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PAPER

Quantum data locking for high-rate private communication

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Abstract

We show that, if the accessible information is used as a security quantifier, quantum channels with a certain symmetry can convey private messages at a tremendously high rate, as high as less than one bit below the rate of non-private classical communication. This result is obtained by exploiting the quantum data locking effect. The price to pay to achieve such a high private communication rate is that accessible information security is in general not composable. However, composable security holds against an eavesdropper who is forced to measure her share of the quantum system within a finite time after she gets it.

1. Introduction

One of the most promising contemporary applications of quantum mechanics is within cryptography, where the laws of quantum physics certify the secrecy of a communication protocol. In quantum key distribution, the communication protocol aims at establishing a shared key between two legitimate parties, Alice and Bob, in such a way that a third party, say Eve, who eavesdrops on and tampers with the communication line, obtains virtually no information about the key [1]. The key itself is generated randomly, possibly to serve as a one-time pad. On the other hand, in a private communication protocol, the sender, say Alice, aims at sending private messages to Bob [2]. In this case, the content of the messages is under the control of Alice and it is not random from her point of view. Clearly, any private communication protocol can be also used for key distribution.

In this paper we introduce a private communication protocol, based on the phenomenon of quantum data locking (QDL) [3], that achieves a private communication rate as high as less than one bit below the classical capacity for non-private communication. Our protocol provides a scheme for realizing a *quantum enigma machine*, a quantum optical cipher based on the QDL effect [4]. It can be implemented experimentally using standard technologies routinely applied in quantum key distribution in setups where information is encoded by single-photon states spread over d optical modes. The security of our private communication protocol is assessed in terms of the accessible information criterion, which is not the standard and widely accepted security criterion in quantum cryptography. A detailed comparison of the two security criteria is given in [5, 6]. This security criterion is in general weaker than the standard security criterion of quantum cryptography. For this reason, before proceeding with the description of the protocol, we make a brief detour to clarify in which context the accessible information yields reliable security, as well as to review the phenomenon of QDL.

1.1. Accessible information security

Suppose that Alice's messages are generated by a source described by the random variable X , with probability distribution $p_X(x)$, and the conditional states obtained by Eve are $\rho_{E|x}$. The ensemble state of the joint system of Alice and Eve is hence given by the density matrix $\rho_{AE} = \sum_x p_X(x) |x\rangle_A \langle x| \otimes \rho_{E|x}$. Let us recall that the accessible information is defined as the maximum classical mutual information between Alice's input and the result of an optimal measurement performed by Eve on her share of the quantum system. A local measurement by Eve is a map $\mathcal{M}_E : E \rightarrow Y$ whose output is the classical variable Y . Then the accessible information of the state ρ_{AE} reads

$$I_{\text{acc}} = \max_{\mathcal{M}_E} I(X; Y), \quad (1)$$

where $I(X; Y) = H(X) + H(Y) - H(XY)$ is the classical mutual information, and H denotes the Shannon entropy.

To assess the security of our protocol, we show that $I_{\text{acc}} \sim \epsilon \log D$ where D is the dimension of Eve's quantum system, and the security parameter ϵ can be made arbitrarily small under suitable conditions. This means that the outputs of any measurement by Eve are arbitrarily close to being independent of Alice's messages. When used as a security quantifier, the accessible information suffers from a major problem: it does not guarantee composable security. Roughly speaking, composable security means that if two communication protocols are secure individually then they remain secure when composed [7, 8]. The fact that the accessible information does not ensure composability is intimately related to the very effect of QDL [5, 9]. However, as discussed in [6, 10], the accessible information yields composable security conditioned on certain physical assumptions. A physical assumption that guarantees composable security is that the eavesdropper is forced to measure her share of the state as soon as she obtains it, as is the case, for instance, when she does not have access to a quantum memory. This is a consequence of the fact that the accessible information concerns the output of Eve's measurements, and not the quantum state itself. Another assumption that implies composable security is that Eve possesses a quantum memory with finite coherence time. In the simplest model, Eve either measures her share of the quantum system within a time τ or the quantum memory decoheres and becomes classical. Suppose the given communication protocol is used as a subroutine of a larger protocol. Composable security is granted if Alice and Bob know the coherence time of Eve's quantum memory and wait for a time sufficiently longer than τ before proceeding. Clearly, too large values of τ would make the protocol impractical. However, as discussed in [6], in a stationary regime the overall asymptotic communication rate is independent of τ and remains finite even in the limit $\tau \rightarrow \infty$.

By making assumptions on the technological capabilities of the eavesdropper we are in fact restricting the class of allowed attacks. In quantum cryptography one distinguishes three kinds of attacks: individual attacks (where the eavesdropper applies local measurement to the output of each use of the communication channel); collective attacks (where the eavesdropper is allowed to store quantum information for an indeterminate amount of time before applying a collective measurement on the output of multiple channel uses); and coherent attack (where the eavesdropper is allowed to tamper with the communication line in an arbitrary way). The assumption that the eavesdropper has a quantum memory with finite coherence time defines a class of attack that lie in between individual and collective attacks. As in individual attacks, the eavesdropper cannot store quantum information for an arbitrarily long time. However, in our case we allow the eavesdropper to store quantum information for a finite time and to apply a collective measurement on the output of multiple channel uses.

To be fair, our communication protocol is defined under the assumption that the legitimate receiver Bob is constrained by the same technological limitations as the eavesdropper Eve.

1.2. Quantum data locking

Below we introduce a private communication protocol that is secure according to the accessible information criterion. Such a protocol is a QDL protocol. In a typical QDL protocol, the legitimate parties, Alice and Bob, publicly agree on a set of $N = MK$ codewords in a high-dimensional quantum system. From this set, they then use a short shared secret key of $\log K$ bits to select a set of M codewords that they will use for sending information. If the eavesdropper does not know the secret key, then the number of bits, as quantified by the accessible information, that she can obtain about the message is essentially equal to zero for certain choices of codewords. In most of the known QDL protocols codewords are chosen from different bases, and the secret key identifies the basis to which the codewords belong. Here we apply a random coding approach and assume that all the $N = MK$ codewords are chosen randomly.

A number of works have been devoted to the role of QDL in physics and information theory [3, 11–16]. However, only recently QDL has been considered in the presence of noise [4–6, 10, 17]. A formal definition of the *locking capacity* of a communication channel has been introduced in [10], as the maximum rate at which information can be reliably and securely transmitted through a (noisy) quantum channel $\mathcal{N}_{A \rightarrow B}$ from Alice to Bob, where the security is quantified by the accessible information. Motivated by QDL protocols, we also allow the assistance of an initial secret key shared by Alice and Bob. In order for this key to be inexpensive in the asymptotic limit, we further require that the bits of secret key grow sublinearly with the number of channel uses.

Two notions of locking capacities were defined in [10]: the *weak locking capacity* and the *strong locking capacity*. The weak locking capacity is defined by requiring security against an eavesdropper who measures the output of the complementary channel (denoted as $\mathcal{N}_{A \rightarrow E} = \tilde{\mathcal{N}}_{A \rightarrow B}$) of the channel from Alice to Bob³. The

³ We recall that the action of a quantum channel $\mathcal{N}_{A \rightarrow B}$ can always be represented as $\mathcal{N}_{A \rightarrow B}(\rho) = \text{Tr}_E(V \rho \otimes \omega_E V^\dagger)$, where ω_E is a pure state of the environment E , and V is a unitary transformation coupling the system with the environment. The conjugate channel of $\mathcal{N}_{A \rightarrow B}$ is then defined by $\tilde{\mathcal{N}}_{A \rightarrow B}(\rho) = \mathcal{N}_{A \rightarrow E}(\rho) = \text{Tr}_B(V \rho \otimes \omega_E V^\dagger)$.

strong locking capacity is instead defined by requiring security against an eavesdropper who is able to measure the very input of the channel. In general, the weak locking capacity is larger than or at most equal to the strong locking capacity, as any strong locking protocol also defines a weak locking one. It is natural to compare the weak locking capacity with the private capacity [2]. Since the latter is defined by the stronger standard security criterion of quantum cryptography, it follows that the weak locking capacity is always larger than or at least equal to the private capacity. Finally, both locking capacities cannot exceed the classical capacity, which is the maximum rate of reliable communication allowed by the channel (not requiring any secrecy) [18]. As shown in [5], there exist qudit channels with low or even zero private capacity whose weak locking capacity is larger than one half of the classical capacity. In our previous work, we have obtained key generation protocols that achieve a strong locking rate just one bit smaller than the classical capacity [6].

