# **Transmission Control Protocol (TCP)**

Antonio Carzaniga

Faculty of Informatics Università della Svizzera italiana

April 6, 2020

#### **Outline**

- Introduction to TCP
- Sequence numbers and acknowledgment numbers
- Timeouts and RTT estimation
- Reliable data transfer in TCP
- Connection management

### **Transmission Control Protocol**

- The Internet's primary transport protocol
  - defined in RFC 793, RFC 1122, RFC 1323, RFC 2018, and RFC 2581

### **Transmission Control Protocol**

- The Internet's primary transport protocol
  - defined in RFC 793, RFC 1122, RFC 1323, RFC 2018, and RFC 2581
- Connection-oriented service
  - endpoints "shake hands" to establish a connection
  - not a circuit-switched connection, nor a virtual circuit

#### **Transmission Control Protocol**

- The Internet's primary transport protocol
  - defined in RFC 793, RFC 1122, RFC 1323, RFC 2018, and RFC 2581
- Connection-oriented service
  - endpoints "shake hands" to establish a connection
  - not a circuit-switched connection, nor a virtual circuit
- Full-duplex service
  - both endpoints can both send and receive, at the same time



### **Preliminary Definitions**

- *TCP segment:* envelope for TCP data
  - TCP data are sent within TCP segments
  - ► TCP segments are usually sent within an IP packet

## **Preliminary Definitions**

- **TCP segment:** envelope for TCP data
  - TCP data are sent within TCP segments
  - TCP segments are usually sent within an IP packet
- Maximum segment size (MSS): maximum amount of application data transmitted in a single segment
  - typically related to the MTU of the connection, to avoid network-level fragmentation (we'll talk about all of this later)

# **Preliminary Definitions**

- *TCP segment:* envelope for TCP data
  - TCP data are sent within TCP segments
  - TCP segments are usually sent within an IP packet
- *Maximum segment size (MSS):* maximum amount of application data transmitted in a single segment
  - typically related to the MTU of the connection, to avoid network-level fragmentation (we'll talk about all of this later)
- Maximum transmission unit (MTU): largest link-layer frame available to the sender host
  - path MTU: largest link-layer frame that can be sent on all links from the sender host to the receiver host

# **TCP Segment Format**

0 31								
source port					destination port			
sequence number								
acknowledgment number								
hdrlen	unused	UA	P R	S	F	receive window		
Internet checksum						urgent data pointer		
options field								
data								



■ *Source and destination ports:* (16-bit each) application identifiers

- *Source and destination ports:* (16-bit each) application identifiers
- Sequence number: (32-bit) used to implement reliable data transfer
- Acknowledgment number: (32-bit) used to implement reliable data transfer

- *Source and destination ports:* (16-bit each) application identifiers
- Sequence number: (32-bit) used to implement reliable data transfer
- Acknowledgment number: (32-bit) used to implement reliable data transfer
- Receive window: (16-bit) size of the "window" on the receiver end

- *Source and destination ports:* (16-bit each) application identifiers
- Sequence number: (32-bit) used to implement reliable data transfer
- Acknowledgment number: (32-bit) used to implement reliable data transfer
- Receive window: (16-bit) size of the "window" on the receiver end
- *Header length:* (4-bit) size of the TCP header in 32-bit words

- *Source and destination ports:* (16-bit each) application identifiers
- Sequence number: (32-bit) used to implement reliable data transfer
- Acknowledgment number: (32-bit) used to implement reliable data transfer
- Receive window: (16-bit) size of the "window" on the receiver end
- *Header length:* (4-bit) size of the TCP header in 32-bit words
- Optional and variable-length options field: may be used to negotiate protocol parameters



■ ACK flag: (1-bit) signals that the value contained in the acknowledgment number represents a valid acknowledgment

- ACK flag: (1-bit) signals that the value contained in the acknowledgment number represents a valid acknowledgment
- *SYN flag:* (1-bit) used during connection setup and shutdown

- ACK flag: (1-bit) signals that the value contained in the acknowledgment number represents a valid acknowledgment
- SYN flag: (1-bit) used during connection setup and shutdown
- RST flag: (1-bit) used during connection setup and shutdown

