

# Multiuser Detection Based MAC Design for Ad Hoc Networks <sup>1</sup>

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## Abstract

In general, the performance and radio resource utilization of Ad Hoc networks are limited by half-duplex operation and possible collisions. In this paper, we propose a novel approach for MAC design that practically eliminates collisions and significantly increases the bandwidth utilization. The key element of this approach is the CDMA multiuser detection technology that allows receiving several signals in parallel without inflicting self-interference. These features give a promise of significant performance improvements. The main goal of this paper is to assess the range of this gain when compared to other existing alternatives. In particular, we compare the performance of the proposed multiuser detection based MAC design with MAC design based on IEEE 802.11 concept and with MAC design based on multi-code CDMA with one signal reception by one user at a time.

**Key words:** CDMA Multiuser detection, MAC design, distributed neighborhood scheduling, code assignment, bandwidth utilization, Ad Hoc networks.

## 1 Introduction

Multi-hop mobile Ad Hoc networks have recently been the subject of extensive research. Nevertheless, the performance and bandwidth utilization of the proposed solutions are significantly inferior

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when compared with the fixed wireless or wired networks. Apart mobility, the main reasons for these limitations are half-duplex operation and possible collisions caused by hidden/exposed terminal problems. While sophisticated adaptive directional antennas give some promise of improvement in the long term, at the moment, this technology seems to be not mature enough to be considered in a difficult Ad Hoc network environment. In this paper, we consider another technology that is more advanced and can significantly improve both the performance and the bandwidth utilization. Namely, recent technological advances allow integration of a CDMA multiuser detection based receiver on one chip and therefore, we consider application of this technology for new MAC design in multi-hop Ad Hoc networks.

There are two main advantages of using multiuser detection in Ad Hoc networks. First, multiple signals from different mobiles can be received at the same time, which practically eliminates the collision problem and can significantly reduce the end-to-end packet transfer delay. Second, the multi-user detection avoids interference between the received signals and this feature can increase the bandwidth utilization by a large factor [1] [2] [3]. Although multiuser detection is known for a long time, most of the studies focus on the physical layer [3]. According to our knowledge, there are no published studies on application of this technology to mobile Ad Hoc networks. In this context, the main goal of this paper is to evaluate potential gain from application of CDMA multiuser detection compared to other solutions proposed for Ad Hoc networks. In particular, we use as references MAC design based on IEEE 802.11 concept and MAC design based on multi-code CDMA, but with one signal reception by one user at a time.

In order to achieve a gain from multiuser detection, a new MAC layer design is required. This design should realize three main functions. First, distributed dynamic code assignment that avoids code collisions is needed. Then, an implementation of distributed scheduling of transmissions and receptions that maximizes throughput within the required fairness criteria is required. Finally, the data transmis-

sion based on multiuser detection has to be organized. Each of these functions constitutes a research topic sufficient for a separate publication of its own. Therefore, in this paper, we give a high level presentation that is focused mainly on a conservative assessment of the potential gain from the application of multiuser detection in Ad Hoc networks. More detailed study of required protocols and algorithms and their optimizations will be given in subsequent publications.

The remainder of the paper is organized as follows. In Section II, we present a framework for the proposed MAC design. It is based on a synchronous time division CDMA (TD-CDMA) structure where each frame is divided into two control slots and a continuous data transmission slot. The control slots are used by a code assignment protocol and a data transmission scheduling protocol. In this section, we also describe the multiuser detection model. Section III describes a distributed scheduling mechanism that provides local fairness and priorities for real time traffic based on time deadlines. In the considered approach, collisions at the receiver can only occur when two signals are using the same code. Therefore, a connectivity update protocol that periodically assigns and reassigns codes is proposed in section IV. The proposed scheme guarantees that there is no code collision in two hops' distance. The numerical results, presented in Section V, indicate that the proposed MAC design increases the throughput by more than an order of magnitude when compared with MAC designs based on IEEE 802.11 concept and by around 100% when compared with MAC designs based on multi-code CDMA. At the same time, the performance characteristics, such as packet delay and loss, are significantly improved. Section VI gives concluding remarks and issues for future work.

## **2 Framework for multiuser detection based MAC protocols**

We assume that each node is equipped with a half-duplex CDMA multiuser detector and that each node is allocated a dedicated code for transmitter-based data transmission. When a node enters into

the system, it is allocated a dedicated code from a set of predefined dedicated code channels that are not used in the node's neighborhood. This allocation can be changed when two nodes with the same code are entering the same neighborhood in order to avoid a code collision.