In a cryptographic setting, the notions of strong and weak data locking capacity correspond to different kinds of attacks by the eavesdropper. In a strong locking scenario, we are imagining that the eavesdropper can obtain a noiseless version of the input states sent by Alice. If the strong locking capacity is non-zero, this means that these messages can remain locked to Eve. This is something that cannot happen if the standard security criterion is applied. In a weak locking scenario, we are instead imagining that the eavesdropper has access to the environment of the channel. This attack is similar to a collective attack. However, as discussed in the previous section, the weak locking attack lies in between the collective and individual attacks.

The first result we present in this paper is a QDL protocol for the d -dimensional noiseless channel, see section 2. The protocol allows QDL (in the strong sense) of the noiseless qudit channel at a rate of $\log d$ bits per channel use, equal to its classical capacity, and consumes secret key at an asymptotic rate of less than 1 bit per channel use. The crucial property of this protocol that distinguishes it from prior work on the topic (e.g. [15]) is that it employs codewords that are separable among different channel uses. This property allows us to generalize the protocol to the case of noisy memoryless channels and to obtain achievable rates of strong and weak locking for a physically motivated family of qudit channels, see sections 3 and 4.

2. A protocol for strong locking of a noiseless channel

In this section we define a strong locking protocol for direct communication via a noiseless qudit channel. This is an improved version of a similar protocol for quantum key distribution that we have introduced in [6]. Sections 2.1–2.4 present the proof of our main results. Applications to (weak and strong) locking of noisy memoryless channels are then presented in sections 3 and 4.

To encode M messages in n qudits, Alice prepares one of the codewords

$$|\psi_c\rangle = \bigotimes_{j=1}^n |x_{j,c}\rangle, \quad (2)$$

for $c = 1, 2, \dots, M$, where the vectors $|x_{j,c}\rangle$ are independently sampled from an ensemble of qudit states $\{p(x), |x\rangle\}$ ⁴. Alice and Bob publicly agree on a set of K n -qudit local unitaries

$$U^{(s)} = \bigotimes_{j=1}^n U_j^{(s)}, \quad (3)$$

for $s = 1, 2, \dots, K$. According to the value of the secret key, Alice applies the unitary transformation $U^{(s)}$ to scramble the n -qudit codewords, obtaining

$$|\psi_c^{(s)}\rangle = U^{(s)}|\psi_c\rangle = \bigotimes_{j=1}^n U_j^{(s)} |x_{j,c}\rangle. \quad (4)$$

In the strong locking scenario, we assume that Eve intercepts the whole train of qudit systems and measures them. Since Eve does not have access to the secret key, we have to compute the accessible information of the state

$$\rho_{\text{AE}} = \sum_{c=1}^M p(c) |c\rangle\langle c| \otimes \sum_{s=1}^K \frac{1}{K} |\psi_c^{(s)}\rangle\langle\psi_c^{(s)}|, \quad (5)$$

where $\{|c\rangle\}_{c=1, \dots, M}$ is an orthonormal basis for an auxiliary dummy quantum system associated to Alice and $p(c)$ is the probability of the codeword $|\psi_c\rangle$. For the sake of simplicity here we assume that all the messages have equal probability, that is, $p(c) = 1/M$ (the case of non-uniform distribution has been considered in [15, 16]). One can upper bound the accessible information as follows (see appendix A):

⁴ We remark that the vectors $|x\rangle$ may not be orthogonal. In general, one could also replace them with mixed states.

$$I_{\text{acc}} \leq \log M - \frac{d^n}{M} \min_{|\phi\rangle} \left\{ H[Q(\phi)] - \eta \left[\sum_{c=1}^M Q_c(\phi) \right] \right\}, \quad (6)$$

where

$$Q_c(\phi) = \frac{1}{K} \sum_{s=1}^K |\langle \phi | \psi_c^{(s)} \rangle|^2, \quad (7)$$

$$H[Q(\phi)] = - \sum_{c=1}^M Q_c(\phi) \log Q_c(\phi), \quad (8)$$

$\eta(x) = -x \log x$, and the minimization is over all n -qudit unit vectors $|\phi\rangle$.

In the following sections 2.1–2.4, we show that there exist choices of the unitaries $\{U^{(s)}\}_{s=1, \dots, K}$ such that

$$I_{\text{acc}} = O(\epsilon \log d^n), \quad (9)$$

provided that

$$K > \max \left\{ 2\gamma^n \left(\frac{1}{\epsilon^2} \ln M + \frac{2}{\epsilon^3} \ln \frac{5}{\epsilon} \right), \frac{d^n}{M} \frac{4 \ln 2 \ln d^n}{\epsilon^2} \right\}, \quad (10)$$

with

$$\gamma = \frac{2d}{d+1}, \quad (11)$$

In particular, if we put $\epsilon = 2^{-n^s}$ in (10) with $s \in (0, 1)$, Eve's accessible information will be exponentially small in n , with an asymptotic secret key consumption rate (in bits per channel use) equal to

$$k = \lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} \frac{\log K}{n} \quad (12)$$

$$= \max \left\{ \log \gamma, \log d - \lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} \frac{\log M}{n} \right\} \quad (13)$$

$$= \max \left\{ 1 - \log \left(1 + \frac{1}{d} \right), \log d - R \right\}, \quad (14)$$

where $R = \lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} \frac{\log M}{n}$.

To show that, we make use of a random coding argument based on random choices of both the codewords and the data locking unitaries. In particular, each of the unitaries $U_j^{(s)}$ is generated independently and randomly by sampling from the uniform Haar distribution of d -dimensional unitaries⁵.

For the case of a noiseless channel, since Bob knows the unitary $U^{(s)}$ chosen by Alice, he can simply apply the inverse transformation $U^{(s)-1}$ and then perform an optimal measurement to discriminate between the codewords⁶. We consider random codewords generated by sampling independently and identically each of the qudit state $|x_{j,c}\rangle$ from a given ensemble of input states. It is well known that in such a setting Bob can decode reliably in the limit $n \rightarrow \infty$ if $M < \epsilon d^n$, with ϵ vanishing in the limit $n \rightarrow \infty$ [20]. For instance, putting $\epsilon = 2^{-n^s}$ for $s < 1$ one obtains an asymptotic rate of communication of $R = \lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} \frac{1}{n} \log M = \log d$ bits per channel use, with a secret key consumption rate of less than 1 bit per channel use.

2.1. Preliminary results

To characterize our QDL protocol we will make use of two concentration inequalities. The first one is the tail bound [20]:

Theorem 1. *Let $\{X_t\}_{t=1, \dots, T}$ be T i.i.d. non-negative real-valued random variables, with $X_t \sim X$ and finite first and second moments, $\mathbb{E}[X]$, $\mathbb{E}[X^2] < \infty$. Then, for any $\tau > 0$ we have that*

⁵ The value of γ depends on the ensemble of unitaries used to scramble the codewords. This value is obtained if the unitaries are sampled from the uniform Haar distribution—see equation (17) and appendix B. In [6, 17] different values of γ were obtained by applying other ensembles of scrambling unitaries.

