Routing Metrics for Minimizing End-to-End Delay in Multi-Radio Multi-Channel Wireless Networks

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Abstract—This paper studies how to select a path with the minimum expected end-to-end delay (EED) in a multi-radio multi-channel (MR-MC) wireless mesh network. While the existing studies mainly focus on the packet transmission delay due to medium access control (MAC), our new EED metric further takes into account the queuing delay at the MAC layer. In particular in the MR-MC context, we develop a generic iterative approach to compute the *multi-radio achievable bandwidth* (MRAB) for a path, taking the impact of inter-/intra-flow interference and space/channel diversity into consideration. The MRAB is then combined with the EED to form the metric *weighted end-to-end delay* (WEED). As a byproduct of MRAB, a channel diversity coefficient is defined to quantitatively represent the channel diversity for a given path. Moreover, we design and implement a distributed WEED-based routing protocol for MR-MC wireless networks by extending the well-known AODV protocol. Extensive simulation results are presented to demonstrate the performance of EED/WEED based routing, with comparison to some existing well-known routing metrics.

Index Terms—Routing, multi-radio multi-channel network, end-to-end delay, achievable bandwidth

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1 INTRODUCTION

Routing in the multi-hop wireless mesh networks has been a hot research area in recent years, with the objective to achieve as high throughput as possible over the network. The main methodology applied in most of the existing works is to select a path based on interference-aware or load-balancing routing metrics to reduce network-wide channel contentions. It is known that the capacity of a single-radio single-channel (SR-SC) multi-hop wireless network cannot scale up with the network size, due to the co-channel interference [17]. The multi-radio multi-channel (MR-MC) technique has been shown as an efficient approach to increase the wireless network capacity [3], [4]. Design of efficient routing schemes for an MR-MC wireless mesh network is much more challenging compared to the SR-SC case.

The existing studies of routing in MR-MC networks [4], [11], [12], [14] mainly focus on throughput performance. Considering that many popular multimedia applications (e.g., voice over IP, IPTV, and online gaming) have a strict delay requirement, in this paper we aim at designing a routing metric to minimize the end-to-end delay, including not only the transmission delay but also the queuing delay at the medium access control (MAC) layer. The packet transmission delay at the MAC layer has been the major concern in the existing studies [6], [7]; however, in many cases the queuing delay

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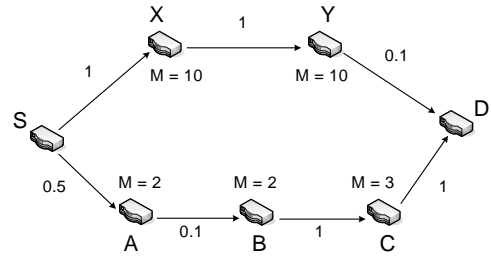
Fig. 1. The impact of queuing delay on path selection.

takes a significant portion of the total delay over a link. The delay through a node, which has many packets in the buffer but a short transmission time, can be larger than that through another node, which has less packets in the buffer but a much longer transmission time.

We here use an example inspired by the one in [1] to show the impact of queuing delay on routing, illustrated in Fig. 1. The number associated with each link is the probability for a successful transmission over the link, denoted as p_s, which implies on average it takes $1/p_s$ attempts to successfully deliver a packet. The integer variable M denotes the number of packets in the MAC layer buffer waiting to be served. Suppose that the bandwidth of each link is 11 Mbps, and the packet length is 1100 bytes, resulting in a transmission time of 0.8 ms over a link. If the queuing delay is not considered, the expected transmission time (ETT) based routing [6] would prefer the path S-X-Y-D (9.6 ms) over the path S-A-B-C-D (11.2 ms). However, a new packet will arrive at the destination with a shorter delay along the path S-A-B-C-D if the queuing delay is taken into account. In this case, the end-to-end delay over S-X-Y-D is 97.6 ms, while only 24 ms over S-A-B-C-D. Note that we ignore the overhead at the MAC layer when computing the transmission delay (e.g., the back-off time in 802.11), which is considered in our later discussions.

The routing metric of expected *end-to-end delay* (EED) proposed in this paper considers both the transmission delay and the queuing delay. Each node monitors the transmission failure probability to estimate the transmission delay, and counts the number of packets waiting in the buffer to estimate the queuing delay. The EED metric also implies the concept of load-balancing. The path with a smaller EED normally consists of the links with fewer packets in the queues, and thus balances the traffic from those congested links. Moreover, counting the number of buffered packets is a convenient implementation; most of the existing load-balancing routing schemes require the traffic information, which is difficult to obtain a priori in practice [11].

In addition to the transmission delay and the queuing delay, the end-to-end delay over a multi-hop wireless network is particularly impacted by the interference among different hops, which can be classified into inter-flow and intra-flow interference [17]. We further propose a path metric called *multi-radio achievable bandwidth* (MRAB) to accurately capture the impact of inter/intra-flow interference and space/channel diversity along a path. We consider a practical scenario that an end-to-end path may consist of both multi-radio nodes and single-radio nodes. In particular, we develop a sub-path based iterative approach to model the complex interactions among inter-flow interference, intra-flow interference, and simultaneous transmission due to space and channel diversity. The MRAB is then integrated with the EED to form a metric called *weighted end-to-end delay* (WEED). As a byproduct of MRAB, a channel diversity coefficient is defined to quantitatively represent the channel diversity along a given path.

We then design and implement a WEED-based routing protocol for MR-MC wireless networks. There exist limited studies on designing a routing protocol for a multi-radio multi-channel network [7]. Efficient routing protocol design in the MR-MC context is challenging. A large space of possible channel and radio configurations over each hop incurs complex message exchange to find a proper path. In our previous work [16], we implemented EED based routing in the SR-SC networks by extending the dynamic source routing (DSR) protocol [29]. However, the DSR takes the source routing model, which can hardly be extended to WEED-based routing in MR-MC networks due to the following reasons: 1) the DSR resorts to overhearing path information to improve efficiency, which cannot guarantee the optimal performance in the MR-MC context. The WEED path metric interleaves all the link metrics along the path through iterative computations in a non-additive manner, by which an optimal end-to-end path does not necessarily ensure the optimality for each path segment due to various local interference situations. 2) Source routing tends to incur large bandwidth overhead by listing all the previous nodes in the packet header. Such overhead will be further exaggerated in the MR-MC context; not only the node address but also the radio sequence number and channel assignment information need to be carried in the packet to identify a transmitting/receiving entity. 3) To the best of our knowledge, how to develop an NS2 package for extending DSR to the MR-MC context is still an open issue.

We thus modify the ad hoc on-demand distance vector (AODV) protocol to implement the WEED based routing in MR-MC networks in a distributed manner. The message exchanges among network nodes are enhanced to carry necessary information of channel/radio assignment, so that each node can independently calculate the MRAB value for any path segment terminating at it. Such a property allows searching for an optimal WEED-based path for any given source-destination pair in a scalable manner. In addition, information exchange in the hop-by-hop routing can considerably reduce messaging overhead compared to the source routing model. We develop an NS2 package for the WEED-based routing according to the general guidance on how to extend AODV to MR-MC networks [31]. Extensive simulation results confirm that EED/WEED provides better performance, compared to some existing well-known routing metrics.

The reminder of this paper is organized as follows. Section 2 reviews more related works. Section 3 introduces the routing metric of EED. Section 4 presents an algorithm to compute the MRAB, which is integrated with the EED metric to form the WEED routing metric. The routing protocol is described in Section 5. Section 6 presents the simulation results. Section 7 gives concluding remarks.

2 RELATED WORK

The studies in [4], [11], [12] define routing metrics for load balancing in the multi-hop wireless network. The routing metrics there however require real-time traffic information. A routing algorithm is presented in [25] to minimize the delay and achieve load balancing. The metric of *expected transmission count* (ETX) is proposed in [14] to describe the channel contentions over a wireless link. The ETX works well in a homogeneous SR-SC environment, but can not describe the complex inter-/intra-flow interferences in the MR-MC context. The ETOP metric enhances the ETX by incorporating the impact of link positions [1].

