



# IP Routing on Cisco IOS, IOS XE, and IOS XR

An Essential Guide to Understanding and Implementing IP Routing Protocols

> Brad Edgeworth, CCIE No. 31574 Aaron Foss, CCIE No. 18761 Ramiro Garza Rios, CCIE No. 15469

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## **Dedications**

This book is dedicated to my loving wife Tanya, who has endured and supported me through all my endeavors.

### -Brad

I would like to dedicate this book to my supportive wife, Anne, and to my children, Ashley, Benny, and Clara, for giving up some weekend time with Dad so that I could write this book.

#### -Aaron

I would like to dedicate this book to my wonderful and beautiful wife, Mariana, and to my children Ramiro, Frinee, Felix, and Lucia for their love, patience, sacrifice, and support while writing this book.

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-Ramiro

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# **Contents at a Glance**

Foreword xxviii Introduction xxix

# Part I Network Fundamentals

Chapter 1 Introduction to the Operating Systems 1

Chapter 2 IPv4 Addressing 29

Chapter 3 How a Router Works 67

## Part II Routing Protocols

- Chapter 4 Static Routing 91
- Chapter 5 EIGRP 125
- Chapter 6 OSPF 191
- Chapter 7 Advanced OSPF 241
- Chapter 8 IS-IS 315
- Chapter 9 Advanced IS-IS 373
- Chapter 10 Border Gateway Protocol (BGP) 407

## Part III Advanced Routing Techniques

- Chapter 11 Route Maps and Route Policy 467
- Chapter 12 Advanced Route Manipulation 521
- Chapter 13 Route Redistribution 551

## Part IV Advanced BGP

- Chapter 14 Advanced BGP 609
- Chapter 15 BGP Best Path Selection 671

## Part V Multicast

- Chapter 16 IPv4 Multicast Routing 745
- Chapter 17 Advanced IPv4 Multicast Routing 811

## Part VI IPv6

- Chapter 18 IPv6 Addressing 893
- Chapter 19 IPv6 Routing 941
- Chapter 20 IPv6 Multicast Routing 1007

## Part VII High Availability

Chapter 21 High Availability Online

## Appendixes

Appendix A Decimal to Hex to Binary Values Online Appendix B BGP Attributes Online

# Contents

| Part I    | Network Fundamentals                            |  |  |  |  |
|-----------|---|--|--|--|--|
| Chapter 1 | Introduction to the Operating Systems 1         |  |  |  |  |
|           | IOS, IOS XE, and IOS XR Software Architecture 1 |  |  |  |  |
|           | IOS 1   |  |  |  |  |
|           | Kernel and OS Scheduling 2                      |  |  |  |  |
|           | Memory Management 2                             |  |  |  |  |
|           | Software Packaging 2                            |  |  |  |  |
|           | IOS XE 4  |  |  |  |  |
|           | Kernel and OS Scheduling 4                      |  |  |  |  |
|           | Memory Management 4                             |  |  |  |  |
|           | IOS XR 5  |  |  |  |  |
|           | Kernel and OS Scheduling 5                      |  |  |  |  |
|           | Memory Management 5                             |  |  |  |  |
|           | Software Packaging 6                            |  |  |  |  |
|           | Debugging 8                                     |  |  |  |  |
|           | CLI and Configuration 8                         |  |  |  |  |
|           | IOS 9   |  |  |  |  |
|           | User Mode 9                                     |  |  |  |  |
|           | Privileged Mode 10                              |  |  |  |  |
|           | Global Configuration Mode 10                    |  |  |  |  |
|           | Configuration Archiving 11                      |  |  |  |  |
|           | Configuration Replace 13                        |  |  |  |  |
|           | IOS XR 14                                       |  |  |  |  |
|           | Viewing Changes in the SysDB 17                 |  |  |  |  |
|           | Commit Label 18                                 |  |  |  |  |
|           | Commit Replace 19                               |  |  |  |  |
|           | Failed Commits 20                               |  |  |  |  |
|           | Configuration Rollback 21                       |  |  |  |  |
|           | Commit Confirmed 22                             |  |  |  |  |
|           | Multiple Commit Options 23                      |  |  |  |  |
|           | Loading Files for Changes 24                    |  |  |  |  |
|           | Hierarchical Configuration 24                   |  |  |  |  |
|           | PWD 26  |  |  |  |  |
|           | Root 26   |  |  |  |  |
|           | Summary 27                                      |  |  |  |  |
|           | References in This Chapter 27                   |  |  |  |  |

#### Chapter 2 IPv4 Addressing 29

IP Fundamentals 29 Understanding Binary 31 Address Classes 34 Subnet Masks and Subnetting 35 Subnet Mask Purpose 36 Calculating Usable IP Addresses 37 Network Prefix Notation 38 Subnetting 38 Subnet Field 39 Subnet Math 41 Subnet Design 46 Classless Interdomain Routing 49 Classful Versus Classless Routing 50 Classful Routing 50 Classless Routing 53 Variable-Length Subnet Masks 55 Summarization 56 Private IP Addressing 58 Special IP Addresses 59 IPv4 Address Configuration 60 Wildcard Subnet Masks 62 Summary 64 References in This Chapter 65 Chapter 3 How a Router Works 67 IP Routing 67 Distance Vector Algorithms 69 Enhanced Distance Vector Algorithm 70 Link-State Algorithms 70 Path Vector Algorithm 71 Routing Table 72 Prefix Length 73 Administrative Distance 73 Metrics 75 Virtual Routing and Forwarding 76 IP Packet Switching 83 Process Switching 84

Cisco Express Forwarding 85 Software CEF 87 Hardware CEF 88 Planes of Operation 89 References in This Chapter 90

## Part II Routing Protocols

#### Chapter 4 Static Routing 91

Connected Networks 91 Secondary Connected Networks 94 Static Routing Fundamentals 94 Point-to-Point Interfaces 96 Broadcast Interfaces 98 Default Route 99 Floating Static Routing 103 Recursive Lookup 105 Multihop Routing 108 *Single Recursive Lookup 108 Multiple Recursive Lookups 109* Problems with Static Route Recursion 112 Null Interface 116 Static VRF Routes 121 References in This Chapter 124

#### Chapter 5 EIGRP 125

EIGRP Fundamentals 125 EIGRP Neighbors 126 Inter-Router Communication 126 Forming EIGRP Neighbors 128 Classic EIGRP Autonomous System Configuration 131 IOS network Statement 132 IOS XR 134 Passive Interfaces 134 Sample Topology and Configuration 134 Confirmation of Interfaces 136 Verification of EIGRP Neighbor Adjacencies 139 Display of Installed EIGRP Routes 140 Router ID 141 EIGRP Terminology 142 Topology Table 143 Path Metric Calculation 145 Custom K Values 148 Interface Delay Settings 149 Load Balancing 151 EIGRP Wide Metrics 153 Failure Detection and Timers 155 Convergence 156 Stuck in Active 159 Stub 160 Design Considerations with EIGRP Stubs 164 Summarization 166 Interface-Specific Summarization 166 Summarization Metrics 171 Advertising a Default Route 172 Automatic Summarization 172 Authentication 174 Enabling Authentication on the interface 174 Key Chain Configuration 174 WAN Considerations 177 IP Bandwidth Percent 177 Split Horizon 179 Next-Hop Self 182 EIGRP Named Configuration 184 Address Family Instance Configuration 185 Address Family Interface Configuration 186 Address Family Topology Configuration 188 Summary 189 References in This Chapter 189 **OSPF** 191 OSPF Fundamentals 191 Inter-Router Communication 193 OSPF Hello Packets 194 Router ID 195 Neighbors 196

Forming OSPF Neighbor Adjacencies 197

**Chapter 6** 

Basic OSPF Configuration 202 IOS network Statement 202 IOS Interface Specific 204 IOS XR 205 Passive Interfaces 205 Sample Topology and Configuration 206 Confirmation of Interfaces 208 Verification of OSPF Neighbor Adjacencies 209 Verification of OSPF Routes 211 Designated Router and Backup Designated Router 212 Designated Router Elections 214 DR and BDR Placement 216 Failure Detection 219 Hello Timer 219 Dead Interval Timer 219 Verifying OSPF Timers 220 OSPF Fast Packet Hellos 220 OSPF Network Types 221 Broadcast 221 Non-Broadcast 222 Point-to-Point Networks 224 Point-to-Multipoint Networks 225 Loopback Networks 229 Review of OSPF Network Types 231 OSPF Adjacency with Different OSPF Network Types 231 Link Costs 235 Authentication 236 IOS Support for OSPF Authentication 236 IOS XR Support for OSPF Authentication 236 Summary 239 References in This Chapter 240 Chapter 7 Advanced OSPF 241 Areas 241 Area ID 245 OSPF Route Types 246 External OSPF Routes 247 Link-State Announcements 249

LSA Age and Flooding 251

LSA Types 251 LSA Type 1: Router Link 252 LSA Type 2: Network Link 257 LSA Type 3: Summary Link 259 LSA Type 5: External Routes 263 LSA Type 4: ASBR Summary 265 LSA Type 7: NSSA External Summary 268 LSA Type Summary 270 OSPF Path Selection 270 Intra-Area Routes 271 Interarea Routes 272 External Route Selection 272 E1 and N1 External Routes 273 E2 and N2 External Routes 273 Equal Cost Multi-Path 274 Summarization of Routes 274 Interarea Summarization 276 External Summarization 280 Default Route 283 OSPF Stubby Areas 286 Stub Areas 286 Totally Stubby Areas 289 Not-So-Stubby Areas 292 Totally NSSA Areas 295 Virtual Links 298 Discontiguous Network 301 Multi-Area Adjacency 304 Prefix Suppression 308 Summary 313 References in This Chapter 314

#### Chapter 8 IS-IS 315

IS-IS Fundamentals 315 Areas 318 OSI Addressing 319 Inter-Domain Part 320 Domain Specific Part 321 NET Addressing 322 Inter-Router Communication 323 IS Protocol Header 325 TLVs 326 IS PDU Addressing 326 Hello Packets 327 Link-State Packets 329 LSP Lifetime 329 LSP ID 330 LSP Sequence 331 Attribute Fields 331 LSP Packet and TLVs 332 IS-IS Neighbor 333 Ethernet 333 Point-to-Point 338 Basic IS-IS Configuration 340 IOS 340 IOS XR 340 Sample Topology and Configuration 341 Confirmation of IS-IS Interfaces 343 Verification of IS-IS Neighbor Adjacencies 346 Verification of IS-IS Routes 347 Designated Intermediate System 348 DIS Elections 351 DIS Placement 352 Point-to-Point Adjacency on Broadcast Media 353 Link State Packet Database 355 Viewing the LSPDB 356 Non-Pseudonode LSPs 357 Pseudonode LSPs 358 Building the Topology 359 Viewing the Topology 360 SPF Calculations 361 Passive Interfaces 362 Removal of Hello Padding 364 Failure Detection 366 Hello Timer 366 Hello Multiplier and Holding Timer 367

Authentication 367 IS-IS Hello Authentication 367 IS-IS LSP Authentication 368 Summary 371 References in This Chapter 372

#### Chapter 9 Advanced IS-IS 373

Advanced IS-IS Routing 373 Route Leaking 377 Backbone Continuity 380 Loop Prevention 382 Router-Specific IS-IS Levels 384 Interface Specific IS-IS Levels 385 Path Selection 386 Equal Cost Multi-Path 387 Interface Metrics 387 Overload Bit 394 Summarization 396 Default Routes 400 Prefix Suppression 401 Summary 405 References in This Chapter 406

#### Chapter 10 Border Gateway Protocol (BGP) 407

BGP Fundamentals 408 Autonomous System Numbers 408 Path Attributes 409 Loop Prevention 409 Address Families 410 Inter-Router Communication 410 Open Messages 412 *Hold Time 412 BGP Identifier 413* Keepalive Messages 413 Update Messages 413 Notification Messages 414 BGP Sessions 415 BGP Neighbor States 415 Idle State 415 Connect State 415 Active State 416 OpenSent State 416 OpenConfirm State 417 Established State 417 Basic BGP Configuration 418 IOS 419 IOS XR 420 Verification of BGP Sessions 421 Prefix Advertisement 425 Receiving and Viewing Routes 427 iBGP 431 iBGP Full-Mesh Requirement 432 Peering via Loopback Addresses 433 eBGP 438 eBGP and iBGP Topologies 442 Next-Hop Manipulation 444 iBGP Scalability 446 Route Reflectors 446 Loop Prevention in Route Reflectors 451 Out-of-Band Route Reflectors 453 Confederations 453 Failure Detection 459 Security 459 eBGP Multihop 459 TTL Security 461 Summary 463 References in This Chapter 465

## Part III Advanced Routing Techniques

#### Chapter 11 Route Maps and Route Policy 467

Access Control Lists 467 Standard ACLs 468 Extended ACLs 469 IGP Network Selection 469 BGP Network Selection 470 Prefix Matching 471 Prefix Lists 473 Prefix Sets 474 Regular Expressions 475 \_(Underscore) 477 ^ (Caret) 478 \$ (Dollar Sign) 478 [] (Brackets) 479 - (Hyphen) 479 [^] (Caret in Brackets) 480 () (Parentheses and | Pipe) 480 . (Period) 481 + (Plus Sign) 481 ? (Question Mark) 481 \* (Asterisk) 482 Looking Glass and Route Servers 483 AS Path Access List 484 IOS XR AS Path Selection Options 484 is-local 485 length 485 unique-length 486 passes-through 486 neighbor-is 487 originates-from 487 AS Path Set 488 Route Maps 488 Conditional Matching 490 Multiple Conditional Match Conditions 491 Complex Matching 491 Optional Actions 492 Continue 493 Route Map Examples 494 Routing Policy Language 496 Route Policy Structure 496 Match Statements 497 Attribute Modification 498 Common Route Policy Structure 499

Boolean Operators 504 Negation 504 Conjunction 504 Disjunction 505 Order of Processing 505 Comparing Prefix Sets to Prefix Lists 506 Parameterization 507 Route Policy Nesting 510 Original Value 511 Editors 512 RPL Examples 513 **RPL Verification** 515 Redistribution RPL Verification 516 BGP RPL Verification 517 References in This Chapter 519 Chapter 12 Advanced Route Manipulation 521 Conditional Routing of Packets 521 Policy-Based Routing Configuration 522 Access-List-Based Forwarding Configuration 523 Local PBR 525 Administrative Distance 526 Modifying EIGRP AD 528 Modifying OSPF AD 529 Modifying IS-IS AD 531 Modifying BGP AD 532 Route Filtering and Manipulation 534 EIGRP Filtering by Prefix 534 EIGRP Filtering by Hop Count 538 EIGRP Offset Lists 538 OSPF Filtering (Local) 541 OSPF Filtering (Area) 543 IS-IS Filtering (Local) 546 BGP Filtering 546 Clearing BGP Connections 549 Summary 550 References in This Chapter 550

#### Chapter 13 Route Redistribution 551

Redistribution Basics 553 Redistribution Is Not Transitive 553 Sequential Protocol Redistribution 555 Routes Must Exist in the RIB 555 Metrics 558 Protocol-Specific Configuration 558 Source-Specific Behaviors 560 Connected Networks 561 IS-IS 561 BGP 562 Destination-Specific Behaviors 563 EIGRP 563 **OSPF** 568 IS-IS 576 BGP 580 Challenges with Redistribution 582 Route Feedback 583 Suboptimal Routing 584 Invalid Routing Tables 589 Routing Loops 590 Methods to Avoid Routing Loops 593 Prefix Filtering 593 Tagging 595 Increase Seed Metrics 598 Administrative Distance 601 Summarization on Redistributing Router 603 Solutions to Redistribution Challenges 606 Summary 606 References in This Chapter 607

### Part IV Advanced BGP

#### Chapter 14 Advanced BGP 609

BGP Communities 609 Enabling BGP Community Support 610 Well-Known Communities 611 Internet 611 No\_Export 611

No Advertise 614 No\_Export\_SubConfed 617 Conditionally Matching BGP Communities 620 Community Set 621 Inline 622 Setting Private BGP Communities 625 Route Summarization 628 Aggregate Address 629 Flexible Route Suppression 632 Selective Prefix Suppression 632 Leaking Suppressed Routes 634 Atomic Aggregate 637 Route Aggregation with AS SET 639 Route Aggregation with Selective Advertisement of AS\_Set 641 Default Route Advertisement 643 Default Route Advertisement Per Neighbor 644 Conditional Route Advertisement 645 Outbound Route Filtering 647 Backdoor Networks 649 Maximum Autonomous System 652 Maximum Prefix 654 Remove Private Autonomous System 656 Allow Autonomous System 658 Local Autonomous System 660 Configuration Scalability 664 IOS Peer Groups 664 IOS Peer Templates 665 IOS XR Configuration Templates 667 Summary 668 References in This Chapter 669 BGP Best Path Selection 671 Chapter 15 BGP Best Path Overview 672 Weight 673 Local Preference 679 Locally Originated via Network or Aggregate Advertisement 684 Accumulated Interior Gateway Protocol 686 Shortest AS Path 694

Origin Type 700 Multi-Exit Discriminator 704 Missing MED behavior 709 Always Compare Med 711 BGP Deterministic MED 713 eBGP over iBGP 714 Lowest IGP Metric 718 Prefer the Oldest EBGP Path 720 Router ID 720 Minimum Cluster List Length 721 Lowest Neighbor Address 722 BGP ECMP 723 eBGP and iBGP Multipath 723 eiBGP Multipath 726 R1 729 R2 730 XR3 730 XR4 730 XR5 731 AS Path Relax 731 Suboptimal Routing with Route Reflectors 733 Additional Route Reflector 734 Shadow Route Reflector 735 Shadow Session Route Reflector 738 BGP Add-Path 739 Summary 742 Further Reading 743

#### Part V Multicast

#### Chapter 16 IPv4 Multicast Routing 745

Multicast Fundamentals 745 Multicast Addressing 749 Layer 2 Multicast Addresses 752 Internet Group Management Protocol 753 IGMP Snooping 753 IGMPv2 756 IGMPv3 759

Multicast Distribution Trees 759 Source Trees 759 Shared Trees 760 Protocol Independent Multicast 762 PIM Dense Mode 765 PIM Sparse Mode 768 PIM Shared and Source Path Trees 768 Shared Tree Join 769 Source Registration 769 PIM SPT Switchover 771 Designated Routers 772 Rendezvous Points 772 Static RP 773 Auto-RP 773 Candidate RPs 773 RP Mapping Agents 774 PIM Bootstrap Router 775 Candidate RPs 775 Reverse Path Forwarding 776 PIM Forwarder 778 Basic Multicast Configuration 780 Configure Rendezvous Points 783 Static RP 784 Auto-RP 785 BSR 786 Multicast Verification 787 Bidirectional PIM 802 Bidir-PIM Designated Forwarder 804 Summary 808 References in This Chapter 809 Chapter 17 Advanced IPv4 Multicast Routing 811 Interdomain Multicast Routing 811 Multiprotocol BGP 812 Multicast Source Discovery Protocol 817

MSDP Source Active Message Types 818 SA Messages 819

Keepalive Messages 819 MSDP Peers 822 MSDP Verification 828 MSDP Stub Networks 831 Rendezvous Point Redundancy 833 Auto-RP with Multiple RPs 835 Auto-RP Group Filtering 836 BSR with Multiple RPs 840 BSR Group Filtering 843 BSR RP Hash Algorithm 845 Static RP with Multiple RPs 846 Anycast RP 847 Source Specific Multicast 850 SSM Mapping 857 DNS SSM Mapping 857 Static SSM Mapping 860 Multicast Security 862 Auto-RP Scoping 862 Multicast Boundaries 863 Administratively Scoped Boundaries 863 Auto-RP Multicast Boundaries 865 BSR Multicast Boundaries 866 Auto-RP Cisco-RP-Announce Message Filtering 867 PIM-SM Source Registration Filtering 867 PIM-SM Accept RP 868 PIM Neighbor Control 869 PIM Register Rate Limit 870 Multicast Traffic Engineering 871 RPF Rules 871 Static Mroutes 872 MBGP 875 Static IGMP Joins 882 Multicast Troubleshooting 886 Mtrace 887 Summary 889 References in This Chapter 891

## Part VI IPv6

Chapter 18 IPv6 Addressing 893 IPv6 Address Structure 893 Text Representation Address Abbreviation 895 IPv6 Hexadecimal to Binary Conversion 896 IPv6 Address Types 898 Unicast 898 Global Unicast 900 Unique Local Unicast 904 Link-Local Unicast 905 Anycast 906 Multicast 908 Special IPv6 Addresses 911 Neighbor Discovery Protocol 912 Router, Prefix, and Parameter Discovery. 913 Redirect 919 IPv6 Stateless Address Autoconfiguration 920 Extended Unique Identifier 920 SLAAC Router Configuration 921 RA Options for DNS 923 Stateless DHCPv6 924 IOS Stateless DHCPv6 Configuration 924 IOS XR Stateless DHCPv6 Configuration 925 Stateless DHCPv6 Verification 926 Stateful DHCPv6, Relay Agent, and Relay Proxy 926 IOS Relay Agent Configuration 927 IOS Relay Agent Verification 928 IOS XR Proxy Agent Configuration 928 IOS XR Proxy Agent Verification 929 IOS Stateful DHCPv6 Server Configuration 930 IOS XR Stateful DHCPv6 Server Configuration 931 Stateful DHCPv6 Server Verification 932 IPv6 Address Resolution and Neighbor Unreachability Detection 934 Duplicate Address Detection 937 Summary 938 References in This Chapter 939

#### Chapter 19 IPv6 Routing 941

Static Routing 941 Static Route Configuration 942 Static Route Reference Chart for IPv6 943 EIGRPv6 944 EIGRPv6 Inter-Router Communication 944 EIGRPv6 Configuration 945 IOS EIGRPv6 Autonomous System Configuration (Classic) 945 IOS EIGRPv6 Hierarchical Configuration (Named Mode) 946 IOS XR EIGRPv6 Configuration 946 EIGRPv6 Verification 947 Summarization 950 Default Route 952 Route Filtering 953 EIGRP Configuration Command Reference Chart for IPv6 954 OSPFv3 956 OSPFv3 Inter-Router Communication 957 OSPFv3 Link-State Advertisement 958 OSPFv3 LSA Flooding Scope 959 OSPFv3 Configuration 960 IOS OSPFv3 Configuration 960 IOS XR OSPFv3 Configuration 961 OSPFv3 Verification 962 OSPFv3 Authentication 970 OSPFv3 Multiple Instances 973 OSPFv3 Configuration Command Reference Chart for IPv6 975 Integrated IS-IS for IPv6 977 IS-IS Inter-Router Communication 978 IS-IS Type-Length-Value 978 IS-IS Topology Modes 978 IS-IS Configuration 979 IOS Base Configuration 979 IOS XR Base Configuration 980 IOS Topology Mode Configuration 981 IOS XR Topology Mode Configuration 981 Verification 985 IS-IS Configuration Reference Chart for IPv6 987

Multiprotocol BGP for IPv6 989 Inter-Router Communication 989 BGP Configuration 991 *IOS Base Configuration 991 IOS XR Base Configuration 992* BGP Verification 993 IPv6 over IPv4 BGP Sessions 998 BGP Configuration Command Reference Chart for IPv6 1001 IPv6 Route Redistribution 1002 Summary 1006 References in This Chapter 1006

#### Chapter 20 IPv6 Multicast Routing 1007

IPv6 Multicast Routing Overview 1007
IPv6 Multicast Address Mapping into MAC Address 1009
Enabling Multicast Routing 1010
Multicast Listener Discovery 1010
Protocol Independent Multicast 1015
PIM Sparse Mode 1015
Static RP 1017
Bootstrap Router 1018
Embedded RP 1021
IPv6 Multicast Verification Commands 1024
Reverse Path Forwarding 1030
Multicast Boundary Scope 1032
PIM Source Specific Multicast 1033
Summary 1034
References in This Chapter 1035

Index 1037

#### Part VII High Availability

Chapter 21 High Availability Online

#### Appendixes

Appendix A Decimal to Hex to Binary Values Online

Appendix B BGP Attributes Online

# **Icons Used in This Book**

| IOS Router     | IOS XR<br>Router | Layer 2<br>Switch | Optical<br>Transport | Optical Cross<br>Connect |
|----------------|------------------|-------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|
| Radio<br>Tower | Printer          | Workstation       | Server               | Regional<br>Office       |
| (              |                  |                   | 2                    | $\bigcirc$               |
| LAN<br>Segment | Ethernet         | Serial            | Switched<br>Circuit  | Routing<br>Domain        |

# **Command Syntax Conventions**

The conventions used to present command syntax in this book are the same conventions used in Cisco's Command Reference. The Command Reference describes these conventions as follows:

- Boldface indicates commands and keywords that are entered literally as shown. In actual configuration examples and output (not general command syntax), boldface indicates commands that are manually input by the user (such as a show command).
- Italics indicate arguments for which you supply actual values.
- Vertical bars (I) separate alternative, mutually exclusive elements.
- Square brackets [] indicate optional elements.
- Braces { } indicate a required choice.
- Braces within brackets [{ }] indicate a required choice within an optional element.

