API for RF receivers including ThinkRF
WSA platform

Release 2.2.0

ThinkRF Corporation
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1.1 Installation

1.1.1 Windows Dependencies

2. Extract the contents of the zipped file
3. Install Python 2.7.6 (python-2.7.6.msi)
4. Add the following to the windows PATH `;C:Python27;C:Python27Scripts`
5. Install Numpy (numpy-1.8.1-win32-superpack-python2.7)
6. Install Scipy (scipy-0.14.0-win32-superpack-python2.7)
7. Install Pyside (PySide-1.2.0.win32-py2.7)
8. Install Pyqtgraph (pyqtgraph-0.9.8.win32)
9. Install zope.interface (zope.interface-4.1.1.win32-py2.7)
10. Install twisted (Twisted-14.0.0.win32-py2.7)
11. Install pywin32 (pywin32-219.win32-py2.7)
12. Using a command line, go to the qtreactor-qtreator-pyrf-1.0 folder, and type `setup.py install`
13. Obtain PyRF source code from https://github.com/pyrf/pyrf
14. Go the pyrf directory and run `setup.py install`

1.1.2 Debian/Ubuntu Dependencies

Use packaged requirements:
API for RF receivers including ThinkRF WSA platform, Release 2.2.0

apt-get install python-pyside python-twisted python-numpy \
   python-zope.interface python-pip python-scipy
pip install -e git://github.com/pyrf/qtreactor.git#egg=qtreactor
pip install -e git://github.com/pyrf/pyqtgraph.git#egg=pyqtgraph

Or install GUI requirements from source:

apt-get install qt-sdk python-dev cmake \
   libblas-dev libatlas-dev liblapack-dev gfortran
export BLAS=/usr/lib/libblas/libblas.so
export ATLAS=/usr/lib/atlas-base/libatlas.so
export LAPACK=/usr/lib/lapack/liblapack.so
pip install -r gui-requirements.txt

Continue from PyRF Installation below.

1.1.3 PyRF Installation

Download the development version:

git clone git://github.com/pyrf/pyrf.git
cd pyrf
python setup.py install

Or download a stable release, then from the source directory:

python setup.py install

1.2 API for WSA RF Receiver

`pyrf.devices.thinkrf.WSA` is the class that provides access to WSA4000 and WSA5000 devices. Its methods closely match the SCPI Command Set described in the Programmers Reference available in ThinkRF Resources.

There are simple examples that use this API under the “examples” directory included with the source code.

This API may be used in a blocking mode (the default) or in an asynchronous mode with using the ‘Twisted’ python library.

In blocking mode all methods that read from the device will wait to receive a response before returning.

In asynchronous mode all methods will send their commands to the device and then immediately return a Twisted Deferred object. If you need to wait for the response or completion of this command you can attach a callback to the Deferred object and the Twisted reactor will call it when ready. You may choose to use Twisted’s inlineCallbacks function decorator to write Twisted code that resembles synchronous code by yielding the Deferred objects returned from the API.

To use the asynchronous when a WSA instance is created you must pass a `pyrf.connectors.twisted_async.TwistedConnector` instance as the connector parameter, as in `show_i_q.py / twisted_show_i_q.py`
1.3 PyRF RTSA

**rtsa-gui** is a cross-platform GUI application built with the **Qt** toolkit and **PySideProject** bindings for Python. The GUI may be launched with the command:

```
rtsa-gui <hostname> [--reset]
```

If *hostname* is not specified a dialog will appear asking you to enter one. If *--reset* is used the WSA will be reset to defaults before the GUI appears.
2.1 pyrf.devices

2.1.1 .thinkrf

class pyrf.devices.thinkrf.WSA(connector=None)
    Interface for WSA4000 and WSA5000
    
    Parameters connector – Connector object to use for SCPI/VRT connections, defaults to a new
    PlainSocketConnector instance
    
    connect() must be called before other methods are used.

    Note: The following methods will either block then return a result or if you passed a TwistedConnector
    instance to the constructor they will immediately return a Twisted Deferred object.

    abort()
    This command will cause the WSA to stop the data capturing, whether in the manual trace block capture,
    triggering or sweeping mode. The WSA will be put into the manual mode; in other words, process such
    as streaming, trigger and sweep will be stopped. The capturing process does not wait until the end of a
    packet to stop, it will stop immediately upon receiving the command.

    antenna(number=None)
    This command selects and queries the active antenna port.
    
