

Computer Security Capstone

Chapter 23: Internet Authentication Applications

Chi-Yu Li (2023 Spring)
Computer Science Department
National Yang Ming Chiao Tung University

Outline

- Kerberos
- X.509
- Public-Key Infrastructure

Kerberos

- Initially developed at MIT

- A software utility available both in the public domain and in commercially supported versions
- The defacto standard for remote authentication

- A trusted third-party authentication service

- Clients and servers trust Kerberos to mediate their mutual authentication
- Requires that
 - A user proves his or her identity for each service invoked
 - Optionally, servers prove their identity to clients

Security Issues between Clients and Servers?

- In an unprotected network environment, any client can apply to any service for server
- Obvious security risk?
 - ❑ Impersonation: an opponent can pretend to be another client and obtain unauthorized privileges on server machines
- How do servers counter this threat?
 - ❑ Confirm the identities of clients
 - ❑ But, each server is required to do this for each client/server interaction

Security Issues between Clients and Servers? (Cont.)

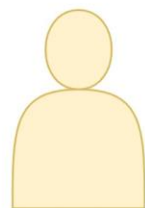
- Alternative: using an authentication server (AS)
 - ❑ Once the AS has verified the user's identity, it can pass this information on to an application server
- How to do all this in a secure way?
 - ❑ If clients send passwords to the AS over the network, the opponent could observe the password

Kerberos Overview

- AS shares a unique secret key with each server
- Session key: one-time encryption key
- Ticket and session key are both encrypted using the user's password as the encryption key
- Password is never passed over the network

2. AS verifies user's access right in database, creates ticket-granting ticket and session key. Results are encrypted using **key derived from user's password**.

1. User logs on to workstation and requests service on host



3. Workstation prompts user for password to decrypt incoming message, then send ticket and authenticator that contains user's name, network address and time to TGS.

