



# Introduction to Passkeys

**Dr. Nina Bindel**

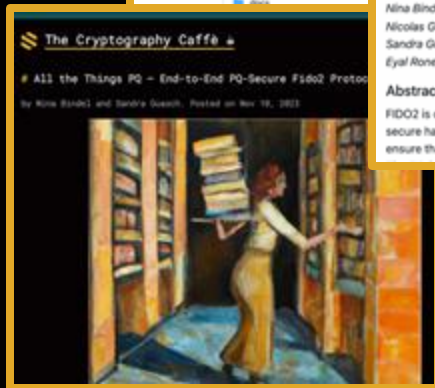
Staff Research Scientist



# Acknowledgment

This presentation is based on collaborative work with

- Gabriel Campagna
- Cas Cremers
- Nicolas Gama
- Sandra Guasch
- James Howe
- Kyle Kotowick
- Duc Nguyen
- Eyal Ronen
- Spencer Wilson
- Tarun Yadav
- Mang Zhao



Paper 2022/1029  
FIDO2, CTAP 2.1, and WebAuthn 2: Provable Security and Post-Quantum Instantiation

Nina Bindel, SandboxAQ  
Cas Cremers, CISPA Helmholtz Center for Information Security  
Mang Zhao, CISPA Helmholtz Center for Information Security

#### Abstract

The FIDO2 protocol is a globally used standard for passwordless authentication, building on an alliance between major players in the online authentication space. While already widely deployed, the standard is still under active development. Since version 2.1 of its CTAP sub-protocol, FIDO2 can potentially be instantiated with post-quantum secure primitives.

Paper 2023/1398

To attest or not to attest, this is the question – Provable attestation in FIDO2

Nina Bindel, SandboxAQ  
Nicolas Gama, SandboxAQ  
Sandra Guasch, SandboxAQ  
Eyal Ronen, Tel Aviv University

#### Abstract

FIDO2 is a secure hardware-based authentication protocol.



All icons are from flaticon premium.

# AGENDA

**01** Passkeys/FIDO2 – a protocol for a passwordless Internet

**02** The FIDO2 Protocol Flow

**03** Post-Quantum FIDO2

**04** Challenges

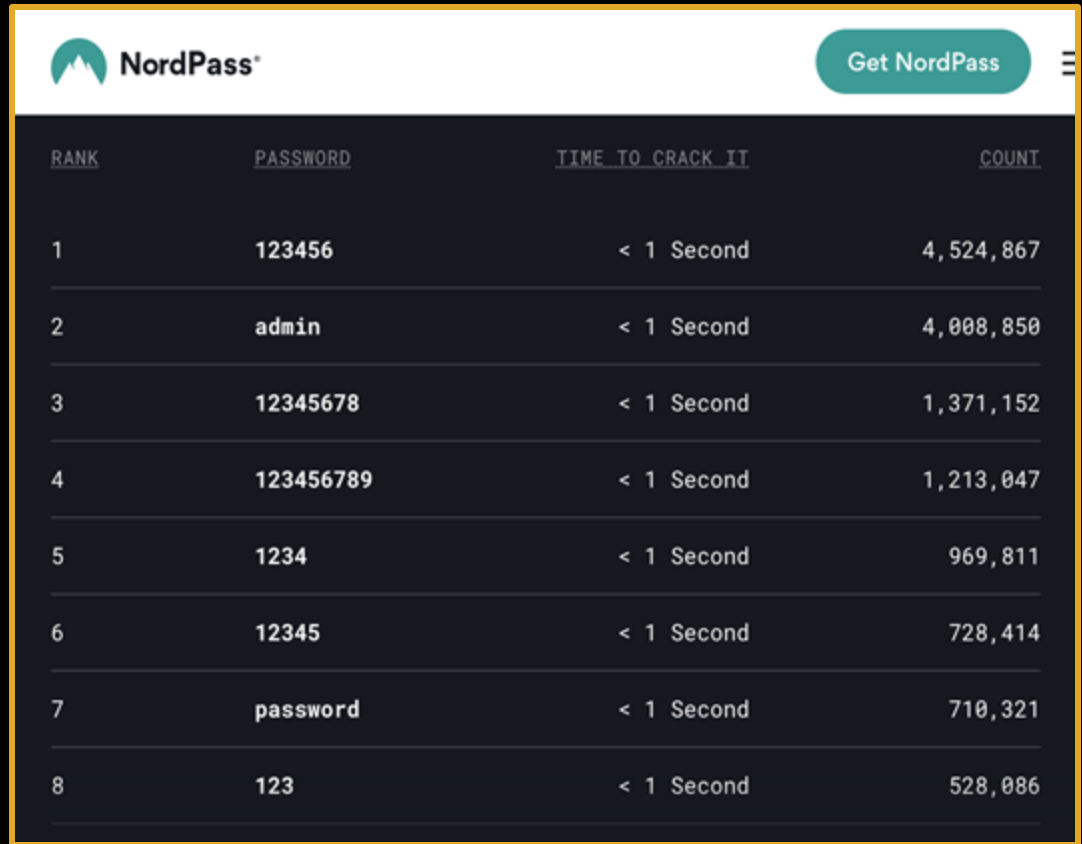


01

# FIDO2 – a protocol for a passwordless Internet

Nearly **every** digital service, from email to banking, requires a password for access.

But often they are the **first and only** line of defense.



The screenshot shows the NordPass website header with the logo and a 'Get NordPass' button. Below the header is a table titled 'Most Common Passwords' (implied by the context) listing the top 8 most common passwords. The table has four columns: RANK, PASSWORD, TIME TO CRACK IT, and COUNT. The passwords listed are 123456, admin, 12345678, 123456789, 1234, 12345, password, and 123. All passwords are cracked in less than 1 second.

RANK	PASSWORD	TIME TO CRACK IT	COUNT
1	123456	< 1 Second	4,524,867
2	admin	< 1 Second	4,008,850
3	12345678	< 1 Second	1,371,152
4	123456789	< 1 Second	1,213,047
5	1234	< 1 Second	969,811
6	12345	< 1 Second	728,414
7	password	< 1 Second	710,321
8	123	< 1 Second	528,086

# Password managers

Nearly 2/3 of internet users keep track of their passwords by **memory or with handwritten notes**<sup>1</sup>.

Almost 1/4 people rely on a **document** on their computer to manage all of their passwords<sup>1</sup>.



<sup>1</sup><https://us.norton.com/blog/privacy/password-statistics>

# Problem statement

Classic authentication solutions for web are not working.

