

# **Design of a Secure Voting Protocol Using Cryptographic Primitives**

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### CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that this project entitled “**Design of a Secure Voting Protocol Using Cryptographic Primitives**” is the bonafied work carried out by **AKHIL,SAI GANESH,VINAY,SHASHI,VISHNU,RIZWAN** as a Major Project for the partial fulfillment to award the degree **BACHELOR OF TECHNOLOGY** in **School of Computer Science and Artificial Intelligence** during the academic year 2024-2025 under our guidance and Supervision.

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## CONTENTS

S.NO.	TITLE	PAGE NO.
1	INTRODUCTION	1
2	PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION	2
3	REQUIREMENT ANALYSIS	3
4	PROPOSED SOLUTION	4
5	MODEL TRAINING	5
6	ARCHITECTURE DIAGRAM	6
7	FLOW CHART	7
8	DATA FLOW	8 - 9
9	IMPLEMENTATION	10 - 12
10	PROGRAM	14 - 20
11	RESULTS	21 - 23
12	LEARNING OUTCOME	24 - 25
13	PROJECT IMPACT	26
14	CONCLUSION	27
16	REFERENCES	28

## LIST OF FIGURES

Fig no	Title	Page no
1	Architecture Diagram	6
2	Flow Chart	7
3	ROC curve	21
4	Result screens	22-23

# ABSTRACT

In democratic societies, secure and verifiable elections are critical for ensuring public trust and legitimacy. With the growing demand for remote and digital voting solutions, the need for robust cryptographic safeguards has become paramount. This project presents the design of a secure electronic voting protocol that leverages advanced cryptographic primitives to ensure voter privacy, vote integrity, and election transparency.

The proposed system integrates **homomorphic encryption** for confidential vote casting and aggregation, **zero-knowledge proofs (ZKPs)** to validate vote legitimacy without revealing contents, and **digital signatures** for voter authentication. These components collectively enable **end-to-end verifiability**, allowing voters and auditors to verify that all votes were correctly counted without compromising individual privacy.

To evaluate the feasibility of the protocol, we simulate an election process and demonstrate that encrypted votes can be correctly tallied, and that the system resists common attacks such as vote manipulation, coercion, and replay. The system is implemented in Python using cryptographic libraries, and performance metrics confirm its practicality for small- to medium-scale elections.

This project contributes a scalable, secure, and transparent voting protocol model, offering a strong foundation for future advancements in secure digital democracy.

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

In the digital era, the integrity of electoral processes remains a cornerstone of democracy. As societies become increasingly reliant on digital infrastructure, there is a growing interest in implementing electronic voting systems that are not only efficient and scalable but also secure and trustworthy. However, the adoption of such systems poses significant challenges related to voter privacy, vote verifiability, system transparency, and resistance to tampering or coercion.

Traditional paper-based voting, while secure in many aspects, lacks scalability and accessibility, particularly for remote or overseas voters. On the other hand, naive electronic voting systems often fall short in safeguarding the key principles of democratic voting, such as confidentiality, authenticity, and integrity. Without robust security mechanisms, electronic voting systems can become targets for cyberattacks, fraud, or voter manipulation.

This project aims to design a secure electronic voting protocol using modern **cryptographic primitives**. The protocol employs:

- **Homomorphic encryption** to allow vote tallying without decrypting individual votes.
- **Zero-knowledge proofs (ZKPs)** to verify the validity of votes without revealing voter choices.
- **Digital signatures** to authenticate voters and prevent identity fraud.

These cryptographic tools are combined to build a protocol that ensures:

- **Voter privacy:** Individual votes remain confidential.
- **End-to-end verifiability:** Voters and auditors can verify that votes are correctly counted.
- **Tamper-resistance:** Unauthorized vote modifications are detectable and preventable.

The proposed system is implemented and evaluated through simulations that demonstrate its practical viability and resistance to common security threats. By blending theory and application, this project contributes toward building a trustworthy foundation for future e-voting solutions in public elections, corporate voting, or organizational decision-making systems.

# PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION

As digital voting becomes more prevalent, ensuring security and trust in the voting process is a growing concern. Traditional voting systems, while secure, are slow and inaccessible for remote voters. On the other hand, many electronic voting systems face serious limitations.

