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An additional mode of key distribution in MIKEY: MIKEY-RSA-R
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Abstract

The Multimedia Internet Keying (MIKEY) specification describes several modes of key distribution solution that addresses multimedia scenarios (e.g., SIP calls and RTSP sessions) -- using pre-shared keys, public keys, and optionally a Diffie-Hellman key exchange. In

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the public-key mode, the Initiator encrypts a random key with the Responder's public key and sends it to the Responder. In many communication scenarios, the Initiator may not know the Responder's public key, or in some cases the Responder's ID (e.g., call forwarding) in advance. We propose a new MIKEY mode that works well in such scenarios. This mode also enhances the group key management support in MIKEY; it supports member-initiated group key download (in contrast to group manager pushing the group keys to all members). This document updates [RFC 3830](#) with the RSA-R mode.

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1. Introduction

The MIKEY protocol [[RFC3830](#)] has three different methods for key transport or exchange: a pre-shared key mode (PSK), a public-key (RSA) mode, and an optional Diffie-Hellman exchange (DHE) mode. In addition, there is also an optional DH-HMAC mode [[I-D.ietf-msec-mikey-dhmac](#)], bringing the total number of modes to four. The primary motivation for the MIKEY protocol design is low-latency requirements of real-time communication, and thus all the exchanges finish in one-half to 1 round-trip; note that this offers no room for security parameter negotiation of the key management protocol itself. In this document, we note that the MIKEY modes defined in [RFC3830](#) [[RFC3830](#)] and [[I-D.ietf-msec-mikey-dhmac](#)] are insufficient to address some deployment scenarios and common use cases, and propose a new mode called MIKEY-RSA in Reverse mode, or simply as MIKEY-RSA-R. This document updates [RFC 3830](#) with the addition of this new mode to that specification.

1.1. Terminology used in this document

The key words "MUST", "MUST NOT", "REQUIRED", "SHALL", "SHALL NOT", "SHOULD", "SHOULD NOT", "RECOMMENDED", "MAY", and "OPTIONAL" in this document are to be interpreted as described in [BCP 14](#), [RFC 2119](#) [[RFC2119](#)].

Furthermore, this document reuses the terminology of the MIKEY specification [[RFC3830](#)].

2. Motivation

As noted in the introduction, the MIKEY specification and other proposals define four different modes of efficient key management for real-time applications. Those modes differ from each other in either the authentication method of choice (public-key, or symmetric shared key-based), or the key establishment method of choice (key download,

or key agreement using a Diffie-Hellman exchange). We summarize these modes below, including their advantages and shortcomings. We then discuss the use cases where these modes are unusable or inefficient.

2.1. Description of the MIKEY modes

The PSK mode requires that the Initiator and the Responder have a common secret key established offline. In this mode, the Initiator selects a TEK Generation Key (TGK), encrypts it with a key derived from the PSK, and sends it to the Responder as part of the first message, namely, I_MESSAGE. The I_MESSAGE is replay protected with

timestamps, and integrity protected with another key derived from the PSK. An optional Verification message from the Responder to the Initiator provides mutual authentication. This mode does not scale well as it requires pre-establishment of a shared key between communicating parties; for example, consider the use cases where any user may want to communicate to any other user in an Enterprise or the Internet at large. The RSA mode might be more suitable for such applications.

In the RSA mode, the Initiator selects a TGK, encrypts and authenticates it with an envelope key, and sends it to the Responder as part of the I_MESSAGE. The Initiator includes the envelope key, encrypted with the Responder's public key, in I_MESSAGE. The I_MESSAGE is replay protected with timestamps, and signed with the Initiator's public key. The Initiator's ID, Certificate (CERT) and the Responder's ID that the Initiator intends to talk may be included in I_MESSAGE. If the Initiator knows several public-keys of the Responder, it can indicate the key used in the optional CHASH payload. An optional Verification message from the Responder to the Initiator provides mutual authentication. The RSA mode works well if the Initiator knows the Responder's ID and the corresponding CERT (or can obtain the CERT independent of the MIKEY protocol). [RFC 3830](#) suggests that an Initiator, in the event that it does not have the Responder's CERT, may obtain the CERT from a directory agent using one or more round trips. However, in some cases, the Initiator may not even know the Responder's ID in advance, and because of that or for other reasons cannot obtain the Responder's CERT.

