

REVIEW:

PROFISHARK LONG TERM CAPTURE

NETWORK HEROES SERIES



MEGUMI  
"THE FLASH"  
TAKESHITA



# MEGUMI TAKESHITA

*,IKERIRI NETWORK SERVICE CO.,LTD.*

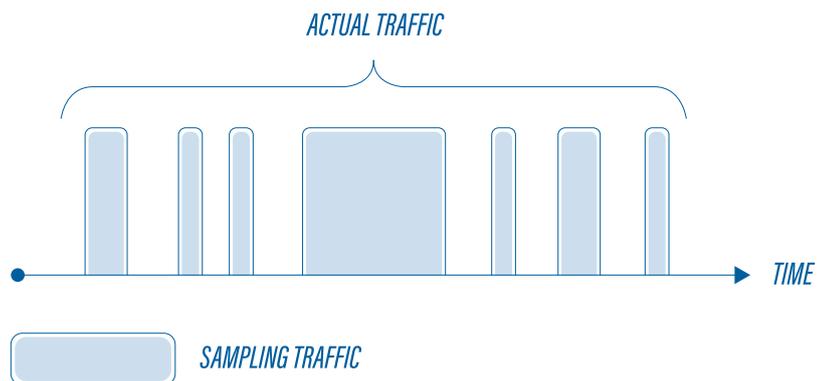
*Megumi Takeshita, known as Packet Otaku, runs a packet analysis company after having worked as a network analyst at BayNetworks and Nortel Networks for many years. Ikeriri Network Service is a reseller of Riverbed, Metageek, Profitap and other packet capture products in Japan. Megumi has written more than 10 books about packet analysis and deep inspection using Wireshark in Japanese.*

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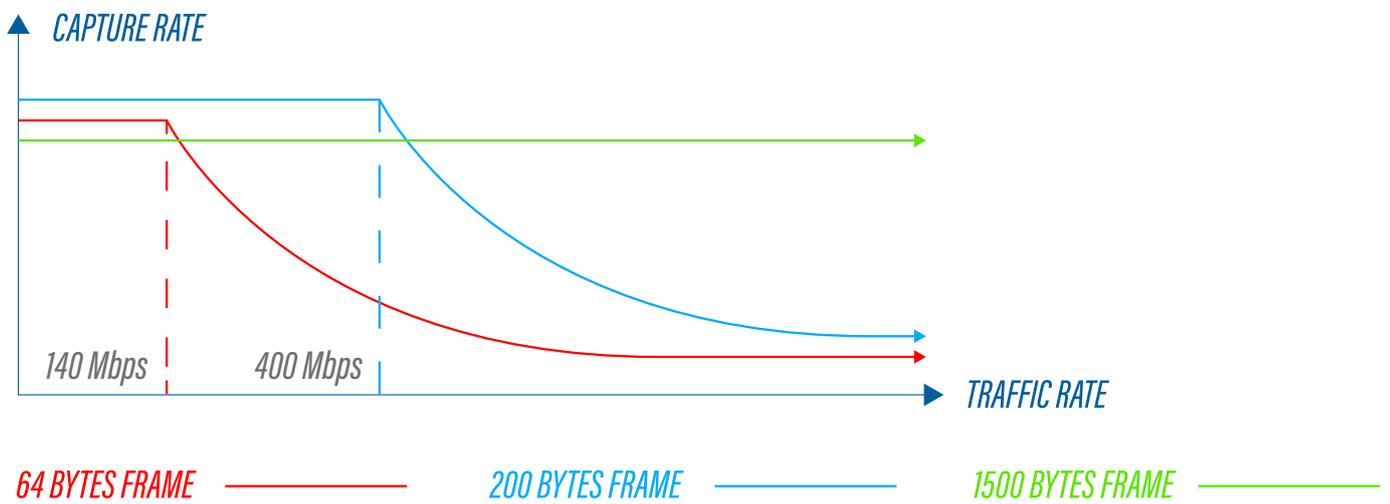
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# IMPORTANCE OF HARDWARE CAPTURING

There are many troubles and security problems in today's internet. However, it is difficult to determine the source of these problems by commands and log files alone. This is why packet based analysis is the good way to analyze the issue. Another option is using flow based technologies, but they are not the best. For example: sampling based analysis (iFlow, sFlow, etc.) loses a part of actual traffic. Especially, small packets with short timing, like 64 bytes frames tend to be omitted by sampling. These are TCP SYN, TCP FIN, TCP ACK without data, small ICMP ping, and so on.



