

RadiInspectorWiFi is a new sight on the wireless network analysis

Before we start, just a little bit of statistics.

Throughout one trip from one side of the city to another with switched RadiInspector Wi-Fi module on, we detected 4 034 unique MAC addresses including 1018 hotspots and 2 352 devices in the idle mode. In the most common cases, there were mobile phones whose owners did not switch off a Wi-Fi mode. We also detected 82 hidden networks that do not transmit SSIDs and work in point-to-point mode.

It's hard to find any other RF range so busy as a 2,4 GHz range. There are a lot of various signals on air: Bluetooth, ZigBee, analogue and digital cameras, remote access systems, microwave stoves etc. The more busy frequency range the more difficult to administrate and analyze it. This circumstance is the most common reason why intruders use this frequency range to conceal their illicit transmitters.

It is a very logical decision to use the same standards that are used within frequency range of interest for the illicit transmitters to maximize their concealment effectiveness. The Wi-Fi is one of the most reasonable standards that can be used to provide such kind transmission due to low cost and affordable components and sustainable engineering decisions. However, first of all, it is hard to discern two digital devices that use the same standard without extracting their unique IDs, when one of them is a legal device and other one is a clandestine transmitter. In case of the Wi-Fi the key facet is MAC address of the device.

We will not consider questions of Internet and Intranet security, these questions are beyond of theme of this article. In our case, we consider the Wi-Fi as a channel of information leakage and what requirements can be implemented to the contemporary Wi-Fi monitoring systems.

An interesting description of a Wi-Fi voice recorder were presented in 2013 on the web site of the English company WINKELMANN . At the first time this device were presented under name "WREN WiFi" and then "ACU-GEM WiFi" but on the web site of the Irish company "ACUSTEK LTD".



Here you can see some key aspects of the description of this device derived from the web site "Gedion LTD" where this recorder already has name "KATANA FT-1":

"The high quality mini voice recorder with a built-in Wi-Fi transmitter.

*Wi-Fi voice recorder "Katana FT-1" is a unique device that combines advantages and devoid of disadvantages of voice recorders and transmitters. In contradistinction to various standard voice recorders, the wireless Wi-Fi recorder "Katana FT-1" does not need a direct access to it. The concealed voice recorder is able to derive and transfer information throughout many years. **In contradistinction to standard RF transmitters, the Wi-Fi voice recorder needs just some minutes of transmission time a day to transfer all recorded data to a recipient, that is why this recorder is hard to detect by EMF detector or by TSCM system.** The size of the recorder is less than two jointed lighters. The recorder supports various changeable microSD cards. The supported volume of memory allows storage up to 300 hours of voice information with the sample rate 8kHz. The built-in battery provides up to 120 hours of autonomous work (without an external power supply). **Uploading of 24 hours of surveillance requires just some minutes.***

The kit contains a mini router Wi-Fi, which can be connected to a PC. The Wi-Fi voice recorder supports a configuration, which allows it to detect a mini-router's network and then connect to it and transfer the retained data.

“Katana FT-1” also can be configured to work within an established Wi-Fi network – in an office Intranet, for instance. In this case, the recorder can transfer a gained information to a remote PC in according to schedule.”

Nowadays voice recorders like a described above can be bought in many various internet shops around the world. A little bit of cunning, of course, is present in the description of the Wi-Fi recorder – every device, which transmits information might be detected. However, detection of this device during recording is obviously a challenge, because of its spurious emission is hard to differentiate with many other signals on the background. The figure 2 shows a spurious emission of the particular Wi-Fi voice recorder, which was detected with very sensitive and sophisticated equipment the distance was just a few centimeters. That is why detection of this device is much more effective during its transmission session via Wi-Fi network.

