XEP-0390: Entity Capabilities 2.0

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This document overhauls the XMPP protocol extension Entity Capabilities (XEP-0115). It defines an XMPP protocol extension for broadcasting and dynamically discovering client, device, or generic entity capabilities. In order to minimize network impact, the transport mechanism is standard XMPP presence broadcast (thus forestalling the need for polling related to service discovery data), the capabilities information can be cached either within a session or across sessions, and the format has been kept as small as possible.
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1 Introduction

XMPP applications often face choices based on the disco#info (see Service Discovery (XEP-0030) \(^1\)) exposed by other entities. For example, for a client, knowledge about whether a roster entry is a Mediated Information eXchange (MIX) (XEP-0369) \(^2\) entity or a normal client is important for user experience. It may also be desirable to provide indicators on the type of client a contact is using (mobile or not).

The canonical way to do so has been issuing XEP-0030 requests to the entities emitting presence. This, with the ever-growing featureset of XMPP, induces a lot of traffic for all involved parties, especially during startup. This is a waste of resources, as XEP-0030 information rarely changes and even more, common client configurations and versions share exactly the same information.

Entity Capabilities (XEP-0115) \(^3\) has provided the XMPP ecosystem with a way to share this information with less bandwidth. Entities using that protocol send a hash of their disco#info result along with presence or stream features. As those hashes can be cached, entities receiving these hashes only need to query the information for each hash once, greatly reducing the Service Discovery traffic.

However, XEP-0115 has two main flaws:

- The hash agility mechanism is underspecified. While it is possible to change the hash function, there is no clearly defined way to send multiple hashes at once to allow for a transition period. Even though it is technically not forbidden to send multiple XEP-0115 <c/> elements with different hashes at once, it is unclear how implementations behave when this happens. Possible issues lie in the use of caps optimization, as well as clients expecting only one <c/> element.

- The algorithm to generate the input for the hash function has flaws as pointed out by Waqas Hussain \(^4\). Even though these flaws have partially been fixed and worked around, the fundamental problem that the structural information of the individual strings from the disco response is lost persists.

2 Requirements

The Entity Capabilities 2.0 protocol aims to satisfy the following requirements:

1. Entities must be able to participate even if they support only XMPP Core \(^5\), XMPP IM \(^6\)

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2. Entities must be able to participate without connectivity to services except their own XMPP server and without connectivity to specialized XMPP services, including cached information from those services.

3. Entities should be able to learn Service Discovery information without actively querying for it.

4. The bandwidth consumption should be as minimal as possible, while reusing existing specifications.

5. It must be possible to write Multi-User Chat (XEP-0045) and Mediated Information Exchange (MIX) (XEP-0369) implementations which can forward this protocol with negligible extra work.

6. Entities must be able to update their published information arbitrarily often in a single presence session.

7. Server infrastructure beyond XMPP Core and XMPP IM must not be required for this to work (but may be beneficial).

8. Entities must be able to be confident that the information obtained from the broadcast is equivalent to the information which would be obtained from querying the generating entity directly at the time the broadcast was generated.

9. The protocol must be able to coexist (but not necessarily exchange information) with Entity Capabilities (XEP-0115).

10. No special XML features beyond what is needed to implement XMPP Core itself should be required.

11. Obsoletion of hash functions should not need a new version of the specification.

12. Support for pushing Entity Capabilities to the clients server without sending presence.

3 Glossary

**Capability Hash** A tuple of hash function and hash value generated as described in the Hash Function Input section.

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2 While elements of XEP-0300 are re-used here, full support of XEP-0300 is not formally required to implement this specification.
4 XEP-0369: Mediated Information eXchange (MIX) [https://xmpp.org/extensions/xep-0369.html].
4 ALGORITHMS

**Capability Hash Cache** A mapping which maps Capability Hashes to disco#info <query/> responses with an empty 'node' attribute.

**Capability Hash Node** The name of a XEP-0030 'node' for a given Capability Hash. See Construction of Capability Hash Nodes.


**Generating Entity** An entity which emits a Capability Hash Set to other entities.

**Processing Entity** An entity which receives and processes a Capability Hash Set from a Generating Entity.

**Query Interception** Server-side processing of disco#info queries directed to a resource based on the Capability Hash Sets published by that resource.

**Gratuitous Capabilities** The sending of a Capability Hash Set to a server before initial presence has been sent and without being asked by the server.

4 Algorithms

The following algorithms provide data which is sent using this protocol.

4.1 Hash Function Input

The input to this algorithm is a Service Discovery (XEP-0030) \(^{12}\) disco#info <query/> response. The output is an octet string which can be used as input to a hash function or an error.

General remarks:

- The algorithm strongly distinguishes between character data (sequences of Unicode code points) and octet strings (sequences of 8-bit bytes). Whenever character data is encoded to octet strings in the following algorithm, the UTF-8 as specified in RFC 3629 \(^{13}\) encoding is used. Whenever octet strings are sorted in the following algorithm, the i;octet collation as specified in RFC 4790 \(^{14}\) is used.

- The algorithm uses the xml:lang attribute. Implementations must take implicit values for the xml:lang attribute into account, for example those inherited from the disco#info,

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the IQ element, or from the root <stream> tag.

1. If the <query/> element contains any elements except <identity/> or <feature/> (both from the Service Discovery (XEP-0030) \(^{15}\) disco#info namespace) or Service Discovery Extensions (XEP-0128) \(^{16}\) data forms, abort with an error.

2. If any Service Discovery Extensions (XEP-0128) \(^{17}\) <x/> element contains a data form which contains a <reported/> or <item/> element, abort with an error.

