Automatic Verification of Cryptographic Protocols: A Logic Programming Approach

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Introduction

Many techniques exist for the verification of cryptographic protocols (theorem proving, model checking, typing, ...)

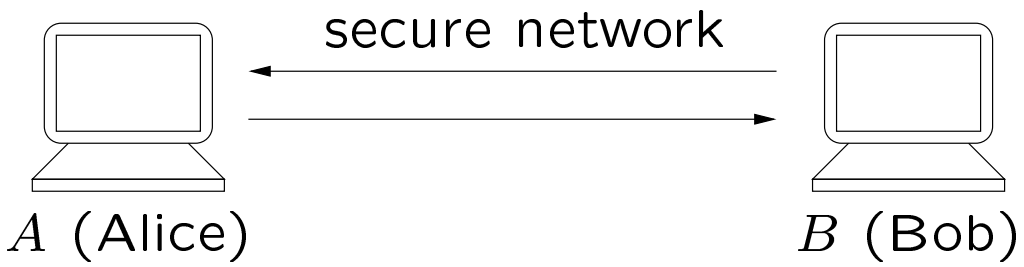
We present a technique based on an abstract representation of the protocol by a logic program (a set of Horn clauses).

This technique yields fully automatic proofs of protocols for an unbounded number of runs (many clients connecting to a server, for instance).

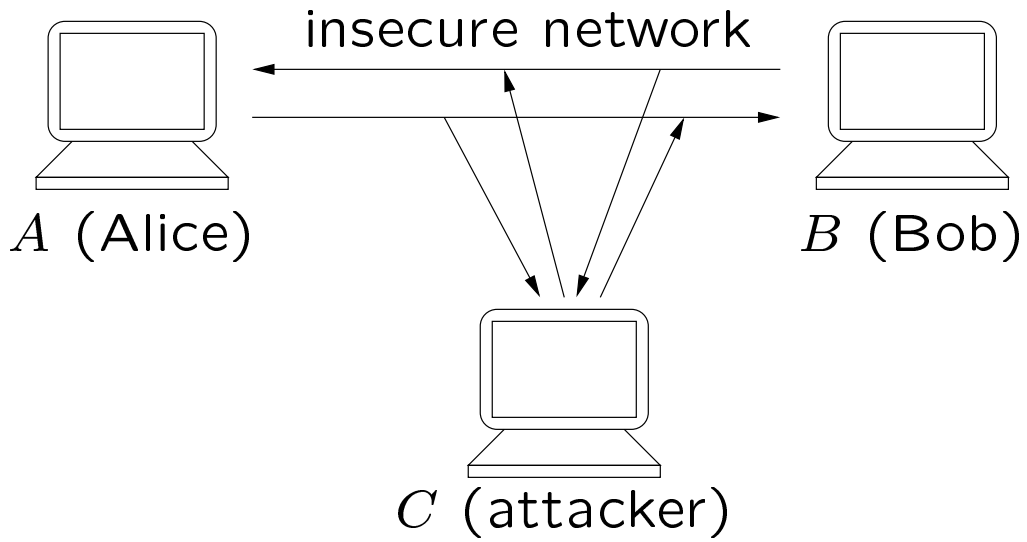
Outline

- Introduction to cryptographic protocols
- Overview of the Horn clause verification method
- Demo and experimental results
- Conclusion and future work

Communications on a secure network



Communications on an insecure network



A talks to B on an insecure network

$\Rightarrow$ encrypt messages to preserve the secrets.

Encryption

The main cryptographic primitive is encryption:

$$\{m\}_k$$

is the encryption of message m under key k.

When you have the decryption key, you can get m from $\{m\}_k$.

- Shared key encryption: the decryption key is equal to the encryption key.
- Public key encryption: the decryption key (secret key sk) is different from the encryption key (public key pk).
- Signature: one signs with the secret key sk ($\{m\}_{sk}$), and checks the signature with the public key pk.

