



Embedded Packet Capture

First Published: July 11, 2008

Last Updated: November 20, 2009

Cisco IOS Embedded Packet Capture (EPC) is an onboard packet capture facility that allows network administrators to capture packets flowing to, through or from the device and to analyze them locally or save and export them for offline analysis using a tool like Wireshark. This feature simplifies operations by allowing the devices to become active participants in the management and operation of the network. This feature facilitates better troubleshooting by gathering information on packet format. It also facilitates application analysis and security.

Finding Feature Information

Your software release may not support all the features documented in this module. For the latest feature information and caveats, see the release notes for your platform and software release. To find information about the features documented in this module, and to see a list of the releases in which each feature is supported, see the [“Feature Information for Embedded Packet Capture”](#) section on page 12.

Use Cisco Feature Navigator to find information about platform support and Cisco IOS and Catalyst OS software image support. To access Cisco Feature Navigator, go to <http://www.cisco.com/go/cfn>. An account on Cisco.com is not required.

Contents

- [Prerequisites for Embedded Packet Capture, page 2](#)
- [Restrictions for Embedded Packet Capture, page 2](#)
- [Information About Embedded Packet Capture, page 2](#)
- [How to Implement Embedded Packet Capture, page 4](#)
- [Additional References, page 10](#)
- [Feature Information for Embedded Packet Capture, page 12](#)



Americas Headquarters:

Cisco Systems, Inc., 170 West Tasman Drive, San Jose, CA 95134-1706 USA

Prerequisites for Embedded Packet Capture

The EPC software subsystem consumes CPU and memory resources in its operation. You must have adequate system resources for different types of operations. Some guidelines for arranging the system resources are provided in [Table 1](#).

Table 1 *System Requirements for EPC subsystem*

Hardware	CPU utilization requirements are platform dependent.
Memory	The packet buffer is stored in DRAM. The size of the packet buffer is user specified.
Diskspace	Packets can be exported to external systems. No intermediate storage on flash disk is required.

Restrictions for Embedded Packet Capture

- EPC only captures multicast packets on ingress and does not capture the replicated packets on egress.
- Currently, the capture file can only be exported off the device; for example, TFTP or FTP servers and local disk.

Information About Embedded Packet Capture

To configure the EPC feature, you must understand the following concepts:

- [EPC Overview, page 2](#)
- [Benefits of EPC, page 2](#)
- [Capture Buffer, page 3](#)
- [Capture Point, page 3](#)

EPC Overview

EPC provides a better level of embedded systems management that helps in tracing and troubleshooting packets. This feature allows network administrators to capture data packets flowing through, to, and from a Cisco router.

Benefits of EPC

Some of the benefits of this feature include:

- Ability to capture IPv4 and IPv6 packets in the Cisco Express Forwarding (CEF) path.
- A flexible method for specifying the capture buffer parameters.
- Filter captured packets.
- Methods to decode data packets captured with varying degree of detail.

- Facility to export the packet capture in PCAP format suitable for analysis using an external tool.
- Extensible infrastructure for enabling packet capture points.

Capture Buffer

The capture buffer is an area in memory for holding the packet data. You can specify unique names, size and type of the buffer, and configure the buffer to handle incoming data as required.

The following types of data are stored in a capture buffer:

- Packet data
- Metadata

The packet data starts from `datagramstart` and copies a minimum of the per-packet-capture size or `datagramsize` to the capture buffer.

The metadata contains descriptive information about a set of packet data. It contains:

- A timestamp of when it is added to a buffer.
- The direction in which the packet data is transmitted—egress or ingress.
- The switch path captured.
- Encapsulation type corresponding to input or output interface to allow the decoding of L2 decoders.

The following actions can be performed on capture buffers:

- Define a capture buffer and associate it with a capture point.
- Clear capture buffers.
- Export capture buffers for offline analysis. Export writes off the file using one of the supported file transfer options: FTP, HTTP, HTTPS, PRAM, RCP, SCP, and TFTP.
- Display content of the capture buffers.

Capture Point

The capture point is a traffic transit point where a packet is captured and associated with a buffer. You can define capture points by providing unique names and different parameters.

