

Side-Channels Attacks on PAKE protocols

Daniel De Almeida Braga

CEA - October, 11th 2022



Me, Myself and I



Cryptography in the Wild: The Security of Cryptographic Implementations and Standards



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- Formally verified implementations and constant-time verification tools

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2. How could these attacks have been prevented?
 - Why were the implementations vulnerable?
3. Are there sustainable ways to fix these vulnerabilities?

Context and Motivations

What to expect from a PAKE, starting from a password:

- Authentication
- End up with a strong key
- Resist to (offline) dictionary attack

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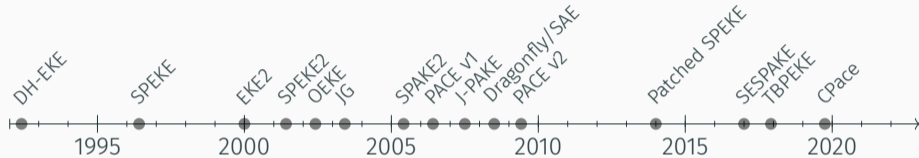
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Lots of different PAKEs

- Balanced/Symmetric

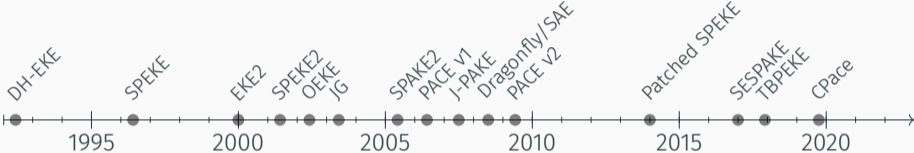
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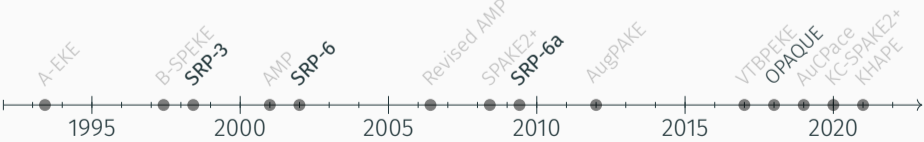


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Lesson to learn: Small leakage can be devastating

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Side Channel Attacks

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Gain information through timing:



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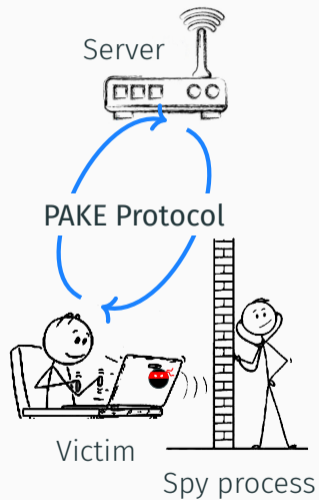
Gain information execution flow:

