

A light gray world map with several orange dots scattered across it, representing various global locations. The dots are concentrated in North America, Europe, and parts of Asia and Africa.

OpenDNS

Managing DDoS Attacks

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who am i

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Responsible for the **Manageability**, **Scalability** and **Reliability** of the OpenDNS resolver infrastructure

DNS DoS

- **Accidental Attack**
 - Queries from one source repeated too often
- **Amplification Attack**
 - Falsified source (the target)
 - Biggest possible answer payload
- **NXDomain Attack**
 - Targeting a specific authority
 - Answer not likely to be cached
 - Uses a botnet **and** falsified source addresses

Rate Limiting

- Most basic limitation, handles **Accidental** and **Amplification** attacks
- Based on the source address
- Limiting becomes more aggressive if the source is persistent
- Open to abuse by faking the target's IP as the source IP
- Different limits based on client categorization, query type, domain categorization, response size, client customer status

Global Attack Identification

Our big data systems consolidate query statistics and identify possible attacks based on the following criteria

- At least 500 unique domains queried in a 10 second period
(this is unusual except for public suffixes and RBLs)
- Negative response ratio must be (95%) of which at least 30% must be **SERVFAIL**
- The longest domain is chosen

The domain-droplist

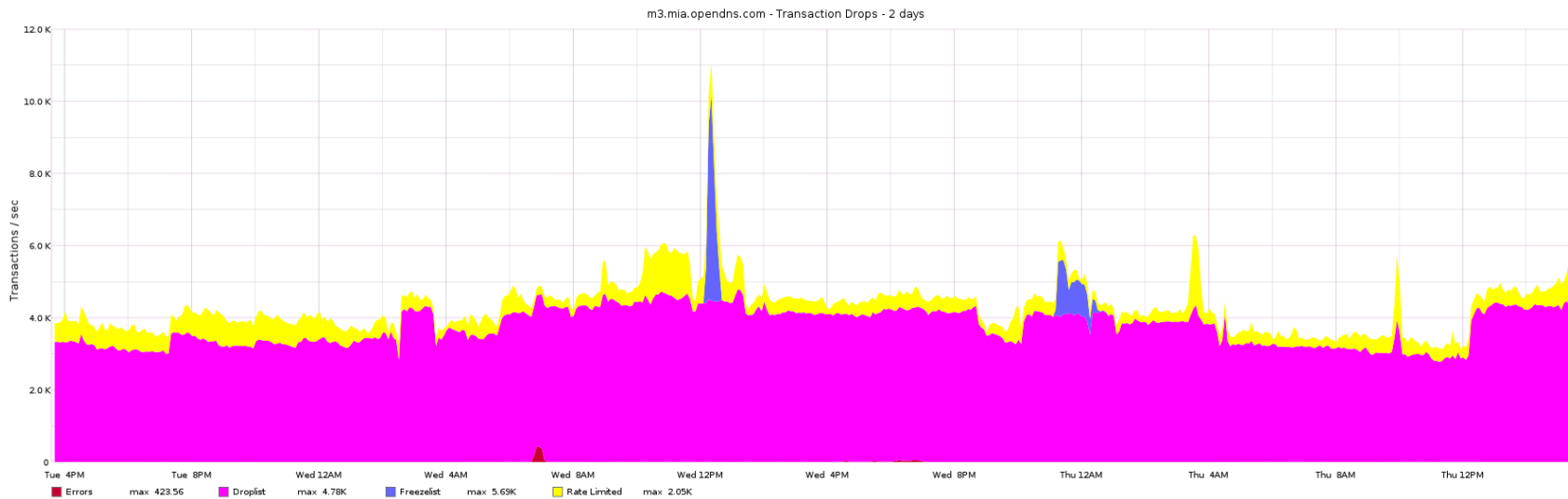
- Queries to domains in the domain-droplist are dropped; no response is sent to the client
- The domain-droplist is populated based on domains satisfying the **Global Attack Identification** criteria, and having an average of less than 100 queries per hour over the last two weeks
- The domain-droplist update is pushed globally in just a few seconds

The domain-freezelist

- Queries to domains in the domain-freezelist are served if a cache entry (expired or not) can be found
- Queries to domains in the domain-freezelist are served if the client can be identified (via EDNS0 or source IP)
- Queries to domains in the domain-freezelist are served over TCP
- The domain-freezelist is populated based on domains satisfying the **Global Attack Identification** criteria, and having an average of between 100 and 500,000 queries per hour over the last two weeks
- The domain-freezelist update is pushed globally in just a few seconds

