# Introduction to Quantum Computing – Quantum Applications

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CMS-UTSC/SciNet



#### Today's lecture

The goal for this session is to discuss how some applications/algorithms for quantum computers work and can be implemented.

We will discuss the following topics:

- Shor's Algorithm
   Modular arithmetics Quantum Phase Estimation RSA Basics
   Classical Factorization Period Estimation (QFT)
- Post Quantum Cryptography
- Concluding remarks



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Material based on Xanadu's codebook and PennyLane documentation.



Please stop me if you have any questions or doubts.



Shor's Algorihtm

#### **Shor's Algorithm**

- One of the most famous algorithms in quantum computing.
- Originally developed in 1994 by Peter Shor, way before a QC was even on a blue print.
- It is a QC algorithm for finding the prime factors of an integer.
- It mixes classical and quantum procedures to solve the problem of factoring numbers.
- This posses serious concerns, basically breaks our typical cryptographic techniques.
- In particular, the RSA system is based on the fact that factorizing large numbers cannot be achieved efficiently.

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E.g.  $13 \equiv \overline{3} \pmod{5}$ , since  $13 - \overline{3} = 10$  and and 10 is a multiple of 5.



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#### **Basic Arithmetics**

Within modular arithmetic, the equivalence is maintained after addition, multiplication, or exponentiation.

$$a \equiv b \pmod{m} \Rightarrow a + n \equiv b + n$$
  
(mod  $m$ ),  $\forall n \in \mathbb{Z}$ 

$$a \equiv b \pmod{m} \Rightarrow a \cdot n \equiv b \cdot n$$
 (mod  $m$ ),  $\forall n \in \mathbb{Z}$ 

$$a \equiv b \pmod{m} \Rightarrow a^n \equiv b^n \pmod{m}, \ \forall n \in \mathbb{Z}^+$$

#### Inverse of a number

An integer c is inverse of a modulo m if  $ac \equiv 1 \pmod{m}$ .

For example, the inverse of 5 modulo 7 is 3 since  $5 \cdot 3 \equiv 15 \pmod{7}$ .

However, not all numbers have inverses since, for example, if we work with modulo 15, there is no integer c such that  $5c \equiv 1 \pmod{15}$ .

The numbers that do not have an inverse are those that are not coprime with the modulus m, that is, if a and m have some common factor then a will not have an inverse.



## Nontrivial square root of m Defined as that number x which

satisfies, 
$$x^2 = 1 \pmod{m}$$

where  $oldsymbol{x}$  is an integer such that

$$x \in \{2, m-2\}$$

For example, 5 is a nontrivial square root of 12. That is because

$$5^2 \equiv 25 \equiv 1 \pmod{12}$$
.

This nontrivial square root will always exist and does not necessarily have to be unique.

Also, 
$$x = x^{-1} \pmod{m}$$
,  $x \neq \pm 1$ 



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#### Classical Factorization – GCD

Given two integers, the Greatest

Common Denominator (GCD) is the

largest possible product using the common prime factors.

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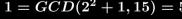
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E.g. 
$$2^4 \equiv 1 \pmod{15}$$

$$2^4 = (2^2)^2 \equiv 1 \; (\mathsf{mod} \; 15)$$

$$\Rightarrow \begin{array}{l} p = GCD(2^2 - 1, 15) = 3 \\ 1 = GCD(2^2 + 1, 15) = 5 \end{array}$$





#### Hands-On: Modular Arithmetic

Implement a function which, given three arguments a, b and m, tells us whether  $a \equiv b \pmod{m}$ 



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Implement a function which, given three arguments a, b and m, tells us whether  $a \equiv b \pmod{m}$ 

```
def is_equivalent(a, b, m):
    return ((a-b) \% m == 0)
print(f"13_=_7_(6)_is_{is_equivalent(13,_7,_6)}")
```



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Implement a function in which given a and m, indicates if there is an inverse for the number a modulo m.



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def has_inverse(a, m):
    """Returns a boolean indicating whether a number has an inverse modulo m.

