Collaboration Opportunities for Content Delivery and Network Infrastructures

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1 Motivation

The Internet is a hugely successful man-made artifact that has changed society fundamentally. Imagine the effect a prolonged outage of the Internet would have: (1) Youngsters wouldn't know how to interact with their peers and how to spend their leisure time as they increasingly rely on social networks, online games, YouTube, and other online entertainment offerings. (2) Manufacturing would hit a roadblock as the communication paths within and between companies increasingly rely on the Internet. (3) Control of critical infrastructures would be hampered as it increasingly relies on the Internet for gathering input data and propagating control information.

In becoming a hugely successful infrastructure, the usage of the Internet and thus its structure has also undergone continuous changes. Usage has changed from dominance by email and FTP in the early days, to the World Wide Web (WWW) from 1995 to 2000, to peer-to-peer applications (P2P) from 2000 to 2007, back to the WWW since 2007. These changes are driven in part by the Internet users' interests as well as how content, including user generated content, is made available.

When considering the current application mix and traffic streams in the Internet, the latest buzz is that "Content is King" just as Bill Gates [28] predicted in his essay from 1996. Hereby, the term content has to be seen very broadly and encompasses everything from commercially prepared content, e.g., broadcast and interactive TV, news, and software, to user-generated content, e.g., videos uploaded to YouTube, and photos uploaded to Flickr, to interactive activities, e.g., online games. Or to quote Bronfman [56], the head of a major music producer and distributor: "What would the Internet be without 'content'? It would be a valueless collection of silent machines with gray screens. It would be the electronic equivalent of a marine desert—lovely elements, nice colors, no life. It would be nothing."

The idea of content delivery being the fundamental operation around which to design future Internet architecture for comes as no surprise. In fact, the idea of Content-Centric Networking (CCN) [91] is guided by this principle. Change, however, takes time, and when hundreds of million of devices are involved, change can only be made slowly. Before such a novel and radically different architecture such as CCN is available or potentially deployable, the Internet in its current state must cope with the challenge of delivering ever-increasing amounts of content to Internet users.

Accordingly, it appears that solely providing connectivity to end users is no longer sufficient for Internet Service Providers (ISPs). Yet, connectivity is a crucial ingredient and some authors, e.g., Andrew Odlyzko [135] have opined that enabling communication is the main task of the Internet network infrastructure. In his paper "Content is not king" he claims that "Content will have a place on the Internet, possibly a substantial place. However, its place will likely be subordinate to that of business and personal communication".

At this point it is crucial to realize that the producers of content are usually not the operators of today's Internet infrastructure. Nonetheless, both content producers and network operators depend on each other. In fact, neither the Internet infrastructure operators nor the content producers can be successful without the other. After all, the content producers want to ensure that their content gets to Internet users with reasonable performance for which they need to rely on the network infrastructure. On the other hand, the network infrastructure providers have to transport the content and manage the infrastructure to satisfy the demand for content from their subscribers. It is this symbiosis between the two parties that motivates our work collaboration between content producers and network operators in delivering content.

Outline: We start this chapter with a short introduction in Section 2. Then, in Section 3, we set the stage by providing an overview of today's Internet network infrastructure, discussing how Internet Service Providers (ISPs) perform traffic engineering, and reviewing the Domain Name System (DNS), an essential component of any Web-based content-delivery architecture. Next, we review current trends in Internet traffic and the application mix as well as traffic dynamics in Sections 4 and 5.

We finish the overview with a brief summary on the background of content delivery in Section 6. Here, we assume that the reader is familiar with the basic architecture of the Web. There are excellent text books on this topic, e.g., [102]. Given that there are several approaches to content delivery, we provide a general high level description of how different Content Delivery Infrastructures work. Since there are also many peer-to-peer based content delivery systems we provide a short review of the basic P2P architectures as well. For additional background on P2P we refer the reader to, e.g., [34, 163].

An overview of the current content delivery spectrum is presented in Section 7. Here we discuss various types of Content Delivery Infrastructures (CDIs) which range from Web-based Content Distribution Networks (CDNs) to Hybrid CDNs to peer-to-peer (P2P) systems. Furthermore, in Section 8 we turn to the challenges that each party involved in Internet content delivery faces separately today.

Finally, we turn to the state of the art of collaboration between networks and content providers. We start by outlining the collaboration incentives for each member of the content delivery landscape in Section 9. Next we review the collaboration schemes that have been discussed in research as well as at the Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF) in Section 10. We briefly introduce the well-known approaches and summarize their key functions. We then pick two collaboration schemes, namely the P2P Oracle and the Provider-aided Distance Information System (PaDIS) for a case study. In Section 11.1 we discuss the P2P Oracle with regards to its effect on the P2P system as well as on network operations. Likewise, the second case study discusses the model of the Provider-aided Distance Information System in Section 11.2, including a large scale analysis based on real traffic traces. Section 12 outlines a possible future direction for collaboration between content providers and network operators. We conclude this part of the chapter in Section 13.

Summary: This chapter builds upon the student's basic knowledge of how the Internet infrastructure operates, i.e., as a network of networks. After reading this chapter the student should have a fundamental understanding about how content distribution via the Internet works today, what the challenges are, and which opportunities lie ahead. Moreover, the chapter points out how all parties—including end users—can benefit from the collaboration between ISPs and content providers. Indeed, simple, almost intuitive, means will enable such collaboration.

2 Introduction

Recent traffic studies [78, 106, 144] show that a large fraction of Internet traffic is due to content delivery and is originated by a small number of Content Delivery Infrastructures (CDIs). Major CDIs include highly popular rich-media sites like YouTube and Netflix, One-Click Hosters (OCHs), e.g., RapidShare [23], Content Delivery Networks (CDNs) such as Akamai and Limelight, and hyper-giants, e.g., Google, Yahoo!, and Microsoft. Gerber and Doverspike [78] report that a few CDIs account for more than half of the traffic of a US-based Tier-1 carrier. Poese et al. [144] report a similar observation from the traffic of a European Tier-1 carrier. Labovitz et al. [106] infer that more than 10% of the total Internet inter-domain traffic originates from Google, and Akamai claims to deliver more than 20% of the total Internet Web traffic [134]. Netflix alone, a company that offers a high definition video video-on-demand streaming service, is responsible for a significant fraction of the traffic in North America ISPs during peak hours [153, 68].

To cope with the increasing demand for content, CDIs have deployed massively distributed server infrastructures to replicate content and make it accessible from different locations on the Internet [171]. These infrastructures have multiple choices as to how and where to place their servers. As described in [111], the main approaches are (1) centralized hosting, (2) data center-based CDIs, (3) edge-cache-based CDIs, and (4) peer-to-peer (P2P) networks. Approaches 2 and 3 scale content delivery by distributing the content onto dedicated infrastructures. These infrastructures can be composed of a few large data centers, a large number of edge caches, or any combination thereof.

To complicate matters further, some of these infrastructures are entangled with the very infrastructures that provide network connectivity to end-users. For example, one of the largest players in content delivery, Akamai, operates more than 120,000 servers in more than 2,000 locations across nearly 1,150 ISP networks [134, 13]. Google is reported to operate tens of data centers and front-end server clusters worldwide [104, 169, 82]. Microsoft has deployed its content delivery infrastructure in 24 locations around the world [124]. Amazon maintains at least 5 large data centers and caches in at least 21 locations around the world [19]. Limelight operates thousands of servers in more than 22 delivery centers and connects directly to 600 networks worldwide [113]. Last but not least, P2P networks rely on a huge number of end users to store, replicate, and distribute content.

Despite the significant entanglement between the infrastructures that deliver content and the network connectivity fabric, our knowledge of their interactions is largely through the literature on network interconnections, e.g., see the recent book by W. Norton [133]. Given the nature of network interconnections, previous work has studied the interactions from an economic perspective [122, 24, 110]. The limited knowledge available about the settlements between networks have led researchers to try to reason about why peering choices are made [38] and what drives the evolution of the Internet [50].

Most of the literature has considered the interactions between content and the network indirectly, e.g., through peerings and traffic measurements, despite recent changes in Internet traffic [78, 106] that have shown the importance of content and applications. The observed changes in traffic, either through direct traffic measurements [63, 64, 172, 106, 2], or through inference [123, 185, 184, 86, 141, 165] have repeatedly shown how volatile traffic can be. With the rise of user-generated content and large shifts in content popularity, traffic volatility has become especially relevant.

Handling changes in traffic has traditionally been done through traffic engineering (TE). Initially, traffic engineering was used by large network operators to optimize the utilization of their networks [27]. The vast majority of the traffic engineering literature has therefore focused on traffic engineering inside a single network [61, 69, 180, 26, 100, 70]. In reality, most of the traffic in the Internet is exchanged between different networks [106], and especially directly between data centers and residential ISPs [2]. Organizations that originate a lot of content, e.g., Google, connect directly to a large number of other networks [106], and need to optimize how content leaves their networks. Organizations that provide Internet access to broadband or mobile users typically wish to optimize how traffic enters their networks, as most users still download more content than they upload. In between, transit ISPs try to balance the load of the traffic exchanged between the networks they connect.

Traditional traffic engineering aims at reducing the likelihood that bottlenecks arise inside a given network due to mismatches between network provisioning and expected demand. Changes in network provisioning are slow, taking place over time scales of weeks or months. Popular content, on the other hand, generates bursts in demand over much smaller time scales, e.g., hours or minutes. Today's Internet requires much more reactive network control techniques than those we have today, and these techniques must take content delivery into consideration. A few steps have been made in this direction. Indeed, collaborative approaches [53, 116, 75] have been proposed to help deal with the traffic generated by content delivery infrastructures. Even in the case of P2P, portals have been proposed to allow P2P applications and users to communicate with ISPs to receive updated views of their networks [181]. In broad terms, all information CDIs are missing today for optimizing their operations is available to ISPs. Combined with the already proposed schemes for collaboration, it is surprising how little real collaboration is performed in today's Internet between these parties.

In this chapter, we analyze the operation of CDIs as well as network operators. The analysis demonstrates the potential for fruitful collaboration. We argue that for collaboration to become more common, it is important for every party in the content delivery landscape, i.e., the content delivery infrastructures, the network operators, and the end users, to benefit. Finally, we present, in depth, two systems that have incentives for every party and that can readily be used today.

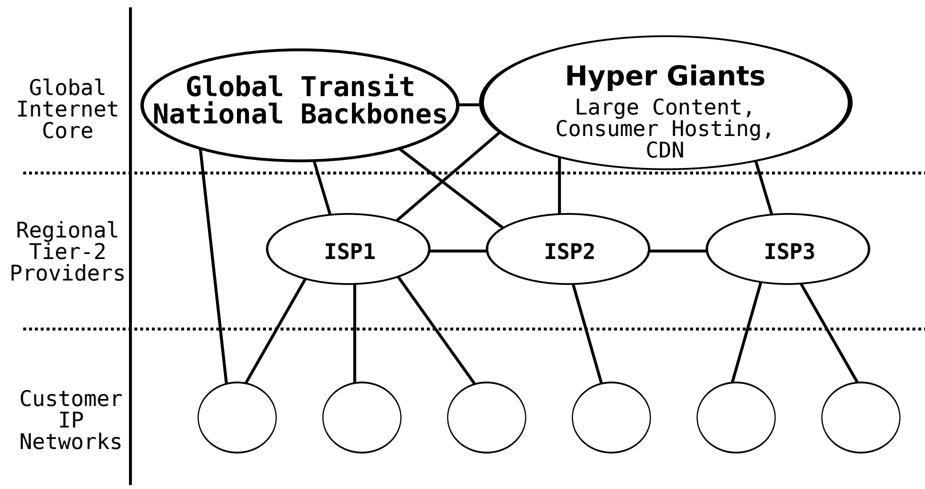


Figure 1: Layout of the Internet Structure

3 Internet Network Infrastructure

The Internet Network Infrastructure is provided by a set of Internet Service Providers (ISPs). An ISP is, in general terms, an organization that provides access to the Internet for its customers. The Internet is structured by the interconnection of multiple individual networks run by ISPs. However, control of an individual network remains solely with the ISP operating it. Figure 1 shows how the Internet is structured today [106]. Here, the ISPs run their own networks. This forces a clear distinction between the individual network that an ISP runs and the global Internet as a network of networks. Also, from this, it can be deduced that nobody has control over the Internet, but instead each ISP has only control over its own network and the direct connections to other networks.

To be able to interconnect with other networks, an ISP needs to operate an autonomous system (AS). An AS is an administrating entity, generally under the control of one administrative domain. On the technical side, each AS is usually managed by an Interior Gateway Protocol (IGP), e.g., OSPF [127] or ISIS [137] while the Border Gateway Protocol (BGP [151]) is the de-facto standard for interconnecting different ASes. For more information and additional details about the Internet topology, we'd like to refer the reader to Chapter 7 of this book [178].

3.1 Traffic Engineering in an AS

The greatest challenge for an ISP is to keep its infrastructure operating efficiently. This is especially hard, since the ISP itself controls neither the behavior, nor the source nor destination of the majority of the traffic it carries. The destination of the traffic is determined by the end-users the ISP sells services to, while the source is usually operated by a Content Delivery Infrastructure (CDI). The behavior is dictated through

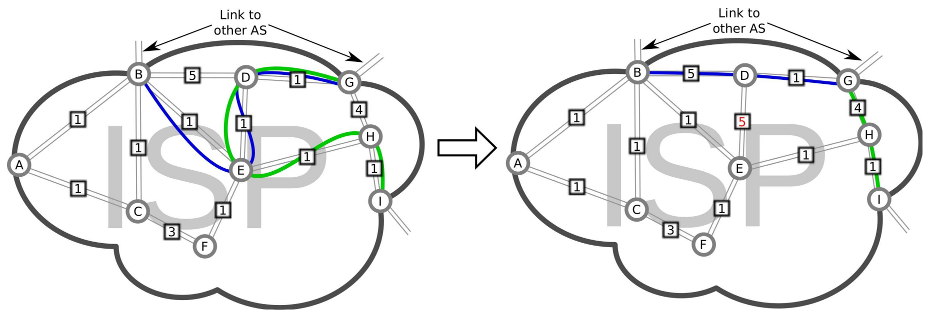


Figure 2: IGP based Traffic Management Example

end-users requesting content, and by the operational choices of the CDI. ISPs today tackle the problem of network operation efficiency by performing Traffic Engineering (TE). In its broadest sense, today's TE encompasses the application of technology and scientific principles to the measurement, characterization, modeling, and control of Internet traffic [27]. Today, traffic engineering reduces to controlling and optimizing the routing function and to steering traffic on an Origin-Destination (OD) flow basis through the network in the most effective way.

Traffic Engineering encompasses multiple steps in order to be performed successfully. First, an ISP needs to record its traffic volume in terms of Origin-Destination flows. This means keeping traffic statistics of how much traffic flows from one router in the network to another. Once the OD flows have been successfully recorded, TE uses this information to simulate the network behavior with different IGP configurations. The goal of these simulations is to find an IGP configuration that spreads the network load as evenly as possible.

Figure 2 shows an example of how an IGP configuration can be used to engineer traffic. The labeled circles represent routers, while the numbers in the squares represent the IGP-weight for the link. For ease of presentation, the weights for each link are set to the same value for both directions. An OD flow, which starts at one router and finishes at another, takes the path through the network that yields the smallest sum over all weights along the path. For example, in the starting configuration of the network (Figure 2 (left)) the flow IG does not take the direct path $I \rightarrow H \rightarrow G$ two, since according to the IGP weights, a more effective path exists. In fact, the path $I \rightarrow H \rightarrow E \rightarrow D \rightarrow \ G$ has an accumulated weight of 4 instead of 5 (green path). All traffic at router I destined for router G takes this path. Similarly, all traffic that originates from B and goes to G follows the path $B \rightarrow E \rightarrow D \rightarrow G$ (blue path). Also, both paths share links, leading to a possible overload situation. In order to solve this problem, we choose to modify the link weight between the routers D and E. By increasing the weight from 1 to 5 (marked red in the right network), the blue as well as the green paths are shifted to the direct path. The change is shown in Figure 2 (right).

This simple diagram allows for illustrating multiple caveats that IGP based traffic engineering introduces. First, IGP-based traffic engineering affects traffic on an OD-flow basis only. This means that the path from one router to another can be changed, but the traffic on the OD flow cannot be split onto multiple paths. Secondly, the change of one weight can affect multiple OD-flows at the same time. Thus, the weights have to be changed very carefully. In the worst case, it might not be possible to fully separate some OD-flows due to the network layout.

One caveat is not immediately obvious but needs to be taken into account when performing traffic engineering. While the link weights are usually known to all routers, they are propagated by messages that routers exchange. This propagation takes time, which can lead to short-term inconsistencies in the view of a network. We again use Figure 2 for illustrating this. When the link weight is changed as described in the example explained before, routers D and E update their routing. This has an immediate effect on the traffic from B to G. With the update, the shortest path from router E to G is now $E \rightarrow H \rightarrow G$. In accordance, E configures its routing to send all traffic for G through H. However, H has not converged at this point and still uses the old path ($H \rightarrow E \rightarrow D \rightarrow G$). Thus, H still sends all traffic for G towards E. As long as H uses the outdated IGP weight information, all traffic for G that reaches either E or H is sent back and forth between the two routers. This forwarding, on the one hand, likely overloads the link. On the other hand, most traffic that is affected by this will be dropped due to its time-to-live (TTL) running out.

The work of Francois et al. [71] shows that it is possible to gradually change IGP weights by sequentially ordering changes. Accordingly, routing loops like those in the example are avoided. However, these changes still require time during which the network can be in a transient state with overloaded links. Besides the challenges induced by optimizing the IGP, this approach also assumes that traffic is predictable and stable over time. By running simulations based on past traffic aggregates to engineer the routing for the future, it is implicitly assumed that traffic patterns remain similar over a longer period of time.

With the emergence of CDIs, however, traffic has become volatile in terms of its origin. In fact, CDIs can shift massive amounts of traffic in a matter of seconds from one server cluster to another. While this behavior is needed and propagated by CDIs to cope with volatile demand surges, it is in stark contrast to the ISP's traffic engineering, which assumes traffic behavior to be stable for days, weeks or sometimes months.

3.2 Domain Name System Basics

The Domain Name System (DNS) plays a major role in today's Internet architecture and is an essential component of any Web based content delivery architecture. DNS relies on a distributed database with a hierarchical structure. The root zone of the DNS system is centrally administered and serves its *zone* information via a collection of *root servers*. The root servers delegate responsibility for specific parts (zones) of the hierarchy to other *name servers*, which may in turn delegate the responsibility to other name servers. At the end, each site is responsible for its own *domain* and maintains its own database containing its information and operates an *authoritative* name server.

The whole DNS database is usually queried by end-hosts using a local name server called *caching resolver*. If this name server receives a query for a domain that it does not know about, it fetches this information from another name server. If the server does not know how to contact the authoritative server for a zone, it will query a root

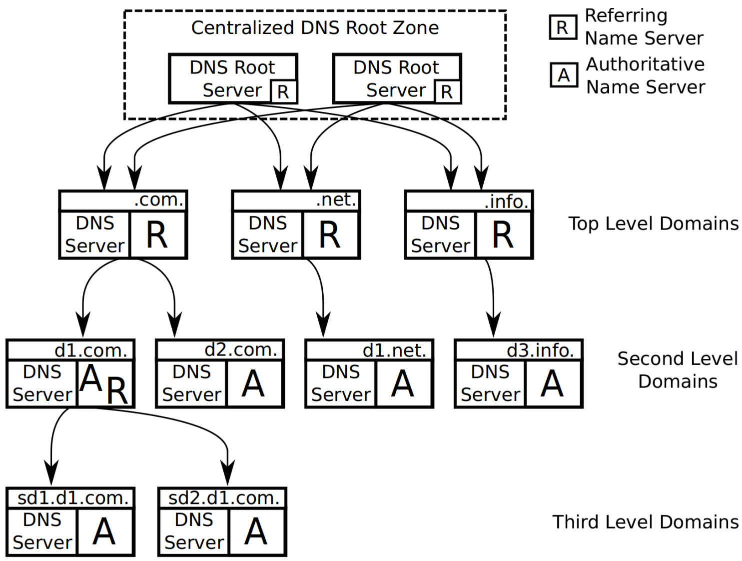


Figure 3: Example DNS hierarchy

server[1]. The root server will *refer* the resolver to another server that is authoritative for the domain that is immediately below the root and of which the zone is a part. The resolver will then query this server, and so forth, stepping down the tree from the root to the desired zone.

To illustrate this process, Figure 3 show a sample DNS hierarchy. In this case, the root of the DNS name space, denoted with a '.', is hosted on two *DNS root servers*. Both servers are under one administrative control, and both can refer a request to any of the top level domain servers. Here, three domains exist, i.e., *.com*, *.net* and *.info*. Again, these name servers refer to the second level domains. Since the domain name are concatenated together as the hierarchy is traversed, the domains that are now possible are *d1.com.*, *d2.com.*, *d1.net.* and *d3.info.*. At this point, the second level domains d1.net. and d3.info have reached their authoritative resolver. For example, a query to the name server of *.d3* for *www.d3.info* is answered authoritatively from there. Note that the name servers for the second level domains are operated by independent entities that know nothing of each other. Thus, the database is distributed, while each party is responsible for its own zone. Finally, the name server of *.d1.com.* has a dual role. While it is referring the subdomains *.sd1.d1.com.* and *.sd2.d1.com.* to other name servers, it also answers queries for other names in its name space authoritatively. This means that a query for *www.d1.com.* is directly answered, while a query for *www.sd1.d1.com* is referred to the name server responsible for *.sd1.d1.com*.

For efficiency reasons DNS relies heavily on caching [95, 3]. All information that a name server delivers to a resolver is cached for a duration specified in the time-to-live

[1]The first query can go to some authoritative server below the root if there exists cached information.

(TTL) field of the *resource records* (RR). Caching today is usually also performed on end-hosts by the operating system's *stub resolver*, as well as applications, e.g., web browsers.