- ACK flag: (1-bit) signals that the value contained in the acknowledgment number represents a valid acknowledgment
- SYN flag: (1-bit) used during connection setup and shutdown
- RST flag: (1-bit) used during connection setup and shutdown
- FIN flag: (1-bit) used during connection shutdown

- ACK flag: (1-bit) signals that the value contained in the acknowledgment number represents a valid acknowledgment
- SYN flag: (1-bit) used during connection setup and shutdown
- RST flag: (1-bit) used during connection setup and shutdown
- FIN flag: (1-bit) used during connection shutdown
- *PSH flag:* (1-bit) "push" flag, used to solicit the receiver to pass the data to the application immediately

- ACK flag: (1-bit) signals that the value contained in the acknowledgment number represents a valid acknowledgment
- SYN flag: (1-bit) used during connection setup and shutdown
- RST flag: (1-bit) used during connection setup and shutdown
- FIN flag: (1-bit) used during connection shutdown
- *PSH flag:* (1-bit) "push" flag, used to solicit the receiver to pass the data to the application immediately
- URG flag: (1-bit) "urgent" flag, used to inform the receiver that the sender has marked some data as "urgent". The location of this urgent data is marked by the urgent data pointer field

- ACK flag: (1-bit) signals that the value contained in the acknowledgment number represents a valid acknowledgment
- SYN flag: (1-bit) used during connection setup and shutdown
- RST flag: (1-bit) used during connection setup and shutdown
- FIN flag: (1-bit) used during connection shutdown
- *PSH flag:* (1-bit) "push" flag, used to solicit the receiver to pass the data to the application immediately
- URG flag: (1-bit) "urgent" flag, used to inform the receiver that the sender has marked some data as "urgent". The location of this urgent data is marked by the urgent data pointer field
- *Checksum:* (16-bit) used to detect transmission errors



- Sequence numbers are associated with *bytes* in the data stream
  - not with segments, as we have used them before

- Sequence numbers are associated with *bytes* in the data stream
  - not with segments, as we have used them before
- The sequence number in a TCP segment indicates the sequence number of the first byte carried by that segment

- Sequence numbers are associated with *bytes* in the data stream
  - not with segments, as we have used them before
- The **sequence number** in a TCP segment indicates **the sequence number of the first byte carried by that segment**

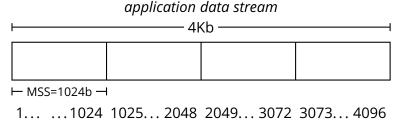
application data stream
4Kh
d/iF

- Sequence numbers are associated with *bytes* in the data stream
  - not with segments, as we have used them before
- The **sequence number** in a TCP segment indicates **the sequence number of the first byte carried by that segment**

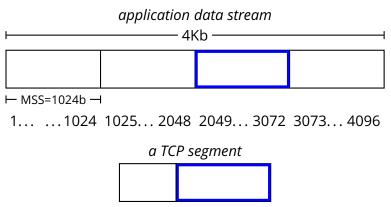
application data stream	
4Kb ———	
- MSS=1024b →	

- Sequence numbers are associated with *bytes* in the data stream
  - not with segments, as we have used them before
- The sequence number in a TCP segment indicates the sequence number of the first byte carried by that segment

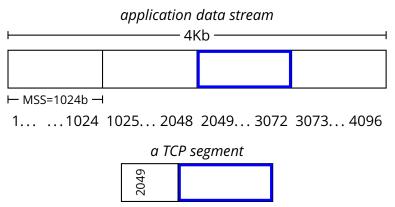
- Sequence numbers are associated with *bytes* in the data stream
  - not with segments, as we have used them before
- The sequence number in a TCP segment indicates the sequence number of the first byte carried by that segment



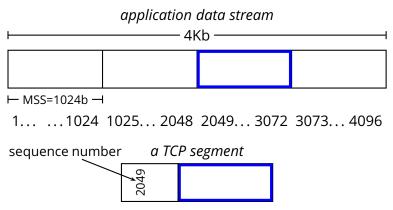
- Sequence numbers are associated with *bytes* in the data stream
  - not with segments, as we have used them before
- The sequence number in a TCP segment indicates the sequence number of the first byte carried by that segment



