



# Mining Network Traffic Data

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# Roadmap

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- Introduction
- Traffic data and analysis tools:
  - data collection, statistical analysis, clustering tools, prediction analysis
- Case studies:
  - wireless network: **Telus Mobility**
  - public safety wireless network: **E-Comm**
  - satellite network: **ChinaSat**
  - packet data networks: **Internet**
- Conclusions and references



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# Network traffic measurements

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- Traffic **measurements** in operational networks help:
  - **understand** traffic characteristics in deployed networks
  - **develop** traffic models
  - **evaluate** performance of protocols and applications
- Traffic **analysis**:
  - **provides** information about the user behavior patterns
  - **enables** network operators to understand the behavior of network users
- Traffic **prediction**: important to assess future network capacity requirements and to plan future network developments



# Self-similarity

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- Self-similarity implies a "fractal-like" behavior: data on various **time scales** have similar patterns
- A wide-sense stationary process  $X(n)$  is called (exactly second order) **self-similar** if its autocorrelation function satisfies:
  - $r^{(m)}(k) = r(k)$ ,  $k \geq 0$ ,  $m = 1, 2, \dots, n$ ,  
where  $m$  is the level of aggregation
- Implications:
  - no natural length of bursts
  - bursts exist across many time scales
  - traffic does not become "smoother" when aggregated (unlike Poisson traffic)



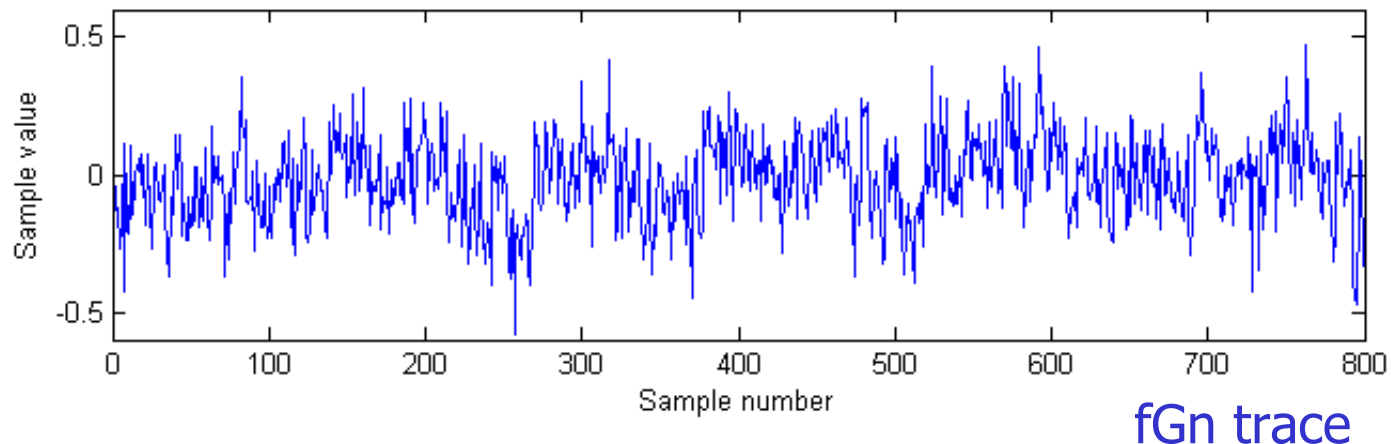
# Self-similar processes

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- Properties:
  - slowly decaying variance
  - long-range dependence
  - Hurst parameter ( $H$ )
- Processes with only short-range dependence (Poisson):  
 $H = 0.5$
- Self-similar processes:  $0.5 < H < 1.0$
- As the traffic volume increases, the traffic becomes more bursty, more self-similar, and the Hurst parameter increases

# Long-range dependence: properties

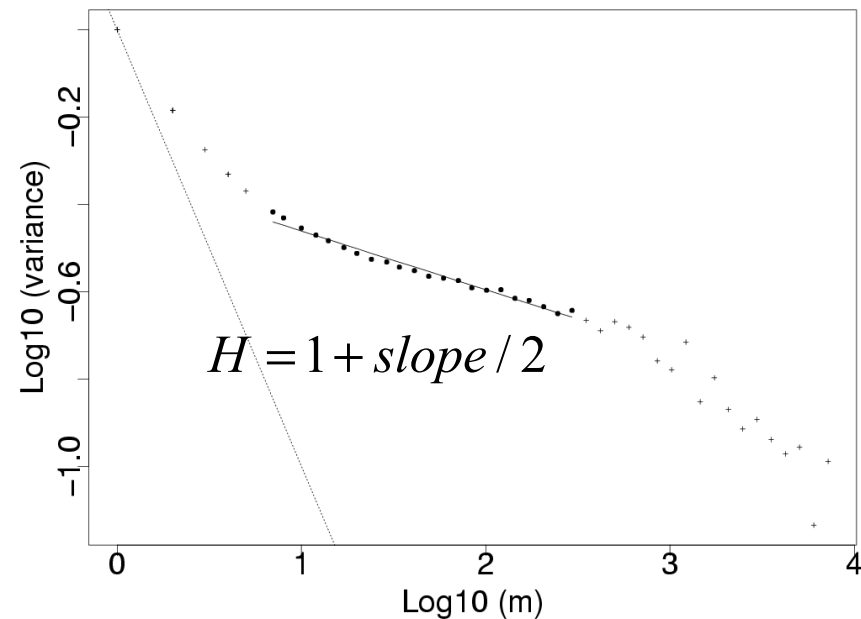
- High variability:
  - when the sample size increases, variance of the sample mean decays more slowly than expected
- Burstiness over a range of timescales:
  - long runs of large values followed by long runs of small values, repeated in aperiodic patterns



# Estimation of H

Various estimators:

- variance-time plots
- R/S plots
- periodograms
- wavelets



Their performance often depends on the characteristics of the data trace under analysis





# Clustering analysis

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- Clustering analysis groups or segments a collection of objects into subsets or **clusters** based on similarity
- An object can be described by a set of measurements or by its relations to other objects
- Clustering algorithms can be employed to analyze network user behaviors
- Network users are classified into clusters, according to the similarity of their behavior patterns
- With user clusters, traffic prediction is reduced to predicting and aggregating users' traffic from few clusters



# Clustering analysis

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- Groups collection of objects into subsets (clusters):
  - resulting intra-cluster similarity is high while inter-cluster similarity is low
- The **inter-cluster distance** reflects dissimilarity between clusters:
  - Euclidean distance between two cluster centroids (mean value of objects in a cluster, viewed as cluster's center of gravity)
- The **intra-cluster distance** expresses coherent similarity of data in the same cluster:
  - average distance of objects from their cluster centroids
- Better clustering:
  - large **inter-cluster** and small **intra-cluster** distances



# Clustering quality

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- **Overall clustering quality**: defined as difference between minimum inter-cluster and maximum intra-cluster distances
  - larger indicator implies better overall clustering quality
- **Silhouette coefficient (x)**:
$$(b(x) - a(x)) / \max \{a(x), b(x)\}$$

a(x) and b(x) are average distances between data point x and other data points in clusters A and B, respectively

  - independent of number of clusters K



# Clustering algorithms

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- Two approaches:
  - partitioning clustering (k-means)
  - hierarchical clustering
- Clustering tools:
  - **AutoClass** tool
  - **k-means** algorithm

P. Cheeseman and J. Stutz, "Bayesian classification (AutoClass): theory and results," in *Advances in Knowledge Discovery and Data Mining*, U. M. Fayyad, G. Piatetsky-Shapiro, P. Smyth, and R. Uthurusamy, Eds., AAAI Press/MIT Press, 1996.

L. Kaufman and P. J. Rousseeuw, *Finding Groups in Data: An Introduction to Cluster Analysis*. New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1990.



