CS 798: Digital Forensics and Incident Response

Lecture 12 - Network Traffic Analysis

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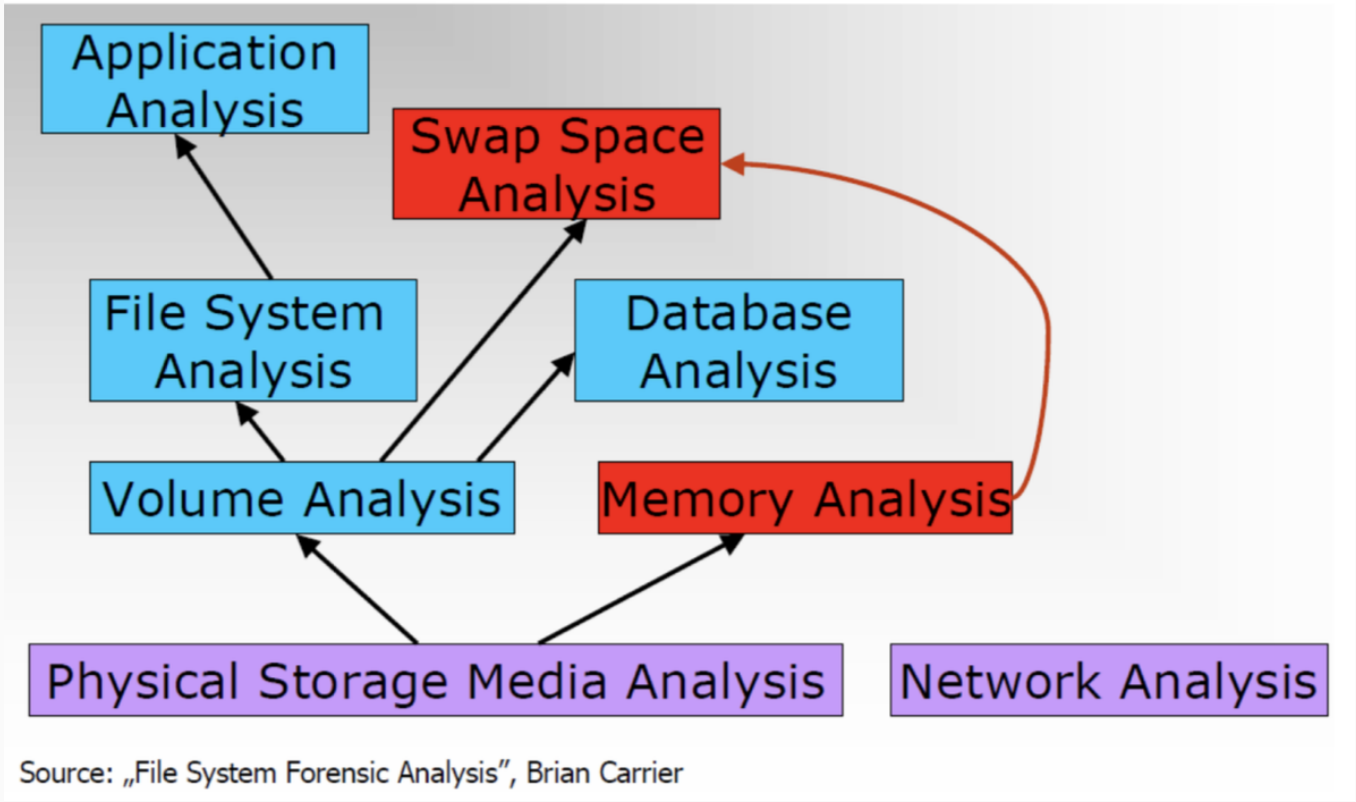
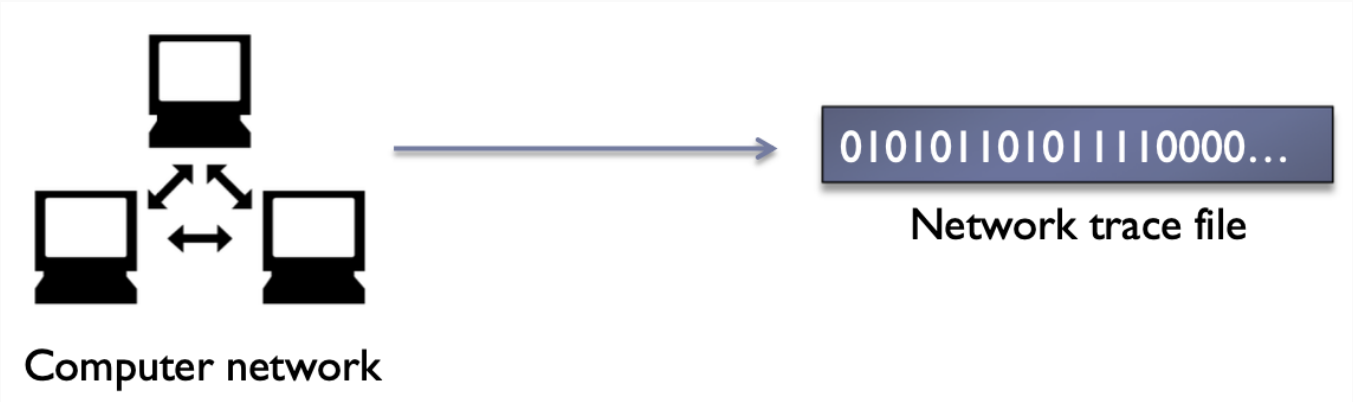
Evidence in network traffic



Source: „File System Forensic Analysis", Brian Carrier

- What are the major sources of evidences from the network?
- Which techniques can be used to extract and analyze them?

Network traffic analysis



- Allow us to collect information from network traces
- A network trace is a linearized bit-copy of collected data exchanged over the network
- Packet analysis, flow analysis, protocol analysis

Why would we want to analyze traffic?

- Detection of potential / and actual attacks
  - e.g., port scans, denial of service attacks
- Reverse engineering of communication protocols
  - e.g., analysis of botnet chatter, or proprietary protocols
- Inspect the contents of communications
  - e.g., intercept message exchanges, carve out file transmissions
- Detect payload patterns
  - e.g., website fingerprinting, DRM-protected content, Tor traffic

Outline

1. Packet analysis techniques
2. Flow analysis techniques
3. Protocol analysis techniques

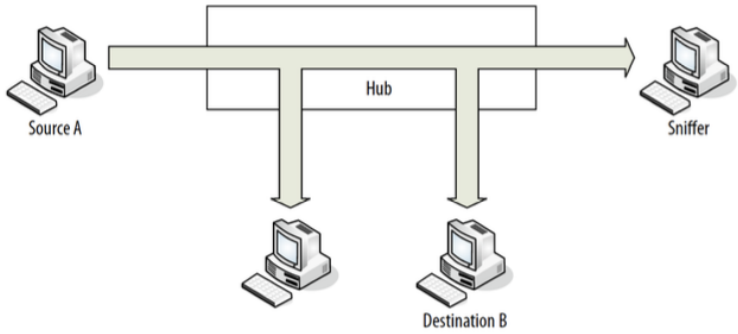
Packet analysis techniques

Packet sniffers and network traces

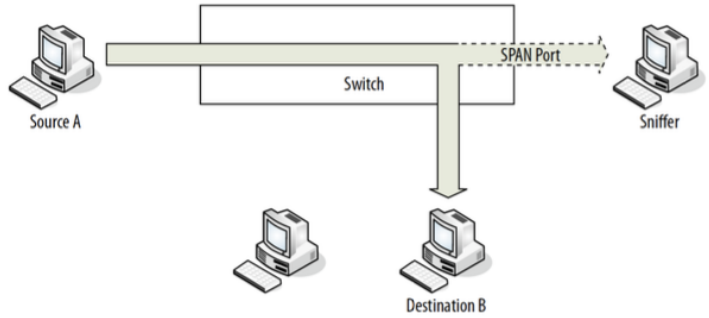
- Packet sniffing is the act of looking at packets as computers pass them over networks
- Packet sniffing is performed using packet sniffers
  - These programs are designed to capture raw data as it crosses the network and translate it into a human readable format for analysis
  - Can be used to capture only relevant packets
- Packet sniffers range from simple, command-line programs, like `tcpdump`, to complex programs with GUI

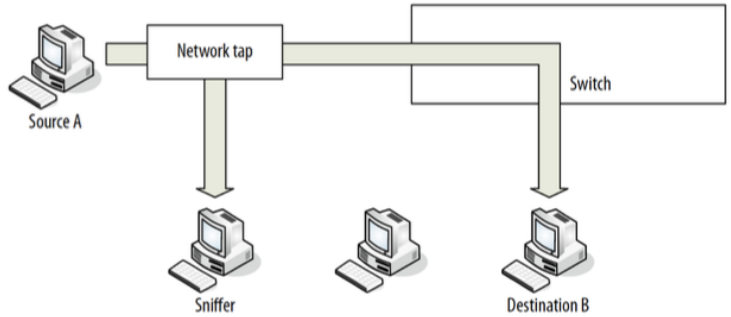
Where packet sniffers are usually placed

A. Connect the sniffer to a **hub**



B. Connect to **switch**'s SPAN port

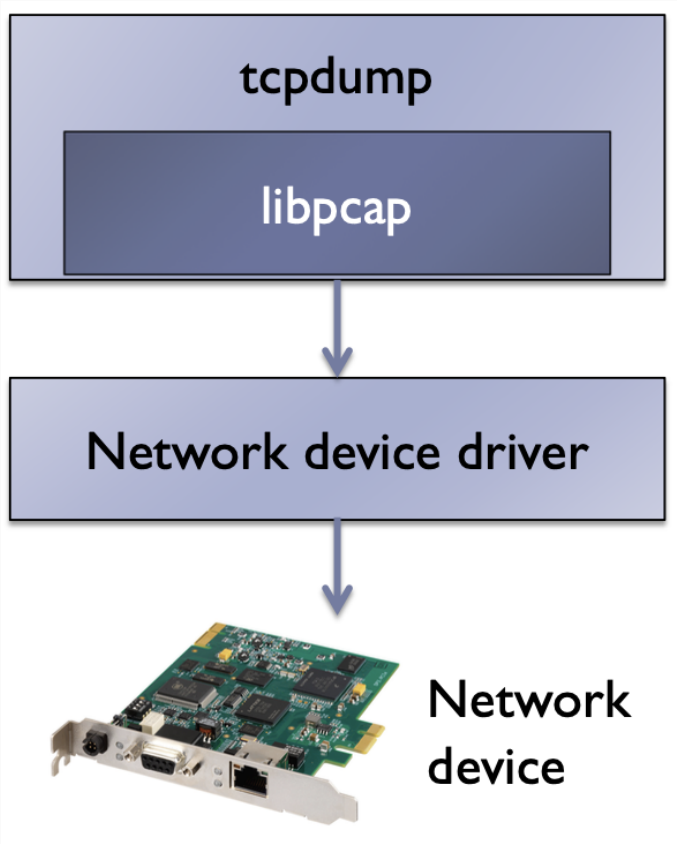




C. Use a **network tap** on the ingress connection side of the switch

Packet sniffers: `tcpdump`

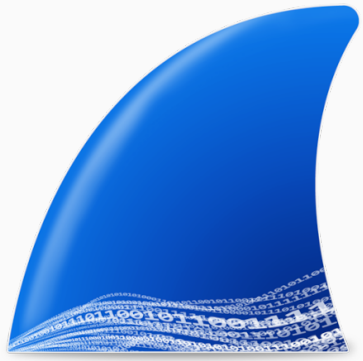
- `tcpdump` is the grandfather of open source packet sniffers
- Uses `libpcap`, which contains a set of system- independent functions for packet capture and network analysis
    - Also used by Wireshark



Packet analysis

- Involves the examination of contents and/or metadata of one or more packets
- Conducted to identify packets of interest and develop a strategy for flow analysis or content reconstruction

- There are many tools available for packet analysis
  - e.g., Wireshark (and `tshark`), `ngrep`, ...



