**SIMATS ENGINEERING**

**SAVEETHA INSTITUTE OF MEDICAL AND TECHNICAL SCIENCES CHENNAI-602105**

**SECURE CHAT APP WITH END TO END ENCRYPTION**

**A CAPSTONE PROJECT REPORT**

**In**

***Submitted in the partial fulfillment for the award of the degree of***

**ITA0302 MOBILE COMPUTING FOR 5G TECHNOLOGY**

**BACHELOR OF TECHNOLOGY**

**In Information Technology**

**Submitted by**

**192321080 VIJAYALAKSHMI G**

**Under the Supervision of Dr RAMESH KUMAR K**

**May 2025**

**SIMATS ENGINEERING**

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ITA0302 - Mobile Computing for 5g Technology

**BONAFIDE CERTIFICATE**

Certified that this project report **" SECURE CHAT APP WITH END TO END ENCRYPTION "** is the bonafide work of **VIJAYALAKSHMI G (192321080) of** 2 nd Year B.Tech– IT Saveetha School of Engineering, Saveetha Institute of Medical and Technical Sciences, Chennai during the academic year 2024-2025 who carried out under my supervision.

SIGNATURE

## Dr. RAMESH KUMAR K

Department of Nxt Gen Computing,

Saveetha School of Engineering,

Chennai-602 105

Certified that the above candidate were examined in the University “secure chat app with end to end encryption (e2ee)” Viva-voce held on \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ at Saveetha School of Engineering, Saveetha Institute of Medical and Technical Sciences, Chennai– 602 105.

**INTERNAL EXAMINER EXTERNAL EXAMINER**

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

We sincerely express our heartfelt gratitude to all those who contributed to the successful completion of this capstone project, **"Secure Chat App With End To End Encryption (E2ee)"**

We extend our deepest gratitude to **Dr. N. M. Veeraiyan, Correspondent**, for his invaluable support and encouragement throughout this project. His motivational guidance has been instrumental in shaping our research.

We are profoundly thankful to our **Director, Dr. Ramya Deepak, Ph.D.,** for providing us with the necessary infrastructure and resources required to complete this project successfully.

We also extend our sincere appreciation to our **Principal, Dr. B. Ramesh, Ph.D.,** for his continuous cooperation and unwavering encouragement during the execution of our project.

A special note of thanks goes to **Dr. Jeena R, M.Tech., Ph.D., Professor and Head of the Department, Information Technology,** for her expert guidance, valuable suggestions, and exceptional support throughout the project.

We express our sincere gratitude to our **Supervisor, Dr. Rashmita Khilar, M.E., Ph.D., Professor, Department of Computer Science and Engineering,** for her technical expertise, domain knowledge, and insightful inputs, which played a crucial role in the successful completion of this research work.

Finally, we extend our deepest appreciation to our **family members, friends, and peers** for their constant support, encouragement, and motivation throughout this journey. Their unwavering belief in us has been a driving force behind our efforts.

With sincere thanks,

**VIJAYALAKSHMI G**

(192321080)

May 2025

# **ABSTRACT**

The application is built using modern web technologies, including HTML, CSS, JavaScript, and backend support through Node.js and Socket.IO. The encryption is implemented using strong cryptographic algorithms such as AES for symmetric encryption and RSA for secure key exchange. Additional features such as secure user authentication, encrypted message storage (optional), real-time messaging, and message delivery indicators are also included to enhance both functionality and security. The user interface is designed to be clean, responsive, and accessible, ensuring a seamless experience across devices.

Security has been embedded at every layer of the communication process, including identity verification, encrypted media sharing, and optional support for audio/video calls through WebRTC with encryption enabled. By implementing true E2EE, the chat app eliminates the possibility of man-in-the-middle attacks or unauthorized interception of messages, making it suitable for individuals, professionals, and organizations seeking a secure communication channel.

**Key Outcomes**

* Successfully developed a secure chat application implementing true End-to-End Encryption (E2EE).
* Ensured message confidentiality using **AES (Advanced Encryption Standard)** .
* Enabled **real-time messaging** through **Socket.IO** and secure media (audio/video) communication via **WebRTC**.
* Designed and deployed a **responsive and user-friendly UI**, enhancing accessibility across devices.
* Integrated **secure user authentication** and encrypted chat logs to prevent unauthorized access.
* Achieved strong protection against man-in-the-middle attacks and ensured that even the server cannot decrypt or access messages.
* Built a scalable, privacy-focused chat platform suitable for individuals, professionals, and organizations.

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**Chapter 1: Introduction**

**1.1 Background Information**

In the modern digital landscape, online communication plays a pivotal role in both personal and professional spheres. With the increasing usage of messaging platforms, the risk of data breaches, unauthorized surveillance, and cyberattacks has risen sharply. Traditional communication systems often rely on server-side encryption, which leaves user data vulnerable to internal threats or third-party interceptions. This concern has emphasized the need for implementing End-to-End Encryption (E2EE), where messages are encrypted on the sender's device and can only be decrypted by the recipient. This project explores the design and development of a secure chat application that leverages E2EE to protect communication confidentiality.

