

Basics of Cryptography and Steganography

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Security Requirements

- Alice wants to send a message to Bob. Moreover, Alice wants to send the message securely: Alice wants to make sure Eve cannot read the message.”
 - [Adapted from Schneier, *Applied Cryptography*, 2nd edition, 1996]
- Exercise 1. Draw a picture of this scenario.
- Exercise 2. Discuss Alice’s security requirements, using the terminology developed to date in CompSci 725.
- Exercise 3. In this scenario, Alice is the sender, Bob is the receiver, and Eve is the eavesdropper. Name another actor with an important role in communication security.
 - Sample answers are widely available on the internet, see e.g. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alice_and_Bob.

I'M SURE YOU'VE HEARD ALL ABOUT THIS SORDID AFFAIR IN THOSE GOSSIPY CRYPTOGRAPHIC PROTOCOL SPECS WITH THOSE BUSYBODIES SCHNEIER AND RIVEST, ALWAYS TAKING ALICE'S SIDE, ALWAYS LABELING ME THE ATTACKER.



YES, IT'S TRUE. I BROKE BOB'S PRIVATE KEY AND EXTRACTED THE TEXT OF HER MESSAGES. BUT DOES ANYONE REALIZE HOW MUCH IT HURT?



HE SAID IT WAS NOTHING, BUT EVERYTHING FROM THE PUBLIC-KEY AUTHENTICATED SIGNATURES ON THE FILES TO THE LIPSTICK HEART SMEARED ON THE DISK SCREAMED "ALICE."



I DIDN'T WANT TO BELIEVE. OF COURSE ON SOME LEVEL I REALIZED IT WAS A KNOWN-PLAINTEXT ATTACK. BUT I COULDN'T ADMIT IT UNTIL I SAW FOR MYSELF.



SO BEFORE YOU SO QUICKLY LABEL ME A THIRD PARTY TO THE COMMUNICATION, JUST REMEMBER: I LOVED HIM FIRST. WE HAD SOMETHING AND SHE TORE IT AWAY. SHE'S THE ATTACKER, NOT ME.



NOT EVE.

ALICE AND BOB

[HTTP://XKCD.COM/177/](http://xkcd.com/177/) (CREATIVE COMMONS 2.5 LICENCE)

