CommWatch - Communication Watch Window

Quick Start Guide

Installation

VS Code Extension

- 1. Download the .vsix file from releases
- 2. Open VS Code
- 3. Press Ctrl+Shift+P (or Cmd+Shift+P on Mac)
- 4. Type "Install from VSIX" and select the file
- 5. Reload VS Code

Desktop Application

Windows:



bash

Download and run the installer CommWatch-Setup-0.1.0.exe

macOS:



hash

Download and mount the DMG
open CommWatch-0.1.0.dmg
Drag to Applications folder

Linux:



bash

Download and install the AppImage chmod +x CommWatch-0.1.0.AppImage ./CommWatch-0.1.0.AppImage



Download binary for your platform
Add to PATH
export PATH=\$PATH:/path/to/commwatch/bin

Verify installation commwatch -- version

First Connection - STM32 Nucleo UART

This example shows connecting to an STM32 Nucleo board via USB CDC ACM.

Hardware Setup:

- 1. Connect STM32 Nucleo board via USB
- 2. Board appears as virtual COM port (e.g., COM5 on Windows, /dev/ttyACM0 on Linux)

VS Code Extension:

- 1. Open Command Palette (Ctrl+Shift+P)
- 2. Run "CommWatch: Open"
- 3. Select device from dropdown (e.g., "STM32 Virtual COM Port")
- 4. Configure settings:
 - o Baud Rate: 115200
 - Data Bits: 8Stop Bits: 1
 - Parity: None
- 5. Click "Connect"
- 6. Monitor incoming EFuse frames in real-time

Desktop App:

- 1. Launch CommWatch
- 2. File \rightarrow Connect
- 3. Select UART device
- 4. Set baud rate to 115200
- 5. Click Connect
- 6. View frames in monitor window

CLI:



bash

Monitor live

commwatch monitor --proto uart --port /dev/ttyACM0 --baud 115200

Record session

commwatch record --proto uart --port /dev/ttyACM0 --baud 115200 --out session.json --duration 60

Replay session

commwatch replay --in session.json --proto uart --port /dev/ttyACM0

Understanding EFuse Frames

EFuse is a custom protocol included as an example:

Frame Structure:



[0xAA] [Type:1] [Length:2] [Payload:N] [CRC16:2] [0xBB]

Example - ADC Reading (Type 0x01):



Decoded View:



Type: ADC Reading (0x01)

Length: 2 bytes ADC Raw: 4660

Voltage: 2.81V (scaled: 4660/4095 * 3.3V)

CRC: ✓ Valid (0x5FA3)

User Guide

Protocols Supported

UART (Universal Asynchronous Receiver-Transmitter)

Configuration Options:

- Baud Rate: 300 to 3,000,000 bps
- Data Bits: 5, 6, 7, or 8
- Stop Bits: 1, 1.5, or 2
- Parity: None, Even, Odd, Mark, Space
- Flow Control: None, XON/XOFF, RTS/CTS, DSR/DTR

Common Use Cases:

- Serial console debugging
- Sensor communication
- Microcontroller programming
- Industrial equipment interfaces

Example Configuration:



json

```
{
  "device": {
    "type": "uart",
    "path": "/dev/ttyUSB0"
},

"options": {
    "baudRate": 115200,
    "dataBits": 8,
    "stopBits": 1,
    "parity": "none"
}
}
```

SPI (Serial Peripheral Interface)

Configuration Options:

- Mode: 0, 1, 2, or 3 (CPOL/CPHA combinations)
- Clock Speed: Up to 50 MHz
- Bit Order: MSB-first or LSB-first
- CS Polarity: Active-low or active-high

Transaction Composer:

```
javascript
```

```
{ action: "assert_cs", delay: 0 },
{ action: "write", data: [0x03, 0x00, 0x00] },
{ action: "read", length: 16 },
{ action: "deassert_cs", delay: 10 }
]
```

Supported Adapters:

- FT232H USB-to-SPI
- CH347A USB bridge
- Custom socket-SPI implementations

I²C (Inter-Integrated Circuit)

Configuration Options:

• Bus Speed: 100 kHz (Standard), 400 kHz (Fast), 1 MHz (Fast Plus)

• Address Mode: 7-bit or 10-bit

• Slave Address: 0x00 to 0x7F (7-bit)

Common Operations:



```
Write: [Address << 1 | 0, Register, Data...]

Read: [Address << 1 | 1, Length] → [Data...]

Write-then-Read: [Addr|W, Reg] [Addr|R] → [Data...]
```

Bus Scanning: The tool can scan for devices on the I²C bus by testing all valid addresses.