So non-sampling capturing is important to analyze the traffic. But an ordinary NIC like the e1000 ( Intel Pro 1000 ) is not good at capturing line rate speeds. So if you use typical Windows PC and capture 64 bytes frames, 140Mbps is the actual rate, because ordinal NIC is controlled by mainly software to create trace file. So CPU usage and packet drop rate is rising at over-140Mbps traffic. You may capture over 90% if the average frame size is about 1500bytes, but you can capture full packets at 430Mbps when the frame size is 200 byte.



Another problem is the time. If you use Wireshark to capture packets in Windows environments, Wireshark doesn't create any time stamps itself, but simply gets them. A capture driver (such as WinPcap, Npcap, libpcap) sets the time and the accuracy depends on Windows time system call. The precision is different from the environment, but it is not by nanosecond, but a couple of microseconds or

Wireshark timestamp accuracy

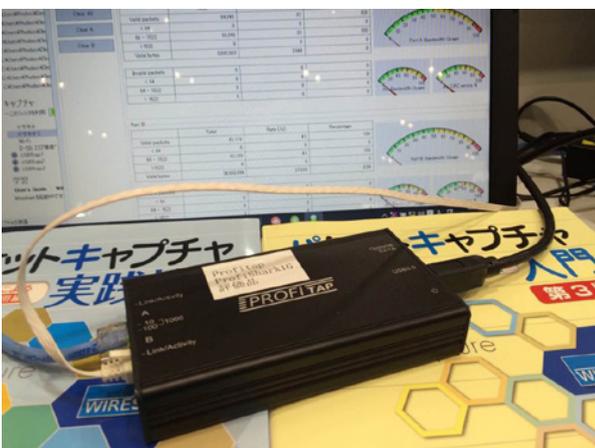
<https://osqa-ask.wireshark.org/questions/2010/wireshark-timestamp-accuracy>

Synchronization of time in many different systems may cause the trace file problems with the timestamping. So capturing packets with good time accuracy is very important for analysis.

So we need hardware-based capture device. The hardware-based capture device is a kind of capture driver accelerator; it has their own memory and FPGA for capturing and processing MAC. also, it creates a trace file directly and communicates with the PC. ProfiShark provide a non-sampling, full-capturing solution. This type of hardware-based capture devices is essential in enterprise networks, such as a backbone network crammed with tons of packets with frames sizes ranging from 64bytes to jumbo frame.

## PROFISHARK SERIES

I am a reseller of Profitap as well as an eager fan of ProfiShark series. The ProfiShark series is one of the best hardware capture solutions in the world. Since 2014, I've made use of the ProfiShark series in daily troubleshooting and investigation. And Ikeriri Network Series also resells the series of ProfiShark for the Japanese market.



ProfiShark series consists of the ProfiShark 100M, ProfiShark 1G, ProfiShark 1G+, ProfiShark 10G and ProfiShark 10G+. They all use common USB3 interface but capture interfaces and GPS/PPS function are different per model.



MODEL	PROFISHARK 100M	PROFISHARK 1G	PROFISHARK 1G+	PROFISHARK 10G	PROFISHARK 10G+
Capture int.	2 x RJ-45			2 x SFP+	
PC Interface	USB3 ( direct capture to disk support ) *power supply				
Other interface	5VDC(opt)	5VDC(opt)	5VDC(opt) 2xSMA female (GPS/PPS)	5VDC(opt)	5VDC(opt) 2xSMA female (GPS/PPS)
Major function	Ideal for both regular Ethernet and Real-Time Industrial Internet	Full-duplex wirespeed capture SPAN and In-Line modes Hardware timestamping (+model:GPS timestamping ) Low level error monitoring PoE support		Full-duplex fiber capture SPAN and In-Line modes Hardware timestamping (+model:GPS timestamping ) Low level error monitoring Hardware filtering packet slicing	
Direct Capture	Compatible with all Intel based Synology NAS system				

Many hardware capture device are a kind of specialized NIC card, This means we need to create our own Packet Capture Device, set up OS and determine the settings and customize for reliable and stable capturing. Sometimes it takes a lot of time to set up a capture PC. We need to attach the NIC and configure many detail settings of the OS service and applications.

