

AN IMPLEMENTATION OF MULTIPROTOCOL LABEL SWITCHING VIRTUAL PRIVATE NETWORKS AND INTERNET PROTOCOL SECURITY USING GRAPHICAL NETWORK SIMULATOR 3 AS AN EDUCATIONAL TOOL

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ABSTRACT— *Graphical network simulator (GNS) 3 is an excellent complementary tool that allows simulation of complex networks like implementation of real labs for network engineers, administrators, and researchers. The primary objective of this paper is to evaluate GNS3 as an educational tool by implementing Multiprotocol Label Switching (MPLS) Virtual private Networks (VPN) and Internet Protocol Security (IPsec) VPN. A Client Server model is created using FileZilla Server and Client, then a file of 11,057,507 bytes is transferred and monitored by network tool OpManager. The result obtained shows that Round-trip time (RTT) value is high for both protocols in GNS3 as compare to real networks. So it is concluded that network topology used can be implemented in GNS3, and could be used as an educational tool, but it requires a system like Intel Core 2 Duo or higher processor, having at least 4GB of RAM, as it utilizes considerable system resources.*

Index Terms: *Graphical Network Simulator (GNS3), Multiprotocol Label Switching (MPLS), Virtual Private Network (VPN), Internet Protocol Security (IPsec), Round-trip Time (RTT).*

1. INTRODUCTION

IT and Telecommunication industry has shown immense progress over the years as different changes are occurring at a very fast pace in this sector. It may be due to the demands of the users, to improve and remove the technological constraints that may exist like bugs and software up gradation that are required by system with the passage of time. Therefore, it is important to conduct different experiments, tests and research work before launching any brand new technology into the market and furthermore to ensure that the fresh technology, application, or software will achieve the desire results.

Simulators and emulators are used for analysis of existing methods, new systems, for training and experimentation purposes. These are cost efficient compared to the physical equipment and tools used in labs. Furthermore, it needs less time and resources for set-up of distinctive simulators and emulators. They are robust for running distinct experiments and research work. Creation and testing of many applications, protocols, and network designs used these simulators. The simulation-based knowledge helps students to develop updated skills in creative and critical thinking and find out new problem-solving techniques [1].

GNS3 is an open-source emulator, but it requires Cisco IOS images for running different routers and Private Internet Exchange (PIX) firewall, etc. According to Fuszner [2], by using GNS3 and Cisco Internetwork Operating System (IOS) emulation of complex networks would be carried out. Cisco IOS runs in a virtual environment on a laptop and personal computers. GNS3 is the graphical front end to Dynagen that runs on top of Dynamips which is the core program that makes Cisco IOS emulation possible and provides user-friendly text based interface [14]. GNS3 provides graphical environment. GNS3 is used for preparation of such as Cisco CCNA, CCNP, CCIP and CCIE as well as Juniper JNCIA, JNCIS and JNCIE. Thanks to Virtual Box integration, now even system engineers and administrators can take advantage of GNS3 to make labs and study for Red hat (RHCE, RHCT),

Microsoft (MSCE, MSCA), Novell (CLP), and many other vendor certifications and for training of students at different institutions. As GNS3 uses Cisco real IOS, command supported by that particular IOS version can be used and configured in GNS3. However, the command supported by other simulators (e.g. Router Sim, Packet tracer and Boson router simulator) depends upon the developer that decides how many commands are chosen and included in the simulator [3]. GNS3 has another interesting feature i.e. packets or traffic would be captured, monitored and analysed using Wire shark.

It is worth mentioning that MPLS has become an essential network technology that has been implemented by many service providers. MPLS has addressed the Scalability, Quality of Service and Traffic Engineering issues etc. Next generation networks have been deployed by different service providers to provide different services using unified infrastructure [4].

2. MULTIPROTOCOL LABEL SWITCHING

MPLS is a standard defined by IETF. Instead of making decision on traditional IP addressing, a new forwarding mechanism in which packets are forwarded based on labels is used. These Labels may correspond to IP destination networks (equal to traditional IP forwarding). They can also correspond to other parameters, such as quality of service (QoS), source address or support forwarding of other protocols as well [5].

