Wireshark

Wireshark is a network packet analyzer, which can be downloaded for use at home from https://www.wireshark.org/#download. A network packet analyzer will try to capture network packets and tries to display that packet data as detailed as possible.

You could think of a network packet analyzer as a measuring device used to examine what is going on inside a network cable, just like a voltmeter is used by an electrician to examine what is going on inside an electric cable (but at a higher level, of course).

In the past, such tools were either very expensive, proprietary, or both. However, with the advent of Wireshark, all that has changed. Wireshark is perhaps one of the best open source packet analyzers available today. Here are some examples people use Wireshark for:

- Network administrators use it to troubleshoot network problems
- Network security engineers use it to examine security problems
- QA engineers use it to verify network applications
- Developers use it to debug protocol implementations
- People use it to learn network protocol internals

Beside these examples Wireshark can be helpful in many other situations too. The following are some of the many features Wireshark provides:

- Available for UNIX and Windows.
- Capture live packet data from a network interface.
- Open files containing packet data captured with tcpdump/WinDump, Wireshark, and a number of other packet capture programs.
- Import packets from text files containing hex dumps of packet data.
- Display packets with very detailed protocol information.
- Save packet data captured.
- Export some or all packets in a number of capture file formats.
- Filter packets on many criteria.
- Search for packets on many criteria.
- Colorize packet display based on filters.
- Create various statistics.

However, to really appreciate its power you have to start using it.

Figure 1 shows Wireshark having captured some packets and waiting for you to examine them.

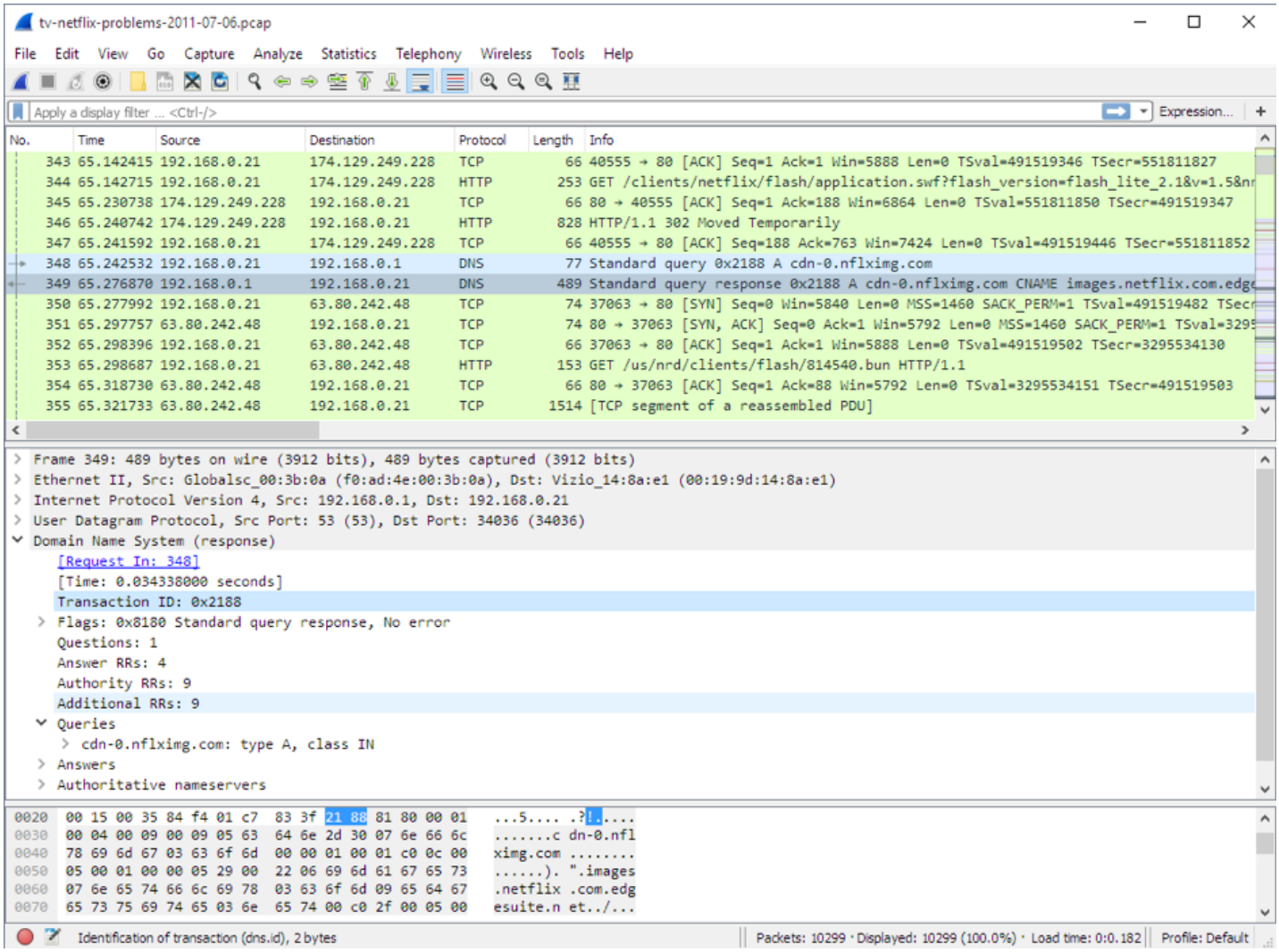


Figure 1 - Wireshark captures packets and lets you examine their contents

Here are some things Wireshark does not provide:

- Wireshark is not an intrusion detection system. It will not warn you when someone does strange things on your network that he/she is not allowed to do. However, if strange things happen, Wireshark might help you figure out what is really going on.
- Wireshark will not manipulate things on the network, it will only "measure" things from it. Wireshark does not send packets on the network or do other active things (except for name resolutions, but even that can be disabled).

The interface

When you start wireshark you should see an interface like the one shown in Figure 2.

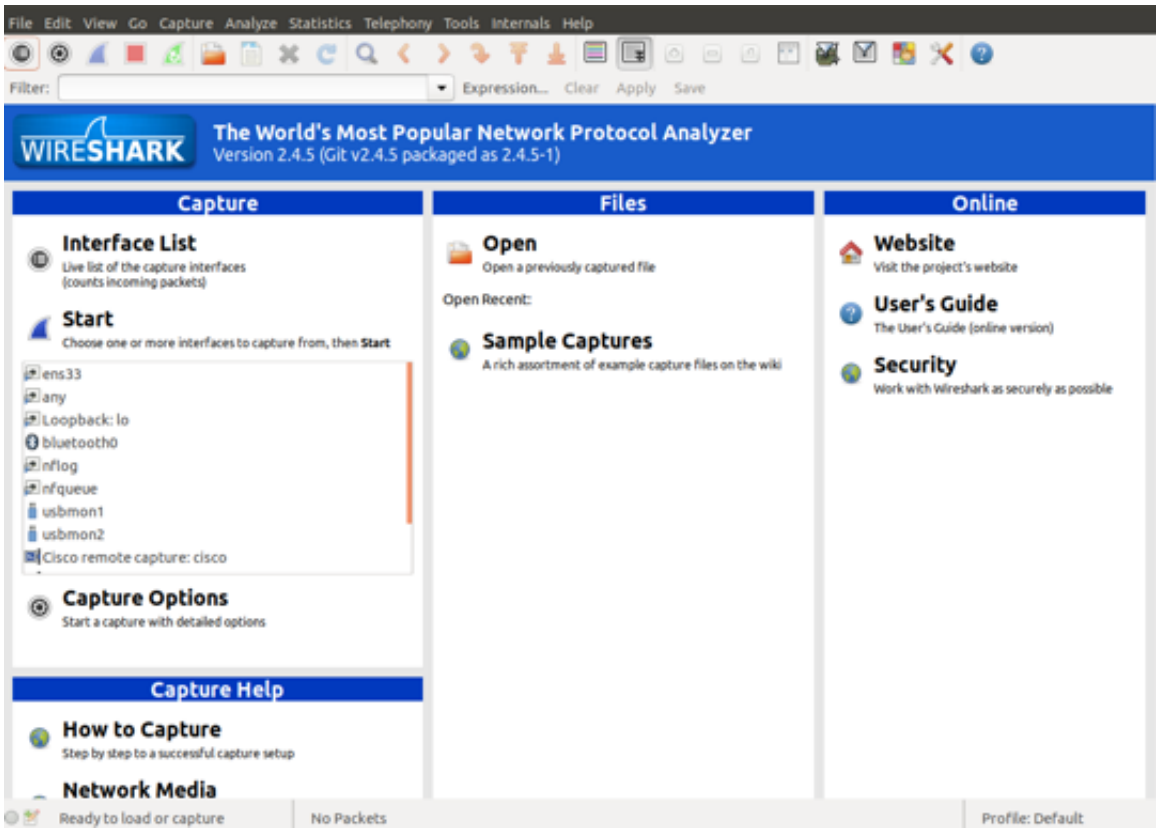
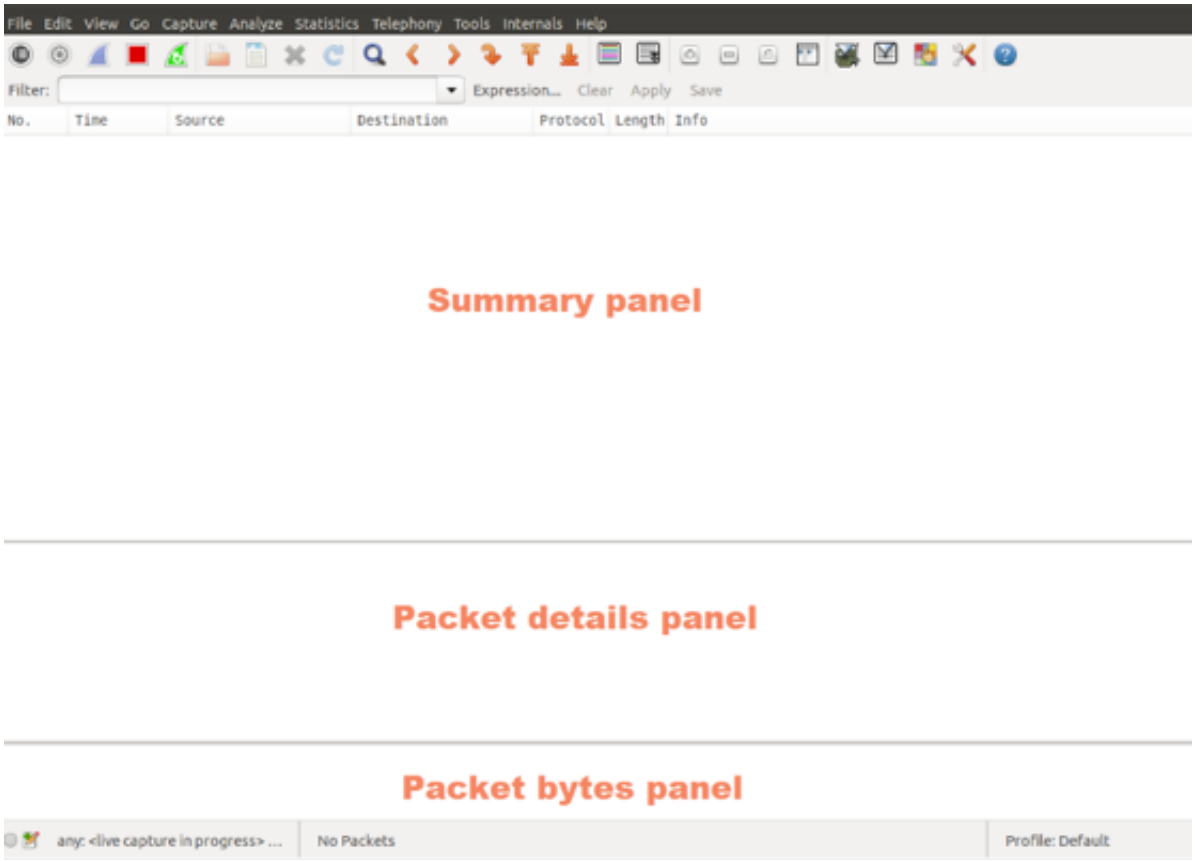


