## Load Balancing Using PCC & RouterOS





#### **About Me**

- RouterOS by Example
- Steve Discher, from College Station, Texas, USA
- Class of '87 Texas A&M University
- Using MikroTik since early 2004 when I started my first WISP
- Author of the book "RouterOS by Example"
- MikroTik Certified Trainer and teach RouterOS classes,
   MyWISPTraining.com
- Operate a wireless distribution company, <u>ISPSupplies.com</u>









## 2. Which method should I pick and how does it work?





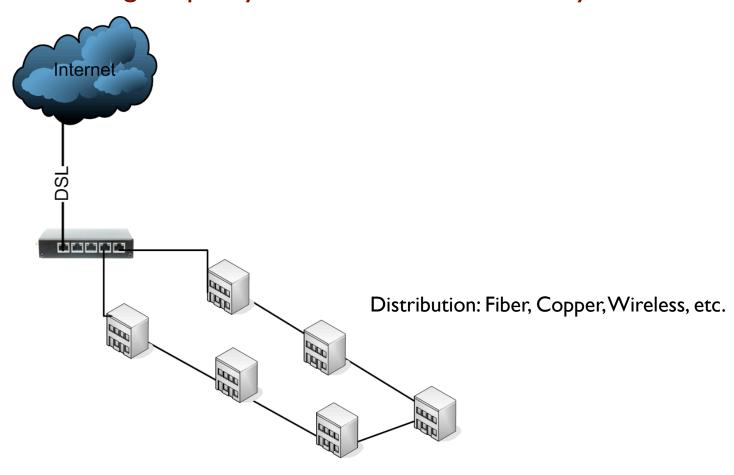
## 3. Ok, I want it but how do I set it up?





#### Typical Scenario Requiring Load Balancing

Problem: No high capacity circuits available, DSL only



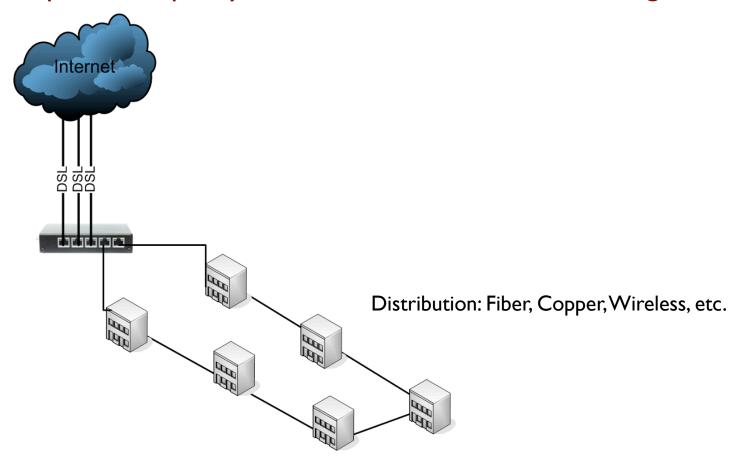
Hotel, Apartments, etc.





#### Typical Scenario Requiring Load Balancing

Solution: Multiple low capacity circuits, RouterOS load balancing



Hotel, Apartments, etc.









• Process to utilize multiple internet connections in such a manner as to proportionately distribute internet traffic across all the connections.





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- Distribution may be symmetrical or asymmetrical depending on circuit availability.
- Useful when the downstream bandwidth requirement to a single routing device exceeds the capabilities of a single internet circuit.









#### Load Balancing in General

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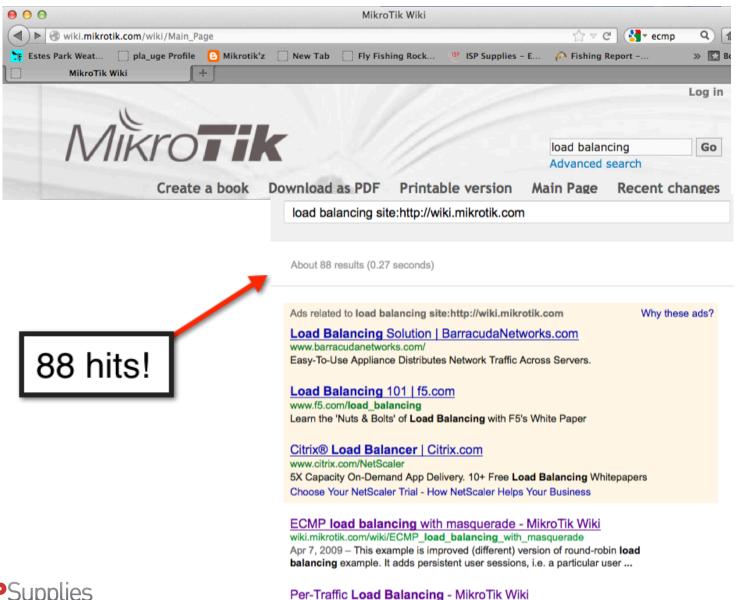


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- Bonding, MLPP, etc. require that the protocol be recognized on both the subscriber and provider ends. Not available with commodity internet connections.
- Can't simply bridge two DSL or Cable modem connections, doesn't work.
- There are several methods to provide load balancing in RouterOS.





#### **Example**











**Load Balancing Options With RouterOS:** 

• **ECMP** - <u>Equal Cost Multi-Path Routing</u>





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  - Per-address pair load balancing





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- MikroTik RouterOS is extremely powerful and configurable, so this can be a double edged sword, several possible solutions to the same problem
- Each has multiple moving pieces
- Greatest success with any solution by understanding the pieces and what they do.





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- 1. Packet The container for our data, header and payload.
- 2. **Connections** "Conduit" through which host to host communication occurs, based on Src/Dst addresses and ports
- 3. **Mangle Facility** Firewall function within RouterOS that allows you to create a mark which is then associated with packets that can be identified later by other functions like firewall rules or routing tables.









4. **PCC** - Per Connection Classifier, function contained with the "Mangle Facility" to sort traffic into streams





- 4. **PCC** Per Connection Classifier, function contained with the "Mangle Facility" to sort traffic into streams
- 5. **Routing Table** Route rules, the rules the router uses to determine what to do with a packet. By comparing the destination address in the packet to the list of routes, the router decides which interface to send the packet out. By adding a routing mark with mangle, we can have multiple routing tables!





#### I.What is a packet?

A packet is like a letter & envelope.

The front is the header and the letter inside the envelope is the payload.





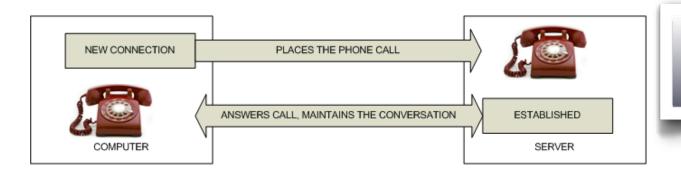


| IPv4 Header                |                                |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Source Address<br>(sender) | Destination Address (receiver) |
| Port                       | Port                           |
| Protocol                   |                                |
|                            |                                |

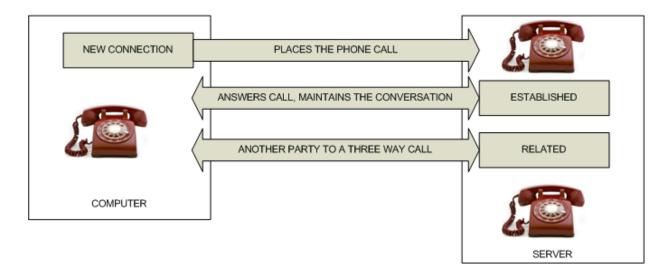




#### 2. What are connections?



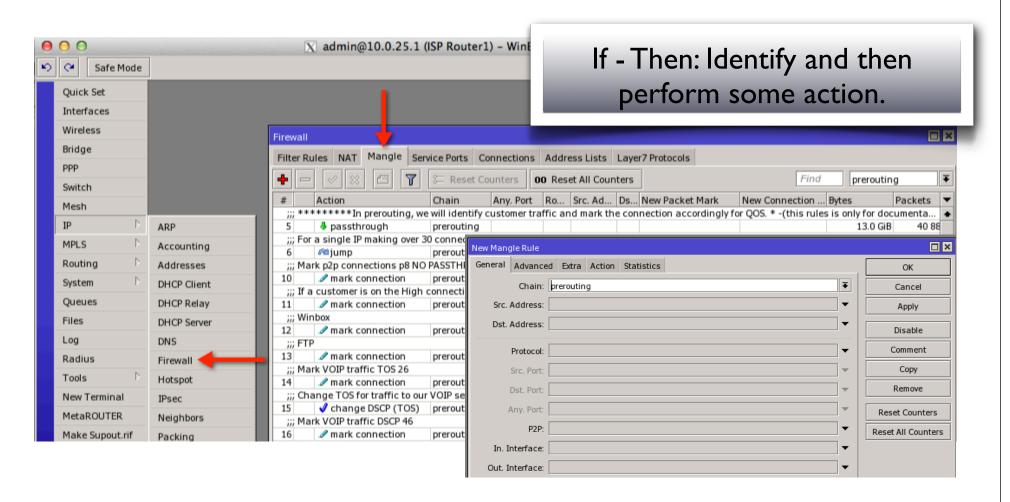
Connections are always in one of three states - new, established, or related.







