"Headless Signal Hound" API for the USB-SA44B version 0.2

Headless Signal Hound Programming Interface

TEST EQUIPMENT PLUS

Headless Signal Hound USB-SA44B Application Programming Interface (API)

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Introduction

About the Headless Signal Hound API and building applications.

he Headless Signal Hound Application Programming Interface is a tool for software engineers to design custom applications for the Signal Hound, built on the actual core engine that drives the Signal Hound software application.

DISCLAIMER—This API is provided free of charge, without warranty. Software developers may only use this API with a genuine Signal HoundTM.

A software application will create a "CMySignalHound" object, which will act as the software representation of the connected "Signal Hound" device.

```
CMySignalHound myHound;
```

The software application must initialize this object before its use. This may take a few seconds, and binds the object to a particular Signal Hound, so it is not done in the class constructor. Initialize returns an error code if it fails.

```
int errorCode = myHound.Initialize();
```

To succeed, the application must be able to find 2 files in the current file path: "<serial number>.tep", and "D<serial number>.bin"

The Signal Hound is now ready to begin sweeping. The settings, found in **myHound.m_settings**, control how the Signal Hound sets up for and runs each sweep. These settings may be controlled directly, or changed through the use of one of the functions found in **MySignalHound.h**.

A sample application is available to you, which illustrates the use of these classes.

The API consists of libSHAPPLIB.a, which must be statically linked to at compile-time. Additionally, two headers expose the functions and settings for the user-accessible classes.

Chapter

Setup and Initialization

Setup

Prior to launching your Headless Signal Hound API application, you will need to have everything set up. This includes making sure the FTDI driver is loaded, the cal data is in your application's "path", and your application is compiled using the Headless Signal Hound API.

The "cal data" consists of two files: "<your serial number>.tep" and "D<your serial number>.bin". Both of these files should be loaded into the application's folder or path before launching the application. For calibrated frequency and amplitude readings, these files must be present and match the serial number used..

To install the FTDI drivers for a Linux environment, follow the instructions found here: http://www.ftdichip.com/Drivers/D2XX/Linux/README.dat

The Signal Hound uses the D2XX drivers. For Linux, this means that if your build already includes the Virtual COM port, or VCP, drivers (Ubuntu does by default), you must "rmmod" or "blacklist" ftdi_sio and usbserial.

Your application will not launch until the FTD2XX drivers are installed correctly.

Signal Hound Initialization

After you launch your application, the first thing to do is to create a "CMySignalHound" object, which will act as the software representation of the connected "Signal Hound" device.

```
CMySignalHound myHound;
```

The constructor will set variables and pointers to their default values, but will NOT connect to the Signal Hound. To actually connect to the Signal Hound, call:

```
int errorCode = myHound.Initialize();
```

The Initialize function will return 0 for success, or an error code as follows:

Table 1: Initialize Error Codes

Error Code	Meaning
1	No Signal Hound found. The FTDI driver scanned the USB ports for a "Signal Hound" device and found none.
2	Signal Hound Port did not open. The FTDI driver found a Signal Hound, but was unable to open its "ports" for data i/o.
98	Signal Hound temperature correction file, "D <serial number="">.bin", was not found.</serial>
99	Signal Hound calibration constants file, " <serial number="">.tep", was not found.</serial>

After the initialization completes, which typically takes a second or two, it is good practice to get the current operating temperature:

```
double temperatureNow = myHound.ReadTemperature();
```

This returns temperature in degrees Celsius, and is valid across the entire operating temperature range. It also updates the internal amplitude correction constants. During normal operation, this function should be called every few minutes to keep the correction constants relevant as the ambient temperature changes.

Sweeping

Normal (Amplitude vs Frequency) Sweeps

When RBW and VBW are set to auto, sweeping is straightforward. Simply set your start and stop frequency (or center frequency and span), set up the sweep, and call DoSweep():

```
myHound.SetCenterAndSpan(centerfreq, span);
myHound.SetupForSweep();
myHound.DoSweep();
```

You may repeatedly call DoSweep() to update the trace. Whenever settings are changed, you must call SetupForSweep() before you do the sweep.