The link metric of *expected transmission time* (ETT) and the associated path metric of *weighted cumulative ETT* (WCETT) are proposed in [6] for multi-channel mesh networks to enhance the ETX by counting the heterogeneous channel rate and capturing intra-flow interference, but the inter-flow interference is not considered. The metric of *interference and channel switching* (MIC) [7] incorporates both inter-flow and intra-flow interference, whereas it only considers the number of interfering nodes as the total amount of the inter-flow interference. A routing metric is designed for flow routing and fair bandwidth allocation in [7], with the inter-/intra-flow interferences considered. In [19], we propose a metric of *multi-hop effective bandwidth* (MHEB) to compute the achievable bandwidth when both inter- and intra-flow interferences are present. However, the MHEB metric uses only a simple weighted average to combine the inter- and intra-flow interference. The MRAB proposed in this paper is based on the MHEB, but applies a more accurate approach to capture the complex interplay between the two types of interference. A recent work [35] proposes new retransmission schemes for route discovery in wireless ad hoc networks, which are shown with the capability of finding better paths compared to existing

route discovery schemes used in DSR and AODV. It will be an interesting research topic to incorporate the proposed retransmission schemes with our routing protocol in MR-MC wireless networks.

Due to the space limit, we will review more literature in the supplementary file associated with this paper on queue length based routing, channel assignment in MR-MC networks, and DSR and AODV based implementations.

3 END-TO-END DELAY METRIC

The end-to-end delay over a path is the summation of delays experienced by all hops along the path. For convenience, we use EED to denote both the routing metric and the delay over an entire path; the meaning should be clear in the context. In order to compute the EED metric over a wireless channel, each node needs to monitor the number of packets waiting for the service in the buffer, as well as measure the transmission failure probability. The *transmission failure probability* is the probability that a MAC-layer transmission fails due to either collisions or poor channel quality. While counting the number of packets in the queue is straightforward, how to measure the transmission failure probability over a link is discussed in Section 5. The average delay D_i for a packet over link i consists of the queuing delay Y_i and the transmission delay T_i as

$$D_i = E[Y_i + T_i]. \tag{1}$$

The *transmission delay* can also be interpreted as the packet service time, which is defined as the period from the instant that a packet begins to be served by the MAC layer to the instant that it is either successfully transmitted or dropped after a predefined maximum number of retransmissions. The *queuing delay* is the time interval from the instant that a packet enters the queue to the instant that it starts being served (i.e., become the head of queue).

At the MAC layer, the transmission delay consists of not only the backoff delay but also the channel busy time due to transmissions from other nodes. Thus, the transmission delay is a metric capturing the interference at the sender side. To measure a transmission delay, the node needs to monitor the MAC layer buffer, recording the time when a packet becomes the head of the queue and the time when the same packet is transmitted or dropped. Let $T_{i,n}$ denote the nth MAC service time samples measured over link i. The average transmission delay over link i can be estimated by the exponential weighted moving average scheme [32] as

$$E[T_i] = (1 - \beta)E[T_i] + \beta T_{i,n} \quad 0 \le \beta \le 1. \tag{2}$$

If there are Q_i packets in the buffer when a new packet enters the queue of link i, the average delay over link i can be estimated as

$$D_i = (Q_i + 1)E[T_i] \tag{3}$$

which means that the total delay over a link equals queuing delay (i.e., the MAC service time of those packets queuing ahead of the new packet) plus the transmission delay (i.e., the MAC service time of the new packet itself). Note that

TABLE 1
Summary of main notations.

Notations	Descriptions
R_i	Interference degree ratio (IDR) over link i
$B_{IT,i}$	Achievable bandwidth under the inter-flow interference (ABITF) over link i
$B_{IR}(ij)$	Achievable bandwidth under the intra-flow interference (ABIRF) over link i and j
$B_A(ij)$	Available bandwidth under interference (ABI) over link i and j
B_{Sub}	ABI of a sub-path
D_i	Overall delay over link i
Q_i	Queue length of link i
T_i	Packet service time over link i
γ	SINR threshold for a successful transmission
$P_v(u)$	Received signal power at node v from node u
N	Received background noise power

the delay expression in (3) implies the memoryless property of the packet service time, as the head-of-line packet only needs to finish a residue packet service time when the new packet comes in. It is well-known that only an exponentially distributed service time has the memoryless property. It has been demonstrated in [28] that the MAC packet service time over 802.11 DCF can indeed be approximated by an exponential random variable.

Consider an end-to-end path including H hops, the EED metric of the path is defined as

$$\text{EED} = \sum_{i=1}^{H} D_i. \tag{4}$$

Note that the EED given in (4) does not capture the effect of co-channel interference in the multi-hop wireless networks under the assumption that all the packets can continuously go through the path hop-by-hop. However, in a multi-hop wireless network, if two links over the same channel are located close to each other, while one link is in transmission, the MAC protocol will freeze the other link. Such channel freezing can be due to either intra-flow transmissions or inter-flow transmissions, which result in extra delays in addition to the basic EED given in (4). In the following section, we discuss how to extend the EED to take account of the co-channel interference.

4 ACHIEVABLE BANDWIDTH OVER A MULTI-RADIO MULTI-CHANNEL PATH

In this section, we develop an algorithm to compute the achievable bandwidth along a multi-radio multi-channel path, termed as *multi-radio achievable bandwidth* (MRAB), by capturing the complex interplay between the inter-flow and intra-flow interference. The end-to-end delay over a multi-radio multi-channel path can be described more accurately by incorporating the MRAB metric into the EED computation to form a new metric *weighted end-to-end delay* (WEED). A byproduct of MRAB analysis is a *channel diversity coefficient* (CDC) defined to quantify the resource consumption along a multi-radio multi-channel path. For convenience, we summarize the main notations in Table 1.

4.1 Multi-Radio Multi-Channel System

Consider a wireless mesh network, where each node is equipped with one or more radio interfaces. The radio interfaces assigned with different channels, either at the same node or at different nodes, can be active simultaneously. Thus, the network throughput can be significantly improved as compared with a single-radio system [4]. The radio interfaces working on different channels form distinct interference topologies. We assume that the channel assignment is given and fixed, according to the discussion in Section 2. All the nodes are stationary, and any node can be used as a router. We consider that the WMN operates over the IEEE 802.11 based MAC, and assume that the routing control information exchanges among neighboring nodes are error free.

We utilize the physical interference model presented in [13] to describe the interference among different hops. Such an interference model indicates that a transmission from node u to node v is successful if the signal to interference and noise ratio (SINR) at receiver v is not less than a pre-determined threshold γ, i.e.,

$$\frac{P_v(u)}{N + \sum_{k:k \neq v} P_v(k)} \geq \gamma \qquad (5)$$

where N denotes the received background noise power, $P_v(u)$ the received signal power at node v from node u, and $P_v(k)$ the interference power from a different transmitting node k.

4.2 Multi-Radio Achievable Bandwidth

4.2.1 Inter-flow interference

We first compute the *achievable bandwidth under the inter-flow interference* (ABITF) over link i, denoted as $B_{IT,i}$. Every node can monitor the received power to estimate the magnitude of the inter-flow interference around its neighborhood. Based on the interference model (5), the SINR threshold implicitly denotes the maximum interference power that a node can tolerate to obtain a successful communication. We define the *interference degree ratio* (IDR), R_i, for link i between node u and v as

$$R_i = \frac{\sum_{k:k \neq v} P_v(k)}{P_v^I(u)}. \qquad (6)$$

where $P_v^I(u) = \frac{P_v(u)}{\gamma} - N$ is the maximum tolerable interference power at node v to receive the signal from node u based on (5), and $\sum_{k:k \neq v} P_v(k)$ is the total power of undesired signals at node v. The ratio reflects the utilization of the channel assigned to link i. Note that if there is no interference, the IDR is 0, implying that the entire bandwidth of this channel is available for link i. On the contrary, an IDR of 1 indicates that the channel has been fully occupied by other links, and no residual bandwidth is available for link i until the ratio gets smaller than 1. Based on this definition, we evaluate the ABITF [1] at link i as

$$B_{IT,i} = \frac{(1 - R_i)B_i}{\text{ETX}_i} \qquad (7)$$

1. Note that the term ABITF does not strictly represent the bandwidth, but is a metric reflecting the impact of interference power on the available bandwidth. The accurate computation of achievable bandwidth B incurs non-linear computation according to the Shannon formula.

where B_i denotes the channel bandwidth of link i, and ETX_i [14] denotes the *expected number of transmission attempts* to achieve a successful transmission over link i. The product $(1 - R_i) \cdot B_i$ indicates the available bandwidth for a transmission under the inter-flow interference. Equation (7) expresses the net bandwidth usage under the transmission failure probability p_i, considering a successful transmission needs ETX_i attempts on average.

It is noteworthy that the calculation in (6) and (7) take account of the interference on the receiver side (i.e., measuring the received power and estimating the SINR). The delay analysis introduced in Section 3 essentially captures the interference at the sender side.

