

# BGP Hijackers That Evade Public Route Collectors\*

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\* Based on our recent *IEEE Access Journal* ([Link](#))



# Outline

- ❖ Background
- ❖ The Problem
- ❖ Lessons Learned
- ❖ Real-world Findings
- ❖ Suggestions



# BGP Prefix Hijacking

## **Documented Suspicious BGP Hijacks:**

- ❖ Targets 2022: Governmental infrastructure **[1]**, Cryptocurrency services **[2]**, etc.
- ❖ Incidents 2021: 775 suspicious BGP hijacks **[3]**.
- ❖ Incidents 2020: 2255 suspicious BGP hijacks **[4]**.
- ❖ Incidents 2019: 1727 suspicious BGP hijacks **[4]**.

**[1]** *Luconi V. Et al. "Impact of the first months of war on routing and latency in Ukraine", Computer Networks Journal*

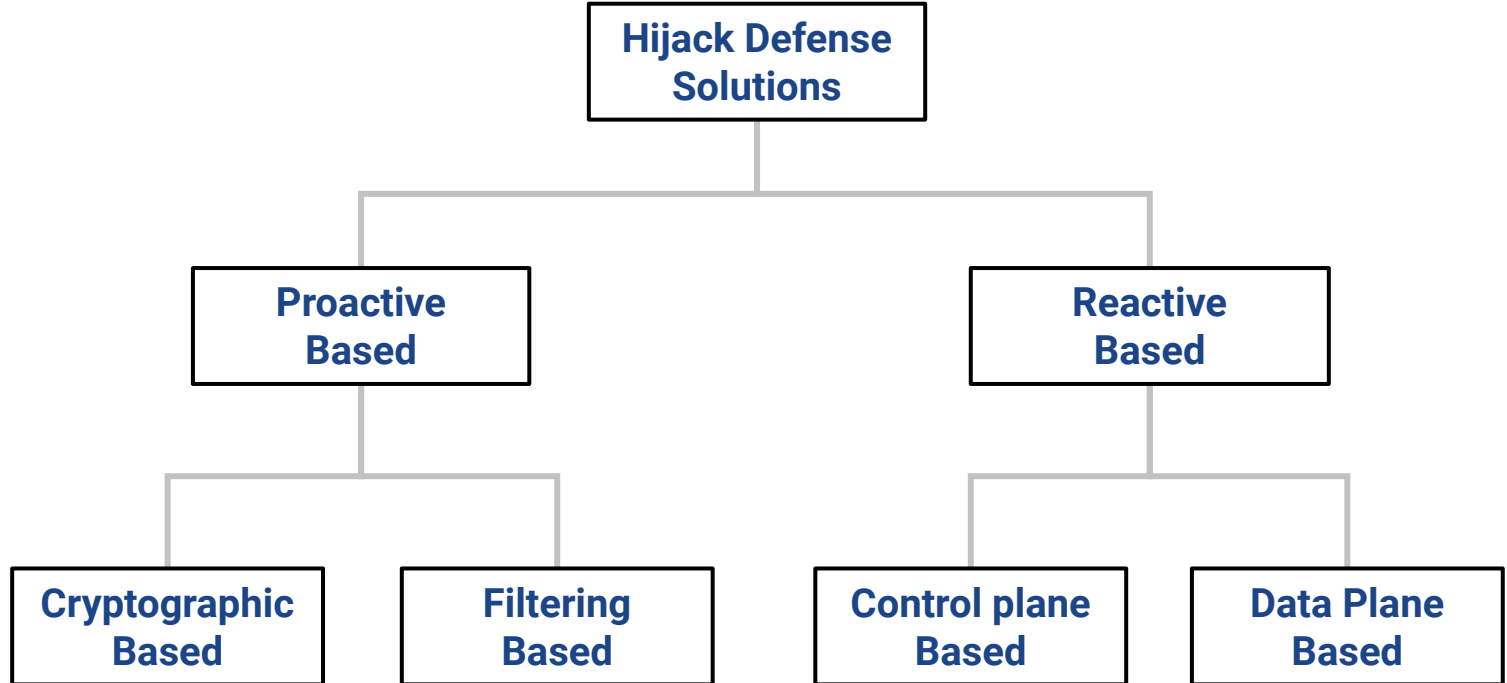
**[2]** <https://www.kentik.com/blog/bgp-hijacks-targeting-cryptocurrency-services/>

**[3]** <https://www.manrs.org/2022/02/bgp-security-in-2021/>

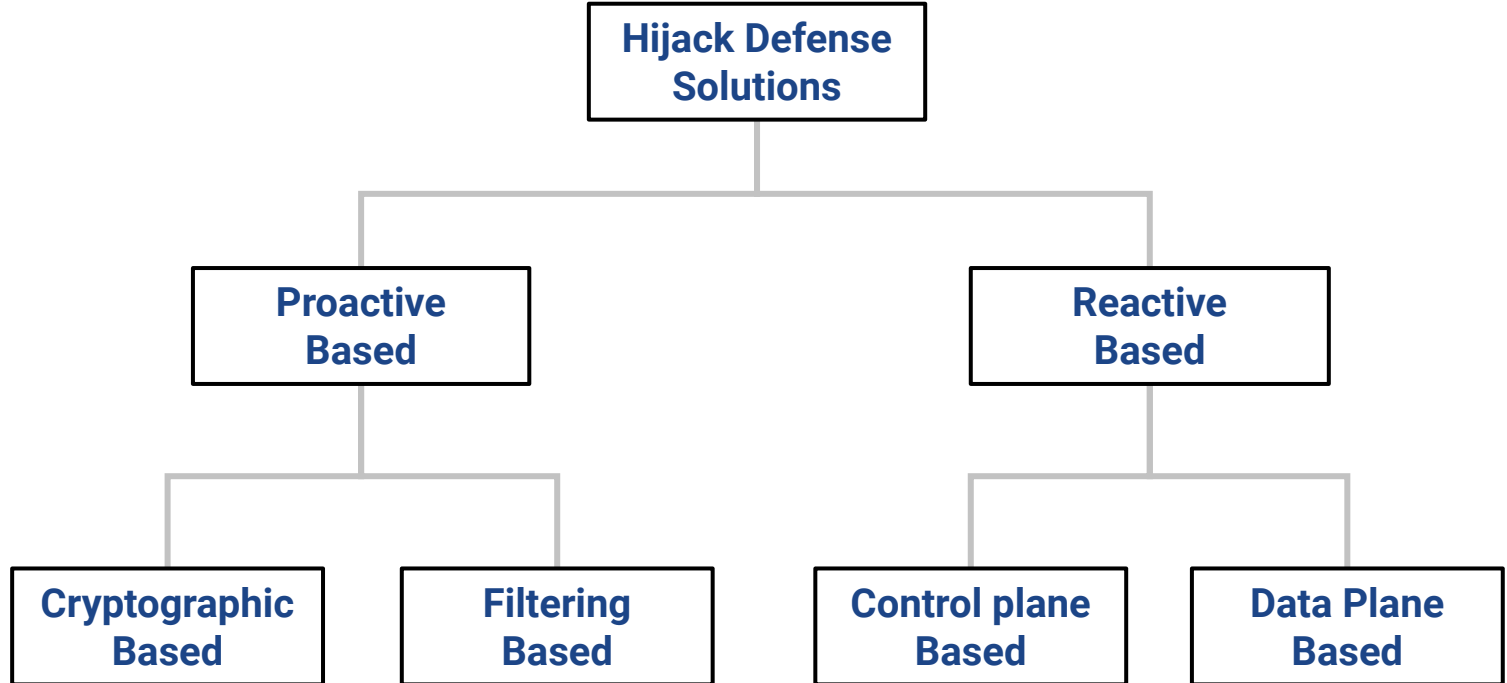
**[4]** <https://www.manrs.org/2021/03/a-regional-look-into-bgp-incidents-in-2020/>



# Current Solutions



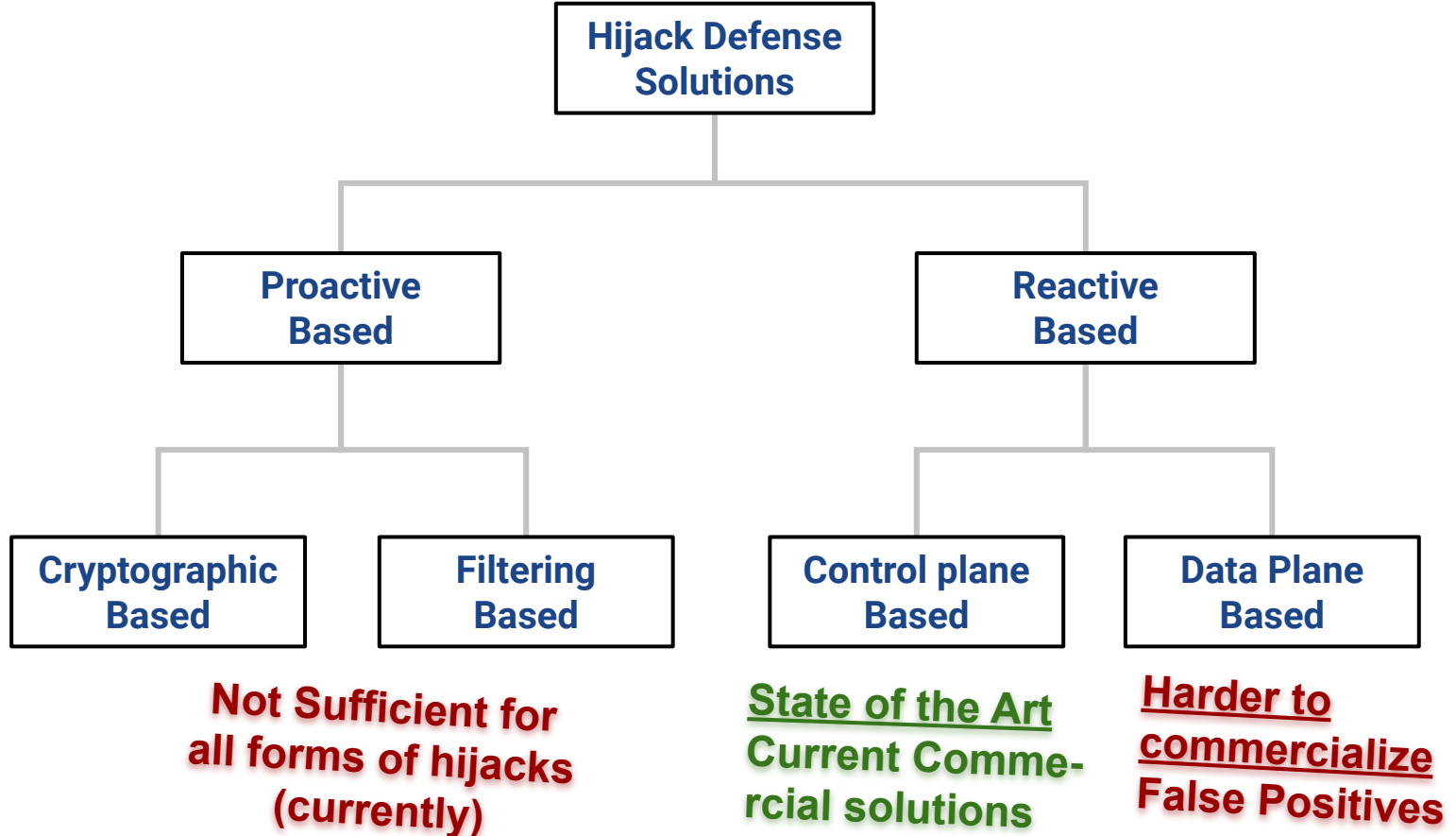
# Current Solutions



**Not Sufficient for  
all forms of hijacks  
(currently)**



# Current Solutions





# Current Hijack Solutions

- ★ Most of current Commercial solutions rely on *Route collectors* & *Looking Glasses*.

