Tikrit University

COLLAGE OF COMPUTER SCIENCE AND MATHEMATICS

Computer Networking

SWITCHING

4th stage

Lecturer 4

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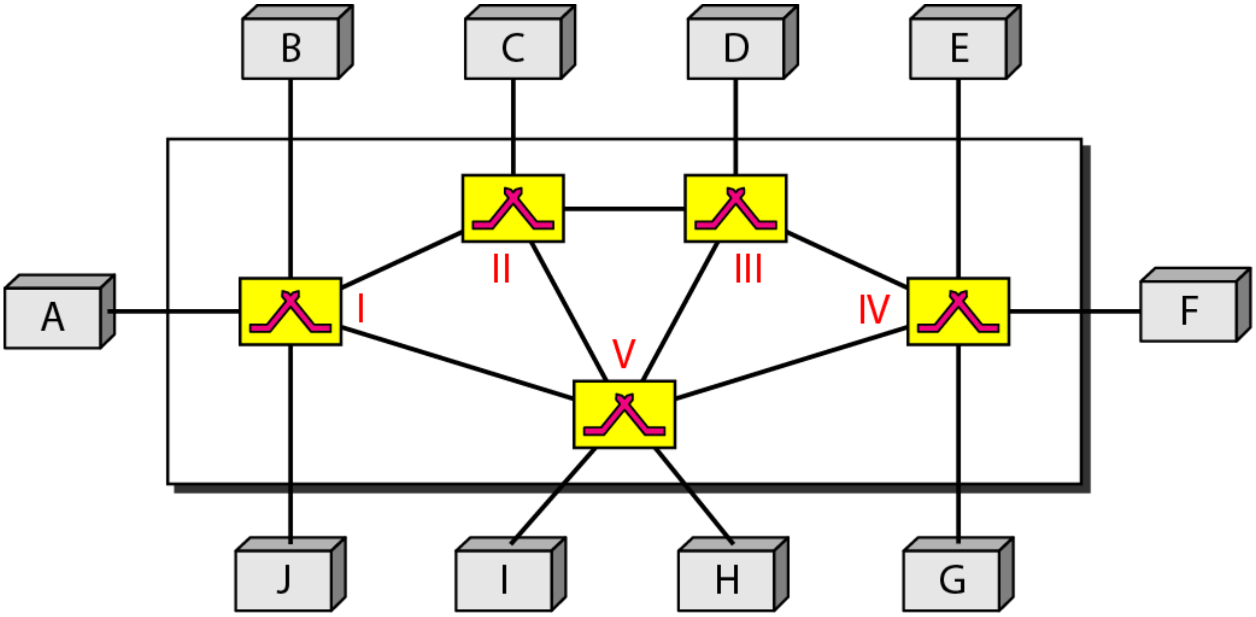
1. Switching

A network is a set of connected devices. Whenever we have multiple devices, we have the problem of how to connect them to make one-to-one communication possible. One solution is to make a point-to-point connection between each pair of devices (a mesh topology) or between a central device and every other device (a star topology).

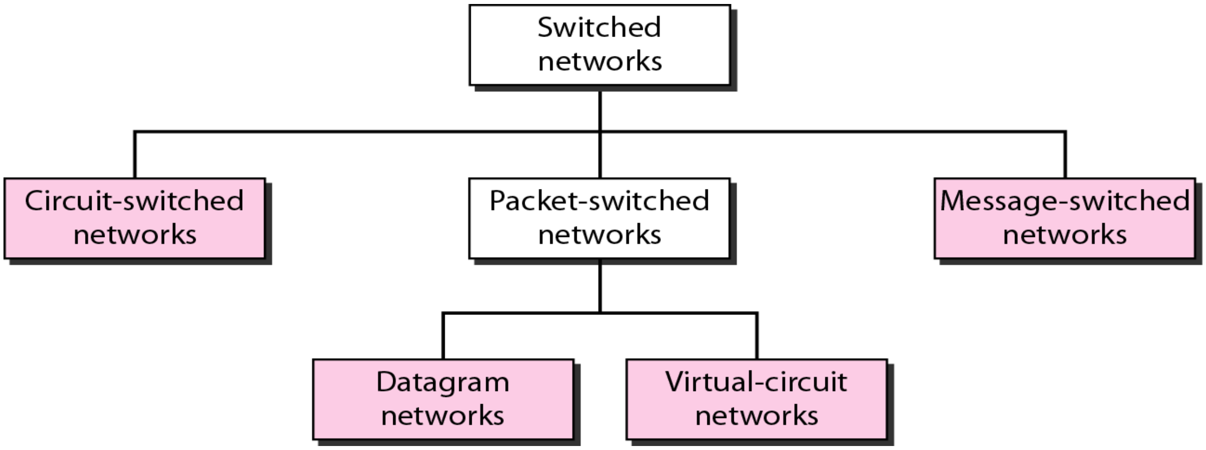
These methods, however, are impractical and wasteful when applied to very large networks. The number and length of the links require too much infrastructure to be cost-efficient, and the majority of those links would be idle most of the time. Other topologies employing multipoint connections, such as a bus, are ruled out because the distances between devices and the total number of devices increase beyond the capacities of the media and equipment.

A better solution is switching. A switched network consists of a series of interlinked nodes, called switches. Switches are devices capable of creating temporary connections between two or more devices linked to the switch. In a switched network, some of these nodes are connected to the end systems (computers or telephones, for example). Others are used only for routing. The figure shows a switched network.



The end systems (communicating devices) are labeled A, B, C, D, and so on, and the switches are labeled I, II, III, IV, and V. Each switch is connected to multiple links.

Taxonomy of switched networks



1.1 CIRCUIT-SWITCHED NETWORKS

A circuit-switched network consists of a set of switches connected by physical links. A connection between two stations is a dedicated path made of one or more links. However, each connection uses only one dedicated channel on each link. Each link is normally divided into *n* channels by using FDM or TDM

Figure shows a trivial circuit-switched network with four switches and four links. Each link is divided into *n (n* is 3 in the figure) channels by using FDM or TDM.

