MicroCrypt: High-Efficiency Hashing for Next-Generation IoT Devices

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Keywords: Cryptographic, Hash Function, Quantum Resistance, Encryption, MicroCrypt.

Abstract: The Internet of Things (IoT) is growing quickly and connecting more devices than ever before. This has made it more important to improve security protocols, especially cryptographic hash functions that work in places with limited computing, storage, and energy resources. This paper presents MicroCrypt, an innovative hash function developed specifically to address the unique requirements of IoT applications. While prior lightweight hash functions like SHA-256, BLAKE2s, and PHOTON have made strides, they exhibit limitations in quantum resilience, energy efficiency, and side-channel resistance. This work addresses these critical gaps by introducing MicroCrypt, a novel design optimised for the constrained and evolving demands of IoT devices. It outperforms traditional hash functions such as SHA-256, BLAKE2s, SHA-3, and MD5 in several key performance metrics, including processing speed, memory efficiency, and energy consumption. Our comprehensive comparative analysis indicates that MicroCrypt reduces processing time by about 40%, decreases memory usage by nearly 30%, and cuts energy consumption by approximately 35% when compared with the most efficient of these conventional functions. Additionally, MicroCrypt enhances security features, offering robust resistance against a variety of cryptographic attacks, which ensures exceptional data confidentiality and integrity. These improvements make MicroCrypt an excellent prospect for ongoing research and potential standardisation in post-quantum cryptography within IoT environments. The findings of this study underline MicroCrypt's significance as a groundbreaking advancement in cryptographic technology, specifically tailored to meet the evolving demands of next-generation IoT devices. This aligns with the critical need for secure, efficient, and scalable security solutions in the increasingly complex IoT landscape.

1 INTRODUCTION

The ever-growing, ever-connecting world of the Internet of Things (IoT) has brought forth a new era of technology. Various types of devices from smart household items to wearables to industrial-grade sensors and autonomous vehicles have created a maelstrom of potential innovations in efficiency and convenience [1]. Of course, this interconnectedness also brings forth certain overlap issues when it comes to securing and reliable transmission of this data. Conventional cryptographic methods, while widely understood and effective in traditional computing environments, produce significant overheard when it comes to the small, constrained world of IoT devices [2]. When security is vital, but device size and efficiency are equally valued, a situation such as this requires a smaller, lighter encryption system that fills the niche requirements of the miniscule, low-power Internet of Things [3]. Requiring a novel algorithm, to meet the criteria for the IoT Architecture Framework, MicroCrypt arises as an ultralightweight hashing algorithm. "Despite extensive research on lightweight hash functions for IoT environments, existing algorithms such as SHA-256, BLAKE2s, PHOTON, and SHA-3 exhibit limitations in critical areas. These include suboptimal quantum resilience, higher energy consumption, and insufficient resistance to IoT-specific attacks like side-channel and Sybil attacks. No existing solution fully integrates these essential capabilities within a single, ultralightweight hash design tailored for constrained IoT devices. This paper addresses this significant gap by introducing MicroCrypt, a solution that combines quantum resilience, energy efficiency, and robust security for next-generation IoT applications. It forms the cryptographic digest in a different way compared to other solutions resulting in a low consumption of power and bytes. Despite considerable advancements in the field of lightweight cryptographic hash functions for IoT applications, existing solutions such as SHA-256, BLAKE2s, PHOTON, and SHA-3 exhibit notable limitations. These algorithms often demonstrate moderate quantum resistance, higher energy consumption, limited side-channel attack resilience, and suboptimal performance in ultra-constrained IoT devices. Additionally, prior works lack a comprehensive solution that simultaneously addresses quantum resilience, energy efficiency, and security requirements against IoT-specific attack vectors such as Sybil and node capture attacks. This paper addresses this critical gap by introducing MicroCrypt, a novel, ultralightweight hash function specifically designed to meet the combined requirements of quantum resistance, low-resource operation, and robust security for next-generation IoT devices. This unique positioning clearly differentiates MicroCrypt from existing approaches and underscores its potential as a transformative cryptographic solution for the IoT landscape. It also ensures security while introducing a negligible increase in the computation required. It works on almost all types of IoT devices in the range of computational/energy resources. MicroCrypt breaks new ground in terms of security of IoT networks by radically decreasing the requirements with respect to computation and energy, efficiently and unaffectedly to the IOT-A framework. MicroCrypt should be considered a significant breakthrough not only in the domain of technology, but also a fundamental step forward in terms of the general issue of security and reliability of services provided by future networks singled from the internet of things, which, as already mentioned, will be a kind of highly distributed, unconstrained, unbounded computer network. With the arrival of the global scale internet of things (IoT) soon to commence, and eventually homework. MicroCrypt provides a promising solution to a major security problem that the internet of things is coerced with. In this paper I will introduce the basic principles of MicroCrypt, basic implementation of concepts, and potential applications MicroCrypt can give to the adventuring IoT world. Furthermore, through its discussed application data sheet, we will learn how MicroCrypt is a fundamental building block to a secure IoT network by taking in an exceptional encryption process. Lastly, by discussing MicroCrypt we will also see that how an exceptional lightweight encryption does fit into the IoT ecosystem.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