# Clustering algorithms: k-means

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- The **k-means** algorithm is commonly used for data clustering
- The algorithm is well-known for its simplicity and efficiency
- Based on the input parameter **k**, it partitions a set of **n** objects into **k** clusters so that the resulting intra-cluster similarity is high and the inter-cluster similarity is low
- Similarity of clusters is measured with respect to the mean value of the objects in a cluster (viewed as the cluster's center of gravity)



# k-means: partitioning clustering

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- Constructs  $k$  partitions of the data from  $n$  objects, where  $k \leq n$
- Two constraints:
  - each cluster must contain at least one object
  - each object must belong to exactly one group
- Requires exhaustive enumeration of all possible combinations to find the optimal cluster solution



# k-means clustering

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- Generates  $k$  clusters from  $n$  objects
- Requires two inputs:
  - $k$ : number of desired partitions
  - $n$  objects
- Uses random placement of initial clusters
- Determines clustering results through an iteration technique to relocate objects to the most similar cluster:
  - similarity is defined as the distance between objects
  - objects that are closer to each other are more similar
- Computational complexity of  $O(nkt)$ , where  $t$  is the maximum number of iterations



# Finding number of clusters

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- The number of clusters  $k$  is not known a priori
- $k$ -means algorithm is repeated for different  $k$  values
- Number of clusters is found by comparing average  $SC$  value for various values of  $k$ :
  - average  $SC$  is calculated for all objects
  - the natural number of clusters  $k$  is found at the local maxima

$SC$ : silhouette coefficient





# Traffic prediction: ARIMA model

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- Auto-Regressive Integrated Moving Average (ARIMA) model:
  - general model for forecasting time series
  - past values: AutoRegressive (AR) structure
  - past random fluctuant effect: Moving Average (MA) process
- ARIMA model explicitly includes differencing
- ARIMA ( $p, d, q$ ):
  - autoregressive parameter:  $p$
  - number of differencing passes:  $d$
  - moving average parameter:  $q$



# Traffic prediction: SARIMA model

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- Seasonal ARIMA is a variation of the ARIMA model
- Seasonal ARIMA (SARIMA) model:

$$(p, d, q) \times (P, D, Q)_S$$

- captures seasonal pattern
- SARIMA additional model parameters:
  - seasonal period parameter:  $S$
  - seasonal autoregressive parameter:  $P$
  - number of seasonal differencing passes:  $D$
  - seasonal moving average parameter:  $Q$



# SARIMA models: selection criteria

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- Order  $(p, d, q)$  selected based on:
  - time series plot of traffic data
  - autocorrelation and partial autocorrelation functions
- Validity of parameter selection:
  - Akaike's information criterion:
    - AIC
    - corrected AICc
  - Bayesian information criterion BIC



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# ChinaSat data: analysis

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- Analysis of network traffic:
  - characteristics of TCP connections
  - network traffic patterns
  - statistical and cluster analysis of traffic
  - anomaly detection:
    - statistical methods
    - wavelets
    - principle component analysis

TCP: transport control protocol

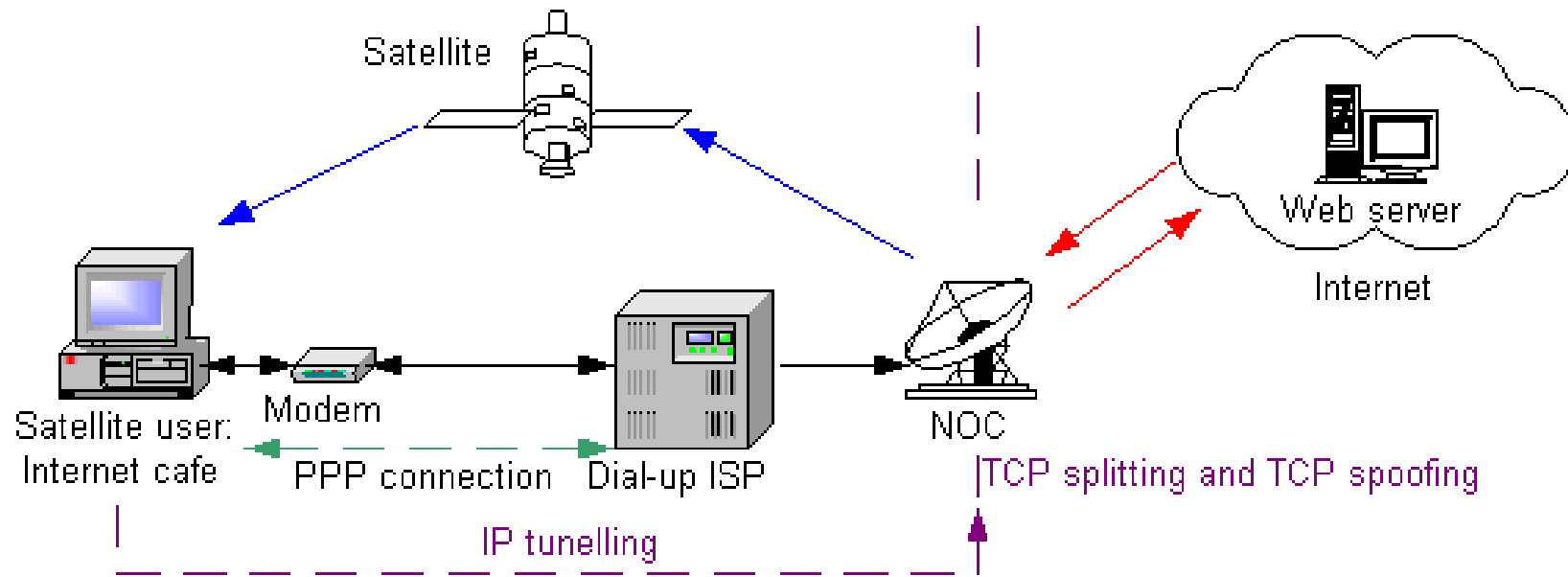


# Network and traffic data

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- **ChinaSat**: network architecture and TCP
- Analysis of **billing** records:
  - aggregated traffic
  - user behavior
- Analysis of **tcpdump** traces:
  - general characteristics
  - TCP options and operating system (OS) fingerprinting
  - network anomalies

# DirecPC system diagram





# Characteristics of satellite links

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- Large coverage area
- High bandwidth
- Long propagation delay
- Large bandwidth-delay product
- High bit error rates:
  - $10^{-6}$  without error correction
  - $10^{-3}$  or  $10^{-2}$  due to extreme weather and interference
- Path asymmetry





# Characteristics of satellite links

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- ChinaSat hybrid satellite network
  - Employs geosynchronous satellites deployed by Hughes Network Systems Inc.
  - Provides data and television services:
    - DirecPC (Classic): unidirectional satellite data service
    - DirecTV: satellite television service
    - DirecWay (Hughnet): new bi-directional satellite data service that replaces DirecPC
  - DirecPC transmission rates:
    - 400 kb/s from satellite to user
    - 33.6 kb/s from user to network operations center (NOC) using dial-up
  - Improves performance using TCP splitting with spoofing



# ChinaSat data: analysis

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- ChinaSat traffic is self-similar and non-stationary
- **Hurst** parameter differs depending on traffic load
- Modeling of TCP connections:
  - inter-arrival time is best modeled by the Weibull distribution
  - number of downloaded bytes is best modeled by the lognormal distribution
- The distribution of visited websites is best modeled by the discrete Gaussian exponential (DGX) distribution



# ChinaSat data: analysis

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- Traffic prediction:
  - autoregressive integrative moving average (ARIMA) was successfully used to predict uploaded traffic (but not downloaded traffic)
  - wavelet + autoregressive model outperforms the ARIMA model

Q. Shao and Lj. Trajkovic, "Measurement and analysis of traffic in a hybrid satellite-terrestrial network," *Proc. SPECTS 2004*, San Jose, CA, July 2004, pp. 329-336.



