

Distributed Systems

Principles and Paradigms

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Chapter 05: Naming

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Naming Entities

- Names, identifiers, and addresses
- Name resolution
- Name space implementation

Naming

Essence

Names are used to denote entities in a distributed system. To operate on an entity, we need to access it at an **access point**. Access points are entities that are named by means of an **address**.

Note

A **location-independent** name for an entity E , is independent from the addresses of the access points offered by E .

Identifiers

Pure name

A name that has no meaning at all; it is just a random string. Pure names can be used for comparison only.

Identifier

A name having the following properties:

- **P1:** Each identifier refers to at most one entity
- **P2:** Each entity is referred to by at most one identifier
- **P3:** An identifier always refers to the same entity (prohibits reusing an identifier)

Observation

An identifier need not necessarily be a pure name, i.e., it may have content.

Flat naming

Problem


Given an essentially **unstructured name** (e.g., an identifier), how can we locate its associated **access point**?

- Simple solutions (broadcasting)
- Home-based approaches
- Distributed Hash Tables (structured P2P)
- Hierarchical location service

Simple solutions

Broadcasting

Broadcast the ID, requesting the entity to return its current address.

- 
- Can never scale beyond local-area networks
 - Requires all processes to listen to incoming location requests

Forwarding pointers

When an entity moves, it leaves behind a pointer to next location

- Dereferencing can be made entirely transparent to clients by simply following the chain of pointers
- Update a client's reference when present location is found
- Geographical scalability problems (for which separate chain reduction mechanisms are needed):
 - Long chains are not fault tolerant
 - Increased network latency at dereferencing

Simple solutions

Broadcasting

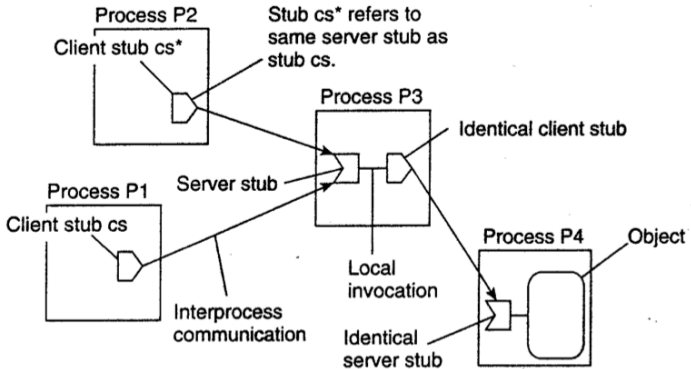
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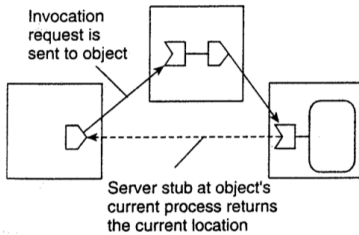
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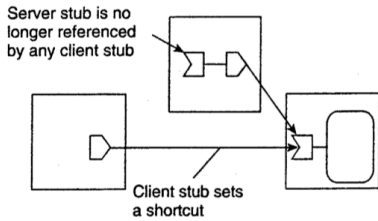
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(a)



(b)

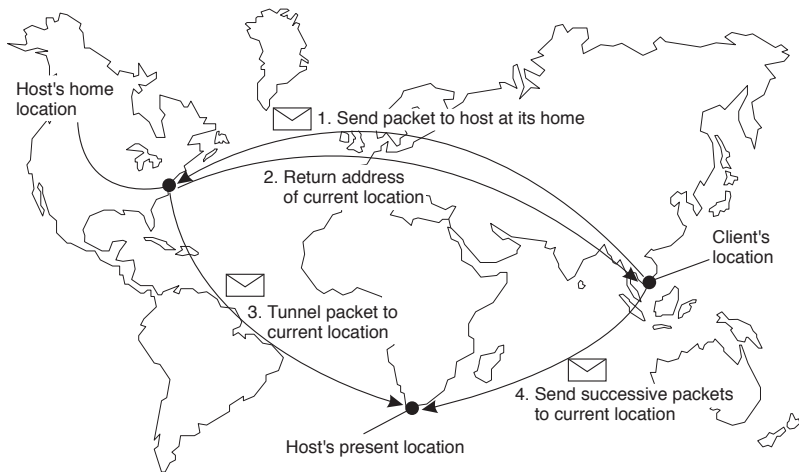
Home-based approaches

Single-tiered scheme

Let a **home** keep track of where the entity is:

