

All paths lead to the root

# We are on e-print!



Paper 2025/1672

## All Paths Lead to the Root

*Théophile Brézot*, Cosmian  
*Chloé Héban* , Cosmian

### Abstract

In an attempt to fix the defects of the definition of forward security for Symmetric Searchable Encryption (SSE) schemes, Amjad et al. [2] proposed injection security. This new security property is strictly stronger than most security properties known to date, which makes it particularly challenging to design schemes meeting its requirements. In this work, we show how it is possible to use trees to decorrelate the modification of an index from its effects, hence achieving injection security. In addition to being conceptually simple, our scheme features non-interactive, stateless and mutation-free search operations that allow supporting concurrent readers easily. Finally, the proposed reference implementation is efficient: both Insert and Search operations execute in milliseconds even when operating on an index with up to a million entries and volumes up to a thousand.

### Metadata

#### Available format(s)



#### Category

Cryptographic protocols

#### Publication info

Preprint.

#### Keywords

SSE STE EMM

#### Contact author(s)

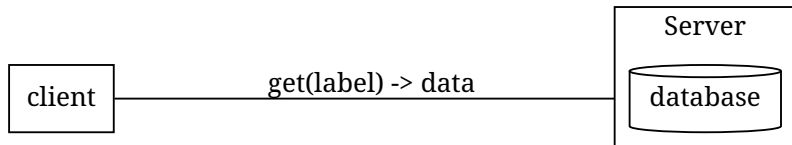
theophile brezot @ cosmian  
com  
chloe heban @ cosmian com

#### History

2025-09-18: approved

## Searchable Symmetric Encryption (SSE)

## Retrieving data from a server?



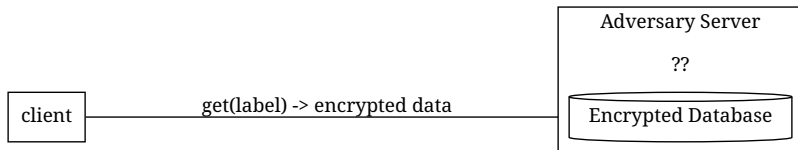
For example: label = "name=DUPONT".

name	surname	birth date	disease
DUPONT	Charles	1971	diabetes
DUPONT	Marie	1988	cancer
...	...	...	...

