

SYSC4907 PROJECT:  
SENSOR-BASED ACCESS CONTROL SYSTEM

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# Abstract

This report describes a Sensor-Based Access Control System (SBACS). The main purpose of this system is to digitize physical means of access, such as keys, and storing them in the cloud. This makes the keys more secure, transferable, and convenient. Included in this report are descriptions of various use cases for the SBACS.

The SBACS is composed of three primary components: the locking hardware, the cloud server, and the user application. This report describes how each of these components was designed, implemented, integrated, and tested. The locking hardware system uses a modular framework, allowing new means of authentication to be added to or removed from the lock as desired.

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# List of Abbreviations

AID	Application Identifier
APDU	Application Protocol Data Unit
API	Application Programming Interface
COBS	Consistent Overhead Byte Stuffing
CPU	Central Processing Unit
HMAC	Keyed-Hash Message Authentication Code
HTML	Hypertext Markup Language
HTTP	Hypertext Transfer Protocol
I2C	Inter-Integrated Circuit
IO	Input/Output
JSON	JavaScript Object Notation
LED	Light-Emitting Diode
MVC	Model-View-Controller
NFC	Near Field Communication
OS	Operating System
RFC	Request for Comments
SBACS	Sensor-Based Access Control System
URL	Uniform Resource Locator

# Chapter 1

## Introduction

### 1.1 Project Motivation

As technology becomes more and more prevalent in our lives, our identities become increasingly intertwined with the technologies that we use daily. This melding has become extremely prevalent in some areas. Some example areas are professional networking with LinkedIn, and banking with the advent of online account management. Over half of all smartphone users have used mobile banking [1]. This popularity may be derived from how convenient and secure the online handling of money is. However, certain aspects of our day to day lives have not yet been graced by the benefits of electronic security and automation.

Physical locks and keys are still widely used for several tasks where electronic locks could be used instead. House locks, bicycle locks, and locker locks are frequently physical locks. Changing to electronic locks could help streamline all of these locks, reducing the number of keys to remember and improving security by reducing the likelihood that the key could be faked by an attacker. This would also reduce the risk of misplacing keys, as a digital key can be backed up for use on another device. It can also increase the security of the lockers by reducing the number of points of failure. Some applications for this have already been found: for example, Walmart has a system where customers can order products to be placed in lockers with electronic keys called Grab-and-Go [2]. Such a system greatly reduces the work involved in

getting a key to the customer, as a PIN can be sent and received electronically.

## 1.2 Proposed Solution

This project outlines a Sensor-Based Access Control System (SBACS), that will expand upon the concept of using electronic locks to further tie security and identity to the electronics we use most: our phones. Using near-field communication (NFC) sensors, along with other electronic authentication methods, the identity associated with a phone can be used as identification for anything requiring access control. This represents a huge advantage with respect to convenience, and it would even further lower the number of possible failure points in security. In addition, with modern mobile devices being automatically backed up to cloud storage, recovering access control keys when a device is lost or stolen can be accomplished easily and securely.

While the focus of the implementation will be on utilising a handheld mobile phone as the vector for transmitting keys to locks, the SBACS is designed to be easily extensible to other hardware. This could include devices as simple as a PIN keypad, or as complex as facial recognition. This allows the SBACS to adapt to particular use cases more effectively by accommodating security, user experience, and redundancy needs dynamically.

## 1.3 Accomplishments

The final product of this project accomplishes the main goals set out in the proposal: a system for access control, using multiple sensors for different methods of authentication, with the ability to dynamically grant and remove access to different users. We have a working prototype that is a drawer secured with an electronic lock, connected to our system to control access. This prototype is able to function with multiple methods of authentication: a PIN and an NFC sensor. An Android application has been developed to allow users to manage aspects of their identity and view information about which locks they are able to access, as well as to use NFC to open a lock. A cloud server stores information about which users are able to access which locks, and

verifies that given authentication information is adequate to provide access to a lock. The lock hardware and the Android application communicate with the cloud server, and the Android application also sends information to the lock hardware using NFC. Finally, there is a web interface to allow management of access to different locks, and to provide basic account management to users of the system. For the simplicity of the prototype, the distinction between administrative users and regular users does not exist, and users cannot be associated into groups like companies.

## 1.4 Overview of Report

The remainder of this report will detail the work that was performed to complete the work on this project. Chapter 2 will outline the details of how the project was performed, including the health and safety factors that were considered, the professionalism in the project, the management of the project, and the contributions of each member of the project. Chapter 3 will provide some extra information to provide a better understanding of the terminology of the report and the technologies that were used in this project. Chapter 4 will provide some possible applications of the system, and provide an explanation of why these solutions would be beneficial over existing solutions. Chapter 5 will discuss the technical and design decisions to accomplish the goals of the project. Chapter 6 will provide an overview of some implementation details of the project, that were discovered beyond the design phase of the project. Chapter 7 provides details on testing of the system, as well as some of the larger issues that were discovered and fixed while developing the system. Chapter 8 will provide a summary of the report and the work that was performed on the project. It will also detail any areas for improvement or extension of the project.

# Chapter 2

## The Engineering Project

### 2.1 Health and Safety

The main health and safety concern for this project was ensuring the safe preparation of circuits for the hardware component. The chance of bodily harm due to electric shock was possible, as the highest-risk component of the project drew 650 mA of current at 12V direct current. Since 650 mA is above the 500 mA threshold for possible heart fibrillation [3], the following standards were enforced to mitigate safety risks when handling the electrical components:

- The workspace and components were kept dry at all times
- Participants ensured they were sufficiently grounded before handling components
- Ground pins were connected first, to ensure any charged components would discharge
- Components' wiring was not altered while the system was powered on

## 2.2 Engineering Professionalism

Engineering is a profession, so professionalism must be maintained when performing engineering projects. In our project we have ensured professionalism in a variety of ways. A professional relationship between the members of the team has been established, ensuring that all members of the team are respected and considered as equals. When disagreements arose about decisions for the project, they were discussed as a team and all viewpoints were understood before making any final decision. This was done to ensure that all members of the team were always happy with the direction of the project, to ensure the best possible outcome.

In this project security is a very important factor, therefore all necessary steps were taken to ensure that personal information and other secure data was handled correctly. This system may also be used to secure physical objects, so the necessary steps were taken to ensure that only the allowed individuals would be able to gain access.

In order to understand all background information to construct the system, we used external resources to expand our understanding of certain subjects. We made sure to reference the works of others and acknowledge the help that we have received, in order to give credit where it is due.

## 2.3 Project Management

This project was sufficiently complicated, that we decided that project management was a necessary tool to facilitate the success of the project. We used Github to manage various issues and tasks, as well as for a central version-controlled repository. We held weekly meetings to follow the Agile development methodology, doing one-week sprints. In these meetings, we demonstrated to each other and our supervisors our progress during the sprint. In our project proposal, we planned a timeline that we used to gauge our overall progress. When we fell behind on our planned timeline, we isolated areas of work that needed to be accelerated to get back on track. Responsibilities for the project were divided evenly among the three team members to balance the



work load, and effectively make use of each member's time and specialisations. To facilitate system integration, we held informal meetings where we collaborated on our work.

(n.b. we will include the Gantt chart from the proposal here)

## 2.4 Individual Contributions

This section will summarise the contributions each team member made to the project, and to this report.

### 2.4.1 Project Contributions

Jessica's contributions:

- Designed lock circuit, lock control software, and authentication modules
- Implemented lock circuit, lock control software, and authentication modules
- Collaborated on the design of the NFC protocol

Richard's contributions:

- Designed the Android application
- Implemented Android application
- Collaborated on the design of the NFC protocol
- Collaborated on HMAC design and implementation

Craig's contributions:

- Designed web server and database
- Implemented web server and database
- Collaborated on HMAC design and implementation

As a group, we collaborated on system integration, and integration testing.

### 2.4.2 Report Contributions

Jessica's contributions:

- Section 3.4
- Section 5.4
- Section 6.2

Richard's contributions:

- Section 5.1, 5.2, 5.3
- Section 6.1

Craig's contributions:

- Section 3.2
- Section 5.5
- Section 6.3

All members collaborated on sections 2 and 4.

# Chapter 3

## Technical Background

This section identifies several technical topics that are relevant to the SBACS. These topics are discussed lightly here to ensure the reader’s familiarity with them in later sections. Therefore, these sections do not discuss the SBACS in detail, but instead attempt to set up a baseline from which the SBACS’s operation can be understood.

### 3.1 NFC

### 3.2 Cloud Computing

Cloud computing is about performing computation, providing data storage, and offering other services on demand over the internet [4]. For this project, Amazon Web Services (as discussed in Section 5.5.1) has been used as the provider of a cloud computing platform to host the server and database of SBACS. Cloud computing allows for computational resources to be dynamically allocated based on the demand at the time. This means that when a server has low demand it will not use as many resources, but when the demand is higher, it will dynamically be provided with more resources.

### 3.3 Security

The three main principles of network security are confidentiality, message integrity, end-point authentication, and operational security [5]. Confidential networks ensure that only the sender and receiver can understand the contents of a message. A message's integrity is protected by a network if the contents of the message cannot be modified by either a malicious attacker or by accident. Networks enable end-point authentication by providing mechanisms by which the sender and receiver can confirm the identity of the other party. Operational security deals with the ability for organisations to protect their host machines from attackers on the internet.

Confidentiality is primarily provided by means of cryptography. Encryption describes a process by which a message is modified using some secret information [5]. Then if a sender and a receiver share some secret information, usually called a key, they can be sure that only they can understand the actual message. If the shared keys are identical, it is called symmetric-key cryptography. If only one of the sender or receiver knows both keys, but both know of the other key, then it is called a public key cryptography.

Message integrity can be handled in many ways, but the goal is always to verify the sender's identity, and to verify that the message has not been changed [5]. Two common ways of providing message integrity are through message authentication codes and digital signatures. Message authentication codes are redundant information added to a message after being generated using a shared secret value. The sender and receiver must share the secret in advance and follow the same procedure to calculate the code. Then the receiver can check that their calculated value matches the value sent by the sender. Digital signatures are primarily handled by certification authorities. The authority does work to ensure the identity of a potential sender, and then combines that sender's public key along with identifying information using the authority's private key. This way, a receiver can check with the certification authority that the sender is who they say that they are.

Operational security primarily lies outside the scope of the SBACS and is handled by things like firewalls [5]. Therefore, the SBACS does not make any considerations

for handling operational security. This means that the SBACS is as vulnerable as the system that it is being run over to operational attacks. As an example, if an attacker had access to a sufficiently powerful machine, they could perform a kind of replay attack. By creating a copy of the data and simply brute forcing all possible keys, the attacker could gain access to a lock.

## 3.4 Single-Board Computers and Microcontrollers

A single-board computer, or SBC, incorporates all of the elements necessary for a functional computer on a single circuit board: a microprocessor, memory, IO, and other functions. Single-board microcontrollers (SBMs) have the same intent, to incorporate all of the elements needed to support a microcontroller onto a single circuit board. The main distinction between SBCs and SBMs is the same as that between computers and microcontrollers. A microcontroller is designed specifically for one purpose, such as powering an alarm clock. Whereas a computer is a general-purpose computing device, and has more memory, a stronger CPU, and other improved hardware features to support the more intense computing needs of a user. As such, it does not require a significant amount of memory, processing power, or electricity to perform its task.

### 3.4.1 Raspberry Pi

The Raspberry Pi is a credit-card-sized, single-board computer developed by the Raspberry Pi Foundation. In its initial design, it was intended to be a learning tool to introduce computer science to students at the pre-university level. However, its reasonable price gave it increased appeal among hobby electronics enthusiasts, and it is now often used for robotics projects, media streaming, IoT projects, and more. Today, the Raspberry Pi has sold over five million units [6], with models ranging from the 5 USD Raspberry Pi Zero, to the 35 USD Raspberry Pi 3 Model B.

### 3.4.2 Arduino

# Chapter 4

## Business Use Cases

Design for our system began with considering use cases that could be handled by our system. This way, we could be sure to only design features that would prove useful to some potential users, while also making sure that we don't miss any features that are necessary. These use cases would also provide benefit to demonstrating our system, in that stepping through a sample use case would show the value of the system to people without them requiring a strong technical background.

We primarily focused on the four use cases that follow. These were outlined in our initial proposal and have remained largely unchanged since then. They draw inspiration from situations that we either encountered ourselves or found through common knowledge and research. Online shopping seemed like a ripe market for technology like the SBACS, and mail delivery seemed that it followed a fairly similar system. Long term storage facilities also seemed as though they would benefit from abstracting away the idea of keys. Once we had considered these use cases, we found that several of the problems that they shared could be solved by a company which provided SBACS as a service. The following subsections describe these use cases in more detail and provide use-case diagrams summarising them.

## 4.1 Online Order Secure Pickup

With online shopping becoming more popular [7], the hassle of being physically present to shop in stores could be eliminated by allowing customers to make an order and payment online, then pick up their products at the store using a SBACS-secured storage container. After a customer's order has been confirmed by the store to be packed and ready for pick-up, a store employee could create a link between their customer and the storage container that holds that user's purchases. When the customer arrives at the store to pick up their items, they can gain access to the storage container assigned to them by using the authentication methods that they had previously provided as the components of their identity. Once the customer has provided these authentication units correctly, the link between their identity and the storage container is broken. This way, the user will not be able to inappropriately access the storage container again, and a new link could be made for a different customer. Figure 1 shows a use-case diagram summarising this.

A strong advantage of this system over existing ones, such as Walmart's Grab & Go, is that it creates a digital fingerprint using a combination of authentication methods supported by the SBACS, which is more difficult to break via brute force than a 6-digit PIN. In addition, with the entire process of shopping being expedited, customers will spend less time in stores and parking lots, leading to less congestion due to vehicle traffic. This system will also grant customers with mobility or vision impairments increased personal autonomy, as they will be able to retrieve their goods with less aid from store employees than traditional shopping allows. Customers with impairments can perform their shopping online using their accessibility software, such as text-to-speech, instead of calling the store to request that an employee retrieve their goods. When the customer receives confirmation of their order and authentication tokens, they can access their assigned SBACS-secured locker in the store themselves, using their usual aids instead of occupying a store employee's time.

