

Chapter 21

Configure Time

This chapter discusses the following topics related to configuring time:

Set the Time Zone on page 213

Configure the Network Time Protocol on page 214

For more information about configuring time, see “Set the Current Date and Time” on page 71.

Set the Time Zone

The default local time zone on the router is UTC (Universal Coordinated Time, formerly known as Greenwich Mean Time). To modify the local time zone, include the `time-zone` statement at the `[edit system]` hierarchy level:

```
[edit system]
time-zone time-zone;
```

You specify the *time-zone* using the continent/country/zone primary name. For the time zone change to take effect for all processes running on the router, you must reboot the router.

For information about setting the time on the router, see “Set the Current Date and Time” on page 71.

Examples: Set the Time Zone

Set the time zone for New York:

```
[edit]
user@host# set system time-zone America/New_York
[edit]
user@host# show
system {
    time-zone America/New_York;
}
```

Set the time zone for Pacific Time:

```
[edit]
user@host# set system time-zone America/Los_Angeles
[edit]
user@host# show
system {
    time-zone America/Los_Angeles;
}
```

For information about what time zones are available, see “time-zone” on page 255.

Configure the Network Time Protocol

The Network Time Protocol (NTP) provides the mechanisms to synchronize time and coordinate time distribution in a large, diverse network. NTP uses a returnable-time design in which a distributed subnet of time servers operating in a self-organizing, hierarchical master-slave configuration synchronizes local clocks within the subnet and to national time standards by means of wire or radio. The servers also can redistribute reference time using local routing algorithms and time daemons.

NTP is defined in the following document:

RFC 1305, *Network Time Protocol (Version 3) Specification, Implementation*

To configure NTP on the router, include the `ntp` statement at the [edit system] hierarchy level:

```
[edit system]
ntp {
    authentication-key number type type value password;
    boot-server address;
    broadcast <address> <key key-number> <version value> <ttl value>;
    broadcast-client;
    multicast-client <address>;
    peer address <key key-number> <version value> <prefer>;
    server address <key key-number> <version value> <prefer>;
    trusted-key [ key-numbers ];
}
```

To configure NTP properties, you can do one of more of the following:

Configure the NTP Boot Server on page 215

Configure the NTP Time Server and Time Services on page 215

Configure NTP Authentication Keys on page 217

Configure the Router to Listen for Broadcast Messages on page 217

Configure the Router to Listen for Multicast Messages on page 218

When configuring NTP, you do not actively configure time servers. Rather, all clients also are servers. An NTP server is not believed unless it, in turn, is synchronized to another NTP server—which itself must be synchronized to something upstream, eventually terminating in a high-precision clock. On the local router, you set the date and time using the `set date` command. To set the time automatically, use the `boot-server` statement at the [edit system ntp] hierarchy level, specifying the address of an NTP server.

Configure the NTP Boot Server

When you boot the router, it issues an `ntpdate` request, which polls a network server to determine the local date and time. You need to configure a server that the router uses to determine the time when the router boots. Otherwise, NTP will not be able to synchronize to a time server if the server's time appears to be very far off of the local router's time.

To configure the NTP boot server, include the `boot-server` statement at the [edit system ntp] hierarchy level:

```
[edit system ntp]
boot-server address;
```

Specify the address of the network server. You must specify an address, not a hostname.

Configure the NTP Time Server and Time Services

When configuring NTP, you can specify which system on the network is the authoritative time source, or time server, and how time is synchronized between systems on the network. To do this, you configure the router to operate in one of the following modes:

Client mode—In this mode, the local router can be synchronized to the remote system, but the remote system can never be synchronized to the local router.

Symmetric active mode—In this mode, the local router and the remote system can synchronize each other. You use this mode in a network in which either the local router or the remote system might be a better source of time.



Note

Symmetric active mode can be initiated by either the local or remote system. Only one system needs to be configured to do so. This means that the local system can synchronize to any system that offers symmetric active mode without any configuration whatsoever. However, we strongly encourage you to configure authentication to ensure that the local system synchronizes only to known time servers.

Broadcast mode—In this mode, the local router sends periodic broadcast messages to a client population at the specified broadcast or multicast *address*. Normally, you include this statement only when the local router is operating as a transmitter.

The following sections describe how to configure these modes of operation:

Configure the Router to Operate in Client Mode on page 216

Configure the Router to Operate in Symmetric Active Mode on page 216

Configure the Router to Operate in Broadcast Mode on page 216

Configure the Router to Operate in Client Mode

To configure the local router to operate in client mode, include the server statement at the [edit system ntp] hierarchy level:

```
[edit system ntp]
  server address <key key-number> <version value> <prefer>;
```

Specify the address of the system acting as the time server. You must specify an address, not a hostname.