⁶ By optimal measurement we mean any measurement that achieves the Holevo bound as, e.g., the pretty good measurement [18].

$$\Pr \left\{ \frac{1}{T} \sum_{t=1}^T X_t < \mathbb{E}[X] - \tau \right\} \leq \exp \left(-\frac{T\tau^2}{2\mathbb{E}[X^2]} \right).$$

($\Pr\{x\}$ denotes the probability that the proposition x is true.) The second one is the operator Chernoff bound [21]:

Theorem 2. Let $\{X_t\}_{t=1, \dots, T}$ be T i.i.d. random variables taking values in the algebra of hermitian operators in dimension D , with $0 \leq X_t \leq \mathbb{I}$ and $\mathbb{E}[X_t] = \mu \mathbb{I}$ (\mathbb{I} is the identity operator). Then, for any $\tau > 0$ and for $(1 + \tau)\mu \leq 1$ we have that

$$\Pr \left\{ \frac{1}{T} \sum_{t=1}^T X_t > (1 + \tau)\mu \mathbb{I} \right\} \leq D \exp \left(-\frac{T\tau^2\mu}{4 \ln 2} \right),$$

and

$$\Pr \left\{ \frac{1}{T} \sum_{t=1}^T X_t < (1 - \tau)\mu \mathbb{I} \right\} \leq D \exp \left(-\frac{T\tau^2\mu}{4 \ln 2} \right).$$

For any given d^n -dimensional unit vector $|\phi\rangle$ and codeword $|\psi_c^{(s)}\rangle$, we define the quantity

$$q_c^{(s)}(\phi) = |\langle \phi | \psi_c^{(s)} \rangle|^2 = |\langle \phi | U^{(s)} \psi_c \rangle|^2. \quad (15)$$

Clearly, the latter is a random variable if the unitary $U^{(s)}$ and/or the codeword c are chosen randomly. To apply theorems 1 and 2, we compute the first and second moments of $q_c^{(s)}(\phi)$, for given $|\phi\rangle$ and c , with respect to the i.i.d. random locking unitaries. We obtain (see appendix B)

$$\mathbb{E}_U[q_c^{(s)}(\phi)] = \frac{1}{d^n}, \quad (16)$$

and

$$\mathbb{E}_U[q_c^{(s)}(\phi)^2] \leq \frac{\gamma^n}{d^{2n}}, \quad (17)$$

with

$$\gamma = \frac{2d}{d+1}. \quad (18)$$

For any given $|\phi\rangle$ and c , we also consider the quantity

$$Q_c(\phi) = \frac{1}{K} \sum_{s=1}^K q_c^{(s)}(\phi). \quad (19)$$

We now derive several concentration inequalities by applying theorems 1 and 2:

- Applying Maurer's tail bound (theorem 1), we obtain that for any given $|\phi\rangle$ and c

$$\Pr \left\{ Q_c(\phi) < \frac{1-\epsilon}{d^n} \right\} \leq \exp \left(-\frac{K\epsilon^2}{2\gamma^n} \right). \quad (20)$$

We then use this inequality to bound the probability that there exist ℓ codewords such that $Q_c(\phi) < \frac{1-\epsilon}{d^n}$. Applying the union bound we obtain

$$\Pr \left\{ \exists c_1, \dots, c_\ell \mid \forall i Q_{c_i}(\phi) < \frac{1-\epsilon}{d^n} \right\} \leq \binom{M}{\ell} \left(\Pr \left\{ Q_c(\phi) < \frac{1-\epsilon}{d^n} \right\} \right)^\ell \quad (21)$$

$$\leq \binom{M}{\ell} \exp \left(-\frac{\ell K \epsilon^2}{2\gamma^n} \right) \quad (22)$$

$$\leq M^\ell \exp \left(-\frac{\ell K \epsilon^2}{2\gamma^n} \right) \quad (23)$$

$$= \exp \left(\ell \ln M - \frac{\ell K \epsilon^2}{2\gamma^n} \right). \quad (24)$$

- Let us consider the operators $|\psi_c^{(s)}\rangle\langle\psi_c^{(s)}|$ and apply the operator Chernoff bound (theorem 2). Notice that equation (16) implies

$$\mathbb{E}_U \left[\left| \psi_c^{(s)} \right\rangle \left\langle \psi_c^{(s)} \right| \right] = \frac{\mathbb{I}}{d^n}. \quad (25)$$

Putting $\mu = 1/d^n$ and $(1 + \tau)\mu = (1 - \delta)$, the operator Chernoff bound implies that for any given c

$$\Pr \left\{ \frac{1}{K} \sum_{s=1}^K \left| \psi_c^{(s)} \right\rangle \left\langle \psi_c^{(s)} \right| > (1 - \delta) \mathbb{I} \right\} \leq d^n \exp \left(- \frac{K(d^n(1 - \delta) - 1)^2}{d^n 4 \ln 2} \right) \quad (26)$$

$$= d^n \exp \left(- \frac{K d^n (1 - \delta - 1/d^n)^2}{4 \ln 2} \right). \quad (27)$$

This in turn implies

$$\Pr \left\{ \max_{|\phi\rangle} Q_c(\phi) > 1 - \delta \right\} \leq d^n \exp \left(- \frac{K d^n (1 - \delta - 1/d^n)^2}{4 \ln 2} \right). \quad (28)$$

We then bound the probability that there exists a codeword c and a vector $|\phi\rangle$ such that $Q_c(\phi) > 1 - \delta$. Applying the union bound we obtain

$$\Pr \left\{ \max_{|\phi\rangle, c} Q_c(\phi) > 1 - \delta \right\} \leq M \Pr \left\{ \max_{|\phi\rangle} Q_c(\phi) > 1 - \delta \right\} \quad (29)$$

$$\leq M d^n \exp \left(- \frac{K d^n (1 - \delta - 1/d^n)^2}{4 \ln 2} \right) \quad (30)$$

$$\leq \exp \left(\ln M d^n - \frac{K d^n (1 - \delta - 1/d^n)^2}{4 \ln 2} \right). \quad (31)$$

- Finally, we consider random choices of the codewords c and apply the Chernoff bound with $\tau = \epsilon$. We then obtain

$$\Pr \left\{ \max_{|\phi\rangle} \sum_{c=1}^M Q_c(\phi) \in \left[(1 - \epsilon) \frac{M}{d^n}, (1 + \epsilon) \frac{M}{d^n} \right] \right\} \geq 1 - 2 d^n \exp \left(\ln d^n - \frac{K \frac{M}{d^n} \epsilon^2}{4 \ln 2} \right). \quad (32)$$

2.2. Eve's accessible information

Let Eve intercept and measure the train of n qudits sent by Alice. We now show that, for n large enough, a random choice of the unitaries $U_j^{(s)}$'s guarantees, up to an arbitrarily small probability, that Eve's accessible information is negligibly small.

We consider a random choice of the codeword $|\psi_c\rangle$. From equation (32), we have that for all $|\phi\rangle$, $\sum_{c=1}^M Q_c(\phi) \in \left[(1 - \epsilon) \frac{M}{d^n}, (1 + \epsilon) \frac{M}{d^n} \right]$ up to a probability which is bounded away from 1 provided

$$K > \frac{d^n 4 \ln 2 \ln d^n}{M \epsilon^2}. \quad (33)$$

This yields

$$\frac{d^n}{M} \max_{|\phi\rangle} \eta \left[\sum_{c=1}^M Q_c(\phi) \right] < \max \left\{ (1 - \epsilon) \log \frac{d^n}{M}, (1 + \epsilon) \log \frac{d^n}{M} \right\}. \quad (34)$$

Which in turn implies that, for K large enough, equation (6) is upper bounded by the following, up to a negligibly small probability,

$$I_{acc} \leq \begin{cases} (1 + \epsilon) \log d^n - \epsilon \log M + \eta(1 + \epsilon) - \frac{d^n}{M} \min_{|\phi\rangle} H[Q(\phi)], & \text{for } M < d^n, \\ (1 - \epsilon) \log d^n + \epsilon \log M + \eta(1 - \epsilon) - \frac{d^n}{M} \min_{|\phi\rangle} H[Q(\phi)], & \text{for } M > d^n. \end{cases} \quad (35)$$

According to the latter expressions, an upper bound on the accessible information follows from a lower bound on the minimum Shannon entropy, $\min_{|\phi\rangle} H[Q(\phi)]$. That is, to prove that $I_{acc} \lesssim \epsilon \log d^n$, we need to show that $\frac{d^n}{M} \min_{|\phi\rangle} H[Q(\phi)] \gtrsim (1 - \epsilon) \log d^n$. To do that, for any $\epsilon > 0$ and d^n and K large enough we bound the probability that

$$-Q_c(\phi) \log Q_c(\phi) < \eta \left(\frac{1 - \epsilon}{d^n} \right). \quad (36)$$

This corresponds to bounding the probability that either $Q_c(\phi) > \lambda_+ = 1 - \eta \left(\frac{1 - \epsilon}{d^n} \right) + O \left(\eta \left(\frac{1 - \epsilon}{d^n} \right) \right)$ or $Q_c(\phi) < \lambda_- = (1 - \epsilon)/d^n$. Notice that for d^n sufficiently large and/or ϵ sufficiently small we have $\lambda_+ \geq 1 - 2\eta \left(\frac{1 - \epsilon}{d^n} \right)$.