#### 3. What is the mangle facility?

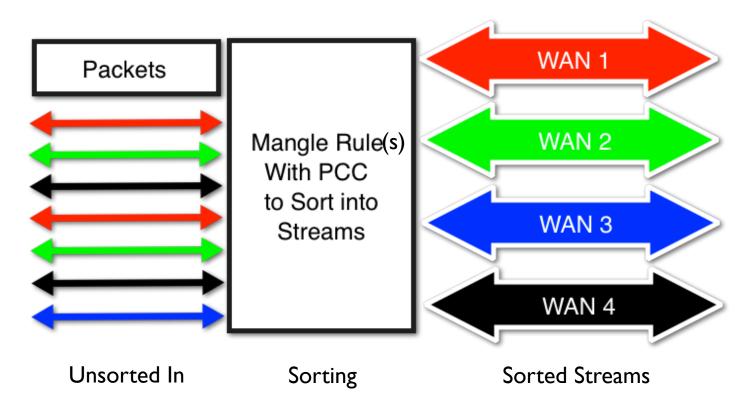






#### 4. What is PCC?

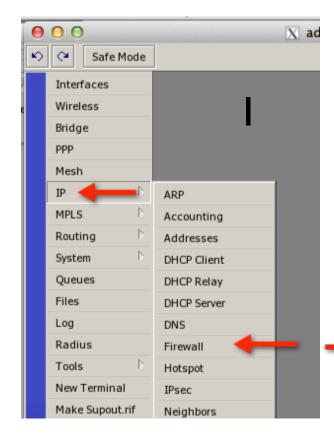
Per Connection Classifier is a mangle option that sorts data into streams that can be marked for identification later.

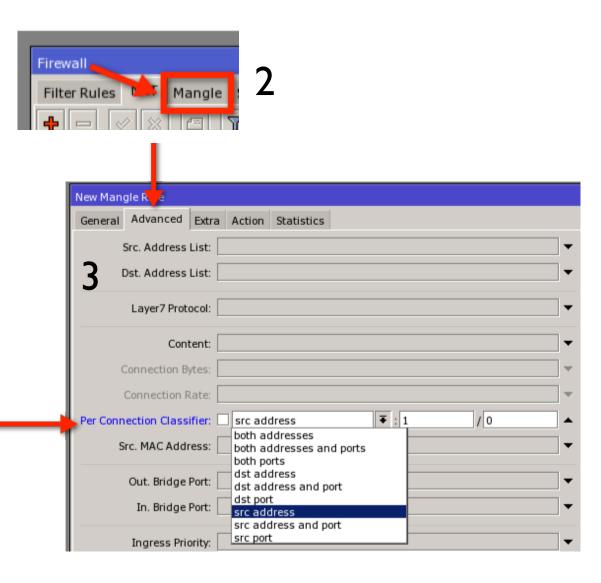






#### Where is it found?



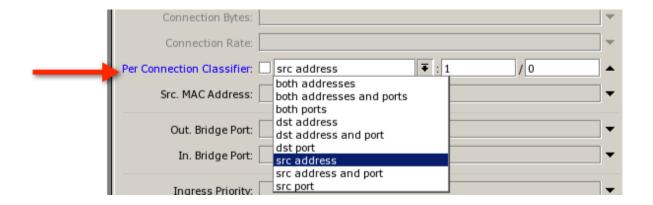






#### How does PCC work?

- •"PCC takes selected fields from IP header, and with the help of a <u>hashing</u> <u>algorithm</u> converts selected fields into 32-bit value.
- •This value then is divided by a <u>Denominator</u> and the <u>Remainder</u> then is compared to a specified <u>Remainder</u>, if equal then packet will be captured.
- •You can choose from src-address, dst-address, src-port, dst-port (or various combinations) from the header to use in this operation."







PCC uses a hashing algorithm.

- A <u>hashing algorithm</u> is a mathematical function that takes an input and returns an output.
- The output will always be the same for a specified input.
- Example of a simple hash:

Input  $\times$  100 = hash value





#### PCC uses modular arithmetic (clock arithmetic).

- Numerators, Denominators and Remainders are parts of modular arithmetic.
- It is represented by a % sign and it is spoken as "mod".
- To work modular math, think of it as "how many are left over (Remainder) after you've subtracted the second value (Denominator) from the first (Numerator) as many times as possible without going negative?"
- Here are some examples of modular math:

```
Numerator = 3 Denominator = 3
```

$$3 \% 3 = 0$$
 because  $3 - 3 = 0$  left over

or

$$4\% 3 = 1$$
 because  $4 - 3 = 1$  left over

$$5 \% 3 = 2 \text{ because } 5 - 3 = 2 \text{ left over}$$

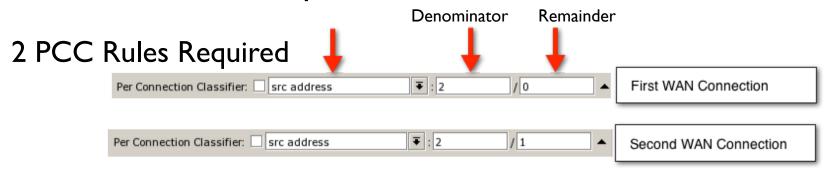
$$6\% 3 = 0$$
, because  $6 - 3 = 3$ , subtract  $3$  again  $= 0$  left over





Modular math helps us understand how to create the PCC rules!

**Example: 2 WAN Connections** 



- The first line means "produce the output of the hash function given the packet's source IP address, divide it by 2 and if the remainder is 0, perform the action of marking the connection as WANI".
- The second line means "produce the output of the hash function given the packet's source IP address, divide it by 2 and if the remainder is I, perform the action of marking the connection as WAN2".





#### How to set PCC, Remember:

2 WAN connections:

2 / 0 First WAN

2 / I Second WAN

3 WAN connections:

3 / 0 First WAN

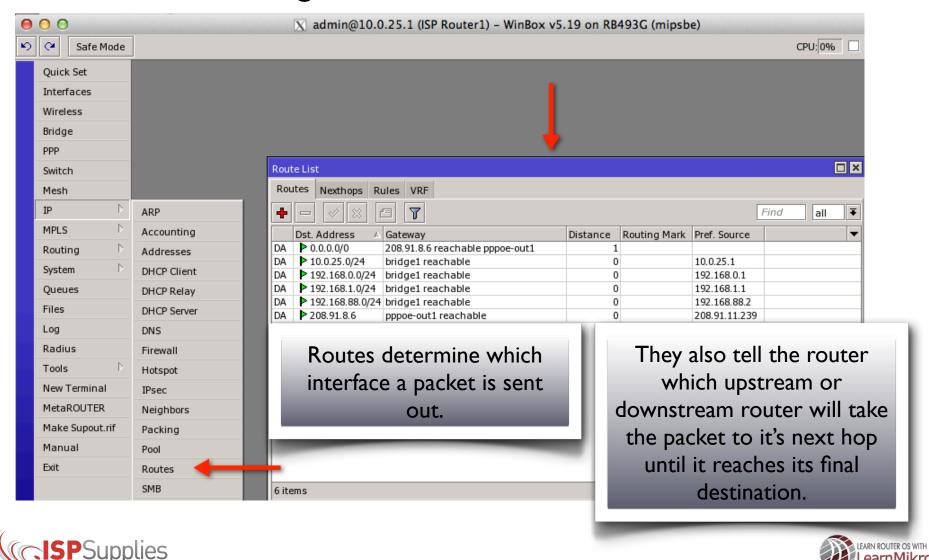
3 / I Second WAN

3 / 2 Third WAN and so on...

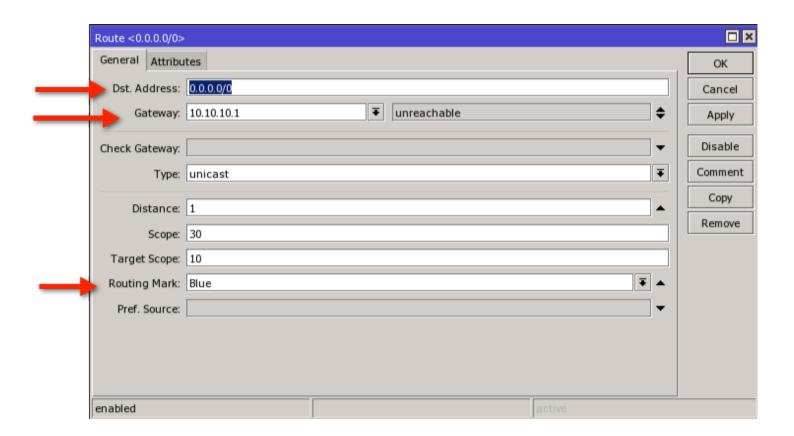




#### 5. What is a routing table?



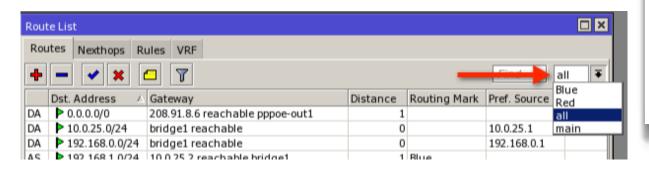
Details of a route, key pieces are destination and gateway.







#### Multiple routing tables with route marks

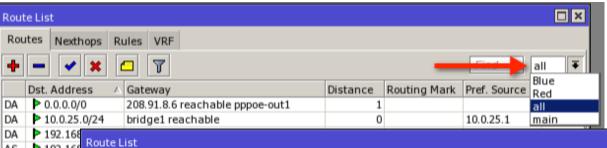


May have multiple routes to same destination network, different gateways in different routing tables!