Args:
    a (int): Number to find the inverse modulus m.
    m (int): Modulus of the equivalence.

Returns:
    bool: True if c exists (ac = 1 (m)), False otherwise
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    bool: True if c exists (ac = 1 (m)), False otherwise
"""
```

```
for c in range(a):
    if ( (a*c-1) % m == 0 ):
        return True
    return False

print("(5,15)", has_inverse(5,15))
print("(7,15)", has_inverse(7,15))
```

```
(5,15) False (7,15) False
```



#### **Period Finding**

Factorizing a number 
$$=$$
  $\underbrace{\text{non-trivial square roots}}_{\text{quantum alg.}} + \text{determine prime factors}$ 

#### **Period Finding**

the purpose of this algorithm is, given an operator U and a state  $|\psi\rangle$ , to find an integer r such that:  $U^r|\psi\rangle = |\psi\rangle$ 

the period depends on both the operator and the chosen state.

$$r
ightarrow$$
 period,  $U^{r+m}\ket{\psi}=U^{m}\ket{\psi}, orall m\in\mathbb{Z}$ 

Finding is one of those problems that can efficiently by tackled with a quantum computer.

Let's assume that we have an state  $\ket{\Psi_0}=rac{1}{\sqrt{r}}(\ket{\phi}+U\ket{\phi}+\cdots+U^{r-1}\ket{\phi})$ 



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Considering that  $U^r | \phi \rangle = | \phi \rangle$ , then we get

$$U\ket{\Psi_0} = \frac{1}{\sqrt{r}}(U\ket{\phi} + U^2\ket{\phi} + \dots + \ket{\phi}) = \ket{\Psi_0}$$



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Considering, 
$$|\Psi_1
angle = rac{1}{\sqrt{r}}(|\phi
angle + \exp\left[rac{-2\pi i}{r}
ight]U\ket{\phi} + \ket{\phi} + \exp\left[rac{-2\pi i}{r} imes 2
ight]U^2\ket{\phi} + \cdots + \exp\left[rac{-2\pi i}{r} imes (r-1)
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i.e. adding an additional phase in each ot the terms.



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Applying U to  $|\Psi_1\rangle$ , we can show that  $|\Psi_1\rangle$  is also an eigenvector of U but with a different eigenvalue.  $U\,|\Psi_1\rangle=\exp\left[\frac{-2\pi i}{r}\right]|\Psi_1\rangle$ 

#### **Period Finding – generalization**

Let's consider now,

$$|\Psi_s
angle = rac{1}{r}\left(|\phi
angle + e^{\left[-rac{2\pi i}{r}s
ight]}U\left|\phi
angle + e^{\left[-rac{2\pi i}{r}2s
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angle + \cdots + e^{\left[-rac{2\pi i}{r}(r-1)s
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with  $s \in \mathbb{Z}$  between 0 and r-1



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$$\Rightarrow |\Psi_s
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#### QPE = Quantum Phase Estimation computes the eigenvalue associated with an eigenvector



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Let's consider now,

$$|\Psi_s\rangle = \frac{1}{r} \left( |\phi\rangle + e^{\left[-\frac{2\pi i}{r}s\right]} U |\phi\rangle + e^{\left[-\frac{2\pi i}{r}2s\right]} U^2 |\phi\rangle + \dots + e^{\left[-\frac{2\pi i}{r}(r-1)s\right]} U^{(r-1)} |\phi\rangle \right)$$

