2.7 Socket Programming with TCP

Now that we have looked at a number of important network applications, let's explore how network application programs are actually written. In this section we'll write application programs that use TCP; in the following section we'll write programs that use UDP.

Recall from Section 2.1 that many network applications consist of a pair of programs—a client program and a server program—residing in two different end systems. When these two programs are executed, a client and a server process are created, and these processes communicate with each other by reading from and writing to sockets. When creating a network application, the developer's main task is to write the code for both the client and server programs.

There are two sorts of network applications. One sort is an implementation of a protocol standard defined in, for example, an RFC. For such an implementation, the client and server programs must conform to the rules dictated by the RFC. For example, the client program could be an implementation of the client side of the FTP protocol, described in Section 2.3 and explicitly defined in RFC 959; similarly, the server program could be an implementation of the FTP server protocol, also explicitly defined in RFC 959. If one developer writes code for the client program and an independent developer writes code for the server program, and both developers carefully follow the rules of the RFC, then the two programs will be able to interoperate. Indeed, many of today's network applications involve communication between client and server programs that have been created by independent developers-for example, a Firefox browser communicating with an Apache Web server, or an FTP client on a PC uploading a file to a Linux FTP server. When a client or server program implements a protocol defined in an RFC, it should use the port number associated with the protocol. (Port numbers were briefly discussed in Section 2.1. They are covered in more detail in Chapter 3.)

The other sort of network application is a proprietary network application. In this case the application-layer protocol used by the client and server programs do not necessarily conform to any existing RFC. A single developer (or development team) creates both the client and server programs, and the developer has complete control over what goes in the code. But because the code does not implement a public-domain protocol, other independent developers will not be able to develop code that interoperates with the application. When developing a proprietary application, the developer must be careful not to use one of the well-known port numbers defined in the RFCs.

In this and the next section, we examine the key issues in developing a proprietary client-server application. During the development phase, one of the first decisions the developer must make is whether the application is to run over TCP or over UDP. Recall that TCP is connection oriented and provides a reliable byte-stream channel through which data flows between two end systems. UDP is connectionless and sends independent packets of data from one end system to the other, without any guarantees about delivery.

In this section we develop a simple client application that runs over TCP; in the next section, we develop a simple client application that runs over UDP. We present these simple TCP and UDP applications in Java. We could have written the code in C or C++, but we opted for Java mostly because the applications are more neatly and cleanly written in Java. With Java there are fewer lines of code, and each line can be explained to the novice programmer without much difficulty. But there is no need to be frightened if you are not familiar with Java. You should be able to follow the code if you have experience programming in another language.

For readers who are interested in client-server programming in C, there are several good references available [Donahoo 2001; Stevens 1997; Frost 1994; Kurose 1996].

2.7.1 Socket Programming with TCP

Recall from Section 2.1 that processes running on different machines communicate with each other by sending messages into sockets. We said that each process was analogous to a house and the process's socket is analogous to a door. As shown in Figure 2.28, the socket is the door between the application process and TCP. The application developer has control of everything on the application-layer side of the socket; however, it has little control of the transport-layer side. (At the very most, the application developer has the ability to fix a few TCP parameters, such as maximum buffer size and maximum segment size.)



Figure 2.28

Processes communicating through TCP sockets

Now let's take a closer look at the interaction of the client and server programs. The client has the job of initiating contact with the server. In order for the server to be able to react to the client's initial contact, the server has to be ready. This implies two things. First, the server program cannot be dormant—that is, it must be running as a process before the client attempts to initiate contact. Second, the server program must have some sort of door—more precisely, a socket—that welcomes some initial contact from a client process running on an arbitrary host. Using our house/door analogy for a process/socket, we will sometimes refer to the client's initial contact as "knocking on the welcoming door."

With the server process running, the client process can initiate a TCP connection to the server. This is done in the client program by creating a socket. When the client creates its socket, it specifies the address of the server process, namely, the IP address of the server host and the port number of the server process. Once the socket has been created in the client program, TCP in the client initiates a three-way handshake and establishes a TCP connection with the server. The three-way handshake, which takes place at the transport layer, is completely transparent to the client and server programs.

