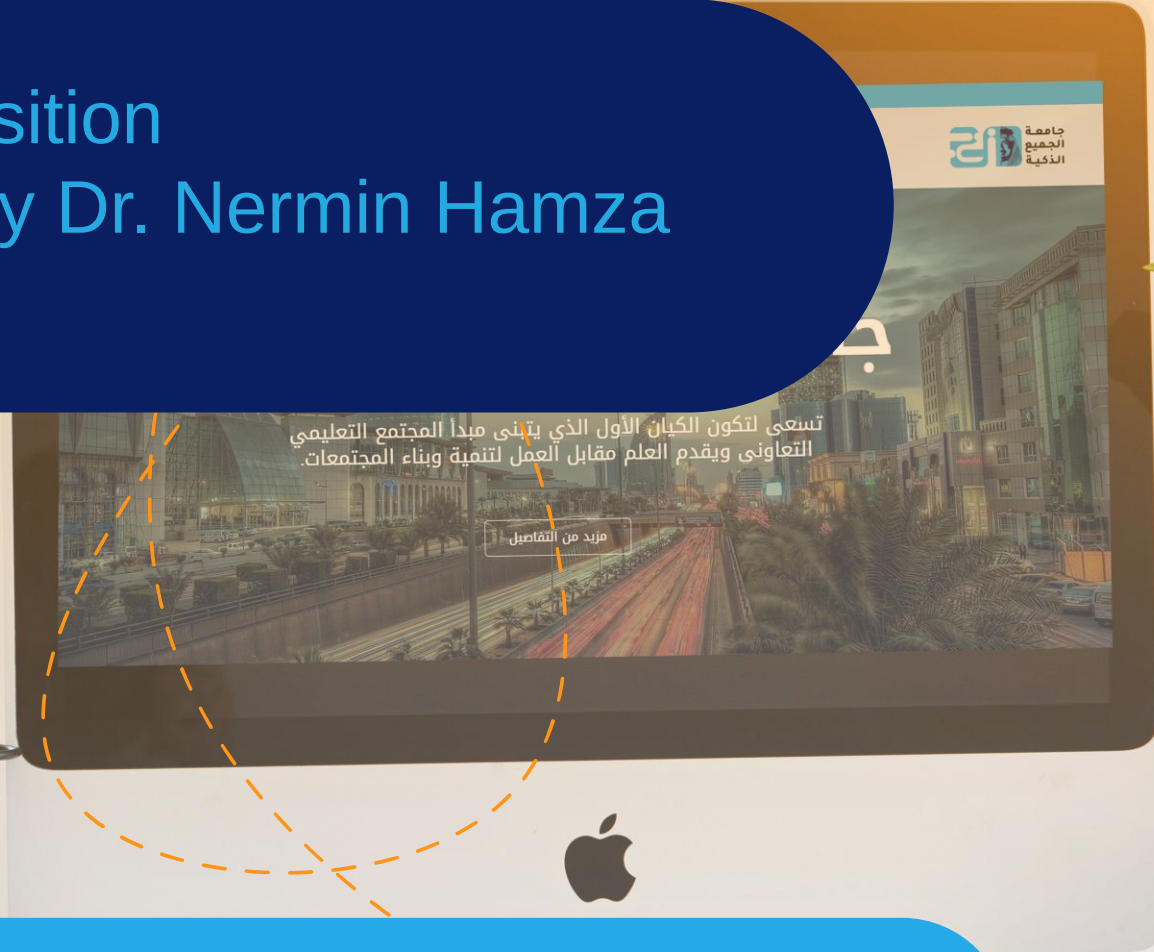


Data Acquisition

Prepared by Dr. Nermin Hamza

Lecture 3



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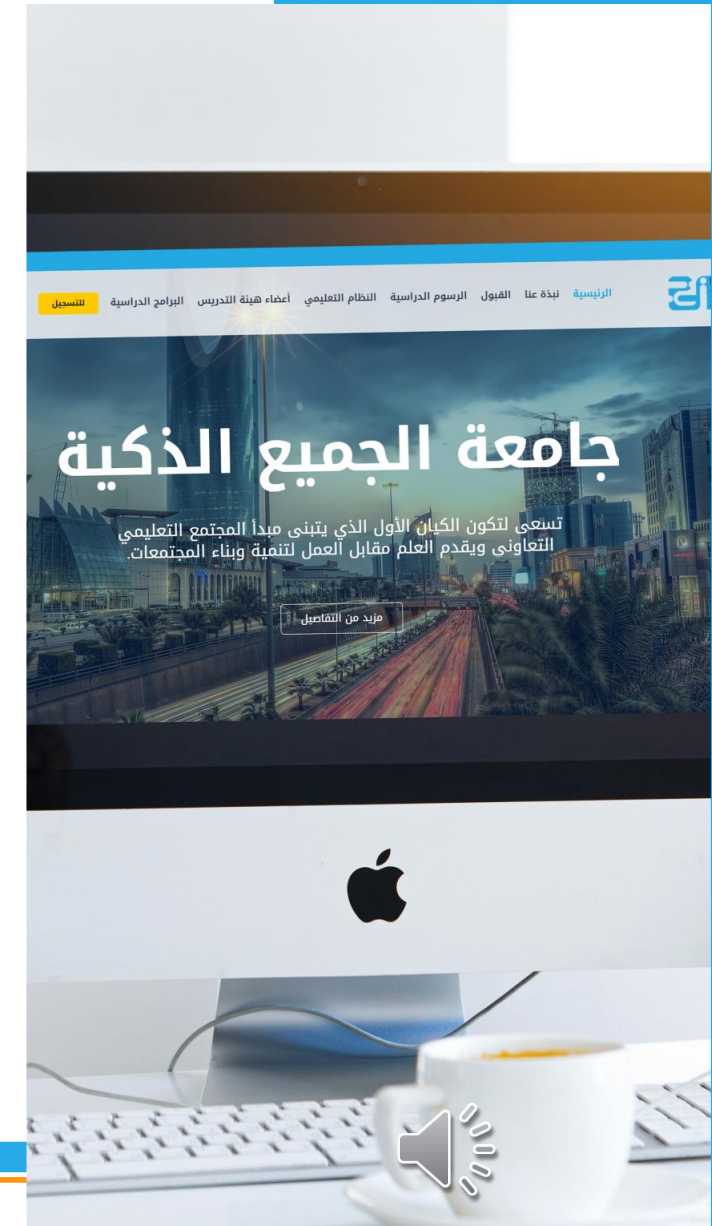
CYB 670
IT Forensics



Lecture 3

Main Topics

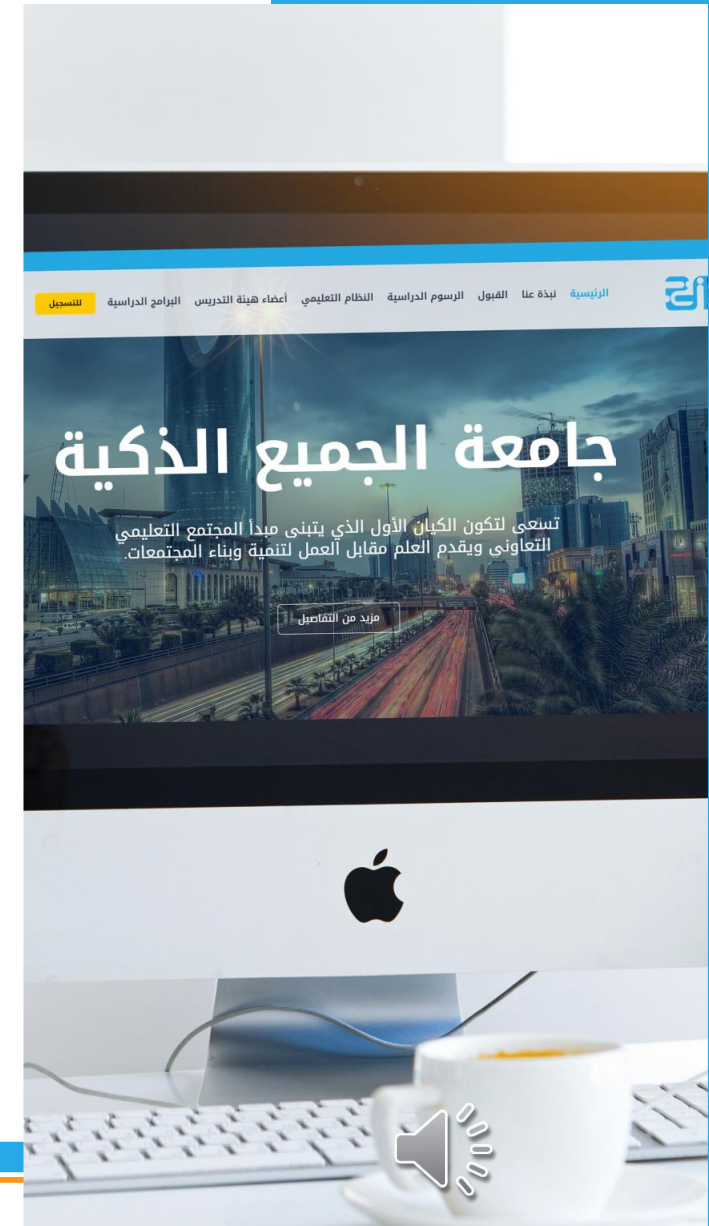
- Exploring evidence
- Disk Drive
- Data Acquisition



