Tuning RED for Web Traffic

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Tuning RED Outline

• Introduction
• Background and Related Work
• Experimental Methodology
  – Web-like Traffic Generation
• Experiment Calibrations and Procedures
• FIFO and RED Results
• Conclusions
Introduction

• RFC2309 recommends Active Queue Management [AQM] for Internet congestion avoidance.
• RED, the best known AQM technique, has not been studied much for Web traffic, the dominant subset of TCP connections on the Internet in 2000.
• The authors use response time, a user-centric performance metric, to study short-lived TCP connections that model HTTP 1.0.
Introduction

- They model HTTP request-response pairs in a lab environment that simulates a large collection of browsing users.
- Artificial delays are added to a small lab testbed to approximate coast-to-coast US round trip times (RTT’s).
- The paper focuses on studying RED tuning parameters.
- The basis of comparison is the effect of RED vs. Drop Tail FIFO on response time for HTTP 1.0.
Background and Related Work

- The authors review RED parameters (\(\text{avg, qlen, min}_{\text{th}}, \text{max}_{\text{th}}, w_q, \text{max}_p\)) and point to Sally Floyd’s modified guidelines.
- RED is effective in preventing congestion collapse when TCP windows are configured to exceed network storage capacity.
- Claim by Villamizar and Song: The bottleneck router queue size should be 1-2 times the bandwidth-delay product.
- RED issues (shortcomings) were studied through alternatives: BLUE, Adaptive RED, BRED, FRED, SRED, and Cisco’s WRED.
  - e.g. FRED shows that RED does not promote fair sharing of link bandwidth between TCP flows with long RTTs or small windows and RED does not provide protection from non-adaptive flows (e.g, UDP flows).
Background and Related Work

- **ECN** was not considered in this paper.

**The big deal** - Most of the previous studies used small number of sources except the **BLUE** paper with 1000-4000 Parento on-off sources (but **BLUE** uses ECN).

- Previous **tuning** results include:
  - optimal $max_p$ is dependent on the number of flows.
  - router queue length stabilizes around $max_{th}$ for a large number of flows.
Background and Related Work

• Previous analytic and simulation modeling at INRIA results:
  – TCP goodput does not improve significantly with RED and this effect is independent of the number of flows.
  – RED has lower mean queueing delay but much higher delay variance.

• Conclusion – research pieces missing include: Web-like traffic and worst-case studies where there are dynamically changing number of TCP flows with highly variable lifetimes.
Experimental Methodology

Figure 2: Experimental laboratory network diagram.
Experimental Methodology

{These researchers used careful, meticulous, experimental techniques that are excellent.}

• They use FreeBSD 2.2.8, ALTQ version 1.2 extensions, and dummynet to build a lab configuration that emulates full-duplex Web traffic through two routers separating Web request generators {browser machines} from Web servers.

• They emulate RTT’s uniformly selected from 7-137 ms. range derived from measured data (mean 79 ms.).

• FreeBSD default TCP window size of 16KB was used.

• A modified version of tcpdump is used to collect TCP/IP headers.
Web-like Traffic Generation

• The *synthetic HTTP traffic* for the experiments is based on *Mah’s Web browsing model* [1995 data] that include:
  – HTTP request length in bytes
  – HTTP reply length in bytes
  – The number of embedded (file) references per page
  – The time between retrieval of two successive pages (user think time)
  – The number of consecutive pages requested from a server.
Web-like Traffic Generation

- The empirical distributions for all these elements were used in *synthetic-traffic generators* they built.
- The client-side request-generation program emulates behavioral elements of Web browsing.
- Important parameters include the size of server requests, the number of browser users (several hundred!!) each instance of the program represents and the user think time.
- A **new** TCP connection is made for each request/response pair (HTTP 1.0).
- Another parameter: number of concurrent TCP connections per browser user (to mimic browser behavior).
Experiment Calibrations and Procedures

1. They needed to insure that the congested link between routers was the primary bottleneck on the end-to-end path.

2. They needed to guarantee that the offered load on the testbed network could be predictably controlled using the number of emulated browser users as a parameter to the traffic generator.

3. To simplify analysis, the number of emulated users remains fixed throughout one experiment.
Experimental Methodology

• Monitoring tools:
  – At router interface collect: router queue size mean and variance, max queue size, min queue size sampled every 3 ms.
  – The machine connected to hubs forming links to routers uses a modified version of `tcpdump` to produce log of link throughput.
  – end-to-end measurements done on end-systems (e.g., response times).
Experimental Calibrations and Procedures

Figure 3 and 4 show desired linear increases that imply no fundamental resource limitations. Note – these runs use a 100 Mbps link.