During the three-way handshake, the client process knocks on the welcoming door of the server process. When the server "hears" the knocking, it creates a new door—more precisely, a new socket—that is dedicated to that particular client. In our example below, the welcoming door is a ServerSocket object that we call the welcomeSocket. When a client knocks on this door, the program invokes welcomeSocket's accept() method, which creates a new door for the client. At the end of the handshaking phase, a TCP connection exists between the client's socket and the server's new socket. Henceforth, we refer to the server's new, dedicated socket as the server's connection socket.

From the application's perspective, the TCP connection is a direct virtual pipe between the client's socket and the server's connection socket. The client process can send arbitrary bytes into its socket, and TCP guarantees that the server process will receive (through the connection socket) each byte in the order sent. TCP thus provides a **reliable byte-stream service** between the client and server processes. Furthermore, just as people can go in and out the same door, the client process not only sends bytes into but also receives bytes from its socket; similarly, the server process not only receives bytes from but also sends bytes into its connection socket. This is illustrated in Figure 2.29. Because sockets play a central role in client/server applications, client/server application development is also referred to as socket programming.

Before providing our example client-server application, it is useful to discuss the notion of a stream. A **stream** is a sequence of characters that flow into or out of a process. Each stream is either an **input stream** for the process or an **output stream** for the process. If the stream is an input stream, then it is attached to some input source for the process, such as standard input (the keyboard) or a socket into which data flows from the Internet. If the stream is an output stream, then it is





attached to some output source for the process, such as standard output (the monitor) or a socket out of which data flows into the Internet.

2.7.2 An Example Client-Server Application in Java

We use the following simple client-server application to demonstrate socket programming for both TCP and UDP:

- 1. A client reads a line from its **standard input** (keyboard) and sends the line out its socket to the server.
- 2. The server reads a line from its connection socket.
- 3. The server converts the line to uppercase.
- 4. The server sends the modified line out its connection socket to the client.
- 5. The client reads the modified line from its socket and prints the line on its **standard output** (monitor).

Figure 2.30 illustrates the main socket-related activity of the client and server.

Next we provide the client-server program pair for a TCP implementation of the application. We provide a detailed, line-by-line analysis after each program. The



Figure 2.30
The client-server application, using connection-oriented transport services

client program is called TCPClient.java, and the server program is called TCPServer.java. In order to emphasize the key issues, we intentionally provide code that is to the point but not bulletproof. "Good code" would certainly have a few more auxiliary lines.

Once the two programs are compiled on their respective hosts, the server program is first executed at the server host, which creates a server process at the server host. As discussed above, the server process waits to be contacted by a client process. In this example application, when the client program is executed, a process is created at the client, and this process immediately contacts the server and establishes a TCP connection with it. The user at the client may then use the application to send a line and then receive a capitalized version of the line.

TCPClient.java

Here is the code for the client side of the application:

```
import java.io.*;
import java.net.*;
class TCPClient {
   public static void main(String argv[]) throws Exception
   {
      String sentence;
      String modifiedSentence;
      BufferedReader inFromUser = new BufferedReader(
               new InputStreamReader(System.in));
      Socket clientSocket = new Socket("hostname", 6789);
      DataOutputStream outToServer = new DataOutputStream(
               clientSocket.getOutputStream());
      BufferedReader inFromServer =
         new BufferedReader(new InputStreamReader(
               clientSocket.getInputStream()));
      sentence = inFromUser.readLine();
      outToServer.writeBytes(sentence + '\n');
      modifiedSentence = inFromServer.readLine();
      System.out.println("FROM SERVER: " +
                        modifiedSentence);
      clientSocket.close();
   }
```

}

The program TCPClient creates three streams and one socket, as shown in Figure 2.31. The socket is called clientSocket. The stream inFromUser is an input stream to the program; it is attached to the standard input (that is, the keyboard). When the user types characters on the keyboard, the characters flow into the stream inFromUser. The stream inFromServer is another input stream to the program; it is attached to the socket. Characters that arrive from the network flow into the stream inFromServer. Finally, the stream outToServer is an output stream to the network flow into the stream stream to the socket. Characters that the client sends to the network flow into the stream outToServer.