Interpreting the Sweep Results

The sweep is stored into arrays of double precision floating point min / max data, myHound.pDataMax and myHound.pDataMin (in milliwatts). The sweep's center frequency corresponds to index (myHound.m_traceSize / 2). All other points are separated by (myHound.m_HzPerPt). The sweep's resolution bandwidth, trace size, and Hz per point can be found by:

```
double myRBW = GetRBWFromIndex(myHound.m_settings.m_RBWSetpoint);
int myTraceSize = myHound.m_traceSize;
int myHzPerPoint = myHound.m_HzPerPt;
```

Finding the peak amplitude and frequency would be found by:

```
int peakidx=0;
for(i=1; i<myHound.m_traceSize; i++)
   if(myHound.pDataMax[i] > myHound.pDataMax[peakidx]) peakidx=i;
double peakFreq = myHound.GetFrequencyFromIdx(peakidx);
double peakAmpl = mW2dBm(myHound.pDataMax[peakidx]); // in dBm
```

RBW / VBW, Limitations and Automatic Setting

The Headless Signal Hound API generally limits the RBW and VBW for sweeps, such that the maximum RBW allowed is 1/10 of the span, and the minimum RBW allowed is 1/5000 span. This will keep the trace size between approximately 36 and 18000. A trace smaller than 36 will look funny when displayed, and a trace larger than 18000 points can take a long time to process and display. There are other restrictions on RBW and VBW as well. As the software transitions from "slow sweeps" with spans of 500 KHz or less, to "fast sweeps" of 5 MHz or more, the minimum RBW becomes 6.5 KHz. For spans between 500 KHz and 5 MHz, the user can set RBW and "Sweep Time Setpoint" to control whether slow sweep or fast sweep is used. Slow sweeps of 1 MHz or more can take several seconds to complete. The default settings put the transition between a span of 500 KHz and 1 MHz.

Generally, users will wish to use the automatic RBW / VBW settings. These were established to give a trace size of roughly 1000 in most cases, which displays nicely on a typical computer screen and processes fairly quickly.

Video Processing, Manual RBW / VBW

For low level data, or to see an average envelope, video processing is often desirable. To enable video processing, VBW must be set to less than RBW, and video mode must not be set to bypass. For example, to set up for 100 Hz RBW, 25 Hz VBW, log scale processing (most common on spectrum analyzers), using an "average" power detector, do the following:

```
//Turn on video processing, set RBW to 100 Hz, VBW to 25 Hz
myHound.m_settings.m_VBWSetpoint = myHound.m_settings.GetBWIDX(25.0);
myHound.m_settings.m_RBWSetpoint = myHound.m_settings.GetBWIDX(100.0);
myHound.m_settings.m_VDMode = HOUND_PROCESS_AS_LOG;
myHound.m_settings.m_VDMMA = HOUND_VDMMA_AVERAGE_ONLY;

myHound.m_settings.m_RBWIsAuto = false;
myHound.m_settings.m_VBWIsAuto = false;
myHound.SetupForSweep();
```

For applications where a large "capture time" is desired, such as when you need a high probability of capturing a rare event (image rejection off), the m_settings.m_SWPTMSetpoint controls the sweep speed, in a loose sense, from fast (0) to very slow (3 or 4). The default setting is 0. A setting of -1 forces sweeps to be as fast as possible, but generally should not be used.

The RBW and VBW will be limited in software to between 1/10 the span and 1/5000 the span, so if you attempt to set the RBW or VBW to an unacceptable value, the function SetupForSweep will return a nonzero value.

Sensitivity and IF Gain Settings

The Headless Signal Hound API automatically adjusts sensitivity and IF gain settings based on reference level. The rule of thumb is that the Signal Hound will reduce gain until an input signal equal to the reference level will have > 3 dB of headroom before IF compression or clipping. Where this is not possible, it will set the gain to a minimum value.

Preamplifier and Attenuator Settings

The preamplifier and attenuator, unlike the IF gain settings, are manually controlled. These controls have a large effect on maximum input power, average noise levels, and LO feedthru.

The preamplifier should be turned on any time an antenna is used to reduce LO feed-thru.

Any time the reference level is \geq +5 dBm, the attenuator should be set to 15 dB and the preamplifier should be off. The maximum recommended input signal level when the preamplifier is on is -20 dBm.

