

MULTI-TOPOLOGY AND MULTI-SERVICE ROUTING SYSTEM

The present invention relates to a multi-topology and multi-service routing system.

The system is developed to operate on various types of transport subnetworks (IP, radio, etc.) and to interconnect the services operating on these subnetworks, in a context of user mobility and of nodes forming the service networks.

Many dynamic routing protocols have been developed in the past for various types of existing switches (circuit switch, packet switch or cells in connected mode, router, etc.). These routing protocols are systematically dedicated to a single network type and form an integral part of the technology developed for a given network. These protocols describe either routing mechanisms within a network, or routing mechanisms between networks of the same kind.

Currently, the developments in this field relate to systems based on multi-topology routing making it possible to instantiate the routing mechanisms of one and the same technology for different topologies, the routing taking account of the quality of service and resource reservations, of the routing over the mobile networks (Adhoc, etc.).

The known routing protocols of the prior art are usually incomplete and do not take account of certain network specifics, such as mobility, optimization of the available resources, etc. Certain studies of the prior art have related notably to the mobility of the network addresses (mobile IP, mobility in IPV6, etc.) and have resulted in solutions requiring the installation of tunnels able to create inefficient stream loops on networks having restricted segments.

Nevertheless, the protocols do not take account of the dynamic routing required at the service level, addressing via one and the same routing protocol various services that may have a different topology. They do not take account of the distribution of a multi-destination stream via a distribution

tree generated dynamically in a distributed manner for each stream instance. These mechanisms do not handle the problems of interconnection of services carried over networks of different kinds.

The routing system according to the invention notably handles the mobility of the users and the servers, the distribution of the multi-destination streams via distribution trees generated dynamically according to the distribution list, the location of the users and the instantaneous topology of the carrier networks. It responds notably to the following questions: on which servers can the destinations be reached (user mobility) and how can the call be routed from the source server to the destination server or servers.

The invention relates to a system of routing a stream between several nodes, N_i , comprising a network, the stream being transmitted by a source and being intended for one or more destinations taking account of the mobility requirements of the users and of the network nodes, characterized in that:

- a node, N_i , of the network comprises a service module, xSV_i , one or more transfer gateways, xTG_i , a function LOC suitable for generating for each service a routing table used at the request of the service modules, xSV_i ,
- a server LOC is connected, for a given service, via a service node group, SNG_i , to the other LOC_i .

A function LOC, on routing information received from another LOC_i , is for example suitable for:

- determining the real itineraries used to propagate the stream across the network,
- keeping up to date a database of distinct transmittal information for each service.

A function LOC_i may contain a location directory in which the user has previously had himself registered, the directory being distributed in each standalone unit of the network.

The invention also relates to a multi-topology and multi-service routing method designed to operate on a transport subnetwork comprising several nodes, N_i , and designed to interconnect the services operating on these networks characterized in that it comprises at least the following steps:

- 5 • locating the service users and communicating various items of information: the location of the users present in the network, the accessibility and topology information relating to all the links existing between the service modules xSV_i of the various services,
- 10 • generating the distribution tree associated with a stream between a source and several destinations taking account of the instantaneous distribution list and topology of the system and of the location of the users.

The method may also comprise the following step:

a service module, xSV_i , wishing to route a stream to one or more destinations interrogates a location function suitable for generating for each
15 service a routing table that supplies, for each destination of the stream, the next service xSV_i access and relay point.

The routing table supplies for example the pair of xTG to be used to reach this next hop.

20 The system and the method that are the subjects of the invention notably have the particular feature of operating at service level.

The invention relates notably to the following functions: the handling of the location of the service users and the communication of the location information to all the network nodes, the recognition of the various
25 topologies associated with the presence of the service switching nodes (telephony, messaging, content distribution, etc.), the generation of the route between a source and one or more destinations taking account of the distribution list and of the instantaneous topology of the system, and of the location of the users.

30 The routing method makes it possible to effectively use networks of which certain main data highways are restricted in bit rate (for example

satellite links, very high frequency (VHF) links, ultra high frequency (UHF) links); the distribution list of a content or of a message is taken into account, the content to be distributed will be transferred only once over the restricted data highways.

5 It defines a routing and location protocol shared by all the services. This has the consequence of avoiding the development of a protocol for each service. By means of this protocol, an end-to-end connectivity is established at the service level via carrier subnetworks of different kinds.

10 The protocol thus developed offers a management view of connectivity at service level that does not exist in the current implementations.

Other features and advantages of the present invention will be more apparent on reading the following description of an appended
15 exemplary embodiment, given for illustration purposes and being in no way limiting, of the figures that represent:

- figure 1, an example of services having different topologies, for example the telephony service and the messaging service,
- figure 2, an example of the architecture for routing the streams
20 according to the invention,
- figure 3, an example of interconnection of the components LOC via service groups,
- figure 4, an example of a breakdown of a mobility domain.

Figure 1 shows the difference in interconnection topologies of the
25 service plans that can exist for two given services; for example for the telephony service and for the messaging service. The transfer gateways are specific for a given service.

