



A New Audio Steganography System Based on Auto-Key Generator

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Abstract

Steganography is the art of hiding the very presence of communication by embedding secret message into innocuous looking cover document, such as digital image, videos, sound files, and other computer files that contain perceptually irrelevant or redundant information as covers or carriers to hide secret messages.

In this paper, a new Least Significant Bit (LSB) nonsequential embedding technique in wave audio files is introduced. To support the immunity of proposed hiding system, and in order to recover some weak aspect inherent with the pure implementation of stego-systems, some auxiliary processes were suggested and investigated including the use of hidden text jumping process and stream ciphering algorithm. Besides, the suggested system used self crypto-hiding pseudo random key generator. The auto-key generator has purposes to investigate the encryption and embedding processes. The hiding results shows no noise in the stego-wave file after embedding process, also no difference in size is found between the original wave audio file and stego-wave file.

Keywords: *Audio steganography, Text hiding, (LSB) technique.*

1. Introduction

Steganography, from the Greek, means covered, or secret writing, and is a long-practiced form of hiding information. Although related to cryptography, they are not the same. Steganography's intent is to hide the existence of the message, while cryptography scrambles a message so that it cannot be understood.

Steganography includes a vast array of techniques for hiding messages in a variety of media. Among these methods are invisible inks, microdots, digital signatures, covert channels and spread-spectrum communications. Today, thanks to modern technology, steganography is used on text, images, sound, signals, and more [1].

Cryptography is the study of mathematical techniques related to aspects of information security such as confidentiality, data integrity, entity authentication, and data origin authentication [2].

This paper introduces a new steganography system based on LSB technique using non-

compressed wave audio file. The embedding text can be enciphered then embedded using the same bytes. Of the wave file, as an encryption and hiding keys, of course the two used bytes are different from each others to increase the complexity of the hiding algorithm. The hiding results show no noise that can be heard in the stego-wave file after embedding process.

The proposed steganography system was chosen because the wave files is common in used in all communication means like, internet, mobiles, computers etc. Since the wave file has huge data, it is considered a good container of a big message. When random LSB technique is used, it will be hard to detect or broken. The proposed hiding algorithm can be considered a simple idea for encryption and hiding, but not the best efficient method for hiding.

2. Steganography

The word Steganography comes from the Greek Steganos (covered or secret) and Graphy (writing or drawing) and it means literally covered writing. Cover is an input to the stego-system, in which the embedded will be hidden. The possible cover carriers are innocent looking carriers (images, audio, video, text, or some other digitally representative code) which will hold the hidden information. Embedded is something to be hidden in the cover. A Message is the information hidden and may be plaintext, ciphertext, images, or anything that can be embedded into a bit stream. Embedding is the process of hiding the embedded message. Stego is the output from the stego-system and is something that has the embedded message hidden in it. Together the cover carrier and the embedded message create a stego-carrier. Hiding information may require a Stegokey which is additional secret information, such as a password, required for embedding the information. For example, when a secret message is hidden within a cover image, the resulting product is a stego-image.

Extracting is getting the embedded message out of the stego message again. New terminology with respect to attacks and breaking steganography schemes is similar to cryptographic terminology; however, there are some significant differences. Just as a Cryptanalyst applies Cryptanalysis in an attempt to decode or crack encrypted messages, the Steganalyst is one who applies Steganalysis in an attempt to detect the existence of hidden information. With cryptography, comparison is made between portions of the plaintext (possibly none) and portions of the ciphertext. In steganography, comparisons may be made between the cover-media, the stego-media, and possible portions of the message. The end result in cryptography is the ciphertext, while the end result in steganography is the stego-media. The message in steganography may or may not be encrypted. If it is encrypted, then if the message is extracted, the cryptanalysis technique may be applied [3], [4].

The advantage of steganography is that it can be used to secretly transmit messages without the fact of the transmission being discovered. Often, using encryption might identify the sender or receiver as somebody with something to hide. For example, that picture of your cat could conceal the plans for your company's latest technical innovation [5].

3. Steganography Methods

The substitution technique is one of the common and important methods of hiding information.

This technique replaces data in the original file with a coded representation of the original message. The colors of "pixels", tiny elements of digital images are often represented by the value of a number contained in an eight-bit byte of data. For example, three increasingly redder shades of red might be represented as follows:

"00001100" or decimal 12 might represent basic red in a particular 8-bit color palette. Each of the following numbers would then represent a minor increase in the redness.

