Chewing on the 0xDEADBEEF (redacted 26th March ‘08)

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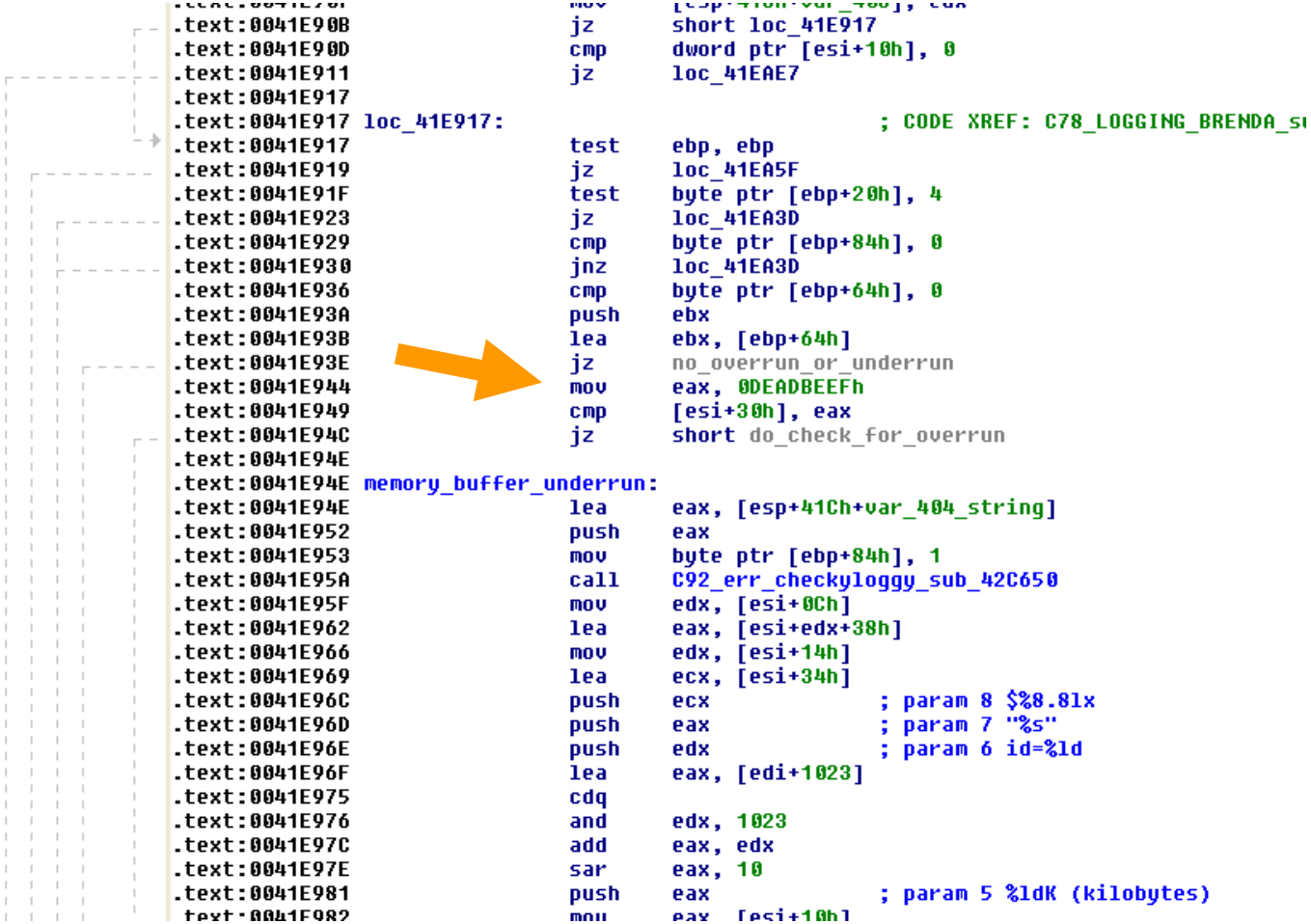
10th August ‘07

Why redact this talk?

- Surely the crooks know this stuff already? Well maybe not, this is not crooks we are up against, just amateur hackers who want to cheat at games (little money in cheating at FPS yet), and its probably not illegal.
- True, Joint Ops is already suffering from cheats, and almost dead, but I don't want to be putting the final nail in the coffin on what was an exceptionally good game in its time.
- Another 6 months or so and there should be no harm in releasing full detail of this talk.
- Some redaction in the screenshots was done to protect privacy of testers (and unwitting testers)
- **Any bona fide researchers in game cheating/network effects are welcome to take a copy of the full talk, plus source code etc, so long as they can satisfy me it will be put to good use. Email Mike.Bond@cl.cam.ac.uk, Phone +44 7890 171913**