The measurement of the interference degree ratio in (6) is according to the physical interference model. In 802.11 system, RSSI is the relative received signal strength in a wireless environment. Different vendors provide their own accuracy and mapping between RSSI value and actual received power. With RSSI, the packet SNR can then readily be computed using NIC noise measurements [33]. Furthermore, in MadWiFi [34], which is a configurable wireless card driver widely used, the reported RSSI for each packet is actually equivalent to the Signal-to-Noise Ratio (SNR). In addition, it is possible for a receiver to obtain the transmission power and the path loss from the desired transmitter through message exchange and channel monitoring, and thus calculate the signal power at the receiver [36], [37]. Based on the SINR measured by the wireless card, the receiver could then estimate the interference power received by deducting the signal and noise from the total receiving power. Estimating signal power is not a trivial issue though. In static wireless networks, the studies in [38] and [39] develop methods to measure the signal power at a receiver by scheduling the RSSI measurement at interference free time instances. In fact, how to accurately estimate the interference power is still an open research issue [40], [41]. Our routing protocol design provides an application which further demonstrates the importance of interference estimation.

4.2.2 Intra-flow interference

Along a path, the links close to and interfering with each other cannot transmit simultaneously, which is termed as intra-flow interference. We consider a 802.11-based interference model in which a successful transmission requires that both the transmitter node and the receiver node should be outside the interference range of other active transmitters and receivers. Assume that the transmission range of a node is *one hop*, while the interference range is r (≥ 1) hops. We define a new concept of *sub-path*: along a path, a sub-path starting from a given link consists of all the consecutive links that will interfere with each other if tuned to the same channel. An example is illustrated in Fig. 2. Suppose that there is only one channel. If r is 1, links AB, BC and CD interfere with each other under the 802.11-based interference model and therefore form a sub-path. In general, given an interference range r, a sub-path spans $r + 2$ hops under the 802.11-based interference model and an H-hop path contains $H - r - 1$ sub-paths.

Considering the impact of intra-flow interference, a sub-path is equivalent to a virtual link, as a new packet can enter
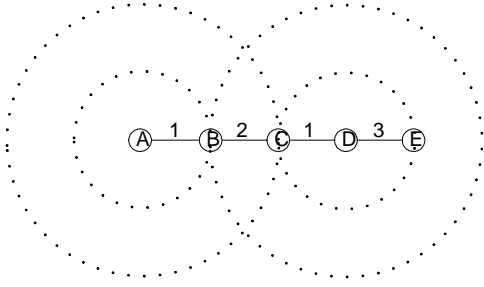
Fig. 2. Example of interference in a multi-radio multi-channel path.

a sub-path only after the previous one leaves. The achievable bandwidth over a sub-path can be iteratively obtained from the achievable bandwidth over two interfering links. For example, consider two consecutive co-channel links i and j within a sub-path, and links i and j have bandwidth B_i and B_j, respectively. Let L be the packet size. Since the two links cannot be active simultaneously, the equivalent *achievable bandwidth under the intra-flow interference* (ABIRF) over links i and j, denoted as $B_{IR}(ij)$, satisfies

$$\frac{L}{B_{IR}(ij)} = \frac{L}{B_i} + \frac{L}{B_j}. \tag{8}$$

It can then be obtained that

$$B_{IR}(ij) = \frac{B_i B_j}{B_i + B_j}. \tag{9}$$

Extending the $B_{IR}(ij)$ result to the whole sub-path can be iteratively implemented: In each iteration, consider those links that have been processed as one virtual link whose bandwidth equals to the ABIRF value already obtained, and then apply the computation of (9) over the virtual link and the next-hop link. Note that the impact of inter-flow interference on link capacity can be conveniently integrated with the intra-flow interference to obtain an aggregate *available bandwidth under interference* (ABI) by using the ABITF computation (7) as the link capacity in the place of physical bandwidth B. Specifically, the ABI over links i and j, denoted as $B_A(ij)$, is given by

$$
\begin{aligned}
B_A(ij) &= \frac{B_{IT,i} B_{IT,j}}{B_{IT,i} + B_{IT,j}} \\
&= \frac{(1 - R_i)(1 - R_j) B_i B_j}{(1 - R_i) B_i \mathrm{ETX}_j + (1 - R_j) B_j \mathrm{ETX}_i}.
\end{aligned} \tag{10}
$$

4.2.3 *Multi-radio achievable bandwidth*

The multi-radio multi-channel connection makes the capacity analysis of a sub-path more complicated. When two links work on different channels through different radio interfaces, they can send/receive packets simultaneously without interference. It is possible that the two end-hops of a sub-path are co-channel links, while other hops in the middle may work on different channels. The iterative procedure discussed above to compute the ABI for a co-channel sub-path can also be extended to the multi-channel sub-path. The achievable bandwidth over two consecutive links i and j is $\min(B_i, B_j)$, if they are assigned with different channels (according to Subsection 4.1, we assume the channel assignment scheme will

choose different radios to enable simultaneous transmissions over different channels). Specifically, the iterative steps to compute the *ABI for a sub-path* (ABSUB), denoted as B_{Sub}, are as follows:

Step 1: For the first link l of the sub-path, set B_{Sub} equal to $B_{IT,l}$ associated with the channel on which the link works.

Step 2: Go to the next link in this sub-path, say link i, and check whether the channel assigned to link i is used by any of previous links in this sub-path. If yes, go to step 4; otherwise go to step 3.

Step 3: Set

$$B_{Sub} = \min(B_{Sub}, B_{IT,i}) \tag{11}$$

and go to step 5.

Step 4: Set

$$B_{Sub} = \frac{B_{Sub} B_{IT,i}}{B_{Sub} + B_{IT,i}} \tag{12}$$

and go to step 5.

Step 5: If this is the last link of the sub-path, terminate the iteration; otherwise, go to step 2.

For any H-hop path including multiple sub-paths, let $B_{Sub,j}$ denote the achievable bandwidth over the jth sub-path. The multi-radio achievable bandwidth can be computed by

$$\mathrm{MRAB} = \min_j \left(B_{Sub,j} \right) \tag{13}$$

for $j = 1, 2, ..., H - r - 1$. If $H - r - 1 \leq 0$, we set $j = 1$, which means the path is short so that there is only one sub-path along the whole path. The computation in (13) exploits the bottleneck concept, but is applied at the sub-path level instead of the link level.

4.3 WEED Metric

In order to evaluate the delay performance over a multi-radio multi-channel path, the MRAB metric is integrated with the EED metric to form a *weighted end-to-end delay* (WEED) metric, given by

$$\mathrm{WEED} = \alpha \sum_{i=1}^{H} D_i + (1 - \alpha) \frac{N_P L}{\mathrm{MRAB}} \tag{14}$$

where $0 \leq \alpha \leq 1$ is tunable weight factor, and N_P denotes the total number of packets in the buffers along the path. Recall that L is the packet size. The WEED is a versatile metric, which comprehensively describes the impact on delay due to the factors including network topology, link quality, MAC collisions, interference, and channel/space diversity. The first term of WEED incorporates the transmission and queueing delay considering link quality, MAC collision, and hop count. The second term describes the impact due to intra-/inter-flow interference in the MR-MC context.

The weighted average scheme in WEED is a heuristic operation. Although the two terms of WEED represent delay effect in a complementary manner, they are not in a simple additive relationship. The weighted average based on the tunable parameter α offers the flexibility to adjust the routing

metric according to the context. We discuss the impact and selection of α using simulation results in Section 6. Another perspective to interpret the WEED metric is that it contains not only the end-to-end delay information regarding a single packet transmission, but also the transmission delay for a block of packets due to the bottleneck bandwidth MRAB. Therefore, selecting a shortest path based on the WEED metric tends to minimize both the short-term and the long-term delay.

Remark 1: It is indicated in [5] that monotonicity is one of necessary properties of a routing metric for the consistent and loop-free routing implementation. For example, the well-known WCETT metric [6] is monotonic. It can be proved that WEED is also monotonic metric by showing that the two terms in (14) are both non-decreasing with an increasing number of hops. Due to the limited space, we omit the details here, which can be found in the conference version [16].

4.4 Channel Diversity Coefficient

A challenging issue being widely studied in the area of multi-channel wireless networks is how to quantify the channel diversity for a given path. Channel diversity is a kind of performance gain compared to a single channel scenario, produced by assigning different channels to different links within a path so that they can be active simultaneously. The fact of achieving the channel diversity gain is that multiple-channel assignment breaks the whole collision domain in the single channel context to multiple separate ones, each over a unique channel. Each separate domain then has a smaller number of entities contending for the channel, thus a smaller collision probability. The more channels are used along a path, the less number of links share the same channel. Intuitively, an ideal quantity describing the channel diversity should capture various aspects, including the number of hops, the number of channels, and the interference relationship among the links. Our approach has demonstrated that the MRAB metric indeed takes all these factors into account. Therefore, we define a *channel diversity coefficient* (CDC) based on the MRAB as

$$\text{CDC} = \frac{\text{MRAB}}{B_s} \qquad (15)$$

where B_s denotes the achievable bandwidth of a path, according to the algorithm in Section 4.2.3, if all links of the path work on the same channel, named as the *single-channel path capacity*. For convenience of comparison, we choose the minimum ABITF value among all links in a path as the link capacity when computing single-channel path capacity B_s. Thus, the CDC is always larger than or equal to 1, and the higher CDC the better the channel diversity. The readers can refer to [16] for an example on the WEED and CDC calculation and how the CDC can indicate the channel diversity effect.