## Passwords

- Hard to remember or weak
- Vulnerable to phishing attacks
- Synchronisation across devices can be challenging (pwd managers)



## Multi-factor authentication / OTPs

- Low usability
- Still rely on passwords
- Still vulnerable to phishing





# Passwordless Alternative: FIDO Authentication

## Advantages

- No need to remember passwords
- Easy to use
- Resistant to phishing attacks
- Widely adopted: FIDO Alliance / W3C standards
  - Supported by all major browsers and platforms
  - Wide range of industry partners
- Constant improvements (e.g., Passkeys)

### Google Adds Passkey Support to Chrome for Windows, macOS and Android

Dec 12, 2022 • Ravi Lak

Companies are increasingly ditching passwords for passkeys

### What is Apple Passkey, and how will it help you go passwordless?

Ivan Mehta @indianidol • 5:00 PM GMT+2 • September 12, 2022

### Momentum for FIDO in Japan Grows as Major Companies Commit to Passwordless Sign-ins with Passkeys

### YubiKeys, passkeys and the future of modern authentication

Christopher Hamrell  
March 31, 2022 • 10 minute read



# A (very) brief history of FIDO authentication

2014

## U2F

2nd factor authentication

2019

## FIDO2 = CTAP (FIDO) + WebAuthn (W3C)

Security tokens are generate credentials which are registered and used to authenticate

2022

## Passkeys

Passkeys = FIDO2 with the option of synchronization of credentials such that synced devices can be used to authenticate

2024

## White Paper: Addressing FIDO Alliance's 'Technologies in Post Quantum World'

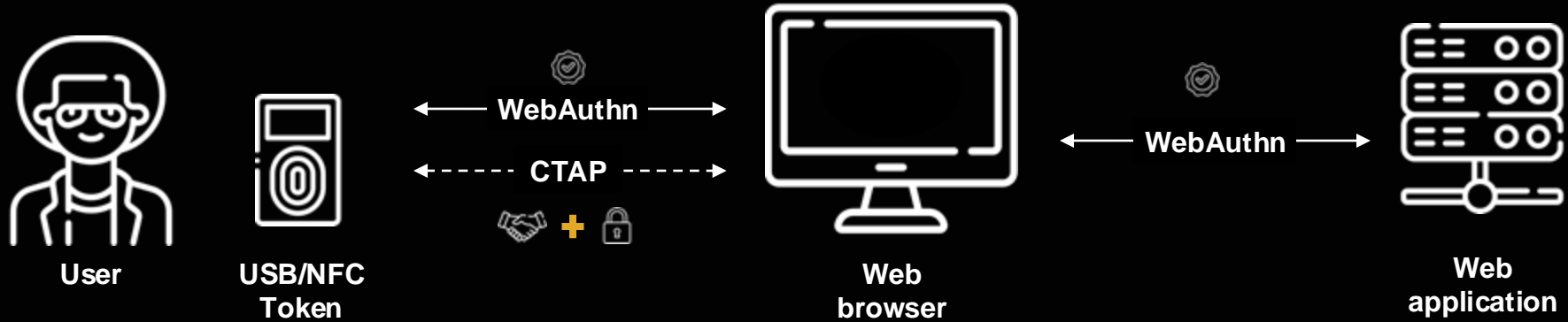
Acknowledging the quantum threat and need to select suitable PQC algorithms and to prepare for smooth transition



02

# The FIDO2 Protocol Flow

# FIDO2 = WebAuthn + CTAP



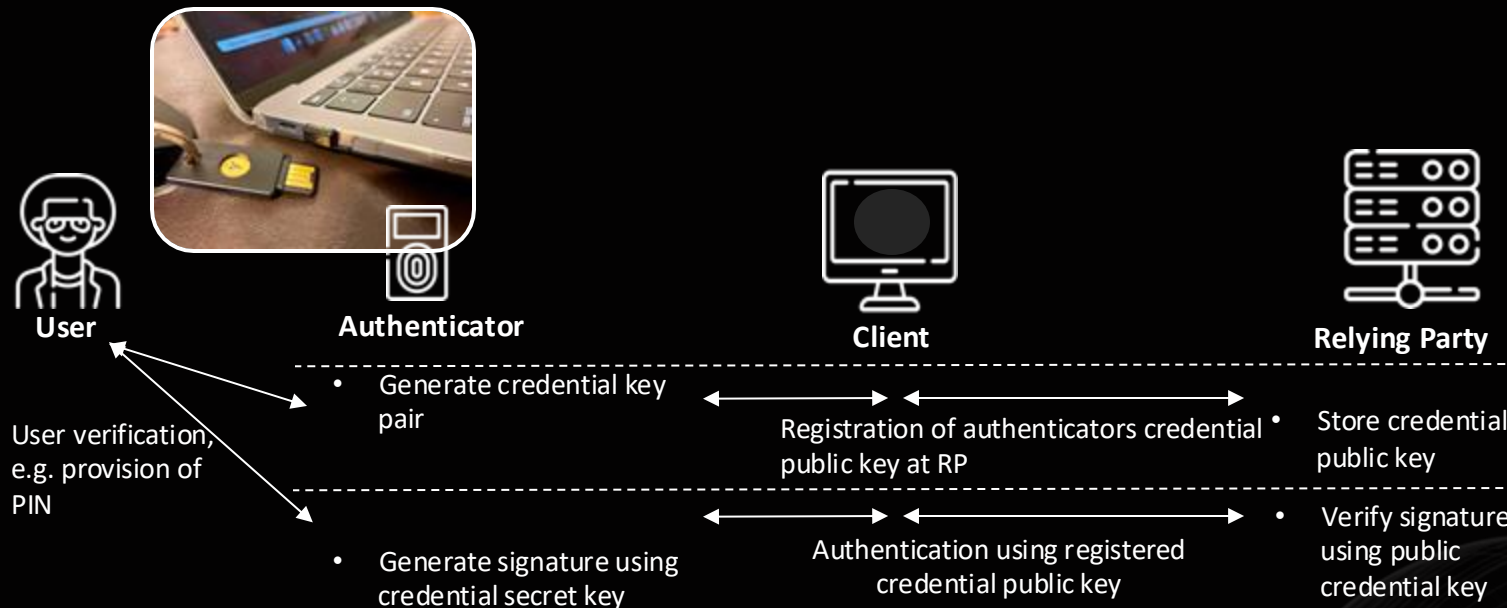
## WebAuthn

Sub-protocol between the client and the server to let the user authenticate into the web service with the hardware token

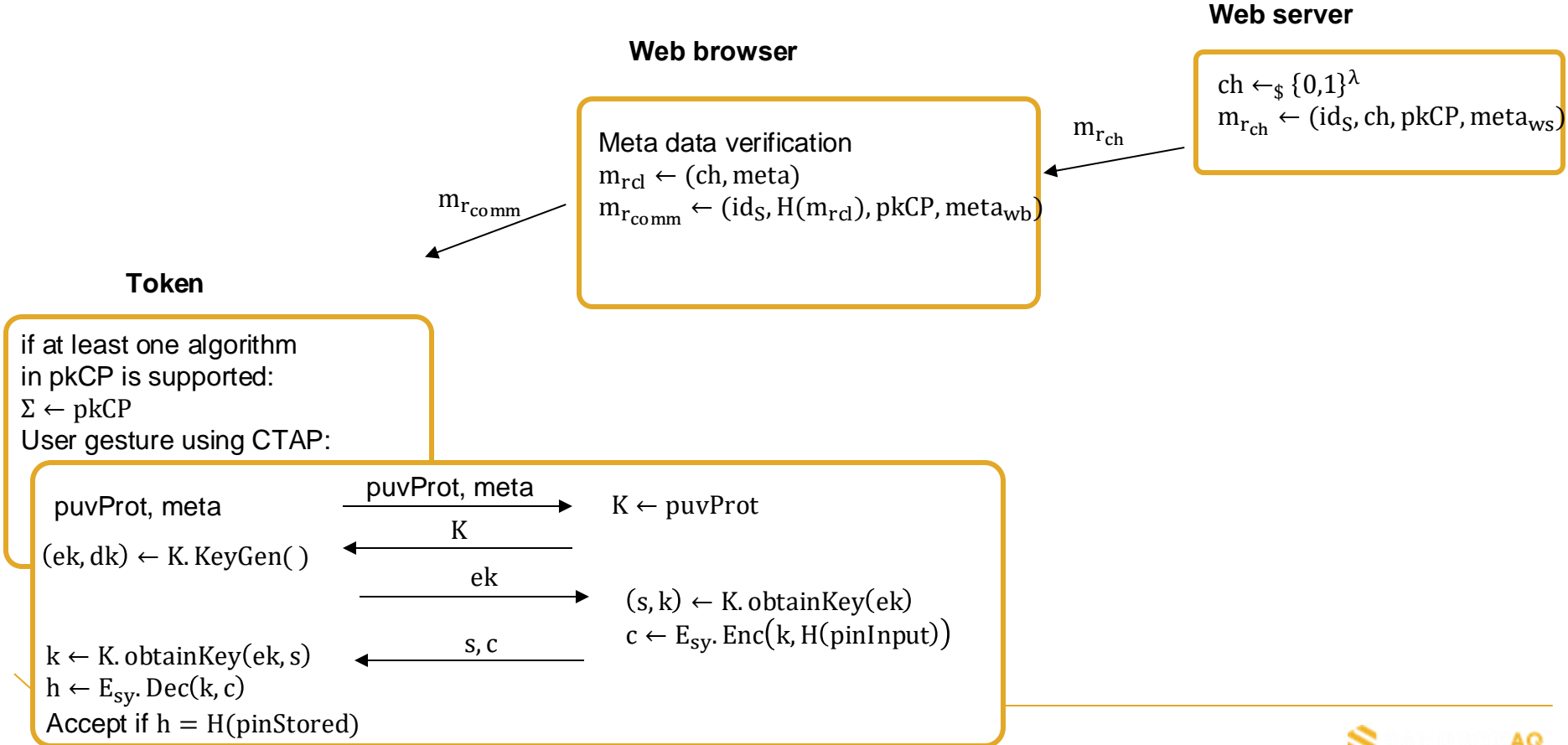
## CTAP (Client To Authenticator Protocol)