Dolev-Yao model

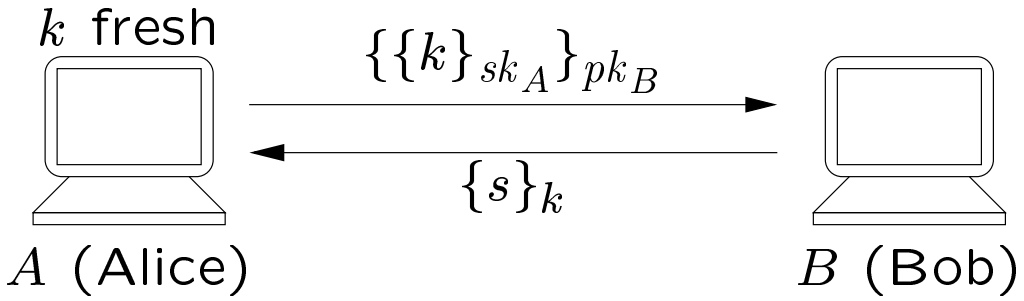
We use the so-called Dolev-Yao model:

- the attacker can get all messages sent on the network
- he can compute messages
- he can send messages on the network

We assume perfect cryptography: one can decrypt only if one has the decryption key.

Example

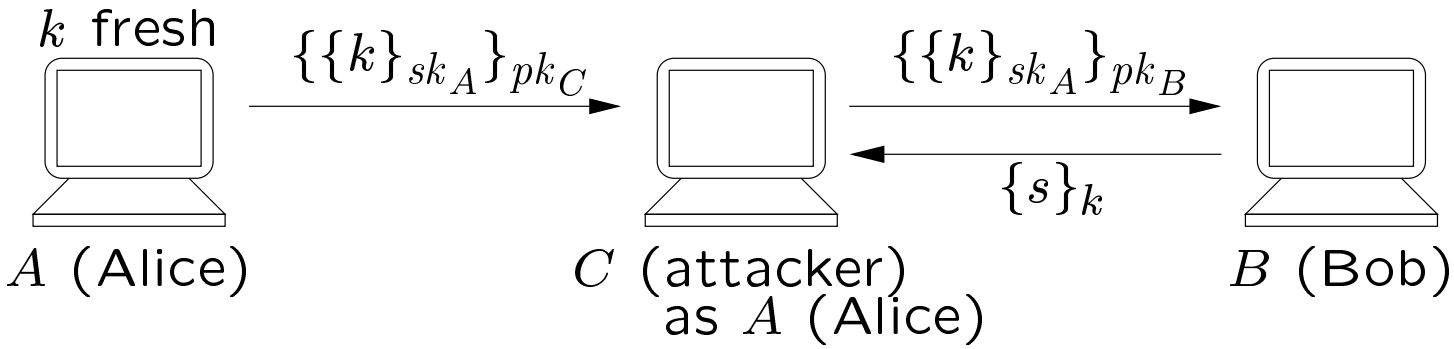
Denning-Sacco key distribution protocol [Denning, Sacco, Comm. ACM, 1981] (simplified)



The goal of the protocol is that the key k should be a secret key, shared between A and B. So s should remain secret.