# Analysis of collected data

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- Analysis of patterns and statistical properties of two sets of data from the ChinaSat DirecPC network:
  - `billing` records
  - `tcpdump` traces
- `Billing` records:
  - daily and weekly traffic patterns
  - user classification:
    - single and multi-variable k-means clustering based on average traffic
    - hierarchical clustering based on user activity



# Analysis of collected data

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- Analysis of `tcpdump` trace
  - `tcpdump` trace:
    - protocols and applications
    - TCP options
    - operating system fingerprinting
    - network anomalies
  - Developed C program `pcapread`:
    - processes `tcpdump` files
    - produces custom output
    - eliminates the need for packet capture library `libpcap`



# Network anomalies

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- Scans and worms
- Denial of service
- Flash crowd
- Traffic shift
- Alpha traffic
- Traffic volume anomalies



# Network anomalies

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- **Scans and worms:**
  - packets are sent to probe network hosts
  - used to discover and exploit resources
- **Denial of service:**
  - large number of packets is directed to a single destination
  - makes a host incapable of handling incoming connections or exhausts available bandwidth along paths to the destination



# Network anomalies

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- **Flash crowd:**
  - high volume of traffic is destined to a single destination
  - caused by breaking news or availability of new software
- **Traffic shift:**
  - redirection of traffic from one set of paths to another
  - caused by route changes, link unavailability, or network congestion





# Network anomalies

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- **Alpha traffic:**
  - unusually high volume of traffic between two endpoints
  - caused by file transfers or bandwidth measurements
- **Traffic volume anomalies:**
  - significant deviation of traffic volume from usual daily or weekly patterns
  - classified as:
    - outages: caused by unavailable links, crashed servers, or routing problems
    - short term increases in demand: caused by short term events such as holiday traffic
  - involve multiple sources and destinations



# Billing records

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- Records were collected during the continuous period from 23:00 on Oct. 31, 2002 to 11:00 on Jan. 10, 2003
- Each file contains the hourly traffic summary for each user
- Fields of interests:
  - SiteID (user identification)
  - Start (record start time)
  - CTxByt (number of bytes downloaded by a user)
  - CRxByt (number of bytes uploaded by a user)
  - CTxPkt (number of packets downloaded by a user)
  - CRxPkt (number of packets uploaded by a user)

