

CSE 477: Introduction to Computer Security

Lecture – 5

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Outline

- Basic crypto concepts
- Other aspects

Cryptographic hash functions

- To reduce the size of the message that Bob has to sign, we often use cryptographic ***hash functions***, which are checksums on messages that have some additional useful properties
- **One-way**: it should be easy to compute $Y=H(M)$, but hard to find M given only Y
- **Collision-resistant**: it should be hard to find two messages, M and N , such that $H(M)=H(N)$
- **Examples**: SHA-1, SHA-256

Cryptographic hash functions: applications

- Given a cryptographic hash function, we can reduce the time and space needed for Bob to perform a digital signature by
 - first creating a hash of M : $h(M)$ and
 - then have him sign this value: $S = E_{S_B}(h(M))$ which is sometimes called the ***digest*** of M
- Send S and M to Alice
- Upon receiving, Alice computes $h' = h(m)$
 - Then compute: $h(m) = D_{P_B}(S)$ and then compare $h' = h(m)$
- Signing a cryptographic digest of the message is more efficient

Cryptographic hash functions: applications

- Signing a cryptographic digest of the message also defends against the MITM attack described previously
 - both guarding integrity and authenticity of the message
- Because it is no longer possible for the attacker to forge a message-signature pair without knowledge of the private key
 - Hence, if the attacker crafts a forged signature its validation will fail!
 - This guarantees authenticity of the message
- Also, because of the collision-resistant property of the hash-function, the attacker cannot find another message M' which will have the same digest as the M
 - This guarantees the integrity of the message

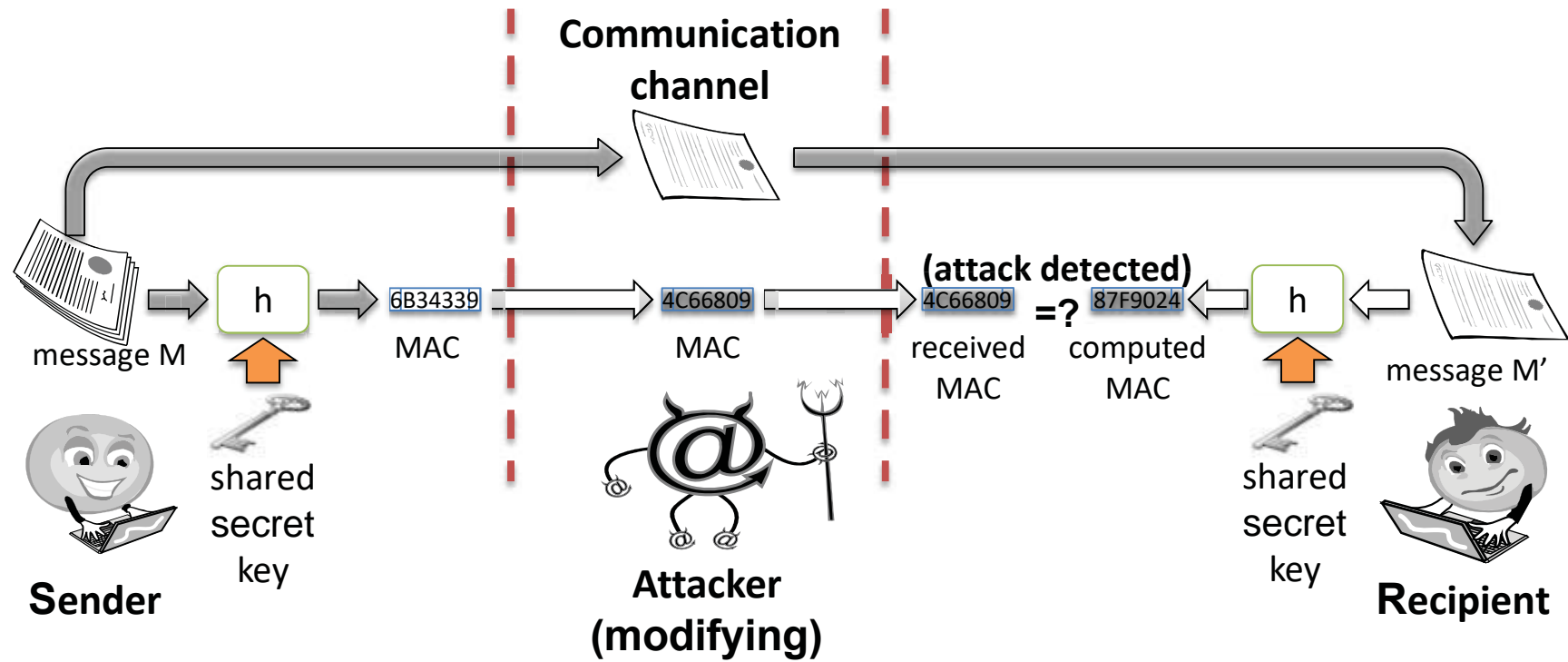
Cryptographic hash functions: applications

