

# PyRIC v0.0.8: User Manual

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May 31, 2016

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# 1 About PyRIC

PyRIC is a python port of (a subset of) iw and by extension a python port of Netlink[3] (w.r.t nl80211 functions). The goal of PyRIC is to provide a simple interface to the underlying nl80211 kernel support that handles the complex operations of Netlink seamlessly while maintaining a minimum of "code walking" to understand, modify and extend. PyRIC will only work on Linux with Netlink support.

While users can utilize libnl(.py) and libio(.py) to communicate directly with the kernel, the true utility of PyRIC is pyw(.py). Like iw, pyw provides an interface/buffer between the caller and the kernel, handling all message construction, parsing and transfer transparently and without requiring any Netlink knowledge or experience.

At this time, PyRIC (through pyw functions) can:

- enumerate interfaces and wireless interfaces,
- get/set regulatory domain,
- get/set hw address,
- get/set ip4, netmask and broadcast address
- identify a radio's chipset and driver,
- turn device on/off,
- get supported standards,
- get supported commands,
- get supported modes,
- get dev/phy info on device,
- get/set mode, and
- add/delete interfaces.

It also provides users with the ability, through libnl(.py) to extend the above functionality by creating additional commands.

Currently, PyRIC does handle multicast messages i.e. events or dumps although plans for future versions include adding the ability to process dumps.

There are other Python implementations but many have not been maintained and most attempt to provide a full implementation of Netlink with nl80211 functionality as a side-project. Unlike those, PyRIC is:

- Pythonic: No ctypes, SWIG etc. PyRIC redefines C header files as Python and uses sockets to communicate directly with the kernel,
- Self-sufficient: No third-party files used, PyRIC is completely self-contained,

- Fast: (relatively speaking) PyRIC is faster than using iw through subprocess.Popen,
- Small: PyRIC is roughly 420kB,
- Parseless: Get the output you want without parsing output from iw. Never worry about iw updates and rewriting your parsers, and
- Easy: If you can use iw, you can use PyRIC.

## 1.1 Naming Conventions

The terms interface, device and radio are all used interchangeably throughout to refer to a network interface card (NIC). The following terms will always have one meaning:

- **dev** - the device name i.e. wlan0 or eth0 of a NIC,
- **phy** - the physical index of a NIC i.e. the 0 in phy0,
- **ifindex** - the interface index of a NIC,
- **card** or **Card** - a NIC abstraction, an object used in pyw functions see the following section for a description.

## 1.2 Cards

A Card is merely a wrapper around a tuple  $t = (\text{phy index}, \text{device name}, \text{ifindex})$ . Since the underlying Netlink calls sometimes require the physical index, sometimes the device name, and sometimes the ifindex, pyw functions<sup>1</sup> take a Card object which doesn't require callers to know which identifier to use for each function. There are four primary methods to creating a Card:

1. **pyw.getcard** returns a Card object from a given dev,
2. **pyw.devinfo** returns the dict info where info['card'] is the Card object. This function will take either a card or a dev
3. **pyw.devadd** returns a new Card object,
4. **pyw.ifaces** returns a list of tuples  $t = (\text{Card}, \text{mode})$  sharing the same phy as a given dev.

A side affect of using Cards is that many of the netlink calls require the ifindex. The ifindex is found through the use of ioctl, meaning two sockets have to be created and two messages have to be sent, received and parsed in order to execute the command. With Cards, the ifindex is requested for only once.

Keep in mind that any identifier (phy,dev,ifindex) can be invalidated outside of your control. Another program can rename your interface, that is change the dev without your knowledge. Depending on what functions are being used this may not be noticed right away as the phy will remain the same. Also, usb devices (if the usb is disconnected and reconnected) will have the same dev but the phy and ifindex will be different.

---

<sup>1</sup>Not all functions accept a Card, the function pyw.devinfo() will accept either a Card or a dev and pyw.isinterface() only accepts a dev

chset	Total	Avg	Longest	Shortest
Popen(iw)	588.3059	0.0588	0.0682	0.0021
one-time	560.3559	0.0560	0.0645	0.0003
persistent	257.8293	0.0257	0.0354	0.0004

Table 1: Benchmark: Popen(iw) vs pyw

### 1.3 Benchmarks

PyRIC makes use of several "extensions" to speed up pyw functions:

1. **Persistent sockets:** pyw provides the caller with functions and the ability to pass their own netlink (or ioctl socket) to pyw functions
2. **One-time request for the nl80211 family id:** pyw stores the family id in a global variable
3. **Consolidation** different "reference" values are consolidated in one class (see the previous section)

While small, these change improve the performance of any programs using pyw. Table 1 shows benchmarks for hop time on a Alfa AWUS036NH conducted 10000 times. Note that we are not implying that PyRIC is faster than iw. Rather, the table shows that PyRIC is faster than using Popen to execute iw. Using one-time sockets, there is a difference of 28 seconds over Popen and iw with a small decrease in the average hoptime. Not a big difference. However, the performance increased dramatically when persistent netlink sockets are used with the total time and average hop time nearly halved.