## **Route Collectors (RC):**

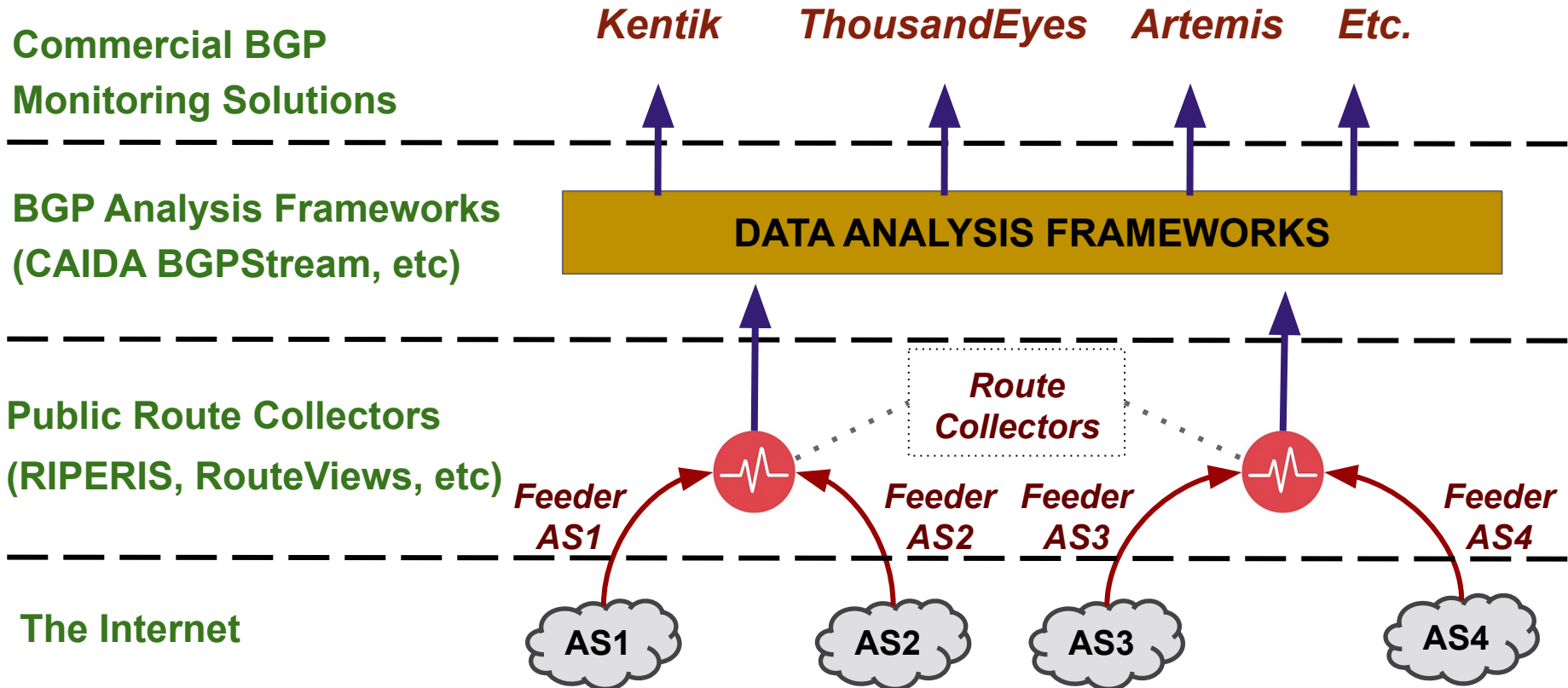
- ❖ BGP speaking devices that collect & report routes received from their neighbors.

## **Public Route Collector Infrastructure:**

- ❖ Namely: RIPE-RIS, Routeviews, etc.
- ❖ Collection of multiple route collectors distributed around the world.



# Pipeline: Route Collection by Commercial Solutions







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Commercial BGP  
Monitoring Solutions

*Kentik*    *ThousandEyes*    *Artemis*    *Etc.*

BGP Analysis Frameworks  
(CAIDA BGPStream, etc)



Public Route Collectors  
(RIPERIS, RouteViews, etc)



*Feeder  
AS1*

*Feeder  
AS2*

*Feeder  
AS3*

*Feeder  
AS4*



The Internet



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Commercial BGP  
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BGP Analysis Frameworks  
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DATA ANALYSIS FRAMEWORKS

Public Route Collectors  
(RIPERIS, RouteViews, etc)

Route  
Collectors

Feeder  
AS1

Feeder  
AS2

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AS3

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AS4

The Internet

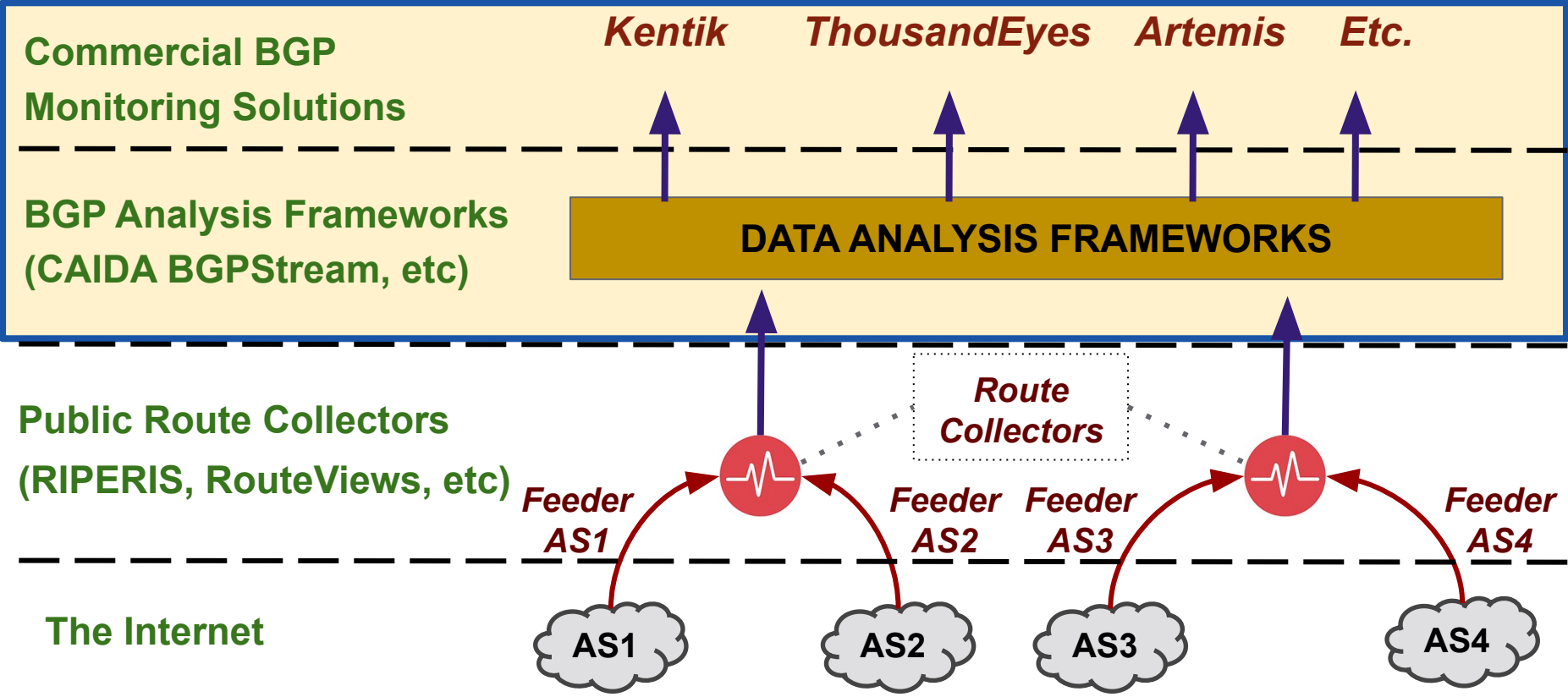
AS1

AS2

AS3

AS4

# Pipeline: Route Collection by Commercial Solutions





# The Problem

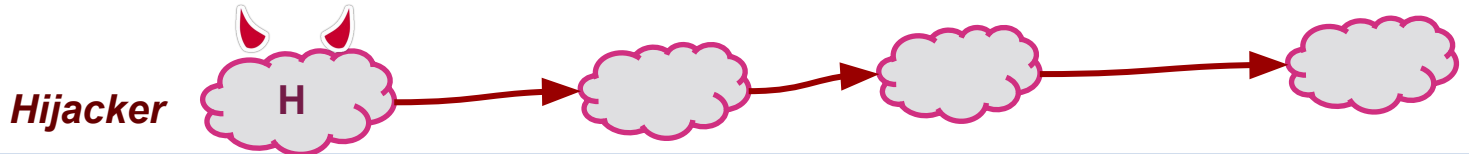
Commercial BGP  
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Public Route Collectors  
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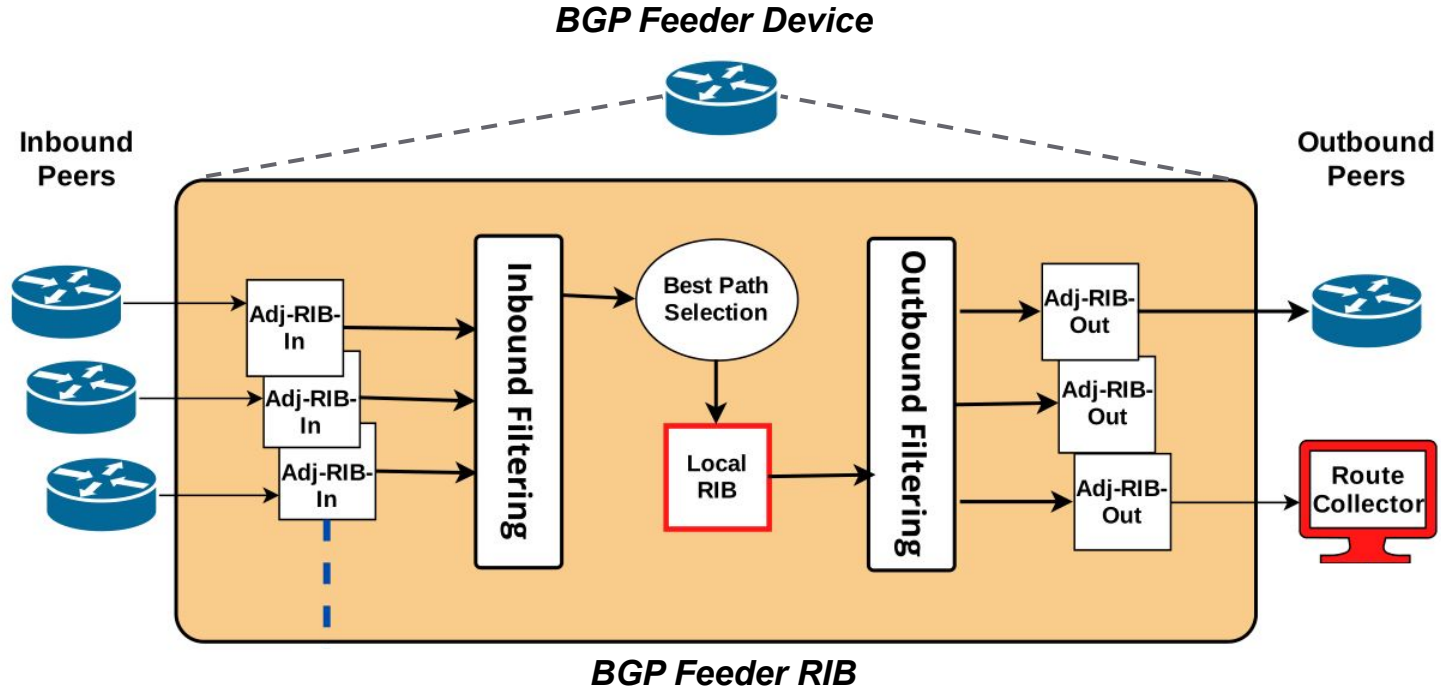
The Internet