Maximum sensitivity is achieved when the preamplifier is on, the attenuator is set to 0 dB, and the reference level is set low enough that an input signal equal to the reference level does not come too close to IF compression. This is typically around -50 dBm to -60 dBm.

Zero Span Sweeps

Zero span sweeps require some additional settings. When you exit "zero span" you must restore the RBW / Sweep settings

You may select virtually any sweep time. IF bandwidths are limited to the values in the HOUND_IFBW table. Points are separated in time by (sweep time / (myHound.m_traceSize - 1)). Amplitude demodulation yields amplitude values (mW), frequency demodulation yields frequency values (Hz).

Harmonics Utility

This is probably easiest to implement manually. Simply call myHound.SetCenterFrequencyAndSpan() for each harmonic you wish to check, and report the peak signal level.

Audio Demodulation

Streaming audio from the Signal Hound is accomplished through the CAudioStream class. In essence, CAudioStream uses the current attenuator and sensitivity settings, sets up for continuous data acquisition, and makes packets of demodulated audio data available to your application. A sample application (built in Windows in this case) might:

```
short * pBigData = new short[20480];

CAudioStream * pStream = (CAudioStream *) pHound->OpenAudio();
for(i=0; i<5; i++) //5 packets
    pStream->ReadAudioChunk(&pBigData[i*4096]);

for(i=0; i<5; i++) //Pre-load 5 packets into buffer to avoid "popping"
    writeAudio(hWaveOut, (char *)(&pBigData[i*4096]), 8192); // OS-specific

while(streaming)
{
    pStream->ReadAudioChunk(&pBigData[0]);
    writeAudio(hWaveOut, (char *)(&pBigData[0]), 8192); // OS-specific
}
pHound->CloseAudio(pStream);
```

To use in Linux, you will need to connect to the sound card using a Linux library.

Sample Applications

The first project, PRE1, is a pre-release with much of the functionality and class structure in place. It illustrates sweeping, automatic and manual bandwidth control, span, center frequency, zero span, and video processing. It was built using CODE::BLOCKS 10.05

Chapter

Utilities

Channel Power and Adjacent Channel Power

Channel Power is available after any sweep with an RBW of ≤ 100 kHz. Internally, channel power integrates across multiple "bins" from the FFT, then divides by the equivalent bandwidth of the FFT window function.

Your channel bandwidth should be at least twice your RBW, and typically more like 10 times as large. To use:

1. Set your channel bandwidth and spacing, in Hz:

```
myHound.m_channelBW = 10.0e3; //Hz
myHound.m_channelSpacing = 10.0e3; //Hz
```

2. Get your channel power, in dBm:

```
double channelPower = myHound.GetCP();
```

3. Get your adjacent channel powers (ACP), in dBm, and compute ACPR, in dBc:

```
double lowerACPR = myHound.GetACPL() - channelPower;
double higherACPR = myHound.GetACPR() - channelPower;
```

Phase Noise Sweeps

Internally, phase noise sweeps are built from several single sideband sweeps centered a fixed amount from the RF CW carrier. They are typically displayed on a log-log scale, where the X-axis represents frequency offset from the carrier, and the Y-axis represents amplitude, in dBc/Hz, down from the carrier.

To use the phase noise function, you must first perform a sweep of the RF carrier. Obtain the peak RF amplitude and frequency using a span of 10 KHz or less. If you are not using a common 10 MHz reference (both Signal Hound and Signal Generator using the same 10 MHz reference), set your center frequency to the peak frequency. You may wish to set your reference level to the peak amplitude and repeat the sweep, since this will give you the settings for the best dynamic range.

Once this is complete, call DoPhaseNoiseSweep. For example, to sweep from 100 Hz to 100 KHz offset, call:

```
int startDecade = 2;
int stopDecade = 5;
myHound.DoPhaseNoiseSweep(startDecade, stopDecade, myPeakAmplitude);
```

where myPeakAmplitude is in linear (milliwatts) units. The results are returned in pDataMax and pDataMin, in milliwatts, and are available as soon as the function returns. You can use mW2dBm() to convert the returned values to dBc relative to carrier. The trace size will be 100 points per decade of offset, so the above example will give you 300 points. The frequency for each point can be found using:

Frequency offset for index k, in Hz, = $10^$ (startDecade + k * 0.01)

Chapter 5

Function Listing

Class CMySignalHound

Function	int Initialize()
Return Values	0 for success, 1 or 2 for device - USB errors, 98 or 99 for calibration file errors.
Arguments	None
Prerequisites	A CMySignalHound object
Description	This must be the first function call after your CMySignalHound object is created. If the return value is zero, proceed. Otherwise, report the error and fix the problem before proceeding.

