

Network Traffic Analysis with Wireshark

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Introduction

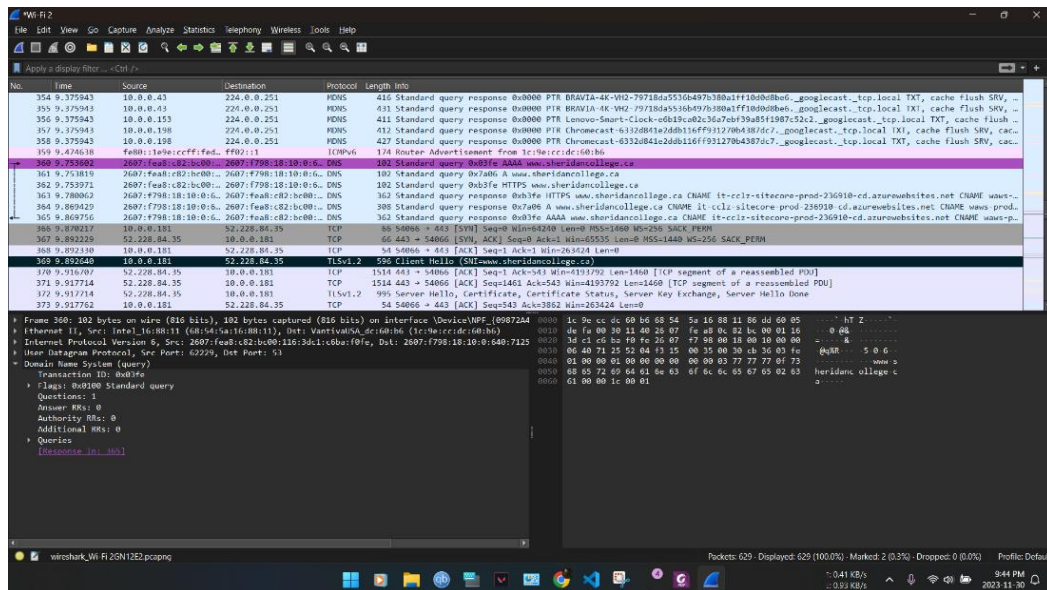
This project demonstrates the use of Wireshark, an industry-standard network protocol analyzer, to capture and interpret network traffic. By analyzing data packets generated from common web requests, I have identified communication protocols and their role in network interactions. The objective was to distinguish normal traffic from potential anomalies, showcasing skills in network analysis and cybersecurity.