**Note** This book covers multiple operating systems, and a differentiation of icons and router names indicate the appropriate operating system that is being referenced. IOS and IOS XE use router names like R1 and R2 and are referenced by the IOS router icon. IOS XR routers will use router names like XR1 and XR2 and are referenced by the IOS XR router icon.

## Foreword

Service providers and even large, well-established enterprises, while they continue to sweat some legacy networking assets, they also realize the operational efficiencies gained by converging these disparate assets onto a common IP infrastructure. Furthermore, they generally understand the benefits of being able to offer new and innovative services with quicker time-to-market deployment with one unified converged IP backbone. Many service providers and enterprises have built out new IP backbones and are already realizing benefits of converged networking, but many have not, plus most have not realized the full potential of capability and revenue generation they can provide. This is where the need and demand for highly skilled IP network engineers becomes critical to the evolution of these IP network infrastructures, and where learning products such as Cisco career certifications and this Cisco Press resource shines in value.

This Cisco Press book is an excellent self-study resource to help aid candidates in preparing to pass exams associated with the CCNA Service Provider, CCNP Service Provider, and CCIE Service Provider career certifications. Exams associated with these Cisco certifications cover technology areas such as routing protocols (Enhanced Interior Gateway Routing Protocol [EIGRP], Open Shortest Path First [OSPF] Protocol, Intermediate System-to-Intermediate System [IS-IS] Protocol, and Border Gateway Protocol [BGP]), multicast, IPv6, and high availability. This book serves as a valuable aid in preparation in these areas. Furthermore, the book covers these topics across multiple Cisco operating system implementations, such as Cisco IOS and IOS XR, which are also covered within the noted Cisco career certifications. This resource can also aid in prepping candidates pursuing CCNA-CCNP-CCIE Routing and Switching certifications. Lastly, this book is valuable in general for learners looking to simply increase their technical understanding about how to configure routing protocols, multicast, IPv6, and high availability.

We hope and expect you'll find this book to be a valuable and frequently referenced technical aid, and a unique reference book for your personal library.

Norm Dunn

Senior Product Manager, Learning@Cisco

Global Product Management, Service Provider Portfolio

Cisco Systems, Inc.

## Introduction

Within Cisco's Focused Technical Support (FTS) organization, a large number of questions about the IOS, IOS XE, and IOS XR operating systems are encountered on a daily basis. This book answers IP routing questions, in addition to covering the implementation and troubleshooting differences between the operating systems.

In alignment with the saying "a picture is worth a thousand words," multiple illustrations are included in the chapters to explain the various concepts. All protocols are presented conceptually, with applicable illustrations, configurations, and appropriate output. The scope of this book evolved to include the IOS and IOS XE operating systems so that non-IOS XR users could benefit from the explanations on the routing protocols. The books structure explains a concept, and then provides the configuration commands and verification of the feature in small, digestible nuggets of information.

This book's content was created in alignment with Learning@Cisco to address the demand for more efficient self-study content for the Cisco Career Service Provider Certifications.

This book encompasses content spread across multiple sources and presents them in a different perspective while covering updated standards and features that are found in enterprise and service provider networks.

# Who Should Read This Book?

Network engineers, consultant, and students who want to understand the concepts and theory of EIGRP, OSPF, IS-IS, BGP, and multicast routing protocols on Cisco IOS, IOS XE, and IOS XR operating systems should read this book.

The book's content is relevant to network engineers in various stages of their career and knowledge. Every topic assumes minimal knowledge and explains the protocol from a ground-up perspective. For the advanced network engineers, relevant information on the routing protocol behavior is included. Differences in protocol behavior between IOS, IOS XE, and IOS XR are explicitly identified for each protocol.

# How This Book Is Organized

Although this book could be read cover to cover, it is designed to be flexible and allow you to easily move between chapters and sections of chapters to cover just the material that you need more work with. This book is organized into seven distinct sections.

Part I of the book provides a brief review of the operating systems, IP addressing, and networking fundamentals.

Chapter 1, "Introduction to the Operating Systems:" This chapter provides a highlevel comparison of the network operating system architectures. An overview of the CLI configuration is provided so that users are comfortable with logging in and configuring the routers.

- Chapter 2, "IPv4 Addressing:" This chapter explains the IPv4 addressing structure, the need for subnetting, and the techniques to differentiate a network address from a host address.
- Chapter 3, "How a Router Works:" This chapter explains the reasons for using a routing protocol, the types of routing protocols, and the logic a router uses for forwarding packets.

Part II of the book explains static routing, EIGRP, OSPF, IS-IS, and BGP routing protocols.

- Chapter 4, "Static Routes:" This chapter explains connected networks and static routes from the perspective of a router.
- Chapter 5, "EIGRP:" This chapter explains the EIGRP routing protocol and how distance vector routing protocols work.
- Chapter 6, "OSPF:" This chapter explains the basic fundamentals of the routing protocol, and its operational characteristics.
- Chapter 7, "Advanced OSPF:" This chapter explains the reason for breaking an OSPF routing domain into multiple areas, techniques for optimization, and how to determine the best path.
- Chapter 8, "IS-IS:" This chapter explains the history of the IS-IS routing protocol, along with the similarities and differences it has with OSPF.
- Chapter 9, "Advanced IS-IS:" This chapter explains multilevel routing in an IS-IS domain, optimization techniques, and the path selection process.
- Chapter 10, "Border Gateway Protocol:" This chapter explains the fundamental concepts of BGP sessions and route advertisement. The chapter covers the differences between external and internal peers.

Part III of the book explains the advanced routing concepts that involve routing policies and redistribution.

- Chapter 11, "Route Maps and Route Policy Language:" This chapter explains prerequisite concepts such as matching networks prefixes with an access control list (ACL), prefix list or BGP advertisements with regex queries. This chapter also explains how IOS and IOS XE route maps can manipulate traffic. The chapter then discusses how IOS XR's route policy language was designed to provide clarity and scalability.
- Chapter 12, "Advanced Route Manipulation:" This chapter discusses policy-based routing, along with administrative distance manipulation, to modify route forward-ing behavior. The chapter concludes by describing how to filter out specific routes from routing protocol participation.
- Chapter 13, "Route Redistribution:" This chapter explains the ability to inject network prefixes learned from one routing protocol into another routing protocol. The chapter provides a thorough coverage on the rules of redistribution, problems associated with mutual redistribution, and methods for remediation.

Part IV of the book revisits BGP and describes how prefix lists, route maps, route policies, and redistribution can be used for traffic engineering.

- Chapter 14, "Advanced BGP:" BGP communities, summarizations, and other router conservation techniques are explained in this chapter.
- Chapter 15, "BGP Best Path Selection:" This chapter provides a through explanation of the best path selection algorithm and the ramifications that the selection has for other routers in the autonomous system. BGP route reflectors are examined, along with suboptimal routing due to path information loss. The chapter concludes with an overview of the various techniques available to optimize traffic flows when using route reflectors.

Part V of the book explains multicast traffic, the benefits of multicast, and configuration.

- Chapter 16, "IPv4 Multicast Routing:" This chapter describes the benefits of multicast. Key multicast features such as Internet Group Management Protocol (IGMP), Protocol Independent Multicast (PIM), rendezvous points, multicast distribution trees are all discussed.
- Chapter 17, "Advanced IPv4 Multicast Routing:" Large multicast networks require additional features to provide scalability and reachability between routing domains and autonomous systems. This chapter explains the advanced features: Multicast Source Discovery Protocol (MSDP), Source Specific Multicast (SSM), multicast boundaries, and multicast BGP.

Part VI of the book explains the IPv6 address structure, the changes to the routing protocols, and IPv6 multicast routing.

- Chapter 18, "IPv6 Addressing:" This chapter describes the IPv6 address structure. The protocol stack's neighbor discovery mechanisms are outlined, such as router advertisement messages, stateless address autoconfiguration, and duplicate address detection.
- Chapter 19, "IPv6 Routing:" This chapter outlines the subtle command structure and protocol mechanics changes between the IPv4 and IPv6 routing protocols.
- Chapter 20, "IPv6 Multicast Routing:" This chapter explains the fundamental differences between IPv4 and IPv6 multicast routing while emphasizing technologies like Multicast Listener Discovery (MLD), SSM, Embedded RP, and multicast boundaries.

Part VII, which can be found online at this book's site, explains the concepts involved with improving the operational uptime of the network.

• Chapter 21, "High Availability:" This chapter describes the techniques available to improve network availability and provide fast routing convergence.

## **Final Words**

This book is an excellent self-study resource to learn the routing protocols on Cisco IOS, IOS XE, and IOS XR operating systems. However, reading is not enough, and anyone who has obtained their CCIE will tell you that you must implement a technology to fully understand it. Our topologies are intentionally kept small to explain the routing concepts. We encourage the reader to re-create the topologies and follow along with the examples. A variety of resources are available that will allow you to practice the same concepts. Look online for the following:

- Online simulators at Learning@Cisco
- Online rack rentals
- Free demo versions of Cisco CSR 1000V (IOS XE)
- Free demo versions of Cisco IOS XRv (IOS XR)

Happy labbing!

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# Chapter 3

# How a Router Works

This chapter covers the following topics:

- IP routing
- IP packet switching
- Planes of operation

The previous chapters described that a router is necessary to transmit packets between network segments. This chapter explains the process a router uses to accomplish this task. By the end of this chapter, you should have a good understanding of how a router performs IP routing and IP packet forwarding between different network segments.

# **IP Routing**

A router's primary function is to move an IP packet from one network to a different network. A router learns about nonattached networks through static configuration or through dynamic IP routing protocols.

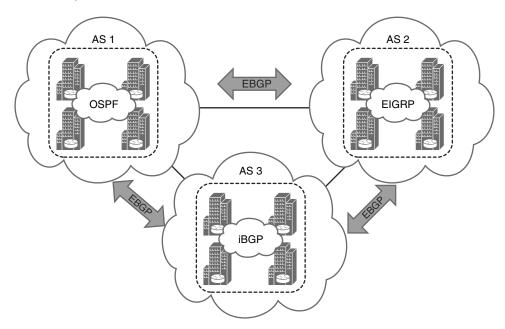
Dynamic IP routing protocols distribute network topology information between routers and provide updates without intervention when a topology change in the network occurs. Design requirements or hardware limitations may restrict IP routing to static routes, which do not accommodate topology changes very well, and can burden network engineers depending on the size of the network. Routers try to select the best loop-free path in a network that forwards a packet to its destination IP address.

A network of interconnected routers and related systems managed under a common network administration is known as an *autonomous system*. The Internet is composed of thousands of autonomous systems spanning the globe. The common dynamic routing protocols found in networks today are as follows:

- RIPv2 (Routing Information Protocol Version 2)
- EIGRP (Enhanced Interior Gateway Routing)
- OSPF (Open Shortest Path First) Protocol
- IS-IS (Intermediate System-to-Intermediate System) Protocol
- BGP (Border Gateway Protocol)

With the exception of BGP, the protocols in the preceding list are designed and optimized for routing within an autonomous system and are known as *internal gateway protocols* (IGPs). External gateway protocols (EGPs) route between autonomous systems. BGP is an EGP protocol but can also be used within an autonomous system. If BGP exchanges routes within an autonomous system, it is known as an *internal BGP* (iBGP) session. If it exchanges routes between different autonomous systems, it is known as an *external BGP* (eBGP) session.

Figure 3-1 shows an illustration of how one or many IGPs as well as iBGP can be running within an autonomous system and how eBGP sessions interconnect the various autonomous systems together.



#### Figure 3-1 Autonomous Systems and How They Interconnect

EGPs and IGPs use different algorithms for path selection and are discussed in the following sections.

#### **Distance Vector Algorithms**

Distance vector routing protocols, such as RIP, advertise routes as vectors (distance, vector), where distance is a metric (or cost) such as hop count and vector is the next-hop router's IP used to reach the destination:

- **Distance:** The distance is the route metric to reach the network.
- Vector: The vector is the interface or direction to reach the network.

When a router receives routing information from a neighbor, it stores it in a local routing database as it is received and the distance vector algorithm (also known as *Bellman-Ford* and *Ford-Fulkerson* algorithms) is used to determine which paths are the best loop-free paths to each reachable destination. Once the best paths are determined, they are installed into the routing table and are advertised to each neighbor router.

Routers running distance vector protocols advertise the routing information to their neighbors from their own perspective, modified from the original route that it received. For this reason, distance vector protocols do not have a complete map of the whole network; instead, their database reflects that a neighbor router knows how to reach the destination network and how far the neighbor router is from the destination network. They do not know how many other routers are in the path toward any of those networks. The advantage of distance vector protocols is that they require less CPU and memory and can run on low-end routers.

An analogy commonly used to describe distance vector protocols is that of a road sign at an intersection that indicates the destination is 20 miles to the west; this information is trusted and blindly followed, without really knowing whether there is a shorter or better way to the destination or if the sign is even correct. Figure 3-2 illustrates how a router using a distance vector protocol views the network and the direction that R3 needs to go to reach the 192.168.1.0/24 subnet.

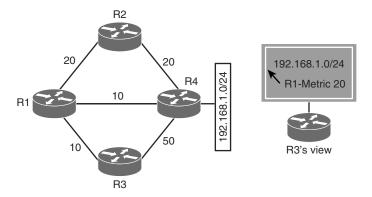


Figure 3-2 Distance Vector Protocol View of the Network

#### **Enhanced Distance Vector Algorithm**

The Diffused Update Algorithm (DUAL) is an enhanced distance vector algorithm that EIGRP uses to calculate the shortest path to a destination within a network. EIGRP advertises network information to its neighbors as other distance vector protocols do, but it has some enhancements as its name suggests. Some of the enhancements introduced into this algorithm compared to other distance vector algorithms are the following:

- Rapid convergence time for changes in the network topology.
- Only sends updates when there is a change in the network. It does not send full
  routing table updates in a periodic fashion like distance vector protocols.
- It uses hellos and forms neighbor relationships just like link-state protocols.
- It uses bandwidth, delay, reliability, load, and maximum transmission unit (MTU) size instead of hop count for path calculations.
- It has the option to load balance traffic across equal or unequal metric cost paths.

EIGRP is sometimes referred to as a *hybrid routing protocol* because it has characteristics of both distance vector and link-state protocols, as shown in the preceding list (for example, forming adjacencies with neighbor routers and relying on more advanced metrics such as bandwidth other than hop count for its best path calculations).

#### **Link-State Algorithms**

Link-state dynamic IP routing protocols advertise the link state and link metric for each of their connected links and directly connected routers to every router in the network. OSPF and IS-IS are two common link-state routing protocols found in enterprise and service provider networks. OSPF advertisements are called *link-state advertisements* (LSAs), and IS-IS uses link-state packets (LSPs) for its advertisements.

As a router receives an advertisement from a neighbor, it stores the information in a local database called the *link-state database* (LSDB), and advertises the link-state information on to each of its neighbor routers exactly as it was received. The link-state information is essentially flooded throughout the network from router to router unchanged, just as the originating router advertised it. This allows all the routers in the network to have a synchronized and identical map of the network.

Using the complete map of the network, every router in the network then runs the Dijskstra shortest path first (SPF) algorithm (developed by Edsger W. Dijkstra) to calculate the best shortest loop-free paths. The link-state algorithm then populates the routing table with this information.

Due to having the complete map of the network, link-state protocols usually require more CPU and memory than distance vector protocols, but they are less prone to routing loops and make better path decisions. In addition, link-state protocols are equipped with extended capabilities such as opaque LSAs for OSPF and TLVs (type/length/value) for IS-IS that allows them to support features commonly used by service providers such as MPLS traffic engineering.

An analogy for link-state protocols is a GPS navigation system. The GPS navigation system has a complete map and can make the best decision as to which way is the shortest and best path to reach the destination. Figure 3-3 illustrates how R3 would view the network to reach the 192.168.1.0/24 subnet.

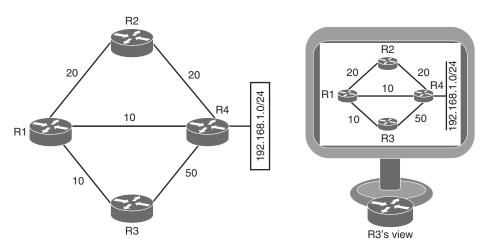


Figure 3-3 Link-State Protocol View of the Network

#### **Path Vector Algorithm**

A path vector protocol such as BGP is similar to a distance vector protocol; the difference is that instead of looking at the distance to determine the best loop-free path, it looks at various BGP path attributes. BGP path attributes include autonomous system path (AS\_Path), Multi-Exit Discriminator (MED), origin, next hop, local preference, atomic aggregate, and aggregator. BGP path attributes are covered in Chapter 10, "BGP," and Chapter 14, "Advanced BGP."

A path vector protocol guarantees loop-free paths by keeping a record of each autonomous system that the routing advertisement traverses. Any time a router receives an advertisement in which it is already part of the autonomous system path, the advertisement is rejected because accepting the autonomous system path would effectively result in a routing loop.

Figure 3-4 illustrates this concept where autonomous system 1 advertises the 10.1.1.0/24 network to autonomous system 2. Autonomous system 2 receives this information and adds itself to the autonomous system path and advertises it to autonomous system 4. Autonomous system 4 adds itself to the path and advertises it to autonomous system 3. Autonomous system 3 receives the route advertisement and adds itself to the path as well. However, when autonomous system 3 advertises that it can reach 10.1.1.0/24 to autonomous system 1, autonomous system 1 discards the advertisement because the

autonomous system path (path vector) contained in the advertisement includes its autonomous system number (autonomous system 1). When autonomous system 3 attempts to advertise reachability for 10.1.1.0/24 to autonomous system 2, autonomous system 2 also discards it because the advertisement includes autonomous system 2 in the autonomous system path, too.

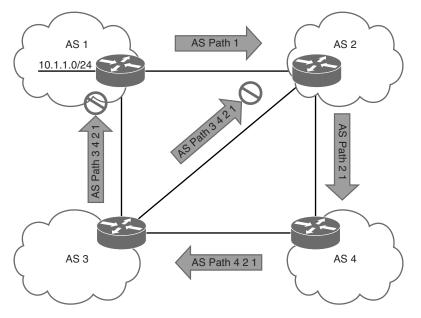


Figure 3-4 Path Vector Loop Avoidance

All BGP path attributes and how to manipulate them to influence the best path selection process are covered in Chapter 15, "BGP Best Path Selection."

#### **Routing Table**

A router identifies the path a packet should take by evaluating the following components on a router:

- **Prefix length:** The prefix length represents the number of leading binary bits in the subnet mask that are in the on position.
- Administrative distance: Administrative distance (AD) is a rating of the trustworthiness of a routing information source. If a router learns about a route to a destination from more than one routing protocol and they all have the same prefix length, AD is compared. The preference is given to the route with the lower AD.
- Metrics: A unit of measure used by a routing protocol in the best path calculation.

#### Prefix Length

Let's look at a scenario of a router selecting a route when the packet destination is within the network range for multiple routes. Assume that a router has the following routes with various prefix lengths in the routing table:

- **10.0.3.0/28**
- **10.0.3.0/26**
- 10.0.3.0/24

Because each of these routes, also known as *prefix routes* or simply *prefixes*, has a different prefix length (subnet mask), they are considered to be different destinations, and they will all be installed into the routing table. This is represented in Table 3-1.

| Prefix      | Subnet Range          | Next Hop | Outgoing Interface   |
|-------------|-----------------------|----------|----------------------|
| 10.0.3.0/28 | 10.0.3.0 - 10.0.3.15  | 10.1.1.1 | Gigabit Ethernet 1/1 |
| 10.0.3.0/26 | 10.0.3.0 - 10.0.3.63  | 10.2.2.2 | Gigabit Ethernet 2/2 |
| 10.0.3.0/24 | 10.0.3.0 - 10.0.3.255 | 10.3.3.3 | Gigabit Ethernet 3/3 |

**Table 3-1** Representation of Routing Table

If a packet needs to be forwarded, the route chosen depends on the prefix length, where the *longest prefix length* is always preferred. For example, /28 is preferred over /26, and /26 is preferred over /24. The following is an example using Table 3-1 as a reference:

- If a packet needs to be forwarded to 10.0.3.14, it would match all three routes, but it would be sent to next hop 10.1.1.1 and outgoing interface Gigabit Ethernet 1/1 because 10.0.3.0/28 has the longest prefix match.
- If a packet needs to be forwarded to 10.0.3.42, it would match 10.0.3.0/24 and 10.0.3.0/26, so the packet would be sent to 10.2.2.2 and outgoing interface Gigabit Ethernet 2/2 because 10.0.3.0/26 has the longest prefix match.
- If a packet needs to be forwarded to 10.0.3.100, it matches only 10.0.3.0/24, so the packet is sent to 10.3.3.3 and outgoing interface Gigabit Ethernet 3/3.

#### Administrative Distance

As each routing protocol receives updates and other routing information, it chooses the best path to any given destination and attempts to install this path into the routing table. Table 3-2 provides the default AD for the routing protocols covered in this book.

| Routing Protocol    | Default Administrative Distance |
|---------------------|---------------------------------|
| Connected           | 0                               |
| Static              | 1                               |
| eBGP                | 20                              |
| EIGRP summary route | 5                               |
| EIGRP (internal)    | 90                              |
| OSPF                | 110                             |
| IS-IS               | 115                             |
| RIP                 | 120                             |
| EIGRP (external)    | 170                             |
| BGP                 | 200                             |
|                     | 200                             |

**Table 3-2** Routing Protocol Default Administrative Distances

For example, if OSPF learns of a best path toward 10.0.1.0/24, it first checks to see whether an entry exists in the routing table. If it does not exist, the route is installed into the Routing Information Base (RIB). If the route already exists in the RIB, the router decides whether to install the route presented by OSPF based on the AD of the route in OSPF and the AD of the existing route in the RIB. If this route has the *lowest AD* to the destination (when compared to the other route in the table), it is installed in the routing table. If this route is not the route with the best AD, the route is rejected.

Consider another example on this topic. A router has OSPF, IS-IS, and EIGRP running, and all three protocols have learned of the destination 10.3.3.0/24 network with a different best path and metric.

Each of these three protocols will then attempt to install the route to 10.0.3.0/24 into the routing table. Because the prefix length is the same, the next decision point is the AD, where the routing protocol with the lowest AD installs the route into the routing table.

Because the EIGRP internal route has the best AD, it is the one installed into the routing table:

| 10.0.3.0/24 | EIGRP | 90 <<< Lowest AD Installed in Route Table |
|-------------|-------|---|
| 10.0.3.0/24 | OSPF  | 110                                       |
| 10.0.3.0/24 | IS-IS | 115                                       |

The routing protocol or protocols that failed to install their route into the table (in this example, that would be OSPF and IS-IS) will hang on to this route to use it as a backup route and will tell the routing table process to report to them if the best path fails so that they can then try to reinstall this route.

For example, if the EIGRP route 10.0.3.0/24 installed in the routing table fails for some reason, the routing table process calls OSPF and IS-IS, and requests them to reinstall the route in the routing table. Out of these two protocols, the preferred route is chosen based on AD, which would be OSPF because of its lower AD.

The default AD might not always be suitable for a network; for instance, there might be a requirement to adjust it so that OSPF routes are preferred over EIGRP routes. However, changing the AD on routing protocols can have severe consequences, such as routing loops and other odd behavior in a network. It is recommended that the AD be changed only with extreme caution, and only after what needs to be accomplished has been thoroughly thought out. A good backup plan is recommended in case things do not turn out as planned.

#### Metrics

As discussed in the previous section, routes are chosen and installed into the routing table based on the routing protocol's AD. The routes learned from the routing protocol with the lowest AD are the ones installed into the routing table. If there are multiple paths to the same destination from a single routing protocol, these paths would have the same AD; for this case, the best path is selected within the routing protocol. Most protocols use the path with the best metric, but OSPF and IS-IS have additional logic that preempts the lowest metric.

If a routing protocol identifies multiple paths as a *best path*, and supports multiple path entries, the router installs the maximum number of paths allowed per destination. This is known as *equal-cost multipath* (ECMP) and provides load sharing across all links.

For example, Figure 3-5 illustrates a network running OSPF to reach the prefix 10.3.3.0/24. Router 1 (R1) has two equal-cost paths; therefore, it will install both in the routing table.

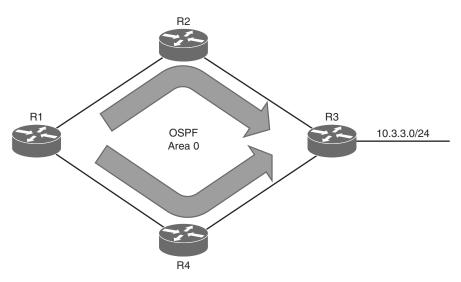


Figure 3-5 OSPF ECMP Technology

Example 3-1 confirms that both paths have been installed into the RIB, and because the metrics are identical, this confirms the router is using ECMP.