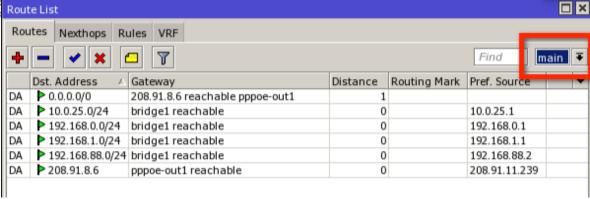




Multiple routing tables with route marks



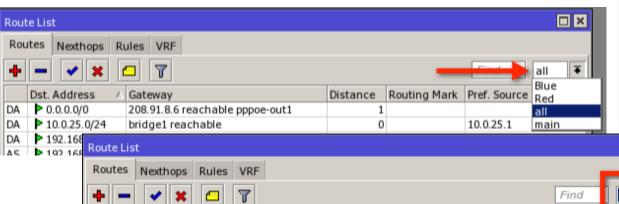
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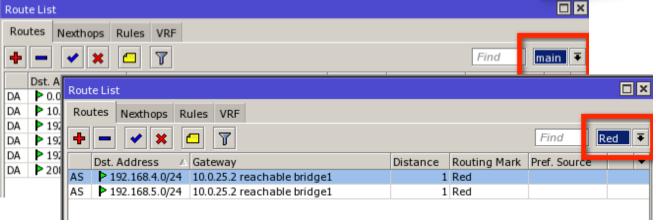




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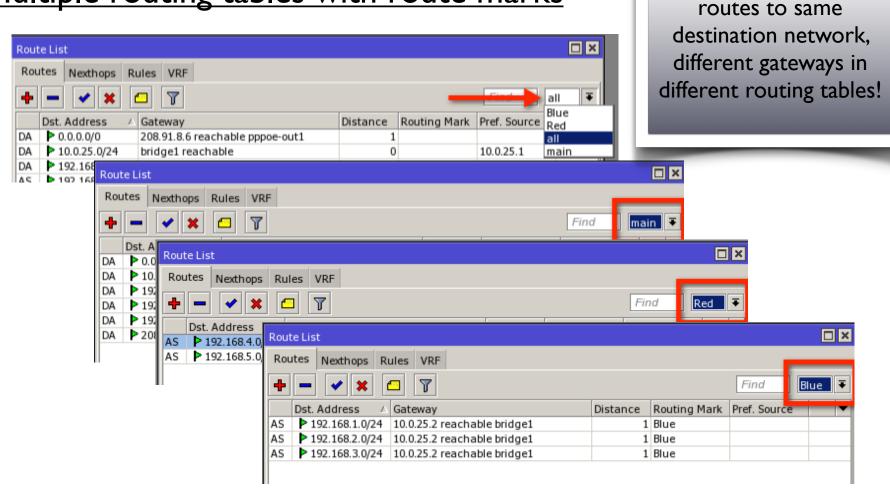
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May have multiple





#### Review:

I. Packet - Container for IP data





- I. Packet Container for IP data
- 2. **Connections** Bi-directional conduit for communication between two hosts





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- 4. PCC Divides data into streams (based on marks)



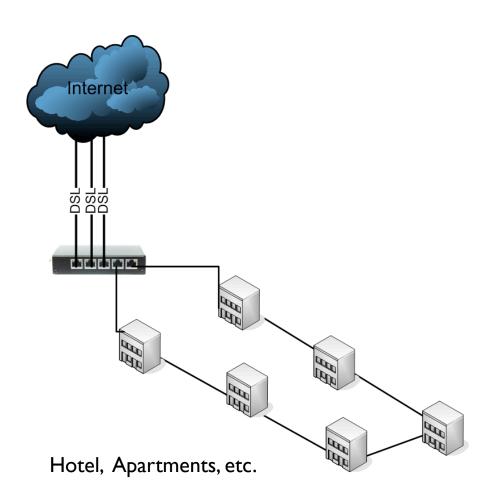


- 1. Packet Container for IP data
- 2. **Connections** Bi-directional conduit for communication between two hosts
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- 4. **PCC** Divides data into streams (based on marks)
- 5. **Routing Table** List of route rules to direct packets and we can have multiple tables based on routing marks





# 3. Ok, I want it but how do I set it up?

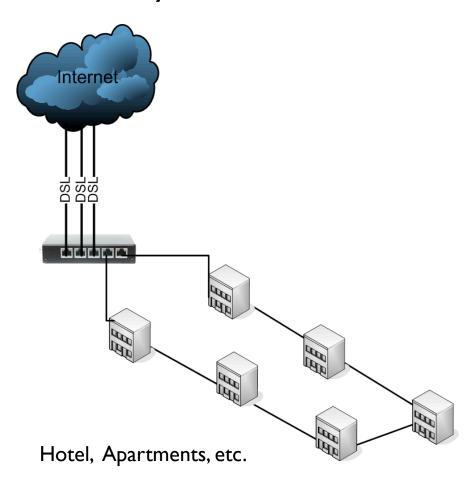






# 3. Ok, I want it but how do I set it up?

Scenario: One router, many clients, three DSL connections

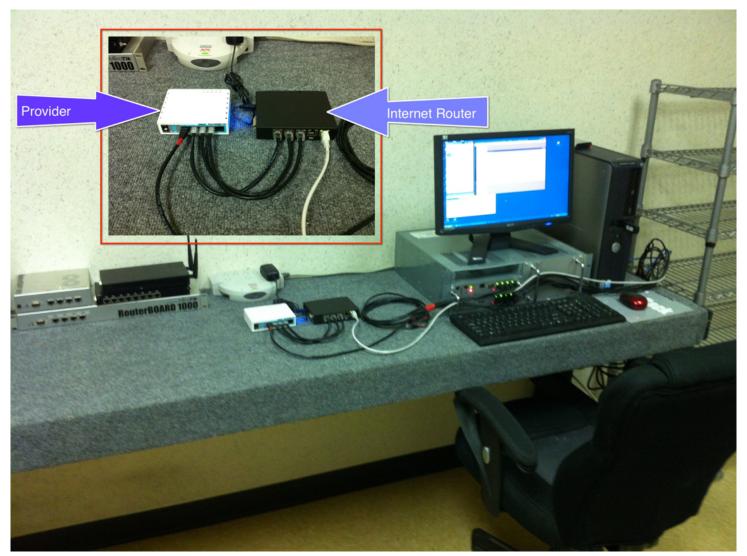






## **Step by Step Configuration**

### Test Setup







### **Step by Step Configuration**

- 1. Set up the basic portion of the network (MTCNA, Wiki, etc):
  - Private IP address on LAN interface
  - DHCP Server on LAN interface
  - DNS server
  - Static IP for WAN or DHCP client on WAN
  - Firewall if required





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- 2. Create load balancing part of the configuration:
  - Mangle rules
  - Routing tables



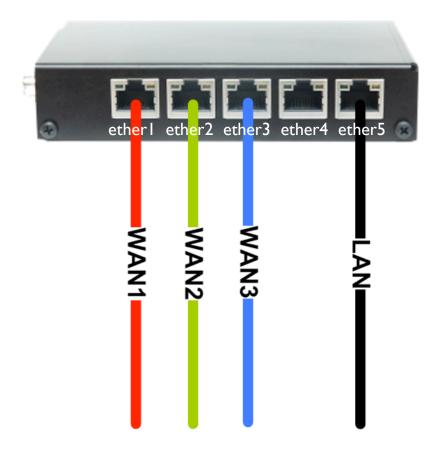


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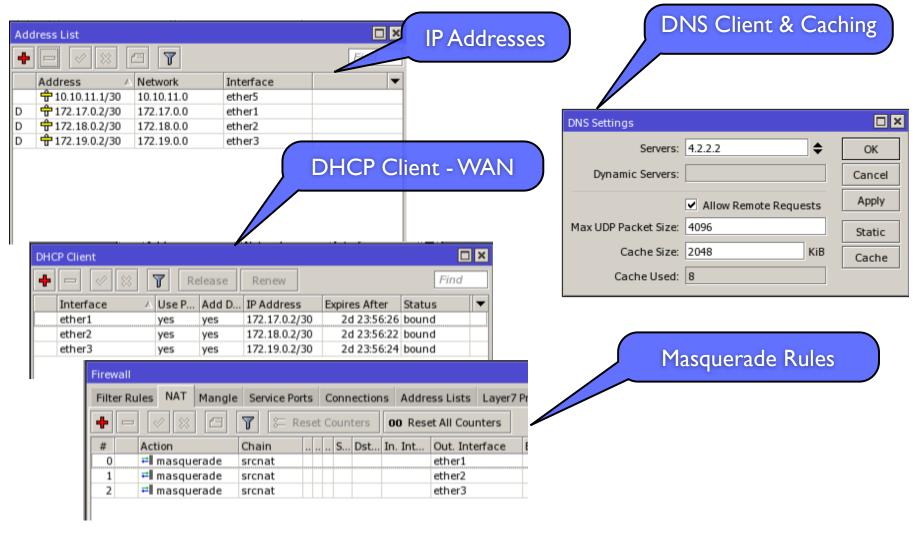
#### Physical interface connections







I. Set up the basic portion of the network (MTCNA, Wiki, etc):







#### 2. Create load balancing part of the configuration:

- Create various mangle rules to mark connections
- Create mangle rules to associate routing marks with packets based on their connection mark.
- Create routes to send traffic out the WAN connections in a predetermined manner.





Step 1: Create some accept rules.

# We have to manually force local traffic to connected networks to stay in the main routing table.

• Background - Any subnet for which the router has an IP address configured is called a connected network, meaning packets to that network are sent out an interface and can reach their destination without using another router to get there.