- Another application of cryptographic hash functions is to protect the integrity of critical files in an operating system in the following way:
 - store the cryptographic hash value of each such file in protected memory
 - compute the cryptographic hash of a corresponding file in run-time
 - and compare the computed value with the stored in secure memory
 - if they match, the file has not been altered with, because of the collision-resistant property of the hash function

Message Authentication Code (MAC)

- A cryptographic hash function h can be used in conjunction with a secret key shared by two parties to provide integrity protection to messages exchanged over an insecure channel, much like a digital signature
- Suppose Alice and Bob share a secret key K
- When Alice wants to send a message M to Bob, she computes the hash value of the key K concatenated with message M : $A = h(K || M)$
 - A is called the MAC
- Alice sends the pair (M, A) to Bob
- Let's assume what Bob receives (M', A)
- Alice computes $A' = h(k || M')$, if $A = A'$, Bob is assured that
 - the message is sent by Alice, thus guaranteeing authenticity
 - and the message has not been altered during transmission and hence guaranteeing integrity

Message Authentication Code (MAC)



Digital Signature vs MAC

- They are similar, but the shared key K needs to be exchanged in a secure fashion
 - Like any symmetric encryption

Cryptographic primitive	Hash	MAC	Digital signature
Security Goal			
Integrity	Yes	Yes	Yes
Authentication	No	Yes	Yes
Non-repudiation	No	No	Yes
Kind of keys	none	symmetric keys	asymmetric keys

Digital certificates

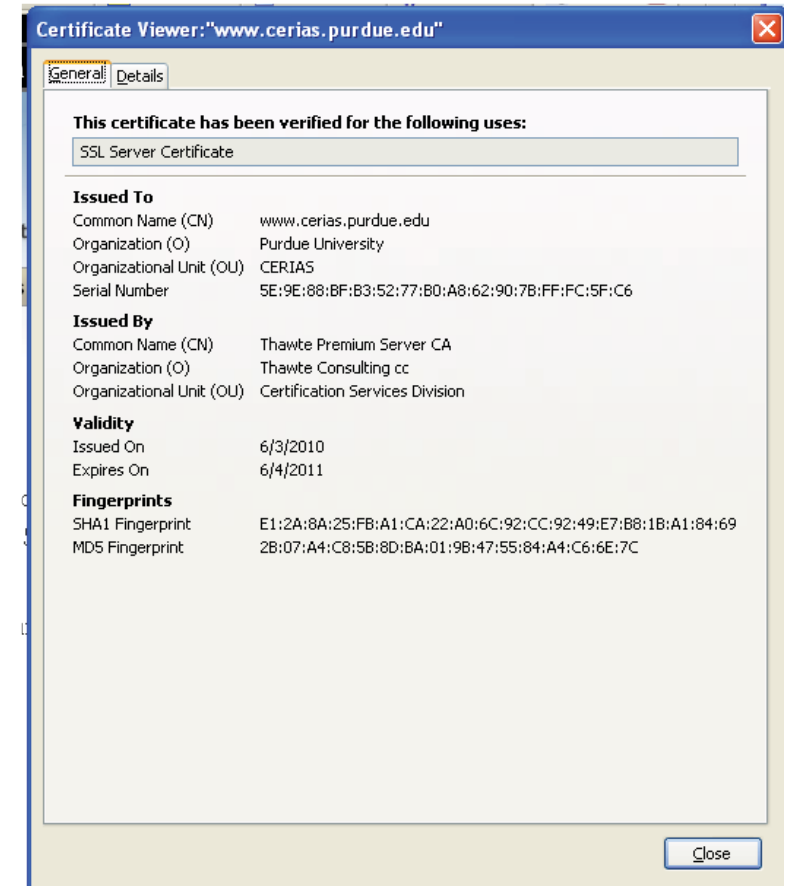
- Public-key cryptography solves the problem of how to get Alice and Bob to share a common secret key
- But this solution has a flaw:
 - How does Alice know that the public key, P_B , that she used is really the public key for Bob?
 - And if there are lots of Bobs, how can she be sure she used the public key for the right one?
- Solution:
 - Utilise a trusted authority who will verify a user's identity and then digitally sign a statement that combines each person's identity with their public key
 - The statement can be something like this:
 - *"The Bob who lives on 11 Main Street in Gotham City was born on August 4, 1981, and has email address bob@gotham.com, has the public key P_B , and I stand by this certification until December 31, 2011."*

