International Journal of
Computational Learning & Intelligence
Vol. 03, Issue 02 (April) 2024

RESEARCH ARTICLE OPEN ACCESS

A Comprehensive Study on Small Office/Home Office (SOHO) Networks

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DOI: **10.5281/zenodo.11065856**
Received: 21 January 2024 / Revised: 18 February 2024 / Accepted: 14 April 2024

Abstract – The rapid integration of technology into our daily lives has catalysed the evolution of Small Office/Home Office (SOHO) networks. This paper presents a comprehensive exploration of SOHO networks, covering architecture, networking devices, security considerations, applications, challenges, and solutions. By conducting a survey of existing literature and analysing related work, we aim to contribute to a nuanced understanding of SOHO networks.

I. INTRODUCTION

Traditional office setups have given way to decentralized work environments facilitated by SOHO networks, empowering individuals and small businesses with advanced networking capabilities. As the global workforce transitions towards remote and flexible work arrangements, the role of SOHO networks becomes increasingly crucial in sustaining productivity and connectivity.

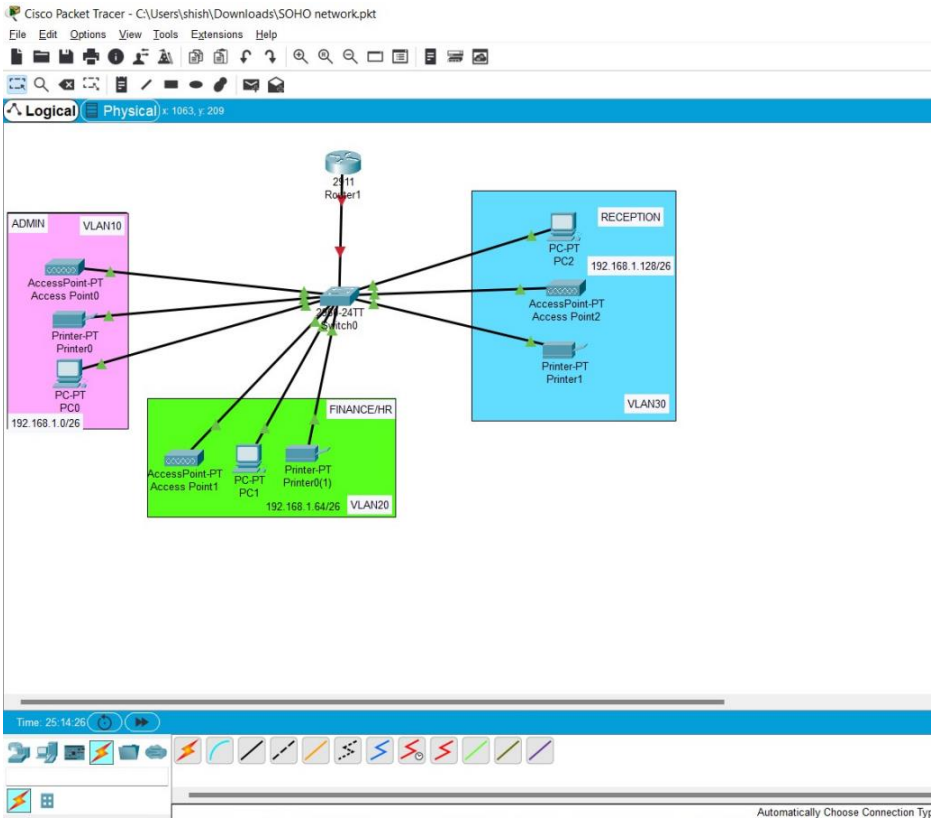
- **HANDS -ON experience of SOHO Networks:** SOHO networks are not merely technological constructs but integral facilitators of entrepreneurship, remote collaboration, and connectivity in the digital age.
- **Scalability**: As the global workforce becomes more decentralized, the significance of SOHO networks extends beyond technological aspects, influencing the socio-economic landscape and redefining the way individuals and small businesses operate in the contemporary digital era.
- **Risk free learning:** - As soho networks provides seamless communication users can safely experiment without disturbing the actual network setups.
- **Performance assessment: -** The users can typically access centralized and shared resources through wired as well as wireless connection

II. PROPOSED WORK

The paper is structured to provide a comprehensive overview of SOHO networks, covering architecture, networking devices, security, applications, challenges, and solutions. Each section contributes to a holistic understanding of SOHO networks, ensuring that readers gain insights into both theoretical concepts and practical considerations.

- **Architecture of SOHO Networks:** This section provides a detailed examination of the architecture of SOHO networks, exploring the fundamental components and their roles in creating a cohesive network infrastructure. The analysis of SOHO NETWORK includes Routers, Switches, wireless access points and other essential components to develop a robust and large network environment for small offices and home-based businesses.
- **Networking Devices in SOHO:** Discussion on the specific networking devices employed in SOHO environments, elucidating the roles and configurations of routers, switches, and wireless access points. This includes an exploration of the technological advancements in these devices and their implications for the overall efficiency and performance of SOHO networks.
- **Network Security in SOHO:** This section addresses the crucial aspect of security in SOHO networks, discussing common threats, vulnerabilities, and proposing robust security measures. Discussion on encryption methods, authentication mechanisms, and firewall implementations to fortify the security posture of SOHO environments. This section provides a detailed exploration of the evolving landscape of cybersecurity in the context of SOHO networks, emphasizing the need for a multi-layered and proactive approach to mitigate emerging threats.
- **Applications of SOHO Networks:** This section explores the diverse applications of SOHO networks, emphasizing their role in communication, collaboration, home-based businesses, cloud services, IoT integration, remote education, and entertainment. Highlighting how SOHO networks facilitate seamless communication and collaboration in an era marked by remote work and virtual teams. This includes an analysis of communication tools, video conferencing platforms, and collaborative applications that leverage the connectivity provided by SOHO networks. Discussing the integration of SOHO networks with cloud services and their role in enabling remote access to applications and data. This section explores the symbiotic relationship between SOHO networks and cloud computing, emphasizing the benefits and challenges associated with cloud integration in small office and home office settings.
- **Internet of Things (IoT) Integration:** Integrating SOHO NETWORKS with IOT devices into home and office environments involves a big role of Soho networks while facilitating seamless communication and control of IOT devices. Highlighting the role of SOHO networks in providing a seamless digital entertainment experience, including streaming services and online gaming. This involves an exploration of the network requirements for high-quality streaming and gaming experiences, emphasizing the impact of SOHO networks on the digital lifestyle of individuals.