Surface

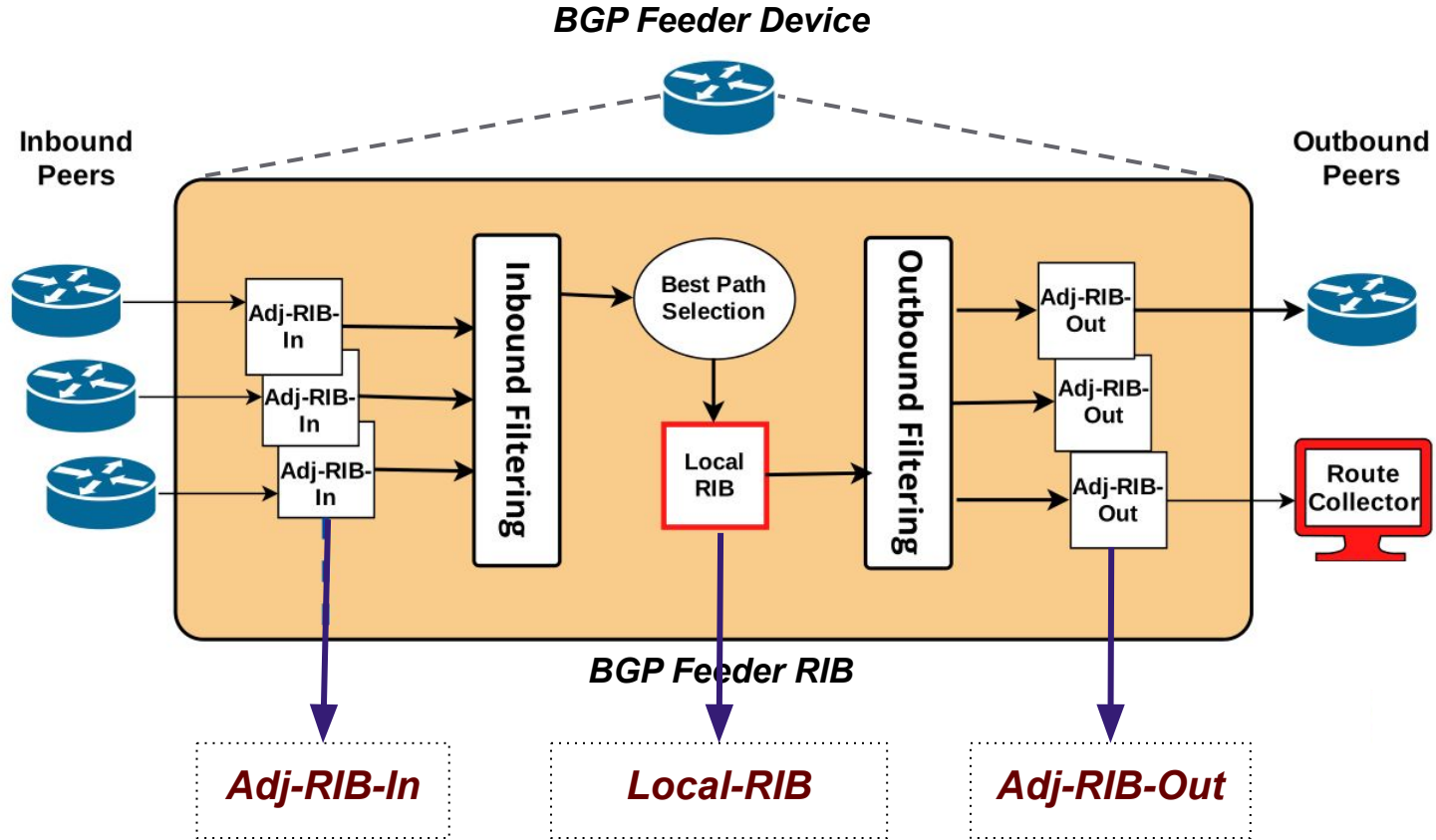
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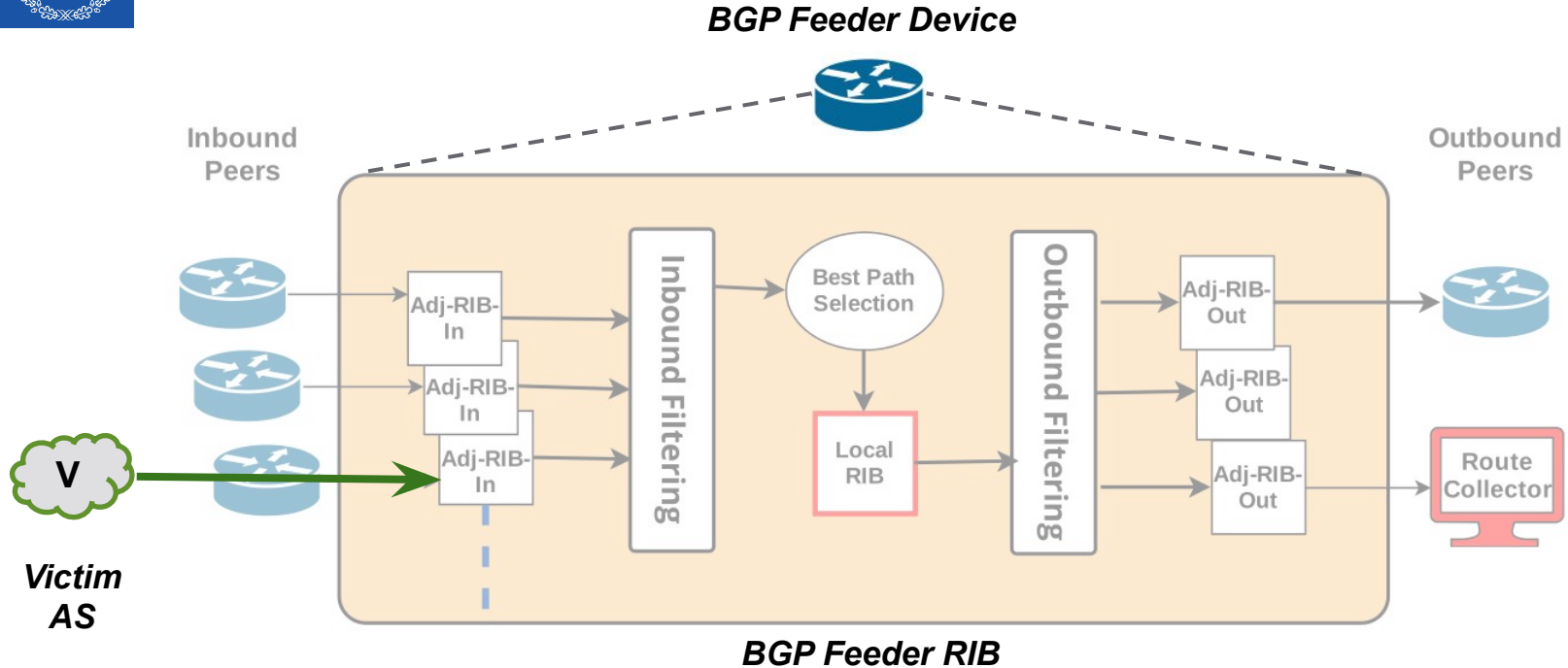
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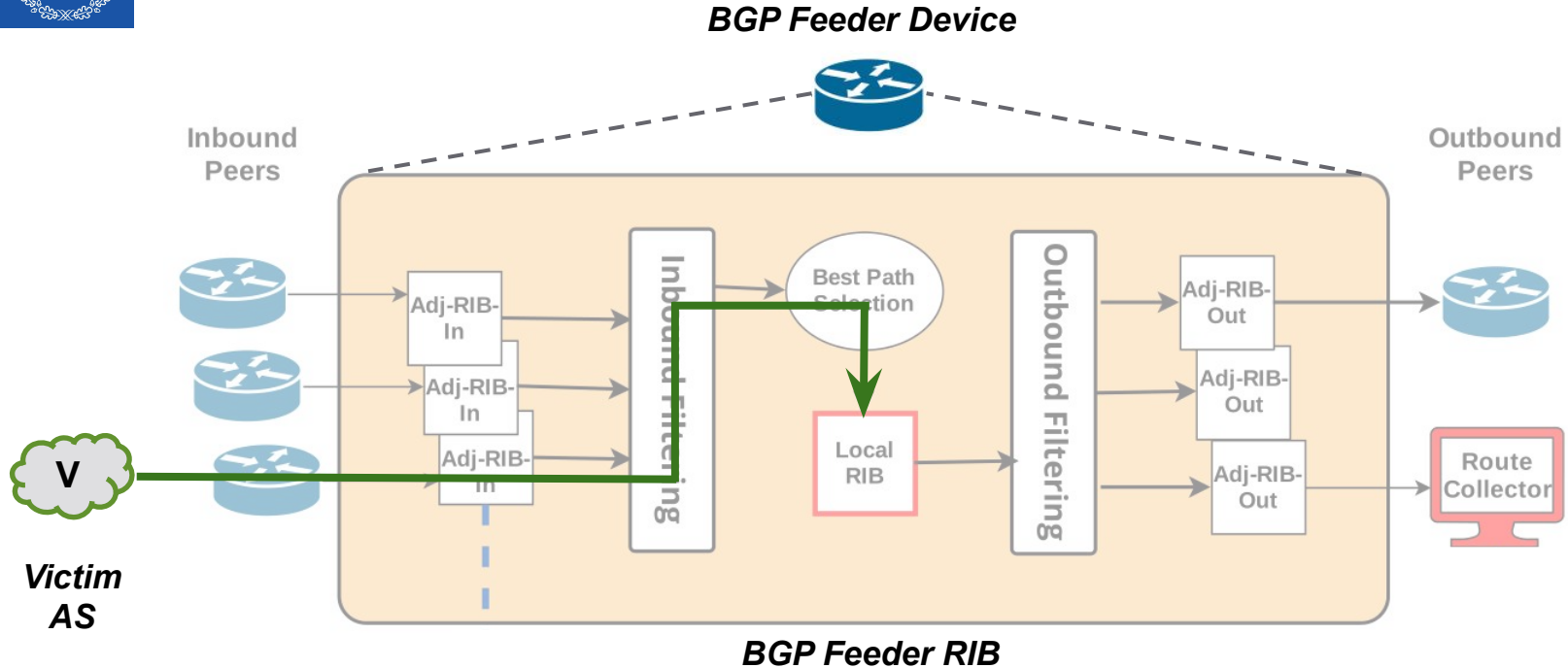
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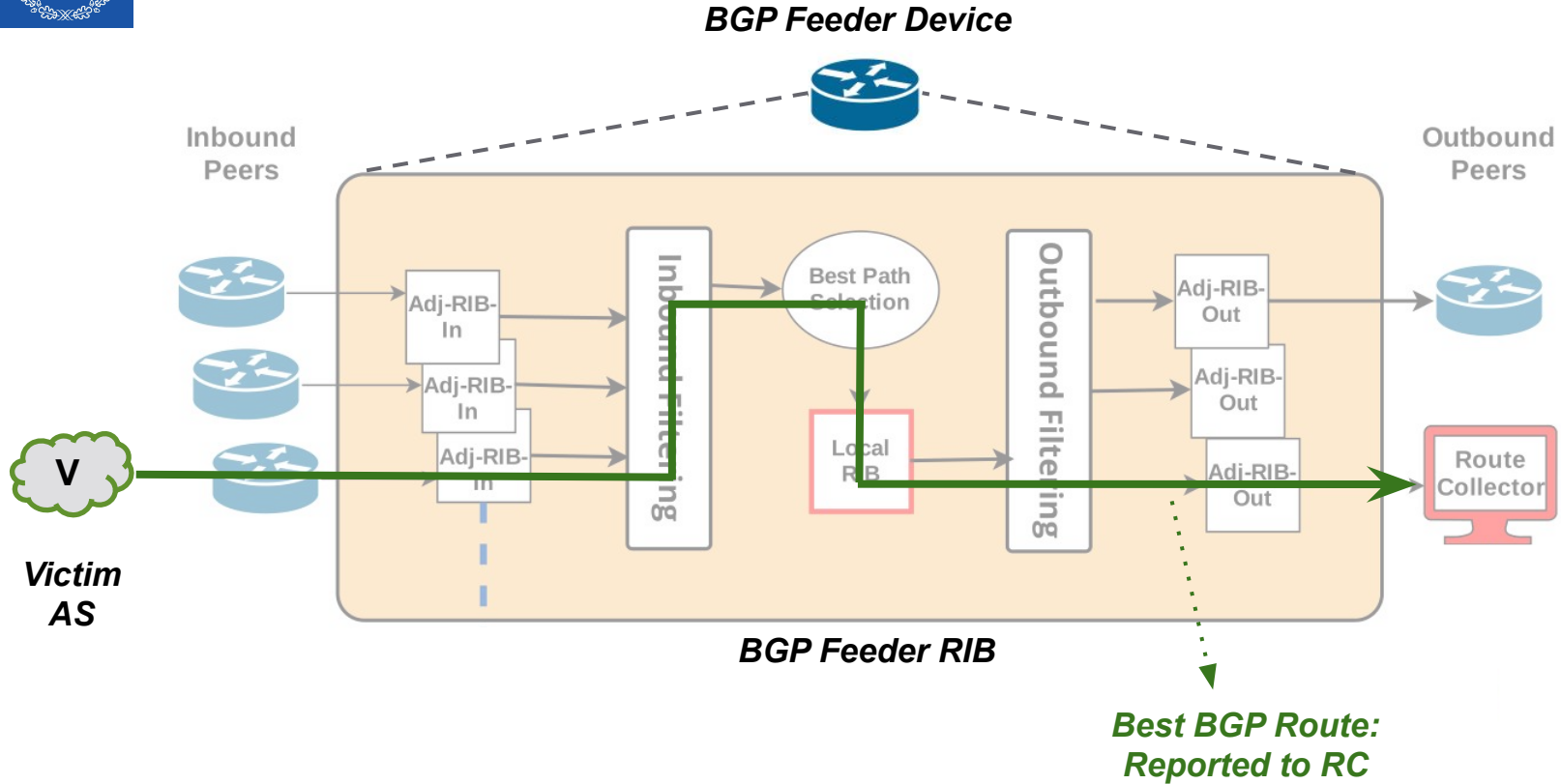


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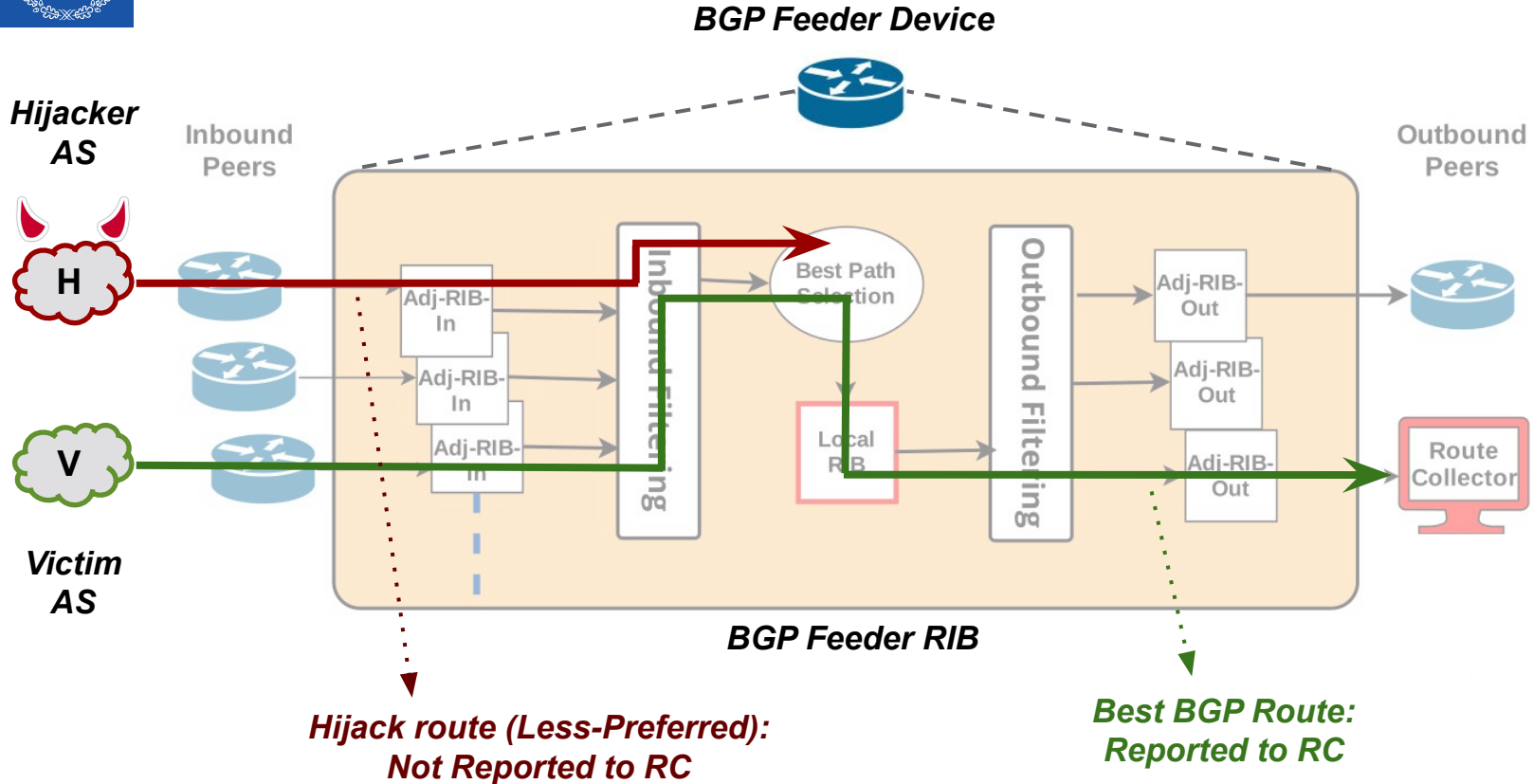