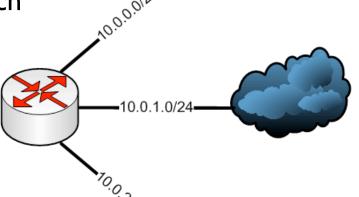


#### Step I continued...

The problem using mangles here is it will force traffic to follow alternate routing tables (not main)

Traffic to these connected networks would go out the WAN interfaces and not reach their intended destinations.

> 10.0.0.1/24 10.0.1.1/24 10.0.2.1/24



**Connected network example** 





Step I continued...

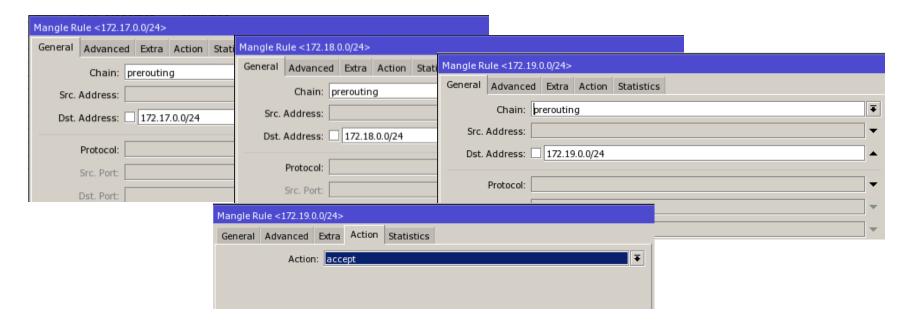
#### Solution:

• The "accept" action causes the packet to leave the mangle chain, thereby not marking it and allowing that traffic to use the main routing table.





#### Step I continued...

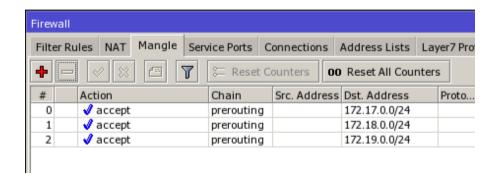


• One rule for each connected network, in this example these are our WAN networks





#### Step I Completed



Create one rule for each connected network (WAN's)

Completed accept mangle rules

```
/ip firewall mangle
add action=accept chain=prerouting disabled=no dst-address=172.17.0.0/24
add action=accept chain=prerouting disabled=no dst-address=172.18.0.0/24
add action=accept chain=prerouting disabled=no dst-address=172.19.0.0/24
```





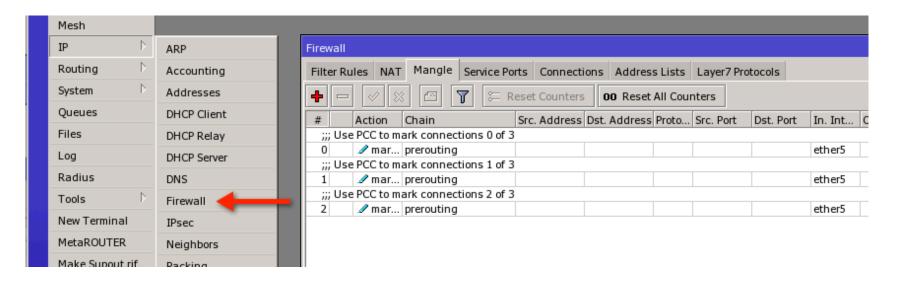
Step 2: Create Mangle rules that will sort the traffic into streams.

#### **Create the PCC mangles:**

- We will use optimal mangle method of marking connections first and then packets because it is the most efficient way to mark traffic, uses least resources.
  - •First identify traffic and mark the connection.
  - •Second, look for that connection mark and mark the routes.

