

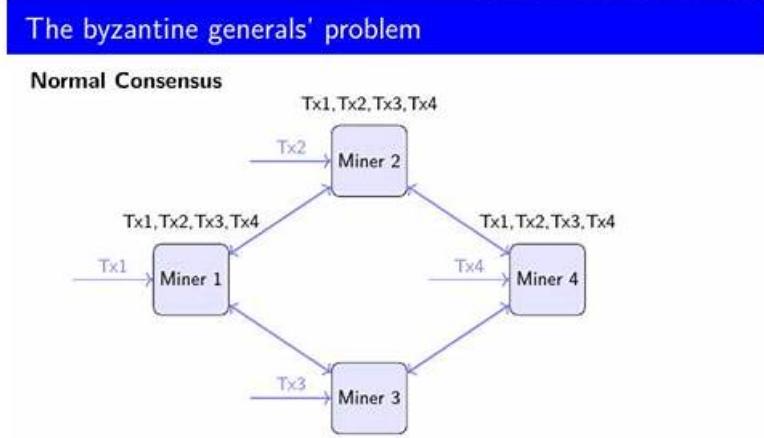
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WGU Introduction to Cryptography HNO1 Sample Questions (Q40-Q45):

NEW QUESTION # 40

(Which cryptographic operation has the fastest decryption process?)

- A. Asymmetric
- **B. Symmetric**
- C. Padding
- D. Hashing

Answer: B

Explanation:

Symmetric cryptography generally provides the fastest encryption and decryption performance among common cryptographic operations. Algorithms like AES and ChaCha20 are designed for high throughput and efficient implementation in software and hardware (e.g., AES-NI acceleration).

Symmetric decryption is computationally similar in cost to symmetric encryption, and both are far faster than asymmetric operations for equivalent security levels. Asymmetric cryptography (RSA, ECC) involves expensive mathematical operations (modular exponentiation or elliptic-curve scalar multiplication), making it much slower and unsuitable for bulk data decryption. That is why real-world secure protocols use asymmetric cryptography primarily to authenticate peers and establish keys, then switch to symmetric encryption for the actual data stream. Hashing is not decryption at all; it is one-way, and there is no "decrypt" operation for a hash. Padding is not a decryption mechanism; it is a formatting step used with block ciphers to align plaintext length. Therefore, the correct choice for the operation with the fastest decryption process is symmetric cryptography.

NEW QUESTION # 41

(Why should an administrator choose lightweight cryptography?)

- A. The data requires minimal protection due to the sensitivity level.
- B. The payload requires complex rounds of encryption.
- **C. The embedded system has limited resources.**
- D. The desktop is in a secure area of the building.

Answer: C

Explanation:

Lightweight cryptography is designed for constrained environments-devices with limited CPU, memory, storage, bandwidth, and power (battery). Examples include IoT sensors, smart locks, RFID tags, embedded controllers, and industrial devices.

Administrators choose lightweight algorithms and protocols to maintain reasonable security while fitting strict resource budgets and real-time constraints.

The goal is not "weaker security because data is unimportant," but rather efficient security that can still meet threat models under constraints. Option B captures this: embedded systems often cannot afford the computational cost of heavy cryptographic primitives (large key sizes, complex modes, frequent handshakes) or may struggle with latency and energy consumption. Option A is irrelevant because physical security of a desktop doesn't remove the need for cryptography in communications or storage. Option C is the opposite of lightweight design. Option D is a poor justification; security design should be based on risk, and lightweight cryptography is not merely for "minimal protection," but for practical deployability under constraints. Therefore, the correct reason is limited resources on embedded systems.

NEW QUESTION # 42

(Which operation can be performed on a certificate during the "Issued" stage?)

- A. Key archiving
- **B. Distribution**
- C. Creation
- D. Key recovery

Answer: B

Explanation:

The "Issued" stage in a certificate lifecycle indicates that the certificate has been generated and signed by the issuing CA and is now valid for use (subject to validity dates, policy constraints, and revocation status). At this point, the operational focus shifts from creating the certificate to making it available to the subject and relying parties. "Distribution" is the lifecycle activity most directly associated with an issued certificate: installing it on servers or endpoints, provisioning it into keystores, publishing it to directories if required, and ensuring the chain (intermediates) is accessible for validation. By contrast, "Creation" is earlier in the process (key generation, CSR creation, identity validation, issuance /signing). "Key recovery" and "key archiving" relate to private key management and escrow policies (often for encryption keys, not signing keys), and are governed by organizational policy and key management systems rather than the certificate's issued state itself. A certificate can be distributed after issuance regardless of whether any key escrow features exist. Therefore, the operation that fits the certificate's "Issued" stage best is distribution of the issued credential for operational use.

NEW QUESTION # 43

(What is the maximum key size (in bits) supported by AES?)

- A. 0
- B. 1
- **C. 2**
- D. 3

Answer: C

Explanation:

AES supports three standardized key sizes: 128, 192, and 256 bits, with a fixed block size of 128 bits.

The maximum of these supported key sizes is 256 bits (AES-256). Key size affects resistance to brute-force key search: larger keys exponentially increase the search space. In practice, AES-128 is already considered strong against brute force with contemporary computing capabilities, while AES-256 is often chosen for compliance requirements, conservative security margins, or to hedge against future advances. AES-512 is not part of the AES standard; if 512-bit keys are desired, systems typically use different constructions (like using AES-256 in certain key-derivation or wrapping schemes) rather than changing AES itself. Therefore, the correct maximum supported AES key size is 256 bits.

NEW QUESTION # 44

(Which certificate encoding process is binary-based?)

- A. Rivest-Shamir-Adleman (RSA)
- B. Public Key Infrastructure (PKI)
- C. Privacy Enhanced Mail (PEM)
- **D. Distinguished Encoding Rules (DER)**

Answer: D

Explanation:

DER (Distinguished Encoding Rules) is a binary encoding format used to represent ASN.1 structures in a canonical, unambiguous way. X.509 certificates are defined using ASN.1, and DER provides a strict subset of BER (Basic Encoding Rules) that guarantees a single, unique encoding for any given data structure. That "unique encoding" property is important for cryptographic operations such as hashing and digital signatures, because different encodings of the same abstract data could otherwise produce different hashes and break signature verification. In contrast, PEM is not a binary encoding; it is essentially a Base64-encoded text wrapper around DER data, bounded by header/footer lines (e.g.,

"BEGIN CERTIFICATE"). PKI is an overall framework for certificate issuance, trust, and lifecycle management—not an encoding. RSA is an asymmetric algorithm used for encryption/signing, not a certificate encoding format. Therefore, the binary-based certificate encoding process among the options is DER.

NEW QUESTION # 45

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