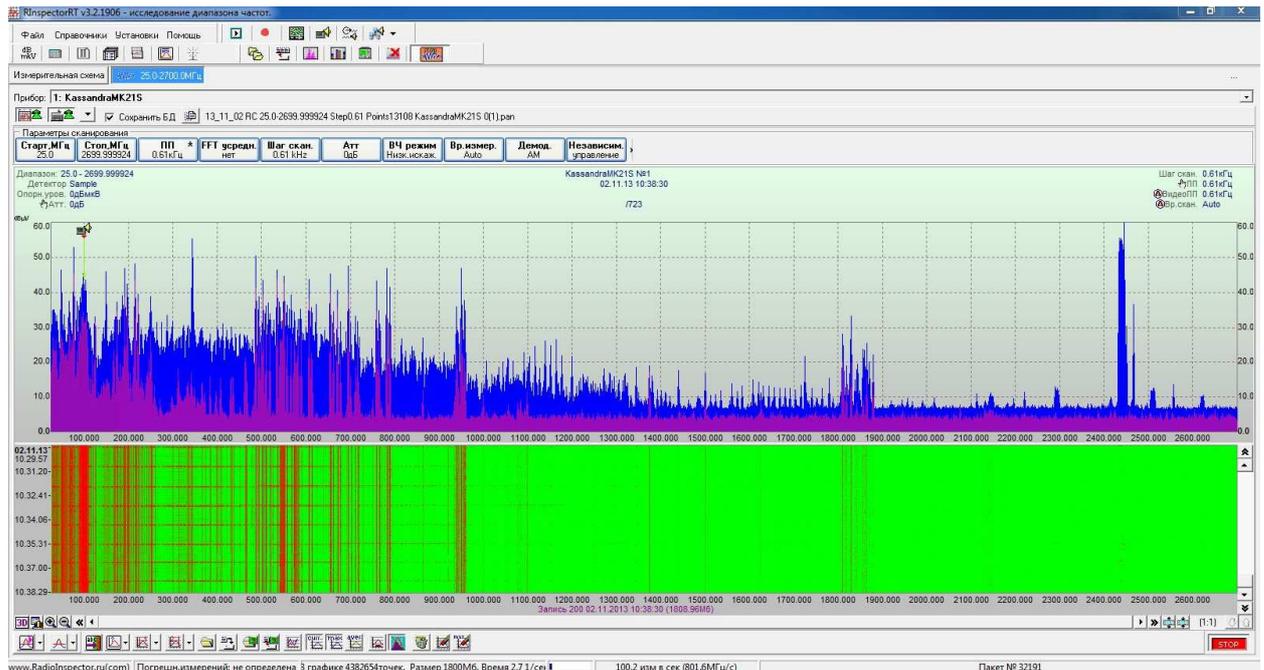
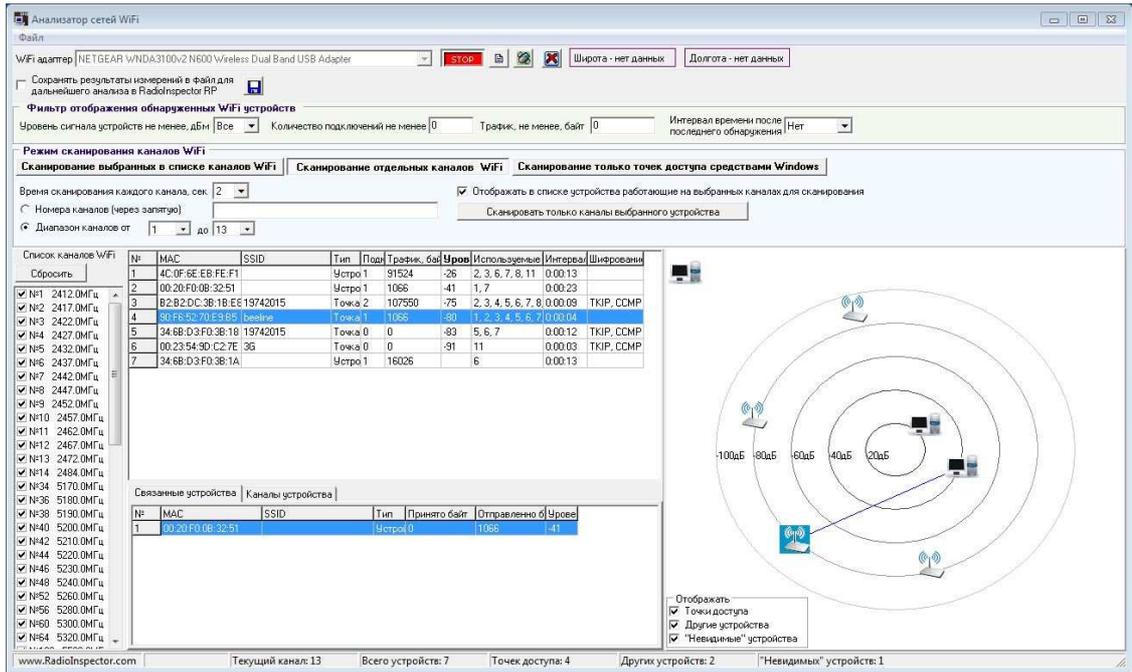


