



Institut de Recherche en Informatique  
et Systèmes Aléatoires

# Leveraging side-channel signals for IoT malware classification and rootkit detection

Univ Rennes 1 • CNRS • IRISA

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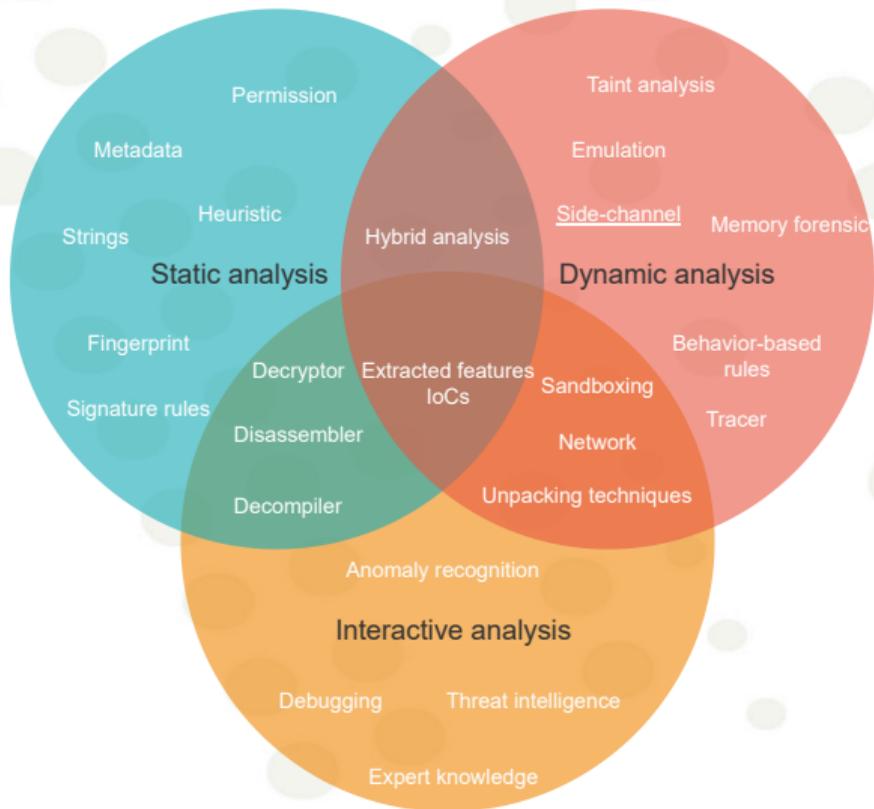
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- 1 Introduction
  - Context
  - State of the art
- 2 AHMA: Obfuscated Malware Classification
- 3 ULTRA: Ultimate Rootkit Detection over the Air
- 4 Conclusion and Perspectives

- Trending of attacks on embedded devices.
- Difficulties for antivirus solutions on IoT devices: Resource constraints.
- Malware detection bypasses



- Malware detection
- Malware similarities
- Malware classification

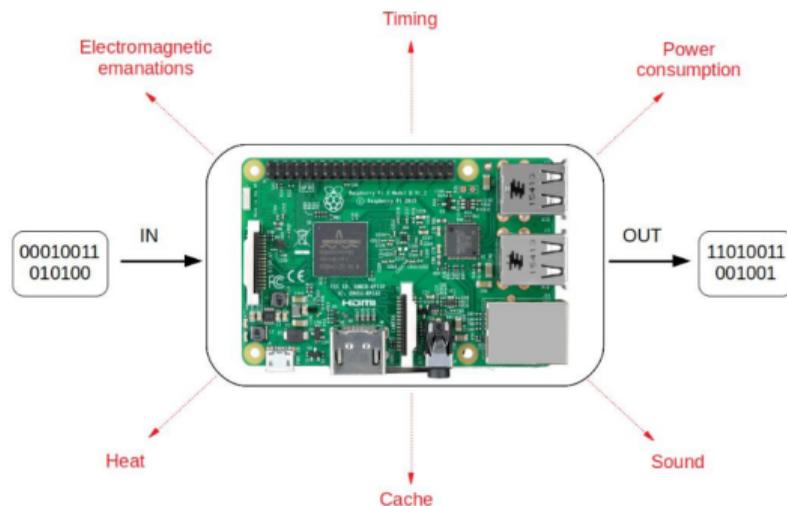
## Static analysis

- Malware obfuscation
- Packers

## Dynamic analysis

- Anti-debugging
- "Side-channel information"

- ✓ Bare-metal device
- ✓ Side channel information
  - ✓ Power consumption
  - ✓ Electromagnetism (EM)
  - ✓ Cache, HPC (software)



- ✓ Anomaly detection using power consumption and EM.

### RQ1

How can we build and setup an IoT malware classification and detection on embedded device using EM?

### Contribution

Automated framework to automatically classify IoT malware by leveraging EM.

- ✓ Anomaly detection using power consumption and EM.
- ✓ Lack of research of side-channel detection for real-world malware.
- ✓ No variations regarding obfuscation and packers.

## RQ2

If a malware analyst has a dataset of unlabeled binaries. Would it be possible to classify the dataset into labeled types, families, variants of malware or rootkits, obfuscation techniques used etc.?

## Contribution

Real-world malicious and benign IoT dataset classification.

- ✓ Anomaly detection using power consumption and EM.
- ✓ Lack of research of side-channel detection for real-world malware.
- ✓ No variation regarding obfuscation and packers.
- ✓ Utilize benchmark software to detect rootkit.

### RQ3

Is it feasible to utilize EM for stealthy rootkit detection on embedded devices?

### Contribution

Novel *baits* to detect rootkit in real-time.

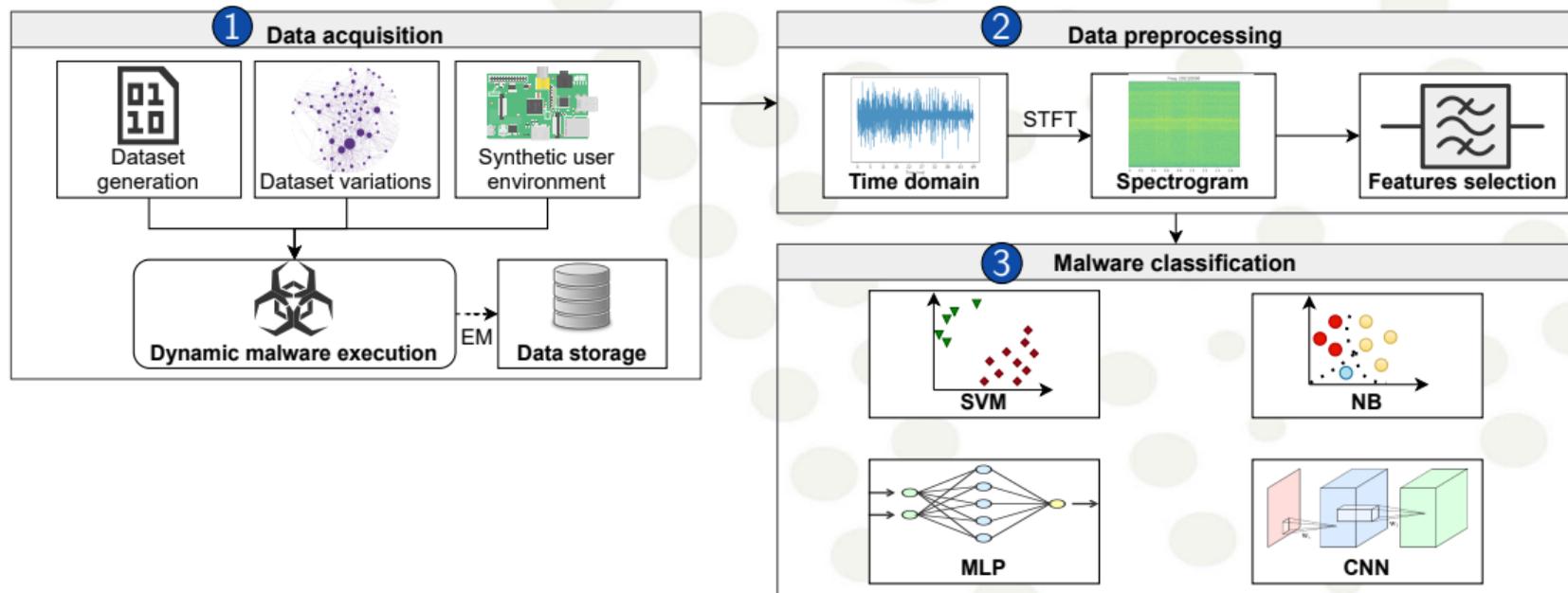
# Obfuscation Revealed: Leveraging Electromagnetic Signals for Obfuscated Malware Classification