### 1.4 Hierarchy/Architecture

PyRIC's hierarchy is briefly discussed next.

1. **\_\_init\_\_.py:** Initialize PyRIC, the root distribution directory use for PyPI packaging
2. **README.md:** self-descriptive
3. **setup.py:** install file
4. **setup.cfg:** used by setup.py
5. **MANIFEST.in:** used by setup.py
6. **LICENSE:** GPLv3 License
7. **PyRIC.pdf:** this file
8. **TODO:** lists any outstanding TODOs, ideas for future revisions
9. **RFI:** comments and observations about netlinks, nl80211 etc
10. **examples:** examples directory
  - (a) **pentest.py:** create wireless pentest environment

- (b) **device\_details.py**: display device information
- 11. **tests**: test directory
  - (a) **pyw unittest.py**: pyw unittesting
- 12. **pyric** package directory
  - (a) **\_\_init\_\_.py**: Initialize pyric defines the EUNDEF error code (PyRIC uses errno for all errorcodes adding EUNDEF) and the common exception class, 'error' - all submodules use this class for any exceptions.
  - (b) **channels.py**: ISM and UNII frequencies and channels, with conversion functions
  - (c) **device.py**: device and chipset utility functions
  - (d) **pyw.py**: this is the interface, providing wireless interface manipulation functions
  - (e) **lib**: lib subpackage
    - i. **\_\_init\_\_.py**: initialize lib subpackage
    - ii. **libnl.py**: netlink API
    - iii. **libio.py**: ioctl API
  - (f) **net**: net subpackage
    - i. **\_\_init\_\_.py**: initialize net subpackage
    - ii. **if\_h.py**: inet/ifreq definition
    - iii. **sockios\_h.py**: socket-level I/O control call flags
    - iv. **netlink\_h.py**: port of netlink.h
    - v. **genetlink\_h.py**: port of genetlink.h
    - vi. **policy.py**: defines attribute datatypes
    - vii. **wireless**: wireless subpackage
      - A. **\_\_init\_\_.py**: initialize lib subpackage
      - B. **nl80211\_h.py**: port of nl80211 (commands & attributes)
      - C. **nl80211\_c.py**: nl80211 attribute datatypes/policies
  - (g) **docs**: docs subpackage
  - (h) **\_\_init\_\_.py**: initialize docs subpackage
  - (i) **nlhelp.py**: functions to search display nl80211 constants
  - (j) **commands.help**: nl80211 commands help data (json)
  - (k) **attributes.help**: nl80211 attributes help data (json)
  - (l) **res**: resource subpackage
    - i. **PyRIC.tex**: LaTeX for user guide
    - ii. **PyRIC.bib**: bibliography for user guide

## 2 Installing PyRIC

Starting with version 0.0.6, the structure (see Section 1 has changed to facilitate packaging on PyPI. This restructuring has of course led to some minor difficulties especially when attempting to install (or even just test) outside of a pip installation.

Source	Stability	Recency	Installation
pip	5	3	5
PyPI	5	3	4
PyRIC Web	4	4	4
Github	3	5	3

Table 2: Stability vs Recency vs Installation

Obviously, the easiest way to install PyRIC is through PyPI:

```
sudo pip install -pre PyRIC
```

Note the use of the '-pre' flag. Without it, pip will not install PyRIC since it is still in the developmental stage.

You can also install PyRIC from source. The tarball can be downloaded from:

- PyPi: <https://pypi.python.org/pypi/PyRIC>,
- PyRIC Web: <http://wraith-wireless.github.io/PyRIC>, or
- Github: <https://github.com/wraith-wireless/PyRIC>.

After downloading, extract and run:

```
sudo python setup.py install
```

If you just want to test PyRIC out, download your choice from above. After extraction, move the pyric folder (the package directory) to your location of choice and from there start Python and import pyw. It is very important that you do not try and run it from PyRIC which is the distribution directory. This will break the imports pyw.py uses.

You will only be able to test PyRIC from the pyric directory but, if you want to, you can add it to your Python path and run it from any program or any location. To do so, assume you untared PyRIC to /home/bob/PyRIC. Create a text file named pyric.pth with one line

```
/home/bob/PyRIC
```

and save this file to /usr/lib/python2.7/dist-packages (or /usr/lib/python3/dist-packages if you want to try it in Python 3).

