

Guest Editors' preface

The importance of Information Security to virtually every level and aspect of modern society is widely accepted. The field is one of the most dynamic in computer science and a growing number of research symposia are devoted to this discipline every year. Business, government, transport, critical infrastructures etc. routinely have to face security issues. News items highlighting security concerns appear in the media with increasing frequency.

The 19th ACM Symposium on Applied Computing was held 14–17 March 2004 in Nicosia, Cyprus. Its Security Track, the third in the series, hosted twelve talks, based on the respective papers included in the conference proceedings, in diverse areas of information security. The Track was organized as a research conference itself, drawing on the expertise of the ten eminent representatives of both Industry and Academia forming its program committee. Their efforts resulted in each of the forty submitted papers getting at least three reviews.

This special issue of the *Journal of Computer Security* presents the four best papers among those presented at the conference. Originally, eight had been selected. Each of the eight was then upgraded by the authors so as to guarantee at least 30% new material with respect to the conference version. Each upgraded paper was additionally reviewed by at least two leading experts in Computer Security, and the four best papers could be selected accordingly.

The best papers reflect the wide diversity of the workshop and provide, we believe, valuable contributions to the field. The first, by Bistarelli et al., uses the framework of soft constraints to model the problem of vulnerabilities cascading through a network. The second, by Collberg and Sahoo, presents an analysis of the robustness of the SHKQ software watermarking algorithm. The third, by Nenadić et al., presents a pair of related protocols for certified e-mail with fair non-repudiation of origin and receipt. The final paper, by Siaterlis and Maglaris, presents a novel data fusion based approach to the detection of distributed denial of service attacks.

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