Introduction to ISIS

SI-E Workshop

AfNOG 2012 - The Gambia

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IS-IS Standards History

- ISO 10589 specification that defines IS-IS as an OSI routing protocol for CLNS traffic
  - A Link State protocol with a 2 level hierarchical architecture
  - With Type/Length/Value (TLV) options for protocol enhancements
- The RFC 1195 added Support for IP
  - Thus Integrated IS-IS
  - I/IS-IS runs on top of the Data Link Layer or rather L2
  - Requires CLNP (Connectionless Network Protocol) to be configured
- RFC5308 adds IPv6 address family support to IS-IS
- RFC5120 defines Multi-Topology concept for IS-IS
  - Permits IPv4 and IPv6 topologies which are not identical

ISIS Levels

- ISIS has a 2 layer hierarchy;
  - Level-1 (the areas)
  - Level-1 (the backbone)
- A router can be either;
  - Level-1 (L1) router
  - Level-2 (L2) router
  - Level-1-2 (L1L2) router

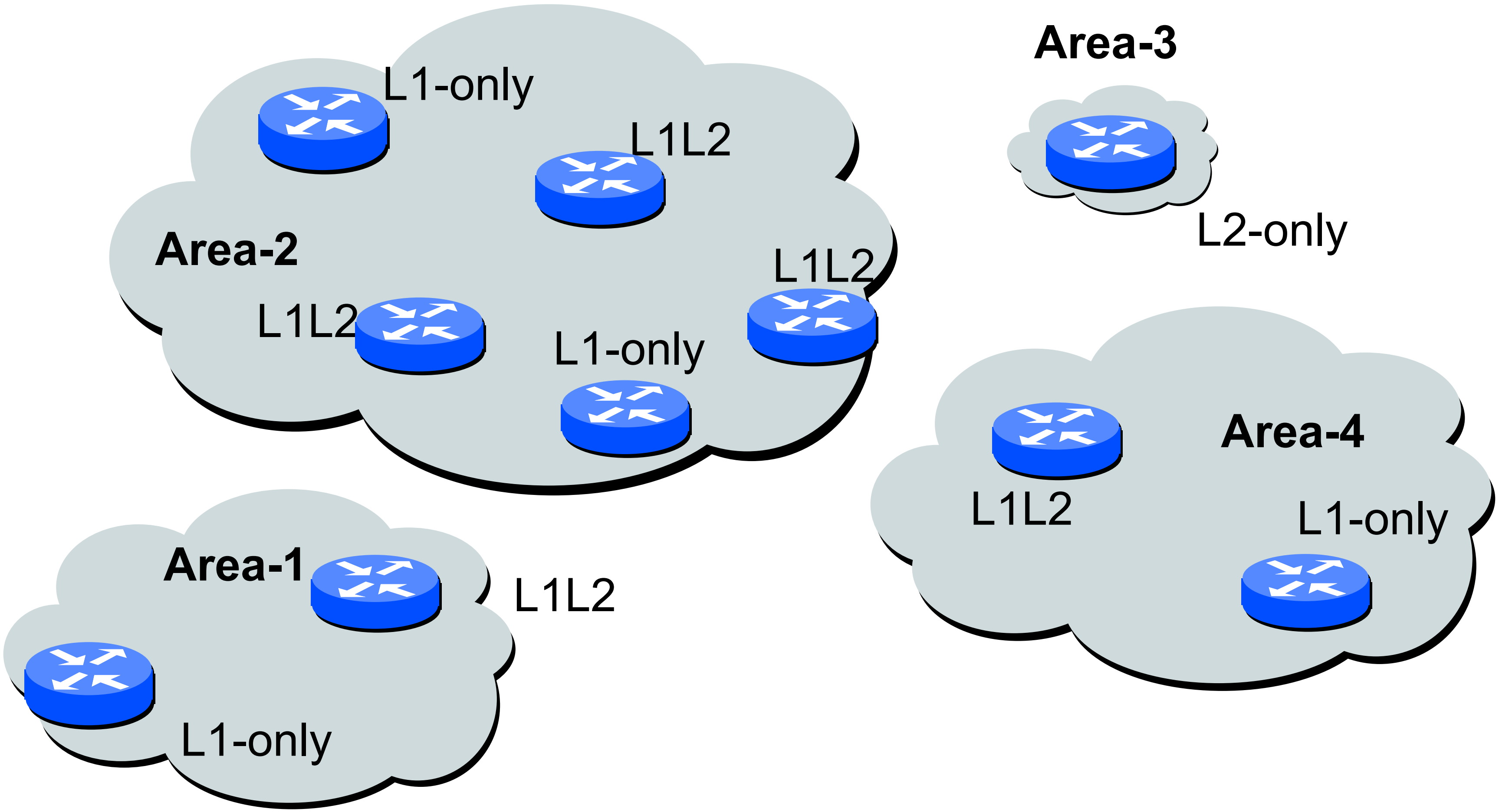
ISIS Levels

- Level-1 router
  - Has neighbours only on the same area
  - Has a level-1 LSDB with all routing information for the area
- Level-2 router
  - May have neighbours in the same or other areas
  - Has a Level-2 LSDB with all routing information about inter-area
- Level-1-2 router
  - May have neighbours on any area.
  - Has two separate LSDBs: level-1 LSDB & level-2 LSDB

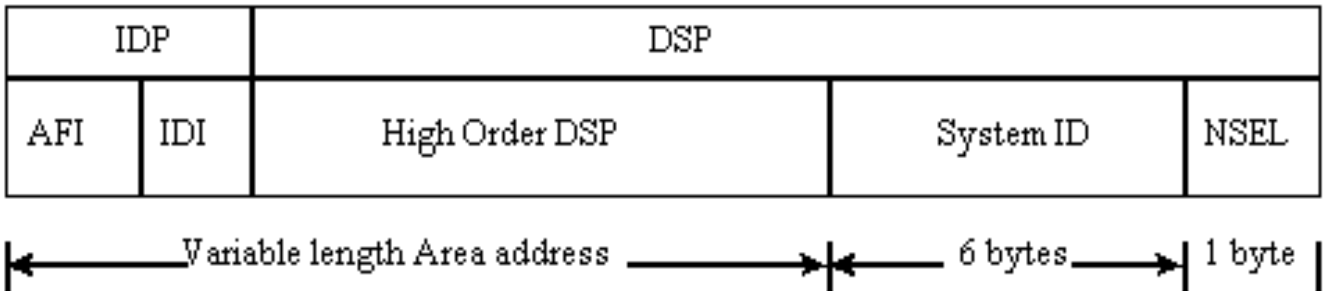
Backbone & Areas

- ISIS does not have a backbone area as such (like OSPF typical area 0)
- Instead the backbone is the contiguous collection of Level-2 capable routers
- ISIS area borders are on the wire or rather links and not routers
- Each router is identified with a unique Network Entity Title (NET)
  - NET is a Network Service Access Point (NSAP) where the n-selector is 0
  - (Compare with each router having a unique Router-ID with IP routing protocols)