Figure 2.31
TCPclient has three streams through which characters flow

Let's now take a look at the various lines in the code.

```
import java.io.*;
import java.net.*;
```

java.io and java.net are Java packages. The java.io package contains classes for input and output streams. In particular, the java.io package contains the BufferedReader and DataOutputStream classes, classes that the program uses to create the three streams previously illustrated. The java.net package provides classes for network support. In particular, it contains the Socket and ServerSocket classes. The clientSocket object of this program is derived from the Socket class.

```
class TCPClient {
   public static void main(String argv[]) throws Exception
        {.....}
}
```

So far, what we've seen is standard stuff that you see at the beginning of most Java code. The third line is the beginning of a class definition block. The keyword class begins the class definition for the class named TCPClient. A class contains variables and methods. The variables and methods of the class are embraced by the curly brackets that begin and end the class definition block. The class TCPClient has no class variables and exactly one method, the main() method. Methods are similar to the functions or procedures in languages such as C; the main() method in the Java language is similar to the main() function in C and C++. When the Java interpreter executes an application (by being invoked upon the application's controlling class), it starts by calling the class's main() method. The main() method then calls all the other methods required to run the application. For this introduction to socket programming in Java, you may ignore the keywords public, static, void, main, and throws Exceptions (although you must include them in the code).

String sentence; String modifiedSentence;

These above two lines declare objects of type String. The object sentence is the string typed by the user and sent to the server. The object modifiedSentence is the string obtained from the server and sent to the user's standard output.

The above line creates the stream object inFromUser of type Buffered Reader. The input stream is initialized with System.in, which attaches the stream to the standard input. The command allows the client to read text from its keyboard.

```
Socket clientSocket = new Socket("hostname", 6789);
```

The above line creates the object clientSocket of type Socket. It also initiates the TCP connection between client and server. The string "host-name" must be replaced with the host name of the server (for example, "apple.poly.edu"). Before the TCP connection is actually initiated, the client performs a DNS lookup on the host name to obtain the host's IP address. The number 6789 is the port number. You can use a different port number, but you must make sure that you use the same port number at the server side of the application. As discussed earlier, the host's IP address along with the application's port number identifies the server process.

The above two lines create stream objects that are attached to the socket. The out-ToServer stream provides the process output to the socket. The inFromServer stream provides the process input from the socket (see Figure 2.31).

```
sentence = inFromUser.readLine();
```

This line places a line typed by the user into the string sentence. The string sentence continues to gather characters until the user ends the line by typing a carriage return. The line passes from standard input through the stream inFrom-User into the string sentence.

```
outToServer.writeBytes(sentence + '\n');
```

The above line sends the string sentence augmented with a carriage return into the outToServer stream. The augmented sentence flows through the client's socket and into the TCP pipe. The client then waits to receive characters from the server.

```
modifiedSentence = inFromServer.readLine();
```

When characters arrive from the server, they flow through the stream inFrom-Server and get placed into the string modifiedSentence. Characters continue to accumulate in modifiedSentence until the line ends with a carriage return character.

```
System.out.println("FROM SERVER " + modifiedSentence);
```

The above line prints to the monitor the string modifiedSentence returned by the server.

```
clientSocket.close();
```

This last line closes the socket and, hence, closes the TCP connection between the client and the server. It causes TCP in the client to send a TCP message to TCP in the server (see Section 3.5).

TCPServer.java

Now let's take a look at the server program.

```
import java.io.*;
import java.net.*;
class TCPServer {
```

```
public static void main(String argv[]) throws Exception
      {
         String clientSentence;
         String capitalizedSentence;
         ServerSocket welcomeSocket = new ServerSocket
            (6789);
         while(true) {
            Socket connectionSocket = welcomeSocket.
               accept();
            BufferedReader inFromClient =
               new BufferedReader(new InputStreamReader(
                  connectionSocket.getInputStream()));
            DataOutputStream outToClient =
               new DataOutputStream(
                  connectionSocket.getOutputStream());
            clientSentence = inFromClient.readLine();
            capitalizedSentence =
                  clientSentence.toUpperCase() + '\n';
            outToClient.writeBytes(capitalizedSentence);
         }
      }
}
```

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TCPServer has many similarities with TCPClient. Let's now take a look at the lines in TCPServer.java. We will not comment on the lines that are identical or similar to commands in TCPClient.java.