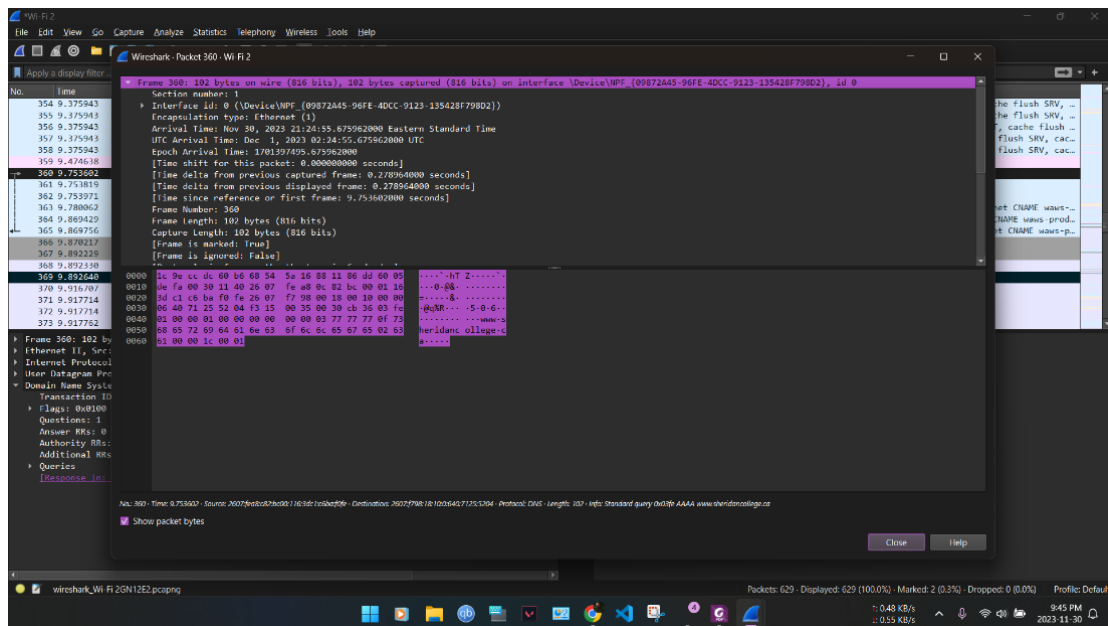
Project Scope and Objectives

1. Packet Capture and Analysis:

Objective: To capture packets generated from accessing different websites and online applications.

Approach: Using Wireshark, I recorded packet flows, focusing on key details such as IP addresses, protocol types (e.g., DNS, TCP, HTTPS), and packet structures. This data was essential for understanding the traffic patterns and network behavior.





The first packet of information when a web request was sent can be viewed and interpreted as follows:

In this session 629 packets were captured and the packet number for the request is 360.

- Time of capture: 9.753602 seconds (from when the capture starts in Wireshark).
- Source IP Address: 2607:fea8:c82:bc00:116:3dc1:c6ba:f0fe
- Destination IP Address: 2607:f798:18:10:0:640:7125:5204
- Protocol used: DNS.
- Packet Length: 102 bytes.
- Query: AAAA (IPv6).
- Transaction ID: 0x03fe
- QR field is set to 0 that shows it is a query and not a response.

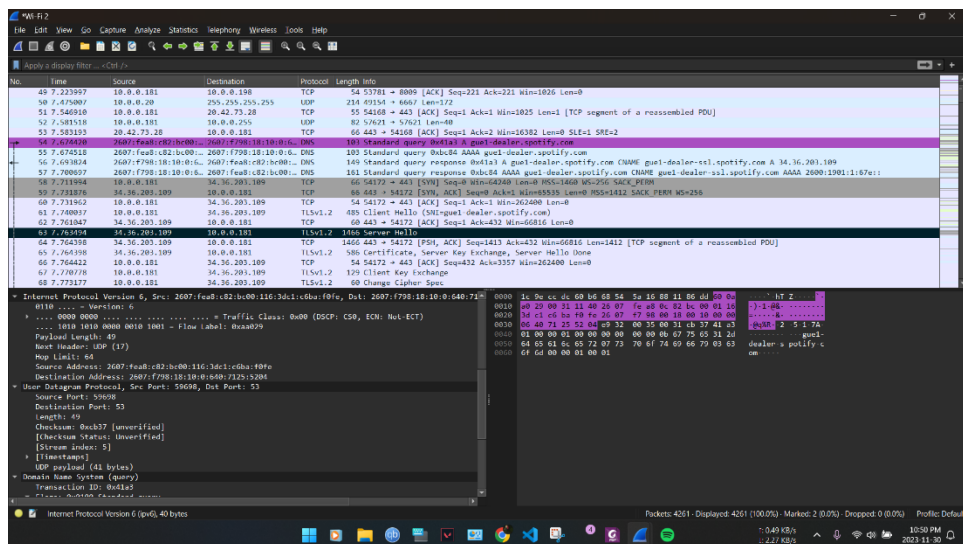
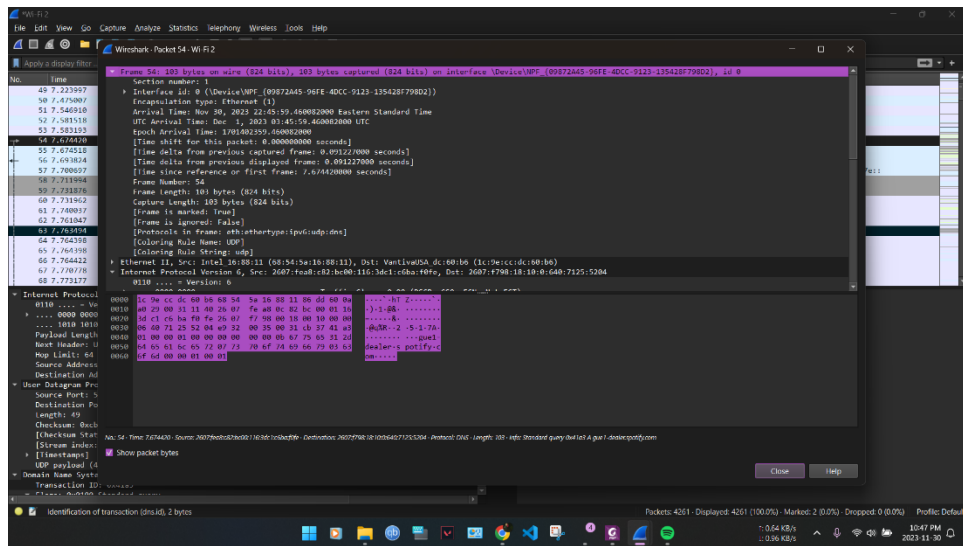
This packet represents a request to resolve the IPv6 address for the given domain. This request is specifically asking for the IPv6 address of the domain that the source is trying to establish a connection with the domain.

