INTEGERS WITH A LARGE SMOOTH DIVISOR

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Received: 7/19/06, Revised: 1/31/07, Accepted: 2/2/07, Published: 4/3/07

Abstract

We study the function $\Theta(x, y, z)$ that counts the number of positive integers $n \leq x$ which have a divisor d > z with the property that $p \leq y$ for every prime p dividing d. We also indicate some cryptographic applications of our results.

1. Introduction

For every integer $n \geq 2$, let $P^+(n)$ and $P^-(n)$ denote the largest and the smallest prime factor of n, respectively, and put $P^+(1) = 1$, $P^-(1) = \infty$. For real numbers $x, y \geq 1$, let $\Psi(x,y)$ and $\Phi(x,y)$ denote the counting functions of the sets of y-smooth numbers and y-rough numbers, respectively; that is,

$$\Psi(x,y) = \#\{n \le x : P^+(n) \le y\}$$
 and $\Phi(x,y) = \#\{n \le x : P^-(n) > y\}.$

For a very wide range in the xy-plane, it is known that

$$\Psi(x,y) \sim \varrho(u) x$$
 and $\Phi(x,y) \sim \omega(u) \frac{x}{\log y}$,

where u denotes the ratio $(\log x)/\log y$, $\varrho(u)$ is the *Dickman function*, and $\omega(u)$ is the *Buch-stab function*; the definitions and certain analytic properties of $\varrho(u)$ and $\omega(u)$ are reviewed in Sections 2 and 3 below.

In this paper, our principal object of study is the function $\Theta(x, y, z)$ that counts positive integers $n \leq x$ for which there exists a divisor $d \mid n$ with d > z and $P^+(d) \leq y$; in other words,

$$\Theta(x, y, z) = \#\{n \le x : n_y > z\},\$$

where n_y denotes the largest y-smooth divisor of n. The function $\Theta(x, y, z)$ has been previously studied in the literature; see [1, 6, 7, 8].

For x, y, z varying over a wide domain, we derive the first two terms of the asymptotic expansion of $\Theta(x, y, z)$. We show that the main term can be naturally defined in terms of the partial convolution $\mathcal{C}_{\omega,\rho}(u, v)$ of ϱ with ω , which is defined by

$$C_{\omega,\varrho}(u,v) = \int_v^\infty \omega(u-s)\varrho(s) ds.$$

Using precise estimates for $\Psi(x,y)$ and $\Phi(x,y)$, we also identify the second term of the asymptotic expansion of $\Theta(x,y,z)$, which is naturally expressed in terms of the partial convolution $\mathcal{C}_{\omega,\varrho'}(u,v)$ of ϱ' with ω :

$$C_{\omega,\varrho'}(u,v) = \int_v^\infty \omega(u-s)\varrho'(s)\,ds.$$

Theorem 1. For fixed $\varepsilon > 0$ and uniformly in the domain

$$x \ge 3,$$
 $y \ge \exp\{(\log \log x)^{5/3+\varepsilon}\},$ $y \log y \le z \le x/y,$

we have

$$\Theta(x, y, z) = (\varrho(u) + \mathcal{C}_{\omega, \varrho}(u, v))x - \gamma \mathcal{C}_{\omega, \varrho'}(u, v) \frac{x}{\log y} + O(\mathcal{E}(x, y, z)),$$

where $u = (\log x)/\log y$, $v = (\log z)/\log y$, γ is the Euler-Mascheroni constant, and

$$\mathcal{E}(x,y,z) = \frac{x}{\log y} \left\{ \varrho(u-1) + \frac{\varrho(v)\log(v+1)}{\log y} + \frac{\varrho(v)}{\log(v+1)} \right\}.$$

Similar results have been obtained concomitantly, using a more elaborate approach, by Tenenbaum [8].

The proof of Theorem 1 is given below in Section 4; our principal tools are the estimates of Lemma 4 (Section 2) and Lemma 6 (Section 3). In Section 5, we use the formula of Theorem 1 to give a heuristic prediction for the density of certain integers of cryptographic interest which appear in a work by Menezes [3].

