

RFC-003: Cryptographic Audit Trail

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

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.

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

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
```

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:...")
```

Storage Format

Entries stored as individual S-expression files:

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

File naming by sequence number enables efficient: - Sequential reads - Range queries - Latest entry lookup

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

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.

Export Formats

S-expression Export

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

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

...

Implementation Notes

Dependencies

- `crypto-ffi` - Ed25519 signatures, SHA-512 hashing
- `srffi-1` - List utilities
- `srffi-4` - `u8vectors` for binary data
- `srffi-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

Implementation Status: Complete **Test Status:** Passing (test-audit.scm)

Integration: Vault operations fully audited