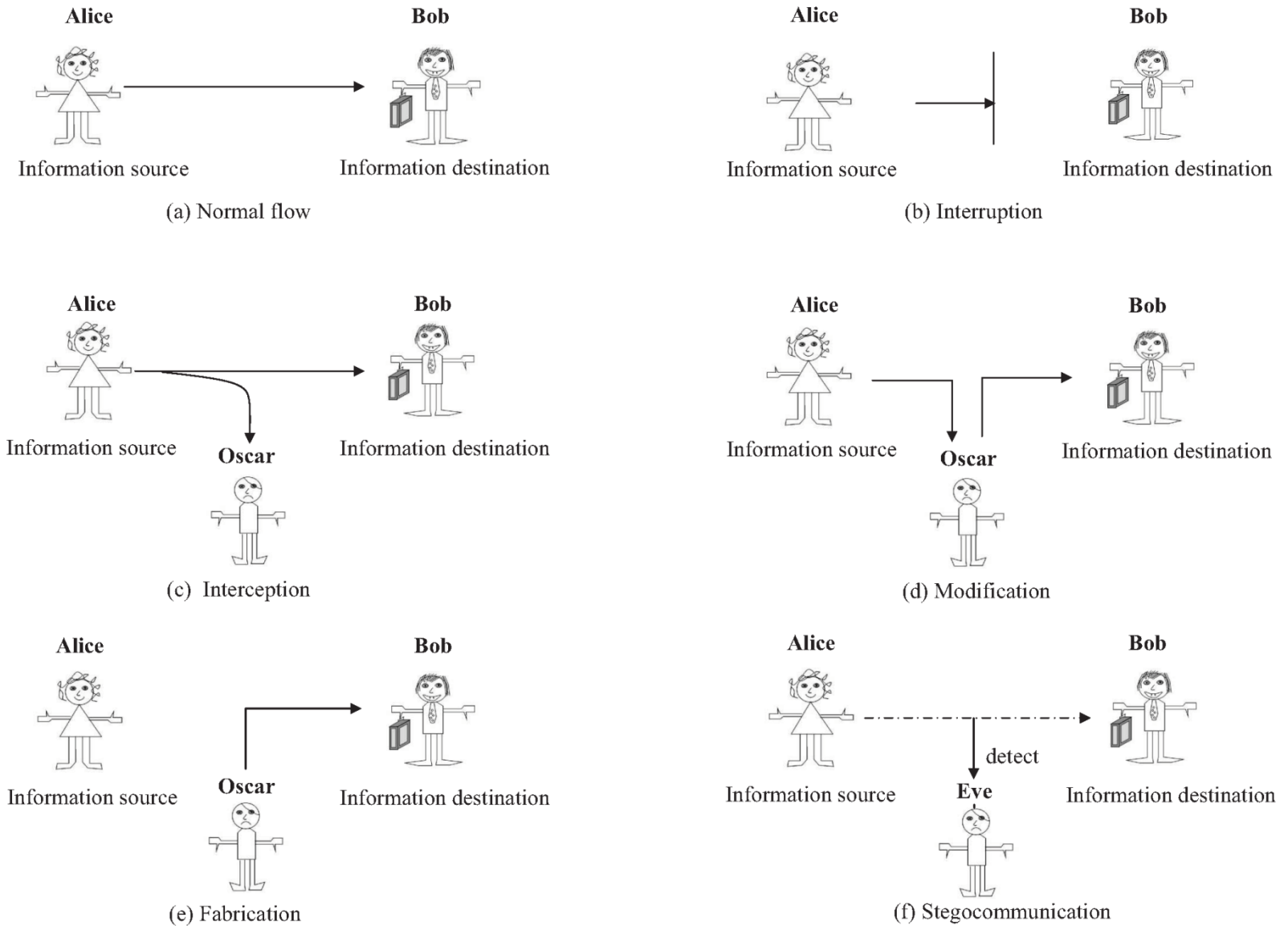


Fig. 1. Normal message flow, and five fundamental threats to this flow.

An Attack Taxonomy for Communication Systems

1. *Interception* (attacker reads the message)
2. *Interruption* (attacker prevents delivery)
3. *Modification* (attacker changes the message)
4. *Fabrication* (attacker injects a message)
 - a) *Impersonation* (attacker pretends to be a legitimate sender or receiver, e.g. this is either a fabrication or an interruption)
5. *Stegocommunication* (Alice and Bob make surreptitious use of a communication system; Eve wears a “white hat”)
6. *Repudiation* (a black-hat Alice falsely asserts she did not send a message to Bob, or a black-hat Bob falsely asserts that he didn't receive a message from Alice); white-hat Judy is the judge.

Symmetric and Public-Key Encryption

- If the decryption key \mathbf{d} can be computed from the encryption key \mathbf{e} , then the algorithm is called *symmetric*.
 - Example: $\mathbf{E}(\mathbf{p}) = (\mathbf{p} + \mathbf{e}) \bmod 256$ is a symmetric (and very weak) encryption of a char \mathbf{p} , because $\mathbf{D}(\mathbf{x}) = (\mathbf{x} + \mathbf{d}) \bmod 256$ is a decryptor when $\mathbf{d} = 256 - \mathbf{e}$.
- If the decryption key cannot be feasibly computed from the encryption key, then the algorithm is called *asymmetric* or *public-key*.

Message Integrity

- Encryption assures confidentiality
 - Assume: the attacker can't discover the key or “crack” the cypher.
- Integrity can also be assured by message codes.
- Sending a plaintext message, plus its Message Authentication Code (MAC), will ensure message integrity to anyone who knows the (shared) secret key.
 - The CBC-MAC is the last ciphertext block from a CBC-mode block cipher.
 - Changing any message bit will change the MAC – this defends against modification.
 - Unless you know the secret key, you can't compute a MAC from the plaintext – this defends against fabrication.
- Keyed hashes (HMACs) are another popular type of MAC.
 - SHA-1 and MD5 are used in SSL
 - To learn more, read Stamp's *Information Security*, 2nd Edition, Wiley, 2011, at pp. 136-7.

Public Key Cryptography

Encryption $E: Plaintext \times EncryptionKey \rightarrow Cyphertext$

Decryption $D: Cyphertext \times DecryptionKey \rightarrow Plaintext$

- The sender must know the encryption key.
- The receiver can decrypt, if they know the decryption key.
- In *public-key cryptography*, we use key-pairs (s, p) , where our secret key s cannot be computed efficiently (as far as anyone knows) from our public key p and our encrypted messages.
 - The algorithms (E, D) are standardized.
 - We let everyone know our public key p .
 - We don't let anyone else know our corresponding secret key s .
 - Anybody can send us encrypted messages using $E(*, p)$.
 - Convenient notation: $\{P\}_{Alice}$ is plaintext P that has been encrypted by a secret key named “Alice”. [Stamp, pp. 89-91, 323]

Authentication in PK Cryptography

- We can use a secret key s to encrypt a message which everyone can decrypt using our corresponding public key p .
 - $E(P, s)$ is a “signed message”. Simpler notation: $[P]_{\text{Alice}}$
 - Only people who know the secret key named “Alice” can create this signature.
 - Anyone who knows the public key for “Alice” can validate this signature.
 - This defends against impersonation and repudiation attacks.
- If you use a key-pair (s, p) for encryption, then you can't use it safely for signing!
 - Do you understand why?