2. Integers Free of Large Prime Factors

In this section, we collect various estimates for the counting function $\Psi(x,y)$ of y-smooth numbers:

$$\Psi(x,y) = \#\{n \le x : P^+(n) \le y\}.$$

As usual, we denote by $\varrho(u)$ the *Dickman function*; it is continuous at u=1, differentiable for u>1, and it satisfies the differential-difference equation

$$u\varrho'(u) + \varrho(u-1) = 0 \qquad (u > 1), \tag{1}$$

along with the initial condition $\varrho(u) = 1$ ($0 \le u \le 1$). It is convenient to define $\varrho(u) = 0$ for all u < 0 so that (1) is satisfied for $u \in \mathbb{R} \setminus \{0, 1\}$, and we also define $\varrho'(u)$ by right-continuity at u = 0 and u = 1. For a discussion of the analytic properties of $\varrho(u)$, we refer the reader to [6, Chapter III.5].

We need the following well known estimate for $\Psi(x, y)$, which is due to Hildebrand [2] (see also [6, Corollary 9.3, Chapter III.5]):

Lemma 1. For fixed $\varepsilon > 0$ and uniformly in the domain

$$x \ge 3,$$
 $x \ge y \ge \exp\{(\log \log x)^{5/3+\varepsilon}\},$

we have

$$\Psi(x,y) = \varrho(u) x \left\{ 1 + O\left(\frac{\log(u+1)}{\log y}\right) \right\},\,$$

where $u = (\log x)/\log y$.

We also need the following extension of Lemma 1, which is a special case of the results of Saias [5]:

Lemma 2. For fixed $\varepsilon > 0$ and uniformly in the domain

$$x \ge 3,$$
 $y \ge \exp\{(\log \log x)^{5/3+\varepsilon}\},$ $x \ge y \log y,$

the following estimate holds:

$$\Psi(x,y) = \varrho(u) x + (\gamma - 1)\varrho'(u) \frac{x}{\log y} + O\left(\varrho''(u) \frac{x}{\log^2 y}\right),\,$$

where $u = (\log x)/\log y$.

The following lemma provides a precise estimate for the sum

$$S(y,z) = \sum_{\substack{d>z\\P^+(d) \le y}} \frac{1}{d}$$

over a wide range, which is used in the proofs of Lemmas 4 and 6 below. The sum S(y, z) has been previously studied; see, for example, [7].

Lemma 3. For fixed $\varepsilon > 0$ and uniformly in the domain

$$y \ge 3$$
, $1 \le z \le \exp \exp\{(\log y)^{3/5 - \varepsilon}\}$,

we have

$$S(y,z) = \tau(v)\log y - \gamma \varrho(v) + O(E(y,z)),$$

where $v = (\log z)/\log y$,

$$\tau(v) = \int_{v}^{\infty} \varrho(s) \, ds,$$

and

$$E(y, z) = \begin{cases} \frac{\varrho(v) \log(v+1)}{\log y} & \text{if } z \ge y \log y; \\ \frac{1}{z} + \frac{\log \log y}{\log y} & \text{if } z < y \log y. \end{cases}$$

Proof. Let $Y = y \log y$. First, suppose that z > Y, and put $T = \frac{\exp\{(\log y)^{3/5 - \varepsilon/2}\}}{\log y}$. By partial summation, it follows that

$$S(y,z) = \sum_{\substack{z < d \le y^T \\ P^+(d) \le y}} \frac{1}{d} + S(y,y^T)$$

$$= \frac{\Psi(y^T, y)}{y^T} - \frac{\Psi(z, y)}{z} + \log y \int_v^T \frac{\Psi(y^s, y)}{y^s} ds + S(y, y^T).$$
(2)

By Lemma 1, we have the estimate $\frac{\Psi(z,y)}{z} = \varrho(v) + O\left(\frac{\varrho(v)\log(v+1)}{\log y}\right)$.

We now recall that

$$\varrho(w) = \exp\left(-w\log w + O(w\log\log w)\right);\tag{3}$$

see [5, Lemma 3(iv)]. Thus, by our choice of T we have

$$\varrho(T) = \exp\left\{-(1+o(1))\frac{\exp\{(\log y)^{3/5-\varepsilon/2}\}}{(\log y)^{2/5+\varepsilon/2}}\right\}.$$

On the other hand, since $v \leq \log z \leq \exp\{(\log y)^{3/5-\varepsilon}\}$, it follows that

$$\frac{\varrho(v)\log(v+1)}{\log y} = \frac{\exp\left(-v\log v + O(v\log\log v)\right)}{\log y}$$

$$\geq \exp\left\{-(1+o(1))\exp\{(\log y)^{3/5-\varepsilon}\}(\log y)^{3/5-\varepsilon}\right\}.$$

