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# Analysis of a serial based digital voice recorder

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Practical for Gold

Version 2.0 (option 2)

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### Table of Contents

| I. <i>I</i> | Abstract1                                 |
|-------------|---|
| П.          | Document Conventions2                     |
| III.        | Executive Summary                         |
| 1           | Method4                                   |
| 2           | Discussion of Findings9                   |
| :           | Spectral Densities15                      |
| 3           | Further Research                          |
| 4           | Conclusions                               |
| 5           | Additional Information and Bibliography21 |
| I           | Definitions                               |
| 6           | Appendix                                  |
|             | Correlations by Device27                  |
|             |   |

## List of Figures

| Figure 1 - Time Series Plot of the 5 devices                      | 5 |
|---|---|
| Figure 2 – Aggregated Time Series Plots of Amplitude              | 5 |
| Figure 3 - Aggregated Time Series Plots of Amplitude for device 5 | 3 |
| Figure 4 - Residual White Noise associated with Device 5          | 3 |
| Figure 5 - Normal Plot of Residual White Noise                    | 7 |
| Figure 6 – Differenced analysis of Device 1 and device 5          | 3 |
| Figure 7 - Matched Pairs, Difference: Device 5-Device 110         | ) |
| Figure 8 - Matched Pairs - Difference: Device 51-Device 5         | 1 |
| Figure 9 - Multivariate Correlations                              | 2 |
| Figure 10 - Time Series Device 1 - Spectral Density15             | 5 |
| Figure 11 - Time Series Device 5 - Spectral Density               | 3 |
| Figure 12 - Variables Control Chart16                             | 3 |
|   |   |

#### I. Abstract

This paper will explore issues with a serially accessed digital voice recorder and in particular the retrieval and analysis of the voice files contained on the device. The device, a "Voicelt" recorder records files to load later into the Dragon Speech recognition software. Unlike standard disk or USB card devices this hardware is accessed using a 9 pin serial link and does not map as a disk drive. There is a SD card expansion slot, though this is not in current use and there is no facility on the device to undelete files and copy them to the SD card. The analysis will derive around extracting the voice files from the device and copying them to a computer in a forensically sound manner. The device has a delete function independent of the PC and may be used "on the road" to dictate files which are later downloaded to the PC host for conversion into text. The device has had voice files deleted without being written to the PC.

Due to a white noise fingerprint in the wave form, it is possible to map files from an individual digital recorder to that specific hardware device.

### **II. Document Conventions**

When you read this practical assignment, you will see the representation of certain words in different fonts and typefaces. The representation of these types of words in this manner includes the following:

| command         | The representation of operating system     |
|-----------------|--|
|                 | commands uses this font style. This style  |
|                 | indicates a command entered at a command   |
|                 | prompt or shell.                           |
| filename        | The representation of filenames, paths,    |
|                 | and directory names use this style.        |
| computer output | The results of a command and other         |
|                 | computer output are in this style          |
| URL             | Web URL's are shown in this style.         |
| Quotation       | A citation or quotation from a book or web |
|                 | site is in this style.                     |
|                 |  |
|                 |  |

#### III. Executive Summary

This paper presents a new approach to the detection of forgeries in digital audio and a possible means to forensically match an audio recording to a specific hardware based digital recorder. Either the hardware device that made the recordings or other recordings from the same digital media recorder need to be a available. The method is based on detecting the underlying white noise created by the recording device. This is a unique stochastic characteristic of the hardware recorder. Any forged region of sound may be shown as not demonstrating the standard white noise pattern.

#### 1 Method

The primary test involved an analysis of the startup waveform the for each of the five devices. This was achieved by measuring the amplitude of the signal using a digital oscilloscope and recording the measurements for each of the first 112 ms. A wave file was created and downloaded using the VoiceIT software to obtain these samples.



#### Figure 1 - Time Series Plot of the 5 devices



When visually compared, there are some differences but the overall pattern is similar across all devices.