MPLS uses a 32-bit label field that is inserted between Layer 2 and Layer 3 headers as shown in Figure 1. MPLS label is 4 Bytes long in which 20 bits are used for label, 3 bits for experimental Class of Service and 1 bit for bottom of stack indicator and 8 bits for Time to live (TTL).

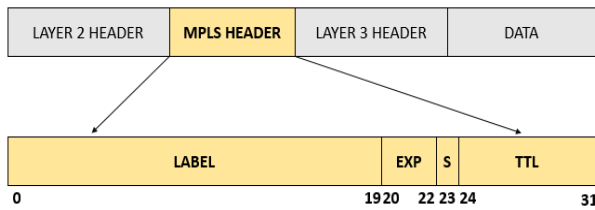


Figure 1: MPLS Structure

According to Morgan and Levering [6], "MPLS network converges dynamically and supports multiple routing protocols". MPLS has benefits like integrated network infrastructure, Border Gateway Protocol (BGP) free core, optimal traffic flow and traffic engineering. MPLS is used by Service Providers for separation of each customers routing information from other customers information within the cloud, so MPLS networks are called MPLS Virtual Private Network (VPN). Telecom Operators or Providers uses two VPN models for providing VPN services to their customers namely Overlay and Peer to Peer VPN model.

2.1 OVERLAY VPN ARCHITECTURE

In this network model Point to Point connection or VC is provided by the Telecom Operators/Service Providers between the customer routers. Routing peer will be created between the customer routers instead of between customer and Provider router. So the Service Provider routers do not notice the customer routes. This Point to Point connection would be layer 1, layer 2 or layer 3 [7].

Figure 2 shows an example of Overlay VPN build on Frame relay network. Frame relay switches are installed in the service Provider network and customer routers are connected to these frame relay switches. Routing peer means that the customer routers are directly connected to each other as depicted in the Figure-1. Generic Routing Encapsulation (GRE) tunnels are used for making layer 3 Overlay VPN network. Advantage of GRE tunnels is that the traffic other than Internet Protocol (IP) would also be routed through it and by using Internet Protocol Security (IPsec) in conjunction with GRE tunnel it is possible to secure the data travelling through it

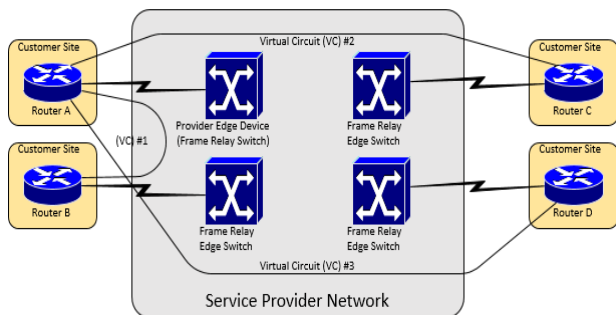


Figure 2: Overlay Virtual Private Networks where the Service provider provides virtual point-to-point links between customer sites.

2.2 PEER TO PEER VPN ARCHITECTURE

In this network model the Service Provider routers will facilitate and transport the data and routing information through its network. It will form routing peer with customer routers at layer 3. According to Badran [8] routing protocol adjacency will be formed between customer edge and the provider edge router.

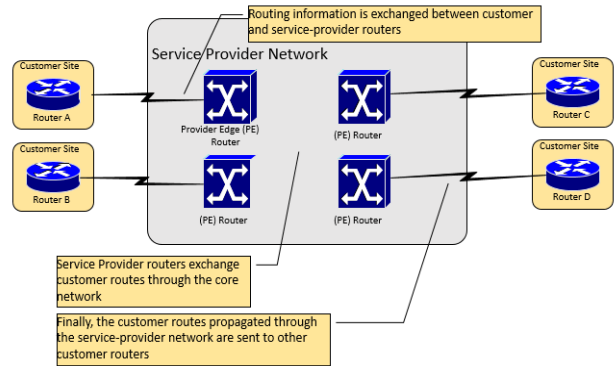


Figure 3: Peer-to-Peer Virtual Private Networks where the Service Provider participates in the customer routing

Figure 3 describes the concept of isolated routing information between different VPNs. When a customer router is added, it requires routing peer to be formed with a single Provider edge (PE) router. Service Provider does not need to create virtual circuits as with the overlay models or configuring packet filters or route filters with old Peer to Peer VPN design. It is an advantage for Service Providers by using MPLS VPN technology.

