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Technical feasibility of Segment Routing Traffic Engineering to steer traffic through VNFs

Research Project 1



SURF NET

SURF is the collaborative ICT organisation for Dutch education and research.

- Education institutions
- Universities
- Research institutions







Network Function Virtualization Pilot

Firewall as a Service (FaaS) Outsourcing

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Virtual Network Function (VNF)



Current Pilot solution

Using GRE tunnels and BGP

Added overhead and complexity per institute



Steering traffic through VNFs

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Research questions

What are the **practical implications** and the **maturity** of **steering** network traffic through VNFs using **Segment Routing over MPLS** instead of the current GRE tunneling solution for SURFnet?

Steering traffic through VNFs

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Two sub questions:

- 1. practical implications
- 2. maturity



Related work

Abdelsalam et. al gave an overview of SR components

- SR-aware
- SR-unaware

Filsfils et. al conducted an experiment in 2015 for SR with Service Function Chaining

- Gave insight in different use cases



Background: What is Segment Routing?

- Source Routing Paradigm
- Point to 'Segments' in the network
- Segments identified with number (SID)
 - Nodes
 - Links (Adjacent Segment IDs)
 - Services



Reference network - Segment Routing



SURFnets new network uses SR-MPLS

Routers part of SR domain

Segment ID: Node, Adjacency

Penultimate node 'pops' label

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Steering traffic through VNFs

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Scenario A



Dedicated SR-proxy

- Every VNF can be used
- Extra device needed with

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Scenario B



SR-aware VNF VNF part of SR-domain

- + Most dynamic due to own SID
- + No proxy needed
- Every VNF needs to be SR-aware

Proof of Concept



Virtual testbed containing:

- 3 Juniper vMX routers
- 1 Juniper vMX "proxy"
- 3 virtual machines (firewall appliance, web server and workstation)

Two scenarios:

- SR-unaware firewall (A)
- SR-aware firewall (B)

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Proof of Concept (A)



Dedicated Proxy used

R3 is penultimate node due to the proxy

Only IP packets from R3 to Proxy

Demo Time



Conclusions

What are the **practical implications** and the **maturity** of **steering** network traffic through VNFs using **Segment Routing over MPLS** instead of the current GRE tunneling solution for SURFnet?

"Labelling" instead of static GRE tunneling

Two scenarios identified with their own characteristics:

SR-aware VNF

- Not mature, due to the lack of SR-MPLS aware VNFs
- Not fully tested in PoC, where a router was used as 'firewall'

SR-unaware VNF with proxy

- Tested in PoC and mature with static proxy, but still in development
- Network traffic was steered through the firewall and filtered



Future work

- Performance testing of SR-MPLS in pilot including more Institutes
- Using SRv6 in SURFnets new network instead of SR-MPLS (data planes)
- Testing SR-aware functions in pilot based on SR-MPLS and SRv6