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- A graduate student at the University of California at Berkeley used a network of about 250 workstations to crack a 40-bit algorithm in less than four hours yesterday, a university professor told CNET today. Responding to an international contest announced by encryption software company RSA Security Dynamics, grad student Ian Goldberg set the UC Berkeley Network of Workstations to the task of cracking the code yesterday using cryptanalysis software, key-testing software that he "tweaked" to run even faster than usual. The software was able to test about 100 billion key combinations an hour, said Eric Brewer, the Berkeley computer science professor who oversees Goldberg's work with the Internet Security, Applications, Authentication and Cryptography research group.
- For his efforts, Goldberg won the \$1,000 prize for the 40-bit level, the weakest encryption that RSA offers. His ease in completing the hack adds fuel to the argument that 40-bit crypto, where scrambling codes are composed of a string of 40 digits, is too weak for commercial use.