Main packet analysis techniques

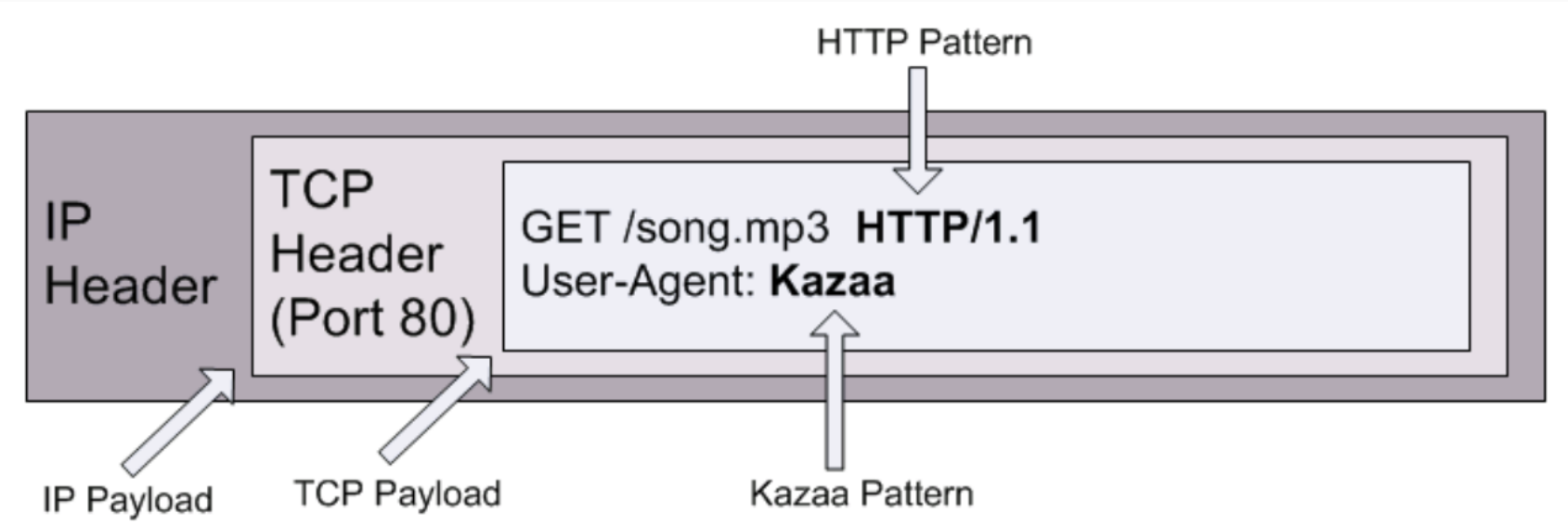
- **Parsing protocol fields**
  - Extract the contents of protocol fields within packets of interest (e.g., obtain TCP fields of packets)
- **Packet filtering**
  - Separate packets based on the values of fields in protocol metadata (e.g., filter interesting conversation snippet)
- **Pattern matching**
  - Identify packets of interest by matching specific values within the packet capture (e.g., keyword search)

Pattern matching

- Search the packet capture for patterns of interest
- Pattern examples:
  1. String match
  2. Source/destination match
  3. Numerical properties

Analysis by string matching

- String search in packet headers
  1. Many applications have pure textual identifiers
  2. Very easy if in a specific location within a packet
  3. Uniqueness not always guaranteed



Analysis by string matching

- String search in packet payload
  1. Example: Packets containing string from some list

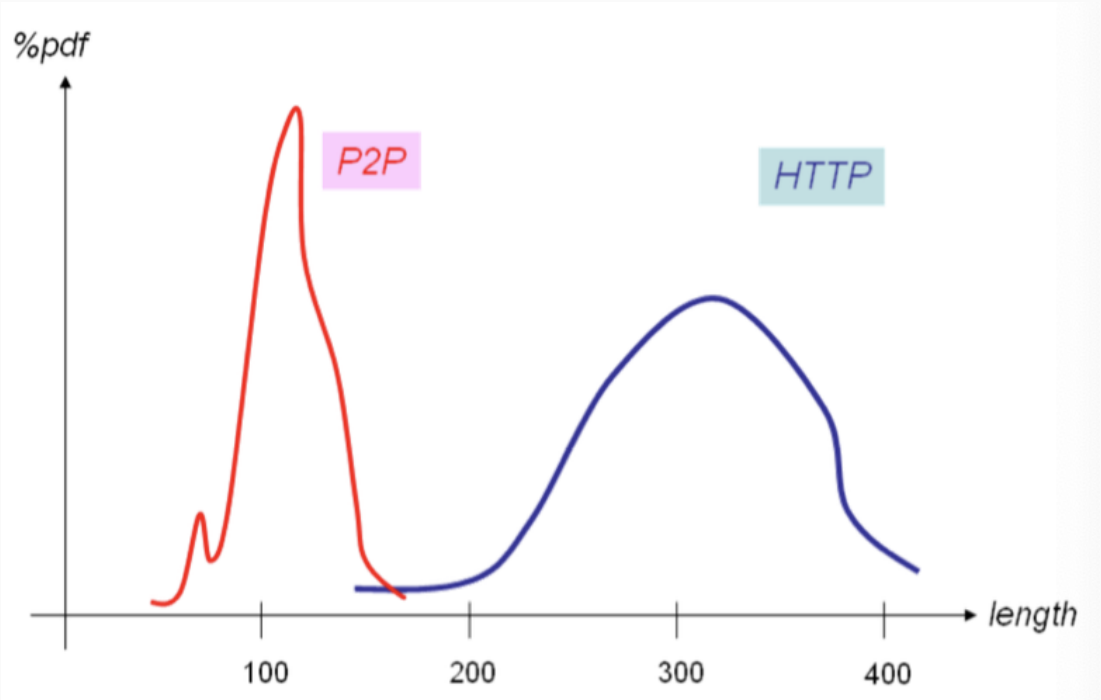
```
$ ngrep -I evidence01.pcap 'secret|recipe|Ann '
input: evidence01.pcap
match: secret|recipe|Ann
##################
T 192.168.1.158:51128 -> 64.12.24.50:443 [AP]
*..a.......... E4628778 .... Sec558user1 ..................... Here 's
the secret
recipe ... I just downloaded it from the file server. Jus
t copy to a thumb drive and you 're good to go &gt;:-) ....
##############################################################
T 192.168.1.158:51128 -> 64.12.24.50:443 [AP]
*..c.z......... G7174647 .... Sec558user1 .......R..7174647..F.CL...."
DEST
.......................F.......... '........... recipe.docx.
##################
```

Analysis by source/destination

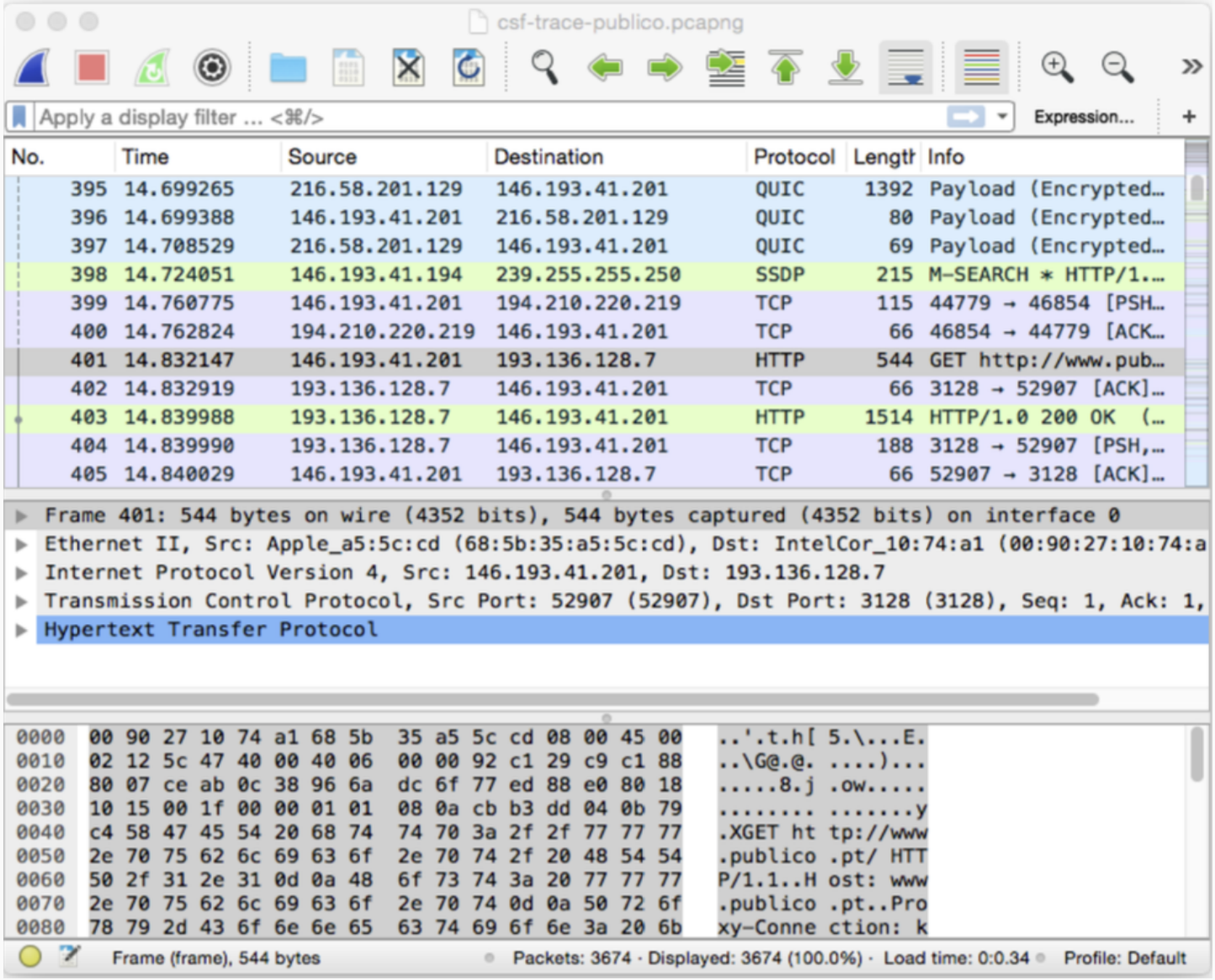
- Example: Packets from 117.17.199.20 to 239.192.152.143

Analysis by numerical properties

- One can look beyond content and focus on metadata:
  1. Packet size
  2. Payload/message length
  3. Position within packet
- Statistics: on average payload size is between X to Y
  1. Very effective analysis when applications use encryption