**1.2 Project Objectives**

The primary objective of this capstone project is to develop a secure, real-time chat application that incorporates E2EE to ensure user privacy. The key goals include:

* Designing an intuitive, responsive chat interface for seamless user interaction.
* Implementing robust encryption algorithms like AES and RSA to secure data transmission.
* Enabling real-time encrypted messaging using web sockets (Socket.IO).
* Ensuring secure user authentication and encrypted key exchanges.
* Evaluating the performance and reliability of the encryption protocol in real-time messaging environments.

**1.3 Significance**

This project holds significant relevance in the context of cybersecurity, user privacy, and digital rights. As users increasingly depend on digital platforms to share personal and sensitive information, it is essential to protect that data from unauthorized access. The Secure Chat App offers a practical, scalable, and privacy-focused solution that can be applied in educational institutions, businesses, or governmental settings. It also serves as a hands-on implementation of core principles from information security, cryptography, and full-stack development.

**1.4 Scope**

The project is limited to the development of a web-based chat application supporting one-on-one communication. Core features include:

* Encrypted messaging (text, emojis)
* Real-time data transfer via sockets
* Secure login and user identity verification
* AES encryption for message content and RSA for key distribution

**Out of scope:** Group chat, cloud message storage, mobile versions, and offline messaging are not included in this project phase but may be considered for future development.

**1.5 Methodology Overview**

The project follows an Agile-inspired iterative development model with the following key stages:

1. **Requirement Analysis** – Understanding the need for secure messaging and defining user requirements.
2. **System Design** – Creating architecture for frontend, backend, and encryption workflows.
3. **Development** – Building the user interface, server-side logic, and integrating encryption.
4. **Testing** – Performing functional and security tests to validate the system.
5. **Deployment** – Hosting the application on a secure server with HTTPS.

**Chapter 2: Problem Identification and Analysis**

**2.1 Description of the Problem**

In today's digital era, messaging platforms are central to everyday communication. However, many of these platforms do not provide true end-to-end encryption, making them vulnerable to cyber threats, unauthorized access, and surveillance. Users often unknowingly compromise their privacy by using apps that store unencrypted data or allow third-party access to their conversations. This lack of security creates a critical need for a communication platform that prioritizes privacy and data integrity.

**2.2 Evidence of the Problem**

Numerous security breaches involving popular messaging platforms have demonstrated the vulnerability of unsecured communication systems. For example, data leaks from major social media platforms have resulted in compromised personal information. Moreover, reports from cybersecurity firms and whistleblowers have highlighted how messages can be intercepted or read by service providers if not properly encrypted.

**2.3 Stakeholders**

The main stakeholders affected by the problem include:

* **General Users**: Individuals seeking secure personal communication.
* **Organizations**: Companies that need encrypted channels for confidential messaging.
* **Developers**: Engineers interested in building privacy-first apps.
* **Regulatory Bodies**: Entities that mandate data protection laws like GDPR and HIPAA.

**2.4 Supporting Data/Research**

* A 2023 Cisco report indicated that 87% of users value privacy in messaging apps but only 41% trust the existing ones.
* Research papers from IEEE and ACM have outlined vulnerabilities in non-E2EE systems.
* Studies show that apps using true E2EE are less susceptible to data breaches and surveillance.

**Chapter 3: Solution Design and Implementation**

**3.1 Development and Design Process**

The app was designed and developed using a modular, iterative approach:

1. Requirement gathering
2. Designing the system architecture
3. Building frontend and backend modules
4. Integrating AES (for message encryption) and RSA (for secure key exchange)
5. Testing and deployment

**3.2 Tools and Technologies Used**

* **Frontend**: HTML, CSS, JavaScript
* **Backend**: Node.js, Express.js
* **Real-Time Communication**: Socket.IO
* **Encryption**: AES for data, RSA for key management
* **Database**: MongoDB (for storing user credentials securely)
* **Deployment**: Render/Vercel with HTTPS enabled

**3.3 Solution Overview**

The secure chat app allows users to register, log in, and communicate with others via real-time chat. All messages are encrypted using AES before transmission and decrypted only by the intended recipient. Public-private key pairs generated through RSA are used for secure key exchanges. The interface includes typing indicators, timestamps, and message delivery notifications.

**3.4 Engineering Standards Applied**

* **ISO/IEC 27001**: Applied for information security best practices.
* **IEEE 802**: Networking and socket protocols are compliant with standard practices.
* **OWASP Security Guidelines**: Followed to avoid common web vulnerabilities.

**3.5 Solution Justification**

Applying these standards ensures robust data protection, system reliability, and compliance with security regulations. The solution is scalable, easily maintainable, and supports future enhancements like group chats and multimedia encryption.

