



**POLITECNICO  
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# Recap Computer System Security (02KRQOV)

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## Acknowledgments

Questo breve riepilogo non ha alcuno scopo se non quello di agevolare lo studio di me stesso, se vi fosse di aiuto siete liberi di usarlo.

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Non mi assumo nessuna responsabilità in merito ad errori o qualsiasi altra cosa. Fatene buon uso!

# 1 Introduction Security ICT System

**Why is security an important issue?** Nowadays that everything is online and connected to a world wide network, the security over the ICT system has become fundamental. A lack of the security could generate loss for millions of money. Also data breach become a problem.

Everyday's technology improve and drive innovation but security must be improved together with the innovations.

With the increase of the number of connected devices, the IoT (Internet of Things), security start to facing a lot of more problem, the complexity of the scenario has become really really big. From personal devices, like desktop, laptop, fridge or car, by communications networks, and to distributed services, everything must be secured!

**Complexity enemy of security** based on one of the first axiom of engineering: *"The more complex a system is, the more difficult its correctness verification will be."*. Keep a system as simple as possible is always a good idea. The KISS rules (***Keep It Simple, Stupid***) is one of the most important rule over the system security.

**Definition of ICT Security** "It is the set of products, services, organization rules and individual behaviours that protect the ICT system of a company.

It has the duty to protect the resources from undesired access, guarantee the privacy of information, ensure the service operation and availability in case of unpredictable events (C.I.A. = Confidentiality, Integrity, Availability).

The objective is to guard the information with the same professionalism and attention as for the jewels and deposit certificates stored in a bank vault.

The ICT system is the safe of our most valuable information; ICT security is the equivalent of the locks, combinations and keys required to protect it."

— **Italian Bank**

An important part of the security study is the Risk Estimation, is a fundamental step that take in account all the assets and events to evaluate the risk of something. The flow is showed in figure 1:

Where the assets is composed by everythings needed by a service to work, both soft and hard part, also human resources. The vulnerabilities, intrinsic of an asset, represent the weakness of it. The threats is a deliberate action, or an accidental event, that can produce the loss of a security properties exploiting a vulnerability. The event is also characterized by an impact and a probability



Figure 1: Risk Estimation

that could be high, low or other middle values.

Direct following of the risk estimation is the Analysis and management of security. After the evaluation of risks, is necessary to:

1. Select Countermeasures
2. Implement Countermeasures
3. Audit (check if works)

The security implement is not a phase of the developmente process, is part of each sigle part of it. Security can't be compute at the end of the devel-opment, it must be implement from the beginning of the process. **Security is a process, not a product!** The following figure 2 show the parallel line followed by the security development.

An important definition, before speaking about security itself, is the **Win-dow of Exposure** the represent the time when an attack could be performed and there are no countermeasures to avoid it. This window could potentially be infinite and this is the real problem. The figure 3 show how this windows id divided in different part:

As already says, security is not a product but is a proccess. Computer flaws are inevitable and this is way we can't use devote our security to only secured products. The only way to effectively do business is an insecure world is to put processes in place that recognize the inheritent insecurity in the products. **The**