- Entity's **home address** registered at a naming service
- The home registers the **foreign address** of the entity
- Client contacts the home first, and then continues with foreign location

Home-based approaches



Home-based approaches

Two-tiered scheme

Keep track of **visiting** entities:

- Check local visitor register first
- Fall back to home location if local lookup fails

Problems with home-based approaches

- Home address has to be supported for entity's lifetime
- Home address is fixed \Rightarrow unnecessary burden when the entity permanently moves
- Poor geographical scalability (entity may be next to client)

Question

How can we solve the “permanent move” problem?

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Distributed Hash Tables (DHT)

Chord

Consider the organization of many nodes into a **logical ring**

- Each node is assigned a random m -bit **identifier**.
- Every entity is assigned a unique m -bit **key**.
- Entity with key k falls under jurisdiction of node with smallest $id \geq k$ (called its **successor**).

Nonsolution

Let node id keep track of $succ(id)$ and start linear search along the ring.

DHTs: Finger tables

Principle

- Each node p maintains a **finger table** $FT_p[]$ with at most m entries:

$$FT_p[i] = \text{succ}(p + 2^{i-1})$$

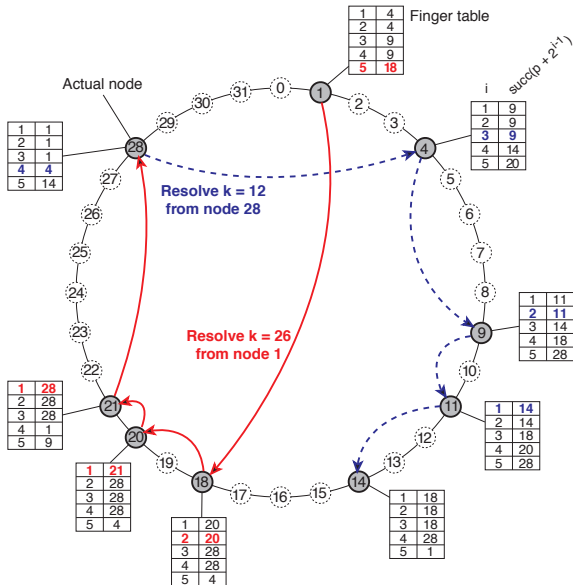
Note: $FT_p[i]$ points to the first node succeeding p by at least 2^{i-1} .

- To look up a key k , node p forwards the request to node with index j satisfying

$$q = FT_p[j] \leq k < FT_p[j+1]$$

- If $p < k < FT_p[1]$, the request is also forwarded to $FT_p[1]$

DHTs: Finger tables



Exploiting network proximity

Problem

The logical organization of nodes in the overlay may lead to **erratic message transfers** in the underlying Internet: node k and node $\text{succ}(k + 1)$ may be very far apart.

Topology-aware node assignment: When assigning an ID to a node, make sure that nodes close in the ID space are also close in the network. **Can be very difficult.**

Proximity routing: Maintain more than one possible successor, and forward to the closest.

Example: in Chord $FT_p[i]$ points to first node in $INT = [p + 2^{i-1}, p + 2^i - 1]$. Node p can also store pointers to other nodes in INT .

Proximity neighbor selection: When there is a choice of selecting who your neighbor will be (not in Chord), pick the closest one.