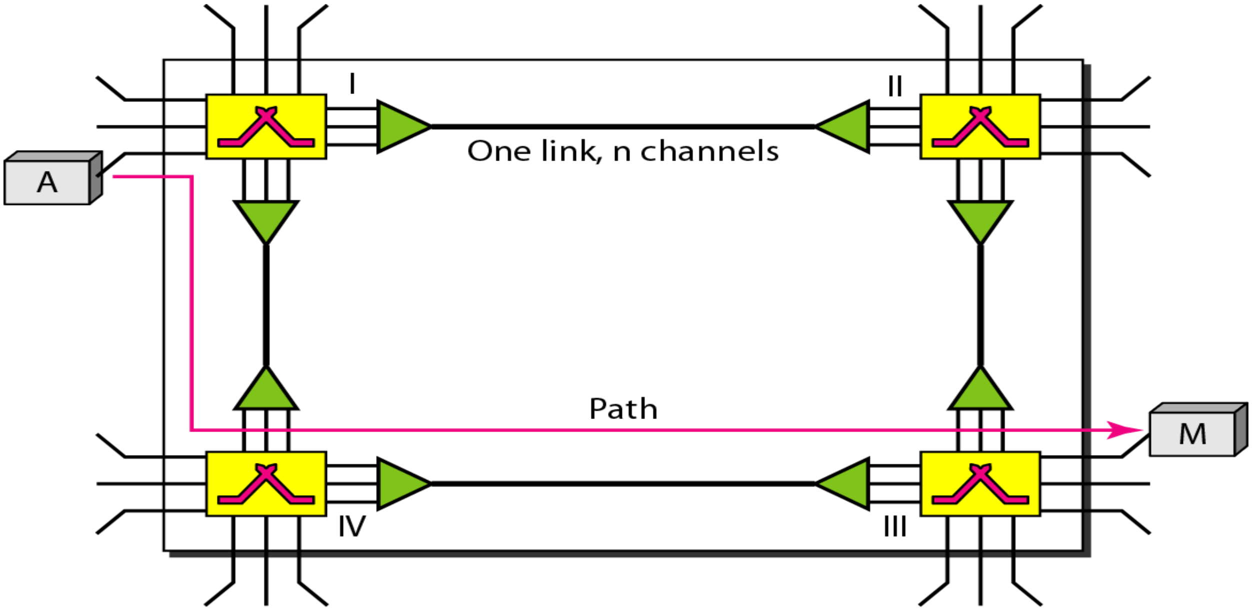


Fig: A trivial circuit-switched network

Three Phases

The actual communication in a circuit-switched network requires three phases: connection setup, data transfer, and connection teardown.

Setup Phase:

Before the two parties (or multiple parties in a conference call) can communicate, a dedicated circuit (combination of channels in links) needs to be established. The end systems are normally connected through dedicated lines to the switches, so connection setup means creating dedicated channels between the switches. For example, in Figure, when system A needs to connect to system M, it sends a setup request that includes the address of system M, to switch I. Switch I finds a channel between itself and switch IV that can be dedicated for this purpose. Switch I then send the request to switch IV, which finds a dedicated channel between itself and switch III. Switch III informs system M of system A's intention at this time.

In the next step to making a connection, an acknowledgment from system M needs to be sent in the opposite direction to system A. Only after system A receives this acknowledgment is the connection established. Note that end-to-end addressing is required for creating a connection between the two end systems. These can be, for example, the addresses of the computers assigned by the administrator in a TDM network, or telephone numbers in an FDM network.

Data Transfer Phase:

After the establishment of the dedicated circuit (channels), the two parties can transfer data.

Teardown Phase:

When one of the parties needs to disconnect, a signal is sent to each switch to release the resources.

Efficiency:

It can be argued that circuit-switched networks are not as efficient as the other two types of networks because resources are allocated during the entire duration of the connection. These resources are unavailable to other connections. In a telephone network, people normally terminate the communication when they have finished their conversation. However, in computer networks, a computer can be connected to another computer even if there is no activity for a long time. In this case, allowing resources to be dedicated means that other connections are deprived.

Delay

Although a circuit-switched network normally has low efficiency, the delay in this type of network is minimal. During data transfer the data are not delayed at each switch; the resources are allocated for the duration of the connection. Figure shows the idea of delay in a circuit switched network when only two switches are involved. As Figure shows, there is no waiting time at each switch. The total delay is due to the time needed to create the connection, transfer data, and disconnect the circuit.

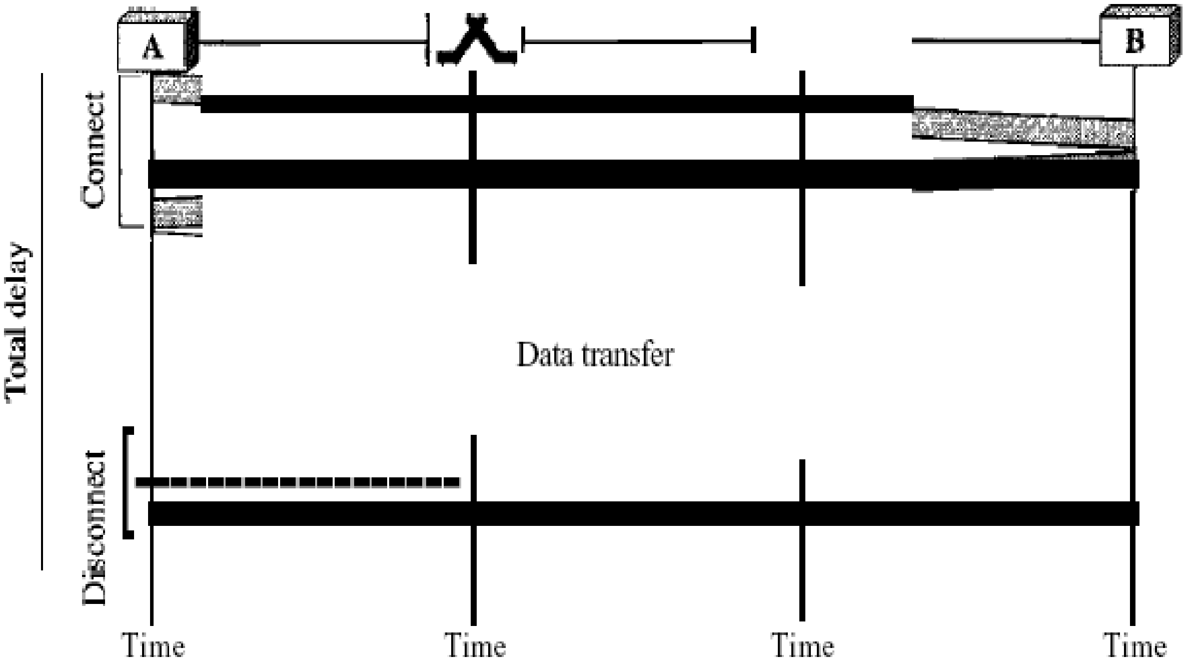


Fig: Delay in a circuit-switched network

The delay caused by the setup is the sum of four parts: the propagation time of the source computer request (slope of the first gray box), the request signal transfer time (height of the first gray box), the propagation time of the acknowledgment from the destination computer (slope of the second gray box), and the signal transfer time of the acknowledgment (height of the second gray box). The delay due to data transfer is the sum of two parts: the propagation time (slope of the colored box) and data transfer time (height of the colored box), which can be very long. The third box shows the time needed to tear down the circuit. We have shown the case in which the receiver requests disconnection, which creates the maximum delay.

