

# RFC-003: Cryptographic Audit Trail

**Status:** Implemented **Date:** January 2026 **Author:** Derrell Piper ddp@eludom.net **Implementation:** audit.scm

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## Abstract

This RFC specifies the cryptographic audit trail system for the Library of Cyberspace, providing tamper-evident, hash-chained logging with SPKI principal attribution and Ed25519 signatures.

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## Motivation

Distributed systems require accountability. Who did what, when, and under whose authority?

Traditional logging fails on all counts: – **Tamperable**: Text files can be edited – **Anonymous**: No cryptographic identity – **Disconnected**: No provable ordering – **Unverifiable**: No mathematical proof of integrity

Cyberspace audit trails provide: 1. **Content-addressed entries** – Tamper-evident by hash 2. **Hash-chained structure** – Append-only ordering 3. **SPKI attribution** – Cryptographic actor identity 4. **Ed25519 seals** – Mathematical proof of authenticity 5. **Dual context** – Human-readable motivation + machine-parseable environment

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## Specification

### Entry Structure

```
(audit-entry
  (id "sha512:b14471cd57ea557f...")
  (timestamp "Mon Jan 5 23:38:20 2026")
  (sequence 1)
  (parent-id "sha512:previous...")
  (actor
    (principal #${public-key-blob})
    (authorization-chain))
```

```

(action
  (verb seal-publish)
  (object "1.0.0")
  (parameters "/path/to/remote"))
(context
  (motivation "Published to filesystem")
  (language "en"))
(environment
  (platform "darwin")
  (timestamp 1767685100))
(seal
  (algorithm "ed25519-sha512")
  (content-hash "..."))
  (signature "...")))

```

## Core Fields

Field	Type	Description
id	string	Content-addressed hash (SHA-512, first 32 hex chars)
timestamp	string	Human-readable time
sequence	integer	Monotonic counter within audit trail
parent-id	string/nil	ID of previous entry (hash chain)
actor	record	SPKI principal who performed action
action	record	What was done (verb, object, parameters)
context	record	Human-readable motivation
environment	alist	Machine environment snapshot
seal	record	Cryptographic signature

## Actor Record

```

(define-record-type <audit-actor>
  (make-audit-actor principal authorization-chain)
  audit-actor?
  (principal actor-principal) ; Public key blob
  (authorization-chain actor-authorization-chain)) ; SPKI cert chain

```

The actor is identified by: – **Principal**: Ed25519 public key (32 bytes) – **Authorization chain**: Optional SPKI certificate chain proving delegation

## Action Record

```

(define-record-type <audit-action>
  (make-audit-action verb object parameters))

```

```

audit-action?
(verb action-verb)      ; Symbol: seal-commit, seal-publish, etc.
(object action-object)   ; Primary target
(parameters action-parameters)) ; Additional arguments

```

Standard verbs: – seal-commit – Version control commit – seal-publish – Release publication – seal-subscribe – Subscription to remote – seal-synchronize – Bidirectional sync – seal-release – Version tagging

### Context Record

```

(define-record-type <audit-context>
  (make-audit-context motivation relates-to language)
  audit-context?
  (motivation context-motivation)      ; Human explanation
  (relates-to context-relates-to)       ; Related entries
  (language context-language))          ; ISO 639-1 code

```

Context provides: – **Motivation:** Why the action was taken (human-readable) – **Relates-to:** Cross-references to related audit entries – **Language:** For internationalization

### Seal Record

```

(define-record-type <audit-seal>
  (make-audit-seal algorithm content-hash signature)
  audit-seal?
  (algorithm seal-algorithm)           ; "ed25519-sha512"
  (content-hash seal-content-hash)     ; SHA-512 of unsealed entry
  (signature seal-signature))          ; Ed25519 signature

```

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## Operations

### **audit-init**

Initialize audit trail for a vault.

```
(audit-init signing-key: key audit-dir: ".vault/audit")
```

### **audit-append**

Create and sign a new audit entry.

```
(audit-append
  actor: public-key-blob
```

```
action: '(seal-commit "hash123")  
motivation: "Added new feature"  
signing-key: private-key-blob)
```

