Topology Control and Routing in Ad hoc Networks: A Survey [6]

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1 Introduction

An ad hoc wireless network, or simply an *ad hoc network*, consists of a collection of geographically distributed nodes that communicate with one other over a wireless medium. An ad hoc network differs from cellular networks in that there is no wired infrastructure and the communication capabilities of the network are limited by the battery power of the network nodes. One of the original motivations for ad hoc networks is found in military applications. A classic example of ad hoc networking is network of war fighters and their mobile platforms in battlefields. Indeed, a wealth of early research in the area involved the development of packet-radio networks (PRNs) and survivable radio networks [16]. While military applications still dominate the research needs in ad hoc networking, the recent rapid advent of mobile telephony and plethora of personal digital assistants has brought to the fore a number of potential commercial applications of ad hoc networks. Examples are disaster relief, conferencing, home networking, sensor networks, personal area networks, and embedded computing applications [37].

The lack of a fixed infrastructure in ad hoc networks implies that any computation on the network needs to be carried out in a decentralized manner. Thus, many of the important problems in ad hoc networking can be formulated as problems in distributed computing. However, there are certain characteristics of ad hoc networks that makes this study somewhat different than traditional work in distributed computing. In this article, we review some of the characteristic features of ad hoc networks, formulate problems and survey research work done in the area. We focus on two basic problem domains: *topology control*, the problem of computing and maintaining a connected topology among the network nodes, and *routing*. This article is not intended to be a comprehensive survey on ad hoc networking. The choice of the problems discussed in this article are somewhat biased by the research interests of the author.

The remainder of this article is organized as follows. In Section 2, we describe various aspects relevant to modeling ad hoc networks. In Section 3, we discuss topology control. Since the nodes of an ad hoc network are often associated with points in 2-dimensional space, topology control is closely tied to computational geometry; we will briefly review this relationship and extant work in the area. In Section 4, we discuss routing protocols for ad hoc networks. After a brief overview of the many protocols that have been proposed, we discuss alternative approaches based on the adversarial network model.

2 Modeling ad hoc networks

One can model an ad hoc network as a collection of points in 2-dimensional (or 3-dimensional) Euclidean space, where each point represents a network node. Each node can be characterized by its computational and communication power. The computational power of a node determines the

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level of coding and encryption that the node can perform, two key issues in wireless communication. The communication characteristics of the network are governed by the propagation characteristics of the radio channel and the environment, and the battery power and power control capabilities of the individual nodes. We now elaborate on these issues.

2.1 Radio propagation and interference

Modeling the wireless radio channel is a complex task; the wireless medium is susceptible to path loss, noise, interference and blockages due to physical obstructions. *Path loss* is the ratio of the received power to the transmitted power. It affects the quality of the received signal and is a function of the propagation distance. If P_R is the received signal power and P_T is the transmitted power, then in free-space (clear, unobstructed line-of-sight path), we have

$$P_R = O\left(\frac{P_t}{d^\alpha}\right). \tag{1}$$

The hidden constant in the big-Oh notation in Equation 1 depends on antenna gains and the carrier frequency, and $\alpha = 2$ [41, 50]. We also note that the particular values of the hidden constants also depend on the units used for expressing the different parameters (such as P_R, P_t and d). Realistic environments are not free-space, however; they include reflections, scattering, and diffraction by buildings, terrain, and other obstructions. Frequently, the same simple exponential propagation model, with α ranging from 2 to 4, is used for modeling such environments as well. For more information on path loss models, we refer the reader to [41].

In addition to path loss, the bit-error rate of a transmission, and hence the quality of the reception at any node, depends on the noise power and the transmission powers and locations of other transmitting nodes in the vicinity of u (assuming all of the nodes are transmitting on the same frequency band, which is what we assume in this article). We discuss here three simplified models that describe when a transmission is received successfully by its intended recipient. Let $\{X_k, k \in \mathcal{T}\}$ denote a set of nodes simultaneously transmitting at some time instant. Let P_k be the power level chosen by node X_k, for $k \in \mathcal{T}$. Then, under the *physical model* [21, 31], the transmission by a node X_i is successfully received by a node Y if

$$\frac{\frac{P_i}{d(X_i,Y)^\alpha}}{N + \sum_{k \in \mathcal{T}, k \neq i} \frac{P_k}{d(X_k,Y)^\alpha}} \geq \beta \tag{2}$$