*Figure 2 - Default start up screen for Wireshark *

A blank screen is shown below.

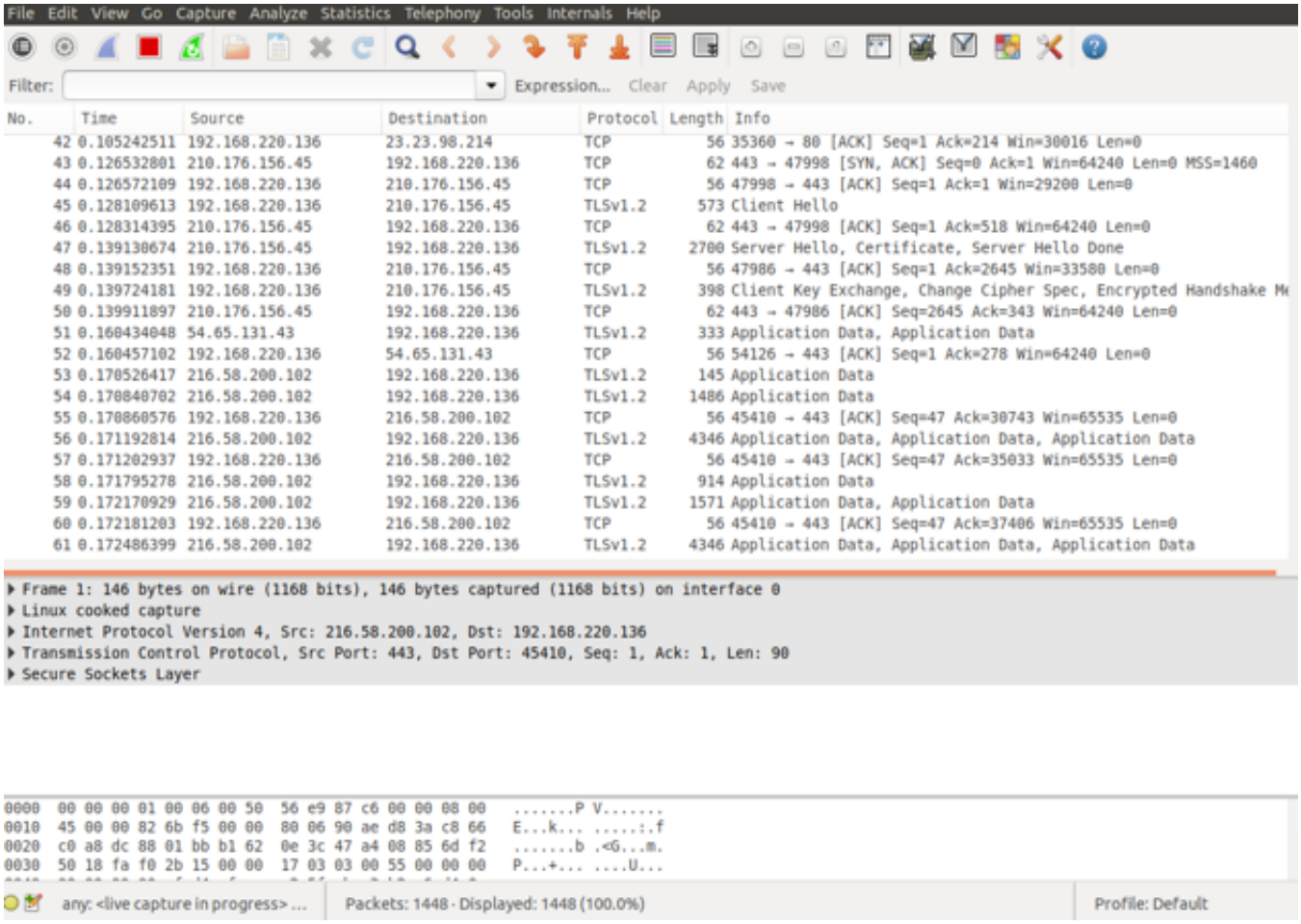


This screen has three main parts: 1. The summary panel shows the list of packets seen by wireshark; 2.

The packet details displays the packet selected in the summary panel in more details; and 3. The packet bytes pane displays the data from the packet selected in the packet list pane and highlights the field selected in the packet details pane.

You can load precaptured network traces into Wireshark for analysis, we can't actually capture live traffic on our systems because of security restrictions.

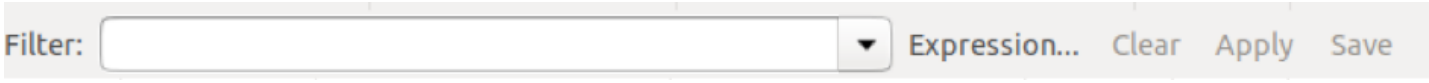
Below you see traffic captured earlier by visiting this site: http://bbc.co.uk



This is showing a stream of packet captured that relate to the web browsing you just did, you should see some of the protocol names discussed in lectures such as TCP, DNS, HTTP etc.

Filtering traffic

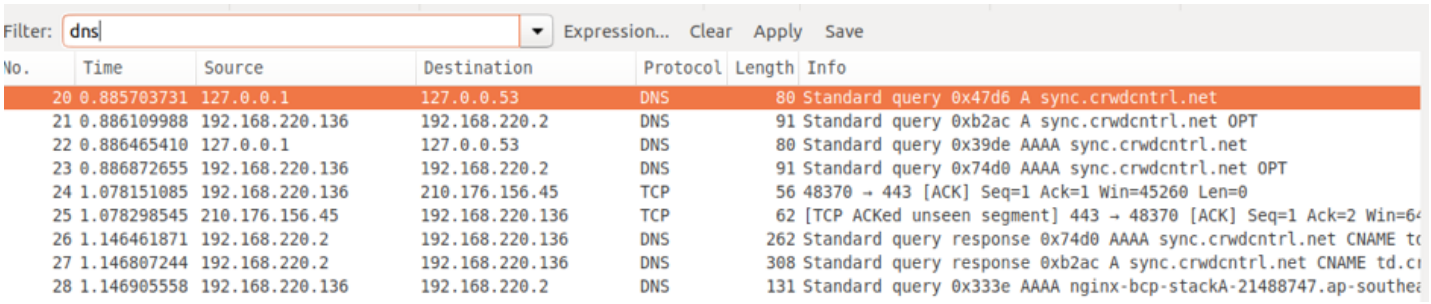
Wireshark will capture a lot of network traffic, on a busy network it will capture more traffic than you can analyse. What if you are only interested in specific traffic, this is where the filter box comes in handy.



This allow you to filter using an expression that can use terms such as the protocol, destination IP address, source IP address and more.