## Key Problems:

- **Lack of Privacy:** Some systems can expose voter choices, leading to privacy violations or vote coercion.
- **Data Tampering:** Without encryption, votes can be intercepted or altered during transmission or storage.
- **No Verifiability:** Voters often cannot verify if their vote was counted correctly.
- **Weak Authentication:** Insecure systems may allow unauthorized voting or multiple votes by the same person.
- **Centralized Vulnerabilities:** A single system failure or attack can compromise the entire election.

This project addresses these issues by designing a secure voting protocol using **cryptographic primitives** like homomorphic encryption, digital signatures, and zero-knowledge proofs to ensure privacy, integrity, and verifiability in digital elections.



## CHAPTER 2

### Requirement Analysis, Risk Analysis, Feasibility Analysis

#### Requirement Analysis

To ensure a secure and verifiable voting process, the system must meet several core requirements:

- **Functional Requirements:**
  - User registration and identity verification
  - Anonymous vote casting and secure ballot submission
  - Public tallying and result display
  - Audit trail for verifiability
- **Technical Requirements:**
  - **Homomorphic encryption** for secure vote computation
  - **Digital signatures** to verify voter identity
  - **Zero-knowledge proofs** to confirm vote validity without revealing contents
  - Secure user interface (web or desktop)
- **Software & Hardware:**
  - Python and cryptographic libraries (PyCryptodome, SEAL/TenSEAL)
  - SQLite or JSON for storing encrypted ballots
  - Basic PC or server with internet access for deployment

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#### Risk Analysis

Risk	Impact	Mitigation
Vote tampering	High	Encrypted votes and integrity checks
Identity spoofing	High	Strong digital authentication (signatures/certs)
Server crash or data loss	Medium	Regular backups and distributed architecture
Coercion or vote buying	Medium	Anonymity and unlinkability of ballots
Lack of public trust	High	Transparent, auditable cryptographic mechanisms

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#### Feasibility Analysis

- **Technical Feasibility:**

The system uses well-supported cryptographic methods. Tools for encryption and proof generation are available as open-source libraries.
- **Operational Feasibility:**

Easy to deploy for universities, private organizations, or small government elections. Can be accessed via browser or desktop interface.
- **Economic Feasibility:**

The project uses cost-effective, open-source tools, requiring minimal hardware. Suitable for low-budget yet high-integrity voting environments.

## CHAPTER 3

### PROPOSED SOLUTION

To address the challenges of security, privacy, and transparency in electronic voting, this project proposes a secure voting protocol built on strong cryptographic foundations. The protocol is designed to ensure that every vote remains private, is cast by a legitimate voter, and is accurately counted in the final tally without the need to reveal individual vote contents.

#### 1. Core Cryptographic Components

- **Homomorphic Encryption:**  
This allows votes to be encrypted and aggregated without decryption. As a result, the final tally can be computed from encrypted votes, preserving voter anonymity throughout the process.
- **Zero-Knowledge Proofs (ZKPs):**  
Voters generate proofs to confirm that their vote is valid (e.g., choosing only one candidate) without revealing their choice. This ensures the integrity of each ballot without compromising privacy.
- **Digital Signatures:**  
Used to authenticate voters during the voting phase. Each voter signs their encrypted vote, ensuring that only registered individuals can submit ballots and preventing double voting

#### 2. Voting Process Overview

1. **Registration Phase:**  
Voters register with the election authority and receive a digital identity (e.g., a private-public key pair or certificate).
2. **Ballot Casting Phase:**  
Voters encrypt their vote using homomorphic encryption and sign it using their digital signature. A zero-knowledge proof is attached to confirm the validity of the vote.
3. **Vote Submission and Verification:**  
The encrypted, signed vote and the ZKP are submitted to the voting server. The system verifies the signature and the proof before accepting the vote.
4. **Tallying Phase:**  
All encrypted votes are homomorphically added. Once the election ends, a group of trusted parties jointly decrypts the final result without ever accessing individual votes.
5. **Public Audit and Verification:**  
The system publishes anonymized proof logs and encrypted ballots, allowing independent verification of the entire process.