DNS Today. When DNS was introduced in 1983, its sole purpose was to resolve host names into IP addresses in a more scalable fashion than the until then used `hosts` file. Since then a number of features and new uses have found their way into the now omnipresent DNS. In addition to the increasing complexity within the DNS protocol itself [175], new and oftentimes unforeseen (ab)uses have been established. Paul Vixie gives an overview in [176]. The most important points of critique are as follows:

CDI load balancing: Content delivery infrastructures set short TTLs on their DNS answers to allow for short reaction times to shifting loads. Short TTLs impede on cacheability and therefore increase the load on the whole DNS system. In addition, CDIs tailor their reply for the IP address of the requesting resolver using the assumption that the DNS resolver is close to the client originating the request. It has been shown in the past that this assumption is quite often wrong [118, 140, 3, 47].

NXDOMAIN catcher: Some ISPs and third party DNS providers mangle a negative reply with the NXDOMAIN status code into a positive one with the IP address of a search website under the control of the ISP. By hosting advertisements along the search results it is easily possible to increase the profit margin. While this may work to some degree for web browsing, applications relying on proper delivery of NXDOMAIN records, e.g., email, are inevitably hampered.

A third-party ecosystem around DNS has evolved over the last couple of years. Players like OpenDNS, AdvantageDNS, UltraDNS, and most recently Google offer open resolvers to anyone with different feature sets. OpenDNS Basic does NXDOMAIN catching but offers phishing and botnet protection for free. Furthermore, OpenDNS increases the service level for payment between 5 dollars a month up to several thousand dollars per year for business customers. When Google Public DNS entered the market, their highest-valued goals were to "speed up your browsing experience" and to "improve your security". To achieve both targets Google advertises an impressive list of optimizations and fine tuning [84], e.g., prefetching, load balancing with shared cache, validity checking, and nonce prepending. Google Public DNS also refrains from utilizing NXDOMAIN to make profit. From an implementation perspective, most if not all of the third-party resolvers host their DNS servers on multiple sites around the globe and use anycast to guide DNS clients to the nearest resolver.

In this open market space a user annoyed by his ISP's DNS can easily choose for cost-free third-party service. Tools such as namebench [129] might help him in choosing a well-performing one. The irony however is that a user, by choosing a different DNS than the one assigned by his ISP, will most likely undermine the traffic matrix optimizations performed by CDIs and ISPs, and can potentially even lower his quality of experience due to longer download times [3].

4 Traffic Trends: Overall

Before delving into the details of the collaborating opportunities for content providers and infrastructures we embark on giving an overview of typical characteristics of Internet traffic. We start by summarizing previous studies on how Internet traffic looks like. We consider four aspects: *(i)* The composition of the application mix, *(ii)* popular content-types, *(iii)* the distribution of traffic over the course of a day, and *(iv)* the distribution of connection sizes.

4.1 Application Mix

One constant in the Internet during the last 10 years has been its steady growth by more than 50 % each year [136, 79]. Initially, protocols such as FTP, SMTP, and NNTP were popular. Then, in about 1994, HTTP entered into the picture. Until 2000, P2P protocols such as Napster and Gnutella became popular but were later overtaken by eDonkey and BitTorrent. However, the traffic mix has undergone substantial changes. Therefore, we now revisit previously reported results regarding the application mix of Internet traffic. For this purpose we rely on various studies that report on the application mix between 2007 and 2009 from different vantage points:

- The study by Maier et al. [117], which is based on a subset of the traces studied in Section 11.2.5. It was presented at IMC '09.
- Two studies by ipoque [156], which report on different regions in the world (Germany and Middle East). These studies are available for download after registration via a Web form.
- The Arbor report [106] on the ATLAS Internet Observatory presented at a recent NANOG[2] meeting.
- The Sandvine report on "Global Broadband Phenomena" [153].

In order to compare the results we have to summarize and unify the traffic categories as each study uses their own nomenclature (see Figure 4). For this purpose we use the following seven categories:

Web. All HTTP traffic including One-Click-Hosters (OCHs or Direct Download Providers) but excluding video and audio streaming over HTTP (i.e., Flash-Video).

Streaming. All types of streaming in the Internet including streaming over HTTP, RTP, RTSP, RTMP, ShoutCast, etc.

Usenet. The article reading and posting system that evolved from UUnet and which uses NNTP as protocol.

BitTorrent/P2P. The popular P2P-protocol BitTorrent and all other P2P traffic that is not eDonkey. Note, that the P2P traffic that is not BitTorrent or eDonkey only adds a tiny fraction. Moreover, this category represents all P2P traffic if the study no further subdivides P2P traffic. This is the case for Arbor [106] and

[2]NANOG is the North American Network Operators Group.

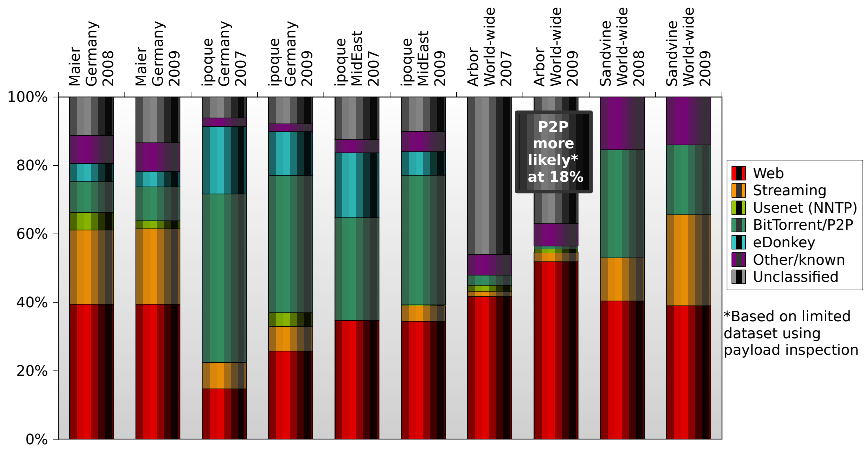


Figure 4: Barplot of the application mix in the Internet (unified categories) for different years, different regions according to several sources [117, 156, 106, 153]. (BitTorrent/P2P contains all P2P except eDonkey.)

Sandvine [153]. Note as well, that the Arbor study [106] reports a table with traffic shares, stating 0.95 % for P2P. This table is annotated with the comment that P2P is more likely to account for 18 % based on payload inspection of a limited data subset.

eDonkey. Another P2P protocol, if reported.

Other/known. Other identified traffic, for details we refer to the corresponding studies.

Unclassified. Traffic that has not been classified. Note, that the Sandvine [153] study does not mention unclassified traffic, which either implies a minute fraction or that it is missing in the plot.

Looking at these statistics we find that all studies report a significant fraction of Web traffic. Indeed, Web is dominant ($> 50\,\%$) in most studies, followed by P2P and streaming. It is noteworthy that Usenet is responsible for a non-negligible fraction in several studies. This is surprising and a good example for the importance of revisiting the application mix periodically in order to identify new trends.

In terms of P2P protocol distribution Figure 4 shows that BitTorrent is dominating and the shares of eDonkey are decreasing. Thus, we note that the results of Plissonneau et al. [143] who observed 91 % of the P2P traffic is due to eDonkey in 2004 are no longer applicable. Indeed, the popularity among P2P protocols swapped in favor of BitTorrent. We can also see a general trend: P2P is declining according to all studies. This is also supported by the results of Anderson [21]. He points out that this decline comes with an increase in video streaming. Moreover, most of the studies pointed out that currently One-Click-Hoster (e.g., Rapidshare or MegaUpload) are as important for file-sharing as P2P systems.

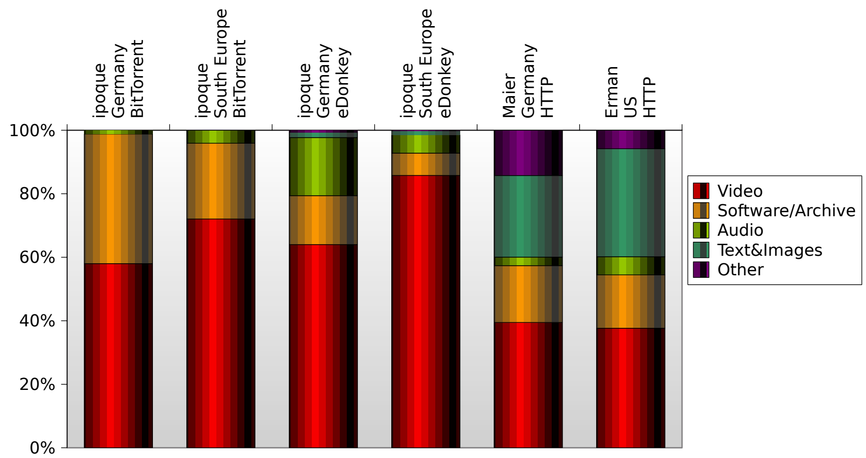


Figure 5: Barplot of content-type popularity in the Internet (unified categories) for different protocols, different regions according to several sources [117, 156, 58].

Of course there are also trends that do not impact the application mix, for example Online Social Networks (OSNs) such as Facebook. This is due to the fact that OSNs use HTTP and they do not transport large videos, but profile elements. Nevertheless, OSNs are not unimportant given the huge number of OSN users world-wide.

4.2 Content-types in the Internet

Next, we turn to the popularity of content-types in the Internet. Again, we leverage several data sources, namely Maier et al. [117], ipoque [156], and Erman et al. [58]. Once more we unify the categories and present results for contents transferred via BitTorrent, eDonkey, and HTTP. See Figure 5 for a summary.

We see that videos are the most popular content in P2P systems (BitTorrent and eDonkey). Even in HTTP videos account for more traffic than any other category. Although HTTP was designed to transfer Web pages (text, e.g., HTML, XML, CSS, JavaScript, and image files) these contribute less than a third of the total HTTP volume.

Overall, a significant fraction of software and archives is noticeable. According to Maier et al. [117] almost all videos are in flash-video format and are served by video portals such as YouTube. Similarly, almost all archives are served by One-Click-Hosters. This is confirmed by the results of Erman et al. [58].

Shifts in the popularity of content-types can be another indicator of new trends. For example, there have been almost no flash-videos before the breakthrough of YouTube.

4.3 Time-of-day Effects

In order to understand when people are active in the Internet we show time-of-day usage plots of link utilization from Maier et al. [117] in Figure 6, and aggregated traffic volume Sandvine [153] in Figure 7.

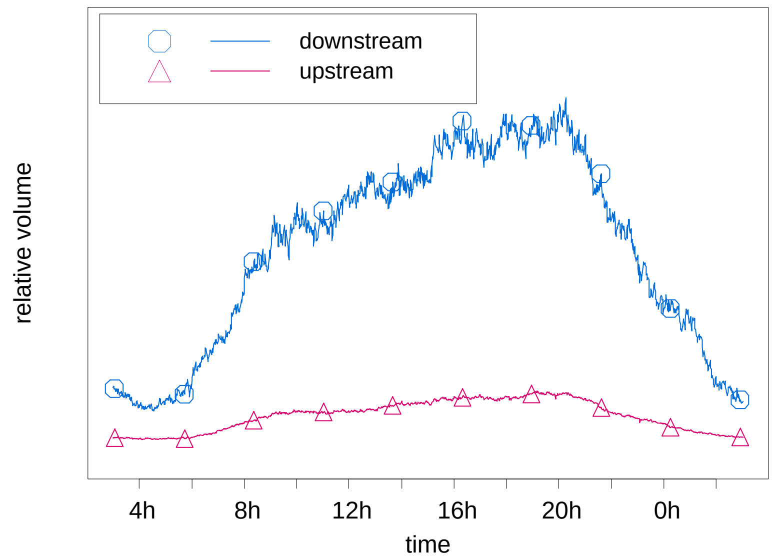


Figure 6: Timeseries of link utilization from Maier et al. [117]

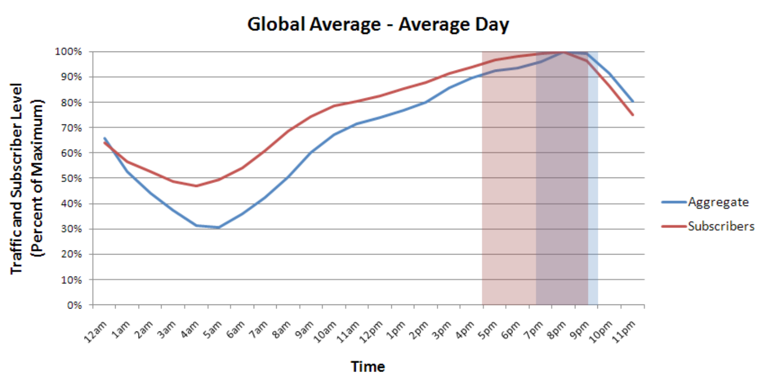


Figure 7: Timeseries of traffic volume from Sandvine [153]

In general, we observe a peak utilization at prime-time around 8 pm and a daily low between 2 am and 4 am. As the data sets of all these studies are primarily collected from residential networks, it not surprising that they all show similar characteristics. The peak usage in the evening hours can easily be explained by the fact that people are usually not at home during business hours. Rising demands just before lunch and in the afternoon may be due to children returning home from school.

Name	Type	Start date	Dur.	Size	Application Volume
MAR10	packet	04 Mar'10 2am	24 h	>5 TB	> 3 TB HTTP, > 5 GB DNS
HTTP-14d	log file	09 Sep'09 3am	14 d	> 200 GB	corresponds to > 40 TB HTTP
DNS-5d	packet	24 Feb'10 4pm	5 d	>25 GB	> 25 GB DNS

Table 1: Summaries of anonymized traces from a European ISP

5 Traffic Trends: Content Server Diversity

So far we have highlighted that the Web and P2P protocols are responsible for a major share of the Internet traffic. However, we have not yet explored if all content is equally popular or if a few content providers dominate. This is the goal of this section.

Our evaluation methodology relies on packet level traces from a large European ISP. We analyze them towards identifying CDI infrastructures and their behavior as seen by an ISP. Here, we find that CDIs rely on the domain Name System (DNS) for their operation. Thus, we focus our analysis on the DNS infrastructure in order to find the server deployment, mapping and operational behavior of CDIs. Based on these observations, we develop classification methods to detect CDI infrastructures and perform a first potential analysis on the impact of CDI operation when basic ISP knowledge is available.

5.1 Residential ISP Traces

We base our study on three sets of anonymized packet-level observations of residential DSL connections collected at aggregation points within a large European ISP. Our monitor, using Endace monitoring cards, allows us to observe the traffic of more than 20,000 DSL lines to the Internet. The data anonymization, classification, as well as application protocol specific header extraction and anonymization is performed immediately on the secured measurement infrastructure using the Bro NIDS [142] with dynamic protocol detection (DPD) [55].

We use an anonymized 24 h packet trace collected in March 2010 (MAR10) for detailed analysis of the protocol behavior. For studying longer term trends, we used Bro's online analysis capabilities to collect an anonymized protocol specific trace summary (HTTP-14d) spanning 2 weeks. Additionally, we collected an anonymized 5 day DNS trace (DNS-5d) in February 2010 to achieve a better understanding of how hostnames are resolved by different sites. Due to the amount of traffic at our vantage point and the resource intensive analysis, we gathered the online trace summaries one at a time. Table 1 summarizes the characteristics of the traces, including their start, duration, size, and protocol volume. It is not possible to determine the exact application mix for the protocol specific traces, as we only focus on the specific protocol. However, we use full traces to cross check the general application mix evolution.

With regards to the application mix, recall Section 4, Maier et al. [117] find that HTTP, BitTorrent, and eDonkey each contribute a significant amount of traffic, see Table 1. In MAR10 HTTP alone contributes almost 60 % of the overall traffic at our vantage point, BitTorrent and eDonkey contribute more than 10 %. Recall that similar protocol distributions have been observed at different times and at other locations of

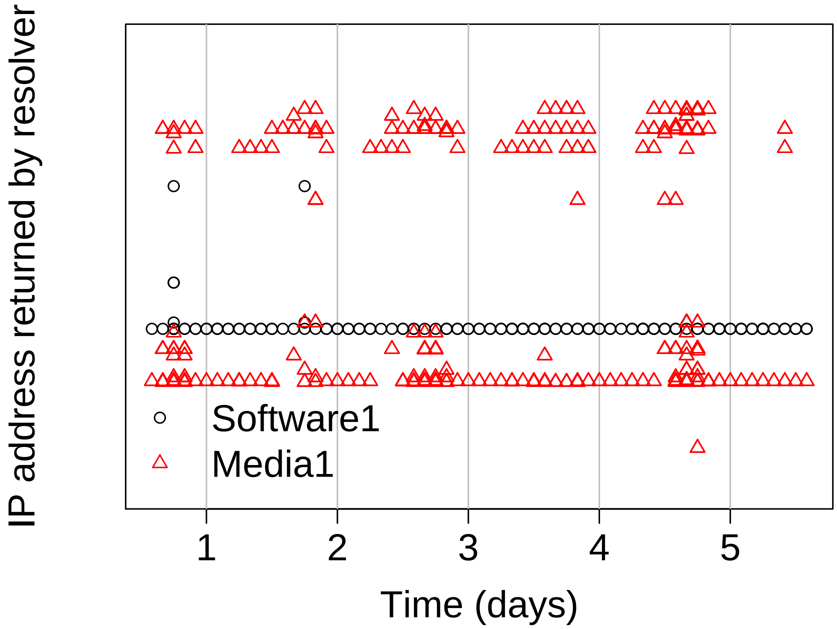


Figure 8: DNS replies for two different sites hosted on a CDI, in two-hour bins

the same ISP, see Figure 4 summarizes the results. Note that almost all streaming is done via the Web on top of HTTP. Therefore, we conclude that currently HTTP is the dominant service and P2P is still responsible for at least 15% of the traffic.

Analyzing HTTP-14d, we find more than 1.2 billion HTTP requests, or 89 million requests per day on average. This is consistent with 95 million requests in 24 hours in MAR10. The advantage of using click stream data from a large set of residential users is their completeness. We are, e.g., not biased by the content offered *(i)* by a web service, *(ii)* whether sufficient users installed measurement tools such as the alexa.com toolbar, or *(iii)* whether users actually use some kind of Web proxy.

To identify the most popular web services, we focus on the most popular hosts. As expected, the distribution of host popularity by volume as well as by number of requests is highly skewed and is consistent with a Zipf-like distribution as observed in other studies [117]. The top 10,000 hosts by volume and the top 10,000 hosts by number of requests together result in roughly 17,500 hosts. This indicates that on the one hand, some hosts that are popular by volume may not be popular by number of requests and vice versa. On the other hand, there are some hosts that are popular according to both metrics. The total activity by these hosts accounts for 88.5 % of the overall HTTP volume and more than 84 % of the HTTP requests. Assuming that the HTTP traffic volume accounts for roughly 60 % of the total traffic, similar to the observations made in September 2009 [117, 5] and in MAR10, more than 50 % of the trace's total traffic is captured by these hosts.

5.2 Server Diversity and DNS Load Balancing

To better understand how HTTP requests are handled and assigned to servers, we use DNS-5d to analyze the 20 most heavily queried DNS names to identify typical usage patterns. We consider only the most heavily used resolver. Figure 8 shows two of the typical patterns for two of the DNS names. It also shows how the resolved IP addresses change (y-axis) across time (x-axis) for two hostnames; respectively a software site, labeled Software1, and a media site, labeled Media1. The vertical lines annotate midnight. If two IP addresses are plotted close to each other, this indicates that the longest common prefix of the two addresses is close. We note that the hostname of Software1 is mainly resolved to a single subnet, excepting a few special cases. However, Media1 is load balanced across approximately 16 different sites. For Media1, there appears to be one main site which is almost always available, while the remaining 15 are predominantly used during afternoon and evening peak usage hours.

These results are promising, and show that individual sites do expose a certain degree of server diversity to their users. While our trace (HTTP-14d) includes the queried hostnames, it does not include the resolved IP address, as a HTTP request header contains the hostname but not the IP address of a server. To verify the above behavior and get an up-to-date view of the DNS replies for the hostnames of our trace, we used 3 hosts within the ISP to issue DNS queries to the ISP's DNS resolver for all 17,500 hostnames repeatedly over a fourteen day measurement period starting on Tue Apr 13th 2010. During these two weeks, we received more than 16 million replies. Unless otherwise mentioned, we rely on our active DNS measurements, with augmented statistics concerning volume and requests from HTTP-14d.

5.3 Server Location Diversity

Our analysis of hostnames and their assignment to servers in section 5.2 has shown that content can be served by multiple servers in different locations. In fact, many domains use the service of a *Content Delivery Infrastructure* (CDI), which can be seen during the DNS resolution progress: The original domain name is mapped to the domain of a CDI, which then answers requests on behalf of the requested domain name from one of its caches [168]. Almost all CDIs rely on a distributed infrastructure to handle the expected load, load spikes, flash crowds, and special events. Additionally, this introduces needed redundancy and fail over configurations in their services. Among the most studied CDI' are Content Distribution Networks (CDNs), such as Akamai [111, 168, 89], and Content Delivery Platforms (CDPs), such as Google [104] and their YouTube service [37].