First, we bound the probability that there exists a codeword c and a vector $|\phi\rangle$ such that $Q_c(\phi) > \lambda_+$. We apply equation (31) with $\delta = 2\eta \left(\frac{1 - \epsilon}{d^n} \right)$ to obtain

$$Pr \left\{ \max_{|\phi\rangle, c} Q_c(\phi) > \lambda_+ \right\} \leq Pr \left\{ \max_{|\phi\rangle, c} Q_c(\phi) > 1 - 2\eta \left(\frac{1 - \epsilon}{d^n} \right) \right\} \quad (37)$$

$$\leq \exp \left(\ln M d^n - \frac{K d^n \left(1 - 2\eta \left(\frac{1 - \epsilon}{d^n} \right) - 1/d^n \right)^2}{4 \ln 2} \right) \quad (38)$$

$$\leq \exp \left(\ln M d^n - \frac{K d^n \left(1 - 4\eta \left(\frac{1 - \epsilon}{d^n} \right) - 2/d^n \right)}{4 \ln 2} \right) \quad (39)$$

$$\leq \exp \left(\ln M d^n - \frac{K d^n \left(1 - 6\eta \left(\frac{1 - \epsilon}{d^n} \right) \right)}{4 \ln 2} \right) =: p_+, \quad (40)$$

where we have also used the fact that $\frac{1}{d^n} < \eta \left(\frac{1 - \epsilon}{d^n} \right)$ for n large enough. This probability vanishes exponentially with d^n provided K is not too small, namely, $K > \frac{\ln M d^n}{d^n} \frac{4 \ln 2}{1 - 6\eta \left((1 - \epsilon)/d^n \right)}$.

Second, we bound the probability that there exist $\ell \ll M$ codewords such that $Q_c(\phi) < \lambda_-$. We apply equation (24) and obtain

$$Pr \left\{ \exists c_1, \dots, c_\ell \mid \forall i Q_{c_i}(\phi) < \lambda_- \right\} = Pr \left\{ \exists c_1, \dots, c_\ell \mid \forall i Q_{c_i}(\phi) < \frac{1 - \epsilon}{d^n} \right\} \quad (41)$$

$$\leq \exp \left(\ell \ln M - \frac{\ell K \epsilon^2}{2\gamma^n} \right). \quad (42)$$

Putting $\ell = \epsilon M$ we have

$$Pr \left\{ \exists c_1, \dots, c_\ell \mid \forall i Q_{c_i}(\phi) < \lambda_- \right\} \leq \exp \left[-M \left(\frac{K \epsilon^3}{2\gamma^n} - \epsilon \ln M \right) \right] =: p_-. \quad (43)$$

Notice that this probability is also exponentially small in M , provided that $K > 2\gamma^n \epsilon^{-2} \ln M$.

Inequality (31) implies that, with probability at least equal to $1 - p_+$, all the $Q_c(\phi)$'s are larger than λ_+ . Also, according to equation (43), for a given $|\phi\rangle$ there exist, with probability greater than $1 - p_-$, at least $M - \ell = (1 - \epsilon)M$ values of c such that $Q_c(\phi) > \lambda_-$. Putting these results together we obtain that for any given $|\phi\rangle$

$$H[Q(\phi)] > -M(1 - \epsilon) \left(\frac{1 - \epsilon}{d^n} \log \frac{1 - \epsilon}{d^n} \right) \quad (44)$$

$$= -\frac{M}{d^n} (1 - \epsilon)^2 \log \frac{1 - \epsilon}{d^n} \quad (45)$$

$$> \frac{M}{d^n} (1 - 2\epsilon) \log d^n - \frac{M}{d^n} (1 - 2\epsilon) \log (1 - \epsilon) \quad (46)$$

$$> \frac{M}{d^n} (1 - 2\epsilon) \log d^n, \quad (47)$$

that is,

$$\frac{d^n}{M} H[Q(\phi)] > (1 - 2\epsilon) \log d^n, \quad (48)$$

with a probability at least equal to $1 - p_- - p_+$, which is in turn larger than $1 - 2p_-$ for M large enough.

2.3. The ϵ -net

To bound the accessible information in equation (35) we have to show that a relation similar to (48) holds for all vectors $|\phi\rangle$. To do that we introduce an ϵ -net. Let us recall that an ϵ -net is a finite set of unit vectors $\mathcal{N}_\epsilon = \{|\phi_i\rangle\}_i$ in a D -dimensional Hilbert space such that for any unit vector $|\phi\rangle$ there exists $|\phi_i\rangle \in \mathcal{N}_\epsilon$ for which

$$\| |\phi\rangle\langle\phi| - |\phi_i\rangle\langle\phi_i| \|_1 \leq \epsilon. \quad (49)$$

As discussed in [11] there exists an ϵ -net with $|\mathcal{N}_\epsilon| \leq (5/\epsilon)^{2D}$. Below, we first extend the bound (48) to include all the vectors in \mathcal{N}_ϵ , and then, for ϵ sufficiently small, to all the manifold of unit vectors.

By applying the union bound we obtain:

$$\Pr \left\{ \min_{|\phi_i\rangle \in \mathcal{N}_\epsilon} H[Q(\phi_i)] < (1 - 2\epsilon) \log d^n \right\} \leq (5/\epsilon)^{2d^n} 2p_- \quad (50)$$

$$= 2(5/\epsilon)^{2d^n} \exp \left[-M \left(\frac{K\epsilon^3}{2\gamma^n} - \epsilon \ln M \right) \right] \quad (51)$$

$$= 2 \exp \left[-M \left(\frac{K\epsilon^3}{2\gamma^n} - \epsilon \ln M - 2 \frac{d^n}{M} \ln \frac{5}{\epsilon} \right) \right]. \quad (52)$$

Then, we have to replace the minimum over vectors in the ϵ -net with a minimum over all unit vectors. An application of the Fannes inequality [22] yields (see also [11])

$$\left| \min_{|\phi\rangle} H[Q(\phi)] - \min_{|\phi_i\rangle \in \mathcal{N}_\epsilon} H[Q(\phi_i)] \right| \leq \epsilon \log d^n + \eta(\epsilon), \quad (53)$$

which implies

$$\Pr \left\{ \min_{|\phi\rangle} H[Q(\phi)] < (1 - 3\epsilon) \log d^n - \eta(\epsilon) \right\} \leq 2 \exp \left[-M \left(\frac{K\epsilon^3}{2\gamma^n} - \epsilon \ln M - 2 \frac{d^n}{M} \ln \frac{5}{\epsilon} \right) \right]. \quad (54)$$

Such a probability is bounded away from one (and goes to zero exponentially in M) provided

$$K > 2\gamma^n \left(\frac{1}{\epsilon^2} \ln M + \frac{2}{\epsilon^3} \frac{d^n}{M} \ln \frac{5}{\epsilon} \right). \quad (55)$$