Therefore,

$$\frac{\Psi(y^T, y)}{y^T} \ll \varrho(T) \ll \frac{\varrho(v) \log(v+1)}{\log y}.$$
 (4)

The following bound is given in the proof of [7, Corollary 2]:

$$S(y, y^T) = \sum_{\substack{d > y^T \\ P^+(d) \le y}} \frac{1}{d} \ll \varrho(T) e^{\varepsilon T} + y^{-(1-\varepsilon)T},$$

from which we deduce that

$$S(y, y^T) \ll \frac{\varrho(v)\log(v+1)}{\log y}.$$
 (5)

To estimate the integral in (2), we apply Lemma 2 and write

$$\int_{v}^{T} \frac{\Psi(y^{s}, y)}{y^{s}} ds = I_{1} + I_{2} + O(I_{3}),$$

where

$$I_{1} = \int_{v}^{T} \varrho(s) ds = \tau(v) - \tau(T),$$

$$I_{2} = \frac{(\gamma - 1)}{\log y} \int_{v}^{T} \varrho'(s) ds = \frac{(\gamma - 1)(\varrho(T) - \varrho(v))}{\log y},$$

$$I_{3} = \frac{1}{\log^{2} y} \int_{v}^{T} \varrho''(s) ds = \frac{\varrho'(T) - \varrho'(v)}{\log^{2} y}.$$

Using (1) together with [6, Lemma 8.1 and bound (61), Chapter III.5] we see that $|\varrho'(v)| \approx \varrho(v) \log(v+1)$. Furthermore, as in our derivation of (4), we see that (3) yields

$$\tau(T) \ll \varrho(T) \ll \frac{\varrho(v)\log(v+1)}{\log^2 y}.$$

Therefore,

$$\int_{v}^{T} \frac{\Psi(y^{s}, y)}{y^{s}} ds = \tau(v) - \frac{(\gamma - 1)\varrho(v)}{\log y} + O\left(\frac{\varrho(v)\log(v+1)}{\log^{2} y}\right). \tag{6}$$

Inserting the estimates (4), (5), and (6) into (2), we obtain the desired estimate when z > Y.

Next, suppose that $y \le z \le Y$, and put $V = \frac{\log Y}{\log y} = 1 + \frac{\log \log y}{\log y}$. Since $\varrho(s) = 1 - \log s$ for $1 \le s \le 2$, we have $1 \ge \varrho(v) \ge \varrho(V) = 1 + O\left(\frac{\log \log y}{\log y}\right)$; therefore,

$$\varrho(v) - \varrho(V) \ll \frac{\log \log y}{\log y}.$$
 (7)

By partial summation, it follows that

$$S(y,z) = \sum_{\substack{z < d \le Y \\ P^{+}(d) \le y}} \frac{1}{d} + S(y,Y)$$

$$= \frac{\Psi(Y,y)}{Y} - \frac{\Psi(z,y)}{z} + \log y \int_{v}^{V} \frac{\Psi(y^{s},y)}{y^{s}} ds + S(y,Y).$$
(8)

Using Lemma 1 together with (7), it follows that

$$\frac{\Psi(Y,y)}{Y} - \frac{\Psi(z,y)}{z} = \varrho(V) - \varrho(v) + O\left(\frac{1}{\log y}\right) \ll \frac{\log\log y}{\log y}.$$
 (9)

Applying the estimate from the previous case, we also have

$$S(y,Y) = \tau(V)\log Y - \gamma \varrho(V) + O\left(\frac{1}{\log y}\right). \tag{10}$$

To estimate the integral in (8), we use Lemma 1 again and write

$$\int_{v}^{V} \frac{\Psi(y^{s}, y)}{y^{s}} ds = I_{4} + O(I_{5}),$$

where

$$I_{4} = \int_{v}^{V} \varrho(s) \, ds = \tau(v) - \tau(V),$$

$$I_{5} = \frac{1}{\log y} \int_{v}^{V} ds = \frac{\log(Y/z)}{\log^{2} y} \ll \frac{\log \log y}{\log^{2} y}.$$

Therefore,

$$\int_{v}^{V} \frac{\Psi(y^{s}, y)}{y^{s}} ds = \tau(v) - \tau(V) + O\left(\frac{\log\log y}{\log^{2} y}\right). \tag{11}$$

Inserting the estimates (9), (10) and (11) into (8), and taking into account (7), we obtain the stated estimate for $y \le z \le Y$.