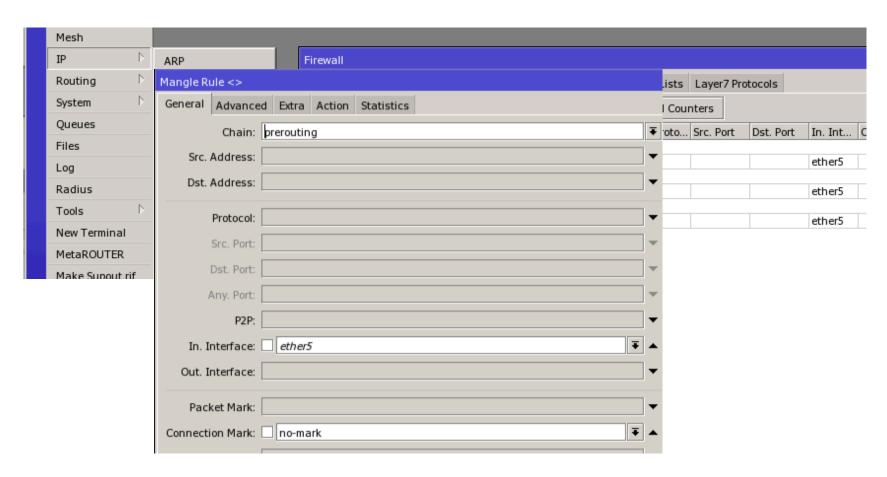






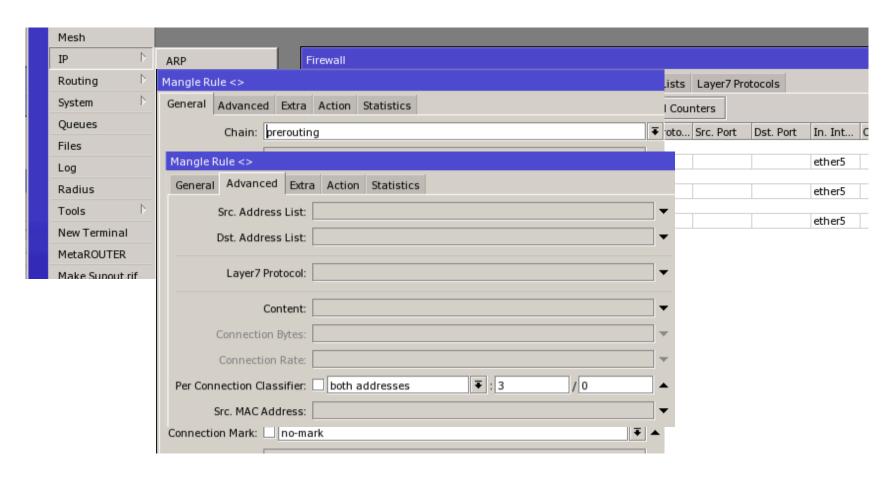






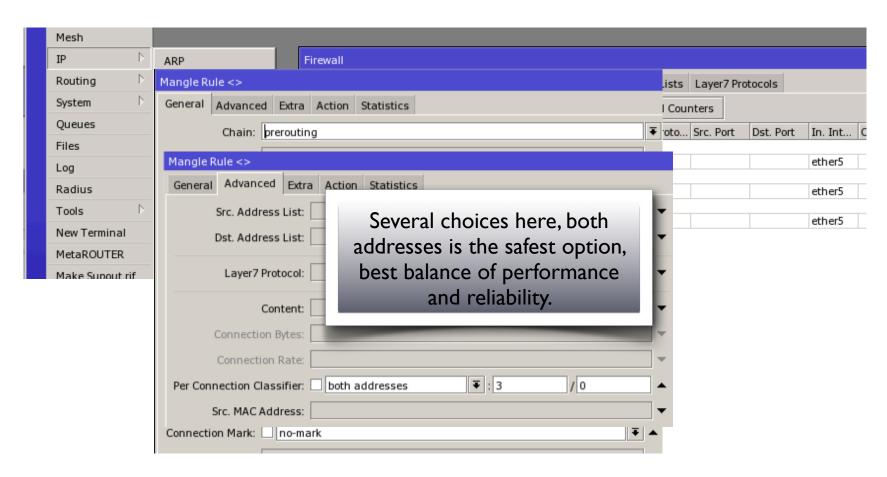






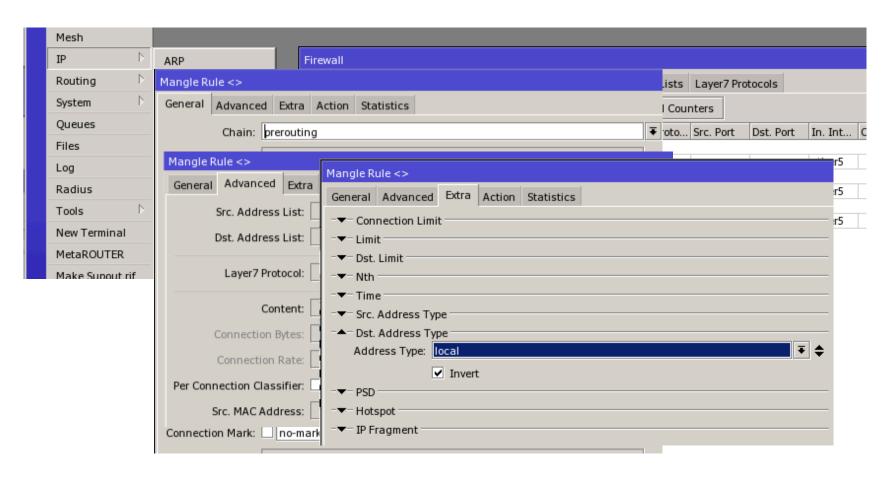






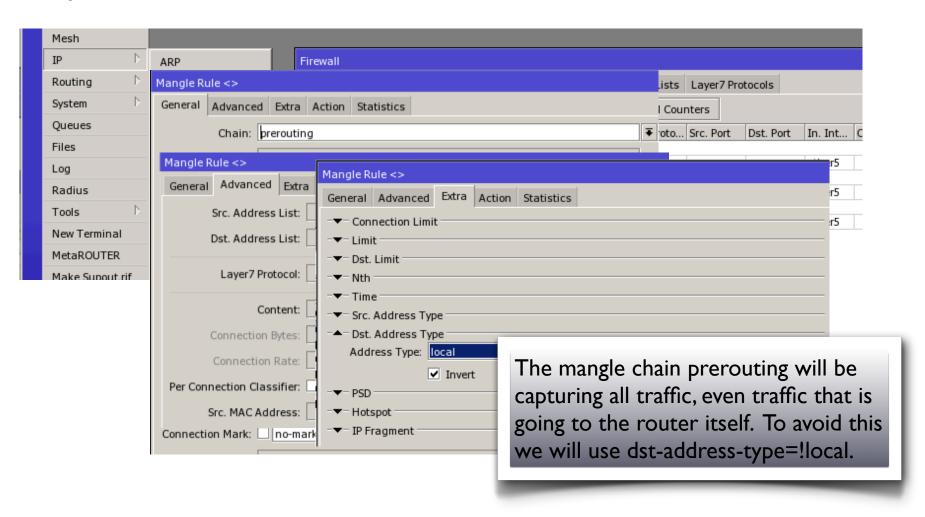






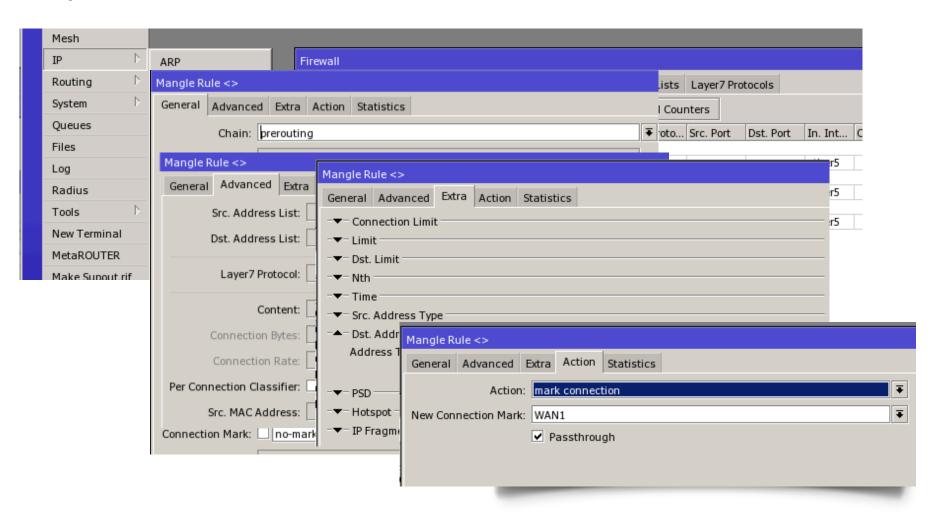






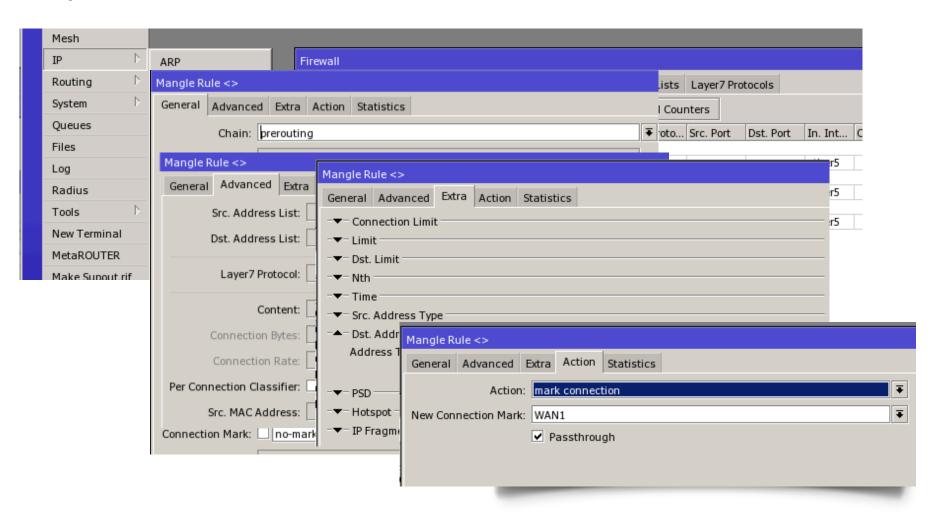








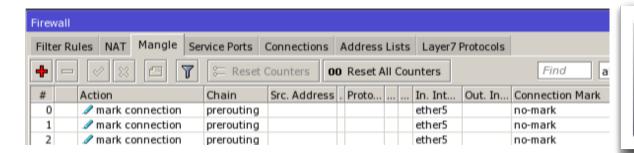








#### Step 2 Completed



Create one PCC mangle rule for each WAN connection

Completed PCC Mangle Rules

ip firewall mangle

add action=mark-connection chain=prerouting connection-mark=no-mark disabled=no dst-address-type=!local \ in-interface=ether5 new-connection-mark=WAN1 passthrough=yes per-connection-classifier=both-addresses:3/0

add action=mark-connection chain=prerouting connection-mark=no-mark disabled=no dst-address-type=!local \ in-interface=ether5 new-connection-mark=WAN2 passthrough=yes per-connection-classifier=both-addresses:3/1

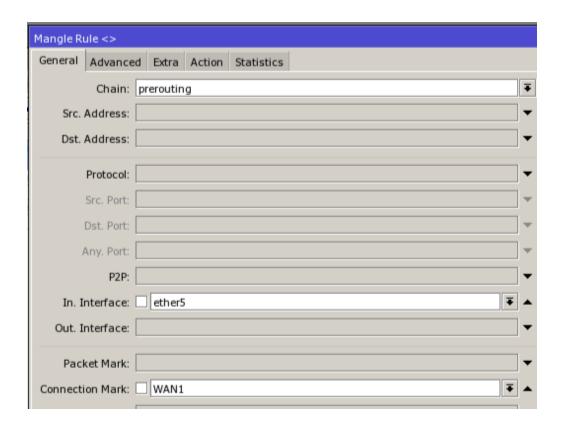
add action=mark-connection chain=prerouting connection-mark=no-mark disabled=no dst-address-type=!local \ in-interface=ether5 new-connection-mark=WAN3 passthrough=yes per-connection-classifier=both-addresses:3/2