There are 3 packets that are not related to the request:

366	9.870217	10.0.0.181	52.228.84.35	TCP	66 54066 → 443 [SYN] Seq=0 Win=64240 Len=0 MSS=1460 WS=256 SACK_PERM
367	9.892229	52.228.84.35	10.0.0.181	TCP	66 443 → 54066 [SYN, ACK] Seq=0 Ack=1 Win=65535 Len=0 MSS=1440 WS=256 SACK_PERM
368	9.892330	10.0.0.181	52.228.84.35	TCP	54 54066 → 443 [ACK] Seq=1 Ack=1 Win=263424 Len=0

These 3 packets are part of the 3-way TCP handshake where the first packet is the initial step in establishing a TCP connection, the second packet is the response to the first packet which acknowledges the receipt of the initial packet, and the third packet indicates that both ends are synchronized and ready to exchange data over the established TCP connection.

Request to app (Spotify):



The second packet of information when Spotify was opened can be viewed and interpreted as follows:

In this session 4261 packets were captured and the packet number for the request is 54.

- Time of capture: 7.674420 seconds (from when the capture starts in Wireshark).
- Source IP Address: 2607:f98:c82:bc00:116:3dc1:c6ba:f0fe
- Destination IP Address: 2607:f98:18:10:0:640:7125:5204
- Protocol used: DNS.
- Packet Length: 103 bytes.
- Query: A (IPv4).
- Transaction ID: 0x41a3
- Domain: gue1-dealer.spotify.com

- QR field is set to 0 that shows it is a query and not a response.

This packet represents a request to resolve the IPv4 address for the domain "gue1-dealer.spotify.com" through the DNS. The source is querying the DNS server for the IPv4 address associated with the domain name.

There are multiple packets that are not related to the request:

58	7.711994	10.0.0.181	34.36.203.109	TCP	66 54172 → 443 [SYN] Seq=0 Win=64240 Len=0 MSS=1460 WS=256 SACK_PERM
59	7.731876	34.36.203.109	10.0.0.181	TCP	66 443 → 54172 [SYN, ACK] Seq=0 Ack=1 Win=65535 Len=0 MSS=1412 SACK_PERM WS=256
60	7.731962	10.0.0.181	34.36.203.109	TCP	54 54172 → 443 [ACK] Seq=1 Ack=1 Win=262400 Len=0

These 3 packets are part of the 3-way TCP Handshake.

61	7.740037	10.0.0.181	34.36.203.109	TLSv1.2	485 Client Hello (SNI=gue1-dealer.spotify.com)
62	7.761047	34.36.203.109	10.0.0.181	TCP	60 443 → 54172 [ACK] Seq=1 Ack=432 Win=66816 Len=0
63	7.763494	34.36.203.109	10.0.0.181	TLSv1.2	1466 Server Hello

There are 2 TLS-related packets of which the first one, the "Client Hello" message is the initial message sent by the client to initiate the TLS handshake with the server "gue1-dealer.spotify.com".