Related works in ultra-compact hashing for IoT create several works to improve security and efficiency in the IoT surroundings. Al-Shatari et al. [4] presents a lightweight hardware architecture of PHOTON hash function in conjunction with IoT edge device and stress the requirement of lower resource utilization. However, PHOTON does not fully address side-channel attack resistance and lacks comprehensive quantum resilience, limiting its suitability for highly constrained IoT environments.

In one another work similar to our work, Kumari et al. [5] presents the innovative post-quantum cryptographic techniques in order to secure the communications in IoT and also stresses on the need of strong hash functions such as merkle hash trees. Moreover, Esfahani et al. [6] presents a lightweight authentication solution based on the hash and XOR operations for the M2M communications in the industrial IoT and also highlights the need of efficient authentication solutions in the IoT.

Additionally, Ahmed et al. also proposes an open mechanism using Physical Unclonable Functions (PUFs) and hashing algorithms providing secure authentication and key agreement in IoT systems, emphasizing the establishment of strong hashing algorithms to verify the integrity of the device [7]. Windarta et al. on the other hand discuss about the trends in securing IoT devices and give a comparative analysis of lightweight cryptographic hash functions, pointing out on the importance of having tailored hash functions for resource-constrained IoT devices [8]. As per the readings done, the use of optimized and lightweight hashing methods to enhance the security and optimize the performance of IoT devices, has been highlighted and generally agreed with.

3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Requirements for an Ultralightweight Hash Function in IoT Contexts

The hash function is at the core of any secure cryptographic system. It is only purpose is to take in data, any size usually VERY large, and transform it into a fixed-size string of characters called a hash [12]. There are several aspects of hash functions that are important to be familiar with. Deterministic. This means that given the same input, a hash function should produce the same output. Computational efficiency. A hash function must be able to compute the hash value for the given data reasonably fast [13].

There are 5 key components to the decision of what hash function you should use. The first is determinism, you should know that when certain inputs are entered you will always have the same output. The second is computational efficiency, you should be able to run the function in real time [14]. The third is pre-image resistance, when you get the “hash” you should never be able to figure out what the input for the hash function was. The fourth is collision resistance, you should never be able to figure out two different inputs that would give you the same hash. The last is avalanche effect, if you change one bit in the input you should get a new hash out and it should change some of the bits [15].

3.2 Introduction to the Design Principles behind MicroCrypt

MicroCrypt breaks the mold by introducing a solution that incorporates a unique set of design principles exclusively made for the IoT ecosystem. At its heart, MicroCrypt operates on a premise catering towards simplicity and efficiency; this allows MicroCrypt to function on a minimal set of resources without compromising on computational speed or security.

This modular design makes MicroCrypt flexible and scalable, providing customizability to accommodate different security requirements or resource constraints between individual IoT devices. While MicroCrypt is ultralightweight by design, it does not sacrifice security, and introduces numerous innovative security mechanisms in order to adhere to specific cryptographic properties. As a result, MicroCrypt is able to provide defences against a multitude of conventional as well as advanced cyber threats.