ProfiShark is a USB3 device, not the NIC style device, so it is not connected with PC deeply and independent from the capture PC. This saves a lot of time and cost to use. We just connect ProfiShark with USB3 interface.

ProfiShark has two interface types ( RJ-45 or SFP+ ), these interfaces can be used as two different capture interfaces ( with hardware aggregation) and also as one port for the uplink and the other for the downlink (a.k.a. In-Line modes).

USB3 bandwidth is 5Gbps, which is enough for wirespeed capturing with ProfiShark1G/1G+. The USB3 interface is also used for power supply. So a bundled USB3 cable is the only thing you need to start capturing.

As Mentioned before, time accuracy in packet capturing is one of the problems in enterprise analysis, because the precision depends on capture driver and OS environment with ordinal NIC.

ProfiShark provides 8ns hardware timestamping (all models) and 16ns precision with GPS through SMA connector for GPS/PPS (Plus models).

# PROFISHARK 1G/1G+ HANDS ON

To use the ProfiShark for the first time, we need to install the driver. You can use the USB drive bundled with ProfiShark or get the newest driver and tools from the Profitap website. In this case we install driver on Windows10 pro (64bit).

## STEP 1: LOCATING INSTALLATION FILES

Open USB key>Windows->Profishark\_1.2.18.exe ( I recommend with administrator privilege )

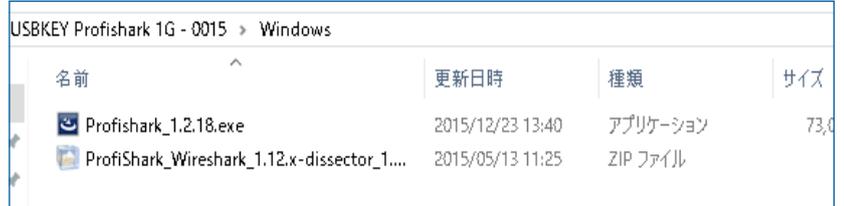
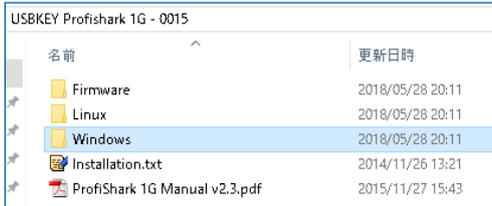


Figure 3-1: ProfiShark USB Key

## STEP 2: PROFISHARK MANAGER INSTALLATION

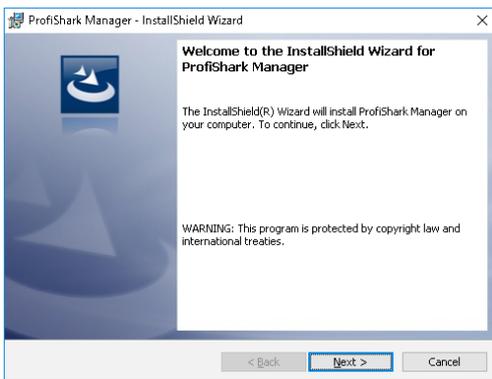


Figure 3-2: ProfiShark Manager



Figure 3-3: Driver installs warning

Click next to install ProfiShark Manager (management program for the ProfiShark Series)

▶ Note: You need to click "install" button in device driver install warning screen.

