



# Cache-timing attacks on cryptographic libraries

Sylvain Guilley, CTO.

## ■ Presentation Outline

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Introduction

Post-Quantum Cryptography Algorithms

Cache-Timing Attacks

Vulnerabilities of Post-Quantum Cryptography Algorithms to  
Cache-Timing Attacks

Vulnerabilities of a Cryptographic Library to Cache-Timing Attacks

Countermeasures

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## CORPORATE PRESENTATION

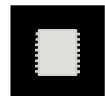
### ■ OUR ACTIVITY

**WHAT**  
DO WE DO?

**SECURITY**  
TECHNOLOGIES



**FOR**  
**WHOM?**



**CHIPSET/DEVICE**  
**VENDORS**



**IC DESIGN**  
**HOUSES**



**CERTIFICATION**  
**LABS**



**GOVERNMENTAL**  
**AGENCIES**

**FOR**  
**WHICH MARKETS?**



### OUR VISION

Going forward, there will be more and more interconnected devices or objects in various market verticals, this is what we call Internet of Things or Internet of Everything. All those objects being interconnected to the cloud, each and every object could be a threat for the whole network. Therefore the security of the objects or the devices is key. Even more, security will become one of the most important assets of the digital world.

## CORPORATE PRESENTATION

### ■ YOUR SECURITY PARTNER



A SOLID  
BACKGROUND

MORE THAN  
15 YEARS OF RESEARCH

MORE THAN  
200 PUBLICATIONS

A STRONG  
RESEARCH  
FORCE

RESEARCH CENTRES  
IN FRANCE  
AND SINGAPORE

SPIN-OFF FROM  
TELECOM PARISTECH



A THOUGHT  
LEADERSHIP  
POSITION IN  
THE SECURITY  
WORLD

MEMBERSHIP OF  
ISO COMMITTEES

3 WORLD-RENOWNED  
SCIENTIFIC ADVISORS

WORLDWIDE PRESENCE

A COMPLETE  
PORTFOLIO OF  
SOLUTIONS

A FULL SET OF  
ANALYSIS PLATFORMS

A COMPREHENSIVE SET OF  
SECURITY TECHNOLOGIES

## CORPORATE PRESENTATION

### ■ BUSINESS LINES

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PROTECT

**THREAT  
PROTECTION**  
Business Line

**SECURYZR**

COMBINATION OF  
SMART UNITS AND  
EXPERTISE RESULTS

EVALUATE

**THREAT  
ANALYSIS**  
Business Line

**LABORYZR**

READY-TO-USE  
PRE AND POST-  
SILICON ANALYSIS  
PLATFORMS

SERVICE  
& CERTIFY

**THINK AHEAD**  
Business Line

**EXPERTYZR**

THE NEXT STEPS  
TOWARDS  
SECURITY  
CHALLENGES

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## ■ NIST PQC Contest (replacement of RSA, ECC, DH)

1. Several proposals: need to evaluate them (security, performance, etc.)
2. Complete submissions published in December 2017: 69 submissions revealed
3. July 2018: 5 submissions retracted, about a dozen need parameter changes
4. Merges... eventually, Feb 2019: round 2
  - Public-key Encryption and Key-establishment Algorithms (17 remaining): BIKE, Classic McEliece, CRYSTALS-KYBER, FrodoKEM, HQC, LAC, LEDAcrypt, NewHope, NTRU, NTRU Prime, NTS-KEM, ROLLO, Round5, RQC, SABER, SIKE, Three Bears.
  - Digital Signature Algorithms (9 remaining): CRYSTALS-DILITHIUM, FALCON, GeMSS, LUOV, MQDSS, Picnic, qTESLA, Rainbow, SPHINCS+.

<http://csrc.nist.gov/groups/ST/post-quantum-crypto/>



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## Cache Architecture

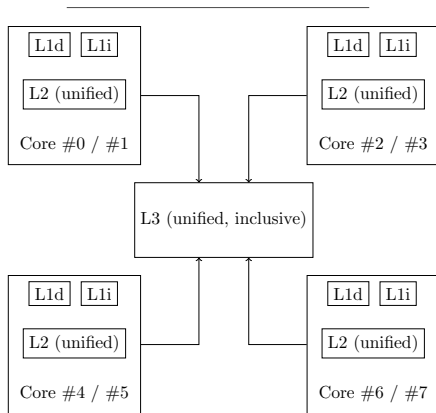


Figure: High-level over of cache architecture (here: modern quadcore Intel processor with Hyperhtreading)