- Sequence numbers are associated with *bytes* in the data stream
  - not with segments, as we have used them before
- The sequence number in a TCP segment indicates the sequence number of the first byte carried by that segment



- Sequence numbers are associated with *bytes* in the data stream
  - not with segments, as we have used them before
- The sequence number in a TCP segment indicates the sequence number of the first byte carried by that segment





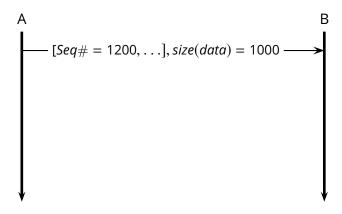
### **Acknowledgment Numbers**

- An acknowledgment number represents the first sequence number not yet seen by the receiver
  - ► TCP acknowledgments are *cumulative*

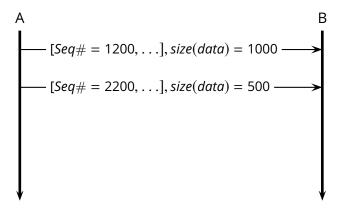
- An acknowledgment number represents the first sequence number not yet seen by the receiver
  - ► TCP acknowledgments are *cumulative*



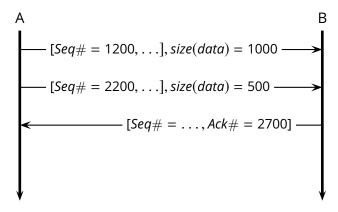
- An acknowledgment number represents the first sequence number not yet seen by the receiver
  - ► TCP acknowledgments are *cumulative*

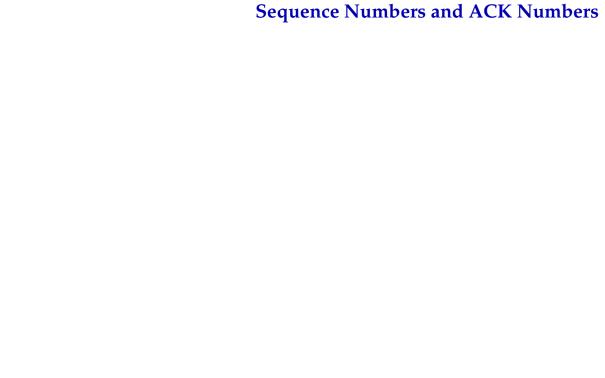


- An acknowledgment number represents the first sequence number not yet seen by the receiver
  - ► TCP acknowledgments are *cumulative*



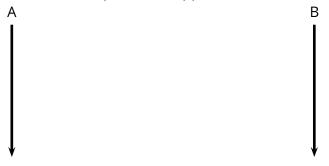
- An acknowledgment number represents the first sequence number not yet seen by the receiver
  - ► TCP acknowledgments are *cumulative*



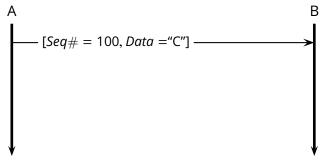


- Notice that a TCP connection is a *full-duplex* link
  - therefore, there are two streams
  - two different sequence numbers

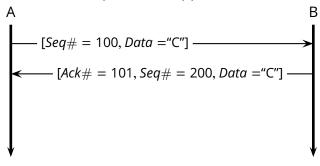
- Notice that a TCP connection is a *full-duplex* link
  - therefore, there are two streams
  - two different sequence numbers



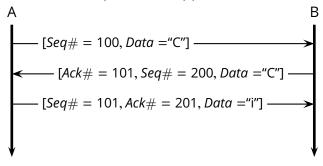
- Notice that a TCP connection is a *full-duplex* link
  - therefore, there are two streams
  - two different sequence numbers



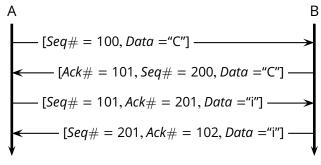
- Notice that a TCP connection is a *full-duplex* link
  - ▶ therefore, there are *two streams*
  - two different sequence numbers