L1, L2, and L1L2 Routers



NSAP and Addressing

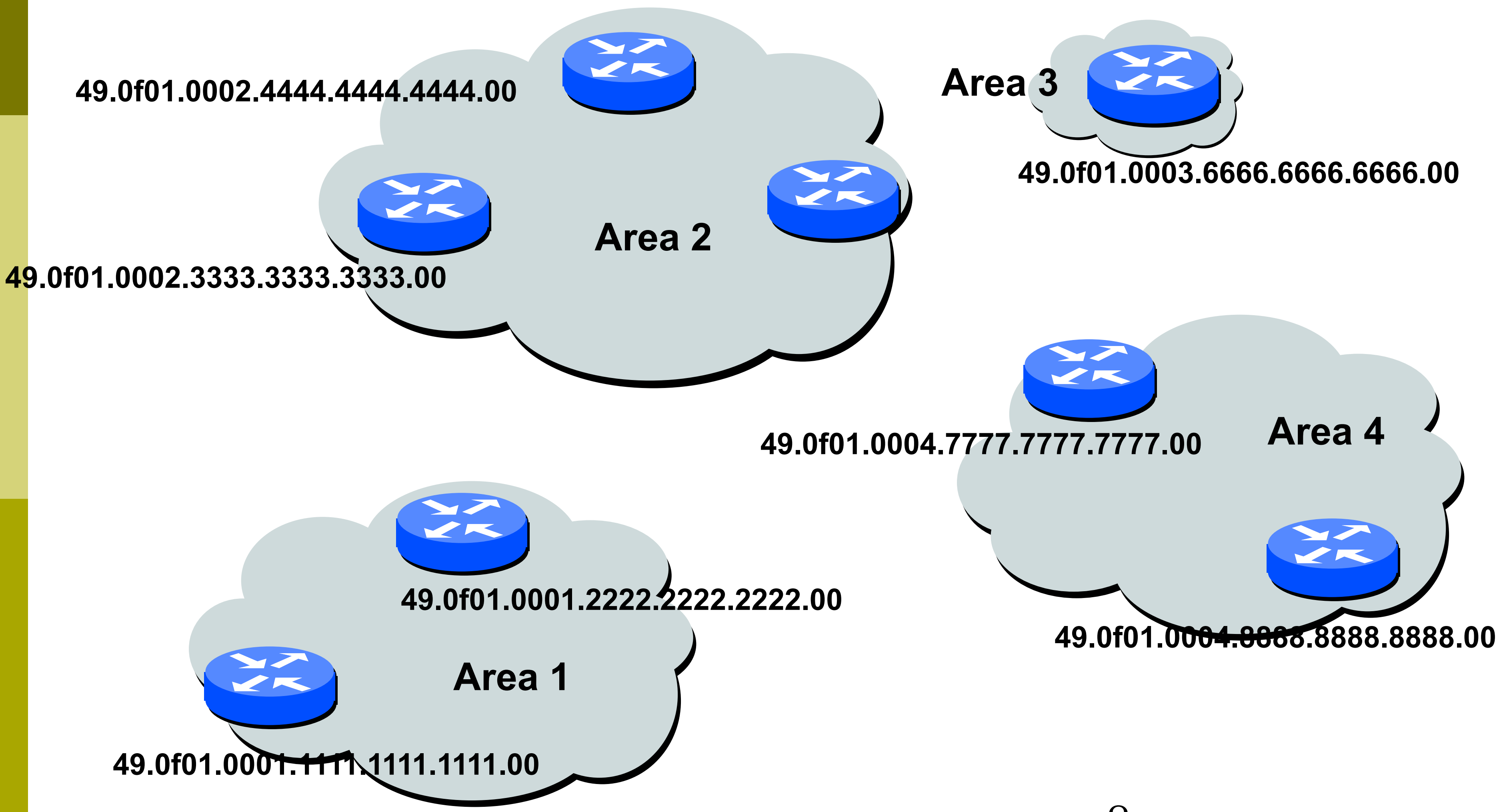


- NSAP: Network Service Access Point
  - Total length between 8 and 20 bytes
  - Area Address: variable length field (up to 13 bytes)
  - System ID: defines either an ES or IS in an area.
  - NSEL: N-selector. identifies a network service
- NET: The address of the network entity itself

Example **47.0001.aaaa.bbbb.cccc.00** Where,

- Area Address = **47.0001**
- SysID = **aaaa.bbbb.cccc**
- Nsel = **00**

Typical NSAP Addressing



Addressing Common Practices

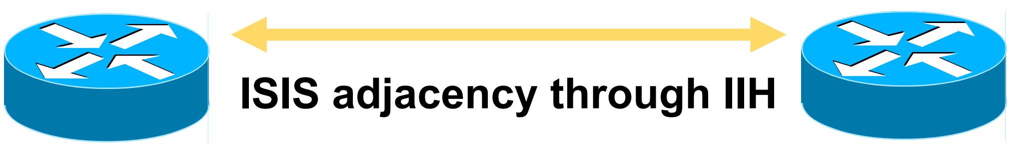
- ISP's typically choose NSAP addresses thus:
  - First 8 bits – pick a number (usually 49)
  - Next 16 bits – area
  - Next 48 bits – router loopback address (BCP)
  - Final 8 bits – zero
- Example:
  - NSAP: 49.0001.1921.6800.1001.00
  - Router: 192.168.1.1 (loopback) in Area 1

Addressing & Design Practices

- ISPs typically use one area (eg.49.0001)
  - Multiple areas only come into consideration once the network is several hundred routers big
- NET begins with 49
  - “Private” address range
- All routers are in L2 only (Core Network)
  - Note: Cisco IOS defaults to L1L2
  - Set L2 under ISIS router configuration (can also be done per interface)

Adjacencies – Hello PDU (IIS)

- Hello Protocol Data Units (PDUs) are exchanged between routers.
- Typically to establish and maintain adjacencies between IS's.