Joint work with Damien Marion, Mathieu Mastio and Annelie Heuser

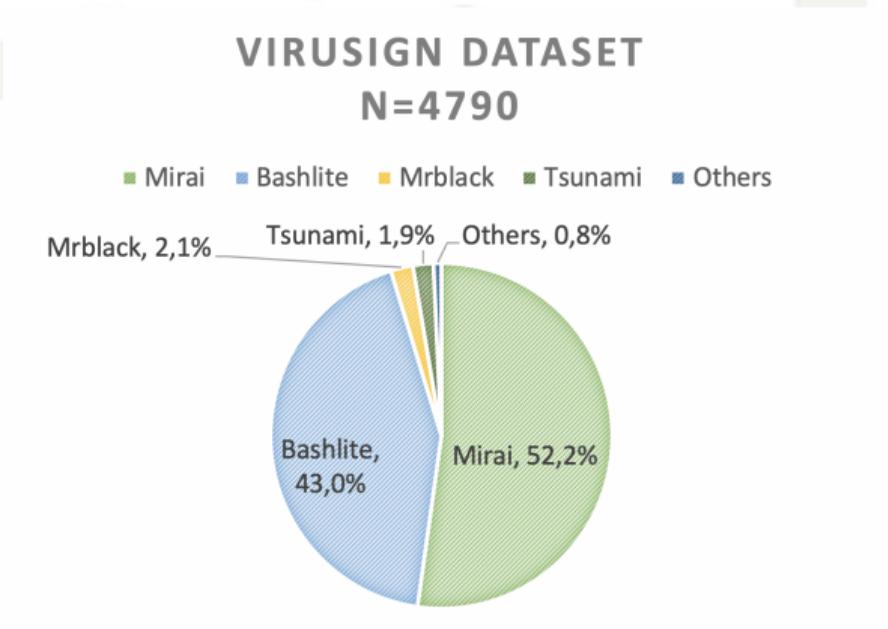
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Duy-Phuc Pham, Damien Marion, and Annelie Heuser. "Poster: Obfuscation Revealed-Using Electromagnetic Emanation to Identify and Classify Malware". In: *2021 IEEE European Symposium on Security and Privacy (EuroS&P)*. IEEE. 2021, pp. 710–712.

Duy-Phuc Pham et al. "Obfuscation Revealed: Leveraging Electromagnetic Signals for Obfuscated Malware Classification". In: *Annual Computer Security Applications Conference (ACSAC)*. 2021.



AVClass to classify malware labels

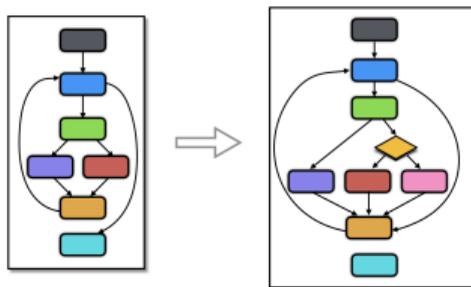


- AVClass to classify malware labels
- Code reviews and reverse engineering

<b>DDoS</b>	<b>Ransomware</b>	<b>Rootkits</b>
Mirai	GonnaCry	spy
Bashlite	(AES, Blowfish, DES)	MaK_It

- AVClass to classify malware labels
- Code reviews and reverse engineering
- Obfuscations

- UPX, Tigress, O-LLVM
- Opaque predicates, bogus control flow, instructions substitution, control-flow flattening; packer and code virtualization



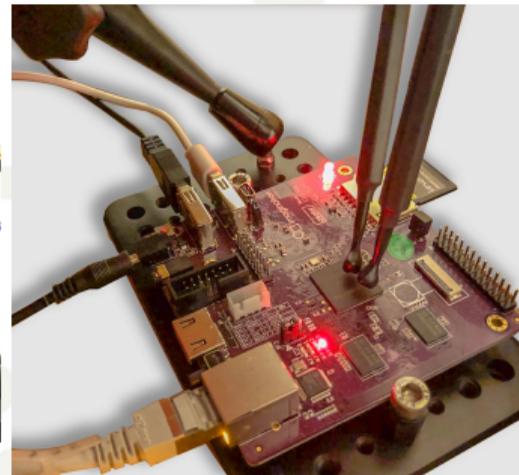
- AVClass to classify malware labels
  - Code reviews and reverse engineering
  - Obfuscations
  - Benign dataset
- Random Linux activities
  - IoT activities
    - Video encoding
    - Camera captures
    - Music

## Specifications

- Multi-purpose embedded device.
  - Prominent architecture: ARM and MIPS.
- Raspberry Pi B+, Creator CI20

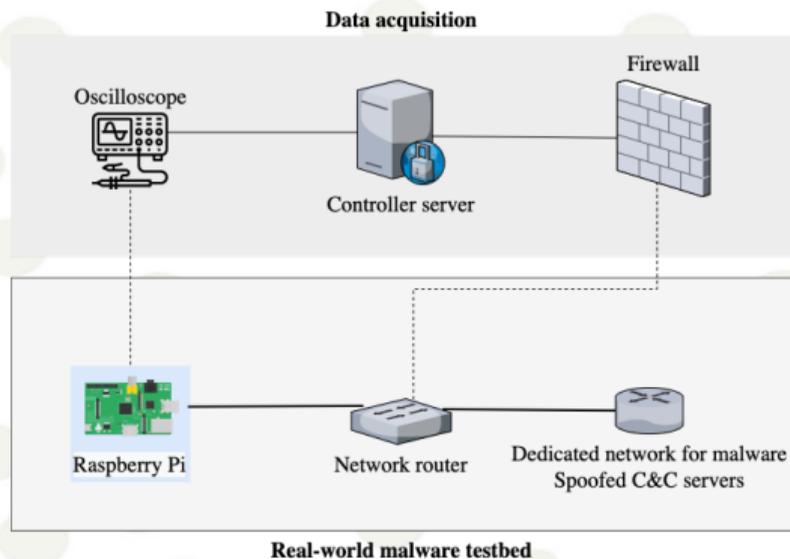


Raspberry Pi B+



Creator CI20

- ✓ Isolated controller server
- ✓ Embedded device inside synthetic environment
  - ✓ Randomized files (to trigger ransomware)
  - ✓ Keyboard emulation (to trigger keylogger)
  - ✓ Default services (no artifacts)
- ✓ Spoofed C&C server