**Example 3-1** R1's Routing Table Showing the ECMP Paths to 10.3.3.0/24

**Note** Best path metric calculation and the default and maximum ECMP paths allowed for each routing protocol vary. This is covered in later routing protocol-related chapters.

#### **Virtual Routing and Forwarding**

Virtual Routing and Forwarding (VRF) is a technology that allows multiple independent virtual routing table and forwarding table instances to exist concurrently in a router. This can be leveraged to create segmentation between networks, which allows for overlapping IP addressing to be used even on a single interface (that is, using subinterfaces), and because the traffic paths are isolated, network security is increased and can eliminate the need for encryption and authentication for network traffic.

Service Providers with Multiprotocol Label Switching (MPLS) backbones typically use VRFs to create separate virtual private networks (VPNs) for their customers, and when used in this manner, VRFs are known as *VPN Routing and Forwarding*.

When VRF is not used in conjunction with MPLS, it is known as *VRF-Lite* (also termed *multi-VRF CE*, or *multi-VRF customer-edge device*). Because MPLS is beyond the scope of this book, only VRF-Lite is covered in this section and is referred to it simply as VRF.

The configurations in Example 3-2 should help clarify the VRF concept. Example 3-2 shows how configuring different interfaces with overlapping IP addresses and subnets is not allowed within a routing table, not even if they are both on different interfaces because they would end up in the same routing table and cause a conflict.

**Example 3-2** Overlapping IP Address Problems

```
IOS
R1(config)#interface GigabitEthernet0/1
R1(config-if)#ip address 10.0.3.1 255.255.255.0
R1(config-if)#interface GigabitEthernet0/3
R1(config-if)#ip address 10.0.3.2 255.255.255.0
```

% 10.0.3.0 overlaps with GigabitEthernet0/1

| IOS XR   |
|--|
| <pre>RP/0/0/CPU0:XR2(config)#interface gigabitEthernet 0/0/0/5</pre> |
| <pre>RP/0/0/CPU0:XR2(config-if)#ipv4 address 10.0.3.1/24</pre>       |
| RP/0/0/CPU0:XR2(config-if)#commit                                    |
| RP/0/0/CPU0:XR2(config-if)#  |
| <pre>RP/0/0/CPU0:XR2(config)#interface gigabitEthernet 0/0/0/3</pre> |
| <pre>RP/0/0/CPU0:XR2(config-if)#ipv4 address 10.0.3.2/24</pre>       |
| RP/0/0/CPU0:XR2(config-if)#commit                                    |
|  |

RP/0/0/CPU0:Jan 13 18:55:35.643 : ipv4\_arm[189]: %IP-IP\_ARM-3-CFLCT\_FORCED\_DOWN : The IPv4 address 10.0.3.1/24 on GigabitEthernet0/0/0/5 conflicts with other IPv4 addresses and has been forced down

**Note** In IOS XR, the IP Address Repository Manager (IPARM) enforces the uniqueness of global IP addresses configured in the system. By default, when there is an IP address and subnet mask conflict, the lowest rack/slot/interface (that is, g0/0/0/3 is lower than g0/0/0/5) is the one that gets assigned the IP address. To change the default behavior, use the **ipv4 conflict-policy {static | highest-ip | longest-prefix}** command.

In older IOS releases, only single-protocol IPv4-only VRFs could be created. The command **ip vrf** *vrf-name* created a single-protocol VRF on the router and was activated on an interface with the command **ip vrf** forwarding *vrf-name* under the interface configuration mode.

In current IOS releases, a new configuration option allows the creation of multiprotocol VRFs that support both IPv4 and IPv6. Entering the command **vrf definition** *vrf-name* creates the multiprotocol VRF. Under VRF definition submode, the command **address-family** {**ipv4** | **ipv6**} is required to specify the appropriate address family. The VRF is then associated to the interface with the command **vrf forwarding** *vrf-name* under the interface configuration submode.

**Note** The commands **ip v***rf vrf-name* and **ip vr***f* **forwarding** *vrf-name* will be available for a period of time before they are deprecated. To migrate any older IPv4-only VRFs to the new multiprotocol VRF configuration, you can use the **vrf upgrade-cli multi-af-mode** {**common-policies | non-common-policies**} [**vrf***-name*] command. When creating a new VRF, even if it is just an IPv4-only VRF, Cisco recommends using the multiprotocol VRF vrf definition and **vrf forwarding** commands.

In IOS, the following steps are required to create a VRF and assign it to an interface:

| Step 1. | Create a multiprotocol VRF.  |
|---------|--|
|         | The multiprotocol VRF routing table is created with the command <b>vrf defini-</b><br>tion <i>vrf-name</i> .   |
| Step 2. | Identify the address family.   |
|         | Initialize the appropriate address family with the command <b>address-family</b> { <b>ipv4</b>   <b>ipv6</b> }. The address family can be IPv4, IPv6, or both.           |
| Step 3. | Specify the interface to be associated with the VRF.   |
|         | Enter interface configuration submode and specify the interface to be associated with the VRF with the command <b>interface</b> <i>interface-type interface-number</i> . |
| Step 4. | Associate the VRF to the interface.  |
|         | The VRF is associated to the interface or subinterface by entering the com-<br>mand <b>vrf forwarding</b> <i>vrf-name</i> under interface configuration submode.         |
| Step 5. | Configure an IP address on the interface or subinterface.  |
|         | The IP address can be IPv4, IPv6, or both. It is configured by entering the following commands:  |
|         | IPv4   |
|         | <pre>ip address ip-address subnet-mask [secondary]</pre>   |
|         | IPv6   |
|         | <pre>ipv6 address {ipv6-address/prefix-length   prefix-name sub-bits/<br/>prefix-length}</pre>   |

**Note** On IOS nodes, the VRF needs to be associated to the interface first before configuring an IP address. If an IP address is already configured, and the VRF is associated to the interface, IOS will remove the IP address.

IOS XR supports only multiprotocol VRFs. The following steps are required to create a multiprotocol VRF and assign it to an interface on an IOS XR node:

```
Step 1. Create a multiprotocol VRF.
```

The multiprotocol VRF routing table is created with the command **vrf** *vrf-name*. The VRF name is arbitrary.

#### **Step 2.** Identify the address family.

Initialize the appropriate address family with the command **address-family** {**ipv4** | **ipv6**} **unicast**. The address family can be IPv4, IPv6, or both.

#### **Step 3.** Specify the interface to be associated with the VRF.

Enter interface configuration submode and specify the interface to be associated with the VRF with the command **interface** *interface-type interfacenumber*.

```
Step 4. Associate the VRF with an interface or subinterface.
The VRF is associated with the interface or subinterface by entering the command vrf vrf-name under interface configuration submode.
Step 5. Configure an IP address on the interface or subinterface.
The IP address can be IPv4, IPv6, or both. It is configured by entering the following commands:
IPv4
ipv4 address ipv4-address subnet-mask
IPv6
ipv6 address ipv6-address/prefix-length
```

**Note** For IOS XR, the VRF needs to be associated to the interface first before configuring an IP address; otherwise, the VRF configuration will not be accepted.

Figure 3-6 Illustrates two routers to help visualize the VRF routing table concept. One of the routers has no VRFs configured, and the other one has a management VRF named MGMT. This figure can be used as a reference for the following examples.

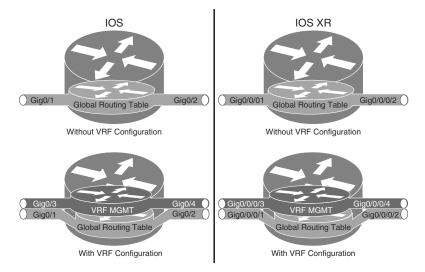


Figure 3-6 Comparison of a Router with no VRFs and a Router with a VRF

Table 3-3 provides a set of interfaces and IP addresses that overlap between the global routing table and the VRF. This information is used in the following examples.

| IOS Interface        | IOS XR Interface         | IP Address  | VRF  | Global |
|----------------------|--------------------------|-------------|------|--------|
| Gigabit Ethernet 0/1 | Gigabit Ethernet 0/0/0/1 | 10.0.3.1/24 |      | 1      |
| Gigabit Ethernet 0/2 | Gigabit Ethernet 0/0/0/2 | 10.0.4.1/24 |      | 1      |
| Gigabit Ethernet 0/3 | Gigabit Ethernet 0/0/0/3 | 10.0.3.1/24 | MGMT |        |
| Gigabit Ethernet 0/4 | Gigabit Ethernet 0/0/0/4 | 10.0.4.1/24 | MGMT |        |

**Table 3-3** Sample Interfaces and IP Addresses

Example 3-3 shows how the IP addresses are assigned to the interfaces in the global routing table shown in Table 3-3.

**Example 3-3** IP Address Configuration in Global Routing Table

```
IOS
R1(config)#interface GigabitEthernet0/1
R1(config-if)#ip address 10.0.3.1 255.255.255.0
R1(config)#interface GigabitEthernet0/2
R1(config-if)#ip address 10.0.4.1 255.255.255.0
```

#### IOS XR

```
RP/0/0/CPU0:XR1(config)#interface gigabitEthernet 0/0/0/1
RP/0/0/CPU0:XR1(config-if)#ipv4 address 10.0.3.1/24
RP/0/0/CPU0:XR1(config)#interface gigabitEthernet 0/0/0/2
RP/0/0/CPU0:XR1(config-if)#ipv4 address 10.0.4.1/24
RP/0/0/CPU0:XR1(config-if)#commit
```

Example 3-4 displays the global routing table with the command **show ip route** for IOS and **show route** for IOS XR to show the IP addresses configured in Example 3-3.

**Example 3-4** Output of Global Routing Table

| IOS  |
|--|
| R1#show ip route                                       |
| ! Output omitted for brevity                           |
| 10.0.0.0/8 is variably subnetted, 4 subnets, 2 masks   |
| C 10.0.3.0/24 is directly connected, GigabitEthernet0/ |
| L 10.0.3.1/32 is directly connected, GigabitEthernet0/ |
| C 10.0.4.0/24 is directly connected, GigabitEthernet0/ |
| L 10.0.4.1/32 is directly connected, GigabitEthernet0/ |

IOS XR RP/0/0/CPU0:XR1#show route ! Output omitted for brevity
C 10.0.3.0/24 is directly connected, 00:00:25, GigabitEthernet0/0/0/1
L 10.0.3.1/32 is directly connected, 00:00:25, GigabitEthernet0/0/0/2
C 10.0.4.0/24 is directly connected, 00:00:02, GigabitEthernet0/0/0/2
L 10.0.4.1/32 is directly connected, 00:00:02, GigabitEthernet0/0/0/2

Example 3-5 shows how the VRF named MGMT is created, two interfaces are associated with it, and the IP addresses in Table 3-3 are configured on the interfaces. These IP addresses overlap with the ones configured in Example 3-3, but there is no conflict because they are in a different routing table.

```
Example 3-5 VRF Configuration Example
```

| IOS   |
|---|
| R1(config)#vrf definition MGMT  |
| <pre>R1(config-vrf)# address-family ipv4</pre>                          |
| R1 (config) #interface GigabitEthernet0/3                               |
| R1(config-if)# <b>vrf forwarding MGMT</b>                               |
| R1(config-if)#ip address 10.0.3.1 255.255.255.0                         |
| R1 (config) #interface GigabitEthernet0/4                               |
| R1(config-if)# <b>vrf forwarding MGMT</b>                               |
| R1(config-if)#ip address 10.0.4.1 255.255.255.0                         |
|   |
|   |
| IOS XR  |
| <pre>RP/0/0/CPU0:XR1(config)#vrf MGMT address-family ipv4 unicast</pre> |
| RP/0/0/CPU0:XR1(config-vrf-af)# <b>root</b>                             |
| <pre>RP/0/0/CPU0:XR1(config)#interface gigabitEthernet 0/0/0/3</pre>    |
| RP/0/0/CPU0:XR1(config-if)#vrf MGMT                                     |
| <pre>RP/0/0/CPU0:XR1(config-if)#ipv4 address 10.0.3.1/24</pre>          |
| <pre>RP/0/0/CPU0:XR1(config)#interface gigabitEthernet 0/0/0/4</pre>    |
| RP/0/0/CPU0:XR1(config-if)#vrf MGMT                                     |
| <pre>RP/0/0/CPU0:XR1(config-if)#ipv4 address 10.0.4.1/24</pre>          |
| RP/0/0/CPU0:XR1(config-if)#commit                                       |

Example 3-6 shows how the VRF IP addresses configured in Example 3-5 cannot be seen in the output of the **show ip route** command for IOS and the **show route** command for IOS XR; these commands display only the contents of the global routing table. To see a VRF routing table, the commands **show ip route vrf** *vrf-name* for IOS and **show route vrf** {all | *vrf-name*} for IOS XR should be used.

```
Example 3-6 Output of Global Routing Table and VRF Routing Table
```

| R1#show ip route  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|---|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| ! Output omitted for brevity  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 10.0.0/8 is variably subnetted, 4 subnets, 2 masks                    |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| C 10.0.3.0/24 is directly connected, GigabitEthernet0/1               |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| L 10.0.3.1/32 is directly connected, GigabitEthernet0/1               |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| C 10.0.4.0/24 is directly connected, GigabitEthernet0/2               |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| L 10.0.4.1/32 is directly connected, GigabitEthernet0/2               |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|   |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| R1#show ip route vrf MGMT   |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| ! Output omitted for brevity  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 10.0.0/8 is variably subnetted, 4 subnets, 2 masks                    |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| C 10.0.3.0/24 is directly connected, GigabitEthernet0/3               |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| L 10.0.3.1/32 is directly connected, GigabitEthernet0/3               |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| C 10.0.4.0/24 is directly connected, GigabitEthernet0/4               |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| L 10.0.4.1/32 is directly connected, GigabitEthernet0/4               |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|   |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|   |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| RP/0/0/CPU0:XR1#show route  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| ! Output omitted for brevity  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| C 10.0.3.0/24 is directly connected, 00:12:44, GigabitEthernet0/0/0/1 |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| L 10.0.3.1/32 is directly connected, 00:12:44, GigabitEthernet0/0/0/1 |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| C 10.0.4.0/24 is directly connected, 00:12:21, GigabitEthernet0/0/0/2 |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| L 10.0.4.1/32 is directly connected, 00:12:21, GigabitEthernet0/0/0/2 |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|   |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| RP/0/0/CPU0:XR1#show route vrf MGMT                                   |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| ! Output omitted for brevity  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| C 10.0.3.0/24 is directly connected, 00:09:15, GigabitEthernet0/0/0/3 |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| L 10.0.3.1/32 is directly connected, 00:09:15, GigabitEthernet0/0/0/3 |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| C 10.0.4.0/24 is directly connected, 00:00:10, GigabitEthernet0/0/0/4 |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| L 10.0.4.1/32 is directly connected, 00:00:10, GigabitEthernet0/0/0/4 |  |  |  |  |  |  |

In IOS, to display a quick summary of the usability status for each IP interface, in addition to all the IP addresses configured in the global routing table and all VRFs, the command **show ip interface brief** should be used. In IOS XR, the command **show ipv4 interface brief** only shows the IP addresses in the global routing table. To see the IP addresses in the global routing table and all VRFs, use the command **show ipv4 vrf all interface brief**. Example 3-7 provides sample output of these **show** commands.

**Example 3-7** Verification of Interfaces Status and IP Addresses

| R1# <b>show ip interface h</b> | orief      |                   |    |          |
|--------------------------------|------------|-------------------|----|----------|
| Interface                      | IP-Address | OK? Method Status |    | Protocol |
| GigabitEthernet0/1             | 10.0.3.1   | YES NVRAM up      | up |          |

| GigabitEthernet0/2 10               | 0.0.4.1 YI      | ES NVRAM up |      | up                |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------|-------------|------|-------------------|
| GigabitEthernet0/3 10               | .0.3.1 YI       | ES NVRAM up |      | up                |
| GigabitEthernet0/4 10               | .0.4.1 YI       | ES NVRAM up |      | up                |
|                                     |                 |             |      |                   |
| RP/0/0/CPU0:XR2#show ipv4           | interface brie  | f           |      |                   |
| RF/0/0/0/0100.AR2# <b>BHOW IP</b> V | interlate bile. | -           |      |                   |
| Interface                           | IP-Addres:      | s Status    |      | Protocol          |
| GigabitEthernet0/0/0/0              | unassigne       | d Shutdo    | wn   | Down              |
| GigabitEthernet0/0/0/1              | 10.0.3.1        | Up          |      | Up                |
| GigabitEthernet0/0/0/2              | 10.0.4.1        | Up          |      | Up                |
|                                     |                 |             |      |                   |
| RP/0/0/CPU0:XR2#show ipv4           | vrf all interfa | ace brief   |      |                   |
|                                     |                 |             |      |                   |
| Interface                           | IP-Address      | s Status    |      | Protocol Vrf-Name |
| GigabitEthernet0/0/0/0              | unassigned      | Shutdown    | Down | default           |
| GigabitEthernet0/0/0/1              | 10.0.3.1        | Up          | Up   | default           |
| GigabitEthernet0/0/0/2              | 10.0.4.1        | Up          | Up   | default           |
| GigabitEthernet0/0/0/3              | 10.0.3.1        | Up          | Up   | MGMT              |
| GigabitEthernet0/0/0/4              | 10.0.4.1        | Up          | Up   | MGMT              |

VRF-Lite can provide similar functionality to that of virtual local-area networks (VLANs); however, instead of relying on Layer 2 technologies such as spanning tree, Layer 3 dynamic routing protocols can be used. Using routing protocols over Layer 2 technologies has some advantages such as improved network convergence times, dynamic traffic load sharing, and troubleshooting tools such as ping and traceroute.

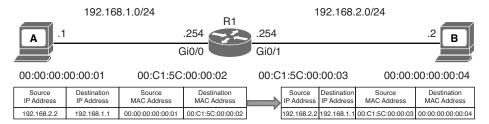
#### **IP Packet Switching**

Chapter 2, "IP Addressing," explained that devices on the same subnet could communicate directly with each other without the need of a router. The second layer of the OSI model, the data link layer, handles addressing beneath the IP protocol stack so that communication is directed between hosts. Network packets include the Layer 2 addressing with unique source and destination addresses for that segment. Ethernet commonly uses MAC addresses, and other data link layer protocols such as Frame Relay use an entirely different method of Layer 2 addressing.

The first routers would receive a packet, remove the Layer 2 information, and verify that the route exists for the destination IP address. If a matching route could not be found, the packet was dropped. If a matching route was found, the router would identify it and add new Layer 2 information to the packet. The Layer 2 source address would be the router's outbound interface, and the destination information would be next hop's Layer 2 address.

Figure 3-7 illustrates the concept where PC A is sending a packet to PC B via Ethernet connection to R1. PC A sends the packet to R1's MAC address of 00:C1:5C: 00:00:02. R1 receives the packet, removes the Layer 2 information, and looks for a route to the

192.168.2.2 address. R1 identifies that connectivity to the 192.168.2.2 IP address is through Gigabit Ethernet 0/1. R1 adds the Layer 2 source address using its Gigabit Ethernet 0/1's MAC address 00:C1:5C:00:00:03 and a destination address for PC B of 00:00:00:00:00:04.



#### Figure 3-7 Layer 2 Addressing

Advancement in technologies has streamlined the process so that routers do not remove and add the Layer 2 addressing but simply rewrites them. IP packet switching or IP packet forwarding is the faster process of receiving an IP packet on an input interface and making a decision of whether to forward the packet to an output interface or drop it. This process is simple and streamlined for a router to be able to forward large amounts of packets.

When the first Cisco routers were developed, they used a mechanism called *process switching* to switch the packets through the routers. As network devices evolved, Cisco created Fast Switching and Cisco Express Forwarding (CEF) to optimize the switching process for the routers to be able to handle larger packet volumes. Fast Switching is deprecated in newer IOS releases and is not covered in this book.

#### **Process Switching**

Process switching, also referred to as *software switching* or *slow path*, is the switching mechanism in which the general-purpose CPU on a router is in charge of packet switching. In IOS, the ip\_input process runs on the general-purpose CPU for processing incoming IP packets. Process switching is the fallback for CEF because it is dedicated for processing punted IP packets when they cannot be switched by CEF.

In IOS XR, the Network Input/Output (NetIO) process is the equivalent to the IOS ip input process and is responsible for forwarding packets in software.

The type of packets that require software handling for both IOS and IOS XR include the following:

- Packets sourced or destined to the router (that is, control traffic, routing protocols)
- Packets that are too complex for the hardware to handle (that is, IP packets with IP options)
- Packets that require extra information that is not currently known (that is, Address Resolution Protocol [ARP] resolution, and so on)

**Note** Software switching is significantly slower than switching done in hardware. NetIO is designed to handle a very small percentage of traffic handled by the system. Packets are hardware switched whenever possible.

Figure 3-8 illustrates how a packet that cannot be CEF switched is punted to the CPU for processing. The ip\_input process consults the routing table and ARP table to obtain the next-hop router's IP address, outgoing interface, and MAC address. It then overwrites the destination MAC address of the packet with the next-hop router's MAC address, overwrites the source MAC address with the MAC address of the outgoing Layer 3 interface, decrements the IP Time-To-Live (TTL) field, recomputes the IP header checksum, and finally delivers the packet to the next-hop router.

The routing table, also known as the *Routing Information Base* (RIB), is built from information obtained from dynamic routing protocols, directly connected and static routes. The ARP table is built from information obtained from the ARP protocol. The ARP protocol is used by IP hosts to dynamically learn the MAC address of other IP hosts on the same subnet. For example, an IP host that needs to perform address resolution for another IP host connected by Ethernet can send an ARP request using a LAN broadcast address, and it then waits for an ARP reply from the IP host. The ARP reply includes the required Layer 2 physical MAC address information.

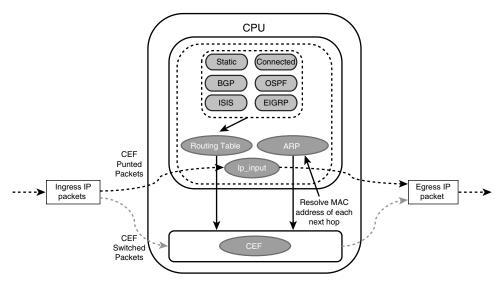


Figure 3-8 Process Switching

#### **Cisco Express Forwarding**

Cisco Express Forwarding (CEF) is a Cisco proprietary switching mechanism developed to keep up with the demands of evolving network infrastructures. It has been the default switching mechanism on most Cisco platforms that do all their packet switching using the general-purpose CPU (software based routers) since the 1990s, and it is the default

switching mechanism used by all Cisco platforms that use specialized application specific integrated circuits (ASICs) and network processing units (NPUs) for high packet throughput (hardware-based routers).

The general-purpose CPU on the software-based and hardware-based routers is similar and perform all the same functions, the difference being that on software based routers the general-purpose CPU is in charge of all operations, including CEF switching (software CEF), and the hardware-based routers do CEF switching using *forwarding engines* that are implemented in specialized ASICs, TCAMs, and NPUs (hardware CEF). Forwarding engines provide the packet switching, forwarding, and route lookup capability to routers.

Given the low cost of the general-purpose CPUs, the price point of software-based routers will be much more affordable, but at the expense of total packet throughput.

When a route processor (RP) engine is equipped with a forwarding engine so that it can make all the packet switching decisions, this is known as a *centralized forwarding architecture*. If the line cards are equipped with forwarding engines so that they can make packet switching decision without intervention of the RP, this is known as a *distributed forwarding architecture*.

For a centralized forwarding architecture, when a packet is received on the ingress line card, it is transmitted to the forwarding engine on the RP. The forwarding engine examines the packet's headers and determines that the packet will be sent out a port on the egress line card, and forwards the packet to the egress line card to be forwarded.

For a distributed forwarding architecture, when a packet is received on the ingress line card, it is transmitted to the local forwarding engine. The forwarding engine performs a packet lookup, and if it determines that the outbound interface is local, it forwards the packet out a local interface. If the outbound interface is located on a different line card, the packet is sent across the switch fabric, also known as the *backplane*, directly to the egress line card, bypassing the RP.

Figure 3-9 illustrates a packet flowing across a centralized and a distributed forwarding architecture.

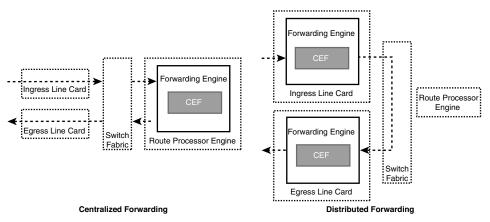


Figure 3-9 Centralized Versus Distributed Forwarding Architectures

#### Software CEF

Software CEF, also known as the software *Forwarding Information Base* (FIB), consists of the following components:

- Forwarding Information Base: The FIB is built directly from the routing table and contains the next-hop IP address for each destination IP in the network. It keeps a mirror image of the forwarding information contained in the IP routing table. When a routing or topology change occurs in the network, the IP routing table is updated, and these changes are reflected in the FIB. CEF uses the FIB to make IP destination prefix-based switching decisions
- Adjacency table: The adjacency table is also known as the Adjacency Information Base (AIB). It contains the MAC addresses and egress interfaces of all directly connected next hops, and it is populated with data from the ARP table and other Layer 2 protocol tables (that is, Frame Relay map tables).