## Constant-time operation — detailed investigation

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**Algorithm 1:** RSA implementation (sq. & mult. always) protected against SCA and FIA [1]

---

**Input :**  $M \in \mathbb{Z}_N$ ,  $d = (d_{n-1}, \dots, d_0)_2$

**Output:**  $M^d \in \mathbb{Z}_N$  or "Error"

```

1  R[0] ← r   (r is a uniform random ∈ ℤN*)
2  R[1] ← r-1
3  R[2] ← M
4  for i ∈ {0, ..., n-1} do
5      R[di] ← R[di] · R[2]
6      R[2] ← R[2]2
7  if R[0] · R[1] · M = R[2] then
8      return r · R[1]
9  else
10     return "Error"

```

---



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**Algorithm 2:** RSA implementation (Montgomery ladder) [2]

---

**Input :**  $M \in \mathbb{Z}_N$ ,  $d = (d_{n-1}, \dots, d_0)_2$

**Output:**  $M^d \in \mathbb{Z}_N$

```

1  R[1] ← 1
2  R[2] ← M
3  for i ∈ {0, ..., n-1} do
4      if di = 1 then
5          R[1] ← R[1] · R[2]
6          R[2] ← R[2] · R[2]
7      else
8          R[2] ← R[2] · R[1]
9          R[1] ← R[1] · R[1]
10 return R[1]

```

---

## Constant-time operation — detailed investigation

### Algorithm 1: RSA implementation (sq. &

mult. always) protected against SCA and FIA [1]

**Input** :  $M \in \mathbb{Z}_N, d = (d_{n-1}, \dots, d_0)_2$

**Output**:  $M^d \in \mathbb{Z}_N$  or "Error"

```

1  $R[0] \leftarrow r$  ( $r$  is a uniform random  $\in \mathbb{Z}_N^*$ )
2  $R[1] \leftarrow r^{-1}$ 
3  $R[2] \leftarrow M$ 
4 for  $i \in \{0, \dots, n-1\}$  do
5    $R[d_i] \leftarrow R[d_i] \cdot R[2]$ 
6    $R[2] \leftarrow R[2]^2$ 
7 if  $R[0] \cdot R[1] \cdot M = R[2]$  then
8   return  $r \cdot R[1]$ 
9 else
10  return "Error"
```

**Not** constant time due to (cached or predicted) table accesses.

### Algorithm 2: RSA implementation (Mont-

gomery ladder) [2]

**Input** :  $M \in \mathbb{Z}_N, d = (d_{n-1}, \dots, d_0)_2$

**Output**:  $M^d \in \mathbb{Z}_N$

```

1  $R[1] \leftarrow 1$ 
2  $R[2] \leftarrow M$ 
3 for  $i \in \{0, \dots, n-1\}$  do
4   if  $d_i = 1$  then
5      $R[1] \leftarrow R[1] \cdot R[2]$ 
6      $R[2] \leftarrow R[2] \cdot R[2]$ 
7   else
8      $R[2] \leftarrow R[2] \cdot R[1]$ 
9      $R[1] \leftarrow R[1] \cdot R[1]$ 
10 return  $R[1]$ 
```

**Not** constant time due to unbalanced load operations.

## ■ Constant-time operation — detailed investigation

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### Algorithm 3: Constant-time RSA implementation

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**Input** :  $M \in \mathbb{Z}_N$ ,  $d = (d_{n-1}, \dots, d_0)_2$

**Output**:  $M^d \in \mathbb{Z}_N$

```

1  $R[1] \leftarrow 1$ 
2  $R[2] \leftarrow M$ 
3 for  $i \in \{0, \dots, n-1\}$  do
4    $\text{mask} \leftarrow \neg!(d_i)$ 
5    $R[1] \leftarrow R[1] \cdot ((R[2] \wedge \text{mask}) \vee (1 \wedge \neg \text{mask}))$ 
6    $R[2] \leftarrow R[2]^2$ 
7 return  $R[1]$ 

```

---

- Notice that  $\text{mask} = \neg!(d_i)$  is equal to either  $0x0000\dots00$  or  $0xFFFF\dotsFF$
- Horizontally aligned, thus subsequently attacked based on values:
- Not vertically secure.
- See attack [3]: *One&Done: A Single-Decryption EM-Based Attack on OpenSSL's Constant-Time Blinded RSA*, by Monjur Alam et al. (same attack on windowed implem.)