In addition to the case where the Responder may have several IDs,

some applications may allow for the Responder's ID to change unilaterally, as is typical in telephony (e.g., forwarding). In those cases and in others, the Initiator might be willing to let the other party establish identity and prove it via an Initiator-trusted third party (e.g., a Certification Authority (CA)).

The DH mode or the DH-HMAC mode of MIKEY might be useful in cases where the Initiator does not have access to the Responder's exact identity and/or CERT. In these modes, the two parties engage in an authenticated DH exchange to derive the TGK. On the downside, the DH modes have higher computational and communication overhead compared to the RSA and the PSK modes. More importantly, these modes are unsuitable for group key distribution. The DH-HMAC mode also requires establishment of PSKs between all possible communicating entities and thus has similar scaling issues as any PSK-based key management protocol.

In summary, in some communication scenarios -- where the Initiator might not have the correct ID and/or the CERT of the Responder --

none of the MIKEY modes described in [[RFC3830](#)] or [I-D.ietf-msec-mikey-dhmac] are suitable and efficient for multimedia session key establishment.

[2.2.](#) Use case motivating the proposed mode

In addition to the issues listed above, there are some types of applications that motivate the new MIKEY mode design proposed in this document.

Note that in the MIKEY-RSA mode (as in case of the PSK mode), the Initiator proposes the session security policy, and chooses the TGK. However, it is also possible that the Initiator wants to allow the Responder to specify the security policy and send the TGK. Consider for example the case of a conferencing scenario where the convener sends an invitation to a group of people to attend a meeting. The procedure then might be for the invitees to request the convener for group key material by sending a MIKEY I_MESSAGE. Thus, in the MIKEY definition of initiators and responders, the Initiator is asking the Responder for keying material. Note that this mode of operation is inline with the MSEC group key management architecture [[RFC4046](#)].

[3.](#) A new MIKEY-RSA mode: MIKEY-RSA-R

[3.1.](#) Outline

The proposed MIKEY mode requires 1 full round trip. The Initiator sends a signed I_MESSAGE to the intended Responder requesting the Responder to send the traffic keying material. The I_MESSAGE MAY contain the Initiator's CERT or a link (URL) to the CERT, and similarly the Responder's reply, R_MESSAGE MAY contain the Responder's CERT or a link to it. The Responder can use the Initiator's public key from the CERT in the I_MESSAGE to send the encrypted TGK in the R_MESSAGE. Upon receiving the R_MESSAGE, the Initiator can use the CERT in the R_MESSAGE to verify whether the Responder is in fact the party that it wants to communicate to, and accept the TGK. We refer to this protocol as MIKEY-RSA in the reverse mode, or simply as MIKEY-RSA-R.

The MIKEY-RSA-R mode exchange is defined as follows:

Initiator

Responder

I_MESSAGE = HDR, T, [RAND], [IDi|CERTi], [IDr], {SP}, SIGNi

R_MESSAGE = HDR, [GenExt(CSB-ID)], T, [RAND], [IDr|CERTr], [SP],
KEMAC, PKE, SIGNr

Figure 1: MIKEY-RSA-R mode

[3.2.](#) Preparing RSA-R messages

Preparation and parsing of RSA-R messages is as described in Sections

5.2 and 5.3 of [RFC 3830](#). Error handling is described in [Section 5.1.2](#) and replay protection guidelines are in Section 5.4 of [RFC 3830](#). In the following, we describe the components of RSA-R messages and specify message processing and parsing rules in addition to those in [RFC 3830](#).

