

Content Distribution for Mobile Internet: A Cloud-based Approach

Zhenhua Li · Yafei Dai · Guihai Chen
Yunhao Liu

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Zhenhua Li
Tsinghua University
Beijing
China

Guihai Chen
Shanghai Jiao Tong University
Shanghai
China

Yafei Dai
Peking University
Beijing
China

Yunhao Liu
Tsinghua University
Beijing
China

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Preface

Content distribution (also known as *content delivery*) is the most fundamental function of the Internet, i.e., distributing *digital content* from one *node* to another node or multiple nodes. Here digital content includes webpage, image, software, audio, video, and so on; a node can be a large server cluster, a personal computer, a smartphone, a tiny sensor, *etc.* Typical content distribution systems include Akamai, BitTorrent, eMule, Skype, Xunlei, QQXuanfeng, and so forth. Since Amazon's launch of Elastic Compute Cloud (EC2) in 2006 and Apple's release of iPhone in 2007, Internet content distribution has illustrated a strong trend of *polarization*. On one hand, great fortune has been invested in building heavyweight and integrated data centers, in order to achieve the economies of scale and the cost efficiency for content distribution. On the other hand, end user devices have been growing more lightweight, mobile, and heterogeneous, thus posing rigorous requirements on the traffic usage, energy consumption, speed, and latency of content distribution.

Through comprehensive real-world measurements, we observe that existing content distribution techniques often exhibit poor performance under the settings of cloud computing and mobile Internet. To address the issue, this book investigates content distribution for mobile Internet with a cloud-based approach, by designing novel traffic-saving, energy-efficient, high-speed, and delay-tolerant content distribution techniques and frameworks that automatically adapt to mobile scenarios.

The major content of this book is organized in six parts, which are further elaborated into ten chapters. Specifically, we start with the background and overview in Part I. Then, since cellular traffic is the most expensive among all Internet traffic, its cloud-based optimization is first explored in Part II. Next, video content dominates the majority of Internet traffic, whose delivery deserves deep investigation in Part III. Moreover, P2P content distribution incurs little infrastructure cost and can scale well with the user base; however, its working efficacy can be poor and unpredictable without the assistance of cloud platforms, which is carefully addressed in Part IV. In addition, as an advanced paradigm of content distribution, cloud storage services like Dropbox and Google Drive have quickly gained

enormous popularity in recent years, which are widely studied in Part V. At last, we summarize the major research contributions and discuss the future work in Part VI.

To be more specific, we summarize the main body of the book as follows:

Part II *Cloud-based Cellular Traffic Optimization.* As the penetration of 3G/4G/5G data networks, cellular traffic optimization has been a common desire of both cellular users and carriers. Together with the Baidu PhoneGuard team, we design and deploy TrafficGuard, a third-party mobile traffic proxy widely used by over 10 million Android devices (Chap. 2). TrafficGuard effectively reduces cellular traffic using a network-layer virtual private network (VPN) that connects a client-side proxy to a centralized traffic processing cloud. Most importantly, it works transparently across heterogeneous apps, so it is not constrained to any specific app.

Part III *Cloud-based Mobile Video Distribution.* Driven by the special requirements of mobile devices on video content distribution, we measure and analyze the industrial “cloud downloading” (Chap. 3), “cloud transcoding” (Chap. 4), and “offline downloading” (Chap. 5) services based on the Tencent Xuanfeng system and popular smart home routers. In particular, we diagnose their respective performance bottlenecks and propose the corresponding optimization schemes.

Part IV *Cloud-assisted P2P Content Distribution.* Through large-scale measurements and analysis of industrial cloud-assisted peer-to-peer (P2P) systems like QQXuanfeng and Xunlei, we extract the basic model of “cloud tracking” content distribution in Chap. 6. Further, we design the “cloud bandwidth scheduling” algorithm to maximize the cloud bandwidth multiplier effect in Chap. 7.