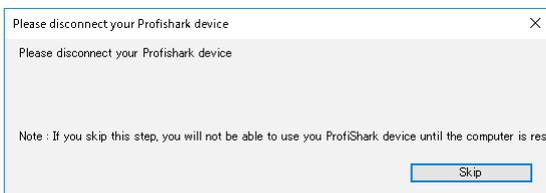
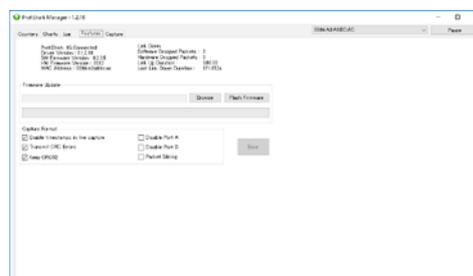
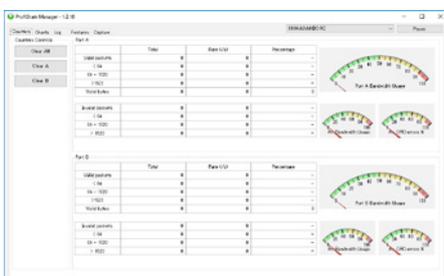


Figure 3-4: Warning dialog

▶ Note: If you have already connected ProfiShark, you need to disconnect ProfiShark and connect again to proceed

## STEP 3: LAUNCHING THE MANAGER



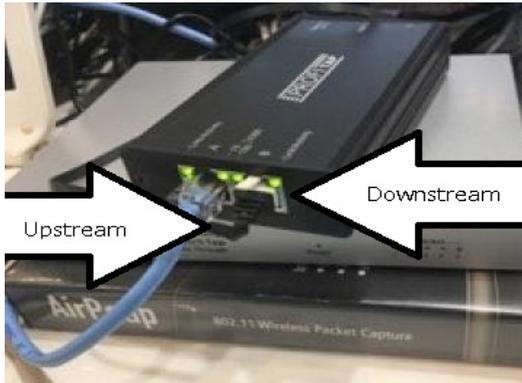
## STEP 4: TIMESTAMPING SETTINGS

If you want to use hardware timestamping, check "Enable timestamps in live capture" under the Capture Format group in the Features tab. And you also set "Transmit CRC Errors," "Keep CRC32" and other settings in this screen.



Figure 3-6: Capture Format group in Features tab

## STEP 5: CONNECTING THE PROFISHARK



We use in-line mode with fail safe, connect upstream link and downstream link to each RJ-45 port (port A and port B)

Figure 3-7: in-line mode with fail safe connection

## STEP 6: STARTING THE CAPTURE

The ProfiShark 1G is recognized as a network adapter. To avoid any useless management packet, I recommend checking off all protocols of network in ProfiShark adapter.

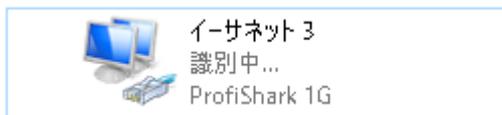
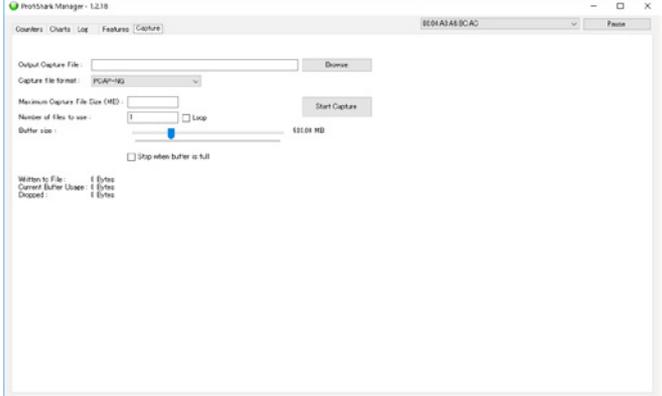


Figure 3-8: Adapter option and properties of ProfiShark NIC adapter

ProfiShark has 2 types of Capture Driver, ProfiShark Live Capture Driver and ProfiShark Direct Capture Driver. The difference is as follows, I recommend using Direct Capture Driver for stability, but if you want to use ProfiShark to capture live to the interface of Wireshark, ProfiShark Live Capture Driver is the right option.

