

Research Article

Comparative analysis of mobile forensic proprietary tools: an application in forensic investigation

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Abstract

The utilization of the Internet and wireless communication reaches its pinnacle from one side of the planet to the other. Marking the rise of criminal activity in recent years sees enormous growth in security breaches and data theft-related cases in mobile phones. To mitigate them, the implementation of security patches, safety fixes, and updates in mobile devices is of high priority for the organization. The need to foster techniques and procedures in the field to be able to extract and precisely dissect digital crime cases, providing valuable tactical data about the investigation. Mobile forensics is a developing branch assisting the investigator in criminal trials and investigations. Acquisition, Collection, and Analysis of mobile phones settle the purpose of recovering cumulative and corroborative evidence. Upgradation and innovation of mobile devices with time imposed a challenge to mobile forensic technology to extract information from such devices. The study aims at extracting comparative and statistical approaches in the analysis of Physical data acquisition utilizing significant versatile mobile criminological proprietary tools. The proposed study also introduces newly developed utility tools along with their characteristic features which help in successful data extraction from mobile devices.

Introduction

Considering the upward trajectory in urbanization results in a remarkable increase in world population crossing 7.91 billion with augmentation of cyberspace to approximately 4.95 billion as per Digital 2022 Global Overview Report. As the number of users increases day by day, the amount of data generated from mobile devices is at high-security risk. Internet activity focus contributes over 5.31 billion and estimates 67.1% of the total population employs smartphones till Jan 2022. Demographical data manifests 4.62 billion of the total population as dynamic web-based media clients which gauges 58.4% till Jan 2022 [1]. Moderation techniques and strides to these unavoidable dangers paves a way for steady data assurance. Certain Smartphone Industries are looking to mitigate these risks by implementing security patches and updates regularly

the Indian smartphone market is pacing upward and reaches 150 Million in 2020 and will increase to 11% with 167 - 168 Million in 2020 with a high prediction of 187 - 190 million market pace in 2022 [1]. This produces a challenge

to the forensic investigator to extract useful data from the suspected user's mobile devices for criminal investigation and trial purposes. Another challenge [2] in mobile forensics is the Boot loop during data extraction which is the device freezing on the startup screen and does not start further, mostly when using a noncompatible mobile forensic tool or the operating system for extraction and acquisition [3]. The scientific process of acquisition, extraction, analysis, and presentation of mobile devices and related evidence in a forensically sound condition is known as Mobile forensics. Mainly [2] mobile forensic tools work on Logical, Physical, and File system acquisition. The application of these acquisition methods mainly depends on the operating system of Mobile devices and the functionality of the tools. The [2] investigator must have an idea about the make & model along with the operating system and its security patch level before choosing any tool for smooth evidence collection for the mobile device. Much research conducted on techniques of data extraction from different mobile devices using open-source and proprietary mobile forensic tools which are now conclusively implemented in forensic labs for extraction purposes. Rusydi Umar, et al. [3] conducted forensic analysis on the WhatsApp application database having

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Keywords: Security breach; Mobile forensic; Acquisition; Cumulative evidence; Corroborative evidence and Data extraction



.crypt12 encryption using Belkasoft Evidence (Trial version) and WhatsApp Key/DB Extractor in which WhatsApp key/DB Extractor gave better results in extracting text messages while Belkasoft Evidence gave much better results in extracting the media & documents.

Oluwafemi Osho, et al. [4] conducted an evaluation of mobile forensic tools including AccessData FTK, EnCase, MOBILedit Forensic Express and Oxygen Forensic Suite on two mobile devices named HTC Desire 300 with android v4.1.2 and Samsung Galaxy GT-S5300 android v2.3.5 focusing on the recovery of deleted data. They concluded that FTK and EnCase are better in recovery than MOBILedit and Oxygen Forensic Suite. Not only WhatsApp applications, but a previous study [5] was also conducted on forensic analysis of fitness applications in mobile devices using Android Studio and DB browser by manual acquisition. The manual acquisition technique [2] is least considerable due to the fact that the artifact can tamper with while handling the mobile evidence directly. In place of Manual acquisition being considered first [2]. Logical and Physical acquisition is preferable by many forensic laboratories all over the world [6]. The reference study conducted forensic data extraction of five social networking apps using MAGNET AXIOM and MSAB-XRY in three conditions mainly before data deletion, some data deletion from the app, and after uninstallation of the app. The study used logical data acquisition techniques for investigation.