where β specifies a threshold for the signal to interference ratio for successful receptions, and N is the noise power level (noise is usually modeled as a white Gaussian signal), normalized to appropriate units. The parameter β typically varies between 0.1 and 10, depending on the underlying wireless transmission technology. It is also often expressed in decibels; in this case, β is a lower bound on one tenth of the common logarithm of the left-hand side of Equation 2. The value of β depends on the modulation and coding schemes used [31]. Equation 2 represents a somewhat pessimistic transmission model; it assumes that the signals from all of the sources in $\{X_k : k \neq i\}$ interfere destructively with the signal from X_i. In practice, however, interfering signals tend to cancel each other, and their interference effect may be small, even when compared with the noise signal. A more optimistic high-level model that considers only pairwise interferences is the following. Under the *protocol model*, the transmission by a node X_i is received by a node Y if

$$\frac{P_i}{d(X_i,Y)^\alpha} \geq (1+\Delta)\frac{P_k}{d(X_k,Y)^\alpha} \tag{3}$$

for every other node X_k simultaneously transmitting over the same bandwidth, where $\Delta > 0$ models a protocol specified guard zone to prevent transmission interference. If we assume that the transmission powers of all the nodes are identical and fixed, then Equation 3 can be rewritten as a lower bound requirement on the ratio of $d(X_k, Y)$ and $d(X_i, Y)$ [21, 31]. In another variant of Equation 3, it is assumed that the transmission by a node X_i with power P_i blocks all nodes that are reachable from X_i with power $(1 + \Delta)P_i$ [1].

2.2 Modeling at higher layers

The radio propagation and interference models of Section 2.1 can be used to derive meaningful bounds on the capacity of ad hoc networks, given node locations and transmission power constraints [20, 21]. Such a model based on physical layer parameters, however, is cumbersome to use for designing and analyzing higher layer protocols. A simpler model that abstracts away the physical layer details is to represent an ad hoc network as a graph $G = (V, E)$ in Euclidean space. The set V is the set of all nodes. The set E contains an edge from node u to v if u can directly transmit to v; this can be determined by the path loss equation (Equation 1) and a basic signal-to-noise ratio formula (Equation 2 or 3) of Section 2.1. We refer to G as the *transmission graph.* Interference can be modeled to a limited extent by the following assumption: a transmission from u to v is successful only if there is no other node w that has an edge to v and is simultaneously transmitting. This is essentially the model that has been used to study packet radio networks (PRNs).

The PRN model, as described above, assumes that each node of an ad hoc network always transmits at the same transmission power. Modern mobile wireless units have the ability of adjusting their transmission power according to the transmission needs, subject to a maximum limit. Such *power control* reduces interference, conserves battery power of the mobile units, and hence allows for better use of the channel bandwidth. For example, if we represent the network using the transmission graph G as described in the preceding paragraph, we can have a node u successfully transmitting to v, even if there is a node w adjacent to v that is transmitting at the same time; this may happen because the received power at v of w's transmission may be much less than that of the received power at v of u's transmission, owing to different levels at which u and w are transmitting at that time.

An interesting framework, the class of *local probabilistic control* MAC protocols (LPC), has been developed in [1] to incorporate power control and interference in the analysis of high-level routing protocols. Given an arbitrary collection of ad hoc network locations, an LPC protocol assigns a probability p_{ij} for each ordered pair (i, j) of nodes such that if each node i attempted to transmit to node j with probability p_{ij} in any step, then the probability that a particular transmission, when attempted, is blocked with probability less than 1/2. This ensures that a routing scheme implemented on top of the LPC protocol does not need any additional coordination among the nodes for power control and addressing interference. In practice, power control and interference are usually addressed at the multiple-access layer of the OSI 7-layer hierarchy (e.g., the IEEE 802.11 MAC protocol and suggested enhancements [2]). Many routing protocols for ad hoc network separate the multiple-access control (MAC) and the network layer concerns. Thus, at the network layer, one can simply model the network as a directed graph and view each edge as an independent non-interfering channel of communication. The particular directed graph is typically a subgraph of the transmission graph and is determined so that it satisfies certain desirable properties with respect to size, power-efficiency, and throughput. The problem of determining an appropriate topology is the topic of Section 3.

