Empreinte Sociométrique

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Abstract

We describe an algorithm that takes contact data to represent the social footprint of a person in a secure and universal way. It allows recognizing an identity without sharing or exposing any personal information to any potential eavesdropper. It could evolve with time and may carry the whole contact history of a person, making it possible to verify if he or she matches with even very old data, all without needing any kind of disclosure between parties. Last update: this technique is pending patent.

I. Introduction

Ike a tyre or a shoe leaving a distinctive mark on the ground, or a finger on a glass, each one of us leaves a trace the more specific the richer our social interactions are. In particular, the history of our contact data is every day more distinct to someone else's. Even before we move from our parents house, we start leaving personal trails (a first cell phone, a pseudo we use for a game, ...) and, of course, our full civil status (names, date of birth, etc.).

Of course, we wouldn't want to share all these information to everyone. So, ensuring maximum security is obviously mandatory when it comes to manipulating personal data.

We herein describe a way to build such a safe footprint that we call *Empreinte Sociométrique*[1] and that is both totally secure, thanks to the use of strong pseudonymization techniques, and particularly effective, that is it ensures that, even though two different *Empreintes Sociométriques* don't look quite alike, they might be representing the same person, but no external stakeholder may ever know.

Embedded in a QR Code or used as is, it could become an assistant to any identification device or to further data manipulation, such as secure deduplication and anonymous enrichment, or even blind comparison of customer databases, all in full compliance with the latest regulations (GDPR, CCPA, ...).

II. FORMAL DESCRIPTION

1. General Algorithm

An *Empreinte Sociométrique*¹ takes an input data characterized by its source and its type and operates several operations to form the final elements: its corpus and its signature concatenated into one long string.

Definition 1 (Source Data). A source data ς is the actual contact data we want to print in the *Empreinte Sociométrique*, eg. "Cyril".

It is defined in the *words* space: ω .

Definition 2 (Data Type). We define the data type τ as a code defining which kind of source data we are dealing with, eg. "firstname".

It is defined in a set of data types \mathcal{T}^2 .

Definition 3 (Input Data). We define an input data d_i as a tuple of data type and source data:

$$d_i := [d_i^{\tau}, d_i^{\varsigma}] \text{ with } \left\{ egin{array}{l} d_i^{\tau} \in \mathcal{T}, ext{the data type} \\ d_i^{\varsigma} \in \omega, ext{the source data} \end{array}
ight.$$

Definition 4 (Recombined Contact). A recombined contact is a final contact data potentially made out of different input data.

For example, you can create a recombined address4 by concatenating a streetName with a streetNumber.

Let $\nu: \omega \to \omega$ be a normalization function that takes an input data and returns its normalized counterpart.

 $^{^{*} \}mbox{filed}$ under registration number FR1905778 at INPI on May 29, 2019

¹a literate translation being a *Sociometric Imprint*

 $^{^2}$ see Table 1 for available values in ${\cal T}$

And let $\rho: \omega^n \to \omega$ be a recombination function that takes several input data to build a missing recombined contact.

Finally, let $\mathfrak{h}()$ be a cryptographic hashing function³, $\mathfrak{c}(msg, key)$ an encryption function and $\zeta()$ a compression algorithm.

Algorithm 1: Overall construction

```
Input: A vector \mathbf{d} := \{d_1, d_2, \dots, d_n\} of input data, a key K
```

Output: The *Empreinte Sociométrique* or an error

1 if $d = \emptyset$ then

3 initialize the set of normalized data $\mathcal{D} \leftarrow \emptyset$;

4 for
$$i \leftarrow 0$$
 to n by 1 do
5 | if $d_i^{\tau} \not\in \mathcal{T}$ then
6 | continue;

7 normalize input data: $d_{Norm} \leftarrow \nu(d_i)$;

8 if
$$d_{Norm} \neq \emptyset$$
 then 9 $\mathcal{D} \leftarrow d_{Norm}$;

10 create the set of recombined contacts \mathcal{R} from the normalized data: $\mathcal{R} \leftarrow \rho(\mathcal{D})$;

initialize the vector of ciphered contacts $\mathcal{C} \leftarrow \emptyset$;

12 for
$$i \leftarrow 0$$
 to $\|\mathcal{R}\|$ by 1 do
13 $\mid \mathcal{C} \leftarrow \mathfrak{h}(\mathcal{R}_i);$

14 initialize the sets of categorized contacts:

 \mathcal{V} the variants, and $\overline{\mathcal{V}}$ the invariants;

15 **for**
$$i \leftarrow 0$$
 to $\|\mathcal{C}\|$ **by** 1 **do**
16 | **if** \mathcal{C}_i is invariant **then**
17 | $\overline{\mathcal{V}} \leftarrow \mathcal{C}_i$;
18 | **else**
19 | $\mathcal{V} \leftarrow \mathcal{C}_i$;

build the corpus c using \mathcal{V} and $\overline{\mathcal{V}}$;

21 compress it and encrypt it partly to build the *Empreinte Sociométrique*:

$$ES \approx \zeta \circ \mathfrak{c}(c, K);$$

22 return ES;

Algorithm 1 describes the general steps to take that leads from a set of input data to its

Empreinte Sociométrique.

