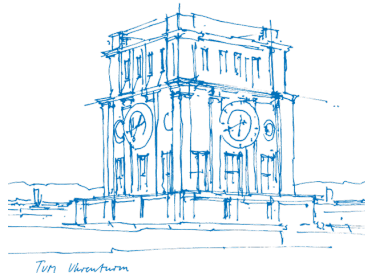


Ciphertext Compression for HQC

Sebastian Bitzer Emma Munisamy Bharath Purtipli Stefan Ritterhoff
Antonia Wachter-Zeh

Zürich 2025



NIST's favourite KEMs



HQC

KYBER

 Regev, [On Lattices, Learning with Errors, Random Linear Codes, and Cryptography](#)

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Metric

Hamming

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Later:

Vadim Lyubashevsky, [Kyber & More](#)

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Ciphertext size	4.5 kB	0.8 kB

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This talk:

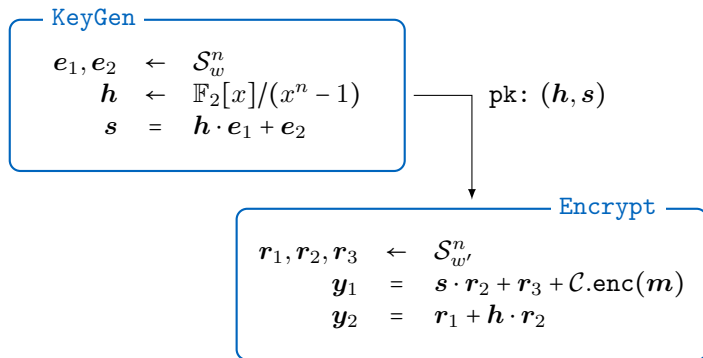
- Hamming-metric compression
- Reduce ciphertext size

HQC in a Nutshell

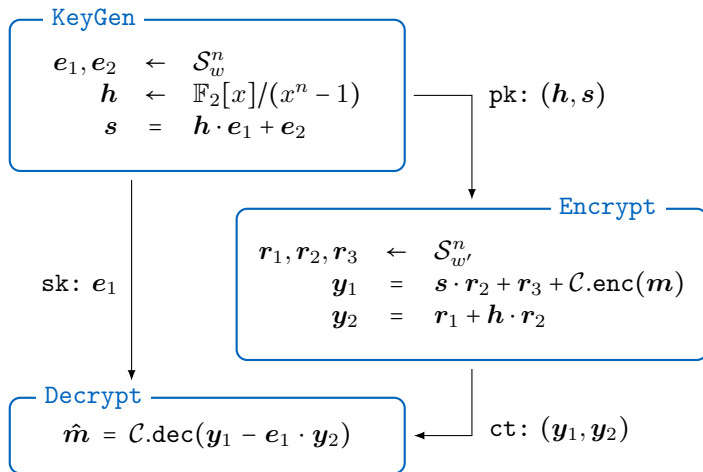
KeyGen

$$\begin{aligned} \mathbf{e}_1, \mathbf{e}_2 &\leftarrow \mathcal{S}_w^n \\ \mathbf{h} &\leftarrow \mathbb{F}_2[x]/(x^n - 1) \\ \mathbf{s} &= \mathbf{h} \cdot \mathbf{e}_1 + \mathbf{e}_2 \end{aligned}$$

