USBIALIE

EXPOSE USB ACTIVITY ON THE FLY!



HELLOS

I am Cesare Pizzi, I'm doing security things at Sorint.lab
I am here because I love hacking (and thanks to the organizers!)
You can find me at "@red5heep" and "https://github.com/cecio"



Malware spreading via USB is not something from the past, but it is still a thing. We had several examples in the last months:

- MISTCLOAK (https://www.mandiant.com/resources/blog/china-nexus-espionage-southeast-asia)
- RASPBERRY ROBIN (https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/security/blog/2022/10/27/raspberry-robin-worm-part-of-larger-ecosystem-facilitating-pre-ransomware-activity/)

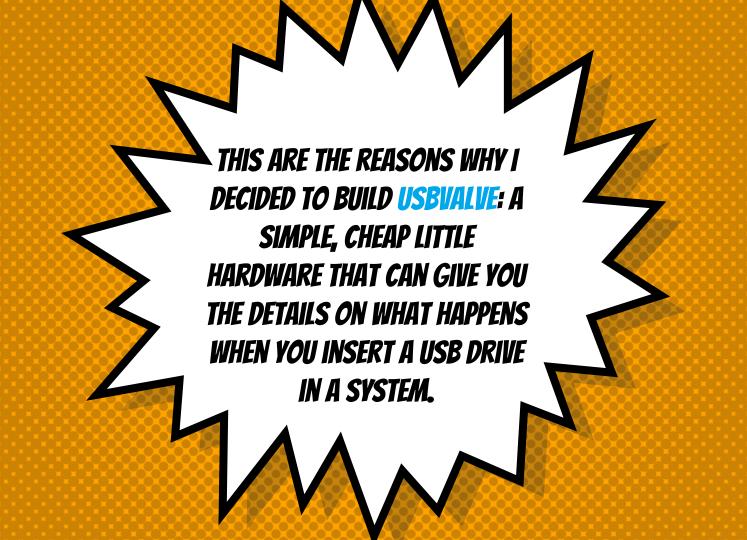
- NJRAT (https://infosecwriteups.com/njrat-malware-analysis-8e90dce07a9e)
- Try2cry (https://www.bleepingcomputer.com/news/security/try2cry-ransomware-tries-to-worm-its-way-to-other-windows-systems/)
- PlugX (https://unit42.paloaltonetworks.com/plugx-variants-in-usbs/)

But why using USB to spread in 2023?

- Implementation is pretty easy
- USB drives are easily exchanged without precautions
- USB allows "spillover" (different networks or even air gapped systems)

But it's not just something related to malware; every time you are inserting a USB key in a system, you don't know what is really happening:

something is stealing files or information for example?





THE HARDWARE (YES, IT'S AN HARDWARE PROJECT)

I decided to build this on well-known, cheap, offthe-shelf hardware, so I opted for:

- Raspberry <u>Pi Pico</u> (6\$)
- OLED SSD1306 screen (8\$) to give immediate output

THE HARDWARE (YES, IT'S AN HARDWARE PROJECT)

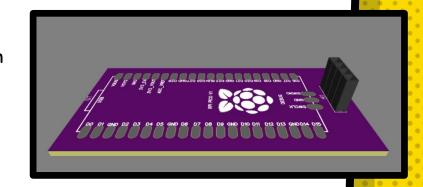
To keep thing simple I tried to avoid to use a real SD card and I emulated everything I needed.

In this way you just need a couple of components to have the fully working project.

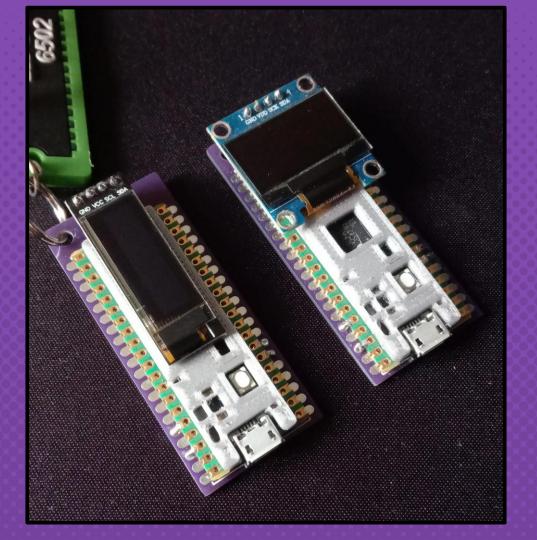
The very same code should run on any "rp2040" based platform supporting "TinyUSB"

