RTSA File Format

Features and Purpose

The RTSA file format is used to store files generated by the RTSA Suite. The file format is binary a chunk based, similar to e.g. the PNG file format.

The file format offers the following distinguishing features:

- Binary, compact and optionally compressed storage of measurement data
- Meta data storage (location, time, format etc.)
- Multi streams
- Interleaving of streams
- Sequential stream read and write
- Random access of complete files
- Preview storage of power spectra and power histogram
- Extension of existing streams

File Structure

Chunk Structure

The file is composed of individual and optionally recursive chunks. Each chunk starts with a chunk header:

The chunkID is a 32 bit code comprised of four ASCII letters. The chunk size (which includes the header) can be used to skip unknown or ignored chunks and progress quickly through the file. A chunk is comprised of a header and actual data, which may be either another series of chunks or binary data, based on the type of chunk.

The version field indicates incompatible of versions of chunks. If the header size in a chunk is larger than the known size of the reading application, the superfluous data may be safely skipped – if it is smaller, the additional fields can be safely assumed to have a default value (usually zero). Incompatible layout of a chunk is indicated by a different version number. With this scheme, it is painless to add new fields to chunks without creating incompatible versions.

General Data Types

Data is stored in little endian format.

Times are always stored in 64bit floating point doubles, relative to the start of the Unix epoch (January first 1970, 12am) or the start of the stream.

All offsets in the file are 64 unsigned integers.

Strings are stored as UTF8 and padded with zeros.

Generic File Layout

An RTSA file starts with a DSFH (File Head) chunk and ends with a DSFT (File Tail) chunk. Extending an existing file will result in multiple DSFH/DSFT pairs. Chunks in the file can be read forward using the chunk size or with random access using offsets stored in other chunks. All offsets are 64bit, relative to the file start and are backwards. There are no forward references, thus one can easily stream an RTSA file.

Basic file structure could be:

```
    STRM
    Stream Head
    ANTA
    Antenna
    SSTR
    Sub Stream
    SAMP
    Samples
    SAMP
    Sample
    STRT
    Stream Tail
    DSFT
```

Other references are based on 64 bit IDs, eg. Stream ID, Sub Stream ID or Antanna IDs. All objects bearing an ID are placed in the file before they are used. They are also part of backward linked chains for retrieval during random access.

Chunks

File Head DSFH

The DSFH chunk starts a new independent segment in an RTSA file. All IDs are considered invalid a the start of a new file header chunk.

mCreationTime				
	creation			

File Tail DSFT

The DSFT terminates a file segment. This is usually the second chunk visited during random access or the last chunk during streaming.

mCompletionTime	File completion time relative to the epoch
mStreamOffset	Offset of the tail of the last stream in the file
mNumStreams	Number of streams in the file

Stream Head STRM

The stream head chunk indicates the start of a new stream in the file.

```
struct DSPStreamFileChunkStreamHead : public DSPStreamFileChunk
{
        quint64
                       mStreamID;
        double
                       mStartTime;
        qint64
                       mStreamOffset;
mStreamID
                            Unique 64bit ID for this stream
mStartTime
                            Start time of this stream relative to the
                            epoch
mStreamOffset
                            Offset of the tail of the previous stream
                            in the file
```

Stream Tail STRT

The stream tail chunk ends a stream. It includes offsets to the start of the stream and the other stream meta data elements such as sub streams and antennas.

mStreamOffset	Offset of the stream head chunk
mSubStreamOffset	Offset of the last sub stream chunk
mPreviewOffset	Offset of the last preview chunk
mNumSamples	Number of samples in this stream
mPayloadSize	Total payload size in bytes for this stream
mPreviewLevels	Number of preview hierarchy levels
mNumPreviews	Total number of previews
mNumPreviewSegment s	Total number of preview segments
mEndTime	End time of this stream relative to the stream start time (aka stream duration)
mAntennaOffset	Offset of the last antenna chunk
mMetaDataOffset	Offset of the last meta data type chunk

