

Root-Me Write-up: Find the Cat

The screenshot shows the Root-Me platform interface. On the left, there's a sidebar with links like 'Capture The Flag', 'Challenges', 'Community', and 'Information'. It also displays '1475 visitors now' and 'Newest members'. Below that is a section for 'Offers' with four categories: 'CDI Other', 'CDI SOC', 'CDI Penetration tester', and 'CDI Cybersecurity consultant'. The main content area is titled 'Find the cat' and is categorized as 'Rescue / Data mining'. It shows '25 Points' and was created by 'Thesas0s' on '28 July 2013'. The 'Level' is indicated by a bar divided into four segments, with the first three being green and the fourth being orange. There are '13874 Challengers' and a '4%' completion rate. A 'Note' section shows a 4-star rating from 963 votes, with buttons for 'I like' and 'I don't like'. The 'Statement' section contains the challenge text: 'The president's cat was kidnapped by separatists. A suspect carrying a USB key has been arrested. Berthier, once again you have to save the Republic! Analyze this key and find out in which city the cat is retained!' It also includes the md5sum of the archive: 'edf2f1aaef605c308561888079e7f7f7'. A 'Download the challenge' button is at the bottom.

Statement

The president's cat was kidnapped by separatists. A suspect carrying a USB key has been arrested. Berthier, once again you have to save the Republic! Analyze this key and find out in which city the cat is retained!

The md5sum of the archive is edf2f1aaef605c308561888079e7f7f7. Input the city name in lowercase.

Initial Analysis

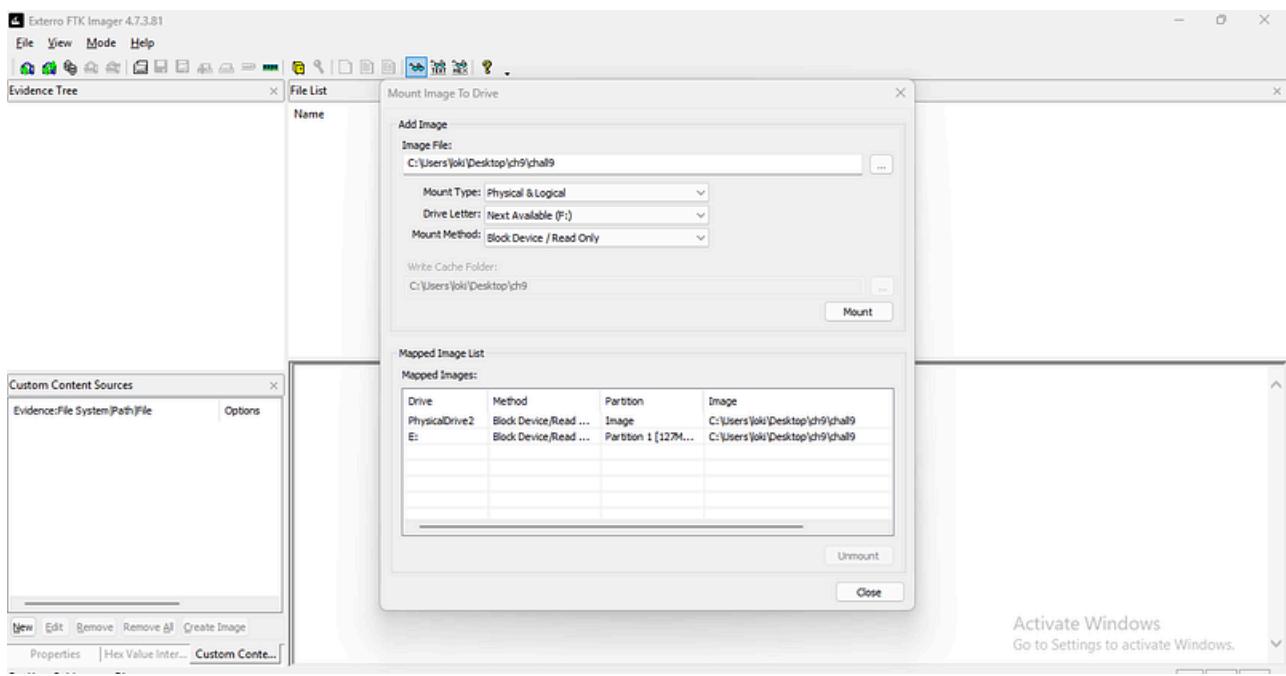
I began with checking the file using common commands such as `file`, `cat`, and `strings`. This helped confirm that the evidence was a USB image and gave an initial idea of what type of data I was dealing with.

