERROR indicates a routine shutdown or restart.
- o FORMERR indicates that a client request was too badly malformed for the session to continue.
- o SERVFAIL indicates that the server is overloaded due to resource exhaustion and needs to shed load.
- o REFUSED indicates that the server has been reconfigured, and at this time it is now unable to perform one or more of the long-lived client operations that were previously being performed on this DSO Session.
- o NOTAUTH indicates that the server has been reconfigured and at this time it is now unable to perform one or more of the long-



lived client operations that were previously being performed on this DSO Session because it does not have authority over the names in question (for example, a DNS Push Notification server could be reconfigured such that it is no longer accepting DNS Push Notification requests for one or more of the currently subscribed names).

This document specifies only these RCODE values for the Retry Delay message. Servers sending Retry Delay messages SHOULD use one of these values. However, future circumstances may create situations where other RCODE values are appropriate in Retry Delay messages, so clients MUST be prepared to accept Retry Delay messages with any RCODE value.

In some cases, when a server sends a Retry Delay message to a client, there may be more than one reason for the server wanting to end the session. Possibly the configuration could have been changed such that some long-lived client operations can no longer be continued due to policy (REFUSED), and other long-lived client operations can no longer be performed due to the server no longer being authoritative for those names (NOTAUTH). In such cases the server MAY use any of the applicable RCODE values, or RCODE=NOERROR (routine shutdown or restart).

Note that the selection of RCODE value in a Retry Delay message is not critical, since the RCODE value is generally used only for information purposes, such as writing to a log file for future human analysis regarding the nature of the disconnection. Generally clients do not modify their behavior depending on the RCODE value. The RETRY DELAY in the message tells the client how long it should wait before attempting a new connection to this service instance.

For clients that do in some way modify their behavior depending on the RCODE value, they should treat unknown RCODE values the same as RCODE=NOERROR (routine shutdown or restart).

A Retry Delay message from server to client is a DSO unidirectional message; the MESSAGE ID MUST be set to zero in the outgoing message and the client MUST NOT send a response.

A client MUST NOT send a Retry Delay DSO message to a server. If a server receives a DSO message where the Primary TLV is the Retry Delay TLV, this is a fatal error and the server MUST forcibly abort the connection immediately.

#### 7.2.2. Retry Delay TLV used as a Response Additional TLV

In the case of a DSO request message that results in a nonzero RCODE value, the responder MAY append a Retry Delay TLV to the response, indicating the time interval during which the initiator SHOULD NOT attempt this operation again.

The indicated time interval during which the initiator SHOULD NOT retry applies only to the failed operation, not to the DSO Session as a whole.

### 7.3. Encryption Padding TLV

The Encryption Padding TLV (DSO-TYPE=3) can only be used as an Additional or Response Additional TLV. It is only applicable when the DSO Transport layer uses encryption such as TLS.

The DSO-DATA for the Padding TLV is optional and is a variable length field containing non-specified values. A DSO-LENGTH of 0 essentially provides for 4 bytes of padding (the minimum amount).

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
PADDING -- VARIABLE NUMBER OF BYTES															

As specified for the EDNS(0) Padding Option [RFC7830] the PADDING bytes SHOULD be set to 0x00. Other values MAY be used, for example, in cases where there is a concern that the padded message could be subject to compression before encryption. PADDING bytes of any value MUST be accepted in the messages received.

The Encryption Padding TLV may be included in either a DSO request message, response, or both. As specified for the EDNS(0) Padding Option [RFC7830] if a DSO request message is received with an Encryption Padding TLV, then the DSO response MUST also include an Encryption Padding TLV.

The length of padding is intentionally not specified in this document and is a function of current best practices with respect to the type and length of data in the preceding TLVs [I-D.ietf-dprive-padding-policy].

## 8. Summary Highlights

This section summarizes some noteworthy highlights about various aspects of the DSO protocol.

### 8.1. QR bit and MESSAGE ID

In DSO Request Messages the QR bit is 0 and the MESSAGE ID is nonzero.

In DSO Response Messages the QR bit is 1 and the MESSAGE ID is nonzero.

In DSO Unidirectional Messages the QR bit is 0 and the MESSAGE ID is zero.

The table below illustrates which combinations are legal and how they are interpreted:

	MESSAGE ID zero	MESSAGE ID nonzero
QR=0	DSO unidirectional Message	DSO Request Message
QR=1	Invalid - Fatal Error	DSO Response Message

## 8.2. TLV Usage

The table below indicates, for each of the three TLVs defined in this document, whether they are valid in each of ten different contexts.

The first five contexts are DSO requests or DSO unidirectional messages from client to server, and the corresponding responses from server back to client:

- o C-P - Primary TLV, sent in DSO Request message, from client to server, with nonzero MESSAGE ID indicating that this request MUST generate response message.
- o C-U - Primary TLV, sent in DSO Unidirectional message, from client to server, with zero MESSAGE ID indicating that this request MUST NOT generate response message.
- o C-A - Additional TLV, optionally added to a DSO request message or DSO unidirectional message from client to server.
- o CRP - Response Primary TLV, included in response message sent back to the client (in response to a client "C-P" request with nonzero MESSAGE ID indicating that a response is required) where the DSO-TYPE of the Response TLV matches the DSO-TYPE of the Primary TLV in the request.
- o CRA - Response Additional TLV, included in response message sent back to the client (in response to a client "C-P" request with nonzero MESSAGE ID indicating that a response is required) where the DSO-TYPE of the Response TLV does not match the DSO-TYPE of the Primary TLV in the request.

The second five contexts are their counterparts in the opposite direction: DSO requests or DSO unidirectional messages from server to client, and the corresponding responses from client back to server.

- o S-P - Primary TLV, sent in DSO Request message, from server to client, with nonzero MESSAGE ID indicating that this request MUST generate response message.
- o S-U - Primary TLV, sent in DSO Unidirectional message, from server to client, with zero MESSAGE ID indicating that this request MUST NOT generate response message.
- o S-A - Additional TLV, optionally added to a DSO request message or DSO unidirectional message from server to client.

- o SRP - Response Primary TLV, included in response message sent back to the server (in response to a server "S-P" request with nonzero MESSAGE ID indicating that a response is required) where the DSO-TYPE of the Response TLV matches the DSO-TYPE of the Primary TLV in the request.
- o SRA - Response Additional TLV, included in response message sent back to the server (in response to a server "S-P" request with nonzero MESSAGE ID indicating that a response is required) where the DSO-TYPE of the Response TLV does not match the DSO-TYPE of the Primary TLV in the request.

	C-P	C-U	C-A	CRP	CRA	S-P	S-U	S-A	SRP	SRA
KeepAlive	X			X			X			
RetryDelay					X		X			X
Padding			X		X			X		X

Note that some of the columns in this table are currently empty. The table provides a template for future TLV definitions to follow. It is recommended that definitions of future TLVs include a similar table summarizing the contexts where the new TLV is valid.

## 9. Additional Considerations

### 9.1. Service Instances

We use the term service instance to refer to software running on a host which can receive connections on some set of IP address and port tuples. What makes the software an instance is that regardless of which of these tuples the client uses to connect to it, the client is connected to the same software, running on the same node (but see Section 9.2), and will receive the same answers and the same keying information.

Service instances are identified from the perspective of the client. If the client is configured with IP addresses and port number tuples, it has no way to tell if the service offered at one tuple is the same server that is listening on a different tuple. So in this case, the client treats each such tuple as if it references a separate service instance.

In some cases a client is configured with a hostname and a port number (either implicitly, where the port number is omitted and assumed, or explicitly, as in the case of DNS SRV records). In these cases, the (hostname, port) tuple uniquely identifies the service instance (hostname comparisons are case-insensitive [RFC1034]).

It is possible that two hostnames might point to some common IP addresses; this is a configuration error which the client is not obliged to detect. The effect of this could be that after being told to disconnect, the client might reconnect to the same server because it is represented as a different service instance.

Implementations SHOULD NOT resolve hostnames and then perform matching of IP address(es) in order to evaluate whether two entities should be determined to be the "same service instance".

## 9.2. Anycast Considerations

When an anycast service is configured on a particular IP address and port, it must be the case that although there is more than one physical server responding on that IP address, each such server can be treated as equivalent. What we mean by "equivalent" here is that both servers can provide the same service and, where appropriate, the same authentication information, such as PKI certificates, when establishing connections.

If a change in network topology causes packets in a particular TCP connection to be sent to an anycast server instance that does not know about the connection, the new server will automatically terminate the connection with a TCP reset, since it will have no record of the connection, and then the client can reconnect or stop using the connection, as appropriate.

If after the connection is re-established, the client's assumption that it is connected to the same service is violated in some way, that would be considered to be incorrect behavior in this context. It is however out of the possible scope for this specification to make specific recommendations in this regard; that would be up to follow-on documents that describe specific uses of DNS stateful operations.



### 9.3. Connection Sharing

As previously specified for DNS over TCP [RFC7766]:

To mitigate the risk of unintentional server overload, DNS clients **MUST** take care to minimize the number of concurrent TCP connections made to any individual server. It is **RECOMMENDED** that for any given client/server interaction there **SHOULD** be no more than one connection for regular queries, one for zone transfers, and one for each protocol that is being used on top of TCP (for example, if the resolver was using TLS). However, it is noted that certain primary/secondary configurations with many busy zones might need to use more than one TCP connection for zone transfers for operational reasons (for example, to support concurrent transfers of multiple zones).

A single server may support multiple services, including DNS Updates [RFC2136], DNS Push Notifications [I-D.ietf-dnssd-push], and other services, for one or more DNS zones. When a client discovers that the target server for several different operations is the same service instance (see Section 9.1), the client **SHOULD** use a single shared DSO Session for all those operations.

This requirement has two benefits. First, it reduces unnecessary connection load on the DNS server. Second, it avoids paying the TCP slow start penalty when making subsequent connections to the same server.

However, server implementers and operators should be aware that connection sharing may not be possible in all cases. A single host device may be home to multiple independent client software instances that don't coordinate with each other. Similarly, multiple independent client devices behind the same NAT gateway will also typically appear to the DNS server as different source ports on the same client IP address. Because of these constraints, a DNS server **MUST** be prepared to accept multiple connections from different source ports on the same client IP address.

#### 9.4. Operational Considerations for Middlebox

Where an application-layer middlebox (e.g., a DNS proxy, forwarder, or session multiplexer) is in the path, care must be taken to avoid a configuration in which DSO traffic is mis-handled. The simplest way to avoid such problems is to avoid using middleboxes. When this is not possible, middleboxes should be evaluated to make sure that they behave correctly.

Correct behavior for middleboxes consists of one of:

- o The middlebox does not forward DSO messages, and responds to DSO messages with a response code other than NOERROR or DSOTYPENI.
- o The middlebox acts as a DSO server and follows this specification in establishing connections.
- o There is a 1:1 correspondence between incoming and outgoing connections, such that when a connection is established to the middlebox, it is guaranteed that exactly one corresponding connection will be established from the middlebox to some DNS resolver, and all incoming messages will be forwarded without modification or reordering. An example of this would be a NAT forwarder or TCP connection optimizer (e.g. for a high-latency connection such as a geosynchronous satellite link).

Middleboxes that do not meet one of the above criteria are very likely to fail in unexpected and difficult-to-diagnose ways. For example, a DNS load balancer might unbundle DNS messages from the incoming TCP stream and forward each message from the stream to a different DNS server. If such a load balancer is in use, and the DNS servers it points implement DSO and are configured to enable DSO, DSO session establishment will succeed, but no coherent session will exist between the client and the server. If such a load balancer is pointed at a DNS server that does not implement DSO or is configured not to allow DSO, no such problem will exist, but such a configuration risks unexpected failure if new server software is installed which does implement DSO.

It is of course possible to implement a middlebox that properly supports DSO. It is even possible to implement one that implements DSO with long-lived operations. This can be done either by maintaining a 1:1 correspondence between incoming and outgoing connections, as mentioned above, or by terminating incoming sessions at the middlebox, but maintaining state in the middlebox about any long-lived that are requested. Specifying this in detail is beyond the scope of this document.

### 9.5. TCP Delayed Acknowledgement Considerations

Most modern implementations of the Transmission Control Protocol (TCP) include a feature called "Delayed Acknowledgement" [RFC1122].

Without this feature, TCP can be very wasteful on the network. For illustration, consider a simple example like remote login, using a very simple TCP implementation that lacks delayed acks. When the user types a keystroke, a data packet is sent. When the data packet arrives at the server, the simple TCP implementation sends an immediate acknowledgement. Mere milliseconds later, the server process reads the one byte of keystroke data, and consequently the simple TCP implementation sends an immediate window update. Mere milliseconds later, the server process generates the character echo, and sends this data back in reply. The simple TCP implementation then sends this data packet immediately too. In this case, this simple TCP implementation sends a burst of three packets almost instantaneously (ack, window update, data).

Clearly it would be more efficient if the TCP implementation were to combine the three separate packets into one, and this is what the delayed ack feature enables.

With delayed ack, the TCP implementation waits after receiving a data packet, typically for 200 ms, and then send its ack if (a) more data packet(s) arrive (b) the receiving process generates some reply data, or (c) 200 ms elapses without either of the above occurring.

With delayed ack, remote login becomes much more efficient, generating just one packet instead of three for each character echo.

The logic of delayed ack is that the 200 ms delay cannot do any significant harm. If something at the other end were waiting for something, then the receiving process should generate the reply that the thing at the end is waiting for, and TCP will then immediately send that reply (and the ack and window update). And if the receiving process does not in fact generate any reply for this particular message, then by definition the thing at the other end cannot be waiting for anything, so the 200 ms delay is harmless.

This assumption may be true, unless the sender is using Nagle's algorithm, a similar efficiency feature, created to protect the network from poorly written client software that performs many rapid small writes in succession. Nagle's algorithm allows these small writes to be combined into larger, less wasteful packets.

Unfortunately, Nagle's algorithm and delayed ack, two valuable efficiency features, can interact badly with each other when used together [NagleDA].

DSO request messages elicit responses; DSO unidirectional messages and DSO response messages do not.

For DSO request messages, which do elicit responses, Nagle's algorithm and delayed ack work as intended.

For DSO messages that do not elicit responses, the delayed ack mechanism causes the ack to be delayed by 200 ms. The 200 ms delay on the ack can in turn cause Nagle's algorithm to prevent the sender from sending any more data for 200 ms until the awaited ack arrives. On an enterprise GigE backbone with sub-millisecond round-trip times, a 200 ms delay is enormous in comparison.

When this issues is raised, there are two solutions that are often offered, neither of them ideal:

1. Disable delayed ack. For DSO messages that elicit no response, removing delayed ack avoids the needless 200 ms delay, and sends back an immediate ack, which tells Nagle's algorithm that it should immediately grant the sender permission to send its next packet. Unfortunately, for DSO messages that *do* elicit a response, removing delayed ack removes the efficiency gains of combining acks with data, and the responder will now send two or three packets instead of one.
2. Disable Nagle's algorithm. When acks are delayed by the delayed ack algorithm, removing Nagle's algorithm prevents the sender from being blocked from sending its next small packet immediately. Unfortunately, on a network with a higher round-trip time, removing Nagle's algorithm removes the efficiency gains of combining multiple small packets into fewer larger ones, with the goal of limiting the number of small packets in flight at any one time.

For DSO messages that elicit a response, delayed ack and Nagle's algorithm do the right thing.

The problem here is that with DSO messages that elicit no response, the TCP implementation is stuck waiting, unsure if a response is about to be generated, or whether the TCP implementation should go ahead and send an ack and window update.

The solution is networking APIs that allow the receiver to inform the TCP implementation that a received message has been read, processed,

and no response for this message will be generated. TCP can then stop waiting for a response that will never come, and immediately go ahead and send an ack and window update.

For implementations of DSO, disabling delayed ack is NOT RECOMMENDED, because of the harm this can do to the network.

For implementations of DSO, disabling Nagle's algorithm is NOT RECOMMENDED, because of the harm this can do to the network.

At the time that this document is being prepared for publication, it is known that at least one TCP implementation provides the ability for the recipient of a TCP message to signal that it is not going to send a response, and hence the delayed ack mechanism can stop waiting. Implementations on operating systems where this feature is available SHOULD make use of it.

## 10. IANA Considerations

### 10.1. DSO OPCODE Registration

The IANA is requested to record the value [TBA1] (tentatively 6) for the DSO OPCODE in the DNS OPCODE Registry. DSO stands for DNS Stateful Operations.

### 10.2. DSO RCODE Registration

The IANA is requested to record the value [TBA2] (tentatively 11) for the DSOTYPENI error code in the DNS RCODE Registry. The DSOTYPENI error code ("DSO-TYPE Not Implemented") indicates that the receiver does implement DNS Stateful Operations, but does not implement the specific DSO-TYPE of the primary TLV in the DSO request message.

### 10.3. DSO Type Code Registry

The IANA is requested to create the 16-bit DSO Type Code Registry, with initial (hexadecimal) values as shown below:

Type	Name	Early Data	Status	Reference
0000	Reserved	NO	Standard	RFC-TBD
0001	KeepAlive	OK	Standard	RFC-TBD
0002	RetryDelay	NO	Standard	RFC-TBD
0003	EncryptionPadding	NA	Standard	RFC-TBD
0004-003F	Unassigned, reserved for DSO session-management TLVs	NO		
0040-F7FF	Unassigned	NO		
F800-FBFF	Experimental/local use	NO		
FC00-FFFF	Reserved for future expansion	NO		

The meanings of the fields are as follows:

Type: the 16-bit DSO type code

Name: the human-readable name of the TLV

Early Data: If OK, this TLV may be sent as early data in a TLS 0-RTT ([RFC8446] Section 2.3) initial handshake. If NA, the TLV may appear as a secondary TLV in a DSO message that is sent as early data.

Status: IETF Document status (or "External" if not documented in an IETF document).

Reference: A stable reference to the document in which this TLV is defined.

DSO Type Code zero is reserved and is not currently intended for allocation.

Registrations of new DSO Type Codes in the "Reserved for DSO session-management" range 0004-003F and the "Reserved for future expansion" range FC00-FFFF require publication of an IETF Standards Action document [RFC8126].

Any document defining a new TLV which lists a value of "OK" in the 0-RTT column must include a threat analysis for the use of the TLV in the case of TLS 0-RTT. See Section 11.1 for details.

Requests to register additional new DSO Type Codes in the "Unassigned" range 0040-F7FF are to be recorded by IANA after Expert Review [RFC8126]. The expert review should validate that the requested type code is specified in a way that conforms to this specification, and that the intended use for the code would not be addressed with an experimental/local assignment.

DSO Type Codes in the "experimental/local" range F800-FBFF may be used as Experimental Use or Private Use values [RFC8126] and may be used freely for development purposes, or for other purposes within a single site. No attempt is made to prevent multiple sites from using the same value in different (and incompatible) ways. There is no need for IANA to review such assignments (since IANA does not record them) and assignments are not generally useful for broad interoperability. It is the responsibility of the sites making use of "experimental/local" values to ensure that no conflicts occur within the intended scope of use.

## 11. Security Considerations

If this mechanism is to be used with DNS over TLS, then these messages are subject to the same constraints as any other DNS-over-

TLS messages and MUST NOT be sent in the clear before the TLS session is established.

The data field of the "Encryption Padding" TLV could be used as a covert channel.

When designing new DSO TLVs, the potential for data in the TLV to be used as a tracking identifier should be taken into consideration, and should be avoided when not required.

When used without TLS or similar cryptographic protection, a malicious entity maybe able to inject a malicious unidirectional DSO Retry Delay Message into the data stream, specifying an unreasonably large RETRY DELAY, causing a denial-of-service attack against the client.

The establishment of DSO sessions has an impact on the number of open TCP connections on a DNS server. Additional resources may be used on the server as a result. However, because the server can limit the number of DSO sessions established and can also close existing DSO sessions as needed, denial of service or resource exhaustion should not be a concern.

#### 11.1. TLS 0-RTT Considerations

DSO permits zero round-trip operation using TCP Fast Open [RFC7413] with TLS 1.3 [RFC8446] 0-RTT to reduce or eliminate round trips in session establishment. TCP Fast Open is only permitted in combination with TLS 0-RTT. In the rest of this section we refer to TLS 1.3 early data in a TLS 0-RTT initial handshake message, whether or not it is included in a TCP SYN packet with early data using the TCP Fast Open option, as "early data."

A DSO message may or may not be permitted to be sent as early data. The definition for each TLV that can be used as a primary TLV is required to state whether or not that TLV is permitted as early data. Only response-requiring messages are ever permitted as early data, and only clients are permitted to send any DSO message as early data, unless there is an implicit session (see Section 5.1).

For DSO messages that are permitted as early data, a client MAY include one or more such messages as early data without having to wait for a DSO response to the first DSO request message to confirm successful establishment of a DSO session.

However, unless there is an implicit session, a client MUST NOT send DSO unidirectional messages until after a DSO Session has been mutually established.



Similarly, unless there is an implicit session, a server MUST NOT send DSO request messages until it has received a response-requiring DSO request message from a client and transmitted a successful NOERROR response for that request.

Caution must be taken to ensure that DSO messages sent as early data are idempotent, or are otherwise immune to any problems that could be result from the inadvertent replay that can occur with zero round-trip operation.

It would be possible to add a TLV that requires the server to do some significant work, and send that to the server as initial data in a TCP SYN packet. A flood of such packets could be used as a DoS attack on the server. None of the TLVs defined here have this property.

If a new TLV is specified that does have this property, that TLV must be specified as not permitted in 0-RTT messages. This prevents work from being done until a round-trip has occurred from the server to the client to verify that the source address of the packet is reachable.

Documents that define new TLVs must state whether each new TLV may be sent as early data. Such documents must include a threat analysis in the security considerations section for each TLV defined in the document that may be sent as early data. This threat analysis should be done based on the advice given in [RFC8446] Section 2.3, 8 and Appendix E.5.

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Hybrid Unicast/Multicast DNS-Based Service Discovery  
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Abstract

This document specifies a mechanism that uses Multicast DNS to automatically populate the wide-area unicast Domain Name System namespace with records describing devices and services found on the local link.

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## 1. Introduction

Multicast DNS [RFC6762] and its companion technology DNS-based Service Discovery [RFC6763] were created to provide IP networking with the ease-of-use and autoconfiguration for which AppleTalk was well known [RFC6760] [ZC].

For a small home network consisting of just a single link (or a few physical links bridged together to appear as a single logical link to IP) Multicast DNS [RFC6762] is sufficient for client devices to look up the ".local" host names of peers on the same home network, and to use DNS-Based Service Discovery (DNS-SD) [RFC6763] to discover services offered on that home network.

For a larger network consisting of multiple links that are interconnected using IP-layer routing instead of link-layer bridging, link-local Multicast DNS alone is insufficient because link-local Multicast DNS packets, by design, are not propagated onto other links.

Using link-local multicast packets for Multicast DNS was a conscious design choice [RFC6762]. Even when limited to a single link, multicast traffic is still generally considered to be more expensive than unicast, because multicast traffic impacts many devices, instead of just a single recipient. In addition, with some technologies like Wi-Fi [802.11], multicast traffic is inherently less efficient and less reliable than unicast, because Wi-Fi multicast traffic is sent using the lower data rates, and is not acknowledged. Multiplying the amount of expensive multicast traffic by flooding it across multiple links would make the traffic load even worse.

Partitioning the network into many small links curtails the spread of expensive multicast traffic, but limits the discoverability of services. Using a very large local link with thousands of hosts enables better service discovery, but at the cost of larger amounts of multicast traffic.

Performing DNS-Based Service Discovery using purely Unicast DNS is more efficient and doesn't require excessively large multicast domains, but requires that the relevant data be available in the Unicast DNS namespace. The Unicast DNS namespace in question could fall within a traditionally assigned globally unique domain name, or could use a private local unicast domain name such as ".home" [HOME].)

In the DNS-SD specification [RFC6763], Section 10 ("Populating the DNS with Information") discusses various possible ways that a service's PTR, SRV, TXT and address records can make their way into



the Unicast DNS namespace, including manual zone file configuration [RFC1034] [RFC1035], DNS Update [RFC2136] [RFC3007] and proxies of various kinds.

Making the relevant data available in the Unicast DNS namespace by manual DNS configuration (as has been done for many years at IETF meetings to advertise the IETF Terminal Room printer) is labor intensive, error prone, and requires a reasonable degree of DNS expertise.

Populating the Unicast DNS namespace via DNS Update by the devices offering the services themselves requires configuration of DNS Update keys on those devices, which has proven onerous and impractical for simple devices like printers and network cameras.

Hence, to facilitate efficient and reliable DNS-Based Service Discovery, a compromise is needed that combines the ease-of-use of Multicast DNS with the efficiency and scalability of Unicast DNS.

This document specifies a type of proxy called a Hybrid Proxy that uses Multicast DNS [RFC6762] to discover Multicast DNS records on its local link, and makes corresponding DNS records visible in the Unicast DNS namespace.

In principle, similar mechanisms could be defined using other local service discovery protocols, to discover local information and then make corresponding DNS records visible in the Unicast DNS namespace. Such mechanisms for other local service discovery protocols could be addressed in future documents.

The design of the Hybrid Proxy is guided by the previously published Requirements for Scalable DNS-Based Service [RFC7558].

In simple terms, a descriptive DNS name is chosen for each link in an organization. Using a DNS NS record, responsibility for that DNS name is delegated to a Hybrid Proxy physically attached to that link. Now, when a remote client issues a unicast query for a name falling within the delegated subdomain, the normal DNS delegation mechanism results in the unicast query arriving at the Hybrid Proxy, since it has been declared authoritative for those names. Now, instead of consulting a textual zone file on disk to discover the answer to the query, as a traditional DNS server would, a Hybrid Proxy consults its local link, using Multicast DNS, to find the answer to the question.

For fault tolerance reasons there may be more than one Hybrid Proxy serving a given link.

Note that the Hybrid Proxy uses a "pull" model. The local link is

not queried using Multicast DNS until a remote client has requested that data. In the idle state, in the absence of client requests, the Hybrid Proxy sends no packets and imposes no burden on the network. It operates purely "on demand".

An alternative proposal has been a proxy that performs DNS updates to a remote DNS server on behalf of the Multicast DNS devices on the local network. The difficulty of this is that the proxy would have to be issuing all possible Multicast DNS queries all the time, to discover all the answers it needed to push up to the remote DNS server using DNS Update. It would thus generate very high load on the network continuously, even when there were no clients with any interest in that data.

Hence, having a model where the query comes to the Hybrid Proxy is much more efficient than a model where the Hybrid Proxy pushes the answers out to some other remote DNS server.

A client can send queries to the Hybrid Proxy in the form of traditional DNS queries, or by making a DNS Push Notification subscription [I-D.ietf-dnssd-push].

## 2. Operational Analogy

A Hybrid Proxy does not operate as a multicast relay, or multicast forwarder. There is no danger of multicast forwarding loops that result in traffic storms, because no multicast packets are forwarded. A Hybrid Proxy operates as a *\*proxy\** for a remote client, performing queries on its behalf and reporting the results back.

A reasonable analogy would be making a telephone call to a colleague at your workplace and saying, "I'm out of the office right now. Would you mind bringing up a printer browser window and telling me the names of the printers you see?" That entails no risk of a forwarding loop causing a traffic storm, because no multicast packets are sent over the telephone call.

A similar analogy, instead of enlisting another human being to initiate the service discovery operation on your behalf, would be to log into your own desktop work computer using screen sharing, and then run the printer browser yourself to see the list of printers. Or log in using ssh and type "dns-sd -B \_ipp.\_tcp" and observe the list of discovered printer names. In neither case is there any risk of a forwarding loop causing a traffic storm, because no multicast packets are being sent over the screen sharing or ssh connection.

The Hybrid Proxy provides another way of performing remote queries, just using a different protocol instead of screen sharing or ssh.

When the Hybrid Proxy software performs Multicast DNS operations, the exact same Multicast DNS caching mechanisms are applied as when any other client software on that Hybrid Proxy device performs Multicast DNS operations, whether that be running a printer browser client locally, or a remote user running the printer browser client via a screen sharing connection, or a remote user logged in via ssh running a command-line tool like "dns-sd".

### 3. Conventions and Terminology Used in this Document

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 "Key words for use in RFCs to Indicate Requirement Levels" [RFC2119].

The Hybrid Proxy builds on Multicast DNS, which works between hosts on the same link. A set of hosts is considered to be "on the same link" if:

- o when any host A from that set sends a packet to any other host B in that set, using unicast, multicast, or broadcast, the entire link-layer packet payload arrives unmodified, and
- o a broadcast sent over that link by any host from that set of hosts can be received by every other host in that set

The link-layer *\*header\** may be modified, such as in Token Ring Source Routing [802.5], but not the link-layer *\*payload\**. In particular, if any device forwarding a packet modifies any part of the IP header or IP payload then the packet is no longer considered to be on the same link. This means that the packet may pass through devices such as repeaters, bridges, hubs or switches and still be considered to be on the same link for the purpose of this document, but not through a device such as an IP router that decrements the IP TTL or otherwise modifies the IP header.

### 4. Compatibility Considerations

No changes to existing devices are required to work with a Hybrid Proxy.

Existing devices that advertise services using Multicast DNS work with Hybrid Proxy.

Existing clients that support DNS-Based Service Discovery over Unicast DNS work with Hybrid Proxy. Service Discovery over Unicast DNS was introduced in Mac OS X 10.4 in April 2005, as is included in Apple products introduced since then, including iPhone and iPad, as well as products from other vendors, such as Microsoft Windows 10.

## 5. Hybrid Proxy Operation

In a typical configuration, a Hybrid Proxy is configured to be authoritative [RFC1034] [RFC1035] for four DNS subdomains, and authority for these subdomains is delegated to it via NS records:

A DNS subdomain for service discovery records.

This subdomain name may contain rich text, including spaces and other punctuation. This is because this subdomain name is used only in graphical user interfaces, where rich text is appropriate.

A DNS subdomain for host name records.

This subdomain name SHOULD be limited to letters, digits and hyphens, to facilitate convenient use of host names in command-line interfaces.

A DNS subdomain for IPv6 Reverse Mapping records.

This subdomain name will be a name that ends in "ip6.arpa."

A DNS subdomain for IPv4 Reverse Mapping records.

This subdomain name will be a name that ends in "in-addr.arpa."

In an enterprise network the naming and delegation of these subdomains is typically performed by conscious action of the network administrator. In a home network naming and delegation would typically be performed using some automatic configuration mechanism such as HNCP [RFC7788].

These three varieties of delegated subdomains (service discovery, host names, and reverse mapping) are described below in sections Section 5.1, Section 5.3 and Section 5.4.

How a client discovers where to issue its service discovery queries is described below in section Section 5.2.

### 5.1. Delegated Subdomain for Service Discovery Records

In its simplest form, each link in an organization is assigned a unique Unicast DNS domain name, such as "Building 1.example.com" or "2nd Floor.Building 3.example.com". Grouping multiple links under a single Unicast DNS domain name is to be specified in a future companion document, but for the purposes of this document, assume that each link has its own unique Unicast DNS domain name. In a graphical user interface these names are not displayed as strings with dots as shown above, but something more akin to a typical file browser graphical user interface (which is harder to illustrate in a text-only document) showing folders, subfolders and files in a file system.

*example.com*	Building 1	1st Floor	Alice's printer
	Building 2	*2nd Floor*	Bob's printer
	*Building 3*	3rd Floor	Charlie's printer
	Building 4	4th Floor	
	Building 5		
	Building 6		

Figure 1: Illustrative GUI

Each named link in an organization has one or more Hybrid Proxies which serves it. This Hybrid Proxy function for each link could be performed by a device like a router or switch that is physically attached to that link. In the parent domain, NS records are used to delegate ownership of each defined link name (e.g., "Building 1.example.com") to the one or more Hybrid Proxies that serve the named link. In other words, the Hybrid Proxies are the authoritative name servers for that subdomain.

With appropriate VLAN configuration [802.1Q] a single Hybrid Proxy device could have a logical presence on many links, and serve as the Hybrid Proxy for all those links. In such a configuration the Hybrid Proxy device would have a single physical Ethernet [802.3] port, configured as a VLAN trunk port, which would appear to software on that device as multiple virtual Ethernet interfaces, one connected to each of the VLAN links.

When a DNS-SD client issues a Unicast DNS query to discover services in a particular Unicast DNS subdomain (e.g., "\_printer.\_tcp.Building 1.example.com. PTR ?") the normal DNS delegation mechanism results in that query being forwarded until it reaches the delegated authoritative name server for that subdomain, namely the Hybrid Proxy on the link in question. Like a conventional

Unicast DNS server, a Hybrid Proxy implements the usual Unicast DNS protocol [RFC1034] [RFC1035] over UDP and TCP. However, unlike a conventional Unicast DNS server that generates answers from the data in its manually-configured zone file, a Hybrid Proxy generates answers using Multicast DNS. A Hybrid Proxy does this by consulting its Multicast DNS cache and/or issuing Multicast DNS queries for the corresponding Multicast DNS name, type and class, (e.g., in this case, "\_printer.\_tcp.local. PTR ?"). Then, from the received Multicast DNS data, the Hybrid Proxy synthesizes the appropriate Unicast DNS response. How long the Hybrid Proxy should wait to accumulate Multicast DNS responses is described below in section Section 5.6.

Naturally, the existing Multicast DNS caching mechanism is used to minimize unnecessary Multicast DNS queries on the wire. The Hybrid Proxy is acting as a client of the underlying Multicast DNS subsystem, and benefits from the same caching and efficiency measures as any other client using that subsystem.

## 5.2. Domain Enumeration

A DNS-SD client performs Domain Enumeration [RFC6763] via certain PTR queries, using both unicast and multicast. If it receives a Domain Name configuration via DHCP option 15 [RFC2132], then it issues unicast queries using this domain. It issues unicast queries using names derived from its IPv6 prefix(es) and IPv4 subnet address(es). These are described below in Section 5.2.1. It also issues multicast Domain Enumeration queries in the "local" domain [RFC6762]. These are described below in Section 5.2.2. The results of all the Domain Enumeration queries are combined for Service Discovery purposes.

### 5.2.1. Domain Enumeration via Unicast Queries

The administrator creates Domain Enumeration PTR records [RFC6763] to inform clients of available service discovery domains, e.g.,:

b._dns-sd._udp.example.com.	PTR	Building 1.example.com.
	PTR	Building 2.example.com.
	PTR	Building 3.example.com.
	PTR	Building 4.example.com.
db._dns-sd._udp.example.com.	PTR	Building 1.example.com.
lb._dns-sd._udp.example.com.	PTR	Building 1.example.com.

The "b" ("browse") records tell the client device the list of browsing domains to display for the user to select from and the "db" ("default browse") record tells the client device which domain in

that list should be selected by default. The "lb" ("legacy browse") record tells the client device which domain to automatically browse on behalf of applications that don't implement UI for multi-domain browsing (which is most of them, as of 2015). The "lb" domain is often the same as the "db" domain, or sometimes the "db" domain plus one or more others that should be included in the list of automatic browsing domains for legacy clients.

DNS responses are limited to a maximum size of 65535 bytes. This limits the maximum number of domains that can be returned for a Domain Enumeration query, as follows:

A DNS response header is 12 bytes. That's typically followed by a single qname (up to 256 bytes) plus qtype (2 bytes) and qclass (2 bytes), leaving 65275 for the Answer Section.

An Answer Section Resource Record consists of:

- o Owner name, encoded as a two-byte compression pointer
- o Two-byte rrtype (type PTR)
- o Two-byte rrclass (class IN)
- o Four-byte ttl
- o Two-byte rdlength
- o rdata (domain name, up to 256 bytes)

This means that each Resource Record in the Answer Section can take up to 268 bytes total, which means that the Answer Section can contain, in the worst case, no more than 243 domains.

In a more typical scenario, where the domain names are not all maximum-sized names, and there is some similarity between names so that reasonable name compression is possible, each Answer Section Resource Record may average 140 bytes, which means that the Answer Section can contain up to 466 domains.

It is anticipated that this should be sufficient for even a large corporate network or university campus.



### 5.2.2. Domain Enumeration via Multicast Queries

Since a Hybrid Proxy exists on many, if not all, the links in an enterprise, it offers an additional way to provide Domain Enumeration data for clients.

A Hybrid Proxy can be configured to generate Multicast DNS responses for the following Multicast DNS Domain Enumeration queries issued by clients:

b._dns-sd._udp.local.	PTR	?
db._dns-sd._udp.local.	PTR	?
lb._dns-sd._udp.local.	PTR	?

This provides the ability for Hybrid Proxies to indicate recommended browsing domains to DNS-SD clients on a per-link granularity. In some enterprises it may be preferable to provide this per-link configuration data in the form of Hybrid Proxy configuration, rather than populating the Unicast DNS servers with the same data (in the "ip6.arpa" or "in-addr.arpa" domains).

Regardless of how the network operator chooses to provide this configuration data, clients will perform Domain Enumeration via both unicast and multicast queries, and then combine the results of these queries.

### 5.3. Delegated Subdomain for LDH Host Names

DNS-SD service instance names and domains are allowed to contain arbitrary Net-Unicode text [RFC5198], encoded as precomposed UTF-8 [RFC3629].

Users typically interact with service discovery software by viewing a list of discovered service instance names on a display, and selecting one of them by pointing, touching, or clicking. Similarly, in software that provides a multi-domain DNS-SD user interface, users view a list of offered domains on the display and select one of them by pointing, touching, or clicking. To use a service, users don't have to remember domain or instance names, or type them; users just have to be able to recognize what they see on the display and touch or click on the thing they want.

In contrast, host names are often remembered and typed. Also, host names have historically been used in command-line interfaces where spaces can be inconvenient. For this reason, host names have traditionally been restricted to letters, digits and hyphens (LDH), with no spaces or other punctuation.

While we still want to allow rich text for DNS-SD service instance names and domains, it is advisable, for maximum compatibility with existing usage, to restrict host names to the traditional letter-digit-hyphen rules. This means that while a service name "My Printer.\_ipp.\_tcp.Building 1.example.com" is acceptable and desirable (it is displayed in a graphical user interface as an instance called "My Printer" in the domain "Building 1" at "example.com"), a host name "My-Printer.Building 1.example.com" is less desirable (because of the space in "Building 1").

To accomodate this difference in allowable characters, a Hybrid Proxy SHOULD support having two separate subdomains delegated to it for each link it serves, one whose name is allowed to contain arbitrary Net-Unicode text [RFC5198], and a second more constrained subdomain whose name is restricted to contain only letters, digits, and hyphens, to be used for host name records (names of 'A' and 'AAAA' address records).

For example, a Hybrid Proxy could have the two subdomains "Building 1.example.com" and "bldg1.example.com" delegated to it. The Hybrid Proxy would then translate these two Multicast DNS records:

```
My Printer._ipp._tcp.local. SRV 0 0 631 prnt.local.  
prnt.local.                A    203.0.113.2
```

into Unicast DNS records as follows:

```
My Printer._ipp._tcp.Building 1.example.com.  
                                SRV 0 0 631 prnt.bldg1.example.com.  
prnt.bldg1.example.com.       A    203.0.113.2
```

Note that the SRV record name is translated using the rich-text domain name ("Building 1.example.com") and the address record name is translated using the LDH domain ("bldg1.example.com").

A Hybrid Proxy MAY support only a single rich text Net-Unicode domain, and use that domain for all records, including 'A' and 'AAAA' address records, but implementers choosing this option should be aware that this choice may produce host names that are awkward to use in command-line environments. Whether this is an issue depends on whether users in the target environment are expected to be using command-line interfaces.

A Hybrid Proxy MUST NOT be restricted to support only a letter-digit-hyphen subdomain, because that results in an unnecessarily poor user experience.

#### 5.4. Delegated Subdomain for Reverse Mapping

A Hybrid Proxy can facilitate easier management of reverse mapping domains, particularly for IPv6 addresses where manual management may be more onerous than it is for IPv4 addresses.

To achieve this, in the parent domain, NS records are used to delegate ownership of the appropriate reverse mapping domain to the Hybrid Proxy. In other words, the Hybrid Proxy becomes the authoritative name server for the reverse mapping domain. For fault tolerance reasons there may be more than one Hybrid Proxy serving a given link.

