

About Segment Routing

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Scope

Segment routing is a method of forwarding packets on the network based on the source routing paradigm. The source chooses a path and encodes it in the packet header as an ordered list of segments. Segments are an identifier for any type of instruction. For example, topology segments identify the next hop toward a destination. Each segment is identified by the segment ID (SID) consisting of a flat unsigned 20-bit integer.

Segments

Interior gateway protocol (IGP) distributes two types of segments: prefix segments and adjacency segments. Each router (node) and each link (adjacency) has an associated segment identifier (SID).

- A prefix SID is associated with an IP prefix. The prefix SID is manually configured from the segment routing global block (SRGB) range of labels, and is distributed by IS-IS or OSPF. The prefix segment steers the traffic along the shortest path to its destination. A node SID is a special type of prefix SID that identifies a specific node. It is configured under the loopback interface with the loopback address of the node as the prefix.

  A prefix segment is a global segment, so a prefix SID is globally unique within the segment routing domain.

- An adjacency segment is identified by a label called an adjacency SID, which represents a specific adjacency, such as egress interface, to a neighboring router. An adjacency SID can be allocated dynamically from the dynamic label range or configured manually from the segment routing local block (SRLB) range of labels. The adjacency SID is distributed by IS-IS or OSPF. The adjacency segment steers the traffic to a specific adjacency.

  An adjacency segment is a local segment, so the adjacency SID is locally unique relative to a specific router.

By combining prefix (node) and adjacency segment IDs in an ordered list, any path within a network can be constructed. At each hop, the top segment is used to identify the next hop. Segments are stacked in order at the top of the packet header. When the top segment contains the identity of another node, the receiving node

uses equal cost multipaths (ECMP) to move the packet to the next hop. When the identity is that of the receiving node, the node pops the top segment and performs the task required by the next segment.

Dataplane

Segment routing can be directly applied to the Multiprotocol Label Switching (MPLS) architecture with no change in the forwarding plane. A segment is encoded as an MPLS label. An ordered list of segments is encoded as a stack of labels. The segment to process is on the top of the stack. The related label is popped from the stack, after the completion of a segment.

Services

Segment Routing integrates with the rich multi-service capabilities of MPLS, including Layer 3 VPN (L3VPN), Virtual Private Wire Service (VPWS), Virtual Private LAN Service (VPLS), and Ethernet VPN (EVPN).

Segment Routing for Traffic Engineering

Segment routing for traffic engineering (SR-TE) takes place through a policy between a source and destination pair. Segment routing for traffic engineering uses the concept of source routing, where the source calculates the path and encodes it in the packet header as a segment. Each segment is an end-to-end path from the source to the destination, and instructs the routers in the provider core network to follow the specified path instead of the shortest path calculated by the IGP. The destination is unaware of the presence of the policy.

Need

With segment routing for traffic engineering (SR-TE), the network no longer needs to maintain a per-application and per-flow state. Instead, it simply obeys the forwarding instructions provided in the packet.

SR-TE utilizes network bandwidth more effectively than traditional MPLS-TE networks by using ECMP at every segment level. It uses a single intelligent source and relieves remaining routers from the task of calculating the required path through the network.

Benefits

- **Ready for SDN**: Segment routing was built for SDN and is the foundation for Application Engineered Routing (AER). SR prepares networks for business models, where applications can direct network behavior. SR provides the right balance between distributed intelligence and centralized optimization and programming.
- **Minimal configuration**: Segment routing for TE requires minimal configuration on the source router.
- **Load balancing**: Unlike in RSVP-TE, load balancing for segment routing can take place in the presence of equal cost multiple paths (ECMPs).
- **Supports Fast Reroute (FRR)**: Fast reroute enables the activation of a pre-configured backup path within 50 milliseconds of path failure.
- **Plug-and-Play deployment**: Segment routing policies are interoperable with existing MPLS control and data planes and can be implemented in an existing deployment.

Workflow for Deploying Segment Routing

Follow this workflow to deploy segment routing.

1. Configure the Segment Routing Global Block (SRGB)
2. Enable Segment Routing and Node SID for the IGP
3. Configure Segment Routing for BGP
4. Configure the SR-TE Policy
5. Configure the SR-PCE
6. Configure TI-LFA and Microloop Avoidance
7. Configure the Segment Routing Mapping Server