

QoS in Frame relay networks

QoS in Frame Relay

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Frame Relay: characteristics

- Packet switching with virtual circuit service
 - Label named DLCI: Data Link Connection Identifier
 - Virtual circuits are bi-directional
- “Connection” is associated with the virtual circuit
- No error control (DL-control is not used even at the edge)
- No flow control
- LAP-F protocol
- Packet size:
 - variable up to 4096byte
- Mainly thought for data traffic

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LAPF packet

- ADDRESS field contains the DLCI (Data Link Connection Identifier) and some additional bits

FLAG
ADDR (MSB)
ADDR (LSB)
control
Information
CRC (MSB)
CRC (LSB)
FLAG

■ DL-CORE
■ DL-CONTROL

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ADDRESS field

- DLCI: Data Link Connection Identifier
- FECN/BECN: forward/backward explicit congestion notification
- DE: discard eligibility
- C/R: command/response
- D/C: DLCI or DL-CORE
- EA: extension bit

upper DLCI	C/R	EA
lower DLCI	FECN/BECN	DE
EA		

Default format (2 byte)

upper DLCI	C/R	EA
DLCI	FECN/BECN	DE
lower DLCI or DL-CORE control	D/C	EA
EA		

3 byte format

upper DLCI	C/R	EA
DLCI	FECN/BECN	DE
DLCI	EA	
lower DLCI or DL-CORE control	D/C	EA
EA		

4 byte format

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Frame Relay: user-network interface

- Negotiable parameters, a-priori, on a contract basis:
 - CIR (Committed Information Rate) [bit/s]
 - CBS (Committed Burst Size) [bit]
 - EBS (Excess Burst Size) [bit]
- CIR: guaranteed bit rate (throughput)
- CBS: amount of data the network is willing to accept over a measurement period T
- EBS: amount of excess data the network may transfer over T. Packets are marked with the DE bit set to 1
- Data exceeding CBS+EBS are directly discarded at network access

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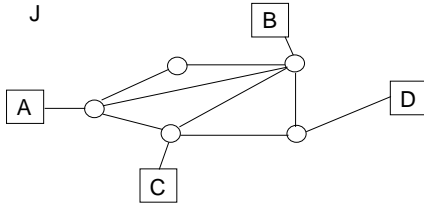
Frame Relay: definition of the measurement interval T

CIR	CBS	EBS	T
> 0	> 0	> 0	CBS/CIR
> 0	> 0	= 0	CBS/CIR
= 0	= 0	> 0	EBS/Access Rate

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Frame Relay: resource allocation

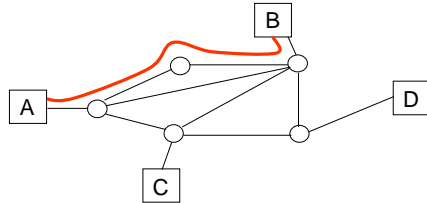
- $\sum_A CIR_{A,J} \leq ACCESS_RATE_A$
 – where A,J refers to the VC from node A to node J



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Frame Relay: resource allocation

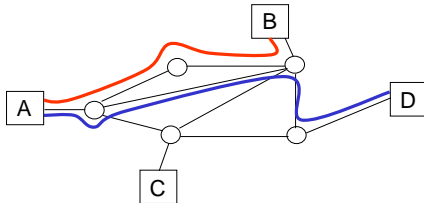
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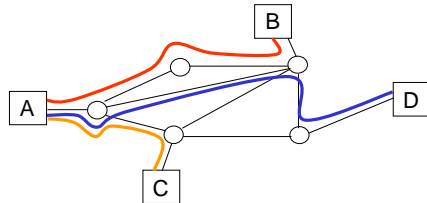
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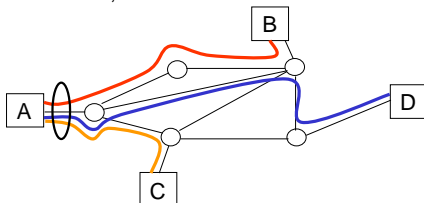
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Frame Relay: resource allocation

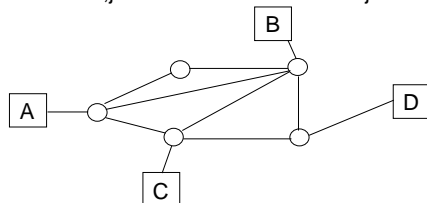
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Frame Relay: resource allocation