## 2.1 Radio structure

Due to the nature of multiuser detection, we assume that the transmission times are synchronized at packet level with the help of either in-band signal exchanges or out-of-band solutions, such as GPS. The proposed frame structure of such a synchronous time division CDMA (TD-CDMA) system is illustrated in Fig. 1 where three slots are defined. The first two slots are associated with control

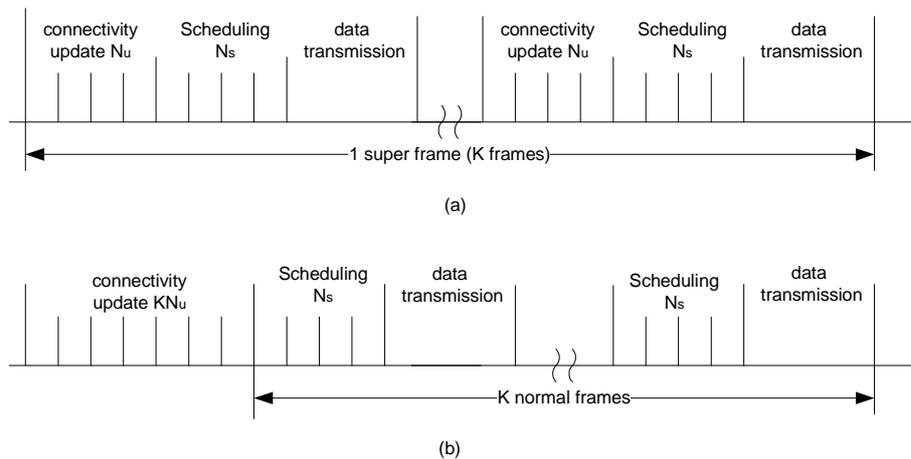


Figure 1: Synchronous transmission

functions and are called connectivity update and scheduling slots, respectively. The third slot serves for a continuous data transmission in the CDMA channels that are selected during the scheduling slot.

The connectivity update slot is used by the connectivity update protocol. In this phase, each node broadcasts its identity information on the common signaling channel so that the neighboring nodes can be detected and code assignment and reassignment can be realized. Since the connectivity update can be executed in a significantly longer time period than the frame cycle, there are two ways to do

connectivity update. One is to distribute connectivity update function into  $K$  frames and each frame contains  $N_u$  minislots for connectivity update that give in total  $KN_u$  minislots as shown in Fig. 1 (a). Alternatively, one can introduce a connectivity update slot with  $KN_u$  minislots for every  $K$  normal frames as illustrated in Fig. 1 (b). In this case, the normal frame only has scheduling and data transmission slots. In Section IV, we describe a connectivity update protocol that guarantees code collision free in two hops' distance.

The scheduling slot is associated with the scheduling protocol and its objective is to select transmissions that can be realized in the subsequent data transmission slot. In this phase, the transmitting and receiving nodes have to be chosen together with the data packets to be transmitted and the channel parameters to be used (like power and transmission rate). The transmission selection should take into account the packet priority, the access fairness and throughput objectives. A simple scheduling mechanism is presented in Section III. Note that the scheduling protocol can use dedicated code channels that are established in the connectivity update phase. In this way, the problem of collisions at receivers which is typical for existing solutions can be effectively eliminated.

As mentioned before, during the data transmission slot, several transmissions are executed in the same neighborhood by taking advantage of CDMA multiuser detection. Here we assume that multicode CDMA is deployed to support variable rate transmission. When a node needs to transmit at  $m$ -rate, it first converts its data stream, serial-to-parallel, into  $m$  basic-rate streams. Each basic-rate stream is spread with a different code generated by the so called "sub-code concatenation" scheme [4] and superimposed before spread spectrum modulation. The sub-code concatenation generated codes are unique to each mobile. In the following subsection, we describe the multiuser detection model that we use for numerical results. This model also gives explanation why the received signals do not inflict normal self-interference and this feature provides significant increase of data transmission throughput.

## 2.2 Linear multiuser detector

Multiuser detection improves the performance of spread-spectrum systems by exploiting the structure of the multi-access interference when demodulating the signal of a user. Fig. 2 demonstrates the throughput improvement multiuser detector over one user detector when two users are transmitting simultaneously. When there is only one communication, the maximum reliable transmission rate is  $R_1$ . But when there are two simultaneous communications, with multiuser detection, the reliable communication is possible at rate pair  $(R_1, R_2)$  which outperforms the one user communication with  $R_1 + R_2 > \max(R_1, R_2)$ .