The following capture points are available:

- IPv4 CEF/interrupt switching path with interface input and output
- IPv6 CEF/interrupt switching path with interface input and output

You can perform the following actions on the capture point:

- Associate or disassociate capture points with capture buffers. Each capture point can be associated with only one capture buffer.
- Destroy capture points.
- Activate packet capture points on a given interface. Multiple packet capture points can be made active on a given interface. For example, Border Gateway Protocol (BGP) packets can be captured into one capture buffer and Open Shortest Path First (OSPF) packets can be captured into another capture buffer.
- Access Control Lists (ACLs) can be applied to capture points.

How to Implement Embedded Packet Capture

This section contains the following tasks:

- [Starting Packet Data Capture, page 4](#) (required)
- [Stopping Packet Data Capture, page 5](#) (required)
- [Exporting Packet Data for Analysis, page 6](#) (optional)
- [Monitoring and Maintaining Captured Data, page 6](#) (optional)

Starting Packet Data Capture

Perform this task to start capturing packet data for analysis and troubleshooting. To capture packet data, a capture buffer and a capture point need to be defined. The capture point should then be associated with the capture buffer. Enabling the capture point will start the process of capturing packet data.

SUMMARY STEPS

1. **enable**
2. **monitor capture buffer** *buffer-name* [**circular** | **clear** | **export** *export-location* | **filter** *access-list* {*ip-access-list* | *ip-expanded-list* | *access-list-name*} | **limit** {**allow-nth-pak** *nth-packet* | **duration** *seconds* | **packet-count** *total-packets* | **packets-per-sec** *packets*} | **linear** | **max-size** *element-size* | **size** *buffer-size* [**max-size** *element-size*]]
3. **monitor capture point** {**ip** | **ipv6**} {**cef** *capture-point-name interface-name interface-type* {**both** | **in** | **out**} | **process-switched** *capture-point-name* {**both** | **from-us** | **in** | **out**}}
4. **monitor capture point associate** *capture-point-name capture-buffer-name*
5. **monitor capture point start** {*capture-point-name* | **all**}

DETAILED STEPS

	Command or Action	Purpose
Step 1	enable Example: Router> enable	Enables privileged EXEC mode. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enter your password if prompted.
Step 2	monitor capture buffer <i>buffer-name</i> [circular clear export <i>export-location</i> filter <i>access-list</i> { <i>ip-access-list</i> <i>ip-expanded-list</i> <i>access-list-name</i> } limit { allow-nth-pak <i>nth-packet</i> duration <i>seconds</i> packet-count <i>total-packets</i> packets-per-sec <i>packets</i> } linear max-size <i>element-size</i> size <i>buffer-size</i> [max-size <i>element-size</i>]] Example: Router# monitor capture buffer pktracel size 58 max-size 256 circular	Defines a capture buffer with the specified name and parameters. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In this example, a circular capture buffer by name pktracel with size 58 bytes and maximum size 256 bytes is defined.

	Command or Action	Purpose
Step 3	<pre>monitor capture point {ip ipv6}{cef capture-point-name interface-name interface-type {both in out} process-switched capture-point-name {both from-us in out}}</pre> <p>Example: Router# monitor capture point ip cef ipceffa0/1 fastEthernet 0/1 both</p>	<p>Defines a capture point with the specified parameters.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In this example, a capture point by name ipceffa0/1 with the Fast Ethernet 0/1 interface in both directions is defined.
Step 4	<pre>monitor capture point associate capture-point-name capture-buffer-name</pre> <p>Example: Router# monitor capture point associate ipceffa0/1 pktrace1</p>	<p>Associates the capture point with the capture buffer specified.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Associating a capture point with a capture buffer results in all packets captured from the specified capture point to be dumped to the associated capture buffer. In this example, the capture point ipceffa0/1 is associated with the capture buffer pktrace1.
Step 5	<pre>monitor capture point start {capture-point-name all}</pre> <p>Example: Router# monitor capture point start ipceffa0/1</p>	<p>Enables the capture point to start capturing packet data.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In this example, the capture point ipceffa0/1 is enabled.

Stopping Packet Data Capture

Perform this task to stop capturing packet data.