For example, if a given link is using the IPv6 prefix 2001:0DB8:1234:5678/64, then the domain "8.7.6.5.4.3.2.1.8.b.d.0.1.0.0.2.ip6.arpa" is delegated to the Hybrid Proxy for that link.

If a given link is using the IPv4 subnet 203.0.113/24, then the domain "113.0.203.in-addr.arpa" is delegated to the Hybrid Proxy for that link.

When a reverse mapping query arrives at the Hybrid Proxy, it issues the identical query on its local link as a Multicast DNS query. The mechanism to force an apparently unicast name to be resolved using link-local Multicast DNS varies depending on the API set being used. For example, in the "/usr/include/dns\_sd.h" APIs (available on macOS, iOS, Microsoft Windows, Linux and Android), using `kDNSServiceFlagsForceMulticast` indicates that the `DNSServiceQueryRecord()` call should perform the query using Multicast DNS. Other APIs sets have different ways of forcing multicast queries. When the host owning that IPv6 or IPv4 address responds with a name of the form "something.local", the Hybrid Proxy rewrites that to use its configured LDH host name domain instead of "local", and returns the response to the caller.

For example, a Hybrid Proxy with the two subdomains "113.0.203.in-addr.arpa" and "bldg1.example.com" delegated to it would translate this Multicast DNS record:

```
2.113.0.203.in-addr.arpa. PTR prnt.local.
```

into this Unicast DNS response:

```
2.113.0.203.in-addr.arpa. PTR prnt.bldg1.example.com.
```

Subsequent queries for the `prnt.bldg1.example.com` address record, falling as it does within the `bldg1.example.com` domain, which is

delegated to the Hybrid Proxy, will arrive at the Hybrid Proxy, where they are answered by issuing Multicast DNS queries and using the received Multicast DNS answers to synthesize Unicast DNS responses, as described above.

#### 5.5. Data Translation

Generating the appropriate Multicast DNS queries involves, at the very least, translating from the configured DNS domain (e.g., "Building 1.example.com") on the Unicast DNS side to "local" on the Multicast DNS side.

Generating the appropriate Unicast DNS responses involves translating back from "local" to the configured DNS Unicast domain.

Other beneficial translation and filtering operations are described below.

##### 5.5.1. DNS TTL limiting

For efficiency, Multicast DNS typically uses moderately high DNS TTL values. For example, the typical TTL on DNS-SD PTR records is 75 minutes. What makes these moderately high TTLs acceptable is the cache coherency mechanisms built in to the Multicast DNS protocol which protect against stale data persisting for too long. When a service shuts down gracefully, it sends goodbye packets to remove its PTR records immediately from neighbouring caches. If a service shuts down abruptly without sending goodbye packets, the Passive Observation Of Failures (POOF) mechanism described in Section 10.5 of the Multicast DNS specification [RFC6762] comes into play to purge the cache of stale data.

A traditional Unicast DNS client on a remote link does not get to participate in these Multicast DNS cache coherency mechanisms on the local link. For traditional Unicast DNS queries (those received without any Long-Lived Query [I-D.sekar-dns-llq] or DNS Push Notification [I-D.ietf-dnssd-push] option) the DNS TTLs reported in the resulting Unicast DNS response SHOULD be capped to be no more than ten seconds.

Similarly, for negative responses, the negative caching TTL indicated in the SOA record [RFC2308] should also be ten seconds (Section 6.1).

This value of ten seconds is chosen based on user experience considerations.

For negative caching, suppose a user is attempting to access a remote device (e.g., a printer), and they are unsuccessful because that

device is powered off. Suppose they then place a telephone call and ask for the device to be powered on. We want the device to become available to the user within a reasonable time period. It is reasonable to expect it to take on the order of ten seconds for a simple device with a simple embedded operating system to power on. Once the device is powered on and has announced its presence on the network via Multicast DNS, we would like it to take no more than a further ten seconds for stale negative cache entries to expire from Unicast DNS caches, making the device available to the user desiring to access it.

Similar reasoning applies to capping positive TTLs at ten seconds. In the event of a device moving location, getting a new DHCP address, or other renumbering events, we would like the updated information to be available to remote clients in a relatively timely fashion.

However, network administrators should be aware that many recursive (caching) DNS servers by default are configured to impose a minimum TTL of 30 seconds. If stale data appears to be persisting in the network to the extent that it adversely impacts user experience, network administrators are advised to check the configuration of their recursive DNS servers.

For received Unicast DNS queries that contain an LLQ or DNS Push Notification option, the Multicast DNS record's TTL SHOULD be returned unmodified, because the Push Notification channel exists to inform the remote client as records come and go. For further details about Long-Lived Queries, and its newer replacement, DNS Push Notifications, see Section 5.6.

#### 5.5.2. Suppressing Unusable Records

A Hybrid Proxy SHOULD suppress Unicast DNS answers for records that are not useful outside the local link. For example, DNS A and AAAA records for IPv6 link-local addresses [RFC4862] and IPv4 link-local addresses [RFC3927] SHOULD be suppressed. Similarly, for sites that have multiple private address realms [RFC1918], in cases where the Hybrid Proxy can determine that the querying client is in a different address realm, private addresses MUST NOT be communicated to that client. IPv6 Unique Local Addresses [RFC4193] SHOULD be suppressed in cases where the Hybrid Proxy can determine that the querying client is in a different IPv6 address realm.

By the same logic, DNS SRV records that reference target host names that have no addresses usable by the requester should be suppressed, and likewise, DNS PTR records that point to unusable SRV records should be similarly be suppressed.

### 5.5.3. NSEC and NSEC3 queries

Since a Hybrid Proxy only knows what names exist on the local link by issuing queries for them, and since it would be impractical to issue queries for every possible name just to find out which names exist and which do not, a Hybrid Proxy cannot programatically generate the traditional NSEC and NSEC3 records which assert the nonexistence of a large range names.

When queried for an NSEC or NSEC3 record type, the Hybrid Proxy issues a qtype "ANY" query using Multicast DNS on the local link, and then generates an NSEC or NSEC3 response signifying which record types do and do not exist just the specific name queried, and no others.

Multicast DNS NSEC records received on the local link MUST NOT be forwarded unmodified to a unicast querier, because there are slight differences in the NSEC record data. In particular, Multicast DNS NSEC records do not have the NSEC bit set in the Type Bit Map, whereas conventional Unicast DNS NSEC records do have the NSEC bit set.

### 5.5.4. Text Encoding Translation

A Hybrid Proxy does no translation between text encodings. Specifically, a Hybrid Proxy does no translation between Punycode and UTF-8, either in the owner name of DNS records, or anywhere in the RDATA of DNS records (such as the RDATA of PTR records, SRV records, NS records, or other record types like TXT, where it is ambiguous whether the RDATA may contain DNS names). All bytes are treated as-is, with no attempt at text encoding translation. A client implementing DNS-based Service Discovery [RFC6763] will use UTF-8 encoding for its service discovery queries, which the Hybrid Proxy passes through without any text encoding translation to the Multicast DNS subsystem. Responses from the Multicast DNS subsystem are similarly returned, without any text encoding translation, back to the requesting client.

### 5.5.5. Application-Specific Data Translation

There may be cases where Application-Specific Data Translation is appropriate.

For example, AirPrint printers tend to advertise fairly verbose information about their capabilities in their DNS-SD TXT record. TXT record sizes in the range 500-1000 bytes are not uncommon. This information is a legacy from LPR printing, because LPR does not have in-band capability negotiation, so all of this information is

conveyed using the DNS-SD TXT record instead. IPP printing does have in-band capability negotiation, but for convenience printers tend to include the same capability information in their IPP DNS-SD TXT records as well. For local mDNS use this extra TXT record information is inefficient, but not fatal. However, when a Hybrid Proxy aggregates data from multiple printers on a link, and sends it via unicast (via UDP or TCP) this amount of unnecessary TXT record information can result in large responses. A DNS reply over TCP carrying information about 70 printers with an average of 700 bytes per printer adds up to about 50 kilobytes of data. Therefore, a Hybrid Proxy that is aware of the specifics of an application-layer protocol such as AirPrint (which uses IPP) can elide unnecessary key/value pairs from the DNS-SD TXT record for better network efficiency.

Also, the DNS-SD TXT record for many printers contains an "adminurl" key something like "adminurl=http://printername.local/status.html". For this URL to be useful outside the local link, the embedded ".local" hostname needs to be translated to an appropriate name with larger scope. It is easy to translate ".local" names when they appear in well-defined places, either as a record's name, or in the rdata of record types like PTR and SRV. In the printing case, some application-specific knowledge about the semantics of the "adminurl" key is needed for the Hybrid Proxy to know that it contains a name that needs to be translated. This is somewhat analogous to the need for NAT gateways to contain ALGs (Application-Specific Gateways) to facilitate the correct translation of protocols that embed addresses in unexpected places.

As is the case with NAT ALGs, protocol designers are advised to avoid communicating names and addresses in nonstandard locations, because those "hidden" names and addresses are at risk of not being translated when necessary, resulting in operational failures. In the printing case, the operational failure of failing to translate the "adminurl" key correctly is that, when accessed from a different link, printing will still work, but clicking the "Admin" UI button will fail to open the printer's administration page. Rather than duplicating the host name from the service's SRV record in its "adminurl" key, thereby having the same host name appear in two places, a better design might have been to omit the host name from the "adminurl" key, and instead have the client implicitly substitute the target host name from the service's SRV record in place of a missing host name in the "adminurl" key. That way the desired host name only appears once, and it is in a well-defined place where software like the Hybrid Proxy is expecting to find it.

Note that this kind of Application-Specific Data Translation is expected to be very rare. It is the exception, rather than the rule. This is an example of a common theme in computing. It is frequently



the case that it is wise to start with a clean, layered design, with clear boundaries. Then, in certain special cases, those layer boundaries may be violated, where the performance and efficiency benefits outweigh the inelegance of the layer violation.

These layer violations are optional. They are done primarily for efficiency reasons, and generally should not be required for correct operation. A Hybrid Proxy MAY operate solely at the mDNS layer, without any knowledge of semantics at the DNS-SD layer or above.

## 5.6. Answer Aggregation

In a simple analysis, simply gathering multicast answers and forwarding them in a unicast response seems adequate, but it raises the question of how long the Hybrid Proxy should wait to be sure that it has received all the Multicast DNS answers it needs to form a complete Unicast DNS response. If it waits too little time, then it risks its Unicast DNS response being incomplete. If it waits too long, then it creates a poor user experience at the client end. In fact, there may be no time which is both short enough to produce a good user experience and at the same time long enough to reliably produce complete results.

Similarly, the Hybrid Proxy -- the authoritative name server for the subdomain in question -- needs to decide what DNS TTL to report for these records. If the TTL is too long then the recursive (caching) name servers issuing queries on behalf of their clients risk caching stale data for too long. If the TTL is too short then the amount of network traffic will be more than necessary. In fact, there may be no TTL which is both short enough to avoid undesirable stale data and at the same time long enough to be efficient on the network.

Both these dilemmas are solved by use of DNS Long-Lived Queries (DNS LLQ) [I-D.sekar-dns-llq] or its newer replacement, DNS Push Notifications [I-D.ietf-dnssd-push]. (Clients and Hybrid Proxies can support both DNS LLQ and DNS Push, and when talking to a Hybrid Proxy that supports both the client may use either protocol, as it chooses, though it is expected that only DNS Push will continue to be supported in the long run.) Clients supporting unicast DNS Service Discovery SHOULD implement DNS Push Notifications [I-D.ietf-dnssd-push] for improved user experience.

When a Hybrid Proxy receives a query containing a DNS LLQ or DNS Push Notification option, it responds immediately using the Multicast DNS records it already has in its cache (if any). This provides a good client user experience by providing a near-instantaneous response. Simultaneously, the Hybrid Proxy issues a Multicast DNS query on the local link to discover if there are any additional Multicast DNS

records it did not already know about. Should additional Multicast DNS responses be received, these are then delivered to the client using DNS LLQ or DNS Push Notification update messages. The timeliness of such update messages is limited only by the timeliness of the device responding to the Multicast DNS query. If the Multicast DNS device responds quickly, then the update message is delivered quickly. If the Multicast DNS device responds slowly, then the update message is delivered slowly. The benefit of using update messages is that the Hybrid Proxy can respond promptly because it doesn't have to delay its unicast response to allow for the expected worst-case delay for receiving all the Multicast DNS responses. Even if a proxy were to try to provide reliability by assuming an excessively pessimistic worst-case time (thereby giving a very poor user experience) there would still be the risk of a slow Multicast DNS device taking even longer than that (e.g., a device that is not even powered on until ten seconds after the initial query is received) resulting in incomplete responses. Using update message solves this dilemma: even very late responses are not lost; they are delivered in subsequent update messages.

There are two factors that determine specifically how responses are generated:

The first factor is whether the query from the client included an LLQ or DNS Push Notification option (typical with long-lived service browsing PTR queries) or not (typical with one-shot operations like SRV or address record queries). Note that queries containing the LLQ or PUSH option are received directly from the client. Queries containing no LLQ or PUSH option are generally received via the client's configured recursive (caching) name server.

The second factor is whether the Hybrid Proxy already has at least one record in its cache that positively answers the question.

- o No LLQ or PUSH option; no answer in cache:  
Issue an mDNS query, exactly as a local client would issue an mDNS query on the local link for the desired record name, type and class, including retransmissions, as appropriate, according to the established mDNS retransmission schedule [RFC6762]. As soon as any Multicast DNS response packet is received that contains one or more positive answers to that question (with or without the Cache Flush bit [RFC6762] set), or a negative answer (signified via a Multicast DNS NSEC record [RFC6762]), the Hybrid Proxy generates a Unicast DNS response packet containing the corresponding (filtered and translated) answers and sends it to the remote client. If after six seconds no Multicast DNS answers have been received, return a negative response to the remote client. Six seconds is enough time to transmit three mDNS queries, and allow some time

for responses to arrive.

DNS TTLs in responses are capped to at most ten seconds.

- o No LLQ or PUSH option; at least one answer in cache:  
Send response right away to minimise delay.  
DNS TTLs in responses are capped to at most ten seconds.  
No local mDNS queries are performed.  
(Reasoning: Given RRSset TTL harmonisation, if the proxy has one Multicast DNS answer in its cache, it can reasonably assume that it has all of them.)
- o Query contains LLQ or PUSH option; no answer in cache:  
As in the case above with no answer in the cache, perform mDNS querying for six seconds, and send a response to the remote client as soon as any relevant mDNS response is received.  
If after six seconds no relevant mDNS response has been received, return negative response to the remote client (for LLQ; not applicable for PUSH). (Reasoning: We don't need to rush to send an empty answer.)  
Whether or not a relevant mDNS response is received within six seconds, the query remains active for as long as the client maintains the LLQ or PUSH state, and if mDNS answers are received later, LLQ or PUSH update messages are sent.  
DNS TTLs in responses are returned unmodified.
- o Query contains LLQ or PUSH option; at least one answer in cache:  
As in the case above with at least one answer in cache, send response right away to minimise delay.  
The query remains active for as long as the client maintains the LLQ or PUSH state, and if additional mDNS answers are received later, LLQ or PUSH update messages are sent.  
(Reasoning: We want UI that is displayed very rapidly, yet continues to remain accurate even as the network environment changes.)  
DNS TTLs in responses are returned unmodified.

Note that the "negative responses" referred to above are "no error no answer" negative responses, not NXDOMAIN. This is because the Hybrid Proxy cannot know all the Multicast DNS domain names that may exist on a link at any given time, so any name with no answers may have child names that do exist, making it an "empty nonterminal" name.

## 6. Administrative DNS Records

### 6.1. DNS SOA (Start of Authority) Record

The MNAME field SHOULD contain the host name of the Hybrid Proxy device (i.e., the same domain name as the rdata of the NS record delegating the relevant zone(s) to this Hybrid Proxy device).

The RNAME field SHOULD contain the mailbox of the person responsible for administering this Hybrid Proxy device.

The SERIAL field MUST be zero.

Zone transfers are undefined for Hybrid Proxy zones, and consequently the REFRESH, RETRY and EXPIRE fields have no useful meaning for Hybrid Proxy zones. These fields SHOULD contain reasonable default values. The RECOMMENDED values are: REFRESH 7200, RETRY 3600, EXPIRE 86400.

The MINIMUM field (used to control the lifetime of negative cache entries) SHOULD contain the value 10. The value of ten seconds is chosen based on user experience considerations (see Section 5.5.1).

In the event that there are multiple Hybrid Proxy devices on a link for fault tolerance reasons, this will result in clients receiving inconsistent SOA records (different MNAME, and possibly RNAME) depending on which Hybrid Proxy answers their SOA query. However, since clients generally have no reason to use the MNAME or RNAME data, this is unlikely to cause any problems.

### 6.2. DNS NS Records

In the event that there are multiple Hybrid Proxy devices on a link for fault tolerance reasons, the parent zone MUST be configured with glue records giving the names and addresses of all the Hybrid Proxy devices on the link.

Each Hybrid Proxy device MUST be configured with its own NS record, and with the NS records of its fellow Hybrid Proxy devices on the same link, so that it can return the correct answers for NS queries.

### 6.3. DNS SRV Records

In the event that a Hybrid Proxy implements LLQ [I-D.sekar-dns-llq] and/or DNS Push Notifications [I-D.ietf-dnssd-push] (as most SHOULD) they MUST generate answers for the appropriate corresponding \_dns-llq.\_udp.<zone> and/or \_dns-push-tls.\_tcp.<zone> SRV record queries. These records are conceptually inserted into the namespace of the

corresponding zones. They do not exist in the ".local" namespace of the local link.

## 7. DNSSEC Issues

### 7.1. On-line signing only

Auth server must possess key, to generate signed data from mDNS responses. Therefore off-line signing not applicable to Hybrid Proxy.

### 7.2. NSEC and NSEC3 Records

In DNSSEC, NSEC and NSEC3 records are used to assert the nonexistence of certain names, also described as "authenticated denial of existence".

Since a Hybrid Proxy only knows what names exist on the local link by issuing queries for them, and since it would be impractical to issue queries for every possible name just to find out which names exist and which do not, a Hybrid Proxy cannot programatically synthesize the traditional NSEC and NSEC3 records which assert the nonexistence of a large range names. Instead, when generating a negative response, a Hybrid Proxy programatically synthesizes a single NSEC record assert the nonexistence of just the specific name queried, and no others. Since the Hybrid Proxy has the zone signing key, it can do this on demand. Since the NSEC record asserts the nonexistence of only a single name, zone walking is not a concern, so NSEC3 is not necessary.

Note that this applies only to traditional immediate DNS queries, which may return immediate negative answers when no immediate positive answer is available. When used with a DNS Push Notification subscription [I-D.ietf-dnssd-push] there are no negative answers, merely the absence of answers so far, which may change in the future if answers become available.

## 8. IPv6 Considerations

An IPv6-only host and an IPv4-only host behave as "ships that pass in the night". Even if they are on the same Ethernet [802.3], neither is aware of the other's traffic. For this reason, each link may have *two* unrelated ".local." zones, one for IPv6 and one for IPv4. Since for practical purposes, a group of IPv6-only hosts and a group of IPv4-only hosts on the same Ethernet act as if they were on two entirely separate Ethernet segments, it is unsurprising that their use of the ".local." zone should occur exactly as it would if they really were on two entirely separate Ethernet segments.

It will be desirable to have a mechanism to 'stitch' together these two unrelated ".local." zones so that they appear as one. Such mechanism will need to be able to differentiate between a dual-stack (v4/v6) host participating in both ".local." zones, and two different hosts, one IPv6-only and the other IPv4-only, which are both trying to use the same name(s). Such a mechanism will be specified in a future companion document.

At present, it is RECOMMENDED that a Hybrid Proxy be configured with a single domain name for both the IPv4 and IPv6 ".local." zones on the local link, and when a unicast query is received, it should issue Multicast DNS queries using both IPv4 and IPv6 on the local link, and then combine the results.

## 9. Security Considerations

### 9.1. Authenticity

A service proves its presence on a link by its ability to answer link-local multicast queries on that link. If greater security is desired, then the Hybrid Proxy mechanism should not be used, and something with stronger security should be used instead, such as authenticated secure DNS Update [RFC2136] [RFC3007].

### 9.2. Privacy

The Domain Name System is, generally speaking, a global public database. Records that exist in the Domain Name System name hierarchy can be queried by name from, in principle, anywhere in the world. If services on a mobile device (like a laptop computer) are made visible via the Hybrid Proxy mechanism, then when those services become visible in a domain such as "My House.example.com" that might indicate to (potentially hostile) observers that the mobile device is in my house. When those services disappear from "My House.example.com" that change could be used by observers to

infer when the mobile device (and possibly its owner) may have left the house. The privacy of this information may be protected using techniques like firewalls and split-view DNS, as are customarily used today to protect the privacy of corporate DNS information.

The Hybrid Proxy could also provide sensitive records only to authenticated users. This is a general DNS problem, not specific to the Hybrid Proxy. Work is underway in the IETF to tackle this problem [RFC7626].

### 9.3. Denial of Service

A remote attacker could use a rapid series of unique Unicast DNS queries to induce a Hybrid Proxy to generate a rapid series of corresponding Multicast DNS queries on one or more of its local links. Multicast traffic is generally more expensive than unicast traffic -- especially on Wi-Fi links -- which makes this attack particularly serious. To limit the damage that can be caused by such attacks, a Hybrid Proxy (or the underlying Multicast DNS subsystem which it utilizes) MUST implement Multicast DNS query rate limiting appropriate to the link technology in question. For today's 802.11b/g/n/ac Wi-Fi links (for which approximately 200 multicast packets per second is sufficient to consume approximately 100% of the wireless spectrum) a limit of 20 Multicast DNS query packets per second is RECOMMENDED. On other link technologies like Gigabit Ethernet higher limits may be appropriate. A consequence of this rate limiting is that a rogue remote client could issue an excessive number of queries, resulting in denial of service to other remote clients attempting to use that Hybrid Proxy. However, this is preferable to a rogue remote client being able to inflict even greater harm on the local network, which could impact the correct operation of all local clients on that network.

## 10. Intellectual Property Rights

Apple has submitted an IPR disclosure concerning the technique proposed in this document. Details are available on the IETF IPR disclosure page [IPR2119].

## 11. IANA Considerations

This document has no IANA Considerations.

## 12. Acknowledgments

Thanks to Markus Stenberg for helping develop the policy regarding the four styles of unicast response according to what data is immediately available in the cache. Thanks to Anders Brandt, Tim Chown, Ralph Droms, Ray Hunter, Ted Lemon, Tom Pusateri, Markus Stenberg, Dave Thaler, and Andrew Yourtchenko for their comments.

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## Appendix A. Implementation Status

Some aspects of the mechanism specified in this document already exist in deployed software. Some aspects are new. This section outlines which aspects already exist and which are new.

### A.1. Already Implemented and Deployed

Domain enumeration by the client (the "b.\_dns-sd.\_udp" queries) is already implemented and deployed.

Unicast queries to the indicated discovery domain is already implemented and deployed.

These are implemented and deployed in Mac OS X 10.4 and later (including all versions of Apple iOS, on all iPhone and iPads), in Bonjour for Windows, and in Android 4.1 "Jelly Bean" (API Level 16) and later.

Domain enumeration and unicast querying have been used for several years at IETF meetings to make Terminal Room printers discoverable from outside the Terminal room. When an IETF attendee presses Cmd-P on a Mac, or selects AirPrint on an iPad or iPhone, and the Terminal room printers appear, that is because the client is sending unicast DNS queries to the IETF DNS servers.

### A.2. Already Implemented

A minimal portable Hybrid Proxy implementation has been produced by Markus Stenberg and Steven Barth, which runs on OS X and several Linux variants including OpenWrt [ohp]. It was demonstrated at the Berlin IETF in July 2013.

Tom Pusateri also has an implementation that runs on any Unix/Linux. It has a RESTful interface for management and an experimental demo CLI and web interface.

### A.3. Partially Implemented

The current APIs make multiple domains visible to client software, but most client UI today lumps all discovered services into a single flat list. This is largely a chicken-and-egg problem. Application writers were naturally reluctant to spend time writing domain-aware UI code when few customers today would benefit from it. If Hybrid

Proxy deployment becomes common, then application writers will have a reason to provide better UI. Existing applications will work with the Hybrid Proxy, but will show all services in a single flat list. Applications with improved UI will group services by domain.

The Long-Lived Query mechanism [I-D.sekar-dns-llq] referred to in this specification exists and is deployed, but has not been standardized by the IETF. The IETF is considering standardizing a superior Long-Lived Query mechanism called DNS Push Notifications [I-D.ietf-dnssd-push]. The pragmatic short-term deployment approach is for vendors to produce Hybrid Proxies that implement both the deployed Long-Lived Query mechanism [I-D.sekar-dns-llq] (for today's clients) and the new DNS Push Notifications mechanism [I-D.ietf-dnssd-push] as the preferred long-term direction.

The translating/filtering Hybrid Proxy specified in this document. Implementations are under development, and operational experience with these implementations has guided updates to this document.

#### A.4. Not Yet Implemented

Client implementations of the new DNS Push Notifications mechanism [I-D.ietf-dnssd-push] are currently underway.

A mechanism to 'stitch' together multiple ".local." zones so that they appear as one. Such a stitching mechanism will be specified in a future companion document. This stitching mechanism addresses the issue that if a printer is physically moved from one link to another, then conceptually the old service has disappeared from the DNS namespace, and a new service with a similar name has appeared. This stitching mechanism will allow a service to change its point of attachment without changing the name by which it can be found.

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Discovery Proxy for Multicast DNS-Based Service Discovery  
draft-ietf-dnssd-hybrid-10

Abstract

This document specifies a network proxy that uses Multicast DNS to automatically populate the wide-area unicast Domain Name System namespace with records describing devices and services found on the local link.

Status of This Memo

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## 1. Introduction

Multicast DNS [RFC6762] and its companion technology DNS-based Service Discovery [RFC6763] were created to provide IP networking with the ease-of-use and autoconfiguration for which AppleTalk was well known [RFC6760] [ZC] [Roadmap].

For a small home network consisting of just a single link (or a few physical links bridged together to appear as a single logical link from the point of view of IP) Multicast DNS [RFC6762] is sufficient for client devices to look up the ".local" host names of peers on the same home network, and to use Multicast DNS-Based Service Discovery (DNS-SD) [RFC6763] to discover services offered on that home network.

For a larger network consisting of multiple links that are interconnected using IP-layer routing instead of link-layer bridging, link-local Multicast DNS alone is insufficient because link-local Multicast DNS packets, by design, are not propagated onto other links.

Using link-local multicast packets for Multicast DNS was a conscious design choice [RFC6762]. Even when limited to a single link, multicast traffic is still generally considered to be more expensive than unicast, because multicast traffic impacts many devices, instead of just a single recipient. In addition, with some technologies like Wi-Fi [IEEE-11], multicast traffic is inherently less efficient and less reliable than unicast, because Wi-Fi multicast traffic is sent at lower data rates, and is not acknowledged [Mcast]. Increasing the amount of expensive multicast traffic by flooding it across multiple links would make the traffic load even worse.

Partitioning the network into many small links curtails the spread of expensive multicast traffic, but limits the discoverability of services. At the opposite end of the spectrum, using a very large local link with thousands of hosts enables better service discovery, but at the cost of larger amounts of multicast traffic.

Performing DNS-Based Service Discovery using purely Unicast DNS is more efficient and doesn't require large multicast domains, but does require that the relevant data be available in the Unicast DNS namespace. The Unicast DNS namespace in question could fall within a traditionally assigned globally unique domain name, or could use a private local unicast domain name such as ".home.arpa" [RFC8375].

In the DNS-SD specification [RFC6763], Section 10 ("Populating the DNS with Information") discusses various possible ways that a service's PTR, SRV, TXT and address records can make their way into the Unicast DNS namespace, including manual zone file configuration



[RFC1034] [RFC1035], DNS Update [RFC2136] [RFC3007] and proxies of various kinds.

Making the relevant data available in the Unicast DNS namespace by manual DNS configuration is one option. This option has been used for many years at IETF meetings to advertise the IETF Terminal Room printer. Details of this example are given in Appendix A of the Roadmap document [Roadmap]. However, this manual DNS configuration is labor intensive, error prone, and requires a reasonable degree of DNS expertise.

Populating the Unicast DNS namespace via DNS Update by the devices offering the services themselves is another option [RegProt] [DNS-UL]. However, this requires configuration of DNS Update keys on those devices, which has proven onerous and impractical for simple devices like printers and network cameras.

Hence, to facilitate efficient and reliable DNS-Based Service Discovery, a compromise is needed that combines the ease-of-use of Multicast DNS with the efficiency and scalability of Unicast DNS.

This document specifies a type of proxy called a "Discovery Proxy" that uses Multicast DNS [RFC6762] to discover Multicast DNS records on its local link, and makes corresponding DNS records visible in the Unicast DNS namespace.

In principle, similar mechanisms could be defined using other local service discovery protocols, to discover local information and then make corresponding DNS records visible in the Unicast DNS namespace. Such mechanisms for other local service discovery protocols could be addressed in future documents.

The design of the Discovery Proxy is guided by the previously published requirements document [RFC7558].

In simple terms, a descriptive DNS name is chosen for each link in an organization. Using a DNS NS record, responsibility for that DNS name is delegated to a Discovery Proxy physically attached to that link. Now, when a remote client issues a unicast query for a name falling within the delegated subdomain, the normal DNS delegation mechanism results in the unicast query arriving at the Discovery Proxy, since it has been declared authoritative for those names. Now, instead of consulting a textual zone file on disk to discover the answer to the query, as a traditional DNS server would, a Discovery Proxy consults its local link, using Multicast DNS, to find the answer to the question.

For fault tolerance reasons there may be more than one Discovery Proxy serving a given link.

Note that the Discovery Proxy uses a "pull" model. The local link is not queried using Multicast DNS until some remote client has requested that data. In the idle state, in the absence of client requests, the Discovery Proxy sends no packets and imposes no burden on the network. It operates purely "on demand".

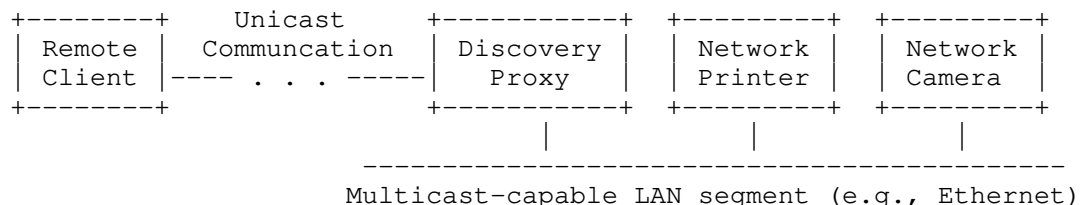
An alternative proposal that has been discussed is a proxy that performs DNS updates to a remote DNS server on behalf of the Multicast DNS devices on the local network. The difficulty with this is that Multicast DNS devices do not routinely announce their records on the network. Generally they remain silent until queried. This means that the complete set of Multicast DNS records in use on a link can only be discovered by active querying, not by passive listening. Because of this, a proxy can only know what names exist on a link by issuing queries for them, and since it would be impractical to issue queries for every possible name just to find out which names exist and which do not, there is no reasonable way for a proxy to programmatically learn all the answers it would need to push up to the remote DNS server using DNS Update. Even if such a mechanism were possible, it would risk generating high load on the network continuously, even when there are no clients with any interest in that data.

Hence, having a model where the query comes to the Discovery Proxy is much more efficient than a model where the Discovery Proxy pushes the answers out to some other remote DNS server.

A client seeking to discover services and other information achieves this by sending traditional DNS queries to the Discovery Proxy, or by sending DNS Push Notification subscription requests [Push].

How a client discovers what domain name(s) to use for its service discovery queries, (and consequently what Discovery Proxy or Proxies to use) is described in Section 5.2.

The diagram below illustrates a network topology using a Discovery Proxy to provide discovery service to a remote client.



## 2. Operational Analogy

A Discovery Proxy does not operate as a multicast relay, or multicast forwarder. There is no danger of multicast forwarding loops that result in traffic storms, because no multicast packets are forwarded. A Discovery Proxy operates as a *\*proxy\** for a remote client, performing queries on its behalf and reporting the results back.

A reasonable analogy is making a telephone call to a colleague at your workplace and saying, "I'm out of the office right now. Would you mind bringing up a printer browser window and telling me the names of the printers you see?" That entails no risk of a forwarding loop causing a traffic storm, because no multicast packets are sent over the telephone call.

A similar analogy, instead of enlisting another human being to initiate the service discovery operation on your behalf, is to log into your own desktop work computer using screen sharing, and then run the printer browser yourself to see the list of printers. Or log in using ssh and type "dns-sd -B \_ipp.\_tcp" and observe the list of discovered printer names. In neither case is there any risk of a forwarding loop causing a traffic storm, because no multicast packets are being sent over the screen sharing or ssh connection.

The Discovery Proxy provides another way of performing remote queries, except using a different protocol instead of screen sharing or ssh.

When the Discovery Proxy software performs Multicast DNS operations, the exact same Multicast DNS caching mechanisms are applied as when any other client software on that Discovery Proxy device performs Multicast DNS operations, whether that be running a printer browser client locally, or a remote user running the printer browser client via a screen sharing connection, or a remote user logged in via ssh running a command-line tool like "dns-sd", or a remote user sending DNS requests that cause a Discovery Proxy to perform discovery operations on its behalf.

### 3. Conventions and Terminology Used in this Document

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 "Key words for use in RFCs to Indicate Requirement Levels", when, and only when, they appear in all capitals, as shown here [RFC2119] [RFC8174].

The Discovery Proxy builds on Multicast DNS, which works between hosts on the same link. For the purposes of this document a set of hosts is considered to be "on the same link" if:

- o when any host from that set sends a packet to any other host in that set, using unicast, multicast, or broadcast, the entire link-layer packet payload arrives unmodified, and
- o a broadcast sent over that link, by any host from that set of hosts, can be received by every other host in that set.

The link-layer *\*header\** may be modified, such as in Token Ring Source Routing [IEEE-5], but not the link-layer *\*payload\**. In particular, if any device forwarding a packet modifies any part of the IP header or IP payload then the packet is no longer considered to be on the same link. This means that the packet may pass through devices such as repeaters, bridges, hubs or switches and still be considered to be on the same link for the purpose of this document, but not through a device such as an IP router that decrements the IP TTL or otherwise modifies the IP header.

### 4. Compatibility Considerations

No changes to existing devices are required to work with a Discovery Proxy.

Existing devices that advertise services using Multicast DNS work with Discovery Proxy.

Existing clients that support DNS-Based Service Discovery over Unicast DNS work with Discovery Proxy. Service Discovery over Unicast DNS was introduced in Mac OS X 10.4 in April 2005, as is included in Apple products introduced since then, including iPhone and iPad, as well as products from other vendors, such as Microsoft Windows 10.

An overview of the larger collection of related Service Discovery technologies, and how Discovery Proxy relates to those, is given in the Service Discovery Road Map document [Roadmap].

## 5. Discovery Proxy Operation

In a typical configuration, a Discovery Proxy is configured to be authoritative [RFC1034] [RFC1035] for four or more DNS subdomains, and authority for these subdomains is delegated to it via NS records:

A DNS subdomain for service discovery records.

This subdomain name may contain rich text, including spaces and other punctuation. This is because this subdomain name is used only in graphical user interfaces, where rich text is appropriate.

A DNS subdomain for host name records.

This subdomain name SHOULD be limited to letters, digits and hyphens, to facilitate convenient use of host names in command-line interfaces.

One or more DNS subdomains for IPv4 Reverse Mapping records.

These subdomains will have names that ends in "in-addr.arpa."

One or more DNS subdomains for IPv6 Reverse Mapping records.

These subdomains will have names that ends in "ip6.arpa."

In an enterprise network the naming and delegation of these subdomains is typically performed by conscious action of the network administrator. In a home network naming and delegation would typically be performed using some automatic configuration mechanism such as HNCP [RFC7788].

These three varieties of delegated subdomains (service discovery, host names, and reverse mapping) are described below in Section 5.1, Section 5.3 and Section 5.4.

How a client discovers where to issue its service discovery queries is described below in Section 5.2.

### 5.1. Delegated Subdomain for Service Discovery Records

In its simplest form, each link in an organization is assigned a unique Unicast DNS domain name, such as "Building 1.example.com" or "2nd Floor.Building 3.example.com". Grouping multiple links under a single Unicast DNS domain name is to be specified in a future companion document, but for the purposes of this document, assume that each link has its own unique Unicast DNS domain name. In a graphical user interface these names are not displayed as strings with dots as shown above, but something more akin to a typical file browser graphical user interface (which is harder to illustrate in a text-only document) showing folders, subfolders and files in a file system.

*example.com*	Building 1	1st Floor	Alice's printer
	Building 2	*2nd Floor*	Bob's printer
	*Building 3*	3rd Floor	Charlie's printer
	Building 4	4th Floor	
	Building 5		
	Building 6		

Figure 1: Illustrative GUI

Each named link in an organization has one or more Discovery Proxies which serve it. This Discovery Proxy function for each link could be performed by a device like a router or switch that is physically attached to that link. In the parent domain, NS records are used to delegate ownership of each defined link name

(e.g., "Building 1.example.com") to the one or more Discovery Proxies that serve the named link. In other words, the Discovery Proxies are the authoritative name servers for that subdomain. As in the rest of DNS-Based Service Discovery, all names are represented as-is using plain UTF-8 encoding, and, as described in Section 5.5.4, no text encoding translations are performed.

With appropriate VLAN configuration [IEEE-1Q] a single Discovery Proxy device could have a logical presence on many links, and serve as the Discovery Proxy for all those links. In such a configuration the Discovery Proxy device would have a single physical Ethernet [IEEE-3] port, configured as a VLAN trunk port, which would appear to software on that device as multiple virtual Ethernet interfaces, one connected to each of the VLAN links.

As an alternative to using VLAN technology, using a Multicast DNS Discovery Relay [Relay] is another way that a Discovery Proxy can have a 'virtual' presence on a remote link.

When a DNS-SD client issues a Unicast DNS query to discover services in a particular Unicast DNS subdomain (e.g., "\_printer.\_tcp.Building 1.example.com. PTR ?") the normal DNS delegation mechanism results in that query being forwarded until it reaches the delegated authoritative name server for that subdomain, namely the Discovery Proxy on the link in question. Like a conventional Unicast DNS server, a Discovery Proxy implements the usual Unicast DNS protocol [RFC1034] [RFC1035] over UDP and TCP. However, unlike a conventional Unicast DNS server that generates answers from the data in its manually-configured zone file, a Discovery Proxy generates answers using Multicast DNS. A Discovery Proxy does this by consulting its Multicast DNS cache and/or issuing Multicast DNS queries, as appropriate, according to the usual protocol rules of Multicast DNS [RFC6762], for the corresponding Multicast DNS name, type and class, with the delegated zone part of the name replaced with ".local" (e.g., in this case, "\_printer.\_tcp.local. PTR ?"). Then, from the received Multicast DNS data, the Discovery Proxy synthesizes the appropriate Unicast DNS response, with the ".local" top-level label replaced with the name of the delegated zone. How long the Discovery Proxy should wait to accumulate Multicast DNS responses before sending its unicast reply is described below in Section 5.6.

The existing Multicast DNS caching mechanism is used to minimize unnecessary Multicast DNS queries on the wire. The Discovery Proxy is acting as a client of the underlying Multicast DNS subsystem, and benefits from the same caching and efficiency measures as any other client using that subsystem.

Note that the contents of the delegated zone, generated as it is by performing ".local" Multicast DNS queries, mirrors the records available on the local link via Multicast DNS very closely, but not precisely. There is not a full bidirectional equivalence between the two. Certain records that are available via Multicast DNS may not have equivalents in the delegated zone, possibly because they are invalid or not relevant in the delegated zone, or because they are being suppressed because they are unusable outside the local link (see Section 5.5.2). Conversely, certain records that appear in the delegated zone may not have corresponding records available on the local link via Multicast DNS. In particular there are certain administrative SRV records (see Section 6) that logically fall within the delegated zone, but semantically represent metadata *about* the zone rather than records *within* the zone, and consequently these administrative records in the delegated zone do not have any corresponding counterparts in the Multicast DNS namespace of the local link.