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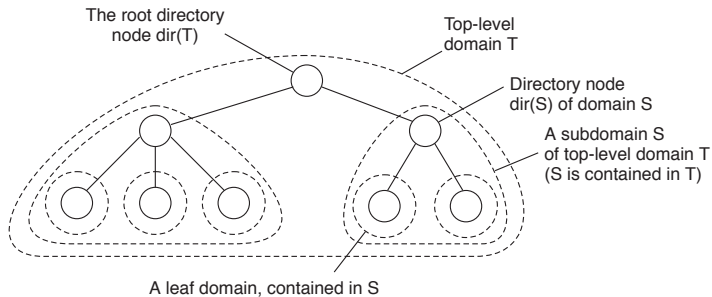
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Hierarchical Location Services (HLS)

Basic idea

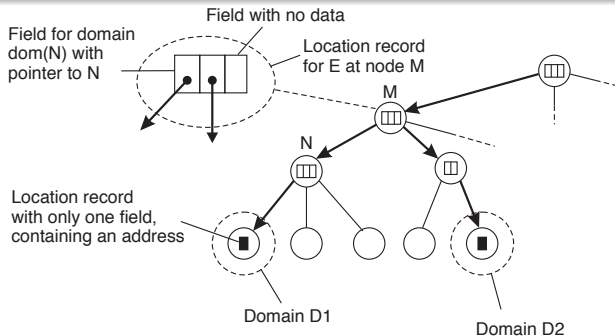
Build a large-scale search tree for which the underlying network is divided into hierarchical domains. Each domain is represented by a separate directory node.



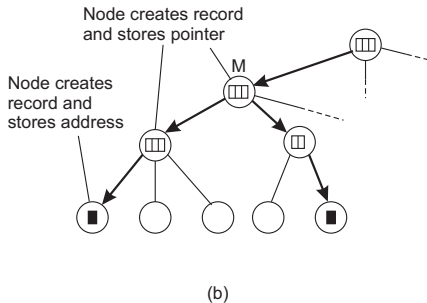
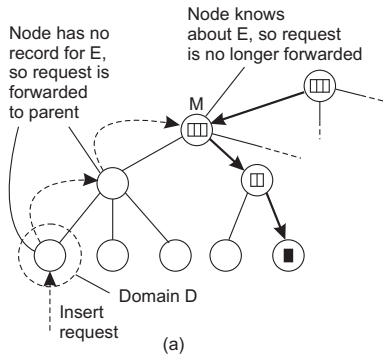
HLS: Tree organization

Invariants

- Address of entity E is stored in a leaf or intermediate node
- Intermediate nodes contain a pointer to a child iff the subtree rooted at the child stores an address of the entity
- The root knows about all entities



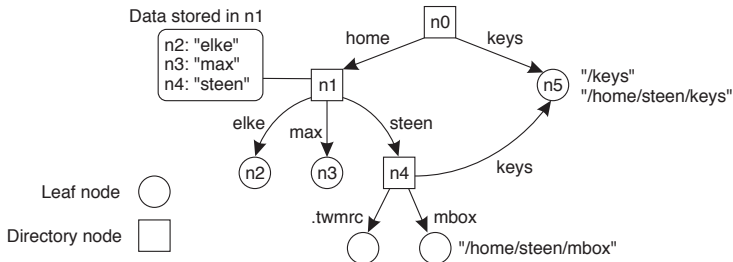
HLS: Insert operation



Name space

Essence

A graph in which a **leaf node** represents a (named) entity. A **directory node** is an entity that refers to other nodes.



Note

A directory node contains a (directory) table of (*edge label*, *node identifier*) pairs.

Name space

Observation

We can easily store all kinds of **attributes** in a node, describing aspects of the entity the node represents:

- Type of the entity
- An identifier for that entity
- Address of the entity's location
- Nicknames
- ...

Note

Directory nodes can also have attributes, besides just storing a directory table with *(edge label, node identifier)* pairs.

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Name resolution

Problem

To resolve a name we need a directory node. How do we actually find that (initial) node?

Closure mechanism

The mechanism to select the implicit context from which to start name resolution:

- *www.cs.vu.nl*: start at a DNS name server
- */home/steen/mbox*: start at the local NFS file server (possible recursive search)
- *0031204447784*: dial a phone number
- *130.37.24.8*: route to the VU's Web server

Question

Why are closure mechanisms always **implicit**?