"00001101" or decimal 13

"00001110" or decimal 14

The likelihood of a casual observer noticing the difference in the shades in the middle of a picture is very slight. The result is that steganographers are able to use the 2 least significant bits to encode messages and while the image does degrade slightly, it is not apparent to the naked eye [6].

4. Basic Model of Information Hiding

Each steganographic technique consists of an embedding algorithm and a detection function. The embedding algorithm is used to hide secret message inside a cover (or carrier) document. The embedding process is usually protected by a keyword so that the only one who possesses the secret keyword can access the hidden message. The detector function is applied to the stego-document and results the hidden secret message. A possible formula of the process may be represented as:

Cover media + embedded message + stegokey = stegomedia.

Figure (1) shows the general acceptable model of a steganography system.

For secure covert communication, it is important that by injecting a secret message into a cover document, no detectable changes are introduced. The main goal is not to raise suspicion and avoid introducing statistically detectable modifications into the stego-document. The quantity of embedded data and the degree of host signal modification vary from one application to one other [8].

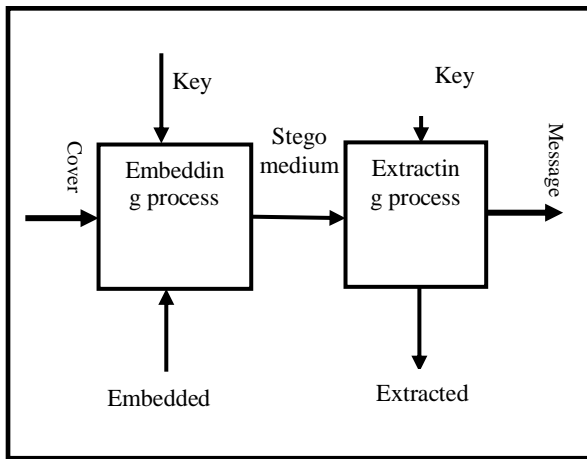


Fig. 1. General steganography system (Stego-system) [7].

5. Wave Audio files

The RIFF file format is a standard published as a joint design document by IBM and Microsoft. The data in WAVE files can be of many different types [9]. WAVE or WAV, short for Waveform Audio File Format [10] (also, but rarely, named, Audio for Windows [11]) is a Microsoft and IBM audio file format standard for storing an audio bitstream on PCs. It is an application of the RIFF bitstream format method for storing data in “chunks”, and thus is also close to the 8SVX and the AIFF format used on Amiga and Macintosh computers, respectively. It is the main format used on Windows systems for raw and typically uncompressed audio. The usual bitstream encoding is the Linear Pulse Code Modulation (LPCM) format. Though a WAV file can hold compressed audio, the most common WAV format contains uncompressed audio in the linear pulse code modulation (LPCM) format. The standard audio file format for CDs is LPCM-encoded, containing two channels of 44,100 samples per second, 16 bits per sample. Data format codes are listed in the following [9]:

5.1. Wave File Format

Wave files have a master RIFF chunk which includes a WAVE identifier followed by sub-chunks. The data is stored in little-endian byte order (See Table (1)).

Table 1, Wave File Format .

Field	Length	Contents
ckID	4	Chunk ID: "RIFF"
Cksize	4	Chunk size: 4+n
WAVEID	4	WAVE ID: "WAVE"
WAVE chunks	n	Wave chunks containing format information and sampled data

5.2. Format Chunk

The Format chunk specifies the format of the data. There are 3 variants of the Format chunk for sampled data. These differ in the extensions to the basic Formant chunk (See Table (2)).

Table 2, Format Chunk.

Field	Length	Contents
ckID	4	Chunk ID: "fmt "
Cksize	4	Chunk size: 16 or 18 or 40
wFormatTag	2	Format code
nChannels	2	Number of interleaved channels
nSamplesPerSec	4	Sampling rate (blocks per second)
nAvgBytesPerSec	4	Data rate
nBlockAlign	2	Data block size (bytes)
wBitsPerSample	2	Bits per sample
cbSize	2	Size of the extension (0 or 22)
wValidBitsPerSample	2	Number of valid bits
dwChannelMask	4	Speaker position mask
SubFormat	16	GUID, including the data format code

The standard format codes for waveform data are given below (See Table (3)). The references above give many more format codes for compressed data, a good fraction of which are now obsolete.

Table 3,
The Standard Format Codes for Waveform Data.