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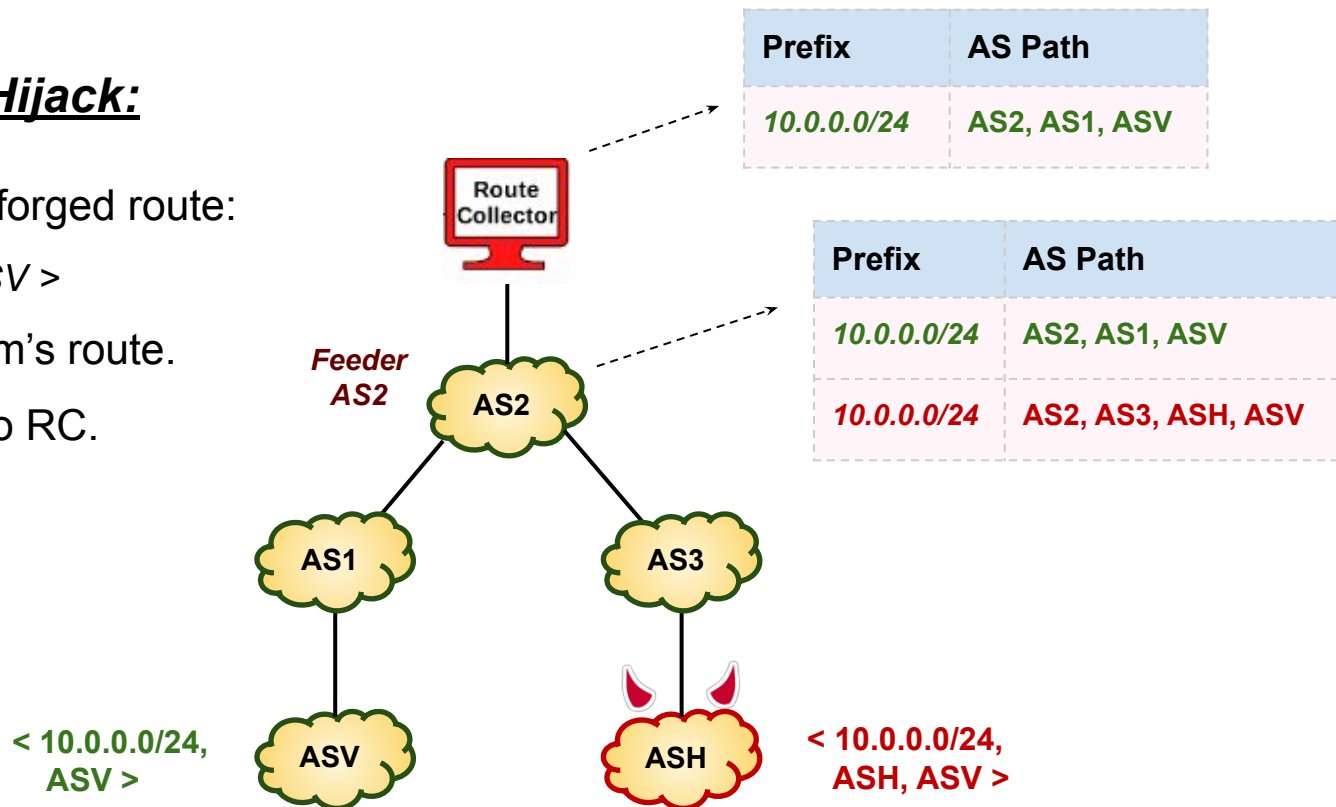
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## Example of Stealthy Hijack:

- ❖ Hijacker announces forged route:  
 $\langle 10.0.0.0/24, ASH, ASV \rangle$
- ❖ AS2 prefers the victim's route.
- ❖ Hijack not reported to RC.





# Presentation Topic

## **This Presentation:**

- ❖ How capable are hijackers to design stealthy hijacks not visible by RCs?



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## **Our Experiments:**

- ❖ BGP hijack Simulations.\*
- ❖ Real-world experiments using the PEERING Testbed.\*

\* For our full experiment results: See our [\*journal\*](#).



# What we Learned

## **For a Hijacker to hide from Public RCs:**

- ❖ Knowledge about which BGP feeders will report the attack matters.
- ❖ Knowledge about routing policies of other ASes matters.
- ❖ Where the hijack is exported matters.

# What we Learned (1/3)

- ❖ Knowledge about feeders matters.
- Unaffected region feeders: Do **not** observe the hijack.
- Affected region feeders: Will observe the hijack.

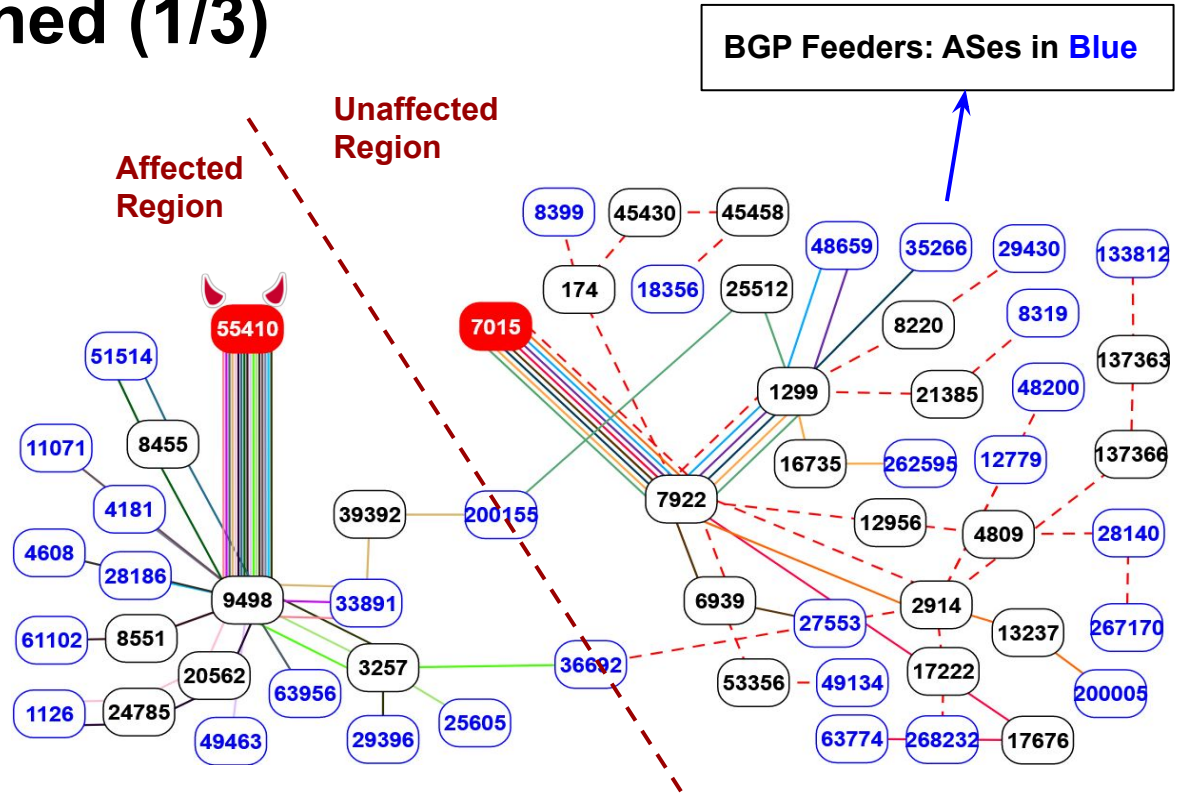


Fig: Vodafone (AS55410) leaking Comcast (AS7015) prefixes (16-04-21)  
 (Source: Cisco BGPstream monitoring service - visualized using BGPlay)



## What we Learned (2/3)

### **To design not observable hijacks by public RCs:**

- ❖ Knowledge about which BGP feeders will report the attack matters.
- ❖ Knowledge about routing policies of other ASes matters.



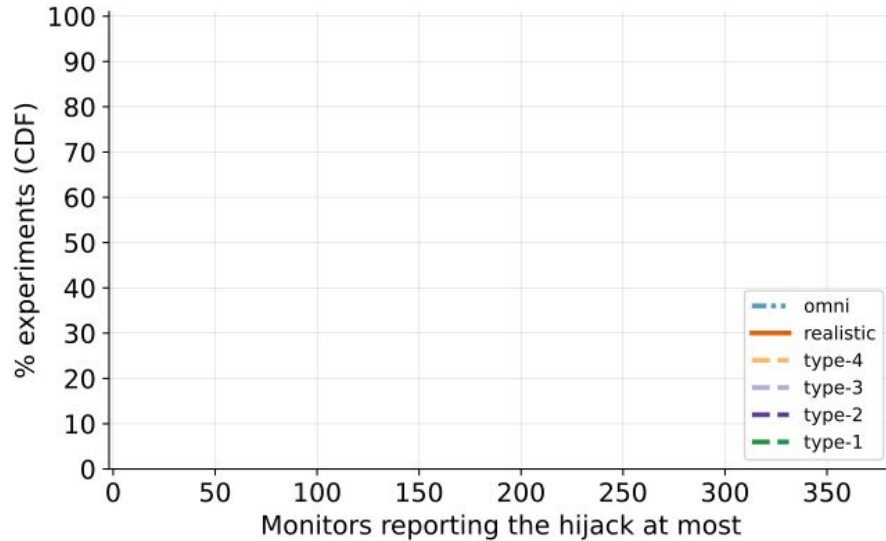


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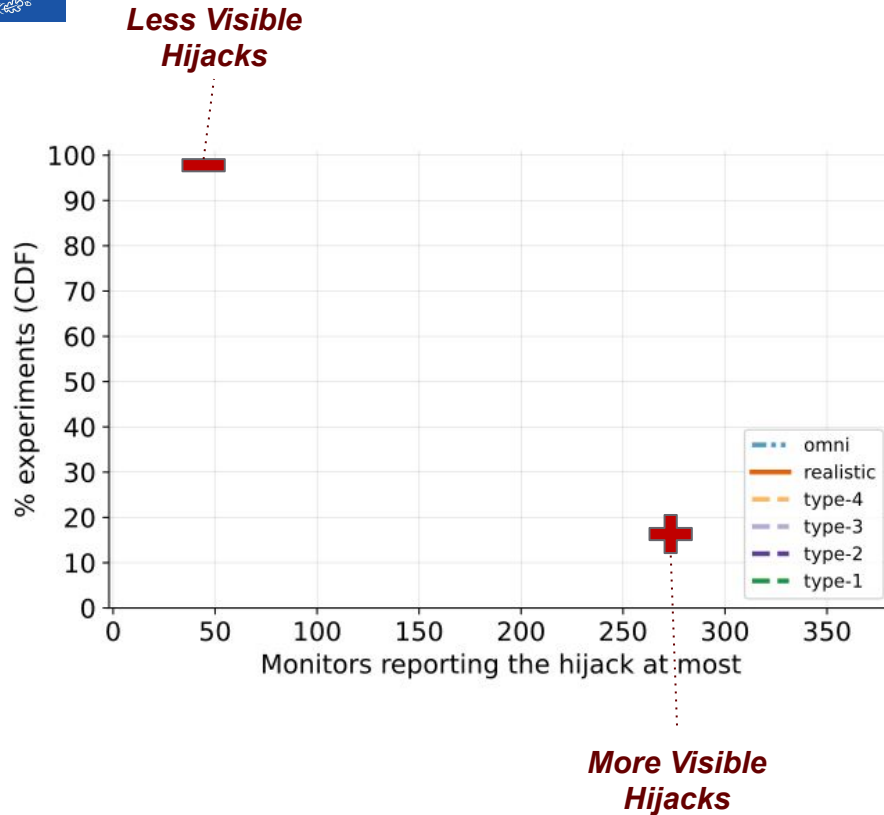
## ***To design not observable hijacks by public RCs:***

- ❖ Knowledge about which BGP feeders will report the attack matters.
- ❖ Knowledge about routing policies of other ASes matters.
  - *Baseline hijacker*: Traditional hijacker – does not deliberately avoid RCs.
  - *Realistic hijacker*: Limited knowledge inferred from routes public RCs disclose.
  - *Omniscient hijacker*: Knows routing policies of every AS in the topology.

