

Proteus schematic diagram

Proteus was a machine for 'anagramming depths'. A 'depth' is two messages sent with the same key. By combining both intercepts, the keys are wiped out leaving a string of characters representing the combined plain language texts. Proteus tries a number of combined cribs against a paper tape containing the combined messages sent 'in depth' – this process was called 'anagramming'. Proteus stored six very common 'cribs' (words that commonly occurred in plain language texts) internally. A second set of several hundred cribs was punched on to paper tape and called a 'dictionary'. Combinations of these two sets of cribs could be tested against the combined message texts paper tape.