## 5.2. Domain Enumeration

A DNS-SD client performs Domain Enumeration [RFC6763] via certain PTR queries, using both unicast and multicast. If it receives a Domain Name configuration via DHCP option 15 [RFC2132], then it issues unicast queries using this domain. It issues unicast queries using names derived from its IPv4 subnet address(es) and IPv6 prefix(es). These are described below in Section 5.2.1. It also issues multicast Domain Enumeration queries in the "local" domain [RFC6762]. These are described below in Section 5.2.2. The results of all the Domain Enumeration queries are combined for Service Discovery purposes.

### 5.2.1. Domain Enumeration via Unicast Queries

The administrator creates Domain Enumeration PTR records [RFC6763] to inform clients of available service discovery domains. Two varieties of such Domain Enumeration PTR records exist; those with names derived from the domain name communicated to the clients via DHCP, and those with names derived from IPv4 subnet address(es) and IPv6 prefix(es) in use by the clients. Below is an example showing the name-based variety:

b._dns-sd._udp.example.com.	PTR	Building 1.example.com.
	PTR	Building 2.example.com.
	PTR	Building 3.example.com.
	PTR	Building 4.example.com.
db._dns-sd._udp.example.com.	PTR	Building 1.example.com.
lb._dns-sd._udp.example.com.	PTR	Building 1.example.com.

The meaning of these records is defined in the DNS Service Discovery specification [RFC6763] but for convenience is repeated here. The "b" ("browse") records tell the client device the list of browsing domains to display for the user to select from. The "db" ("default browse") record tells the client device which domain in that list should be selected by default. The "db" domain MUST be one of the domains in the "b" list; if not then no domain is selected by default. The "lb" ("legacy browse") record tells the client device which domain to automatically browse on behalf of applications that don't implement UI for multi-domain browsing (which is most of them, at the time of writing). The "lb" domain is often the same as the "db" domain, or sometimes the "db" domain plus one or more others that should be included in the list of automatic browsing domains for legacy clients.

Note that in the example above, for clarity, space characters in names are shown as actual spaces. If this data is manually entered



into a textual zone file for authoritative server software such as BIND, care must be taken because the space character is used as a field separator, and other characters like dot ('.'), semicolon (';'), dollar ('\$'), backslash ('\'), etc., also have special meaning. These characters have to be escaped when entered into a textual zone file, following the rules in Section 5.1 of the DNS specification [RFC1035]. For example, a literal space in a name is represented in the textual zone file using '\032', so "Building 1.example.com." is entered as "Building\0321.example.com."

DNS responses are limited to a maximum size of 65535 bytes. This limits the maximum number of domains that can be returned for a Domain Enumeration query, as follows:

A DNS response header is 12 bytes. That's typically followed by a single qname (up to 256 bytes) plus qtype (2 bytes) and qclass (2 bytes), leaving 65275 for the Answer Section.

An Answer Section Resource Record consists of:

- o Owner name, encoded as a two-byte compression pointer
- o Two-byte rrtype (type PTR)
- o Two-byte rrclass (class IN)
- o Four-byte ttl
- o Two-byte rdlength
- o rdata (domain name, up to 256 bytes)

This means that each Resource Record in the Answer Section can take up to 268 bytes total, which means that the Answer Section can contain, in the worst case, no more than 243 domains.

In a more typical scenario, where the domain names are not all maximum-sized names, and there is some similarity between names so that reasonable name compression is possible, each Answer Section Resource Record may average 140 bytes, which means that the Answer Section can contain up to 466 domains.

It is anticipated that this should be sufficient for even a large corporate network or university campus.

### 5.2.2. Domain Enumeration via Multicast Queries

In the case where Discovery Proxy functionality is widely deployed within an enterprise (either by having a Discovery Proxy on each link, or by having a Discovery Proxy with a remote 'virtual' presence on each link using VLANs or Multicast DNS Discovery Relays [Relay]) this offers an additional way to provide Domain Enumeration data for clients.

A Discovery Proxy can be configured to generate Multicast DNS responses for the following Multicast DNS Domain Enumeration queries issued by clients:

b._dns-sd._udp.local.	PTR	?
db._dns-sd._udp.local.	PTR	?
lb._dns-sd._udp.local.	PTR	?

This provides the ability for Discovery Proxies to indicate recommended browsing domains to DNS-SD clients on a per-link granularity. In some enterprises it may be preferable to provide this per-link configuration data in the form of Discovery Proxy configuration, rather than populating the Unicast DNS servers with the same data (in the "ip6.arpa" or "in-addr.arpa" domains).

Regardless of how the network operator chooses to provide this configuration data, clients will perform Domain Enumeration via both unicast and multicast queries, and then combine the results of these queries.

### 5.3. Delegated Subdomain for LDH Host Names

DNS-SD service instance names and domains are allowed to contain arbitrary Net-Unicode text [RFC5198], encoded as precomposed UTF-8 [RFC3629].

Users typically interact with service discovery software by viewing a list of discovered service instance names on a display, and selecting one of them by pointing, touching, or clicking. Similarly, in software that provides a multi-domain DNS-SD user interface, users view a list of offered domains on the display and select one of them by pointing, touching, or clicking. To use a service, users don't have to remember domain or instance names, or type them; users just have to be able to recognize what they see on the display and touch or click on the thing they want.

In contrast, host names are often remembered and typed. Also, host names have historically been used in command-line interfaces where spaces can be inconvenient. For this reason, host names have traditionally been restricted to letters, digits and hyphens (LDH), with no spaces or other punctuation.

While we do want to allow rich text for DNS-SD service instance names and domains, it is advisable, for maximum compatibility with existing usage, to restrict host names to the traditional letter-digit-hyphen rules. This means that while a service name "My Printer.\_ipp.\_tcp.Building 1.example.com" is acceptable and desirable (it is displayed in a graphical user interface as an instance called "My Printer" in the domain "Building 1" at "example.com"), a host name "My-Printer.Building 1.example.com" is less desirable (because of the space in "Building 1").

To accomodate this difference in allowable characters, a Discovery Proxy SHOULD support having two separate subdomains delegated to it for each link it serves, one whose name is allowed to contain arbitrary Net-Unicode text [RFC5198], and a second more constrained subdomain whose name is restricted to contain only letters, digits, and hyphens, to be used for host name records (names of 'A' and 'AAAA' address records). The restricted names may be any valid name consisting of only letters, digits, and hyphens, including Punycode-encoded names [RFC3492].

For example, a Discovery Proxy could have the two subdomains "Building 1.example.com" and "bldg1.example.com" delegated to it. The Discovery Proxy would then translate these two Multicast DNS records:

```
My Printer._ipp._tcp.local. SRV 0 0 631 prnt.local.
prnt.local.                A    203.0.113.2
```

into Unicast DNS records as follows:

```
My Printer._ipp._tcp.Building 1.example.com.
                                SRV 0 0 631 prnt.bldg1.example.com.
prnt.bldg1.example.com.       A    203.0.113.2
```

Note that the SRV record name is translated using the rich-text domain name ("Building 1.example.com") and the address record name is translated using the LDH domain ("bldg1.example.com").

A Discovery Proxy MAY support only a single rich text Net-Unicode domain, and use that domain for all records, including 'A' and 'AAAA' address records, but implementers choosing this option should be aware that this choice may produce host names that are awkward to use in command-line environments. Whether this is an issue depends on whether users in the target environment are expected to be using command-line interfaces.

A Discovery Proxy MUST NOT be restricted to support only a letter-digit-hyphen subdomain, because that results in an unnecessarily poor user experience.

As described above in Section 5.2.1, for clarity, space characters in names are shown as actual spaces. If this data were to be manually entered into a textual zone file (which it isn't) then spaces would need to be represented using '\032', so "My Printer.\_ipp.\_tcp.Building 1.example.com." would become "My\032Printer.\_ipp.\_tcp.Building\0321.example.com." Note that the '\032' representation does not appear in the network packets sent over the air. In the wire format of DNS messages, spaces are sent as spaces, not as '\032', and likewise, in a graphical user interface at the client device, spaces are shown as spaces, not as '\032'.

#### 5.4. Delegated Subdomain for Reverse Mapping

A Discovery Proxy can facilitate easier management of reverse mapping domains, particularly for IPv6 addresses where manual management may be more onerous than it is for IPv4 addresses.

To achieve this, in the parent domain, NS records are used to delegate ownership of the appropriate reverse mapping domain to the Discovery Proxy. In other words, the Discovery Proxy becomes the authoritative name server for the reverse mapping domain. For fault tolerance reasons there may be more than one Discovery Proxy serving a given link.

If a given link is using the IPv4 subnet 203.0.113/24, then the domain "113.0.203.in-addr.arpa" is delegated to the Discovery Proxy for that link.

For example, if a given link is using the IPv6 prefix 2001:0DB8:1234:5678/64, then the domain "8.7.6.5.4.3.2.1.8.b.d.0.1.0.0.2.ip6.arpa" is delegated to the Discovery Proxy for that link.

When a reverse mapping query arrives at the Discovery Proxy, it issues the identical query on its local link as a Multicast DNS query. The mechanism to force an apparently unicast name to be resolved using link-local Multicast DNS varies depending on the API set being used. For example, in the "dns\_sd.h" APIs (available on macOS, iOS, Bonjour for Windows, Linux and Android), using `kDNSServiceFlagsForceMulticast` indicates that the `DNSServiceQueryRecord()` call should perform the query using Multicast DNS. Other APIs sets have different ways of forcing multicast queries. When the host owning that IPv4 or IPv6 address responds with a name of the form "something.local", the Discovery Proxy rewrites that to use its configured LDH host name domain instead of "local", and returns the response to the caller.

For example, a Discovery Proxy with the two subdomains "113.0.203.in-addr.arpa" and "bldg1.example.com" delegated to it would translate this Multicast DNS record:

2.113.0.203.in-addr.arpa. PTR prnt.local.

into this Unicast DNS response:

2.113.0.203.in-addr.arpa. PTR prnt.bldg1.example.com.

Subsequent queries for the prnt.bldg1.example.com address record, falling as it does within the bldg1.example.com domain, which is delegated to the Discovery Proxy, will arrive at the Discovery Proxy, where they are answered by issuing Multicast DNS queries and using the received Multicast DNS answers to synthesize Unicast DNS responses, as described above.

Note that this design assumes that all addresses on a given IPv4 subnet or IPv6 prefix are mapped to hostnames using the Discovery Proxy mechanism. It would be possible to implement a Discovery Proxy that can be configured so that some address-to-name mappings are performed using Multicast DNS on the local link, while other address-to-name mappings within the same IPv4 subnet or IPv6 prefix are configured manually.

### 5.5. Data Translation

Generating the appropriate Multicast DNS queries involves, at the very least, translating from the configured DNS domain (e.g., "Building 1.example.com") on the Unicast DNS side to "local" on the Multicast DNS side.

Generating the appropriate Unicast DNS responses involves translating back from "local" to the appropriate configured DNS Unicast domain.

Other beneficial translation and filtering operations are described below.

#### 5.5.1. DNS TTL limiting

For efficiency, Multicast DNS typically uses moderately high DNS TTL values. For example, the typical TTL on DNS-SD PTR records is 75 minutes. What makes these moderately high TTLs acceptable is the cache coherency mechanisms built in to the Multicast DNS protocol which protect against stale data persisting for too long. When a service shuts down gracefully, it sends goodbye packets to remove its PTR records immediately from neighboring caches. If a service shuts down abruptly without sending goodbye packets, the Passive Observation Of Failures (POOF) mechanism described in Section 10.5 of the Multicast DNS specification [RFC6762] comes into play to purge the cache of stale data.

A traditional Unicast DNS client on a distant remote link does not get to participate in these Multicast DNS cache coherency mechanisms on the local link. For traditional Unicast DNS queries (those received without using Long-Lived Query [LLQ] or DNS Push Notification subscriptions [Push]) the DNS TTLs reported in the resulting Unicast DNS response MUST be capped to be no more than ten seconds.

Similarly, for negative responses, the negative caching TTL indicated in the SOA record [RFC2308] should also be ten seconds (Section 6.1).

This value of ten seconds is chosen based on user-experience considerations.

For negative caching, suppose a user is attempting to access a remote device (e.g., a printer), and they are unsuccessful because that device is powered off. Suppose they then place a telephone call and ask for the device to be powered on. We want the device to become available to the user within a reasonable time period. It is reasonable to expect it to take on the order of ten seconds for a simple device with a simple embedded operating system to power on.

Once the device is powered on and has announced its presence on the network via Multicast DNS, we would like it to take no more than a further ten seconds for stale negative cache entries to expire from Unicast DNS caches, making the device available to the user desiring to access it.

Similar reasoning applies to capping positive TTLs at ten seconds. In the event of a device moving location, getting a new DHCP address, or other renumbering events, we would like the updated information to be available to remote clients in a relatively timely fashion.

However, network administrators should be aware that many recursive (caching) DNS servers by default are configured to impose a minimum TTL of 30 seconds. If stale data appears to be persisting in the network to the extent that it adversely impacts user experience, network administrators are advised to check the configuration of their recursive DNS servers.

For received Unicast DNS queries that use LLQ [LLQ] or DNS Push Notifications [Push], the Multicast DNS record's TTL SHOULD be returned unmodified, because the Push Notification channel exists to inform the remote client as records come and go. For further details about Long-Lived Queries, and its newer replacement, DNS Push Notifications, see Section 5.6.

#### 5.5.2. Suppressing Unusable Records

A Discovery Proxy SHOULD offer a configurable option, enabled by default, to suppress Unicast DNS answers for records that are not useful outside the local link. When the option to suppress unusable records is enabled:

- o DNS A and AAAA records for IPv4 link-local addresses [RFC3927] and IPv6 link-local addresses [RFC4862] SHOULD be suppressed.
- o Similarly, for sites that have multiple private address realms [RFC1918], in cases where the Discovery Proxy can determine that the querying client is in a different address realm, private addresses SHOULD NOT be communicated to that client.
- o IPv6 Unique Local Addresses [RFC4193] SHOULD be suppressed in cases where the Discovery Proxy can determine that the querying client is in a different IPv6 address realm.
- o By the same logic, DNS SRV records that reference target host names that have no addresses usable by the requester should be suppressed, and likewise, DNS PTR records that point to unusable SRV records should be similarly be suppressed.



### 5.5.3. NSEC and NSEC3 queries

Multicast DNS devices do not routinely announce their records on the network. Generally they remain silent until queried. This means that the complete set of Multicast DNS records in use on a link can only be discovered by active querying, not by passive listening. Because of this, a Discovery Proxy can only know what names exist on a link by issuing queries for them, and since it would be impractical to issue queries for every possible name just to find out which names exist and which do not, a Discovery Proxy cannot programmatically generate the traditional NSEC [RFC4034] and NSEC3 [RFC5155] records which assert the nonexistence of a large range of names.

When queried for an NSEC or NSEC3 record type, the Discovery Proxy issues a qtype "ANY" query using Multicast DNS on the local link, and then generates an NSEC or NSEC3 response with a Type Bit Map signifying which record types do and do not exist for just the specific name queried, and no other names.

Multicast DNS NSEC records received on the local link MUST NOT be forwarded unmodified to a unicast querier, because there are slight differences in the NSEC record data. In particular, Multicast DNS NSEC records do not have the NSEC bit set in the Type Bit Map, whereas conventional Unicast DNS NSEC records do have the NSEC bit set.

### 5.5.4. No Text Encoding Translation

A Discovery Proxy does no translation between text encodings. Specifically, a Discovery Proxy does no translation between Punycode encoding [RFC3492] and UTF-8 encoding [RFC3629], either in the owner name of DNS records, or anywhere in the RDATA of DNS records (such as the RDATA of PTR records, SRV records, NS records, or other record types like TXT, where it is ambiguous whether the RDATA may contain DNS names). All bytes are treated as-is, with no attempt at text encoding translation. A client implementing DNS-based Service Discovery [RFC6763] will use UTF-8 encoding for its service discovery queries, which the Discovery Proxy passes through without any text encoding translation to the Multicast DNS subsystem. Responses from the Multicast DNS subsystem are similarly returned, without any text encoding translation, back to the requesting client.

#### 5.5.5. Application-Specific Data Translation

There may be cases where Application-Specific Data Translation is appropriate.

For example, AirPrint printers tend to advertise fairly verbose information about their capabilities in their DNS-SD TXT record. TXT record sizes in the range 500-1000 bytes are not uncommon. This information is a legacy from LPR printing, because LPR does not have in-band capability negotiation, so all of this information is conveyed using the DNS-SD TXT record instead. IPP printing does have in-band capability negotiation, but for convenience printers tend to include the same capability information in their IPP DNS-SD TXT records as well. For local mDNS use this extra TXT record information is inefficient, but not fatal. However, when a Discovery Proxy aggregates data from multiple printers on a link, and sends it via unicast (via UDP or TCP) this amount of unnecessary TXT record information can result in large responses. A DNS reply over TCP carrying information about 70 printers with an average of 700 bytes per printer adds up to about 50 kilobytes of data. Therefore, a Discovery Proxy that is aware of the specifics of an application-layer protocol such as AirPrint (which uses IPP) can elide unnecessary key/value pairs from the DNS-SD TXT record for better network efficiency.

Also, the DNS-SD TXT record for many printers contains an "adminurl" key something like "adminurl=http://printername.local/status.html". For this URL to be useful outside the local link, the embedded ".local" hostname needs to be translated to an appropriate name with larger scope. It is easy to translate ".local" names when they appear in well-defined places, either as a record's name, or in the rdata of record types like PTR and SRV. In the printing case, some application-specific knowledge about the semantics of the "adminurl" key is needed for the Discovery Proxy to know that it contains a name that needs to be translated. This is somewhat analogous to the need for NAT gateways to contain ALGs (Application-Specific Gateways) to facilitate the correct translation of protocols that embed addresses in unexpected places.

To avoid the need for application-specific knowledge about the semantics of particular TXT record keys, protocol designers are advised to avoid placing link-local names or link-local IP addresses in TXT record keys, if translation of those names or addresses would be required for off-link operation. In the printing case, the operational failure of failing to translate the "adminurl" key correctly is that, when accessed from a different link, printing will still work, but clicking the "Admin" UI button will fail to open the printer's administration page. Rather than duplicating the host name

from the service's SRV record in its "adminurl" key, thereby having the same host name appear in two places, a better design might have been to omit the host name from the "adminurl" key, and instead have the client implicitly substitute the target host name from the service's SRV record in place of a missing host name in the "adminurl" key. That way the desired host name only appears once, and it is in a well-defined place where software like the Discovery Proxy is expecting to find it.

Note that this kind of Application-Specific Data Translation is expected to be very rare. It is the exception, rather than the rule. This is an example of a common theme in computing. It is frequently the case that it is wise to start with a clean, layered design, with clear boundaries. Then, in certain special cases, those layer boundaries may be violated, where the performance and efficiency benefits outweigh the inelegance of the layer violation.

These layer violations are optional. They are done primarily for efficiency reasons, and generally should not be required for correct operation. A Discovery Proxy MAY operate solely at the mDNS layer, without any knowledge of semantics at the DNS-SD layer or above.

## 5.6. Answer Aggregation

In a simple analysis, simply gathering multicast answers and forwarding them in a unicast response seems adequate, but it raises the question of how long the Discovery Proxy should wait to be sure that it has received all the Multicast DNS answers it needs to form a complete Unicast DNS response. If it waits too little time, then it risks its Unicast DNS response being incomplete. If it waits too long, then it creates a poor user experience at the client end. In fact, there may be no time which is both short enough to produce a good user experience and at the same time long enough to reliably produce complete results.

Similarly, the Discovery Proxy -- the authoritative name server for the subdomain in question -- needs to decide what DNS TTL to report for these records. If the TTL is too long then the recursive (caching) name servers issuing queries on behalf of their clients risk caching stale data for too long. If the TTL is too short then the amount of network traffic will be more than necessary. In fact, there may be no TTL which is both short enough to avoid undesirable stale data and at the same time long enough to be efficient on the network.

Both these dilemmas are solved by use of DNS Long-Lived Queries (DNS LLQ) [LLQ] or its newer replacement, DNS Push Notifications [Push].

Clients supporting unicast DNS Service Discovery SHOULD implement DNS Push Notifications [Push] for improved user experience.

Clients and Discovery Proxies MAY support both DNS LLQ and DNS Push, and when talking to a Discovery Proxy that supports both, the client may use either protocol, as it chooses, though it is expected that only DNS Push will continue to be supported in the long run.

When a Discovery Proxy receives a query using DNS LLQ or DNS Push Notifications, it responds immediately using the Multicast DNS records it already has in its cache (if any). This provides a good client user experience by providing a near-instantaneous response. Simultaneously, the Discovery Proxy issues a Multicast DNS query on the local link to discover if there are any additional Multicast DNS records it did not already know about. Should additional Multicast DNS responses be received, these are then delivered to the client using additional DNS LLQ or DNS Push Notification update messages. The timeliness of such update messages is limited only by the timeliness of the device responding to the Multicast DNS query. If the Multicast DNS device responds quickly, then the update message is delivered quickly. If the Multicast DNS device responds slowly, then

the update message is delivered slowly. The benefit of using update messages is that the Discovery Proxy can respond promptly because it doesn't have to delay its unicast response to allow for the expected worst-case delay for receiving all the Multicast DNS responses. Even if a proxy were to try to provide reliability by assuming an excessively pessimistic worst-case time (thereby giving a very poor user experience) there would still be the risk of a slow Multicast DNS device taking even longer than that (e.g., a device that is not even powered on until ten seconds after the initial query is received) resulting in incomplete responses. Using update message solves this dilemma: even very late responses are not lost; they are delivered in subsequent update messages.

There are two factors that determine specifically how responses are generated:

The first factor is whether the query from the client used LLQ or DNS Push Notifications (used for long-lived service browsing PTR queries) or not (used for one-shot operations like SRV or address record queries). Note that queries using LLQ or DNS Push Notifications are received directly from the client. Queries not using LLQ or DNS Push Notifications are generally received via the client's configured recursive (caching) name server.

The second factor is whether the Discovery Proxy already has at least one record in its cache that positively answers the question.

- o Not using LLQ or Push Notifications; no answer in cache:  
Issue an mDNS query, exactly as a local client would issue an mDNS query on the local link for the desired record name, type and class, including retransmissions, as appropriate, according to the established mDNS retransmission schedule [RFC6762]. As soon as any Multicast DNS response packet is received that contains one or more positive answers to that question (with or without the Cache Flush bit [RFC6762] set), or a negative answer (signified via a Multicast DNS NSEC record [RFC6762]), the Discovery Proxy generates a Unicast DNS response packet containing the corresponding (filtered and translated) answers and sends it to the remote client. If after six seconds no Multicast DNS answers have been received, cancel the mDNS query and return a negative response to the remote client. Six seconds is enough time to transmit three mDNS queries, and allow some time for responses to arrive.  
DNS TTLs in responses MUST be capped to at most ten seconds.  
(Reasoning: Queries not using LLQ or Push Notifications are generally queries that expect an answer from only one device, so the first response is also the only response.)

- o Not using LLQ or Push Notifications; at least one answer in cache:  
Send response right away to minimise delay.  
DNS TTLs in responses MUST be capped to at most ten seconds.  
No local mDNS queries are performed.  
(Reasoning: Queries not using LLQ or Push Notifications are generally queries that expect an answer from only one device. Given RRSset TTL harmonisation, if the proxy has one Multicast DNS answer in its cache, it can reasonably assume that it has all of them.)
- o Using LLQ or Push Notifications; no answer in cache:  
As in the case above with no answer in the cache, perform mDNS querying for six seconds, and send a response to the remote client as soon as any relevant mDNS response is received.  
If after six seconds no relevant mDNS response has been received, return negative response to the remote client (for LLQ; not applicable for Push Notifications).  
(Reasoning: We don't need to rush to send an empty answer.)  
Whether or not a relevant mDNS response is received within six seconds, the query remains active for as long as the client maintains the LLQ or Push Notification state, and if mDNS answers are received later, LLQ or Push Notification messages are sent.  
DNS TTLs in responses are returned unmodified.
- o Using LLQ or Push Notifications; at least one answer in cache:  
As in the case above with at least one answer in cache, send response right away to minimise delay.  
The query remains active for as long as the client maintains the LLQ or Push Notification state, and results in transmission of mDNS queries, with appropriate Known Answer lists, to determine if further answers are available. If additional mDNS answers are received later, LLQ or Push Notification messages are sent.  
(Reasoning: We want UI that is displayed very rapidly, yet continues to remain accurate even as the network environment changes.)  
DNS TTLs in responses are returned unmodified.

The "negative responses" referred to above are "no error no answer" negative responses, not NXDOMAIN. This is because the Discovery Proxy cannot know all the Multicast DNS domain names that may exist on a link at any given time, so any name with no answers may have child names that do exist, making it an "empty nonterminal" name.

Note that certain aspects of the behavior described here do not have to be implemented overtly by the Discovery Proxy; they occur naturally as a result of using existing Multicast DNS APIs.

For example, in the first case above (no LLQ or Push Notifications, and no answers in the cache) if a new Multicast DNS query is requested (either by a local client, or by the Discovery Proxy on behalf of a remote client), and there is not already an identical Multicast DNS query active, and there are no matching answers already in the Multicast DNS cache on the Discovery Proxy device, then this will cause a series of Multicast DNS query packets to be issued with exponential backoff. The exponential backoff sequence in some implementations starts at one second and then doubles for each retransmission (0, 1, 3, 7 seconds, etc.) and in others starts at one second and then triples for each retransmission (0, 1, 4, 13 seconds, etc.). In either case, if no response has been received after six seconds, that is long enough that the underlying Multicast DNS implementation will have sent three query packets without receiving any response. At that point the Discovery Proxy cancels its Multicast DNS query (so no further Multicast DNS query packets will be sent for this query) and returns a negative response to the remote client via unicast.

The six-second delay is chosen to be long enough to give enough time for devices to respond, yet short enough not to be too onerous for a human user waiting for a response. For example, using the "dig" DNS debugging tool, the current default settings result in it waiting a total of 15 seconds for a reply (three transmissions of the query packet, with a wait of 5 seconds after each packet) which is ample time for it to have received a negative reply from a Discovery Proxy after six seconds.

The statement that for a one-shot query (i.e., no LLQ or Push Notifications requested), if at least one answer is already available in the cache then a Discovery Proxy should not issue additional mDNS query packets, also occurs naturally as a result of using existing Multicast DNS APIs. If a new Multicast DNS query is requested (either locally, or by the Discovery Proxy on behalf of a remote client), for which there are relevant answers already in the Multicast DNS cache on the Discovery Proxy device, and after the answers are delivered the Multicast DNS query is then cancelled immediately, then no Multicast DNS query packets will be generated for this query.

## 6. Administrative DNS Records

### 6.1. DNS SOA (Start of Authority) Record

The MNAME field SHOULD contain the host name of the Discovery Proxy device (i.e., the same domain name as the rdata of the NS record delegating the relevant zone(s) to this Discovery Proxy device).

The RNAME field SHOULD contain the mailbox of the person responsible for administering this Discovery Proxy device.

The SERIAL field MUST be zero.

Zone transfers are undefined for Discovery Proxy zones, and consequently the REFRESH, RETRY and EXPIRE fields have no useful meaning for Discovery Proxy zones. These fields SHOULD contain reasonable default values. The RECOMMENDED values are: REFRESH 7200, RETRY 3600, EXPIRE 86400.

The MINIMUM field (used to control the lifetime of negative cache entries) SHOULD contain the value 10. The value of ten seconds is chosen based on user-experience considerations (see Section 5.5.1).

In the event that there are multiple Discovery Proxy devices on a link for fault tolerance reasons, this will result in clients receiving inconsistent SOA records (different MNAME, and possibly RNAME) depending on which Discovery Proxy answers their SOA query. However, since clients generally have no reason to use the MNAME or RNAME data, this is unlikely to cause any problems.



## 6.2. DNS NS Records

In the event that there are multiple Discovery Proxy devices on a link for fault tolerance reasons, the parent zone MUST be configured with NS records giving the names of all the Discovery Proxy devices on the link.

Each Discovery Proxy device MUST be configured to answer NS queries for the zone apex name by giving its own NS record, and the NS records of its fellow Discovery Proxy devices on the same link, so that it can return the correct answers for NS queries.

The target host name in the RDATA of an NS record MUST NOT reference a name that falls within any zone delegated to a Discovery Proxy. Apart from the zone apex name, all other host names that fall within a zone delegated to a Discovery Proxy correspond to local Multicast DNS host names, which logically belong to the respective Multicast DNS hosts defending those names, not the Discovery Proxy. Generally speaking, the Discovery Proxy does not own or control the delegated zone; it is merely a conduit to the corresponding ".local" namespace, which is controlled by the Multicast DNS hosts on that link. If an NS record were to reference a manually-determined host name that falls within a delegated zone, that manually-determined host name may inadvertently conflict with a corresponding ".local" host name that is owned and controlled by some device on that link.

## 6.3. DNS Delegation Records

Since the Multicast DNS specification [RFC6762] states that there can be no delegation (subdomains) within a ".local" namespace, this implies that any name within a zone delegated to a Discovery Proxy (except for the zone apex name itself) cannot have any answers for any DNS queries for RRTYPEs SOA, NS, or DS. Consequently:

- o for any query for the zone apex name of a zone delegated to a Discovery Proxy, the Discovery Proxy MUST generate the appropriate immediate answers as described above, and
- o for any query for RRTYPEs SOA, NS, or DS, for any name within a zone delegated to a Discovery Proxy, other than the zone apex name, instead of translating the query to its corresponding Multicast DNS ".local" equivalent, a Discovery Proxy MUST generate an immediate negative answer.

#### 6.4. DNS SRV Records

There are certain special DNS records that logically fall within the delegated unicast DNS subdomain, but rather than mapping to their corresponding ".local" namesakes, they actually contain metadata pertaining to the operation of the delegated unicast DNS subdomain itself. They do not exist in the corresponding ".local" namespace of the local link. For these queries a Discovery Proxy MUST generate immediate answers, whether positive or negative, to avoid delays while clients wait for their query to be answered. For example, if a Discovery Proxy does not implement Long-Lived Queries [LLQ] then it MUST return an immediate negative answer to tell the client this without delay, instead of passing the query through to the local network as a query for "\_dns-llq.\_udp.local.", and then waiting unsuccessfully for answers that will not be forthcoming.

If a Discovery Proxy implements Long-Lived Queries [LLQ] then it MUST positively respond to "\_dns-llq.\_udp.<zone> SRV" queries, "\_dns-llq.\_tcp.<zone> SRV" queries, and "\_dns-llq-tls.\_tcp.<zone> SRV" queries as appropriate, else it MUST return an immediate negative answer for those queries.

If a Discovery Proxy implements DNS Push Notifications [Push] then it MUST positively respond to "\_dns-push-tls.\_tcp.<zone>" queries, else it MUST return an immediate negative answer for those queries.

A Discovery Proxy MUST return an immediate negative answer for "\_dns-update.\_udp.<zone> SRV" queries, "\_dns-update.\_tcp.<zone> SRV" queries, and "\_dns-update-tls.\_tcp.<zone> SRV" queries, since using DNS Update [RFC2136] to change zones generated dynamically from local Multicast DNS data is not possible.

## 7. DNSSEC Considerations

### 7.1. On-line signing only

The Discovery Proxy acts as the authoritative name server for designated subdomains, and if DNSSEC is to be used, the Discovery Proxy needs to possess a copy of the signing keys, in order to generate authoritative signed data from the local Multicast DNS responses it receives. Off-line signing is not applicable to Discovery Proxy.

### 7.2. NSEC and NSEC3 Records

In DNSSEC NSEC [RFC4034] and NSEC3 [RFC5155] records are used to assert the nonexistence of certain names, also described as "authenticated denial of existence".

Since a Discovery Proxy only knows what names exist on the local link by issuing queries for them, and since it would be impractical to issue queries for every possible name just to find out which names exist and which do not, a Discovery Proxy cannot programmatically synthesize the traditional NSEC and NSEC3 records which assert the nonexistence of a large range of names. Instead, when generating a negative response, a Discovery Proxy programmatically synthesizes a single NSEC record assert the nonexistence of just the specific name queried, and no others. Since the Discovery Proxy has the zone signing key, it can do this on demand. Since the NSEC record asserts the nonexistence of only a single name, zone walking is not a concern, so NSEC3 is not necessary.

Note that this applies only to traditional immediate DNS queries, which may return immediate negative answers when no immediate positive answer is available. When used with a DNS Push Notification subscription [Push] there are no negative answers, merely the absence of answers so far, which may change in the future if answers become available.

## 8. IPv6 Considerations

An IPv4-only host and an IPv6-only host behave as "ships that pass in the night". Even if they are on the same Ethernet [IEEE-3], neither is aware of the other's traffic. For this reason, each link may have *\*two\** unrelated ".local." zones, one for IPv4 and one for IPv6. Since for practical purposes, a group of IPv4-only hosts and a group of IPv6-only hosts on the same Ethernet act as if they were on two entirely separate Ethernet segments, it is unsurprising that their use of the ".local." zone should occur exactly as it would if they really were on two entirely separate Ethernet segments.

It will be desirable to have a mechanism to 'stitch' together these two unrelated ".local." zones so that they appear as one. Such mechanism will need to be able to differentiate between a dual-stack (v4/v6) host participating in both ".local." zones, and two different hosts, one IPv4-only and the other IPv6-only, which are both trying to use the same name(s). Such a mechanism will be specified in a future companion document.

At present, it is RECOMMENDED that a Discovery Proxy be configured with a single domain name for both the IPv4 and IPv6 ".local." zones on the local link, and when a unicast query is received, it should issue Multicast DNS queries using both IPv4 and IPv6 on the local link, and then combine the results.

## 9. Security Considerations

### 9.1. Authenticity

A service proves its presence on a link by its ability to answer link-local multicast queries on that link. If greater security is desired, then the Discovery Proxy mechanism should not be used, and something with stronger security should be used instead, such as authenticated secure DNS Update [RFC2136] [RFC3007].

### 9.2. Privacy

The Domain Name System is, generally speaking, a global public database. Records that exist in the Domain Name System name hierarchy can be queried by name from, in principle, anywhere in the world. If services on a mobile device (like a laptop computer) are made visible via the Discovery Proxy mechanism, then when those services become visible in a domain such as "My House.example.com" that might indicate to (potentially hostile) observers that the mobile device is in my house. When those services disappear from "My House.example.com" that change could be used by observers to infer when the mobile device (and possibly its owner) may have left the house. The privacy of this information may be protected using techniques like firewalls, split-view DNS, and Virtual Private Networks (VPNs), as are customarily used today to protect the privacy of corporate DNS information.

The privacy issue is particularly serious for the IPv4 and IPv6 reverse zones. If the public delegation of the reverse zones points to the Discovery Proxy, and the Discovery Proxy is reachable globally, then it could leak a significant amount of information. Attackers could discover hosts that otherwise might not be easy to identify, and learn their hostnames. Attackers could also discover the existence of links where hosts frequently come and go.

The Discovery Proxy could also provide sensitive records only to authenticated users. This is a general DNS problem, not specific to the Discovery Proxy. Work is underway in the IETF to tackle this problem [RFC7626].

### 9.3. Denial of Service

A remote attacker could use a rapid series of unique Unicast DNS queries to induce a Discovery Proxy to generate a rapid series of corresponding Multicast DNS queries on one or more of its local links. Multicast traffic is generally more expensive than unicast traffic -- especially on Wi-Fi links -- which makes this attack particularly serious. To limit the damage that can be caused by such

attacks, a Discovery Proxy (or the underlying Multicast DNS subsystem which it utilizes) MUST implement Multicast DNS query rate limiting appropriate to the link technology in question. For today's 802.11b/g/n/ac Wi-Fi links (for which approximately 200 multicast packets per second is sufficient to consume approximately 100% of the wireless spectrum) a limit of 20 Multicast DNS query packets per second is RECOMMENDED. On other link technologies like Gigabit Ethernet higher limits may be appropriate. A consequence of this rate limiting is that a rogue remote client could issue an excessive number of queries, resulting in denial of service to other legitimate remote clients attempting to use that Discovery Proxy. However, this is preferable to a rogue remote client being able to inflict even greater harm on the local network, which could impact the correct operation of all local clients on that network.

#### 10. IANA Considerations

This document has no IANA Considerations.

#### 11. Acknowledgments

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## Appendix A. Implementation Status

Some aspects of the mechanism specified in this document already exist in deployed software. Some aspects are new. This section outlines which aspects already exist and which are new.

### A.1. Already Implemented and Deployed

Domain enumeration by the client (the "b.\_dns-sd.\_udp" queries) is already implemented and deployed.

Unicast queries to the indicated discovery domain is already implemented and deployed.

These are implemented and deployed in Mac OS X 10.4 and later (including all versions of Apple iOS, on all iPhone and iPads), in Bonjour for Windows, and in Android 4.1 "Jelly Bean" (API Level 16) and later.

Domain enumeration and unicast querying have been used for several years at IETF meetings to make Terminal Room printers discoverable from outside the Terminal room. When an IETF attendee presses Cmd-P on a Mac, or selects AirPrint on an iPad or iPhone, and the Terminal room printers appear, that is because the client is sending unicast DNS queries to the IETF DNS servers. A walk-through giving the details of this particular specific example is given in Appendix A of the Roadmap document [Roadmap].

### A.2. Already Implemented

A minimal portable Discovery Proxy implementation has been produced by Markus Stenberg and Steven Barth, which runs on OS X and several Linux variants including OpenWrt [ohp]. It was demonstrated at the Berlin IETF in July 2013.

Tom Pusateri has an implementation that runs on any Unix/Linux. It has a RESTful interface for management and an experimental demo CLI and web interface.

Ted Lemon also has produced a portable implementation of Discovery Proxy, which is available in the mDNSResponder open source code.

The Long-Lived Query mechanism [LLQ] referred to in this specification exists and is deployed, but was not standardized by the IETF. The IETF has developed a superior Long-Lived Query mechanism called DNS Push Notifications [Push], which is built on DNS Stateful Operations [RFC8490]. The pragmatic short-term deployment approach is for vendors to produce Discovery Proxies that implement both the

deployed Long-Lived Query mechanism [LLQ] (for today's clients) and the new DNS Push Notifications mechanism [Push] as the preferred long-term direction.

#### A.3. Partially Implemented

The current APIs make multiple domains visible to client software, but most client UI today lumps all discovered services into a single flat list. This is largely a chicken-and-egg problem. Application writers were naturally reluctant to spend time writing domain-aware UI code when few customers today would benefit from it. If Discovery Proxy deployment becomes common, then application writers will have a reason to provide better UI. Existing applications will work with the Discovery Proxy, but will show all services in a single flat list. Applications with improved UI will group services by domain.

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Device Pairing Using Short Authentication Strings  
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Abstract

This document proposes a device pairing mechanism that establishes a relationship between two devices by agreeing on a secret and manually verifying the secret's authenticity using an SAS (short authentication string). Pairing has to be performed only once per pair of devices, as for a re-discovery at any later point in time, the exchanged secret can be used for mutual authentication.

The proposed pairing method is suited for each application area where human operated devices need to establish a relation that allows configurationless and privacy preserving re-discovery at any later point in time. Since privacy preserving applications are the main suitors, we especially care about privacy.

Status of This Memo

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## 1. Introduction

To engage in secure and privacy preserving communication, hosts need to differentiate between authorized peers, which must both know about the host's presence and be able to decrypt messages sent by the host, and other peers, which must not be able to decrypt the host's messages and ideally should not be aware of the host's presence. The necessary relationship between host and peer can be established by a centralized service, e.g. a certificate authority, by a web of trust, e.g. PGP, or -- without using global identities -- by device pairing.

This document proposes a device pairing mechanism that provides human operated devices with pairwise authenticated secrets, allowing mutual automatic re-discovery at any later point in time along with mutual private authentication. We especially care about privacy and user-friendliness.