Format Code	PreProcessor Symbol	Data
0x0001	WAVE_FORMAT_PCM	PCM
0x0003	WAVE_FORMAT_IEEE_FLOAT	IEEE float
0x0006	WAVE_FORMAT_ALAW	8-bit ITU-T G.711 A-law
0x0007	WAVE_FORMAT_MULAW	8-bit ITU-T G.711 μ -law
0xFFFFE	WAVE_FORMAT_EXTENSIBLE	Determined by Sub Format

This paper we focuses on PCM data.

5.3. Pulse Code Modulation (PCM) Format

The first part of the Format chunk is used to describe PCM data:

- For PCM data, the Format chunk in the header declares the number of bits/sample in each sample (wBitsPerSample). The original documentation (Revision 1) specified that the number of bits per sample is to be rounded up to the next multiple of 8 bits. This rounded-up value is the container size. This information is redundant in that the container size (in bytes) for each sample can also be determined from the block size divided by the number of channels (nBlockAlign / nChannels).
- This redundancy has been appropriated to define new formats. For instance, Cool Edit uses a format which declares a sample size of 24 bits together with a container size of 4 bytes (32 bits) determined from the block size and number of channels. With this combination, the data is actually stored as 32-bit IEEE floats.
- PCM data is two's-complement except for resolutions of 1-8 bits, which are represented as offset binary.

5.4. Examples

Consider sampled data e.g *voice.wav* with the following parameters,

- $N_c = 1$ channels.
- The total number of blocks is $N_s = 110033$. Each block consists of N_c samples.
- Sampling rate $F = 22050$ (blocks per second).

- Each sample is $M = 2$ bytes long. As shown in table (4).

Table 4,
Example of Wave File (*voice.wav*) format.

Field	Length	Contents
ckID	4	Chunk ID: "RIFF"
		Chunk size:
Cksize	4	$4+24+(8+M * N_c * N_s + (0 \text{ or } 1))=220102$
WAVEID	4	WAVE ID: "WAVE"
ckID	4	Chunk ID: "fmt "
Cksize	4	Chunk size = 16
wFormatTag	2	WAVE_FORMAT_PCM = 1
nChannels	2	$N_c = 1$
nSamplesPerSec	4	$F = 22050$
nAvgBytesPerSec	4	$F * M * N_c = 44100$
nBlockAlign	2	$M * N_c = 2$
wBitsPerSample	2	rounds up to $8 * M = 16$
ckID	4	Chunk ID: "data"
		Chunk size:
Cksize	4	$M * N_c * N_s = 220066$
sampled data	$M * N_c * N_s$	$N_c * N_s$ channel-interleaved M -byte samples
Pad	0 or 1	Padding byte if $M * N_c * N_s$ is odd

WAVE files often have information chunks that precede or follow the sound data (Data chunk). Some programs assume that for PCM data, the file header is exactly 44 bytes long and that the rest of the file contains sound data. This is not a safe assumption. Figure (2) shows *voice.wav* file in hexadecimal and character representation.