Lecture 3

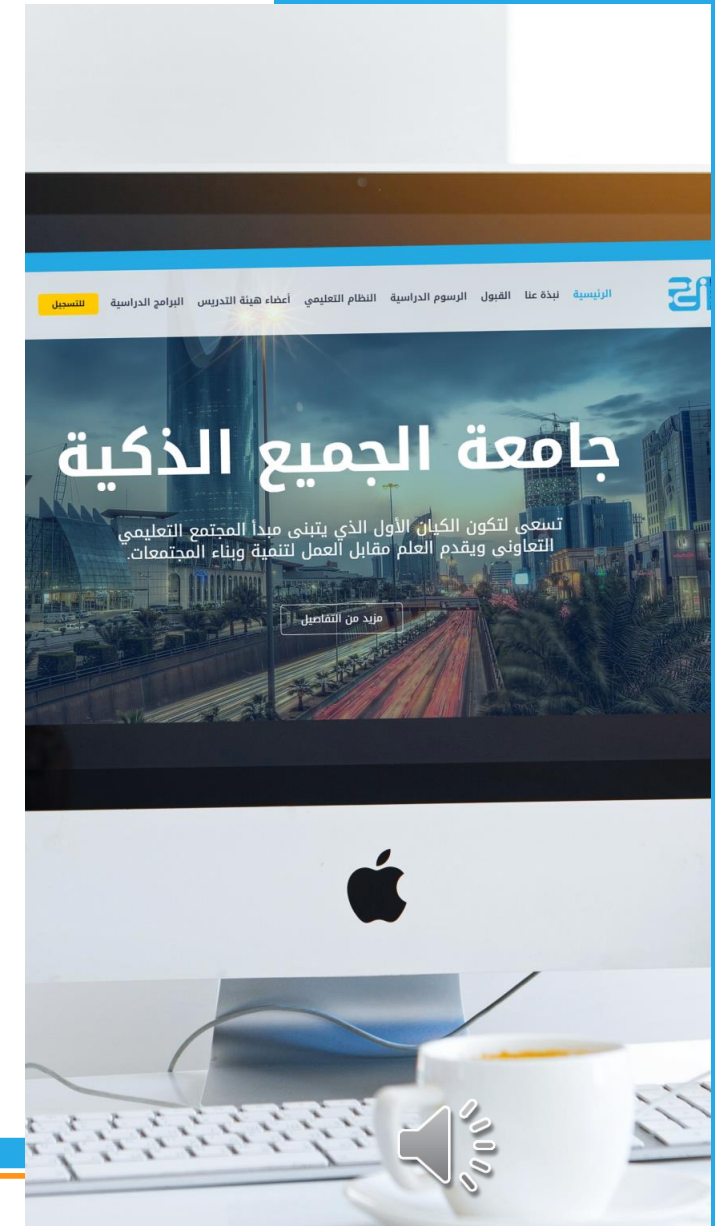
Exploring evidence

Law matter produced before a court of law in an attempt to prove or disprove a point in issue, such as the statements of witnesses, documents or material objects.

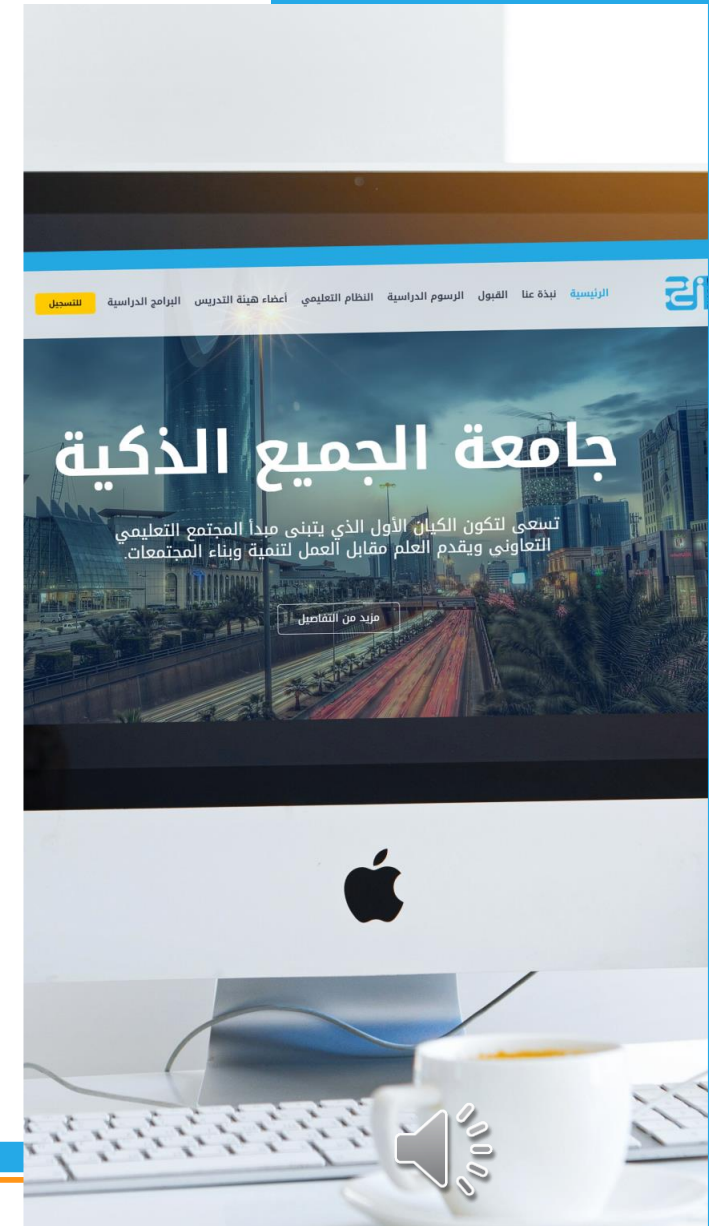


Lecture 3

Disk Drive



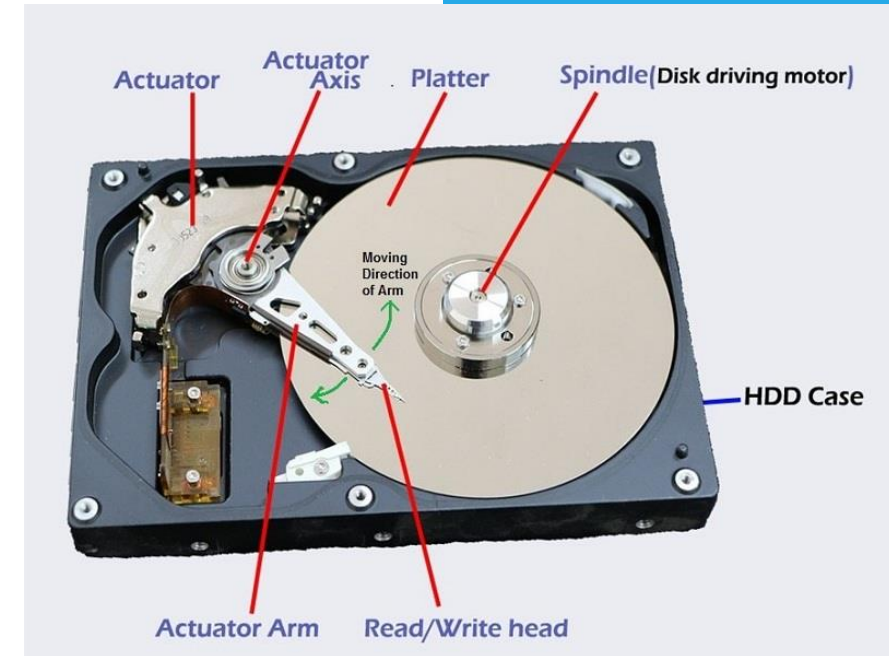
- Magnetic storage devices
 - Magnetic storage devices read and write data by using electromagnetic read/write heads (floppy and magnetic tap)
- Optical storage devices
 - CD/DVD
- Flash Memory Device



Lecture 3

Hard Disks

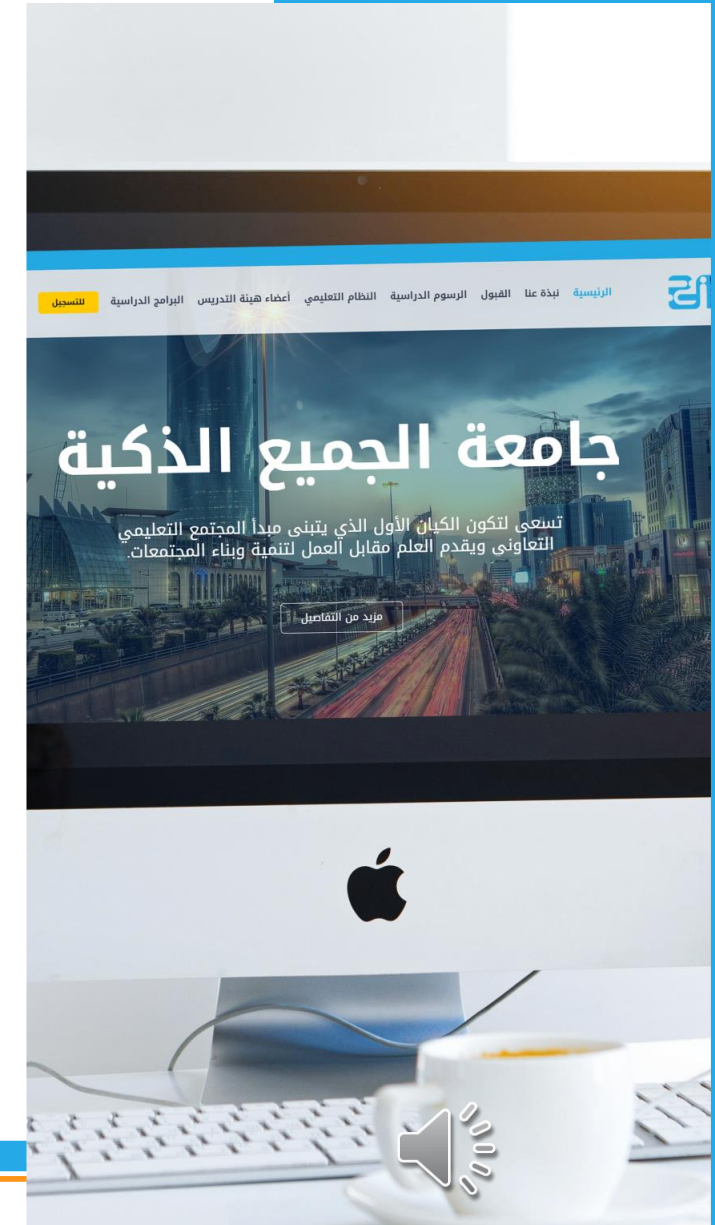
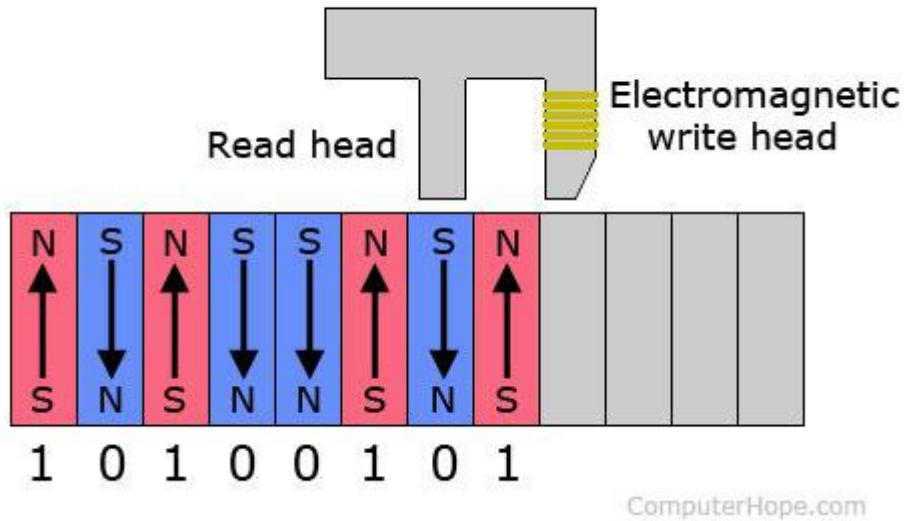
- HDD
 - Capacity of hard disk
 - Several disks known as platters
 - (sector and tracks)
 - Data is read, written or erased as the magnetic dots pass under read/write heads
 - (seek time , access time , transfer time)
- SSD
 - Data is stored by controlling the movement of electrons within a NAND chip
 - Data is stored as 0s and 1s in millions of tiny transistors within the chip



