

TCP Sliding Windows, Flow Control, and Congestion Control

Lecture material taken from
“Computer Networks *A Systems Approach*”,
Fourth Ed., Peterson and Davie,
Morgan Kaufmann, 2007.



Sliding Windows Outline

- Generic Sliding Windows
- Receiver Response Choices
- Introduction to TCP Sliding Windows
 - Flow control and buffers
 - Advertised window
 - Congestion control

Sliding Windows

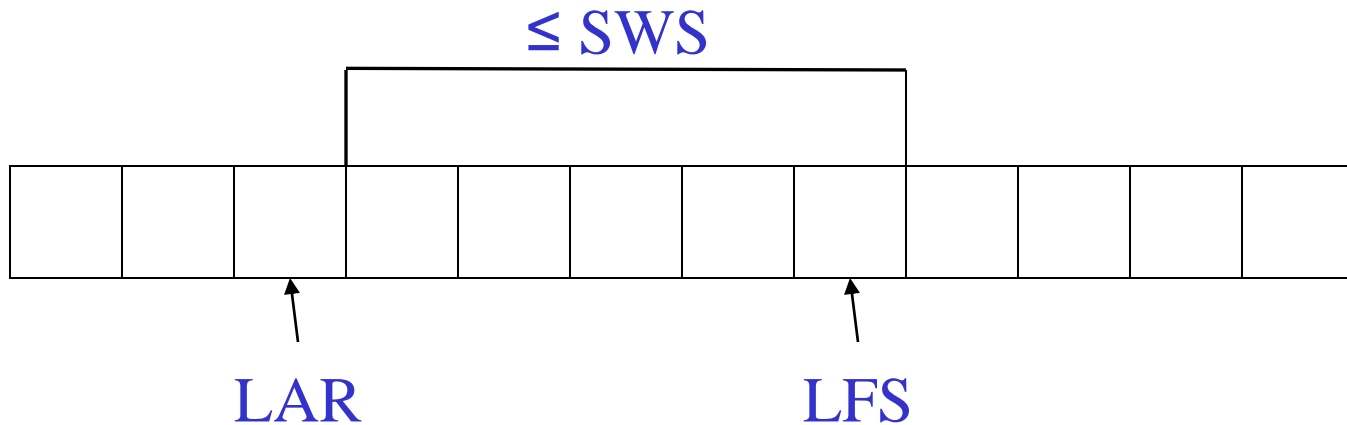
- Normally a data link layer concept.
- Our interest is understanding the TCP mechanism at the transport layer.
- Each frame is assigned a sequence number: **SeqNum**.
- The sender maintains three variables: send window size (**SWS**), last ACK received (**LAR**), and last Frame sent (**LFS**).

Sender Variables

- **SWS** :: the upper bound on the number of outstanding frames (not ACKed) the sender can transmit.
- **LAR** :: the sequence number of the last ACK received.
- **LFS** :: the sequence number of the last frame sent.

Sender Invariant

$$\text{LFS} - \text{LAR} \leq \text{SWS}$$



Sender Window

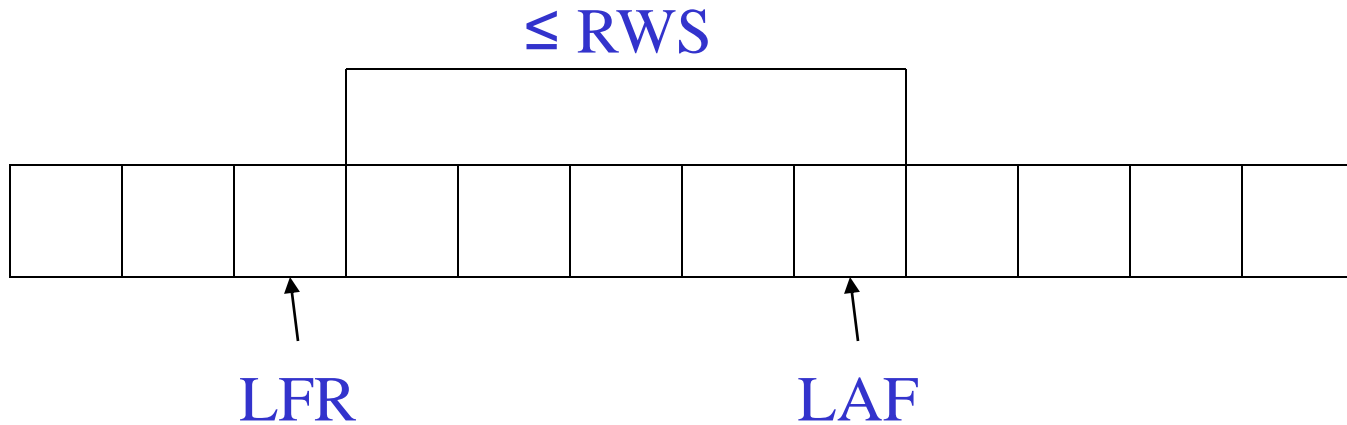
- An arriving ACK → **LAR** moves right 1 → sender can send one more frame.
- Associate a **timer** with each frame the sender transmits.
- Sender retransmits the frame if the timer *times out*.
- Sender buffer :: up to **SWS** frames.

