CYSE 587 (Spring 2025)

Cyber Security System Engineering

Lab1: ADS-B Signal Spoofing and Jamming

Team Securetight

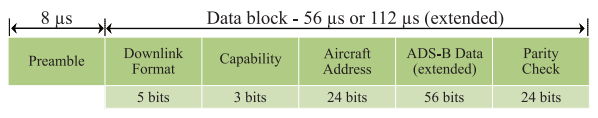
1. Tasks to perform

ADS-B spoofing involves broadcasting fake aircraft location signals to deceive aviation systems. Attackers can create nonexistent aircraft or deceive real aircraft positions, potentially causing dangerous confusion in air traffic management and increasing collision risks.

The task is to enhance the channel to be more realistic and implement gradual spoofing attacks and various jamming attacks in the given simulation source code.

1. Adding realistic features to the ADS-B channel implementation

Before making some modifications to the function, we need to first change the way the ADS-B channel works in the simulation. We introduced the format of actual ADS-B messages to perform spoofing and jamming attacks for future use while adding the bit-level transmitting and receiving capabilities and timing concepts of the channel. We boldly removed the artificial "corrupt" message implementation and used the 3-byte parity of the message to perform a cyclic redundancy check.



*Figure 1. [[1]](#endnote-1)Illustration of ADS-B message structure*

We implemented the whole ADS-B message format. However, the actual preamble signal is not transmitted by the drones in our implementation. Rather, we just added 8μs delay to all the messages assuming that the preamble signal is always correctly transceived. While we acknowledge that distortion of the preamble signal is not possible in our simulator (and some jammers actually target the preamble signal), we believe this is enough to perform a gradual spoofing attack and all the requested jamming attacks.

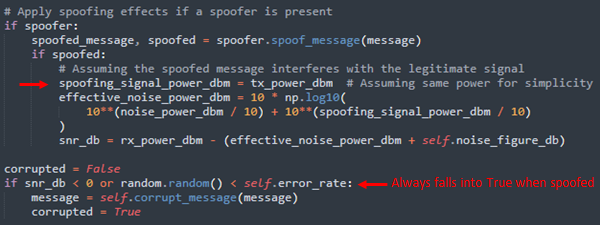
Messages have a fixed Downlink Format value of 17, Capability 5, and Type Code 11. Drones fit their unique identification(ICAO 24, displayed as Aircraft Address in Figure 1.) and the current location in the ADS-B message format, encode it into a hexadecimal string, and then broadcast the signal. For convenience, drones have been implemented to transmit "even" and "odd" CPR (compact location reporting) simultaneously.

As for jammer implementation, ADS-B messages are encoded into a hexadecimal string and transmitted bit-by-bit. Simulated jammers are capable of emitting a signal with a certain power and frequency, at the desired timing. This signal will flip one bit in a message based on probability. On the other hand, a spoofer does not need a bit-by-bit transceiving concept. Thus, our spoofer implementation receives the full message, decodes the payload within, modifies the data, encodes it again with the correct parity, and then finally transmits it; hoping for GCS to take it as a benign signal.

1. Implementing Gradual Spoofing Attack

A gradual spoofing attack involves slowly and incrementally modifying aircraft position data over time, making the false data harder to detect compared to sudden position changes. The attacker gradually shifts reported coordinates to make the deception appear more natural and bypass anomaly detection.

We had to focus on two main features to implement a realistic gradual spoofing attack. One is a spoofing signal power and the other is a perturbation of a drone position. We will first argue and explain what we have modified to be more realistic regarding spoofing signal power.



*Figure 2. Setting a spoofing signal power in the original implementation.*

Setting spoofing signal power as the same as the signal power of the message itself is a bad approach regarding “realistic” simulation because spoofers in the real world typically use lower power to avoid detection, i.e., having equal power would make the attack too obvious. Also, if the signal power for a spoofer is too big, the signal-to-noise ratio(*snr\_db*) will fall into a negative value, causing every spoofing message to be classified as corrupted. This should be avoided. So we decided to carefully calculate spoofing\_signal\_power\_dbm in such a way that it does not overwhelm legitimate signals but is strong enough to be injected. In other words, we need to find the value of “spoofing noise” that satisfies the following inequality.

*transmit power – path loss – thermal noise – default noise – spoofing noise = receive power > 0*

We targeted the *receiving power* to be 17.5dB (fixed) to get a proper spoofing noise power.

For the perturbation of a drone position, we introduced the concept of acceleration and decay factor λ. Our gradual spoofer now stores previous the position of a drone and calculates its direction vector based on the difference in the drone’s position.

For spoofing attempt *i*,

And the acceleration vector gets updated for every *i,*

Finally, we calculate the desired spoofing position by adding a Δ vector to the current drone position. Performing gradual spoofing in this way has several advantages for the attacker. Accumulation of the Δ vector calculated by the direction vector and acceleration helps the spoofing attack to be “gradual” in the concept of momentum. Momentum can increase or decrease in the desired way when λ is set to be greater than 1.0 or less than 1.0, respectively.

TODO: Writing about improvements, achieved results, and how it affects the cyber and physical domains.

1. X. Ying et al, "Detecting ADS-B Spoofing Attacks using Deep Neural Networks", arXiv:1904.09969 [cs.CR], Apr. 2019., Fig 2. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)