Diffie-Hellman key exchange
Key Exchange

- We have seen already how public-key cryptography may be used for public key distribution;
- Public-key cryptography may be used also for key exchange:
  - Two parties (users) execute some algorithm (protocol) and get a common secret key;
  - The key may be used for subsequent encryption of messages;
Diffie-Hellman Key Exchange

• Most known algorithm for key exchange is Diffie-Hellman algorithm (1976);
• The purpose of the algorithm is exchange of a secret key (not encryption);
• DH algorithm is considered as a public-key algorithm because:
  • Users to generate the same secret key rely on publicly known information + some private information;
  • In principle, it is possible to generate a key knowing only public information, but it is computationally expensive;
Discrete logarithms

- Security of DH algorithm relies upon difficulty of computing discrete logarithms;
- Primitive root of a prime number $p$: a number such that all numbers
  $a \mod p, a^2 \mod p, \ldots, a^{p-1} \mod p$ are different;
- For any number $b$ less than $p$ and a primitive root $a$ of $p$ the discrete logarithm (index) of $b$ for the base $a \mod p$ is the number $i$ such that

\[
b = a^i \mod p \quad 0 \leq i \leq (p - 1)\]
Discrete logarithms

- Notation: \( \text{ind}_{a,p}(b) \)
- Key facts:
  - It is relatively easy calculate exponentials modulo a prime, that is given \( a, i, p \) calculate \( a^i \mod p \)
  - It is very difficult and for large primes infeasible to calculate discrete algorithms, that is given \( b, a, p \) find \( i \) such that

\[
b = a^i \mod p
\]
Diffie-Hellman key exchange

• Two publicly known numbers:
  • prime number $q$
  • primitive root $\alpha$ of $q$

• Let $A$ and $B$ wish to exchange a key, then they do the following:
  • $A$ selects a random integer $X_A < q$ and keeps it in secret
  • $B$ selects a random integer $X_B < q$ and keeps it in secret
  • $A$ computes $Y_A = \alpha^{X_A} \mod q$ and sends it to $B$
  • $B$ computes $Y_B = \alpha^{X_B} \mod q$ and sends it to $A$
The secret key

- Both A and B is now able to calculate common secret key:
  - A calculates \[ K = (Y_B)^{X_A} \mod q \]
  - B calculates \[ K = (Y_A)^{X_B} \mod q \]

- These calculations give identical results and \( K \) is the common secret key.
Deffie-Hellman Key Exchange

User A

Generate random $X_A < q$
Calculate $Y_A = X_A \mod q$
Calculate $K = (Y_B)^{X_A} \mod q$

User B

Generate random $X_B < q$
Calculate $Y_B = X_B \mod q$
Calculate $K = (Y_A)^{X_B} \mod q$
How to break HD key exchange?

• An attacker knows $q, a, Y_A, Y_B$
• How can (s)he calculate $K$?
• Straightforward way is to find out $X_A$, or $X_B$ and repeat calculations of $A$ or $B$;
• However this includes calculations of discrete logarithms: $X_B = ind_{e, q}(Y_B)$ which is infeasible for large $q$;
• No essentially better passive attacks are known.
Example

• For $q = 7$ check that $2$ is not a primitive root of $7$ and $3$ is a primitive root of $7$;
• Let $q = 7$ and $a = 3$ is publicly known numbers in DH algorithm;
• Let $X_A = 4$ and $X_B = 3$ be private keys of A and B, respectively;
• Then $Y_A = 3^4 \mod 7 = 4$
• $Y_B = 3^3 \mod 7 = 6$
• Common secret key

$$K = 6^4 \mod 7 = 4^3 \mod 7 = 1$$