In a nutshell, the whole process could be summed up as follows:

- Data handling;
- Normalization of contact data;
- Recombination to maximize endpoints;
- Ciphering of each endpoint;
- Organization of the corpus;
- Compression;
- Encryption;
- Signature and final packaging.

To ensure maximum security, the whole operation should take place on the data owner side.

2. Step-by-Step Process

As seen in Algorithm 1, the very first step applied to an input data d_i is to check whether it is a valid or not.

At this stage, an input data would be deemed invalid for two reasons:

- The source data is empty: $d_i^{\varsigma} = \emptyset$;
- The data type doesn't exist: $d_i^{\tau} \notin \mathcal{T}$.

Each invalid input data is discarded while each valid one is then applied the normalization function $\nu()$.

2.1 Normalization

The goal of such a normalization is to homogenize source data to make sure the subsequent operations handle equivalent data.

Definition 5 (Equivalence). We speak of data equivalence when we cannot distinguish them from one another after normalization:

$$\forall x, y \in \omega : x \equiv y$$

$$\iff \begin{cases} x^{\tau} = y^{\tau} \\ \|\nu(x)\| = \|\nu(y)\| \\ n \leftarrow \|\nu(x)\|, \forall i := [1..n] : \\ \nu(x)[i] = \nu(y)[i] \end{cases}$$
(2)

In other words, two input data are said equivalent if they share the same data type and their normalized versions are identical.

³set as a system parameter

Normalization could be applied differently depending on the data type d^{τ} .

The following are the transformations that might be applied to an input data source d^{ς} :

• Replacement of punctation and special characters by spaces, eg.

$$\left.\begin{array}{c} - \\ \cdot \\ \cdot \\ * \\ etc. \end{array}\right\} \mapsto \setminus \mathtt{s}$$

• Trim and extraction of excess spaces, eg.

$$\sl My\sl Sdata \mapsto My\sl Sdata = My data$$

- Removal of accents, eg. é \mapsto e, ñ \mapsto n;
- Capitalization, eg. Cyril → CYRIL;
- Dictionary substitution eg.

$$\left. \begin{array}{c} \text{AVE} \\ \text{AVENUE} \\ \text{AVN} \\ \text{AVNU} \end{array} \right\} \longmapsto \text{AV} \qquad \begin{array}{c} \text{F} \\ \text{Madam} \\ \text{Ms} \\ \text{Mrs} \end{array} \right\} \mapsto 2 \quad \textit{etc}.$$

In some case, normalization could transform the source data to a single space which in turn would lead to d_i being discarded.

Example 1. Let

be two source data of the same data type:

$$d_1^{ au}=d_2^{ au}= ext{address4},$$

then we have:

$$\nu(d_1^{\varsigma}) = \nu(d_2^{\varsigma}) = d_2^{\varsigma} \Longrightarrow d_1 \equiv d_2$$

As d_1 and d_2 are equivalent, only one of them would be kept in the set of normalized data \mathcal{D} to pass onto the recombination step.

2.2 Recombination

Once the data will be irreversibly ciphered into the final *Empreinte Sociométrique*, we need to maximize the chance to get a match when using it, the goal of the recombination function ρ

is to provide as many representations as possible of the data.

Each data type may have dozens or even hundreds of possible combinations so we won't detail them here. Instead, we will use an example.

Example 2. Let the vector **d** be the input data:

```
{(gender,Mr.),(firstname,John),
(middle,F.),(lastname,Kennedy),
(streetNumber,1600),(streetName,
Pennsylvania Avenue),(city,Washington),
(zip,DC 20500)}
```

Let $\mathcal{D} \leftarrow \nu(\mathbf{d})$ be a set of normalized data:

```
{1, JOHN, F, KENNEDY, 1600, PENNSYLVANIA AV, WASHINGTON, DC 20500}
```

Then $\mathcal{R} \leftarrow \rho(\mathcal{D})$ might yield the following additional values:

- 1 JOHN;
- JOHN F;
- 1 JOHN F;
- JOHN KENNEDY;
- 1 JOHN KENNEDY;
- JOHN F KENNEDY;
- 1 JOHN F KENNEDY;1600 PENNSYLVANIA AV;
- WASHINGTON DC 20500:
- 1600 PENNSYLVANIA AV WASHINGTON DC 20500;
- JOHN KENNEDY 1600 PENNSYLVANIA AV WASHINGTON DC 20500;
- 1 JOHN KENNEDY 1600 PENNSYLVANIA
- AV WASHINGTON DC 20500;
- JOHN F KENNEDY 1600 PENNSYLVANIA
- AV WASHINGTON DC 20500;
- 1 JOHN F KENNEDY 1600 PENNSYLVANIA
 AV WASHINGTON DC 20500.

$$\Longrightarrow \|\mathcal{R}\| = 22$$

Once ciphered, these 22 recombined contacts along with their respective output codes Ω will form the basis of the corpus.