Finally, suppose that $1 \le z < y$. In this case,

$$S(y,z) = \sum_{z < d \le y} \frac{1}{d} + S(y,y).$$
 (12)

By partial summation, we have

$$\sum_{z < d \le y} \frac{1}{d} = \log y - \log z + O(z^{-1}) = (1 - v) \log y + O(z^{-1})$$
$$= \log y \int_{v}^{1} \varrho(s) \, ds + O(z^{-1}) = (\tau(v) - \tau(1)) \log y + O(z^{-1}).$$

Applying the estimate from the previous case, we also have

$$S(y,y) = \tau(1)\log y - \gamma \varrho(1) + O\left(\frac{\log\log y}{\log y}\right).$$

Inserting these estimates into (12), and using the fact that $\varrho(v) = \varrho(1) = 1$, we obtain the desired result.

Lemma 4. For fixed $\varepsilon > 0$ and uniformly in the domain

$$x \ge 3$$
, $y \ge \exp\{(\log \log x)^{5/3+\varepsilon}\}$, $1 \le z \le x/y$,

we have

$$\sum_{\substack{z < d \le x/y \\ P^+(d) \le y}} \frac{\varrho(u - u_d)}{d} \ll C_{\varrho,\varrho}(u, v) \log(u + 1) + \varrho(u - v)\varrho(v) + \varrho(u - 1),$$

where $u = (\log x)/\log y$, $v = (\log z)/\log y$, $u_d = (\log d)/\log y$ for every integer d in the sum, and

$$\mathcal{C}_{\varrho,\varrho}(u,v) = \int_v^\infty \varrho(u-s)\varrho(s) \, ds.$$

Proof. By partial summation, we have

$$\sum_{\substack{z < d \le x/y \\ P^+(d) \le y}} \frac{\varrho(u - u_d)}{d} = S(y, x/y) - \varrho(u - v)S(y, z) + \int_v^{u - 1} \varrho'(u - s)S(y, y^s) \, ds.$$

Lemma 3 implies that

$$S(y, x/y) = \tau(u - 1) \log y + O(\varrho(u - 1)),$$

$$S(y, z) = \tau(v) \log y + O(\varrho(v)),$$

and

$$\int_{v}^{u-1} \varrho'(u-s)S(y,y^s) \, ds = I_1 \log y + O(I_2),$$

where

$$I_1 = \int_v^{u-1} \varrho'(u-s)\tau(s) ds = \varrho(u-v)\tau(v) - \tau(u-1) + \mathcal{C}_{\varrho,\varrho}(u,v),$$

$$I_2 = \int_v^{u-1} |\varrho'(u-s)|\varrho(s) ds.$$

Finally, using the bound $|\varrho'(t)| \ll \varrho(t) \log(t+1)$ (for t>1), we see that

$$I_2 \ll \log(u+1) \int_v^{u-1} \varrho(u-s)\varrho(s) \, ds \leq \mathcal{C}_{\varrho,\varrho}(u,v) \log(u+1).$$

Putting everything together, the result follows.

3. Integers Free of Small Prime Factors

In this section, we collect various estimates for the counting function $\Phi(x,y)$ of y-rough numbers:

$$\Phi(x,y) = \#\{n \le x : P^{-}(n) > y\}.$$

As usual, we denote by $\omega(u)$ the Buchstab function; for u > 1, it is the unique continuous solution to the differential-difference equation

$$(u\omega(u))' = \omega(u-1) \qquad (u>2)$$
(13)

with initial condition $u\omega(u) = 1$ ($1 \le u \le 2$). It is convenient to define $\omega(u) = 0$ for all u < 1 so that (13) is satisfied for $u \in \mathbb{R} \setminus \{1, 2\}$, and we also define $\omega'(u)$ by right-continuity at u = 1 and u = 2. For a discussion of the analytic properties of $\omega(u)$, we refer the reader to [6, Chapter III.6]

The next result follows from [6, Corollary 7.5, Chapter III.6]:

Lemma 5. For fixed $\varepsilon > 0$ and uniformly in the domain

$$x \ge 3,$$
 $x \ge y \ge \exp\{(\log \log x)^{5/3+\varepsilon}\},$

the following estimate holds:

$$\Phi(x,y) = \left(x\omega(u) - y\right)\frac{e^{\gamma}}{\zeta(1,y)} + O\left(\frac{x\varrho(u)}{\log^2 y}\right),\,$$

where $u = (\log x)/\log y$, and $\zeta(1, y) = \prod_{p \le y} (1 - p^{-1})^{-1}$.