# Retrieving data from a server?

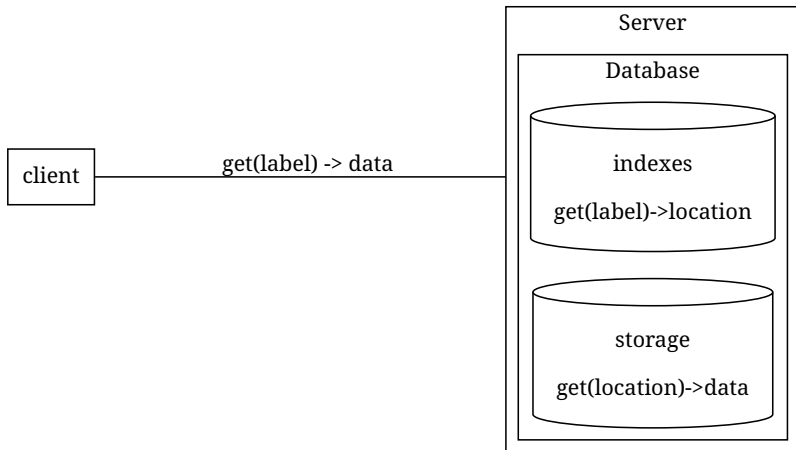
*The server knows everything.*

# Controlling the leakage

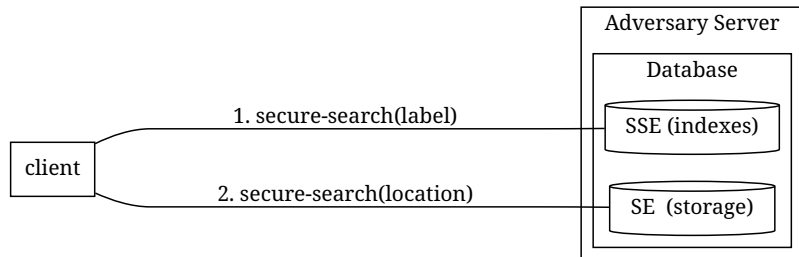


*Encrypting the whole database breaks keyword search.*

# Controlling the leakage



# Controlling the leakage

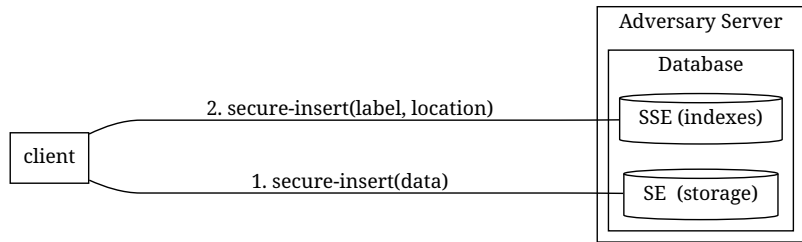


Leaks:

1.  $\mathcal{L}_{SSE}(\text{Search}, \text{label});$
2.  $\mathcal{L}_{SE}(\text{Search}, \text{location}).$



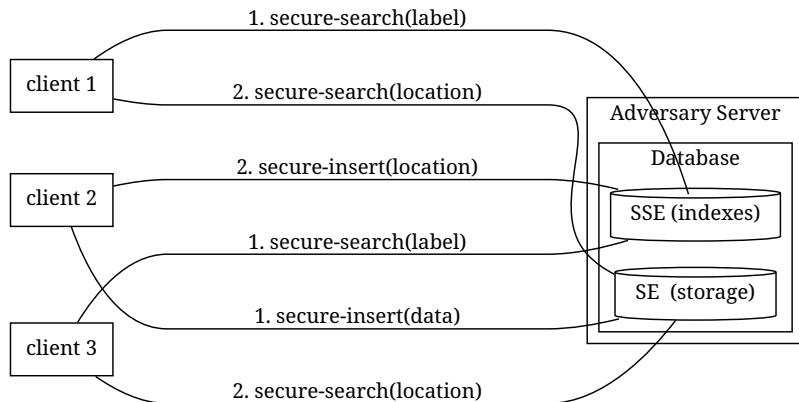
# Supporting dynamic states



Leaks:

1.  $\mathcal{L}_{SE}(\text{Insert}, \text{data})$ .
2.  $\mathcal{L}_{SSE}(\text{Insert}, \text{label}, \text{location})$ ;

# Supporting concurrent queries



# Structured Encryption

# Index

## Index ADT:

► *States:*  $\mathbb{L}^{V^*}$

► *Operations:*

*Search* :: state → label → Set value

*Insert* :: state → label → value → ()

## Index STE:

► *States:*  $\mathbb{K}^{\mathbb{L}^{V^*}}$

► *Operations:*

*Setup* :: () → IO key

*Search* :: key → label → IO (Set value)

*Insert* :: key → label → value → IO ()

# Multi-Map (MM)

## MM ADT:

- ▶ *States:*  $\mathbb{L}^{V^*}$
- ▶ *Operations:*
  - `Search` :: state -> label -> List value
  - `Insert` :: state -> label -> value -> ()

## MM STE:

- ▶ *States:*  $\mathbb{K}^{\mathbb{L}^{V^*}}$
- ▶ *Operations:*
  - `Setup` :: () -> IO key
  - `Search` :: key -> label -> IO (List value)
  - `Insert` :: key -> label -> value -> IO ()

## Multi-Map STE to Index STE transformation

```
Index::setup  = MM::setup
Index::insert = MM::insert
Index::search = unique . MM::search
               where
                 unique = fold Set::insert EmptySet
```

Why bother implementing a more constrained  
ADT?