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Name linking

Hard link

What we have described so far as a **path name**: a name that is resolved by following a specific path in a naming graph from one node to another.

Name linking

Soft link

Allow a node O to contain a **name** of another node:

- First resolve O 's name (leading to O)
- Read the content of O , yielding *name*
- Name resolution continues with *name*

Observations

- The name resolution process determines that we read the **content** of a node, in particular, the name in the other node that we need to go to.
- One way or the other, we know where and how to start name resolution given *name*

Name linking

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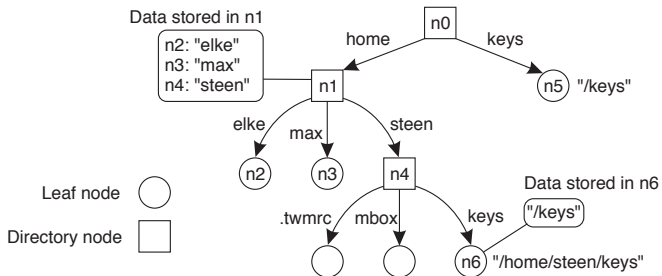
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Name linking



Observation

Node *n5* has only one name

Name-space implementation

Basic issue

Distribute the name resolution process as well as name space management across multiple machines, by distributing nodes of the naming graph.

Distinguish three levels

- Global level: Consists of the high-level directory nodes. Main aspect is that these directory nodes have to be jointly managed by different administrations
- Administrational level: Contains mid-level directory nodes that can be grouped in such a way that each group can be assigned to a separate administration.
- Managerial level: Consists of low-level directory nodes within a single administration. Main issue is effectively mapping directory nodes to local name servers.

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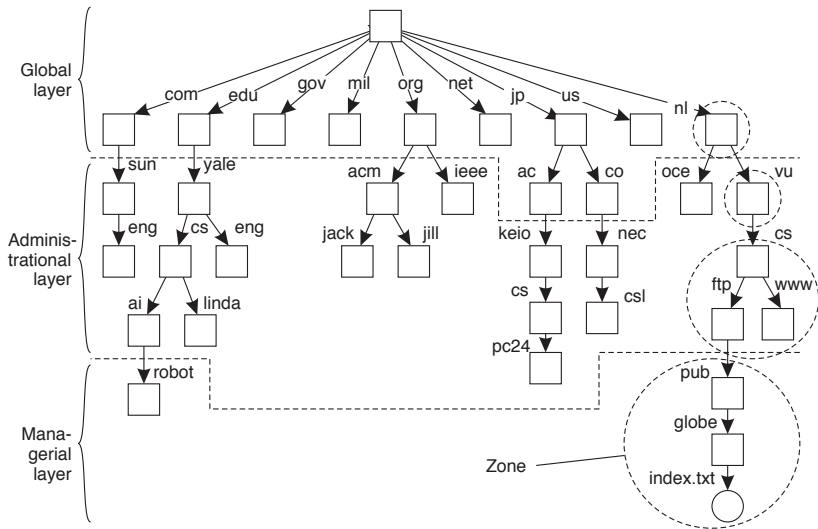
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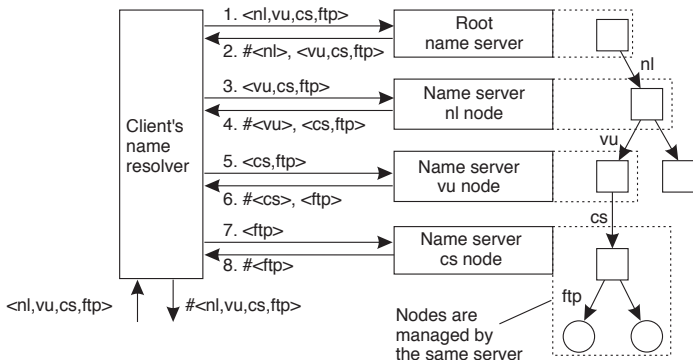


Name-space implementation

Item	Global	Administrational	Managerial
1	Worldwide	Organization	Department
2	Few	Many	Vast numbers
3	Seconds	Milliseconds	Immediate
4	Lazy	Immediate	Immediate
5	Many	None or few	None
6	Yes	Yes	Sometimes
1: Geographical scale 2: # Nodes 3: Responsiveness		4: Update propagation 5: # Replicas 6: Client-side caching?	