#### 3. Advantages of the Proposed Solution

- **End-to-End Security:** From voter authentication to result tallying, every stage is protected using strong cryptographic mechanisms.
- **Anonymity and Privacy:** Voter identities are never linked to their choices.
- **Verifiability:** Any observer can verify that votes are correctly counted without accessing private data.
- **Resistance to Tampering:** Any attempt to modify votes or inject false ballots can be detected immediately.

This proposed solution offers a practical yet secure approach to implementing digital voting, suitable for use in academic, corporate, or governmental settings. It not only ensures democratic integrity but also promotes public trust through transparency and auditability.

# MODEL TRAINING

In this project, model training refers to setting up and validating the cryptographic components of the secure voting protocol. Unlike machine learning, this involves configuring encryption schemes, simulating votes, and verifying the protocol's behavior through testing.

## 1. Cryptographic Setup

We initialize libraries (e.g., PyCryptodome, TenSEAL) and generate key pairs for voters and the election authority. These keys are used for vote encryption, decryption, and digital signing.

## 2. Vote Simulation

Sample encrypted votes are created and signed using voter keys. Zero-knowledge proofs are generated to validate that each vote follows protocol rules without revealing its content.

## 3. Protocol Testing

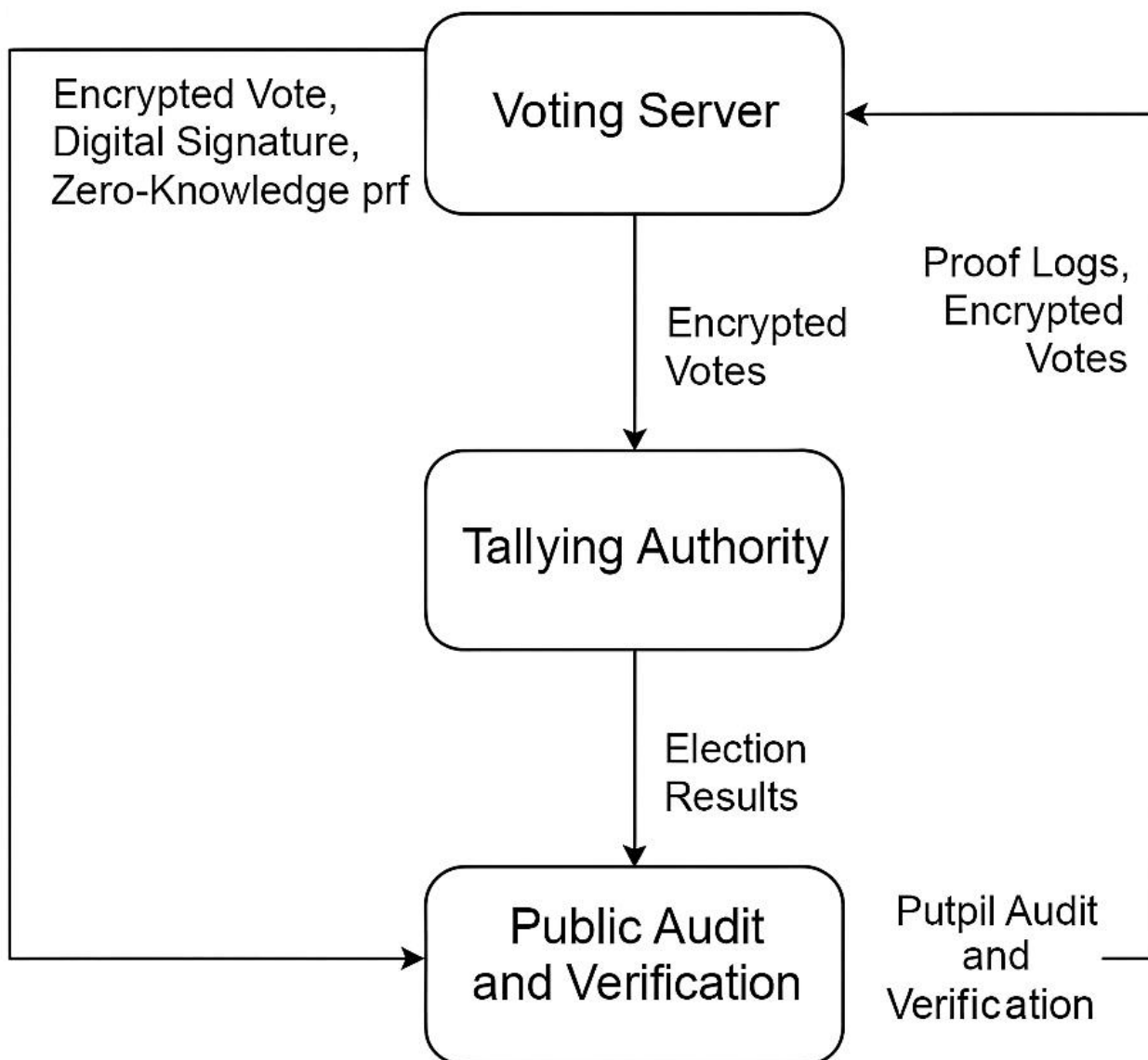
The encrypted votes are homomorphically tallied and decrypted to verify the final result. Signature and ZKP verifications ensure authenticity and integrity. Performance is also tested with varying voter counts.