Figure 2 – Aggregated Time Series Plots of Amplitude

In order to confirm that the startup pattern remained constant for each device, five separate downloads were conducted and analysed for the 5<sup>th</sup> device.



Figure 3 - Aggregated Time Series Plots of Amplitude for device 5



Figure 4 - Residual White Noise associated with Device 5

Looking at the differences from each of the results of the 5<sup>th</sup> device, the differences obtained when each of the five samples was analysed is attributable to IID white noise. It was shown that the differences are normally distributed about the mean.



Alternatively, a comparison of the differences from the results of separate devices did not demonstrate any similarity of values. In comparing the values from the first and fifth devices, there is a clear difference in the patterns.

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Figure 6 – Differenced analysis of Device 1 and device 5

When plotted together, the discrepancies which seemed similar on individual plots are show to be significantly different (as will be upheld using statistical tests later in the paper).

The plot of the discrepancies on the same

device are demonstrated to be small and insignificant. This shows us that there is some correlation at the startup stage. From this it is possible to deduce that there is a hardware dependant white noise signature. Each file created with the device may be shown to have the individual white noise signature. Each signature is unique to the individual hardware device.

## 2 Discussion of Findings

A correlation of the wave function was completed across the five devices and against the same device.

| Proximity Matrix            |                                       |          |          |          |          |  |  |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|--|--|
|                             | Correlation between Vectors of Values |          |          |          |          |  |  |
|                             | DEVICE5                               | DEVICE51 | DEVICE52 | DEVICE53 | DEVICE54 |  |  |
| DEVICE5                     | .000                                  | .998     | .998     | .998     | .998     |  |  |
| DEVICE51                    | .998                                  | .000     | .996     | .997     | .997     |  |  |
| DEVICE52                    | .998                                  | .996     | .000     | .996     | .996     |  |  |
| DEVICE53                    | .998                                  | .997     | .996     | .000     | .997     |  |  |
| DEVICE54                    | .998                                  | .997     | .996     | .997     | .000     |  |  |
| This is a similarity matrix |                                       |          |          |          |          |  |  |

It is clear with a correlation factor between 0.996 and 0.998 from readings taken that there is a common white noise function that is associated with the device.

| Proximity Matrix            |                                       |         |         |         |         |  |  |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|--|--|
|                             | Correlation between Vectors of Values |         |         |         |         |  |  |
|                             | DEVICE1                               | DEVICE2 | DEVICE3 | DEVICE4 | DEVICE5 |  |  |
| DEVICE1                     | .000                                  | .473    | .532    | .604    | .230    |  |  |
| DEVICE2                     | .473                                  | .000    | .430    | .544    | .148    |  |  |
| DEVICE3                     | .532                                  | .430    | .000    | .860    | .288    |  |  |
| DEVICE4                     | .604                                  | .544    | .860    | .000    | .381    |  |  |
| DEVICE5                     | .230                                  | .148    | .288    | .381    | .000    |  |  |
| This is a similarity matrix |                                       |         |         |         |         |  |  |

Alternatively, it is also demonstrated (correlation from 0.148 to .860) that there is a variation between the separate devices. The white noise startup function is similar between the 5 devices, but there is enough of a difference that a white noise fingerprint may be determined.



An analysis of the bi-variate matched pairs model for the separate device wave functions demonstrates that there is some correlation ( $R^2$ =5.3%) but as may be seen from the Wilcoxon Sign-Rank Test, the wave forms are significantly different at the alpha = 5% level..

This may be compared again with the results of the correlations from the wave functions obtained from the same device (see below). In this case the correlation is high ( $R^2$ =99.65%) and the results are not significantly different.



From this result, we can clearly see that there is a device specific signature to the start-up sequence that is mapped into the resulting waveform and thus the file.

This start-up sequence may be used forensically as a hardware fingerprint to prove conclusively that a file originated from a particular hardware voice recorder. This may be necessary in cases where a forgery is suspected as the resultant wave function will not have the same white noise function as that produced by the hardware recorder being tested if the file was not created on the device.