The second packet "Server Hello" is the response from the server to the client's "Hello" message during the TLS handshake. It is used to acknowledge and secure communication.

The TLS Version is TLSv1.2.

The image shows a Wireshark packet capture of a network session. The top pane displays a list of packets, with the first three highlighted in red, corresponding to the TCP handshake. The second pane shows the details of the selected packet (packet 61), which is a TLSv1.2 Client Hello. The third pane shows the raw packet data in hexadecimal and ASCII. The packet list includes various protocols such as TCP, DNS, ARP, and ICMPv6, along with their respective source and destination addresses and ports.

No.	Time	Source	Destination	Protocol	Length	Info
58	0.000000	10.0.0.181	34.36.203.109	TCP	66	54172 → 443 [SYN] Seq=0 Win=64240 Len=0 MSS=1460 WS=256 SACK_PERM
59	0.020334	34.36.203.109	10.0.0.181	TCP	66	443 → 54172 [SYN, ACK] Seq=0 Ack=1 Win=65535 Len=0 MSS=1412 SACK_PERM WS=256
60	0.020511	10.0.0.181	34.36.203.109	TCP	54	54172 → 443 [ACK] Seq=1 Ack=1 Win=262400 Len=0
61	0.020511	10.0.0.181	34.36.203.109	TLSv1.2	485	Client Hello (SNI=gue1-dealer.spotify.com)
62	0.020511	34.36.203.109	10.0.0.181	TCP	60	443 → 54172 [ACK] Seq=1 Ack=432 Win=66816 Len=0
63	0.020511	34.36.203.109	10.0.0.181	TLSv1.2	1466	Server Hello

Protocol	Percent Packets	Packets	Percent Bytes	Bytes	Bits/s	End Packets	End Bytes	End Bits/s	PDU's
▼ Frame	100.0	156798	100.0	117881273	253 k	0	0	0	156798
▼ Ethernet	100.0	156798	1.9	2294992	4933	0	0	0	156798
▼ Internet Protocol Version 6	71.0	111275	3.8	4451000	9567	0	0	0	111275
▼ User Datagram Protocol	31.5	49412	0.3	395296	849	0	0	0	49412
▼ QUIC IETF	26.9	42162	27.0	31821236	68 k	42142	31187829	67 k	42930
Malformed Packet	0.0	20	0.0	0	0	20	0	0	20
Multicast Domain Name System	0.3	463	0.1	71704	154	463	71704	154	463
Domain Name System	4.3	6776	0.5	615348	1322	6776	615348	1322	6776
Data	0.0	11	0.0	980	2	11	980	2	11
▼ Transmission Control Protocol	38.5	60375	43.3	51054778	109 k	42953	32159229	69 k	60375
Transport Layer Security	7.8	12189	41.1	48414792	104 k	12189	43624001	93 k	12637
▼ Hypertext Transfer Protocol	0.0	52	0.0	29213	62	26	8004	17	52
Online Certificate Status Protocol	0.0	22	0.0	8631	18	22	8631	18	22
Data	3.3	5185	0.0	9899	21	5185	9899	21	5185
▼ Internet Control Message Protocol v6	0.9	1436	0.1	153600	330	1433	153240	329	1436
Malformed Packet	0.0	3	0.0	0	0	3	0	0	3
Data	0.0	52	0.1	64064	137	52	64064	137	52
▼ Internet Protocol Version 4	25.3	39685	0.7	795064	1709	0	0	0	39685
▼ User Datagram Protocol	3.9	6081	0.0	48648	104	0	0	0	6081
TP-Link Smart Home Protocol	0.0	63	0.0	1885	4	63	1885	4	63
Simple Service Discovery Protocol	1.0	1580	0.4	434659	934	1580	434659	934	1580
QUIC IETF	0.7	1038	0.5	533748	1147	1038	428274	920	1164
Network Time Protocol	0.0	2	0.0	96	0	2	96	0	2
NetBIOS Name Service	0.1	138	0.0	6900	14	138	6900	14	138
▼ NetBIOS Datagram Service	0.0	5	0.0	1005	2	0	0	0	5
▼ SMB (Server Message Block Protocol)	0.0	5	0.0	595	1	0	0	0	5
▼ SMB MailSlot Protocol	0.0	5	0.0	125	0	0	0	0	5
Microsoft Windows Browser Protocol	0.0	5	0.0	165	0	5	165	0	5
Multicast Domain Name System	0.7	1106	0.1	154650	332	1106	154650	332	1106
Dynamic Host Configuration Protocol	0.0	5	0.0	1795	3	5	1795	3	5
Domain Name System	0.0	28	0.0	2728	5	28	2728	5	28
Data	1.3	2116	0.5	570510	1226	2116	570510	1226	2116
▼ Transmission Control Protocol	21.2	33195	20.9	24672643	53 k	20955	15663239	33 k	33195
Transport Layer Security	7.1	11065	20.8	24560621	52 k	11065	22516760	48 k	11309
▼ Hypertext Transfer Protocol	0.3	412	0.2	276454	594	117	26769	57	412
Online Certificate Status Protocol	0.0	36	0.0	16158	34	36	16158	34	36
Line-based text data	0.0	2	0.0	82	0	2	82	0	2
eXtensible Markup Language	0.2	257	0.1	153675	330	257	153675	330	257
Data	0.5	729	0.0	729	1	729	729	1	729
Apache JServ Protocol v1.3	0.0	34	0.1	97478	209	34	97024	208	43
Internet Group Management Protocol	0.3	402	0.0	3216	6	402	3216	6	402
Internet Control Message Protocol	0.0	7	0.0	112	0	7	112	0	7
Address Resolution Protocol	3.7	5838	0.2	242774	521	5838	242774	521	5838

