

# Traffic Load Balancing in EVPN/VXLAN Networks

**Tech Note** 

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## Introduction

This document focuses on how traffic is load balanced in an EVPN/VXLAN network using QFX Series devices.

An EVPN/VXLAN network consists of a physical underlay layer and the logical overlay layer. This document illustrates how traffic is load balanced at both layers using QFX10000 Series switches, which use Juniper's custom PE chip, and QFX5100/QFX5110 switches, which use Broadcom Trident2/Trident2+ chips. It also highlights the differences between these platforms when it comes to selecting next hops, and how these differences affect the platforms' load-balancing capabilities. Traffic scenarios that will be covered include:

- Intra-VNI traffic using EVPN type-2 routes
- Inter-VNI traffic using EVPN type-2 routes
- Inter-VNI traffic using EVPN type-5 routes

For more information on VXLAN network identifiers (VNIs), see <u>Understanding EVPN with VXLAN Data Plane</u> <u>Encapsulation</u>. For more information on EVPN route types, see <u>Understanding EVPN Pure Route Type-5 on QFX Series</u> <u>Switches</u>.

## Topologies

The topologies used to demonstrate traffic flows using EVPN type-2 and type-5 routes are shown in Figures 1 and 2.







Figure 2: Topology for traffic flows using EVPN type-5 routes

## **Technology Overview**

Before getting into some load balancing scenarios, it is important to understand some key concepts.

## **Underlay Network**

In an EVPN/VXLAN environment, the underlay network is the fabric that provides physical connectivity between all the devices in the network. Also known as a Clos network, the underlay typically uses a leaf-spine design with Layer 3 routing providing reachability between the devices. The goal of this network is to provide any-to-any connectivity between all devices, as well as to provide inter-device reachability for the signaling protocols used in the overlay network.

In this document, EBGP is used in the underlay network, with each device having its own ASN. No IGP is required. An example of this setup is shown in Figure 3.



Figure 3: Leaf-spine design; ASNs assigned per device

## Load Balancing in the Underlay

To ensure packets are load balanced in the underlay, the multipath multiple-as parameter must be added on all devices, since by default only prefixes advertised by neighbors in the same AS are considered. The full configuration statement is as follows:

set protocols bgp group underlay multipath multiple-as

A load balancing policy must also be defined and applied to the forwarding table, as follows:

```
set policy-options policy-statement LB then load-balance per-packet
set routing-options forwarding-table export LB
```

## **Overlay Network**

Network overlays are created by encapsulating traffic and tunneling it over a physical network. A number of tunneling protocols can be used in the data center to create network overlays—the most common protocol is Virtual Extensible LAN (VXLAN). The VXLAN tunneling protocol encapsulates Layer 2 Ethernet frames in Layer 3 UDP packets to enable virtual Layer 2 subnets or segments that can span the underlying (physical) Layer 3 network.

In a VXLAN overlay network, each Layer 2 subnet or segment is uniquely identified by a virtual network identifier (VNI). A VNI enables segmenting of traffic the same way that a VLAN ID segments traffic. As is the case with VLANs, endpoints with the same VNI can communicate directly with each other, whereas endpoints on different VNIs require a router, or gateway.

The entity that performs VXLAN encapsulation and decapsulation is called a VXLAN tunnel endpoint (VTEP). VTEPs typically reside in hypervisor hosts, such as ESXi or KVM hosts, but can also reside in network devices to support baremetal server (BMS) endpoints. Each VTEP is typically assigned a unique IP address.

Though VXLANs can be manually provisioned, typically a signaling protocol is used. Ethernet VPN (EVPN) is a standardsbased protocol that provides virtual multipoint bridged connectivity between different domains over an IP or IP/MPLS backbone network. This control-plane technology uses Multiprotocol BGP (MP-BGP) for MAC and IP address (endpoint) distribution, with MAC addresses being treated as "routes." As used in data center environments, EVPN enables devices acting as VTEPs to exchange reachability information with each other about their endpoints.

In this document, MP-IBGP peering is used, with the EVPN protocol family (family evpn) enabled. When using a 'centralized routing' model, i.e. Layer 3 gateways on the spine devices and Layer 2 gateways on the leaf devices, MP-IBGP sessions are established between all nodes; when using the 'distributed routing', i.e. a collapsed Layer 2 / Layer 3 gateway on the leaf devices, MP-IBGP sessions are needed only between leaf devices. Route reflection can be used to reduce the number of peering sessions.