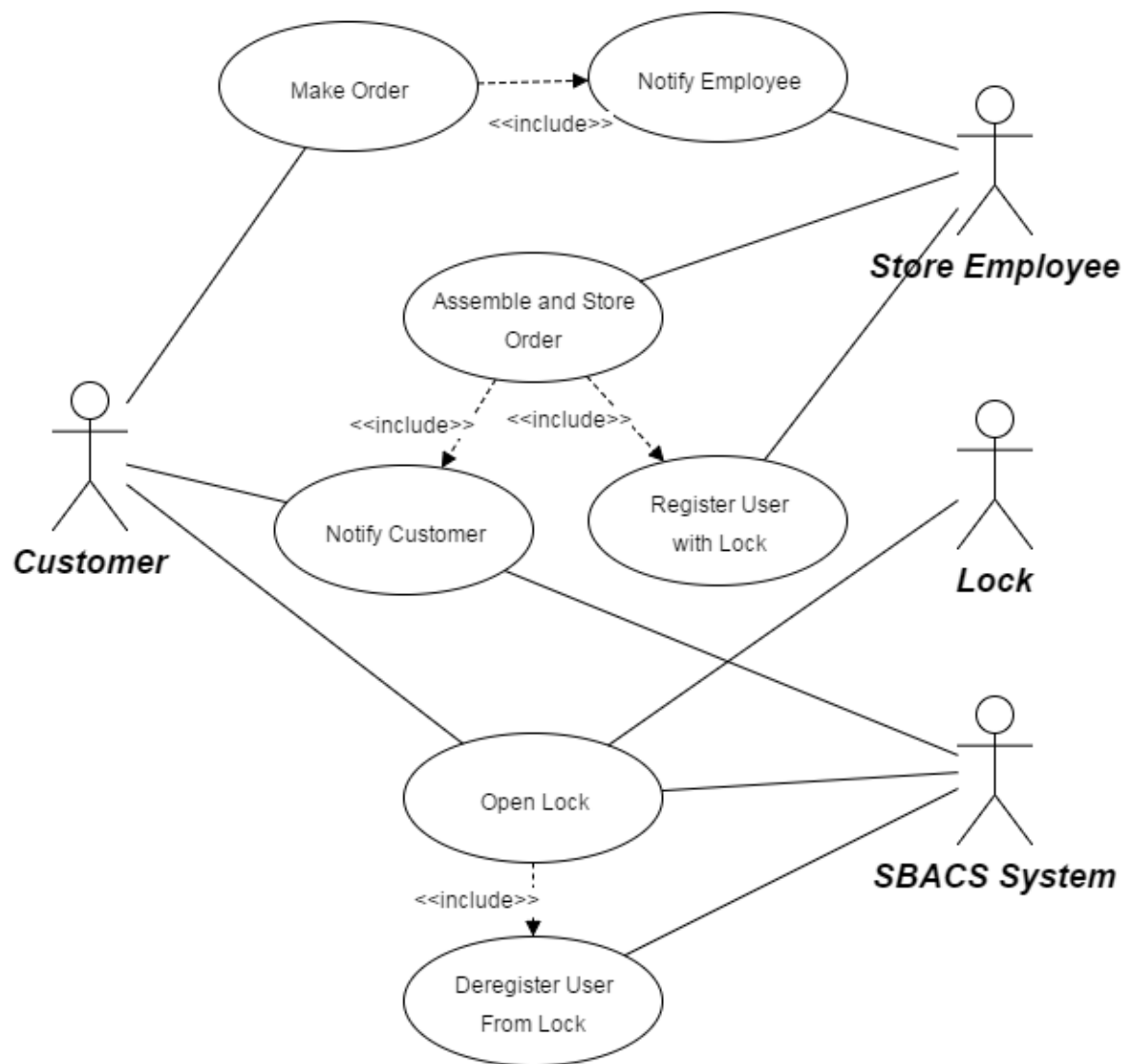


Figure 1: Online Order Secure Pickup Use Case Diagram



## 4.2 Central Mail Package Pickup

Some parcels are too large to fit in a regular mail box, and must be delivered in person. Many delivery services only operate during standard work hours, while many people that need to accept the delivery will not be home. In these cases where packages cannot be stored in a mail box, and cannot be accepted by the recipient, these packages often go to an office of the delivery service. The recipient must then go to pick up their package at the office. This is counter-productive, as the customer has paid for the delivery, and now they are forced to go out of their way to get their item, which has not been delivered to their desired location.

In some places, Canada Post already has community mailboxes, which have a box for larger parcels. The problem with this is that it is only usable for parcels that are being delivered with Canada Post, but there are other parcel delivery services as well that are unable to make use of this. This community mailbox also uses a physical key to open this box, where they leave the key in the customer's normal mailbox, then they use that key to open the parcel box, then they must return the key by dropping it in a mail delivery slot. This involves the need for the physical keys, and requires staff to physically find the keys for the parcel box among the other mail that is in the delivery slot. The Sensor-Based Access Control System would eliminate the need for these physical keys, and would allow more delivery services to make use of the same boxes, ensuring that it is most convenient for the customers.

This system could be used to access parcel boxes, which would allow the delivery to be placed in a box that would fit the parcel. These boxes could be set up in an area where they are close to many customers, allowing them to quickly pick up their parcel without going all the way to the local office. The delivery person would grant access to the customer, then place the parcel in the box. Then the customer could be notified through the application that there is a parcel ready to be picked up. When the customer arrives at the box, they can use the application to open the parcel box, and receive their package. These interactions are summarised in the use case diagram in Figure 2.

Throughout this process, the system could make use of the registrations that have

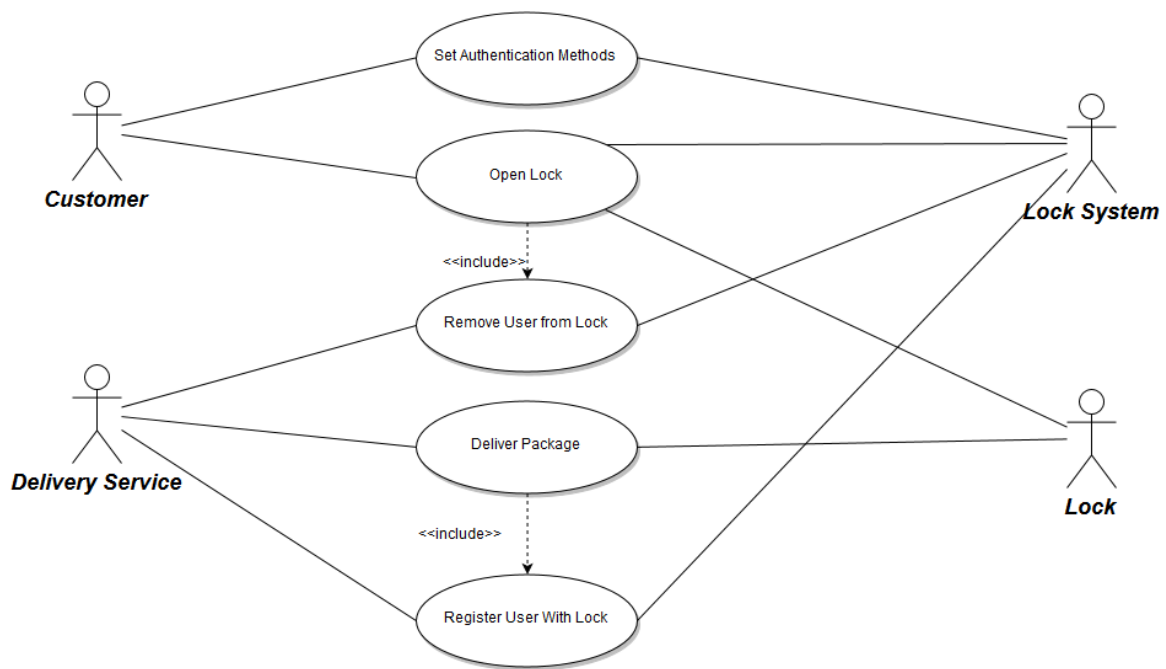


Figure 2: Central Mail Package Pickup Use Case Diagram

been set up for the central mail box. The user set up as the deliverer would be able to send notifications to the system on the status of the package, allowing the recipient user to better know when their package would arrive. Further, the system could be configured such that the system would notify the user when the package had not been picked up after a certain time had elapsed since it was dropped off. This information could also be exposed to the people who manage the central mail box, allowing them to determine the status of their boxes, informing them of potential problems, such as a package that has been languishing for too long in the same box. If the package is not picked up after a given amount of time, the system would notify the customer that the package will no longer be available to be picked up, and alternate options will be given. This would also lead to an expiry of the customer's registration to the box, so they will no longer be able to open the box.

### 4.3 Long Term Storage

The Sensor-Based Access Control System also has applications for long term storage companies, such as Dymon. For these companies, the system could be viewed as an overall manager of customer storage. The system's registrations can be used to provide additional services for specific storage spaces. The system will also expose much of the administrative tasks that the company will need to provide.

The system, using its multiple step authentication, would allow the company to advertise greater security. Along with similar methods to those described in the use cases in sections 4.1, and 4.2, the system could be configured to require biometrics, such as fingerprints or facial recognition, as a form of authentication. By combining these metrics, the system would greatly reduce the potential for attack by strengthening the potential failure points of the identification process.

Once a customer has a storage space reserved and has set up their identification, the registration could be configured to expose additional features. An example feature would be a live video stream of the contents of the storage space. This would allow the customer to verify that the contents of the space had been correctly stored, for example after requesting that the company switch their locker. Figure 3 shows a use case diagram outlining the interactions to manage a long term storage facility with SBACS.

Another additional feature would be the option to log items that are stored in the storage space. Through the system, the customer would be able to note which items they are adding or removing from the storage space, which would later allow the customer to remotely access a list of the items in the storage space, so they do not have to remember all of the contents. This provides a different view of the stored contents on top of the video stream mentioned above. This list could also be searchable or contain images of the items, to make the list easier to use.

The system would also provide the ability to dynamically give certain users access to the storage room. This would allow a storage room to be communally owned by the members of a conglomerate, for example a company. This would ease the process by which multiple people may access the storage space while also ensuring



Figure 3: Long Term Storage Use Case Diagram

that control of the storage was held centrally. More privileged users would be able to allow temporary access to less privileged users for a given time period. All of the attempted authentications could also be logged and made available to certain users, creating a reliable paper trail.

## 4.4 Service Provider

Since one of the main goals of the Sensor-Based Access Control System is to allow for a user to share their identities between different locks, a logical application of the system is a service provider. A service provider could sell the service of installing and managing the information technology parts of the system to other companies that might want to make use of it, such as Walmart or Dymon mentioned above.

This would benefit the end users as they would be able to share their identities amongst the service providers' various customers. This would allow someone to sign up for a locker at Walmart, and later reuse their SBACS identity to open their

apartment's mail package pickup unit assuming both SBACS systems were managed by the same service provider. This shared identity would allow people to remember fewer passwords and generally have fewer physical keys.

Customers purchasing the services for the SBACS would save any technical work associated with installing the system. The service provider would be able to manage the databases, servers and any customer complaints or feedback. Providers would also take care of sharing end user identities, which would even further increase how much time end users could save, as they would only be required to set up one account with the service provider instead of one account per company. This incentivizes companies to make use of a service provider, as it makes the resulting system more attractive to potential customers as well as reducing the overall cost of setting up the system.

# Chapter 5

## Problem Analysis and System Design

This chapter describes the initial work done to plan out the overall system, before beginning the implementation work. The following sections highlight the main considerations and factors in our initial decisions when designing the system. As with all systems, some of the design was changed during implementation, which is described further in chapter 6.

### 5.1 Overall System Analysis

The requirements of our system from the use cases described in chapter 4 lead us to a simple outline for the entire system. The main component of the system would be the cloud server, which would store information regarding users, locks, and the relationships between them. The lock hardware would need to be able to securely accept data from the user, and securely send that data to the server for verification. Since handling electronic security can be difficult to do manually, having an application that handles much of the busy work would greatly help users interact with the system.

One of the main goals of the system was to improve the reusability of the electronic keys that are created. For this reason, the idea of a key was split into two parts: an

authenticator, and an identity. Users would be able to create many authenticators, which are data like passwords, or PINs. These then could be combined into an identity, which would be used to open a particular lock. This allowed making identities that reuse the same authenticator, and reusing identities for different locks.

Another goal of the system was to provide additional behaviour on top of just being able to unlock particular locks. This extra behaviour was captured in the notion of a registration, which ties one lock to one identity. Through the registration, we were able to implement notifications to the user as well as streaming of the lock's contents.

### 5.1.1 Architectural Patterns

The architecture of our system is a Centralized Client-Server pattern [8], as can be seen in the model diagram in Figure 4. The client components of the system are the LockHardware, AndroidApplication, and WebInterface. The server components are the SbacsServer and the SbacsDatabase. This is centralized because the data and general functionality of the system are on the central server components. The client components have some specific functionality locally as well, generally limited to basic processing of information supplied by a user, as well as the manipulation of the user interface.

Each component in the system uses a Basic Layer pattern [9] to divide responsibilities of the component. Specifically, there are four main layers used: user interface layer, system interface layer, function layer, and model layer. The user interface layer handles the display to the user and the input from the user. The system interface layer is used to send and receive information between components in the system. The function layer is used to process information in a variety of ways. The model layer is used to store the needed information of the system.

The AndroidApplication component has a user interface layer, to handle the display of information to the user, in the form of a graphical user interface. The user can interact with this interface and enter information. When information needs to be processed, it is sent to the function layer, where basic processing of the information

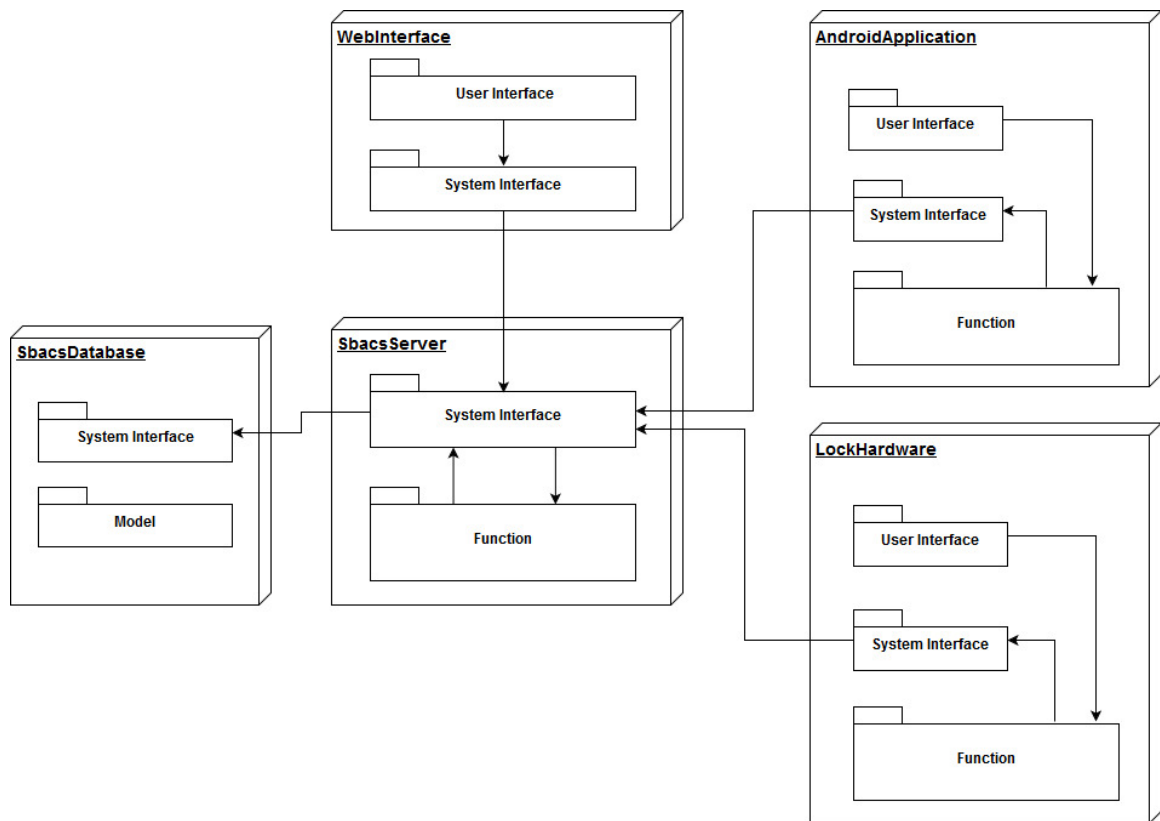


Figure 4: Architecture of SBACS



is performed. In some cases, there will need to be more processing performed, using the functionality available on the central server. In order to send the information to the server, it is passed to the system interface layer to be sent to the SbacsServer.

The WebInterface component has a user interface layer that acts in a very similar way to the AndroidApplication component. However, the WebInterface does not perform any processing of information locally, so it does not need a function layer. Instead, when processing is required, it is sent to the system interface layer to send the information to the SbacsServer.

The LockHardware component has a very basic user interface layer, consisting of LEDs for the display of information and various authentication modules for user input. Once users input information through an authentication module, the information is passed to the function layer to be processed. Similarly to the AndroidApplication, the information sometimes requires more processing on the central server, and in that case is sent to the system interface layer to send the information to the SbacsServer.

The SbacsServer component has no user interface layer, as it should only be interacted with through one of the client components. Instead, all input to the server is done through the system interface layer in the form of HTTP requests. The requests are then passed to the function layer to process the request and generate an appropriate response. The processing of requests often requires information stored in the SbacsDatabase, so the system interface layer must be called to send a request to the SbacsDatabase.

