ncplib Documentation

Release 6.1.0

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Jun 11, 2022

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NCP library for Python 3, developed by CRFS.

CHAPTER 1

Features

- NCP client.
- NCP server.
- Asynchronous connections via asyncio.

CHAPTER 2

Resources

- Documentation is on Read the Docs.
- Examples, issue tracking and source code are on GitHub.

Chapter $\mathbf{3}$

Usage

3.1 Installation

3.1.1 Requirements

ncplib supports Python 3.7 and above. It has no other dependencies.

3.1.2 Installing

It's recommended to install *ncplib* in a virtual environment using venv.

Install *ncplib* using pip.

pip install ncplib

3.1.3 Upgrading

Upgrade *ncplib* using pip:

pip install --upgrade ncplib

Important: Check the Changelog before upgrading.

3.2 NCP client

ncplib allows you to connect to a NCP server and issue commands.

3.2.1 Overview

Connecting to a NCP server

Connect to a *NCP server* using *connect()*. The returned *Connection* will automatically close when the connection block exits.

```
import ncplib
async with await ncplib.connect("127.0.0.1", 9999) as connection:
    pass # Your client code here.
# Connection is automatically closed here.
```

Sending a packet

Send a NCP packet containing a single NCP field using Connection.send():

```
response = connection.send("DSPC", "TIME", SAMP=1024, FCTR=1200)
```

Receiving replies to a packet

The return value of Connection.send() is a Response. Receive a single NCP field reply using Response. recv():

field = await response.recv()

Alternatively, use the *Response* as an *async iterator* to loop over multiple *NCP field* replies:

```
async for field in response:
pass
```

Important: The *async for loop* will only terminate when the underlying connection closes.

Accessing field data

The return value of *Response.recv()* is a *Field*, representing a *NCP field*. Access contained *NCP parameters* using item access:

print(field["TSDC"])

Advanced usage

• NCP connection documentation.

3.2.2 API reference

ncplib.connect (host: str, port: Optional[int] = None, *, remote_hostname: Optional[str] = None, hostname: Optional[str] = None, connection_username: Optional[str] = None, connection_domain: str = ", timeout: int = 60, auto_erro: bool = True, auto_warn: bool = True, auto_ackn: bool = True, ssl: bool | ssl.SSLContext = False, username: str = ", password: str = ") → Connection

Connects to a *NCP server*.

Parameters

- **host** (*str*) The hostname of the *NCP server*. This can be an IP address or domain name.
- **port** (*int*) The port number of the *NCP* server.
- **remote_hostname** (*str*) The identifying hostname for the remote end of the connection. If omitted, this will be the host:port of the NCP server.
- **hostname** (*str*) The identifying hostname in the client connection. Defaults to the system hostname.
- **connection_username** (*str*) The identifying username in the client connection. Defaults to the login name of the system user.
- **connection_domain** (*str*) The identifying domain in the client connection.
- **timeout** (*int*) The network timeout (in seconds). Applies to: connecting, receiving a packet, closing connection.
- **auto_erro** (bool) Automatically raise a *CommandError* on receiving an ERRO *NCP* parameter.
- auto_warn (bool) Automatically issue a CommandWarning on receiving a WARN NCP parameter.
- **auto_ackn** (bool) Automatically ignore NCP fields containing an ACKN NCP parameter.
- **ssl** (*bool*) Connect to the Node using an encrypted (TLS) connection. Requires TLS support on the Node.
- **username** (*str*) Authenticate with the Node using the given username. Requires authentication support on the Node.
- **password** (*str*) Authenticate with the Node using the given password. Requires authentication support on the Node.

Raises ncplib.NCPError - if the NCP connection failed.

Returns The client Connection.

Return type Connection

3.3 NCP server

ncplib allows you to create a NCP server and respond to incoming *NCP client* connections.

3.3.1 Overview

Defining a connection handler

A connection handler is a coroutine that starts whenever a new *NCP client* connects to the server. The provided *Connection* allows you to receive incoming NCP commands as *Field* instances.

```
async def client_connected(connection):
    pass
```

When the connection handler exits, the *Connection* will automatically close.