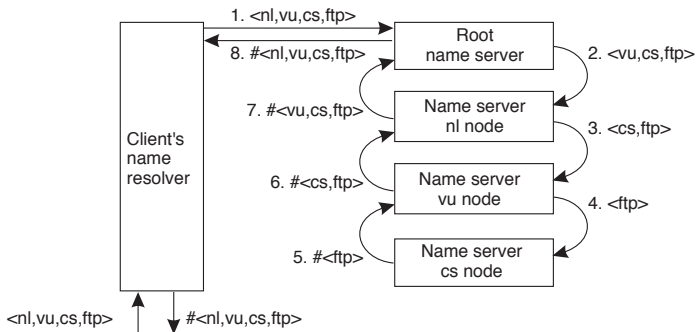
Iterative name resolution

- 1 $resolve(dir, [name_1, \dots, name_K])$ sent to $Server_0$ responsible for dir
- 2 $Server_0$ resolves $resolve(dir, name_1) \rightarrow dir_1$, returning the identification (address) of $Server_1$, which stores dir_1 .
- 3 Client sends $resolve(dir_1, [name_2, \dots, name_K])$ to $Server_1$, etc.



Recursive name resolution

- 1 $resolve(dir, [name_1, \dots, name_K])$ sent to *Server0* responsible for *dir*
- 2 *Server0* resolves $resolve(dir, name_1) \rightarrow dir_1$, and sends $resolve(dir_1, [name_2, \dots, name_K])$ to *Server1*, which stores *dir1*.
- 3 *Server0* waits for result from *Server1*, and returns it to client.



Caching in recursive name resolution

Server for node	Should resolve	Looks up	Passes to child	Receives and caches	Returns to requester
cs	<ftp>	#<ftp>	—	—	#<ftp>
vu	<cs,ftp>	#<cs>	<ftp>	#<ftp>	#<cs> #<cs, ftp>
nl	<vu,cs,ftp>	#<vu>	<cs,ftp>	#<cs> #<cs,ftp>	#<vu> #<vu,cs> #<vu,cs,ftp>
root	<nl,vu,cs,ftp>	#<nl>	<vu,cs,ftp>	#<vu> #<vu,cs> #<vu,cs,ftp>	#<nl> #<nl,vu> #<nl,vu,cs> #<nl,vu,cs,ftp>

Scalability issues

Size scalability

We need to ensure that servers can handle a large number of requests per time unit \Rightarrow high-level servers are in big trouble.

Solution

Assume (at least at global and administrative level) that content of nodes hardly ever changes. We can then apply extensive replication by mapping nodes to multiple servers, and start name resolution at the nearest server.

Observation

An important attribute of many nodes is the **address** where the represented entity can be contacted. Replicating nodes makes large-scale traditional name servers unsuitable for locating mobile entities.

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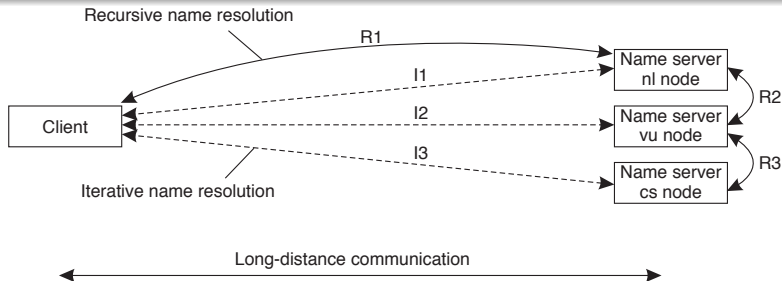
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Scalability issues

Geographical scalability

We need to ensure that the name resolution process scales across large geographical distances.



