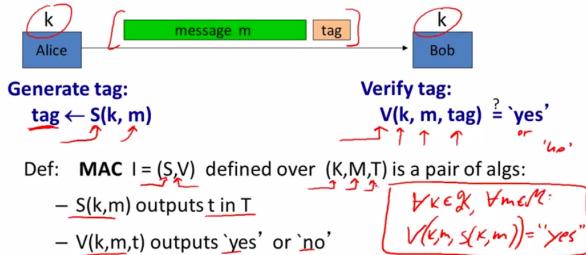


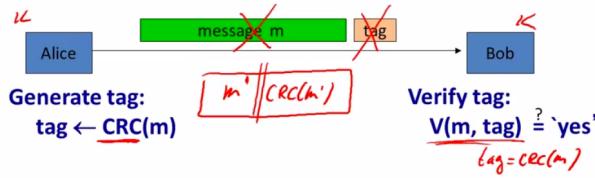
- **Message Integrity 1: definitions**
- **Message Authentication Codes**
- Message Integrity
  - Goal: Integrity, no confidentiality
  - Examples:
    - Protecting public binaries on disk
    - Protecting banner ads on web pages
- Message Integrity: MAC

### Message integrity: MACs



- tag 90 bits or 100 bits
- Integrity requires a secret key

### Integrity requires a secret key



- Attacker can easily modify message  $m$  and re-compute CRC.
- CRC designed to detect random, not malicious errors.

- CRC - cyclic redundancy check
- Secure MACs

### Secure MACs

Attacker's power: **chosen message attack**

- for  $m_1, m_2, \dots, m_q$  attacker is given  $t_i \leftarrow S(k, m_i)$

Attacker's goal: **existential forgery**

- produce some new valid message/tag pair  $(m, t)$ .
- $(m, t) \notin \{(m_1, t_1), \dots, (m_q, t_q)\}$

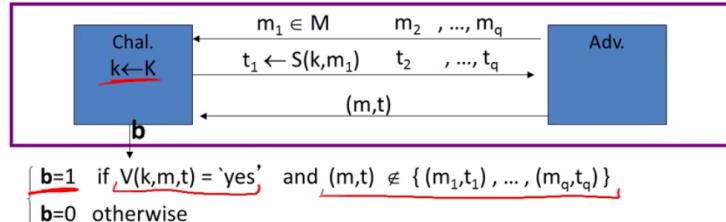
⇒ attacker cannot produce a valid tag for a new message

⇒ given  $(m, t)$ , attacker cannot even produce  $(m, t')$  for  $t' \neq t$

- Secure MACs

## Secure MACs

- For a MAC  $I = (S, V)$  and adv. A define a MAC game as:



Def:  $I = (S, V)$  is a secure MAC if for all “efficient” A:

$$\text{Adv}_{\text{MAC}}[A, I] = \Pr[\text{Chal. outputs 1}] \text{ is “negligible.”}$$

- Example: protecting system files

### Example: protecting system files

Suppose at install time the system computes:



Later a virus infects system and modifies system files

User reboots into clean OS and supplies his password

- Then: secure MAC  $\Rightarrow$  all modified files will be detected

Dan Boneh

- **MACs Based On PRFs**

- Review: Secure MACs

### Review: Secure MACs

MAC: signing alg.  $S(k, m) \rightarrow t$  and verification alg.  $V(k, m, t) \rightarrow 0, 1$

Attacker's power: **chosen message attack**

- for  $m_1, m_2, \dots, m_q$  attacker is given  $t_i \leftarrow S(k, m_i)$

Attacker's goal: **existential forgery**

- produce some new valid message/tag pair  $(m, t)$ .  

$$(m, t) \notin \{(m_1, t_1), \dots, (m_q, t_q)\}$$

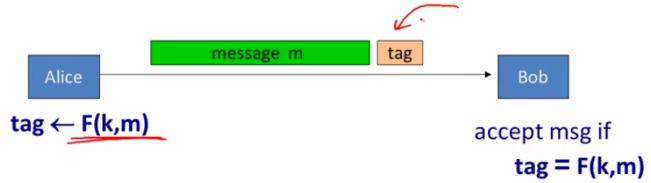
$\Rightarrow$  attacker cannot produce a valid tag for a new message

- Secure PRF  $\Rightarrow$  Secure MAC

## Secure PRF $\Rightarrow$ Secure MAC

For a PRF  $F: K \times X \rightarrow Y$  define a MAC  $I_F = (S, V)$  as:

- $S(k, m) := F(k, m)$
- $V(k, m, t)$ : output 'yes' if  $t = F(k, m)$  and 'no' otherwise.



### - Security

#### Security

Thm: If  $F: K \times X \rightarrow Y$  is a secure PRF and  $1/|Y|$  is negligible (i.e.  $|Y|$  is large) then  $I_F$  is a secure MAC.

