

Men are from TCP and Women are from UDP

Shôn Ellerton, August 15, 2026

Men are from Mars and women are from Venus, but what are they in terms of the technological world of the Internet?



Alright! This piece is a little techy, geeky and like, totally, nerdy!

Because. I like computers, technology, and all that stuff. Except, of course, when technology is being used unnecessarily for the sake of being novel or used in a 'Big Brother' sort of way!

This is all about trying to teach the layman one of the most important aspects of the Internet and how it can be related to how men and women communicate.

So, let's be technical for just a second!

There are several layers on what makes up how we get a webpage to our screens.

And, wow! What a magnificent journey it is!

Think of it this way.

When you build a road.

You've got to start at the first layer, the natural soil.

The second layer, coarse gravel.

The third layer, crushed stone.

The fourth layer, asphalt mix.

And of course, the top layer, the asphalt.

You get the picture.

In the Internet world, I'll skip some of the layers.

On the bottom you've got the cabling which could be things like ethernet or fibre cables, or even the airwaves.

The second, the unique addresses for each machine called MAC addresses, which have names like 00:D8:61:67:AE:9E.

Then you have those pesky IP addresses like 192.168.1.1 and 8.8.8.8 and so on.

After that, you've got the transport layer with wonderful acronyms like TCP and UDP, then after that, you've got a bunch of other layers, but the top layer is what you see on the screen itself. You know, all that HTML stuff which *no one* in their right minds builds from scratch anymore.

But it's the transport layer I'll discuss how men and women are so similar to each other depending whether you use one called TCP or the other, UDP.

Basically, everything we send on our Internet relies on sending little packets of information. So, if I send a picture to you, all that info is gathered together into little packets like if someone sends you a lot of post giving you a little piece of the picture in each letter.

It needs to be put in order, and knowing our unreliable the Post Office is, you'll never know if you get the packets in sequence, so we put a lot of other bits of data into it like sequence numbers and stuff like that. And, ultimately, by the time you receive it, it's all put together again in the right order because you have the correct sequence numbers.

Let's say you had to relocate an ancient cathedral because it sits on an eroding cliff or in the way of progress in the form of a new railway or something like that. Imagine, forgetting to number the stones of this ancient cathedral, and then, after taking it apart, you don't know how to put it together again.

That wouldn't go down very well, would it?

This is what TCP does. It means *Transmission Control Protocol*. And this is how men talk!

There's no room for error here!

Every packet is verified and put in order and in sequence.

Nothing is lost.

So, here's a real life example.

Take a foreman instructing his crane operator to lift a heavy piece of machinery hundreds of feet to be positioned on top of a building.

Foreman: 'You're all clear and ready to go. Are you ready? Over'

Crane Operator: 'Yes sir. Over.'

Foreman: 'Attach Bundle 8 in Yard 2 and await for further instructions. Over'

Crane Operator: 'Roger that. Over'

After some time

Crane Operator: 'Bundle 8 ready for lift. Over'

Foreman: 'Proceed lift and position over Deck 42'

...Anyway, you get the gist.

As you can see, there's a lot of short bits of communication but it's clear and concise. There's little in the way for scope of error here. It's just too important.

This is why TCP is crucial for maintaining our data is intact. Can you imagine losing little chunks out of a Word document or, more importantly, something like a database or a text file containing code?

Sure, it's a little slow, because, if you take the analogy above, you have to keep switching off and on the radio time to transmit every broadcast or packet of information.

This is how men tend to communicate in practice.

Women?

Totally different!

They are the *other* transport protocol known as the UDP, or the *User Datagram Protocol*.

Taking the analogy above, let's convert it to UDP context.

Foreman (or should I say *Forewoman*?):

‘Hi David, up there in the crane. I know you’re just about to go to lunch and all that, but I’d like you to do something for me. Can you do something for me? What I’d like you to do shouldn’t be too hard for you because I know you’re really good at this, but could you, perhaps, move your crane thing over there and look for this big piece of machinery? I think it’s over there in that yard, but... Oh, I see, you can’t see me pointing to it can you? Silly me! Hang on, I’ll ask this nice chappie where it is. Oh yes. I forgot, it’s in a place called Yard 2, and the name of the piece of machinery is a Mitsubishi Model something or another A/C unit which, by the looks of it has a strap around it with a number on it, and it says, 6, no wait! It says 8! Now, could you bring your thingy over here and lift it up to the top of that deck over there. The deck with those two guys in orange are standing. And...’

Crane Operator: ‘Hang on! Hang on! You mean move the machinery denoted Bundle 8 in Yard 2 to Deck 42?’

Forewoman: ‘Uh! I Guess. Yes. That would be terrific, if you could do that now, that would be very nice. But let me know if the weather’s going to cause trouble because if it is, we’ll have to change our plans. But, I’ll leave it up to your capable hands because you know the limitations of that great big crane of yours. And, just for your information, I’d like to suggest that....’

Crane Operator: ‘Um! Time out! Am I to proceed with the lift?’

Forewoman: ‘Yes! Isn’t that what I’ve been saying all the time? Haven’t you been listening?’

You see, UDP is ideal for video and audio stuff because it doesn’t really matter if you lose a little bit of info. You might get some pixelation on the video or a bit of a stutter on the audio, but does it really make a difference?

You just keep flooding out the information not really caring if the person or machine at the other end can keep up with it or not. One just hopes that the receiver has taken in as much information as possible.

Basically, with UDP, you can keep spewing up loads of information, some of it, if lost, won’t make much difference.

It’s so true.

Yes. Men are from Mars and women are from Venus.

So, likewise, in our modern world of Internet technology.

Men are from TCP, and women are from UDP!