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Survivability-Enhancing Routing Scheme for Multi-Domain Networks

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Abstract — We present a routing solution which eliminates the inherent path exploration problem of BGP and thereby enhances survivability in multi-domain networks. The path exploration problem is caused by the dependency among paths learned from neighboring domains. We propose to solve this issue by using two domain level disjoint paths. Our work is based on the aggregated representation of transit domains. The aggregated scheme we use is obtaining the shortest path between each pair of border routers for the associated domain. We also propose to use a single node to represent the destination domain, thereby the size of routing table is 2*(n-1). To implement our solution, domain level source routing is used and a SDRP header is added to the delivered packet. This avoids re-calculation and path exploration when repairing inter-domain link failures. Inter-domain link failures must be repaired at domain level, while intra-domain link failures can be repaired by neighboring nodes, border routers or at domain level. The intra-domain repair methods are compared by simulation and based on the results border router repairing is recommended.

Keywords: aggregated representation, disjoint paths, inter-domain routing, multi-domain survivability

I. INTRODUCTION

Today’s Internet is constructed of a vast amount of interconnected autonomous systems (ASes, also called domains in this paper) administrated by different Internet Service Provider (ISP). Border Gateway Protocol (BGP), a path vector protocol, is the de-facto routing protocol used to exchange reachability information among domains. The path exploration phenomenon is the main reason of slow convergence of BGP deployed in multi-domain networks. The root cause of path exploration is the path dependency among neighboring ASes [1]. In other words, the selected paths in one domain are dependent on the path selection made in the neighboring ASes. In the worst case, the theoretical upper bound of alternate paths which may have to be explored after a failure is O(n!) [2].

Several solutions are proposed to reduce or limit the influence caused by the path exploration problem. Forward edge sequence number (fesn) introduced in [1] attaches a fesn list according to the AS path in the BGP announcements. This fesn list is used to distinguish failure events and invalidate multiple routes which match this list to limit the path exploration. The ghost-flushing proposal described in [3] improves the convergence time by propagating bad news quicker than good news. These solutions are palliative and cannot solve the problem thoroughly. In [4], a new routing protocol based on disjoint path calculation is proposed where a complex aggregated scheme obtaining minimum total cost of two link disjoint paths is adopted. The aggregated scheme contains two components, one is represented by \( M_i \), an array of domain \( D_i \) storing the minimum cost between each pair of border routers and the other component includes a set of arrays represented by \( M^j_i \). \( M^j_i \) stores the minimum cost for each two border routers after reversing links in the shortest path between border routers \( B^j_i \) and \( B^j_{i'} \) and negating their cost. Through the representation of \( M_i \) and \( M^j_i \), these two paths are completely link disjoint even when they traverse the same domain. However, depending on the network’s topological characteristics, it may be possible to find a shorter link disjoint path at domain level rather than finding a link disjoint path pair within the same sequence of domains. Here domain level disjoint means the inter-domain links in the two paths are disjoint, whereas inside a domain they may share some intra-domain links (caused by the topological characteristics, e.g., they traverse the same domain). Hence we use a simple aggregated scheme which only contains the set of array \( M_i \).

Intra-domain link failures can be repaired by neighbor nodes, border routers of the associated domain or at domain level. We develop a new survivability-enhancing routing solution based on the simple aggregated scheme for minimum cost between each pair of border routers. We also propose to use a single node to represent the destination domain while applying the aggregated scheme proposed in [7] to the source and transit domains to decrease the size of the routing table. Our solution uses domain level source routing and a Source Demand Routing Packet (SDRP) header is added to the packets [5]. Inside domains standard Internal Gateway Protocol (IGP) is deployed.

The remainder of this paper is organized as follows: Sec. 2 describes the aggregated scheme used in this paper. Sec. 3 illustrates the formation of the routing table. We describe the source routing details in Sec. 4. Sec. 5 presents the implementation details and Sec. 6 discusses the survivability issues in a multi-domain network scenario based on the simulation results. Finally, conclusions and future work are outlined in Sec. 7.

II. AGGREGATED SCHEME

For scalability and commercial reasons, each domain cannot know the internal topology of other domains in multi-domain networks. However, calculating disjoint paths requires information about the traversal properties of each domain. We use the Aggregated Representation (AR) described in [7] to...
calculate the minimum cost between each pair of border routers. We use $B_i^j$ to denote border router of domain $i$ ($D_i$). Thus domain $D_i$ can be represented by a two-dimensional symmetric matrix $M_i$, where the element $m_{ij}^k$ denotes the cost of the shortest path between border router $B_i^j$ and $B_i^k$. Fig. 1 depicts an illustrative example of AR. For the topology shown in fig. 1, the elements of matrices $M_1, M_2, M_3,$ and $M_4$ are presented in fig. 2. The elements of $M_i$ are calculated by the Dijkstra algorithm. Suppose domain $D_i$ has $n$ border routers, matrix $M_i$ will contain $n^2$ elements.

