

Quantum Cyber Security

Lecture 14: Post-Quantum Cryptography I

Petros Wallden

University of Edinburgh

10th March 2026



- 1 What Post-Quantum Cryptography is?
- 2 Categories of Post-Quantum Secure Cryptosystems
- 3 Quantum Algorithms: What can a quantum adversary break
- 4 Quantum (Adversarial) Access To Classical Protocols
- 5 The Quantum Random Oracle (QRO)
- 6 Example: Quantum Access to Oblivious Transfer
- 7 Further reading: Changes in Definitions of Secure Encryption

What is Post-Quantum Cryptography?

Question

Is a classical cryptosystem secure against adversaries that have quantum technologies, including a scalable fault-tolerant quantum computer?

Question

Is a classical cryptosystem secure against adversaries that have quantum technologies, including a scalable fault-tolerant quantum computer?

- All honest steps of protocols involve classical computations and communications
- Adversaries can use off-line (to compute) or online (replace classical with quantum messages) their quantum technologies

What is Post-Quantum Cryptography?

Question

Is a classical cryptosystem secure against adversaries that have quantum technologies, including a scalable fault-tolerant quantum computer?

- All honest steps of protocols involve classical computations and communications
- Adversaries can use off-line (to compute) or online (replace classical with quantum messages) their quantum technologies

Definition

A classical system that withstands all quantum attacks is called **Post-Quantum Secure**

Levels of Post-Quantum Security

- **Level 1:** Adversaries use a quantum computer to solve a classical hard problem that guarantees the security
Example: Use QC to factor and break RSA

Levels of Post-Quantum Security

- **Level 1:** Adversaries use a quantum computer to solve a classical hard problem that guarantees the security
Example: Use QC to factor and break RSA
- **Level 2:** Definitions need modific since adversaries can send quant-info instead of classical in protocol or 'security game'
Eg: Advers can Encr/Decr (chosen plaintext/ciphertext) superpos of classical messages and use superpos output

Levels of Post-Quantum Security

- **Level 1:** Adversaries use a quantum computer to solve a classical hard problem that guarantees the security
Example: Use QC to factor and break RSA
- **Level 2:** Definitions need modification since adversaries can send quantum information instead of classical in protocol or 'security game'
Eg: Adversaries can Encr/Decr (chosen plaintext/ciphertext) superposition of classical messages and use superposition output
- **Level 3:** Some techniques to prove security do not apply since they 'copy' something impossible for quantum information
Example: 'Rewinding', 'Cut-and-Choose', 'Zero-Knowledge'

Levels of Post-Quantum Security

- **Level 1:** Adversaries use a quantum computer to solve a classical hard problem that guarantees the security
Example: Use QC to factor and break RSA
- **Level 2:** Definitions need modific since adversaries can send quant-info instead of classical in protocol or 'security game'
Eg: Advers can Encr/Decr (chosen plaintext/ciphertext) superpos of classical messages and use superpos output
- **Level 3:** Some techniques to prove security do not apply since they 'copy' something impossible for quant-info
Example: 'Rewinding', 'Cut-and-Choose', 'Zero-Knowledge'

We focus on Level 1 & Level 2

Types of Post-Quantum Cryptosystems

Post-Quantum Cryptosystems classified by hardness assumption

Types of Post-Quantum Cryptosystems

Post-Quantum Cryptosystems classified by hardness assumption

- **Lattice-Based:** Given a high-dimensional lattice, find the smallest vector in the lattice (SVP). Believed to be hard to even approximate even for quantum computers (see later)

Types of Post-Quantum Cryptosystems

Post-Quantum Cryptosystems classified by hardness assumption

- **Lattice-Based:** Given a high-dimensional lattice, find the smallest vector in the lattice (SVP). Believed to be hard to even approximate even for quantum computers (see later)
- **Hash-Based:** Relies on assumption that post-quantum secure cryptographic hash functions exist. SHA-3 can be used. Security proven in Quantum Random Oracle model (see later)

Types of Post-Quantum Cryptosystems

Post-Quantum Cryptosystems classified by hardness assumption

- **Lattice-Based:** Given a high-dimensional lattice, find the smallest vector in the lattice (SVP). Believed to be hard to even approximate even for quantum computers (see later)
- **Hash-Based:** Relies on assumption that post-quantum secure cryptographic hash functions exist. SHA-3 can be used. Security proven in Quantum Random Oracle model (see later)
- **Code-Based:** Uses error-correcting codes, with decoding kept secret. Security reduces to max-likelihood decoding or max-distance problem, both believed to be hard for QC.