Lecture 3

Hard Drive

Hard drive read/write head



Lecture 3

Hard Drive Capels



IDE(PATA)

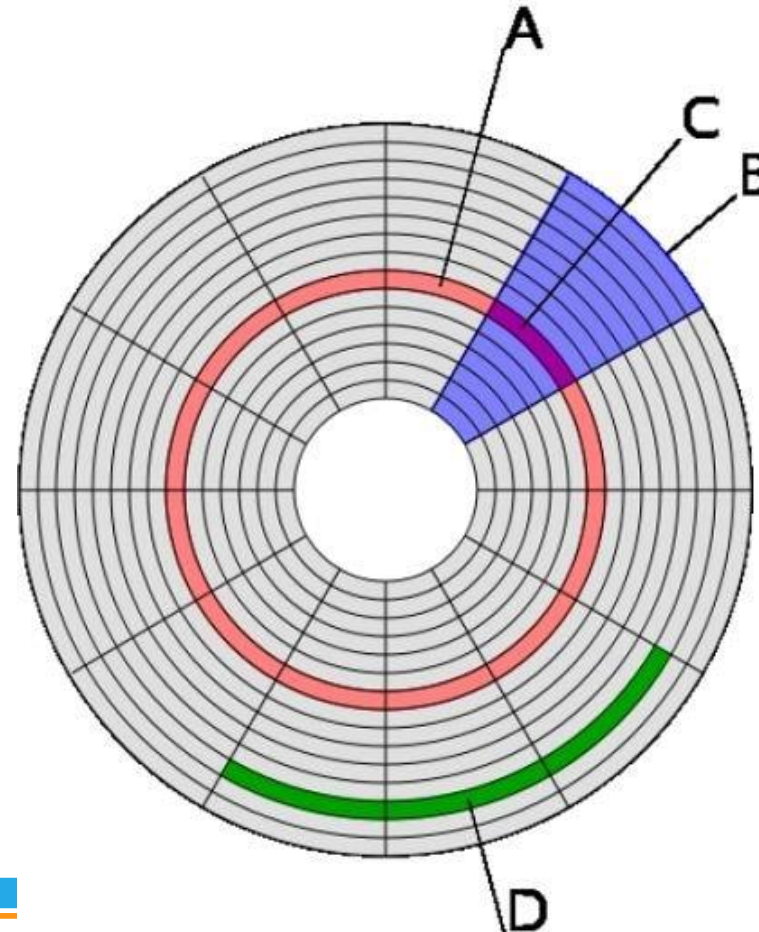
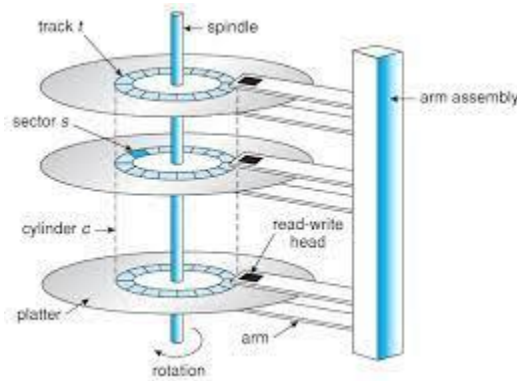


SATA



Lecture 3

Hard Drive Structure



Hard Drive Structure:

A = track

B = sector

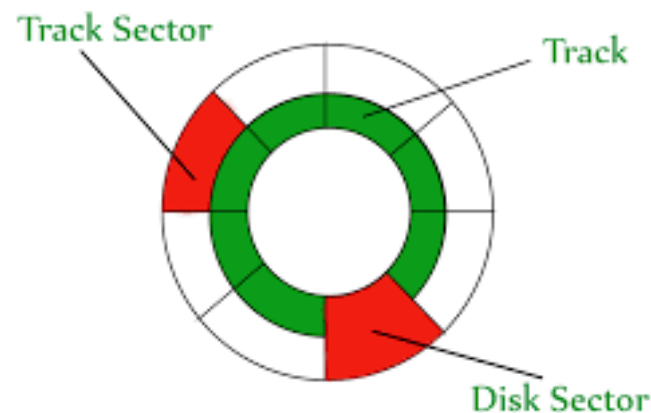
C = sector of a track

D = cluster



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- Track : Disk platters are formatted in a system of concentric circles, or rings, called tracks.
- Sector : Within each track are sectors, which subdivide the circle into a system arcs, each formatted to hold the same amount of data—typically 512 bytes

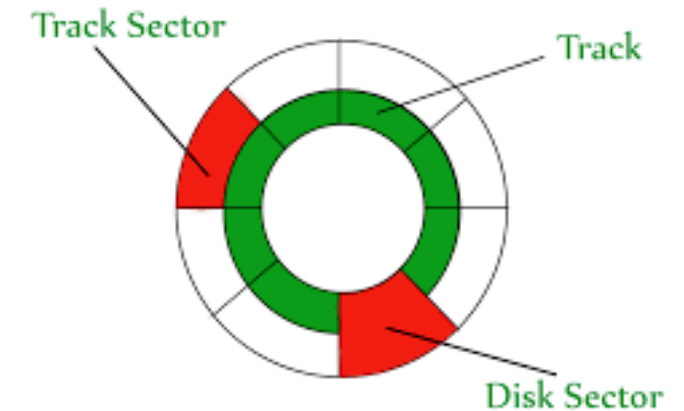


- **Bad Sector** : Bad sectors refer to areas on the disk where data cannot be appropriately accessed due to logical or physical errors.

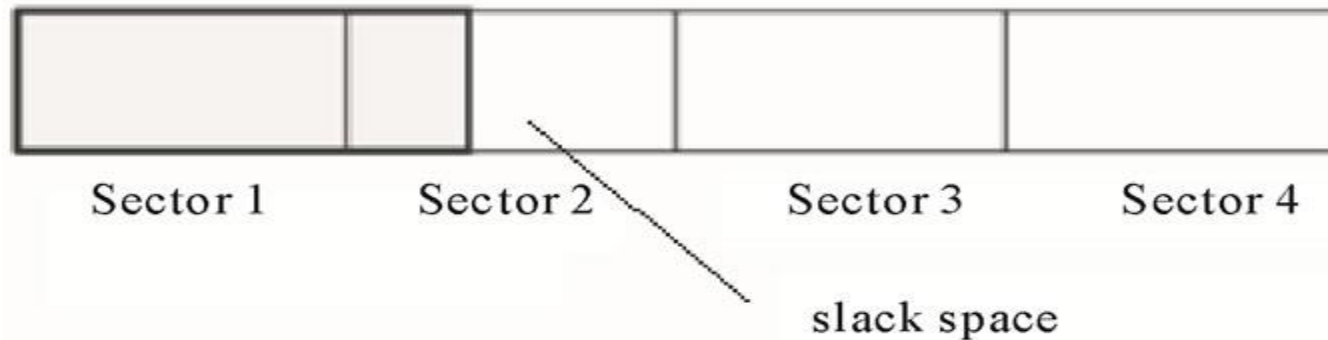
- **Sector is used but not allocated**

Unallocated Space

One of the most neglected areas in forensic data recovery is that of unallocated Space. When a file on a hard drive containing data is deleted, the data belonging to the file remains on the disk. This area is known as unallocated space. The data will remain there until it is overwritten by another file. Any data found in this area at one time belonged to a file which has since been deleted.



- **Slack space** is the leftover storage that exists on a computer's hard disk drive when a computer file does not need all the **space** it has been allocated by the operating system.
- The examination of **slack space** is an important aspect of computer forensics.

