Software Defined Radio (SDR)

Mike Ham

What is SDR?

- Effectively the goal is to remove the analog parts of a radio and do it all in software
  - Think about turning a knob on the radio and replacing that mechanism with software
- Rather than just being able to tune into one thing (e.g. FM radio), you can capture a wide array of bands

What radio waves surround you?

What can SDR do?

- This can be used as an AM / FM radio, a police scanner, air traffic control listener, etc.
- Receiver images from weather satellites
- You're basically packet sniffing with radio
- Isn't that not legit to do?
  - Use common sense when doing stuff like this
  - The antennas you have can only receive not transmit so you're ok here

The Hardware

USB RTL-SDR Kit
$17.99 from Hak5 http://hakshop.myshopify.com/collections/software-defined-radio/products/software-defined-radio-kit-rtl-sdr?variant=424034573

Intended Purpose

- This USD adapter is meant to allow users to record and watch digital TV on a computer
  - Still image snapshots, recording and playback, etc.
  - Play FM radio and DAB digital radio
- Realtek RTL2832U and R820T chipsets
  - With a little trickery, we can actually make these do a lot more

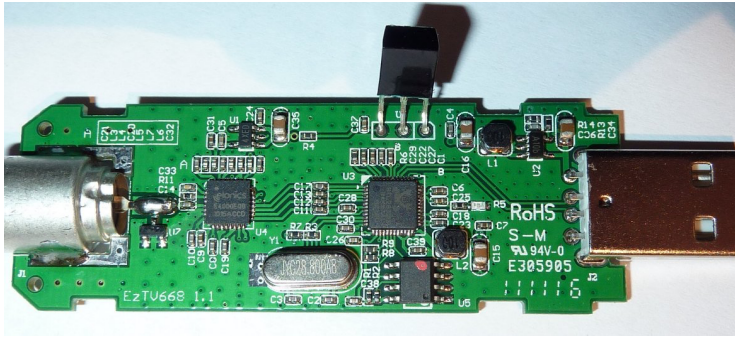
Geeky Specs

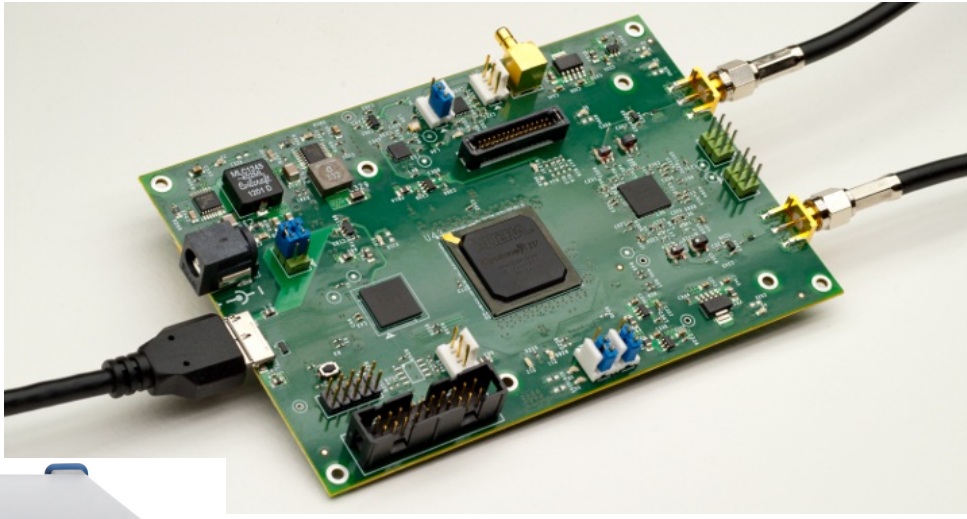
- DVBT:48.25 ~863.25 MHZ
- FM radio: 87.5~108 MHZ
- DAB radio: L-Band-1452960~1490624 KHZ
- VHF—174928~ 239200 KHz
- Will work for both for software defined radio and DVB video capture (where available)
- Compatible with most SDR software. Approx range: 25MHz-1700MHz
- 6-8 MHz Bandwidth

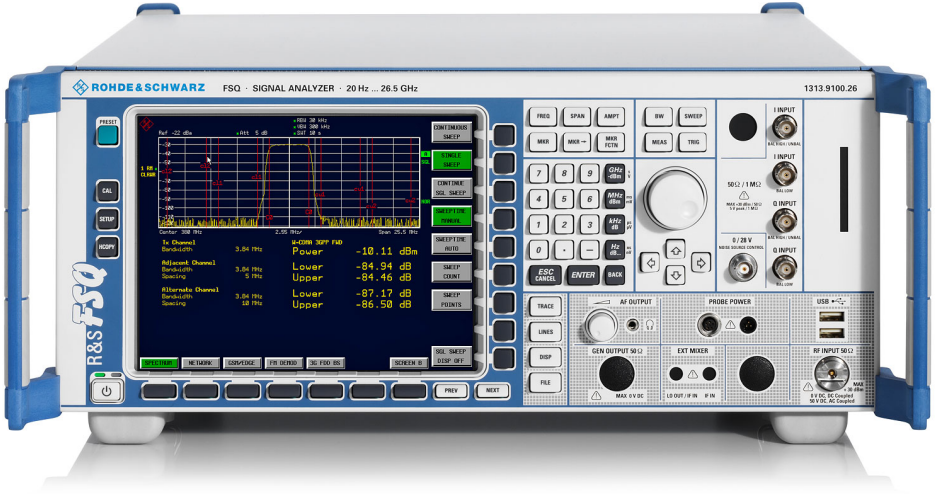
Driver Voodoo

- Some really smart people have crafted a driver for these USB adapters to give us more control
- Driver – software that controls hardware
  - Your mouse, keyboard, printers, etc. all use them
  - Computer has to know how to speak the language of the hardware in order for it to work