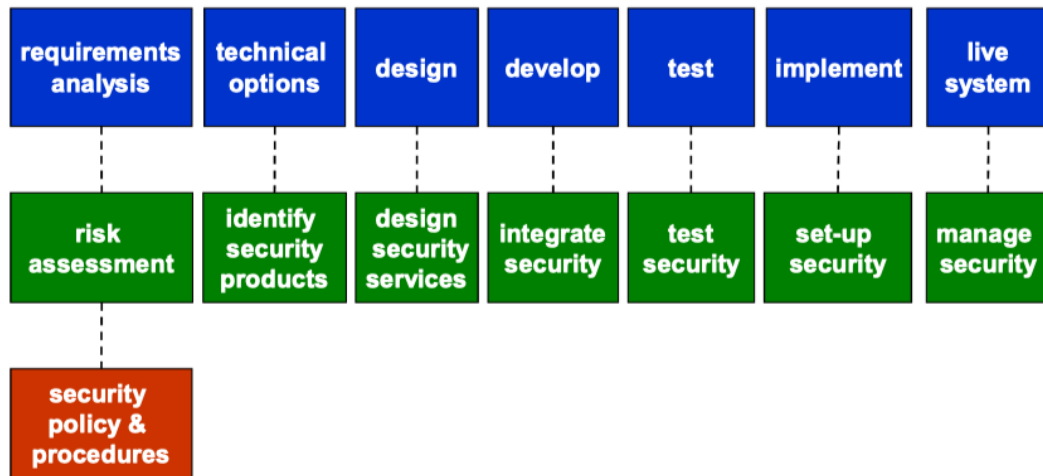


Figure 2: Security Life Cycle



Figure 3: Window of Exposure

trick is to reduce your risk of exposure regardless of the products or patches.

**Security Principles** Here some of the most important security principles:

- Security by Design
- Least Privilege: Only correct rights and the only few needed
- Need-to-know: Access to the only piece of stuff that are needed

- Security by Default
- Security in Depth: More the importance of the system, more the obstacles

**Security Properties** The following list show the most importante properties of the security world:

- Authentication (Simple/Mutual): Source (or both) must prove themself
- Data Origin/Authentication
- Authorization and Access Control
- Confidentiality/Privacy/Secrecy
- Non Repudiation: Formal proof, acceptable by a court of justice, that gives undeniable evidence of the data creator
- Availability
- Accountability
- Integrity: Modification, Filtering

**Where is the enemy?** The enemy normally is supposed to be outside of our system but is not simple as it seems. The possible locations are:

- Outside our organization (Firewall)
- Outside our organization, with exceptionn of our parters (VPN)
- Inside our organitazion
- Everywhere!

The last item is probably the more true. The distinction between internal/external and good/bad guys is no more sufficient. From the *Verizon Data Breach Invetigation Report* the percentage of source of attacks is: 20% Internal and 80% External, probably the internal percentage is a little bit higher due to the fact that Verizon is a provider and can't show the internal side so much.

**Basic Problems** There are some basic problem for security:

- Networks are insecure:
  - Clear communications
  - LAN use broadcast
  - Not E2E geographical connections

- Weak user Authentication
- No server Authentication
- **Software with bugs!**

**Classes of Attacks** Some of the most common type of attacks:

- IP Spoofing / Shadow Server
- Packet Sniffing
- Connection Hijacking / Data Spoofing
- Denial-of-Service (Distributed DoS)

The **IP Spoofing**, or source address spoofing, is forging the source network address, typically performed at LV3 (IP), but also at LV2 can be performed. The typical attacks are: Data Forging and unauthorized access to systems.

The **Packet Spoofing** it reads the packet addresses to another network node, it easy to do in LAN or at the switching nodes. It allows to intercept password, data and other stuffs.

The **Denial-of-Service (DoS)** it keeps a host busy so that it can't provide its services. There are a lots of examples: mail/log saturation, ping flooding, SYN attacks. The main problem of this kind of attacks is that there are no countermeasures. The **Distributed DoS** are similar to the previous one but performed by a greater number of hosts (botnet), controlled by a master. The power is the same of a normal DoS multiplied by the number of deamons of the botnet. There are also some techniques to improve the attack like using a reflector to hide the attacker's track. One of the more important DDoS was performed against Yahoo! during Feb 2000.

The **Shadow Server** is a technique that host that manage the attacks show itself (to victims) as a service provider without having the right to do so. It provide a "wrong" service to victims, like bank sites or other stuffs.

**Connection Hijacking / MITM**, AKA Data Spoofing, is performed when attacker takes control of a communication channel to insert, delete, or manipulate traffics. It can edit data in all forms, and change the messages of the communications. Another similar for is the **Trojan / MITB**, it used the fact that network channels are more protected, but users terminals not. The behaviour is to install a keylogger to store everything. It could be also passed via browser extension.