- Execute `long_processing` \Rightarrow *a*
- Else, no *a* in `pwd`

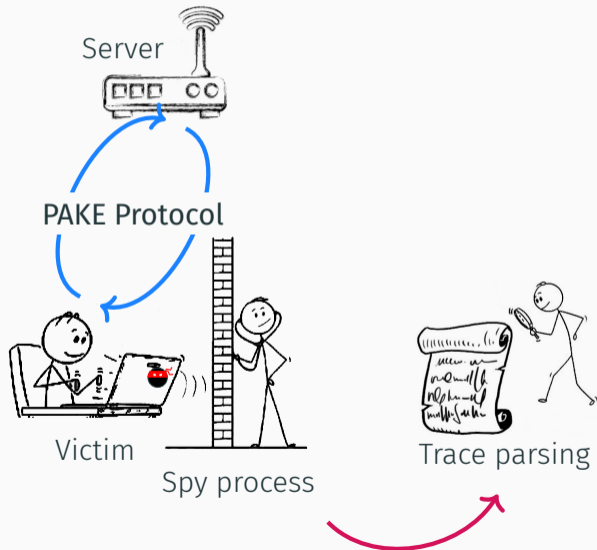
Attack Workflow



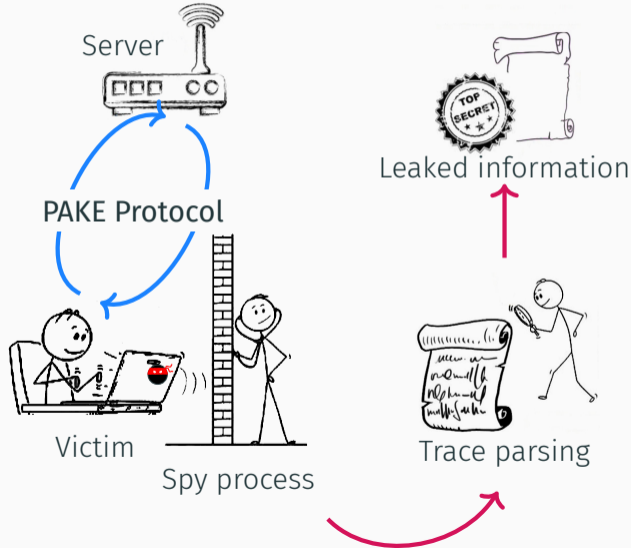
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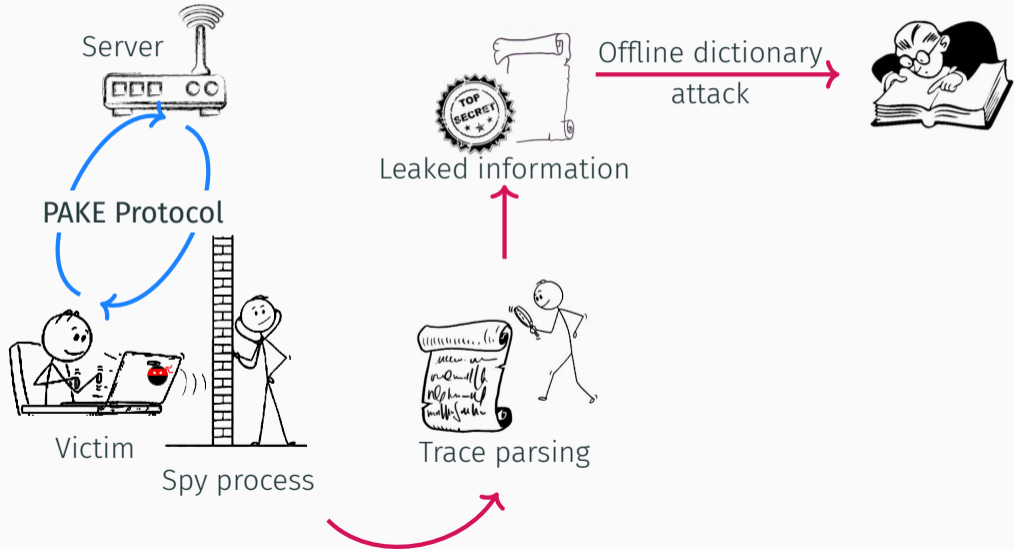
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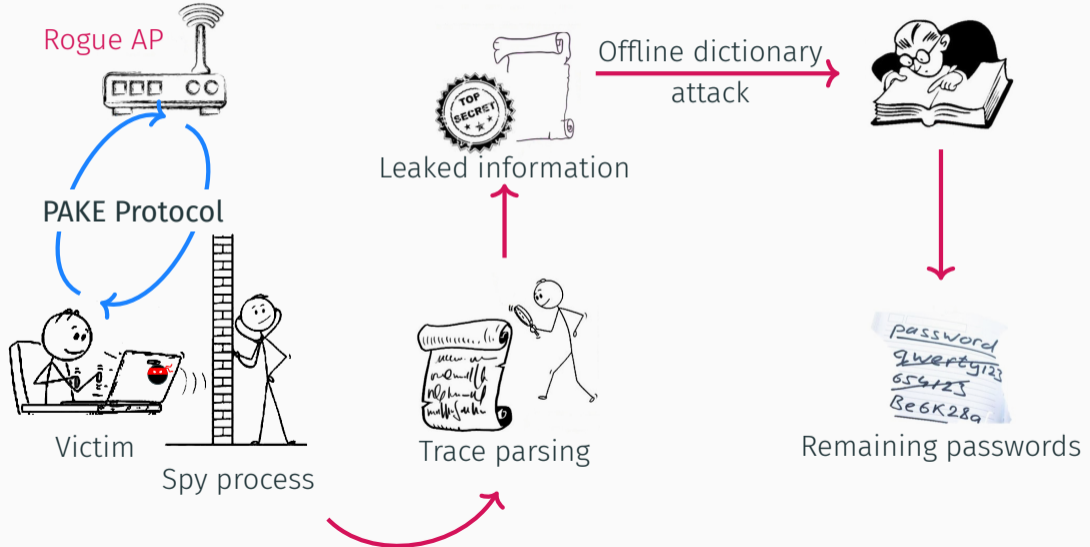
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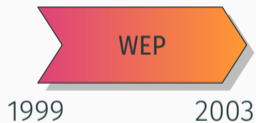


Side Channels in Dragonfly/SAE (WPA3)

Toward Secure Wi-Fi Protocols...



