



THE SZ42 CHALLENGE – PART 12

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Lorenz SZ42 – Tunny

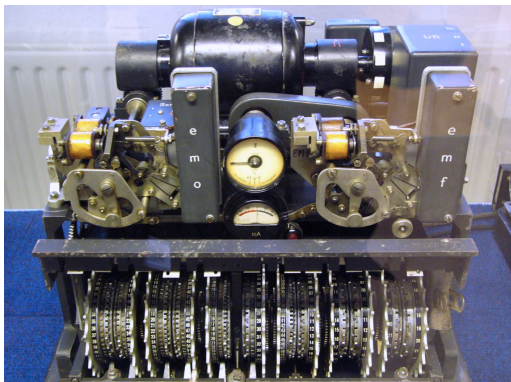


Figure: A Lorenz SZ42 machine with its covers removed on display at Bletchley Park museum.

Source: <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Lorenz-SZ42-2.jpg>

Introduction (1/2)

The Lorenz SZ42, codenamed Tunny, was a teleprinter encryption device used by Germany during WW2 for strategic communications. Its successful cryptanalysis at Bletchley Park provided the Allies with high-grade intelligence about several fronts, as well as for the preparations for the D-Day landings.

The story of Tunny's codebreaking and Colossus is well known, following the declassification of the General Report on Tunny in 2000, and the publication of several books. More details can be found in the references [CR10, Gan14, RDF15, Las20].

Introduction (2/2)

The work of the Testery, the other Tunny section at Bletchley Park, is less known. Named after its commander, Major Ralph Tester, the Testery was responsible for the development and application of hand methods, that complemented the work of machines like Colossus. For some reason, the report on the Testery was not declassified until 2018.

A detailed functional description of the SZ42 is given in the additional zip file, as well as a simulator, and hints for cryptanalysis.

Challenge (1/4)

This is the twelfth challenge in a series of 13 level-2 challenges with the SZ42.

With this challenge, we provide one ciphertext (1000 characters) and one plaintext (988 characters).

As described in the additional file “Lorenz_SZ42.pdf” some SZ42 models use motor limitations which are intended to reduce the number of motor stops, making cryptanalysis more challenging.

There are no motor limitations in this challenge.

The patterns for the CHI and MU wheels are known as well as the starting positions for the CHI, MU, and PSI wheels.

Challenge (2/4)

To solve the challenge, you need to recover the PSI wheel patterns so that you can decrypt the ciphertext. Here are the known patterns:

CHI1 pattern:

xxx.xxx..x.x....x...xx.xx...x..xxx...xxx.

CHI2 pattern:

xxxxx...x.x.x...xx.xxxx..x...x.

CHI3 pattern:

.x..x.xxxxx..xx.x..xxx.....x.

CHI4 pattern:

.x.xxx...xxx....xx.x.x.xx.

CHI5 pattern:

xx.xx.x...xx....x.xxxx.

Challenge (3/4)

MU1 pattern:

. .x.xx.xxxx.xxx.xxx..xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx.xxxx.x

MU2 pattern:

x..xxx.x.xxx.x.x.x....x...x.x.....x

CHI wheels starting positions:

2 3 7 0 16

MU wheels starting positions:

39 8

PSI wheels starting positions:

16 13 25 12 48

The solution is a 6-digit code at the end of the plaintext.

Please enter the solution in the form of six digits (without spaces), for example enter: "123456".

Challenge (4/4)

The attached zip file includes:

1. Additional provided material, e.g. ciphertexts (and plaintexts)
2. A simulator in Java, used to create the challenges
3. A functional description of the SZ42, including the description of the Baudot alphabet and its notations
4. Ideas for possible attacks
5. *key.txt* and *key_description.txt* containing an example key for the SZ42

References



Jack Copeland and Heath Robinson, *Colossus: Breaking the German "Tunny" code at Bletchley Park. An illustrated history*, The Rutherford Journal: The New Zealand Journal for the History and Philosophy of Science and Technology **3** (2010), <http://www.rutherfordjournal.org/article030109.html>.



Paul Gannon, *Colossus: Bletchley Park's Last Secret*, Atlantic Books Ltd, 2014.



George Lasry, *Solving a tunny challenge with computerized "testery" methods*, Proceedings of the 3rd International Conference on Historical Cryptology HistoCrypt 2020, no. 171, Linköping University Electronic Press, 2020, pp. 96–105.



James Reeds, Whitfield Diffie, and JV Field, *Breaking Teleprinter Ciphers at Bletchley Park: An Edition of I.J. Good, D. Michie and G. Timms: General Report on Tunny with Emphasis on Statistical methods (1945)*, John Wiley & Sons, 2015.