1.2 DATAGRAM NETWORKS

In a datagram network, each packet is treated independently of all others. Even if a packet is part of a multipacket transmission, the network treats it as though it existed alone. Packets in this approach are referred to as datagrams.

Datagram switching is normally done at the network layer. We briefly discuss datagram networks here as a comparison with circuit-switched and virtual-circuit switched networks Figure shows how the datagram approach is used to deliver four packets from station A to station X. The switches in a datagram network are traditionally referred to as routers. That is why we use a different symbol for the switches in the figure.

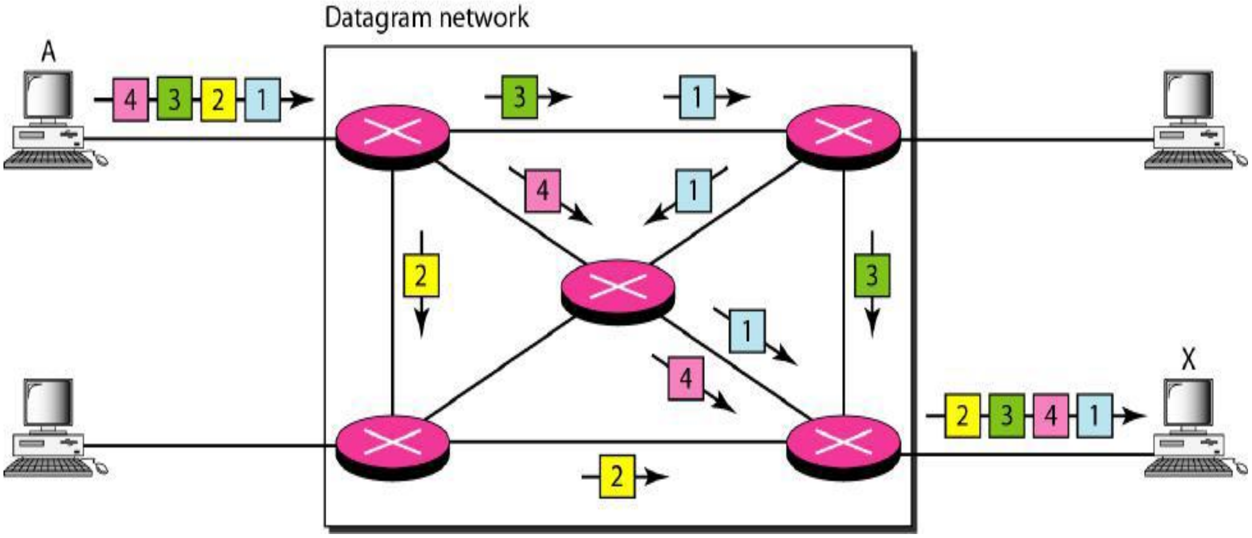


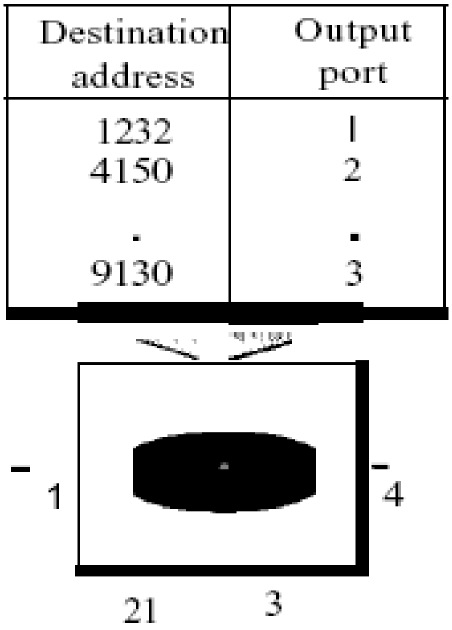
Fig: *A datagram network with four switches (routers)*

In this example, all four packets (or datagrams) belong to the same message, but may travel different paths to reach their destination. This is so because the links may be involved in carrying packets from other sources and do not have the necessary bandwidth available to carry all the packets from A to X. This approach can cause the datagrams of a transmission to arrive at their destination out of order with different delays between the packets. Packets may also be lost or dropped because of a lack of resources. In most protocols, it is the responsibility of an upper layer protocol to reorder the datagrams or ask for lost datagrams before passing them on to the application.

The datagram networks are sometimes referred to as connectionless networks. The term *connectionless* here means that the switch (packet switch) does not keep information about the connection state. There are no setup or teardown phases. Each packet is treated the same by a switch regardless of its source or destination.

Routing Table

If there are no setup or teardown phases, how are the packets routed to their destinations in a datagram network? In this type of network, each switch (or packet switch) has a routing table which is based on the destination address. The routing tables are dynamic and are updated periodically. The destination addresses and the corresponding forwarding output ports are recorded in the tables. This is different from the table of a circuit switched network in which each entry is created when the setup phase is completed and deleted when the teardown phase is over. Figure shows the routing table for a switch.



Destination address	Output port
1232	1
4150	2
.	.
9130	3

Fig: Routing table in a datagram network

Destination Address

Every packet in a datagram network carries a header that contains, among other information, the destination address of the packet. When the switch receives the packet, this destination address is examined; the routing table is consulted to find the corresponding port through which the packet should be forwarded. This address, unlike the address in a virtual circuit-switched network, remains the same during the entire journey of the packet.

Efficiency

The efficiency of a datagram network is better than that of a circuit-switched network; resources are allocated only when there are packets to be transferred. If a source sends a packet and there is a delay of a few minutes before another packet can be sent, the resources can be reallocated during these minutes for other packets from other sources.

Delay

There may be greater delay in a datagram network than in a virtual-circuit network. Although there are no setup and teardown phases, each packet may experience a wait at a switch before it is forwarded. In addition, since not all packets in a message necessarily travel through the same switches, the delay is not uniform for the packets of a message.