2. Protocols Identified and Analyzed - The following protocols were observed in the network capture:

- **TCP (Transmission Control Protocol):** This is the main protocol used for most of the traffic, indicating reliable, connection-oriented transmissions. (Eddy, 2022)
- **UDP (User Datagram Protocol):** This is less prevalent than TCP, used for connectionless communications, typically for streaming, gaming, and real-time services. (Postel, 1980)
- **HTTPS (Over TCP Port 443):** This represents encrypted web traffic, indicating secure web browsing. (Touch & Eliot Lear, 2023)
- **DNS (Over UDP Port 53):** Domain Name System are critical services and essential for resolving domain names to IP addresses. (Touch & Eliot Lear, 2023)
- **SSDP (Simple Service Discovery Protocol over UDP Port 1900):** Used for discovering and locating UPnP devices on a local network. (Goland, 1999)
- **mDNS (Multicast DNS over UDP Port 5353):** Used for resolving hostnames to IP addresses within small networks without central DNS services. (Cheshire, 2013)

A. Types of Services and Apps Using These Protocols

Based on the protocols identified, the following services and applications are typically associated:

- **Web Browsing (HTTPS/TCP Port 443):** This includes all secure web traffic, including services such as online banking, shopping, social media platforms, streaming services, and cloud-based applications.

- **Streaming and Real-time Communications (UDP):** Encompasses applications like video conferencing apps, VoIP services, live game streaming platforms, and other multimedia streaming services.
- **Domain Name Resolution (DNS/UDP Port 53):** This is a foundational aspect of internet usage and includes any service that requires domain name resolution, which is a fundamental part of internet usage, including all above-mentioned services.
- **Network Device Discovery (SSDP/UDP Port 1900 and mDNS/UDP Port 5353):** These services are typically used by network devices for configuration and discovery within a local area network.

B. Exact services and applications accessed based on the capture information are as follows:

- **IPv6 Addresses:**
 - 2a03:2880::/32 This range indicates the activities related to Facebook and its associated platforms.
 - 2607:f8b0::/32 This range points to usage of Google's suite, including Search, YouTube, Gmail, etc.
 - 2620:1ec::/32 This range Suggests access to Wikipedia or related resources.
- **IPv4 Addresses:**
 - 54.231.232.49, 52.109.92.58, and 3.98.112.127 are within the **Amazon Web Services (AWS)** range, potentially indicating use of AWS-hosted services or websites.
 - Addresses in the 23.*.* range are typically associated with **Akamai Technologies**, a content delivery network provider, which could indicate access to various content-rich services such as media streaming, software download sites, or large online platforms.