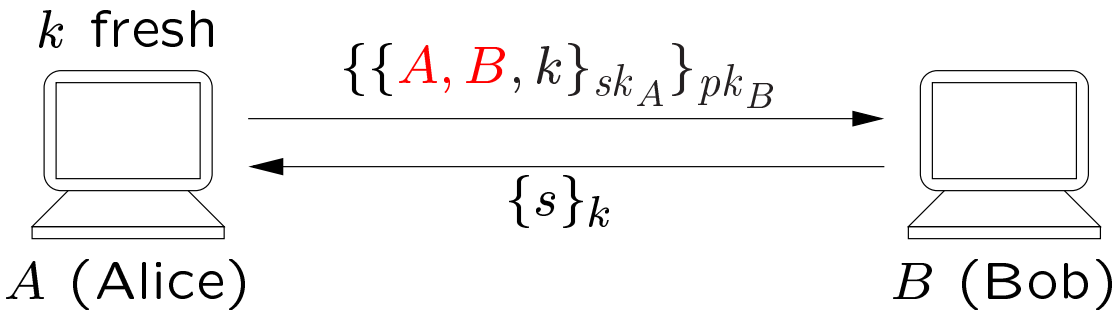
The attack

The (well-known) attack against this protocol.



The attacker C impersonates A and obtains the secret s.

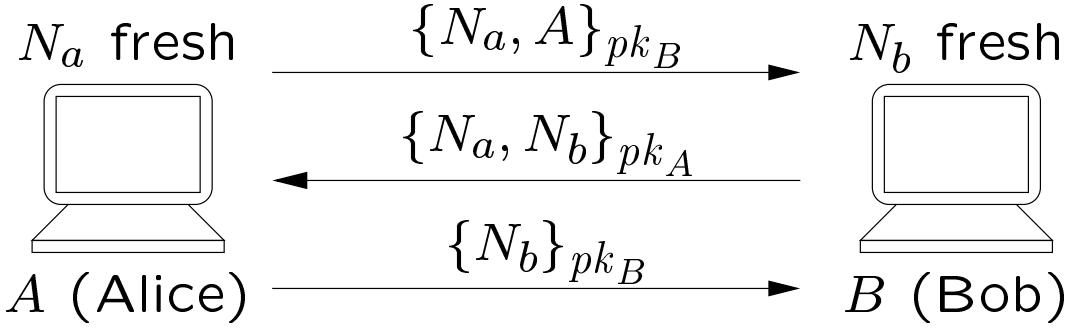
The corrected protocol



Now C cannot impersonate A because in the previous attack, the first message is $\{\{A, C, k\}_{sk_A}\}_{pk_B}$, which is not accepted by B.

Another example

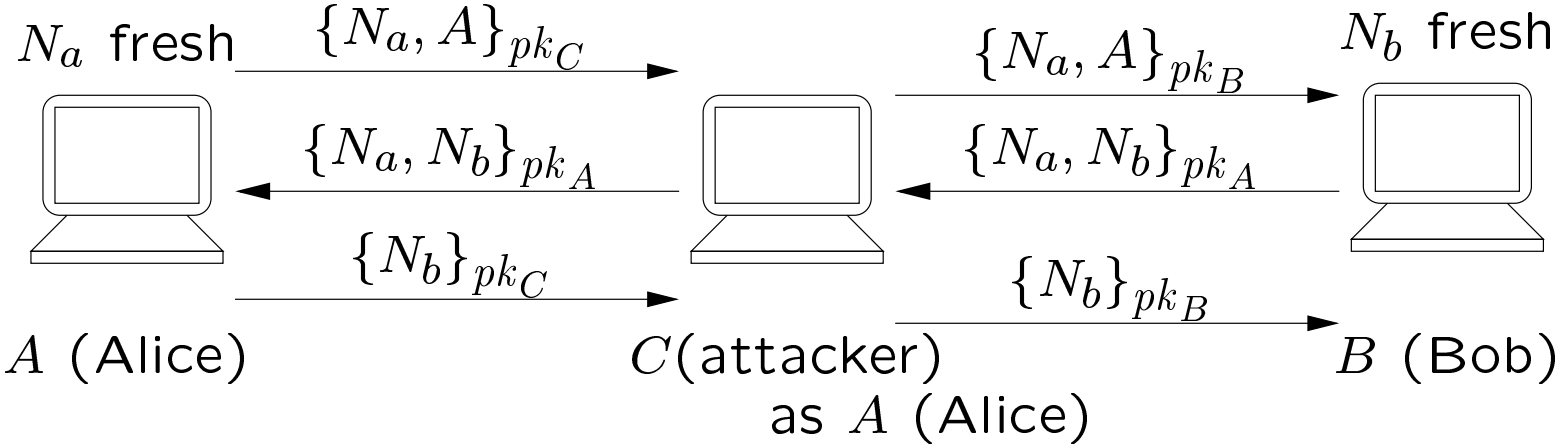
Needham-Schroeder public key protocol [Needham, Schroeder, Comm. ACM, 1978]