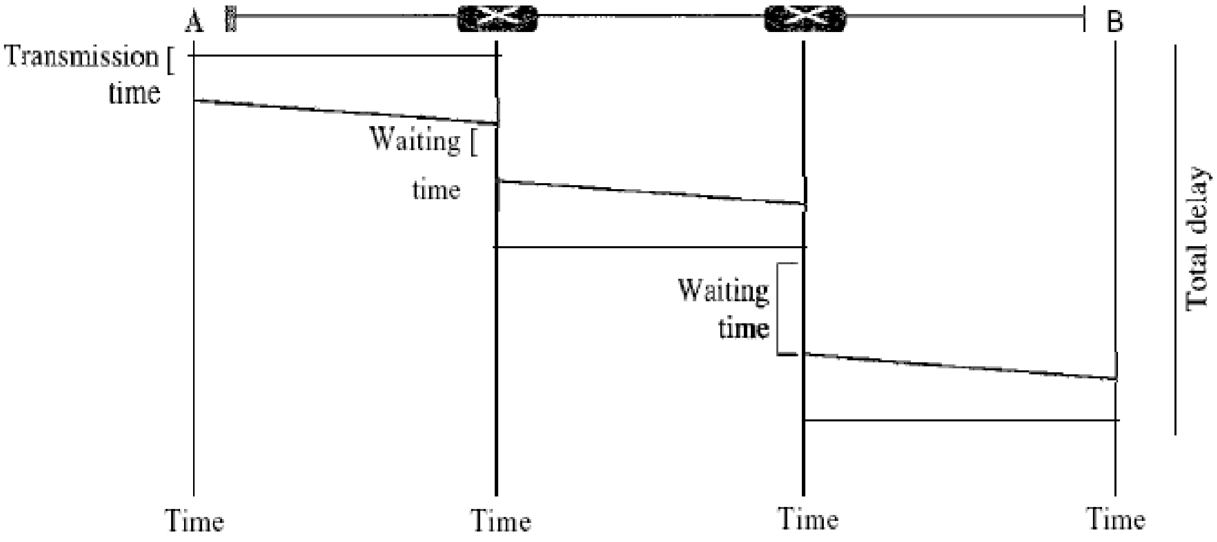


Fig: Delay in a datagram network

The packet travels through two switches. There are three transmission times *(3T)*, three propagation delays (slopes 3't of the lines), and two waiting times (WI + *w2)'* We ignore the processing time in each switch. The total delay is

Total delay =*3T* + 3t + WI + W2

1.3 VIRTUAL-CIRCUIT NETWORKS:

A virtual-circuit network is a cross between a circuit-switched network and a datagram network. It has some characteristics of both.

1. As in a circuit-switched network, there are setup and teardown phases in addition to the data transfer phase.
2. Resources can be allocated during the setup phase, as in a circuit-switched network, or on demand, as in a datagram network.
3. As in a datagram network, data are packetized and each packet carries an address in the header. However, the address in the header has local jurisdiction (it defines what should be the next switch and the channel on which the packet is being canied), not end-to-end jurisdiction. The reader may ask how the intermediate switches know where to send the packet if there is no final destination address carried by a packet. The answer will be clear when we discuss virtual circuit identifiers in the next section.
4. As in a circuit-switched network, all packets follow the same path established during the connection.
5. A virtual-circuit network is normally implemented in the data link layer, while a circuit switched network is implemented in the physical layer and a datagram network in the network layer. But this may change in the future. Figure is an example of a virtual-circuit network. The network has switches that allow traffic from sources to destinations. A source or destination can be a computer, packet switch, bridge, or any other device that connects other networks.

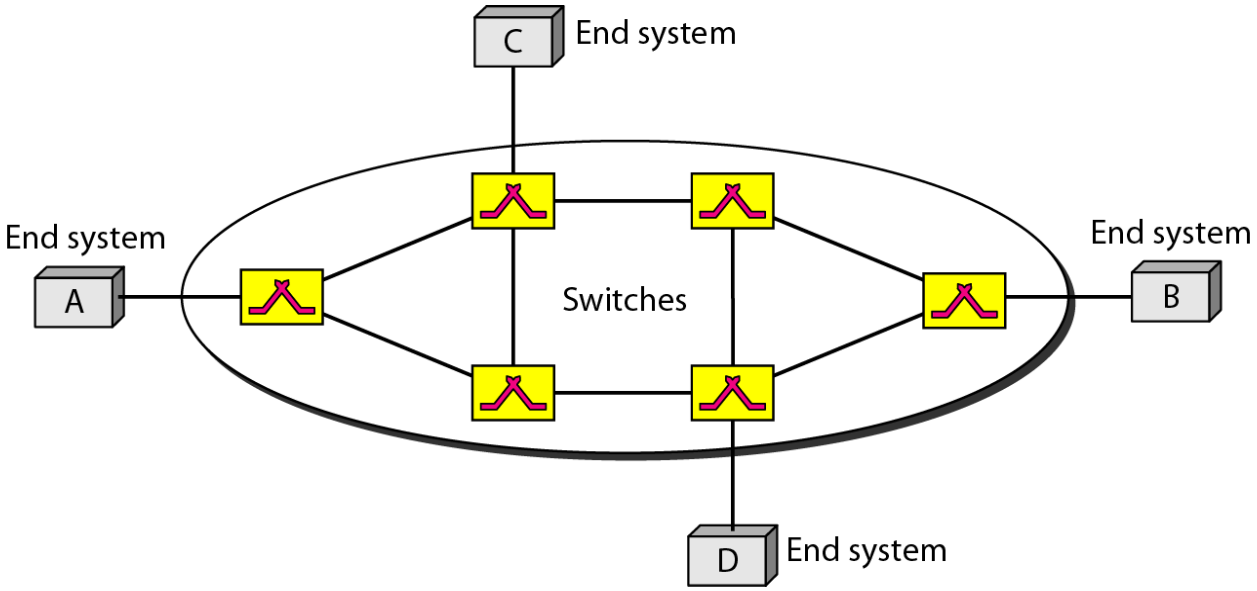


Fig a: *Virtual-circuit network*

Addressing

In a virtual-circuit network, two types of addressing are involved: global and local (virtual-circuit identifier).

Global Addressing: A source or a destination needs to have a global address-an address that can be unique in the scope of the network or internationally if the network is part of an international network. However, we will see that a global address in virtual-circuit networks is used only to create a virtual-circuit identifier, as discussed next.