Sub Stream SSTR

A sub stream chunk contains the common meta data for a series of samples, such as frequency bounds, rates, types, orientations etc. A stream may contain any number of sub streams, due to e.g. antenna movement or multi segment antennas.

```
struct DSPStreamFileChunkSubStream : DSPStreamFileChunk
{
       quint64
                       mStreamID:
       quint32
                       mSubStreamID;
       qint64
                       mSubStreamOffset
       double
                       mFrequencyStart;
       double
                       mFrequencyStep;
       double
                       mFrequencySpan;
       double
                       mValueMinimum;
       double
                       mValueMaximum;
       double
                       mDirection;
       quint32
                       mAntennaIndex;
       quint32
                       mNumCategories;
       char
                       mName[128];
       quint64
                       mAntennaID;
       quint64
                       mMetaDataID;
};
mStreamID
                           The ID of the parent stream
mSubStreamID
                           The stream unique ID of this sub stream
mSubStreamOffset
                           Offset of the previous sub stream of this
                           stream
mFrequencyStart
                           Start of the frequency range
mFrequencyStep
                           Sample rate or bin step
                           Size of frequency range
mFrequencySpan
mValueMinimum
                           Lowest value
mValueMaximum
                           Highest value
                           Simple directional indicator
mDirection
mAntennalndex
                           Index of multi segment antenna
mNumCategories
                           Number of categories, if this is a sub
                           stream with name indexed samples
mName
                           Name of this sub stream
mAntennalD
                           The ID of the antenna used to create
                           this sub stream
mMetaDataID
                           Meta data type ID, if this is a structured
                           data sub stream
```

The payload of a sub stream chunk contains the sub stream category chunks.

Sub Stream Category SSCA

A single category in a category sub stream. A category is a named scalar measurement, e.g. a channel power or a detection probability.

mName	Name of the category
mFlags	Category flags DSSFC_*
mRed	Red color value
mGreen	Green color value
mBlue	Blue color value
mAlpha	Alpha color value
mStartFrequency	Start frequency
mEndFrequency	End frequency

Antenna ANTA

Antenna chunks combine information of the physical and logical properties of the antenna used as well as geo information, such as location and direction.

```
struct DSPStreamFileChunkAntenna : public DSPStreamFileChunk
       quint64
                      mAntennaID;
       gint64
                      mAntennaOffset;
       char
                      mName[128];
       double
                      mLatitude, mLongitude;
       quint32
                      mFlags;
       quint32
                      mNumSegments;
       float
                      mTransform[4][4];
       char
                      mAntennaUUID[16];
};
static const guint32 DSPAF_LOCATION_VALID
                                                    0x0000001U;
static const quint32 DSPAF_TRANSFORM_VALID =
                                                    0x00000002U;
static const guint32 DSPAF_DIRECTION_VALID =
                                                    0x00000004U;
static const quint32 DSPAF_ROTATION
                                                    0x00000008U;
```

mAntennalD	Unique ID of the antenna
mAntennaOffset	Offset of previous antenna chunk in the stream
mName	Name of the antenna
mLatitude	Latitude of base antenna location
mLongitude	Longitude of base antenna location
mFlags	Antenna flags DSPAF_*

mNumSegments	Number of antenna segments
mTransform	Antenna transformation (e.g. rotation)
mAntennaUUID	Global unique ID of the antenna

The 64 bit antenna ID is used to indicate one antenna chunk, whereas the antenna UUID indicates the physical antenna. Thus moving an antenna would change the antenna ID but not the UUID.

The payload of an antenna chunk contains the antenna segment chunks.

Antenna Segment ANTS

A multi segment antenna contains a series of antenna segment chunks in its payload section.

Meta Data Type MDTT

Structured data is stored in the file using a binary compression mode based on a meta data type. These types are stored themselves as binary compressed data in the payload section of meta data type chunks.

The structured data and its meta data type system is explained in its own chapter.