## ■ Measurement Techniques — Contention

Attack Feature	PRIME PROBE <sup>1</sup>	+	EVICT + TIME <sup>2</sup>	+	FLUSH RELOAD <sup>2</sup>
Target	L1 / L3 <sup>3</sup>		L1		LLC (L3)
Behavior	$\neg(V \text{ access})$ (A fast)	$\implies$	$(V \text{ access})$ (A fast)	$\implies$	$(V \text{ access})$ (A fast)
Accuracy	small		small		high
False positives	many		many		few

<sup>1</sup>D. A. Osvik, A. Shamir, and E. Tromer, "Cache attacks and countermeasures: The case of AES", in *Cryptographers Track at the RSA Conference*, Springer, 2006, pp. 1–20.

<sup>2</sup>Y. Yarom and K. Falkner, "Flush+reload: A high resolution, low noise, L3 cache side-channel attack.", in *USENIX Security Symposium*, 2014, pp. 719–732.

<sup>3</sup>F. Liu, Y. Yarom, Q. Ge, *et al.*, "Last-level cache side-channel attacks are practical", in *Security and Privacy (SP), 2015 IEEE Symposium on*, IEEE, 2015, pp. 605–622.

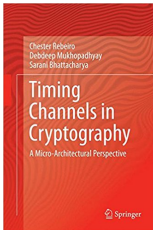
## ■ Taxonomy [9]

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- EVICT + TIME
- PRIME + PROBE
- FLUSH + RELOAD
- FLUSH + TIME + FLUSH
- FLUSH + GAUSS + RELOAD
- CacheBleed

[7]  
[8]

Best state-of-the-art:



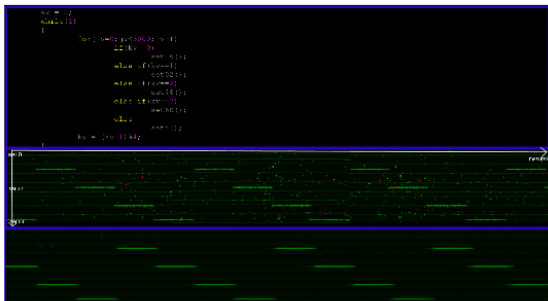
*Timing Channels in Cryptography —  
A Micro-Architectural Perspective*

Authors: Rebeiro, Chester,  
Mukhopadhyay, Debdeep,  
Bhattacharya, Sarani.

[http://www.springer.com/us/  
book/9783319123691](http://www.springer.com/us/book/9783319123691)

# Timing attacks

- ▶ Branches
- ▶ Caches  
(data,  
code)



Feature	External side-channel	Timing side-channel
Possibility to profile	yes	yes
Sampling rate	10 Gsample/s	10 Msample/s
Diversity	Monovariate	Multivariate*
Signal-to-noise ratio	$10^{-3}$	10

\*: probing of I/D cache of various levels, MMU, branch prediction registers, HPC (Hardware Perf Counters), etc.