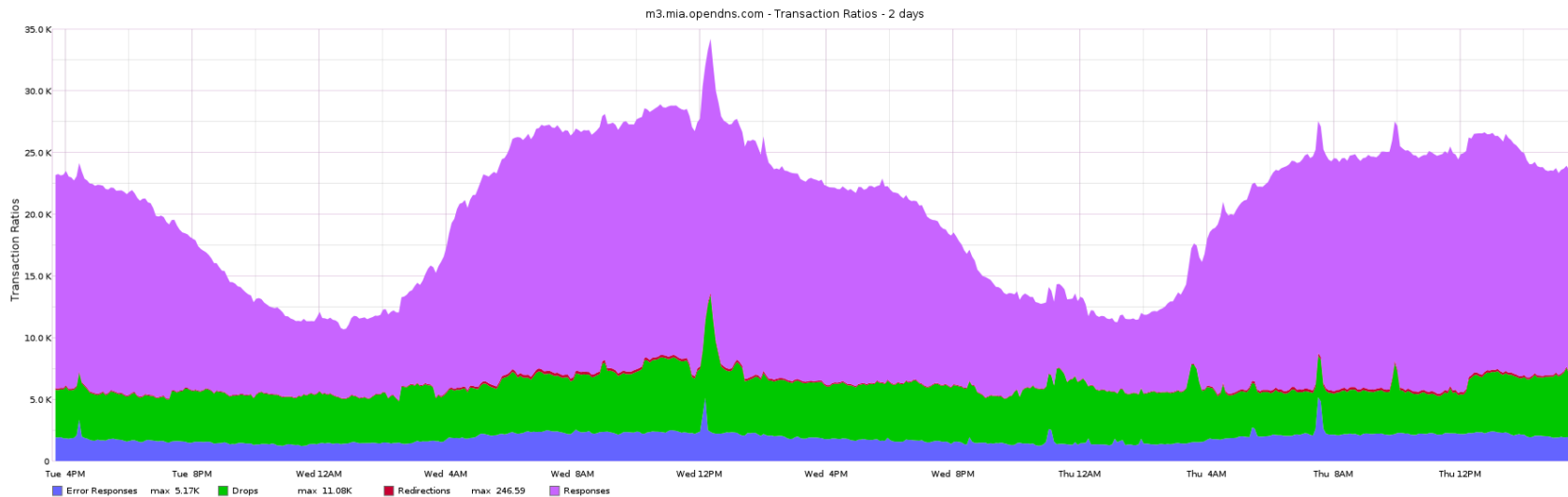
Dropped Data

A single resolver can drop thousands of queries per second. Drops (magenta) peak at 4,780/second here.



Transaction Ratios

As a ratio against “normal” traffic (purple), up to 40% might be dropped (green). Daily this is about 15 billion of 95 billion.



Authoritative RTT

We also avoid performing our own DoS against authorities

- Maintain RTT per control/qtype/auth-IP combination
- Candidate nameservers are used lowest RTT first
- Avoids querying latent authorities
 - May be under attack
 - May be "far away"
 - May be under maintenance
- If latency hits a predefined threshold, the authority is considered "down"
 - Put in timeout (40 seconds)
 - May cause immediate SERVFAIL responses to clients

RTT Tracking

Round Trip Times are tracked per **NS IP** per **zone** per **qtype**

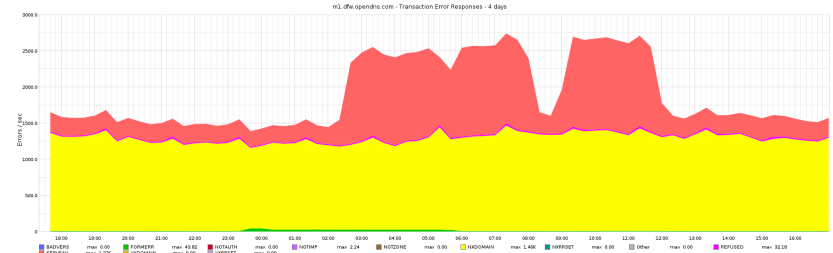
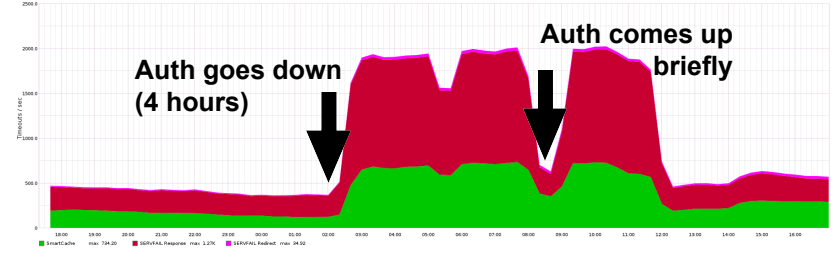
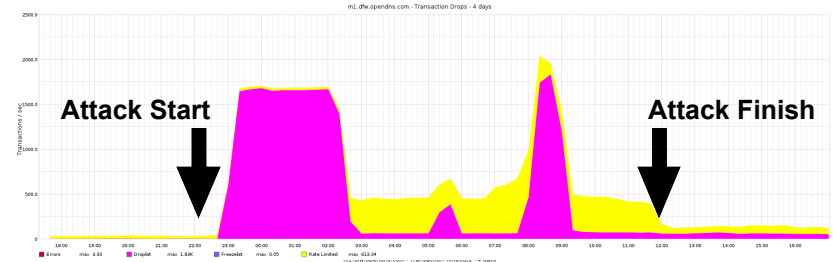
| | ns0 | ns1 | ns2 |
|------|----------|----------|--------|
| 4 | | | RTT=4+ |
| 2 | | | |
| 1 | | | |
| 0.6 | RTT=0.41 | | |
| 0.35 | | RTT=0.12 | |

