What's wrong?

- It can't be changed.
- Internet transport layer = TCP (1981), UDP (1980)
  - Service = what these protocols provide; neither matches app. requirements nor infrastructure capabilities
    (cf.: the tons of papers on app-x-over-... and tcp-over-y)
- Probably only two truly significant changes:
  1. Addition of congestion control to TCP: 1988
  2. Change of default TCP CC. in Linux to BIC: 2004
     (a bit later: CUBIC) ... not IETF-approved!

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IETF has developed much more

- Getting deployed:
  - Many, many TCP bug fixes
- Hardly getting deployed:
  - New protocols: UDP-Lite, SCTP, DCCP
- Newer things - can't evaluate deployment yet (but don't want this to end up "in the red" !)
  - LEDBAT, MPTCP…

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Why can't it be changed?

- Internet was not designed for security
  - hence, tendency to disable/block everything that looks "strange"
  - TCP, UDP, and special applications, i.e. port numbers, are considered acceptable; everything else is "strange"
    - ➔ Application programmers don't use other transport protocols
- Design was supposed to be open...
  - "Be conservative in what you send, liberal in what you accept"
  - Reality is different (Deep Packet Inspection, ..)
- What went wrong?

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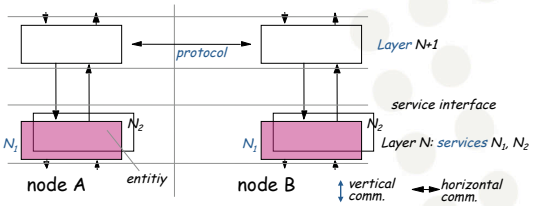
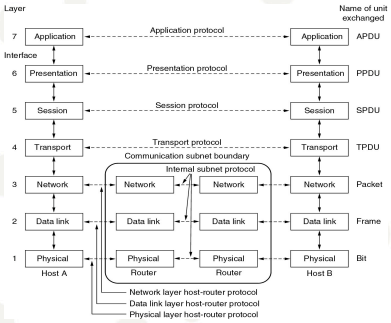
Internet design flaw: no abstraction





Source: A. Tanenbaum, Computer Networks

- OSI had the right idea! :-) ...abstraction.
  - Layers merely provide a service
  - Lower layers + their internal operation hidden ➔ could be replaced
- Transport layer should be especially easy to change!

A better Internet transport design

A more abstract transport API

1. Applications say...
   - what kind of service they prefer
   - what kind of traffic they will generate
2. Using its resources (protocols, signaling with the inner network, ...), the transport layer does its best (still best effort!) to provide a good service
   - Could try a new protocol, and give up in case of failure
   - Could maybe also answer: "hey, you're even getting a guarantee here!"

A better Internet transport design /2

- Bryan Ford and Janardhan Iyengar: “Breaking Up the Transport Logjam”, HotNets-VII, October 2008.
  http://www.brynosaurus.com/pub/net/logjam.pdf
- Michael Welzl: "A Case for Middleware to Enable Advanced Internet Services", NGNM'04 workshop, co-located with Networking 2004, Athens, Greece, 14 May, 2004
  http://heim.ifi.uio.no/~michawe/research/publications/ngnm04.pdf
- The problem might not have occurred with this...
  - but this doesn’t help us now.
  - so how can we get there?

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A way forward

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Pragmatic incentive view

- I believe that most Internet deployment failures (yes also QoS towards end users) are at least partially due to misaligned incentives
  - We should no longer develop technology without considering this
- I'm not the first one to say this:
  David D. Clark, John Wroclawski, Karen R. Sollins, Robert Braden: "Tussle in cyberspace: defining tomorrow's internet", SIGCOMM 2002
  - Let's apply these principles to the transport layer...

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The transport tussle

1. Application designers
   - want to get best performance with minimal effort
     - Note: difference between updating an already working application and writing a new one from scratch
   - making use of a protocol which is now only available in 1% of the world: usually not worth it
     - Note for commercial applications: programming effort = time = money
   - Future: if things change, we can still update our application

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The transport tussle /2

2. OS developers
   - want to get best performance with minimal risk
   - e.g. Linux: it seems that whatever makes the OS work better without reducing stability is welcome
   - supporting a protocol which might be used one day is not a big risk, maybe worth it (in Linux, even protocol designers do the work)

The transport tussle /3

3. Designers of middleboxes / firewalls
   - Devices / software often promise "security and good network performance"
   - Whatever is unknown can be a security risk
   - But: if blocking something notably degrades performance, customers won't like that ➔ might not block it by default

Please remember these groups

1. Application designers
2. OS developers
3. Designers of middleboxes / firewalls

- Each group has "support groups" that share their interests, i.e. no need to explicitly consider them
  1. customers (want a good price)
  2. IETF (compatibility)
  3. device maintainers (might use system defaults)

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How to accommodate the tussle?

- We are talking about people here; no hard facts, nothing is set in stone
  - People can change their minds
  - Group 3 is often seen as unchangeable; let us not believe in this (if we do, we're giving up!)
- Main "message" of this talk: **we should take this tussle serious, and develop suitable technology!**

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Success stories

- TCP "bug fixes"
  - in accordance with originally planned behavior
  - installing in OS (group 2) yields a direct benefit for group 2 (and group 1)
- (CU)BIC congestion control as default in Linux TCP
  - not even a standard! but a major press release + available code, written by the designers
  - installing in OS (group 2 only) yielded a direct benefit for group 2 (and group 1)

Suggested research agenda

Step 1: Beneficial Transparent Deployment

- Achieve a notable benefit by transparently deploying new protocols
  - in the OS; involves only group 2
  - always ensure fallback, no disadvantage from trying the new protocol; could eventually give more and more people from group 3 a reason to say "yes"
  - once group 2 and group 3 have it, it makes sense for group 1 to use it ➔ full benefit!

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Step 2: A new API

- When, because of success with step 1, group 1 begins to really use the new protocols, they will be annoyed by the complex Internet transport API
  - SCTP and DCCP: not just two new protocols, but lots of options that come with them
    - SCTP: draft-ietf-tsvwg-sctpsocket-22, 92 pages
    - DCCP: not even specified, given by implementations; lots of options

➔give them a protocol-independent API (just with transport *services*, not protocols)

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A lot of work is needed

- Measure what middleboxes do
- Evaluate encapsulation variants (everything-over-UDP?)
- Transport protocol negotiation / connection setup (Meta-SYN etc. ideas); note that this gets even more difficult (= interesting!) when incorporating protocol availability checks
- Showing a benefit from transparent deployment of, e.g., SCTP and DCCP
- Possibly necessary to make protocols more attractive to users, e.g. DCCP?
- Design the new API, show its benefit to users

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Conclusion

- I repeat: **main "message" of this talk: we should take this tussle serious, and develop suitable technology!**
  - **Secondary message: also consider aligning existing technology with it**
- Let's avoid repeating past mistakes over and over again, and really improve the Internet

- A funding view: consider the mantra of "clean-slate design"...
  1. don't care about the Internet, do something new
  2. think about gradually moving to the new thing
- A lot of money has gone into 1)
  - It's time to get and use some money for 2) !

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