Figure 3-10 illustrates how the CEF table is built from the routing table and the ARP table and how a packet is CEF switched through the router. When an IP packet is received, if there is a valid FIB and adjacency table entry for it, the router overwrites the destination MAC address of the packet with the next hop router's MAC address, overwrites the source MAC address with the MAC address of the outgoing Layer 3 interface, decrements IP TTL field, recomputes the IP header checksum, and finally delivers the packet to the next-hop router.

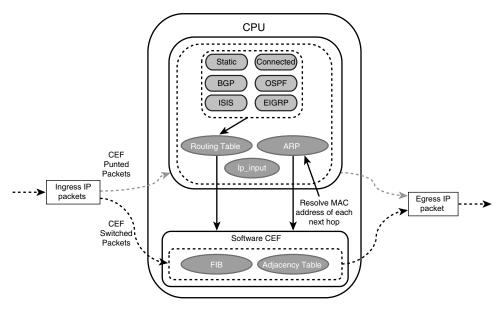


Figure 3-10 CEF Switching

#### Hardware CEF

The ASICs in hardware-based routers have a very high cost to design, produce, and troubleshoot. ASICs allow for very high packet rates, but the trade-off is that they are limited in their functionality because they are hardwired to perform specific tasks. There are routers equipped with NPUs that are designed to overcome the inflexibility of ASICs. Unlike ASICs, NPUs are programmable, and their firmware can be changed with relative ease.

The main advantage of the distributed forwarding architectures is that the packet throughput performance is greatly improved by offloading the packet switching responsibilities to the line cards. Packet switching in distributed architecture platforms is done via distributed CEF (dCEF), which is a mechanism in which the CEF data structures are downloaded to forwarding ASICs and the CPUs of all line cards so that they can participate in packet switching; this allows for the switching to be done at the distributed level, thus increasing the packet throughput of the router.

Software CEF in hardware-based platforms is not used to do packet switching as in softwarebased platforms; instead, it is used to program the hardware CEF, as shown in Figure 3-11.

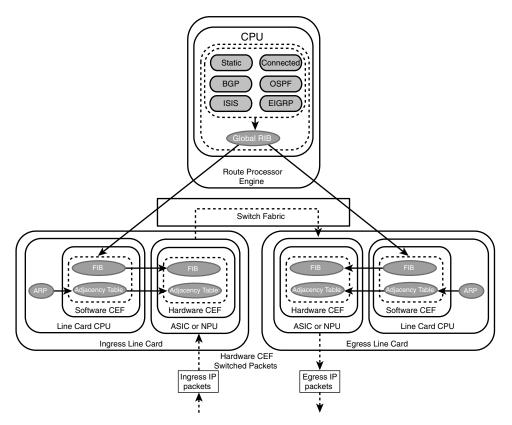


Figure 3-11 *dCEF Hardware Switching* 

Figure 3-11 also illustrates how the RIB process interacts with the RIBs of the routing protocols. The RIB process is in charge of the calculation of best paths, alternative paths, and the redistribution from different protocols and all these details merge into the global RIB (gRIB), where the best path for a destination network is installed. This is further distributed into the software CEF tables of different line cards, which is further mirrored into hardware CEF. The Switch Fabric is the backplane for all modules in the system. It creates a dedicated connection between all line cards and the route processors and provides fast data switching transmission between them.

In most distributed architecture platforms, if the incoming packet is control plane traffic or management traffic it is punted to the RP's CPU. The following list includes some examples of packets that are typically punted for processing by the RP's CPU or line card's CPU:

- Control traffic, such as BGP, OSPF, IS-IS, PIM, IGMP, and so on
- Management traffic, such as Telnet, SSH, SNMP, and so on
- Layer 2 mechanisms, such as CDP, ARP, LACP PDU, BFD, and so on
- Fragmentation, DF bit set, IP options set
- TTL expired
- ICMP echo request

#### **Planes of Operation**

A router is typically segmented into three planes of operation, each with a specific and clearly defined objective:

The control plane: The control plane is the brain of the router. It consists of dynamic IP routing protocols (that is OSPF, IS-IS, BGP, and so on), the RIB, routing updates, in addition to other protocols such as PIM, IGMP, ICMP, ARP, BFD, LACP, and so on. In short, the control plane is responsible for maintaining sessions and exchanging protocol information with other router or network devices.

In centralized architecture platforms, the general-purpose CPU manages all control plane protocols. In distributed architecture platforms, routing protocols, and most other protocols, always run on the core CPU in the RPs or Supervisor engines, but there are other control plane protocols such as ARP, BFD, and ICMP that in some distributed architecture platforms have now been offloaded to the line card CPU.

- The data plane: The data plane is the forwarding plane, which is responsible for the switching of packets through the router (that is, process switching and CEF switching). In the data plane, there could be features that could affect packet forwarding such as quality of service (QoS) and access control lists (ACLs).
- The management plane: The management plane is used to manage a device through its connection to the network. Examples of protocols processed in the management plane include Simple Network Management Protocol (SNMP), Telnet, File Transfer Protocol (FTP), Secure FTP, and Secure Shell (SSH). These management protocols are used for monitoring and for command-line interface (CLI) access.

Figure 3-12 shows how the three planes of operation and how the processes are isolated from each other. In IOS XR, a process failure within one plane does not affect other processes or applications within that plane. This layered architecture creates a more reliable model than one with a monolithic architecture such as IOS, where failure of a single process may cause a failure of the whole system.

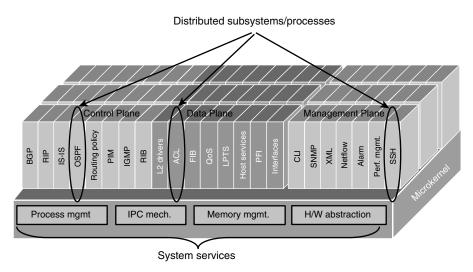


Figure 3-12 Separation of Control, Data, and Management Planes

#### Summary

This chapter provided an overview of the fundamentals of IP routing and IP switching and the control planes of operation. In summary, it showed how a router makes a forwarding decision, which consists of three basic components:

- The routing protocols, which are used to build the routing table (RIB)
- The routing table, which is used to program the switching mechanisms (that is, CEF)
- The switching mechanisms used to perform the actual packet forwarding

#### **References in This Chapter**

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# Index

## Symbols

- \* (asterisks) query modifier, 482
- [] (brackets) query modifier, 479
- ^] (caret in brackets) query modifier, 480
- ^ (carets) query modifier, 478
- \$ (dollar signs) query modifier, 478-479
- (hyphen) query modifier, 479-480
- () (parentheses) query modifier, 480
- . (period) query modifier, 481
- l (pipe) query modifier, 480
- + (plus sign) query modifier, 481
- ? (question mark) query modifier, 481-482
- underscores) query modifier, 477-478
- 2-Way state (OSPF neighbors), 196
- 10.55.200.33/12 address range calculations, 45
- 172.16.2.3/23 address range calculations, 45
- 192.168.100.0/24 subnet challenge, 46

- available hosts, 47 available subnets, 47
- available sublicts, 47
- binary bit values, 47
- final address allocation scheme, 49
- LAN 1/LAN 2 subnet assignments, 47-48
- LAN 3 assignments, 48
- 192.168.100.5/26 address range calculations, 45

## Α

- abbreviations (IPv6 addresses), 895-896 ABF (access-list-based forwarding), 521 configuring, 523-525 overview, 521 ABRs (Area Border Routers), 242 totally stubby areas, 289 Type 3 LSAs, 259 accumulated interior gateway protocol. *See* AIGP
- ACEs (access control entries), 467

ACLs (access control lists), 467 ABF, 521 configuring, 523-525 overview, 521 ACEs, 467 AS Path, 484 categories, 468 extended BGP network selection, 470 defining, 469 IGP network selection, 469-470 standard, 468-469 ACL to network entries, 469-468 defining, 468 actions (route maps), 492 active neighbor field (OSPF Hello packet), 194 Active state (BGP neighbors), 416 AD (administrative distance), 73-76, 91 default values, 526 floating static routes, verifying, 104-105 modifying, 527 BGP, 532-534 EIGRP, 528-529 IS-IS, 531-532 OSPF, 529-531 redistribution routing loop prevention, 601-603 suboptimal routing, 527, 584 Add-Path feature (BGP), 739-742 address families **EIGRP** configurations instances, 185-186 interfaces, 186-188 topology, 188

identifiers (AFIs) BGP. 410 listing of, website, 812 MBGP, 812 address-family command, 77 address-family ipv6 command, 954 address-family ipv6 unicast autonomous-system as-number command, 954 address-family ipv6 unicast command, 988, 1001 addresses anycast, 906-908 duplicate address detection, disabling, 908 topology, 906-908 updated topology, 907 broadcast calculating, 43 defined, 37 destination, 1012 host all-0s, 37 available, listing, 47 first usable, calculating, 43 last usable, calculating, 43 IP. See IP addresses IPv6 abbreviations, 895-896 bit length values, 894 case, 894 components, 894 hexadecimal to binary conversion, 896-898 bextets, 894 network boundaries, 894 unicast, 894

loopback, 911 MAC defined, 752 multicast, 752-753 multicast Administratively Scoped Block, 751 GLOP Block, 751 IANA assigned, 749 Internetwork Control Block, 750 IPv6. 908-911 Layer 2, 752-753 Local Network Control Block, 750 reserved, 750 Source-Specific Multicast Block. 751 NET. 322-323 common private, 322 expanded structure, 322 guidelines, 323 minimal format, 322 multiple, 323 next-hop eBGP, 444-445 MBGP for IPv6, 997 **OSPF** multicast, 193 resolution, 934-936 unicast link-local (LLA), 905-906 unique local unicast (ULA), 904-905 unspecified, 911 Adj-RIB-Out table neighbor-specific view, 429-430

adjacencies (neighbors) **EIGRP. 128** advertised networks update packet, 131 hello packet capture, 129 INIT flag and acknowledgment update packet, 130 INIT flag set update packet, 129 route prefixes update packet, 130 sample topology, 129 verification, 139 EIGRPv6 verification, 949 IS-IS, 318 broadcast, 333 compatibility chart, 386 P2P. 338-339 verification, 346-347 OSPF, 197-202 DBD packet, 199 debug perspective example, 201-202 Hello packet with neighbors detected, 198 Hello packet with no neighbors detected, 197 hub-and-spoke topology, 228 LSR, 200 LSU. 200 multi-area, 304-308 network type compatibility, 231-234 parameters, verifying, 198-199 process, 201 simple topology, 197 verifying, 209-210 OSPFv2 versus OSPFv3, 957

Adjacency Information Base (AIB), 87 admin mode (IOS XR), 14 administrative distance. See AD Administratively Scoped Block, 751 administratively scoped multicast boundaries, 863-864 advertisements BGP conditional. 645-647 default, 643-644 default per neighbor, 644-645 candidate RP (C-RP-Adv), 775 NDP RA messages, 913 af-interface command, 185 af-interface interface-type interfacenumber command, 954 AFI (Authority and Format Identifier), 320 AFIs (address family identifiers) BGP, 410 listing of, website, 812 MBGP, 812 age (OSPF LSAs), 251 aggregate-addressipv6-prefix/prefixlength command, 1001 aggregation. See also summarization addresses, 629-631 AS Set, 639-641 atomic, 637-639 IPv6, 902-903 link aggregation (LAG), 722 selective AS Set, 641-643 AIB (Adjacency Information Base), 87 AIGP (accumulated interior gateway protocol), 686-694 configuration, 689 guidelines, 688

MED conversion, 693-694 metric modifications, 688 neighbor sessions metrics verification, 690 PAs, exchanging, 687 processing logic, 692-719 algorithms BGP best path, 672 AIGP. See AIGP AS\_Path length, 694-698 attribute classifications, 673 attributes list, 672 eBGP over iBGP, 714-717 local preference, 679-682 locally originated via network or aggregate advertisement, 683-686 lowest IGP metric, 718-720 lowest neighbor address, 722 MED. See MED, BGP best path selection minimum cluster list length, 721 oldest EBGP, 720 origin types, 700-703 RIDs, 720-721 weight, 673-679 BSR RP hash, 845-846 Dijskstra shortest path first, 70 distance vector, 69 enhanced distance vector, 70 link-state, 70-71 path vector, 71-72 RPF. See RPF allowing ASNs, 658-660 and keyword (conjunction operator), 41-42, 504 any source multicast (ASM), 850

duplicate address detection. disabling, 908 RPs. 847-849 topology, 906-908 updated topology, 907 architecture centralized versus distributed forwarding, 86 **IOS.** 1 kernel. 2 memory management, 2 run to completion scheduler, 2 software packaging, 2-4 IOS XE. 4 kernel. 4 memory management, 4 scheduling, 4 IOS XR. 5 kernel. 5 memory management, 6 scheduling, 5 software packaging, 6-7 IS-IS, 317 multicast, 745 OSPF. 192-193 prefix matching, 471 route policies, 499-504 advanced conditional statement nesting, 502 bad RPL design, 503 conditional match and action statement, 499 conditional match with if-else logic, 500 conditional match with if-elseif logic, 501

anycast IPv6 addresses, 906-908

conditional match with if-elseifelse logic, 501 conditional statement nesting, 502 good RPL design, 503 if-elseif-else route-policy, 502 inline policy set expansion, 500 inline prefix filtering, 499 nested conditional match, 503 prefix set filtering, 500 RFC 1918 route map with if-else logic, 501 RPL, 496 archiving configurations, 11-13 area area-id authentication ipsec spi spi authentication-algorithm commands, 975 area area-id encryption ipsec spi spi esp encryption-algorithm command, 975 area area-id nssa command, 975 area area-id range ipv6-prefix/prefixlength command, 975 area area-id stub command, 975 area area-id stub no-summary command, 975 Area Border Routers. See ABRs area ID field (OSPF Hello packet), 194 areas (IS-IS), 318-319 areas (OSPF) ABRs, 242 backbone, 242 defined, 241 disadvantages, 242 failed route advertisement, 242 filtering, 543-546 IDs, 245-246 multi-area adjacencies, 304-308

configuration, 305-306 inefficient topologies, 304 nonbroadcast interface verification, 304 OSPF neighborship, 306-307 verification, 306-308 multi-area topology, 243-245 NSSAs. 268-269 OSPFv3 authentication/encryption, 972 route types external, 247-248 intra-area/interarea, 246-247 stubby, 286 NSSAs. 292-295 stub areas, 286-289 totally, 289-292 totally NSSAs, 295-298 types, 286 successful route advertisement. 243 summarization, 276-280 Type 1 LSA flooding, 252 **ASBRs** (Autonomous System Boundary Routers), 247, 265-268 AS-external LSAs, 959 ASM (any source multicast), 850 ASNs (autonomous system numbers), 408-409 allowing, 658-660 local. 660-664 private, removing, 656-658 AS Paths, 488 ACL (IOS), 484 BGP best path algorithm, 694-698 configuration, 696 processing logic, 698

IOS XR selection options, 484 is-local. 485 length, 485-486 neighbor-is, 487 originates-from option, 487 passes-through, 486-487 unique-length, 486 Assert PIM control message, 764 AS Set, 641-643 as-set keyword, 639-641 asterisk (\*) query modifier, 482 asynchronous mode (BFD) atomic aggregate attribute, 637-639 attached bits (LSPs), 331 attachment points, 516 Attempt state (OSPF neighbors), 196 attributes atomic aggregate, 637-639 BGP best path, 409 AIGP. See AIGP AS\_Path length, 694-698 classifications, 673 eBGP over iBGP, 714-717 listing of, 672 locally originated via networks or aggregate advertisement, 683-686 local preference, 679-682 lowest IGP metric, 718-720 lowest neighbor address, 722 MED. See MED, BGP best path selection minimum cluster list length, 721 oldest EBGP, 720 origin, 700-703 RIDs, 720-721 weight, 673-679

eBGP/iBGP multipath, 725 eBGP prefix listing of, 441 local, 441 remote, 440 EIGRP, propagation, 146 LSPs, 331 route policies, modification, 498 authentication BGP. 462-463 **EIGRP**, 174 enabling, 174 key chain configuration, 174-177 IS-IS, 367 configuration, 369-370 *bello*. 368 LSP. 368 types, 367 **OSPF. 236** IOS. 236 IOS XR. 237-239 types supported, 236 OSPFv2 versus OSPFv3, 955 OSPFv3, 970-973 areas, 972 interfaces, 972 IPsec verification, 973 authentication command, 975 authentication key-chain key-chainname command, 186 authentication keychain key-chainname command, 954 authentication mode command, 186 authentication options field (OSPF Hello packet), 194

Authority and Format Identifier (AFI), 320 Autonomous System Boundary Routers (ASBRs), 247, 265-268 autonomous systems, 67 **EIGRP**, 126 installed routes, displaying, 140-141 interface verification, 136-139 IOS. 132-133 **IOS XR. 134** neighbor adjacencies verification, 139 passive interfaces, 134 sample topology, 134-136 maximum BGP, 652-654 numbers (ASNs) allowing, 658-660 local. 660-664 private, removing, 656-658 Auto-RPs, 773 candidate RPs, 773 Cisco-RP-announce message filtering, 867 configuring, 785-786 multicast boundaries, 865-866 **RP MAs**, 774 TTL scoping, 862 auto-summary command, 188

### B

backbone, 242, 380-382 backdoor networks, 649-652 backup connectivity, 101 bandwidth (EIGRP), 177-179 bandwidth-percent percent command, 186 BDRs (backup designated routers), 213 LSA distribution, 213 OSPF elections, 214-216 placement, 216-219 Bellman-Ford algorithms, 69 BGP (Border Gateway Protocol), 68 AD, modifying, 532-534 address families, 410 Adj-RIB-Out table neighbor-specific view, 429-430 advertisements conditional, 645-647 default, 643-644 default per neighbor, 644-645 aggregation aggregate addresses, 629-631 AS Set, 639-641 atomic, 637-639 selective AS Set, 641-643 allow autonomous feature, 658-660 ASNs, 408-409 backdoor networks, 649-652 best path algorithm, 672 AIGP. See AIGP AS\_Path length, 694-698 attribute classifications, 673 attributes list, 672 eBGP versus iBGP, 714-717 locally originated via network or aggregate advertisement, 683-686 local preference, 679-682 lowest IGP metric, 718-720 lowest neighbor address, 722

MED. See MED. BGP best path selection minimum cluster list length, 721 oldest EBGP, 720 origin types, 700-703 RIDs, 720-721 weight, 673-679 communities, 609 conditionally matching, 620-627 formats, 610 Internet, 611 No Advertise, 614-617 No Export, 611-614 No Export SubConfed, 617-620 support, 611 confederations, 453-458 AS100 BGP table, 457 configuring, 455-457 iBGP versus eBGP sessions, 454 NLRI. 458 topology, 453 configuring, 418-419 IOS, 419-420 IOS XR. 420-421 defined, 407 eBGP BGP table, 440 configuration, 439 iBGP combinations, 442-444 iBGP sessions, compared, 438 local prefix attributes, 441 next-hop addresses, 444-445 prefix attributes, 441 remote prefix attributes, 440 topology, 438

ECMP. 723 AS Path relax feature, 731-733 eBGP/iBGP multipath, 723-726 eiBGP multipath. See eiBGP multipath failure detection, 459 fast convergence, 125, 189, 221, 315, 366, 459 filtering, 546-548 iBGP. See iBGP inter-router communication, 410-411 keepalive messages, 413 message types, 411 notification messages, 414 open messages, 412-413 update messages, 413-414 IPv4 neighbor output, 423-424 local autonomous feature, 660-664 loop prevention, 409-410 maximum autonomous system, 652-654 maximum prefix, 654-656 Multiprotocol. See MBGP neighbors AIGP metrics support, verifying, 690 default advertisements, 644-645 lowest address (path selection), 722 neighbor states, 415 Active, 416 Connect, 415-416 Established, 417 idle, 415 OpenConfirm, 417 OpenSent, 416-417

OSPF preferred over BGP for RPF calculation, 878 outbound filtering, 647-649 PAs, 409 peer configuration *IOS groups*, 664-665 IOS templates, 665-666 IOS XR templates, 667-668 prefix advertisements, 425-427 redistribution destination-specific behaviors, 580-582 source-specific behaviors, 562-563 regex reference topology, 476 remove private autonomous system feature, 656-658 routes displaying, 428-431 receiving, 427 summary with prefixes, 430 **RPL** verification BGP table, 517-518 redistribution, 516-517 security, 459 authentication, 462-463 eBGP multihop, 459-461 TTL, 461-462 sessions clearing, 549 IPv6 over IPv4, 998-1001 overview, 415 verification, 421-424 suboptimal routing with RRs, 733-734 Add-Path feature, 739-742 RRs, adding, 734-735

shadow RRs. 735-737 shadow session RRs. 738-739 summarization, 628, 632-637 summary fields, 422 table fields, 429 bgp router-id router-id command. 1001 bidirectional connectivity verification, 97-98 **Bidirectional Forwarding Detection.** See BFD **Bidir-PIM (bidirectional PIM)** designated forwarders, 804-808 overview. 802-808 binary notation base 2 calculations, 31-32 bit values, 31-32, 47 to decimal conversion. 33 decimal to binary conversions, 32 defined. 31 IPv6 hexadecimal conversion. 896-898 subnet mask conversion, 36 bits overload, 394-396 values, 31-32, 47 bitwise AND operator, 41-42 boolean operators, 504 conjunction, 504 disjunction, 505 negation, 504 order of processing, 505-506 Bootstrap PIM control message, 764 bootstrap router. See BSR Border Gateway Protocol. See BGP boundaries IPv6, 894, 1032-1033

multicast, 863-866 administratively scoped, 863-864 Auto-RP, 865-866 BSR, 866 brackets ([]) query modifier, 479 broadcast addresses calculating, 43 defined. 37 broadcast interfaces as P2P interfaces, configuring, 353-355 static routing, 98-99 broadcast networks IS-IS, 326, 333-338 adjacency process, 333 IIH hello with neighbors detected, 337 IIH hello with no neighbors detected, 335 parameter verification, 336 simple topology, 334 **OSPF**, 221 video feed, 747 BSR (bootstrap router), 775-776 configuring, 786-787 IPv6 PIM-SM, 1018-1021 BSR election, 1020 candidate RP, 1021 embedded RP, 1021-1024 IOS XR configuration, 1020 *RP cache*, 1020 multicast boundaries, 866 redundant RPs, 840-846 group filtering, 843-845 hash algorithm, 845-846

# С

#### calculating

broadcast addresses, 43 CIDR best paths, 54-55 EIGRP paths, 145 attribute propagation, 146 custom K values, 148-149 default K values, 145 with definitions, 145 formula, 145 interface delay settings, 149-151 interface metrics, 146 load balancing, 151-153 lowest link speed/cumulative delay, 146 specific prefix, 147-148 variance multiplier, 151-152 wide metrics, 153-154 host addresses first usable, 43 last usable, 43 OSPF interface costs, 235-236 SPF IS-IS. 361-362 *Type 1 LSAs*, 256 subnets bitwise AND operations, 41-42 magic number method, 42-45 usable IP addresses, 37-38 wildcard subnet masks, 63 /24 networks, 64 single IP bosts, 63 summary routes, 64 candidate RP advertisement (C-RP-Adv), 764, 775

candidate RPs (C-RPs), 773, 1021-1024 caret in brackets [^] query modifier, 480 carets (^) query modifier, 478 CEF (Cisco Express Forwarding), 86 centralized versus distributed forwarding architectures, 86 defined, 86 distributed, 88 hardware, 88-89 IPv6, enabling, 899 software, 87 tables nonrecursive multihop static routes, 107 static route recursion problem, 114 centralized forwarding architecture, 86 CE router connectivity default route configuration, 100 ISP to, 100 CIDR (classless interdomain routing), 35 best path calculation, 54-55 IP addresses interface assignments, 60 route summarization, 56-58 no summarization example, 56 with summarization example, 57 summary prefixes, 57-58 updates, 54 **VLSMs** classless routing update, 55 defined, 55 successful route convergence, 55-56