The DNS server can choose to return one or more server IP addresses based on the domain name in the request and the IP address of the requesting DNS resolver. For example, it may use a geo-location database [120] to localize the region of the DNS resolver, utilize BGP data to identify the ISP, create a topology map derived via traceroutes, or any combination of these and other topological and geographic localization techniques. A DNS server has, in principle, two methods for load balancing across multiple servers:

MultQuery: Can return multiple IP addresses within a single DNS response

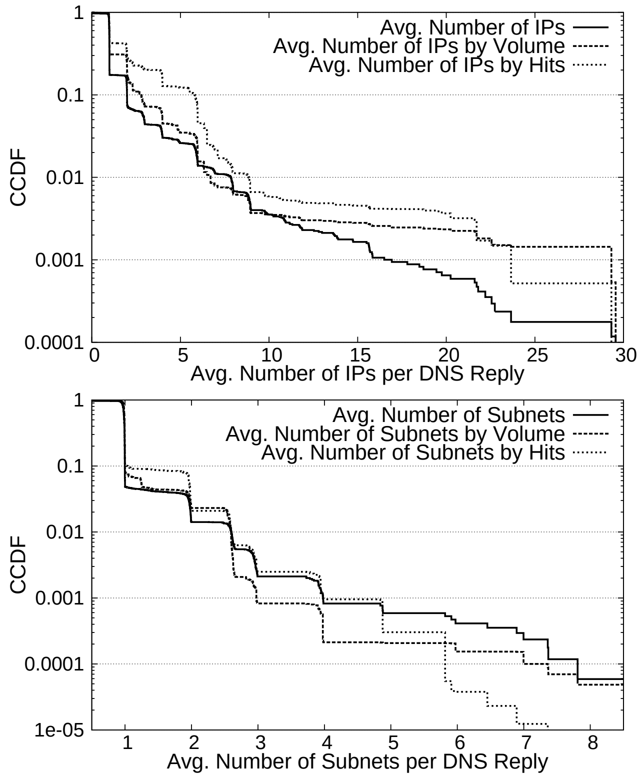


Figure 9: CCDF of mean # of IPs (top) and subnets (bottom) per DNS reply for the ISPs DNS resolver.

CrossQuery: Can return different IP addresses for repeated queries and thus perform DNS redirection.

In our active DNS measurements, we found that often a mixture of MultQuery and CrossQuery is being used in practice. Furthermore, we used the measurement results to *(i)* map hostnames to sets of IP addresses and *(ii)* check the IP address diversity of these sets for a better understanding of server diversity and their location. We achieved this by aggregating the returned IP addresses into subnets based on BGP information obtained from within the ISP. This allows for detailed information about the different locations within the ISP, while giving an aggregated view of subnets reachable via peering links.

Another issue stems from the fact that the IP address returned by the CDI depends on the IP address of the ISP DNS resolver [3, 140, 168]. Due to this, we used the DNS resolver of the ISP of our vantage point as well as external DNS resolvers (see section 5.3). The former reflects the experience of most of the clients at our vantage point[3].

[3]We verify using the traces that more than 95 % of the clients use the ISP's DNS resolver as their default one.

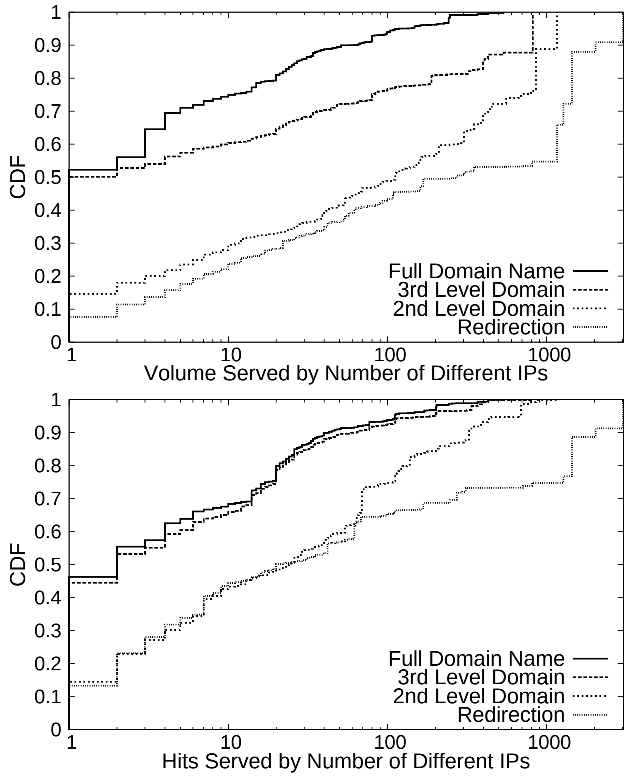


Figure 10: CDF of # of IPs for the ISP DNS resolver normalized by traffic volume (top) and requests (bottom) including aggregation on domain levels. (Logarithmic x-axis.)

The latter lets us discover additional diversity as well as understand the preference of the CDI for this specific ISP.

Prevalence of MultQuery. We start our analysis by checking the prevalence of the first form of DNS based load balancing, MultQuery. Figure 9 shows a CCDF plot of the average number of IP addresses (top) and subnets (bottom) per DNS reply. In addition, we included the same data normalized by traffic volume and number of requests.

A first observation is that the number of returned IP addresses per request is rather small. The median is 1, the average is 1.3 and even the 0.9 percentile is 2. We note that even when an answer yields multiple IP addresses, the majority of them are from the same subnet. Therefore, the diversity decreases even further if we aggregate to subnets. From a network perspective, this implies that there is not much choice, neither for the ISP nor for the user, regarding where to download the content from. Both are limited to the information provided by the DNS server. However, when we normalize the hosts by their respective popularity, we see a significant improvement. More than 29% of the volume and 19% of requests have a choice among at least 2 IP addresses.

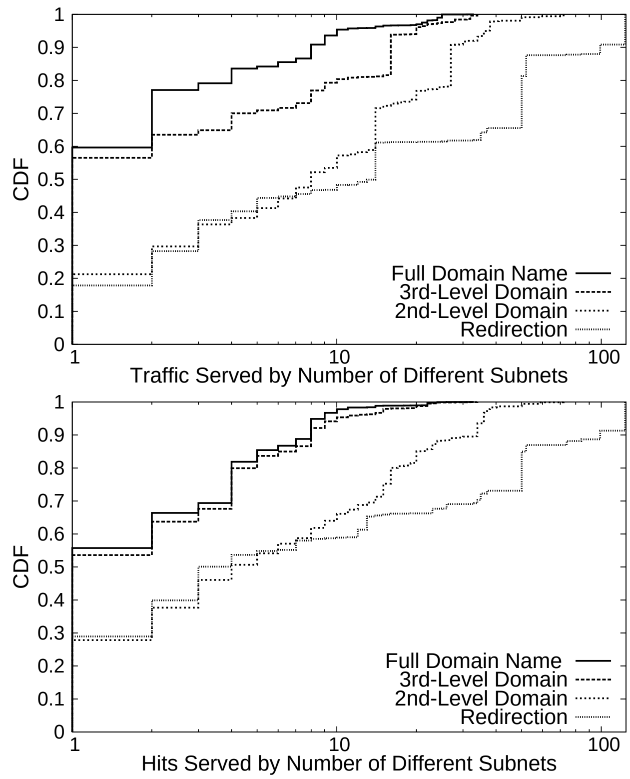


Figure 11: CDF of # of subnets for ISP DNS resolver normalized by traffic volume (top) and by requests (bottom) including aggregation on domain levels. (Logarithmic x-axis.)

Prevalence of CrossQuery. Next, we check how prevalent CrossQuery, the second form of DNS based load balancing is. Since CrossQuery returns different IP addresses for repeated queries, its potential contribution to server diversity can only be studied by aggregating across time. The lines labeled `Full Domain Name` in Figures 10 and 11 capture this case.

We find that more than $50\,\%$ of the volume or requests can be served by more than one IP address. Similarly, there is choice between at least two subnets over $40\,\%$ of the time across both metrics, see Figure 11. This indicates that there is significant potential for the ISP to bias the location preference of the CDI.

Subdomain Aggregation. Since some CDIs only use subdomains as hints about the context of the requested URLs or the requested services, we accumulate the answers further regarding the 2nd and 3rd part of the domain names of the hosts, see Figures 10 and 11 at the respective data series called `3rd Level Domain` and `2nd Level Domain`. For example, we might accumulate the IP addresses from DNS replies for dl1.example.org and dl2.example.org for the statistics on the 2nd level domain, but not

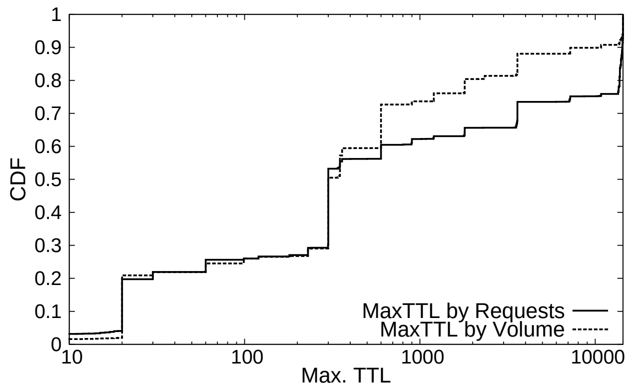


Figure 12: CDF of DNS TTL value by traffic volume and by number of requests.

the third level domain.

This is a feasible approach, since many hosts respond to all requests that belong to a subset of the subnets returned when accumulating by the second-level domain of DNS resolver answer, including recursive requests and redirections. This behavior was verified with active measurements in [144]. We find that at least two major CDIs, a streaming provider and a One-Click Hoster, serve requested content from servers that match in their second level domain.

We note that the accumulation by third-level domain, and especially by second level domain significantly increases the number of observed subnets per request both normalized by requests as well as by volume. The number of returned subnets further increases when accumulating to the second-level domain of DNS resolver answer. Studying our traces in more detail, we find that this is due to the substantial traffic volume and number of requests that are served by CDIs, some of which are highly distributed within ISPs or located in multihomed datacenters or peer-exchange points.

Infrastructure Redirection Aggregation. Taking a closer look at the DNS replies [126], we find that some CDIs use CNAME records to map queried hostname to an A record. These A records show the same pattern as the hostnames in the previous section: the second level domain is identical. Similar to the previous approach, we can aggregate by these A records.

Turning our attention to the implications of the proposed aggregation schemes, we notice the available diversity increases tremendously. More than 50% of the hits and 70% of the bytes can be served by more than 20 servers. With regards to subnets, the diversity decreases slightly. Nevertheless, more than 5 subnets are available for 45 % of the hits and 55% of the bytes.

If we consider aggregation periods in the order of tens of minutes, the numbers do not decrease by much. The reason that most of the diversity is observable even over these short aggregation time periods, is that the typical TTL, see Figure 12, is rather short with a mean of $2,100$ seconds and an median of 300 seconds normalized by volume. When weighted by requests, the mean/median is $4,100/300$ seconds.

	ISP DNS		OpenDNS		GoogleDNS	
Metric	observed	potential	observed	potential	observed	potential
IPs	12.3 %	24.2 %	5.8 %	16.0 %	6.0 %	9.7 %
requests	14.9 %	33.2 %	4.7 %	18.8 %	4.8 %	6.4 %
volume	23.4 %	50.0 %	12.0 %	27.7 %	12.3 %	13.4 %

Table 2: Traffic localization within the network by different DNS resolvers normalized by number of requests and traffic volume together with the potentially available fraction of localized traffic.

Alternative DNS Resolvers. So far we have only considered the effect of content diversity when the ISP DNS resolver is used. To understand how much the DNS load balancing deployed by a CDI is biased by the queried DNS resolver, we repeat the experiment from Section 5.2 using two other DNS resolvers. In particular, we pick the next most popular DNS resolvers found in our traces: GoogleDNS and OpenDNS. Both are third-party resolvers with a global footprint and utilize DNS anycast.

Comparing the results, we find that we attain more IP address diversity and subnet diversity when using the ISP DNS resolver. This is mainly due to the fact that CDIs select the supplied caches based on the source IP address of the querying DNS resolver. Since the CDIs are no longer able to map the request to the AS it originates from, but rather to AS the DNS resolver belongs to, the server selection by the CDI cannot optimize for the location of the DNS client.

A possible solution to the problem is the EDNS-Client-Subnet extension [46], an extension that utilizes the EDNS0 option field that is used today by DNS Security Extensions (DNSSEC). A recent study [139] showed that the user-to-server allocation can be significantly improved as well as the end-to-end performance for the client. On the other hand, this requires that all the involved resolvers and authoritative servers in ISPs, CDNs, third parties that maintain resolvers and authoritative servers, e.g., GoogleDNS, OpenDNS, have to support EDNS-Client-Subnet extension.

5.4 Impact on Traffic Localization

Analyzing the three active DNS measurements from the ISP, OpenDNS as well as Google DNS resolver, we find that a significant part of the requests that could have been in principle served by sources within the ISP are directed towards servers that are outside of the ISP. However, before tackling this issue, we need to understand what fraction of the traffic may be served by IP addresses within the ISP's network and what fraction is served by IP addresses outside of the AS. To this end, we analyze each of the three active DNS traces separately. For each trace, we start by classifying all DNS replies regarding the `redirection` aggregation described in Section 5.3 and account the volume (or hits) evenly to each of the IP addresses. Next, we classify the IP addresses in two groups - inside and outside of the ISP network. Table 2 summarizes the results of this aggregation regarding the traffic and hits that were kept inside the ISP's network in the columns labeled `observed`.

Turning to the results, we find that there is hardly any difference between those clients that use the external DNS resolvers, i.e., GoogleDNS or OpenDNS. Of the returned IP addresses, less than 6 % are within the AS. When weighted by number of requests, this does not change much. However, when normalizing by volume, about 12 % of the traffic stays within the AS. In contrast, clients that use the ISP's DNS resolver fare better: almost a quarter of the traffic volume is served from servers within the AS. Normalized by requests, we see a three fold increase, and normalized by hits or volume, roughly a two fold increase over using external DNS resolvers. Among the reasons for the "bad" performance of external DNS resolvers is that some CDIs may always return IP addresses outside the ISP, despite the fact that many of its servers are deployed within the ISP. The reason behind this is that the CDIs cannot map the DNS resolver to the AS anymore, and thus are unaware of the origin of the request. This explains the substantial difference and highlights on the one hand the effectiveness of the CDI optimization, but also points out its limits. As such, it is not surprising that there are efforts under way within the IETF to include the source IP addresses of the DNS client in the DNS requests [47].

However, one can ask if the CDI utilizes the full potential of traffic localization on an AS level. For this, we check the potential of traffic localization, by changing the volume (or hit) distribution from even to greedy. Thus, as soon as we observe at least one IP address inside the ISP's network, we count all traffic for the entire aggregation to be internal. Table 2 shows the results in the columns labeled `potential` for all three DNS traces. Note the substantial differences. Our results indicate that a gain of more than a factor of two can be achieved. Furthermore, up to 50 % of the traffic can be delivered from servers within the ISP rather than only 23.4 %. This may not only in itself result in a substantial reduction of costs for the ISP, but it also points out the potential of collaboration between CDIs and ISPs. While the increase is noticeable it is nowhere near that of the ISP's DNS resolver. The potential benefit when relying on GoogleDNS is rather small. A deeper study on our results unveils that content served by highly distributed and redundant infrastructures can be localized the most.

5.5 Summary

We find that HTTP is again the dominant traffic source, while the prevalence of P2P traffic decreases. Since most CDIs rely on distributed infrastructure, we not only observe significant server location diversity but also significant path diversity for accessing HTTP based content. Indeed, there is the potential to bias roughly half of the overall traffic by redirecting queries to different content servers.

More precisely, we estimate that around 70 % of the HTTP traffic in a big European ISP can be redirected when taking advantage of the diversity due to MultQuery, CrossQuery and hostname aggregation. Furthermore, we show that current CDI optimizations that approximate the location of end-users based on the location of the local DNS resolvers are more effective than those based on the location of third-party resolvers. Finally, we show that the traffic localization potential within the above mentioned ISP is very high especially when the ISP DNS resolver is utilized.

6 Content Delivery: An Overview

While content may be seen as king not all content is equally popular among users. Indeed, content popularity often follows “Zipf’s law”. If the popularity of elements as function of the rank is consistent with a power-law distribution it is referred to as Zipf’s-like (see [186, 125] and references therein). The rank is determined by the number of occurrence of an element, where a low rank index refers to a popular element. Not surprisingly Zipf’s law does not only apply to the popularity of content but also quite a number of different quantities in Internet traffic, including the popularity of Web pages [33, 159], traffic demands [59, 62, 183, 177, 44], as well as interdomain Web traffic demands [64]. Thus, while some content can be served by a single server most content, namely the popular content, can only be served if it is highly replicated across multiple servers. Thus, one of the main challenges in content delivery is **server selection**. Server selection means identifying a specific server from which the request for content by a user is satisfied.

Content delivery and the network infrastructure interact mostly through content source selection, often called server selection. Here, it does not matter whether the source is a server pushing content through HTTP or from a peer in a P2P network. In the case of HTTP, the domain name system (DNS) is the preferred mechanism for performing server selection. In the case of P2P, peer selection strategies drive where the content is obtained from and how, e.g., when the content is cut into chunks.

To direct users to appropriate servers, CDIs rely extensively on the Domain Name System (DNS). We describe this and other server selection mechanisms in detail later in this section. The CDI chooses a server based on several metrics. Criteria for server selection include the IP address of the end-user’s DNS resolver, the availability of the server, the proximity of the server to the resolver, and the monetary cost of delivering the content. Note that the server selection does not know the client IP address or network location, it only knows the IP address of the DNS resolver the end-user contacted. A recent study [3] showed that sometimes the end-user is not close to the resolver. To improve the mapping of end-users to servers, the client-IP eDNS extension [47] has been recently proposed.

In P2P systems peers can choose among all other peers to download content from but only if the have the desired content. Thus the problem of getting content in a P2P system is actually two-fold: first the user needs to find the content and once it knows of possible peers it can download the content from, it needs to connect to some of them to get the desired content. In P2P systems the content lookup is realized in many different ways. Some P2P network, called structured P2P, implement a distributed lookup system most often referred to as distributed hash table (DHT). Other P2P systems, called unstructured P2P, like Gnutella, flood search request into the network. Some systems rely on a partial centralized infrastructure to obtain content information. We discuss the different approaches in P2P systems in more detail in section 6.2.

Before we can discuss all the various options on how content delivery can be improved in the current Internet we give a short overview how a typical Content Distribution Network operates.

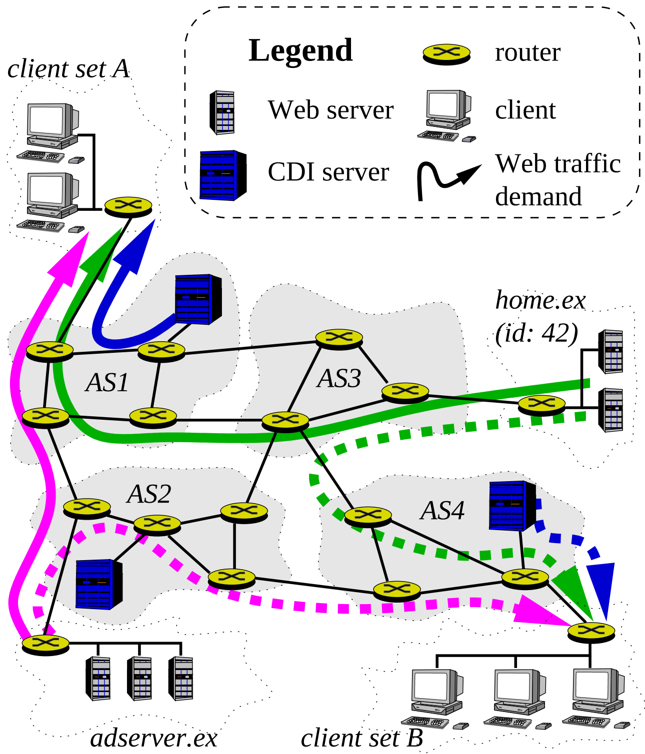


Figure 13: Example of CDI deployment and traffic flows (Web traffic demands).

6.1 Content Delivery Networks

Recall content is king in the current Internet and content is typically first placed on the Web site of the content producer, the original Web servers. Content Delivery Infrastructures (CDIs) (see, e.g., [90, 52, 77, 29, 94, 103, 154]) are designed to reduce the load on origin servers and at the same time improve performance for the user. Most CDIs have a large set of servers deployed throughout the Internet and cache the content of the original publisher at these servers. Therefore another view of CDIs is that they provide reverse proxy services for content providers, the publishers. In order to take advantage of their distributed infrastructure, requests for data are redirected to the "closest" cache server. Intelligent redirection can reduce network latency and load (and therefore network congestion) improving response time. CDIs differ in their approach to redirecting traffic. Some (such as Akamai [134]), use DNS to translate the hostname of a page request into the IP address of an appropriate server. This translation may consider the location of the client, the location of the server, the connectivity of the client to the server, the load on the server, and other performance and cost based criteria.

An example that shows how the CDI infrastructure is embedded in the Internet architecture is shown in Figure 13. Recall, the Internet is divided into a collection of

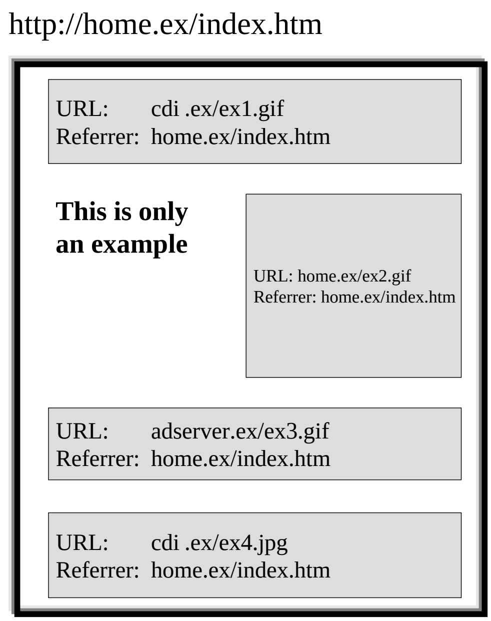


Figure 14: Example Web page with some CDI content.

autonomous systems (ASes). Each AS is managed by an Internet Service Provider (ISP), who operates a backbone network that provides connectivity to clients and to other ISPs. Figure 13 shows four ASes, numbered 1–4, whose backbones consist of three routers each, two Web site publishers, home.ex and adserver.ex, and two sets of clients. The publisher home.ex is connected to AS 3 while the publisher adserver.ex is connected to AS 2. A set of clients is connected to AS 1, another to AS 4.

