

Confidential Channels

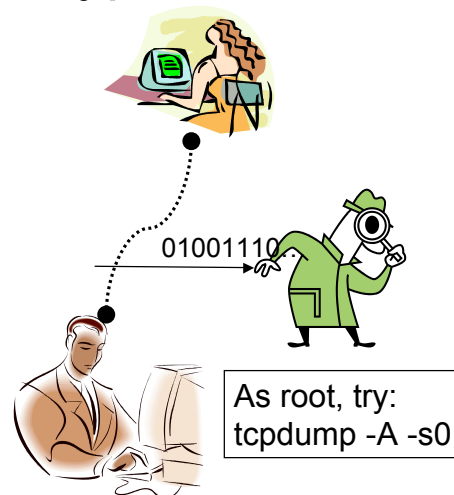
Using encryption for network security

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What is encryption?

- Encryption is used to achieve confidentiality
- Alice and Bob, wish to communicate secretly.
- Curious Carl wants to listen into their private chat.



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Ciphers

- Ciphers operate to “garble” their input to make it unintelligible. The output of a cipher (ciphertext) does not bear any clear relation to the input (clear-text or plaintext).
 - The earliest recorded example of the use of a cipher is by Julius Caesar to his generals: He would shift each letter to the third letter following it in the alphabet.
 - Example: Attack now → Dwwdfn qrz

Assumptions about cipher design

- The adversary knows the cipher algorithm.
- To achieve secrecy, ciphers use keys.
- A key is an auxiliary input to the algorithm that must be kept private.
 - Only the key value is private. It is assumed that the enemy knows how keys are generated.

Example: Vigenere cipher

$$K = \text{VECTOR} = (21, 4, 2, 19, 14, 17)$$

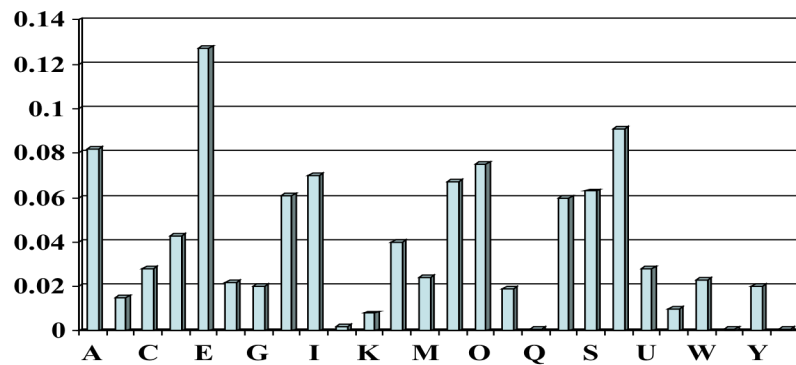
W	E	W	I	L	L	M	E	E	T	A	T	M	I	D	N	I	G	H	T
22	4	22	8	11	11	12	4	4	19	0	19	12	8	3	13	8	6	7	19
21	4	2	19	14	17	21	4	2	19	14	17	21	4	2	19	14	17	21	4
↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
17	8	24	1	25	2	7	8	6	12	14	10	7	12	5	6	22	23	2	23
R	I	Y	B	Z	C	H	I	G	M	O	K	H	M	F	G	W	X	C	X

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Courtesy of Giuseppe Ateniese

Breaking the Vigenere Cipher

- The probability distribution of characters



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Looking at the example again

$$K = \text{VECTOR} = (21, 4, 2, 19, 14, 17)$$

W	E	W	I	L	L	M	E	E	T	A	T	M	I	D	N	I	G	H	T
22	4	22	8	11	11	12	4	4	19	0	19	12	8	3	13	8	6	7	19
21	4	2	19	14	17	21	4	2	19	14	17	21	4	2	19	14	17	21	4
↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
17	8	24	1	25	2	7	8	6	12	14	10	7	12	5	6	22	23	2	23
R	I	Y	B	Z	C	H	I	G	M	O	K	H	M	F	G	W	X	C	X

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Index of coincidence

$c_i = \#$ of occurrences of the i -th character

$$c = \sum_i c_i \qquad p_i = c_i/c,$$

$p_i =$ frequency of the i -th character

$$IC = \sum_{i=0 \dots 25} p_i^2 \qquad \begin{array}{l} IC \text{ for random text} \simeq 0.038 \\ IC \text{ for typical English} \simeq 0.065 \end{array}$$

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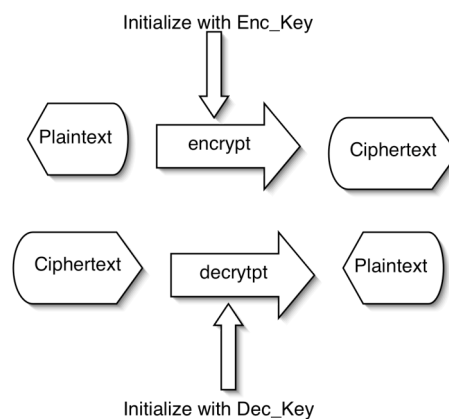
Choosing a cipher

- Ciphers are vulnerable to many known analysis techniques, and one must count on new attacks being discovered
- General advice:
 - Avoid proprietary commercial ciphers whose design has not been publicly scrutinized. Do not develop your own if good alternatives exist: Adopt standards.

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General encryption schemes



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Symmetric vs. Asymmetric

- If the encryption and decryption keys are equal*, the scheme is said to be **symmetric**
- If the encryption and decryption keys differ, and moreover the decryption key cannot be computed from knowledge of the algorithm and encryption key, the scheme is **asymmetric**

Security of ciphers

From the Vigenere cipher to the
Vernam one-time pad

Attacks on Encryption Schemes

- Types:
 - Passive:
 - Ciphertext only
 - Known-plaintext
 - Active:
 - Chosen plaintext (CPA)
 - Adaptive CPA
 - Chosen-ciphertext (CCA1)
 - Adaptive CCA (CCA2)
- Outcomes:
 - Total Break (key recovery)
 - Recovery of plaintext
 - Distinguishability between two alternative encrypted texts
- Most stringent security: IND-CCA2

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Perfect cipher

- If the Vigenere cipher has key at least as long as the plaintext, is chosen at random, and used only once:
 - The scheme is called the **Vernam One-Time Pad**
 - It is provably unbreakable, even if the adversary has infinite computational power
- Reasoning: Given some ciphertext, any message of the same size would encrypt to the observed ciphertext under some key.

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Perfect secrecy

- Shannon proved that the only cipher that is secure against an all-powerful adversary
 - Has key length equal to, or larger than the message
 - The key is random
 - Used only once
 - As inefficient as the Vernam one-time pad

Modern ciphers

- Operates on binary plaintext
- Uses binary keys of **fixed length**
- Different types of ciphers:
 - Public key/asymmetric ciphers
 - **Symmetric ciphers**
 - Stream ciphers (RC4, A5/x, Helix, SEAL)
 - Block ciphers (Triple-DES, Blowfish, AES)

Modern ciphers (continues)

- Two basic operations
 - Substitution: Substitutes a code symbol (for instance bit octets) for another.
 - Example: shifts (Vegenere cipher), xor
 - Permutation: Transposes or re-orders the symbols present in the code
- Both steps are needed for security