The first line in TCPServer is substantially different from what we saw in TCPClient:

```
ServerSocket welcomeSocket = new ServerSocket(6789);
```

This line creates the object welcomeSocket, which is of type ServerSocket. The welcomeSocket is a sort of door that listens for a knock from some client. The welcomeSocket listens on port number 6789. The next line is

```
Socket connectionSocket = welcomeSocket.accept();
```

This line creates a *new* socket, called connectionSocket, when some client knocks on welcomeSocket. This socket also has port number 6789. (We'll explain why both sockets have the same port number in Chapter 3.) TCP then establishes a direct virtual pipe between clientSocket at the client and connectionSocket at the server. The client and server can then send bytes to each other

over the pipe, and all bytes sent arrive at the other side in order. With connectionSocket established, the server can continue to listen for requests from other clients for the application using welcomeSocket. (This version of the program doesn't actually listen for more connection requests, but it can be modified with threads to do so.) The program then creates several stream objects, analogous to the stream objects created in clientSocket. Now consider

```
capitalizedSentence = clientSentence.toUpperCase() + '\n';
```

This command is the heart of the application. It takes the line sent by the client, capitalizes it, and adds a carriage return. It uses the method toUpperCase(). All the other commands in the program are peripheral; they are used for communication with the client.

To test the program pair, you install and compile TCPClient.java in one host and TCPServer.java in another host. Be sure to include the proper hostname of the server in TCPClient.java. You next execute TCPServer.class, the compiled server program, in the server. This creates a process in the server that idles until it is contacted by some client. Then you execute TCPClient.class, the compiled client program, in the client. This creates a process in the client and establishes a TCP connection between the client and server processes. Finally, to use the application, you type a sentence followed by a carriage return.

To develop your own client-server application, you can begin by slightly modifying the programs. For example, instead of converting all the letters to uppercase, the server can count the number of times the letter *s* appears and return this number.

2.8 Socket Programming with UDP

We learned in the previous section that when two processes communicate over TCP, it is as if there were a pipe between the two processes. This pipe remains in place until one of the two processes closes it. When one of the processes wants to send some bytes to the other process, it simply inserts the bytes into the pipe. The sending process does not have to attach a destination address to the bytes because the pipe is logically connected to the destination. Furthermore, the pipe provides a reliable byte-stream channel—the sequence of bytes received by the receiving process is exactly the sequence of bytes that the sender inserted into the pipe.

UDP also allows two (or more) processes running on different hosts to communicate. However, UDP differs from TCP in many fundamental ways. First, UDP is a connectionless service—there isn't an initial handshaking phase during which a pipe is established between the two processes. Because UDP doesn't have a pipe, when a process wants to send a batch of bytes to another process, the sending process must attach the destination process's address to the batch of bytes. And this must be done for each batch of bytes the sending process sends. As an analogy, consider a group of 20 persons who take five taxis to a common destination; as the people enter the taxis, each taxi driver must separately be informed of the destination. Thus, UDP is similar to a taxi service. The destination address is a tuple consisting of the IP address of the destination host and the port number of the destination process. We refer to the batch of information bytes along with the IP destination address and port number as the "packet." UDP provides an unreliable message-oriented service model, in that it makes a best effort to deliver the batch of bytes to the destination. It is messageoriented in that batches are bytes that are sent in a single zero operation at the sending side, will be delivered as a batch at the receiving side; this contrasts with TCP's byte-stream semantics. UDP service is best-effort in that UDP makes no guarantee that the batch of bytes will indeed be delivered. The UDP service thus contrasts sharply (in several respects) with TCP's reliable byte-stream service model.