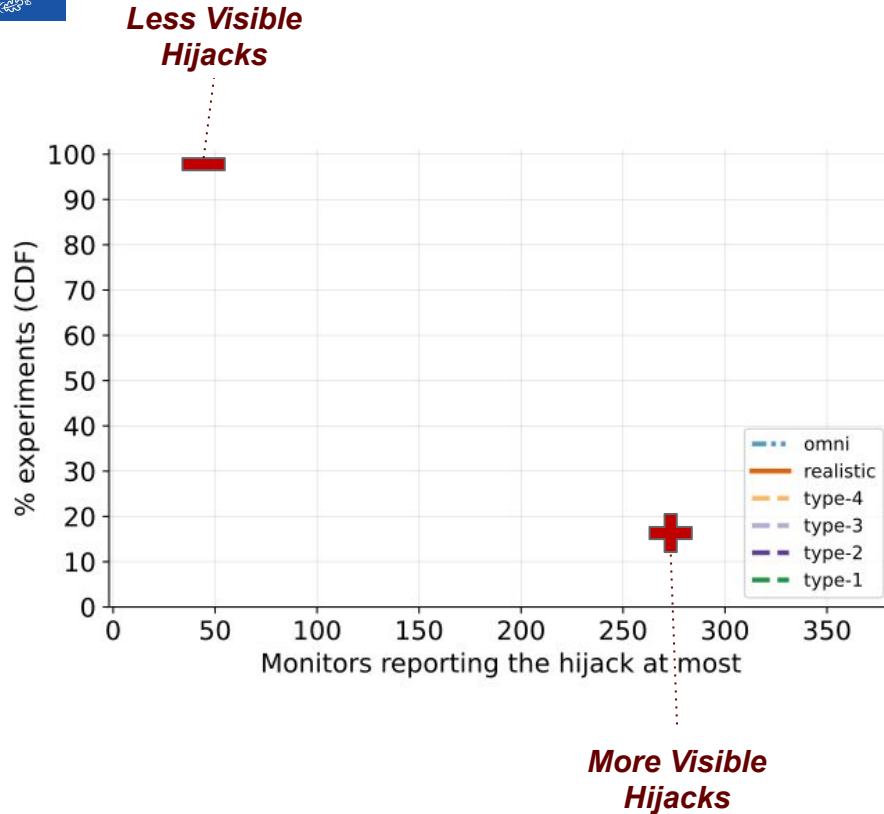
# Knowledge Routing Policies Matters – Visibility



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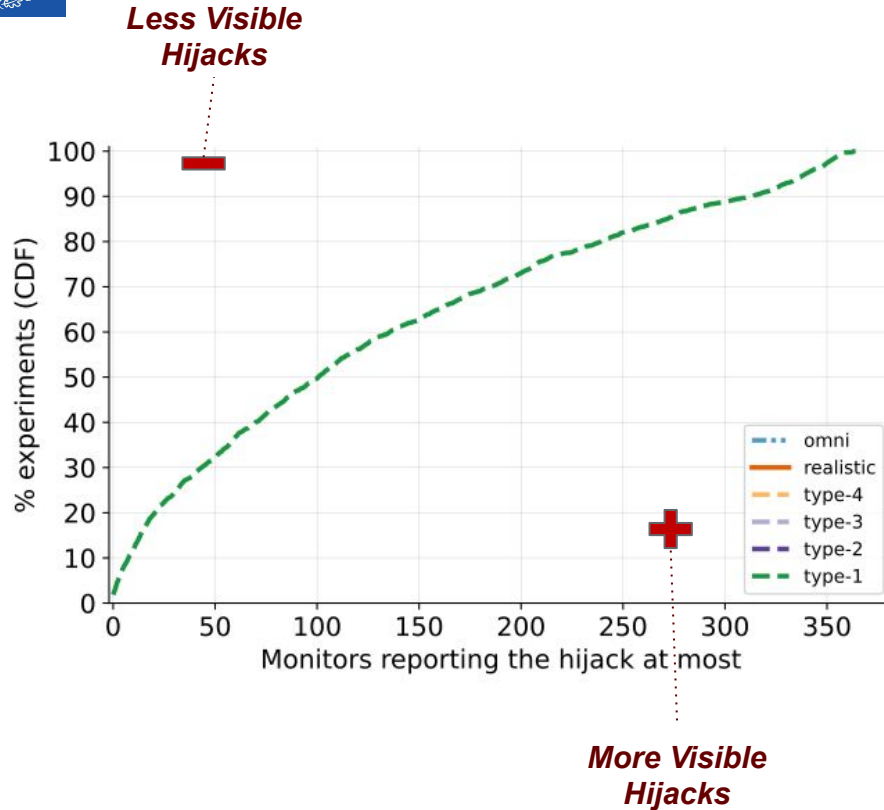
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- Type-0: { **ASH** }
- Type-1: { **ASH**, **ASV** }
- Type-N: { **ASH**, ..., **ASV** }

*Higher Type:  
Longer forged paths*

\* Visibility results based on the AS-level graph

# Knowledge Routing Policies Matters – Visibility



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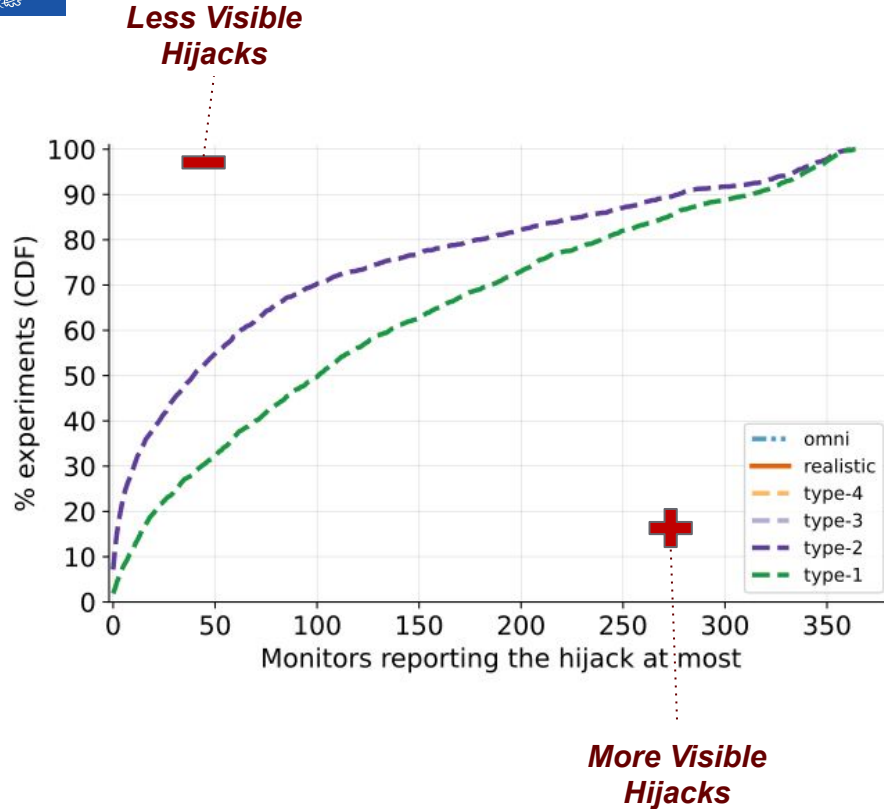
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## Visibility (2K simulations)\*:

- Type-1: 2% completely stealthy.
- Type-2: 7% completely stealthy.
- Type-3: 15% completely stealthy.
- Type-4: 21% completely stealthy.

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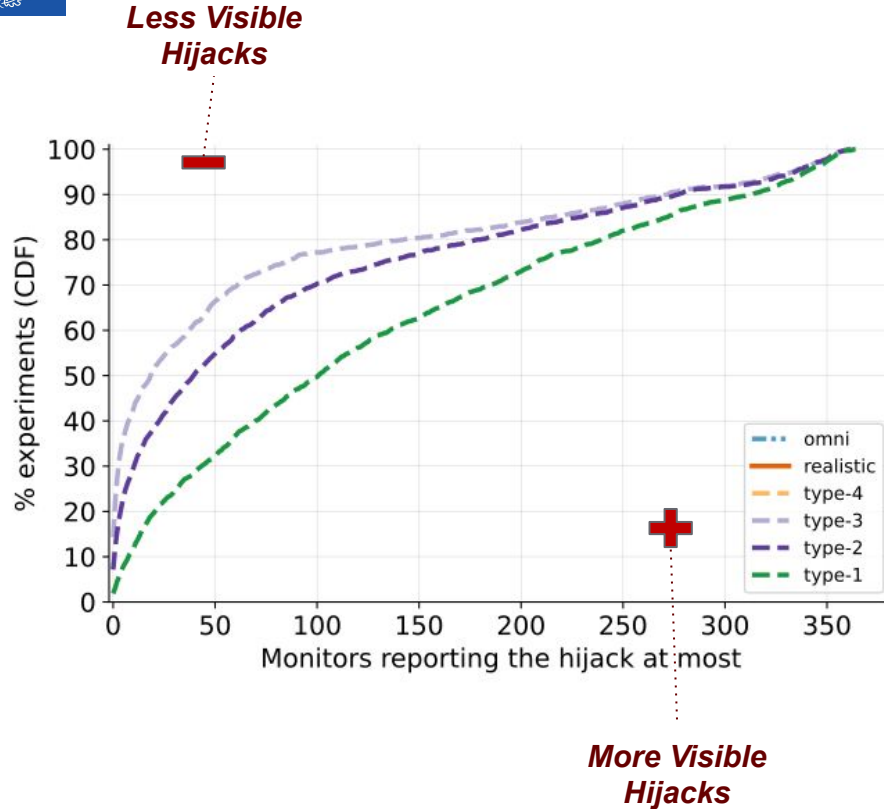
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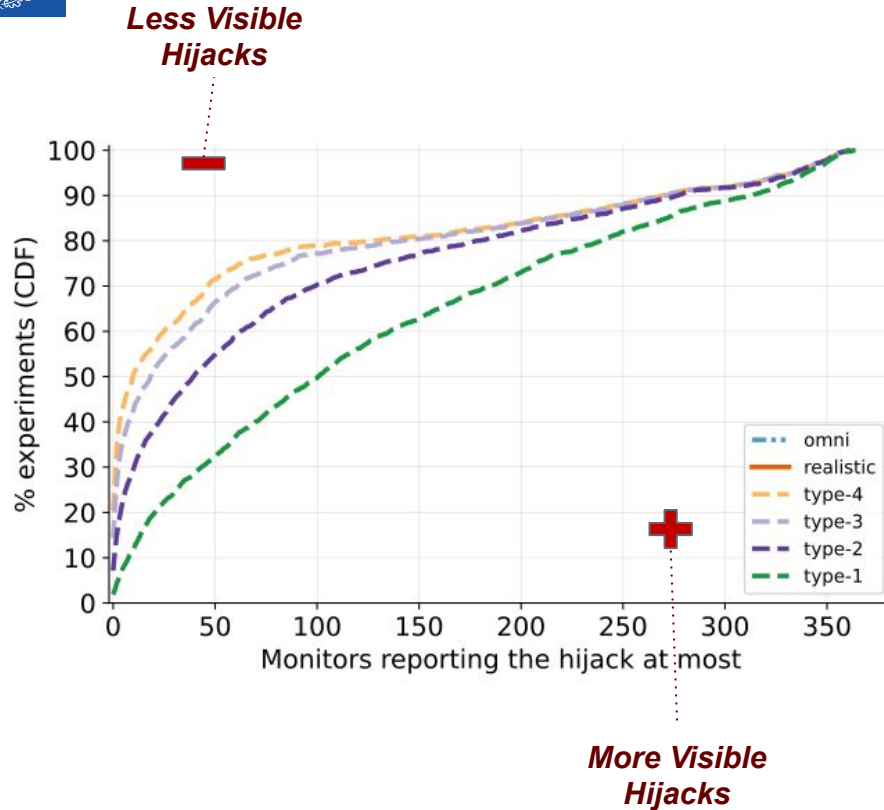
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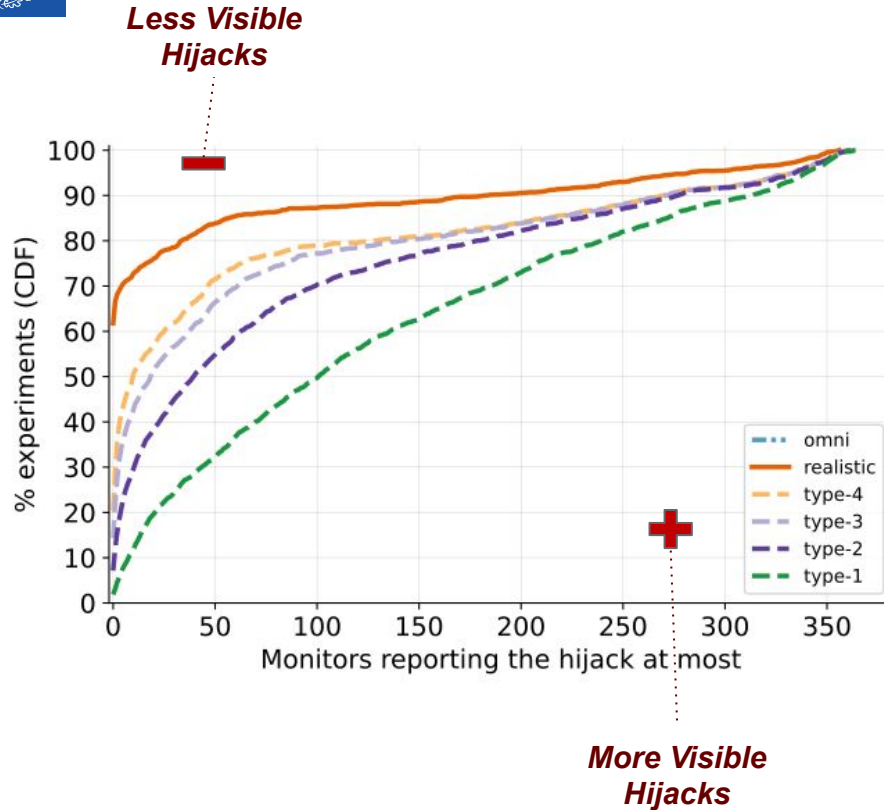
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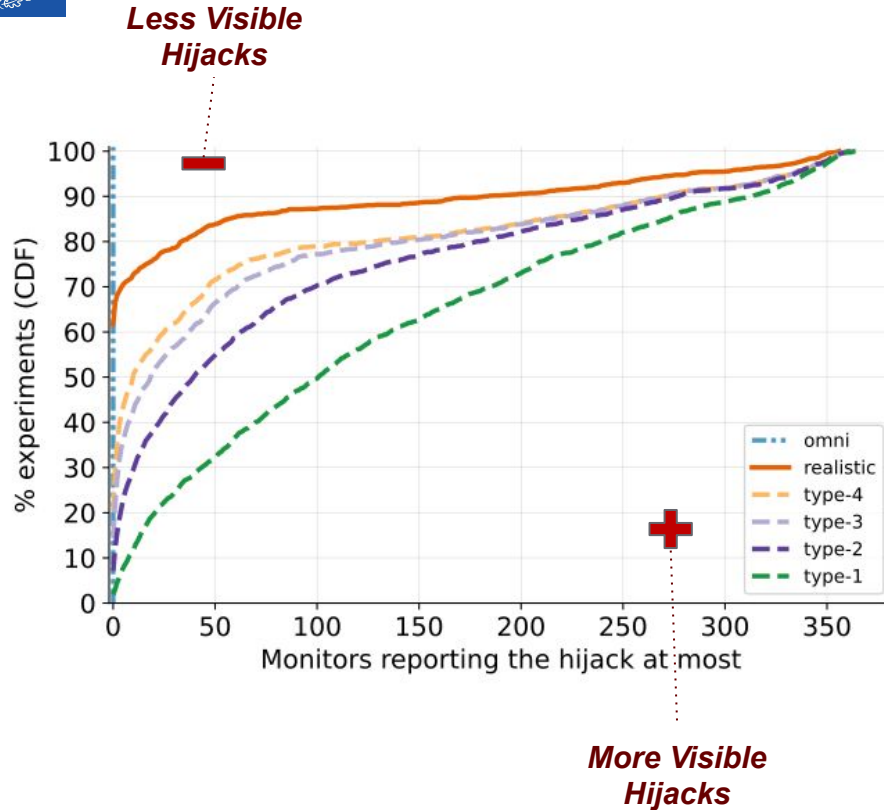
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- Real: 62% completely stealthy.