Receiver Variables

- Receiver window size (RWS) :: the upper bound on the number of out-of-order frames the receiver is willing to accept.
- Largest acceptable frame (LAF) :: the sequence number of the largest acceptable frame.
- Last frame received (LFR) :: the sequence number of the last frame received.

Receiver Invariant

$$\text{LAF} - \text{LFR} \leq \text{RWS}$$



Receiver Window

When a frame arrives with SeqNum:

If ($\text{SeqNum} \leq \text{LFR}$ or $\text{SeqNum} > \text{LAF}$)
*the frame is **discarded** because it is
outside the window.*

If ($\text{LFR} < \text{SeqNum} \leq \text{LAF}$)
*the frame is **accepted**.*

Receiver ACK Decisions

SeqNumToAck :: largest sequence number **not yet ACKed** such that all frames $\leq \text{SeqNumToAck}$ have been received.

- Receiver ACKs receipt of SeqNumToAck and sets

$$\text{LFR} = \text{SeqNumToAck}$$

$$\text{LAF} = \text{LFR} + \text{RWS}$$

SeqNumToAck is adjusted appropriately!

Generic ACK Choices

1. ACK sequence number indicates the ***last frame successfully received.***

- OR -

2. ACK sequence number indicates the ***next frame the receiver expects to receive.***

Both of these can be strictly individual ACKs or represent cumulative ACKing.

Cumulative ACKs is the most common technique.

Generic Responses to a Lost Packet or Frame

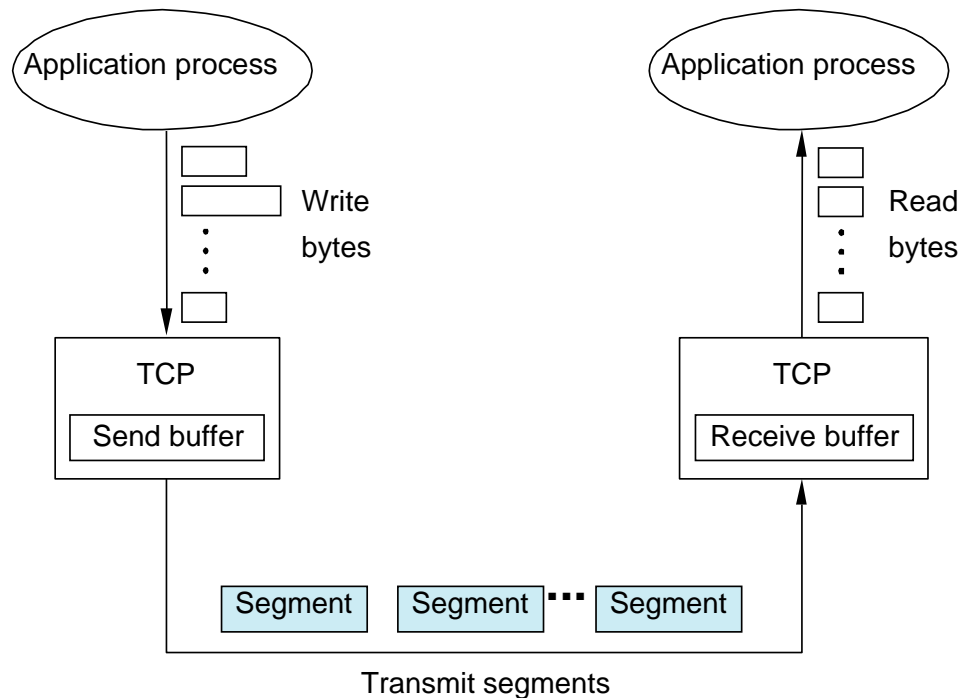
1. Use a duplicate ACK.
2. Use a selective ACK [SACK].
3. Use a negative ACK [NACK] .

TCP Sliding Windows

- * *In practice, the TCP implementation switches from packet pointers to byte pointers.*
- Guarantees reliable delivery of data.
- Ensures data delivered in order.
- Enforces flow control between sender and receiver.
- The idea is: the sender does not overrun the receiver's buffer.