Listening for an incoming packet

When writing a *NCP server*, you most likely want to wait for the connected client to execute a command. Within your client_connected function, Listen for an incomining *NCP field* using *Connection.recv()*.

field = await connection.recv()

Alternatively, use the Connection as an async iterator to loop over multiple NCP field replies:

```
async for field in connection:
pass
```

Important: The *async for loop* will only terminate when the underlying connection closes.

Accessing field data

The return value of Connection.recv() is a Field, representing a NCP field.

Access information about the NCP field and enclosing NCP packet:

```
print(field.packet_type)
print(field.name)
```

Access contained NCP parameters using item access:

print(field["FCTR"])

Replying to the incoming field

Send a reply to an incoming Field using Field.send().

field.send(ACKN=1)

Putting it all together

A simple client_connected callback might like this:

```
async def client_connected(connection):
    async for field in connection:
    if field.packet_type == "DSPC" and field.name == "TIME":
        field.send(ACNK=1)
        # Do some more command processing here.
    else:
        field.send(ERRO="Unknown command", ERRC=400)
        break
```

Start the server

Start a new NCP server.

```
loop = asyncio.get_event_loop()
server = loop.run_until_complete(_start_server(client_connected))
try:
    loop.run_forever()
finally:
    server.close()
    loop.run_until_complete(server.wait_closed())
```

Advanced usage

• NCP connection documentation.

3.3.2 API reference

Parameters

- **client_connected** A coroutine function taking a single *Connection* argument representing the client connection. When the connection handler exits, the *Connection* will automatically close. If the client closes the connection, the connection handler will exit.
- **host** (*str*) The host to bind the server to.
- **port** (*int*) The port to bind the server to.
- **timeout** (*int*) The network timeout (in seconds). Applies to: creating server, receiving a packet, closing connection, closing server.
- **start_serving** (*bool*) Causes the created server to start accepting connections immediately.
- **ssl** (*ssl*.*SSLContext*) Start the server using an encrypted (TLS) connection.
- **authenticate** A callable taking a username and password argument, returning True if the authentication is successful, and false if not. When present, authentication is mandatory.

Returns The created Server.

Return type Server

3.4 NCP connection

NCP connections are used by the NCP client and NCP server to represent each side of a connection.

3.4.1 Overview

Getting started

- NCP client documentation.
- NCP server documentation.

Spawning tasks

Spawn a concurrent task to handle long-running commands:

```
import asyncio
loop = asyncio.get_event_loop()
async def handle_dspc_time(field):
    field.send(ACKN=1)
    await asyncio.sleep(10)  # Simulate a blocking task.
    field.send(TSDC=0, TIMM=1)
for field in connection:
    if field.packet_type == "DSPC" and field.name == "TIME":
        # Spawn a concurrent task to avoid blocking the accept loop.
        loop.create_task(handle_dspc_time(field))
    # Handle other field types here.
```

3.4.2 API reference

Important: Do not instantiate these classes directly. Use *connect()* to create a *NCP client* connection. Use *start_server()* to create a *NCP server*.

class ncplib.Connection (reader:asyncio.streams.StreamReader,writer:asyncio.streams.StreamWriter,cio.streams.StreamWriter,predicate:Callable[[ncplib.connection.Field],bool],*,logger:logging.Logger,remote_hostname:str,A connection between a NCP client and a NCP server.NCP server.streams.StreamWriter,streams.StreamWriter,

Connections can be used as *async iterators* to loop over each incoming *Field*:

async for field in connection:
 pass

Important: The *async for loop* will only terminate when the underlying connection closes.

Connections can also be used as *async context managers* to automatically close the connection:

```
async with connection:
    pass
# Connection is automatically closed.
```

logger

The logging.Logger used by this connection. Log messages will be prefixed with the host and port of the connection.

remote_hostname

The identifying hostname for the remote end of the connection.