PROFISHARK NIC CAPTURE DRIVER	PROFISHARK DIRECT CAPTURE DRIVER
Start capturing using Wireshark, tshark, dumpcap and other application as usual	Start capturing using Capture tab of ProfiShark Manager
<p>キャプチャ</p> <p>…このフィルタを利用: <input type="text" value="キャプチャフィルタ..."/> を入力</p> <p>VMware Network Adapter VMnet8</p> <p>Npcap Loopback Adapter</p> <p>VMware Network Adapter VMnet1</p> <p>Wi-Fi 6</p> <p><b>イーサネット 3</b></p> <p>イーサネット</p>	
<p>ProfiShark NIC Capture Driver</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Network Driver (NDIS)</li> <li>Capture Driver (WinPcap etc.)</li> <li>Wireshark</li> </ul>	<p>ProfiShark Direct Capture Driver</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Trace file (pcapng/pcap) in SSD/HDD</li> <li>Wireshark</li> </ul>

Now open the Capture tab in ProfiShark Manager. Click Browse button to set Output Capture File, and choose Capture file format from PCAP-NG, PCAP Nanosecond and ERF, set Maximum Capture File Size (MB), Number of files to use, and other settings. Push “Start Capture” button to capture packets!

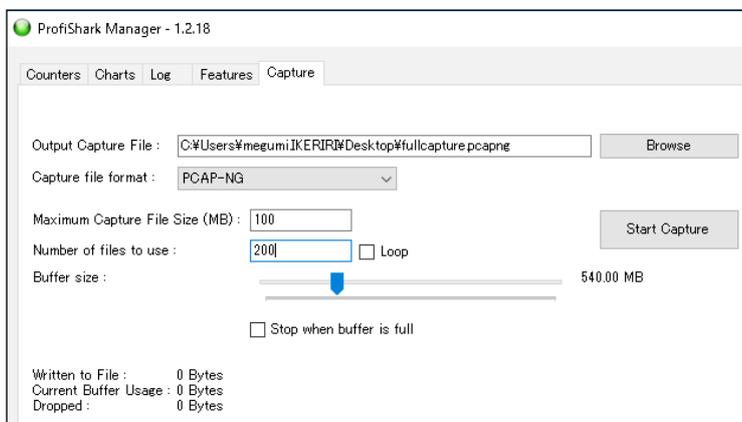


Figure 3-9: Capture tab in ProfiShark Manager

## STEP 7: STATISTICS

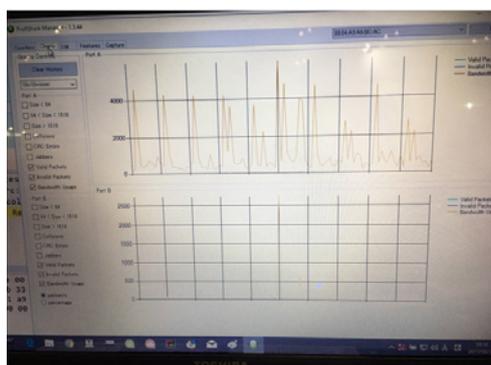


Figure 3-10: Charts tab in ProfiShark Manager

When you capture using ProfiShark Direct Capture Driver, you can check dynamic statistics in Charts tab and configure log information in Log tab.

Now we got non-sampling, full-capture trace files!

Note: Profitap also provides dissector plugin of Wireshark (Windows (x64/x86) / Linux) so you can copy unzipped profishark.dll into global plugin folder of Wireshark.

 profishark-dissector-linux.zip

 profishark-dissector-windows.zip

 profishark.dll

# LONG TERM TRAFFIC CAPTURE

Sometimes, we cannot find the key of the problem from just a small trace file. For example, we may find the trends of traffic and discover traffic anomaly from many trace files for a month. Sometimes we need to look for the security problem from huge forensics trace files. Long term traffic capture is important for troubleshooting and security investigation in these situations.

However, bringing a packet analysis PC into enterprise network is not an option. A PC (Windows or Linux) has a lot of vulnerabilities such as OS security, many interfaces such as Wi-Fi, Wired and USB, and application problems. So using a ProfiShark with PC in customer's network is difficult, because security cannot be guaranteed.

Another problem is stability and reliability for long-term traffic capture. Using the Wireshark GUI is not suitable for long-term capturing, but tshark CLI application has many functions. Using dumpcap command is one of the good ways.