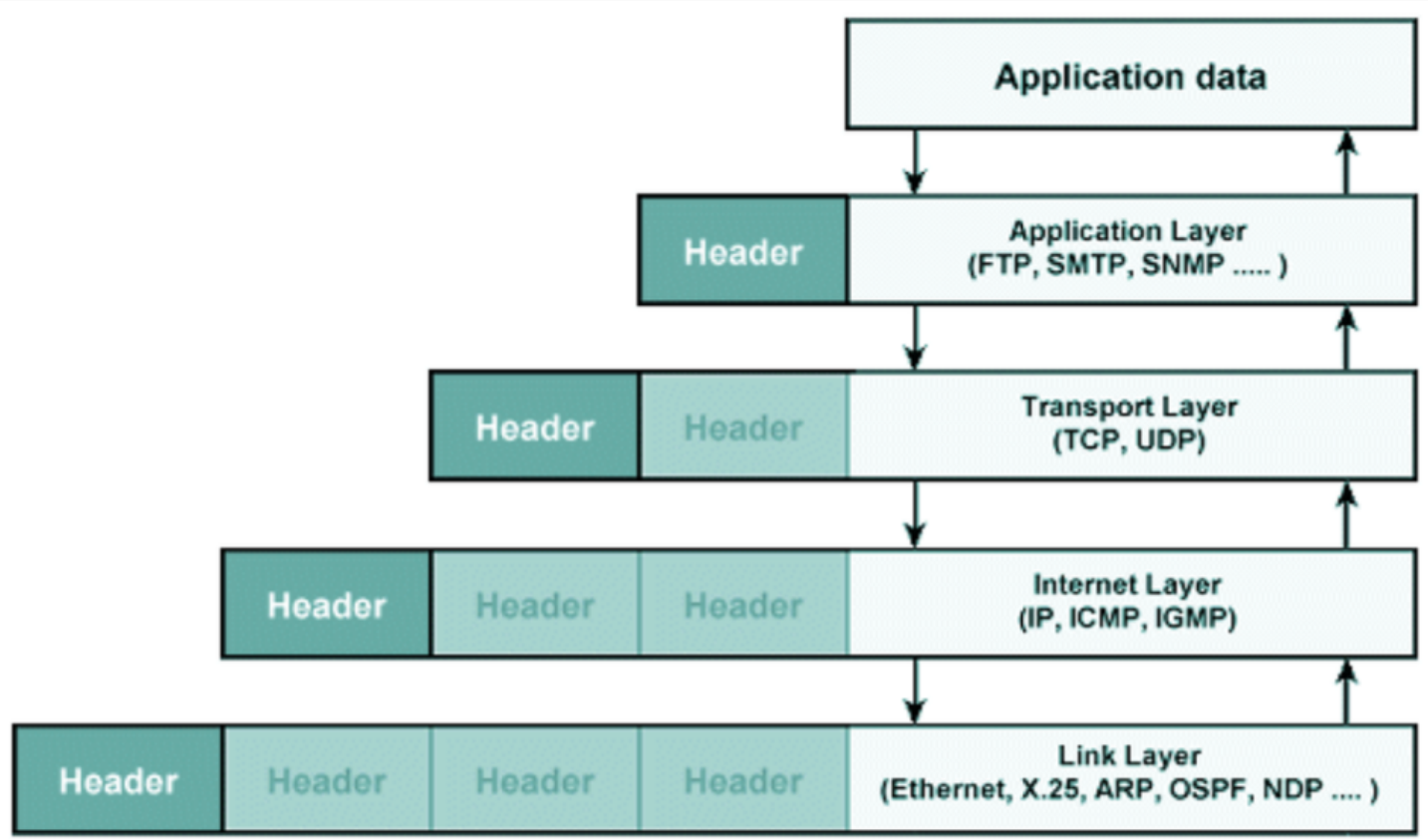


Use Case #1: Inspecting individual packets

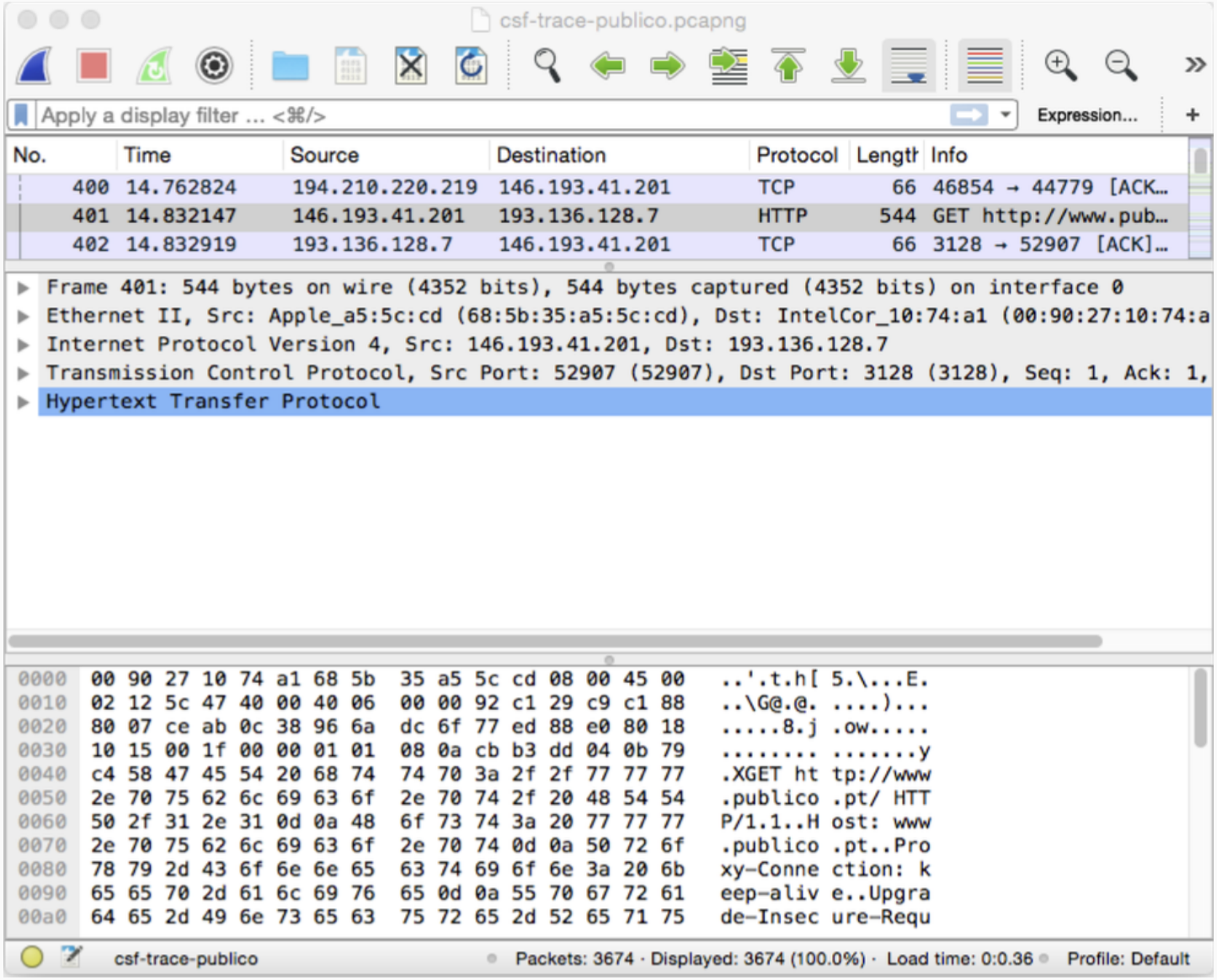


Packet network layers

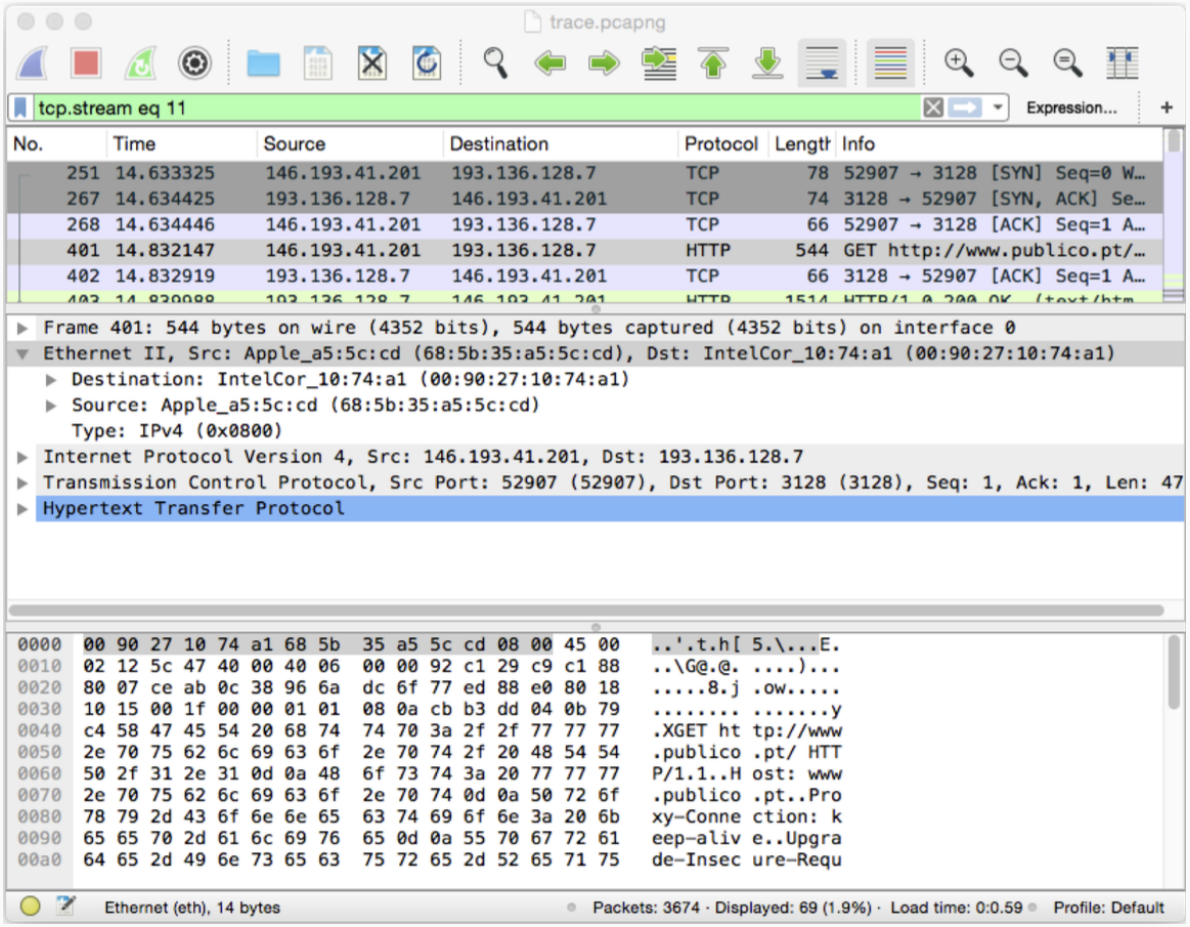
- Packets are encoded according to network layers
  - Each layer plays a role in abstracting out details of lower levels

