

Space data and information transfer systems — AOS (advanced orbiting systems) space data link protocol

ICS 49.140

National foreword

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The UK participation in its preparation was entrusted to Technical Committee ACE/68, Space systems and operations, which has the responsibility to:

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Summary of pages

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INTERNATIONAL STANDARD

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Space data and information transfer systems — AOS (advanced orbiting systems) space data link protocol

*Systèmes de transfert des données et informations spatiales —
Protocole de liaison pour données spatiales AOS (systèmes
perfectionnés sur orbite)*



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Foreword

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ISO 22666 was prepared by the Consultative Committee for Space Data Systems (CCSDS) (as CCSDS 732.0-B-1, September 2003) and was adopted (without modifications except those stated in Clause 2 of this International Standard) by Technical Committee ISO/TC 20, *Aircraft and space vehicles*, Subcommittee SC 13, *Space data and information transfer systems*.

Space data and information transfer systems — AOS (advanced orbiting systems) space data link protocol

1 Scope

This International Standard specifies the advanced orbiting systems (AOS) space data link protocol, a data link layer protocol as defined in ISO/IEC 7498-1, that is to be used over space-to-ground, ground-to-space, or space-to-space communications links by space missions.

The scope and field of application are furthermore detailed in subclauses 1.1 and 1.2 of the enclosed CCSDS publication.

2 Requirements

Requirements are the technical recommendations made in the following publication (reproduced on the following pages), which is adopted as an International Standard:

CCSDS 732.0-B-1, September 2003, *AOS space data link protocol*.

For the purposes of international standardization, the modifications outlined below shall apply to the specific clauses and paragraphs of publication CCSDS 732.0-B-1.

Pages i to v

This part is information which is relevant to the CCSDS publication only.

Page 1-5

Add the following information to the references indicated:

[3] Document CCSDS 131.0-B-1, September 2003, is equivalent to ISO 22641:2005.

[4] Document CCSDS 135.0-B-1, January 2002, is equivalent to ISO 22647:—¹⁾.

[6] Document CCSDS 133.0-B-1, September 2003, is equivalent to ISO 22646:2005.

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Add the following information to the references indicated:

[B4] Document CCSDS 910.4-B-1, May 1996, is equivalent to ISO 15396:1998.

1) To be published.

[B5] Document CCSDS 232.0-B-1, September 2003, is equivalent to ISO 22664:2005.

It has been agreed with the Consultative Committee for Space Data Systems that Subcommittee ISO/TC 20/SC 13 will be consulted in the event of any revision or amendment of publication CCSDS 732.0-B-1. To this end, NASA will act as a liaison body between CCSDS and ISO.

Consultative Committee for Space Data Systems

RECOMMENDATION FOR SPACE
DATA SYSTEM STANDARDS

AOS SPACE DATA LINK PROTOCOL

CCSDS 732.0-B-1

BLUE BOOK

September 2003



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CCSDS RECOMMENDATION FOR AOS SPACE DATA LINK PROTOCOL

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This document has been approved for publication by the Management Council of the Consultative Committee for Space Data Systems (CCSDS) and represents the consensus technical agreement of the participating CCSDS Member Agencies. The procedure for review and authorization of CCSDS Recommendations is detailed in reference [B1], and the record of Agency participation in the authorization of this document can be obtained from the CCSDS Secretariat at the address below.

This Recommendation is published and maintained by:

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National Aeronautics and Space Administration
Washington, DC 20546, USA

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STATEMENT OF INTENT

The Consultative Committee for Space Data Systems (CCSDS) is an organization officially established by the management of member space Agencies. The Committee meets periodically to address data systems problems that are common to all participants, and to formulate sound technical solutions to these problems. Inasmuch as participation in the CCSDS is completely voluntary, the results of Committee actions are termed **Recommendations** and are not considered binding on any Agency.