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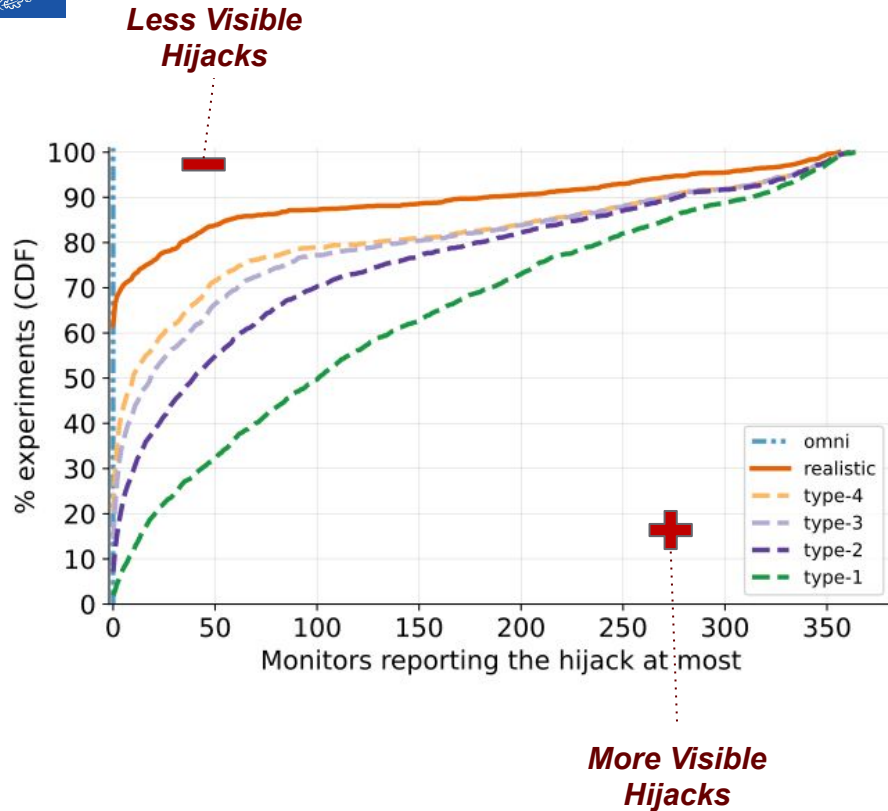
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- Real: 62% completely stealthy.
- Omni: 100% completely stealthy.

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## More Findings\*:

- Potential Impact stealthy attacks.
- Future topologies: More IXP links.
- Future topologies: More Monitors.

\* Visibility results based on the AS-level graph



## What we Learned (3/3)

- ❖ Knowledge about which BGP feeders will report the attack matters.
- ❖ Knowledge about routing policies of other ASes matters.
- ❖ Where the hijack is exported matters.



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<i>Type-1</i>	1963	0.3%	47%	99%
<i>Type-4</i>	1570	0.0%	24%	99%
<i>Realistic</i>	764	0.0%	3%	99%
<i>Omni</i>	0	0%	0%	0%

***Table: % visible sims based on where the hijack is exported.***

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## Routes over Peers

- Easier to influence:  
Path lengths matter more for such neighbors.

## Routes over Transit Providers

- Harder to influence:  
Business relations matter more.

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## *Realistic Hijackers*

- Hijacks easier to hide when exported to Peers.
- Harder to hide when exported to transits.

## *Omni Hijackers*

- Completely stealthy.

*Table: % visible sims based on where the hijack is exported.*



# Real World Evaluation: PEERING Testbed

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## Real World Set-up

- ❖ **Testbed:** PEERING Testbed to emulate BGP hijacks.
- ❖ **Victim:** Testbed site at *Wisconsin*.
- ❖ **Hijacker:** Testbed site at *GRNET* and *AMS-IX*.



# Experiment Goals

- **Goal:** Design a stealthy hijack not observable by public RCs.
- **(1):** Ability of hijacker to identify all dangerous monitors.
- **(2):** Ability of hijacker to circumvent the hijack from reaching RCs.

## **Binary classification of monitors**

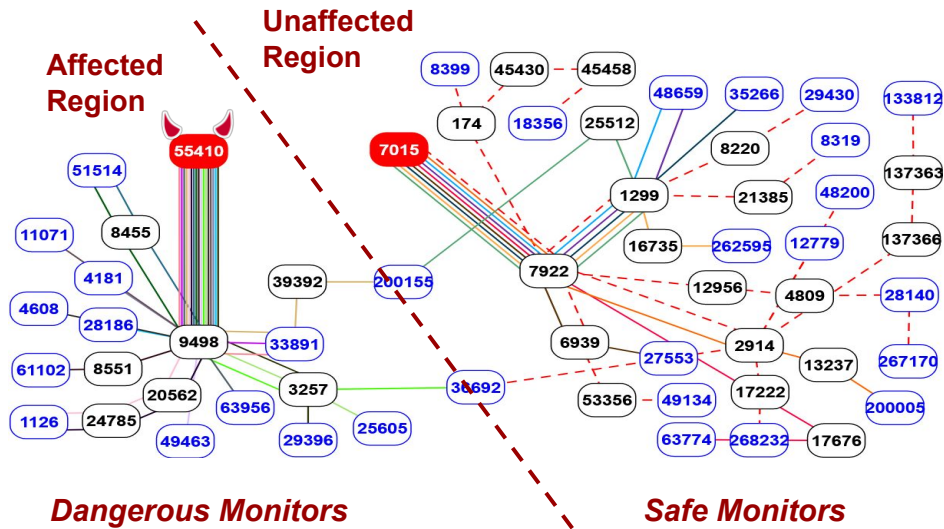
- ❖ **Safe:** Will not report the attack.
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# Why Classifying the Monitors Matters

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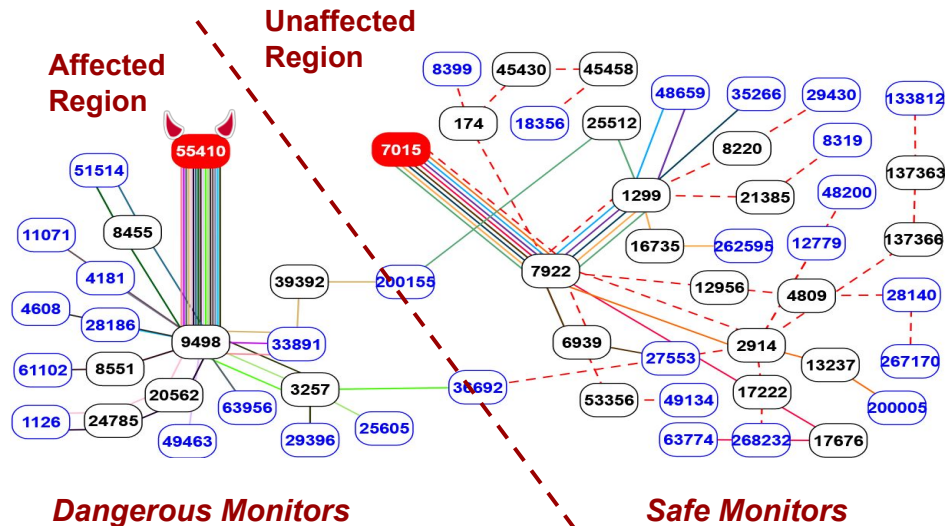


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## Binary classification of monitors

- ❖ **Safe:** Will not report the attack.
- ❖ **Dangerous:** Will report the attack.
- ❖ A Proximity Classifier (AS-path lengths).
- ❖ A business relationship Classifier (Gao-Rexford).





# Findings: Proximity vs Business Classifier

		<i>GRNET Transit ASN 5408</i>	<i>AMS Transit ASN 8283</i>	<i>AMS Transit ASN 12859</i>	<i>AMS Peer ASN 9002</i>	<i>AMS Peer ASN 6461</i>	<i>AMS Peer ASN 52320</i>
<b># Total Monitors</b>							
<b>% Monitors Correctly Classified Proximity Classifier</b>	<i>Accuracy</i>						
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	<i>Dangerous (Safe)</i>	13% (99%)	62% (93%)	75% (91%)	100% (97%)	<b>10%</b> (94%)	100% (99%)
<b>% Monitors Correctly Classified Business Classifier</b>	<i>Accuracy</i>						
	<i>Dangerous (Safe)</i>						

## Findings: Transit Providers

Proximity Classifier: Average Accuracy = 78%  
NOT sufficient to identify all dangerous monitors  
 (Overestimates **Safe** Monitors)

## Findings: IXP Peers

Proximity Classifier: Average Accuracy = 96%  
 Possible to identify all dangerous monitors  
 (But outliers may exist)

# Findings: Proximity vs Business Classifier

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<b>% Monitors Correctly Classified Business Classifier</b>	<i>Accuracy</i>	90%	92%	89%	Same	Same	Same
	<i>Dangerous (Safe)</i>	95% (89%)	96% (86%)	97% (81%)	Same	Same	Same

## Findings: Transit Providers

**Business Classifier: Average Accuracy = 90%**  
**Dangerous monitor misclassifications reduced by <= 91%**  
**(At the cost of misclassifying some safe monitors)**

## Findings: IXP Peers

**Practically Unchanged**





# Suggestions: Dealing with Hijackers that Avoid RCs

- ❖ RQ: How vulnerable are Route Collectors to stealthy attacks?
- ❖ Problem: Route collectors may be vulnerable to stealthy attacks if:
  - **(1)** BGP Feeders reports their best routes to RC and
  - **(2)** The Route Collector is public.
- ❖ Prevention methods:
  - Better BGP filtering / Following best practices (ASPA helps!).
  - New feeders: feeders in more strategic locations.
  - Smarter feeders: Forwarding suspicious routes to RC (not just the best route).
  - Feeders Forwarding all routes to RCs (BMP).

