

# ECE 435 – Network Engineering

## Lecture 32

Vince Weaver

<https://web.eece.maine.edu/~vweaver>

[vincent.weaver@maine.edu](mailto:vincent.weaver@maine.edu)

17 April 2026

# Announcements

- HW#10 was due
- HW#11 will be posted
- Project status reports due
  - One e-mail per group
  - One-line summary of project topic
  - Brief update on how it is going
  - Whether you're willing to present on Monday / Wednesday / Friday



# Wireless Services

Must provide 9 services

- Intracell for dealing with things outside of a cell
  - Association – allow stations to connect to base stations. When arriving announce its identity and capability
  - Disassociation – either side may break the association, should do it before shutting down
  - Reassociation – can change preferred base station, useful for handover (but best-effort)

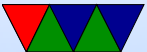


- Distribution – determines best way to route frames
- Integration – in case frame needs to be sent through a non-802.11 network
- Intercell
  - Authentication – check password
  - Deauthentication – to leave network
  - Privacy – encryption
  - Data delivery – modeled on Ethernet, no guarantees frames will get in



# Encryption

- Important as anyone can eavesdrop, even from a distance
- <https://arstechnica.com/gadgets/2019/03/802-eleventy-who-goes-there-wpa3-wi-fi-security-and-what->



# Authentication

- Three states: not authenticated, authenticated but not associated, authenticated and associated
- device sends probe requests. Advertise data rates and what version of 802.11 supported. BSSID of ff:ff:ff:ff:ff:ff so all access points that hear it will respond
- if an access point (AP) supports a common data rate, it will respond with SSID, data rate, encryption mode, etc
- device chooses an access point and authenticates.



Originally this would have been WEP, but deprecated so often happens in open and usually succeeds. Device sends a 802.11 open authentication frame, seq 0x01

- AP responds saying open with seq 0x02
- if AP receives frames other than auth or probe from device, responds with a deauth to make it start over
- A device can be authenticated to multiple APs but only associated with one
- device determines who to associate with and requests



- AP responds and creates association ID
- once associated then WPA/WPA2 has to happen still before data can flow



# WEP (obsolete)

- WEP – Wired Equivalent Privacy
  - Used RC4 and CRC32
  - Deprecated 2004
  - Meant to be 64 bit originally, but 40 due to export limitations
  - Later 128-bit. Can enter in hex or ASCII chars
  - Can be cracked fairly quickly these days (10 mins on a laptop)



# WPA (Wi-Fi Protected Access)

- Also broken, obsolete in 2008
- 802.11i – Temporal Key Integrity Protocol (TKIP)
- 64 or 128 bit encryption key
- TKIP replace CRC, harder to crack, RC4
- Generate new key each packet



# WPA Personal vs Enterprise

- WPA-personal
  - Pre-shared key (PSK), AKA the password
  - 128 bits derived from 256 bits
  - If ASCII, PBKDF2 applied and then SSID used as salt (to prevent rainbow tables)
- WPA-enterprise
  - Like eduroam
  - more complicated key setup
  - Authentication via 802.1X server, RADIUS, PEAP



# WPA2 (Wi-Fi Protected Access II)

- Key exchange Broken in 2017
- IEEE 802.11i-2004
- Uses AES
- 4-way handshake
  - AP sends random number (ANonce)
  - Client sends own (SNonce)
  - AP calculates PTK from that, encrypts
  - Client decrypts with PTK. If works, good
- PTK key for unicast, GTK for broadcast



# WPA3 (2018)

- 802.11-2016
- Replaces PSK (pre-shared key exchange) with SAE
- Simultaneous Authentication of Equals instead of pre-shared key
- Supposed to help with weak passwords, and also configuring devices without displays
- 802.11w – protection of management frame



# WPA Password Issues

- Rainbow tables possible (pre-compiled tables that can speed breaking encryption, made with common passwords and SSIDs)
- WPA/WPA2 can try to crack weak passwords offline
- WPA3 need active connection to network to do it
- WPA/WPA2 lack of forward secrecy, once password broke can decrypt all future and past traffic
- Possibly if you share WPA password then anyone who knows password can decrypt



# Encryption Issues

- Past security issues with WiFi:
- KRACK attack (key reinstallation attack)
  - Issue on Linux machines, Ironically had issues for too closely following IEEE standard
  - 4-way WPA2 handshake
  - You can resend 3rd way of handshake with the key, and other side will accept it (in case it was lost) and re-start encryption from beginning
  - This leads to same key being used to encrypt multiple



frames

- That makes reversing the key trivial
- Frag attack
  - <https://lwn.net/Articles/856044/>
  - (fragmentation bit is outside of the encrypted/protected, so by messing with that you can get rogue chunks of encrypted data inserted into frames)



# Other Security Issues

- Packet sniffing
- Easier to tap into a network undetected. Long range antennas
- Malicious association – go into an area with own access point that machines will connect to
- MAC spoofing, set your MAC to an existing machines
- Denial of Service – flood the router so it can't respond



- Deauthentication attack– continually spoof an "I'm leaving" packet from all MAC addresses on network
- Hide you SSID? How effective is that?
- Encryption breaking, see long list of issues on WPA Wikipedia page