Key Management & Distribution

- We should use many different public/private key pairs:
 - For our email,
 - For our bank account (our partner knows this private key too),
 - For our workgroup (shared with other members), ...
- A “public key infrastructure” (PKI) will help us create, publicise, and discover public keys (p_1, p_2, \dots).
- A “certificate authority” (CA) is a registry for public keys – this is an important part of a PKI..
 - The CA uses one of its signing keys to sign a “certificate” of the form $[name, p]_{CA}$.
 - Anyone who knows the CA’s corresponding public key can verify that p was registered by someone who convinced the CA that they are identified by *name*.
 - Note: we also need some way to discover CAs and their keys... our web browsers help with this...

Some Security Issues with CAs

- The *name* in a certificate might not be a unique identifier for a person or an organisation – there are many people named “John Doe”.
- A CA might register a key to an impersonator.
- The end-user might not inspect the certificate to confirm that
 - *name* is a (reasonably) unique identifier for the person or organisation they are trying to communicate with.

Highly-available Secure Comms

- If a Certificate Authority is offline, or if you can't wait for a response, you will use the public keys stored in your local computer.
 - But! A public key may be revoked at any time, e.g. if someone reports their key was stolen.
- Key Continuity Management is an alternative to CAs.
 - The first time someone presents a key, *you* decide whether or not to accept it.
 - When someone presents a key that you have accepted previously, it's *ok* to accept it again (if you haven't had any bad experiences with this key)
 - If someone presents a changed key, *you* should think carefully before accepting!
 - Secure revocation requires a secure channel e.g. point-to-point for Diffie-Hellman
 - This idea was introduced in SSH, in 1996. It was named, and identified as a general design principle, by Peter Gutmann (<http://www.cs.auckland.ac.nz/~pgut001/>).
 - Reference: Simson Garfinkel, in <http://www.simson.net/thesis/pki3.pdf>

Attacks on Cryptographic Protocols

- A ciphertext may be broken by...
 - Discovering the “restricted” algorithm (if the algorithm doesn’t require a key).
 - Discovering the key by non-cryptographic means (bribery, theft, ‘just asking’).
 - Discovering the key by “brute-force search” (through all possible keys).
 - Discovering the key by cryptanalysis based on other information, such as known pairs of (plaintext, ciphertext).
- The weakest point in the system is unlikely to be its cryptography!
 - See Ferguson & Schneier, *Practical Cryptography*, 2003.
 - For example: you should consider what identification was required, when a CA accepted a key, before you accept any public key from this CA as a “proof of identity”.

Identification and Authentication

- You can authenticate your identity to a local machine by
 - what you have (e.g. a smart card),
 - what you know (e.g. a password),
 - what you “are” (e.g. your thumbprint or handwriting)
- After you have authenticated yourself locally, then you can use cryptographic protocols to...
 - ... authenticate your outgoing messages (if others know your public key);
 - ... verify the integrity of your incoming messages (if you know your correspondents’ public keys);
 - ... send confidential messages to other people (if you know their public keys).
 - Warning: you (and others) must trust the operations of your local machine! We’ll return to this subject...

Steganography

- The art of sending undetectable messages.
 - The primary goal of the wardens is detection of stegocommunication.
 - The primary goal of the prisoners is **availability**.
 - It's up to the analyst to decide the colours of the hats!
 - Steganography, like cryptography, may be used by black-hats or white-hats.
- Steganography is *complementary* to cryptography.
 - Using strong cryptography, Alice and Bob achieve **confidentiality** and **integrity**.
 - Alice and Bob should use steganography if they're worried about **availability** or **traffic analysis**.
 - Cryptographic communications are “obviously” encrypted.
 - If warden Walter can't understand what Alice is saying...
 - Should he punish Alice for sending an encrypted message?
 - Should he prevent Alice's encrypted message from reaching Bob?
 - Should he carefully watch Bob, after allowing him to read the message?