5. Workstation sends ticket and authenticator to host.

Once per user
logon session

Request ticket-granting
ticket

Ticket + session key

Request service-
granting ticket

Ticket + session key

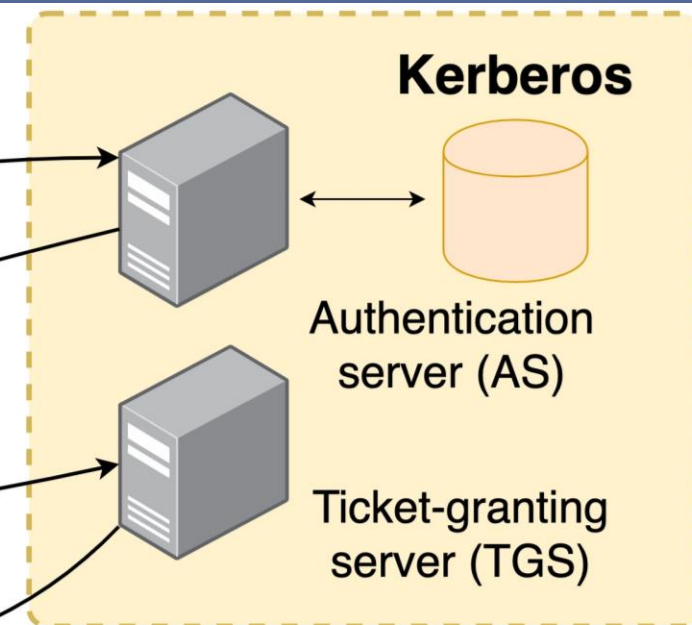
Once per type
of service

Request service

Provide server
authenticator

Once per service
session

Kerberos



4. TGS decrypts ticket and authenticator, verifies request then creates ticket for requested application server

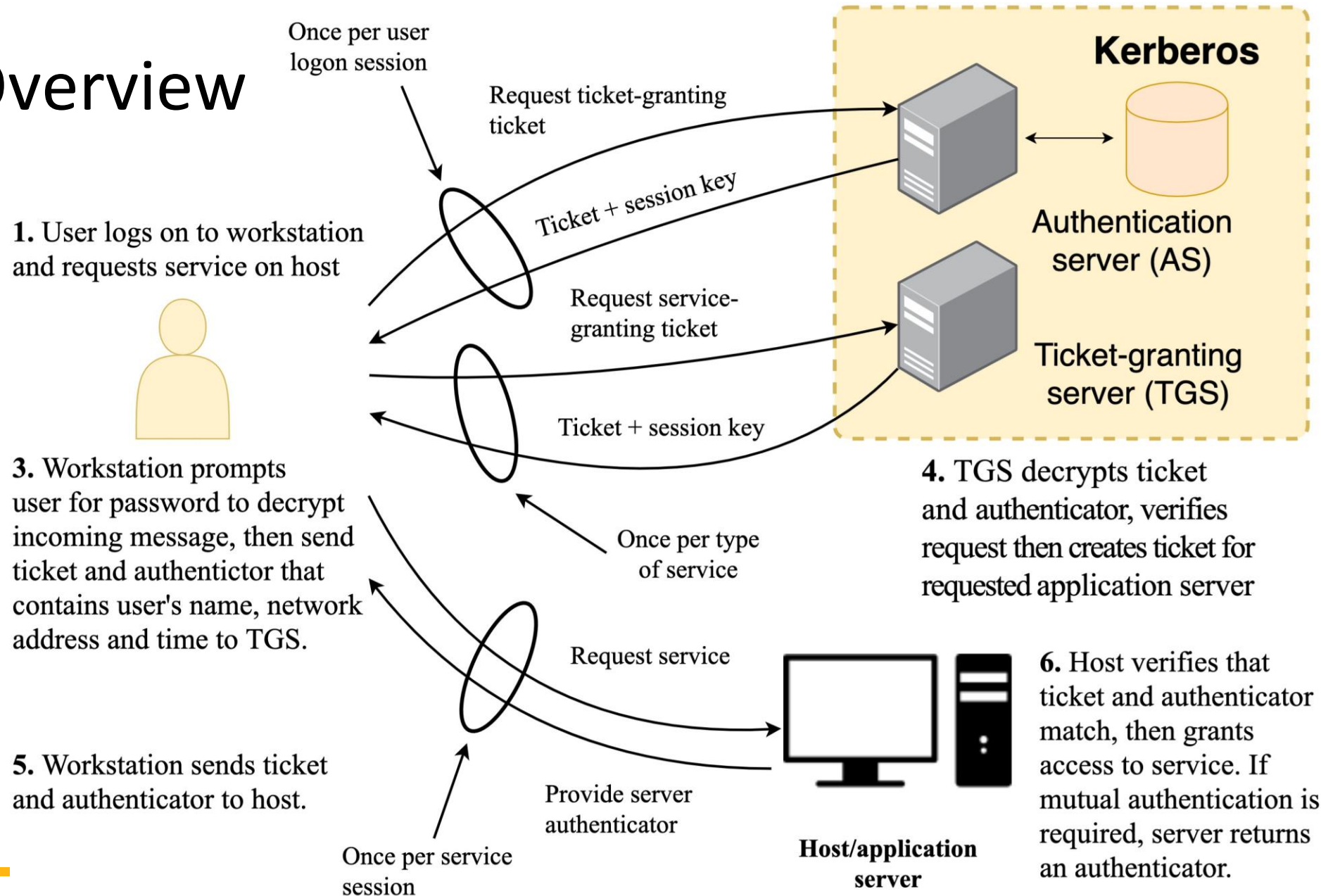
6. Host verifies that ticket and authenticator match, then grants access to service. If mutual authentication is required, server returns an authenticator.