2.3 Mobility

There are two approaches to modeling mobility in ad hoc networks. One approach, often used in simulations, is to model the motion of a node as a mobility vector, that gives the direction and speed of the node. Each node independently chooses a mobility vector that defines its motion for a period of time, after which a new random mobility vector is assigned (e.g., see [30, 33]). Models for group movement, whereby a group of nodes may move in the same general direction have also been recently studied [2, 30].

For a theoretical analysis, detailed models of mobility, as above, are difficult to work with. Instead, mobility can be represented by changes in the underlying transmission graph. For instance, we can analyze the robustness of an ad hoc network routing protocol by considering the amount of work needed to be done when an elementary change in the transmission graph occurs; that is, when an edge is removed or added or the neighborhood of a node changes [17, 47]. Another interesting model for capturing node mobility is the recently proposed adversarial network model [7], in which an adversary may alter the underlying graph in an unpredictable manner. Arbitrary node movements can be represented by adversarial changes in topology. We discuss this model in greater detail in Section 4.4.

3 Topology control

The absence of a central infrastructure implies that an ad hoc network does not have an associated fixed topology. Indeed, an important task of an ad hoc network consisting of geographically dispersed nodes is to determine an appropriate topology over which high-level routing protocols are implemented. In this section, we consider topology control, the problem of determining an appropriate topology in an ad hoc network. Let V denote the collection of nodes and let G denote the graph on V in which there is an edge from node u to node v if and only if u can directly reach v. Let T denote the topology returned by the topology control algorithm. The quality of the topology T can be evaluated according to several criteria including connectivity, energy-efficiency, throughput, and robustness to mobility. In the remainder of this section, we elaborate on these measures.

3.1 Connectivity and energy-efficiency

Perhaps, the most basic requirement of a topology is that it be connected. More precisely, we require that any two nodes that are connected in G are also connected in T. Since the topology T forms the underlying network for routing protocols, it is also desirable that there exist energy-efficient paths between potential source-destination pairs. One notion of energy-efficiency is the *energy stretch factor*, which we now define. As discussed in Section 2, the power required, and hence the energy consumed, for a transmission from u to v is a polynomial function of the distance between u and v. Define the energy used for delivering a packet along a path to be the sum of the energy used along the edges of the path. For two nodes u and v, let $E_G(u,v)$ (resp., $E_T(u,v)$) denote the energy of the minimum energy path between u and v in G (resp., T). We now define the *energy stretch factor* of T to be the maximum, over all u and v, of $E_G(u,v)/E_T(u,v)$. A notion of quality similar to the energy stretch factor is the *hop stretch factor* which measures the ratios of the hop-counts rather than that of the energy.

We would like to provide connectivity and energy-efficiency using a "simple" topology that is "easy" to maintain. While there is no single way to formalize "simplicity" and "maintainability", some objective measures that influence these subjective goals are the size of the topology in terms of the number of edges in T and the maximum degree of any node in T.

Connectivity, degree, and size are network design measures common to both wired and wireless settings. Analogous to the notion of energy stretch factor is that of *distance stretch factor* (or simply the stretch factor) in fixed-connection networks, where the distance between two nodes is the length of the shortest path between the two nodes. The problem of designing topologies with low stretch factors has been extensively studied by network designers. Of most relevance in this context is the notion of a spanner. Given a graph G on a set of nodes, a *spanner* is a subgraph H of G in which the distance between any two nodes is within a constant factor of the distance between the two nodes in G. Put differently, the distance stretch factor of a spanner is $O(1)$. If we adopt the model, as discussed in Section 2, that power attenuates as distance raised to an exponent greater than 1 (a typical assumption is an exponent between 2 and 4), then it can be shown that a topology with a $O(1)$ distance stretch factor also has a $O(1)$ energy stretch factor.

What distinguishes the topology control problem in the mobile ad hoc setting from traditional network design is that we need to determine the topology in a completely distributed environment. A number of distributed topology control algorithms have been proposed recently [32, 43, 52, 53]. These algorithms draw upon computational geometry techniques that define connected topologies on points in Euclidean space. The techniques, and the topologies obtained, vary in the degree of simplicity, the quality of the topology, and their suitability for distributed implementation. We now review some well-studied geometric structures and their associated topology control algorithms.