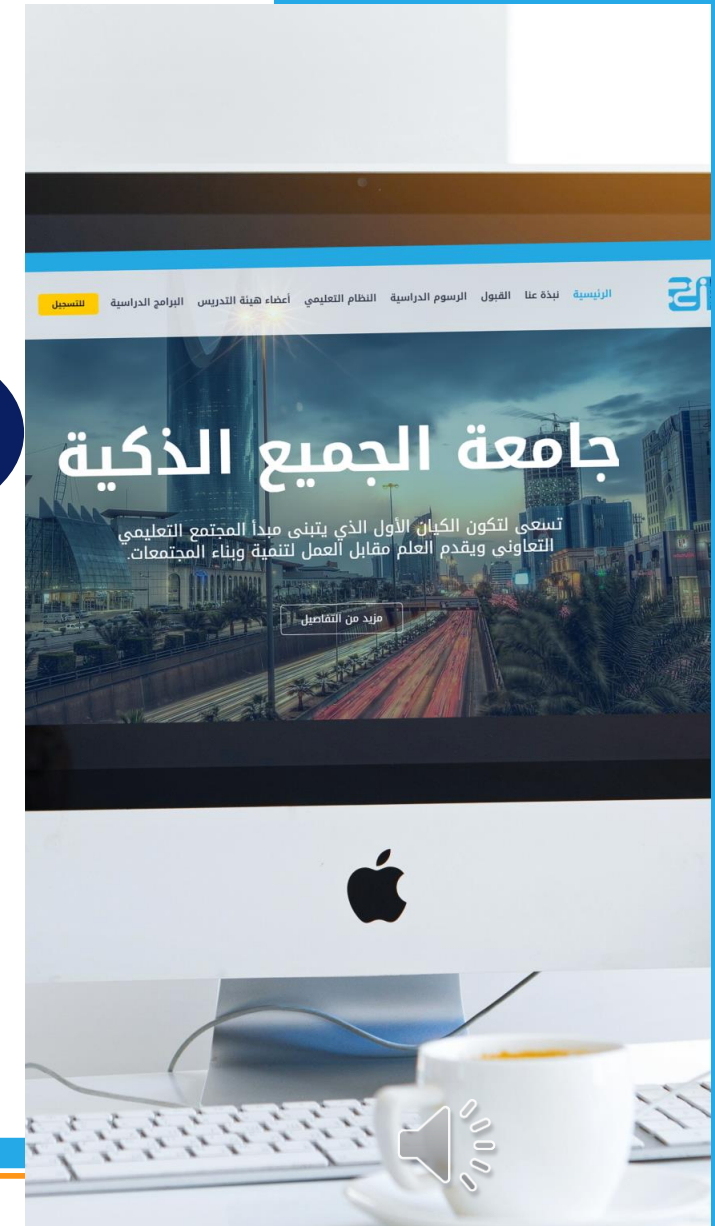


- Understanding Storage Formats for Digital Evidence
- Understanding write blocking
- Data Acquisition Types
- Data Acquisition Methods
- Defining forensic imaging



Lecture 3

Understanding Storage Formats for Digital Evidence



- Data in a forensics acquisition tool is stored as an image file
- Each vendor has unique features, so several different proprietary formats are available.
- Depending on the proprietary format, many forensics analysis tools can read other vendors' formatted acquisitions.



- Bit Stream

- Bit Stream (mirror image/ evidence grade backups) involves capturing data on the copied media.
- This include hidden and residual data (slack, space , swap, unused space, residue, deleted files , etc.)

- Backup

- Slack, residue , deleted ,etc.. Are not indexed .
- Backup usually donot capture this data they modify the timestamps of data contaminating the timeline .



- Three formats
 - Raw format
 - Proprietary formats
 - Advanced Forensics Format (AFF)



- Examiners performed a bit-by-bit copy from one disk to another disk the same size or larger.
- Makes it possible to write bit-stream data to files.
- This copy technique creates simple sequential flat files of a suspect drive or data set. The output of these flat files is referred to as a **raw format** .



- Advantages
 - Fast data transfers
 - Ignores minor data read errors on source drive
 - Most computer forensics tools can read raw format
- Disadvantages
 - Requires as much storage as original disk or data
 - Tools might not collect marginal (bad) sectors



- Most commercial forensics tools have their own formats for collecting digital evidence.

Proprietary formats typically offer several features that complement the vendor's analysis.

- Features offered
 - Option to compress or not compress image files
 - Can split an image into smaller segmented files
 - Can integrate metadata into the image file



- Disadvantages
 - Inability to share an image between different tools
 - File size limitation for each segmented volume
 - The Expert Witness format is unofficial standard



- Developed by Dr. Simson L. Garfinkel as an open-source acquisition format
- Design goals
 - Provide compressed or uncompressed image files
 - No size restriction for disk-to-image files
 - Provide space in the image file or segmented files for metadata
 - Simple design with extensibility
 - Open source for multiple platforms and OSs

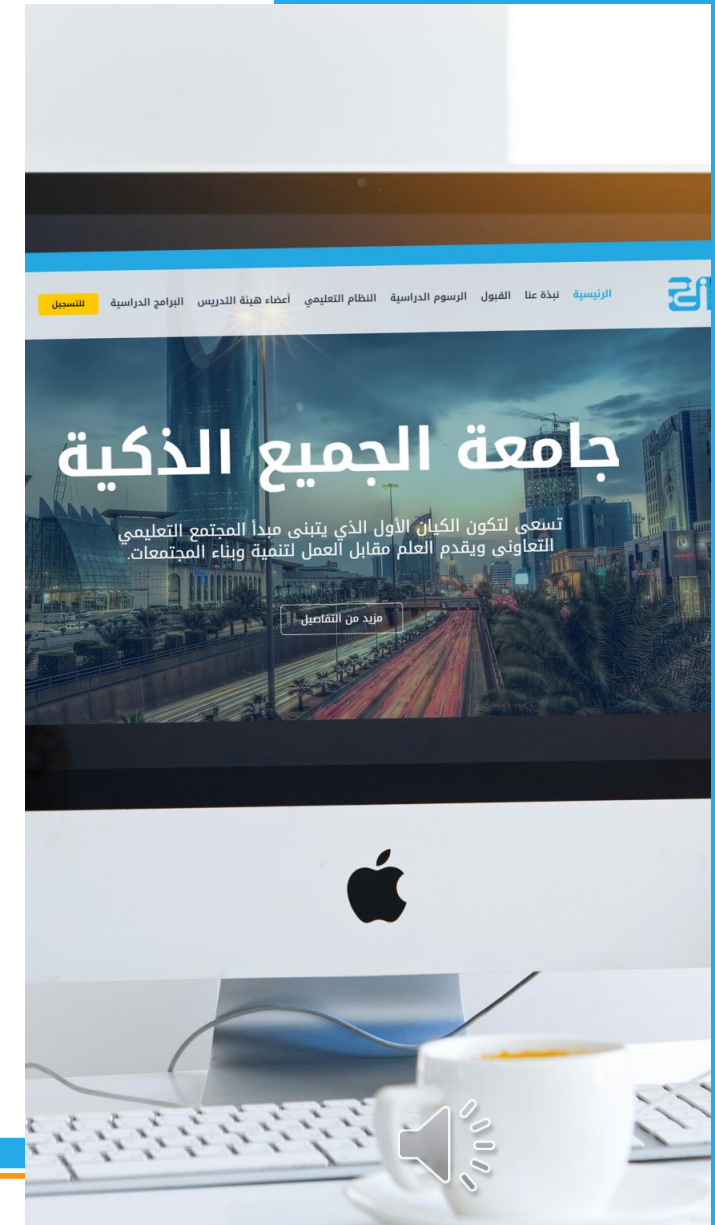


- Design goals
 - Internal consistency checks for self-authentication
- File extensions include .afd for segmented image files and .afm for AFF metadata



Lecture 3

Understanding write blocking

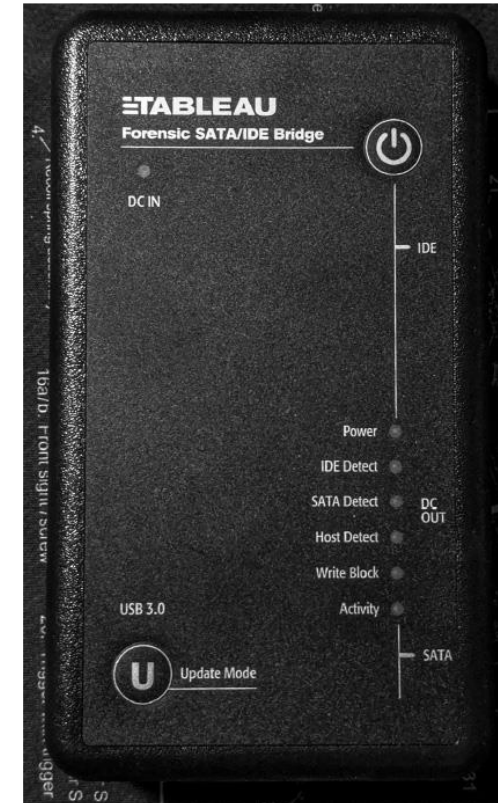


Understanding write blocking

- We want to ensure we do not change a single bit of data on the source device.
- To prevent the alteration of the source device, we must use a write blocker.
- You have a choice of utilizing a "hardware write blocker" or a "software write blocker."



- A hardware write blocker is a device that intercepts and prevents any modification to the source device.



Software write blocker

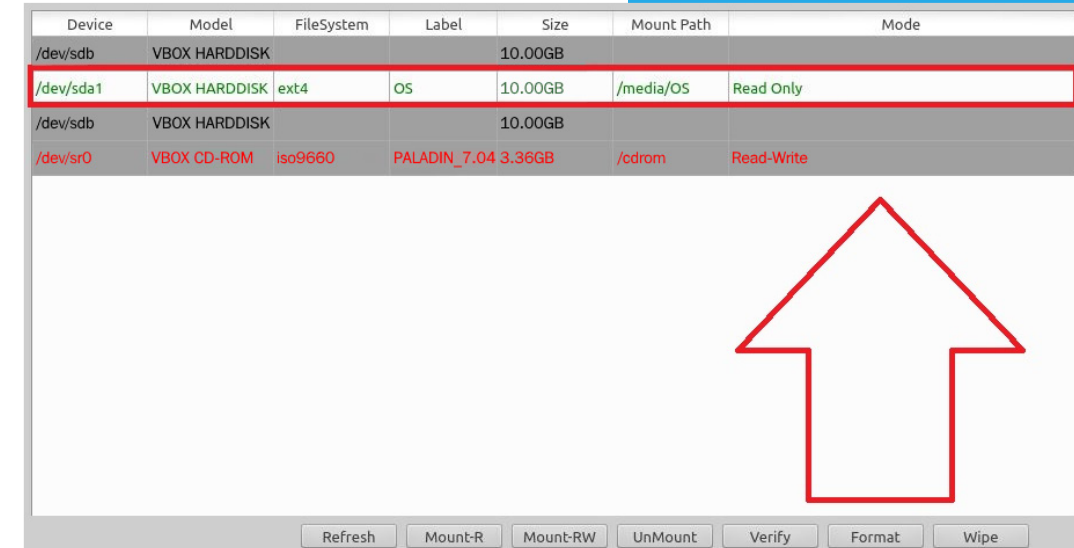
- Software write blocking is where a change is made to the operating system to stop it from making writes to the device.
- For a Windows based system, there is a registry change you can make to prevent rights to attached USB devices.
- This will require you to have a hard drive dock to connect to the system.



