

# Eavesdropping on and Emulating MIFARE Ultralight and Classic Cards Using Software Defined Radio

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## Abstract

In this report, we describe a Software-Defined Radio (SDR) approach for eavesdropping on Near Field Communications (NFC) and Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) cards operating at 13.56 MHz. We show that GNU Radio and Python make a great platform for prototyping, while maintaining sufficient performance for passive attacks without extensive optimizations and using only modest processing power. We successfully eavesdrop on real MIFARE Ultralight and Classic 1K cards by capturing the raw radio waves with a home-made antenna. We recover the plaintext of both reader and tag fully by demodulating the incoming radio waves, parsing individual bits and error detection codes into packets, and then decrypting them when necessary. On the transmission side, we achieve full software emulation of the reader and of MIFARE Ultralight and Classic 1K cards (including encryption), and partial hardware emulation, where we correctly modulate the signal, but not within the strict timing limits of the protocol. Our transmissions can also be used to prevent legitimate communication by interfering with the intended reader or tag signals.

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## 1. Introduction

Contactless cards and tags have become very popular in recent years, with everyday applications including e-passports [34], ticketing [36, 7, 12], access control [37], and payment [21, 11] systems. However, as these devices operate wirelessly, adversaries can pick up the radio signals and eavesdrop on the communication between a tag and a reader. Traditionally, such attacks on radio communications required dedicated hardware for particular frequencies and modulation types, but with the advent of Software-Defined Radio (SDR), it is possible to use generic equipment and perform the demodulation in software. Even so, despite a range of embedded devices and Field-Programmable Gate Arrays (FPGAs) that are capable of various attacks on Near Field Communication (NFC), Radio Frequency Identification (RFID), and related technologies, to the best of our knowledge no open-source SDR implementation exists for High-Frequency (HF) NFC.<sup>1</sup>

To this end, we developed such an implementation on an Ettus Research Universal Software Radio Peripheral (USRP) using Python and GNU Radio with an antenna made out of simple wire that allows passive eavesdropping on reader-tag communication. Though our implementation is easily extensible, we focused on MIFARE cards by NXP Semiconductors, since MIFARE has “a market share of more than 77% in the transport ticketing industry”, with “150 million reader and 10 billion contactless and dual interface IC’s sold” [25]. Specifically, we use Ultralight [29] and Classic 1K [27] cards, as the former does not employ any encryption, while the latter uses a broken cryptographic algorithm (Section 3.4), making them

ideal candidates for such exploration. Moreover, we achieve full software and partial hardware reader and tag emulation, that can also be used to jam signals between a legitimate tag and reader. In summary, our contributions are as follows:

1. We implement in pure Software-Defined Radio a demodulator for NFC/RFID readers and tags operating in the 13.56 MHz frequency, which decodes radio waves into plaintext packets.
2. We test our implementation by eavesdropping on real MIFARE Classic 1K and Ultralight communications with an RFID reader using a home-made antenna and a USRP, successfully decoding any encrypted packets.
3. We additionally implement in software the emulation of both readers and tags, including encryption if necessary.
4. Though our transmission capabilities cannot keep up with the strict timing requirements of the protocol, we show how our implementation can jam real reader-tag communications and prevent the successful transmission of data.
5. Overall, our work shows that prototyping using Software-Defined Radio is sufficient in practice for passive attacks, without the need for extensive optimizations or heavy computing power.

## PAPER STRUCTURE

## 2. Related Work

Early work on RFID Hacking was conducted in a non-academic context, and focused on finding vulnerabilities in access control systems [32, 36]. Later, Buettner and Wetherall [5, 6, 4] experimented more systematically with RFID and SDR, but focused primarily on Gen 2 cards operating at 900 MHz.

<sup>1</sup>Though they exist for UHF Gen2 cards. See <https://github.com/brunoprog64/rfid-gen2> and <https://github.com/yqzheng/usrp2reader> for instance.

Their work was extended by others, typically in the context of proposing better protocols [3, 39], but still for Ultra High Frequencies (UHF), with the exception of a recent work by Hassanieh et al. [14], which also included an extension to HF.

There have also been a number of designs which use microcontrollers and Field-Programmable Gate Arrays (FPGAs) for signal processing, such as the Proxmark 3 [38], and RFI-Dler [20]. Though such projects allow the use of custom firmware for additional functionality, they also require dedicated hardware in their design.

The MIFARE Classic cryptographic protocol was reverse-engineered by Nohl et al. by dissolving the plastic surrounding the chips, recovering the individual logic gates and converting them to a high-level algorithm [24]. Garcia et al. then discovered additional vulnerabilities of the protocol based on its nested authentication and parity bits [12]. Due to the wide range of applications of the MIFARE Classic, the topic became very popular for Master's thesis projects [33, 7, 31, 37], which found additional vulnerabilities, or examined the problem within the context of a specific application.

Finally, given the widespread availability of NFC-enabled mobile devices, researchers have also focused on NFC relay attacks using mobile phones [21, 11], as well as exploring [23] and protecting [13] the NFC mobile phone stack.

### 3. Background

The terms Radio Frequency Identification (RFID), Near Field Communication (NFC), contactless smartcards, proximity cards and vicinity cards are often used interchangeably, but they are covered by different standards and concern different parts of the radio spectrum. In this project, we looked at the ISO/IEC 14443 standard, with physical characteristics defined in [15], modulation and encoding in [17], initialization and anticollision in [18] and transmission protocols in [16].

Specifically, we focus on **Type A** communications, whose **carrier frequency** is  $f_c = 13.56$  MHz. The reader – or **Proximity Coupling Device (PCD)** – communicates with the card – or **Proximity Integrated Circuit Card (PICC)** – through **100% Amplitude Shift Keying (ASK)**, with data using the **Modified Miller** encoding. The communication from tag to reader utilizes **Load Modulation** with a **subcarrier frequency** of  $f_s = f_c/16 = 847.5$  kHz, using **Manchester Encoding**, and both transmit at a rate of 106 kbit/s.

Because the carrier frequency is  $f_c = 13.56$  MHz, the wavelength is  $c/f_c \approx 22$  meters, making it impossible to deploy antennas that would fit in a card-size form-factor. Additionally, because the cards are **passive** (i.e. do not have their own power source), both the communication and the power source are achieved through **inductive coupling** from the PCD's antenna loop to the PICC's antenna loop.

#### SECTION STRUCTURE

#### 3.1 PCD Transmissions

Amplitude Shift Keying (ASK) of depth  $X\%$  is a form of digital modulation which specifies that if the amplitude of the

signal representing a digital 1 is equal to  $A$  and the amplitude of the signal representing a digital 0 is equal to  $B$ , then  $X = \frac{A-B}{A+B}$ , as showing in Figure 1. Specifically, for 100% ASK, no signal is sent at all during a digital 0, indicating that such periods must be very brief, since the PICC needs to keep charge (using a capacitor) for the period of silence.