A CUSTOM PCB

I decided to create also a super simple custom PCB, but you can build your own also without



THE FINAL RESULT



AN INSOMNI'HACK VERSION

I prepared this BLACK "limited edition" PCB, just for Insomni'hack





Based on "<u>TinyUSB</u>" library the system build a complete fake Filesystem directly in the RAM of the "<u>Pico</u>" and monitor for what is going on.

The File System has been crafted to expose more space than what is actually available in the memory of the board: we are not storing files, just checking accesses!

In order to avoid issues due to caching or some internals of the OS (works for both Linux and Windows) and to avoid false positive, the Fake FS places some files in specific positions in the clusters and then it monitor accesses.

```
#ifndef RAMDISK H
#define RAMDISK H
// The filesystem contains 3 files at specific blocks (see also USBvalve.ino)
      README.TXT
      System Volume Information
#define README CONTENTS \
  "...nuke the entire site from orbit. It's the only way to be sure."
#define AUTORUN CONTENTS \
  "[autorun]\r\nopen=calc.exe\r\nicon=icon.ico\r\n"
uint8_t msc_disk[DISK_BLOCK_NUM][DISK_BLOCK_SIZE] = {
//----- Block 0: -----//
0xeb, 0x3c, 0x90, 0x6d, 0x6b, 0x66, 0x73, 0x2e, 0x66, 0x61, 0x74, 0x00, 0x02, 0x01, 0x01, 0x00,
0x01, 0x10, 0x00, 0x00, 0x08, 0xf8, 0x66, 0x00, 0x01, 0x00, 0x01, 0x00, 0x00, 0x00, 0x00, 0x00,
0x00, 0x00, 0x00, 0x00, 0x80, 0x00, 0x29, 0x66, 0x36, 0xba, 0xf7, 0x55, 0x53, 0x42, 0x56, 0x41,
0x4c, 0x56, 0x45, 0x20, 0x20, 0x20, 0x46, 0x41, 0x54, 0x31, 0x32, 0x20, 0x20, 0x20, 0x0e, 0x1f,
0xbe, 0x5b, 0x7c, 0xac, 0x22, 0xc0, 0x74, 0x0b, 0x56, 0xb4, 0x0e, 0xbb, 0x07, 0x00, 0xcd, 0x10,
0x5e, 0xeb, 0xf0, 0x32, 0xe4, 0xcd, 0x16, 0xcd, 0x19, 0xeb, 0xfe, 0x54, 0x68, 0x69, 0x73, 0x20,
0x69, 0x73, 0x20, 0x6e, 0x6f, 0x74, 0x20, 0x61, 0x20, 0x62, 0x6f, 0x6f, 0x74, 0x61, 0x62, 0x6c,
0x65, 0x20, 0x64, 0x69, 0x73, 0x6b, 0x2e, 0x20, 0x20, 0x50, 0x6c, 0x65, 0x61, 0x73, 0x65, 0x20,
0x69, 0x6e, 0x73, 0x65, 0x72, 0x74, 0x20, 0x61, 0x20, 0x62, 0x6f, 0x6f, 0x74, 0x61, 0x62, 0x6c,
0x65, 0x20, 0x66, 0x6c, 0x6f, 0x70, 0x70, 0x79, 0x20, 0x61, 0x6e, 0x64, 0x0d, 0x0a, 0x70, 0x72,
0x65, 0x73, 0x73, 0x20, 0x61, 0x6e, 0x79, 0x20, 0x6b, 0x65, 0x79, 0x20, 0x74, 0x6f, 0x20, 0x74,
0x72, 0x79, 0x20, 0x61, 0x67, 0x61, 0x69, 0x6e, 0x20, 0x2e, 0x2e, 0x2e, 0x20, 0x0d, 0x0a, 0x00,
0x00, 0x00, 0x00, 0x00, 0x00, 0x00, 0x00, 0x00, 0x00, 0x00, 0x00, 0x00, 0x00, 0x00, 0x00, 0x00,
0x00, 0x00, 0x00, 0x00, 0x00, 0x00, 0x00, 0x00, 0x00, 0x00, 0x00, 0x00, 0x00, 0x00, 0x00, 0x00, 0x00,
0x00, 0x00, 0x00, 0x00, 0x00, 0x00, 0x00, 0x00, 0x00, 0x00, 0x00, 0x00, 0x00, 0x00, 0x00, 0x00, 0x00,
```



