

Stealing DNA sequences? It can be done with an audio recorder

Engineers at the University of California say they have demonstrated how easy it would be to snoop on biotech companies making synthetic DNA.

All you need is an audio recording, they say. Place a smartphone near a DNA synthesizer, record the sound, run the recording across algorithms trained to discern the clicks and buzzes that particular machine makes, and you'll know exactly what combination of DNA building blocks it is generating.

The researchers demonstrated their spying technique on the [Applied Biosystems](#) 3400 DNA Synthesizer, a widely used older model.

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The purpose of their exercise is to convince engineers that they must design bioinstrumentation with these kinds of security leaks in mind. Hacking data via online networks isn't the only way to steal proprietary data, the researchers say.

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Perhaps we could use such algorithms to spy on ourselves. "I would welcome a microphone in my lab if it was able to listen to the routine sounds a machine is making and then tell me when there's a deviation in those sounds, because that would be a way to get early warning of a failure or degraded performance," says [bioengineer] [William Grover](#).

Read full, original post: [How to Steal DNA With Sound](#)