Host/application
server

Kerberos Overview

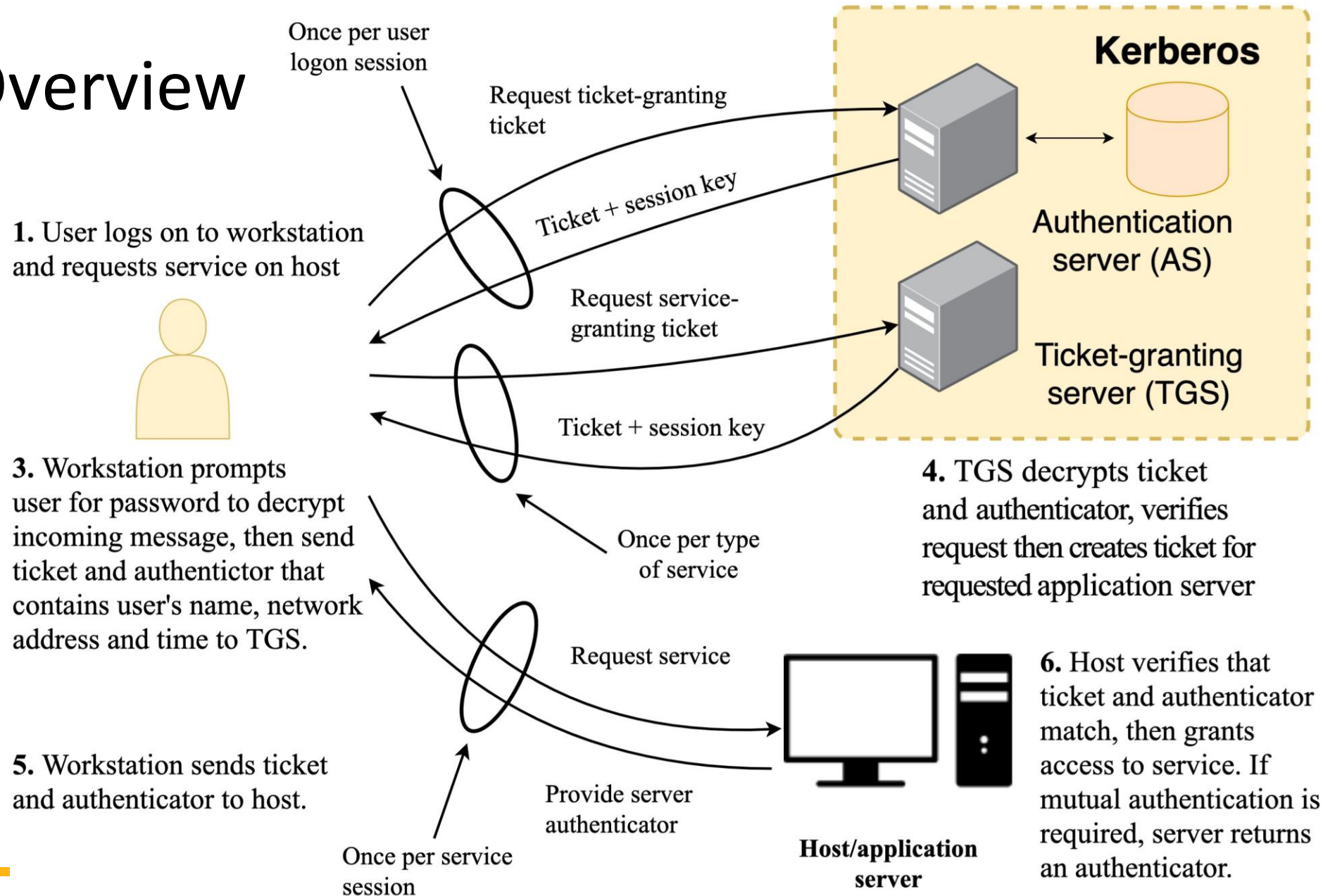
- Ticket: a set of credentials
 - User's ID, server's ID, a timestamp, a lifetime
- Entire ticket is encrypted using a secret DES key shared by the AS and the server
- Why TGS?
 - Query the user for his password for each service **Inconvenient!**
 - Store the password in memory for the duration of the logon session **Security risk!**
- TGS: A ticket to get more tickets!



Kerberos Overview

How to counter the following threats for ticket-granting ticket?

- Ticket may be stolen and reused
 - Timestamp
- Alteration of the ticket
 - Encrypted with a secret key known only to the AS and TGS
- User spoofing
 - Authentication based on the encryption with the user's password
- Replay attack
 - Authenticator, which is not reusable



Kerberos Realms

- A Kerberos realm: full-service Kerberos environment

- A Kerberos server

- A number of clients

- Each registers with the Kerberos server; the server holds a database for the user ID/password