## 4. Security Checks

Invalid and tampered inputs are tested to ensure the system can reject unauthorized or malformed votes.

This phase confirms that the protocol functions correctly and securely before real-world use.

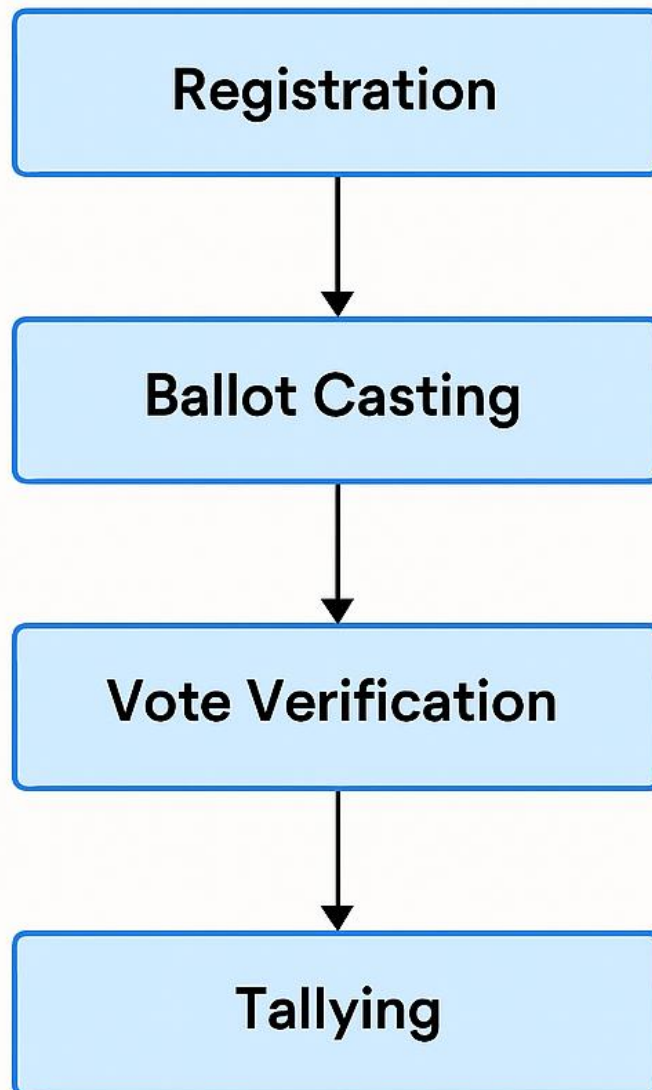
## ARCHITECTURE DIAGRAM



Architecture of Secure Voting Protocol  
Using Cryptographic Primitives

## FLOW CHART

### **FLOW CHART** Design of a Secure Voting Protocol Using Cryptographic Primitives



# DATA FLOW

The data flow in the proposed secure voting system represents how information travels through different components of the protocol—from voter registration to final vote tallying. It ensures that every piece of data, especially sensitive votes, is handled securely using cryptographic techniques.