**Raw traces:**

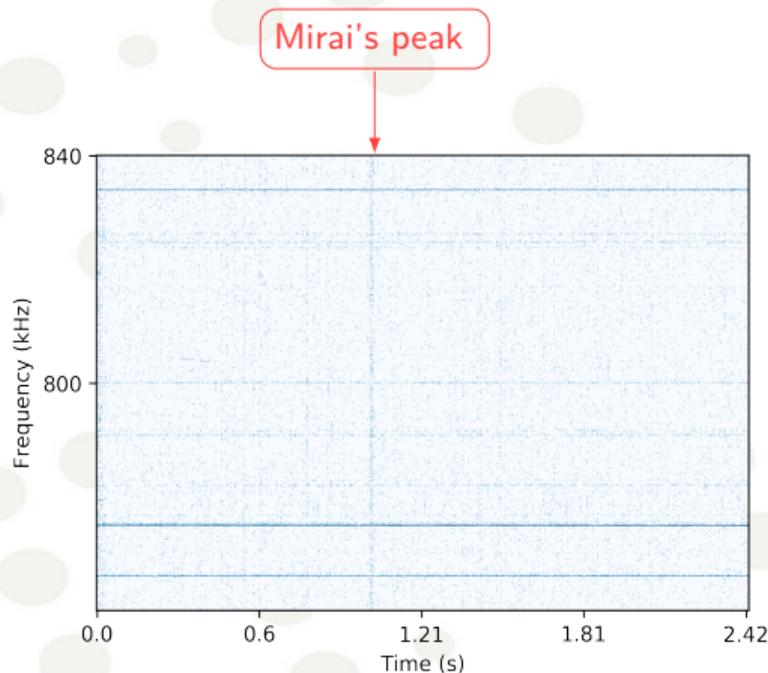
106k(traces)  $\times$  2(MS/s)  $\times$  2.5(s) [1.2TB]

**Time-frequency representation:**

Short-time Fourier transform

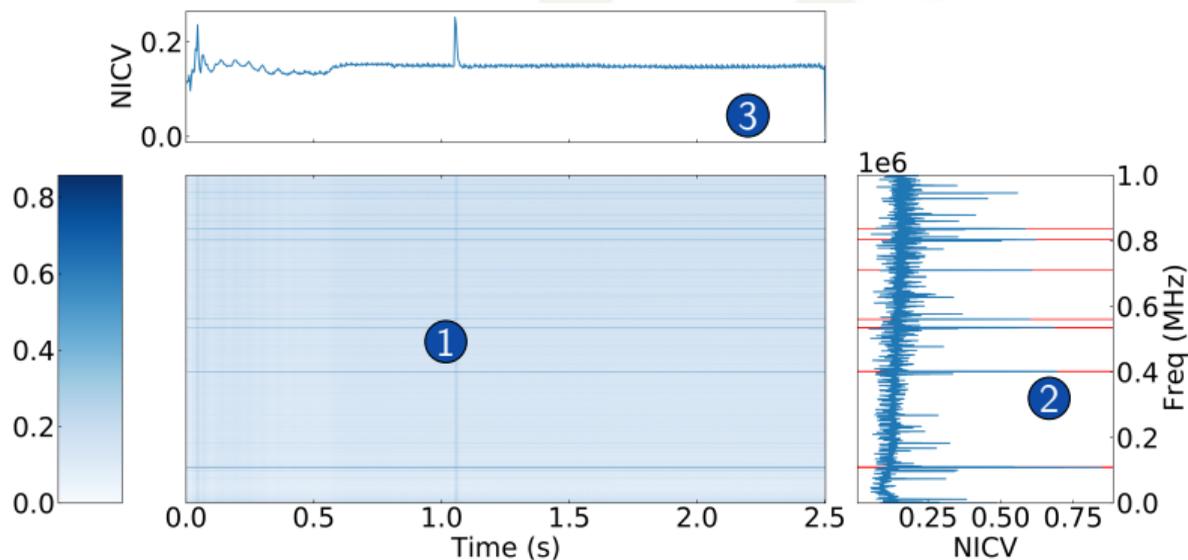
$$\text{spectro}\{x(n)\}(m, \omega) = \left| \sum_{n=0}^N x(n)w(n-m)e^{-j\omega n} \right|^2$$

$$\begin{cases} \text{windows} & = 8192 \\ \text{overlap} & = 4096 \end{cases}$$



$$\text{NICV}(X, Y) = \frac{\text{Var}[\mathbb{E}[X|Y]]}{\text{Var}[X]}$$

$$F_{\text{extract}} = \underset{\epsilon}{\text{argmax}} \left( \left\{ \max[\text{NICV}(X, Y)_f^D] \right\}_{f < F} \right)$$



## Machine Learning

- ✓ Linear Discriminant Analysis (LDA) + Naive Bayes (NB)
- ✓ Linear Discriminant Analysis (LDA) + Support vector machine (SVM)

## Deep Learning

- ✓ Multi-Layer Perceptron (MLP)
- ✓ Convolutional Neural Network (CNN)

Scenarios	#	MLP	CNN	LDA+NB	LDA+SVM
Executables	31	73.56 [24]	<b>82.28</b> [24]	70.92 [28]	71.84 [20]
Type	4	99.75 [28]	<b>99.82</b> [28]	97.97 [24]	98.07 [24]
Family	6	98.57 [28]	<b>99.61</b> [28]	97.19 [28]	97.27 [28]
Novelty	5	88.41 [16]	<b>98.85</b> [24]	98.25 [28]	98.61 [28]
Virtualization	2	95.60 [20]	<b>95.83</b> [24]	91.29 [6]	91.25 [6]
Packer	2	93.39 [28]	<b>94.96</b> [20]	83.62 [16]	83.58 [16]
Obfuscation	7	73.79 [28]	<b>82.70</b> [24]	64.29 [10]	64.47 [10]

**Table 1.** Accuracy obtained with MLP, CNN, LDA + NB and LDA + SVM applied on several scenarios.

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**Table 1.** Accuracy obtained with MLP, CNN, LDA + NB and LDA + SVM applied on several scenarios.

- ✓ Classify various malware samples in multiple in-the-wild scenarios.
- ✓ Obfuscation technique can be classified.
- ✓ Evaluation of both DL/ML.
- ✓ Evaluated Artifacts:
  - ✓ Code: <https://github.com/ahma-hub/analysis/wiki>
  - ✓ Data: <https://zenodo.org/record/5414107>

## Disadvantages

- ✓ Oscilloscopes: difficulties in practical usage and expensive
- ✓ It only works with *active* malware not *passive*: **stealthy rootkits**.
- ✓ Difficulties for file-less and self-deleting malware detection.