The proposed pairing mechanism consists of three steps needed to establish a relationship between a host and a peer:

1. Discovery of the peer device. The host needs a means to discover network parameters necessary to establish a connection to the peer. During this discovery process, neither the host nor the peer must disclose its presence.
2. Agreeing on pairing data. The devices have to agree on pairing data, which can be used by both parties at any later point in time to generate identifiers for re-discovery and to prove the authenticity of the pairing. The pairing data can e.g. be a shared secret agreed upon via a Diffie-Hellman key exchange.
3. Authenticate pairing data. Since in most cases the messages necessary to agree upon pairing data are send over an insecure channel, means that guarantee the authenticity of these messages are necessary; otherwise the pairing data is in turn not suited as a means for a later proof of authenticity. For the proposed pairing mechanism we use manual interaction involving an SAS (short authentication string) to proof the authenticity of the pairing data.

### 1.1. Requirements

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].

## 2. Problem Statement and Requirements

The general pairing requirement is easy to state: establish a trust relation between two entities in a secure manner. But details matter, and in this section we explore the detailed requirements that guide our design.

### 2.1. Secure Pairing Over Internet Connections

Many pairing protocols have already been developed, in particular for the pairing of devices over specific wireless networks. For example, the current Bluetooth specifications include a pairing protocol that has evolved over several revisions towards better security and usability [BTLEPairing]. The Wi-Fi Alliance defined the Wi-Fi Protected Setup process to ease the setup of security-enabled Wi-Fi networks in home and small office environments [WPS]. Other wireless standards have defined or are defining similar protocols, tailored to specific technologies.

This specification defines a pairing protocol that is independent of the underlying technology. We simply make the hypothesis that the two parties engaged in the pairing can discover each other and then establish connections over IP in order to agree a shared secret.

[[TODO: Should we support certificates besides a shared secret?]]

### 2.2. Identity Assurance

The parties in the pairing must be able to identify each other. To put it simply, if Alice believes that she is establishing a pairing with Bob, she must somehow ensure that the pairing is actually established with Bob, and not with some interloper like Eve or Nessie. Providing this assurance requires designing both the protocol and the user interface (UI) with care.

Consider for example an attack in which Eve tricks Alice into engaging in a pairing process while pretending to be Bob. Alice must be able to discover that something is wrong, and refuse to establish the pairing. The parties engaged in the pairing must at least be able to verify their identities, respectively.

### 2.3. Adequate User Interface

Because the pairing protocol is executed without prior knowledge, it is typically vulnerable to "Man-in-the-middle" attacks. While Alice is trying to establish a pairing with Bob, Eve positions herself in the middle. Instead of getting a pairing between Alice and Bob, both Alice and Bob get paired with Eve. This requires specific features in



the protocol to detect man-in-the-middle attacks, and if possible resist them. The reference [NR11] analyzes the various proposals to solve this problem, and in this document, we present a layman description of these issues in Section 2.4. The various protocols proposed in the literature impose diverse constraints on the UI interface, which we will review here.

#### 2.3.1. Short PIN Proved Inadequate

The initial Bluetooth pairing protocol relied on a four digit PIN, displayed by one of the devices to be paired. The user would read that PIN and provide it to the other device. The PIN would then be used in a Password Authenticated Key Exchange. Wi-Fi Protected Setup [WPS] offered a similar option. There were various attacks against the actual protocol; some of the problems were caused by issues in the protocol, but most were tied to the usage of short PINs.

In the reference implementation, the PIN is picked at random by the paired device before the beginning of the exchange. But this requires that the paired device is capable of generating and displaying a four digit number. It turns out that many devices cannot do that. For example, an audio headset does not have any display capability. These limited devices ended up using static PINs, with fixed values like "0000" or "0001".

Even when the paired device could display a random PIN, that PIN will have to be copied by the user on the pairing device. It turns out that users do not like copying long series of numbers, and the usability thus dictated that the PINs be short -- four digits in practice. But there is only so much assurance as can be derived from a four digit key.

It is interesting to note that the latest revisions of the Bluetooth Pairing protocol [BTLEPairing] do not include the short PIN option anymore. The PIN entry methods have been superseded by the simple "just works" method for devices without displays, and by a procedure based on an SAS (short authentication string) when displays are available.

A further problem with these PIN based approaches is that -- in contrast to SASes -- the PIN is a secret instrumental in the security algorithm. To guarantee security, this PIN had to be transmitted via a secure out of band channel.

### 2.3.2. Push Buttons Just Work, But Are Insecure

Some devices are unable to input or display any code. The industry more or less converged on a "push button" solution. When the button is pushed, devices enter a "pairing" mode, during which they will accept a pairing request from whatever other device connects to them.

The Bluetooth Pairing protocol [BTLEPairing] denotes that as the "just works" method. It does indeed work, and if the pairing succeeds the devices will later be able to use the pairing keys to authenticate connections. However, the procedure does not provide any protection against MITM attacks during the pairing process. The only protection is that pushing the button will only allow pairing for a limited time, thus limiting the opportunities of attacks.

As we set up to define a pairing protocol with a broad set of applications, we cannot limit ourselves to an insecure "push button" method. But we probably need to allow for a mode of operation that works for input-limited and display limited devices.

### 2.3.3. Short Range Communication

There have been several attempts to define pairing protocols that use "secure channels." Most of them are based on short range communication systems, where the short range limits the feasibility for attackers to access the channels. Example of such limited systems include for example:

- o QR codes, displayed on the screen of one device, and read by the camera of the other device.
- o Near Field Communication (NFC) systems, which provides wireless communication with a very short range.
- o Sound systems, in which one systems emits a sequence of sounds or ultrasounds that is picked by the microphone of the other system.

A common problem with these solutions is that they require special capabilities that may not be present in every device. Another problem is that they are often one-way channels. Yet another problem is that the side channel is not necessarily secret. QR codes could be read by third parties. Powerful radios antennas might be able to interfere with NFC. Sensitive microphones might pick the sounds. We will discuss the specific case of QR codes in Section 2.7.

#### 2.3.4. Short Authentication Strings

The evolving pairing protocols seem to converge towards a "display and compare" method. This is in line with academic studies, such as [KFR09] or [USK11]. This points to a very simple scenario:

1. Alice initiates pairing
2. Bob selects Alice's device from a list.
3. Alice and Bob compare displayed strings that represent a fingerprint of the key.
4. If the strings match, Alice and Bob accept the pairing.

Most existing pairing protocols display the fingerprint of the key as a 6 or 7 digit numbers. Usability studies show that gives good results, with little risk that users mistakenly accept two different numbers as matching. However, the authors of [USK11] found that people had more success comparing computer generated sentences than comparing numbers. This is in line with the argument in [XKCD936] to use sequences of randomly chosen common words as passwords. On the other hand, standardizing strings is more complicated than standardizing numbers. We would need to specify a list of common words, and the process to go from a binary fingerprint to a set of words. We would need to be concerned with internationalization issues, such as using different lists of words in German and in English. This could require negotiation of word lists or languages inside the pairing protocols.

In contrast, numbers are easy to specify, as in "take a 20 bit number and display it as an integer using decimal notation."

#### 2.4. Resist Cryptographic Attacks

It is tempting to believe that once two peers are connected, they could create a secret with a few simple steps, such as for example exchange two nonces, hash the concatenation of these nonces with the shared secret that is about to be established, display a short authentication string composed of a short version of that hash on each device, and verify that the two values match. The sequence of messages would be something like:

Alice $g^{xA} \rightarrow$  $nA \rightarrow$  Computes $s = g^{xAxB}$ $h = \text{hash}(s nA nB)$ Displays short version of h	Bob  $\leftarrow g^{xB}$  $\leftarrow nB$ Computes $s = g^{xAxB}$ $h = \text{hash}(s nA nB)$ Displays short version of h
---	---

If the two short hashes match, Alice and Bob are supposedly assured that they have computed the same secret, but there is a problem. The exchange may not deter a smart attacker in the middle. Let's redraw the same message flow, this time involving Eve:

Alice $g^{xA} \rightarrow$   $nA \rightarrow$   Computes $s' = g^{xAxB'}$ $h' = \text{hash}(s nA nB')$ Displays short version of h'	Eve  $g^{xA'} \rightarrow$  $\leftarrow g^{xB'}$  $nA \rightarrow$  Picks $nB'$ smartly $\leftarrow nB'$	Bob   $\leftarrow g^{xB}$   $\leftarrow nB$  Computes $s'' = g^{xA'xB}$ $h'' = \text{hash}(s'' nA nB)$ Displays short version of h''
--	--	--

Let's now assume that to pick the nonce  $nB'$  smartly, Eve runs the following algorithm:

```

s' = g^{xAxB'}
s'' = g^{xA'xB}
repeat
  pick a new version of nB'
  h' = hash(s|nA|nB')
  h'' = hash(s''|nA|nB)
until the short version of h'
matches the short version of h''

```

Of course, running this algorithm will require in theory as many iterations as the possible values of the short hash. But hash algorithms are fast, and it is possible to try millions of values in

less than a second. If the short string is made up of fewer than 6 digits, Eve will find a matching nonce quickly, and Alice and Bob will hardly notice the delay. Even if the matching string is as long as 8 letters, Eve will probably find a value where the short versions of  $h'$  and  $h''$  are close enough, e.g. start and end with the same two or three letters. Alice and Bob may well be fooled.

The classic solution to such problems is to "commit" a possible attacker to a nonce before sending it. This commitment can be realized by a hash. In the modified exchange, Alice sends a secure hash of her nonce before sending the actual value:

Alice	Bob
$g^{xA} \rightarrow$	
	$\leftarrow g^{xB}$
Computes	Computes
$s = g^{xAxB}$	$s = g^{xAxB}$
$h_a = \text{hash}(s nA) \rightarrow$	
	$\leftarrow nB$
$nA \rightarrow$	verifies $h_a == \text{hash}(s nA)$
Computes	Computes
$h = \text{hash}(s nA nB)$	$h = \text{hash}(s nA nB)$
Displays short	Displays short
version of $h$	version of $h$

Alice will only disclose  $nA$  after having confirmation from Bob that  $\text{hash}(nA)$  has been received. At that point, Eve has a problem. She can still forge the values of the nonces but she needs to pick the nonce  $nA'$  before the actual value of  $nA$  has been disclosed. Eve would still have a random chance of fooling Alice and Bob, but it will be a very small chance: one in a million if the short authentication string is made of 6 digits, even fewer if that string is longer.

Nguyen et al. [NR11] survey these protocols and compare them with respect to the amount of necessary user interaction and the computation time needed on the devices. The authors state that such a protocol is optimal with respect to user interaction if it suffices for users to verify a single  $b$ -bit SAS while having a one-shot attack success probability of  $2^{-b}$ . Further,  $n$  consecutive attacks on the protocol must not have a better success probability than  $n$  one-shot attacks.

There is still a theoretical problem, if Eve has somehow managed to "crack" the hash function. We build some "defense in depth" by some simple measures. In the design presented above, the hash " $h_a$ "

depends on the shared secret "s", which acts as a "salt" and reduces the effectiveness of potential attacks based on pre-computed catalogs. For simplicity, the design used a simple concatenation mechanism, but we could instead use a keyed-hash message authentication code (HMAC, [RFC2104], [RFC6151]), using the shared secret as a key, since the HMAC construct has proven very robust over time. Then, we can constrain the size of the random numbers to be exactly the same as the output of the hash function. Hash attacks often require padding the input string with arbitrary data; restraining the size limits the likelihood of such padding.

## 2.5. Privacy Requirements

Pairing exposes a relation between several devices and their owners. Adversaries may attempt to collect this information, for example in an attempt to track devices, their owners, or their "social graph." It is often argued that pairing could be performed in a safe place, from which adversaries are assumed absent, but experience shows that such assumptions are often misguided. It is much safer to acknowledge the privacy issues and design the pairing process accordingly.

In order to start the pairing process, devices must first discover each other. We do not have the option of using the private discovery protocol [I-D.ietf-dnssd-privacy] since the privacy of that protocol depends on the pre-existing pairing. In the simplest design, one of the devices will announce a "friendly name" using DNS-SD. Adversaries could monitor the discovery protocol, and record that name. An alternative would be for one device to announce a random name, and communicate it to the other device via some private channel. There is an obvious tradeoff here: friendly names are easier to use but less private than random names. We anticipate that different users will choose different tradeoffs, for example using friendly names if they assume that the environment is "safe," and using random names in public places.

During the pairing process, the two devices establish a connection and validate a pairing secret. As discussed in Section 2.3, we have to assume that adversaries can mount MITM attacks. The pairing protocol can detect such attacks and resist them, but the attackers will have access to all messages exchanged before validation is performed. It is important to not exchange any privacy sensitive information before that validation. This includes, for example, the identities of the parties or their public keys.

## 2.6. Using TLS

The pairing algorithms typically combine the establishment of a shared secret through an [EC]DH exchange with the verification of that secret through displaying and comparison of a "short authentication string" (SAS). As explained in Section 2.4, the secure comparison requires a "commit before disclose" mechanism.

We have three possible designs: (1) create a pairing algorithm from scratch, specifying our own crypto exchanges; (2) use an [EC]DH version of TLS to negotiate a shared secret, export the key to the application as specified in [RFC5705], and implement the "commit before disclose" and SAS verification as part of the pairing application; or, (3) use TLS, integrate the "commit before disclose" and SAS verification as TLS extensions, and export the verified key to the application as specified in [RFC5705].

When faced with the same choice, the designers of ZRTP [RFC6189] chose to design a new protocol integrated in the general framework of real time communications. We don't want to follow that path, and would rather not create yet another protocol. We would need to reinvent a lot of the negotiation capabilities that are part of TLS, not to mention algorithm agility, post quantum, and all that sort of things. It is thus pretty clear that we should use TLS.

It turns out that there was already an attempt to define SAS extensions for TLS ([I-D.miers-tls-sas]). It is a very close match to our third design option, full integration of SAS in TLS, but the draft has expired, and there does not seem to be any support for the SAS options in the common TLS packages.

In our design, we will choose the middle ground option -- use TLS for [EC]DH, and implement the SAS verification as part of the pairing application. This minimizes dependencies on TLS packages to the availability of a key export API following [RFC5705]. We will need to specify the hash algorithm used for the SAS computation and validation, which carries some of the issues associated with "designing our own crypto". One solution would be to use the same hash algorithm negotiated by the TLS connection, but common TLS packages do not not always make this algorithm identifier available through standard APIs. A fallback solution is to specify a state of the art keyed MAC algorithm.

## 2.7. QR codes

In Section 2.3.3, we reviewed a number of short range communication systems that can be used to facilitate pairing. Out of these, QR codes stand aside because most devices that can display a short

string can also display the image of a QR code, and because many pairing scenarios involve cell phones equipped with cameras capable of reading a QR code.

QR codes could be particularly useful when starting discovery. QR codes can encode an alphanumeric string, which could for example encode the selected name of the pairing service. This would enable automatic discovery, and would be easier to use than reading the random name of the day and matching it against the results of DNS-SD.

In addition to the instance name, a QR code could also be leveraged for authentication. It could encode an SAS or even a longer authentication string. Transmitting the output of a cryptographic hash function or HMAC via the OOB channel would make an offline combinatorial search attack infeasible and thus allow to not send the commitment discussed in Section 2.4 saving a message. Further, if a single device created both QR codes for discovery and verification, respectively, and the other device scans these, the users could just wait while both QRs are scanned subsequently as no user interaction is necessary between these two scans (but it needs a QR scanner (app) that support this). This could make the process feel like a single user interaction.

But still, from a users point of view, scanning QR codes may not be more efficient than visual verification of a short string. The user has to take a picture of the QR code, which is arguably not simpler than just "look at the number on the screen and tell me whether it is the same as yours".

In the case of a man-in-the-middle attack, the evaluation of the QR code will fail. The "client" that took the picture will know that, but the "server" will not. The user will still need to click some "Cancel" button on the server, which means that the process will not be completely automated.

### 3. Design of the Pairing Mechanism

In this section we discuss the design of pairing protocols that use manually verified short authentication strings (SAS), considering both security and user experience.

We divide pairing in three parts: discovery, agreement, and authentication, detailed in the following subsections.



### 3.1. Discovery

The goal of the discovery phase is establishing a connection, which is later used to exchange the pairing data, between the two devices that are about to be paired in an IP network without any a priori knowledge and without publishing any private information. In accordance with TLS, we refer to the device initiating the cryptographic protocol as client, and to the other device as server; the server has to be discoverable by the client.

Granting privacy during the discovery phase without relying on a priori knowledge demands another user interaction (besides the SAS verification during the authentication phase). There are two possible ways of realizing this user interaction depending on whether QR codes are supported or not. If QR codes are supported, the discovery process can be independent of DNS-SD, because QR codes allow the transmission of a sufficient amount of data. Leveraging QR codes, the discovery proceeds as follows.

1. The server displays a QR code containing the clients A and AAAA resource records, and further the SRV resource record corresponding to the pairing service instance. A privacy preserving instance name is not necessary, because this instance is never published via an unsecured network.
2. The client scans the QR code retrieving the necessary information for establishing a connection to the server.

If QR codes are not supported, the discovery proceeds as follows.

1. The server displays its chosen instance name on its screen.
2. The client performs a discovery of all the "pairing" servers available on the local network. This may result in the discovery of several servers.
3. Among these available "pairing servers" the client user selects the name that matches the name displayed by the server.

### 3.2. Agreement

Once the server has been selected, the client connects to it without further user intervention. Client and server use this connection for exchanging data that allows them to agree on a shared secret by using a cryptographic protocol that yields an SAS. We discussed design aspects of such protocols in Section 2.4.

### 3.3. Authentication

In the authentication phase, the users are asked to validate the pairing by comparing the SASes -- typically represented by a number encoded over up to 7 decimal digits. If the SASes match, each user enters an agreement, for example by pressing a button labeled "OK", which results in the pairing being remembered. If they do not match, each user should cancel the pairing, for example by pressing a button labeled "CANCEL".

Depending on whether QR codes are supported, the SAS may also be represented as QR code. Despite the fact that using QR codes to represent the authentication string renders using longer authentication strings feasible, we suggest to always generate an SAS during the agreement phase, because this makes realizations of the agreement phase and the authentication phase independent. Devices may display the "real" name of the other device alongside the SAS.

### 3.4. Intra User Pairing

Users can pair their own devices in secure (home) networks without any interaction using a special DNS-SD pairing service. Verification methods where a single user holds both devices, e.g. synchronously pressing buttons on both devices a few times, are also suitable. Further, a secure OOB could be established by connecting two devices with an USB channel. Pairing via an USB connection is also used by some Bluetooth devices, e.g. when pairing a controller with a gaming console.

[[TODO: elaborate]]

### 3.5. Pairing Data Synchronization

To make it sufficient for users to pair only one of their devices to one of their friends devices while still being able to engage in later communication with all of this friend's devices using any of the own devices, we offer the possibility to synchronize pairing data among devices of the same user. Pairing data synchronization is performed via a special DNS-SD service (`_pdsync._tls`).

[[TODO: elaborate]]

### 3.6. Public Authentication Keys

[[TODO: Should we discuss public authentication keys whose fingerprints are verified during pairing?]]

## 4. Solution

[[TODO: elaborate on all subsections]]

In the proposed pairing protocol, one of the devices acts as a "server", and the other acts as a "client". The server will publish a "pairing service". The client will discover the service instance during the discovery phase, as explained in Section 4.1. The pairing service itself is specified in Section 4.2.

### 4.1. Discovery

The discovery uses DNS-SD [RFC6763] over mDNS [RFC6762]. The pairing service is identified in DNS SD as "\_pairing.\_tcp". When the pairing service starts, the server starts publishing the chosen instance name. The client will discover that name and the corresponding connection parameters.

If QR code scanning is available as OOB channel, the discovery data is directly transmitted via QR codes instead of DNS-SD over mDNS. [[TODO: We should precisely specify the data layout of this QR code. It could either be the wire format of the corresponding resource records (which would be easier for us), or a more efficient representation. If we chose the wire format, we could use a fix name as instance name.]]

### 4.2. Agreement and Authentication

The pairing protocol is built using TLS. The following description uses the presentation language defined in section 4 of [RFC5246]. The protocol uses five message types, defined in the following enum:

```
enum {  
    ClientHash(1),  
    ServerRandom(2),  
    ClientRandom(3),  
    ServerSuccess(4),  
    ClientSuccess(5)  
} PairingMessageType;
```

Devices implementing the service MUST support TLS 1.2 [RFC5246], and SHOULD support TLS 1.3 as soon as it becomes available. When using TLS, the client and server MUST negotiate a ciphersuite providing forward secrecy (PFS), and strong encryption (256 bits symmetric key). All implementations using TLS 1.2 SHOULD be able to negotiate the cipher suite TLS\_DH\_anon\_WITH\_AES\_256\_CBC\_SHA256.

Once the TLS connection has been established, each party extracts the pairing secret  $S_p$  from the connection context per [RFC5705], using the following parameters:

Disambiguating label string: "PAIRING SECRET"

Context value: empty.

Length value: 32 bytes (256 bits).

Once  $S_p$  has been obtained, the client picks a random number  $R_c$ , exactly 32 bytes long. The client then selects a hash algorithm, which SHOULD be the same algorithm as negotiated for building the PRF in the TLS connection. If there is no suitable API to retrieve that algorithm, the client MAY use SHA256 instead. The client then computes the hash value  $H_c$  as:

$$H_c = \text{HMAC\_hash}(S_p, R_c)$$

Where "HMAC\_hash" is the HMAC function constructed with the selected algorithm.

The client transmits the selected hash function and the computed value of  $H_c$  in the Client Hash message, over the TLS connection:

```
struct {  
    PairingMessageType messageType;  
    hashAlgorithm hash;  
    uint8 hashLength;  
    opaque H_c[hashLength];  
} ClientHashMessage;
```

messageType Set to "ClientHash".

hash The code of the selected hash algorithm, per definition of HashAlgorithm in section 7.4.1.1.1 of [RFC5246].

hashLength The length of the hash  $H_c$ , which MUST be consistent with the selected algorithm "hash".

$H_c$  The value of the client hash.

Upon reception of this message, the server stores its value. The server picks a random number  $R_s$ , exactly 32 bytes long, and transmits it to the client in the server random message, over the TLS connection:

```
struct {  
    PairingMessageType messageType;  
    opaque R_s[32];  
} ServerRandomMessage;
```

messageType Set to "ServerRandom".

R\_s The value of the random number chosen by the server.

Upon reception of this message, the client discloses its own random number by transmitting the client random message:

```
struct {  
    PairingMessageType messageType;  
    opaque R_c[32];  
} ClientRandomMessage;
```

messageType Set to "ClientRandom".

R\_c The value of the random number chosen by the client.

Upon reception of this message, the server verifies that the number R\_c hashes to the previously received value H\_c. If the number does not match, the server MUST abandon the pairing attempt and abort the TLS connection.

At this stage, both client and server can compute the short hash SAS as:

SAS = first 20 bits of HMAC\_hash(S\_p, R\_c + R\_s)

Where "HMAC\_hash" is the HMAC function constructed with the hash algorithm selected by the client in the ClientHashMessage.

Both client and server display the SAS as a decimal integer, and ask the user to compare the values. If the values do not match, the user cancels the pairing. Otherwise, the protocol continues with the exchange of names, both server and client announcing their own preferred name in a Success message

```
struct {  
    PairingMessageType messageType;  
    uint8 nameLength;  
    opaque name[nameLength];  
} ClientSuccessMessage;
```

messageType Set to "ClientSuccess" if transmitted by the client, "ServerSuccess" if by the server.

nameLength The length of the string encoding the selected name.

name The selected name of the client or the server, encoded as a string of UTF8 characters.

After receiving these messages, client and servers can orderly close the TLS connection, terminating the pairing exchange.

## 5. Security Considerations

We need to consider two types of attacks against a pairing system: attacks that occur during the establishment of the pairing relation, and attacks that occur after that establishment.

During the establishment of the pairing system, we are concerned with privacy attacks and with MITM attacks. Privacy attacks reveal the existence of a pairing between two devices, which can be used to track graphs of relations. MITM attacks result in compromised pairing keys. The discovery procedures specified in Section 4.1 and the authentication procedures specified in Section 4.2 are specifically designed to mitigate such attacks.

The establishment of the pairing results in the creation of a shared secret. After the establishment of the pairing relation, attackers who compromise one of the devices could access the shared secret. This will enable them to either track or spoof the devices. To mitigate such attacks, nodes **MUST** store the secret safely, and **MUST** be able to quickly revoke a compromised pairing. This is however not sufficient, as the compromise of the pairing key could remain undetected for a long time. For further safety, nodes **SHOULD** assign a time limit to the validity of pairings, discard the corresponding keys when the time has passed, and establish new pairings.

## 6. IANA Considerations

This draft does not require any IANA action.

## 7. Acknowledgments

TODO

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Device Pairing Using Short Authentication Strings  
draft-ietf-dnssd-pairing-05

Abstract

This document proposes a device pairing mechanism that establishes a relation between two devices by agreeing on a secret and manually verifying the secret's authenticity using an SAS (short authentication string). Pairing has to be performed only once per pair of devices, as for a re-discovery at any later point in time, the exchanged secret can be used for mutual authentication.

The proposed pairing method is suited for each application area where human operated devices need to establish a relation that allows configurationless and privacy preserving re-discovery at any later point in time. Since privacy preserving applications are the main suitors, we especially care about privacy.

Status of This Memo

This Internet-Draft is submitted in full conformance with the provisions of BCP 78 and BCP 79.

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## 1. Introduction

To engage in secure and privacy preserving communication, hosts need to differentiate between authorized peers, which must both know about the host's presence and be able to decrypt messages sent by the host, and other peers, which must not be able to decrypt the host's messages and ideally should not obtain information that could be used to identify the host. The necessary relation between host and peer can be established by a centralized service, e.g. a certificate authority, by a web of trust, e.g. PGP, or -- without using global identities -- by device pairing.

This document proposes a device pairing mechanism that provides human operated devices with pairwise authenticated secrets, allowing mutual automatic re-discovery at any later point in time along with mutual private authentication. We especially care about privacy and user-friendliness. This pairing system can provide the pairing secrets used in DNSSD Privacy Extensions [I-D.ietf-dnssd-privacy].

The proposed pairing mechanism consists of three steps needed to establish a relationship between a host and a peer:

1. Discovering the peer device. The host needs a means to discover network parameters necessary to establish a connection to the peer. During this discovery process, neither the host nor the peer must disclose its presence.
2. Agreeing on pairing data. The devices have to agree on pairing data, which can be used by both parties at any later point in time to generate identifiers for re-discovery and to prove the authenticity of the pairing. The pairing data can e.g. be a shared secret agreed upon via a Diffie-Hellman key exchange.
3. Authenticating pairing data. Since in most cases the messages necessary to agree upon pairing data are sent over an insecure channel, means that guarantee the authenticity of these messages are necessary; otherwise the pairing data is in turn not suited as a means for a later proof of authenticity. For the proposed pairing mechanism we use manual authentication involving an SAS (short authentication string) to prove the authenticity of the pairing data.

The design of this protocol is based on the analysis of pairing protocols issues presented in [I-D.ietf-dnssd-pairing-info] and in [K17].

Many pairing scenarios involve cell phones equipped with cameras capable of reading a QR code. In these scenarios, scanning QR codes might be more user friendly than selecting names or reading short authentication strings from on screen menus. An optional use of QR codes in pairing protocols is presented in Section 3.

DNSSD privacy requirements are analyzed in [I-D.ietf-dnssd-privreq] and scaling considerations are reviewed in [I-D.ietf-dnssd-privacyscaling]. Further work on these two drafts may lead to reviewing the mechanism proposed here.

### 1.1. Requirements

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].

## 1.2. Document Organization

NOTE TO RFC EDITOR: remove or rewrite this section before publication.

The original version of this document was organized in two parts. The first part presented the pairing need, the list of requirements that shall be met. This first part was informational in nature. The second part composed the actual specification of the protocol.

In his early review, Steve Kent observed that the style of the first part seems inappropriate for a standards track document, and suggested that the two parts should be split into two documents, the first part becoming an informational document, and the second focusing on standard track specification of the protocol, making reference to the informational document as appropriate.

The DNS-SD working group approved this split during its meeting in Prague in July 2017. This version of the document implements the split, only retaining the specification part.

## 2. Protocol Specification

In the proposed pairing protocol, we will consider the device that initiates the pairing as the "client" and the device that responds as the "server". The server will publish a "pairing service". The client will discover the service instance during the discovery phase, as explained in Section 2.1. The pairing service itself is specified in Section 2.3.

We divide pairing in three parts: discovery, agreement, and authentication, detailed in the following subsections.

### 2.1. Discovery

The goal of the discovery phase is establishing a connection, which is later used to exchange the pairing data between the two devices that are about to be paired in an IP network without any prior knowledge and without publishing any private information.

When the pairing service starts, the server will advertise the pairing service according to DNS-SD [RFC6763] over mDNS [RFC6762]. In conformance with DNS-SD, the service is described by an SRV record and by an empty TXT record. These records will be organized as follows:

1. The pairing service is identified in DNS-SD as "\_pairing.\_tcp".

2. The instance name will be a text chosen by the server. It MAY be a random string if the server does not want to advertise its identity in the local environment, or the user friendly name of the server in other cases.
3. The priority and weight fields of the SRV record SHOULD be set according to [RFC6763].
4. The host name MUST be set to the host name advertised by the server in mDNS. The server MAY use a randomized host name as explained in [I-D.ietf-dnssd-privacy], provided that this name is properly published in mDNS.
5. The port number MUST be set to the number at which the server is listening for the pairing service. This port number SHOULD be randomly picked by the server.

The discovery proceeds as follows:

1. The server advertises an instance of the above described pairing service and displays its instance name on the server's screen.
2. The client discovers all the instances of the pairing service available on the local network. This may result in the discovery of several instance names.
3. Among these available instance names, the client's user selects the name that matches the name displayed by the server.
4. Per DNS-SD, the client then retrieves the SRV record of the selected instance, retrieves the corresponding server's A (or AAAA) record, and establishes the connection.

## 2.2. Agreement on a Shared Secret

Once the server has been selected at the end of the discovery phase, the client connects to it without further user intervention. Client and server use this connection for exchanging data that allows them to agree on a shared secret by using TLS and a key exporter.

Devices implementing the service MUST support TLS 1.2 [RFC5246], and MAY negotiate TLS 1.3 when it becomes available. When using TLS, the client and server MUST negotiate a ciphersuite providing forward secrecy (PFS), and strong encryption (256 bits symmetric key). All implementations using TLS 1.2 MUST be able to negotiate the cipher suite TLS\_DH\_anon\_WITH\_AES\_256\_CBC\_SHA256.

Once the TLS connection has been established, each party extracts the pairing secret  $S_p$  from the connection context per [RFC5705], using the following parameters:

Disambiguating label string: "PAIRING SECRET"

Context value: empty.

Length value: 32 bytes (256 bits).

The secret " $S_p$ " will be authenticated in the authentication part of the protocol.

### 2.3. Authentication

The pairing protocol implemented on top of TLS allows the users to authenticate the shared secret established in the "Agreement" phase, and to minimize the risk of interference by a third party like a "man-in-the-middle". The pairing protocol is built using TLS. The following description uses the presentation language defined in section 4 of [RFC5246]. The protocol uses five message types, defined in the following enum:

```
enum {  
    ClientHash(1),  
    ServerRandom(2),  
    ClientRandom(3),  
    ServerSuccess(4),  
    ClientSuccess(5)  
} PairingMessageType;
```

Once  $S_p$  has been obtained, the client picks a random number  $R_c$ , exactly 32 bytes long. The client then selects a hash algorithm, which MUST be the same algorithm as negotiated for building the PRF in the TLS connection. The client then computes the hash value  $H_c$  as:

$$H_c = \text{HMAC\_hash}(S_p, R_c)$$

Where "HMAC\_hash" is the HMAC function constructed with the selected algorithm.

The client transmits the selected hash function and the computed value of  $H_c$  in the Client Hash message, over the TLS connection:

```
struct {  
    PairingMessageType messageType;  
    hashAlgorithm hash;  
    uint8 hashLength;  
    opaque H_c[hashLength];  
} ClientHashMessage;
```

messageType: Set to "ClientHash".

hash: The code of the selected hash algorithm, per definition of HashAlgorithm in section 7.4.1.1.1 of [RFC5246].

hashLength: The length of the hash H\_c, which MUST be consistent with the selected algorithm "hash".

H\_c: The value of the client hash.

Upon reception of this message, the server stores its value. The server picks a random number R\_s, exactly 32 bytes long, and transmits it to the client in the server random message, over the TLS connection:

```
struct {  
    PairingMessageType messageType;  
    opaque R_s[32];  
} ServerRandomMessage;
```

messageType Set to "ServerRandom".

R\_s: The value of the random number chosen by the server.

Upon reception of this message, the client discloses its own random number by transmitting the client random message:

```
struct {  
    PairingMessageType messageType;  
    opaque R_c[32];  
} ClientRandomMessage;
```

messageType Set to "ClientRandom".

R\_c: The value of the random number chosen by the client.

Upon reception of this message, the server verifies that the number R\_c hashes to the previously received value H\_c. If the number does not match, the server MUST abandon the pairing attempt and abort the TLS connection.

At this stage, both client and server can compute the short hash SAS as:

SAS = first 20 bits of HMAC\_hash(S\_p, R\_c || R\_s)

Where "HMAC\_hash" is the HMAC function constructed with the hash algorithm selected by the client in the ClientHashMessage.

Both client and server display the SAS as a 7 digit decimal integer, including leading zeroes, and ask the user to compare the values. If the SASes match, each user enters an agreement, for example by pressing a button labeled "OK", which results in the pairing being remembered. If they do not match, each user should cancel the pairing, for example by pressing a button labeled "CANCEL".

If the values do match and both users agree, the protocol continues with the exchange of names, both server and client announcing their own preferred name in a Success message

```
struct {  
    PairingMessageType messageType;  
    uint8 nameLength;  
    opaque name[nameLength];  
} ClientSuccessMessage;
```

messageType: Set to "ClientSuccess" if transmitted by the client, "ServerSuccess" if by the server.

nameLength: The length of the string encoding the selected name.

name: The selected name of the client or the server, encoded as a string of UTF8 characters.

After receiving these messages, client and servers can orderly close the TLS connection, terminating the pairing exchange.

### 3. Optional Use of QR Codes

When QR codes are supported, the discovery process can be independent of DNS-SD, because QR codes allow the transmission of a sufficient amount of data. The agreement process can also be streamlined by the scanning of a second QR code.

#### 3.1. Discovery Using QR Codes

If QR code scanning is available as out-of-band channel, the discovery data is directly transmitted via QR codes instead of DNS-SD over mDNS. Leveraging QR codes, the discovery proceeds as follows:



1. The server displays a QR code containing the connection data otherwise found in the SRV and A or AAAA records: IPv4 or IPv6 address, port number, and optionally host name.
2. The client scans the QR code retrieving the necessary information for establishing a connection to the server.

[[TODO: We should precisely specify the data layout of this QR code. It could either be the wire format of the corresponding resource records (which would be easier for us), or a more efficient representation. If we chose the wire format, we could use a fixed name as instance name.]]

### 3.2. Agreement with QR Codes

When QR codes are available, the agreement on a shared secret proceeds exactly as in the general case.

### 3.3. Authentication with QR Codes

The availability of QR codes does not change the required network messages or the computation of the SAS, which will be performed exactly as specified in Section 2.3, but when QR codes are supported, the SAS may also be represented as QR code.

In the general case, both client and server display the SAS as a decimal integer, and ask the user to compare the values. If the server supports QR codes, the server displays a QR code encoding the decimal string representation of the SAS. If the client is capable of scanning QR codes, it may scan the value and compare it to the locally computed value.

Once user agreement has been obtained, the protocol continues as in the general case presented in Section 2.3.

## 4. Security Considerations

We need to consider two types of attacks against a pairing system: attacks that occur during the establishment of the pairing relation, and attacks that occur after that establishment.

During the establishment of the pairing system, we are concerned with privacy attacks and with MitM attacks. Privacy attacks reveal the existence of a pairing between two devices, which can be used to track graphs of relations. MitM attacks result in compromised pairing keys. The discovery procedures specified in Section 2.1 and the authentication procedures specified in Section 2.3 are specifically designed to mitigate such attacks, assuming that the

client and user are in close, physical proximity and thus a human user can visually acquire and verify the pairing information.

The establishment of the pairing results in the creation of a shared secret. After the establishment of the pairing relation, attackers who compromise one of the devices could access the shared secret. This will enable them to either track or spoof the devices. To mitigate such attacks, nodes **MUST** store the secret safely, and **MUST** be able to quickly revoke a compromised pairing.

## 5. IANA Considerations

This draft does not require any IANA action.

## 6. Acknowledgments

We would like to thank Steve Kent and Ted Lemon for their detailed reviews of this document, and for their advice on how to improve it.

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Privacy Extensions for DNS-SD  
draft-ietf-dnssd-privacy-00.txt

Abstract

DNS-SD (DNS Service Discovery) normally discloses information about both the devices offering services and the devices requesting services. This information includes host names, network parameters, and possibly a further description of the corresponding service instance. Especially when mobile devices engage in DNS Service Discovery over Multicast DNS at a public hotspot, a serious privacy problem arises.

We propose to solve this problem by a two-stage approach. In the first stage, hosts discover Private Discovery Service Instances via DNS-SD using special formats to protect their privacy. These service instances correspond to Private Discovery Servers running on peers. In the second stage, hosts directly query these Private Discovery Servers via DNS-SD over TLS. A pairwise shared secret necessary to establish these connections is only known to hosts authorized by a pairing system.

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## 1. Introduction

DNS-SD [RFC6763] enables distribution and discovery in local networks without configuration. It is very convenient for users, but it requires the public exposure of the offering and requesting identities along with information about the offered and requested services. Some of the information published by the announcements can be very revealing. These privacy issues and potential solutions are discussed in [KW14a] and [KW14b].

There are cases when nodes connected to a network want to provide or consume services without exposing their identity to the other parties connected to the same network. Consider for example a traveler wanting to upload pictures from a phone to a laptop when connected to the Wi-Fi network of an Internet cafe, or two travelers who want to share files between their laptops when waiting for their plane in an airport lounge.

We expect that these exchanges will start with a discovery procedure using DNS-SD [RFC6763]. One of the devices will publish the availability of a service, such as a picture library or a file store in our examples. The user of the other device will discover this service, and then connect to it.

When analyzing these scenarios in Section 2, we find that the DNS-SD messages leak identifying information such as the instance name, the host name or service properties. We review the design constraint of a solution in Section 3, and describe the proposed solution in Section 4.

### 1.1. Requirements

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].

## 2. Privacy Implications of DNS-SD

DNS-Based Service Discovery (DNS-SD) is defined in [RFC6763]. It allows nodes to publish the availability of an instance of a service by inserting specific records in the DNS ([RFC1033], [RFC1034], [RFC1035]) or by publishing these records locally using multicast DNS

(mDNS) [RFC6762]. Available services are described using three types of records:

**PTR Record:** Associates a service type in the domain with an "instance" name of this service type.

**SRV Record:** Provides the node name, port number, priority and weight associated with the service instance, in conformance with [RFC2782].

**TXT Record:** Provides a set of attribute-value pairs describing specific properties of the service instance.

In the remaining subsections, we will review the privacy issues related to publishing instance names, node names, service attributes and other data, as well as review the implications of using the discovery service as a client.

## 2.1. Privacy Implication of Publishing Service Instance Names

In the first phase of discovery, the client obtains all the PTR records associated with a service type in a given naming domain. Each PTR record contains a Service Instance Name defined in Section 4 of [RFC6763]:

Service Instance Name = <Instance> . <Service> . <Domain>

The <Instance> portion of the Service Instance Name is meant to convey enough information for users of discovery clients to easily select the desired service instance. Nodes that use DNS-SD over mDNS [RFC6762] in a mobile environment will rely on the specificity of the instance name to identify the desired service instance. In our example of users wanting to upload pictures to a laptop in an Internet Cafe, the list of available service instances may look like:

Alice's Images	. _imageStore._tcp	. local
Alice's Mobile Phone	. _presence._tcp	. local
Alice's Notebook	. _presence._tcp	. local
Bob's Notebook	. _presence._tcp	. local
Carol's Notebook	. _presence._tcp	. local

Alice will see the list on her phone and understand intuitively that she should pick the first item. The discovery will "just work".