### 3 Using PyRIC

As stated previously, PyRIC provides a set of functions to interact with your system's radio(s) and the ability to interact directly with the kernel through netlink and ioctl sockets.

It is helpful if the reader has a basic knowledge of netlinks. For a review, see "Communicating between the kernel and user-space in Linux using Netlink Sockets" [3].

### 3.1 Interacting with the Wireless Core and Wireless NICs: pyw.py

If you can use iw, you can use pyw.py. The easiest way to explain how to use pyw is with an example. Imagine your wireless network is on ch 6 has been experiencing difficulties lately and you want to capture some traffic to analyse it. Listing 1 shows how to set up a wireless pentest environment.

```
1: import pyric                                # pyric error (and ecode EUNDEF)
2: from pyric import pyw                        # for iw functionality
3: from pyric import device                     # for chipset/driver
4: from pyric.channels import rf2ch             # rf to channel conversion
5:
6: dev = 'wlan0'
7: ifaces = pyw.interfaces()
8: wifaces = pyw.winterfaces()
9: if dev not in ifaces:
10:     print "Device {0} is not valid, use one of {1}".format(dev, ifaces)
11:     return
12: elif dev not in wifaces:
13:     print "Device {0} is not wireless, use one of {1}".format(dev, wifaces)
14:
15: print "Regulatory Domain currently: ", pyw.regget()
16: dinfo = pyw.devinfo(dev)
17: card = dinfo['card']
18: pinfo = pyw.phyinfo(card)
19: driver = device.ifdriver(card.dev)
20: chipset = device.ifchipset(driver)
21:
22: pyw.down(card)
23: pyw.macset(card, '00:03:93:57:54:46')
24:
25: msg = "Using {0} currently in mode: {1}\n".format(card, dinfo['mode'])
26: msg += "\tDriver: {0} Chipset: {1}\n".format(driver, chipset)
27: if dinfo['mode'] == 'managed':
28:     msg += "\ton channel {0} width {1}\n".format(rf2ch(dinfo['RF']),
29:                                                    dinfo['CHW'])
30: msg += "\tSupports modes {0}\n".format(pinfo['modes'])
31: msg += "\tSupports commands {0}\n".format(pinfo['commands'])
32: msg += "\thw addr {0}\n".format(pyw.macget(card))
33: print msg
34:
35: pdev = 'pent0'
36: for iface in pyw.ifaces(card):
37:     pyw.devdel(iface[0])
38: pcard = pyw.devadd(card, pdev, 'monitor')
39: pyw.up(pcard)
40: pyw.chset(pcard, 6, None)
41:
42: # DO STUFF HERE
43:
44: pyw.devdel(pcard)
45:
46: card = pyw.devadd(card, card.dev, dinfo['mode'])
47: pyw.macset(card, dinfo['mac'])
48: pyw.up(card)
```

Listing 1: Setting up a Wireless Pentest Environment

Listing 1 attempts to show most of the available pyw functions in use and is the basic shell used in another project, Wraith[4], to instantiate a wireless (802.11) sensor - (for a full listing of all pyw functions see Appendix A) - with scanning capabilities. Lines 1 and 2 should always be included as they import the pyric error and pyw functions. Line 3 imports device which provides the ifchipset and ifdriver functions and Line 4 imports the rf2ch conversion function.

In lines 6 through 13, the device wlan0 is confirmed wireless and lines 16 through 20 a Card object for 'wlan0' is created and details about the interface are printed. Next, the mac address of wlan0 is changed on lines 23. Note, the device is brought down first.

More information on the device is printed in lines 25 through 33. Starting on line 35, a device named 'pent0' is created in monitor mode. First in lines 36 and 37, all interfaces on the same phy are deleted <sup>2</sup> before creating the new device, bringing the card up and setting it to channel 6 NOHT.

Restoring the device starts on line 45, where the virtual interface is deleted, the previous interface is restored and the mac address is reset.

### 3.1.1 One-time vs Persistent Sockets

The example in Listing 1 uses one-time sockets (netlink and ioctl). When using iw, there are several things that occur prior to the actual command or request being submitted. First, iw creates a netlink socket. Then, iw will request the family id for nl80211. The relative time spent doing this is negligible but, it is redundant and it may become noticeable in programs that repeatedly use the Netlink service. Once complete, iw closes the socket. In some cases, the ifindex of the device is needed and iw will also initiate an ioctl call to retrieve it. PyRIC eliminates these redundancies by using a global variable in pyw that stores the family id after the first time it is requested and by providing callers the option to use persistent sockets.

- **One-time Sockets** Similar to iw. The command, creates the netlink socket (or ioctl socket), composes the message, sends the message and receives the response, parses the results, closes the socket and returns the results to the caller. At no time does the caller need to be aware of any underlying Netlink processes or structures.
- **Persistent Sockets** Communication and parsing only. The onus of socket creation and deletion is on the caller which allows them to create one (or more) socket(s). The pyw functions will only handle message construction, message sending and receiving and message parsing.