3. If any Service Discovery Extensions (XEP-0128) \(^{18}\) <x/> element does not adhere to the "FORM_TYPE" protocol specified by Field Standardization for Data Forms (XEP-0068) \(^{19}\), abort with an error.

4. Processing of <feature/> elements:
   a) For each <feature/> element: Encode the character data of the 'var' attribute and append an octet of value 0x1f (ASCII Unit Separator)
   b) Join the resulting octet strings together, ordered from lesser to greater.
   c) Append an octet of value 0x1c (ASCII File Separator).
   The result of this step is referenced as Features String later.

5. Processing of <identity/> nodes:
   a) For each <identity/> node:
      i. Encode the character data of the 'category', 'type', 'xml:lang' and 'name' attributes.
      ii. Append an octet of value 0x1f (ASCII Unit Separator) to each resulting octet string.
      iii. Join the resulting octet strings together, in the order of 'category', 'type', 'xml:lang' and 'name', resulting in a single octet string for the <identity/> node.
      iv. Append an octet of value 0x1e (ASCII Record Separator).
   b) Join the resulting octet strings together, ordered from lesser to greater.
   c) Append an octet of value 0x1c (ASCII File Separator).

\(^{15}\)XEP-0030: Service Discovery \(<\text{https://xmpp.org/extensions/xep-0030.html}>\).
\(^{17}\)XEP-0128: Service Discovery Extensions \(<\text{https://xmpp.org/extensions/xep-0128.html}>\).
\(^{19}\)XEP-0068: Field Data Standardization for Data Forms \(<\text{https://xmpp.org/extensions/xep-0068.html}>\).
The result of this step is referenced as Identities String later.

6. Processing of Service Discovery Extensions (XEP-0128)\textsuperscript{20} \textlt;\textlt;x/> elements:

a) For each \textlt;x/> element:

i. For each \textlt;field/> element:

A. Encode the character data of each \textlt:value/> element and append an octet of value 0x1f (ASCII Unit Separator)
B. Join the resulting octet strings together, ordered from lesser to greater.
C. Encode the character data of the 'var' attribute and append an octet of value 0x1f (ASCII Unit Separator) and the result from the previous step.
D. Append an octet of value 0x1e (ASCII Record Separator).
ii. Join the resulting octet strings together, ordered from lesser to greater.
iii. Append an octet of value 0x1d (ASCII Group Separator).

b) Join the resulting octet strings together, ordered from lesser to greater.

c) Append an octet of value 0x1c (ASCII File Separator).

The result of this step is referenced as Extensions String later.

7. Join the Features String, Identities String and Extensions String together, in this order. Return the resulting string as result of the algorithm.

4.2 Construction of Capability Hash Sets

The entity picks a set of hash functions it wishes to use. The set of hash functions MUST include at least one hash function which MUST be implemented according to Use of Cryptographic Hash Functions in XMPP (XEP-0300)\textsuperscript{21} and SHOULD NOT include any hash functions which MUST NOT be supported according to XEP-0300.

Using the algorithm from the previous subsection, the entity calculates the input for the hash functions. It then runs the input through each hash function individually. The resulting tuples of hash algorithm and hash values constitute the Capability Hash Set.


4.3 Construction of Capability Hash Nodes

The Capability Hash Node is obtained from a Capability Hash with the following simple algorithm:

1. To the namespace prefix "urn:xmpp:caps#", append the name of the hash function as per Use of Cryptographic Hash Functions in XMPP (XEP-0300) 22.
2. Append a FULL STOP character (U+002E, ".").
3. Append the Base64 encoded (as specified in RFC 3548 23) hash value.

The Capability Hash Node can be decomposed into its original components with the following algorithm:

1. Remove the namespace prefix "urn:xmpp:caps#" from the input.
2. From the end of the string, start searching for the FULL STOP character (U+002E, "," ) separator.
3. Split the string into the hash function and the Base64-encoded hash value at the position found in the previous step.

4.4 Verification of a Capability Hash Set

The algorithm takes a Capability Hash Set as input and returns successfully if the hash matches and an error otherwise.

1. Pick a Capability Hash from the Capability Hash Set.
2. Query the Generating Entity for disco#info on the Capability Hash Node for the chosen hash like described above. If the entity returns an error, abort with an error.
3. Locally calculate the Capability Hash using the same hash function as in the input as described in the algorithm. If the algorithm exits with an error, abort with an error.
4. If the hashes do not match, abort with an error.
5. Exit successfully, the hash is verified.

4.5 Examples

The two examples walk through the process of constructing a Capability Hash Set for SHA-256 and SHA3-256. The full algorithm for generating the hash function input is explained.

4.5.1 Simple Example

Listing 1: disco#info payload for the simple example; no XEP-0128 forms

```xml
<query xmlns="http://jabber.org/protocol/disco#info">
  <identity category="client" name="BombusMod" type="mobile"/>
  <feature var="http://jabber.org/protocol/si"/>
  <feature var="http://jabber.org/protocol/bytestreams"/>
  <feature var="http://jabber.org/protocol/chatstates"/>
  <feature var="http://jabber.org/protocol/disco#info"/>
  <feature var="http://jabber.org/protocol/disco#items"/>
  <feature var="urn:xmpp:ping"/>
  <feature var="jabber:iq:time"/>
  <feature var="jabber:iq:privacy"/>
  <feature var="jabber:iq:version"/>
  <feature var="http://jabber.org/protocol/rosterx"/>
  <feature var="urn:xmpp:time"/>
  <feature var="urn:xmpp:receipts"/>
  <feature var="jabber:iq:roster"/>
  <feature var="jabber:iq:last"/>
</query>
```

The data from the example was the first entry in the capsdb\(^{24}\) hashes subdirectory which had no data forms at the time of writing. The features have been shuffled to show the sorting step in the algorithm.

