

# MysteryTwister C3

THE CRYPTO CHALLENGE CONTEST

## HANDYCIPHER – PART 5

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# Introduction

Handycipher is a low-tech stream cipher, simple enough to permit pen-and-paper encrypting and decrypting of messages, while providing a significantly high level of security. Handycipher was first published in 2014 and further improved in 2015 and 2016.

Part 5 of the Handycipher series presents the same challenge as Part 2, but employs an improved version of the cipher, which has been strengthened:

- (1) by adding another ten characters to the ciphertext alphabet,
- (2) by enlarging the key from 41 to 51 characters,
- (3) by increasing the number of null characters from 15 to 25, and
- (4) by interweaving random non-null "noise" characters in the Core part of the cipher before the null characters are added.

# Challenge

Part 5 of the Handycipher series is a partly-known plaintext challenge. How Handycipher works is described in detail in the pdf within the additional zip file.

Your task is to recover some of the plaintext message  $M$ , given the 7,538-character ciphertext  $C$  generated by encrypting  $M$  with Handycipher and the secret key  $K$ . For a full break, you also could try to discover  $K$ .

The ciphertext  $C$  is given as a text file within the additional zip file. Also given there is another text file containing 229 consecutive letters occurring at an unknown location in the plaintext  $M$  (therefore partly-known).

The solution consists of the **fifth word in each of the sentences** of  $M$  **not written by Tennessee Williams**. Please enter the solution with spaces between the words.

Remark: The end of each sentence is determined by a letter pair ". " or "? " which is not part of an ellipsis, an abbreviation, or a quotation attribution.

# Additional Files

The additional zip archive contains the following files:

- mtc3\_handycipher-6\_description.pdf
  - ➡ detailed explanation of Handycipher
- known-plaintext\_HC-05.txt
  - ➡ the known part of the plaintext
- ciphertxt\_HC-05.txt
  - ➡ the complete ciphertext
- handycipher.zip
  - ➡ Python code and test files for Handycipher

## References (1/2)

In the document "mtc3\_handycipher-6\_description.pdf" the cipher is explained in detail. You can find it within the additional zip file.

A complete version history of Handycipher can be found at <http://eprint.iacr.org/eprint-bin/versions.pl?entry=2014/257>

Successful cryptanalysis of an earlier version of Handycipher can be found here – however, it's more fun to try by yourself 😊  
<https://oilulio.wordpress.com/2014/06/19/handycipher-decrypt/>  
<https://oilulio.wordpress.com/2014/07/28/breaking-handycipher-2/>

## References (2/2): Overview of all HC challenges

- HC, Parts 1 & 4: known initial segment of the plaintext
- HC, Parts 2 & 5: known segment occurring somewhere in the plaintext
- HC, Parts 3 & 6: ciphertext-only
  
- EHC, Parts 1 & 4: known initial segment of the plaintext; three different encryptions of the same plaintext using the same key (but different session keys)
- EHC, Parts 2 & 5: known segment occurring somewhere in the plaintext
- EHC, Parts 3 & 6: ciphertext-only
  
- WHC, Parts 1 & 4: known initial segment of the plaintext
- WHC, Parts 2 & 5: ciphertext-only with some information about the key matrix
- WHC, Parts 3 & 6: ciphertext-only