To include an authentication key in all messages sent to the time server, include the key option. The key corresponds to the key number you specify in the authentication-key statement as described in “Configure NTP Authentication Keys” on page 217.

By default, the router sends NTP version 3 packets to the time server. To set the NTP version level to 1 or 2, include the version option.

If you configure more than one time server, you can mark one server as being preferred by including the prefer option.

Configure the Router to Operate in Symmetric Active Mode

To configure the local router to operate in symmetric active mode, include the peer statement at the [edit system ntp] hierarchy level:

```
[edit system ntp]
  peer address <key key-number> <version value> <prefer>;
```

Specify the address of the remote system. You must specify an address, not a hostname.

To include an authentication key in all messages sent to the remote system, include the key option. The key corresponds to the key number you specify in the authentication-key statement as described in “Configure NTP Authentication Keys” on page 217.

By default, the router sends NTP version 3 packets to the remote system. To set the NTP version level to 1 or 2, include the version option.

If you configure more than one remote system, you can mark one system as being preferred by including the prefer option:

```
peer address <key key-number> <version value> <prefer>;
```

Configure the Router to Operate in Broadcast Mode

To configure the local router to operate in broadcast mode, include the broadcast statement at the [edit system ntp] hierarchy level:

```
[edit system ntp]
  broadcast address <key key-number> <version value> <ttl value>;
```

Specify the broadcast address on one of the local networks or a multicast address assigned to NTP. You must specify an address, not a hostname. Currently, the multicast address must be 224.0.1.1.

To include an authentication key in all messages sent to the remote system, include the key option. The key corresponds to the key number you specify in the authentication-key statement as described in “Configure NTP Authentication Keys” on page 217.

By default, the router sends NTP version 3 packets to the remote system. To set the NTP version level to 1 or 2, include the version option.

Configure NTP Authentication Keys

Time synchronization can be authenticated to ensure that the local router obtains its time services only from known sources. By default, network time synchronization is unauthenticated. The system will synchronize to whatever system appears to have the highest quality time. We strongly encourage you to configure authentication of network time services.

To authenticate other time servers, include the trusted-key statement at the [edit system ntp] hierarchy level. Only time servers transmitting network time packets that contain one of the specified key numbers and whose key matches the value configured for that key number are eligible to be synchronized to. Other systems can synchronize to the local router without being authenticated.

```
[edit system ntp]
trusted-key [ key-numbers ];
```

Each key can be any 32-bit unsigned integer except 0. Include the key option in the peer, server, or broadcast statements to transmit the specified authentication key when transmitting packets. The key is necessary if the remote system has authentication enabled so that it can synchronize to the local system.

To define the authentication keys, include the authentication-key statement at the [edit system ntp] hierarchy level:

```
[edit system ntp]
authentication-key key-number type type value password;
```

number is the key number, *type* is the authentication type (either MD5 or DES), and *password* is the password for this key. The key number, type, and password must match on all systems using that particular key for authentication.

Configure the Router to Listen for Broadcast Messages

When you are using NTP, you can configure the local router to listen for broadcast messages on the local network to discover other servers on the same subnet by including the broadcast-client statement at the [edit system ntp] hierarchy level:

```
[edit system ntp]
broadcast-client;
```

When the router hears a broadcast message for the first time, it measures the nominal network delay using a brief client-server exchange with the remote server. Then, it enters *broadcast client* mode, in which it listens for, and synchronizes to, succeeding broadcast messages.

To avoid accidental or malicious disruption in this mode, both the local and remote systems must use authentication and the same trusted key and key identifier.

Configure the Router to Listen for Multicast Messages

When you are using NTP, you can configure the local router to listen for multicast messages on the local network to discover other servers on the same subnet by including the `multicast-client` statement at the `[edit system ntp]` hierarchy level:

```
[edit system ntp]
multicast-client <address>;
```

When the router hears a multicast message for the first time, it measures the nominal network delay using a brief client-server exchange with the remote server. Then, it enters *multicast client* mode, in which it listens for, and synchronizes to, succeeding multicast messages.

You can specify one or more IP addresses. (You must specify an address, not a hostname.) If you do, the route joins those multicast groups. If you do not specify any addresses, the software uses 224.0.1.1.

To avoid accidental or malicious disruption in this mode, both the local and remote systems must use authentication and the same trusted key and key identifier.