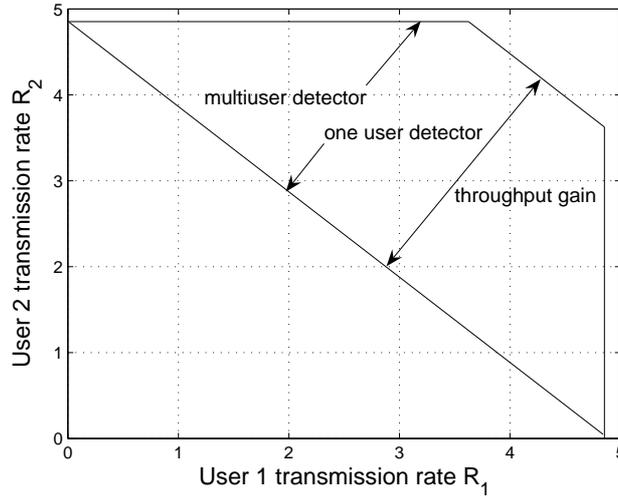


Figure 2: Throughput improvement of multiuser detection

We consider a minimum mean square error (MMSE) detector as it is an optimal linear detector that maximizes the signal-to-interference-plus-noise ratio. Under random spreading sequences, the SINR at node  $k$  from node  $i$  is [1]

$$\gamma(i, k) = \frac{p_i}{\sigma^2 + \frac{1}{L} \sum_{j=1, j \neq i}^M I(p_j, p_i, \gamma(i, k))} \quad (1)$$

where

$$I(p_j, p_i, \gamma(i, k)) = \frac{p_j p_i}{p_i + p_j \gamma(i, k)}$$

is the effective interference from user  $j$ .  $p_i, p_j$  are the received powers from node  $i, j$  at node  $k$ ;  $\sigma^2$  is the noise power at node  $k$ ;  $L$  is the processing gain; and  $M$  is the number of signals being processed by node  $k$ . This equation holds when the number of nodes ( $M$ ) and the processing gain ( $L$ ) both go to infinity, with  $M/L \rightarrow \theta$ , a constant. In a real system, the SINR expression is an approximation to the actual SINR. It is noted that the approximation becomes more accurate as the system scales up.

### 3 Distributed neighborhood scheduling

To facilitate the presentation of the scheduling algorithm, we first review the traffic model considered in this paper. We consider two classes of traffic: realtime voice and non realtime data. Each node requires two buffers for each of its neighboring nodes to accommodate bursty voice and data packets arrivals. Each of the traffic class has different packet generation rate, SINR, packet loss rate (PLR) and delay requirements. The data transmission slot length corresponds to the transmission time of one voice packet with basic transmission rate on a single code channel. We assume that the data packets can be fragmented or assembled to form transmission packets with the same transmission duration as the voice packets. It is also assumed that each arrival packet that enters the scheduling system is allocated a delay bound (time-out) value expressed in number of frames. This value is decreased by one for every frame interval till the packet is scheduled to transmit or till the value is zero. In the latter case, the packet is discarded. The rate at which voice packets are discarded is referred to as the voice packet loss rate. In the following, we refer to the packets with time-out value equal to one as the most urgent packets (MUPs), the packets with time-out value equal to two as the second MUPs, and so on.

We assume that the voice packets have higher priority than data packets and that, among the same

class packets, the smallest time-out value gives precedence for transmission. Based on these rules, each node selects a candidate packet or a set of candidate packets from the same class and destined to one of its neighboring nodes for a possible transmission in the next transmission slot. Then the node priority for transmission contention with other neighboring nodes is determined. Here again, the precedence is given for voice packets. Then, for nodes with candidate voice packets, the precedence is given for nodes with higher overall voice packet loss rate. Analogously, for nodes with candidate data packets, the precedence is given for nodes with higher overall data packet delay.

To resolve the contention for transmission and select the receiving nodes, we apply exchange of RTS/CTS control messages conducted on dedicated code channels. Namely, at the beginning of each scheduling slot, each node, with a set of candidate packets for transmission, sends out an RTS message. A RTS message carries the intended receiver ID, the sender ID, a bunch of subcodes which represent the variable transmission rate, and the node priority which contains two fields. The first field is traffic type, either voice or data; and the second field is the measured packet loss rate for voice traffic and the largest delay for data traffic. The distribution of RTS messages in the neighborhood is not straightforward since the targeted RTS receiver may also have an RTS message to be sent. To solve this problem, we propose a protocol that requires only three minislots. In this approach, the nodes are divided into black and white nodes in such a way that in the neighborhood there are at least one black and one white node. Then, in the first minislot, the white nodes transmit the RTS messages on the dedicated code channels. These messages are received by all black nodes due to multiuser detection. In the second minislot, the black nodes transmit their own RTS messages together with the RTS messages received in the first minislot. Finally in the third minislot, the white nodes transmit the RTS messages received from the black nodes in the second minislot. Due to the space limitation, we will provide full description of this protocol in a forthcoming publication.

After three minislots of RTS exchanges, each node has the transmission status, either transmission or

reception, of its neighboring nodes. A node that receives at least one RTS message determines whether it will receive or transmit in the subsequent transmission slot by comparing its own node priority with the other contending nodes' priorities. In case at least one of the received RTS messages has higher priority, the node becomes a receiver to all contending neighboring nodes; otherwise, it will transmit its own candidate packets. Then, the nodes selected as receivers send out the CTS messages to the senders of received RTS messages in one minislot by means of dedicated code channels.