The authors were concerned about exceeding the 64 socket descriptor limitation on one FreeBSD process. This limit was never encountered due to long user think times.
Figures 5 and 6 show the highly bursty nature of requests by 3500 users during one second intervals.
Experimental Procedures

• After initializing and configuring the test-bed, the server-side processes were started followed by the browser processes.

• Each browser emulated an equal number of users chosen to place load on network that represent 50, 70, 80, 90, 98 or 110 percent of 10 Mbps capacity.

• Each experiments ran for 90 minutes with the first 20 minutes discarded to eliminate startup and stabilization effects.
Experiment Calibrations and Procedures

**Figure 7:** Average response time per second during an experiment. The plot includes the initial 20 minutes, where the traffic generators are started and stabilize.

**Figure 8:** Cumulative response time distribution for 3,500 users on the unconstrained (100 Mbps) network.
Experimental Procedures

- Figure 8 represents the best-case performance for 3500 browsers generating request/response pairs in an unconstrained network.

- Since responses from the servers are much larger than requests to server, only the effects on the IP output queue carrying traffic from servers to browsers is reported (All other queues are FIFO with queue size of 50 elements).

- They measure: end-to-end response times, percent of IP packets dropped at the bottlenecked link, mean queue size and throughput achieved on the link.
FIFO Results [Drop Tail]

- FIFO tests run to establish a baseline.
  *
  For the critical FIFO parameter, queue size, the consensus is roughly 2-4 times the bandwidth-delay product (bdp).
    - mean min RTT = 79 ms.
    + 10 Mbps congested link => 96 K bytes (bdp)
    - measured IP datagrams approx. 1 K bytes ➔ **190 - 380** elements in FIFO queue to be within guidelines.
FIFO Results

Figure 9a: FIFO performance at 80% load.

Figure 9b: FIFO performance at 90% load.

Figure 9c: FIFO performance at 98% load.

Figure 9d: FIFO performance at 110% load.
### Table 1: FIFO results.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Load %</th>
<th>Queue Length</th>
<th>KB per sec.</th>
<th>% drops</th>
<th>Mean queue</th>
<th>Median resp. (ms)</th>
<th>% ≤ 1 sec.</th>
<th>1&lt;%≤2 sec.</th>
<th>2&lt;%≤3 sec.</th>
<th>% &gt; 3 sec.</th>
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<td>1.3</td>
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<td>980</td>
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</table>
FIFO Results

• In Figure 9 a queue size of from 120 to 190 is a reasonable choice (1.25-2 bdp) especially when one considers the tradeoffs for response time without significant loss in link utilization or high drops.

• At 98% (Figure 9c), one can see the tradeoff of using a queue length of 120. Namely, longer response times for shorter objects, but shorter response times for longer objects.
FIFO Results

Figure 10: FIFO performance for different loads with a queue length of 120 elements.
Figure 10 FIFO Results

- At loads below 80% capacity, there is no significant change in response time as a function of load.
- Response time degrades sharply when offered load exceeds link capacity.
RED Experimental Goals

• Determine the RED parameter settings that provide good performance for Web traffic.
  – Additionally review the RED parameter guidelines.

• Another objective is to examine the tradeoffs in RED tuning parameter choices.

• The FIFO results show complex tradeoffs between response times for short responses and response times for longer responses.
**RED Results**

*Figure 11:* The performance of RED at different loads.

\[ w_q = 1/512, \quad max_p = 1/10, \quad min_{th} = 30, \quad max_{th} = 90, \quad qlen = 480. \]
The queue size was set to 480 to eliminate physical queue length ($qlen$) as a factor.
The figure shows the effect of varying loads on response time distributions.

- $(min_{th}, max_{th})$ set to (30, 90)
- The interesting range for varying RED parameters for optimization is between $90-110\%$ load levels where performance decreases significantly.
RED Results

**Figure 12a:** Response time CDF for offered load at 90% of link capacity ($w_q=1/512$, $max_p=1/10$, $qlen=480$).

**Figure 12b:** Response time CDF for offered load at 98% of link capacity ($w_q=1/512$, $max_p=1/10$, $qlen=480$).
The goal is to study $\min_{th}, \max_{th}$ choices

- The Floyd recommended choice $\text{(5, 15)}$ yields bad performance at 90% load and poor performance at 98% load.

- $(30, 90)$ or $(60, 180)$ are the best choices!