NXDOMAIN Attack Footprint

DROPEd (magenta) and
ratelimited (yellow) traffic

SERVFAIL (red) vs
SMARTCACHE (green)

SERVFAIL (salmon) vs NXDOMAIN and
other non-zero rcodes

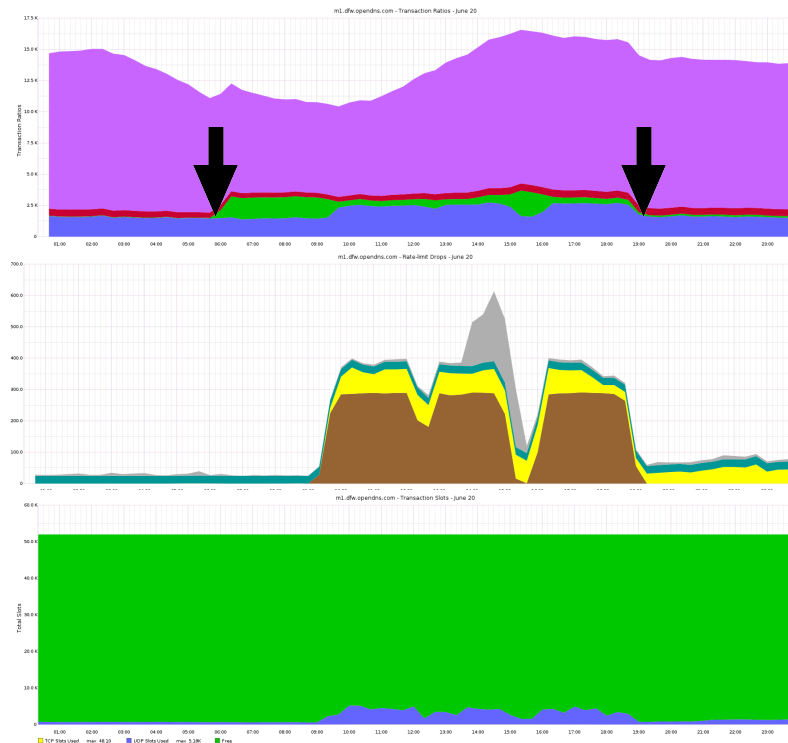


NXDOMAIN Attack Footprint

Ratios show the attack is all additional dropped (green) data

Ratelimits show SERVFAIL (brown) and Oversize (yellow) drops

The resolver “suffers” keeping additional query context



Future Technologies



Improved Freezelist “Thawing”

Improvements are in magenta

- UDP queries matching the freezelist
 - If in the main-cache (maybe expired), proceed as normal
 - If in the freeze-cache (small cache), send a TC
 - Store in the freeze-cache
 - Drop
- TCP queries matching the freezelist
 - Respond as normal
 - Close the connection after response is sent
 - Broadcast the answer to all resolvers in the datacenter

NXDOMAIN count

Store an NXDOMAIN count at the zone cut

- Z.mydomain.com stored as level1-nxdomain-count
- Y.Z.mydomain.com stored as level2-nxdomain-count
- X.Y.Z.mydomain.com stored as level3+-nxdomain-count
- *.X.Y.Z.mydomain.com stored as level3+-nxdomain-count
- Ratelimit based on per-zone *-nxdomain-count

Whitelist Labels

Labels such as `{www,mail,ns}0?[0-9]?` should be whitelisted

- Apply the whitelist to domain-freezelist at top level only
 - `www01.target-domain.com` is whitelisted
 - `www01.ac84lsdlies.target-domain.com` is not whitelisted
- Apply the whitelist to NXDOMAIN counts at level ≤ 3
 - `mail.target-domain.com` **is not** counted when tracking NXDOMAIN attacks
 - `mail.a.b.c.target-domain.com` **is** counted when tracking NXDOMAIN attacks

Sign up for better control:

<http://www.OpenDNS.com/>

Set your DNS:

208.67.220.220

208.67.222.222