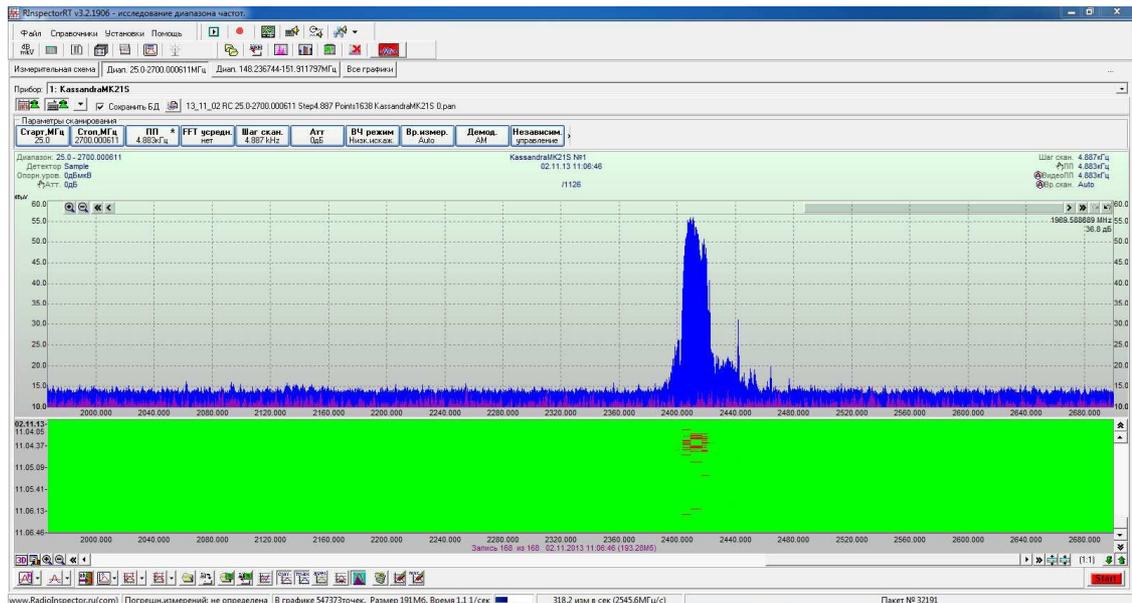
Figure 2. The spurious emission of the Wi-Fi voice recorder

We conducted our own tests and confirm all of announced parameters of this voice recorder. We want to emphasize the following features:

The voice recorder can be detected as a Wi-Fi hotspot with any kind of name. In our case a very popular mobile operator's name was chosen for the SSID name (Figure 3.).



1. The transmission of the 30 minutes of conversation took us 30 seconds (Figure 4).



It was a very first signal for the reassessment of the approach of monitoring of the Wi-Fi networks. An uninterrupted and permanent monitoring of the Wi-Fi network is actual and must be present in any organization, which is interested in controlling of the information leakage channels.

Let's consider an environment around a premise inside a business center with many Wi-Fi hotspots and a large amount of different mobile devices connected to them. In such kind circumstances it is hard to detect a new hotspot with a name very similar to the already present. For instance, SSID "Orange Wi-Fi" vs "OrangeWi-Fi". It is crucial to know MAC addresses all of legal devices in your premise and provide an automatic monitoring any changes within the Wi-Fi environment.