Virtual-Circuit Identifier: The identifier that is actually used for data transfer is called the virtual-circuit identifier (Vel). A vel, unlike a global address, is a small number that has only switch scope; it is used by a frame between two switches. When a frame arrives at a switch, it has a VCI; when it leaves, it has a different VCl. Figure shows how the VCI in a data frame changes from one switch to another. Note that a VCI does not need to be a large number since
each switch can use its own unique set of VCls.

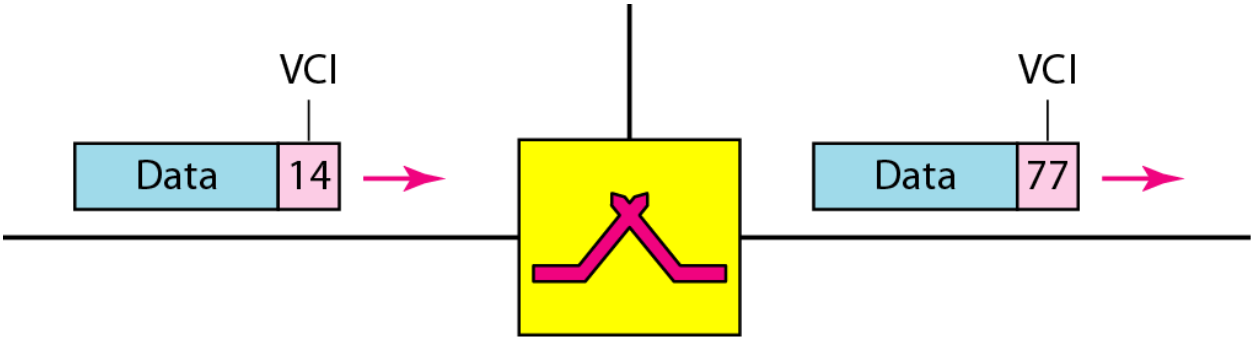


Figure *Virtual-circuit identifier*

Three Phases

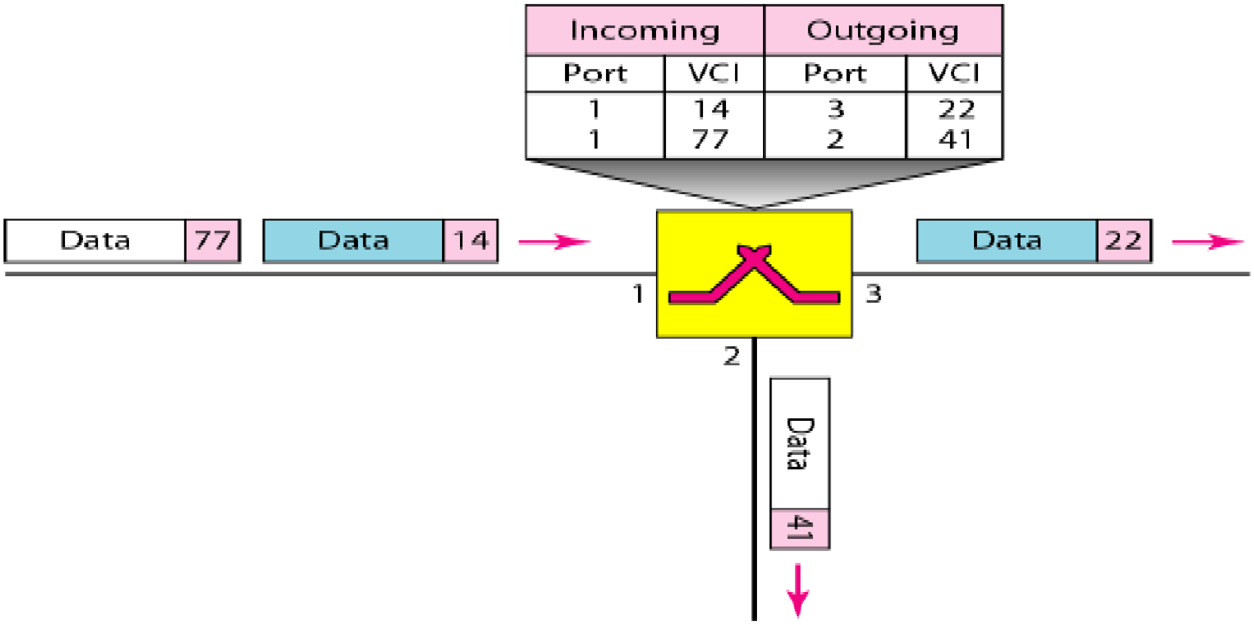
As in a circuit-switched network, a source and destination need to go through three phases in a virtual-circuit network: setup, data transfer, and teardown. In the setup phase, the source and destination use their global addresses to help switches make table entries for the connection. In the teardown phase, the source and destination inform the switches to delete the corresponding entry. Data transfer occurs between these two phases. We first discuss the data transfer phase, which is more straightforward; we then talk about the setup and teardown phases.

Data Transfer Phase

To transfer a frame from a source to its destination, all switches need to have a table entry for this virtual circuit. The table, in its simplest form, has four columns. This means that the switch holds four pieces of information for each virtual circuit that is already set up. We show later how the switches make their table entries, but for the moment we assume that each switch has a table with entries for all active virtual circuits. Figure 2 shows such a switch and its corresponding table. And also shows a frame arriving at port 1 with a VCI of 14. When the frame arrives, the switch looks in its table to find port 1 and a VCI of 14. When it is found, the switch knows to change the VCI to 22 and send out the frame from port 3. Figure 3 shows how a frame from source A reaches destination B and how its VCI changes during the trip. Each switch changes the VCI and routes the frame. The data transfer phase is active until the source sends all its frames to the destination. The procedure at the switch is the same for each frame of a message. The process creates a virtual circuit, not a real circuit, between the source and destination.