- A number of app servers

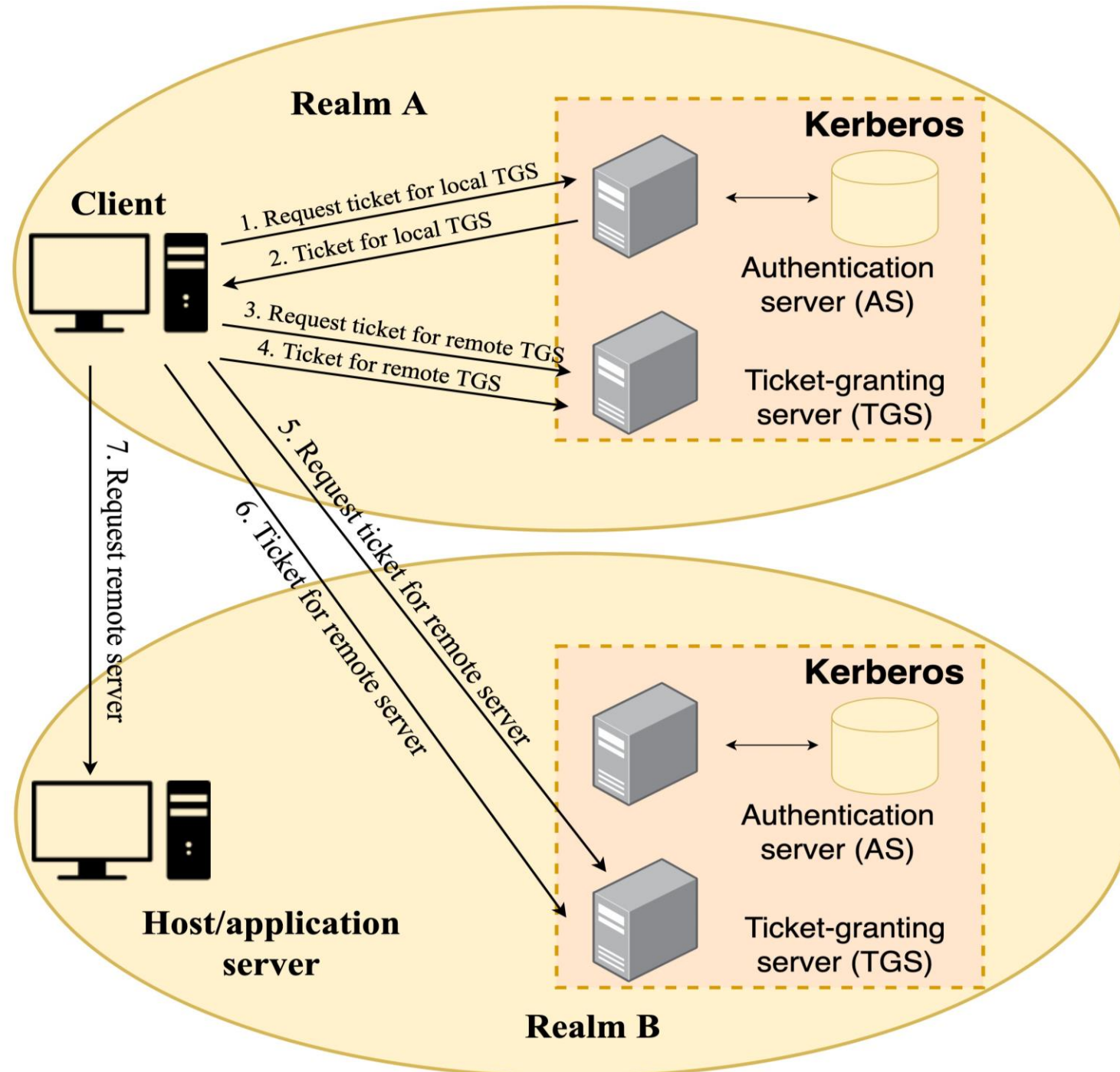
- Each registers with the Kerberos server and shares a secret key with it

- Different realms

- Networks of clients and server under different administrative organizations

Interrealm Authentication

- The Kerberos server in each realm shares a secret key with the server in the other realm
- Kerberos servers are registered with each other



Kerberos Versions 4 and 5

- Most widely used: Version 4 in late 1980s
- Version 5
 - ❑ Introduced in 1993; updated in 2005
 - ❑ Now widely implemented
 - Part of Microsoft's Active Directory service
 - Most current UNIX and Linux systems
 - Apple's Mac OS X
 - ❑ AES is the default choice (DES in v4)
 - ❑ Authentication forwarding
 - Enabling a client to access a server and have that server access another sever on behalf of the client

Performance Issues

- Very little performance impact in a large-scale environment
 - ❑ if the system is properly configured
 - ❑ The amount of traffic needed for the granting ticket: modest
- Does it require a dedicated platform?
 - ❑ Not wise to run it on the same machine as a resource-intensive app
 - ❑ Its security is best assured by placing it on a separate, isolated machine
- How about using multiple realms to maintain performance?
 - ❑ Probably not
 - ❑ The motivation of multiple realms is administrative