Sub-protocol between the token and the client to also ensure only browsers trusted by the user can communicate directly with the token

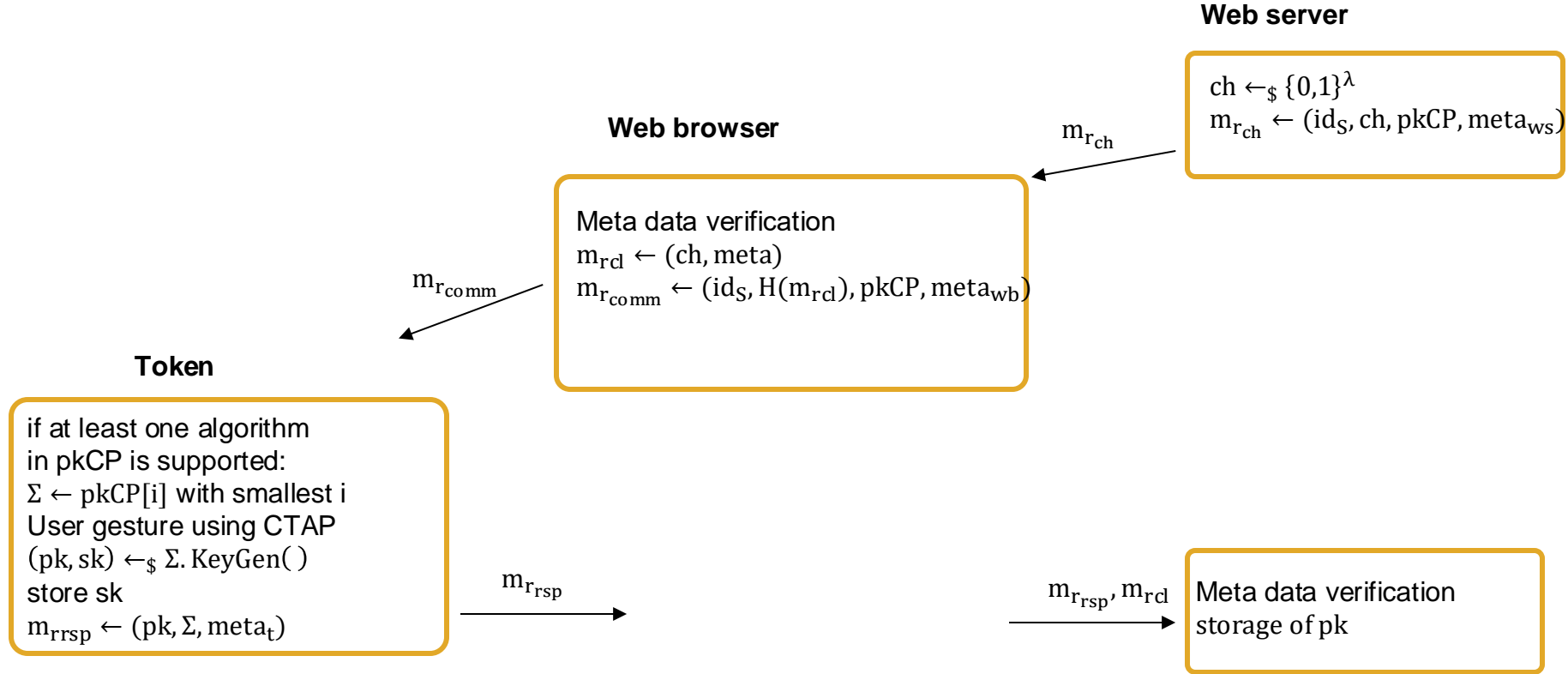
# Basic FIDO2 operation flow



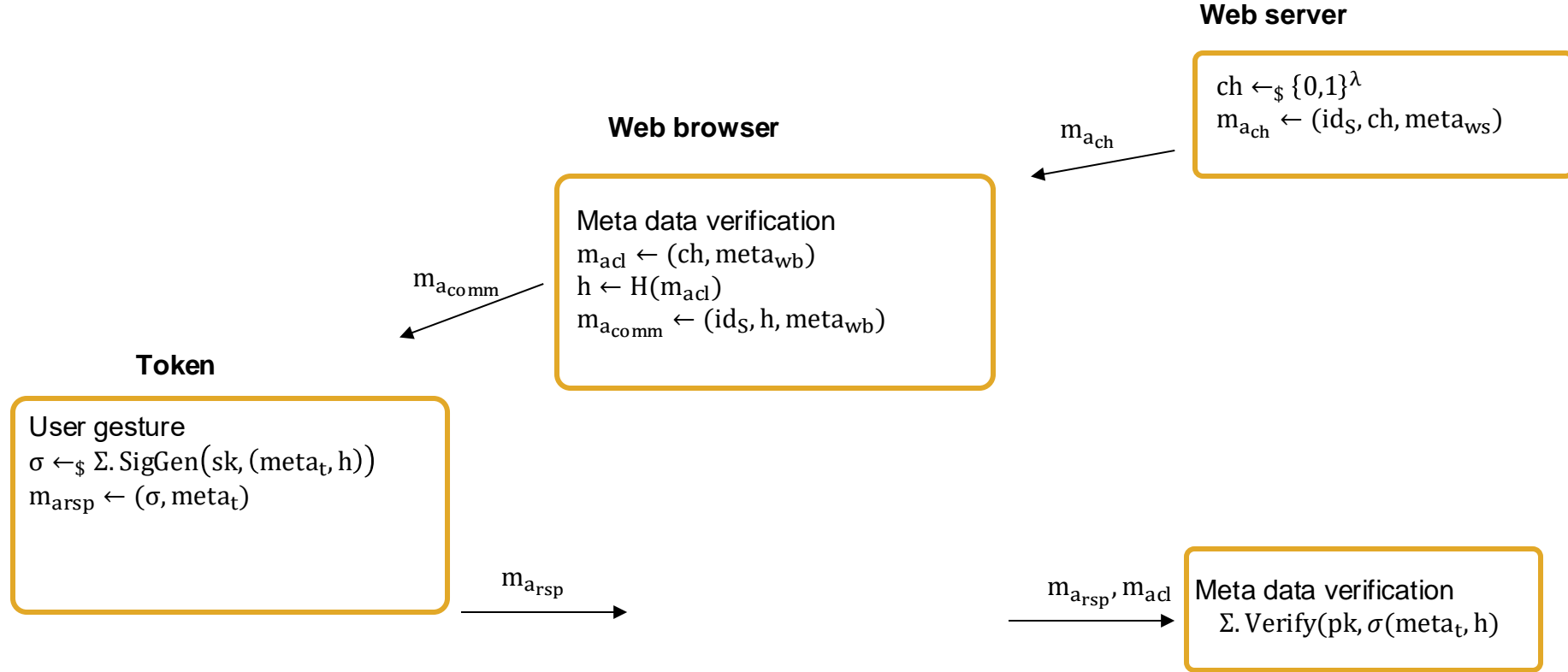
# Cryptographic details of registration flow