The 0xDEADBEEF

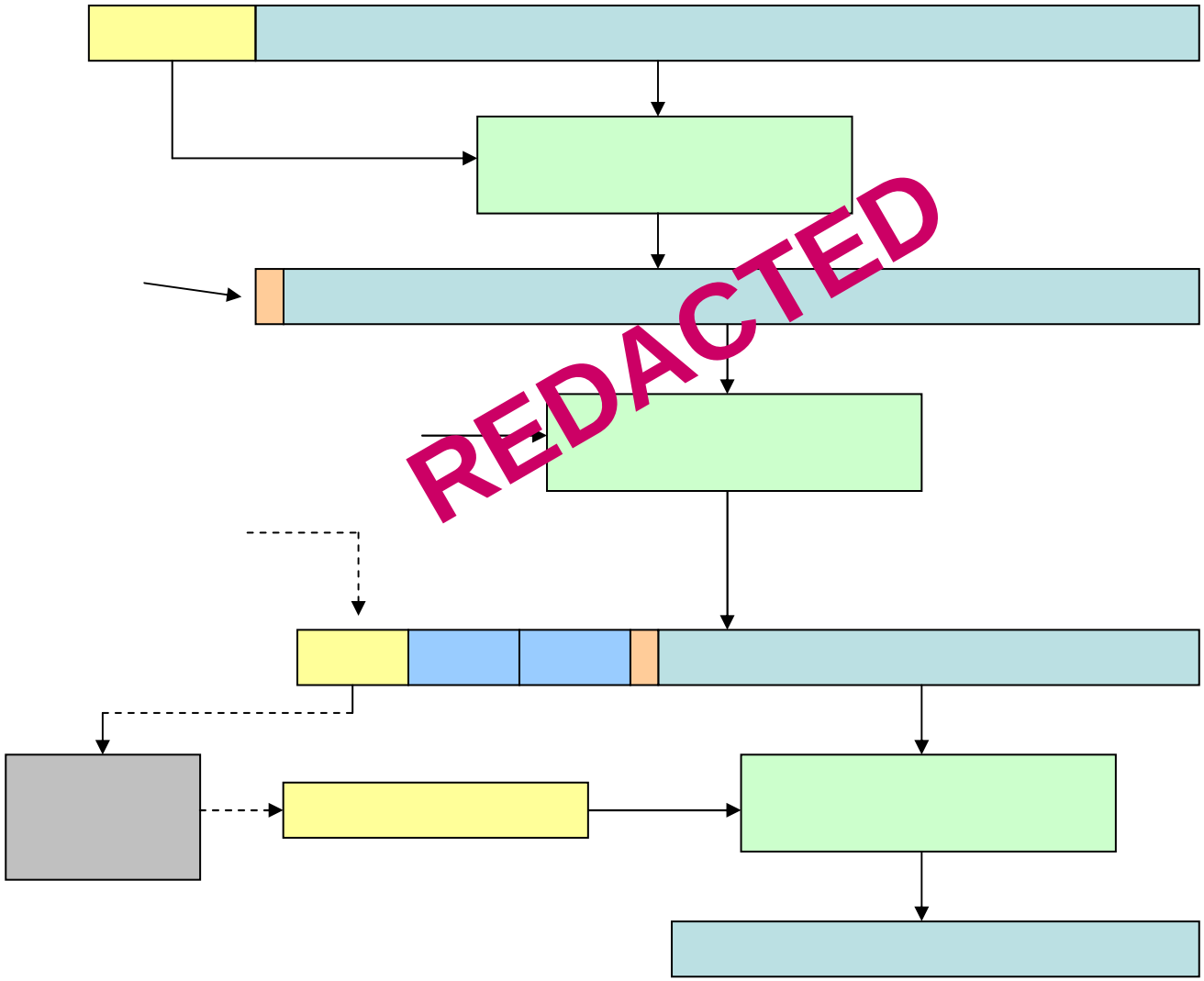


Contents

This work discusses reverse engineering and cryptanalysis of the encrypted data packets transmitted by an online multiplayer tactical shooter computer game “Joint Operations”.

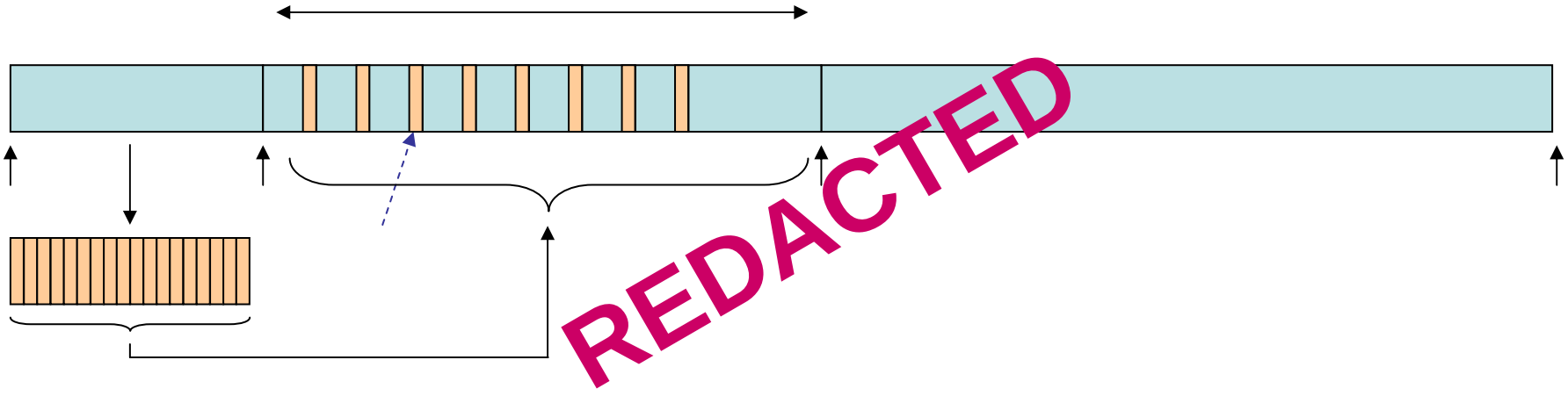
- How it does the encryption
- How I cracked it
- Sturgeon’s Razor
- What if?
- Future Work