Based on this data, the report concludes that the network traffic consisted of a variety of encrypted web browsing activities, including social media interaction, information searching, video streaming, and the use of cloud-based services. Additionally, local network activities included device discovery and configuration.

Also, the identification of Facebook services, Google services, and Akamai Technologies from the IP addresses in the network capture is based on known IP address allocations and the services these companies provide. The reason these addresses are associated with these services and what roles they play in terms of privacy, security, hosting, and other network services:

Facebook Services (IPv6 addresses in the 2a03:2880::/32 range)

Why It Shows Up:

- Facebook owns a block of IP addresses, and traffic to or from these addresses can be indicative of interactions with Facebook's various services, such as the main social networking site, Instagram, WhatsApp, or other affiliated platforms.

Purpose in Terms of Privacy and Security:

- Facebook uses encryption (like HTTPS over TCP port 443) to protect user data and communications.
- Implements privacy controls, allowing users to manage who sees their information.

Hosting and Network Services:

- Operates its own data centers and uses a content delivery network (CDN) to distribute content efficiently across the globe.
- Provides APIs and services for third-party developers and businesses. (Engineering at Meta: Networking & Traffic, n.d.)

Google Services (IPv6 addresses in the 2607:f8b0::/32 range)

Why It Shows Up:

- Google owns a vast range of IP addresses for its services, including search, email (Gmail), video hosting (YouTube), and cloud services (Google Cloud Platform).

Purpose in Terms of Privacy and Security:

- Google also employs encryption to protect data in transit.
- Offers various security features like two-factor authentication and secure browsing tools.
- It has robust privacy policies with options for users to control their data.

Hosting and Network Services:

- Provides extensive hosting services via Google Cloud, including computing, storage, and networking capabilities.
- Operates one of the largest CDNs, speeding up access to services and reducing latency. (Google Cloud documentation, n.d.)

Akamai Technologies (IPv4 addresses in the 23.*.*.* range)

Why It Shows Up:

- Akamai is one of the largest CDN providers and their IP ranges are used to deliver content for clients across different industries. This can include anything from media streaming to software downloads.

Purpose in Terms of Privacy and Security:

- Akamai's CDN enhances security by defending against DDoS attacks and improving website performance, which is crucial for maintaining availability and user experience.
- Offers secure content delivery with advanced encryption and authentication features.

Hosting and Network Services:

- Reduces latency by caching content on servers closer to the end-users.
- Provides cloud security solutions, web and mobile performance services, and cloud service monitoring. (Resource Library, n.d.)

The presence of these services in network traffic is common given the widespread use of these platforms for both personal and business purposes. They implement layers of security and privacy measures to protect user data and ensure the integrity of their services. In terms of network services, they contribute to a huge portion of internet traffic because they host a variety of services, from social media to search engines, video streaming, and beyond.

3. Network Troubleshooting with Wireshark

There are three ways administrators can use Wireshark to troubleshoot network problems.

A. Use packet captures to identify traffic types:

To monitor viruses, potentially spreading to other hosts or malfunctioning NICs and the kind of traffic flowing through the network. Network administrators want to be able to verify that traffic is genuine and valid if something seems off on the network.

Consider the two following instances of traffic identification:

- **Investigate NIC communications in a cluster:** In private cloud failover clusters or other deployments, Intel Advanced Network Services (ANS) probes detect network team members and ensure they are operational.

We could investigate communication between cluster team members or investigate why there are so many ANS probes, indicating a problem with one of the NICs. The NIC may be incorrectly configured, using the incorrect driver, or failing. Because Wireshark already has an ANS traffic filter, this capture is simple.

- **Detect virus propagation based on Address Resolution Protocol (ARP) queries or known malware sites:** A high number of ARP queries coming from a single machine is one suspicious traffic pattern. A virus may have infected the device and is now trying to spread to other systems. A protocol analyzer can assist us in detecting this type of traffic and its source, allowing us to thoroughly inspect the machine.

Perhaps we've heard of malware that spreads over the network by using recognizable URLs or other data. Use the documentation for Wireshark to help create a filter using these details to determine whether the malware was on the network.