In particular, for every eff. MAC adversary A attacking  $I_F$  there exists an eff. PRF adversary B attacking  $F$  s.t.:

$$\text{Adv}_{\text{MAC}}[A, I_F] \leq \text{Adv}_{\text{PRF}}[B, F] + 1/|Y|$$

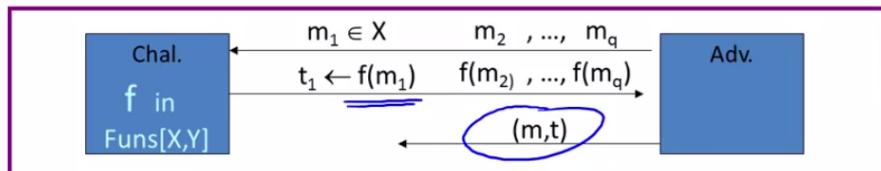
$\Rightarrow I_F$  is secure as long as  $|Y|$  is large, say  $|Y| = 2^{80}$ .

### - Proof Sketch

#### Proof Sketch

Suppose  $f: X \rightarrow Y$  is a truly random function

Then MAC adversary A must win the following game:



A wins if  $t = f(m)$  and  $m \notin \{m_1, \dots, m_q\}$

$\Rightarrow \Pr[A \text{ wins}] = 1/|Y|$

same must hold for  $F(k, x)$

Dan Boi

- Examples

## Examples

- AES: a MAC for 16-byte messages. ↙
- Main question: how to convert Small-MAC into a Big-MAC ?
- Two main constructions used in practice:
  - CBC-MAC (banking – ANSI X9.9, X9.19, FIPS 186-3)
  - HMAC (Internet protocols: SSL, IPsec, SSH, ...)
- Both convert a small-PRF into a big-PRF.

- Truncating MACs based on PRFs

## Truncating MACs based on PRFs

Easy lemma: suppose  $F: K \times X \rightarrow \{0,1\}^n$  is a secure PRF.

Then so is  $F_t(k, m) = \underbrace{F(k, m)[1 \dots t]}_{\text{output the first } t \text{ bits}}$  for all  $1 \leq t \leq n$

⇒ if  $(S, V)$  is a MAC is based on a secure PRF outputting  $n$ -bit tags  
 the truncated MAC outputting  $w$  bits is secure  
 ... as long as  $1/2^w$  is still negligible (say  $w \geq 64$ )

- MACs and PRFs

## MACs and PRFs

Recall: secure PRF  $F \Rightarrow$  secure MAC, as long as  $|Y|$  is large

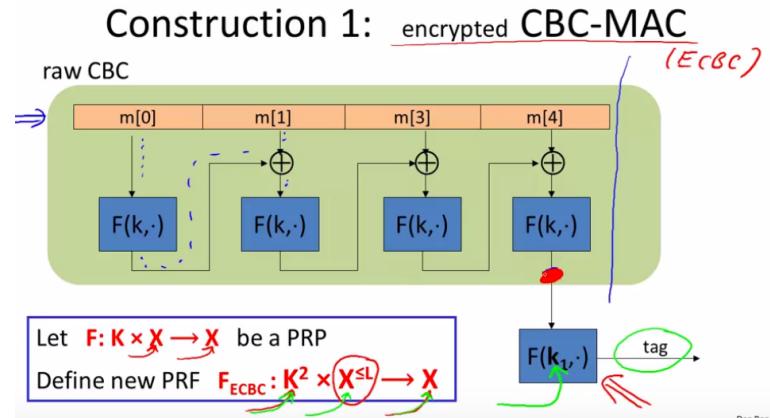
$$S(k, m) = \underbrace{F(k, m)}_{\text{large}} \quad \text{large}$$

Our goal:

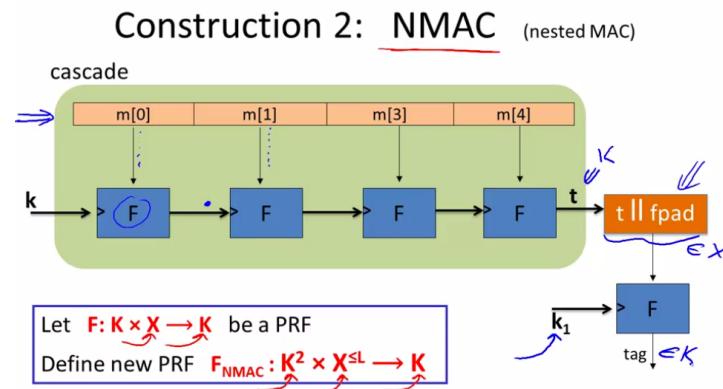
given a PRF for short messages (AES)  
construct a PRF for long messages.

From here on let  $X = \{0,1\}^n$  (e.g.  $n=128$ )

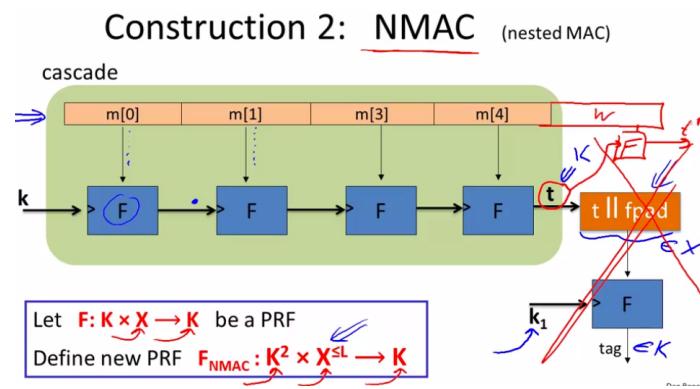
- Construction 1: ECBC-MAC



- Construction 2: NMAC



- Not secure if only cascade



- extension attack are the attacks on cascade
- Why the last encryption step in ECBC-MAC?