III. IMPLEMENTATION



In the simulated environment of Cisco Packet Tracer, the SOHO network is designed with a focus on simplicity, scalability, and security. The network encompasses fundamental components, including routers, switches, wireless access points, and end devices.

Network Topology

The topology follows a basic design with a router connecting to a switch. The switch is further connected to end devices such as desktop computers and laptops. In addition to it wireless access point is connected to provide WIFI to mobile devices.

Device Configuration

Routers are configured to handle inter-network communication and serve as the gateway for internet connectivity.

Switches are configured to manage local area network (LAN) traffic efficiently, utilizing VLANs to segment network segments logically. Quality of Service (QoS) settings are applied to prioritize critical traffic.

IP Addressing and Subnetting

Based on the subnetting, devices in the network are assigned IP addresses to organize and streamline communication.

Subnetting the Base Network (192.168.1.0)

For efficient network management, the base network 192.168.1.0 is submitted into three subnets.

Subnetting Process:

1. Binary Representation: The original Class C subnet mask 255.255.255.0 is represented in binary as 11111111.11111111.11111111.00000000.
2. Borrowing Bits: To create three subnets, two bits are borrowed. The new subnet mask becomes 11111111.11111111.11111111.11000000, which in decimal form is 255.255.255.192.

Subnet Details

1. First Subnet:
   - Network ID: 192.168.1.0
   - Broadcast ID: 192.168.1.63
   - Host Range: 192.168.1.1 - 192.168.1.62

2. Second Subnet:
   - Network ID: 192.168.1.64
   - Broadcast ID: 192.168.1.127
   - Host Range: 192.168.1.65 - 192.168.1.126

3. Third Subnet:
   - Network ID: 192.168.1.128
   - Broadcast ID: 192.168.1.191
   - Host Range: 192.168.1.129 - 192.168.1.190

Compatibility Requirements

When an organization starts to roll out a few small offices and home offices, they tend to configure them exactly the same way. This offers several advantages, such as:

- Easy deployment process (they follow the same procedure)
- Easy maintenance process
- Easy troubleshooting process

These standards refer not only to the device type (vendor) and model but also to the network design and configuration. These standards are usually dictated by the corporate office. SOHO users usually receive pre-configured equipment that just must be plugged in without any other configuration process. Most of the time the network devices' suppliers are big companies that are chosen because they are reliable, and they offer quality support services. When deploying SOHO networks, different compatibility requirements must be taken into consideration for the network to seamlessly integrate with the corporate infrastructure.

Service Classification

Once a router was hardened, and USB storage attached, we performed a TCP and UDP port scan and service identification using Nmap [29] of the devices from the WLAN. Of these nonroutine services, some are arguably required for SOHO routers. As these are consumer devices, and often found in the home or office setting where a domain name server (DNS) does not likely exist, DNS, and HTTPS for an easy-to-use and secure graphical configuration interface are nearly necessities. Still, we found the use of HTTPS to be atypical across the routers we assessed, and instead found that insecure HTTP was the predominant service provided for configuration.

In today's market, it does not seem necessary, and perhaps even inappropriate, to default to router configuration over an insecure channel. 40 percent of the routers we evaluated support the HTTPS protocol, but most router manufactures chose not to enable it in an unorthodox configuration presumably due to the security warning produced by a self-signed HTTPS certificate. During initial router configuration and setup, the SOHO router should generate a HTTPS certificate and instruct the administrator to store the generated certificate in their browser's trusted certificate authority list and also inform them to do the same with any other computer that will be used to manage the router.

IV. RESULTS

Scalability tests were conducted to evaluate the network's capacity to accommodate additional devices and support future expansion. The results of these tests demonstrate the robustness of the SOHO network design in handling increased device loads while maintaining optimal performance.

Key Findings:

- **Seamless Device Integration**:
  The network exhibited seamless integration of new devices without significant disruptions or downtime.
- **Stability under Increased Load:**
  As the number of devices increased, the network-maintained stability, demonstrating its ability to handle heightened traffic and resource demands.
- **Optimal Performance:**
  Throughout the scalability testing, the network sustained optimal performance levels, ensuring a smooth and responsive user experience.

Implications

The positive outcomes of the scalability testing suggest that the SOHO network design is not only accommodating to current needs but also flexible and scalable to meet the evolving requirements of users. This scalability is a crucial aspect, especially in dynamic environments where the number of connected devices may vary over time.

These results affirm the effectiveness of the network design in adapting to the growing demands of a Small Office/Home Office (SOHO) setting, laying the foundation for a resilient and future-proof network infrastructure.

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