This paper discusses the [7] physical acquisition of an isolated sample mobile device using proprietary tools and the comparative analysis of the recovered artifacts. The study focuses on the practical performance of proprietary tools [8] by testing the artifacts recovery method and its overall features from the acquisition till report generation.

Methodology

The experiment was partitioned into stages: experimental setup of sample mobile device; acquisition of sample mobile device using three forensic proprietary tools for artifacts gathering and recovery and comparative result generation from the analysis of artifacts recovered from all three forensic tools. As per the current extraction types, generally, extraction is of three types Physical, Logical, and File system. On the other hand, cloud-based extractions can be performed on a separate basis as the data backup resides on cloud storage which has to be exported using token generation and session IDs Image 1.

The sample mobile device was procured (Table 1) and tested in front of laymen with his consent. Note that the SIM was not part of the experimental setup with the intention to narrow down the study. The physical dump is collected by the acquisition of internal and cloud storage only taking into account that SIM would not give much information as compared to the information stored in the social media database, internal storage media, and cloud.

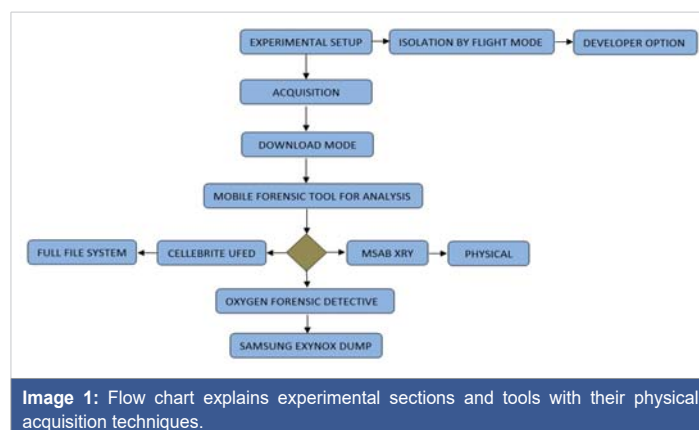


Table 1: Equipment identification before the examination.

Device name	Model	Android vesion	security patch level
Samsung Galaxy M31	SM-M315F/DS	11	December 1 st , 2021

Logical extraction may not require physically connecting the mobile device in order to extract the data. Such extraction works on the principle of injection of the third-party application which collects the on-device data. The injection of such third-party applications can either be by connecting the device with OTG or using wireless bandwidth. While in the case of iOS Technology, the older version can be partial jailbreak using the vulnerability engagement in the device.

The system and software information is rechecked online for custom ROM installation [9] by providing an IMEI number at <https://www.imei.info/>. The compatibility of the Sample mobile device is checked before the acquisition using the [10,11] in-built support of manuals of all three mobile forensic tools [2,12]. The mobile used for testing purposes is checked with the latest android version and security patch level to correctly examine the analytical performance of Forensic tools which helps forensic experts for further analysis in forensic laboratories.

Step one is to isolate the mobile device by enabling Flight mode or Airplane mode [13]. Along with this, enable the developer option and check the stay awake option to prevent the screen from locking [13].

The mobile forensic proprietary tools used for the experimental study are shown in Table 2.

Staging towards the acquisition part after completing the experimental setup of the sample device, the mobile device is now connected to the particular tool at a time for the data collection using physical acquisition [2,14]. To complete the step of acquisition, a mobile device is necessary to put in download mode (Image 2).

Table 2: Mobile forensic tools with their version used in an experimental study.

	Tool Used	Version
1	MSAB-XRY	10.0.0
2	Cellebrite UFED4PC	7.50.0.137
3	Oxygen Forensic Detective	13.6.0.47



Image 2: Download mode enabled in Sample mobile device.

The mobile phone is made pattern locked with 8 keys in pattern as “729513486” So to check whether these tools were able to bypass or crack the pattern lock and the type of technique they adopt [13] Image 3.

A special booting mode specifically made by Samsung for certified repair technicians to get the root access privilege and debug the system easily for easy maintenance, software, and firmware updates along with recovery of data [13,15,16] Images 4-6.

Results and discussion

The objective of this study is fulfilled by examining the working performance of mobile forensic proprietary tools using Physical acquisition [17-20] with a major focus on the recovery of deleted artifacts. The artifacts collected from the examination using different tools are shown in Tables 3,4.