Under this condition for K , we finally have the following upper bound for the accessible information

$$I_{acc} \leq \begin{cases} 4\epsilon \log d^n - \epsilon \log M + \eta(1 + \epsilon) + \eta(\epsilon), & \text{for } M < d^n, \\ 2\epsilon \log d^n + \epsilon \log M + \eta(1 - \epsilon) + \eta(\epsilon), & \text{for } M > d^n. \end{cases} \quad (56)$$

2.4. Improving the bound on K

We expect the number of messages to increase exponentially in the number of channel use, that is, $M \simeq 2^{nR}$. When $2^R < d$, this yields an additional exponential term, proportional to $d^n/M \simeq (d2^{-R})^n \gg 1$ on the right hand side of (55). This term originated from the fact that we are using an ϵ -net on a space of dimension d^n , that contains up to $(5/\epsilon)^{2d^n}$ elements. We now show that it is sufficient to consider an ϵ -net on a smaller space of dimension M . As a result, we obtain an improved bound on K :

$$K > 2\gamma^n \left(\frac{1}{\epsilon^2} \ln M + \frac{2}{\epsilon^3} \ln \frac{5}{\epsilon} \right). \quad (57)$$

To show that, we first note that $Q(\phi)$ is indeed a function of an effective vector $|\tilde{\phi}\rangle$ with complex components $\tilde{\phi}_c$, for $c = 1, \dots, M$, where

$$|\tilde{\phi}_c|^2 = \frac{1}{K} \sum_{s=1}^K |\langle \phi | \psi_c^{(s)} \rangle|. \quad (58)$$

For $MK \gg d^n$ the condition (32) implies that the codewords $|\psi_c^{(s)}\rangle$ fill the whole d^n -dimensional Hilbert space with high probability. This means that we can parameterize any unit vector $|\phi\rangle$ in terms of the parameters $\tilde{\phi}_c$ and a set of dummy parameters that do not affect the value of $Q(\phi)$.

From (32), we obtain that $\sum_{c=1}^M |\tilde{\phi}_c|^2 \leq (1 + \epsilon)M/d^n \leq 1$, up to small probability. That is, these parameters define a sphere in M complex dimensions with radius smaller than 1. Repeating the same reasoning with an ϵ -net defined on this M -dimensional space we obtain the bounds (56) on the accessible information under the tighter condition (57) on the number of key messages.

In conclusion we obtain, from (56), that

$$I_{\text{acc}} \leq O(\epsilon \log d^n). \quad (59)$$

Under the condition, from (57) and (33),

$$K \geq \max \left\{ 2\gamma^n \left(\frac{1}{\epsilon^2} \ln M + \frac{2}{\epsilon^3} \ln \frac{5}{\epsilon} \right), \frac{d^n}{M} \frac{4 \ln 2 \ln d^n}{\epsilon^2} \right\}. \quad (60)$$

3. Strong locking of a memoryless qudit channel

The noiseless protocol can be straightforwardly applied for the strong locking of a noisy qudit channel $\mathcal{N}_{A \rightarrow B}$ connecting Alice to Bob. The point is that in a strong locking setting we require that the communication is secure against an eavesdropper having access to the very input of the channel. In other words, the security of the protocol is independent of how the channel acts on the input, and hence it applies to the noiseless case as well as the noisy one. That is, the bound on the accessible information in equation (56) and the condition on the number of key values in equation (60) apply for a generic qudit channel.

The crucial difference, however, is that the presence of noise reduces the rate at which Alice and Bob can reliably communicate classical information. Let us suppose that, using the codewords described above, Alice and Bob can achieve a reliable communication rate of $R = \lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} \frac{1}{n} \log M$ bits per channel use [23]. Then (60) implies an asymptotic key consumption rate of

$$\lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} \frac{\log K}{n} = \max \{ \log \gamma, \log d - R \} = \max \left\{ 1 - \log \left(1 + \frac{1}{d} \right), \log d - R \right\}. \quad (61)$$

Since R cannot exceed $\log d$, we obtain an increase in the secret key consumption rate with respect to the noiseless setting. We can say that the latter equation represents a trade-off between communication rate and secret key consumption. In order to achieve strong locking, the secret key consumption rate should increase to compensate the reduced communication rate.

4. Weak locking of a memoryless qudit channel

In the weak locking scenario the eavesdropper has access to the output of the complementary channel, hence receiving a signal distorted by noise. One thus expects that the randomness introduced by the noise contributes to the QDL effect. If this is true, then one can exploit the randomness due to the noise to reduce the length of the required secret key. Below we show that this intuition is true by examining a family of channels of a specific form. We define these channels through their conjugates, which are of the form

$$\tilde{\mathcal{N}}_{A \rightarrow B}(\rho) = \mathcal{N}_{A \rightarrow E}(\rho) = p\rho + (1 - p)\sigma, \quad (62)$$

where $p \in [0, 1]$ and σ is a given density matrix (notable examples of channels belonging to this family are the erasure channel and the conjugate of the depolarizing channel).

The results for the noiseless case can be easily applied to these channels. To do that, it is sufficient to notice that, with probability p , the channel $\mathcal{N}_{A \rightarrow E}$ is noiseless. In other words, for n uses of the channel, one expects that the channel $\mathcal{N}_{A \rightarrow E}$ will act as an effective noiseless channel over a fraction of about pn qudits. It is sufficient to require that the protocol data locks the information contained in these qudits, since the remaining $(1 - p)n$ qudits do not convey any information at all about the message as the output is independent of the input.

More formally, upon n uses of the channel Eve receives (with probability arbitrarily close to 1 for n large enough) no more than $n(p + \delta)$ qudits without any distortion. Let us hence consider a given subset of $n(p + \delta)$ qudits and apply the same reasoning of the noiseless channel given above with n replaced by $n(p + \delta)$. This yields a bound on Eve's accessible information conditioned on the choice of the subset:

$$\Pr \left\{ I_{\text{acc}}^{\text{subset}} > O \left(\epsilon \log d^{n(p+\delta)} \right) \right\} \leq 2 \exp \left[-M \left(\frac{K\epsilon^3}{2\gamma^{n(p+\delta)}} - \epsilon \ln M - 2 \ln \frac{5}{\epsilon} \right) \right]. \quad (63)$$

(this follows from the bounds in equation (54)). Finally, we apply the union bound to account for all possible $\binom{n}{n(p+\delta)}$ choices of the subset of $n(p+\delta)$ qudits:

$$\Pr \left\{ I_{\text{acc}} > O \left(\epsilon \log d^{n(p+\delta)} \right) \right\} \leq 2 \binom{n}{n(p+\delta)} \exp \left[-M \left(\frac{K\epsilon^3}{2\gamma^{n(p+\delta)}} - \epsilon \ln M - 2 \ln \frac{5}{\epsilon} \right) \right] \quad (64)$$

$$\leq 2n^{n(p+\delta)} \exp \left[-M \left(\frac{K\epsilon^3}{2\gamma^{n(p+\delta)}} - \epsilon \ln M - 2 \ln \frac{5}{\epsilon} \right) \right] \quad (65)$$

$$\leq 2 \exp \left[n(p+\delta) \ln n - M \left(\frac{K\epsilon^3}{2\gamma^{n(p+\delta)}} - \epsilon \ln M - 2 \ln \frac{5}{\epsilon} \right) \right]. \quad (66)$$

This probability goes to zero exponentially in M —we can always assume that $M = \epsilon 2^{nR}$ where R is the communication rate—for K large enough. From (66) and (33), we obtain the following sufficient condition on K :

$$K > \max \left\{ 2\gamma^{n(p+\delta)} \left(\frac{1}{\epsilon^2} \ln M + \frac{2}{\epsilon^4} \ln \frac{5}{\epsilon} \right), \frac{d^{n(p+\delta)}}{M} \frac{4 \ln 2 \ln d^{n(p+\delta)}}{\epsilon^2} \right\}, \quad (67)$$

which yields an asymptotic secret key consumption rate of (we can assume $\lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} \delta = 0$)

$$\lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} \frac{\log K}{n} = \max \{ p\gamma, p \log d - R \} = \max \left\{ p \left[1 - \log \left(1 + \frac{1}{d} \right) \right], p \log d - R \right\}. \quad (68)$$