- Notice that a TCP connection is a *full-duplex* link
  - ► therefore, there are *two streams*
  - two different sequence numbers

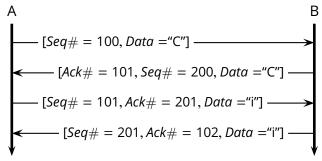


- Notice that a TCP connection is a *full-duplex* link
  - therefore, there are two streams
  - two different sequence numbers



- Notice that a TCP connection is a *full-duplex* link
  - therefore, there are two streams
  - two different sequence numbers

E.g., consider a simple "Echo" application:



Acknowledgments are "piggybacked" on data segments

- TCP provides reliable data transfer using a *timer* to detect lost segments
  - ▶ timeout without an ACK  $\rightarrow$  lost packet  $\rightarrow$  retransmission

- TCP provides reliable data transfer using a *timer* to detect lost segments
  - timeout without an ACK → lost packet → retransmission
- How long to wait for acknowledgments?

- TCP provides reliable data transfer using a *timer* to detect lost segments
  - timeout without an ACK → lost packet → retransmission
- How long to wait for acknowledgments?
- $\blacksquare$  Retransmission timeouts should be larger than the round-trip time RTT = 2L
  - as close as possible to the RTT

- TCP provides reliable data transfer using a *timer* to detect lost segments
  - timeout without an ACK → lost packet → retransmission
- How long to wait for acknowledgments?
- $\blacksquare$  Retransmission timeouts should be larger than the round-trip time RTT = 2L
  - as close as possible to the RTT
- TCP controls its timeout by continuously *estimating the current RTT*



- RTT is measured using ACKs
  - only for packets transmitted once
- Given a single sample *S* at any given time
- Exponential weighted moving average (EWMA)

$$\overline{RTT} = (1 - \alpha)\overline{RTT}' + \alpha S$$

- RTT is measured using ACKs
  - only for packets transmitted once
- Given a single sample *S* at any given time
- Exponential weighted moving average (EWMA)

$$\overline{RTT} = (1 - \alpha)\overline{RTT}' + \alpha S$$

▶ RFC 2988 recommends  $\alpha = 0.125$ 

- RTT is measured using ACKs
  - only for packets transmitted once
- Given a single sample S at any given time
- Exponential weighted moving average (EWMA)

$$\overline{RTT} = (1 - \alpha)\overline{RTT}' + \alpha S$$

- ▶ RFC 2988 recommends  $\alpha = 0.125$
- TCP also measures the *variability of RTT*

$$\overline{DevRTT} = (1 - \beta)\overline{DevRTT}' + \beta |\overline{RTT}' - S|$$

- RTT is measured using ACKs
  - only for packets transmitted once
- Given a single sample S at any given time
- Exponential weighted moving average (EWMA)

$$\overline{RTT} = (1 - \alpha)\overline{RTT}' + \alpha S$$

- ▶ RFC 2988 recommends  $\alpha = 0.125$
- TCP also measures the *variability of RTT*

$$\overline{\textit{DevRTT}} = (1 - \beta)\overline{\textit{DevRTT}}' + \beta|\overline{\textit{RTT}}' - S|$$

▶ RFC 2988 recommends  $\beta = 0.25$ 



#### **Timeout Value**

- The timeout interval *T* must be larger than the RTT
  - so as to avoid unnecessary retransmission
- However, T should not be too far from RTT
  - ▶ so as to detect (and retransmit) lost segments as quickly as possible

#### **Timeout Value**

- The timeout interval *T* must be larger than the RTT
  - so as to avoid unnecessary retransmission
- However, T should not be too far from RTT
  - ► so as to detect (and retransmit) lost segments as quickly as possible
- TCP sets its timeouts using the estimated RTT ( $\overline{RTT}$ ) and the variability estimate  $\overline{DevRTT}$ :

$$T = \overline{RTT} + 4\overline{DevRTT}$$

#### Reliable Data Transfer (Sender)

A simplified TCP sender

```
r_send(data)
if (timer not running)
    start_timer()
u_send([data,next_seq_num])
next_seq_num ← next_seq_num + length(data)
```