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# QPE = Quantum Phase Estimation computes the eigenvalue associated with an eigenvector

I.e. if we could obtain any of these states  $|\Psi_s\rangle$  and by applying the quantum phase estimation (QPE) algorithm, we could then obtain  $\frac{r}{s} \Rightarrow$  period!



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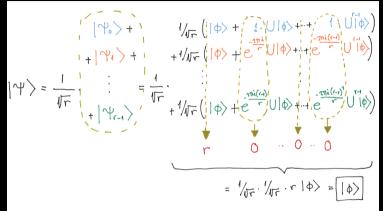
However, there is a "chicken-egg" situation here...



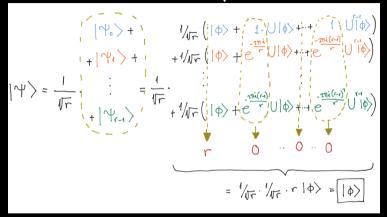
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$$\sum_{k=0}^{r-1} e^{\left[-\frac{2\pi i}{r}k\right]} = 0$$



$$| \psi_{\circ} \rangle + | \psi_$$

$$\sum_{k=0}^{r-1} e^{\left[-\frac{2\pi i}{r}k\right]} = 0$$

 $| \cdot \cdot | \phi \rangle$  is just the superposition of all  $| \Psi_s \rangle$ 



$$| \psi \rangle = \frac{1}{\sqrt{r}} \left( | \phi \rangle + \frac{1}{\sqrt{r}} \left( | \phi \rangle + \frac{2\pi i (r-1)}{\sqrt{r}} \right) \right) \right)$$

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Applying the QPE alg to the operator  $U \mid \phi 
angle \leadsto$  superposition of all  $rac{r}{s}, s \in \{0, r-1\}$ 

$$| \psi \rangle = \frac{1}{\sqrt{r}} \left( \frac{1}{\sqrt{r}} + \frac{1}{\sqrt{r}} \frac{1}{\sqrt{r}} + \frac{1}{\sqrt{r}} \frac{1}{$$

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Intro to Quantum Computing - Applications

Measurements ightarrow decimal numbers ightarrow fraction  $rac{r}{s} \Rightarrow r$ 

# **Period Finding - Recap**



## Period Finding - Recap

OBJECTIVE: Obtain the period from decimals

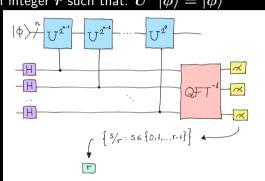


## **Period Finding - Recap**

OBJECTIVE: Obtain the period from decimals

Given an operator U and a state  $|\phi\rangle$ , find an integer r such that:  $U^r |\phi\rangle = |\phi\rangle$ 

Quantum Phase Estimation (QPE) on this state, will receive a superposition of states with amplitudes containing the different values of  $\frac{s}{r}$ , and by performing a series of measurements, will recover the value of r.



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⇒ qml.QuantumPhaseEstimation

https://pennylane.readthedocs.io/en/stable/code/api/pennylane

QuantumPhaseEstimation.html



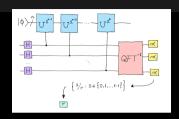
After obtaining the potential r values, one would take the **largest** of all possible fractions or, more efficiently, calculate the **least common multiple** of all of them.



## **QPE** – Hands-on

Implement the QPE circuit for the state  $|0001\rangle$  Useful functions:

qml.QuantumPhaseEstimation, get\_unitary\_matrix, get\_phase



(Credit: Xanadu)



## QPE - Hands-on

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qml.QuantumPhaseEstimation, get\_unitary\_matrix, get\_phase