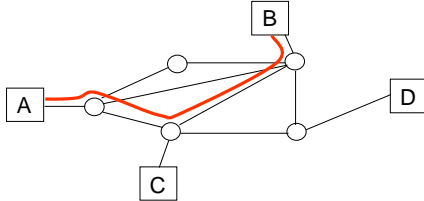
- $\sum_{LINK} CIR_{i,j} \leq LINK_SPEED \quad \forall \text{ links}$
 – where i,j refers to the VC from i to j



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Frame Relay: resource allocation

- $\sum_{\text{LINK}} \text{CIR}_{i,j} \leq \text{LINK_SPEED} \quad \forall \text{ links}$
 – where i,j refers to the VC from i to j

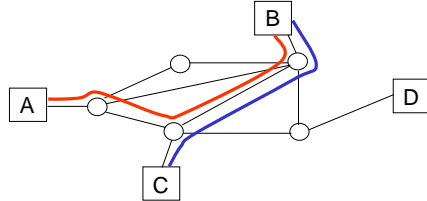


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Frame Relay: resource allocation

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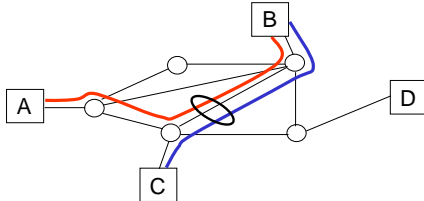


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Frame Relay: resource allocation

- $\sum_{\text{LINK}} \text{CIR}_{i,j} \leq \text{LINK_SPEED} \quad \forall \text{ links}$
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Frame Relay: algorithms

- Policing, or conformance verification
 - Leaky Bucket
 - Token Bucket
- Congestion control
 - backward
 - forward

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Conformance verification

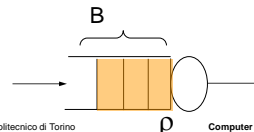
- Basic idea
 - If a packet reaches the network access and it is conformant to the CBS constraint over T , it is transmitted at high priority with $DE=0$
 - If a packet reaches the network access and it is not conformant to CBS over T but it is conformant to $\text{CBS}+\text{EBS}$ over T , it is transmitted at low priority with $DE=1$
 - If a packet reaches the network access and it is not conformant to $\text{CBS}+\text{EBS}$ over T , it is discarded
- Same algorithms can be used to do shaping
 - Traffic adaptation to make it conformant
 - Delay instead of marking/dropping

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Leaky Bucket

- As a traffic regulator
 - User traffic entering the buffer is transmitted at a maximum CBR rate equal to ρ
 - User traffic exceeding the buffer size B is dropped
 - Any source becomes a CBR source at rate ρ
 - If packet size is fixed
- When using to do conformance verification, if a packet arrives earlier than it should, with respect to ρ , drop it



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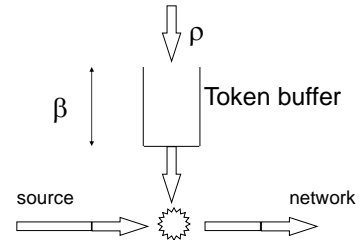
Leaky Bucket

- Buffer size B is not a critical parameter
 - we can assume infinite buffer size
- Amount of data sent over a period T is $\leq T\rho$
- Dimensioning of parameter ρ for VBR traffic with peak B_p and average B_M
 - $\rho \cong B_M$: too much traffic could be discarded
 - $\rho \cong B_p$: waste of link bit rate, largely underutilized
- Traffic regulator which does not admit any burstiness

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Token Bucket



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Token Bucket

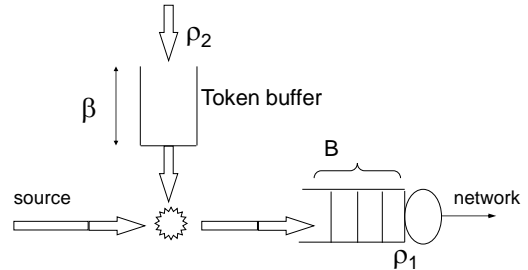
- Tokens are generated at a fixed rate ρ
- A maximum number of β tokens can be stored in the token buffer
 - Permits some burstiness
- User data are sent over the network only if there is a token available in the token buffer
- Maximum amount of data sent over a period T is $\leq T\rho + \beta$
- The source becomes a VBR source with
 - $B_M \cong \rho$
 - $B_p \cong \text{access rate}$
 - Burst duration $\cong \beta$
- Access to the network can be further regulated with a cascading leaky bucket to limit B_p