The SbacsDatabase component only has system interface and model layers, as it is only meant to store information and respond to requests for information. The system interface layer is used to receive requests for data, and then will call the model layer to retrieve the appropriate data. The model layer is the only model layer that exists in the system, as it stores all of the data for the system as a whole.

## 5.2 NFC Design

Determining how NFC communication should take place required analysis of two hardware systems: NFC card readers, as well as mobile devices. The most desirable

protocol would be able to handle the widest variety of available hardwares for the two devices. The performance considerations between modes was fairly minimal, so preference was placed on the portability of the solution.

### 5.2.1 Card Readers

Since NFC cards are primarily designed for NFC communications, there were few restrictions that stemmed from potential choices in card reader. Since NFC communications are specified by the ISO, most cards support enough protocols that any decision on our part would be very likely to be supported by any card that would be desirable for any other reason.

### 5.2.2 Mobile Devices

The two most popular operating systems for mobile devices are iOS and Android [10]. Since iOS devices have NFC disabled for everything except Apple Pay[11], the only option that remained was Android. Apple devices would represent a large part of the potential market, so alternatives to NFC would have to be considered.

Among Android devices, there exist devices which have hardware support for NFC communications, and those which rely on host-based card emulation. Devices with hardware support have a component called a Secure Element which performs all of the communication with the external NFC terminal. Later, applications can query this element to determine the status of the transaction, as well as other data. Devices which use host-based card emulation use a software implementation of secure elements. Since host-based card emulation is done through software, it will run on all Android devices running version 4.4 or greater [12], which represents over 99% of all Android devices currently in use. The differences between secure elements and emulators can be seen in figures 5 and 6.

Android offers an API called Beam which is the only way Android devices can use NFC in active mode [13]. Beam, however, does not support sending more than one message between devices. Since the information we are sending can be fairly large in the interest of security, this was not feasible given the restrictions of the NFC protocols

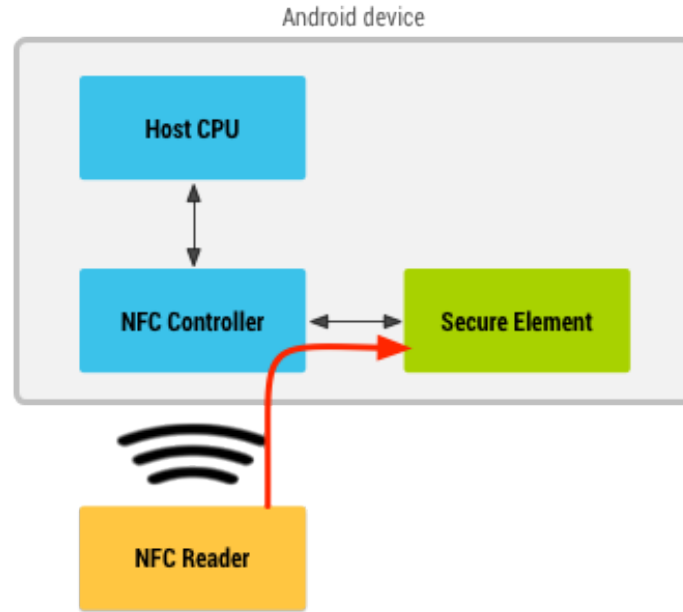


Figure 5: An android device using a secure element [12]

we used. Further, active communications are easier to eavesdrop on, as discussed in the background section. We decided that these costs outweighed the simplicity of the Beam API, so passive communications were chosen for the implementation.

Since more than one application could potentially want to handle an NFC message, the message protocol contains a field called the Application IDentifier, or AID [14]. These AIDs are 16-byte bit patterns which identify which application should handle the associated message. The Android operating system is responsible for delivering the APDUs to the appropriate application’s service [.] Reserving a particular AID for national or international use requires some paperwork and a fee, as per the international standards organisation [14]. Therefore, by not paying this fee, our application may happen to share an AID with another application. We found that the cost of a potential collision was less than the cost of reserving an AID, therefore our application uses a proprietary which we selected at random.

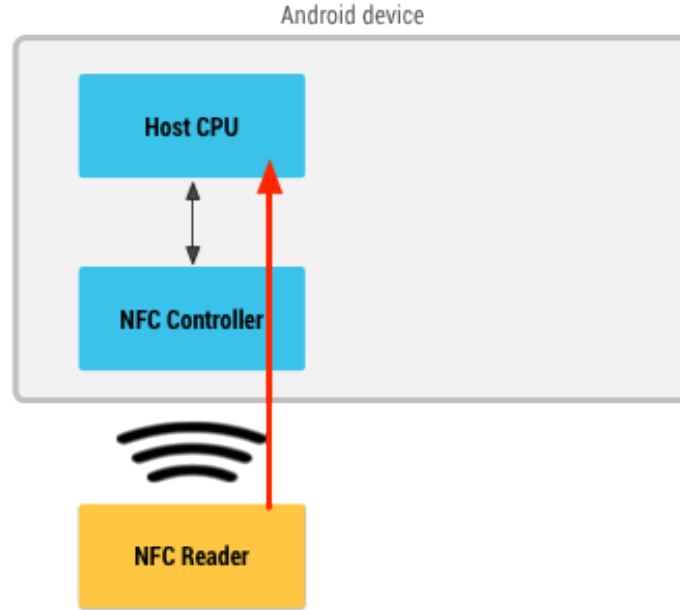


Figure 6: An android device using host-based emulation [12]

### 5.2.3 Protocol

Since our NFC communications may require more data than can be fit within an Application Protocol Data Units (APDUs), we required a protocol which would handle segmenting and recombining the message. APDUs are defined in ISO 7816-4 [15] and are the units used by ISO 14443-4 [16], which describes the transmission protocol used by NFC devices. They are restricted to 256 bytes, including headers.

To work around this, the hardware device connected to the shield maintains a buffer. Under ISO 14443-4, messages can be reliably transferred, so managing this buffer is the main consideration of our protocol. The hardware determines the maximum amount of data that can be stored in one APDU, after filling in some mandatory fields such as the AID, and fills in this value into the length field of the APDU that it sends to the Android device. Then, the Android application responds with the minimum of that much data, and all of the remaining data that it has to send. Once the hardware receives an amount of data less than the potential maximum, it deactivates the connection. In the event that the data from the Android application fits exactly into the last message that would be sent, the protocol still works, as the

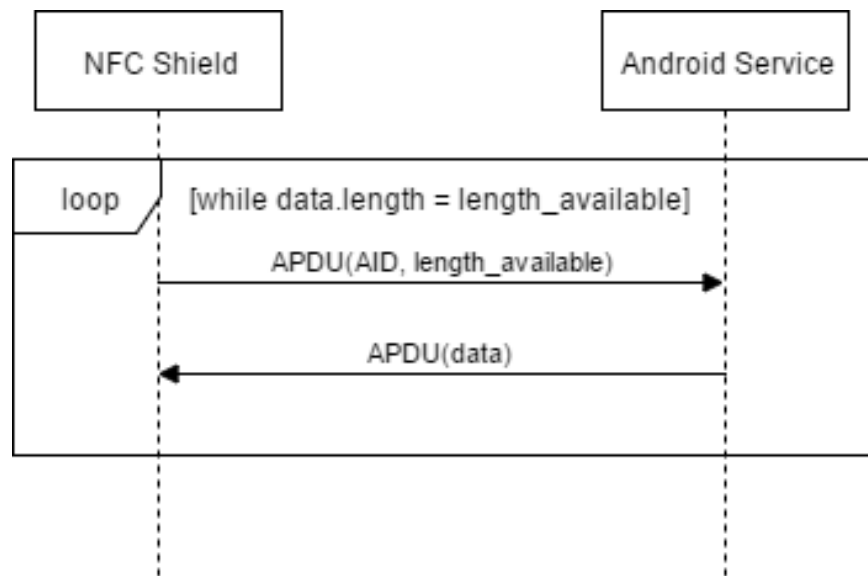


Figure 7: The happy-path message sequence chart for the designed protocol

application will then respond with zero data bytes. This process is visualised as a message sequence chart in figure 7, as well as state machines in figures 8 and 9.

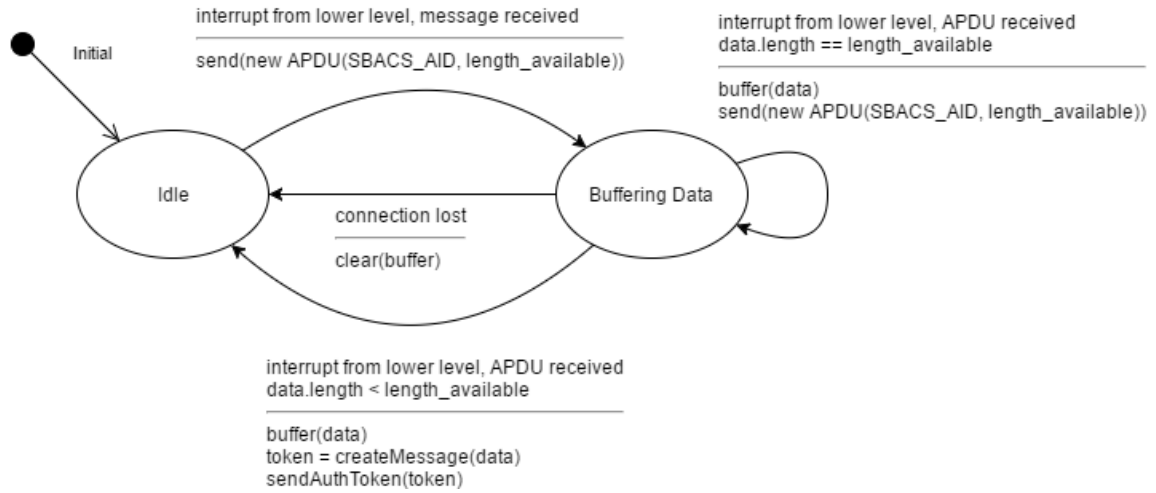


Figure 8: FSM describing the hardware's implementation of the protocol

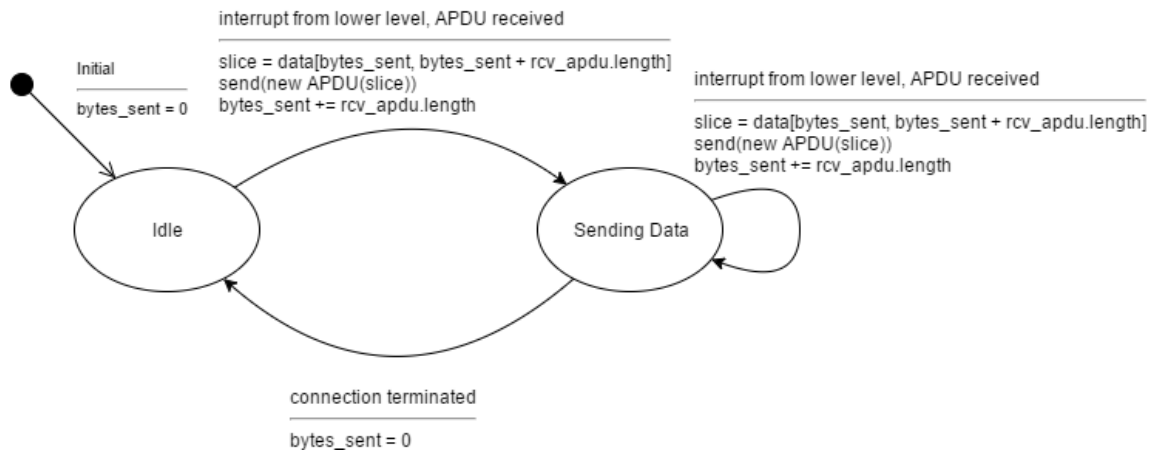


Figure 9: FSM describing the application's implementation of the protocol

## 5.3 Android Application

The Android application's goal was to provide the end users with an easy way of interacting with the SBACS system. Therefore the application was designed to be as simple as possible while still maintaining flexibility when dealing with the cloud server as well as the many potential hardware devices.

### 5.3.1 User Interface

The natural decision for designing the basic workings of the application was to use the Model-View-Controller (MVC) [17] architectural pattern. This pattern separates the underlying data (model) from the display that the user sees (view) as well as the components that the user interacts with (controller). Android provides APIs to support MVC. Model objects can be simple objects, but view objects can subclass the View class or its more specific subclasses, and the controller objects can subclass the Adapter class or its subclasses. More precisely, since the View objects and the Model objects never communicate, this follows the Model-View-Adapter pattern. The difference can be seen in figures 10 and 11.

Android applications themselves should follow the patterns set out by the standards. Activity classes represent the pages that contain the various views and controllers that users can interact with. We decided on a design where the user first encounters a login Activity, which prompts them to either sign up or log in. Once the user has logged in, we provide a hub Activity which leads to the various other Activities in the application. These other Activities show the various data related to the user, such as their authenticators and identities.

Communication between Activities is handled by a class provided by Android called an Intent [18]. Intent objects contain information about the nature of the request to begin the new Activity. In this way, information such as the user's identification number could be sent from the login Activity to the hub Activity, which would allow the application to correctly load the information from that user when displaying the data Activities.

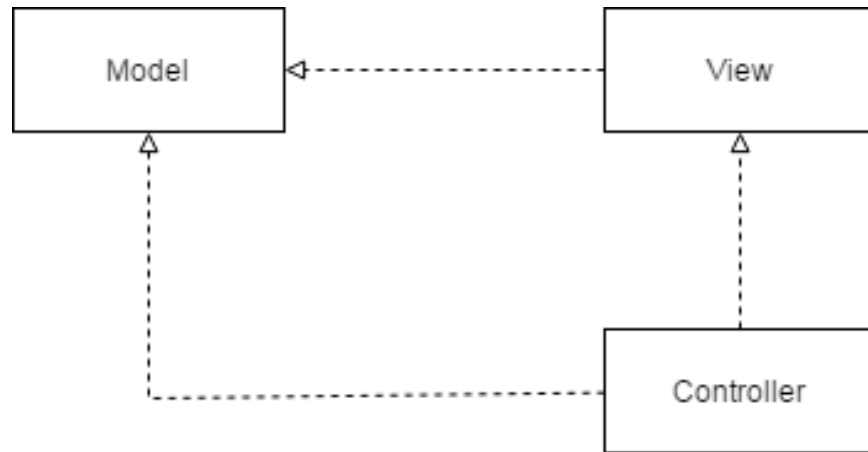


Figure 10: Demonstrative class diagram of the MVC pattern

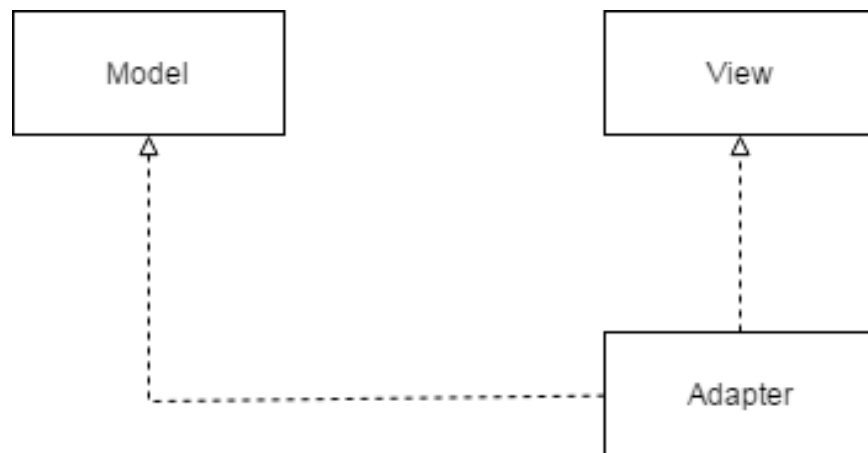


Figure 11: Demonstrative class diagram of the MVA pattern



### 5.3.2 Notifications

The design for the notifications that would inform end users of information such as their newly available registration with a particular lock was based partly on decreasing load on the server. If we had designed the notification system to be handled by the server, we would have needed the server to maintain a large amount of state information. In order to be able to send the notifications, the server would have to remember the IP address of each current user. This would require handshaking between the application and server on creating and terminating a connection, as well as when the application changes IP address due to roaming. Further, the server would have to queue up all of the notification information that a user who does not currently have a session would want. Having the server maintain all of this information was thought to be too great a cost. For this reason, it seemed simpler and more effective to have the application poll the server at a particular access point for new information.