Lemma 6. For fixed $\varepsilon > 0$ and uniformly in the domain

$$x \ge 3$$
, $y \ge \exp\{(\log \log x)^{5/3+\varepsilon}\}$, $1 \le z \le x/y$,

we have

$$\sum_{\substack{z < d \le x/y \\ P^+(d) \le y}} \frac{\omega(u - u_d)}{d} = \mathcal{C}_{\omega,\varrho}(u,v) \log y - \gamma \, \mathcal{C}_{\omega,\varrho'}(u,v) + O(E(y,z)),$$

where $u = (\log x)/\log y$, $v = (\log z)/\log y$, $u_d = (\log d)/\log y$ for every integer d in the sum, and E(y,z) is the error term of Lemma 3.

Proof. By partial summation, it follows that

$$\sum_{\substack{z < d \le x/y \\ P^+(d) \le y}} \frac{\omega(u - u_d)}{d} = S(y, x/y) - \omega(u - v)S(y, z) + \int_v^{u-1} \omega'(u - s)S(y, y^s) \, ds.$$

By Lemma 3 we have the estimates $S(y, x/y) = \tau(u-1) \log y - \gamma \varrho(u-1) + O(E(y, x/y))$ and $S(y, z) = \tau(v) \log y - \gamma \varrho(v) + O(E(y, z))$. Also,

$$\int_{v}^{u-1} \omega'(u-s)S(y,y^{s}) ds = I_{1} \log y - \gamma I_{2} + O(I_{3}),$$

where

$$I_{1} = \int_{v}^{u-1} \omega'(u-s)\tau(s) ds = \omega(u-v)\tau(v) - \tau(u-1) + \mathcal{C}_{\omega,\varrho}(u,v),$$

$$I_{2} = \int_{v}^{u-1} \omega'(u-s)\varrho(s) ds = \omega(u-v)\varrho(v) - \varrho(u-1) + \mathcal{C}_{\omega,\varrho'}(u,v),$$

$$I_{3} = \frac{1}{\log y} \int_{v}^{u-1} |\omega'(u-s)| E(y,y^{s}) ds.$$

Putting everything together, we see that the stated estimate follows from the bound

$$E(y, x/y) + \omega(u - v)E(y, z) + I_3 \ll E(y, z).$$
 (14)

To prove this, observe that $E(y, z_1) \ll E(y, z_2)$ holds for all $z_1 \geq z_2 \geq 1$. Therefore, $E(y, x/y) \ll E(y, z)$, and

$$I_3 \ll \frac{E(y,z)}{\log y} \int_v^{u-1} \left| \omega'(u-s) \right| ds \ll \frac{E(y,z)}{\log y}.$$

Taking into account the fact that $\omega(u-v) \approx 1$, we derive (14), completing the proof.

4. Proof of Theorem 1

For fixed y, every positive integer n can be uniquely decomposed as a product n = de, where $P^+(d) \le y$ and $P^-(e) > y$. Therefore,

$$\begin{array}{lcl} \Theta(x,y,z) & = & \displaystyle \sum_{\substack{z < d \leq x \\ P^+(d) \leq y}} \sum_{\substack{e \leq x/d \\ P^-(e) > y}} 1 = \sum_{\substack{z < d \leq x \\ P^+(d) \leq y}} \Phi(x/d,y) \\ & = & \displaystyle \Psi(x,y) - \Psi(x/y,y) + \sum_{\substack{z < d \leq x/y \\ P^+(d) < y}} \Phi(x/d,y). \end{array}$$

