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Transmission of IPv6 Packets over DECT Ultra Low Energy
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Abstract

DECT Ultra Low Energy is a low power air interface technology that is defined by the DECT Forum and specified by ETSI.

The DECT air interface technology has been used world-wide in communication devices for more than 20 years, primarily carrying voice for cordless telephony but has also been deployed for data centric services.

The DECT Ultra Low Energy is a recent addition to the DECT interface primarily intended for low-bandwidth, low-power applications such as sensor devices, smart meters, home automation etc. As the DECT Ultra Low Energy interface inherits many of the capabilities from DECT, it benefits from long range, interference free operation, world wide reserved frequency band, low silicon prices and maturity. There is an added value in the ability to communicate with IPv6 over DECT ULE such as for Internet of Things applications.

This document describes how IPv6 is transported over DECT ULE using 6LoWPAN techniques.

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1. Introduction

DECT Ultra Low Energy (DECT ULE or just ULE) is an air interface technology building on the key fundamentals of traditional DECT / CAT-iq but with specific changes to significantly reduce the power consumption on the expense of data throughput. DECT ULE devices with requirements to power consumption will operate on special power optimized silicon, but can connect to a DECT Gateway supporting traditional DECT / CAT-iq for cordless telephony and data as well as the ULE extensions. DECT terminology operates with two major role definitions: The Portable Part (PP) is the power constrained device, while the Fixed Part (FP) is the Gateway or base station. This FP may be connected to the Internet. An example of a use case for DECT ULE is a home security sensor transmitting small amounts of data (few bytes) at periodic intervals through the FP, but is able to wake up upon an external event (burglar) and communicate with the FP. Another example incorporating both DECT ULE as well as traditional CAT-iq telephony is an elderly pendant (broche) which can transmit periodic status messages to a care provider using very little battery, but in the event of urgency, the elderly person can establish a voice connection through the pendant to an alarm service. It is expected that DECT ULE will be integrated into many residential gateways, as many of these already implements DECT CAT-iq for cordless telephony. DECT ULE can be added as a software option for the FP. It is desirable to consider IPv6 for DECT ULE devices due to the large address space and well-known infrastructure. This document describes how IPv6 is used on DECT ULE links to optimize power while maintaining the many benefits of IPv6 transmission. [RFC4944] specifies the transmission of IPv6 over IEEE 802.15.4. DECT ULE has in many ways similar characteristics of IEEE 802.15.4, but also differences. Many of the mechanisms defined in [RFC4944] can be applied to the transmission of IPv6 on DECT ULE links.

This document specifies how to map IPv6 over DECT ULE inspired by [RFC4944].

1.1. Requirements Notation

The key words "MUST", "MUST NOT", "REQUIRED", "SHALL", "SHALL NOT", "SHOULD", "SHOULD NOT", "RECOMMENDED", "MAY", and "OPTIONAL" in this document are to be interpreted as described in [RFC2119].

1.2. Terms Used

PP: DECT Portable Part, typically the sensor node

FP: DECT Fixed Part, the gateway

LLME: Lower Layer Management Entity

NWK: Network

PVC: Permanent Virtual Circuit

6LN: DECT Portable part having a role as defined in [RFC6775]

6LBR: DECT Fixed Part having a role as defined in [RFC6775]

2. DECT Ultra Low Energy

DECT ULE is a low power air interface technology that is designed to support both circuit switched for service, such as voice communication, and for packet mode data services at modest data rate. This draft is only addressing the packet mode data service of DECT ULE.

2.1. The DECT ULE Protocol Stack

The DECT ULE protocol stack consists of the PHY layer operating at frequencies in the 1880 - 1920 MHz frequency band depending on the region and uses a symbol rate of 1.152 Mbps. Radio bearers are allocated by use of FDMA/TDMA/TDD technics.

In its generic network topology, DECT is defined as a cellular network technology. However, the most common configuration is a star network with a single FP defining the network with a number of PP attached. The MAC layer supports both traditional DECT as this is used for services like discovery, pairing, security features etc. All these features have been reused from DECT.