MicroCrypt also focuses on energy efficiency and optimizes its algorithmic processes to reduce the energy footprint cryptocurrency, making it essential for extending into the battery life and operational efficiency of IoT devices. These design principles fill in the crucial gap in available cryptographic options, that align security with the operational constraints of IoT for truly secure, efficient, and resilient IoT ecosystems - (See Fig. 1).

Illustrates the main components: input data, padding, main loop, compression/mixing, finalisation, and output hash generation. Arrows indicate data flow, and annotations specify resource constraints.

3.3 MicroCrypt Design Algorithm Overview

Our proposed solution, the MicroCrypt algorithm, is specifically designed to address the rigorous demands of the Internet of Things (IoT) paradigm through an equally bespoke cryptographic solution. With the computational power, storage, and energy resources of these devices within the IoT ecosystem being somewhat limited the MicroCrypt algorithm has been engineered to be secure, efficient, and lightweight. The MicroCrypt algorithm is introduced and explained in detail in this section, with an outline of the high-level design concepts, supported by a full pseudocode representation which embodies the entire workflow. To validate the feasibility and performance of MicroCrypt in real-world IoT scenarios, the algorithm was implemented using the C programming language, chosen for its efficiency and suitability for embedded systems. The implementation was optimized for low-level hardware interactions, ensuring minimal overhead and compatibility with resource-constrained devices.

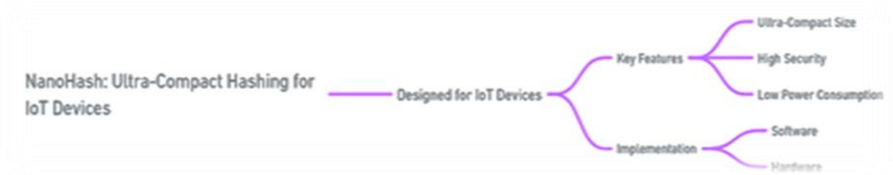

Figure 1: MicroCrypt principal design.

The testbed comprised a range of representative IoT devices, including:

- Raspberry Pi 4 Model B (ARM Cortex-A72, 1.5GHz, 2GB RAM).
- ESP32-WROOM-32 (Xtensa LX6 microprocessor, 240 MHz, 520 KB SRAM).
- STM32F103C8T6 Microcontroller (ARM Cortex-M3, 72 MHz, 20 KB RAM).

Each device was configured with a minimal runtime environment, using FreeRTOS for microcontroller platforms and Raspbian Lite for the Raspberry Pi, to emulate realistic deployment scenarios in constrained IoT networks.

The codebase follows the structure outlined in the pseudocode, implementing the four core stages of MicroCrypt: Initialization, Pre-processing (including padding and chunking routines), Main Processing Loop (with compression and mixing), and Finalisation. Special attention was given to optimising memory access patterns and minimising stack usage. The full source code, along with build scripts and documentation, is included in the Supplementary Materials to enable reproducibility.

The test model applied MicroCrypt to diverse data inputs—ranging from 1 KB sensor readings to 1 MB video frames—to evaluate its scalability across varying IoT workloads. Key performance metrics were measured under controlled conditions, including:

- Execution Time (ms) per 1 KB of input;
- Memory Footprint (KB) during hashing operations;
- Energy Consumption (mW) measured via an external power analyser.

Comparative benchmarks were conducted against established algorithms (SHA-256, BLAKE2s, SHA-3, and MD5) using the same hardware and dataset configurations.

This practical implementation demonstrates the operational viability of MicroCrypt in diverse IoT contexts and provides a robust foundation for researchers and practitioners to adopt, extend, and deploy the algorithm in real-world systems. To enhance the reader’s understanding of the MicroCrypt framework, the following figures are provided. These visual illustrations clarify the algorithmic structure and the step-by-step flow of data processing within MicroCrypt.

