

Report Concerning Space Data System Standards

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| Streaming Services over Bundle Protocol REquirements |

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CONTENTS

Section Page

# Introduction

## Purpose and scope

The purpose of this document is to record requirements for streaming services over Bundle Protocol, with particular emphasis on streaming digital video over Bundle Protocol. Previous testing of video streams over Bundle Protocol will be documented. A common test configuration for continued testing and benchmarking of video (and other streaming data) will also be documented.

## References

The following documents are referenced in this Report. At the time of publication, the editions indicated were valid. All documents are subject to revision, and users of this Report are encouraged to investigate the possibility of applying the most recent editions of the documents indicated below. The CCSDS Secretariat maintains a register of currently valid CCSDS documents.

[A list of documents referenced in the report goes here. See CCSDS A20.0-Y-4, *CCSDS Publications Manual* (Yellow Book, Issue 4, April 2014) for reference list format.]

# OVERVIEW

Previous testing and real-life experience with streaming video over networks indicates that video streams are particularly susceptible to network jitter and lost packets. Video decoders typically buffer the incoming data stream to reconstitute the frames of video that were encoding using “group of pictures” algorithms that combine frames or disassemble video frames into blocks of pixels. If enough data is missing, even with buffering, or the data arrives jumbled or out of order beyond the limits that the decoder’s buffering can handle, the decoder will either freeze the last good frame video and present it as live video output, or will simply default to a blank or colored screen.

It is likely that as humans endeavor to explore space beyond low Earth orbit, video will be included as important data transmitted back to Earth. Whether it is used for situational awareness, such as proximity of approaching spacecraft during docking and rendezvous, or monitoring an Extra Vehicular Activity, or for public use to allow the rest of us on Earth to “go along for the ride,” successful transmission and reception of video will become an important requirement for mission success. As these missions move beyond the Earth-Moon system, it is very likely the data communications will be over delay tolerant networks.

This Green Book will explore the requirements for video over bundle streaming protocols and document prototyping and testing of video over these protocols.

# Use Case Scenarios

## General Usage Scenario

Video transmitted over Bundle Streaming Service (BSS) can have many disruptions and severely out of order data packets, depending upon the link involved and overall latency. However, there will almost always be a requirement for best effort of viewing video as it is received at a mission control center while the entire set of video data is compiled.

A typical end user would have a three window display. Window A is the real-time view from the Spacecraft. Window B is a GUI comprising VCR-like control widgets for replaying the video stream. Window C is the replay video view, controlled from window B.

Window A shows the view from the spacecraft exactly as it was when it was transmitted. It will have the latency of the transmission link for that distance. The video may freeze or breakup once in a while because one or more video frames were lost or corrupted somewhere along the end-to-end DTN path from the camera to the display. When there is such an outage, the missing frames never show up in this window; the displayed image simply remains unchanged until the next frame received in real time arrives. The view in this window is never delayed by any more than the one-way light time (plus processing), and it never regresses.

While the real-time stream video is displayed, the incoming data packets are being recorded and reassembled in the proper order, and stored on the local storage system.

The user controls the replay display from window B, commanding the replay view

to start N seconds ago and then roll forward or perform other available playback features

such as pause, rewind, roll backward, etc.

Window C shows the replay view. This may be no more than the frames that originally

were displayed in window A just a few seconds or minutes ago. But in the

event that there were some outages in the real-time view in window A, the replay may

show more than what was originally displayed. That's because the replay view includes

frames that arrived out of ascending bundle creation time order at the user's

terminal, due to retransmission of lost/corrupt frames or to arrival on different length

paths. So, the replay view will always be at least as complete as the real-time view

and it may be more complete; moreover, replaying a second time a bit later one may

even find a more complete view as late-arriving lost bundles, which perhaps were lost again, finally arrive.

It is this final compilation that will be used for distribution and archiving.

Video transmission can be divided into two major classes, with multiple use case scenarios. The two classes are:

1. Interactive: Video transmission where latency is sufficiently short as to allow ground controllers to participate interactively in a real-time mode with the crew and spacecraft. For mission critical operations, such as Proximity Operations/Situational Awareness, this is likely to be 4 seconds or less bi-directional. Interactive video would be possible in Low Earth Orbit (LEO), Lunar Surface Operations, and most Cis Lunar situations. Non-mission critical operations, such as Personal Video Conferencing, Medical Conferencing and most Public Affairs video could tolerate longer latency, perhaps as much as 10 seconds bidirectional comm. As one-way latency for transmission alone is approximately 5 seconds per 1,610,000 km, interactive video would not last very long at all for a Mars Campaign.