# Semi-dynamic MM to fully-dynamic MM transformation

## Associative ADT:

► *States*:  $\mathbb{L}^{\mathbb{T}(\mathbb{V})}$

► *Operations*:

*Search* ::  $s \rightarrow l \rightarrow T\ v$

*Mutate* ::  $s \rightarrow l \rightarrow (T\ v \rightarrow T\ v) \rightarrow ()$



## Semi-dynamic MM to fully-dynamic MM transformation

The fully-dynamic Multi-Map is an associative ADT:

```
MM::Search s l v ~ Search s l v
```

```
MM::Insert s l v ~ Mutate s l (Cons v)
```

```
MM::Delete s l v ~ Mutate s l (remove v)
```

where

```
remove v [] = []
```

```
remove v [v l] = remove v l
```

```
remove v [w l] = Cons w (remove v l)
```

# Semi-dynamic MM to fully-dynamic MM transformation

*Mutations are composable<sup>1</sup>: all we need is to log them!*

## Journaling Multi-Map ADT:

► *States*:  $\mathbb{L}(\mathbb{T}(\mathbb{V})^{\mathbb{T}(\mathbb{V})})^*$

► *Operations*:

`Search state -> l -> List (T v -> T v)`

`Insert state -> l -> (T v -> T v) -> ()`

---

<sup>1</sup>More precisely, they form a monoid and can therefore be reduced.

## Semi-dynamic MM to fully-dynamic MM transformation

*Implementing any (fully-dynamic) associative ADT on top of a (semi-dynamic) multi-map is therefore simple!*

```
search s l      = let transformations = MM::search s l  
                  in (reduce transformations) T::empty
```

```
mutate s l m v = MM::insert s l (m v)
```

PLOC is actually *simple*!

# Challenge

## MM STE:

- ▶ *States:*  $\mathbb{K}^{\mathbb{L}^{V^*}}$
- ▶ *Operations:*
  - `Setup` :: () -> IO key
  - `Search` :: key -> label -> IO (List value)
  - `Insert` :: key -> label -> value -> IO ()

## Objectives:

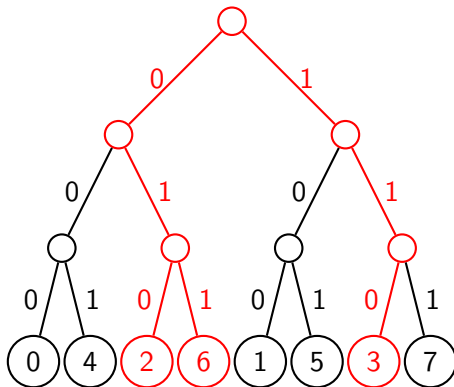
1. Do not to leak anything during insertion:  
 $\mathcal{L}(\text{Insert}, \text{label}, \text{value}) = \perp$
2. Only leak a (meaningless) UID of the label:  
 $\mathcal{L}(\text{Search}, \text{label}) = \text{sp}$

## Search

Simply derive the set of target branches:

- ▶  $\text{PRF}(\text{key}, \text{cat}, 0) = 3 \bmod 8 = \text{b}...011$
- ▶  $\text{PRF}(\text{key}, \text{cat}, 1) = 2 \bmod 8 = \text{b}...010$
- ▶  $\text{PRF}(\text{key}, \text{cat}, 2) = 6 \bmod 8 = \text{b}...110$

Mind the endianness!

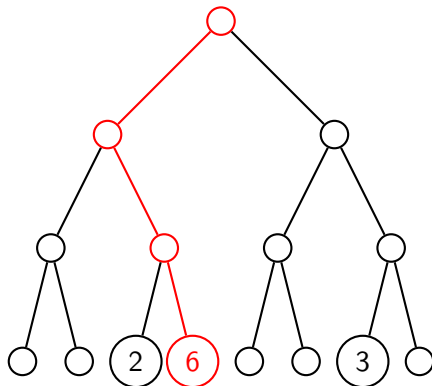


## Insert – Datum

```
type Datum = target * value
```

*A datum must always be stored on its target branch.*

For example with (6 food):