The DECT ULE device can switch to the ULE mode of operation, utilizing the new ULE MAC layer features. The DECT ULE Data Link Control (DLC) provides multiplexing as well as segmentation and re-assembly for larger packets from layers above. The DECT ULE layer also implements per-message authentication and encryption. The DLC layer ensures packet integrity and preserves packet order, but delivery is based on best effort.

The current DECT ULE MAC layer standard supports low bandwidth data broadcast. However the usage of this broadcast service has not yet been standardized for higher layers. This document is not considering usage of this DECT ULE MAC broadcast service in current version.

In general, communication sessions can be initiated from both FP and PP side. Depending on power down modes employed in the PP, latency

may occur when initiating sessions from FP side. MAC layer communication can either take place using connection oriented packet transfer with low overhead for short sessions or take place using connection oriented bearers including media reservation. The MAC layer autonomously selects the radio spectrum positions that are available within the band and can rearrange these to avoid interference. The MAC layer has built-in retransmission procedures in order to improve transmission reliability.

The DECT ULE device will typically incorporate an Application Programmers Interface (API) as well as common elements known as Generic Access Profile (GAP) for enrolling into the network. The DECT ULE stack establishes a permanent virtual circuit (PVC) for the application layers and provides support for a range of different application protocols. The used application protocol is negotiated between the PP and FP when the PVC communication service is established. This draft defines 6LoWPAN as one of the possible protocols to negotiate.

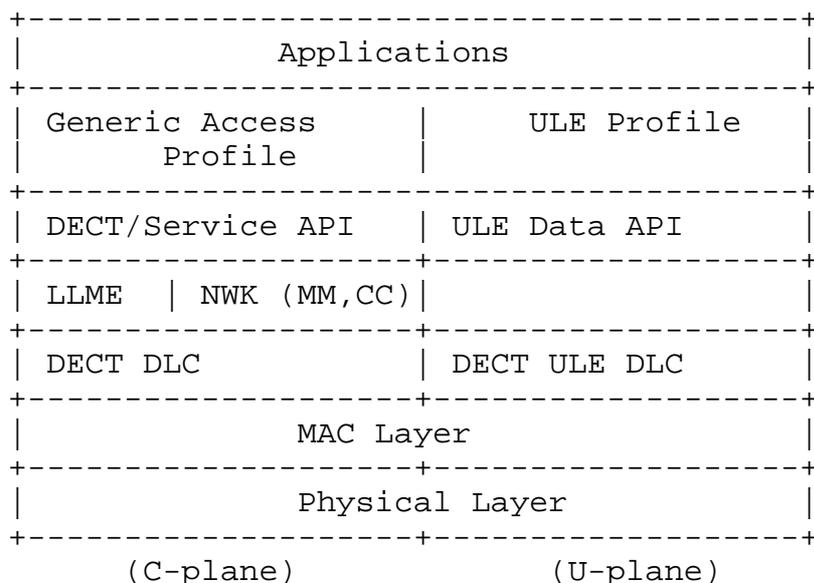


Figure 1: DECT ULE Protocol Stack

The DECT ULE stack can be divided into control (C-plane) and user-data (U-plane) parts shown to the left and to the right in figure 1, respectively.

2.2. Link layer roles and topology

A FP is assumed to be less constrained than a PP. Hence, in the primary scenario FP and PP will act as 6LBR and a 6LN, respectively. This document does only address this primary scenario.

In DECT ULE, at link layer the communication only takes place between a FP and a PP. A FP is able to handle multiple simultaneous connections with a number of PP. Hence, in a DECT ULE network using IPv6, a radio hop is equivalent to an IPv6 link and vice versa.