Cisco Express Forwarding. See CEF feature navigator tool website, 3 Cisco-RP-announce message filtering, 867 clarity (RPL), 496 classes (IP addresses) A, 34 B, 35 C. 35 D. 35 history, 34 listing of, 34 classful routing best path confusion, 53 discontiguous networks, 53 local decision process, 50-51 subnet masks uniform, 50-51 variable-length, 52 updates, 50 classic mode (EIGRPv6), 945 classless interdomain routing. See CIDR clear bgp ipv6 unicast command, 1001 CLI (command-line interface) IOS modes, 9-11 global configuration, 10-11 privileged, 10 user, 9-10 IOS XR modes admin, 14 EXEC, 14 global configuration, 14 cluster lists (BGP), 721

commands address-family, 77 address-family ipv6, 954 address-family ipv6 unicast, 988, 1001 address-family ipv6 unicast autonomous-system as-number, 954 af-interface, 185 af-interface interface-type interfacenumber, 954 aggregate-addressipv6-prefix/prefixlength, 1001 area area-id authentication ipsec spi spi authentication-algorithm, 975 area area-id encryption ipsec spi spi esp encryption-algorithm, 975 area area-id nssa, 975 area area-id range ipv6-prefix/prefixlength, 975 area area-id stub, 975 area area-id stub no summary, 975 authentication, 975 authentication key-chain key-chainname, 186 authentication keychain key-chainname, 954 authentication mode, 186 auto-summary, 188 bandwidth-percent percent, 186 bgp router-id router-id, 1001 clear bgp ipv6 unicast, 1001 commit, 17 commit label, 18 default-information originate, 975, 988 default-originate, 1001 distribute-list prefix-list list-name interface-number, 954

distribute-list prefix-list list-name interface-type interface-number, 954 eigrp router-id router-id, 185 eigrp stub, 185 encryption, 975 hello-interval seconds, 186 hold-time seconds, 186 if as-path, 497 if as-path in, 497 if as-path is-local, 497 if destination in, 497 if local-preference, 497 if med. 497 if next-hop in, 497 if origin is, 497 if tag, 497, 498 instance instance-id, 975 interface interface-type interfacenumber, 19.225, 19.579, 19.783 ip address ip-address subnet-mask, 60 ip ospf process-id area area-id, 204 ipv4 address ip-address subnet mask. 60 ipv4 address ipv4-address prefixlength, 60 ipv6 authentication key-chain eigrp as-number key-chain-name, 954 ipv6 authentication mode eigrp asnumber md5, 954 ipv6 router eigrp as-number, 954 ipv6 router isis, 988 ipv6 summary-address eigrp as-number ipv6-prefix/prefix-length, 954 ip vrf forwarding vrf-name, 77 ip vrf vrf-name, 77 isis ipv6 metric, 988

match as-path acl-number, 490 match ip address, 490 match ip address prefix-list prefixlist-name, 490 match local-preference, 490 match metric, 490 match tag tag-value, 490 maximum-paths, 188 metric, 988 metric-style, 988 metric weights TOS K1 K2 K3 K4 K5, 186 multitopology, 988 neighbor, 1001 neighbor remote-as as-number, 1001 neighbor ip-address local-as-alternate-as-number. neighbor activate, 1001 net network-entity-title, 988 networkipv6-prefix/prefix-length, 1001 network network, 185 next-hop-self, 186 nssa, 975 nssa [default-information-originate] no-summary, 975 ospfv3 authentication, 975 ospfv3 encryption, 975 ospfv3 process-id area area-id, 975 ospfv3 process-id area area-ID, 975 passive-interface, 186 prepend as-path, 498 pwd, 26 range ipv6-prefix/prefix-length, 975 remote-as as-number, 1001 replace as-path, 498

root, 26 route-policy route-policy-name, 954, 1001 router bgp as-number, 1001 router eigrp as-number, 132, 954 router eigrp process-name, 954 router isis, 988 router ospfv3 process-id, 975 set local-preference, 498 set med, 498 set next-hop, 498 set origin, 498 set weight, 498 show bgp ipv6 unicast, 993 show bgp ipv6 unicast neighbors, 993 show bgp ipv6 unicast summary, 993 show clns interface, 985 show clns neighbor, 985 show configuration, 15 show configuration commit changes, 18 show configuration commit changes incremental, 18 show configuration commit list, 17 show configuration failed, 20 show configuration merge, 16 show interface interface-type interface-number, 149 show ip eigrp interface, 136 show ip interface, 61 show ip route vrf vrf-name, 81 show ipv4 route vrf-name, 81 show ipv6 mld groups, 1024 show ipv6 mld interface, 1024 show ipv6 mld traffic, 1024 show ipv6 mrib route, 1024 show ipv6 mroute, 1024

show ipv6 mroute active, 1024 show ipv6 pim bsr candidate-rp, 1024 show ipv6 pim bsr election, 1024 show ipv6 pim bsr rp-cache, 1024 show ipv6 pim group-map, 1024 show ipv6 pim interface, 1024 show ipv6 pim neighbor, 1024 show ipv6 pim range-list, 1024 show ipv6 pim topology, 1024 show ipv6 pim traffic, 1024 show ipv6 pim tunnel, 1024 show ipv6 protocols, 985 show ipv6 route bgp, 993 show ipv6 route ospf, 962 show ipv6 rpf ipv6-address, 1024 show isis database, 985 show isis interface, 985 show isis neighbor, 985 show isis neighbors, 985 show mfib route, 798 show mfib route rate, 1024 show mfib route src-ip-address/ group-address, 886 show mld groups, 1024 show mld interface, 1024 show mld traffic, 1024 show mrib ipv6 route, 1024 show mrib route, 798 show ospfv3 database, 962 show ospfv3 interface, 962 show ospfv3 neighbor, 962 show ospfv3 virtual-links, 962 show pim ipv6 bsr candidate rp, 1024 show pim ipv6 bsr election, 1024 show pim ipv6 bsr rp-cache, 1024 show pim ipv6 group-map, 1024

show pim ipv6 interface, 1024 show pim ipv6 neighbor, 1024 show pim ipv6 range-list, 1024 show pim ipv6 rpf ipv6-address, 1024 show pim ipv6 topology, 1024 show pim ipv6 traffic, 1024 show pim ipv6 tunnel info, 1024 show pim topology, 799 show protocols ipv6, 985 show route eigrp, 163-165 show route ipv6 bgp, 993 show route ipv6 ospf, 962 show running-config, 15 show the commit, 23 single-topology, 988 split-horizon, 186 stub. 975 stub no-summary, 975 summary-address ipv6-prefix/prefixlength, 954, 975 summary-address network, 186 summary-address prefix/prefixlength, 988 summary-metric network bandwidth delay reliability load MTU [AD], 188 summary-prefix prefix/prefix-length, 988 timers active-time, 188 topology base, 185, 954 variance variance-multiplier, 188 vrf definition vrf-name, 77 vrf upgrade-cli multi-af-mode, 77 commit command, 17 commit label command, 18

commits (configurations), 16-17 changes, displaying, 18 commit lists, displaying, 17 confirming, 22-23 failures, 20-21 labels, 18-19 lists, displaying, 17 multiple commit options, 23-24 replaces, 19-20 communities (BGP), 609 conditionally matching, 620-627 community sets, 621 inline, 622-625 private BGP communities, 625-627 formats, 610 support, 611 well-known Internet, 611 No\_Advertise, 614-617 No\_Export, 611-614 No\_Export\_SubConfed, 617-620 complete sequence number packets (CSNPs), 350 complex matching route maps, 491-492 conditional matching, 490 BGP communities, 620-627 community sets, 621 inline, 622-625 private BGP communities, 625-627 complex matching, 491-492 multiple match, 491

conditional routing ABF configuring, 523-525 overview, 521 BGP, 645-647 disadvantages, 522 PBR configuring, 522 local. 525-526 overview, 521 confederations (BGP), 453-458 AS100 BGP table, 457 configuring, 455-457 iBGP versions eBGP sessions, 454 NLRI, 458 topology, 453 configurations archiving, 11-13 ABF, 523-525 BGP, 418-419 authentication, 462 confederations, 455-457 IOS, 419-420 IOS peer groups, 664-665 IOS peer templates, 665-666 IOS XR, 420-421 IOS XR templates, 667-668 maximum prefix, 655 ORF, 648 BSR, 786-787 changes displaying in SysDB, 17-18 rolling back, 21-22 commits, 16-17 changes, displaying, 18 confirming, 22-23

failures, 20-21 labels, 18-19 list, displaying, 17 multiple commit options, 23-24 replaces, 19-20 default routes CE router, 100 XR1/R3 example, 101-102 DNS SSM mapping, 859 eBGP, 438, 439 multibop sessions, 460 multipath, 724 EIGRP bandwidth percent, 178 installed routes, displaying, 140-141 interface delays, 150 interface verification, 136-139 IOS. 132-133 IOS XR. 134 key chains, 174-177 named configurations. See EIGRP, named configurations neighbor adjacencies verification. 139 passive interfaces, 134 sample topology, 134-136 stubs. 162-163 EIGRPv6 classic mode, 945 IOS XR, 946-947 named mode, 946 external route summarization, 282 files, loading, 24 hierarchical, 25-26 iBGP, 724

interarea route summarization, 279 IOS relay agents, 927-928 IOS XR relay proxy agents, 928-929 two-stage commit, 14-17 IPv6 multicast, 1025 static, 942-943 unicast, 899 IS-IS. 340 authentication. 369-370 broadcast interfaces as P2P, 353-355 default routes, 400 DISs. 352 interfaces, verifying, 343-346 IOS. 340 IOS XR. 340-341 metrics, 391 neighbor adjacencies, verifying, 346-347 overload bits, 395 prefix suppression, 403 route-leaking, 377 route verification, 347-348 summarization, 399 topology example, 341-343 IS-IS for IPv6, 979 IOS base, 979-980 IOS topology mode, 981 IOS XR base, 980 IOS XR topology mode, 981-984 MBGP, 815 IOS. 991-992 IOS XR. 992-993 merging, 16

multicast, 780-782, 786-787 multiple recursive lookups, 110 nested, exiting, 26 nonrecursive multihop static routes, 107 **OSPF** IOS interface specific, 204-205 IOS network statement. 202-204 IOS XR. 205 multi-area adjacencies, 305-306 NSSAs. 293-294 point-to-multipoint network, 226 prefix suppression, 310 stub areas, 287-288 topology sample, 206-208 totally NSSAs, 297 totally stubby areas, 290-291 virtual links. 300 OSPFv3 IOS. 960-961 IOS XR. 961 PBR, 522 prompts IOS. 26 IOS XR. 26 replacing, 13 route reflectors, 449-450 RPs. 783-787 Auto-RPs, 785-786 static, 784-785 running, displaying, 15 SSM, 852-853, 860 stateful DHCPv6 IOS. 930 IOS XR, 931-932

stateless DHCPv6 IOS, 924-925 IOS XR. 925-926 target, displaying, 15 VRFs example, 81 IOS, 78 IOS XR, 78-79 confirmed parameter, 23 confirming commits, 22-23 conjunction operator, 504 connected networks defined. 91 local routes, 93 redistribution, 561 routing table sample, 92-93 sample topology, 92 secondary, 94 specific network routing detail output sample, 93 connections BGP, clearing, 549 ES-IS/IS-IS, 316 OSPF prefix suppression, verifying, 312 Connect state (BGP neighbors), 415-416 continue keyword, 493-494 **EIGRP**, 158 C-RP-Adv (candidate RP advertisement), 775 C-RPs (candidate RPs), 773 CSNPs (complete sequence number packets), 350

# D

DAD (duplicate address detection), 937-938 databases LSDB, 70, 192 OSPF Type 1 LSA fields, 252 OSPFv3, 965-969 LSPDB (IS-IS) building topology, 359-360 displaying, 356-357 displaying topology, 360-361 non-pseudonode LSPs, 357-358 pseudonode LSPs, 358-359 SPF calculations, 361-362 without transit networks, 404-405 data plane, 89 **DBD** packets **OSPF**, 194 **OSPFv3**, 957 dCEF (distributed CEF), 88 dead interval field (OSPF Hello packet), 194 dead interval timer, 219 debugging IOS XR traces, 8 default-information originate command, 975, 988 default-originate command, 1001 default routes, 99-102 backup connectivity, 101 **BGP** advertisements overview, 643-644 per neighbor, 644-645 CE router configuration, 100 routing tables, 100-101

EIGRPv6, 952-953 IS-IS, 400-401 **OSPF** summarization, 283-285 **XR1/R3** configuration example, 101-102 routing tables, 102 Dense Mode (PIM), 765-767 design EIGRP stubs, 164-166 subnetting, 46 available host values, listing, 47 available subnets, listing, 47 binary bit values, listing, 47 final address allocation scheme, 49 LAN 1/LAN 2 subnet assignments, 47-48 LAN 3 assignments, 48 designated forwarders (DFs), 764, 804-808 designated intermediate systems. See DISs designated router & backup designated router field (OSPF Hello packet), 194 designated routers. See DRs destination addresses (MLD), 1012 destination-specific redistribution behaviors BGP, 580-582 EIGRP, 563-566 EIGRP-to-EIGRP, 566-568 IS-IS, 576-578 IS-IS to IS-IS, 578-580 OSPF. 569-571 forwarding addresses, 573-576 OSPF-to-OSPF, 571-572

DFs (designated forwarders), 764, 804-808 DHCPv6 stateful, 926-927 IOS relay agent configuration, 927-928 IOS relay agent verification, 928 IOS server configuration, 930 IOS XR relay proxy agent configuration, 928-929 IOS XR relay proxy agent verification, 929 IOS XR server configuration, 931-932 server verification, 932-934 topology, 926 stateless, 924-926 IOS configuration, 924-925 IOS XR configuration, 925-926 verification, 926 Diffused Update Algorithm (DUAL), 70 Dijskstra shortest path first algorithm, 70 discard routes, 399 discontiguous networks, 301-303 disjunction operator, 505 displaying BGP routes, 428-431 configurations changes in SysDB, 17-18 commit changes, 18 commit lists, 17 running, 15 target, 15 EIGRP routes, 140-141 interfaces/IP addresses status verification, 82-83

IOS configuration archive, 12 **IPv4** interfaces specific, 61 summaries, 62 **IS-IS** LSPDB, 356-359 LSP topology, 360-361 NDP parameters, 916-917 OSPFv3 LSDB summary view, 969 route policy states, 515-516 VRFs, 81-82 DISs (designated intermediate systems), 348 configuration, 352 **CSNPs**, 350 elections, 351 logical drawing, 348 LSP advertisement, 349 placement, 352-353 pseudonode LSPs, 349-350 verification, 353 distance vector algorithms, 69 distributed CEF (dCEF), 88 distributed forwarding architecture, 86 distribute-list prefix-list list-name interface-number command, 954 distribute-list prefix-list list-name interface-type interface-number command, 954 distribution trees (multicast), 759 shared trees, 761 source trees, 759-760 DNS SLAAC RA options, 923-924 SSM mapping, 857-860 configuration, 859 topology, 858 verification, 859

stateless DHCPv6, 924-926 IOS configuration, 924-925 IOS XR configuration, 925-926 verification, 926 DNSSL (DNS Search List), 923 dollar sign (\$) query modifier, 478-479 Domain Specific Part (DSP), 320-321 done messages (MLD), 1010 dot-decimal notation binary conversions to, 33 converting to binary, 32 defined, 30 octet subtraction, 63 /24 networks, 64 single IP hosts, 63 summary routes, 64 wildcard subnet masks, 62 Down state (OSPF neighbors), 196 downstream interface, 763 DRs (designated routers), 213 election, verifying, 795 **OSPF**, 213 elections. 214-216 LSA distribution, 213 placement, 216-219 **PIM-SM**, 772 Type 2 LSAs, 257-259 DSP (Domain Specific Part), 320-321 DUAL (Diffused Update Algorithm), 70 dual stacks, 893 duplicate address detection (DAD), 937-938 dynamic routing protocols, 68 administrative distance, 73-76 distance vector, 69 enhanced distance vector, 70

link-state, 70-71 listing of, 68 path vector, 71-72 routing table metrics, 75-76

## E

eBGP BGP table, 440 configuration, 439 eiBGP multipath, 726-733 core deciding path, 728 edge routers, 727 topology, 728-731 iBGP combinations, 442-444 sessions, compared, 438 multihop sessions, 459-461 multipath, 723-726 attributes, 725 configuration, 724 next-hop addresses, 444-445 oldest path, 720 over iBGP, 714-717 configuration, 715 processing logic, 717 routing table, 717 prefix attributes listing of, 441 local, 441 remote, 440 topology, 438 ECMP (equal-cost multipath), 75 BGP, 723 AS Path relax feature, 731-733 eBGP/iBGP multipath, 723-726 eiBGP multipath, 726-733

IS-IS, 387 OSPF path selection, 274 EGPs (exterior gateway protocols) defined, 68 path selection algorithms distance vector, 69 enhanced distance vector, 70 link-state, 70-71 path vector, 71-72 eiBGP multipath, 726-733 core deciding path, 728 edge routers, 727 topology, 728-731 **EIGRP** (Enhanced Interior Gateway Routing Protocol), 68, 125 AD, modifying, 528-529 authentication, 174 enabling, 174 key chain configuration, 174-177 autonomous system configuration, 126 installed routes, displaying, 140-141 interface verification, 136-139 IOS, 132-133 **IOS XR. 134** neighbor adjacencies verification, 139 passive interfaces, 134 sample topology, 134-136 convergence, 158 feasibility condition, 142 feasible distance (FD), 142 feasible successor, 142 filtering hop counts, 538 offset lists, 538-541 prefix, 534-537

inter-router communication, 127 link failures, 156-157 metrics, 145 attribute propagation, 146 custom K values, 148-149 default K values, 145 with definitions, 145 formula, 145 interface delay settings, 149-151 interface metrics, 146 load balancing, 151-153 lowest link speed/cumulative delay, 146 specific prefix, 147-148 variance multiplier, 151-152 wide, 153-154 named configurations, 184 address family instance configuration, 185-186 address family interface configuration, 186-188 address family topology configuration, 188 benefits, 184 neighbors advertised networks update packet, 131 forming, 128-131 hello packet capture, 129 INIT flag and acknowledgment update packet, 130 INIT flag set update packet, 129 overview, 126 requirements, 128 route prefixes update packet, 130 sample topology, 129 verification, 139

packet types, 127 PDMs, 126 queries boundaries, establishing, 157 packets, handling, 157 redistribution, 563-566 reference topology, 142 reported distance (RD), 142 **RIDs**, 141 RTP, 127 stubs, 160 default configuration, 162-163 designs, 164-166 inter-region traffic, 161-162 regional/remote topology, 161 route tables after link failures, 163 successors, 142 summarization automatic, 172-174 hierarchical, 166 interface-specific, 166-171 metrics, 171-172 timers hello/hold, 155-156 SIA, 159-160 topology table, 143-144 WANs, 177 bandwidth percent, 177-179 next-hop self behavior, 182-183 split horizons, 179-182 eigrp router-id router-id command, 185 eigrp stub command, 185 EIGRP-to-EIGRP redistribution, 566-568

#### EIGRPv6, 944

configuration classic mode, 945 IOS XR, 946-947 named mode, 946 configuration command reference chart. 954 default routes, 952-953 inter-router communication, 944 route filtering, 953-954 summarization, 950-952 verification, 947-950 base configuration, 948-949 neighbor adjacency, 949-950 routing table, 950 show commands, 947 topology, 948 elections DISs. 351 DRs/DBRs, 214-216 embedded RP, 1021-1024 encryption command, 975 end systems (ES), 316 enhanced distance vector algorithms, 70 **Enhanced Interior Gateway Routing** Protocol. See EIGRP Equal Cost Multi-Path. See ECMP ES (end systems), 316 Established state (BGP neighbors), 417 Ethernet link failures floating static routes, 104 static route recursion problems, 113-114 EUI-IDs (extended unique identifiers), 920-921 Exchange state (OSPF neighbors), 196

EXEC mode (IOS XR), 14 exiting nested configurations, 26 explicit IP addresses, 133 explicit subnets, 133 explicit tracking (MLD), 1014 ExStart state (OSPF neighbors), 196 extended ACLs BGP network selection, 470 defining, 469 IGP network selection, 469-470 extended BGP communities, 610 extended unique identifiers (EUI-IDs), 920-921 exterior gateway protocols. See EGPs external routes, 247-248 IS-IS, 386 OSPF path selection, 272 OSPF summarization, 280-283 concept, 280 configuration, 282 loop-prevention routers, 283 routing table before summarization, 281 topology, 281 Type 1, 273 Type 2, 273-274

### F

failure detection BGP, 459 IS-IS, 366 *hello multiplier, 367 hello timers, 366-367 holding timer, 367* 

**OSPF**, 219 dead interval timer, 219 fast-packet Hellos, 220-221 Hello timer, 219 timer verification, 219 failures area route advertisement, 242 commit, 20-21 EIGRP route tables after link failures with stubs, 163 link. 156-157 fast reroutes. See FRR full-mesh iBGP link, 433 **OSPF** interarea summarization, 277 fast-packet Hellos, 220-221 fast reroute. See FRR FD (feasible distance), 142 feasibility condition, 142 feasible successors, 142 feature navigator tool, 3 feature sets, identifying, 2-3 FHR (first-hop router), 763 FIB (Forwarding Information Base), 87 fields BGP summary, 422 table, 429 IGMPv2 messages, 757 IIH packets, 328 IS-IS neighbor states, 346 LSP lifetime, 329 NSAP DSP, 321 IDP, 320

**OSPF** Hello packet, 194 LSDB. 252 OSPFv3 Options bit field, 966 Type 3 LSAs, 262 Type 4 LSAs, 267 Type 5 LSAs, 265 Type 7 LSAs, 269 ULA, 904 filter-autorp keyword, 864 filtering routes, 534 Auto-RP Cisco-RP-announce messages, 867 Auto-RP group, 836-840 BGP, 546-548, 647-649 BSR multiple RPs, 843-845 EIGRP hop counts, 538 offset lists, 538-541 prefix, 534-537 EIGRPv6, 953-954 IS-IS, 546 **OSPF** areas. 543-546 local, 541-543 PIM-SM source registration, 867-868 Finite State Machine (FSM), 415 first-hop router (FHR), 763 first usable host addresses, calculating, 43 flexible route suppression leaking suppressed routes, 634-637 selective prefix, 632-634

floating static routes, 103-105 AD verification, 104-105 backups, configuring, 112 defined, 103 Ethernet link failures, 104 **XR1/R3** configuration, 103 routing table, 103-104 flooding OSPF LSAs, 251 *Type 1, 252 Type 5, 263* OSPFv3 scopes, 959-960 Ford-Fulkerson algorithms, 69 forwarding access-list-based (ABF), 521 configuring, 523-525 overview, 521 bidirectional detection (BFD) Cisco Express (CEF) centralized versus distributed forwarding architectures, 86 defined, 86 distributed, 88 bardware, 88-89 IPv6, enabling, 899 software, 87 tables, 107-114 continuous. See continuous forwarding Information Base (FIB), 87 nonstop. See NSF multicast forwarding information base (MFIB), 764 reverse path. See RPF virtual routing and forwarding. See VRF

fragment IDs (LSP IDs), 330 frame relay interfaces, 222-223 FSM (Finite State Machine), 415 full-mesh topology (iBGP), 432-433 Full state (OSPF neighbors), 196

# G

gateways, 30 general topology networks, 327 global configuration mode IOS. 10-11 IOS XR, 14 global routing tables IP address configuration, 80 output, 80-81 global unicast addresses. See GUAs GLOP Block, 751 group membership LSAs, 959 groups IPv6 multicast, 910-911 MLD. 1013 GUAs (global unicast addresses), 900 address allocation hierarchy, 900-901 prefixes bit boundaries, 903 list website, 900 route aggregation, 902-903 subnetting chart, 903

# Η

hardware CEF, 88-89 hello authentication (IS-IS), 368 hello interval field (OSPF Hello packet), 194 hello-interval seconds command, 186 hello multiplier (IS-IS failure detection), 367 Hello packets area IDs, 245 fast-packet, 220-221 IIH, 327-328 fields, 328 padding removing, 365 TLVs, 328 types, 327 IS-IS, 324 OSPF, 194-195, 245 **OSPFv3**, 957 Hello PIM control message, 764 hello timers EIGRP, 155-156 IS-IS failure detection, 366-367 OSPF failure detection, 219 hexadecimal addresses IPv6 binary conversion, 896-898 hextets, 894 hierarchy configurations, 25-26 EIGRP summarization, 166 GUA address allocation, 900-901 IS-IS, 317 OSPF, 192-193 high availability HO-DSP (High Order DSP), 321 hold timers, 367 BGP, 412 EIGRP, 155-156 hold-time seconds command, 186 hop counts (EIGRP filtering), 538

### hosts addresses *all-0s, 37 available, listing, 47 first usable, calculating, 43 last usable, calculating, 43* identifiers, 30 subnet mask reference chart, 40 hyphen (-) query modifier, 479-480