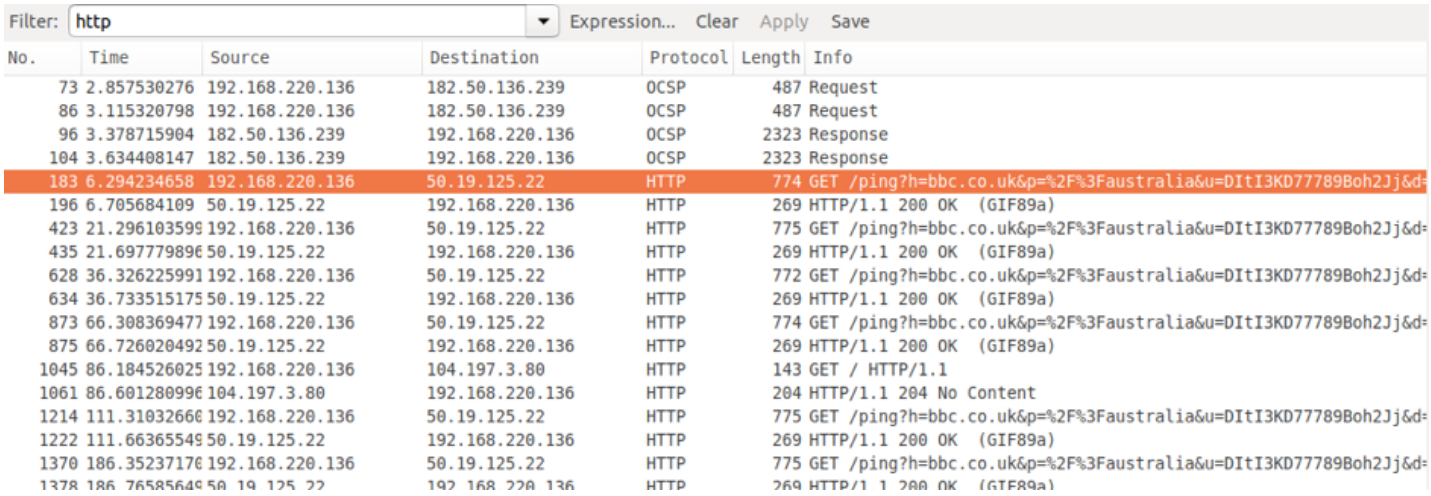
Say that we are interested in looking for DNS lookup traffic. An example would be an infected machine might be trying to contact a command and control centre and we are interested in associated DNS lookups.

To select DNS traffic you would enter DNS into the filter bar and select Apply. You would see something like this.



This shows DNS queries for `sync.crwdcntrolnet` sent from my computer `192.168.220.136` to a DNS server (in this case I am running in a virtual