For example, if you want to capture and create hourly file which name is "test\_xxxx\_yyyymmddhhmmss.pcapng" (xxxx: sequence number y:year m:month d:day h:hour m:minute s:second) for a month ( 720 files ) then stop capturing. The command is below.

```
dumpcap -i 1 -s 400 -b duration:3600 -a files:720 -w test.pcapng
```

NOTE -i: interface index, -s: snaplen (bytes), -b multiple file option (duration: seconds by each file), -a autostop option, -w write file path

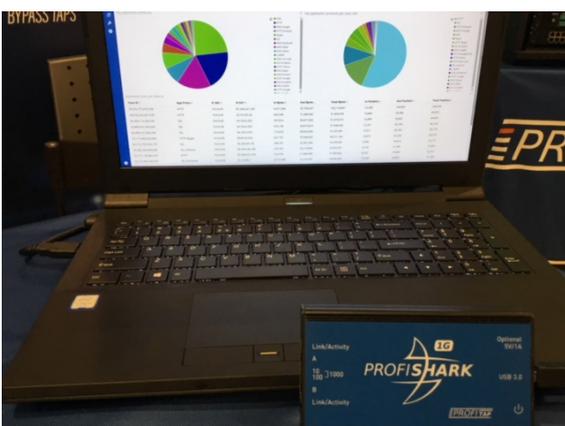
But using PC is not the best way for long term traffic capture, because we need to change storage such as SSD/HDD. And waking up troubleshooting PC for a month without crash and reboot is difficult. Do you think it works?

That's why Profitap has a nice solution, ProfiShark supports all Intel based Synology NAS systems! We can capture, create and transfer trace files to NAS without PC. The NAS has a huge storage as well as fault tolerance such as RAID.

A NAS is much stable than a PC and you do not need a lot of time and money to build capture system for long-term analysis. The only thing you have do is just connecting a USB3 cable from ProfiShark to an Intel based Synology NAS system.



Figure 4-1: connecting a NAS to the ProfiShark



Of course you can utilize full function of ProfiShark, use ringbuffer or normal capture mode, and split capture to different files based on time and size. And more, ProfiShark with NAS solution has good statistics screens with pie charts and histograms for long term traffic

Figure 4-2: ProfiShark with NAS solution

# LONG TERM CAPTURE SOLUTION HANDS ON

Let's start the hands-on of longterm capture solution. There is a ProfiShark 1G connected with a Synology NAS. All configurations are done in the WebUI of NAS.

Note: we use demo site of ProfiShark NAS solution.

## STEP 1: LOGIN

Login into Synology NAS via WebUI, then click top-left menu button to access ProfiShark icon. It appears ProfiShark window.



Figure 5-1: Synology NAS WebUI

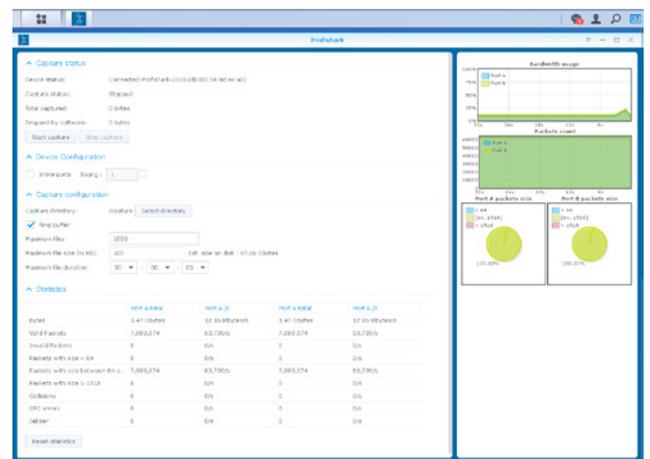


Figure 5-2: ProfiShark window

## STEP 2: CAPTURE STATUS

Check Capture status in ProfiShark window. This time "Connected Profishark-1Gv5" is shown in Device status, and we can check capture status, total captured bytes, and so on. You can also control capturing by pushing the 'Start capture' and 'Stop capture' buttons. And if you want to set specified inline ports and Slicing, you can set in Device Configuration section.

