

## SSH Fingerprint Format

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### Abstract

This document formally documents the fingerprint format in use for verifying public keys from SSH clients and servers.

### Introduction

The security of the SSH protocols relies on the verification of public host keys. Since public keys tend to be very large, it is difficult for a human to verify an entire host key. Even with a PKI in place, it is useful to have a standard for exchanging short fingerprints of public keys.

This document formally describes the simple key fingerprint format.

## Fingerprint Format

The fingerprint of a public key consists of the output of the MD5 message-digest algorithm [[RFC-1321](#)]. The input to the algorithm is the public key blob as described in [[SSH-TRANS](#)]. The output of the algorithm is presented to the user as a sequence of 16 octets printed as hexadecimal with lowercase letters and separated by colons.

For example: "4b:69:6c:72:6f:79:20:77:61:73:20:68:65:72:65:21"

## References

[SSH-TRANS] Ylonen, T., et al: "SSH Transport Layer Protocol", Internet Draft, [draft-secsh-transport-09.txt](#)

[RFC-1321] R. Rivest: "The MD5 Message-Digest Algorithm", April 1992.

[RFC-2026] S. Bradner: "The Internet Standards Process -- Revision 3", October 1996.

## Author's Address:

Markus Friedl  
markus@openbsd.org  
Ganghoferstr. 7  
Munich, Germany