2.2 INTERNET PROTOCOL SECURITY VPN

IPsec VPN tunnel is a feasible solution for data protection between two remote sites which are connected through internet. Internet Protocol security (IPsec) is a protocol suite which provides

1. Data authentication
2. Data Integrity
3. Data Confidentiality
4. Anti-Reply

IPsec VPN protects the data travelling from source to the destination with help of different protocols namely Internet Key Exchange (IKE), Encapsulating Security Payload (ESP) and Authentication Header (AH).

IPsec has two modes of operation which defines the extent of protection offered by IPsec. These are transport and tunnel mode. The original IP header is unprotected in transport mode and only the upper layer data is protected. On other hand in tunnel mode the original IP header and transport layer both are protected. Original IP header is replaced with new IP header. Azam et al. [9] reveals the network performance will be affected due to variation in number of overhead bytes. This variation in number of overhead bytes occurs by using different protocols, file sizes and different algorithms. Figure 4 describes different IPsec modes.

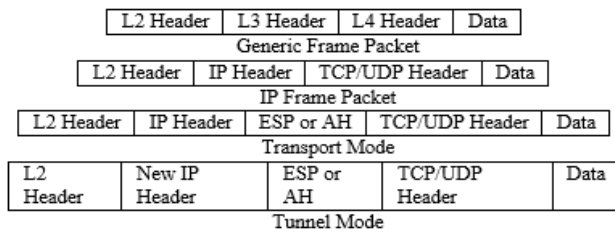


Figure 4: IPsec Transport Mode and Tunnel Mode

3. SIMULATION SCENARIO AND TOOLS

Simulator may be defined as the one that imitates an existing or proposes system and applications that will produce results approximating the actual conditions [10]. There are different systems, for example, nuclear reactions and warfare, which are dangerous to be conducted for analysis and experimentation purposes, so simulations will be a good option for these systems. According to Smith [11] "Simulation is a process of making model of a real or imaginary system and conducting tests with this model." It is a very vast field, and models may be made for any imaginable system. Simulators may be used for telecommunication field, computer networks, integrated circuits, highway systems, flight training system and many more. Simulators are cost efficient, faster and less dangerous as compare to the real systems. Now a day's simulations are utilized by every engineering and scientific field. Simulations are either discrete or continuous event. It depends upon how the state variables will change. In a discrete event, the variable values will change instantly at different points of time. On the other hand, in a continuous event the value of the variables will change continuously.

3.1 TOPOLOGY SCENARIO AND COMPONENTS USED

The topology scenario is designed considering simplicity and minimum hardware resources to be used. Figure 5 shows the implemented topology using GNS3 to simulate MPLS VPN and IPsec VPN. Five routers are used in this network design; two of these router are used as Customer Edge (CE) and other three routers for Service Provider (SP) named as Provider Edge (PE) and Provider (P). Cisco 3700 ISO images are used with serial links in between. PC or VMware Machine are connected using cloud symbol. For serial link 1.544 Mbits/sec and for Fast Ethernet 100 Mbits/sec bandwidth is used.

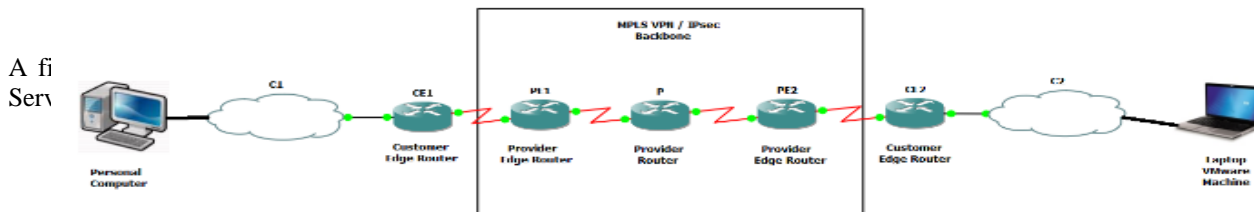


Figure 5: Topology of the experimental network prototype

and VMware Machine. Traffic and packets are captured. Wire shack packet analyser tool. For calculation of various results parameter OpManager network monitoring tool is used. In the test given below Layer 3 MPLS VPN (Peer to Peer VPN) and IPsec VPN is implemented in GNS3. Same file is downloaded from FileZilla server and time is calculated for comparison between the two technologies. RTT value for both technologies is noted for comparison. Table 1 shows the devices and applications that are used for conducting this test.

