Lecture 22: RSA Encryption
Recall: RSA Assumption

- We pick two primes uniformly and independently at random $p, q \leftarrow P_n$
- We define $N = p \cdot q$
- We shall work over the group $(\mathbb{Z}_N^*, \times)$, where $\mathbb{Z}_N^*$ is the set of all natural numbers $< N$ that are relatively prime to $N$, and $\times$ is integer multiplication mod $N$
- We pick $y \leftarrow \mathbb{Z}_N^*$
- Let $\varphi(N)$ represent the size of the set $\mathbb{Z}_N^*$, which is $(p - 1)(q - 1)$
- We pick any $e \in \mathbb{Z}_{\varphi(N)}^*$, that is, $e$ is a natural number $< \varphi(N)$ and is relatively prime to $\varphi(N)$
- We give $(n, N, e, y)$ to the adversary $A$ as ask her to find the $e$-th root of $y$, i.e., find $x$ such that $x^e = y$

**RSA Assumption.** For any computationally bounded adversary, the above-mentioned problem is hard to solve.
Recall: Properties

- The function $x^e : \mathbb{Z}_N^* \rightarrow \mathbb{Z}_N^*$ is a bijection for all $e$ such that $\gcd(e, \varphi(N)) = 1$

- Given $(n, N, e, y)$, where $y \leftarrow \mathbb{Z}_N^*$, it is difficult for any computationally bounded adversary to compute the $e$-th root of $y$, i.e., the element $y^{1/e}$

- But given $d$ such that $e \cdot d = 1 \mod \varphi(N)$, it is easy to compute $y^{1/e}$, because $y^d = y^{1/e}$

Now, think how we can design a key-agreement scheme using these properties. Once the key-agreement protocol is ready, we can use a one-time pad to create an public-key encryption scheme.
Key-Agreement

First, Alice and Bob establish a key that is hidden from the adversary

Alice

Bob

\[ p, q \leftarrow P_n \]

\[ N = p \cdot q \]

\[ r \leftarrow \mathbb{Z}_N^{*} \quad \text{pk} = (n, N, e) \quad \text{Pick any } e \in \mathbb{Z}_{\varphi(N)}^{*} \]

\[ y = r^e \]

\[ \tilde{r} = y^d \]

Note that \( r = \tilde{r} \) and is hidden from an adversary based on the RSA assumption.
Using this key, Alice sends the encryption of $m \in \mathbb{Z}_N^*$ using the one-time pad encryption scheme.

$$c = m \cdot r$$

$$\tilde{m} = c \cdot \text{inv}(\tilde{r})$$

Since, we always have $r = \tilde{r}$, this encryption scheme always decrypts correctly. Note that $\text{inv}(\tilde{r})$ can be computed only by knowing $\varphi(N)$. 
Alice

\[ p, q \overset{\$}{\leftarrow} P_n \]

\[ N = p \cdot q \]

\[ r \overset{\$}{\leftarrow} \mathbb{Z}_N^* \]

\[ y = r^e \]

\[ c = m \cdot r \]

Bob

pk = (n, N, e)

Pick any \( e \in \mathbb{Z}_{\varphi(N)}^* \)

\[ (y, c) \rightarrow \tilde{r} = y^d \]

\[ \tilde{m} = c \cdot \text{inv}(\tilde{r}) \]
We emphasize that this encryption scheme works only for $m \in \mathbb{Z}_N^*$. In particular, this works for all messages $m$ that have a binary representation of length less than $n$-bits, because $p$ and $q$ are $n$-bit primes.

**HOWEVER, THIS SCHEME IS INSECURE**
Let us start with a simpler problem.

Suppose I pick an integer $x$ and give $y = x^3$ to you. Can you efficiently find the $x$?

Running for for loop with $i \in \{0, \ldots, y\}$ and testing whether $i^3 = y$ or not is an inefficient solution.

However, binary search on the domain $\{0, \ldots, y\}$ is an efficient algorithm.

Then why does the RSA assumption that says “computing the $e$-th root is difficult if $\varphi(N)$ is unknown” hold? Answer: Because we are working over $\mathbb{Z}_N^*$ and not $\mathbb{Z}$. “Wrapping around” due to the modulus operation while cubing kills the binary search approach.

However, if $x$ is such that $x^e < N$ then the modulus operation does not take effect. So, if $x < N^{1/e}$ then we can find the $e$-th root of $y$!
Now, let us try to attack the “first attempt” algorithm

Recall that we have $c = m \cdot r$ and $y = r^e$. So, we have $c^e = m^e \cdot r^e$. Now, note that $c^e \cdot \text{inv}(y) = m^e \cdot r^e \cdot y^{-1} = m^e$.

So, the adversary can compute $c^e \cdot \text{inv}(y)$ to obtain $m^e$. If $m < N^{1/e}$, then the adversary can use binary search to recover $m$.

There is another problem! If Alice is encrypting and sending multiple messages $\{m_1, m_2, \ldots\}$, then the eavesdropper can recover $\{m_1^e, m_2^e, \ldots\}$. So, she can find which of these $\{m_1^e, m_2^e, \ldots\}$ are identical. In turn, she can find out the messages in $\{m_1, m_2, \ldots\}$ that are identical (because $x^e : \mathbb{Z}_N^* \rightarrow \mathbb{Z}_N^*$ is a bijection).

How do we fix these attacks?
Our idea is to pad the message $m$ with some randomness $s$. The new message $s || m$, with high probability, satisfies $(s || m)^e > N$ (that is, it wraps around).

How does it satisfy the second attack mentioned above (Think: Birthday bound)?

Let us write down the new encryption scheme for $m \in \{0, 1\}^{n/2}$

**Enc_{n, N, e}(m):**

1. Pick $r \leftarrow \mathbb{Z}_N^*$
2. Pick $s \leftarrow \{0, 1\}^{n/2}$
3. Compute $y = r^e$, and $c = (s || m) \cdot r$
4. Return $(y, c)$
Final Optimized RSA Encryption

- Note that masking with $r$ is not helping at all! Let us call $s \parallel m$ as the payload. An adversary can obtain the “$e$-th power of the payload” by computing $c^e \cdot y^{-1}$

- So, we can use the following optimized encryption algorithm instead

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Enc_{n,N,e}(m):

1. Pick $s \leftarrow \{0, 1\}^{n/2}$
2. Return $c = (s \parallel m)^e$
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Looking Ahead: Implementing RSA

Let us summarize all the algorithms that we need to implement RSA algorithm

1. Generating $n$-bit primes to sample $p$ and $q$
2. Generating $e$ such that $e$ is relatively prime to $\varphi(N)$, where $N = pq$
3. Finding the trapdoor $d$ such that $e \cdot d = 1 \mod \varphi(N)$