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- Whenever an Agency establishes a CCSDS-related **standard**, this **standard** will be in accord with the relevant **Recommendation**. Establishing such a **standard** does not preclude other provisions which an Agency may develop.
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 - The **standard** itself.
 - The anticipated date of initial operational capability.
 - The anticipated duration of operational service.
- Specific service arrangements are made via memoranda of agreement. Neither this Recommendation nor any ensuing standard is a substitute for a memorandum of agreement.

No later than five years from its date of issuance, this **Recommendation** will be reviewed by the CCSDS to determine whether it should: (1) remain in effect without change; (2) be changed to reflect the impact of new technologies, new requirements, or new directions; or, (3) be retired or canceled.

In those instances when a new version of a **Recommendation** is issued, existing CCSDS-related Agency standards and implementations are not negated or deemed to be non-CCSDS compatible. It is the responsibility of each Agency to determine when such standards or implementations are to be modified. Each Agency is, however, strongly encouraged to direct planning for its new standards and implementations towards the later version of the Recommendation.

CCSDS RECOMMENDATION FOR AOS SPACE DATA LINK PROTOCOL

FOREWORD

This document is a technical Recommendation for use in developing flight and ground systems for space missions and has been prepared by the Consultative Committee for Space Data Systems (CCSDS). The Advanced Orbiting Systems (AOS) Space Data Link Protocol described herein is intended for missions that are cross-supported between Agencies of the CCSDS.

This Recommendation specifies a communications protocol to be used by space missions to transfer space application data over ground-to-space or space-to-space communications links. This Recommendation is developed from the specifications of the Data Link Layer portion of an older CCSDS Recommendation (reference [B2]), which defines essentially the same protocol and services but in a slightly different context.

This Recommendation does not change the major technical contents defined in reference [B2], but the presentation of the specification has been changed so that:

- a) this protocol can be used to transfer any data over any space link in either direction;
- b) all CCSDS space link protocols are specified in a unified manner;
- c) the specification matches the OSI Basic Reference Model (references [1] and [2]).

Together with the change in presentation, a few technical specifications in reference [B2] have been changed in order to define all Space Data Link Protocols in a unified way. Also, some technical terms in reference [B2] have been changed in order to unify the terminology used in all the CCSDS Recommendations that define space link. These changes are listed in annex C of this Recommendation.

Through the process of normal evolution, it is expected that expansion, deletion or modification to this document may occur. This Recommendation is therefore subject to CCSDS document management and change control procedures, as defined in reference [B1]. Current versions of CCSDS documents are maintained at the CCSDS Web site:

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Questions relating to the contents or status of this document should be addressed to the CCSDS Secretariat at the address indicated on page i.

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 PURPOSE

The purpose of this Recommendation is to specify the Advanced Orbiting Systems (AOS) Space Data Link Protocol. This protocol is a Data Link Layer protocol (see reference [1]) to be used over space-to-ground, ground-to-space, or space-to-space communications links by space missions.

1.2 SCOPE

This Recommendation defines the AOS Space Data Link Protocol in terms of:

- a) the services provided to the users of this protocol;
- b) the protocol data units employed by the protocol; and
- c) the procedures performed by the protocol.

It does not specify:

- a) individual implementations or products;
- b) the implementation of service interfaces within real systems;
- c) the methods or technologies required to perform the procedures; or
- d) the management activities required to configure and control the protocol.

1.3 APPLICABILITY

This Recommendation applies to the creation of Agency standards and to future data communications over space links between Consultative Committee for Space Data Systems (CCSDS) Agencies in cross-support situations. The Recommendation includes comprehensive specification of the services and protocol for inter-Agency cross support. It is neither a specification of, nor a design for, real systems that may be implemented for existing or future missions.

The Recommendation specified in this document is to be invoked through the normal standards programs of each CCSDS Agency and is applicable to those missions for which cross support based on capabilities described in this Recommendation is anticipated. Where mandatory capabilities are clearly indicated in sections of the Recommendation, they must be implemented when this document is used as a basis for cross support. Where options are allowed or implied, implementation of these options is subject to specific bilateral cross support agreements between the Agencies involved.