WEREWOLFDUMPER	Success	05-01-2022 11:36:46 UTC+05:30	Waiting for device to start up...
WEREWOLFDUMPER	Success	05-01-2022 11:37:37 UTC+05:30	ro.crypto.state: 'encrypted'
WEREWOLFDUMPER	Success	05-01-2022 11:37:37 UTC+05:30	ro.crypto.type: 'file'
WEREWOLFDUMPER	Success	05-01-2022 11:37:37 UTC+05:30	ro.frp.pst: '/dev/block/persistent'
WEREWOLFDUMPER	Success	05-01-2022 11:37:37 UTC+05:30	pwd file: '/data/system_de/0/spblob/87da81d80d5b3bf7.pwd'
WEREWOLFDUMPER	Success	05-01-2022 11:37:37 UTC+05:30	pwtype: 1
WEREWOLFDUMPER	Success	05-01-2022 11:37:37 UTC+05:30	Suggested brute force method: Pattern lock
WEREWOLFDUMPER	Success	05-01-2022 11:38:02 UTC+05:30	Detected 64 bit architecture.
WEREWOLFDUMPER	Success	05-01-2022 11:38:03 UTC+05:30	Chosen brute force method: Pattern lock
WEREWOLFDUMPER	Success	05-01-2022 11:38:03 UTC+05:30	Trying size(s): 4 - 9

Trying pattern '12496857'...

Image 3: Brute Forcing of pattern lock in Samsung M31 using MSAB-XRY.

Extraction Summary

File System: Samsung GSM SM-M315F Galaxy M31
File System [Android ADB]

Extraction start date/time: 12-01-2022 10:12:35 AM(UTC+5:30)
Extraction end date/time: 12-01-2022 14:6:27 PM(UTC+5:30)

Device Info

Advertising ID #1: bb8cec9d-517e-420c-8e12-2d724041d9c7
Bluetooth MAC Address: D4-8A-39-83-36-B1
Android ID: 6e99dc701242bbe
Carrier Name: Vodafone IN
OS Version: T1
Factory number: RZ8N9317Q78
ICCID: 89918720400330229152
IMEI: 352091181955335
IMSI: 405872081634668
Mac Address: D4-8A-39-83-36-B2
Phone Activation Time: 27-01-2021 12:11:29 PM(UTC+0)

Image Hashes

Hash data is available for this extraction.

Content

79 data sources can be extracted using UFED Cloud

Autofill	232	Calendar	240 (1)	Call Log	5513 (2)
Chats	2489 (38)	Contacts	14356 (292)	Cookies	4578 (4)
Device Connectivity	52	Device Locations	1428	Device Users	1
Devices	52	Downloads	12	Emails	648 (7)
Installed Applications	731	Instant Messages	576 (3)	Notes	93
Passwords	2138	Searched Items	212 (1)	User Accounts	149
User Dictionary	30092	Web Bookmarks	14	Web History	7446 (43)

Image 4: Cellebrite UFED interface after extraction.