$$M_1 = \begin{pmatrix}
R_1 & R_2 & R_3 & R_4 & \ldots & R_n \\
R_2 & 2 & 3 & 3 & \ldots & 2 \\
R_3 & 2 & 3 & 3 & \ldots & 2 \\
R_4 & 3 & 3 & 3 & \ldots & 2 \\
\vdots & \vdots & \vdots & \vdots & \ddots & \vdots \\
R_n & 2 & 3 & 3 & \ldots & 2 \\
\end{pmatrix}$$

IV. Domain Level Source Routing

With BGP the reachability information is carried in route updates containing announcements or withdrawals of reachable destinations. A border router stores the set of all feasible paths, then it runs a route selection process and only the selected best path is advertised to its neighbor ASes [8]. We assume that each domain knows the reachability information of destination networks directly attached to other domains. Link state information of both inter-domain links and virtual links obtained by the AR is propagated by border routers throughout the multi-domain network. We use $l_{\text{inter-domain}}$ to denote the number of inter-domain links and $|B_i|$ to denote the number of border routers for domain $D_i$. The total number of links, both real and virtual, is calculated by equation (1).

$$\text{Total\ links} = l_{\text{inter-domain}} + \sum_i |B_i| \cdot \left( \frac{|B_i| - 1}{2} \right)$$

To propagate link state information, a flooding mechanism and fully-meshed internal Border Gateway Protocol (iBGP) connections [8] are adopted. Flooding is used to propagate information among neighboring domains while iBGP connections are used to propagate information among border routers of the same domain. This requires a modification in the BGP protocol to include link-state information dissemination. The exact modification of the BGP packet format is out of the scope of this paper. Proposals for BGP extensions to carry path-related information (a path can be seen as a link between two nodes) exist in the literature [13]. After inter-domain link state databases are synchronized, two domain level disjoint paths are calculated using the Suurballe algorithm [6] and the routing table is formed. Each border router maintains two link state databases, one for inter-domain routing and the other for intra-domain routing. We propose using a single node to represent the destination domain, thus the size of the routing table is $2^n - 1$. Each entry in the routing table contains the following fields: destination domain, a binary field to distinguish the primary and backup paths, the domain level path and the total cost.

Fig. 1: An illustrative example of AR. (a) original topology (b) virtual topology after using AR to represent domains. Solid lines represent inter-domain links whereas dashed line represent virtual links obtained by AR.

Fig. 2: Elements of Matrices $M_1, M_2, M_3,$ and $M_4$.

Fig. 3: An illustrative example. (a) Example of OSPF protocol (b) Example when using the Suurballe algorithm

Source routing is implemented by encapsulating the entire packet in a SDRP, and a SDRP header is added [5]. With our proposal the SDRP header stores domain level hops, i.e. the border routers on the way from source to destination. Hops inside a domain are not specified in the SDRP.

According to our proposal, the working path in a multi-domain network is specified in three steps:

1) Use IGP routing inside the source domain to reach the closest border router with the original packet header.

2) Use domain level source routing with an SDRP header.

3) Use IGP routing inside the destination domain with the original packet header.
V. DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE IMPLEMENTATION

In this section, we describe the implementation in detail. For simplification, two assumptions are made:

1. There are no parallel links between two different routers or domains.
2. When a border router announces routes, no export policy caused by the commercial relationships, is applied between ASes.

Fig. 4 presents an illustrative example for domain level disjoint path calculation. For the topology depicted in fig. 1 (a), fig. 4(a) shows two domain level disjoint paths for data traffic from R15 to R18. The primary and backup paths are marked by arrowed black and gray lines, respectively. Fig. 4(b) illustrates two physical paths and these two paths share two intra-domain links: R5<->R6 and R11<->R12.

Fig. 4: An example of domain level disjoint paths (a) two domain level disjoint paths for traffic from R15 to R18, they are marked by arrowed black and gray lines, respectively. (b) Two physical paths from R15 to R18

A. Routing Table

For the multi-domain network shown in fig. 1(a), the routing table of border router R1 is the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Destination domain</th>
<th>Primary</th>
<th>Next hops along the path</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>D1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>D1</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>R2 D1</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>R3 D3</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>R4 D3</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>R4 R8 R10 D4</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>R5 R7 R9 D4</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The topology contains 4 domains, thus the size of the routing table is $2^{4*(4-1)} = 6$.

B. Procedure after an inter-domain link failure

Fig. 5 presents the procedure after an inter-domain link failure and this procedure is executed only by border routers.

