

Network Working Group  
Request for Comments: 1785  
Updates: 1350  
Category: Informational

G. Malkin  
Xylogics, Inc.  
A. Harkin  
Hewlett Packard Co.  
March 1995

## TFTP Option Negotiation Analysis

### Status of this Memo

This memo provides information for the Internet community. This memo does not specify an Internet standard of any kind. Distribution of this memo is unlimited.

### Abstract

The TFTP option negotiation mechanism, proposed in [1], is a backward-compatible extension to the TFTP protocol, defined in [2]. It allows file transfer options to be negotiated prior to the transfer using a mechanism which is consistent with TFTP's Request Packet format. The mechanism is kept simple by enforcing a request-respond-acknowledge sequence, similar to the lock-step approach taken by TFTP itself.

This document was written to allay concerns that the presence of options in a TFTP Request packet might cause pathological behavior on servers which do not support TFTP option negotiation.

### Test Results

A TFTP client, modified to send TFTP options, was tested against five unmodified servers:

|     |                    |             |
|-----|--------------------|-------------|
| DEC | DEC 3000/400 alpha | OSF1 V3.0   |
| SGI | IP17 mips          | IRIX 5.2    |
| SUN | sun4c sparc        | SunOS 5.1   |
| IBM | RS/6000 Model 320  | AIX 3.4     |
| SUN | sun4m              | SunOS 4.1.3 |

In each case, the servers ignored the option information in the Request packet and the transfer proceeded as though no option negotiation had been attempted. In addition, the standard BSD4.3 source for TFTP, the starting point for many implementations, was examined. The code clearly ignores any extraneous information in Request packets.

From these results and examinations, it is clear that the TFTP option

negotiation mechanism is fully backward-compatible with unmodified TFTP servers.

#### Security Considerations

Security issues are not discussed in this memo.

#### References

- [1] Malkin, G., and A. Harkin, "TFTP Option Extension", RFC 1782, Xylogics, Inc., Hewlett Packard Co., March 1995.
- [2] Sollins, K., "The TFTP Protocol (Revision 2)", STD 33, RFC 1350, MIT, July 1992.

#### Related Documents

Malkin, G., and A. Harkin, "TFTP Blocksize Option", RFC 1783, Xylogics, Inc., Hewlett Packard Co., March 1995.

Malkin, G., and A. Harkin, "TFTP Timeout Interval and Transfer Size Options", RFC 1784, Xylogics, Inc., Hewlett Packard Co., March 1995.

#### Authors' Addresses

Gary Scott Malkin  
Xylogics, Inc.  
53 Third Avenue  
Burlington, MA 01803

Phone: (617) 272-8140  
EMail: gmalkin@xylogics.com

Art Harkin  
Internet Services Project  
Information Networks Division  
19420 Homestead Road MS 43LN  
Cupertino, CA 95014

Phone: (408) 447-3755  
EMail: ash@cup.hp.com

