CO 487 Winter 2024:
Lecture Notes

Lecture notes taken, unless otherwise specified, by myself during the Winter 2024 offering of CO 487, taught by Alfred Menezes.

Lectures

Chapter 1

Introduction

Lecture 1
Jan 8

Cryptography is securing communications in the presence of malicious adversaries. To simplify, consider Alice and Bob communicating with the eavesdropper Eve. Communications should be:

- Confidential: Only authorized people can read it
- Integral: Ensured that it is unmodified
- Origin authenticated: Ensured that the source is in fact Alice
- Non-repudiated: Unable to gaslight the message existing

Examples: TLS for intenet browsing, GSM for cell phone communications, Bluetooth for other wireless devices.

Overview: Transport Layer Security The protocol used by browsers to visit websites. TLS assures an individual user (a client) of the authenticity of the website (a server) and to establish a secure communications session.

TLS uses symmetric-key cryptography. Both the client and server have a shared secret k called a key. They can then use AES for encryption and HMAC for authentication.

To establish the shared secret, use public-key cryptography. Alice can encrypt the session key k can be encrypted with Bob's RSA public key. Then, Bob can decrypt it with his private key.

To ensure Alice is getting an authentic copy of Bob's public key, a certification authority (CA) signs it using the CA's private key. The CA public key comes with Alice's device preinstalled.

Potential vulnerabilities when using TLS:

- Weak cryptography scheme or vulnerable to quantum computing
- Weak random number generation for the session key
- Fraudulent certificates
- Implementation bugs

- Phishing attacks
- Transmission is secured, but the endpoints are not

These are mostly the purview of cybersecurity, of which cryptography is a part. Cryptography is not typically the weakest link in the cybersecurity chain.