Part V *Cloud Storage-oriented Content Distribution.* We are the first to discover the “traffic overuse problem” that pervasively exists in today’s cloud storage services. Also, we propose and implement a variety of algorithms to address the problem, such as BDS—batched data sync, IDS—incremental data sync, ASD—adaptive sync defer (Chap. 8), and UDS—update-batched delayed sync (Chap. 9).

In this book, we provide a series of useful takeaways and easy-to-follow experiences to the researchers and developers working on mobile Internet and cloud computing/storage. Additionally, we have built an educational and experimental cloud computing platform (<http://www.thucloud.com>) to benefit the readers. On top of this platform, the readers can monitor (virtual) cloud servers, accelerate web content distribution, explore the potentials of offline downloading, acquire free cloud storage space, and so forth. Should you have any questions or suggestions, please contact the four authors via lizhenhua1983@gmail.com, dyf@pku.edu.cn, gchen@cs.sjtu.edu.cn, and yunhaoliu@gmail.com.

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Zhenhua Li
Yafei Dai
Guihai Chen
Yunhao Liu

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Contents

Part I Get Started

1	Background and Overview	3
1.1	Internet Content Distribution	3
1.2	Cloud Computing and Mobile Internet	6
1.3	Frontier Techniques	7
1.4	Overview of the Book Structure	9
	References	13

Part II Cloud-Based Cellular Traffic Optimization

2	Cross-Application Cellular Traffic Optimization	19
2.1	Introduction	19
2.2	State-of-the-Art Systems	22
2.3	Measuring Cellular Traffic	24
2.3.1	Dataset Collection	24
2.3.2	Content Analysis	25
2.4	System Overview	29
2.5	Mechanisms	31
2.5.1	Image Compression	32
2.5.2	Content Validation	34
2.5.3	Traffic Filtering	34
2.5.4	Value-Based Web Caching (VBWC)	36
2.6	Evaluation	37
2.6.1	Data Collection and Methodology	37
2.6.2	Traffic Reduction	37
2.6.3	System Overhead	40
2.6.4	Latency Penalty	43
2.7	Conclusion	45
	References	46

Part III Cloud-Based Mobile Video Distribution

3	Cloud Downloading for Unpopular Videos	51
3.1	Introduction	51
3.2	Related Work	55
3.3	System Design	56
3.3.1	System Overview	56
3.3.2	Data Transfer Acceleration	58
3.3.3	Download Success Rate Improvement	60
3.3.4	Cache Capacity Planning	62
3.3.5	Cache Replacement Strategy	63
3.4	Performance Evaluation	64
3.4.1	Dataset	64
3.4.2	Metrics	65
3.4.3	Data Transfer Rate	66
3.4.4	View Startup Delay	68
3.4.5	Energy Efficiency	69
3.5	Conclusion and Future Work	71
	References	72
4	Cloud Transcoding for Mobile Devices	75
4.1	Introduction	75
4.2	System Design	79
4.2.1	System Overview	79
4.2.2	Transcoding Prediction	81
4.2.3	Cloud Cache Organization	82
4.2.4	Accelerating the Data Transfer of Transcoded Videos	84
4.3	Performance Evaluation	84
4.4	Future Work	87
	References	88
5	Offline Downloading: A Comparative Study	89
5.1	Introduction	89
5.2	Related Work	93
5.3	System Overview	95
5.3.1	Overview of Xuanfeng	95
5.3.2	Overview of the Smart AP Systems	97
5.4	Workload Characteristics	98
5.5	Performance of the Cloud-Based System	101
5.5.1	Pre-downloading Performance	101
5.5.2	Fetching Performance	103
5.5.3	End-to-End Performance	106
5.6	Performance of the Smart APs	106
5.6.1	Methodology	106
5.6.2	Benchmark Results	108

5.7	The ODR Middleware	111
5.7.1	Design and Implementation	111
5.7.2	Performance Evaluation	114
5.8	Conclusion	115
	References	116