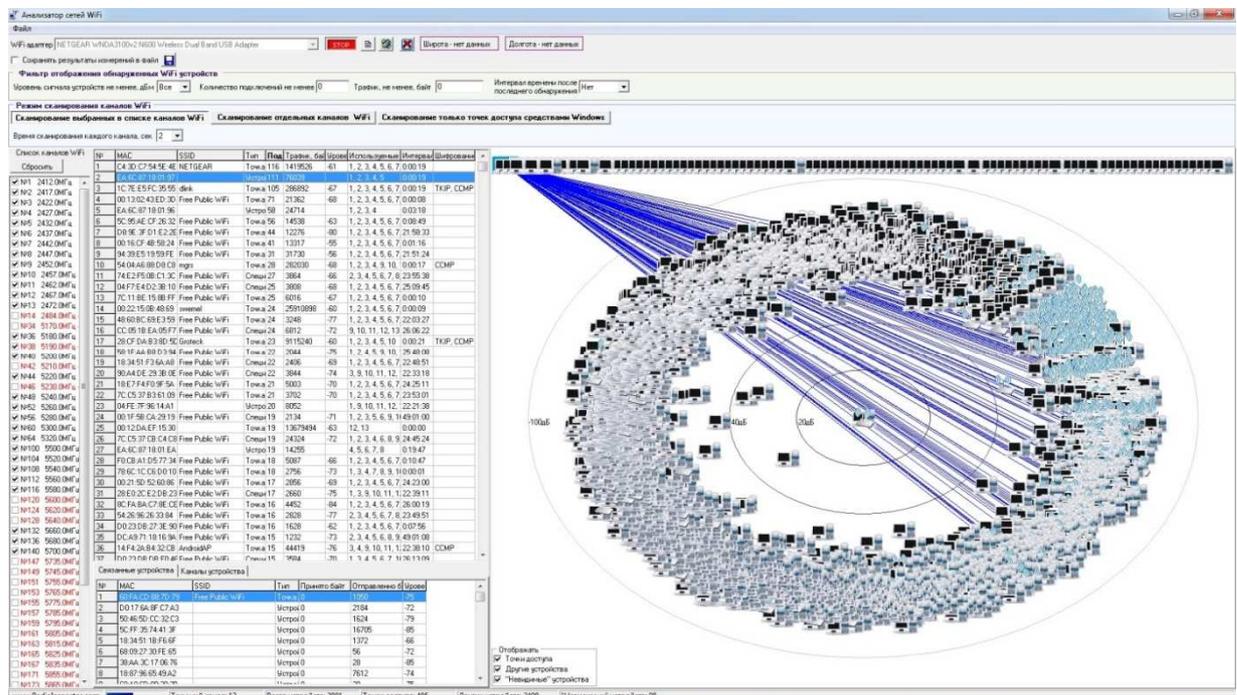


Figure 5. Hundreds of Wi-Fi devices around the controlled premise

No doubt, the threat of interception of information by means of Wi-Fi devices is real. However, we should take into account that voice recorder with the price about \$2500 can buy not every curious person.

Another one feature that uses advantages of Wi-Fi is a wireless video camera. Let's consider a very popular and affordable model Defender MULTICAM WF-10HD. It's pretty enough to get acquainted with the description of this device to understand it can be very useful tool for the surveillance. The camera is accessible via special Internet resource. The main problem is to switch the camera on via Internet. After the activation, you will see the same picture as was described above - a new Wi-Fi hotspot. Meanwhile, this device can also store video onto the built-in SD card and then transfer information in a convenient moment.

What is the most common problem with contemporary Wi-Fi network analyzers that used by security staff? These analyzers are connected directly to the controlling PC that usually placed in a special room far enough from controlled premise. This situation just increases the threat, because an illicit transmitter might be missed.

The requirements to a Wi-Fi monitoring system

The following requirements to a Wi-Fi monitoring system are based on a huge run experience of the TSCM work and analysis of channels of information leakage:

1. Uninterruptible 7/24 monitoring of the whole Wi-Fi range standards (IEEE 802.11 a/b/g/n), with the time-bound.
2. An ability to install a monitoring unit in a controlled area directly without a management PC.
3. An ability of work in an autonomous mode without a direct connection to the controlling PC for information storage.

4. Maintaining of the list of MAC addresses of detected devices for the fast detection and identification.
5. Multi domain distributed network of monitoring devices support.
6. A lightweight, compact and economy receiving module for operational tasks of detection and analysis of the wireless network.

On the base of described above requirements, a new generation of the soft&hardware system RadiInspectorWiFi with the receiver RSWIFI was developed.



Figure 6. RadiInspector WiFi

What kind changes were made?

First of all, a new receiver, which is able to intercept all modern Wi-Fi standards IEEE 802.11 a/b/g/n was developed. The receiver contains its own microcomputer that can work in autonomous mode without connection to a PC. The memory of the microcomputer is calculated to retain automatically collected data throughout up to one year. The microcomputer has a nonvolatile memory. The OS loads and process of network monitoring starts immediately after the power is switched on.

The software now supports not only single server connection, but distributed monitoring network as well. A vast amount of monitoring systems can be connected to a controlling PC. The monitoring module connects to a controlling PC via 100Base-T interface. It is possible to build a monitoring network by installing modules within building that should be under control. Eventually, any attempt to bring a Wi-Fi device to a controlled premise and switch it on will be detected. The receiving module might be connected to a tablet PC, in this case it becomes a mobile system not for detection only, but localization by relative signal's strength.

The frontend of the RadiInspectorWiFi is similar to the first program's generation, but has some important add-ons (See figure 7). The opportunity to upload a retained archive to a receiver is added. User also can get information about a producer of the Wi-Fi module based on the MAC address analysis. It is important to emphasize, the instrument has no restrictions concerned to quantity of channels being under control. All channels within two specified frequency ranges are under control.