Wardens and Prisoners

- “On July 17 [1965], a prisoner [in Mt Eden Prison] asked a guard to pass a newspaper to another prisoner in another cell.
- “The guard found a coded note in its pages.
 - Unable to decipher the message he simply copied it for the file.
- “**Inexplicably, he then delivered the newspaper and its mysterious contents.**
 - If that note had been successfully read, what occurred next would have been avoided.
 - ... The prisoners began smashing up the central office and set it on fire at the same time other prisoners were being unlocked.
 - What the *Herald* would later call a ‘wild orgy of destruction’ ensured firefighters entering the jail were forced to retreat. ...”

[“The night all hell broke loose at Mt Eden Prison”, NZ Herald, 28 July 2015]

Watermarking, Tamper-Proofing and Obfuscation – Tools for Software Protection

Christian Collberg & Clark Thomborson

IEEE Transactions on Software Engineering
28:8, 735-746, August 2002.

DOI: [10.1109/TSE.2002.1027797](https://doi.org/10.1109/TSE.2002.1027797)

Watermarking and Fingerprinting

Watermark: an additional message, embedded into a cover message.



- Messages may be images, audio, video, text, executables, ...
- **Visible** or **invisible** (steganographic) embeddings
- **Robust** (difficult to remove) or **fragile** (guaranteed to be removed) if cover is distorted.
- **Watermarking** (only one extra message per cover) or **fingerprinting** (different versions of the cover carry different messages).

Our Desiderata for (Robust, Invisible) SW Watermarks

- Watermarks should be **stealthy** -- difficult for an adversary to locate.
- Watermarks should be **resilient** to attack -- resisting attempts at removal even if they are located.
- Watermarks should have a **high data-rate** -- so that we can store a meaningful message without significantly increasing the size of the object.

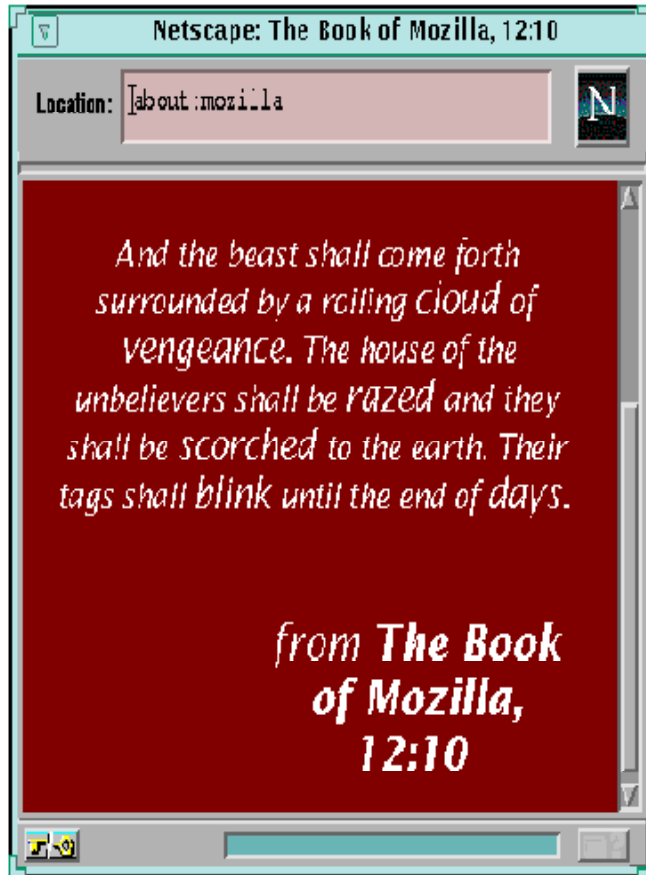
Attacks on Watermarks

- **Subtractive** attacks: remove the watermark (WM) without damaging the cover.
- **Additive** attacks: add a new WM without revealing “which WM was added first”.
- **Distortive** attacks: modify the WM without damaging the cover.
- **Collusive** attacks: examine two fingerprinted objects, or a watermarked object and its unwatermarked cover; find the differences; construct a new object without a recognisable mark.

Defenses for Robust Software Watermarks

- **Obfuscation**: we can modify the software, so that a reverse engineer will have great difficulty figuring out how to reproduce the cover without also reproducing the WM.
- **Tamperproofing**: we can add integrity-checking code that (almost always) renders it unusable if the object is modified.