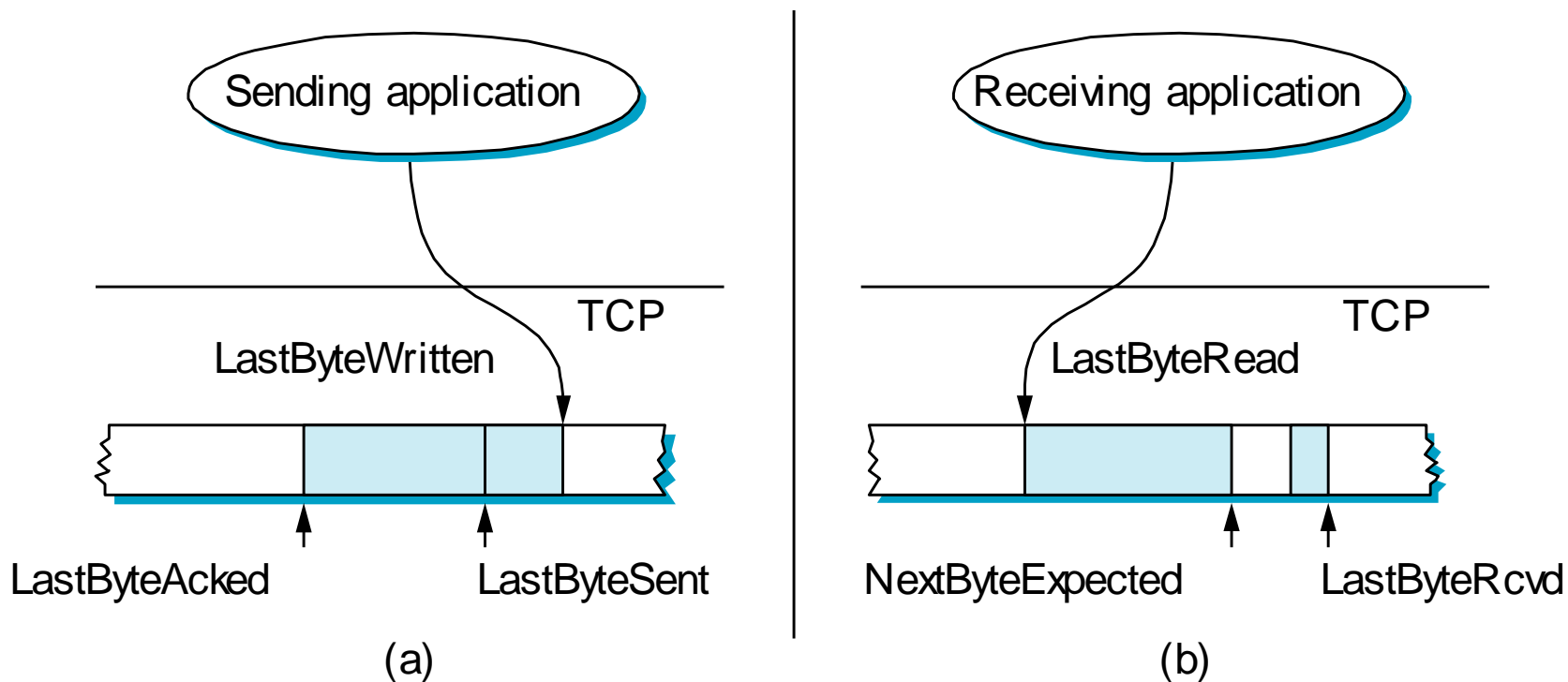
Figure 5.3

TCP Managing a Byte Stream



P&D slide

Figure 5.8 Relationship between TCP Send Buffer and TCP Receive Buffer

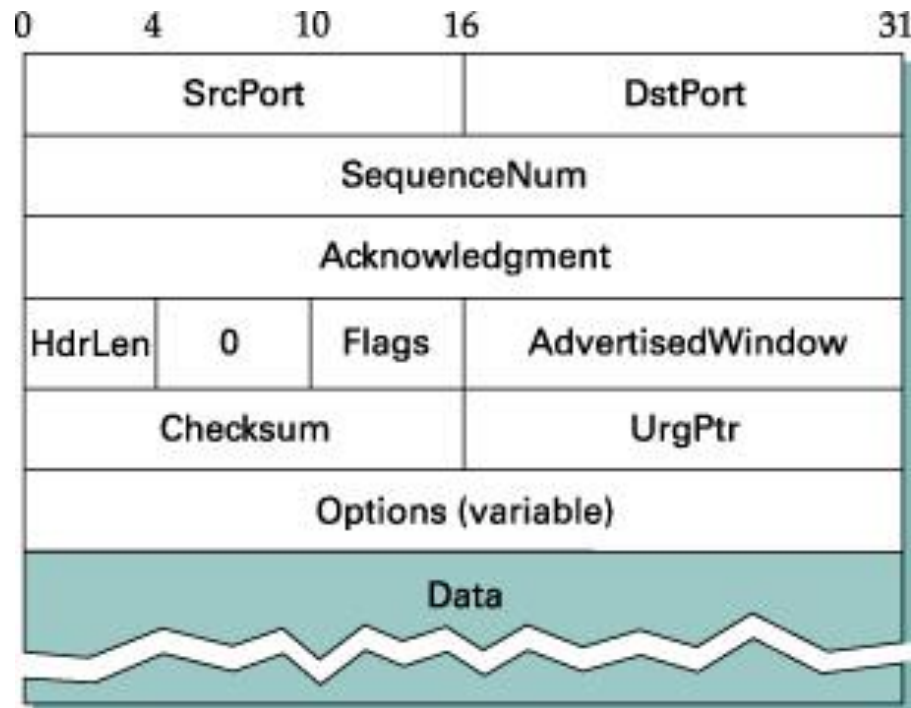


P&D slide

Receiver's Advertised Window

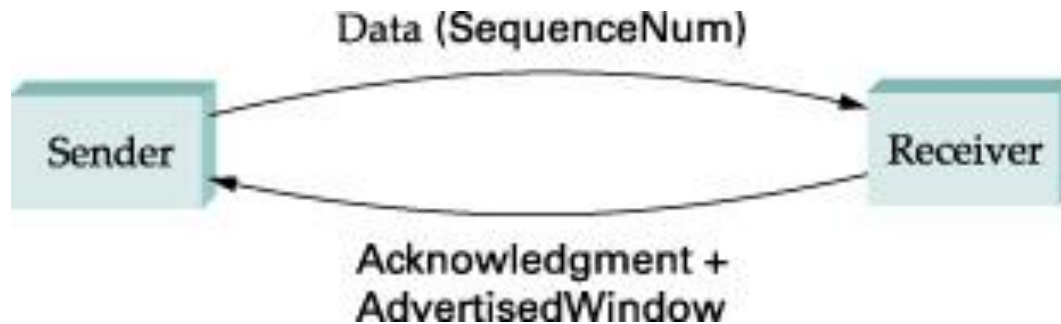
- The big difference in TCP is that the size of the sliding window size at the TCP receiver is not fixed.
- The receiver *advertises* an adjustable window size (**AdvertisedWindow** field in TCP header).
- Sender is limited to having no more than **AdvertisedWindow** bytes of unACKed data at any time.

Figure 5.4 TCP Header Format



P&D slide

Figure 5.5 Simplified TCP



P&D slide

TCP Flow Control

- The discussion is similar to the previous sliding window mechanism except we add the complexity of sending and receiving *application processes* that are filling and emptying their local buffers.
- Also we introduce the complexity that buffers are of finite size without worrying about where the buffers are stored.

MaxSendBuffer

MaxRcvBuffer



TCP Flow Control

- The receiver **throttles** the sender by advertising a window size no larger than the amount it can buffer.

On TCP receiver side:

$\text{LastByteRcvd} - \text{LastByteRead} \leq \text{MaxRcvBuffer}$

to avoid buffer overflow!

TCP Flow Control

TCP receiver advertises:

$$\text{AdvertisedWindow} = \text{MaxRcvBuffer} - (\text{LastByteRcvd} - \text{LastByteRead})$$