N_a and N_b should be shared secrets between A and B. At the end of the protocol, B should be convinced that he talked to A and conversely.

The attack

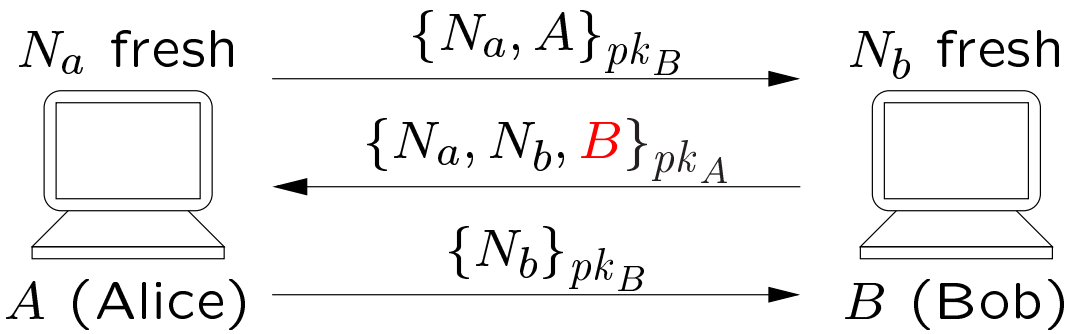
Lowe [Lowe, TACAS'96] found a man-in-the-middle attack against the Needham-Schroeder protocol:



C impersonates A, and obtains N_a and N_b. B thinks he talks to A, whereas in fact he talks to C.

The corrected protocol

Lowe suggested the following corrected version:



We can check that it prevents the previous attack.

Practical examples

- SSH (Secure SHell)
- SSL (Secure Socket Layer), renamed TLS (Transport Layer Security), `https://`
- IPsec
- SET (Secure Electronic Transaction), e-commerce protocol.

Why cryptographic protocols ?

- Their design is error prone.
- Errors are not detected by testing:
  they appear only in the presence of an adversary.
- Errors can have serious consequences.

Goals of protocols

- Secrecy: The attacker cannot have a message s.
- Authenticity: If B thinks he talks to A then A thinks she talks to B.
- Key exchange: establish a shared secret key between A and B.
- Fair contract signing.
- ...

Difficulties of protocol verification

Cryptographic protocols are infinite state:

- The attacker can create messages of unbounded size.
- Unbounded number of sessions of the protocol.

With the assumption of a bounded number of sessions, protocols are still decidable.

They are undecidable in the general case.

Solutions to undecidability

To solve an undecidable problem, we can

- Use approximations, abstraction.
- Terminate on a restricted class.

We do both, using a very precise abstraction.