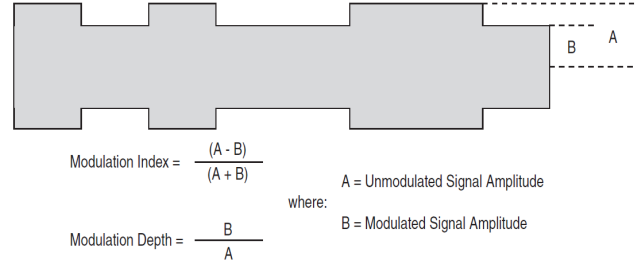


Figure 1. Amplitude Shift Keying (ASK) [1]

This is achieved through the Modified Miller Encoding, which ensures that there is no period of more than  $3\mu s$  of silence (“pause”). Specifically, every bit is represented as a (combination of) signals lasting a total of  $t_b = 128/f_c \approx 9.44\mu s$ . The encoding (show in Figure 2) is as follows:

- A 1 is encoded as an unmodulated signal for  $t_b/2 \approx 4.72\mu s$ , followed by a period of silence for  $3\mu s$ , followed by an unmodulated signal for  $t_b/2 - 3 \approx 1.72\mu s$
- A 0 after a 0 is encoded as a silence period for  $3\mu s$  followed by an unmodulated signal for  $t_b - 3 \approx 6.44\mu s$
- A 0 after a 1 is encoded as an unmodulated signal for a period of  $t_b \approx 9.44\mu s$
- To indicate the beginning and the end of a transmission, a logical 0 is used for both the start and the end

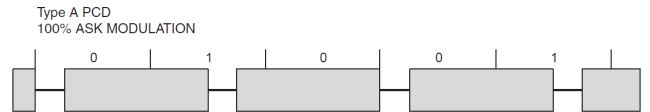


Figure 2. Miller Encoding at 100% ASK [1]

In practice, however, because of hardware imperfections, the pause is not perfect, but needs to comply with the requirements shown in Figure 3. As a result, the modulated carrier for the encodings resembles Figure 4.

#### 3.2 PICC Transmissions

As mentioned above, the tag does not have sufficient power for active transmissions. Consequently, the PICC achieves data transmission passively, by changing its **load**, which can be inferred as a voltage drop on the PCD, hence the term **load modulation**. Switching the load generates a **subcarrier**, which has a frequency  $f_s = f_c/16 = 847.5$  kHz.

The bits are then encoded using **On-Off Keying (OOK)** or **Manchester Encoding** as follows, with a total duration also equal to  $t_b \approx 9.44\mu s$ , which also equals 8 periods of the subcarrier, also shown in Figures 5 and 6:

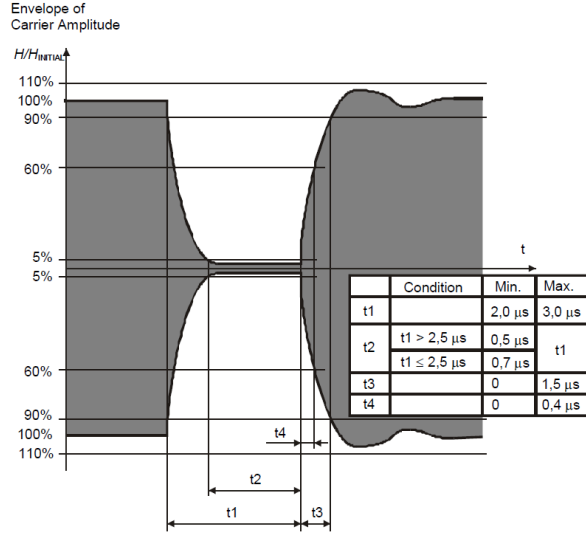


Figure 3. Real Pause Requirements [17]

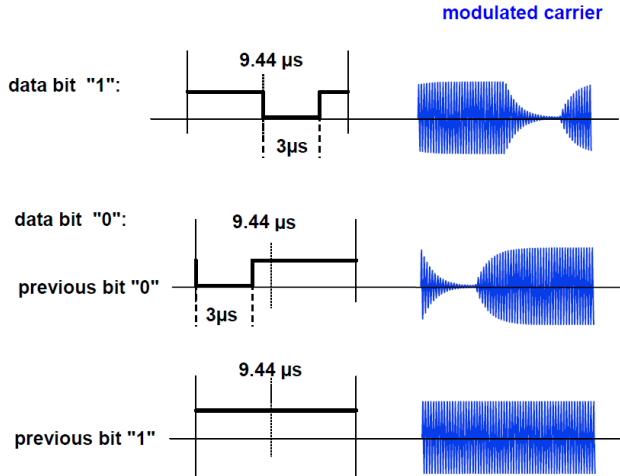


Figure 4. Realistic Miller Encoding [25]

- A 1 is encoded by modulating the subcarrier for the *first* half ( $= t_b/2 \approx 4.72\mu s$ ) of the bit duration
- A 0 is encoded by modulating the subcarrier for the *second* half ( $= t_b/2 \approx 4.72\mu s$ ) of the bit duration
- A logical 1 starts the transmission
- No modulation signifies the end of a transmission

### 3.3 The Protocol

Though the ISO/IEC 14443A protocol is general, we will focus on a few key aspects that are relevant to our discussion. As a result, we will refer the reader to [18] for more details such as timing requirements.

First of all, it is worth noting that each byte is **ordered** from the Least Significant Bit (LSB) to the Most Significant Bit (MSB), and that each byte is followed by an **odd parity bit**, meaning that an even number of high bits (ones) is fol-

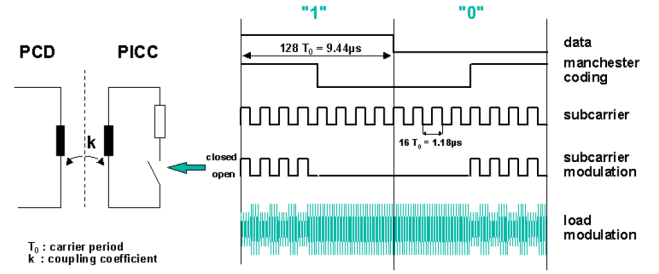


Figure 5. Manchester Encoding with Load Modulation [25]

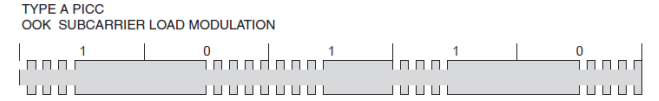


Figure 6. Envelope of Load Modulation [1]

lowed by another high bit (one), whereas an odd number of ones is followed by a low bit (zero). For example, the byte 0x3F is encoded as 1111 1100 1.

The PCD signifies that it is waiting to read tags by repeatedly sending a **REQA (0x26)** or a **WUPA (0x52)**, where the “A” signifies that type A protocol is used. The difference between the REQA request and the WUPA wake-up request is that the latter also wakes up PICCs that were previously asked to HALT. Unlike all other commands, they are sent using a *short frame* that only consists of 7 bits, and which does not include a parity bit. As a result, the REQA command (including the beginning and end transmission zero bits) is sent as the sequence of bits 0 0110 010 0.

The standard has also defined **Anticollision** and **Selection** phases before the transmission of actual data which are used to ensure the non-interference from multiple tags and the correct selection of the tag. However, we only discuss them in the context of the MIFARE cards in Appendix A, since they are not necessary for understanding the rest of this report.

Finally, we mention that to detect errors with longer transmissions, for some requests and responses a **Cyclic Redundancy Check (CRC)** is used on the transmitted bytes (but excluding start/end and parity bits). The polynomial used is  $x^{16} + x^{12} + x^5 + 1$ , with a starting value of 0x6363, under the assumption that “FF0 shall be the leftmost flip-flop where data is shifted in [and] FF15 shall be the rightmost flip-flop where data is shifted out” [18]. For example, the **HALT/HLTA** command uses 2 bytes (0x50 0x00) followed by the two CRC bytes which can be calculated as 0x57 0xCD.