On Personal Computer (PC) GNS3 emulator package is installed having Wireshark Packet analyzing tool with it. The topology scenario is designed in GNS3 and FileZilla FTP Server and Client Model is developed with Laptop having Virtual Box VMware machine installed on it. The network monitoring tool Op Manager is installed on PC which is used for monitoring of file transfer rate and incoming and outgoing traffic in the network and Round trip time. Packet analyzing is done using Wireshark. All the above feature is only available in GNS3 that live traffic is captured and monitored using network interfaces, other software tools like Packet Tracer and Boson NetSim don't have these capabilities.

Table 1: Hardware and Software Used for Peer to Peer and IPsec VPN

Devices / Application	Description
Personal Computer (PC)	Intel Core 2 Duo CPU, 2.93 GHZ, 4GB RAM
Laptop	Intel Core 2 Duo CPU T6500, 2.1 GHZ, 2GB RAM
Ethernet Cross Cable	Cross cables
GNS3	Emulator used for implementation of MPLS
Virtual Player	VMware Machine
Serial links	1.544 Mbits/sec connections between routers
Full duplex Fast Ethernet connections	Two 100Mbits/sec connections are used, one for connecting an external PC to the CE1 router and the other for connectivity of VMware machine with CE2 router.
Protocols Used	MPLS VPN and Ipsec VPN
Wireshark	Packet analyzing tool
OpManager	Network Monitoring tool
FileZilla	FTP Server and Client

4 RESULT ANALYSIS

In this Section we have discussed the layer 3 MPLS VPN & IPsec VPN, there configuration and results analysis.

4.1 CONFIGURATION OF LAYER 3 MPLS VPN

Configuration of each router as shown in topology scenario

4.1.1 CUSTOMER EDGE ROUTER

IP addresses are assigned to both serial and Fast Ethernet interfaces of CE routers. Bandwidth of 1.544 Mb/s is used on the serial interfaces and clock rate is not set on these interfaces as these are DTE ends. Routing Information Protocol IP (version 2) routing protocol is used for advertising the networks of CE routers.

4.1.2 PROVIDER EDGE ROUTER

Clock rate of 64 kbps is configured on the DCE ends of CE. MPLS and Label distribution protocol (LDP) are configured on PE router interfaces. Open Shortest Path First (OSPF) routing protocol is used to advertise all networks and RIP (V2) protocol is used on PE routers loopback interface and serial interface attached to CE routers. **ip vrf** command is used to configure Virtual Routing and Forwarding (VRF) on PE routers. PE routers have VRF instances for each attached VPN. Route Distinguisher (RD) is used to keep the customer routing information separate from other customers. Border Gateway Protocol (BGP) is configured on both PE routers. RD combines with IPv4 prefix to make vpnv4 prefix which is transported by IBGP between PE routers. In order to make aware of different routes RIP is redistributed into BGP and vice-versa.

4.1.3 PROVIDER INTERNAL ROUTER

Bandwidth 1.544 Mb/s and clock rate of 64 Kbps is configured on both serial interfaces. MPLS and LDP are configured on serial interfaces. OSPF routing protocol is configured for dynamic routing.

4.2 RESULTS OF LAYER 3 MPLS VPN

Trace route command is used on CE2 router to check the route to fast Ethernet interface of CE1 router. Output shows that four devices (Labeled 1, 2, 3 & 4) are involved in reaching the interface as depicted in Table 2. This is different from overlay VPN network.

Routing Table of CE2 router shown in Table 3 shows all the connected interfaces and the routes advertised by MP-BGP. In Peer to Peer VPN technology, CE2 router includes the route information of both CE1 and PE2 routers. The routing peer is established between customer edge and provider edge routers. File is downloaded from FileZilla server and time is noted as shown in Table 4, minimum and maximum time for downloading the file is 140 (2.33 minutes) and 268 seconds (4.46 minutes) respectively. Average time taken for file transfer is 218.14 seconds (3.6 minutes) and Standard deviation is 55.19. There is variation in file transfer time; it is due to variation in the number of processes that are running in Windows operating system and load on the CPU.