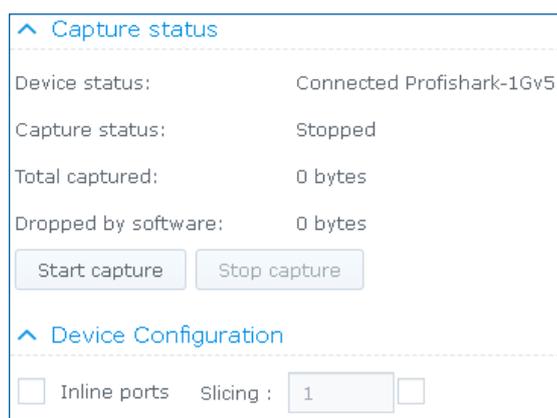
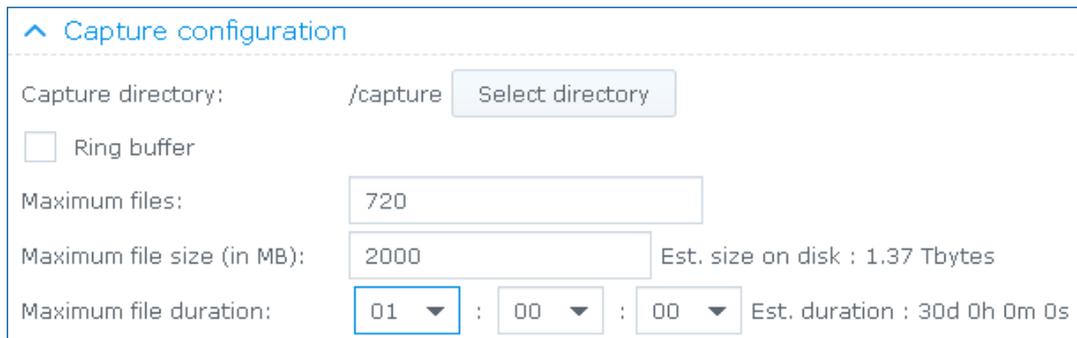


Figure 5-3: Capture status and Device Configuration section

## STEP 3: LONG-TERM CAPTURE SETTINGS

You can set long term capture settings in Capture configuration section. You can set the path of trace files in Capture directory. If you want to overwrite the oldest file, please check the checkbox for Ring buffer. You can set Maximum files, Maximum file size (in MB) and Maximum file duration. In this case we need to capture and create hourly trace files for a month in /capture directory. We set as below.



The screenshot shows the 'Capture configuration' section with the following settings:

- Capture directory: /capture (with a 'Select directory' button)
- Ring buffer:
- Maximum files: 720
- Maximum file size (in MB): 2000 (Est. size on disk : 1.37 Tbytes)
- Maximum file duration: 01 : 00 : 00 (Est. duration : 30d 0h 0m 0s)

Figure 5-4: Capture configuration section

## STEP 4: LONG-TERM CAPTURE STATISTICS

You can also check dynamic statistics in Statics section as well as bar and pie chart in right window. The statistics tables are consists of Bytes, Valid Packets, Packets with size < 64, Packets with size between 64 and 1518, Packets with size > 1518, Collisions, CRC errors and Jabber by Port A total, Port A/s, Port B total and Port B/s. If you want to reset counters, just push the 'Reset statistics' button.



Figure 5-5: Statistics section and Graph

# CONCLUSION

Profitap's ProfiShark series are the best hardware based packet capture solution in the world. We do not need a powerful and customized Desktop PC; we just bring a laptop to start non-sampling and full-capturing. In case of long term capturing, ProfiShark solutions with a Synology NAS provide enterprise monitoring at an incredible price!



# IT ALL STARTS WITH VISIBILITY

## **PROFITAP**

Profitap develops a wide range of state-of-the-art and user-friendly network monitoring tools for both SMEs and the enterprise sector. Our wide range of high-density network TAPs, field service troubleshooters and network packet brokers are extremely performant, providing complete visibility and access to your network, 24/7.

We've been creating monitoring solutions for network analysis and traffic acquisition for more than 33 years. Therefore, we are experts in our field and our award-winning ProfiShark® 1G stands to prove it. This lightweight, advanced and portable network TAP is one of the most innovative products on the market.

With more than 1,000 clients from 55 countries, PROFITAP has become a must-have solution for many important businesses, many of which are among Fortune 500 companies.

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