### 3.4 MIFARE Classic 1K Encryption

Even though the MIFARE Ultralight is ISO/IEC 14443 A compliant [29], the MIFARE Classic 1K uses a proprietary cryptographic protocol called CRYPTO1 [27]. The details of the protocol were not made publicly available, with the MIFARE datasheets only broadly explaining the 3-pass protocol [27]. Each **sector** (equal to 4 **blocks** of 16 bytes each) has two 6-byte keys (**Key A and B**), which on delivery are set to





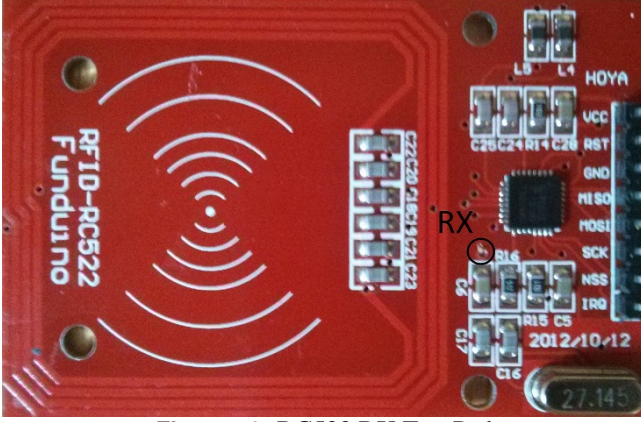


Figure 10. RC522 RX Test Pad



Figure 11. Cards/Tags used for the experiment

#### 4.2 The Antenna

Much research has been conducted into making RFID-type antennas work well and with up to a large distance, with much of it available as application notes [25, 22, 26]. Many of them are also available for direct purchase, such as the DLP-RFID-ANT by DLP Design,<sup>2</sup> but fundamentally the RFID antenna is just an inductor, made out of wire wrapped into a coil. These home-made antennas made out of simple wire (or out of NFC tags themselves [19]) have proven themselves to work [8], so we made our own. According to [26], the inductance should be between 300 nH and 3  $\mu$ H, so using Equation (1) with  $N = 8$  turns,  $D = 4$ cm, and  $s = 2.8$ mm (22 AWG), we get an inductance of 5.28  $\mu$ H, which is within the prescribed limits.

$$L[nH] = \frac{24.6 \cdot N^2 \cdot D[cm]}{1 + 2.75 \cdot \frac{s[cm]}{D[cm]}} \quad (1)$$

Measuring the signal strength of the wire loop and of the RC522 RX test pad directly on the oscilloscope resulted in equal signal strength (when they were less about a cm apart), but connecting it to the USRP made the signal strength drop

considerably, and also required a tuning capacitor in series with the antenna.

For emulating PICC transmission (TX) through Load Modulation, we used a transistor and 2 resistors. Since the entire set-up was crude, their values were empirically determined, but the schematic can be seen in Figure 12 and the final circuit in Figure 13.

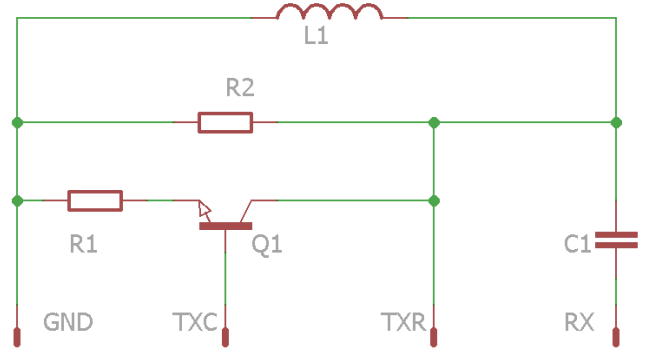


Figure 12. Antenna Schematic

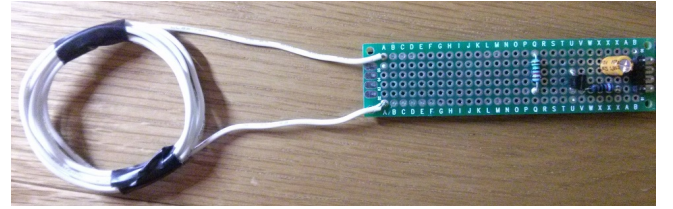


Figure 13. Antenna PCB

Though we discuss the antenna more in Section 5, we mention here that the range for eavesdropping on both reader and tag (which is further away) was only about 1-2 cm. To remedy this, we taped the antenna to the back of the RC522 reader, and the tag to be read to the front of it as shown in Figure 14. The picture taken is before the final PCB was made, and with a different NFC tag (still using the NTAG203 chip).

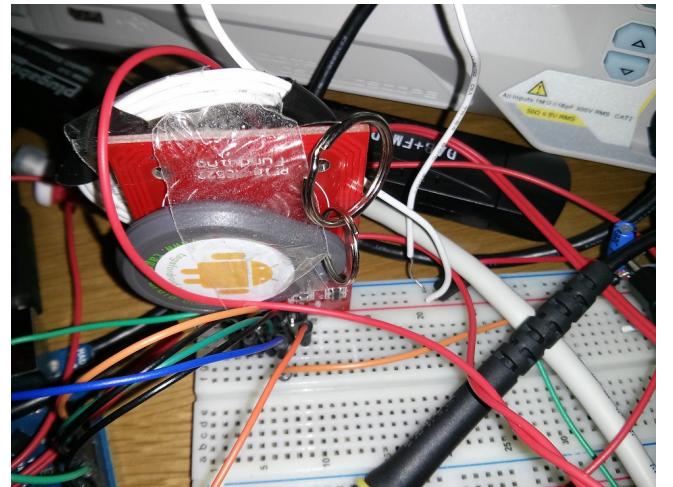


Figure 14. Measurement Setup

<sup>2</sup>Found at <http://www.dlpdesign.com/rf/ant1.shtml>

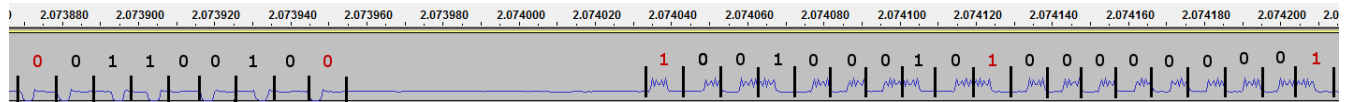


Figure 15. Annotated Recoding

### 4.3 Eavesdropping

For consistency/determinism, and easy testing/reproducibility, we initially recorded the interaction between the reader and the tag. This was achieved by using our home-made antenna connected to the USRP in the setup shown in Figure 14. The *envelope* of the signal is sufficient for our purposes, and for our Amplitude Modulated (AM) signal can be calculated as the absolute value of the signal. Recoding the envelope as a WAV file (using GNU Radio’s `wavfile_sink`) using a sample rate of 2,000,000 samples/second and a 16-bit output, we get around 4 MB of data to be processed per second.

Opening the resulting audio file in Audacity Audio Editor, we see that for PCD transmissions the signal drops close to 0, while for PICC transmissions the subcarrier spikes hover at about 5-10% above the average. An annotated example of the REQA and ATQA transmissions is shown in Figure 15, where start/end and parity bits are shown in red.

Consequently, we can detect such transitions by having a moving window (say of length 2,000) that keeps track of the average, and if the next value is below a certain threshold (10% of the average), consider it part of a reader transmission, and if it goes above a different threshold (110% of the average), consider it part of a card transmission. The transmission is considered over when the signal has returned to its average values for too long (currently  $> 25\mu s$ ), and to ensure that the average does not drift, values above the high threshold and below the low threshold are not included in the moving average. The duration and values of these transitions are then passed on to the appropriate decoders through callbacks, so that the decoding runs in a background thread.

The two decoders (one for Manchester encoding, and the other for the Modified Miller Encoding) are essentially Finite State Machines (FSM) that implement the specifications mentioned in Sections 3.1 and 3.2, allowing for some margin of transmission and measurement errors. For instance, the sequence  $[(0, 3), (1, 11), (0, 3), (1, 16), (0, 3), (1, 6)]$  of (bit,  $\mu s$  duration) pairs would be (approximately) split as:

```

[(0, 3), (1, 6.5)] → 0
[(4.5, 1), (0, 3), (1, 1.5)] → 1
[(1, 9.5)] → 0
[(1, 5), (0, 3), (1, 1.5)] → 1
(1, 4.5) → state=ONE_FIRST_STAGE

```

Having recovered all the bits (including parity, but discarding any start/end bits), and knowing whether the PCD or the PICC is doing the transmission, these bits can be interpreted with context in a more high-level FSM. This is the code that

updates the internal state of the tag/reader when needed (e.g. to decrypt bits in the MIFARE Classic case), ensures that the parity is correct and transforms bits into bytes, and then based on the current state and the “header” of the incoming bytes determines the command issued, interprets the bytes and checks any CRC if necessary.