After the first cycle of RTS/CTS exchange, a second round of RTS/CTS exchange is executed. Since this time the receiving nodes are determined, the exchange can be executed in two minislots. This additional exchange has several goals. The first goal is associated with the fact that in the second round the RTS messages are received directly from its source nodes. It gives the selected receivers possibility to estimate the propagation loss related to each connection. Also, it allows estimating the interference induced by connections destined to other nodes. In this way, local power control can be implemented at a receiver with multiple connections. Let  $M_v$  and  $M_d$  denote the number of neighboring voice and data connections which have the same transmission destination. Define  $\alpha_v = M_v/L$ ,  $\alpha_d = M_d/L$ . Let  $\gamma_v$  and  $\gamma_d$  denote the SINR requirements and  $p_v$  and  $p_d$  denote the minimum required received power to achieve  $\gamma_v$  and  $\gamma_d$ , respectively. If we replace Eq.(1) with these parameters and after some manipulation, the SINR expressions for voice and data traffic can be specified as

$$\begin{cases} \gamma_v = \frac{p_v}{\sigma^2 + (\alpha_v - \frac{1}{L})I(p_v, p_v, \gamma_v) + \alpha_d I(p_d, p_v, \gamma_v) + \frac{1}{L} \sum_i I(p_i, p_v, \gamma_v)} \\ \gamma_d = \frac{p_d}{\sigma^2 + \alpha_v I(p_v, p_d, \gamma_d) + (\alpha_d - \frac{1}{L})I(p_d, p_d, \gamma_d) + \frac{1}{L} \sum_i I(p_i, p_d, \gamma_d)}. \end{cases} \quad (2)$$

The last item in the divisor is the effective interference from neighboring nodes whose destinations are other nodes. For large networks,  $\gamma_v/p_v$  and  $\gamma_d/p_d$  are a constant [1]. Based on Eq. (2), the minimum required received power to achieve  $\gamma_v$  and  $\gamma_d$  for voice and data traffic are estimated at each receiver. With the estimated propagation attenuation, the minimum required transmission power for

each subcode channel is estimated. Under maximum transmission power constraint, the maximum number of packets that can be supported in each connection can also be obtained. The transmission permissions which include the confirmed number of subcodes and the transmission power for each packet transmission are passed via the second CTS message to the senders.

The second goal of the second RTS/CTS round is to allocate a function to the stranded nodes. The stranded nodes are the nodes that do not receive CTS messages addressed to them in the first round since their RTS messages are sent to the nodes that win the contention for transmission. Note that after the first round of RTS/CTS messages, each stranded node knows which function was allocated to each node in the neighborhood (receiver or transmitter or stranded). Based on this information, two options are considered. In the first one, each stranded node selects new candidate packets from the packets destined to one of the receiving nodes. Based on this new selection, the stranded node sends a new RTS message directly to the selected receiving node. In the second option, the stranded nodes organize communication between them. Namely, based on the known neighboring stranded nodes priorities, each node determines whether it becomes a transmitter or a receiver and the transmitters send RTS message directly to the associated receiver.

The scheduling approach proposed in this section is not necessarily optimal but is sufficient for a conservative assessment of the gain from application of the multiuser detection. More sophisticated schemes will be presented in subsequent publications.

## **4 Distributed code assignment**

This section describes an efficient distributed code assignment scheme to facilitate multiuser detection. In a wireless setting, the maximum transmission range is determined by the minimum required received power at a node, which is referred to as neighborhood threshold in this paper. Therefore, a

node A is identified by a node B to be B's neighbor only when A is within the maximum range of B. The objective of code channel assignment is to identify nodes in neighborhood for code division multiple access. To realize code assignment, each node maintains two lists. One is the neighboring node list which includes the neighboring nodes and the code channels being assigned to them. The other contains the available codes that are not being used by any of its neighboring nodes and can be assigned to a newcomer in this node's neighborhood. Let

$$A \equiv \{\text{total code channels available}\},$$

$$B \equiv \{\text{code channels used by neighboring nodes}\},$$

$$C \equiv \{\text{available code channel list}\},$$

$$A = B \cup C.$$

Here, a node is treated to be a neighbor of itself.

In connectivity update subslot, each node broadcasts a NOTICE message on common channel to identify the neighboring nodes and to exchange the available code channel information. The NOTICE message contains the node ID, the preassigned code channel, and the available code channel list which has all the unused channels in this node's neighborhood.

When a new node comes within the transmission range of an existing node, it will follow the listed steps to get admitted:

1. Receive NOTICE messages from neighboring nodes;
2. Based on the neighboring node list and the available code list, select a dedicated code channel, and send out a NOTICE message with the code selection after a random backoff;

Then the neighboring nodes update their neighboring node list and available code channel set based on the received NOTICE message.