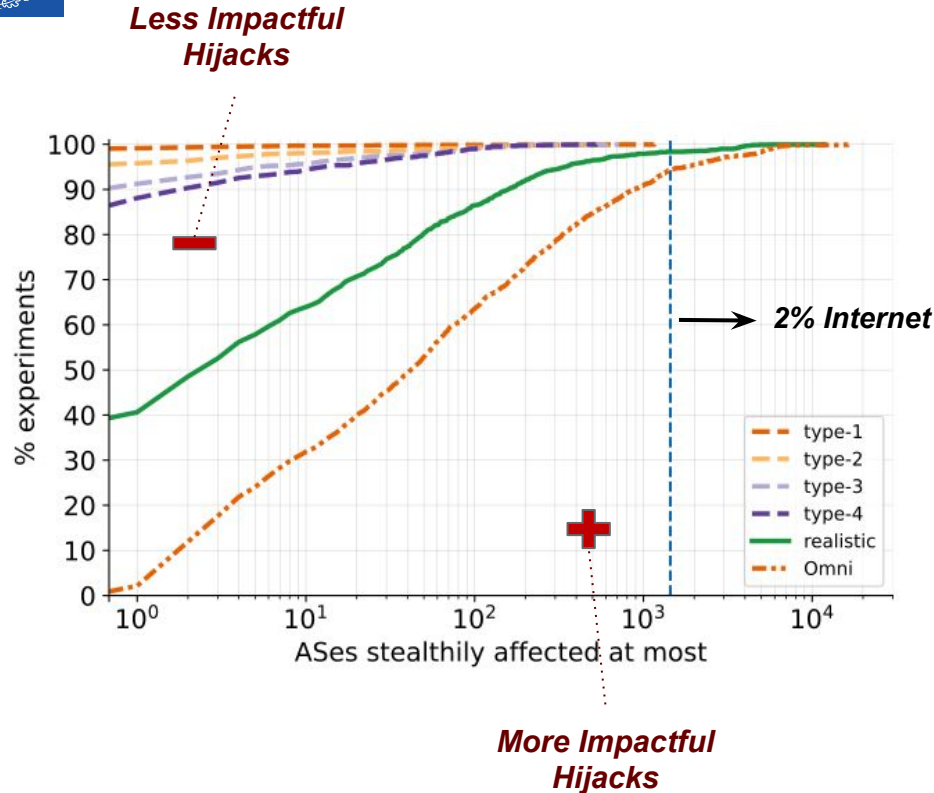
Questions?





# Appendix

# Knowledge Routing Policies Matters – Impact



## Baseline Hijackers (forged path shape):

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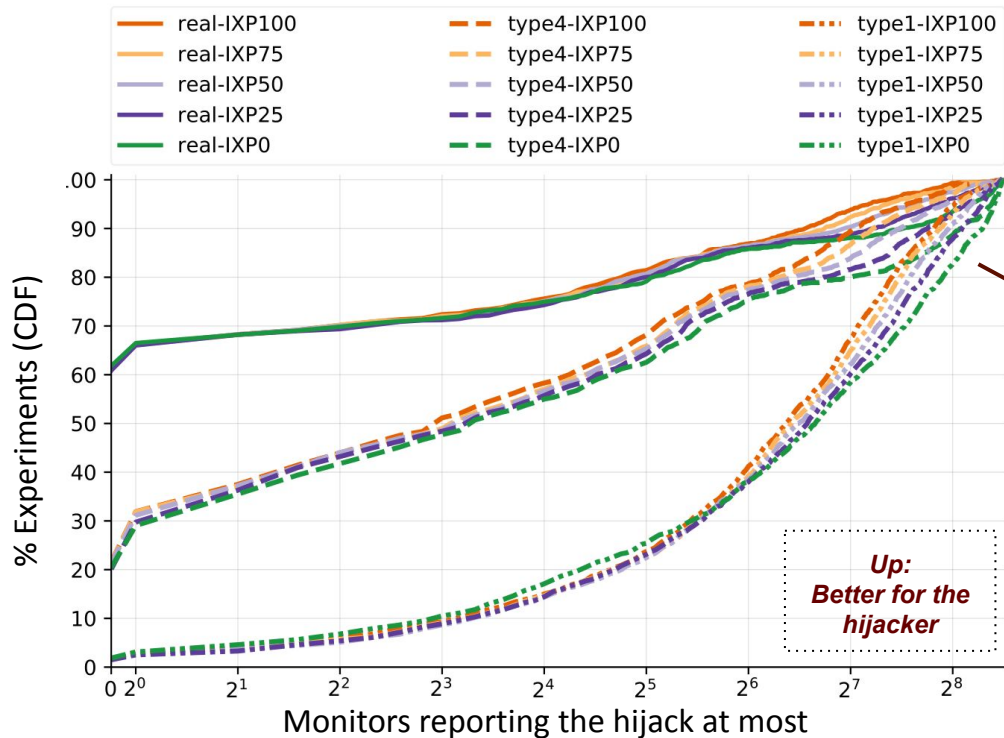
Cannot stealthily intercept > 2% Internet

## Realistic & Omni Hijackers:

- Stealthily intercepts > 2% Internet:  
1.65% and 5.65% sims (respectively)
- Up to 16.2% & 23.5% Internet  
Stealthily intercepted (respectively)

\* Results based on the AS-level graph

# Appendix – Topologies With More IXP Links



## Adding more IXP links

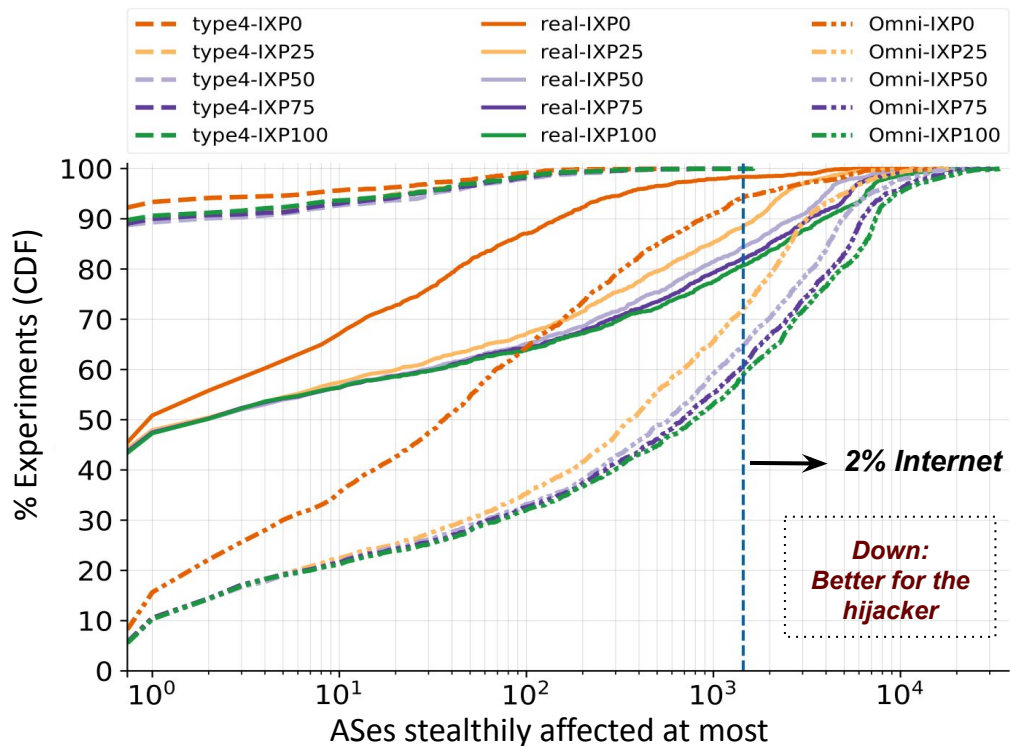
- No impact to success rate
- Visible hijacks: stealthier

## 90th percentile visibility

- Type-1: 28% less monitors
- Type-4: 50.9% less monitors
- Realistic: 48.3% less monitors
- Omni: Still invisible

\* Results based on the AS-level graph

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## Adding more IXP links

- **Stealthy hijacks more impactful**

## Traditional Topology (IXP0)

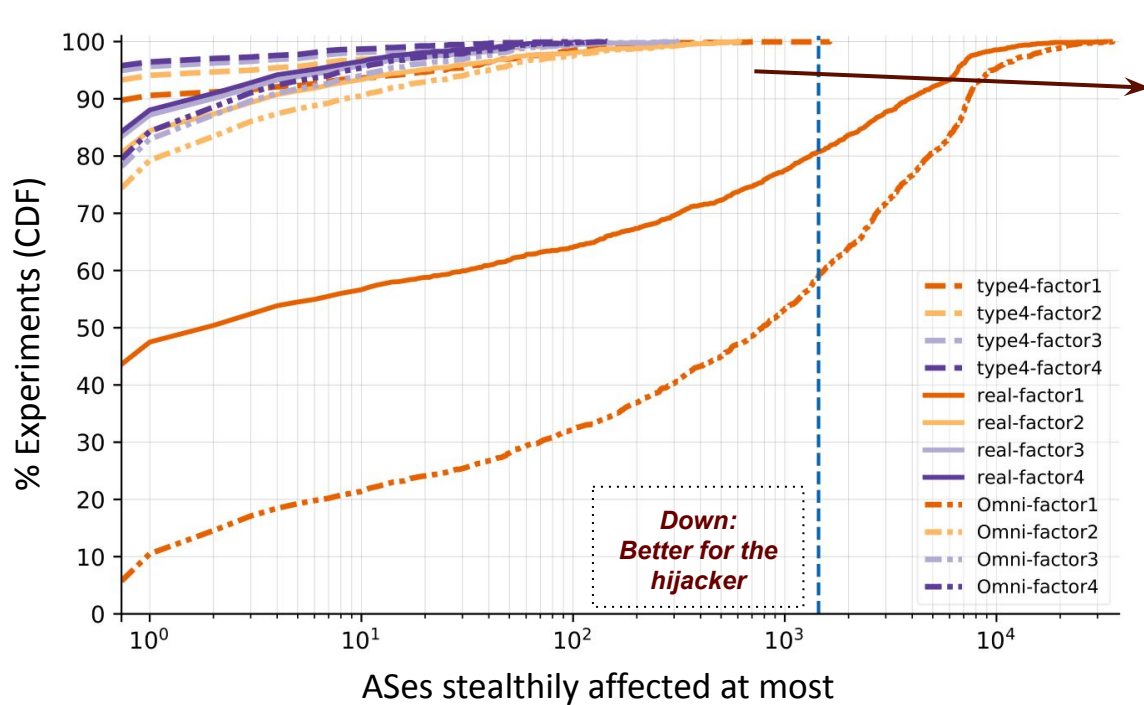
- **Type-1: 0.7% affected ASes**
- **Realistic: 16.2% affected ASes**
- **Omni: 23.5% affected ASes**

## Fully IXP Topology (IXP100)

- **Type-1: 2.2% affected ASes**
- **Realistic: 45.5% affected ASes**
- **Omni: 49.0% affected ASes**

\* Results based on the AS-level graph

# Appendix – Topologies With More Monitors

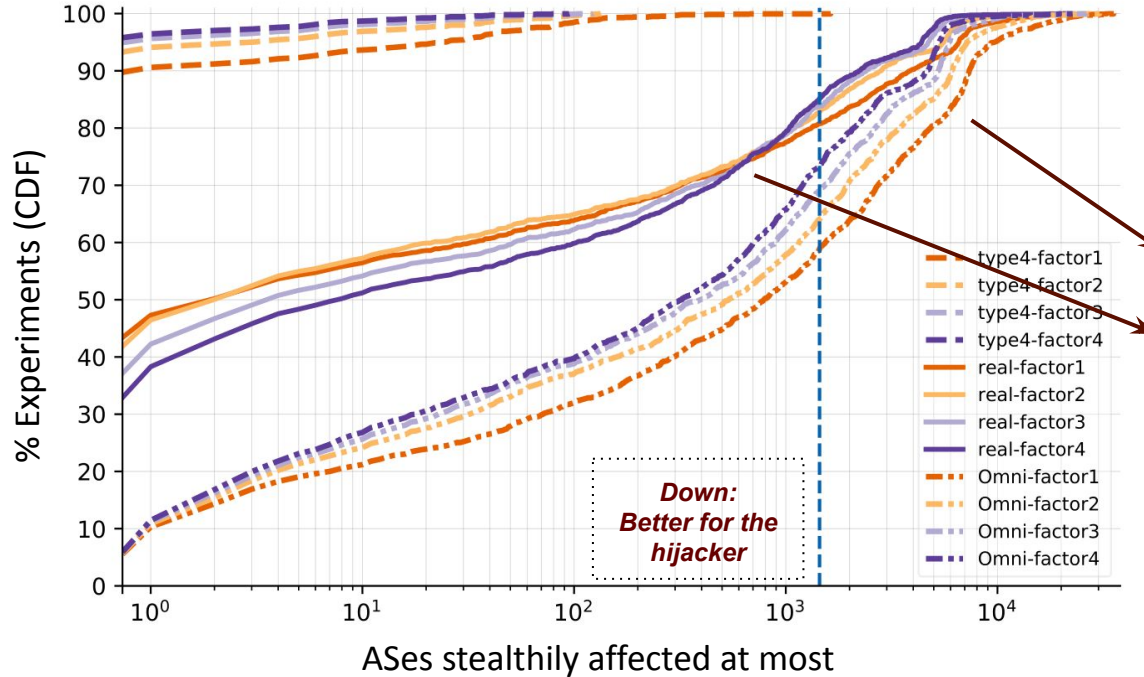


## Non-Reactive Hijackers

- Prevents attacks affecting > 2% Internet

\* Results based on the AS-level graph

# Appendix – Topologies With More Monitors



## Non-Reactive Hijackers

- Prevents attacks affecting > 2% Internet

## Reactive Hijackers

- **Realistic: 28.8% affected ASes down from 45.6%**
- **Omni: 31.8% affected ASes down from 49.0%**
- **Realistic Hijackers may benefit if < 800 ASes affected**