REAL MALWARE

We'll go through 4 malwares which will use 4 different techniques to trigger the execution, some of them pretty naive, some more sophisticated.

Obviously all the USB activities will be catched and exposed by USBvalve.

REAL MALWARE

It looks like that malware authors using USB spread techniques, prefer to use .NET executables.

May be because we are examining some simple malware samples?

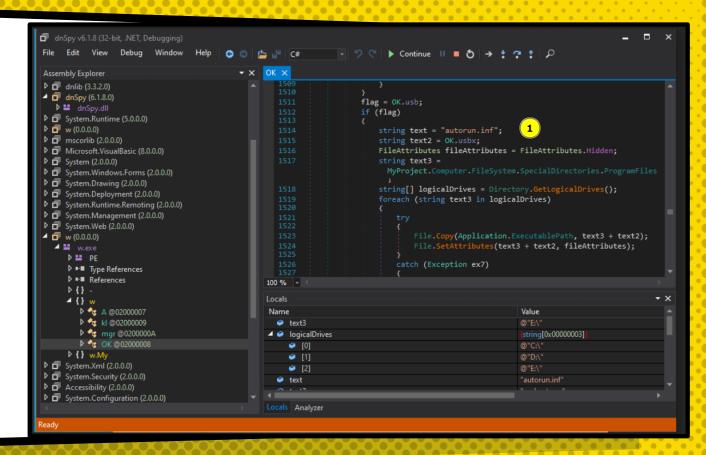
REAL MALWARE

This can be true for njrat and try2cry, but for Raspberry Robin and PlugX it's another story: we are actually facing something more complex and structured.





The malware change Autoruns.inf file...



NJRAT

...to trigger execution of svchost.exe copied on the drive

```
Administrator: Command Prompt
C:\Users\me>e:
E:\>dir
 Volume in drive E is USBVALVE
 Volume Serial Number is F7BA-3666
 Directory of E:\
13/11/2022 11:07
                                 66 README.TXT
               1 File(s)
                                     66 bytes
               0 Dir(s)
                              1,003,008 bytes free
E:\>dir /ah
 Volume in drive E is USBVALVE
 Volume Serial Number is F7BA-3666
 Directory of E:\
                                 50 AUTORUN.INF
14/11/2022 22:19
14/11/2022 22:01
                     <DIR>
                                    System Volume Information
02/10/2022 18:12
                             37,888 svchost.exe
               2 File(s)
                                 37,938 bytes
               1 Dir(s)
                              1,003,008 bytes free
E:\>type autorun.inf
[autorun]
open=E:\svchost.exe
shellexecute=E:\
```