After having created a packet, the sending process pushes the packet into the network through a socket. Continuing with our taxi analogy, at the other side of the sending socket, there is a taxi waiting for the packet. The taxi then drives the packet in the direction of the packet's destination address. However, the taxi does not guarantee that it will eventually get the packet to its ultimate destination—the taxi could break down or suffer some other unforeseen problem. In other terms, *UDP provides an unreliable transport service to its communication processes*—it makes no guarantees that a packet will reach its ultimate destination.

In this section we illustrate socket programming by redeveloping the same application of the previous section, but this time over UDP. We'll see that the code for UDP is different from the TCP code in many important ways. In particular, there is (1) no initial handshaking between the two processes and therefore no need for a welcoming socket, (2) no streams are attached to the sockets, (3) the sending hosts create packets by attaching the IP destination address and port number to each batch of bytes it sends, and (4) the receiving process must unravel each received packet to obtain the packet's information bytes. Recall once again our simple application:

- 1. A client reads a line from its standard input (keyboard) and sends the line out its socket to the server.
- 2. The server reads a line from its socket.
- 3. The server converts the line to uppercase.
- 4. The server sends the modified line out its socket to the client.
- The client reads the modified line from its socket and prints the line on its standard output (monitor).

Figure 2.32 highlights the main socket-related activity of the client and server that communicate over a connectionless (UDP) transport service.



Figure 2.32
The client-server application, using connectionless transport services

UDPClient.java

Here is the code for the client side of the application:

```
byte[] receiveData = new byte[1024];
   String sentence = inFromUser.readLine();
   sendData = sentence.getBytes();
   DatagramPacket sendPacket =
      new DatagramPacket(sendData, sendData.length,
                  IPAddress, 9876);
   clientSocket.send(sendPacket);
   DatagramPacket receivePacket =
      new DatagramPacket(receiveData,
                  receiveData.length);
   clientSocket.receive(receivePacket);
   String modifiedSentence =
      new String(receivePacket.getData());
   System.out.println("FROM SERVER:" +
                  modifiedSentence);
   clientSocket.close();
}
```

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}

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The program UDPClient.java constructs one stream and one socket, as shown in Figure 2.33. The socket is called clientSocket, and it is of type DatagramSocket. Note that UDP uses a different kind of socket than TCP at the client. In particular, with UDP our client uses a DatagramSocket, whereas with TCP our client used a Socket. The stream inFromUser is an input stream to the program; it is attached to the standard input, that is, to the keyboard. We had an equivalent stream in our TCP version of the program. When the user types characters on the keyboard, the characters flow into the stream inFromUser. But in contrast with TCP, there are no streams (input or output) attached to the socket. Instead of feeding bytes to the stream attached to a Socket object, UDP will push individual packets through the DatagramSocket object.

Let's now take a look at the lines in the code that differ significantly from TCPClient.java.

DatagramSocket clientSocket = new DatagramSocket();

This line creates the object clientSocket of type DatagramSocket. In contrast with TCPClient.java, this line does not initiate a TCP connection. In particular, the client host does not contact the server host upon execution of this line. For this reason, the constructor DatagramSocket() does not take the server host name or port number as arguments. Using our door-pipe analogy, the execution of the above line creates a door for the client process but does not create a pipe between the two processes.

InetAddress IPAddress = InetAddress.getByName("hostname");





In order to send bytes to a destination process, we need the address of the process. Part of this address is the IP address of the destination host. The above line invokes a DNS lookup that translates the hostname (in this example, supplied in the code by the developer) to an IP address. DNS was also invoked by the TCP version of the client, although it was done there implicitly rather than explicitly. The method getByName() takes as an argument the hostname of the server and returns the IP address of this same server. It places this address in the object IPAddress of type InetAddress.

```
byte[] sendData = new byte[1024];
byte[] receiveData = new byte[1024];
```

The byte arrays sendData and receiveData will hold the data the client sends and receives, respectively.

```
sendData = sentence.getBytes();
```

The above line essentially performs a type conversion. It takes the string sentence and renames it as sendData, which is an array of bytes.

```
DatagramPacket sendPacket = new DatagramPacket(
    sendData, sendData.length, IPAddress, 9876);
```