Other SDR Hardware

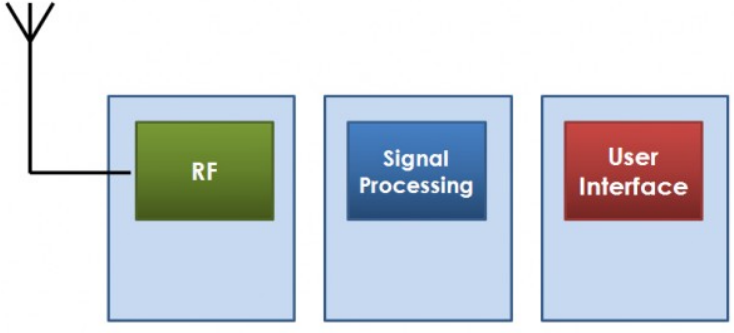




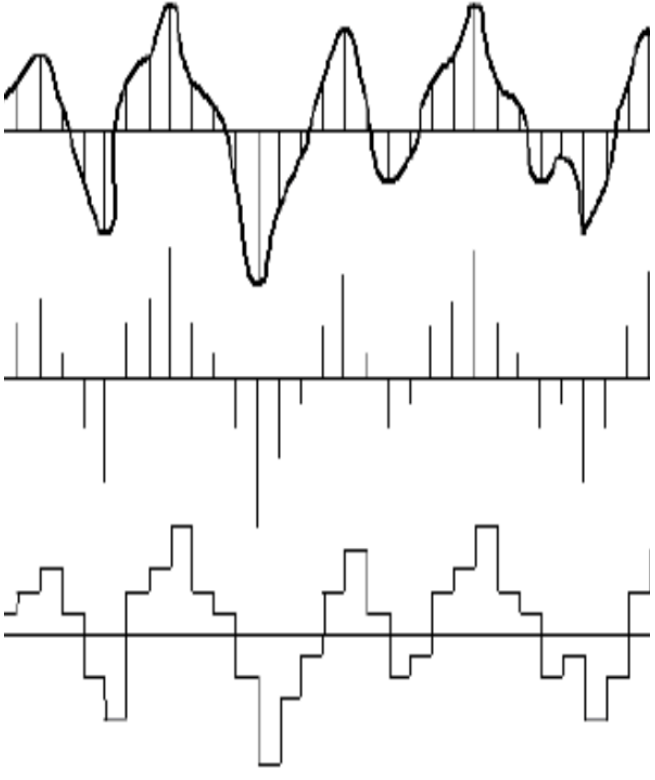


How does SDR work?

- At a 10,000’ view, SDR converts the analog signals on the antenna into digital signals (1’s and 0’s)
- Using signal processing techniques, we can make that data more usable



Original → Sampled → Reconstructed



Installing

- Clone my script off of GitHub
- Change the script to be executable:

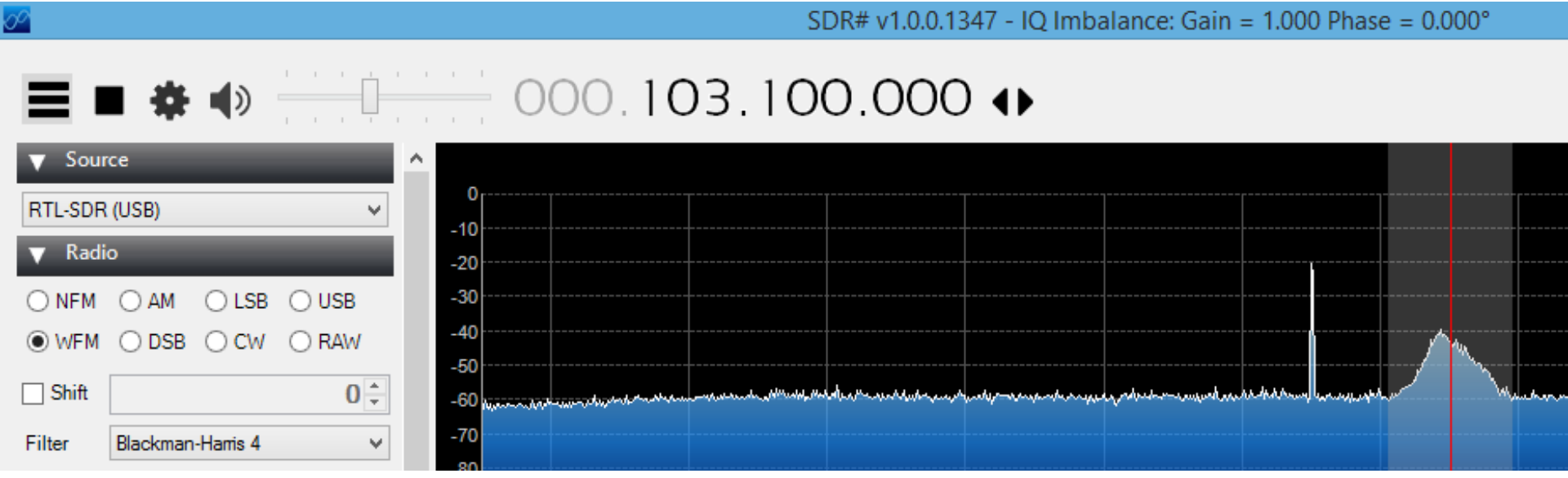
  chmod +x sdr_setup.sh
- Run the script:

  ./sdr_setup.sh

FM Radio

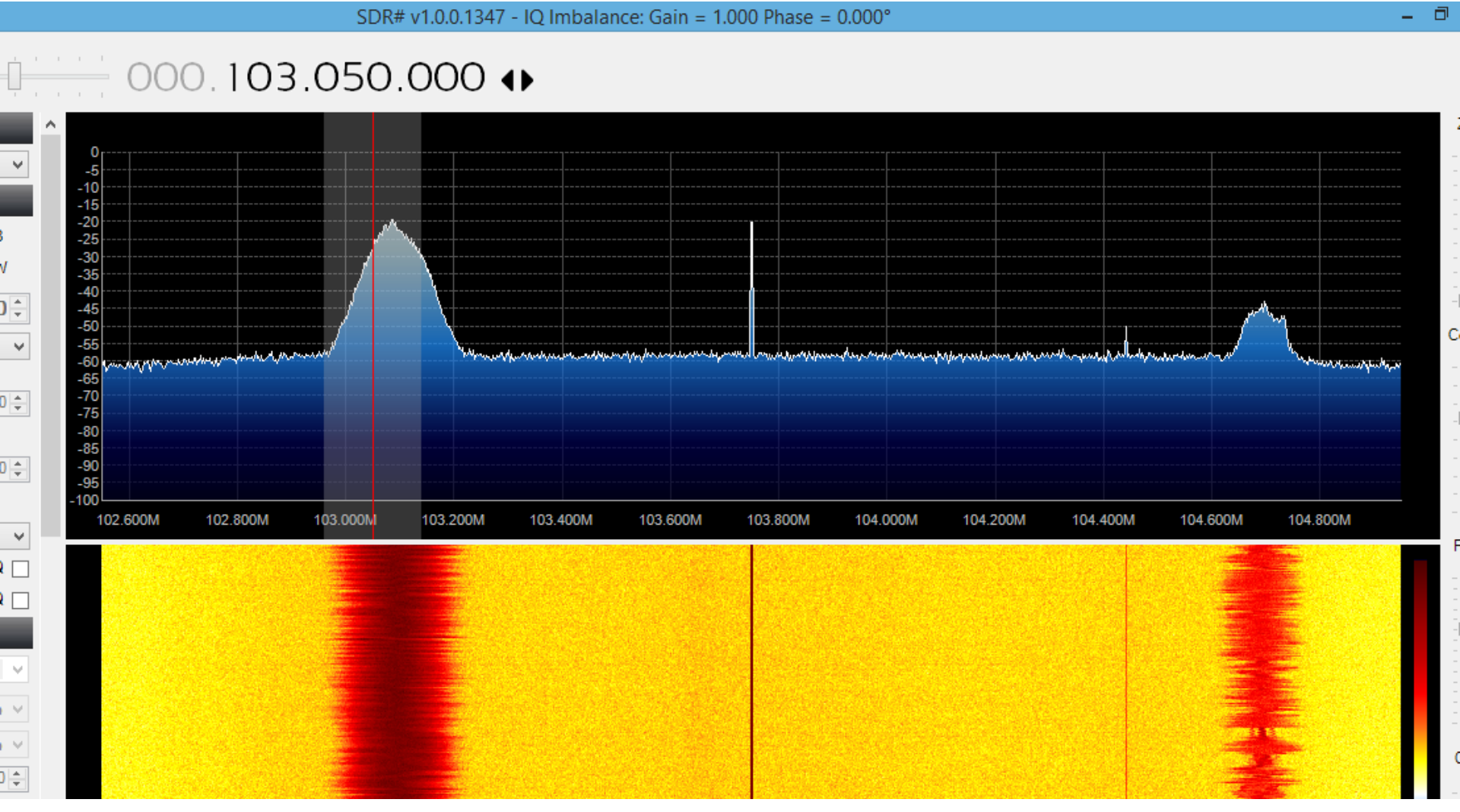
- Let's go for something normal first
- FM radio (these radios are supposed to do this out of the box)