# Cryptographic details of registration flow

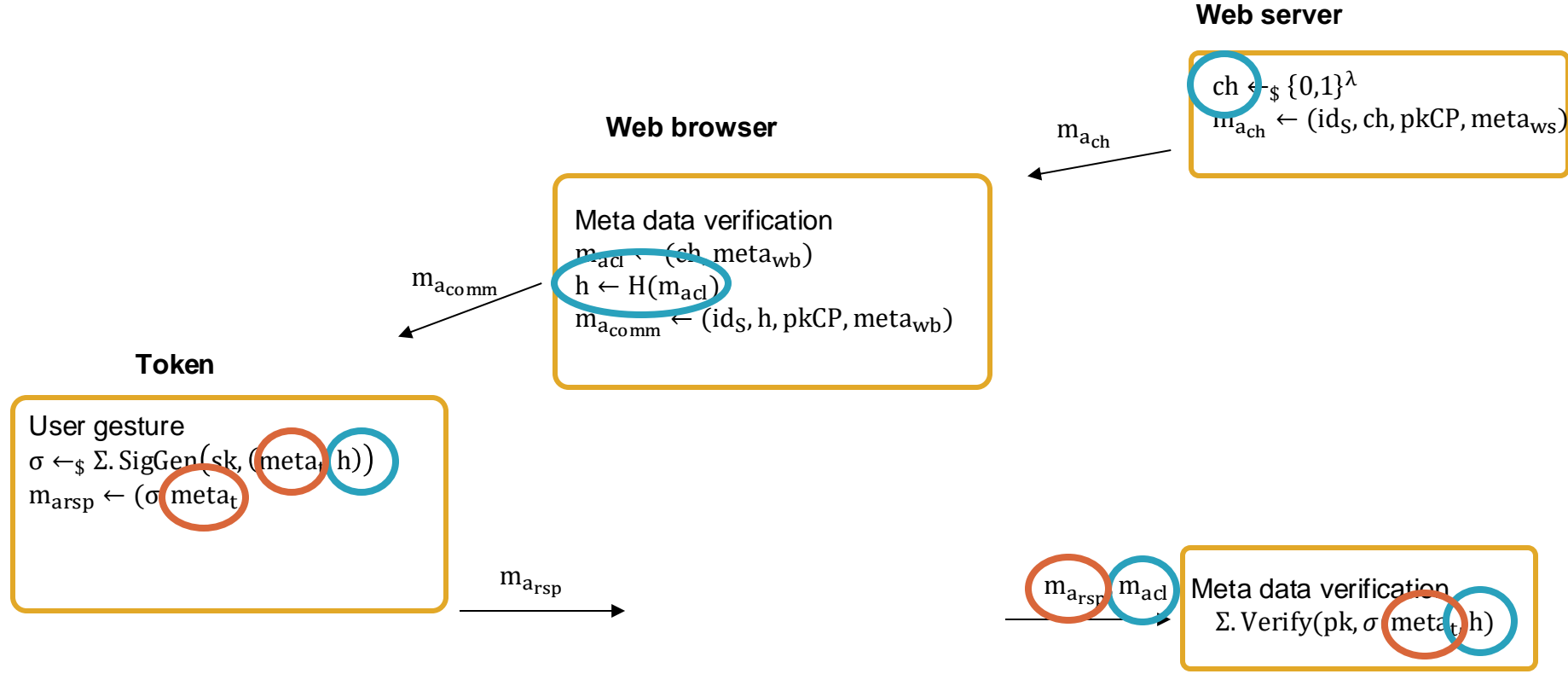


# Cryptographic details of authentication flow





# Cryptographic details of authentication flow



For more details and a security reduction of FIDO2 see  
<https://eprint.iacr.org/2020/756>, <https://eprint.iacr.org/2022/1029>

# FIDO2 protocol options

*We have seen so far...*

- FIDO2 base protocol (WebAuthn + CTAP) = FIDO2 w/o attestation

*Next ...*

- FIDO2 + attestation

# Remote attestation

## Basic setup



Host / Client / Device

Report /  
statement



Challenger / Verifier



### Report / statement

software running, boot sequence, hardware specifications, system integrity, device model..



### Challenger / verifier

verifies characteristics of the client, based on the attestation report , determines the level of trust on the system, and makes authorization decisions.