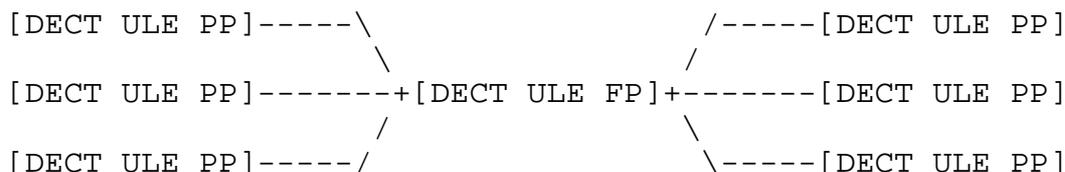


Figure 2: DECT ULE star topology

DECT ULE repeaters are not considered in this document.

2.3. Addressing Model

Each DECT PP is assigned an <IPEI> (International Portable Equipment Identity) during manufacturing. This identity has the size of 40 bits and is DECT globally unique for the PP and can be used to constitute the MAC address. However, it cannot be used to derive a globally unique IID.

When bound to a FP, a PP is assigned a 20 bit TPUI (Temporary Portable User Identity) which is unique within the FP. This TPUI is used for addressing (layer 2) in messages between FP and PP.

Each DECT FP is assigned a <RFPI> (Radio Fixed Part Identity) during manufacturing. This identity has the size of 40 bits and is globally unique for a FP and can be used to constitute the MAC address. However, it cannot be used to derive a globally unique IID.

Alternatively each DECT PP and DECT FP can be assigned a unique (IEEE) MAC-48 address additionally to the DECT identities to be used by the 6LoWPAN. With such an approach, the FP and PP have to implement a mapping between used MAC-48 addresses and DECT identities.

2.4. MTU Considerations

Generally the DECT ULE FP and PP may be generating data that fits into a single MAC Layer packet (38 bytes) for periodically transferred information, depending on application. IP data packets may be much larger and hence MTU size should be the size of the IP data packet. The DECT ULE DLC procedures supports segmentation and reassembly of any MTU size below 65536 bytes, but most implementations do only support smaller values. The default MTU size in DECT ULE is 500 octets, but it is assumed it is configured to fit the requirements from IPv6 data packets, hence [RFC4944] fragmentation/reassembly is not required.

It is expected that the LOWPAN_IPHC packet will fulfill all the requirements for header compression without spending unnecessary overhead for mesh addressing.

It is important to realize that the usage of larger packets will be on the expense of battery life, as a large packet inside the DECT ULE stack will be fragmented into several or many MAC layer packets, each consuming power to transmit / receive.

2.5. Additional Considerations

The DECT ULE standard allows PP to be registered (bind) to multiple FP and roaming between these FP. This draft does not consider the scenarios of PP roaming between multiple FP. The use of repeater functionality is also not considered in this draft.

3. Specification of IPv6 over DECT ULE

Before any IP-layer communications can take place over DECT ULE, DECT ULE enabled nodes such as 6LNs and 6LBRs have to find each other and establish a suitable link-layer connection. The obtain-access-rights registration and location registration procedures are documented by ETSI in the specifications [EN300.175-part1-7] and [TS102.939-1].

DECT ULE technology sets strict requirements for low power consumption and thus limits the allowed protocol overhead. 6LoWPAN standards [RFC4944], [RFC6775], and [RFC6282] provide useful functionality for reducing overhead which can be applied to DECT ULE. This functionality comprises link-local IPv6 addresses and stateless IPv6 address autoconfiguration, Neighbor Discovery and header compression.

The ULE 6LoWPAN adaptation layer can run directly on this U-plane DLC layer. Figure 3 illustrates IPv6 over DECT ULE stack.

A significant difference between IEEE 802.15.4 and DECT ULE is that the former supports both star and mesh topology (and requires a routing protocol), whereas DECT ULE in it's primary configuration does not support the formation of multihop networks at the link layer. In consequence, the mesh header defined in [RFC4944] for mesh under routing MUST NOT be used in DECT ULE networks. In addition, a DECT ULE PP node MUST NOT play the role of a 6LoWPAN Router (6LR).