1. Choose **WFM** (wide-band FM radio)
2. Set your frequency by clicking large numbers on top
    1. Local station KJAM is **103.1**
    2. The interface is a little touchy
3. Click the play button and listen!


SDR# v1.0.0.1347 - IQ Imbalance: Gain = 1.000 Phase = 0.000°
000.103.100.000
Source
RTL-SDR (USB)
Radio
NFM
AM
LSB
USB
WFM
DSB
CW
RAW
Shift
0
Filter
Blackman-Harris 4
0
-10
-20
-30
-40
-50
-60
-70

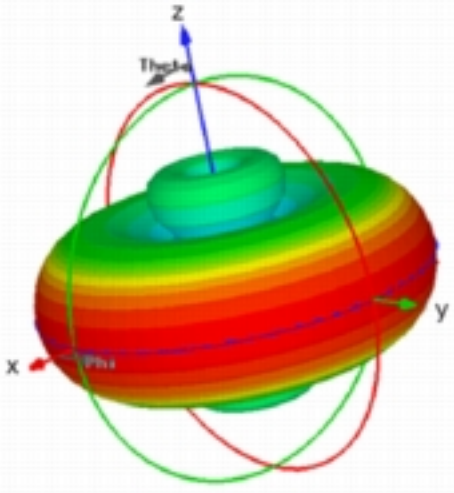
Find me another station!

- I’ve given you a FM station to tune into
- SDR# shows us where we have strong signals in the current spectrum (WFM in our case)
  - Peaks more than likely will be other radio stations
- You can use the filters on the right-hand side to try and pick out different radio stations
  - Antenna position matters, make sure it stands upright, move to window if need be (they’re just little fellas)

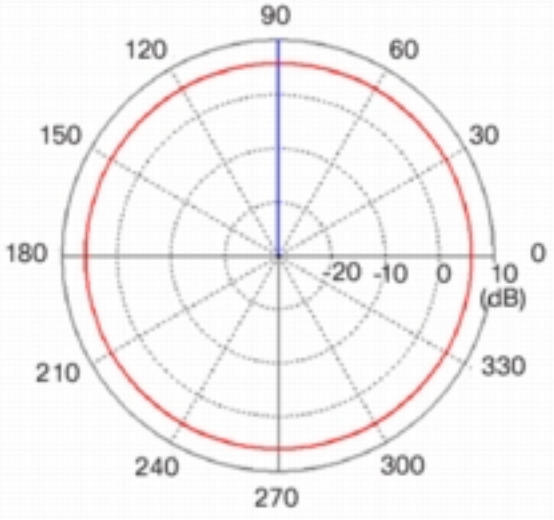

SDR# v1.0.0.1347 - IQ Imbalance: Gain = 1.000 Phase = 0.000°
000.103.050.000
0
-5
-10
-15
-20
-25
-30
-35
-40
-45
-50
-55
-60
-65
-70
-75
-80
-85
-90
-95
-100
102.600M
102.800M
103.000M
103.200M
103.400M
103.600M
103.800M
104.000M
104.200M
104.400M
104.600M
104.800M

Antenna Types

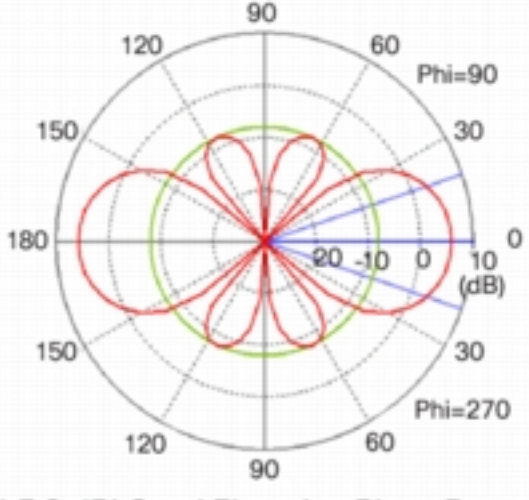
- Omnidirectional
  - Extends your range in all directions
- Directional
  - Let’s you focus your signal in a particular direction
- Sensitivity – measured in dBi
  - dBi - gain of an antenna as referenced to an ISOTROPIC (omnidirectional) source
  - Remember, every 3 dBi = double the sensitivity