```
| $\frac{1}{2} \cdot \sigma \frac{1}{2} \cdot
```

(Credit: Xanadu)

```
def U():
    qml.SWAP(wires=[2,3])
    qml.SWAP(wires=[1,2])
    qml.SWAP(wires=[0,1])
    for i in range(4):
        qml.PauliX(wires=i)

matrix = get_unitary_matrix(U, wire_order=range(4))()

n_target_wires = 4
target_wires = range(n_target_wires)
n_estimation_wires = 3
estimation_wires = range(4, 4 + n_estimation_wires)

14
15
```





```
@qml.qnode(dev)
def circuit(matrix):
    gml.PauliX(wires=3)
    qml.QuantumPhaseEstimation(matrix,target_wires,estimation_wires)
    return qml.sample(wires=estimation_wires)
```



```
@aml.anode(dev)
def circuit(matrix):
    gml.PauliX(wires=3)
    qml.QuantumPhaseEstimation(matrix,target_wires,estimation_wires)
    return qml.sample(wires=estimation_wires)
```

```
SCHOOL SERVICES OF THE SERVICE
```

def get\_phase(matrix):

binary = "".join([str(b) for b in circuit(matrix)])
return int(binary, 2) / 2 \*\* n\_estimation\_wires

```
1 for i in range(5):
2     print(circuit(matrix))
3     print(f"shot_{i+1}, _phase:", get_phase(matrix))
```

```
[1 1 0]

shot 1, phase: 0.25

[0 1 0]

shot 2, phase: 0.5

[1 0 0]

shot 3, phase: 0.25

[1 0 0]

shot 4, phase: 0.25

[1 1 0]

shot 5, phase: 0.0
```



## Hands-on: Period Finding i

```
def U():
    qml.SWAP(wires=[2,3])
    qml.SWAP(wires=[1,2])
    qml.SWAP(wires=[0,1])
    for i in range(4):
        qml.PauliX(wires=i)

matrix = get_unitary_matrix(U, wire_order=range(4))()

target_wires = range(4)
    n_estimation_wires = 3
estimation_wires = range(4, 4 + n_estimation_wires)
```



## Hands-on: Period Finding ii

```
get_period(matrix):
shots = 10
for i in range(shots):
    phase = Fraction(get_phase(matrix)).denominator
    if (phase > r):
        r = phase
    print(f"shot_{i+1}, _phase: ", phase, Fraction(phase))
return(r)
```

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## Hands-on: Period Finding iii

```
print(get_period(matrix))
```

```
shot 1, phase: 4 4
shot 2, phase: 4 4
shot 3, phase: 2 2
shot 4, phase: 4 4
shot 5, phase: 4 4
shot 6, phase: 2 2
shot 7, phase: 1 1
shot 8, phase: 4 4
shot 9, phase: 1 1
shot 10, phase: 4 4
```



Nontrivial square root:  $x^2 \equiv 1 \pmod{N}$ , or more generally,  $x^r \equiv 1 \pmod{N}$  with r an even number.



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Let's define the following function,  $f_{N,a}(m) = a^m \pmod{m}$ 

We want to know which m satisfies  $f_{N,a}(m)=1$ , i.e.  $a^m\equiv 1\pmod m$ , because if m is even  $\Rightarrow$  nontrivial square root.



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Let's define the following function,  $f_{N,a}(m) = a^m \pmod m$ 

We want to know which m satisfies  $f_{N,a}(m)=1$ , i.e.  $a^m\equiv 1\pmod m$ , because if m is even  $\Rightarrow$  nontrivial square root.

Also, by the defn. f is a periodic function with period m

 $\Rightarrow$  finding the period  $\approx$  finding the nontrivial square root.



Shor's alg. proposes to define an operator  $U_{N,a}$  such that  $\ket{U_{N,a}^m\ket{1}}=\ket{f_{N,a}(m)}$ 

$$U_{N,a}^m\ket{1}=\ket{f_{N,a}(m)}$$

 $\Rightarrow$  finding an r such that  $f_{N,a}^r=1$  would be equivalent to finding the minimum rsuch that  $U_{N,a}^r|1\rangle \equiv |1\rangle \Leftarrow$  period finding alg.

#### **Full Algorithm**

- 1. Select a random number a between 2 and N-2(Classical).
- 2. Check that a and N are not coprime numbers (Classical).
- 3. Construct the operator  $U_{N,a}$  and calculate its period r(Period Finding: Quantum).
- 4. If r is odd, go back to step 1.
- 5. Compute the nontrivial square root x as  $a^{r/2}$  (Classical).
- 6. Compute the factors of N as GCD(x-1, ) and GCD(x+1,N) (Classical).



# **Shor's Algorithm – Some Observations**

- $U_{N,a}$  can only be implemented in a QC if a and N are coprime, oherwise there could be  $2 \neq$  elements  $|x\rangle$  and  $|y\rangle$  such that  $U\,|x\rangle=U\,|y\rangle\Rightarrow U$  would not be invertible
- Shor's algorithm only uses quantum computation to find the period of the function
- Currently, quantum computers have proven to be much more efficient in a reduced set of algorithms, among which is the finding period of this type of functions
- Shor's insight was to translate the factorization of prime numbers to period finding one



## Shor's Algorithm – Hands-on i

Implement the following helper functions:

is\_coprime receives two integers and returns True if they are *coprime* or False otherwise.

is\_odd given an integer returns True if it is odd and False otherwise.

is\_not\_one given x and N, determine if  $x\not\equiv\pm 1\pmod N$ . Return False if they are equal.

#### Obs:

Coprime numbers are those numbers that have only one common factor, namely 1. That means a pair of numbers are said to be co prime when they have their highest common factor as 1.



## Shor's Algorithm - Hands-on ii