    Parameters number – 1 or 2 to set; None to query
    
    Returns active antenna port

    apply_device_settings(settings)
    This command takes a dict of device settings, and applies them to the WSA
    
    Parameters settings – dict containing settings such as gain,antenna,etc

    attenuator(enable=None)
    This command enables, disables or queries the WSA's RFE 20 dB attenuation.
    
    Parameters enable – True or False to set; None to query
    
    Returns the current attenuator state

    capture(spp, ppb)
    This command will start the single block capture and the return of ppb packets of spp samples each. The
data within a single block capture trace is continuous from one packet to the other, but not necessary between successive block capture commands issued.

**Parameters**

- **spp** – the number of samples in a packet
- **ppb** – the number of packets in a capture

**connect (host)**

connect to a wsa

Parameters **host** – the hostname or IP to connect to

**decimation (value=None)**

This command sets or queries the rate of decimation of samples in a trace capture. This decimation method consists of cascaded integrator-comb (CIC) filters and at every `value` number of samples, one sample is captured. The supported rate is 4 - 1023. When the rate is set to 1, no decimation is performed on the trace capture.

Parameters **value** *(int)* – new decimation value (1 or 4 - 1023); None to query

Returns the decimation value

**disconnect ()**

close a connection to a wsa

**eof ()**

Check if the VRT stream has closed.

Returns True if no more data, False if more data

**errors ()**

Flush and return the list of errors from past commands sent to the WSA. An empty list is returned when no errors are present.

**flush ()**

This command clears the WSA’s internal data storage buffer of any data that is waiting to be sent. Thus, it is recommended that the flush command should be used when switching between different capture modes to clear up the remnants of packet.

**flush_captures ()**

Flush capture memory of sweep captures.

**freq (freq=None)**

This command sets or queries the tuned center frequency of the WSA.

Parameters **freq** *(int)* – the new center frequency in Hz (0 - 10 GHz); None to query

Returns the frequency in Hz

**fshift (shift=None)**

This command sets or queries the frequency shift value.

Parameters **freq** *(int)* – the new frequency shift in Hz (0 - 125 MHz); None to query

Returns the amount of frequency shift

**gain (gain=None)**

This command sets or queries RFE quantized gain configuration. The RF front end (RFE) of the WSA consists of multiple quantized gain stages. The gain corresponding to each user-selectable setting has been pre-calculated for either optimal sensitivity or linearity. The parameter defines the total quantized gain of the RFE.

Parameters **gain** – ‘high’, ‘medium’, ‘low’ or ‘vlow’ to set; None to query
Returns the RF gain value

**has_data()**
Check if there is VRT data to read.

**Returns** True if there is a packet to read, False if not

**have_read_perm()**
Check if we have permission to read data.

**Returns** True if allowed to read, False if not

**id()**
Returns the WSA’s identification information string.

**Returns** “<Manufacturer>,<Model>,<Serial number>,<Firmware version>”

**ifgain**(gain=None)
This command sets or queries variable IF gain stages of the RFE. The gain has a range of -10 to 34 dB. This stage of the gain is additive with the primary gain stages of the LNA that are described in `gain()`.

**Parameters** gain – float between -10 and 34 to set; None to query

**Returns** the ifgain in dB

**locked**(modulestr)
This command queries the lock status of the RF VCO (Voltage Control Oscillator) in the Radio Front End (RFE) or the lock status of the PLL reference clock in the digital card.

**Parameters** modulestr – ‘vco’ for rf lock status, ‘clkref’ for mobo lock status

**Returns** True if locked

**ppb**(packets=None)
This command sets the number of IQ packets in a capture block

**Parameters** packets – the number of samples in a packet

**Returns** the current ppb value if the packets parameter is None

**preselect_filter**(enable=None)
This command sets or queries the RFE preselect filter selection.

**Parameters** enable – True or False to set; None to query

**Returns** the RFE preselect filter selection state

**raw_read**(num)
Raw read of VRT socket data from the WSA.

**Parameters** num – the number of bytes to read

**Returns** bytes

**read()**
Read a single VRT packet from the WSA.

**request_read_perm()**
Acquire exclusive permission to read data from the WSA.

**Returns** True if allowed to read, False if not

**reset()**
Resets the WSA to its default settings. It does not affect the registers or queues associated with the IEEE mandated commands.