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*Offline dictionary
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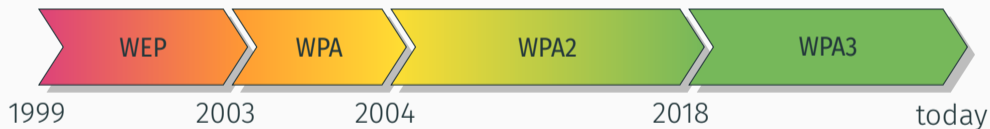


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KRACK attack

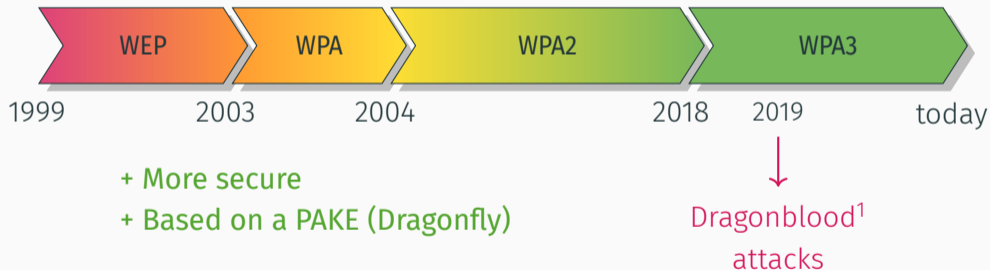
Toward Secure Wi-Fi Protocols...



- + More secure
- + Based on a PAKE (Dragonfly¹)

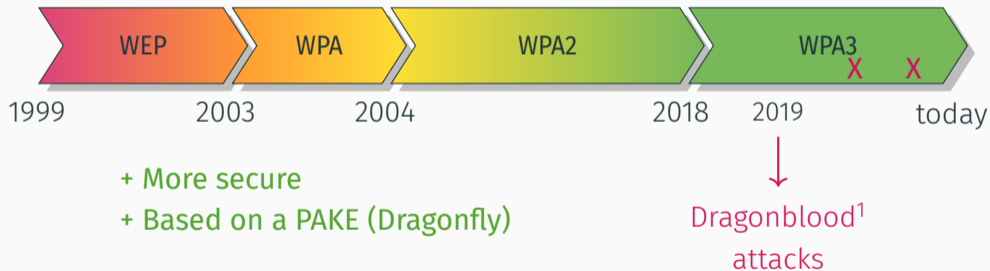
¹ D. Harkins, 2015, *Dragonfly Key Exchange*, RFC 7664

... But Still not Bulltproof



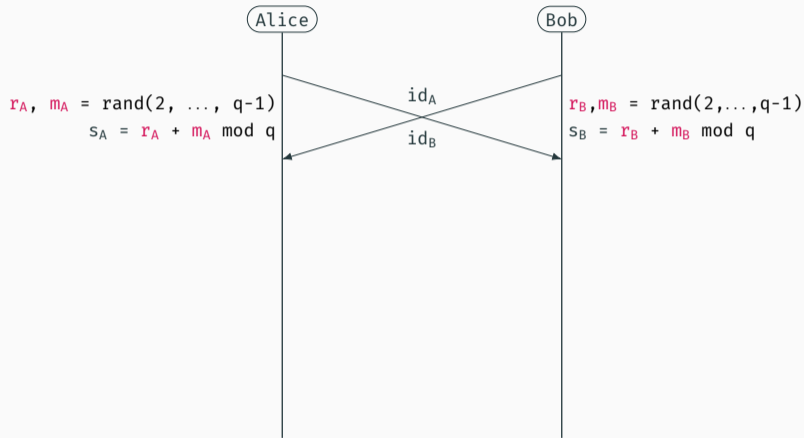
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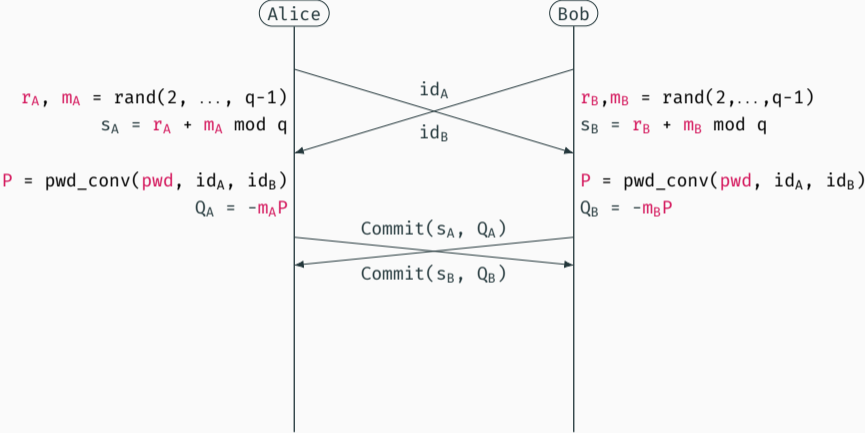