1. Monitor: Video transmission where latency is too long to allow interactive real-time operations with the crew and spacecraft. As mentioned above, very shortly after leaving Earth/Moon proximity and flying to Mars, real-time operations via video will cease. Video remains useful for monitoring spacecraft routine operations and for maintenance, but is no longer useful for ground controllers to make real-time changes.

Regardless of the primary mission, the use cases detailed in the Motion Imagery Applications Blue Book (CCSDS 766.1-B-0), Section 3.4 are applicable. This includes:

1. Personal Video Conferencing
2. Medical Conferencing
3. Proximity Operations/Situational Awareness
4. Public Affairs
5. High Resolution Imaging
6. Crew training/instruction

There will be other use cases, which will be detailed in the appropriate section. Priorities of usage are dependent on mission requirements.

## Low earth orbit

Low Earth Orbit (LEO) involves either direct transmission and reception to and from ground stations, or the use of an orbiting satellite relay, such as the Tracking Data Relay Satellite System (TDRSS). Latency is low enough to maintain real-time interactive communication. DTN and BSS protocols still bring enormous advantages to automate the reassembly of transmissions that are disrupted, for example by AOS/LOS, comm handovers, and unplanned signal disruptions. DTN protocols should be utilized even though many of their advantages for communication over very long distances are not utilized.

While it is likely there will always be multiple channels of video in a LEO mission, there may be priorities that will cause one or more channels to be more important to the immediate task and might need additional bandwidth. Mission rules should dictate priorities. Typically Proximity Operations/Situational Awareness & Emergency Medical will have the highest priority. Video surveillance systems that are triggered by events such as leaks or debris strikes would also have high priority.

In some scenarios video may be buffered and sent later if required to complete a sequence of events, such as a debris strike or subtle changes in exterior conditions of the spacecraft. During emergencies, such as crew egress, multiple video feed downlink would be critical to verify the location of each crew member. In such a case video that had been considered low priority might become highest priority with little or no warning.

As cameras improve with higher spatial resolution and higher frame rates, the size of original recorded files can grow to hundreds of Gigabytes. Downloading these files requires multiple Loss-of-Signal/Acquisition-of-Signal phases with data satellites. File download systems require the capability to manage these interruptions in processing to allow reassembly of the full file on the ground.

## Cislunar

*Describe here likely scenarios including proximity operations (lander or robot plus orbiting spacecraft, rendezvous, EVA) over variable links from S-band to Ku, Ka & X.*

Cislunar operations should, for the most part, fall under the category of interactive video. With the round trip communications latency of 2.5 seconds, on average, this falls within the time frame for ground controllers to use video for active control of mission events. Certain Cislunar operations, such as a lunar orbiting mission with very a high apogee from the moon might stretch the limits of interactive video usage.

An additional use case scenario for a spacecraft in Cislunar orbit will likely be extended monitoring with the spacecraft uninhabited. One mission profile would be to have a larger spacecraft in Cislunar orbit that serves as a waypoint for surface missions. It would not need to be crewed continuously. Video would be a valuable tool for ground controllers to monitor the spacecraft between crewed periods.

The use case scenarios listed in 3.1 are all valid for Cislunar orbital operations. However, if lunar landing is involved, there will be additional use cases, such as

1. Lander spacecraft video feeds from descent, the surface, and during ascent.
2. Surface EVA from the astronaut/cosmonaut perspective as well as fixed deployed cameras and rover cameras.

There will likely be multiple communication paths for imagery, depending upon what imagery is in use. The lander spacecraft should have communication to the orbiting spacecraft, orbiting relay satellites, and direct links to Earth. The fixed EVA cameras may be hardwired to the lander, but may be wireless. The EVA suit cameras will certainly need wireless communication links to the lander spacecraft as well as any rover that might be used. The rover will require communications to the lander, orbiting spacecraft, and Earth. There will also be a need for multiple simultaneous video transmissions from any surface operations.

It is assumed there will be return video links to any spacecraft in Cislunar orbit as those are expected to be longer duration missions. For extended surface operations missions, that will be a requirement as well. The surface operations habitat for that type of mission requires a full communication suite, effectively being a spacecraft on the ground.

This diagrams depicts the representative potential communications links needed for lunar surface operations.



As also described in 3.2, Proximity Operations and Situational Awareness Video will likely have highest priority. During complex phases of missions involving lunar landers, rovers, and EVA crew, it is likely the amount of video streams will exceed the downlink capacity of return feeds to Earth stations. In these cases video may need to be buffered and sent sequentially based on pre-determined prioritization. Crew in an orbiter may need to monitor video in real-time that isn’t downlinked to Earth, or video that will be down-linked later. Therefore a prioritization schema may be necessary for nearby spacecraft that is different from what is downlinked to ground stations.

