Introduction to Number Theory Chapter 4 Primitive Roots and RSA

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- Such an object is called a ring. In this case it is usually denoted by $\mathbb{Z}/m\mathbb{Z}$ or $\mathbb{Z}_m$.
- In this chapter we will look at its multiplicative structure.
- In particular we will consider the reduced residue classes modulo m.

- An obvious question is what happens if we take powers of a fixed residue a?

Definition 1

Given $m \in \mathbb{N}$, $a \in \mathbb{Z}$, $(a, m) = 1$ we define the order $\text{ord}_m(a)$ of a modulo m to be the smallest positive integer t such that

$$a^t \equiv 1 \pmod{m}.$$

We may express this by saying that a belongs to the exponent t modulo m, or that t is the order of a modulo m.

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- Note that by Euler's theorem, $a^{\phi(m)} \equiv 1 \pmod{m}$, so that $\mathrm{ord}_m(a)$ exists.

- We can do better than that.

Theorem 2

Suppose that $m \in \mathbb{N}$, $(a, m) = 1$ *and* $n \in \mathbb{N}$ *is such that* $a^n \equiv 1 \pmod{m}$. *Then* $\operatorname{ord}_m(a) | n$. *In particular* $\operatorname{ord}_m(a) | \phi(m)$.

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with $1 \le u < v \le \phi(m)$,

- and then

$$a^{v-u} \equiv 1 \pmod{m}$$

and $1 \le v - u < \phi(m)$ contradicting the assumption that $\text{ord}_m(a) = \phi(m)$.

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- Thus there is one element of order 1, one element of order 2, two of order 3 and two of order 6.

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- $a = 6$, $6^2 = 36 \equiv 1$, $\text{ord}_7(6) = 2$.
- Thus there is one element of order 1, one element of order 2, two of order 3 and two of order 6.
- Is it a fluke that for each $d|6 = \phi(7)$ the number of elements of order d is $\phi(d)$?

- We now come to an important concept

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Suppose that $m \in \mathbb{N}$ and $(a, m) = 1$. If $\text{ord}_m(a) = \phi(m)$ then we say that a is a primitive root modulo m.

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- There are primitive roots to some moduli. For example, modulo 7 the powers of 3 are successively $3, 2, 6, 4, 5, 1$.

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- There are primitive roots to some moduli. For example, modulo 7 the powers of 3 are successively $3, 2, 6, 4, 5, 1$.
- Gauss determined precisely which moduli possess primitive roots. The first step is the case of prime modulus.

Theorem 6 (Gauss)

Suppose that p is a prime number. Let $d|p-1$ then there are $\phi(d)$ residue classes a with $\text{ord}_p(a) = d$. In particular there are $\phi(p-1) = \phi(\phi(p))$ primitive roots modulo p.

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- Let $1 = d_1 < d_2 < \ldots < d_k = p-1$ be the divisors of $p-1$ in order.
- We have a relationship $\sum_{r|d_j} \psi(r) = d_j$ for each $j = 1, 2, \ldots$ and, of course, the sum is over a subset of the divisors of $p-1$. I claim that this determines $\psi(d_j)$ uniquely.

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- But we already know a solution, namely $\psi = \phi$.

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- Then suppose that $\psi(d_1), \ldots, \psi(d_j)$ are determined.
- Then we have

$$\sum_{r|d_{j+1}} \psi(r) = d_{j+1}.$$

- Hence

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- But we already know one solution, namely $\psi(r) = \phi(r)$.

- To get a better insight here is the proof in the special case $p = 13$

Example 7

Here is the proof when $p = 13$, so we are concerned with the divisors of 12.

$$(\psi(1), \psi(2), \psi(3), \psi(4), \psi(6), \psi(12)) \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 1 & 1 & 1 & 1 & 1 \\ 0 & 1 & 0 & 1 & 1 & 1 \\ 0 & 0 & 1 & 0 & 1 & 1 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 1 & 0 & 1 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 1 & 1 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 1 \end{pmatrix} = (1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 12)$$

- How about higher powers of odd primes?

Theorem 8 (Gauss)

We have primitive roots modulo m when $m = 2$, $m = 4$, $m = p^k$ and $m = 2p^k$ with p an odd prime and in no other cases.

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Suppose that $k \geq 3$. Then the numbers $(-1)^u 5^v$ with $u = 0, 1$ and $0 \leq v < 2^{k-2}$ form a set of reduced residues modulo 2^k

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- We will not need these results but I will include the proofs in the class text for anyone interested.

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Suppose p is an odd prime. When $p \nmid a$ the congruence $x^k \equiv a \pmod p$ has 0 or $(k, p-1)$ solutions, and the number of reduced residues a modulo p for which it is soluble is $\frac{p-1}{(k,p-1)}$.

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- The above theorem suggests the following.

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Given a primitive root g and a reduced residue class a modulo m we define the discrete logarithm $\text{dlog}_g(a)$, or index $\text{ind}_g(a)$ to be that unique residue class l modulo $\phi(m)$ such that $g^l \equiv a \pmod{m}$

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- The notation $\mathrm{ind}_g(x)$ is more commonly used, but $\mathrm{dlog}_g(x)$ seems more natural.

- It is useful to work through a detailed example.

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- Hence the original congruence has five solutions given by

$$x \equiv 2, 8, 10, 7, 6 \pmod{11}$$

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- The recipient only has to know n and d.
- The level of security depends only on the ease with which one can find d knowing n and e.
- The numbers n and e can be in the public domain.

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- In other words, knowing $\phi(n)$ is equivalent to factoring n.