This example shows that the presence of noise in the channel to Eve allows Alice and Bob to consume secret key at a reduced rate, compared to the strong locking case in (61). We now compute a lower bound on the maximum achievable communication rate for the class of channels considered here. To compute R , we first write an isometric extension of the channel. We introduce four quantum systems: systems 1, 2 and 3 are qudits and system 4 is a qubit. In input, system 1 is assigned to Alice and systems 2, 3 and 4 to Eve. In output, system 1 is assigned to Eve and the others to Bob. We put

$$U_{1234} = \mathbb{I}_{123} \otimes |0\rangle_4 \langle 0| + \mathbb{S}_{12} \otimes \mathbb{I}_3 \otimes |1\rangle_4 \langle 1|, \quad (69)$$

where \mathbb{S}_{12} is the swap operation between qudits 1 and 2. As initial state of the environment we put

$$|\varphi_E\rangle = |\varphi\rangle_{23} \otimes \left(\sqrt{p} |0\rangle_4 \langle 0| + \sqrt{1-p} |1\rangle_4 \langle 1| \right), \quad (70)$$

where $\text{Tr}_3(|\varphi\rangle_{23} \langle \varphi|) = \sigma_2$ (without loss of generality we can also assume $\text{Tr}_3(|\varphi\rangle_{23} \langle \varphi|) = \sigma_3$).

One can easily check that

$$\text{Tr}_{234} \left(U_{1234} \rho_1 \otimes |\varphi_E\rangle_{234} \langle \varphi_E| U_{1234}^\dagger \right) = p \rho_1 + (1-p) \sigma. \quad (71)$$

Taking the trace over the output systems 1 we obtain the output of the channel to Bob:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Tr}_1 \left(U_{1234} \rho_1 \otimes |\varphi_E\rangle_{234} \langle \varphi_E| U_{1234}^\dagger \right) &= p |\varphi\rangle_{23} \langle \varphi| \otimes |0\rangle_4 \langle 0| + (1-p) \rho_2 \otimes \sigma_3 \otimes |1\rangle_4 \langle 1| \\ &\quad + \sqrt{p(1-p)} \left[\text{Tr}_1 (\mathbb{S}_{12} \rho_1 \otimes |\varphi\rangle_{23} \langle \varphi|) \otimes |1\rangle_4 \langle 0| + \text{h.c.} \right]. \end{aligned} \quad (72)$$

We notice that the action on the channel from Alice and Bob depends on σ through the last two terms proportional to $|0\rangle_4 \langle 1|$ and $|1\rangle_4 \langle 0|$. If we apply a completely dephasing channel on qubit 4 the channel to Bob becomes an erasure channel with erasure probability p independently of σ . This implies that the classical capacity of the erasure channel is an achievable rate for classical communication, hence we can put $R = (1-p) \log d$. Moreover, this bound holds for any choice of the locking unitary, since the erasure channel is covariant under unitary transformations.

4.1. Erasure channel

If σ is orthogonal to the input space, the channel in equation (62) is a qudit erasure channel with erasure probability $1-p$, whose complement is an erasure channel with erasure probability p . In this case, the maximum communication rate equals the classical capacity of the erasure channel, $R = (1-p) \log d$, with a secret key consumption rate of

$$k = \max \left\{ p \left[1 - \log \left(1 + \frac{1}{d} \right) \right], (2p - 1) \log d \right\} \quad (73)$$

bits per channel use.

4.2. Conjugate of the depolarizing channel

If $\sigma = \mathbb{I}/d$, the channel in equation (62) is a qudit depolarizing channel with depolarizing probability $1 - p$. We can rewrite the action of the depolarizing channel as

$$\mathcal{N}_{A \rightarrow E}(\rho) = p\rho + \frac{1-p}{d^2} \sum_{a,b=0}^{d-1} X^a Z^b \rho Z^{-b} X^{-a}, \quad (74)$$

where $X = \sum_{j=0}^{d-1} |j \oplus 1\rangle \langle j|$ (\oplus denotes summation modulo d) and $Z = \sum_{j=0}^{d-1} e^{ij2\pi/d} |j\rangle \langle j|$ are the d -dimensional generalization of the Pauli matrices, and $\{|j\rangle\}_{j=0, \dots, d-1}$ is a qudit basis. This representation of the channel to Eve induces a representation for the isometric extension, which is given by the bipartite conditional unitary

$$U = \sum_{a,b=0}^{d-1} |ab\rangle \langle ab| \otimes X^a Z^b, \quad (75)$$

where the first system, assigned to Eve's input, is represented by a d^2 -dimensional Hilbert space (spanned by the basis vectors $\{|ab\rangle\}$), and the second is the input qudit system. As initial state of Eve's system we take

$$|\varphi_E\rangle = \sum_{a,b=0}^{d-1} \sqrt{q_{ab}} |ab\rangle, \quad (76)$$

where $q_{00} = p + (1-p)/d^2$ and $q_{ab} = (1-p)/d^2$ for $ab \neq 00$. Taking the partial trace over Eve's output system, we finally obtain the following expression for the channel to Bob:

$$\mathcal{N}_{A \rightarrow B}(\rho) = \sum_{a,b,a',b'=0}^{d-1} \sqrt{q_{ab} q_{a'b'}} \text{Tr} \left(X^a Z^b \rho Z^{-b'} X^{-a'} \right) |ab\rangle \langle a'b'|. \quad (77)$$

A straightforward calculation yields that the maximum achievable rate using our ensemble of input states is

$$R = f(p, d^2) - f(p, d), \quad (78)$$

where

$$f(p, D) = - \left(p + \frac{1-p}{D} \right) \log \left(p + \frac{1-p}{D} \right) - (D-1) \frac{1-p}{D} \log \left(\frac{1-p}{D} \right). \quad (79)$$

As in the case of the erasure channel, this rate is independent of the choice of the locking unitary.

In conclusion, equation (78) gives the maximum reliable communication rate from Alice to Bob. The secret key consumption rate is hence equal to

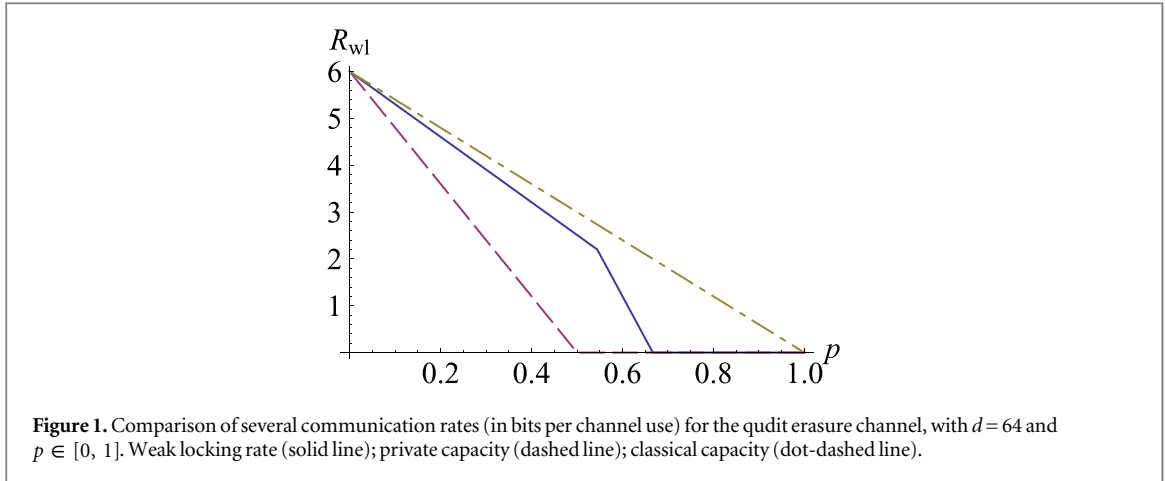
$$k = \max \left\{ p \left[1 - \log \left(1 + \frac{1}{d} \right) \right], p \log d - f(p, d^2) + f(p, d) \right\}. \quad (80)$$

5. Quantum bootstrapping

Our QDL protocols yield achievable rates of strong and weak locking through a noisy qudit channel. Consider the case of weak locking at a rate R with a secret consumption rate of k bits per channel use. If the channel $\mathcal{N}_{A \rightarrow B}$ has non-zero private capacity, one can first use the channel to establish a private key between the two legitimate parties, then use such a key to lock the subsequent uses of the channel. In this way Alice and Bob will achieve a weak locking rate of

$$R_{\text{wl}} = \frac{R}{1 + k/P}, \quad (81)$$

where P is the private capacity of the communication channel [2]. It follows that any channel with non-zero private capacity allows us to lock data in the weak locking sense. For qudit channels having R and P large enough, R_{wl} can be much larger than the private capacity and arbitrarily close to the classical capacity.