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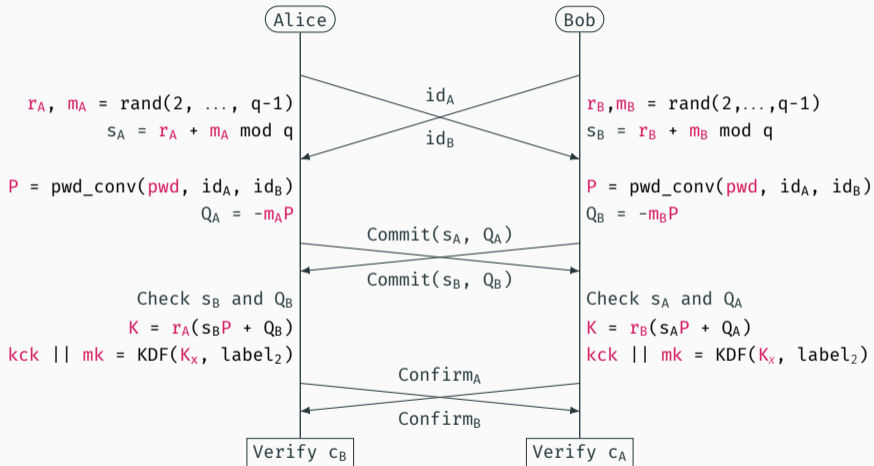
Dragonfly / SAE - A Balanced PAKE



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A **cache-attack** that lets us extract
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FLUSH+RELOAD¹ and PDA²

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First attack (ACSAC 2020)

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Password to point on an Elliptic Curve

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Passive attacker can eliminate
wrong passwords from a list

SAE - Probabilistic Password Conversion (EC)

```
def HuntingAndPecking(pwd, MACA, MACB, k=40):
```