Part IV Cloud-Assisted P2P Content Distribution

6	Cloud Tracking or Open-P2SP.	121
6.1	Introduction	121
6.2	Related Work	125
6.3	QQXuanfeng System Overview	126
6.3.1	System Architecture and Index Structure	126
6.3.2	A Typical User’s Request Processing.	128
6.4	Challenging Problems and Solutions	129
6.4.1	Handling Server and Content Dynamics	129
6.4.2	Limited Utilization of Server Bandwidth	131
6.4.3	Differentiated Acceleration of Peer Swarms	132
6.4.4	Bringing Extra Benefit to Server Providers	134
6.5	Performance Evaluation	135
6.5.1	Acceleration Effect on Peer Swarms.	135
6.5.2	Bandwidth Contribution of Servers	137
6.5.3	Extra Bandwidth Utilization of Servers	139
6.6	Conclusion and Future Work.	140
	References	141
7	Cloud Bandwidth Scheduling	143
7.1	Introduction	143
7.2	Related Work	146
7.3	Fine-Grained Performance Model.	148
7.3.1	Key Impact Factors	148
7.3.2	OBAP and Its Optimal Solution	151
7.4	Fast-Convergent Iterative Algorithm.	153
7.5	Trace-Driven Simulations	157
7.5.1	Trace Dataset	157
7.5.2	Metrics	159
7.5.3	Simulation Results.	159
7.6	Prototype Implementation	162
7.7	Conclusion and Future Work.	163
	References	164

Part V Cloud Storage-Oriented Content Distribution

8	Toward Network-Level Efficiency for Cloud Storage Services	167
8.1	Introduction	167
8.2	Related Work	171

8.3	Common Design Framework.	172
8.4	Methodology.	174
8.4.1	Real-World Cloud Storage Trace.	174
8.4.2	Benchmark Experiments.	175
8.5	Simple File Operations.	176
8.5.1	File Creation.	178
8.5.2	File Deletion.	180
8.5.3	File Modification and Sync Granularity	181
8.6	Compression and Deduplication.	183
8.6.1	Data Compression Level	183
8.6.2	Data Deduplication Granularity	185
8.7	Frequent File Modifications.	188
8.7.1	Sync Deferment	188
8.7.2	Impact of Network and Hardware	191
8.8	Conclusion	194
	References	194
9	Efficient Batched Synchronization for Cloud Storage Services	197
9.1	Introduction	197
9.2	Related Work	200
9.3	Understanding Cloud Storage Services	201
9.3.1	Data Synchronization Mechanism	201
9.3.2	Controlled Measurements	203
9.3.3	Other Cloud Storage Services and Operating Systems	208
9.4	The Traffic Overuse Problem in Practice.	210
9.4.1	Analysis of Real-World Dropbox Network Traces	210
9.4.2	Examining Practical Dropbox Usage Scenarios	212
9.5	The UDS Middleware	214
9.5.1	UDS Implementation	214
9.5.2	Configuring and Benchmarking UDS.	216
9.6	UDS+: Reducing CPU Utilization	218
9.6.1	CPU Usage of Dropbox and UDS	219
9.6.2	Reducing the CPU Utilization of UDS	220
9.7	Conclusion	221
	References	222
 Part VI Last Thoughts		
10	Research Summary and Future Work	227
10.1	Research Summary	227
10.2	Future Work	229
	References	230

Acronyms

AP	Access point, or WiFi home router
ASD	Adaptive synchronization defer
BDS	Batched data synchronization
BT	BitTorrent
C/S	Client/Server content distribution
CCN	Content centric networking
CDN	Content distribution (delivery) network
CloudP2P	Hybrid cloud and P2P content distribution
DASH	Dynamic adaptive streaming over HTTP
EC2	Elastic compute cloud
HLS	HTTP live streaming
IDS	Incremental data synchronization
NDN	Named data networking
P2P	Peer-to-Peer content distribution
P2SP	Peer-to-Server&Peer content distribution
PUE	Power usage effectiveness
QoS	Quality of service
RFID	Radio frequency identification device
S3	Simple storage service
SDN	Software-defined networking
TUE	Traffic usage efficiency
UDS	Update-batched delayed synchronization
VBWC	Value-based web cache
VoD	Video on demand
VPN	Virtual private network
WWW	World Wide Web, or “World Wide Wait”