download: satellite to user  
upload: user to NOC

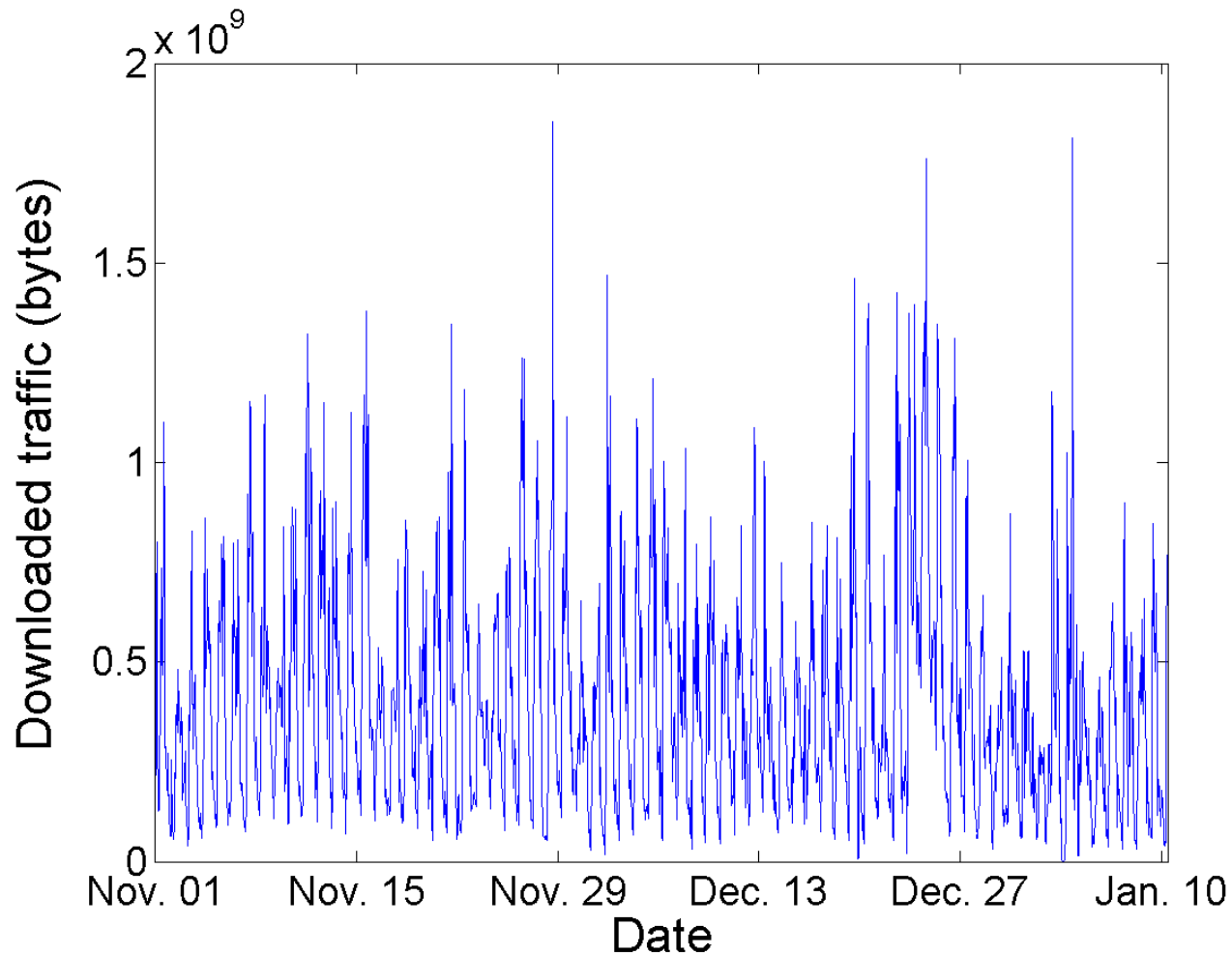


# Billing records: characteristics

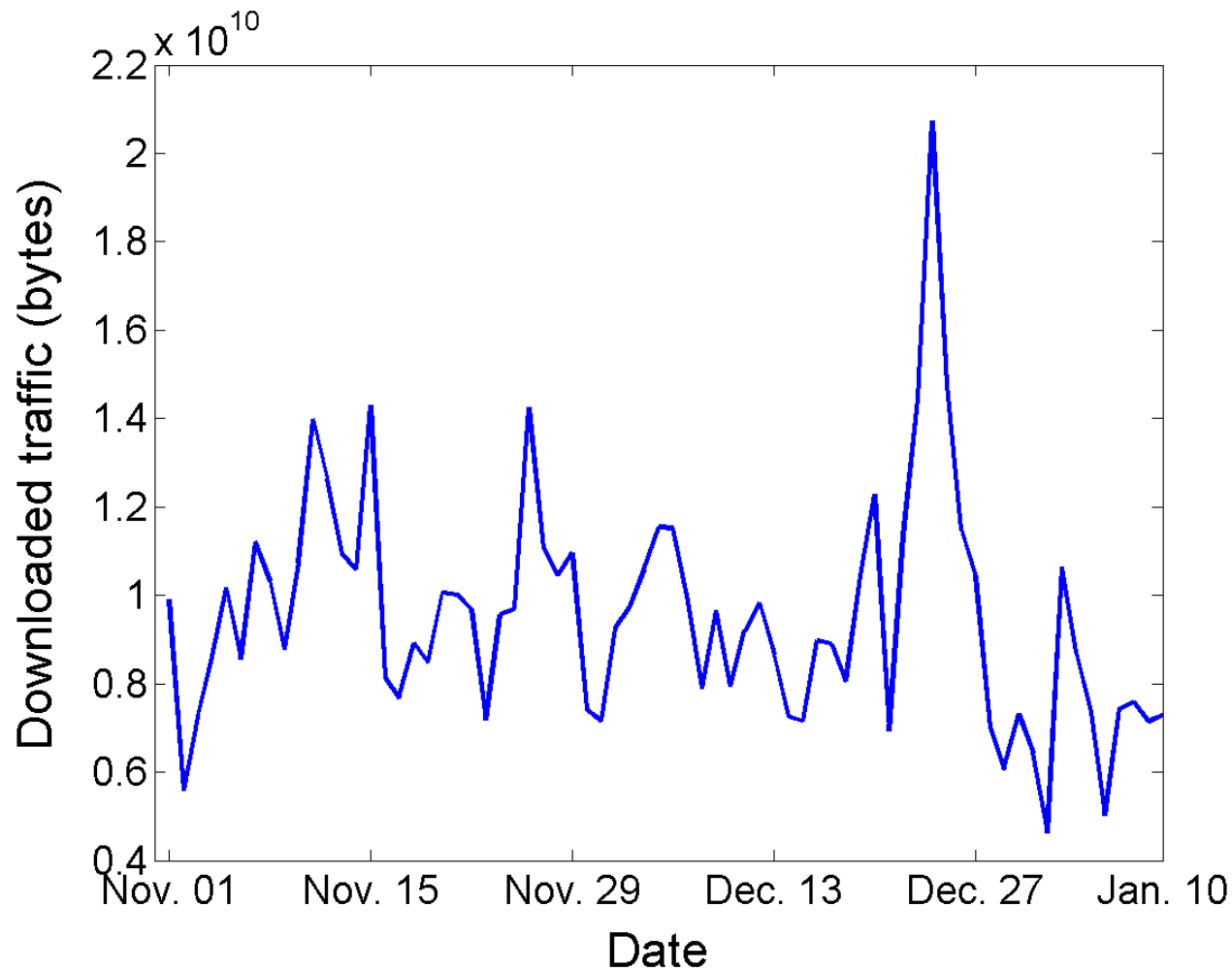
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- 186 unique SiteIDs
- Daily and weekly cycles:
  - lower traffic volume on weekends
  - daily cycle starts at 7 AM, rises to three daily maxima at 11 AM, 3 PM, and 7 PM, then decrease monotonically until 7 AM
- Highest daily traffic recorded on Dec. 24, 2002
- Outage occurred on Jan. 3, 2003