For nodes in Euclidean space, a number of *proximity graphs* have been proposed. These include relative neighborhood graphs and Gabriel graphs [49]. Let V be a collection of nodes in Euclidean space. The *relative neighborhood graph* (RNG) has an edge between two nodes u and v, if there is no node w such that $\max\{d(u,w), d(v,w)\} < d(u,v)$. The *Gabriel graph* (GG) has an edge between two nodes u and v if and only if there is no node w such that $d^2(u,w) + d^2(v,w) \leq d^2(u,v)$. Both RNG and GG are easy to compute using a local algorithm. While both RNG and GG are connected graphs, they have poor spanning ratios in the worst case. The worst-case spanning ratio of GG is $\Omega(\sqrt{n})$, while that of RNG is $\Omega(n)$. Even for random point sets, it has been shown that GG and RNG have $\omega(1)$ spanning ratios. With regard to energy-efficiency, GG has energy-stretch of 1 and hence is optimal, while RNG has polynomial energy-stretch. The worst-case degree of GG is $\Omega(n)$.

An elegant generalization of proximity graphs due to Yao [56] yields spanners for an arbitrary collection of points in finite-dimensional Euclidean space. Given a set of nodes in 2-dimensional space, suppose we partition the space around each node into *sectors* of a fixed angle and connect the node to the nearest neighbor in each sector. If each sector has an angle of $\Theta < \pi/3$, the resultant graph, commonly referred to as a Θ-graph, has been shown to be a connected graph with stretch $1/(1 - 2\sin(\Theta/2))$ [44]; thus, the Θ-graph is a spanner.

For ad hoc wireless networks, the Θ-graph can be easily constructed using a fast local algorithm in which each node queries nodes within its transmission radius, and selects the nearest nodes in each sector as its adjacent nodes. We note that the construction of the Θ-graph requires that the nodes know their own positions, either from a geographical positioning system (GPS) or through other means, such as inertial sensors and acoustic range-finding devices. One drawback of the Θ-graph is its large maximum degree in the worst-case. Consider the example of all nodes on the circumference of a circle, and a node at the center that is reachable from every node on the circumference of the circle. Then, the center is a neighbor for every node in the Θ-graph. One can obtain a bounded-degree subgraph of the Θ-graph that is also a spanner by processing the edges in order by length and adding an edge (u,v) to the subgraph if there is no other edge (u,w) or (v,w) already added and having an angle close to that of (u,v) [45] (a related idea is used in [5]). The topology control algorithm of [53] adopts a similar approach to convert a Θ-graph to a constant-degree spanner. The basic idea is to eliminate an edge between u and v if there exists a node w such that (u, w) and (w, v) are also edges, and $d(u, w)$ and $d(w, v)$ are both smaller than $d(u, v)$ (or some constant q times $d(u, v)$). Performing this elimination process in a completely uncoordinated manner may, however, adversely affect the spanner property. If the edges of the Θ-graph are processed in a particular order, then it is shown that the spanner property is maintained and each node ends up with a constant number of adjacent edges. The edge processing order, however, relies on a global ranking and it is not apparent how to implement the postprocessing of the Θ-graph edges in time independent of the diameter of the network. A different postprocessing of the Θ-graph has also been proposed in [55, 52]; the graph, referred to as the *Yao-Yao graph*, can be easily computed locally and also guarantees constant degree for each node. Whether the Yao-Yao graph satisfies the spanner property is unknown.

Another geometric structure that leads to a spanner is the Delaunay triangulation of the set of points, which is a collection of edges satisfying the property for each edge that there is a circle containing the edge endpoints but not containing any other points. Without additional restrictions, however, the Delaunay triangulation graph may include edges much longer than the transmission range of a node. It has been shown that restricted Delaunay graphs [17], in which we only include Delaunay edges with a limited fixed transmission radius, are also spanners. Furthermore, the number of edges in a restricted Delaunay graph is linear in the number of nodes; the maximum degree of a node may be $\Omega(n)$ in the worst case, however. For a comprehensive survey on geometric spanners and other structures in geometric network design, see [14].

The spanner property only ensures the existence of distance- and energy-efficient paths; how are these paths computed online when routing requests arise? While for some topologies such as the Θ-graph and certain variants, the quality paths are easily calculated using local control, for others, including the restricted Delaunay graph and the Yao-Yao graph, this is not the case [17, 52]. (Also see Section 4 for more discussion on online selection of paths, when we consider routing protocols.)