The algorithm starts by constructing the **Features String**. For this, the values of the 'var' attributes of the feature nodes are encoded as UTF-8 and suffixed with 0x1f (ASCII Unit Separator). The first three of those features are shown as a hexdump below:

```
00000000 68 74 74 70 3a 2f 2f 6a 61 62 62 65 72 2e 6f 72 |http://jabber.
00000010 67 2f 70 72 6f 74 6f 63 6f 6c 2f 62 79 74 65  |g/protocol/si.
0000001e

00000000 68 74 74 70 3a 2f 2f 6a 61 62 62 65 72 2e 6f 72 |http://jabber.
00000010 67 2f 70 72 6f 74 6f 63 6f 6c 2f 62 79 74 65  |g/protocol/bytest.
00000020 74 72 65 61 6d 73 1f |streams.
00000027

00000000 68 74 74 70 3a 2f 2f 6a 61 62 62 65 72 2e 6f 72 |http://jabber.
```

\(^{24}\)https://github.com/xnyhps/capsdb/
Note the appended 0x1f octet for each of the three strings. Now the strings are ordered using the i;octet collation and concatenated. The result is suffixed with 0x1c (ASCII File Separator), which gives the following hexdump of the final Features String:

```
00000000 68 74 74 70 3a 2f 2f 6a 61 62 62 65 72 2e 6f 72 | http://jabber.org/|
00000010 67 2f 70 72 6f 74 6f 63 6f 6c 2f 62 79 74 65 73 | protocol/bytes |
00000020 74 61 74 65 73 1f | tates |
00000026 62 62 65 72 2e 6f 72 67 2f 70 72 6f 74 6f 63 6f | bber.org/protocol |
00000030 6c 2f 63 68 61 74 73 74 61 74 65 73 1f 68 74 74 | chatstates.http |
0000003d 70 3a 2f 2f 6a 61 62 62 65 72 2e 6f 72 67 2f | p://jabber.org/p |
00000046 67 2f 70 72 6f 74 6f 63 6f 6c 2f 64 69 73 63 6f | protocol/disco#in |
00000050 66 6f 1f 68 74 74 70 3a 2f 2f 6a 61 62 62 65 72 | fo. http://jabber |
0000005e 2e 6f 72 67 2f 70 72 6f 74 6f 63 6f 6c 2f 64 69 | . org / protocol |
0000006c 73 6c 23 69 74 65 6d 73 1f 68 74 74 70 3a 2f | sco#items http: /|
0000007a 6a 61 62 62 65 72 2e 6f 72 67 2f 70 72 6f 74 6f | jabber.org/prot |
00000086 63 6f 6c 2f 73 69 1f 68 74 74 70 3a 2f | ocol/ibb.
00000092 6f 63 6f 6c 2f 73 69 2f 70 72 66 69 6c 65 2f | profile /|
0000009c 66 69 6c 65 2d 74 72 61 6e 73 66 65 72 1f 6a 61 | file-transfer.ja |
000000a0 62 62 65 72 3a 69 71 3a 6c 61 73 74 1f 6a 61 62 | bber:iq:last.jab |
```
For the *Identities String*, first the character data of the 'category', 'type', 'xml:lang' and 'name' attributes is encoded as UTF-8 and suffixed with 0x1f (ASCII Unit Separator). The resulting individual strings have the following hexdumps:

```
00000000 63 6c 69 65 6e 74 1f | client .|
00000007
00000000 6d 6f 62 69 6c 65 1f | mobile .|
00000007
00000000 1f | . |
00000001
00000000 42 6f 6d 62 75 73 4d 6f 64 1f | BombusMod |
0000000a
```

The strings are now joined together and the result is suffixed with 0x1e (ASCII Record Separator):

```
00000000 63 6c 69 65 6e 74 1f 6d 6f 62 69 6c 65 1f 42 6f 6d 62 75 73 4d 6f 64 1f | client. mobile..BombusMod |
00000010 6f 6d 62 75 73 4d 6f 64 1f 1e | BombusMod .. |
0000001a
```

Normally, a sorting step would occur here. As the example only has a single string, the sorting and joining is a no-op. The string is now suffixed with 0x1c (ASCII File Separator) to get the *Identities String*:

```
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```
The **Extensions String** is simply the 0x1c (ASCII File Separator) used to terminate it as no extensions are contained in the example. Thus, the final input for the hash function is, as hexdump:

```plaintext
00000000 68 74 74 70 3a 2f 2f 6a 61 62 62 65 72 2e 6f 72 |http://jabber.
                00000010 67 2f 70 72 6f 74 6f 63 6f 6c 2f 62 79 74 65 73 |g/protocol/bytes
                00000020 74 72 65 61 6d 73 1f 68 74 74 70 3a 2f 2f 6a 61 |steam\path(.http://ja)
                00000030 62 62 65 72 2e 6f 72 67 2f 70 72 6f 74 6f 63 6f |ber.org/protocol|
                00000040 6c 2f 63 68 61 74 73 74 61 74 65 73 1f 68 74 74 |chatstates.http
                00000050 70 3a 2f 2f 6a 61 62 62 65 72 2e 6f 72 67 2f 70 |p://jabber.org/p|
                00000060 6f 63 6f 6l 2f 69 62 62 1f 68 74 74 70 3a 2f 2f |ocol/ibb.jpg
                00000070 6a 61 62 62 65 72 2e 6f 72 67 2f 70 72 6f 74 6f |jabber.org/protocol|
                00000080 63 6f 6c 2f 72 6f 73 74 65 72 78 1f 68 74 74 70 | roster.http
                00000090 3a 2f 2f 6a 61 62 62 65 72 2e 6f 72 67 2f 70 72 |://jabber.org/pr
                000000a0 6f 63 6f 6l 2f 73 69 1f 68 74 74 70 3a 2f 2f |ocol/si/file-
                000000b0 6a 61 62 62 65 72 2e 6f 72 67 2f 70 72 6f 74 6f |jabber.org/profile|
                000000c0 63 6f 6c 2f 72 6f 73 74 65 72 78 1f 68 74 74 70 | rosterx.http
                000000d0 3a 2f 2f 6a 61 62 62 65 72 2e 6f 72 67 2f 70 72 |://jabber.org/pr
                000000e0 6f 63 6f 6l 2f 73 69 1f 68 74 74 70 3a 2f 2f |ocol/si/file-
                000000f0 6a 61 62 62 65 72 2e 6f 72 67 2f 70 72 6f 74 6f |jabber.org/profile|
                00000100 6f 63 6f 6l 2f 73 69 1f 68 74 74 70 3a 2f 2f |ocol/si/file-
                00000110 6a 61 62 62 65 72 2e 6f 72 67 2f 70 72 6f 74 6f |jabber.org/profile|
                00000120 66 69 6c 65 2d 74 72 61 6e 73 66 65 72 1f 6a 61 |file-transfer.ja|
```

Running this octet string through the hash functions leads as to the following Capability Hash Set:

```
<c xmlns="urn:xmpp:caps">
  <hash xmlns="urn:xmpp:hashes:2" algo="sha-256">kzBZbkqJ3ADrj7v08reD1qcWUwNGHaidNUgD7nHp1w8</hash>
  <hash xmlns="urn:xmpp:hashes:2" algo="sha3-256">mdYAfU9rEdT0cWD07UEAt6E56SUzk/g6TnqUeuD9Q</hash>
</c>
```

### 4.5.2 Complex Example

Listing 2: disco#info payload for the complex example with XEP-0128 forms

```
<query xmlns="http://jabber.org/protocol/disco#info">
  <identity category="client" name="Tkabber" type="pc" xml:lang="en"/>
  <identity category="client" name="    " type="pc" xml:lang="ru"/>
  <feature var="games:board"/>
  <feature var="http://jabber.org/protocol/activity"/>
  <feature var="http://jabber.org/protocol/activity+notify"/>
  <feature var="http://jabber.org/protocol/bytestreams"/>
  <feature var="http://jabber.org/protocol/chatstates"/>
  <feature var="http://jabber.org/protocol/commands"/>
  <feature var="http://jabber.org/protocol/disco#info"/>
</query>
```
The data from the example is the shortest entry from the capsdb hashes subdirectory which had data forms and multiple identities at the time of writing. The features have been shuffled to show the sorting step in the algorithm.

We skip over the process for the Features String and only present the final result encoded as base64 for reference:

```
Z2FtZXM6Ym9hcQfaHR0cDovL2phYmJlci5vcmcvCHjdvdG9jb2wvYWN0aXZpdHkfaHR0cDovL2phYmJlci5vcmcvCHjdvdG9jb2wvYWN0aXZpdHkfaHR0
cDovL2phYmJlci5vcmcvCHjdvdG9jb2wvYWN0aXZpdHkfaHR0cDovL2phYmJlci5vcmcvCHjdvdG9jb2wvYWN0aXZpdHkfaHR0
cDovL2phYmJlci5vcmcvCHjdvdG9jb2wvYWN0aXZpdHkfaHR0cDovL2phYmJlci5vcmcvCHjdvdG9jb2wvYWN0aXZpdHkfaHR0
cDovL2phYmJlci5vcmcvCHjdvdG9jb2wvYWN0aXZpdHkfaHR0cDovL2phYmJlci5vcmcvCHjdvdG9jb2wvYWN0aXZpdHkfaHR0
cDovL2phYmJlci5vcmcvCHjdvdG9jb2wvYWN0aXZpdHkfaHR0cDovL2phYmJlci5vcmcvCHjdvdG9jb2wvYWN0aXZpdHkfaHR0
```

https://github.com/xnyhps/capsdb/
In the previous example, it was already shown how the individual parts of each `<identity/>` element are combined. We get the following octet strings as hexdumps:

```
00000000 63 6c 69 65 6e 74 1f 70 63 1f 72 75 1f d0 a2 d0 |client.pc.ru.....|
00000010 ba d0 b0 d0 b1 d0 b1 d0 b5 d1 80 1f 1e |..............|
0000001 d
```

The second string is ordered before the first string in the i;octet collation and afterwards the strings are joined and the result is suffixed with 0x1c (ASCII File Separator) to close the identities part of the input. The final *Identities String* is thus, as hexdump:

```
00000000 63 6c 69 65 6e 74 1f 70 63 1f 65 6e 1f 54 6b 61 |client.pc.en.Tka|
00000010 62 62 65 72 1f 1e |bber..|
00000016
```

The example has a *Service Discovery Extensions (XEP-0128)* form. For each field, a string consisting of the 'var' attributes character data and the values is created as per the algorithm:

```
00000000 46 4f 52 4d 5f 54 59 50 45 1f 75 72 6e 3a 78 6d |FORM_TYPE.urn:xm|
00000010 70 70 3a 64 61 74 61 66 6f 72 6d 73 3a 73 6f 66 |pp:dataforms:sof|
00000020 74 77 61 72 65 69 6e 66 0f 61 7f 5d 7a 7d 72 0c |twareinfo...
14

---

The strings need to be sorted using i;octet and joined together. The result is suffixed with 0x1d (ASCII Group Separator), which closes the form. As this is the only form, the resulting Extensions String is obtained by adding a 0x1c (ASCII File Separator) to close the extensions section of the hash input:

Note the "os" field is now before the other fields but after "FORM_TYPE", due to the sorting. The final hash function input is obtained by concatenating the Features String, Identities String
and Extensions String:

```
00000000  67 61 6d 65 73:62 6f 61 72 64 1f 68 74 74 70  
games:board.http |
00000010  3a 2f 2f 6a 61 62 62 65 72 2e 6f 72 67 2f 70 72  
./jabber.org/pr |
00000020  6f 74 6f 63 6f 6c 2f 61 63 74 69 76 69 74 79 1f  
protocol/activity |
00000030  68 74 74 70 3a 2f 2f 6a 61 62 62 65 72 2e 6f 72  
http://jabber.or |
00000040  67 70 72 6f 74 6f 63 6f 6c 2f 61 63 74 69 76 69  
g/notify.http:|
00000050  6f 74 6f 63 6f 6c 2f 62 79 74 65 73 74 72 65 61  
tocol/bytestream|
00000060  6f 74 74 70 3a 2f 2f 6a 61 62 62 65 72 2e 6f 72  
http://jabber.or |
00000070  67 2f 70 72 6f 74 6f 63 6f 6c 2f 62 79 74 65 73  
g/protocol/cha |
00000080  73 1f 68 74 74 70 3a 2f 2f 6a 61 62 62 65 72 2e  
s\path(.http:|
00000090  6f 74 6f 63 6f 6c 2f 64 69 73 63 6f 23 69 6e 66  
tocol/disco#inf |
000000a0  6f 1f 68 74 74 70 3a 2f 2f 6a 61 62 62 65 72 2e  
o.http://jab |
000000b0  6f 74 6f 63 6f 6c 2f 66 65 61 74 75 72 65 2d 6e  
tocol/feature-
000000c0  6f 74 74 70 3a 2f 2f 6a 61 62 62 65 72 2e 6f 72  
http://jabber.or |
000000d0  6f 74 6f 63 6f 6c 2f 65 76 69 6c 1f 68 74 74 70  
tocol/evil. |
000000e0  6f 74 74 70 3a 2f 2f 6a 61 62 62 65 72 2e 6f 72  
http://jabber.or |
000000f0  6f 74 6f 63 6f 6c 2f 66 65 61 74 75 72 65 2d 6e  
tocol/feature-
00000100  6a 61 62 62 65 72 2e 6f 72 67 2f 70 72 6f 74 6f  
jabber.org/pr |
```

Feeding the concatenated octet string as input to the hash functions yields the following Capability Hash Set:

```
<c xmlns="urn:xmpp:caps">
  <hash xmlns="urn:xmpp:hashes:2" algo="sha-256">
    u79ZroNJbdSWhdSp311mddz44oHHPsEBntQ5b1jqBSY=
  </hash>
  <hash xmlns="urn:xmpp:hashes:2" algo="sha3-256">
    XpUJzLAc93258sMECZ3FJpebkzuyNXDzRNwQog8eycg=
  </hash>
</c>
```

5 Use Cases

5.1 Advertising Support

If an entity supports *Entity Capabilities 2.0*, it MUST advertise the fact by returning a feature of "urn:xmpp:caps".
Listing 3: Response to a disco#info request

```
<iq from='romeo@montague.lit/orchard'
    id='disco1'
    to='juliet@capulet.lit/chamber'
    type='result'>
<query xmlns='http://jabber.org/protocol/disco#info'>
  ...
  <feature var='urn:xmpp:caps'/>  
  ...
</query>
</iq>
```

5.2 Advertisement of Support and Capabilities by Servers

A server MAY advertise its support for this protocol as well as the current hashes in the stream features.

Listing 4: Stream Features of a server

```
<stream:features>
  ...
  <c xmlns='urn:xmpp:caps'>
    <hash xmlns='urn:xmpp:hashes:2' algo='sha-256'>
      K1Njy3HZBTh1o4moOD5gGhn0U0oK7/CbfL1UD16o4=
    </hash>
    <hash xmlns='urn:xmpp:hashes:2' algo='sha3-256'>
      sDTQqBmX6iG/ X3zjt06fjZMBBqL/723knFIyRf0sg8=
    </hash>
  </c>
  ...
</stream:features>
```

When a connected client or peer server sends a service discovery information request to determine the entity capabilities of a server that advertises capabilities via the stream feature, the requesting entity MUST send the disco#info request to the server’s JID as provided in the 'from' attribute of the response stream header. To enable this functionality, a server that advertises support for entity capabilities MUST provide a 'from' address in its response stream headers, in accordance with RFC 6120.

5.3 Advertising Support of Caps Optimizations

If a server supports Caps Optimizations, it MUST advertise the fact by returning a feature of "urn:xmpp:caps:optimize".

---

5.4 Broadcasting Entity Capabilities

An entity publishes the current Capability Hash Set in presence stanzas it sends:

Listing 6: Presence broadcast with hashes

```xml
<presence from='juliet@capulet.lit'/>
  <c xmlns='urn:xmpp:caps'>
    <hash xmlns='urn:xmpp:hashes:2' algo='sha-256'>
      u79ZroNJbdSWhdSp311mddz44oHHPsEBntQ5b1jqBSY=
    </hash>
    <hash xmlns='urn:xmpp:hashes:2' algo='sha3-256'>
      XpUJZLAc93258sMECZ3FJpebkzuyNXDzRWQog8eycg=
    </hash>
  </c>
</presence>
```

The `<hash/>` element is specified by Use of Cryptographic Hash Functions in XMPP (XEP-0300) and is used to transport the Capability Hashes.

5.5 Service Discovery Query for a Specific Hash Value

To query the Service Discovery (XEP-0030) information for a specific Capability Hash value, an entity MUST query a Service Discovery node equal to the Capability Hash Node. An entity is free to choose for which Capability Hash of a Capability Hash Set the request is sent.