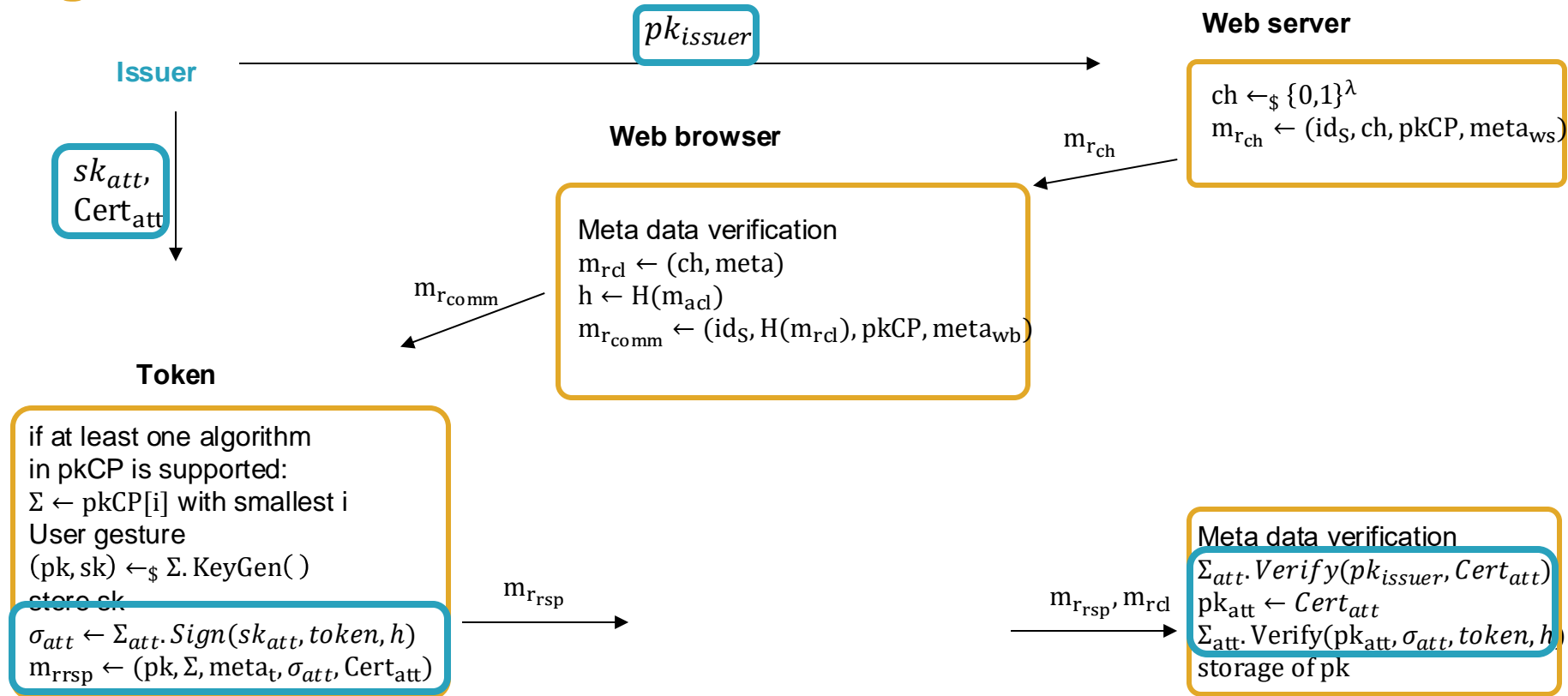


The integrity and authenticity of the attestation report is preserved with a **digital signature**

# Where is attestation used?



# Registration flow w/ attestation



For more details on different attestation modes in FIDO2 and an analysis of their privacy and security guarantees, see <https://eprint.iacr.org/2022/084>, <https://eprint.iacr.org/2023/1398>

# FIDO2 protocol options

*We have seen so far...*

- FIDO2 base protocol (WebAuthn + CTAP) = FIDO2 w/o attestation
- FIDO2 + attestation

*Next ...*

- FIDO2 with different credential storing options
  - non-residential / non-discoverable
  - residential / discoverable
    - Passkeys

# FIDO2 discoverable vs non-discoverable credentials

## Discoverable (residential) credentials

Private keys are stored in the token.

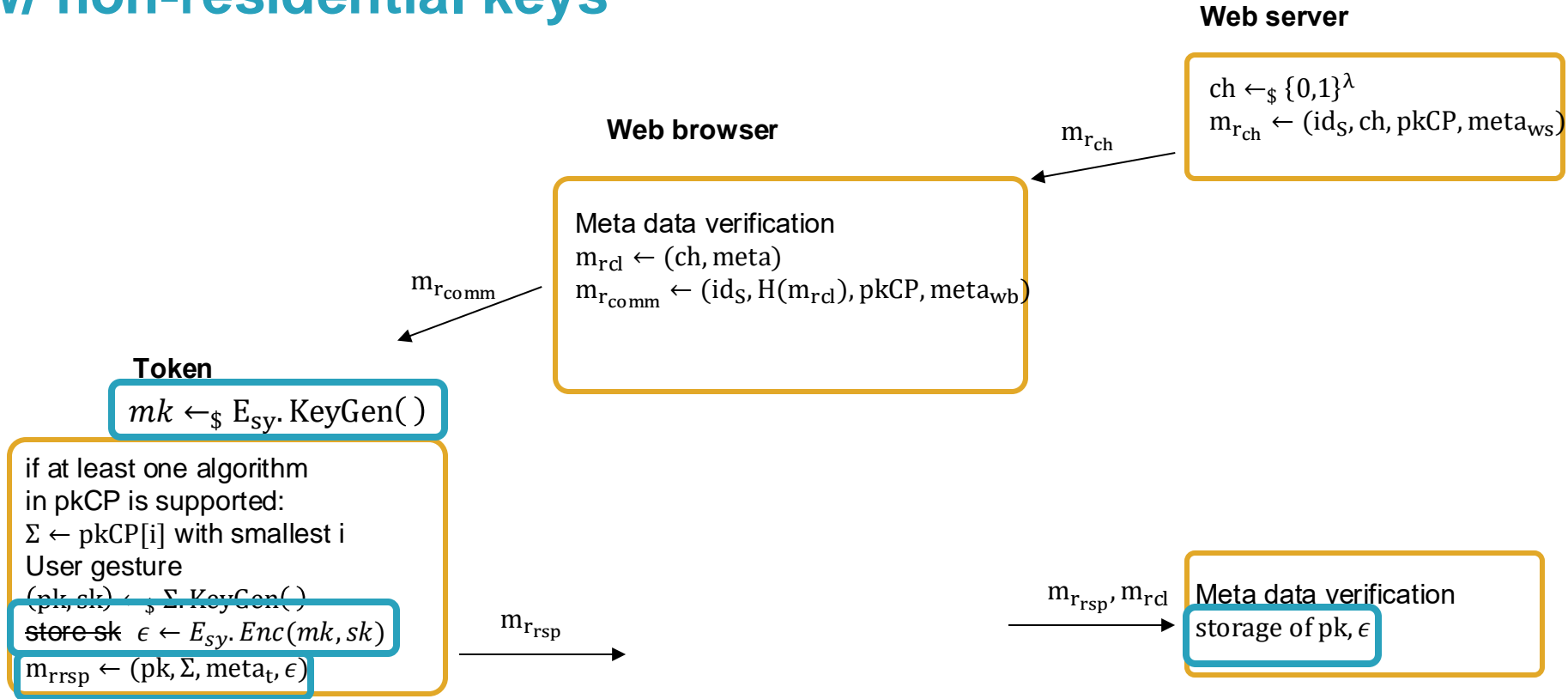
# of servers to register with is limited by token storage space.

## Non-discoverable (non-residential) credentials

Private keys are stored in the remote servers, encrypted with a token master key.

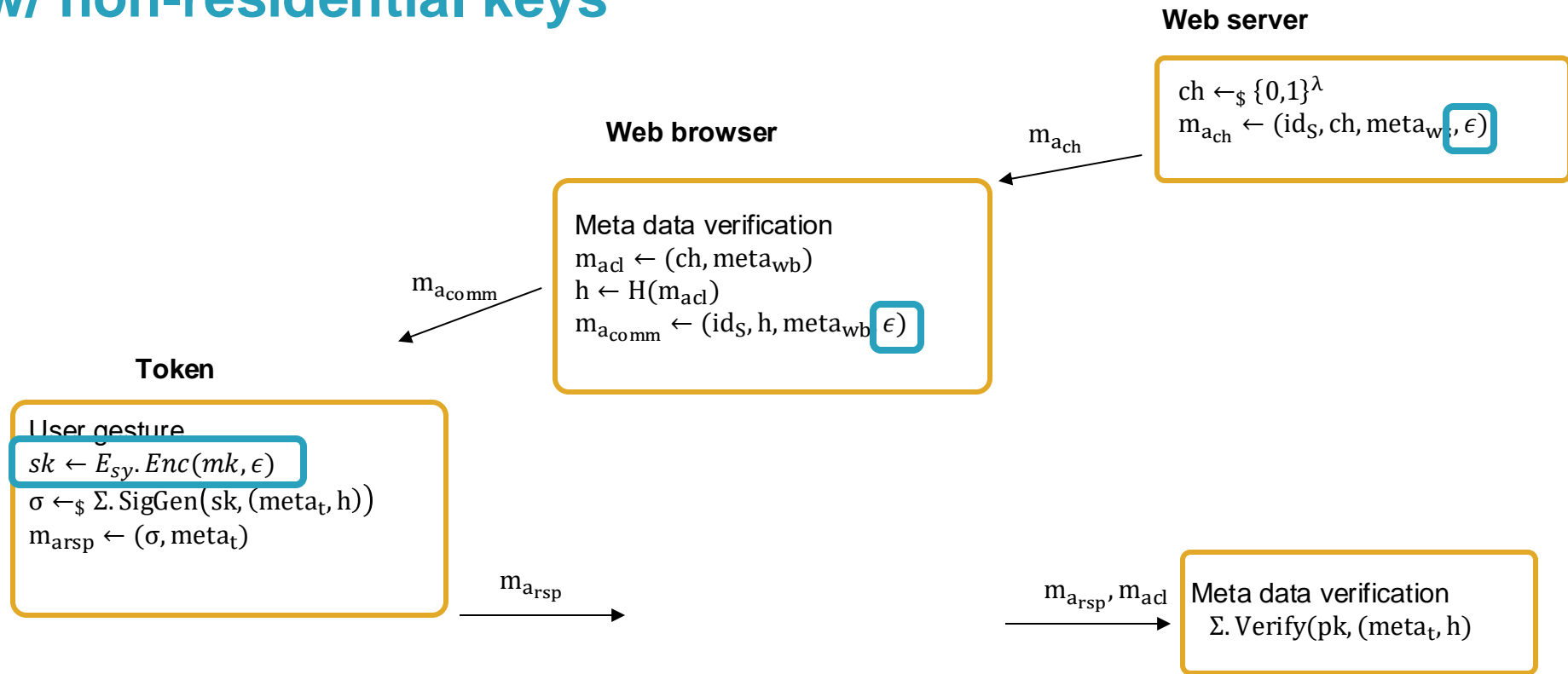
# of servers to register with is potentially unlimited.