Our preceding discussion on energy-efficiency has focused on unicast energy usage. Also of interest is to identify energy-efficient structures for broadcast and multicast operations. A number of greedy heuristics for broadcast routing have been studied in [51, 54]. While it has been shown that a constant-factor approximation is achievable (in, fact, the minimum spanning tree is shown to be $O(1)$-approximate), the complexity of the optimization problem is still open. Also, the algorithms analyzed in [51] are all centralized; no efficient distributed algorithms are known.

3.2 Throughput

In addition to connectivity and energy-efficiency, we would like to have a topology with high capacity or throughput; that is, it must be feasible to route "about as much traffic" in the topology as any other topology, satisfying the desired constraints. Depending on the network characteristics that are being studied and the traffic patterns being considered, one can formalize the notion of throughput of an ad hoc network in different ways, and we review some definitions in the following.

In [21], Gupta and Kumar analyze the throughput of ad hoc networks under both the physical and protocol models of interference, as defined in Section 2.1. They define the throughput in terms of terms of a bit-distance product. Suppose we say that the network transports one *bit-meter* when one bit has been transported a distance of one meter. Then, the throughput of a network can be measured in terms of the number of bit-meters that are transported per second. It is shown in [21] that for n identical nodes randomly located in a disk of unit area, each node using a fixed transmission range, the throughput achievable for each source for a randomly selected destination, measured as a bit-distance product, is inversely proportional to $\sqrt{n \log n}$. It is also shown that if we allow the nodes as well as the source-destination pairs to be selected optimally, the maximum bit-distance product achievable by the network per unit time grows as $\Theta(\sqrt{n})$; thus, the average bit-distance product per node is inversely proportional to $\sqrt{n}$. The preceding results suggest that under certain assumptions about traffic pattern or node locations, the average throughput furnished to each user decreases as the number of users increases. In a follow up study [20], it is shown that this apparent "inscalability" can be alleviated for delay-tolerant applications under certain (optimistic) assumptions about node mobility and probabilistic assumptions about source-destination pairs and node locations.

The preceding definitions of throughput capture the capabilities of the network in the best-case and average-case (assuming a random traffic pattern) settings. Quite often, though, the traffic pattern does not fit into either of these moulds. A better model in these situations is to define throughput for a traffic pattern determined by arbitrary source-destination pairs exchanging data at arbitrary rates. One performance measure is then *throughput-competitiveness* which is the largest number $\phi \leq 1$ such that given any set $\{(s_i, t_i)\}$ of source destination pairs, if a flow of r_i can be routed in G among each source-destination pair, then a flow of $\phi \cdot r_i$ can be routed in T. Throughput-competitiveness captures the *worst-case* performance of the topology and is, thus, a hard performance measure to optimize. In scenarios where we have some knowledge of traffic patterns, we can restrict the class of source-destination pairs and measure throughput-competitiveness in a more meaningful manner.

The throughput-competitiveness of a topology depends on, among other factors, the level of interference inherent to the topology. Define the *interference number* of an edge e in T to be the maximum number of other edges in T that interfere with e, in the sense of Section 2 [6]. Define the interference number of the topology to be the maximum interference number of an edge in T. A plausible goal then is to seek a topology with a small interference number. The particular interference number achievable, however, depends on the relative positions of the ad hoc network nodes and their transmission radii. This leads to the following open problem in network design: Given a collection of ad hoc network nodes, design a connected topology that minimizes the interference number. It seems unlikely that the preceding optimization problem can be solved effectively by a local algorithm; nevertheless, a centralized algorithm for the problem may be of theoretical interest.

Can we provide simultaneous guarantees on throughput and energy-efficiency, given an arbitrary collection of nodes forming an ad hoc network? This is the focus of research in a recent work [6], where tradeoffs among congestion, energy-efficiency, and dilation (hopcount-efficiency) are studied. It is shown that there exists an ad hoc network and a set of source-destination pairs with associated flow rates such that any topology incurs a $\Omega(n^{1/3})$ factor overhead in either congestion or total energy consumed, where n is the number of nodes in the network. Bounds on the product of congestion and dilation and the product of dilation and energy have also been derived in [6].