The location of the CDI's servers differ from CDI to CDI and depends on contractual agreements between the CDI and the individual ISPs. In some instances, the CDI servers are deployed within the data centers of the ISP and therefore belong to the same AS, like AS 1, 2, 4 in Figure 13. Clients of the ISP (end-users) are typically served by these servers in the same AS. With other ISPs, the CDI may have a private peering agreement that allows the CDI to serve requests from the ISPs clients via a direct connection between the CDI and the AS. The CDI may also co-locate servers with the ISP's clients, e.g., on university campuses. With other ISPs there may be no relationship with the CDI, and the traffic to the ISP's clients is routed via another AS.

Let us consider the steps that are necessary to download the Web page shown in Figure 14. This page consists of one main page located at home.ex/index.htm and four embedded objects. The publisher responsible for home.ex has decided to use the services of a CDI, cdi.ex. One object (ex2.gif) of the sample page is located on the same server as the page itself (index.htm); another object (ex3.gif) is served by a company providing dynamic advertisements, adserver.ex; and objects ex1.gif and ex4.jpg are hosted by the CDI.

If a specific client from client set A in Figure 13 accesses the Web page, publisher home.ex serves the bytes for the main page and one embedded object, publisher adserver.ex serves the bytes for the object located on its servers, and the “nearest” CDI server serves the two CDI-located objects—in this case, they will be served from AS 1. In contrast, if a specific client from client set B accesses the page, the two CDI objects are delivered from a different CDI server, namely the one in AS 4. Keep in mind that it is the objective of the CDI to direct the client to a CDI server that is close to the client.

To complete the picture one question remains. How does the CDI choose the “nearest” server to deliver the content from? Today’s CDI landscape relies mainly on three techniques to assign end-users to servers.

1. IP-Anycast
2. DNS based redirection
3. HTTP redirection

While all techniques help the CDIs to assign end-users to their servers, all of them have different drawbacks. In the following we will explain how the different techniques work and what those drawbacks are:

IP-Anycast. IP Anycast is a routing technique used to send IP packets to the topologically closest member of a group of potential CDI servers. IP Anycast is usually realized by announcing the destination address from multiple locations in a network or on the Internet. Since the same IP address is available at multiple locations, the routing process selects the shortest route for the destination according to its configuration. Simply speaking, each router in a network selects one of the locations the Anycasted IP is announced from based on the used routing metrics (e.g., path length or routing weights) and configures a route towards it. Note that, if a network learns of an Anycasted IP address from different sources, it does not necessarily direct all its traffic to one of its locations. Its routing can decide to send packets from region A in the network to location A’ while region B gets a route to location B’. This means that the entire server selection of a CDI becomes trivial as it is now a part of the routing process. This means that the CDI loses control of how the users are mapped to the server because the network calculates the routing based on its own metrics. Another issue is that the routing in a network is optimized based on the ISPs criteria which might not be the same as the CDIs or even contrary. Thus the “nearest” server might not be the best one the CDI could offer.

DNS-based redirection. Today most CDIs rely on the Domain Name System (DNS) to direct users to appropriate servers. When requesting content, the end-user typically asks a DNS resolver, e.g., the resolver of its ISP, for the resolution of a domain name. The resolver then asks the authoritative server for the domain. This can be the CDI’s authoritative server, or the the content provider’s authoritative server, which then delegates to the CDI’s authoritative server. At this point the CDI selects the server for this request based on where the request comes from. But the request does not come directly from the end-user but from its DNS resolver! Thus the CDI can only select a server based on the IP address of the end-user's DNS resolver. To improve the mapping of end-users to servers, the client-IP eDNS extension [47] has been recently proposed. Criteria for server selection include the availability of the server, the proximity of the server to the resolver, and the monetary cost of delivering the content. For proximity estimations the CDIs rely heavily on network measurements [134] and geolocation information [120] to figure out which of their servers is close by and has the best network path performance. A recent study [3] showed that sometimes the end user is not close to the resolver and another study points out that geolocation databases can not be relied upon [146]. Thus the proximity estimations for the "nearest" CDI server highly depend on the quality and precision of network measurements and a proper DNS deployment of the ISPs. For an excellent survey on DNS-based Server Selections in CDNs, we refer the reader to [140].

HTTP redirection. The Hypertext Transfer Protocol (HTTP) is today's de-facto standard to transport content in the Internet (see section 5). The protocol incorporates a mechanism to redirect users at the application level at least since it was standardized as version 1.0 in 1996 [30]. By sending an appropriate HTTP status code (HTTP status codes 3XX) the web server can tell the connected user that a requested object is available from another URL, which can also point to another server. This allows a CDI to redirect an end-user to another server. Reasons for this might include limited server capacities, poor transfer performance or when another server is closer to the end-user, e.g., a client from the US connecting to a server in Europe although the CDI has servers in the US. The HTTP redirection mechanism has some important benefits over the DNS based approach. First, the CDI directly communicates with the end-user and thus knows the exact destination it sends the traffic to (opposed to the assumption that the DNS resolver is "close"). Yet it still has to estimate the proximity of the end-user using the same methodologies as described in the DNS based case. Second, the CDI already knows which object the end-user requests and can use this information for its decision. It allows a CDI to direct a user towards a server where the content object is already available to improve its cache hit rate. Other important informations includes the size and type of the object. This allows the CDI to optimize the server selection based on the requirements to transfer the object e.g., for delay sensitive ones like streaming video or more throughput oriented ones like huge software patches. Yet this improvement comes at a price as the user has to establish a new connection to another server. This includes another DNS lookup to get the servers IP address as well as the whole TCP setup including performance critical phases like slow start. This can repeat itself multiple times before an appropriate server is found, which delays the object delivery even further.

6.2 Peer-to-Peer Networks

Peer-to-peer (P2P) is a distributed system architecture in which all participants, the so called peers, are equally privileged users of the system. A P2P system forms an overlay network on top of existing communication networks (e.g., the Internet). All participating peers of the P2P system are the nodes of the overlay network graph, while the connections between them are the edges. It is possible to extend this definition of edges in the overlay network graph to all known peers, in contrast to all connected peers. Based on how peers connect to each other and thus build the overlay network, we can classify P2P systems into two basic categories:

Unstructured: The P2P system does not impose any structure on the overlay network. The peers connect to each other in an arbitrary fashion. Most often peers are chosen randomly. Content lookups are flooded to the network (e.g., Gnutella), resulting in limited scalability, or not offered at all (e.g., plain BitTorrent).

Structured: Peers organize themselves following certain criteria and algorithms. The resulting overlay network graphs have specific topologies and properties that usually offer better scalability and faster lookups than unstructured P2P systems (e.g., Kademlia, BitTorrent DHT).

The overlay network is mainly used for indexing content and peer discovery while the actual content is transferred directly between peers. Thus the connection between the individual peers has significant impact on both the direct content transfers as well as the performance of the resulting overlay network. This has been shown in previous studies and multiple solutions have been proposed [181, 39, 168, 11, 18, 132] which are described in detail in section 10.

Applications of P2P systems in content delivery range from time insensitive applications like file sharing, software delivery or patch distribution to very time sensitive ones like streaming TV or on demand video delivery.

Peer-to-Peer systems To construct an overlay topology, unstructured P2P networks usually employ an arbitrary neighbor selection procedure [166]. This can result in a situation where a node in Frankfurt downloads a large content file from a node in Sydney, while the same information may be available at a node in Berlin. While structured P2P systems follow certain rules and algorithms, the information available to them either has to be inferred by measurements [150] or rely on publicly available information such as routing information [152]. Both options are much less precise and up-to-date compared to the information information an ISP has readily at hand. It has been shown that P2P traffic often crosses network boundaries multiple times [8, 97]. This is not necessarily optimal as most network bottlenecks in the Internet are assumed to be either in the access network or on the links between ISPs, but rarely in the backbones of the ISPs [17]. Besides, studies have shown that the desired content is often available "in the proximity" of interested users [97, 149]. This is due to content language and geographical regions of interest. P2P networks benefit from increasing their traffic locality, as shown by Bindal et. al [31] for the case of BitTorrent.

P2P systems usually implement their own routing [20] in the overlay topology. Routing on such an overlay topology is no longer done on a per-prefix basis, but rather on a query or key basis. In unstructured P2P networks, queries are disseminated, e.g., via flooding [80] or random walks, while structured P2P networks often use DHT-based routing systems to locate data [166]. Answers can either be sent directly using the underlay routing [166] or through the overlay network by retracing the query path [80]. By routing through the overlay of P2P nodes, P2P systems hope to use paths with better performance than those available via the Internet native routing [20, 155]. However, the benefits of redirecting traffic on an alternative path, e.g., one with larger available bandwidth or lower delay, are not necessarily obvious. While the performance of the P2P system may temporarily improve, the available bandwidth of the newly chosen path may deteriorate due to the traffic added to this path. The ISP has then to redirect some traffic so that other applications using this path can receive enough bandwidth. In other words, P2P systems reinvent and re-implement a routing system whose dynamics should be able to explicitly interact with the dynamics of native Internet routing [98, 157]. While a routing underlay as proposed by Nakao et al. [128] can reduce the work duplication, it cannot by itself overcome the problems created by the interaction. Consider a situation where a P2P system imposes a lot of traffic load on an ISP network. This may cause the ISP to change some routing metrics and therefore some paths (at the native routing layer) in order to improve its network utilization. This can however cause a change of routes at the application layer by the P2P system, which may again trigger a response by the ISP, and so on.

P2P today. The P2P paradigm has been very successful in delivering content to end-users. BitTorrent [45] is the prime example, used mainly for file sharing. Other examples include more time sensitive applications such as video streaming [54, 115, 105]. Despite the varying (and perhaps declining) share of P2P traffic in different regions of the world [117], P2P traffic still constitutes a significant fraction of the total Internet traffic. P2P systems have been shown to scale application capacity well during flash crowds [182]. However, the strength of P2P systems, i.e., anybody can share anything over this technology, also turns out to be a weakness when it comes to content availability. In fact, mostly popular content is available on P2P networks, while older content disappears as users' interest in it declines. In the example of BitTorrent, this leads to torrents missing pieces, in which case a download can never be completed. In case of video streaming, the video might simply no longer be available or the number of available peers is too low to sustain the required video bit-rate, resulting in gaps or stuttering of the video stream.

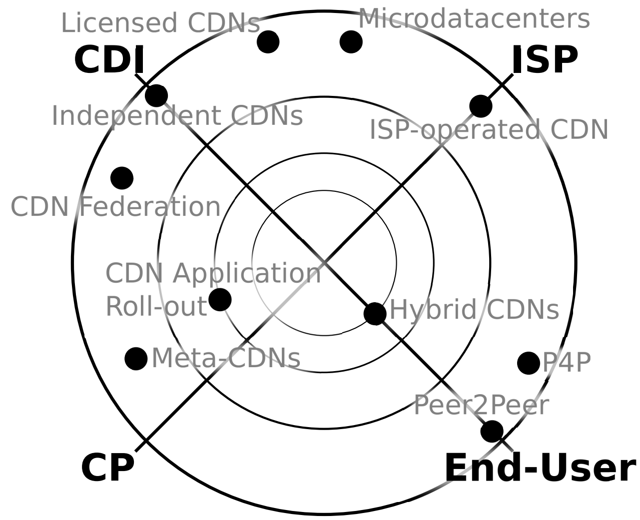


Figure 15: Spectrum of content delivery solutions and involvement of stake-holders in the content delivery.

7 Content Delivery: The Landscape

Internet traffic grows at a rate of approximately 30% per year [43] and is dominated by the delivery of content to end users [2, 78, 106, 144]. To cope with the increasing demand for content, and to support the level of reliability and scalability required by commercial-grade applications, Content Distribution Infrastructures (CDIs) have emerged. In general terms, CDIs are overlays built on top of existing network infrastructures that aim to accelerate the delivery of content to end-users. CDIs include, but are not limited to, Content Distribution Networks (CDNs), such as Akamai and Google, Video Streaming Portals (VSP) such as YouTube, One-Click-Hosters (OCH) like Rapidshare and MegaUpload. However, a CDI does not necessarily produce the content that it delivers. Thus, we define a Content Producer (CP) as the entity that generates content. In some cases, e.g., Google and YouTube, the CP and CDI can be the same entity. In other instances, for example Akamai and Limelight, the CDI only delivers what a CP pays for.

But not all CDIs are built upon the same philosophy, designs and technology. For example, a CDI can be operated independently by deploying caches in different networks, by renting space in datacenters or by building its own datacenters. Furthermore, some CDIs are operated by ISPs, by Content Producers, or in the case of Peer-to-Peer networks, by self-organized end-users. To summarize the spectrum of CDI solutions, Figure 15 provides an overview of different CDI solutions. They are aligned by their architectures according to which parties are involved.

7.1 Independent Content Distribution

Independent CDIs are usually referred to as Content Delivery Networks (CDNs). They have a strong customer base of content producers and are responsible for delivering the content of their customers to end-users around the world. Today, they are, by traffic volume as well as hosted content, the largest players on the Internet. In general, there are four main components to independent CDN architectures: a server deployment, a strategy for replicating content on servers, a mechanism for directing users to servers, and a system for collecting and processing server logs.

For server deployment, three main approaches exist [111]: centralized, datacenter based and distributed infrastructures:

Central Location: This approach is used by small CDNs, One-Click Hosters, and applications running in public clouds. Centralized hosting takes advantage of (a) the economies of scale that a single location offers [25], (b) the flexibility that multi-homing offers [81], and (c) the connectivity opportunities that IXPs offer [2]. The disadvantages of centralized hosting are the potential for a single point of failure, and the limited ability to ensure low latency to users located in different networks around the world [112].

Datacenter Based: This approach deploys in several large data centers. It again leverages economies of scale while improving reliability and creating a larger foot-print with further reach. However, by utilizing multiple datacenters, new challenges regarding the content distribution, synchronization and delivery arise. For example, the datacenter delivering content to an end-user cannot be statically configured any-more, but the selection needs to take the location of the end-user into account. This approach is used by CDNs such as Limelight, EdgeCast and BitGravity. Many cloud providers also use this approach, including Amazon CloudFront and Microsoft Azure.

Distributed Infrastructures: This approach consists of a highly distributed infrastructure deployment, potentially deep inside third-party networks. Here, the large number of servers scattered across numerous networks offer high availability and replication of content while being very close to end-users. Furthermore, this type can balance traffic across locations, best react to flash crowds by dynamic server assignments, and deliver content with improved latency. However, with the highly distributed infrastructures, the challenges of assigning users to the right server location increase many-fold. Also, with deep deployment datacenters are usually not available anymore, leading to the question where to deploy how many servers. Today, Akamai is only one independent CDN that uses this approach on a global scale.

CDNs with more than one location typically follow a pull strategy [134] for content distribution and replication. Thus, content requests can be directed to servers that do not have the required object cached. When a requested object is not at the selected server, neighboring servers in the same cluster or region are asked. If the object is not available at neighboring servers, the origin or root server responsible for the object is contacted to retrieve the content. A requested object that is fetched from a remote server is saved locally and then delivered to the end user. To keep the copies of the object fresh, a TTL value is assigned to it. When the TTL value expires, the object is removed. For scalability reasons, any server of the CDN or within a region can respond to the request of an end user [171].

A special case of the independent CDI category are free CDNs such as Coral [76], which follow a similar architectural design. In these CDNs, server resources are offered by end-users or non-profit organizations.

7.2 ISP-operated CDIs

The potential for generating revenue from content delivery has motivated a number of ISPs to build and operate their own Content Distribution Infrastructures. For example, large ISPs such as AT&T and Verizon have built their own CDNs along the same general architectural principles as independent CDIs. However, due to the limitations arising from being restricted to one network, these CDNs are not deployed in a distributed fashion across multiple networks and thus are not globally operating solutions. To overcome this issue, the CDNi group at the IETF [132] is discussing how to interconnect these CDNs to boost their efficiency and coverage. The content provider are third parties, applications and services offered by the ISP. Other ISPs with large footprints, such as Level3 and Telefonica [108, 109], have also built CDNs in order to efficiently transfer content across the globe and offer improved services to their end users.

7.3 Emerging Trends in CDI Architectures

Economics, especially cost reduction, is the key driving force behind emerging CDI architectures. The content delivery market has become highly competitive. While the demand for content delivery services is rising and the cost of bandwidth is decreasing, the profit margins of storage and processing [25] are dwindling, increasing the pressure on CDIs to reduce costs. At the same time, more parties are entering the market in new ways, looking to capture a slice of the revenue. However, today's traditional CDI deployments lack agility to combat these effects. Contracts for server deployments last for months or years and the available locations are typically limited to datacenters. The time required to install a new server today is in the order of weeks or months. Such timescales are too large to react to changes in demand. CDIs are therefore looking for new ways to expand or shrink their capacity, on demand, and especially at low cost.

7.3.1 Hybrid Content Distribution

In a hybrid CDI, end-users download client software that assists with content distribution. As in P2P file-sharing systems, the content is broken into pieces and offered by both other users who have installed the client software as well as by the CDI's servers. The client software contacts dedicated CDI servers, called control plane servers, which schedule which parts of the content are to be downloaded from what peers. Criteria for selecting peers include AS-level proximity as well as the availability of the content. If no close peers are found, or if the download process from other peers significantly slows the content delivery process, the traditional CDI servers take over the content delivery job entirely. Akamai already offers NetSession [1], a hybrid CDI solution for delivering very large files such as software updates at lower cost to its customers. Xunlei [51], an application aggregator with high penetration in China, follows a similar paradigm. It is used to download various types of files including videos, executables, and even emails, and supports popular protocols such as HTTP, FTP, and RTSP. Xunlei maintains its own trackers and servers. A study of hybrid CDIs [88] showed that up to 80% of content delivery traffic can be outsourced from server-based delivery to end-users, without significant degradation in total download time.

7.3.2 Licensed CDNs

Licensed CDNs have been proposed to combine the benefits of the large content-provider customer base of an independent CDI with the end-user base of an ISP [167]. A licensed CDN is a partnership between an independent CDI and an ISP. The CDI licenses the content delivery software that runs on servers to the ISP while the ISP owns and operates the servers. The servers deliver content to the end-users and report logging information back to the CDI. The revenue derived from content producers is then shared between the two parties. Thus, a CDI can expand its footprint deep inside an ISP network without investing in hardware, incurring lower operating costs. The ISP benefits from not having to invest in developing the software for a reliable and scalable content distribution. More importantly, a licensed CDN also alleviates the ISP's need to negotiate directly with content producers, which might be challenging, given an ISPs limited footprint.

7.3.3 Application-based CDIs

Recently, large application and content producers have rolled out their own CDIs, hosted in multiple large data centers. Some popular applications generate so much traffic that the content producers can better amortize delivery costs by doing content distribution themselves. Google is one such example. It has deployed a number of data centers and interconnected them with high speed backbone networks. Google connects its datacenters to a large number of ISPs via IXPs and also via private peering. Google has also launched the Google Global Cache (GGC) [83], which can be installed inside ISP networks. The GGC reduces the transit cost of small ISPs and those that are located in areas with limited connectivity, e.g., Africa. The GGC servers are given for free to the ISPs which install and maintain them. GGC also allows an ISP to advertise through BGP the prefixes of users that each GGC server should serve. As another example, Netflix, which is responsible for around 30% of the traffic in North America at certain times, is also rolling out its own CDI. The Netflix system is called Open Connect Network [130]. Netflix offers an interface where ISPs can advertise, via BGP, their preferences as to which subnets are served by which Open Connect Network servers.

7.3.4 Meta-CDIs

Today, content producers contract with multiple CDIs to deliver their content. To optimize for cost and performance [114], meta-CDIs act as brokers to help with CDI selection. These brokers collect performance metrics from a number of end-users and try to estimate the best CDI, based on the server that a user is assigned. To this end, the brokers place a small file on a number of CDIs. Then they embed the request for this file in popular websites' source code, in the form of a javascript. When users visit these sites, they report back statistics based on the servers that each CDI assigned the users. The broker then recommends CDIs for a given source of demand taking also into consideration the cost of delivery. Cedexis is one of these brokers for web browsing. Another broker for video streaming is Conviva [54]. These brokers may compensate when a CDI does not assign a user to the optimal server (which a recent study [144] has shown sometimes occurs) by selecting a different CDI.

7.3.5 CDI Federations

To avoid the cost of providing a global footprint and perhaps to allow for a single negotiating unit with content providers, federations of CDIs have been proposed. In this architecture, smaller CDIs, perhaps operated by ISPs, join together to form a larger federated CDI. A CDI belonging to the federation can replicate content to a partner CDI in a location where it has no footprint. The CDI reduces its transit costs because it only has to send the object once to satisfy the demand for users in that location. Overall, cost may be reduced due to distance-based pricing [173]. The IETF CDNi working group [132] works on CDI federation.

8 Challenges in Content Delivery

The challenges that CDIs and P2P systems are faced with are based on the fact that they are unaware of the underlying network infrastructure and its conditions. In the best case, they can try to detect and infer the topology and state of the ISP's network through measurements, but even with large scale measurements, it is a difficult task, especially if accuracy is necessary. Furthermore, when it comes to short-term congestion and/or avoiding network bottlenecks, measurements are of no use. In the following we describe the challenges those systems face in more detail.

8.1 Content Delivery Infrastructures (CDIs)

From the viewpoint of the end-users and ISPs, the redirection schemes employed by existing CDIs have three major limitations:

Network Bottlenecks. Despite the traffic flow optimization performed by CDIs, the assignment of end-user requests to servers by CDIs may still result in sub-optimal content delivery performance for the end-users. This is a consequence of the limited information CDIs have about the network conditions between the end-user and their servers. Tracking the ever changing conditions in networks, i.e., through active measurements and end-user reports, incurs an overhead for the CDI without a guarantee of performance improvements for the end-user. Without sufficient information about the network paths between the CDI servers and the end-user, any assignment performed by the CDI may lead to additional load on existing network bottlenecks, or to the creation of new bottlenecks.

User Mis-location. DNS requests received by the CDI DNS servers originate from the DNS resolver of the end-user, not from the end-user itself. The assignment is therefore based on the assumption that end-users are close to their DNS resolvers. Recent studies have shown that in many cases this assumption does not hold [118, 3]. As a result, the end-user is mis-located and the server assignment is not optimal. As a response to this issue, DNS extensions have been proposed to include the end-user IP information [47].