However, DNS-SD/mDNS will reveal to anybody that Alice is currently visiting the Internet Cafe. It further discloses the fact that she uses two devices, shares an image store, and uses a chat application supporting the \_presence protocol on both of her devices. She might

currently chat with Bob or Carol, as they are also using a `_presence` supporting chat application. This information is not just available to devices actively browsing for and offering services, but to anybody passively listing to the network traffic.

## 2.2. Privacy Implication of Publishing Node Names

The SRV records contain the DNS name of the node publishing the service. Typical implementations construct this DNS name by concatenating the "host name" of the node with the name of the local domain. The privacy implications of this practice are reviewed in [I-D.ietf-intarea-hostname-practice]. Depending on naming practices, the host name is either a strong identifier of the device, or at a minimum a partial identifier. It enables tracking of the device, and by extension of the device's owner.

## 2.3. Privacy Implication of Publishing Service Attributes

The TXT record's attribute and value pairs contain information on the characteristics of the corresponding service instance. This in turn reveals information about the devices that publish services. The amount of information varies widely with the particular service and its implementation:

- o Some attributes like the paper size available in a printer, are the same on many devices, and thus only provide limited information to a tracker.
- o Attributes that have freeform values, such as the name of a directory, may reveal much more information.

Combinations of attributes have more information power than specific attributes, and can potentially be used for "fingerprinting" a specific device.

Information contained in TXT records does not only breach privacy by making devices trackable, but might directly contain private information about the user. For instance the `_presence` service reveals the "chat status" to everyone in the same network. Users might not be aware of that.

Further, TXT records often contain version information about services allowing potential attackers to identify devices running exploit-prone versions of a certain service.



## 2.4. Device Fingerprinting

The combination of information published in DNS-SD has the potential to provide a "fingerprint" of a specific device. Such information includes:

- o The list of services published by the device, which can be retrieved because the SRV records will point to the same host name.
- o The specific attributes describing these services.
- o The port numbers used by the services.
- o The values of the priority and weight attributes in the SRV records.

This combination of services and attributes will often be sufficient to identify the version of the software running on a device. If a device publishes many services with rich sets of attributes, the combination may be sufficient to identify the specific device.

There is however an argument that devices providing services can be discovered by observing the local traffic, and that trying to hide the presence of the service is futile. The same argument can be extended to say that the pattern of services offered by a device allows for fingerprinting the device. This may or may not be true, since we can expect that services will be designed or updated to avoid leaking fingerprints. In any case, the design of the discovery service should avoid making a bad situation worse, and should as much as possible avoid providing new fingerprinting information.

## 2.5. Privacy Implication of Discovering Services

The consumers of services engage in discovery, and in doing so reveal some information such as the list of services they are interested in and the domains in which they are looking for the services. When the clients select specific instances of services, they reveal their preference for these instances. This can be benign if the service type is very common, but it could be more problematic for sensitive services, such as for example some private messaging services.

One way to protect clients would be to somehow encrypt the requested service types. Of course, just as we noted in Section 2.4, traffic analysis can often reveal the service.

### 3. Design of the Private DNS-SD Discovery Service

In this section, we present the design of a two-stage solution that enables private use of DNS-SD, without affecting existing users. The solution is largely based on the architecture proposed in [KW14b], which separates the general private discovery problem in three components. The first component is an offline pairing mechanism, which is performed only once per pair of users. It establishes a shared secret over an authenticated channel, allowing devices to authenticate using this secret without user interaction at any later point in time. We use the pairing system proposed in [I-D.kaiser-dnssd-pairing].

The further two components are online (in contrast to pairing they are performed anew each time joining a network) and compose the two service discovery stages, namely

- o Discovery of the Private Discovery Service -- the first stage -- in which hosts discover the Private Discovery Service (PDS), a special service offered by every host supporting our extension. After the discovery, hosts connect to the PSD offered by paired peers.
- o Actual Service Discovery -- the second stage -- is performed through the Private Discovery Service, which only accepts encrypted messages associated with an authenticated session; thus not compromising privacy.

In other words, the hosts first discover paired peers and then directly engage in privacy preserving service discovery.

The stages are independent with respect to means used for transmitting the necessary data. While in our extension the messages for the first stage are transmitted using IP multicast, the messages for the second stage are transmitted via unicast. One could also imagine using a Distributed Hash Table for the first stage, being completely independent of multicast.

#### 3.1. Device Pairing

Any private discovery solution needs to differentiate between authorized devices, which are allowed to get information about discoverable entities, and other devices, which should not be aware of the availability of private entities. The commonly used solution to this problem is establishing a "device pairing".

Device pairing has to be performed only once per pair of users. This is important for user-friendliness, as it is the only step that

demands user-interaction. After this single pairing, privacy preserving service discovery works fully automatically. In this document, we leverage [I-D.kaiser-dnssd-pairing] as pairing mechanism.

The pairing yields a mutually authenticated shared secret, and optionally mutually authenticated public keys or certificates added to a local web of trust. Public key technology has many advantages, but shared secrets are typically easier to handle on small devices.

### 3.2. Discovery of the Private Discovery Service

The first stage of service discovery is to check whether instances of compatible Private Discovery Services are available in the local scope. The goal of that stage is to identify devices that share a pairing with the querier, and are available locally. The service instances can be discovered using regular DNS-SD procedures, but the list of discovered services will have to be filtered so only paired devices are retained.

The discovery relies on the advertisement of "proofs" by the publishers of the service. Each proof is the hash of a nonce with the key shared between the publisher and one of the paired devices. In order to reduce the overall number of messages, we use a special encoding of the instance name. Suppose that the publisher manages N pairings with the associated keys K1, K2, ... Kn. The instance name will be set to an encoding of N "proofs" of the N keys, where each proof is computed as function of the key and a nonce:

instance name = <nonce><F1><F2>..

Fi = hash (nonce, Ki), where hash is a cryptographic hash function.

The querier can test the instance name by computing the same "proof" for each of its own keys. Suppose that the receiver manages P pairings, with the corresponding keys X1, X2, .. Xp. The receiver verification procedure will be:

```
for each received instance name:
  retrieve nonce from instance name
  for (j = 1 to P)
    retrieve the key Xj of pairing number j
    compute F = hash(nonce, Xj)
    for (i=1 to N)
      retrieve the proof Fi
      if F is equal to Fi
        mark the pairing number j as available
```

The procedure presented here requires on average  $O(M*N)$  iterations of the hash function. It also requires  $O(M*N^2)$  comparison operations, but these are less onerous than cryptographic operations. Further, when setting the nonce to a timestamp, the  $F_i$  have to be calculated only once per time interval.

The number of pairing proofs that can be encoded in a single record is limited by the maximum size of a DNS label, which is 63 bytes. Since these are characters and not pure binary values, nonce and proofs will have to be encoded using BASE64 ([RFC2045] section 6.8), resulting in at most 378 bits. The nonce should not be repeated, and the simplest way to achieve that is to set the nonce to a 32 bit timestamp value. The remaining 346 bits could encode up to 10 proofs of 32 bits each, which would be sufficient for many practical scenarios.

In practice, a 32 bit proof should be sufficient to distinguish between available devices. However, there is clearly a risk of collision. The Private Discovery Service as described here will find the available pairings, but it might also find a spurious number of "false positives". The chances of that happening are however quite small: less than 0.02% for a device managing 10 pairings and processing 10000 responses.

### 3.3. Private Discovery Service

The Private Discovery Service discovery allows discovering a list of available paired devices, and verifying that either party knows the corresponding shared secret. At that point, the querier can engage in a series of directed discoveries.

We have considered defining an ad-hoc protocol for the private discovery service, but found that just using TLS would be much simpler. The Directed Private Discovery service is just a regular DNS-SD service, accessed over TLS, using the encapsulation of DNS over TLS defined in [RFC7858]. The main difference with simple DNS over TLS is the need for authentication.

We assume that the pairing process has provided each pair of authorized client and server with a shared secret. We can use that shared secret to provide mutual authentication of clients and servers using "Pre Shared Key" authentication, as defined in [RFC4279] and incorporated in the latest version of TLS [I-D.ietf-tls-tls13].

One difficulty is the reliance on a key identifier in the protocol. For example, in TLS 1.3 the PSK extension is defined as:

```
opaque psk_identity<0..2^16-1>;

struct {
    select (Role) {
        case client:
            psk_identity identities<2..2^16-1>;

        case server:
            uint16 selected_identity;
    }
} PreSharedKeyExtension
```

According to the protocol, the PSK identity is passed in clear text at the beginning of the key exchange. This is logical, since server and clients need to identify the secret that will be used to protect the connection. But if we used a static identifier for the key, adversaries could use that identifier to track server and clients. The solution is to use a time-varying identifier, constructed exactly like the "hint" described in Section 3.2, by concatenating a nonce and the hash of the nonce with the shared secret.

### 3.3.1. A Note on Private DNS Services

Our solution uses a variant of the DNS over TLS protocol [RFC7858] defined by the DNS Private Exchange working group (DPRIVE). DPRIVE is also working on an UDP variant, DNS over DTLS [I-D.ietf-dprive-dnsodtls], which would also be a candidate.

DPRIVE and Private Discovery solve however two somewhat different problems. DPRIVE is concerned with the confidentiality of DNS transactions, addressing the problems outlined in [RFC7626]. However, DPRIVE does not address the confidentiality or privacy issues with publication of services, and is not a direct solution to DNS-SD privacy:

- o Discovery queries are scoped by the domain name within which services are published. As nodes move and visit arbitrary networks, there is no guarantee that the domain services for these networks will be accessible using DNS over TLS or DNS over DTLS.
- o Information placed in the DNS is considered public. Even if the server does support DNS over TLS, third parties will still be able to discover the content of PTR, SRV and TXT records.
- o Neither DNS over TLS nor DNS over DTLS applies to MDNS.

In contrast, we propose using mutual authentication of the client and server as part of the TLS solution, to ensure that only authorized parties learn the presence of a service.

### 3.4. Randomized Host Names

Instead of publishing their actual name in the SRV records, nodes could publish a randomized name. That is the solution argued for in [I-D.ietf-intarea-hostname-practice].

Randomized host names will prevent some of the tracking. Host names are typically not visible by the users, and randomizing host names will probably not cause much usability issues.

### 3.5. Timing of Obfuscation and Randomization

It is important that the obfuscation of instance names is performed at the right time, and that the obfuscated names change in synchrony with other identifiers, such as MAC Addresses, IP Addresses or host names. If the randomized host name changed but the instance name remained constant, an adversary would have no difficulty linking the old and new host names. Similarly, if IP or MAC addresses changed but host names remained constant, the adversary could link the new addresses to the old ones using the published name.

The problem is handled in [I-D.ietf-intarea-hostname-practice], which recommends to pick a new random host name at the time of connecting to a new network. New instance names for the Private Discovery Services should be composed at the same time.

## 4. Private Discovery Service Specification

The proposed solution uses the following components:

- o Host name randomization to prevent tracking.
- o Device pairing yielding pairwise shared secrets.
- o A Private Discovery Server (PDS) running on each host.
- o Discovery of the PDS instances using DNS-SD.

These components are detailed in the following subsections.

#### 4.1. Host Name Randomization

Nodes publishing services with DNS-SD and concerned about their privacy MUST use a randomized host name. The randomized name MUST be changed when network connectivity changes, to avoid the correlation issues described in Section 3.5. The randomized host name MUST be used in the SRV records describing the service instance, and the corresponding A or AAAA records MUST be made available through DNS or MDNS, within the same scope as the PTR, SRV and TXT records used by DNS-SD.

If the link-layer address of the network connection is properly obfuscated (e.g. using MAC Address Randomization), the Randomized Host Name MAY be computed using the algorithm described in section 3.7 of [RFC7844]. If this is not possible, the randomized host name SHOULD be constructed by simply picking a 48 bit random number meeting the Randomness Requirements for Security expressed in [RFC4075], and then use the hexadecimal representation of this number as the obfuscated host name.

#### 4.2. Device Pairing

Nodes that want to leverage the Private Directory Service for private service discovery among peers MUST share a secret with each of these peers. Each shared secret MUST be a 256 bit randomly chosen number. We RECOMMEND using the pairing mechanism proposed in [I-D.kaiser-dnssd-pairing] to establish these secrets.

[[TODO: Should we support mutually authenticated certificates? They can also be used to initiate TLS and have several advantages, i.e. allow setting an expiry date.]]

#### 4.3. Private Discovery Server

A Private Discovery Server (PDS) is a minimal DNS server running on each host. Its task is to offer resource records corresponding to private services only to authorized peers. These peers MUST share a secret with the host (see Section 4.2). To ensure privacy of the requests, the service is only available over TLS [RFC5246], and the shared secrets are used to mutually authenticate peers and servers.

The Private Name Server SHOULD support DNS push notifications [I-D.ietf-dnssd-push], e.g. to facilitate an up-to-date contact list in a chat application without polling.

#### 4.3.1. Establishing TLS Connections

The PDS MUST only answer queries via DNS over TLS [RFC7858] and MUST use a PSK authenticated TLS handshake [RFC4279]. The client and server should negotiate a forward secure cipher suite such as DHE-PSK or ECDHE-PSK when available. The shared secret exchanged during pairing MUST be used as PSK.

When using the PSK based authentication, the "psk\_identity" parameter identifying the pre-shared key MUST be composed as follows, using the conventions of TLS [RFC7858]:

```
struct {  
  
    uint32 gmt_unix_time;  
  
    opaque random_bytes[4];  
  
} nonce;  
  
long_proof = HASH(nonce | pairing_key )  
proof = first 12 bytes of long_proof  
psk_identity = BASE64(nonce) "." BASE64(proof)
```

In this formula, HASH SHOULD be the function SHA256 defined in [RFC4055]. Implementers MAY eventually replace SHA256 with a stronger algorithm, in which cases both clients and servers will have to agree on that algorithm during the pairing process. The first 32 bits of the nonce are set to the current time and date in standard UNIX 32-bit format (seconds since the midnight starting Jan 1, 1970, UTC, ignoring leap seconds) according to the client's internal clock. The next 32 bits of the nonce are set to a value generated by a secure random number generator.

In this formula, the identity is finally set to a character string, using BASE64 ([RFC2045] section 6.8). This transformation is meant to comply with the PSK identity encoding rules specified in section 5.1 of [RFC4279].

The server will check the received key identity, trying the key against the valid keys established through pairing. If one of the keys matches, the TLS connection is accepted, otherwise it is declined.



#### 4.4. Publishing Private Discovery Service Instances

Nodes that provide the Private Discovery Service SHOULD advertise their availability by publishing instances of the service through DNS-SD.

The DNS-SD service type for the Private Discovery Service is "\_pds.\_tls".

Each published instance describes one server and up to 10 pairings. In the case where a node manages more than 10 pairings, it should publish as many instances as necessary to advertise all available pairings.

Each instance name is composed as follows:

```
pick a 32 bit nonce, e.g. using the Unix GMT time.
set the binary identifier to the nonce.

for each of up to 10 pairings
    hint = first 32 bits of HASH(<nonce>|<pairing key>)
    concatenate the hint to the binary identifier

set instance-ID = BASE64(binary identifier)
```

In this formula, HASH SHOULD be the function SHA256 defined in [RFC4055], and BASE64 is defined in section 6.8 of [RFC2045]. The concatenation of a 32 bit nonce and up to 10 pairing hints result a bit string at most 352 bit long. The BASE64 conversion will produce a string that is up to 59 characters long, which fits within the 63 characters limit defined in [RFC6763].

#### 4.5. Discovering Private Discovery Service Instances

Nodes that wish to discover Private Discovery Service Instances will issue a DNS-SD discovery request for the service type. These request will return a series of PTR records, providing the names of the instances present in the scope.

The querier SHOULD examine each instance to see whether it hints at one of its available pairings, according to the following conceptual algorithm:

```
for each received instance name:
  convert the instance name to binary using BASE64
  if the conversion fails,
    discard the instance.
  if the binary instance length is a not multiple of 32 bits,
    discard the instance.

nonce = first 32 bits of binary.
for each 32 bit hint after the nonce
  for each available pairing
    retrieve the key Xj of pairing number j
    compute F = hash(nonce, Xj)
    if F is equal to the 32 bit hint
      mark the pairing number j as available
```

Once a pairing has been marked available, the querier SHOULD try connecting to the corresponding instance, using the selected key. The connection is likely to succeed, but it MAY fail for a variety of reasons. One of these reasons is the probabilistic nature of the hint, which entails a small chance of "falsepositive" match. This will occur if the hash of the nonce with two different keys produces the same result. In that case, the TLS connection will fail with an authentication error or a decryption error.

#### 4.6. Using the Private Discovery Service

Once instances of the Private Discovery Service have been discovered, peers can establish TLS connections and send DNS requests over these connections, as specified in DNS-SD.

### 5. Security Considerations

This document specifies a method to protect the privacy of service publishing nodes. This is especially useful when operating in a public space. Hiding the identity of the publishing nodes prevents some forms of "targeting" of high value nodes. However, adversaries can attempt various attacks to break the anonymity of the service, or to deny it. A list of these attacks and their mitigations are described in the following sections.

#### 5.1. Attacks Against the Pairing System

There are a variety of attacks against pairing systems, which may result in compromised pairing secrets. If an adversary manages to acquire a compromised key, the adversary will be able to perform private service discovery according to Section 4.5. This will allow tracking of the service. The adversary will also be able to discover which private services are available for the compromised pairing.

Attacks on pairing systems are detailed in [I-D.kaizer-dnssd-pairing].

#### 5.2. Denial of Discovery of the Private Discovery Service

The algorithm described in Section 4.5 scales as  $O(M*N)$ , where  $M$  is the number of pairings per node and  $N$  is the number of nodes in the local scope. Adversaries can attack this service by publishing "fake" instances, effectively increasing the number  $N$  in that scaling equation.

Similar attacks can be mounted against DNS-SD: creating fake instances will generally increase the noise in the system and make discovery less usable. Private Discovery Service discovery SHOULD use the same mitigations as DNS-SD.

The attack is amplified because the clients need to compute proofs for all the nonces presented in Private Discovery Service Instance names. One possible mitigation would be to require that such nonces correspond to rounded timestamps. If we assume that timestamps must not be too old, there will be a finite number of valid rounded timestamps at any time. Even if there are many instances present, they would all pick their nonces from this small number of rounded timestamps, and a smart client could make sure that proofs are only computed once per valid time stamp.

#### 5.3. Replay Attacks Against Discovery of the Private Discovery Service

Adversaries can record the service instance names published by Private Discovery Service instances, and replay them later in different contexts. Peers engaging in discovery can be misled into believing that a paired server is present. They will attempt to connect to the absent peer, and in doing so will disclose their presence in a monitored scope.

The binary instance identifiers defined in Section 4.4 start with 32 bits encoding the "UNIX" time. In order to protect against replay attacks, clients MAY verify that this time is reasonably recent.

[[TODO: Should we somehow encode the scope in the identifier? Having both scope and time would really mitigate that attack.]]

#### 5.4. Denial of Private Discovery Service

The Private Discovery Service is only available through a mutually authenticated TLS connection, which provides state-of-the-art protection mechanisms. However, adversaries can mount a denial of service attack against the service. In the absence of shared

secrets, the connections will fail, but the servers will expend some CPU cycles defending against them.

To mitigate such attacks, nodes SHOULD restrict the range of network addresses from which they accept connections, matching the expected scope of the service.

This mitigation will not prevent denial of service attacks performed by locally connected adversaries; but protecting against local denial of service attacks is generally very difficult. For example, local attackers can also attack mDNS and DNS-SD by generating a large number of multicast requests.

#### 5.5. Replay Attacks against the Private Discovery Service

Adversaries may record the PSK Key Identifiers used in successful connections to a private discovery service. They could attempt to replay them later against nodes advertising the private service at other times or at other locations. If the PSK Identifier is still valid, the server will accept the TLS connection, and in doing so will reveal being the same server observed at a previous time or location.

The PSK identifiers defined in Section 4.3.1 start with 32 bits encoding the "UNIX" time. In order to mitigate replay attacks, servers SHOULD verify that this time is reasonably recent, and fail the connection if it is too old, or if it occurs too far in the future.

The processing of timestamps is however affected by the accuracy of computer clocks. If the check is too strict, reasonable connections could fail. To further mitigate replay attacks, servers MAY record the list of valid PSK identifiers received in a recent past, and fail connections if one of these identifiers is replayed.

#### 6. IANA Considerations

This draft does not require any IANA action. (Or does it? What about the `_pds` tag?)

#### 7. Acknowledgments

This draft results from initial discussions with Dave Thaler, and encouragements from the DNS-SD working group members.

## 8. References

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Abstract

DNS-SD (DNS Service Discovery) normally discloses information about both the devices offering services and the devices requesting services. This information includes host names, network parameters, and possibly a further description of the corresponding service instance. Especially when mobile devices engage in DNS Service Discovery over Multicast DNS at a public hotspot, a serious privacy problem arises.

We propose to solve this problem by a two-stage approach. In the first stage, hosts discover Private Discovery Service Instances via DNS-SD using special formats to protect their privacy. These service instances correspond to Private Discovery Servers running on peers. In the second stage, hosts directly query these Private Discovery Servers via DNS-SD over TLS. A pairwise shared secret necessary to establish these connections is only known to hosts authorized by a pairing system.

Revisions of this draft are currently considered in the DNSSD working group.

Status of This Memo

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## 1. Introduction

DNS-SD [RFC6763] over mDNS [RFC6762] enables configurationless service discovery in local networks. It is very convenient for users, but it requires the public exposure of the offering and requesting identities along with information about the offered and requested services. Parts of the published information can seriously breach the user's privacy. These privacy issues and potential solutions are discussed in [KW14a] and [KW14b].

There are cases when nodes connected to a network want to provide or consume services without exposing their identity to the other parties connected to the same network. Consider for example a traveler wanting to upload pictures from a phone to a laptop when connected to the Wi-Fi network of an Internet cafe, or two travelers who want to share files between their laptops when waiting for their plane in an airport lounge.

We expect that these exchanges will start with a discovery procedure using DNS-SD [RFC6763] over mDNS [RFC6762]. One of the devices will publish the availability of a service, such as a picture library or a file store in our examples. The user of the other device will discover this service, and then connect to it.

When analyzing these scenarios in [I-D.ietf-dnssd-prireq], we find that the DNS-SD messages leak identifying information such as the instance name, the host name or service properties. We review the design constraint of a solution in Section 2, and describe the proposed solution in Section 3.

While we focus on a mDNS-based distribution of the DNS-SD resource records, our solution is agnostic about the distribution method and also works with other distribution methods, e.g. the classical hierarchical DNS.

The solution presented here relies on 1-1 pairings between clients and servers. Discussions during the IETF 101 in London showed that this requirement of a full mesh of pairings poses some scalability issues, as explained in [I-D.ietf-dnssd-privacyscaling]. The next revision of this draft may propose a different mechanism.

### 1.1. Requirements

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].

## 2. Design of the Private DNS-SD Discovery Service

In this section, we present the design of a two-stage solution that enables private use of DNS-SD, without affecting existing users. The solution is largely based on the architecture proposed in [KW14b] and [K17], which separates the general private discovery problem in three components. The first component is an offline pairing mechanism, which is performed only once per pair of users. It establishes a shared secret over an authenticated channel, allowing devices to authenticate using this secret without user interaction at any later point in time. We use the pairing system proposed in [I-D.ietf-dnssd-pairing].

The further two components are online (in contrast to pairing they are performed anew each time joining a network) and compose the two service discovery stages, namely

- o Discovery of the Private Discovery Service -- the first stage -- in which hosts discover the Private Discovery Service (PDS), a special service offered by every host supporting our extension. After the discovery, hosts connect to the PSD offered by paired peers.
- o Actual Service Discovery -- the second stage -- is performed through the Private Discovery Service, which only accepts encrypted messages associated with an authenticated session; thus not compromising privacy.

In other words, the hosts first discover paired peers and then directly engage in privacy preserving service discovery.

The stages are independent with respect to means used for transmitting the necessary data. While in our extension the messages for the first stage are transmitted using IP multicast, the messages for the second stage are transmitted via unicast. One could also imagine using a Distributed Hash Table for the first stage, being completely independent of multicast.

## 2.1. Device Pairing

Any private discovery solution needs to differentiate between authorized devices, which are allowed to get information about discoverable entities, and other devices, which should not be aware of the availability of private entities. The commonly used solution to this problem is establishing a "device pairing".

Device pairing has to be performed only once per pair of users. This is important for user-friendliness, as it is the only step that demands user-interaction. After this single pairing, privacy preserving service discovery works fully automatically. In this document, we utilize [I-D.ietf-dnssd-pairing] as the pairing mechanism.

The pairing yields a mutually authenticated shared secret, and optionally mutually authenticated public keys or certificates added to a local web of trust. Public key technology has many advantages, but shared secrets are typically easier to handle on small devices.

## 2.2. Discovery of the Private Discovery Service

The first stage of service discovery is to check whether instances of compatible Private Discovery Services are available in the local scope. The goal of that stage is to identify devices that share a pairing with the querier, and are available locally. The service instances can be browsed using regular DNS-SD procedures, and then filtered so that only instances offered by paired devices are retained.

### 2.2.1. Obfuscated Instance Names

The instance names for the Private Discovery Service are obfuscated, so that authorized peers can associate the instance with its publisher, but unauthorized peers can only observe what looks like a random name. To achieve this, the names are composed as the concatenation of a nonce and a proof, which is composed by hashing the nonce with a pairing key:

```
PrivateInstanceName = <nonce>|<proof>
proof = hash(<nonce>|<key>)
```

The publisher will publish as many instances as it has established pairings.

The discovering party that looks for instances of the service will receive lists of advertisements from nodes present on the network. For each advertisement, it will parse the instance name, and then,

for each available pairing key, compares the proof to the hash of the nonce concatenated with this pairing key. If there is no match, it discards the instance name. If there is a match, it has discovered a peer.

#### 2.2.2. Using a Predictable Nonce

Assume that there are  $N$  nodes on the local scope, and that each node has on average  $M$  pairings. Each node will publish on average  $M$  records, and the node engaging in discovery may have to process on average  $N*M$  instance names. The discovering node will have to compute on average  $M$  potential hashes for each nonce. The number of hash computations would scale as  $O(N*M*M)$ , which means that it could cause a significant drain of resource in large networks.

In order to minimize the amount of computing resource, we suggest that the nonce be derived from the current time, for example set to a representation of the current time rounded to some period. With this convention, receivers can predict the nonces that will appear in the published instances.

The publishers will have to create new records at the end of each rounding period. If the rounding period is set too short, they will have to repeat that very often, which is inefficient. On the other hand, if the rounding period is too long, the system may be exposed to replay attacks. We initially proposed a value of about 5 minutes, which would work well for the mDNS variant of DNS-SD. However, this may cause an excessive number of updates for the DNS server based version of DNS-SD. We propose to set a value of about 30 minutes, which seems to be a reasonable compromise.

Receivers can pre-calculate all the  $M$  relevant proofs once per time interval and then establish a mapping from the corresponding instance names to the pairing data in form of a hash table. These  $M$  relevant proofs are the proofs resulting from hashing a host's  $M$  pairing keys alongside the current nonce. Each time they receive an instance name, they can test in  $O(1)$  time if the received service information is relevant or not.

Unix defines a 32 bit time stamp as the number of seconds elapsed since January 1st, 1970 not counting leap seconds. The most significant 20 bits of this 32 bit number represent the number of 2048 seconds intervals since the epoch. 2048 seconds correspond to 34 minutes and 8 seconds, which is close enough to our design goal of 30 minutes. We will thus use this 20 bit number as nonce, which for simplicity will be padded zeroes to 24 bits and encoded in 3 octets.

For coping with time skew, receivers pre-calculate proofs for the respective next time interval and store hash tables for the last, the current, and the next time interval. When receiving a service instance name, receivers first check whether the nonce corresponds to the current, the last or the next time interval, and if so, check whether the instance name is in the corresponding hash table. For (approximately) meeting our design goal of 5 min validity, the last time interval may only be considered if the current one is less than half way over and the next time interval may only be considered if the current time interval is more than half way over.

Publishers will need to compute  $O(M)$  hashes at most once per time stamp interval. If records can be created "on the fly", publishers will only need to perform that computation upon receipt of the first query during a given interval, and cache the computed results for the remainder of the interval. There are however scenarios in which records have to be produced in advance, for example when records are published within a scope defined by a domain name and managed by a "classic" DNS server. In such scenarios, publishers will need to perform the computations and publication exactly once per time stamp interval.

#### 2.2.3. Using a Short Proof

Devices will have to publish as many instance names as they have peers. The instance names will have to be represented via a text string, which means that the binary concatenation of nonce and proof will have to be encoded using a binary-to-text conversion such as BASE64 ([RFC2045] section 6.8) or BASE32 ([RFC4648] section 6).

Using long proofs, such as the full output of SHA256 [RFC4055], would generate fairly long instance names: 48 characters using BASE64, or 56 using BASE32. These long names would inflate the network traffic required when discovering the privacy service. They would also limit the number of DNS-SD PTR records that could be packed in a single 1500 octet sized packet, to 23 or fewer with BASE64, or 20 or fewer with BASE32.

Shorter proofs lead to shorter messages, which is more efficient as long as we do not encounter too many collisions. A collision will happen if the proof computed by the publisher using one key matches a proof computed by a receiver using another key. If a receiver mistakenly believes that a proof fits one of its peers, it will attempt to connect to the service as explained in section Section 3.5 but in the absence of the proper pairwise shared key, the connection will fail. This will not create an actual error, but the probability of such events should be kept low.

The following table provides the probability that a discovery agent maintaining 100 pairings will observe a collision after receiving 100000 advertisement records. It also provides the number of characters required for the encoding of the corresponding instance name in BASE64 or BASE32, assuming 24 bit nonces.

Proof	Collisions	BASE64	BASE32
24	5.96046%	8	16
32	0.02328%	11	16
40	0.00009%	12	16
48	3.6E-09	12	16
56	1.4E-11	15	16

Table 1

The table shows that for a proof, 24 bits would be too short. 32 bits might be long enough, but the BASE64 encoding requires padding if the input is not an even multiple of 24 bits, and BASE32 requires padding if the input is not a multiple of 40 bits. Given that, the desirable proof lengths are thus 48 bits if using BASE64, or 56 bits if using BASE32. The resulting instance name will be either 12 characters long with BASE64, allowing 54 advertisements in an 1500 byte mDNS message, or 16 characters long with BASE32, allowing 47 advertisements per message.

In the specification section, we will assume BASE64, and 48 bit proofs composed of the first 6 bytes of a SHA256 hash.

#### 2.2.4. Direct Queries

The preceding sections assume that the discovery is performed using the classic DNS-SD process, in which a query for all available "instance names" of a service provides a list of PTR records. The discoverer will then select the instance names that correspond to its peers, and request the SRV and TXT records corresponding to the service instance, and then obtain the relevant A or AAAA records. This is generally required in DNS-SD because the instance names are not known in advance, but for the Private Discovery Service the instance names can be predicted, and a more efficient Direct Query method can be used.

At a given time, the node engaged in discovery can predict the nonce that its peer will use, since that nonce is composed by rounding the current time. The node can also compute the proofs that its peers might use, since it knows the nonce and the keys. The node can thus

build a list of instance names, and directly query the SRV records corresponding to these names. If peers are present, they will answer directly.

This "direct query" process will result in fewer network messages than the regular DNS-SD query process in some circumstances, depending on the number of peers per node and the number of nodes publishing the presence discovery service in the desired scope.

When using mDNS, it is possible to pack multiple queries in a single broadcast message. Using name compression and 12 characters per instance name, it is possible to pack 70 queries in a 1500 octet mDNS multicast message. It is also possible to request unicast replies to the queries, resulting in significant efficiency gains in wireless networks.

### 2.3. Private Discovery Service

The Private Discovery Service discovery allows discovering a list of available paired devices, and verifying that either party knows the corresponding shared secret. At that point, the querier can engage in a series of directed discoveries.

We have considered defining an ad-hoc protocol for the private discovery service, but found that just using TLS would be much simpler. The directed Private Discovery Service is just a regular DNS-SD service, accessed over TLS, using the encapsulation of DNS over TLS defined in [RFC7858]. The main difference with plain DNS over TLS is the need for an authentication based on pre-shared keys.

We assume that the pairing process has provided each pair of authorized client and server with a shared secret. We can use that shared secret to provide mutual authentication of clients and servers using "Pre-Shared Key" authentication, as defined in [RFC4279] and incorporated in the latest version of TLS [I-D.ietf-tls-tls13].

One difficulty is the reliance on a key identifier in the protocol. For example, in TLS 1.3 the PSK extension is defined as:



```
opaque psk_identity<0..2^16-1>;

struct {
    select (Role) {
        case client:
            psk_identity identities<2..2^16-1>;

        case server:
            uint16 selected_identity;
    }
} PreSharedKeyExtension
```

According to the protocol, the PSK identity is passed in clear text at the beginning of the key exchange. This is logical, since server and clients need to identify the secret that will be used to protect the connection. But if we used a static identifier for the key, adversaries could use that identifier to track server and clients. The solution is to use a time-varying identifier, constructed exactly like the "proof" described in Section 2.2, by concatenating a nonce and the hash of the nonce with the shared secret.

#### 2.3.1. A Note on Private DNS Services

Our solution uses a variant of the DNS over TLS protocol [RFC7858] defined by the DNS Private Exchange working group (DPRIVE). DPRIVE further published an UDP variant, DNS over DTLS [RFC8094], which would also be a candidate.

DPRIVE and Private Discovery, however, solve two somewhat different problems. While DPRIVE is concerned with the confidentiality of DNS transactions addressing the problems outlined in [RFC7626], DPRIVE does not address the confidentiality or privacy issues with publication of services, and is not a direct solution to DNS-SD privacy:

- o Discovery queries are scoped by the domain name within which services are published. As nodes move and visit arbitrary networks, there is no guarantee that the domain services for these networks will be accessible using DNS over TLS or DNS over DTLS.
- o Information placed in the DNS is considered public. Even if the server does support DNS over TLS, third parties will still be able to discover the content of PTR, SRV and TXT records.
- o Neither DNS over TLS nor DNS over DTLS applies to mDNS.

In contrast, we propose using mutual authentication of the client and server as part of the TLS solution, to ensure that only authorized parties learn the presence of a service.

#### 2.4. Randomized Host Names

Instead of publishing their actual host names in the SRV records, nodes could publish randomized host names. That is the solution argued for in [RFC8117].

Randomized host names will prevent some of the tracking. Host names are typically not visible by the users, and randomizing host names will probably not cause much usability issues.

#### 2.5. Timing of Obfuscation and Randomization

It is important that the obfuscation of instance names is performed at the right time, and that the obfuscated names change in synchrony with other identifiers, such as MAC Addresses, IP Addresses or host names. If the randomized host name changed but the instance name remained constant, an adversary would have no difficulty linking the old and new host names. Similarly, if IP or MAC addresses changed but host names remained constant, the adversary could link the new addresses to the old ones using the published name.

The problem is handled in [RFC8117], which recommends to pick a new random host name at the time of connecting to a new network. New instance names for the Private Discovery Services should be composed at the same time.

### 3. Private Discovery Service Specification

The proposed solution uses the following components:

- o Host name randomization to prevent tracking.
- o Device pairing yielding pairwise shared secrets.
- o A Private Discovery Server (PDS) running on each host.
- o Discovery of the PDS instances using DNS-SD.

These components are detailed in the following subsections.

### 3.1. Host Name Randomization

Nodes publishing services with DNS-SD and concerned about their privacy MUST use a randomized host name. The randomized name MUST be changed when network connectivity changes, to avoid the correlation issues described in Section 2.5. The randomized host name MUST be used in the SRV records describing the service instance, and the corresponding A or AAAA records MUST be made available through DNS or mDNS, within the same scope as the PTR, SRV and TXT records used by DNS-SD.

If the link-layer address of the network connection is properly obfuscated (e.g. using MAC Address Randomization), the Randomized Host Name MAY be computed using the algorithm described in section 3.7 of [RFC7844]. If this is not possible, the randomized host name SHOULD be constructed by simply picking a 48 bit random number meeting the Randomness Requirements for Security expressed in [RFC4075], and then use the hexadecimal representation of this number as the obfuscated host name.

### 3.2. Device Pairing

Nodes that want to leverage the Private Directory Service for private service discovery among peers MUST share a secret with each of these peers. Each shared secret MUST be a 256 bit randomly chosen number. We RECOMMEND using the pairing mechanism proposed in [I-D.ietf-dnssd-pairing] to establish these secrets.

### 3.3. Private Discovery Server

A Private Discovery Server (PDS) is a minimal DNS server running on each host. Its task is to offer resource records corresponding to private services only to authorized peers. These peers MUST share a secret with the host (see Section 3.2). To ensure privacy of the requests, the service is only available over TLS [RFC5246], and the shared secrets are used to mutually authenticate peers and servers.

The Private Name Server SHOULD support DNS push notifications [I-D.ietf-dnssd-push], e.g. to facilitate an up-to-date contact list in a chat application without polling.

#### 3.3.1. Establishing TLS Connections

The PDS MUST only answer queries via DNS over TLS [RFC7858] and MUST use a PSK authenticated TLS handshake [RFC4279]. The client and server SHOULD negotiate a forward secure cipher suite such as DHE-PSK or ECDHE-PSK when available. The shared secret exchanged during pairing MUST be used as PSK. To guarantee interoperability,

implementations of the Private Name Server MUST support TLS\_PSK\_WITH\_AES\_256\_GCM\_SHA384.

When using the PSK based authentication, the "psk\_identity" parameter identifying the pre-shared key MUST be identical to the "Instance Identifier" defined in Section 3.4, i.e. 24 bit nonce and 48 bit proof encoded in BASE64 as 12 character string. The server will use the pairing key associated with this instance identifier.

### 3.4. Publishing Private Discovery Service Instances

Nodes that provide the Private Discovery Service SHOULD advertise their availability by publishing instances of the service through DNS-SD.

The DNS-SD service type for the Private Discovery Service is "\_pds.\_tcp".

Each published instance describes one server and one pairing. In the case where a node manages more than one pairing, it should publish as many instances as necessary to advertise the PDS to all paired peers.

Each instance name is composed as follows:

- pick a 24 bit nonce, set to the 20 most significant bits of the 32 bit Unix GMT time padded with 4 zeroes.

- For example, on August 22, 2017 at 20h 4 min and 54 seconds international time, the Unix 32 bit time had the hexadecimal value 0x599C8E68. The corresponding nonce would be set to the 24 bits: 0x599C80.

- compute a 48 bit proof:

- proof = first 48 bits of HASH(<nonce>|<pairing key>)

- set the 72 bit binary identifier as the concatenation of nonce and proof

- set instance\_name = BASE64(binary identifier)

In this formula, HASH SHOULD be the function SHA256 defined in [RFC4055], and BASE64 is defined in section 6.8 of [RFC2045]. The concatenation of a 24 bit nonce and 48 bit proof result in a 72 bit string. The BASE64 conversion is 12 characters long per [RFC6763].

### 3.5. Discovering Private Discovery Service Instances

Nodes that wish to discover Private Discovery Service Instances SHOULD issue a DNS-SD discovery request for the service type "\_pds.\_tcp". They MAY, as an alternative, use the Direct Discovery procedure defined in Section 3.6. When using the Direct Discovery procedure over mDNS, nodes SHOULD always set the QU-bit (unicast response requested, see [RFC6762] Section 5.4) because responses related to a "\_pds.\_tcp" instance are only relevant for the querying node itself.

When nodes send a DNS-SD discovery request, they will receive in response a series of PTR records, each providing the name of one of the instances present in the scope.

For each time interval, the querier SHOULD pre-calculate a hash table mapping instance names to pairings according to the following conceptual algorithm:

```
nonce = 20 bit rounded time stamp of the \  
    respective next time interval padded to \  
    24 bits with four zeroes  
for each available pairing  
    retrieve the key Xj of pairing number j  
    compute F = first 48 bits of hash(nonce, Xj)  
    construct the binary instance_name as described \  
        in the previous section  
    instance_names[nonce][instance_name] = Xj;
```

The querier SHOULD store the hash tables for the previous, the current, and the next time interval.