X.509: Public-key Certificate

- A certificate

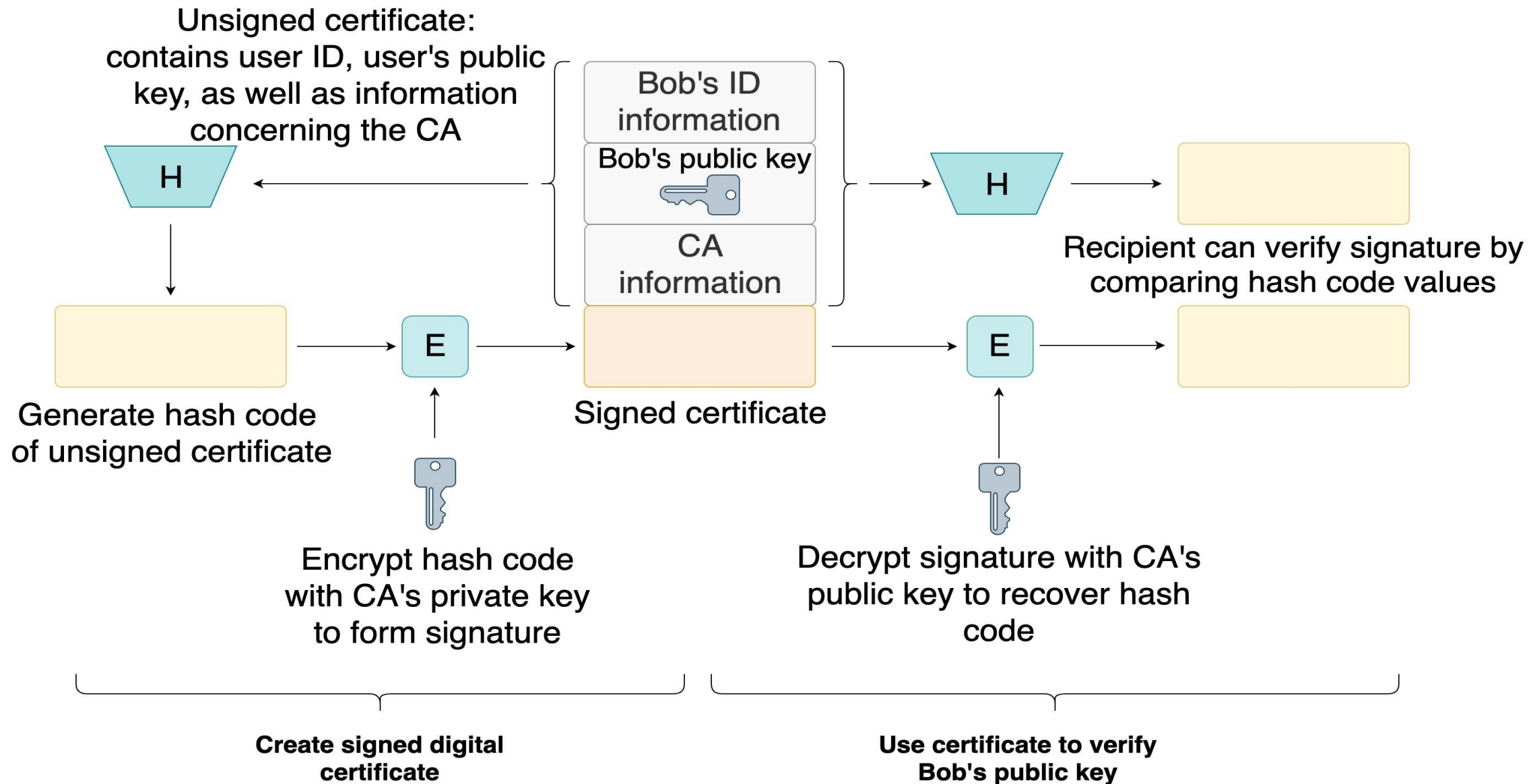
- linking a public key with the identity of the key's owner
- the whole block signed by a trusted third party

- Third party: certificate authority (CA)