Content Delivery Cost Finally, CDIs strive to minimize the overall cost of delivering huge amounts of content to end-users. To that end, their assignment strategy is mainly driven by economic aspects. While a CDI will always try to assign users in such a way that the server can deliver reasonable performance, this can again result in end-users not being directed to the server able to deliver best performance.

8.2 Peer-to-Peer Networks (P2P)

P2P traffic often starves other applications like Web traffic of bandwidth [162]. This is because most P2P systems rely on application layer routing based on an overlay topology on top of the Internet, which is largely independent of the Internet routing and topology [8]. This can result in a situation where a node in Frankfurt downloads a large content file from a node in Sydney, while the same information may be available at a node in Berlin. As a result P2P systems use more network resources due to traffic crossing the underlying network multiple times. For more details and information on P2P systems, see Section 6.2.

8.3 Internet Service Providers (ISPs)

ISPs face several challenges regarding the operation of their network infrastructure. With the emergence of Content, and especially distributed content delivery, be it from CDIs or P2P networks, these operational challenges have increased manifold.

Network Provisioning. Provisioning and operation a network means running the infrastructure at its highest efficiency. To ensure this, new cables as well as the peering points with other networks need to be established and/or upgraded. However, with the emergence of CDIs and P2P networks, the network provisioning has become more complicated, since the network loads tend to shift depending on the content that is currently transported while the direct peering might not be effective anymore.

Volatile Content Traffic. CDIs and P2P networks strive to optimize their own operational overhead, possibly at the expense of the underlying infrastructure. In terms of CDIs, this means that a CDI chooses the best server based on its own criteria, not knowing what parts of the networks infrastructure is being used. Especially with globally deployed CDIs it becomes increasingly difficult for ISPs to predict what CDI is causing what traffic from where based on past behavior. This has a direct implication on the traffic engineering of the network, as this is usually based on traffic predictions from past network traffic patterns.

Customer Satisfaction. Regardless of the increased difficulty with network provisioning and traffic engineering, end-users are demanding more and larger content. This, coupled with the dominant form of flat rates for customer subscriptions, increases the pressure on ISPs to delay network upgrades as long as possible to keep prices competitive. But letting links run full increases packet loss. This, in turn, drastically reduces the quality of experience of the end-users. This, in turn, encourages end-users to switch their subscriptions.

8.4 Summary

In summary, we identify the following challenges in todays content delivery:

- The ISP has limited ability to manage its traffic and therefore incurs potentially increased costs, e.g., for its interdomain traffic, as well as for its inability to do traffic engineering on its internal network while having to offer competitive subscriptions to its end-users.

- The P2P system has limited ability to pick an optimal overlay topology and therefore provide optimal performance to its users, as it has no prior knowledge of the underlying Internet topology. It therefore has to either disregard or reverse engineer it.
- The CDI has limited ability to pick the optimal server and therefore provide optimal performance to its users, as it has to infer the network topology as well as the dynamic network conditions. Moreover, it has limited knowledge about the location of the user as it only knows the IP address of the DNS resolver.
- The different systems try to measure the path performance independently.

9 Incentives for Collaboration

ISPs are in a unique position to help CDIs and P2P systems to improve content delivery. Specifically, ISPs have the knowledge about the state of the underlying network topology and the status of individual links that CDIs are lacking. This information not only helps CDIs in their user-to-server mapping, but also reduces the need for CDIs to perform large-scale active measurements and topology discovery [16]. It also enables CDIs to better amortize their existing infrastructure, offer better quality of experience to their users, and plan their infrastructure expansion more efficiently. On the other side, ISPs are not just selflessly giving up their network information. Offering their intimate knowledge of the network to CDIs puts ISPs in the position that they can also actively guide the CDIs. This allows ISPs to gain unprecedented influence on CDI traffic.

The opportunity for ISPs to coordinate with CDIs is technically possible thanks to the decoupling of server selection from content delivery. In general, any end-user requesting content from a CDI first does a mapping request, usually through the Domain Name System (DNS). During this request, the CDI needs to locate the network position of the end-user and assign a server capable of delivering the content, preferably close to the end-user. ISPs have this information ready at their fingertips, but are currently not able to communicate their knowledge to CDIs. Furthermore, ISPs solve the challenge of predicting CDI traffic, which is very difficult due to the lack of information on the CDI mapping strategy regarding the end-users to servers assignment. In order to reap the benefits of the other's knowledge, both parties require incentives to work together.

9.1 Incentives for CDIs

The CDIs' market requires them to enable new applications while reducing their operational costs and improve end-user experience [134]. By cooperating with an ISP, a CDI improves the mapping of end-users to servers, improves in the end-user experience, has accurate and up-to-date knowledge of the networks and thus gains a competitive advantage. This is particularly important for CDIs in light of the commoditization of the content delivery market and the selection offered to end-users, for example through meta-CDNs [54]. The improved mapping also yields better infrastructure amortization and, thanks to cooperation with ISPs, CDIs will no longer have to perform and analyze voluminous measurements in order to infer the network conditions or end-user locations.

To stimulate cooperation, ISPs can operate and provide their network knowledge as a free service to CDIs or even offer discounts on peering or hosting prices, e.g., for early adopters and CDIs willing to cooperate. The loss of peering or hosting revenue is amortized with the benefits of a lower network utilization, reduced investments in network capacity expansion and by taking back some control over traffic within the network. Ma et al. [116] have developed a methodology to estimate the prices in such a cooperative scheme by utilizing the Shapley settlement mechanism. Cooperation can also act as an enabler for CDIs and ISPs to jointly launch new applications in a cost-effective way, for example traffic-intensive applications such as the delivery of high definition video on-demand, or real-time applications such as online games.

9.2 Incentives for ISPs

ISPs are interested in reducing their operational and infrastructure upgrade costs, offering broadband services at competitive prices, and delivering the best end-user experience possible. Due to network congestion during peak hour, ISPs in North America have recently revisited the flat pricing model and some have announced data caps to broadband services. A better management of traffic in their networks allows them to offer higher data caps or even alleviate the need to introduce them. From an ISP perspective, cooperation with a CDI offers the possibility to do global traffic and peering management through an improved awareness of traffic across the whole network. For example, peering agreements with CDIs can offer cooperation in exchange for reduced costs to CDIs. This can be an incentive for CDIs to peer with ISPs, and an additional revenue for an ISP, as such reduced prices can attract additional peering customers. Furthermore, collaboration with CDIs has the potential to reduce the significant overhead due to the handling of customer complaints that often do not stem from the operation of the ISP but the operation of CDIs [40]. Through this, ISPs can identify and mitigate congestion in content delivery, and react to short disturbances caused by an increased demand of content from CDIs by communicating these incidents back directly to the source.

9.3 Effect on End-users

Collaboration between ISPs and CDIs in content delivery empowers end-users to obtain the best possible quality of experience. As such, this creates an incentive for end-users to support the adoption of collaboration by both ISPs and CDIs. For example, an ISP can offer more attractive products, i.e., higher bandwidth or lower prices, since it is able to better manage the traffic inside its network. Also, thanks to better traffic engineering, ISPs can increase data caps on their broadband offers, making the ISP more attractive to end-users. Moreover, CDIs that are willing to jointly deliver content can offer better quality of experience to end-users. This can even be done through premium services offered by the CDI to its customers. For example, CDIs delivering streaming services can offer higher quality videos to end-users thanks to better server assignment and network engineering.

10 Opportunities for Collaboration

As pointed out ISPs are in a unique position to help CDIs and P2P systems to improve content delivery since they have the knowledge about the state of the underlying network topology, the status of individual links, as well as the location of the user. In this section we first describe the high level concept all existing solutions have in common and then continue by illustrating where and why they differ in certain aspects.

The presented solutions include the original Oracle concept proposed by Aggarwal et al [11], P4P proposed by Xie et al. [181], Ono proposed by Choffnes and Bustamante [39] and PaDIS proposed by Poese et al. [145]. We also give an overview of the activities within the IETF which have been fueled to some extend by the proposed systems discussed in this section, namely ALTO and CDNi.

10.1 Conceptual Design

To overcome the challenges in Content Delivery, recall section 8, various solutions have been proposed by the research community. While they all differ in certain aspects, their basic idea is the same: utilize available information about the network to make an educated selection prior connecting to a service. Following this idea, all of the proposed solution employ the same basic conceptual design: the *management plane* is responsible for collecting up-to-date information about the network while the *control plane* acts as an interface to this information for the application.

Management Plane: The Network Map. The systems management plane is responsible to collect up-to-date state network information, such as network topology, routing information, link utilization and other important metrics. This information is used to maintain an internal map of the network representing the current state of the real network. One important aspect of this component is how the information about the network is retrieved. The different implementations range from active measurements over passive measurements to active participation in network management systems (such as BGP). Another important aspect is the frequency in which the information is collected. For certain information such as topology or routing an immediate update is necessary to guarantee correct functioning of the system, while others, such as link utilization or packet loss rates, only degrade the quality of the system. Still other information, such as link capacities or transmission delays, can be considered (semi-)static. Last but not least the systems differ in what information is necessary to be operational and if additional information sources can be used to improve accuracy.

Control Plane: The Information Interface. The control plane of the system is responsible for providing an interface to the information of the management plane so that clients can make use of the information. This can basically be seen as an interface or API that clients can query to get information about the current network state. The various proposed solutions differ mainly in which fashion and at which granularity the information can be retrieved. There are two main competing approaches: abstracted network maps and preference lists. The first one transforms the available information from the management plane into an annotated representation of nodes and edges. The big difference to the actual data of the management plane is the aggregation level and the specific annotations. Clients can then query the system to get an up-to-date abstract network map, which they can use to decide which of the possible destination to connect to by calculating the best candidates by themselves using their own optimization target. The second one uses the information of the management plane to create a ranked list of possible service destinations (read: IP addresses). The required input includes the source, possible destinations and (if the system supports multiple collaboration objectives) an optimization goal, e.g., minimal delay. The output consists of a re-ordered list of the possible destinations in regard to the optimization goal, the first being the most and the last being the least desirable destination.

Note that in both cases the client is in the position to select the final destination, allowing to completely ignore the additional information. Another important fact is that the client is not necessarily the end-user but might be a service provider themselves. For instance a company providing content delivery service (CDN) could make use of this service to improve its user-to-server mapping accuracy or in case of the BitTorrent P2P system the tracker could query the service prior returning an initial peer list to a connected client. While not strictly necessary, the two components are usually implemented as separate entities within the system to allow better scalability, information aggregation and/or anonymization without loosing precision or multiple collaboration objectives. In addition to that, all systems table important issues for any collaboration approach, such as privacy information leakage or targeted objective(s).

The presentation of the following solutions will outline the specific implementation and thus highlights the differences between the solutions.

10.2 P2P Oracle Service

Aggarwal et al. [11] describe an *oracle* service to solve the mismatch between the overlay network and underlay routing network in P2P content delivery. Instead of the P2P node choosing neighbors independently, the ISP can offer a service, the *oracle*, that ranks the potential neighbors according to certain metrics: a client supplied peer list is re-ordered based on coarse-grained distance metrics, e.g., the number of AS hops [87], the peer being inside/outside the AS or the distance to the edge of the AS. This ranking can be seen as the ISP expressing preference for certain P2P neighbors. For peers inside the network additional information can be used, such as access bandwidth, expected delay or link congestion to further improve the traffic management.

10.3 Proactive Network Provider Participation for P2P (P4P)

The "Proactive Network Provider Participation for P2P" is another approach to enable cooperative network information sharing between the network provider and applications. The P4P architecture [181] introduces iTrackers as portals operated by network providers that divides the traffic control responsibilities between providers and applications. Each iTracker maintains an internal representation of the network in the form of nodes and annotated edges. A node represents a set of clients that can be aggregated at different levels, e.g., certain locations (PoP) or network state (similar level of congestion). Clients can query the iTracker to obtain the "virtual" cost for possible peer candidates. This “virtual” cost allows the network operators to express any kind of preferences and may be based on the provider’s choice of metrics, including utilization, transit costs, or geography. It also enables the client to compare and choose the most suited peers to connect to.

10.4 Ono - Travelocity-based Path Selection

The Ono system [39] by Choffnes and Bustamante is based on “techniques for inferring and exploiting the network measurements performed by CDNs for the purpose of locating and utilizing quality Internet paths without performing extensive path probing or monitoring” proposed by Su et al. in [168]. Based on their observations that CDN redirection is driven primarily by latency [168], they formulate the following hypothesis: Peers that exhibit similar redirection behavior of the same CDN are most likely close to each other, probably even in the same AS. For this each peer performs periodic DNS lookups on popular CDN names and calculates how close other peers are by determining the cosine similarity with their lookups. To share the lookup among the peers they use either direct communication between Ono enabled peers or via distributed storage solutions e.g., DHT-based. On the downside Ono relies on the precision of the measurements that the CDNs perform and that their assignment strategy is actually based mainly on delay. Should the CDNs change their strategy in that regard Ono might yield wrong input for the biased peer selection the authors envision.

When considering our design concept described above, Ono is a bit harder to fit into the picture: Ono distributes the functionality of the management and control planes among all participating peers. Also, Ono does not try to measure the network state directly, but infers it by observing Akamai’s user-to-server mapping behavior on a large scale and relies on Akamai doing the actual measurements [134], Thus the management plane of Ono consists of recently resolved hostnames from many P2P clients. The quality of other peers can then be assessed by the number of hostnames that resolve to the same destination. The control plane in Ono’s case is a DHT, which allows decentralized reads and writes of key-value pairs in a distributed manner, thus giving access to the data of the management plane.

10.5 Provider-aided Distance Information System (PaDIS)

In [144, 145] Poese et al. propose a “Provider-aided Information Systems (PaDIS)”, a system to enable collaboration between network operators and content delivery systems. The system enhances concept of the P2P Oracle to include server based content delivery systems (e.g., CDNs), to maintain an up-to-date annotated map of the ISP network and its properties as well as the state of ISP-operated servers that are open for rent. In addition, it provides recommendations on possible locations for servers to better satisfy the demand by the CDN and ISP traffic engineering goals. In the management plane, it gathers detailed information about the network topology, i.e., routers and links, annotations such as link utilization, router load as well as topological changes. An Interior Gateway Protocol (IGP) listener provides up-to-date information about routers and links. Additional information, e.g., link utilization and other metrics can be retrieved via SNMP. A Border Gateway Protocol (BGP) listener collects routing information to calculate the paths that traffic takes through the network, including egress traffic. Ingress points of traffic can be found by utilizing Netflow data. This allows for complete forward and reverse path mapping inside the ISP and enables a complete path map between any two points in the ISP network. While PaDIS builds an anotated map of the ISP network, it keeps the information acquired from other components in separate data structures. This separation ensures that changes in prefix assignments do not directly affect the routing in the annotated network map. Precalculating path properties for all paths, allow for constant lookup speed independent of path length and network topology. On the control plane, PaDIS makes use of the prefrence lists known from the P2P Oracle, but supports multiple, individual optimization targets. Apart from basic default optimizations (e.g., low delay, high throughput), additional optimizations can be negotiated between the network operator and the content delivery system. For CDN-ISP collaboration opportunities when the ISP operates both the network and the CDN we refer the reader to [93, 53, 161, 60].

10.6 Application-Layer Traffic Optimization (ALTO)

The research into P2P traffic localization has led the IETF to form a working group for "Application Layer Traffic Optimization (ALTO)" [119]. The goal of the ALTO WG is to develop Internet standards that offer "better-than-random" peer selection by providing information about the underlying network and to design a query-response protocol that the applications can query for an optimized peer selection strategy [18]. On the control plane, ALTO offers multiple services to the Applications querying it, most notably are the Endpoint Cost Service and the Map service. The Endpoint Cost Service allows the Application the query the ALTO server for costs and rankings based on endpoints (usually IP subnets) and use that information for an optimized peer selection process or to pick the most suitable server of a CDI. The Network Map service makes use of the fact that most endpoints are in fact rather close to each other and thus can be aggregated into a single entity. The resulting set of entities is then called an ALTO Network Map. The definition of proximity in that case depends on the aggregation level, in one Map endpoints in the same IP subnet may be considered close while in another all subnets attached to the same Point of Presence (PoP) are close. In contrast to the Endpoint Cost Service the ALTO Network Map is suitable when more Endpoints need to be considered and offers better scalability, especially when coupled with caching techniques. Although the ALTO WG statement is more P2P centric, the service is also suitable to improve the connection to CDN servers.

11 Collaboration Use Cases: P2P and TE

The growth of demand for content is motivating collaboration between ISPs and applications. In this chapter we review to use cases: P2P and Traffic Engineering.

11.1 Use Case: P2P

Recall, P2P systems are self-organizing systems of autonomous entities, called peers, that cooperate for common goals. These common goals range from sharing of resources, e.g., music and video files, processing power, or storage space [166] to collaborative routing as in Skype and P2P-TV. A fundamental characteristic of these systems is their distributed designs and resources.

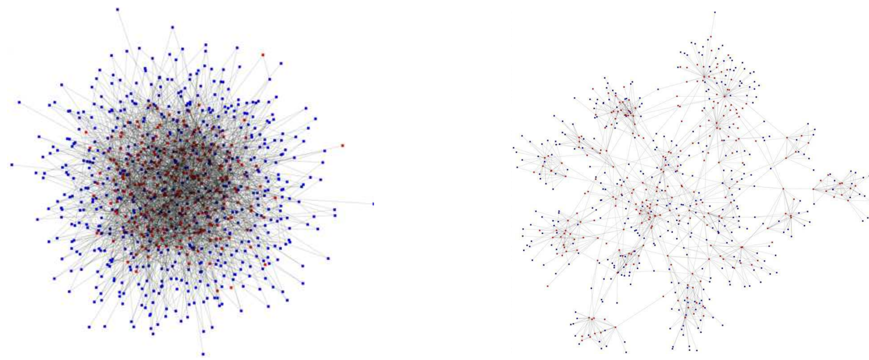
Advantages of P2P systems include elimination of bottlenecks and single points-of-failure within the system, increased processing power, high availability/redundancy, and little or no dependence on any particular central entity. However, P2P systems are plagued by some fundamental issues, such as overlay/underlay topological and routing mismatch [157], inefficiencies in locating and retrieving resources, and scalability and performance issues caused by uncontrolled traffic swamps [166].

Several of these drawbacks can be addressed by collaboration between the P2P overlay and the Internet routing underlay. To overcome these limits each ISP can offer the "oracle" service as introduced in Section 10.2 to the P2P users which explicitly helps P2P users to choose "good" neighbors. The P2P user can supply its ISP's oracle with a list of possible P2P neighbors, during bootstrapping and/or content exchange. The ISP's oracle then returns a ranked list to the querying user, according to its preference (e.g., AS-hop distance) and knowledge of the ISP topology and traffic volume, while at the same time keeping the interest of the P2P user in mind. We show that in principle, P2P systems as well as the ISPs profit from the use of the oracle even when only considering the AS-distance for ranking nodes [11], because the overlay topology is now localized and respects the underlying Internet topology, and the P2P user profits from the ISP's knowledge.

To study the impact of biased neighbor selection on a real P2P network that implements its own routing, we run extensive simulations of the Gnutella protocol. We show that in contrast to the unmodified P2P system, the ISP-aided localized P2P system shows consistent improvements in the observed end-user experience, measured in terms of content download times, network locality of query responses and desired content, and quality of query responses. A significantly large portion of P2P traffic remains local to the ISP network, and ISPs notice a substantial reduction in overall P2P traffic. This can lead to immense cost savings for the ISPs [35]. The oracle consistently shows performance gains even across different topologies under a broad range of user behavior scenarios. For a more detailed analysis of the P2P oracle service, see [11, 9, 10].

11.1.1 Influence on P2P Topology

To explore the influence of consulting the oracle on the network topology we visualize, in Figure 16 [170], the Gnutella overlay topology. At a particular instant in time, we sample the Gnutella overlay topology, display all the online nodes in the graph, and join



(a) Unbiased Gnutella (b) Gnutella with Oracle

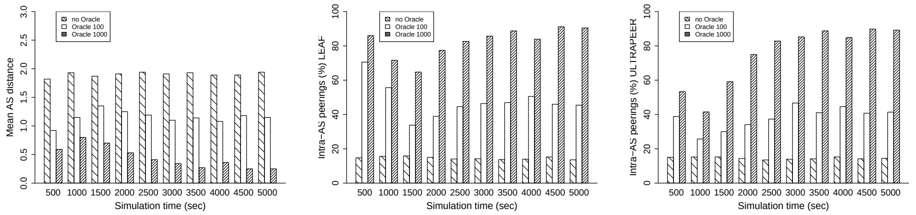
Figure 16: Visualization of Gnutella overlay topology

two nodes with an edge if there exists a Gnutella peering between them at this point of time. The resulting graph structures are displayed in Figure 16. For our simulations we consider 5 different topologies: Germany, USA, World1, World2 and World3, each modeled after their respective AS topologies (World1-3 differ in the size of the ASes). We can easily observe that the Gnutella topology in the biased case is well correlated with the Internet AS topology, where the nodes within an AS form a dense cluster, with only a few connections going to nodes in other ASes. This is in stark contrast to the unbiased Gnutella graph, where no such property can be observed. Multiple runs of the above experiments, using the different topologies yield similar results.

11.1.2 Benefits of Collaboration

Mean AS distance:
The benefits of using an oracle for biasing the neighborhood in Gnutella are visible in Figure 17a, which shows the average AS distance (in the underlay) between any two connected Gnutella nodes. The AS distance is obtained as follows. We map each Gnutella node's IP address to its parent AS, and for each overlay edge, we find the network distance in AS hops between the two end-nodes. We observe that the least amount of decrease in the average AS distance occurs from 1.93 to 0.8 at 1000 seconds, and the maximum decrease from 1.94 to 0.25 happens at 5000 seconds. Given that the AS diameter remains constant at 4 hops, the average decrease of 1.45 in the AS distance is significant. Besides, as the average AS distance in the case of oracle list size of 1000 is 0.45, a value less than 1, it implies that most of the Gnutella peerings are indeed within the ASes, i.e., they are not crossing AS boundaries. This can be a major relief for ISPs, as they do not incur any additional cost for traffic within their domains. Also traffic that does not leave the network is easier to manage. Moreover, P2P traffic will not encounter inter-ISP bottlenecks.