Process: 1. Increment sequence counter 2. Get parent entry ID (hash chain link) 3. Build unsealed entry structure 4. Compute SHA-512 hash of canonical S-expression 5. Sign hash with Ed25519 6. Create seal record 7. Save entry to disk

### **audit-verify**

Verify cryptographic seal on an entry.

```
(audit-verify entry public-key: key)
```

Verification steps: 1. Reconstruct unsealed entry 2. Compute SHA-512 hash 3. Compare with stored content-hash 4. Verify Ed25519 signature

### **audit-chain**

Verify entire audit chain.

```
(audit-chain verify-key: public-key)
```

Verifies: – Each entry's signature is valid – Parent-id references form valid chain – Sequence numbers are monotonic

### **audit-read**

Read specific audit entry.

```
(audit-read sequence: 42)  
(audit-read id: "sha512:...")
```

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## **Storage Format**

Entries stored as individual S-expression files:

```
.vault/audit/  
 1.sex  
 2.sex  
 3.sex  
 ...
```

File naming by sequence number enables efficient:

- Sequential reads
- Range queries
- Latest entry lookup

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## Security Considerations

### Threat Model

**Trusted:** - Local filesystem (during operation) - Ed25519 implementation (libsodium) - Private keys

**Untrusted:** - Storage medium (after creation) - Network transport - Other actors

### Attack Mitigations

Attack	Mitigation
Entry modification	SHA-512 hash detects tampering
Entry deletion	Chain breaks are detectable
Entry insertion	Hash chain prevents backdating
Actor impersonation	Ed25519 signatures verify identity
Replay attacks	Sequence numbers detect duplicates

### Non-Repudiation

Once an entry is signed and published:

- Actor cannot deny performing the action
- Timestamp cannot be backdated
- Content cannot be altered
- Signature mathematically proves authorship

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## Integration Points

### Vault Operations

All vault operations record audit entries:

```
(seal-commit "message")      → (action (verb seal-commit) ...)  
(seal-publish "1.0.0" ...)   → (action (verb seal-publish) ...)  
(seal-subscribe remote ...) → (action (verb seal-subscribe) ...)
```

## **SPKI Authorization**

Audit entries can include authorization chains:

```
(actor
  (principal #${bob-public-key})
  (authorization-chain
    (signed-cert ...) ; Alice delegated to Bob
    (signed-cert ...))) ; Root delegated to Alice
```

This proves not just who acted, but under whose authority.

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## **Export Formats**

### **S-expression Export**

```
(audit-export-sexp output: "audit-export.sex")
```

Produces:

```
(audit-trail
  (audit-entry ...)
  (audit-entry ...)
  ...)
```

### **Human-readable Export**

```
(audit-export-human output: "audit-export.txt")
```

Produces:

```
AUDIT TRAIL - Library of Cyberspace
=====
```

```
Entry #1
ID: sha512:b14471cd57ea557f...
Time: Mon Jan 5 23:38:20 2026
Action: seal-publish
Why: Published release to filesystem
```

```
Entry #2
...
```

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## **Implementation Notes**

### **Dependencies**

- crypto-ffi – Ed25519 signatures, SHA-512 hashing
- srfi-1 – List utilities
- srfi-4 – u8vectors for binary data
- srfi-13 – String utilities

### **Performance Considerations**

- Content-addressed IDs enable O(1) lookup by hash
  - Sequential file naming enables efficient range queries
  - Lazy verification: verify on read, not on load
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## **References**

1. Haber, S., & Stornetta, W. S. (1991). How to time-stamp a digital document.
  2. Merkle, R. C. (1987). A digital signature based on a conventional encryption function.
  3. Bernstein, D. J. (2006). Curve25519: new Diffie-Hellman speed records.
  4. SPKI/SDSI – RFC 2693, RFC 2692
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## **Changelog**

- **2026-01-06** – Initial specification
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**Implementation Status:** Complete **Test Status:** Passing  
(test-audit.scm) **Integration:** Vault operations fully audited