- IS-IS area addresses are also exchanged in this IIH PDUs.
- A PDU is an IS-IS equivalent of a packet

Link State PDU (LSP)

- Each router creates an LSP and floods it to neighbours
- A level-1 router will create level-1 LSP(s)
- A level-2 router will create level-2 LSP(s)
- A level-1-2 router will create
  - Independent level-1 LSP(s) and
  - Independent level-2 LSP(s)

The ISIS LSP

- LSPs have a Fixed Header and TLV coded contents
- Typically an LSP header contains
  - LSP-id Sequence number
  - Remaining Lifetime Checksum
  - Type of LSP (level-1, level-2)
  - Attached bit
  - Overload bit
- The LSP contents are coded as TLV (Type, Length, Value) and contain;
  - Area addresses
  - IS neighbours
  - Authentication Information

Link State Database Content

- Each IS maintains a separate LSDB for either level-1 or level-2 LSPs
- The LSDB contains:
  - LSP headers and contents
  - **SRM** = Send Routing Message
  - **SSN** = Send Sequence Number
  - **SRM bits**: set per interface when a router has to flood an LSP through that interface
  - **SSN bits**: set per interface when router has to send a PSNP for this LSP

Flooding of LSPs

- New LSPs are flooded to all neighbors
- All IS's get all LSPs
- Each LSP has a sequence number
- There are 2 kinds of flooding:
  - Flooding on a point to point link and
  - Flooding on a LAN

Flooding on a p2p link

- Once the adjacency is established either routers send CSNP packet.
- And in case of any missing LSP's, if not present in the received CSNP both routers would send a request!!!!!
- This is done through a PSNP packet request
- PSNP (Partial Sequence Number PDU)
- CSNP (Complete Sequence Number PDU)

Flooding on a LAN

- Each LAN has a Designated Router (DIS)
- The DIS has two tasks
  - Conducting LSP flooding over the LAN
  - Creating and updating a special LSP describing the LAN topology (Pseudo-node LSP)
- DIS election is based on priority
  - Best practice is to select two routers and give them higher priority
  - Thus, in case of any failure one provides deterministic backup for the other
  - DIS Tie breaker is router with the highest MAC address

Flooding on a LAN Cont...

- DIS conducts the flooding over the LAN
- DIS multicasts CSNP every 10 seconds
- All routers on the LAN check the CSNP against their own LSDB.
- In case of any missing content withing the LSP, the IS may request for specific re-transmissions of uptodate LSP's via a PSNP request

Complete Sequence Number PDU

- Used to distribute a routers complete link-state database
- If the LSDB is large, multiple CSNPs are sent
- Used on 2 occasions:
  - Periodic multicast by DIS (every 10 seconds) to synchronise the LSDB over LAN subnets
  - On p2p links when link comes up

Partial Sequence Number PDUs

- Typically exchanged on p2p links, PSNP are used to ack and request link-state info
- Two functions
  - Acknowledge receipt of an LSP
  - Request transmission of latest LSP
- PSNPs describe LSPs by its header
  - LSP identifier
  - Sequence number
  - Remaining lifetime
  - LSP checksum

Network Design Issues

- As in all IP network designs, the key issue is the addressing layout
- ISIS supports a large number of routers in a single area
- When network is so large requiring the use of areas, employ summary-addresses
- >400 routers in the backbone is quite doable … according to Philip Smith :-)