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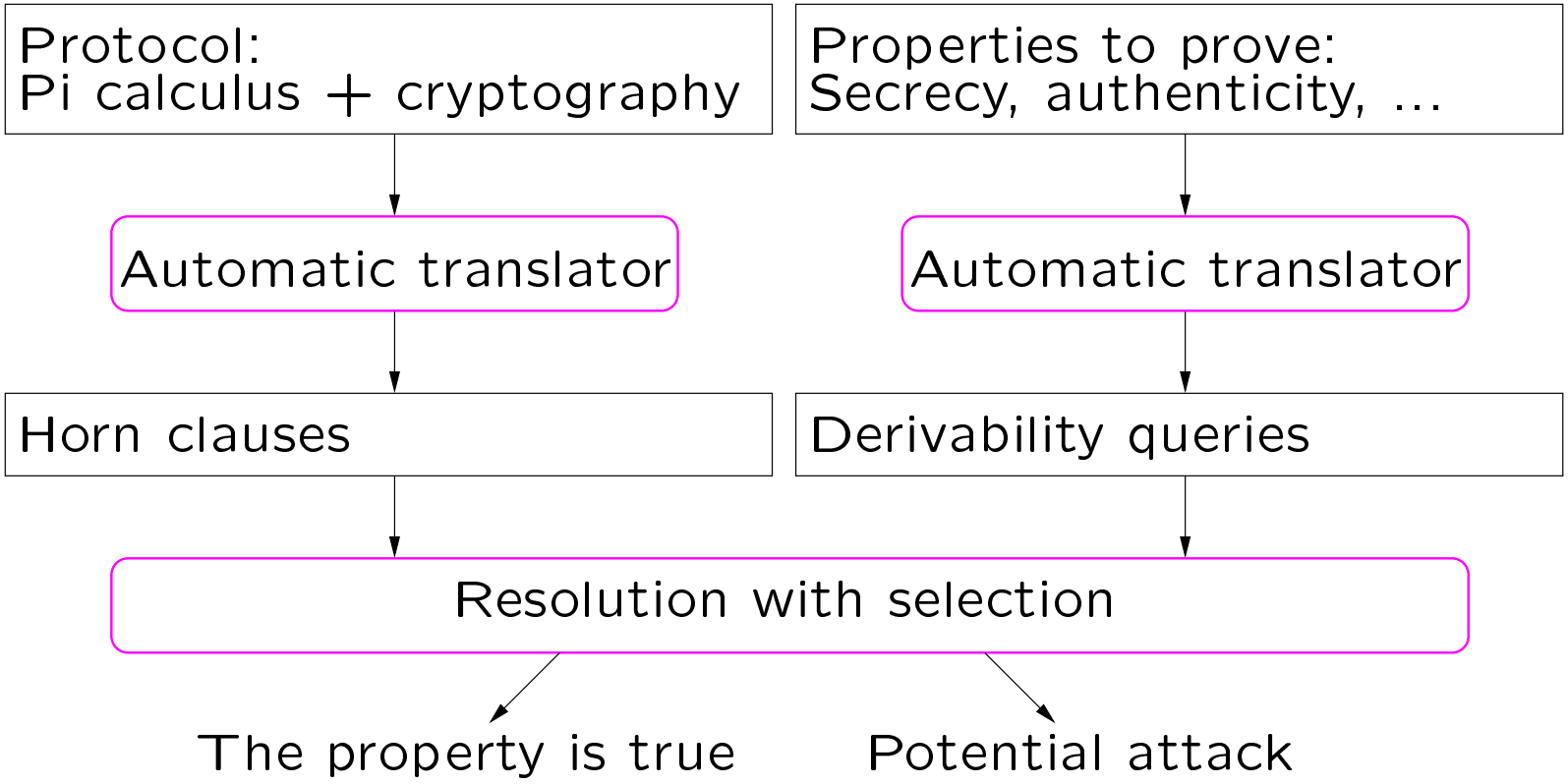
The Horn clause verification method



Features of the Horn clause verification method

- Fully automatic.
- Efficient: small examples verified in less than 0.1 s; complex ones in a few minutes.
- Very precise: no false attack in our tests.
- For unbounded number of sessions and message space.
- For a wide range of cryptographic primitives.