After that, I researched what a USB key is typically used for and correlated this with the file information obtained earlier. Based on this, I decided that mounting the USB image would be a reasonable first step.

Mounting the USB Image

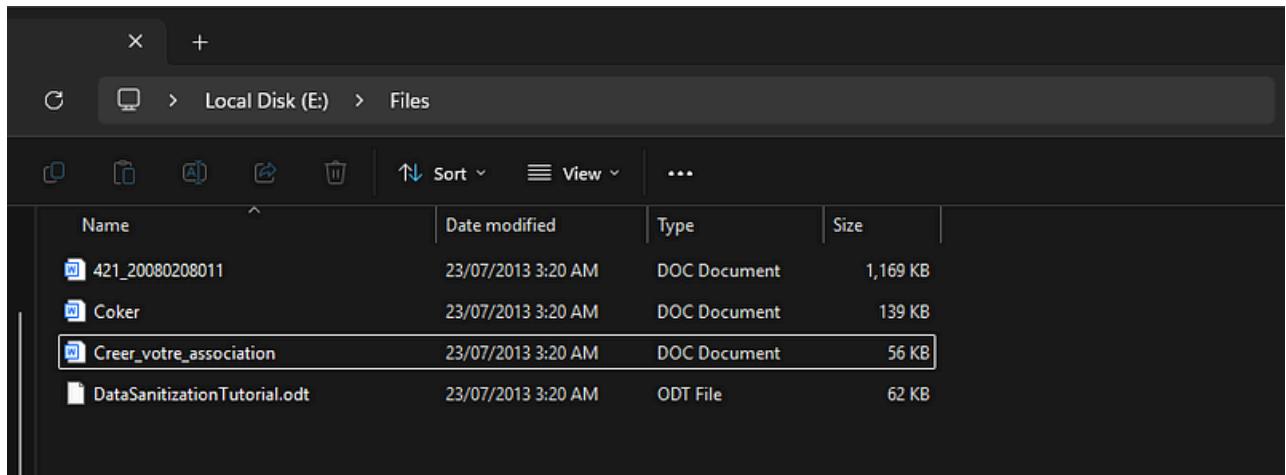
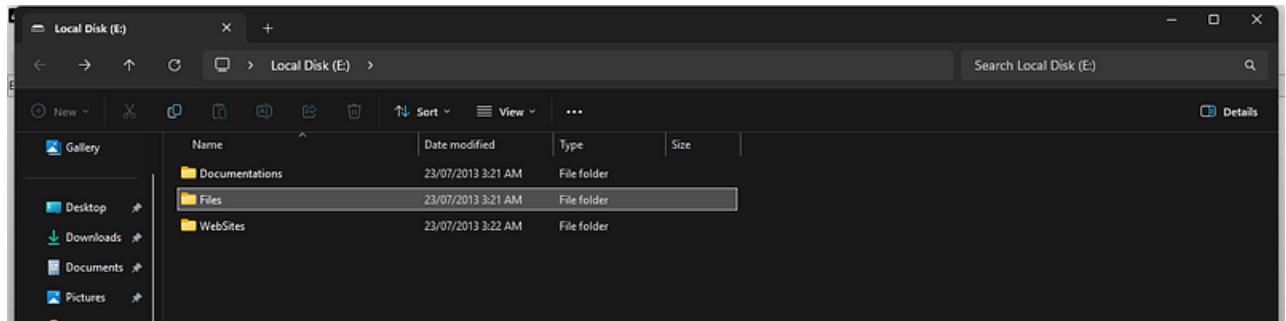
I used **FTK Imager** to mount the USB image. After mounting it, three folders were visible. I browsed through them, looking for anything that could resemble a flag or location-related clue.