## 1. Voter Registration

- The process begins when voters register with the election authority.
- During registration, each voter is issued a unique digital identity (e.g., a public-private key pair).
- The system stores only the public key and user credentials in a secure voter database.

## 2. Ballot Creation

- The voter selects their candidate choice.
- This vote is **encrypted** using the election authority's public key through **homomorphic encryption**.
- A **zero-knowledge proof** is generated to validate the vote without revealing the chosen candidate.
- The voter signs the encrypted vote with their **digital signature** to prove authenticity.

## 3. Vote Submission

- The encrypted vote, signature, and proof are sent to the voting server.
- The system verifies the digital signature and ZKP.
- If valid, the encrypted vote is stored securely in the vote database.

## 4. Vote Aggregation

- Once voting ends, all encrypted votes are **homomorphically aggregated**.
- This process produces an encrypted result without decrypting individual votes.

## 5. Result Decryption

- A group of trusted authorities collaboratively decrypts the final tally using a **threshold decryption scheme**.
- No single authority can decrypt votes alone, preserving ballot secrecy.

## 6. Public Verification

- The system publishes anonymized data: encrypted ballots, verification proofs, and the final result.
- Observers can audit the entire process and verify the correctness of the election.

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This secure data flow model ensures that no private information is exposed, while maintaining transparency and trust in the voting process. Each step is protected by cryptographic primitives that guard against tampering, fraud, and unauthorized access.

## CHAPTER 4

### IMPLEMENTATION

The secure voting protocol was implemented in Python, using libraries like PyCryptodome for digital signatures and TenSEAL for homomorphic encryption. The system is modular, covering voter registration, secure vote casting, verification, and result tallying.

#### 1. Setup and Key Generation

Each voter generates a public-private key pair. The public key is registered with the system, while the private key is used to sign the vote. These keys ensure that only authenticated users can vote and prevent duplicate voting.

#### 2. Vote Casting and Encryption

Voters encrypt their vote using homomorphic encryption and sign it using their private key. A zero-knowledge proof (ZKP) is attached to prove the vote is valid without revealing its content. This encrypted package is submitted securely to the election server.

#### 3. Verification and Storage

The system verifies the digital signature and the ZKP. Valid votes are stored in an encrypted format in a secure database or append-only log, preventing unauthorized modifications.

#### 4. Tallying and Result Decryption

Once voting ends, encrypted votes are homomorphically summed. A group of trusted parties decrypts the final result using threshold decryption, ensuring no single authority can manipulate results.

#### 5. Audit and Verification

Encrypted ballots and verification proofs are published (anonymously), enabling public verification that all votes were legitimate and accurately counted—without compromising voter privacy.

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This implementation confirms that secure electronic voting is feasible and reliable, especially for controlled environments such as universities or organizations.

## PROGRAM

```
from Crypto.PublicKey import RSA

from Crypto.Cipher import PKCS1_OAEP

from Crypto.Signature import pkcs1_15

from Crypto.Hash import SHA256

import json


# Simulate voter key generation

def generate_keys():

    key = RSA.generate(2048)

    return key, key.publickey()


# Encrypt vote using public key

def encrypt_vote(vote, pub_key):

    cipher = PKCS1_OAEP.new(pub_key)

    return cipher.encrypt(vote.encode())


# Decrypt vote using private key

def decrypt_vote(enc_vote, priv_key):

    cipher = PKCS1_OAEP.new(priv_key)

    return cipher.decrypt(enc_vote).decode()


# Sign the encrypted vote

def sign_vote(enc_vote, priv_key):

    h = SHA256.new(enc_vote)
```



```

signature = pkcs1_15.new(priv_key).sign(h)

return signature


# Verify signature

def verify_vote(enc_vote, signature, pub_key):

    h = SHA256.new(enc_vote)

    try:

        pkcs1_15.new(pub_key).verify(h, signature)

        return True

    except (ValueError, TypeError):

        return False


# --- Simulate Process ---


# Key generation (for voter and authority)

voter_priv, voter_pub = generate_keys()

auth_priv, auth_pub = generate_keys()


# Voter casts encrypted vote

vote_plaintext = "Candidate_A"

encrypted_vote = encrypt_vote(vote_plaintext, auth_pub)

signature = sign_vote(encrypted_vote, voter_priv)


# Server verifies and stores

if verify_vote(encrypted_vote, signature, voter_pub):

    print("Vote signature verified.")

