Distance Hijacking Attacks on Distance Bounding Protocols

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Abstract

Distance bounding protocols are typically analyzed with respect to three types of attacks: Distance Fraud, Mafia Fraud, and Terrorist Fraud. We define and analyze a fourth main type of attack on distance bounding protocols, called Distance Hijacking. We show that many proposed distance bounding protocols are vulnerable to this type of attack, and we propose solutions to make these protocols resilient to Distance Hijacking. We further show that verifying distance bounding protocols using existing informal and formal frameworks does not guarantee the absence of Distance Hijacking attacks.

Distance bounding, location verification, position verification, attacks, hijacking, multi-prover environment

1 Introduction

By using *distance bounding protocols*, a device (the verifier) can securely obtain an upper bound on its distance to another device (the prover). A number of distance bounding protocols were proposed in recent years [2, 4, 5, 10, 12, 13, 17–21, 23–25]. The proposed protocols differ in terms of the performance and security guarantees that they provide. Their security was so far mainly evaluated by analyzing their resilience to three types of attacks: *Distance Fraud*, *Mafia Fraud* and *Terrorist Fraud*. In Distance Fraud attacks, a sole dishonest prover convinces the verifier that he is at a different distance than he really is. In Mafia Fraud attacks, the prover is honest, but an attacker tries to modify the distance that the verifier establishes by interfering with their communication. In Terrorist Fraud attacks, the dishonest prover colludes with another attacker that is closer to the verifier, to convince the verifier of a wrong distance to the prover.

In this work we analyze the resilience of distance bounding protocols to a type of attack that we coin *Distance Hijacking*. In Distance Hijacking attacks a dishonest prover convinces the verifier that it is at a distance at which some other honest prover resides, which differs from the actual distance of the dishonest prover to the verifier. For example, one of the ways in which the dishonest prover can achieve this is by hijacking the distance measurement phase of a distance bounding protocol from an honest (closer or further) prover.

Conceptually, Distance Hijacking can be placed between Distance Fraud and Terrorist Fraud. Unlike in Terrorist Fraud, where a dishonest prover colludes with another attacker, in Distance Hijacking a dishonest prover interacts with other honest provers. Unlike Distance Fraud attacks, which involve only a dishonest prover and a verifier, Distance Hijacking attacks in addition involve other honest provers. These seemingly subtle differences have significant consequences, e. g., the countermeasures proposed against Terrorist Fraud strictly depend on the fact that the dishonest prover needs to share data with another attacker. In fact, as we will show, protocols that are resilient against the three classical attack types, or that have been verified using any of the existing frameworks, need not be resilient against Distance Hijacking.

We perform a case study of existing protocols. All distance bounding protocols that where proposed in the last years roughly fall into two categories: those based on the Brands and Chaum protocol, and those based on the Hancke and Kuhn protocol. We show that all proposed protocols that followed the structure proposed by Brands and Chaum are vulnerable to Distance Hijacking. Protocols that followed the structure proposed by Hancke and Kuhn are less vulnerable to this type of attack. We propose two classes of effective and generic countermeasures that make Brands and Chaum and related protocols secure against Distance Hijacking in the above scenario. Our countermeasures are inexpensive: they do not require additional messages or cryptographic operations.

We show that all distance bounding protocols, including those based on the Hancke and Kuhn protocol, are vulnerable to Distance Hijacking if run alongside another ill-designed distance bounding protocol. This can occur if more than one distance bounding protocol is used in the same environment, which we refer to as a multi-protocol environment. Such ill-designed protocols, when run by an honest prover, enable a dishonest prover (running, e. g., a Hancke and Kuhn protocol) to hijack the distance of the honest prover. Such attacks can be seen as a variant of the Chosen Protocol Attack [11]. We discuss designs of distance bounding protocols that enable such attacks and show how to mitigate these attacks. In some scenarios, Distance Hijacking is feasible even if the honest and dishonest prover belong to different administrative domains and only perform distance bounding with verifiers in their respective domains.

We further show that existing formal frameworks for distance bounding protocol analysis do not guarantee the absence of Distance Hijacking attacks, even if some instances of Distance Hijacking can be detected using some of those frameworks.

Contributions First, we identify Distance Hijacking as a threat for distance bounding protocols that are run in multi-prover environments, whose absence is not guaranteed by existing frameworks. Second, we address the security of distance bounding protocols in multi-prover and multi-protocol environments which was not done by the security analysis of state-of-the-art distance bounding protocols. Third, we show that prominent distance bounding protocols are vulnerable to Distance Hijacking. Fourth, we propose countermeasures that prevent or mitigate Distance Hijacking. Fifth, we generalize Distance Hijacking to Location Hijacking.

We proceed as follows. In Section 2 we provide background on distance bounding protocols. In Section 3 we introduce Distance Hijacking attacks and analyze the resilience of existing distance bounding protocols against these attacks. In Section 4 we show how distance bounding protocols can be made resilient against Distance Hijacking. In Section 5 we analyze the resilience of distance bounding protocols to Distance Hijacking in multi-protocol environments. We introduce the notion of Location Hijacking in Section 6, present the related work in Section 7, and conclude in Section 8. In Appendix A we provide a detailed attack on the signature-based version of the Brands and Chaum protocol.

2 Background

The goal of a distance bounding protocol is to enable a verifier to establish an upper bound on its physical distance to a prover. As a running example, we consider the basic Brands and Chaum protocol with signatures [4, p. 7], depicted in Figure 1. In the protocol, the prover P randomly generates (denoted by $\in_R$) a bit string $m_1, \ldots, m_k$, and sends a commit of this value to the verifier V. Thus, although the bit string is not revealed yet, V will be able to check whether P indeed committed to this particular string when V learns the string later. The verifier then generates his own random bit string $\alpha_1, \ldots, \alpha_k$, and initiates the so-called *rapid bit exchange*. In this exchange, bits are sent one-by-one, and the prover has to respond as quickly as possible with the exclusive-or ($\oplus$) of the challenge bit string α and his own bit string. In

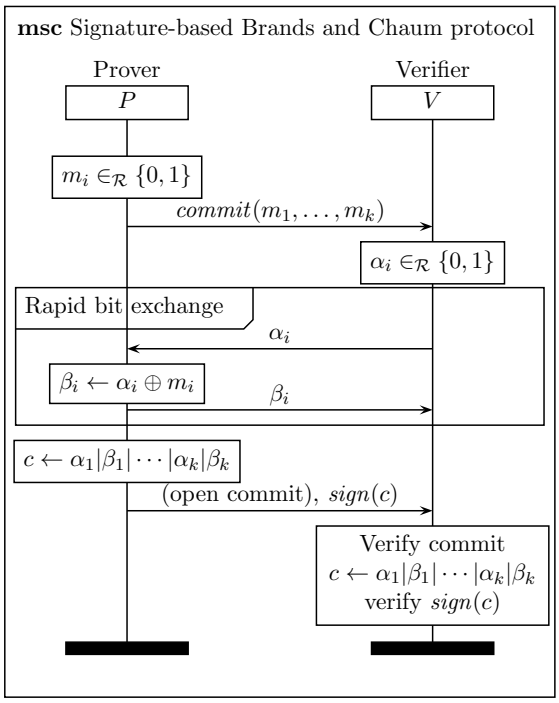


Figure 1: Signature-based Brands and Chaum protocol.