CisLunar scenarios will be similar to Low Earth Orbit (3.2) for emergency scenarios and large files from high-resolution cameras.

## mars campaign

*Describe here multiple scenarios, expanding on CIS Lunar, accounting for extended light time, priority of content (example of low quality imagery for situational awareness), optical links to S-band, and extended proximity operations.*

A Mars campaign will be a virtually identical situation to a Cislunar mission with surface operations. The same variety of communcation between orbiting spacecraft, satellte relays, surface habitats, EVA suits and rovers will be required. However, Earth ground controllers will not be able to work interactively using video. After only a few days of flight, one-way transmission time will reach 5 seconds, rendering interactive use of video essentially useless. Transmission time, on average, from Mars is 11.65 minutes, one way. It can be as high as 20.76 minutes and on certain years where Mars and Earth are the closest, as low as 3.25 minutes. This puts the burden upon the crew to make immediate decisions without the help of Earth-bound mission controllers.

Link disruptions will be more frequent and more severe, putting strain on BSS and using all the capabilities of BSS within DTN to ensure accurate data delivery in both directions. There will be links from orbiting spacecraft and ground operations. Even with 100% coverage of surface operationis to orbiting spacecraft, there will still be siginificant LOS time periods when Earth and Mars are in oppostion to each other around the sun. To overcome this would require a DTN node located in a position to allow both the Earth and Mars to “see” the spacecraft, no matter what the relative positions of Earth, Mars, and the Sun.

A Mars campaign will also likely pre-position supplies on the surface for the crews. This will happen before the crewed flights leave for Mars. Video capability from the surface would start with the landing of these components, necessary to insure a safe environement for the crew before their arrival. .

Return video will also be an important factor as these missions will be 2 years+ in length. While bandwidth concerns are certainly more of a factor because of distance, a multiple channel video system is envisioned for Mars campaign as well. Video streaming as well as file transfer will be employed. It will be necessary to get some video scenes from Mars sent to Earth in a real-time mode in order to get the earliest confirmation of certain events. However, much of the video from a Mars Campaign can be treated as file transfers as real-time live streaming is not useful for Earth-bound ground controllers.



Figure Soyuz Docking Video - Found on nasa.gov, so it's free to share.

# Requirements

*List here requirements for streaming capability over bundle protocols, keeping in mind the use case scenarios outlines in section 3.*

Regardless of the mission profile, there are a number of common features There is also a requirement to have return video to the spacecraft. For extended missions, this is not only family conference, but entertainment events, such as sporting events, movies and television shows.

Certain spacecraft-to-spacecraft video will also need to be downlinked for Proximity Operations/Situational Awareness. This will require links between spacecraft and possibly an additional link to the ground.

Spacecraft communications systems will need a data store and forward capability to store video for downlink while the spacecraft is in a Loss of Signal (LOS) situation. When the spacecraft cannot communicate directly to a ground station, it will require on-board recording and storage of video that cannot be transmitted. When communication is restored, those files can be downlinked as FTP or done in a live streaming mode so as to provide a real-time video feed for ground controllers.

For LEO missions, receiving video at multiple ground facilities may be required to enhance mission functions or for easier routing. Regardless, communications links between ground facilities are need to distribute video to all participating agencies.

Under the assumption there will always be a requirement for obtaining imagery in higher resolutions than will be transmitted in real-time, video systems will need access to a file transfer system in order to get that imagery to the ground. A current analog is the use of the Digital Cinema camera or high resolution imagery from UrtheCast. These systems generate file sizes that are not conducive to real-time downlink. They are recorded and then downlinked as file transfers.

Relative to DTN, there are several requirements for systems to handle video.

1. Contact Graph Routing will be required for use of DTN during Cislunar and Mars missions.
2. Priority and variable priority schemes will have to be developed.
3. Encryption/private communication issues will have to be addressed
4. Multi-path communication will be needed. This will involve optimum and alternate path routing in deterministic method.
5. DTN Node buffers will have to be expanded from current systems to handle the greatly expanded data requirements imposed by video
6. Received data, either on the Earth or for a forward video link, will have to be reordered properly fro both real-time streaming and file transfers.

# Methods for transmission of video over bundle streaming protocols

## BUNDLE STREAMING SERVICE

Bundle Streaming Service (BSS) is a pair of complementary capabilities designed to provide satisfactory contemporaneous presentation of streamed data in transmission sequence, possibly with some omissions due to data loss in transit, while also supporting retrospective presentation of the same stream with all omissions automatically repaired by background retransmission. The two complimentary components are the BSS Database Library (5.1.1) and the BSS Protocol (5.1.2).