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1.4 RATIONALE

The CCSDS believes it is important to document the rationale underlying the recommendations chosen, so that future evaluations of proposed changes or improvements will not lose sight of previous decisions.

1.5 DOCUMENT STRUCTURE

This document is divided into five numbered sections and three annexes:

- a) section 1 presents the purpose, scope, applicability and rationale of this Recommendation and lists the conventions, definitions, and references used throughout the Recommendation;
- b) section 2 provides an overview of the AOS Space Data Link Protocol;
- c) section 3 defines the services provided by the protocol entity;
- d) section 4 specifies the protocol data units and procedures employed by the protocol entity;
- e) section 5 specifies the managed parameters used by the protocol entity;
- f) annex A lists all acronyms used within this document;
- g) annex B provides a list of informative references;
- h) annex C lists the changes from the older CCSDS Recommendation (reference [B2]).

1.6 CONVENTIONS AND DEFINITIONS

1.6.1 DEFINITIONS

1.6.1.1 Definitions from the Open Systems Interconnection (OSI) Basic Reference Model

This Recommendation makes use of a number of terms defined in reference [1]. The use of those terms in this Recommendation shall be understood in a generic sense; i.e., in the sense that those terms are generally applicable to any of a variety of technologies that provide for the exchange of information between real systems. Those terms are:

- a) blocking;
- b) connection;
- c) Data Link Layer;
- d) entity;
- e) flow control;

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- f) Network Layer;
- g) peer entities;
- h) Physical Layer;
- i) protocol control information;
- j) protocol data unit;
- k) real system;
- l) segmenting;
- m) service;
- n) Service Access Point (SAP);
- o) SAP address;
- p) service data unit.

1.6.1.2 Definitions from OSI Service Definition Conventions

This Recommendation makes use of a number of terms defined in reference [2]. The use of those terms in this Recommendation shall be understood in a generic sense; i.e., in the sense that those terms are generally applicable to any of a variety of technologies that provide for the exchange of information between real systems. Those terms are:

- a) confirmation;
- b) indication;
- c) primitive;
- d) request;
- e) response;
- f) service provider;
- g) service user.

1.6.1.3 Terms Defined in this Recommendation

For the purposes of this Recommendation, the following definitions also apply. Many other terms that pertain to specific items are defined in the appropriate sections.

aperiodic: not *periodic* (see below).

asynchronous: not *synchronous* (see below).

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delimited: having a known (and finite) length; applies to data in the context of data handling.

Mission Phase: a period of a mission during which specified communications characteristics are fixed. The transition between two consecutive Mission Phases may cause an interruption of the communications services.

periodic: of or pertaining to a sequence of events in which each event occurs at a fixed time interval (within specified tolerance) after the previous event in the sequence.

Physical Channel: a stream of bits transferred over a space link in a single direction.

space link: a communications link between a spacecraft and its associated ground system or between two spacecraft. A space link consists of one or more Physical Channels in one or both directions.

synchronous: of or pertaining to a sequence of events occurring in a fixed time relationship (within specified tolerance) to another sequence of events. Note that 'synchronous' does not necessarily imply 'periodic' or 'constant rate'.

1.6.2 NOMENCLATURE

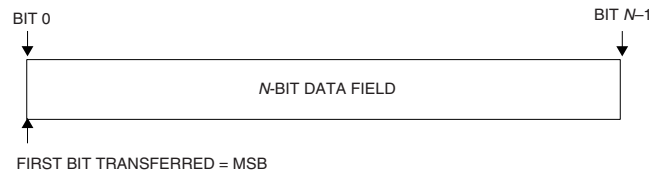
The following conventions apply throughout this Recommendation:

- a) the words 'shall' and 'must' imply a binding and verifiable specification;
- b) the word 'should' implies an optional, but desirable, specification;
- c) the word 'may' implies an optional specification;
- d) the words 'is', 'are', and 'will' imply statements of fact.

