Data Hiding Techniques in Windows OS: A Practical Approach to Investigation and Defense

Nihad Ahmad Hassan, Rami Hijazi

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In the digital world, the need to protect online communications increase as the technology behind it evolves. There are many techniques currently available to encrypt and secure our communication channels. Data hiding techniques can take data confidentiality to a new level as we can hide our secret messages in ordinary, honest-looking data files.

Steganography is the science of hiding data. It has several categorizations, and each type has its own techniques in hiding. Steganography has played a vital role in secret communication during wars since the dawn of history. In recent days, few computer users successfully manage to exploit their Windows® machine to conceal their private data.

Businesses also have deep concerns about misusing data hiding techniques. Many employers are amazed at how easily their valuable information can get out of their company walls. In many legal cases a disgruntled employee would successfully steal company private data despite all security measures implemented using simple digital hiding techniques.

Human right activists who live in countries controlled by oppressive regimes need ways to smuggle their online communications without attracting surveillance monitoring systems, continuously scan in/out internet traffic for interesting keywords and other artifacts. The same applies to journalists and whistleblowers all over the world.

Computer forensic investigators, law enforcements officers, intelligence services and IT security professionals need a guide to tell them where criminals can conceal their data in Windows® OS & multimedia files and how they can discover concealed data quickly and retrieve it in a forensic way.

Data Hiding Techniques in Windows OS is a response to all these concerns. Data hiding topics are usually approached in most books using an academic method, with long math equations about how each hiding technique algorithm works behind the scene, and are usually targeted at people who work in the academic arenas. This book teaches **professionals and end users alike** how they can hide their data and discover the hidden ones using a variety of ways under the most commonly used operating system on earth, Windows®.

This is your hands-on guide to understand, detect and use today's most popular techniques in hiding and exploring hidden data under Windows® machines, covering all Windows® versions from XP till Windows® 10. Starting with the Roman Emperor, Julius Caesar, and his simple cipher method to the surveillance programs deployed by NSA, to monitor communication and online traffic, this book will teach you everything you need to know to protect your digital data using steganographic & anonymity cryptographic techniques. Written in a simple style and requiring only basic knowledge of main Windows® functions, techniques are presented in a way to easily implement them directly on your computer.

- A brief history of steganography since early inception to present day
- Simple methods to hide your data without using any third party tools, and different ways to investigate and

explore hidden data

- Exploiting multimedia files to conceal data using text, image, video and audio steganography
- Exploiting Windows® NTFS file system to hide your secret data
- A wide array of encryption techniques to protect your confidential data and securing your online communications
- Using cryptographic anonymity tools to conceal your identity online
- Explaining how hidden data could be used to plant a malware and launch sophisticated attacks against computer systems
- Methods to crack steganography and cryptography
- A chapter dedicated to anti-forensic techniques, detailing how to conceal data when using a Windows® machine

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