CAN (Controller Area Network)

Configuration Options:

• Bitrate: 125k, 250k, 500k, 1M bps

• CAN-FD: Extended data rates

• Filters: ID-based message filtering

• Listen-Only: Monitoring without ACKs

Frame Format:



```
Standard (11-bit ID):
[ID:11][RTR:1][DLC:4][Data:0-8]

Extended (29-bit ID):
[ID:29][RTR:1][DLC:4][Data:0-8]
```

Supported Interfaces:

- SocketCAN (Linux: can0, vcan0)
- CANalyst-II USB adapter
- PCAN USB adapter
- Custom UDP bridge

Filter Example:



json

Ethernet (UDP/TCP/Raw)

Configuration Options:

- Protocol: UDP, TCP, or Raw socketsInterface: Network interface selection
- Port: UDP/TCP port number
- Multicast: Join multicast groups
- BPF Filter: Berkeley Packet Filter expressions

UDP Example:



json

```
{
  "device": { "type": "ethernet" },
  "options": {
    "ethProtocol": "udp",
    "ethPort": 5000,
    "ethHost": "192.168.1.100"
  }
}
```

PCAP Capture: When available, the tool can capture packets using libpcap for detailed analysis.

Features

Live Monitor

Display Modes:

- Hex: Show raw bytes in hexadecimal
- ASCII: Show printable characters
- **Both:** Combined hex + ASCII view

Features:

- Color-coded TX/RX (blue for transmit, green for receive)
- Timestamp precision to microseconds
- Frame length indicators
- Error highlighting
- Auto-scroll with manual override
- Search and filter

Keyboard Shortcuts:

- Ctrl+F: Search
- Ctrl+C: Copy selected frames
- Ctrl+A: Select all
- Space: Pause/resume auto-scroll

TX Builder

Manual Entry:



Input: AA 01 00 02 12 34 5F A3 BB Effect: Sends 9 bytes immediately

Presets:



ison

```
{
  "presets": [
     {
          "name": "ADC Read",
          "data": "AA 01 00 00 5F A3 BB"
     },
     {
          "name": "Status Query",
          "data": "AA 02 00 00 C1 84 BB"
     }
     ]
}
```

Periodic Sending:

- Set interval in milliseconds
- Click "Start Periodic" to begin
- Useful for testing device timeouts

Burst Mode:

- Send multiple frames rapidly
- Configure burst size and interval
- Stress testing and performance validation

Decoder View

Parsed Fields: Shows decoded frame structure with:

- Field names
- Values (with units if applicable)
- Types (uint8, uint16, float, etc.)
- Raw bytes

CRC Verification:

- ✓ Valid: Green badge
- X Invalid: Red badge with expected vs calculated values

Protocol Support:

- EFuse (custom protocol)
- COBS (Consistent Overhead Byte Stuffing)
- SLIP (Serial Line IP)
- Hex (raw hexadecimal)
- ASCII (text)
- Custom decoders via plugins

Filters & Triggers

Filter Types:

1. Regex Filter:



Pattern: ^AA.*BB\$

Action: Show only matching frames

2. Byte Pattern:



Pattern: AA ?? ?? ?? ?? ?? ?? BB Action: Colorize matches in yellow

3. Field Predicate:



Field: voltage Condition: > 3.0

Action: Export to separate file

Actions:

• Show: Display only matching frames

• Hide: Suppress matching frames

• Colorize: Highlight with custom color

• Export: Save to file

• Respond: Send automated response

Statistics Panel

Real-Time Metrics:

- RX Messages & Bytes
- TX Messages & Bytes
- Error Count
- Message Rate (msg/s)
- Uptime

Performance Monitoring: The tool can handle 10,000+ messages per second without UI lag thanks to:

- Backpressure handling
- Ring buffers
- Worker thread decoding
- Incremental rendering

Logging & Export

Export Formats:

1. **CSV**:



CSV

```
Timestamp, Direction, Length, Hex
1698765432000, rx, 9, "AA 01 00 02 12 34 5F A3 BB"
1698765432100, tx, 7, "AA 02 00 00 C1 84 BB"
```

2. **JSON**:



json

```
{
    "version": "1.0",
    "frames": [
        {
             "id": "frame-0",
             "timestamp": "1698765432000000000",
             "direction": "rx",
             "raw": [170, 1, 0, 2, 18, 52, 95, 163, 187],
             "decoded": { ... }
        }
    }
}
```

3. PCAP-NG: Compatible with Wireshark for advanced analysis.

Session Management:

- Save: Store current configuration and logs
- Load: Restore previous session
- Bookmark: Mark important events
- Annotations: Add notes to frames

Virtual Devices (Simulators)

Each protocol includes a simulator for testing without hardware:

UART Simulator Modes:

- Loopback: Echo all sent data
- Scripted: Playback predefined sequence
- Burst: Generate high-rate traffic
- Error Inject: Simulate transmission errors

Example Scripted Simulation:

```
json
```

CAN Simulator: Generates realistic automotive traffic:

- Engine RPM (0x100)
- Vehicle Speed (0x200)
- Coolant Temperature (0x300)
- OBD-II requests/responses (0x7E0-0x7E7)

Ethernet Simulator:

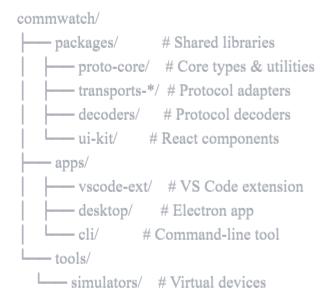
- UDP echo server
- TCP stream generator
- Multicast traffic

Developer Guide

Architecture

Monorepo Structure:





Creating Custom Decoders

Step 1: Define Decoder Class



```
import { ProtocolDecoder, DecodedFrame, FrameField, FrameError } from '@commwatch/proto-core';
export class MyCustomDecoder implements ProtocolDecoder {
id = 'my-protocol';
 name = 'My Custom Protocol';
 decode(raw: Uint8Array): DecodedFrame | null {
  // Parse raw bytes
  if (raw.length < 4) return null;
  const header = raw[0];
  const type = raw[1];
  const length = (raw[2] \le 8) | raw[3];
  const payload = raw.slice(4, 4 + length);
  const fields: FrameField[] = [
    name: 'header',
    value: header,
    type: 'uint8',
    raw: raw.slice(0, 1),
    offset: 0,
   },
    name: 'type',
    value: type,
    type: 'uint8',
    raw: raw.slice(1, 2),
    offset: 1,
   },
    name: 'payload',
    value: payload,
    type: 'bytes',
    raw: payload,
    offset: 4,
   },
  ];
  return {
   protocol: this.id,
   fields,
  };
```

```
encode(fields: FrameField[]): Uint8Array {
// Build frame from fields
 const header = (fields.find(f => f.name === 'header')?.value as number) \parallel 0;
 const type = (fields.find(f => f.name === 'type')?.value as number) || 0;
 const payload = (fields.find(f => f.name === 'payload')?.value as Uint8Array(0);
 const length = payload.length;
 const frame = new Uint8Array(4 + length);
 frame[0] = header;
 frame[1] = type;
 frame[2] = (length \gg 8) & 0xFF;
 frame[3] = length & 0xFF;
 frame.set(payload, 4);
return frame;
validate(raw: Uint8Array): FrameError | null {
 if (raw.length < 4) {
 return {
   code: 'FRAME_TOO_SHORT',
   message: 'Frame must be at least 4 bytes',
   severity: 'error',
 };
return null;
```