3.1. Protocol stack

In order to enable transmission of IPv6 packets over DECT ULE, a Permanent Virtual Circuit (PVC) has to be opened between FP and PP. This MUST be done by setting up a service call from PP to FP. The PP SHALL specify the <<IWU-ATTRIBUTES>> in a service-change (other) message before sending a service-change (resume) message as defined in [TS102.939-1]. The <<IWU-ATTRIBUTES>> SHALL define the ULE Application Protocol Identifier to 0x06 and the MTU size to 1280 octets or larger. The FP MUST send a service-change-accept (resume) containing a valid paging descriptor. The PP MUST be pageable.

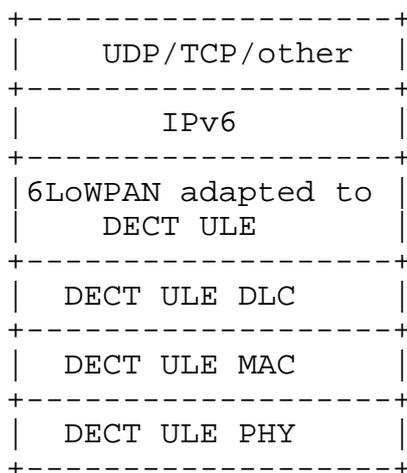


Figure 3: IPv6 over DECT ULE Stack

3.2. Link model

The general model is that IPv6 is layer 3 and DECT ULE MAC+DLC is layer 2. The DECT ULE implements fragmentation and reassembly functionality and [RFC4944] fragmentation and reassembly function MUST NOT be used. Since IPv6 requires MTU size of at least 1280 octets, the DECT ULE connection (PVC) MUST be configured with equivalent MTU size.

This specification also assumes the IPv6 header compression format specified in [RFC6282]. It is also assumed that the IPv6 payload length can be inferred from the ULE DLC packet length and the IID value inferred from the link-layer address.

Due to DECT ULE star topology, each branch of the star is considered to be an individual link and thus the PPs cannot directly hear one another and cannot talk to one another with link-local addresses. However, the FP acts as a 6LBR for communication between the PPs. After the FP and PPs have connected at the DECT ULE level, the link can be considered up and IPv6 address configuration and transmission can begin. The FP ensures address collisions do not occur.

3.2.1. Stateless address autoconfiguration

A DECT ULE 6LN performs stateless address autoconfiguration as per [RFC4862]. A 64-bit Interface identifier (IID) for a DECT ULE interface MAY be formed by utilizing a MAC-48 device address as defined in [RFC2464] "IPv6 over Ethernet" specification. Alternatively, the DECT device addresses IPEI, RFPI or TPUI, MAY be used instead to derive the IID.

As defined in [RFC4291], the IPv6 link-local address for a DECT ULE node is formed by appending the IID, to the prefix FE80::/64, as shown in Figure 4.

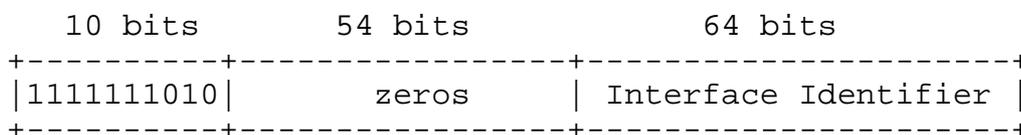


Figure 4: IPv6 link-local address in DECT ULE

A 6LN MUST join the all-nodes multicast address.

After link-local address configuration, 6LN sends Router Solicitation messages as described in [RFC4861] Section 6.3.7.

For non-link-local addresses a 64-bit IID MAY be formed by utilizing a MAC-48 device address. Alternatively, a randomly generated IID (see Section 3.2.2) can be used instead, for example, as discussed in [I-D.ietf-6man-default-iids]. The non-link-local addresses 6LN generates must be registered with 6LBR as described in Section 3.2.2.

Only if the device address is known to be a public address the "Universal/Local" bit can be set to 1 [RFC4291].

