How can you trust information you find on the Internet? Where can you find an answer that is
detailed enough to be useful, but not too complex for you to understand? Since anyone can publish
information instantly on the World Wide Web distinguishing quality information can be very difficult.
Before the coming of the information age, there were only a few options for research – books,
magazines, and scholarly journals.

Scholarly journals (also called academic, peer-reviewed, or refereed journals) are the traditional
method of communicating new scientific discoveries. Authors generally submit their articles to several
other scientists for review and comment, and these reviewers must approve the article before it is
published. Since the audience is other scientists, the language used is highly technical and specific to
the field. Scholarly journals are one type of primary source for research.

Primary sources are newly created or recorded knowledge by a scientist or researcher. These
can be scholarly journal articles, scientific reports or even an in-person presentation. Secondary sources
review, discuss, or analyze primary sources and are written later. Some examples of secondary sources
are encyclopedia articles, science news reports, and most books.

Both types of information sources may have citations, references to earlier research. Citations
in a primary source are an acknowledgement of previous research and give a link between earlier
knowledge and the current study. Citations in a secondary source indicate where the author got the
information they used to write their review of the topic.

For this lab, work in groups of two at each computer. Take notes on what you find on the back.

1. Visit the Wikipedia article for RSA Cryptography (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/RSA) and go to
   the Notes, References and External links. Since this article is a secondary source, these are the
   many information sources used to create it. Identify the type of information source (scholarly
   journal article, book, etc) for each of the five references on the back of this worksheet.

2. For each of the five, evaluate it on the following criteria:
   a. Authority – who is the author and what is their level of expertise
   b. Audience – who is the article written for and at what level is the article written
   c. Currency – how recent is the article and does that matter
   d. Content – could you understand and use the article for a paper in this class

3. Now go to Lionsearch (http://psu.summon.serialssolutions.com) and find a scholarly article on
   RSA Cryptography that you think has high quality in those four criteria and cite it below.
NOTES


2. SIAM News, Volume 36, Number 5, June 2003


References

Menezes, Alfred; Paul C. van Oorschot; Scott A. Vanstone (October 1996). Handbook of Applied Cryptography.

External Links

Rivest; Ronald L. (Belmont, MA), Shamir; Adi (Cambridge, MA), Adleman; Leonard M. (Arlington, MA), December 14, 1977, U.S. Patent 4,405,829