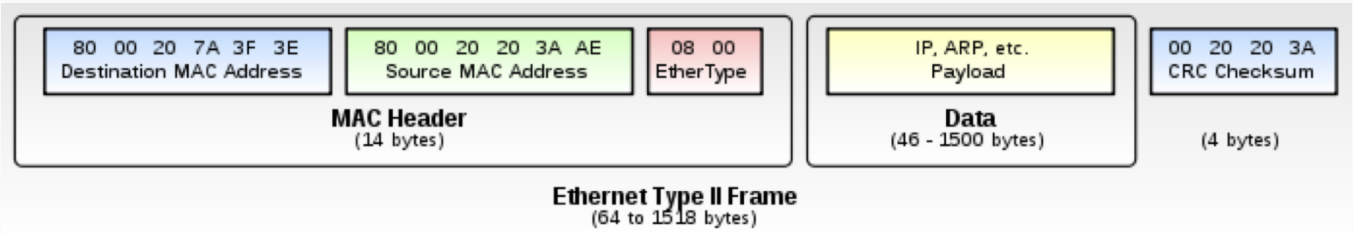


Wireshark lets us navigate across each layer

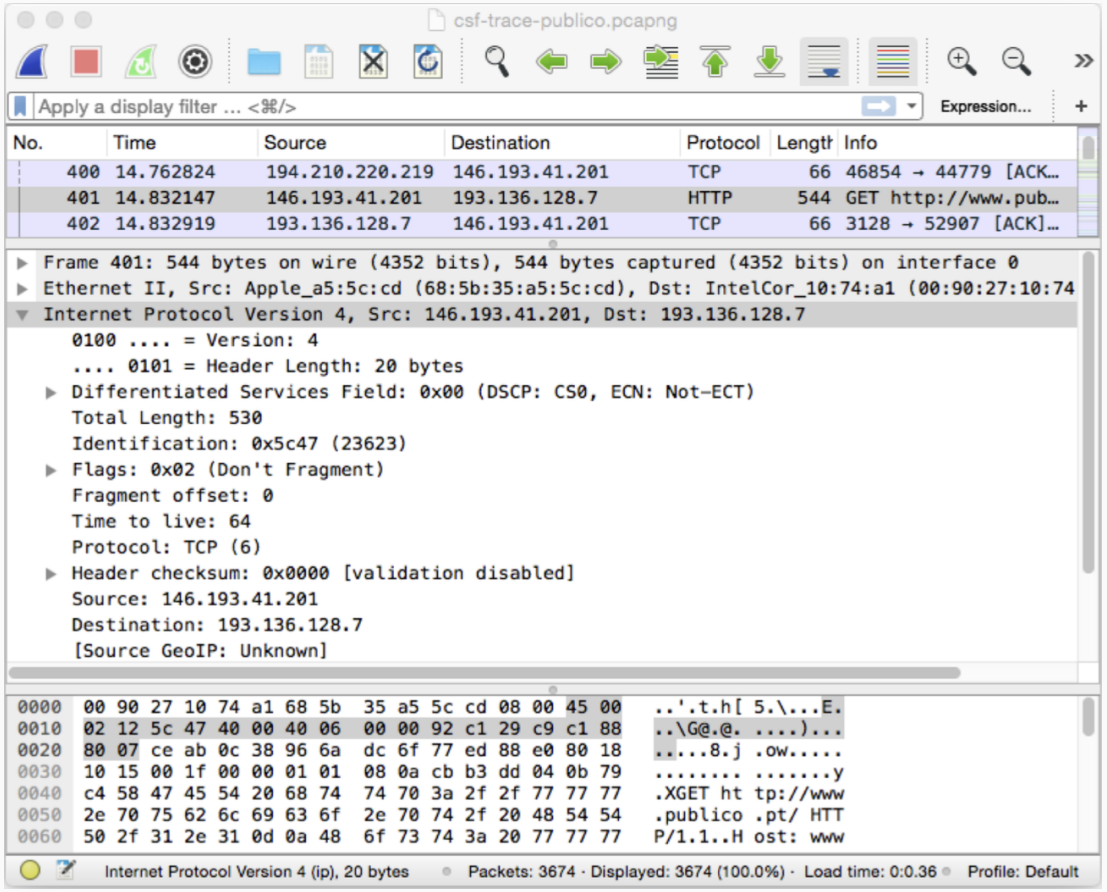


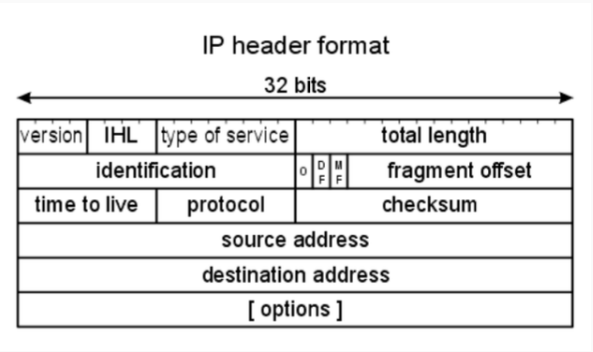
Ethernet frame of an IP packet



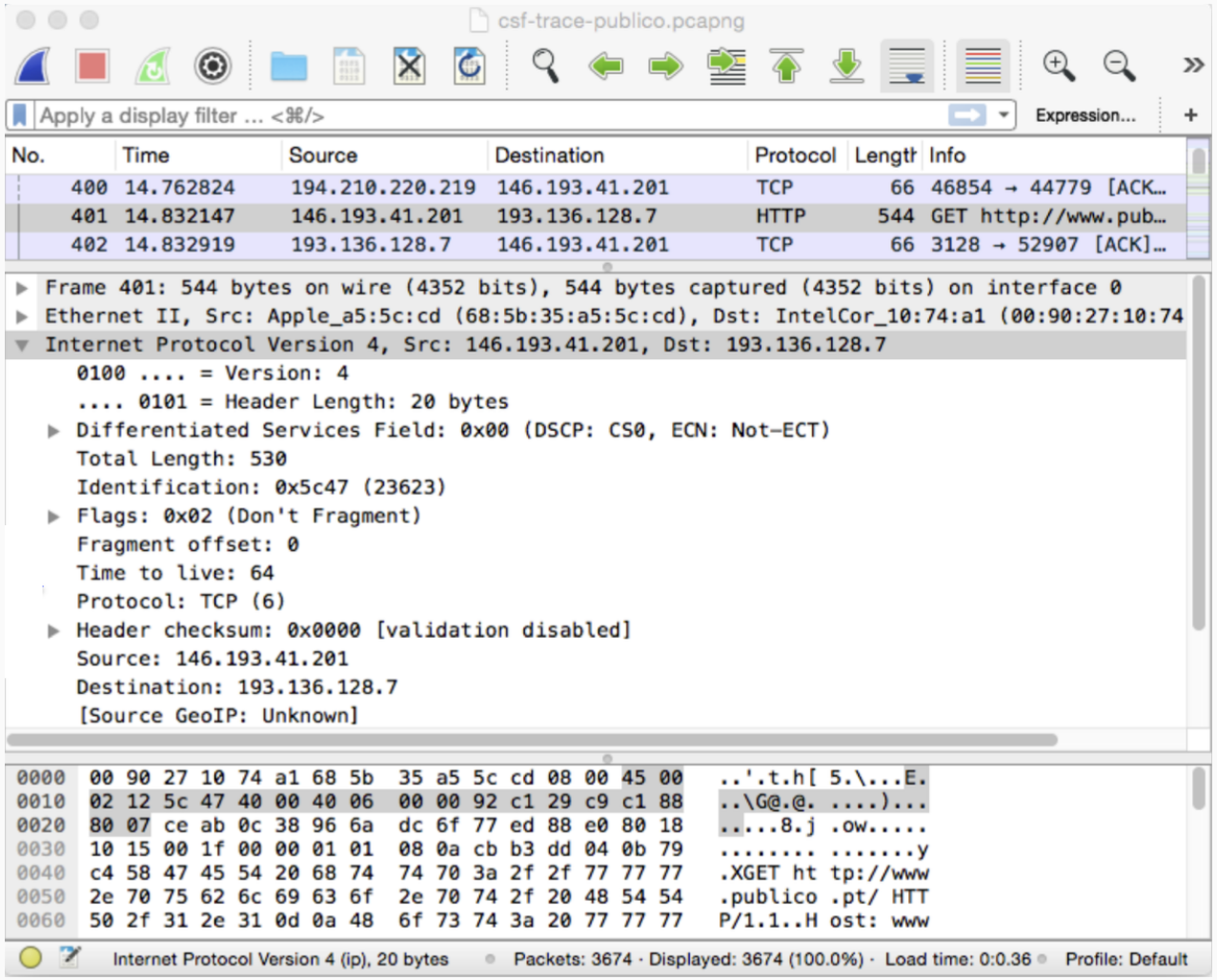


The Internet Protocol

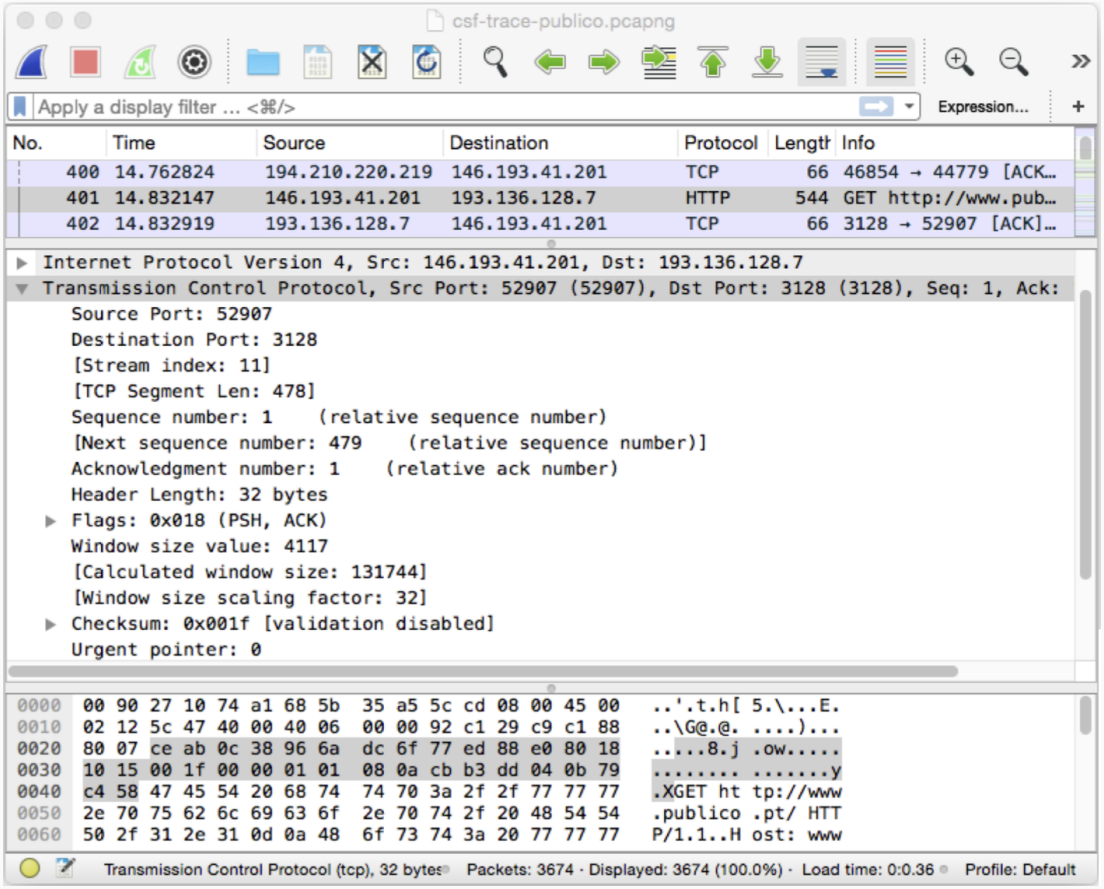


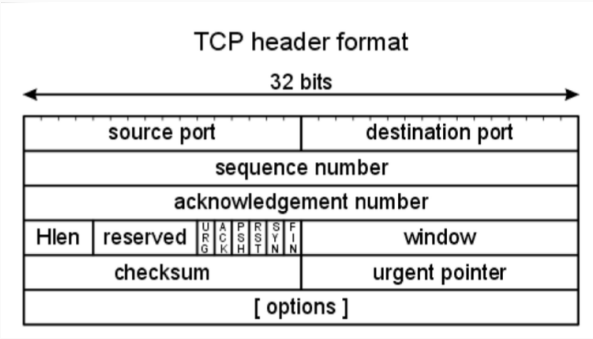


Parsing the IP packet payload

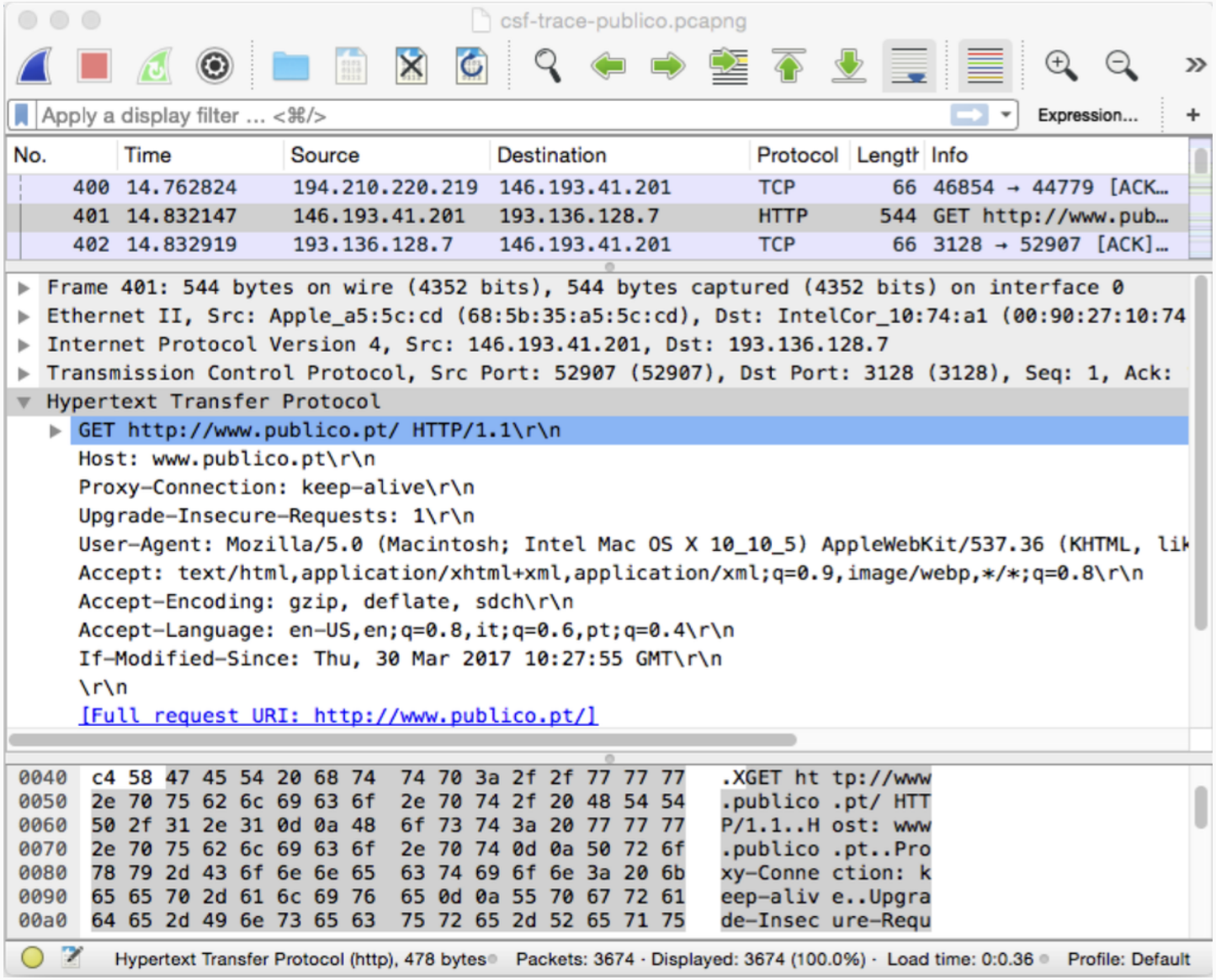


The TCP Protocol





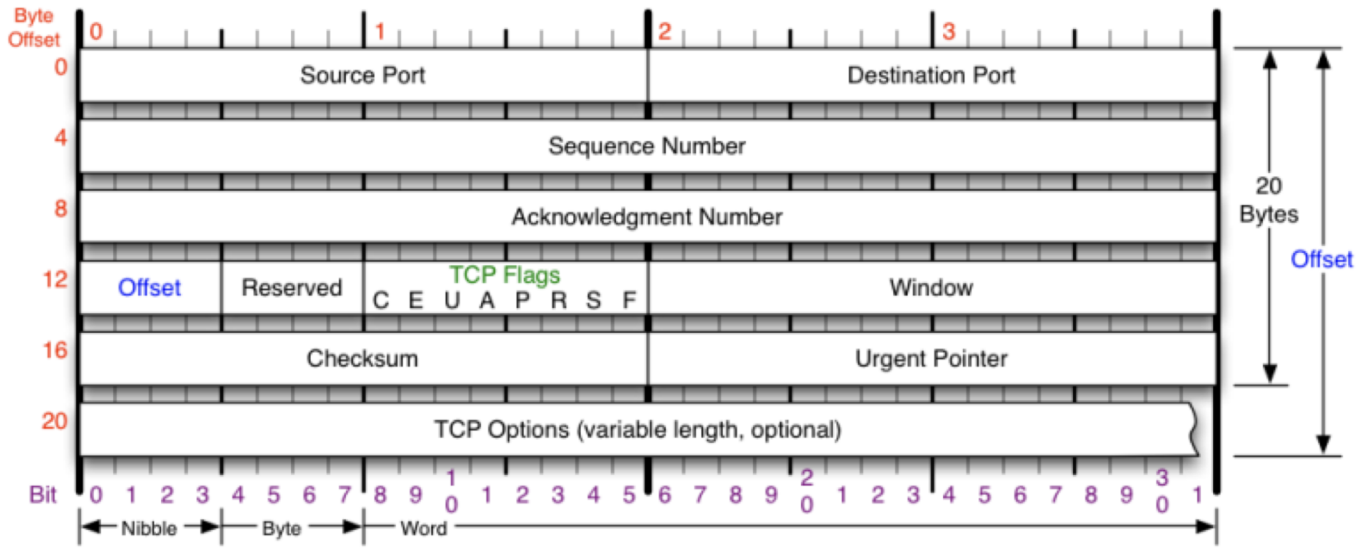
HTTP Request



Use Case #2: Detection of port scans

- Port scan attacks: aim to detect whether or not there is a service listening on a specific port
- Main techniques
  - SYN scan
  - ACK scan
  - UDP scan

TCP review: TCP header



TCP Flags

C E U A P R S F

Congestion Window
C 0x80 Reduced (CWR)
E 0x40 ECN Echo (ECE)
U 0x20 Urgent
A 0x10 Ack