Packet “Encryption” Overview

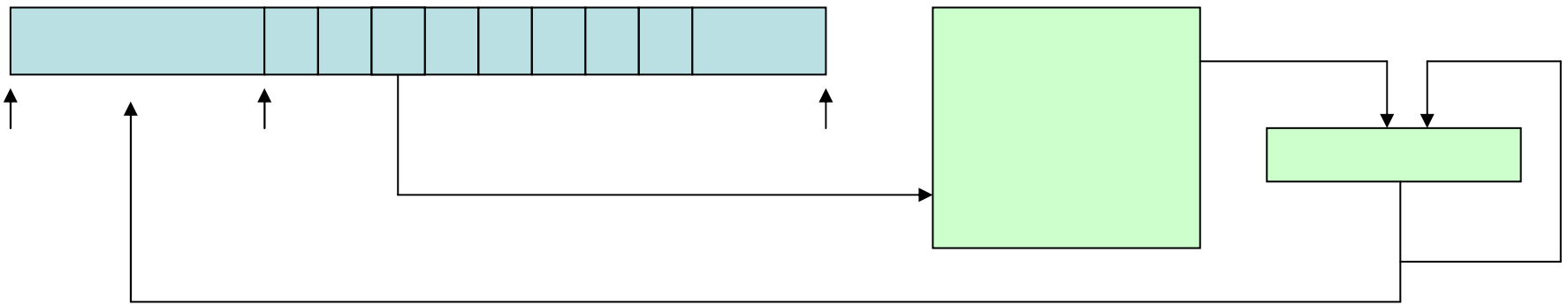


Henry Decrypt

Packets longer than X bytes encoded as follows:



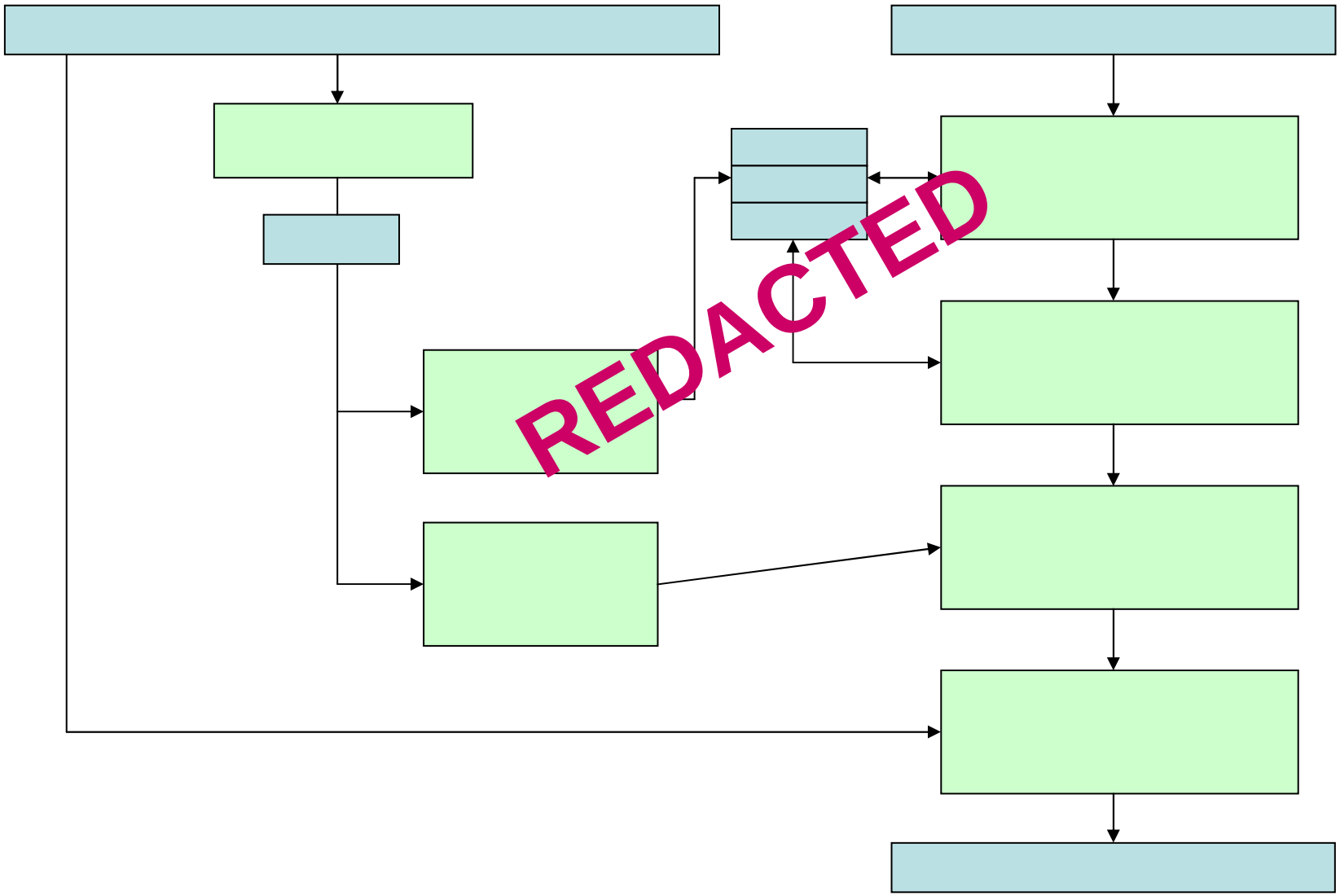
Packets less than X bytes with X



Main Decrypt Routine

- Takes null terminated array (usually ASCII string) as key input
- Always discards first byte without use
- Consists of key schedule derivation plus four base routines, all operating with byte-wise modulo addition
  - first quadratic equation
  - second quadratic equation
  - conditional string reverse (diffusion!)
  - Vigenère cipher

Main Decrypt Routine



decrypt_mask2

```
void decrypt_mask2(ref byte[] message, UInt32 len,ref UInt32[] keyschedule)
       {
       <snip>
       }
```

REDACTED

nb. code looks weird because it is trans-literated from dissasembly

decrypt_mask1

```
void decrypt_mask1(ref byte[] message, UInt32 len, UInt32 magic, UInt32 k3)
       {
       <snip>
       }
```

REDACTED

nb. code looks weird because it is trans-literated from dissasembly

decrypt_loopy

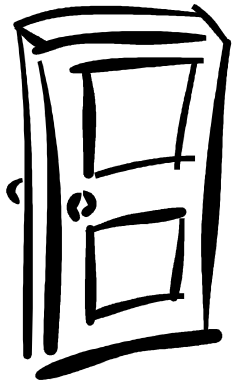
```
void decloopy(ref byte[] message, UInt32 len, byte[] key)
      {
      <snip>

      }
```

REDACTED

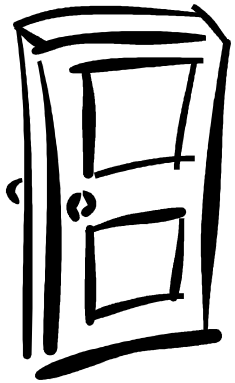
nb. code looks weird because it is trans-literated from dissasembly

Three Doors

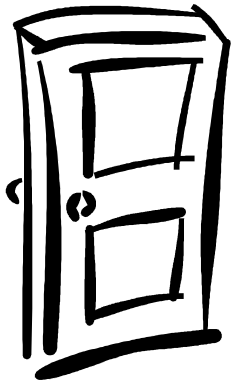
Behind one is a car, behind one freedom, and behind the other, certain death! Pick a door. Now I take away a door. Do you change your mind, or stick with your door?



Cryptanalysis



Static Reverse Engineering



Debugging

How I cracked it

1. intercepted packets using Ethereal: noted apparent encryption
2. created chosen chat messages, analysed by length of packet: detected individual packets corresponding to chat message
3. took differential between chosen plaintexts ‘aaaaaaaaaaa’ and ‘bbbbbbbbbb’, looking for evidence of stream cipher
4. stream cipher theory validated, began reverse engineering to locate stream cipher

How I cracked it (2)

5. no evidence of stream cipher from examining XOR calls
6. worked upwards from the UDP sendto system call, found static hard-coded keys at 6 layers up (later henry at 3 layers also)
7. from static keys located crypto, discovered stream combined using byte-level addition
8. reverse engineered crypto algorithms (but not their calling structure)

How I cracked it (3)

9. studied packet ciphertexts and differentials between packets looking for evidence of crypto algorithm identified
10. found good evidence, but also evidence of another algorithm
11. went back looking and found “henry”
12. implemented decryption of henry