$\texttt{close()} \rightarrow None$

Closes the connection.

Hint: If you use the connection as an *async context manager*, there's no need to call *Connection*. *close()* manually.

$\texttt{is_closing()} \rightarrow bool$

Returns True if the connection is closing.

A closing connection should not be written to.

recv() \rightarrow ncplib.connection.Field

Waits for the next *Field* received by the connection.

Raises *ncplib*.*NCPError* – if a field could not be retrieved from the connection.

Returns The next *Field* received.

Return type *Field*

recv_field (*packet_type: str, field_name: str*) \rightarrow ncplib.connection.Field Waits for the next matching *Field* received by the connection.

Parameters

- **packet_type** (*str*) The packet type, must be a valid *identifier*.
- field_name (str) The field name, must be a valid *identifier*.

Raises *ncplib*. *NCPError* – if a field could not be retrieved from the connection.

Returns The next Field received.

Return type *Field*

send (*packet_type: str, field_name: str, **params*) \rightarrow ncplib.connection.Response Sends a *NCP packet* containing a single *NCP field*.

Parameters

- packet_type (*str*) The packet type, must be a valid *identifier*.
- field_name (str) The field name, must be a valid *identifier*.
- **params Keyword arguments, one per NCP parameter. Each parameter name should be a valid *identifier*, and each parameter value should be one of the supported value types.

Returns A *Response* providing access to any *Field* instances received in reply to the sent packet.

Return type Response

Raises

- **ValueError** if any of the packet, field or parameter names were not a valid *identifier*, or any of the parameter values were invalid.
- **TypeError** if any of the parameter values were not one of the supported *value types*.

send_packet (*packet_type: str*, ***fields*) \rightarrow ncplib.connection.Response Sends a *NCP packet* containing multiple *NCP fields*.

Hint: Prefer *send()* unless you need to send multiple fields in a single packet.

Parameters

- packet_type (str) The packet type, must be a valid *identifier*.
- **fields Keyword arguments, one per field. Each field name should be a valid *identi-fier*, and the field value should be a dict of parameter names mapped to parameter values. Each parameter name should be a valid *identifier*, and each parameter value should be one of the supported *value types*.

Returns A *Response* providing access to any *Field* instances received in reply to the sent packet.

Return type Response

Raises

- **ValueError** if any of the packet, field or parameter names were not a valid *identifier*, or any of the parameter values were invalid.
- **TypeError** if any of the parameter values were not one of the supported *value types*.

transport

The asyncio.WriteTransport used by this connection.

wait_closed() \rightarrow None

Waits for the connection to finish closing.

Hint: If you use the connection as an *async context manager*, there's no need to call *Connection*. *wait_closed()* manually.

class ncplib.**Response**(connection: ncplib.connection.Connection, packet_type: str, expected_fields: Set[Tuple[str, int]])

A response to a NCP packet, returned by Connection.send(), Connection.send_packet() and Field.send().

Provides access to any Field received in reply to the sent packet.

Responses can be used as *async iterators* to loop over each incoming *Field*:

async for field in response: pass

Important: The *async for loop* will only terminate when the underlying connection closes.

recv() \rightarrow ncplib.connection.Field

Waits for the next *Field* received in reply to the sent *NCP* packet.

Raises ncplib. NCPError - if a field could not be retrieved from the connection.

Returns The next *Field* received.

Return type Field

recv_field (*field_name: str*) \rightarrow ncplib.connection.Field

Waits for the next matching *Field* received in reply to the sent *NCP* packet.

Hint: Prefer *recv()* unless the sent packet contained multiple fields.

Parameters field_name (*str*) – The field name, must be a valid *identifier*.

Raises ncplib. NCPError - if a field could not be retrieved from the connection.

Returns The next Field received.

Return type Field

A NCP field received by a Connection.