- trusted by the user community
- e.g., government agency, financial institution

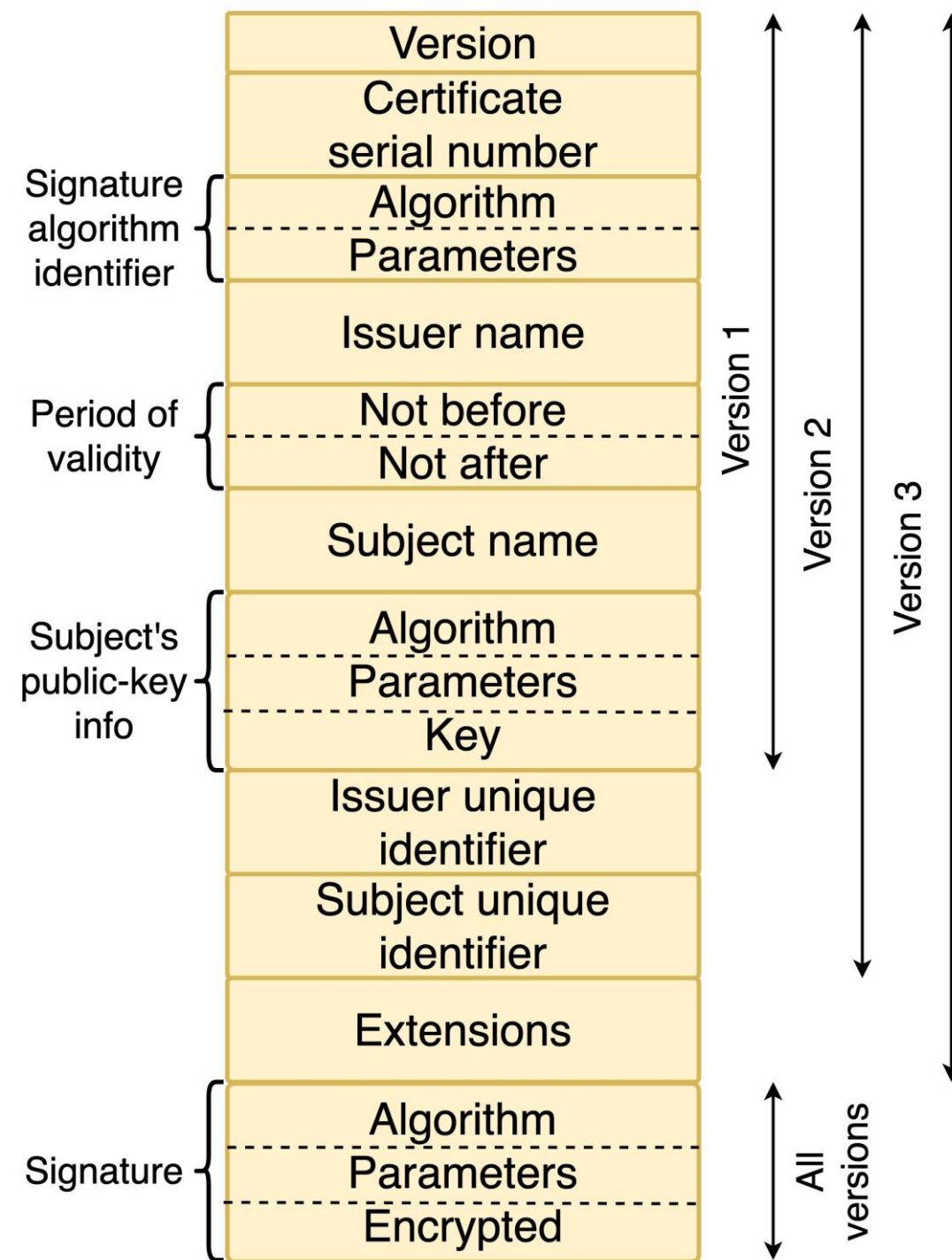
- User can present his public key to the authority in a secure manner and obtain a certificate