Suppose we define a MAC  $I_{RAW} = (S, V)$  where

$$S(k, m) = \text{rawCBC}(k, m)$$

Then  $I_{RAW}$  is easily broken using a 1-chosen msg attack.

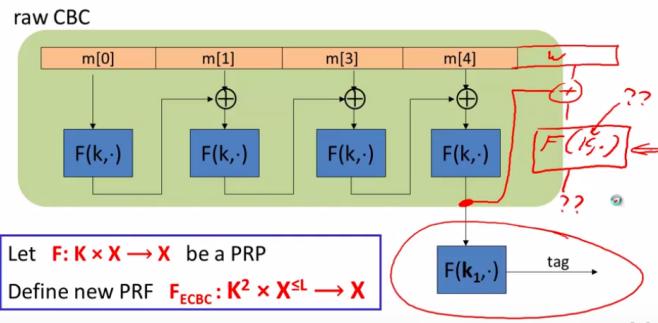
Adversary works as follows:

- Choose an arbitrary one-block message  $m \in X$
- Request tag for  $m$ . Get  $t = F(k, m)$
- Output  $t$  as MAC forgery for the 2-block message  $(m, t \oplus m)$

$$\text{Indeed: } \text{rawCBC}(k, (m, t \oplus m)) = F(k, F(k, m) \oplus (t \oplus m)) = F(k, t \oplus (t \oplus m)) = t$$

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### - Construction 1: ECBC-MAC



### - ECBE-MAC and NMAC analysis

Theorem: For any  $L > 0$ ,

For every eff.  $q$ -query PRF adv.  $A$  attacking  $F_{\text{ECBC}}$  or  $F_{\text{NMAC}}$   
there exists an eff. adversary  $B$  s.t.:

$$\text{Adv}_{\text{PRF}}[A, F_{\text{ECBC}}] \leq \text{Adv}_{\text{PRP}}[B, F] + 2q^2 / |X|$$

$$\text{Adv}_{\text{PRF}}[A, F_{\text{NMAC}}] \leq q \cdot L \cdot \text{Adv}_{\text{PRP}}[B, F] + q^2 / 2|K|$$

CBC-MAC is secure as long as  $q \ll |X|^{1/2}$

NMAC is secure as long as  $q \ll |K|^{1/2}$  (2<sup>64</sup> for AES-128)

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### - An example

#### An example

$$\text{Adv}_{\text{PRF}}[A, F_{\text{ECBC}}] \leq \text{Adv}_{\text{PRP}}[B, F] + q^2 / |X|$$

$q = \# \text{ messages MAC-ed with } k$

Suppose we want  $\text{Adv}_{\text{PRF}}[A, F_{\text{ECBC}}] \leq 1/2^{32} \Leftrightarrow q^2 / |X| < 1/2^{32}$

- AES:  $|X| = 2^{128} \Rightarrow q < 2^{48}$

So, after  $2^{48}$  messages must change key

- 3DES:  $|X| = 2^{64} \Rightarrow q < 2^{16}$

- The security bounds are tight: an attack

After signing  $|X|^{1/2}$  messages with ECBC-MAC or  
 $|K|^{1/2}$  messages with NMAC  
the MACs become insecure

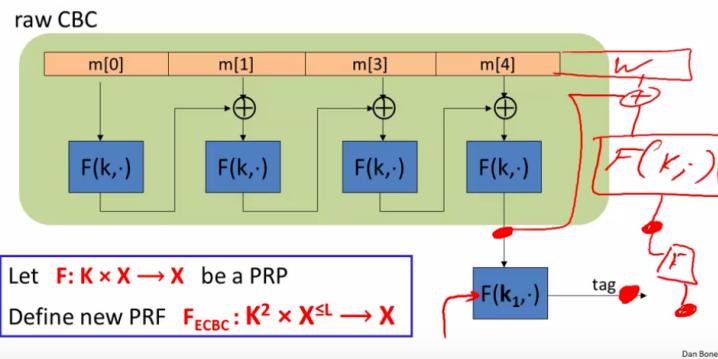
Suppose the underlying PRF  $F$  is a PRP (e.g. AES)

- Then both PRFs (ECBC and NMAC) have the following extension property:

$$\forall x, y, w: F_{\text{BIG}}(k, x) = F_{\text{BIG}}(k, y) \Rightarrow F_{\text{BIG}}(k, x||w) = F_{\text{BIG}}(k, y||w)$$

- if two messages are the same after the output of the raw CBC function then adding another block will be computing the same value and when encrypting will get the same output and final output. If two values are the same for two distinct messages if appending w will get the same output for both of the messages.