Paladin toolbox

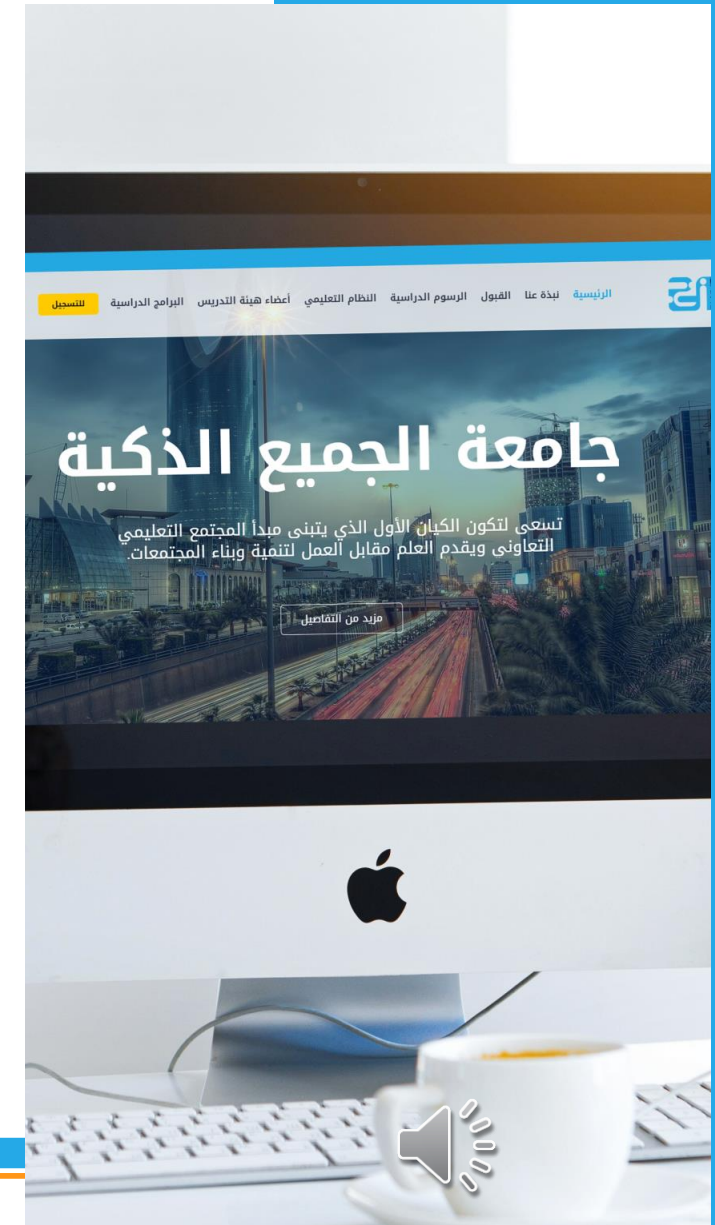
There are two options when you mount a device:

- Read-only
- Read/write
- You **should not mount** a device read/write unless you want to change the device.
- If you create a **forensic image of the device**, then you should mount read-only.



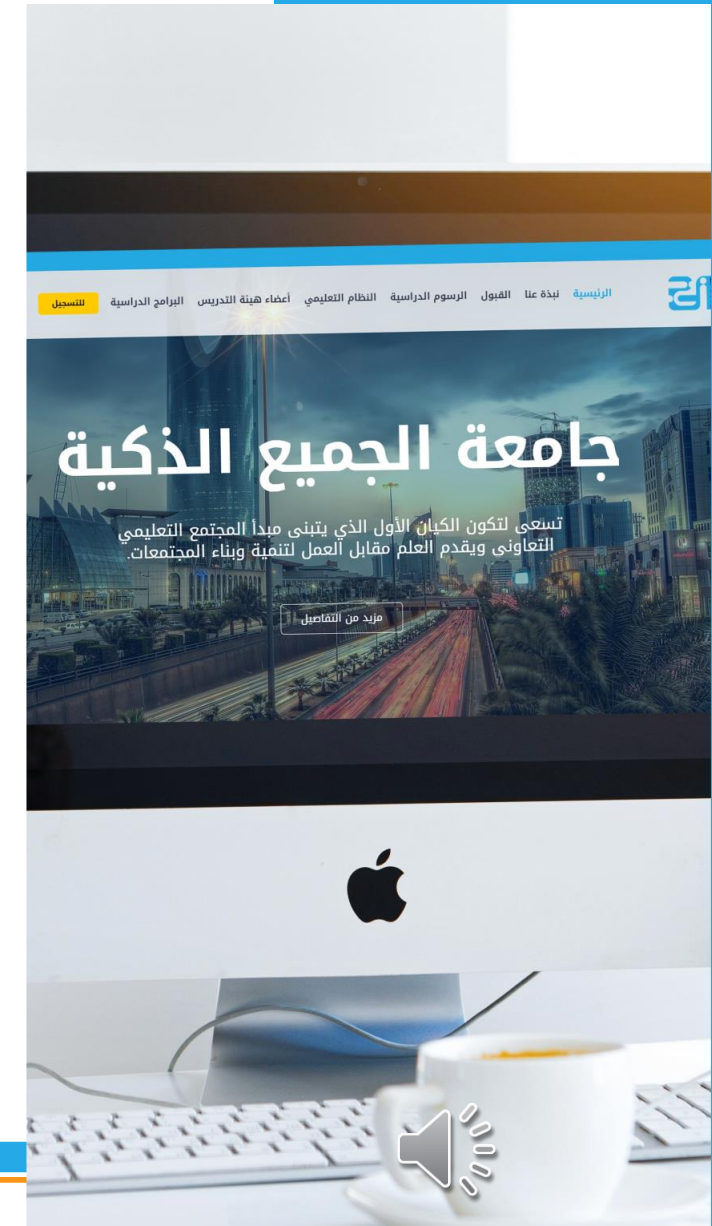
Lecture 3

Data Acquisition Types

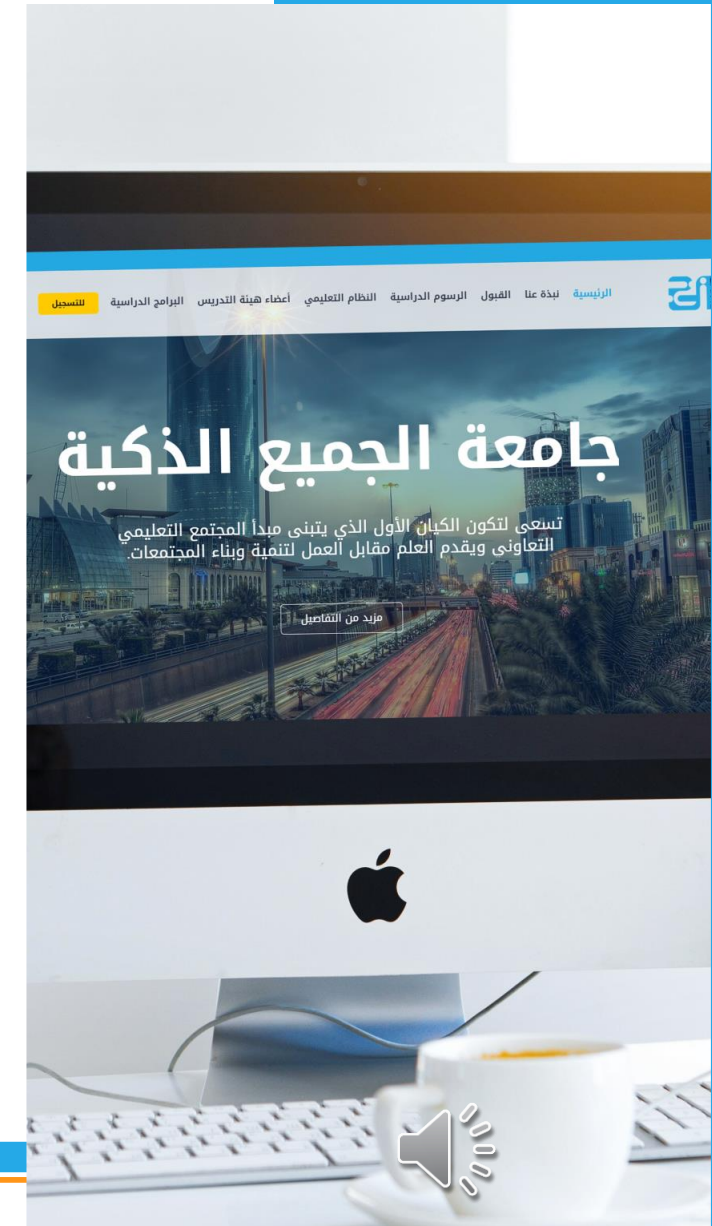


Two types of data acquisition

- Static acquisition
- Live acquisition

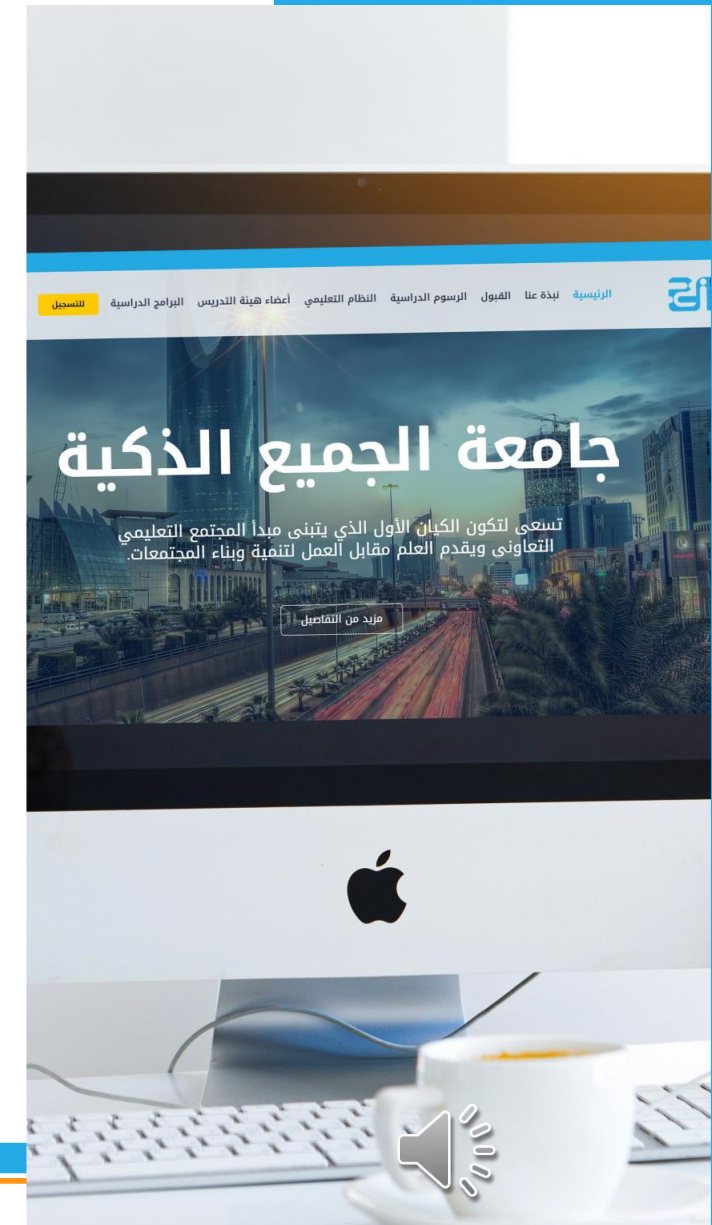


- **Static acquisition**
 - Static data acquisition refers to the process of extracting and gathering the **unaltered data from storage media**.
 - Sources of non-volatile data include hard drives, DVD-ROMs, USB drives, flash cards, smart-phones, external hard drives, etc.
 - Copying a hard drive from a powered-off system
 - Used to be the standard
 - Does not alter the data, so it's repeatable