[3.3](#). Components of the I_MESSAGE

MIKEY-RSA-R requires a full round trip to download the TGKs. The I_MESSAGE MUST have the MIKEY HDR and the timestamp payload for replay protection. The HDR field contains a CSB_ID (Crypto Session Bundle ID) randomly selected by the Initiator. The V bit MUST be set to '1' and ignored by the Responder, as a response is MANDATORY in this mode. The Initiator SHOULD indicate the number of CSs supported, and SHOULD fill in the CS ID map type and CS ID info fields for the RTP/RTCP streams it originates. This is because the sender of the streams chooses the SSRC which is carried in the CS ID info field; see [Section 6.1.1 of RFC 3830](#). The exception to Initiators not specifying SSRC values is to allow the Responder pick them to avoid SSRC collisions. Initiators of MIKEY messages that do not originate RTP streams MUST specify a '0' as the number of CSs supported. This typically applies to group communication and to the entities in the listen-only mode.

The I_MESSAGE MUST be signed by the Initiator following the procedure to sign MIKEY messages specified in [RFC 3830](#). The SIGNi payload contains this signature. Thus the I_MESSAGE is integrity and replay protected.

The RAND payload SHOULD be included in the I_MESSAGE when MIKEY-RSA-R mode is used for unicast communication. It SHOULD be omitted when this mode is used to establish group keys. The reason for the inclusion of the RAND payload in unicast scenarios is to allow for

the Initiator to contribute entropy to the key derivation process (in addition to the CSB_ID).

IDi and CERTi SHOULD be included, but they MAY be left out when it is expected that the peer already knows the Initiating party's ID (or can obtain the certificate in some other manner). For example, this could be the case if the ID is extracted from SIP. For certificate handling, authorization, and policies, see [Section 4.3. of RFC 3830](#).

If CERTi is included, it MUST correspond to the private key used to sign the I_MESSAGE.

If the Responder has multiple Identities, the Initiator MAY also include the specific identity, IDr, of the Responder with whom communication is desired. If the Initiator's policy does not allow acceptance of an R_MESSAGE from any entity other than one that can assert a specific identity, the Initiator MUST include that specific identity in an IDr payload in the I_MESSAGE.

The Initiator MAY also send security policy (SP) payload(s) containing all the security policies that it supports. If the Responder does not support any of the policies included, it SHOULD reply with an Error message of type "Invalid SPpar" (Error no. 10).

SIGNi is a signature covering the Initiator's MIKEY message, I_MESSAGE, using the Initiator's signature key (see [Section 5.2 of RFC 3830](#) for the exact definition). The signature assures the Responder that the claimed Initiator has indeed generated the message. This automatically provides message integrity as well.

[3.4.](#) Processing the I_MESSAGE

Upon receiving an I_MESSAGE of the RSA-R format, the Responder MUST respond with one of the following messages:

- o The Responder SHOULD send an Error message "Message type not supported" (Error no. 13), if it cannot correctly parse the received MIKEY message. Error message format is as specified in [Section 5.1.2 of RFC 3830](#). Error no. 13 is not defined in [RFC 3830](#), and so [RFC 3830](#) compliant implementations MAY return "an unspecified error occurred" (Error no. 12).
- o The Responder MUST send an R_MESSAGE, if SIGNi can be correctly verified and the timestamp is current; if an SP payload is present in the I_MESSAGE the Responder MUST return one of the proposed security policies that matches the Responder's local policy.
- o If a RAND payload is present in the I_MESSAGE, both sides use that RAND payload as the RAND value in the MIKEY key computation. In case of multicast, if a RAND payload is present in the I_MESSAGE, the Responder SHOULD ignore the payload. In any case, the R_MESSAGE for multicast communication MUST contain a RAND payload

and that RAND payload is used for key computation.

- o The rest of the error message rules are as described in [Section 5.1.2 of RFC 3830](#), and message processing rules are as described in [Section 5.3 of RFC 3830](#).

[3.5.](#) Components of the R_MESSAGE

The HDR payload in the R_MESSAGE is formed following the procedure described in [RFC 3830](#). Specifically, the CSB ID in the HDR payload MUST be the same as the one in the HDR of the I_MESSAGE. The Responder MUST fill in the number of CSs and the CS ID map type and CS ID info fields of the HDR payload.