Types of Post-Quantum Cryptosystems

Post-Quantum Cryptosystems classified by hardness assumption

- **Lattice-Based:** Given a high-dimensional lattice, find the smallest vector in the lattice (SVP). Believed to be hard to even approximate even for quantum computers (see later)
- **Hash-Based:** Relies on assumption that post-quantum secure cryptographic hash functions exist. SHA-3 can be used. Security proven in Quantum Random Oracle model (see later)
- **Code-Based:** Uses error-correcting codes, with decoding kept secret. Security reduces to max-likelihood decoding or max-distance problem, both believed to be hard for QC.
- **Other:** Multivariate, SuperSingular-Isogeny (recently broken), Symmetric-key (block-ciphers)

Types of Post-Quantum Cryptosystems

Post-Quantum Cryptosystems classified by hardness assumption

- **Lattice-Based:** Given a high-dimensional lattice, find the smallest vector in the lattice (SVP). Believed to be hard to even approximate even for quantum computers (see later)
- **Hash-Based:** Relies on assumption that post-quantum secure cryptographic hash functions exist. SHA-3 can be used. Security proven in Quantum Random Oracle model (see later)
- **Code-Based:** Uses error-correcting codes, with decoding kept secret. Security reduces to max-likelihood decoding or max-distance problem, both believed to be hard for QC.
- **Other:** Multivariate, SuperSingular-Isogeny (recently broken), Symmetric-key (block-ciphers)

Higher/lower confidence these are secure against QC. All less efficient/practical than used (quantumly insecure) protocols

Postquantum Standardization

Competition (4 rounds) winners (July 2022)

- **Lattices:** CRYSTALS-Kyber, CRYSTALS-Dilithium (signature), Falcon (signature)
- **Code-based:** BIKE, Classic McEliece, HQC
- **Hash-based:** SPHINCS+ (signature)
- Supersingular Elliptic Curve, Isogeny: SIKE (broken classically)

NIST standardized (2024)

- **FIPS 203** (Federal Information Processing Standard). Encryption, based on CRYSTALS-Kyber
- **FIPS 204.** Signatures, based on CRYSTALS-Dilithium
- **FIPS 205.** Signatures, based on SPHINCS+
- To-be-released **FIPS 206.** Signatures, based on FALCON (NTRU-based)

Next lectures (lattice-based earlier/simpler protocols)

- There is **no generic speed-up** for every task
- Separate analysis for each problem/cryptosystem

- There is **no generic speed-up** for every task
- Separate analysis for each problem/cryptosystem
- **Best quantum algorithm required** even when it doesn't break/solve efficiently the problem

Security parameters (key-size) for real-life implementations depend on this (quantum cryptanalysis)

- There is **no generic speed-up** for every task
- Separate analysis for each problem/cryptosystem
- **Best quantum algorithm required** even when it doesn't break/solve efficiently the problem

Security parameters (key-size) for real-life implementations depend on this (quantum cryptanalysis)

- Existing quantum computers require **Quantum Error Correction** to implement most algorithms. Currently **far from breaking cryptosystems** even when there is an exponential quantum speed-up

What Quantum Algorithms Offer:

- Poly-time algorithm for **factoring** and **discrete logarithm** with **Shor's Algorithm**

Breaks: RSA, DSA, ECDSA, etc

What Quantum Algorithms Offer:

- Poly-time algorithm for **factoring** and **discrete logarithm** with **Shor's Algorithm**

Breaks: RSA, DSA, ECDSA, etc

- Quadratic speed-up for **search** (and smaller poly speed-up for **collisions**) with **Grover's Algorithm**

Affects: Hash-based, symmetric-key, etc (but appears ok with doubling key-size)

What Quantum Algorithms Offer:

- Poly-time algorithm for **factoring** and **discrete logarithm** with **Shor's Algorithm**

Breaks: RSA, DSA, ECDSA, etc

- Quadratic speed-up for **search** (and smaller poly speed-up for **collisions**) with **Grover's Algorithm**