Function	int SetupForSweep()
Return Values	0 if setup was successful using givensettings, 1 if settings were modified
Arguments	None
Prerequisites	The CMySignalHound object's member, m_settings, must be preloaded with the desired sweep settings,
Description	This must be called before "DoSweep" to set up the hardware and software for the selected sweep. If the return value is not zero, indicate to the user that the desired settings were invalid and were modified. For example, there are some RBW and VBW settings that would create sweeps too large or small to display properly. These would be automatically updated.

Function int PreamplifierOnOff(bool onoff)

Return Values (ignore) 0 for success

Arguments onoff: ON: 1 or true; OFF: 0 or false

Prerequisites

Description This turns the RF preamplifier on or off. The RF preamplifier, or preamp, gives a signal

boost of about 15 dB, and reduces LO feedthru. Do not use the RF preamplifier for input

signals above -20 dBm.

Function int SetCenterAndSpan(double cf, double span)

Return Values (ignore)

Arguments cf: center frequency, in Hz

span: span frequency, in Hz

Prerequisites

Description This sets the start and stop frequencies of a sweep by supplying a center and span frequency.

Call this function each time you wish to scan across a different chunk of spectrum.

Function int SetStartAndStop(double start, double stop)

Return Values (ignore)

Arguments start: start frequency, in Hz

stop: stop frequency, in Hz

Prerequisites

Description This sets the start and stop frequencies of a sweep directly. Call this function or

SetCenterAndSpan each time you wish to scan across a different chunk of spectrum.

Function double GetFrequencyFromIdx(int idx)

Return Values Resolution Bandwidth (RBW) or Video Bandwidth (VBW), in Hz.

Arguments idx: the index of the RBW or VBW setting, from the m_settings member.

Prerequisites

Description This returns the RBW or VBW based on an index used in the CSettings class.

Functionint SetExternalRef()Return Values1 for success, 0 for "External Reference not found"ArgumentsPrerequisitesAn external reference connected to the "10 MHz Ref Input" BNC connectorDescriptionThis permanently switches the reference form the internal TCXO to the external reference. Use this when you wish to use an external reference for precise frequency measurements.

Function	int DoSweep()	
Return Values	0 for success, non-zero for error. The most common error is 5, USB data error, usually caused from not receiving the expected amount of data.	
Arguments		
Prerequisites	m_settings must have the desired settings, and SetupForSweep() must be complete.	
Description	This function performs a sweep and fills the trace data arrays with current sweep data. The function does not return until the sweep is complete.	
	When complete, m_traceSize will be loaded with the trace size, where (m_traceSize / 2), discarding remainder, represents the point at the center frequency, and points, or "bins", are spaced by m_HzPerPt Hz. pDataMax will contain the maximum (or average) amplitude at each frequency, and pDataMin will contain the minimum amplitude.	

Function	int DoPhaseNoiseSweep(int startDecade, int stopDecade, double referenceAmplitude)
Return Values	ignore.
Arguments	startDecade: start at an offset from carrier of 10 [^] startDecade Hz.
	stopDecade: stop at an offset from carrier of 10 [^] stopDecade Hz.
	referenceAmplitude: The amplitde of the main carrier signal, used to compute dBm/Hz.
Prerequisites	A regular sweep with a narrow RBW must be performed to find the peak RF amplitude before calling DoPhaseNoiseSweep. Use SetCenterAndSpan to set the center frequency to the signal's frequency, and set referenceAmplitude to the peak amplitude.
Description	This function performs a Phase Noise sweep and fills the trace data arrays with current sweep data. The function does not return until the sweep is complete.
	When complete, m_traceSize will be loaded with the trace size, where each decade of offset has 100 points of data. Use the data in pDataMax only.

