Position-based cryptography: Single-qubit protocol secure against multi-qubit attacks

Andreas Bluhm (QMATH, University of Copenhagen)
— joint work with Matthias Christandl and Florian Speelman arXiv:2104.06301

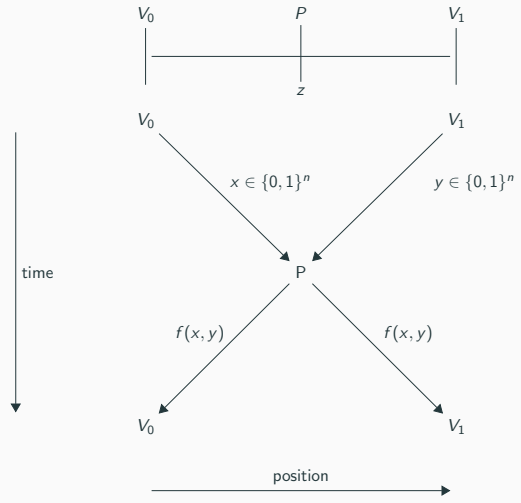
AQIS 2021

Introduction

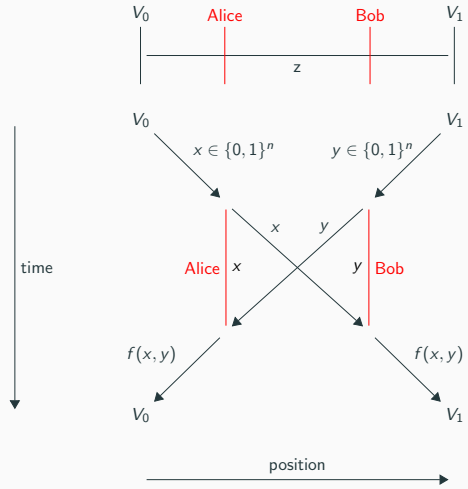
- Why do you trust the clerk behind the counter at the bank?
- Answer: Because of her location!
- Position-based cryptography: Use position as credential

The classical situation

Classical protocols



Classical attacks

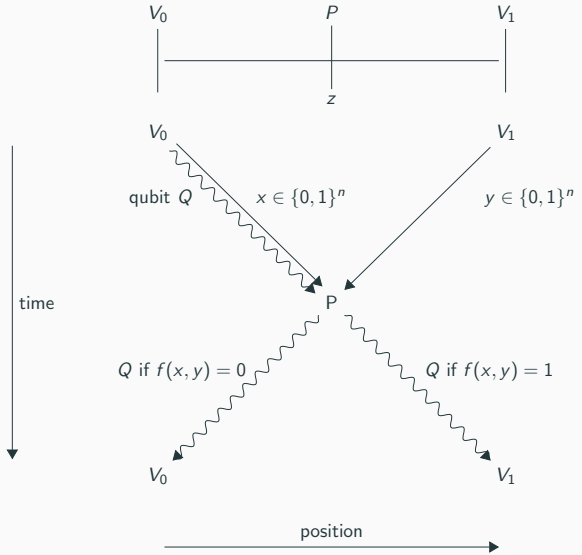


Why could going quantum help?

- Key step: Alice and Bob have to copy their bit strings x and y
- No-cloning theorem: Quantum information cannot be copied perfectly
- In other words, there is no quantum channel such that $\rho \mapsto \rho \otimes \rho$ for all quantum states ρ
- On the downside, quantum attackers are more powerful as well
- In particular, they can use entanglement for quantum teleportation
- Unconditional security impossible, but we want to prove that attackers need a lot of entanglement

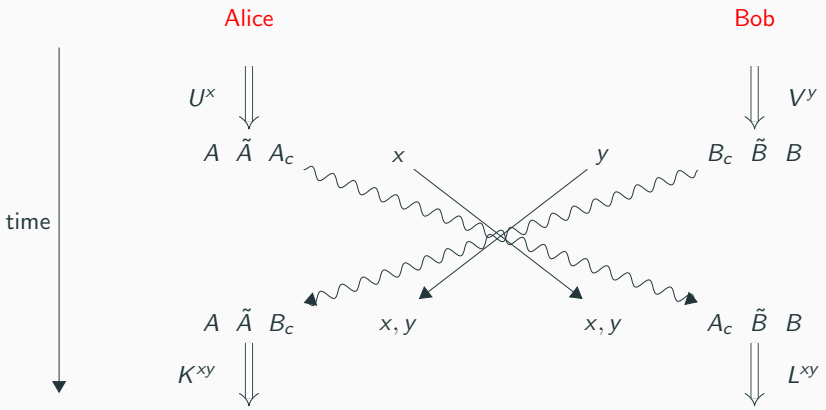
The single qubit protocol

Qubit routing protocol



- Protocol goes back to [KMS11]
- Verifiers prepare $|0\rangle$, $|1\rangle$, $|+\rangle$, $|-\rangle$ with equal probability
- At the end of the protocol: measure in computational or Hadamard basis, depending on qubit sent