```
def is_coprime(a, N):
    """Determine if two numbers are coprime.

Args:
    a (int): First number to check if is coprime with the other.
    N (int): Second number to check if is coprime with the other.

Returns:
    bool: True if they are coprime numbers, False otherwise.

"""

if np.gcd(a,N) == 1:
    return True
    else:
    return False
```



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# Shor's Algorithm - Hands-on iii

```
def is_odd(r):
    """Determine if a number is odd.

Args:
    r (int): Integer to check if is an odd number.

Returns:
    bool: True if it is odd, False otherwise.

"""

if (r % 2 == 0):
    return False
else:
    return True
```



## Shor's Algorithm – Hands-on iv

```
def is_not_one(x, N):
    if ((x-1)\%N==0) or ((x+1)\%N==0):
        return False
        return True
```



## Shor's Algorithm - Hands-on v

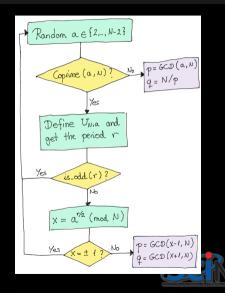
```
print("3_and_12_are_coprime_numbers:_", is_coprime(3,12))
print("5_is_odd:_", is_odd(5))
 print("4_is_not_one_mod_5:_", is_not_one(4,5))
```



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## Hands-on: Shor's Algorithm complete implementation

Implement Shor's algorithm as shown in the flow diagram:



The RSA System

# Cryptography - Some Basic Definitions i

**Encryption** The process of converting the message from its plaintext to ciphertext Plaintext The message in its natural format has not been turned into a secret.

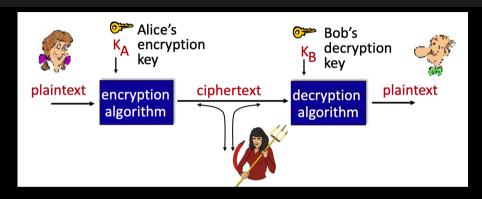
**Ciphertext** The altered form of a plaintext message, so as to be unreadable for anyone except the intended recipients. Something that has been turned into a secret.

Hash function Function that accepts an input message of any length and generates, through a one-way operation, a fixed-length output called a message digest or hash.

Source: https://www.isc2.org/Certifications/CISSP/CISSP-Student-Glossary



# Cryptography - Some Basic Definitions ii



m plaintext message  $K_A(m)$  ciphertext, encrypted with key  $K_A$ 

 $m=K_B(K_A(m))$  ciphertext decrypted



#### **RSA**

- RSA = Rivest, Shamir, Adelson algorithm
- $\bullet$  the rough estimate is that QC will need  $\approx 10^3$  qubits in order to break current cybersecturiyt schema

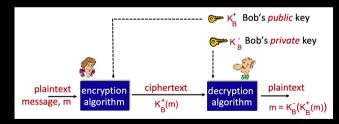


#### **RSA**

- RSA = Rivest, Shamir, Adelson algorithm
- ullet the rough estimate is that QC will need  $pprox 10^3$  qubits in order to break current cybersecturiyt schema

#### Public Key Cryptographic System

- aka Asymmetric Key Cryptography
- sender and receiver do not share secret key
- public encryption key is known to all
- private decryption key is known only to receiver



#### **Public Keys Systems**

- Bob will create a method for encoding messages and another method for decoding messages.
- Bob will send Alice the instructions to encode any message. These instructions
  are what we formally denote as the *public key*, as when this key is sent over the
  communication channel, it can be intercepted by Trudy.
- 3. Alice encrypts her message for Bob using the public key and sends it to him. In the same way, Trudy can intercept this message.
- 4. Bob is the only one who knows the decoding method, which we will call *private key*. Therefore, even if someone else knows the encrypted message and the public key, they will not be able to decode it.

#### A tell of symmetric keys

It may seem that if we know how a message is encoded, we can deduce the decoding method, but this process may be very expensive.

Bob sends a 128-integers message

Suppose Bob knows a matrix M of size 128 and also knows its inverse  $M^{-1}$ 

Bob will send Alice the matrix M, so Alice can use it to encode her message

 $\Rightarrow$  Alice's encoded message  $ec{c}=Mec{m}$ 

Bob will recover the original message  $\vec{m}$  by applying  $M^{-1}$ , this matrix has not been made public at any time:

$$M^{-1}\vec{c}=M^{-1}M\vec{m}=\vec{m}$$

Someone who knows M (the public key) could recover  $M^{-1}$  (the private key), but the process of calculating the inverse of a matrix is an expensive process.