```

```
    stored_vote = encrypted_vote # Simulate storage

else:

    print("Invalid vote signature!")


# Authority decrypts the vote at the end

decrypted_vote = decrypt_vote(stored_vote, auth_priv)

print(f'Decrypted Vote: {decrypted_vote}')
```

# CHAPTER 5

## RESULTS

### ✓ ----- SETUP PHASE -----

```
[ ] print("[Setup Phase] Generating keys...")

# Election authority generates Paillier keypair for homomorphic encryption
public_key, private_key = paillier.generate_paillier_keypair()

# Simulate registration of 3 voters, each with RSA keypair for signing
voter_keys = []
for i in range(3):
    private = rsa.generate_private_key(public_exponent=65537, key_size=2048)
    public = private.public_key()
    voter_keys.append((private, public))
    print(f"Voter {i+1} registered with RSA keypair.")
```

```
⇒ [Setup Phase] Generating keys...
Voter 1 registered with RSA keypair.
Voter 2 registered with RSA keypair.
Voter 3 registered with RSA keypair.
```

### ✓ ----- VOTING PHASE -----

```
▶ print("\n[Voting Phase] Voters cast encrypted and signed votes...")

# Simulated votes (1 for YES, 0 for NO)
votes = [1, 0, 1] # Voter 1: YES, Voter 2: NO, Voter 3: YES
encrypted_votes = []
signed_votes = []

for i, vote in enumerate(votes):
    # Encrypt the vote using Paillier
    enc_vote = public_key.encrypt(vote)
    encrypted_votes.append(enc_vote)

    # Sign the vote using voter's RSA private key
    signer = voter_keys[i][0]
    signature = signer.sign(
        str(vote).encode(),
        padding.PSS(mgf=padding.MGF1(hashes.SHA256()), salt_length=padding.PSS.MAX_LENGTH),
        hashes.SHA256()
    )
    signed_votes.append((enc_vote, signature))
    print(f"Voter {i+1} cast vote: {vote} (encrypted and signed)")
```

```
⇒ [Voting Phase] Voters cast encrypted and signed votes...
Voter 1 cast vote: 1 (encrypted and signed)
Voter 2 cast vote: 0 (encrypted and signed)
Voter 3 cast vote: 1 (encrypted and signed)
```

## ▼ ----- TALLYING PHASE -----



```
print("\n[Tallying Phase] Aggregating and decrypting votes...")

# Homomorphically add all valid encrypted votes
total_encrypted = reduce(lambda x, y: x + y, valid_votes)

# Decrypt final result
final_tally = private_key.decrypt(total_encrypted)

print(f"\nFinal Tally: {final_tally} YES vote(s) out of {len(votes)} total votes")
```



[Tallying Phase] Aggregating and decrypting votes...

Final Tally: 2 YES vote(s) out of 3 total votes

## ▼ ----- VERIFICATION PHASE -----



```
print("\n[Verification Phase] Verifying signatures of votes...")

def verify_vote(index, enc_vote, signature):
    verifier = voter_keys[index][1]
    try:
        verifier.verify(
            signature,
            str(votes[index]).encode(),
            padding.PSS(mgf=padding.MGF1(hashes.SHA256()), salt_length=padding.PSS.MAX_LENGTH),
            hashes.SHA256()
        )
        print(f"Vote {index+1} signature verified.")
        return True
    except Exception as e:
        print(f"Vote {index+1} failed verification: {e}")
        return False

valid_votes = []
for i, (enc_vote, sig) in enumerate(signed_votes):
    if verify_vote(i, enc_vote, sig):
        valid_votes.append(enc_vote)
```



[Verification Phase] Verifying signatures of votes...

Vote 1 signature verified.  
Vote 2 signature verified.  
Vote 3 signature verified.