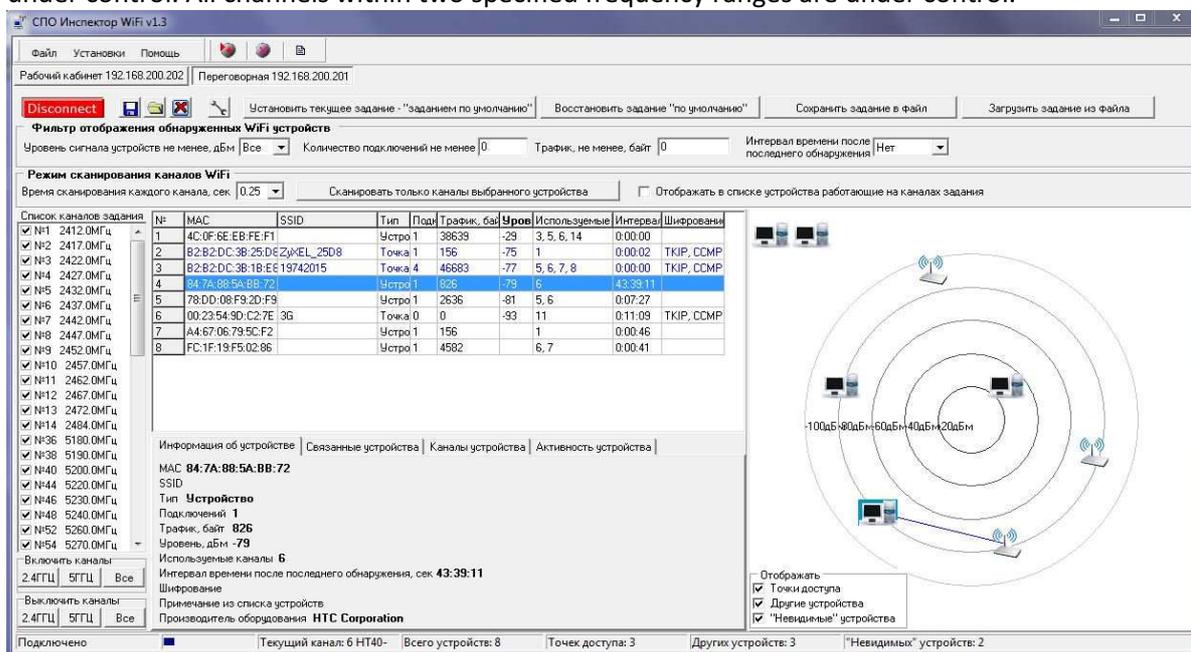


Figure 7. The program interface.

Sometimes it is hard to organize an update of the device like a remote monitoring system. Our new RSWIFI module supports a remote firmware update via local network.

Such kind approach to building of the wireless network monitoring system seems to us a very perspective from the point of the detection of illicit network access and monitoring of information leakage channels.

What is the next?

The receiver is already able to support a GPS receiver. This extension allows not only collect and store collected MACs, but store GPS coordinates where this MAC has been detected. Highly likely, a geo option will be added to the next version of the RadiInspectorWiFi. The software with GPS option enabled can be used for mobile Wi-Fi analysis based on a car, including an autonomous analysis. It is enough to connect the receiver to a powerbank with 5V output (Figure 8), and system starts Wi-Fi network analysis with geospatial coordinates included.



Icom company has announced their new mobile stations that use a Wi-Fi network to communicate to each other. These mobile stations are intended to unite radio communications and IP technologies. This feature allows communicate various mobile stations that can't reach each other with a radio signal.

Another one important thing that worth to be mentioned is a new Bluetooth 4.0 feature. This feature was detected coincidentally during the testing Bluetooth transmission by our new hardware system. We couldn't detect a data transmission between two modern devices with Bluetooth 4.0 transmitters. We only could intercept the beginning of transmission and then the signal had disappeared, but the devices indicated that transmission is still going well, the same time the counter of Bluetooth packets has

stopped. The sophisticated analysis of the spectrum with RadiInspectorWiFi allowed us to detect a new network with SSID, which name consists a real name of the device that involved in transmission process. What does it mean? It means if any device that supports Bluetooth 4.0 has a Wi-Fi transmitter and a file being transmitted is big enough, in this case this device will try to establish connection via Wi-Fi by organizing a new wireless network between transmitter and recipient. What is the threat? A Wi-Fi transmission is more powerful than Bluetooth and can be easily intercepted by third party and name of the device allows intruders to understand, who is a real owner of the device with this MAC address. No one of the owners of the confidential information will be glad to know this. Of course, manufacturers should inform customers about this feature, but they don't.