

CONTENTS IN DETAIL

INTRODUCTION	1
Why I Wrote This Book	2
How This Book Is Unique	2
Linux Forensic Analysis Scenarios	3
Target Audience and Prerequisites	5
Who Should Read This Book?	5
Prerequisite Knowledge	6
Forensic Tools and Platforms Needed	6
Scope and Organization	7
Content Scope	7
Book Organization and Structure	8
Overview of Chapters	10
Conventions and Format	12
Formatting and Presentation	13
Data Flow Diagrams	14

1	
DIGITAL FORENSICS OVERVIEW	17
Digital Forensics History	17
Pre-Y2K	18
2000–2010	18
2010–2020	19
2020 and Beyond	20
Forensic Analysis Trends and Challenges	21
Shift in Size, Location, and Complexity of Evidence	21
Multi-Jurisdictional Aspects	22
Industry, Academia, and Law Enforcement Collaboration	22
Principles of Postmortem Computer Forensic Analysis	23
Digital Forensic Standards	23
Peer-Reviewed Research	23
Industry Regulation and Best Practice	24
Special Topics in Forensics	25
Forensic Readiness	25
Anti-Forensics	25

2	
LINUX OVERVIEW	27
History of Linux	28

Unix Roots	28
Early Linux Systems	30
Early Desktop Environments	31
Modern Linux Systems	32
Hardware	33
The Kernel	34
Devices	35
Systemd	36
The Command Line	37
Modern Desktop Environments	38
Linux Distributions	39
The Evolution of Linux Distributions	40
Debian-Based Distributions	41
SUSE-Based Distributions	42
Red Hat–Based Distributions	43
Arch-Based Distributions	43
Other Distributions	44
Forensic Analysis of Linux Systems	44

3

EVIDENCE FROM STORAGE DEVICES AND FILESYSTEMS

47

Analysis of Storage Layout and Volume Management	49
Analysis of Partition Tables	49
Logical Volume Manager	53
Linux Software RAID	57
Filesystem Forensic Analysis	60
Linux Filesystem Concepts	60
Forensic Artifacts in Linux Filesystems	62
List and Extract Data	64
An Analysis of ext4	67
Filesystem Metadata: Superblock	67
File Metadata: Inodes	69
List and Extract Files	71
An Analysis of btrfs	72
Filesystem Metadata: Superblock	73
File Metadata: Inodes	75
Multiple Devices and Subvolumes	77
List and Extract Files	80
An Analysis of xfs	81
Filesystem Metadata: Superblock	81
File Metadata: Inodes	83
List and Extract Files	84
Linux Swap Analysis	85
Identifying and Analyzing Swap	85
Hibernation	87
Analyzing Filesystem Encryption	89

LUKS Full-Disk Encryption	90
eCryptfs Encrypted Directories	93
Fscrypt and Ext4 Directory Encryption	96
Summary	98

4 DIRECTORY LAYOUT AND FORENSIC ANALYSIS OF LINUX FILES 99

Linux Directory Layout	99
Filesystem Hierarchy	100
User Home Directory	104
Hashsets and NSRL for Linux	109
Linux File Types and Identification	111
POSIX File Types	111
Magic Strings and File Extensions	113
Hidden Files	114
Linux File Analysis	115
Application Metadata	115
Content Analysis	116
Executable Files	117
Crash and Core Dumps	120
Process Core Dumps	120
Application and Distro-Specific Crash Data	123
Kernel Crashes	125
Summary	130

5 INVESTIGATING EVIDENCE FROM LINUX LOGS 131

Traditional Syslog	132
Syslog Facility, Severity, and Priority	132
Syslog Configuration	134
Analyzing Syslog Messages	135
Systemd Journal	137
Systemd Journal Features and Components	137
Systemd Journal Configuration	138
Analysis of Journal File Contents	141
Other Application and Daemon Logs	145
Custom Logging to Syslog or Systemd Journal	145
Independent Server Application Logs	147
Independent User Application Logs	149
Plymouth Splash Startup Logs	150
Kernel and Audit Logs	151
The Kernel Ring Buffer	152
The Linux Auditing System	155
Summary	159