i.e., the amount of free space available in the receiver's buffer.

TCP Flow Control

The TCP sender must adhere to the **AdvertisedWindow** from the receiver such that

$$\text{LastByteSent} - \text{LastByteAked} \leq \text{AdvertisedWindow}$$

or use **EffectiveWindow**

$$\text{EffectiveWindow} = \text{AdvertisedWindow} - (\text{LastByteSent} - \text{LastByteAked})$$

TCP Flow Control

Sender Flow Control Rules:

1. **EffectiveWindow > 0** *for sender to send more data.*
2. **LastByteWritten – LastByteAcked ≤ MaxSendBuffer**

equality here → send buffer is full!!

*→ TCP sender process must **block** the sender application.*

TCP Congestion Control

- **CongestionWindow** :: a variable held by the TCP source for each connection.
- * TCP is modified such that the maximum number of bytes of unacknowledged data allowed is the *minimum of* **CongestionWindow** and **AdvertisedWindow**.

MaxWindow :: min (**CongestionWindow** , **AdvertisedWindow**)

TCP Congestion Control

Finally, we have that

$$\text{EffectiveWindow} = \text{MaxWindow} - (\text{LastByteSent} - \text{LastByteAcked})$$

The idea :: the source's effective window can be **no faster** than the slowest of the network (i.e., its core *routers*) or the destination Host.

The TCP source receives **implicit** and/or **explicit** indications of congestion by which to reduce the size of **CongestionWindow**.

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