For group communication, all the members MUST use the same CSB ID and CS ID in computing the traffic keying material. Therefore, for group key establishment, the Responder MUST include a General Extension Payload containing a new CSB ID in the R_MESSAGE. If a new CSB ID is present in the R_MESSAGE, the Initiator and the Responder MUST use that value in key material computation. Furthermore, the CS ID map type and CS ID map info MUST be populated by the Responder. The General Extension Payload carrying a CSB ID MUST NOT be present in case of unicast communication.

When used in group scenarios with bi-directional media, the Responder SHOULD include two TGKs or TEKs in the KEMAC payload. The first TGK or TEK SHOULD be used for receiving media on the Initiator's side and the second one to encrypt/authenticate media originating on the Initiator's side. This allows all the multicast traffic to be encrypted/authenticated by the same group key, while keys used for unicast streams from all the group members can still be independent.

The T payload is exactly the same as that received in the I_MESSAGE.

If the I_MESSAGE did not include the RAND payload, it MUST be present in the R_MESSAGE. In case it has been included in the I_MESSAGE, it MUST NOT be present in the R_MESSAGE. In group communication, the RAND payload is always sent by the Responder and in unicast communication, either the Initiator or the Responder (but not both) generate and send the RAND payload.

IDr and CERTr SHOULD be included, but they MAY be left out when it can be expected that the peer already knows the other party's ID (or can obtain the certificate in some other manner). For example, this could be the case if the ID is extracted from SIP. For certificate handling, authorization, and policies, see [Section 4.3. of RFC 3830](#). If CERTr is included, it MUST correspond to the private key used to sign the R_MESSAGE.

An SP payload MAY be included in the R_MESSAGE. If an SP payload was in the I_MESSAGE, then R_MESSAGE MUST contain an SP payload specifying the security policies of the secure RTP session being negotiated. More specifically, the Initiator may have provided multiple options, but the Responder MUST choose one option per Security Policy Parameter.

The KEMAC payload contains a set of encrypted sub-payloads and a MAC: $KEMAC = E(encr_key, IDr || \{TGK\}) || MAC$. The first payload (IDr) in KEMAC is the identity of the Responder (not a certificate, but generally the same ID as the one specified in the certificate). Each of the following payloads (TGK) includes a TGK randomly and independently chosen by the Responder (and possible other related parameters, e.g., the key lifetime). The encrypted part is then followed by a MAC, which is calculated over the KEMAC payload. The *encr_key* and the *auth_key* are derived from the envelope key, *env_key*, as specified in [Section 4.1.4. of RFC 3830](#). The payload definitions are specified in [Section 6.2 of RFC 3830](#).

The Responder encrypts and integrity protects the TGK with keys derived from a randomly or pseudo-randomly chosen envelope key, and encrypts the envelope key itself with the public key of the Initiator. The PKE payload contains the encrypted envelope key, *env_key*: $PKE = E(PKi, env_key)$. PKi denotes the Initiator's public key. Note that, as suggested in [RFC 3830](#), the envelope key MAY be cached and used as the PSK for re-keying.

To compute the signature that goes in the SIGNr payload, the Responder MUST sign:

R_MESSAGE (excluding the SIGNr payload itself) || IDi || IDr || T.

Note that the added identities and timestamp are identical to those transported in the ID and T payloads.

[3.6.](#) Processing the R_MESSAGE

In addition to the processing rules in [RFC 3830](#), the following rules apply to processing of the R_MESSAGE of MIKEY RSA-R mode.

If the I_MESSAGE contained a RAND payload, the Initiator MUST silently discard an R_MESSAGE that contains a RAND payload. Similarly, if the I_MESSAGE did not contain a RAND payload, the Initiator MUST silently discard an R_MESSAGE that does not contain a RAND payload.

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If the SP payload contains a policy not specified in the SP message, if present, in the I_MESSAGE, such and R_MESSAGE MUST be discarded silently.

