IEEE 802.11 Wireless LAN Standard

Chapter 14

Protocol Architecture

- Functions of physical layer:
  - Encoding/decoding of signals
  - Preamble generation/removal (for synchronization)
  - Bit transmission/reception
  - Includes specification of the transmission medium

Separation of LLC and MAC

- The logic required to manage access to a shared-access medium not found in traditional layer 2 data link control
- For the same LLC, several MAC options may be provided

Protocol Architecture

- Functions of medium access control (MAC) layer:
  - On transmission, assemble data into a frame with address and error detection fields
  - On reception, disassemble frame and perform address recognition and error detection
  - Govern access to the LAN transmission medium
- Functions of logical link control (LLC) Layer:
  - Provide an interface to higher layers and perform flow and error control

MAC Frame Format

- MAC control
  - Contains Mac protocol information
- Destination MAC address
  - Destination physical attachment point
- Source MAC address
  - Source physical attachment point
- CRC
  - Cyclic redundancy check

Figure 14.1 IEEE 802 Protocol Layers Compared to OSI Model
Logical Link Control
- Characteristics of LLC not shared by other control protocols:
  - Must support multiaccess, shared-medium nature of the link
  - Relieved of some details of link access by MAC layer

LLC Services
- Unacknowledged connectionless service
  - No flow- and error-control mechanisms
  - Data delivery not guaranteed
- Connection-mode service
  - Logical connection set up between two users
  - Flow- and error-control provided
- Acknowledged connectionless service
  - Cross between previous two
  - Datagrams acknowledged
  - No prior logical setup

Differences between LLC and HDLC
- LLC uses asynchronous balanced mode of operation of HDLC (type 2 operation)
- LLC supports unacknowledged connectionless service (type 1 operation)
- LLC supports acknowledged connectionless service (type 3 operation)
- LLC permits multiplexing by the use of LLC service access points (LSAPs)

IEEE 802.11 Architecture
- Distribution system (DS)
- Access point (AP)
- Basic service set (BSS)
  - Stations competing for access to shared wireless medium
  - Isolated or connected to backbone DS through AP
- Extended service set (ESS)
  - Two or more basic service sets interconnected by DS

Distribution of Messages Within a DS
- Distribution service
  - Used to exchange MAC frames from station in one BSS to station in another BSS
- Integration service
  - Transfer of data between station on IEEE 802.11 LAN and station on integrated IEEE 802.x LAN
Transition Types Based On Mobility

- No transition
  - Stationary or moves only within BSS
- BSS transition
  - Station moving from one BSS to another BSS in same ESS
- ESS transition
  - Station moving from BSS in one ESS to BSS within another ESS

Association-Related Services

- Association
  - Establishes initial association between station and AP
- Reassociation
  - Enables transfer of association from one AP to another, allowing station to move from one BSS to another
- Disassociation
  - Association termination notice from station or AP

Access and Privacy Services

- Authentication
  - Establishes identity of stations to each other
- Deauthentication
  - Invoked when existing authentication is terminated
- Privacy
  - Prevents message contents from being read by unintended recipient

IEEE 802.11 Medium Access Control

- MAC layer covers three functional areas:
  - Reliable data delivery
  - Access control
  - Security

IEEE 802.11 Protocol Architecture

- Logical Link Control
- Distributed Coordination Function (DCF)
- Point Coordination Function (PCF)

Reliable Data Delivery

- More efficient to deal with errors at the MAC level than higher layer (such as TCP)
- Frame exchange protocol
  - Source station transmits data
  - Destination responds with acknowledgment (ACK)
  - If source doesn’t receive ACK, it retransmits frame
- Four frame exchange
  - Source issues request to send (RTS)
  - Destination responds with clear to send (CTS)
  - Source transmits data
  - Destination responds with ACK
Medium Access Control Logic

- Interframe Space (IFS) Values
  - Short IFS (SIFS)
    - Shortest IFS
    - Used for immediate response actions
  - Point coordination function IFS (PIFS)
    - Midlength IFS
    - Used by centralized controller in PCF scheme when using polls
  - Distributed coordination function IFS (DIFS)
    - Longest IFS
    - Used as minimum delay of asynchronous frames contending for access

IFS Usage

- SIFS
  - Acknowledgment (ACK)
  - Clear to send (CTS)
  - Poll response
- PIFS
  - Used by centralized controller in issuing polls
  - Takes precedence over normal contention traffic
- DIFS
  - Used for all ordinary asynchronous traffic

MAC Frame Fields

- Frame Control – frame type, control information
- Duration/connection ID – channel allocation time
- Addresses – context dependant, types include source and destination
- Sequence control – numbering and reassembly
- Frame body – MSDU or fragment of MSDU
- Frame check sequence – 32-bit CRC

Frame Control Fields

- Protocol version – 802.11 version
- Type – control, management, or data
- Subtype – identifies function of frame
- To DS – 1 if destined for DS
- From DS – 1 if leaving DS
- More fragments – 1 if fragments follow
- Retry – 1 if retransmission of previous frame
Frame Control Fields

- Power management – 1 if transmitting station is in sleep mode
- More data – Indicates that station has more data to send
- WEP – 1 if wired equivalent protocol is implemented
- Order – 1 if any data frame is sent using the Strictly Ordered service

Control Frame Subtypes

- Power save – poll (PS-Poll)
- Request to send (RTS)
- Clear to send (CTS)
- Acknowledgment
- Contention-free (CF-end)
- CF-end + CF-ack

Data Frame Subtypes

- Data-carrying frames
  - Data
  - Data + CF-Ack
  - Data + CF-Poll
  - Data + CF-Ack + CF-Poll
- Other subtypes (don’t carry user data)
  - Null Function
  - CF-Ack
  - CF-Poll
  - CF-Ack + CF-Poll

Management Frame Subtypes

- Association request
- Association response
- Reassociation request
- Reassociation response
- Probe request
- Probe response
- Beacon

Management Frame Subtypes

- Announcement traffic indication message
- Dissociation
- Authentication
- Deauthentication

Figure 14.9 WEP Block Diagram
Authentication
- Open system authentication
  - Exchange of identities, no security benefits
- Shared Key authentication
  - Shared Key assures authentication

Physical Media Defined by Original 802.11 Standard
- Direct-sequence spread spectrum
  - Operating in 2.4 GHz ISM band
  - Data rates of 1 and 2 Mbps
- Frequency-hopping spread spectrum
  - Operating in 2.4 GHz ISM band
  - Data rates of 1 and 2 Mbps
- Infrared
  - 1 and 2 Mbps
  - Wavelength between 850 and 950 nm

IEEE 802.11a and IEEE 802.11b
- IEEE 802.11a
  - Makes use of 5-GHz band
  - Provides rates of 6, 9, 12, 18, 24, 36, 48, 54 Mbps
  - Uses orthogonal frequency division multiplexing (OFDM)
  - Subcarrier modulated using BPSK, QPSK, 16-QAM or 64-QAM
- IEEE 802.11b
  - Provides data rates of 5.5 and 11 Mbps
  - Complementary code keying (CCK) modulation scheme