Definition 6 (Output Code). An output code Ω is a code defining the specific type of a recombined contact. It is either a special version of the input type code or the concatenation of its different parts.

A complete list of output types can be found in Table 9. Each code might be combined with one or several others in order to form a new output type.

2.3 Ciphering

As we want to take advantage of the very characteristics of cryptographic hashing, ie. making an input its unique yet irreversible fixed-length image, and as we want it to be both secure and widely spread to devices, the cipher $\mathfrak{h}()$ to apply to each item of $\mathcal R$ should be a well-known well-tested cryptographic hashing function:

$$\forall i \in [1.. \|\mathcal{R}\|] : \mathcal{C}_i \leftarrow \mathfrak{h}(\mathcal{R}_i) \tag{3}$$

Note. Because of the subsequent steps of our process, the strength of $\mathfrak{h}()$ is actually not that important, so it could be an algorithm as trivial as MD-5 or a more secure one such as Blake-2 or Keccak⁴.

The only thing mandatory is to set it once and for all to be sure any future utilization will use the same cipher.

Once the ciphering stage finished, we have all the necessary components to build the first part of the *Empreinte Sociométrique*: its corpus.

2.4 Corpus

To build the corpus, we first need to create the set of all imprints $\mathcal E$ from $\mathcal C$.

Definition 7 (Imprint). We define an imprint⁵ ε by the following tuple of information:

- Its general type code, eg. $\varepsilon^{\tau} = \text{ad for an}$ address type;
- The ciphered recombined normalized item ε^h , called its *hash*;
- A timestamp of collect (or insertion) in the system, eg. $\varepsilon^t = 1544529071$;
- Its specific short code $\varepsilon^{\bar{s}}$.

The complete list of type codes are given in Table 10.

It is easy to prove that each imprint is as safe as the functions used to build ε^h . And when we say "safe" it is by means of recovering the original data source (which doesn't exist anymore at this point).

Definition 8 (Short Code). A short code \bar{s} is a special 4-characters hash defining the specific type of imprint.

Algorithm 2 describes the construction of a short code using the output field type Ω . It uses a 62-characters basis \mathcal{B} using the three following sequences in that order:

- The 10 figures: 1234567890;
- The 26 lower-case alphabet;
- The 26 upper-case alphabet.

Let idx(char) be a function that returns the index number (starting at 1) of the passed character in \mathcal{B} .

Algorithm 2: Short code \bar{s}

Input: Ω

Output: The corresponding short code

- 1 initialize the sum of Ω characters on that basis: $s \leftarrow 0$;
- 2 for $i \leftarrow 1$ to $\|\Omega\|$ do
- $s \vdash s \leftarrow s + idx(\Omega_i);$
- 4 make it an hexadecimal string representation: $s_{16} := (s)_{16}$;
- 5 hash Ω with MD-5 hashing function: $h := md5(\Omega)$;
- 6 extract and concatenate the first two characters of *s*₁₆ and *h*:

$$\bar{s} \leftarrow s_{16}[0] + + s_{16}[1] + + h[0] + + h[1]$$

7 return \overline{s} ;

For example, for $\Omega=$ email, we have: $\bar{s}(\Omega):=$ 0c5a

Definition 9 (Variance). A invariant contact data is a data that is not meant to change in a lifetime. For example, the date of birth is invariant. There is a limited set of variant contact data.

On the other hand, a variant data may change in time (for example, a postal address where one lives). There is an unlimited list of invariant contact data. An *Empreinte Sociométrique* may even carry multiple of the same types (for example, if one has moved a lot, he should have as many invariant addresses as places he is been living).

⁴Short list available on Wikipedia: https://bit.ly/ BbDpgxd

⁵Empreinte in French

Definition 10 (Corpus). The corpus of an *Empreinte Sociométrique* is a special concatenation of all the imprints built from the input data using a secret token T_k . It is made of variant and invariant imprints.

Algorithm 3 describes its construction.

Let BLOCK_SEP and SEC_SEP be two special string separators ⁶, PREFIX a system parameter setting a cutting index, and *cut(str, at)* the cutting string utility.

Finally, let V_HASH be the hashing algorithm used by the system.

2.5 Signature

Sometimes, you wouldn't want to take a chance to share the actual corpus, but rather an even safer version of it, which won't allow anyone (including yourself) to rebuild the imprints. That is where the signature comes in handy.