# Wifi network setup

- Simple like at home, you have a password and share it with people you trust
- Automated, like at airport. Connect with no password, but stuck on private 10.0.0.x network with DNS pointing only to own server. You have to make account / pay money / etc which will then add your MAC address. Then re-connect and then it lets you through
- Enterprise. Have to set up key file and maybe authenticate with username/password



# Transmission Power

- 802.11b signal typically around 32mW
- Often use dBmW (often shorted dBm) where  
0dBm=1mW
- 1dBm = 0.001258925W
- Convert -68 dBm to Watts
  - $P = 1W * 10^{P_{dBm}/10} / 1000$
  - -68 dBm = 160pW
- Convert 1W to dBm



- $P_{dBm} = 10 * \log_{10}(1000 * P_W / 1W)$
- $1W = 30dBm$
- Juno space probe (13 Oct 2016)
  - 8.4GHz, received -135.75dBm (2.7e-20kW) 18kb/s  
(math is right. why report kW not W though?)



# Channels

- 802.11b, DSSS 2.4GHz, 2412MHz as first channel, 14 channels 5MHz apart 1-14.
- 802.11g same as 802.11b when talking to b, but a modes when talking to other g
- 802.11a 5GHz band, channels 1-199 starting at 5005MHz 5MHz apart
- CMA/CA – uses RTS/CTS. 802.11g needs to do this if 802.11b present, slowing things down 20-50%



# Linux Interface

- In old days “iwconfig” or “iwlist”, deprecated
- On debian at least, install “iw” package
- `/usr/sbin/iw dev` – show devices
- `sudo /usr/sbin/iw wlp1s0f0 scan`

```
wlan0      IEEE 802.11abg  ESSID:"Whatever"  
          Mode:Managed  Frequency:2.452 GHz  
          Access Point: 00:1C:10:11:B4:C6  
          Bit Rate=54 Mb/s   Tx-Power=200 dBm  
          Retry short limit:7   RTS thr:off   Fragment thr:off  
          Encryption key:XXXXX  
          Power Management:off  
          Link Quality=42/70   Signal level=-68 dBm
```



```
Rx invalid nwid:0  Rx invalid crypt:0  Rx invalid frag:0  
Tx excessive retries:0  Invalid misc:0  Missed beacon:0
```

What does some of this mean? RTS threshold: can old  
do CTS/RTS if file is too big  
same with Fragment threshold



# Capturing 802.11 packets

- Is it possible to gather raw 802.11 packets, like you can with ethernet/tcpdump?
- Tricky. Often wireless networks restrict raw access to the transmitter/receiver for regulatory issues (don't want random code on computer able to blast out radio signals that could interfere with shared network)
- There is a special "monitor" mode you can put some wifi cards into
- Only some of my machines support it



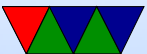
- For pi3/pi4 there are custom firmware replacements (nexmon) that in theory enable it plus other hacking

```
# Find out name of wifi device
sudo /usr/sbin/iw dev
# Replace wlan0 here with what the previous command reports
# Device must be down
sudo /usr/sbin/iw wlan0 set type monitor
then use wireshark
# Return to managed mode
sudo /usr/sbin/iw wlan0 set type managed
```



# Bridging

- How do you connect together multiple groups of machines into one big LAN?
- An interconnection at the link layer is called a MAC bridge, or bridge. Also a Layer-2 switch
- IEEE 802.1D
- Transparent bridge, as users are not aware of them
- Bridge acts in promiscuous mode (receives every frame on the LAN) so it can find ones that need to forward on across the bridge



# Terminology Review

- repeater – purely electronic, resends voltages (original Ethernet allowed four)
- hubs – frames coming in one port sent to all others  
creates a collision domain
- bridge – connects two or more LANs. Each line own collision domain  
can maybe bridge different types of networks  
(Ethernet/token, wired/wireless)
- switch – point-to-point frame routing, sort of like one



bridge per port

- router – higher layer, strips off frame headers and looks at packets, then generates new frame headers when it routes to other network



# Bridging Diagram

- Some switches are just a bunch of ethernet cards, bridged together, possibly just running an embedded OS like Linux
- TODO: diagram
- Can also bridge in software, can bridge emulator/VM to external network port
- Linux br0 device



# Backward/Self Learning

- Want switches to be able to find any ethernet device on network automatically without having to configure it
- How does bridge learn the MAC addresses?
- It watches for frames coming in and their source address. Puts in table.
- How does it learn where destination is? It broadcasts to all. Once the destination also sends a frame (so its source is known) then the switch updates its table and no longer broadcasts.



- How do you handle machines that are moved? Aging mechanism. If not heard from for a while, expire the table
- Multicast or Broadcast, can follow GMRP or GARP to limit how far it is broadcast



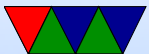
# Bridge vs Switch

- Before 1991 a switch was a bridge (in the standard)
- In 1991 Kalpana made a “switch” and differentiated it by cut-through instead of store and forward
- Store and forward – whole frame received before resent  
larger latency, no problem with broadcast, can check FCS
- cut-through – can start transmitting before receiving completely (destination MAC at beginning). Slightly better latency, broadcast not possible, too late to check



# FCS

- These day most are store and forward



# Switch Implementation

- Can implement in software with an OS like Linux
- Multiple ethernet cards
- Use operating system bridge support to bridge the interfaces together