\* Results based on the AS-level graph

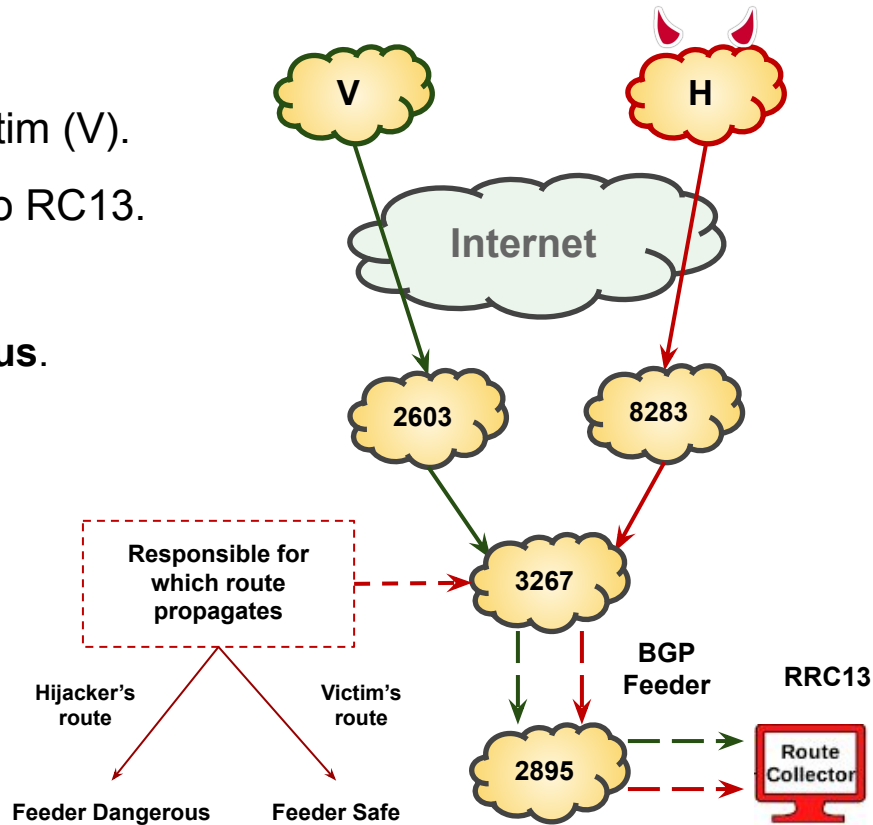


# Classifying the Feeders: A Real World Example

- Hijacker (H) announces same prefix as Victim (V).
- AS3267 chooses which route propagates to RC13.
  - ◆ IF V route propagates: Feeder **safe**.
  - ◆ IF H route propagates: Feeder **dangerous**.

## Classifiers Tested:

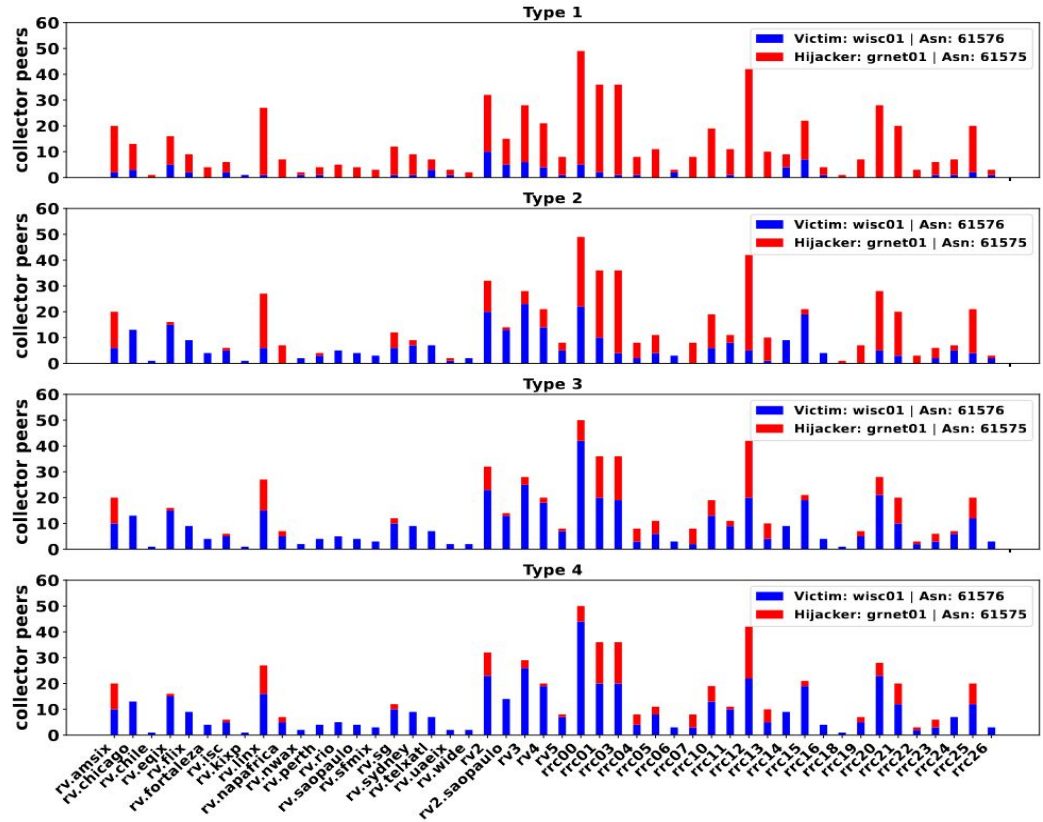
- ❖ A Proximity Classifier (AS-path lengths).
- ❖ A business relationship Classifier (Gao-Rexford).



# Real World: PEERING Testbed

❖ How the hijack visibility changes (per RC) by announcing less-preferred hijacks.

- ❖ Type-0: { **ASH** }
- ❖ Type-1: { **ASH**, **ASV** }
- ❖ Type-N: { **ASH**, ..., **ASV** }



# Proximity Classifier – Reason for Misclassifications

<i>Proximity Classifier: Reason for Misclassification (FP / FN)</i>	<b>GRnet Transit ASN 5408</b>	<b>AMS Transit ASN 8283</b>	<b>AMS Transit ASN 12859</b>	<b>AMS Peer ASN 9002</b>	<b>AMS Peer ASN 6461</b>	<b>AMS Peer ASN 52320</b>
<b>1. Shortest AS-Path Violation</b>	<b>FP: 1 FN: 140</b>	<b>FP: 2 FN: 158</b>	<b>FP: 0 FN: 79</b>	<b>FP: 0 FN: 0</b>	<b>FP: 1 FN: 8</b>	<b>FP: 0 FN: 0</b>
<i>a) Longer Path preferred</i>	<i>FP: 0 FN: 139</i>	<i>FP: 1 FN: 157</i>	<i>FP: 0 FN: 79</i>	<i>FP: 0 FN: 0</i>	<i>FP: 1 FN: 0</i>	<i>FP: 0 FN: 0</i>
<i>b) Victim Path not observed</i>	<i>FP: 1 FN: 0</i>	<i>FP: 1 FN: 0</i>	<i>FP: 0 FN: 0</i>	<i>FP: 0 FN: 0</i>	<i>FP: 0 FN: 0</i>	<i>FP: 0 FN: 0</i>
<i>c) Hijacker Path not observed</i>	<i>FP: 0 FN: 1</i>	<i>FP: 0 FN: 1</i>	<i>FP: 0 FN: 0</i>	<i>FP: 0 FN: 0</i>	<i>FP: 0 FN: 8</i>	<i>FP: 0 FN: 0</i>
<b>3. Tie breakers Violations</b>	<b>FP: 2 FN: 0</b>	<b>FP: 15 FN: 0</b>	<b>FP: 29 FN: 0</b>	<b>FP: 15 FN: 0</b>	<b>FP: 33 FN: 0</b>	<b>FP: 1 FN: 0</b>
<i>d) Victim path preferred</i>	<i>FP: 2 FN: 0</i>	<i>FP: 15 FN: 0</i>	<i>FP: 29 FN: 0</i>	<i>FP: 15 FN: 0</i>	<i>FP: 33 FN: 0</i>	<i>FP: 1 FN: 0</i>
<b>Total (FP / FN)</b>	<b>FP: 3 FN: 140</b>	<b>FP: 17 FN: 158</b>	<b>FP: 29 FN: 79</b>	<b>FP: 15 FN: 0</b>	<b>FP: 34 FN: 8</b>	<b>FP: 1 FN: 0</b>

# Gao-Rexford Classifier – Reason for Misclassifications

<i>Gao Rexford Classifier Reason for Misclassification (FP / FN)</i>	<b>GRnet Transit ASN 5408</b>	<b>AMS Transit ASN 8283</b>	<b>AMS Transit ASN 12859</b>	<b>AMS Peer ASN 9002</b>	<b>AMS Peer ASN 6461</b>	<b>AMS Peer ASN 52320</b>
<b>1. Gao Rexford Violation</b>	<b>FP: 52 FN: 0</b>	<b>FP: 27 FN: 0</b>	<b>FP: 48 FN: 0</b>	<b>FP: 3 FN: 0</b>	<b>FP: 2 FN: 0</b>	<b>FP: 1 FN: 0</b>
<i>a) customer - provider</i>	<i>FP: 1 FN: 0</i>	<i>FP: 0 FN: 0</i>	<i>FP: 0 FN: 0</i>	<i>FP: 0 FN: 0</i>	<i>FP: 0 FN: 0</i>	<i>FP: 0 FN: 0</i>
<i>b) customer - peer</i>	<i>FP: 0 FN: 0</i>	<i>FP: 6 FN: 0</i>	<i>FP: 20 FN: 0</i>	<i>FP: 0 FN: 0</i>	<i>FP: 0 FN: 0</i>	<i>FP: 0 FN: 0</i>
<i>c) peer - provider</i>	<i>FP: 51 FN: 0</i>	<i>FP: 21 FN: 0</i>	<i>FP: 28 FN: 0</i>	<i>FP: 3 FN: 0</i>	<i>FP: 2 FN: 0</i>	<i>FP: 1 FN: 0</i>
<b>2. Shortest AS-Path Violation</b>	<b>FP: 1 FN: 8</b>	<b>FP: 2 FN: 17</b>	<b>FP: 0 FN: 9</b>	<b>FP: 0 FN: 0</b>	<b>FP: 1 FN: 8</b>	<b>FP: 0 FN: 0</b>
<i>d) Longer Path preferred (Same Gao relation)</i>	<i>FP: 0 FN: 4</i>	<i>FP: 0 FN: 13</i>	<i>FP: 0 FN: 9</i>	<i>FP: 0 FN: 0</i>	<i>FP: 1 FN: 0</i>	<i>FP: 0 FN: 0</i>
<i>e) Longer Path preferred (Unknown relation)</i>	<i>FP: 0 FN: 3</i>	<i>FP: 1 FN: 3</i>	<i>FP: 0 FN: 0</i>	<i>FP: 0 FN: 0</i>	<i>FP: 0 FN: 0</i>	<i>FP: 0 FN: 0</i>
<i>f) Victim Path not observed</i>	<i>FP: 1 FN: 0</i>	<i>FP: 1 FN: 0</i>	<i>FP: 0 FN: 0</i>	<i>FP: 0 FN: 0</i>	<i>FP: 0 FN: 0</i>	<i>FP: 0 FN: 0</i>
<i>g) Hijacker Path not observed</i>	<i>FP: 0 FN: 1</i>	<i>FP: 0 FN: 1</i>	<i>FP: 0 FN: 0</i>	<i>FP: 0 FN: 0</i>	<i>FP: 0 FN: 8</i>	<i>FP: 0 FN: 0</i>
<b>3. Tie breakers Violations</b>	<b>FP: 2 FN: 0</b>	<b>FP: 8 FN: 0</b>	<b>FP: 17 FN: 0</b>	<b>FP: 15 FN: 0</b>	<b>FP: 33 FN: 0</b>	<b>FP: 1 FN: 0</b>
<i>h) Victim path preferred</i>	<i>FP: 2 FN: 0</i>	<i>FP: 8 FN: 0</i>	<i>FP: 17 FN: 0</i>	<i>FP: 15 FN: 0</i>	<i>FP: 33 FN: 0</i>	<i>FP: 1 FN: 0</i>
<b>Total (FP / FN)</b>	<b>FP: 55 FN: 8</b>	<b>FP: 37 FN: 17</b>	<b>FP: 65 FN: 9</b>	<b>FP: 18 FN: 0</b>	<b>FP: 36 FN: 8</b>	<b>FP: 2 FN: 0</b>



# More Results

- ❖ For more experiment results: Refer to our [\*Published Journal\*](#).