SUMMARY STEPS

- enable
- monitor capture point stop {capture-point-name | all}

DETAILED STEPS

	Command or Action	Purpose
Step 1	<pre>enable</pre> <p>Example: Router> enable</p>	<p>Enables privileged EXEC mode.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enter your password if prompted.
Step 2	<pre>monitor capture point stop {capture-point-name all}</pre> <p>Example: Router# monitor capture point stop ipceffa0/1</p>	<p>Disables the capture point and stops the packet data capture process.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In this example, the capture point ipceffa0/1 is disabled.

Exporting Packet Data for Analysis

Perform this task to export the packet data for analysis using an external tool.

SUMMARY STEPS

1. **enable**
2. **monitor capture buffer** *buffer-name* **export** *export-location*

DETAILED STEPS

	Command or Action	Purpose
Step 1	enable Example: Router> enable	Enables privileged EXEC mode. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enter your password if prompted.
Step 2	monitor capture buffer <i>buffer-name</i> export <i>export-location</i> Router# monitor capture buffer pktracel export tftp://88.1.88.9/pktracel	Exports the data for analysis. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In this example, data from the capture buffer pktracel is exported using the TFTP protocol.

Monitoring and Maintaining Captured Data

Perform this task to monitor and maintain the packet data captured. Capture buffer details and capture point details can be displayed.

SUMMARY STEPS

1. **enable**
2. **show monitor capture** {**buffer** {*capture-buffer-name* [**parameters**] | **all parameters** | **merged** *capture-buffer-name1* *capture-buffer-name2*}[**dump**] [**filter** *filter-parameters*]} | **point** {**all** | *capture-point-name*}}
3. **debug packet-capture**

DETAILED STEPS

	Command or Action	Purpose
Step 1	enable Example: Router> enable	Enables privileged EXEC mode. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enter your password if prompted.
Step 2	show monitor capture {buffer {capture-buffer-name [parameters] all parameters merged capture-buffer-name1 capture-buffer-name2} [dump] [filter filter-parameters]} point {all capture-point-name}	Displays the data captured. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In this example, data from the capture buffer pktrace1 is displayed.
Step 3	debug packet-capture Example: Router# debug packet-capture	Enables packet capture infra debugs.

Configuration Examples for Embedded Packet Capture

This section contains the following configuration examples.

- [Starting Packet Data Capture: Example, page 7](#)
- [Stopping Packet Data Capture: Example, page 8](#)
- [Exporting Packet Data: Example, page 8](#)
- [Monitoring and Maintaining Captured Data: Example, page 8](#)

Starting Packet Data Capture: Example

The following example shows how to capture packets to and from Fast Ethernet 0/1 interface:

```
Router> enable
Router# monitor capture buffer pktrace1 ip cef ipceffa0/1 fastEthernet 0/1 both
Router# monitor capture point associate ipceffa0/1 pktrace1
Router# monitor capture point start ipceffa0/1
```

```
Mar 21 11:13:34.023: %BUFCAP-6-ENABLE: Capture Point ipceffa0/1 enabled.
```

```
Router# show monitor capture point all
```

```
Status Information for Capture Point ipceffa0/1
IPv4 CEF
Switch Path: IPv4 CEF          , Capture Buffer: pktrace1
Status : Inactive
```

```
Configuration:
monitor capture point ip cef ipceffa0/1 FastEthernet0/1 both
```

```

Router# show monitor capture buffer all

Capture buffer pktracel (circular buffer)
Buffer Size : 262144 bytes, Max Element Size : 256 bytes, Packets : 31
Allow-nth-pak : 0, Duration : 0 (seconds), Max packets : 0, pps : 0
Associated Capture Points:
Name : ipceffa0/1, Status : Active
Configuration:
monitor capture buffer pktracel size 256 max-size 256 circular
monitor capture point associate ipceffa0/1 pktracel

```

Stopping Packet Data Capture: Example

The following example shows how to stop capturing packet data:

```

Router> enable
Router# monitor capture point stop ipceffa0/1

Mar 21 11:14:20.152: %BUFCAP-6-DISABLE: Capture Point ipceffa0/1 disabled.