3.3 Robustness to mobility

An additional challenge in the design of distributed topology control algorithms is to ensure some degree of robustness to the mobility of nodes. One measure of robustness of the topology is given by the maximum number of nodes that need to change their topology information as a result of a movement of a node. This number, which may be referred to as the *adaptability* of the topology control algorithm, depends on the size of the transmission neighborhood of the mobile node u, and the relative location of the nodes. The topology control algorithms based on proximity graphs all have low adaptability, since a change in a node location will only require the nodes in its neighborhood (both old and new) to recompute their edges in the topology. The topology of Gao et al [17] is more complex since it relies on a hierarchical clustering of the nodes. Under certain assumptions about the distribution of points on the plane, however, they have shown that the number of nodes that need to be updated due to a change in the underlying transmission graph is proportional to the number of nodes in the immediate neighborhood of the mobile node, the update time per node being a constant. Other than maintaining the topology, mobility also entails changes in the routing paths. The maintenance of routing paths in the presence of mobility is discussed in Section 4.

4 Routing protocols

In the previous section, we considered the design of topologies that have certain desirable properties in terms of connectivity, energy-efficiency, and throughput. We now consider the design of routing schemes that harness these properties. We note that while the presentation in this article follows the approach of separating the network design and routing scheme design components, the two components are closely intertwined. The choice of the particular topology control algorithm may have a strong impact on the choice of the routing scheme. Since the topology is constantly changing, the routing scheme has to be robust to changes in topology.

How do we analyze the efficiency of an ad hoc network routing protocol? One framework is to analyze the cost of individual routing requests using the measures laid out in Section 3, namely, stretch and power stretch. Also relevant are the measures of adaptability and the memory overhead. The memory overhead is simply the size in bits of all the data structures used by the routing protocol. In Sections 4.1, 4.2, and 4.3, we survey several routing protocols proposed for ad hoc networks and discuss the tradeoffs among the different performance measures. In Section 4.4, we discuss the adversarial model, an alternative framework for analysis.

4.1 Flat routing protocols

For an ad hoc network, given a topology, represented by an undirected graph $G = (V, E)$, a routing scheme has to select paths between source destination pairs in much the same manner as in wired networks. Two paradigms that underlie Internet routing protocols are Distance Vector (DV) and Link State (LS) algorithms. Both DV and LS algorithms require continual exchange of global routing information. This enables the individual nodes of the network to maintain a close approximation of the current network map at every instant. For ad hoc networks, *proactive* routing protocols follow the DV or LS paradigm and attempt to keep routing information for all the nodes up to date, e.g., OLSR, DSDV [38]. When the topology of an ad hoc network is under constant flux, however, LS generates large number of link state changes, while DV algorithms frequently suffer from out of date state. The size of the network and the mobility of the nodes are two hurdles in the design of scalable routing protocols. For example, the DSDV protocol has $O(1)$ stretch but requires each node to store an $O(n)$-size distance vector; one consequence of the latter memory overhead is that the adaptability of the network is high since all distance vectors may need to be updated when a node moves.

In contrast to proactive algorithms, *reactive* routing protocols cache topological information and update the cached information on-demand. Reactive protocols avoid the prohibitive cost of routing information maintenance of proactive protocols, and tend to work well in practice. While the idea of aggressive caching and occasional update results in good average performance, the worst-case latency could be high. Examples of reactive protocols are Dynamic Source Routing (DSR) [25], Ad-hoc On-Demand Distance Vector Routing (AODV) [36], and TORA [35]. For a comparison of certain proactive and reactive routing protocols, see [13].

Hybrids of proactive and reactive protocols, e.g., Zone Routing Protocol [22], have also been proposed, that maintain a clustering of the network and keep routing information up-to-date within a cluster while using a reactive paradigm for collecting information about distant nodes.

The most basic clustering that has been studied in the context of ad hoc networks is based on dominating sets. Given an undirected graph $G = (V, E)$, a *dominating set* D of G is a subset of V such that for every node $v \in V$, either $v \in D$ or there exists a node $u \in D$ such that $(u, v) \in E$. The set D of *dominators* identifies a set of clusters, each cluster consisting of a node in D and its adjacent nodes. (If we need non-overlapping clusters, then we can have each node v in $V - D$ associate with exactly one node in D that is adjacent to v.) The dominators act as clusterheads that store global routing information. To minimize the cost of updating the global routing database due to network changes, clusterings based on a small number of clusters are desirable. The problem of finding a dominating set of minimum size, however, is a classic NP-complete optimization problem [18] and it is known that unless NP has $n^{O(\log \log n)}$-time deterministic algorithms, the best approximation ratio achievable in polynomial time is $O(\log n)$ [15].