- Construction 1: ECBC-MAC



- The security bounds are tight: an attack

Let  $F_{\text{BIG}}: K \times X \rightarrow Y$  be a PRF that has the extension property

$$F_{\text{BIG}}(k, x) = F_{\text{BIG}}(k, y) \Rightarrow F_{\text{BIG}}(k, x||w) = F_{\text{BIG}}(k, y||w)$$

Generic attack on the derived MAC:

step 1: issue  $|Y|^{1/2}$  message queries for rand. messages in  $X$ .

obtain  $(m_i, t_i)$  for  $i = 1, \dots, |Y|^{1/2}$

step 2: find a collision  $t_u = t_v$  for  $u \neq v$  (one exists w.h.p by b-day paradox)

step 3: choose some  $w$  and query for  $t := F_{\text{BIG}}(k, m_u||w)$

step 4: output forgery  $(m_v||w, t)$ . Indeed  $t := F_{\text{BIG}}(k, m_v||w)$

- Comparison

ECBC-MAC is commonly used as an AES-based MAC

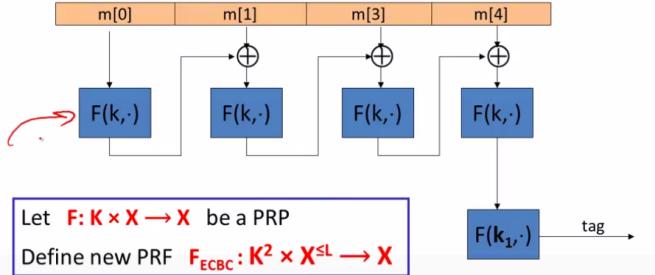
- CCM encryption mode (used in 802.11i)

- NIST standard called CMAC

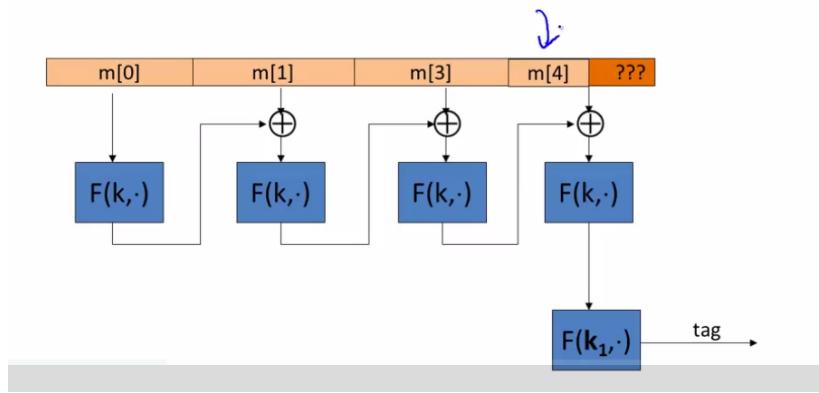
NMAC not usually used with AES or 3DES

- Main reason: need to change AES key on every block  
requires re-computing AES key expansion
- But NMAC is the basis for a popular MAC called HMAC (next)

- MAC Padding
- Recall: ECBC-MAC



- What is msg. len. is not multiple of block size?



- CBC MAC Padding
  - padding function must be invertible that guarantees that the padding function is one to one

For security, padding must be invertible !

$$m_0 \neq m_1 \Rightarrow \text{pad}(m_0) \neq \text{pad}(m_1)$$

ISO: pad with “1000...00”. Add new dummy block if needed.

– The “1” indicates beginning of pad.



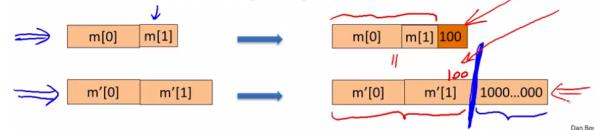
- scan the message from right to left when reach first one remove the padding
- have to add a dummy block if the message is a multiple of the block length to begin with

For security, padding must be invertible !

$$m_0 \neq m_1 \Rightarrow \text{pad}(m_0) \neq \text{pad}(m_1)$$

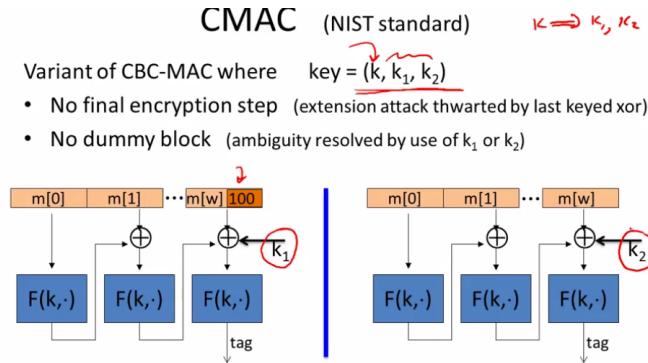
ISO: pad with “1000...00”. Add new dummy block if needed.

– The “1” indicates beginning of pad.