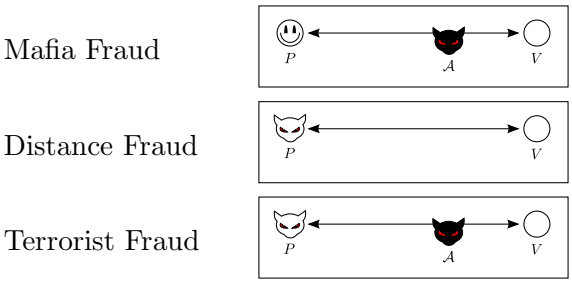


Figure 2: The three main attack scenarios considered in the analysis of distance bounding protocols.

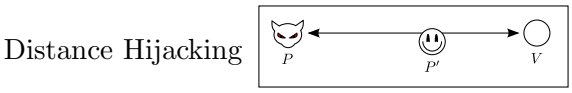


Figure 3: *A Distance Hijacking attack.* The attack is executed by a dishonest prover P. P convinces V that he is at a different distance by exploiting the honest prover P'.

the end, the verifier will derive an upper bound on the distance to the prover from the response times. Notice that the prover can delay messages at will, making himself appear farther away, but he cannot respond faster than what is dictated by the time-of-flight of the messages. After this phase, P concatenates the bits as c, and sends to V a means to open the commit he sent earlier, as well as the concatenation c signed with his signature key. Upon receiving this final message, V verifies that the commit previously sent by P indeed matches with the response (by computing $m_i = \alpha_i \oplus \beta_i$ and opening the commit), concatenates the bits he has observed, and compares them to the received signature using the public key of P.

Because the goal of a distance bounding protocol is to provide a guarantee for the verifier V, V will never participate in an attack since that would mean V would be attacking itself. The attacker can of course pretend to be another verifier V', and abuse his location to attack the real verifier V.

Three different classes of attacks are traditionally considered in the analysis of distance bounding protocols: Distance Fraud, Mafia Fraud and Terrorist Fraud. All attacks that fall into one of these three classes have similar goals, namely to make the verifier believe that the prover P is physically closer to the verifier V than it really is. The main difference between these attacks is in the parties that carry out the attack, and their mutual relationships; this is illustrated in Figure 2.

Mafia Fraud attacks, also called relay attacks, were first described by Desmedt [8]. In this type of attack, both the prover P and verifier V are honest, and the attack is performed by an external attacker $\mathcal{A}$. The attacker attempts to shorten the distance measured between the honest prover and the verifier. In Mafia Fraud attacks the physical distance between the attacker and the verifier is typically small in order for the attacker to be able to shorten the distance.

In a *Distance Fraud* attack a dishonest prover P will try to shorten the distance measured by the verifier V. This type of attack is executed by the dishonest prover P alone, without collusion with other (external) parties. An example of a Distance Fraud attack occurs if the protocol allows the prover to send his reply before receiving the challenge. This enables the prover to reply too quickly, thereby shortening the distance measured by the verifier.

The third class of attacks is *Terrorist Fraud* attacks [8]. In this type of attack a dishonest prover P collaborates with an external attacker $\mathcal{A}$ to convince the verifier V that he is closer than he really is. All countermeasures to Terrorist Fraud make the assumption that the dishonest prover P is unwilling to reveal his long-term (private or secret) key to the attacker $\mathcal{A}$ that he collaborates with. Possible grounds for this unwillingness are impersonation, i. e., the external attacker can later use the key to impersonate the dishonest prover, and traceability, i. e., the key may later be used to implicate the dishonest prover in performing a Terrorist Fraud attack. Furthermore, from the perspective of the verifier, it is impossible to distinguish between the external attacker and the prover if the attacker knows the long term key of the prover.

3 Distance Hijacking

Attacks on distance bounding protocols have traditionally been divided into three classes described in the previous section. In this section we describe a fourth class that has until now been overlooked in the design of distance bounding protocols, *Distance Hijacking attacks*.

We say that a prover P is *honest* if and only if all of P's actions conform to the protocol specification.

Definition 1. *Distance Hijacking attack. A Distance Hijacking attack is an attack in which a dishonest prover P exploits one or more honest parties $P_1, \ldots, P_n$ to provide a verifier V with false information about the distance between P and V.*

A protocol is then said to be vulnerable to Distance Hijacking if it allows P to perform a successful Distance Hijacking attack. We observe that these attacks do not exclude the involvement of other attackers with whom the dishonest prover is colluding or the involvement of other honest verifiers that might enable the execution of the attack.

In the context of distance bounding protocols, the information about the distance is the upper bound; hence attacks involve convincing V that P is closer than it actually is. In a typical Distance Hijacking attack on a distance bounding protocol, a dishonest prover P convinces a verifier V that P has executed a distance measurement (e. g., rapid bit exchange) phase with V whereas this phase has been really executed by an honest prover P'. This is done without the cooperation of the honest prover P'. Often this type of attack can be carried out by allowing the honest prover to complete the distance bounding protocol as he normally would, and then by replacing all messages that contain signatures or MACs, with messages signed (or MAC'ed) by the attacker.

Example 1 (Distance hijacking attack on signature-based Brands and Chaum)**.** *Figure 4 depicts a basic Distance Hijacking attack on the signature-based Brands and Chaum from Figure 1. V thinks he is communicating with P. When P' tries to prove his distance, P just waits until the final signature is sent by P'. P jams the message and re-signs the content c with his own signature key, and sends the result to V.*[1] *V will successfully verify the commit as well as the signature, and will falsely conclude that P is within the distance computed from the distance bounding phase, which was performed by P'.*

We next show an example scenario in which Distance Hijacking attacks pose a threat.

Example 2 (Real-world scenario)**.** *Consider the scenario depicted in Figure 5, in which several people work in a secure facility. In the facility is a mainframe containing sensitive information. The mainframe can be accessed wirelesly by all authorized personnel, in order to facilitate easy access by multiple people at the same time. As an added security mechanism, in case an employee loses his smartcard with his private key, the mainframe can only be accessed by people inside the building. This is verified every time an employee logs in to the system, by running a distance*

[1] Even if we assume that only the MAC of c is signed, P can simply re-sign this MAC without knowing c.

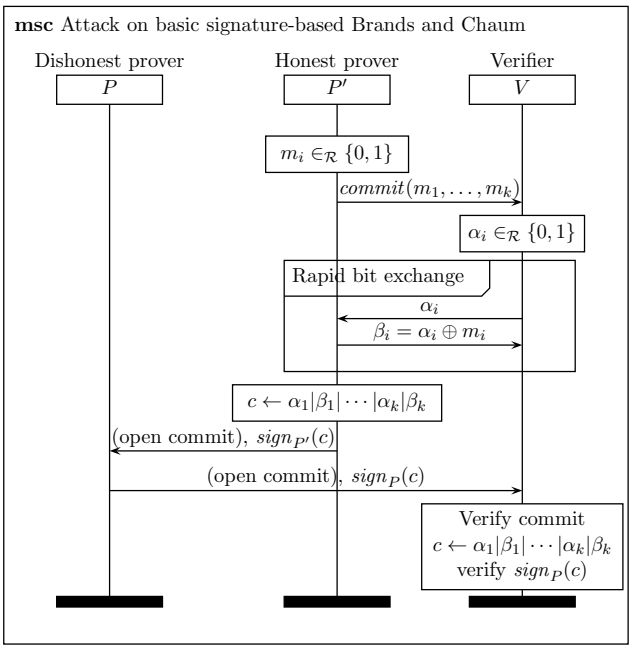


Figure 4: Distance Hijacking attack on basic signature-based Brands and Chaum. $sign_P$ and $sign_{P'}$ denote the signatures with the signature keys of P and P', respectively.