## SDR Advantages

- Flexible and adaptable
- Suitable for streaming mode
- Affordable and portable



# ULTRA: Ultimate Rootkit Detection over the Air

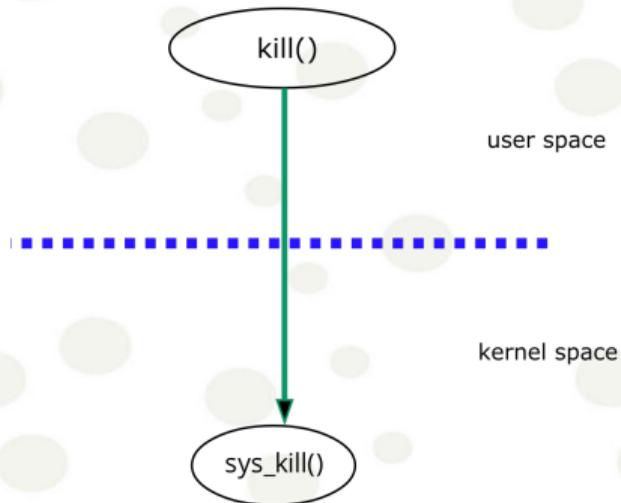
Joint work with Damien Marion and Annelie Heuser



Media: Hackaday

## Classification

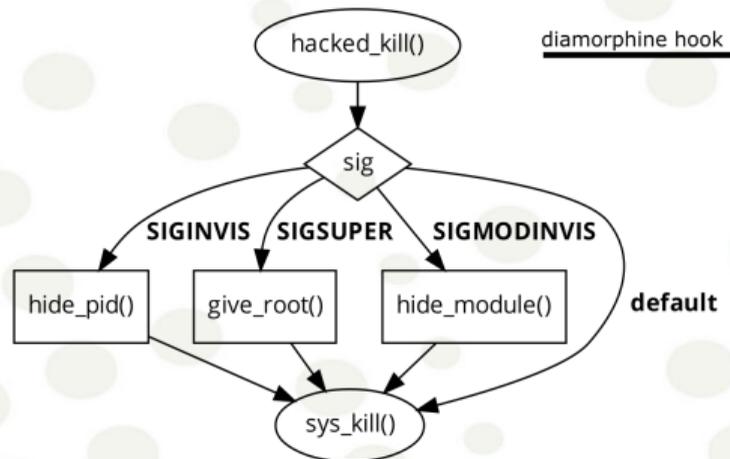
- ✓ User-level
- ✓ Kernel-level
- ✓ Boot and hypervisor level
- ✓ Hardware and firmware level



*kill()* syscall flow

## Classification

- ✓ User-level
- ✓ Kernel-level
- ✓ Boot and hypervisor level
- ✓ Hardware and firmware level



Diamorphine rootkit syscall hooking

### Bait definition

A *bait*  $\beta$ , which is a software or hardware stimulus on a device  $\delta$ , has the following requirements:

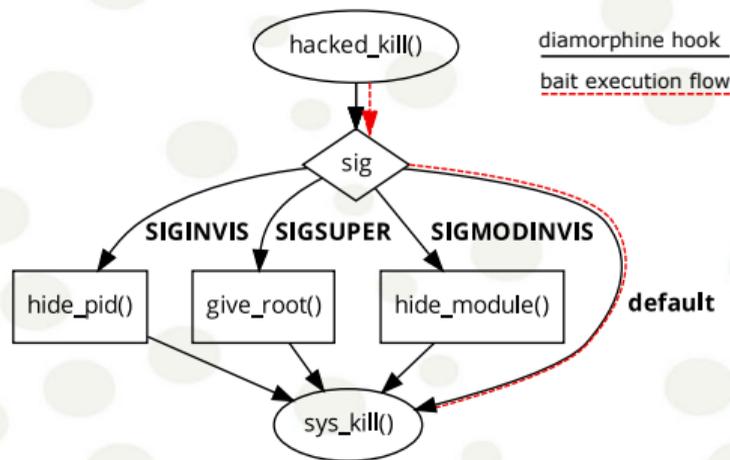
- (i) The bait can trigger partial or full behavior of rootkits without knowing *modus operandi* of the rootkit in advance;
- (ii) It has a variable duration time of execution activities that can be remotely controlled;
- (iii) It cannot be distinguished from common benign behavior (e.g., it relies on unprivileged execution).



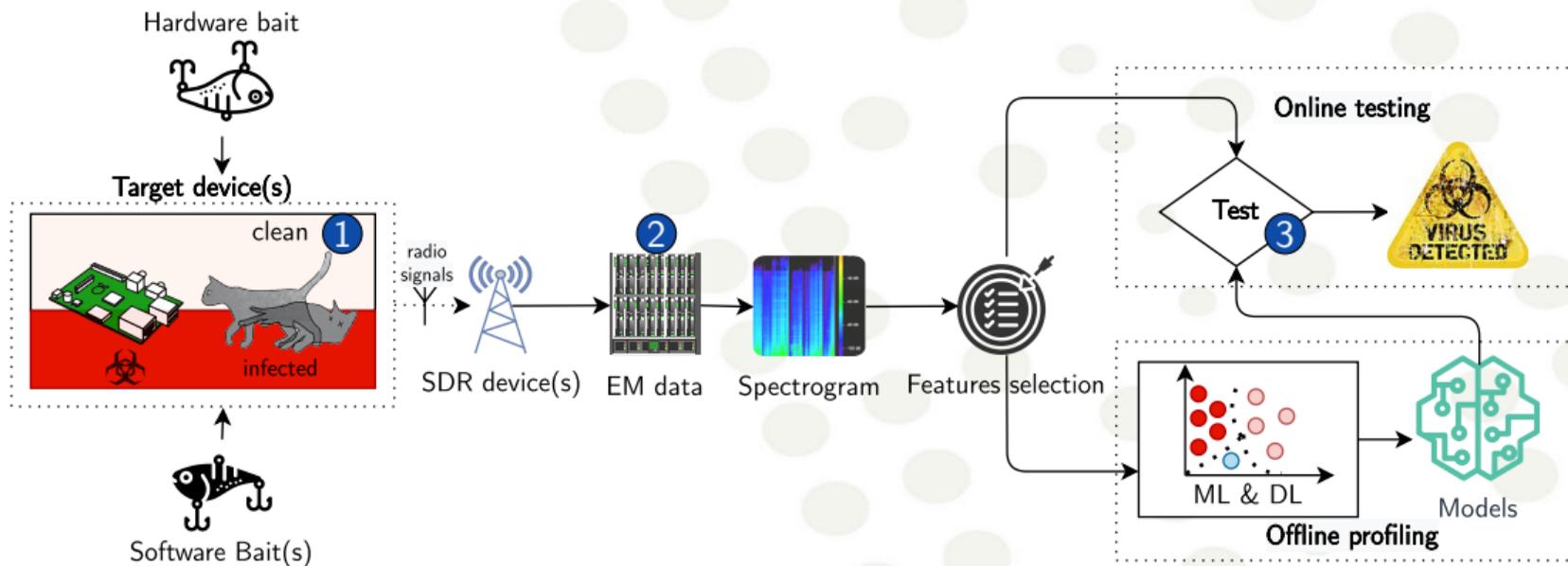
An example of hardware bait

## Classification

- ✓ User-level
- ✓ Kernel-level
- ✓ Boot and hypervisor level
- ✓ Hardware and firmware level



Proposed bait running with **Diamorphine** on infected device



- Benign activities
  - User-space: Linux utilities, etc.
  - Kernel-space: Kernel drivers, firewalls, etc.
- Rootkit dataset

	Hide files	Network	Keylogger	RAT	LPE	Mode
<i>diamorphine</i> *	✓				✓	Kernel
<i>m0ham3d</i> *	✓	✓			✓	Kernel
<i>adore-ng</i>	✓	✓		✓		Kernel
<i>spy</i>			✓			Kernel
<i>maK_it</i>			✓			Kernel
<i>beurk</i>	✓	✓		✓		User
<i>vlany</i>	✓	✓		✓		User

\* plus an obfuscated version.