Preview SPRV

A preview chunk contains one histogram and several preview spectra, as well as offsets into the file for fast seeking. They are organized in a tree, where the tree height is determined by the number of previews in the file.

```
struct DSPStreamFileChunkStreamPreview : public DSPStreamFileChunk
{
    static const quint32 HistogramWidth = 48;
    static const quint32 HistogramHeight = 32;
    static const quint32 WaterfallWidth = 128;
```

```
static const quint32 SegmentsShift
                                                             4;
      static const quint32 Segments
                                                             16;
      static const quint32 Samples
                                                             4096;
                      mPreviewLevel, mPreviewCount;
      quint8
      qint64
                      mPreviewOffsets[Segments];
                      mPreviewTimes[Segments];
      double
                      mPreviewSamples[Segments];
      guint64
mPreviewLevel
                          Level of this preview chunk in the
                          hierarchy. Leave chunks of the tree
                          have level zero
mPreviewCount
                          Number of preview elements in this
                          chunk
mPreviewOffsets
                          Offsets of child preview chunks or the
                          sample chunks for leave preview
                          chunks
mPreviewTimes
                          Start times of the child preview chunks
                          relative to the stream start time
mPreviewSamples
                          Start sample index numbers of the child
                          preview chunks
```

The payload of the preview chunk may contain the preview information in unitless eight bit values.

Samples SAMP

Actual measurement data is stored in sample chunks.

```
struct DSPStreamFileChunkSamples : public DSPStreamFileChunk
{
       quint64
                               mStreamID;
                               mSubStreamID;
       quint32
                                               : 8;
       DPSStreamSampleType
                               mSampleType
       DSPStreamSampleUnit
                               mSampleUnit
                                               : 8;
                                               : 8;
       DSPStreamPayloadType
                               mPayloadType
       qint32
                               mCompression
                                               : 8;
                               mPacketStartTime, mPacketEndTime;
       double
       quint32
                               mPacketFlags;
                               mSampleSize, mSampleDepth, mNumSamples;
       quint32
};
```

mStreamID	ID of the parent stream	
mSubStreamID	ID of the sub stream for this data	
mSampleType	Datatype of the individual data	
	elements	
mSampleUnit	Unit used for the samples	

mPayloadType	General payload type
mCompression	Compression or zero for lossless
mPacketStartTime	Start time of this chunk relative to stream start
mPacketEndTime	End time of this chunk relative to stream start
mPacketFlags	Packet flags DSPPF_*
mSampleSize	Size of an individual sample
mSampleDepth	Depth of a sample
mNumSamples	Number of samples in the packet

The sample type describes a single data element with its size (8, 16 or 32) its signed-ness (U or S) and whether it is integer or float (U/S or F). The extension N denotes packet storage, whereas all others are stored on 16 byte boundaries.

The sample unit describes the physical unit and value range for an individual data element.

GENERIC	Generic floating point value
DBM	Decibel milliwatt
PERCENTAGE	Percentage 01
DBM_HZ	Decibel milliwatt per Hz
DBM_M2	Decibel milliwatt per square meter
INDEX	Integer index
PHASE	Phase from $-\pi$ to $+\pi$
SIGNED_1	Signed floating point in the range – 1 to

	1
UNSIGNED_1	Unsigned floating point in the range 0 to 1

The payload type specifies the high level sample data structure.

GENERIC	Generic numeric data
AUDIO	Audio samples
IQ	IQ samples, two values per sample
SPECTRA	Power spectra
DETECTION	Detection probability
HISTOGRAM	Histogram
ENERGY	Energy
VECTOR3	3D Vectors
STRUCTURED	Structured data using meta data types
IQ_SLICE	Slices of IQ samples
IMAGE	Grey scale image

Structured Data using Meta Data Type

Type of Types

The structured data types use a hierarchical type system with a small set of base types and three type constructors: fixed sized vectors, variable sized arrays and objects.

A type object itself has five fields:

id	U64	ID of this type
type	U8	Type enum for basic type or type constructor
flags	U32	Flags for this type DSMTF_*
count	U32	Number of elements or bitmask
elements	Array	Member elements

The elements array is used with objects and has the following type:

name	String	Name of the element
flags	U32	Flags for the element DSMEF_*
type	Object	The type of the element

This type of types has the type ID zero and forms the root of the type system.