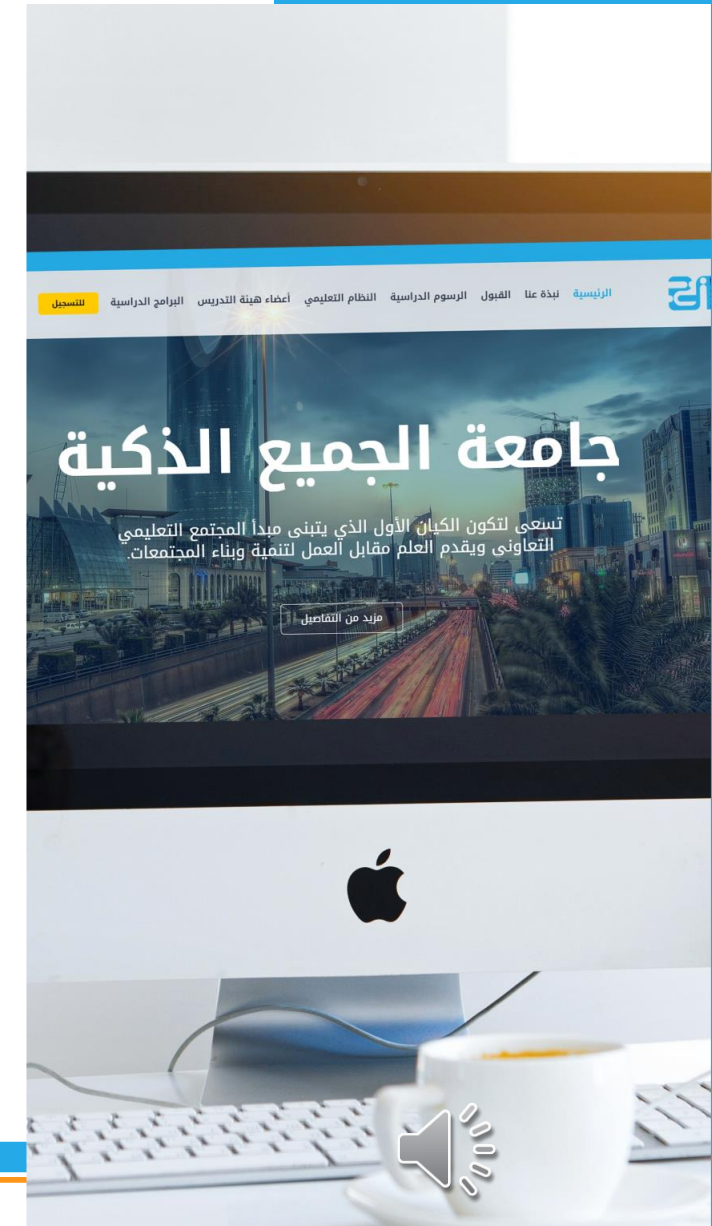


- **Live acquisition**

- A live acquisition is where data is retrieved from a digital device directly via its normal interface; for example, switching a computer on and running programs from within the operating system. This has some level of risk, as data is likely to be modified.
- Copying data from a running computer
- Now the preferred type, because of hard disk encryption
- Cannot be repeated exactly—alters the data
- Also, collecting RAM data is becoming more important
 - But RAM data has no timestamp, which makes it much harder to use

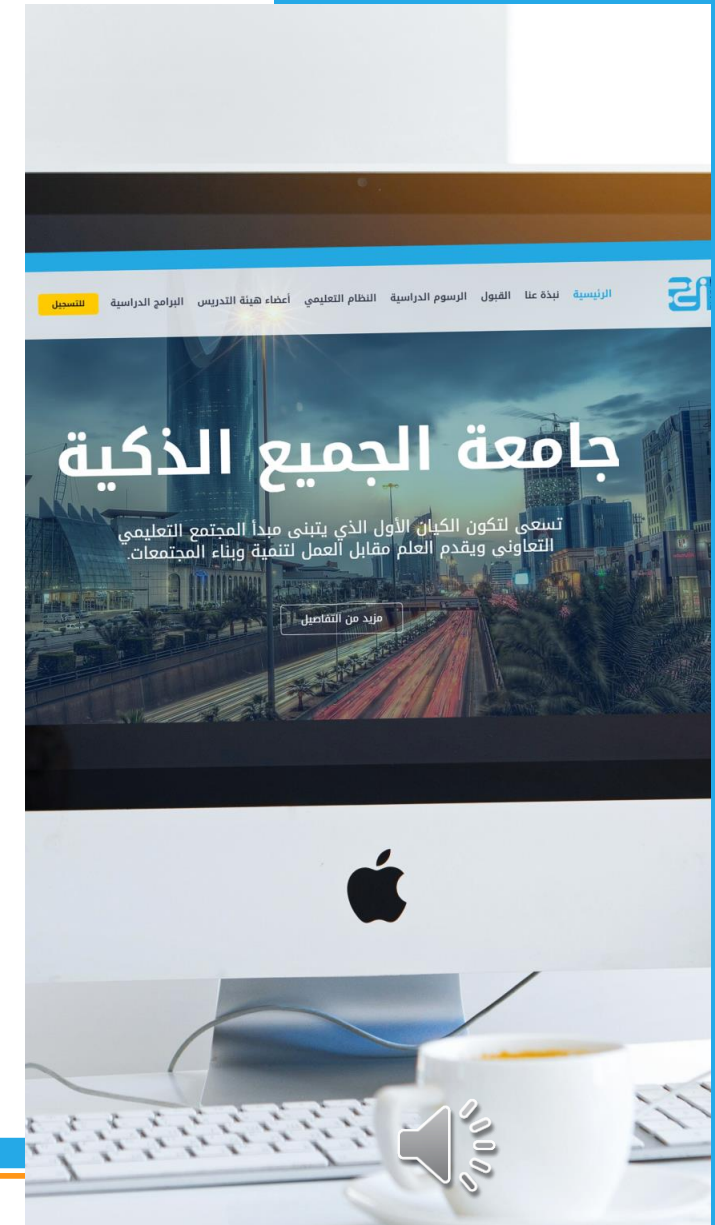


- **Order of volatility**
 - ▣ Registers and Cache
 - ▣ Routing Table, ARP Cache, Process Table, Kernel Statistics
 - ▣ Contents of System Memory (RAM)
 - ▣ Remote Logging and Monitoring Data
 - ▣ Physical Configuration, Network Topology
 - ▣ Temporary File Systems
 - ▣ Data on Disk
 - ▣ Archival Media



Lecture 3

Data Acquisition Methods



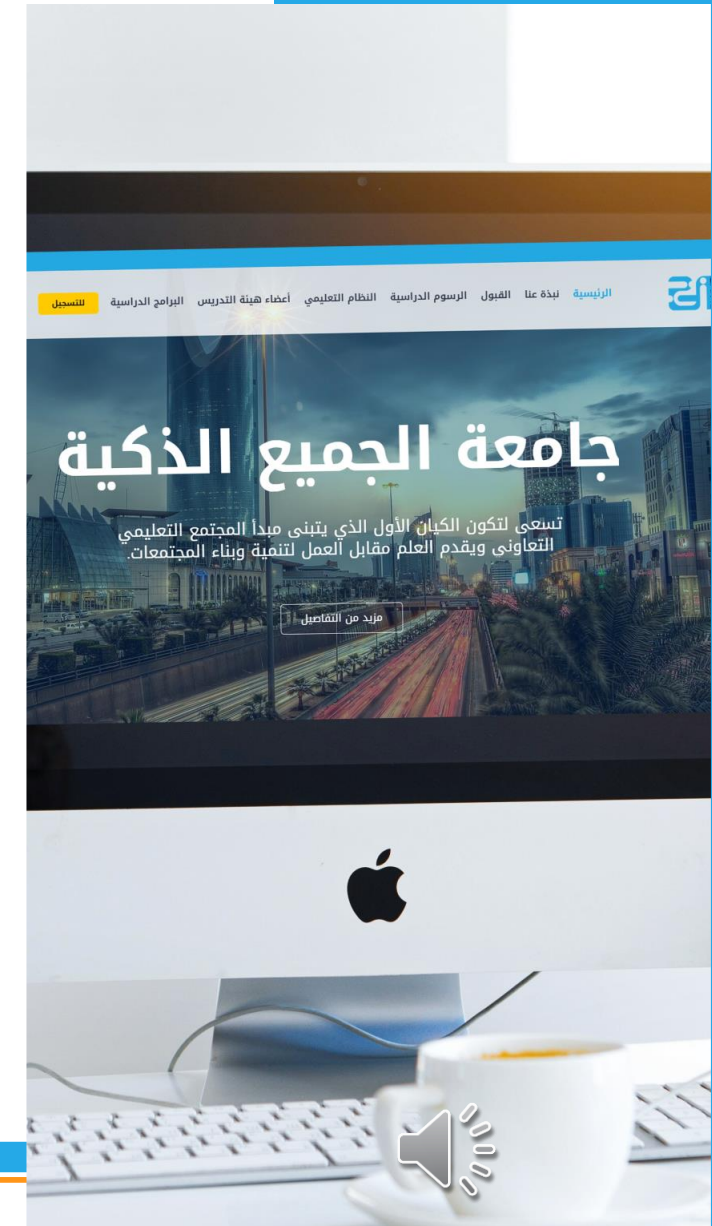
- When making a copy, consider:
 - Size of the source disk
 - Use digital signatures for verification
 - When working with large drives, an alternative is using tape backup systems whether you can retain the disk