It is seen that for a node to be assigned a code channel, knowledge only from its first hop neighboring nodes (in two hops' distance) is required. Assume that around this node, there are  $N$  first hop neighboring nodes with their available code channel set as:

$$C_i = \text{available code channel set of neighboring node } i,$$

$$i = 1, 2, \dots, N$$

A code channel from set  $C_1 \cap \dots \cap C_i \cap \dots \cap C_N$  is selected and assigned. A node fails to get a code channel cannot be identified by its neighboring nodes though it physically exists, which causes node blocking. When no NOTICE message is detected during connectivity update subslot, a node is assumed to move out of the neighborhood, and the code channel will be set available for potential new comers. It is noted that only neighboring nodes in two hops' distance are taken into account in code channel assignment, and the same code channel can be reused outside two hops' distance without affecting each other. Therefore, the total number of code channels needed to identify all the neighboring nodes is irrespective of the network size, but constrained by the number of neighboring nodes, namely, network density.

When a node moves around the network, a NOTICE message is needed to transmit over the common control channel periodically to update a node's connectivity. Because of the totally distributed network structure, code channel assignment collision happens when two or more nodes assigned with the same code move into the neighborhood of each other. Code assignment collision has the risk of transmission collision due to hidden or exposed nodes and should be resolved immediately. Hidden/exposed node problem can be detected in connectivity update process. Hidden nodes are detected when a node finds

that in its neighboring node list, two or more nodes are assigned with the same code channel; while exposed nodes are detected when the node itself is using the same code. The process to reselect a code channel is the same as when a node joins the system for the first time. Node blocking happens when the reselection turns out to be a failure.

## 5 Numerical results

The numerical results are obtained by means of a discrete event simulation that models an Ad Hoc network working at 450MHz frequency band with the following parameters. The spreading gain is set to 512. We focus on a circle simulation area with radius of 350m. A mobility model which mimics human and vehicle movement behavior is applied [5]. The speed limit is 120km/h. To avoid boundary effect, the nodes moving out of the circle will reenter the simulation area again. We assume a reliable wireless communication and a free space propagation mode so that the signal attenuation is caused exclusively by transmission distance. To promptly update its connectivity information for neighborhood identification, we apply the radio structure as shown in Fig.1 (b) for connectivity update with an interval of  $10 \times$  normal frame length. Each node has the maximum transmission power of  $7w$ . The neighborhood threshold is set to  $10^{-6}w$  and the noise power is set to  $10^{-7}w$ . Each node accommodates two types of traffic, voice and data with SINR requirements of 7dB and 10dB, respectively. Both the voice and the data packet flows are simulated by an ON-OFF model. The delay bound for a packet entering a node is set to 2 and 100 frames for voice and data packets, respectively. The number of nodes is set to 100 unless stated otherwise. The simulation runs 10000 frames to obtain the results.

Since the goal of the presented study is to assess the efficiency of the new MAC design, the objective of the applied packet generation model is to achieve large and uniform loading of each node. Therefore, we do not consider the routing algorithm and the packets are generated in each node with indication of

the neighboring node to which they should be sent by the MAC protocols. The ON and OFF durations of packet flows follow an exponential distribution with mean of 1 and 49 frames for voice and 5 and 25 frames for data traffic, respectively. The voice and data packets generation rate at each node is proportional to the number of neighboring nodes and is assumed to be Poisson distributed with mean of 0.1 and 1 times the number of identified neighboring nodes. Every bunch of packets generated in a frame is randomly assigned to a destination chosen from its neighboring node list. As a destination node may move out of the transmission range of a sender, waiting packets with this destination are reassigned to a destination from the updated neighboring node list.

We compare the performance of the proposed MAC design based on multiuser detection with two existing concepts: multiple CDMA connections in the neighborhood [6], and one connection in the neighborhood as in IEEE 802.11. The three communication scenarios are demonstrated in Fig. 3. Note

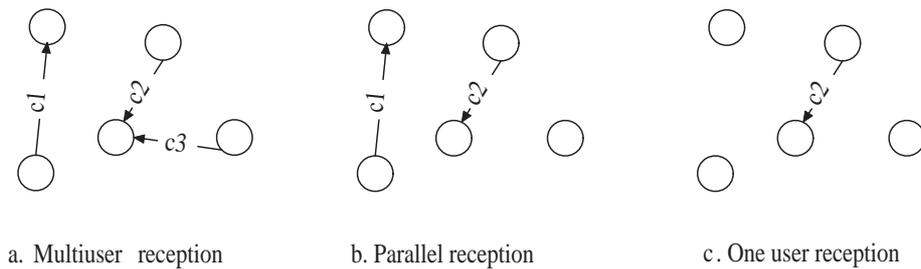


Figure 3: Simulation scenarios

that in the first two scenarios, there are several parallel connections in the neighborhood, but only in the multiuser detection case a node can receive several connections simultaneously. In order to facilitate the comparison, we assume that all three communication scenarios use the same frame structure as proposed in section II. This corresponds to an assumption that on average, the ratio between the data communication time and the time associated with exchange of control packets is the same in all scenarios.