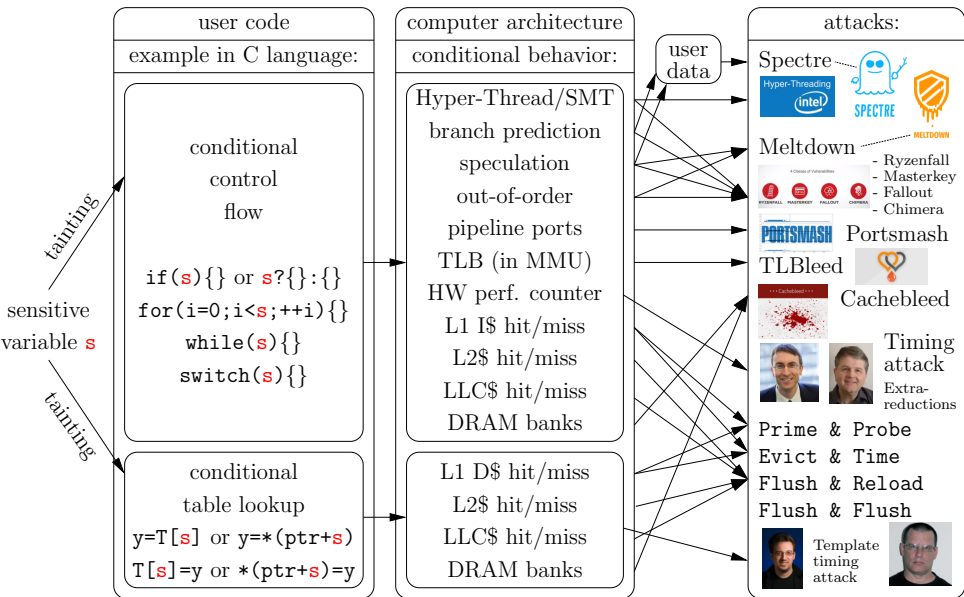


## ■ Vulnerabilities List

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How \ What	Data	Code
Read	Yes	Yes
Write	Yes	No
Exploit	Sensitive indirections	Conditional jump/call

Note: FLUSH + RELOAD only applicable to **shared** data or code (static arrays, code in shared dynamic libraries, etc.)



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## ■ Vulnerability Research

### Possible Approaches

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- Dynamic analysis: `valgrind` "abuse" (sensitive = non-initialized variables)
- Static analysis:
  - On assembly code: `cacheaudit` (only a subset of 32-bit assembler)
  - On intermediary language: `ct-verif` (safe and sound, but not easy to use)
  - On C source code:
    - ▶ `tis-ct` (but no way to tag variables as sensitive)
    - ▶ **Catalyzer™ tool** [10], based on Alexander Schaub's Stanalyzr

## ■ Vulnerability Research

### General Approach

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- Potential vulnerabilities if sensitive value:
  - Used to index in array (or in general, to compute address in memory to be addressed)
  - Used in a branching operation
  
- Thus, vulnerability research needs to:
  - Propagate sensitive values,
  - Determine if value used in leaking operation

## Vulnerability Research Methodology

Catalyzer™ tool

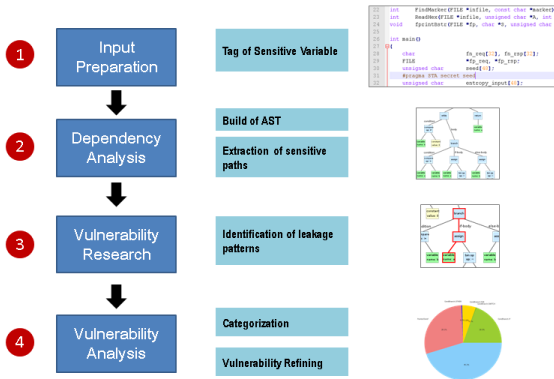


Figure: Static analysis tool principle

## ■ Vulnerability Research Methodology

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- All submissions must implement a function to generate KAT files (for signature, encryption or encapsulation)
- Tagged as sensitive: randomness used in generating KAT files (thus also secret keys)
- KAT-generating function (for the Reference Implementation) were analyzed

Note: this might lead to false positives (leakage of non-sensitive values possibly reported)

## Results Vulnerable Implementations

[10]

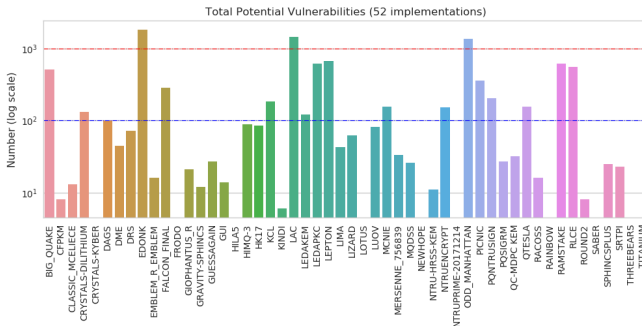


Figure: Total number of potential vulnerabilities found for each analyzed round #1 candidate

Note: 52 out of the 69 submissions were analyzed.



