Crypto report

Write a report on what you have learnt from the above programming tasks. This is an open topic, but as a minimum requirement you should consider the efficiency of the algorithms used, and explain the strategies applied. For tasks 2.3 and 2.4 (i.e. password cracking), you should conduct timing tests then include your results and your analysis of them in the report. The literatures related tasks should be referenced. There is no word limit on the report, however as a rough guide, 700-800 words should be sufficient.

**Hash Encryption Cracking**

In cryptography the roll of hash function can be very important for the protection and storage of data. Generally, within computer science such functions are used for mapping data to allow faster search time for retrieval at a later data. However, in cryptography these functions can be used to transform data into an unrecognisable format such as changing it to a fixed and containing only hexadecimal characters it to a fixed length. The hash functions are known as one-way function due the fact they are easy to turn data into a hash but very difficult to turn it back this due to their internal method. If given a hash code, there is no way to tell what the original data could be unless provided with extra information e.g. the specific hash encryption method. There are many type of hash functions such as MD5, SHA-1. The problems faced in this report all deal with SHA-1 hash function.

As mentioned hash function are one-way functions and therefore do not have an inverse function, but this doesn’t mean that it is impossible to break. In fact, using that same hashing function can be used to decrypt the hash. This does however take a rather substantially long time when compared to the initial encryption. This paper will now show two such methods of breaking SHA-1 encryptions.

For either of the methods to work it is required knowing the original hash function e.g. SHA-1, the alphabet of the data; valid characters such as a-z, along with the possible maximum size of the original data as this creates boundaries in the code.

**Brute Force**  
The most obvious method of breaking encryption is the brute force method where by every single combination and permutation of the know alphabet is produce. These are then encrypted, the resulting encryption is then measured against the original hash, if there is a match then the decrypted data has been discovered.   
This process has the highest computational time of the two methods shown. However, there are different ways to go about implementing this method to allow for greater efficiency.

Nested Loop  
By using a series of nested loops it is possible to recreate the input by cycling through the loops every permutation of the alphabet will be achieved.   
The solution is rather primitive use of brute force as it does have wasted computations. Using the pseudocode (see **Appendix 2**) it is shows that the first item of the alphabet is “” (empty string). This is there so it is possible to create all possible length passwords e.g. “” + ”” + “a” = “a”.  
However, if you look at the code it is inevitable that once the most inner loop has completed its cycle the middle loop will change to “a” so the next iteration will equal “” + “a” + “” = “a”.  
With the pseudocodes alphabet containing 4 characters means there is a possibility of 40 combination, but due to the repeat combinations there is an extra 9 combinations.  
To counter this it would be possible improvements to this method could involve the use of threads. By removing the empty string element and using independent loops that are cycling through fix length permutations the search time will increase, though the cost will result in high computational power.

Recursion  
Recursion is the method of breaking down a problem to its simplest solution by calling itself within itself. By using this method if is possible to build a string that can be hashed to see if it matches the original message.   
Looking at the pseudocode (see **Appendix 3**) it is possible to see that when a string is fed into the method the message is split into two strings. One string is the last character (rhs), while the rest is stored in another string (lhs). The method then focuses solely on the rhs string. This is since it only ever needs to increment the value of rhs by one before returning the output. Though once the rhs has cycled through the alphabet it resets to the first character and calls the method again while passing through the lsh string and the whole process is repeated. This is like how you add 1 to another number

e.g. 189 + 1   
 lhs = 18, rhs = 9  
 (lhs = 1, rhs = 9), rhs = 0  
 = 190

This method provides many benefits such as no repeat outputs and is not limited to a maximum length; just like adding 1 to a number and go on to an infinite length.

Results  
When given a set of hash strings both algorithms were able to find the original message for each the results are below.

As shown by the results table (see **Appendix 4**) the recursive function was the fastest at finding the original message for each string.

**APPENDIX**

1) **Git Hub repository holding the code for the assignment.**<https://github.com/UWE-SimonLlewellyn/Cryptography>  
Each project is made using Java 7 and can be loaded via Netbeans.

2) **Pseudocode for Brute force by Nested Loop**   
alphabet = {“”,”a”, “b”, “c”}   
String s = “”  
LOOP i < alphabet length  
 LOOP j < alphabet length  
 LOOP k < alphabet length  
 IF s == hash  
 return s  
 END IF  
 s = alphabet[i] + alphabet[j] + alphabet[k]  
 END LOOP  
 END LOOP  
END LOOP

3) **Pseudocode for Brute Force by Recursion**   
MAIN()  
 alphabet = {“”,”a”, “b”, “c”}   
 String new = “”  
 LOOP while hash(new)!= to cyphertext  
 new = nextString(new, alphabet)  
 END LOOP  
 return new  
END MAIN  
---------------------------------------  
nextString(String s, String alphabet)  
 int n = s.length  
 String lhs = "" , rhs = “” // left and right hand side  
 char last = last char of the alphabet  
 IF n == 0  
 return first char of alphabet  
 END IF  
 IF n > 1  
 lhs = all but last chats of string  
 END IF  
 rhs = last char of string  
 IF rhs == last  
 rhs = first char of alphabet  
 return nextString(lhs, alphabet) + rhs  
 ELSE  
 rhs + 1 //next char in alphabet  
 return lhs + rhs;  
 END IF  
END newString

4) **Result table comparing Nested Loop to Recursion**