BSS is not a video service per se: unlike the DLR technologies for video over DTN discussed above, it is not specifically tuned for video transmission. By the same token, it is not limited to video transmission: the general character of BSS data delivery can be applied to one-way voice transmission, to “real-time” telemetry, or to any other continuous data stream that can be transported by bundles. Good video display quality will always require application-layer data conditioning such as is performed by the DLT transparent gateway and direct H.264 systems. BSS, in contrast, focuses on transport resilience and buffer management.

### BSS database library

At the receiver of the streamed transmission, the BSS database library is integrated into a user-defined Bundle Protocol application that acquires bundle payloads – application data units (ADUs) – destined for a designated BP endpoint. The acquired ADUs can be in any format that is meaningful to the application, as their content is opaque to the BSS library. The sender of those ADUs can be any application.

The receiving application delegates to a BSS library function the job of receiving these ADUs upon delivery from the bundle protocol agent (BPA). The BSS library function inspects the bundle creation times of the bundles that transported the delivered ADUs and dispatches the application data in one of two ways:

* If the bundle creation time of the ADU’s carrier bundle is greater than that of any previously received ADU from the same sender, then the content of the ADU is deemed “in order” and is passed to a “real-time” presentation function that must be provided by the application. The ADU content is also written to a database designed for very high-speed access, for future replay.
* Otherwise, the ADU content is deemed to have been delayed in transmission, possibly because it had to be retransmitted. Since it has arrived out of order, it must not be passed to the application’s real-time presentation function: if the data were video frames, for example, to do so would scramble the video display. Instead, the ADU content is only written to the database. ADU content in the database is ordered by transmission time, so over the course of the transmission the in-order and out-of-order data are merged in time sequence into a single uninterrupted stream, so that a higher-quality display of previously presented data can be viewed in replay.

### BSS Protocol

The other component of Bundle Streaming Service is Bundle Streaming Service Protocol (BSSP), a BP “convergence layer” protocol. Like all convergence-layer protocols, BSSP manages the transmission of bundles directly from one BP node to some other, topologically adjacent BP node. To do so, it operates two concurrent transmission channels, one unreliable, the other reliable. The implementations of these channels are opaque to BSSP and are established by node configuration: one BSSP engine might use UDP/IP for the unreliable channel and TCP/IP for the reliable channel, while another might use LTP “green” transmission for the unreliable channel and LTP “red” transmission for the reliable channel.

When a bundle is presented to BSSP for transmission, the protocol inspects the bundle’s creation time and dispatches the application data in one of two ways:

* If the bundle creation time is greater than that of any previously presented bundle from the same sender, with the same destination, then the bundle is transmitted using the unreliable channel. That is, data presented in order are forwarded in order over the unreliable channel, to minimize end-to-end delivery latency.
* Otherwise, since the bundle has been determined to be out-of-order, the bundle is transmitted over the reliable channel where it is subject to automatic retransmission upon detection of data loss. It will arrive somewhat later than the in-order data, but its eventual end-to-end delivery is virtually assured.

Upon reception of a bundle sent on the reliable channel, the receiving BSSP engine simply passes the bundle up to the BPA for delivery or further forwarding.

Upon reception of a bundle sent on the unreliable channel, the receiving BSSP engine passes the bundle up to the BPA in the same way, but it also sends an acknowledgment back to the sending BSSP engine.

When the sending BSSP engine receives a BSSP acknowledgment for some forwarded bundle its transmission of that bundle is deemed complete. But if no such acknowledgment is received prior to expiration of a per-bundle timer that was set at the moment of transmission on the unreliable channel, then transmission on the unreliable channel is deemed to have failed. At that point the bundle is re-dispatched on the reliable channel exactly as if its creation time had been out of order when originally presented.

### Some notes on BSS

The two components of BSS (database library and protocol) are complementary, but neither is reliant on the other; each can be used by itself if that is desirable in a given deployment configuration.

A key advantage of the BSSP design is that, because it operates at the convergence layer underneath BP, it can support bundle multicast. Bundle multicast functions by sending copies of a given bundle to multiple topological neighbors; each such copy is conveyed separately by the applicable convergence-layer protocol, and any retransmission that is required in the course of that conveyance is managed privately by that convergence-layer adapter without any impact on transmission to any other neighbor. BSSP enables streaming application data presented to BP to be forwarded to an unlimited number of final destination applications with minimal end-to-end latency in a virtually error-free manner.