TRY2CRY

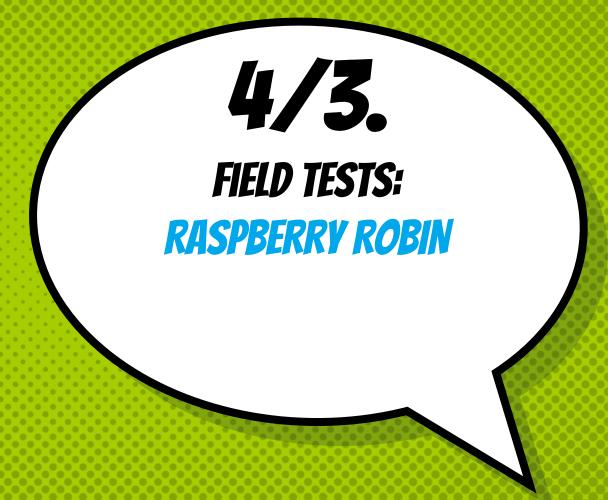
The ransomware is copying itself on USB...

```
mMain ×
                // Token: 0x0600003C RID: 60 RVA: 0x0002C214 File Offset: 0x0002A414
                private void Timer1 Tick(object sender, EventArgs e)
                        foreach (DriveInfo driveInfo in DriveInfo.GetDrives())
                            if ((driveInfo.DriveType == DriveType.Removable) & driveInfo.IsReady)
                                ArrayList arrayList = new ArrayList();
                                ArrayList arrayList2 = new ArrayList();
                                string executablePath = Application.ExecutablePath;
                                string[] directories = Directory.GetDirectories(driveInfo.RootDirectory.FullName);
                                arrayList.AddRange(directories):
                                string destFileName = driveInfo.RootDirectory.FullName + this.DqgCloZVcJIZInjgggEpYqv(Conversions.ToString
                                  (Strings.Chr(183))) + "فاص حدا".exe";
                                if (File.Exists(executablePath))
                                    File.Copy(executablePath, destFileName);
                                string destFileName2 = driveInfo.RootDirectory.FullName + this.DqgCloZVcJIZInjgggEpYqv(Conversions.ToString
                                  (Strings.Chr(183))) + "هاه.exe";
                                if (File.Exists(executablePath))
                                    File.Copy(executablePath, destFileName2);
                                string destFileName3 = driveInfo.RootDirectory.FullName + this.DggCloZVcJIZInjgggEpYqv(Conversions.ToString
                                  (Strings.Chr(183))) + "كلمات المرور. exe";
                                if (File.Exists(executablePath))
                                    File.Copy(executablePath, destFileName3);
                                string destFileName4 = driveInfo.RootDirectory.FullName + this.DqgCloZVcJIZInjgggEpYqv(Conversions.ToString
                                  (Strings.Chr(183))) + "غريب exe";
                                if (File.Exists(executablePath))
100 % -
```

TRY2CRY

...with some "fancy" file names (in arabic), hoping that the user will click on them

exe Important.exe.هام.exe passwords.exe المرور exe passwords.exe.خاص جدا.exe very special.exe.خاص

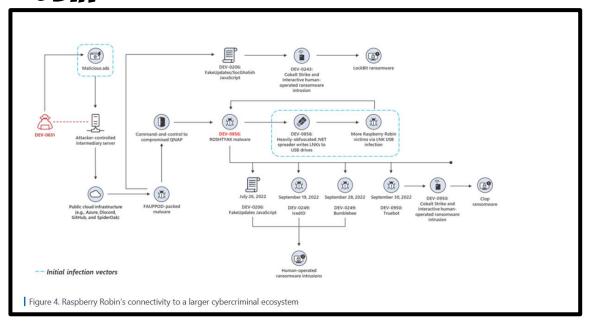


This malware is pretty complex and composed of several parts.

MS and Red Canary did awesome analysis on it.

- * https://redcanary.com/blog/raspberry-robin/
- * https://www.microsoft.com/enus/security/blog/2022/10/27/raspberry-robinworm-part-of-larger-ecosystem-facilitatingpre-ransomware-activity/

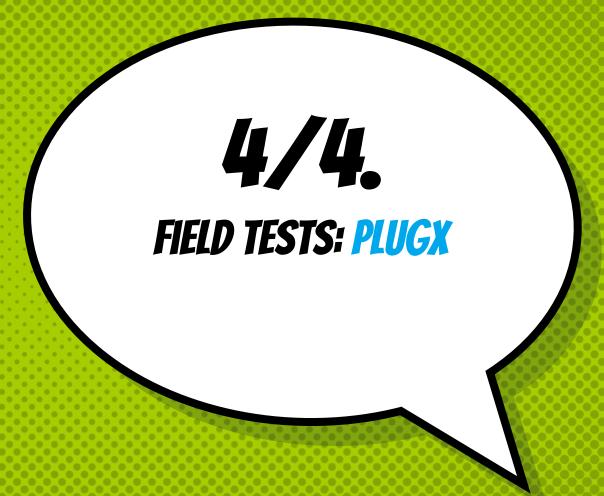
From the MS site mentioned before



If you really want an insight about the complexity behind Raspberry Robin and Roshtyak, have a look to this awesome report from AVAST:

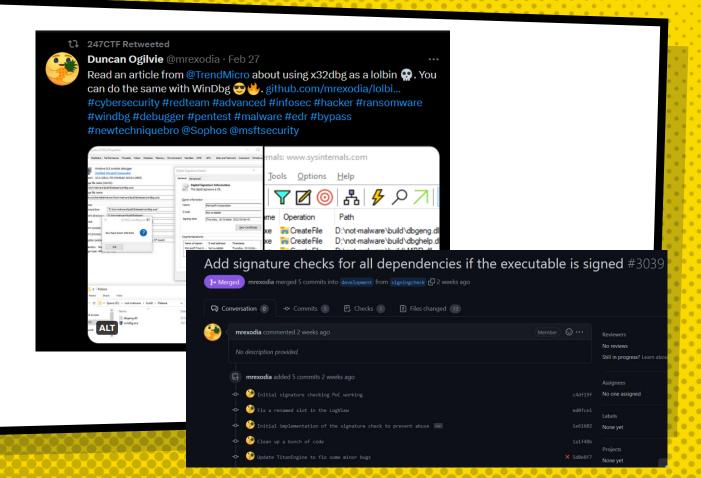
* https://decoded.avast.io/janvojtesek/raspberry-robinsroshtyak-a-little-lesson-in-trickery/?s=09

It creates a LNK file disguised as a folder, using name "recovery.lnk" or some USB drives brands, encouraging the user to click on it.



PlugX is pretty interesting, because it looks like it's targeting (at least in some of its variant) security analysts:

https://unit42.paloaltonetworks.com/plugxvariants-in-usbs/



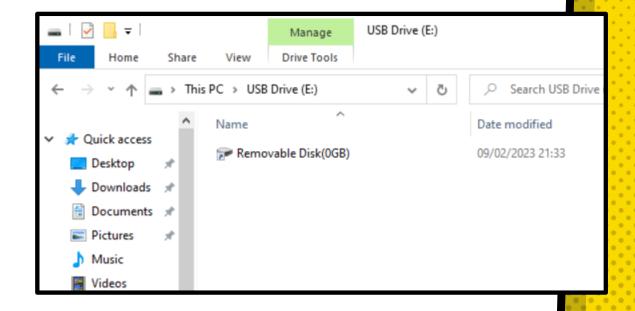
The sample is distributed as X32bridge.dll file which is "side-loaded" when X64dbg application is started.

Once loaded the DLL will search the payload in X32bridge.dat file.

The malware uses USB to spread, with an interesting technique:

It creates a LNK file disguised as a device (with proper icon) and all the files are saved in a folder named with Unicode char OOAO (no-break space)

This is what you see in Explorer:



This is what you see in cmd:

```
Volume Serial Number is EEE8-C1DF
Directory of C:\Users\me\Desktop\xdbg\x32
09/02/2023 16:42
                             72,704 x32bridge.dll
               1 File(s)
                                 72,704 bytes
               0 Dir(s) 31,051,808,768 bytes free
C:\Users\me\Desktop\xdbg\x32>copy ..\..\Downloads\plugx\X32bridge.dat .
        1 file(s) copied.
C:\Users\me\Desktop\xdbg\x32>x32dbg.exe
C:\Users\me\Desktop\xdbg\x32>e:
E:\>dir
Volume in drive E is USBVALVE
Volume Serial Number is F7BA-3666
Directory of E:\
                              1,751 USBVALVE.lnk
09/02/2023 21:21
               1 File(s)
                                   1,751 bytes
               0 Dir(s)
                                   6,144 bytes free
E:\>type USBVALVE.lnk
L@¶@<sup>l</sup>FÒ@ w↓müÀ∥Î@P«ıà∦<<sup>l</sup>@w↓müÀ∥Î@£♥5@¶▼PÓOð Û:i▶ó+00Ø↓/C:\V1kUs∭►Windows@
                                                                                  ♦ ¥ÇOwHIVîñ.+♠@§³▼Windows=Z1IV(ì►System3
        ♦´¥çOwHIVîñ.ÝŸΘ§]jSystem32↑V2£♥FS₌l cmd.exe@ ♦´¥FS₌lIV»¬.&ÓΘäĕ~åcmd.exe=J∟⊝∟-I⊲♥■↓p¯▶C:\Windows\System32\cmd.
exe)/q /c "á\á\RECYCLER.BIN\files\x32dbg.exe"!%systemroot%\system32\SHELL32.dll¶♥⊖á%comspec%%comspec%+á%¦∟ðáwN<sup>⊥</sup>
```