This polling was implemented simply in the application using a service which runs in the background of the Android device. This service regularly hits the server at a particular endpoint designed for handling these notifications. Since many users may be using the application at once, it was important to consider the performance of the endpoint's code. The endpoint returns information valuable to the application for display in the notification. The notifications make use of an Android notification's ability to launch an Activity with an Intent to take the user to the appropriate Activity associated with the notification.

The overall design of the polling sequence can be seen in figure 12. Some simplifications have been made to the diagram to preserve its readability. The main simplification is the Notification that is created by the service. In order to preserve security as well as to improve the user's experience there is only ever one SBACS notification in existence at a time on a given device. This way when a user logs out, another user cannot see their notifications. In addition, the user will not be inundated with a large number of notifications when, for example, they join a company which makes extensive use of SBACS locks. Therefore, when the service receives new notifications, in the opt block of figure 12, it first checks if there is an existing Notification. If there is, instead of creating a new Notification it updates the current

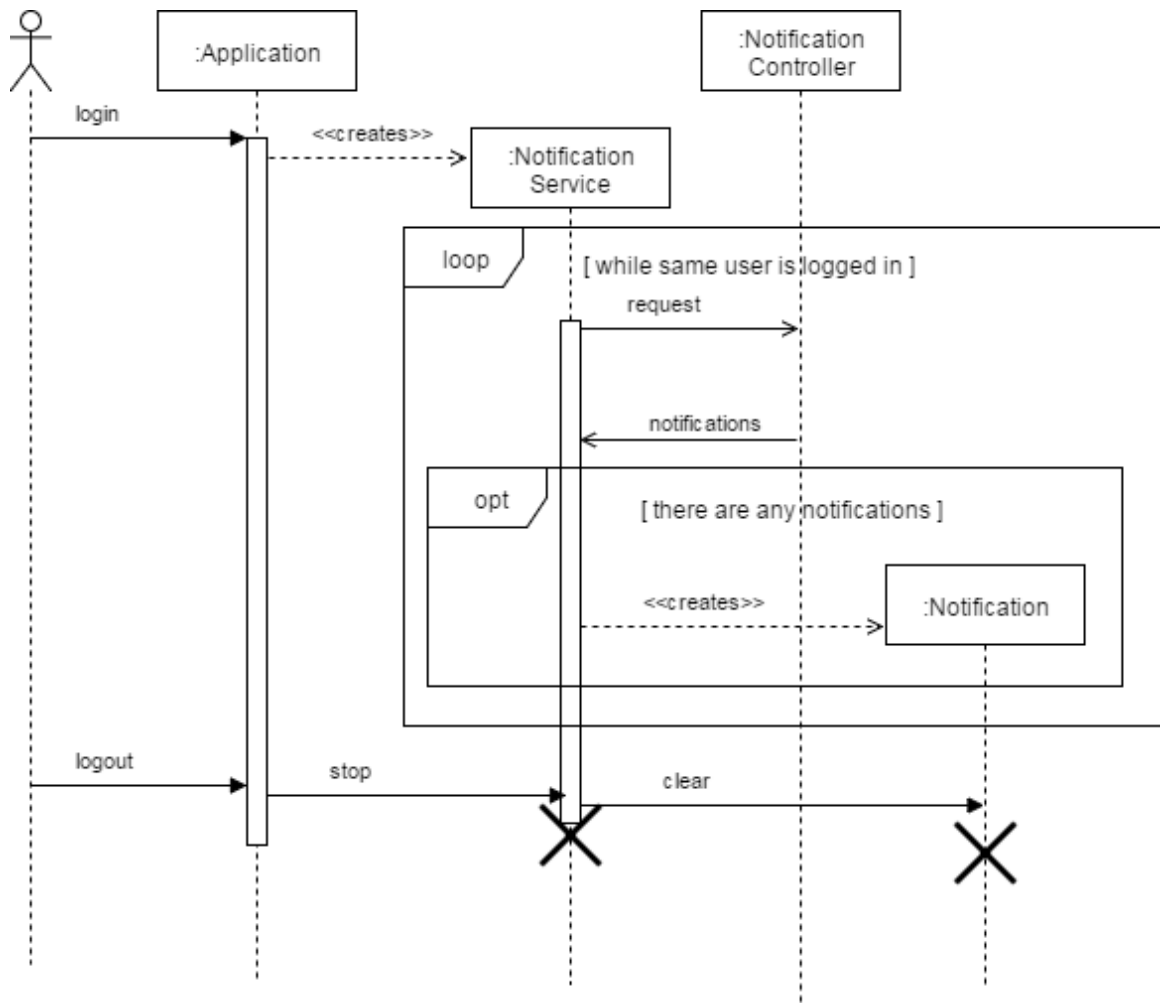


Figure 12: Notification polling sequence diagram

one. Also, Notifications can be cleared by the user visiting the appropriate page of the application that would show the new information, or by the user interacting with the notification through their Android device's operating system.

### 5.3.3 NFC Handler

Recall from section 5.2.2, the NFC communication method that we decided on used host-based card emulation. Android provides an API to accomplish these communications, through the `HostApuService` class [19]. This class provides a framework

for creating a service which runs in the background on the Android device. The service handles setting up and closing NFC communications, while also providing overrideable methods to determine what data should be sent based on the incoming message.

Services also take an Intent object to determine their purpose [18]. This feature allows the login Activity to start the service with the correct key information for a user's NFC authenticator. This way, the data sent by the service could contain the user's secret key value. Since passive NFC communications are difficult to eavesdrop on, this was thought to be a safe method of conveying the secret key to the lock without requiring too much data to be sent over the slow NFC physical links. This passing of information of course was also configured to follow the protocol designed above for NFC communications in section 5.2.3.

## 5.4 Lock Hardware

### 5.4.1 Lock Control Circuit Design

Design of the lock control circuit, the core of the system, began by determining its requirements:

- There should be LEDs to indicate the status of the system, and to notify the user of the results of their access attempt
- There must be an electrically-powered lock, and a means to digitally alter its status
- The core must run a process where all authentication data will be passed, and this process must communicate to the server over the internet
- The core must have USB ports, to support having modules send authentication data to the core

Figure 13 is a block diagram of the first draft of the core layout. Note that the specific electrical elements used in each block are discussed in section 6.2.1.

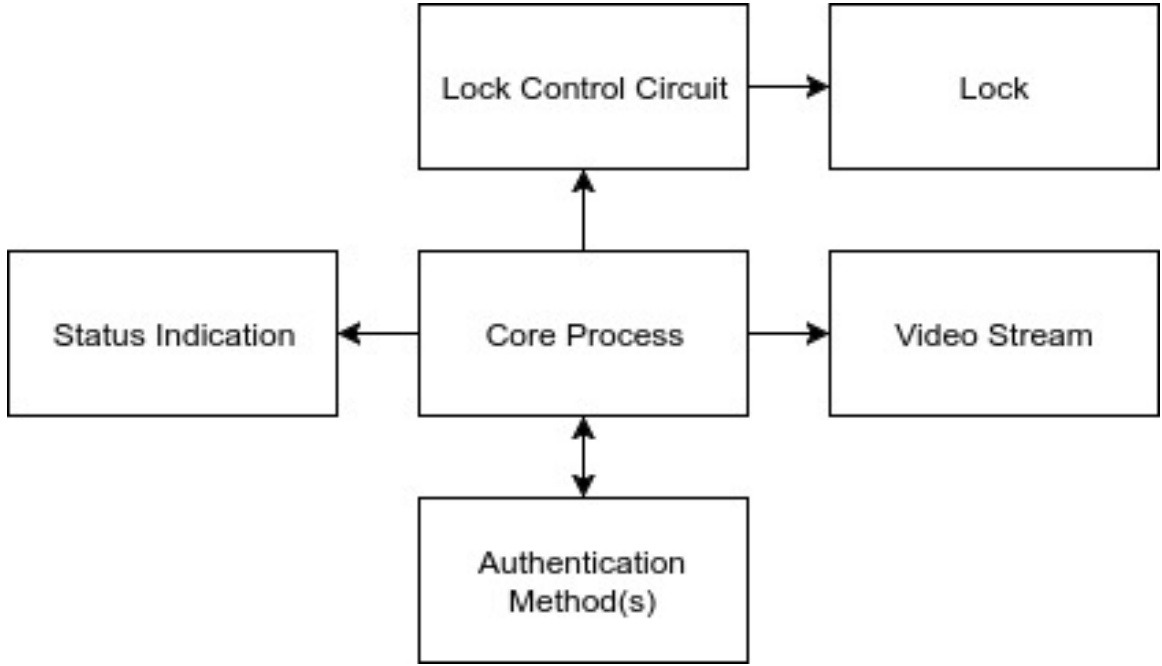


Figure 13: Hardware Block Diagram

### 5.4.2 Lock Control Software Design

As mentioned in the requirements stated in the previous section, the lock control software should manage the status LEDs, the lock, and handle incoming authentication data and server interactions. Since the first three elements listed are hardware-related operations, creating a layer of abstraction between the hardware and the core process would increase the cohesion of the design, and prove simpler to implement. This resulted in the first three possible classes for the lock control software: one for the abstraction of the LEDs, one for the abstraction of the lock control circuit, and one for the abstraction of the hardware interface used for communicating with the authentication modules. Since USB is widely used and simple to implement, USB was chosen as the means to connect the modules.

Continuing on with dividing the various responsibilities of the lock control software into subclasses, two more emerge from the remaining requirements: one class to poll the authentication modules, which will take advantage of the hardware abstraction of the hardware interface, and one class to handle server communication. Figure 13

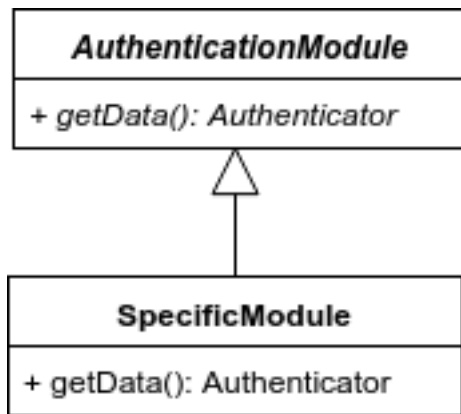


Figure 14: Authentication Modules Basic Classes

is a block diagram of the initial design architecture of the lock software.

### 5.4.3 Authentication Modules

To meet the requirement of having a modular framework that supports multiple authentication methods, modules that perform the gathering of authentication data can be attached to the system, to increase the authentication options. As a result, multiple design patterns emerged immediately in the design of the software for the modules. Interfacing with the system core would be the same across all authentication modules, so only the method used to gather authentication data is unique to each module. Two design patterns can be extracted from this statement: an Adapter pattern, where the Adaptee provides the interfaces necessary for communicating with the core, and a Template method for handling the authentication data. The Adapter can simply implement the Template method, as well as add any other functionality necessary for the means of authentication. Figure 14 is a basic class diagram of how these patterns would be implemented. The **AuthenticationModule** class is the Adaptee, providing the `getData()` template method to Adapters when they provide a specific implementation of the module.

With an Adapter pattern in place to handle the creation of various types of authentication modules, there also needed to be a pattern to handle the general flow of data, which starts with user entry, and ends with transmission to the system core.

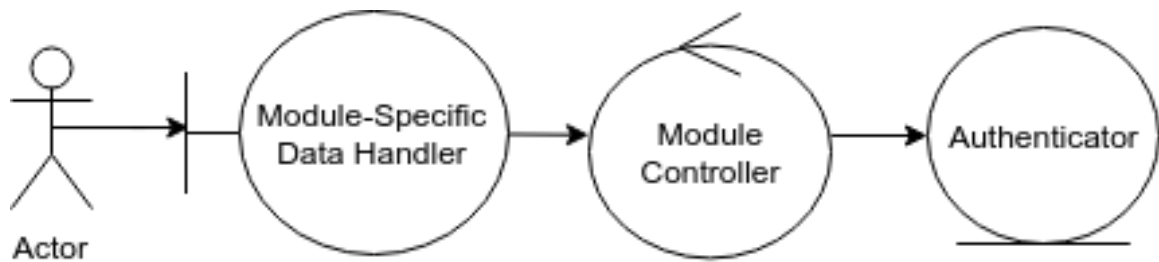


Figure 15: Authentication Modules Entity-Controller-Boundary Diagram

The Entity-Controller-Boundary pattern was a natural fit for this situation, and as shown in Figure 15, the first draft of the authentication module software only required one of each stereotype in the pattern, as the software did not need to be complex. An actor, such as a user attempting to gain access, interacts with the Boundary class of the authentication module, the Module-Specific Data Handler, to send a form of authentication data to the system. The Data Handler hands the data to the Module Controller, which then converts the data into an Entity class, represented as the Authenticator class in Figure 15. Authenticator is an abstraction of the authentication data, which would be sent to the core process.

In the planning stages of the project, it was intended that the authentication modules would communicate with a central single-board microcontroller, such as a Arduino, which would be deemed a "communication board." This communication board would be responsible for receiving data from the authentication modules, and for error detection and error correction, removing that overhead from the central computer. Once all of the authentication data was gathered, the board would send the data over a USB connection to the central computer. However, this design was discarded for multiple reasons:

1. The Arduino, as well as most other microcontrollers in the hobby market, can only communicate with another Arduino over I2C;
2. There is only one pair of pins reserved for I2C on most microcontrollers, meaning there can only be one "slave" for each "master" communication board (refer to pinout here);

3. Connecting all of the authentication modules over USB allowed for far more modularity than the "communication board" would have.

Thus, the design changed, in particular to accommodate the final point. Authentication modules would send authenticators directly to the core system over USB, with no middle board required. This simplified the design considerably, as the behaviour of the authentication modules did not need to change at all, and the responsibilities of the communication board were offloaded to the system core. Overall, this design would require fewer microcontrollers, while still meeting the requirements.

## 5.5 Cloud

### 5.5.1 Amazon Web Services

Amazon Web Services (AWS) provides a platform to host various cloud services, including web servers and data storage options [20]. In this project, Amazon Web Services was chosen to host the web server and the database. This decision was made because the platform is versatile and easy to use, providing a great level of control where needed but also handling the complicated configuration details automatically. AWS also provides these services for free within a trial period of one year, making it an even more attractive choice for a project with limited lifetime. To host the web server, the choice of programming language and technology, as well as the choice of operating system to run the server, are left to the user. Similarly, the database technology is a choice of the user, making AWS a very flexible platform to work with. Amazon Web Services also provides some other very helpful features, such as domain name services, SSL certificate management, and various security configuration details to protect the web server and our data. We chose to use AWS because of the variety of services that were offered that provide everything we needed to effectively host our web server for this project.

### 5.5.2 Representational State Transfer

The Representational State Transfer (REST) architectural style [21] was chosen to be used for our web server. The main principle of REST that we adhered to is the idea of a stateless server in the client-server relationship. This means that the server does not store any session information; enough session information must be passed from the client on each request to identify the necessary information for the request. The benefit of this for the server is that less information is stored on the server, so less time will be spent contacting the database to determine session information. Another feature of REST is the idea of a uniform interface. This helps to keep the system simple by relying on identifiers to specify which resource or service is needed at the time. The path and the query string in the URL are examples of identifiers that specify which endpoint or service is being requested. The web server for this project has this uniform interface as all HTTP requests go to a single Front Controller (Section 5.5.13), which then determines based on the identifiers the appropriate handler of the request.

