



Faculty of Sciences,  
Technology  
and Communication

# Information Security Basics

Course Overview and Organization

Alex Biryukov  
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# Course Organization

- This course is divided into **three parts**:
  - Symmetric cryptography (A. Biryukov + J. Großschädl)
  - Public-key cryptography (J.-S. Coron)
  - Security protocols (P. B. Rønne)
- Quizzes (multiple-choice)
  - Separate quiz **after each part** (3 quizzes in total)
  - Each quiz: **10 multiple-choice questions** with 4-5 answers
  - 30 minutes (at last lecture of each part), closed book
- Grading
  - Quizzes (for all three parts together): **30%**
  - Written exam (January 2025, open book): **70%**



# Information Security Profile

- This course introduces the Information Security Profile
- After successful completion of this profile a student will be able to:
  - Explain the **principles and techniques** of information security
  - Identify multiple **applications** for information security
  - Apply the most important **standards and methods** related to the management of information security in a given context
  - Know the **state-of-the-art** and thereby pursue **life-long learning** of new developments in information security



# Semester 2

- **Required courses**
  - Algorithms for Numbers and Public-Key Cryptography
  - Principles of Security Engineering
  - Symmetric Key Cryptography and Security of Communications
- **Recommended courses**
  - Software Vulnerabilities: Exploitation and Mitigation
  - Formal Methods (advised for Security Protocols)

# Semester 3

- **Required courses**
  - Cryptocurrencies and the Cryptographic Blockchain
  - Security Modelling
  - Security Protocols (taking Formal Methods before this course is advised)
- **Recommended courses**
  - Fault and Intrusion Tolerance
  - Management of Information Security
  - Open Network Security



# Information Security Basics

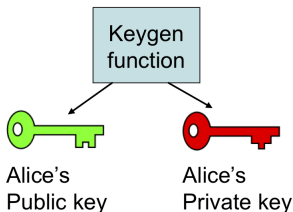
## Part 1: Introduction to public-key cryptography

Jean-Sébastien Coron

University of Luxembourg

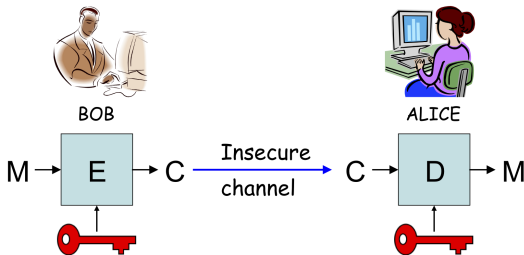
# Public-key cryptography

- Invented by Diffie and Hellman in 1976. Revolutionized the field.
- Each user now has two keys
  - A public key
  - A private key
  - Should be hard to compute the private key from the public key.
- Enables:
  - Asymmetric encryption
  - Digital signatures
  - Key exchange, identification, and many other protocols.



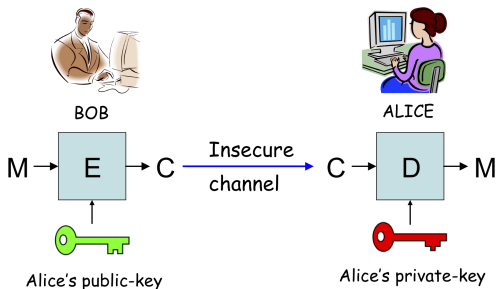
# Key distribution issue

- Symmetric cryptography
  - Problem: how to initially distribute the key to establish a secure channel ?



# Public-key encryption

- Public-key encryption (or asymmetric encryption)
  - Solves the key distribution issue



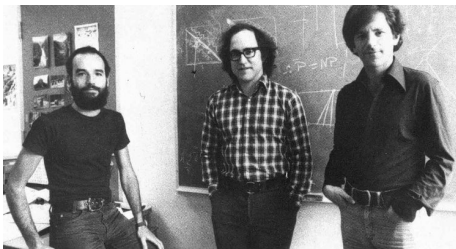
# Analogy: the mailbox

- Bob wants to send a letter to Alice
  - Bob obtains Alice's adress
  - Bob puts his letter in Alice's mailbox
  - Alice opens her mailbox and read Bob's letter.
- Properties of the mailbox
  - Anybody can put a letter in the mailbox
  - Only Alice can open her mailbox



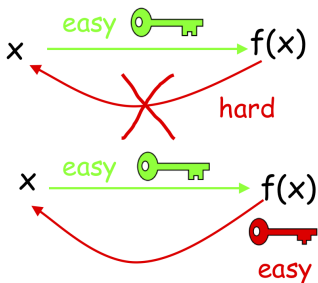
# The RSA algorithm

- The RSA algorithm is the most widely-used public-key encryption algorithm
  - Invented in 1977 by Rivest, Shamir and Adleman.
  - Implements a trapdoor one-way permutation
  - Used for encryption and signature.
  - Widely used in electronic commerce protocols (SSL), secure email, and many other applications.