## ■ Results

### Vulnerable Implementations

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[10]

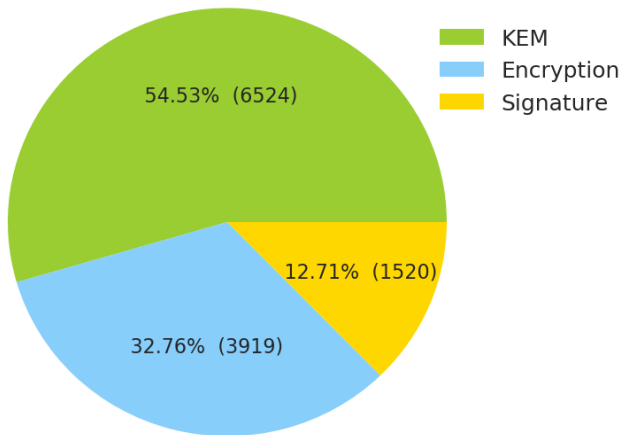
Out of 52 analyzed candidates:

- Potential vulnerabilities in **42** submissions (80.8%)
  - More than 100 reported vulnerabilities in **17** submissions
  - More than 1000 reported vulnerabilities in **3** submissions
- 4 submissions with easily fixable / probably not exploitable vulnerabilities (EMBLEM, Lima, Giophantus, OKCN-AKCN in the MLWE variant)
- 10 submissions without detected vulnerabilities (Frodo, Rainbow, Hila5, Saber, CRYSTALS-Kyber, LOTUS, NewHope, ntruprime, ThreeBears and Titanium)

## Results

Statistics

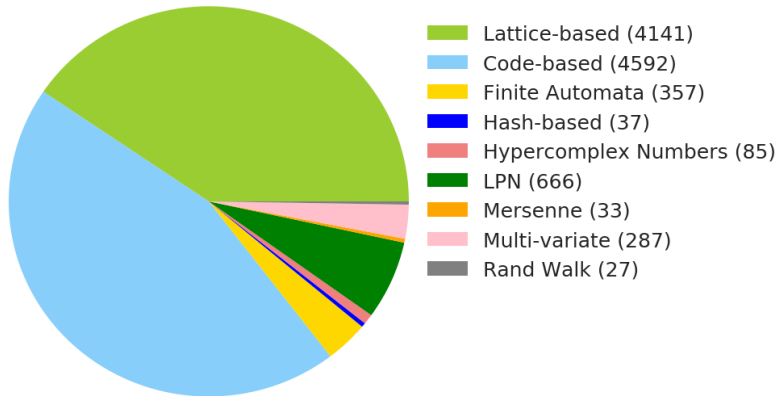
(raw data—not divided by the number of submissions)



## Results

Statistics

(raw data—not divided by the number of submissions)



## ■ Results

### Overview Per Type of Vulnerabilities

Vulnerability Type	Occurrences
Gaussian sampling	3
Other sampling	13
Use of GMP	4
Insecure GF operations	12
Other leakage sources (incl. error correction)	31

Table: Breakdown of vulnerabilities per type.

Note: the 10 constant-time submissions of round 1 are:

- 7 (out of 17 of Round 2 remaining candidates) for Encryption and KEM;
- 1 (out of 9 of Round 2 remaining candidates) for Digital Signature;
- 2 (namely: LOTUS and Titanium) have been rejected from the competition

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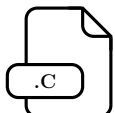
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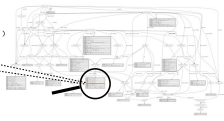
```
#pragma sta mbedtls_rsa_context,D
```

### Where in the source code?



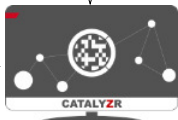
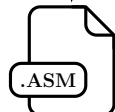
stanalyzer

```
/*  
 * Initialize one MPI  
 */  
void mbedtls_mpi_init( mbedtls_mpi *X )  
{  
    if ( X == NULL )  
        return;  
    X->n = 1;  
    X->m = 0;  
    X->p = NULL;  
}
```



LLVM | GCC

sensitive LoCs



objdump

### Where in the assembly code?

```
0000000000000490 <mbedtls_mpi_init>:  
490: 48 05 ff          test   %rdi,%rdi  
491: 74 16            jle   <+0x16>  
495: c7 07 01 00 00 00 movl  $0x1,(%rdi)  
49b: 48 c7 47 00 00 00 movq  $0x0,0x0(%rdi)  
4a2: 00  
4a3: 48 c7 47 10 00 00 00 movq  $0x0,0x10(%rdi)  
4a2: 00  
4ab: f3 c3          repz retq  
4ad: 0f 00          nopl  (%rax)
```