Table 2: Output of Trace route Command (Peer to Peer VPN)

```
CE2#traceroute 192.168.3.1

Type escape sequence to abort.
Tracing the route to 192.168.3.1

 1 10.1.1.6 152 msec 136 msec 156 msec
 2 192.168.1.5 [MPLS: Label 16/21 Exp 0] 124 msec 300 msec 284 msec
 3 10.1.1.2 [MPLS: Label 21 Exp 0] 92 msec 212 msec 204 msec
 4 10.1.1.1 404 msec 224 msec *
```

Table 3: Out of Show ip route command (Peer to Peer VPN)

```
CE2#show ip route

Gateway of last resort is not set

C    192.168.4.0/24 is directly connected, FastEthernet2/0
     10.0.0.0/30 is subnetted, 2 subnets
R    10.1.1.0 [120/1] via 10.1.1.6, 00:00:19, Serial1/1
C    10.1.1.4 is directly connected, Serial1/1
R    192.168.3.0/24 [120/1] via 10.1.1.6, 00:00:19, Serial1/1
```

Table 4: File Transfer Time in Layer 3 MPLS VPN Network

Status:	File transfer successful, transferred 11,057,507 bytes in 180 seconds
Status:	File transfer successful, transferred 11,057,507 bytes in 259 seconds
Status:	File transfer successful, transferred 11,057,507 bytes in 265 seconds
Status:	File transfer successful, transferred 11,057,507 bytes in 140 seconds
Status:	File transfer successful, transferred 11,057,507 bytes in 162 seconds
Status:	File transfer successful, transferred 11,057,507 bytes in 253 seconds

Figure 6 shows alternative representation of file transfer time of file transferred through FileZilla server and client. Wireshark captures the data travelling through MPLS VPN network. Frame #15 is shown in Figure 7; the total length of the frame is 1512 bytes which includes 1460 bytes of data, 4 bytes Cisco HDLC, 8 bytes MPLS labels, 20 bytes IP and 20 bytes TCP overhead.

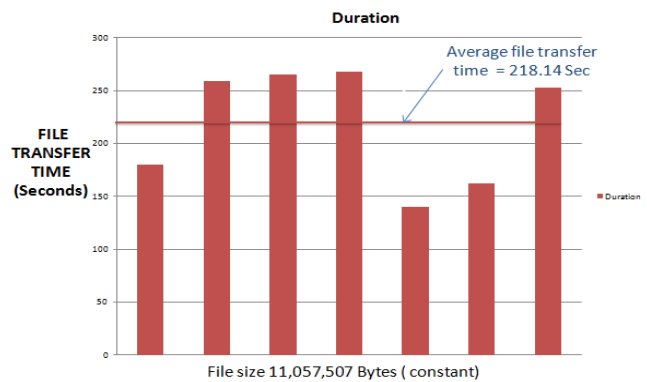


Figure 6: Graph for File Transfer Time in MPLS VPN

No.	Time	Source	Destination	Protocol	Info
15	0.10300	192.168.3.3	192.168.4.2	TCP	49197 > mtop [ACK] Seq=29849 Ack=1 Win=64240 Len=1460
Frame 15 (1512 bytes on wire, 1512 bytes captured)					
Cisco HDLC					
MultiProtocol Label Switching Header, Label: 18, Exp: 0, S: 0, TTL: 126					
MultiProtocol Label Switching Header, Label: 18, Exp: 0, S: 1, TTL: 126					
Internet Protocol, Src: 192.168.3.3 (192.168.3.3), Dst: 192.168.4.2 (192.168.4.2)					
Transmission Control Protocol, Src Port: 49197 (49197), Dst Port: mtop (1038), Seq: 29849, Ack: 1, Len: 1460					
Data (1460 bytes)					

Figure 7: Frame Captured on the Serial interface in MPLS VPN

Date and Time	Path	Min. RTT	Max. RTT	Avg. RTT
08-08-2012 15:07:22	CE1 <- 192.168.4.2	452 msec	452 msec	452.0 msec
08-08-2012 15:12:22	CE1 <- 192.168.4.2	348 msec	728 msec	540.0 msec

Figure 8: Round Trip Time history report in MPLS VPN

Figure 8 shows RTT history report, the average value of RTT is high as compare to the normal threshold value of 100 msec (default value in OpManager). It is reported as an alarm by the traffic monitoring tool.