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Token Bucket+ Leaky Bucket

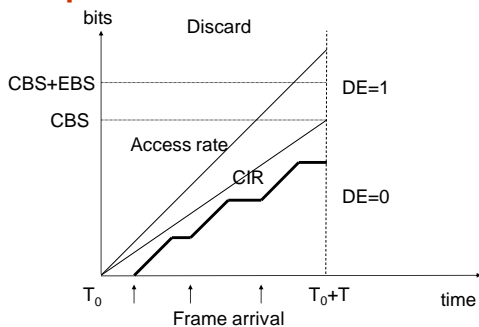
- Regulates average rate ρ_2 , peak rate ρ_1 , burst duration β



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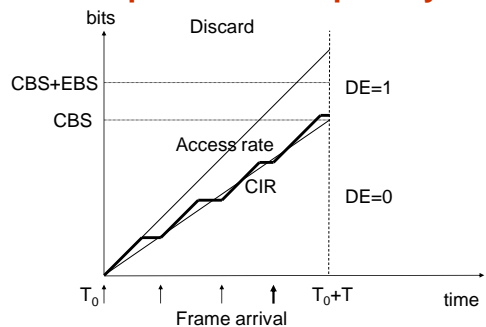
All packets conformant to CBS



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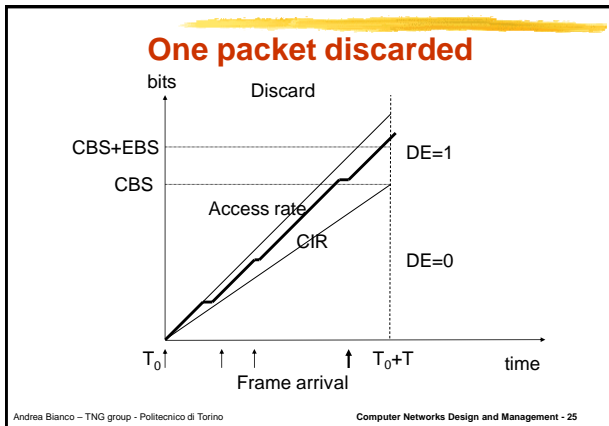
One packet at low priority



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Measurement problems

- Measuring a rate of an asynchronous packet flow may be complex
- Simple solution:
 - Measure over fixed length intervals

Interval 1

Interval 2

time

- When does the interval starts? Border effect between adjacent intervals?

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Measurements problems

- Better solution is a temporal sliding window of T seconds
 - When a packet arrives, the rate is measured accounting for the amount of byte received during the last T seconds
 - Difficult to implement (necessary to remember packet arrival times)
- It is possible to exploit a fluid approximation
 - New rate R estimate at each packet arrival
 - At packet arrival, we assume that the flow has transmitted $R \cdot T$ byte in the last T seconds and the estimate of R is updated

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Congestion

- Informally
 - too many sources sending too much data, too fast for network to handle
- More formally
 - Average input rate larger than average output rate
- Congestion signal
 - long delays (queueing in router buffers)
 - lost packets (buffer overflow at routers)
- Effect
 - Retransmissions (sometimes un-needed)
 - Reduced throughput

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Effect of congestion

- Multihop paths
- As red traffic increases, all arriving blue pkts at upper queue are dropped
- The blue throughput goes to 0
- When packet dropped, any “upstream transmission capacity used for that packet was wasted!

Host A

Host B

Host C

Host D

λ_{in} : original data

λ'_{in} : original data, plus retransmitted data

finite shared output link buffers

λ_{out}

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Solutions?

- Increase the buffer size
 - Buffers helps in solving
 - Contentions
 - Short term congestion only
 - For permanent overload, the excess traffic is lost, regardless of the buffer size
- Increase the link speed
 - We may even create worse congestion
- Increase processing speed
 - We will transfer more packets, possibly exacerbating the congestion
- Congestion is created by an excess of traffic
 - To solve it, we need to reduce the input traffic

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Approaches to congestion control

- Drop based
 - Network nodes only drop packets when needed
 - Relies on end-to-end (transport) protocols to solve the congestion
- Credit based
 - Network nodes provide credits to upstream nodes
 - Backpressure
- Signalling based (to users)
 - Network nodes detect congestion and signal to users
 - Via a single or few bit (forward/backward)
 - Via explicit rate computation
- In all cases, rely on cooperation