# Cryptographic details of registration flow w/ non-residential keys



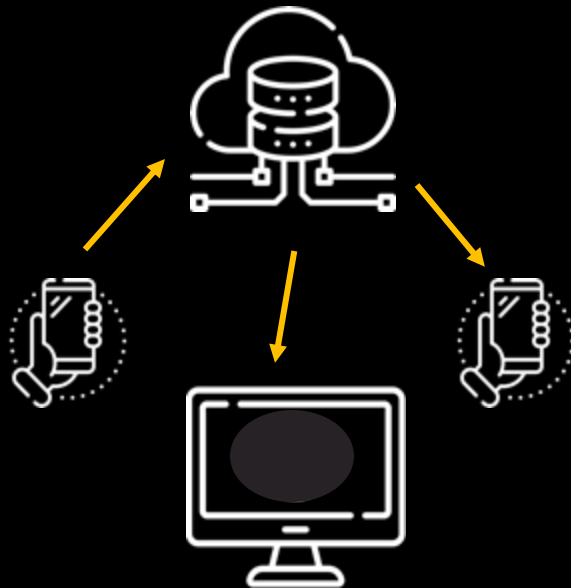


# Cryptographic details of authentication flow w/ non-residential keys



# Passkeys = FIDO2 + credential synchronisation

- They are **discoverable** / **resident** FIDO credentials
- **Cross-device authentication**
- **Synced passkeys:**
  - E2E across all devices on Passkey provider
  - Since very recently, proposal to sync over different platform possible
- Hardware-bound credentials can still be enforced for critical applications
- Attestation can become crucial to understand how a credential is managed



# FIDO2 protocol options

*We have seen so far...*

- FIDO2 base protocol (WebAuthn + CTAP) = FIDO2 w/o attestation
- FIDO2 + attestation
- FIDO2 with different credential storing options
  - non-residential / non-discoverable
  - residential / discoverable
    - Passkeys

*Next ...*

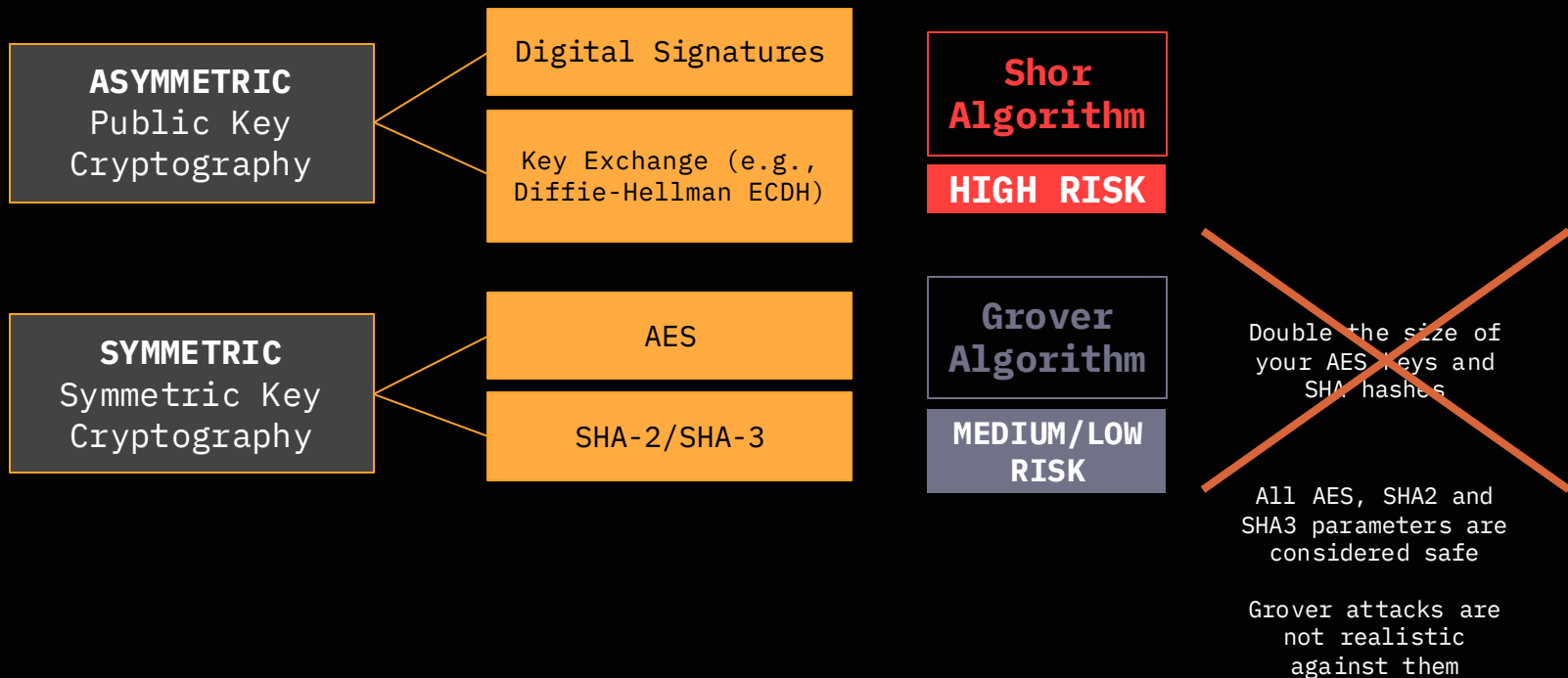
- Is FIDO2 Post-Quantum secure?