1.6.3 CONVENTIONS

In this document, the following convention is used to identify each bit in an N -bit field. The first bit in the field to be transmitted (i.e., the most left justified when drawing a figure) is defined to be 'Bit 0'; the following bit is defined to be 'Bit 1' and so on up to 'Bit $N-1$ '. When the field is used to express a binary value (such as a counter), the Most Significant Bit (MSB) shall be the first transmitted bit of the field, i.e., 'Bit 0' (see figure 1-1).

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**Figure 1-1: Bit Numbering Convention**

In accordance with standard data-communications practice, data fields are often grouped into eight-bit ‘words’ which conform to the above convention. Throughout this Recommendation, such an eight-bit word is called an ‘octet’. The numbering for octets within a data structure starts with zero. By CCSDS convention, all ‘spare’ bits shall be permanently set to ‘0’.

1.7 REFERENCES

The following documents contain provisions which, through reference in this text, constitute provisions of this Recommendation. At the time of publication, the editions indicated were valid. All documents are subject to revision, and users of this Recommendation are encouraged to investigate the possibility of applying the most recent editions of the documents indicated below. The CCSDS Secretariat maintains a register of currently valid CCSDS Recommendations.

- [1] *Information Technology—Open Systems Interconnection—Basic Reference Model: The Basic Model*. International Standard, ISO/IEC 7498-1. 2nd ed. Geneva: ISO, 1994.
- [2] *Information Technology—Open Systems Interconnection—Basic Reference Model—Conventions for the Definition of OSI Services*. International Standard, ISO/IEC 10731:1994. Geneva: ISO, 1994.
- [3] *TM Synchronization and Channel Coding*. Recommendation for Space Data System Standards, CCSDS 131.0-B-1. Blue Book. Issue 1. Washington, D.C.: CCSDS, September 2003.
- [4] *Space Link Identifiers*. Recommendation for Space Data System Standards, CCSDS 135.0-B-1. Blue Book. Issue 1. Washington, D.C.: CCSDS, January 2002.
- [5] *CCSDS Global Spacecraft Identification Field Code Assignment Control Procedures*. Recommendation for Space Data System Standards, CCSDS 320.0-B-3. Blue Book. Issue 3. Washington, D.C.: CCSDS, April 2003.
- [6] *Space Packet Protocol*. Recommendation for Space Data System Standards, CCSDS 133.0-B-1. Blue Book. Issue 1. Washington, D.C.: CCSDS, September 2003.

NOTE – Informative references are listed in annex B.

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2 OVERVIEW

2.1 CONCEPT OF AOS SPACE DATA LINK PROTOCOL

2.1.1 ARCHITECTURE

The AOS Space Data Link Protocol is a Data Link Layer protocol (see reference [1]) to be used by space missions. This protocol has been designed to meet the requirements of space missions for efficient transfer of space application data of various types and characteristics over space-to-ground, ground-to-space, or space-to-space communications links (hereafter called space links).

Figure 2-1 illustrates the relationship of this protocol to the reference model of Open Systems Interconnection (reference [1]). Two sublayers of the Data Link Layer are defined for CCSDS space link protocols as shown in reference [B3]. The AOS Space Data Link Protocol corresponds to the Data Link Protocol Sublayer, and provides functions of transferring various data using a fixed-length protocol data unit called the Transfer Frame. The Synchronization and Channel Coding Sublayer provides some additional functions necessary for transferring Transfer Frames over a space link. These functions are delimiting/synchronizing Transfer Frames, error-correction coding/decoding (optional), and bit transition generation/removal (optional). For the Synchronization and Channel Coding Sublayer, the TM Synchronization and Channel Coding Recommendation (reference [3]) must be used with the AOS Space Data Link Protocol. How the AOS Space Data Link Protocol is used in overall space data systems is shown in reference [B3].