For unencrypted commands, this process is not crucial,<sup>3</sup> but for the Classic 1K, parsing the commands to get the UID, for instance, is of utmost importance as any deviations would result in ciphertext that cannot be decrypted. Specifically for regular data transmission decryption is straightforward, but the setup phase of the challenge-response protocol needs to be handled more subtly, especially because of nested authentications after the first authentication. Hence, while the actual cipher is abstracted away into a different class, it is the responsibility of the FSM to correctly call it.

### 4.4 Emulating

The FSM proved to be an important abstraction for the emulation part of the project because it centralized also encryption considerations. As a result, the emulated Reader and Tag only deal with plaintext messages (and not individual bits). Specifically, the Reader is set to perform identically to the Arduino’s `DumpInfo` program, by performing the anticollision, and then reading all card blocks. The Tag is programmed to respond to the incoming commands, and its memory layout is set dynamically through files. For reproducibility (and especially when emulating the tag against a recording), the randomness used by the Tag and the Reader can also be fixed, but they can also be generated on-the-fly as needed, ensuring that this is not merely a replay attack.

Because of this setup, it is possible to emulate both the reader and the tag simultaneously, without needing to go through encoding and modulation, but we have also coded the Manchester and Modified Miller encodings (in a reverse fashion to Section 4.3), as well as modulation, which can be output to a WAV file for use without a USRP.

Modulating the Reader’s output is straightforward: it is enough to generate a 13.56 MHz (sine wave) carrier and output it, or output nothing for the “pause” duration. Load Modulation of the Tag is more complicated, and is achieved by only outputting when the encoding is a logical 1 (for either  $4.5\mu s$  or  $9\mu s$ ). Specifically, however, and as explained in Section 3.2 (Figure 5), this is achieved by generating a 847.5 kHz subcarrier, multiplying by the bit to output, and the switching the load (in this case through the transistor) only for the amount of time for which the signal is positive.

<sup>3</sup>Indeed, the code will just print the plaintext bytes in case it cannot interpret them.

## 5. Evaluation

pictures comparing, also showing from real reader

compare to embedded solutions speedups due to numpy, and removing function calls from 50sec/sec to 6secs/sec to 2secs/sec

conclude that good, but not real time, also not synchronization on clock... clock recovery so no timeouts

lack of newer cards eg desfire and ultralight ev

critique transmission for tag. also could not get it down to the kHz range.

needed better setup

compare the 2 daughterboards

talk about different cards (not just one) how it is easy to do ntag203

bad antenna. did not use coax, but SMA... briefly talk about failed amplifier (not LNA!)

<http://marcusjenkins.com/amateur-radio-2/a-signal-amplifier-module-for-hf/>

talk about touching/not touching reader (antenna)

talk about real usrp signal vs already touching (tag)

example traces in appendix

## 6. Conclusions

and future work

## Acknowledgments

I would like to thank Kasper Rasmussen for being my supervisor, for his invaluable help throughout the project, and for entrusting me with his expensive equipment. I would also like to thank Simon Crowe for helping shape the focus of the project. Finally, I would like to thank Kellogg College and their Research Support Grant which enabled the purchase of some of the components that were used in this project.

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## Appendices

### A MIFARE Cards

In this section, we focus on the MIFARE Ultralight and Classic 1K cards, with more general ISO details in [18].

#### A.1 MIFARE Ultralight [29]

The memory layout for a MIFARE Ultralight card can be found in Figure 17. The card has a 7-byte UID SN[0-6], including 2 check bytes BCC[0-1]. SN0 is the manufacturer ID (0x04 for NXP Semiconductors), and the check bytes are defined as follows:  $BCC0 = 0x88 \oplus SN0 \oplus SN1 \oplus SN2$  and  $BCC1 = SN3 \oplus SN4 \oplus SN5 \oplus SN6$ . Lock bytes can be used to turn pages into read-only mode, while One-Time Pad (OTP) bytes can be set to 1, but never set back to 0 again. As can be seen in Figure 16, Ultralight cards go through 2 rounds of ANTICOLLISION and SELECT commands.

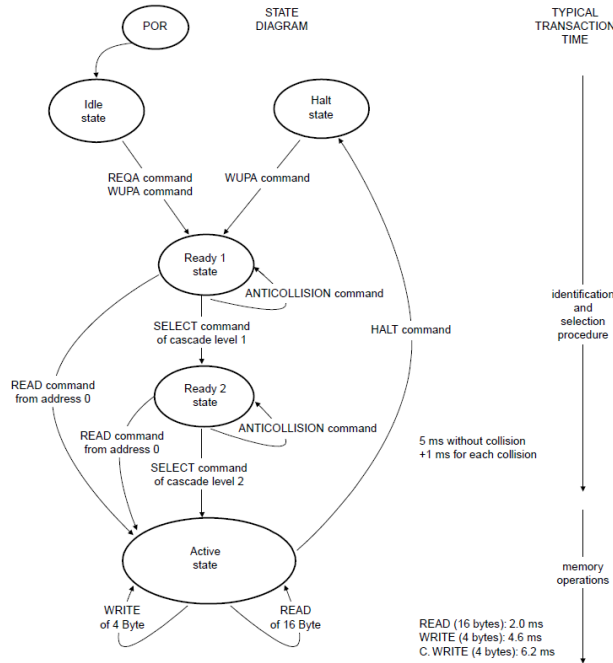


Figure 16. MIFARE Ultralight FSM

| Page address |            | Byte number   |          |            |            |
|--------------|------------|---------------|----------|------------|------------|
| Decimal      | Hex        | 0             | 1        | 2          | 3          |
| 0            | 00h        | serial number |          |            |            |
| 1            | 01h        | serial number |          |            |            |
| 2            | 02h        | serial number | internal | lock bytes | lock bytes |
| 3            | 03h        | OTP           | OTP      | OTP        | OTP        |
| 4 to 15      | 04h to 0Fh | user memory   |          |            |            |

Figure 17. MIFARE Ultralight Memory Layout

Table 1 shows the possible commands when communicating with a MIFARE Ultralight card. The address for the READ and WRITE commands are between 0x00 and 0x0F and include roll-over C[0-1] is the CRC, and D[0-15] refers to data bytes.

Table 1. MIFARE Ultralight Commands

| Command                 | Code                                  | Response              |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| REQA                    | 0x26                                  | 0x44 0x00 (ATQA)      |
| WUPA                    | 0x52                                  | 0x44 0x00 (ATQA)      |
| ANTICOLLISION (1)       | 0x93 0x[20-67]                        | 0x88 SN0 SN1 SN2 BCC0 |
| SELECT (1)              | 0x93 0x70 0x88 SN0 SN1 SN2 BCC0 C0 C1 | 0x04 C0 C1            |
| ANTICOLLISION (2)       | 0x95 0x[20-67]                        | SN3 SN4 SN5 SN6 BCC1  |
| SELECT (2)              | 0x95 0x70 SN3 SN4 SN5 SN6 BCC1 C0 C1  | 0x00 C0 C1            |
| READ                    | 0x30 [Addr] C0 C1                     | D0 D1 ... D15 C0 C1   |
| WRITE                   | 0xA2 [Addr] D0 D1 D2 D3 C0 C1         | [ACK/NAK]             |
| COMPATIBILITY WRITE (1) | 0xA0 [Addr] C0 C1                     | [ACK/NAK]             |
| COMPATIBILITY WRITE (2) | D0 D1 ... D15 C0 C1                   | [ACK/NAK]             |
| HALT                    | 0x50 0x00 C0 C1                       | [passive ACK/NAK]     |

## A.2 MIFARE Classic 1K [27]

The memory layout for Classic 1K cards can be seen in Figure 18. The card does not have a globally-unique identifier, but instead uses a 4-byte Non-Unique Identifier (NUID) in block 0. Each sector has a block called the “trailer”, which contains the two keys and the access bits. The layout for these access bits is shown in Figure 19, where  $CX_y$  is the  $X$ ’th access bit for block  $y$ . These access bits are interpreted differently based on whether the block is a trailer block (Figure 20) or a data block (Figure 21).