2.1. **pyrf.devices**
**scpiget** *(cmd)*
Send a SCPI command and wait for the response.

This is the lowest-level interface provided. Please see the Programmer’s Guide for information about the commands available.

- **Parameters** `cmd` *(str)* – the command to send
- **Returns** the response back from the box if any

**scpiset** *(cmd)*
Send a SCPI command.

This is the lowest-level interface provided. Please see the Programmer’s Guide for information about the commands available.

- **Parameters** `cmd` *(str)* – the command to send

**spp** *(samples=None)*
This command sets or queries the number of Samples Per Packet (SPPacket).

The upper bound of the samples is limited by the VRT’s 16-bit packet size field less the VRT header and any optional fields (i.e. Stream ID, Class ID, Timestamps, and trailer) of 32-bit wide words. However since the SPP must be a multiple of 16, the maximum is thus limited by $2^{16} - 16$.

- **Parameters** `samples` – the number of samples in a packet or None
- **Returns** the current spp value if the samples parameter is None

**stream_start** *(stream_id=None)*
This command begins the execution of the stream capture. It will also initiate data capturing. Data packets will be streamed (or pushed) from the WSA whenever data is available.

- **Parameters** `stream_id` – optional unsigned 32-bit stream identifier

**stream_status** ()
This query returns the current running status of the stream capture mode.

- **Returns** ‘RUNNING’ or ‘STOPPED’

**stream_stop** ()
This command stops the stream capture. After receiving the command, the WSA system will stop when the current capturing VRT packet is completed.

**sweep_add** *(entry)*
Add an entry to the sweep list

- **Parameters** `entry` *(pyrf.config.SweepEntry)* – the sweep entry to add

**sweep_clear** ()
Remove all entries from the sweep list.

**sweep_read** *(index)*
Read an entry from the sweep list.

- **Parameters** `index` – the index of the entry to read
- **Returns** sweep entry

- **Return type** pyrf.config.SweepEntry

**sweep_start** *(start_id=None)*
Start the sweep engine.

**sweep_stop** ()
Stop the sweep engine.
trigger (settings=None)
This command sets or queries the type of trigger event. Setting the trigger type to “NONE” is equivalent
to disabling the trigger execution; setting to any other type will enable the trigger engine.

Parameters settings (dictionary) – the new trigger settings; None to query

Returns the trigger settings

pyrf.devices.thinkrf.parse_discovery_response (response)
This function parses the WSA’s raw discovery response

Parameters response – The WSA’s raw response to a discovery query

Returns Return (model, serial, firmware version) based on a discovery

response message

2.2 pyrf.sweep_device

class pyrf.sweep_device.SweepDevice (real_device, async_callback=None)
Virtual device that generates power levels from a range of frequencies by sweeping the frequencies with a real
device and piecing together FFT results.

Parameters

• real_device – device that will will be used for capturing data, typically a
pyrf.devices.thinkrf.WSA instance.

• callback – callback to use for async operation (not used if real_device is using a
PlainSocketConnector)

capture_power_spectrum (fstart, fstop, rbw, device_settings=None, mode='ZIF', continu-
ous=False, min_points=32)
Initiate a capture of power spectral density by setting up a sweep list and starting a single sweep.

Parameters

• fstart (float) – starting frequency in Hz

• fstop (float) – ending frequency in Hz

• rbw (float) – requested RBW in Hz (output RBW may be smaller than requested)

• device_settings – antenna, gain and other device settings

• mode (string) – sweep mode, ‘ZIF left band’, ‘ZIF’ or ‘SH’

• continuous (bool) – async continue after first sweep

• min_points (int) – smallest number of points per capture from real_device

exception pyrf.sweep_device.SweepDeviceError
class pyrf.sweep_device.SweepStep
Data structure used by SweepDevice for planning sweeps