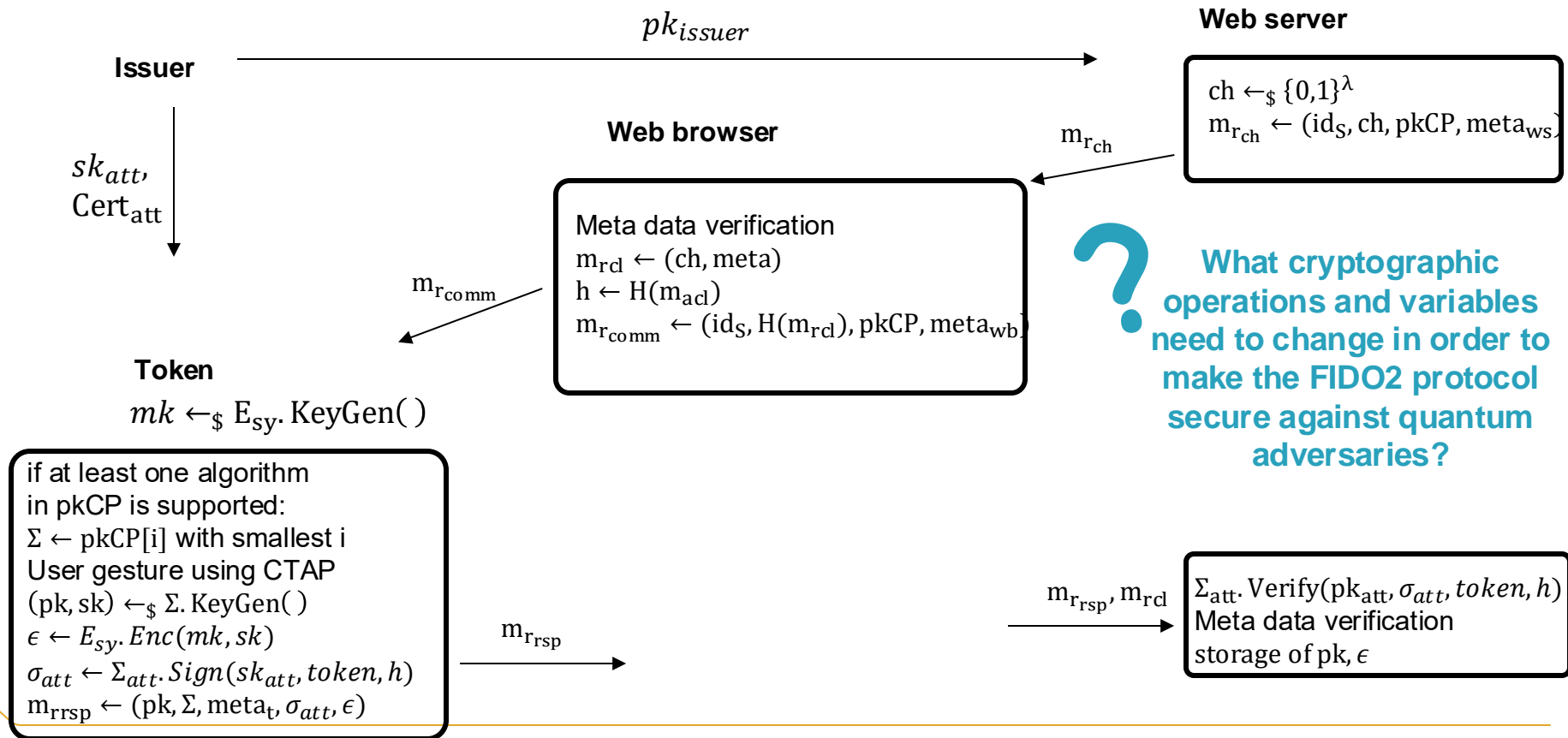
**03**

**PQ FIDO2**

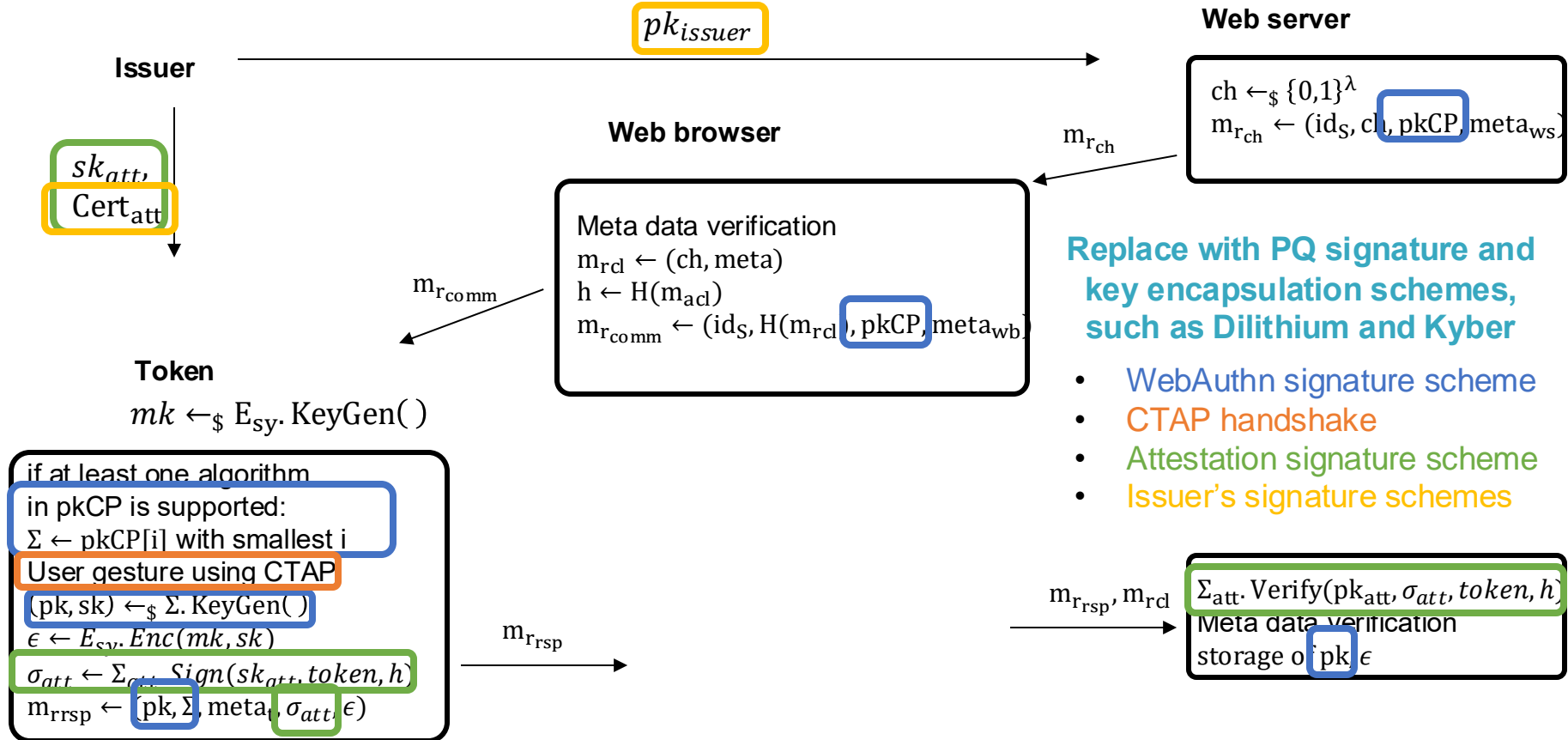
# Cryptography at risk



# Registration flow w/ attestation and non-residential keys









# Registration flow w/ attestation and non-residential keys



For more details on PQ FIDO2 see <https://eprint.iacr.org/2022/1029>

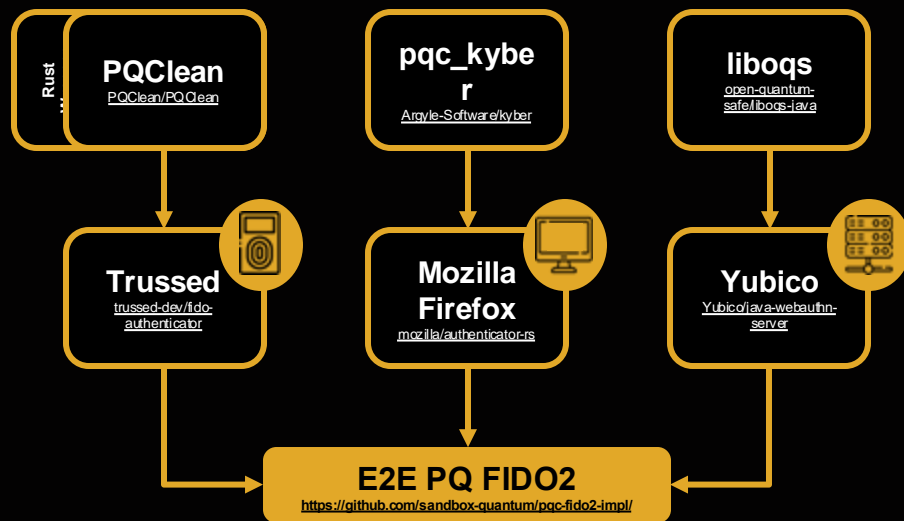
# Object sizes (w/ CTAP)



Algorithm	PQ	option object		<div><div><div>Public key</div><div>Signature</div></div><div>attestation/assertion object</div><div>credential object</div></div>	
		reg.	auth.	registration	authentication
ECDSA256 (observed)				 attestation	
				 no attestation	
Dilithium-3 (observed)				 attestation	