There are other application-level problems:

- Buffer Overflow
- Cookies
- Clear password in DB



- "invent" a protection system

We make now some clearance about name of malwares:

- Virus: Damage the target and replicate itself, propagated by humans (require complicity)
- Worm: Damage target because replications (resource saturation)
- Trojan: Malware vector
- Backdoor: Unauthorized access point
- Rootkit: Privileged access tools, hidden and stealth
- Ransomware: Make hosts unreadable (can be also silent)

**Non technological problems** Prorably the greatest majority of the problems and leaks come from here! The are some basic problems: due to low awareness, mistakes, tendency to trust and other facts the major cause of leaks are humans.

The **Social Engineering** are sets of techniques used to asks the involuntary user's participatio to the attack action, usually the naïve users are targeted (e.g. *"do change immediately your password with the following one, because your PC is under attack"*), also experienced users are targeted (e.g. by copying an authentic mail but changing its attachment or URL).

One of the most used technique is the **Phishing** ( fishing) where the attacker try to stole information (fishing) from the target (fish), it can be achieved, for example, by showing acquaintance with the company's procedures, habits and personnel helps in gaining trust and make the target lower his defences. Is often performed by using fake mail, SMS or IM. The normal procedures works by attarcting the fish in a shadow server where it will leave of the sensitive informations or persuade to install plugins or other stuffs. Two variants exist, **spear phishing** (include several personal data to disguise the fake message as a good one, e.g. mail address, name of Dept/Office, phone no.) or **whailing** (targeted to VIP such as CEO or CIO). The **Pharming** is a set of several techniques to re-direct a user towards a shadow server, chaging the hosts file, nameserver, poisoning cache of DNS. Some important examples of this techniques are T.J.Maxx attack, Transformed3 phishing or Stuxnet.

The typical path of attackers is showed in figure 4.

From this brief introduction we can define he three pillars of security:



Figure 4: Cyber (intrusion) Kill Chain

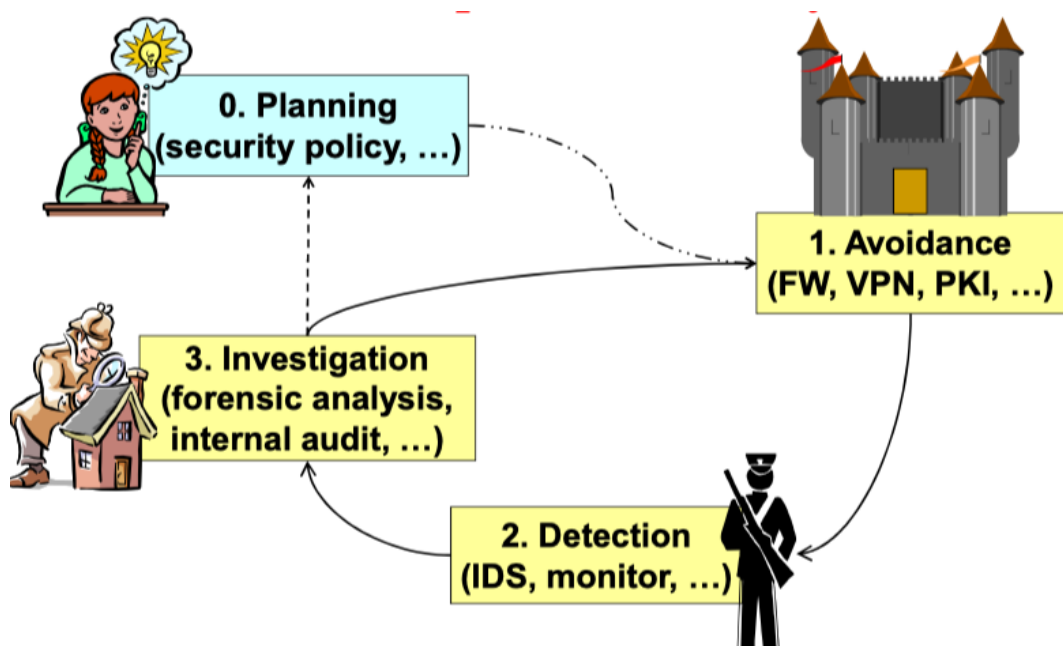


Figure 5: Pillars of Security

and we can define the main figures:

- Hacker: Good and skilled
- Cracker: Bad but skilled

- Script Kiddie: Bad but NOT skilled
- Wannabe Lamer: Not good at all

## 2 Basic of ICT security

### 2.1 Cryptography Introduction

The basic principles of Cryptography are showed in the following figure



Figure 6: Cryptography flow

Some important terminology. The message in clear is called:

- Cleartext or plaintext
- Refer with **P**

Instead the encrypted message:

- Ciphertext
- Refer with **C**

Some principles of Cryptography, written by Kerchoffs, are: If the keys:

- Are kept secret
- Are managed only by trusted systems
- Are of adequate length

then...

- it has no importance that the encryption and decryption algorithms are kept secret
- on the contrary it is better to make the algorithms public so that they can be widely analysed and their possible weaknesses identified

In computer system STO (Security Through Obscurity) is not good. An important operator of this world is the XOR function that is the ideal confusion operator, because it not change the probability. Is also a primitive operation present in all CPUs.

## 2.2 Symmetric Cryptography

Are all the algorithms based on a secret key shared between sender and receiver, used for encrypt and decrypt. Figure 7 show the general flow of this kind of algorithms. The advantage are low computational cost, in fact is used for data encryption.

- $C = enc(K, P)$
- $P = dec(K, C) = enc^{-1}(K, C)$

One of the main problem is *"How to share (securely) the secret key among sender and receiver?"*. T

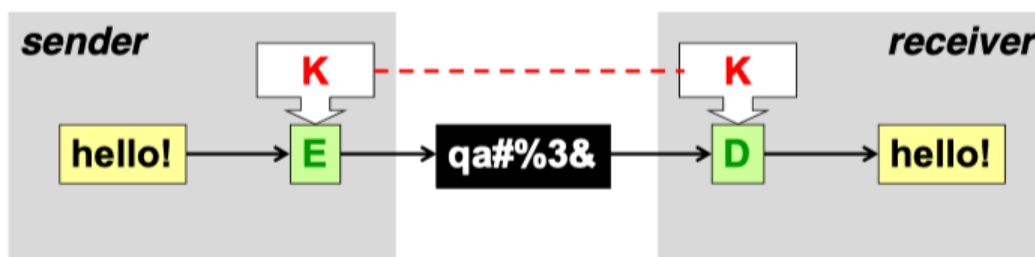


Figure 7: Symmetric General flow

There is not a confirmation of correct decryption, is up to the user to understand if the result is correct or not, in any case a result is provided with any key.

**DES** (Data Encryption Standard) one of the first used by US government. Is now obsolete, is based on a key of 64 bits, composed by:

- Key: 56 bits
- Parity: 8 bits

This means that the actual bit of resistance is 56. It's based on 64 bits of data blocks. It is also designed to be efficient in hardware with poor performance, the flow is:

1. XOR
2. Shift
3. Permutation (not so good performance)

**3DES** is the triple repeated application of DES, it used two of three 56 bits keys. Is different from passing to a key long  $56 \times 3$  because the key length will not match with that number of bits. It can be computed in two ways:

- 2 Keys:  $C = \text{enc}(K_1, \text{dec}(K_2, \text{enc}(K_1, P)))$
- 3 Keys:  $C = \text{enc}(K_3, \text{dec}(K_2, \text{enc}(K_1, P)))$

The central step of decryption is made to generate mess.

An important issue of the encryption is the doubling of an algorithm. Double application of encryption algorithms is subject to a known-plaintext attack named **meet-in-the-middle** which allows to decrypt data with at most  $2^N + 1$  attempts (if the keys are N-bits long). Thus the double version is never used, it double the computation time and increases the key length of only one bit. The formulas are:

$$C = \text{enc}(K_2, \text{enc}(K_1, P))$$

$$\text{dec}(C, K_2) = \text{dec}(K_2, \text{enc}(K_2, \text{enc}(K_1, P)))$$

$$\text{dec}(C, K_2) = \text{enc}(K_1, P)$$

The attacker can compute  $\text{ENC}(K_1, P)$  for all values of  $K_1$  and  $\text{DEC}(K_2, C)$  for all possible values of  $K_2$ , and add only 1 bit of strength for 2 keys of the same size.