Quantum attacks



Main theorem

Theorem

Let $n \geq 10$. Let us assume that the verifiers choose the bit strings x, y of length n uniformly at random. Then there exists a function $f : \{0,1\}^{2n} \to \{0,1\}$ with the property that, if the number q of qubits each of the attackers controls satisfies

$$q \leq \frac{1}{2}n - 5,$$

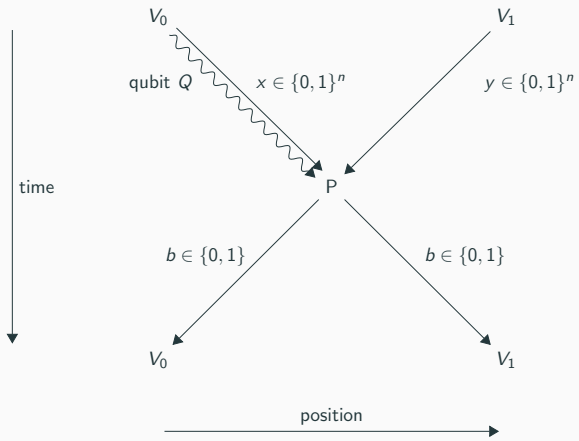
the attackers are caught with probability at least $2 \cdot 10^{-2}$. Moreover, a uniformly random function f will have this property (except with exponentially small probability).

- Success probability of the attackers can be suppressed exponentially by sequential repetition

Proof idea

- Qubit routing already considered in [BFSS13], but only for perfect attacks
- The action of attackers before communicating already determines where the qubit ends up
- Discretize the possible quantum strategies of the attackers with the help of ϵ-nets
- Construct classical rounding functions which capture the essentials of the quantum strategies $\rightarrow$ (ϵ, q)-classical rounding
- These give rise to a Boolean function for each attack Alice and Bob could do controlling at most q qubits each
- They agree with the Boolean function f used in the routing protocol on all pairs of classical bit strings (x, y) on which the attackers succeed with probability at least $1 - \epsilon^2$
- Counting argument: number of (ϵ, q)-classical roundings $\ll$ number of Boolean functions f (on $2n$ bits)

Measuring protocol



- Protocol resembles [BK11]
- Verifiers prepare Q randomly as $|0\rangle$ or $|1\rangle$, apply Hadamard gate if $f(x, y) = 1$
- Prover measures in basis specified by $f(x, y)$, sends back outcome b
- Verifiers check consistency of b with the Q they sent

Pros and cons

- The protocol in [BK11] uses n-qubits, whereas we use a single qubit and a Boolean function on $2n$ bits
- Using an entropic uncertainty relation and modifying the proof slightly, we can prove the same security as for the routing protocol
- The routing protocol is simpler for the prover because there is no need to measure
- Security proof for the measuring protocol still holds if quantum information travels slowly
- Fits current technology better (qubits transmitted using fiber optics)

Noise robust protocol

- Hitherto, we assumed that the honest prover succeeds perfectly
- Now, we only assume that she succeeds with probability at least 0.99
- Repeat the protocol independently r-times and accept if the final measurement accepts more than $(1-\delta)r$ times, where δ is a small constant

Theorem

Let r, q, $n \in \mathbb{N}$, $n \geq 10$. Assume that a function $f : \{0,1\}^{2n} \to \{0,1\}$ is chosen uniformly at random. Then, an honest prover succeeds in a protocol with noise level at most 1% with probability at least $1 - c^r$. Attackers controlling at most $q \leq \frac{1}{2}n - 5$ qubits each round will succeed with probability at most c'^r, where $c, c' < 1$ are universal constants.

- Proof: Chernoff bound

Concrete functions

Binary inner product function

$$IP(x, y) = \sum_{i=1}^{n} x_i y_i \pmod 2,$$

Theorem

Let $n \geq 10$. Let us assume that the verifiers choose the bit strings x, y of length n uniformly at random. If the number q of qubits each of the attackers controls satisfies

$$q \leq \frac{1}{2} \log n - 5,$$

the attackers are caught during the routing and measuring protocols with probability at least $2 \cdot 10^{-2}$, respectively.

- Proof based on communication complexity

Outlook

The ultimate goal

- One would like to prove that attackers need an exponential amount of entanglement to break some position-verification protocol
- In our case, the honest prover only manipulates one qubit, whereas the attackers need $\Omega(n)$ qubits
- That's not only exponentially more resources, but unboundedly many more!
- That is still true for concrete functions, where the attackers need $\Omega(\log n)$ qubits
- Why does that not already show everything we could wish for?
- $\rightarrow$ The honest prover needs to manipulate $\Theta(n)$ classical bits

Conclusion

The routing and measuring protocols have some nice features:

- The honest prover only needs to handle one qubit and needs not even measure it
- The verifiers need not create entangled states or have quantum memory
- The more classical bits the verifiers send, the more qubits the attackers need
- The honest prover, however, does not need more quantum resources

We can spend classical resources to increase the quantum cost of the attackers without increasing the quantum cost of the prover!

References

[BFSS13]: H. Buhrman *et al*. The garden-hose model. In *Proceedings of the 4th Conference on Innovations in Theoretical Computer Science*, ITCS '13, pages 145–158. ACM, 2013.

[BK11]: S. Beigi and R. König. Simplified instantaneous non-local quantum computation with applications to position-based cryptography. *New Journal of Physics*, 13(9):093036, 2011.

[KMS11] Kent *et al*. Quantum tagging: Authenticating location via quantum information and relativistic signaling constraints. Physical Review A, 84:012326, 2011.