Dan Bone

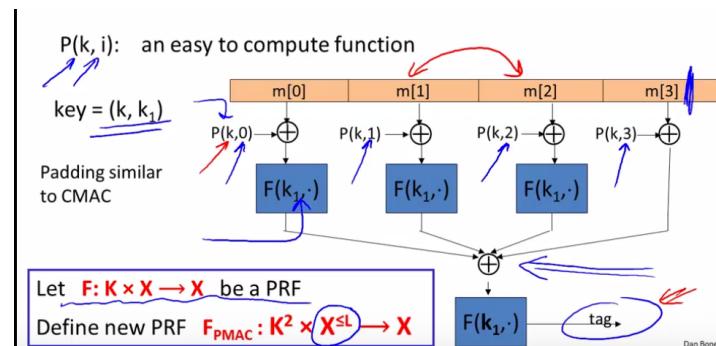
- CMAC (NIST standard)
  - impossible to do extension attack because the adversary does not know the last block that went into the function



- **Message Integrity 3: more constructions**

- **PMAC and the Carter-Wegman MAC**

- Construction 3: PMAC - parallel MAC
  - P is blocking the block swapping attack



- PMAC: Analysis

PMAC Theorem: For any  $L > 0$ ,

If  $F$  is a secure PRF over  $(K, X, X)$  then

$F_{\text{PMAC}}$  is a secure PRF over  $(K, X^{\leq L}, X)$ .

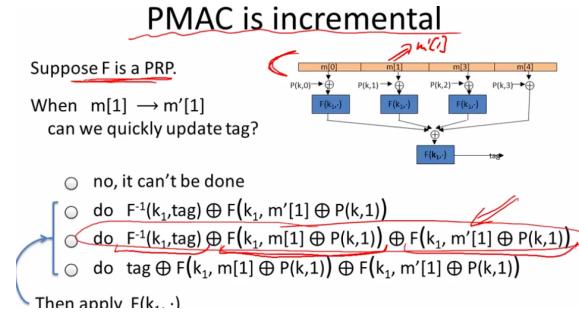
For every eff.  $q$ -query PRF adv.  $A$  attacking  $F_{\text{PMAC}}$  there exists an eff. PRF adversary  $B$  s.t.:

$$\text{Adv}_{\text{PRF}}[A, F_{\text{PMAC}}] \leq \text{Adv}_{\text{PRF}}[B, F] + 2q^2 L^2 / |X|$$

PMAC is secure as long as  $qL \ll |X|^{1/2}$

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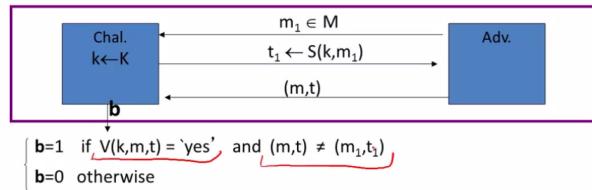
- PMAC is incremental



- One time MAC (analog of one time pad)

### One time MAC (analog of one time pad)

- For a MAC  $I = (S, V)$  and adv.  $A$  define a MAC game as:



Def:  $I = (S, V)$  is a secure MAC if for all "efficient"  $A$ :

$$\text{Adv}_{\text{MAC}}[A, I] = \Pr[\text{Chal. outputs 1}] \text{ is "negligible."}$$

- One-time MAC: an example

- pick a prime number that is larger than the block size that is being used.

Can be secure against all adversaries and faster than PRF-based MACs

Let  $q$  be a large prime (e.g.  $q = 2^{128} + 51$ )

key =  $(k, a) \in \{1, \dots, q\}^2$  (two random ints. in  $[1, q]$ )

msg =  $(m[1], \dots, m[L])$  where each block is 128 bit int.

$$S(\text{key}, \text{msg}) = P_{\text{msg}}(k) + a \pmod{q}$$

where  $P_{\text{msg}}(x) = m[L] \cdot x^L + \dots + m[1] \cdot x$  is a poly. of deg L.

Fact: given  $S(\text{key}, \text{msg}_1)$  adv. has no info about  $S(\text{key}, \text{msg}_2)$

Peter Reiher

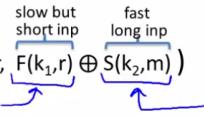
- One-time MAC  $\rightarrow$  Many-time MAC

Let  $(S, V)$  be a secure one-time MAC over  $(K, M, \{0, 1\}^n)$ .

Let  $F: K_F \times \{0, 1\}^n \rightarrow \{0, 1\}^n$  be a secure PRF.

Carter-Wegman MAC:  $CW((k_1, k_2), m) = (r, F(k_1, r) \oplus S(k_2, m))$

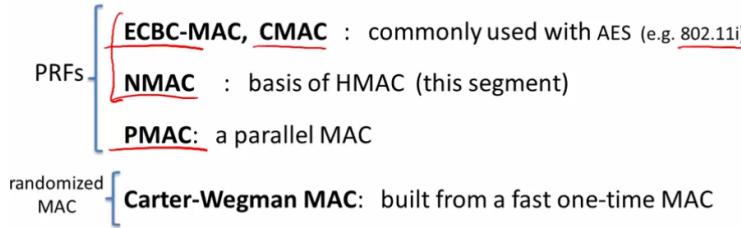
for random  $r \leftarrow \{0, 1\}^n$ .



Thm: If  $(S, V)$  is a secure **one-time** MAC and  $F$  a secure PRF then  $CW$  is a secure MAC outputting tags in  $\{0, 1\}^{2n}$ .