#### Symmetric vs Asymmetric Keys

RSA uses methods for which calculation of the private key is totally intractable for large values (with a traditional computer).

- ullet Choose two prime numbers p and q
- ullet Define N=pq
- Define  $\theta = \overline{(p-1)(q-1)}$
- ullet Choose an e that is coprime with heta
- ullet Compute d as the inverse of e (mod heta)



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The public key will be the pair (e, N) and an integer message m will be encrypted as:

$$c=m^e\ ({\sf mod}\ N)$$

The private key, known only by Bob, is defined by the pair (d, N). The process to obtain the original message is as follows:

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$$p=5, q=13 \Rightarrow N=5\cdot 13=65$$
 and  $heta=(5-1)(13-1)=48$ 



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 and  $\theta=(5-1)(13-1)=48$  Choosing  $e=5$ , as it is coprime with  $\theta$ , and calculate its inverse  $d=29$  For sending the number "6", it should be encoded using the  $c=m^e$  (mod  $N$ ) eqn.  $c=6^5$  (mod  $65$ ) = 41 (mod  $65$ )



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To obtain the original msg, we can verify that  $41^{29} \pmod{65} = 6$ 

Qn: can we recover the private key from the public one?

(e,N) is given as it is teh publci key, and we would like to know (d,N)



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To obtain that inverse, we need to determine

$$\theta = (p-1)(q-1)$$



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decompsing N into its prime factors  $\leadsto p$  and q



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$$\theta = (p-1)(q-1)$$

$$0 = (p - 1)(q - 1)$$
  
 $\Rightarrow p, q$ 

decompsing 
$$N$$
 into its prime factors  $\leadsto p$  and  $q$ 

Suppose we have intercepted that the public key is the pair (5,35) and the encrypted message 3.



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Suppose we have intercepted that the public key is the pair (5,35) and the encrypted message 3.

To decode the message we first need to know the prime factors of 35



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$$\Rightarrow p, q$$

decompsing N into its prime factors  $\leadsto p$  and q

Suppose we have intercepted that the public key is the pair (5,35) and the encrypted message 3.

To decode the message we first need to know the prime factors of 35 ightarrow p = 5 and q = 7



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Suppose we have intercepted that the public key is the pair (5,35) and the encrypted message 3.

To decode the message we first need to know the prime factors of  $35 \to p=5$  and  $q=7 \Rightarrow \theta=(5-1)(7-1)=24$ 



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To decode the message we first need to know the prime factors of  $35 \rightarrow p = 5$  and  $q = 7 \Rightarrow \theta = (5-1)(7-1) = 24$  Calculating the inverse of 5 (mod 24)  $\rightarrow$  d = 5



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so, we can recover the message 
$$m=c^d\pmod N=3^5\pmod 35=3$$



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so, we can recover the message  $m=c^d\pmod N=3^5\pmod {35}=33$ 

Decoding was possible because the number was very small and doable to factorize

Currently, RSA uses primes of the order of 600 digits, which makes factoring in the traditional way an intractable process.

#### **RSA** in practice

- exponentiation in RSA is computationally intensive
- DES is at least 100 times faster than RSA
- use public key crypto to establish secure connection, then establish second key –
   symmetric session key for encrypting data
- Bob and Alice use RSA to exchange a symmetric session key KS
- once both have KS, they use symmetric key cryptography



#### RSA - Hands-on

Create a function that, given two primes p and q returns valid values of e, d and N.



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#### RSA - Hands-on

Create a function that, given two primes p and q returns valid values of e, d and N.