				 none	



# End-to-end open source PQC Fido2 implementation

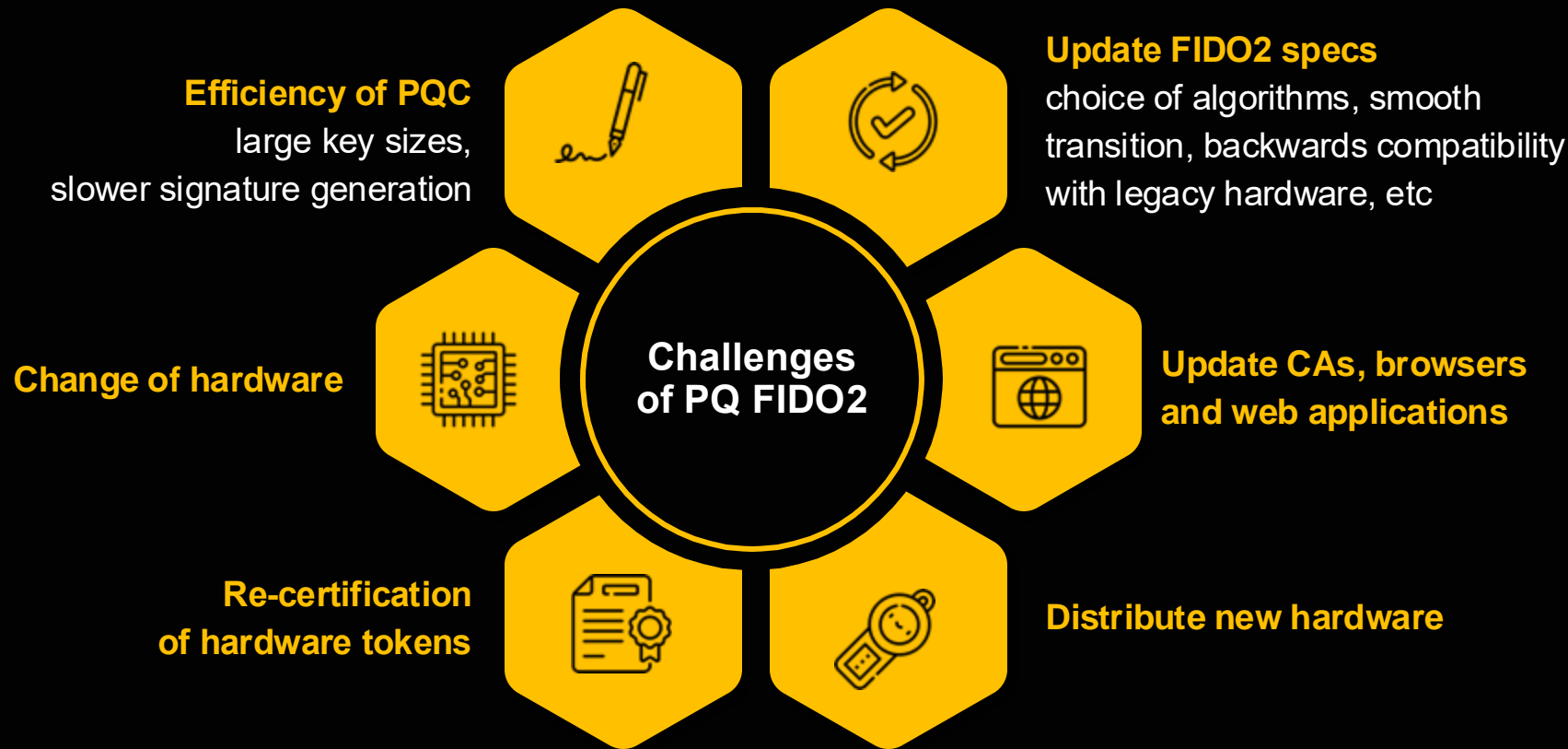


- E2E PQ FIDO2 OSS using Kyber and Dilithium on Git
- Blog post
- Presentation

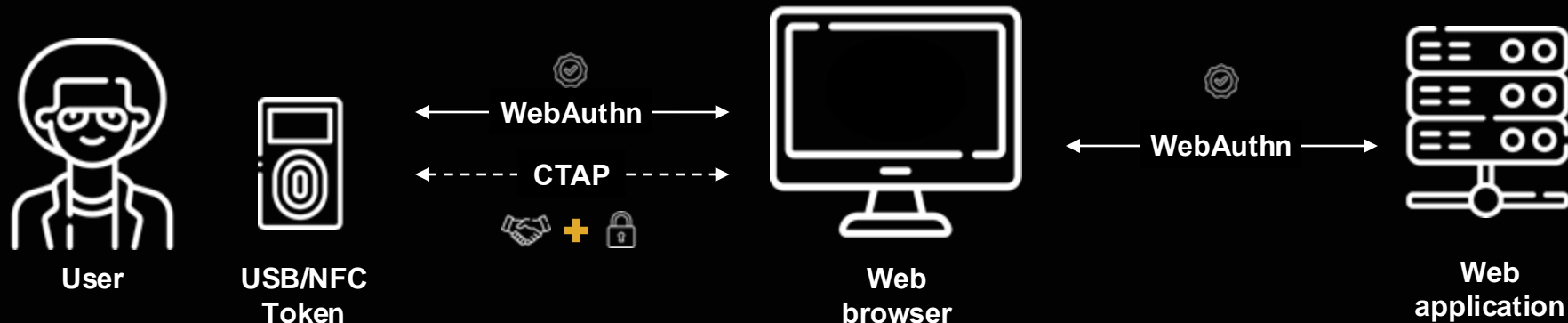


04

# Challenges to make Passkeys quantum secure



# Summary



- FIDO2/Passkeys protocol alternative to password-based log-in
- Cryptographic protocol flow of registration and authenticational (with variants):
  - Digital signature schemes (authentication and attestation)
  - Key agreement (DH key exchange, of Kyber KEM)
  - Hash functions
  - Symmetric encryption
- Discussion of challenges of PQC migration of the FIDO2 system