machine so its sending it to my host computer). You will probably see something different.

You could now filter out the HTTP traffic by following the same approach used for DNS traffic. You would see something like this.



Following a stream

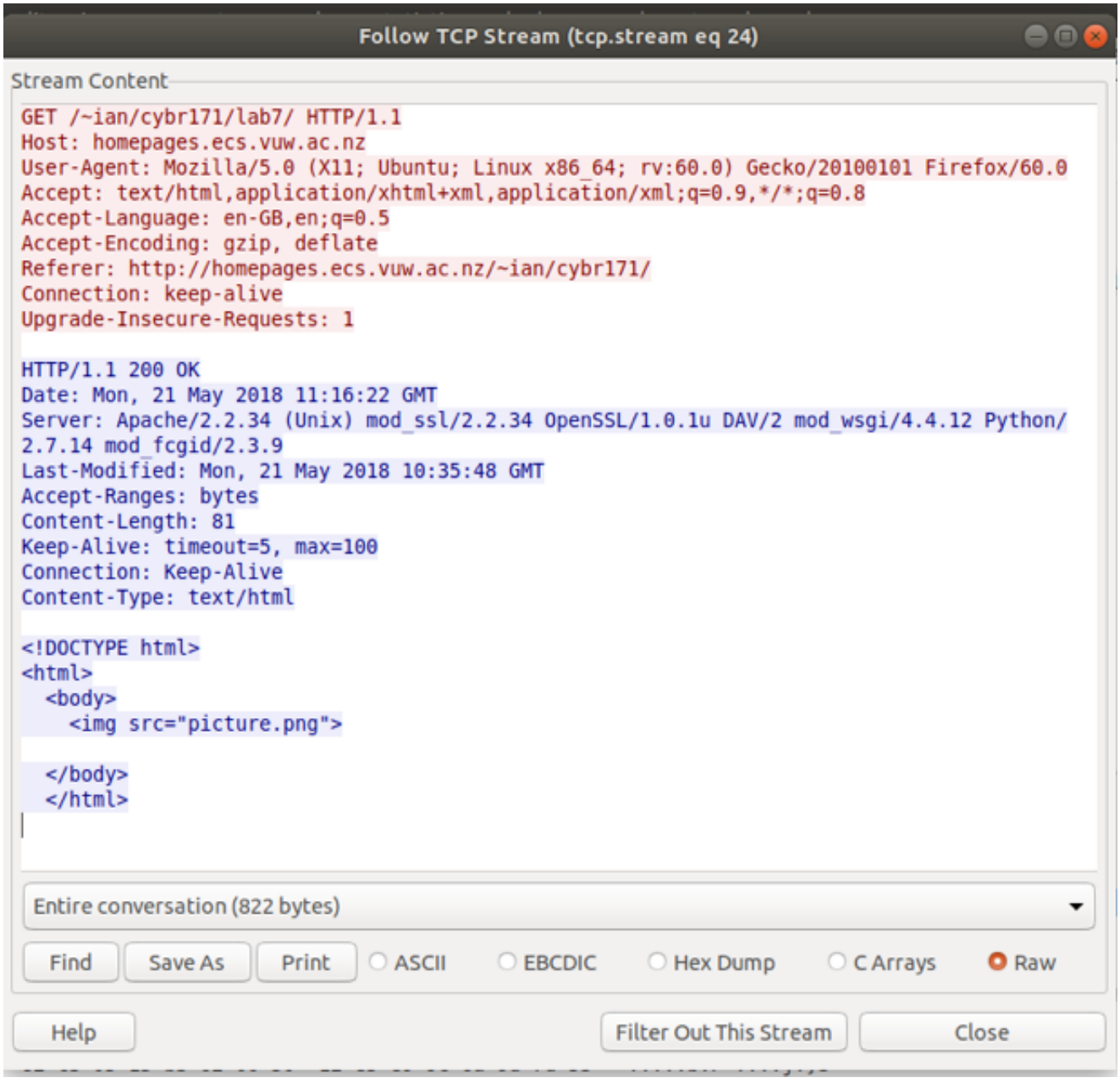
Many of our protocols have requests and responses that are spread across many packets. What we want to do when analysing traffic is to put these back together to make it easier to see what is being sent and retrieved.