- Construction 4: HMAC (Hash-MAC)
- **Collision Resistance 1: what is a collision resistant function?**
- **Introduction**
- Recap: message integrity
  - secure if an attacker is given a tag an arbitrary message of choice cannot construct a tag for a new message

So far, four MAC constructions:

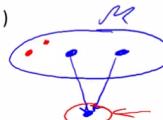


- Collision Resistance

Let  $H: M \rightarrow T$  be a hash function ( $|M| \gg |T|$ )

A collision for  $H$  is a pair  $m_0, m_1 \in M$  such that:

$$H(m_0) = H(m_1) \text{ and } m_0 \neq m_1$$



A function  $H$  is collision resistant if for all (explicit) "eff" algs.  $A$ :

$$\text{Adv}_{\text{CR}}[A, H] = \Pr[A \text{ outputs collision for } H]$$

is "neg".

Example: SHA-256 (outputs 256 bits) ←

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- MACs from Collision Resistance

Let  $I = (S, V)$  be a MAC for short messages over  $(K, M, T)$  (e.g. AES)

Let  $H: M^{\text{big}} \rightarrow M$

Def:  $I^{\text{big}} = (S^{\text{big}}, V^{\text{big}})$  over  $(K, M^{\text{big}}, T)$  as:

$$S^{\text{big}}(k, m) = S(k, H(m)) ; V^{\text{big}}(k, m, t) = V(k, H(m), t)$$

Thm: If  $I$  is a secure MAC and  $H$  is collision resistant  
 then  $I^{\text{big}}$  is a secure MAC.

Example:  $S(k, m) = \text{AES}_{2\text{-block-cbc}}(k, \text{SHA-256}(m))$  is a secure MAC.

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$$S^{\text{big}}(k, m) = S(k, H(m)) ; V^{\text{big}}(k, m, t) = V(k, H(m), t)$$

Collision resistance is necessary for security:

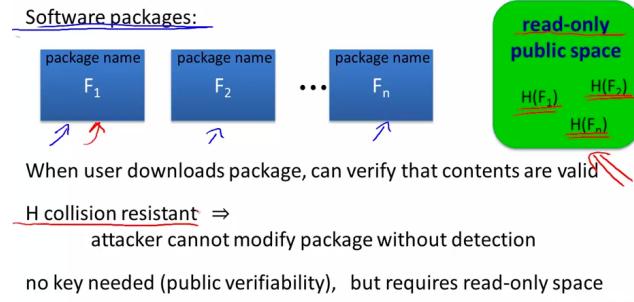
Suppose adversary can find  $m_0 \neq m_1$  s.t.  $H(m_0) = H(m_1)$ .

Then:  $S^{\text{big}}$  is insecure under a 1-chosen msg attack

step 1: adversary asks for  $t \leftarrow S(k, m_0)$

step 2: output  $(m_1, t)$  as forgery

- Protecting file integrity using C.R. hash



- The value of his hash will not map to the value in the public space
- **Generic Birthday Attack**
- Generic attack on C.R. functions

Let  $H: M \rightarrow \{0,1\}^n$  be a hash function ( $|M| >> 2^n$ )  
 Generic alg. to find a collision in time  $O(2^{n/2})$  hashes

Algorithm:

1. Choose  $2^{n/2}$  random messages in  $M: m_1, \dots, m_{2^{n/2}}$  (distinct w.h.p.)
2. For  $i = 1, \dots, 2^{n/2}$  compute  $t_i = H(m_i) \in \{0,1\}^n$
3. Look for a collision ( $t_i = t_j$ ). If not found, got back to step 1.

How well will this work?

- The birthday paradox

Let  $r_1, \dots, r_n \in \{1, \dots, B\}$  be indep. identically distributed integers.

Thm: when  $n = 1.2 \times B^{1/2}$  then  $\Pr[\exists i \neq j: r_i = r_j] \geq \frac{1}{2}$

Proof: (for uniform indep.  $r_1, \dots, r_n$ )

$$\begin{aligned} \Pr[\exists i \neq j: r_i = r_j] &= 1 - \Pr[\forall i \neq j: r_i \neq r_j] = 1 - \left(\frac{B-1}{B}\right)\left(\frac{B-2}{B}\right) \cdots \left(\frac{B-n+1}{B}\right) = \\ &= 1 - \prod_{i=1}^{n-1} \left(1 - \frac{1}{B}\right) \geq 1 - \prod_{i=1}^{n-1} e^{-1/B} = 1 - e^{-\frac{1}{B} \sum_{i=1}^{n-1} 1} \geq 1 - e^{-n^2/2B} \\ &\quad \text{Since } n = 1.2 \times B^{1/2} \Rightarrow n^2 = 1.44B \geq 2B \Rightarrow -n^2/2B \leq -B/2 \Rightarrow e^{-n^2/2B} \leq e^{-B/2} = e^{-0.5B} = 0.53 > \frac{1}{2} \end{aligned}$$

- Generic attack

$H: M \rightarrow \{0,1\}^n$ . Collision finding algorithm:

1. Choose  $2^{n/2}$  random elements in  $M: m_1, \dots, m_{2^{n/2}}$
2. For  $i = 1, \dots, 2^{n/2}$  compute  $t_i = H(m_i) \in \{0,1\}^n$
3. Look for a collision ( $t_i = t_j$ ). If not found, got back to step 1.