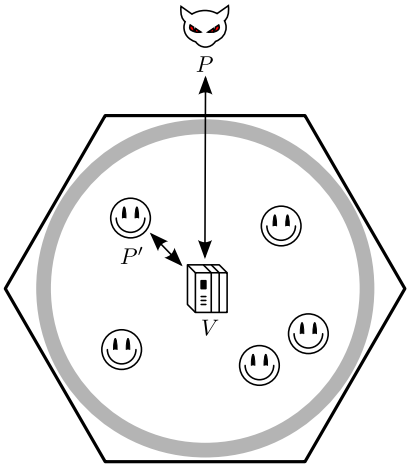


Figure 5: Real-world scenario for Distance Hijacking. P has a (stolen) smartcard. However, he cannot enter the secure facility and he does not have any collaborators inside the facility. In a Distance Hijacking attack, P exploits the presence of an honest P' to convince V that P is within the secure facility.

bounding protocol between a station in the building (acting as the verifier) and the employees terminal (acting as the prover).

Assume that an attacker has managed to get hold of an employee smartcard but is unable to physically access the building. He is instead located in a van in the parking lot where he has a powerful antenna capable of communicating with the wireless terminal inside the building. However in order to log in to the system the attacker needs to prove that he is inside the building by running a distance bounding protocol.

If the distance bounding protocol in use is vulnerable to distance hijacking, the attacker can exploit the presence of the smartcard of another (non-collaborating and unaware) employee inside the building to execute a distance hijacking attack. The mainframe security system now believes that the attacker is in the building with a valid private key, and he is granted access.

As straightforward as this type of attack may seem, a surprising number of distance bounding protocols are vulnerable to Distance Hijacking, as we will show in Section 3.3. In Section 5 we discuss more complex Distance Hijacking attacks, where several different distance bounding protocols are used in the same environment.

3.1 Attack classification

To clarify the relations between the resulting four attack types, we provide an exhaustive classification of attacks on distance bounding protocols.

As stated in the introduction, conceptually speaking, Distance Hijacking can be placed between Distance Fraud and Terrorist Fraud. One could thus consider extending the definition of either Distance Fraud or Terrorist Fraud to also include Distance Hijacking attacks. However, given that previous analyses and countermeasures do not exclude such attacks, the consequence would be that many protocols would be incorrectly labeled as being resistant against the (new definition of) Distance Fraud or Terrorist Fraud, or that existing countermeasures are insufficient. We therefore choose to introduce Distance Hijacking as a separate type of attack.

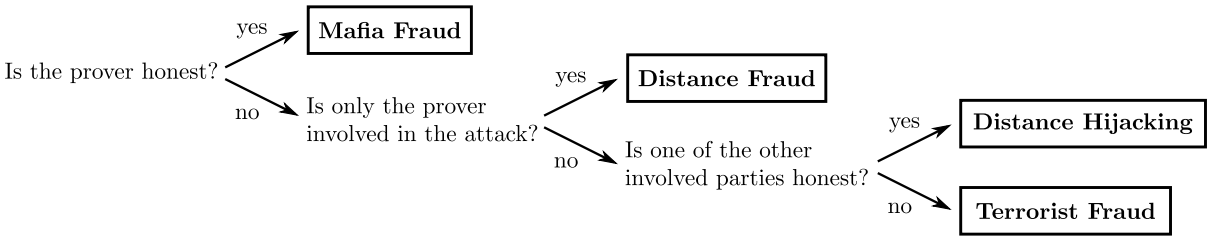


Figure 6: Classification of attacks on distance bounding protocols, in which a verifier computes an incorrect distance bound for a prover.

We show why the existing three attack types do not cover Distance Hijacking. In Mafia Fraud attacks the prover is honest. Distance Fraud attacks are defined as attacks by a lone dishonest prover, and are typically performed by forging a signature-like message. These two types are therefore clearly different from Distance Hijacking, which involves at least a dishonest prover and another honest party.

To illustrate the difference between Distance Hijacking and the attack type that is conceptually closest, Terrorist Fraud, we consider again the scenario from Example 2. Recall that in Terrorist Fraud, the dishonest prover collaborates with another (closer) attacker. In the scenario from the example, there are two main reasons why the absence of Terrorist Fraud attacks does not guarantee the absence of Distance Hijacking attacks. First, we observe that Terrorist Fraud is not possible in this scenario, because the attacker does not have another attacker inside the building that is willing to cooperate with him. Hence the designers of the system could consider using a protocol such as signature-based Brands and Chaum, on which Distance Hijacking may still be possible. Second, the common countermeasure to Terrorist Fraud is to force the attacker to reveal his long term key to his accomplice, based on the assumption that this will deter the attacker. However, in the scenario from Example 2 this assumption does not hold: the attacker has no problem with leaking the (stolen) long term key. Additionally, even if he does transmit the key, it will be to the (unmodified) smartcard of an honest employee. The employee's smartcard will typically not detect this key, and will even delete the received data after the session ends. Hence guaranteeing the absence of Terrorist Fraud attacks, either by assumption or by countermeasure, does not guarantee the absence of Distance Hijacking.

Given that none of the four attack types is subsumed by another type, we turn to constructing a classification. Given an attack on a distance bounding protocol, our classification allows one to uniquely determine to which of the four attack types it belongs. As a side effect, our classification yields distinct definitions for each of the four attack types.

We introduce some additional terminology. The goal of a distance bounding protocol is to compute a correct distance bound. More precisely, we say that the verifier V computes the *correct distance bound* d on P, if P or his identifying key[2] is indeed within the (computed or expected) distance d. We make two assumptions on distance-bounding protocols. First, in the absence of attackers, the verifier computes the correct distance bound. Second, we assume that the protocols guarantee weak authentication of P (i. e., *aliveness* [15]).

Using the above terminology and assumptions, we provide an exhaustive classification of attacks on distance bounding protocols attacks in which the verifier computes an incorrect distance bound for the prover, represented in Figure 6. Assume that V does not compute the correct distance bound d for P. Thus, neither P nor his identifying key is within the distance d. Because of our first protocol assumption, this must be caused by an attacker.

We distinguish two main cases. If P is honest, then P is not the attacker, and therefore an external attacker is changing the distance. This type of attack is known as *Mafia Fraud*. If P is not honest, then we distinguish again between two cases. First, if only P is involved in the

[2]In our context, P is identified by his key. If others know P's key, they cannot be distinguished from P.