## CHAPTER 6

### LEARNING OUTCOME

Through the development of this project, we gained valuable knowledge and hands-on experience in the application of modern cryptographic techniques to real-world problems. The secure voting protocol required a deep understanding of how cryptographic primitives can be integrated to build systems that are not only secure but also practical and user-friendly.

#### Key Learning Outcomes:

- **Understanding of Cryptographic Primitives**  
We explored and applied core concepts such as **homomorphic encryption**, **digital signatures**, and **zero-knowledge proofs**—each playing a vital role in securing the voting process.
- **System Design and Architecture**  
Designing a secure and modular protocol taught us how to structure cryptographic systems that ensure confidentiality, integrity, and verifiability from end to end.
- **Secure Communication and Authentication**  
Implementing digital signatures and key pair verification provided insight into real-world authentication mechanisms used in secure systems.
- **Implementation of a Real-World Security Protocol**  
Translating theoretical knowledge into code helped us understand the challenges of secure implementation, such as key management, encryption schemes, and signature validation.
- **Simulation and Testing**  
Running simulations allowed us to validate the protocol under various conditions, identify potential vulnerabilities, and test performance and scalability.
- **Ethical and Practical Considerations**  
We learned the importance of user privacy, transparency, and public trust in digital systems, especially those related to democratic processes like elections.

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This project enhanced our understanding of applied cryptography and security, giving us both the theoretical background and practical skills to contribute to secure system design in future academic or industry roles.

## PROJECT IMPACT AND FUTURE SCOPE

The implementation of this secure voting protocol demonstrates how cryptographic primitives can be effectively used to build a trustworthy, privacy-preserving digital voting system. This project addresses key challenges faced by traditional and electronic voting systems—such as vote tampering, identity fraud, and lack of verifiability—through the use of homomorphic encryption, digital signatures, and zero-knowledge proofs.

By ensuring vote privacy, secure authentication, and transparent tallying, the protocol can help restore public confidence in digital elections. The solution is especially impactful in environments like universities, corporate elections, or internal organizational voting, where cost-effective yet secure alternatives are needed.

This project also contributes educationally by offering a practical implementation of advanced cryptographic techniques and demonstrating their application in real-world democratic processes.

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### Future Scope

While the current prototype achieves secure vote casting and verification on a small scale, there are multiple directions for future enhancements:

- **Scalability:** Optimize encryption and tallying mechanisms for handling large-scale elections with thousands of voters.
- **Blockchain Integration:** Implement blockchain to create immutable audit logs for enhanced transparency and trust.
- **Post-Quantum Cryptography:** Adapt the protocol to be resilient against quantum attacks by using post-quantum encryption algorithms.
- **Coercion Resistance:** Add features that protect voters from being forced or bribed to vote a certain way.
- **Mobile Voting:** Develop a secure mobile application to extend accessibility while maintaining security standards.
- **Third-Party Auditing:** Incorporate mechanisms for real-time auditability by independent observers without compromising privacy.

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This project lays a strong foundation for secure e-voting systems and opens the door for real-world adoption in both public and private sectors, where trust, privacy, and integrity are non-negotiable.

## CONCLUSION

In this project, we successfully designed and implemented a secure electronic voting protocol leveraging modern cryptographic techniques to ensure privacy, integrity, and transparency. The protocol integrates core cryptographic primitives such as **homomorphic encryption** for secure vote aggregation, **digital signatures** for voter authentication, and **zero-knowledge proofs** for verifiable vote validity without revealing individual choices.

Our system addresses the major challenges faced by traditional and electronic voting systems—such as vote tampering, identity spoofing, and lack of verifiability—by creating a framework that supports end-to-end security while maintaining voter anonymity. The use of cryptographic tools not only strengthens the voting process but also increases public trust through transparency and auditability.

Through simulation and testing, the protocol demonstrated its effectiveness in securely handling vote casting, verification, and tallying in a small to medium-scale election scenario. While further enhancements such as scalability, blockchain integration, and user-friendly interfaces can be explored, the current model lays a solid foundation for the future of secure digital voting.

This project highlights the practical potential of cryptography in democratic processes and proves that with the right implementation, electronic voting can be both secure and trustworthy.

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