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Sector size and MFT FILE Record size

May 4, 2012 in Forensic Analysis

This is a quick post to clarify a very common misconception about sizes of a sector and a single MFT FILE record on NTFS file system.

The most common values associated with these 2 parameters are:

- o 512 bytes for a sector
- o 1024 bytes for a single MFT FILE record

It turns out that new large drives are often seen by OS as having a sector size that is larger than 512 bytes and as a result, the MFT FILE record size is often also larger. This is not a big issue and many forensic tools handle it properly, but seeing many people explicite calling out these 'hard wired' values, I thought I will make an attempt to clarify it a bit.

A side effect of this is that \$MFT size may quickly grow to many GiBs.

I do not work with hardcore file carving on daily basis, so I am pretty sure that someone who does could (and I hope will) offer a more in-depth explanation of what's going on under the hood (e.g. whether the 4096 is a virtual sector made out of 8 'old-school' physical sectors that are 512 bytes, etc.).

On a practical level, one can confirm the size of the sector and cluster as well as MFT FILE record size using e.g. fsutil tool in Windows.

For a drive with a 512-bytes long sector, you may get a result like this:

```
fsutil fsinfo ntfsinfo c:
[...]
Bytes Per Sector :
                                 512 <- sector size
Bytes Per Cluster :
                                 4096 <- cluster size = 8 sectors
                               : 1024 <- MFT FILE Record size = 2 sectors
Bytes Per FileRecord Segment
[...]
```

For a drive with 4096 bytes long sectors, the fsutil can give the following result:

```
fsutil fsinfo ntfsinfo g:
                                                                                      2012
                                                                                      January 2012
                                                                                      December
[...1
                                                                                      2011
                                                                                      November
Bytes Per Sector :
                                   4096 <- sector size
```

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2012

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July 2012

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May 2012

April 2012

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February

2011

Bytes Per Cluster: 4096 <- cluster size = 1 sector October 2011

Bytes Per FileRecord Segment : 4096 <- MFT FILE Record size

= 1 sector = 1 cluster

ster Categories

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> Anti-Forensics

The values for a logical volume can be read from BPB (BIOS Parameter Block) – a decent explanation on encoding used to preserve the value of FILE record size can be found here.

000000000 46 49 4C 45 30 00 09 00 27 25 00 02 00 00 00 00 FILEO...'%.....

000000010 01 00 01 00 48 00 01 00 68 01 00 00 10 00 00H...h.....

000000020 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 04 00 00 01 00 00 00

Autostart (Persistence)

This is an example of a FILE record on such a large drive:

Batch Analysis

Cluester

Compromise Detection

DeXRAY

File Formats

ZOO Forensic

Analysis Forensic

Riddles

Forensic Riddles – Answers

Hackme/crackme

HAM HAPI

HCD

Hexacorn

HexDive

HexDive Pro

HMFT HSD

hstrings

HWD

Malware Analysis

Others

PECluester

PESectionExtrac

Preaching

Proxy Logs Analysis

Silly

Software Releases

Tips & Tricks

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	000000070	В9	78	C5	A0	47	51	СВ	01	В9	78	C5	A0	47	51	СВ	01	.xGQxGQ
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Comments Off

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