The querier SHOULD examine each instance to see whether it corresponds to one of its available pairings, according to the following conceptual algorithm:

```
for each received instance_name:
    convert the instance name to binary using BASE64
    if the conversion fails,
        discard the instance.
    if the binary instance length is not 72 bits,
        discard the instance.

nonce = first 24 bits of binary.

Check that the 4 least significant bits of the nonce
have the value 0, and that the 20 most significant
bits of the nonce match the first 20 bits of
the current time, or the previous interval (20 bit number
minus 1) if the current interval is less than half over,
or the next interval (20 bit number plus 1) if the
current interval is more than half over. If the
nonce does not match an acceptable value, discard
the instance.

if ((Xj = instance_names[nonce][instance_name]) != null)
    mark the pairing number j as available
```

The check of the current time is meant to mitigate replay attacks, while not mandating a time synchronization precision better than 15 minutes.

Once a pairing has been marked available, the querier SHOULD try connecting to the corresponding instance, using the selected key. The connection is likely to succeed, but it MAY fail for a variety of reasons. One of these reasons is the probabilistic nature of the proof, which entails a small chance of "false positive" match. This will occur if the hash of the nonce with two different keys produces the same result. In that case, the TLS connection will fail with an authentication error or a decryption error.

### 3.6. Direct Discovery of Private Discovery Service Instances

Nodes that wish to discover Private Discovery Service Instances MAY use the following Direct Discovery procedure instead of the regular DNS-SD Discovery explained in Section 3.5.

To perform Direct Discovery, nodes should compose a list of Private Discovery Service Instances Names. There will be one name for each pairing available to the node. The Instance name for each name will be composed of a nonce and a proof, using the algorithm specified in Section 3.4.

The querier will issue SRV record queries for each of these names. The queries will only succeed if the corresponding instance is present, in which case a pairing is discovered. After that, the querier SHOULD try connecting to the corresponding instance, as explained in Section 3.4.

### 3.7. Using the Private Discovery Service

Once instances of the Private Discovery Service have been discovered, peers can establish TLS connections and send DNS requests over these connections, as specified in DNS-SD.

## 4. Security Considerations

This document specifies a method for protecting the privacy of nodes that offer and query for services. This is especially useful when operating in a public space. Hiding the identity of the publishing nodes prevents some forms of "targeting" of high value nodes. However, adversaries can attempt various attacks to break the anonymity of the service, or to deny it. A list of these attacks and their mitigations are described in the following sections.

### 4.1. Attacks Against the Pairing System

There are a variety of attacks against pairing systems, which may result in compromised pairing secrets. If an adversary manages to acquire a compromised key, the adversary will be able to perform private service discovery according to Section 3.5. This will allow tracking of the service. The adversary will also be able to discover which private services are available for the compromised pairing.

Attacks on pairing systems are detailed in [I-D.ietf-dnssd-pairing].

### 4.2. Denial of Discovery of the Private Discovery Service

The algorithm described in Section 3.5 scales as  $O(M*N)$ , where  $M$  is the number of pairings per node and  $N$  is the number of nodes in the local scope. Adversaries can attack this service by publishing "fake" instances, effectively increasing the number  $N$  in that scaling equation.

Similar attacks can be mounted against DNS-SD: creating fake instances will generally increase the noise in the system and make discovery less usable. Private Discovery Service discovery SHOULD use the same mitigations as DNS-SD.

The attack could be amplified if the clients needed to compute proofs for all the nonces presented in Private Discovery Service Instance

names. This is mitigated by the specification of nonces as rounded time stamps in Section 3.5. If we assume that timestamps must not be too old, there will be a finite number of valid rounded timestamps at any time. Even if there are many instances present, they would all pick their nonces from this small number of rounded timestamps, and a smart client will make sure that proofs are only computed once per valid time stamp.

#### 4.3. Replay Attacks Against Discovery of the Private Discovery Service

Adversaries can record the service instance names published by Private Discovery Service instances, and replay them later in different contexts. Peers engaging in discovery can be misled into believing that a paired server is present. They will attempt to connect to the absent peer, and in doing so will disclose their presence in a monitored scope.

The binary instance identifiers defined in Section 3.4 start with 24 bits encoding the most significant bits of the "UNIX" time. In order to protect against replay attacks, clients SHOULD verify that this time is reasonably recent, as specified in Section 3.5.

#### 4.4. Denial of Private Discovery Service

The Private Discovery Service is only available through a mutually authenticated TLS connection, which provides state-of-the-art protection mechanisms. However, adversaries can mount a denial of service attack against the service. In the absence of shared secrets, the connections will fail, but the servers will expend some CPU cycles defending against them.

To mitigate such attacks, nodes SHOULD restrict the range of network addresses from which they accept connections, matching the expected scope of the service.

This mitigation will not prevent denial of service attacks performed by locally connected adversaries; but protecting against local denial of service attacks is generally very difficult. For example, local attackers can also attack mDNS and DNS-SD by generating a large number of multicast requests.

#### 4.5. Replay Attacks against the Private Discovery Service

Adversaries may record the PSK Key Identifiers used in successful connections to a private discovery service. They could attempt to replay them later against nodes advertising the private service at other times or at other locations. If the PSK identifier is still valid, the server will accept the TLS connection, and in doing so



will reveal being the same server observed at a previous time or location.

The PSK identifiers defined in Section 3.3.1 start with the 24 most significant bits of the "UNIX" time. In order to mitigate replay attacks, servers SHOULD verify that this time is reasonably recent, and fail the connection if it is too old, or if it occurs too far in the future.

The processing of timestamps is however affected by the accuracy of computer clocks. If the check is too strict, reasonable connections could fail. To further mitigate replay attacks, servers MAY record the list of valid PSK identifiers received in a recent past, and fail connections if one of these identifiers is replayed.

#### 4.6. Replay attacks and clock synchronization

The mitigation of replay attacks relies on verification of the time encoded in the nonce. This verification assumes that the hosts engaged in discovery have a reasonably accurate sense of the current time.

#### 4.7. Fingerprinting the number of published instances

Adversaries could monitor the number of instances published by a particular device, which in the absence of mitigations will reflect the number of pairings established by that device. This number will probably vary between 1 and maybe 100, providing the adversary with maybe 6 or 7 bits of input in a fingerprinting algorithm.

Devices MAY protect against this fingerprinting by publishing a number of "fake" instances in addition to the real ones. The fake instance identifiers will contain the same nonce as the genuine instance identifiers, and random bits instead of the proof. Peers should be able to quickly discard these fake instances, as the proof will not match any of the values that they expect. One plausible padding strategy is to ensure that the total number of published instances, either fake or genuine, matches one of a few values such as 16, 32, 64, or higher powers of 2.

#### 5. IANA Considerations

This draft does not require any IANA action.

## 6. Acknowledgments

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DNS Push Notifications  
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Abstract

The Domain Name System (DNS) was designed to return matching records efficiently for queries for data that is relatively static. When those records change frequently, DNS is still efficient at returning the updated results when polled. But there exists no mechanism for a client to be asynchronously notified when these changes occur. This document defines a mechanism for a client to be notified of such changes to DNS records, called DNS Push Notifications.

Status of This Memo

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## 1. Introduction

DNS records may be updated using DNS Update [RFC2136]. Other mechanisms such as a Hybrid Proxy [I-D.ietf-dnssd-hybrid] can also generate changes to a DNS zone. This document specifies a protocol for DNS clients to subscribe to receive asynchronous notifications of changes to RRSets of interest. It is immediately relevant in the case of DNS Service Discovery [RFC6763] but is not limited to that use case, and provides a general DNS mechanism for DNS record change notifications. Familiarity with the DNS protocol and DNS packet formats is assumed [RFC1034] [RFC1035] [RFC6895].

## 1.1. 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 "Key words for use in RFCs to Indicate Requirement Levels" [RFC2119].

## 2. Motivation

As the domain name system continues to adapt to new uses and changes in deployment, polling has the potential to burden DNS servers at many levels throughout the network. Other network protocols have successfully deployed a publish/subscribe model to state changes following the Observer design pattern [obs]. XMPP Publish-Subscribe [XEP0060] and Atom [RFC4287] are examples. While DNS servers are generally highly tuned and capable of a high rate of query/response traffic, adding a publish/subscribe model for tracking changes to DNS records can result in more timely notification of changes with reduced CPU usage and lower network traffic.

Multicast DNS [RFC6762] implementations always listen on a well known link-local IP multicast group, and new services and updates are sent for all group members to receive. Therefore, Multicast DNS already has asynchronous change notification capability. However, when DNS Service Discovery [RFC6763] is used across a wide area network using Unicast DNS (possibly facilitated via a Hybrid Proxy [I-D.ietf-dnssd-hybrid]) it would be beneficial to have an equivalent capability for Unicast DNS, to allow clients to learn about DNS record changes in a timely manner without polling.

DNS Long-Lived Queries (LLQ) [I-D.sekar-dns-llq] is an existing deployed solution to provide asynchronous change notifications. Even though it can be used over TCP, LLQ is defined primarily as a UDP-based protocol, and as such it defines its own equivalents of existing TCP features like the three-way handshake, flow control, and reliability. This document builds on experience gained with the LLQ protocol, with an improved design. Instead of using UDP, this specification uses long-lived TCP connections [I-D.ietf-dnsop-session-signal], and therefore doesn't need to reinvent existing TCP functionality. Instead of inventing a new vocabulary of messages to communicate DNS zone changes, this specification adopts the syntax and semantics of DNS Update messages [RFC2136].

DNS Push Notifications impose less load on the responding server than rapid polling would, but Push Notifications do still have a cost, so DNS Push Notification clients MUST NOT recklessly create an excessive number of Push Notification subscriptions. A subscription SHOULD

only be active when there is a valid reason to need live data (for example, an on-screen display is currently showing the results to the user) and the subscription SHOULD be cancelled as soon as the need for that data ends (for example, when the user dismisses that display). Implementations MAY want to implement idle timeouts, so that if the user ceases interacting with the device, the display showing the result of the DNS Push Notification subscription is automatically dismissed after a certain period of inactivity. For example, if a user presses the "Print" button on their smartphone, and then leaves the phone showing the printer discovery screen until the phone goes to sleep, then the printer discovery screen should be automatically dismissed as the device goes to sleep. If the user does still intend to print, this will require them to press the "Print" button again when they wake their phone up.

A DNS Push Notification client MUST NOT routinely keep a DNS Push Notification subscription active 24 hours a day 7 days a week just to keep a list in memory up to date so that it will be really fast if the user does choose to bring up an on-screen display of that data. DNS Push Notifications are designed to be fast enough that there is no need to pre-load a "warm" list in memory just in case it might be needed later.

Generally, a client SHOULD NOT keep a connection to a server open indefinitely if it has no active subscriptions on that connection. After 30 seconds with no active subscriptions the client SHOULD close the idle connection, and, if needed in the future, open a new connection.

### 3. Overview

The existing DNS Update protocol [RFC2136] provides a mechanism for clients to add or delete individual resource records (RRs) or entire resource record sets (RRSets) on the zone's server.

This specification adopts a simplified subset of these existing syntax and semantics, and uses them for DNS Push Notification messages going in the opposite direction, from server to client, to communicate changes to a zone. The client subscribes for Push Notifications by connecting to the server and sending DNS message(s) indicating the RRSet(s) of interest. When the client loses interest in updates to these records, it unsubscribes.

The DNS Push Notification server for a zone is any server capable of generating the correct change notifications for a name. It may be a master, slave, or stealth name server [RFC1996]. Consequently, the "\_dns-push-tls.\_tcp.<zone>" SRV record for a



zone MAY reference the same target host and port as that zone's "\_dns-update-tls.\_tcp.<zone>" SRV record. When the same target host and port is offered for both DNS Updates and DNS Push Notifications, a client MAY use a single TCP connection to that server for both DNS Updates and DNS Push Notification Queries.

Supporting DNS Updates and DNS Push Notifications on the same server is OPTIONAL. A DNS Push Notification server does NOT also have to support DNS Update.

DNS Updates and DNS Push Notifications may be handled on different ports on the same target host, in which case they are not considered to be the "same server" for the purposes of this specification, and communications with these two ports are handled independently.

Standard DNS Queries MAY be sent over a DNS Push Notification connection, provided that these are queries for names falling within the server's zone (the <zone> in the "\_dns-push-tls.\_tcp.<zone>" SRV record). The RD (Recursion Desired) bit MUST be zero.

DNS Push Notification clients are NOT required to implement DNS Update Prerequisite processing. Prerequisites are used to perform tentative atomic test-and-set type operations when a client updates records on a server, and that concept has no applicability when it comes to an authoritative server informing a client of changes to DNS records.

This DNS Push Notification specification includes support for DNS classes, for completeness. However, in practice, it is anticipated that for the foreseeable future the only DNS class in use will be DNS class "IN", as is the reality today with existing DNS servers and clients. A DNS Push Notification server MAY choose to implement only DNS class "IN".

#### 4. Transport

Implementations of DNS Update [RFC2136] MAY use either User Datagram Protocol (UDP) [RFC0768] or Transmission Control Protocol (TCP) [RFC0793] as the transport protocol, in keeping with the historical precedent that DNS queries must first be sent over UDP [RFC1123]. This requirement to use UDP has subsequently been relaxed [RFC7766].

In keeping with the more recent precedent, DNS Push Notification is defined only for TCP. DNS Push Notification clients MUST use TLS over TCP.

Connection setup over TCP ensures return reachability and alleviates concerns of state overload at the server through anonymous subscriptions. All subscribers are guaranteed to be reachable by the server by virtue of the TCP three-way handshake. Flooding attacks are possible with any protocol, and a benefit of TCP is that there are already established industry best practices to guard against SYN flooding and similar attacks [IPJ.9-4-TCPSYN] [RFC4953].

Use of TCP also allows DNS Push Notifications to take advantage of current and future developments in TCP, such as Multipath TCP (MPTCP) [RFC6824], TCP Fast Open (TFO) [RFC7413], Tail Loss Probe (TLP) [I-D.dukkipati-tcpm-tcp-loss-probe], and so on.

Transport Layer Security (TLS) [RFC5246] is well understood and deployed across many protocols running over TCP. It is designed to prevent eavesdropping, tampering, or message forgery. TLS is REQUIRED for every connection between a client subscriber and server in this protocol specification. Additional security measures such as client authentication during TLS negotiation MAY also be employed to increase the trust relationship between client and server.

Additional authentication of the SRV target using DNSSEC verification and DANE TLSA records [RFC7673] is strongly encouraged. See below in Section 7.2 for details.

#### 5. State Considerations

Each DNS Push Notification server is capable of handling some finite number of Push Notification subscriptions. This number will vary from server to server and is based on physical machine characteristics, network bandwidth, and operating system resource allocation. After a client establishes a connection to a DNS server, each record subscription is individually accepted or rejected. Servers may employ various techniques to limit subscriptions to a manageable level. Correspondingly, the client is free to establish simultaneous connections to alternate DNS servers that support DNS

Push Notifications for the zone and distribute record subscriptions at its discretion. In this way, both clients and servers can react to resource constraints. Token bucket rate limiting schemes are also effective in providing fairness by a server across numerous client requests.

## 6. Protocol Operation

The DNS Push Notification protocol is a session-oriented protocol, and makes use of DNS Session Signaling [I-D.ietf-dnsop-session-signal].

DNS Push Notification clients and servers MUST support DNS Session Signaling, but the server must not issue any DNS Session Signaling operations until after the client has first initiated a DNS Session Signaling operation of its own. A single server can support DNS Queries, DNS Updates, and DNS Push Notifications (using DNS Session Signaling) on the same TCP port, and until the client has sent at least one DNS Session Signaling operation the server does not know what kind of client has connected to it. Once the client has indicated willingness to use DNS Session Signaling operations by sending one of its own, either side of the connection may then initiate further Session Signaling operations at any time.

A DNS Push Notification exchange begins with the client discovering the appropriate server, using the procedure described in Section 6.1, and then making a TLS/TCP connection to it.

A typical DNS Push Notification client will immediately issue a DNS Session Signaling Idle Timeout operation to request a session timeout longer than the the 30-second default, but this is NOT REQUIRED. A DNS Push Notification client MAY issue other requests on the connection first, and only issue a DNS Session Signaling Idle Timeout operation later if it determines that to be necessary.

Once the connection is made, the client may then add and remove Push Notification subscriptions. In accordance with the current set of active subscriptions the server sends relevant asynchronous Push Notifications to the client. Note that a client MUST be prepared to receive (and silently ignore) Push Notifications for subscriptions it has previously removed, since there is no way to prevent the situation where a Push Notification is in flight from server to client while the client's UNSUBSCRIBE message cancelling that subscription is simultaneously in flight from client to server.

The exchange between client and server terminates when either end closes the TCP connection with a TCP FIN or RST.

### 6.1. Discovery

The first step in DNS Push Notification subscription is to discover an appropriate DNS server that supports DNS Push Notifications for the desired zone. The client **MUST** also determine which TCP port on the server is listening for connections, which need not be (and often is not) the typical TCP port 53 used for conventional DNS, or TCP port 853 used for DNS over TLS [RFC7858].

1. The client begins the discovery by sending a DNS query to the local resolver with record type SOA [RFC1035] for the name of the record it wishes to subscribe.
2. If the SOA record exists, it **MUST** be returned in the Answer Section of the response. If not, the local resolver **SHOULD** include the SOA record for the zone of the requested name in the Authority Section.
3. If no SOA record is returned, the client then strips off the leading label from the requested name. If the resulting name has at least one label in it, the client sends a new SOA query and processing continues at step 2 above. If the resulting name is empty (the root label) then this is a network configuration error and the client gives up. The client **MAY** retry the operation at a later time.
4. Once the SOA is known (either by virtue of being seen in the Answer Section, or in the Authority Section), the client sends a DNS query with type SRV [RFC2782] for the record name "\_dns-push-tls.\_tcp.<zone>", where <zone> is the owner name of the discovered SOA record.
5. If the zone in question does not offer DNS Push Notifications then SRV record **MUST NOT** exist and the SRV query will return a negative answer.
6. If the zone in question is set up to offer DNS Push Notifications then this SRV record **MUST** exist. The SRV "target" contains the name of the server providing DNS Push Notifications for the zone. The port number on which to contact the server is in the SRV record "port" field. The address(es) of the target host **MAY** be included in the Additional Section, however, the address records **SHOULD** be authenticated before use as described below in Section 7.2 [RFC7673].
7. More than one SRV record may be returned. In this case, the "priority" and "weight" values in the returned SRV records are used to determine the order in which to contact the servers for

subscription requests. As described in the SRV specification [RFC2782], the server with the lowest "priority" is first contacted. If more than one server has the same "priority", the "weight" indicates the weighted probability that the client should contact that server. Higher weights have higher probabilities of being selected. If a server is not reachable or is not willing to accept a subscription request, then a subsequent server is to be contacted.

Each time a client makes a new DNS Push Notification subscription connection, it SHOULD repeat the discovery process in order to determine the preferred DNS server for subscriptions at that time.

Note that this repeated discovery step is typically very fast and typically results in no queries on the network. The client device MUST respect the DNS TTL values on records it receives, and store them in its local cache with this lifetime. This means that, as long as the DNS TTL values on the authoritative records were set to reasonable values, repeated application of this discovery process can be completed nearly instantaneously by the client, using only locally-stored data.

## 6.2. DNS Push Notification SUBSCRIBE

After connecting, and requesting a longer idle timeout if necessary, a DNS Push Notification client then indicates its desire to receive DNS Push Notifications for a given domain name by sending a SUBSCRIBE request over the established TLS connection to the server. A SUBSCRIBE request is encoded in a DNS Session Signaling [I-D.ietf-dnsop-session-signal] message. This specification defines a new DNS Session Signaling TLV for DNS Push Notification SUBSCRIBE Requests/Responses (tentatively Session Signaling Type Code 64).

A server may not initiate a SUBSCRIBE request.

## 6.2.1. SUBSCRIBE Request

A SUBSCRIBE request message begins with the standard DNS Session Signaling 4-byte header [I-D.ietf-dnsop-session-signal], followed by the SUBSCRIBE TLV.

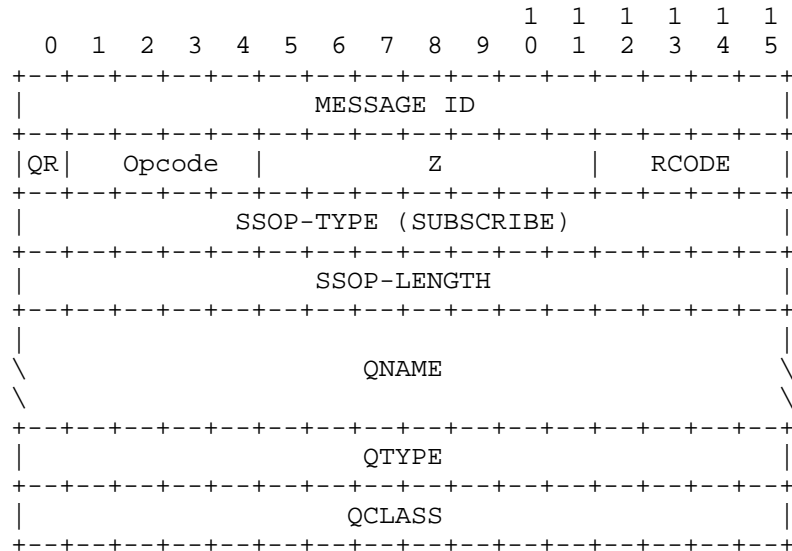


Figure 1

The MESSAGE ID field MUST be set to a unique value, that the client is not using for any other active operation on this connection. For the purposes here, a MESSAGE ID is in use on this connection if the client has used it in a request for which it has not yet received a response, or if the client has used it for a subscription which it has not yet cancelled using UNSUBSCRIBE. In the SUBSCRIBE response the server MUST echo back the MESSAGE ID value unchanged.

In a request the DNS Header QR bit MUST be zero.

The DNS Header Opcode field holds the Session Signaling Opcode value (tentatively 6).

The Z bits MUST be zero on transmission, and MUST be silently ignored on reception.

The return code (RCODE) field MUST be set to 0 in a request.

In the SUBSCRIBE TLV the SSOP-TYPE is SUBSCRIBE (tentatively 64). The SSOP-LENGTH is the length of the data that follows, which specifies the name, type, and class of the record(s) being sought.

A SUBSCRIBE request MUST contain exactly one question. There is no QCOUNT field to specify more than one question. Since SUBSCRIBE requests are sent over TCP, multiple SUBSCRIBE requests can be concatenated in a single TCP stream and packed efficiently into TCP segments.

If accepted, the subscription will stay in effect until the client cancels the subscription using UNSUBSCRIBE or until the connection between the client and the server is closed.

SUBSCRIBE requests on a given connection MUST be unique. A client MUST NOT send a SUBSCRIBE message that duplicates the QNAME, QTYPE and QCLASS of an existing active subscription on that TLS/TCP connection. For the purpose of this matching, the established DNS case-insensitivity for US-ASCII letters applies (e.g., "foo.com" and "Foo.com" are the same). If a server receives such a duplicate SUBSCRIBE message this is an error and the server MUST immediately close the TCP connection.

DNS wildcarding is not supported. That is, a wildcard ("\*") in a SUBSCRIBE message matches only a literal wildcard character ("\*") in the zone, and nothing else.

Aliasing is not supported. That is, a CNAME in a SUBSCRIBE message matches only a literal CNAME record in the zone, and nothing else.

A client may SUBSCRIBE to records that are unknown to the server at the time of the request (providing that the name falls within one of the zone(s) the server is responsible for) and this is not an error. The server MUST accept these requests and send Push Notifications if and when matching records are found in the future.

If neither QTYPE nor QCLASS are ANY (255) then this is a specific subscription to changes for the given QNAME, QTYPE and QCLASS. If one or both of QTYPE or QCLASS are ANY (255) then this subscription matches any type and/or any class, as appropriate.

NOTE: A little-known quirk of DNS is that in DNS QUERY requests, QTYPE and QCLASS 255 mean "ANY" not "ALL". They indicate that the server should respond with ANY matching records of its choosing, not necessarily ALL matching records. This can lead to some surprising and unexpected results, were a query returns some valid answers but not all of them, and makes QTYPE=ANY queries less useful than people sometimes imagine.



When used in conjunction with SUBSCRIBE, QTYPE and QCLASS 255 should be interpreted to mean "ALL", not "ANY". After accepting a subscription where one or both of QTYPE or QCLASS are 255, the server MUST send Push Notification Updates for ALL record changes that match the subscription, not just some of them.

## 6.2.2. SUBSCRIBE Response

Each SUBSCRIBE request generates exactly one SUBSCRIBE response from the server.

A SUBSCRIBE response message begins with the standard DNS Session Signaling 4-byte header [I-D.ietf-dnsop-session-signal], possibly followed by one or more optional modifier TLVs such as a Terminate modifier TLV [I-D.ietf-dnsop-session-signal].

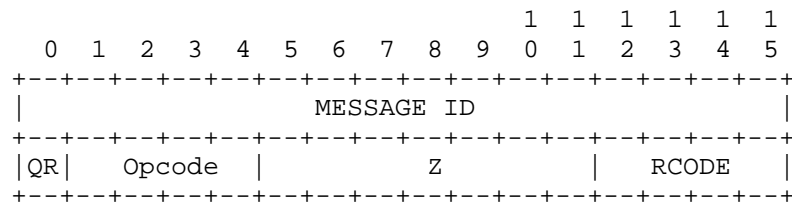


Figure 2

The MESSAGE ID field MUST echo the value given in the ID field of the SUBSCRIBE request. This is how the client knows which request is being responded to.

In a response the DNS Header QR bit MUST be one.  
If the QR bit is not one the message is not a response.

The DNS Header Opcode field holds the Session Signaling Opcode value (tentatively 6).

The Z bits MUST be zero on transmission, and MUST be silently ignored on reception.

In the SUBSCRIBE response the RCODE indicates whether or not the subscription was accepted. Supported RCODEs are as follows:

Mnemonic	Value	Description
NOERROR	0	SUBSCRIBE successful.
FORMERR	1	Server failed to process request due to a malformed request.
SERVFAIL	2	Server failed to process request due to resource exhaustion.
NXDOMAIN	3	NOT APPLICABLE. DNS Push Notification servers MUST NOT return NXDOMAIN errors in response to SUBSCRIBE requests.
NOTIMP	4	Server does not recognize DNS Session Signaling Opcode.
REFUSED	5	Server refuses to process request for policy or security reasons.
NOTAUTH	9	Server is not authoritative for the requested name.
SSOPNOTIMP	11	SUBSCRIBE operation not supported.

#### SUBSCRIBE Response codes

This document specifies only these RCODE values for SUBSCRIBE Responses. Servers sending SUBSCRIBE Responses SHOULD use one of these values. However, future circumstances may create situations where other RCODE values are appropriate in SUBSCRIBE Responses, so clients MUST be prepared to accept SUBSCRIBE Responses with any RCODE value.

If the server sends a nonzero RCODE in the SUBSCRIBE response, either the client is (at least partially) misconfigured or the server resources are exhausted. In either case, the client shouldn't retry the subscription right away. Either end can terminate the connection, but the client may want to try this subscription again or it may have other successful subscriptions that it doesn't want to abandon. If the server sends a nonzero RCODE then it SHOULD append a Terminate modifier TLV [I-D.ietf-dnsop-session-signal] to the response specifying a delay before the client attempts this operation again. Recommended values for the delay for different RCODE values are given below:

For RCODE = 1 (FORMERR) the delay may be any value selected by the implementer. A value of five minutes is RECOMMENDED, to avoid high load from defective clients.

For RCODE = 2 (SERVFAIL), which occurs due to resource exhaustion, the delay should be chosen according to the level of server overload and the anticipated duration of that overload. By default, a value of one minute is RECOMMENDED.

For RCODE = 4 (NOTIMP), which occurs on a server that doesn't implement DNS Session Signaling [I-D.ietf-dnsop-session-signal], it is unlikely that the server will begin supporting DNS Session Signaling in the next few minutes, so the retry delay SHOULD be one hour.

For RCODE = 5 (REFUSED), which occurs on a server that implements DNS Push Notifications, but is currently configured to disallow DNS Push Notifications, the retry delay may be any value selected by the implementer and/or configured by the operator. This is a misconfiguration, since this server is listed in a "\_dns-push-tls.\_tcp.<zone>" SRV record, but the server itself is not currently configured to support DNS Push Notifications. Since it is possible that the misconfiguration may be repaired at any time, the retry delay should not be set too high. By default, a value of 5 minutes is RECOMMENDED.

For RCODE = 9 (NOTAUTH), which occurs on a server that implements DNS Push Notifications, but is not configured to be authoritative for the requested name, the retry delay may be any value selected by the implementer and/or configured by the operator. This is a misconfiguration, since this server is listed in a "\_dns-push-tls.\_tcp.<zone>" SRV record, but the server itself is not currently configured to support DNS Push Notifications for that zone. Since it is possible that the misconfiguration may be repaired at any time, the retry delay should not be set too high. By default, a value of 5 minutes is RECOMMENDED.

For RCODE = 11 (DNS Push SUBSCRIBE operation not supported), which occurs on a server that doesn't implement DNS Push Notifications, it is unlikely that the server will begin supporting DNS Push Notifications in the next few minutes, so the retry delay SHOULD be one hour.

For other RCODE values, the retry delay should be set by the server as appropriate for that error condition. By default, a value of 5 minutes is RECOMMENDED.

For RCODE = 9 (NOTAUTH), the time delay applies to requests for other names falling within the same zone. Requests for names falling within other zones are not subject to the delay. For all other RCODEs the time delay applies to all subsequent requests to this server.

After sending an error response the server MAY allow the connection to remain open, or MAY send a DNS Push Notification Terminate Session operation TLV and then close the TCP connection, as described in the DNS Session Signaling specification [I-D.ietf-dnsop-session-signal]. Clients MUST correctly handle both cases.

### 6.3. DNS Push Notification Update Messages

Once a subscription has been successfully established, the server generates PUSH messages to send to the client as appropriate. An initial PUSH message will be sent immediately in the case that the answer set was non-empty at the moment the subscription was established. Subsequent changes to the answer set are then communicated to the client in subsequent PUSH messages.

#### 6.3.1. PUSH Message format

A PUSH message begins with the standard DNS Session Signaling 4-byte header [I-D.ietf-dnsop-session-signal], followed by the PUSH TLV.

The format of PUSH messages borrows from the existing DNS Update [RFC2136] protocol, with some simplifications.

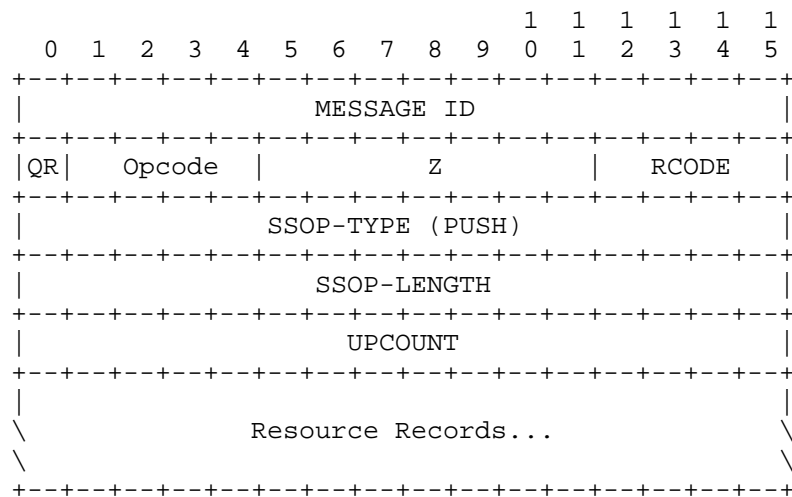


Figure 3

The MESSAGE ID field MUST be set to zero on transmission, and silently ignored on reception. A PUSH message could potentially match more than one subscription, or could relate to a subscription that the client has just cancelled with an UNSUBSCRIBE message, so the MESSAGE ID field serves no useful purpose.

In a PUSH message the DNS Header QR bit MUST be zero.

The DNS Header Opcode field holds the Session Signaling Opcode value (tentatively 6).

The Z bits MUST be zero on transmission, and MUST be silently ignored on reception.

The return code (RCODE) field MUST be set to 0 in a request.

In the PUSH message TLV the SSOP-TYPE is PUSH (tentatively 65). The SSOP-LENGTH is the length of the SSOP-DATA that follows.

The SSOP-DATA contains a two-byte count of the number of records that follow, followed by the records, in customary Resource Record format (as used in DNS Update [RFC2136] messages).

The SSOP-DATA contains the relevant change information for the client, formatted identically to a DNS Update [RFC2136]. To recap:

Delete all RRsets from a name:  
TTL=0, CLASS=ANY, RDLENGTH=0, TYPE=ANY.

Delete an RRset from a name:  
TTL=0, CLASS=ANY, RDLENGTH=0;  
TYPE specifies the RRset being deleted.

Delete an individual RR from a name:  
TTL=0, CLASS=NONE;  
TYPE, RDLENGTH and RDATA specifies the RR being deleted.

Add to an RRset:  
TTL, CLASS, TYPE, RDLENGTH and RDATA specifies the RR being added.

When processing the records received in a PUSH Message, the receiving client MUST validate that the records being added or deleted correspond with at least one currently active subscription on that connection. Specifically, the record name MUST match the name given in the SUBSCRIBE request, subject to the usual established DNS case-insensitivity for US-ASCII letters. If the QTYPE in the SUBSCRIBE request was not ANY (255) then the TYPE of the record must match the QTYPE given in the SUBSCRIBE request. If the QCLASS in the SUBSCRIBE request was not ANY (255) then the CLASS of the record must match the QCLASS given in the SUBSCRIBE request. If a matching active subscription on that connection is not found, then that individual record addition/deletion is silently ignored. Processing of other additions and deletions in this message is not affected. The TCP connection is not closed. This is to allow for the unavoidable race condition where a client sends an outbound UNSUBSCRIBE while inbound PUSH messages for that subscription from the server are still in flight.

In the case where a single change affects more than one active subscription, only one PUSH message is sent. For example, a PUSH message adding a given record may match both a SUBSCRIBE request with the same QTYPE and a different SUBSCRIBE request with QTYPE=ANY. It is not the case that two PUSH messages are sent because the new record matches two active subscriptions.

The server SHOULD encode change notifications in the most efficient manner possible. For example, when three AAAA records are deleted from a given name, and no other AAAA records exist for that name, the server SHOULD send a "delete an RRset from a name" PUSH message, not three separate "delete an individual RR from a name" PUSH messages. Similarly, when both an SRV and a TXT record are deleted from a given name, and no other records of any kind exist for that name, the server SHOULD send a "delete all RRsets from a name" PUSH message, not two separate "delete an RRset from a name" PUSH messages.

A server SHOULD combine multiple change notifications in a single PUSH message when possible, even if those change notifications apply to different subscriptions. Conceptually, a PUSH messages is a connection-level concept, not a subscription-level concept.

Reception of a PUSH message does not directly generate a response back to the server. (Updates may indirectly generate other operations; e.g., a Push Notification Update Message declaring the appearance of a PTR record could lead to a query for the SRV record named in the rdata of that PTR record [RFC6763].)

The TTL of an added record is stored by the client and decremented as time passes, with the caveat that for as long as a relevant subscription is active, the TTL does not decrement below 1 second. For as long as a relevant subscription remains active, the client SHOULD assume that when a record goes away the server will notify it of that fact. Consequently, a client does not have to poll to verify that the record is still there. Once a subscription is cancelled (individually, or as a result of the TCP connection being closed) record ageing resumes and records are removed from the local cache when their TTL reaches zero.



#### 6.4. DNS Push Notification UNSUBSCRIBE

To cancel an individual subscription without closing the entire connection, the client sends an UNSUBSCRIBE message over the established TCP connection to the server. The UNSUBSCRIBE message is encoded in a DNS Session Signaling [I-D.ietf-dnsop-session-signal] message. This specification defines a new DNS Session Signaling TLV for DNS Push Notification UNSUBSCRIBE Requests/Responses (tentatively Session Signaling Type Code 66).

A server may not initiate an UNSUBSCRIBE request.

## 6.4.1. UNSUBSCRIBE Request

An UNSUBSCRIBE request message begins with the standard DNS Session Signaling 4-byte header [I-D.ietf-dnsop-session-signal], followed by the UNSUBSCRIBE TLV.

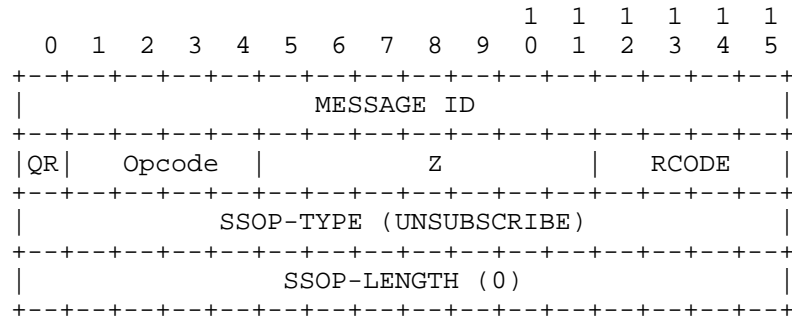


Figure 4

The MESSAGE ID field MUST match the value given in the ID field of an active SUBSCRIBE request. This is how the server knows which SUBSCRIBE request is being cancelled. After receipt of the UNSUBSCRIBE request, the SUBSCRIBE request is no longer active. If a server receives an UNSUBSCRIBE message where the MESSAGE ID does not match the ID of an active SUBSCRIBE request this is an error and the server MUST return a response containing RCODE = 1 (FORMERR). In the UNSUBSCRIBE response the server MUST echo back the MESSAGE ID value unchanged. It is allowable for the client to issue an UNSUBSCRIBE request for a previous SUBSCRIBE request for which the client has not yet received a SUBSCRIBE response. This is to allow for the case where a client starts and stops a subscription in less than the round-trip time to the server. The client is NOT required to wait for the SUBSCRIBE response before issuing the UNSUBSCRIBE request.

In a request the DNS Header QR bit MUST be zero.

The DNS Header Opcode field holds the Session Signaling Opcode value (tentatively 6).

The Z bits MUST be zero on transmission, and MUST be silently ignored on reception.

The return code (RCODE) field MUST be set to 0 in a request.

In the UNSUBSCRIBE TLV the SSOP-TYPE is UNSUBSCRIBE (tentatively 66).

The SSOP-LENGTH is zero.

## 6.4.2. UNSUBSCRIBE Response

Each UNSUBSCRIBE request generates exactly one UNSUBSCRIBE response from the server.

An UNSUBSCRIBE response message contains with the standard DNS Session Signaling 4-byte header [I-D.ietf-dnsop-session-signal].

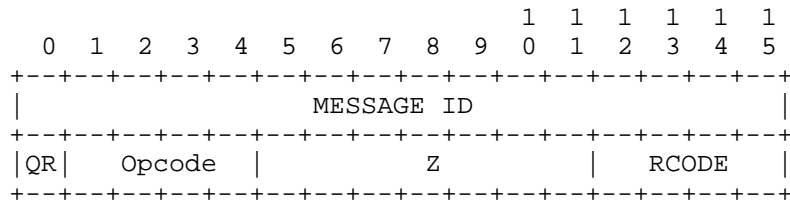


Figure 5

The MESSAGE ID field MUST echo the value given in the ID field of the UNSUBSCRIBE request. This is how the client knows which request is being responded to.

In a response the DNS Header QR bit MUST be one.  
If the QR bit is not one the message is not a response.

The DNS Header Opcode field holds the Session Signaling Opcode value (tentatively 6).

The Z bits MUST be zero on transmission, and MUST be silently ignored on reception.

In the UNSUBSCRIBE response the RCODE indicates whether or not the unsubscribe request was successful. Supported RCODEs are as follows:

Mnemonic	Value	Description
NOERROR	0	UNSUBSCRIBE successful.
FORMERR	1	Server failed to process request due to a malformed request.
NOTIMP	4	Server does not recognize DNS Session Signaling Opcode.
SSOPNOTIMP	11	UNSUBSCRIBE operation not supported.