4.5 Implementation Issues

4.5.1 *Update interval*

It is obvious that both EED and WEED heavily depend on the queue length information, so they can be viewed as a load sensitive metric. Similar to other load sensitive metrics, the

re-routing process is necessary by updating the traffic status (backlog information in this paper) and re-calculating the route to avoid congestion in the network. The route update interval is a critical factor, balancing the tradeoff between performance and the overhead. On one hand, over-frequent updates exceeding the timescale of network status changes incur unnecessary overhead. On the other hand, an inappropriate large update interval will prevent the route from timely tracing the network status, and the network may experience degraded performance in terms of delay or packet loss due to untimely backlog updates. We investigate the impact of update time intervals through simulation in Section 6.

It is noteworthy that routing oscillation is a cost inherent to the load balancing in routing. The traffic engineering technique can not completely remove the routing oscillation but can mitigate the impact of routing oscillation. With Multi-Protocol Label Switching (MPLS) technique, the path for a traffic flow will be fixed by the virtual circuit technique, so all packets of this traffic flow will flow the same path and arrive at the destination in order. The load balancing will be implemented as assigning paths (virtual circuits) to traffic flows based on the EED routing metric.

4.5.2 *Impact of queue length*

Besides the update interval, the queue length information itself affects the estimation of queuing delay for the EED and WEED metrics as well. The instantaneous queue length changes rapidly. If we directly use it to estimate the queuing delay, frequent rerouting might be incurred. To prevent this problem, we maintain a weighted average queue length at each node, denoted as $\bar{Q}$, and use this weighted average value as the backlog information instead of instantaneous sample value for the EED computation. Specifically, each node samples the instantaneous queue length according to a schedule, and let Q_n denote the nth sample. The average queue length $\bar{Q}$ by incorporating the instantaneous queue length Q_n, according to the exponential weighted moving average scheme [32], is

$$\bar{Q} = (1 - \beta) \cdot \bar{Q} + \beta \cdot Q_n. \qquad (16)$$

5 ROUTING PROTOCOL DESIGN

We design a routing protocol to implement the EED and WEED metrics in a multi-radio multi-channel network. Different from our previous work [16], we choose the *hop-by-hop routing* instead of *source routing*. The hop-by-hop routing has the advantages in reducing overhead, facilitating accurate delay estimation, and enabling distributed implementation in an MR-MC network, referring to the discussion in Section 1. Specifically, we extend the basic AODV protocol to implement the WEED based routing protocol in an MR-MC network. Each radio acts as an independent entity in the routing process. Each radio exchanges information with its neighbors, estimates the transmission failure probability of a link, and manages the routing table by calculating the WEED metric of the segment from source to itself. Assume that the channel assignment is given and time invariant. Due to the page limit, we present all the implementation details in the supplementary file associated with this paper. There, we first summarize the basic AODV
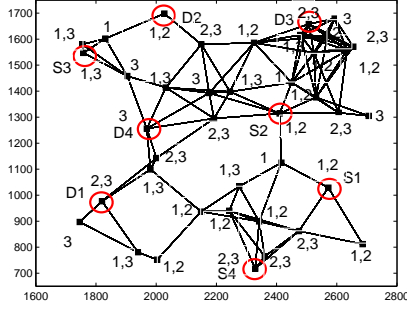
Fig. 3. The random topology.

operation, and then present the details of extending the basic AODV to achieve a WEED-based routing protocol for MR-MC networks. In addition, we discuss the overhead introduced in protocol implementation.

6 PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

In this section, we evaluate the performance of the new routing protocol, which is based on the EED and WEED metrics, in both SR-SC and MR-MC contexts. We consider a random topology as shown in Fig. 3, where 40 nodes are randomly placed in a $1000m \times 1000m$ area with necessary adjustment to maintain the connectivity.[2] We use the popular tool NS2 [24] to conduct our simulations. The transmission power of each node is set to give a transmission range of 250m and the carrier sensing threshold is set to give an interference range of 550m. We run 4 multi-hop flows over the network. The source and destination nodes for flow i $(i = 1, 2, 3, 4)$ are denoted as S_i and D_i respectively. Over each channel, the 802.11 DCF MAC protocol is simulated with the RTS/CTS mechanism disabled. Each channel has the capacity of 11 Mbps and the packet size is 1000 bytes.[3] The HELLO message is broadcast every 5 seconds to estimate the link quality. The parameter α is set to 0.5 if not specifically mentioned. In the simulation, we by default use the user datagram protocol (UDP) traffic for performance evaluation. We also investigate the performance with transmission control protocol (TCP) traffic, where we will specifically indicate the traffic type.

With a specified flow rate r, we generate random traffic arrivals using uniformly distributed packet inter-arrival times with the mean value of $1/r$. In each experiment, we repeat the simulation 100 times to obtain the average performance and the 95% confidence interval. We conduct a comprehensive simulation study to investigate the performance of our routing protocol. Due to the page limit, studies of the impact of α, impact of β and channel diversity result are presented in the supplementary file associated with this paper.

2. In the conference version of this work [16], we also consider a grid topology. Performance evaluations for the grid topology is not included in this paper due to the page limit. All the insights revealed from the random topology apply to the grid topology too.

3. In the conference version [16], the channel capacity and packet size are set as 1 Mbps and 512 bytes, respectively. In this paper, we consider the higher-rate situation to better demonstrate the impact of queueing delay and the throughput performance, when the network is close to saturation.
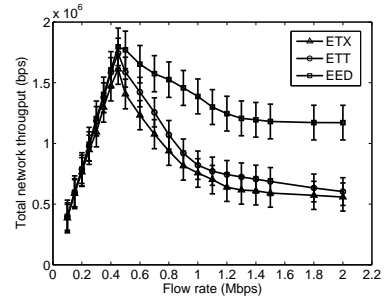
(a) Total network throughput
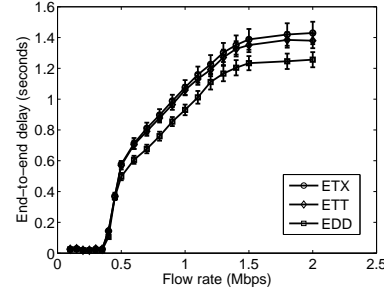
(b) Average end-to-end delay

Fig. 4. The routing performance versus flow rate.

Currently, there is no existing package in NS2 to implement the routing protocol in the multi-radio multi-channel environment. The only reference known to us is [31], based on which we extend the NS2 package for a multi-radio multi-channel network. Specifically, we add several functionalities to the network simulation architecture developed in [31] for radio-based operations including message exchanging, routing metric calculation, and routing table management. Moreover, we implement the physical interference model in the channel class in NS2 by assuming that the transmission power is the same at all nodes.

6.1 EED-based Routing in SR-SC Context

The EED metric by itself can be used as an efficient routing metric in the SR-SC context, since it effectively captures not only the queuing delay but also the transmission delay at the MAC layer. We present the average performance along with confidence interval of EED in comparison with the well-known metrics ETT and ETX.

The throughput performance is shown in Fig. 4. The buffer size at each node is 50 packets, and the route update interval is set as 20 seconds. Both EED and ETT outperform the ETX metric in terms of throughput and delay, since ETT and EDD take account of the link bandwidth and transmission failure probability when computing the path, while ETX only addresses the latter. Specifically, the queuing delay is negligible under light traffic, therefore EED and ETT are almost equivalent since they both exploit the transmission failure probability and bandwidth for each link at the MAC layer. While ETX addresses only the transmission failure probability, it is not as accurate as EED and ETT in path selection. Once the network becomes congested (i.e., with heavy traffic larger than 0.6 Mbps), the queuing delay takes a larger portion of end-to-end delay. In this case, EED is preferred to ETT and

(a) Total network throughput
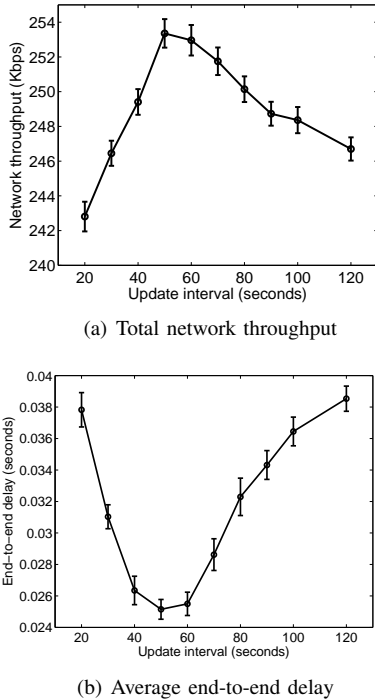

(b) Average end-to-end delay

Fig. 5. The impact of EED update interval on routing performance.