### 5.5.3 JavaScript Object Notation

In order to send information between the client and the server, a standard format for representing the data is necessary. We have chosen to use JavaScript Object Notation (JSON) to serve this purpose. ”JSON is a lightweight, text-based, language-independent data interchange format” [22]. JSON provides an easy way of transferring data that is flexible and has support from many programming languages, making it a very good choice for our project, where different components will be using different technologies and built in different languages. It is also very lightweight in terms of its grammar, having very few elements that allow for many different types of data, keeping the parsing easy which can help to improve response time. Figure 16 shows the JSON representation of Authenticators for a user. This information is a list of Authenticator entries, each with an Auth\_Id, AuthType, AuthKey, and AuthSalt, where the AuthKey and AuthSalt each have an array of byte data and type of Buffer.



```
1  [
2  {
3    "Auth_Id": 20,
4    "AuthType": "nfc",
5    "AuthKey": {
6      "type": "Buffer",
7      "data": [ ]
8    },
9    "AuthSalt": {
10     "type": "Buffer",
11     "data": [ ]
12   }
13 },
14 {
15   "Auth_Id": 22,
16   "AuthType": "password",
17   "AuthKey": {
18     "type": "Buffer",
19     "data": [ ]
20   },
21   "AuthSalt": {
22     "type": "Buffer",
23     "data": [ ]
24   }
25 }
26 ]
```

Figure 16: JSON Representation of Authenticator data for a user

#### 5.5.4 Node.js

Amazon Web Services allows for web servers written in many languages, leaving the choice of language to the user (as discussed in section 5.5.1). In our case we decided to use Node.js to write our server code. This language was chosen because it is able to run on multiple operating systems and does not require more than one tool for effective development. The ability to run on multiple operating systems is very useful to test our code in different ways, and leaves us with flexibility of which operating system to host the server with. In the early stages of the project, we considered using C# with the .NET framework to build the web server, as some members of the group had experience working with this particular technology in the past for a similar purpose. After some discussion, it was decided that in order to effectively develop the application in C# tools would be needed that are not available on the computers at school, which would limit our ability to work on the server. This is a major reason that we decided on Node.js, since it can be very effectively developed using only simple text editors, then can be executed quickly, without needing to install any build tools. This portability made it very easy to work on the code in the same development environment whether we were at school or at home.

#### 5.5.5 HTML

Hyper Text Markup Language (HTML) is the standard language for creating web pages. HTML describes the structure and content of a web page through its markup. Web Browsers use an HTML document to render the content of a web page [23]. Since this language is the standard, it was a natural choice for our project to have the structure and content of the web interface represented in HTML. An HTML document is returned by the server on an HTTP GET request to the root of the SBACS server URL, and is then rendered by the client's web browser. Figure 17 shows the HTML of the SBACS web site home page, along with the page rendered by a web browser.

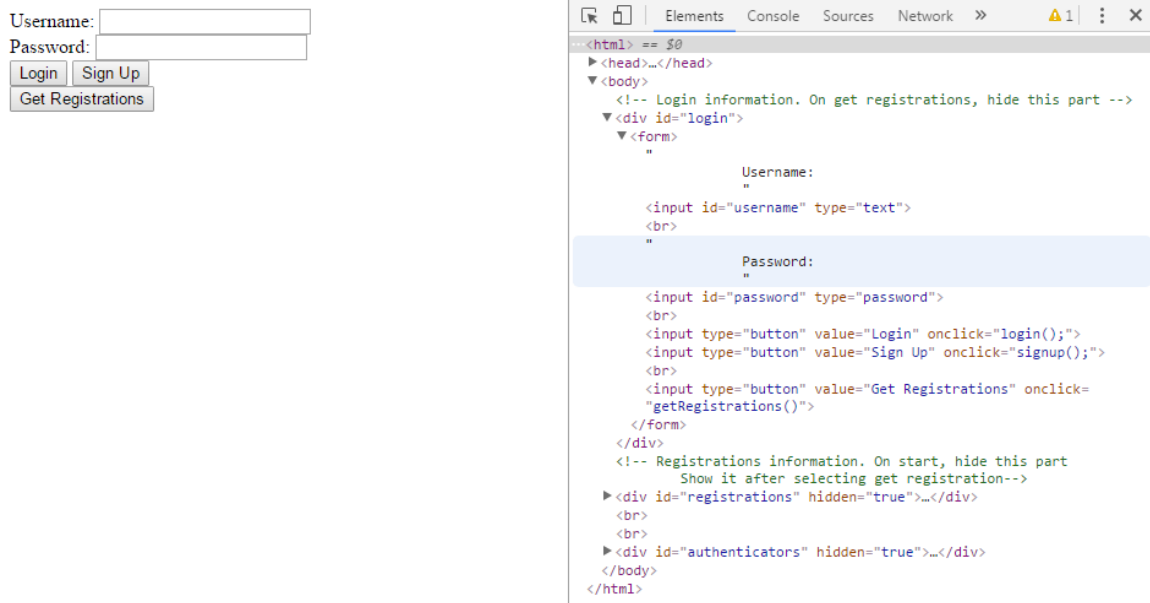


Figure 17: Rendered SBACS Home Web Page (left) and HTML of Web Page (right)

### 5.5.6 JQuery

The structure and content of the web interface are statically defined using HTML (as discussed in section 5.5.5), but this will not be an interactive web page without the use of JavaScript. JavaScript allows for functionality to be added to certain actions performed by the user while interacting with the web page. In this project, we use JavaScript to dynamically modify the content of the web page and retrieve additional information from the server without requiring a page reload on the client side.

JavaScript has varying levels of support across different web browsers. This introduces a problem as different clients will have a different user experience, and some functionality may not work for all clients. JQuery is a library that helps to solve this problem by providing standard functions that are supported by many different web browsers [24]. There is also the added benefit of having functions that provide more functionality than the default JavaScript functions, making many operations easier on the programmer. For example, manipulation of the content and structure of the web page is made much simpler through standard JQuery functions [25]. The support across many browsers and the added functionality make this a very desirable

library to fulfill all of the needs of our web interface.

### 5.5.7 Single Page Application

The web interface is designed to be a Single Page Application (SPA). A Single Page Application is a web application that runs on a single web page, having no HTML page reloads [26]. This means that there is JavaScript performing all requests to the server to retrieve new information, and the JavaScript is also performing the manipulation of the web page to update the content and structure. This style of application was chosen in order to keep the server side processing of HTML to a minimum. Once the page has been returned to the client one time, there will be no more HTML processing on the server, as all subsequent information is requested through JavaScript. This reduces complexity on the server processing, as a static HTML file is always returned, and no actual processing of HTML is needed.

### 5.5.8 MySQL

To store data that is needed by our system, we decided to use a relational database. All members of the group have taken at least one course that has talked about relational databases, so we all had at least some basic understanding of this type of database. MySQL was chosen because it was known to members of the group, making it easy for everyone to make queries to the database whenever it was needed.

### 5.5.9 Relational Database Normalization

Database Normalization is used to efficiently organize tables in a database to eliminate redundant data and to maintain all information that exists in the data [27]. The end goal of normalization is to reduce the amount of data that is stored, without removing necessary information. There are various normal forms to measure the amount of normalization that has been used. The rules to meet first, second, and third normal form will be shown in this section, as our database tables meet these forms. Figure 18 shows the tables of our database and their relationships.

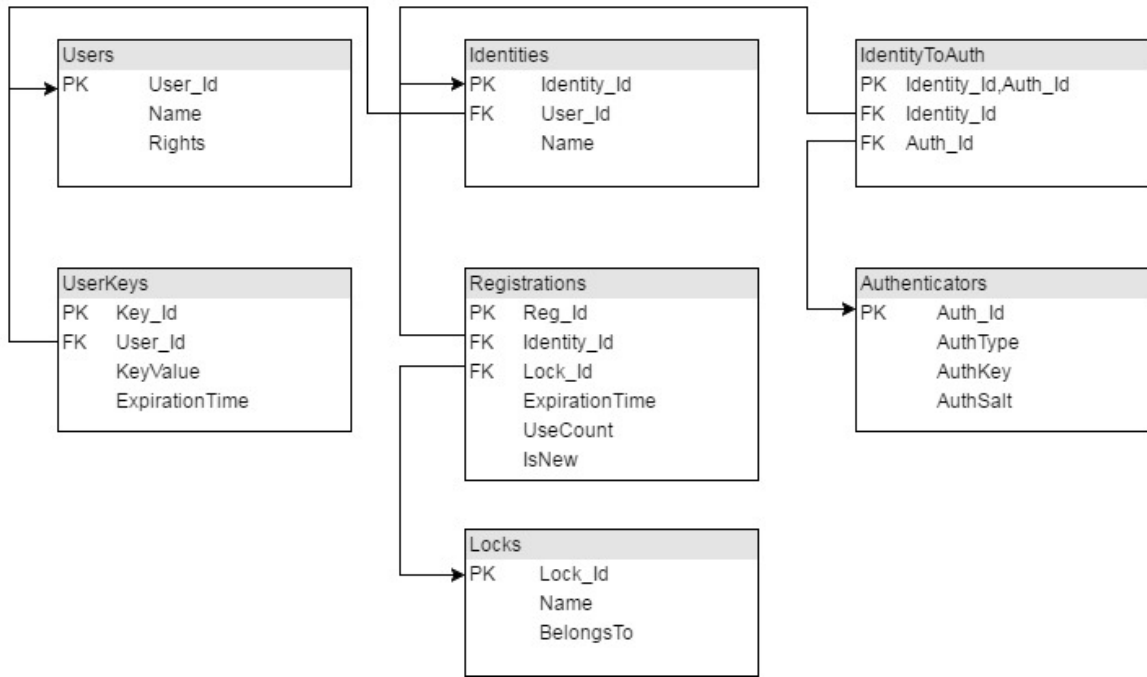


Figure 18: Database Tables

To meet third normal form, first and second normal form must also be met. First normal form has three rules: data items must be defined and grouped in tables, there must be no repeating groups of data, and there must be a primary key for each table [28]. In our database we have many tables that are used to group data; one example is the Users table that groups data items such as User.Id, Name, and Rights. There are no repeating groups of data in any of the tables and each table has a primary key.

Second normal form requires that no partial dependencies exist [29]. This means that there cannot be data items that are dependent on a field that is not the primary key in a table. In our tables, we have ensured that no partial dependencies exist, so we meet second normal form. Third normal form requires that no transitive dependencies exist in a table, meaning that a data item does not depend on the primary key of the table [30]. Again, in our tables there are no transitive dependencies so we meet third normal form.

### 5.5.10 Authentication for Server API

Many requests to the server allow users to read, modify, and delete data, so we needed a way to ensure that users were identified and authenticated to allow certain requests to be performed. We used Keyed-Hash Message Authentication Codes (HMAC) to accomplish this goal. The user is able to login using their username and password, and upon successful login, they are provided with a key and user id. The key is then used to hash the body of subsequent messages. The client must also send the user id to identify who is trying to make the request. When the server receives the request, it will hash the body of the message as well using the key that it has stored for that user. If the hashed body that is provided is the same as what the server gets from hashing the body, then this means that the user is authenticated. The provided user id is used to determine which key the server will use to hash the message, and is also used to determine whether or not the user is authorized to make the request they are attempting to make.

### 5.5.11 Storing Authenticator Data Securely

In order to protect user passwords from attacks, the database must not store the passwords in plain text. If the passwords are in plain text, an attacker could simply read the data and know the users password. To prevent this problem, we use salting, which allows us to store a hashed version of the data, along with a salt that is used to generate the hashed value [31]. To compare a given password by the user to the value that is stored, the server must retrieve the salt and use it to hash the given password. The hashed value in the database should then match the hashed given password, meaning that the user has provided the same password. With this technique, the data is never stored in plain text so it is less vulnerable to many types of attacks.

### 5.5.12 Sending Data Securely Over the Network

The Hypertext Transfer Protocol (HTTP) is the standard protocol used to send requests on the internet [32]. In many situations, these requests need to contain sensitive information, such as passwords or personal information about the user. Over

this HTTP connection, this data cannot be sent securely, as there are security vulnerabilities in HTTP. In order to send this information securely, HTTPS is the common solution. In order to ensure the information is sent securely, there is a layer of authentication and encryption between the client and server for every HTTPS request that is made [33]. This ensures that only the sender and intended recipient are able to view and modify the contents of the message. In our project we have ensured the use of HTTPS wherever it is necessary to protect our sensitive information.

### 5.5.13 Design Patterns

In order to handle incoming requests to the server, we use a Front Controller pattern. In this pattern, all request to the server are handled by a single controller, the Front Controller, and the requests are sent to the appropriate controller to be handled [34]. As can be seen in Figure 19, the requests will all go to the FrontController. This controller will determine, based on the path and method of the request, which controller should be called to complete the request. The request will then be processed and a correct response will be generated by the controller that is called. For example, a request to login would be sent to the LoginController, whereas a request to access a lock would go to the AccessController.

The Facade pattern [35] is used to initially sign up a user for SBACS. There is a single request to the server to sign up, with a given username and password. This request will be processed by the Front Controller and then sent to the SignupController. Figure 20 shows the class diagram of how the SignupController interacts with multiple other controllers. The sequence of operations that are called can be seen in the sequence diagram in Figure 21. The SignupController will call the UserController to create a new User with the given username, then will call the IdentityController to create an Identity for the new User, and finally will call the AuthenticatorController to create an Authenticator that is a password with the given password for the User.