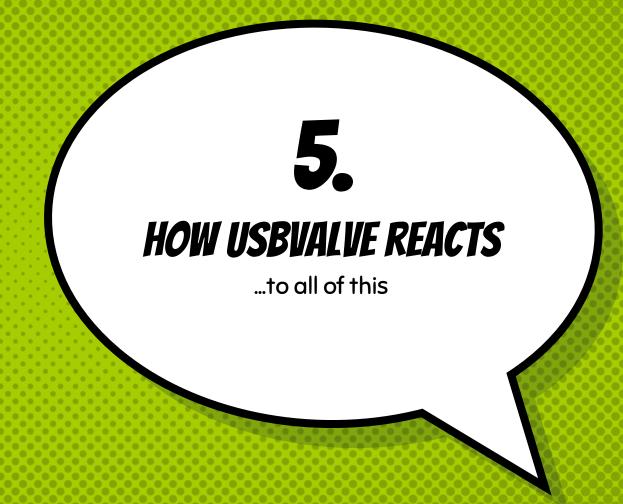
This is what you see in Linux:

This is what you see in Linux if you drill down:

```
>>> ls
    'Removable Disk(OGB).lnk' 'System Volume Information'
 cesare@dell /mnt
>>> ls -l
total 48
drwxr-xr-x 3 root root 16384 Feb 9
                                    2023
 -rwxr-xr-x 1 root root 1751 Feb 9
                                    2023 'Removable Disk(OGB).lnk'
drwxr-xr-x 2 root root 16384 Feb 9 17:20 'System Volume Information'
 cesare@dell /mnt
>>> cd
 cesare@dell /mnt/
>>> ls
     desktop.ini 'Removable Disk(OGB).lnk'
 cesare@dell /mnt/
>>> ls -l
total 48
drwxr-xr-x 3 root root 16384 Feb
                                    2023
                      134 Feb 9
                                    2023
                                          desktop.ini
 r-xr-xr-x 1 root root
 rwxr-xr-x 1 root root 1747 Feb 9
                                    2023 'Removable Disk(OGB).lnk'
 cesare@dell /mnt/
>>> cat desktop.ini
 .ShellClassInfo]
IconResource=%systemroot%\system32\SHELL32.dll,7%
 cesare@dell /mnt/
```

This is what you see in Linux if you drill down even more:

```
>>> 15
desktop.ini RECYCLER.BIN x32bridge.dat X32bridge.dll
 cesare@dell /mnt/
>>> ls -l
total 240
-r-xr-xr-x 1 root root 134 Feb 9 2023 desktop.ini
drwxr-xr-x 3 root root 16384 Feb 9 2023 RECYCLER.BIN
-rwxr-xr-x 1 root root 127514 Feb 9 17:39 x32bridge.dat
-rwxr-xr-x 1 root root 72704 Feb 9 17:42 X32bridge.dll
 cesare@dell
>>> cat desktop.ini
[.ShellClassInfo]
IconResource=%systemroot%\system32\SHELL32.dll,78
 cesare@dell /mnt/
```



When you insert the board, you will see something like this:



Depending on the system you may have auto-mount or not. Let's make an example with a Windows System where the USB are always mounted automatically:



As you can see the Autorun.inf file is accessed. This is pretty normal, even if the Autoplay feature is turned off. In this case it is not executed, but only read.