ETX since it takes queuing delay into account during the path selection phase.

Another interesting observation is that the network throughput under all the three routing metrics first increases linearly with the flow rate when the network is lightly loaded, but then starts degrading when the flow rate increases exceeding a certain level. Correspondingly, the delay is almost 0 before input rate exceeds 0.4 Mbps, and then it starts increasing rapidly. Such phenomenon reflects that the network becomes congested with the input per-flow rate larger than 0.4 Mbps and the congestion has a more severe impact on the queuing delay than the throughput. In the literature, the performance turning point is termed as the *optimal operation point* [18], [21] which indicates the capacity region of an 802.11-based wireless network. It is further shown in [15] that the optimal operation point is independent of the implementation details of the CSMA/CA protocols. Thus, we observe the similar optimal operation points for all three routing metrics.

6.2 The Impact of Route Update Interval

We next examine the impact of the route update interval on the routing performance in a single channel context. The basic idea of rerouting is to redistribute traffic within the network according to traffic dynamics. Traffic dynamics can be observed at different time scales. At the packet level (time scale of sub-second), a specific random process can be used to model the packet arrival process. At the bursty chunk level (time scale of second), traffic can be generated according to alternate on/off periods, for example, in a voice or video traffic flow [23]. At the traffic flow level (time scale of tens of seconds), the flow or call arrivals and departures obviously change the traffic load. The existing traffic engineering studies for both wire-line

and wireless networks [22], [23] have suggested a route update interval at the time scale corresponding to call level dynamics.

To demonstrate the impact of route update interval, we particularly set up bursty traffic flows with exponential on/off periods, where the average on and off durations are 1 second and 1.5 seconds, respectively, and traffic rate in each on period is 0.4 Mbps. At the flow level, S1 and S2 maintain active during the simulation, while S3 and S4 periodically join and leave the network. Both S3 and S4 use an exponential inter-arrival time with the average of 100 seconds and an exponential flow duration time with the average of 100 seconds. The buffer size at each node is limited to 200 packets. Each source node incurs rerouting based on the route update interval.

Fig. 5 shows the network throughput and the end-to-end delay versus different update intervals. Both inappropriately small and large intervals result in low throughput and large delay. On one hand, an inappropriately small update interval induces over-frequent link metric updates and results in a large messaging overhead. On the other hand, an inappropriately large update interval does not respond to a congested link in a timely manner and results in a longer waiting time in the buffer or even unnecessary packet loss due to the limited buffer size. From Fig. 5, we can observe that route update interval for the optimal performance does show at the time scale of tens of seconds, corresponding to call level dynamics as suggested by existing traffic engineering works [22], [23]. In the following experiments, we always set route update interval at 50 seconds.

6.3 Routing Performance in MR-MC Context

We also run simulations in the MR-MC context to compare the routing performance under the WEED metric to that under the WCETT metric. The channel assignment scheme is given in Fig. 3. There are 3 available channels and each node is equipped with either 1 or 2 radios. The numbers associated with each node indicate the channels assigned to the node. The physical bandwidth per-channel is set to 11 Mbps for all channels. The tunable parameter α in (14) is set to 0.5, so EED and MRAB have the same importance in the path selection.

We get two important observations from Fig. 6: 1) The WEED outperforms the WCETT in terms of throughput and delay as expected under a congested network (i.e., per-flow rate larger than 0.6 Mbps). The WEED can redirect the traffic to lightly loaded paths according to the queuing delay, thus relieve the congestion. Fig. 6(c) shows that the packet delivery ratio under WEED is considerably better than that under WCETT when the network is intermediately loaded or heavily loaded. Further, the increment of throughput slows down when the per-flow rate keeps increasing, especially when the rate is larger than 0.8 Mbps. The reason is that, even with a higher input rate, the packet loss frequently takes place at nodes due to the limited buffer size, which prevents throughput from increasing. This fact also implies that the network is approaching its maximum achievable throughput; 2) We achieve better throughput performance with multiple radios and channels than that in the SR-SC scenario, comparing Fig. 6(a) to Fig. 4(a). However, the throughput is not three times of that in the SR-SC context, though there are 3 available channels. There are two main reasons. One is that the channel
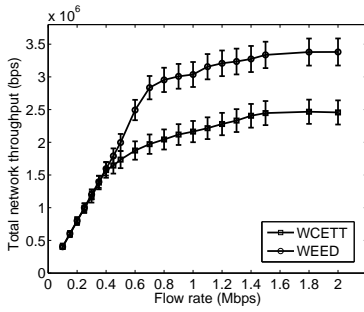
(a) Total network throughput
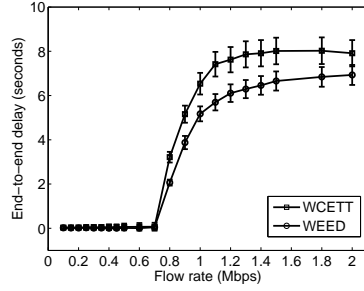
(b) Average end-to-end delay
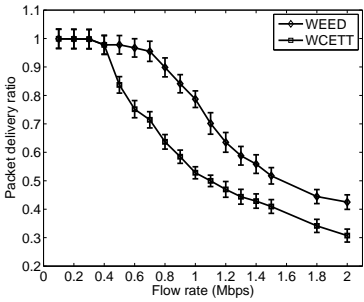
(c) Packet delivery ratio

Fig. 6. The routing performance versus flow rate.

Fig. 7. Network throughput with 3 radios and 6 channels.

assignment is static, thus a node cannot dynamically switch to other channels for better throughput. The other is that some nodes have only one radio interface, which restricts the full utilization of all 3 channels. Note that the network arrives at the peak throughput around 0.4 Mbps for the input rate in a single channel scenario, but keeps increasing even at the input rate higher than 1.4 Mbps in the multi-channel context. This further demonstrates that an MR-MC network can accommodate a much larger amount of network traffic than its SR-SC counterpart. It is noteworthy that the delay is supposed to keep increasing with the increment of input rate; however, the curves in Fig. 6(b) become flat, because we only count those packets which successfully arrive at the destination when computing the end-to-end delay. The packets dropped at intermediate nodes are not taken into account for delay calculation, and therefore the delay tends to keep steady even if more packets are dropped at intermediate nodes due to a large input rate. We also present the network throughput performance in Fig. 7 with 6 channels and 3 radios to show that the WEED metric consistently perform better than WCETT with more channels and radios available.

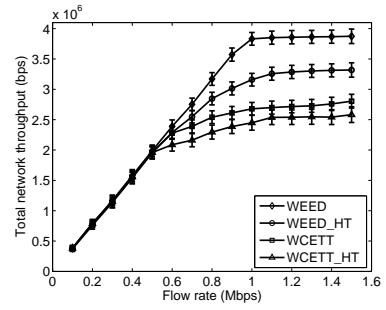Comparing Fig. 6(b) to Fig. 4(b), we can see that delay

performance degrades in the MR-MC context, which are due to the two factors. One is that the short path between source and destination node may be cut off due to the channel assignment, and a longer path will be used. The other is that it takes a longer time in the MR-MC context to search for a better path in each route discovery operation. Specifically, during the route discovery phase, a source node may send out multiple RREQs through different radios, and each RREQ may traverse a couple of paths since any intermediate node broadcasts the RREQ through all its radios.

We also investigate the performance of the proposed routing protocol with heterogenous ranges, which is shown in Fig. 7, denoted as WCETT_HT and WEED_HT. We randomly change the transmission power of each radio in NS2, and maintain the same threshold. Therefore, different radios have different communication and interference ranges. It can be seen that there is about 15% throughput loss for WEED with heterogenous ranges. The reason for such performance loss is that homogeneous interference range is assumed in calculating the achievable bandwidth, which may overestimate the actual available bandwidth with the heterogenous ranges. Note that the WCETT performance decreases less than 10 %. In other words, WCETT is more robust to the heterogeneous case. This is because WCETT assumes all links within a path interfere with each other, i.e., WCETT selects the path based on a conservative interference estimation.