This line constructs the packet, sendPacket, which the client will pop into the network through its socket. This packet includes that data that is contained in the packet, sendData, the length of this data, the IP address of the server, and the port number of the application (which we have set to 9876). Note that sendPacket is of type DatagramPacket.

```
clientSocket.send(sendPacket);
```

In the above line, the method send() of the object clientSocket takes the packet just constructed and pops it into the network through clientSocket. Once again, note that UDP sends the line of characters in a manner very different from TCP. TCP simply inserted the string of characters into a stream, which had a logical direct connection to the server; UDP creates a packet that includes the address of the server. After sending the packet, the client then waits to receive a packet from the server.

```
DatagramPacket receivePacket =
    new DatagramPacket(receiveData, receiveData.length);
```

In the above line, while waiting for the packet from the server, the client creates a placeholder for the packet, receivePacket, an object of type DatagramPacket.

```
clientSocket.receive(receivePacket);
```

The client idles until it receives a packet; when it does receive a packet, it puts the packet in receivePacket.

```
String modifiedSentence =
    new String(receivePacket.getData());
```

The above line extracts the data from receivePacket and performs a type conversion, converting an array of bytes into the string modifiedSentence.

```
System.out.println("FROM SERVER:" + modifiedSentence);
```

This line, which is also present in TCPClient, prints out the string modified-Sentence at the client's monitor.

```
clientSocket.close();
```

This last line closes the socket. Because UDP is connectionless, this line does not cause the client to send a transport-layer message to the server (in contrast with TCPClient).

UDPServer.java

Let's now take a look at the server side of the application:

```
import java.io.*;
import java.net.*;
class UDPServer {
  public static void main(String args[]) throws Exception
      {
      DatagramSocket serverSocket = new
                           DatagramSocket(9876);
      byte[] receiveData = new byte[1024];
      byte[] sendData = new byte[1024];
      while(true)
         {
         DatagramPacket receivePacket =
               new DatagramPacket(receiveData,
                        receiveData.length);
         serverSocket.receive(receivePacket);
         String sentence = new String(
                     receivePacket.getData());
         InetAddress IPAddress =
                     receivePacket.getAddress();
         int port = receivePacket.getPort();
         String capitalizedSentence =
                     sentence.toUpperCase();
         sendData = capitalizedSentence.getBytes();
         DatagramPacket sendPacket =
         new DatagramPacket(sendData,
                  sendData.length, IPAddress, port);
         serverSocket.send(sendPacket);
      }
   }
}
```

The program UDPServer.java constructs one socket, as shown in Figure 2.34. The socket is called serverSocket. It is an object of type DatagramSocket, as was the socket in the client side of the application. Once again, no streams are attached to the socket.



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Figure 2.34 • UDPServer has no streams; the socket accepts packets from the process and delivers packets to the process.

Let's now take a look at the lines in the code that differ from TCPServer.java.

```
DatagramSocket serverSocket = new DatagramSocket(9876);
```

The above line constructs the DatagramSocket serverSocket at port 9876. All data sent and received will pass through this socket. Because UDP is connectionless, we do not have to create a new socket and continue to listen for new connection requests, as done in TCPServer.java. If multiple clients access this application, they will all send their packets into this single door, serverSocket.

```
String sentence = new String(receivePacket.getData());
InetAddress IPAddress = receivePacket.getAddress();
int port = receivePacket.getPort();
```

The above three lines unravel the packet that arrives from the client. The first of the three lines extracts the data from the packet and places the data in the String sentence; it has an analogous line in UDPClient. The second line extracts the IP address; the third line extracts the client port number, which is chosen by the client and is different from the server port number 9876. (We will discuss client port numbers in some detail in the next chapter.) It is necessary for the server to obtain

the address (IP address and port number) of the client, so that it can send the capitalized sentence back to the client.

That completes our analysis of the UDP program pair. To test the application, you install and compile UDPClient.java in one host and UDPServer.java in another host. (Be sure to include the proper hostname of the server in UDP Client.java.) Then execute the two programs on their respective hosts. Unlike with TCP, you can first execute the client side and then the server side. This is because the client process does not attempt to initiate a connection with the server when you execute the client program. Once you have executed the client and server programs, you may use the application by typing a line at the client.