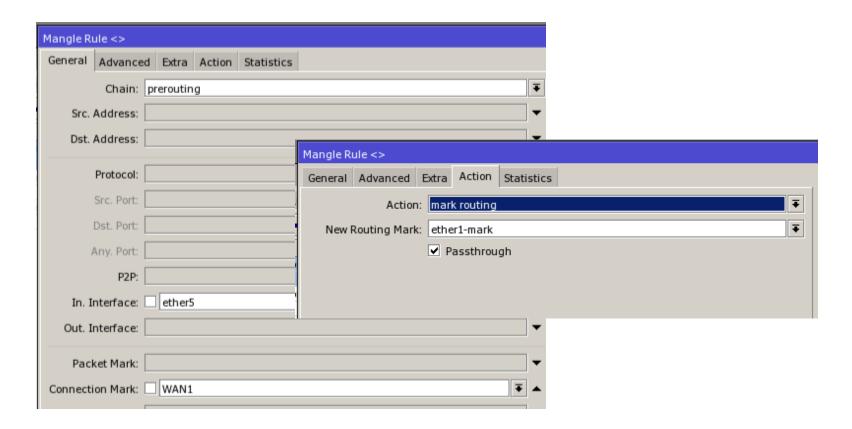






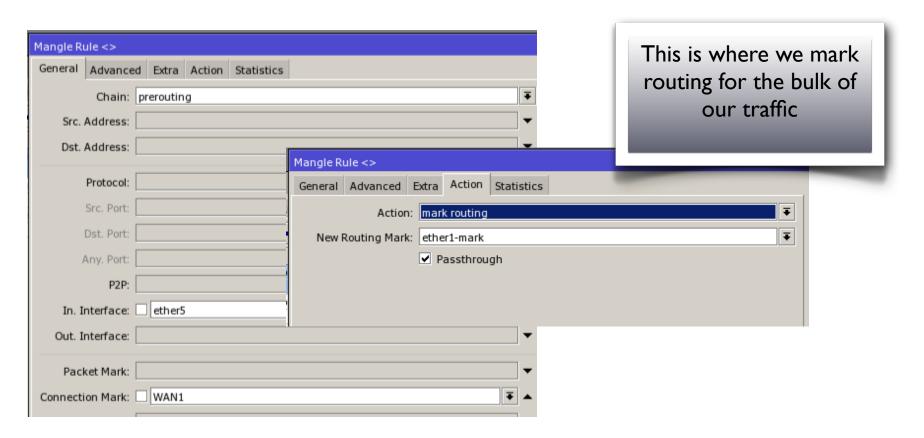










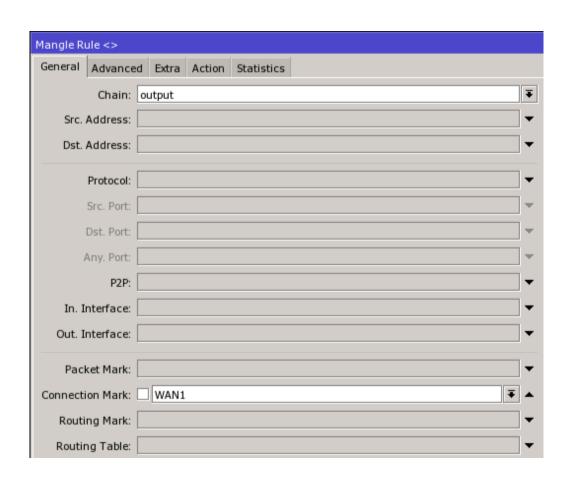






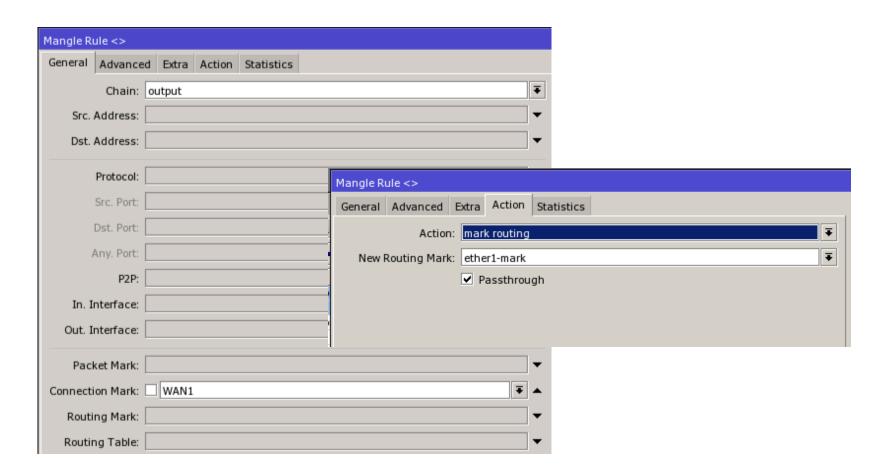






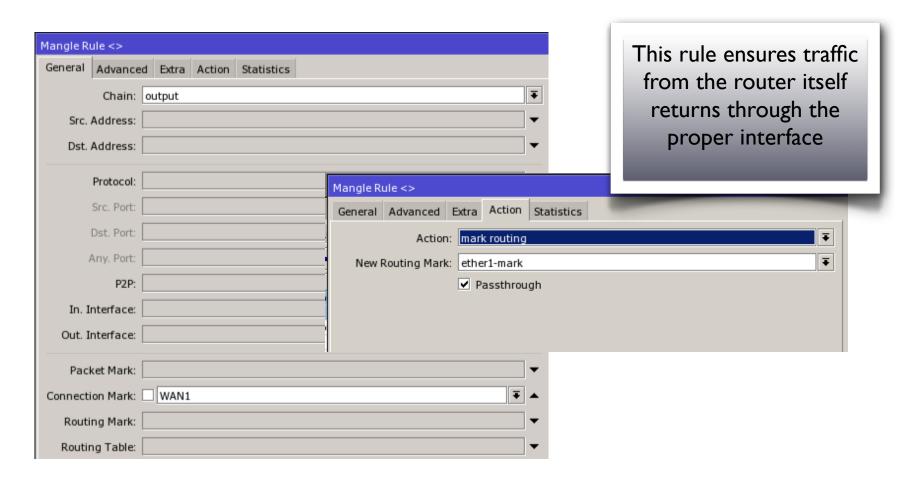








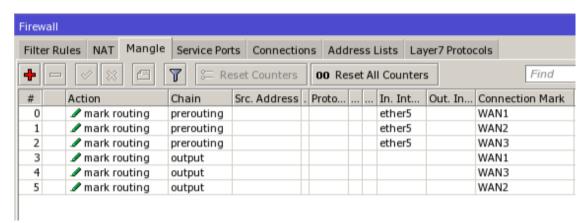








#### **Step 3 Completed**



Create one rule for for each WAN connection, in prerouting chain and same in output chain

Completed route marking rules

/ip firewall mangle

add action=mark-routing chain=prerouting connection-mark=WAN1 disabled=no in-interface=ether5 \ new-routing-mark=ether1-mark passthrough=yes

add action=mark-routing chain=prerouting connection-mark=WAN2 disabled=no in-interface=ether5 \ new-routing-mark=ether2-mark passthrough=yes

add action=mark-routing chain=prerouting connection-mark=WAN3 disabled=no in-interface=ether5 \ new-routing-mark=ether3-mark passthrough=yes

add action=mark-routing chain=output connection-mark=WAN1 disabled=no new-routing-mark=ether1-mark passthrough=yes add action=mark-routing chain=output connection-mark=WAN3 disabled=no new-routing-mark=ether3-mark passthrough=yes add action=mark-routing chain=output connection-mark=WAN2 disabled=no new-routing-mark=ether2-mark passthrough=yes



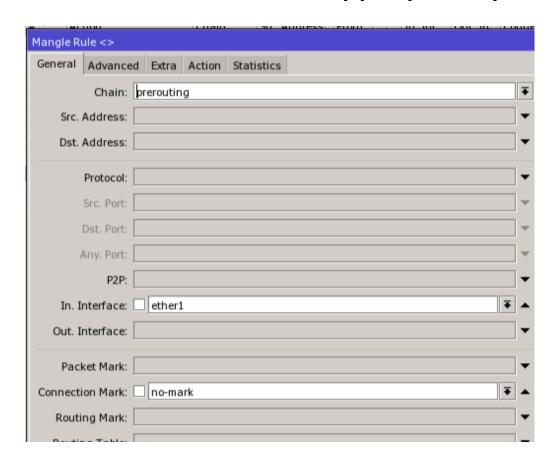


Step 4: Identify which WAN interface the traffic came in and mark the connections appropriately.





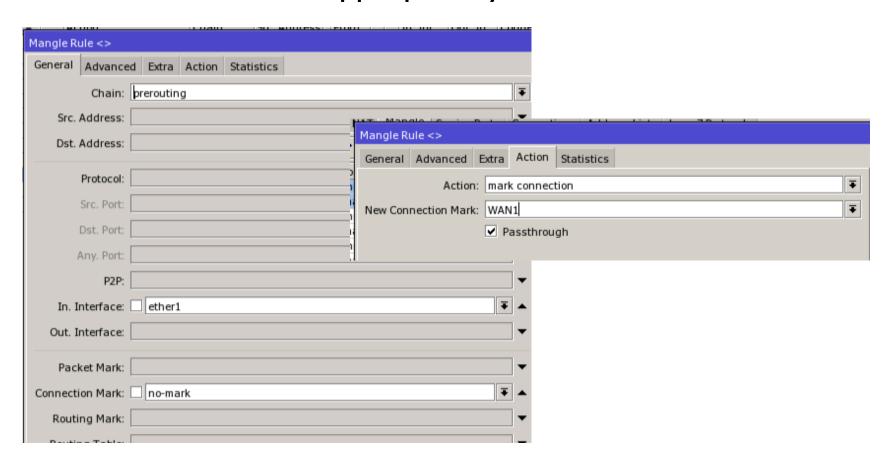
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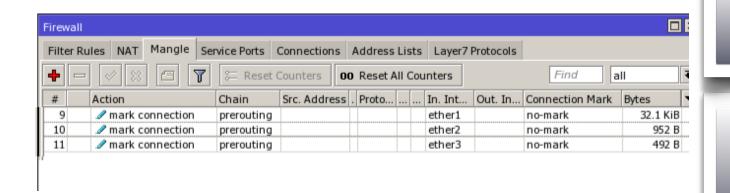
Step 4: Identify which WAN interface the traffic came in and mark the connections appropriately.







#### Step 4 Completed



Create one rule for each WAN connection

Completed WAN connection marking rules

/ip firewall mangle

- add action=mark-connection chain=prerouting connection-mark=no-mark disabled=no \ in-interface=ether1 new-connection-mark=WAN1 passthrough=yes
- add action=mark-connection chain=prerouting connection-mark=no-mark disabled=no \ in-interface=ether3 new-connection-mark=WAN3 passthrough=yes
- add action=mark-connection chain=prerouting connection-mark=no-mark disabled=no \ in-interface=ether2 new-connection-mark=WAN2 passthrough=yes





Final result: Connections should be marked, route marks added to packets based on connection mark.