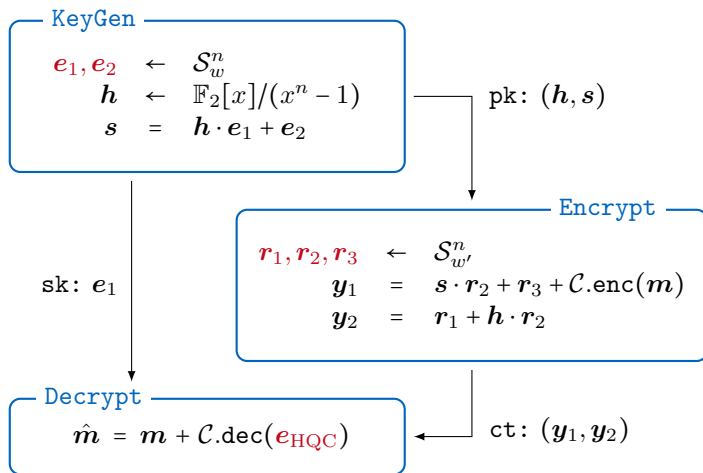
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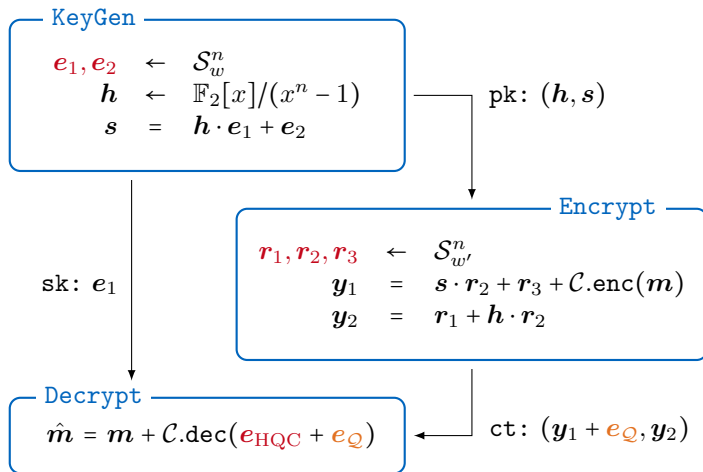
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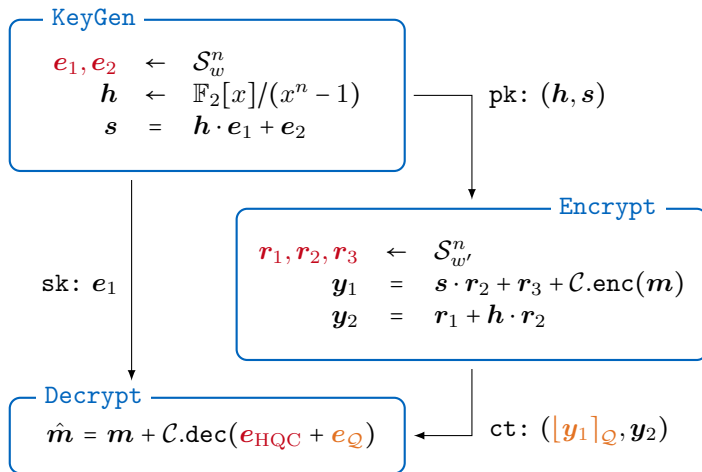
HQC in a Nutshell



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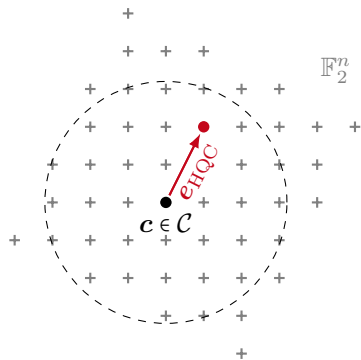


HQC in a Nutshell



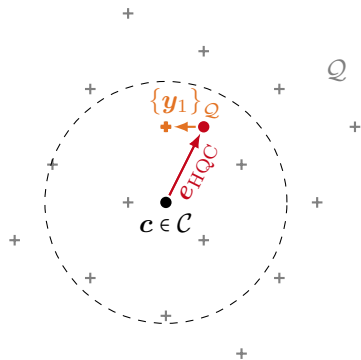
Less Bits, More Noise

$$\begin{aligned} \lfloor \cdot \rfloor_{\mathcal{Q}}: \quad \mathbb{F}_2^n &\rightarrow \mathcal{Q} \\ \mathbf{v} &\mapsto \lfloor \mathbf{v} \rfloor_{\mathcal{Q}} = \mathbf{v} + \{\mathbf{v}\}_{\mathcal{Q}} \\ n \text{ bit} &\rightarrow \rho n \text{ bit}, \quad \rho < 1 \end{aligned}$$