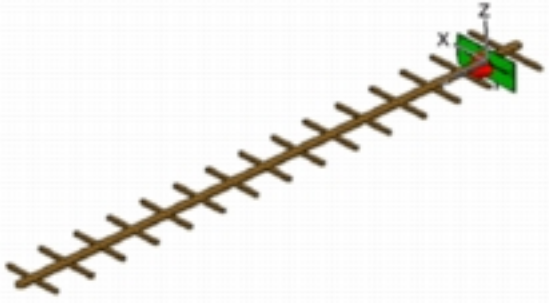
(a) 5.8 dBi Omni 3D Pattern



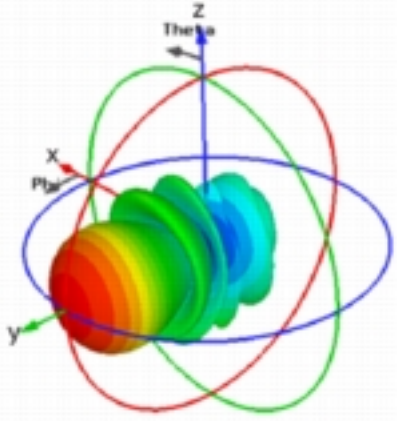
(b) 5.8 dBi Omni Azimuth Plane Pattern



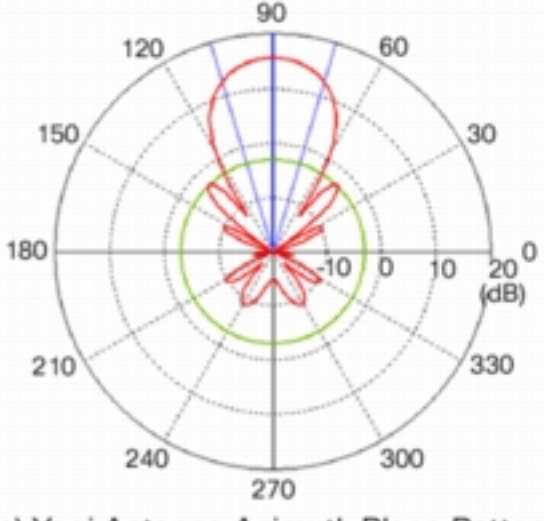
(c) 5.8 dBi Omni Elevation Plane Pattern



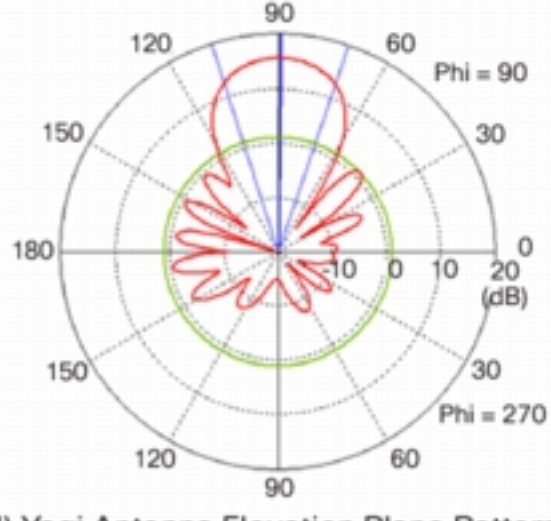
(a) Yagi Antenna Model



(b) Yagi Antenna 3D Radiation Pattern



(c) Yagi Antenna Azimuth Plane Pattern



(d) Yagi Antenna Elevation Plane Pattern

Look at the Spectrum

- If you adjust the contrast a bit, pinpointing signals becomes a little bit easier

How about Weather Radio

- Most AM/FM radios can't tune into the same weather network
- We've probably all seen one of these…maybe at Grandparents?

RTL-SDR Weather Station

- This is where SDR starts to get cool
- Our adapter *shouldn't* be able to gather weather data, but we have special drivers
- NOAA – a big deal in the weather world

Tuning into Weather

1. Find your nearest NOAA weather station frequency here: http://www.nws.noaa.gov/nwr/coverage/county_coverage.html

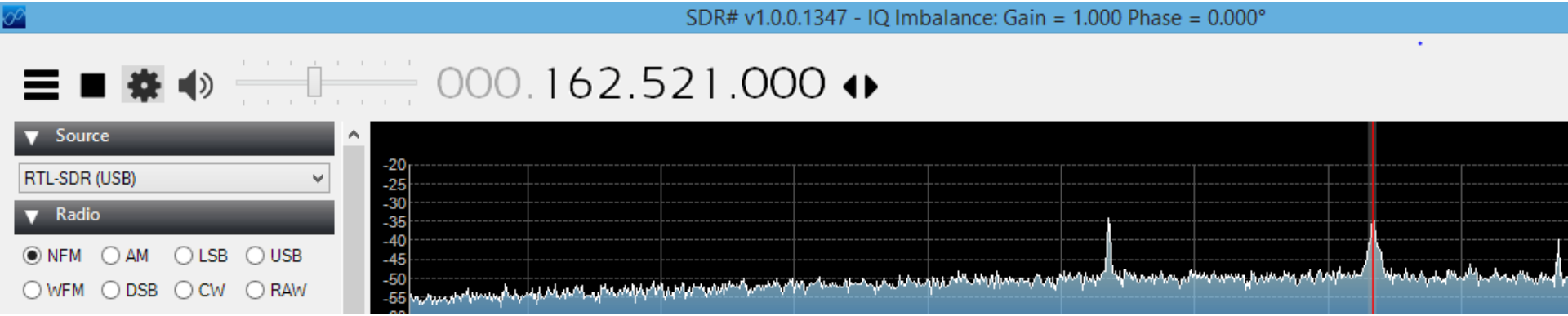
Kingsbury	046077	Arlington	KXI71	162.525	ALL
Kingsbury	046077	Wessington	WXM27	162.550	ALL
Lake	046079	Arlington	KXI71	162.525	ALL
Lake	046079	Sioux Falls	WXM28	162.400	ALL
Lawrence	046081	Lead	WXL23	162.525	ALL

2. Type one of the frequencies into SDR#

Tuning into Weather

3. The peak is much smaller/thinner than FM, we're dealing with *narrow-band* here. Change the radio to **NFM**

- Note: NFM requires a little better signal, may not work well in a building
  - Even though NOAA says 162.525 look at your spectrum and see what your radio wants
  - Environmental factors affect signal


SDR# v1.0.0.1347 - IQ Imbalance: Gain = 1.000 Phase = 0.000°
000.162.521.000
Source
RTL-SDR (USB)
Radio
NFM
AM
LSB
USB
WFM
DSB
CW
RAW
-20
-25
-30
-35
-40
-45
-50
-55

Weather Recording (Backup)

Let’s talk Airplanes

- ADS-B - Automatic dependent surveillance – broadcast
  - Cooperative surveillance for tracking aircraft
- Aircraft determines its position and broadcasts it for safety measures
- Sent in clear text, they want people to read this so planes don’t crash

Pieces of Software

- dump1090
  - Takes all of the ADSB data and decodes the packets (frames)

- **Disclaimer**: Madison is not a destination for many planes, fingers crossed one is passing over