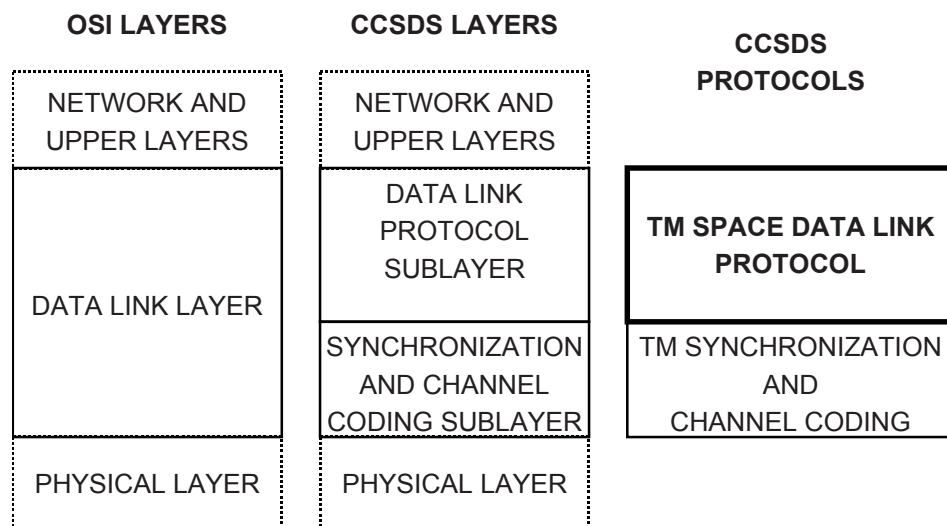


Figure 2-1: Relationship with OSI Layers

2.1.2 PROTOCOL FEATURES

The AOS Space Data Link Protocol provides the users with several services to transfer service data units over a space link. To facilitate simple, reliable, and robust synchronization

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procedures, fixed-length protocol data units are used to transfer data through the weak-signal, noisy space links: their length is established for a particular Physical Channel (a single stream of bits transferred over a space link in a single direction) during a particular Mission Phase by management. These protocol data units are known as AOS Transfer Frames (unless otherwise stated, the terms 'Transfer Frame' and 'Frame' in this document refer to the AOS Transfer Frame). Each Transfer Frame contains a header which provides protocol control information and a fixed-length data field within which higher-layer service data units are carried.

A key feature of the AOS Space Data Link Protocol is the concept of 'Virtual Channels' (VC). The Virtual Channel facility allows one Physical Channel to be shared among multiple higher-layer data streams, each of which may have different service requirements. A single Physical Channel may therefore be divided into several separate logical data channels, each known as a 'Virtual Channel'. Each Transfer Frame transferred over a Physical Channel belongs to one of the Virtual Channels of the Physical Channel.

2.1.3 ADDRESSING

There are three identifier fields in the header of Transfer Frames: Transfer Frame Version Number (TFVN), Spacecraft Identifier (SCID), and Virtual Channel Identifier (VCID). The concatenation of a TFVN and a SCID is known as a Master Channel Identifier (MCID), and the concatenation of an MCID and a VCID is called a Global Virtual Channel Identifier (GVCID). Therefore,

$$\text{MCID} = \text{TFVN} + \text{SCID};$$

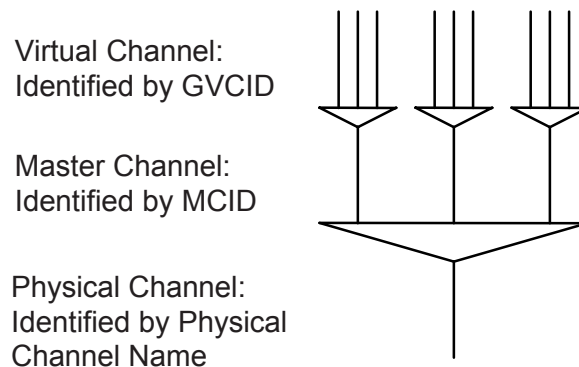
$$\text{GVCID} = \text{MCID} + \text{VCID} = \text{TFVN} + \text{SCID} + \text{VCID}.$$

Each Virtual Channel in a Physical Channel is identified by a GVCID. Therefore, a Virtual Channel consists of Transfer Frames with the same GVCID.