P 0x08 Push
R 0x04 Reset
S 0x02 Syn
F 0x01 Fin

Congestion Notification

ECN (Explicit Congestion Notification). See RFC 3168 for full details, valid states below.

Packet State	DSB	ECN bits
Syn	0 0	1 1
Syn-Ack	0 0	0 1
Ack	0 1	0 0
No Congestion	0 1	0 0
No Congestion	1 0	0 0
Congestion	1 1	0 0
Receiver Response	1 1	0 1
Sender Response	1 1	1 1

TCP Options

0 End of Options List
1 No Operation (NOP, Pad)
2 Maximum segment size
3 Window Scale
4 Selective ACK ok
8 Timestamp

Checksum

Checksum of entire TCP segment and pseudo header (parts of IP header)

Offset

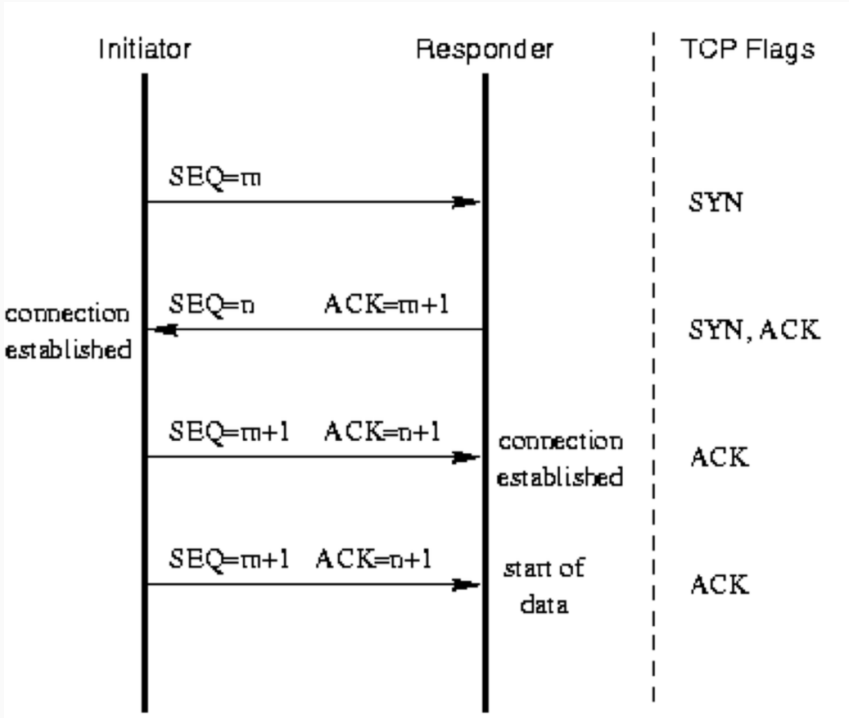
Number of 32-bit words in TCP header, minimum value of 5. Multiply by 4 to get byte count.

RFC 793

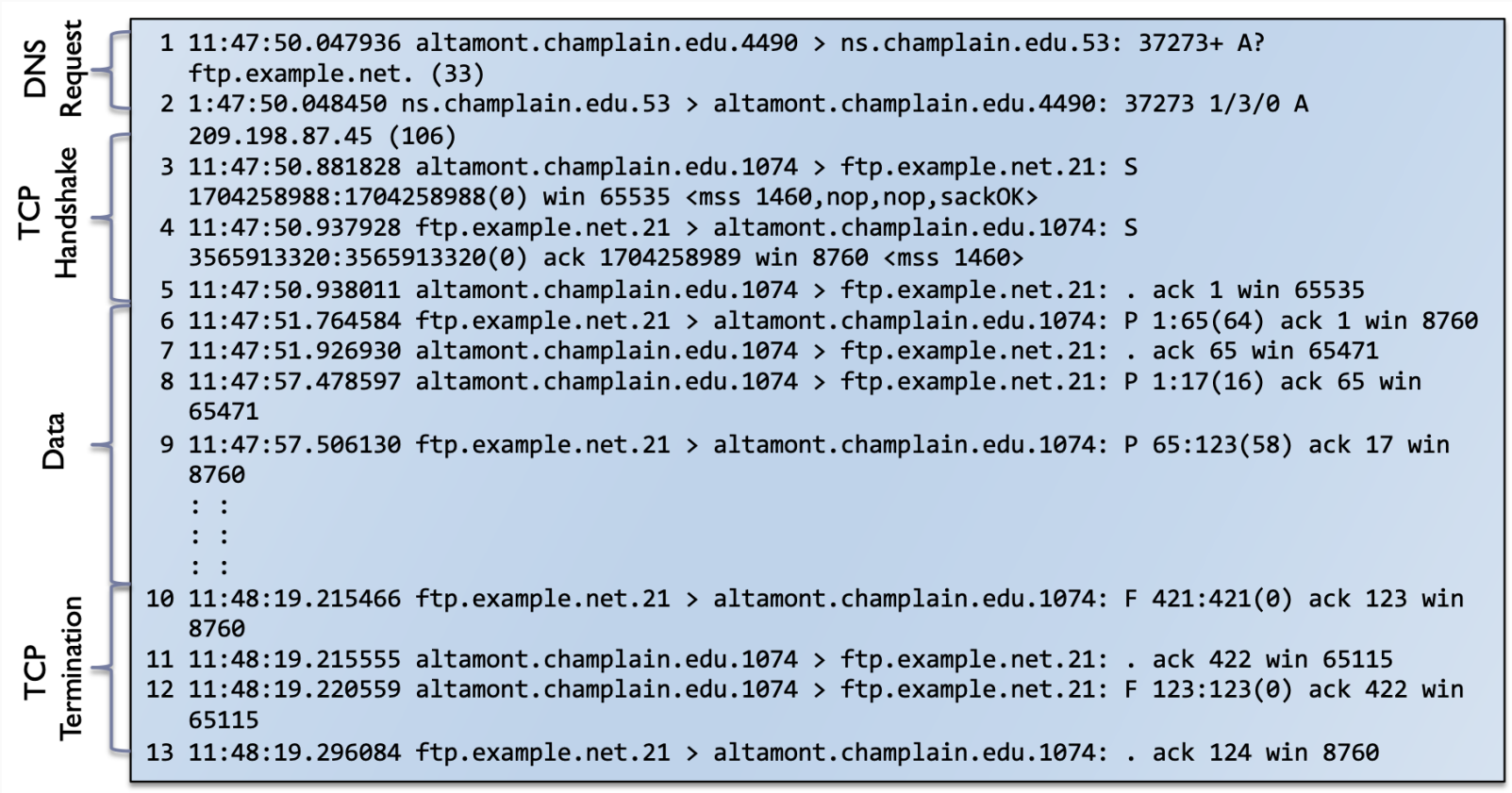
Please refer to RFC 793 for the complete Transmission Control Protocol (TCP) Specification.