Don’t Stop at 30K Feet

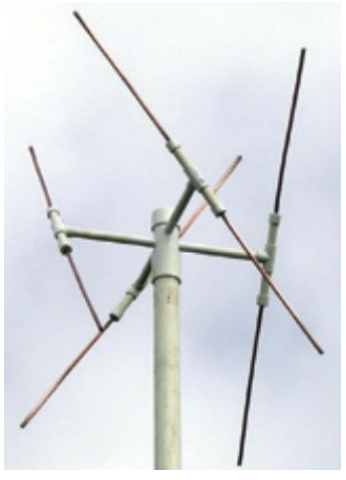
- Planes are very cool, but I like space a little better…
- How about gathering some information from satellites?
  - Our friends, the NOAA, have satellites sending images back for weather purposes
- This gets a little more complicated though

Satellite Imagery

- Unfortunately, you need a different antenna than what we have
  - As satellites spin and tumble through space, their signals do not come in a completely linear fashion
- With a special antenna, you can gather “audio” from the satellites and save it off to a file

Right Hand Circularly Polarized (RHCP

- As the satellites broadcast their signal, they also rotate, rotating the signal polarization
- Satellite antennas are also designed to receive best from signals coming from the sky

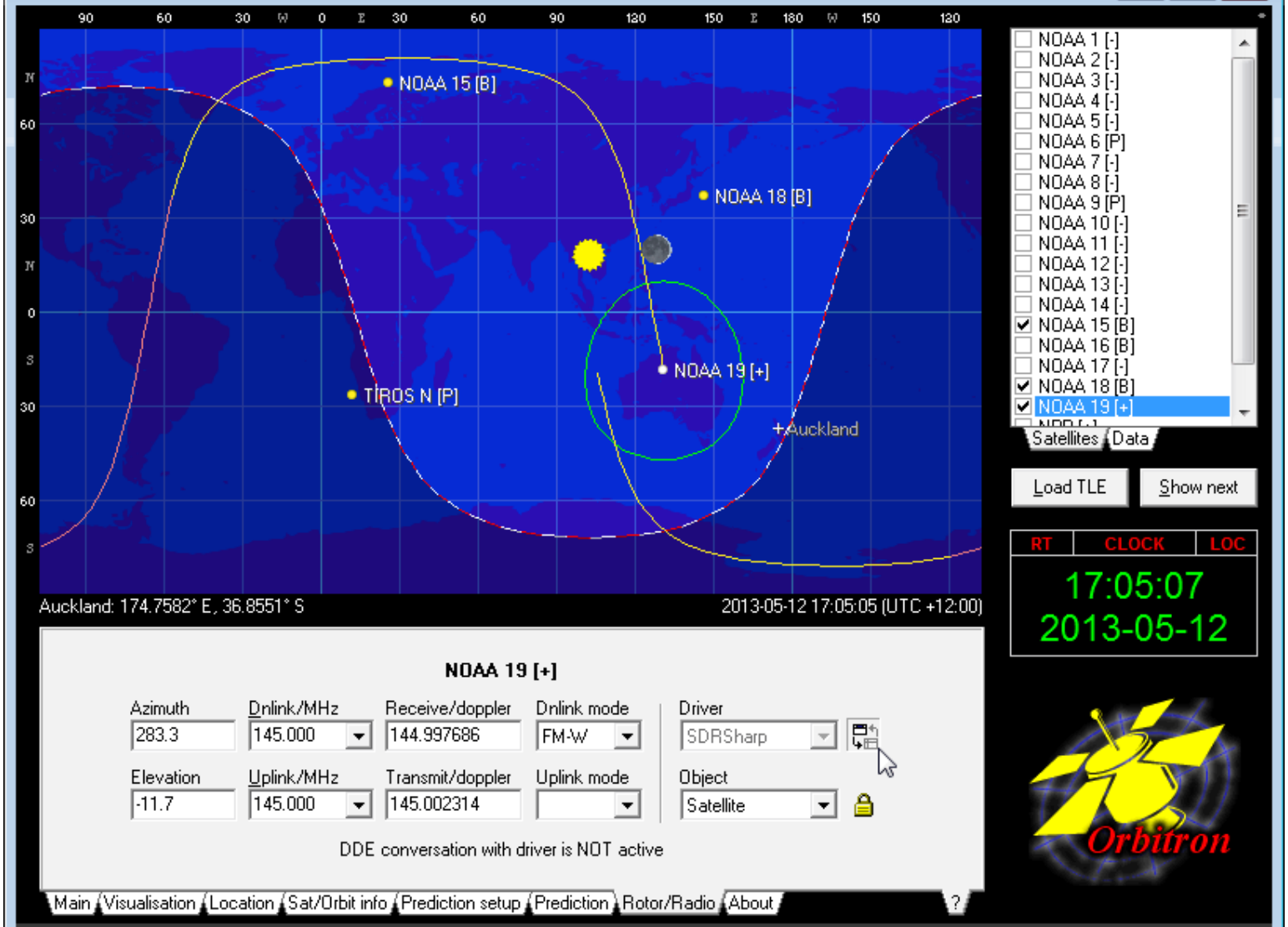


Tracking Satellite

- Once the antenna is attached, if you tune into one of the following stations, you may start receiving the “audio”
  - NOAA 15 – 137.6200 MHz
  - NOAA 18 – 137.9125 MHz
  - NOAA 19 – 137.1000 MHz