The caller needs to be cognizant of whether the function requires a netlink or ioctl socket. Passing the wrong type will result in an error.

NOTE: One must remember that there is an upper limit to the number of open netlink sockets. It is advised to use one-time functions as much as possible and save the use of persistent sockets for use in code that repeatedly makes use of netlink.

The latest version of pyw.py (v 0.1.\*) implements this functionality through the use of what I call templates<sup>3</sup>, Listing 2 and stubs Listing 3.

---

<sup>2</sup>we have found that it is better to delete all interfaces on the same phy ensuring that external processes don't interfere with the new device

<sup>3</sup>I use templates and stubs for the lack of any better naming convention



```

def fcttemplate(arg0, arg1, ..., argn, *argv):
    # put parameter validation (if any) here
    try:
        nlsock = argv[0]
    except IndexError:
        return _nlstub_(fcttemplate, arg0, arg1, ..., argn)

    # command execution
    ...
    return results

```

Listing 2: A Basic Netlink Function Template

The template function in Listing 2 checks if argv has a netlink socket<sup>4</sup> at index 0. If so, it proceeds to execution. If there is no socket, the stub is executed which creates one. If something other than a netlink socket is at argv[0], an error will be raised during execution.

```

def _nlstub_(fct, *argv):
    nlsock = None
    try:
        nlsock = nlsock = nl.nl_socket_alloc()
        argv = list(argv) + [nlsock]
        return fct(*argv)
    except pyric.error:
        raise # catch & release
    finally:
        if nlsock: nl.nl_socket_free(nlsock)

```

Listing 3: Function \_nlstub\_

The stub function, Listing 3 allocates a netlink socket, executes the original (now with a netlink socket) and then destroys the netlink socket.

```

1: import pyric                                # pyric error (and ecode EUNDEF)
2: from pyric import pyw                        # for iw functionality
3: from pyric.lib import libnl as nl           # for netlink sockets
4:
5: nlsock = nl.nl_socket_alloc(timeout=1)
6: card = pyw.getcard('wlan0', nlsock)
7: print pyw.devnodes(card, nlsock)
8: nl.nl_socket_free(nlsock)

```

Listing 4: Using Persistent Sockets

Listing 4, shows the creation of a persistent netlink socket that is used in the creation of a card and in retrieved the card's supported modes.

Use Python's built in help features on pyw functions or see Appendix A to determine what type of socket is needed.

---

<sup>4</sup>ioctl calls operate in the same manner

### 3.2 Interacting with the Kernel: libnl.py and libio.py

The kernel interfaces, libnl.py and libio.py are located in the lib directory. They handle socket creation/deletion, message creation/parsing and kernel communication. Aside from creating and deleting persistent sockets, there is little need to access their functions unless you plan on extending pyw functionality. As such, a further discussion of libnl.py and libio.py can be found in the next section.

## 4 Extending PyRIC

You may find that pyw does not offer some of the functionality you need. Using libnl.py and/or libnl.io, additional functionality can be added to your program.

### 4.1 Porting C

All Python ports of C header files can be found in the net directory. C Enums and #defines are ported using constants. C structs are ported using three Python structures and the Python struct package:

1. a format string for packing and unpacking the struct
2. a constant specifying the size of the struct in bytes
3. a function taking the attributes of the struct as arguments and returning a packed string

Listing 5 shows the C definition of the nlmsg\_hdr found in netlink.h.

```
struct nlmsg_hdr {
    __u32 nlmsg_len;
    __u16 nlmsg_type;
    __u16 nlmsg_flags;
    __u32 nlmsg_seq;
    __u32 nlmsg_pid;
};
```

Listing 5: C Struct nlmsg\_hdr

And Listing 6 shows the ported version in Python.

```
nl_nlmsg_hdr = "IHII"
NLMSGHDRLEN = struct.calcsize(nl_nlmsg_hdr)
def nlmsg_hdr(mlen, nltype, flags, seq, pid):
    return struct.pack(nl_nlmsg_hdr, NLMSGHDRLEN+mlen, nltype, flags, seq, pid)
```

Listing 6: Corresponding Python Definition

When using pyw, dealing with these structures is handled transparently by libnl.py and libio.py. When extending or customizing pyw, a basic understanding of the definitions in netlink\_h.py, genetlink\_h.py and if\_h.py.