TCP review: TCP 3-way handshake

- Client sends a SYN to the server. Client sets the segment's sequence number to rand value `m`
- Server replies with a SYN-ACK. The ack number is set to `m+1`, and the sequence number that the server chooses for the packet is another random number `n`
- Client sends an ACK back to the server



TCP review: Connection setup



SYN scan

- One of the most common scans out there today
  - If there is a service, then that would elicit a SYN/ACK
  - If the result is RST/ACK then there is no service listening
- SYN scan to 192.168.1.100 on port 80

```
14:08:49.973455 IP (tos 0x8, ttl  64, id 64574, offset 0, flags [none],
length: 40) 192.168.1.102.2640 > 192.168.1.100.80: S [tcp sum ok]
1104445670:1104445670(0) win 512
 0x0000:  4508 0028 fc3e 0000 4006 fa6e c0a8 0166  E..(.>..@..n...f
 0x0010:  c0a8 0164 0a50 0050 41d4 80e6 4ad4 27ec  ...d.P.PA...J.'.
 0x0020:  5002 0200 e9ac 0000                      P.......
```

UDP scan

- Useful for discovering UDP based services such as DNS
  - If computer has a service listening you will get nothing back
  - Otherwise, you will get an ICMP port unreachable message
- UDP scan to 192.168.1.100 on port 53

```
14:27:09.947037 IP (tos 0x10, ttl  64, id 22934, offset 0, flags [none],
length: 28) 192.168.1.102.2695 > 192.168.1.100.53: [udp sum ok] [|domain]
0x0000:  4510 001c 5996 0000 4011 9d10 c0a8 0166  E...Y...@......f
0x0010:  c0a8 0164 0a87 0035 0008 7107            ...d...5..q.
```

Analysis by source / destination

- Port scan using TCP ports from a user-defined list
  - From host `holmes` to host `watson` (responses not shown)

```
13:21:45.010117 holmes.4033 > watson.220: S 93266:93266(0) win 8192
13:21:45.011128 holmes.4003 > watson.ftp: S 92918:92918(0) win 8192
13:21:45.012014 holmes.4005 > watson.telnet: S 92946:92946(0) win 8192
13:21:45.013095 holmes.4004 > watson.22: S 92932:92932(0) win 8192
13:21:45.014107 holmes.4019 > watson.110: S 93094:93094(0) win 8192
13:21:45.015865 holmes.4010 > watson.63: S 93016:93016(0) win 8192
13:21:45.016763 holmes.4021 > watson.nntp: S 93106:93106(0) win 8192
13:21:45.018001 holmes.4016 > watson.80: S 93076:93076(0) win 8192
13:21:45.018456 holmes.4017 > watson.92: S 93154:93154(0) win 8192
13:21:45.018997 holmes.4034 > watson.396: S 93280:93280(0) win 8192
13:21:45.019562 holmes.4031 > watson.215: S 93238:93238(0) win 8192
13:21:45.020017 holmes.4002 > watson.17: S 92912:92912(0) win 8192
```

- Site scan for any Web servers (listening on port 80)
  - Host `foo.example.net` hits hosts on 192.168.77.0 subnet

```
13:21:45.012014 foo.example.com.1090 > 192.168.77.27.80: S 92946:92946(0) win 8192
13:21:45.013095 foo.example.com.1092 > 192.168.77.28.80: S 92932:92932(0) win 8192
13:21:45.014107 foo.example.com.1093 > 192.168.77.29.80: S 93094:93094(0) win 8192
13:21:45.015865 foo.example.com.1095 > 192.168.77.30.80: S 93016:93016(0) win 8192
13:21:45.016763 foo.example.com.1096 > 192.168.77.31.80: S 93106:93106(0) win 8192
13:21:45.018001 foo.example.com.1097 > 192.168.77.32.80: S 93076:93076(0) win 8192
13:21:45.018456 foo.example.com.1100 > 192.168.77.33.80: S 93154:93154(0) win 8192
13:21:45.018997 foo.example.com.1102 > 192.168.77.34.80: S 93280:93280(0) win 8192
```

Use case #3: Detection of DDoS attacks

- UDP flood
  - Flood random ports on a remote host with UDP packets
- ICMP flood
  - Overwhelm the target with ICMP Echo Request (ping) packets
- Smurf attack
  - Send ICMP packets with the victim's spoofed source IP
- SYN flood
  - Send multiple SYN requests, but either does not respond to SYN-ACK response, or sends SYN requests from a spoofed IP
- Amplification
  - e.g., exploit publically-accessible NTP servers to overwhelm the targeted server with UDP traffic
- HTTP flood
  - Seemingly-legitimate HTTP GET or POST requests to attack a web server or application

Flow analysis techniques

Go with the flow

- In RFC 3679, a flow is defined as:
  - "a sequence of packets sent from a particular source to a particular unicast, anycast, or multicast destination that the source desires to label as a flow"
- A flow can consist of all packets in a specific transport connection or a media stream
  - But, not necessarily 1:1 mapped to a transport connection
  - Can be constructed upon other L4 protocols, including UDP

Flow analysis

- Flow analysis consists in examination of sequences of related packets (i.e., flows)
- Conducted to identify traffic patterns, isolate suspicious activity, analyze higher-layer protocols, or extract data
- Examples of flow analysis tools: Wireshark, `tcpflow`, `pcapcat`

Summary of flow analysis techniques

1. List flows
    - List all flows within a packet capture, or only specific flows based on their characteristics
2. Export a flow
    - Isolate a flow, or multiple flows, and store the flow(s) of interest to disk for further analysis
3. File and data carving
    - Extract files or other data of interest from reassembled flow

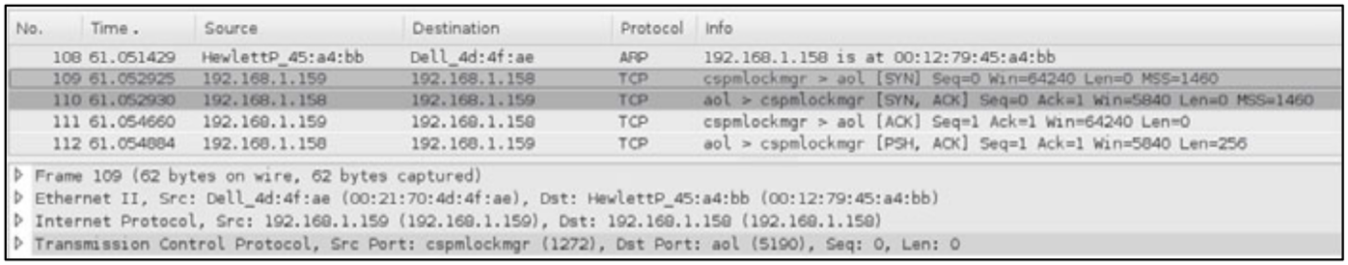
1. List flows

- Listing conversations (TCP streams) using `tshark`
  - 192.168.1.158 on TCP port 5190
  - host involved in the conversation was 192.168.1.159
  - 1,042 bytes were transferred

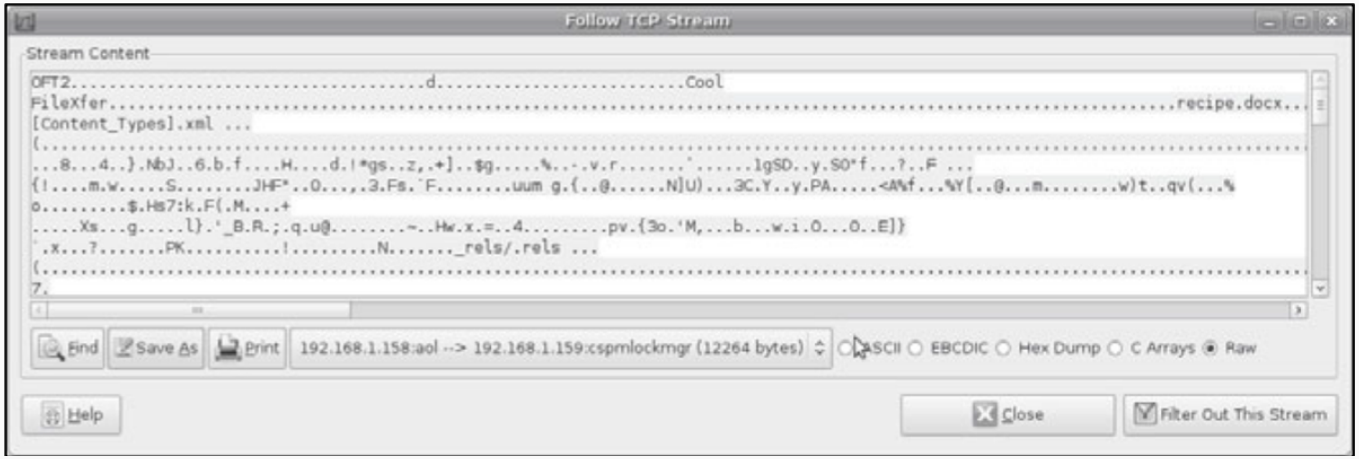
```
$ tshark -qn -z conv,tcp -r evidence01.pcap
================================================================================

TCP Conversations
Filter:<No Filter>
                                               |  <-      |     ->     |   Total    |
                                               | Frames  Bytes | Frames  Bytes | Frames  Bytes
192.168.1.159:1271   <-> 205.188.13.12:443     |   31   29717 |   16    1451  |   47    31168
192.168.1.159:1221   <-> 64.12.25.91:443       |   24    4206 |   16    1799  |   40     6005
192.168.1.158:51128  <-> 64.12.24.50:443       |   20    2622 |   20    1681  |   40     4303
192.168.1.158:5190   <-> 192.168.1.159:127     |    9    1042 |   15   13100  |   24    14142
192.168.1.159:1273   <-> 64.236.68.246:80      |    5    1545 |    5    1964  |   10     3509
192.168.1.2:54419    <-> 192.168.1.157:80      |    3     206 |    4     272  |    7      478
192.168.1.2:55488    <-> 192.168.1.30:22       |    2     292 |    3     246  |    5      538
================================================================================
```

2. Export a flow



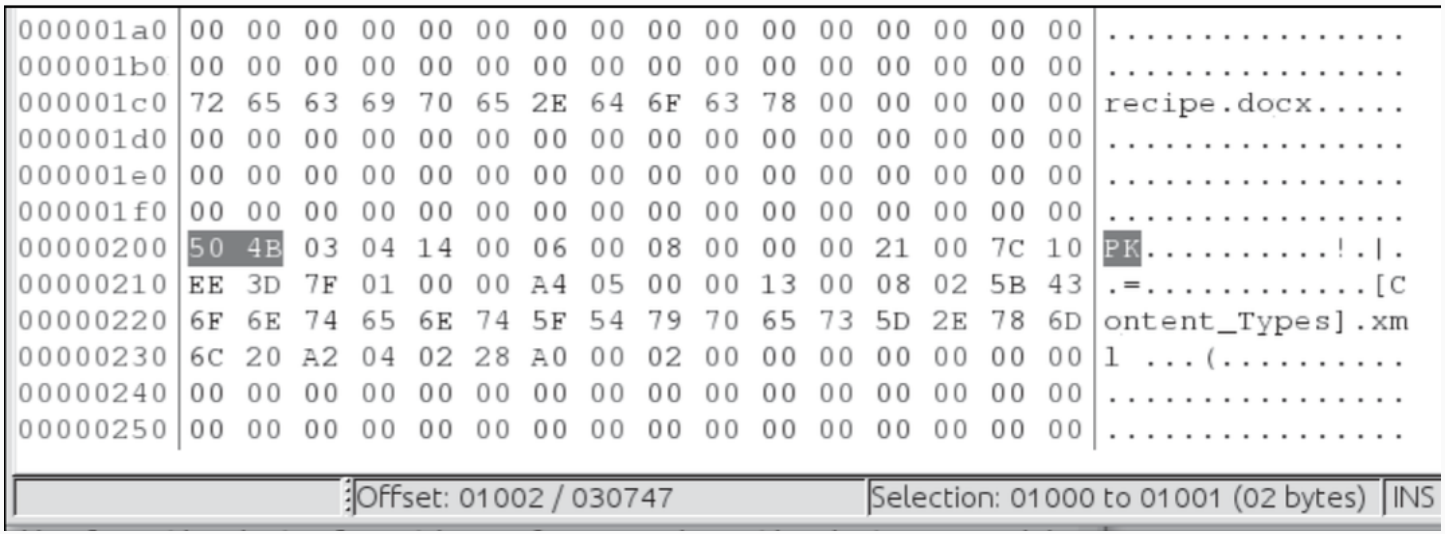
- Frame #109 is part of the TCP stream of interest
  - 192.168.1.158 -192.168.1.159 on TCP port 5190



- "Follow TCP Stream" function to isolate TCP stream, and select direction which appears to contain OFT2 file