Fig. 5: Process procedure after receiving LSA packet indicating inter-domain link failure

Received LSA packet indicating inter-domain link failure

If this information is new then

If it is received by flooding then

Use iBGP connections to propagate LSA

Flooding the LSA except the received interface

Else

Use flooding to propagate LSA

End if

For all $i \in \{\text{Route entries}\}$ do

If failed link is contained in the working path then

Switch to the other path

End if

End for

Else

Discard the LSA packet

End if

parallel links. We focus on single link failures. Inter-domain link failures can only be repaired at domain level, whereas intra-domain link failures can be repaired by the two neighboring nodes of the failed link, the border router of the domain including the failed link, or the border router of the source domain possibly traversing other domains. We use OPNET [14] as the simulation tool and the following statistics are used to compare the different repair mechanisms for intra-domain link failures:

1. Packet loss:

\[
\text{Packet Loss} = \text{Packets}_{\text{generated}} - \text{Packets}_{\text{received}}
\]  

2. ETE delay:

\[
\text{ETE delay} = t_{\text{packet received}} - t_{\text{packet sent}}
\]

3. Hops from source to destination

4. Total cost from source to destination

5. Re-convergence time of domains: if traffic originated from a domain can reach its destination again after failure occurs, we assume that the domain has converged.

A. Repairing intra-domain link failure in a multi-domain network

1) Neighbor nodes repairing

When a neighbor node detects the failure, it will calculate a new shortest path between itself and the downstream node in order to circumvent the failed link. To increase recovery speed, we propose that only the neighbor nodes update their topology. Packets which do not pass through the failed link still follow their previous route whereas those passing through the failed link use the new shortest path. Neighbor nodes repairing may introduce one or two routing loops between itself, the upstream node or the downstream node. Fig. 6 depicts an illustrative example. For traffic from R1 to R4 the shortest path without
Domain level repairing

4

is increased. We mark the moments “Network converges”, “Link fails” and “Network re-converges” of domain level repairing. For neighbor node repairing, the detection time is so short that the curve looks almost smooth, whereas domain level repairing always has the largest packet loss which means the source domain re-converges slowest.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time (Sec)</th>
<th>Border router repairing</th>
<th>Domain level repairing</th>
<th>Neighbor nodes repairing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

b) ETE delay

The “ETE delay” is compared in fig. 9. Neighbor node repairing has the largest ETE delay whereas domain level repairing has the smallest. Neighbor nodes repairing always has larger ETE delay than border router repairing because it traverses a longer path, however, there is no general result between border router repairing and domain level repairing, because the paths they traverse are topology-dependent.

Table 1 summarizes the comparison results of the three repair methods. Considering the trade-off among the factors compared in table 1, we recommend border router repairing.

C. Repairing inter-domain link failures

The procedure for repairing inter-domain link failures was depicted in fig. 5, and is similar to repairing intra-domain link failure at domain level. The re-convergence time of each domain is topology dependent and domains closer to the failed link re-converge quicker because the failure propagation time is smaller. Fig. 11 presents an illustrative example. For the topology shown in fig. 7 (a), we create three traffic streams from R10 to R17, R6 to R18, R15 to R16. Fig.10 depicts the primary paths of these streams which are marked by dashed, gray and black lines, respectively. Inter-domain link R10<->R17 now fails, and the failed link is included in the primary paths of these streams which are marked by dashed, gray and black lines, respectively. Inter-domain link R10<->R17 now fails, and the failed link is included in the primary paths of these streams which are marked by dashed, gray and black lines, respectively. Inter-domain link R10<->R17 now fails, and the failed link is included in the primary paths of these streams which are marked by dashed, gray and black lines, respectively.
TABLE I

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Neighbor nodes repairing</th>
<th>Border router repairing</th>
<th>Domain level repairing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Propagation scope of the failure</td>
<td>Smallest, limited to two neighboring nodes</td>
<td>Medium, limited to the associated domain</td>
<td>Largest, throughout the network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Re-convergence time</td>
<td>smallest</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>largest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ETE delay</td>
<td>Largest</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Smallest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hops (routers)</td>
<td>9(^{1})</td>
<td>5(^{1})</td>
<td>9(^{1})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total cost</td>
<td>56(^{1})</td>
<td>52(^{1})</td>
<td>47(^{1})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Route loop</td>
<td>May introduce</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concern other domains</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recover node failure</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Superscript \(^{1}\) means the value is topology-dependent.

depicts the “Packet Loss” calculated at the connection end nodes. There is no change in the curve of R16 because the primary path of the traffic does not include the failed link. The source domain of the traffic from R10 to R17 is closer to the failed link than traffic from R6 to R18, resulting in a smaller packet loss in R17 than R18, which is illustrated in fig. 11.

VII. CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE WORK

This paper presents a routing solution which can eliminate the path exploration problem in multi-domain networks. We use the Suurballe algorithm to compute two domain level disjoint paths, and thus, solve the path dependency which is the root cause of path exploration for BGP. The aggregated scheme we use is obtaining the shortest path between each pair of border routers for the transit domains. To implement our solution, domain level source routing is used and a SDRP header is added to the packets. Considering the trade-off amongst re-convergence time, packet loss and ETE delay we recommend border router repairing for intra-domain link failures. With our proposal neither re-calculation nor path exploration are performed in case of an inter-domain link failure. For future work, we plan to include export policies and parallel links in the multi-domain network scenario.

REFERENCES