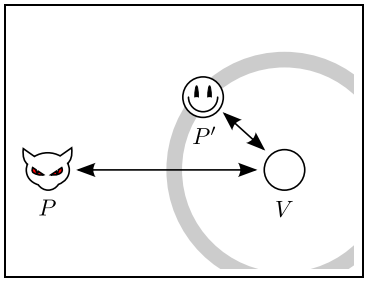


Figure 7: Scenario in which V accepts protocol sessions from multiple provers, here P and P', where Distance Hijacking may be a threat.

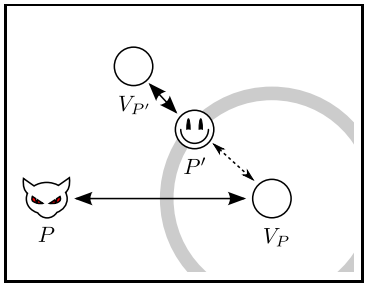


Figure 8: Scenario with multiple prover/verifier pairs, where V_x only accepts sessions from x. Even in this case, Distance Hijacking may be possible.

attack, he must be the attacker, trying to change his own distance. This type of attack is known as *Distance Fraud*. Second, if other parties are involved, we make a final distinction. If all of the other parties are dishonest or collaborating, the attack is called a *Terrorist Fraud* attack. Alternatively, if one of the other parties involved in the attack is honest, it cannot be said to be collaborating. Hence, the honest party is being exploited in the attack. We have coined this type of attack *Distance Hijacking*.

It is worth pointing out that although P refers to a specific identity, or rather the identity of a party holding a specific key, this classification is also valid in the context of anonymous distance bounding protocols [26]. In anonymous distance bounding, the only guarantee provided to the verifier is that *someone* is within a specific distance, as opposed to P is within a specific distance. In order to fit anonymous distance bounding protocols into this model, we say that all provers in anonymous distance bounding share the same key (which could be public) and, in the decision points in Figure 6, "the prover" must be replaced by "the closest prover".

3.2 Multi-prover environments

The main requirement for Distance Hijacking is that there are other parties in the environment, which can be exploited by a dishonest prover. We call environments in which multiple provers may occur *multi-prover environments*. We give two concrete examples of such environments.

Multiple provers, single verifier One such a scenario occurs when a verifier accepts proofs from multiple provers, as depicted in Figure 7. For example, this may occur in RFID distance bounding where a reader may accept multiple tags. In this case, Distance Hijacking occurs when a dishonest prover P hijacks the distance from P' to V and instead convinces V that P is at this distance, thereby falsely "shortening" the distance between P and V.

Note that in the above example, the verifiers accept protocol sessions from multiple provers. Below we show that this is not required for the attacks.

Multiple provers, multiple verifiers Consider an environment with multiple provers $P, P', \ldots$ and corresponding verifiers, $V_P, V_{P'}, \ldots$, where verifier V_P only accepts proofs-of-distance from prover P and verifier $V_{P'}$ only from prover P'. Even in this scenario, a prover P can hijack a session from a prover P' to a verifier $V_{P'}$ to make V_P falsely believe that P is at distance $dist(P', V_P)$. This type of scenario is depicted in Figure 8. P' assumes that he is proving his distance to $V_{P'}$, but instead, the fast response of P' is accepted by V_P, who assumes that the response was sent by P.

Note that for the attack to work, neither P and V_P nor P and P' need to be physically close. Instead, the communication between P' and $V_{P'}$ can be enabled by the attacker who created a relay between them whereas P can communicate to P' using a high power transceiver and a

No.	Protocol	Vulnerable
1	Brands and Chaum (Fiat-Shamir) [4, p. 351]	Yes
2	Brands and Chaum (Schnorr) [4, p. 353]	Yes
3	Brands and Chaum (signature) [4, p. 350]	Yes
4	Bussard and Bagga [5]	No
5	CRCS [20]	Yes
6	Hancke and Kuhn [10]	No
7	Hitomi [18]	No
8	KA2 [13]	No
9	Kuhn, Luecken, Tippenhauer [14]	Yes
10	MAD [25]	Yes
11	Meadows et al. for $F(\ldots) = \langle NV, NP \oplus P \rangle$ [16]	Yes
12	Munilla and Peinado [17]	No
13	Noise resilient MAD [23]	Yes
14	Poulidor [24]	No
15	Reid et al. [21]	No
16	Swiss-Knife [12]	No
17	Tree [2]	No
18	WSBC+DB [19, p. 50]	Yes
19	WSBC+DB Noent [19, p. 51]	Yes

Table 1: Vulnerability of existing protocols to Distance Hijacking (single protocol environment).

high gain antenna. This second scenario may even occur across domains: the only requirement is that the distance measurement (e. g., rapid bit exchange) phases used in both domains are to some extent compatible.

3.3 Analysis of Existing Distance Bounding Protocols

We have analyzed several protocols and found numerous new attacks that fall into the class of Distance Hijacking attacks. We give an overview of the protocols analyzed in Table 1. The vast majority of the attacks we find are new. To the best of our knowledge, only two such attacks were previously reported in the literature. The attack on a simplified version of "Brands and Chaum (signature)" is described in [22]. The attack on a member of the protocol family proposed by Meadows et al., in particular for the instance with $F(NV, NP, P) = \langle NV, NP \oplus P \rangle$, is described in [3]. All other attacks in the table are new.

In our analysis we used the following system and attacker model. We assume that the attacker controls the network and may eavesdrop, intercept, inject, and block messages. This attacker model corresponds to the standard Dolev-Yao model. We do not pose any restrictions on the number or locations of devices that the attacker holds; the attacker can control several dishonest provers as well as other wireless devices. Entities are identified by their keys; entities that hold the same keys cannot be distinguished.

We describe three attacks from the table in detail. First, the attack on the basic Brands and Chaum protocol with signatures is depicted in Figure 4. Second, a method to attack the Kuhn, Luecken, Tippenhauer protocol is described in Figure 10. Third, we describe an attack against the Brands and Chaum protocol based on Schnorr identification in Figure 15 (in Appendix A).

In general, it seems that protocols that closely follow the original Brands and Chaum protocols do not offer protection against Distance Hijacking. In contrast, protocols that derive from the Hancke and Kuhn protocol, which explicitly uses the key shared between agents in the distance bounding phase, protect against Distance Hijacking in single-protocol environments.

However, as we explain in Section 5, all protocols, including the ones derived from Hancke and Kuhn protocol, are vulnerable to Distance Hijacking in specific multi-protocol environments.

We note that for many of the attacks in the table, it is required that the verifier V is not "disturbed" by P's messages. As a concrete example, consider the attack in Figure 4. If V would receive and parse P's final signed message, V might abort the protocol, in which case

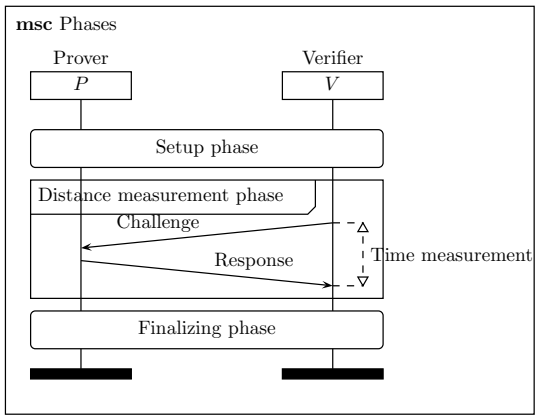


Figure 9: Phases in distance bounding protocols: Setup, distance measurement, and finalizing. The setup and finalizing phases may be empty.