Affects: Hash-based, symmetric-key, etc (but appears ok with doubling key-size)

- Other quantum speed-ups: Simon's Algorithm, Variational Quantum Algorithms, HHL Algorithm

- Quantum Computations can be decomposed to a **circuit**
- The basic blocks are (quantum) **gates**

- Quantum Computations can be decomposed to a **circuit**
- The basic blocks are (quantum) **gates**
- Gates are **unitary operations** (thus invertible) $U^\dagger U = \mathbb{I}$
- The final result/read-out requires also a **measurement** (non-invertible – see algorithms)

- We are given a classical gate corresponding to an unknown function f as a **black box** (oracle)



- We are given a classical gate corresponding to an unknown function f as a **black box** (oracle)



- **Access:** Query the oracle, i.e. insert x and obtain $f(x)$

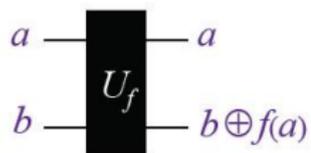
- We are given a classical gate corresponding to an unknown function f as a **black box** (oracle)



- **Access:** Query the oracle, i.e. insert x and obtain $f(x)$
- **Goal:** Determine properties of the function f with the fewest queries to the oracle

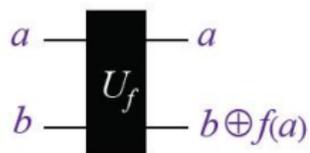
The Quantum Oracle Model

- We are given a quantum gate corresponding to an unknown classical function f as a **black box** (oracle) acting on two qubits in the following way:



The Quantum Oracle Model

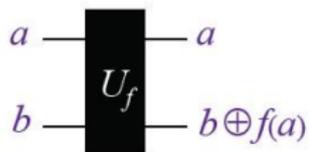
- We are given a quantum gate corresponding to an unknown classical function f as a **black box** (oracle) acting on two qubits in the following way:



- **Access:** Query the quantum oracle, i.e. insert $|a\rangle |b\rangle$ and obtain $|a\rangle |b \oplus f(a)\rangle$

The Quantum Oracle Model

- We are given a quantum gate corresponding to an unknown classical function f as a **black box** (oracle) acting on two qubits in the following way:



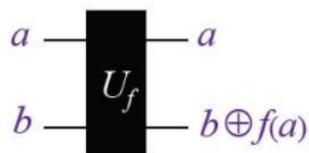
- **Access:** Query the quantum oracle, i.e. insert $|a\rangle |b\rangle$ and obtain $|a\rangle |b \oplus f(a)\rangle$

By linearity, we can also query in superposition:

$$\sum_{a,b} C_{a,b} |a\rangle |b\rangle \rightarrow \sum_{a,b} C_{a,b} |a\rangle |b \oplus f(a)\rangle$$

The Quantum Oracle Model

- We are given a quantum gate corresponding to an unknown classical function f as a **black box** (oracle) acting on two qubits in the following way:



- **Access:** Query the quantum oracle, i.e. insert $|a\rangle |b\rangle$ and obtain $|a\rangle |b \oplus f(a)\rangle$

By linearity, we can also query in superposition:

$$\sum_{a,b} C_{a,b} |a\rangle |b\rangle \rightarrow \sum_{a,b} C_{a,b} |a\rangle |b \oplus f(a)\rangle$$

- **Goal:** Determine properties of the classical function f with the fewest queries to the quantum oracle

- Honest messages/communications are **classical** (or else in computational basis): E.g. $011 \rightarrow |011\rangle$

- Honest messages/communications are **classical** (or else in computational basis): E.g. $011 \rightarrow |011\rangle$
- What if an adversary **inputs** a superposition of classical messages in some step?

$$\sum_{x \in \{0,1\}^n} a_x |x\rangle$$

- Honest messages/communications are **classical** (or else in computational basis): E.g. $011 \rightarrow |011\rangle$
- What if an adversary **inputs** a superposition of classical messages in some step?

$$\sum_{x \in \{0,1\}^n} a_x |x\rangle$$

- We can model any classical step (operation/function) as a **unitary** that takes **classical inputs** to **classical outputs**
- By linearity: **superposition input** gives **superposition output**

- An adversary can use the **superposition output**:
 - ① Process it in q-algorithm to extract more info: breaks security
 - ② Illustrate that definitions/proof-techniques need modification