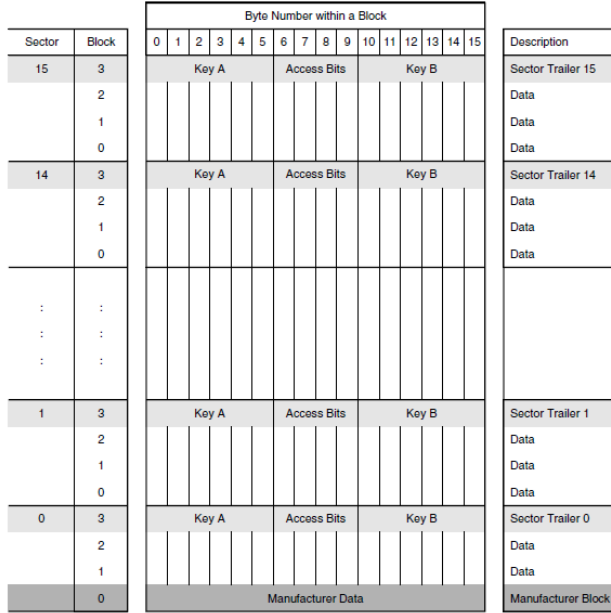


Figure 18. MIFARE Classic 1K Memory Layout

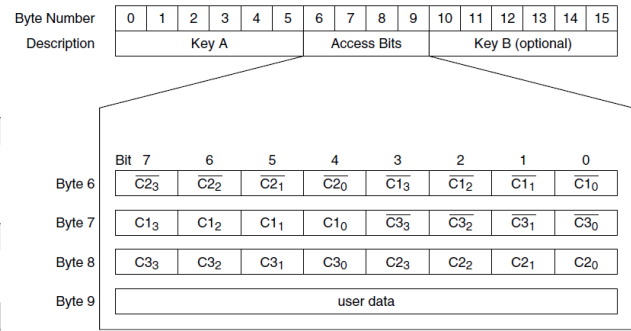


Figure 19. MIFARE Classic 1K Access Bits

| Access bits |    |    | Access condition for |       |             |       |       |       |   | Remark |
|-------------|----|----|----------------------|-------|-------------|-------|-------|-------|---|--------|
|             |    |    | KEYA                 |       | Access bits |       | KEYB  |       |   |        |
| C1          | C2 | C3 | read                 | write | read        | write | read  | write |   |        |
| 0           | 0  | 0  | never                | key A | key A       | never | key A | key A | Key B may be read <sup>[1]</sup>                          |        |
| 0           | 1  | 0  | never                | never | key A       | never | key A | never | Key B may be read <sup>[1]</sup>                          |        |
| 1           | 0  | 0  | never                | key B | key A B     | never | never | key B |   |        |
| 1           | 1  | 0  | never                | never | key A B     | never | never | never |   |        |
| 0           | 0  | 1  | never                | key A | key A       | key A | key A | key A | Key B may be read, transport configuration <sup>[1]</sup> |        |
| 0           | 1  | 1  | never                | key B | key A B     | key B | never | key B |   |        |
| 1           | 0  | 1  | never                | never | key A B     | key B | never | never |   |        |
| 1           | 1  | 1  | never                | never | key A B     | never | never | never |   |        |

[1] for this access condition key B is readable and may be used for data

Figure 20. Trailer Block Access Conditions

| Access bits |    |    | Access condition for |                    |                    |                              | Application             |
|-------------|----|----|----------------------|--------------------|--------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------|
| C1          | C2 | C3 | read                 | write              | increment          | decrement, transfer, restore |                         |
| 0           | 0  | 0  | key A[B]             | key A[B1]          | key A[B1]          | key A[B1]                    | transport configuration |
| 0           | 1  | 0  | key A[B]             | never              | never              | never                        | read/write block        |
| 1           | 0  | 0  | key A[B]             | key B <sup>1</sup> | never              | never                        | read/write block        |
| 1           | 1  | 0  | key A[B]             | key B <sup>1</sup> | key B <sup>1</sup> | key A[B <sup>1</sup> ]       | value block             |
| 0           | 0  | 1  | key A[B]             | never              | never              | key A[B <sup>1</sup> ]       | value block             |
| 0           | 1  | 1  | key B                | key B <sup>1</sup> | never              | never                        | read/write block        |
| 1           | 0  | 1  | key B                | never              | never              | never                        | read/write block        |
| 1           | 1  | 1  | never                | never              | never              | never                        | read/write block        |

[1] if Key B may be read in the corresponding Sector Trailer it cannot serve for authentication (all grey marked lines in previous table). As a consequences, if the reader authenticates any block of a sector which uses the grey marked access conditions and using key B, the card will refuse any subsequent memory access after authentication.

Figure 21. Data Block Access Conditions

It is worth noting that the data blocks can be used for simple read/write operations, or they can be used as “value blocks” for applications which need more robustness and backups and could benefit from operations like INCREMENT and DECREMENT (see below). The layout for such blocks is shown in Figure 22.

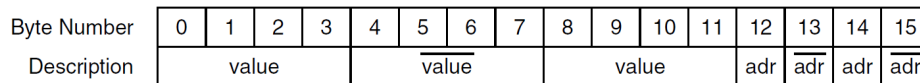


Figure 22. Value Block Layout

As indicated in Figure 23, the Classic 1K only uses a single round of ANTICOLLISION and SELECT commands, but includes a much more complicated 3-pass authentication mechanism. We explain in detail the encryption scheme in Appendix B, but we include the un-encrypted commands in Table 2, where NID[0-3] represents the NUID and  $BCC = NID0 \oplus NID1 \oplus NID2 \oplus NID3$ . Addresses range from 0x00 to 0x3F, while C[0-1] refers to the Checksum and D[0-15] to data bytes.