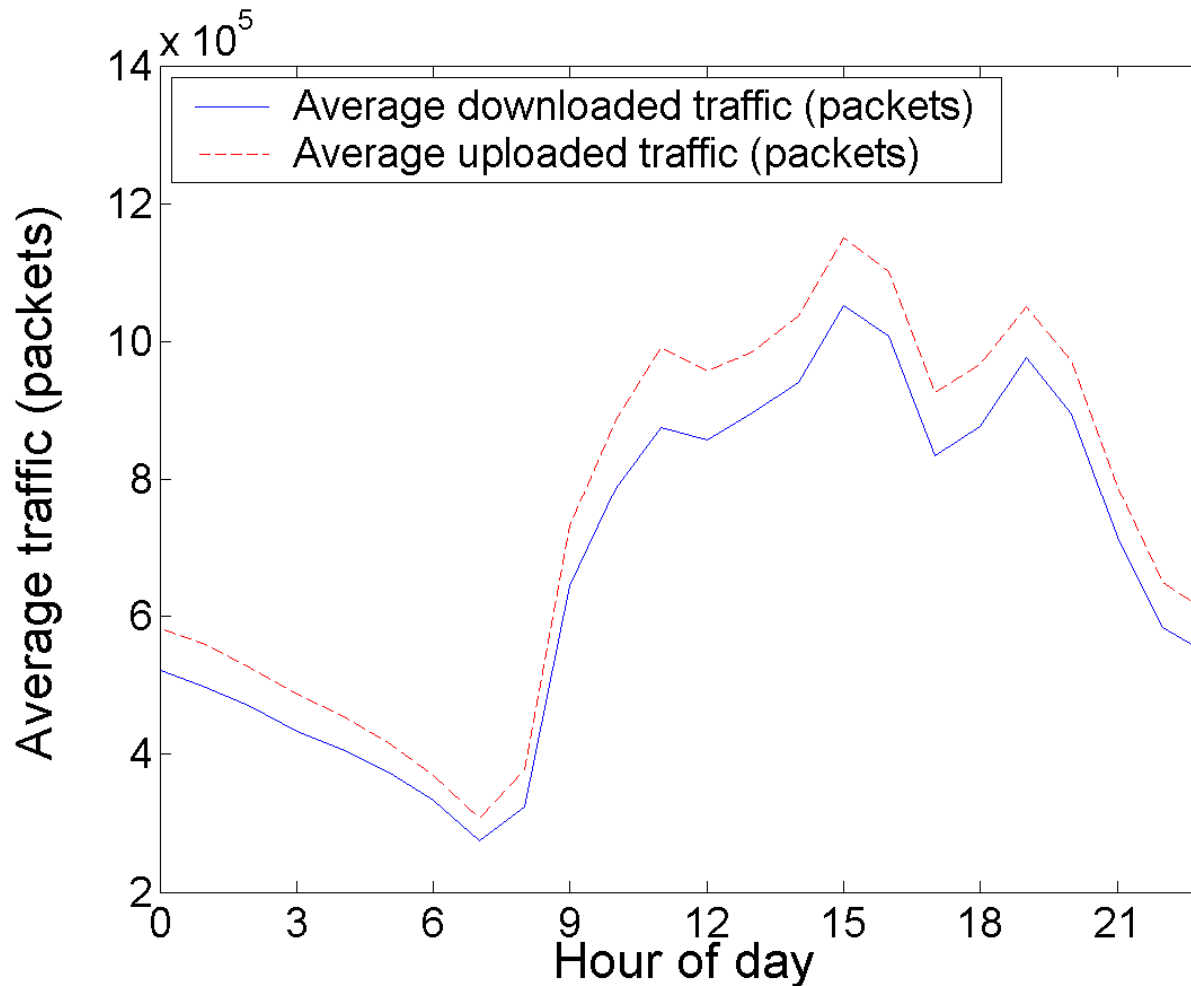
# Aggregated hourly traffic



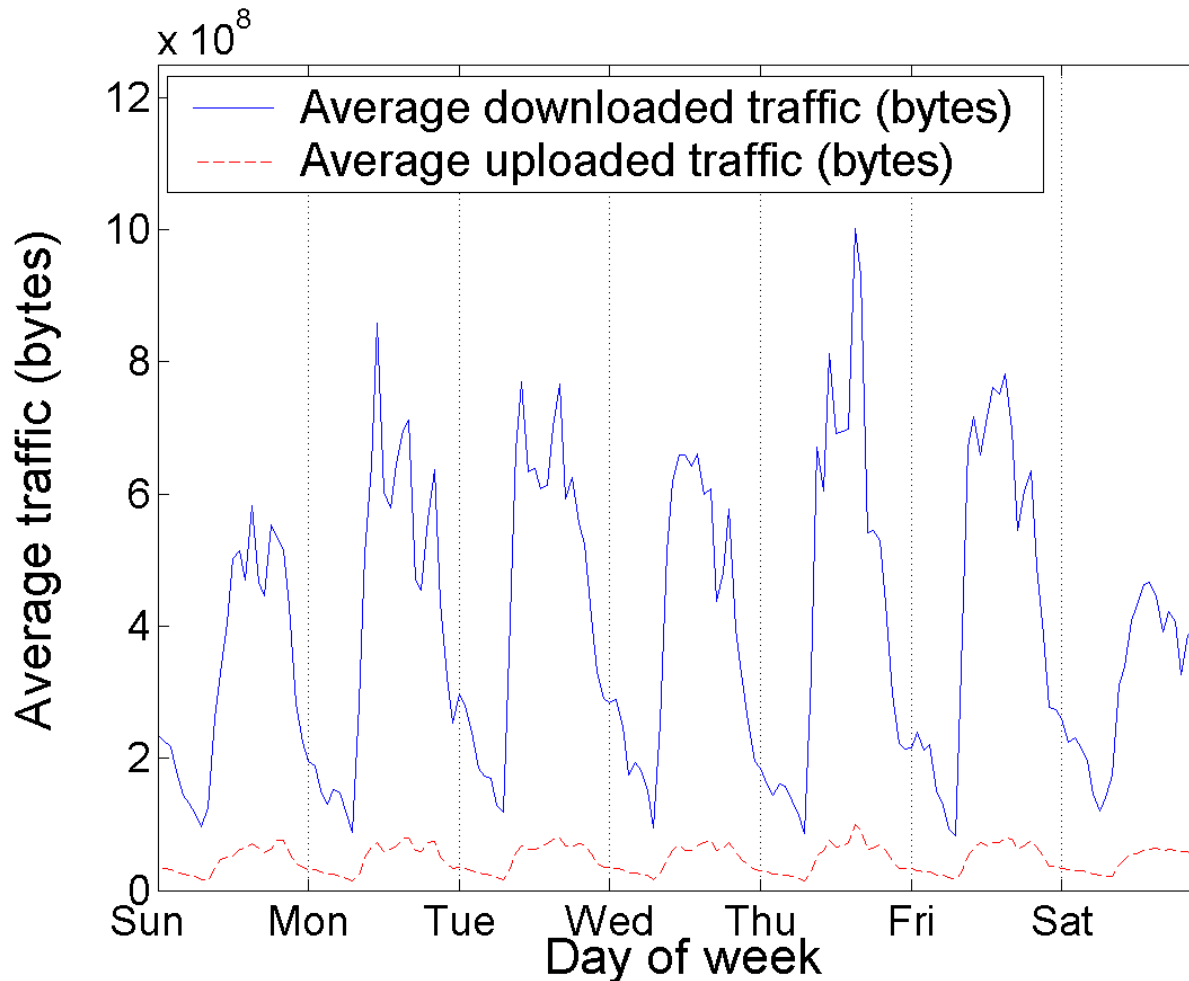
# Aggregated daily traffic



# Daily diurnal traffic: average downloaded bytes



# Weekly traffic: average downloaded bytes





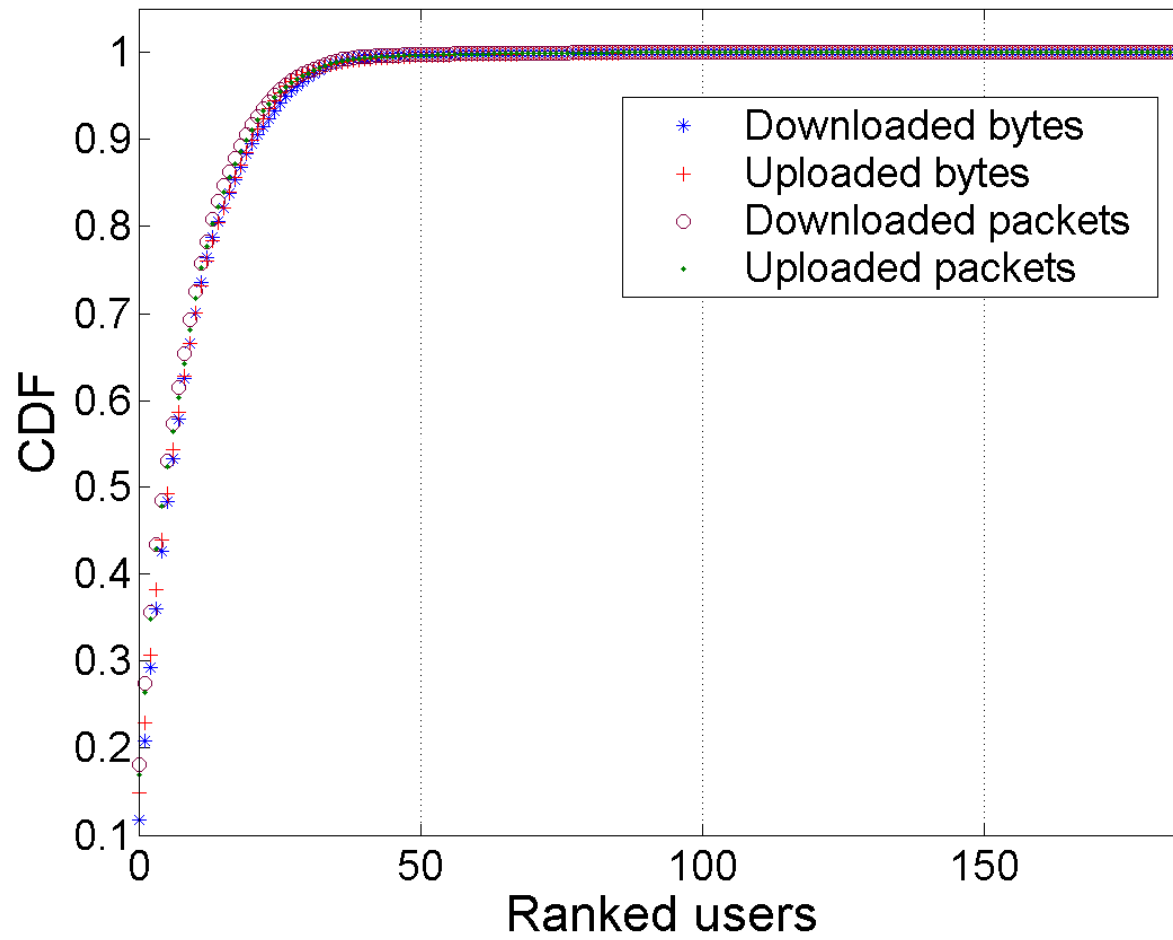
# Ranking of user traffic

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- Users are ranked according to the traffic volume
- The **top user** downloaded **78.8 GB**, uploaded **11.9 GB**, and downloaded/uploaded **~205 million** packets
- Most users download/uploaded little traffic
- Cumulative distribution functions (CDFs) are constructed from the ranks:
  - **top user** accounts for **11%** of downloaded bytes
  - **top 25 users** contributed **93.3%** of downloaded bytes
  - **top 37 users** contributed **99%** of total traffic (packets and bytes)



# Cumulative distribution functions





# k-means: clustering results

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- Natural number of clusters is  $k=3$  for downloaded and uploaded bytes
- Most users belong to the group with small traffic volume
- For  $k=3$ :
  - 159 users in group 1 (average 0.0-16.8 MB downloaded per hour)
  - 24 users in group 2 (average 16.8-70.6 MB downloaded per hour)
  - 3 users in group 3 (average 70.6-110.7 MB downloaded per hour)



# Refinement:

## three most common traffic patterns

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- **Idle** users:
  - rarely download/upload traffic
  - represented by zero traffic
- **Active** users:
  - download/upload traffic for more than 18 hours a day
  - represented by traffic over 24 hours each day
- **Semi-active** users:
  - download/upload traffic for 8-12 hours a day
  - represented by a cycle of 10 hours **ACTIVE**/14 hours **IDLE** cycle for each day



## Refinement: clustering results

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Traffic pattern	Number of users
Idle	162
Active	16
Semi-active	8
Total number of users	186

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# tcpdump traces

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- Traces were continuously collected from 11:30 on Dec. 14, 2002 to 11:00 on Jan. 10, 2003 at the NOC
- The first 68 bytes of a each TCP/IP packet were captured
- ~63 GB of data contained in 127 files
- User IP address is not constant due to the use of the private IP address range and dynamic IP
- Majority of traffic is TCP:
  - 94% of total bytes and 84% of total packets
  - HTTP (port 80) accounts for 90% of TCP connections and 76% of TCP bytes
  - FTP (port 21) accounts for 0.2% of TCP connections and 11% of TCP bytes