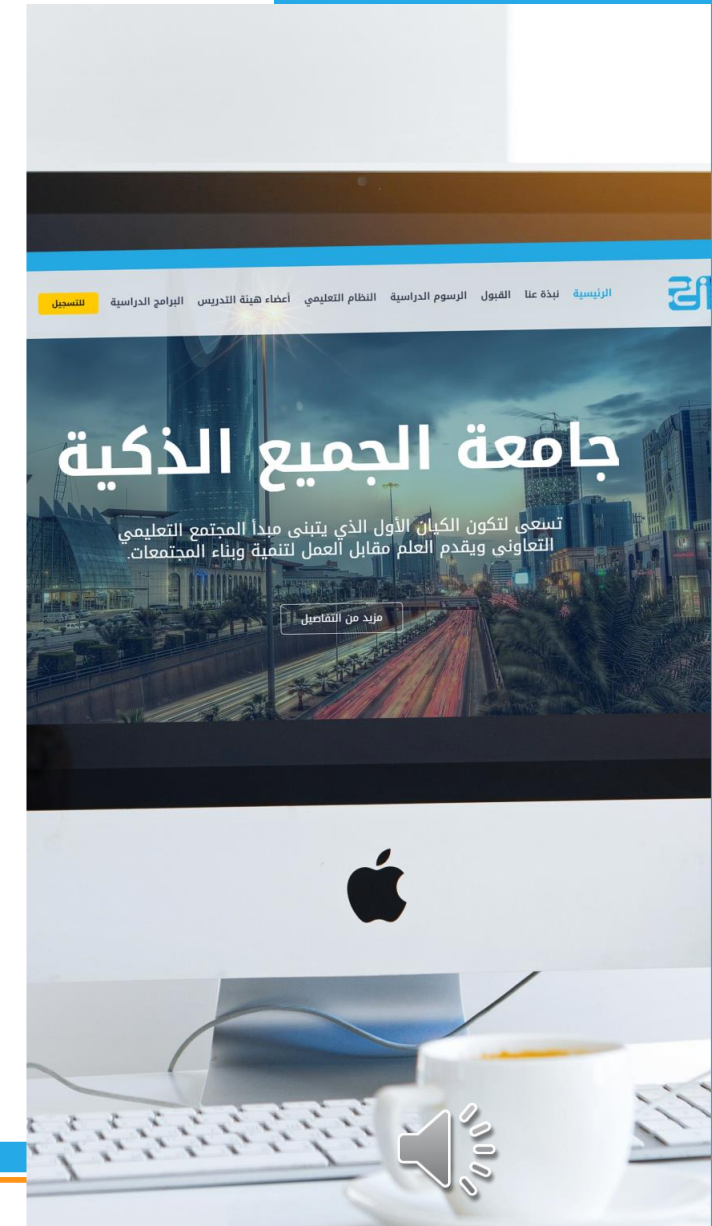
Methods of data collection

- Creating a disk-to-image file
- Creating a disk-to-disk
- Creating a logical disk-to-disk or disk-to-data file

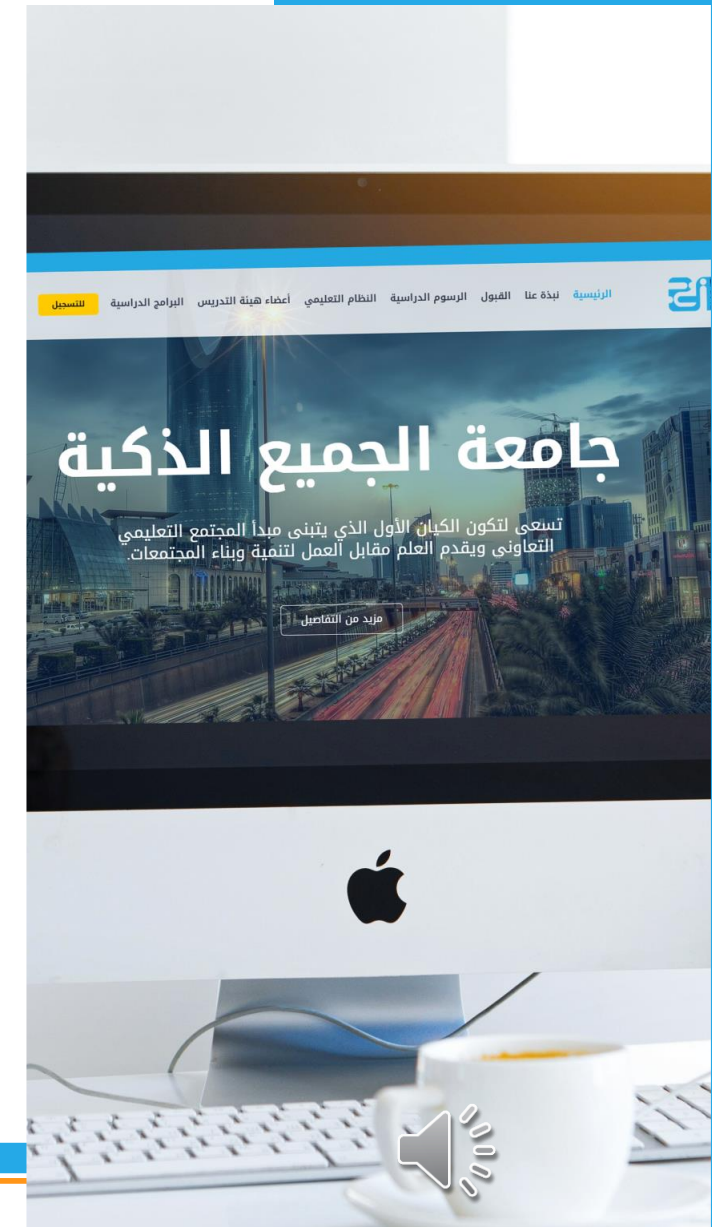
Or Creating a sparse data copy of a file or folder



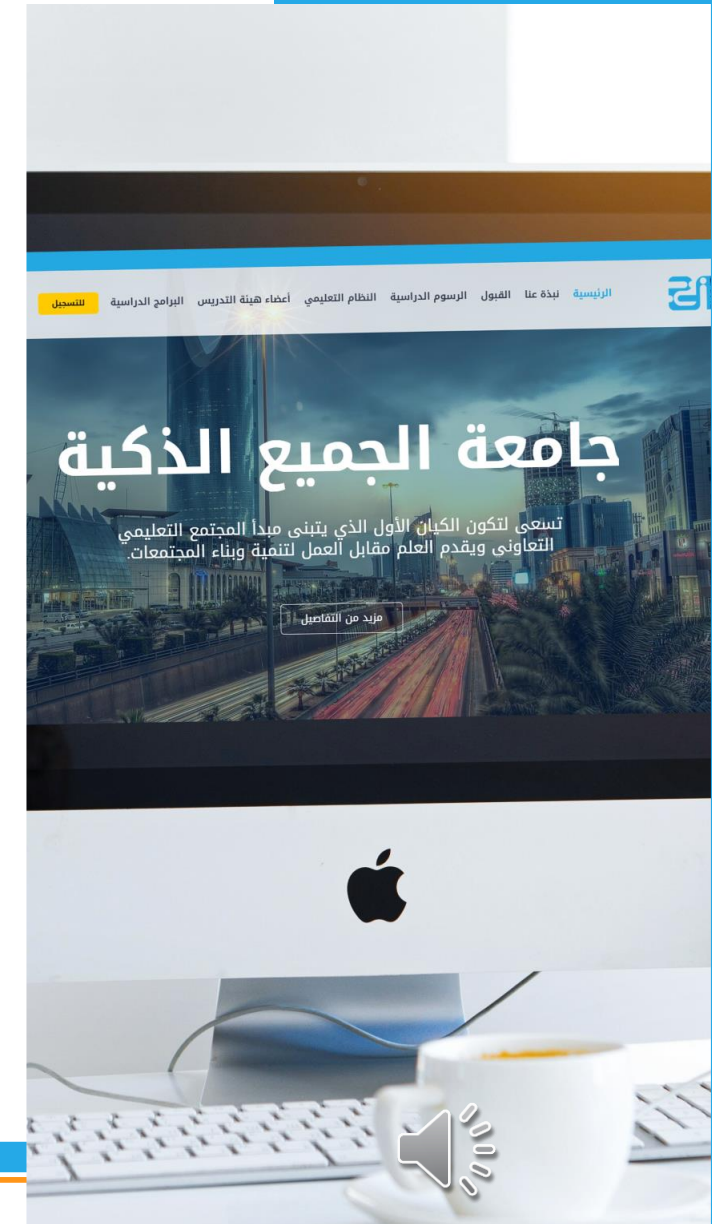
- Creating a disk-to-image file
 - Most common method and offers most flexibility
 - Can make more than one copy
 - Copies are bit-for-bit replications of the original drive
 - ProDiscover, EnCase, FTK, SMART, Sleuth Kit, X-Ways, iLookIX



- Creating a disk-to-disk
 - When can't make a disk-to-image file because of hardware or software errors or incompatibilities Or acquire older drives
 - Several imaging Tools can copy data exactly from an older disk to a newer disk
 - Tools can adjust disk's geometry configuration (its cylinder, head, and track configuration)
 - EnCase, SafeBack, SnapCopy