Listing 7: Service Discovery request in response to a broadcast Capability Hash Set

```xml
<presence from='juliet@capulet.lit/chamber' to='romeo@montague.lit/orchard'/>
  <c xmlns='urn:xmpp:caps'/>
```

30As outlined in the Business Rules, this statement does not oblige an entity to actually perform this query.
<hash xmlns="urn:xmpp:hashes:2" algo="sha-256">
    u792roNjbdSWhdSp311mddz44oHHPsEBntQ5b1jqBSY=
</hash>

<hash xmlns="urn:xmpp:hashes:2" algo="sha-3-256">
    XpUJzLAc93258sMECZ3FjpebkzuyNXDzRNwQog8eycg=
</hash>
</c>
</presence>

<iq from='romeo@montague.lit/orchard' id='disco3' to='juliet@capulet.lit/chamber' type='get'>
    <query xmlns='http://jabber.org/protocol/disco#info' node='urn:xmpp:cap#sha-256.'>
        u792roNjbdSWhdSp311mddz44oHHPsEBntQ5b1jqBSY='a
    </query>
</iq>

<iq from='juliet@capulet.lit/chamber' id='disco3' to='romeo@montague.lit/orchard' type='result'>
    <query xmlns='http://jabber.org/protocol/disco#info' node='urn:xmpp:cap#sha-256.'>
        u792roNjbdSWhdSp311mddz44oHHPsEBntQ5b1jqBSY='a
    </query>
    <identity category="client" name="Tkabber" type="pc" xml:lang="en"/>
    <identity category="client" name=" Tkabber" type="pc" xml:lang="ru"/>
    <Feature var="games:board"/>
    <Feature var="http://jabber.org/protocol/activity"/>
    <Feature var="http://jabber.org/protocol/activity+notify"/>
    <Feature var="http://jabber.org/protocol/bytestreams"/>
    <Feature var="http://jabber.org/protocol/chatstates"/>
    <Feature var="http://jabber.org/protocol/commands"/>
    <Feature var="http://jabber.org/protocol/disco#info"/>
    <Feature var="http://jabber.org/protocol/disco#items"/>
    <Feature var="http://jabber.org/protocol/evil"/>
    <Feature var="http://jabber.org/protocol/feature-neg"/>
    <Feature var="http://jabber.org/protocol/geoloc"/>
    <Feature var="http://jabber.org/protocol/geoloc+notify"/>
    <Feature var="http://jabber.org/protocol/ibb"/>
    <Feature var="http://jabber.org/protocol/iqibb"/>
    <Feature var="http://jabber.org/protocol/mood"/>
    <Feature var="http://jabber.org/protocol/mood+notify"/>
    <Feature var="http://jabber.org/protocol/rosterx"/>
    <Feature var="http://jabber.org/protocol/si"/>
    <Feature var="http://jabber.org/protocol/si/profile/file-transfer"/>
    <Feature var="http://jabber.org/protocol/tune"/>
    <Feature var="http://www.facebook.com/xmpp/messages"/>
</iq>
5.6 Gratuitous Capabilities

A server MAY support pushing of Capability Hashes from clients before sending initial presence. This allows servers to discover capabilities of clients before those have sent initial presence, which may be useful or important for some protocols (such as Mediated Information eXchange.
This feature is called **Gratuitous Capabilities**.

To advertise support, the server publishes the urn:xmpp:caps:gratuitous feature:

```xml
<iq from='montague.lit' id='disco3' to='romeo@montague.lit/chamber' type='result'>
  <query xmlns='http://jabber.org/protocol/disco#info'>
    ...
    <feature var='urn:xmpp:caps'/>
    <feature var='urn:xmpp:caps:gratuitous'/>
    ...
  </query>
</iq>
```

After determining server support, a client can send **Capability Hashes** via **Gratuitous Capabilities** before sending initial presence:

```xml
<iq from='romeo@montague.lit/chamber' to='montague.lit' id='grat1' type='set'>
  <c xmlns='urn:xmpp:caps'>
    <hash xmlns='urn:xmpp:hashes:2' algo='sha-256'>
      u79ZroNJbdSWhdSp311mddz44oHHPsEBntQ5b1jqBSY=
    </hash>
    <hash xmlns='urn:xmpp:hashes:2' algo='sha3-256'>
      XpUJzLAc93258sMECZ3FJpebkzuynXDzRNwQog8eycg=
    </hash>
  </c>
</iq>

<iq from='montague.lit' to='romeo@montague.lit/chamber' id='grat1' type='result'>
</iq>
```

The server replies with an empty result on success. The server MUST NOT broadcast the **Capability Hashes** submitted via **Gratuitous Capabilities** using presence. Clients SHOULD NOT send **Gratuitous Capabilities** after they have sent initial presence; instead, they SHOULD re-send presence to update the **Capability Hashes**. Otherwise, entities subscribed to the presence will not receive the updated **Capability Hashes**.

---

6 Business Rules

6.1 Rules for Generating Entities

• Entities MUST respond to disco#info queries for all Capability Hash Nodes of at least the most recent 3 Capability Hash Sets emitted.

• Entities MUST broadcast the Capability Hash Set of the current disco#info it publishes in every non-directed “available” <presence/> they send and SHOULD do so for directed “available” <presence/>.

• After initial presence has been sent, entities MUST re-broadcast the Capability Hash Set after their disco#info response changes, but MAY limit the rate at which presences are emitted solely for the purpose of sending new Capability Hash Sets.