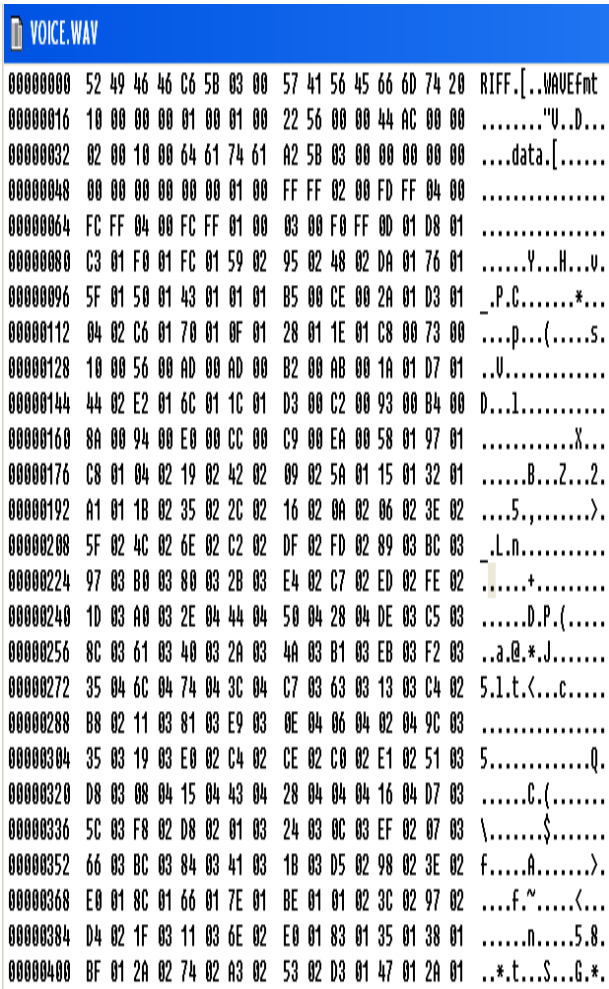


Fig. 2. Voice .Wav File in Hexadecimal and Character Representation.

6. Audio Stenography System Using LSB-Technique

The aim of this paper is to implement an algorithm for an information hiding technique using LSB in digital wave files. This section shows the hiding and extracting algorithms supported by encryption algorithm and then shows the proposed system implementation with an experimental example. The proposed systems in information hiding algorithm consist of two main algorithms. The first one interested in hiding text in wave cover file called hiding algorithm and the second one is specialized in extracting data from the stego wave file called the extracting algorithm.

6.1. Hiding Algorithm

This algorithm consist of two stages, these stages contribute to each other to obtain a secure algorithm. The first one is the enciphering stage

and the second is embedding stage. Hiding algorithm is based on hoping style. The proposed algorithm details can be described in the following steps:

1. Read cover-wave file.
2. Enter plain-text characters.
3. Skip (60) byte from beginning of the file.
4. Calculate the plaintext size (n bytes $\leq 1/(5*8)=1/40$ of the size of container) (or length), n must be embedded in the container file in order to be known during the extracted process, n represented by (3) bytes (=24 bits) then embed the 1st bit in the LSB of the Hide-byte of the container, then jump (5) bytes to embed the 2nd bit,...and so on until finish embedding all the 24 bits.
5. Embedd data: this step includes two processes:
 - a - Enciphering process: consider the current byte as a Encryption key-byte. This byte add (XORing) to plaintext byte according to the following equation:
Cipher-byte = Plain-byte XOR Key-byte.
 - b- Embedding process: consider the current byte as a jump-key embed the 1st bit of cipher-byte in the next byte using LSB technique, then jump a random step according to the following equation:
Jump-step = (Jump-key MOD Mode-Byte) + Shift-Byte.

Repeating the process to embedding the 2nd bit of cipher-byte after jumping by jump-step until finishing all bits of the cipher-byte . Repeating the process in (a) and (b) until finishing all plaintext . The hiding algorithm steps as shown in Figure (3).

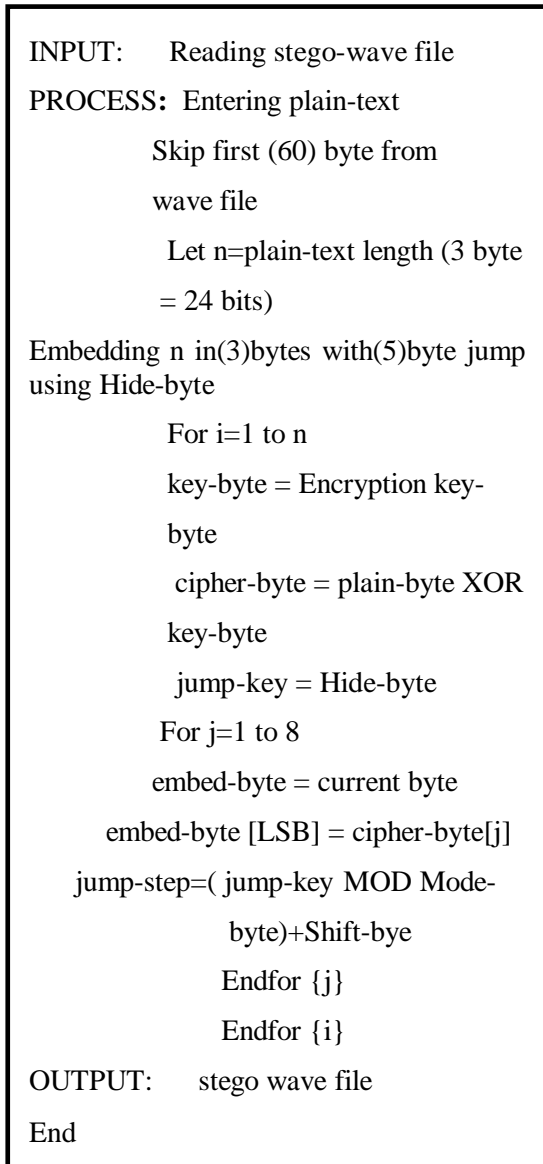


Fig. 3. Hiding Algorithm .