Access NCP parameter values using item access:

print(field["PDAT"])

connection

The Connection that created this field.

packet_type

The type of NCP packet that contained this field. This will be a valid identifier.

packet_id

The ID of the of NCP packet that contained this field.

packet_timestamp

A timezone-aware datetime.datetime describing when the containing packet was sent.

name

The name of the NCP field. This will be a valid identifier.

id

The unique int ID of this field.

send (***params*) \rightarrow ncplib.connection.Response

Sends a *NCP packet* containing a single field in reply to this field.

- **Parameters **params** Keyword arguments, one per *NCP parameter*. Each parameter name should be a valid *identifier*, and each parameter value should be one of the supported *value types*.
- **Returns** A *Response* providing access to any *Field* instances received in reply to the sent packet.

Return type Response

Raises

- **ValueError** if any of the packet, field or parameter names were not a valid *identifier*, or any of the parameter values were invalid.
- **TypeError** if any of the parameter values were not one of the supported *value types*.

3.5 Errors and warnings

NCP errors and warnings.

3.5.1 API reference

```
exception ncplib.NCPError
Base class for all exceptions thrown by ncplib.
```

- **exception** ncplib.NetworkError Raised when an NCP Connection cannot connect, or disconnects unexpectedly.
- exception ncplib.AuthenticationError Raised when an NCP Connection cannot authenticate.
- **exception** ncplib.NetworkTimeoutError Raised when an NCP *Connection* times out while performing network activity.
- exception ncplib.ConnectionClosed Raised when an NCP Connection is closed gracefully.
- **exception** ncplib.**CommandError** (*field: Field, detail: str, code: int*) Raised by the *NCP client* when the *NCP server* sends a *NCP field* containing an ERRO parameter.

Can be disabled by setting auto_erro to False in ncplib.connect().

field

The *ncplib*.*Field* that triggered the error.

detail

The human-readable str message from the server.

code

The int code from the server,

exception ncplib.DecodeError

Raised when a non-recoverable error was encountered in a NCP packet.

exception ncplib.CommandWarning(field: Field, detail: str, code: int)

Issued by the NCP client when the NCP server sends a NCP field containing a WARN parameter.

Can be disabled by setting auto_warn to False in ncplib.connect().

field

The *ncplib*.*Field* that triggered the error.

detail

The human-readable str message from the server.

code

The int code from the server,

```
exception ncplib.DecodeWarning
```

Issued when a recoverable error was encountered in a NCP packet.

3.6 Value types

3.6.1 Overview

NCP data types are mapped onto python types as follows:

NCP type	Python type
i32	int
u32	ncplib.u32
i64	ncplib.i64
u64	ncplib.u64
f32	float
f64	ncplib.f64
string	str
raw	bytes
data i8	array.array(typecode="b")
data i16	array.array(typecode="h")
data i32	array.array(typecode="i")
data u8	array.array(typecode="B")
data u16	array.array(typecode="H")
data u32	array.array(typecode="I")
data u64	array.array(typecode="L")
data i64	array.array(typecode="l")
data f32	array.array(typecode="f")
data f64	array.array(typecode="d")

3.6.2 API reference

class ncplib.u32

A u32 value.

Wrap any int values to be encoded as u32 in u32.

class ncplib.i64 An *i64* value.

all 104 value.

Wrap any int values to be encoded as i64 in *i64*.

class ncplib.u64 A u64 value.

Wrap any int values to be encoded as u64 in u64.

class ncplib.f64

A *f64* value.

Wrap any float values to be encoded as f64 in f64.

CHAPTER 4

More information

4.1 Contributing

Bug reports, bug fixes, and new features are always welcome. Please raise issues on GitHub, and submit pull requests for any new code.

4.1.1 Testing

It's recommended to test *ncplib* in a virtual environment using venv.

Run the test suite:

```
pip install -e .
python -m unittest discover tests
```

4.1.2 Contributors

ncplib was developed by CRFS and other contributors.

4.2 Glossary

identifier A str of ascii uppercase letters and numbers, at most 4 characters long, e.g. "DSPC".

NCP Node Communication Protocol, a binary communication and control protocol, developed by CRFS.