refinement flow

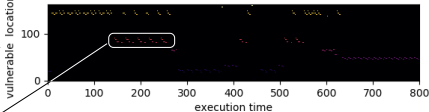
LLVM | GCC

sensitive addresses



debugger

### When, how many times? How often?



or



FLUSH +  
FLUSH

### Are the leakages exploitable?



## ■ Sensitive RSA function, mbedtls-2.14.0/library/rsa.c

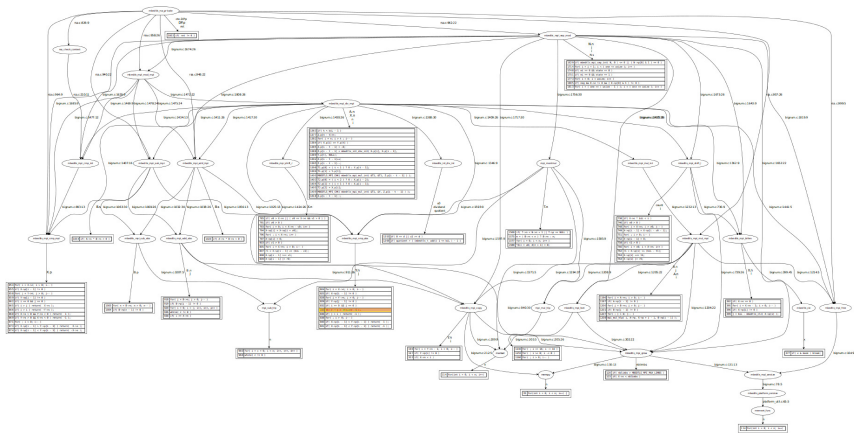
```

/*
 * _____
 * Exponent blinding supposed to prevent side-channel attacks using multiple
 * traces of measurements to recover the RSA key. The more collisions are there,
 * the more bits of the key can be recovered. See [3].
 *
 * Collecting n collisions with m bit long blinding value requires 2^(m-m/n)
 * observations on average.
 *
 * For example with 28 byte blinding to achieve 2 collisions the adversary has
 * to make 2^112 observations on average.
 *
 * (With the currently (as of 2017 April) known best algorithms breaking 2048
 * bit RSA requires approximately as much time as trying out 2^112 random keys.
 * Thus in this sense with 28 byte blinding the security is not reduced by
 * side-channel attacks like the one in [3])
 *
 * This countermeasure does not help if the key recovery is possible with a
 * single trace. */
#define RSA_EXPONENT_BLINDING 28

/*
 * Do an RSA private key operation
 */
int mbedtls_rsa_private( mbedtls_rsa_context *ctx,
                        int (*f_rng)(void *, unsigned char *, size_t),
                        void *p_rng,
                        const unsigned char *input,
                        unsigned char *output )

```

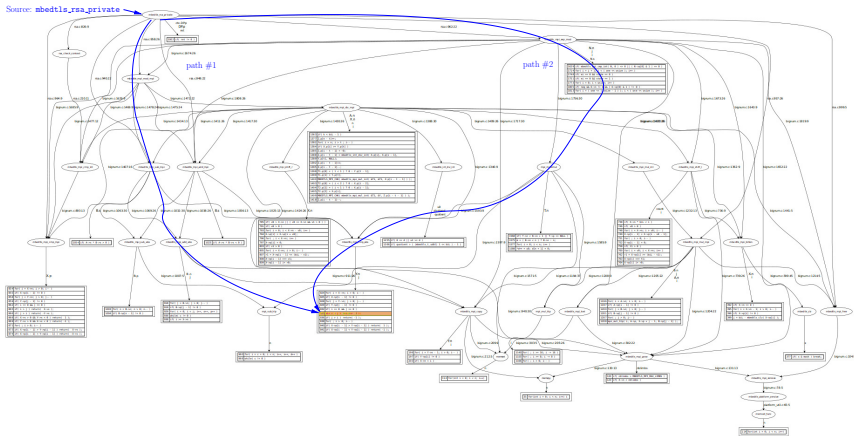
- MbedTLS leakage in RSA signature function [11]  
 Most of the leakages are in file `bigint.c` (output of Catalyzer™ tool)



There are multiple paths to activate a vulnerability



■ MbedTLS leakage in RSA signature function [11]  
 Most of the leakages are in file bignum.c (output of Catalyzer™ tool)



There are multiple paths to activate a vulnerability

## ■ Symbolic static over-estimated analysis

No undetected leakages, but some false positives

False positives are rare because the assumptions made in static analysis are tight in cryptography. Indeed, intermediate values are randomized. Example of *unlikely* false positives are:

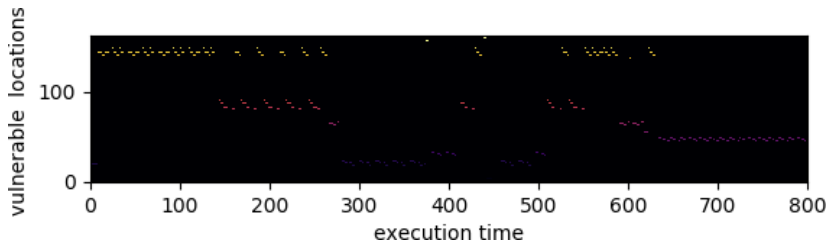
- sensitive annihilation is not understood, e.g.,  $s \oplus s$  is null but still considered sensitive
- dead code can be analyzed if present in obfuscated blocks, e.g.,  

```
if(tricky_condition_that_happens_to_be_always_zero) {
  y=f(s)... }
```
- output of a hash function is sensitive but unexploitable
- conditional code turned into constant-time assembly
- let  $u$  be unsensitive and  $s$  be sensitive, then  $*(s+u) = s[u] = u[s]$  is sensitive, but
  - $u[s]$  is sensitive (e.g., SubBytes table lookup), and
  - $s[u]$  is unsensitive (e.g.,  $s[7] \gg 31$  is the unsensitive evaluation of the MSB of a 256-bit nonce  $s$  to be used for ECDSA).

## ■ Translation of cache-timing vulnerable C operations into assembly

C construct	Pseudo-assembly construct	Vulnerable?
if( <b>s</b> ){}	cmov <b>s</b> or setcc <b>s</b>	no
if( <b>s</b> ){}	test <b>s</b> jump <i>address</i>	yes
for(i=0;i< <b>s</b> ;++i){}		
while( <b>s</b> ){}		
switch( <b>s</b> ){}		
y=T[ <b>s</b> ] or y=*(ptr+ <b>s</b> )	load <b>s</b>	yes
T[ <b>s</b> ]=y or *(ptr+ <b>s</b> )=y	store <b>s</b>	yes

- Dynamic profiling with Catalyzer™ of the 160+ vulnerable LoC in `bigint.c` ..... [12]



- Functions and loops can be identified  $\implies$  useful feedback to developer.

```

/*
 * Conditionally assign X = Y, without leaking information
 * about whether the assignment was made or not.
 * (Leaking information about the respective sizes of X and Y is ok however.)
 */
int mbedtls_mpi_safe_cond_assign( mbedtls_mpi *X, const mbedtls_mpi *Y,
                                unsigned char assign )
{
    int ret = 0;
    size_t i;

    /* make sure assign is 0 or 1 in a time-constant manner */
    assign = (assign | (unsigned char)-assign) >> 7;

    MBEDTLS_MPI_CHK( mbedtls_mpi_grow( X, Y->n ) );

    X->s = X->s * ( 1 - assign ) + Y->s * assign;

    for( i = 0; i < Y->n; i++ )
        X->p[i] = X->p[i] * ( 1 - assign ) + Y->p[i] * assign;

    for( ; i < X->n; i++ )
        X->p[i] *= ( 1 - assign );

cleanup:
    return( ret );
}

```

```

/*
 * Signed addition: X = A + B
 */
int mbedtls_mpi_add_mpi( mbedtls_mpi *X, const mbedtls_mpi *A, const mbedtls_mpi *B )
{
    int ret, s = A->s;

    if( A->s * B->s < 0 )
    {
        if( mbedtls_mpi_cmp_abs( A, B ) >= 0 )
        {
            MBEDTLS_MPI_CHK( mbedtls_mpi_sub_abs( X, A, B ) );
            X->s = s;
        }
        else
        {
            MBEDTLS_MPI_CHK( mbedtls_mpi_sub_abs( X, B, A ) );
            X->s = -s;
        }
    }
    else
    {
        MBEDTLS_MPI_CHK( mbedtls_mpi_add_abs( X, A, B ) );
        X->s = s;
    }

cleanup:

    return( ret );
}