## 4.2 Input/Output Control (ioctl)

PyRIC provides more than just iw-related functions, it also implements functions from ifconfig and iwconfig. These command line tools still use ioctl (or the proc directory). For example, `interfaces()` reads from `'/proc/net/dev'` to retrieve all system interfaces and `winterfaces()` use `ioctl` to check if a device is wireless. Input/Output control calls have only been used when there was no viable alternative and, it should not be necessary to have to add any further `ioctl` commands. If you find that you need an `ioctl` related command, search through `if_h.py` for the appropriate structure and add it's definitions to `ifreq`.

## 4.3 Netlink and nl80211

Documentation on Netlink, and nl80211 in particular, is so minimal as to be negligible. The clusterfuck of code and lack of comments in the iw source tree make it impossible to use as any sort of roadmap. Fortunately Thomas Graf's site[2] has excellent coverage of libnl, the Netlink library. Using this as a reference, a simple Netlink parser was put together which later became `libnl.py`. Using the command line tool `strace` and `libnl.py`, Netlink messages could be dissected and analyzed.

Let us consider adding a virtual interface with the command:

```
sudo iw phy0 interface add test0 type monitor
```

First, we need to see what is going on under the covers. Using `strace`:

```
strace -f -x -s 4096 iw phy0 interface add test0 type monitor
```

from a terminal will give a you a lot of output, most irrelevant (to us). Scroll through this until the netlink socket creation as highlighted in Figure 1. You can see that a socket of type `PF_NETLINK` is created and the send/receive buffers are set to 32768.

What we want to analyze are the messages sent and received over the netlink socket. In Figure 1, iw is requesting the family id for nl80211. This id will be used in subsequent requests related to nl80211 as we will see shortly. The return message gives the nl80211 family id as 26 and returns other nl80211 attributes. This is handled by the private function `_familyid_` in `pyw.py`. Figure 2 shows the add interface message being sent to the kernel.

We are interested in the byte sequence following `msg_iov(1)`. Copy this and paste into in a python variable as in Listing 7 and pass it to the function `nlmsg_fromstream` which parses the byte stream and returns the `GENLMsg`.

```
>>> from pyric.lib import libnl as nl
>>> sent = "\x30\x00\x00\x00\x1a...\x00\x00"
>>> msg = nl.nlmsg_fromstream(sent)
>>> msg
nlmsg_hdr(len=48,type=26,flags=5,seq=1463268720,pid=10982)
genlmsg_hdr(cmd=7)
```



```

close(4)
open(4, "0\n", 199)
read(4, "0\n", 199)
close(4)
sendmsg(3, {msg_name(12)={sa_family=AF_NETLINK, pid=0, groups=00000000}, msg_iov(1)=[{"\x30\x00\x00\x00\x1a\x00\x05\x00\x70\xb5\x37\x57\xe6\x2a\x00\x00\x07\x00\x00\x00\x08\x00\x01\x00\x00\x00\x00\x00\x0a\x00\x04\x00\x74\x65\x73\x74\x30\x00\x00\x00\x08\x00\x05\x00\x06\x00\x00\x00", 48}], msg_controllen=0, msg_flags=0}, 0) = 48
recvmsg(3, {msg_name(12)={sa_family=AF_NETLINK, pid=0, groups=00000000}, msg_iov(1)=[{"\x44\x00\x00\x00\x02\x00\x00\x00\x70\xb5\x37\x57\xe6\x2a\x00\x00\xff\xff\xff\xff\x30\x00\x00\x00\x1a\x00\x05\x00\x70\xb5\x37\x57\xe6\x2a\x00\x00\x07\x00\x00\x00\x08\x00\x01\x00\x00\x00\x00\x00\x0a\x00\x04\x00\x74\x65\x73\x74\x30\x00\x00\x00\x08\x00\x05\x00\x06\x00\x00\x00", 48}], msg_controllen=0, msg_flags=0}, 0) = 48

```

Figure 2: Netlink sendmsg

```

>>> from pyric.net.wireless.nl80211_h import NL80211_IFTYPES
>>> NL80211_IFTYPES[6]
'monitor'

```

Listing 8: Parsing netlink messages continued

In Listing 8 command number 7 corresponds to `NL80211_CMD_NEW_INTERFACE` and the attributes that need to be passed to the kernel are `NL80211_ATTR_WIPHY`, `NL80211_ATTR_IFNAME` and `NL80211_ATTR_IFTYPE`. The `IFTYPE` is also known as the mode i.e. 'monitor' which can be found in `nl80211_h.py` `NL80211_IFTYPES`. We don't parse the return message from the kernel but, it follows the same SOP. In this case, it returns the attributes of the new virtual interface.