At this stage, nothing immediately stood out as a direct answer.



During analysis, several documents and files were found . One titled **“Alsace”** contained references to hotels, camping locations, and tourist offices. Additional documents related to Alsace were also present, including administrative documents such as **“CREATING YOUR ASSOCIATION—HOW IT WORKS.”**

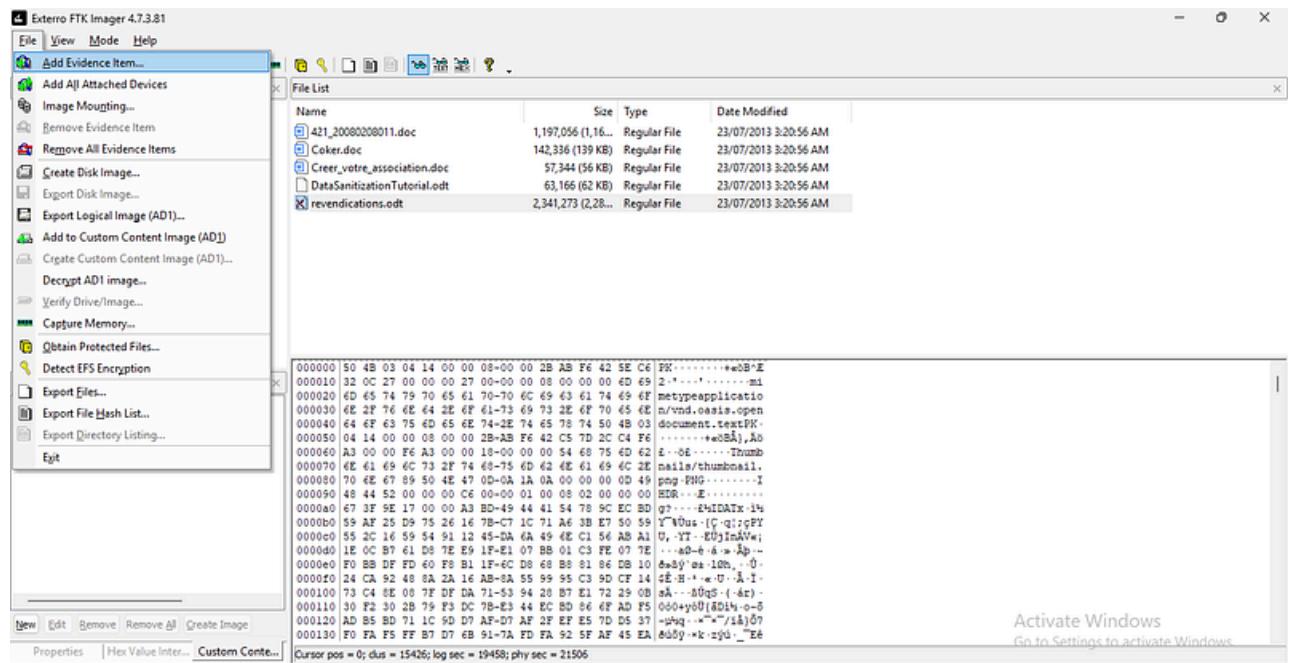
What stood out most was an **.odt file titled “data sanitization tutorial.”** This strongly implied that data may have been intentionally removed or hidden.