## Pre-processing

- EM monitoring during **0.5 seconds** using HackRF SDR with **2MHz** window,
  - Centered in 1222MHz for Raspberry Pi B+ and 792MHz for the Creator CI20.
- Time frequency representation: short-time Fourier transform

$$\begin{cases} \text{windows} & = 8192 \\ \text{overlap} & = 4096 \end{cases}$$

## Open-data (traces and models)

<https://zenodo.org/record/5902451>

## Deep Learning

- Multi-Layer Perceptron (MLP)

## Machine learning

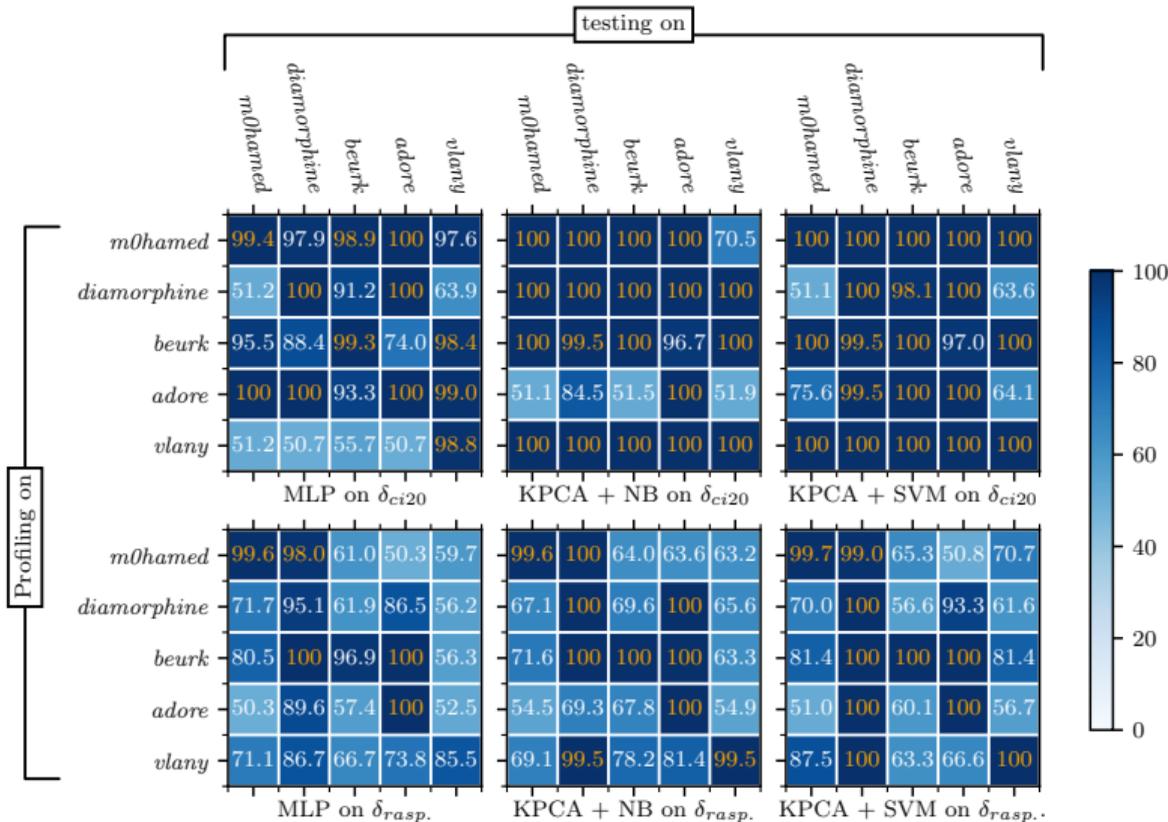
- Kernel PCA (KPCA) + Naive Bayes (NB)
- Kernel PCA (KPCA) + Support vector machine (SVM)