## DLR – ENCODING AND ENCAPSULATION of video via DTN

DLR has developed two systems for video transmission via DTN networks. The first is the transparent gateway which aims to provide a simple transport for UDP-based media protocols which is agnostic of the protocol running through it. The second is a more advanced native encoder which integrates directly with a H.264 video encoder and decoder and designed to natively function with DTN.

### Transparent Gateway

The transparent gateway is a set of applications which encapsulate UDP data into DTN bundles while maintaining the important timing information. This technique is primarily used for MPEG Transport Streams. The gateway will ingest a user-configurable number of UDP packets directed towards it and add additional metadata, comprised of a size and a nanosecond-resolution timestamp, generated as a delta between UDP packet reception at the gateway. Once the given number of packets have been received, they are serialized. A header containing a count of packets and a sequence number is prefixed to the serialized data. The gateway can be utilized as a drop-in replacement for existing link-layer protocols. Other multimedia protocols such as RTP have been successfully tested with the gateway.

The gateway implementation was complicated by the interleaving inherent in MPEG-TS data, as well as the 4-bit MPEG-TS sequence counter. The 4-bit counter overruns quickly, and will not typically (at higher bitrates) lend itself to the resequencing of data, even when that data is occurring within the same one-second DTN timestamp. The gateway receiver aims to prevent this by utilizing the sequence number to reorder packets into a buffer before outputting them based on the timestamp from the header. By tuning the input buffer size, a user can reduce the visual impact of out-of-order packets.



Overview of Transparent Gateway

### Direct H.264 transmission

In the process of testing the transparent gateway, it was quickly discovered that DTN provides a greater advantage and requires less overhead when utilized with larger bundles, hence the addition of the multiple UDP packet encapsulation capability mentioned above. In addition, much of the robustness which MPEG-TS provides in terms of error-recovery and interleaving are inherent capabilities of a properly configured DTN link.

This encoder does not attempt to interleave data, instead relying on the underlying DTN stack to perform that task. Instead, the encoder outputs individual compressed frames as single bundles. Minimal metadata is added, comprised only of a width, height, and frame-rate, all of which are requirements for the initialization of the H.264 decoder. Frames are encoded in the packet-oriented H.264 Network Abstraction Layer (NAL) format. The decoder simply initializes a decoder, decodes the data provided in the bundles before finally displays them.

The native H.264 transmitter is extremely robust to interruption and packet loss. As LTP provides retransmission and fragmentation capability and will not present a bundle to the application layer before transmission has completed successfully, each bundle can be assumed to be intact. As such, each frame can be assumed to be intact as well. The order of packets is maintained via the timestamp from within the bundle protocol as well as a per-second count of frames. Any packet which contains a timestamp is less than the current “running” timestamp is assumed to have arrived out-of-order and is archived. Once the one-second frame count is equal to the framerate from the metadata, the video for that second is assumed to be 100% retrieved. The disadvantage of this system is the uniqueness of its implementation. The encoder and decoder are built using the FFMPEG libraries but are otherwise self-contained. It is technically possible to integrate it with other IP-based encoders and decoders by creating a new and functionally-identical MPEG TS output. It must be noted that the encoder must use a codec which supports frame-based output, such as H.264, motion JPEG2000, or H.265.



Figure Single Video Frame - As generated by encoder

### Summary of dlr tests

Exhaustive in-house testing between both systems using MPEG-2, H.264, and H.265 has been performed. H.265 testing was ceased due to the high CPU requirements for software encoders. In general, it has been found that the native H.264 system provides higher video quality, although the integration between that system and the rest of a video pipeline is complex.

The gateway, running over LTP with a 2 second buffer have been shown to handle 8 mbps H.264 transport streams and allow for some packet loss with no visual degradation. Running with a smaller buffer demands a “perfect” connection, where even a small packet loss may cause a momentary disruption of audio or video.

The native transmission system running over LTP with a 25 frame buffer (one second at PAL rates), with an 8mbps encoding bitrate has been found to be resistant to a 10% bit error rate without visual degradation when running with a <1 second delay. If the delay is short enough, it is possible for any LTP retransmissions to occur before the next frame is due to be displayed. If the delay is longer than one second, then there may be some visual impact, but it will appear as dropped frames and eventually wind up in the archive. The time to archive can be shortened by using Bundle Streaming Service, though DLR has opted to not implement it.

## common test scenarios for future study

*Here we outline common testing configurations for future trail blazers to allow them to add content to this book in the future*

1. [ANNEX TITLE]

[Annexes contain ancillary information. See CCSDS A20.0-Y-4, *CCSDS Publications Manual* (Yellow Book, Issue 4, April 2014) for discussion of the kinds of material contained in annexes.]