For telephony, the service plan P_T comprises for example several modules LCC having notably the function of controlling the calls and the
30 multimedia, modules GTW having the function of providing the

interconnection of the telephony services with the telephony services of other networks, components QSM that handle the management of quality of service on the data highways of the core network. The modules LCC are for example considered to be the application platform for the telephony systems
 5 for the purpose of supplying advanced services and telephony.

For messaging, the service plan P_M comprises for example several components MTG having the function of specifying the functional adaptations required for the transport of messages over another network, components MSG in charge of the messaging system.

10 Figure 2 schematically represents an example of a system for routing a stream according to the invention between several nodes N_i . The system comprises several service access points and relay points, xSV_i , transfer gateways, xTG_i allowing the streams to be transferred to be adapted to the capacities of the subnetwork. A module suitable for handling the
 15 routing for all of the services, called the LOC_i , is associated with each xSV_i of the routing system. When a service module, xSV_i , wishes to route a stream to one or more destinations (one or more network nodes), it interrogates the local module LOC_i associated with the xSV_i that supplies the next step or next-hop information (stream routed from $xSVB$ to $xSVG$) and where
 20 necessary the information on the transfer gateways xTG to be used. During each of the requests of the xSV , the function LOC (implemented for example in the form of a component offering services) gives, for each destination of the stream, the next relay hop (xSV_i) of the information and the pair of xTG (the first is the entrance gateway to the network traversed and the second is
 25 the exit gateway) to be used to reach this next hop.

A module xSV groups together the relaying and access point functions (for example the module xSV can include a mailbox in the case of a messaging function).

The module LOC contains for example a location directory in
 30 which the user has previously had himself registered, in this instance the directory is for example distributed in each standalone unit of the network.

To generate the distribution tree associated with a stream between a source and several destinations taking account of the mobility requirements of the users and of the network nodes, the functions LOC (location and routing) interchange the following information: the location of the users
5 present in the network, and accessibility and topology information relating to all the links that exist between the service modules xSV of the various services.

To propagate the information that they have, the servers LOC_i are interconnected in the following manner: the servers LOC are interconnected
10 for a given service via an SNG (a group of LOC that are in direct line of sight that represents a given network at service level or a service node group) having notably the function of broadcasting an item of information received by all the LOC connected to this service node group. One and the same server LOC may form part of several SNG. An item of information transmitted
15 by a server LOC in a SNG is received by all the LOC connected to this SNG.

Figure 3 schematically represents an example of the organization of the network interconnection into a service node group "SNG", shown in figure 2.

The information thus propagated by the SNG allows each
20 connected component LOC to generate, for a given service, the information routing table that is used by the requests transmitted by the service modules xSV. This is carried out by means of known algorithms, for example of the Distance Vector or Link State type.

The invention is used for example for putting in place a domain
25 structure making it possible to limit the number of items of routing information interchanged and to control the incoming and outgoing streams of a given network.

Such a structure has notably the advantage of defining the field of mobility of the users and the zones in which the servers or access point xSV
30 can move.

A user mobility domain consists for example of various network types (infrastructure network, high bit rate radio network, low bit rate radio network, etc.) or of networks controlled by different government authorities. These networks in fact constitute autonomous service areas or ASA.

5 Figure 4 represents an example of the breakdown of a mobility domain, on which the service users can move in several autonomous service areas ASA. An assembly of service relays or access points (xSV) may be moved with the LOC function that is attached to them without causing any reconfiguration by administration within an ASA.

10 The LOC interconnected by SNG form an autonomous service area ASA, within which the functions LOC can move with the xSV that are attached to them. The accessibilities and the topology within one and the same area ASA are known to all the LOC of one and the same ASA. The connections between ASA do not propagate the accessibilities internal to the
15 ASA, but propagate to the adjacent areas ASA only the accessibility of the ASA and accordingly limit the volume of routing information interchanged over the network. These solutions are similar to those developed for packet networks, but they have been applied to the topologies formed by networks at the interconnection level of the servers supplying the service.

20 An external network is considered to be an autonomous service area "ASA" by the routing system according to the invention.

The exemplary embodiments described above address the dynamic management of the topologies formed by service networks. They address the networks on which a distributed management of mobility is
25 required (mobility of the service nodes and mobility of the service users).

The invention applies notably to the networks of which certain main data highways are restricted in bit rate (satellite, microwave, Adhoc network data highways, etc.), because it makes it possible to take account of the distribution list of a content or of a message and makes it possible to
30 ensure that the content to be distributed will be transferred only once over the restricted data highways.

The invention also makes it possible to create an end-to-end connectivity for the service, even if the carrier subnetworks are of different kinds.

CLAIMS

1 - A system for routing a stream between several nodes, N_i , comprising a network, the stream being transmitted by a source and being intended for one or more destinations characterized in that:

- a node, N_i , of the network comprises a service module, one or more transfer gateways, a function which generates for each service a routing table used at the request of the service modules,
- a server is connected, for a given service, via a service node, to routing modules.

2 - The routing system as claimed in claim 1, characterized in that the function on routing information received from one of the other routing modules:

- determines real itineraries used to propagate the stream across the network, and
- updates a database of distinct transmittal information for each service.

3 - The routing system as claimed in claim 1, characterized in that one of the routing modules contains a location directory in which the user has previously had himself registered, the directory being distributed in each standalone unit of the network.