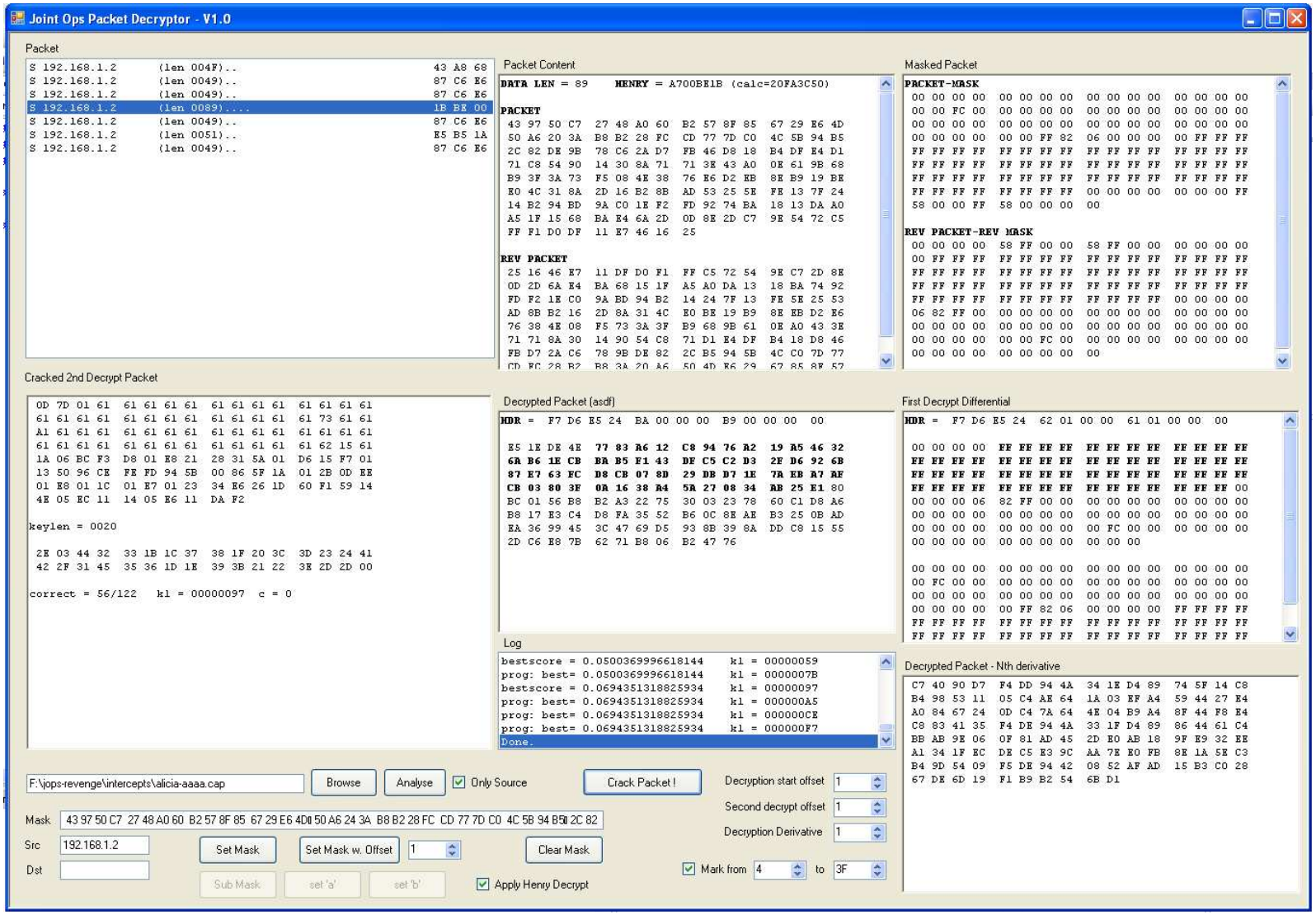
How I cracked it (4)

13. implemented decryption using static hard-coded key; by luck applying XXX yielded success.. a low entropy header
14. analysed packets looking for size and meaning of header
15. analysed differentials after first decrypt, looking for second decrypt
16. after much thought concluded second decrypt was indeed same algorithm, starting with XXX

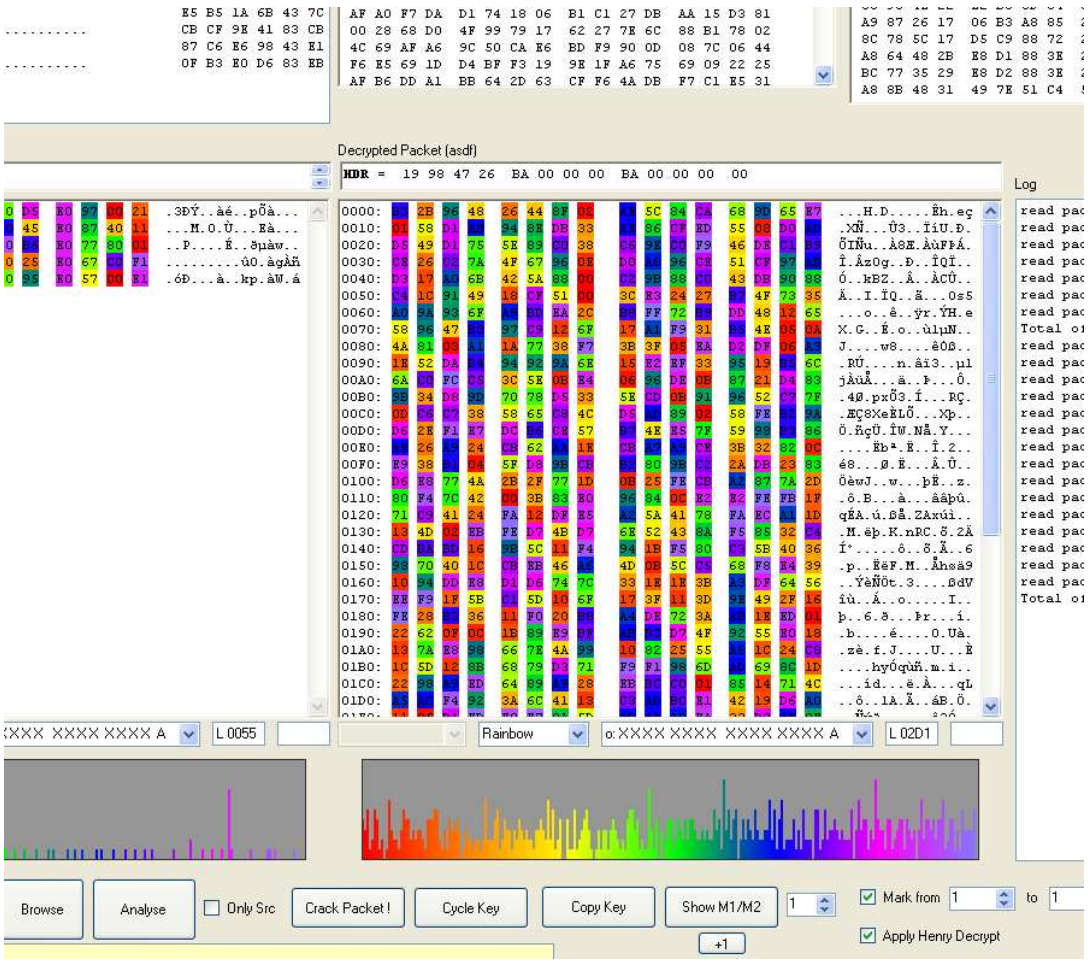
How I cracked it (5)