Syntax of the process calculus

Pi calculus + cryptographic primitives

$M, N ::=$	terms
x, y, z	variable
a, b, c, k, s	name
$f(M_1, \ldots, M_n)$	constructor application
$P, Q ::=$	processes
$\overline{M}\langle N \rangle.P$	output
$M(x).P$	input
$let\ x = g(M_1, \ldots, M_n)\ in\ P\ else\ Q$	destructor application
$if\ M = N\ then\ P\ else\ Q$	conditional
$0 \quad P \mid Q \quad !P \quad (\nu a)P$	

Constructors and destructors

Two kinds of operations:

- Constructors f are used to build terms
  $f(M_1, \ldots, M_n)$

- Destructors g manipulate terms
  $let\ x = g(M_1, \ldots, M_n)\ in\ P\ else\ Q$
  Destructors are defined by reductions $g(M_1, \ldots, M_n) \to M$.

Examples of constructors and destructors

Shared-key encryption:

- Constructor: Shared-key encryption $\mathsf{encrypt}(M, N)$.

- Destructor: Decryption $\mathsf{decrypt}(M', N)$

$$\mathsf{decrypt}(\mathsf{encrypt}(M, N), N) \to M.$$

Examples of constructors and destructors (continued)

Signature:

- Constructors: Signature $\mathsf{sign}(M, N)$.
  Public key generation $\mathsf{pk}(N)$.

- Destructors: Signature checking $\mathsf{checksign}(M', N')$

$$\mathsf{checksign}(\mathsf{sign}(M, N), \mathsf{pk}(N)) \rightarrow M.$$

Message extraction $\mathsf{getmess}(M')$

$$\mathsf{getmess}(\mathsf{sign}(M, N)) \rightarrow M.$$

We represent in the same way public-key encryption, hash functions, ...

Example: The Denning-Sacco protocol

Message 1. $A \to B : \quad \{\{k\}_{sk_A}\}_{pk_B} \quad k$ fresh
Message 2. $B \to A : \quad \{s\}_k$

$(\nu sk_A)(\nu sk_B) let\ pk_A = \mathsf{pk}(sk_A)\ in\ let\ pk_B = \mathsf{pk}(sk_B)\ in$
$\overline{c}\langle pk_A\rangle\overline{c}\langle pk_B\rangle.$

(A) $\quad !\, c(x_pk_B).(\nu k)\overline{c}\langle \mathsf{pencrypt}(\mathsf{sign}(k, sk_A), x_pk_B)\rangle.$
$\quad\quad c(x).let\ s = \mathsf{decrypt}(x, k)\ in\ 0$

(B) $\quad |\quad !\, c(y).let\ y' = \mathsf{pdecrypt}(y, sk_B)\ in$
$\quad\quad let\ k = \mathsf{checksign}(y', pk_A)\ in\ \overline{c}\langle \mathsf{encrypt}(\mathsf{s}, k)\rangle$

The Horn clause representation

The main predicate used by the Horn clause representation of protocols is attacker:

attacker(M) means the attacker may have M.

We can model actions of the adversary and of the protocol participants thanks to this predicate.

Processes are automatically translated into Horn clauses (joint work with Martín Abadi).

Example - Cryptographic primitives

Shared-key encryption:

- Encryption pencrypt(m, k).
  attacker(m) $\wedge$ attacker(k) $\rightarrow$ attacker(encrypt(m, k))

- Decryption decrypt(encrypt$(m, k)), k) \rightarrow m$.
  attacker(encrypt(m, k)) $\wedge$ attacker(k) $\rightarrow$ attacker(m)

General treatment of primitives

- Constructors $f(M_1, \ldots, M_n)$
  $\mathsf{attacker}(x_1) \wedge \ldots \wedge \mathsf{attacker}(x_n) \rightarrow \mathsf{attacker}(f(x_1, \ldots, x_n))$

- Destructors $g(M_1, \ldots, M_n) \rightarrow M$
  $\mathsf{attacker}(M_1) \wedge \ldots \wedge \mathsf{attacker}(M_n) \rightarrow \mathsf{attacker}(M)$

Example - Coding of a protocol

Upon receipt of a message of the form $\mathsf{pencrypt}(\mathsf{sign}(y, sk_A), pk_B)$, B replies with $\mathsf{encrypt}(\mathsf{s}, y)$:

$$\mathsf{attacker}(\mathsf{pencrypt}(\mathsf{sign}(y, sk_A), pk_B)) \rightarrow \mathsf{attacker}(\mathsf{encrypt}(\mathsf{s}, y))$$

The attacker sends $\mathsf{pencrypt}(\mathsf{sign}(y, sk_A), pk_B)$ to B, and intercepts his reply $\mathsf{encrypt}(\mathsf{s}, y)$.