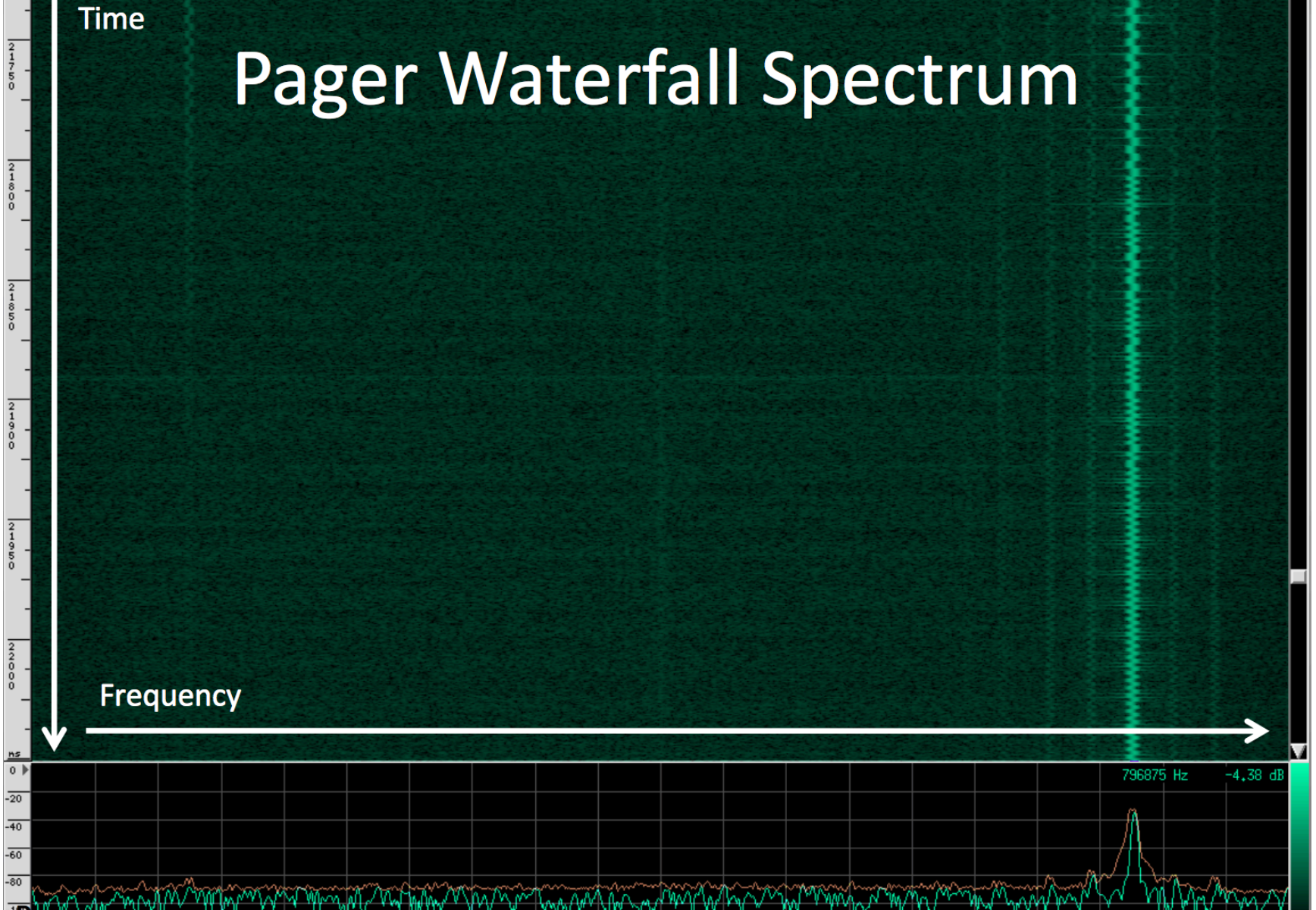
Decoding the Data

- Through some complicated software, the 1's and 0's from the audio stream can be converted back into digital content
  - Orbitron
  - WXtoImg
- The result being satellite imagery and positioning


Orbitron 3.71
NOAA 15 [B]
NOAA 18 [B]
NOAA 19 [+]
TIROS N [P]
Auckland
Auckland: 174.7582° E, 36.8551° S
2013-05-12 17:05:05 (UTC +12:00)
NOAA 1 [-]
NOAA 2 [-]
NOAA 3 [-]
NOAA 4 [-]
NOAA 5 [-]
NOAA 6 [P]
NOAA 7 [-]
NOAA 8 [-]
NOAA 9 [P]
NOAA 10 [-]
NOAA 11 [-]
NOAA 12 [-]
NOAA 13 [-]
NOAA 14 [-]
NOAA 15 [B]
NOAA 16 [B]
NOAA 17 [-]
NOAA 18 [B]
NOAA 19 [+]
Satellites
Data
Load TLE
Show next
RT
CLOCK
LOC
17:05:07
2013-05-12
NOAA 19 [+]
Azimuth
283.3
Dnlink/MHz
145.000
Receive/doppler
144.997686
Dnlink mode
FM-W
Driver
SDRSharp
Elevation
-11.7
Uplink/MHz
145.000
Transmit/doppler
145.002314
Uplink mode
Object
Satellite
DDE conversation with driver is NOT active
Main
Visualisation
Location
Sat/Orbit info
Prediction setup
Prediction
Rotor/Radio
About
?
Orbitron
Orbitron 3.71 - (C) 2001-2005 by Sebastian Stoff


SDR# RSDEV Fork v1.3.1 - IQ Imbalance: Gain = 0.966 Phase = -0.160°
Play
Stop
IQ Stream
Wave file
Radio
NFM
AM
LSB
USB
WFM
DSB
CW-L
CW-U
Frequency
137,912,500
Center
138,695,797
Shift
-8,333
Front end
RTL-SDR / RTL2832U
Filter type
Blackman-Harris
Filter bandwidth
30000
Filter order
10
Squelch
CW Shift
Step size
Snap to grid
12.5 kHz
Correct IQ
Swap I & Q
FM Stereo
Mark Peaks
Audio
AF Gain
Samplerate
48000 sample/sec
Input
[MME] Microsoft Sound M...
Output
[MME] Microsoft Sound M...
Latency (ms)
100
Filter Audio
AGC
Use AGC
Use Hang
Threshold (dB)
100
Decay (ms)
100
Slope (dB)
0
FFT Display
View
Both
Window
Blackman-Harris
Resolution
32768
Gradient
S-Attack
0
-10
-20
-30
-40
-50
-60
-70
-80
-90
-100
-110
-120
-130
137.750MHz
137.875MHz
138.000MHz
138.125MHz
WXtoImg: Recording
File
Satellite
Enhancements
Options
Projection
Image
Help
Image
Audio Files
Raw Images
Saved Images
Recording NOAA 18 (unprocessed data shown)...
2012-08-19 03:22 UTC
NOAA 18 Elev: 38.3° Azi: 18.3° 7:49 / 11:40
Recording NOAA 18 (northbound 59 E) on 137.9125 MHz from 03:14:27 UTC...
64%
50%

Balint Seeber – Applications Specialist


Time
Pager Waterfall Spectrum
Frequency
796875 Hz
-4.38 dB

Decoder 0

- [ ] From beginning
- [x] From start offset

Offset: 0

- [ ] Extend Offset
- [x] Sync settings
- [x] Show bits

Columns: 4

- [ ] Invert
- [ ] Invert first bit
- [ ] Straight
- [ ] Flip Flop
- [ ] Diff
- [ ] Diff (inverted)
- [ ] Prev 0
- [ ] Prev 1
- [x] Manchester 0 (IEEE)
- [ ] Manchester 1 (orig)
- [ ] Diff Man 0
- [ ] BPM
- [ ] Diff Man 1
- [ ] BPS