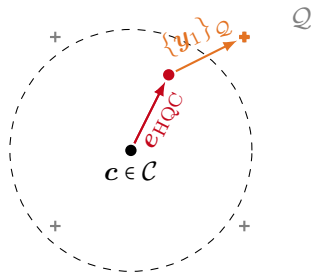
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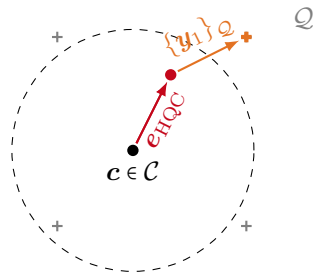
Claude E. Shannon, [A Mathematical Theory of Communication](#)

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Rate-Distortion Bound (RDB)

Compression ρ implies average distortion

$$\mathbb{E}_{\mathbf{v}} \left[\frac{1}{n} \text{wt}_H(\{\mathbf{v}\}_{\mathcal{Q}}) \right] \geq H^{-1}(1 - \rho)$$



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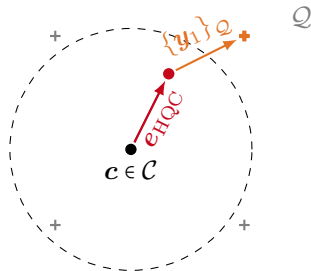
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Trade-off: ct size vs. pk size

Polar Codes are Good Quantizers



Korada, Urbanke, [Polar Codes are Optimal for Lossy Source Coding](#)

Polar Codes are Good Quantizers



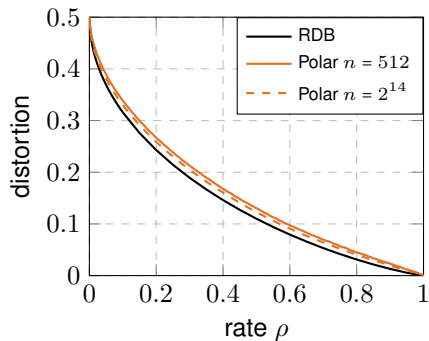
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- Successive Cancellation (SC) decoding:
RDB for $n \rightarrow \infty$

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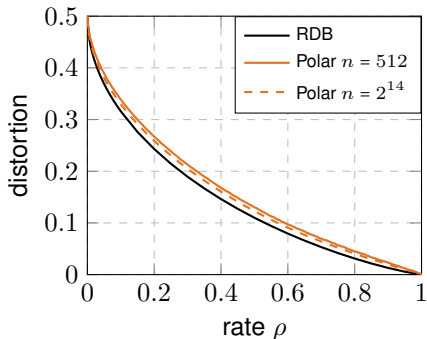
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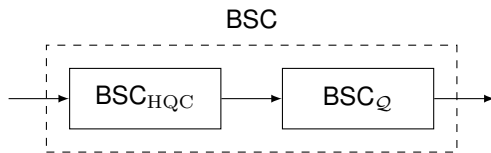
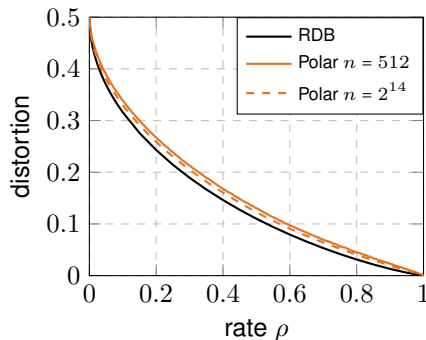