Note: the keys encryption key-byte, hide byte, Mode-byte and Shift-byte are secret keys that can be send by other communication means except the same cover wave file.

The flowchart of the hiding algorithm is shown in Figure (4).

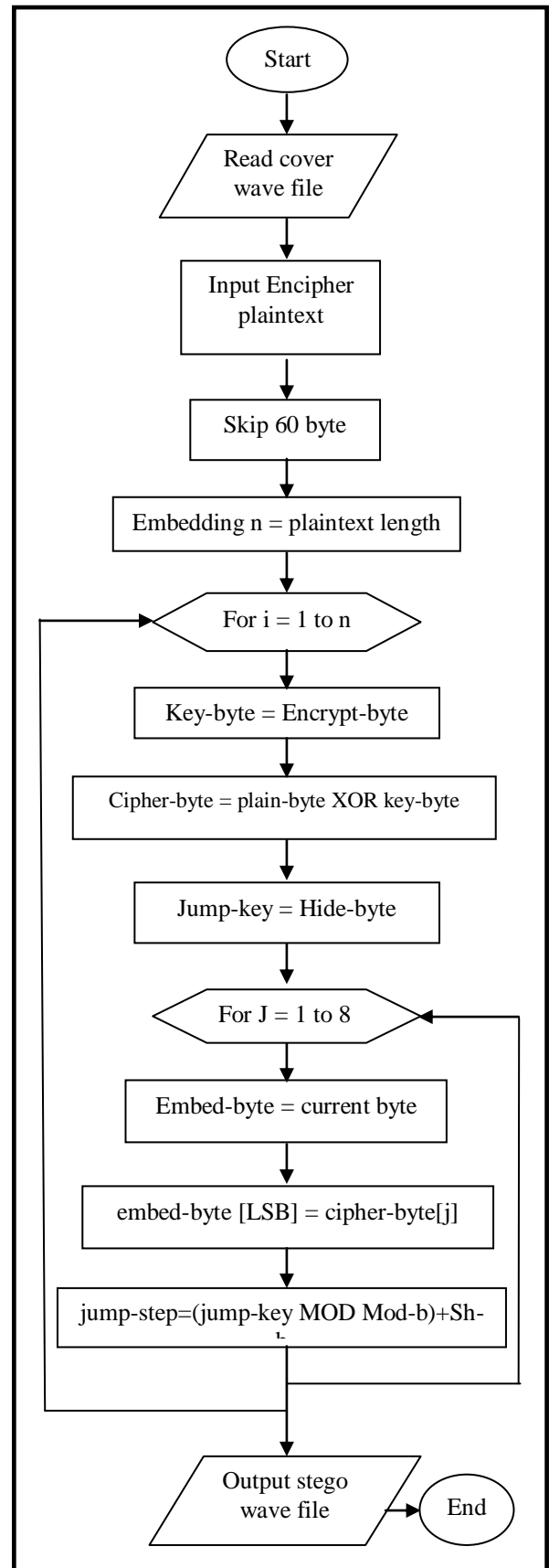


Fig. 4. Hiding Algorithm Flow Chart .

6.2. Practical Result

In this subsection we will introduce a practical example of hiding algorithm. Let's choose the plain text: "Information Hiding System for Wave Audio Files", which is to be hide.

In figure (5) the data of two files are shown. First is voice.wav represent the audio wave file before hiding, and the second is stego.wav which represent the voice.wav file after end of hiding process.