Using Lemma 1, it follows that $\Psi(x,y) - \Psi(x/y,y) = \varrho(u) x + O\left(\frac{\varrho(u-1)x}{\log y}\right)$. By Lemma 5, we also have

$$\sum_{\substack{z < d \le x/y \\ P^+(d) \le y}} \Phi(x/d, y) = \sum_{\substack{z < d \le x/y \\ P^+(d) \le y}} \left\{ \left(\frac{x \omega(u - u_d)}{d} - y \right) \frac{e^{\gamma}}{\zeta(1, y)} + O\left(\frac{x\varrho(u - u_d)}{d \log^2 y} \right) \right\}$$

$$= \frac{e^{\gamma} x}{\zeta(1, y)} \sum_{\substack{z < d \le x/y \\ P^+(d) \le y}} \frac{\omega(u - u_d)}{d} - \frac{e^{\gamma} y}{\zeta(1, y)} \left\{ \Psi(x/y, y) - \Psi(z, y) \right\}$$

$$+ O\left(\frac{x}{\log^2 y} \sum_{\substack{z < d \le x/y \\ P^+(d) \le y}} \frac{\varrho(u - u_d)}{d} \right). \tag{15}$$

Applying Lemma 1 again, we have $-\frac{e^{\gamma}y}{\zeta(1,y)} \{ \Psi(x/y,y) - \Psi(z,y) \} \ll \frac{\varrho(u-1)x}{\log y}$. Inserting the estimates of Lemmas 4 and 6 into (15), and making use of the trivial estimate

$$C_{\varrho,\varrho}(u,v)\log(u+1) \ll \log y \int_v^\infty \varrho(s) \, ds \ll \frac{\varrho(v)\log y}{\log(v+1)}.$$

it is easy to see that

$$\Theta(x,y,z) = \left(\varrho(u) + \mathcal{C}_{\omega,\varrho}(u,v)\frac{e^{\gamma}\log y}{\zeta(1,y)}\right)x - \gamma \,\mathcal{C}_{\omega,\varrho'}(u,v)\frac{e^{\gamma}x}{\zeta(1,y)} + O\left(\mathcal{E}(x,y,z)\right).$$

To complete to proof, we use the estimate (see Vinogradov [9]):

$$\zeta(1, y) = e^{\gamma} \log y (1 + \exp\{-c(\log y)^{3/5}\}),$$

which holds for some absolute constant c > 0, together with the trivial estimate

$$\max \{ \mathcal{C}_{\omega,\varrho}(u,v), \mathcal{C}_{\omega,\varrho'}(u,v) \} \ll \int_{v}^{\infty} \varrho(s) \, ds \ll \frac{\varrho(v)}{\log(v+1)}.$$

5. Cryptographic Applications

Suppose that two primes p and q are selected for use in the Digital Signature Algorithm (see, for example, [4]) using the following standard method:

- Select a random m-bit prime q;
- Randomly generate k-bit integers n until a prime p = 2nq + 1 is reached.

The large subgroup attack described in [3, Section 3.2.3] leads one naturally to consider the following question: What is the probability $\eta(k, \ell, m)$ that n has a divisor s > q which is 2^{ℓ} -smooth?

It is natural to expect that the proportion of those integers in the set $\{2^{k-1} \le n < 2^k\}$ having a large smooth divisor should be roughly the same as the proportion of integers in

$$\left\{2^{k-1} \le n < 2^k : n = (p-1)/(2q) \text{ for some prime } p \equiv 1 \pmod{2q}\right\}$$

having a large smooth divisor. Accordingly, we expect that the probability $\eta(k,\ell,m)$ is reasonably close to

$$\frac{\Theta(2^k, 2^\ell, 2^m) - \Theta(2^{k-1}, 2^\ell, 2^m)}{2^{k-1}}.$$

Theorem 1 then suggests that $\eta(k,\ell,m) \approx 2 \wp(k,\ell,m) - \wp(k-1,\ell,m)$, where

$$\wp(k,\ell,m) = \varrho(k/\ell) + \mathcal{C}_{\omega,\varrho}(k/\ell,m/\ell) - \frac{\gamma \, \mathcal{C}_{\omega,\varrho'}(k/\ell,m/\ell)}{\ell \log 2}.$$

In particular, the most interesting choice of parameters at the present time is k = 863, $\ell = 80$, and m = 160 (which produce a 1024-bit prime p); we expect $\eta(863, 80, 160) \approx 0.09576$.

Acknowledgements. The authors would like to thank Alfred Menezes for bringing to our attention the cryptographic applications which initially motivated our work. We also thank Gérald Tenenbaum for pointing out a mistake in the original manuscript, and for many subsequent discussions. This work was started during a visit by W. B. to Macquarie University; the support and hospitality of this institution are gratefully acknowledged. During the preparation of this paper, I. S. was supported in part by ARC grant DP0556431.

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