| Fire                  | wall               |        |                     |                      |                |                 |         |                  |                 |  |
|-----------------------|--------------------|--------|---------------------|----------------------|----------------|-----------------|---------|------------------|-----------------|--|
| Filter Rules NAT Mang |                    |        | le Service Ports Co |                      | nnection       | nections Addres |         | Layer7 Protocols |                 |  |
| _                     | Y                  | Track  | ing                 |                      |                |                 |         |                  |                 |  |
|                       | Src. Address       |        |                     | Dst. Address         |                |                 | Proto   | Connecti         | Connection Mark |  |
| U                     | 10.0.25.1:1966     |        |                     | 224.0.0.109:1966     |                |                 | 17 (    |                  |                 |  |
| U                     | 208.91.11.239:1966 |        |                     | 224.0.0.109:1966     |                |                 | 17 (    |                  |                 |  |
| U                     | 0.0.0.0:68         |        |                     | 255.255.255.255:67   |                |                 | 17 (    |                  | WAN2            |  |
| U                     | 0.0.0.0:5678       |        |                     | 255.255.255.255:5678 |                |                 | 17 (    |                  | WAN2            |  |
| Α                     | 10.0.25.2:15997    |        |                     | 74.125.227.100:80    |                |                 | 6 (tcp) |                  | WAN1            |  |
| Α                     | 10.0.25.2:16007    |        |                     | 208.91.12.170:53     |                |                 | 6 (tcp) |                  | WAN2            |  |
| Α                     | 10.0.25.2:16015    |        |                     | 74.125.227.130:443   |                |                 | 6 (tcp) |                  | WAN3            |  |
| Α                     | 10.0.25.2:16016    |        |                     | 74.125.227.103:443   |                |                 | 6 (tcp) |                  | WAN2            |  |
| Α                     | 10.0.25.10:63963   |        |                     | 10.0.25.1:53         |                |                 | 17 (    |                  | WAN3            |  |
| Α                     | 10.0.25.21:49504   |        |                     | 10.0.25.1:8291       |                |                 | 6 (tcp) |                  | WAN2            |  |
| Α                     | 10.0.25.21:50997   |        |                     | 10.0.25.1:8291       |                |                 | 6 (tcp) |                  | WAN2            |  |
| Α                     | 10.0.25.21:51108   |        |                     | 167.216.129.11:443   |                |                 | 6 (tcp) |                  | WAN2            |  |
| Α                     | 10.0.25.21:51109   |        |                     | 167.216.129.11:443   |                |                 | 6 (tcp) |                  | WAN2            |  |
| Α                     | 10.0.25.2          | 1:5116 | 3                   | 173                  | 3.239.79.155:4 | 143             | 6 (tcp) |                  | WAN2            |  |
|                       | 10.0.25.2          | 1:5190 | )2                  | 4.2.                 | .2.2:53        |                 | 17 (    |                  | WAN2            |  |
|                       | 10.0.25.2          | 1:5297 | '1                  | 4.2.                 | .2.2:53        |                 | 17 (    |                  | WAN2            |  |
| Α                     | 10.0.25.2          | 1:5476 | 0                   | 4.2.                 | 2.2:53         |                 | 17 (    |                  | WAN2            |  |

Always check the connection table to ensure mangles are working for connections





Mangles are done, we now create the routes:





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• We will need one default route for each routing mark, corresponding to each of the WAN connections.





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- We will need one default route for each routing mark, corresponding to each of the WAN connections.
- •We will also need one unmarked default route corresponding to each of the WAN connections.



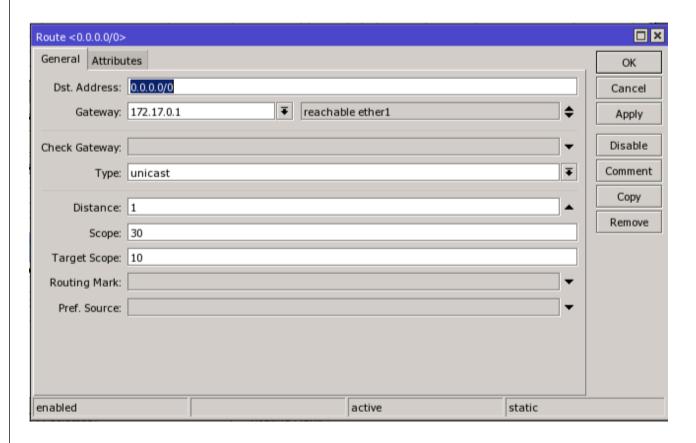


Step 5: Create the unmarked default routes.





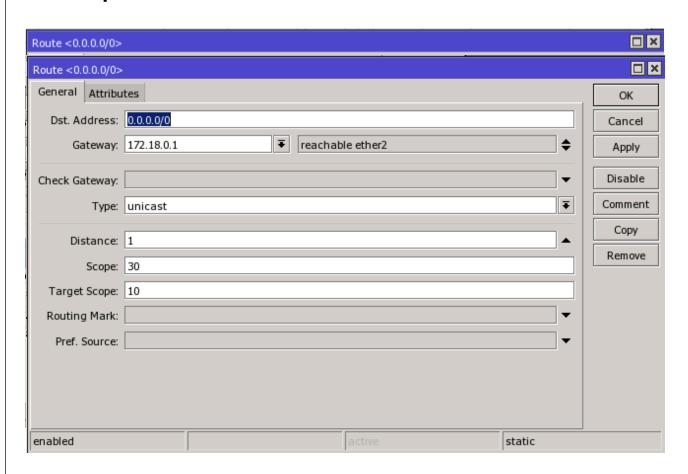
#### Step 5: Create the unmarked default routes.







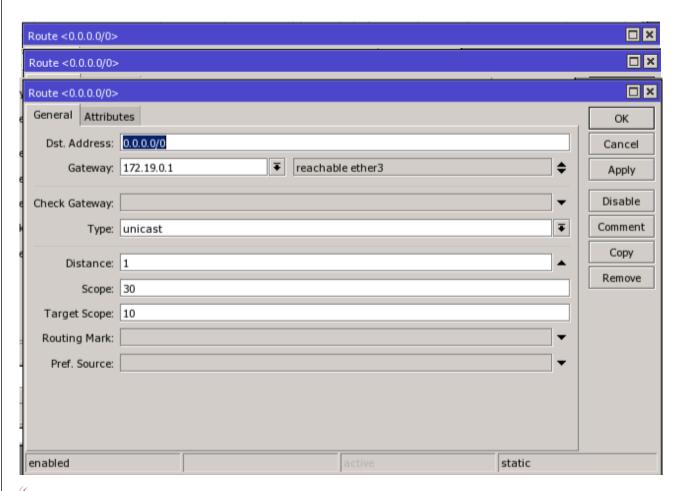
#### Step 5: Create the unmarked default routes.







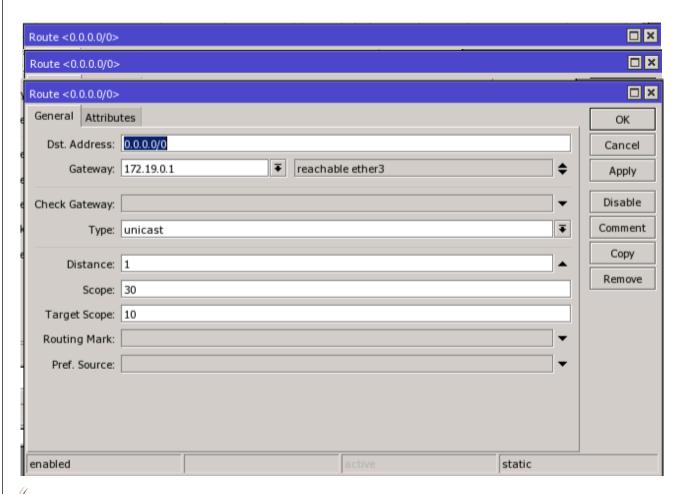
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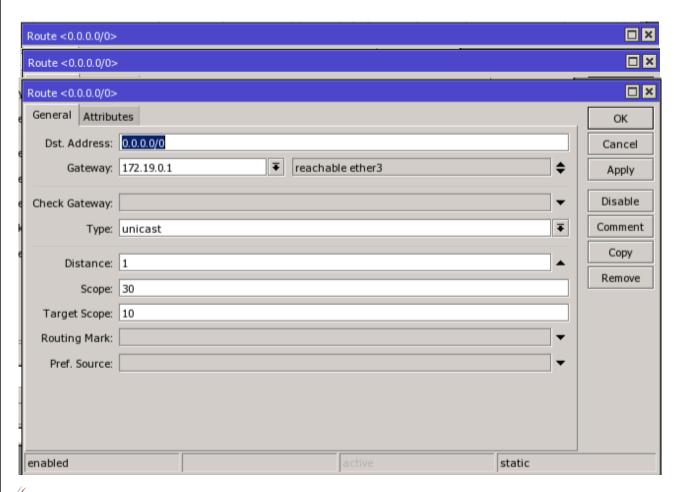


Provides failover ensures traffic always
has a default route
because if there is no
active marked route to
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Considering using distance to prefer one default over another.



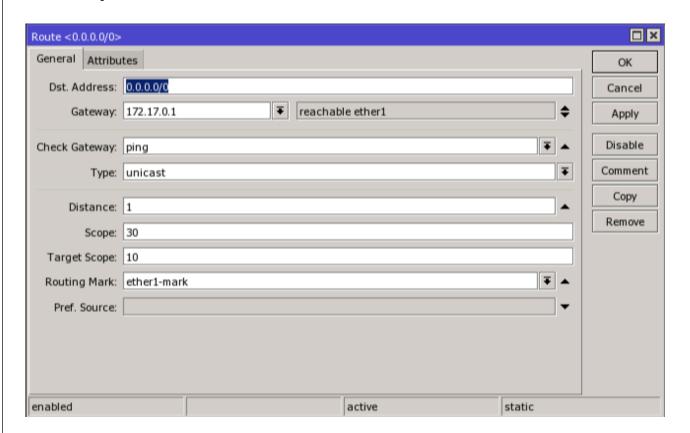


Step 6: Create the marked default routes.