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Features of the approaches

- Drop
 - Easy
 - No need to be flow aware
- Credit
 - Very complex
 - Need to be flow aware to avoid blocking a link
- Signalling
 - Can trade complexity vs effectiveness
 - Can be either flow unaware or flow aware

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Frame Relay: congestion

- Summation of CIR over all virtual circuits on each link may exceed the available bit rate over a link (overbooking)
 - Creates congestion, potentially a long-term congestion
- Traffic burstiness may create congestion (typically short term congestion)
- Need to control congestion?
 - X.25 (ISDN) may exploit link-by-link (hop-by-hop) flow control (and internal switch backpressure) to control (un-fairly) congestion
 - In Internet the congestion control is delegated to hosts running TCP, the network simply drops packets
 - Frame relay, which does not implement flow control, uses explicit signaling from network nodes to signal congestion to users through FECN and BECN bits

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Congestion control in Frame Relay

- Flow control is not supported in Frame Relay
- The network is unprotected against congestion
 - Only protection mechanism is packet discarding
- Congestion should not occur if sources are sending at CIR!
- When a switch (network node) establishes that congestion has occurred, to signal congestion it sets one among two bits:
 - FECN (Forward technique)
 - BECN (Backward technique)

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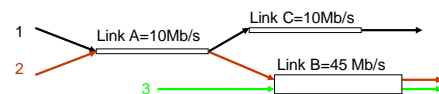
Congestion control: goals

- Avoid packet loss
- Constraints?
 - Maximum network utilization
 - Fairness
 - Often in contrast
- Simple case: all flows are alike
 - Fairness means to provide the same set of resources to all flows
 - Over a single bottleneck the problem is trivial
 - Network wide problem

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Congestion control: an example



- Maximize the bit rate received by each flow
 - Flow 1: 5 Mb/s
 - Flow 2: 5 Mb/s
 - Flow 3: 40 Mb/s
- Maximize the overall network utilization
 - Flow 1: 10 Mb/s
 - Flow 2: 0 Mb/s
 - Flow 3: 45 Mb/s

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Max-min fairness

- One possible definition of fairness
- A bit rate allocation is defined as max-min if
 - It maximizes the bit rate allocation to flows who receive the minimum allocation
- Property:
 - A max-min allocation is such that, to increase the bit rate allocated to a flow, it is necessary to decrease the bit rate allocated to another flow which is already a smaller or equal bit rate
 - In other words, no bit rate increase can be obtained without penalizing flows already receiving a smaller allocation
- A max-min allocation cannot be obtained with local assignments
 - A global network view is needed

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Max-min fairness: algorithm

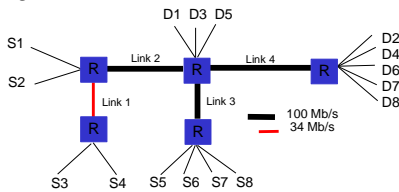
- Given: topology, link capacity, flows and flow routing
- 1) The algorithm starts with a 0 allocation to all flows, each flow is marked as unsatisfied
- 2) The allocation of all unsatisfied flows is increased by the same, small, quantity, until a bottleneck link is saturated
- 3) All bottlenecked flows are saturated, thus, cannot receive a larger allocation
 - Bottlenecked flows are marked as satisfied
- 4) Goto 2, until all flows are bottlenecked and satisfied
- Must re-run for any topology or flow modification

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Max-min fairness: example

- Problem: find a fair bandwidth allocation to flows (F_i : $S_i \rightarrow D_i$), according to the max-min paradigm



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Max-min fairness: example

- Order in which links are saturated
 - L1, L4, L3, L2
- Solution: fair max-min allocation
 - F_1 : 45.25 Mbps
 - F_2 : 20.75 Mbps
 - F_3 : 17 Mbps
 - F_4 : 17 Mbps
 - F_5 : 37.75 Mbps
 - F_6 : 20.75 Mbps
 - F_7 : 20.75 Mbps
 - F_8 : 20.75 Mbps

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Forward congestion

- When a switch detects congestion, it sets the FECN bit to 1 on all arriving packets sharing the congested buffer
 - Congestion signaled to all congested VCs
- When the congestion indication reaches the receiver, it is redirected to the transmitter on a data flow traveling in the opposite direction
- The transmitter reduces the transmission speed according to a standardized algorithm
- Properties:
 - Relatively slow
 - Simple to implement
 - No additional traffic is created, if there is a data flow from receiver to transmitter (normally at least ACKs are sent)
 - «Automatically» signaling only to active DLCIs