With this information, we can now code our function. Recall the `fcctemplate` as defined in Listing 2 and fill in the command execution as shown in Listing 9.

```

# construct the message
msg = nl.nlmmsg_new(nltype=_familyid_(nlsock),
                    cmd=nl80211h.NL80211_CMD_NEW_INTERFACE,
                    flags=nlh.NLM_F_REQUEST | nlh.NLM_F_ACK)
nl.nla_put_u32(msg, card.phy, nl80211h.NL80211_ATTR_WIPHY)
nl.nla_put_string(msg, vdev, nl80211h.NL80211_ATTR_IFNAME)
nl.nla_put_u32(msg, IFTYPES.index(mode), nl80211h.NL80211_ATTR_IFTYPE)

# send, receive and parse return results, returning the new Card
nl.nl_sendmsg(nlsock, msg)
rmsg = nl.nl_recvmsg(nlsock) # success returns new device attributes
return Card(card.phy, vdev, nl.nla_find(rmsg, nl80211h.NL80211_ATTR_IFINDEX))

```

Listing 9: Coding the function

We construct a new `GENLMsg` passing the `nl80211` family id, the command we got earlier and flags specifying that this is a request and we want to get an ACK back<sup>5</sup>. Now, add each attribute to

<sup>5</sup>`libnl.py` always forces an ACK and handles the underlying process of receiving it

the message. Note the order: value, then attribute. With the message constructed, send it to the kernel, get the results, parse and return them.

Rather simple, in fact the hardest part is figuring out what to send to the kernel. Everything else is handled behind the scenes by libnl.py.

## Appendix A API: pyw.py

### A.1 Constants

- **\_FAM80211ID\_**: Global netlink family id of nl80211. Do not touch
- **IFTYPES**: redefined (from nl80211\_h.py) interface modes
- **MNTRFLAGS**: redefined (from nl80211\_h.py) monitor mode flags
- **IPADDR**: Regular Expression for ip4 address validation
- **MACADDR**: Regular Expression for mac address validation

### A.2 Objects/Classes

**Card** A wrapper around a tuple `t = (physical index, device name, interface index)` which exposes the following properties through `.'`:

- **phy**: physical index
- **dev**: device name
- **idx**: interface index (ifindex)

Because the underlying Netlink calls will sometimes require the physical index, sometimes the device name, and sometimes the ifindex, pyw functions accept a **Card**, object. This allows callers to use pyw functions without having to remember which identifier the function requires. However, in some cases the function requires a dev or accepts both. See the next section on functions.

While callers could create their own Cards, it is recommend to use one of the following

- **pyw.getcard** returns a **Card** object from a given dev
- **pyw.devinfo** returns the dict info where info['card'] is the **Card** object. This function will take either a card or a dev
- **pyw.devadd** returns a new **Card** object
- **pyw.ifaces** returns a list of tuples `t = (Card, mode)` sharing the same phy as a given device to do so. It is also recommended to periodically validate the **Card**. On some cheaper usb wireless nics, there are periodic disconnects which results in a new phy and ifindex.

### A.3 Functions

- `interfaces()`: (ifconfig), type: filesystem, returns list of all network dev
- `isinterface(dev)`: (ifconfig <dev>) type: filesystem, check dev is an interface
- `winterfaces([iosock])`: (iwconfig), type: ioctl, list wireless interfaces
- `iswireless(dev,[iosock])`: (iwconfig <dev>), type: ioctl, check dev is a wireless interface
- `regget([nlsock])`: (iw reg get), type: netlink, get regulatory domain
- `regset(rd,[nlsock])`: (iw reg set <rd>), type: netlink, set regulatory domain to rd
- `getcard(dev,[nlsock])` (N/A), type: hybrid netlink and ioctl: get a Card object for dev
- `validcard(card,[nlsock])`: (N/A), type: (hybrid netlink and ioctl), verify card is still valid
- `macget(card,[iosock])`: (ifconfig card.<dev>), type: ioctl get card's hw address
- `macset(card,mac,[iosock])`: (ifconfig card.<dev> hw ether <mac>), type: ioctl, set card's hw address to mac
- `up(card,[iosock])` (ifconfig card.<dev> up), type: ioctl, bring card up
- `down(card,[iosock])`: (ifconfig card.<dev> down), type: ioctl, bring card down
- `inetget(card,[iosock])`: (ifconfig card.<dev>), type: ioctl, get ip4 address, netmask and broadcast address of card
- `inetset(card,ipaddr,netmask,broadcast,[iosock])`: (ifconfig card/<dev> <ipaddr> netmask <netmask> broadcast <broadcast>), type: ioctl, set the interface addresses of the card
- `ip4set(card,ipaddr,[iosock])`: (ifconfig card.<dev> <ipaddr>), type: ioctl, set the card's ip4 address
- `netmaskset(card,netmask,[iosock])`: (ifconfig card.<dev> netmask <netmask>), type: ioctl, set the card's netmask
- `broadcastset(card,broadcast,[iosock])`: (ifconfig card.<dev> broadcast <broadcast>), type: ioctl, set the card's broadcast address
- `devfreqs(card,[nlsock])`: (iw phy card.phy info), type: netlink, get card's supported frequencies
- `devchs(card,[nlsock])`: (iw phy card.phy info), type: netlink, get card's supported channels
- `devstds(card,[iosock])`: (iwconfig card.<dev> | grep IEEE), type: ioctl, get list of card's 802.11 supported standards
- `devmodes(card,[nlsock])`: (iw phy card.phy info | grep interface), type: netlink, get card's supported modes
- `devcmds(card,[nlsock])`: (iw phy card.phy info | grep commands), type: netlink, get card's supported commands
- `devinfo(card,[nlsock])`: (iw dev card.<dev> info), type: netlink, get info for dev