6 RECONSTRUCTING SYSTEM BOOT AND INITIALIZATION 161

Analysis of Bootloaders	161
BIOS/MBR GRUB Booting	163
UEFI GRUB Booting	164
GRUB Configuration	166
Other Bootloaders	168
Analysis of Kernel Initialization	169
Kernel Command Line and Runtime Parameters	170
Kernel Modules	171
Kernel Parameters	173
Analyzing initrd and initramfs	174
Analysis of Systemd	177
Systemd Unit Files	178
Systemd Initialization Process	180
Systemd Services and Daemons	182
Activation and On-Demand Services	184
Scheduled Commands and Timers	188
Power and Physical Environment Analysis	191
Power and Physical Environment Analysis	191
Sleep, Shutdown, and Reboot Evidence	192
Human Proximity Indicators	194
Summary	198

7 EXAMINATION OF INSTALLED SOFTWARE PACKAGES 199

System Identification	200
Distro Release Information	201
Unique Machine ID	202
System Hostname	202
Distro Installer Analysis	203
Debian Installer	204
Raspberry Pi Raspian	205
Fedora Anaconda	206
SUSE YaST	207
Arch Linux	208
Package File Format Analysis	209
Debian Binary Package Format	210
Red Hat Package Manager	214
Arch Pacman Packages	216
Package Management System Analysis	218
Debian apt	219
Fedora dnf	222
SUSE zypper	224
Arch pacman	226
Universal Software Package Analysis	228

ApplImage	229
Flatpak	231
Snap	234
Software Centers and GUI Frontends	235
Other Software Installation Analysis	237
Manually Compiled and Installed Software	237
Programming Language Packages	238
Application Plug-Ins	239
Summary	239

8 IDENTIFYING NETWORK CONFIGURATION ARTIFACTS 241

Network Configuration Analysis	242
Linux Interfaces and Addressing	242
Network Managers and Distro-Specific Configuration	245
DNS Resolution	247
Network Services	250
Wireless Network Analysis	253
Wi-Fi Artifacts	253
Bluetooth Artifacts	258
WWAN Artifacts	260
Network Security Artifacts	262
WireGuard, IPsec, and OpenVPN	262
Linux Firewalls and IP Access Control	265
Proxy Settings	267
Summary	269

9 FORENSIC ANALYSIS OF TIME AND LOCATION 271

Linux Time Configuration Analysis	271
Time Formats	271
Time Zones	273
Daylight Saving and Leap Time	275
Time Synchronization	276
Timestamps and Forensic Timelines	278
Internationalization	280
Locale and Language Settings	280
Physical Keyboard Layout	282
Linux and Geographic Location	284
Geographic Location History	285
GeoClue Geolocation Service	287
Summary	288

10 RECONSTRUCTING USER DESKTOPS AND LOGIN ACTIVITY 289

Linux Login and Session Analysis	289
Seats and Sessions	291
Shell Login	294
X11 and Wayland	298
Desktop Login	300
Authentication and Authorization	304
User, Group, and Password Files	304
Elevated Privileges	309
GNOME Keyring	312
KDE Wallet Manager	314
Biometric Fingerprint Authentication	316
GnuPG	317
Linux Desktop Artifacts	319
Desktop Settings and Configuration	319
Desktop Clipboard Data	323
Desktop Trash Cans	324
Desktop Bookmarks and Recent Files	326
Desktop Thumbnail Images	328
Well-Integrated Desktop Applications	330
Other Desktop Forensic Artifacts	331
User Network Access	333
Secure Shell Access	334
Remote Desktop Access	336
Network Shares and Cloud Services	338
Summary	341

11 FORENSIC TRACES OF ATTACHED PERIPHERAL DEVICES 343

Linux Peripheral Devices	344
Linux Device Management	344
Identify Attached USB Devices	345
Identify PCI and Thunderbolt Devices	347
Printers and Scanners	348
Analysis of Printers and Printing History	349
Analysis of Scanning Devices and History	351
External Attached Storage	352
Storage Hardware Identification	353
Evidence of Mounted Storage	354
Summary	355

AFTERWORD 357

APPENDIX A:
FILE AND DIRECTORY LIST FOR DIGITAL INVESTIGATORS **361**

/	362
/boot/	363
/boot/grub/	363
/boot/loader/	364
EFI/	364
/etc/	364
/home/*/	369
XDG and freedesktop directories	369
.cache/	370
.config/	370
.local/	371
Other Dot Files and Directories	371
/usr/	372
/usr/lib/	372
/usr/lib/systemd/	373
/usr/local/, /usr/opt/	373
/usr/share/	373
/var/	374
/var/cache/	374
/var/log/	375
/var/lib/	376
/var/spool/	377