#### Reliable Data Transfer (Sender)

#### A simplified TCP sender

```
r_send(data)
if (timer not running)
  start_timer()
u_send([data,next_seq_num])
next_seq_num ← next_seq_num + length(data)
```

u\_send(pending segment with smallest sequence number)
start\_timer()

#### Reliable Data Transfer (Sender)

#### A simplified TCP sender

```
r_send(data)

if (timer not running)

start_timer()

u_send([data,next_seq_num])

next_seq_num ← next_seq_num + length(data)
```

```
timeout
u_send(pending segment with smallest sequence number)
start timer()
```

```
■ u_recv([ACK,y])

if (y > base)

base ← y

if (there are pending segments)

start_timer()

else ...
```



■ Arrival of in-order segment with expected sequence number; all data up to expected sequence number already acknowledged

- Arrival of in-order segment with expected sequence number; all data up to expected sequence number already acknowledged
  - Delayed ACK: wait 500ms for another in-order segment; If that does not arrive, send ACK

- Arrival of in-order segment with expected sequence number; all data up to expected sequence number already acknowledged
  - Delayed ACK: wait 500ms for another in-order segment; If that does not arrive, send ACK
- Arrival of in-order segment with expected sequence number. One other in-order segment waiting for ACK (see above)

- Arrival of in-order segment with expected sequence number; all data up to expected sequence number already acknowledged
  - Delayed ACK: wait 500ms for another in-order segment; If that does not arrive, send ACK
- Arrival of in-order segment with expected sequence number. One other in-order segment waiting for ACK (see above)
  - Cumulative ACK: immediately send cumulative ACK (for both segments)

- Arrival of in-order segment with expected sequence number; all data up to expected sequence number already acknowledged
  - Delayed ACK: wait 500ms for another in-order segment; If that does not arrive, send ACK
- Arrival of in-order segment with expected sequence number. One other in-order segment waiting for ACK (see above)
  - Cumulative ACK: immediately send cumulative ACK (for both segments)
- Arrival of out of order segment with higher-than-expected sequence number (gap detected)

- Arrival of in-order segment with expected sequence number; all data up to expected sequence number already acknowledged
  - Delayed ACK: wait 500ms for another in-order segment; If that does not arrive, send ACK
- Arrival of in-order segment with expected sequence number. One other in-order segment waiting for ACK (see above)
  - Cumulative ACK: immediately send cumulative ACK (for both segments)
- Arrival of out of order segment with higher-than-expected sequence number (gap detected)
  - Duplicate ACK: immediately send duplicate ACK

- Arrival of in-order segment with expected sequence number; all data up to expected sequence number already acknowledged
  - Delayed ACK: wait 500ms for another in-order segment; If that does not arrive, send ACK
- Arrival of in-order segment with expected sequence number. One other in-order segment waiting for ACK (see above)
  - Cumulative ACK: immediately send cumulative ACK (for both segments)
- Arrival of out of order segment with higher-than-expected sequence number (gap detected)
  - Duplicate ACK: immediately send duplicate ACK
- Arrival of segment that (partially or completely) fills a gap in the received data

- Arrival of in-order segment with expected sequence number; all data up to expected sequence number already acknowledged
  - Delayed ACK: wait 500ms for another in-order segment; If that does not arrive, send ACK
- Arrival of in-order segment with expected sequence number. One other in-order segment waiting for ACK (see above)
  - Cumulative ACK: immediately send cumulative ACK (for both segments)
- Arrival of out of order segment with higher-than-expected sequence number (gap detected)
  - Duplicate ACK: immediately send duplicate ACK
- Arrival of segment that (partially or completely) fills a gap in the received data
  - Immediate ACK: immediately send ACK if the packet start at the lower end of the gap



### Reaction to ACKs (Sender)

u\_recv([ACK,y])

```
if (y > base)
base ← y
if (there are pending segments)
start_timer()
```

### **Reaction to ACKs (Sender)**

```
u_recv([ACK,y])
if (y > base)
base ← y
if (there are pending segments)
start_timer()
else
ack_counter[y] ← ack_counter[y] + 1
if (ack_counter[y] = 3)
u_send(segment with sequence number y)
```