Intra-AS P2P connections:
The above observations on AS distance are even better understood from the plots in



(a) Mean AS distance in Underlay (b) Intra-AS peerings (%) for Leaf nodes (c) Intra-AS peerings (%) for Ultrapeers

Figure 17: Metrics for Gnutella simulations

Figures 17b and 17c, where we show the total number of intra-AS P2P connections in the Gnutella network as a percentage of the total number of intra- and inter-AS P2P connections, for both leafs and ultrapeers.

In Figure 17b, we observe that in the case of leaf nodes, taking the average over the 10 time points, the percentage of intra-AS P2P connections increases from 14.6% in unbiased case to 47.88% in the case of oracle with list size 100. For oracle with list size 1000, we note an average of 82.22% intra-AS P2P connections.

In Figure 17c, we observe similar results for ultrapeers. The percentage of intra-AS P2P connections increases from an average value of 14.54% in the unbiased case to 38.04% in the case of oracle with list size 100, and further to 74.95% in case of oracle with list size 1000.

The percentage increase in intra-AS P2P connections is larger for leaf nodes as compared to ultrapeers, a welcome development. One needs a certain number of inter-AS connections, to maintain network connectivity and to be able to search for file content that may not be available within an AS. However, as leaf nodes typically have poor connectivity to the Internet, and have lower uptimes, it is reasonable to have leaf nodes keep most of their peerings within their AS, while allowing the ultrapeers to have slightly more connections outside their ASes.

For the impact of Oracle on download time under different topologies we refer the reader to [7]. For the impact of Oracle-like localization techniques on the inter-AS traffic flow of the BitTorrent P2P system we refer the reader to [49, 32, 138, 158].

11.2 Use Case: Traffic Engineering

The growth of demand for content and the resulting deployment of content delivery infrastructures pose new challenges to CDIs and to ISPs. For CDIs, the cost of deploying and maintaining such a massive infrastructure has significantly increased during the last years [147] and the revenue from delivering traffic to end-users has decreased due to the intense competition. Furthermore, CDIs struggle to engineer and manage their infrastructures, replicate content based on end-user demand, and assign users to appropriate servers.

The latter is challenging as end-user to server assignment is based on inaccurate

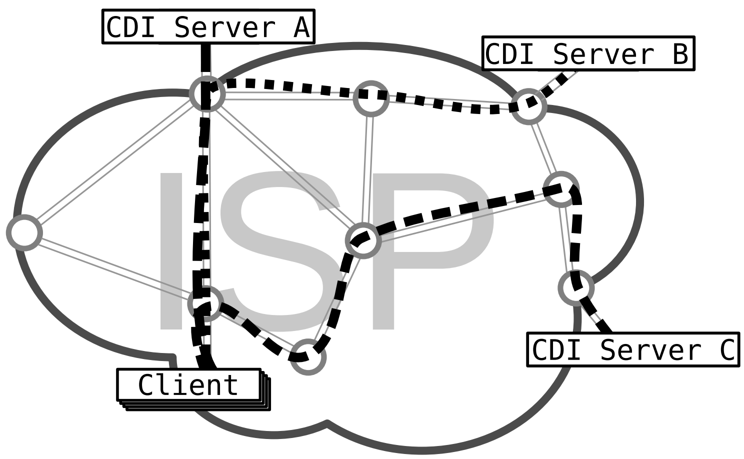


Figure 18: By choosing a CDI server for a client with the help of CaTE, traffic engineering goals and accurate end-user server assignment become possible.

end-user location information [118, 47], and inferring the network conditions within an ISP without direct information from the network is difficult. Moreover, due to highly distributed server deployment and adaptive server assignment, the traffic injected by CDIs is volatile. For example, if one of its locations is overloaded, a CDI will reassign end-users to other locations, resulting in large traffic shifts in the ISP network within minutes. Current traffic engineering by ISP networks adapts the routing and operates on time scales of several hours, and is therefore too slow to react to rapid traffic changes caused by CDIs.

The pressure for cost reduction and customer satisfaction that both CDIs and ISPs are confronted with, coupled with the opportunity that distributed server infrastructures offer, motivate us to propose a new tool in the traffic engineering landscape. We introduce *Content-aware Traffic Engineering* (CaTE). CaTE leverages the location diversity offered by CDIs and, through this, it allows to adapt to traffic demand shifts. In fact, CaTE relies on the observation that by selecting an appropriate server among those available to deliver the content, the path of the traffic in the network can be influenced in a desired way. Figure 18 illustrates the basic concept of CaTE. The content requested by the client is in principle available from three servers (A, B, and C) in the network. However, the client only connects to one of the network locations. Today, the decision of where the client will connect to is solely done by the CDI and is partially based on measurements and/or inference of network information and end-user location. With CaTE the decision on end-user to server assignment can be done jointly between the CDI and ISP.

11.2.1 The CaTE Approach

CaTE complements existing traffic engineering solutions [18, 53, 93, 160, 179, 181] by focusing on traffic demands rather than routing. Let **y** be the vector of traffic counts on links and **x** the vector of traffic counts in origin-destination (OD) flows in the ISP network. Then **y**=A**x**, where A is the routing matrix. $A_{ij} = 1$ if the OD flow i traverses link j and 0 otherwise. Traditional traffic engineering is the process of adjusting A, given the OD flows **x**, so as to influence the link traffic **y** in a desirable way. In CaTE, we revisit traffic engineering by focusing on traffic demands rather than routing changes. Content-aware Traffic Engineering (CaTE) is thus the process of adjusting the traffic demand vector **x**, without changing the routing matrix A, so as to change the link traffic **y** in a desirable way.

CaTE offers additional traffic engineering capabilities to both ISPs and CDNs to better manage the volatility of content demand in small time scales. Traditional traffic engineering [18, 53, 93, 160, 179, 181] relies on changes of routing weights that take place in the time scale of hours [70]. On the contrary, in CaTE, the redirection of end-users to servers can take place per request or within the TTL of a DNS query that is typically tens of seconds in large CDNs [144]. Thanks to the online recommendations by ISP networks, CDNs gain the ability to better assign end-users to servers and better amortize the deployment and maintenance cost of their infrastructure. Network bottlenecks are also circumvented and thus the ISP operation is improved. Furthermore, the burden of measuring and inferring network topology, and the state of the network, both challenging problems, is removed from the CDNs. Moreover, in [73, Sections 4 and 5] we show that the online CaTE decisions on the end-user to server assignment leads to optimal traffic assignment within the network under a number of different metrics. The advantage is that now the problem of assigning traffic to links reduces to a fractional solution (on the contrary, assigning routing weights to links is NP-hard). In short, all involved parties, including the end-users, benefit from CaTE, creating a win-win situation for everyone.

11.2.2 A Prototype to Support CaTE

CaTE relies on a close collaboration between CDN and ISP in small time scales (seconds or per request). To achieve this goal, network information has to be collected and processed by the ISP. Candidate CDN servers have to be communicated to the ISP and ranked based on a commonly agreed criteria, e.g., to optimize the delay between the end-user and the CDN server. Today, there is no system to support the above operations. This motivate us to design, implement and evaluate a novel and scalable system that can support CaTE. In this section we describe the architecture and deployment of our working prototype to enable CaTE. We start by presenting our prototype in Section 11.2.2. We then comment on its operation and deployment within the ISP, its interaction with a CDN, and its performance that is beyond the state-of-the-art [18].

Architecture:
The CaTE system is installed in an ISP and interacts with the existing CDN server selector. The main tasks of the CaTE system are to: (1) maintain an up-to-date annotated map of the ISP network and its properties, (2) produce preference rankings based on the paths between end-users and candidate servers, and (3) communicate with the CDN server selection system to influence the assignment of end-user to servers. To this end, we propose an architecture that comprises a *Network Monitoring* component, a *Query Processing* component and a *communication interface* between an ISP and a CDN. For an overview of the architecture see Figure 19.

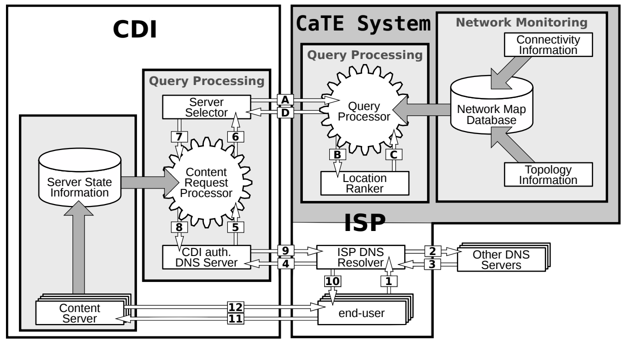


Figure 19: CaTE System architecture and flow of messages.

Network Monitoring:
The network monitoring component gathers information about the topology and the state of the network from several sources to maintain an up-to-date view of the network. The network monitoring component consists of the following subcomponents:

The **Topology Information** component gathers detailed information about the basic network topology, i.e., routers and links, as well as annotations such as link utilization, router load, and topological changes. An Interior Gateway Protocol (IGP) listener provides up-to-date link-state (i.e., IS-IS, OSPF) information. Information about routers and links is retrieved, thus, the network topology can be extracted. The nominal link delay, i.e., the latency on a link without queuing, can be found through the link length and physical technology. The link utilization and other metrics can be retrieved via SNMP from the routers or an SNMP aggregator.

The **Connectivity Information** component uses routing information to calculate the paths that traffic takes through the network. Finding the path of egress traffic can be done by using a Border Gateway Protocol (BGP) listener. Ingress points of traffic into the ISP network can be found by utilizing Netflow data. This allows for complete forward and reverse path mapping inside the ISP. Furthermore, the system can map customers as well as CDN infrastructures into the network map by finding the routers that announce the address space associated with them. In total, this allows for a complete path map between any two points in the ISP network. Finally, our system has access to an uplink database that provides information about the connectivity statistics of end-users.

The **Network Map Database** component processes the information collected by the *Topology* and *Connectivity Information* components to build an annotated network map of the ISP network tailored towards fast lookup on path properties. It uses a layer of indirection to keep the more volatile information learned from BGP separate from the slower changing topological information. This allows address space to be quickly reassigned without any reprocessing of routing or path information. It also enables pre-calculation of path properties for all paths that yields a constant database lookup complexity independent of path length and network architecture. If topology changes, e.g., IGP weights change or a link fails, the *Topology Information* component immediately updates the database which only recalculates the properties of the affected paths. Having ISP-centric information ready for fast access in a database ensures timely responses and high query throughput.

Query Processing:
The **Query Processing** component receives a description of a request for content from the CDN, which specifies the end-user making the request and a list of candidate CDN servers. It then uses information from the *Network Map Database* and a selected ranking function to rank the candidate servers. This component consists of the following subcomponents:

The **Query Processor** receives the query from the CDN. First, the query processor maps each source-destination (server to end-user) pair to a path in the network. In most cases, the end-user is seen as the ISP DNS resolver, unless both ISP and CDN support the client IP eDNS extension [47]. Once the path is found, the properties of the path are retrieved. Next, the pairs are run individually through the location ranker subcomponent (see below) to get a preference value. Finally, the list is sorted by preference values, the values are stripped from the list, and it is sent back to the CDN.

The **Location Ranker** component computes the preference value for individual source-destination pairs based on the source-destination path properties and an appropriate function. Which function to use depends on (a) the CDN, (b) what metrics the CDN asked for and (c) the optimization goal of the ISP. The preference value for each source-destination pair is then handed back to the Query Processor. Multiple such optimization functions being defined upon the collaboration agreement and subsequently selected individually in each ranking request. For example, a function might be the minimization of end-user and server delay. In [73] we evaluate CaTE with multiple ranking functions for different optimization goals.

Communication Interfaces:
When a CDN receives a content request, the *Server Selector* needs to choose a content server to fulfill this request. We propose that the server selector sends the list of eligible content servers along with the source of the query and an optimization goal to the ISP's CaTE system to obtain additional guidance about the underlying network. If the guidance is at granularity of a single DNS request, we propose a DNS-like protocol using UDP to prevent extra overhead for connection management. If the granularity is at a coarser level, i.e., seconds or even minutes, we rely on TCP.

11.2.3 Privacy and Performance

During the exchange of messages, none of the parties is revealing any sensitive operational information. CDNs only reveal the candidate servers that can respond to a given request without any additional operational information (e.g., CDN server load, cost of delivery or any reason why a server is chosen). The set of candidate servers can be updated per request or within a TTL that is typically in the order of a tens of seconds in popular CDNs [144]. On the other side, the ISP does not reveal any operational information or the preference weights it uses for the ranking. In fact, the ISP only re-orders a list of candidate servers provided by the CDN. This approach differs significantly from [18, 181], where partial or complete ISP network information, routing weights, or ranking scores are publicly available. We argue that an important aspect to improve content delivery is to rely on up-to-date information during server selection of the CDN. This also eliminates the need of CDNs to perform active measurements to infer the conditions within the ISP that can add overhead to CDN operation and may be inaccurate. With CaTE, the final decision is still made by the CDN, yet it is augmented with up-to-date network guidance from the ISP.

To improve the performance of our system, we do not rely on XML-based network maps as proposed in [18], but on light protocols that are close to DNS in design. This design choice is important as topology information in large networks (in the order of multiple MBytes). Transferring this information periodically to many end-users is likely to be challenging. In a single instance of our system, we manage to reply to up to $90,000$ queries/sec when 50 candidate servers supplied by the CDN. At this level, the performance of our system is comparable to that of current DNS servers, such as BIND. However, the number of replies drops to around $15,000$ per second when considering 350 candidate servers. The additional response time when our system is used is around 1 ms when the number of candidate servers is 50 and around 4 ms when considering 350 candidate servers. This overhead is small compared to the DNS resolution time [3]. The performance was achieved on a commodity dual-quad core server with 32 GB of RAM and 1GBit Ethernet interfaces. Furthermore, running additional servers does not require any synchronization between them. Thus, multiple servers can be located in different places inside the network.

Deployment:
Deploying the system inside the ISP network does not require any change in the network configuration or ISP DNS operation. Our system solely relies on protocol listeners and access to ISP network information. Moreover, no installation of special software is required by end-users. The CaTE system adds minimal overhead to ISPs and CDNs. It only requires the installation of a server in both sides to facilitate communication between them.

Typically, an ISP operates a number of DNS resolvers to better balance the load of DNS requests and to locate DNS servers closer to end-users. To this end, we envision that the ISP's CaTE servers can be co-located with DNS resolvers in order to scale in the same fashion as DNS. CaTE servers can also be located close to peering points in order to reduce the latency between the CDN and an instance of the system. Synchronization of multiple CaTE instances is not necessary as they are aware of the state of the same network. We concluded that this is the best deployment strategy, other possible deployment strategies we have considered are presented in [73].

Operation:
We now describe the operation of our working prototype and its interaction with the CDN. In Figure 19 we illustrate the basic system architecture to support CaTE including the flow of information when the CaTE system is used. When a DNS request is submitted by an end-user to the ISP DNS resolvers *(1)* there are a number of recursive steps *(2)* until the authoritative DNS server is found *(3)*. Then, the ISP DNS resolver contacts the authoritative DNS server *(4)*. There, the request is handed to the

content request processor operated by the CDN query processing component *(5)*. The content request processor has access to full information about the status of the CDN. Based on the operational status of the CDN servers, the server selection system [134] is responsible for choosing eligible content servers *(6)*. In the end, a preference list of content servers is generated. At this point, the CDN server selector sends the list of eligible content servers *(A)* along with user information, such as the IP of the DNS resolvers or client and an optimization metric to ISP. The query processor of the ISP system ranks the list using the location ranker *(B)*. After all the elements have been processed, the query processor has an annotated list with preferences for the ISP *(C)*. The query processor sorts the list by the preference values, strips the values and sends the list back to the CDN *(D)*. The CDN server selector incorporates the feedback, selects the best content server(s) and hand them back to the content request processor *(7)*. Then, the answer travels the path back to the client, i.e. from the CDN's authoritative DNS server *(8)* via the ISP DNS resolver *(9)* to the end-user *(10)*. Finally, the end-user contacts the selected server *(11)* and downloads the content *(12)*.

11.2.4 Modeling CaTE

Next, we formalize CaTE and discuss how it relates to traditional traffic engineering and multipath routing.

Architecture:
We model the network as a directed graph $G(V, E)$ where V is the set of nodes and E is the set of links. An origin-destination (OD) flow f_{od} consists of all traffic entering the network at a given point $o \in V$ (origin) and exiting the network at some point $d \in V$ (destination). The traffic on a link is the superposition of all OD flows that traverse the link.

The relationship between link and OD flow traffic is expressed by the routing matrix A. The matrix A has size $|E| \times |V|^2$. Each element of matrix A has a boolean value. $A_{ml} = 1$ if OD flow m traverses link l, and 0 otherwise. The routing matrix A can be derived from routing protocols, e.g., OSPF, ISIS, BGP. Typically, A is very sparse since each OD flow traverses only a very small number of links. Let **y** be a vector of size $|E|$ with traffic counts on links and **x** a vector of size $|V|^2$ with traffic counts in OD flows, then **y**=A**x**. Note, **x** is the vector representation of the traffic matrix.

Traditional Traffic Engineering: In its broadest sense, traffic engineering encompasses the application of technology and scientific principles to the measurement, characterization, modeling, and control of Internet traffic [27]. Traditionally, traffic engineering reduces to controlling and optimizing the routing function and to steering traffic through the network in the most effective way. Translated into the above matrix form, traffic engineering is the process of adjusting A, given the OD flows **x**, so as to influence the link traffic **y** in a desirable way, as coined in [107]. The above definition assumes that the OD flow vector **x** is known. For instance, direct observations can be obtained, e.g., with Netflow data [42, 63].

Terminology: We denote as *flow* an OD flow between two routers in the network. We call a flow *splittable* if arbitrarily small pieces of the flow can be assigned to other

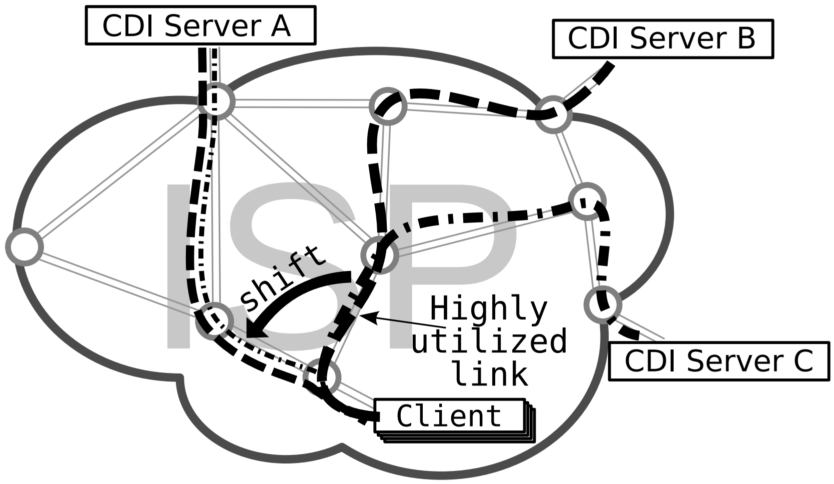


Figure 20: Content-aware Traffic Engineering Process

flows. This is not to be confused with end-to-end sessions, i.e., TCP connections, which are *un-splittable*. The assumption that flows are splittable is reasonable, as the percentage of traffic of a single end-to-end session is small compared to that of a flow between routers. Let C be the set of nominal capacities of the links in the network G. We denote as *link utilization* the fraction of the link capacity that is used by flows. We denote as *flow utilization* the maximum link utilization among all links that a flow traverses. We introduce the terms of *traffic consumer* and *traffic producer* which refer to the aggregated demand of users attached to a router, and the CDIs that are responsible for the traffic respectively. We refer to the different alternatives from which content can be supplied by a given CDI as *network locations* that host servers.

Definition of CaTE:
We revisit traffic engineering by focusing on the traffic demands rather than changing the routing.
Definition 1: Content-aware Traffic Engineering(CaTE) is the process of adjusting the traffic demand vector $\mathbf{x}$, given a routing matrix A, so as to change the link traffic $\mathbf{y}$.

Not all the traffic can be adjusted arbitrarily. Only traffic for which location diversity is available can be adjusted by CaTE. Therefore, $\mathbf{x}$=$\mathbf{x}_r$+$\mathbf{x}_s$ where $\mathbf{x}_r$ denotes the content demands that can be adjusted and $\mathbf{x}_s$ denotes the content demands that can not be adjusted as there is only a single location in the network where the content can be downloaded from. The amount of traffic that can be adjusted depends on the diversity of locations from which the content can be obtained. We can rewrite the relation between traffic counts on links and traffic counts in flows as follows: $\mathbf{y}$=$A(\mathbf{x}_s + \mathbf{x}_r)$. CaTE adjusts the traffic on each link of the network by adjusting the content demands $\mathbf{x}_r$: $\mathbf{y}_r$=$A\mathbf{x}_r$. Applying CaTE means adjusting the content demand to satisfy a traffic engineering goal.
Definition 2: Optimal Traffic Matrix is the new traffic matrix, $\mathbf{x}^*$, after applying CaTE, given a network topology G, a routing matrix A and an initial traffic matrix $\mathbf{x}$.

Figure 20 illustrates the CaTE process. A content consumer requests content that three different servers can deliver. Let us assume that, without CaTE, the CDI redirects the clients to servers B and C. Unfortunately, the resulting traffic crosses a highly-utilized link. With CaTE, content can also be downloaded from server A, thus, the traffic within the network is better balanced as the highly utilized link is circumvented.

Minimizing the maximum utilization across all links in a network is a popular traffic engineering goal [69, 70, 111]. It potentially improves the quality of experience and postpones the need for capacity increase. CaTE mitigates bottlenecks and minimizes the maximum link utilization by re-assigning parts of the traffic traversing heavily loaded paths. Thus it redirects traffic to other, less utilized paths. Later in this chapter, we will elaborate in Section 11.2.5, different metrics such as path length or network delay can also be used in CaTE.