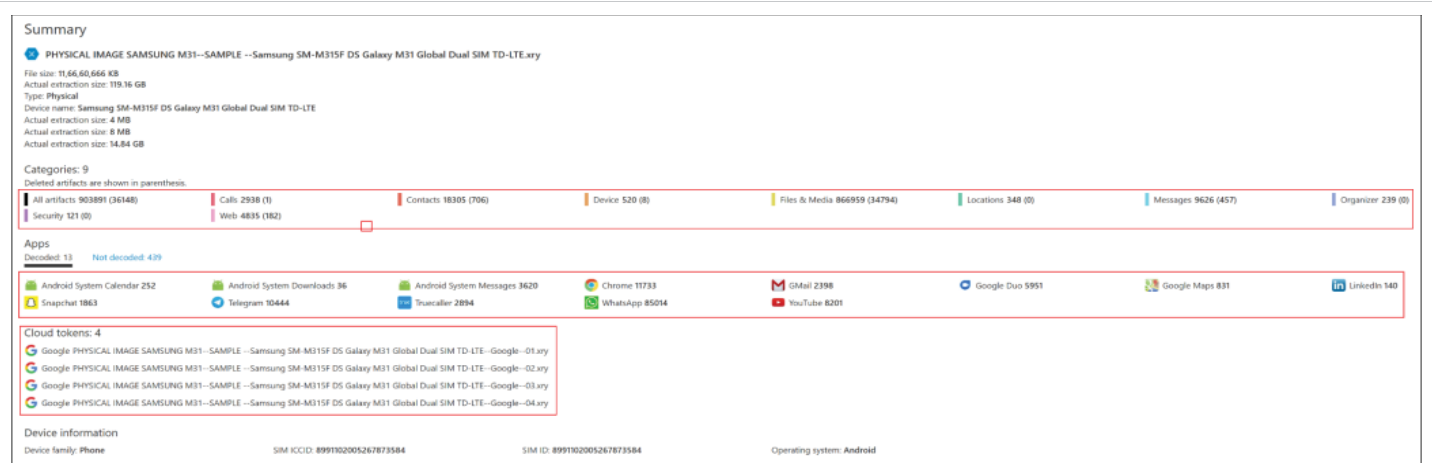


Image 5: MSAB XRY interface after extraction.

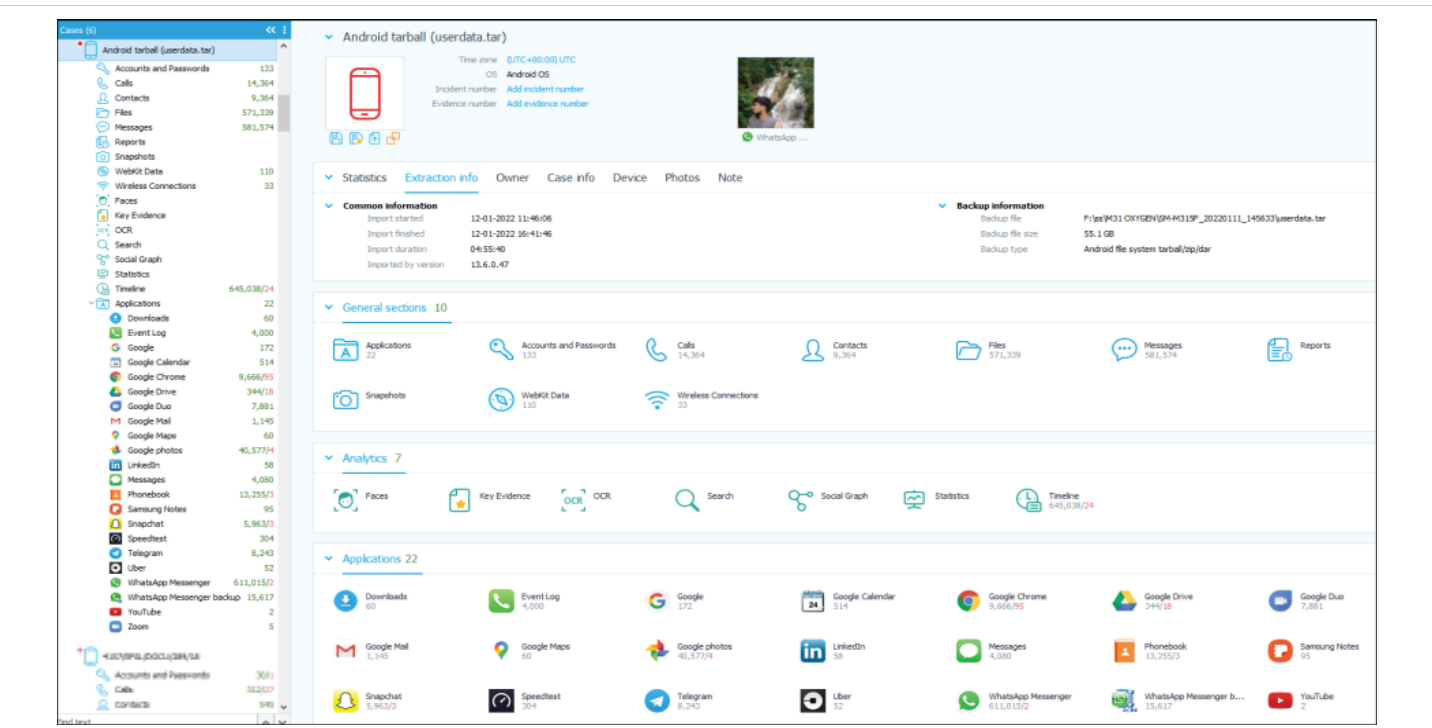


Image 6: Oxygen Forensic Detective interface after extraction.