Parameters

• fcenter – starting center frequency in Hz

• fstep – frequency increment each step in Hz

• fshift – frequency shift in Hz

• decimation – decimation value
• points – samples to capture
• bins_skip – number of FFT bins to skip from left
• bins_run – number of usable FFT bins each step
• bins_pass – number of bins from first step to discard from left
• bins_keep – total number of bins to keep from all steps

steps

to_sweep_entry (device, tfe_mode, **kwargs)
Create a SweepEntry for device matching this SweepStep,
extra parameters (gain, antenna etc.) may be provided as keyword parameters

pyrf.sweep_device.plan_sweep (device, fstart, fstop, rbw, mode, min_points=32)

Parameters

• device – a device class or instance such as pyrf.devices.thinkrf.WSA
• fstart (float) – starting frequency in Hz
• fstop (float) – ending frequency in Hz
• rbw (float) – requested RBW in Hz (output RBW may be smaller than requested)
• mode (string) – sweep mode, ‘ZIF left band’, ‘ZIF’ or ‘SH’
• min_points (int) – smallest number of points per capture

The following device properties are used in planning the sweep:

device.properties.FULL_BW full width of the filter in Hz
device.properties.USABLE_BW usable portion before filter drop-off at edges in Hz
device.properties.MIN_TUNABLE the lowest valid center frequency for arbitrary tuning in Hz, 0(DC) is always assumed to be available for direct digitization
device.properties.MAX_TUNABLE the highest valid center frequency for arbitrary tuning in Hz
device.properties.DC_OFFSET_BW the range of frequencies around center that may be affected by a DC offset and should not be used
 device.properties.TUNING_RESOLUTION the smallest tuning increment for fcenter and fstep

Returns (actual fstart, actual fstop, list of SweepStep instances)

The caller would then use each of these tuples to do the following:
1. The first 5 values are used for a single capture or single sweep
2. An FFT is run on the points returned to produce bins in the linear domain
3. bins[bins_skip:bins_skip + bins_run] are selected
4. take logarithm of output bins and appended to the result
5. for sweeps repeat from 2 until the sweep is complete
6. bins_pass is the number of selected bins to skip from the first capture only
7. bins_keep is the total number of selected bins to keep; for single captures bins_run == bins_keep
2.3 pyrf.capture_device

```python
class pyrf.capture_device.CaptureDevice(real_device, async_callback=None, device_settings=None):
    Virtual device that returns power levels generated from a single data packet

Parameters

- `real_device` – device that will be used for capturing data, typically a pyrf.thinkrf.WSA instance.
- `async_callback` – callback to use for async operation (not used if real_device is using a PlainSocketConnector)
- `device_settings` – initial device settings to use, passed to pyrf.capture_device.CaptureDevice.configure_device() if given

capture_time_domain(rfe_mode, freq, rbw, device_settings=None, min_points=128)
    Initiate a capture of raw time domain IQ or I-only data

Parameters

- `rfe_mode` – radio front end mode, e.g. ‘ZIF’, ‘SH’, ...
- `freq` – center frequency
- `rbw (float)` – requested RBW in Hz (output RBW may be smaller than requested)
- `device_settings` – attenuator, decimation frequency shift and other device settings
- `min_points (int)` – smallest number of points per capture from real_device

configure_device(device_settings)
    Configure the device settings on the next capture

Parameters

- `device_settings` – attenuator, decimation frequency shift and other device settings

read_data(packet)

exception pyrf.capture_device.CaptureDeviceError
```

2.4 pyrf.connectors

2.4.1 .blocking

```python
class pyrf.connectors.blocking.PlainSocketConnector
    This connector makes SCPI/VRT socket connections using plain sockets.

    connect(host)
    disconnect()
    eof()
    has_data()
    raw_read(num)
    scpiget(cmd)
    scpiset(cmd)
```
`sync_async(gen)`
Handler for the `@sync_async` decorator. We convert the generator to a single return value for simple synchronous use.

`pyrf.connectors.blocking.socketread(socket, count, flags=None)`
Retry socket read until count data received, like reading from a file.

### 2.4.2 twisted_async

**class** `pyrf.connectors.twisted_async.SCPIClient`

- `connectionMade()`
- `dataReceived(data)`
- `scpiget(cmd)`
- `scpiset(cmd)`

**class** `pyrf.connectors.twisted_async.SCPIClientFactory`

- `buildProtocol(addr)`
- `clientConnectionFailed(connector, reason)`
- `clientConnectionLost(connector, reason)`
- `startedConnecting(connector)`

**class** `pyrf.connectors.twisted_async.TwistedConnector(reactor, vrt_callback=None)`
A connector that makes SCPI/VRT connections asynchronously using Twisted.