The means for a 6LBR to obtain an IPv6 prefix for numbering the DECT ULE network is out of scope of this document, but can be, for example, accomplished via DHCPv6 Prefix Delegation [RFC3633] or by using Unique Local IPv6 Unicast Addresses (ULA) [RFC4193]. Due to the link model of the DECT ULE the 6LBR MUST set the "on-link" flag (L) to zero in the Prefix Information Option [RFC4861]. This will cause 6LNs to always send packets to the 6LBR, including the case when the destination is another 6LN using the same prefix.

3.2.2. Neighbor discovery

'Neighbor Discovery Optimization for IPv6 over Low-Power Wireless Personal Area Networks (6LoWPANs)' [RFC6775] describes the neighbor discovery approach as adapted for use in several 6LoWPAN topologies, including the mesh topology. As DECT ULE is considered not to support mesh networks, hence only those aspects that apply to a star topology are considered.

The following aspects of the Neighbor Discovery optimizations [RFC6775] are applicable to DECT ULE 6LNs:

1. For sending Router Solicitations and processing Router Advertisements the DECT ULE 6LNs MUST, respectively, follow Sections 5.3 and 5.4 of the [RFC6775].
2. A DECT ULE 6LN SHOULD NOT register its link-local address. A DECT ULE 6LN MUST register its non-link-local addresses with the 6LBR by sending a Neighbor Solicitation (NS) message with the Address Registration Option (ARO) and process the Neighbor Advertisement (NA) accordingly. The NS with the ARO option MUST be sent irrespective of the method used to generate the IID. The 6LN MUST register only one IPv6 address per available IPv6 prefix.

3.2.3. Unicast and Multicast address mapping

The DECT MAC layer broadcast service is considered inadequate for IP multicast.

Hence traffic is always unicast between two DECT ULE nodes. Even in the case where a 6LBR is attached to multiple 6LNs, the 6LBR cannot do a multicast to all the connected 6LNs. If the 6LBR needs to send a multicast packet to all its 6LNs, it has to replicate the packet and unicast it on each link. However, this may not be energy-efficient and particular care must be taken if the FP is battery-powered. In the opposite direction, a 6LN can only transmit data to or through the 6LBR. Hence, when a 6LN needs to transmit an IPv6 multicast packet, the 6LN will unicast the corresponding DECT ULE packet to the 6LBR. The 6LBR will then forward the multicast packet

to other 6LNs. To avoid excess of unwanted multicast traffic being sent to 6LNs, the 6LBR SHOULD implement MLD Snooping feature [RFC4541].

3.2.4. Header Compression

Header compression as defined in [RFC6282], which specifies the compression format for IPv6 datagrams on top of IEEE 802.15.4, is REQUIRED in this document as the basis for IPv6 header compression on top of DECT ULE. All headers MUST be compressed according to [RFC6282] encoding formats. The DECT ULE's star topology structure and ARO can be exploited in order to provide a mechanism for IID compression. The following text describes the principles of IPv6 address compression on top of DECT ULE.

3.2.4.1. Link-local Header Compression

In a link-local communication terminated at 6LN and 6LBR, both the IPv6 source and destination addresses MUST be elided, since the node knows that the packet is destined for it even if the packet does not have destination IPv6 address. A node SHALL learn the IID of the other endpoint of each DECT ULE connection it participates in. By exploiting this information, a node that receives a PDU containing an IPv6 packet can infer the corresponding IPv6 source address. A node MUST maintain a Neighbor Cache, in which the entries include both the IID of the neighbor and the Device Address that identifies the neighbor. For the type of communication considered in this paragraph, the following settings MUST be used in the IPv6 compressed header: CID=0, SAC=0, SAM=11, DAC=0, DAM=11.

3.2.4.2. Non-link-local Header Compression

To enable efficient header compression, the 6LBR MUST include 6LoWPAN Context Option (6CO) [RFC6775] for all prefixes the 6LBR advertises in Router Advertisements for use in stateless address autoconfiguration.