**IDEA** International Data Encryption Algorithm it was patented but with low royalty, developed for 16 bits architectures. It uses a 128 bits key and 64 bits of data block, it's famous because it is used in PGP. The operations used are:

- XOR
- Addition Modulo 16
- Multiplication Modulo  $2^{16} + 1$

**RC2, RC4** other algorithms developed by Ron Rivest (Ron's Code), they are algorithm proprietary of RSA but not patented, 3 to 10 times faster than DES. RC2 is a block algorithm, RC4 is a stream one. They are using a variable length key.

**Application of block algorithms** applying these algorithm over data of size different from the block size require a little effort. When the data size is greater than the algorithm's block size:

- ECB (Electronic Code Block)
- CBC (Cipher Block Chaining)

In the other case:

- Padding
- CFB (Cipher FeedBack), OFB (Output FeedBack)
- CTR (Counter Mode)

The first solution **ECB** is a bad idea, it based on the division of the data in chunks with the same size of a block, by encrypting them with a  $K$  (key), the formula is:  $C_i = enc(K, P_i)$ . The problems of this solution are:

- Swapping of two blocks of cipher goes undetected
- Identical blocks generated identical cipher texts hence it is vulnerable to *known-plaintext* attacks. (Word example)

These are the main reason to avoid the use of this solution for big data. The decryption is made by reversing the process. The figure 8 show the process.



Figure 8: ECB

The solution of **CBC** [figure 9] is more secure, by using an IV (Initialization Vector), it encrypt the block by XORing it with the previous block and with

the key, this avoid the problem of the *know-plaintext*, because same text in different position will generate different encrypted text. The IV is added for increasing the difficulties of decryption. The formula is the following:

$$C_i = enc(K, P_i \oplus C_{i-1})$$

The decryption require the Initialization Vector ( $C_0$ ), the formula is the revert the process by the following formula:

$$P_i = dec(K, C_i) \oplus C_{i-1}$$

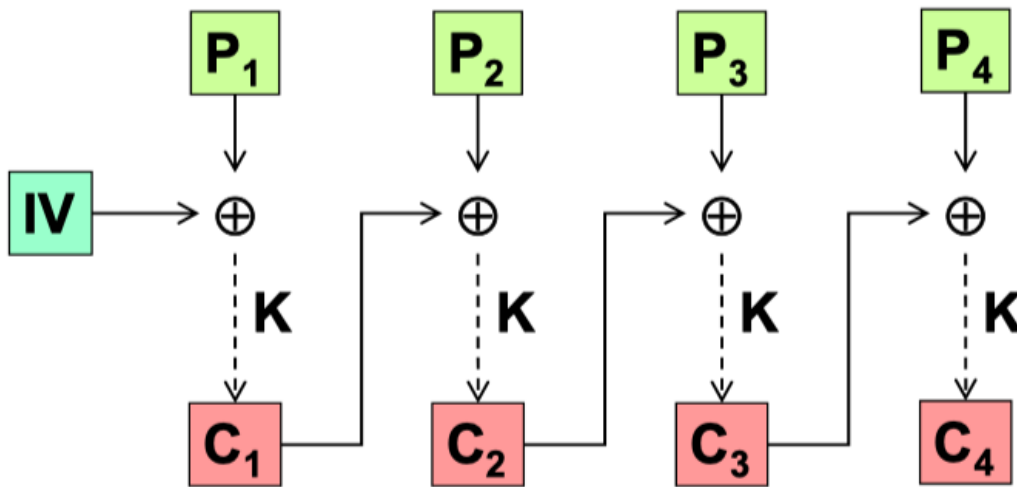


Figure 9: CBC Encryption

When the data is shorter than the block size, a **padding** (or aligning, filling) is required. It consist by adding some data at the end to completely fill the block. There are several techniques used for padding:

- If the length is known: 0x00 bytes
- Original DES: 1 bit followed by 0
- One byte 128 (0x80) followed by null 0x00
- Last byte value equal to length of padding

There are also some techniques with explicit length for padding:

- (SSL/TLS) bytes with value L
- (SSH2) random bytes
- (IPsec/ESP) progressive numbers

Padding is typically applied to large data, on the last fragment resulting from the division in blocks (ECB or CBC), for  $|D| < |B|$  we prefer ad hoc techniques like CFB, OFB or CTR. Another important note is that, even if the plaintext is an exact multiple of the block, padding must be added anyhow to avoid errors in the interpretation of the last block.