Digital certificates

- Such a statement is called *digital certificates*
- Such a trusted authority is called a *Certificate Authority (CA)*
- Since the digital certificate is a strong evidence of the authenticity of Bob's public key, Alice can trust it even if it comes from an unsigned email message or is posted on a third-party web site
- However, Alice also needs to trust the public key of CAs. This creates a circular problem
 - Solution, embed the public keys of the CAs in the OS/Browser
- We will study the protocol for validating digital certificates when we study web security

Digital certificates

- Name of the certification authority (e.g., Thawte).
- Date of issuance of the certificate (e.g., 1/1/2009).
- Expiration date of the certificate (e.g., 12/31/2011).
- Address of the website (e.g., mail.google.com).
- Name of the organization operating the web site (e.g., “Google, Inc.”).
- Public key used of the web server (e.g., an RSA 1,024-bit key).
- Name of the cryptographic hash function used (e.g., SHA-256).
- Digital signature.



Other aspects: passwords

- A short sequence of characters used as a means to authenticate someone via a secret that they know (***something you know paradigm***)
- Ideally, passwords should be easy to remember and hard to guess
 - Unfortunately, these two goals are in conflict with each other
 - Easy to remember passwords are easy to guess!
 - Hard random passwords are difficult to memorise!

Strong passwords

- What is a strong password
 - UPPER/lower case characters
 - Special characters
 - Numbers
- When is a password strong?
 - Seattle1
 - M1ke03
 - P@\$\$w0rd
 - TD2k5secV
- An Example:
 - “Mark took Lisa to Disneyland on March 15,
 - MtLtDoM15,
 - MtL+DoM15, (a more secure password)

Password complexity

- A fixed 6 symbols password:
 - Numbers: $10^6 = 1,000,000$
 - UPPER or lower case characters $26^6 = 308,915,776$
 - UPPER and lower case characters $52^6 = 19,770,609,664$
 - 32 special characters (&, %, \$, £, “, |, ^, §, etc.) $32^6 = 1,073,741,824$
 - 94 practical symbols available $94^6 = 689,869,781,056$
 - ASCII standard 7 bit $2^7 = 128$ symbols
 - $128^6 = 4,398,046,511,104$ (4 trillion)
- Odd characters make password safer!

Password length

- 94 characters:
 - 26 UPPER/lower case characters=52characters
 - 10 numbers
 - 32 special characters
 - $52 + 10 + 32 = 94$ characters available

5 characters: $94^5 =$	7,339,040,224
6 characters: $94^6 =$	689,869,781,056
7 characters: $94^7 =$	64,847,759,419,264
8 characters: $94^8 =$	6,095,689,385,410,816
9 characters: $94^9 =$	572,994,802,228,616,704

Longer passwords are better

Secure passwords

- A strong password includes characters from at least three of the following groups:

Group	Example
Lowercase letters	a, b, c, ...
Uppercase letters	A, B, C, ...
Numerals	0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9
Non-alphanumeric (symbols)	() ` ~ ! @ # \$ % ^ & * - + = \ { } [] : ; " ' < > , . ? /
Unicode characters	€, Γ, f, and λ

Use pass phrases eg. "I re@lly want to buy 11 Dogs!"

Dictionary attack

- For the English language, there are less than 50,000 common words, 1,000 common human first names, 1,000 typical pet names, and 10,000 common last names
- 36,525 birthdays and anniversaries for almost all living humans
- So an attacker can compile a dictionary of all these common passwords and have a file that has fewer than 100,000 entries
- Armed with this dictionary of common passwords, one can perform an attack that is called, for obvious reasons, a ***dictionary attack***
- If a computer can test one password every millisecond, then it can complete the dictionary attack in 100 seconds, which is less than 2 minutes
 - Solution:
 - a certain number of password try within a certain duration
 - a certain number of tries before the account is locked

Other attacks

- ***Social engineering*** refers to techniques involving the use of human insiders to circumvent computer security solutions
 - *“Humans are the weakest link in the information security chain”*
- **Pretexting**: creating a story that convinces an administrator or operator into revealing secret information
 - I forgot my password and I have a meeting in 10 minutes. Could you please reset my password according to my choice?!
- **Baiting**: offering a kind of “gift” to get a user or agent to perform an insecure action
 - Leaving a USB drive with text “top secret”!
- **Quid pro quo** (“something for something.”): offering an action or service and then expecting something in return:
 - I am a helpdesk agent and your computer is in severe danger, let me help you!

Security usability

- A secure system must be usable:
 - Remember security is often the secondary goal of a user
- Security Usability:
 - A growing field combining the expertise of Security researchers, psychologists and computer engineering
- Domain was created with the following seminal paper by Whitten et al.:
 - Why Johnny Can't Encrypt at Usenix'99 – Study the paper
- If you are more interested about passwords:
 - Passwords and the Evolution of Imperfect Authentication – Bonneau et al.
- Homework: to read these two papers

The lecture slides can be found in the following location!