## Why is Load Balancing Needed in the Overlay?

Server multihoming to redundant top-of-rack devices is a common requirement in data centers. Traditionally, this requirement required proprietary solutions such as multichassis link aggregation (MLAG), multichassis link aggregation groups (MC-LAGs), Virtual Chassis Port (VCP), switch stacking, and Virtual Chassis. While each solution has its merits, each requires use of a single vendor's devices. And from a technical standpoint, when using MLAG/MC-LAG multihoming is limited to two PE devices.

The standards-based EVPN protocol, on the other hand, includes built-in multihoming capabilities, scales horizontally across any number of PE devices, and seamlessly integrates into multivendor, Layer 3 Clos fabrics.

## **ESIs and Multihoming**

In Figure 4, H2 is multihomed via a standard LAG to both LS2 and LS3 in the same Layer 2 domain. On these leaf switches, this common Layer 2 domain takes the form of an Ethernet segment (ES), with a common Ethernet Segment Identifier (ESI) assigned. Both LS2 and LS3 advertise direct reachability to this segment via a Type1 route to LS1.



\_\_\_\_\_\_

#### Figure 4: ESI advertisement via EVPN Type 1 route

Type 1 routes do not advertise MAC addresses for endpoints learned on this ESI. For MAC reachability, a Type 2 route is required. For the moment, let's assume that LS2 and LS3 have both learned H2's MAC address.



Figure 5: EVPN Type 2 advertisement with associated ESI

With multiple paths established, LS1 will load balance traffic destined to H2 through the VXLAN tunnels to both LS2 and LS3, as shown in Figure 6.



Figure 6: Multipathing from LS1 to H2 via LS2 and LS3

## Aliasing

A problem arises, however, when only one of LS2 and LS3 has learned H2's MAC address, as shown in Figure 7.



#### Figure 7: Multipathing failure from LS1 to H2 via LS2 and LS3

The solution to this problem is aliasing. Aliasing is the ability of a remote leaf switch (in this case LS1) to load balance Layer 2 unicast traffic towards a given end endpoint (H2) through all leaf switches connected to the endpoint's Ethernet segment (LS2 and LS3), even when the remote leaf switch has not received an endpoint MAC address advertisement from all those leaf switches.

With aliasing, the multihoming issue in Figure 7 is overcome, as shown in Figure 8.



LS1 knows that since both LS2 and LS3 have advertised the same ESI, H2 must be reachable via both leaf switches. LS1 can load-balance traffic to host H2 over both tunnels.

#### Figure 8: Multipathing from LS1 to H2 via LS2 and LS3, with aliasing

## Load Balancing: Underlay vs. Overlay

As discussed above, a set of leaf switches multihomed to a local end host will each advertise reachability for that host, resulting in the remote leaf switch(es) learning multiple paths to reach the end host. There are multiple load-balancing considerations here. In order to reach a particular (i.e. single) remote VTEP, traffic can flow through multiple paths via different spine nodes; this is taken care of using standard load balancing in the underlay. However, using all the available paths (i.e. all the remote VTEPs) to the end host in an active-active manner requires using load-balancing capabilities in the overlay context.

The rest of this document focuses on how load balancing can be achieved in the overlay, and identifies some of the differences in load balancing capabilities across QFX Series platforms.

## Load Balancing Scenarios

## Scenario 1a: Intra-VNI traffic using EVPN Type-2 routes – multiple flows to same DMAC

#### Topology

- Layer 3 gateway at spine layer (QFX10000)
- Layer 2 gateway at leaf layer (QFX5100 / QFX5110)



#### **Traffic Flow**

• Sending 50 flows from H3 (10.10.10.110) to H1 (10.10.10.10)

Traffic details:

- SMAC: 00:10:94:00:00:23
- DMAC: 00:10:94:00:00:24
- SIP: 10.10.10.110
- DIP: 10.10.10.10
- SPORT: 1024-1074
- DPORT: 50000 50050

#### Operation

QFX5110-1 has received H1's MAC address via either QFX5100-1 or QFX5100-2. As discussed earlier, due to aliasing, QFX5110-1 knows that it can reach H1's MAC address via both QFX5100-1 and QFX5100-2, even though only one of them sent the Type 2 advertisement.

The QFX5100/QFX5110 can only install VTEP next hops in the PFE; it cannot install ESI next hops. This means that, for any given overlay destination, only one remote VTEP can be selected. To send traffic to the selected VTEP, traffic can be load balanced at the underlay layer through the two spine nodes.

Hence, for a given destination MAC address, there is no load balancing of the flows at the overlay layer; traffic is load balanced only in the underlay.