# Trapdoor one-way permutation

- Trapdoor one-way permutation
  - Computing  $f(x)$  from  $x$  is easy
  - Computing  $x$  from  $f(x)$  is hard without the trapdoor



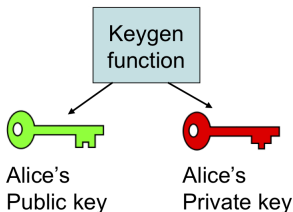
- Public-key encryption
  - Anybody can compute the encryption  $c = f(m)$  of the message  $m$ .
  - One can recover  $m$  from the ciphertext  $c$  only with the trapdoor.

- Key generation:
  - Generate two large distinct primes  $p$  and  $q$  of same bit-size  $k/2$ , where  $k$  is a parameter.
  - Compute  $n = p \cdot q$  and  $\phi = (p - 1)(q - 1)$ .
  - Select a random integer  $e$  such that  $\gcd(e, \phi) = 1$
  - Compute the unique integer  $d$  such that

$$e \cdot d \equiv 1 \pmod{\phi}$$

using the extended Euclidean algorithm.

- The public key is  $(n, e)$ .
- The private key is  $d$ .



- Encryption with public-key  $(n, e)$ 
  - Given a message  $m \in [0, n - 1]$  and the recipient's public-key  $(n, e)$ , compute the ciphertext:

$$c = m^e \bmod n$$

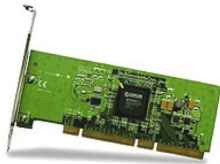
- Decryption with private-key  $d$ 
  - Given a ciphertext  $c$ , to recover  $m$ , compute:

$$m = c^d \bmod n$$

- Message encoding
  - The message  $m$  is viewed as an integer between 0 and  $n - 1$
  - One can always interpret a bit-string of length less than  $\lfloor \log_2 n \rfloor$  as such a number.

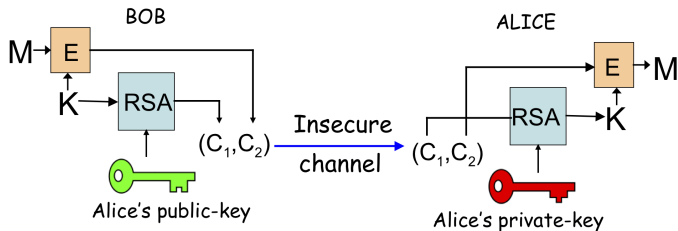
# Implementation of RSA

- Required: computing with large integers
  - more than 1024 bits.
- In software
  - big integer library: GMP, NTL
- In hardware
  - Cryptoprocessor for smart-card
  - Hardware accelerator for PC.



# Speed of RSA

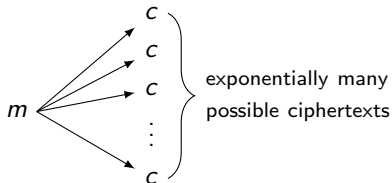
- RSA much slower than AES and other secret key algorithms.
- To encrypt long messages
  - encrypt a symmetric key  $K$  with RSA
  - and encrypt the long message with  $K$



# Security of RSA

- The security of RSA is based on the hardness of factoring.
  - Given  $n = p \cdot q$ , it should be difficult to recover  $p$  and  $q$ .
  - No efficient algorithm is known to do that. Best algorithms have sub-exponential complexity.
  - Factoring record (2020): a 829-bit RSA modulus  $n$ .
  - In practice, one uses at least 1024-bit RSA moduli.
- However, there are many other lines of attacks.
  - Attacks against textbook RSA encryption
  - Low private / public exponent attacks
  - Implementation attacks: timing attacks, power attacks and fault attacks

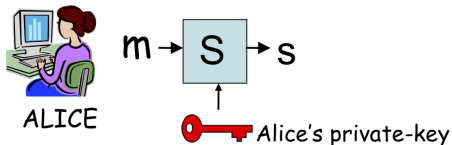
- Textbook RSA encryption: dictionary attack
  - If only two possible messages  $m_0$  and  $m_1$ , then only  $c_0 = (m_0)^e \bmod N$  and  $c_1 = (m_1)^e \bmod N$ .
  - $\Rightarrow$  encryption must be probabilistic.



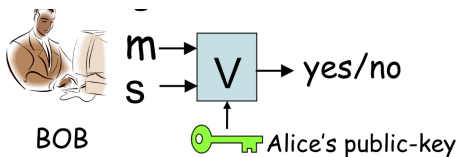
- Example: PKCS#1 v1.5 (1993)
  - $\mu(m) = 0002\|r\|00\|m$
  - $c = \mu(m)^e \bmod N$
  - Still insufficient  
(Bleichenbacher's attack, 1998)

# Digital signatures

- A digital signature  $\sigma$  is a bit string that depends on the message  $m$  and the user's public-key  $pk$ 
  - Only Alice can sign a message  $m$  using her private-key  $sk$



- Anybody can verify Alice's signature of the message  $m$  given her public-key  $pk$