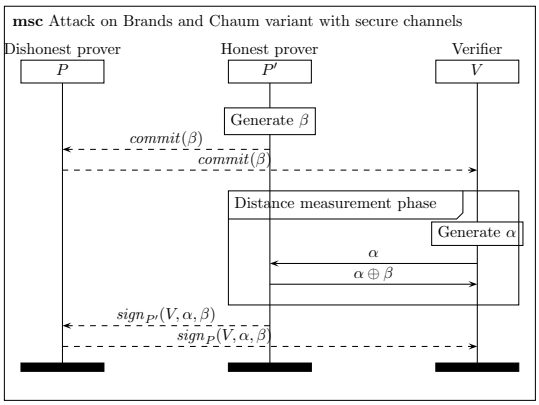


Figure 10: Attack on Brands and Chaum variant where setup and finalization use a secure channel. We use dashed arrows to denote transmission over a secure channel. P' assumes that P is a verifier.

the attack fails. There are several practical scenarios in which the attacks are directly possible. For example, assume that the signed message is sent through standard WiFi channels, and P assumes that he is responding to some other verifier V_2. In this case, P sends the message addressed to V_2, and V's hardware may already filter out the message before it arrives at the protocol level. Alternatively, the attacker can jam-and-eavesdrop the signals sent by P (except for P's fast response). Jamming seems to be possible on all protocols in the table except for MAD, which explicitly requires jamming detection, upon which the protocol aborts.

4 Protecting against Distance Hijacking

We have seen that many protocols are vulnerable to Distance Hijacking, and we now show how to repair them. Without loss of generality, any distance bounding protocol can be divided into three phases as depicted in Figure 9: the *setup phase*, where nonces and commitments are exchanged; the *distance measurement phase*, where the physical distance is measured, often using rapid bit exchange; and the *finalizing phase* that often includes a proof of identity. The only phase that is required to be non-empty for a distance bounding protocol is the distance measurement phase. The distance measurement phase follows the following schema: the verifier sends out a fresh challenge, to which the prover responds with some value; this process may be split into several rounds.

In a Distance Hijacking attack, a dishonest prover exploits another prover's response in the distance measurement phase. Thus, although the dishonest prover has few restrictions, because he does not have to follow the protocol and can construct his own messages as he chooses, he can only exploit honest provers as far as the protocol allows him to. Therefore, in the fixes we propose, we ensure that the distance measurement response of an honest prover cannot be abused by others in their communication with the verifier.

Before we proceed to solutions, we provide more intuition by showing why two seemingly straightforward fixes to the basic Brands and Chaum protocol fail.

Example 3. Flawed fix: identity concatenation. *A first flawed fix is to concatenate the prover's identity to the response message.*[3] *In the case of a rapid bit exchange, the verifier may simply send out a longer challenge to ensure that the challenge has the same length as the response.*

[3]This is an element of one of the fixes proposed in [3], which we discuss in Section 7.

The problem with this solution is that the identity part of the response is predictable, and might therefore be overshadowed by the attacker, replacing it with his own identity.

Example 4. Flawed fix: secure channels. *A second fix is to perform the setup and finalizing phases over some secure channel, e. g., by using SSL/TLS.*[4] *Because an attacker now cannot eavesdrop (or change) the contents of the communication, it might seem that any hijacking is thwarted. However, as depicted in Figure 10, such protocols are still vulnerable to Distance Hijacking. In the attack, P claims to be a verifier when communicating with P', and P claims to be a prover when communicating with V. Thus, P' assumes that he is proving his distance to P, and therefore transmits his commit over the secure channel to P. P simply forwards this commit to V. Because the distance measurement phase is not protected by the secure channel, P' will respond to V's challenge. Afterwards, P' will finalize his part over the secure channel with P. P re-signs this information and sends it to V over the secure channel.*

As the above examples show, it is not trivial to make protocols resilient against Distance Hijacking. The main idea underlying the solution is to make the prover's messages during the distance measurement phase distinguishable from those of other provers, such that a verifier will not mistake the response of one prover (say, P') for the response of another (say, P). We discuss two possible solutions to ensure this: explicit linking and implicit linking.

Solution family 1: Explicit linking The first solution, *explicit linking*, ensures that the response from different provers is distinguishable by explicitly including identity information in the response, combined with integrity protection. Example instances of explicit linking are the following, where we assume that NP is a nonce generated by the prover which he commits to in the setup phase.

- $challenge \oplus h(P, NP)$, where h is a hash function.
- $challenge \oplus sign_P(NP)$.
- $challenge \oplus encrypt_{k(P,V)}(P, NP)$, where $k(P, V)$ is a symmetric shared key between P and V.

Note that the construction in the Hancke-Kuhn protocol falls into the third category, because the long-term symmetric key shared key between the participants is explicitly involved in the response in a way that can be verified by V.

Solution family 2: Implicit linking The second solution type, *implicit* linking, does not make the responses of different provers distinguishable on their own. Rather, it relies on the fact that honest provers do not reveal some secret, typically their own nonce NP, before the distance measurement phase has been completed. Thus, before this phase, only the prover who generated NP knows the secret and can use it to construct messages. In protocols that commit to a (temporary) secret in setup phase, the prover can include his identity in the commit, hence sending $commit(P, NP)$ before the distance measurement phase. Until the prover P releases this nonce during or after his response, other (dishonest) provers cannot commit to NP with their own identity. Thus, the verifier can check that the claimed identity for the distance measurement phase corresponds to the commit he received during the setup phase.

5 Multi-protocol Environments

So far, we discussed Distance Hijacking attacks in *single-protocol environments*, where both dishonest and honest prover run the same distance bounding protocol. However, it does not

[4] This results in a protocol similar to what is described in [14].

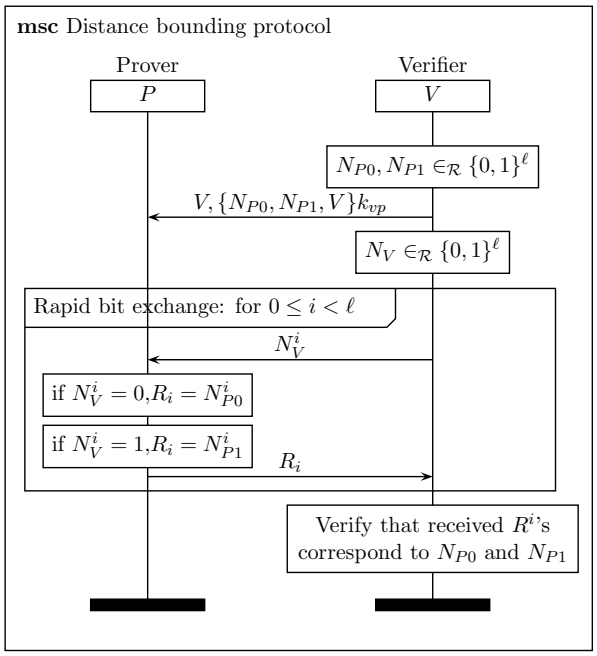


Figure 11: A Distance Bounding Protocol that enables Distance Hijacking on Hancke-Kuhn protocol in multi-protocol environments.

have to be the case that all provers and verifiers in the environment execute the same distance bounding protocol. It is possible that verifier-prover pairs belong to different domains and execute different ranging and distance bounding protocols, but use similar hardware for their distance measurement phase. We call such environments *multi-protocol environments*.