NCP field Each NCP packet contains zero or more fields. A field consists of a field name, which must be a valid *identifier*, and zero or more NCP parameters.

ncplib represents each field in an incoming NCP packet as a ncplib. Field instance.

- NCP packet The basic unit of *NCP* communication. A packet consists of a packet *type*, which must be a valid *identifier*, and zero or more *NCP fields*.
- NCP parameter Each NCP field contains zero or more parameters. A parameter consists of a parameter *name*, which must be a valid *identifier*, and a *value*, which must be one of the supported *value types*.

ncplib represents each parameter as a name/value mapping on a *ncplib*.*Field* instance.

4.3 Changelog

4.3.1 6.1.0 - 11/06/2022

• Added connection_username and connection_domain arguments to connect ().

4.3.2 6.0.1 - 23/12/2021

• Added explicit support for async_timeout 4.0.

4.3.3 6.0.0 - 23/12/2021

- Added support for NCP encrypted (TLS) connections via the ssl argument for *connect()* and *start_server()*.
- Added support for NCP authentication via the username and password arguments for *connect()*, and the authenticate argument for *start_server()*.
- **Breaking:** *start_server()* now returns a asyncio.base_events.Server, and the ncplib. Server class has been removed.

4.3.4 5.0.0 - 18/02/2021

- Added support for NCP connection timeout negotation, improving reliability and cleanup of NCP connections when supported by the remote.
- Added support for NCP data types i64, u64, f32, f64, data u64, data i64, data f32 and data f64.
- Response.recv() no longer requires the ID of the of NCP packet in replies.
- Breaking: auto_link and auto_auth arguments for connect() and start_server() removed.
- Breaking: timeout argument for *connect()* and *start_server()* must be an integer, and can no longer be None.
- Breaking: Removed timeout attribute from Connection.

4.3.5 4.1.1 - 14/09/2020

• Optimized auto_link background task.

4.3.6 4.1.0 - 07/07/2020

- Added Field.packet_id attribute.
- Field.send() now includes the ID of the of NCP packet that contained the field.
- Response.recv() now requires the ID of the of NCP packet in replies.

4.3.7 4.0.0 - 20/05/2020

- Breaking: Renamed ConnectionError to NetworkError to avoid conflicts with stdlib.
- Added *timeout* parameter to *connect()*, *start_server()* and *Connection*. This is the network timeout (in seconds). If *None*, no timeout is used, which can lead to deadlocks. The default timeout is 15 seconds. A *NetworkTimeoutError* error will be raised if a timeout is exceeded.

4.3.8 3.0.0 - 24/10/2019

This release requires a minimum Python version of 3.7.

- Breaking: Python 3.7 is now the minimum supported Python version.
- Breaking: Removed app framework.
- Breaking: Removed run_client and run_app.
- Added *Connection.wait_closed()* to ensure that the connection is fully closed (needed since Python 3.7).
- Added full PEP 484 type hints, allowing tools like mypy to be used to statically-verify ncplib programs.

4.3.9 2.3.3 - 27/03/2017

• Only applying wait_for compatibility shim to Python 3.4.2 and below.

4.3.10 2.3.2 - 15/03/2017

- Forcing cancellation of timed out connection in run_client in Python 3.4.2.
- Added examples.

4.3.11 2.3.1 - 02/03/2017

- Using remote_hostname in connect errors messages generated by run_client.
- Fixed issues with mixing coroutines and async defs.
- Fixed issues with logging connection errors in run_client.

4.3.12 2.3.0 - 02/03/2017

- Added Field.connection.
- Added app.
- Added :class 'NCPError', ConnectionError and :class 'ConnectionClosed' exceptions.
- Added run_client.
- connect(), Connection.recv(), Connection.recv_field(), Response.recv() and Response.recv_field() no longer raise EOFError or OSError, but a subclass of NCPError.
- Micro-optimizations, roughly doubling the performance of encode/decode.
- Connection open and close log messages promoted from DEBUG to INFO level.