3. File / data carving

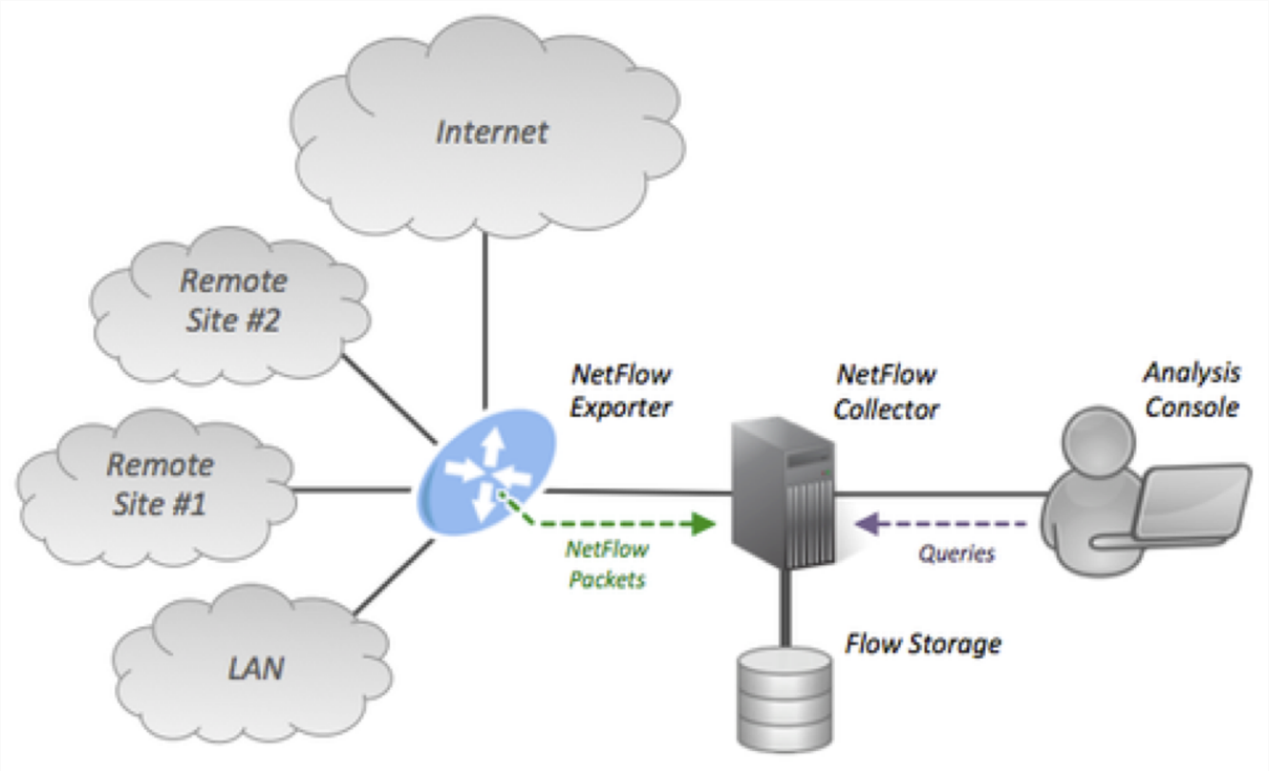
- Carve a file out of the captured network traffic
  - A `.docx` file has the "magic number" `0x50 0x4B`



- To determine the file ending, add the file size number determined from the OFT header (omitted here)

Netflow logs

- Technology by Cisco that collects and categorizes IP traffic as it passes through the supported network devices
- Built into the supported devices, NetFlow does not collect the entire payload of the network packets
    - It creates a cache on the router for each new flow



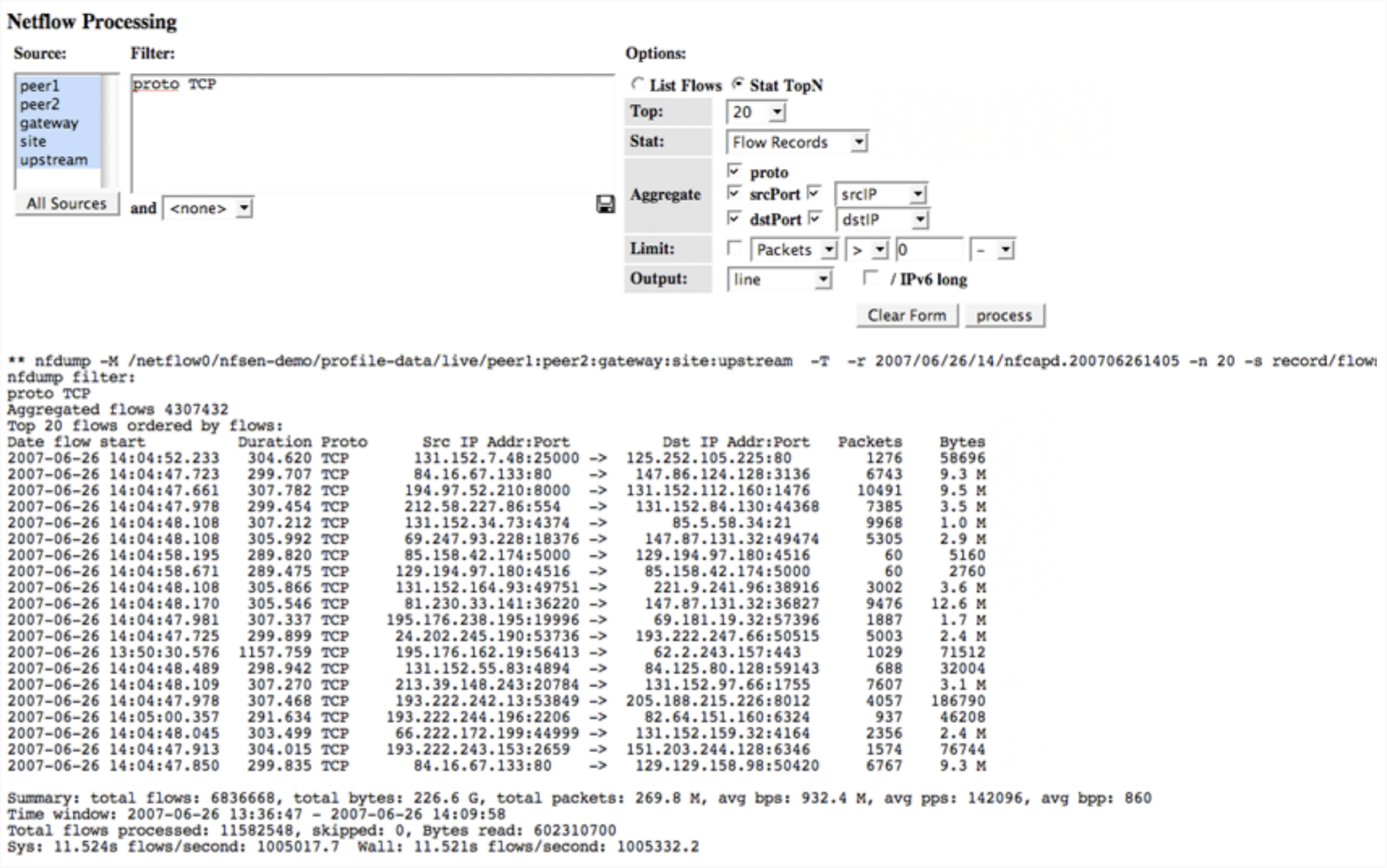
Netflow logs and its benefits to forensics

- NetFlows logs flows, not TCP connections!
- For each TCP connection, NetFlow records two flows
- Benefits:
  - Greatly reduce the amount of data needed to be analyzed
  - Simpler to identify any suspicious traffic for future investigation

Which packets belong to individual flows?

- As IP packets come into a supported device interface, NetFlow scans them for the following seven fields:
  1. Source IP address
  2. Destination IP address
  3. Source port number
  4. Destination port number
  5. IP protocol
  6. Type-of-service (ToS) byte
  7. Input logical interface
- If these fields match an existing flow the byte count for the flow entry is incremented within the device cache
  - Else the packet is part of new flow

NetFlow listing example




```
** nfdump -M /netflow0/nfsen-demo/profile-data/live/peer1:peer2:gateway:site:upstream  -T  -r 2007/06/26/14/nfcapd.200706261405 -n 20 -s record/flows
nfdump filter:
proto TCP
Aggregated flows 4307432
Top 20 flows ordered by flows:
Date flow start          Duration Proto      Src IP Addr:Port          Dst IP Addr:Port   Packets    Bytes
2007-06-26 14:04:52.233   304.620 TCP       131.152.7.48:25000 ->  125.252.105.225:80        1276    58696
2007-06-26 14:04:47.723   299.707 TCP        84.16.67.133:80    ->  147.86.124.128:3136      6743    9.3 M
2007-06-26 14:04:47.661   307.782 TCP       194.97.52.210:8000  ->  131.152.112.160:1476    10491    9.5 M
2007-06-26 14:04:47.978   299.454 TCP       212.58.227.86:554   ->  131.152.84.130:44368     7385    3.5 M
2007-06-26 14:04:48.108   307.212 TCP       131.152.34.73:4374  ->       85.5.58.34:21       9968    1.0 M
2007-06-26 14:04:48.108   305.992 TCP       69.247.93.228:18376 ->   147.87.131.32:49474     5305    2.9 M
2007-06-26 14:04:58.195   289.820 TCP       85.158.42.174:5000  ->  129.194.97.180:4516        60     5160
2007-06-26 14:04:58.671   289.475 TCP      129.194.97.180:4516  ->   85.158.42.174:5000        60     2760
2007-06-26 14:04:48.108   305.866 TCP      131.152.164.93:49751 ->    221.9.241.96:38916      3002    3.6 M
2007-06-26 14:04:48.170   305.546 TCP       81.230.33.141:36220 ->   147.87.131.32:36827     9476   12.6 M
2007-06-26 14:04:47.981   307.337 TCP     195.176.238.195:19996 ->    69.181.19.32:57396      1887    1.7 M
2007-06-26 14:04:47.725   299.899 TCP      24.202.245.190:53736 ->   193.222.247.66:50515     5003    2.4 M
2007-06-26 13:50:30.576  1157.759 TCP      195.176.162.19:56413 ->    62.2.243.157:443        1029   71512
2007-06-26 14:04:48.489   298.942 TCP       131.152.55.83:4894  ->   84.125.80.128:59143      688   32004
2007-06-26 14:04:48.109   307.270 TCP      213.39.148.243:20784 ->   131.152.97.66:1755       7607    3.1 M
2007-06-26 14:04:47.978   307.468 TCP      193.222.242.13:53849 ->  205.188.215.226:8012      4057  186790
2007-06-26 14:05:00.357   291.634 TCP     193.222.244.196:2206  ->   82.64.151.160:6324       937   46208
2007-06-26 14:04:48.045   303.499 TCP      66.222.172.199:44999 ->   131.152.159.32:4164      2356    2.4 M
2007-06-26 14:04:47.913   304.015 TCP     193.222.243.153:2659  ->  151.203.244.128:6346      1574   76744
2007-06-26 14:04:47.850   299.835 TCP       84.16.67.133:80    ->   129.129.158.98:50420     6767    9.3 M

Summary: total flows: 6836668, total bytes: 226.6 G, total packets: 269.8 M, avg bps: 932.4 M, avg pps: 142096, avg bpp: 860
Time window: 2007-06-26 13:36:47 - 2007-06-26 14:09:58
Total flows processed: 11582548, skipped: 0, Bytes read: 602310700
Sys: 11.524s flows/second: 1005017.7  Wall: 11.521s flows/second: 1005332.2
```

Protocol analysis techniques

Protocol analysis

- Aim to understand how a particular communication protocol works, what it's used for, how to identify it, how to dissect it
- Many protocols are deliberately kept secret:
  - By their inventors to protect intellectual property, keep out competition, or security and covert communications
  - By attackers to bypass IDS (Intrusion Detection Systems) firewall rules, smuggle data in strange places, and generally create mayhem

Where to get information on protocols

- IETF Request for Comments (RFC)
  - Perhaps the most well known public repository of documented protocols
  - RFC: any thought, suggestion, etc. related to the Internet network
- Other standard bodies
  - Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers Standards Association (IEEE-SA)
  - International Organization for Standardization (ISO)
- Vendors
  - Cisco: RFC2784
  - Microsoft: communications protocols used by Window server, clients
- Researchers
  - Russian researcher Alexandr Shutko has published his "Unofficial" OSCAR (ICQ v7/v8/v9) protocol documentation

Protocol identification techniques

1. Search for common binary/hexadecimal/ASCII values that are typically associated with a specific protocol
2. Leverage information in the encapsulating protocol
3. Leverage the TCP/UDP port number, many of which are associated with standard default services
4. Analyze the function of the source or destination server (specified by IP address or hostname)
5. Test for the presence of recognizable protocol structures
6. Check metadata for matches with known protocols

