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Information technology — Security techniques — Entity authentication —

Part 6: Mechanisms using manual data transfer

Technologies de l'information — Techniques de sécurité — Authentification d'entité —

Partie 6: Mécanismes utilisant un transfert manuel de données

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Foreword

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ISO/IEC 9798-6 was prepared by Joint Technical Committee ISO/IEC JTC 1, *Information technology*, Subcommittee SC 27, *IT Security techniques*.

ISO/IEC 9798 consists of the following parts, under the general title *Information technology — Security techniques — Entity authentication*:

— *Part 1: General*

— *Part 2: Mechanisms using symmetric encipherment algorithms*

— *Part 3: Mechanisms using digital signature techniques*

— *Part 4: Mechanisms using a cryptographic check function*

— *Part 5: Mechanisms using zero-knowledge techniques*

— *Part 6: Mechanisms using manual data transfer*

Introduction

Within networks of communicating devices it is often necessary for two devices to perform an entity authentication procedure using a channel which may be subject to both passive and active attacks, where an active attack may include a malicious third party introducing data into the channel and/or modifying, deleting or repeating data legitimately sent on the channel. Other parts of this International Standard describe entity authentication mechanisms applicable when the two devices share a secret key, or where one device has an authenticated copy of a public key for the other device.

In this part of ISO/IEC 9798, entity authentication mechanisms, referred to as manual authentication mechanisms, are specified where there is no such assumption of pre-established keying relationships. Instead entity authentication is achieved by manually transferring short data strings from one device to the other, or by manually comparing short data strings output by the two devices.

For the purposes of this part of ISO/IEC 9798, the meaning of the term entity authentication is different to the meaning applied in other parts of ISO/IEC 9798. Instead of one device verifying that the other device has a claimed identity (and vice versa), both devices in possession of a user verify that they correctly share a data string with the other device at the time of execution of the mechanism. Of course, this data string could contain identifiers for one or both of the devices.

As described in informative annexes A and B a manual authentication mechanism may be used as the basis for secret key establishment or reliable exchange of public keys. A manual authentication mechanism could also be used for reliable exchange of other secret or public security parameters, including security policy statements or timestamps.

Information technology — Security techniques — Entity authentication —

Part 6: Mechanisms using manual data transfer

1 Scope

This part of ISO/IEC 9798 specifies four entity authentication mechanisms based on manual data transfer between authenticating devices. As described in Annexes A and B, these mechanisms may be used to support key management functions; guidance on secure choice of parameters for the mechanisms is provided in Annex C.

Such mechanisms may be appropriate in a variety of circumstances. One such application occurs in personal networks, where the owner of two personal devices capable of wireless communications wishes them to perform an entity authentication procedure as part of the process of preparing them for use in the network.

2 Normative references

The following referenced documents are indispensable for the application of this document. For dated references, only the edition cited applies. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

ISO/IEC 9798-1:1997, *Information technology — Security techniques — Entity authentication — Part 1: General*

3 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this document, the terms and definitions given in ISO/IEC 9798-1 and the following apply.

3.1
check-value
string of bits, computed as the output of a check-value function, sent from the data originator to data recipient that enables the recipient of data to check its correctness

3.2
check-value function
function f which maps strings of bits and a short secret key, i.e. a key that can readily be entered into or read from a user device, to fixed-length strings of bits, satisfying the following properties:

— for any key k and any input string d, the function $f(d, k)$ can be computed efficiently;

— it shall be computationally infeasible to find a pair of data strings (d, d') for which the number of keys which satisfy $f(d, k) = f(d', k)$ is more than a small fraction of the possible set of keys.

NOTE 1 In practice, a short key would typically contain 4-6 digits or alphanumeric characters.

NOTE 2 In practice, security is maximized if the set of possible outputs from the check-value function is the same size as the set of possible keys.

3.3
data origin authentication
corroboration that the source of data received is as claimed

[ISO 7498-2]

3.4
manual authentication certificate
combination of a secret key and a check value generated by one of the two devices engaging in manual authentication, with the property that, when entered into the other device, these values can be used to complete the manual authentication process at some later time

3.5
Message Authentication Code
MAC
string of bits which is the output of a MAC algorithm

[ISO/IEC 9797-1]

3.6
Message Authentication Code algorithm
MAC algorithm
algorithm for computing a function which maps strings of bits and a secret key to fixed-length strings of bits, satisfying the following properties:

— for any key and any input string the function can be computed efficiently;

— for any fixed key, and given no prior knowledge of the key, it is computationally infeasible to compute the function value on any new input string, even given knowledge of the set of input strings and corresponding function values, where the value of the ith input string may have been chosen after observing the value of the first i-1 function values.