17. Upgraded analysis tool to crack final key using chosen plaintext from chat messages.
18. Cracking algorithm uses brute-force to crack quadratic-equation based keys
19. calulcates optimal Vignere cipher key using a tuned fitness function

My Analysis Tool



My Analysis Tool (2)



What if?

- Suppose they'd used stronger key stream generator based on proper crypto algorithm (e.g. 3DES)?
  - Easier. Only need to reverse engineer to identify algorithm, not to re-implement
  - Easier. Crypto with proper diffusion characteristics makes it easier to determine when you have got it right. Still stuck with 95% accurate crypto reimplementations which occasionally get a byte wrong
  - Easier to locate in disassembly. Look for crypto-code characteristics
- Supose they changed key every packet instead of every session?
  - Much easier to exhaust key space of weak cipher by sending a repeated message under many different keys

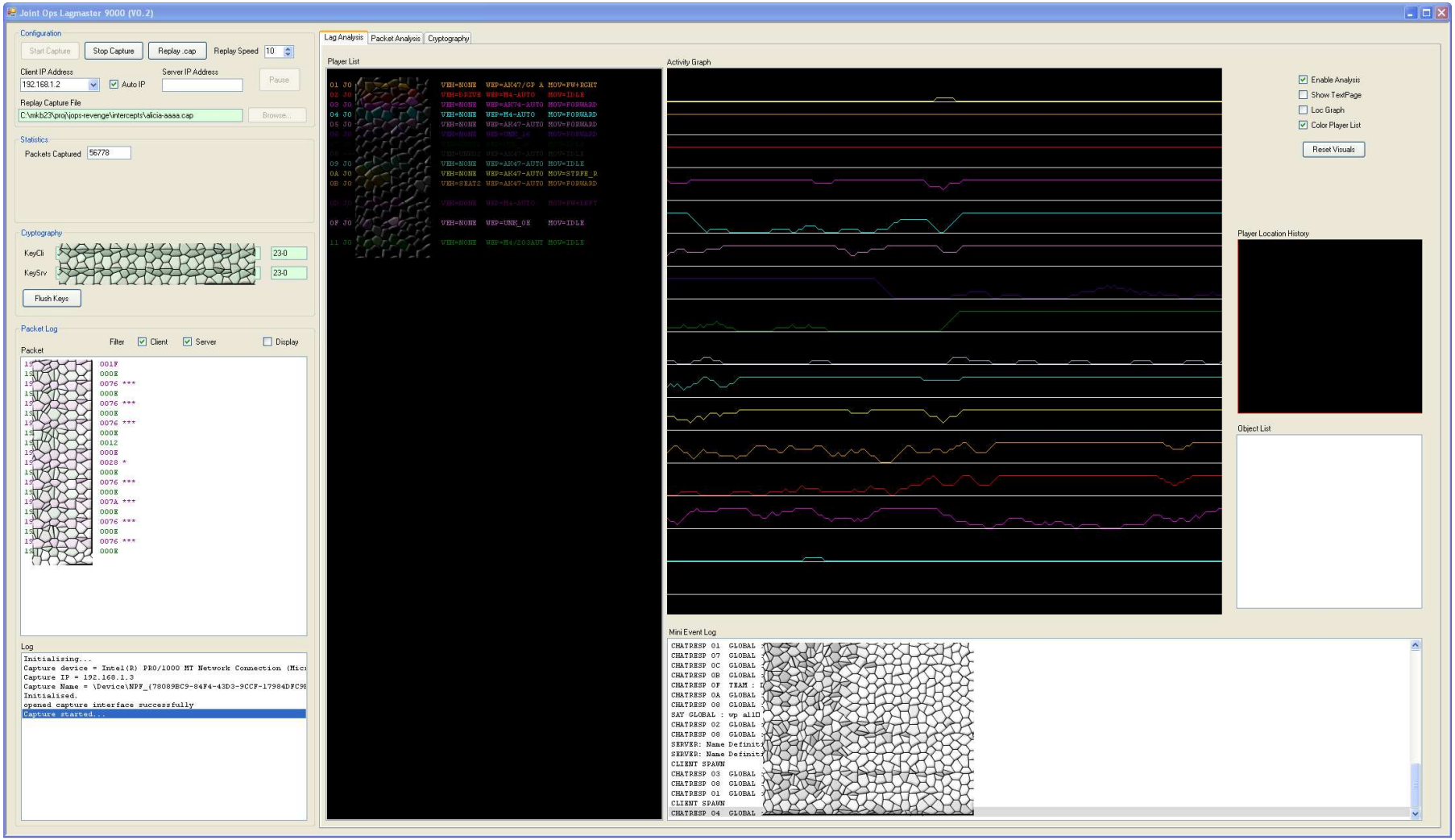
Sturgeon’s Razor

- My previous reverse-engineering rules