We further investigate the performance with TCP traffic, where the random topology and channel assignment scheme in Fig. 3 is used. Fig. 8 shows the result. WCETT and WEED have much better throughput than ETT and EDD, because ETT and EDD do not account for the multi-channel interference. Since TCP applies both the congestion control and flow control, the input rate of each flow is automatically controlled within the capacity region. The receiver window does not increase until the acknowledgement for current packet is successfully received. Unlike the UDP, TCP traffic leads to a lower throughput, but can guarantee a high delivery ratio. This is the reason that WCETT and WEED achieve a very similar throughput under TCP.

7 CONCLUSION

In this paper, we aim at designing link/path metrics that can lead to path selection with the minimum end-to-end delay and a high network throughput in the multi-radio multi-channel wireless network. The key contributions are in three aspects:
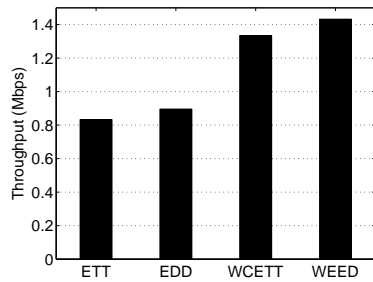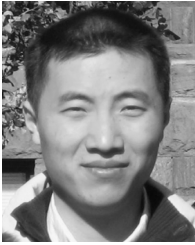
Fig. 8. Throughput with TCP traffic.

1) Both the queuing delay and transmission delay at the MAC layer are incorporated into the EED link metric computation; 2) A generic iterative approach is developed to compute the achievable bandwidth over a multi-radio multi-channel path, which captures the complex interaction among hop count, channel assignment, and inter/intra flow interference to form the WEED path metric; 3) A practical routing protocol is designed based on AODV to implement the EED/WEED metric. Each node can independently make the routing decision, thus reducing the communication overhead and improving the efficiency. We demonstrate the efficiency of the EED/WEED based routing via extensive NS2 simulation results.

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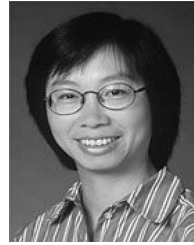
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Supplementary Material: Routing Metrics for Minimizing End-to-End Delay in Multi-Radio Multi-Channel Wireless Networks

Hongkun Li, Yu Cheng, Chi Zhou and Weihua Zhuang

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APPENDIX

1 RELATED WORK

This section reviews more literatures on the routing in multi-radio multi-channel wireless network.

In the MR-MC context, routing is coupled with channel assignment, scheduling and flow control. Some existing works [2], [20] formulate the optimization problem to jointly solve these issues. However, these formulations are NP-hard, and require centralized computation based on the time-slotted system, which is not applicable in a distributed system. Developing a distributed routing protocol for joint performance optimization is still an open issue [10]. For simplicity, most existing studies on routing in the MR-MC networks [6], [7], [11] assume the static channel assignment. We also take the assumption of static channel assignment, and will deal with the dynamic channel assignment in our future work. In this paper, the path with a shorter queuing delay is preferred to alleviate the network congestion. Backlog information is often used in dynamic network management. The longest queue first scheduling algorithm [8]–[10] has been proved as throughput-optimal, where links with longer queues are served with higher priority to mitigate congestions. Our routing metric exploiting queue information has the same spirit to avoid congestion. Moreover, Ren *et al.* utilize the queue length information to design the routing algorithm, and demonstrates the effectiveness of the routing algorithm [26].

The existing routing protocols for wireless networks and the metrics therein are not efficient for optimizing the performance of MR-MC networks. Most of DSR or AODV based routing protocols support only additive routing metrics. That is, a path metric is the summation of link metrics. However, an efficient routing metric for an MR-MC network, such as WCETT [6] and WEED as discussed in this paper, is not additive. There exist limited works on designing routing protocol particularly for the MR-MC networks. In [6], the MR-LQSR protocol is developed, where a new layer (called MAC connectivity layer) is created between the network layer and MAC layer. However, implementation of the MR-LQSR protocol requires modification on the standard network architecture. A load and interference balanced routing algorithm is proposed in [7],

where a virtual network is generated and metric decomposition is performed, leading to a complex implementation. We design a WEED-based routing protocol by extending the AODV protocol, which has the advantages of supporting the standard network architecture and the non-additive routing metrics.

2 ROUTING PROTOCOL DESIGN

In this section, we present the details of the new routing protocol to implement WEED metric. As stated in the main file, we apply the AODV based routing protocol.

2.1 Basic AODV Operation

With AODV, each router resorts to a distance vector algorithm to configure its routing table. The routing information exchanged among routers is represented as distance vectors which indicate the source-destination pair, the previous-hop node, and the distance already traveled towards the destination node. The source node of a flow initiates a route discovery process if its routing table does not have a distance vector yet to the destination. In the route discovery phase, the source broadcasts a Route Request (RREQ) message to its neighbors to acquire routing information. The RREQ message contains the destination address, the address of the requestor node, the address of the latest node processing the RREQ, and the distance from the source to the latest node. Each node receiving a fresh RREQ message updates its routing table according to the distance vector, particularly modifying the routing entry destined to the RREQ requestor, and then rebroadcasts the RREQ. Such procedure continues until the RREQ reaches the destination node. The destination node selects the path with the best metric value based on the distance vectors carried by the RREQ messages; further it determines the next-hop node that is closest to the source in the reverse path and unicasts a Route Reply (RREP) message to the source node through that node. Upon receiving an RREP, an intermediate node creates or updates the routing entry to the RREP source (i.e., the flow destination associated with the RREQ) and then forwards the RREP to the source node along the reverse path. When the RREP message reaches the source node, the route discovery phase ends. Note that each node updates its routing table only upon receiving an RREQ or RREP message. Otherwise, a node just forwards data based on its routing table.

2.2 Extending AODV to MR-MC Context

2.2.1 Radio interface based implementation

Though each node may have several radios, we maintain only one routing table for each node regardless of how many radios it has. Each node updates the routing entry based on path weight contained in the RREQ or RREP message. Each radio interface is considered as an independent entity for all operations in the routing, such as probing, maintaining neighbor list and creating/updating the routing entry. Each node is assigned with a unique node IP address, and each radio interface of a node is identified with a *radio index number* (RIN). A radio interface on a node can then be uniquely identified in term of a *node-radio tuple* (IP, RIN) and used as the basic operation unit. The routing entries in the routing table are therefore indexed by (IP, RIN) tuple.

2.2.2 EED metric

The EED metric itself can be used as a routing metric. In the SR-SC context, each node periodically broadcasts HELLO messages to its one-hop neighbors. Such messages can be used as probes to estimate the transmission failure probability, which is used to compute the inter-flow interference (7) [1]; the backlog information and the average service time are also carried in each HELLO message. Each node maintains a neighbor list to record the information extracted from the HELLO messages for EED computation. In an MR-MC network, each radio independently broadcasts HELLO messages on its operating channel, listens to the HELLO messages from neighbors on the same channel, manages the neighbor list (each neighbor is represented as an (IP, RIN) tuple), and estimates the transmission failure probability. Details on how to compute EED metric and estimate the transmission failure probability (or correspondingly the successful transmission probability) from the Hello messages are presented in Section 2.3.3.

2.2.3 Route discovery

In an MR-MC network, a broadcast message may reach an intermediate node through the same set of nodes but different radios. An example is given in Fig. 1, where the number associated with a link denotes the operating channel. The paths from S to D go through the same nodes (node A, B and C); however, from S to B, there are 4 distinct paths using different channels (e.g. a path from S to A on channel 1 and A to B on channel 2). Therefore, a new mechanism is required to correctly differentiate various paths and the freshness of control message. In particular, each RREQ will be differentiated by unique broadcast ID and node-radio tuple (IP, RIN) of the source node.

2.2.4 WEED calculation

The central part of the new protocol is to compute the WEED metric. As a distributed implementation, each node needs to compute the WEED value of the segment from the source to itself. For such a purpose, we define two new fields in the

1. all the equation indice in this document refer to the equations in the main file
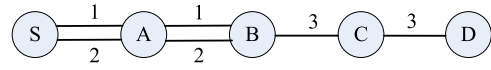

Fig. 1. Illustration of a multi-radio multi-channel path.

RREQ and RREP messages to indicate the channel assignment information and the ABITF value, respectively, over each previous hop. The two fields will be used to compute the MRAB value by the iterative algorithm given in Subsection 4.2. With the MRAB and EED values, the WEED metric can be obtained.