Public-key Certificate Use



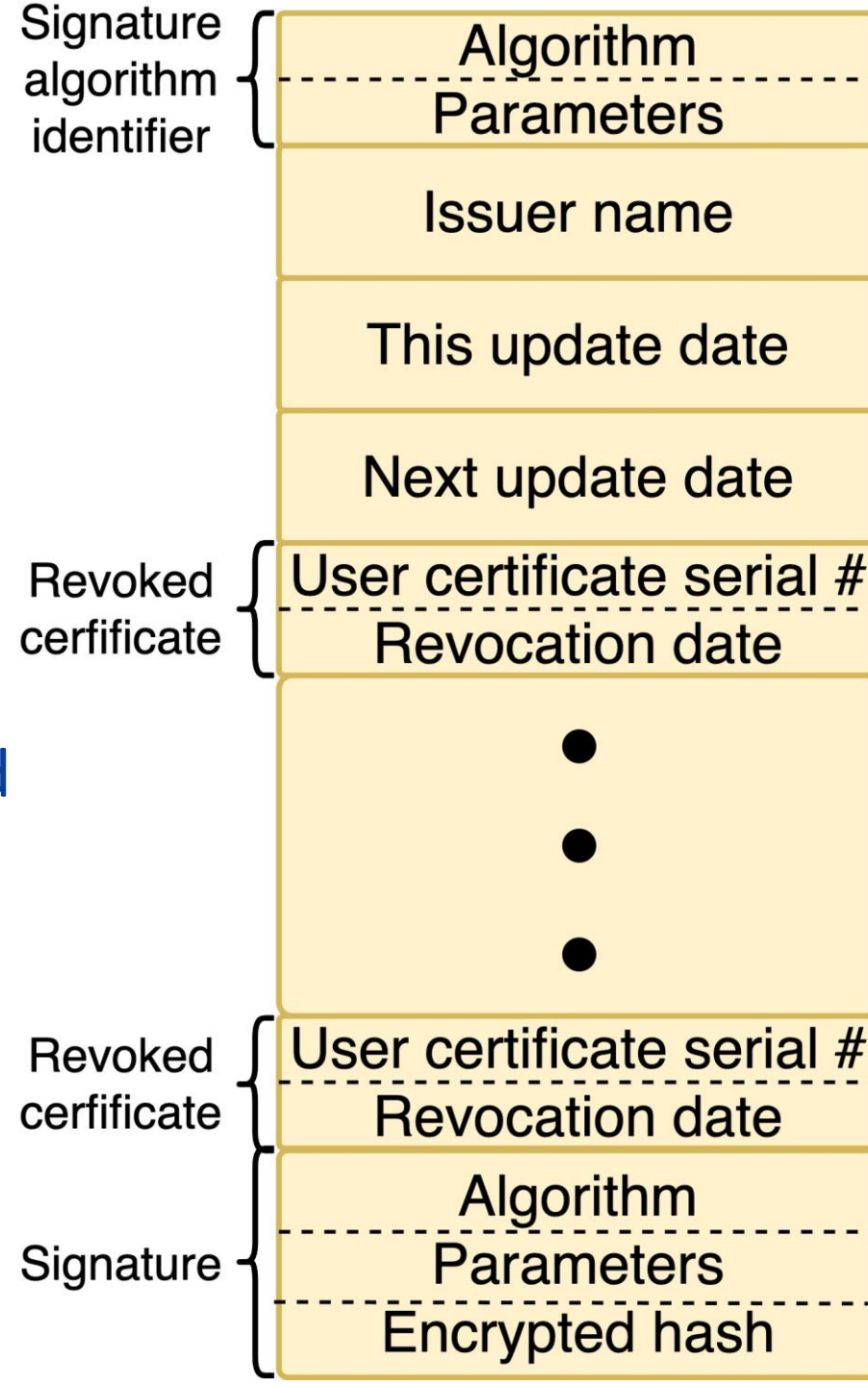
X.509

- Specified in RFC 5280
- Most widely accepted format for public-key certificates
- Used in most network security apps
 - ▣ IPSec, SSL, TLS, S/MIME, etc.
- Usage restriction
 - ▣ “Key Usage” and “Extended Key Usage” extensions specify a set of approved uses
- What if the certificate has been compromised? How to revoke it?



X.509 (Cont.)

- A certificate revocation list (CRL)
 - ❑ signed by the issuer
 - ❑ containing a serial number of a certificate and the revocation date
- When receiving a certificate, an app should determine whether it has been revoked
 - ❑ checking the current CRL for its issuing CA
 - ❑ very few apps do this due to high overheads
- The recent Heartbleed Open SSL bug has dramatically highlighted deficiencies with the use of CRLs



X.509 (Cont.)

- A lightweight protocol for the revocation in RFC 6960
 - including in recent versions of most common Web browsers
 - “Authority Information Access” extension in a certificate: specify the server address
- Hash signature
 - MD5 collisions are found in 2012: depreciated
 - SHA-1 collisions are discovered in 2017
 - Using SHA-2 and SHA-3 now

Public-Key Infrastructure (PKI)

- RFC 4949: the set of hardware, software, people, policies, and procedures needed to create, manage, store, distribute, and revoke digital certificates based on asymmetric cryptography
- Principal objective: enable secure, convenient, and efficient acquisition of public keys
- Current X.509 PKI implementations: trust store
 - ▣ A large list of CAs and their public keys

CAs in Trust Store

- Either directly sign “end-user” certificates
- Or sign a small number of Intermediate-CAs
 - They in turn sign “end-user” certificates
- All the hierarchies are very small, and all are equally trusted
- Automatically verified certificate: acquiring it from one of those CAs
 - Alternatively: use either a self-signed certificate or a certificate signed by some other CA
 - Such certificates are initially recognized as “untrusted”
 - The user presented with stark warnings about accepting such certificates

Issues with the PKI Model

- Issue 1: Reliance on the user to make an informed decision when there is a problem verifying a certificate
- Issue 2: Assuming that all of the CAs in the “trust store” are equally trusted, equally well managed, and apply equivalent policies
 - Compromise of the DigiNotar CA in 2011
 - Fraudulent issue of certificates for many well-known organizations
 - Bankrupt later that year
 - Compromise of the Comodo CA in 2011
 - A small number of fraudulent certificates issued
 - Iranian government: mount a “man-in-the-middle” attack
 - On the secured communications of many of their citizens