**Chapter 4: Results and Recommendations**

**4.1 Evaluation of Results**

The chat app was evaluated based on performance, security, and usability. Results showed:

* Successful encryption and decryption of messages in real-time.
* No data leakage during communication.
* Consistent user experience across browsers and devices.

**4.2 Challenges Encountered**

* Integrating real-time communication with encryption slowed message delivery initially.
* Managing key pairs securely without central storage required redesigning parts of the architecture.

**4.3 Possible Improvements**

* Add support for encrypted image, video, and voice messages.
* Implement biometric or OTP-based authentication.
* Include offline messaging with deferred encryption.

**4.4 Recommendations**

* Deploy in organizations that require secure internal communication.
* Use for applications involving legal, financial, or medical data.
* Explore blockchain integration for tamper-proof audit trails.

**Chapter 5: Reflection on Learning and Personal Development**

**5.1 Key Learning Outcomes**

**Academic Knowledge:**  
Through this project, I applied key concepts from cryptography, networking, and secure software design. Implementing End-to-End Encryption (E2EE) helped me understand how theoretical models like symmetric (AES) and asymmetric (RSA) encryption actually function in real applications. I also learned about secure communication protocols, data protection policies, and the importance of privacy-focused system design.

**Technical Skills:**  
The project improved my skills in both frontend and backend development. I used:

* **Frontend:** HTML, CSS, JavaScript, and Bootstrap to create an interactive and responsive chat UI.
* **Backend:** Node.js and Express for server-side logic, message handling, and key exchanges.
* **Security:** CryptoJS and Node-RSA for encrypting and decrypting messages securely.
* **Database:** MongoDB to securely store user credentials without saving message content.
* **Version Control & Deployment:** Git, GitHub, and HTTPS setup for secure deployment.

**Problem-Solving and Critical Thinking:**  
I had to handle challenges such as synchronizing encryption/decryption during real-time messaging, preventing replay attacks, and maintaining low latency. These problems strengthened my debugging skills and taught me how to evaluate different algorithmic choices based on performance and security needs.

**5.2 Challenges Encountered and Overcome**

**Technical Challenges:**

* **Real-time encryption** caused issues when message order was not preserved due to asynchronous socket communication.
* **Key management** was tricky since storing private keys on the server could compromise security. I had to implement client-side key generation and session key sharing via public keys only.
* **Testing for vulnerabilities** required the use of tools like Postman and Wireshark to simulate attacks and ensure robustness.

**Personal & Professional Growth:**  
This project improved my ability to work independently and strengthened my attention to detail. I learned the importance of secure coding practices, reading documentation carefully, and continuous testing. It also gave me a real sense of how engineers build applications with security as a priority from the ground up.

**Teamwork & Communication:**  
Even though this was an individual project, I often consulted with mentors and peers for feedback. This taught me how to present technical problems clearly, accept constructive criticism, and iterate on design ideas more effectively.

**5.3 Application of Engineering Standards**

This project followed core security and software engineering standards:

* **Confidentiality, Integrity, Availability (CIA) principles**
* **OWASP guidelines** for secure web apps
* Avoiding storage of sensitive data and using **HTTPS** for secure communication
* Ensuring **data encryption at rest and in transit** to comply with data protection best practices.

Adhering to these standards gave the project a strong foundation and helped ensure both security and reliability.

**5.4 Insights into the Industry**

Working on a secure messaging app gave me insight into how companies like WhatsApp or Signal handle E2EE. I learned the importance of user privacy in modern digital communication, and how developers must balance usability with strong encryption. It also made me aware of the demand for cybersecurity in every field, and how these practices can be implemented even in small-scale apps.

**5.5 Conclusion of Personal Development**

This project has had a significant impact on my career direction. It helped me realize my passion for cybersecurity and backend development. I now feel more confident in tackling real-world problems, especially those requiring secure communication and privacy-aware design. It has also helped me develop a more structured and analytical mindset that I will carry forward in both my higher studies and professional work.

**Chapter 6: Conclusion**

The **Secure Chat App with End-to-End Encryption** successfully meets its goal of providing private and secure real-time communication. By leveraging cryptographic algorithms and secure communication channels, the app ensures that user data remains confidential and is accessible only to intended recipients. The system avoids storing messages on the server, further reducing risks of data leaks.

This project not only demonstrates the importance of E2EE in modern communication but also highlights the feasibility of implementing such systems at a student level. The real-time chat functionality, combined with robust encryption, proves that strong security can be achieved without compromising performance or user experience.

The process involved careful planning, iterative development, and testing to ensure reliability and user trust. The solution also aligns with industry standards, providing a strong foundation for deployment and future enhancements.

In conclusion, the project has fulfilled its academic and practical objectives. It provided an enriching learning experience in secure application development, and it contributes meaningfully to the broader field of privacy-focused software solutions.

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