## Insertion – Uniform Scheduling

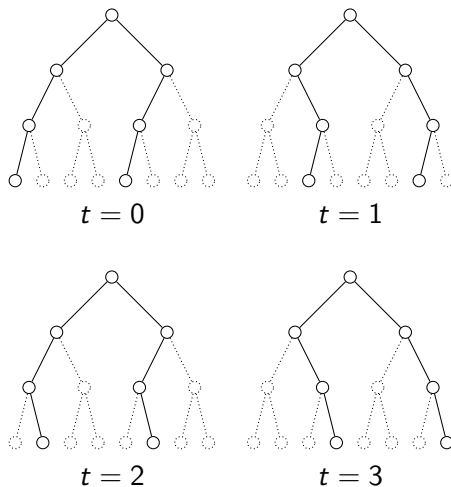
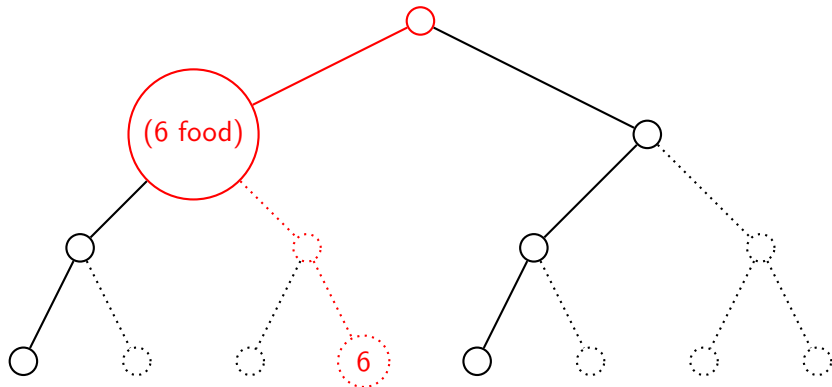


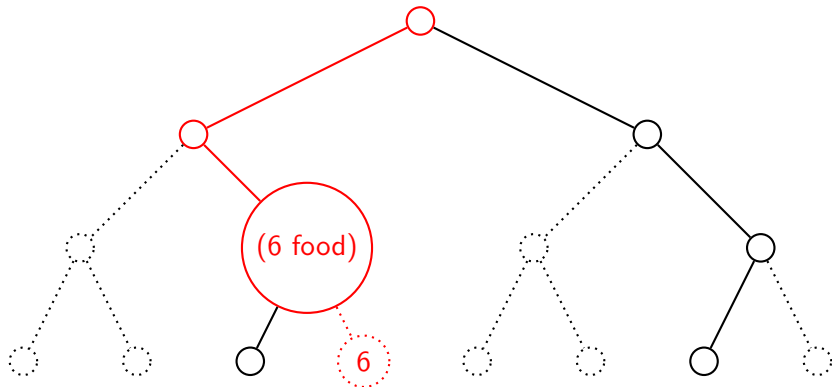
Figure 1: Scheduled subtrees for  $N = 8$  and  $n = 2$ .