When a 6LN transmits an IPv6 packet to a destination using global Unicast IPv6 addresses, if a context is defined for the prefix of the 6LNs global IPv6 address, the 6LN MUST indicate this context in the corresponding source fields of the compressed IPv6 header as per Section 3.1 of [RFC6282], and MUST elide the IPv6 source address. For this, the 6LN MUST use the following settings in the IPv6 compressed header: CID=1, SAC=1, SAM=11. In this case, the 6LBR can infer the elided IPv6 source address since 1) the 6LBR has previously assigned the prefix to the 6LNs; and 2) the 6LBR maintains a Neighbor Cache that relates the Device Address and the IID of the corresponding PP. If a context is defined for the IPv6 destination

address, the 6LN MUST also indicate this context in the corresponding destination fields of the compressed IPv6 header, and MUST elide the prefix of the destination IPv6 address. For this, the 6LN MUST set the DAM field of the compressed IPv6 header as CID=1, DAC=1 and DAM=01 or DAM=11. Note that when a context is defined for the IPv6 destination address, the 6LBR can infer the elided destination prefix by using the context.

When a 6LBR receives a IPv6 packet having a global Unicast IPv6 address, and the destination of the packet is a 6LN, if a context is defined for the prefix of the 6LN's global IPv6 address, the 6LBR MUST indicate this context in the corresponding destination fields of the compressed IPv6 header, and MUST elide the IPv6 destination address of the packet before forwarding it to the 6LN. For this, the 6LBR MUST set the DAM field of the IPv6 compressed header as DAM=11. CID and DAC MUST be set to CID=1 and DAC=1. If a context is defined for the prefix of the IPv6 source address, the 6LBR MUST indicate this context in the source fields of the compressed IPv6 header, and MUST elide that prefix as well. For this, the 6LBR MUST set the SAM field of the IPv6 compressed header as CID=1, SAC=1 and SAM=01 or SAM=11.

3.3. Internet connectivity scenarios

In a typical scenario, the DECT ULE network is connected to the Internet as shown in the Figure 5.

A degenerate scenario can be imagined where a PP is acting as 6LBR and providing Internet connectivity for the FP. How the FP could then further provide Internet connectivity to other PP, possibly connected to the FP, is out of the scope of this document.

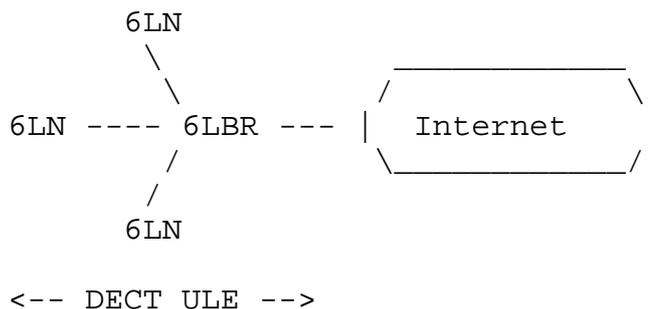


Figure 5: DECT ULE network connected to the Internet

The IPv6 address configuration as described in Section 3.2.1 allows implementations the choice to support [I-D.ietf-6man-default-iids] for non-link addresses.

6. ETSI Considerations

ETSI is standardizing a list of known application layer protocols that can use the DECT ULE permanent virtual circuit packet data service. Each protocol is identified by a unique known identifier, which is exchanged in the service-change procedure as defined in [TS102.939-1]. The IPv6/6LoWPAN as described in this document is considered as an application layer protocol on top of DECT ULE. In order to provide interoperability between 6LoWPAN / DECT ULE devices a common protocol identifier for 6LoWPAN is standardized by ETSI.

The ETSI DECT ULE Application Protocol Identifier is specified to 0x06 for 6LoWPAN.

7. Acknowledgements

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Ralph Droms has provided valuable feedback for this draft.

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