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Public-Key Cryptography – PKC 2021

24th IACR International Conference on Practice and Theory of Public Key Cryptography Virtual Event, May 10–13, 2021 Proceedings, Part II



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Preface

The 24th International Conference on Practice and Theory of Public-Key Cryptography (PKC 2021) was held virtually over Zoom from May 10th to May 13th, 2021. It was supposed to take place in Edinburgh, Scotland, but due to COVID-19 this was not possible. The conference is organized annually by the International Association for Cryptologic Research (IACR), and is the main annual conference with an explicit focus on public-key cryptography. Given NIST's efforts on standardization of post-quantum cryptography, this year constructions and cryptanalysis in this area were specially encouraged. These proceedings are comprised of two volumes and include the 52 papers that were selected by the Program Committee (PC), as well as a one-page abstract corresponding to one of the two invited talks, which reflect this year's focus.

The 52 accepted papers were selected out of a total of 156 received submissions. Submissions were assigned to at least three reviewers, while submissions by PC members received at least four reviews. Due to time constraints, the review period this year did not include a rebuttal step, where the authors get a chance to preview their papers' preliminary reviews. The review process, however, was fairly interactive, as in a large number of occasions reviewers posed questions to the authors. Six of the accepted papers were first conditionally accepted and received an additional round of reviewing; in addition, two of the papers were "soft merged" due to the similarity of results and shared one presentation slot.

Given the high number and quality of the submissions, the reviewing and paper selection process was a challenging task and I am deeply grateful to the members of the PC for their high dedication and thorough work. In addition to the PC members, many external reviewers joined the review process in their particular areas of expertise. We were fortunate to have this knowledgeable and energetic team of experts, and I am deeply grateful to all of them for their contributions. The submissions included two papers with which I had a conflict of interest (they were authored by current and/or close collaborators). For these two papers I abstained from the management of the discussion and delegated this task to a PC member. Many thanks to Hoeteck Wee and Vassilis Zikas, respectively, for their help in managing these two papers.

The paper submission, review and discussion processes were effectively and efficiently made possible by the Web-Submission-and-Review software, written by Shai Halevi, and hosted by the IACR. As always, many thanks to Shai for his assistance with the system's various features.

This year the program was further enriched by two invited talks by Léo Ducas (CWI, the Netherlands; "Lattices and Factoring") and Eike Kiltz (Ruhr-Universität Bochum, Germany; "How Provably Secure are (EC)DSA Signatures?"). My special thanks to Lèo and Eike for accepting the invitation and great presentations.

I am also grateful for their predisposition, availability, and efforts (unfortunately not fully realized when we decided to go virtual) to Markulf Kohlweiss and Petros Wallden, who served as General Co-chairs, and to Dimitris Karakostas (all from The

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University of Edinburgh), who managed the conference's website. I finally thank all the authors who submitted papers to this conference, and all the conference attendees who made this event a truly intellectually stimulating one through their active (albeit remote) participation.

Next time, Edinburgh!

March 2021 Juan A. Garay

PKC 2021

The 24th International Conference on Practice and Theory of Public-Key Cryptography

Virtual Event May 10–13, 2021

Organized in cooperation with IACR

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Lattices and Factoring (Abstract of Invited Talk)

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The Netherlands

Abstract. In this talk, I would like to re-popularize two dual ideas that relate Lattices and Factoring. Such a connection may appear surprising at first, but is only one logarithm away: after all, factoring is nothing more than a *multiplicative* knapsack problem, i.e. a subset product problem, where the weights are given by the set of small enough primes.

The first of the two ideas, we owe to Schnorr (1991) and to Adleman (1995). It consists in finding close or short vectors in a carefully crafted lattice, in the hope that they will provide so-called factoring relations. While this idea does not appear to lead to faster factoring algorithms, it remains fascinating and has in fact lead to other major results. Indeed, the Schnorr-Adleman lattice plays a key role in the proof by Ajtai (1998) of the NP-hardness of the shortest vector problem.

The second idea, due to Chor and Rivest (1988) shows a reverse connection: constructing the lattice this time using *discrete* logarithms, they instead solve the bounded distance decoding (BDD) problem through easy factoring instances. Revisiting their idea, Pierrot and I (2018) showed that this was a quite close to an optimal construction for solving BDD in polynomial time. It was in fact the best known such construction until some recent work by Peikert and Mook (2020).

I wish to conclude with an invitation to explore the cryptographic potential of other lattices than the random q-ary lattices—the lattices underlying the Learning with Error problem (LWE) and the Short Integer Solution problem (SIS). While SIS and LWE have shown to be very convenient for constructing the most advanced schemes and protocols, I believe that more general lattices have a yet untapped potential for cryptography.

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