```

```

/*
 * Montgomery multiplication:  $A = A * B * R^{-1} \pmod N$  (HAC 14.36)
 */
static int mpi_montmul( mbedtls_mpi *A, const mbedtls_mpi *B, const mbedtls_mpi *N,
                       mbedtls_mpi_uint mm, const mbedtls_mpi *T )
{
    // [...]

    if( mbedtls_mpi_cmp_abs( A, N ) >= 0 )
        mpi_sub_hlp( n, N->p, A->p );
    else
        /* prevent timing attacks */
        mpi_sub_hlp( n, A->p, T->p );

    return( 0 );
}

```

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■ Issues with multiplication in  $GF(2^N)$  extensions [13]

Table 1: PQC submissions at NIST using vulnerable  $GF(2^N)$  operations

Submission	Type	Finite Group	Tower fields used
BIG QUAKE	Code-based	$GF(2^N)$ , $N = 12, 18$	No
DAGS	Code-based	$GF((2^5)^2)$ , $GF((2^6)^2)$	Yes
EdonK	Code-based	$GF(2^N)$ , $N = 128, 192$	No
Ramstake	Code-based	$GF(2^8)$	No
RLCE	Code-based	$GF(2^N)$ , $N = 10, 11$	No
LAC	Lattice-based	$GF(2^N)$ , $N = 9, 10$	No
DME	Multivariate	$GF(2^N)$ , $N = 24, 48$	No
HIMQ-3	Multivariate	$GF(2^8)$	No
LUOV	Multivariate	$GF(2^8)$ , $GF((2^{16})^l)$ , $l = 3, 4, 5$	Yes

Vulnerable  $a \cdot b$  in  $\mathbb{C}$ :  $a \cdot \text{antilog}[\log[a] + \log[b]] = 0$ .

■ Issues with multiplication in  $GF(2^N)$  extensions [13]

Table 3: Performances (in clock cycles) of several multiplication algorithms

Multiplication algorithm	Alg.	$GF(2^6)$	$GF(2^{12})$ (*)	$GF((2^6)^2)$	Constant-time?
Tabulated log/antilog (**)	3, 4	8	11	20	No
Iterative, conditional reduction	5	27	51	133	No
Iterative, ASM with PCLMUL, conditional reduction	5	29	41	146	No
Iterative, unconditional reduction	6	30	58	155	Yes
Iterative, ASM with PCLMUL, unconditional reduction	6	35	65	225	Yes
Iterative, unconditional reduction, 1-bit-sliced (***) 64 computations in parallel	7	55/64	335/64	-	Yes
Iterative, ASM with PCLMUL, unconditional reduction, bit-sliced (****) 2 computations in parallel	8	55/2	95/2	-	Yes

## ■ Example of implementation in bitslice

```

173 /* 7.2: 1-bit-sliced multiplication (SIMD code) */
174 void gf_multsubTab(gf_t *x, gf_t *y, gf_t *z)
175 {
176     uint64_t xbin[6];
177     uint64_t ybin[6];
178     uint64_t res[6];
179
180     xbin[0]=xbin[1]=xbin[2]=xbin[3]=xbin[4]=xbin[5] = 0;
181     ybin[0]=ybin[1]=ybin[2]=ybin[3]=ybin[4]=ybin[5] = 0;
182
183     res[0] = (xbin[0] & ybin[0]);
184     res[1] = (xbin[1] & ybin[0]);
185     res[2] = (xbin[2] & ybin[0]);
186     res[3] = (xbin[3] & ybin[0]);
187     res[4] = (xbin[4] & ybin[0]);
188     res[5] = (xbin[5] & ybin[0]);
189
190     res[0] ^= (xbin[5] & ybin[1]);
191     res[1] ^= (xbin[05] & ybin[1]);
192     res[2] ^= (xbin[1] & ybin[1]);
193     res[3] ^= (xbin[2] & ybin[1]);
194     res[4] ^= (xbin[3] & ybin[1]);
195     res[5] ^= (xbin[4] & ybin[1]);

```

⋮

## ■ Conclusions and Perspectives

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### Conclusions

- We presented a static analysis tool (Catalyzer™) that allows to determine whether the implementation of a cryptographic algorithm is susceptible to cache-timing side-channel leaks.
- NIST post-quantum project candidates: potential leaks in a vast majority of the candidates.
- Analysis of the severity of leakages.

### Perspectives

- Formalize the analysis carried out by Catalyzer™ core tool (namely Alexander Schaub's Stanalyzr)
- Extend the tool to RowHammer [14], [15]

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