  - do what you can
  - give everything a name
- Occam and Sturgeon together…
  - “90% of everything is crap”
  - “All things being equal, the simplest explanation tends to be the best one."
- Yields the new rules (used when explaining weird function behaviour) :
  - “the simplest explanation is that its just a load of crap”

Future Work

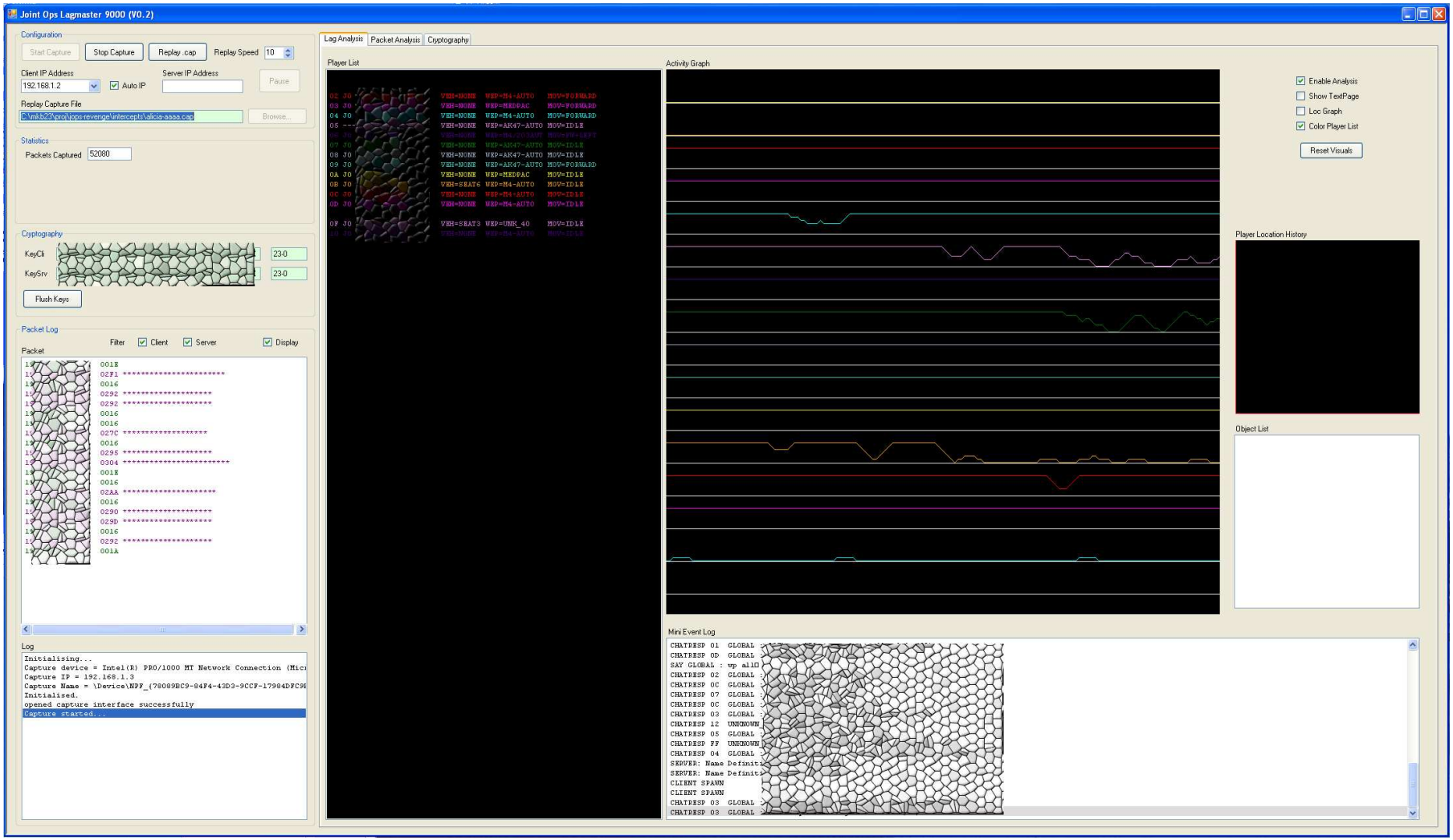
- This work just a pre-requisite to experiments on “Neo-Tactics”
- I want to find out how the update rates of players in-game vary. You have 150 players in game, but you only have 600 bytes of data in your packet. What do you send?
  - Does perception of unfairness/cheating correspond to real bandwidth problems, or inadequacies/anomalies in *use of available bandwidth*?
- This work will also enable (study of) many sorts of undetectable cheating based on packet interception/analysis/rewriting
  - What sorts of hack are achievable if you can mess with the packets in tactical shooters? I hope to make a taxonomy.