Hash pwd , MAC_A , MAC_B and a counter until we find a point coordinate. Do 40 iterations anyway, but save the first conversion

```
    y = set_coordinates(x, seedx)  
    return (x, y)
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def HuntingAndPecking(pwd, MACA, MACB, k=40):
    found, i = false, 1
    while not found or i < k:
        seed = Hash(MACA, MACB, pwd, i)
        xcand = KDF(seed, label)
        if xcand is a point's coordinate:
            if not found:
                found, x, seedx = true, xcand, seed
                pwd = get_random()
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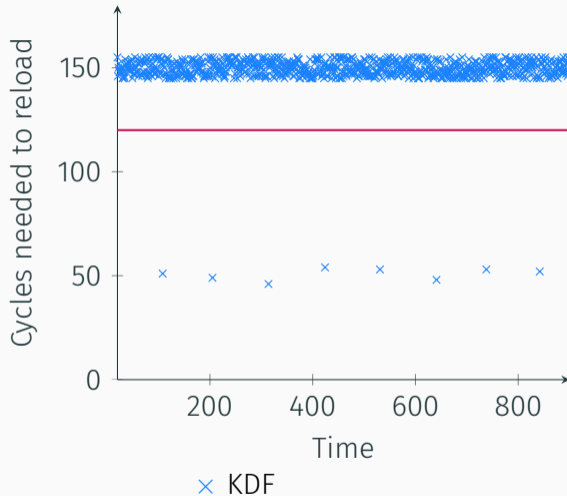
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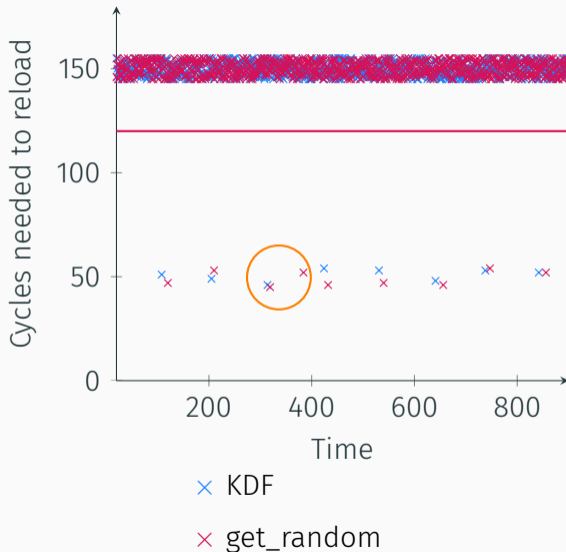
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- Iteration are easy to distinguish
- We can guess which iteration is converting the password



Dictionary Reduction

	Iter. for MAC_A, MAC_{B_1}
Leakage	3
pwd ₁	
pwd ₂	
pwd ₃	
pwd ₄	
...	
pwd ₅	

Dictionary Reduction

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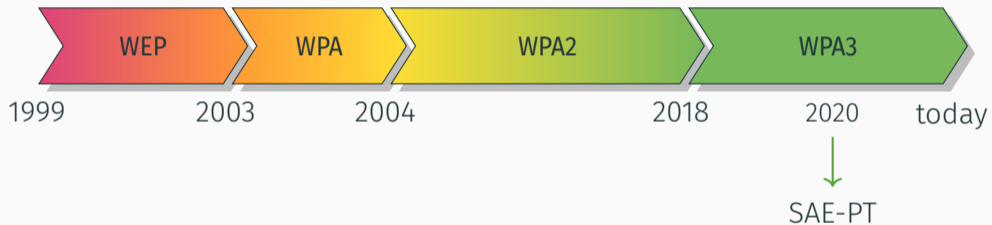
Dictionary Reduction

	Iter. for MAC_A, MAC_{B_1}	Iter. for MAC_A, MAC_{B_2}
Leakage	3	2
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Improving the password conversion



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    # Skip leading 0's  
    while (buf[0] == 0):  
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        buf++  
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We should have caught this in the first analysis!

Computer Aided Cryptography

Multiple areas..

- Design level
 - Protocol verification (symbolic / computational model)
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 - Source code level? Binary level?
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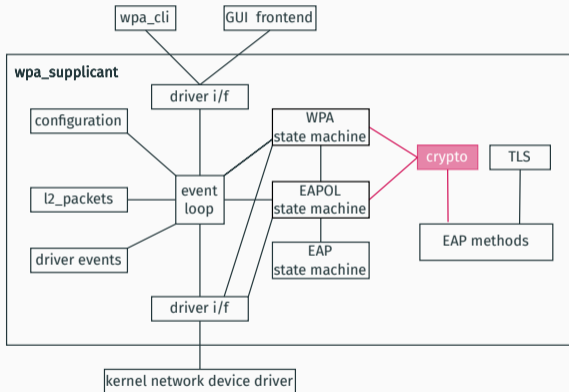
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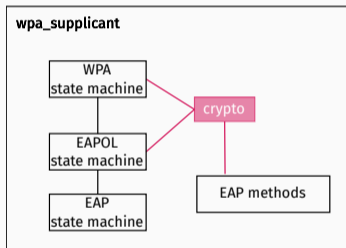
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 - Leakage model?
- Generating formally verified binaries

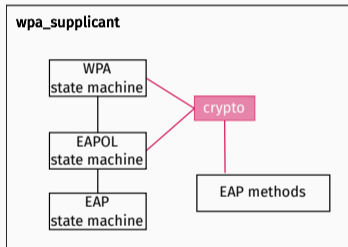
Fixing hostap



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`crypto/`

...

`crypto.h`

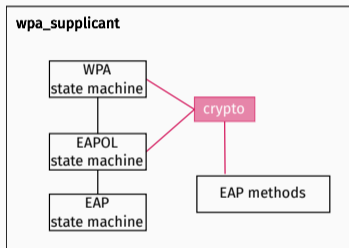
`crypto_mbedtls.c`

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Fixing hostap



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`crypto_hacl.c`

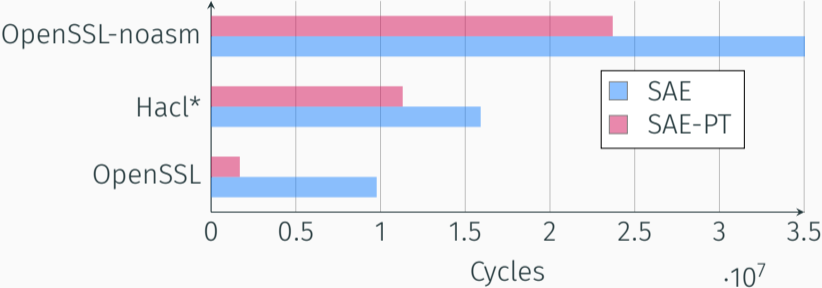
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Benchmarks



Constant-time Tools & Usability