- [ ] Baudot
- [ ] 7-bit ASCII
- [x] 8-bit ASCII
- [x] Swap endian-ness
- [x] Enforce control bits
- [ ] Start bit
- [x] No stop bits
- [ ] Stop bit
- [ ] Two stop bits

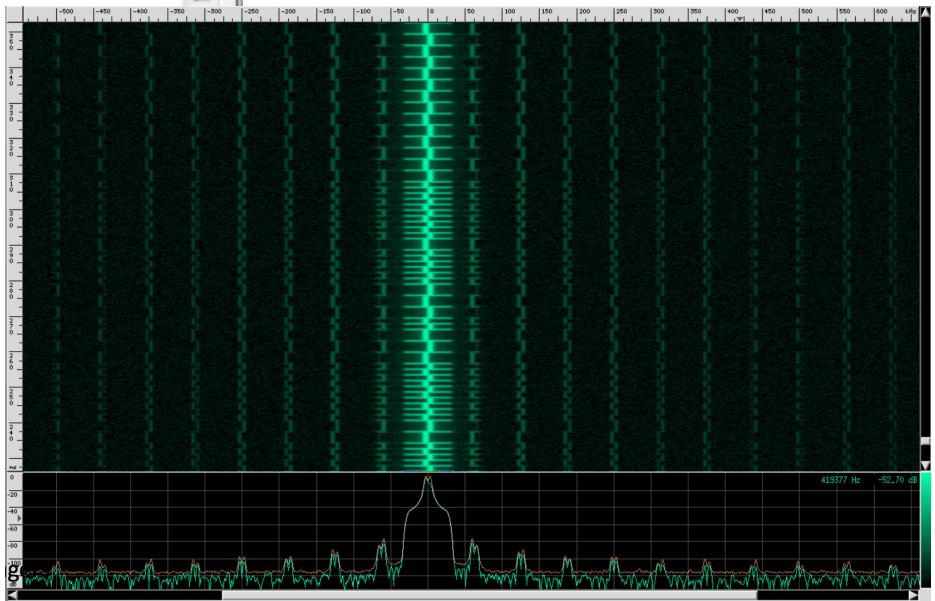
- [x] Highlight differences
- [ ] Show decoded data
- [ ] Accumulate data
- [ ] Extra newline