The R near the name state the access mode (Read).



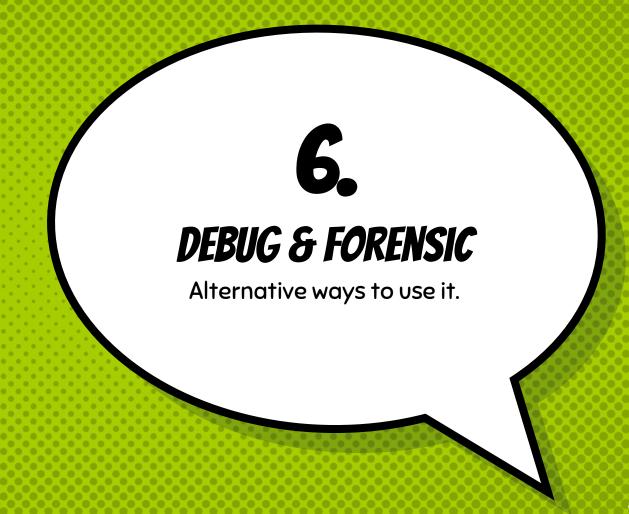
This starts to be a little suspicious (see [!]): something is reading all the files on the dongle. This is not a default behavior, so something strange is happening. It could be just the AV (but Windows Defender does not do it by default) or may be something else.



Ok, something is writing...this is definitely wrong!

If something is writing just after the dongle insertion, something bad is happening. It can be a malware trying to spread itself or something encrypting files, or...?.





DEBUG & FORENSIC

USBvalve can be used also to debug or make forensic investigations as well, checking what is going on the device when read/write operations are done.

After insertion a serial port is added to the system: it's just a matter of connecting the COM/Serial to a terminal and then check

DEBUG & FORENSIC

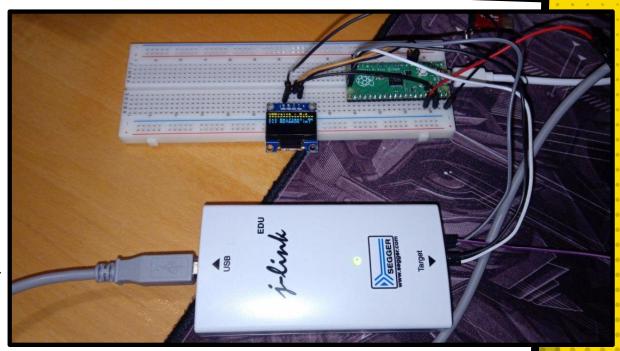
In this case we are monitoring very specific commands like SCSI READ(10) and WRITE(10) commands, with sector accessed and a small dump of the data.

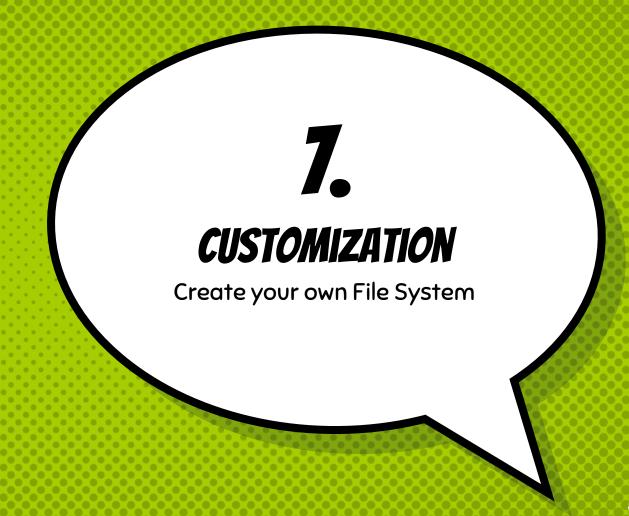
For timing reason it's not possible to dump the entire packet.



DEBUG & FORENSIC

But since the SWD PINs are exposed, you can also attach an hardware debugger and attach GDB: at this point you have full access to the USB activities and you can inspect all the traffic done with the protocol





CUSTOMIZATION

A pre-built FileSystem is provided in the original source.