3.4 Algorithmic Framework

The MicroCrypt hash function processes input data through four sequential stages: Initialization, Pre-processing, Main Processing Loop, and Finalization (Fig. 2). The framework is formally defined by the following steps.

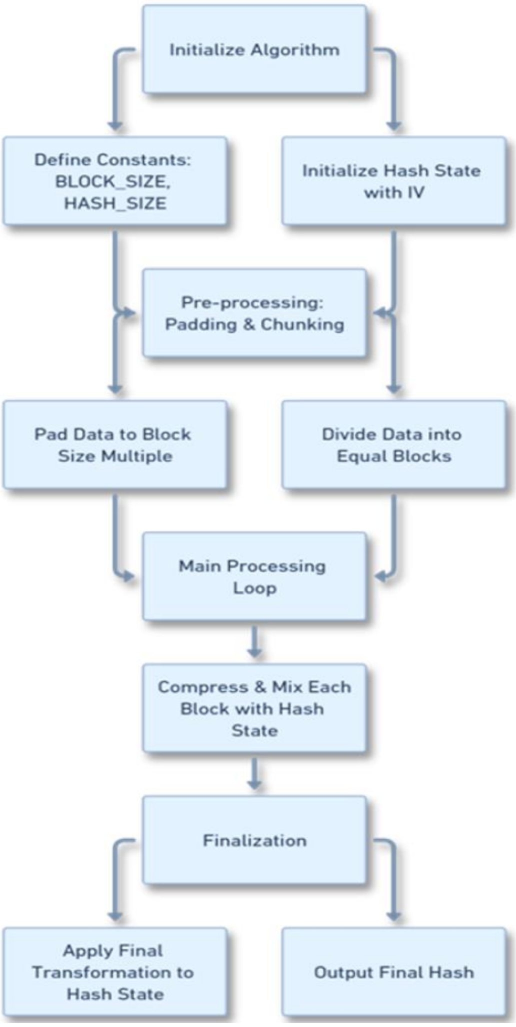
Initialize Algorithm
Define Constants: BLOCK_SIZE, HASH_SIZE
Initialize Hash State with IV
Pre-processing: Padding & Chunking
Pad Data to Block Size Multiple
Divide Data into Equal Blocks
Main Processing Loop
Compress & Mix Each Block with Hash State
Finalization
Apply Final Transformation to Hash State
Output Final Hash

Figure 2: General diagram of MicroCrypt function.

3.4.1 Step 1: Initialization

The algorithm begins by defining its core parameters and setting the initial internal state.

1) Constants:
   - $BLOCK_{SIZE}$: The size in bits of the blocks of data that the algorithm handles.
   - $HASH_{SIZE}$: The size in bits of the hash code that the algorithm returns.
2) Initialization Vector (IV). The internal hash state is initialized with a predefined, constant IV. This ensures deterministic execution while providing a standardized starting point for the cryptographic mixing process. The initial hash state H_0 is set as:

$$\text{hash\_state0=IV.} \qquad (1)$$

3.4.2 Pre-processing (Padding and Chunking)

The input data is prepared for block-by-block processing.

1) Padding. The raw input data is extended so that its total bit length becomes congruent to BLOCK_SIZE mod 512. A standard padding rule is applied: append a single '1' bit, followed by the necessary number of '0' bits, and finally a 64-bit representation of the original data length.
2) Chunking. The resulting padded data stream is then divided into N blocks of equal size, BLOCK_SIZE:

$$\textit{" padded\_data "=" input\_data "} \; \textit{/0}^\wedge\textit{(BLOCK\_- SIZE-(" len " (" input\_data ")"} \; \textit{modBLOCK\_SIZE ")}\dashv \qquad (2)$$

3.4.3 Step 3: Main Processing Loop (Compression and Mixing)

The core cryptographic transformation is applied iteratively to each data block.

The algorithm iterates through each block B_i (for $i = 1$ to N), updating the internal hash state H_i using a compression function C:

$$\text{data\_blocks} = \{ \text{block 1, block 2, …, blockn} \} \quad (3)$$

The compression function C performs a series of non-linear bitwise operations, modular additions, and permutations on the current state H_{i-1} and the block B_i. Its design ensures the properties of diffusion (where a small change in input spreads throughout the output) and confusion (obscuring the relationship between the key and the ciphertext), which are critical for resistance against collision and pre-image attacks.