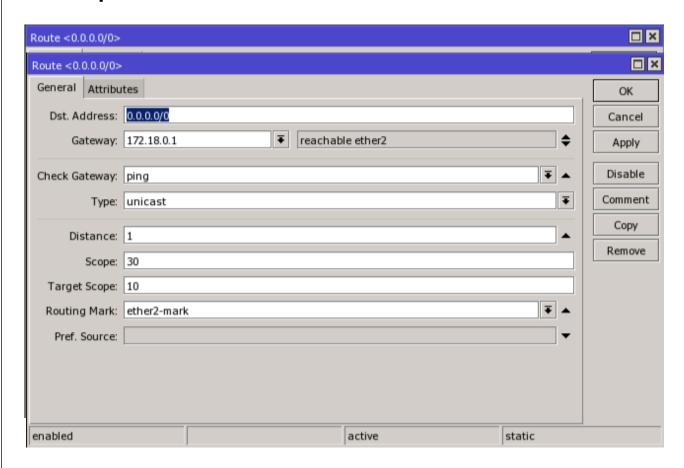
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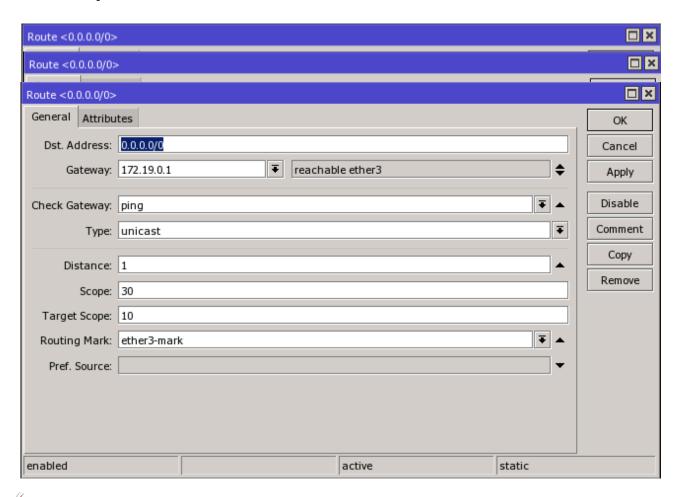
Step 6: Create the marked default routes.







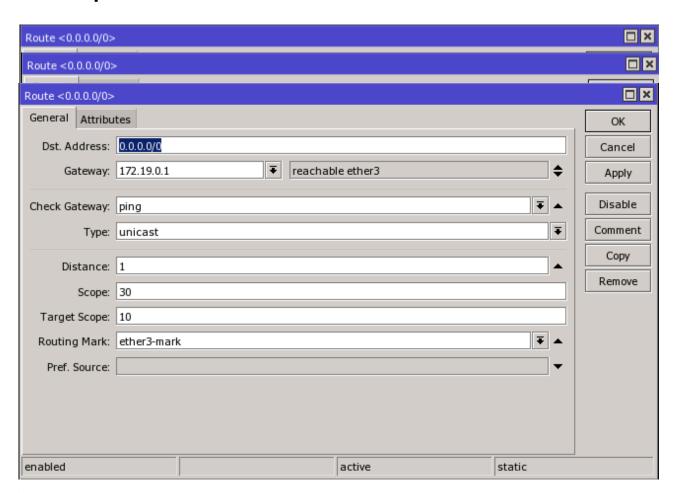
Step 6: Create the marked default routes.







Step 6: Create the marked default routes.



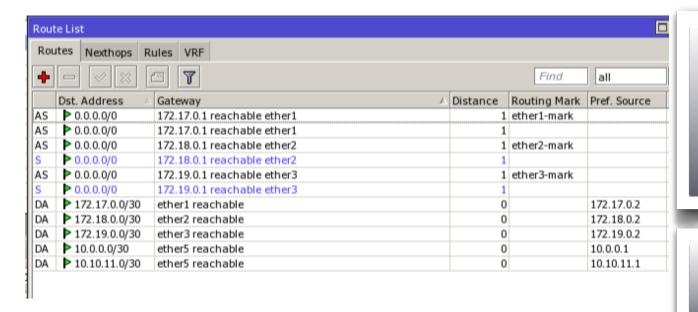
Use "check-gateway" to ensure gateway is alive.

Only need to use "check-gateway" on marked routes because any routes with that gateway become inactive if it fails thereby affecting marked routes too.





#### Final result - Routing table



One marked default for each WAN connection, and one unmarked default route for each WAN connection

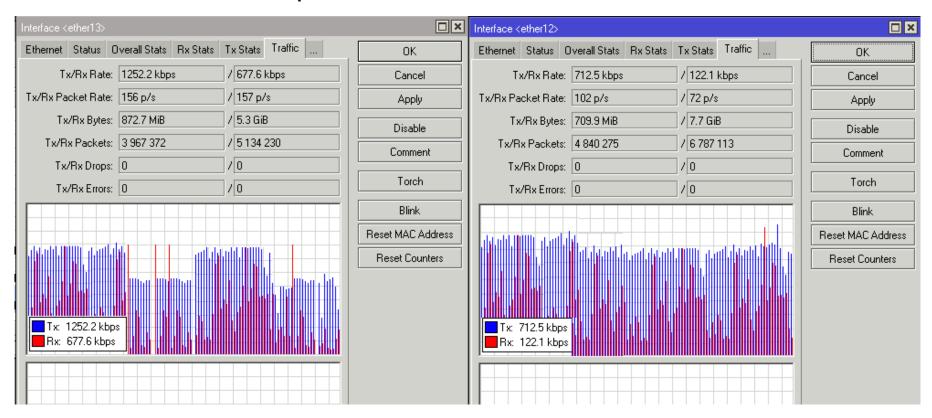
Completed routing table





#### Final result!

Actual screen shots from a load balance configuration in production with 2 WAN connections.







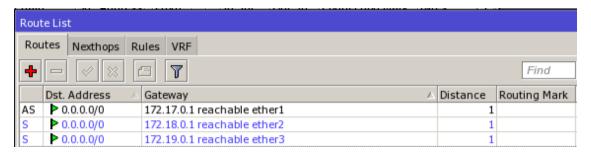
# I use DHCP for my WAN addressing, how can I get the marked routes created properly?

```
/system script
add name=ConfigureDHCPRoutes policy=\
   ftp,reboot,read,write,policy,test,winbox,password,sniff,sensitive,api source=":local cli\
   entcounter\r\
    \n:local routecounter\r\
   \n:local duplicatecounter\r\
   \n:local routeupdated \"no\"\r\
   \n:foreach clientcounter in=[/ip dhcp-client find] do={\r\
   \n:local routingmarkname ([/ip dhcp-client get \$clientcounter interface] . \"-mark\")\r\
   \n:local newroutinggateway [ip dhcp-client get \$clientcounter gateway]\r\
   \n:foreach routecounter in=[/ip route find where routing-mark=\$routingmarkname] do={\r\
   \n :local routinggateway [/ip route get [find routing-mark=\$routingmarkname] gateway]\
   \r\
   \n : if ([:len \parble newroutinggateway] > 0) do={\r\}
   \n\t :if (\$\"routinggateway\" != \$\"newroutinggateway\") do={ \r\
           /ip route set \$routecounter gateway=\$newroutinggateway \r\
   \n\t\t:set routeupdated \"yes\"\r\
   \n\t }\r\
   \n\t\
   \n } \r\
   \n :if ([:len \$newroutinggateway] > 0) do={\r\
          :if (\$routeupdated = \"no\") do={\r\
           /ip route add routing-mark=\$routingmarkname gateway=\$newroutinggateway dst-add\
   ress=0.0.0.0/0\r\
   \n
        }\r\
    \n }\r\
    n}\r
    \n"
```

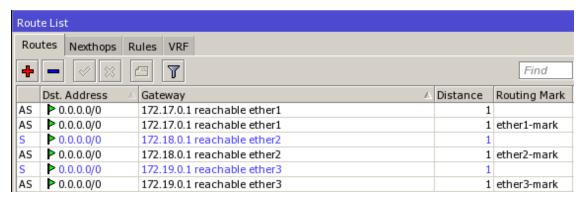




#### Before Running Script



#### After Running Script







PCC doesn't seem to work properly with HotSpot or IP Webproxy

• It is possible to make it work but the rules get very detailed and complicated.

Solution: Use two routers, one for load balancing, one for HotSpot or IP Webproxy.

Solution: Use metarouter with host router doing main routing functions, virtual router doing the load balancing.





DNS resolves from some clients, not others

• If you are using two different ISP's and their respective name servers, possibly some clients are accessing ISPI's DNS server through ISP2's connection and ISPI is blocking DNS requests from outside their IP space.

Solution: Consider OpenDNS, destination NAT with redirect to DNS cache, etc.





Strange http issues, some images load, other don't, problems with some secure sites

Solution: Try using "both addresses" or "source address" for PCC classifier. While "both addresses and ports" gives the greatest chance for randomization and better possibility for even distribution, it can create these types of issues.





I can only get asymmetrical connections, one DSL and one cable modem.

Solution: You can "weight" one interface higher and force more traffic through it by repeating the connection marking PCC rule more than once for that connection.

#### Example for added weight to WAN3.

```
/ip firewall mangle
add action=mark-connection chain=prerouting connection-mark=no-mark disabled=\
    no dst-address-type=!local in-interface=ether5 new-connection-mark=WAN1 \
    passthrough=yes per-connection-classifier=both-addresses:3/0
add action=mark-connection chain=prerouting connection-mark=no-mark disabled=\
    no dst-address-type=!local in-interface=ether5 new-connection-mark=WAN2 \
    passthrough=yes per-connection-classifier=both-addresses:3/1
add action=mark-connection chain=prerouting connection-mark=no-mark disabled=\
    no dst-address-type=!local in-interface=ether5 new-connection-mark=WAN3 \
    passthrough=yes per-connection-classifier=both-addresses:3/2
add action=mark-connection chain=prerouting connection-mark=no-mark disabled=\
    no dst-address-type=!local in-interface=ether5 new-connection-mark=WAN3 \
    passthrough=yes per-connection-classifier=both-addresses:3/3
```





#### **Thank You!**

- MyWISPTraining.com
- LearnMikroTik.com
- ISPSupplies.com
- "RouterOS by Example" available for many distributors or Amazon.com, iTunes