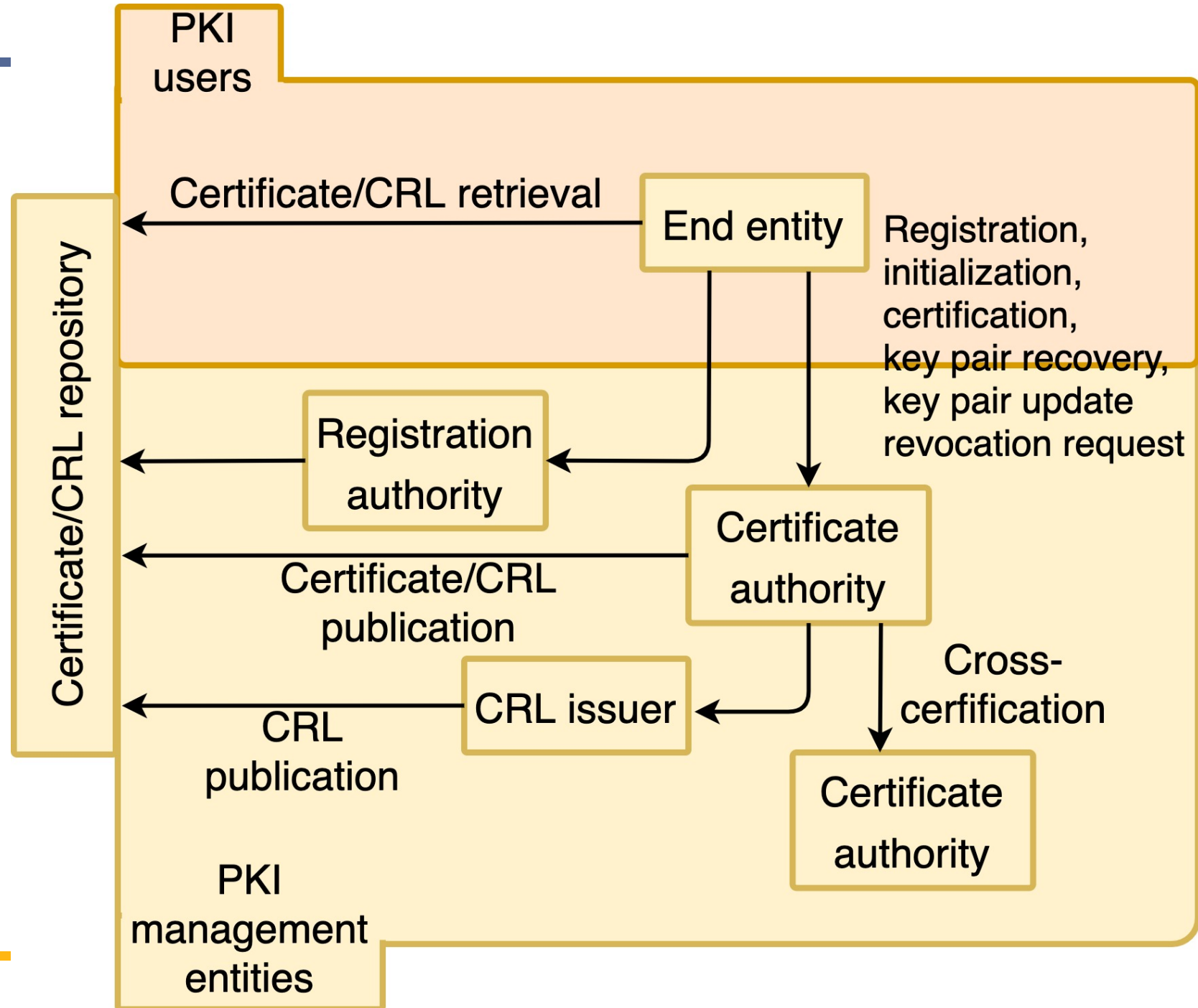
Issues with the PKI Model (Cont.)

- Issue 3: different implementations, in the various web browsers and OS, use different “trust stores”
 - Present different security views to users

Improve the X.509 Certificates

- Recognize that many apps do not require formal linking of a public key to a verified identity
 - ❑ In many web apps, all users really need is to know that if they visit the same secure site
 - ❑ i.e., same site and same key as when they previously visited
- Improvement 1: confirming continuity in time
 - ❑ Apps keep a record of certificate details for all sites they visit
 - ❑ e.g., Google Chrome
- Improvement 2: confirming continuity in space
 - ❑ Using a number of widely separated “network notary servers” that keep records of certificates for all sites they view
 - ❑ e.g., Firefox “Perspectives” plugin; notary servers: Google Certificate Catalog

Public Key Infrastructure X.509 (PKIX)



Questions?