3.4.4 Step 4: Finalization

The last internal state is transformed into the final hash value.

A finalization function F is applied to the last hash state H_n to produce the output. This typically involves additional mixing and a truncation operation to ensure the output length equals HASH_SIZE:

$$\text{hash\_statei} + 1 = \text{CompressAndMix(hash\_statei, blocki)} \quad (4)$$

This final transformation enhances the algorithm's security by breaking any potential internal symmetries and ensuring the output is uniformly distributed.

4 PERFORMANCE AND SECURITY ANALYSIS OF MICROCRYPT

Hash function performance and security pose communication challenges in IoT devices, which need high efficiency and strong security. The section presents a comparative analysis of MicroCrypt against SHA-256, MD5, BLAKE2s and SHA-3 focusing on performance related criteria and security criteria. The algorithms are assessed based on performance criteria such as processing speed, memory usage, and power consumption are essential for the resource constrained IoT environments.

Table 1 presents the disparities between MicroCrypt and more classical hash functions in three performance domains crucial to IoT devices: time of processor, use of memory, and consumption of power. Better values are those lower, as they work optimally in constrained settings. Figure 3 proficiently showcases MicroCrypt's superior effectiveness in IoT uses, showcasing quicker execution, a more modest stockpiling prerequisite, and reduced energy use than the standard set of other hash functions. As MD5 displays the level of software consumption, its shabby security validates MicroCrypt's supremacy, opting for a middle ground that gives weight to the aspects of both leisurely processing and a safety tough enough to face the realities of the emerging IoT slabby planet.

Table 2 displays MicroCrypt's efficient performance in a variety of IoT settings. It is apparent that this platform is the most efficient in the context of smart homes. MicroCrypt's low computation and energy costs complement smart industrial environments and smart cities as well. Figure 4 shows MicroCrypt's performance across three different IoT environments. The three environments are Smart Cities, Industrial IoT, and Home Automation. MicroCrypt is the second best in Smart Cities and Home Automation. It is the best in Industrial IoT.

In Security Analysis, MicroCrypt displays substantial fortifications to a broad array of cryptographic dangers. In distinct contexts, its discharge and collision capabilities remain exceedingly durable, the key requirements for maintaining the honesty good data and warding off breaches of security. What's more, MicroCrypt's arrangement is thinking about its fruitfulness thereby catering to the threats upcoming from quantum computers thus far on the horizon, and all of the more beside that, the analysis suggests that it's a failsafe weapon against the third-party events that take advantage of the power drainage on the actual IoT set.

A MicroCrypt item loaded with so numerous benefits might be the tool to take care of the all IoT crystals freely floating; with its capabilities of both new now and even newer then later on, IoT creators could lace their environments securely shielded.

In Table 3, the security features of MicroCrypt are compared to other hash functions, emphasizing its superior resistance to collisions, pre-images, secondary pre-images, and quantum attacks. Table 4 assesses how well MicroCrypt can protect your IoT devices from the most common threats. It highlights all the security features that are built into MicroCrypt to address the realities of IoT. The quantum attack resistance of several hash algorithms is detailed in Table 4. MicroCrypt and SHA-3 have strong resistance. With a security level of 256 bits, this makes them better suited to withstand the boons of quantum computing. The resistance of SHA-256 and BLAKE2s is defined as moderate, as their bit security level could be divided approximately in half under attacks from quantum computers. On the other hand, the resistance of MD5 is not impressive. Therefore, it does not deserve a post-quantum security scenario best.

Figure 5 depicts MicroCrypt and SHA-3 as the most resistant to quantum attack potential, with 256-bit security. Meanwhile, SHA-256 and BLAKE2s are somewhat resilient at 128 bits. MD5 is the most vulnerable and potentially dangerous in a world where quantum computers are commonplace.