Function	double ReadTemperature()
Return Values	Current temperature of the Signal Hound, in degrees Celsius
Arguments	
Prerequisites	
Description	This function reads the temperature sensor, updates the calibration corrections, and returns the temperature.

Function	int DoMeasuringReceiver(MEAS_RCVR_STRUCT * pMeasRcvr)
Return Values	ignore
Arguments	pMeasRcvr: poiner to a structure representing the inputs and outputs of the "measuring receiver" personality of the Signal Hound.
Prerequisites	The inputs of pMeasRcvr (RFFrequency, AudioLPFreq, AudioBPFreq, UseLPF, and UseBPF) must be valid.
Description	This function uses the Measuring Receiver personality of the Signal Hound. Using the supplied input values, the Signal Hound digitally demodulates the incoming data, filters the demodulated "audio" using the selected filter or filters, and computes AM and FM peak and RMS modulation, as well as carrier frequency and audio frequency.

Function	void * OpenAudio()
Return Values	a pointer to a CAudioStream object. Save this pointer and use it when calling ReadAudioChunk and CloseAudio.
Arguments	
Prerequisites	Set CSettings::m_decimation to the desired decimation (IF bandwidth) setpoint.
Description	This function uses the current center frequency and begins to stream demodulated audio data to the application. Do not call this function until you are ready to continuously poll CAudioStream::ReadAudioChunk to acquire the demodulated 16-bit audio. The demodulation mode defaults to FM, but can be changed by setting CAudioStream::m_demodMode

Function vo	id CloseAudio	(void *	pAudioStr)
-------------	---------------	---------	------------

Return Values

Arguments a pointer to the CAudioStream object to close.

Prerequisites

This function closes the open audio stream. You must call this before going back to sweeping. Description

Important variables in the CMySignalHound class

Member Variable	Description
m_settings	CSettings class. Encapsulates the Signal Hound settings
pDataMax	Trace Data Array. An array of up to 32768 points of trace data maximums (or averages). Linear, milliwatt units.
pDataMin	Trace Data Array. An array of up to 32768 points of trace data minimums (or averages). Linear, milliwatt units.
m_HzPerPt	Hz per point, offset from center frequency at (m_traceSize / 2)
m_traceSize	Trace size. pDataMax and pDataMin each have this many elements after DoSweep() is called.
m_BBSPSetpt	1, 2, or 5 (MHz)
m_serialNumber	8 digit serial number
m_channelBW	For channel power, channel bandwidth in Hz
m_channelSpacing	For channel power, channel spacing in Hz
m_idxOfMinRBW	For any given span, these variables will be set after a call to SetupForSweep(). These indexes represent the minimum and maximum RBW settings for a given span, to
m_idxOfMaxRBW	keep trace size to a manageable level.

CSettings class (CMySignalHound.m_settings)

Function int GetBWIDX(double bw)

Return Values Nearest RBW / VBW index for a bandwidth of bw

Arguments bw: The desired bandwidth

Prerequisites

Description This function computes the nearest RBW / VBW bandwidth index to the desired

bandwidth.

Important variables in the CSettings Class

Member Variable	Description
m_refLevel	+10 to -150, in dBm
m_attenIndex	0-3, representing 0-15 dB
m_ZSMode	<pre>// Modes for Zero Span</pre>
m_RBWSetpoint	Minimum: 2, representing 5 MHz RBW. Maximum: 24, representing 0.1 Hz bandwidth. Setpoints from 4-24 are in powers of 2.
m_VBWSetpoint	Must be equal to or greater than m_RBWSetpoint. Ignored for 5 MHz RBW.
m_VDMMA	// Modes for Video Detector Min Max (m_VDMMA) #define HOUND_VDMMA_MIN_MAX 1 #define HOUND_VDMMA_MIN_ONLY 2 #define HOUND_VDMMA_MAX_ONLY 3 #define HOUND_VDMMA_AVERAGE_ONLY 4
m_VDMode	<pre>// Modes for Video Detector Processing (m_VDMode) #define HOUND_PROCESS_AS_POWER</pre>