- `phyinfo(card,[nlsock])`: (iw phy card.<phy> info), type: netlink, get info for phy
- `ifaces(card,[nlsock])`: (APX iw card.dev | grep phy#), type: netlink, get all cards (w/ modes) of interfaces sharing the same phy as card
- `txget(card,[iosock])`: (iwconfig card.<dev> | grep Tx-Power card), type: ioctl, get card's transmission power
- `chget(card,[nlsock])`: (iw dev <card.dev> info | grep channelS), type: netlink, get card's current channel (only works for cards in mode managed)
- `chset(card,ch,chw,[nlsock])`: iw phy <card.phy> set channel <ch> <chw>), type: netlink, set card's current channel to ch with width chw
- `freqset(card,rf,chw,[nlsock])`: iw phy <card.phy> set freq <rf> <chw>), type: netlink, set card's current frequency to rf with width chw
- `devmodes(card,[iosock])`: (iw phy card.<phy>), type: netlink, get modes supported by card
- `modeset(card,mode,[flags],[nlsock])`: (iw dev card.<dev> set type <mode> [flags]), type: netlink, set card's mode to mode with flags (if mode is monitor)
- `modeget(card[nlsock])`: (iw dev card.<dev> info | grep mode), type: netlink, get card's mode
- `devadd(card,vnic,mode,[flags],[nlsock])`: (iw phy card.<phy> interface add <vnic> type <mode> flags <flags>), type: netlink, creates a new virtual interface on card's phy with dev vdev, in mode and using flags. Note: flags are only supported in when creating a monitor mode
- `devdel(card,[nlsock])`: (iw card.<dev> del), type: netlink, deletes dev
  - `__hex2mac__(v)`: returns a ':' separated mac address from byte stream v
  - `__hex2ip4__(v)`: returns a '.' separated ip4 address from byte stream v
  - `__validip4__(addr)`: determines if addr is a valid ip4 address
  - `__validmac__(addr)`: determines if addr is a valid mac address
  - `__issetf__(flags,flag)`: determines if flag is set in flags
  - `__setf__(flags,flag)`: set flag in flags to on
  - `__unsetf__(flags,flag)`: set flag in flags to off
  - `__familyid__(nlsock)`: returns and sets the Netlink family id for nl80211, only called once per module import
  - `__ifindex__(dev,[iosock])`: returns dev's ifindex
  - `__flagsget__(dev,[iosock])`: get's the dev's interface flags
  - `__flagsset__(dev,flags,[iosock])`: set's the dev's interface flags
  - `__getfreqs__(band)`: returns a list of frequencies from the packed byte string band
  - `__iostub__(fct,*argv)`: ioctl stub function, calls fct with parameter list argv and an allocated ioctl socket
  - `__nlstub__(fct,*argv)`: netlink stub function, calls fct with parameter list argv and an allocated netlink socket



## Appendix B API: libnl.py

Providing libnl similar functionality, libnl.py provides the interface between pyw and the underlying nl80211 core. It relates similarly to libnl by providing functions handling netlink messages and sockets and where possible uses similarly named functions as those libnl to ease any transitions from C to PyRIC. However, several liberties have been taken as libnl.py handles only nl80211 generic netlink messages.

### B.1 Constants

- **BUFSZ** default rx and tx buffer size

### B.2 Classes/Objects

The two classes in libnl.py, NLSocket and GENLMsg, discussed in the following sections subclass Python's builtin dict. This has been done IOT to take advantage of dict's already existing functions and primarily their mutability and Python's 'pass by name' i.e. modifications in a function will be reflected in the caller. This makes the classes very similar to the use C pointers to structs in libnl.