In the context of ad hoc networks, we are interested in distributed algorithms for finding a small dominating set. Kutten and Peleg describe a distributed dominating set algorithm which takes $O(\log^* n)$ time [29] on any network, assuming a synchronous model of computation, in which each node can exchange a message with each neighbor in each step. The primary emphasis in [29] is on time complexity, however, and there is no nontrivial asymptotic upper bound on the approximation ratio. In contrast, Haas and Liang [33] present a distributed implementation of the greedy algorithm that achieves the same approximation ratio as the greedy algorithm; however, there exist networks for which the distributed greedy algorithm takes $\Omega(n)$ time. Building upon NC algorithms for the set cover problem [11, 40], a randomized distributed implementation of the sequential algorithm is presented in [24] and is shown to achieve an $O(\log n)$ approximation in $O(\log^2 n)$ time with high probability. It is still open whether one can derive the same approximation in $O(\log n)$ time. Also, better approximations for nodes in Euclidean space merit further investigation.

4.2 Hierarchical routing protocols

The idea of one-level clustering, as discussed in Section 4.1, can be easily generalized to a multilevel hierarchical network decomposition. Indeed, this is an old concept in networking dating back to the 70s [26, 34]. While many of the hierarchical routing protocols were originally designed for fixed networks, they are applicable, with suitable modification, for ad hoc networks. The main idea of hierarchical routing is to organize the network as a hierarchy of nested clusters of nodes. Each node of the network is a level-0 cluster. The level-i clusters are grouped together into a certain number of level-$i + 1$ clusters, for $i \geq 0$. In the most basic clustering, one assumes that all level-i clusters are disjoint; many routing protocols use overlapping clusters to provide fault-tolerance and make the protocol more adaptive to dynamic network changes.

A hierarchical control structure enforces a hierarchical addressing on the network nodes, which can form the basis of a routing scheme. In a typical routing scheme, each cluster elects certain leaders within the cluster, which obtain and represent network state information at multiple levels of granularity. Routing can be performed by forwarding the given packet to a level-i cluster which contains the destination node, successively for decreasing value of i, until the packet reaches a level-0 cluster containing the destination, which is the destination itself. Routing protocols differ in the precise mechanism by which network state information is gathered and the particular paths used in the routing process.

The hierarchical control structures on which different routing protocols are based differ in the number m of levels of the hierarchy, the size and diameter of the clusters at different levels of the hierarchy, and amount of overlap among the clusters. The different choices lead to a natural tradeoff between memory overhead and the stretch factor. Steenstrup [47] reviews several practical hierarchical clustering protocols proposed for ad hoc networks. Most of these protocols rely on heuristics and, as such, do not provide provable worst-case guarantees.

From a theoretical standpoint, the protocol presented in [10] provides a suitable tradeoff between stretch and memory overhead. The routing protocol, designed for fixed-connection networks, uses the elegant network decomposition technique of sparse neighborhood covers to achieve a stretch of $O(k^2)$ while using $O(kn^{1/k} \log^2 n \log D)$ local memory overhead, where D is the diameter of the network. (See [19] for a recent survey on tradeoffs in routing for fixed-connection networks.) Thus, the preceding protocol guarantees the near-optimal tradeoff of achieving $O(\text{polylog}(n))$ stretch while only using $O(\text{polylog}(n))$ local memory overhead. There are two major disadvantages of the above protocol in the context of ad hoc networks. First, responding to mobility of nodes may require significant overhead. Second, the decomposition technique is complex and would be impractical for scenarios in which the network nodes have limited power and computational capabilities.

4.3 Geographic routing protocols

A recent approach to designing simple protocols that keep overhead small is to exploit the underlying geometry (and geography) of the ad hoc network locations. In the Greedy Perimeter Stateless Routing (GPSR) protocol [27], each node only maintains information about their "neighborhood", which is the set of nodes that the node can directly reach. Using positioning information, the source node greedily passes a given packet to a neighbor that is closest to the destination; if greedy forwarding is impossible, then the packet is forwarded along a perimeter of the region to reach the destination. While GPSR guarantees connectivity, the best bound on the stretch of the protocol is $\Omega(n)$. GPSR is however, adaptive to node mobility since the nodes maintain neighborhood information only. As such, GPSR does not take into account energy efficiency.