[3.7.](#) Additions to [RFC 3830](#) message types and other values

This document introduces two new message types (Table 6.1a of [RFC 3830](#)), an Error no (Table 6.12 of [RFC 3830](#)), and a general extension payload (Table 6.15 of [RFC 3830](#)). This section specifies those additions.

[3.7.1.](#) Modified Table 6.1a from [RFC 3830](#)

Modified Table 6.1a from [RFC 3830](#):

Data type	Value	Comment
Pre-shared	0	Initiator's pre-shared key message
PSK ver msg	1	Verification message of a Pre-shared key msg
Public key	2	Initiator's public-key transport message
PK ver msg	3	Verification message of a public-key message
D-H init	4	Initiator's DH exchange message
D-H resp	5	Responder's DH exchange message
Error	6	Error message
DHHMAC init	7	DH HMAC message 1
DHHMAC resp	8	DH HMAC message 2
RSA-R I_MSG	9	Initiator's RSA-R public-key message (NEW)
RSA-R R_MSG	10	Responder's RSA-R public-key message (NEW)

Figure 2: Table 6.1a from [RFC 3830](#) (Revised)

3.7.2. Modified Table 6.12 from [RFC 3830](#)

Modified Table 6.12 from [RFC 3830](#):

Error no		Value		Comment

Auth failure		0		Authentication failure
Invalid TS		1		Invalid timestamp
Invalid PRF		2		PRF function not supported
Invalid MAC		3		MAC algorithm not supported
Invalid EA		4		Encryption algorithm not supported
Invalid HA		5		Hash function not supported
Invalid DH		6		DH group not supported
Invalid ID		7		ID not supported
Invalid Cert		8		Certificate not supported
Invalid SP		9		SP type not supported
Invalid SPpar		10		SP parameters not supported
Invalid DT		11		not supported Data type
Unspecified error		12		an unspecified error occurred
Unsupported				
message type		13		unparseable MIKEY message (NEW)

Figure 3: Table 6.12 from [RFC 3830](#) (Revised)

3.7.3. Modified Table 6.15 from [RFC 3830](#)

Modified Table 6.15 from [RFC 3830](#):

Type		Value		Comment

Vendor ID		0		Vendor specific byte string
SDP IDs		1		List of SDP key mgmt IDs
				(allocated for use in [KMASDP])
CSB-ID		3		Responder's modified CSB-ID (group mode)

Figure 4: Table 6.15 from [RFC 3830](#) (Revised)

4. Applicability of the RSA-R and RSA modes

MIKEY-RSA-R mode and RSA mode are both very useful: deciding on which mode to use depends on the application.

The RSA-R mode is useful when you have reasons to believe that the Responder may be a different party than the one to which the MIKEY I_MESSAGE was sent. This is quite common in telephony and multimedia

applications where the session or the call can be retargeted or forwarded. When the security policy allows it, leaving some flexibility for the Initiator to see who the Responder may turn out to be, before making the decision to continue or discontinue the session may be appropriate. In such cases, the main objective of the Initiator's RSA-R message is to present its public key/certificate to the Responder, and wait for a Responder to present its identity.

The second scenario is when the Initiator already has the Responder's certificate but wants to allow the Responder to come up with all the keying material. This is applicable in conferences where the Responder is the key distributor and the Initiators contact the Responder to initiate key download. Notice that this is quite similar to the group key download model as specified in GDOI [[RFC3547](#)], GSAKMP [[I-D.ietf-msec-gsakmp-sec](#)], and GKDP [[I-D.ietf-msec-gkdp](#)] protocols (also see [[RFC4046](#)]). The catch however is that the participating entities must know that they need to contact a well-known address as far as that conferencing group is concerned. Note that they only need the Responder's address, not necessarily its CERT. If the group members have the Responder's CERT, there is no harm; they simply do not need the CERT to compose I_MESSAGE.

The RSA mode is useful when the Initiator knows the Responder's identity and CERT. This mode is also useful when the key exchange is happening in an established session with a Responder (for example,

when switching from a non-secure mode to a secure mode), and when the policy is such that it is only appropriate to establish a MIKEY session with the Responder that is targeted by the Initiator.