UNSUBSCRIBE Response codes

This document specifies only these RCODE values for UNSUBSCRIBE Responses. Servers sending UNSUBSCRIBE Responses SHOULD use one of these values. However, future circumstances may create situations where other RCODE values are appropriate in UNSUBSCRIBE Responses, so clients MUST be prepared to accept UNSUBSCRIBE Responses with any RCODE value.

Having being successfully revoked with a correctly-formatted UNSUBSCRIBE message (resulting in a response with RCODE NOERROR) the previously referenced subscription is no longer active and the server MAY discard the state associated with it immediately, or later, at the server's discretion.

Nonzero RCODE values signal some kind of error.

RCODE value FORMERR indicates an incorrect MESSAGE ID or other message format error.

RCODE values NOTIMP and SSOPNOTIMP should not occur in practice.

A server would only generate NOTIMP if it did not support Session Signaling, and if the server does not support Session Signaling then it should not be possible for a client to have an active subscription to cancel.

Similarly, a server would only generate SSOPNOTIMP if it did not support Push Notifications, and if the server does not support Push Notifications then it should not be possible for a client to have an active subscription to cancel.

All nonzero RCODE values indicate a serious problem with the client. After sending an error response, the server SHOULD send a DNS Push Notification Terminate Session operation TLV and then close the TCP connection, as described in the DNS Session Signaling specification [I-D.ietf-dnsop-session-signal].

## 6.5. DNS Session Signaling Push Notification RECONFIRM

Sometimes, particularly when used with a Hybrid Proxy [I-D.ietf-dnssd-hybrid], a DNS Zone may contain stale data. When a client encounters data that it believe may be stale (e.g., an SRV record referencing a target host+port that is not responding to connection requests) the client can send a RECONFIRM message to request that the server re-verify that the data is still valid. For a Hybrid Proxy, this causes it to issue new Multicast DNS requests to ascertain whether the target device is still present. For other types of DNS server, the RECONFIRM operation is currently undefined and SHOULD be silently ignored.

A RECONFIRM request is formatted identically to a SUBSCRIBE request, except that the TLV type is RECONFIRM (tentatively 67) instead of SUBSCRIBE. Additionally, QTYPE MUST NOT be the value ANY (255) and QCLASS MUST NOT be the value ANY (255).

Like all DNS Session Signaling [I-D.ietf-dnsop-session-signal] requests, a RECONFIRM request MUST contain a unique MESSAGE ID, not currently in use in this session.

A RECONFIRM request generates exactly one RECONFIRM response from the server, formatted identically to a SUBSCRIBE response, which echoes back the unique MESSAGE ID from the RECONFIRM request.

In the RECONFIRM response the RCODE indicates whether or not the request was successful. Supported RCODEs are as follows:

Mnemonic	Value	Description
NOERROR	0	RECONFIRM successful.
FORMERR	1	Server failed to process request due to a malformed request.
NOTIMP	4	Server does not recognize DNS Session Signaling Opcode.
SSOPNOTIMP	11	RECONFIRM operation not supported.

## RECONFIRM Response codes

This document specifies only these RCODE values for RECONFIRM Responses. Servers sending RECONFIRM Responses SHOULD use one of these values. However, future circumstances may create situations where other RCODE values are appropriate in RECONFIRM Responses, so clients MUST be prepared to accept RECONFIRM Responses with any RCODE value.

A correctly-formatted RECONFIRM message results in a response with RCODE NOERROR.

Nonzero RCODE values signal some kind of error. If the server sends a nonzero RCODE then it SHOULD append a Terminate modifier TLV [I-D.ietf-dnsop-session-signal] to the response specifying a delay before the client attempts this operation again. The RECOMMENDED value for the delay is five minutes. For serious errors, after sending the error response, the server SHOULD send a DNS Push Notification Terminate Session operation TLV and then close the TCP connection, as described in the DNS Session Signaling specification [I-D.ietf-dnsop-session-signal].

If, after receiving a valid RECONFIRM request, the server determines that the records are in fact no longer valid, then subsequent DNS PUSH Messages will be generated to inform interested clients. Thus, one client discovering that a previously-advertised printer is no longer present has the side effect of informing all other interested clients that the printer in question is now gone.

## 6.6. Client-Initiated Termination

An individual subscription is terminated by sending an UNSUBSCRIBE TLV for that specific subscription, or all subscriptions can be cancelled at once by the client closing the connection. When a client terminates an individual subscription (via UNSUBSCRIBE) or all subscriptions on that connection (by closing the connection) it is signaling to the server that it is longer interested in receiving those particular updates. It is informing the server that the server may release any state information it has been keeping with regards to these particular subscriptions.

After terminating its last subscription on a connection via UNSUBSCRIBE, a client MAY close the connection immediately, or it may keep it open if it anticipates performing further operations on that connection in the future. If a client wishes to keep an idle connection open, it MUST continue to meet its keepalive obligations [I-D.ietf-dnsop-session-signal] or the server is entitled to close the connection (see below).

If a client plans to terminate one or more subscriptions on a connection and doesn't intend to keep that connection open, then as an efficiency optimization it MAY instead choose to simply close the connection, which implicitly terminates all subscriptions on that connection. This may occur because the client computer is being shut down, is going to sleep, the application requiring the subscriptions has terminated, or simply because the last active subscription on that connection has been cancelled.

When closing a connection, a client will generally do an abortive disconnect, sending a TCP RST. This immediately discards all remaining inbound and outbound data, which is appropriate if the client no longer has any interest in this data. In the BSD Sockets API, sending a TCP RST is achieved by setting the SO\_LINGER option with a time of 0 seconds and then closing the socket.

If a client has performed operations on this connection that it would not want lost (like DNS updates) then the client SHOULD do an orderly disconnect, sending a TCP FIN. In the BSD Sockets API, sending a TCP FIN is achieved by calling "shutdown(s,SHUT\_WR)" and keeping the socket open until all remaining data has been read from it.

## 7. Security Considerations

TLS support is REQUIRED in DNS Push Notifications. There is no provision for opportunistic encryption using a mechanism like "STARTTLS".



DNSSEC is RECOMMENDED for DNS Push Notifications. TLS alone does not provide complete security. TLS certificate verification can provide reasonable assurance that the client is really talking to the server associated with the desired host name, but since the desired host name is learned via a DNS SRV query, if the SRV query is subverted then the client may have a secure connection to a rogue server. DNSSEC can provide added confidence that the SRV query has not been subverted.

### 7.1. Security Services

It is the goal of using TLS to provide the following security services:

**Confidentiality:** All application-layer communication is encrypted with the goal that no party should be able to decrypt it except the intended receiver.

**Data integrity protection:** Any changes made to the communication in transit are detectable by the receiver.

**Authentication:** An end-point of the TLS communication is authenticated as the intended entity to communicate with.

Deployment recommendations on the appropriate key lengths and cypher suites are beyond the scope of this document. Please refer to TLS Recommendations [RFC7525] for the best current practices. Keep in mind that best practices only exist for a snapshot in time and recommendations will continue to change. Updated versions or errata may exist for these recommendations.

### 7.2. TLS Name Authentication

As described in Section 6.1, the client discovers the DNS Push Notification server using an SRV lookup for the record name "\_dns-push-tls.\_tcp.<zone>". The server connection endpoint SHOULD then be authenticated using DANE TLSA records for the associated SRV record. This associates the target's name and port number with a trusted TLS certificate [RFC7673]. This procedure uses the TLS Server Name Indication (SNI) extension [RFC6066] to inform the server of the name the client has authenticated through the use of TLSA records. Therefore, if the SRV record passes DNSSEC validation and a TLSA record matching the target name is useable, an SNI extension MUST be used for the target name to ensure the client is connecting to the server it has authenticated. If the target name does not have a usable TLSA record, then the use of the SNI extension is optional.

### 7.3. TLS Compression

In order to reduce the chances of compression-related attacks, TLS-level compression SHOULD be disabled when using TLS versions 1.2 and earlier. In the draft version of TLS 1.3 [I-D.ietf-tls-tls13], TLS-level compression has been removed completely.

### 7.4. TLS Session Resumption

TLS Session Resumption is permissible on DNS Push Notification servers. The server may keep TLS state with Session IDs [RFC5246] or operate in stateless mode by sending a Session Ticket [RFC5077] to the client for it to store. However, once the connection is closed, any existing subscriptions will be dropped. When the TLS session is resumed, the DNS Push Notification server will not have any subscription state and will proceed as with any other new connection. Use of TLS Session Resumption allows a new TLS connection to be set up more quickly, but the client will still have to recreate any desired subscriptions.

## 8. IANA Considerations

This document defines the service name: "\_dns-push-tls.\_tcp". It is only applicable for the TCP protocol. This name is to be published in the IANA Service Name Registry.

This document defines three DNS Session Signaling TLV types: SUBSCRIBE with (tentative) value 64, PUSH with (tentative) value 65, UNSUBSCRIBE with (tentative) value 66, and RECONFIRM with (tentative) value 67.

## 9. Acknowledgements

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Abstract

The Domain Name System (DNS) was designed to return matching records efficiently for queries for data that are relatively static. When those records change frequently, DNS is still efficient at returning the updated results when polled, as long as the polling rate is not too high. But there exists no mechanism for a client to be asynchronously notified when these changes occur. This document defines a mechanism for a client to be notified of such changes to DNS records, called DNS Push Notifications.

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## 1. Introduction

Domain Name System (DNS) records may be updated using DNS Update [RFC2136]. Other mechanisms such as a Discovery Proxy [DisProx] can also generate changes to a DNS zone. This document specifies a protocol for DNS clients to subscribe to receive asynchronous notifications of changes to RRsets of interest. It is immediately relevant in the case of DNS Service Discovery [RFC6763] but is not limited to that use case, and provides a general DNS mechanism for DNS record change notifications. Familiarity with the DNS protocol and DNS packet formats is assumed [RFC1034] [RFC1035] [RFC6895].

### 1.1. 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 BCP 14 [RFC2119] [RFC8174] when, and only when, they appear in all capitals, as shown here. These words may also appear in this document in lower case as plain English words, absent their normative meanings.

### 1.2. Fatal Errors

Certain invalid situations are described in this specification, like a server sending a Push Notification subscription request to a client, or a client sending a Push Notification response to a server. These should never occur with a correctly implemented client and server, and if they do occur then they indicate a serious implementation error. In these extreme cases there is no reasonable expectation of a graceful recovery, and the recipient detecting the error should respond by unilaterally aborting the session without regard for data loss. Such cases are addressed by having an engineer investigate the cause of the failure and fixing the problem in the software.

Where this specification says "forcibly abort", it means sending a TCP RST to terminate the TCP connection, and the TLS session running over that TCP connection. In the BSD Sockets API, this is achieved by setting the SO\_LINGER option to zero before closing the socket.

## 2. Motivation

As the domain name system continues to adapt to new uses and changes in deployment, polling has the potential to burden DNS servers at many levels throughout the network. Other network protocols have successfully deployed a publish/subscribe model following the Observer design pattern [obs]. XMPP Publish-Subscribe [XEP0060] and Atom [RFC4287] are examples. While DNS servers are generally highly tuned and capable of a high rate of query/response traffic, adding a publish/subscribe model for tracking changes to DNS records can deliver more timely notification of changes with reduced CPU usage and lower network traffic.

Multicast DNS [RFC6762] implementations always listen on a well known link-local IP multicast group address, and changes are sent to that multicast group address for all group members to receive. Therefore, Multicast DNS already has asynchronous change notification capability. When DNS Service Discovery [RFC6763] is used across a wide area network using Unicast DNS (possibly facilitated via a Discovery Proxy [DisProx]) it would be beneficial to have an equivalent capability for Unicast DNS, to allow clients to learn about DNS record changes in a timely manner without polling.

The DNS Long-Lived Queries (LLQ) mechanism [LLQ] is an existing deployed solution to provide asynchronous change notifications, used by Apple's Back to My Mac [RFC6281] service introduced in Mac OS X 10.5 Leopard in 2007. Back to My Mac was designed in an era when the data center operations staff asserted that it was impossible for a server to handle large numbers of mostly-idle TCP connections, so LLQ was defined as a UDP-based protocol, effectively replicating much of TCP's connection state management logic in user space, and creating its own imitation of existing TCP features like the three-way handshake, flow control, and reliability.

This document builds on experience gained with the LLQ protocol, with an improved design. Instead of using UDP, this specification uses DNS Stateful Operations (DSO) [RFC8490] running over TLS over TCP, and therefore doesn't need to reinvent existing TCP functionality. Using TCP also gives long-lived low-traffic connections better longevity through NAT gateways without depending on the gateway to support NAT Port Mapping Protocol (NAT-PMP) [RFC6886] or Port Control Protocol (PCP) [RFC6887], or resorting to excessive keepalive traffic.

### 3. Overview

A DNS Push Notification client subscribes for Push Notifications for a particular RRset by connecting to the appropriate Push Notification server for that RRset, and sending DSO message(s) indicating the RRset(s) of interest. When the client loses interest in receiving further updates to these records, it unsubscribes.

The DNS Push Notification server for a DNS zone is any server capable of generating the correct change notifications for a name. It may be a primary, secondary, or stealth name server [RFC7719].

The "\_dns-push-tls.\_tcp.<zone>" SRV record for a zone MAY reference the same target host and port as that zone's "\_dns-update-tls.\_tcp.<zone>" SRV record. When the same target host and port is offered for both DNS Updates and DNS Push Notifications, a client MAY use a single DSO session to that server for both DNS Updates and DNS Push Notification Subscriptions. DNS Updates and DNS Push Notifications may be handled on different ports on the same target host, in which case they are not considered to be the "same server" for the purposes of this specification, and communications with these two ports are handled independently. Supporting DNS Updates and DNS Push Notifications on the same server is OPTIONAL. A DNS Push Notification server is not required to support DNS Update.

Standard DNS Queries MAY be sent over a DNS Push Notification (i.e., DSO) session. For any zone for which the server is authoritative, it MUST respond authoritatively for queries for names falling within that zone (e.g., the "\_dns-push-tls.\_tcp.<zone>" SRV record) both for normal DNS queries and for DNS Push Notification subscriptions. For names for which the server is acting as a recursive resolver (e.g., when the server is the local recursive resolver) for any query for which it supports DNS Push Notification subscriptions, it MUST also support standard queries.

DNS Push Notifications impose less load on the responding server than rapid polling would, but Push Notifications do still have a cost, so DNS Push Notification clients MUST NOT recklessly create an excessive number of Push Notification subscriptions. Specifically:

(a) A subscription should only be active when there is a valid reason to need live data (for example, an on-screen display is currently showing the results to the user) and the subscription SHOULD be cancelled as soon as the need for that data ends (for example, when the user dismisses that display). In the case of a device like a smartphone which, after some period of inactivity, goes to sleep or otherwise darkens its screen, it should cancel its subscriptions when darkening the screen (since the user cannot see any changes on the

display anyway) and reinstate its subscriptions when re-awakening from display sleep.

(b) A DNS Push Notification client SHOULD NOT routinely keep a DNS Push Notification subscription active 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, just to keep a list in memory up to date so that if the user does choose to bring up an on-screen display of that data, it can be displayed really fast. DNS Push Notifications are designed to be fast enough that there is no need to pre-load a "warm" list in memory just in case it might be needed later.

Generally, as described in the DNS Stateful Operations specification [RFC8490], a client must not keep a DSO session to a server open indefinitely if it has no subscriptions (or other operations) active on that session. A client may close a DSO session immediately it becomes idle, and then if needed in the future, open a new session when required. Alternatively, a client may speculatively keep an idle DSO session open for some time, subject to the constraint that it must not keep a session open that has been idle for more than the session's idle timeout (15 seconds by default) [RFC8490].

Note that a DSO session that has an active DNS Push Notification subscription is not considered idle, even if there is no traffic flowing for an extended period of time. In this case the DSO inactivity timeout does not apply, because the session is not inactive, but the keepalive interval does still apply, to ensure generation of sufficient messages to maintain state in middleboxes (such as NAT gateways or firewalls) and for the client and server to periodically verify that they still have connectivity to each other. This is described in Section 6.2 of the DSO specification [RFC8490].

#### 4. State Considerations

Each DNS Push Notification server is capable of handling some finite number of Push Notification subscriptions. This number will vary from server to server and is based on physical machine characteristics, network bandwidth, and operating system resource allocation. After a client establishes a session to a DNS server, each subscription is individually accepted or rejected. Servers may employ various techniques to limit subscriptions to a manageable level. Correspondingly, the client is free to establish simultaneous sessions to alternate DNS servers that support DNS Push Notifications for the zone and distribute subscriptions at the client's discretion. In this way, both clients and servers can react to resource constraints.

## 5. Transport

Other DNS operations like DNS Update [RFC2136] MAY use either User Datagram Protocol (UDP) [RFC0768] or Transmission Control Protocol (TCP) [RFC0793] as the transport protocol, in keeping with the historical precedent that DNS queries must first be sent over UDP [RFC1123]. This requirement to use UDP has subsequently been relaxed [RFC7766].

In keeping with the more recent precedent, DNS Push Notification is defined only for TCP. DNS Push Notification clients MUST use DNS Stateful Operations [RFC8490] running over TLS over TCP [RFC7858].

Connection setup over TCP ensures return reachability and alleviates concerns of state overload at the server, which is a potential problem with connectionless protocols, which can be more vulnerable to being exploited by attackers using spoofed source addresses. All subscribers are guaranteed to be reachable by the server by virtue of the TCP three-way handshake. Flooding attacks are possible with any protocol, and a benefit of TCP is that there are already established industry best practices to guard against SYN flooding and similar attacks [SYN] [RFC4953].

Use of TCP also allows DNS Push Notifications to take advantage of current and future developments in TCP, such as Multipath TCP (MPTCP) [RFC6824], TCP Fast Open (TFO) [RFC7413], the TCP RACK fast loss detection algorithm [I-D.ietf-tcpm-rack], and so on.

Transport Layer Security (TLS) [RFC8446] is well understood, and used by many application-layer protocols running over TCP. TLS is designed to prevent eavesdropping, tampering, and message forgery. TLS is REQUIRED for every connection between a client subscriber and server in this protocol specification. Additional security measures such as client authentication during TLS negotiation may also be employed to increase the trust relationship between client and server.

## 6. Protocol Operation

The DNS Push Notification protocol is a session-oriented protocol, and makes use of DNS Stateful Operations (DSO) [RFC8490].

For details of the DSO message format refer to the DNS Stateful Operations specification [RFC8490]. Those details are not repeated here.

DNS Push Notification clients and servers **MUST** support DSO. A single server can support DNS Queries, DNS Updates, and DNS Push Notifications (using DSO) on the same TCP port.

A DNS Push Notification exchange begins with the client discovering the appropriate server, using the procedure described in Section 6.1, and then making a TLS/TCP connection to it.

A typical DNS Push Notification client will immediately issue a DSO Keepalive operation to request a session timeout and/or keepalive interval longer than the 15-second default values, but this is not required. A DNS Push Notification client **MAY** issue other requests on the session first, and only issue a DSO Keepalive operation later if it determines that to be necessary. Sending either a DSO Keepalive operation or a Push Notification subscription request over the TLS/TCP connection to the server signals the client's support of DSO and serves to establish a DSO session.

In accordance with the current set of active subscriptions, the server sends relevant asynchronous Push Notifications to the client. Note that a client **MUST** be prepared to receive (and silently ignore) Push Notifications for subscriptions it has previously removed, since there is no way to prevent the situation where a Push Notification is in flight from server to client while the client's UNSUBSCRIBE message cancelling that subscription is simultaneously in flight from client to server.

### 6.1. Discovery

The first step in establishing a DNS Push Notification subscription is to discover an appropriate DNS server that supports DNS Push Notifications for the desired zone.

The client begins by opening a DSO Session to its normal configured DNS recursive resolver and requesting a Push Notification subscription. This connection is made to TCP port 853, the default port for DNS-over-TLS [RFC7858]. If the request for a Push Notification subscription is successful, and the recursive resolver doesn't already have an active subscription for that name, type, and class, then the recursive resolver will make a corresponding Push Notification subscription on the client's behalf. Results received are relayed to the client. This is closely analogous to how a client sends a normal DNS query to its configured DNS recursive resolver which, if it doesn't already have appropriate answer(s) in its cache, issues an upstream query to satisfy the request.

In many contexts, the recursive resolver will be able to handle Push Notifications for all names that the client may need to follow. Use of VPN tunnels and Private DNS [RFC8499] can create some additional complexity in the client software here; the techniques to handle VPN tunnels and Private DNS for DNS Push Notifications are the same as those already used to handle this for normal DNS queries.

If the recursive resolver does not support DNS over TLS, or supports DNS over TLS but is not listening on TCP port 853, or supports DNS over TLS on TCP port 853 but does not support DSO on that port, then the DSO Session establishment will fail [RFC8490].

If the recursive resolver does support DSO but not Push Notification subscriptions, then it will return the DSO error code DSOTYPENI (11).

In some cases, the recursive resolver may support DSO and Push Notification subscriptions, but may not be able to subscribe for Push Notifications for a particular name. In this case, the recursive resolver should return SERVFAIL to the client. This includes being unable to establish a connection to the zone's DNS Push Notification server or establishing a connection but receiving a non success response code. In some cases, where the client has a pre-established trust relationship with the owner of the zone (that is not handled via the usual mechanisms for VPN software) the client may handle these failures by contacting the zone's DNS Push server directly.

In any of the cases described above where the client fails to establish a DNS Push Notification subscription via its configured recursive resolver, the client should proceed to discover the

appropriate server for direct communication. The client MUST also determine which TCP port on the server is listening for connections, which need not be (and often is not) the typical TCP port 53 used for conventional DNS, or TCP port 853 used for DNS over TLS.

The discovery algorithm described here is an iterative algorithm, which starts with the full name of the record to which the client wishes to subscribe. Successive SOA queries are then issued, trimming one label each time, until the closest enclosing authoritative server is discovered. There is also an optimization to enable the client to take a "short cut" directly to the SOA record of the closest enclosing authoritative server in many cases.

1. The client begins the discovery by sending a DNS query to its local resolver, with record type SOA [RFC1035] for the record name to which it wishes to subscribe. As an example, suppose the client wishes to subscribe to PTR records with the name `_ipp._tcp.headoffice.example.com` (to discover Internet Printing Protocol (IPP) printers [RFC8010] [RFC8011] being advertised in the head office of Example Company.). The client begins by sending an SOA query for `_ipp._tcp.headoffice.example.com` to the local recursive resolver. The goal is to determine the server authoritative for the name `_ipp._tcp.headoffice.example.com`. The closest enclosing DNS zone containing the name `_ipp._tcp.headoffice.example.com` could be `example.com`, or `headoffice.example.com`, or `_tcp.headoffice.example.com`, or even `_ipp._tcp.headoffice.example.com`. The client does not know in advance where the closest enclosing zone cut occurs, which is why it uses the iterative procedure described here to discover this information.
2. If the requested SOA record exists, it will be returned in the Answer section with a NOERROR response code, and the client has succeeded in discovering the information it needs.  
(This language is not placing any new requirements on DNS recursive resolvers. This text merely describes the existing operation of the DNS protocol [RFC1034] [RFC1035].)
3. If the requested SOA record does not exist, the client will get back a NOERROR/NODATA response or an NXDOMAIN/Name Error response. In either case, the local resolver would normally include the SOA record for the closest enclosing zone of the requested name in the Authority Section. If the SOA record is received in the Authority Section, then the client has succeeded in discovering the information it needs.  
(This language is not placing any new requirements on DNS recursive resolvers. This text merely describes the existing



operation of the DNS protocol regarding negative responses [RFC2308].)

4. If the client receives a response containing no SOA record, then it proceeds with the iterative approach. The client strips the leading label from the current query name, and if the resulting name has at least two labels in it, the client sends an SOA query for that new name, and processing continues at step 2 above, repeating the iterative search until either an SOA is received, or the query name consists of a single label, i.e., a Top Level Domain (TLD). In the case of a single-label name (TLD), this is a network configuration error, which should not happen, and the client gives up. The client may retry the operation at a later time, of the client's choosing, such after a change in network attachment.
5. Once the SOA is known (either by virtue of being seen in the Answer Section, or in the Authority Section), the client sends a DNS query with type SRV [RFC2782] for the record name "\_dns-push-tls.\_tcp.<zone>", where <zone> is the owner name of the discovered SOA record.
6. If the zone in question is set up to offer DNS Push Notifications then this SRV record MUST exist. (If this SRV record does not exist then the zone is not correctly configured for DNS Push Notifications as specified in this document.) The SRV "target" contains the name of the server providing DNS Push Notifications for the zone. The port number on which to contact the server is in the SRV record "port" field. The address(es) of the target host MAY be included in the Additional Section, however, the address records SHOULD be authenticated before use as described below in Section 7.2 and in the specification for using DANE TLSA Records with SRV Records [RFC7673], if applicable.
7. More than one SRV record may be returned. In this case, the "priority" and "weight" values in the returned SRV records are used to determine the order in which to contact the servers for subscription requests. As described in the SRV specification [RFC2782], the server with the lowest "priority" is first contacted. If more than one server has the same "priority", the "weight" indicates the weighted probability that the client should contact that server. Higher weights have higher probabilities of being selected. If a server is not willing to accept a subscription request, or is not reachable within a reasonable time, as determined by the client, then a subsequent server is to be contacted.

Each time a client makes a new DNS Push Notification subscription, it SHOULD repeat the discovery process in order to determine the preferred DNS server for that subscription at that time. If a client already has a DSO session with that DNS server the client SHOULD reuse that existing DSO session for the new subscription, otherwise, a new DSO session is established. The client MUST respect the DNS TTL values on records it receives while performing the discovery process and store them in its local cache with this lifetime (as it will generally be do anyway for all DNS queries it performs). This means that, as long as the DNS TTL values on the authoritative records are set to reasonable values, repeated application of the discovery process can be completed nearly instantaneously by the client, using only locally-stored cached data.

## 6.2. DNS Push Notification SUBSCRIBE

After connecting, and requesting a longer idle timeout and/or keepalive interval if necessary, a DNS Push Notification client then indicates its desire to receive DNS Push Notifications for a given domain name by sending a SUBSCRIBE request to the server. A SUBSCRIBE request is encoded in a DSO message [RFC8490]. This specification defines a primary DSO TLV for DNS Push Notification SUBSCRIBE Requests (tentatively DSO Type Code 0x40).

DSO messages with the SUBSCRIBE TLV as the Primary TLV are permitted in TLS early data, provided that the precautions described in Section 7.3 are followed.

The entity that initiates a SUBSCRIBE request is by definition the client. A server MUST NOT send a SUBSCRIBE request over an existing session from a client. If a server does send a SUBSCRIBE request over a DSO session initiated by a client, this is a fatal error and the client MUST forcibly abort the connection immediately.

Each SUBSCRIBE request generates exactly one SUBSCRIBE response from the server. The entity that initiates a SUBSCRIBE response is by definition the server. A client MUST NOT send a SUBSCRIBE response. If a client does send a SUBSCRIBE response, this is a fatal error and the server MUST forcibly abort the connection immediately.

### 6.2.1. SUBSCRIBE Request

A SUBSCRIBE request begins with the standard DSO 12-byte header [RFC8490], followed by the SUBSCRIBE primary TLV. A SUBSCRIBE request is illustrated in Figure 1.

The MESSAGE ID field MUST be set to a unique value, that the client is not using for any other active operation on this DSO session. For the purposes here, a MESSAGE ID is in use on this session if the client has used it in a request for which it has not yet received a response, or if the client has used it for a subscription which it has not yet cancelled using UNSUBSCRIBE. In the SUBSCRIBE response the server MUST echo back the MESSAGE ID value unchanged.

The other header fields MUST be set as described in the DSO specification [RFC8490]. The DNS OPCODE field contains the OPCODE value for DNS Stateful Operations (6). The four count fields must be zero, and the corresponding four sections must be empty (i.e., absent).

The DSO-TYPE is SUBSCRIBE (tentatively 0x40).

The DSO-LENGTH is the length of the DSO-DATA that follows, which specifies the name, type, and class of the record(s) being sought.

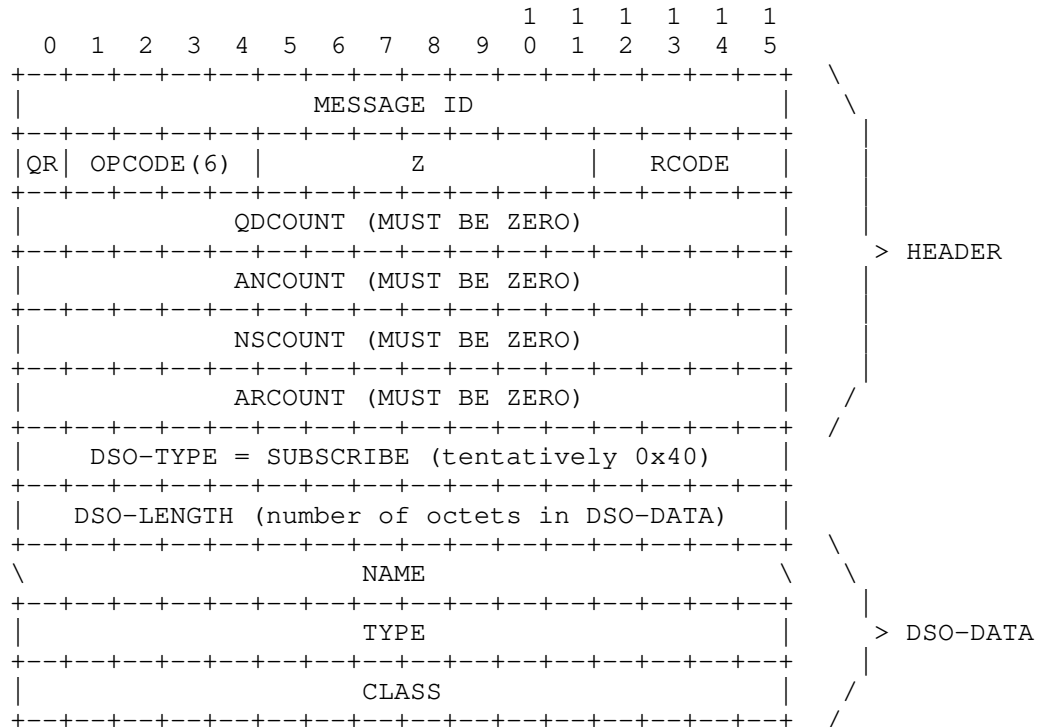


Figure 1: SUBSCRIBE Request

The DSO-DATA for a SUBSCRIBE request MUST contain exactly one NAME, TYPE, and CLASS. Since SUBSCRIBE requests are sent over TCP, multiple SUBSCRIBE DSO request messages can be concatenated in a single TCP stream and packed efficiently into TCP segments.

If accepted, the subscription will stay in effect until the client cancels the subscription using UNSUBSCRIBE or until the DSO session between the client and the server is closed.

SUBSCRIBE requests on a given session MUST be unique. A client MUST NOT send a SUBSCRIBE message that duplicates the NAME, TYPE and CLASS of an existing active subscription on that DSO session. For the purpose of this matching, the established DNS case-insensitivity for US-ASCII letters [RFC0020] applies (e.g., "example.com" and "Example.com" are the same). If a server receives such a duplicate SUBSCRIBE message, this is a fatal error and the server MUST forcibly abort the connection immediately.

DNS wildcarding is not supported. That is, a wildcard ("\*") in a SUBSCRIBE message matches only a literal wildcard character ("\*") in the zone, and nothing else.

Aliasing is not supported. That is, a CNAME in a SUBSCRIBE message matches only a literal CNAME record in the zone, and no other records with the same owner name.

A client may SUBSCRIBE to records that are unknown to the server at the time of the request (providing that the name falls within one of the zone(s) the server is responsible for) and this is not an error. The server MUST NOT return NXDOMAIN in this case. The server MUST accept these requests and send Push Notifications if and when matching records are found in the future.

If neither TYPE nor CLASS are ANY (255) then this is a specific subscription to changes for the given NAME, TYPE and CLASS. If one or both of TYPE or CLASS are ANY (255) then this subscription matches any type and/or any class, as appropriate.

NOTE: A little-known quirk of DNS is that in DNS QUERY requests, QTYPE and QCLASS 255 mean "ANY" not "ALL". They indicate that the server should respond with ANY matching records of its choosing, not necessarily ALL matching records. This can lead to some surprising and unexpected results, where a query returns some valid answers but not all of them, and makes QTYPE = 255 (ANY) queries less useful than people sometimes imagine.

When used in conjunction with SUBSCRIBE, TYPE and CLASS 255 should be interpreted to mean "ALL", not "ANY". After accepting a subscription where one or both of TYPE or CLASS are 255, the server MUST send Push Notification Updates for ALL record changes that match the subscription, not just some of them.

## 6.2.2. SUBSCRIBE Response

A SUBSCRIBE response begins with the standard DSO 12-byte header [RFC8490]. The QR bit in the header is set indicating it is a response. The header MAY be followed by one or more optional TLVs, such as a Retry Delay TLV. A SUBSCRIBE response is illustrated in Figure 2.

The MESSAGE ID field MUST echo the value given in the MESSAGE ID field of the SUBSCRIBE request. This is how the client knows which request is being responded to.

The other header fields MUST be set as described in the DSO specification [RFC8490]. The DNS OPCODE field contains the OPCODE value for DNS Stateful Operations (6). The four count fields must be zero, and the corresponding four sections must be empty (i.e., absent).

A SUBSCRIBE response message MUST NOT include a SUBSCRIBE TLV. If a client receives a SUBSCRIBE response message containing a SUBSCRIBE TLV then the response message is processed but the SUBSCRIBE TLV MUST be silently ignored.

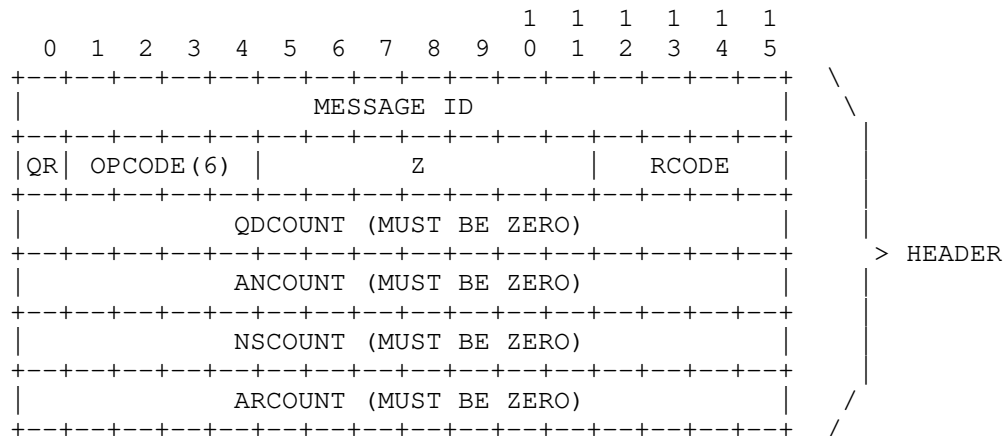


Figure 2: SUBSCRIBE Response

In the SUBSCRIBE response the RCODE indicates whether or not the subscription was accepted. Supported RCODEs are as follows:

Mnemonic	Value	Description
NOERROR	0	SUBSCRIBE successful.
FORMERR	1	Server failed to process request due to a malformed request.
SERVFAIL	2	Server failed to process request due to a problem with the server.
NOTIMP	4	Server does not implement DSO.
REFUSED	5	Server refuses to process request for policy or security reasons.
NOTAUTH	9	Server is not authoritative for the requested name.
DSOTYPENI	11	SUBSCRIBE operation not supported.

Table 1: SUBSCRIBE Response codes

This document specifies only these RCODE values for SUBSCRIBE Responses. Servers sending SUBSCRIBE Responses SHOULD use one of these values. Note that NXDOMAIN is not a valid RCODE in response to a SUBSCRIBE Request. However, future circumstances may create situations where other RCODE values are appropriate in SUBSCRIBE Responses, so clients MUST be prepared to accept SUBSCRIBE Responses with any other RCODE value.

If the server sends a nonzero RCODE in the SUBSCRIBE response, that means:

- a. the client is (at least partially) misconfigured, or
- b. the server resources are exhausted, or
- c. there is some other unknown failure on the server.

In any case, the client shouldn't retry the subscription to this server right away. If multiple SRV records were returned as described in Section 6.1, Paragraph 7, a subsequent server MAY be tried immediately.

If the client has other successful subscriptions to this server, these subscriptions remain even though additional subscriptions may be refused. Neither the client nor the server are required to close the connection, although, either end may choose to do so.

If the server sends a nonzero RCODE then it SHOULD append a Retry Delay TLV [RFC8490] to the response specifying a delay before the

client attempts this operation again. Recommended values for the delay for different RCODE values are given below. These recommended values apply both to the default values a server should place in the Retry Delay TLV, and the default values a client should assume if the server provides no Retry Delay TLV.

For RCODE = 1 (FORMERR) the delay may be any value selected by the implementer. A value of five minutes is RECOMMENDED, to reduce the risk of high load from defective clients.

For RCODE = 2 (SERVFAIL) the delay should be chosen according to the level of server overload and the anticipated duration of that overload. By default, a value of one minute is RECOMMENDED. If a more serious server failure occurs, the delay may be longer in accordance with the specific problem encountered.

For RCODE = 4 (NOTIMP), which occurs on a server that doesn't implement DNS Stateful Operations [RFC8490], it is unlikely that the server will begin supporting DSO in the next few minutes, so the retry delay SHOULD be one hour. Notethat in such a case, a server that doesn't implement DSO is unlikely to place a Retry Delay TLV in its response, so this recommended value in particular applies to what a client should assume by default.

For RCODE = 5 (REFUSED), which occurs on a server that implements DNS Push Notifications, but is currently configured to disallow DNS Push Notifications, the retry delay may be any value selected by the implementer and/or configured by the operator.

If the server being queried is listed in a "\_dns-push-tls.\_tcp.<zone>" SRV record for the zone, then this is a misconfiguration, since this server is being advertised as supporting DNS Push Notifications for this zone, but the server itself is not currently configured to perform that task. Since it is possible that the misconfiguration may be repaired at any time, the retry delay should not be set too high. By default, a value of 5 minutes is RECOMMENDED.

For RCODE = 9 (NOTAUTH), which occurs on a server that implements DNS Push Notifications, but is not configured to be authoritative for the requested name, the retry delay may be any value selected by the implementer and/or configured by the operator.

If the server being queried is listed in a "\_dns-push-tls.\_tcp.<zone>" SRV record for the zone, then this is a misconfiguration, since this server is being advertised as supporting DNS Push Notifications for this zone, but the server itself is not currently configured to perform that task. Since it



is possible that the misconfiguration may be repaired at any time, the retry delay should not be set too high. By default, a value of 5 minutes is RECOMMENDED.

For RCODE = 11 (DSOTYPENI), which occurs on a server that implements DSO but doesn't implement DNS Push Notifications, it is unlikely that the server will begin supporting DNS Push Notifications in the next few minutes, so the retry delay SHOULD be one hour.

For other RCODE values, the retry delay should be set by the server as appropriate for that error condition. By default, a value of 5 minutes is RECOMMENDED.

For RCODE = 9 (NOTAUTH), the time delay applies to requests for other names falling within the same zone. Requests for names falling within other zones are not subject to the delay. For all other RCODEs the time delay applies to all subsequent requests to this server.

After sending an error response the server MAY allow the session to remain open, or MAY send a DNS Push Notification Retry Delay Operation TLV instructing the client to close the session, as described in the DSO specification [RFC8490]. Clients MUST correctly handle both cases.

### 6.3. DNS Push Notification Updates

Once a subscription has been successfully established, the server generates PUSH messages to send to the client as appropriate. In the case that the answer set was already non-empty at the moment the subscription was established, an initial PUSH message will be sent immediately following the SUBSCRIBE Response. Subsequent changes to the answer set are then communicated to the client in subsequent PUSH messages.

A client **MUST NOT** send a PUSH message. If a client does send a PUSH message, or a PUSH message is sent with the QR bit set indicating that it is a response, this is a fatal error and the receiver **MUST** forcibly abort the connection immediately.