Step 2: Register Decoder



typescript

```
// In your application startup
import { MyCustomDecoder } from './my-custom-decoder';
const decoder = new MyCustomDecoder();
decoderRegistry.register(decoder);
```

Step 3: Use in Configuration

```
ijson

{
    "protocol": {
        "id": "my-protocol",
        "name": "My Custom Protocol",
        "decoder": "my-protocol"
        }
}
```

Creating Custom Transport Adapters

Step 1: Implement TransportAdapter Interface



```
import { TransportAdapter, DeviceInfo, AdapterHandle, AdapterOpenOptions } from '@commwatch/proto-core';
export class MyCustomAdapter implements TransportAdapter {
 id = 'my-transport';
 name = 'My Custom Transport';
 type = 'my-transport' as const;
 async listDevices(): Promise<DeviceInfo[]> {
  // Discover available devices
  return [
    id: 'my-device-1',
    name: 'My Device 1',
    type: 'my-transport',
    path: '/dev/mydevice0',
   },
  ];
 async open(dev: DeviceInfo, options: AdapterOpenOptions): Promise<AdapterHandle> {
  // Open device and return handle
  return new MyCustomHandle(dev, options);
 }
 supportsSimulation(): boolean {
  return true;
 async createSimulator(config: SimulatorConfig): Promise<AdapterHandle> {
  return new MyCustomSimulator(config);
```

Step 2: Implement Adapter Handle



}

```
class MyCustomHandle implements AdapterHandle {
 private readCallbacks: Set<(chunk: Uint8Array, meta?: RxMeta) => void> = new Set();
 private stats: AdapterStats = {
  bytesRx: 0,
  bytesTx: 0,
  messagesRx: 0,
  messagesTx: 0,
  errors: 0,
  uptime: 0,
 };
 constructor(private device: DeviceInfo, private options: AdapterOpenOptions) {
  // Initialize device connection
 async write(frame: Uint8Array): Promise<void> {
  // Send data to device
  this.stats.bytesTx += frame.length;
  this.stats.messagesTx++;
 read(cb: (chunk: Uint8Array, meta?: RxMeta) => void): Unsubscribe {
  this.readCallbacks.add(cb);
  return () => this.readCallbacks.delete(cb);
 async setOptions(opts: Partial<AdapterOpenOptions>): Promise<void> {
  Object.assign(this.options, opts);
 async close(): Promise<void> {
  this.readCallbacks.clear();
 async getStats(): Promise<AdapterStats> {
  return { ...this.stats };
```

Plugin System

CommWatch supports runtime plugin loading:

Plugin Manifest (plugin.json):

```
json
   "name": "my-commwatch-plugin",
   "version": "1.0.0",
   "type": "decoder",
   "entry": "./dist/index.js",
   "exports": {
    "decoder": "MyCustomDecoder"
Plugin Entry Point:
 3
typescript
  export class MyCustomDecoder implements ProtocolDecoder {
   // Implementation
  export function activate(context: any) {
   context.registerDecoder(new MyCustomDecoder());
Loading Plugins:
 (<u>;;</u>
typescript
  import { PluginManager } from '@commwatch/proto-core';
  const pluginManager = new PluginManager();
  await pluginManager.loadPlugin('./path/to/plugin');
Testing
Unit Tests:
```

```
import { describe, it, expect } from 'vitest';
import { MyCustomDecoder } from './my-custom-decoder';
describe('MyCustomDecoder', () => {
 const decoder = new MyCustomDecoder();
 it('should decode valid frame', () => {
  const frame = new Uint8Array([0x55, 0x01, 0x00, 0x04, 0x12, 0x34, 0x56, 0x78]);
  const decoded = decoder.decode(frame);
  expect(decoded).not.toBeNull();
  expect(decoded?.fields[0].value).toBe(0x55);
 });
 it('should detect invalid frame', () => {
  const frame = new Uint8Array([0x55, 0x01]);
  const error = decoder.validate(frame);
  expect(error).not.toBeNull();
  expect(error?.code).toBe('FRAME_TOO_SHORT');
 });
});
```