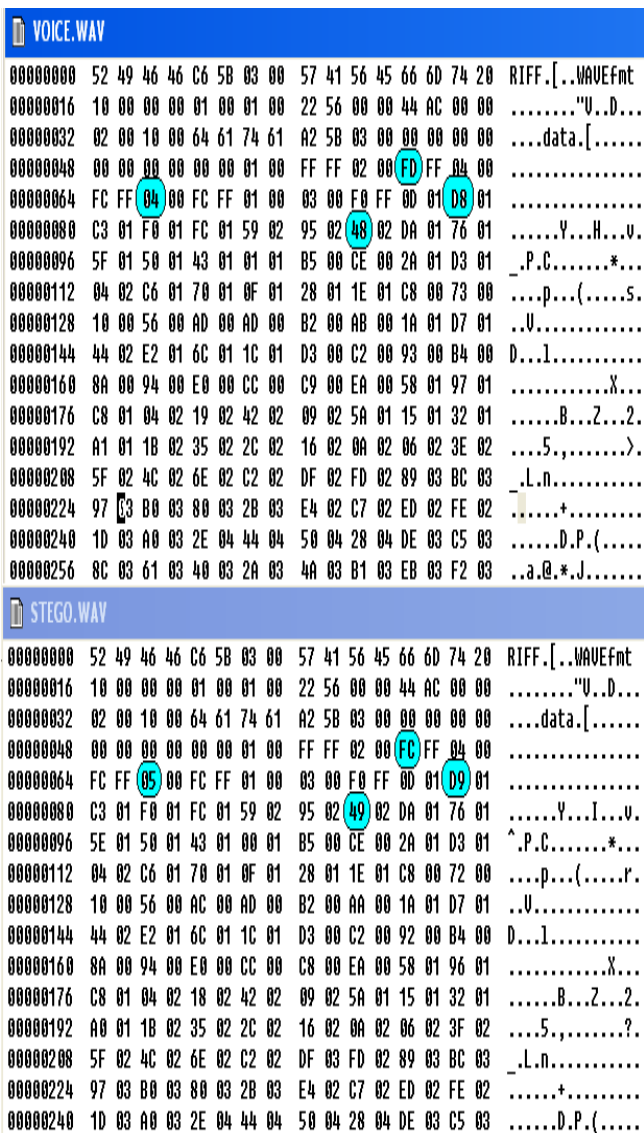


Fig. 5. The Data of Voice.Wav (Before Embedding) and Stego.Wav (After Embedding).

The shaded and circled hexadecimals represent the change bytes after exchanging the LSB of the specified byte.

6.3. Extracting Algorithm

This algorithm consists of two stages. The first one is the extracting stage and the second is deciphering the extracting ciphertext. Extracting algorithm details can be described as follows:

1. Read stego-wave file.
2. Skip (60) byte from beginning of the file.
3. Extracting the embedding plaintext length (n) from the LSB of specifying bytes with (5) bytes jump using encryption key-byte.
4. Extracting data: this step includes two process:
 - a- Extracting process: preparing the key-byte considering the current byte as a key-byte, then consider the hide-byte as a jump-key, then extracting the 1st bit of cipher-byte from the LSB of the current byte, after that, jumping in a random step according to the following equation:

$$\text{Jump-step} = (\text{Jump-key} \text{ MOD Mode-byte}) + \text{Shift-byte}.$$

Repeating the process until get all the bits of the cipher-byte .

- b- Deciphering process: to obtain the plain-text by:

$$\text{Plain-byte} = \text{Cipher-byte XOR Key-byte}.$$

Repeating the process in (a) and (b) until all the plain-text characters are extracted. The extracting algorithm steps can be shown in Figure (6).

```

INPUT: Reading stego-wave file
PROCESS: Skip first (60) byte from stego-wave file
          Extracting plaintext length (n) from LSB of the specifying bytes
          For i=1 to n
              key-byte = Encryption-byte
              jump-key = Hide-byte
              For j=1 to 8
                  embed-byte = current byte
                  cipher-byte [j] = embed-byte[LSB]
              jump-step=(jump-key MOD Mod-by)+Shift-byte
              Endfor {j}
              plain-byte = cipher-byte XOR key-byte
              Endfor {i}
OUTPUT: Plaintext
END
    
```

Fig. 6. The Extracting Algorithm.

The flowchart of the extracting algorithm is show in figure (7).