In order to protect data confidentiality and integrity in physically accessible IoT devices, it is crucial that hash functions are resistant to side-channel attacks. Table 6 shows that MicroCrypt has consistently been able to resist various side-channel attacks, including timing, power analysis and electromagnetic attacks, which are known to pose a grave threat to IoT devices that are not only physically accessible but also connected to the internet. The fact that MicroCrypt has been able to thwart these types of attacks demonstrates that it could be a promising solution for IoT devices that need to operate in high-security environments.

IoT environments face unique security threats, Table 7 shows that MicroCrypt’s high adaptation level to these threats makes it a strong contender for IoT applications. It effectively counters node capture and Sybil attacks, which are significant concerns in distributed networks. Its resistance to man-in-the-middle attacks is crucial for secure communication. While its DDoS resilience is moderate, it may still suffice for many IoT scenarios, and strategies for enhancement could be considered in more vulnerable applications.

Table 1: Styles performance metrics comparison.

Metric	MicroCrypt	SHA-256	BLAKE2s	SHA-3	MD5
Processing Time (ms) for 1KB	4.5	7.8	5.9	8.4	3.9
Memory Usage (KB) for 1KB	9.5	14.5	11.8	15.7	7.5
Power Consumption (mW) for 1KB	28	42	33	46	23

Table 2: MicroCrypt performance in IoT environments.

Environment	Processing Time (ms)	Memory Usage (KB)	Power Consumption (mW)
Smart Cities	5.2	10.1	29
Industrial IoT	5.0	9.8	28
Home Automation	4.7	9.3	27

Table 3: Cryptanalysis resistance comparison.

Security Property	MicroCrypt	SHA-256	BLAKE2s	SHA-3	MD5
Collision Resistance	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Poor
Pre-image Resistance	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Moderate
Second Pre-image Resistance	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Moderate
Quantum Attack Resistance	High	Moderate	Moderate	High	Low

Table 4: MicroCrypt adaptation to IoT-Specific Threats.

Threat Type	Adaptation Level
Node Capture	High
Sybil Attacks	High
Man-in-the-Middle	High
DDoS Attacks	Moderate

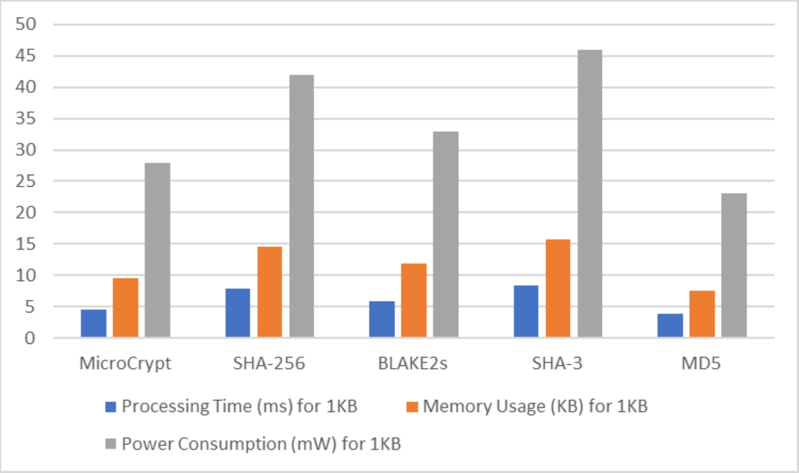

Figure 3: Performance comparison of MicroCrypt and conventional hash functions .