- An adversary can use the **superposition output**:
 - ① Process it in q-algorithm to extract more info: breaks security
 - ② Illustrate that definitions/proof-techniques need modification
- Assuming quantum access can be more or less realistic:
 - ① **Q1**: Quantum states are not communicated to honest parties
Examples: Encrypt superpositions in public-key setting;
compute hashes of superpositions

- An adversary can use the **superposition output**:
 - 1 Process it in q-algorithm to extract more info: breaks security
 - 2 Illustrate that definitions/proof-techniques need modification
- Assuming quantum access can be more or less realistic:
 - 1 **Q1**: Quantum states are not communicated to honest parties
Examples: Encrypt superpositions in public-key setting;
compute hashes of superpositions
 - 2 **Q2**: Honest parties receive and process quantum states
Examples: Decrypt superpositions in public-key setting;
encrypt superpositions in symmetric-key

Turning a Classical Function to Unitary

- Express the function as a Boolean circuit (AND, OR, NOT)
- Replace each gate with a reversible version of the same gate
- Replace clas gates with quantum unitaries (X, \wedge X, Toffoli)

Turning a Classical Function to Unitary

- Express the function as a Boolean circuit (**AND**, **OR**, **NOT**)
- Replace each gate with a reversible version of the same gate
- Replace clas gates with quantum unitaries (**X**, **\wedge X**, **Toffoli**)
- **Quantum Circuit:** on classical input returns classical output
- **Quantum Circuit:** on superpos input returns superpos output
- Behaves as Quantum Oracle (see previous lecture)

$$U_f |x\rangle |y\rangle = |x\rangle |y \oplus f(x)\rangle$$

Unitary Gates Used

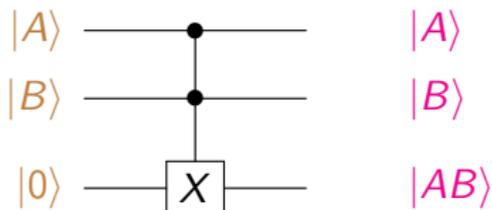
- The **NOT** gate:



- The reversible **OR** gate:



- The reversible **AND** gate:



The (Quantum) Random Oracle

- (Classical) Random Oracle: Oracle that responds to every input (x) with a random output ($O(x)$).

The (Quantum) Random Oracle

- (Classical) Random Oracle: Oracle that responds to every input (x) with a random output ($O(x)$).
- Typical Use: To replace cryptographic hash functions (preimage, second-preimage resistant and collision resistant)
- Real hash functions $h(x)$ instead (e.g. SHA3).

The (Quantum) Random Oracle

- (Classical) Random Oracle: Oracle that responds to every input (x) with a random output ($O(x)$).
- Typical Use: To replace cryptographic hash functions (preimage, second-preimage resistant and collision resistant)
- Real hash functions $h(x)$ instead (e.g. SHA3).

Security against attacks not using specific structure of the function. “**Brute-force**” attacks: comp. $h(x)$ for many inputs

The (Quantum) Random Oracle

- **(Classical) Random Oracle**: Oracle that responds to every input (x) with a random output ($O(x)$).
- **Typical Use**: To replace cryptographic hash functions (preimage, second-preimage resistant and collision resistant)
- Real hash functions $h(x)$ instead (e.g. SHA3).

Security against attacks not using specific structure of the function. “**Brute-force**” attacks: comp. $h(x)$ for many inputs

- **Quantum Random Oracle (QRO)**: A classical random oracle that can be accessed in superposition
- **Practically feasible**: Given hash function, adversary can run the unitary with **quantum input** and obtain **quantum output**.

The Quantum Random Oracle

- **Speed-up:** Generic speed-up without any detail of the function (“quantum brute-force”)

The Quantum Random Oracle

- **Speed-up**: Generic speed-up without any detail of the function (“quantum brute-force”)
- **Finding preimages**: Use $O(x)$ as Grover’s oracle. Start with equal superpos and apply oracle (and iteration) **sequentially**.

Applies QRO on previous (quantum) output to obtain:

Quadratic Speed-Up

The Quantum Random Oracle

- **Speed-up**: Generic speed-up without any detail of the function (“quantum brute-force”)
- **Finding preimages**: Use $O(x)$ as Grover’s oracle. Start with equal superpos and apply oracle (and iteration) **sequentially**.