A C type definition would look like this:

```
struct MetaType
       quint64
                      mID;
       Type
                      mType;
       quint32
                      mFlags;
       quint32
                      mCount;
       struct Element
               QString
                              mName;
               quint32
                              mFlags;
               MetaType
                              mType;
               mElements[];
       }
};
```

Storage Format

A simple numeric type is stored in little endian format, using the number of bytes denoted by its type flag (8, 16, 32 or 64).

The string type is stored using a 32bit number for the number of characters followed by a sequence of UTF8 characters.

Vectors are stored as a packed sequence of elements.

Arrays are stored with a 32bit size, followed by a sequence of elements.

Objects are stored with a 32bit mask, indicating non zero elements (starting with bit zero) followed by a sequence of non zero elements.

Examples

The examples assume type IDs starting at one (1)

Array of 16bit signed Integers

An array of simple types, stores the type of the base element in a single element child.

```
MetaType ArrayOfInt = \{1, MT\_ARRAY, 0, 0, \{\{'''', 0, \{2, MT\_INTEGER, DSSMTF\_16BIT \mid DSSMTF\_SIGNED, 0, \{\}\}\}\}\};
```

The resulting binary sequence would thus be:

```
01 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 : mID 1
06 : mType MT_ARRAY
00 00 00 00 : mFlags 0
00 00 00 00 : mCount 0
00 00 00 01 : mElements size 1
00 00 00 00 : mName ""
00 00 00 00 : mFlags
00 00 00 1F : mType mask 11111
02 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 : mID 2
02 : mType MT_INTEGER
12 00 00 00 : mFlags 16Bit and signed
00 00 00 00 : mCount 0
00 00 00 00 : mElements size 0
```

Object of a 3D vector

Objects can store up to 32 named data elements. The child elements are stored in an array of objects, including the types. Types that have been defined before are stored with their ID only. This example uses a vector of 32bit floats with the elements x, y and z.

```
MetaType Vector3D = {1, MT_OBJECT, 0, 0, {{"x", 0, {2, MT_FLOAT, 0, 0, {}}} {{"y", 0, {2, MT_FLOAT, 0, 0, {}}} {{"z", 0, {2, MT_FLOAT, 0, 0, {}}}};
```

The resulting binary sequence would thus be:

```
01 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 : mID 1
07: mType MT_OBJECT
00 00 00 00 : mFlags 0
00 00 00 00 : mCount 0
00 00 00 03: mElements size 3
01 00 00 00 78: mName "x"
00 00 00 00: mFlags
00 00 00 1F: mType mask 11111
02 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 : mID 2
```

```
03: mType MT_FLOAT

12 00 00 00: mFlags 16Bit and signed

00 00 00 00: mCount 0

00 00 00 00: mElements size 0

01 00 00 00 79: mName "y"

00 00 00 00: mFlags

00 00 00 01: mType mask 00001

02 00 00 00 00 00 00 00: mID 2

01 00 00 00: mFlags

00 00 00 01: mType mask 00001

02 00 00 00: mFlags

00 00 00 00: mFlags
```

Seeking and Preview Data

All preview chunks of a stream form a tree of stream segments. Each node has up to 16 references to nodes in the next lower level. The lowest level references individual sample chunks.

Seeking by time or sample number is thus a three step process:

- 1. Read the stream tail and extract the preview root offset and the stream end time
- 2. Traverse the tree using the preview times, samples and offset fields of the nodes, starting from the root until you reach a leaf node
- 3. Linearly read and scan the sample chunks using the packet start and end time

The preview data in each preview chunk consists of a series of up to 16 power spectra and one histogram. The cover range of each spectra is given by the preview times, the cover range of the histogram is the full range of the preview chunk.

The preview data is comprised of eight bit unsigned integer values spanning the complete range from 0 to 255. It has no unit or scale and is intended for visual presentation of the stream content without the need to actually read the file. The recursive structure of the preview allows a quick presentation of the full stream or sections even for very large files.