**CTS** (CipherText Stealing) permits to use block algorithms without padding:

- Last (partial) block filled with bytes from the second-to-last block
- These bytes are removed from the second-to-last block (which become partial)
- After encryption, exchange the position of the last and second-to-last blocks.

The figure shows better the solution algorithm:

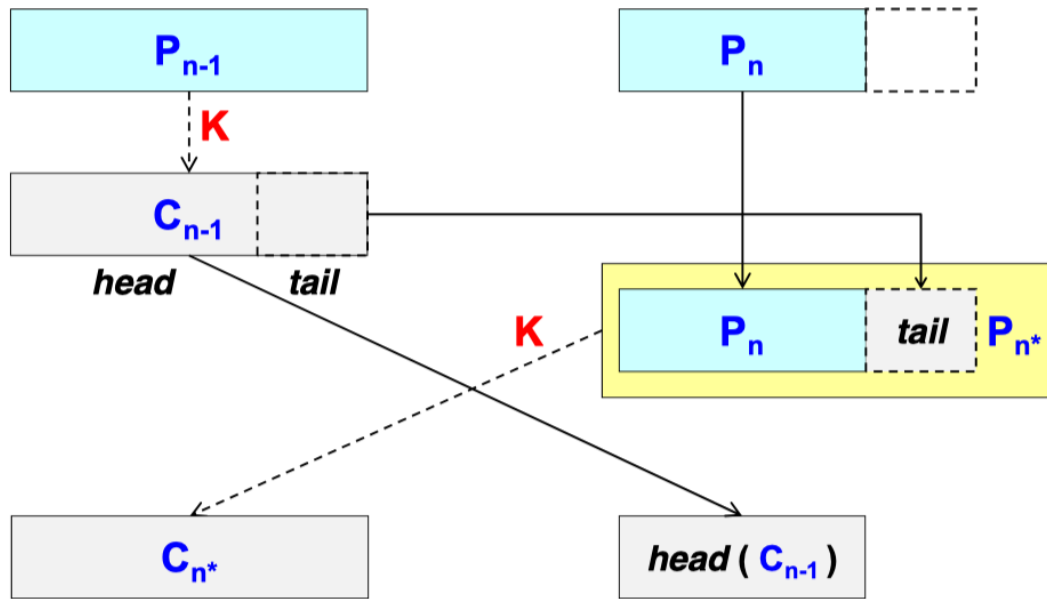


Figure 10: CTS with ECB Encryption

This technique is useful when we cannot increase the size of the data after the encryption. The tail, store, after the encryption in the second-to-last block is encrypted 2 times and it requires 2 decryption.

The **CRT** (Counter mode), really used, uses a block algorithm to cipher  $N$  bits at a time. It require:

- **NONCE** = Number used ONCE
- counter



The flow is showed in the following figure 11:

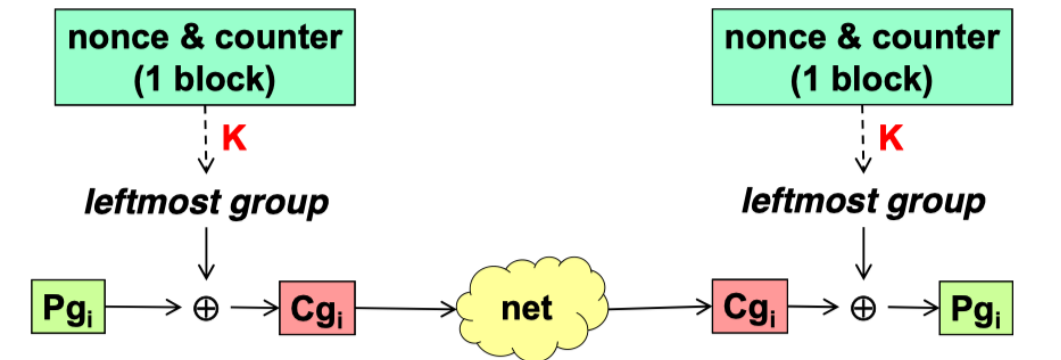


Figure 11: CRT flow

**Symmetric Stream Algorithms** this kind of algorithms not require to separate datas in blocks. They operate over one bit/byte at the time. The ideal algorithms require a key which is as long as the message to protect, of course this is not possible. The real algorithms use pseudo-random key generators, synchronized between the sender and receiver, some examples are RC4 and SEAL. The idea is show in figure

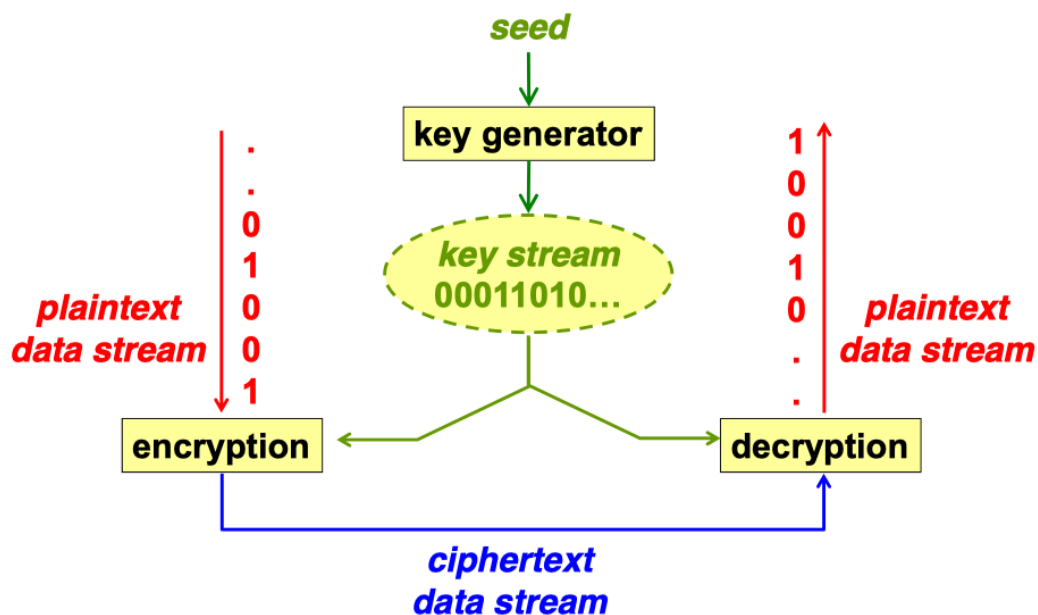


Figure 12: Algorithms of type stream

A lot of challenges were started for stream ciphers, some algorithms are:

- HC-128, Salsa, SOSEMANUK
- Grain v1, MICKEY 2.0

- Salsa20 and ChaCha20
- Camellia
- SEED and ARIA

**Problem of symmetric cryptography** one of the main problem of all this technique is that one key is required for each couple / group of user in order to guarantee privacy within groups. This means that, for a complete private communication between  $N$  parties,  $N * (N - 1)/2$  keys are necessary, these require key exchange algorithms and generate a problem for large groups. Another know problem is the **length of secret keys**, if:

- The encryption algorithm was well designed
- the keys -  $N$  bit length - are kept secret

... then the only possible attack is the brute force (exhaustive) attack which requires a number of trials equal to:

$$T = 2^{Nbit}$$

This means that and increase of the computational power, reduce the strenght of the keys, that require a growing number over years. For this reason a challenges (AES) was promoted to develop another algorithm, the winner was **Rijndael**.

## 2.3 Asymmetric Cryptography