This is demonstrated clearly in the scatterplots.



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Here we see a significant correlation within the results across recordings on the same device giving a Cronbach's Alpha = 99.91%. This may be compared with the analysis of separate devices. When comparing hardware device 1 and device 5, Cronbach's Alpha is found to be only 34.91% which is not significantly correlated.

The results have demonstrated that there is a strong correlation between wave files produced on the same hardware device. This is contrasted with the ability to significantly demonstrate variation in wave files created on a separate hardware device.

#### **Spectral Densities**

By taking the spectral densities of the individual devices, we can create a unique hardware fingerprint based on the individual white noise function of the device.





0.418624

Bartlett's Kolmogorov-Smirnov

The spectral density is unique for each hardware device and a fingerprint function may be created for the individual device.





#### White Noise test

Fisher's Kappa Prob > Kappa Bartlett's Kolmogorov-Smirnov 9.9355812 0.0012104 0.236253





Note: Sigma used for limits based on range.







Note: Sigma used for limits based on range.





The start-up function may be used as a fingerprint against the hardware to determine if the file was created using the specific device.

#### **3** Further Research

Although the tests are significant for the hardware being researched, further work would need to be completed to make these results valid for all hardware based digital recorders. It may also be possible to map wave files to software/ hardware combinations on PC's. This could be the focus of future research.

A test of other devices should also be completed. It would be expected that other devices should satisfy the same white noise differences across a group and it is likely that there it is possible to create signatures for all digital recorders based on this technique. Further research would need to be completed to satisfy this hypothesis beyond reasonable doubt. By testing a sample of the same devices, it is however possible to test this assumption on a case by case basis. This would lead to the testing of a group of devices to prove the white noise function for a device model under investigation.

No compression was used during the test. This is not an issue for wave file based digital recorders, but there may be different results in the case of MP3 or other compression based processes.

#### 4 Conclusions

It has been demonstrated that we can map an individual digital hardware recorder to a specific wave file. This study verified the ability and developed techniques to allow device fingerprinting that use the devices white noise on start-up to link a sound file to a specific hardware recorder.

The techniques apply to a number of different practically useful goals, ranging from distinguishing between device fingerprinting of audio files to the detection of forgeries. The difficulties associated with digital forensic analysis of PDA's and digital hardware recorders have proven to be an obstacle (Frichot, 2004) and other methods need to be developed to ensure the forensically sound acquisition of data.

This study presents another method that may be utilized in forensic analysis of audio files.

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#### Definitions

The following table defines abbreviations used in this document:

- GIAC Global Information Assurance Certification
- MAC Modified, Accessed, Created times
- SOE Standard Operating Environment
- SANS SysAdmin, Audit, Network, Security
- USB Universal Serial Bus

## 6 Appendix

#### **Correlations by Device**






















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| Fisher's Kappa                | 13.099152 |
|-------------------------------|-----------|
| Prob > Kappa                  | 0.0000242 |
| Bartlett's Kolmogorov-Smirnov | 0.418624  |





1500 Spectral Density 0 .2 .3 .0 .1 .4 .5 Frequency White Noise test Fisher's Kappa Prob > Kappa Bartlett's Kolmogorov-Smirnov 11.156033 0.0002764 0.3501048 **Time Series Device 3** 140 120 100 Device 3 80 60 40 20 0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100 110 0 120 Row

Mean Std N 39.393421 29.489137 114

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| Fisher's Kappa                | 7.6978653 |
|-------------------------------|-----------|
| Prob > Kappa                  | 0.0164113 |
| Bartlett's Kolmogorov-Smirnov | 0.2898514 |



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| 15.965443 |
|-----------|
| 5.3923e-7 |
| 0.5026617 |
|           |





0.1565





Fisher's Kappa Prob > Kappa Bartlett's Kolmogorov-Smirnov 9.9355812 0.0012104 0.236253









Note: Sigma used for limits based on range.





