- A digital signature provides:
  - Authenticity: only Alice can produce a signature of a message valid under her public-key.
  - Integrity: the signed message cannot be modified.
  - Non-repudiation: Alice cannot later claim that she did not sign the message

# The RSA signature scheme

- Key generation :
  - Public modulus:  $N = p \cdot q$  where  $p$  and  $q$  are large primes.
  - Public exponent :  $e$
  - Private exponent:  $d$ , such that  $d \cdot e = 1 \pmod{\phi(N)}$
- To sign a message  $m$ , the signer computes :
  - $s = m^d \pmod{N}$
  - Only the signer can sign the message.
- To verify the signature, one checks that:
  - $m = s^e \pmod{N}$
  - Anybody can verify the signature

# Hash-and-sign paradigm

- There are many attacks on basic RSA signatures:
  - Existential forgery:  $r^e = m \pmod{N}$
  - Chosen-message attack:  $(m_1 \cdot m_2)^d = m_1^d \cdot m_2^d \pmod{N}$
- To prevent from these attacks, one usually uses a hash function. The message is first hashed, then padded.

$$m \longrightarrow H(m) \longrightarrow 1001 \dots 0101 \parallel H(m)$$
$$\downarrow$$
$$\sigma = (1001 \dots 0101 \parallel H(m))^d \pmod{N}$$

- Example: PKCS#1 v1.5 (1993)

$$\mu(m) = 0001 \text{ FF} \dots \text{FF}00 \parallel c_{\text{SHA}} \parallel \text{SHA}(m)$$

- The signature is then
$$\sigma = \mu(m)^d \pmod{N}$$

# Other signature schemes

- Digital Signature Algorithm (DSA) (1991)
  - Digital Signature Standard (DSS) proposed by NIST, specified in FIPS 186.
  - Variant of Schnorr and ElGamal signature schemes
  - Security based on the hardness of discrete logarithm problem.
  - Public-key:  $y = g^x \bmod p$
  - Signature:  $(r, s)$ , where  $r = (g^k \bmod p) \bmod q$  and  $s = k^{-1}(H(m) + x \cdot r) \bmod q$ , where  $k \xleftarrow{\$} \mathbb{Z}_q$
- ECDSA: a variant of DSA for elliptic-curves
  - Shorter public-key than DSA (160 bits instead of 1024 bits)
  - Used in Bitcoin to ensure that funds can only be spent by their rightful owners.

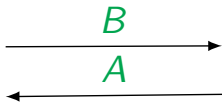
# Diffie-Hellman key-exchange protocol

- Public parameters:  $g$  and  $p$



Bob

$$B = g^b [p]$$



Alice

$$A = g^a [p]$$

$$K_B = A^b = (g^a)^b = g^{ab} [p]$$

$$K_A = B^a = (g^b)^a = g^{ba} [p]$$

$$K_B = K_A$$

# Security of Diffie-Hellman

- Based on the hardness of the discrete-log problem:
  - Given  $A = g^a \pmod{p}$ , find  $a$
  - No efficient algorithm for large prime  $p$ .
- No authentication
  - Vulnerable to the man in the middle attack

# Diffie-Hellman: man in the middle attack



Bob

$$B = g^b [p]$$



Alice

$$A = g^a [p]$$

$$K_B = A^b = g^{ab} [p]$$

$$K_A = B^a = g^{ba} [p]$$

$$K_B = K_A$$

# Diffie-Hellman: man in the middle attack



Bob

$$B = g^b [p]$$



Eve



Alice

$$A = g^a [p]$$

$$K_B = A^b = g^{ab} [p]$$

$$K_B = K_A$$

$$K_A = B^a = g^{ba} [p]$$

# Diffie-Hellman: man in the middle attack



Bob

$$B = g^b [p]$$

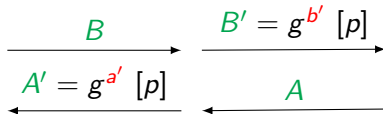


Eve



Alice

$$A = g^a [p]$$



$$K'_B = (A')^b = g^{a'b} [p]$$

$$K'_A = (B')^a = g^{b'a} [p]$$

$$K'_B = B'^a [p]$$

$$K'_A = A'^b [p]$$

# Security of Diffie-Hellman

- Based on the hardness of the discrete-log problem:
  - Given  $A = g^a \pmod{p}$ , find  $a$
  - No efficient algorithm for large prime  $p$ .
- No authentication
  - Vulnerable to the man in the middle attack
- Authenticated key exchange
  - Using a PKI. Alice and Bob can sign  $A$  and  $B$
  - Password-authenticated key-exchange IEEE P1363.2

# Lessons from the past

- Cryptography is a permanent race between construction and attacks
  - but somehow this has changed with modern cryptography and security proofs.
- Security should rely on the secrecy of the key and not of the algorithm
  - Open algorithms enables open scrutiny.
  
- Note: installation of Sage
  - Install Sage <https://www.sagemath.org>
  - Run a Jupyter notebook
    - \$ `sage -n jupyter`

# Installation of Sage

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