Alternatively, for generic channels, including those with zero private capacity, one can define a QDL protocol under the assumption that Alice and Bob know an upper bound τ on the coherence time of Eve's quantum memory. For $R > k$, a weak locking protocol is then defined according to the following procedure:

1. Alice and Bob initially share a secret key of nk bits;
2. They use the secret key to send about nR bits of locked information through n uses of the qudit channel;
3. They wait a time τ sufficiently long to guarantee that Eve's quantum memory decoheres. After such a time the locked information Alice has sent to Bob can be considered secure in the composable sense (see section 1 and [6]);
4. If $R > k$, Alice and Bob recycle nk of the nR bits as a secret key for the next round of the communication protocol;
5. They repeat the above procedure for n' times.

(We remark that Bob does not need to store quantum information for a time longer than τ . Indeed, he needs to store quantum information only for the time necessary to send nR bits along the channel from Alice to Bob. In other words the protocol does not require the legitimate Bob to have better technology than the eavesdropper Eve.)

Using this bootstrap technique, Alice and Bob will asymptotically achieve a weak locking rate of (for $R \geq k$)

$$R_{wl} = R - k \quad (82)$$

bits per channel use, with a secret key consumption rate of k/n' bits that goes to zero in the limit $n' \rightarrow \infty$. While the rate per channel use is finite and independent of τ , one may object that the communication rate *per second* will become arbitrarily small if τ is large enough. To solve this problem, Alice and Bob can run two or more independent instances of the protocol in parallel (each using an independent secret key) taking advantage of the dead times between one protocol and the other. It follows that the communication rate per second remains finite and independent of τ even in the limit of $\tau \rightarrow \infty$. (Clearly, this procedure becomes impractical if τ is too large.)

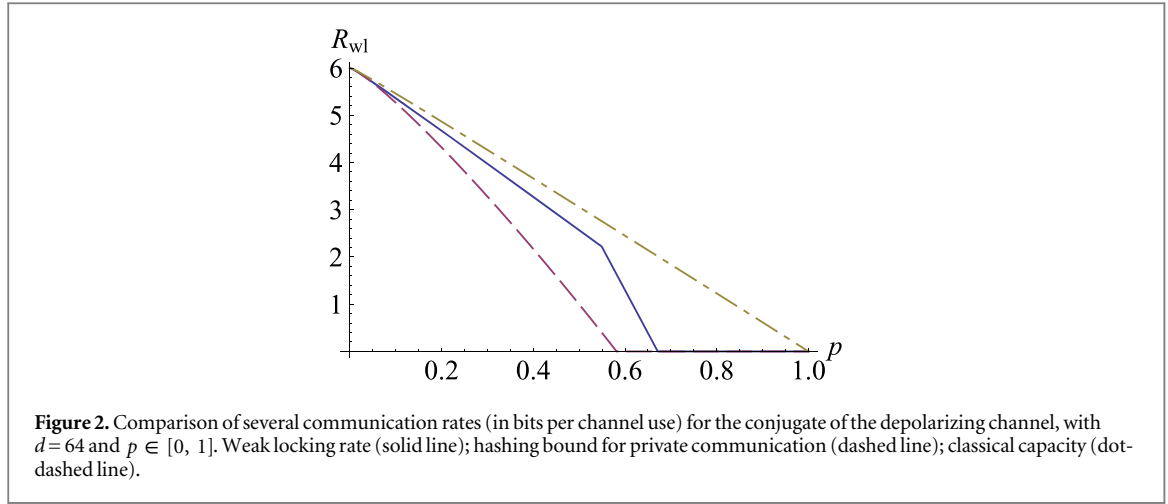
For the qudit erasure channel, the procedure described above achieves a weak locking rate (in bits per channel use) of

$$R_{wl} = (1 - p) \log d - \max \left\{ p \left[1 - \log \left(1 + \frac{1}{d} \right) \right], (2p - 1) \log d \right\} \quad (83)$$

Similarly, for the conjugate of the qudit depolarizing channel we obtain

$$R_{wl} = f(p, d^2) - f(p, d) - \max \left\{ p \left[1 - \log \left(1 + \frac{1}{d} \right) \right], p \log d - f(p, d^2) + f(p, d) \right\}, \quad (84)$$

where $f(p, d)$ and $f(p, d^2)$ are as in equation (79). figure 1 shows the weak locking rate of the qudit erasure channel compared with the classical capacity [18] and the private capacity [2]. Figure 2 shows the weak locking rate of the conjugate of the qudit depolarizing channel, compared with its classical capacity and the Hashing bound for private communication.



The idea of key recycling is not new in quantum cryptography (see, e.g., [24]). The crucial difference in our approach is that we are assuming the weaker security criterion expressed in terms of the accessible information. By weakening the notion of security we are able to obtain a positive rate of locked communication even if the channel has zero privacy according to the standard security criterion of quantum cryptography.

6. Conclusions

In conclusion, we have presented protocols that achieve a weak locking rate as high as less than one bit below the classical capacity for quantum channels exhibiting certain symmetry properties. These results, together with [5, 6], further deepen our understanding of the QDL effect as well as of the notions of locking capacities recently introduced in [10]. A few natural questions remain open. It is not clear whether our strong locking protocol for the noiseless channel is optimal in terms of secret key consumption. The obtained secret key consumption rate of $\max \{1 - \log(1 + 1/d), \log d - R\}$ bits per channel use could very well not be a fundamental limit, but just a consequence of our proof technique. Also, one would like to find weak locking protocols for general channels beyond the restricted, yet physically relevant, class of channels considered here. Finally, since the most important realizations of quantum communication channels are within continuous-variable, it is urgent to discover QDL protocols for quantum systems with infinite dimensions.

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Appendix A. Upper bound on the accessible information

In this appendix we derive an upper bound on the accessible information of the bipartite state

$$\rho_{AE} = \frac{1}{M} \sum_{x=1}^M |x\rangle\langle x| \otimes \sum_{s=1}^K \frac{1}{K} |\psi_x^{(s)}\rangle\langle\psi_x^{(s)}|. \quad (\text{A.1})$$

The accessible information is the maximum classical mutual information between Alice's input X and the result of an optimal measurement performed by Eve on her share of the quantum system. Such a local measurement is described by a set of POVM elements $\{\Lambda_y\}_y$, with $\Lambda_y \geq 0$ and $\sum_y \Lambda_y = \mathbb{I}$, where y is the value of the corresponding measurement result. The output of the measurement is a random variable Y . The conditional probability distribution of Y given x is

$$p_Y(y|x) = \sum_{s=1}^K \frac{1}{K} \langle \psi_x^{(s)} | \Lambda_y | \psi_x^{(s)} \rangle, \quad (\text{A.2})$$

and $p_Y(y) = M^{-1} \sum_x p_Y(y|x)$

Then the accessible information of the state ρ_{AE} reads

$$I_{\text{acc}} = \max_{\{\Lambda_Y\}} I(X; Y) = \max_{\{\Lambda_Y\}} H(X) + H(Y) - H(XY), \quad (\text{A.3})$$

where

$$H(X) = -\sum_x p_X(x) \log p_X(x) = \log M, \quad (\text{A.4})$$

$$H(Y) = -\sum_y p_Y(y) \log p_Y(y), \quad (\text{A.5})$$

and

$$H(XY) = -\sum_{x,y} p_Y(y|x) p_X(x) \log p_Y(y|x) p_X(x) = -\sum_{x,y} M^{-1} p_Y(y|x) \log M^{-1} p_Y(y|x). \quad (\text{A.6})$$