A callback may be assigned to `vrt_callback` that will be called with VRT packets as they arrive. When `.vrt_callback` is `None` (the default) arriving packets will be ignored.

- `connect(host, output_file=None)`
- `disconnect()`
- `eof()`
- `inject_recording_state(state)`
- `raw_read(num_bytes)`
- `scpiget(cmd)`
- `scpiset(cmd)`
- `set_recording_output(output_file=None)`
- `sync_async(gen)`

**exception** `pyrf.connectors.twisted_async.TwistedConnectorError`

**class** `pyrf.connectors.twisted_async.VRClient(receive_callback)`
A Twisted protocol for the VRT connection

**Parameters** `receive_callback` – a function that will be passed a vrt DataPacket or ContextPacket when it is received

- `connectionLost(reason)`
- `dataReceived(data)`

---

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Chapter 2. Reference
EOF = False
injected_recording_state (state)
makeConnection (transport)
set_recording_output (output_file=None)

class pyrf.connectors.twisted_async.VRTClientFactory (receive_callback)

    buildProtocol (addr)
    clientConnectionFailed (connector, reason)
    clientConnectionLost (connector, reason)
    startedConnecting (connector)

2.5 pyrf.config

class pyrf.config.SweepEntry (fstart=2400000000, fstop=2400000000, fstep=100000000, fshift=0,
    decimation=0, antenna=1, gain='vlow', ifgain=0, spp=1024, ppb=1,
    trigtype='none', dwell_s=0, dwell_us=0, level_fstart=50000000, level_fstop=10000000000,
    level_amplitude=-100, attenuator=True, rfe_mode='ZIF')

Sweep entry for pyrf.devices.thinkrf.WSA.sweep_add()

Parameters

• fstart – starting frequency in Hz
• fstop – ending frequency in Hz
• fstep – frequency step in Hz
• fshift – the frequency shift in Hz
• decimation – the decimation value (0 or 4 - 1023)
• antenna – the antenna (1 or 2)
• gain – the RF gain value (‘high’, ‘medium’, ‘low’ or ‘vlow’)
• ifgain – the IF gain in dB (-10 - 34)
• spp – samples per packet
• ppb – packets per block
• dwell_s – dwell time seconds
• dwell_us – dwell time microseconds
• trigtype – trigger type (‘none’, ‘pulse’ or ‘level’)
• level_fstart – level trigger starting frequency in Hz
• level_fstop – level trigger ending frequency in Hz
• level_amplitude – level trigger minimum in dBm
• attenuator – enable/disable attenuator
class `pyrf.config.TriggerSettings`(*trigtype=’NONE’, *fstart=None, *fstop=None, *amplitude=None)*

Trigger settings for `pyrf.devices.thinkrf.WSA.trigger()`.

**Parameters**
- **trigtype** – “LEVEL” or “NONE” to disable
- **fstart** – starting frequency in Hz
- **fstop** – ending frequency in Hz
- **amplitude** – minimum level for trigger in dBm

```python
exception `pyrf.config.TriggerSettingsError`
```

### 2.6 pyrf.numpy_util

`pyrf.numpy_util.compute_fft(`*dut, data_pkt, context, correct_phase=True, hide_differential_dc_offset=True, convert_to_dbm=True, apply_window=True, apply_spec_inv=True, apply_reference=True, ref=None)*`

Return an array of dBm values by computing the FFT of the passed data and reference level.

**Parameters**
- **dut** (*pyrf.devices.thinkrf.WSA*) – WSA device
- **data_pkt** (*pyrf.vrt.DataPacket*) – packet containing samples
- **context** – dict containing context values
- **correct_phase** – apply phase correction for captures with IQ data
- **hide_differential_dc_offset** – mask the differential DC offset present in captures with IQ data
- **convert_to_dbm** – convert the output values to dBm

**Returns** numpy array of dBm values as floats

### 2.7 pyrf.util

`pyrf.util.read_data_and_context(`*dut, points=1024)*

Initiate capture of one data packet, wait for and return data packet and collect preceeding context packets.