• Before initial presence has been sent and if the server supports Gratuitous Capabilities, entities SHOULD send Gratuitous Capabilities after their disco#info response changes, but MAY limit the rate at which Gratuitous Capabilities are sent. (For example, a client may load and enable additional functionality (thus changing its features) based on server support and only send Gratuitous Capabilities once all functionality has been set up, not after each individual feature.)

• Entities MAY assume that another entity supports Entity Capabilities 2.0 after receiving a Capability Hash Set from that entity.

• Entities MAY also send Entity Capabilities (XEP-0115) capabilities to support legacy entities.

6.2 Rules for Processing Entities

• Entities MAY limit the rate at which they process incoming Capability Hash Sets.

• Entities MUST be able to process Capability Hash Nodes which use a hash function whose name includes the FULL STOP character (U+002E, ".").

• Entities MAY verify incoming Capability Hash Sets.

• Entities MUST NOT expect to receive Capability Hash Sets on every presence sent by an entity supporting Entity Capabilities 2.0.

6.2.1 Caching

A Capability Hash MAY be stored alongside with its disco#info in a Capability Hash Cache. A received Capability Hash which has not been verified MUST NOT be stored. Instead of issuing a Service Discovery (XEP-0030) disco#info <query/> with absent ‘node’

---

attribute to a target entity, an entity MAY use a **Capability Hash Cache** to obtain the response. To look up the disco#info response in the **Capability Hash Cache**, an entity MUST use a hash from the **Capability Hash Set** which was most recently received from the entity to which the <query/> would have been sent otherwise. If none of the most recently received **Capability Hashes** are found in the **Capability Hash Cache**, the entity MUST fall back to sending the request. An entity MUST NOT use **Capability Hashes** which were not included in the most recent **Capability Hash Set** received from the target entity. An entity MAY use external data sources to fill the **Capability Hash Cache**. An entity MUST ensure that implicit values for xml:lang attributes is preserved when disco#info data is cached. This can for example happen by making the implicit values explicit in the storage.

### 6.3 Additional Rules for Clients and Servers implementing Caps Optimizations

- Servers MAY strip off the <c/> element if it has not changed since the previous presence broadcast.
- Servers MUST ensure that the first presence notification sent to each subscriber contains the most recent <c/> element, if any were sent in the current presence session.
- Servers MUST ensure that every change in the <c/> element is sent to all subscribers.
- Clients MAY omit the <c/> element if it has not changed since the last presence iff they determined that their server supports Caps Optimization.
- Servers MAY answer disco#info requests for **Capability Hash Nodes** on behalf of their and others clients if the disco#info response belonging to that **Capability Hash** is known to them.

### 6.4 Query Interception

Servers MAY implement **Query Interception** to further optimise bandwidth consumption. The idea is that servers intercept Service Discovery (XEP-0030) disco#info queries sent to clients if they already know the answer from **Capability Hashes** published by the client. The rules for **Query Interception** are the following (to be applied in this order):

- Servers MUST NOT intercept disco#info queries except those with empty node or a node which refers to a **Capability Hash Node** known to the server.
- Servers MUST NOT intercept disco#info queries on behalf of the resource unless the query would be forwarded to the resource otherwise.

---

8 SECURITY CONSIDERATIONS

- Servers MUST NOT intercept disco#info queries to resources which do not support Entity Capabilities 2.0 (clients not implementing Entity Capabilities 2.0 may legitimately use disco#info nodes matching the format of Capability Hash Nodes for different purposes).

- Servers SHOULD intercept disco#info queries with empty node and answer them with the disco#info of the most recent Capability Hash Set published by the client.

- Servers SHOULD intercept disco#info queries a valid Capability Hash Node node, if the server knows the disco#info for the Capability Hash Node. Otherwise, the query MUST be forwarded to the addressed resource. Note that it is valid for a server to reply for Capability Hash Nodes which have not been published by the resource.

7 Implementation Notes

7.1 Caching

It is RECOMMENDED that entities use the caching mechanisms outlined in the Caching Business Rules. Entities MAY share caches among connections and accounts.

7.2 Upgrading from XEP-0115

Generating Entities are encouraged to also emit Entity Capabilities (XEP-0115) elements in their presence updates (as specified in XEP-0115) for a reasonable transition period. When receiving a Capability Hash Set along with XEP-0115 capabilities, a Processing Entity MAY obtain the disco#info query for verification from a XEP-0115 based cache instead of querying the Generating Entity directly. A Processing Entity MUST NOT use disco#info data from a XEP-0115 cache without verification if an Entity Capabilities 2.0 element is available.

8 Security Considerations

8.1 Hash Function Input Data Separators

The codepoints used for separating the different parts in the Hash Function Input Algorithm (0x1c (ASCII File Separator) through 0x1f (ASCII Unit Separator)) are not allowed in well-formed XML 1.0 character data. As entities are, per XMPP Core, required to close a stream if non-well-formed XML 1.0 data is received, these codepoints cannot occur in the input to the algorithm and their use as separators is safe.

---

36Note that the "ASCII Separators" codepoints would be valid, although discouraged, characters of XML 1.1, but XMPP mandates XML 1.0.
8.2 Caching

If the algorithm for constructing the input to the hash function or the used hash function itself allow for cheap collisions, caching the hashes will become dangerous as it allows for cache poisoning. This in turn allows entities to effectively fake disco#info responses of other entities.

This was an issue with Entity Capabilities (XEP-0115) and has been addressed with a new algorithm for generating the hash function input which keeps the structural information of the disco#info input.

An entity MUST NOT ever use disco#info which has not been verified to belong to a Capability Hash obtained from a cache using that Capability Hash. Using cache contents from a trusted source (at the discretion of the entity) counts as verifying.