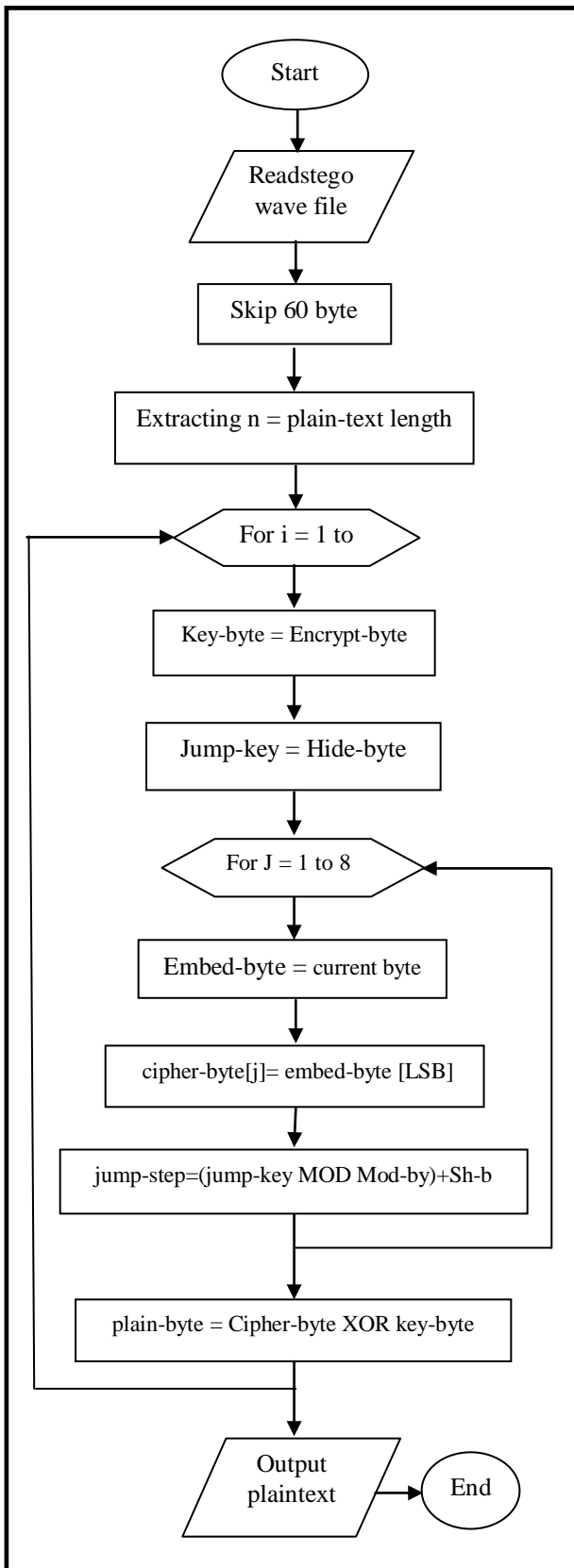


Fig.7. The Extracting Algorithm.

7. Conclusions

This paper use LSB data-hiding technique, depending on auto-key generator. It obvious the LSB-Technique can be used when the cover file is uncompressed file but it can be used when the cover file is lossless compressed file, as done in .png image files. Any random data added to stego file (not only in LSB) means that real noise in audio file can be heard and that's affects the extraction of the information. A random key generator is used for two purposes, first to encrypt the hidden message, and second to generate random jumping in the wave file to give more robustness to the steganography system.

8. References

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نظام جديد للأخفاء بالصوت يعتمد على مولد مفتاح- ذاتي

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الخلاصة

علم الاخفاء هو فن اخفاء كل ماهو مهم باستخدام الاتصالات بواسطة اعمار الرسالة السرية في وثيقة غطاء عادية، كالصور الرقمية، المرئية، ملفات الصوت وغيرها من ملفات الحاسوب ذات المعلومات المتكررة تستخدم كإغصية او حوامل لاختفاء المعلومات السرية. في هذا البحث، تم اقتراح نظام اخفاء غير متسلسل باستخدام تقنية الاعمار بالثنائي الاقل اهمية (LBS) بالاعتماد على ملفات صوتية من نوع (wav). ولزيادة درجة الامنية لنظام الاخفاء المقترح، و للقضاء على نقاط الضعف باستخدام تلك التقنية، تم اقتراح وتحقيق بعض العمليات المساعدة ومنها استخدام عملية القفز بالنص المخفي بالاضافة الى استخدام خوارزمية التشفير الانسيابي واقتراح استخدام نظام تشفير-اخفاء باستخدام مولد عشوائي ذاتي. هذا المولد الذاتي يعمل لتحقيق غرضين هما عمليات التشفير والتضمين. اظهرت النتائج انه لايمكن ان تسمع ضوضاء في ملفات الصوت المخفيه (stego) بعد عملية التضمين، كذلك لا يوجد اختلاف بين ملف الصوت الاصلي و ملف الصوت المخفي (stego) من حيث الحجم.