# OS fingerprinting results

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- Analyzed 9 hours of `tcpdump` trace on Dec. 14, 2002 using the open-source tool `p0f v2`
- Assumed constant IP addresses
- Detected 171 users:
  - 137 users did not initiate any connections and cannot be identified (no SYN packets)
  - 14 users employ Microsoft Windows
  - 2 users employ Linux
  - 1 user employs an unknown OS (identified as an MSS-modifying proxy)

OS: operating system



# Network anomalies

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- Ethereal/Wireshark, tcptrace, and pcapread
- Four types of network anomalies were detected:
  - invalid TCP flag combinations
  - large number of TCP resets
  - UDP and TCP port scans
  - traffic volume anomalies



# Analysis of TCP flags

TCP flag	Packet count	% of Total
SYN only	19,050,849	48.500
RST only	7,440,418	18.900
FIN only	12,679,619	32.300
*SYN+FIN	408	0.001
*RST+FIN (no PSH)	85,571	0.200
*RST+PSH (no FIN)	18,111	0.050
*RST+FIN+PSH	8,329	0.020
*Total number of packets with invalid TCP flag combinations	112,419	0.300
Total packet count	39,283,305	100.000





# Large number of TCP resets

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- Connections are terminated by either **TCP FIN** or **TCP RST**:
  - 12,679,619 connections were terminated by **FIN** (63%)
  - 7,440,418 connections were terminated by **RST** (37%)
- Large number of **TCP RST** indicates that connections are terminated in error conditions
- **TCP RST** is employed by Microsoft Internet Explorer to terminate connections instead of **TCP FIN**

M. Arlitt and C. Williamson, "An analysis of TCP reset behaviour on the Internet," *ACM SIGCOMM Comput. Commun. Rev.*, vol. 35, no. 1, pp. 37-44, Jan. 2005.



# UDP and TCP port scans

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- UDP port scans are found on UDP port 137 (NETBEUI)
- TCP port scans are found on these TCP ports:
  - 80 Hypertext transfer protocol (HTTP)
  - 139 NETBIOS extended user interface (NETBEUI)
  - 434 HTTP over secure socket layer (HTTPS)
  - 1433 Microsoft structured query language (MS SQL)
  - 27374 Subseven trojan
- No HTTP(S) servers were active in the ChinaSat network
- MSSQL vulnerability was discovered on Oct. 2002, which may be the cause of scans on TCP port 1433
- The Subseven trojan is a backdoor program used with malicious intents

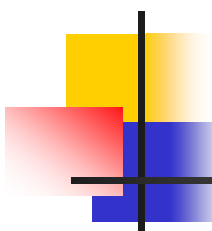
TCP: transport control protocol  
UDP: user defined protocol



# UDP port scans originating from the ChinaSat network

192.168.2.30:137 - 195.x.x.98:1025  
192.168.2.30:137 - 202.x.x.153:1027  
192.168.2.30:137 - 210.x.x.23:1035  
192.168.2.30:137 - 195.x.x.42:1026  
192.168.2.30:137 - 202.y.y.226:1026  
192.168.2.30:137 - 218.x.x.238:1025  
192.168.2.30:137 - 202.y.y.226:1025  
192.168.2.30:137 - 202.y.y.226:1027  
192.168.2.30:137 - 202.y.y.226:1028  
192.168.2.30:137 - 202.y.y.226:1029  
192.168.2.30:137 - 202.y.y.242:1026  
192.168.2.30:137 - 61.x.x.5:1028  
192.168.2.30:137 - 219.x.x.226:1025  
192.168.2.30:137 - 213.x.x.189:1028  
192.168.2.30:137 - 61.x.x.193:1025  
192.168.2.30:137 - 202.y.y.207:1028  
192.168.2.30:137 - 202.y.y.207:1025  
192.168.2.30:137 - 202.y.y.207:1026  
192.168.2.30:137 - 202.y.y.207:1027  
192.168.2.30:137 - 64.x.x.148:1027

- Client (192.168.2.30) source port (137) scans external network addresses at destination ports (1025-1040):
  - > 100 are recorded within a three-hour period
  - targeted IP addresses are variable
  - multiple ports are scanned per IP
  - may correspond to Bugbear, OpaSoft, or other worms



# UDP port scans direct to the ChinaSat network

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210.x.x.23:1035 - 192.168.1.121:137  
210.x.x.23:1035 - 192.168.1.63:137  
210.x.x.23:1035 - 192.168.2.11:137  
210.x.x.23:1035 - 192.168.1.250:137  
210.x.x.23:1035 - 192.168.1.25:137  
210.x.x.23:1035 - 192.168.2.79:137  
210.x.x.23:1035 - 192.168.1.52:137  
210.x.x.23:1035 - 192.168.6.191:137  
210.x.x.23:1035 - 192.168.1.241:137  
210.x.x.23:1035 - 192.168.2.91:137  
210.x.x.23:1035 - 192.168.1.5:137  
210.x.x.23:1035 - 192.168.1.210:137  
210.x.x.23:1035 - 192.168.6.127:137  
210.x.x.23:1035 - 192.168.1.201:137  
210.x.x.23:1035 - 192.168.6.179:137  
210.x.x.23:1035 - 192.168.2.82:137  
210.x.x.23:1035 - 192.168.1.239:137  
210.x.x.23:1035 - 192.168.1.87:137  
210.x.x.23:1035 - 192.168.1.90:137  
210.x.x.23:1035 - 192.168.1.177:137  
210.x.x.23:1035 - 192.168.1.39:137

- External address (210.x.x.23) scans for port (137) (NETBEUI) response within the ChinaSat network from source port (1035):
  - > 200 are recorded within a three-hour period
  - targets IP addresses are not sequential
  - may correspond to Bugbear, OpaSoft, or other worms



# Detection of traffic volume anomalies using wavelets

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- Traffic is decomposed into various frequencies using the wavelet transform
- Traffic volume anomalies are identified by the large variation in wavelet coefficient values
- The coarsest scale level where the anomalies are found indicates the time scale of an anomaly