Compression of Spectrum Data

Uncompressed spectra are stored as 32bit floating point numbers. The common unit is dBm (decibel milliwatt). Spectrum data can be compressed using a compression factor indicator from 1 to 31. The algorithm is based on wavelets, quantization and variable symbol lengths.

Wavelet Conversion

The first compression step is a trivial wavelet transform. It is performed on up to 16 spectra in one block.

It alternates between a compression step in time direction and a step in the frequency direction, until both are not divisible by two anymore. Only the low pass coefficients are recursively filtered.

The wavelet transform replaces the even indexed numbers with the sum of and the odd indexed numbers with the difference between the two samples. The results are multiplied by the square root of one half in each step to keep the numbers in range.

Ouantization

All coefficients are then uniformly quantized using a quantization factor derived from the compression factor.

```
float quant = 0.1f * (1 << (chunk.mCompression - 1));</pre>
```

Bit Packing

Bit packing uses a variant of the Rice Code to store the integer portion of the quantized coefficients. The number of leading zero bits indicates the size of the code, each leading zero bit increases the size of the residual by three bits. The remaining bits provide the residual values. Codes are therefore multiples of four bits, which simplifies parsing.

Code	Value	Code	Value
1000	+0	1001	-0
1010	+1	1011	-1
1100	+2	1101	-2
1110	+3	1111	-3
0100 0000	+4	0100 0001	-4
0100 0010	+5	0100 0011	-5
0100 0100	+6	0100 0101	-6
0111 1110	+35	0111 1111	-35
0010 0000 0000	+36	0010 0000 0001	-36
0010 0000 0010	+37	0010 0000 0011	-37
0011 1111 1110	+291	0011 1111 1111	-291
0001 0000 0000	+292	0001 0000 0000	-292
0000		0001	
0001 0000 0000	+293	0001 0000 0000	-293
0010		0011	
0001 1111 1111	+2339	0001 1111 1111	-2339
1110		1111	

Decompression

Decompression is performed in the inverse order of compression:

- 1. Unpacking the required number of coefficients from the bitstream
- 2. Dequantization
- 3. Inverse wavelet transform

Sample Code

This section provides some sample code for the decompression step.

The WaveTransformStep performs one decompression step in the frequency (x/colums) or time dimension (y/rows). The coefficients are assumed to be compact. The sx and sy parameters specify the step size, the dxy parameter the offset between the two sections (half the step size in the appropriate direction).

WaveDecompress first determines the starting step size, then iterates alternatively in time and frequency domain.

```
void WaveDecompress(void)
{
    quint32step = 1;
    while ((NumRows & (2 * step - 1)) == 0) step *= 2;
    while ((NumColumns & (2 * step - 1)) == 0) step *= 2;

while (step > 1)
    {
        step >>= 1;
        if ((NumColumns & (2 * step - 1)) == 0)
        {
            WaveTransformStep (2 * step, step, step);
        }
        if ((NumRows & (2 * step - 1)) == 0)
        {
            WaveTransformStep (step, 2 * step, step * NumColumns);
        }
    }
}
```

The transform step is the same in compression and decompression mode, only the order and step sizes are different.