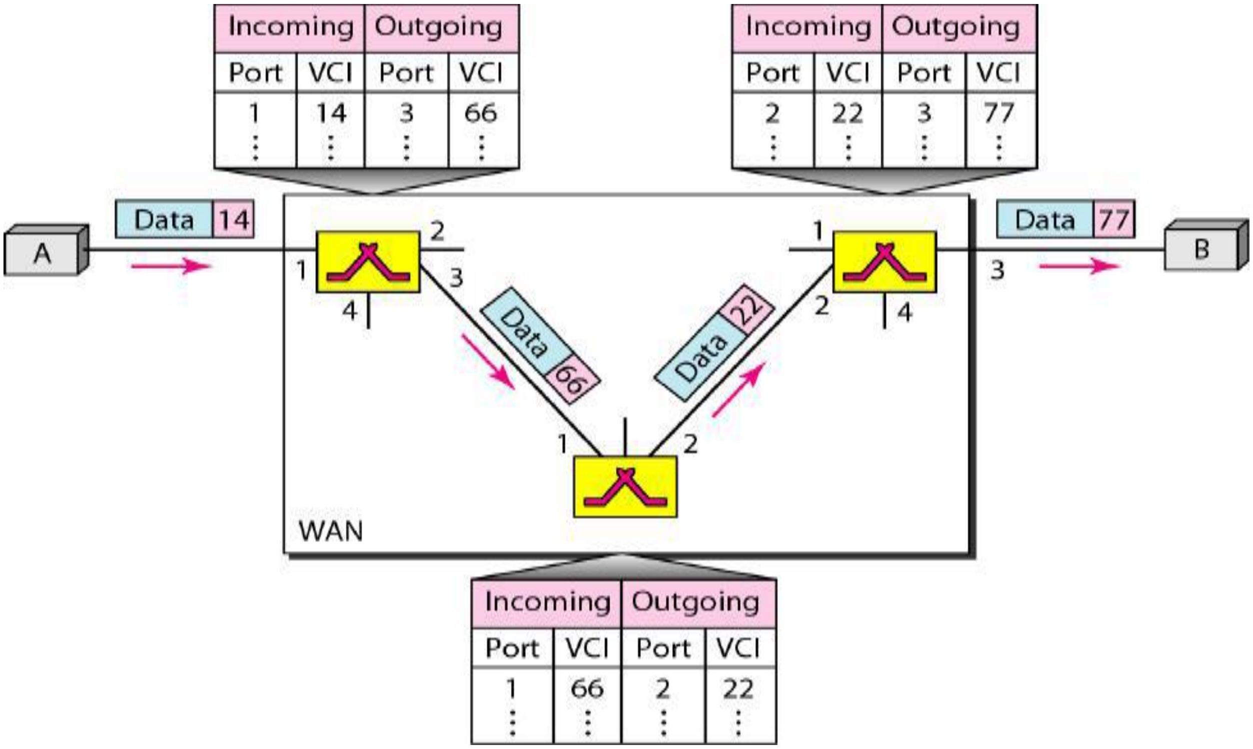
Setup Phase

In the setup phase, a switch creates an entry for a virtual circuit. For example, suppose source A needs to create a virtual circuit to B. Two steps are required: the setup request and the acknowledgment.



Incoming		Outgoing	
Port	VCI	Port	VCI
1	14	3	22
1	77	2	41

Figure *Switch and tables in a virtual-circuit network*



Incoming		Outgoing	
Port	VCI	Port	VCI
1	14	3	66
⋮	⋮	⋮	⋮

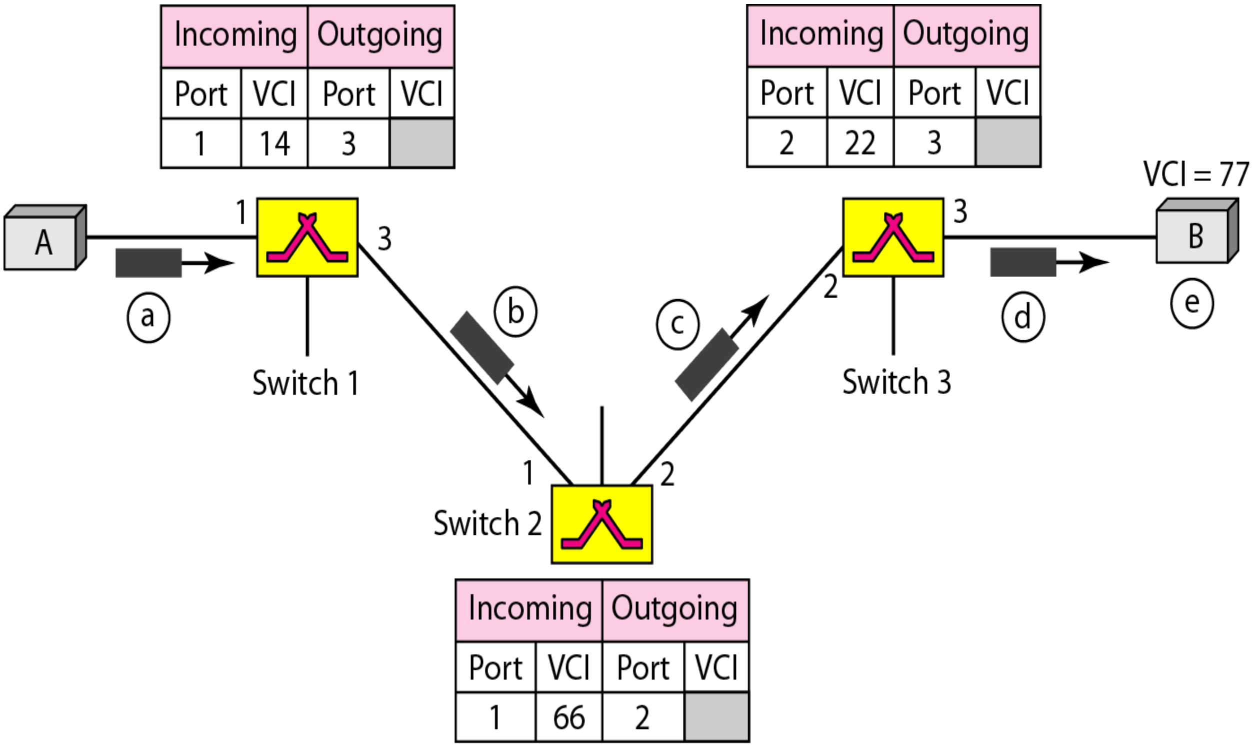
Incoming		Outgoing	
Port	VCI	Port	VCI
1	66	2	22
⋮	⋮	⋮	⋮

Incoming		Outgoing	
Port	VCI	Port	VCI
2	22	3	77
⋮	⋮	⋮	⋮

Figure *Source-to-destination data transfer in a virtual-circuit network*

Setup Request

A setup request frame is sent from the source to the destination. Figure shows the process.