```

Exporting Packet Data: Example

The following example shows how to export data for analysis through an external tool:

```

Router> enable
Router# monitor capture buffer pktracel export tftp://88.1.88.9/pktracel

```

Monitoring and Maintaining Captured Data: Example

The EPC feature provides the ability to dump packets in ASCII. The following example shows an IPv4 ICMP echo reply packet from one host to another:

```

<timestamp>: IPv4 packet received on Ethernet0/0 in the IPv4 CEF LES switch path
029E28E0: AABBC01 2D00AABB CC013000 08004500  *;L.-.*;L.0...E.
029E28F0: 00640001 0000FE01 A8950A00 00020A00  .d....~.(.....
029E2900: 00010000 D5C80001 00000000 00000000  ...UH.....
029E2910: B080ABCD ABCDABCD ABCDABCD ABCDABCD  0.+M+M+M+M+M+M+M
029E2920: ABCDABCD ABCDABCD ABCDABCD ABCDABCD  +M+M+M+M+M+M+M
029E2930: ABCDABCD ABCDABCD ABCDABCD ABCDABCD  +M+M+M+M+M+M+M
029E2940: ABCDABCD ABCDABCD ABCDABCD ABCDABCD  +M+M+M+M+M+M+M
029E2950: ABCD

```

The following example shows how to view the contents of the capture buffer pktracel. This output is displayed using the **show monitor capture buffer capture-buffer-name dump** command. This command supports two modes: the default mode and the dump mode. In the dump mode, the hexadecimal dump of the captured packet is also shown.

```

Router> enable
Router# show monitor capture buffer pktracel dump

11:13:00.593 EDT Mar 21 2007 : IPv4 Turbo      : Fa2/1 Fa0/1

65B6F500: 080020A2 44D90009 E94F8406 08004500  .. "DY..iO...E.
65B6F510: 00400F00 0000FE01 92AF5801 13025801  .@....~/X...X.
65B6F520: 58090800 4D1A1169 00000000 0005326C  X...M..i.....21
65B6F530: 01CCABCD ABCDABCD ABCDABCD ABCDABCD  .L+M+M+M+M+M+M+M
65B6F540: ABCDABCD ABCDABCD ABCDABCD ABCD00    +M+M+M+M+M+M+M.

```

```
11:13:20.593 EDT Mar 21 2007 : IPv4 Turbo      : Fa2/1 Fa0/1

65B6F500: 080020A2 44D90009 E94F8406 08004500  .. "DY..iO....E.
65B6F510: 00400F02 0000FE01 92AD5801 13025801  .@....~..-X...X.
65B6F520: 58090800 FEF91169 00000000 0005326C  X...~y.i.....2l
65B6F530: 4FECABCD ABCDABCD ABCDABCD ABCDABCD  O1+M+M+M+M+M+M+M
65B6F540: ABCDABCD ABCDABCD ABCDABCD ABCDFF   +M+M+M+M+M+M+M
```

The following example shows how to enable the packet capture infra debugs:

```
Router> enable
Router# debug packet-capture

Buffer Capture Infrastructure debugging is on
```

Additional References

The following sections provide references related to the EPC feature.

Related Documents

Related Topic	Document Title
Cisco IOS commands	Cisco IOS Master Commands List, All Releases
Network Management commands (including EEM commands): complete command syntax, defaults, command mode, command history, usage guidelines, and examples.	Cisco IOS Network Management Command Reference

Standards

Standard	Title
No new or modified standards are supported, and support for existing standards has not been modified.	—

MIBs

MIB	MIBs Link
No new or modified MIBs are supported by this feature, and support for existing MIBs has not been modified by this feature.	To locate and download MIBs for selected platforms, Cisco IOS releases, and feature sets, use Cisco MIB Locator found at the following URL: http://www.cisco.com/go/mibs

RFCs

RFC	Title
No new or modified RFCs are supported, and support for existing RFCs has not been modified.	—

Technical Assistance

Description	Link
<p>The Cisco Support website provides extensive online resources, including documentation and tools for troubleshooting and resolving technical issues with Cisco products and technologies.</p> <p>To receive security and technical information about your products, you can subscribe to various services, such as the Product Alert Tool (accessed from Field Notices), the Cisco Technical Services Newsletter, and Really Simple Syndication (RSS) Feeds.</p> <p>Access to most tools on the Cisco Support website requires a Cisco.com user ID and password.</p>	<p>http://www.cisco.com/cisco/web/support/index.html</p>

Feature Information for Embedded Packet Capture

Table 2 lists the release history for this feature.