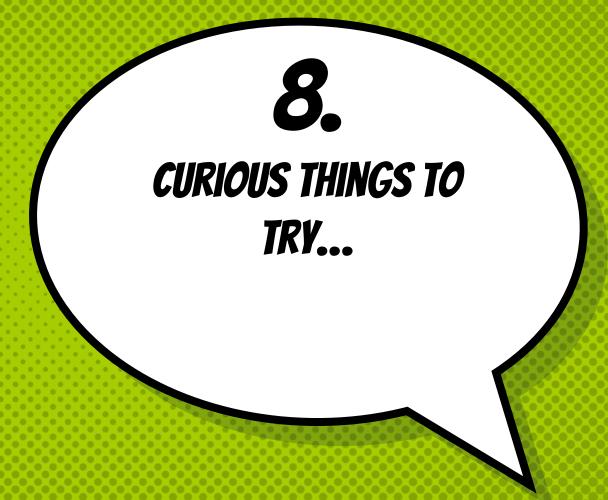
But you can create your own, if you whish. A companion script is provided to create the proper structure out from a file, formatted in the proper way.

CUSTOMIZATION

dd if=/dev/zero of=fat.fs bs=1024 count=1024 sudo mkfs.fat fat.fs -9 1/1 -f 1 -s 1 -r 16 -n "USBVALVE" sudo mount fat.fs /mnt

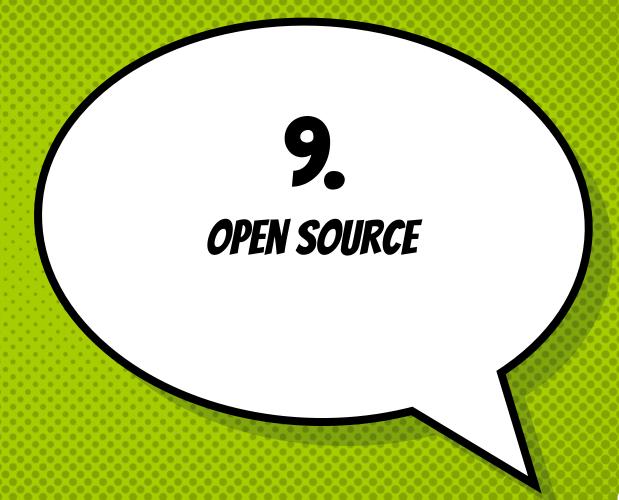
Now you can create the files you prefer in the /mnt/ folder.

Once done a Python script can create the proper structures to be compiled as RAM disk. Some adjustment on some global variables may be required to have all working.



COURIOUS THINGS...

Right now I'm testing all the devices with a USB port in my house (TV decoder, modem, Steam Deck ...) to see if they are doing something strange with my data:-)

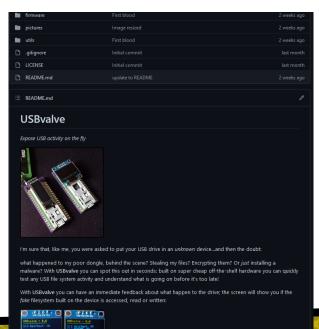


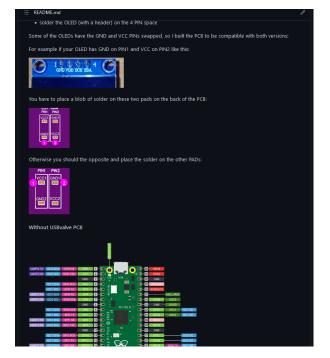
NOW IT'S YOUR TURN

Everything has been released as OpenSource so you can get it and personalize the entire program to fit your needs. Build instructions are present too:

https://github.com/cecio/USBvalve

NOW IT'S YOUR TURN







CREDITS

Special thanks to:

- × TinyUSB project (https://docs.tinyusb.org/en/latest/)
- AdaFruit porting
 (https://github.com/adafruit/Adafruit_TinyUSB_Arduino)
- × All the analysis mentioned before
- Presentation template by <u>SlidesCarnival</u>



Any questions?

You can find me at @red5heep and on Github