For example, to look at a request for a HTTP page and the reply.

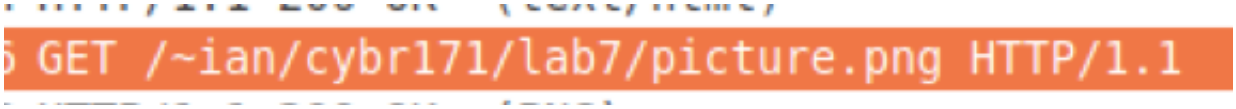
First you would use filtering to find all of the HTTP packets, and then locate a packet for interest. For example:

Assuming that we want to follow HTTP packets sent to a web server at `130.195.5.21` we would find a packet with this source address.

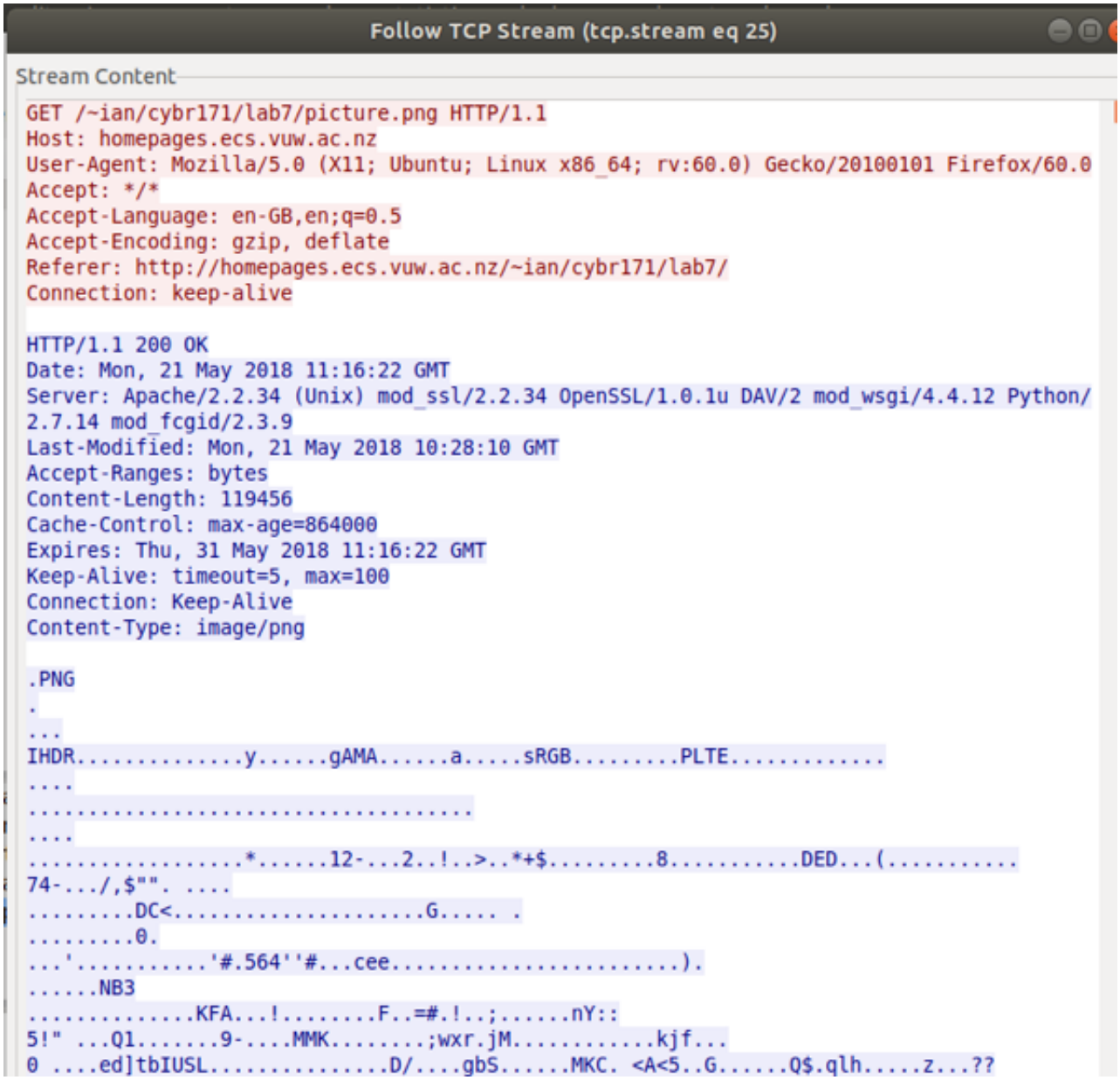
We then Right click on it and choose **Follow TCP stream**. You should see the full details of the request and response, such as:



This shows that we retrieve the page using `GET /~ian/cybr171/lab7/` and the text in blue is the reply including the HTML for the webpage. You can also use the same approach to retrieve the image file `picture.png` . Find the request for the image file:



You would then be able to use *Follow TCP stream* to show what is returned, for example:



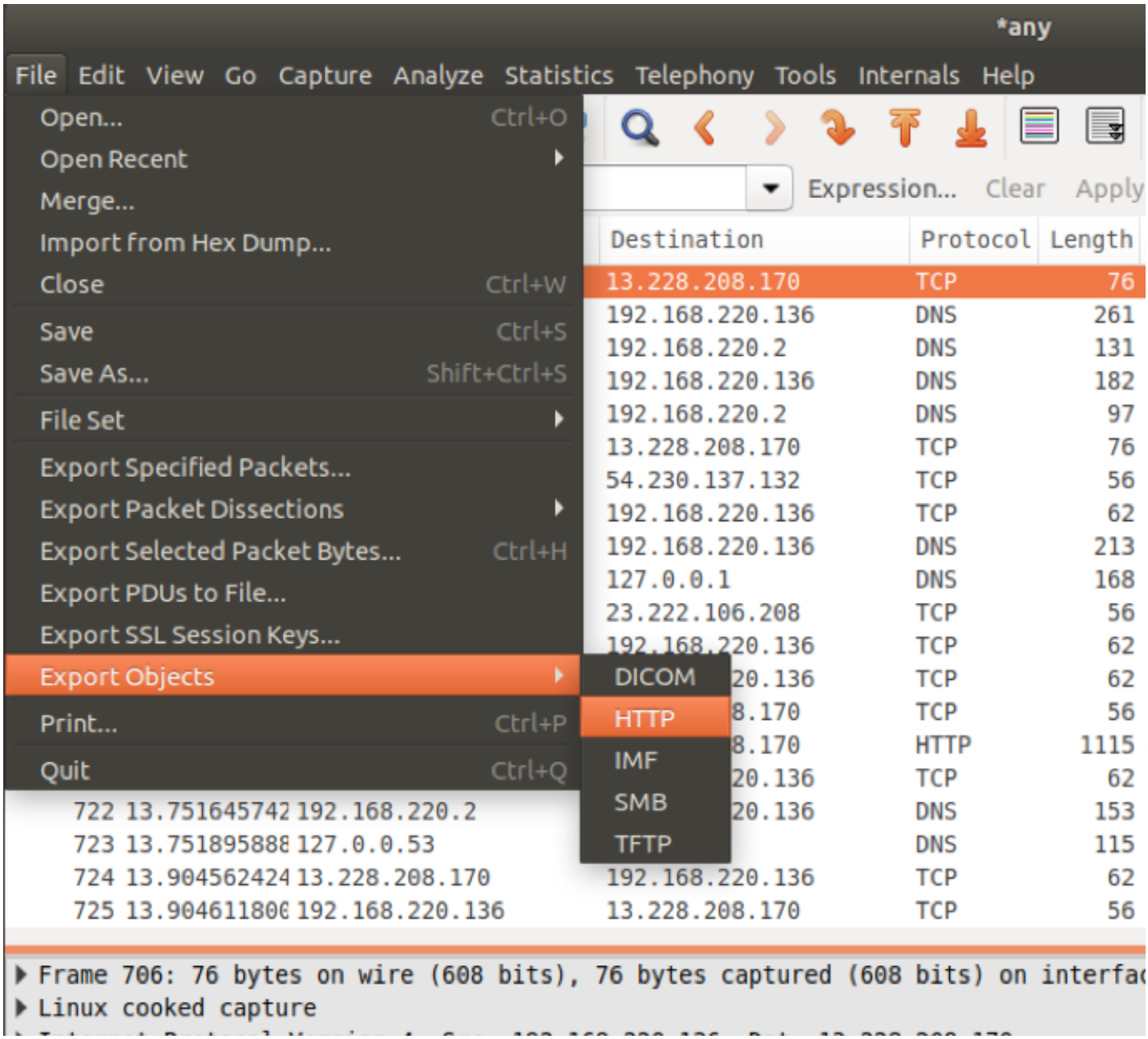
The binary representation of `picture.png` is shown in blue.