All Transfer Frames with the same MCID on a Physical Channel constitute a Master Channel (MC). A Master Channel consists of one or more Virtual Channels. In most cases, a Physical Channel carries only Transfer Frames of a single MCID, and the Master Channel will be identical with the Physical Channel. However, a Physical Channel may carry Transfer Frames with multiple MCIDs (with the same TFVN). In such a case, the Physical Channel consists of multiple Master Channels. A Physical Channel is identified with a Physical Channel Name, which is set by management and not included in the header of Transfer Frames.

The relationships between these Channels are shown in figure 2-2.

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**Figure 2-2: Relationships between Channels****2.1.4 PROTOCOL DESCRIPTION**

The AOS Space Data Link Protocol is described in terms of:

- a) the services provided to the users;
- b) the protocol data units; and
- c) the procedures performed by the protocol.

The service definitions are given in the form of primitives, which present an abstract model of the logical exchange of data and control information between the protocol entity and the service user. The definitions of primitives are independent of specific implementation approaches.

The procedure specifications define the procedures performed by protocol entities for the transfer of information between peer entities. The definitions of procedures are independent of specific implementation methods or technologies.

This protocol specification also specifies the requirements for the underlying services provided by the Channel Coding Sublayer and the Physical Layer.

2.2 OVERVIEW OF SERVICES**2.2.1 COMMON FEATURES OF SERVICES**

The AOS Space Data Link Protocol provides users with data transfer services. The point at which a service is provided by a protocol entity to a user is called a Service Access Point (SAP) (see reference [1]). Each service user is identified by a SAP address.

Service data units submitted to a SAP are processed in the order of submission. No processing order is maintained for service data units submitted to different SAPs.

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NOTE – Implementations may be required to perform flow control at an SAP between the service user and the service provider. However, CCSDS does not recommend a scheme for flow control between the user and the provider.

The followings are features common to all the services defined by this Recommendation:

- a) unidirectional (one way) services: one end of a connection can send, but not receive, data through the space link, while the other end can receive, but not send.
- b) unconfirmed services: the sending user does not receive confirmation from the receiving end that data has been received.
- c) incomplete services: the services do not guarantee completeness, but some services may signal gaps in the sequence of service data units delivered to the receiving user.
- d) sequence-preserving services: the sequence of service data units supplied by the sending user is preserved through the transfer over the space link, although there may be gaps and duplications in the sequence of service data units delivered to the receiving user.

NOTE – This Recommendation assumes that these services are provided at the end points of a space link. However, this Recommendation makes no assumptions concerning how these end points are composed or configured either on-board a spacecraft or in a ground system. In a ground system, the services defined by this Recommendation may be extended or enhanced with Space Link Extension Services (reference [B4]).

2.2.2 SERVICE TYPES

2.2.2.1 Overview

The AOS Space Data Link Protocol provides three service types (asynchronous, synchronous, and periodic) that determine how service data units supplied by the user are transferred in protocol data units over a space link.

The models shown below are intended only to illustrate the characteristics of services. They are not intended to guide or restrict design of on-board or ground systems.

2.2.2.2 Asynchronous Service

In asynchronous service, there are no timing relationships between the transfer of service data units supplied by the service user and the transmission of Transfer Frames generated by the service provider. The user may request data transfer at any time it desires, but there may be restrictions imposed by the provider on the data generation rate. In this service (figure 2-3), each service data unit from a sending user is placed in a queue, the contents of which are sent to a receiving user in the order in which they were presented. Although transmission errors may prevent delivery of some data units, the service provider attempts to transfer all

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data units provided by the user exactly once. The timing of data transfer is determined by the provider in accordance with mission-specific rules, and may depend on the traffic at the time of transfer. The key feature of this service is that all of the service data units from the sending user are transferred, and transferred only once.