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Backward congestion

- When a switch detects congestion, it sets the BECN bit to 1 on all packets belonging to congested VCs
 - These packets are not stored in the congested buffer!
 - Ad-hoc signaling packets may be generated by the switch if no data traffic is flowing in the opposite direction
- The transmitter reduces the transmission speed according to a standardized algorithm when it detects packets with BECN=1
- Properties:
 - Relatively fast
 - Complex: need to store a list of congested (active?) DLCI on the forward path and to wait (or to create after a timeout) packets with the proper DLCI on the backward path

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Source behaviour: FECN

- The FECN technique is based on the idea that congestion phenomena are relatively slow
- Transmitter
 - Start transmitting at a speed equal to CIR
 - Computes the percentage of LAP-F frames received with a FECN bit set to 1 (FECN₁) over a pre-determined time interval
 - If FECN₁ is >50%, the emission rate is reduced
 - If FECN₁ is <50%, the emission rate is incremented

Source behaviour: FECN

- Measuring interval $\delta=2RTT$
- Rate based transmitter:
 - $R_{INITIAL} = CIR$
 - if $FECN_1 > FECN_0$
 - $R_{New} = 0.875R_{Old}$
 - if $FECN_1 < FECN_0$
 - $R_{New} = 1.0625R_{Old}$
 - If not transmitting for T, restart from $R_{INITIAL}$
- Window based transmitter:
 - $W_{INITIAL} = 1$
 - if $FECN_1 > FECN_0$
 - $W_{New} = 0.875W_{Old}$
 - if $FECN_1 < FECN_0$
 - $W_{New} = W_{Old} + 1$

Source behaviour: BECN

- The BECN technique is based on the idea that congestion phenomena are fast
 - Instantaneous reaction (not based on $\delta=2RTT$)
- $R_{INITIAL} = CIR$
- If a single frame with BECN=1 is received:
 - $R_N = 1/8R_O$
- If a single frame with BECN=0 is received:
 - Increase rate

Congestion control: issues

- Fairness among flows
 - More active flows receive more congestion signals
 - May be ok, since are creating more congestion, but is it max-min fair?
 - Temporarily inactive flows?
- Signaling frequency
 - Any reaction to congestion signals is constrained by the flow RTT
 - It would make sense to adapt the (congestion) signaling frequency to flow RTT
 - Practically impossible to know flow RTT in network nodes (may be done at the tx/rx side)
 - Connections with shorter RTTs react faster
 - Both when increasing and decreasing rate
- When congestion is detected (set up congestion bit in the header)
 - Operate on packet reaching the buffer or leaving the buffer?

Congestion control: issues

- How to detect congestion?
 - Measure ingress flow speed in each buffer
 - Over which time interval?
 - Worth complexity given the binary feedback available?
 - Always balance complexity, performance, signaling capability
 - Operates on a flow basis or on traffic aggregate?
 - Threshold on buffer occupancy
 - Instantaneous buffer occupancy
 - Fast, but unstable
 - Typically exploits some hysteresis to avoid switching between congested/non-congested state
 - Average occupancy over a time-sliding measurement window
 - How the window size should be determined?
 - More stable, but slower in reaction
 - Occupancy derivative
 - More precise than occupancy alone
 - » Buffer occupancy of 100 packets should be treated differently if the "previous" buffer occupancy was 150 or 50 packets
 - Need to define time interval over which evaluate the derivative
 - Threshold value?
 - Close to zero occupancy to exploit most of the buffer size
 - Enough space below threshold to allow for synchronous arrivals and avoid unneeded congestion signals

Congestion control: issues

- Buffer sizing?
 - Buffer above threshold should increase proportionally to
 - Number of connections involved in congestion
 - Connection RTTs
 - Need to buffer in-flight packets
 - Connection rate
- Always pay attention to
 - The scenario in which algorithms are compared
 - Network topology (often single bottleneck node examined)
 - Number of flows
 - Flow behavior
 - Difficulty in properly setting parameters
 - If choosing wrong values what happens?
 - How difficult is to set up proper values?
 - Algorithm robustness to parameter setting
 - Algorithm complexity w.r.t. performance gain
- All parameters (threshold, measurement window, buffer size) could be set off-line or modified at run time
 - Run time modification is worth the effort?