CaTE and Traditional TE:
CaTE is complementary to routing-based traffic engineering as it does not modify the routing. Routing-based traffic engineering adjusts routing weights to adapt to traffic matrix changes. To avoid micro-loops during IGP convergence [71], it is common practice to only adjust a small number of routing weights [70]. To limit the number of changes in routing weights, routing-based traffic engineering relies on traffic matrices computed over long time periods and offline estimation of the routing weights. Therefore, routing-based traffic engineering operates on time scales of hours, which can be too slow to react to rapid change of traffic demands. CaTE complements routing-based traffic engineering and can influence flows at shorter time scales by assigning clients to servers on a per request basis. Thus, CaTE influences the traffic within a network online in a fine-grained fashion.

CaTE and Multipath Routing:
Multipath routing helps end-hosts to increase and control their upload capacity [99]. It can be used to minimize transit costs [81]. Multipath also enables ASes to dynamically distribute the load inside networks in the presence of volatile and hard to predict traffic demand changes [63, 57, 96, 65]. This is a significant advantage, as routing-based traffic engineering can be too slow to react to phenomena such as flash crowds. Multipath takes advantage of the diversity of paths to better distribute traffic.

CaTE also leverages the path diversity, and can be advantageously combined with multipath to further improve traffic engineering and end-user performance. One of the advantages of CaTE is its limited investments in hardware deployed within an ISP. It can be realized with no change to routers, contrary to some of the previous multipath proposals [96, 57, 65]. The overhead of CaTE is also limited as no state about individual TCP connections needs to be maintained, contrary to multipath [96, 57, 65]. In contrast to [57, 96], CaTE is not restricted to MPLS-like solutions and is easily deployable in today's networks.

CaTE and Oscillations:
Theoretical results [67, 66] have shown that load balancing algorithms can take advantage of multipath while provably avoiding traffic oscillations. In addition, their convergence is fast. Building on these theoretical results, Fischer et al. proposed RE-

PLEX [65], a dynamic traffic engineering algorithm that exploits the fact that there are multiple paths to a destination. It dynamically changes the traffic load routed on each path. Extensive simulations show that REPLEX leads to fast convergence, without oscillations, even when there is lag between consecutive updates about the state of the network. CaTE is derived from the same principles and thus inherits all the above-mentioned desired properties.

11.2.5 Potential of Collaboration

In this section, we quantify the potential benefits of CaTE when deployed within an European Tier-1 ISP using operational data.

Experimental Setting: To evaluate CaTE, an understanding of the studied ISP network is necessary, including its topological properties and their implications on the flow of traffic. Indeed, the topological properties of the ISP network influence the availability of disjoint paths, which are key to benefit from the load-balancing ability of CaTE. Because CaTE influences traffic aggregates inside the ISP network at the granularity of requests directed to CDIs, fine-grained traffic statistics are necessary. Traffic counts per-OD flow, often used in the literature, are too coarse an input for CaTE.

Data from a Large European ISP: To build fine-grained traffic demands, we rely on anonymized packet-level traces of residential DSL connections from a large European Tier-1 ISP, henceforth called *ISP1*. For ISP1, we have the complete annotated router-level topology including the router locations as well as all public and private peerings. ISP1 contains more than 650 routers and 30 peering points all over the world. Using the same monitoring infrastructure as in Section 5.1, we collect a 10 days long trace of HTTP and DNS traffic starting on May 7, 2010. We observe 720 million DNS messages as well as more than 1 billion HTTP requests involving about 1.4 million unique hostnames, representing more than 35 TBytes of data. We note that more than 65% of the traffic volume is due to HTTP.

A large fraction of the traffic in the Internet is due to large CDIs, including CDNs, hyper-giants, and OCHs, as reported in earlier studies [78, 106, 144]. In Figure 21, we plot the cumulative fraction of HTTP traffic volume as a function of the CDIs that originate the traffic. For this, we regard a CDI as a organizational unit where all servers from the distributed infrastructure serve the same content, such as Akamai or Google. We rank the CDIs by decreasing traffic volume observed in our trace. Note that the x-axis uses a logarithmic scale. The top 10 CDIs are responsible for around 40% of the HTTP traffic volume and the top 100 CDIs for close to 70% of the HTTP traffic volume. The marginal increase of traffic is diminishing when increasing the number of CDIs. This shows that collaborating directly with a small number of large CDIs, can yield significant savings.

In Figure 22 we plot the traffic of the top 1, 10, 100 CDIs by volume as well as the total traffic over time normalized to the peak traffic in our dataset. For illustrative purposes, we show the evolution across the first 60 hours of our trace. A strong diurnal pattern of traffic activity is observed. We again observe that a small number of CDIs are responsible for about half of the traffic. Similar observations are made for the rest of the trace.

Understanding the Location Diversity of CDIs: To achieve traffic engineering goals,

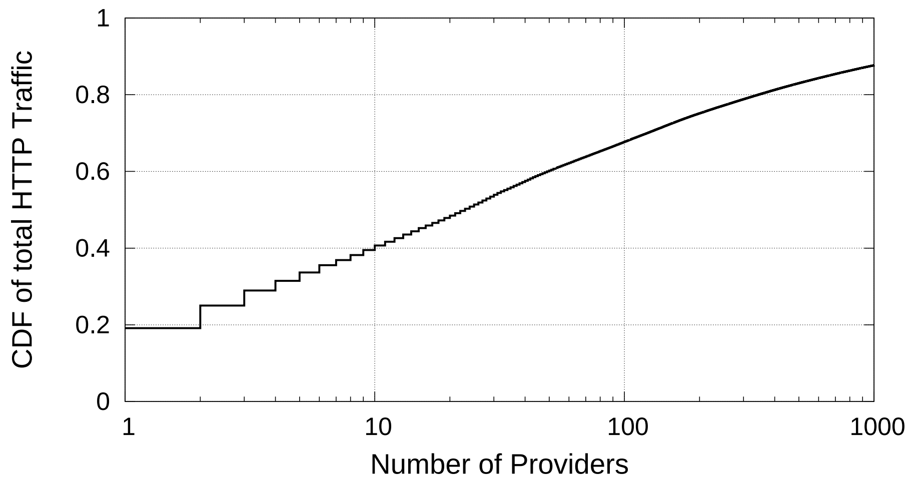


Figure 21: CDF of traffic volume of CDIs in ISP1.

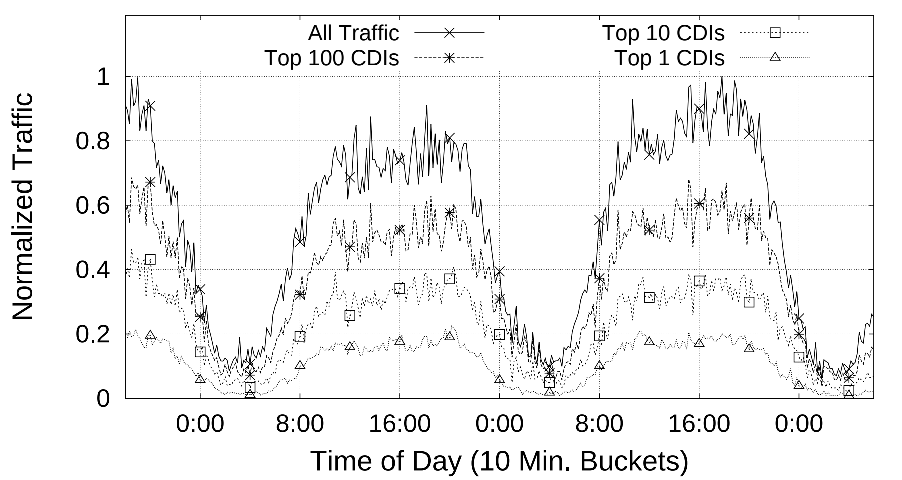


Figure 22: Normalized traffic for top CDIs by volume in ISP1.

it is crucial to also understand the location diversity of the top CDIs, as CaTE relies on the fact that the same content is available at multiple locations. Traffic originated from multiple network locations by a given CDI is seen by CaTE as a single atomic traffic aggregate to be engineered. Furthermore, as routing in the Internet works per prefix, we assume that the granularity of subnets is the finest at which CaTE should engineer the traffic demand. Thus, we differentiate candidate locations of CDIs by their subnets and quantify the location diversity of CDIs through the number of subnets from which content can be obtained.

We examine the amount of location diversity offered by CDIs based on traces from ISP1. To identify the subnets of individual CDIs, we rely on a similar methodology to the one from Poese et al. [144]. Our granularity is comparable to their ”infrastructure

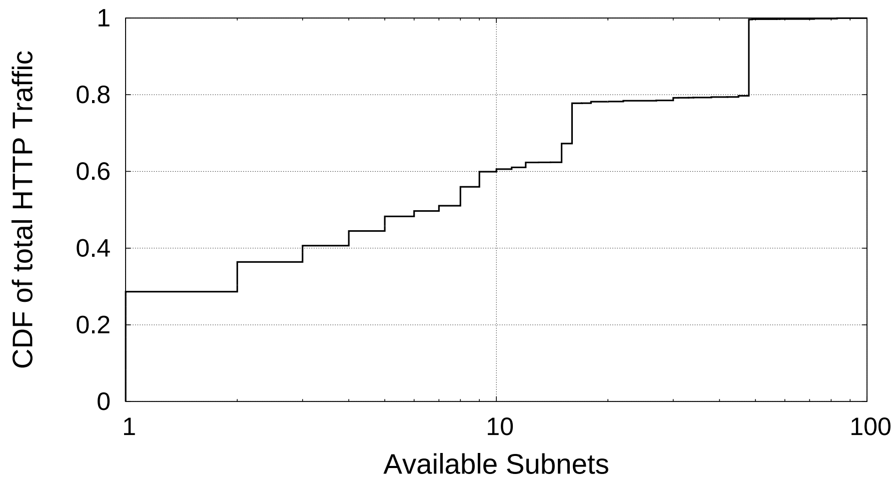


Figure 23: Subnet diversity from which content is available.

redirection aggregation". Figure 23 shows the cumulative fraction of HTTP traffic as a function of the number of subnets (logarithmic scale) from which a given content can be obtained, over the entire 10 days of the trace. We observe that more than 50% of the HTTP traffic can be delivered from at least 8 different subnets, and more than 60% of the HTTP traffic from more than 3 locations. These results confirm the observations made in [144].

Dynamics in Location Diversity: So far the location diversity of CDIs has been evaluated irrespective of time. To complement the finding, we turn our attention to the location diversity exposed by CDIs at small time-scales, i.e., in the order of minutes. To this end, we split the original trace into 10 minutes bins. Figure 24 shows the evolution of the number of exposed subnets of five of the top 10 CDIs by volume. Note that the diversity exposed by some CDIs exhibits explicit time of day patterns, while others do not. This can be due to the structural setup or the type of content served by the CDI. The exposed location diversity patterns, i.e., flat or diurnal, are representative for all CDIs with a major traffic share in our trace. We conclude that a significant location diversity is exposed by popular CDIs at any point in time, and is quite extensive during the peak hour.

Content Demand Generation: The location diversity is not a mere observation about CDIs deployment. It requires to revisit the mapping between a given content demand and the realized traffic matrix. Given the location diversity for content, multiple traffic matrices can be realized from a given content demand. The standard view of the OD flows therefore provides an incomplete picture of the options available for CaTE.

As an input for CaTE, we introduce an abstraction of the demand that reflects the available location diversity. We rely on the notion of *potential vectors*, that were denoted as x_r in Section 11.2.4. To generate the potential vector for a given CDI, the amount of traffic this CDI originates as well as the potential ingress points need to be known. Combining all potential vectors and x_s, we synthesize a network-wide content demand matrix for each time bin, by scaling the traffic demand to match the network

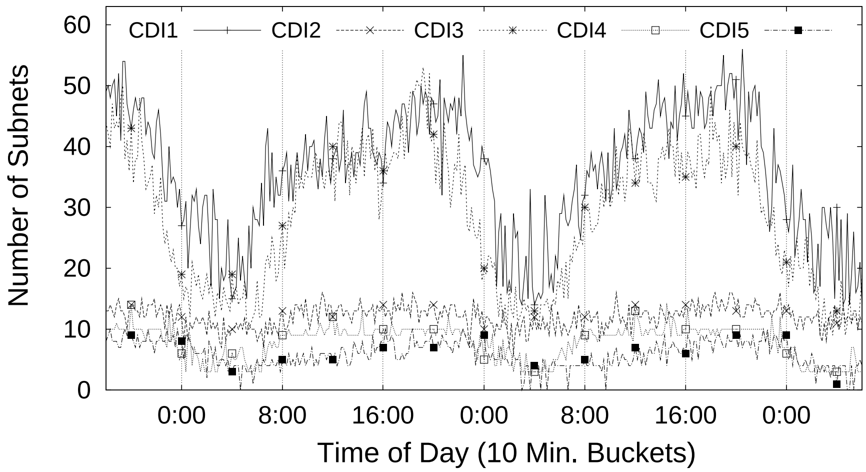


Figure 24: Evolution over time of number of subnets for selected CDIs in the top 10 CDIs.

utilization of ISP1. For our evaluation, we use the series of content demand matrices over a period of 10 days. The content demands are based exclusively on the HTTP traffic of our trace.

11.3 Summary

In this section we presented the potential of the *Oracle* and *Content-aware Traffic Engineering* (CaTE), two collaborative approach to improve content delivery while achieving traffic engineering goals. Both leverage location diversity offered by P2P systems or CDIs. Moreover, CaTE enables dynamic adaption to traffic demand shifts. With CaTE/the oracle the decision on end-user to server/peer assignment can be done jointly between the CDI/P2P system and the ISP. Our analysis of operational data from a European Tier-1 ISP has shown ample opportunities for CaTE to improve content delivery as it is done today.

Through extensive experiments, we show that both P2P users and ISPs benefit from ISP-aided P2P locality, measured in terms of improved content download times, increased network locality of query responses and desired content, and overall reduction in P2P traffic. For a more detailed analysis of the possible improvements and additional background information on the parameter set and resulting improvements, we refer the reader to [11, 6].

In [75, 73, 74] we quantify the benefits of CaTE and consider one of the most popular traffic engineering goals, namely minimizing the maximum utilization of the links in the network [69, 70]. Our evaluation shows that CaTE yields encouraging results, even when only a few large CDIs are collaborating with an ISP. In fact, even metrics that are not directly related to the optimization function of CaTE are improved. Besides significant improvements for the operation of ISP networks, the end-users to also benefit from these gains. This can be attributed to the decrease of delay as well as the reduced link utilization. In [73] we also consider other network metrics such as path length or path delay and the effect of other network topologies. We also outline how CaTE can aid in the deployment of popular large scale applications, e.g., NetFlix, by selecting strategic locations for caches and specific optimization goals to support their operation. With this we conclude the section on collaborative traffic engineering and continue to elaborate on our idea for “in-network server deployment” in the next chapter.

12 Future of Collaboration

PaDIS and CaTE are designed to enable cooperation between CDI and ISPs for the already deployed servers. Recent advances in virtualization offer CDIs additional degree of freedom to scale-up or shrink the footprint on demand. This can be done either by jointly deploying and operating new servers with the ISPs. In this section we formally introduce the design of on-demand services motivated by the recent announcement of major ISPs to support generic hardware-network appliances, also referred to as microdatacenters, and offer them to application, service, and content providers. We also provide the design and implementation of NetPaaS, a system to orchestrate the deployment of on-demand services inside microdatacenters, by utilizing the view of the ISP about the network and additional computation and storage resources inside the network.

12.1 The New Cloud: Microdatacenters Deep Inside the Network

Applications are increasingly relying on direct interactions with end-users and are very sensitive to delay [111]. Indeed, transaction delay is critical for online businesses [101]. Network delay and loss are important contributors. Today, large-scale service deployments are restricted by limited locations in the network, e.g., datacenters, peering locations, or IXPs. These locations are not necessarily ideal [112]. We point out that *selection of service location is critical and currently not flexible enough*. Services should be located close enough to, in terms of network distance, the clients. Since client demands are volatile and change across time, CDIs need agility [41]. They can improve their service quality by quickly allocating, de-allocating, and migrating resources on-demand where and when they are needed. Indeed, since delay and packet loss are among the critical metrics, the service may need to be deployed deep inside the network, as many ISPs do for IPTV services. This option is not yet available for non-ISP content delivery Infrastructures, e.g., for cloud services.

Currently, most services and networks are run by independent entities with different and often conflicting objectives. Lack of information about the other entity leads to suboptimal performance and resource allocation for both the CDI and the ISP. For example, CDIs implement sophisticated methods to infer network conditions to improve perceived end-user experience [134], e.g., active measurements within the ISPs. Yet, the information gleaned from these measurements is already available with far greater precision to the ISP. On the other hand, ISPs continuously upgrade their infrastructures without being able to efficiently engineer the CDI traffic flows [144]. Today, cooperation and/or partnership between providers is limited to, e.g., peering or lately direct interconnections with content delivery Infrastructures. This level of cooperation is too narrow to reduce operational costs, improve end-user experience, circumvent bottlenecks, handle flash crowds, and adapt to changing network conditions and user demands. This has led to initial discussions on how to improve communication between the various entities, e.g., within the IETF ALTO and CDNi working groups.

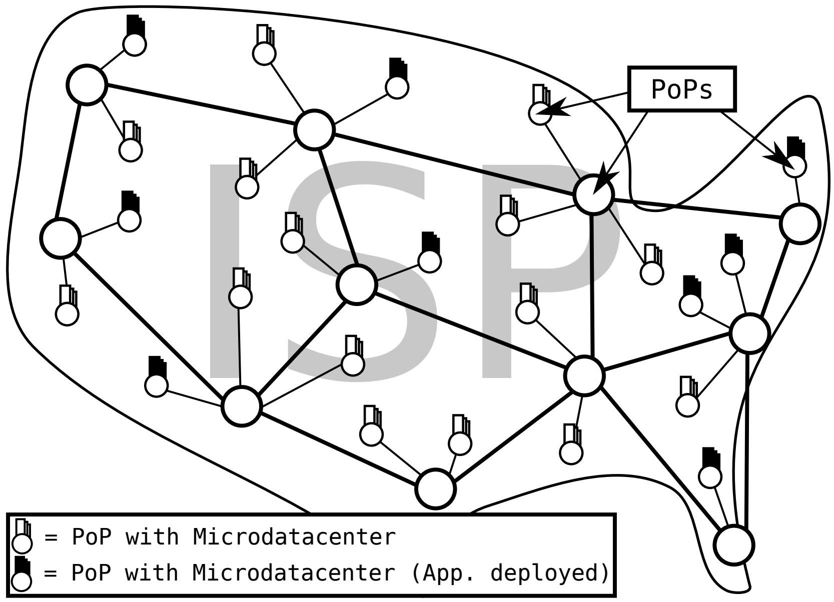


Figure 25: Microdatacenters in an ISP with NetPaaS enabled

12.1.1 The ISPs Proposal

To overcome the above mentioned obstacles in service deployment and operation, major ISPs, including AT&T, Verizon, Deutsche Telekom, Telefonica, NTT, have proposed the use of cloud resources consisting of general purpose appliances that are co-located at network aggregation points inside the ISP. With the convergence of computing, storage, and communications, the acceptance of cloud services, and the ever increasing demand for popular services, ISPs are moving towards deploying general-purpose computing and storage infrastructures in their points of presences (PoPs). Henceforth, we refer to these as *microdatacenters*. The description of the functionality of these microdatacenters is provided in a white paper [131] that appeared in the SDN and OpenFlow World Congress in October 2012 and signed by 13 of the largest ISPs. Microdatacenters can be also the technical solution needed to materialize recent alliances of major CDIs, such as Akamai with large ISPs in the area of content delivery [12, 14, 15]. We notice that Software Defined Networks (SDNs) is another alternative to redirect traffic or perform traffic engineering when applied within an ISP or between and ISP and a CDN in cooperation. The comparison of the two approaches, NFV and SND, is out of the scope of this chapter and we refer the users to the related literature on SDN e.g., [36, 85, 121, 148, 92].

Figure 25 illustrates the basic idea. The ISP can offer *slices* within its microdatacenters, that can be leased by the CDIs—using our proposed mechanism—based on their needs. This approach leverages recent advances in virtualization technology, and flexible billing models, such as pay-as-you-go, to provide cost-efficient and scalable service deployment, enabling unprecedented flexibility. Moreover, the diversity of available service locations within the network can be used to improve end-user experience and makes it possible to launch even more demanding applications, such as interactive ones. On-demand service enables CDIs to rely on a fixed infrastructure deployment for their baseline operation and then scale it up by dynamically allocating resources closer to end-users. It also lowers the burden of entrance in the service market for smaller CDIs who might rely exclusively on the on-demand service at first.

12.1.2 Microdatacenter Specifications

Microdatacenters consist of one or more racks of off-the-shelf hardware deployed in general purpose rack space at network aggregation points. State-of-the-art solutions have been proposed by the VMware/Cisco/EMC VCE consortium [174], and are also offered by other vendors, such as NetApp and Dell. These solutions are general-purpose and provide a shared infrastructure for a large range of applications. They typically consist of two basic components: hardware and management software.

Hardware: Typical microdatacenters include *storage*, *computing*, *memory*, and *network access* components. Storage consists of tens of Terabytes with an ultra-fast controller providing I/O throughput in the order of hundreds of Gbps. The storage component is connected to the Internet through multi-Gbps interfaces and to the computing component with Gigabit Ethernet switches. Typically, a rack includes up to 40 physical multi-core blade servers as well as two routers and two switches in mesh configuration, for redundancy and load balancing.

Management Software: Each vendor offers a set of management tools not only for administering the components but also to create resource slices and to delegate the operation of the slices to external entities. This can be done per-server or via hardware supported virtualization[4]. The management software is also responsible for storage allocation and handling network resources, including IP address space. In addition, the management tools come with a monitoring interface that allows the ISP to monitor the utilization of the overall microdatacenter as well as the information for each slice that can be shared with the external entity.