Problem

By mapping nodes to servers that can be located anywhere, we introduce an implicit location dependency.

Example: Decentralized DNS

Basic idea

Take a full DNS name, hash into a key k , and use a DHT-based system to allow for key lookups. **Main drawback:** You can't ask for all nodes in a subdomain (but very few people were doing this anyway).

Information in a node

SOA	Zone	Holds info on the represented zone
A	Host	IP addr. of host this node represents
MX	Domain	Mail server to handle mail for this node
SRV	Domain	Server handling a specific service
NS	Zone	Name server for the represented zone
CNAME	Node	Symbolic link
PTR	Host	Canonical name of a host
HINFO	Host	Info on this host
TXT	Any kind	Any info considered useful

DNS on Pastry

Pastry

DHT-based system that works with **prefixes** of keys. Consider a system in which keys come from a 4-digit number space. A node with ID 3210 keeps track of the following nodes

n_k	prefix of $ID(n_k)$	n_k	prefix of $ID(n_k)$
n_0	0	n_1	1
n_2	2	n_{30}	30
n_{31}	31	n_{33}	33
n_{320}	320	n_{322}	322
n_{323}	323		

Note

Node 3210 is responsible for handling keys with prefix 321. If it receives a request for key 3012, it will forward the request to node n_{30} . For **DNS**: A node responsible for key k stores DNS records of names with hash value k .

Replication of records

Definition

Replicated at level i – record is replicated to all nodes with i matching prefixes. **Note:** # hops for looking up record at level i is generally i .

Observation

Let x_i denote the fraction of most popular DNS names of which the records should be replicated at level i , then:

$$x_i = \left[\frac{d^i(\log N - C)}{1 + d + \dots + d^{\log N - 1}} \right]^{1/(1-\alpha)}$$

with N is the total number of nodes, $d = b^{(1-\alpha)/\alpha}$ and $\alpha \approx 1$, assuming that popularity follows a **Zipf distribution**:

The frequency of the n -th ranked item is proportional to $1/n^\alpha$

Replication of records

Meaning

If you want to reach an average of $C = 1$ hops when looking up a DNS record, then with $b = 4$, $\alpha = 0.9$, $N = 10,000$ and $1,000,000$ records that

- 61 most popular records should be replicated at level 0
- 284 next most popular records at level 1
- 1323 next most popular records at level 2
- 6177 next most popular records at level 3
- 28826 next most popular records at level 4
- 134505 next most popular records at level 5
- the rest should not be replicated

Attribute-based naming

Observation

In many cases, it is much more convenient to name, and look up entities by means of their **attributes** \Rightarrow traditional **directory services** (aka **yellow pages**).

Problem

Lookup operations can be extremely expensive, as they require to match **requested attribute values**, against **actual attribute values** \Rightarrow inspect **all entities** (in principle).

Solution

Implement basic directory service as database, and combine with traditional structured naming system.

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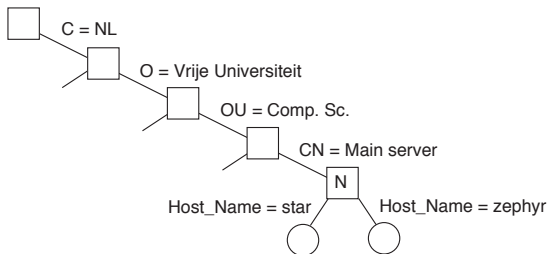
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Example: LDAP



Attribute	Value
Country	NL
Locality	Amsterdam
Organization	Vrije Universiteit
OrganizationalUnit	Comp. Sc.
CommonName	Main server
Host_Name	star
Host_Address	192.31.231.42

Attribute	Value
Country	NL
Locality	Amsterdam
Organization	Vrije Universiteit
OrganizationalUnit	Comp. Sc.
CommonName	Main server
Host_Name	zephyr
Host_Address	137.37.20.10

```

answer =
search("&(C = NL) (O = Vrije Universiteit) (OU = *) (CN = Main server)")
  
```