4.3 CONFIGURATION OF LAYER 3 IPSEC VPN

Configuration of each router as shown in topology scenario.

4.3.1 CUSTOMER EDGE ROUTER

IP addresses are assigned to the interfaces and bandwidth of 1.544 Mb/s is used on serial interface. Default gateway is defined on CE routers. First step is ISAKMP policy is configured on CE routers. It is IKE phase 1. This phase includes configuration of encryption algorithm, authentication algorithm, Pre-shared key, and Diffie-Hellman version 1, 2 or 5 and tunnel lifetime. Second step is configuring the IPsec transform set, it is IKE phase 2. Third step is configuring Crypto access list, access list is configured so that the interesting traffic will travel through the IPsec tunnel for secure data transport. Fourth step is configuring crypto map, it is IKE phase 2. Fifth step is applying crypto map to the interface. Some important configurations of CE1 are shown in the Table 5.

4.3.2 PROVIDER EDGE ROUTER

Clock rate of 64 Kbps is set on the DCE end. Default bandwidth is used on the serial interfaces and RIP (Version 2) protocol is configured for dynamic routing on PE routers.

Table 5: Configuration of CE1 Router (IPsec VPN)

```
crypto isakmp policy 1
  encr aes
  authentication pre-share
  group 5
crypto isakmp key MSC2008 address 192.168.6.2
!
!
crypto ipsec transform-set VPN1 esp-aes esp-sha-hmac
!
crypto map MAP1 10 ipsec-isakmp
  set peer 192.168.6.2
  set transform-set VPN1
  match address 101
interface Serial1/0
  ip address 192.168.1.1 255.255.255.252
  crypto map MAP1
access-list 101 permit ip 192.168.3.0 0.0.0.255 192.168.4.0
0.0.0.255
ip route 0.0.0.0 0.0.0.0 192.168.1.2
```

4.3.3 PROVIDER INTERNAL ROUTER

Clock rate of 64 kbps is configured on both serial interfaces; bandwidth of 1.544 Mb/s is used on the serial interfaces. Similarly RIP (Version 2) protocol is configured on P router.

4.4 RESULTS OF LAYER3 MPLS VPN

Table 6 shows crypto isakmp sa is used to check all the IKE security associations (SAs). Output shows that ISKAMP is in idle state (quiescent state). It gives detail about the source and destination and status of IKE security associations.

Table 7 shows crypto IPsec sa command result that provides information regarding the current settings used by security associations. It gives information about the encapsulated, encrypted and digested packets etc.

Table 6: Output of crypto isakmp sa command (IPsec VPN)

```
CE2#show crypto isakmp sa
IPv4 Crypto ISAKMP SA
dst          src          state          conn-id slot status
192.168.1.1  192.168.6.2  QM_IDLE       1001      0 ACTIVE
```

Table 7: Output of Show crypto ipsec sa command

```
CE1#show crypto ipsec sa
interface: Serial1/0
Crypto map tag: MAP1, local addr 192.168.1.1
protected vrf: (none)
local ident (addr/mask/prot/port): (192.168.3.0/255.255.255.0/0/0)
remote ident (addr/mask/prot/port): (192.168.4.0/255.255.255.0/0/0)
current_peer 192.168.6.2 port 500
  PERMIT, flags=(origin_is_acl,)
#pkts encaps: 31810, #pkts encrypt: 31810, #pkts digest: 31810
#pkts decaps: 17052, #pkts decrypt: 17052, #pkts verify: 17052

local crypto endpt.: 192.168.1.1, remote crypto endpt.: 192.168.6.2
path mtu 1500, ip mtu 1500, ip mtu idb Serial1/0
current outbound spi: 0x3513881B(890472475)
inbound esp sas:
  transform: esp-aes esp-sha-hmac ,
  in use settings =(Tunnel, )
  conn id: 1, flow id: SW:1, crypto map: MAP1
  sa timing: remaining key lifetime (k/sec): (4593674/2520)
  IV size: 16 bytes
  replay detection support: Y
  Status: ACTIVE
outbound esp sas:
  transform: esp-aes esp-sha-hmac ,
  in use settings =(Tunnel, )
  conn id: 2, flow id: SW:2, crypto map: MAP1
  sa timing: remaining key lifetime (k/sec): (4548889/2501)
  IV size: 16 bytes
  replay detection support: Y
  Status: ACTIVE
```