General coding of a protocol

If a principal A has received the messages $M_1, \ldots, M_n$ and sends the message M,

$$\mathsf{attacker}(M_1) \wedge \ldots \wedge \mathsf{attacker}(M_n) \rightarrow \mathsf{attacker}(M).$$

Sound approximations

- The freshness of keys, nonces is partially modeled.
- The state of principals is partially modeled.
- The number of times a message appears is ignored,
  only the fact that is has appeared is taken into account.

These approximations help for efficient verification
with infinite state spaces,
with any number of protocol runs.

Security properties

- Secrecy:
  If attacker(M) cannot be derived from the rules, then M is secret.

  The term M cannot be built by an attacker.

- Correspondence assertions:
  The checker can also prove properties of the form "if an event has happened, then some other events must have happened".

Determining derivability

The natural tool for determining derivability of a fact from clauses is resolution.

Basic SLD-resolution (as in Prolog) would never terminate:

$$\mathsf{attacker}(\mathsf{encrypt}(m, k)) \wedge \mathsf{attacker}(k) \rightarrow \mathsf{attacker}(m)$$

yields a loop.

Resolution with free selection

$$\frac{R = H \to F \qquad R' = F'_1 \wedge H' \to F'}{\sigma H \wedge \sigma H' \to \sigma F'}$$

where σ is the most general unifier of F and F'_1,
F and F'_1 are selected.

The selection function selects:
– a hypothesis not of the form attacker(x) if possible,
– the conclusion otherwise.

Key idea: avoid resolving on facts attacker(x).

Termination (joint work with A. Podelski)

The technique does not always terminate,
but terminates on tagged protocols.

Each cryptographic primitive application is identified by a constant tag:

$$\mathsf{encrypt}((\mathsf{c}_0, M), K)$$

- Simple syntactic annotation.
- Retains the intended behavior of the protocol.
- Prevents type flaw attacks.
- Good design practice. Used in real protocols (SSH).

Other possible variants

- Ordered resolution with selection [Weidenbach, 1999].

- Ordered resolution with factorization and splitting
  [Comon, Cortier, 2003]
  Terminates on clauses with at most one variable.
  Protocols which blindly copy at most one term.

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Experimental results

Pentium III, 1 GHz.

Protocol	Result	ms
Needham-Schroeder public key	Attack [Lowe]	10
Needham-Schroeder public key corrected	Secure	7
Needham-Schroeder shared key	Attack [Denning]	52
Needham-Schroeder shared key corrected	Secure	109
Denning-Sacco	Attack [AN]	6
Denning-Sacco corrected	Secure	7
Otway-Rees	Secure	10
Otway-Rees, variant of Paulson98	Attack [Paulson]	12
Yahalom	Secure	10
Simpler Yahalom	Secure	11
Main mode of Skeme	Secure	23
Certified email	Secure	100
Certified email + SSH	Secure	42000

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Conclusion

- A lot of effort (and a lot of progress!) on the verification of cryptographic protocols.

- We can now have fully automatic proofs of cryptographic protocols for an unbounded number of sessions.

- Logic is a very powerful tool to represent systems formally.

Future work

Still a lot to do:

- Some features not modeled: timestamps, . . .
- Some properties not yet automatically proved: denial of service, process equivalences, . . .
- Proofs of protocols in the computational model of cryptography.