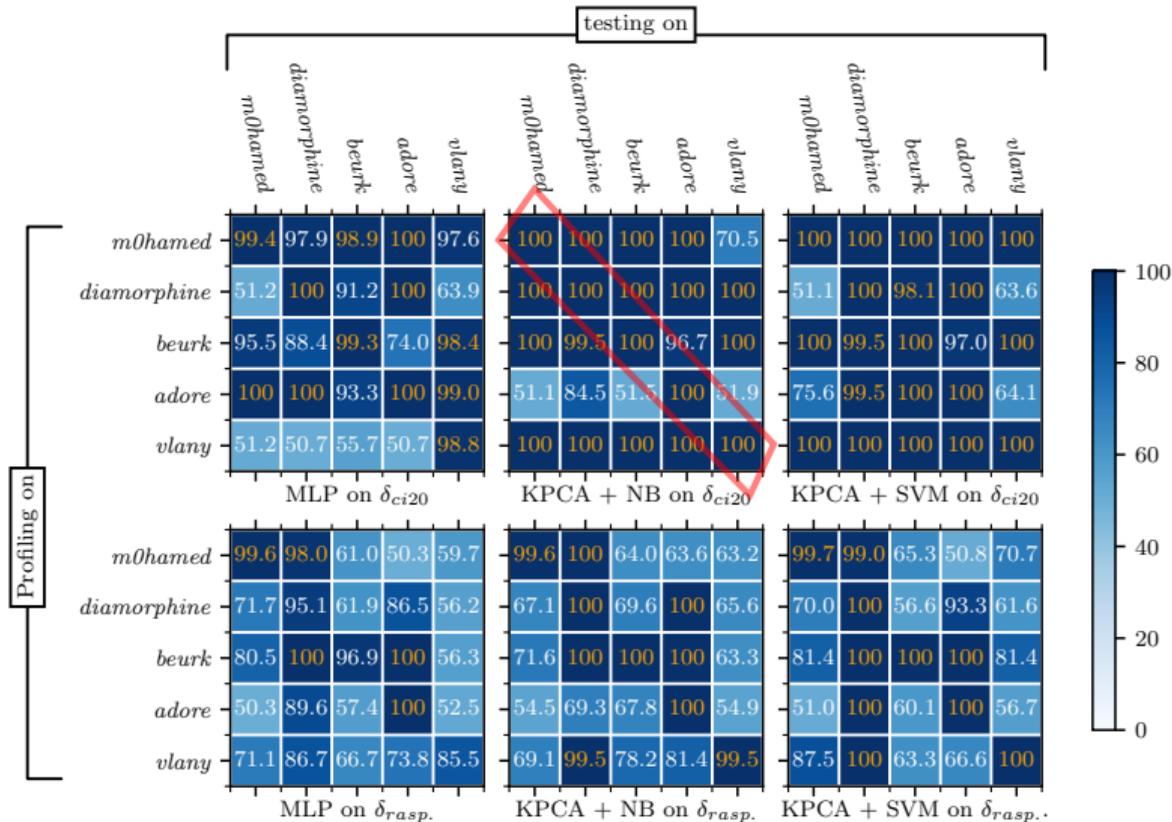
## Hill climbing algorithm

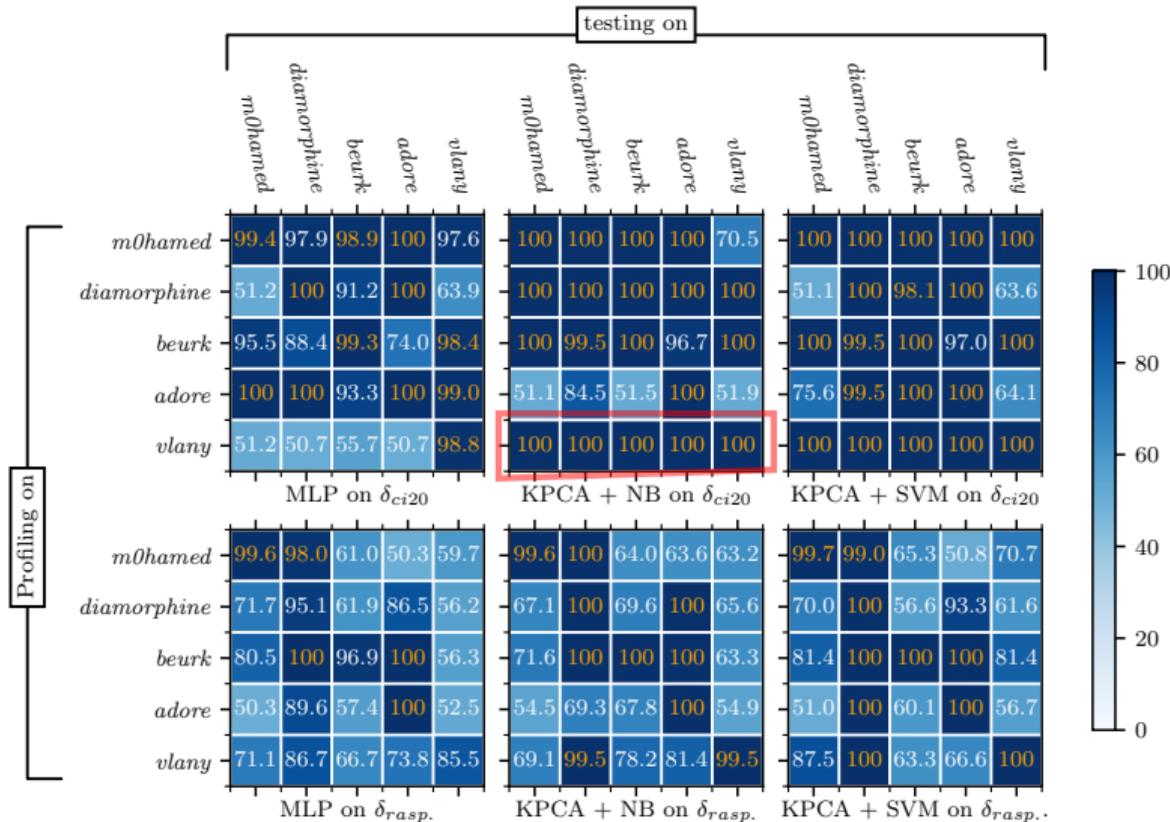
Iterated “forward selection” of the sorted extracted bandwidth (using NICV) for optimal bandwidth selection.

## Average processing (optional)

The testing traces can be average to increase the detection rate.







Probe type

Scenario	MLP			KPCA + NB			KPCA + SVM		
	BA $[\epsilon_{opt}]$	TPR	TNR	BA $[\epsilon_{opt}]$	TPR	TNR	BA $[\epsilon_{opt}]$	TPR	TNR
$\{0, 0\} \rightarrow \{0, 0\}$	100 <sub>[2]</sub>	100	100	100 <sub>[2]</sub>	100	100	100 <sub>[2]</sub>	100	100
$\{0, 0\} \rightarrow \{1, 0\}$	100 <sub>[2]</sub>	100	100	100 <sub>[2]</sub>	100	100	100 <sub>[2]</sub>	100	100
$\{0, 0\} \rightarrow \{2, 1\}$	60.6 <sub>[2]</sub>	21.4	99.9	50.0 <sub>[2]</sub>	0.0	100	50.0 <sub>[2]</sub>	0.0	100
$\{1, 0\} \rightarrow \{1, 0\}$	100 <sub>[2]</sub>	100	100	100 <sub>[3]</sub>	100	100	100 <sub>[2]</sub>	100	100
$\{2, 1\} \rightarrow \{2, 1\}$	100 <sub>[1]</sub>	100	100	100 <sub>[4]</sub>	100	100	100 <sub>[4]</sub>	100	100

More scenarios available: sample classification, keyloggers detection with software and hardware baits, influence of benign kernel activities, effect of background noise, influence of obfuscation.



ULTRA with a cheap probe  
*beurk vs. open bait*

Probe location

Scenario	MLP			KPCA + NB			KPCA + SVM		
	BA $[\epsilon_{opt}]$	TPR	TNR	BA $[\epsilon_{opt}]$	TPR	TNR	BA $[\epsilon_{opt}]$	TPR	TNR
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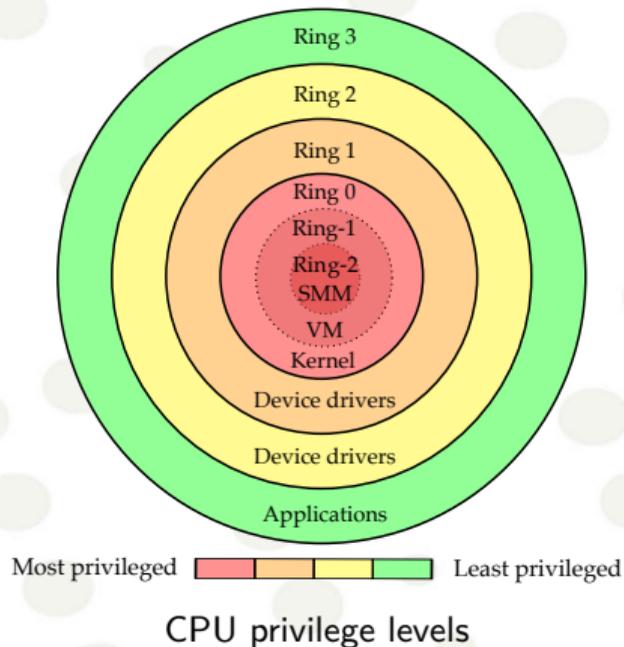


ULTRA with a cheap probe  
*beurk vs. open bait*

- ✓ ULTRA framework: Wave-and-Play solution.
- ✓ Investigation of various experiments and real-world scenarios.
- ✓ Promising solution (detection accuracy up to 100%) and handy: tested with multiple probes and probe relocation with affordable SDR.