Many Tools, Presumably Low Adoption

Tool	Target	Technique
ABPV13	C	Formal
Binsec/Rel	Binary	Symbolic
Blazer	Java	Formal
BPT17	C	Symbolic
CacheAudit	Binary	Formal
CacheD	Trace	Symbolic
COCO-CHANNEL	Java	Symbolic
ctgrind	Binary	Dynamic
ct-fuzz	LLVM	Dynamic
ct-verif	LLVM	Formal
CT-WASM	WASM	Formal
DATA	Binary	Dynamic
dudect	Binary	Statistics

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FaCT	DSL	Formal
FlowTracker	LLVM	Formal
haybale-pitchfork	LLVM	Symbolic
KMO12	Binary	Formal
MemSan	LLVM	Dynamic
MicroWalk	Binary	Dynamic
SC-Eliminator	LLVM	Formal
SideTrail	LLVM	Formal
Themis	Java	Formal
timecop	Binary	Dynamic
tis-ct	C	Symbolic
VirtualCert	x86	Formal

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Why do we still find textbook issues?

- ◆ Are they waiting for specific features?

Let's ask them!

“They’re not that hard to mitigate”: What Cryptographic Library Developers Think About Timing Attacks

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27 libraries

OpenSSL, BearSSL, libgcrypt, s2n
(Amazon), RustCrypto, ...


44 valid responses

Various roles (developers,
maintainers, committers, ...)

1. Participant background

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2. Library properties & decisions

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5. Hypothetical tool use
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6. Miscellaneous

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Interesting responses

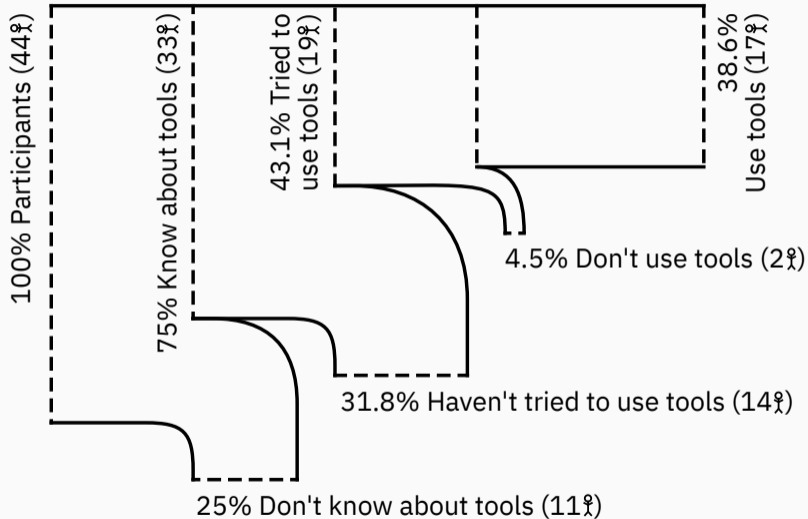
*“It was totally obvious for everybody right from the start that protection against timing attacks is **necessary**.”*

*“I’m very interested in these sorts of tools, but so far it seems formal analysis tools (at least where we’ve tried to apply it to correctness) are **not really usable by mere mortals yet**.”*

*“For many cases there **aren’t enough real world attacks** to justify spending time on preventing timing leaks.”*

*“They’re **not that hard to mitigate**, at least with the compilers I’m using right now.”*

Leaky pipeline



Tool developers

- Make usable tools
- Promote them

Crypto developers

- Use the tools
- Annotate your code

Compiler writers

- Support secret types
- Give more control to developers

Standardization bodies

- Encourage to use tools and give recommendations
- Require constant-time code

- PAKEs are spreading
- They are particularly prone to side-channel attacks
- Computer-aided cryptography is nice
- We need more usable tools

Thank you for your attention!



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