4.3.13 2.2.1 - 27/02/2017

- Fixed bug with Node authentication due to premature sending of LINK packets.
- Fixed edge-case bug in connection closing.

4.3.14 2.2.0 - 27/02/2017

- Added Python 3.4 support.
- Added Connection.is_closing().
- Added Connection.remote_hostname.
- Added auto_link parameter to connect (), start_server() and run_app.
- Added remote_hostname parameter to connect().
- Connection open and close log messages demoted from INFO to DEBUG level.

4.3.15 2.1.0 - 04/11/2016

- Client hostname used in *connect()* defaults to system hostname, instead of "python3-ncplib".
- Added hostname parameter to *connect* (), to override default client hostname.
- Removed multiplexing support for multiple *Response* over a single connection. This must now be implemented in application code.
- Connection logger no longer formats the host and port in log messages. This must now be done using the standard Python logging.Formatter.

4.3.16 2.0.14 - 04/11/2016

- Added support for parsing known embedded footer bug from Axis nodes.
- Fixed pending deprecation warning for legacy _____aiter___ protocol.

4.3.17 2.0.13 - 21/10/2016

• Using transport.is_closing() to detect lost connection, making neplib compatible with uvloop.

4.3.18 2.0.12 - 21/10/2016

• Connection.recv_field() and Response.recv_field() now raise an exception on network error to match the behavior of Connection.recv() and Response.recv(). Previously they returned None on network error, an undocumented and undesired behavior.

4.3.19 2.0.11 - 14/10/2016

• Deprecated wait_closed() on Connection. It's now a no-op, and Connection.close() is sufficient to close the connection.

4.3.20 2.0.10 - 14/10/2016

• Fixed IPv6 handling in NCP server.

4.3.21 2.0.9 - 13/10/2016

• Handling more classes of shutdown errors.

4.3.22 2.0.8 - 13/10/2016

• Suppressing connection errors in NCP server.

4.3.23 2.0.7 - 13/10/2016

• Handling more classes of shutdown errors.

4.3.24 2.0.6 - 13/10/2016

- Handling more classes of client connection error gracefully.
- Handling shutdown of broken connections gracefully.

4.3.25 2.0.5 - 11/10/2016

• Gracefully closing client connections on authentication error.

4.3.26 2.0.4 - 05/09/2016

• Not validating packet format in incoming packets.

4.3.27 2.0.3 - 02/09/2016

• Not logging client errors and warnings, since raised exceptions/warnings will do this automatically.

4.3.28 2.0.2 - 01/09/2016

• Stripping trailing spaces from field names on decode, in addition to null bytes.

4.3.29 2.0.1 - 19/07/2016

• Added run_app function to NCP server.

4.3.30 2.0.0 - 17/03/2016

This release requires a minimum Python version of 3.5. This allows *ncplib* to take advantage of new native support for coroutines in Python 3.5. It also provides a new *start_server()* function for creating a *NCP server*.

A number of interfaces have been updated or removed in order to take better advantage of Python 3.5 async features, and to unify the interface between *NCP client* and *NCP server* connections. Please read the detailed release notes below for more information.

- NCP server support.
- Connection can be used as an async context manager.
- Connection.send() has a cleaner API, allowing params to be specified as keyword arguments.
- Connection.send() and Connection.send_packet() return a Response that can be used to access replies to the original messages.
- Connection.recv(), Connection.recv_field(), Response.recv() and Response. recv_field() return a Field instance, representing a NCP field.
- Connection and Response can be used as an *async iterator* of Field.
- Field. send() allows direct replies to be sent to the incoming NCP field.
- Breaking: Python 3.5 is now the minimum supported Python version.
- Breaking: Connection.send() API has changed to be single-field. Use Connection. send_packet() to send a multi-field NCP packet.
- Breaking: Connection.execute() has been removed. Use Connection.send().recv() instead.

4.3.31 1.0.1 - 21/12/2015

• Automated build and release of package to private Anaconda Cloud channel.

4.3.32 1.0.0 - 07/12/2015

• First production release.

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