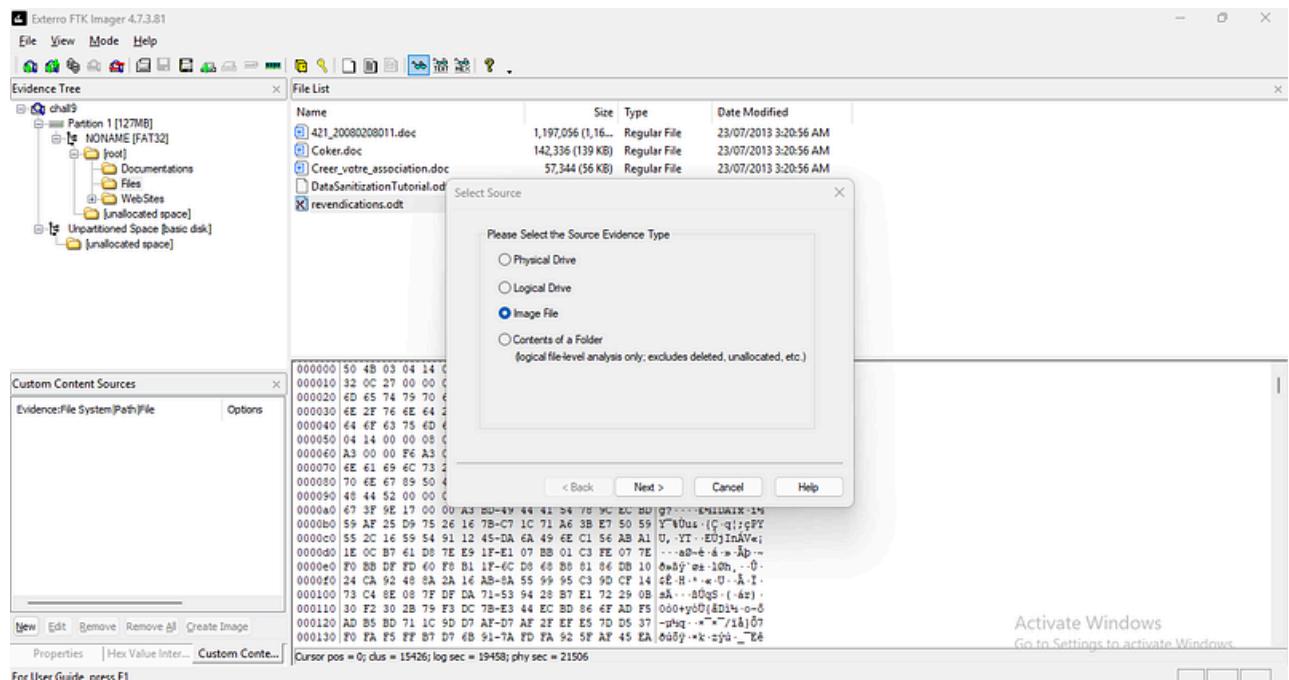
Since mounting the USB did not reveal anything conclusive, I changed my approach.

Instead of mounting the image, I reopened **FTK Imager** and added the USB image as an **evidence item**:

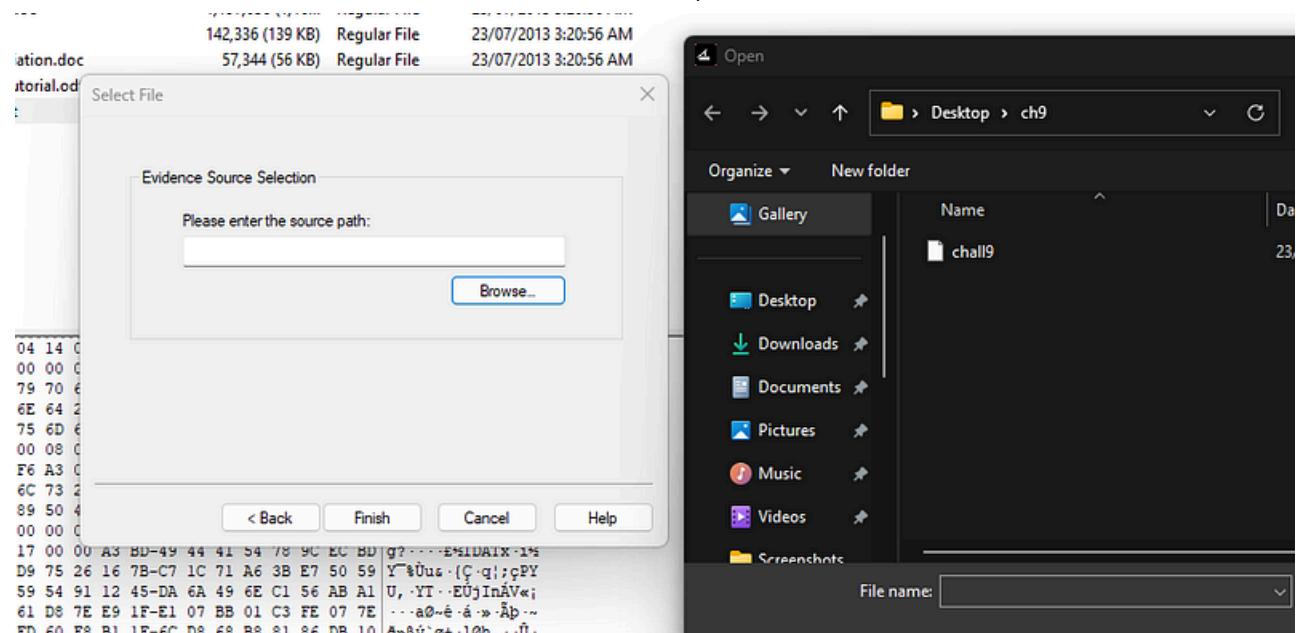
- Selected *Add Evidence Item*



- Choose *Image File*



- Selected ch9 (the USB image)



After expanding the file system view, I found a **deleted file** named:

`revendication.odt`

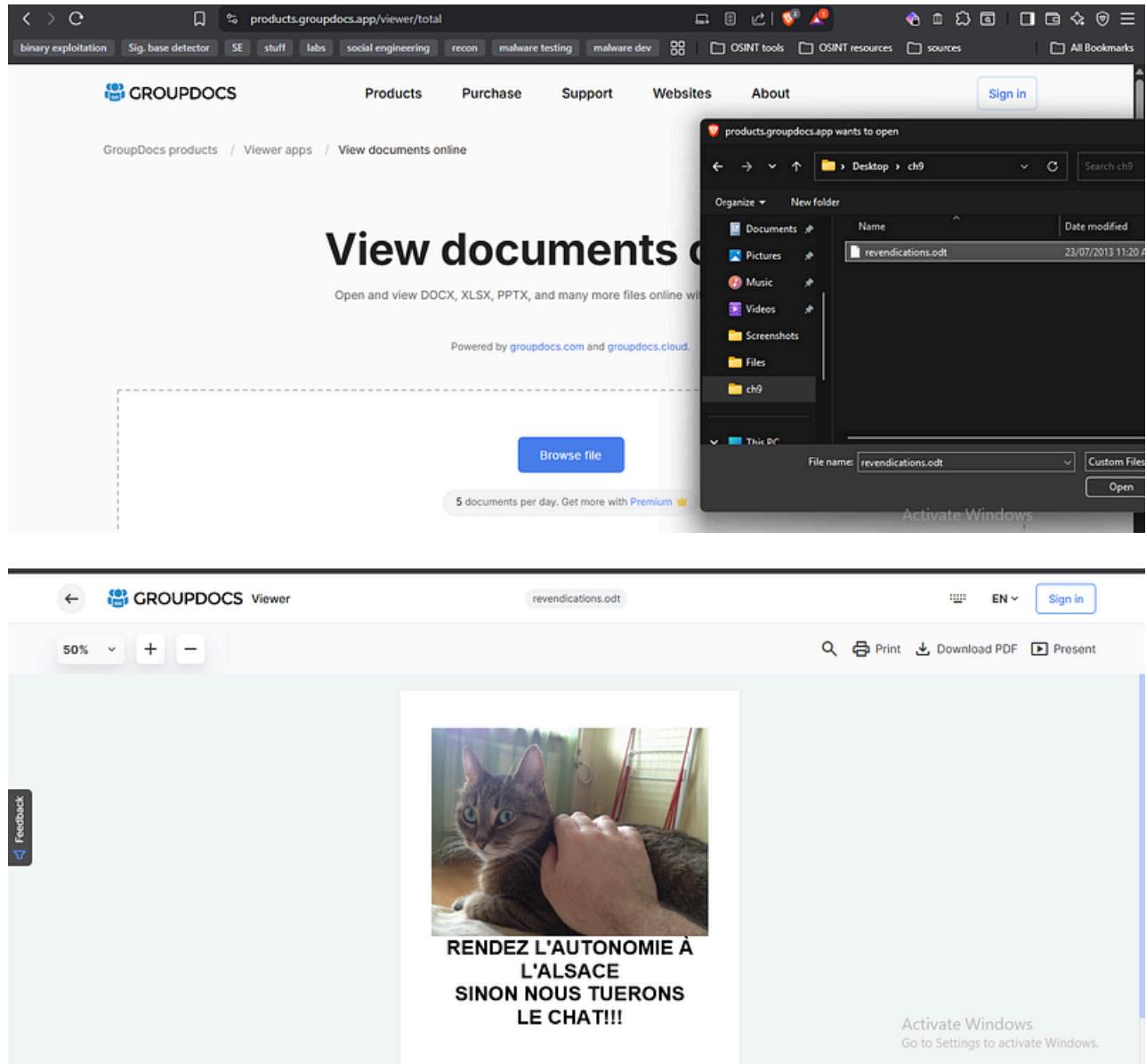
I extracted this file for further analysis.

The screenshot shows the FTK Imager interface. The 'Evidence Tree' pane shows a partition labeled 'Partition 1 [127MB]' containing several folders like 'Documentation', 'FileSt', and 'WebSts'. The 'File List' pane shows files including '421_20080208011.doc', 'Coker.doc', 'Creer_votre_association.doc', 'DataSanitizationTutorial.odt', and 'revendication.odt'. The 'Custom Content Sources' pane at the bottom lists various file paths under 'Evidence:File System Path'. A large hex dump of the extracted file is shown at the bottom of the interface.

Extracting and Viewing the Deleted Document

To view the contents of the extracted .odt file, I used the following tool:

- <https://products.groupdocs.app/viewer/total>



Inside the document, I found:

- An image of a cat

The following text:

**RENDEZ L'AUTONOMIE À L'ALSACE
SINON NOUS TUERONS LE CHAT!!!**

Translation:

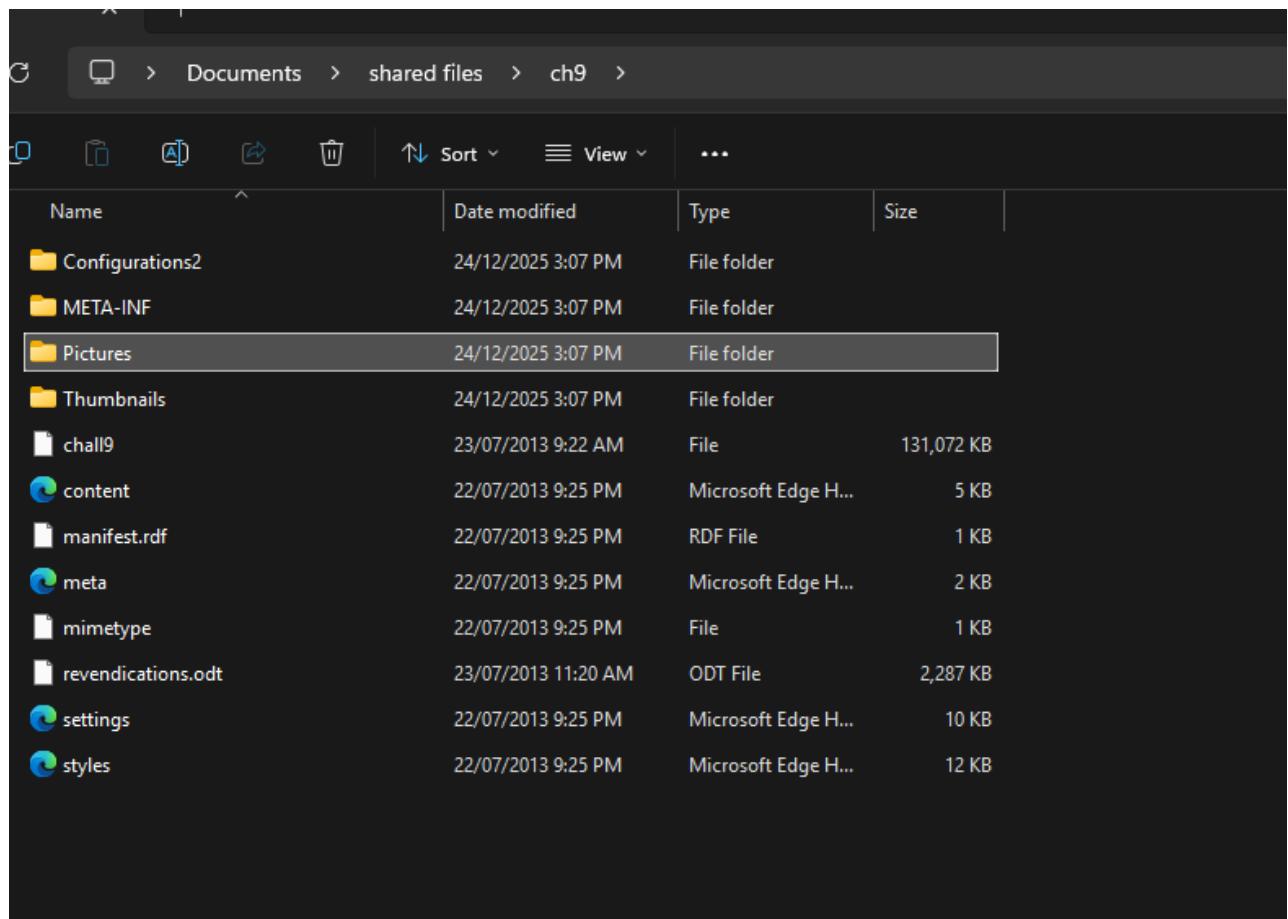
“Give Alsace back its autonomy or we will kill the cat!!!”

This confirmed the motive and region but still did not directly provide the city name.

Metadata Analysis

Since the message alone was not the flag, I decided to extract the image from the .odt file and analyze its metadata.

Using **7-Zip**, I extracted the contents of the .odt file. After checking the image properties, I found embedded **GPS coordinates (latitude and longitude)**.