Table 8: File Transfer Time in IPsec VPN Network

Status:	File transfer successful, transferred 11,057,507 bytes in 254 seconds
Status:	File transfer successful, transferred 11,057,507 bytes in 209 seconds
Status:	File transfer successful, transferred 11,057,507 bytes in 198 seconds
Status:	File transfer successful, transferred 11,057,507 bytes in 235 seconds
Status:	File transfer successful, transferred 11,057,507 bytes in 270 seconds
Status:	File transfer successful, transferred 11,057,507 bytes in 243 seconds
Status:	File transfer successful, transferred 11,057,507 bytes in 233 seconds

File is downloaded from its FileZilla server to its client using IPsec VPN, minimum and maximum file transfer time is 198 seconds (3.3 minutes) and 270 seconds (4.5 minutes). Average time for file transfer in this experiment is 234.57

seconds (3.9 minutes) and standard deviation is 24.82 as shown in Table 8.

Figure 9 shows the average file transfer time. Average File transfer time in IPsec VPN is more as compare to MPLS VPN network.

Figure 10 shows frame captured by Wire shark shows that 1500 bytes of data is available on the link. Instead of showing the IP addresses of end devices i.e. source address 192.168.3.3 and destination address 192.168.4.2, IPsec tunnel mode presents the IP addresses of the tunnel end points. IPsec appends more overhead as compare to MPLS VPN; in tunnel mode the overhead imposed by IPsec is 50 to 57 bytes or 58 to 73 bytes depending upon which encryption algorithm is used.

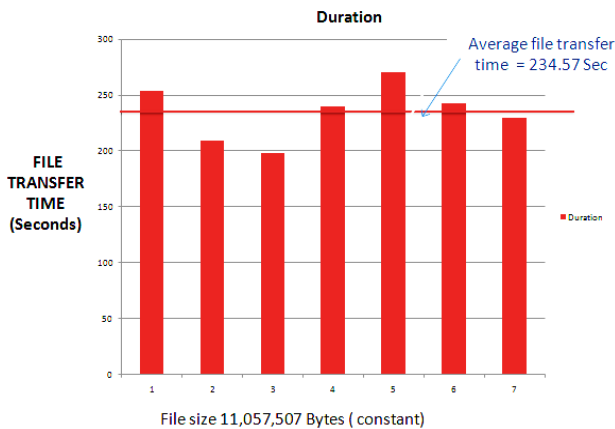


Figure 9: Graph for File Transfer Time in IPsec VPN

No.	Time	Source	Destination	Protocol	Info
503	4.260000	192.168.1.1	192.168.6.1	ESP	ESP (SPI=0x0c73ead)
Frame 503 (1500 bytes on wire, 1500 bytes captured)					
Cisco HDLC					
Internet Protocol, Src: 192.168.1.1 (192.168.1.1), Dst: 192.168.6.1 (192.168.6.1)					
Encapsulating Security Payload					

Figure 10: Frame Captured on the Serial interface



Figure 11: Round Trip Time history report

Figure 11 shows RTT history report. Serial interface of CE1 is source and destination is the serial interface of CE2 router. RTT report shows an average RTT value of 546 milliseconds.

5. CONCLUSION

Simulators and emulators are playing vital role in different fields of science and technology. Simulators are admired by researchers and students due to the fact that, either access to the equipment is not available or time and finance is required for establishing the lab. So therefore they are used for research work and getting hands on experience in different technologies. MPLS VPN and IPsec VPN are implemented with the objective to generate traffic in GNS3 for comparison between the two techniques. Both techniques are successfully implemented. Average file download time in MPLS and IPsec VPN is 218.14 seconds and 234.57 seconds respectively. IPsec appends more overhead as compare to MPLS so due to this reason the time taken for file transfer in IPsec VPN network is more than the MPLS VPN implementation. Finally according to OpManager report, the RTT average value is higher in IPsec VPN as compare to MPLS VPN, because IPsec provides security but it adds more overhead which may affect the network performance. The main drawback of GNS3 is that it utilizes a lot of system resources, for all the technologies implemented in this paper, the CPU usage was 100 % as reported by Windows task manager.

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