

BIFROST RELIABLE TRANSPORT FOR VIDEO OVER INTERNET

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Live events have traditionally been transmitted using satellite and dedicated fiber. Today, when the number of events is increasing, production companies and broadcasters are looking for more cost-efficient ways to do their contribution.

Internet can be used for sending video at a very low cost. But the global network provides no guarantee for a specific capacity, which makes it dangerous to use for sending important events.

Intinor develops products and technologies to make contribution over Internet easy and safe. The purpose of our new transport protocol "Bifrost Reliable Transport" (BRT) together with our robust and easy-to-use hardware is to provide the best solution for live video over Internet.

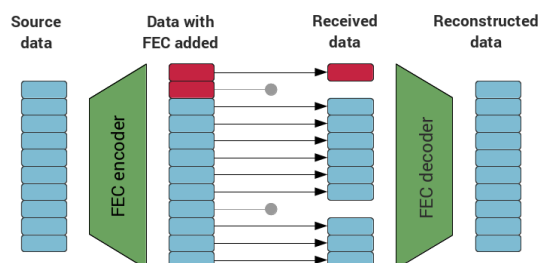
ERROR CORRECTION

Most Internet connections have more or less packet loss. This is usually handled by using Transmission Control Protocol (TCP) which includes error correction through communication between sender and receiver and retransmission of lost data.

For low latency live video transmission, a protocol based on Forward Error Correction (FEC) is much better since it adds a predictable and smaller amount of latency and also a constant bitrate over time. No data burst is caused by the transport protocol because of packet loss.

When using forward error correction, the sender calculates redundancy data which can be used by the receiver to reconstruct lost data packets.

BRT uses a very efficient forward error correction. When adding for example 20% redundant data, the receiver can handle up to 20% packet loss. Increasing the amount of redundant data makes the transmission even more robust.



NETWORK BONDING

Using only one Internet connection is still very risky. Capacity can be too low, bursts of packet loss can interrupt the transmission or the network can suddenly fail during the live event for many different reasons.

An Intinor Direkt link encoder using the network bonding algorithms in the BRT protocol can balance the load over multiple Internet connections. If Wifi and/or fixed Internet connections are available, they can be used in combination with one or multiple 3G/4G wireless networks and even KA satellite Internet connections.

Network bonding enables higher bandwidth (higher video quality) and also robustness through redundancy. It also helps the field operator relax since if one network fails, the transmission can continue on the ones that are remaining.

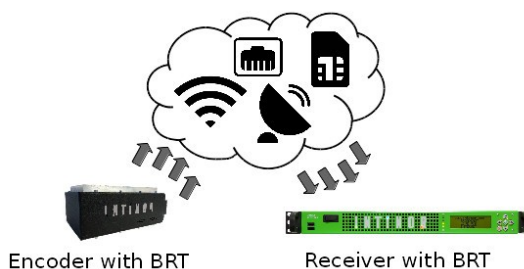
Any temporary or permanent reduction in network capacity is quickly detected and compensated for. The encoder does this automatically, either by moving data over to any connection with available unused capacity or by lowering the encoder bitrate. This usually does not affect the video on the receiving side.

ADAPTIVE BITRATE

For most live events, the target is high quality HD video in 5 to 10 megabits per second. An Intinor encoder using BRT tries to send the bitrate configured using network bonding over the available Internet connections. In some cases, the total bitrate is still not enough, or it may fluctuate over time due to local wireless conditions or Internet congestion.

The sender and the receiver using BRT are constantly monitoring the available capacity on each available Internet connection. With adaptive bitrate the sender can quickly react to capacity fluctuations by decreasing or increasing the video bitrate. This results in the best possible video quality for any situation.

When adaptive bitrate is used, there is no need to reserve a capacity headroom, and video can be sent with the highest possible quality and the least risk of interruptions.



ADAPTIVE RESOLUTION

The target bitrate is usually set based on the resolution and the kind of content to be send. For example, 10 megabits per second is good for a high quality 1080i live sport contribution.

Intinor encoders using BRT adapt the bitrate if needed based on the Internet connections available. When the bitrate is reduced, the encoder can also reduce the resolution. By doing this, the bitrate can be reduced further without introducing excessive visible artifacts such as blockiness.

On the receiving side, the picture is transparently scaled back to the original resolution so that an SDI output or re-encoded web stream is not affected by the resolution change.

REDUNDANT AUDIO

In some rare cases, there are interruptions in the stream despite error correction, network bonding and adaptive bitrate. For example, two 3G/4G modems are used and the video is balanced equally with 20% redundant error correction data. One of the 3G/4G connections suddenly disconnects due to a network error. It takes a small amount of time for the receiver to identify this and report to the sender to move data to the other connection and/or adapt the bitrate.

Such sudden network drops can cause interruptions in both audio and video. Video artifacts or sub-second freezes are annoying to viewers, but are usually considered acceptable. On the other hand, an interruption in the audio can be really bad, for example if the reply from a person being interviewed is lost.

To reduce the impact for the viewer, BRT makes sure audio is always sent redundant over at least two Internet connections (unless only one connection is available). The result of a sudden network interruption when using BRT is at worst visual artifacts or freeze in the video, but the audio is never interrupted.

LEAST COST MANAGEMENT

It is common that different Internet connections have different cost. For example, a Wifi or fixed Internet connection from the event is usually free to use, and local pre-paid SIM-cards are less expensive than international SIM-cards with roaming.

BRT takes care of least cost management of Internet connection in the most optimal way fully automatic.

The sending device can be pre-configured with different price priority on the different Internet connections. In the above example, fixed Internet and Wifi will be the only connections used if capacity on those are enough.

If only one cheap connection is available, redundant audio will be sent over 3G/4G until error is detected and data is moved over to the modem.

If one SIM-card with an unknown amount of remaining data is used, capacity will move over to the modem with a more expensive SIM-card when cheap data is finished etc.

This way, the event is always transmitted in the most cost-efficient way by BRT while the field operator can take care of other things.

In most cases however, with BRT everything automatically happens in the most optimal way without manual adjustments.

The user powers up the Direkt link, connects the video source, connects Wifi and fixed Internet if available and then let BRT take care of the rest.

EASY TO USE PROFILES

Off course there are many ways to configure a complex system based on BRT. To make usage simple, an operator can adjust a number profiles for different applications. For example:

- 1) Low latency for news reporting with optimized redundancy
- 2) High quality and high redundancy with higher latency
- 3) Balanced latency/redundancy
- 4) Low cost – best effort
- 5) High redundancy at any cost

Profile number 5. above can mean 100% redundancy both video and audio. The encoder sends 10mbps over two LTE modems meaning double data volume is used.

The profiles can easily be pre-configured before the event, changed by the operator on site or changed remotely from the MCR.

Factual text: In Norse mythology, **Bifrost** is a burning rainbow bridge that reaches between Midgard (Earth) and Asgard, the realm of the gods [*wikipedia*].