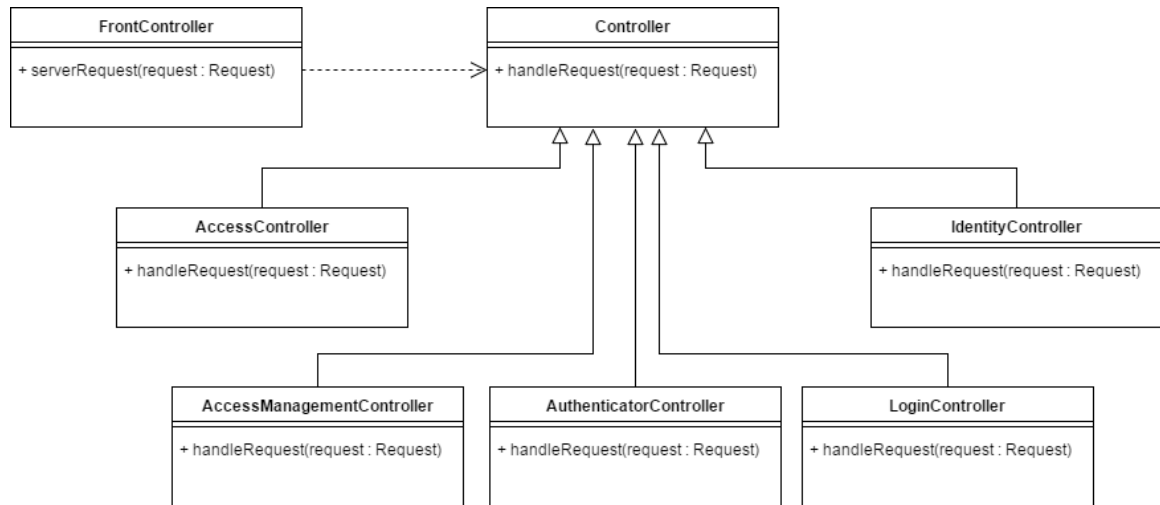


Figure 19: Front Controller Class Diagram

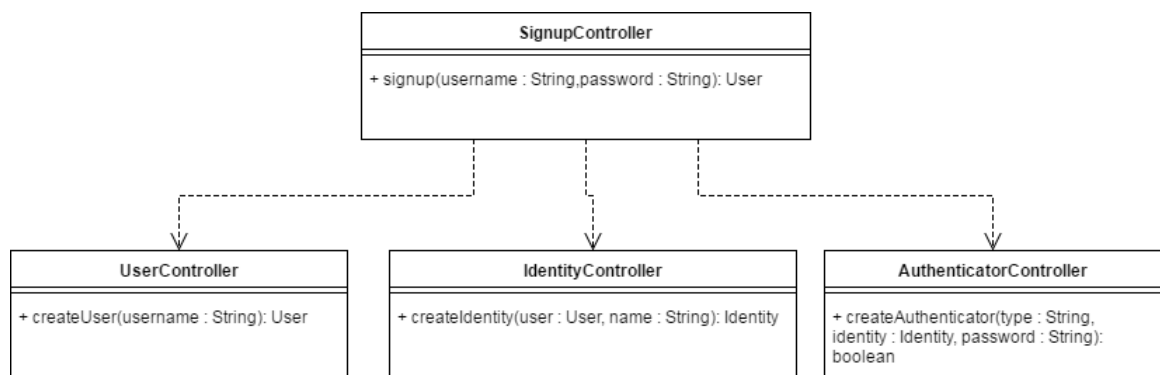


Figure 20: Facade Class Diagram



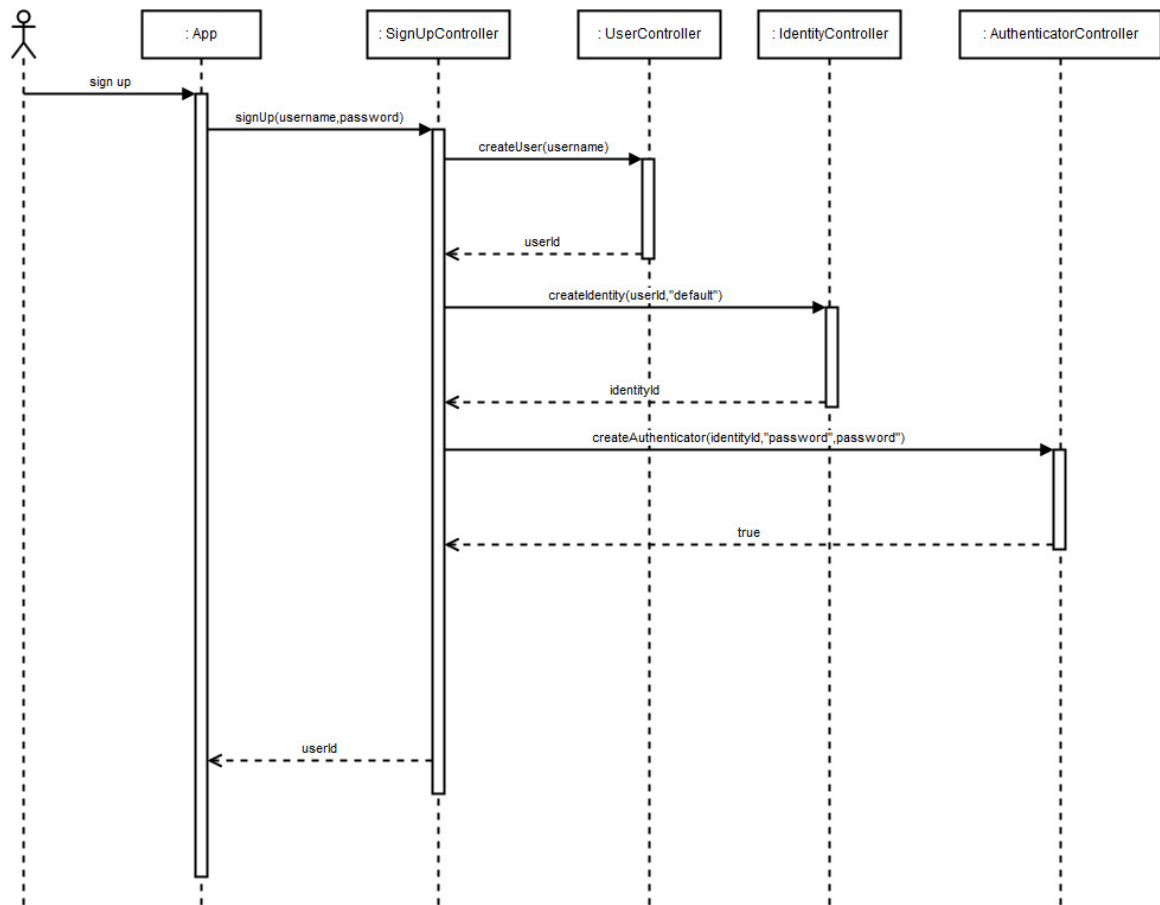


Figure 21: Facade Sequence Diagram

## **5.6 Lock Demonstration**

This chapter will be about the design and construction of the demo unit used at the poster fair

# Chapter 6

## System Implementation

This chapter describes the steps taken to implement the SBACS. The tools used along with the design patterns implemented are described in detail, along with any design decisions that had to be made or changed when the need became apparent. This chapter also outlines all of the protocols used to facilitate communication between the various devices that make up SBACS.

### 6.1 Android Application Development

The Android application was developed using Android Studio [36] exclusively, and is primarily composed of Java classes, XML documents, and gradle build files. Android studio was selected since it seemed to be the natural tool for writing an Android application, and didn't have any negatives with respect to our requirements. Gradle [37] was chosen as the build tool as it is naturally integrated with Android studio.

#### 6.1.1 Server Interfacing

Connections to the server were managed through the android Volley API. Volley provides a simple interface over which HTTP and HTTPS messages can be sent [38] [39]. Standard operation of Volley follows a simple procedure: first a RequestQueue is set up, and then various Requests are enqueued. These requests are then dequeued by

the RequestQueue's thread, which then creates an HTTP/HTTPS connection. The response that comes back over the connection is handled by another thread.

The code for handling these responses is put in a class that extends a `Response.Listener` of a given type. The `Response.Listener` class provides methods to handle HTTP responses. Since these classes have just a few relatively simple methods, anonymous classes were used in all cases. Further, we decided that handling the parsing should be done as safely as possible, so all responses were first parsed simply as `Strings`. Then, the response was attempted to be parsed as a JSON object of the type expected from the server. If that parsing failed, the message was instead considered an error, and handled from there. A high level example is shown in figure 22 in the particular case of logging in to the application. Note that in this figure, the `getBody` call that the `StringRequest` performs is actually asynchronous. This shows how much the operations in Volley are performed asynchronously on the fly, and if these were to take too long, the message would be sent by the RequestQueue before the `StringRequest` finished. In this case, this was not particularly important, since the only operation performed was converting a JSON object containing a few bytes to a byte array, but had to be considered in other cases.

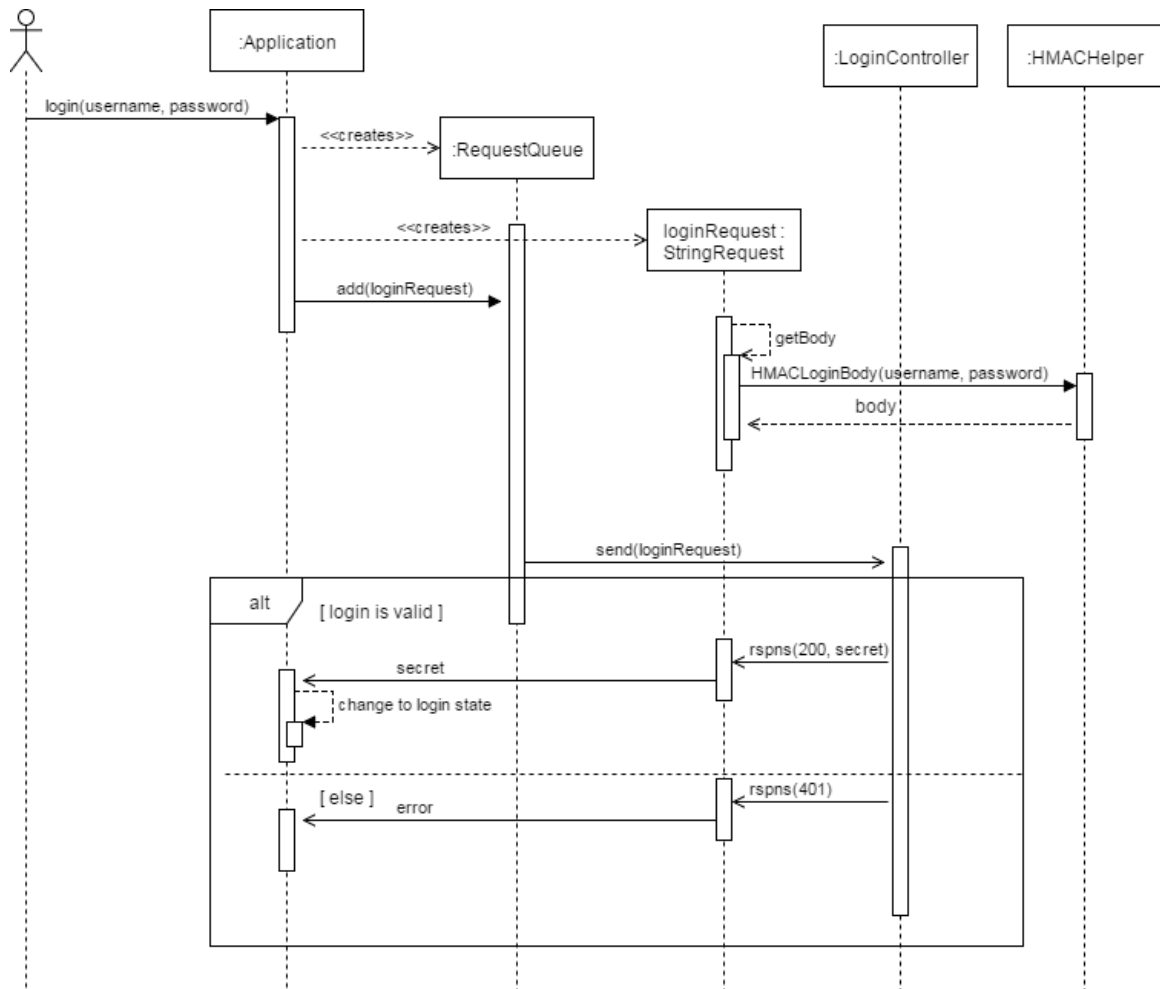


Figure 22: Login sequence diagram demonstrating Volley

### 6.1.2 HMAC

Since the server used HMAC to handle security issues, the application needed to make frequent use of the headers that the server expected to handle authentication. For this reason, a helper class called `HMACHelper`, was created. This class provided methods that were commonly used by all requests about data particular to the current user. Most notably, `HMACHelper` provided a method which calculated the secret using the same algorithm that the server would use. To reiterate how HMAC functions, the body of the message is hashed using a private key shared by the server with the application. When the application sends data that requires authentication, the server checks that the secret value provided by the application matches what it calculates using the body of the message as well as the private key associated with the user. These private keys are generated by the server when the user logs in to the application, and expire over time, creating the notion of a session.

The precise algorithm used for the hashing function matches the decision made for the server. This is necessary, since otherwise the secret values would not match between the application and the server. The application relies on a version of the Password-Based Key Derivation Function algorithm using SHA256 [40] to be available on the Android device. The only workarounds for this added requirement would have been to implement the algorithm (specified in RFC 8018 [41] with test vectors in RFC 6070 [42]) ourselves, or by making use of a third party implementation. However writing it ourselves is heavily discouraged as any minor error could result in a security breach, and we did not want to have to worry about any intellectual property issues of using a third party library. In addition, the number of iterations and the length of the resulting key had to be synchronised between the server and the application to ensure the values match.

A simplified demonstration of this process is shown in figure 23. This figure shows what the application does when a user requests the information related to all the locks that they have a registration for. Several steps, such as the `Volley RequestQueue`, have been abstracted out for the purpose of simplifying the message of the diagram. For more details about volley, see section 6.1.1. For more information on how the server handles HMAC, see section 5.5.10.

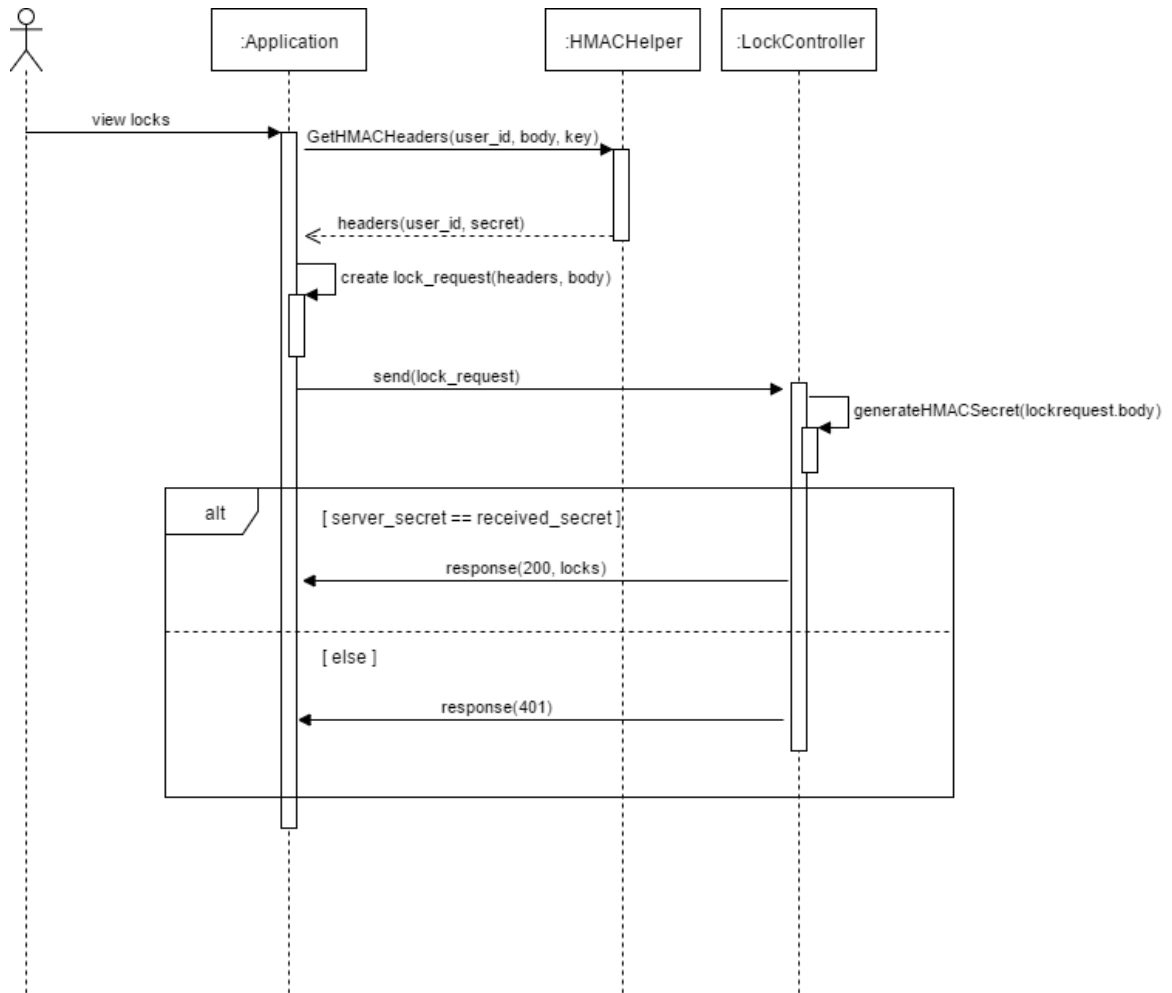


Figure 23: Sequence diagram of the application requesting sample data after login in

Sometime after this was implemented, an update to the Android operating system resulted in the algorithm used for key derivation to no longer be supported. Since this occurred at a time near to a project deliverable, we felt that the fastest way to correct the problem was to change the algorithm used to rely on SHA1 instead, and then later to use SHA256 again but with a different algorithm. This is further explained and explored in section 7.3.2.