2.2.5 Route update

In traditional AODV, the major reason for route updates is link failures. Our protocol exploits queue length information to search paths with better performance. Each node-radio tuple maintains its queue length information. In order to adjust the routing decision according to the network status, each source node incurs a rerouting process according to a *route update interval*. The route update interval needs to be properly determined to balance the tradeoff among the rerouting messaging overhead, route stability, and timely routing adaption. We investigate the impact of update interval on the system performance in Section 6.

Remark 1: It should be emphasized that our routing metric developed in Section 4 is protocol independent, although we here specifically design an AODV-based implementation. Given the network topology, interference model, MAC protocol, the approach presented in Section 4 is a generic method to achieve a routing metric that can properly capture the delay, taking the impact of inter-/intra-flow interference and space/channel diversity into consideration. The AODV-based protocol is just one way for nodes to exchange necessary messages in a distributed manner to find a proper path based on the routing metric. In Section 1, we discuss the advantages of AODV-based implementation over the DSR-based protocol. Pursuing more effective distributed protocol design than the AODV-based one can be an interesting future topic.

Remark 2: For mathematical tractability, we make the assumption of homogeneous ranges when developing the iterative method to compute the achievable bandwidth of a path. However, our protocol design can be also used in the case of heterogenous ranges. In practice, a sender node sends out data according to its transmission power. A receiver measures the received power and compares it with the pre-determined threshold (e.g., receiver sensitivity) to decide whether or not the signal is decodable and whether or not it is the interference. Such implementation is independent of the mathematical modeling. Efficient routing in the heterogenous context (for both SR-SC and MR-MC networks) deserves further in-depth studies.

2.3 WEED over a Multi-Radio Path

Each routing entry consists of destination node-radio tuple (IP, RIN), next-hop node-radio tuple (IP, RIN), the operating interface/channel to the next hop, and the WEED value to the destination. We only consider the single path routing here,

and it is not difficult to extend our protocol to the multi-path routing. Note that, in the MR-MC context, the single path means only one path is allowed between any two (IP, RIN) tuples. At the radio level, there may exist multiple paths between a pair of source-destination nodes through the same set of nodes, as illustrated in Figure 1. The routing table maintains the path with the smallest WEED value. The routing table is probably updated upon receiving an RREQ or RREP message. Since the source (IP, RIN) tuple is contained in the RREQ or RREP, any intermediate node can conveniently check whether there is a path between the source (IP, RIN) tuple and its receiving (IP, RIN) tuple. The following are the main procedures of the new routing protocol.

2.3.1   RREQ operation

The source broadcasts an RREQ through all its radio interfaces at the beginning of route discovery phase. Each RREQ message carries the source (IP, RIN) tuple and a broadcast sequence number. Each radio interface maintains a broadcast ID, and increases it by 1 for each new RREQ. When an intermediate node receives an RREQ, it will create (for a new (IP, RIN) tuple) and update (for a smaller WEED value) reversed route destined at the source (IP, RIN) tuple in the RREQ message. The intermediate node rebroadcasts the RREQ only if the message has changed its routing table. Before rebroadcasting the RREQ through each radio interface, the forwarding node appends the channel on which it receives the RREQ to the channel usage field, inserts the latest ABITF value into the ABITF filed, and sets its (IP, RIN) tuple as the previous (IP, RIN) tuple. Duplicated RREQ messages received by a node (which can be identified through the source (IP, RIN) tuple and the sequence number) will be discarded.[2] How to compute the WEED value is to be discussed later.

2.3.2   RREP operation

The RREP operation is similar to that of RREQ except that RREP is unicast transmission. An RREP packet will go through the path that the RREQ traverses, just in the reverse direction. Each forwarding node-radio tuple identifies the next hop tuple (i.e., the previous hop in the RREQ forwarding) in the RREP packet before transmission. Only if an intermediate tuple is the desired next hop, it will process the RREP; otherwise, it will discard the RREP. Upon receiving the RREP, the forwarding tuple first establishes or updates the entry to the source of RREP depending on whether there is an entry destined at the source of RREP or the new WEED value is smaller than the existing metric value. Then it looks up the routing table to decide the next hop and the operating channel, and sets itself as the previous hop. The exchange of Hello message and the RREQ operation guarantee that any intermediate tuple can find the appropriate routing entry to the RREP destination (i.e., the RREQ source).

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2. Though doing this may miss the optimal route due to the non-isotonic property of WEED, we need to reduce redundant broadcasts in the network, as the redundant broadcast can result in large overhead and significantly impacts the protocol efficiency in practice.

2.3.3   EED implementation

We consider that a directed link is defined by an upstream end and a downstream end, and the two-way communications between two neighbor node-radio tuples is through two directional links. To obtain the EED link metric, a downstream tuple needs to know the number of packets in the upstream tuple's buffer and the average service time (i.e., transmission delay) for a packet. In our routing protocol, each tuple periodically broadcasts the probe packets (i.e., Hello messages) to its one-hop neighbors at a predetermined rate λ, and each probe carries the instantaneous queue length information and the average service time. Each downstream tuple maintains a neighbor list. When the downstream tuple receives a probe packet, it updates the value $\bar{Q}$ and $E[T_i]$ for the corresponding upstream tuple in its neighbor list. Then the average end-to-end delay (4) can be readily derived.

In each RREQ or RREP message, there is an *EED filed* indicating the EED value of the path. Once a radio receives a fresh RREQ, it looks up its neighbor list for backlog Q and transmission delay $E[T_i]$, and then estimates the delay over the link connecting the previous (IP, RIN) tuple and its receiving (IP, RIN) tuple. Thus, the cumulative EED value in the RREQ is updated by adding the new delay value. It is noteworthy that the Hello message mechanism can guarantee that the neighbor list contains the previous (IP, RIN) tuple.

Note that the HELLO message is also broadcast periodically to implement the metrics ETX and ETT; but only link quality is carried by HELLO message for ETX and ETT.

In addition, HELLO message helps to estimate the transmission failure probability, which is used in computation of inter-flow interference (7). A downstream tuple counts the number of probes received from each upstream tuple during a period T; use V_i to denote the number of probes received from the upstream tuple associated with link i. The transmission failure probability over link i can be estimated as $p_i = \frac{V_i}{\lambda T}$. The p_i value is also recorded in the neighbor list. After a downstream node finishes processing a received probe packet, the probe is discarded. Note that in the MR-MC context, the probing process in each channel runs independently. Thus, the communication overhead on each channel is the same as that in the SR-SC scenario.

2.3.4   MRAB and WEED calculation

MRAB and WEED calculation is the central part of the new protocol, which is involved in both RREQ and RREP operations for routing in two directions. We discuss the procedure for the RREQ case, and the case for RREP is similar. In each RREQ/RREP message, two fields are defined for WEED/MRAB computation: one is *channel usage field*, indicating the channel assignment information of each previous hop; the other is *ABITF field* listing the ABITF value of each previous hop, where the ABITF value at each hop can be obtained by monitoring the interference power from other nodes. Assume that the ratio r of the interference range to the transmission range is predetermined, so the sub-path length is known to all nodes. In addition, the hop count information is carried in the RREQ. Based on these information, a node receiving the RREQ message can apply the algorithm given in

Subsection 4.2.3 to compute the MRAB of the path segment from the source node to the receiving node. The MRAB metric can be further combined with the EED metric to obtain the WEED metric according to (14).

Let us take the path in Fig. 1 as an example. The RREQ starting from a node-radio tuple at S arrives at node D following the link-channel pairs: ((S,A), 1), ((A,B), 1), ((B,C), 3) and ((C,D), 3). Assuming r is 1, there are 2 sub-paths. In addition, the corresponding ABITF values are given in the RREQ. Thus the involved tuple at node D can iteratively compute B_{Sub} for each sub-path, and determine the MRAB value by selecting the smaller B_{Sub}. Given the values of EED and MRAB, the WEED can be computed. Though the channel assignment information and ABITF field contain the information for all previous hops, no other global information is required in the RREQ message.

It should be emphasized that our routing protocol does not require listing the IP addresses and radio index numbers for upstream node-radio tuples, reducing the overhead, which however have to be included in the packet header in the DSR protocol [29]. Furthermore, each node computes the MRAB and WEED values in the distributed manner and makes forwarding decision independently. As a result, our protocol can be viewed as a hop-by-hop routing protocol.