Distance Hijacking in Multi-protocol Environments In what follows we show that there are plausible multi-protocol environments in which protocols that are resilient to Distance Hijacking in single-protocol environments become vulnerable to this type of attack in multi-protocol environments. More precisely, we show that there are pairs of distance bounding protocols that use similar distance measurement phases, which, when one protocol from the pair is supported by an honest prover and the other is supported by the verifier, will enable a dishonest prover to hijack the distance of the honest prover.

We define a multi-protocol environment *MPE* as a set of triplets, where a triplet (A, B, R) denotes that agent A may execute the protocol role R (e. g., the prover role of the Brands and Chaum protocol) when communicating with B, and where at least two different protocols are contained in the set. We say that a distance bounding protocol DB is vulnerable to a Distance Hijacking Attack in a multi-protocol environment *MPE* if a dishonest prover P can perform a successful Distance Hijacking attack against a verifier V running DB in the verifier role in that environment (and hence $(V, P, DB(\text{verifier})) \in MPE$).

It is easy to see that, given *any* distance bounding protocol, a multi-protocol environment can be constructed in which this protocol will be vulnerable to Distance Hijacking attacks. For example, all distance bounding protocols will be vulnerable to Distance Hijacking if run in the same environment with a protocol that gives a dishonest prover full control over the bits that the honest prover uses in the distance measurement phase. This is not such an unlikely scenario, since it is plausible that in the same environment in which a verifier and a dishonest prover run e. g., Hancke and Kuhn, an honest prover runs an insecure ranging protocol which supports the same type of distance measurement phase as the Hancke and Kuhn protocol. This insecure ranging protocol could easily allow a dishonest prover to set the bits that the honest prover uses in the distance measurement phase (e. g., for debugging purposes). It might also be that

this insecure ranging protocol is simply enabled as a feature for non-critical applications and therefore coexists with the Hancke and Kuhn protocol on the devices (and thus shares the same hardware / distance measurement implementation with the Hancke and Kuhn protocol).

This means that all multi-prover distance bounding protocol deployments cannot be guaranteed to be secure unless additional measures are in place that limit the risk from other protocols running in the environment. As we have seen above, in some environments, protocols run by honest parties give almost complete control of honest provers to the dishonest prover.

However, we show that there are multi-protocol environments where honest provers and the verifier run secure distance bounding protocols, and where Distance Hijacking attack is still feasible. We show this on an example of the Hancke-Kuhn distance bounding protocol. We construct a multi-protocol environment in which the verifier runs the Hancke-Kuhn protocol, and the honest provers supports a minor variation of the Hancke-Kuhn protocol (secure against Distance Hijacking in a single-protocol environment). We show that in this environment a dishonest prover can execute a successful Distance Hijacking attack. Our variation of the Hancke-Kuhn protocol is shown in Figure 11. It differs from the Hancke and Kuhn protocol in that the prover does not compute the values of registers N_{P0} and N_{P1} but that these are computed by the verifier and sent (confidentially) to the prover. This protocol modification would make sense if one would, e. g., assume that the prover does not have a good random number generator (e. g., an RFID tag).

An attack in this multi-protocol environment then works as follows. A dishonest prover P initiates the original Hancke and Kuhn protocol with the verifier V, and derives shared register values with V (for details see Hancke and Kuhn protocol [10]). P then acts as a verifier and initiates the modified Hancke and Kuhn protocol from Figure 11 with the honest prover P'. P then provides the register values to P' as specified in the modified protocol. V and P' then execute a rapid bit exchange and V believes that this exchange was executed by P.

Observe that the attack does not require the two protocols to share the same long-term keys: V verifies the use of the key as prescribed by the Hancke and Kuhn protocol, which was provided by P, and remains unknown to P'. However, the attack strictly requires that V and P' to use similar hardware for the fast response phase.

Similarly, a modified version of the Brands and Chaum protocol can be constructed that, if run next to the Hancke and Kuhn protocol, would also enable a Distance Hijacking attack against the Hancke and Kuhn protocol. This phenomenon is similar to the Chosen Protocol attack in cryptographic protocol analysis. We relate the two concepts in Section 7.

Protecting against Distance Hijacking in Multi-Protocol Environments Previously, we proposed countermeasures that prevent Distance Hijacking in single-protocol environments. We now discuss some approaches that can mitigate such attacks in multi-protocol environments.

For multi-protocol environments the obvious solution is to try to ensure that all protocols in an environment use different (incompatible) hardware for their distance measurement phase. Thus, attacks in multi-protocol environments can be prevented by better regulation in distance bounding protocol deployment and construction. Minor application-specific modifications to the distance measurement phase (e. g., including application-specific dummy bits) would already prevent a number of attacks. Similarly, manufacturer-specific or deployment specific hardware modifications would also protect against multi-protocol attacks; this can, however, be expensive.

There are a number of scenarios in which such deployment and regulatory protection measures cannot be used. We therefore propose an alternative solution that makes use of "prover honeypots". Recall that to execute a Distance Hijacking attack, a dishonest prover either needs to be able to successfully claim to have executed a distance measurement phase that was executed by an honest prover, or needs to make an honest prover execute a distance measurement phase using specific bits. The prevention of the false distance measurement claim naturally extends from single- to multi-protocol environments — this type of attack can be prevented by

using protocols that are resilient to Distance Hijacking in single-protocol environments. However, as we have shown, protocols that are resilient to Distance Hijacking in single-protocol environments cannot prevent attacks in a multi-protocol environment where an honest prover is made to execute a distance measurement phase using the bits provided by a dishonest prover. We aim to detect such attacks by the use of prover honeypots.

Our solution works as follows. The verifier first sets up a number of virtual or real honeypot provers which are either physical or virtual devices that are placed in the vicinity of the verifier. These honeypot provers are created either by the verifier or by the devices that the verifier trusts and controls. To other provers, honeypot provers claim either their true or false locations/identities, and they support a broad set of ranging and distance bounding protocols. The idea behind this setting is that when a dishonest prover mounts a Distance Hijacking attack, it chooses one of the honeypot provers to abuse in his attack. Besides setting up honeypot provers, the verifier also limits its operation to specific distance bounding protocols: it executes only distance bounding protocols which force a dishonest prover to reveal its secret key (that it shares with the verifier) to the honest prover if he wants to execute a Distance Hijacking attack. Such protocols have been developed in the context of Terrorist Fraud protection [12]. Thus, if a dishonest prover executes a successful Distance Hijacking attack and uses one of the honeypots to launch the attack, the key that it shares with the verifier will be revealed to the honeypot prover. In order to check if a Distance Hijacking attack was executed, the verifier, after the execution of a distance bounding protocol with a given prover, simply needs to ask his honeypot provers to send him the bits that they used in any recent distance measurement phase. If those bits allow the reconstruction of the key that the verifier shares with the prover [12], the verifier concludes that the prover attempted to execute a Distance Hijacking attack.