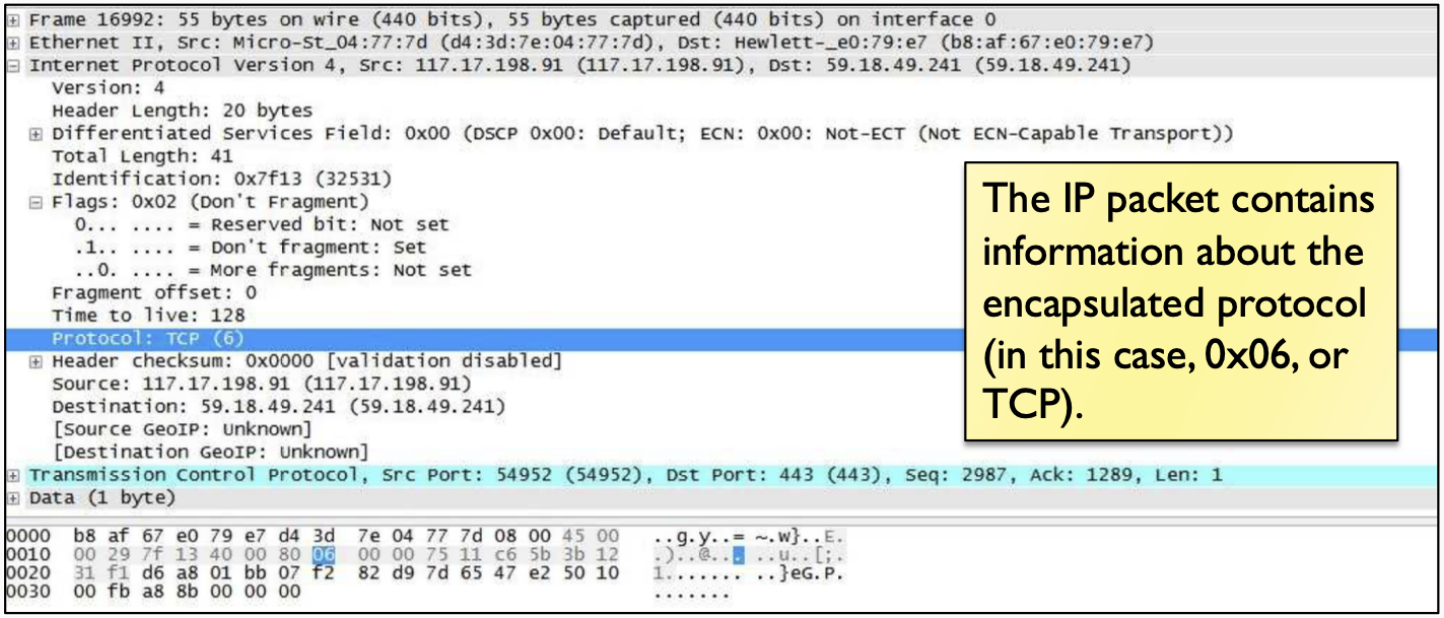
1. Search values associated w/ specific protocol

- Search for common binary/hexadecimal/ASCII values that are typically associated with a specific protocol
  - Most protocols contain sequences of bits
  - Present in packets associated with that protocol, in predictable places
  - Hexadecimal sequence `0x45 0x00` often marks the start of an IPv4 packet

```
$ tcpdump -nn -AX -r evidence01.pcap
22:57:22.022972 IP 64.12.24.50.443 > 192.168.1.158.51128: Flags [.], ack 6,
    win 64240, length 0
        0x0000:  4500 0028 b43d 0000 7f06 6d0e 400c 1832  E..(.=....m.@..2
        0x0010:  c0a8 019e 01bb c7b8 07e9 60db 336b d2c9  ..........`.3k..
        0x0020:  5010 faf0 61f2 0000 0000 0000 0000       P...a.........
```

2. Information in the encapsulating protocol

- Leverage information in the encapsulating protocol
  - Protocols often contain info that indicates the type of encapsulated protocol
  - OSI model, lower-layer protocol fields typically indicate the higher-layer protocol that may be encapsulated, to facilitate proper processing



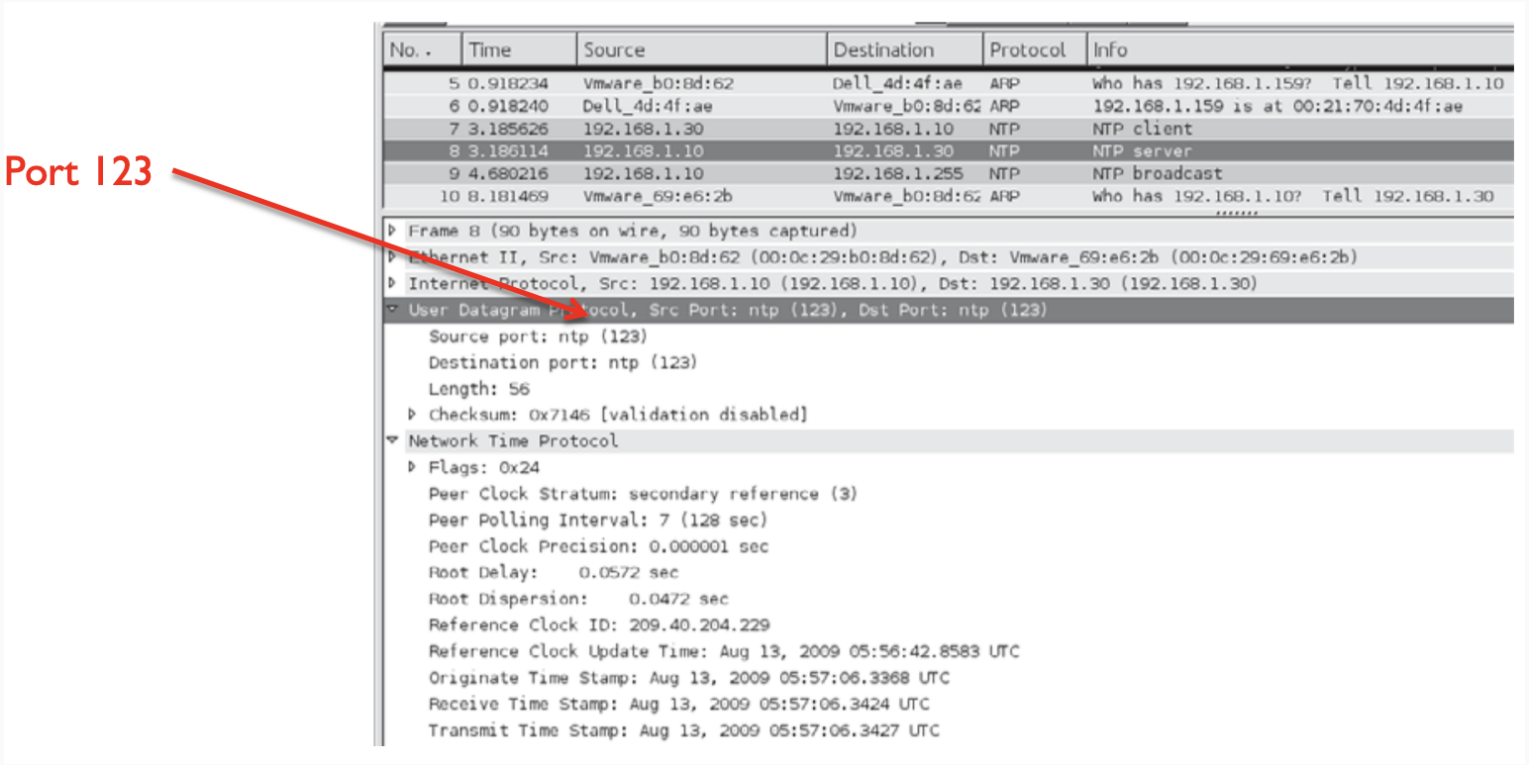
3. Leverage the TCP/UDP port number

- Examine the TCP or UDP port number in use
  - Many of which are associated with standard default services

Internet Protocol (IP) Port(s)	Protocol(s)	Description
80	TCP	HTTP, commonly used for Web servers
443	TCP	Hypertext Transfer Protocol Secure sockets (HTTPS) for secure Web servers.
53	UDP and TCP	Domain Name Server/Service (DNS) for resolving names to IP addresses
25	TCP	Simple Mail Transfer Protocol(SMTP), used for sending e-mail
22	TCP	The Secure Shell (SSH) protocol
23	TCP	Telnet, an insecure administration protocol
20 and 21	TCP	An insecure Fire Transfer Protocol (FTP)
135–139 and 445	TCP and UDP	Windows file sharing, login, and Remote Procedure Call (RPC)
500	UDP	Internet Security Association and Key Management Protocol (ISAKMP) key negotiation for Secure Internet Protocol (IPSec) virtual private networks (VPNs)
5060	UDP	Session Initiation Protocol (SIP) for some VoIP uses
123	UDP	Network Time Protocol (NTP) for network time synchronization

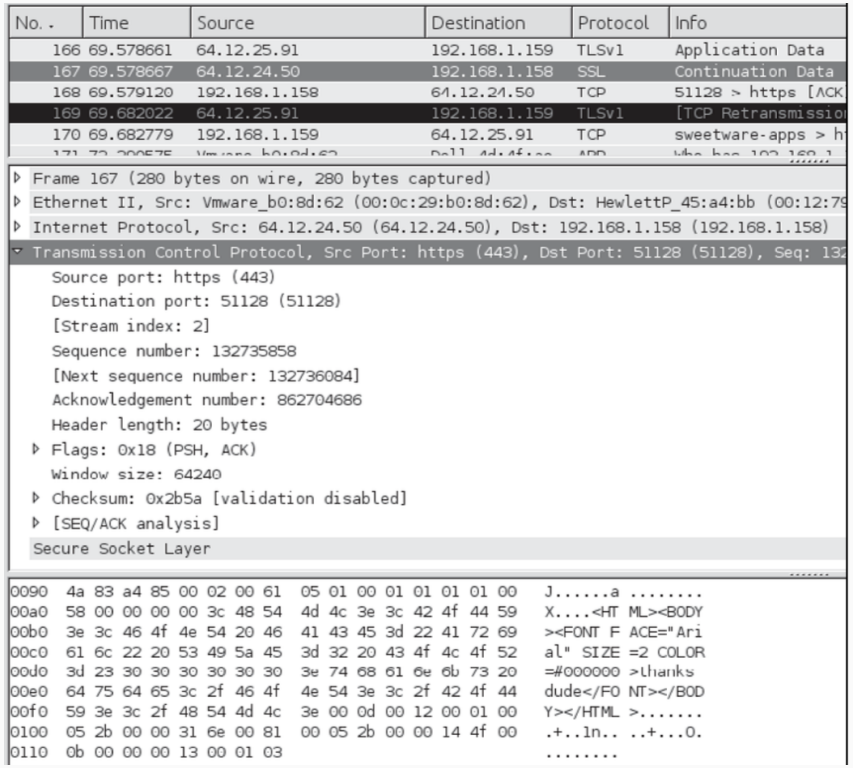
Example using port identification

- Wireshark automatically associates the UDP port, 123, with its IANA-assigned default service, NTP



Limitations of port-based identification

- Servers can be configured to use nonstandard port numbers for services
  - Wireshark automatically associates TCP port 443 with its IANA-assigned default service: HTTPS
- But this is INCORRECT:
  - Packet contents not encrypted



4. Analyze the function of source / destination

- Server hostnames and domains provide clues as to their functions, which can help identify likely protocols in use

```
$ whois 64.12.24.50
...
NetRange: 64.12.0.0 - 64.12.255.255
CIDR: 64.12.0.0/16
...
OrgName: America Online , Inc.
OrgId: AMERIC -158
Address: 10600 Infantry Ridge Road
City: Manassas
StateProv: VA
PostalCode: 20109
Country: US
RegDate: 1999 -12 -13
Updated: 1999 -12 -16
Ref: http :// whois.arin.net/rest/org/AMERIC -158
```

It would be reasonable to hypothesize that the traffic associated with this server could be traffic commonly used to support AOL's services, such as HTTP or AIM

Takeaways

- Traffic analysis enables forensic investigators to determine the history of events involved in network communications
- Such analysis is based on specific evidence that can can be acquired using protocol, packet, and flow analysis techniques
- It is up to the forensic investigator to select the best technique(s) to use according to the investigative scenario

Pointers

- **Textbook:**
  - Casey – Chapters 24.4, 24.5 , Luttgens – Chapter 9.4
- **Others:**
  - Introducing Network Analysis
  - Gary Kessler, On teaching TCP/IP Protocol Analysis to Computer Forensic Examiners
- **Acknowledgements:**
  - Slides adapted from Nuno Santos's Forensics Cyber-Security course at Técnico Lisbon