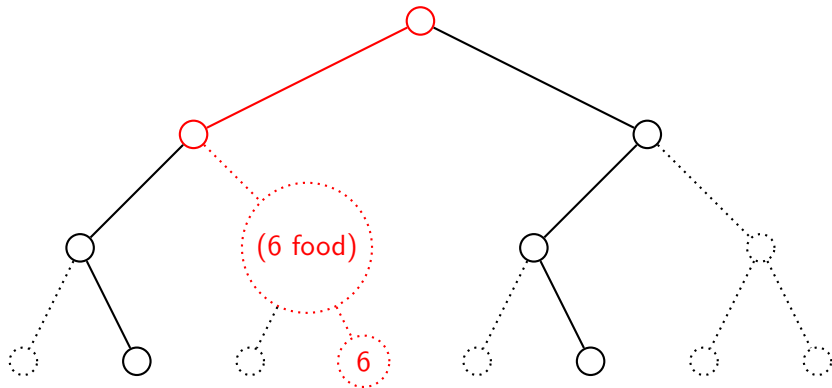
## Insert – Compaction 1



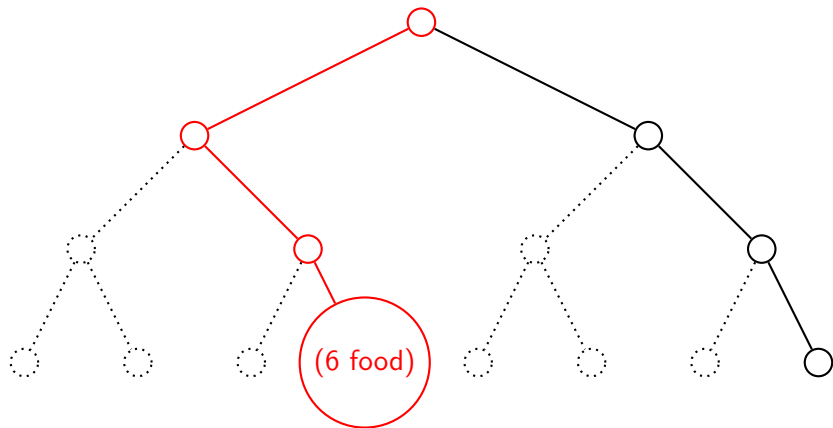
## Insert – Compaction 2



## Insert – Compaction 3



## Insert – Compaction 4



## Insert – Compaction

*Can the compaction prevent tree overflow?*

## Insert – Compaction

*Can the compaction prevent tree overflow?*  
**yes** (but hard to prove)

## Conclusion – PLOC is *injection-secure*

- ▶  $\mathcal{L}(\text{Search}, \text{label}) = \{\text{target-branch}\}$
- ▶  $\mathcal{L}(\text{Insert}, \text{label}, \text{value}) = \perp$

*Complete decorrelation of mutations and their effects!*

## Conclusion – PLOC is *efficient*

With a *simple* implementation<sup>2</sup>:

$n \setminus B$	$2^{10}$		$2^{16}$		$2^{20}$	
16	2.1msec	1.8msec	26msec	3.1msec	0.17sec	3.8msec
64	2.1msec	5.4msec	25msec	11msec	0.12sec	13msec
256	2.0msec	18msec	25msec	34msec	0.12sec	45msec

Table 2: (*Search* *Insert*) performances in function of  $n$  and  $B$  for  $V = \sqrt{B}$ .

---

<sup>2</sup>Less than 400LoC!



## Conclusion – PLOC is *state-of-the-art*

*Only FIX<sup>3</sup> achieves the same security properties. . . but not the same efficiency!*

---

<sup>3</sup>AC:AmjKamMoa23

Future works

# Can we improve the performance?

- ▶ Search performance is in  $O(V)$ :
  - ▶ can we store more than one datum per target branch?  $\Rightarrow O(\frac{V}{m})$
- ▶ Search bandwidth is in  $O(c \lg B)$ :
  - ▶ can we reduce the depth by  $\lg c$ ?  $\Rightarrow O(\lg B)$

# What about concurrency?

Reliance on an synchronized mutable state due to:

- ▶ MM semantics (order)
  - ▶ implement the index directly?
  - ▶ relax progress property?
- ▶ Uniform scheduling (next scheduled branches)
  - ▶ can compaction work with a random scheduling?
  - ▶ relax progress property?

# What about concurrency?

Reliance on an synchronized mutable state due to:

- ▶ MM semantics (order)  $O(L) \Rightarrow$  bad
  - ▶ ~~implement the index directly?~~
  - ▶ relax progress property + relax target selection
- ▶ Uniform scheduling (next scheduled branches)  $O(1)$ 
  - ▶ ~~can compaction work with a random scheduling?~~
  - ▶ relax progress property?

# What about the data-related leakage?

- ▶ Store data directly inside the SSE?
  - ▶ what is the impact on performance?
- ▶ Use an independent scheme with no leakage (ORAM)?
  - ▶ with what performances?
  - ▶ can it be compatible with concurrent queries?

# What about the data-related leakage?

- ▶ Store data directly inside the SSE?
  - ▶ what is the impact on performance?  
**Big** due to volume-hiding
- ▶ Use an independent scheme with no leakage (ORAM)?
  - ▶ with what performances?
  - ▶ can it be compatible with concurrent queries?

# What about the data-related leakage?

- ▶ Store data directly inside the SSE?
  - ▶ what is the impact on performance?  
**Big** due to volume-hiding
- ▶ Use an independent scheme with no leakage (ORAM)?
  - ▶ with what performances?  
**OK**  $O(\log N)$
  - ▶ can it be compatible with concurrent queries?



# What about the data-related leakage?

- ▶ Store data directly inside the SSE?
  - ▶ what is the impact on performance?  
**Big** due to volume-hiding
- ▶ Use an independent scheme with no leakage (ORAM)?
  - ▶ with what performances?  
**OK**  $O(\log N)$
  - ▶ can it be compatible with concurrent queries?  
**NO** requires a lock

Thanks!