[ISO/IEC 9797-1]

3.7
manual entity authentication
process achieving entity authentication between two devices using a combination of message exchanges via a (potentially insecure) communications channel and the manual transfer of limited amounts of data between the devices

3.8
simple input interface
interface for a device that shall allow the user to indicate to the device the successful or unsuccessful completion of a procedure, e.g. as could be implemented as a pair of buttons or a single button which is either pressed or not within a certain time interval

3.9
simple output interface
interface for a device that shall allow the device to indicate to the user the successful or unsuccessful completion of a procedure, e.g. as could be implemented by red and green lights or as single light which is lit in different ways to indicate success or failure

4 Symbols and abbreviated terms

A, B	Labels used for the two devices engaging in a manual entity authentication mechanism
D	Data string whose value is established between devices A and B as the result of performing a manual entity authentication mechanism

I_A, I_B — Distinguishing identifiers of *A* and *B* respectively.

K — (Short) secret key used with a check-value function in mechanisms 1 and 2

K_A, K_{Ai}, K_B, K_{Bi} — Random MAC keys used in mechanisms 3 and 4

MAC — Message Authentication Code

R — (Short) random bit-string used in mechanisms 3 and 4

5 Requirements

The authentication mechanisms specified in this part of ISO/IEC 9798 have the following requirements.

a) The pair of devices performing the manual authentication procedure shall be connected via a communications link (e.g. a wireless link). No security assumptions are made regarding this link; that is, the mechanisms are designed to operate securely even in an environment where an attacker can monitor and change data transferred on this link.

b) The pair of devices performing the manual authentication procedure shall both have a user interface capable of data input and data output.

c) The user data input interface for a device shall, at minimum, be capable of indicating successful or unsuccessful completion of a procedure (e.g. as could be implemented by using either two buttons or a single button which is either pressed or not within a certain time interval); such a means of data input is referred to below as a *simple* input interface. By contrast, a *standard* input interface shall provide means for the input of a short string of symbols, e.g. a numeric, hexadecimal or alphanumeric keypad. Unless explicitly stated otherwise, it is necessary that every device has a standard means of data input.

d) The user data output interface for a device shall, at minimum, be capable of indicating either success or failure of an authentication procedure (e.g. as could be implemented by means of red and green lights); such a means of data output is referred to below as a *simple* output interface. By contrast, a *standard* output interface shall provide means for the output of a short string of symbols, e.g. a numeric, hexadecimal or alphanumeric display. Unless explicitly stated otherwise, it is necessary that every device has a standard means of data output.

e) For mechanisms 1 and 2, the two devices performing the entity authentication procedure shall have agreed on the use of a specific check-value function, and shall have the means to implement this function.

NOTE Guidance on appropriate choices for check-value functions and lengths for check-values and random keys for use in mechanisms 1 and 2 is provided in Annex C. A construction for an unconditionally secure check-value function suitable for use with mechanisms 1 and 2 is given in Annex D.

f) For mechanisms 3 and 4, the two devices performing the entity authentication procedure shall have agreed on the use of a specific MAC algorithm, and shall have the means to implement this algorithm.

NOTE Guidance on appropriate choices for MAC algorithms and lengths for MACs and random keys for use in mechanisms 3 and 4 is provided in Annex C.

g) Prior to invocation of one of the manual authentication mechanisms, the two devices performing the mechanism shall have exchanged a data string D. This may be generated by one device and sent to the other device, or it may consist of the concatenation of data generated by both devices and sent in both directions across the communications link.

h) Either a single human user shall be in possession of both devices and shall operate them both, or the two devices shall be operated by two users who share a trusted means of communication.

6 Mechanisms using a short check-value

6.1 General

In this clause two manual authentication mechanisms are specified that are based on the use of a check-value. The two mechanisms are appropriate for different types of devices. Specifically,

— the first mechanism (mechanism 1) is appropriate for the case where one device has a simple input interface and the other has a simple output interface, and

— the second mechanism (mechanism 2) is appropriate for the case where both devices have a simple input interface.

A standard input or output interface can emulate a simple interface, and hence if both devices have standard input and output interfaces then either of the mechanisms may be used.

Both mechanisms operate in the following general way. A data string D is transferred from one device to the other (or is the concatenation of data transferred in both directions) via the communications link between them. The manual entity authentication mechanism is then executed. As a result of the mechanism both devices are provided with assurance that the data string D they possess is the same as the value held by the other device.