IANA (Internet Assigned Numbers Authority) AFI listing website, 812 IPv6 address blocks, 911 multicast addresses, 910 multicast addresses, 749 private address ranges, 58 public ASNs, 408 special purpose reserved addresses, 59 iBGP custom routing, 432 eBGP combinations, 442-444 sessions, compared, 438 eiBGP multipath, 726-733 core deciding path, 728 edge routers, 727 topology, 728-731 full-mesh requirement, 432-433 multipath, 723-726 attributes, 725 configuration, 724

over eBGP, 714-717 configuration, 715 processing logic, 717 routing table, 717 path attributes, 432 peering via loopback addresses, 433-437 BGP table, 437 configuration source, 435-436 IPv4 session summary, 437 prefix advertisement behavior, 431 scalability, 432, 446 confederations, 453-458 loop prevention in route reflectors, 451-452 out-of-band route reflectors, 453 route reflectors, 446-451 ICMPv6, 919-920 identifying active licenses, 3-4 feature sets. 2-3 sender network IDs. 36-37 software versions, 2-3 universal image versions, 3-4 IDI (Initial Domain Identifier), 320 Idle state (BGP neighbors), 415 IDP (Inter-Domain Part), 320 IDs extended unique (EUI-IDs), 920-921 LSPs. 330 OSPF areas, 245-246 router (RIDs) BGP, 413, 720-721 EIGRP. 141 EIGRPv6, 945 **OSPF. 196** OSPFv2 versus OSPFv3, 955 sender network, 36-37

**IETF** (Internet Engineering Task Force), 59 if as-path command, 497 if as-path in command, 497 if as-path is-local command, 497 if destination in command, 497 if local-preference command, 497 if med command, 497 if next-hop in command, 497 if origin is command, 497 if tag command, 497, 498 IGMP (Internet Group Management Protocol), 745, 753 snooping, 753-756 static joins, 882-886 IGMPv2 configuration, 884-885 IGMPv3 configuration, 884-885 mroute table, 885-886 v2, 757-758, 780-782 v3, 753, 759 IGPs (interior gateway protocols) defined. 68 lowest IGP metric (BGP path selection), 718-720 path selection algorithms distance vector, 69 enhanced distance vector, 70 link-state, 70-71 path vector, 71-72 IIH (IS-IS hello) packets, 327-328 fields, 328 IS-IS interface frequency, 393 padding, removing, 365 **TLVs**, 328 types, 327

include-connected key word, 1004 incoming interfaces, 763 incremental SPF. See iSPF INIT flag sets (EIGRP update packet), 129 Initial Domain Identifier (IDI), 320 Init state (OSPF neighbors), 196 in keyword (ip multicast boundary access-list command), 864 inline BGP community conditional matching, 622-625 inline policy set expansion, 500 inline prefix filtering route policy, 499 instance instance-id command, 975 instances EIGRP address family configuration, 185-186 multiple OSPFv2 versus OSPFv3, 957 OSPFv3, 973-975 Integrated IS-IS, 323 interarea routes, 246-247 IS-IS, 386 LSAs. 959 OSPF path selection, 272 OSPF summarization, 276-280 concept, 276 configuring, 279 example, 278 failure, 277 loop-prevention routes, 280 metrics, 277 routing table after summarization. 279 routing table before summarization, 278 prefix LSAs, 959

interdomain multicast routing MBGP, 812 AFIs/SAFIs, 812 BGP topology, 813-814 configuration, 815 multicast BGP session summary verification, 817 unicast BGP session summary verification, 816 update message packet capture, 813 MSDP, 817-818 keepalive messages, 819-821 peers, 822-828 SA messages, 818-819 stub networks, 831-833 verification, 828-831 Inter-Domain Part (IDP), 320 interface address mask field (OSPF Hello packet), 194 interface interface-type interfacenumber command, 954, 975, 988 interface priority field (OSPF Hello packet), 194 interfaces broadcast as P2P, configuring, 353-355 static. 98-99 EIGRP address family configuration, 186-188 authentication, enabling, 174 delay settings, 149-151 path calculation metrics, 146 summarization, 166-171 verifying, 136-139

IP addresses, assigning CIDR notation, 60 full subnet masks, 60 secondary addresses, 60-61 SLAAC, 895-924 IPv4 specific, displaying, 61 summaries, displaying, 62 IPv6 status, 899-900 IS-IS IIH frequency, 393 metric, 387-394 passive, 361-362 specific levels, 385-386 verifying, 343-346 loopback, 433-437 null defined, 116 packet traces demonstrating routing loops, 118-119 preventing routing loops, 119-120 routing loops, 117-118 **OSPF** areas. OSPF, areas costs, 235-236 frame relay, 222-223 non-broadcast, 223, 301-303 P2P. 225 point-to-multipoint network type, 226-227 verifying, 208-209 OSPFv3 authentication/encryption, 972 verification, 965 overlapping IP addresses, 76-77

P2P broadcast interfaces as, configuring, 353-355 static routing, 96-98 passive EIGRP, 134 OSPF, 205-206 PIM downstream, 763 incoming, 763 RPF, 762 upstream, 763 verification, 791 status verification, displaying, 82-83 VRFs, assigning IOS, 78 IOS XR, 78-79 interior gateway protocols. See IGPs intermediate systems (IS), 316 Intermediate System-to-Intermediate System. See IS-IS Internet Assigned Numbers Authority. See IANA BGP community, 611 Engineering Task Force (IETF), 59 Group Management Protocol. See IGMP Internetwork Control Block, 750 Internetworking Operating System. See IOS inter-region network connectivity, 161-162 inter-router communication, 957 BGP, 410-411 keepalive messages, 413 message types, 411 notification messages, 414

open messages, 412-413 sessions, 415 update messages, 413-414 **EIGRP. 127** EIGRPv6. 944 IPv6. 978 IS-IS. 323-325 *IIH packets*, 327-328 IS PDU addressing, 326-327 IS protocol headers, 325 LSPs. 329-332 neighbors. See IS-IS, neighbors TLVs. 326 MBGP for IPv6, 989-990 OSPF, 193-194 Hello packets, 194-195 multicast addresses, 193 packet types, 194 intra-area prefix, 959 intra-area routes, 246-247 IS-IS. 386 OSPF path selection, 271-272 **IOS** (Internetworking Operating System), 1 administratively scoped multicast boundaries, 864 AS Path ACL, 484 BGP best path weight, 678 configuration scalability, 664-666 configuring, 419-420 identifier, 413 CLI modes. 9-11 global configuration, 10-11 privileged, 10 user, 9-10

configurations archiving, 11-13 prompts, 26 replacing, 13 DNS SSM mapping, enabling, 858 eBGP configuration, 438 EIGRP autonomous system configuration. 132-133 RIDs. 141 EIGRPv6 configuration, 945-946 route filtering, 953-954 IS-IS configuring, 340 route leaking, 377 IS-IS for IPv6 base configuration, 979-980 topology configuration, 981 kernel, 2 memory management, 2 MBGP for IPv6 configuration, 991-992 **MSDP** MSDP Compliance, 823 peer configuration, 822 **OSPF** authentication, 236 interface specific configuration, 204-205 network statement. 202-204 OSPFv3 configuration, 960-961 PBR, 521 configuring, 522 local, 525-526 overview, 521 PIM-SM accept RP, 868-869

prefix lists, 473 private BGP communities, setting, 625-627 process switching, 84 run to completion scheduler, 2 show ip mroute command flags, 794 SLAAC configuration, 922 software packaging, 2-4 SSM, enabling, 851 stateful DHCPv6 relay agent configuration, 927-928 relay agent verification, 928 server configuration, 930 stateless DHCPv6 configuration, 924-925 static route, configuring, 96 summary, 7 VRFs, creating, 78 IOSd, 4 IOS XE. 4 kernel, 4 memory management, 4 scheduling, 4 summary, 7 IOS XR, 5 ABF. 521 configuring, 523-525 overview, 521 AS paths, 484 is-local, 485 length, 485-486 neighbor-is, 487 originates-from, 487 passes-through, 486-487 sets, 488 unique-length, 486

### BGP

best path weight, 678 community conditional matching, 621-625 configuring, 420-421 identifier, 413 peer configuration, 667-668 commits confirming, 22-23 failures, 20-21 labels, 18-19 multiple commit options, 23-24 replaces, 19-20 configurations change rollbacks, 21-22 displaying changes in SysDB, 17 - 18files, loading, 24 bierarchical, 25-26 nested, exiting, 26 processing changes, 14-17 prompts, 26 eBGP configuration, 438 EIGRP autonomous system configuration. 134 RIDs. 141 EIGRPv6 configuration, 946-947 route filtering, 954 IPv6 BSR PIM-SM configuration, 1020 IS-IS configuring, 340-341 route leaking, 377 IS-IS for IPv6 base configuration, 980

topology mode configuration, 981-984 kernel. 5 MBGP for IPv6 configuration, 992-993 memory management, 6 modes admin. 14 EXEC, 14 global configuration, 14 MSDP peer configuration, 822-823 multicast boundary scope configuration. 1032 OSPF authentication. 237-239 configuring, 205 OSPFv3 configuration, 961 prefix lists, 473 sets, 474-475 process switching, 84 scheduling, 5 software packaging, 6-7 SSM, enabling, 851 stateful DHCPv6 relay proxy agent configuration, 928-929 relay proxy agent verification, 929 server configuration, 931-932 stateless DHCPv6 configuration, 925-926 static routes, configuring, 96 static VRF routes, 121-122 summary, 7 traces. 8 VRFs, creating, 78-79

**IP** addresses assigning to interfaces CIDR notation. 60 full subnet masks, 60 secondary addresses, 60-61 SLAAC, 895-924 binary notation base 2 calculations, 31-32 bit values. 31-32 to decimal conversion, 33 decimal to binary conversions, 32 defined, 31 classes A, 34 B, 35 C, 35 D, 35 bistory, 34 listing of, 34 defined, 30 dot-decimal notation, 30 explicit, 133 gateway, 30 global routing table configuration, 80 history, 34 interfaces, 60 interesting octets, 43 **NAT**, 58 network/host identifiers, 30 next-hop self, 182-183 overlapping, 76-77 private defined, 58 IPv4 address ranges, 58 NAT, 58

secondary, assigning to interfaces, 60-61 special-purpose reserved, 59 status verification, displaying, 82-83 subnet fields, 39 subnet masks. See subnet masks usable, calculating, 37-38 ip address ip-address subnet-mask command, 60 ip ospf process-id area area-id command, 204 IP packets, delivering, 30 IPv4 BGP neighbor output, 421-424 interfaces specific, displaying, 61 summaries, displaying, 62 IPv6 address resolution, compared, 934 over IPv4 BGP sessions. 998-1001 multicast routing. See multicast multicast versus IPv6 multicast, 1008 session summary of loopback interfaces, 437 ipv4 address ip-address subnet mask command, 60 ipv4 address ipv4-address prefixlength command, 60 IPv6 address allocation hierarchy, 900-901 address structure abbreviations, 895-896 bit length values, 894 case, 894 components, 894

*bexadecimal to binary* conversion, 896-898 bextets, 894 network boundaries, 894 unicast. 894 aggregation, 902-903 anycast, 906-908 duplicate address detection, disabling, 908 topology, 906 updated topology, 907 CEF. enabling, 899 EIGRPv6, 944 classic mode configuration, 945 configuration command reference chart, 954 default routes, 952-953 inter-router communication, 944 IOS XR configuration, 946-947 named mode configuration, 946 route filtering, 953-954 summarization, 950-952 topology, 948 verification, 947-950 IS-IS. 977 configuration, 979 configuration commands reference chart. 988 inter-router communication, 978 IOS base configuration, 979-980 IOS topology mode configuration, 981 IOS XR base configuration, 980 IOS XR topology mode configuration, 981-984 TLVs, 944-978

topology modes, 978-979 verification, 985-987 MBGP. 989 BGP configuration commands reference chart, 1001 inter-router communication. 989-990 IOS configuration, 991-992 IOS XR configuration, 992-993 IPv6 over IPv4 BGP sessions. 998-1001 verification. See verification, MBGP for IPv6 multicast, 908-911 active traffic flows, 1030 address format, 909 common addresses, 910 configuration, 1025 enabling, 1010 enhancements, 1008 groups, 910-911 IPv4 multicast comparison, 1008 MAC address mapping, 1009 MLD. 1010-1015 PIM. 1015 PIM-SM. See PIM-SM PIM-SSM, 1033-1034 RPF. 1030-1032 scope boundary, 1032-1033 scope types, 909 stream statistics, enabling, 1029 topology, 908 verification commands, 1024 NDP. 912 address resolution, 934-936 default router preferences, modifying, 916

disabling RA messages, 918 duplicate address detection, 937-938 ICMPv6 message types, 913 NUD (neighbor unreachability detection), 936 parameters, displaying, 916-917 prefix valid lifetime/preferred lifetime values, 915-916 RA lifetime values, 917-918 RA messages, 913-914 reachability, 936-937 redirects, 919-920 stateful DHCPv6. See DHCPv6, stateful stateless address autoconfiguration, 895-924 stateless DHCPv6, 924-926 **OSPFv3**, 955 authentication, 970-973 configuration commands reference chart, 975 flooding scopes, 959-960 inter-router communication, 957 IOS configuration, 960-961 IOS XR configuration, 961 LSAs. 958 *multiple instances*, 973-975 OSPFv2, compared, 955-957 verification, 962-970 overview, 893 redistribution, 1002-1005 IOS. 1002 route tables, 1003-1005 special purpose addresses, 911

static routing, 941-942 configuration commands reference chart. 943 configuring, 942-943 show commands reference chart, 943 subnetting chart, 903 unicast, 898-900 configuring, 899 global, 900-903 interface status, 899-900 link-local, 905-906 scopes, 898-899 unique local, 904-905 ipv6 authentication key-chain eigrp as-number key-chain-name command, 954 ipv6 authentication mode eigrp asnumber md5 command, 954 ipv6 router eigrp as-number command, 954 ipv6 router isis command, 988 ipv6 summary-address eigrp as-number ipv6-prefix/prefix-length command, 954 ip vrf forwarding vrf-name command, 77 ip vrf vrf-name command, 77 IS (intermediate systems), 316 IS-IS (Intermediate System-to-Intermediate System), 68 AD, modifying, 531-532 areas. 318-319 authentication, 367 configuration, 369-370 bello, 368 LSP. 368 types, 367

backbone continuity, 380-382 broadcast interfaces as P2P, configuring, 353-355 configuring interfaces, verifying, 343-346 IOS. 340 IOS XR, 340-341 neighbor adjacencies, verifying, 346-347 route verification, 347-348 topology example, 341-343 default routes, 400-401 DISs, 348-353 configuration, 352 CSNPs. 350 elections, 351 logical drawing, 348 LSP advertisement, 349 placement, 352-353 pseudonode LSPs, 349-350 verification, 353 failure detection, 366 bello multiplier, 367 bello timers, 366-367 *bolding timer*, 367 filtering, 546 hierarchy, 317 IIH padding, removing, 365 Integrated, 323 interarea topology, 374 interfaces IIH frequency, 393 metric, 387-394 passive, 362-364 specific levels, 385-386 verifying, 343-346

inter-router communication, 323-325 IIH packets, 327-328 IS PDU addressing, 326-327 IS protocol headers, 325 LSPs, 329-332 TLVs, 326 IPv6, 977 configuration, 979 configuration commands reference chart, 988 inter-router communication, 978 IOS base configuration, 979-980 IOS topology mode configuration. 981 IOS XR base configuration, 980 IOS XR topology mode configuration, 981-984 TLVs, 944-978 topology modes, 978-979 verification, 985-987 loop prevention, 382-384 LSPDB, 317, 355 building topology, 359-360 displaying, 356-357 displaying topology, 360-361 non-pseudonode LSPs, 357-358 pseudonode LSPs, 358-359 SPF calculations, 361-362 LSPs, 329-332 attribute fields, 331 IDs, 330 lifetime, 329 sequence number, 331 TLVs, 332 types, 329

metrics configuration, 391 mismatch, 389 narrow and wide, 388 topology, 391 verification, 392 neighbors, 333-339 adjacency capability chart, 386 broadcast, 333-338 P2P, 338-339 verifying, 346-347 NET addresses, 322-323 common private, 322 expanded structure, 322 guidelines, 323 minimal format, 322 multiple, 323 NSAP, 320 DSP, 321 IDP, 320 structure, 320 **OSPF** commonalities, 316 overload bits, 394-396 configuration, 395 routing table, 395-396 topology, 394 packets, 324 path selection, 386 ECMP, 387 interface metrics, 387-394 processing order, 387 prefix suppression, 401-405 redistribution, 576-578 route-leaking, 377-380 configuring, 377

interarea TLVs, 379-380 routing table, 378-379 router specific levels, 384-385 segmenting domains into multiple levels, 373-376 SPT, 317 suboptimal routing, 377 summarization, 396 configuration, 399 discard routes, 399 metric, 396-397 ranges, 397 routing table, 398 topology, 398 isis ipv6 metric command, 988 IS-IS to IS-IS redistribution, 578-580 is-local option (AS Path), 485 iSPF (incremental SPF) ISP to CE router connectivity, 100

# J - K

Join/prune PIM control message, 764 keepalive messages, 413, 819-821 kernels IOS, 2 IOS XE, 4 IOS XR, 5 key chains, 174-177 keywords and, 504 as-set, 639-641 continue, 493-494 filter-autorp, 864 in, 864 include-connected, 1004 ip multicast boundary access-list command, 864 not, 504 or, 505 out, 864 rp-list, 867 **K values (EIGRP metrics)** custom, 148-149 default, 145

label parameter, 23 LAG (link aggregation) bundles, 722 last-hop router (LHR), 763 last usable host addresses, calculating, 43 Layer 2 addressing, 83-84 Layer 2 multicast addresses, 752-753 leaking configuring, 377 interarea TLVs, 379-380 routing table, 378-379 suppressed routes, 634-637 length option (AS Path), 485-486 LFA FRR (loop-free alternate FRR) LHR (last-hop router), 763 licenses, 3-4 lifetime field (LSPs), 329 links aggregation (LAG) bundles, 722 failures (EIGRP), 156-157, 163 link-state acknowledgment packets, 194, 957 advertisements. See LSAs

algorithms, 70-71 database. See LSDB packet database. See LSPDB packets. See LSPs request (LSR) packets, 194, 200 update (LSU) packets, 194, 200 local addresses. See LLAs OSPF virtual, 298-301 configuring, 300 verification, 300-301 Linux differentials, 13 LLAs (link-local addresses), 905-906 assignment, 906 format. 905 manually assigning, 906 load balancing EIGRP. 151-153 RP groups, 836-840 configuration, 837 group-to-RP mapping, 837, 839-840 redundancy Auto-RP group-to-RP mappings, 838 redundancy configuration, 838 loading configuration files, 24 Loading state (OSPF neighbors), 196 local ASNs, 660-664 Network Control Block, 750 OSPF filtering, 541-543 PBR, 525-526 preferences (BGP), 679-682 configuration, 680 processing logic, 682 routing table, 682 topology, 679 routes. 93

LocPrf field (BGP tables), 429 looking glass servers, 483 loopback addresses (iBGP peering), 433-437 BGP table, 437 configuration source, 435-436 IPv4 session summary, 437 OSPF, 229-230 loops packet traces demonstrating, 118-119 prevention, 119-120 BGP, 409-410 IS-IS, 382-384 route reflectors, 451-452 redistribution AD, 601-603 overview, 590-592 prefix filtering, 593-595 seed metrics, increasing, 598-600 summarization, 603-605 tagging, 595-598 topology, 117-118 LSAs (link-state advertisements), 70, 191 DR/BDR distribution, 213 exponential LSA sessions per routers on same segment, 212 OSPF, 249-251 age, 251 flooding, 251 reduction through area segmentation, 274 summary, 270 Туре 1, 252-257 Туре 2, 257-259 Туре 3, 259-262

Туре 4, 265-268 Туре 5, 263-265 Туре 7, 268-269 OSPFv2 versus OSPFv3, 955 **OSPFv3**, 958 flooding scopes, 959-960 types, 959 LSDB (link-state database), 70, 192 OSPF Type 1 LSA fields, 252 OSPFv3, 965-969 LSPDB (link-state packet database) (IS-IS), 317, 355 displaying, 356-357 non-pseudonode LSPs, 357-358 pseudonode LSPs, 358-359 SPF calculations, 361-362 topology building, 359-360 displaying, 360-361 without transit networks, 404-405 LSPs (link-state packets), 70 DISs advertisement, 349 pseudonode, 349-350 IS-IS, 324, 329-332 attribute fields, 331 authentication. 368 building topology, 359-360 displaying topology, 360-361 IDs, 330 lifetime, 329 LSPDB, displaying, 356-357 non-pseudonode, 357-358 pseudonode, 358-359 sequence number, 331 TLVs, 332 types, 329

LSRs (link-state request) packets, 194, 200 LSU (link-state update) packets, 194, 200

### Μ

MAC addresses defined, 752 mapping, 1009 multicast, 752-753 magic number method, 42-45 address range calculation examples 10.55.200.33/12, 45 172.16.2.3/23.45 192.168.100.5/26, 45 broadcast addresses, calculating, 43 first usable addresses, 43 interesting IP address octets, 43 interesting subnet octets, 42-43 last usable host address, 43 process overview, 44 management plane, 89 mapping (SSM), 857 DNS, 857-860 configuration, 859 topology, 858 verification, 859 static, 860-862 configuring, 860 verification, 861 MAs (RP mapping agents), 773 match as-path acl-number command, 490 matching length parameters (prefix matching), 471 match ip address command, 490

match ip address prefix-list prefixlist-name command, 490 match local-preference command, 490 match metric command, 490 match statements, 497 match tag tag-value command, 490 maximum-paths command, 188 MBGP (Multiprotocol BGP), 812 AFIs/SAFIs, 812 BGP configuration commands reference chart, 1001 topology, 813-814 configuration, 815 IOS, 991-992 IOS XR, 992-993 inter-router communication, 989-990 IPv6 over IPv4 BGP sessions, 998-1001 multicast BGP session summary verification, 817 multicast traffic engineering, 875-882 as chosen RPF source of information, 880 configuring, 876 incongruent unicast/multicast data paths, 878-880 MBGP table, 877 multicast BGP as chosen RPF source of information, 880 OSPF preferred over BGP for RPF calculation, 878 RPF information, 877 traceroute unicast traffic, 881 unicast BGP as RPF source after multicast link failures, 882 unicast BGP session summary verification, 816

update message packet capture, 813 verification commands, 993 IPv6 route table, 997 IPv6 unicast BGP table, 996 neighbor status, 996 next-hop address selection, 997 router configuration, 994-995 MDT, 851 MED (Multi-Exit Discriminator), 693 AIGP metric conversion, 693-694 BGP best path selection, 704-714 always compare MED feature, 711-713 configuration, 706 deterministic, 713-714 missing MED behaviors, 710-711 outbound traffic, influencing, 705 processing logic, 708 routing table after modification, 707 memory, managing IOS, 2 IOS XE, 4 IOS XR, 6 merging configurations, 16 messages Auto-RP Cisco-RP-announce filtering, 867 BGP, 411 keepalive, 413 notification, 414 open, 412-413 update, 413-414 IGMPv2 messages, 757

keepalive, 819-821 MLD. 1010 PIM control, 764 PIM-SM IPv6 multicast, 1015 RA, 913-914 SA, 818-819, 828 metric command, 988 Metric field (BGP tables), 429 metrics AIGP configuration, 689 guidelines, 688 MED conversion, 693-694 modifications, 688 neighbor sessions metrics verification, 690 processing logic, 692-719 EIGRP attribute propagation, 146 custom K values, 148-149 default K values, 145 with definitions, 145 formula, 145 interface delay settings, 149-151 interface metrics, 146 load balancing, 151-153 lowest link speed/cumulative delay, 146 specific prefix, 147-148 summarization. 171-172 variance multiplier, 151-152 wide, 153-154 external routes *Type 1, 273* Type 2, 273-274

interarea summarization, 277 IS-IS configuration, 391 interface, 387-394 mismatch, 389 narrow and wide, 388 SPF, 361-362 summarization, 396-397 topology, 391 verification, 392 lowest IGP (BGP path selection), 718-720 OSPF interface costs, 235-236 redistribution, 558 routing tables, 75-76 seed redistribution, 598-600, 606 Type 3 LSAs, 261 Type 4 LSAs, 265 metric-style command, 988 metric weights TOS K1 K2 K3 K4 K5 command, 186 MFIB (multicast forwarding information base), 764 MLD (Multicast Listener Discovery), 1010-1015 destination addresses, 1012 disabling, 1014 exclude filter mode, 1011 explicit tracking, 1014 groups, 1013 include filter mode, 1011 message types, 1010 querier election, 1012 query messages, 1012 static joins, 1015 versions, 1010

modes IOS global configuration, 10-11 privileged, 10 user, 9-10 IOS XR admin, 14 EXEC, 14 global configuration, 14 MPLS (Multiprotocol Label Switching), 76 MRIB (multicast routing information base), 763 mroutes, 872-875 MSDP (Multicast Source Discovery Protocol), 817-818 keepalive messages, 819-821 peers, 822-828 IOS, 822 IOS XR, 822-823 MSDP and MBGP sessions between PIM domains, 823-827 MSDP Compliance, 823 SA message packet captures, 828 SA RPF checks. 823 status, 829 SA messages, 818-819 stub networks, 831-833 verification, 828-831 Mroute table, 829 peer status, 829 RPF check for source subnet, 831 RPF check for source subnet without MBGP, 831 SA cache, 830

mtrace, multicast troubleshooting, 887-889 with active source, 888 no active source, 888 PIM disabled, 889 reference topology, 887 multi-area adjacencies, 304-308 configuration, 305-306 inefficient topologies, 304 nonbroadcast interface verification, 304 OSPF neighborship, 306-307 verification, 306, 307-308 multicast, 745 addressing Administratively Scoped Block, 751 GLOP Block, 751 IANA assigned, 749 Internetwork Control Block, 750 Layer 2, 752-753 Local Network Control Block, 750 OSPF, 193 reserved addresses. 750 Source-Specific Multicast Block, 751 any source (ASM), 850 architecture, 745 configuration, 780-782, 786-787 distribution trees, 759 shared trees, 761 source trees, 759-760 forwarding information base (MFIB), 764 **IGMP**, 753 snooping, 753-756  $\nu 2, 757-758$ 

v3,759versions, 753 IPv6, 908-911 active traffic flows, 1030 address format, 909 common addresses, 910 configuration, 1025 enabling, 1010 enhancements, 1008 groups, 910-911 IPv4 multicast comparison, 1008 MAC address mapping, 1009 MLD, 1010-1015 PIM. 1015 PIM-SM. See PIM-SM PIM-SSM, 1033-1034 RPF, 1030-1032 scope boundary, 1032-1033 scope types, 909 show commands, 1024 stream statistics, enabling, 1029 topology, 908 MBGP, 812 AFIs/SAFIs, 812 BGP topology, 813-814 configuration, 815 multicast BGP session summary verification, 817 unicast BPG session summary verification, 816 update message packet capture, 813 MSDP, 817-818 keepalive messages, 819-821 peers, 822-828 SA messages, 818-819

stub networks, 831-833 verification, 828-831 PIM, 762 bidirectional, 802-808 control messages, 764 Dense Mode (PIM-DM), 765-767 downstream, 763 first-hop router (FHR), 763 forwarder, 778-779 incoming interface, 763 last-hop router (LHR), 763 multicast forwarding information base (MFIB), 764 multicast routing information base (MRIB), 763 multicast state, 764 operating modes, 764 outgoing interface (OIF), 763 outgoing interface list (OIL), 763 reference topology, 762 RPF. See RPF Sparse Mode, 768-772 upstream, 763 redundant RPs, 833-834 anycast, 847-849 Auto-RP load balancing, 836-840 Auto-RP with multiple RPs, 835-840 BSR. 840-846 static RP, 846 RPF, 776-777 RPs. 772 Auto-RP, 773-774 configuring. See RPs, configuring