Applies QRO on previous (quantum) output to obtain:

Quadratic Speed-Up

- **Practical**: Adversary runs U_h , where h is the real hash function

The Quantum Random Oracle

- **Speed-up**: Generic speed-up without any detail of the function (“quantum brute-force”)
- **Finding preimages**: Use $O(x)$ as Grover’s oracle. Start with equal superpos and apply oracle (and iteration) **sequentially**.

Applies QRO on previous (quantum) output to obtain:

Quadratic Speed-Up

- **Practical**: Adversary runs U_h , where h is the real hash function
- Similar advantage for collision finding

The Quantum Random Oracle

- **Speed-up**: Generic speed-up without any detail of the function (“quantum brute-force”)
- **Finding preimages**: Use $O(x)$ as Grover’s oracle. Start with equal superpos and apply oracle (and iteration) **sequentially**.

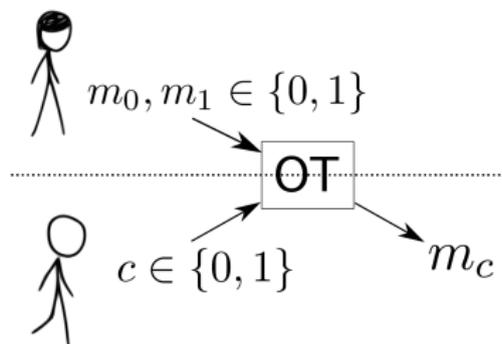
Applies QRO on previous (quantum) output to obtain:

Quadratic Speed-Up

- **Practical**: Adversary runs U_h , where h is the real hash function
- Similar advantage for collision finding
- RO (and QRO) can be used in complicated proofs where a “programmable RO” is required.

Further **difficulties** for QRO due to **no-cloning!**

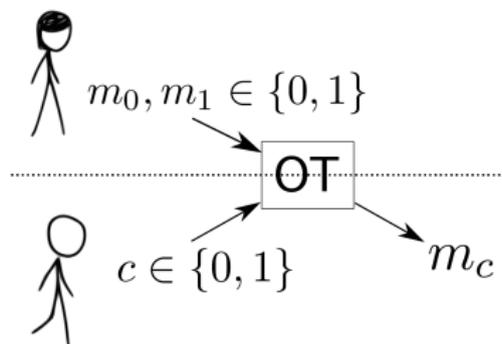
Example of Quantum Access: 1-of-2 Oblivious Transfer



Different (classical) security definitions for OT for Bob (receiver):

- 1 Bob learns nothing about one message $m_{c \oplus 1}$ (guess prob **0.5**)
- 2 Bob learns at most 1-bit of info from $m_0, m_1, m_0 \oplus m_1$.

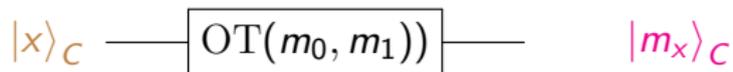
Example of Quantum Access: 1-of-2 Oblivious Transfer



Different (classical) security definitions for OT for Bob (receiver):

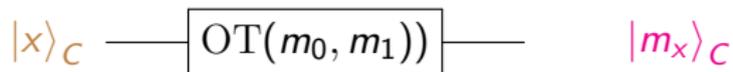
- 1 Bob learns nothing about one message $m_{c \oplus 1}$ (guess prob **0.5**)
 - 2 Bob learns at most 1-bit of info from $m_0, m_1, m_0 \oplus m_1$.
- Classically these are equivalent
 - Allowing quantum access only (2) can be achieved!

- From Bob's view the OT behaves like this gate:



Quantum Access to 1-of-2 Oblivious Transfer

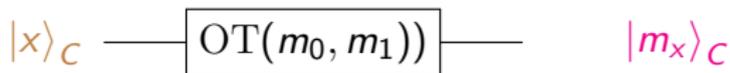
- From Bob's view the OT behaves like this gate:



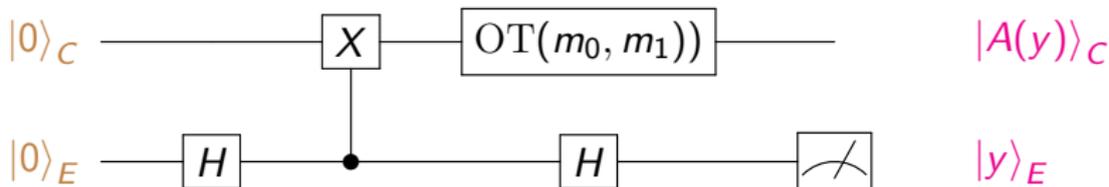
- Bob can prepare his input register C in superposition and entangled with a private register E .