6 Location Hijacking

In this section we generalize Distance Hijacking to *Location Hijacking*. We consider the problem of location verification, or position verification, in which a set of verifiers establishes the location of a prover, even though this prover may act dishonestly, i. e., the prover can pretend to be at another location than he really is. The objective of a location verification protocol is to ensure that the location of the prover is reliably determined.

Protocols for location verification often build on distance bounding protocols. A prover repeatedly uses a distance bounding protocol to prove his proximity to a set of verifiers. Based on the combined information, the verifiers are able to verify the location of the prover. This process is depicted in Figure 12. The circles represent the measured distances by the verifiers V_1, V_2, V_3, and they conclude that P' must be located in the intersection. If a dishonest prover P can hijack distance bounding sessions of a party P', he can pretend to be at the location where P' resides, regardless of his actual location. This constitutes a *Location Hijacking* attack: a dishonest prover can hijack the location of P'.

Definition 2. *Location Hijacking attack. A Location Hijacking attack is an attack in which a dishonest prover P exploits one or more honest parties $P_1, \ldots, P_n$ to provide a set of verifiers $V_1, \ldots, V_k$ with false information about the location of P (either absolute or relative to the location of the verifiers).*

Furthermore, the threat of hijacking is magnified in the context of location verification, because multiple distance bounding results are combined. To illustrate this, consider the following setup, in which three honest provers P_1,P_2, and P_3 are within range of the verifiers, as sketched in Figure 13. As before, a dishonest prover can perform Distance Hijacking attacks on the distance bounding phases, thereby hijacking the location of P_1, P_2, or P_3 as he chooses. However, he can also combine Distance Hijacking attacks with respect to multiple honest provers: this allows him to make his location appear to be at any intersection of the distances of a set of

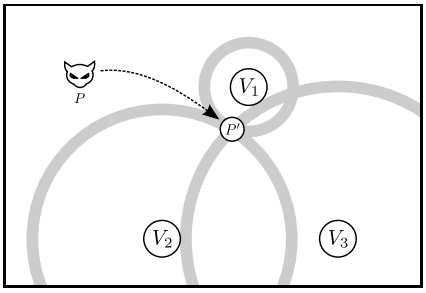


Figure 12: Location Verification and Location Hijacking: P hijacks the location of P', for example by hijacking the distance bounding protocol instances of P' with respect to the verifiers.

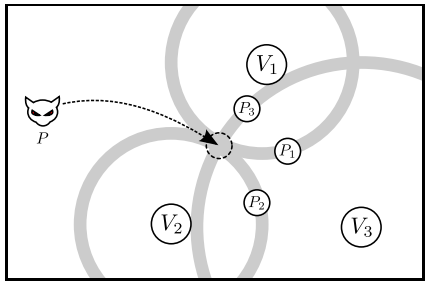


Figure 13: Location Hijacking to empty location: When asked to prove his location to the verifiers, P hijacks P_1's distance for V_1, P_2's distance for V_2, and P_3's distance for V_3. The verifiers conclude that P is at the location indicated by the arrow.

honest provers. For example, in Figure 13, he can convince the verifiers that he is located at the position indicated by the arrow, by combining the distance bounding phases of the honest provers, even though nobody is present at this location.

Case Study of Location Hijacking To emphasize that location hijacking is indeed a relevant problem, even on recent protocols, we give a brief case study of a recent protocol by Chiang et al. [6] that is vulnerable to location hijacking. In this protocol a prover sends out a location claim, after which he receives simultaneous challenges from a number of verifiers. The prover aggregates the challenges and broadcasts his response to all verifiers. This many-to-one challenge response then constitutes one round of the underlying distance bounding protocol, which in this case is Brands and Chaum's original suggestion [4]. The authors present a proof that their scheme is optimal in the sense that it achieves the "maximal security" any location verification schemes based solely on time-of-flight can provide.

Despite the proof, this scheme is vulnerable to location hijacking (Figure 12). The proof in [6] is focused on the fact that a prover must be at the claimed location (within some accuracy) in order to correctly reply to the challenges. The proof however, does not address the authentication of the node at the claimed location but instead leaves that up to the underlying distance bounding protocol. Since the underlying distance bounding protocol is vulnerable to Distance Hijacking, the location verification protocol inherits this vulnerability. In this case it is possible that another distance bounding protocol could be used instead of Brands and Chaum, in order to achieve a secure scheme, but this example shows that even recent location verification schemes with proofs of optimal security, can be vulnerable to Location Hijacking.

7 Related work

Distance bounding for RFID tags Avoine et al. present in [1] a framework for analyzing RFID distance bounding protocols. They give definitions for the three main attack types, and also define *Impersonation Fraud*, in which "a lonely prover purports to be another one" [1, p. 5], i. e., a violation of weak authentication. They consider these four types of attack with respect to black-box and white-box provers, yielding a total of eight security notions. None of their models covers Distance Hijacking attacks.

Formal models Although multi-prover environments have not been considered for practical distance bounding protocol proposals before, such environments are considered in the area of formal security protocol analysis, which derives from the Dolev-Yao attacker model.

Meadows et al. developed a formal methodology to prove properties of distance bounding protocols [16]. Because the methodology is not particularly suited for dealing with the case of a dishonest prover, they did not consider Distance Hijacking attacks.

The first two formal approaches for distance bounding protocols that have considered multi-prover scenarios and dishonest provers are Malladi et al. [22] and Basin et al. [3]. Malladi et al. propose a tool-supported framework for analyzing distance bounding protocols, and model a variant of the first signature-based protocol by Brands and Chaum. They analyze this protocol in several scenarios and find an attack that falls into our class. In their "farther adversary" scenario, the attacker is farther from the verifier than the reported distance. This suggests that the "farther adversary" scenario covers both Distance Fraud and Distance Hijacking. However, this observation is not consistent with Malladi et al.'s statement that including the identity in the signature makes the protocol secure in the "farther adversary" scenario. From our analysis it is clear that the resulting protocol will still be vulnerable to Distance Hijacking.

Basin et al. proposed in [3] a framework that is also capable of verifying (and suggesting attacks on) distance bounding protocols on the logical level. They analyze a family of distance bounding protocols proposed by Meadows et al. in [16] and find an attack that falls into our class of Distance Hijacking attacks, which they refer to as an "impersonation attack". They prove that a concatenation-based version of the protocol is secure in their framework. This protocol is still vulnerable to a Distance Hijacking attack, similar to the one in Example 3.

Chosen Protocol attack The multi-protocol Distance Hijacking attack described in Section 5 resembles the Chosen Protocol (or Multi-Protocol) attack in cryptographic protocol analysis, which was introduced by Kelsey, Schneier, and Wagner [11]. They describe how, given any secure cryptographic protocol, a second protocol can be constructed ("chosen") which is also secure, but when both are executed in parallel, an attacker can use the second protocol to attack the first. Chosen Protocol attacks are an instance of Multi-Protocol attacks [7]. In a traditional (Dolev-Yao style) setting, Multi-Protocol attacks require that both protocols use the same key infrastructure, in which case many protocols are vulnerable [7]. Ensuring that the protocols use different keys prevents the problem [9], which is often guaranteed in practice. The practical threat of multi-protocol attacks in the Dolev-Yao setting is therefore limited.