## Short-term

- Larger dataset and upcoming threats (eg. hypervisor, eBPF rootkits)
- IoT malware and rootkits from APT campaigns (eg. APT28, UNC3524/APT29)



## Long-term

- ✓ A standalone solution that uses electromagnetic waves to detect malware and similar threats for other platforms (PLC, Linux servers, etc.)
- ✓ Portable solution with GPU (e.g. Nvidia Jetson Nano)



## Long-term

- ✓ Evasion techniques
  - Dynamic bare-metal malware analysis pitfalls
  - Electromagnetic noise (eg. NoiseSDR [CF22])
- ✓ Model explainability

## Contributions

- ✓ Duy-Phuc Pham, Duc-Ly Vu, and Fabio Massacci. “Mac-A-Mal: macOS malware analysis framework resistant to anti evasion techniques”. In: *Journal of Computer Virology and Hacking Techniques* 15.4 (2019), pp. 249–257
- ✓ Duy-Phuc Pham, Damien Marion, and Annelie Heuser. “Poster: Obfuscation Revealed-Using Electromagnetic Emanation to Identify and Classify Malware”. In: *2021 IEEE European Symposium on Security and Privacy (EuroS&P)*. IEEE. 2021, pp. 710–712
- ✓ Duy-Phuc Pham et al. “Obfuscation Revealed: Leveraging Electromagnetic Signals for Obfuscated Malware Classification”. In: *Annual Computer Security Applications Conference (ACSAC)*. 2021
- ✓ Duy-Phuc Pham, Damien Marion, and Annelie Heuser. “ULTRA: Ultimate Rootkit Detection over the Air”. In: *25th International Symposium on Research in Attacks, Intrusions and Defenses (RAID)*. 2022

# Thank you!



Electromagnetism discussion

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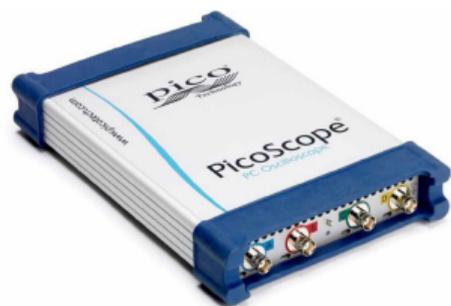
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Consider a dataset that contains 99 negative samples and 1 positive sample. Classifying all values as negative yields a 0.99 accuracy score.

Balanced Accuracy is not affected by this issue. It normalizes true positive and true negative predictions by the number of positive and negative samples, respectively, and divides their sum by two:

$$\mathbf{BA} = \frac{TPR + TNR}{2} \quad (1)$$

- ✓ Picoscope 6000
- ✓ Keysight Infiniium
- ✓ HackRF SDR



- Multi-Layer Perceptron (MLP)
- Convolutional Neural Network (CNN)

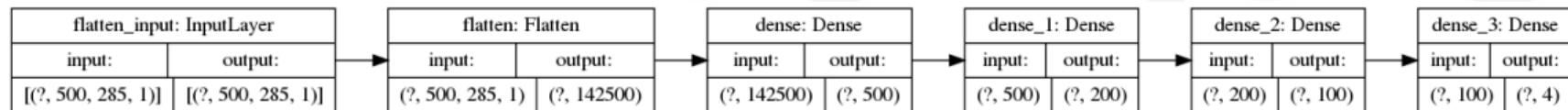


Table: Proposed MLP architecture of ULTRA framework

Layer	Size	Filter	Activation
Flatten	spectrogram_size	—	leaky relu
Dense	500	—	leaky relu
Dense	200	—	leaky relu
Dense	100	—	leaky relu
Dense	N	—	softmax (multi-class) or sigmoid (two-class)

Layer	Size	Filter	Activation
Convolution	64	$7 \times 7$	relu
Max Pooling	64	$2 \times 2$	—
Convolution	128	$3 \times 3$	relu
Convolution	128	$3 \times 3$	relu
Max Pooling	128	$2 \times 2$	—
Convolution	256	$3 \times 3$	relu
Convolution	256	$3 \times 3$	relu
Max Pooling	256	$2 \times 2$	—
Dense	128	—	relu
Dense	64	—	relu
Dense	nb_labels	—	softmax

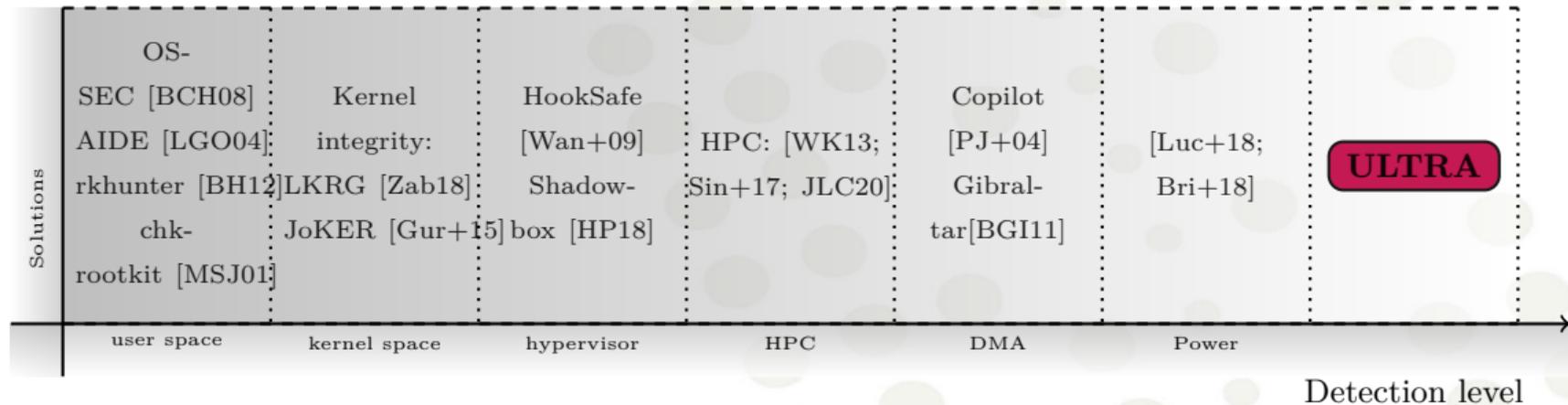
Article	Year	Techniques
WattsUpDoc: Power SC to Nonintrusively Discover Untargeted MW on Embedded Medical Devices	2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Detection of 12 MW variants</li> <li>- Power &amp; MLP &amp; 3NN &amp; RF</li> </ul>
Detecting crypto-ransomware in IoT networks based on energy consumption footprint	2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- MW detection of Ransomware</li> <li>- PowerTutor &amp; KNN</li> </ul>
Deep learning-based classification and anomaly detection of side-channel signals	2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Anomaly detection of botnet</li> <li>- Power &amp; MLP &amp; LSTM</li> </ul>
HLMD: a signature-based approach to HW-level behavioral MW detection and classification	2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- MW classification of 14 variants</li> <li>- HPC &amp; singular values</li> </ul>

Article	Year	Techniques
EDDIE: EM-based detection of deviations in program execution	2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Code Inj. detection</li> <li>- EM &amp; STFT &amp; KS</li> </ul>
MW detection in embedded systems using NN model for EM SC signals	2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- MW detection of DDoS, Ransomware, CF Hijack</li> <li>- EM &amp; MLP</li> </ul>

→ Real world malware.