Expected number of iteration  $\approx 2$

Running time:  $O(2^{n/2})$  (space  $O(2^{n/2})$ )

- Sample C.R. hash functions

	digest size (bits)	Speed (MB/sec)	generic attack time
NIST standards	SHA-1	160	$2^{80}$
	SHA-256	256	$2^{128}$
	SHA-512	512	$2^{256}$
Whirlpool	512	57	$2^{256}$

- Collision Resistance 2: Constructions
- Collision resistance: review

Let  $H: M \rightarrow T$  be a hash function ( $|M| \gg |T|$ )

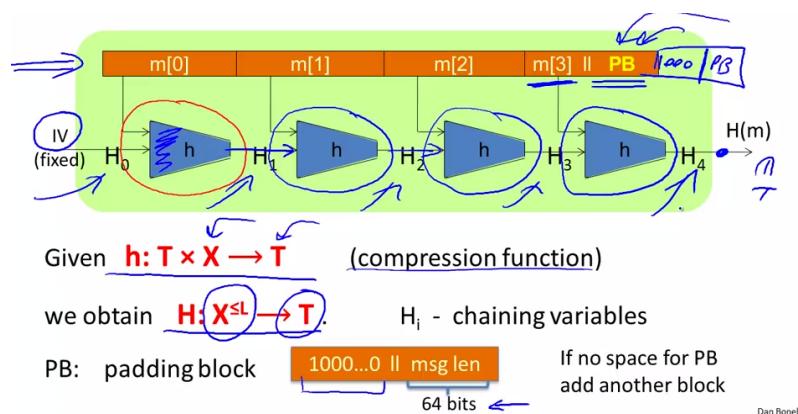
A collision for  $H$  is a pair  $m_0, m_1 \in M$  such that:

$$\underbrace{H(m_0) = H(m_1)}_{\text{and}} \quad \underline{m_0 \neq m_1}$$

Goal: collision resistant (C.R.) hash functions

Step 1: given C.R. function for short messages,  
construct C.R. function for long messages

- The Merkle-Damgård iterated construction



- MD collision resistance
  - candidate collision for the compression function
  - arguments have to be distinct if the arguments are the same then don't have a collision for the compression function

Thm: if  $h$  is collision resistant then so is  $H$ .

Proof: collision on  $H$   $\Rightarrow$  collision on  $h$

Suppose  $H(M) = H(M')$ . We build collision for  $h$ .

$$\begin{aligned} IV &= H_0, H_1, \dots, H_t, H_{t+1} = H(M) \\ &\quad // \quad // \\ IV' &= H'_0, H'_1, \dots, H'_r, H'_{r+1} = H(M') \\ &\quad // \quad // \\ h(H_t, M_t \parallel PB) &= H_{t+1} = H'_{r+1} = h(H'_r, M'_r \parallel PB') \end{aligned}$$

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$H_t \neq H'_r$  or  
 $M_t \neq M'_r$  or  
 $PB \neq PB'$   
 $\Rightarrow$  coll. for  $h$

Suppose  $H_t = H'_r$  and  $M_t = M'_r$  and  $PB = PB'$

Then:  $h(H_{t-1}, M_{t-1}) = H_t = H'_r = h(H'_{t-1}, M'_{t-1})$

$$\begin{cases} H_{t-1} \neq H'_{t-1} \\ \text{or} \\ M_{t-1} \neq M'_{t-1} \end{cases} \Rightarrow \text{coll. for } h$$

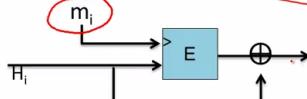
It's ok to suppose  $H_{t-1} = H'_{t-1}$   
 and  $M_{t-1} = M'_{t-1}$  and  $M_t = M'_r$

Iterate to begin of msg:  
 (1) find coll. for  $h$ , or  
 (2) try:  $M_i \neq M'_i \Rightarrow M = M'$

- If little function is collision resistance then the big function is collision resistance
- To construct collision resistance function, suffices to construct compression function
- **Constructing Compression Functions**
- Compression function from a block cipher

$E: K \times \{0,1\}^n \rightarrow \{0,1\}^n$  a block cipher.

The Davies-Meyer compression function:  $h(H, m) = E(m, H) \oplus H$



Thm: Suppose  $E$  is an ideal cipher (collection of  $|K|$  random perms.).  
 Finding a collision  $h(H, m) = h(H', m')$  takes  $O(2^{n/2})$  evaluations of  $(E, D)$ .

Best possible !!

Suppose we define  $h(H, m) = E(m, H)$

Then the resulting  $h(.,.)$  is not collision resistant:

to build a collision  $(H, m)$  and  $(H', m')$

choose random  $(H, m, m')$  and construct  $H'$  as follows:

- $\Rightarrow$
- $H' = D(m', E(m, H)) \Rightarrow E(m', H) = E(m, H)$
  - $H' = E(m', D(m, H))$
  - $H' = E(m', E(m, H))$
  - $H' = D(m', D(m, H))$

- Other block cipher constructions

Let  $E: \{0,1\}^n \times \{0,1\}^n \rightarrow \{0,1\}^n$  for simplicity

Miyaguchi-Preneel:  $\underline{h(H, m) = E(m, H) \oplus H \oplus m}$  (Whirlpool)