Sample Files Analyzed

File Header

```
DSFH 44 53 46 48 mChunkID 18 00 00 00 mChunkSize
```

```
00 00 00 00
                              mChunkFlags;
01 00
                              mVersion
18 00
                              mHeaderSize
E0 96 2A ED 3A 1C 15 43
                             mCreationTime
Stream Header
STRM
53 54 52 4D
                              mChunkID
28 00 00 00
                             mChunkSize
00 00 00 00
                              mChunkFlags
01 00
                             mVersion
28 00
                             mHeaderSize
07 00 00 00 00 00 00 00
                             mStreamID
29 5C FF EC BE 22 D6 41
                             mStartTime
00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00
                             mStreamOffset - no prior stream packet, thus terminating offset 0
Antenna
ANTA
41 4E 54 41
                              mChunkID.
F8 00 00 00
                              mChunkSize
00 00 00 00
                              mChunkFlags
01 00
                             mVersion
F8 00
                             mHeaderSize
Sub Stream
SSTR
53 53 54 52
                              mChunkID
E8 00 00 00
                             mChunkSize
00 00 00 00
                              mChunkFlags
01 00
                              mVersion
E8 00
                              mHeaderSize
07 00 00 00 00 00 00 00
                              mStreamID
03 00 00 00
                              mSubStreamID
00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00
                             mSubStreamOffset - no prior substream packet
Sample packet
SAMP
53 41 4D 50
                             mChunkID.
40 70 00 00
                             mChunkSize
00 00 00 00
                              mChunkFlags
01 00
                              mVersion
40 00
                              mHeaderSize
07 00 00 00 00 00 00 00
                              mStreamID
03 00 00 00
                              mSubStreamID
05
                              mSampleType - DSST_F32
01
                              mSampleUnit - DSSU DBU
03
                              mPayloadType - DSPT SPECRTA
00
                              mCompression - uncompressed
D9 39 6A D2 6D DD 50 40
                              mPacketStartTime
1D E7 BD Fa 7F DD 50 40
                              mPacketEndTime
00 00 00 00
                              mPacketFlags;
80 03 00 00
                             mSampleSize - 896 bins
01 00 00 00
                             mSampleDepth
```

mNumSamples - 8 spectra in the packet

- first data sample

...

08 00 00 00

91 C8 9A C2

Stream Tail

STRT 53 54 52 54 58 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 01 00 58 00 18 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 38 01 00 00 00 00 00 30 D8 0B 01 00 00 00 00 10 13 00 00 00 00 00 01 00 00 01 00 00 05 00 00 05 00 00 05 00 00 05 00 00 05 8 00 00 05 8 F8 D9 3D 29 08 51 40 40 00 00 00 00	mChunkSize mChunkFlags mVersion mHeaderSize mStreamOffset - offset of the STRM chunk in the file mSubStreamOffset - offset of the last SSTR chunk in the stream mPreviewOffset mNumSamples mPayloadSize mPreviewLevels - small file, thus single level preview tree mNumPreviews - 6 preview chunks in the bottom level mNumPreviewSegments - 88 preview segments in the bottom level - padding mEndTime mAntennaOffset - offset of the last ANTA chunk in the stream
File Tail DSFT 44 53 46 54 28 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 01 00 28 00 A0 FE 52 ED 3A 1C 15 43 01 00 00 00 xx xx xx xx	mChunkID mChunkSize mChunkFlags mVersion mHeaderSize mCompletionTime mNumStreams - padding

Command Line File Utility

The RTSAFileTool command line utility can be used to inspect, repair or export rtsa files. It is part of the installation and can be found in the applications install folder.

Inspecting Files

The command line for inspecting files is:

```
RSTAFileTool info
  [-start=<starttime>] [-end=<endtime>]
  [-histo] [-preview[=<lines>]]
  file.rtsa
```

start	HH:mm:ss.z zz	Optional start time in the file
end	HH:mm:ss.z zz	Optional end time in the file
histo		Show histogram for selected range
preview	U32	Show preview lines of spectras
file.rtsa		Filename of source file

Repairing Files

The command line for repairing files is:

RSTAFileTool repair [-compress=<factor>] file.rtsa target.rtsa

compress	U32	Compression factor to be used in target file
file.rtsa		Filename of source file
target.rtsa		Filename of target file

Exporting Data from Files

The command line for exporting data from files is:

```
RSTAFileTool export
```

```
[-start=<starttime>] [-end=<endtime>]
[-compress=<factor>]
```

[-format=<csv|rtsa|xml|excel|dat|xml|json|wv|asc|mat|iq>]

file.rtsa [target.csv]

start	HH:mm:ss.z	Optional start time in the file
end	HH:mm:ss.z	Optional end time in the file
compress	U32	Compression factor for target files
format		Output format
file.rtsa		Filename of source file
target.csv		Filename of target file, or stdout if no filename is provided