#### 6.3.1. PUSH Message

A PUSH unidirectional message begins with the standard DSO 12-byte header [RFC8490], followed by the PUSH primary TLV. A PUSH message is illustrated in Figure 3.

In accordance with the definition of DSO unidirectional messages, the MESSAGE ID field **MUST** be zero. There is no client response to a PUSH message.

The other header fields **MUST** be set as described in the DSO specification [RFC8490]. The DNS OPCODE field contains the OPCODE value for DNS Stateful Operations (6). The four count fields must be zero, and the corresponding four sections must be empty (i.e., absent).

The DSO-TYPE is PUSH (tentatively 0x41).

The DSO-LENGTH is the length of the DSO-DATA that follows, which specifies the changes being communicated.

The DSO-DATA contains one or more change notifications. A PUSH Message **MUST** contain at least one change notification. If a PUSH Message is received that contains no change notifications, this is a fatal error, and the client **MUST** forcibly abort the connection immediately.

The change notification records are formatted similarly to how DNS Resource Records are conventionally expressed in DNS messages, as illustrated in Figure 3, and are interpreted as described below.

The TTL field holds an unsigned 32-bit integer [RFC2181]. If the TTL is in the range 0 to 2,147,483,647 seconds (0 to  $2^{31} - 1$ , or 0x7FFFFFFF), then a new DNS Resource Record with the given name, type, class and RDATA is added. Type and class MUST NOT be 255 (ANY). If either type or class are 255 (ANY) this is a fatal error, and the client MUST forcibly abort the connection immediately. A TTL of 0 means that this record should be retained for as long as the subscription is active, and should be discarded immediately the moment the subscription is cancelled.

If the TTL has the value 0xFFFFFFFF, then the DNS Resource Record with the given name, type, class and RDATA is removed. Type and class MUST NOT be 255 (ANY). If either type or class are 255 (ANY) this is a fatal error, and the client MUST forcibly abort the connection immediately.

If the TTL has the value 0xFFFFFFFEE, then this is a 'collective' remove notification. For collective remove notifications RDLEN MUST be zero and consequently the RDATA MUST be empty. If a change notification is received where TTL = 0xFFFFFFFEE and RDLEN is not zero, this is a fatal error, and the client MUST forcibly abort the connection immediately.

There are three types of collective remove notification:

For collective remove notifications, if CLASS is not 255 (ANY) and TYPE is not 255 (ANY) then for the given name this removes all records of the specified type in the specified class.

For collective remove notifications, if CLASS is not 255 (ANY) and TYPE is 255 (ANY) then for the given name this removes all records of all types in the specified class.

For collective remove notifications, if CLASS is 255 (ANY), then for the given name this removes all records of all types in all classes. In this case TYPE MUST be set to zero on transmission, and MUST be silently ignored on reception.

## Summary of change notification types:

Remove all RRsets from a name, in all classes  
TTL = 0xFFFFFFFFE, RDLEN = 0, CLASS = 255 (ANY)

Remove all RRsets from a name, in given class:  
TTL = 0xFFFFFFFFE, RDLEN = 0, CLASS gives class, TYPE = 255 (ANY)

Remove specified RRset from a name, in given class:  
TTL = 0xFFFFFFFFE, RDLEN = 0  
CLASS and TYPE specify the RRset being removed

Remove an individual RR from a name:  
TTL = 0xFFFFFFFF  
CLASS, TYPE, RDLEN and RDATA specify the RR being removed

Add individual RR to a name  
TTL >= 0 and TTL <= 0x7FFFFFFF  
CLASS, TYPE, RDLEN, RDATA and TTL specify the RR being added

Note that it is valid for the RDATA of an added or removed DNS Resource Record to be empty (zero length). For example, an Address Prefix List Resource Record [RFC3123] may have empty RDATA. Therefore, a change notification with RDLEN = 0 does not automatically indicate a remove notification. If RDLEN = 0 and TTL is in the range 0 - 0x7FFFFFFF, this change notification signals the addition of a record with the given name, type, class, and empty RDATA. If RDLEN = 0 and TTL = 0xFFFFFFFF, this change notification signals the removal specifically of that single record with the given name, type, class, and empty RDATA.

If the TTL is any value other than 0xFFFFFFFF, 0xFFFFFFFFE, or a value in the range 0 - 0x7FFFFFFF, then the receiver SHOULD silently ignore this particular change notification record. The connection is not terminated and other valid change notification records within this PUSH message are processed as usual.

For efficiency, when generating a PUSH message, a server SHOULD include as many change notifications as it has immediately available to send, rather than sending each change notification as a separate DSO message. Once it has exhausted the list of change notifications immediately available to send, a server SHOULD then send the PUSH message immediately, rather than waiting to see if additional change notifications become available.

For efficiency, when generating a PUSH message, a server SHOULD use standard DNS name compression, with offsets relative to the beginning of the DNS message [RFC1035]. When multiple change notifications in a single PUSH message have the same owner name, this name compression can yield significant savings. Name compression should be performed as specified in Section 18.14 of the Multicast DNS specification [RFC6762], namely, owner names should always be compressed, and names appearing within RDATA should be compressed for only the RR types listed below:

NS, CNAME, PTR, DNAME, SOA, MX, AFSDB, RT, KX, RP, PX, SRV, NSEC

Servers may generate PUSH messages up to a maximum DNS message length of 16,382 bytes, counting from the start of the DSO 12-byte header. Including the two-byte length prefix that is used to frame DNS over a byte stream like TLS, this makes a total of 16,384 bytes. Servers MUST NOT generate PUSH messages larger than this. Where the immediately available change notifications are sufficient to exceed a DNS message length of 16,382 bytes, the change notifications MUST be communicated in separate PUSH messages of up to 16,382 bytes each. DNS name compression becomes less effective for messages larger than 16,384 bytes, so little efficiency benefit is gained by sending messages larger than this.

If a client receives a PUSH message with a DNS message length larger than 16,382 bytes, this is a fatal error, and the client MUST forcibly abort the connection immediately.

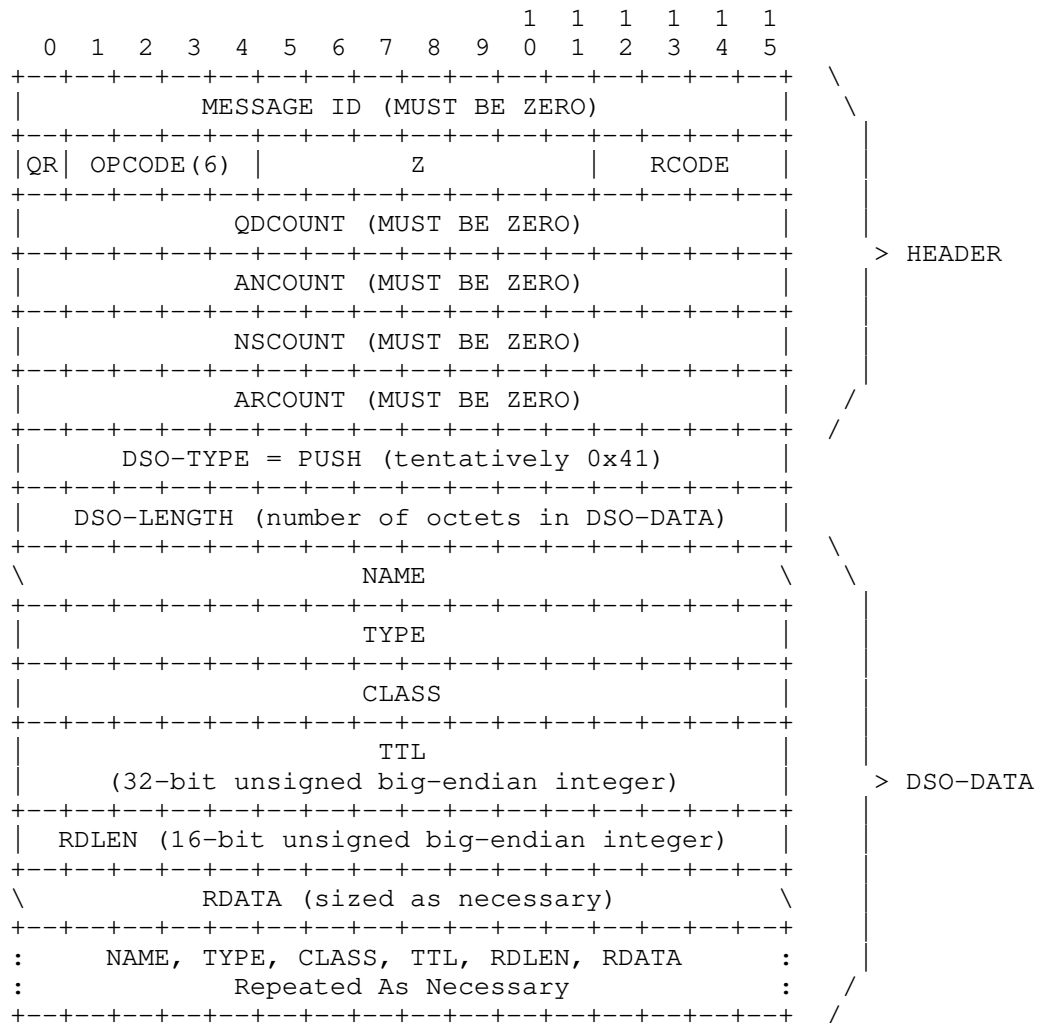


Figure 3: PUSH Message

When processing the records received in a PUSH Message, the receiving client MUST validate that the records being added or removed correspond with at least one currently active subscription on that session. Specifically, the record name MUST match the name given in the SUBSCRIBE request, subject to the usual established DNS case-insensitivity for US-ASCII letters. For individual additions and removals, if the TYPE in the SUBSCRIBE request was not ANY (255) then the TYPE of the record must match the TYPE given in the SUBSCRIBE request, and if the CLASS in the SUBSCRIBE request was not ANY (255) then the CLASS of the record must match the CLASS given in the

SUBSCRIBE request. For collective removals, at least one of the records being removed must match an active subscription. If a matching active subscription on that session is not found, then that particular addition/removal record is silently ignored. Processing of other additions and removal records in this message is not affected. The DSO session is not closed. This is to allow for the unavoidable race condition where a client sends an outbound UNSUBSCRIBE while inbound PUSH messages for that subscription from the server are still in flight.

In the case where a single change affects more than one active subscription, only one PUSH message is sent. For example, a PUSH message adding a given record may match both a SUBSCRIBE request with the same TYPE and a different SUBSCRIBE request with TYPE = 255 (ANY). It is not the case that two PUSH messages are sent because the new record matches two active subscriptions.

The server SHOULD encode change notifications in the most efficient manner possible. For example, when three AAAA records are removed from a given name, and no other AAAA records exist for that name, the server SHOULD send a "remove an RRset from a name" PUSH message, not three separate "remove an individual RR from a name" PUSH messages. Similarly, when both an SRV and a TXT record are removed from a given name, and no other records of any kind exist for that name, the server SHOULD send a "remove all RRsets from a name" PUSH message, not two separate "remove an RRset from a name" PUSH messages.

A server SHOULD combine multiple change notifications in a single PUSH message when possible, even if those change notifications apply to different subscriptions. Conceptually, a PUSH message is a session-level mechanism, not a subscription-level mechanism.

The TTL of an added record is stored by the client. While the subscription is active, the TTL is not decremented, because a change to the TTL would produce a new update. For as long as a relevant subscription remains active, the client SHOULD assume that when a record goes away the server will notify it of that fact. Consequently, a client does not have to poll to verify that the record is still there. Once a subscription is cancelled (individually, or as a result of the DSO session being closed) record aging for records covered by the subscription resumes and records are removed from the local cache when their TTL reaches zero.

#### 6.4. DNS Push Notification UNSUBSCRIBE

To cancel an individual subscription without closing the entire DSO session, the client sends an UNSUBSCRIBE message over the established DSO session to the server.

The entity that initiates an UNSUBSCRIBE message is by definition the client. A server **MUST NOT** send an UNSUBSCRIBE message over an existing session from a client. If a server does send an UNSUBSCRIBE message over a DSO session initiated by a client, or an UNSUBSCRIBE message is sent with the QR bit set indicating that it is a response, this is a fatal error and the receiver **MUST** forcibly abort the connection immediately.

##### 6.4.1. UNSUBSCRIBE Message

An UNSUBSCRIBE unidirectional message begins with the standard DSO 12-byte header [RFC8490], followed by the UNSUBSCRIBE primary TLV. An UNSUBSCRIBE message is illustrated in Figure 4.

In accordance with the definition of DSO unidirectional messages, the MESSAGE ID field **MUST** be zero. There is no server response to an UNSUBSCRIBE message.

The other header fields **MUST** be set as described in the DSO specification [RFC8490]. The DNS OPCODE field contains the OPCODE value for DNS Stateful Operations (6). The four count fields must be zero, and the corresponding four sections must be empty (i.e., absent).

The DSO-TYPE is UNSUBSCRIBE (tentatively 0x42).

The DSO-LENGTH field contains the value 2, the length of the 2-octet MESSAGE ID contained in the DSO-DATA.

The DSO-DATA contains the value previously given in the MESSAGE ID field of an active SUBSCRIBE request. This is how the server knows which SUBSCRIBE request is being cancelled. After receipt of the UNSUBSCRIBE message, the SUBSCRIBE request is no longer active.

It is allowable for the client to issue an UNSUBSCRIBE message for a previous SUBSCRIBE request for which the client has not yet received a SUBSCRIBE response. This is to allow for the case where a client starts and stops a subscription in less than the round-trip time to the server. The client is **NOT** required to wait for the SUBSCRIBE response before issuing the UNSUBSCRIBE message.



Consequently, it is possible for a server to receive an UNSUBSCRIBE message that does not match any currently active subscription. This can occur when a client sends a SUBSCRIBE request, which subsequently fails and returns an error code, but the client sent an UNSUBSCRIBE message before it became aware that the SUBSCRIBE request had failed. Because of this, servers MUST silently ignore UNSUBSCRIBE messages that do not match any currently active subscription.

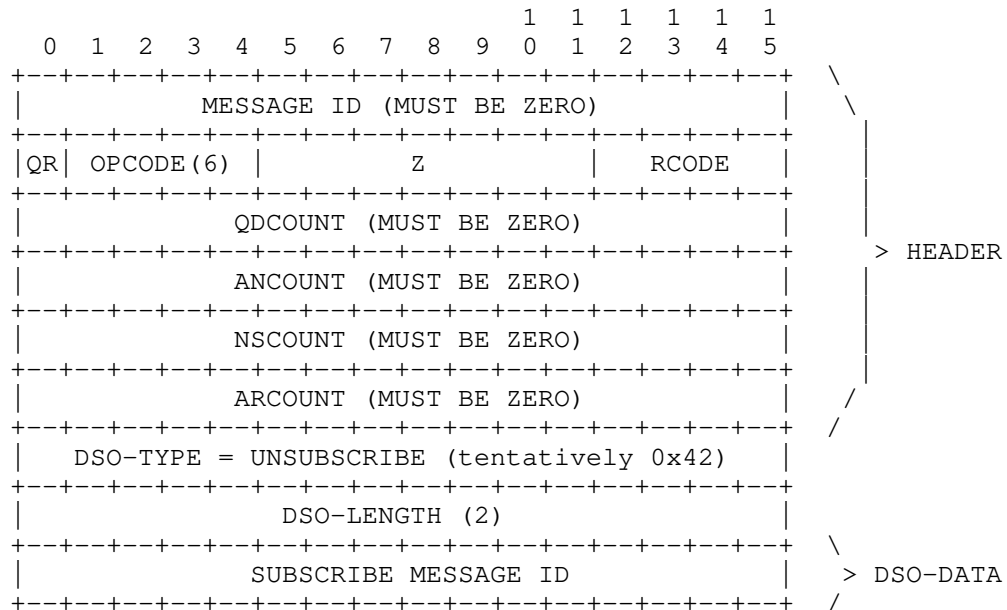


Figure 4: UNSUBSCRIBE Message

## 6.5. DNS Push Notification RECONFIRM

Sometimes, particularly when used with a Discovery Proxy [DisProx], a DNS Zone may contain stale data. When a client encounters data that it believes may be stale (e.g., an SRV record referencing a target host+port that is not responding to connection requests) the client can send a RECONFIRM message to ask the server to re-verify that the data is still valid. For a Discovery Proxy, this causes it to issue new Multicast DNS queries to ascertain whether the target device is still present. How the Discovery Proxy causes these new Multicast DNS queries to be issued depends on the details of the underlying Multicast DNS implementation being used. For example, a Discovery Proxy built on Apple's `dns_sd.h` API [SD-API] responds to a DNS Push Notification RECONFIRM message by calling the underlying API's `DNSServiceReconfirmRecord()` routine.

For other types of DNS server, the RECONFIRM operation is currently undefined, and SHOULD result in a NOERROR response, but otherwise need not cause any action to occur.

Frequent use of RECONFIRM operations may be a sign of network unreliability, or some kind of misconfiguration, so RECONFIRM operations MAY be logged or otherwise communicated to a human administrator to assist in detecting and remedying such network problems.

If, after receiving a valid RECONFIRM message, the server determines that the disputed records are in fact no longer valid, then subsequent DNS PUSH Messages will be generated to inform interested clients. Thus, one client discovering that a previously-advertised device (like a network printer) is no longer present has the side effect of informing all other interested clients that the device in question is now gone.

The entity that initiates a RECONFIRM message is by definition the client. A server MUST NOT send a RECONFIRM message over an existing session from a client. If a server does send a RECONFIRM message over a DSO session initiated by a client, or a RECONFIRM message is sent with the QR bit set indicating that it is a response, this is a fatal error and the receiver MUST forcibly abort the connection immediately.

#### 6.5.1. RECONFIRM Message

A RECONFIRM unidirectional message begins with the standard DSO 12-byte header [RFC8490], followed by the RECONFIRM primary TLV. A RECONFIRM message is illustrated in Figure 5.

In accordance with the definition of DSO unidirectional messages, the MESSAGE ID field MUST be zero. There is no server response to a RECONFIRM message.

The other header fields MUST be set as described in the DSO specification [RFC8490]. The DNS OPCODE field contains the OPCODE value for DNS Stateful Operations (6). The four count fields must be zero, and the corresponding four sections must be empty (i.e., absent).

The DSO-TYPE is RECONFIRM (tentatively 0x43).

The DSO-LENGTH is the length of the data that follows, which specifies the name, type, class, and content of the record being disputed.

The DSO-DATA for a RECONFIRM message MUST contain exactly one record. The DSO-DATA for a RECONFIRM message has no count field to specify more than one record. Since RECONFIRM messages are sent over TCP, multiple RECONFIRM messages can be concatenated in a single TCP stream and packed efficiently into TCP segments.

TYPE MUST NOT be the value ANY (255) and CLASS MUST NOT be the value ANY (255).

DNS wildcarding is not supported. That is, a wildcard ("\*") in a RECONFIRM message matches only a literal wildcard character ("\*") in the zone, and nothing else.

Aliasing is not supported. That is, a CNAME in a RECONFIRM message matches only a literal CNAME record in the zone, and no other records with the same owner name.

Note that there is no RDLEN field, since the length of the RDATA can be inferred from DSO-LENGTH, so an additional RDLEN field would be redundant.

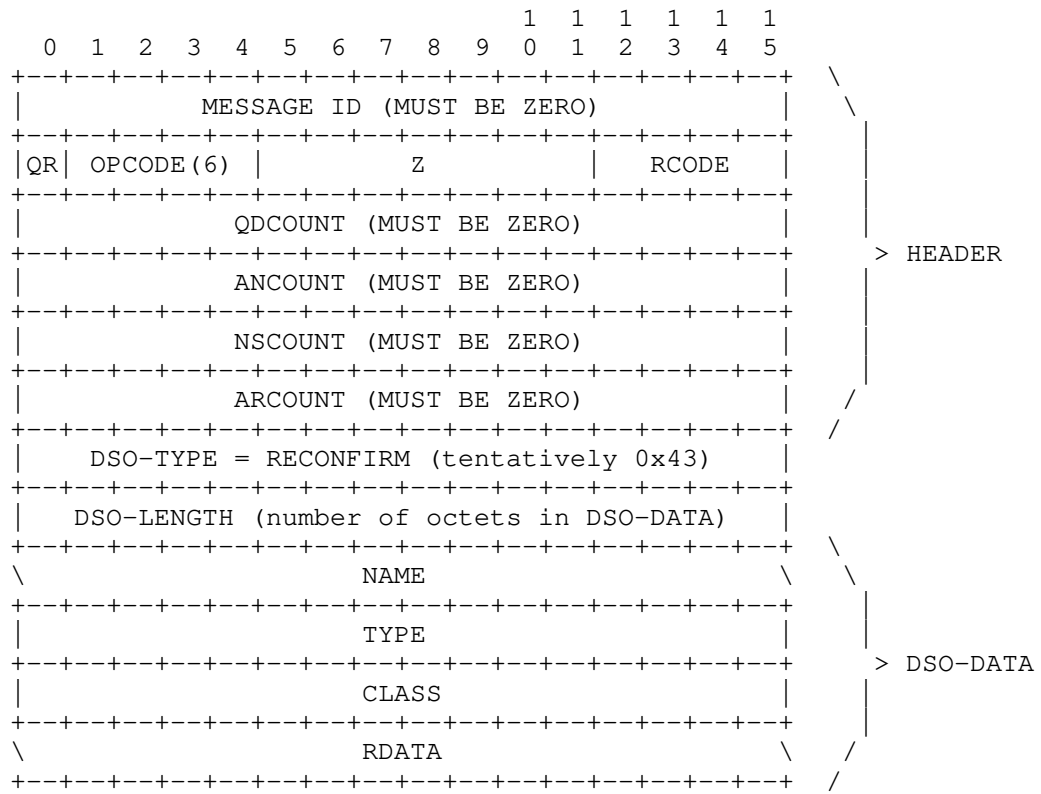


Figure 5: RECONFIRM Message

## 6.6. DNS Stateful Operations TLV Context Summary

This document defines four new DSO TLVs. As recommended in Section 8.2 of the DNS Stateful Operations specification [RFC8490], the valid contexts of these new TLV types are summarized below.

The client TLV contexts are:

C-P: Client request message, primary TLV  
 C-U: Client unidirectional message, primary TLV  
 C-A: Client request or unidirectional message, additional TLV  
 CRP: Response back to client, primary TLV  
 CRA: Response back to client, additional TLV

TLV Type	C-P	C-U	C-A	CRP	CRA
SUBSCRIBE	X				
PUSH					
UNSUBSCRIBE		X			
RECONFIRM		X			

Table 2: DSO TLV Client Context Summary

The server TLV contexts are:

S-P: Server request message, primary TLV  
 S-U: Server unidirectional message, primary TLV  
 S-A: Server request or unidirectional message, additional TLV  
 SRP: Response back to server, primary TLV  
 SRA: Response back to server, additional TLV

TLV Type	S-P	S-U	S-A	SRP	SRA
SUBSCRIBE					
PUSH		X			
UNSUBSCRIBE					
RECONFIRM					

Table 3: DSO TLV Server Context Summary

## 6.7. Client-Initiated Termination

An individual subscription is terminated by sending an UNSUBSCRIBE TLV for that specific subscription, or all subscriptions can be cancelled at once by the client closing the DSO session. When a client terminates an individual subscription (via UNSUBSCRIBE) or all subscriptions on that DSO session (by ending the session) it is signaling to the server that it is no longer interested in receiving those particular updates. It is informing the server that the server may release any state information it has been keeping with regards to these particular subscriptions.

After terminating its last subscription on a session via UNSUBSCRIBE, a client MAY close the session immediately, or it may keep it open if it anticipates performing further operations on that session in the future. If a client wishes to keep an idle session open, it MUST respect the maximum idle time required by the server [RFC8490].

If a client plans to terminate one or more subscriptions on a session and doesn't intend to keep that session open, then as an efficiency optimization it MAY instead choose to simply close the session, which implicitly terminates all subscriptions on that session. This may occur because the client computer is being shut down, is going to sleep, the application requiring the subscriptions has terminated, or simply because the last active subscription on that session has been cancelled.

When closing a session, a client should perform an orderly close of the TLS session. Typical APIs will provide a session close method that will send a TLS close\_notify alert (see Section 6.1 of the TLS 1.3 specification [RFC8446]). This instructs the recipient that the sender will not send any more data over the session. After sending the TLS close\_notify alert the client MUST gracefully close the underlying connection using a TCP FIN, so that the TLS close\_notify is reliably delivered. The mechanisms for gracefully closing a TCP connection with a TCP FIN vary depending on the networking API. For example, in the BSD Sockets API, sending a TCP FIN is achieved by calling "shutdown(s, SHUT\_WR)" and keeping the socket open until all remaining data has been read from it.

If the session is forcibly closed at the TCP level by sending a RST from either end of the connection, data may be lost.

## 6.8. Client Fallback to Polling

There are cases where a client may exhaust all avenues for establishing a DNS Push Notification subscription without success. This can happen if the client's configured recursive resolver does not support DNS over TLS, or supports DNS over TLS but is not listening on TCP port 853, or supports DNS over TLS on TCP port 853 but does not support DSO on that port, or for some other reason is unable to provide a DNS Push Notification subscription. In this case the client will attempt to communicate directly with an appropriate server, and it may be that the zone apex discovery fails, or there is no "\_dns-push-tls.\_tcp.<zone>" SRV record, or server indicated in the SRV record is misconfigured, or is unresponsive for some other reason.

Regardless of the reason for the failure, after being unable to establish the desired DNS Push Notification subscription, it is likely that the client will still wish to know the answer it seeks, even if that answer cannot be obtained with the timely change notifications provided by DNS Push Notifications. In such cases it is likely that the client will obtain the answer it seeks via a conventional DNS query instead, repeated at some interval to detect when the answer RRset changes.

In the case where a client responds to its failure to establish a DNS Push Notification subscription by falling back to polling with conventional DNS queries instead, the polling rate should be controlled to avoid placing excessive burden on the server. The interval between successive DNS queries for the same name, type and class SHOULD be at least the minimum of: 900 seconds (15 minutes), or two seconds more than the TTL of the answer RRset.

The reason that for TTLs shorter than 898 seconds the query should not be reissued until two seconds *after* the answer RRset has expired is to ensure that the answer RRset has also expired from the cache on the client's configured recursive resolver. Otherwise (particularly if the clocks on the client and the recursive resolver do not run at precisely the same rate) there's a risk of a race condition where the client queries its configured recursive resolver just as the answer RRset has one second remaining in the recursive resolver's cache. The client would then receive a reply telling it that the answer RRset has one second remaining, and then the client would then re-query the recursive resolver again one second later when the answer RRset actually expires, and only then would the recursive resolver issue a new query to fetch new fresh data from the authoritative server. Waiting until the answer RRset has definitely expired from the the cache on the client's configured recursive

resolver avoids this race condition and unnecessary additional queries it causes.

Each time a client is about to reissue its query to discover changes to the answer RRset, it should first make a new attempt to establish a DNS Push Notification subscription, using previously cached DNS answers as appropriate. After a temporary misconfiguration has been remedied, this allows a client that is polling to return to using DNS Push Notifications for asynchronous notification of changes.

## 7. Security Considerations

The Strict Privacy Usage Profile for DNS over TLS is REQUIRED for DNS Push Notifications [RFC8310]. Cleartext connections for DNS Push Notifications are not permissible. Since this is a new protocol, transition mechanisms from the Opportunistic Privacy profile are unnecessary.

Also, see Section 9 of the DNS over (D)TLS Usage Profiles document [RFC8310] for additional recommendations for various versions of TLS usage.

As a consequence of requiring TLS, client certificate authentication and verification may also be enforced by the server for stronger client-server security or end-to-end security. However, recommendations for security in particular deployment scenarios are outside the scope of this document.

DNSSEC is RECOMMENDED for the authentication of DNS Push Notification servers. TLS alone does not provide complete security. TLS certificate verification can provide reasonable assurance that the client is really talking to the server associated with the desired host name, but since the desired host name is learned via a DNS SRV query, if the SRV query is subverted then the client may have a secure connection to a rogue server. DNSSEC can provide added confidence that the SRV query has not been subverted.



### 7.1. Security Services

It is the goal of using TLS to provide the following security services:

**Confidentiality:** All application-layer communication is encrypted with the goal that no party should be able to decrypt it except the intended receiver.

**Data integrity protection:** Any changes made to the communication in transit are detectable by the receiver.

**Authentication:** An end-point of the TLS communication is authenticated as the intended entity to communicate with.

**Anti-replay protection:** TLS provides for the detection of and prevention against messages sent previously over a TLS connection (such as DNS Push Notifications). If prior messages are re-sent at a later time as a form of a man-in-the-middle attack then the receiver will detect this and reject the replayed messages.

Deployment recommendations on the appropriate key lengths and cypher suites are beyond the scope of this document. Please refer to TLS Recommendations [BCP195] for the best current practices. Keep in mind that best practices only exist for a snapshot in time and recommendations will continue to change. Updated versions or errata may exist for these recommendations.

### 7.2. TLS Name Authentication

As described in Section 6.1, the client discovers the DNS Push Notification server using an SRV lookup for the record name "\_dns-push-tls.\_tcp.<zone>". The server connection endpoint SHOULD then be authenticated using DANE TLSA records for the associated SRV record. This associates the target's name and port number with a trusted TLS certificate [RFC7673]. This procedure uses the TLS Server Name Indication (SNI) extension [RFC6066] to inform the server of the name the client has authenticated through the use of TLSA records. Therefore, if the SRV record passes DNSSEC validation and a TLSA record matching the target name is useable, an SNI extension must be used for the target name to ensure the client is connecting to the server it has authenticated. If the target name does not have a usable TLSA record, then the use of the SNI extension is optional. See Usage Profiles for DNS over TLS and DNS over DTLS [RFC8310] for more information on authenticating domain names.

### 7.3. TLS Early Data

DSO messages with the SUBSCRIBE TLV as the Primary TLV are permitted in TLS early data. Using TLS early data can save one network round trip, and can result in the client obtaining results faster.

However, there are some factors to consider before using TLS early data.

TLS Early Data is not forward secret. In cases where forward secrecy of DNS Push Notification subscriptions is required, the client should not use TLS Early Data.

With TLS early data there are no guarantees of non-replay between connections. If packets are duplicated and delayed in the network, the later arrivals could be mistaken for new subscription requests. Generally this is not a major concern, since the amount of state generated on the server for these spurious subscriptions is small and short-lived, since the TCP connection will not complete the three-way handshake. Servers MAY choose to implement rate-limiting measures that are activated when the server detects an excessive number of spurious subscription requests.

For further guidance please see discussion of zero round-trip data (Section 2.3, Section 8, and Appendix E.5) in the TLS 1.3 specification, [RFC8446].

### 7.4. TLS Session Resumption

TLS Session Resumption [RFC8446] is permissible on DNS Push Notification servers. However, closing the TLS connection terminates the DSO session. When the TLS session is resumed, the DNS Push Notification server will not have any subscription state and will proceed as with any other new DSO session. Use of TLS Session Resumption may allow a TLS connection to be set up more quickly, but the client will still have to recreate any desired subscriptions.

## 8. IANA Considerations

This document defines a new service name, only applicable for the TCP protocol, to be recorded in the IANA Service Type Registry [RFC6335] [SRVTYPE].

Name	Port	Value	Definition
DNS Push Notification Service Type	None	"_dns-push-tls._tcp"	Section 6.1

Table 4: IANA Service Type Assignments

This document defines four new DNS Stateful Operation TLV types to be recorded in the IANA DSO Type Code Registry [RFC8490] [DSOTYPE].

Name	Value	Early Data	Status	Definition
SUBSCRIBE	TBA (0x40)	OK	Standards Track	Section 6.2
PUSH	TBA (0x41)	NO	Standards Track	Section 6.3
UNSUBSCRIBE	TBA (0x42)	NO	Standards Track	Section 6.4
RECONFIRM	TBA (0x43)	NO	Standards Track	Section 6.5

Table 5: IANA DSO TLV Type Code Assignments

This document defines no new DNS OPCODEs or RCODEs.

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Stateful Multi-Link DNS Service Discovery  
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Abstract

This document proposes a stateful model for automating Multi-Link DNS Service Discovery, as an extension to the existing solution, which relies entirely on multicast DNS for discovering services, and does not formally maintain DNS zone state. When fully deployed this will confer several advantages: the ability to do DNS zone transfers, integrating with existing DNS infrastructure; the elimination of the need for regular multicast queries; and the ability for services to securely register and defend their names, preventing malicious spoofing of services on the network.

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## 1. Introduction

This document describes a way of doing DNS service discovery using DNS updates [RFC2136] rather than Multicast DNS [RFC6762]. Update validation is done on the same basis as Multicast DNS validation: the assumption is that a device connected to a local link is permitted to advertise services. However, in contrast to mDNS, which provides no mechanism for defending claims made by services, we propose that services should publish keys when initially registering names, and use SIG(0) authentication [RFC2931] when issuing DNS updates, using the published key.

Advantages of this proposal over the Multicast DNS Hybrid proposal [I-D.ietf-dnssd-hybrid] are:

- o Service advertisement does not require multicast.
- o Names are stored in DNS zone databases, and therefore can be published using standard DNS protocol features such as zone transfers.
- o Names can be defended by services that register them, so that it is difficult for an attacker to spoof an existing service.

There are, however, disadvantages to this approach. The first disadvantage is that this proposal does not actually eliminate multicast except in the case that all local services implement the

new update mechanism. Because this approach maintains state, and that state must include existing services that only support advertising via Multicast DNS, additional complexity is required to avoid retaining stale information; this complexity is not required for the stateless model proposed in the mDNS hybrid specification.

Another disadvantage of this approach is that it requires a stable naming infrastructure, and requires forwarders on each local link.

Some sites may find it preferable to rely on the stateless model for this reason. However, the stateful model provides sufficient advantages that it will make sense for some sites to implement it, even in the legacy mode that still supports service discovery using Multicast DNS.

## 2. Terminology

For the sake of brevity this document uses a number of abbreviations. These are expanded here:

mDNS Multicast DNS

ML-DNSSD Multi-Link DNS Service Discovery

## 3. Overview

Stateful Multi-Link DNS service discovery attempts to provide stateful service that is otherwise equivalent to Hybrid Unicast/Multicast DNS-Based Service Discovery, except that where possible multicast is avoided, and DNS zones are maintained such that full interoperation with the DNS is possible.

In order to accomplish this, service providers detect whether the local network supports stateful operation. If not, they simply provide service using mDNS as before. If so, they advertise services solely using DNS updates.

The DNS infrastructure is prepared to take DNS updates from devices on served networks; each unique link has a DNS forwarder that can detect that a packet originated locally and was not forwarded; this serves as validation that the service can be advertised.

Legacy services are supported using the same query process used in the hybrid model. Unlike with the hybrid model, however, discovered services are added to DNS zones.

As with the Hybrid model, services are discovered using unicast DNS. Multicast DNS service discovery is not usable on networks offering stateful multi-link DNS service discovery.

#### 4. Service Behavior

Hosts offering services using DNS service discovery must advertise these services. When a host offering services is connected to a network that does not offer stateful ML-DNSSD, it offers service discovery using Multicast DNS. When stateful ML-DNSSD is offered, the host does not offer service discovery using Multicast DNS.

##### 4.1. Detecting Stateful ML-DNSSD

In order to detect the presence of stateful ML-DNSSD, the host first performs registration domain discovery as in section 11 of [RFC6763] to acquire the name of the recommended default domain for registering services. If this process fails, Stateful ML-DNSSD is not present. If the process succeeds, the host looks for a PTR record using the well-known name "\_mldnssd.<domain>". If a PTR record is present, stateful ML-DNSSD is present.

Whenever a host detects a change to the link, a change to the IP addresses of the DNS resolvers provided on the link, or a change to the set of prefixes available on the link, the host re-tries the ML-DNSSD detection process.

##### 4.2. Publishing Services when Stateful ML-DNSSD is present

When stateful ML-DNSSD is present, a host adds its own information into the DNS. This information is added into three separate domains, as described in [I-D.ietf-dnssd-hybrid], section 4. The subdomain for services and the subdomain for names are a single subdomain, the recommended default domain for registering services. The IPv4 and IPv6 reverse-mapping zones are discovered by querying the well-known names "\_inaddr\_zone.<domain>" and "\_ipv6\_zone.<domain>" for PTR records. Each PTR record points to a specific zone to which updates are sent for IPv4 and IPv6 PTR records.

When a host that offers service first starts, it generates a key that is used to authenticate its DNS updates. This key is included whenever updating the service's name.

There are four domain names that are updated when a service advertises itself: the human-readable name, the machine-readable name, the service entry or entries, and the reverse-mapping pointers. The update proceeds by first adding or updating the machine-readable name, then adding a PTR record from the human-

readable name to the machine-readable name, then adding the reverse-mapping pointers, then adding the service. All updates are signed using SIG(0), authenticated with the private half of the host's key.

To add the machine-readable name, the host creates a DNS update that adds its name. The update is predicated on the nonexistence of the name. The update includes A and AAAA records for all of the hosts IP addresses except its link-local addresses. If this update succeeds, the machine-readable name has been added.

The update can fail for one of two reasons: either the signature was invalid, or the name already exists. In the former case, there is a bug, and the host should revert to providing service using mDNS.

Otherwise, if the update fails, the name already exists. The host creates a new update that deletes any A and AAAA RRsets and adds A and AAAA as before. There is no predicate for this update because the server should reject it if the name belongs to some other host (that is, has a different key). If this update fails, the host chooses a new machine-readable name and restarts the process.

The host then creates a PTR record under "Human Readable Name.<domain>" pointing to the machine-readable name. If this fails, the host must choose a different name and attempt to add it, until successful.

The host now creates updates for the reverse-mapping name of every IPv4 address it has that is not a link-local address, and adds a PTR record for each, pointing back at the machine-readable name. These adds should not fail. The process is repeated for every IPv6 address that is not link-local.

Finally, the host updates the well-known name for its service or services, adding an entry for each one. These names may already have SRV RRTypes, so this update must add records.

TODO: consider whether this is really the right way to do this--it's really complicated, and might be better done as a single HTTP request.

#### 4.3. Maintenance

Whenever the host adds its service to the DNS, it queries the machine-readable name to see what the TTL is. When 80% of that TTL has expired, the host refreshes all of its records. This prevents the records from being cleaned up by the DNS server as stale.

If the host is being shut down cleanly, it may remove all names and SRV records that it has added, or may remove all SRV records, leaving everything else intact in order to reserve the name. In most cases, it is better to leave the name.

## 5. Discovery

Service Discovery is done as per RFC 6763. Service discovery defaults to '.local', which is resolved using mDNS. If ML-DNSSD is present in any form, hosts doing service discovery should successfully discover this following the method described in RFC 6763. The service appears to the host doing service discovery the same way whether the hybrid model or the stateful model is being used. Hosts do not do mDNS if ML-DNSSD is present.

In order to support progressive queries in situations where legacy service discovery is in operation, hosts should use DNS push [I-D.ietf-dnssd-push].

## 6. DNS Service Infrastructure

Updates are sent to a forwarder on the local link. The forwarder uses neighbor discovery or ARP to validate each of the IP addresses presented in an A or AAAA record. Updates that do not come from local hosts are silently discarded. Other updates are forwarded to the primary name server without changes.

The primary server validates all updates by using the key stored on the machine-readable name to which the update points. If the update is an update of the machine-readable name, the update is validated based on the key stored at that name, if any, or else using the key contained in the update.

Any number of secondaries may be configured. Secondaries may also serve as forwarders if appropriate.

## 7. Legacy Service Discovery

Service discovery done as in mdns-hybrid, except that state is retained. State is periodically probed; stale state is discarded. Discovery service listens for initial service announcements.

## 8. Security Considerations

Any host on a network on which service discovery is supported can advertise services, which might be spoofed so as to capture private information. One solution to this is to only accept updates from designated infrastructure networks, so that networks to which regular

users connect are not permitted to advertise services. This will, however, limit the usefulness of various services which may be present on user devices.

It may be possible to only allow anonymous pairing [I-D.ietf-dnssd-pairing] on public-facing networks, so that infrastructure services cannot be advertised, but users can still rendezvous.

## 9. Normative References

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