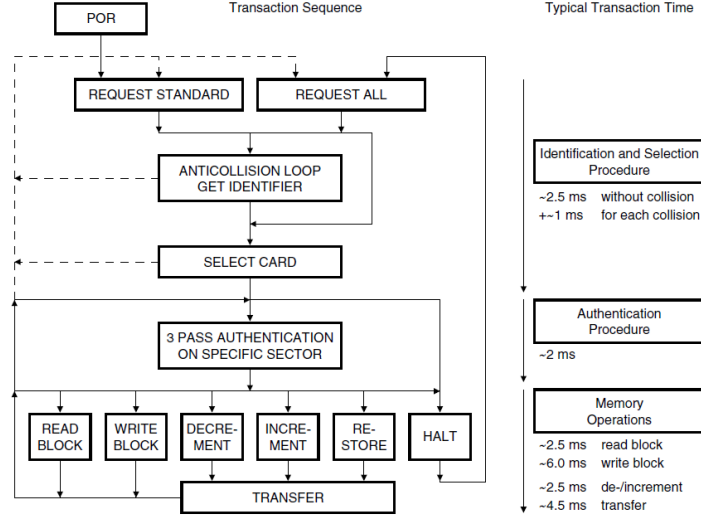


Figure 23. Classic 1K FSM

Table 2. MIFARE Classic 1K Plaintext Commands

| Command          | Code                                    | Response                |
|------------------|---|-------------------------|
| REQA             | 0x26                                    | 0x04 0x00 (ATQA)        |
| WUPA             | 0x52                                    | 0x04 0x00 (ATQA)        |
| ANTICOLLISION    | 0x93 0x20                               | NID0 NID1 NID2 NID3 BCC |
| SELECT           | 0x93 0x70 NID0 NID1 NID2 NID3 BCC C0 C1 | 0x08 C0 C1              |
| AUTHA            | 0x60 [Addr] C0 C1                       | D0 D1 D2 D3 [TOKEN RB]  |
| AUTHB            | 0x61 [Addr] C0 C1                       | D0 D1 D2 D3 [TOKEN RB]  |
| AUTH3 [TOKEN AB] | D0 D1 ... D7                            | D0 D1 D2 D3 [TOKEN BA]  |
| READ             | 0x30 [Addr] C0 C1                       | D0 D1 ... D15 C0 C1     |
| WRITE (1)        | 0xA0 [Addr] C0 C1                       | [ACK/NAK]               |
| WRITE (2)        | D0 D1 ... D15 C0 C1                     | [ACK/NAK]               |
| INCREMENT (1)    | 0xC1 [Addr] C0 C1                       | [ACK/NAK]               |
| DECREMENT (1)    | 0xC0 [Addr] C0 C1                       | [ACK/NAK]               |
| RESTORE (1)      | 0xC2 [Addr] C0 C1                       | [ACK/NAK]               |
| INC/DEC/RES (2)  | D0 D1 ... D15 C0 C1                     | [passive ACK/NAK]       |
| TRANSFER         | 0xB0 [Addr] C0 C1                       | [ACK/NAK]               |
| HALT             | 0x50 0x00 C0 C1                         | [passive ACK/NAK]       |

## B CRYPTO1

In this section, we summarize the CRYPTO1 algorithm as reverse-engineered in [24, 12], but do not discuss the numerous vulnerabilities with the cipher which are addressed in the original papers. In the notation of [12], let the (unencrypted) nonce RB be denoted by  $n_T$ , the token AB be denoted as  $\{n_R\}, \{a_R\}$  and the token BA be denoted as  $\{a_T\}$ . Also denote by  $k$  the key,  $u$  the tag's unique identifier (UID), and for any  $x$ , let  $x_i$  be its  $i$ -th bit (for  $i$  for which this is well-defined). The CRYPTO1 algorithm uses a Linear Feedback Shift Register (LFSR) of size equal to 48 bits which is initialized by the key (also of length 48). Thus, as  $\alpha_i = a_i a_{i+1} \dots a_{i+47}$  the internal state of the LFSR at time  $i$ , we get that:

- $a_i := k_i$ , for  $0 \leq i \leq 47$
- $a_{48+i} := L(a_i, \dots, a_{47+i}) \oplus n_{T,i} \oplus u_i$ , for  $0 \leq i \leq 31$
- $a_{80+i} := L(a_{32+i}, \dots, a_{79+i}) \oplus n_{R,i}$ , for  $0 \leq i \leq 31$
- $a_{112+i} := L(a_{64+i}, \dots, a_{111+i})$ ,  $\forall i \in \mathbb{N}$

where  $L$  is the LFSR “feedback function” defined by:

$$L(x_0 x_1 \dots x_{47}) := x_0 \oplus x_5 \oplus x_9 \oplus x_{10} \oplus x_{12} \oplus x_{14} \oplus x_{15} \oplus x_{17} \oplus x_{19} \oplus x_{24} \oplus x_{25} \oplus x_{27} \oplus x_{29} \oplus x_{35} \oplus x_{39} \oplus x_{41} \oplus x_{42} \oplus x_{43}$$

The outputs are encrypted using a “filter function”:

$f(x_0x_1 \dots x_{47}) := f_c(f_a(x_9, x_{11}, x_{13}, x_{15}), f_b(x_{17}, x_{19}, x_{21}, x_{23}), f_b(x_{25}, x_{27}, x_{29}, x_{31}), f_a(x_{33}, x_{35}, x_{37}, x_{39}), f_b(x_{41}, x_{43}, x_{45}, x_{47}))$ , where

$$f_a(y_0, y_1, y_2, y_3) := ((y_0 \vee y_1) \oplus (y_0 \wedge y_3)) \oplus (y_2 \wedge ((y_0 \oplus y_1) \vee y_3))$$

$$f_b(y_0, y_1, y_2, y_3) := ((y_0 \wedge y_1) \vee y_2) \oplus ((y_0 \oplus y_1) \wedge (y_2 \vee y_3))$$

$$f_c(y_0, y_1, y_2, y_3, y_4) := (y_0 \vee ((y_1 \vee y_4) \wedge (y_3 \oplus y_4))) \oplus ((y_0 \oplus (y_1 \wedge y_3)) \wedge ((y_2 \oplus y_3) \vee (y_1 \wedge y_4)))$$

These two main functions are summarized in Figure 24.

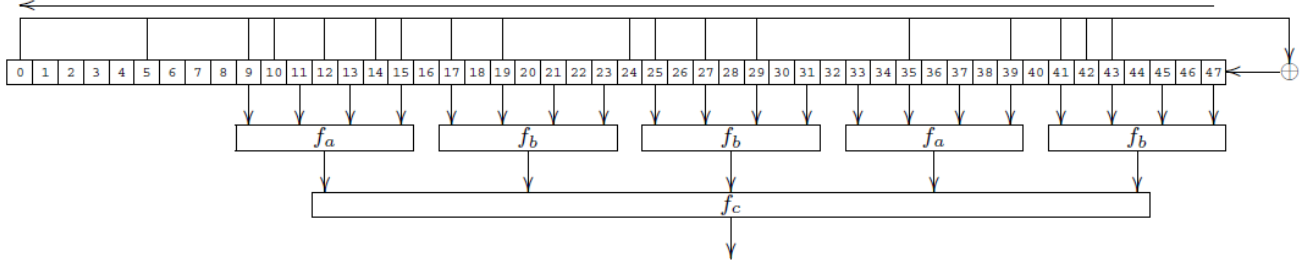


Figure 24. Crypto1 LFSR [12]

The keystream bit  $b_i$  is then defined by  $b_i := f(a_i \dots a_{47+i})$ , and the encryptions of the  $i$ -th regular bit (i.e. excluding start/end and parity bits) is defined by XORing with  $b_i$ . Specifically, for  $0 \leq i \leq 31$ ,  $\{n_{R,i}\} = n_{R,i} \oplus b_{32+i}$ ,  $\{a_{R,i}\} = a_{R,i} \oplus b_{64+i}$ ,  $\{a_{T,i}\} = a_{T,i} \oplus b_{96+i}$ . Note that the first 32 bits are not used in the first authentication, but they are used in all subsequent authentications, as the tag nonce is encrypted (and the cipher is re-initialized), so that  $\{n_{T,i}\} = n_{T,i} \oplus b_i$ .

The challenges only depend on the random nonce  $n_T$ , with  $a_R = \text{suc}^{64}(n_T)$  and  $a_T = \text{suc}^{96}(n_T)$ , where the “**successor function**” (used for the Pseudo Random Number Generation (PRNG) is iteratively applied 64 and 96 times respectively. It is defined by  $\text{suc}(x_0x_1 \dots x_{31}) := x_1x_2 \dots x_{31}(x_{16} \oplus x_{18} \oplus x_{19} \oplus x_{21})$  which only depends on the last 16 bits of the input.