In contrast, our multi-protocol Distance Hijacking attacks do not require that keys are shared among protocols. Rather, the distance measurement phase must be regarded as a security primitive, and care must be taken when security primitives are shared among protocols. If not, unexpected interactions can occur, as witnessed by our attacks. In practice, multi-protocol Distance Hijacking poses a more significant threat than its shared-key based counterpart, because it can be expected that only a few different hardware components for distance measurement will be manufactured, which may be used by a large number of different protocols.

8 Conclusions

Depending on the context in which distance bounding protocols are used, Distance Hijacking attacks may pose a substantial threat. Our analysis shows that many distance bounding protocols cannot be safely used in scenarios with multiple provers. Fortunately, it seems that adapting the protocols to be resilient against these attacks is possible in single-protocol environments without imposing a significant overhead. Similar observations can be made for location verification protocols with respect to Location Hijacking attacks.

Distance Hijacking requires an environment with multiple identities, which is a standard assumption in traditional security protocol analysis. From this perspective, it may seem surprising that such cases are not covered by current security arguments used in the literature. It can be argued that some of these protocols were not designed to function in a context with multiple provers. Whatever the original intent of the protocol, it is clear that secure functioning

in a context with multiple provers is a desirable feature, giving an edge to those protocols that are resilient against Distance Hijacking attacks.

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A Example attack: Brands and Chaum (Schnorr identification)

In [4] several concrete protocols are suggested. None of the proposed protocols is resilient against Distance Hijacking attacks. However, some the attacks are more involved than just re-signing the final message. Below we give a concrete example of such a more involved attack on the protocol from [4, p. 353], which is based on the Schnorr identification scheme.

The Schnorr-based protocol variant is depicted graphically in Figure 14. In the protocol, the public key of the prover is the tuple $(p, q, g, h = g^x \bmod p)$ and the corresponding private key is x.

In the protocol, a prover P chooses a random bit string β and secret random value w. P sends g^w and a commit of β to the verifier V. The verifier chooses his own random bit string α. Next, V performs a rapid bit exchange with P based on α and β. After the rapid bit exchange, P combines α and β into c and computes $r \leftarrow w + cx \bmod p$, i. e., he adds his secret value w to the product of c and his secret key x, modulo q. He sends the resulting r along with the commit opening to V. V also computes c. V then raises the public key of P ($h = g^x$) to the power of c and multiplies the result with $a = g^w$ and compares the result with g^r. If the values match, the verifier accepts that P is within the measured distance.

In Figure 15 we show a Distance Hijacking attack on the protocol. The honest prover P' starts and tries to prove his distance to the verifier V. The dishonest prover P intercepts the initial message of P' and replaces the value $a_P = g^{w_{P'}}$ by his own $a_P = g^{w_P}$. He sends a_P along with the commit to V. V then performs the rapid bit exchange with P', unaware of the identity mismatch. After this phase, P again intercepts the response of P', effectively replacing the identification computation by his own, while forwarding the "open commit" unchanged.

For the attack, it is necessary that P replaces the value $a_{P'}$ by some value g^{w_P} such that P

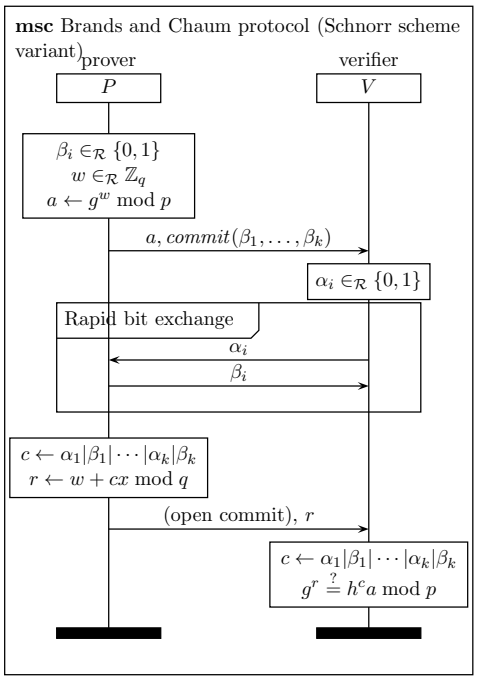


Figure 14: Brands and Chaum protocol based on the Schnorr identification scheme. The public key of the prover is the tuple $(p, q, g, h = g^x \bmod p)$ and the corresponding private key is x.

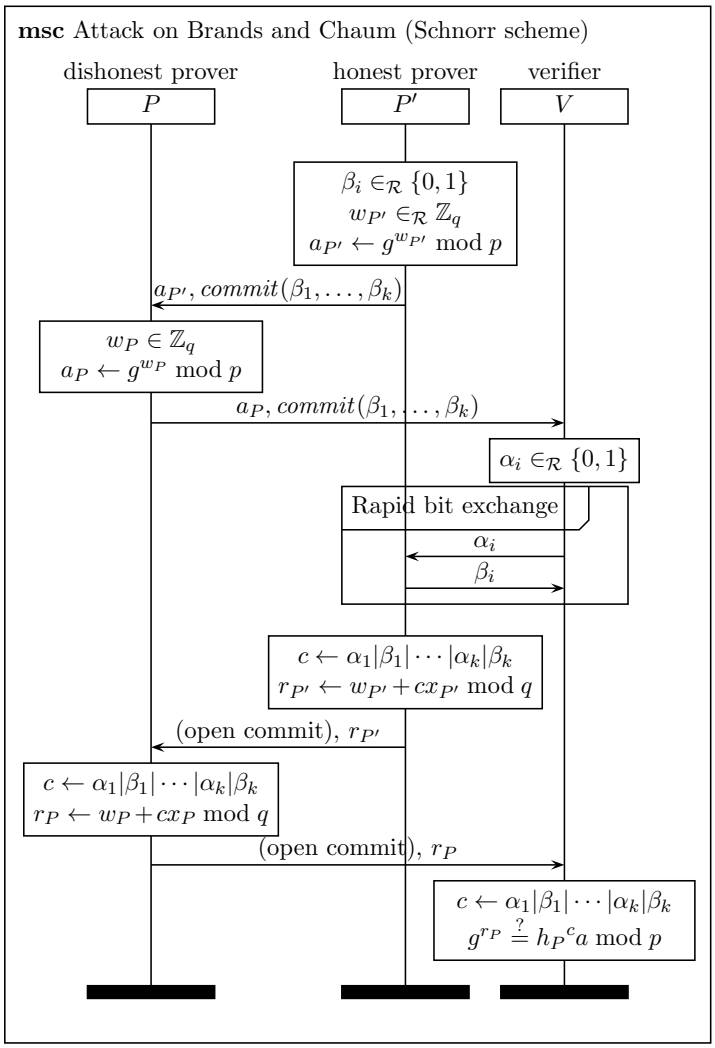


Figure 15: Distance Hijacking attack on Brands and Chaum (Schnorr scheme variant). x_P and $x_{P'}$ are the private keys of P' and P, respectively, and $h_P = g^{x_P}$.

knows w_P. w_P does not need to be random and may be an arbitrary constant, but it is needed for P to later compute r_P as expected by V.