Extracting HTTP objects from a stream

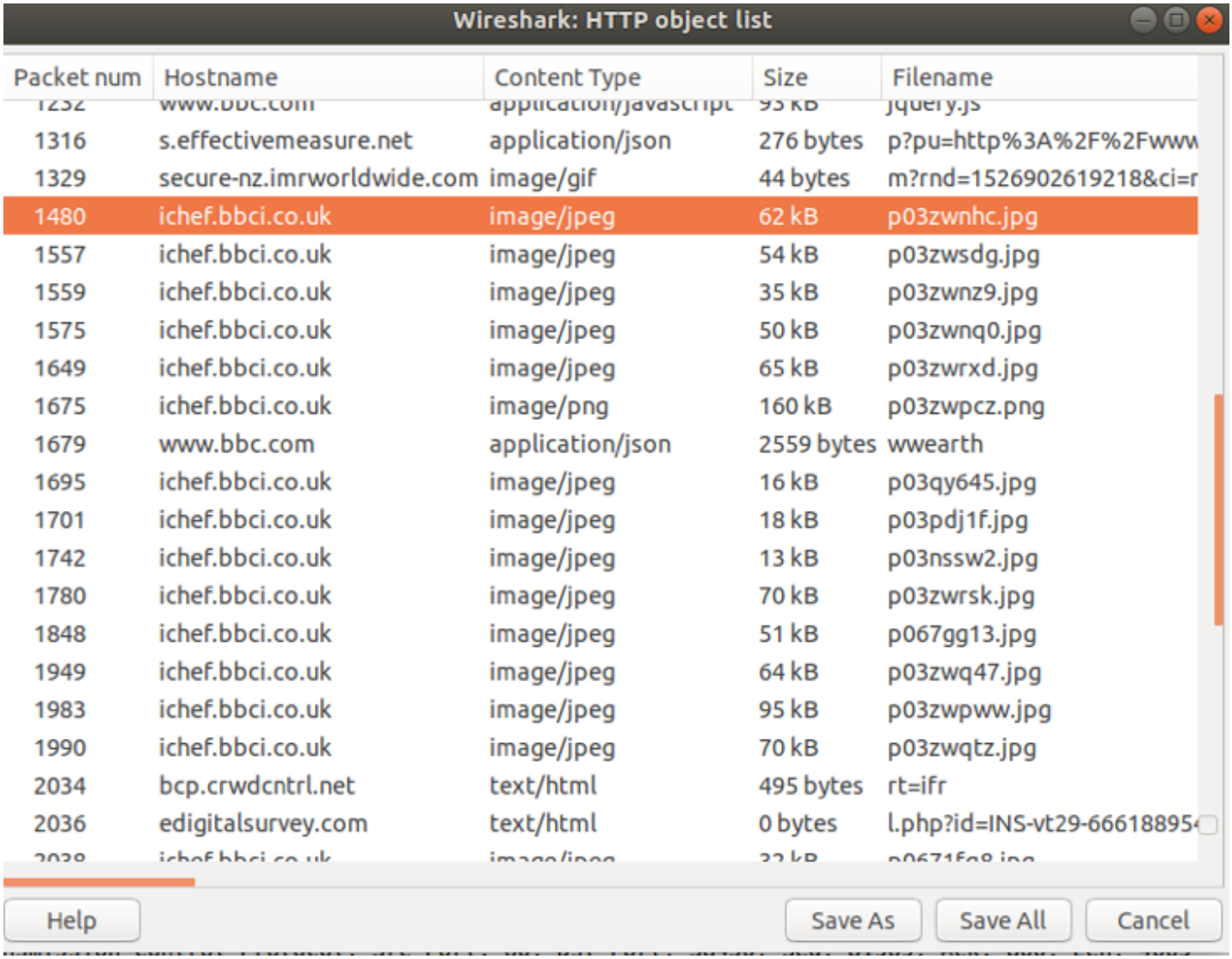
What is we want to analyse what a person has been browsing, in particular extract all of the pictures that they have been viewing (perhaps to look for content violating the organisational policies).

Wireshark comes with a useful features for exporting packet data in different formats. This makes some forms of analysis very easy because Wireshark can extract the data and convert it into useful formats, in this case extract files sent and received via HTTP.

To do this choose File, go to Export Objects and choose HTTP.



You should now see all of the HTTP objects (CSS, javascript, html and image files). You could save all of them off for later analysis but we will choose a single one.



It is possbile to save this to the desktop as picture.jpg and open it using a viewing program such as a browser. For example:

Learning more

We have scratched the surface of Wireshark. You can install this at home and try this on your own computer, see https://www.wireshark.org/#download. Furthermore, there are also some excellent video tutorials at https://www.wireshark.org/docs/.

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