It is worth noting that the start and ending transmission bits are not encrypted, but the parity bits are — by reusing the encryption bit for the next bit to be encrypted:  $\{p_j\} := p_j \oplus b_{8j+8}$ . This leaks information, and makes the protocol incompatible with the ISO standard, since the parity bits can be inverted. See Appendix C for an example.

### C Example Traces

In this section we show two example traces, one for the MIFARE Ultralight (Table 3) and one for the Classic 1K (Table 4). For the latter, only part of the trace is shown. The key used is 0xFF 0xFF 0xFF 0xFF 0xFF 0xFF, and the exclamation points indicate inverted parity bits.

Table 3. MIFARE Ultralight Trace

| Direction | Bytes  | Explanation   |
|-----------|--|---|
| PCD→PICC  | 0x26   | REQA  |
| PICC→PCD  | 0x44 0x00  | ATQA  |
| PCD→PICC  | 0x93 0x20  | ANTICOLLISION (1)   |
| PICC→PCD  | 0x88 0x04 0xBE 0x6F 0x5D                           | ANTICOLLISION (1) RESPONSE<br>0x88 UID0 UID1 UID2 BCC0<br>$UID0 \oplus UID1 \oplus UID2 \oplus BCC0 = 0x88$ |
| PCD→PICC  | 0x93 0x70<br>0x88 0x04 0xBE 0x6F 0x5D<br>0xA1 0x8E | SELECT (1)<br>0x88 + UID[0-2] + BCC0<br>CRC   |
| PICC→PCD  | 0x04<br>0xDA 0x17                                  | SELECT (1) RESPONSE<br>CRC  |
| PCD→PICC  | 0x95 0x20  | ANTICOLLISION (2)   |
| PICC→PCD  | 0x22 0x09 0x29 0x80 0x82                           | ANTICOLLISION (2) RESPONSE<br>UID[3-6] + BCC1<br>$UID3 \oplus UID4 \oplus UID5 \oplus UID6 = BCC1$          |



|          |   |   |
|----------|---|---|
| PCD→PICC | 0x95 0x70<br>0x22 0x09 0x29 0x80 0x82<br>0xD8 0xBA  | SELECT(2)<br>UID[3-6] + BCC1<br>CRC                                     |
| PICC→PCD | 0x00<br>0xFE 0x51   | SELECT (2) RESPONSE<br>CRC  |
| PCD→PICC | 0x30<br>0x00<br>0x02 0xA8   | READ<br>ADDR<br>CRC   |
| PICC→PCD | 0x04 0xBE 0x6F 0x5D<br>0x22 0x09 0x29 0x80<br>0x82 0x48 0x00 0x00<br>0xE1 0x10 0x12 0x00<br>0xF8 0x99 | UID<br>UID<br>UID + INTERNAL + LOCK BYTES<br>OTP<br>CRC                 |
| PCD→PICC | 0x30<br>0x04<br>0x26 0xEE   | READ<br>ADDR<br>CRC   |
| PICC→PCD | 0x01 0x03 0xA0 0x10<br>0x44 0x03 0x00 0xFE<br>0x00 0x00 0x00 0x00<br>0x00 0x00 0x00 0x00<br>0x81 0x3B | USER DATA (1)<br>USER DATA (2)<br>USER DATA (3)<br>USER DATA (4)<br>CRC |
| PCD→PICC | 0x30<br>0x08<br>0x4A 0x24   | READ<br>ADDR<br>CRC   |
| PICC→PCD | 0x00 0x00 0x00 0x00<br>0x00 0x00 0x00 0x00<br>0x00 0x00 0x00 0x00<br>0x00 0x00 0x00 0x00<br>0x37 0x49 | USER DATA (1)<br>USER DATA (2)<br>USER DATA (3)<br>USER DATA (4)<br>CRC |
| PCD→PICC | 0x30<br>0x0C<br>0x6E 0x62   | READ<br>ADDR<br>CRC   |
| PICC→PCD | 0x00 0x00 0x00 0x00<br>0x00 0x00 0x00 0x00<br>0x00 0x00 0x00 0x00<br>0x00 0x00 0x00 0x00<br>0x37 0x49 | USER DATA (1)<br>USER DATA (2)<br>USER DATA (3)<br>USER DATA (4)<br>CRC |
| PCD→PICC | 0x50 0x00<br>0x57 0xCD  | HALT<br>CRC   |

Table 4. MIFARE Classic 1K Trace

| Direction | Plaintext Bytes                                    | Encrypted Bytes | Explanation                                     |
|-----------|--|-----------------|---|
| PCD→PICC  | 0x26   | -               | REQA  |
| PICC→PCD  | 0x04 0x00  | -               | ATQA  |
| PCD→PICC  | 0x93 0x20  | -               | ANTICOLLISION                                   |
| PICC→PCD  | 0xCD 0x76 0x92 0x74 0x5D                           | -               | ANTI RESP<br>UID[0-3] BCC<br>$\oplus UID = BCC$ |
| PCD→PICC  | 0x93 0x70<br>0xCD 0x76 0x92 0x74 0x5D<br>0x45 0xDD | -               | SELECT<br>UID[0-3] + BCC<br>CRC                 |