PIM bootstrap router, 775-776 static. 773 security, 862 Auto-RP Cisco-RP-announce message filtering, 867 Auto-RP TTL scoping, 862 boundaries, 863-866 PIM neighbor control, 869-870 PIM register rate limit, 870 PIM-SM, 867-869 SSM. 850 configuration, 852-853 group-to-PIM mode mapping, 853 IOS, enabling, 851 IOS XR, enabling, 851 mapping, 857-862 MDT creation, 851 mroute table, 855-857 RPF neighbors, identifying, 854 topology, 854 stream statistics, 801 traffic engineering MBGP. 875-882 RPF rules, 871-872 static IGMP joins, 882-886 static mroutes, 872-875 unicast incongruent, 871 troubleshooting, -889 mtrace, 887-889 show commands, 886 verification active traffic flows, 801 configuration, 788-789 DR election, 792, 795 IGMP. 790-791 IOS show ip mroute flags, 794

PIM group mapping, 792 PIM interfaces, 791 PIM topology, 793 show mrib route/show mfib route flags, 798 show pim topology flags, 799 source registration between RP and FHR tree creation. 796-798 SPT between RP and FHR tree creation, 796-798 SPT path, 800 SPT switchover, 799-800 stream statistics, 801 video feed, 748 Multicast Listener Discovery. See MLD multicast routing information base (MRIB), 763 Multicast Source Discovery Protocol. See MSDP Multi-Exit Discriminator. See MED multihop static routes multiple recursive lookups, 109-111 overview, 108 single recursive lookups, 108-109 multiple instances (OSPFv3), 973-975 multiple match route maps, 491-492 multiple recursive static routes, 109-111 beneficial, 111 configuring, 110 recursive static routes routing table, 110-111 routing table, 110

multiprotocol BGP. See MBGP Label Switching (MPLS), 76 VRFs IOS, 78 IOS XR, 78-79 defined, 77 IPv4-only migrations, 77 multitopology command, 988

# Ν

named configurations (EIGRP), 184 address family configurations instances, 185-186 interfaces, 186-188 topology, 188 benefits, 184 named mode (EIGRPv6), 946 narrow IS-IS metrics, 388 NAT (Network Address Translation), 58 NBMA (non-broadcast multi-access), 222 NDP (Neighbor Discovery Protocol), 912 address resolution, 934-936 default router preferences, modifying, 916 duplicate address detection, 937-938 ICMPv6 message types, 913 NUD. 936 parameters, displaying, 916-917 prefix valid lifetime/preferred lifetime values, 915-916 RA messages advertisements, 913-914 disabling, 918

lifetime values, 917-918 packet capture, 915 responses, 914 reachability, 936-937 redirects. 919-920 SLAAC, 895-924 DNS RA options, 923-924 extended unique identifiers, 920-921 router configuration, 921-923 stateful DHCPv6, 926-927 IOS relay agent configuration, 927-928 IOS relay agent verification, 928 IOS server configuration, 930 IOS XR relay proxy agent configuration, 928-929 IOS XR relay proxy agent verification, 929 IOS XR server configuration, 931-932 server verification, 932-934 topology, 926 stateless DHCPv6, 924-926 IOS configuration, 924-925 IOS XR configuration, 925-926 verification, 926 negation boolean operator, 504 neighbor activate command, 1001 neighbor command, 1001 Neighbor Discovery Protocol. See NDP neighbor ip-address local-as-alternateas-number command, neighbor-is option (AS Path), 487 neighbor remote-as as-number command, 1001

neighbors adjacencies. See adjacencies BGP AIGP metrics support, verifying, 690 default advertisements, 644-645 lowest address (path selection), 722 BGP states, 415 Active, 416 Connect, 415-416 Established, 417 Idle, 415 OpenConfirm, 417 OpenSent, 416-417 EIGRP adjacencies. See adjacencies, EIGRP convergence, 158 forming, 128-131 hello/hold timers, 155-156 link failures, 156-157 overview, 126 packets, 129-131 query boundaries, establishing, 157 query packets, bandling, 157 requirements, 128 sample topology, 129 SIA timers, 159-160 verification, 139 EIGRPv6 adjacency verification, 949 IS-IS, 333-339 adjacency compatibility chart, 386 broadcast, 333-338 P2P, 338-339 verifying, 346-347

**OSPF**, 196 adjacencies. See adjacencies, **OSPF** multi-area interface, 306-307 non-broadcast, 223 P2P interfaces verification, 225 states, 196, 210 Type 1 LSAs state, 256 PIM, 869-870 RPF, 763, 854 unreachability detection (NUD), 936 nested configurations, exiting, 26 nesting route policies, 510-511 NET addresses, 322-323 common private, 322 expanded structure, 322 guidelines, 323 minimal format, 322 multiple, 323 net network-entity-title command, 988 Network Address Translation (NAT), 58 Network field (BGP tables), 429 networkipv6-prefix/prefix-length command, 1001 Network Layer Reachability Information (NLRI), 458 network network command, 185 networks backdoor, 649-652 broadcast, 326, 333-338 connected defined, 91 local routes, 93 redistribution, 561 routing table sample, 92-93 sample topology, 92

secondary, 94 specific network routing detail output sample, 93 convergence. See convergence discontiguous, 301-303 general topology, 327 identifiers (IP addresses), 30 IDs, 36-37 LSAs, 959 operating system (NOS), 1 **OSPF**, 221 areas. 246-248 broadcast, 221 listing of, 231 loopback, 229-230 neighbor adjacency compatibility, 231-234 non-broadcast, 222-223 P2P. 224-225 point-to-multipoint, 225-229 P2P, 338-339 prefix notation. See CIDR Service Access Point. See NSAP stub, 831-833 network statement IOS EIGRP autonomous system configuration, 132-133 all interfaces, enabling, 133 explicit IP addresses, 133 explicit subnets, 133 large subnet ranges, 133 IOS OSPF configuration, 202-204 next-hop addresses BGP, 429 eBGP, 444-445 EIGRP WANs, 182-183 MBGP for IPv6, 997

next-hop-self command, 186 nibbles, 894 NLRI (Network Layer Reachability Information), 458 No Advertise BGP community, 614-617 node protection No Export BGP community, 611-614 No Export SubConfed BGP community, 617-620 non-broadcast multi-access (NBMA), 222 non-broadcast networks (OSPF), 222-223, 301-303 non-pseudonode LSPs, 357-358 nonrecursive multihop static routes, 107 nonstop routing. See NSR NOS (network operating system), 1 notification messages, 414 not keyword (negation operator), 504 not-so-stubby areas. See NSSAs **NSAP** (Network Service Access Point), 320 DSP, 321 IDP, 320 structure, 320 nssa command, 975 nssa [default-information-originate] no-summary command, 975 NSSAs (not-so-stubby areas), 268, 292-295,959 concept, 292 **OSPF** autonomous system, 293 configuration, 293-294

routing table after, 294 before, 293 totally, 295-298 concept, 295 configuration, 297 routing table after, 298 routing table before, 296 topology, 296 Type 7 LSAs, 268-269 NUD (neighbor unreachability detection), 936 null interfaces defined, 116 routing loops, 117-118 packet traces demonstrating, 118-119 preventing, 119-120

## 0

octets dot-decimal octet subtraction, 63 /24 networks, 64 single IP bosts, 63 summary routes, 64 interesting IP addresses, 43 subnet, 42-43 offset lists, 538-541 OIF (outgoing interface), 763 OIL (outgoing interface list), 763 OPenConfirm state (BGP neighbors), 417 open messages, 412-413 BGP identifier, 413 hold time, 412

OpenSent state (BGP neighbors), 416-417 Open Shortest Path First. See OSPF Open Systems Interconnection. See OSI operating systems summary, 7 operators bitwise AND, 41-42 boolean, 504 conjunction, 504 disjunction, 505 negation, 504 order of processing, 505-506 Options bit field (OSPFv3), 966 ORF (outbound route filtering), 647-649 originates-from option (AS Path), 487 origin attribute (BGP), 700-703 configuration, 701 processing logic, 703 or keyword (disjunction operator), 505 **OSI (Open Systems Interconnection)** addressing NET, 322-323 NSAP, 320-321 end systems (ES), 316 ES-IS, 316 intermediate systems (IS), 316 IS-IS, 316 hierarchy, 317 LSPDB, 317 **OSPF** commonalities, 316 SPT, 317 IS-IS. See IS-IS model, 315 protocol suite, 316

### OSPF (Open Shortest Path First), 68

AD, modifying, 529-531 areas ABRs. 242 backbone, 242 defined, 241 disadvantages, 242 external routes, 247-248 failed route advertisement, 242 filtering, 543-546 IDs. 245-246 interarea summarization. 276-280 intra-area/interarea routes, 246-247 multi-area topology, 243-245 NSSAs. See NSSAs successful route advertisement. 243 Type 1 LSA flooding, 252 authentication, 236 IOS. 236 IOS XR. 237-239 types supported, 236 BFD configurations IOS interface specific, 204-205 IOS network statement. 202-204 IOS XR. 205 topology sample, 206-208 discontiguous networks, 301-303 DRs/BDRs, 213 elections, 214-216 LSA distribution, 213 placement, 216-219

exponential LSA sessions per routers on same segment, 212 failure detection, 219 dead interval timer, 219 fast-packet Hellos, 220-221 Hello timer, 219 timers, verifying, 220 filtering areas. 543-546 local. 541-543 hierarchical architecture, 192-193 interfaces costs, 235-236 nonbroadcast, verifying, 302 verifying, 208-209 inter-router communication, 193-194 Hello packets, 194-195 multicast addresses, 193 packet types, 194 IS-IS commonalities, 316 LSAs, 191, 249-251 age, 251 flooding, 251 reduction through area segmentation, 274 summary, 270 Туре 1, 252-257 Type 2, 257-259 Туре 3, 259-262 *Type* 4, 265-268 Туре 5, 263-265 Туре 7, 268-269 LSDB (link-state database), 192 multi-access networks topology, 212 multi-area adjacencies, 304-308 configuration, 305-306

inefficient topologies, 304 nonbroadcast interface verification. 304 OSPF neighborship, 306-307 verification, 306-308 neighbors, 196 adjacencies. See adjacencies, **OSPF** multi-area interface, 306-307 non-broadcast, 223 P2P interfaces verification, 225 states, 196, 210 Type 1 LSAs state, 256 network types, 221 broadcast. 221 listing of, 231 loopback, 229-230 neighbor adjacency compatibility, 231-234 non-broadcast, 222-223 P2P, 224-225 point-to-multipoint, 225-229 passive interfaces, 205-206 path selection, 270-271 ECMP. 274 external routes, 272 interarea routes, 272 intra-area routes, 271-272 Type 1 external routes, 273 Type 2 external routes, 273-274 preferred over BGP for RPF calculation. 878 prefix suppression, 308-312 configuration, 310 connectivity verification, 312 routing table, 309, 311

*Type 1 LSAs after, 309, 311 Type 2 LSAs*, 310, 312 processes, running, 193 redistribution, 569-571 forwarding address, 573-576 OSPF-to-OSPF, 571-572 RIB installed routes, verifying, 211-212 RIDs. 196 SPT. 192 stubby areas, 286 NSSAs. 292-295 stub areas, 286-289 totally, 289-292 totally NSSAs, 295-298 types, 286 summarization, 274-276 default. 283-285 external, 280-283 interarea, 276-280 version 2 versus version 3, 955-957 virtual links, 298-301 configuring, 300 verification, 300-301 **OSPFv3.955** authentication, 970-973 areas. 972 interfaces, 972 IPsec verification, 973 configuration commands reference chart, 975 IOS. 960-961 IOS XR. 961 inter-router communication, 957 LSAs. 958 flooding scopes, 959-960 types, 959

multiple instances, 973-975 OSPFv2, compared, 955-957 verification, 962-970 configuration, 963-964 interfaces, 965 LSDB, 965-968 routes table, 969-970 show commands, 962 ospfv3 authentication command, 975 ospfv3 encryption command, 975 ospfv3 process-id area area-id command, 975 ospfv3 process-id area area-ID command, 975 outbound route filtering (ORF), 647-649 outgoing interface (OIF), 763 outgoing interface list (OIL), 763 out keyword (ip multicast boundary access-list command), 864 out-of-band route reflectors, 453 overload bits IS-IS. 394-396 configuration, 395 routing table, 395-396 topology, 394 LSPs, 331

#### Ρ

#### P2P (point-to-point) interfaces

broadcast interfaces as, configuring, 353-355 static routing, 96-98 bidirectional connectivity verification, 97-98 direct attachments, 96-97

routing table example, 97 serial connections, 96 P2P (point-to-point) networks IS-IS neighbors, 338-339 OSPF. 224-225 configuring, 224 interface verification, 225 neighbors on P2P interfaces, verifying, 225 packages installation envelopes (PIEs) IOS, 2-4 **IOS XR, 6-7** packets **CSNPs. 350** EIGRP advertised networks update, 131 *bello packet*, 129 INIT flag and acknowledgment, 1.30 INIT flag set, 129 queries, handling, 156-157 route prefixes update, 130 types, 127 EIGRPv6. 944 Hello. See Hello packets IIH padding, removing, 365 IP, delivering, 30 IS-IS bello (IIH), 327-328 IS PDU addressing, 326-327 IS protocol headers, 325 TLVs, 326 types, 324 link-state. See LSPs OSPF, 194

OSPFv2 versus OSPFv3, 955 OSPFv3, 957 sequence number (SNPs), 324 packet switching **CEF**, 86 centralized versus distributed forwarding architectures, 86 defined, 86 distributed. 88 hardware, 88-89 software, 87 Layer 2 addressing, 83-84 process switching, 84-85 parameterization route policies, 507-510 **RPL**, 496 parameters NDP, displaying, 916-917 OSPF show the commit command, 23 parentheses () query modifier, 480 partial route calculation. See PRC partition bits (LSPs), 331 PAs (path attributes) AIGP, exchanging, 687 BGP, 409 passes-through option (AS Path), 486-487 passive-interface command, 186 passive interfaces **EIGRP**, 134 IS-IS, 361-362 OSPF, 205-206 Path and Origin field (BGP tables), 429 paths AS sets, 488 BGP algorithm, 672

AIGP. See AIGP AS\_Path length, 694-698 AS Path relax feature, 731-733 attributes, 409, 672-673 eBGP versus iBGP, 714-717 ECMP. See ECMP. BGP locally originated via network or aggregate advertisement, 683-686 local preference, 679-682 lowest IGP metric, 718-720 lowest neighbor address, 722 MED. See MED, BGP best path selection minimum cluster list length, 721 oldest EBGP, 720 origin types, 700-703 RIDs. 720-721 weight, 673-679 EIGRP metrics, 145 attribute propagation, 146 custom K values, 148-149 default K values, 145 with definitions, 145 formula, 145 interface delay settings, 149-151 interface metrics, 146 load balancing, 151-153 lowest link speed/cumulative delay, 146 specific prefix, 147-148 variance multiplier, 151-152 wide, 153-154 IS-IS selection, 386 ECMP. 387 interface metrics, 387-394 processing order, 387

OSPF selection, 270-271 ECMP. 274 external routes, 272 interarea routes, 272 intra-area routes. 271-272 Type 1 external routes, 273 Type 2 external routes, 273-274 selection algorithms distance vector, 69 enhanced distance vector, 70 link-state, 70-71 path vector, 71-72 vector algorithms, 71-72 PBR (policy-based routing), 521 configuring, 522 local, 525-526 overview, 521 PDMs (protocol-dependent modules), 126 PDUs (protocol data units), 324, 326 peers BGP, 415, 664-665 MSDP. 822-828 IOS. 822 IOS XR. 822-823 MSDP and MBGP sessions between PIM domains. 823-827 MSDP Compliance, 823 SA message packet captures, 828 SA RPF checks, 823 status, 829 period (.) query modifier, 481 PIEs (package installation envelopes), 6

PIM (Protocol Independent Multicast), 745, 762 bidirectional, 802-808 BSR, 775-776, configuration, 786-787 boundaries, 866 configuring, 780-782 control messages, 764 Dense Mode (PIM-DM), 765-767 downstream, 763 first-hop router (FHR), 763 forwarder, 778-779 group mapping verification, 792 interfaces downstream, 763 incoming, 763 outgoing interface (OIF), 763 RPF, 762 upstream, 763 verification, 791 IPv6, 1015 last-hop router (LHR), 763 multicast forwarding information base (MFIB), 764 routing information base (MRIB), 763 state. 764 neighbor control, 869-870 operating modes, 764 outgoing interface list (OIL), 763 reference topology, 762 register rate limit, 870 RPF, 763, 777 RPs. See RPs Sparse Mode. See PIM-SM SSM. See PIM-SSM

topology, verification, 793 upstream, 763 PIM-SM (PIM Sparse Mode), 768-772 accept RP, 868-869 BSR, 1018-1021 DRs, 772 message types, 1015 multicast forwarding overview, 768 PIM tunnels, 1017 shared tree joins, 769 source registration, 769-770, 867-868 SPT switchover, 771 static RP configuration, 1017-1018 **PIM-SSM (PIM-Source Specific** Multicast), 850, 1033-1034 configuration, 852-853 group-to-PIM mode mapping, 853 IOS, enabling, 851 IOS XR, enabling, 851 mapping, 857-862 MDT creation, 851 mroute table, 855-857 RPF neighbors, identifying, 854 topology, 854 pipe (l) query modifier, 480 placement DISs, 352-353 DRs/BDRs, 216-219 planes of operation, 89-90 plus sign (+) query modifier, 481 point-to-multipoint networks, 225-229 point-to-point interfaces. See P2P interfaces point-to-point networks. See P2P networks

policies (route) actions, 496 attachment points, 516 attribute modifications, 498 boolean operators, 504 conjunction, 504 disjunction, 505 negation, 504 order of processing, 505-506 conditional matching commands, 559 editors, 512-513 match statements, 497 nesting, 510-511 original value, 511-512 parameterization, 507-510 prefix sets versus prefix lists, 506 redistribution set actions, 559 states, displaying, 515-516 structure, 496-497, 499-504 advanced conditional statement nesting, 502 bad RPL design, 503 conditional match and action statement, 499 conditional match with if-elseifelse logic, 501 conditional match with if-elseif logic, 501 conditional match with if-else *logic*, 500 conditional statement nesting, 502 good RPL design, 503 *if-elseif-else route-policy*, 502 inline policy set expansion, 500 inline prefix filtering, 499 nested conditional match, 503

prefix set filtering, 500 RFC 1918 route map with if-else logic, 501 verification BGP table, 517-518 redistribution, 516-517 policy-based routing. See PBR, 521 PRC (partial route calculation) prefixes BGP advertisements, 425-427 eBGP attributes listing of, 441 local, 441 remote, 440 EIGRP filtering, 534-537 update packet, 130 filtering, 593-595 **GUAs**, 900 independent convergence. See PIC lengths, 73 lists, 473-474, 506 matching basic pattern, 471 ineligible matched prefixes, 472 looking glass/route servers, 483 matching length parameters, 471 prefix lists, 473-474 prefix sets, 474-475 regex. See regex structure, 471 maximum, 654-656 NDP valid lifetime/preferred lifetime values, 915-916

sets, 474-475 filtering route policy, 500 prefix lists, compared, 506 suppression, 632-634 IS-IS, 401-405 OSPF, 308-312 prepend as-path command, 498 preventing loops, 119-120 redistribution prefix filtering, 593-595 seed metrics, increasing, 598-600 tagging, 595-598 RRs, 451-452 private ASNs, 408, 656-658 private BGP communities, 610, 625-627 private IP addresses defined, 58 IPv4 address ranges, 58 **NAT**, 58 privileged mode (IOS), 10 problems. See troubleshooting processes IOSd, 4 **OSPF**, 193 scheduling IOS, 2 IOS XE, 4 IOS XR, 5 switching, 84-85 prompts (configuration) IOS, 26 IOS XR, 26 protocol data units (PDUs), 324, 326 protocol-dependent modules (PDMs), 126

Protocol Independent Multicast. See PIM protocols. See also names of specific protocols administrative distance, 73-76 distance vector, 69 dynamic, 68 distance vector, 69 enhanced distance vector, 70 link-state, 70-71 listing of, 68 path vector, 71-72 enhanced distance vector, 70 link-state, 70-71 path vector, 71-72 **RIPv1**, 50 **RIPv2**, 54 routing table metrics, 75-76 pseudonode IDs (LSP IDs), 330 DISs. 349-350 IS-IS, displaying, 358-359 public ASNs, 408 pwd command, 26

# Q

queries
boundaries, 157
messages (MLD), 1010, 1012
packets, 156-157
query modifiers (regex)
\* (asterisks), 482
[] (brackets), 479
[^] (caret in brackets), 480
^ (carets), 478
\$ (dollar signs), 478-479
- (hyphen), 479-480

() (parentheses), 480
. (period), 481
| (pipe), 480
+ (plus sign), 481
? (question mark), 481-482
\_ (underscores), 477-478
question mark (?) query modifier, 481-482

## R

range ipv6-prefix/prefix-length command, 975 RAs (router advertisement) NDP messages, 913-914 advertisements, 913 disabling, 918 lifetime values, 917-918 packet capture, 915 responses, 914 SLAAC DNS options, 923-924 RD (reported distance), 142 **RDNSS (Recursive DNS Server)**, 923 reachability (NDP), 936-937 real-time operating system (RTOS), 5 recursion (static routes), 98-99, 105-107 multiple, 109-111 nonrecursive multihop configurations, 107 problems, 112-116 single, 108-109 topology, 105 XR1/R3 configuration, 105-106 **Recursive DNS Server (RDNSS)**, 923 redirects (IPv6), 919-920