Table 3: Total artifacts retrieved from Samsung Galaxy M31 SM-M315F/DS.

Category	Tools used		
	Cellebrite UFED	MSAB-XRY	Oxygen Forensic Detective
Total artifacts	553455	940039	1176939

Table 4: Categorization of artifacts retrieved from Samsung Galaxy M31 SM-M315F/DS.

Data category	Tools used		
	cellebrite UFED	MSAB XRY	Oxygen Forensic Detective
call logs	5513(2)	2938(1)	14364
contacts	14356(292)	18305(706)	9364
device	731(0)	520(8)	Not Categorized
files&media	407551(12682)	866959(34794)	571339
locations	1428(0)	348(0)	Not Categorized
messages	3713(50)	9626(457)	581574
calender	240(1)	239(0)	514
user accounts	149	116	133
web data	7460(43)	4835(182)	2080

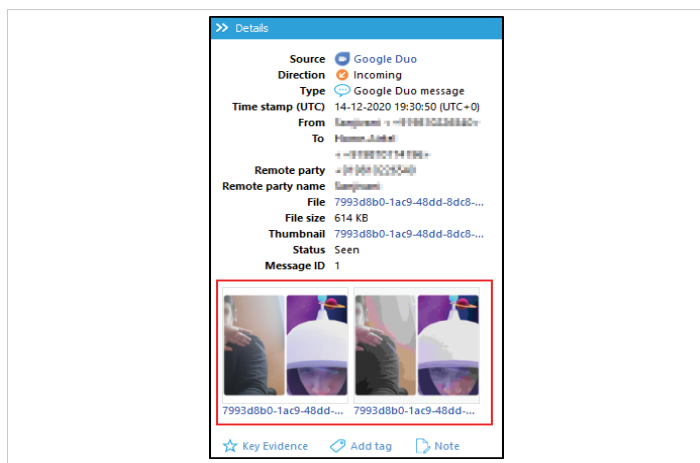
Note: Deleted Artifacts are shown in parenthesis.

For dead devices, chipset-based extraction is performed in order to get the physical dump of data. Along with this method, the device was turned into suitable mode by pressing certain keys which make the tool perform the exploit. However, the chances of getting more amount of deleted data are higher in the case of extraction of the rooted device as compared to the non-rooted one. In order to get the deleted data by physical extraction, the device was made into flashed mode and made into partial root mode which is called download mode or Emergency Download mode (EDL).

The study highlighted the data extraction using Download mode [13,15,16] which is specifically built for technical support and maintenance in Samsung smartphones. Other factors were also considered for the proper analysis of tools as shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Comparison of tools.

Factors	Tools used		
	Cellebrite UFED	MSAB-XRY	Oxygen Forensic Detective
Interface usability	✓	✓	✓
Device compatibility	✓	✓	✓
Log Report generation	×	✓	×
Hashing of report	✓	✓	✓

**Image 7:** On-call snapshot retrieved by Oxygen Forensic Detective.

One of the reasons for considering MSAB XRY over other mobile forensic tools mentioned above is the generation of log reports to examine the errors while performing acquisition. On the other hand [11]. Oxygen forensic detective summarizes artifacts in a much better way than the above tools by filtering the data according to the type of file and application separately [10]. UFED and XRY are more efficient in data and meta-carving as compared to Oxygen Forensic Detective.

Analyzing social media artifacts, Oxygen Forensic Detective finds a vast range of artifacts especially for Whatsapp and Google Duo by extracting the on-call snapshots as compared to other tools as shown in Image 6. The above study was found to be helpful for forensic investigators in mitigating the challenge of unlocking Samsung smartphones, efficient analysis & report generation [8] Image 7.

Conclusion

Above mentioned tools, Cellebrite UFED, MSAB XRY and Oxygen Forensic Detective were found to give the best results in different domains of artifact retrieval. The functionality of these proprietary tools is much better in all aspects as compared with open-source tools. In the advancement of Mobile Forensics, the tools need to be updated with the latest Mobile device modules and technology to recover deleted artifacts. Extracting the artifacts from the latest android and security patch level will always be a challenge to forensic experts. The extraction of social messaging application data is a challenging task in view of the probability of finding critical evidence is more as compared to other artifacts. Capturing the token and in order to live capturing of cloud-based application data is another challenging task for law enforcement agencies

as well as proprietary tool manufacturers. The research in the developing field of forensic science cannot be compromised by the upgradation of smartphones.

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