Easter Eggs

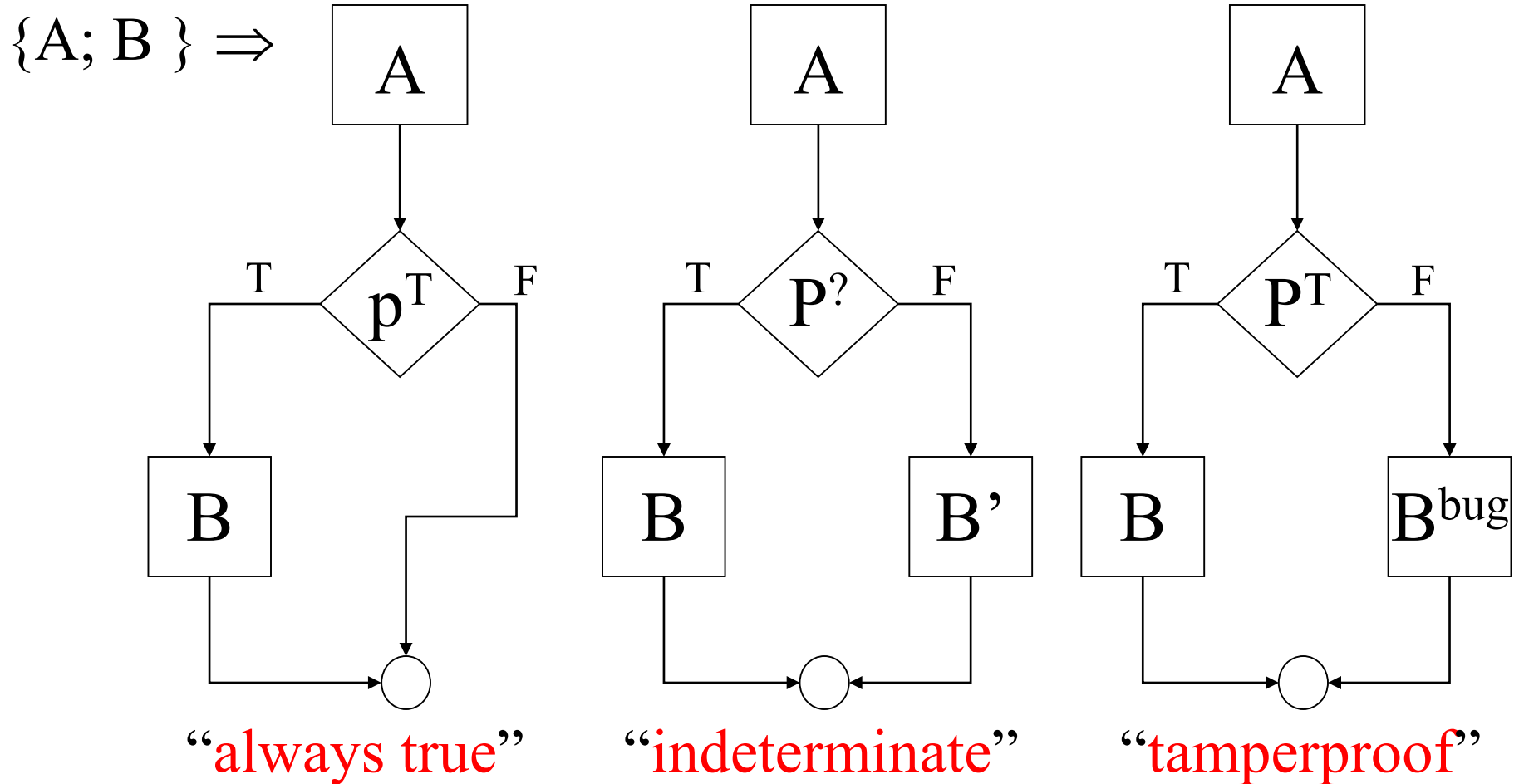


- The watermark is visible -- if you know where to look!
- Not resilient, once the secret is out.
- See eeggs.com

Software Obfuscation

- Many authors, websites and even a few commercial products offer “automatic obfuscation” as a defense against reverse engineering.
- Existing products generally operate at the lexical level of software, for example by removing or scrambling the names of identifiers.
- We were the first (in 1997) to use “opaque predicates” to obfuscate the control structure of software.

Opaque Predicates



State of the Art for Dark Security

- Software obfuscation makes it *more difficult* for pirates to defeat standard tamperproofing mechanisms, or to engage in other forms of reverse engineering.
- Software watermarking embeds “ownership marks” in software, making it *more difficult* for anyone to be confident that
 - they have “removed all the marks”, or
 - can avoid all watermark detectors, or
 - can subvert all watermark detectors they can’t avoid.
- Software steganography is immature:
 - More R&D is required before robust obfuscating and watermarking tools will be easy to use *and* offer a significant security advantage.
 - Dalvik and Java bytecodes are routinely obfuscated; but this is mostly lex-level obfuscation, so is analogous to routinely suppressing the symbol table when releasing machine-coded software.
 - There are no axiomatic systems with real-world validity which support proofs of security. (I’m currently working on this...)