**Returns** (data_pkt, context_values)

Where context_values is a dict of {field_name: value} items from all the context packets received.

`pyrf.util.collect_data_and_context(`*dut)*

Wait for and return data packet and collect preceeding context packets.

### 2.8 pyrf.vrt

class `pyrf.vrt.ContextPacket`(*packet_type, count, size, tmpstr, has_timestamp)*

A Context Packet received from `pyrf.devices.thinkrf.WSA.read()`
fields
a dict containing field names and values from the packet

is_context_packet (ptype=None)
Parameters ptype – “Receiver”, “Digitizer” or None for any packet type
Returns True if this packet matches the type passed

is_data_packet()
Returns False

class pyrf.vrt.DataArray (binary_data, bytes_per_sample)
Data Packet values as a lazy array read from binary_data.
Parameters bytes_per_sample – 1 for PSD8 data, 2 for I14 data or 4 for I24 data

numpy_array()
return a numpy array for this data

class pyrf.vrt.DataPacket (count, size, stream_id, tsi, tsf, payload, trailer)
A Data Packet received from pyrf.devices.thinkrf.WSA.read()
data
a pyrf.vrt.IQData object containing the packet data

is_context_packet (ptype=None)
Returns False

is_data_packet()
Returns True

class pyrf.vrt.IQData (binary_data)
Data Packet values as a lazy collection of (I, Q) tuples read from binary_data.
This object behaves as an immutable python sequence, e.g. you may do any of the following:
points = len(iq_data)
i_and_q = iq_data[5]
for i, q in iq_data:
    print i, q

numpy_array()
Return a numpy array of I, Q values for this data similar to:
array([[ -44,  8],
       [-40, 60],
       [-12, 92],
       ..., [-132, -8],
       [-124, 56],
       [-44, 80]], dtype=int16)

exception pyrf.vrt.InvalidDataReceived

pyrf.vrt.generate_specia_packet (data, count=0)
Parameters
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- **data** – a python dict that can be serialized as JSON
- **count** – int count for the header of this packet

**Returns** (vrt packet bytes, next count int)

`pyrf.vrt.vrt_packet_reader(raw_read)`

Read a VRT packet, parse it and return an object with its data.

Implemented as a generator that yields the result of the passed raw_read function and accepts the value sent as its data.
These examples may be found in the “examples” directory included with the PyRF source code.

### 3.1 discovery.py / twisted_discovery.py

- discovery.py
- twisted_discovery.py

These examples detect WSA devices on the same network

Example output:

```
WSA4000 00:50:c2:ea:29:14 None at 10.126.110.111
WSA4000 00:50:c2:ea:29:26 None at 10.126.110.113
```

### 3.2 show_i_q.py / twisted_show_i_q.py

These examples connect to a device specified on the command line, tunes it to a center frequency of 2.450 MHz then reads and displays one capture of 1024 i, q values.

- show_i_q.py
- twisted_show_i_q.py

Example output (truncated):

```
0, -20
-8, -16
0, -24
-8, -12
0, -32
24, -24
32, -16
-12, -24
-20, 0
12, -32
32, -4
0, 12
-20, -16
-48, 16
-12, 12
```
3.3 matplotlib_plot_sweep.py

This example connects to a device specified on the command line, and plots a complete sweep of the spectrum using NumPy and matplotlib.

- matplotlib_plot_sweep.py

3.4 pyqtgraph_plot_block.py

This example connects to a device specified on the command line, tunes it to a center frequency of 2.450 MHz then continually captures and displays an FFT in a GUI window.

- pyqtgraph_plot_block.py

PyRF is an openly available, comprehensive development environment for wireless signal analysis. It enables rapid development of powerful applications that leverage the new generation of measurement-grade software-defined radio technology.

PyRF is built on the Python Programming Language and includes feature-rich libraries, example applications and source code, all specific to the requirements of signal analysis. PyRF is openly available, allowing commercialization of solutions through BSD open licensing and offering device independence via standard hardware APIs. PyRF handles the low-level details of real-time acquisition, signal processing and visualization, allowing you to concentrate on your analysis solutions.
This library currently supports development for the ThinkRF WSA4000 and WSA5000 platforms.
Links

- Official github page
- Documentation for this API
- WSA4000/WSA5000 Documentation
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