Incoming		Outgoing	
Port	VCI	Port	VCI
1	14	3	

Incoming		Outgoing	
Port	VCI	Port	VCI
1	66	2	

Incoming		Outgoing	
Port	VCI	Port	VCI
2	22	3	

Figure *Setup request in a virtual-circuit network*

a. Source A sends a setup frame to switch 1.

b. Switch 1 receives the setup request frame. It knows that a frame going from A to B goes out through port 3. How the switch has obtained this information is a point covered in future chapters. The switch, in the setup phase, acts as a packet switch; it has a routing table which is different from the switching table. For the moment, assume that it knows the output port. The switch creates an entry in its table for this virtual circuit, but it is only able to fill three of the four columns. The switch assigns the incoming port (1) and chooses an available incoming VCI (14) and the outgoing port (3). It does not yet know the outgoing VCI, which will be found during the acknowledgment step. The switch then forwards the frame through port 3 to switch 2.

c. Switch 2 receives the setup request frame. The same events happen here as at switch 1; three columns of the table are completed: in this case, incoming port (l), incoming VCI (66), and outgoing port (2).

d. Switch 3 receives the setup request frame. Again, three columns are completed: incoming port (2), incoming VCI (22), and outgoing port (3).

e. Destination B receives the setup frame, and if it is ready to receive frames from A, it assigns a VCI to the incoming frames that come from A, in this case 77. This VCI lets the destination know that the frames come from A, and not other sources.

Acknowledgment A special frame, called the acknowledgment frame, completes the entries in the switching tables. Figure 8.15 shows the process.

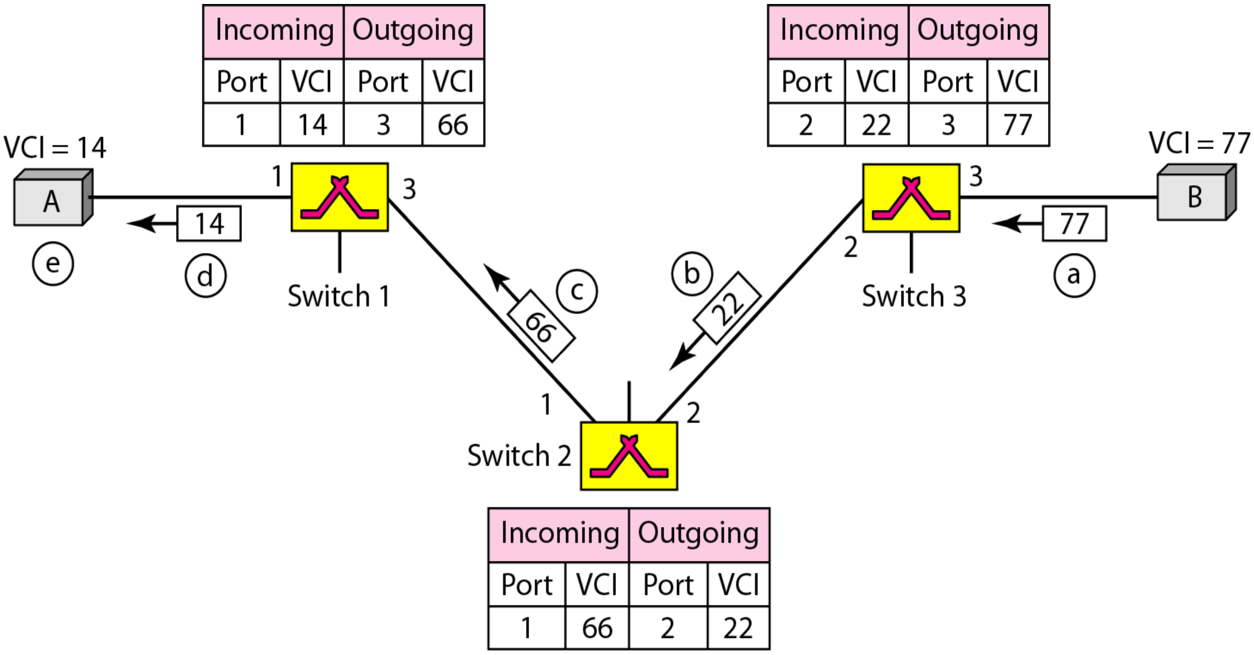
a. The destination sends an acknowledgment to switch 3. The acknowledgment carries the global source and destination addresses so the switch knows which entry in the table is to be completed. The frame also carries VCI 77, chosen by the destination as the incoming VCI for frames from A. Switch 3 uses this VCI to complete the outgoing VCI column for this entry. Note that 77 is the incoming VCI for destination B, but the outgoing VCI for switch 3.

b. Switch 3 sends an acknowledgment to switch 2 that contains its incoming VCI in the table, chosen in the previous step. Switch 2 uses this as the outgoing VCI in the table.

c. Switch 2 sends an acknowledgment to switch 1 that contains its incoming VCI in the table, chosen in the previous step. Switch 1 uses this as the outgoing VCI in the table.

d. Finally switch 1 sends an acknowledgment to source A that contains its incoming VCI in the table, chosen in the previous step.

e. The source uses this as the outgoing VCI for the data frames to be sent to destination B.



Incoming		Outgoing	
Port	VCI	Port	VCI
1	14	3	66

Incoming		Outgoing	
Port	VCI	Port	VCI
2	22	3	77

Incoming		Outgoing	
Port	VCI	Port	VCI
1	66	2	22

Figure *Setup acknowledgments in a virtual-circuit network*

Teardown Phase

In this phase, source A, after sending all frames to B, sends a special frame called a *teardown request.* Destination B responds with a teardown confirmation frame. All switches delete the corresponding entry from their tables.

Efficiency

As we said before, resource reservation in a virtual-circuit network can be made during the setup or can be on demand during the data transfer phase. In the first case, the delay for each packet is the same; in the second case, each packet may encounter different delays. There is one big advantage in a virtual-circuit network even if resource allocation is on demand. The source can check the availability of the resources, without actually reserving it. Consider a family that wants to dine at a restaurant. Although the restaurant may not accept reservations (allocation of the tables is on demand), the family can call and find out the waiting time. This can save the family time and effort.

Delay in Virtual-Circuit Networks

In a virtual-circuit network, there is a one-time delay for setup and a one-time delay for teardown. If resources are allocated during the setup phase, there is no wait time for individual packets. Below Figure shows the delay for a packet traveling through two switches in a virtual circuit network.