6.2 Mechanism 1 – One device with simple input, one device with simple output

6.2.1 Requirements

This mechanism has the following specific requirements.

a) The mechanism specified in this subclause is appropriate for the case where one device (device A) has a simple input interface and the other (device B) has a simple output interface.

b) Device A shall have the means to generate keys.

6.2.2 Specification of data exchanged

The following data exchanges and operations shall take place (see also Figure 1).

a) Both devices shall output a signal to acknowledge that they have received data D and that they are ready for the authentication mechanism to commence. On observing that both devices are ready, the user shall then enter a signal into device A to notify it that the mechanism can start.

b) Device A shall generate a random key K, where K is suitable for use with the check-value function shared by the two components. Using this key K, device A shall compute a check-value as a function of the data D. The check-value and the key K shall then be output via the output interface of device A. The user shall read the check-value and the key K from the output interface.

c) The user shall enter the check-value and the key K output by device A to device B using its input interface. Device B shall use the key K to re-compute the check-value as a function of its stored version of data D. If the two check-values agree, then device B shall output a success signal to the user via its simple output interface. Otherwise it shall give a failure signal.

d) The user shall enter the result output by device B, i.e. success or failure, into device A via its simple input interface.

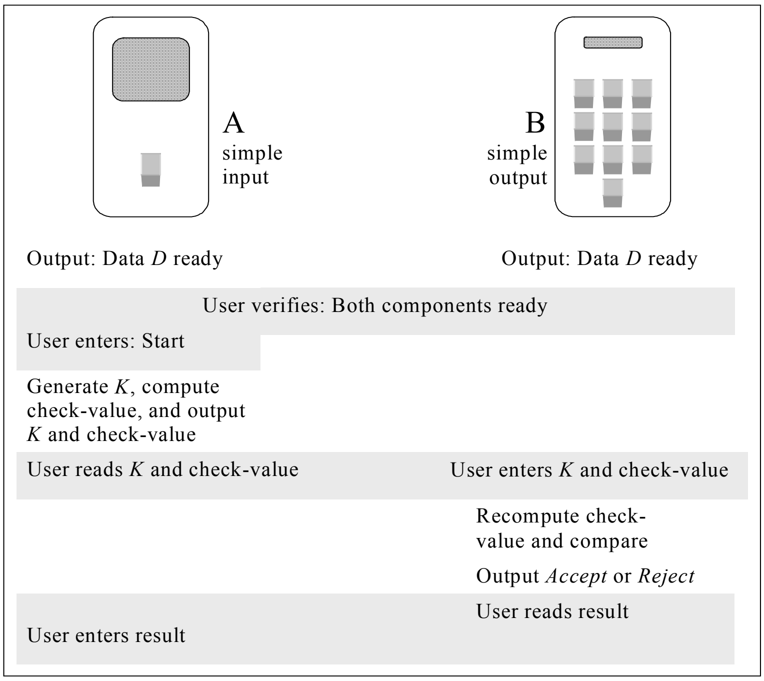

Figure 1 — Manual authentication mechanism 1

6.2.3 Manual authentication certificates

Manual authentication mechanism 1 has the property that no authentication information is transmitted over the insecure channel. Therefore, it does not affect the security of the mechanism if the manual authentication values K and check-value are transferred from device A to device B before the latter has received the actual data D. Naturally, such an approach is applicable only to situations where device A generates the data D. However, in such a case, mechanism 1 offers a means of authenticating data to be received at some later time. Such authentication means is called a manual authentication certificate. A protocol for data origin authentication using a manual authentication certificate is now specified (with the same requirements as specified in subclause 6.2.1). Note that this protocol does not provide entity authentication.

Suppose device A has data D that needs to be sent to device B at some later time.

a) Device A generates a random key K, where K is suitable for use with the check-value function shared by the two devices. Using this key K, device A computes a check-value as a function of the data D. The check-value and the key K are then output to the user by the output interface of device A. The user reads the output check-value and key K.

b) The user enters the check-value and key K output from device A to the input interface of device B. The key K and the check-value are stored in device B.

c) When device B at some later time receives data D, it can verify the authenticity of the data using the stored values of K and check-value. Device B uses the key K to recompute the check-value as a function of the received data D. If the two check-values agree then device B accepts the data and outputs a success signal to the user. Otherwise it gives a failure signal.

The manual authentication certificate consists of K and the check-value computed as a function of K and D.

NOTE An example of data that could be included in D are a public key of a device, its identity, the domain of service, etc. In Annex A an example is provided of how manual authentication certificates can be used to establish a shared secret key between two devices.