B. Use packet capture to monitor the network performance:

Wireshark includes a statistical analysis tool to aid in the management of network performance issues. It provides numerous options for analyzing network efficiency and identifying areas for improvement.

In Wireshark, go to the Statistics menu and select the following performance filters:

- **Capture File Properties:** Provides basic details about the capture file, such as its size, the duration of its capture, its interface, its filters, etc. When archiving baseline captures for future comparisons, this information is extremely helpful.
- **Protocol Hierarchy:** Identifies and ranks every protocol in the capture, allowing us to determine the proportion of traffic that each protocol accounts for on the network.

For example, we can quickly find out how much of the traffic was on the network is IPv6 versus IPv4 or compare DNS and Dynamic Host Configuration Protocol traffic.

- **Conversations:** Shows all the communications, along with the start time, traffic type, duration, and size, between the designated endpoints. Apply what we've learned to clarify the data that is transferred between two nodes.
- **IO Graphs:** Allows us to filter content and view performance data in an interactive graph format that shows network traffic information. For instance, instead of using the numerical output from the Protocol Hierarchy tool, we might decide to use a graph to see the quantity of errors compared to legitimate traffic.
- **TCP Stream Graphs:** Shows details about TCP traffic, such as roundtrip, throughput, and window scaling. To enable this menu, select a packet that is TCP-based.
- **IPv4 Statistics > Destination and Ports:** Identifies the destination of network traffic, such as IP addresses and port numbers, and filters it accordingly. Remember that certain port numbers, like port 80 for HTTP and port 443 for HTTPS, are standardized.
- **IPv4 Statistics > Source and Destination Addresses:** Displays network traffic arranged according to IPv4 source and destination addresses, thereby reducing the amount of traffic that needs to be investigated. Understanding the relationship between two nodes—such as routers that share routing tables or proxies and the clients they serve—needs to have access to this data.

IPv6 network traffic can also be handled with Wireshark. Comprehensive documentation is available on the official Wireshark website.

C. Use packet captures to discover network devices:

Protocol analyzers can also be used to identify and record the devices connected to the network and exchange data. Network experts can classify involvement in networks in several ways, such as the following:

- Network capture makes it evident which hosts are connected to the network by displaying the source and destination MAC and IP addresses.
- In addition to the protocols identified, knowing what applications exchange network information is useful for ensuring that security system rules and packet filtering configurations are correct. We can also use these criteria to detect peer-to-peer BitTorrent or other network abuses.
- Client requests to the web, FTP, or file servers are displayed, assisting in the identification of queries or processes that consume server resources.
- Recognize information sent to client devices to figure out what the clients do. Ansible or other configuration management automation messages may be included in this data.

D. Network Security Insights

In addition, network analysts and cybersecurity experts can investigate security flaws throughout a network in several ways with Wireshark. They can utilize Wireshark, for instance, to:

- **Determine network threats:** Malware, viruses, and other malicious traffic can all be determined using Wireshark. Cybersecurity experts can identify suspicious activity patterns and take the necessary steps to reduce the threat by examining network traffic.

- **Track network performance:** We can use Wireshark to track network performance and find any bottlenecks or other problems that might be interfering with it. Cybersecurity experts can find the source of performance problems and take the necessary steps to fix them by examining network traffic.
- **Identify network intrusions:** By examining network traffic for indications of unauthorized access or other questionable activity, Wireshark can be used to identify network intrusions. Cybersecurity experts can identify and stop network intrusions before they cause serious harm by continuously monitoring network traffic.
- **Troubleshoot network issues:** By examining network traffic and determining the source of the problem, Wireshark can be used to troubleshoot network issues. Cybersecurity experts can examine network traffic in real-time or from a saved capture file to find configuration errors, network congestion, malfunctioning devices, and other problems that might be affecting network performance.

Conclusion:

This project highlights Wireshark's value as a powerful tool for network analysis, troubleshooting, and security monitoring. Through this hands-on experience, I developed skills in protocol analysis, traffic management, and security diagnostics. This project illustrates my ability to apply technical knowledge to real-world network scenarios, enhancing network security and operational efficiency.