Not all commands may be available in your Cisco IOS software release. For release information about a specific command, see the command reference documentation.

Use Cisco Feature Navigator to find information about platform support and software image support. Cisco Feature Navigator enables you to determine which Cisco IOS and Catalyst OS software images support a specific software release, feature set, or platform. To access Cisco Feature Navigator, go to <http://www.cisco.com/go/cfn>. An account on Cisco.com is not required.



Note

Table 2 lists only the Cisco IOS software release that introduced support for a given feature in a given Cisco IOS software release train. Unless noted otherwise, subsequent releases of that Cisco IOS software release train also support that feature.

Table 2 Feature Information for Embedded Packet Capture

Feature Name	Releases	Feature Information
Embedded Packet Capture	12.4(20)T 12.2(33)SRE	<p>Cisco IOS Embedded Packet Capture (EPC) is an onboard packet capture facility that allows network administrators to capture packets flowing to, through or from the device and to analyze them locally or save and export them for offline analysis using a tool like Wireshark. This feature simplifies operations by allowing the devices to become active participants in the management and operation of the network. This feature facilitates better troubleshooting by gathering information on packet format. It also facilitates application analysis and security.</p> <p>This feature was introduced in Cisco IOS Release 12.4(20)T and integrated into Cisco IOS Release 12.2(33)SRE.</p> <p>The following sections provide information about this feature:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information About Embedded Packet Capture, page 2 <p>The following commands were introduced or modified:</p> <p>debug packet-capture, monitor capture buffer, monitor capture point, monitor capture point associate, monitor capture point disassociate, monitor capture point start, monitor capture point stop, show monitor capture.</p>

CCDE, CCENT, CCSI, Cisco Eos, Cisco HealthPresence, Cisco IronPort, the Cisco logo, Cisco Nurse Connect, Cisco Pulse, Cisco SensorBase, Cisco StackPower, Cisco StadiumVision, Cisco TelePresence, Cisco Unified Computing System, Cisco WebEx, DCE, Flip Channels, Flip for Good, Flip Mino, Flipshare (Design), Flip Ultra, Flip Video, Flip Video (Design), Instant Broadband, and Welcome to the Human Network are trademarks; Changing the Way We Work, Live, Play, and Learn, Cisco Capital, Cisco Capital (Design), Cisco:Financed (Stylized), Cisco Store, Flip Gift Card, and One Million Acts of Green are service marks; and Access Registrar, Aironet, AllTouch, AsyncOS, Bringing the Meeting To You, Catalyst, CCDA, CCDP, CCIE, CCIP, CCNA, CCNP, CCSP, CCVP, Cisco, the Cisco Certified Internetwork Expert logo, Cisco IOS, Cisco Lumin, Cisco Nexus, Cisco Press, Cisco Systems, Cisco Systems Capital, the Cisco Systems logo, Cisco Unity, Collaboration Without Limitation, Continuum, EtherFast, EtherSwitch, Event Center, Explorer, Follow Me Browsing, GainMaker, iLYNX, IOS, iPhone, IronPort, the IronPort logo, Laser Link, LightStream, Linksys, MeetingPlace, MeetingPlace Chime Sound, MGX, Networkers, Networking Academy, PCNow, PIX, PowerKEY, PowerPanels, PowerTV, PowerTV (Design), PowerVu, Prisma, ProConnect, ROSA, SenderBase, SMARTnet, Spectrum Expert, StackWise, WebEx, and the WebEx logo are registered trademarks of Cisco Systems, Inc. and/or its affiliates in the United States and certain other countries.

All other trademarks mentioned in this document or website are the property of their respective owners. The use of the word partner does not imply a partnership relationship between Cisco and any other company. (0910R)

Any Internet Protocol (IP) addresses and phone numbers used in this document are not intended to be actual addresses and phone numbers. Any examples, command display output, network topology diagrams, and other figures included in the document are shown for illustrative purposes only. Any use of actual IP addresses or phone numbers in illustrative content is unintentional and coincidental.

© 2008-2009 Cisco Systems, Inc. All rights reserved