Integration Tests with Simulators:



```
import { describe, it, expect } from 'vitest';
import { UARTAdapter } from '@commwatch/transports-uart';
describe('UART Integration', () => {
 it('should send and receive data', async () => {
  const adapter = new UARTAdapter();
  const handle = await adapter.createSimulator({ mode: 'loopback' });
  const received: Uint8Array[] = [];
  handle.read((chunk) => {
   received.push(chunk);
  });
  const testData = new Uint8Array([0x01, 0x02, 0x03]);
  await handle.write(testData);
  await new Promise(resolve => setTimeout(resolve, 100));
  expect(received.length).toBeGreaterThan(0);
  expect(Array.from(received[0])).toEqual([0x01, 0x02, 0x03]);
  await handle.close();
 });
});
```

Building and Packaging

Build All Packages:



bash

pnpm install pnpm run build

Package VS Code Extension:



hash

```
cd apps/vscode-ext
pnpm run package
# Output: commwatch-vscode-0.1.0.vsix
```

Build Electron App:



bash

```
cd apps/desktop

# Build for current platform

pnpm run dist

# Build for specific platforms

pnpm run dist:win

pnpm run dist:mac

pnpm run dist:linux

# Output: apps/desktop/release/
```

Build CLI Binary:



bash

```
cd apps/cli
pnpm run build:binary

# Output: apps/cli/bin/
# - commwatch-win-x64.exe
# - commwatch-linux-x64
# - commwatch-macos-x64
```

Performance Optimization

High-Rate Data Handling:

1. Backpressure Management:



```
const RING_BUFFER_SIZE = 10000;
const ringBuffer = new RingBuffer<ProtocolFrame>(RING_BUFFER_SIZE);
handle.read((chunk) => {
   if (!ringBuffer.isFull()) {
      ringBuffer.push(processFrame(chunk));
   } else {
      // Drop frame or apply other strategy
      stats.errors++;
   }
});

2. Worker Thread Decoding:
```



typescript

```
const decoderWorker = new Worker('./decoder-worker.js');
decoderWorker.postMessage({ raw: chunk });
decoderWorker.onmessage = (e) => {
  const decoded = e.data;
  updateUI(decoded);
};
```

3. Incremental Rendering:



typescript

```
// Render only visible frames
const virtualScroll = useVirtualScroll({
  itemCount: frames.length,
  itemHeight: 24,
  windowHeight: 600,
});
```

return frames.slice(virtualScroll.startIndex, virtualScroll.endIndex).map(renderFrame);

Debugging

Enable Debug Logging:



VS Code Extension

Set environment variable: DEBUG=commwatch:*

Desktop App

Launch with --enable-logging flag

CLI

Use --verbose flag

Log Levels:

• ERROR: Critical failures

• WARN: Potential issues

• INFO: General information

• DEBUG: Detailed diagnostics

• TRACE: Very detailed traces

Common Issues:

1. Permission Denied on Serial Port (Linux):



bash

sudo usermod -a -G dialout \$USER

#Logout and login again

2. CAN Interface Not Found:



hash

Load virtual CAN module sudo modprobe vcan sudo ip link add dev vcan0 type vcan sudo ip link set up vcan0

3. High CPU Usage:

- Reduce frame rate with filters
- Disable real-time decoding for high-rate protocols
- Use ring buffer with size limits

Examples & Sample Configurations

STM32 Nucleo UART Configuration

```
json
```

```
"name": "STM32 Nucleo UART",
"device": {
 "id": "uart:COM5",
 "name": "STM32 Virtual COM Port",
 "type": "uart",
 "path": "COM5"
"protocol": {
 "id": "efuse",
 "name": "EFuse Protocol",
 "decoder": "efuse"
"options": {
 "baudRate": 115200,
 "dataBits": 8,
 "stopBits": 1,
 "parity": "none"
"presets": [
  "name": "Read ADC",
  "data": "AA 01 00 00 5F A3 BB"
  "name": "Read Status",
  "data": "AA 02 00 00 C1 84 BB"
  "name": "Write Config",
  "data": "AA 03 00 04 12 34 56 78 E2 F1 BB"
```