### 6.1.3 Entity Representation

The application needed to be able to display data to the user that came from the server and database. These data are represented in the MVC design of the application. Since the database is relational, the model classes that represent the constructs stored in the database, such as identities, authenticators, locks, and registrations, were all passive entity classes whose only real role was to contain data.

Each kind of data that was of interest to the user was given its own Activity, which is similar to the notion of a page in a web application. These Activities were all primarily composed of a ListView object, which displays a list of data. This list was configured with an Adapter class which extends the general ArrayAdapter<T> class. These adapters were used to convert the model classes into a view. The adapter classes were composed of an XML file which described the layout of the view, as well as a Java class which provided the methods by which the data could be used to fill in the layout.

## 6.2 Hardware

The hardware portion of the project consisted of three components: the lock control circuit, the lock control software, and the authentication modules.

### 6.2.1 Lock Control Circuit Implementation

Selecting the device to run the core process was the first step in implementing the lock control circuit. A single-board microcontroller was the first option considered,



as it had the potential to be lower in cost than a single-board computer, given that it would fulfil all of the requirements for the core circuit.

Since driving the LEDs and the electrical lock only requires digital output, no analog pins would be necessary. This would lower the cost of the hardware, as digital-only boards tend to be cheaper than analog-capable boards. While the single-board microcontrollers considered had optional boards which could add Wifi or Ethernet capabilities, they would not have been a sufficient solution to run the core process, as they were lacking a sufficient number of USB ports, and the overhead for implementing the core would have been too high. Because the microcontrollers do not run an operating system, essential primitive operations such as file opening, checking device attributes, and reading/writing to devices would not be available. For these reasons, a single-board microcontroller was not selected to run the core process for the lock control circuit.

A Raspberry Pi was ultimately selected as the computer to run the core process. The Pi 3 Model B has four USB ports, built-in Wifi capability, runs Linux, and has forty pins for general-purpose IO (GPIO). These hardware features made the Raspberry Pi the best out-of-the-box solution to run the core process. The GPIO pins provided the digital outputs for driving the status LEDs and the lock. Using Linux

## 6.2.2 Lock Control Circuit

The next design problem to consider was the means to control the status of the electric lock. The simplest locks available, solenoid locks and electric strike locks, do not include any control mechanisms. They are either powered on, to disengage the lock, or powered off and locked. Therefore, it was necessary to implement a circuit to control the power to the lock, with the switching being driven by one of the Raspberry Pi's GPIO pins. There were two options considered for this:

1. Transistor/diode circuit

This circuit would use a TIP120 Darlington transistor, coupled with a 1N4004 flyback diode, to drive the lock. This circuit is demonstrated in figure X.

Todo: Make the figure of the transistor/diode circuit in Fritzing

The major issue with this circuit is that a significant amount of power would be dissipated by the transistor. The power law for a single voltage drop is  $P = IV = I^2R$ . A transistor can be treated as two voltage drops, one from base to emitter ( $V_{BE}$ ), and another from collector to emitter ( $V_{CE}$ ), resulting in the power dissipated by a transistor being given by:

$$P = V_{BE}I_B + V_{CE}I_C \quad [43]$$

Since  $I_B \ll I_C$  when the lock circuit is active, the  $V_{BE}I_B$  term is negligible in this case, so the power dissipated by the transistor is given by:

$$P = V_{CE}I_C$$

Since the transistor is in the "off" state when there is no voltage applied to the base terminal, no current may flow, so the power dissipated by the transistor when "off" is zero. When a voltage is applied to the base, the transistor is brought into the "saturation" state, which allows current to flow freely from collector to emitter. When this happens, the solenoid is powered on, and quickly reaches a state where it behaves like a wire, or close-circuit. This means that the change in current through the solenoid,  $\frac{di}{dt}$ , is zero. Since the voltage drop across a solenoid is given by  $V = -L\frac{di}{dt}$  [44], there will then be no decrease in voltage from the solenoid power source to the transistor. Since the solenoid lock used for the proof-of-concept system draws 650 mA at 12V, the power dissipated by the transistor would be:

$$P = 12\text{ V} \times 650\text{ mA}$$

$$P = 7.8\text{ W}$$

This power dissipation is quite significant in comparison to, for example, the resistors in the LED circuit, which at most will dissipate about 50 mW. (See Appendix A.) A heat dissipation mechanism would be necessary to ensure that

the system does not heat up dangerously while in operation, which may not be practical in a real-life scenario. Secure systems should be completely enclosed. Adding a fan would introduce a point of physical access to the system, increasing the risk that it could be physically compromised.

Insert some more math and talk about the flyback diode to deal with the voltage spike - take the lock to a DOE lab at some point and measure the voltage spike when 12V DC is applied, to see what the minimum RB breakdown voltage should be

## 2. Relay circuit

Internally, a relay is very similar to the transistor/diode circuit, with a mechanical switch added. The relay itself has three inputs, and three outputs. The inputs are a positive voltage ( $V_{CC}$ ), ground (GND), and an input signal (IN). The outputs are a normally-closed terminal (NC), a common terminal (COM), and a normally-open terminal (NO). The circuit diagram of a relay is shown in Figure 24. On the left side are the three input terminals. The IN terminal is connected to a transistor (Q1 on the diagram), which determines whether an internal solenoid (K1 on the diagram) is powered or unpowered. The solenoid generates a magnetic field when powered, causing the magnetic switch next to it to flip. When the solenoid is unpowered, the switch completes the circuit connected to the NC terminal, allowing current to flow through the COM and NC terminals. When the IN signal is high and the switch is flipped, the NC terminal is disconnected from the circuit, while the NO terminal takes its place. Current then flows through the COM and NO terminals when IN is high.

Unlike the transistor in the transistor/diode circuit, the transistor inside the relay does not require any heat dissipation. The relay's  $V_{CC}$  is provided by the 5V GPIO pin on the Raspberry Pi, as  $V_{CC}$  should be 5 V, according to the datasheet for the relay [46]. The maximum current that can be drawn from this pin, when there are no other GPIO pins drawing current, is 400 mA [47]. Therefore, the maximum power dissipated by transistor K1 is:

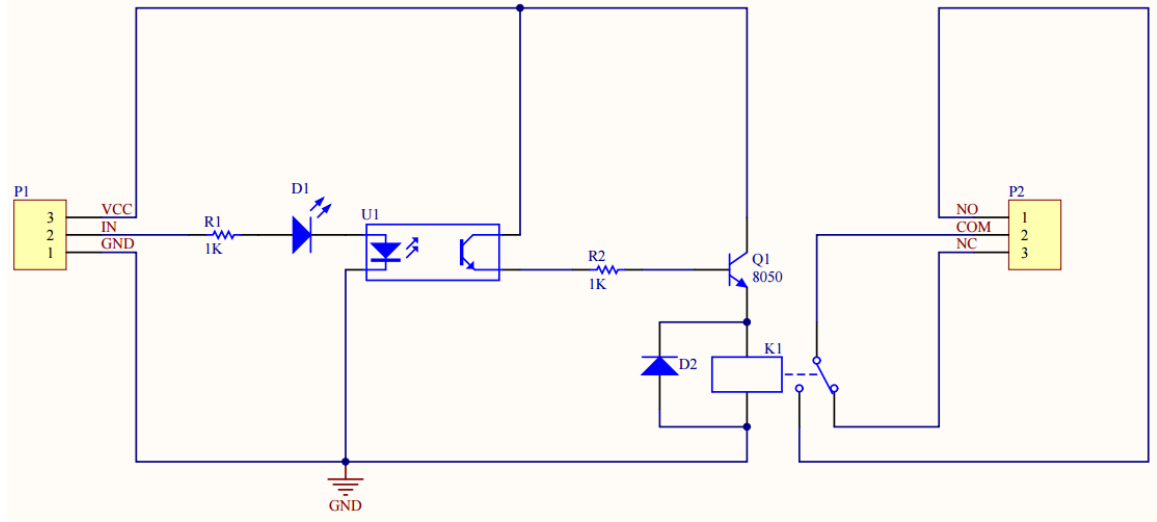


Figure 24: Relay Circuit Diagram [45]

$$P_{max} = 5\text{ V} \times 400\text{ mA}$$

$$P_{max} = 2\text{ W}$$

Since there are three GPIO pins being used to power LEDs, the minimum current drawn from the 5V pin will be  $400\text{ mA} - 3 \times 16\text{ mA} = 352\text{ mA}$ . This gives a minimum power of  $P_{min} = 1.76\text{ W}$ .

The final layout for the lock control circuit is demonstrated in figure 25.

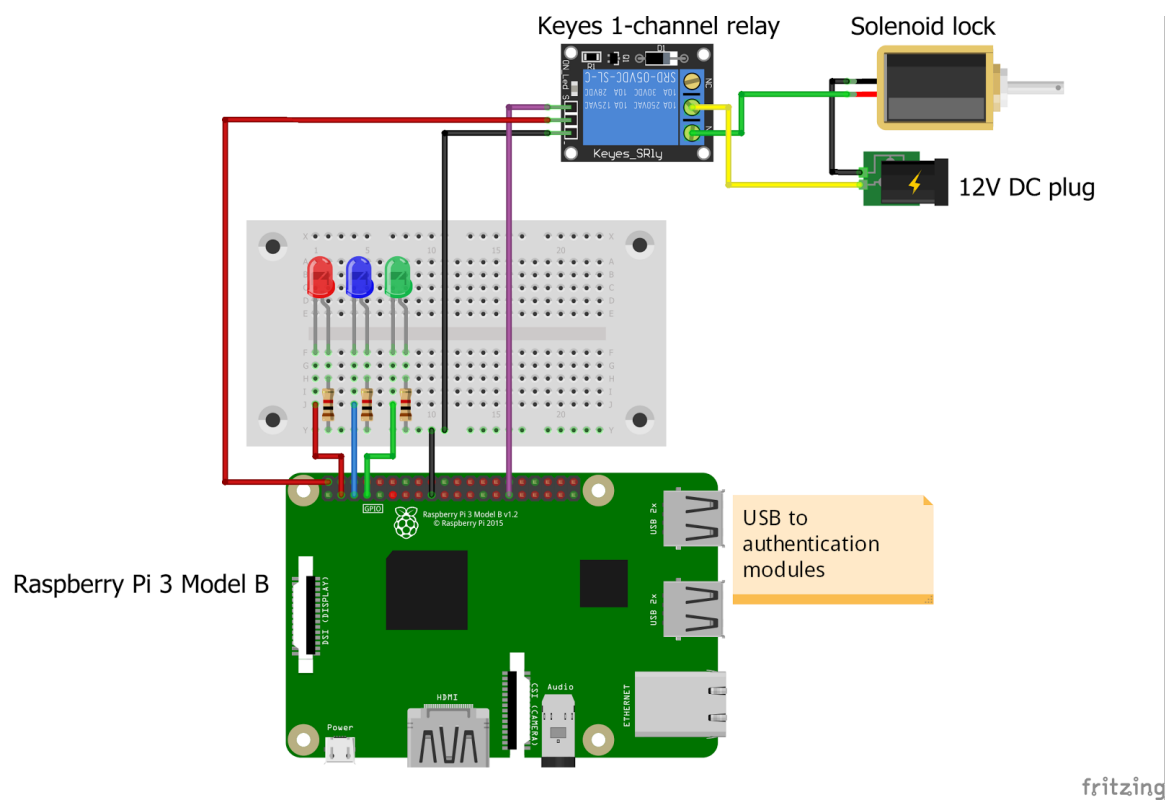


Figure 25: Lock Control Circuit

### 6.2.3 Lock Control Software

The lock control software was written in C++. C++ was selected primarily because the software for the authentication modules could only be written in C++, and using the same language as the modules would allow the core process to share classes with the modules. The second major reason for selecting C++ was that it was an object-oriented language, so the design patterns mentioned in section 5.4.2 could be implemented as described.

### 6.2.4 Authentication Module Implementations

The authentication modules in this project were powered by Arduino IDE-compatible microcontrollers. The

#### NFC Module

The module that was the primary focus of this project's proof-of-concept was the NFC module. The module uses a Adafruit PN532 NFC shield to read NFC data from an Android phone. The PN532 is driven by a Adafruit Feather 32u4 single-board microcontroller. The Feather was selected because of it uses 3V logic, matching the PN532's 3V logic. The Arduino would have required a logic level shifter to shift its 5V logic down to 3V. The wiring of the NFC module hardware is shown in Figure 26.

The PN532 shield is run in Serial Peripheral Interface (SPI) mode by wiring SEL0 "off" and SEL1 "on". This interface uses the SCLK, MOSI, MISO, SSEL pins on the PN532 shield

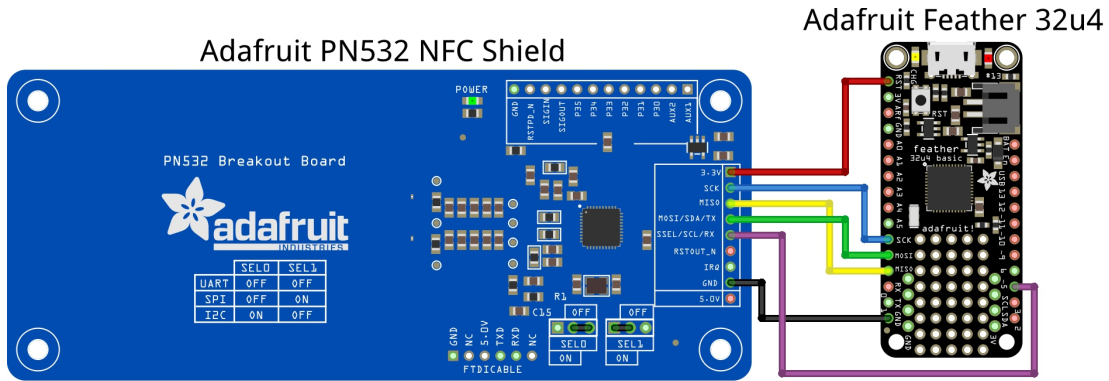


Figure 26: NFC Module Wiring Diagram

## PIN Module

### 6.2.5 Serial Communication Protocol

In order to distinguish actual communication data from noise on the serial line, a protocol was necessary to allow for error-free communication between the authentication modules and the Raspberry Pi. The protocol is a simple set of rules for formatting raw bytes into data packets, largely inspired by the Trivial File Transfer Protocol (TFTP), specified in RFC 1350 [48].

When a user interacts with an authentication module, the data they send is buffered in the module's RAM. Once an interaction between the user and the module is complete, the module initiates a data transfer with the Raspberry Pi. The authentication module divides its buffered data into 254-byte blocks, and sends them in sequence, as the Pi acknowledges them in sequence. The reasons for this design will be outlined in the remainder of this subsection.

Similarly to TFTP, the Serial Communication protocol supports five types of packets:

1. Request data transfer (REQUEST)
2. Acknowledgment (ACK)
3. Data (DATA)

0	1	2	3	4	5
FLAG	REQUEST		BLOCK		FLAG
0x7E	0x00 0x01				0x7E

Figure 27: Serial REQUEST packet format

## 4. Module set-up (SETUP)

## 5. Error (ERROR)

Packets start and end with a single byte known as the packet flag. The packet flag could have been any arbitrary byte, so 0x7E was selected. 0x7E is outside of the range of ASCII, so it would not commonly appear in the data. Following the starting packet flag is a Serial Communication Protocol header, which consists of two two-byte values: the packet opcode, and a block number. The opcode field defines which of the five listed types is the type of the packet, while the block number field's use varies depending on the packet type. All packets end with the packet flag.