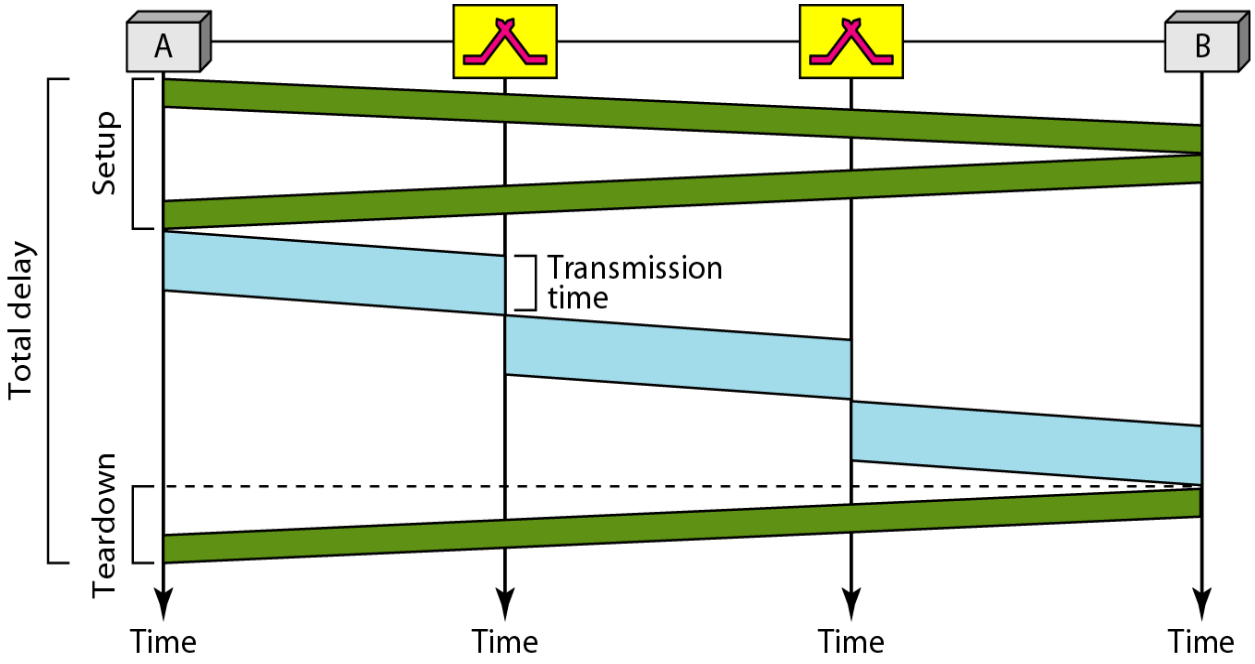
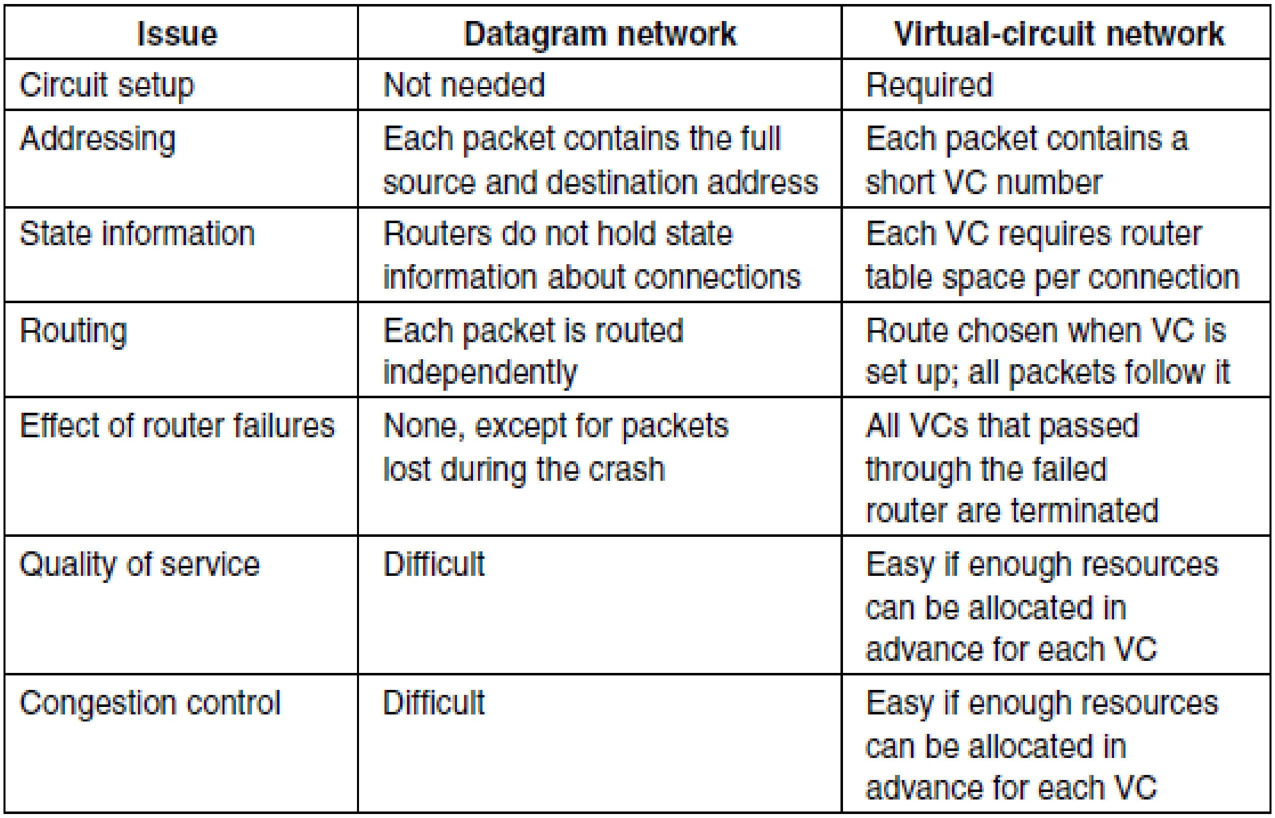


Fig: Delay in a virtual-circuit network

The packet is traveling through two switches (routers). There are three transmission times *(3T)*, three propagation times (3't), data transfer depicted by the sloping lines, a setup delay (which includes transmission and propagation in two directions), and a teardown delay (which includes transmission and propagation in one direction). We ignore the processing time in each switch. The total delay time is

Total delay = *3T*+ 3't + setup delay + teardown delay

Comparison



Issue	Datagram network	Virtual-circuit network
Circuit setup	Not needed	Required
Addressing	Each packet contains the full source and destination address	Each packet contains a short VC number
State information	Routers do not hold state information about connections	Each VC requires router table space per connection
Routing	Each packet is routed independently	Route chosen when VC is set up; all packets follow it
Effect of router failures	None, except for packets lost during the crash	All VCs that passed through the failed router are terminated
Quality of service	Difficult	Easy if enough resources can be allocated in advance for each VC
Congestion control	Difficult	Easy if enough resources can be allocated in advance for each VC