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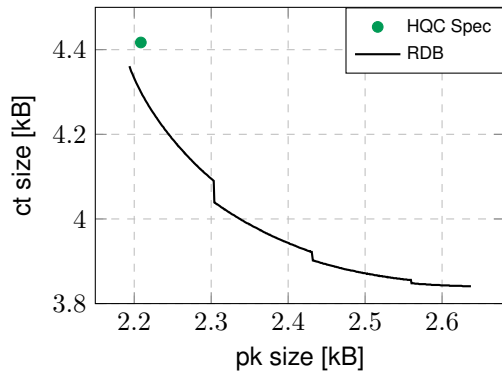
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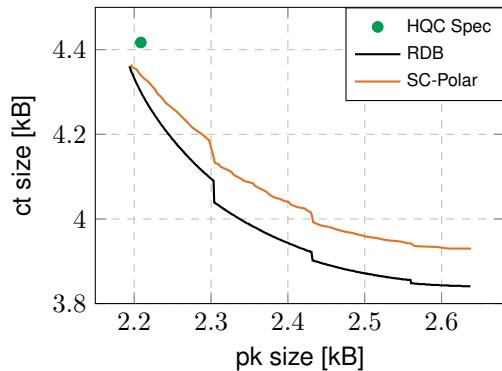
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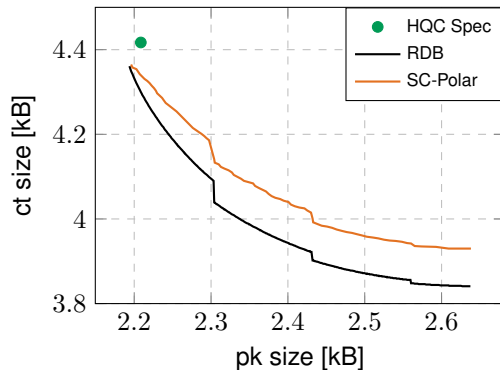
Polarizing Results



Polarizing Results



Polarizing Results



Optimize compression:

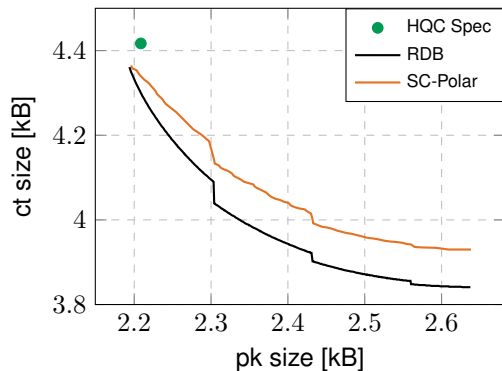


Better code, better decoder



More complex

Polarizing Results



Optimize compression:

- 😊 Better code, better decoder
- ⚠ More complex

Simplify compression:

- 😊 Low cost, rigorous analysis
- ⚠ Suboptimal compression

Keep It Short & Simple



Claude E. Shannon, [Coding Theorems for a Discrete Source with a Fidelity Criterion](#)

Direct Product $\mathcal{Q} \times \dots \times \mathcal{Q}$

$$\rightarrow \mathcal{V}(\mathcal{Q}) = \{\mathbf{v} \in \mathbb{F}_2^n : [\mathbf{v}]_{\mathcal{Q}} = \mathbf{0}\}$$

$$\rightarrow \mathcal{V}(\mathcal{Q}^{\times m}) = \mathcal{V}(\mathcal{Q})^{\times m}$$

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$$\rightarrow n = 23, \rho = \frac{12}{23}$$

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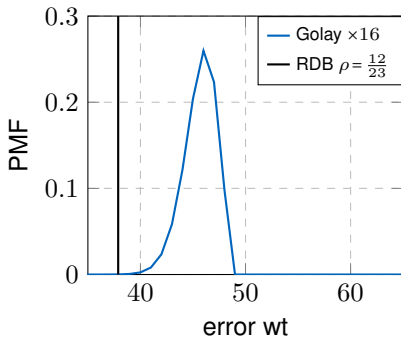
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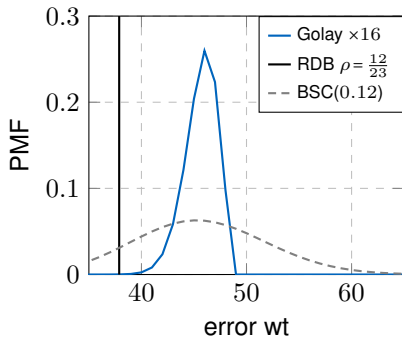
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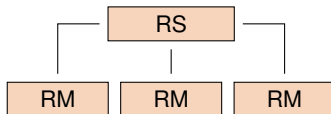
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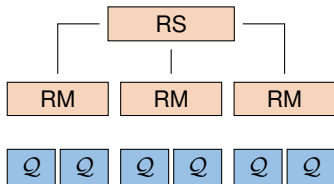
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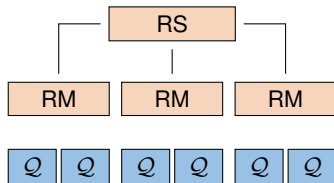
Aligning Compression and Error Correction