An ISP can allocate resource slices consisting of computing, storage, memory, and network access in a microdatacenter and then delegate the operation of the slice to a CDI. This is what we refer to as the *ISPs cloud service* which is realized via resource slices in microdatacenters throughout the ISPs infrastructure.

12.1.3 Microdatacenter Network Footprint

Most ISPs' networks consist of an access network to provide Internet access to DSL and/or cable customers, as well as an aggregation network for business and/or VPN customers. Routers at this level are often referred to as *edge routers*. The access and aggregation networks are then connected to the ISP's backbone which consists of *core*

[4]For example, para-virtualization [48] presents the VM with an abstraction that is similar but not identical to the underlying hardware.

routers. *Border routers* are core routers that are used to connect either to other networks or to co-location centers. Opportunities to deploy microdatacenters exist at each level: edge, core, or border router locations.

The advantage of deploying service infrastructure only at the core router locations is that there are a few large and well established locations. This is also a disadvantage as location diversity might be limited. Location diversity is highest at the edge router locations. However, it might not always be possible to deploy a microdatacenter, i.e., due to limited space and/or power at the facilities, or due to cost. These locations, however, minimize the distance to the customers. Border router locations are often a subset of core routers, hence they inherit the same advantages and disadvantages.

The advantage of using an ISP cloud service vs. a public cloud service for a CDI is the chance to minimize the distance to the end-user. on-demand service deployment allows the CDI to control the location of the slices and ensures that there are no major network bottlenecks.

12.2 On-Demand Service Design

An *on-demand service* is a service of the ISP (see Figure 25) that enables CDIs to use a hosting infrastructure that scales according to end-user demands, so as to minimize its capital expenditures and operating costs, as well as the distance between its hosting infrastructure and the source of the demand. Moreover, it offers an interface that enables the CDI to map user requests to appropriate slices in order to maximize slice utilization and minimize the distance between the end-user and the slices.

Definition 1: ISP On-Demand Service. The ISP on-demand service is a service offered by the ISP and uses as its base unit of resource allocation the notion of a microdatacenter *slice*. It is the ISP's task to allocate/de-allocate the slices since it operates the microdatacenter. The CDI requests slices based on its clients demand. When the slice is allocated to the CDI, the service can be installed on the slice. From that point on, the CDI fully controls the operation of the service installed in the microdatacenter. Negotiation about slices are done via the *on-demand service interface* through which CDI demands are matched to the ISPs resources. How to map demands to resources in an efficient manner is the task of the ISP and part of the *on-demand service realization*. In addition, the interface allows for access to the billing information. Moreover, the *on-demand service interface* enables the mapping of user requests to appropriate slices.

The above mentioned use of microdatacenters is in-line with the available primitives of private and public clouds operated in large-scale datacenters, e.g., [19, 124].

12.2.1 Microdatacenter Slice

Based on our description of microdatacenters in the previous sections, we define a slice as follows.

Definition 2: Slice. The slice of a microdatacenter is a set of physical or virtualized resources of a specific capacity, for each of the resources of the microdatacenter. The slice is delegated to the service provider that can install and operate its service using the resources of the slice.

For example, a slice can be a 1-core server with 2 GB RAM, 30 GB storage, a 1 Gbps Internet access bandwidth, 2 public IPs—an actual physical resource. Alternatively, it can be a VServer with 2GB and 1 Gbps Internet access bandwidth, 1 public IP, and a pre-installed OS—a virtual machine of a specific type. With the current management and virtualization tools available from microdatacenter vendors, it is possible to allocate/deallocate slices on-demand in with unprecedented degree of freedom, e.g., [25] and references within.

12.2.2 On-Demand Service Realization

Based on the above specification of on-demand service, the ISP has to implement two functions to offer its *on-demand service*: *mapping of service provider demands to slices* and *assigning users to slices*.

Note, the time scales at which these two services are expected to be used differ significantly. The first one allows the service provider to flexibly allocate and de-allocate its slices based on its forecast of demands, in those locations where it wants them. We foresee that requests for slices are not issued individually but rather collectively on a time scale of tens of minutes or hours.

The CDI provides the ISP with a set of demands for slice resources, predicted demand locations, desired slice locations, as well as optimization criteria. The ISP then has to map the demands to its microdatacenter resources. We expect that the major degree of freedom that the ISP uses to jointly optimize performance is the desired slice location. We refer to this optimization problem as the `slice location` problem. If the desired slice locations are fully specified or the predicted demand locations are missing, the `slice location` problem becomes trivial and the ISP only grants or denies the request.

At the second time scale, the ISP can help the CDI in assigning users to slices. Since the service is offered at multiple locations, a good assignment of users to slices impacts not only the load on the network but also the network delay and packet loss, which are key contributors to the user experience. Jointly optimizing this mapping is therefore of interest to both the ISP and the CDI. The CDI can query the ISP for each request on where to map it, based on the current set of slice assignments and service loads. The ISP then uses its network information to propose possible slices. We refer to this problem as the `user-slice assignment` problem, see [75].

Another degree of freedom on-demand service offers to the CDI is auto-scaling. While it is quite feasible to dimension applications, flash-crowds or device failures are hard to predict. To this end, a CDI may allow on-demand service to create replicas if its monitoring indicates that the capacity of the service at a given location is or will be exceeded. To realize this service, the ISP needs to constantly monitor resource availability and if necessary migrate or suggest the creation of additional slices. Moreover, it has to allow the CDI to monitor the utilization of its slices.

12.2.3 Service Interfaces

The ISP offers four interfaces to the content delivery Infrastructures:

Resource discovery: Using this interface the CDI requests information about resources, e.g., about available locations for slices and if in principle slices are available at those locations at what price.

Slice allocation: Using this interface the CDI requests slice allocation within a certain cost limit.

User-slice assignment: Using this interface the CDI requests recommendations for user demand to slice mapping.

Monitoring and billing: Using this interface the CDI monitors the status and cost of its slices.

In Section 12.3 we give specific examples of how these service interfaces can be used by a CDI and ISP to cooperate in order to improve their services.

12.2.4 Billing

It is important for the CDI to minimize and track the cost of its use of on-demand service. Depending on the scale of the services, the service provider has to pay the usual price or negotiate bilateral agreements with the ISP. Using the resource discovery interface, it estimates the cost of slice allocation at possible locations. Using the slice allocation interface, it can bound the total cost of the request.

We expect that the billing of a slice allocated via on-demand service follows that of large-scale datacenters. This means that there is an installation cost and a usage cost. The installation cost applies to a single slice in a microdatacenter and is charged only once or over long time intervals, e.g., hours, and is fixed. The installation cost typically increases if additional licenses have to be leased, e.g., software licenses. The installation cost can depend on the location of the microdatacenter that hosts the slice or the time-of-day.

The usage cost follows a pay-as-you-go billing model and charges for the usage of different resources assigned to a slice. The billing among different resources in the same slice can be quite diverse. The slice can use expensive resources such as bandwidth or cheaper ones such as CPU.

For example, a slice may have a $\$0.01$ per hour installation cost and a usage cost that depends on its use of various resources, e.g., $\$0.02$ per real CPU usage per hour, $\$0.001$ per GByte stored per hour, and $\$0.001$ per Gbps outgoing traffic per hour. If the slice is idle, then only the installation cost is charged. Note, that if the slice is used for a short period within the allocation time, e.g., a few minutes, then the charge may apply to the minimum billing granularity.

To minimize the cost of deploying an on-demand service, the CDI can change its total slice demands as well as its slice specifications dynamically. Moreover, it can relax the slice specifications to reduce overall cost of its service deployment.

12.3 Network Platform as a Service (NetPaaS)

Next, we discuss the prototype system that has been proposed to materialize the On-demand service, Network Platform as a Service (NetPaaS). NetPaaS leverages the view of PaDIS and also utilize the knowledge about the status of the microdatacenters within the network. NetPaaS is also able to map the requests of CDIs to available microdatacenters to better match the demand with the resources inside the network. The granularity at which they are exchanged via the service interface. We also outline several possible protocols for the service interfaces. We focus on resource discovery, slice allocation, and user-slice assignment. We do not discuss monitoring and billing because they can be realized today using techniques similar to those in use by current public clouds, e.g., [25]. Due to space limitations, we refer the reader to [72] for a formalization of NetPaaS, as well as an evaluation on a CDI use case.

Recall that our assumption that the time scales at which the two principle components of on-demand service operate are different. On the one hand, resource discovery and slice allocation are expected to be done on time scales of tens of minutes, hours, or even days. On the other hand, user-slice assignment potentially happens on a per user request basis. Accordingly, the protocols differ. We propose to use out-of-band protocols for the first two service interfaces and in-band protocols for the third one.

12.3.1 Resource Discovery

The purpose of resource discovery is to provide the CDI with the ability to gather information about the resources offered by the ISP. Accordingly, we have two message types: CDI_Discovery_Request and ISP_Discovery_Response.

CDI_Discovery_Request: Is issued either without and with arguments. In the first case the response is the set of resources that are offered. In the second case the responds contains details about the resources named in the argument.

ISP_Discovery_Response: List of available resource or details about the resources specified in the argument.

So far we have not outlined at what granularity and specificity the resources are requested. This depends on the agreements between the CDI and the ISP. For example, the ISP may have no problem revealing its microdatacenter locations to a major CDI. However, it may not want to share this information with an untrusted CDI that wants to run a single slice. For the latter, the region in which the microdatacenter is located might well suffice.

With regards to granularity, the ISP can specify which type of servers it is offering in each microdatacenter region, as is common for public cloud services [19], unless another agreement is in place that enables access to more specific information. With regards to the availability and/or price, the ISP can either return a base price, including installation and usage cost, to indicate that resources are available or offer an auction-based system. In the latter case, the discovery request returns information about past prices.

12.3.2 Slice Allocation

Slice allocation enables the CDI and ISP to cooperate for allocating slices in microdatacenters close to the end-user that are able to satisfy the demands. We envision five message types: CDI_Demand_Request, ISP_Demand_Response, CDI_ Slice_Request,

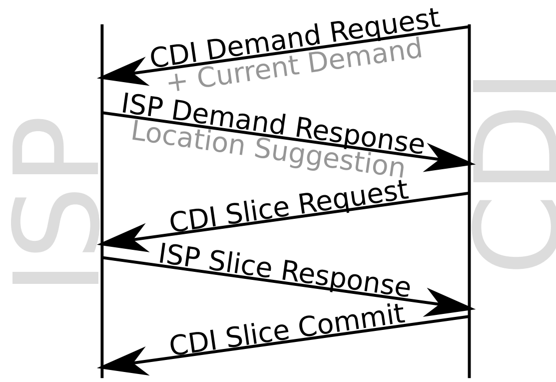


Figure 26: Slice allocation message exchange.

ISP_Slice_Response, CDI_Slice_Commit. The first two message types enable the cooperation between the CDI and the ISP to allocate slices at appropriate microdatacenter by utilizing network information, see Figure 26. The last three messages enable a three way handshake between the CDI and the ISP to verify that the ISP is able to provide a specific slice for the CDI.

CDI_Demand_Request: Is submitted by the CDI to the ISP and contains a summary of the hardware resources the CDI wants together with optimization criteria, constraints, and a demand forecast, e.g., per region or per network prefix. Possible optimization criteria are to minimize network distance or the cost. The constrains include: number of locations, minimum resources per slice, etc.

ISP_Demand_Response: The ISP returns a set of proposed slice configurations and their price. It computes these by solving the `slice location` problem.

CDI_Slice_Request: The CDI either selects, based on its criteria, a set of proposed slices as returned by the ISP_Demand_Response, or it completes a specification of a slice set request using information it retrieved via the resource discovery interface. In addition, the request contains a maximum cost.

ISP_Slice_Response: Upon receiving a CDI_Slice_Request, the ISP checks if it can offer the set of slices at the requested cost. This involves solving another version of the `slice location` problem. If possible, the ISP returns the price otherwise it declines the request. At this step, the ISP reserves the requested resources to guarantee their availability. Note, the ISP does not have to return precise slice definitions, e.g., instead of returning that slice x should be located in microdatacenter y attached to router z it only returns slice x should be located in region xyz.

CDI_Slice_Commit: This step confirms CDI_Slice_Requests. Upon receiving the commit from the CDI, the ISP allocates the slices and delegates their control to the CDI.

Now we discuss different ways in which a CDI and an ISP can cooperate using the above messages. These ways differ in which information is shared and with whom.

Minimum information exchange: The CDI uses the information from the ISP_Demand_Response for queries via CDI_Demand_Request with a uniform distributed demand vector. The responses include slice candidates with servers having specified hardware profiles and in specific regions. Then, the CDI scales the suggested slices according to its demand locations and uses the CDI_Slice_Request message to check if the ISP can offer it and at what price. Once it has found a satisfactory configuration it can use the CDI_Slice_Commit message to request the necessary slices.

Partnership 1: The CDI uses CDI_Demand_Request with a scaled demand CDI selects one of these and uses the ISP_Slice_Request message so that the ISP can reserve the resources. Upon successful reservation, the CDI_Slice_Commit message confirms the allocation of the slices.

Partnership 2: The CDI uses the CDI_Demand_Request without a demand vector but with specific resource requests. The ISP response specifies candidate microdatacenters with available resources. Then, the CDI uses its version of the `slice location` problem to find possible slice sets at a subset of these locations. Then, the CDI uses the ISP_Slice_Request message to see if the ISP can offer it and at what price. Once it finds a satisfactory configuration it uses the CDI_Slice_Commit message to allocate the slices.

The first scenario corresponds to the minimum information that has to be exchanged in order to reach a consensus on the locations and specification of the slices. The latter two summarize different forms of possible cooperations that can be agreed upon in bilateral agreements.

So far, we have assumed that there are no preallocated slices. However, this is typically not the case, and the actual task is to augment a preexisting set of slices in such a way as to best serve the predicted demand for the next time period. To enable this, another argument to each message request can be provided, indicating a set of already allocated resources and a penalty value for deallocating slices in one location and allocating them in another. This penalty is needed as part of the optimization problem. Basically, it indicates up to which point it is preferable to keep a suboptimal location because of stability of resource allocation vs. when to migrate the service to a new location. Based on the returned information, the CDI has the option of either moving slices using VM migration or to de-allocate and allocate new slices.

The ISP microdatacenter can offer VM migration and/or consolidation[5] with keeping the IP addresses only within the same microdatacenter location. Across microdatacenters it may only offer migration with tunnels which requires the CDI to temporarily operate two slices at both locations. However, the old one is a good candidate for consolidation so that it is possible to reduce the allocated resources to a minimum within a microdatacenter once all new requests are served by the newly allocated slices. Thus, if an ISP offers service consolidation, one option for CDIs that want to use diverse sets of microdatacenters is to always keep a minimal slice active at each location and expand or shrink it according to the demand.

[5] Here, consolidation corresponds to moving multiple VMs with minimal resource requirements to the same physical machine to keep a base service.

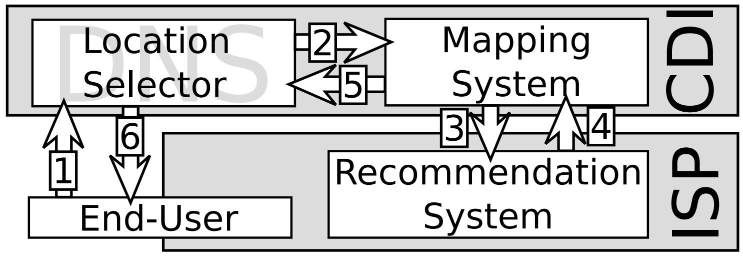


Figure 27: User-slice assignment schematic.

12.3.3 User-Slice Assignment

The purpose of the user-slice assignment interface is to enable small time scale interactions between the CDI and the ISP, to ensure that end-user demand is mapped to the appropriate slice. Therefore, the interface has to be integrated into the process used by the CDI to map user requests to CDI servers. Next, we first review how this is currently realized using DNS. Then, we discuss options on how the user-slice assignment interface can be integrated, see Figure 27.

CDI: User request to CDI server mapping. Before an end-user issues a request for the CDI service, e.g., downloading some content or watching a video, it issues a DNS request to map the hostname to an IP address of the server that hosts the service. This DNS request is sent to the ISPs DNS resolver or an alternative DNS resolver. This resolver contacts the authoritative DNS server of the CDI service, since caching is typically restricted by small TTL's. The authoritative DNS server uses a CDI service, the CDI mapping system, to select a CDI server from which to satisfy the future requests of this end-user. The CDI mapping system performs a CDI specific optimization. This optimization may consider the load on the CDI servers, the network location of the CDI server as well as the requesting DNS server, the price of network access at the CDI server, etc. Note, the CDI's authoritative DNS name servers usually does not have access to the IP address of the end-user as the request is forwarded via the DNS resolver unless the eDNS [47] standard is used. With eDNS, the client IP address or the IP prefix can be added to the DNS request sent by the DNS resolver to the authoritative DNS name server. In addition, the CDI can use HTTP redirection to further load balance within its infrastructure.

User-Slice Assignment: Option 1. Considering the process outlined above, one possible way to use the user-slice assignment interface is within the optimization that the CDI mapping system performs. For this case, we envision two message types: CDI_User-Slice_Assign_Request and ICDI_User-Slice_Assign_Response which correspond to steps 3 and 4 in Figure 27.

CDI_User-Slice_Assign_Request: Issued by the CDI's DNS server to the ISP. It contains the client IP address as well as slice locations within or outside of the ISP.

ISP_User-Slice_Assign_Response: The ISP responses with a ranking of the slice locations.

The previous two messages enable the CDI to consider information from the ISP, conveyed via the ranking, for its mapping. This is equivalent to the functionality and protocols proposed by the IETF ALTO working group. However, we envision a more light weight implementation. We propose to not rely on XML for encoding each request if the granularity of the requests is on a per connection level. If the CDI uses a coarser granularity such as subnet or region, the efficiency of the message exchange is even less critical.

User-Slice Assignment: Option 2. Another way to integrate the user-slice assignment interface within the above process is by pro-actively sharing information between the CDI and the ISP. For this case, we again envision two message types: ISP_User-Slice_Assign_Proposal and CDI_User-Slice_Assign_Ack.

ISP_User-Slice_Assign_Proposal: Is sent by the ISP to the CDI mapping system. It contains a set of IP prefixes each with an associated ranking of the different microdatacenter locations.

CDI_User-Slice_Assign_Ack: The CDI either acknowledges or rejects the proposal.

This again enables the CDI to include information from the ISP, conveyed via the ranking, in its mapping. For example, one can use BGP to send such messages—a mechanism Akamai already utilizes to aid in mapping users to its clusters [134].

12.4 Summary

Motivated by the high requirements newly deployed services put on the ISPs networks, we formally introduced the design of on-demand services to relieve both the CDI and the ISP. We also provided the design and implementation of NetPaaS, a system to orchestrate the deployment of on-demand services using the ISPs view of the network and available resources. In [72] we evaluate NetPaaS using operational traces from the biggest commercial CDN and a European Tier-1 ISP. We quantify the benefits of NetPaaS by utilizing different optimization goals e.g., delay reduction or reduced link utilization. Our results show that NetPaaS yields encouraging results for a joint deployment of new services that significantly improves the end-users performance while reducing the network utilization for the ISP and offering agile service deployment to the CDI. For the analysis and performance evaluation of on-demand server placement algorithms in wide-area networks we refer the reader to [164] and [22].

13 Conclusion

People value the Internet for the content and the applications it makes available [91]. For example, the demand for online entertainment and web browsing has exceeded 70% of the peak downstream traffic in the United States [153]. Recent traffic studies [78, 106, 144] show that a large fraction of Internet traffic is originated by a small number of Content Distribution Infrastructures (CDIs). Major CDIs include highly popular rich-media sites such as YouTube and Netflix, One-Click Hosters (OCHs), e.g., RapidShare, Content Delivery Networks (CDNs) such as Akamai, and hyper-giants, e.g., Google and Yahoo!. Gerber and Doverspike [78] report that a few CDIs account for more than half of the traffic in a US-based Tier-1 carrier.

To cope with the increasing demand for content, CDIs deploy massively distributed infrastructures [111] to replicate content and make it accessible from different locations in the Internet [171, 4]. Not all CDIs are built upon the same philosophy, design, or technology. For example, a CDI can be operated independently by deploying caches in different networks, by renting space in datacenters, or by building datacenters. Furthermore, some CDIs are operated by ISPs, some by Content Producers, or in the case of Peer-to-Peer networks, by self-organized end users. Accordingly, we give an overview of the spectrum of CDI solutions.

CDIs often struggle in mapping users to the best server, regardless of whether the best server is the closest, the one with the most capacity, or the one providing the lowest delay. The inability of CDIs to map end users to the right server stems from the fact that CDIs have limited visibility into ISP networks, i.e., a CDI has incomplete knowledge of an ISP's set up, operation, and current state. Thus, in this book chapter, we propose viewing the challenges that CDIs and ISPs face as an opportunity: *to collaborate*. We point out the opportunities and incentives for all parties—CDIs, ISPs and end users—to get involved. This collaboration may ultimately lead to major changes in the way that content is distributed across the Internet.

Accordingly, we review the proposed enablers and building blocks for collaboration ranging from the P2P oracle service, P4P, Ono, and PaDIS, to the IETF activities [11, 181, 39, 144, 119, 132]. To illustrate the benefits of collaboration between applications and networks, we provide two use-cases: P2P and traffic engineering. The main take away is that substantial benefits for all involved parties are obtainable.

Upcoming trends include virtualization and the Cloud. These trends offer new ways of collaborative deployment of content delivery infrastructure if combined with the proposed enablers for collaboration. Accordingly, we propose Network Platform as a Service (NetPaaS), which allows CDIs and ISPs to cooperate not only on user assignment, but on dynamically deploying and removing servers and thus scaling content delivery infrastructure on demand.

We believe that ISP-CDN collaboration and NetPaaS can play a significant role in the future content delivery ecosystem. Most of the collaboration enablers, however, have not yet been deployed in the wild, and therefore only the future will tell if the Internet takes advantage of these opportunities.

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