By convexity of mutual information, it is sufficient to restrict to the set of rank-one POVM with $\Lambda_y = \mu_y |\phi_y\rangle\langle\phi_y|$, where the $|\phi_y\rangle$'s are unit vectors and $\mu_y > 0$. The condition $\sum_y \mu_y |\phi_y\rangle\langle\phi_y| = \mathbb{I}$ then implies $\sum_y \mu_y/d^n = 1$. A straightforward calculation yields

$$I_{\text{acc}} = \log M - \min_{\{\mu_y |\phi_y\rangle\langle\phi_y|\}} \sum_y \frac{\mu_y}{M} \left\{ H[Q(\phi_y)] - \eta \left[\sum_x Q_x(\phi_y) \right] \right\}, \quad (\text{A.7})$$

where $\eta(\cdot) = -(\cdot) \log(\cdot)$, $Q(\phi_y)$ is the M -dimensional real vector of non-negative components

$$Q_x(\phi_y) = \frac{1}{K} \sum_{s=1}^K |\langle \phi_y | \psi_x^{(s)} \rangle|^2, \quad (\text{A.8})$$

and $H[Q(\phi_y)] = -\sum_x Q_x(\phi_y) \log Q_x(\phi_y)$.

We now apply a standard convexity argument, first used in [3]. To do that, notice that the positive quantities μ_y/d^n can be interpreted as probability weights. An upper bound on the accessible information (A.7) is then obtained by using the fact that the average cannot exceed the maximum. This yields

$$I_{\text{acc}} = \log M - \frac{d^n}{M} \min_{\{\mu_y |\phi_y\rangle\langle\phi_y|\}} \sum_y \frac{\mu_y}{d^n} \left\{ H[Q(\phi_y)] - \eta \left[\sum_x Q_x(\phi_y) \right] \right\} \quad (\text{A.9})$$

$$\leq \log M - \frac{d^n}{M} \min_{|\phi\rangle} \left\{ H[Q(\phi)] - \eta \left[\sum_x Q_x(\phi) \right] \right\}, \quad (\text{A.10})$$

which is the upper bound in (6).

Appendix B. Calculation of the first and second moment

Here we compute the first and second moment of $q_c(\phi) = |\langle \phi | U | \psi \rangle|^2$ with respect to a random unitary of the form $U = \bigotimes_{j=1}^n U_j$, where each qudit unitary U_j is independently sampled from the uniform distribution induced by the Haar measure $d\mu(U_j)$ on the unitary group.

We have

$$\mathbb{E}_U[q_c(\phi)] = \mathbb{E}_U[\langle \phi | U | \psi \rangle \langle \psi | U^\dagger | \phi \rangle] \quad (\text{B.1})$$

$$= \langle \phi | \mathbb{E}_U[U | \psi \rangle \langle \psi | U^\dagger] | \phi \rangle \quad (\text{B.2})$$

$$= \langle \phi | \bigotimes_{j=1}^n \mathbb{E}_{U_j}[U_j | x_{j,c} \rangle \langle x_{j,c} | U_j^\dagger] | \phi \rangle \quad (\text{B.3})$$

$$= \frac{1}{d^n}, \quad (\text{B.4})$$

where we have used $\mathbb{E}_{U_j}[U_j | x \rangle \langle x | U_j^\dagger] = \int d\mu(U_j) U_j | x \rangle \langle x | U_j^\dagger = \mathbb{I}/d$ for any unit vector $|x\rangle$.

To compute the second moment we first write

$$\mathbb{E}_U[q_c(\phi)^2] = \mathbb{E}_U[\langle \phi | U | \psi \rangle \langle \psi | U^\dagger | \phi \rangle \langle \phi | U | \psi \rangle \langle \psi | U^\dagger | \phi \rangle] \quad (\text{B.5})$$

$$= \mathbb{E}_U[\langle \phi, \phi | U \otimes U | \psi, \psi \rangle \langle \psi, \psi | U^\dagger \otimes U^\dagger | \phi, \phi \rangle] \quad (\text{B.6})$$

$$= \langle \phi, \phi | \mathbb{E}_U [U \otimes U | \psi_c, \psi_c \rangle \langle \psi_c, \psi_c | U^\dagger \otimes U^\dagger] | \phi, \phi \rangle \quad (\text{B.7})$$

$$= \langle \phi, \phi | \bigotimes_{j=1}^n \mathbb{E}_{U_j} [U_j \otimes U_j | x_{j,c}, x_{j,c} \rangle \langle x_{j,c}, x_{j,c} | U_j^\dagger \otimes U_j^\dagger] | \phi, \phi \rangle \quad (\text{B.8})$$

$$= \langle \phi, \phi | \bigotimes_{j=1}^n \int d\mu (U_j) U_j \otimes U_j | x_{j,c}, x_{j,c} \rangle \langle x_{j,c}, x_{j,c} | U_j^\dagger \otimes U_j^\dagger | \phi, \phi \rangle, \quad (\text{B.9})$$

where $|\phi, \phi\rangle = |\phi\rangle \otimes |\phi\rangle$, $|\psi_c, \psi_c\rangle = |\psi_c\rangle \otimes |\psi_c\rangle$ and $|x_{j,c}, x_{j,c}\rangle = |x_{j,c}\rangle \otimes |x_{j,c}\rangle$. We then apply the representation of the twirling operator [25]

$$\mathcal{T}(\rho) = \int d\mu (U) U \otimes U \rho U^\dagger \otimes U^\dagger \quad (\text{B.10})$$

$$= \text{Tr}(\rho Q_0) \frac{Q_0}{\text{Tr}(Q_0)} + \text{Tr}(\rho Q_1) \frac{Q_1}{\text{Tr}(Q_1)}, \quad (\text{B.11})$$

where

$$Q_\alpha = \frac{\mathbb{I} + (-1)^\alpha S}{2} \quad (\text{B.12})$$

are the projectors on the symmetric ($\alpha = 0$) and anti-symmetric ($\alpha = 1$) subspaces, \mathbb{I} denotes the identity operator, and S is the swap operator ($S|\psi, \psi'\rangle = |\psi', \psi\rangle$). We then have

$$\mathcal{T}(|x_{j,c}, x_{j,c}\rangle \langle x_{j,c}, x_{j,c}|) = \frac{Q_0}{\text{Tr}(Q_0)} = \frac{2}{d(d+1)} Q_0, \quad (\text{B.13})$$

which yields

$$\mathbb{E}_U [q_c(\phi)^2] = \left(\frac{2}{d(d+1)} \right)^n \langle \phi, \phi | Q_0^{\otimes n} | \phi, \phi \rangle \quad (\text{B.14})$$

$$\leq \left(\frac{2}{d(d+1)} \right)^n \|Q_0^{\otimes n}\|_\infty \quad (\text{B.15})$$

$$= \left(\frac{2}{d(d+1)} \right)^n \|Q_0\|_\infty^n \quad (\text{B.16})$$

$$= \left(\frac{2}{d(d+1)} \right)^n. \quad (\text{B.17})$$

Here we have used the fact that $\langle \phi, \phi | Q_0^{\otimes n} | \phi, \phi \rangle \leq \|Q_0^{\otimes n}\|_\infty$, where $\|Q_0^{\otimes n}\|_\infty$ is the operator norm of $Q_0^{\otimes n}$ (namely, the supremum of its eigenvalues), and that $\|Q_0^{\otimes n}\|_\infty = \|Q_0\|_\infty^n = 1$.

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