#### B.2.1 NLSocket

NLSocket is a wrapper around a netlink socket which exposes the following properties through '.':

- **sock**: the actual socket
- **fd**: the socket's file descriptor (deprecated)
- **tx**: size of the send buffer
- **rx**: size of the receive buffer
- **pid**: port id
- **grpm**: group mask
- **seq**: sequence number
- **timeout**: socket timeout

and has the following methods:

- **incr()**: increment sequence number
- **send(pkt)**: sends pkt returning bytes sent
- **recv()**: returns received message (will block unless timeout is set)
- **close()**: close the socket

NLSockets are created with `nl_socket_alloc` and must be freed with `nl_socket_free`. See Section B.3.

### B.2.2 GENLMsg

GENLMsg is a wrapper around a dict with the following key->value pairs:

- **len**: total message length including the header
- **nltype**: netlink type
- **flags**: message flags
- **seq**: seq. #
- **pid**: port id
- **cmd**: generic netlink command
- **attrs**: list of message attributes. Each attribute is a tuple  $t = (\text{attribute}, \text{value}, \text{datatype})$  where:
  - **attribute**: netlink attribute type i.e. CTRL\_ATTR\_FAMILY\_ID
  - **value**: the unpacked attribute value
  - **datatype**: datatype of the attribute as defined in `nelink_h` i.e. NLA\_U8

NOTE: as discussed below, on sending, the seq. # and port id are overridden with values of the netlink socket.

GENLMsg exposes the following properties:

- **len**: length of the message (get only)
- **vers**: returns 1 (default version) (get only)
- **nltype**: message content i.e. generic or nl80211 (get or set)
- **flags**: message flags (get or set)
- **seq**: current sequence # (get or set)
- **pid**: port id (get or set)
- **cmd**: netlink command (get or set)
- **attrs**: attribute list (get only)
- **numattrs**: number of attributes (get only)

GENLMsg has the following methods:

- `__repr__()`: returns a string representation useful for debugging
- `tostream()`: returns a packed netlink message

There are two methods of creating a GENLMsg. Create a new message (to send) with `nlmsg_new` and create a message from a received packet with `nlmsg_fromstream`. These are discussed below.

## B.3 Functions

### – Netlink Socket Related

- \* `nl_socket_alloc(pid,grps,seq,rx,tx,timeout)`: creates a netlink socket with port id = pid, group mask = grps, initial seq. # = seq, send and receive buffer size = tx and rx respectively and blocking timeout = timeout
- \* `nl_socket_free(sock)`: closes the socket
- \* `nl_socket_pid(sock)`: (deprecated for `NLSocket.pid`) returns the port id
- \* `nl_socket_grpmask(sock)`: (deprecated for `NLSocket.grpmask`) returns the group mask
- \* `nl_sendmsg(sock,msg,override=False)`: sends the netlink msg over socket. NOTE: `NLSockets` will automatically set the port id and seq. # regardless of their value in the message. If `override` is `True`, the message's pid and seq. # will be used instead.
- \* `nl_rcvmsg(sock)`: returns a `GENLMsg` or blocks unless the socket's timeout is set. Should only be called once per every `nl_sendmsg`.

### – Netlink Message Related

- \* `nlmsg_new(nltype=None,cmd=None,pid=None,flags=None,attrs=None)`: creates a new `GENLMsg` with zero or more attributes defined.
- \* `nlmsg_fromstream(stream)`: parses the message in stream returning the corresponding `GENLMsg`
- \* `nla_parse(msg,l,mtype,stream,idx)`: parses the attributes in stream appending them to the attribute list of message where `msg` = the `GENLMsg`, `l` = the total length of the message, `mtype` = the message content (i.e. netlink type) `stream` is the original byte stream and `idx` is the index of the start of the attribute list
- \* `nla_parse_nested(nested)`: returns the list of packed nested attributes extracted from the stream `nested`. Callers must unpack and parse the returned attributes themselves
- \* `nla_put(msg,v,a,t)`: appends the attribute `a`, with value `v` and datatype `t` to the msg's attribute list
- \* `nla_put_<DATATYPE>(msg,v,a)`: eight specialized functions that append attribute `a` with the value `v` and type `<DATATYPE>` to msg's attribute list
- \* `nla_putat(msg,i,v,a,d)`: puts attribute `a`, with value `v` and datatype `d` at index `i` in msg's attribute list.
- \* `nla_pop(msg,i)`: removes the attribute tuple at index `i`, returning the popped tuple
- \* `nla_find(msg,a,value=True)`: returns the first attribute `a` in msg's attribute list. If `value` returns only the value otherwise returns the attribute tuple
- \* `nla_get(msg,i,value=True)`: returns the attribute at index `i`. If `value` returns only the value otherwise returns the attribute tuple
- \* `_nla_strip(v)`: (private) strips padding bytes from the end of `v`
- \* `_attrpack(a,v,d)`: (private) packs the attribute tuple
- `_maxbufsz_()`: (private) returns the maximum allowable socket buffer size

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PYRIC: Python Radio Interface Controller v0.0.5

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