CAN Bus OBD-II Configuration



```
"name": "OBD-II CAN",
"device": {
 "type": "can",
 "path": "can0"
"options": {
 "canBitrate": 500000,
 "canFilters": [
  { "id": 0x7E8, "mask": 0x7FF, "extended": false },
  { "id": 0x7E9, "mask": 0x7FF, "extended": false }
"presets": [
  "name": "Request Engine RPM",
  "data": "00 00 07 E0 02 01 0C 00 00 00 00 00"
  "name": "Request Vehicle Speed",
  "data": "00 00 07 E0 02 01 0D 00 00 00 00 00"
```

Ethernet UDP Configuration



```
"name": "UDP Communication",
"device": {
 "type": "ethernet"
"options": {
 "ethProtocol": "udp",
 "ethPort": 5000,
 "ethHost": "192.168.1.100"
"filters": [
  "type": "pattern",
  "value": "STAT",
  "action": "colorize",
  "color": "green"
  "type": "pattern",
  "value": "ERR",
  "action": "colorize",
  "color": "red"
```

FAQ

- **Q:** Can I use CommWatch without physical hardware? A: Yes! Each protocol includes a simulator. Use the simulator option when connecting.
- **Q:** How do I add support for a custom protocol? A: Create a custom decoder implementing the ProtocolDecoder interface. See "Creating Custom Decoders" section.
- **Q: What's the maximum data rate supported?** A: CommWatch can handle 10,000+ messages/second with proper configuration. Use ring buffers and worker threads for optimal performance.
- **Q:** Can I export captured data to Wireshark? A: Yes, use the PCAP-NG export format which is compatible with Wireshark.
- Q: Does it work on Raspberry Pi? A: Yes, the CLI and desktop app work on Raspberry Pi (ARM Linux). Build from source or use the Linux ARM binaries.
- **Q:** How do I report bugs or request features? A: Open an issue on GitHub with detailed description and steps to reproduce.
- **Q:** Is there a limit to log file size? A: The tool automatically rotates logs when they reach configurable size limits (default 100MB).

Q: Can I script automated tests? A: Yes, use the CLI tool with replay functionality or the built-in JavaScript scripting engine.

Troubleshooting

Device Not Found

Symptoms: Device doesn't appear in device list

Solutions:

- 1. Check physical connection
- 2. Verify drivers are installed
- 3. Check permissions (Linux/macOS)
- 4. Try different USB port
- 5. Refresh device list

Connection Fails

Symptoms: "Failed to open device" error

Solutions:

- 1. Close other applications using the device
- 2. Check device is not in use
- 3. Verify configuration (baud rate, etc.)
- 4. Try simulator mode to isolate hardware issues

High CPU Usage

Symptoms: Application becomes slow or unresponsive

Solutions:

- 1. Apply filters to reduce displayed frames
- 2. Increase frame buffer size
- 3. Disable real-time decoding
- 4. Export and analyze offline

CRC Errors

Symptoms: Many frames show CRC mismatch

Solutions:

- 1. Check cable quality and connections
- 2. Reduce baud rate (UART)
- 3. Verify protocol configuration
- 4. Check for EMI/noise issues

License & Credits

CommWatch is open source software.

Dependencies:

- serialport: Serial port communication
- socketcan: CAN bus support (Linux)

- electron: Desktop application framework
- VS Code Extension API
- React & Tailwind CSS

Special Thanks:

- STM32 community for testing
- CAN bus protocol contributors
- All open source dependencies

Support

- Documentation: https://docs.commwatch.io
 GitHub: https://github.com/commwatch/commwatch
- Issues: https://github.com/commwatch/commwatch/issues
 Discord: https://discord.gg/commwatch