An even simpler approach than GPSR is to use the Θ-graph, as discussed in Section 3. The Θ-graph not only defines a topology but also directly yields a simple routing protocol with $O(1)$ stretch and $O(1)$ memory overhead; the memory overhead is constant since each node needs to store the coordinates of the nearest node in each of a constant number of sectors. This approach is used in [23] for routing in the plane. The worst-case adaptability of the routing scheme is at least the maximum in-degree of a Θ-graph, which may be large; consequently, the movement of a single node may require updates in a large number of nearby nodes. One approach to alleviate this problem is to use the constant-degree variants of the Θ-graph, as discussed in Section 3. Unfortunately, while the topology control algorithms based on these variants guarantee the existence of energy-efficient paths, a constructive mechanism for calculating these paths in a distributed manner is not known.

4.4 Adversarial model

A second framework for analyzing ad hoc network routing algorithms is the adversarial model, first developed in [12] and subsequently enhanced in several recent studies [4, 8]. In the context of ad hoc networks, we can model mobility and traffic patterns using an adversary. Mobility can be modeled by allowing the adversary to activate/deactivate network edges; arbitrary traffic patterns can be modeled by allowing the adversary to determine the rate of packet arrival and the source-destination pairs for each packet. We describe here the most general adversarial model considered thus far [8]. In this model, the adversary is allowed to inject packets at arbitrary nodes at arbitrary times and can activate an arbitrary number of incoming or outgoing edges subject to a maximum degree bound Δ for each node. The destination for the each packet is also selected by the adversary. There is one more constraint, that the buffer size of each node is limited to a value B. If at any time, the number of packets in a buffer exceeds B then the excess packets have to be dropped.

The adversarial control of the network topology is intended to model the dynamic nature of an ad hoc network in which edges may appear and disappear over time. We assume that no packets are lost; furthermore the model does not cover malicious faults in the sense that it is implicitly assumed that all of the nodes faithfully execute a given routing protocol. The adversarial control of packet injection models the dynamic and unpredictable nature of network traffic.

The performance of a given routing algorithm can now be measured by means of a competitive analysis framework. For a given sequence σ of packet injections and edge activations, let $\mathrm{OPT}_B(\sigma)$ denote the maximum number of packets that can be delivered assuming the buffer of each node is of size at most B. For a given algorithm $\mathcal{A}$, let $\mathcal{A}_{B'}(\sigma)$ denote the number of packets delivered by $\mathcal{A}$ assuming the buffer of each node is of size at most B'. We call $\mathcal{A}$ (c, s)-competitive if for all σ and B, we have

$$\mathcal{A}_{sB}(\sigma) \geq c \cdot \mathrm{OPT}_B(\sigma) - r,$$

for some value $r \geq 0$ that is independent of $\mathrm{OPT}_B(\sigma)$ [8, 46].

The best result known for the above adversarial model is a simple local balancing algorithm that send packets from nodes with high load to nodes with low load; the load on a node is signified by the height of the buffer [8]. (The local balancing approach has also formed the basis of fast algorithms for load balancing [3] and multicommodity flow [9].) For a given $T \geq B + 2(\Delta - 1)$, the algorithm of [8] is $O(1 - \varepsilon, 1 + (1 + (T + \Delta)/B)L/\varepsilon)$-competitive, where L is the average path length used by successful packets in an optimal solution; in particular, if the degree Δ is always constant, then there exists a simple $(1 - \varepsilon, O(L/\varepsilon))$-competitive algorithm. An important open question is what is the smallest value of s that yields a (δ, s)-competitive algorithm for some constant $0 < \delta < 1$.

5 Concluding remarks

In Section 4, we noted that many routing protocols, proposed for ad hoc networks are adaptations of protocols originally devised for fixed-connection networks. We anticipate that due to the advent of peer-to-peer computing, the two problem domains will bear an even stronger relationship; peer-to-peer networks share many of the same concerns with ad-hoc networks, e.g., a need to quickly adapt to the frequent changes in the system and completely decentralized organization. An interesting direction for future research is to see whether resource location protocols designed for peer-to-peer networks [28, 39, 42, 48] can be adapted to yield effective routing protocols for ad hoc networks.

Finally, we note that most of the results we have discussed in this article rely on MAC layer protocols for power control and contention resolution, and implicitly assume that the ad hoc network is deployed over open, flat terrain. Designing power control protocols to improve bandwidth and energy efficiency is an active area of research [2, 30]. Models for radio propagation in the presence of blockages that have been used in simulation studies tend to be complex; it would be useful to develop simpler models suitable for analyzing routing protocols.

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