

# Public Key Cryptography

Septimiu Crivei

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- Semester: 5
- Status: optional course
- Hours: 2C+1L
- Course contents:
  1. Notions of algorithm complexity.
  2. Elements of number theory.
  3. Primality testing.
  4. Factorization methods.
  5. Public key cryptography.
  6. Applications.
- Assessment: assignments and labs

# The Story of Alice and Bob

From “The Alice and Bob After Dinner Speech” given at the Zurich Seminar, April 1984, by John Gordon:

*So let's talk about coding theory [note: actually, cryptography]. There are perhaps some of you here tonight who are not experts in coding theory, but rather have been dragged here kicking and screaming. So I thought it would be a good idea if I gave you a sort of instant, five minute graduate course in coding theory.*

*Coding theorists are concerned with two things. Firstly and most importantly they are concerned with the private lives of two people called Alice and Bob. In theory papers, whenever a coding theorist wants to describe a transaction between two parties he doesn't call them A and B. No. For some longstanding traditional reason he calls them Alice and Bob.*

*Now there are hundreds of papers written about Alice and Bob. Over the years Alice and Bob have tried to defraud insurance companies, they've played poker for high stakes by mail, and they've exchanged secret messages over tapped telephones.*

*If we put together all the little details from here and there, snippets from lots of papers, we get a fascinating picture of their lives. This may be the first time a definitive biography of Alice and Bob has been given.*

*In papers written by American authors Bob is frequently selling stock to speculators. From the number of stock market deals Bob is involved in we infer that he is probably a stockbroker. However from his concern about eavesdropping he is probably active in some subversive enterprise as well. And from the number of times Alice tries to buy stock from him we infer she is probably a speculator. Alice is also concerned that her financial dealings with Bob are not brought to the attention of her husband. So Bob is a subversive stockbroker and Alice is a two-timing speculator.*

*But Alice has a number of serious problems. She and Bob only get to talk by telephone or by electronic mail. In the country where they live the telephone service is very expensive. And Alice and Bob are cheapskates. So the first thing Alice must do is minimize the cost of the phone call.*

*The telephone is also very noisy. Often the interference is so bad that Alice and Bob can hardly hear each other. On top of that Alice and Bob have very powerful enemies. One of their enemies is the Tax Authority. Another is the Secret Police. This is a pity, since their favorite topics of discussion are tax frauds and overthrowing the government.*

*These enemies have almost unlimited resources. They always listen in to telephone conversations between Alice and Bob. And these enemies are very sneaky. One of their favorite tricks is to telephone Alice and pretend to be Bob.*

*Well, you think, so all Alice has to do is listen very carefully to be sure she recognizes Bob's voice. But no. You see Alice has never met Bob. She has no idea what his voice sounds like.*

*So you see Alice has a whole bunch of problems to face. Oh yes, and there is one more thing I forgot to say - Alice doesn't trust Bob. We don't know why she doesn't trust him, but at some time in the past there has been an incident.*

*Now most people in Alice's position would give up. Not Alice. She has courage which can only be described as awesome. **Against all odds, over a noisy telephone line, tapped by the tax authorities and the secret police, Alice will happily attempt, with someone she doesn't trust, whom she cannot hear clearly, and who is probably someone else, to fiddle her tax returns and to organize a coup d'etat, while at the same time minimizing the cost of the phone call.***

*A coding theorist is someone who doesn't think Alice is crazy...*

# Public Key Cryptography

## *Private key cryptosystem*

- characteristic for classical cryptography
- once the encryption key was known, the decryption key could be easily recovered, hence the message deciphered.

## *Public key cryptosystem*

- 1976: Diffie and Hellman
- Idea: given the encryption key, one cannot determine the decryption key in a "reasonable" time.  
Hence  $f : \{plaintext\} \rightarrow \{ciphertext\}$  can be easily computed once the encryption key  $K_E$  is known, but  $f^{-1}$  is very difficult (impossible) to be computed in practice without knowing the decryption key  $K_D$ .

The story of Alice, Bob and their friends begins...

# RSA - Rivest, Shamir, Adleman (1977)

## 1. Key generation. Alice creates a public key and a private key.

- 1.1. Generates 2 random large distinct primes  $p, q$ .
- 1.2. Computes  $n = pq$  and  $\varphi(n) = (p - 1)(q - 1)$ .
- 1.3. Randomly selects  $1 < e < \varphi(n)$  with  $\gcd(e, \varphi(n)) = 1$ .
- 1.4. Computes  $d = e^{-1} \bmod \varphi(n)$ .
- 1.5. Alice's public key is  $K_E = (n, e)$ ; her private key is  $K_D = d$ .

## 2. Encryption. Bob sends an encrypted message to Alice.

- 2.1. Gets Alice's public key  $K_E = (n, e)$ .
- 2.2. Represents the message as a number  $m$  between 0 and  $n - 1$ .
- 2.3. Computes  $c = m^e \bmod n$ .
- 2.4. Sends the ciphertext  $c$  to Alice.

## 3. Decryption. Alice decrypts the message from Bob.

- 3.1 Alice uses the private key  $K_D = d$  to get the message  $m = c^d \bmod n$ .



- **Primality**

- the largest known prime:  $2^{82589933} - 1$  (December 2018), which has 24862048 decimal digits
- in practice one uses prime numbers of 1024 or 2048 bits

## Problem

Is a given large number prime?

- *probabilistic* polynomial-time algorithms
- AKS test - *deterministic* polynomial-time (2003)

- **Factorization**

## Problem

Find a prime factor of a large composite number  $n$ .

- exponential-time algorithms