Working Lag Analysis Tool



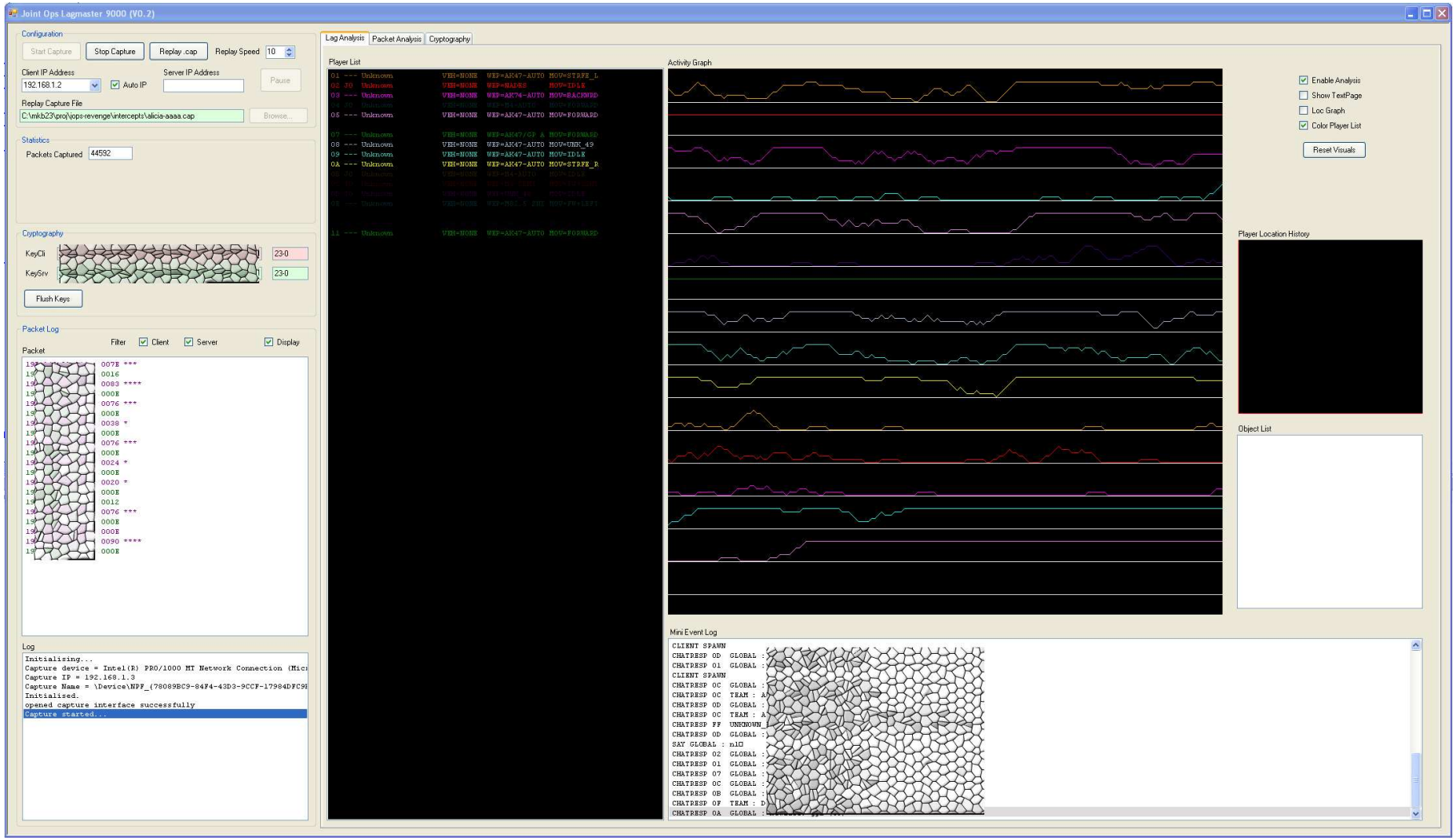
Hi res picture: see http://www.cl.cam.ac.uk/~mkb23/jopsdec/lag1-censor.png

Working Lag Analysis Tool (2)



Hi res picture: see http://www.cl.cam.ac.uk/~mkb23/jopsdec/lag2-censor.png

Working Lag Analysis Tool (3)



Hi res picture: see http://www.cl.cam.ac.uk/~mkb23/jopsdec/lag3-censor.png