|          |   |  |   |
|----------|---|--|---|
| PICC→PCD | 0x08<br>0xB6 0xDD   | -  | SELECT RESPONSE<br>CRC  |
| PCD→PICC | 0x60<br>0x3C<br>0x1A 0x80   | -  | AUTH (KEY A)<br>ADDR<br>CRC   |
| PICC→PCD | 0x0E 0x61 0x64 0xD6   | -  | $n_T$   |
| PCD→PICC | 0x15 0x45 0x90 0xA8<br>0x4F 0x4E 0x67 0x4E  | 0x78 0x5A 0x41 0x80!<br>0x50! 0x04! 0x8F 0x22!   | $n_R$<br>$a_R$  |
| PICC→PCD | 0x41 0x3E 0xEB 0xCF   | 0xCE! 0xCA! 0x0D! 0x83   | $a_T$   |
| PCD→PICC | 0x30<br>0x3F<br>0x76 0x61   | 0x69!<br>0xAC!<br>0x4F! 0x02   | READ<br>ADDR<br>CRC   |
| PICC→PCD | 0x00 0x00 0x00 0x00 0x00 0x00<br>0xFF 0x07 0x80 0x69<br>0xFF 0xFF 0xFF 0xFF 0xFF 0xFF<br>0xD4 0x55    | 0xBC 0x2F 0xBD! 0xB1! 0x75! 0x44!<br>0x3C 0xD7! 0xD2 0x28<br>0x3B! 0xA5! 0x08 0x04 0x88! 0x18!<br>0x89 0x42!     | KEY A (INACCESSIBLE)<br>ACCESS BITS<br>KEY B<br>CRC                     |
| PCD→PICC | 0x30<br>0x3E<br>0xFF 0x70   | 0x71!<br>0xF7<br>0x9F! 0x31  | READ<br>ADDR<br>CRC   |
| PICC→PCD | 0x00 0x00 0x00 0x00<br>0x00 0x00 0x00 0x00<br>0x00 0x00 0x00 0x00<br>0x00 0x00 0x00 0x00<br>0x37 0x49 | 0xE2! 0x99! 0x8D 0xE0<br>0x3F 0x96! 0xEF 0xC5<br>0xD0 0xD3! 0x24! 0x87!<br>0xF7 0x15! 0x06! 0x55!<br>0xA0! 0x97! | USER DATA (1)<br>USER DATA (2)<br>USER DATA (3)<br>USER DATA (4)<br>CRC |
| PCD→PICC | 0x30<br>0x3D<br>0x64 0x42   | 0xC1!<br>0x43<br>0x22!0x92!  | READ<br>ADDR<br>CRC   |
| PICC→PCD | 0x00 0x00 0x00 0x00<br>0x00 0x00 0x00 0x00<br>0x00 0x00 0x00 0x00<br>0x00 0x00 0x00 0x00<br>0x37 0x49 | 0xD2 0x00! 0x9D 0x87!<br>0xD9 0x0D 0x25 0x73<br>0x51 0x27 0x44 0xCC!<br>0x55 0x44! 0x85 0x9D<br>0x44 0xF6        | USER DATA (1)<br>USER DATA (2)<br>USER DATA (3)<br>USER DATA (4)<br>CRC |
| PCD→PICC | 0x30<br>0x3C<br>0xED 0x53   | 0x27<br>0x02<br>0x5C 0x41!   | READ<br>ADDR<br>CRC   |
| PICC→PCD | 0x00 0x00 0x00 0x00<br>0x00 0x00 0x00 0x00<br>0x00 0x00 0x00 0x00<br>0x00 0x00 0x00 0x00<br>0x37 0x49 | 0x8B! 0xD1! 0xE3 0x87!<br>0x63! 0x75! 0x44 0x34<br>0x3B 0xAF! 0x27 0x0A!<br>0xAD! 0x84 0x1C 0xDB!<br>0xD8 0x4A   | USER DATA (1)<br>USER DATA (2)<br>USER DATA (3)<br>USER DATA (4)<br>CRC |
| PCD→PICC | 0x60<br>0x38<br>0x3E 0xC6   | 0xC6<br>0xDC<br>0xBA! 0x11!  | (NESTED) AUTH (KEY A)<br>ADDR<br>CRC                                    |
| PICC→PCD | 0x8F 0x82 0x69 0x9E   | 0x70! 0xBD 0xED! 0x81  | (ENCRYPTED) $n_T$   |
| PCD→PICC | 0x01 0x3A 0x6B 0xBA<br>0x73 0xD4 0x42 0x2D  | 0xFC! 0x1A 0x1A! 0x1D!<br>0x7D! 0x90 0x7E! 0x24!   | $n_R$<br>$a_R$  |
| PICC→PCD | 0xD0 0xA2 0x28 0xDB   | 0x87 0x4D 0xFF! 0x8A   | $a_T$   |
| PCD→PICC | 0x30<br>0x3B<br>0x52 0x27   | 0x31<br>0x56 0xA1!<br>0x84   | READ<br>ADDR<br>CRC   |
| PICC→PCD | 0x00 0x00 0x00 0x00 0x00 0x00<br>0xFF 0x07 0x80 0x69<br>0xFF 0xFF 0xFF 0xFF 0xFF 0xFF<br>0xD4 0x55    | 0x64 0x85! 0x16 0x6D 0xCF! 0xF7<br>0x3C! 0x62 0xD2 0xB4<br>0x3B! 0x5F! 0xA8! 0x71 0xD1 0x6B!<br>0x6C! 0x42       | KEY A (INACCESSIBLE)<br>ACCESS BITS<br>KEY B<br>CRC                     |

|          |   |   |   |
|----------|---|---|---|
| PCD→PICC | 0x30<br>0x3A<br>0xDB 0x36   | 0x02!<br>0x44!<br>0xD4! 0x47!   | READ<br>ADDR<br>CRC   |
| PICC→PCD | 0x00 0x00 0x00 0x00<br>0x00 0x00 0x00 0x00<br>0x00 0x00 0x00 0x00<br>0x00 0x00 0x00 0x00<br>0x37 0x49 | 0x41 0xBC! 0x42! 0xD9<br>0x39 0x4C! 0x9A 0x80!<br>0x4E 0x76 0xB1! 0xA1!<br>0xA4 0xD1 0x82! 0x61<br>0x28 0xBC!     | USER DATA (1)<br>USER DATA (2)<br>USER DATA (3)<br>USER DATA (4)<br>CRC |
| PCD→PICC | 0x30<br>0x9<br>0x40 0x04  | 0xA5<br>0x63 0x90!<br>0x32!   | READ<br>ADDR<br>CRC   |
| PICC→PCD | 0x00 0x00 0x00 0x00<br>0x00 0x00 0x00 0x00<br>0x00 0x00 0x00 0x00<br>0x00 0x00 0x00 0x00<br>0x37 0x49 | 0xBD! 0xC3 0xA6! 0x15<br>0x8B 0x2A! 0x6A! 0x03<br>0x72! 0xEF! 0x02! 0x38<br>0x05! 0xC5! 0x3F 0x4E!<br>0x94! 0x08  | USER DATA (1)<br>USER DATA (2)<br>USER DATA (3)<br>USER DATA (4)<br>CRC |
| PCD→PICC | 0x30<br>0x38<br>0xC9 0x15   | 0xE2<br>0x1C!<br>0x8A 0x16!   | READ<br>ADDR<br>CRC   |
| PICC→PCD | 0x00 0x00 0x00 0x00<br>0x00 0x00 0x00 0x00<br>0x00 0x00 0x00 0x00<br>0x00 0x00 0x00 0x00<br>0x37 0x49 | 0x51 0x1B 0xA6! 0x49<br>0x29! 0xF2 0x75 0x35!<br>0x1B! 0xE1 0x72 0x68<br>0x7F 0x3F 0x2A 0xE9!<br>0x73 0x0F        | USER DATA (1)<br>USER DATA (2)<br>USER DATA (3)<br>USER DATA (4)<br>CRC |
| PCD→PICC | 0x60<br>0x34<br>0x52 0x0C   | 0x7F!<br>0xB8!<br>0x88 0x7B!  | (NESTED) AUTH (KEY A)<br>ADDR<br>CRC                                    |
| PICC→PCD | 0xDC 0xFC 0x96 0x2B   | 0x23! 0x23! 0x6E 0xF4!  | (ENCRYPTED) $n_T$   |
| PCD→PICC | 0xEE 0x08 0xB0 0x0A<br>0xF6 0x01 0xBA 0x11  | 0x1A 0xB9! 0xEF! 0x7B!<br>0xC5 0xC3 0x51 0x57!  | $n_R$<br>$a_R$  |
| PICC→PCD | 0x6E 0x27 0x63 0x93   | 0x3E 0x19 0x48! 0xF4!   | $a_T$   |
| PCD→PICC | 0x30<br>0x37<br>0x3E 0xED   | 0xD6!<br>0x59!<br>0xB4! 0x73!   | READ<br>ADDR<br>CRC   |
| PICC→PCD | 0x00 0x00 0x00 0x00 0x00 0x00<br>0xFF 0x07 0x80 0x69<br>0xFF 0xFF 0xFF 0xFF 0xFF 0xFF<br>0xD4 0x55    | 0x32! 0x84 0xE6 0xB1! 0x45! 0x56!<br>0x5C! 0x1A! 0xED! 0xD3!<br>0xED! 0x76 0x32! 0x5F 0x5D! 0x4D<br>0x96! 0xFC!   | KEY A (INACCESSIBLE)<br>ACCESS BITS<br>KEY B<br>CRC                     |
| PCD→PICC | 0x30<br>0x36<br>0xB7 0xFC   | 0xBB!<br>0x4D!<br>0xF8 0x55   | READ<br>ADDR<br>CRC   |
| PICC→PCD | 0x00 0x00 0x00 0x00<br>0x00 0x00 0x00 0x00<br>0x00 0x00 0x00 0x00<br>0x00 0x00 0x00 0x00<br>0x37 0x49 | 0x7E 0x9E! 0x34! 0x38!<br>0xDC! 0xE2! 0xF9 0x98!<br>0xA0 0x88 0x78! 0xA9!<br>0xCD! 0xEE! 0x17 0xD8<br>0xFF! 0xFD! | USER DATA (1)<br>USER DATA (2)<br>USER DATA (3)<br>USER DATA (4)<br>CRC |