4.1. Limitations

The RSA-R mode may not easily support 3-way calling, under the assumptions that motivated the design. An extra message may be required compared to the MIKEY-RSA mode specified in [RFC 3830](#). Consider that A wants to talk to B and C, but does not have B's or C's CERT. A might contact B and request that B supply a key for a 3-way call. Now if B knows C's CERT, then B can simply use the MIKEY-RSA mode (as defined in [RFC 3830](#)) to send the TGK to C. If not, then the solution is not straightforward. For instance, A might ask C to contact B or itself to get the TGK, in effect initiating a 3-way exchange. It should be noted that 3-way calling is typically implemented using a bridge, in which case there are no issues (it looks like 3 point-to-point sessions, where one end of each session is a bridge mixing the traffic into a single stream).

5. Security Considerations

We offer a brief overview of the security properties of the exchange. There are two messages: the I_MESSAGE and the R_MESSAGE. The I_MESSAGE is a signed request by an Initiator requesting the Responder to select a TGK to be used to protect multimedia (e.g., Secure RTP or SRTP [[RFC3711](#)]) sessions.

The message is signed, which assures the Responder that the claimed Initiator has indeed generated the message. This automatically provides message integrity as well.

There is a timestamp in the I_MESSAGE, which when generated and interpreted in the context of the MIKEY specification, assures the Responder that the request is live and not a replay. Indirectly, this also provides protection against a DoS attack in that the I_MESSAGE must itself be signed. The Responder however would have to verify the Initiator's signature and the timestamp, and thus would spend significant computing resources. It is possible to mitigate this by caching recently received and verified requests.

Note that the I_MESSAGE in this method basically equals DoS protection properties of the DH method and not the public key method as there are no payloads encrypted by the Responder's public key in I_MESSAGE. If IDr is not included in the I_MESSAGE, the Responder will accept the message and a response (and state) would be created for the malicious request.

The R_MESSAGE is quite similar to the I_MESSAGE in the MIKEY-RSA mode and has all the same security properties.

When using the RSA-R mode, the Responder may be a different party than the one to which the MIKEY I_MESSAGE was sent. It is the responsibility of the Initiator to verify that the identity of the Responder is acceptable (based on its local policy) if it changes from the party to which the MIKEY I_MESSAGE was sent, and to take appropriate action based on the outcome. In some cases, it could be appropriate to accept Responder's identity if it can be strongly authenticated; in other cases, a blacklist or a whitelist may be appropriate.

When both unicast and multicast streams need to be negotiated it is RECOMMENDED to use multiple instances of MIKEY-RSA-R rather than a single instance in group mode. This is to avoid potential key reuse with counter mode.

[5.1.](#) Impact of the Responder choosing the TGK

In the MIKEY-RSA or PSK modes, the Initiator chooses the TGK and the Responder has the option to accept the key or not. In the RSA-R mode

for unicast communication, the Initiator and the Responder contribute random information in generating the TEK (RAND from the Initiator and the TGK from the Responder). For group communication, the sender will choose the TGK and the RAND; note that it is in the interest of the sender to provide sufficient entropy to TEK generation since the TEK protects data sent by the Responder.

Thus, in case of unicast communication, the RSA-R mode is slightly better than the RSA mode in that it allows the Initiator as well as the Responder to contribute entropy to the TEK generation process. This comes at the expense of the additional message. However, as

noted earlier, the new mode needs the additional message to allow simpler provisioning.

[RFC 3830](#) has additional notes on the security properties of the MIKEY protocol, key derivation functions and other components.

[6.](#) IANA Considerations

This specification requires the following IANA assignments to the MIKEY registry :

Add to "Error Payload namespace:"

Unsupported message type ----- 13

Add to "Common Header payload name spaces:"

RSA-R I_MSG ----- 9

RSA-R R_MSG ----- 10

General Extensions payload name spaces:

CSB-ID ----- 3

(Note: if not available, please assign the next available number)

[7.](#) Acknowledgments

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