#### redistribution

challenges invalid routing tables, 589-590 route feedback, 583 solutions. 606 suboptimal routing, 584-588 default seed metrics, 606 defined. 551 destination-specific behaviors BGP. 580-582 EIGRP. 563-566 EIGRP-to-EIGRP. 566-568 IS-IS. 576-578 IS-IS to IS-IS, 578-580 OSPF, 569-571 OSPF forwarding address, 573-576 OSPF-to-OSPF. 571-572 IPv6, 1002-1005 IOS. 1002 route tables, 1003-1005 metrics, 558 RIB existence, 555-557 route selection conditional matching command, 559 routing loops AD, 601-603 overview, 590-592 prefix filtering, 593-595 seed metrics, increasing, 598-600 summarization, 603-605 tagging, 595-598 RPL, 516-517 sequential protocol, 555 set actions, 559

source protocols, 553 selection criteria, 606 specific behaviors, 561-563 transitivity, 553-554 redundancy (RPs), 833-834 anycast, 847-849 Auto-RP load balancing, 836-840 configuration, 837 group-to-RP mapping, 837, 839-840 redundancy Auto-RP group-to-RP mapping, 838 redundancy configuration, 838 Auto-RP with multiple RPs, 835-840 configuration, 835 RP mapping, 836 BSR, 840-846 group filtering, 843-845 hash algorithm, 845-846 static RPs, 846 regex (regular expressions), 475 BGP reference topology, 476 query modifiers \* (asterisks), 482 [] (brackets), 479 [^] (caret in brackets), 480 ^ (carets), 478 \$ (dollar signs), 478-479 - (byphen), 479-480 () (parentheses), 480 . (period), 481 | (pipe), 480 + (plus sign), 481 ? (question mark), 481-482 \_(underscores), 477-478

Register PIM control message, 764 register rate limits (PIM), 870 Register stop PIM control message, 764 relay agents IOS configuration, 927-928 verification, 928 IOS XR proxy configuration, 928-929 verification, 929 remote-as as-number command, 1001 removing IIH padding, 365 private ASNs, 656-658 rendezvous points. See RPs replace as-path command, 498 replacing commits, 19-20 configurations, 13 reported distance (RD), 142 report messages (MLD), 1010 reserved multicast addresses, 750 reverse path forwarding. See RPF **RIB** (Routing Information Base), 74 BGP routes, displaying, 431 OSPF installed routes, verifying, 211-212 RID field (OSPF Hello packet), 194 **RIDs** (router IDs) BGP, 413, 720-721 **EIGRP**, 141 EIGRPv6, 945 **OSPF**, 196 OSPFv2 versus OSPFv3, 955 **RIPv1** (Routing Information Protocol Version 1), 50

**RIPv2** (Routing Information Protocol Version 2), 54, 68 rollbacks (configuration changes), 21-22 root command, 26, route flap dampening. See RFD route maps, 488 command syntax, 489 components, 489 conditional matching, 490 commands, 559 complex matching, 491-492 multiple match, 491 continue keyword, 493-494 examples, 494-495 optional actions, 492 redistribution set actions, 559 sample, 489 route-policy route-policy-name command, 954, 1001 router advertisements. See RAs router bgp as-number command, 1001 route reflectors. See RRs router eigrp as-number command, 132,954 router eigrp process-name command, 954 router IDs. See RIDs router isis command, 988 router isis instance-id command, router LSA bits, 968 router ospfv3 process-id command, 975 routers autonomous systems, 67 dynamic routing protocols, 68 IS-IS specific levels, 384-385 LSAs, 959

overview. 67 path selection algorithms distance vector, 69 enhanced distance vector, 70 link-state, 70-71 path vector, 71-72 planes of operation, 89-90 routing tables administrative distance, 73-76 metrics, 75-76 overview, 72 prefix lengths, 73 types (LSPs), 331 VRFs. See VRFs Routing Information Base. See RIB **Routing Information Protocol Version** 1 (RIPv1), 50 **Routing Information Protocol Version** 2 (RIPv2), 54, 68 routing policy language. See RPL routing tables administrative distance, 73-76 after Ethernet link failure, 114 after OSPF interarea route summarization. 279 default routes CE router, 100-101 XR1/R3 example, 102 EIGRPv6, 950 global IP address configuration, 80 output, 80-81 invalid, 589-590 IS-IS default routes, 401 overload bits, 395 prefix suppression XR1, 402

route-leaking, 378-379 summarization. 398 metrics, 75-76 **OSPF** area external routes, 248 loopback, 230 multi-area topology, 246-247 point-to-multipoint, 228 prefix suppression, 308-312 stubby areas, 287 totally NSSAs, 298 totally stubby areas, 291 overview, 72 prefix lengths, 73 recursive static routes, 99 static routes with P2P interfaces, 97 virtual. See VRFs RPF (reverse path forwarding), 762, 776-777 IPv6 multicast routing, 1030-1032 **MSDP** check for source subnet, 831 check for source subnet without MBGP, 831 SA RPF checks, 823 multicast traffic engineering rules, 871-872 neighbor, 763, 854 OSPF preferred over BGP for RPF calculations, 878 RPL (routing policy language), 496 actions, 496 architecture, 496 attachment points, 516 attribute modification actions, 498 boolean operators, 504 conjunction, 504

disjunction, 505 negation, 504 order of processing, 505-506 editors, 512-513 examples, 513-515 match statements, 497 original value, 511-512 parameterization, 496, 507-510 prefix sets versus prefix lists, 506 route policy nesting, 510-511 route policy structure, 499-504 advanced conditional statement nesting, 502 bad RPL design, 503 conditional match and action statement, 499 conditional match with if-elseifelse logic, 501 conditional match with if-elseif *logic*, 501 conditional match with if-else *logic*. 500 conditional statement nesting, 502 good RPL design, 503 if-elseif-else route-policy, 502 inline policy set expansion, 500 inline prefix filtering, 499 nested conditional match, 503 prefix set filtering, 500 RFC 1918 route map with if-else logic, 501 states, displaying, 515-516 structure, 496-497 verification BGP table, 517-518 redistribution, 516-517 rp-list keyword, 867

RP mapping agents (MAs), 774 RPs (rendezvous points), 772 anycast, 847-849 Auto-RPs, 773 candidate RPs, 773 Cisco-RP-announce message filtering, 867 configuring, 785-786 RP MAs, 774 candidate, 1021-1024 configuring, 783-787 Auto-RPs, 785-786 static, 784-785 embedded, 1021-1024 PIM bootstrap router, 775-776 PIM-SM accept, 868-869 redundant, 833-834 anycast, 847-849 Auto-RP load balancing, 836-840 Auto-RP with multiple RPs, 835-840 BSR, 840-846 static, 773, 846 configuring, 784-785 PIM-SM. 1017-1018 switchover. See continuous forwarding **RRs** (route reflectors) BGP suboptimal routing, 733-734 Add-Path feature, 739-742 RRs, adding, 734-735 shadow RRs, 735-737 shadow session RRs, 738-739 table, 450 configurations, 449-450

loop prevention, 451-452 out-of-band, 453 rules, 446-447, 450 topology, 448 RTOS (real-time operating system), 5 RTP (Reliable Transport Protocol), 127 running configurations displaying, 15 target configurations, merging, 16 run to completion schedulers, 2

## S

SAFIs (subsequent address family identifiers), 812 SA (source active) messages, 818-819 cache, 830 packet capture, 828 SA RPF checks, 823 scalability **BGP** configuration IOS peers, 664-666 IOS XR peer templates, 667-668 iBGP, 432, 446 confederations, 453-458 loop prevention in route reflectors, 451-452 out-of-band route reflectors, 453 route reflectors, 446-451 **RPL**, 496 scheduling processes IOS. 2 IOS XE. 4 IOS XR. 5

scopes Auto-RP TTL, 862 IPv6 multicast, 909 multicast boundary, 1032-1033 unicast, 898-899 OSPFv3 flooding, 959-960 secondary connected networks, 94 secondary IP addresses, 60-61 security BGP, 459 authentication, 462-463 eBGP multihop, 459-461 TTL, 461-462 multicast, 862 Auto-RP Cisco-RP-announce message filtering, 867 Auto-RP TTL scoping, 862 boundaries, 863-866 PIM. 869-870 PIM-SM, 867-869 seed metrics, redistribution, 598-600, 606 selective AS Set (aggregation), 641-643 SEL (Selector) fields, 321 sender network IDs, identifying, 36-37 sequence number packets (SNPs), 324, 331 sequential protocol redistribution, 555 serial connections, 96 servers prefix matching, 483 stateful DHCPv6 IOS configuration, 930 IOS XR configuration, 931-932 verification, 932-934

sessions BGP clearing, 549 IPv6 over IPv4, 998-1001 overview, 415 verification, 421-424 shadow RR, 738-739 set actions, 559 set local-preference command, 498 set med command, 498 set next-hp command, 498 set origin command, 498 set weight command, 498 shadow RRs, 735-737 shared trees, 761 Shortest Path First. See SPF show bgp ipv6 unicast command, 993 show bgp ipv6 unicast neighbors command, 993 show bgp ipv6 unicast summary command, 993 show clns interface command, 985 show clns neighbor command, 985 show configuration command, 15 show configuration commit changes command, 18 show configuration commit changes incremental command, 18 show configuration commit list command, 17 show configuration failed command, 20 show configuration merge command, 16 show interface interface-type interface-number command, 149 show ip eigrp interface command, 136 show ip interface command, 61 show ip mroute command, 794

show ip route vrf vrf-name command, 81 show ipv4 route vrf-name command, 81 show ipv6 mld groups command, 1024 show ipv6 mld interface command, 1024 show ipv6 mld traffic command, 1024 show ipv6 mrib route command, 1024 show ipv6 mroute active command, 1024 show ipv6 mroute command, 1024 show ipv6 pim group-map command, 1024 show ipv6 pim interface command, 1024 show ipv6 pim neighbor command, 1024 show ipv6 pim range-list command, 1024 show ipv6 pim topology command, 1024 show ipv6 pim traffic command, 1024 show ipv6 pim tunnel command, 1024 show ipv6 protocols command, 985 show ipv6 route bgp command, 993 show ipv6 route ospf command, 962 show ipv6 rpf ipv6-address command, 1024 show isis database command, 985 show isis interface command, 985 show isis neighbor command, 985 show isis neighbors command, 985 show mfib route command, 798 show mfib route rate command, 1024 show mfib route src-ip-address/ group-address command, 886 show mld groups command, 1024 show mld interface command, 1024 show mld traffic command, 1024 show mrib ipv6 route command, 1024

show mrib route command, 798

show ospfv3 database command, 962 show ospfv3 interface command, 962 show ospfv3 neighbor command, 962 show ospfv3 virtual-links command, 962 show pim ipv6 bsr candidate rp command, 1024 show pim ipv6 bsr election command, 1024 show pim ipv6 bsr rp-cache command, 1024 show pim ipv6 group-map command, 1024show pim ipv6 interface command, 1024 show pim ipv6 neighbor command, 1024 show pim ipv6 range-list command, 1024 show pim ipv6 rpf ipv6-address command, 1024 show pim ipv6 topology command, 1024 show pim ipv6 traffic command, 1024show pim ipv6 tunnel info command, 1024 show pim topology command, 799 show protocols ipv6 command, 985 show route ipv6 bgp command, 993 show route ipv6 ospf command, 962 show running-config command, 15 show the commit command, 23 SIA (stuck-in-active) timers, 159-160 single recursive static routes, 108-109 single-stage commits, 11 single-topology command, 988 SixXS ULA generator tool website, 905

SLAAC (stateless address autoconfiguration), 895-924 DNS RA options, 923-924 extended unique identifiers, 920-921 router configuration, 921-923 slow path, 84-85 SMUs (software maintenance upgrades), 6 SNPs (sequence number packets), 324.331 software **CEF**, 87 maintenance upgrades (SMUs), 6 packaging IOS. 2-4 IOS XR, 6-7 switching, 84-85 versions, 2-3 source active. See SA messages sources protocol-specific behaviors BGP, 562-563 connected networks, 561 IS-IS, 561 redistribution protocols, 553, 606 registration filtering, 867-868 trees, 759-760 Source Specific Multicast. See SSM Sparse Mode (PIM). See PIM-SM special IPv6 addresses, 911 special-purpose reserved IP addresses, 59 SPF (Shortest Path First) calculation throttling incremental. See iSPF IS-IS, 361-362 tree. See SPT

SPF tree. See SPT split-horizon command, 186 split horizons (EIGRP WANs), 179-182 SPT (SPF tree) IS-IS, 317, 361-362 path verification, 800 PIM-SM switchover, 771 switchover, 799-800 Type 1 LSA calculation, 256 **OSPF. 192** SSM (Source Specific Multicast), 850 configuration, 852-853 enabling IOS. 851 IOS XR. 851 group-to-PIM mode mapping, 853 mapping, 857 DNS. 857-860 static, 860-862 MDT creation, 851 mroute table, 855-857 RPF neighbors, identifying, 854 topology, 854 standard ACLs, 468-469 stateful DHCPv6, 926-927 IOS relay agents configuration, 927-928 verification, 928 IOS XR relay proxy agents configuration, 928-929 verification, 929 servers IOS configuration, 930 IOS XR configuration, 931-932 verification, 932-934 topology, 926

stateful switchover. See SSO stateless address autoconfiguration. See SLAAC stateless DHCPv6, 924-926 configuration IOS, 924-925 IOS XR. 925-926 verification, 926 statements match, 497 network IOS EIGRP autonomous system configuration, 132-133 IOS OSPF configuration, 202-204 State refresh PIM control message, 764 states BGP neighbors, 415 Active, 416 Connect, 415-416 Established, 417 Idle, 415 OpenConfirm, 417 OpenSent, 416-417 IS-IS neighbors, 346 multicast, 764 OSPF neighbors, 196, 210, 256 route policies, displaying, 515-516 static joins IGMP. 882-886 MLD, 1015 static routes advantages/disadvantages, 94-95 broadcast interfaces, 98-99 classifications, 95

default routes, 99-102 backup connectivity, 101 CE routers, 100-101 XR1/R3 example, 101-102 example, 95 floating, 103-105 AD verification, 104-105 backups, configuring, 112 defined, 103 Ethernet link failures, 104 XR1/R3 configuration, 103 XR1/R3 routing table, 103-104 IPv6, 941-942 configuration commands reference chart, 943 configuring, 942-943 show commands reference chart, 943 mroutes, 872-875 multihop multiple recursive lookups, 109-111 overview, 108 single recursive lookups, 108-109 nonrecursive multihop, 107 null interfaces defined, 116 packet traces, 118-119 routing loops, 117-120 P2P interfaces, 96-98 bidirectional connectivity verification, 97-98 direct attachments, 96-97 routing table example, 97 serial connections, 96

recursion problems, 112-116 CEF table. 114 Ethernet link failure, 113-114 floating static routes for backup, 112 floating static route working as intended routing table. 115-116 next-hop IP addressing with outbound interface correction. 115 next-hop IP address with outbound interface after Ethernet link recovery routing table, 116 stable links routing table, 112-113 recursive lookup, 105-107 nonrecursive multihop configurations, 107 topology, 105 XR1/R3 configuration, 105-106 RPs, 773, 846 configuring, 784-785 PIM-SM, 1017-1018 SSM mapping, 860-862 configuring, 860 verification, 861 VRF, 121-123 IOS, 122-123 IOS XR. 121-122 stream statistics, 1029 stub areas, 286-289 configuration, 287-288 routing table, 287 stubby areas (OSPF), 286 NSSAs, 292-295 autonomous systems example, 293

concept, 292 configuration, 293-294 routing table after, 294 routing table before, 293 stub areas, 286-289 configuration, 287-288 routing table, 287 totally, 289-292 configuration, 290-291 routing table after, 291 routing table before, 290 topology, 289 totally NSSAs, 295-298 concept, 295 configuration, 297 routing table after, 298 routing table before, 296 topology, 296 types, 286 stub command, 975 stub no-summary command, 975 stubs **EIGRP. 160** default configuration, 162-163 designs, 164-166 inter-region traffic, 161-162 regional/remote topology, 161 route tables after link failures, 163 MSDP, 831-833 stuck-in-active (SIA) timers, 159-160 subnet masks binary conversion, 36 classful routing best path confusion, 53 discontiguous networks, 53

uniform, 50-51 variable-length, 52 defined. 30 interesting octets, 42-43 IP address interface assignments, 60 network prefix notation, 38 prefix lengths, 73 reference chart, 40 sender network IDs, identifying, 36-37 subnets, calculating bitwise AND operations, 41-42 magic number method, 42-45 usable IP address, calculating, 37-38 variable-length. See VLSMs wildcard. 62-63 calculating, 63 dot-decimal notation, 62 example, 63 rules, 62 subnetting address range calculations 10.55.200.33/12, 45 172.16.2.3/23.45 192.168.100.5/26.45 design, 46 available host values, listing, 47 available subnets, listing, 47 binary bit values, listing, 47 final address allocation scheme, 49 LAN 1/LAN 2 subnet assignments, 47-48 LAN 3 assignments, 48 explicit, 133 IP address fields, 39 IPv6 subnetting chart, 903

overview, 38-39 subnet mask reference chart, 40 subnets, calculating bitwise AND operations, 41-42 magic number method, 42-45 suboptimal routing AD, 527 example, 377 fixing, 377-380 redistribution challenges, 584-588 AD. 584 multipoint redistribution topology, 584 resolving, 588 route feedback, 585 with RRs (BGP), 733-734 Add-Path feature, 739-742 RRs, adding, 734-735 shadow RRs. 735-737 shadow session RRs. 738-739 subsequent address family identifiers (SAFIs), 812 successors defined. 142 feasible, 142 summarization BGP, 628 aggregate addresses, 629-631 AS\_Set aggregation, 639-641 atomic aggregate, 637-639 *flexible route suppression*, 632-637 selective AS Set, 641-643 EIGRP automatic, 172-174 *bierarchical*, 166

interface-specific, 166-171 metrics, 171-172 EIGRPv6, 950-952 IS-IS. 396 configuration, 399 discard routes. 399 metric, 396-397 ranges, 397 routing table, 398 topology, 398 OSPF routes, 274-276 default, 283-285 external, 276-283 redistribution routing loop prevention, 603-605 summary-address ipv6-prefix/ prefix-length command, 954, 975 summary-address network command, 186 summary-address prefix/prefixlength command, 988 summary-metric network bandwidth delay reliability load MTU [AD] command, 188 summary prefixes, 57-58 summary-prefix prefix/prefix-length command, 988 supernetting. See summarization SysDB, 17-18 system ID (LSP IDs), 330

### Т

tags (route), 595-598 target configurations displaying, 15 running configurations, merging, 16 TCP (BGP) communication, 410 templates (peer) IOS, 665-666 IOS XR, 667-668 timers EIGRP hello/hold, 155-156 SIA, 159-160 IS-IS hello, 366-367 holding, 367 OSPF dead interval, 219 Hello, 219 verification, 219 timers active-time command, 188 Time-To-Live. See TTL TLVs (Type, Length, Value) IIH packets, 328 IPv6 IS-IS, 944-978 IS-IS route-leaking interarea, 379-380 LSPs, 332 overview, 326 topology base command, 185, 954 totally NSSAs, 295-298 concept, 295 configuration, 297 routing table after, 298 routing table before, 296 topology, 296 totally stubby areas, 289-292 configuration, 290-291 routing table after, 291 routing table before, 290 topology, 289

traces (IOS XR), 8 troubleshooting IOS XR traces, 8 multicast, 886-889 mtrace, 887-889 show commands, 886 static route recursion, 112-116 CEF table, 114 Ethernet link failure, 113-114 floating static routes for backup, 112 floating static route working as intended routing table, 115-116 next-hop IP address with outbound interface after Ethernet link recovery routing table, 116 next-bop IP address with outbound interface correction, 115 stable links routing table, 112-113 TTL (Time-To-Live), 862 Auto-RP scoping, 862 BGP security, 461-462 eBGP multihop sessions, 461 two-stage commit (IOS XR), 14-17 Type, Length, Value. See TLVs Type 1 external routes, 273 Type 1 LSAs, 252-257 areas 1234 example, 253-255 flooding, 252 LSDB fields, 252 **OSPF** neighbor states, 256 prefix suppression, 309, 311

SPF tree calculation, 256 stub network link types, 256 summary output, 252 visualization, 257 before, 310 after, 312 Type 2 external routes, 273-274 Type 2 LSAs, 257-259 Type 3 LSAs, 259-262 conceptual, 259 detailed output, displaying, 261-262 fields. 262 summary output, 260 visualization, 262 Type 4 LSAs, 265-268 detailed output, 267 fields. 267 generic output, 266 metrics, 265 Type 5 LSAs, 263-265 detailed output, 264 fields, 265 flooding, 263 generic output, 263 Type 7 LSAs, 268-269 detailed output, 269 fields. 269 generic output, 268

# U

ULA (unique local unicast) addresses, 904-905 underscores (\_) query modifier, 477-478 unequal load balancing, 151-153 unicast BGP session summary verification, 816 IPv6, 898-900 addresses, 894 configuring, 899 global, 900-903 interface status, 899-900 link-local, 905-906 scopes, 898-899 unique local, 904-905 video feed, 746 unique-length option (AS Path), 486 unique local unicast addresses (ULA), 904-905 universal images, identifying, 3-4 unspecified addresses (IPv6), 911 updates BGP, 413-414 CIDR, 54 classful routing, 50 **EIGRP** packets advertised networks, 131 INIT flag and acknowledgment, 130 INIT flag set, 129 route prefixes, 130 VLSM classless routing, 55 upstream, 763 user mode (IOS), 9-10

## V

variable-length subnet masks. *See* VLSMs variance variance-multiplier command, 188 verification BGP neighbors supporting AIGP metrics, 690 ORF. 649 sessions, 421-424 bidirectional connectivity between routers, 97-98 DHCPv6 stateful, 932-934 stateless, 926 DIS, 353 DNS SSM mapping, 859 DR manipulation, 217 EIGRP authentication, 176 hello/hold timers, 155 interfaces, 136-139, 149 key chain settings, 176 K values, 148-149 neighbor adjacencies, 139 EIGRPv6, 947-950 base configuration, 948-949 neighbor adjacency, 949-950 routing table, 950 show commands, 947 topology, 948 floating static routes AD, 104-105 IOS relay agents, 928 IOS XR relay proxy agents, 929 IPv6 multicast routing, 1024 IS-IS broadcast parameters, 336 interfaces, 343-346, 392 IPv6. 985-987 neighbor adjacencies, 346-347

passive interfaces, 364 routes, 347-348 MBGP for IPv6 commands, 993 IPv6 route table, 997 IPv6 unicast BGP table, 996 neighbor status, 996 next-hop address selection, 997 router configuration, 994-995 MSDP. 828-831 Mroute table, 829 peer status, 829 RPF check for source subnet, 831 RPF check for source subnet without MBGP, 831 SA cache. 830 multi-area adiacencies, 306 OSPF routes, 307-308 multicast active traffic flows, 801 configuration, 786-787 DR election, 792, 795 IGMP interface, 790 IGMP joins, 791 IOS show ip mroute flags, 794 PIM group mapping, 792 PIM interfaces, 791 PIM topology, 793 show mrib route/show mfib route flags, 798 show pim topology flags, 799 source registration between RP and FHR tree creation. 796-798 SPT between RP and FHR creation, 796-798

SPT path, 800 SPT switchover, 799-800 stream statistics. 801 **OSPF** authentication, 238, 239 interfaces, 208-209 neighbor adjacencies, 209-210 non-broadcast interfaces, 223, 302 non-broadcast neighbors, 223 point-to-multipoint network, 227 prefix suppression connectivity, 312 RIB installed routes, 211-212 timers, 219 virtual links, 300-301 OSPFv3, 962-970 configuration, 963-964 interfaces, 965 IPsec, 973 LSDB, 965-969 routes table, 969-970 show commands, 962 RPL BGP table, 517-518 redistribution, 516-517 static SSM, 861 unequal load balancing, 152-153 unicast BGP session summary, 816 versions active software, identifying, 2-3 MLD, 1010 universal image, identifying, 3-4 virtual links (OSPF), 298-301 configuring, 300 verification, 300-301

VLSMs (variable-length subnet masks) classless routing update, 55 defined, 55 successful route convergence, 55-56 vrf definition vrf-name command, 77 VRFs (Virtual Routing and Forwarding), 76 configuring example, 81 IOS, 78 IOS XR, 78-79 defined, 76 displaying, 81-82 interfaces/IP addresses status verification, 82-83 IPv4-only, 77 Lite, 76 migrating IPv4-only to multiprotocol, 77 MPLS support, 76 multiprotocol, 77 overlapping IP addresses/interfaces between global routing table and VRFs global routing tables, 80-81 VRF configuration example, 81 overlapping IP address problems, 76-77 routers with/without comparison, 79 static VRF routes, 121-123 IOS, 122-123 IOS XR, 121-122 vrf upgrade-cli multi-af-mode command, 77

### W

WANs (EIGRP), 177 bandwidth percent, 177-179 next-hop self behavior, 182-183 split horizons, 179-182 websites Cisco. 3 GUA prefixes, 900 IANA AFI listing, 812 looking glass servers, 483 private BGP community patterns, 610 route servers, 483 SixXS ULA generator tool, 905 weight (BGP), 673-679 configuration, 674 IOS, 678 **IOS XR, 678** processing logic, 676 tables, 429 topology, 673 well-known BGP communities Internet, 611 No Advertise, 614-617 No Export, 611-614 No Export SubConfed, 617-620 wide metrics EIGRP, 153-154 IS-IS, 388 wildcard subnet masks, 62-63 calculating, 63 /24 networks, 64 single IP hosts, 63 summary routes, 64 dot-decimal notation, 62 example, 63 rules, 62