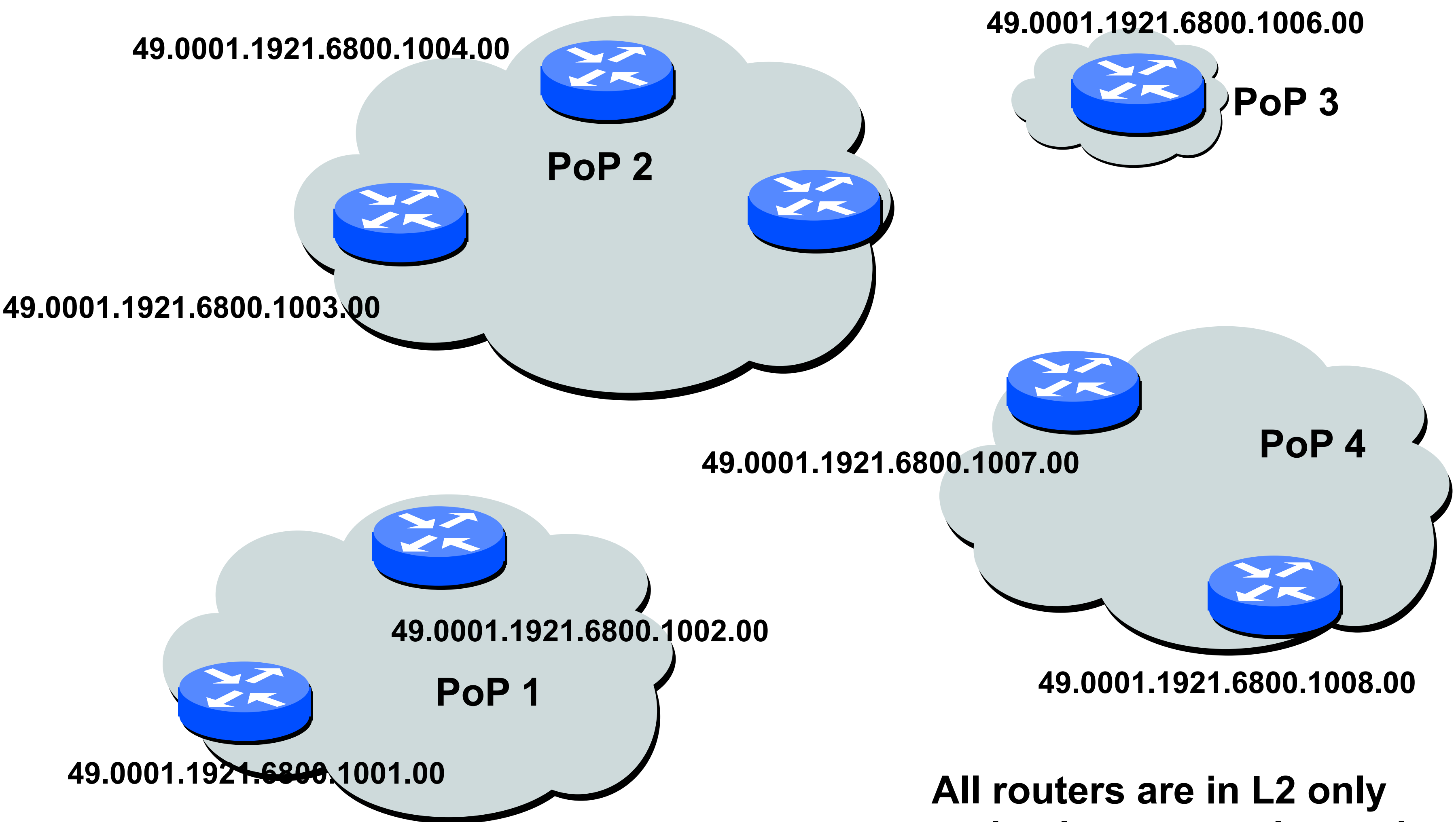
Network Design Issues

- Link cost
  - Default on all interfaces is 10
  - (Compare with OSPF which sets cost according to link bandwidth)
  - Manually configured according to routing strategy
- Summary address cost
  - Equal to the best more specific cost
- Backbone has to be contiguous
  - Ensures continuity through redundancy
- Area partitioning
  - Design in a way that backbone can NOT be partitioned

Scaling Issues

- Areas vs. single area
  - Use areas where
    - sub-optimal routing is not an issue
    - areas with one single exit point
- Start with L2-only everywhere
  - Thus future implementation of any level-1 areas would become easier
  - Backbone continuity is ensured from start

Typical ISP Design



All routers are in L2 only
and only one area is used

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