Quantum Access to 1-of-2 Oblivious Transfer

- From Bob's view the OT behaves like this gate:



- Bob can prepare his input register C in superposition and entangled with a private register E .
- The following circuit shows the problem:



where, $|A(y)\rangle_C := \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}} (|m_0\rangle_C + (-1)^y |m_1\rangle_C)$.

- **Claim:** The adversary can guess the XOR of m_0, m_1 with constant advantage.

Quantum Access to 1-of-2 Oblivious Transfer

- **Claim:** The adversary can guess the XOR of m_0, m_1 with constant advantage.
- **Proof:** The adversary sets $y = \tilde{m}_0 \oplus \tilde{m}_1$

Quantum Access to 1-of-2 Oblivious Transfer

- **Claim:** The adversary can guess the XOR of m_0, m_1 with constant advantage.
- **Proof:** The adversary sets $y = \tilde{m}_0 \oplus \tilde{m}_1$

Is not hard to see that the adversary succeeds with prob:

$$\text{Prob}[\tilde{m}_0 \oplus \tilde{m}_1 = m_0 \oplus m_1] = 3/4$$

Exercise: Check why this is the case!

- **Claim:** The adversary can guess the XOR of m_0, m_1 with constant advantage.
- **Proof:** The adversary sets $y = \tilde{m}_0 \oplus \tilde{m}_1$

Is not hard to see that the adversary succeeds with prob:

$$\text{Prob}[\tilde{m}_0 \oplus \tilde{m}_1 = m_0 \oplus m_1] = 3/4$$

Exercise: Check why this is the case!

- Definition 1 **fails**
- Definition 2 is **valid** (to guess XOR info about m_0, m_1 is lost)

Cryptosystems are considered secure when they do not break even when given some extra abilities:

- **Chosen Plaintext Attacks (CPA)**. Gets encryption of any plaintext he chooses (apart from challenge).

Modelled as oracle access to **Enc**

Cryptosystems are considered secure when they do not break even when given some extra abilities:

- **Chosen Plaintext Attacks (CPA)**. Gets encryption of any plaintext he chooses (apart from challenge).

Modelled as oracle access to **Enc**

- **Quantum Chosen Plaintext Attacks (qCPA)**. Plaintexts are allowed to be in superposition – Superposition access to **Enc**

Cryptosystems are considered secure when they do not break even when given some extra abilities:

- **Chosen Plaintext Attacks (CPA)**. Gets encryption of any plaintext he chooses (apart from challenge).

Modelled as oracle access to **Enc**

- **Quantum Chosen Plaintext Attacks (qCPA)**. Plaintexts are allowed to be in superposition – Superposition access to **Enc**
- **Public-Key**: Essential (classical/quantum) since adversary can encrypt with public key
- **Symmetric-Key**: Higher Security. Quantum Access means that honest party encrypt, by default, using unitaries (preserving coherence/superpositions). **Less Realistic**

- **Chosen Ciphertext Attacks (CCA)**. Gets decryption of any ciphertext he wishes (apart from challenge).

Modelled as oracle access to **Dec**

- **Chosen Ciphertext Attacks (CCA)**. Gets decryption of any ciphertext he wishes (apart from challenge).

Modelled as oracle access to **Dec**

- **Quantum Chosen Ciphertext Attacks (qCCA)**. Ciphertexts are allowed to be in superposition – Superp access to **Dec**

- **Chosen Ciphertext Attacks (CCA)**. Gets decryption of any ciphertext he wishes (apart from challenge).

Modelled as oracle access to **Dec**

- **Quantum Chosen Ciphertext Attacks (qCCA)**. Ciphertexts are allowed to be in superposition – Superp access to **Dec**
- **Public/Symmetric Key**: Quantum Access means that honest party decrypt, by default, using unitaries (preserving coherence/superpositions). **Less Realistic**