A malicious entity could send a large amount of Capability Hash Sets in short intervals, while making sure that it provides matching disco#info responses. If a Processing Entity uses caching, this can overflow or thrash the caches. Processing Entities should be aware of this risk and apply proper rate-limiting for processing Capability Hash Sets. To reduce the attack surface, an entity MAY choose to not cache Capability Hashes obtained from entities not in its roster.

As mentioned earlier, when storing disco#info data in a cache for later retrieval, implementations MUST ensure that implicit values for xml:lang attributes are reconstructed correctly when the disco#info is restored.

8.3 Directed Presence

Entities MAY choose to not send Capability Hash Sets with directed presence (for example to increase privacy). In that case, entities SHOULD also refuse direct Service Discovery (XEP-0030) queries.

8.4 Query Interception

The server replies to certain disco#info queries on behalf of the client. This means that the client has no choice on to whom they reply. Otherwise, a client could choose to reply with <service-unavailable/> to mask its existence. We consider two effects of this:

- A remote entity could attempt to detect that an entity exists behind a resource. For this, they send a disco#info query to the resource since nearly everyone implements disco#info. As the client responds with <service-unavailable/>, it looks as if no client was present at this resource.
  
  With Query Interception, the server would reply on behalf of the client. However, the consensus in the community is that by measuring the difference between the reply from the server of the resource and the reply from the actual resource, it would generally be

possible to detect the existence of a resource.

- A remote entity can obtain the disco#info information of any resource which supports Entity Capabilities 2.0 and of which the entity knows the resource. This cannot be mitigated with Query Interception. The risk is deemed acceptable considering that resources should generally be chosen randomly.

9 Design Considerations

The following alternatives to the custom algorithm were considered and eventually rejected:

9.1 Canonical XML

A common way to canonicalize XML which could be used is Canonical XML. It was decided not to use Canonical XML for the following reasons:

- Implementing it is quite some effort and not all XML libraries come with an implementation.
- It is sensitive to the relative ordering of the elements. The relative ordering of children in disco#info <query/> elements, however, does not matter.
- Several children of Service Discovery Extensions (XEP-0128) data forms are deliberately ignored, like instructions and other descriptive text. The descriptive text is not relevant for the information is being conveyed.

Thus, using Canonical XML would require additional, non-trivial software support and still require non-trivial additional canonicalization rules.

10 IANA Considerations

This document requires no interaction with the Internet Assigned Numbers Authority (IANA).

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40 Canonical XML 1.0 <http://www.w3.org/TR/xml-c14n>.
42 The Internet Assigned Numbers Authority (IANA) is the central coordinator for the assignment of unique parameter values for Internet protocols, such as port numbers and URI schemes. For further information, see <http://www.iana.org/>.
11 XMPP Registrar Considerations

11.1 Protocol Namespaces

The XMPP Registrar includes "urn:xmpp:caps" in its registry of protocol namespaces (see <https://xmpp.org/registrar/namespaces.html>).

```xml
<ns>
  <name>urn:xmpp:caps</name>
  <doc>&xep0390;</doc>
</ns>
```

11.2 Service Discovery Features

The XMPP Registrar includes "urn:xmpp:caps" and "urn:xmpp:caps:optimize" in its registry of service discovery features (see <https://xmpp.org/registrar/disco-features.html>).

```xml
<var>
  <name>urn:xmpp:caps</name>
  <desc>Indicate support for Entity Capabilities 2.0</desc>
  <doc>&xep0390;</doc>
</var>

<var>
  <name>urn:xmpp:caps:optimize</name>
  <desc>Indicate support for optimisation of Entity Capabilities 2.0 broadcast.</desc>
  <doc>&xep0390;</doc>
</var>
```

11.3 Stream Features

The XMPP Registrar includes "urn:xmpp:caps" in its registry of stream features (see <https://xmpp.org/registrar/stream-features.html>).

```xml
<feature>
  <ns>urn:xmpp:caps</ns>
  <name>ecaps2</name>
  <element>c</element>
  <desc>Indicate support for Entity Capabilities 2.0 and publish capabilities to peer.</desc>
  <doc>&xep0390;</doc>
</feature>
```

43The XMPP Registrar maintains a list of reserved protocol namespaces as well as registries of parameters used in the context of XMPP extension protocols approved by the XMPP Standards Foundation. For further information, see <https://xmpp.org/registrar/>.
12 XML Schema

```xml
<?xml version='1.0' encoding='UTF-8'?>
<xs:schema
  xmlns:xs='http://www.w3.org/2001/XMLSchema'
  targetNamespace='urn:xmpp:caps'
  xmlns='urn:xmpp:caps'
  elementFormDefault='qualified'
  xmlns:hashes='urn:xmpp:hashes:2'>
  <!-- FIXME: import of XEP-0300 schema, which isn't at https://xmpp.org/schemas/_at_the_time_of_writing -->
  <xs:annotation>
    <xs:documentation>
      The protocol documented by this schema is defined in XEP-0390:
      http://www.xmpp.org/extensions/xep-0390.html
    </xs:documentation>
  </xs:annotation>

  <xs:element name='c'>
    <xs:complexType>
      <xs:sequence minOccurs='1'>
        <xs:element ref='hashes:hash' minOccurs='1' maxOccurs='unbounded'/>
      </xs:sequence>
    </xs:complexType>
  </xs:element>
</xs:schema>
```

13 Acknowledgements

Thanks to the authors of Entity Capabilities (XEP-0115) for coming up with the original idea of using presence broadcast to convey service discovery information, as well as the optimization strategies.

The note below the example in Advertisement of Support and Capabilities by Servers has been copied verbatimly from XEP-0115.

Thanks to Waqas Hussain for originally (to my knowledge) pointing out the security flaws in XEP-0115 (see 45).

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