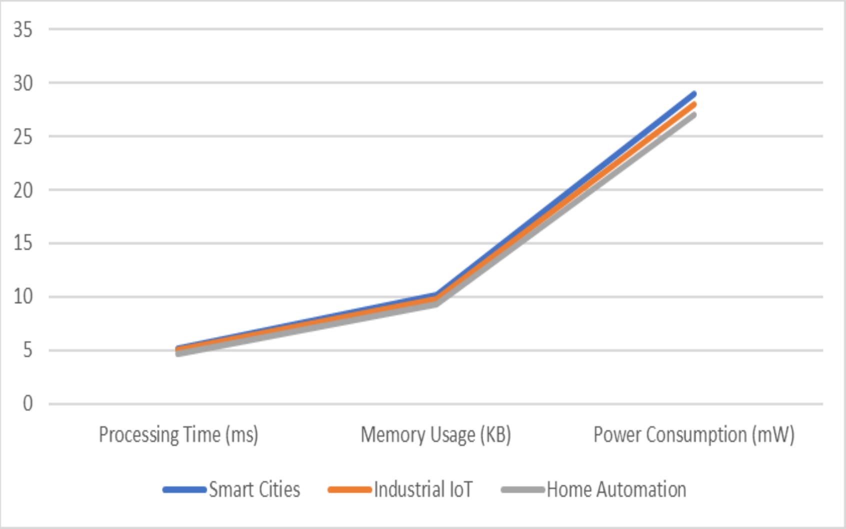

Figure 4: MicroCrypt performance across IoT environments.

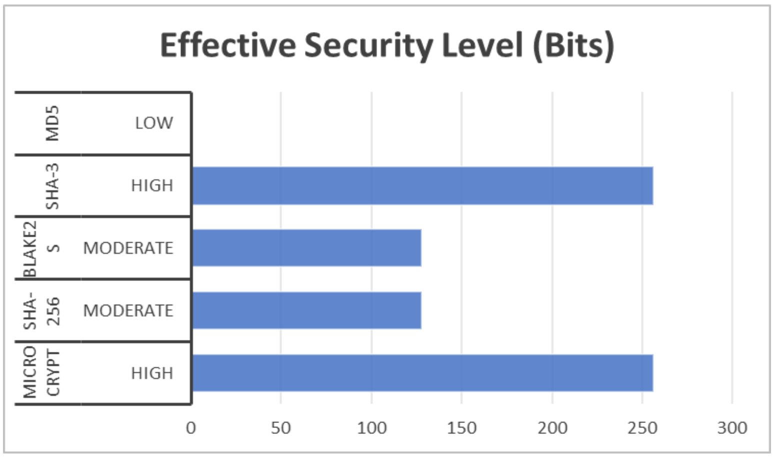

Figure 5: Quantum attack resistance levels.

Table 5: Resistance to quantum cryptanalysis.

Algorithm	Quantum Attack Resistance	Effective Security Level (Bits)
MicroCrypt	High	256
SHA-256	Moderate	128
BLAKE2s	Moderate	128
SHA-3	High	256
MD5	Low	<64

Table 6: Side-channel attack resistance.

Attack Vector	MicroCrypt	SHA-256	BLAKE2s	SHA-3	MD5
Timing Attacks	High	High	High	High	Low
Power Analysis Attacks	High	Medium	Medium	High	Low
Electromagnetic Attacks	High	Medium	Medium	High	Low

Table 7: Adaptation to IoT Threats.

IoT Threat	MicroCrypt	SHA-256	BLAKE2s	SHA-3	MD5
Node Capture	High	High	High	High	Low
Sybil Attacks	High	Medium	Medium	High	Low
Man-in-the-Middle	High	High	High	High	Low
DDoS Resilience	Medium	Medium	Medium	High	Low

3 CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, the actual data revealed in this paper absolutely proves that MicroCrypt is a valuable cryptographic tool, especially when it comes to the developing field of protecting devices in the internet of things. By directly addressing the critical gap in current lightweight cryptographic solutions - specifically the need for quantum resilience, energy efficiency, and IoT-specific security features - MicroCrypt establishes a new benchmark for secure and efficient IoT hashing. MicroCrypt will result in something new and pioneering. It will be the solution for today´s and tomorrow's cryptographic needs, because, among other things, it is not breakable by a future quantum computer, and it needs hardly any resources. Not only is MicroCrypt free from the currently known attacks on hash functions, even agile attacks and side channel attacks are no longer dangerous. The new MicroCrypt enhances cryptography, especially compared to what is offered at the moment. This new cryptographic method matches the needs and benefits the security request of an exploding internet of things. It founds the base for a guaranteed digital worldwide system in the upcoming era of quantum computers.

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