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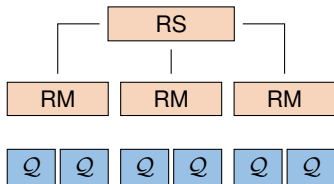
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Quantization error

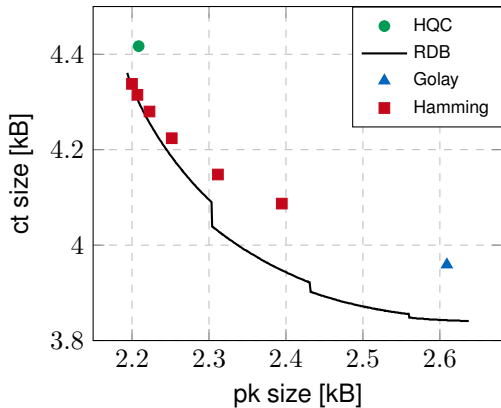
- 😊 Independent for each RM
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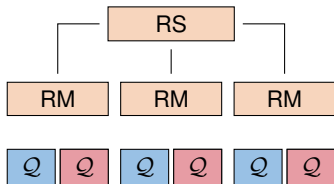


Quantization error

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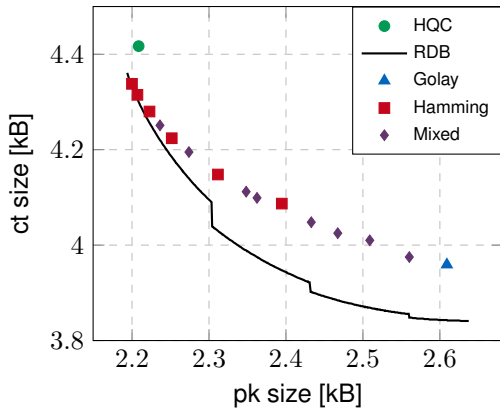


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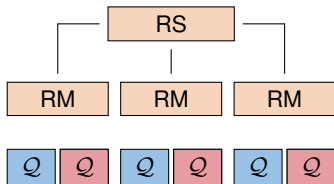


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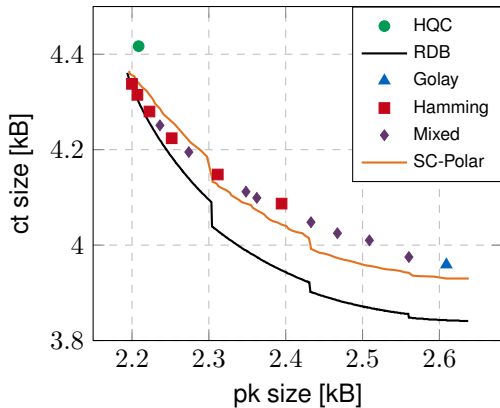


Aligning Compression and Error Correction



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Conclusion

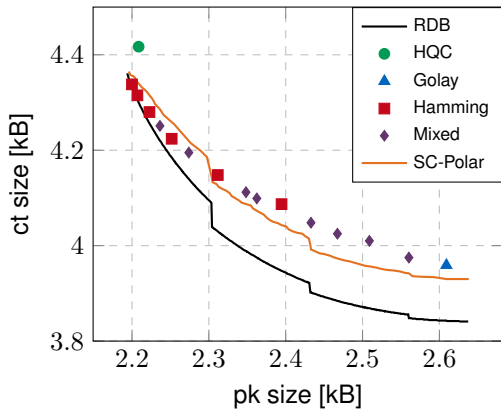
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- 😊 Compression = decoding
- 😊 Precise control for short codes
- 😊 Ciphertext size -10%

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Thank you!

Questions?