2.4 Protocol Overhead

Compared to the SR-SC scenario, routing in the MR-MC context will incur larger communication overhead for control information exchange, which now includes the channel assignment and radio allocation information for the routing metric calculation. There are three control messages in our protocol, RREQ, RREP and HELLO. The RREP message is unicast and sent only once for each source-destination pair during the route discovery phase. Therefore, the overhead of control messages mainly comes from the HELLO message and RREQ message. The HELLO message is used to exchange the information, such as queue length and average service time. There is a tradeoff between performance and overhead for HELLO message exchange. The more frequently it is sent, the more accurate information and decision can be derived, but more overhead. In the RREQ message, the channel assignment information and the link capacity are required to compute the achievable bandwidth of a sub-path, but only the node ID of previous hop is inserted. Suppose there are n nodes in the network and each is equipped with the maximum number of radios, K. Thus, the maximum number of broadcast messages included by one RREQ is $K \times nK = nK^2$, in the case that the RREQ generated from a radio is received and rebroadcast by all the other nodes and thus all the radios.

3 ADDITIONAL SIMULATION RESULTS

3.1 Performance of EED under Grid Topology

In this subsection, we presents the EED performance under grid topology. Fig. 2 shows the grid topology used in the simulation. Fig. 4(a) and Fig. 4(b) compare the throughput and delay performance for ETX, ETT and EED metrics. We can get the similar conclusion compared with that under random topology in the main file.
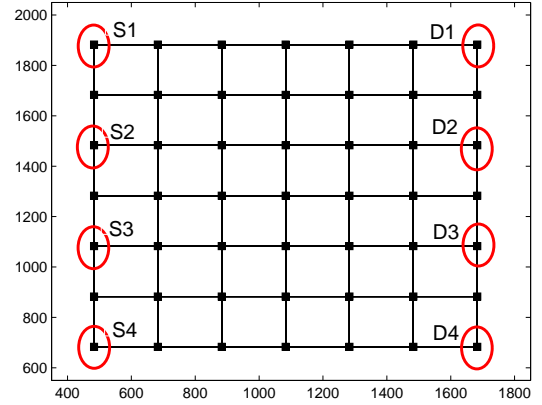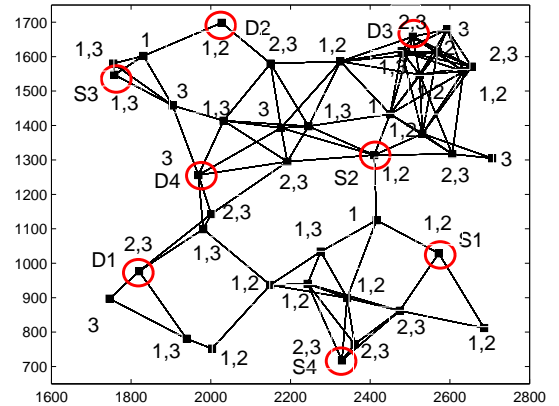

Fig. 2. The grid topology.

Fig. 3. The random topology.

3.2 Impact of α and β

We further investigate the impact of the weighted parameter α on the network throughput with simulations. For the convenience of presentation, the random topology is given for the rest of simulation results. The per-flow rate is 0.8 Mbps with Poisson arrival. The factor α heuristically balances the contributions of two components in WEED. We run each simulation more than 100 rounds. The measured network throughput and associated 95 % confidence interval are plotted in Fig. 5. The curve for the SR-SC case clearly shows that the throughput degrades when α is either too large or too small, which indicates that one component dominates the other. The throughput difference under various α values can be up to 10 %. For the two MR-MC curves, we can still observe similar behavior, although the impact of α is not as obvious as in the SR-SC case. The reason for the reduced sensitivity on α is that the two components in WEED are coupled more closely. The first component of WEED (i.e., the EED metric) mainly aims to describe the transmission and queueing delay incorporating the impact of MAC collision and link quality. We can see that the channel assignment and inter-/intra-flow interference, which are considered in MRAB calculation, do impact the
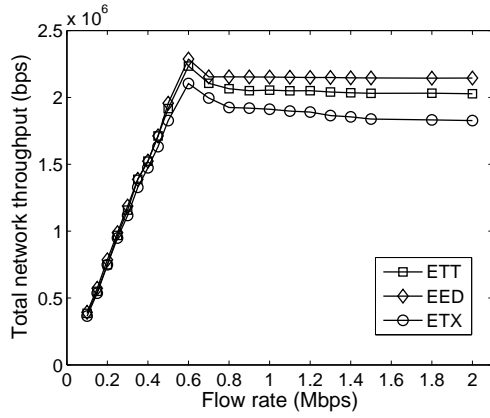
(a) Total network throughput
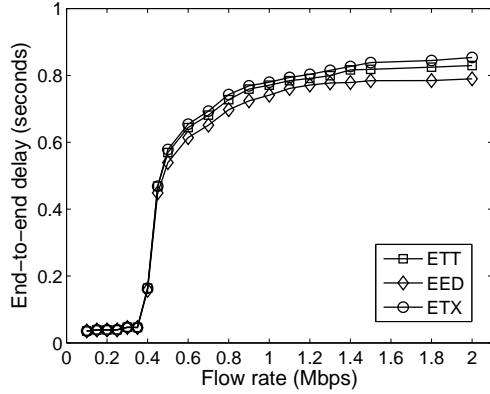
(b) Average end-to-end delay

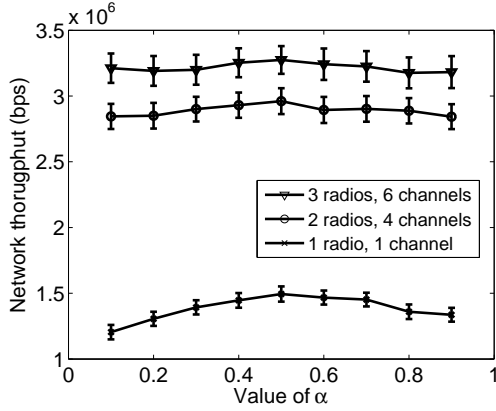Fig. 4. The routing performance versus flow rate under grid topology.

Fig. 5. Network performance with various values of α.

Fig. 6. Impact of β on network throughput.

Fig. 7. Channel diversity coefficient from WEED-based routing.

EED calculation. In summary, we observe through simulations that both components in the WEED metric are important in describing the delay and should be assigned similar weights. Setting $\alpha = 0.5$ is a good heuristic value for both SR-SC and MR-MC cases.

It is worth noting that β is used in the EWMA algorithm to obtain an average queue length. Our purpose is to smooth the queue length to avoid frequent rerouting. We investigate the impact of β by changing the update interval. The results is based on the route update interval to 50 seconds, and
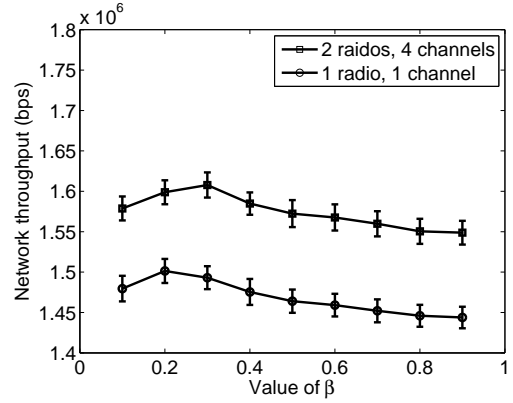
the original simulation scenarios: single radio single channel and 2 radios 4 channels cases under the random topology given in Fig. 3, where the per-flow rate is fixed at 0.4 Mbps. Fig. 6 illustrates the impact of β. It is obvious that β affects the throughput performance as expected. Small β gives the average value higher priority in the EED computation; while large β relies more on instant value, which may leads to frequent variation of EED value.

3.3 Channel Diversity Coefficient

In this subsection, we investigate the channel diversity co-efficient of the selected paths. We specially focus on flow 1, and analyze the first 10 route decisions (i.e., first 10 update intervals) under the random topology. We record the selected paths from the WEED based routing, and compute the corresponding CDC values. As shown in Fig. 7, the two curves correspond to the input rate (IR) of 0.4 Mbps and 1.2 Mbps respectively. The other configurations remain the same as in the experiment in subsection 6.3.

It can be seen that, with a small input rate, the WEED always chooses the path with a higher CDC because the queuing delay takes a very small portion in the WEED metric and the MRAB value dominates the path selection, which means a path with large MRAB value is preferred. According to the definition of CDC (15), the MRAB value directly

determines CDC, therefore CDC value is always large. On the other hand, the routes vary over time under the higher offered load. Because the queue length varies significantly and takes a larger portion in WEED calculation in this case. The buffer is empty at beginning, and the path with good CDC is used; after some periods, congestion occurs along some routes, consequently the queuing delay takes a larger portion in WEED during route update. The updated route is the path with a smaller CDC but better EED performance. The different routing decisions demonstrate that our routing metric can adaptively trace the instant network status in the complex interference and the queuing environment for better performance.

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