Figs. 4 and 5 show the voice and data packet throughput as a function of the total number of CDMA

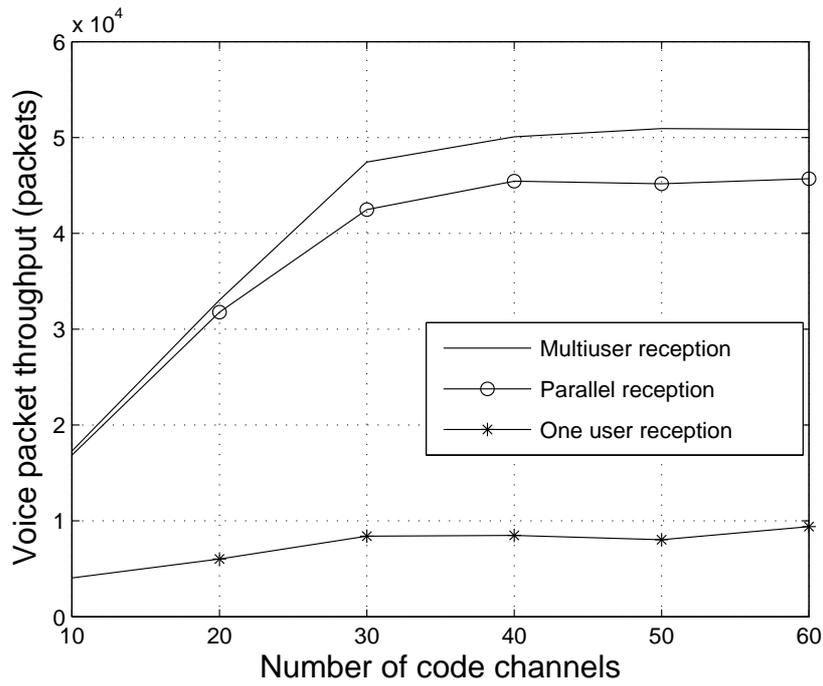


Figure 4: Voice packet throughput

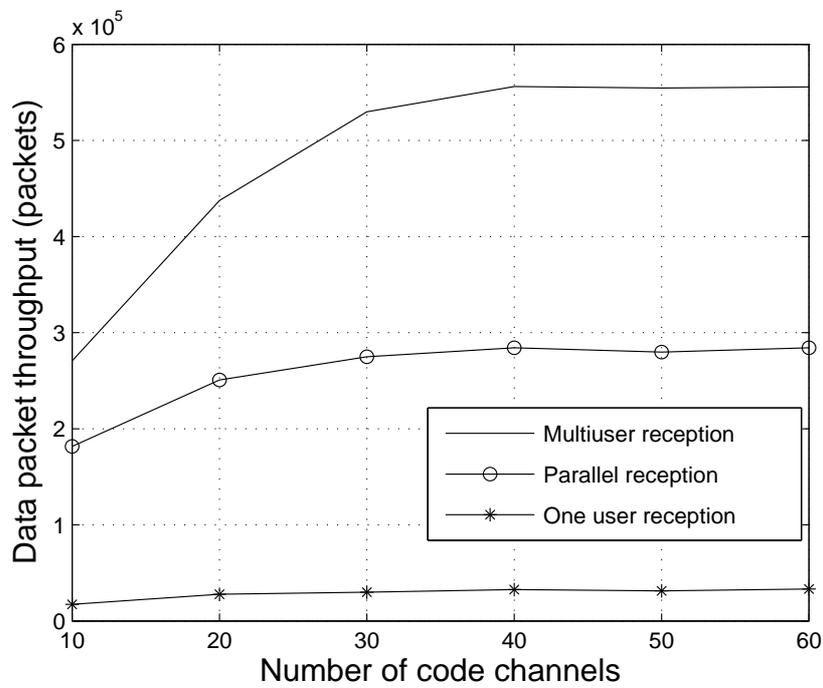


Figure 5: Data packet throughput

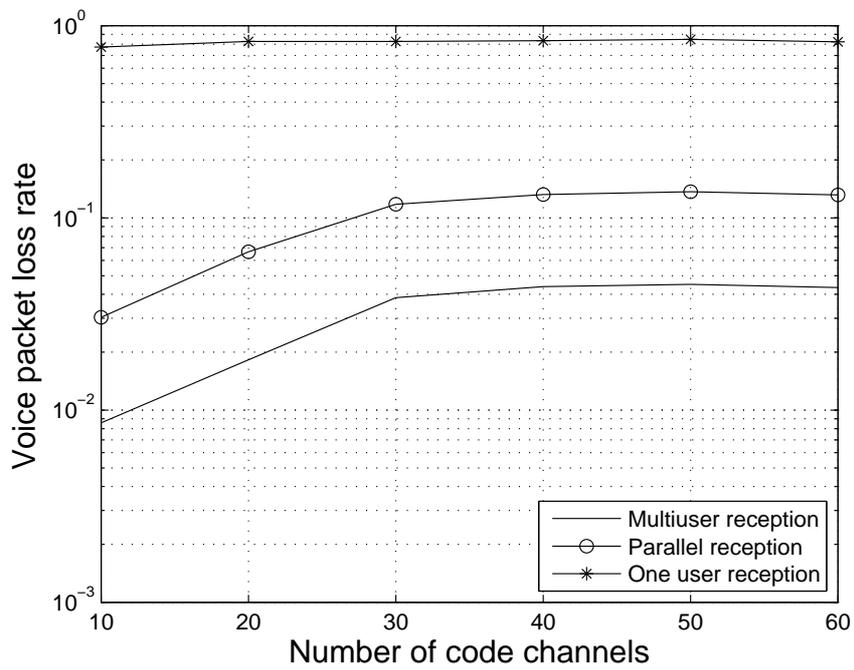


Figure 6: Voice packet loss rate

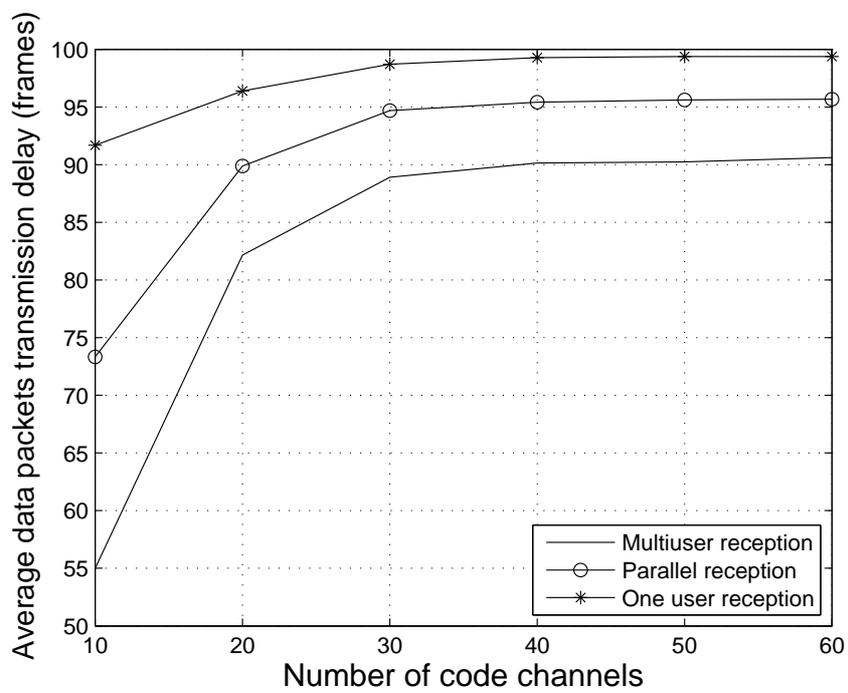


Figure 7: Average data packets transmission delay

codes. With sufficient number of codes, 60 as shown later, the proposed MAC design with multiuser detection can provide a total throughput that greatly outperforms the other two solutions. In particular, this gain is in the range of 100% when compared to multiple CDMA channels case and around 15 times when compared to one channel case. Obviously, this gain is realized largely by the data traffic since the voice traffic constitutes only around 9% of the total traffic. It is also seen that the packet throughput increases with the number of code channels in all three communication scenarios. This is because as the number of code channels increase, the number of identified nodes increases and more nodes are transmitting simultaneously. It is important to underline that at the same time, the multiuser detection scheme provides a lower voice packet loss rate and a smaller data packets transmission delay as illustrated in Figs. 6 and 7. Another observation of Figs. 6 and 7 is that as the number of code channels increase, the voice packet loss rate and the average data packet transmission delay increase as well because the increase of network density results in more contentions among neighboring nodes.

To illustrate the efficiency of the proposed code assignment scheme, Figs. 8 and 9 show the average number of identified neighboring nodes and the node blocking probability when there are 80, 100 and 120 nodes in the simulation area. Node blocking happens when nodes do not have a code assignment and are temporary disconnected from the system. From Figs. 8 and 9, it is seen that as the number of available codes increases, the node blocking probability decreases and the number of identified neighboring nodes increases. A dense network with 120 nodes requires more than 60 code channels to achieve zero node blocking probability, while a network with 80 nodes only requires around 40 code channels. This verifies that the proposed code assignment scheme is only affected by the density of a network, which implies that it can support large scale networks.