```
def create_keys(p, q):
     theta = (p-1)*(q-1)
     done = False
     while (not done):
         e = np.random.randint(0,p)
                                                        print(create_keys(3,53))
         if (np.gcd(e,theta)==1):
             done = True
     d = pow(e,-1,theta)
     N = p * q
     return (e,d,N)
```

Create a function that given d, N and a series of integers [c0, c1, ...], is able to retrieve the original message. Pass each of the received numbers to 'ascii' to read the hidden message.



Create a function that given d, N and a series of integers [c0, c1, ...], is able to retrieve the original message. Pass each of the received numbers to 'ascii' to read the hidden message.

```
def decode(d,N, code):
    """Decode an encrypted message

Args:
    d (int): Value of the RSA codification.
    N (int): Product of p and q.
    code list[int]: List of values to be decoded.

Returns:
    string: Decoded message. (One character per list item)
"""
```



Create a function that given d, N and a series of integers [c0, c1, ...], is able to retrieve the original message. Pass each of the received numbers to 'ascii' to read the hidden message.

```
def decode(d,N, code):
    message = ""
    for c in code:
        message = message + \frac{chr}{c**d} % N)
    return message
```

# Post-Quantum Cryptography

 By 2016, NIST started the search for possible Post Quantum Encryption candidates:

https://csrc.nist.gov/Projects/post-quantum-cryptography

- Main idea would be to have a modular implementation of cryptographical features
- But, one should also consider encrypted storage and silos.



**Some Final Remarks** 

#### A lot has been left out...

- A lot of math and physics has not been covered/discussed/presented
- Some concrete algorithms were not covered at full:

Quantum Phase Estimation

Period Finding

Linear systems of equations

Hamiltonean Dynamics

QML



# Some final thoughts... i

- QC is (at the moment) a lot (like a lot) of linear algebra, complex numbers, probability theory (on steroids), ...
- QCers do NOT work by trying multiple parallel solutions at once
   Take a look at this "comic strip" by Scott Aaronson & Zach Weinersmith
   https://www.smbc-comics.com/comic/the-talk-3
- QCers work by harvesting the most involved and "weird" concepts of quantum mechanics: superposition, entanglement, interference



# Some final thoughts... ii

- The way to program QCers (right now) is via quantum circuits 
   operators
   Some may say, that programming a QC is finding the right circuit, ie. a combination of gates/ops. to generate the proper interference pattern in your quantum states (think about the double-slit experiment, this is what is going on but at a much larger scale)
  - Also, the current APIs are more like "quantum circuitry assembly" language
- Be aware and careful (critical?) of the "hype", e.g. quantum supremacy, quantum advantage, ...
- QC won't solve all type of problems, but a set of problems that traditional or classical computers have a hard time solving, e.g. high "complexity" (CS) ones, or "weird" ones