	#define HOUND_PROCESS_AS_LOG 3 #define HOUND_PROCESS_BYPASSED 4		
m_RBWIsAuto	default: true. When true, RBW is automatically updated when span is updated		
m_VBWIsAuto	default: true. When true, VBW is automatically updated when span is updated		
m_SWPTMSetpoint	Set to 0 (prefer fast sweeping with short acquisitions) thru 3 (prefer slow sweeping with long acquisitions). Allows users to select longer acquisitions to catch intermittent events.		
m_suppressImage	When set to true, two acquisitions will be masked together to reject image and spurious signals for a continuous narrow-band signal. When set to false, the image response is not masked out at all.		
m_decimation	Decimation setpoint. Automatically controlled for span > 0. #define HOUND_IFBW_240kHz 1 #define HOUND_IFBW_120kHz 2 #define HOUND_IFBW_60kHz 4 #define HOUND_IFBW_30kHz 8 #define HOUND_IFBW_15kHz 16		
m_sweepMode	<pre>// Sweep Modes (m_sweepMode) #define HOUND_SWEEP_MODE_SLOW_SWEEP</pre>		
m_ZSSweepTime	Zero Span Sweep time setting, in seconds.		
m_ZSMode	<pre>// Modes for Zero Span</pre>		

MEAS_RCVR_STRUCT

INPUTS		
RFFrequency	center frequency of modulated signal	
UseLPF	Set to 'true' to filter audio through the selected low pass filter	
AudioLPFreq	Low pass filter cutoff frequency	
UseBPF	Set to true to filter audio through the selected bandpass filter.	
AudioBPFreq	Center frequency for the audio bandpass filter. This filter has a bandwidth of approximately 160 Hz	
OUTPUTS		
RFCounter	The actual RF frequency detected within the selected IF passband	
AMAudioFreq	The frequency of the amplitude-modulated audio tone, if any	
FMAudioFreq	The frequency of the frequency-modulated audio tone, if any	
RFAmplitude	The average amplitude, in dBFS (dB down from Full Scale)	
FMPeakPlus, FMPeakMinus, FMRMS	The results of FM demodulation. PeakPlus represents the most positive frequency offset. PeakMinus represents the most negative frequency offset. RMS represents the root mean square offset. For a sinusoid, the RMS value will be 0.707 times the Peak value.	
AMPeakPlus, AMPeakMinus, AMRMS	The results of AM demodulation. PeakPlus represents the most positive amplitude offset, in percent. PeakMinus represents the most negative amplitude offset, in percent. RMS represents the root mean square offset. For a sinusoid, the RMS value will be 0.707 times the Peak value.	

CAudioStream Class

Function	int ReadAudioChunk(short * buffer)
Return Values	ignore
Arguments	Pointer to an int16 buffer.
Prerequisites	CMySignalHound::OpenAudio must be used to create a pointer to an audio stream
Description	This function reads I/Q data from the Signal Hound, demodulates the audio and loads it into this buffer. 4K samples (4096 samples, or 8192 bytes) will be loaded.

Important variables in the CAudioStream Class

Member Variable		Description
m_demodMode	#define DEMOD_MODE_AM #define DEMOD_MODE_FM #define DEMOD_MODE_USB #define DEMOD_MODE_LSB #define DEMOD_MODE_CW	0 //Amplitude modulation 1 //Frequency modulation 2 //Single sideband (upper sideband) 3 //Single sideband (lower sideband) 4 //Continuous Wave / Morse Code

Miscellaneous Functions (no class)

Function	double mW2dBm(double mWIn)
Return Values	RF Power, in dBm
Arguments	mWIn: RF Power, in mW
Prerequisites	
Description	This function converts milliwatts to dBm

Function double GetRBWFromIndex (int idx)

Return Values Resolution bandwidth, in Hz

Arguments idx: index of RBW or VBW, from usually from CSettings::m_RBWSetpt

Prerequisites

Description This function converts milliwatts to dBm

ERROR CODES

Error Code	Meaning
0	No error.
1	No Signal Hound found. The FTDI driver scanned the USB ports for a "Signal Hound" device and found none.
2	Signal Hound Port did not open. The FTDI driver found a Signal Hound, but was unable to open its "ports" for data i/o.
4	Unexpected (leftover) USB data
5	Missing USB Data
8	IF level too high - possible compression warning
98	Signal Hound temperature correction file, "D <serial number="">.bin", was not found.</serial>
99	Signal Hound calibration constants file, " <serial number="">.tep", was not found.</serial>