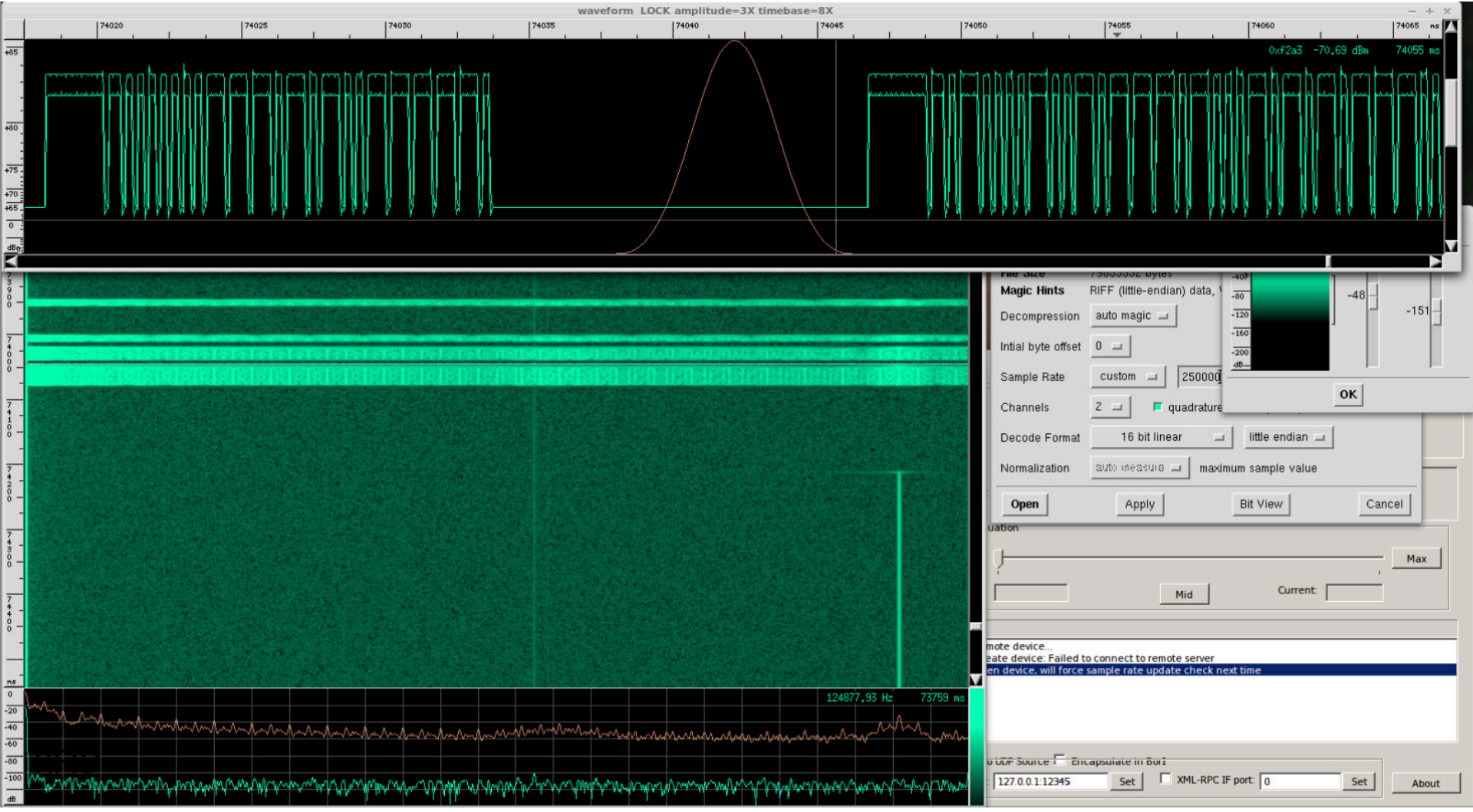
Max bits: 4096

Dump Clear

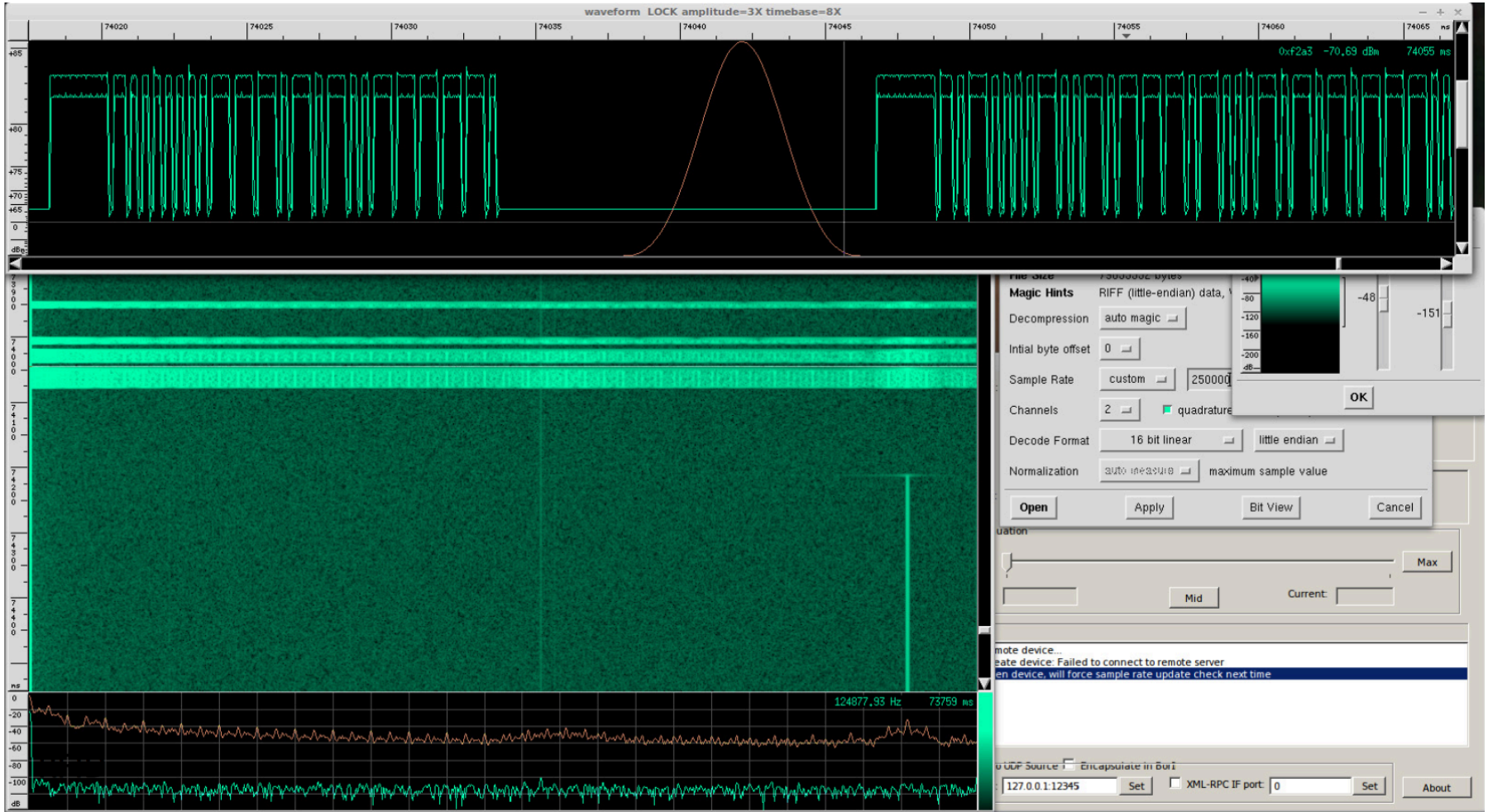
```
000     10101010 10101010 10101010 11111100     aa aa aa fc     ....
004     00101101 00000010 00001000 00001100     2d 02 08 0c     -...
008     00000000 00000000 00000000 00000000     00 00 00 00     ....
012     00000000 10000001 11000001 0    00 81 c1 ...<7 left>

Sum: C1
LRC: FFFFFC42
CRC Poly D5 Start 00: 03
CRC Poly D5 Start FF: A9
CRC Poly AB Start 00: 2E
CRC Poly AB Start FF: 78
CRC Poly EA Start 00: DB
CRC Poly EA Start FF: 71
```




waveform LOCK amplitude=3X timebase=8X
74020
74025
74030
74035
74040
74045
74050
74055
74060
74065
ns
0xf2a3 -70.69 dBm 74055 ms
dBm
Magic Hints
RIFF (little-endian) data,
Decompression
auto magic
Intial byte offset
0
Sample Rate
custom
250000
Channels
2
quadrature
Decode Format
16 bit linear
little endian
Normalization
maximum sample value
Open
Apply
Bit View
Cancel
OK
Max
Mid
Current:
mote device...
eate device: Failed to connect to remote server
en device, will force sample rate update check next time
127.0.0.1:12345
Set
XML-RPC IF port:
0
Set
About
124877.93 Hz
73759 ms
dB

Toyota Prius Keyless Entry



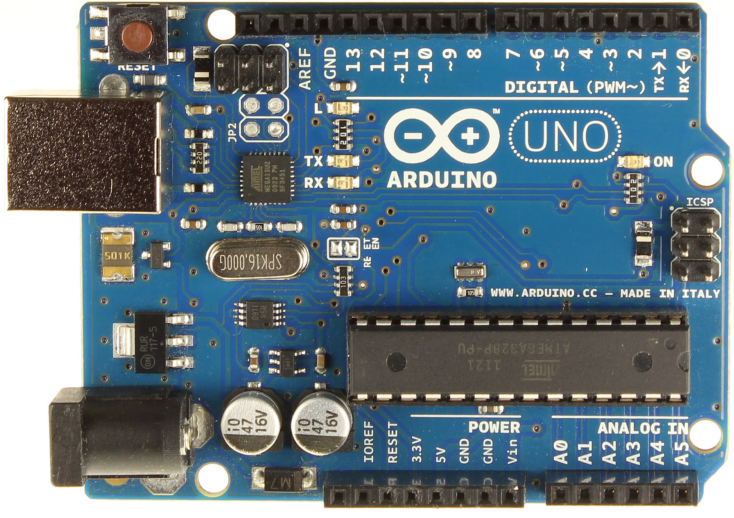
Jared Boon

- Tire Pressure Monitoring System (TPMS)
- All cars in the US sold after 2008 have it
- We should know if one of our tires are low
- Guess what? There's no "wire" going into your tire to check the pressure, it's wireless ☺

TPMS

- The signals have some really rudimentary protection on them, but Jared was able to demodulate them
- He could get each tire's pressure from 30-50 feet away depending on the TPMS module
- Probably not a goldmine of information but interesting nonetheless

Pranks?


DIGITAL (PWM~)
UNO
ARDUINO
WWW.ARDUINO.CC – MADE IN ITALY
POWER
ANALOG IN

+

More Ideas

- Building security badges
- Gated communities
- Doorbells
- Remote controlled power outlets