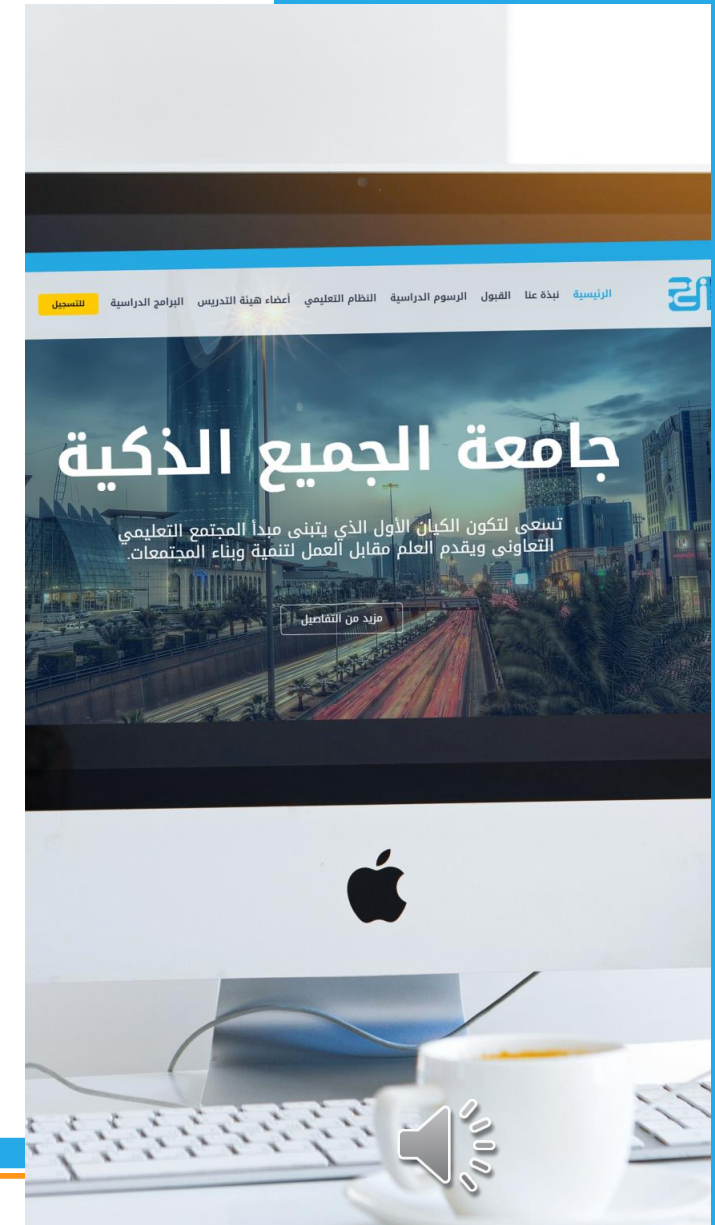


- Logical acquisition or sparse acquisition
 - Can take several hours; use when your time is limited
 - Logical acquisition captures only specific files of interest to the case
 - Sparse acquisition collects fragments of unallocated (deleted) data
 - For large disks
 - PST or OST mail files, RAID servers



Lecture 3

Defining forensic imaging



Defining forensic imaging

- We never want to change the source device/digital evidence
- You should only conduct your digital forensic analysis on a copy and not the original.
- Remember the forensic copy you make will also be considered the evidence and will have the same responsibilities as the original source device in terms of evidence.



- We are creating a bit-for-bit copy of the source device, but we store that data in a forensic image format.
- This could be a DD image, an E01 image, or an AFF image.
- We take that source data and wrap it in a protective wrapper of the forensic image.
- We will recover deleted files, file slack, and partition slack.

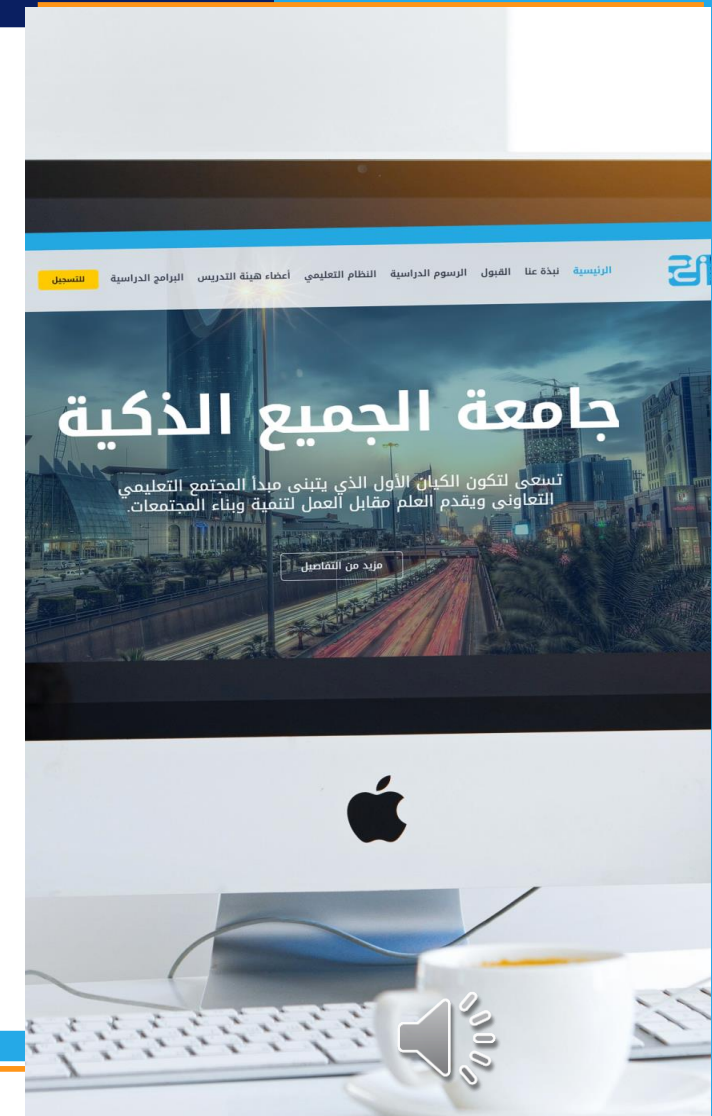


Logical forensic image:

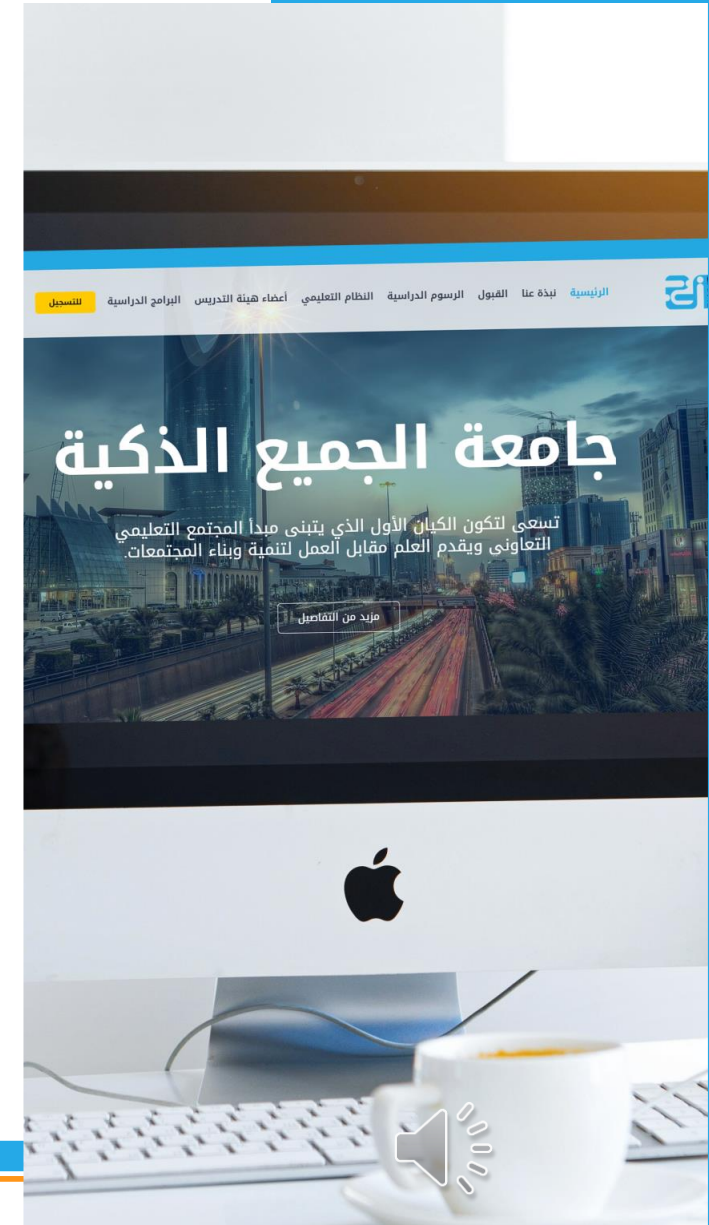
- Sometimes, we are restricted to only accessing specific datasets. They do not allow us to access the entire container.
- We cannot create a bit-for-bit copy of a forensic image or a forensic copy.
- This could be when we are extracting data from a server, and we cannot shut the server down to create a forensic image from the source hard drives.
- Due to this, we can make logical copies of the files and folders pertinent to the investigation.
- We will NOT be able to recover deleted files, file slack, and partition slack.



- Create a duplicate copy of your evidence image file
- Make at least two images of digital evidence
 - Use different tools or techniques
- Copy **host protected area** of a disk drive as well
 - Consider using a hardware acquisition tool that can access the drive at the BIOS level
- Be prepared to deal with encrypted drives
 - **Whole disk encryption** feature in Windows called BitLocker makes static acquisitions more difficult
 - May require user to provide decryption key



- Autopsy
- Easeuse
- WinHex



Lecture 3

Autopsy

123 - Autopsy 4.14.0

Case View Tools Window Help

Add Data Source Images/Videos Communications Timeline File Discovery Close Case Generate Report

Keyword Lists Keyword Search

Listing

Data Sources

Table Thumbnail

Save Table as CSV

Name	Type	Size (Bytes)	Sector Size (Bytes)	Timezone	Device ID
1.001	Image	4871301120	512	Asia/Calcutta	b11b5051-2bf4-4cf2-a318-a10c4025f3c3

Hex Text Application Message File Metadata Context Results Annotations Other Occurrences

Name	/img_1.001
Type	Raw Single
Size	4871301120
MD5	aee4fcd9301c03b3b054623ca261959a
SHA1	da2fe30fe21711edf42310873af475859a68f300
SHA256	65e2002fed0b286f49541c7e97dcec0dda913d51a063ceeed86782bdacda2312
Sector Size	512
Time Zone	Asia/Calcutta
Acquisition Details	Unknown
Device ID	b11b5051-2bf4-4cf2-a318-a10c4025f3c3

Autopsy



Lecture 3

Thank you