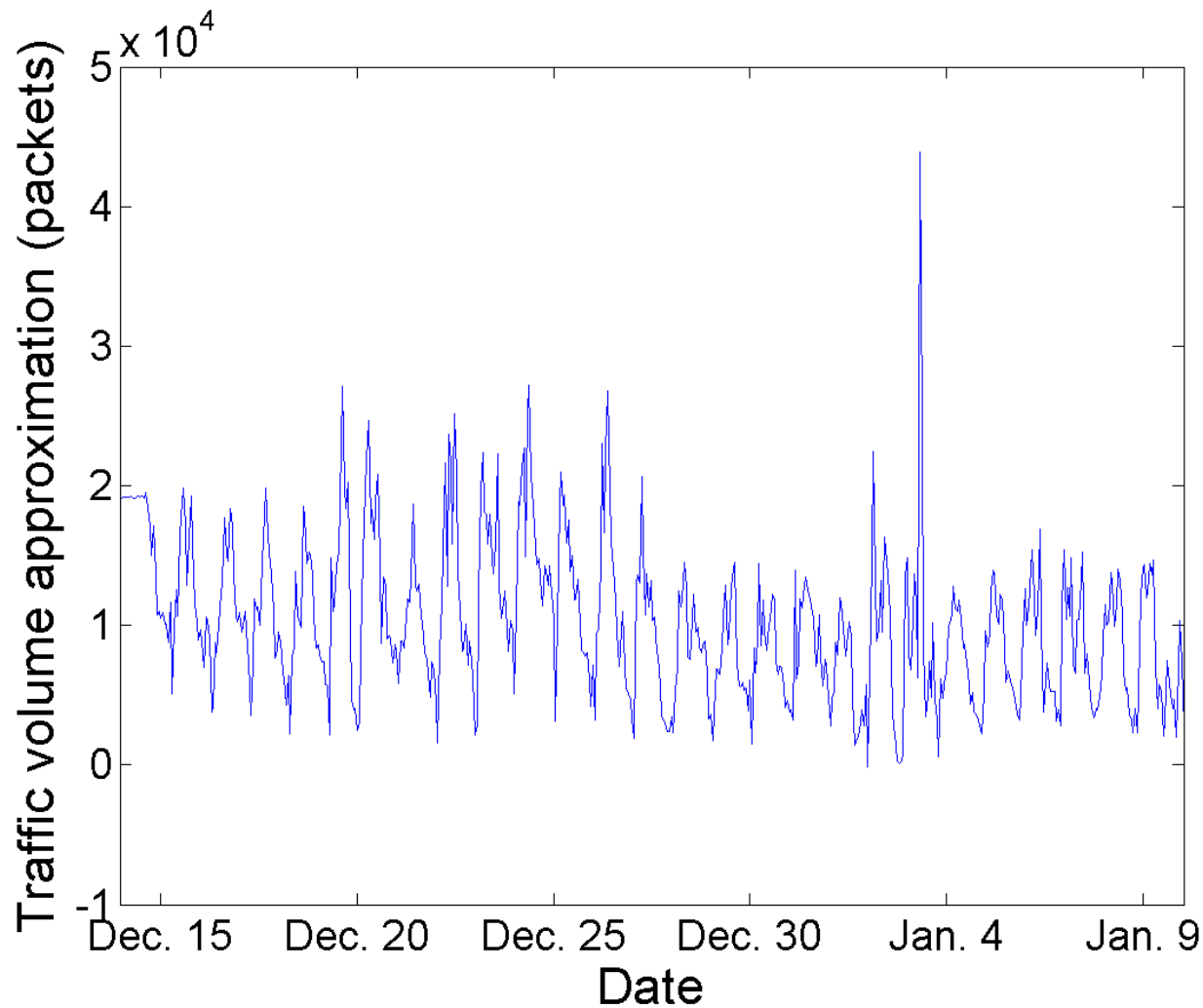


# Detection of traffic volume anomalies using wavelets

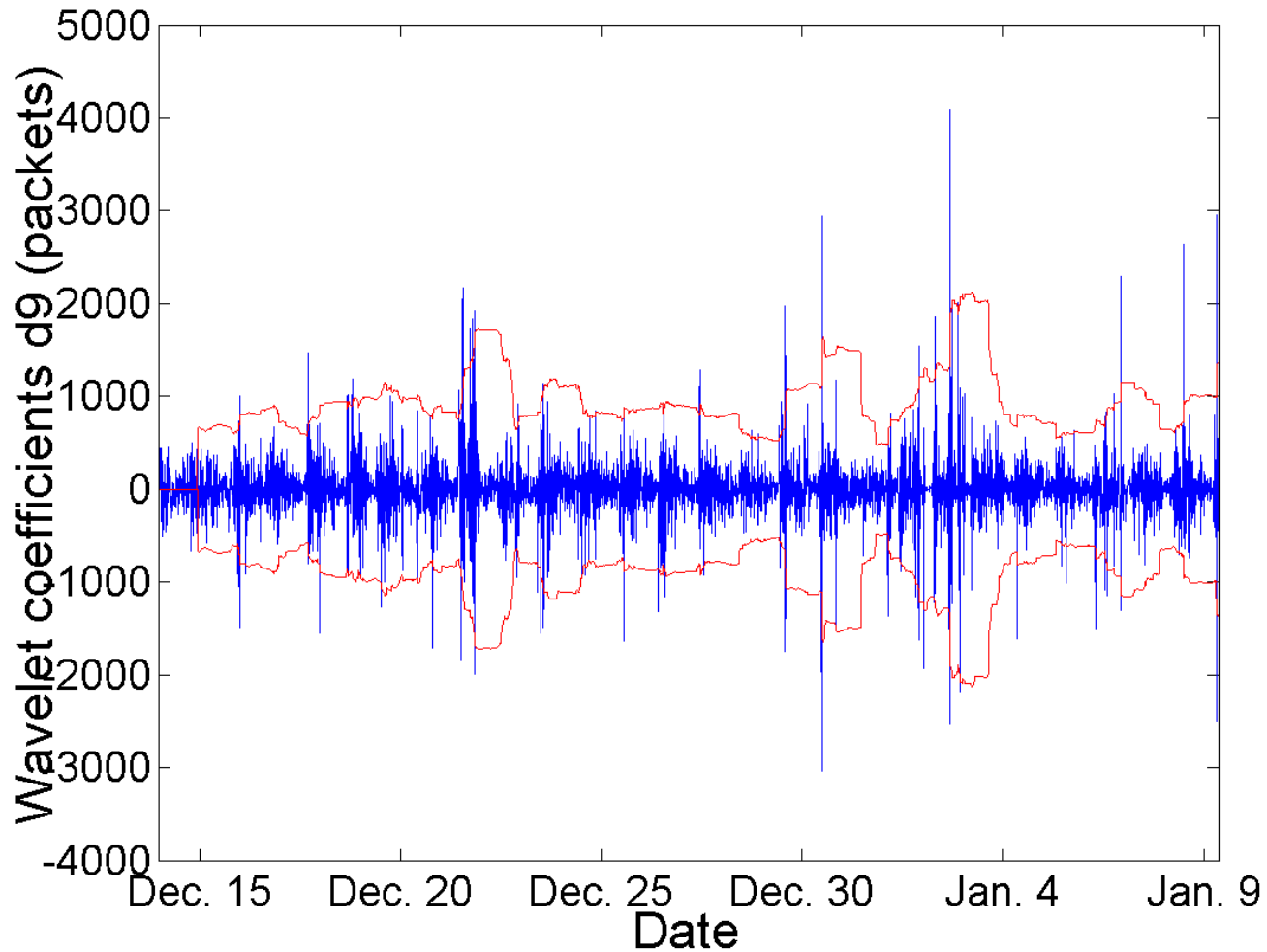
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- `tcpdump` traces are binned in terms of packets or bytes (each second)
- Wavelet transform of 12 levels is employed to decompose the traffic
- The coarsest level approximately represents the hourly traffic
- Anomalies are:
  - detected with a moving window of size 20 and by calculating the mean and standard deviation ( $\sigma$ ) of the wavelet coefficients in each window
  - identified when wavelet coefficients lie outside the  $\pm 3\sigma$  of the mean value