$\underline{h(H, m) = E(H \oplus m, m) \oplus m}$

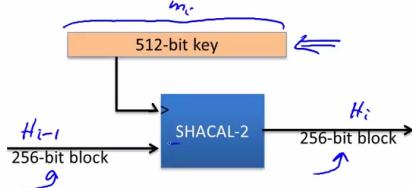
total of 12 variants like this

Other natural variants are insecure:

$\underline{h(H, m) = E(m, H) \oplus m}$  (HW)

- Case study: SHA-256

- Merkle-Damgård function
- Davies-Meyer compression function
- Block cipher: SHACAL-2



- Provable compression functions

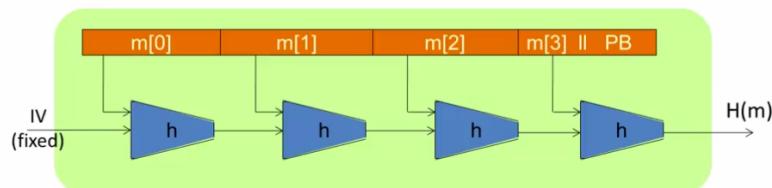
Choose a random 2000-bit prime  $p$  and random  $1 \leq u, v \leq p$ .

For  $m, h \in \{0, \dots, p-1\}$  define  $\underline{h(H, m) = u^H \cdot v^m \pmod{p}}$

Fact: finding collision for  $h(., .)$  is as hard as solving "discrete-log" modulo  $p$ .

Problem: slow.

- HMAC: a MAC from a hash function
- HMAC
- The Merkle-Damgård iterated construction



Thm: h collision resistant  $\Rightarrow$  H collision resistant

Can we use  $H(.)$  to directly build a MAC?

- MAC from a Merkle-Damgard Hash Function

H:  $X^{\leq L} \rightarrow T$  a C.R. Merkle-Damgard Hash Function

Attempt #1:  $S(k, m) = H(k \parallel m)$

This MAC is insecure because:

- Given  $H(k \parallel m)$  can compute  $H(w \parallel k \parallel m \parallel PB)$  for any  $w$ .
- Given  $H(k \parallel m)$  can compute  $H(k \parallel m \parallel w)$  for any  $w$ .
- ⇒ ○ Given  $H(k \parallel m)$  can compute  $H(k \parallel m \parallel PB \parallel w)$  for any  $w$ .
- Anyone can compute  $H(k \parallel m)$  for any  $m$ .

- Standardized method: HMAC (Hash-MAC)

Most widely used MAC on the Internet.

H: hash function.

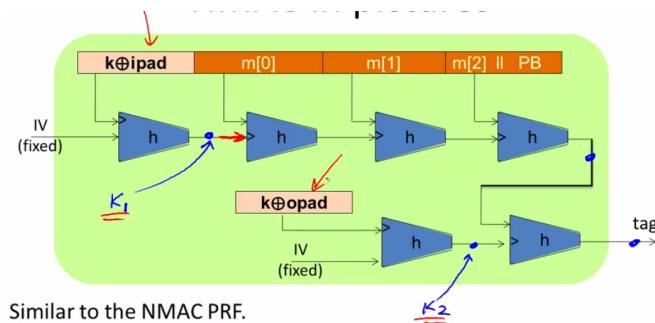
example: SHA-256; output is 256 bits

Building a MAC out of a hash function:

HMAC:  $S(k, m) = H(k \oplus \text{opad}, H(k \oplus \text{ipad} \parallel m))$

Dan Boneh

- HMAC in pictures



- HMAC properties

HMAC is assumed to be a secure PRF

- Can be proven under certain PRF assumptions about  $h(.,.)$
- Security bounds similar to NMAC
  - Need  $q^2/|T|$  to be negligible ( $q \ll |T|^{\frac{1}{2}}$ )

In TLS: must support HMAC-SHA1-96

- Timing attacks on MAC verification
- Warning: verification timing attacks

Example: Keyczar crypto library (Python) [simplified]

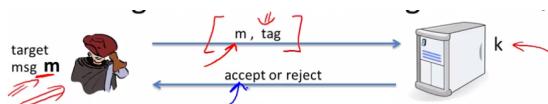
```
def Verify(key, msg, sig_bytes):
    return HMAC(key, msg) == sig_bytes.
```

*16-bytes*

The problem: '==' implemented as a byte-by-byte comparison

- Comparator returns false when first inequality found

- Warning: verification timing attacks



Timing attack: to compute tag for target message m do:

- Step 1: Query server with random tag
- Step 2: Loop over all possible first bytes and query server.  
stop when verification takes a little longer than in step 1
- Step 3: repeat for all tag bytes until valid tag found

- Defense #1

Make string comparator always take same time (Python) :

```
return false if sig_bytes has wrong length ←
result = 0
for x, y in zip(HMAC(key,msg), sig_bytes):
    result |= ord(x) ^ ord(y)
return result == 0
```

Can be difficult to ensure due to optimizing compiler.

- Defense #2
  - doesn't know what strings are being compared

Make string comparator always take same time (Python) :

```
def Verify(key, msg, sig_bytes):
    mac = HMAC(key, msg)
    return HMAC(key, mac) == HMAC(key, sig_bytes)
```

Attacker doesn't know values being compared