#### Verification

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```
SMAC (H3): 00:10:94:00:00:23
DMAC (H1): 00:10:94:00:00:24
```

Check the MAC table on QFX5110-1 for H3 and H1:

user@5110-1> show et	hernet-switching v	xlan-tunn	el-end-poir	nt esi   fi	ind 1752
00:01:01:01:01:01:01	:01:01:01 default-	switch	175	52 131076	esi.1752
2					
RVTEP-IP	RVTEP-IFL	VENH	MASK-ID	FLAGS	
172.23.0.1	vtep.32772	1753	1	2	
172.24.0.1	vtep.32771	1751	0	2	

The output shows the remote VTEPs and VTEP IFLs related to the ESI.

Check reachability information for the remote VTEPs:

```
user@5110-1> show route forwarding-table destination 172.23.0.1
Routing table: default.inet
Internet:
Enabled protocols: Bridging,
Destination
                  Type RtRef Next hop
                                                Type Index
                                                              NhRef Netif
172.23.0.1/32
                                                ulst 131070
                                                                20
                     user
                             1
                             192.168.90.1
                                                        1740
                                                                 13 et-0/0/49.0
                                                ucst
                             192.168.100.1
                                                ucst
                                                         1741
                                                                13 et-0/0/50.0
```

```
user@5110-1> show route forwarding-table destination 172.24.0.1
Routing table: default.inet
Internet:
Enabled protocols: Bridging,
Destination
                  Type RtRef Next hop
                                               Type Index
                                                           NhRef Netif
172.24.0.1/32
                                               ulst 131070
                                                               20
                     user
                             1
                             192.168.90.1
                                               ucst
                                                        1740
                                                                13 et-0/0/49.0
                                                        1741 13 et-0/0/50.0
                             192.168.100.1
                                               ucst
```

The output shows ECMP next hops for both remote VTEPs.

Now login to the PFE to see the next hop installed for H1's MAC address:

	Lan Flag	igs ifl	ifl	pfe mas	s ifl
00:00:5e:00:01:01 3 00:10:94:00:00:23 3 00:10:94:00:00:24 3	0 0x0 0 0x0 0 0x0 0 0x0	0014 vtep.32770 814 xe-0/0/46.0 0014 vtep.32771	vtep.32770 xe-0/0/46. vtep.32771	0 0x2 x0 0 0x2 x0 0 0x2	l vtep.32770 l xe-0/0/46.0 l vtep.32771

#### FPC0(5110-1 vty)# show 12 manager mac-table

Then verify the remote VTEP's IP address:

```
user@5110-1> show interfaces vtep.32771 | match endpoint
VXLAN Endpoint Type: Remote, VXLAN Endpoint Address: 172.24.0.1, L2 Routing Instance:
default-switch, L3 Routing Instance: default
```

The output shows that the device has installed the VTEP next hop, and not the ESI next hop. For H1's MAC address, the VTEP installed is 172.24.0.1.

## Scenario 1b: Intra-VNI traffic using EVPN Type-2 routes – multiple flows to multiple DMACs

#### **Topology (same as Scenario 1a)**

- Layer 3 gateway at spine layer (QFX10000)
- Layer 2 gateway at leaf layer (QFX5100 / QFX5110)



#### **Traffic Flow**

- Sending 50 flows from H3 (10.10.10.110) to H1 (10.10.10.10)
- Sending 50 flows from H4 (10.10.10.115) to H2 (10.10.10.15)

H3 to H1 traffic details:

- SMAC: 00:10:94:00:00:23
- DMAC: 00:10:94:00:00:24
- SIP: 10.10.10.110
- DIP: 10.10.10.10
- SPORT: 1024-1074
- DPORT:50000 50050

H4 to H2 traffic details:

- SMAC: 00:10:94:00:00:c2
- DMAC: 00:10:94:00:00:c1
- SIP: 10.10.10.115
- DIP: 10.10.10.15
- SPORT: 1024-1074
- DPORT:50000 50050

#### Operation

Similar to scenario 1a, QFX5110-1 has received H2's MAC address via either QFX5100-1 or QFX5100-2. As discussed earlier, due to aliasing, QFX5110-1 knows that it can reach H2's MAC address via QFX5100-1 and QFX5100-2, even though only one of them sent the Type 2 advertisement.

The QFX5100/QFX5110 can only install VTEP next hops in the PFE and cannot install ESI next hops. This means that, for any given destination in overlay, only one remote VTEP can be selected. To send traffic to the selected VTEP, traffic can be load balanced at the underlay layer through the two spine nodes.

Hence, for a given destination MAC address, there is no load balancing of the flows at the overlay layer; traffic is load balanced only in the underlay.

In this scenario, traffic flows to multiple destination MAC addresses. The PFE still installs only one remote VTEP next hop, however the kernel programs the PFE such a way that it will alternate between the remote VTEPs that are installed, resulting in a certain amount of load balancing at the overlay layer.

In this case, the first 50 flows are sent through QFX5100-2, while the second 50 flows are sent through QFX5100-1.

#### Verification

The outputs below focus only on the traffic from H4 (10.10.10.115) to H2 (10.10.10.15). Details for the H3-to-H1 traffic flows are shown in Scenario 1a.

SMAC (H4): 00:10:94:00:00:c2 DMAC (H2): 00:10:94:00:00:c1

Check the MAC table on QFX5110-1 for H4 and H2:

```
user@5110-1> show ethernet-switching vxlan-tunnel-end-point esi | find 1752
00:01:01:01:01:01:01:01:01 default-switch
                                                      1752 131076 esi.1752
2
    RVTEP-IP
                        RVTEP-IFL
                                        VENH
                                                 MASK-ID
                                                           FLAGS
    172.23.0.1
                         vtep.32772
                                        1753
                                                            2
                                                 1
    172.24.0.1
                         vtep.32771
                                         1751
                                                  0
                                                            2
```

The output shows the remote VTEPs and VTEP IFLs related to the ESI.

Now login to the PFE to see the next hop installed for H2's MAC address:

```
FPC0(5110-1 vty) # show 12 manager mac-table
```

•••	•								
mad	c address	BD Index	learn vlan	Entry Flags	entry ifl	hal ifl	hard pfe	ware i mask	nfo ifl
(	0:10:94:00:00:c1	3	0	0x0014	vtep.32772	vtep.32772	0	0x1	vtep.32772
(	00:10:94:00:00:c2	3	0	0x0814	xe-0/0/46.0	xe-0/0/46.0	0 C	0x1	xe-0/0/46.0

Then verify the remote VTEP's IP address:

```
user@5110-1> show interfaces vtep.32772 | match endpoint
VXLAN Endpoint Type: Remote, VXLAN Endpoint Address: 172.23.0.1, L2 Routing Instance:
default-switch, L3 Routing Instance: default
```

The output shows that the device has installed the VTEP next hop, and not the ESI next hop. For H2's MAC address, the VTEP installed is 172.23.0.1.

## Scenario 2: Inter-VNI traffic using EVPN Type-2 routes

#### Topology

- Layer 3 gateway at spine layer (QFX10000)
- Layer 2 gateway at leaf layer (QFX5100 / QFX5110)



#### **Traffic Flow**

• Sending 50 flows from H3 (10.10.10.110) to H5 (172.16.0.5)

Traffic details:

- SMAC: 00:10:94:00:00:23
- DMAC: 00:00:5e:00:01:01 (DMAC of anycast gateway)
- SIP: 10.10.10.110
- DIP: 172.16.0.5
- SPORT: 1024-1074
- DPORT:50000 50050

#### Operation

In this scenario, traffic flows between subnets, therefore it needs to be routed at the spine layer. The packet's DMAC is that of the default gateway, which is on the spine devices. Since anycast gateway (GW) functionality is used, the GW MAC address is advertised with an associated ESI.

QFX5110-1 receives the anycast GW MAC address via either QFX10000-1 or QFX10000-2. Due to aliasing, QFX5110-1 knows that it can reach the GW MAC address via QFX10000-1 and QFX10000-2, even though only one of them sent the Type 2 advertisement.

As discussed in Scenario 1, QFX5110-1 can only install VTEP next hops in the PFE, it cannot install ESI next hops. For inter-VNI traffic, the DMAC is always set to the anycast GW MAC, hence it will always select only one GW.

Once traffic reaches one of the QFX10000 devices, it performs the routing (from VNI 10 to VNI 30 in this case). The destination in VNI 30, i.e. H5, is reachable through both QFX5100-1 and QFX5100-2.

This is where load-balancing behavior differs between QFX10000 Series switches and QFX5100/QFX5110 switches: the QFX10000 will actually install the ESI next hop in the PFE. Therefore, it can load balance flows to a particular destination MAC address across the remote VTEP on QFX5100-1 *and* the remote VTEP on QFX5100-2.

#### Verification

Check the MAC table on QFX5110-1 for the anycast GW MAC address:

{master:0}							
user@5110-1> show eth	ernet-switching v	xlan-tunn	el-end-p	point	esi		
ESI	RTT		VLNBH	I INH	ESI-IFL	LOC-IFL	
#RVTEPs							
05:00:00:00:00:00:00:	00:0a:00 default-	switch		1744	131081	esi.1744	
2							
RVTEP-IP	RVTEP-IFL	VENH	MASK-	ID H	FLAGS		
172.22.0.1	vtep.32770	1750	1		2		
172.21.0.1	vtep.32769	1742	0		2		

The output shows the remote VTEPs and VTEP IFLs related to the ESI.

Now login to the PFE to see the next hop installed for the GW MAC address:

FPCO(5110-1 vty)# show 12 manager mac-table
...
mac address BD learn Entry entry hal hardware info
Index vlan Flags ifl ifl pfe mask ifl

00:00:5e:00:01:01 3 0 0x0014 vtep.32770 vtep.32770 0 0x1 vtep.32770

Then verify the remote VTEP's IP address:

```
{master:0}
user@5110-1> show interfaces vtep.32770 | match endpoint
        VXLAN Endpoint Type: Remote, VXLAN Endpoint Address: 172.22.0.1, L2 Routing Instance:
default-switch, L3 Routing Instance: default
```

The output shows that the device has installed the VTEP next hop, and not the ESI next hop. In this scenario, the VTEP installed is 172.22.0.1, which is on QFX10000-2.

Once the traffic reaches QFX10000-2, a lookup is performed to learn the MAC address of H5 (00:10:94:00:00:C0):

```
{master:0}
user@10000-2> show ethernet-switching table | match :c0
bd30 00:10:94:00:00:c0 DR esi.1825
00:01:01:01:01:01:01:01:01
```

```
{master:0}
user@10000-2> show ethernet-switching vxlan-tunnel-end-point esi
ESI
                              RTT
                                                       VLNBH INH
                                                                               LOC-IFL
                                                                     ESI-IFL
#RVTEPs
00:01:01:01:01:01:01:01:01 default-switch
                                                       1825 2097155 esi.1825
2
                                                 MASK-ID
    RVTEP-IP
                        RVTEP-IFL
                                        VENH
                                                           FLAGS
    172.23.0.1
                         vtep.32771
                                        1826
                                                  1
                                                            2
    172.24.0.1
                         vtep.32769
                                         1824
                                                  0
                                                            2
```

The output shows the remote VTEPs and VTEP IFLs related to the ESI.

Now login to the PFE to see the next hop installed for H5's MAC address:

FPC0(10000-2 vty) # show 12 manager mac-table

	BD	learn	Entry	entry	hal	haro	dware	info	
mac address	Index	vlan	Flags	ifl	ifl	pfe	mas	k ifl	
00:10:94:00:00:c0	11	0	0x0014	esi.1825	esi.1825	0	0x1	esi.1825	

Since the next hop is an ESI, traffic will be load balanced across both QFX5100-1 and QFX5100-2.

## Scenario 3: Inter-VNI traffic using EVPN Type-5 routes

#### Topology

- QFX10000s act as collapsed Layer 2 / Layer 3 gateways
- Reachability is advertised using Type 5 messages



#### **Traffic Flow**

• Sending 50 flows from H2 (192.168.210.10) to H1 (192.168.200.10)

#### Operation

QFX10000-5 receives the 192.168.200.0/24 prefix in a Type 5 route from both QFX10000-3 and QFX10000-4. QFX10000-5 sends all traffic flows to only one destination VTEP. In order to load balance traffic across both remote VTEPs, the multipath parameter must be added to the VRF's routing options, as follows:

set routing-instances VRF-1 routing-options multipath

#### Verification

Before enabling multipath on QFX10000-5:

{master:0}

```
user@10000-5> show evpn ip-prefix-database prefix 192.168.200.0/24
L3 context: VRF-1
EVPN->IPv4 Imported Prefixes
Prefix
                                              Etaq
192.168.200.0/24
                                                 0
  Route distinguisher
                         VNI/Label Router MAC
                                                       Nexthop/Overlay GW/ESI
  172.25.0.10:10
                         5555
                                    ec:3e:f7:87:dc:5a 172.25.0.1
  172.28.0.10:10
                         5555
                                    80:ac:ac:2e:75:c8 172.28.0.1
{master:0}
user@10000-5> show route forwarding-table | match 192.168.200.0
192.168.200.0/24
                      user
                               0
                                                              1831
                                                                       2
                                                     comp
```

The output shows a single composite next hop type for the prefix in the Packet Forwarding Engine, indicating that the device is selecting only one of the two available next hops.

After enabling multipath on QFX10000-5:

With multipath enabled, the output now shows the unilist next hop type for the prefix with two next hops, indicating that ECMP is taking place.

## References

Juniper Networks EVPN Implementation for Next-Generation Data Center Architectures

Configuring EVPN Type 5 for QFX10000 Series Switches

Understanding EVPN Pure Route Type-5 on QFX Series Switches

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