**Table:** Comparison with related works on side-channel malware (SCM) analysis using EM or power consumption.

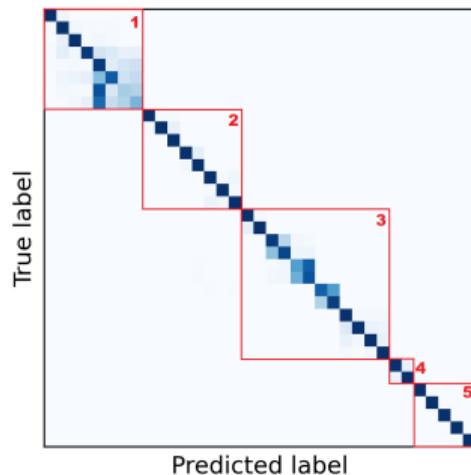
Article	SCM detection	Anomaly detection	SCM classification	Real-world SCM	Real-world analysis environment	Samples size	Variations	Benign dataset	Window size	Open data, source code	Device under test
WattsUpDoc [Cla+13]	✓	-	-	✓	-	15	-	-	5s	-	Windows XP Embedded 664 MHz
IDEA [Kha+19]	-	✓	-	-	-	3	-	-	<40 $\mu$ s	-	AT328p 16MHz, Cortex A8
REMOTE [Seh+20]	-	✓	-	✓	-	3	-	-	<10ms	-	Single-core ARM 1Ghz
Wang <i>et al.</i> [Wan+18]	-	✓	-	-	-	1	-	-	10s	-	Raspberry Pi, Arduino, Siemens PLC
Khan <i>et al.</i> [Kha+19]	✓	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	<150 $\mu$ s	-	Cyclone II FPGA & NIOS II soft-processor
DeepPower [Din+20]	✓	-	✓	✓	-	5	-	-	1s	-	MIPS/ARM OpenWRT
Chawla <i>et al.</i> [CKM21]	✓	-	✓	✓	-	137	-	✓	10s	-	Android Intrinsic Open-Q 820
<b>Chapter ??</b>	(✓)*	-	✓	✓	✓	35	✓	✓	2.5s	✓	Multi-core, 900 Mhz ARM



Taxonomy of rootkit detection approaches and positioning our approach in the state of the art and open source tools.

**Table:** Comparison with related works on rootkit (RK) detection using different side-channel analysis techniques: HPC, DMA, Power consumption (Power) and EM.

	Article	WnP	Classification	Baits	ML	DL	Sample size	Open source	Benign	User RK	Window size	Device under test
HPC	Numchecker [WK13]	-	-	✓	-	-	8	-	-	-	262.3 ms	32-bit Ubuntu PC
	[Sin+17]	-	-	-	✓	-	5	-	-	-	45s	VMWare Windows 7 Intel
	[JLC20]	-	-	✓	✓	-	4	-	-	-	2.91s	ARM Cortex-A53
EM/Power/DMA	Copilot [PJ+04]	-	-	-	-	-	12	-	-	-	30s	PCI-compatible Intel PC Linux
	Gibraltar [BGI11]	-	-	-	-	-	23	-	✓	-	20s	PCI-compatible Intel PC Linux
	[Luc+18]	-	-	-	✓	✓	5	-	-	✓	>5m	PC Windows 10 & Ubuntu 14
	[Bri+18]	-	-	-	✓	-	5	-	-	-	>1m	Dell OptiPlex 755 Windows 7
	<b>ULTRA</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	9	✓	✓	✓	1.3s	ARM Raspberry Pi & MIPS Ci20



Confusion matrix of a CNN classification into 35 binaries from left to right (with and without obfuscation).

(1) *bashlite\_cfflatten*, *bashlite\_upx*, *bashlite\_bcf*, *bashlite*, *bashlite\_addopaque*, *bashlite\_sub*, *bashlite\_flatten*, *bashlite\_virtualize*;

(2) *mirai\_sub*, *mirai\_bcf*, *mirai\_cfflatten*, *mirai*, *mirai\_upx*, *mirai\_addopaque*, *mirai\_flatten*, *mirai\_virtualize*;

(3) *gonnacry\_des*, *gonnacry\_des\_upx*, *gonnacry*, *gonnacry\_aes*, *gonnacry\_aes\_upx*, *gonnacry\_upx*, *gonnacry\_flatten*, *gonnacry\_virtualize*, *gonnacry\_addopaque*, *gonnacry\_bcf*, *gonnacry\_sub*, *gonnacry\_cfflatten*;

(4) *spy*, *maK\_Iit*;

(5) *benign*: encode video, play audio, take picture, record camera, random.

Activities	Executables			
Linux Utilities	mknod	vdir	more	find
	zgrep	ls	cat	findmnt
	zmore	as	ed	rm
	touch	dmesg	sleep	cd
	less	grep	objdump	
Network	wget	hostname	ss	ip
Compression	gunzip	bunzip2	bzip2	tar
	uncompress			
Data backup	dd			
Scripting	python			
Photo & Video	raspistill	raspivid		
Video Encoding	MP4Box			
Audio player	mpg321			

- Binaries from fresh Linux installation

- Random activities

Table: ULTRA's targeted devices specification, architectures (Arch.), and their targeted frequency leakage ( $F_c$ ) and CPU in MHz.

Device $\delta$	Arch.	CPU	RAM	OS	$F_c$
Raspberry Pi B+	ARM32	700	512MB	Linux 4.1.7	1222
Creator CI20	MIPS32	1200	1GB	Linux 3.18.3	792

Table: ULTRA's bill of materials

Equipment	Rate/Unit	Count	Amount (Euro)
HackRF One SDR	309	1	309
Adapter SMA Male BNC Female RG316	5	1	5
Amplifier Langer PA-303 BNC	375	1	375
Probe Langer RF-U 5-2*	250	1	250
<b>Total</b>			<b>939</b>

\* *This can be omitted in the case of using a hand-crafted probe.*

**Table:** Performance evaluation of rootkit (RK) and their obfuscated variants<sup>(\*)</sup> detection results, and execution latency. List of indicators: (✓) RK detected; (-) Not detected; (†) Malicious behavior trigger required; (⚠) Kernel panicked; Executed on (‡) CPU ; (§) GPU.

RK	AV solutions			
	<i>rkhunter</i>	<i>chkrootkit</i>	<i>LKRG</i>	<i>ULTRA</i>
diamorphine	✓	-	✓†	✓
diamorphine <sup>(*)</sup>	-	-	✓†	✓
m0ham3d	✓	-	✓†	✓
m0ham3d <sup>(*)</sup>	-	-	✓†	✓
adore-ng	-	-	✓†⚠	✓
spy	-	-	-	✓
maK_it	-	-	-	✓
beurk	-	-	-	✓
vlany	-	-	-	✓
Latency (sec)	1326.6‡	44.3‡	2.6‡	1.3§-1.5‡

**Table:** Classification by family and by activity obtained with MLP, LDA + NB and LDA + SVM. The column “#” gives the number of classes per scenario.

			MLP	LDA + NB	LDA + SVM
Scenario	#		AC $[\epsilon_{opt}]^{PR/RC}$	AC $[\epsilon_{opt}]^{PR/RC}$	AC $[\epsilon_{opt}]^{PR/RC}$
$\delta_{ci20}$	family	19	91.3 <sub>[65]</sub> <sup>83.0/83.0</sup>	76.0 <sub>[10]</sub> <sup>65.6/65.4</sup>	85.6 <sub>[8]</sub> <sup>76.1/76.3</sup>
	activity	46	82.5 <sub>[45]</sub> <sup>83.0/82.5</sup>	62.5 <sub>[10]</sub> <sup>63.2/62.4</sup>	76.0 <sub>[10]</sub> <sup>75.8/76.0</sup>
$\delta_{rasp}$	family	19	82.1 <sub>[50]</sub> <sup>79.1/76.5</sup>	54.7 <sub>[10]</sub> <sup>53.9/55.3</sup>	66.2 <sub>[10]</sub> <sup>66.9/60.1</sup>
	activity	46	75.0 <sub>[40]</sub> <sup>75.4/75.0</sup>	50.6 <sub>[10]</sub> <sup>51.5/55.6</sup>	59.2 <sub>[9]</sub> <sup>59.4/59.2</sup>