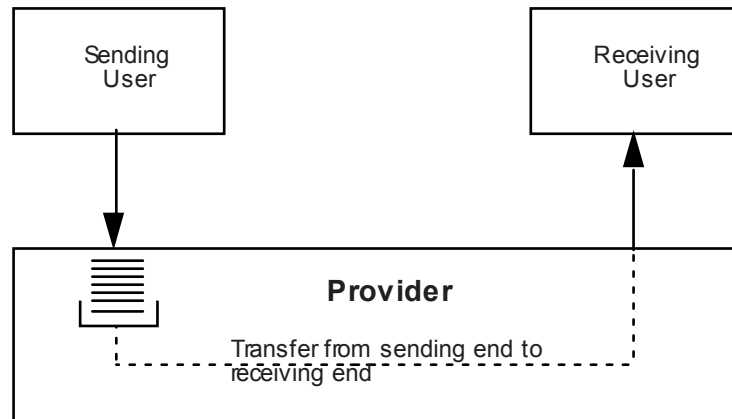


Figure 2-3: Asynchronous Service Model

2.2.2.3 Synchronous Service

In synchronous service, the transfer of service data units is synchronized with the release of either (1) Transfer Frames of a Virtual Channel, (2) Transfer Frames of a Master Channel, or (3) all Transfer Frames of a Physical Channel. The transfer timing may be periodic or aperiodic.

In this service (figure 2-4), each service data unit from a sending user is placed in a buffer that can hold only one service data unit; the content of the buffer is sent to a receiving user at the time when a Transfer Frame is transmitted. The transmission timing of Transfer Frames is determined by the service provider according to mission-specific rules (usually known to the user). The key feature of this service, which is essentially time-division multiplexing, is that the timing of data transfer is driven by the transfer mechanism, not by individual service requests from the user. Thus a particular service data unit from a user might be sent once, several times (if the 'new' value is not placed in the buffer soon enough), or not at all (if one value is replaced by a second before the service provider can send it).

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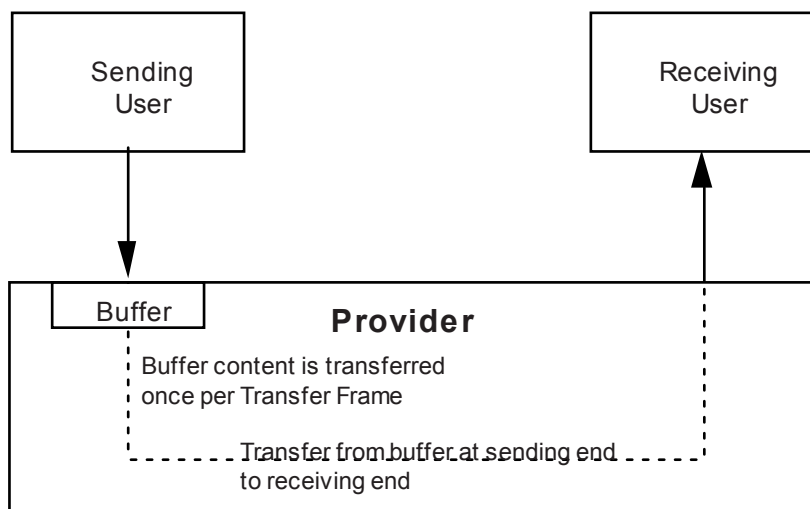


Figure 2-4: Synchronous Service Model

2.2.2.4 Periodic Service

Periodic service is a special case of synchronous service in which service data units are transferred at a constant rate. Periodic transfer from service interface to service interface is provided with a specified maximum delay and a specified maximum jitter at the service interface. There are three cases in which a synchronous service is periodic:

- If the service is associated with a Virtual Channel (or a Master Channel) and that Virtual (or Master) Channel produces Transfer Frames at a constant rate, then the service is periodic.
- If the service is associated with a Master Channel and there is only one Master Channel in the Physical Channel, then the service is periodic.

For periodic services, all service data units are sent only once if the user supplies service data units at the same rate as the rate at which the service provider transfers them.

