Lecture 5: Flow Control

HW 1 due WEDNESDAY
Moving up the Stack

CSE 123 – Lecture 5: Flow Control
Reliable Transmission

- The data networking version of the same problem
  - How do we reliably send a message when packets can be lost/corrupted in the network?

- Two options
  - Detect a loss/corruption and retransmit
  - Send data redundantly to tolerate loss/corruption
Simple Idea: ARQ

- Receiver sends **acknowledgments** (ACKs)
  - Sender “times out” and retransmits if it doesn’t receive them
- Basic approach is generically referred to as **Automatic Repeat Request (ARQ)**
Not So Fast…

- Loss can occur on ACK channel as well
  - Sender cannot distinguish data loss from ACK loss
  - Sender will retransmit the data frame
- ACK loss—or early timeout—results in duplication
  - The receiver thinks the retransmission is new data

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Sequence Numbers

- Sequence numbers solve this problem
  - Receiver can simply ignore duplicate data
  - But must still send an ACK! (Why?)
- Simplest ARQ: Stop-and-wait
  - Only one outstanding frame at a time

How many bits does stop-and-wait need for sequence numbers?

A. 1  
B. 2  
C. Depends on timeout  
D. I don’t know
Stop-and-Wait Performance

- Lousy performance if time to transmit 1 packet (serialization delay) << time to get to the receiver (propagation delay)
  - How bad? Depends on round trip time (RTT)

- Want to utilize all available bandwidth
  - Need to keep more data “in flight”
  - How much? Called the bandwidth-delay product

- Also limited by quality of timeout (how long?)

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How many bits do we want to keep in flight?

A. Bandwidth * one-way delay
B. Bandwidth * round-trip delay
C. Depends on timeout
D. I don’t know
Pipelined Transmission

- Keep multiple packets “in flight”
  - Allows sender to make efficient use of the link
  - Sequence numbers ensure receiver can distinguish frames

- Sender buffers outstanding un-acked packets
  - Receiver ACKs the highest *consecutive* frame received
    » ACKs are *cumulative* (covers current frame and all previous)

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Go-Back-N

- Retransmit all packets from point of loss
  - Packets sent after loss event are ignored (i.e., sent again)

- Simple to implement (receiver doesn’t need to buffer)
- Sender controls how much data is “in flight”

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Send Window

- Bound on number of outstanding packets
  - Window “opens” upon receipt of *new* ACK
  - Window resets entirely upon a timeout

- Limits amount of waste
  - Still lots of duplicates in Go-Back-N
  - We can do better with *selective retransmission*
Sliding Window

- Single mechanism that supports:
  - Multiple outstanding packets
  - Reliable delivery
  - In-order delivery
  - Flow control

- Sender and receiver each maintain “window” abstractions to track outstanding packets
  - At the core of all modern ARQ protocols

- Go-Back-N is a special case
  - Receive window size of one
Sliding Window – Sender

- Window bounds outstanding unACKed data
  - Implies need for buffering at sender
- “Last” ACK applies to in-order data
- What to do on a timeout?
  - Go-Back-N: resend all unacknowledged data on timeout
  - Selective Retransmit: timer per packet, resend as needed
Sliding Window – Receiver

- Receiver buffers too:
  - data may arrive out-of-order
  - or faster than can be consumed

  » Flow control: tell sender how much buffer left at receiver

- Receiver sends an ACK for every segment:
  - Cumulative, Selective (exempt missing frames), or Negative (only missing frames)
Deciding When to Retransmit

- How do you know when a packet has been lost?
  - Ultimately sender uses timers to decide when to retransmit

- But how long should the timer be?
  - Too long: inefficient (large delays, poor use of bandwidth)
  - Too short: may retransmit unnecessarily (causing extra traffic)

- Right timer is based on the **round-trip time (RTT)**
  - Which can vary greatly for reasons well see later
Can we shortcut the timeout?

- Timeout is long in practice
  - Lots of variation in RTT and timeout must be conservative

- If packets are usually *in order* then duplicate cumulative ACKs imply that a packet was lost
  - Fast retransmit
    » When sender receives multiple duplicate acknowledgements resends missing packet

Duplicate ACKs for packet N indicate which packet was lost?

A. Packet N-1  
B. Packet N  
C. Packet N+1  
D. Packet N+2  
E. You can’t tell
Fast retransmit

- Don’t bother waiting
  - Receipt of duplicate acknowledgement (dupACK) indicates loss
  - Retransmit immediately

- Used in TCP
  - Need to be careful if frames can be reordered
  - TCP Reno identifies a loss if there are three duplicate ACKs in a row
For Next Time

- Read 5-5.2 in P&D
- HW 1 due at the beginning of class Wednesday
- (Keep) going on the project…