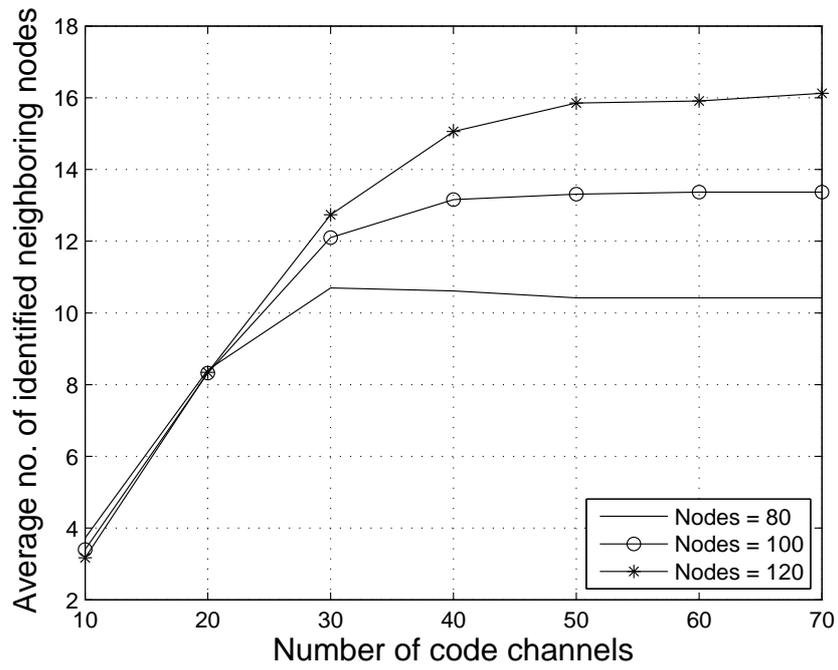


Figure 8: Average number of identified neighboring nodes

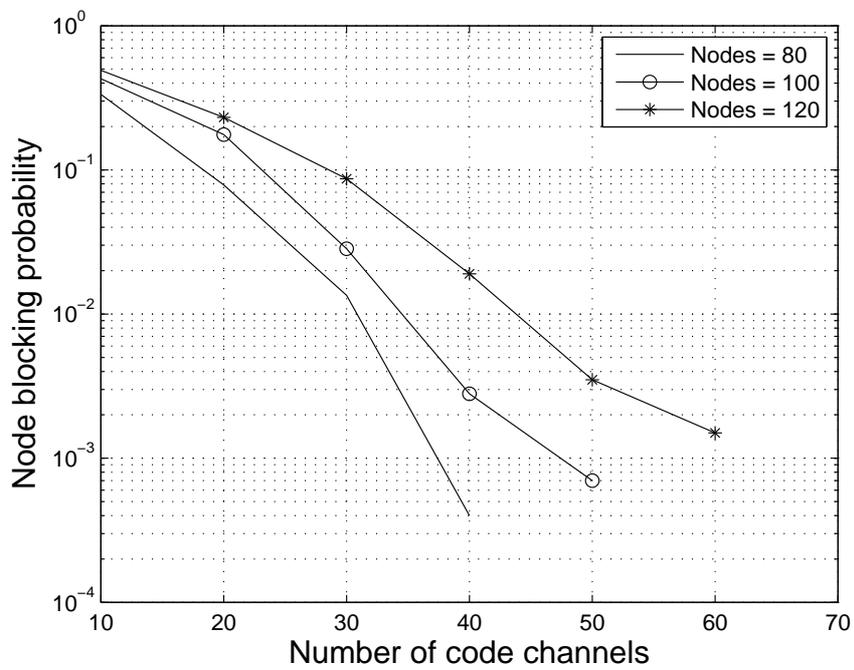


Figure 9: Node blocking probability

## 6 Conclusions

A new MAC design based on multiuser detection is presented in this paper. By using a linear MMSE multiuser detector at each node, the proposed solution can significantly outperform the solutions based on multiple CDMA channels and IEEE 802.11 concepts. In particular, the total throughput can be increased by a factor of 100% and 1500%, respectively, with concurrent improvement in QoS characteristics. Moreover, with described receiver-based power control, each node can save power consumption and reduce the interference induced in other nodes, which can accordingly allow greater spatial reuse. To facilitate multiuser detection, a code assignment scheme which can avoid potential code collision is also proposed.

The presented work is part of a larger project that is supported by both the government and a private company funds and the work is being continued in several directions in both physical and networking layers. Concerning work related to multiuser detection, currently we are working on application of distributed fair queuing algorithm for combined fairness and throughput optimization. Also, a more sophisticated propagation model with consideration of shadowing and fading will be taken into account in opportunistic scheduling for better radio resource utilization.

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