# Wavelet approximation coefficients

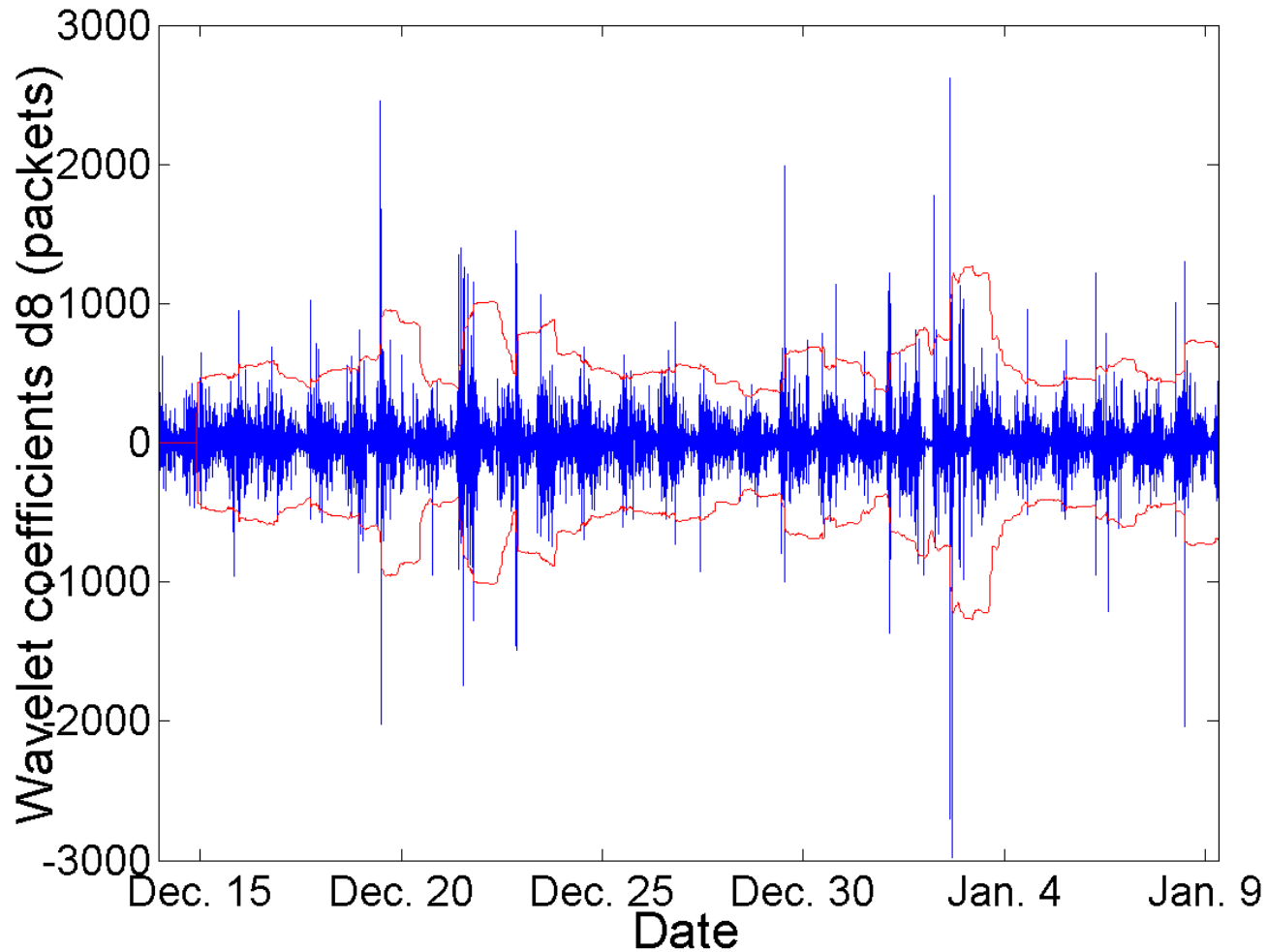


# Wavelet detail coefficients: $d_9$





# Wavelet detail coefficients: $d_8$





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- Case studies:
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  - satellite network: ChinaSat
  - packet data network: Internet
- **Conclusions, future work, and references**



# Conclusions

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- Traffic data from deployed networks (Telus Mobility, E-Comm, **ChinaSat**, the Internet) were used to:
- **evaluate network performance**
- **characterize and model traffic** (inter-arrival and call holding times)
- **classify network users** using clustering algorithms
- **predict network traffic** by employing SARIMA models based on aggregate user traffic and user clusters
- **detect network anomalies** using wavelet analysis



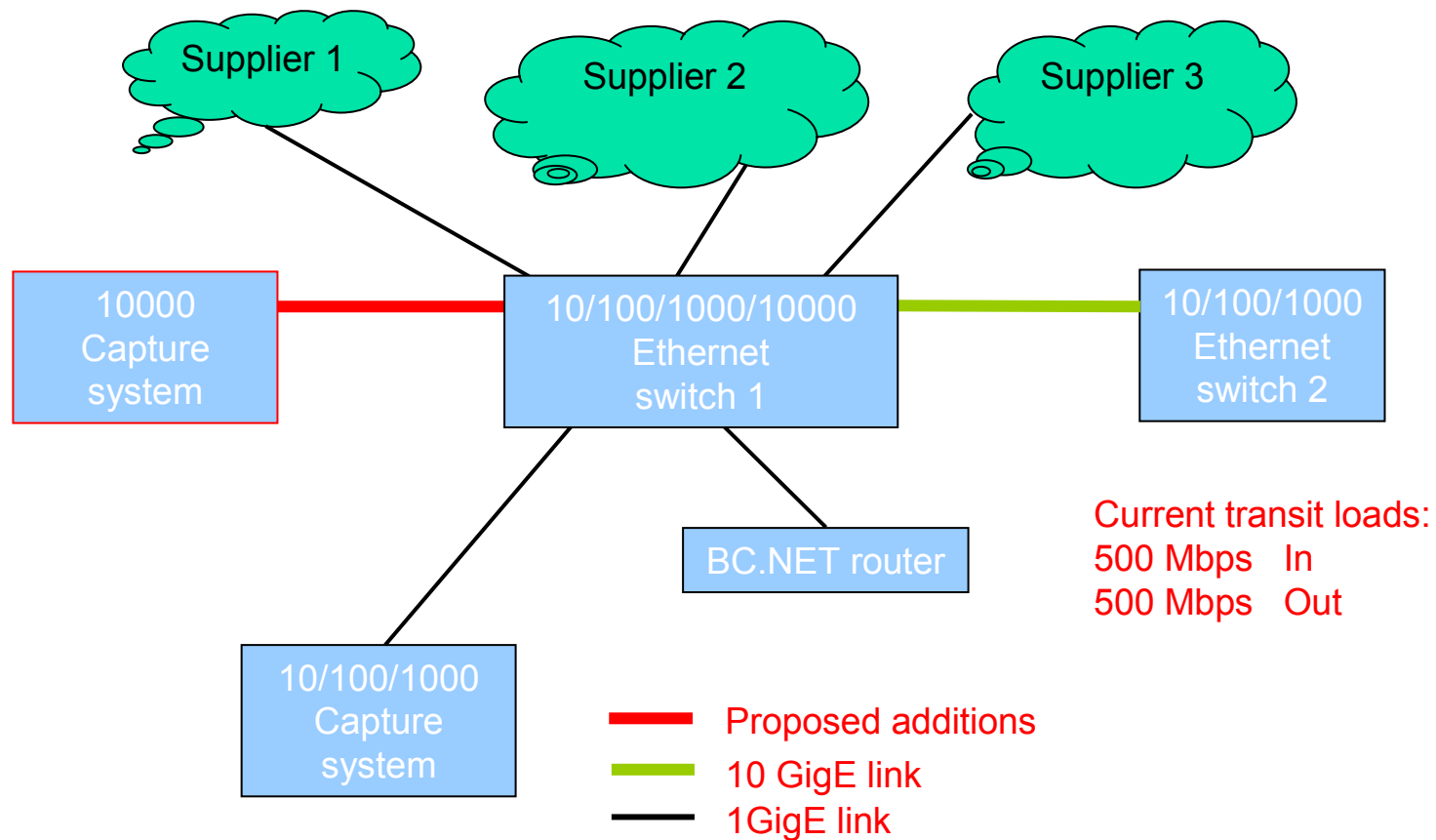
# Current and future projects

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- Measuring traffic from BC.NET: <http://www.bc.net/>  
BCNET builds high-performance networks for British Columbia's research and education institutes. A not-for-profit society, BCNET is collectively funded by BC's universities, federal and provincial governments.
- Collecting user traffic and BGP data form routing tables
- Measuring equipment:
  - Endace Ninjabox 5000 (10 Gbps): 16 GB RAM, 16 TB RAID storage with write-to-disk performance of 5 Gbps
  - Endace Ninjabox 504 (1 Gbps): 8 GB RAM, 8 TB RAID storage with write-to-disk performance of 2 Gbps

BGP: border gateway protocol

# BC.NET traffic measurements





# References: downloads

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[http://www.ensc.sfu.ca/~ljilja/publications\\_date.html](http://www.ensc.sfu.ca/~ljilja/publications_date.html)

- S. Lau and Lj. Trajkovic, "Analysis of traffic data from a hybrid satellite-terrestrial network," in *Proc. QShine 2007*, Vancouver, BC, Canada, Aug. 2007.
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