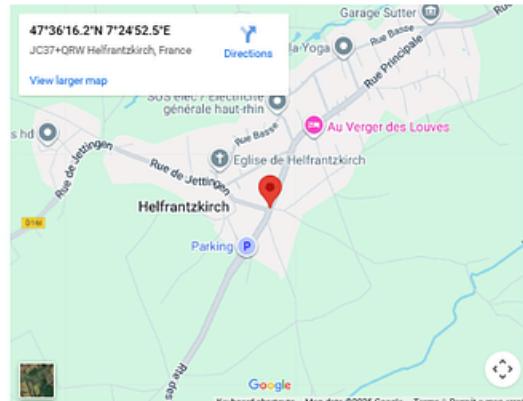
Name	Date modified	Type	Size
Configurations2	24/12/2025 3:07 PM	File folder	
META-INF	24/12/2025 3:07 PM	File folder	
Pictures	24/12/2025 3:07 PM	File folder	
Thumbnails	24/12/2025 3:07 PM	File folder	
chall9	23/07/2013 9:22 AM	File	131,072 KB
content	22/07/2013 9:25 PM	Microsoft Edge H...	5 KB
manifest.rdf	22/07/2013 9:25 PM	RDF File	1 KB
meta	22/07/2013 9:25 PM	Microsoft Edge H...	2 KB
mimetype	22/07/2013 9:25 PM	File	1 KB
revindications.odt	23/07/2013 11:20 AM	ODT File	2,287 KB
settings	22/07/2013 9:25 PM	Microsoft Edge H...	10 KB
styles	22/07/2013 9:25 PM	Microsoft Edge H...	12 KB

[REMOVE METADATA](#)

Camera settings

Make	Apple
Model	iPhone 4S
Focal length	4.3 mm
Aperture	2.4
Exposure	1/20
ISO	160
Flash	Off, Did not fire

Altitude: 16.7 m Above Sea Level
 Latitude: 47 deg 36' 16.15" N
 Longitude: 7 deg 24' 52.48" E



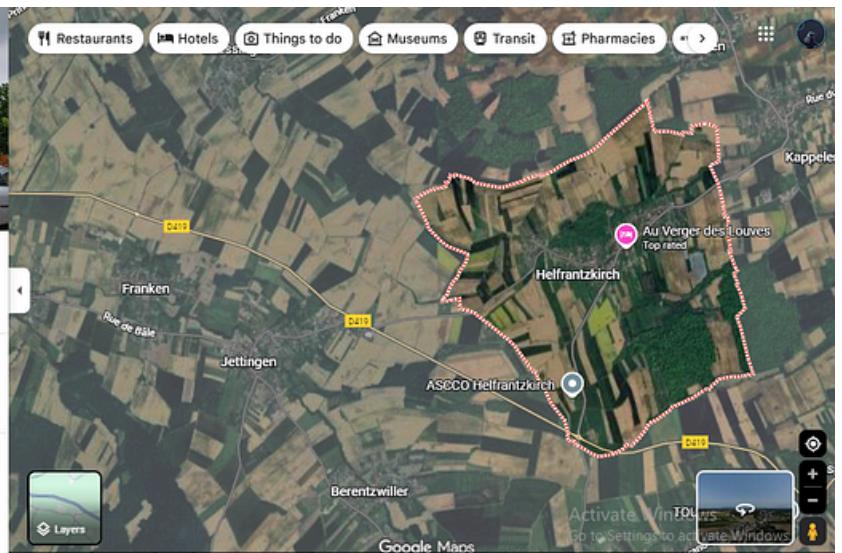
47°36'16.2"N 7°24'52.5"E
JC37+QRW Helfrantzkirch, France
[View larger map](#)

Directions | [Report a map error](#)

Activate Windows
Go to Settings to activate Wind...

To interpret the metadata, I used: <https://jimpl.com/>

The coordinates resolved to the city:



47°36'16.2"N 7°24'52.5"E

Helfrantzkirch
68510 France
Cloudy · 35°F 8:13 AM

[Directions](#) [Save](#) [Nearby](#) [Send to phone](#) [Share](#)

Quick facts
Helfrantzkirch is a commune in the Haut-Rhin department in Alsace in north-eastern France. [Wikipedia](#)

Helfrantzkirch

Final Answer

Flag: helfrantzkirch

By [Alexander Sapo](#) on [December 24, 2025](#).

[Canonical link](#)