REQUEST packets are sent by authentication modules to the Raspberry Pi, to notify the Pi that a full authentication token has been buffered by the module, and is ready to send. The format of a REQUEST packet is shown in Figure 27. For REQUEST packets, the block number field denotes the number of DATA packets that the module will send. This allows the Pi to allocate a data buffer to match the size of the authentication token, instead of an arbitrarily large buffer, which is wasteful for smaller modules such as the PIN module.

The Raspberry Pi acknowledges REQUEST and DATA packets using ACK packets. Like REQUEST packets, ACK packets are 6-byte packets, starting with the packet flag, followed by the opcode. Unlike REQUEST packets, bytes 3 and 4 of an ACK packet denote the block number that is being acknowledged by the Pi. This ensures that the Pi correctly buffers the data in sequence. Figure 28 demonstrates the format of ACK packets.

An authentication module sends the token data to the Raspberry Pi using DATA packets. DATA packets are the only packets of variable length, with the DATA field ranging from 1 byte to 255 bytes long. Like ACK packets, the block number field



0	1	2	3	4	5
FLAG	ACK		BLOCK		FLAG
0x7E	0x00 0x02				0x7E

Figure 28: Serial ACK packet format

0	1	2	3	4	5
FLAG	ACK		BLOCK		DATA
0x7E	0x00 0x02				1 to 255 bytes
					0x7E

Figure 29: Serial DATA packet format

denotes the block number of the data. The format of DATA packets is depicted Figure 29, but warrants further explanation.

As mentioned earlier in this section, the authentication module divides its buffer into 254-byte blocks, but the DATA packets can contain up to 255 bytes. This difference is due to the need to encode the data bytes before they are sent over USB. If the packet flag (0x7E) occurs in the data, then the packet will be cut short when it is received by the Raspberry Pi. To remedy this, the data block is encoded using the Consistent Overhead Byte Stuffing (COBS) algorithm.

COBS eliminates occurrences of the packet flag in the data by transforming them into pointers. Appended to the start of the data is a byte, whose value denotes the index of the next occurrence of the packet flag, relative to that byte. If the next instance is not the terminal byte, then it will be transformed into a relative index of the next occurrence of the packet flag. This process of replacing the packet flag with pointers is repeated until the terminal byte. Finally, the data is terminated with the packet flag. Table 1 shows a few sample inputs drawn from actual data used to test the SBACS hardware, encoded using COBS.

Input Type	In Bytes	Out Bytes
Module ID ""nfc""	6E 66 63 00	04 6E 66 63 00 7E
PIN data	30 34 28 31	04 30 34 28 31 7E
NFC data block	00 01 ... 7D 7E 7F ... FD	7F 00 01 ... 7D 80 7F ... FD 7E

Table 1: COBS encoding inputs and outputs for various data

This algorithm was chosen for its consistent overhead. COBS inserts one additional byte for every 254 bytes in a data block, requiring the data to be divided into 254-byte sections if it is larger than that. Therefore, to reduce the number of computations required to chunk the data for COBS and then for DATA packets, the DATA packet buffer size was chosen as 255 bytes to match COBS. This way, data that has been chunked for processing in COBS can be immediately inserted into a packet without further transformations.

## 6.3 Cloud Services

The server application was developed using Notepad++, a free source code editor with support for multiple languages [49]. This was used instead of an IDE to maintain the same development environment at school and outside of school when working on this project. Node.js does not require special build tools, so it is very easy to simply write the code in a relatively basic editor, and then run it from the command line to test it. To manage dependencies of libraries for our server code we used NPM, a package manager for Node.js. NPM is the dependency management tool that is bundled with Node.js, so it was a natural choice to use for our project [50].

### 6.3.1 Learning to Use Amazon Web Services

Amazon Web Services provides all the hosting that we needed for this project, so it was a natural choice for us to use (Section 5.5.1). When we started, we followed some basic tutorials to get a sample web application running, that would return a static HTML page on all HTTP requests. The first major challenge came from attempting to modify this sample application. First, we had to find the code of the sample application, as it was not given in any location that we thought to look on AWS. Eventually we found the code and modified it, then building and testing it locally to ensure that the code was correct. Then we had to deploy this new code, which proved to be harder than expected. The process is not complicated once it is known, but the wording was confusing in the instructions, so it took a few tries to get it working.

Once we had this process figured out, we were able to easily write our own code and the process of updating our hosted server was easy.

The next challenge in learning AWS came from the database. Since we needed a persistent data storage, and had decided on a relational database, we decided to set up our database using AWS as well, which allowed us to keep all hosted services in one place. Initially, we created the database from the management console of our hosted web application. This made it easy to get a database setup and working with our server in very little time, but we soon realized that it was tied to the web application, and could not exist without the web application. This was not ideal, since the database should be able to exist separately, so we ended up deleting that database, and hosting one from the relational database manager on AWS. This kept it completely separate from the server, but still usable by the server. Another challenge was introduced when we tried to access the database directly, to initially build the tables and data, and to have the ability to query it later on. We were not all able to access the database, and we were unsure why, since we all were using the same tools, with the same settings to do it. Eventually we discovered that the database itself has settings to allow certain IP addresses to access it directly. We all agreed that this was a very smart feature, but we simply did not realize it existed at first. Once we discovered this, we were able to add the IP addresses of our computers as we needed to, but left the general public unable to access our database, keeping it secure.

We also had to learn more about how AWS handles SSL certificates and domain names, so that we could use HTTPS instead of HTTP to transfer user information securely. We realized we would need a domain name for certain features of our system, so we used AWS to purchase our domain name, and then to route requests to that domain name to our hosted server. This was not very complicated, but still had some learning to get it done correctly, and involved some change to configuration files on our server that we did not know existed up to that point. The specific troubles with SSL Certificates will be explained in more detail in the following section.

### 6.3.2 SSL Certificates

As discussed in Section 5.5.12, it is important to use HTTPS instead of HTTP when sending requests with sensitive information. In order to send requests over HTTPS instead of HTTP, SSL Certificates are needed. These provide an extra layer of security to ensure that only the sending and receiving parties are aware of the content of the message. SSL Certificates were a challenge to understand and work with, as none of us had much knowledge about them before. Certificates must be signed in order for them to be considered valid. This signing can be done by a developer, but the certificate must be explicitly declared as valid on each device that will have contact with the server over HTTPS in this case. This would be very hard to manage and is not practical for an application with many users. In order for most devices to know by default that it should be accepted, the certificates must be signed by a Certificate Authority. The Certificate Authorities are known to browsers and let the devices know that the destination can be trusted.

For our project it was decided that it would be easier for everyone if the certificates were signed by a Certificate Authority, to keep things simple. Unfortunately, this process can take time to get approved, and there is still some configuration to be managed by the server to work correctly. AWS handles many of these complications, and also handles the generation and signing of the certificates, but in order to do this, a domain name must be owned. Using AWS for this was the best option we found for this problem, so we bought a domain name, and we were able to get the SSL Certificates, and had HTTPS working quickly after that.

### 6.3.3 Improving Response Time

The system needs to respond quickly to inputs from the user in order to provide the best user experience. One limiting factor of this response time is the communication with the cloud server. Sending a request over the network is very slow relative to other actions in the system, so the response from the server must be as quick as possible to minimize the delay. In order to keep this fast, the main goal of the server is to have a response sent as early as possible to the user. Many actions are dependent on

one another, but in a few cases the response can be sent to the user before all the actions associated with the request have actually finished. For example, when a user logs in, the server must check that they have provided sufficient authentication to be logged in. Once this has been validated, the user is considered to be logged in. At this point, the server sends a key to the user that is valid for a limited time, which is used by the Android application to provide NFC authentication, and is also used in the authentication on subsequent requests to the server. After this key is sent back to the user, the server must still save this key if it is newly created, and must save the key as the NFC authenticator for the user. Since these actions can happen after the key is sent, the response will be returned faster.

Another limiting factor in the speed of server response is contact with the database. This can be slow, as the database may have a large amount of information to go through. To solve this problem, the server sends as few queries as possible, that will collect all the information that is needed for the request, but will not retrieve data that is unnecessary. Less queries to the database keeps the delay in sending and receiving responses low, allowing the server to spend less time waiting and more time processing information.

In addition, the calculations done to ensure security had to be measured to ensure that the response time was not suffering without meaningfully benefitting security. We measured the time taken by the password-based key derivation function using the algorithm we chose, SHA256, given different numbers of iterations, which is summarised in table 2. We found that ten thousand iterations worked well, as roughly a tenth of a second did not dramatically impact user experience, while also ensuring that brute forcing was too inefficient. We then considered the salt length being used in the algorithm, but as table 3 shows, we found that the salt length did not have a meaningful effect on performance up to the suitably large length of 256 bytes.

Iterations	Response Time (ms)
1	2
10	2
100	2
1000	15
10000	130
100000	1308
1000000	12777

Table 2: Time taken to perform SHA256 password based key derivation vs. iterations

Salt Length	Response Time (ms)
1	1188
2	1249
4	1206
8	1214
16	1200
32	1191
64	1178
128	1173
256	1216

Table 3: Time taken to perform SHA256 password based key derivation vs. salt length, with 10000 iterations

# Chapter 7

## Testing and Bug Fixes

Points to mention in this chapter:

- Our biggest bug - issues with sending bytes "in the raw" using JSON
- Limitation on the number of bytes in NFC data exchanges using the PN532 shield
- The many struggles of serial communication (e.g. the Serial Monitor in the Arduino IDE, certain input flags on a port would be enabled by default on some machines but not others)

### 7.1 Testing

#### 7.1.1 Server Testing

To test the server, it was hosted locally by running the server code through the command line. In order to send HTTP requests to the server, an application called Postman was used. Postman is a useful application for building and sending HTTP requests, with a nice user interface [51]. It also saves the history of sent requests, making it easy to perform a suite of requests each time testing needs to be performed.

Once the code was tested locally and verified to be stable, it was deployed to Amazon Web Services to host the new version of the server. Once it was deployed,

the test suite was run again to ensure that the code still worked in the actual server environment.

In order to debug when issues were found on the server, the server logs were very important. The logs of the server would often indicate how the input was interpreted or how the data from the database was read, so we could see where the issue was. In some cases, additional logging information was needed to indicate if certain blocks of code had been reached, to determine whether the program flow was correct.

### 7.1.2 Android Application Testing

The majority of the Android application's code was written for one of two reasons: to display information to the user, or to interface with the server controllers. While there exist ways to test the display [52], the display was not considered paramount to the success of the demonstrative system we set out to make. Conversely, the interactions that the application had with the controller are fundamental to the success of the project.

Since most of the interactions with the server a mock would have had to be built to set up local unit and regression tests. Since the server was in development at the same time as the application, there would have been extra work associated with keeping the mock up to date. Instead, most testing was done through a human regression over a test plan. The number of test cases to verify stayed at a reasonable level throughout the design process, so performing the regression by hand never became cumbersome. The regression covered each action that the application could take that interacted with the server including each unsuccessful interaction due to things like a dropped internet connection.

Bugs, when encountered, were examined using the debugger in Android Studio [36]. This debugger supports breakpoints as well as simple stepping instructions, which make finding the cause of an error much simpler. Another application of these features was in the regression tests themselves, where certain invisible values, such as the HMAC key received from the login controller on the server, could be checked without modifying the application.



## 7.2 Debugging

### 7.2.1 Hardware Debugging

Due to the limitations of the Arduino IDE, debugging the various components of the lock hardware was not a simple task. In particular, the largest limitation was that there was no way to debug an Authentication Module by monitoring the data it was sending over USB, while also running the lock hardware's core process, as only one program at a time could access the authentication module's device file at a time. If the Arduino IDE Serial Monitor was running, the SBACS process could not. Since the Arduino IDE did not provide any other debugging mechanisms besides the Serial Monitor,

## 7.3 Bugs

### 7.3.1 Issues with Serial Communication

### 7.3.2 Issues with String Encodings

When the database was first built, we decided to store authentication data as strings. This was chosen because we found strings easy to work with, and most HTTP libraries had support for sending data as strings. During the integration phase of the project, we started having trouble with authentication, where the data that was retrieved from the server by the phone was then sent to the lock controller and then sent back to the server for validation. The server was receiving different data than it was initially sending, so all requests to unlock were being denied. After debugging at different points in the system, we came to the conclusion that the encoding of strings was not the same across the languages and technologies we were using, so the data was not the same when it reached the server again.

To solve this problem, we changed the data types stored by the database to be binary data rather than strings. This eliminated the problem of encoding, since binary data is simply binary regardless of the platform or technology being used. We realized

that it would have made more sense to go with a binary data type in the beginning, but we did not anticipate the problems with encoding initially. This problem took a long time to identify, and was the largest delay in our integration phase of the project.

### 7.3.3 Issues with Encryption Algorithm Availability

This issue is discussed briefly in section 6.1.2. The algorithm used by the server to compute HMAC message digests used the password-based key derivation function (PBKF2) [42] run using SHA256 [40]. We chose SHA256 over SHA1 because SHA1 has a known method of generating collisions [53]. However, Android did not specifically state that PBKF2 over SHA256 was supported on all devices [54]. This unfortunately caused problems later on in development. After a certain update, the Android devices that we were using for testing stopped supporting this algorithm.

We had a few options: we could change to the supported SHA1 algorithm, we could make use of a third party implementation of the algorithm using SHA256, we could write the SHA256 implementation ourselves, or we could change the method used to create message digests. Each of these options had benefits and drawbacks, but the decision had to be made quickly since the change to support occurred very near to a deadline.

Using a third party implementation seemed risky without the time to investigate the various options to be sure that the code met the standards needed. There was also a possibility of difficulties integrating the code with ours, and potential legal problems with licensing. While this may have required the least code change, we felt the risk associated with this option was too great.

Implementing the algorithm ourselves would almost certainly have not been feasible within the time required. Further, writing such complicated and important algorithms is generally discouraged, as even a small error could result in incompatibility with other code using the standards correctly, or even worse, a security breach. Overall, this option was not appealing.

Eliminating those options left either changing a couple constants in the code to switch the underlying secure hash algorithm, or changing the way keys are generated

to using a different supported algorithm. For the time being, we decided that the much simpler option of converting the code to use SHA1 instead of SHA256. Since then, we have updated the server and application to make use of the built in HMAC digest generation code using the currently collision-free SHA256.

# Chapter 8

## Conclusions

The SBACS provides a fairly simple method of digitising any physical lock. The digital locks are secure, reusable, and easier to recover than physical locks are. The current implementation of the system can be used to maintain a simple business use case, such as the online order secure pickup use case described in section 4.1. Locks and users can be added to the system, and registrations can be made between them. Then, the users can use their identities to authenticate themselves and open the locks.

The system could be made more accessible to companies that don't want to use NFC or simple PIN codes as their authentication method by implementing more authentication modules. Certain companies would want a more secure method of authentication, which would encourage developing a module that performs facial, fingerprint, or other biometric recognition. The SBACS's design ensures that the only difficult work would be in designing the software to actually compare the biometrics. Integration of the new modules is totally invisible to the services provided.

In addition, several companies would want to be able to associate further information with registrations, beyond just the video streaming, such as an inventory of items or a list of accesses to the lock. These could be implemented with minimal changes to the core of the SBACS. The authentication could be handled by the same session and HMAC methods used elsewhere, so the only real change would be an additional column or table, depending on the complexity of the desired data. The majority of the work would reside in providing an interface for collecting the data.

Currently, the SBACS is an entirely flat system with respect to privileges for users. In a practical SBACS having a distinction for administrative users would likely be beneficial. This would require work on the server to support, particularly if multiple levels of administrator were added. Multiple types of administrators would make sense for providing SBACS as a service.

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# Appendix A

## Calculations

### A.1 Power dissipated by a resistor in LED circuit

Each GPIO pin on the Raspberry Pi uses 3.3V logic, and allows a maximum current draw of 16 mA. A typical red LED is rated for 1.8V to 2.2V, with 20mA current draw [55].

# Appendix B

## Diagrams