- The authors prefer $(30, 90)$ at 98% load.

- After Figure 13, authors conclude that $(30, 90)$ provides the best ‘balance’ for response time performance.
RED Results

The effect of varying $\text{min}_{\text{th}}$ is small at 90% load.

Figure 13: The effect of changing $\text{min}_{\text{th}}$. Load = 90% and $\text{max}_{\text{th}} = 90$, $w_q = 1/512$, $\text{max}_{\text{p}} = 1/10$, $q\text{len} = 480$. 
RED Results

**Figure 14:** Results for different values of $w_q$ and $max_p$.
Load = 90%, and $qlen = 480$, $min_{th} = 30$, $max_{th} = 90$. 
Figure 14 RED Results

- $max_p = 0.25$ has negative impact on performance – too many packets are dropped. Generally, changes in $w_q$ and $max_p$ mainly impact longer flows (the back part of the CDF).

- There is no evidence to use values other than recommended $w_q = 1/512$ and $max_p = 0.10$
### RED Results

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Load %</th>
<th>Queue Length</th>
<th>KB/s</th>
<th>% Drop</th>
<th>Mean Queue</th>
<th>Median Resp.(ms)</th>
<th>% ≤ 1 sec</th>
<th>1&lt;%≤ 2 sec</th>
<th>2&lt;%≤ 3 sec</th>
<th>% &gt; 3 sec</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>90</td>
<td>480</td>
<td>1079</td>
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</table>

120 is a good choice for queue length at 90% and 110% load.
RED Results

Figure 15a: “Good” RED parameter settings at 90% load.

Figure 15b: “Good” RED parameters settings at 98% load.
## Best RED Parameter Summary

**TABLE IV**

**Empirically Determined “Best” RED Parameter Values**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Load</th>
<th>$min_{th}, max_{th}$</th>
<th>$w_q$</th>
<th>$max_p$</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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<tr>
<td>90</td>
<td>30,90</td>
<td>1/512</td>
<td>1/10</td>
<td>best overall response</td>
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<td>90</td>
<td>30,90</td>
<td>1/512</td>
<td>1/20</td>
<td>highest link utilization</td>
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<tr>
<td>90</td>
<td>120,360</td>
<td>1/512</td>
<td>1/10</td>
<td>lowest drop rate</td>
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<tr>
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<td>5,90</td>
<td>1/128</td>
<td>1/20</td>
<td>best overall response</td>
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<td>98</td>
<td>30,180</td>
<td>1/512</td>
<td>1/10</td>
<td>highest link utilization</td>
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<td>98</td>
<td>90,150</td>
<td>1/512</td>
<td>1/10</td>
<td>lowest drop rate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**RED Results**

**Figure 16a:** “Bad” RED parameters settings at 90% load.

**Figure 16b:** “Bad” RED parameters settings at 98% load.
Figures 15 and 16 RED Results

• RED can be tuned to yield “best settings” for a given load percentage.

• At high loads, near saturation, there is a significant downside potential for choosing “bad” parameter settings.

bottom line result- RED tuning is not easy!
RED Response Time Analysis

• This section added when paper went to journal.
• Detailed analysis of retransmission patterns for various TCP segments (e.g., SYN, FIN)
• This section reinforces the complexity of understanding the effects of RED for HTTP traffic.
### RED Response Time Analysis

Table 5: Summary retransmission statistics for experiments with more detailed instrumentation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class of retransmission event</th>
<th>% of all TCP connections ((min_{th}, max_{th}) = (5,15) (60,180))</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No retransmissions</td>
<td>56.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 or more retransmissions</td>
<td>43.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>1 or more SYN segments</td>
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<tr>
<td>1 or more FIN segments</td>
<td>6.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>1 or more data segments</td>
<td>25.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combined SYN/FIN/data</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Total TCP connections        | 439,979 | 460,022 |
| Total segments lost          | 12.4%   | 2.4%    |
FIFO versus RED

The only improvement for RED is at 98% load where careful tuning improves response times for shorter responses.

Figure 22a: FIFO and RED at 90% load.

Figure 22b: FIFO and RED at 98% load.

Figure 22c: FIFO and RED at 110% load.
Conclusions

- Contrary to expectations, there is little improvement in response times for RED for offered loads up to 90%.
- At loads approaching link saturation, RED can be carefully tuned to provide better response times.
- Above 90%, load response times are more sensitive to RED settings with a greater downside potential of choosing bad parameter settings.

* There seems to be no advantage to deploying RED on links carrying only Web traffic.

Question: Why these results for these experiments?