2.2.3 SUMMARY OF SERVICES

2.2.3.1 Overview

Seven services are provided by the AOS Space Data Link Protocol. Five of them (Packet, Bitstream, Virtual Channel Access, Virtual Channel Operational Control Field, and Virtual Channel Frame) are provided for a Virtual Channel. One of them (Master Channel Frame) is provided for a Master Channel. One of them (Insert) is provided for all Transfer Frames in a Physical Channel. Table 2-1 summarizes these services.

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Table 2-1: Summary of Services Provided by AOS Space Data Link Protocol

Service	Service Type	Service Data Unit	SAP Address
Packet	Asynchronous	Packet	GVCID + Packet Version Number
Bitstream	Asynchronous or Periodic	Bitstream Data	GVCID
Virtual Channel Access (VCA)	Asynchronous or Periodic	VCA_SDU	GVCID
Virtual Channel Operational Control Field (VC_OCF)	Synchronous or Periodic	OCF_SDU	GVCID
Virtual Channel Frame (VCF)	Asynchronous or Periodic	Transfer Frame	GVCID
Master Channel Frame (MCF)	Asynchronous or Periodic	Transfer Frame	MCID
Insert	Periodic	IN_SDU	Physical Channel Name

2.2.3.2 Packet Service

The Packet Service transfers a sequence of variable-length, delimited, octet-aligned service data units known as Packets across a space link. The Packets transferred by this service must have a Packet Version Number (PVN) authorized by CCSDS. For the Packet Version Numbers presently authorized by CCSDS, see reference [4]. The service is unidirectional, asynchronous and sequence-preserving. It does not guarantee completeness, nor does it signal gaps in the sequence of service data units delivered to a receiving user.

A user of this service is a protocol entity that sends or receives Packets with a single PVN. A user is identified with the PVN and a GVCID. Different users (i.e., Packets with different versions) can share a single Virtual Channel, and if there are multiple users on a Virtual Channel, the service provider multiplexes Packets of different versions to form a single stream of Packets to be transferred on that Virtual Channel.

2.2.3.3 Bitstream Service

The Bitstream service provides transfer of a serial string of bits, whose internal structure and boundaries are unknown to the service provider, across a space link. The service is unidirectional, either asynchronous or periodic, and sequence-preserving. The service does not guarantee completeness, but it may signal gaps in the sequence of service data units delivered to the receiving user.

For a given service instance, only one user, identified with the GVCID of the Virtual Channel, can use this service on a Virtual Channel. Bitstreams from different users are not multiplexed together within one Virtual Channel.

2.2.3.4 Virtual Channel Access (VCA) Service

The Virtual Channel Access (VCA) Service provides transfer of a sequence of privately formatted service data units of fixed length across a space link. The service is unidirectional, either asynchronous or periodic, and sequence-preserving. The service does not guarantee completeness, but it may signal gaps in the sequence of service data units delivered to the receiving user.

For a given service instance, only one user, identified with the GVCID of the Virtual Channel, can use this service on a Virtual Channel. Service data units from different users are not multiplexed together within one Virtual Channel.

2.2.3.5 Virtual Channel Operational Control Field (VC_OCF) Service

The Virtual Channel Operational Control Field (VC_OCF) Service provides synchronous transfer of fixed-length data units, each consisting of four octets, in the Operational Control Field (OCF) of Transfer Frames of a Virtual Channel. The service is unidirectional and sequence-preserving. The transfer is synchronized with the release of Transfer Frames of a Virtual Channel. The service does not guarantee completeness, but it may signal gaps in the sequence of service data units delivered to the receiving user.

For a given service instance, only one user, identified with the GVCID of the Virtual Channel, can use this service on a Virtual Channel. Service data units from different users are not multiplexed together within one Virtual Channel.

2.2.3.6 Virtual Channel Frame (VCF) Service

The Virtual Channel Frame (VCF) Service provides transfer of a sequence of fixed-length AOS Transfer Frames of a Virtual Channel, created by an independent protocol entity, across a space link. The service is unidirectional, either asynchronous or periodic, and sequence-preserving. The service does not guarantee completeness, but it may signal gaps in the sequence of service data units delivered to the receiving user.