Definition 11 (Registrar). A registrar is a special invariant imprint. Built from their equivalent imprints, it includes the following items:

- Birth country (with code: birthcountry);
- Birth day (birthday) with default format dd/MM/yyyy;
- Birth place (birthplace);
- Given name (givenname);
- Full identity (identity) taking into account country of origin;
- Middle names (middlenames);
- Surname (surname).

Definition 12 (Signature). The signature Σ uses the corpus of the *Empreinte Sociométrique* to build a unique yet irreversible identifier to freely share with no risk whatsoever to go back to the corpus, let alone the original data, from it.

Algorithm 4 describes how to build it from the corpus.

Let xt(corpus) be a function that transforms existing imprints in the corpus to registrars, hash() the Blake2b hashing function returning its hexadecimal string representation, and pub(shortCode, shortenedHash) the

- The pipe character (I) as BLOCK_SEP;
- The percent character (%) as SEC_SEP.

Algorithm 3: Corpus construction

```
Input: The set of imprints \mathcal{E}, a secret token T_k
```

Output: The corpus string

- 1 split the variant from the invariant imprints: $V, \overline{V} := \mathcal{E}$;
- 2 initialize the invariants string: $\overline{v} \leftarrow 0$;

3 for
$$i \leftarrow 1$$
 to $\|\overline{\mathcal{V}}\|$ by 1 do
4 $\|\overline{v} \leftarrow \overline{v} + \overline{\mathcal{V}}_i;$
5 if $i < \|\overline{\mathcal{V}}\|$ then
6 $\|\overline{v} \leftarrow \overline{v} + \text{BLOCK_SEP};$

7 initialize the variants string: $v \leftarrow 0$;

```
8 for i \leftarrow 1 to \|\mathcal{V}\| by 1 do

9 v \leftarrow v + \mathcal{V}_i;

10 if i < \|\mathcal{V}\| then

11 v \leftarrow v + \text{BLOCK\_SEP};
```

12 concat the core corpus:

$$c \leftarrow \overline{v} + \text{SEC_SEP} + v;$$

- 13 compress it: $C \leftarrow \zeta(c)$;
- 14 separate prefix p^- from suffix s^+ at PREFIX: $p^-, s^+ := cut(C, PREFIX);$
- 15 encrypt the prefix with the token:

$$\mathfrak{e} \leftarrow \mathfrak{c}(p^-, T_k);$$

16 get the length of the encrypted prefix: $l \leftarrow ||e||$;

17 set the version short code: $v \leftarrow \overline{s}(V_HASH);$

18 build the full corpus χ :

$$\chi \leftarrow s^+ + \mathfrak{e} + \text{SEC_SEP} + l + v \quad (4)$$

19 hash the corpus with MD-5 to get a 32-characters pseudo-random head string: $H \leftarrow \mathtt{md5}(\chi)$;

20 return $H + \chi$;

⁶In our current impmlementation, we use:

function building a public imprint where the *shortenedHash* is the integer value of the imprint's *hash* ε^h with its first character stripped off⁷.

Algorithm 4: Signature construction

Input: A corpus χ , the token T_k **Output:** The signature

- 1 extract the set of registrars from the corpus (if any); $\mathcal{R} \leftarrow xt(\chi)$
- 2 get existing gender g and/or social security number $ss: \mathcal{R} \leftarrow \{g, ss\};$
- 3 build the prefix *P* by concatenating the registrars, the gender and the social security *hashes*;

$$P := + + \Big|_{i=1}^{\|\mathcal{R}\|} \varepsilon_i^h$$

- 4 set the hashed prefix: $H_P \leftarrow hash(P)$;
- 5 encrypt the hashed prefix with the token: $E_P \leftarrow |(H_P, T_k);$
- 6 finalize the prefix: $P \leftarrow H_P[0] + E_P$;
- 7 initialize the empty string s^{l} ;
- s for $i \leftarrow 1$ to $\|\mathcal{R}\|$ by 1 do
- build its public imprint ε_i^{π} : $\varepsilon_i^{\pi} \leftarrow pub(\varepsilon^{\overline{s}}, shortenHash(\mathcal{R}_i))$ $s^{\iota} \leftarrow s^{\iota} + \varepsilon^{\overline{\tau}}$:

10
$$s^{\iota} \leftarrow s^{\iota} + + \varepsilon_{i}^{\pi};$$

11 **if** $i < norm\mathcal{R}$ **then**
12 $s^{\iota} \leftarrow s^{\iota} ++ \text{SEC_SEP};$

- 13 keep the 8 first characters of the MD-5 hash of s^{ι} : $H_{s^{\iota}} \leftarrow \mathtt{md5}(s^{\iota})[1..8]$;
- 14 encrypt s^i with the token: $E_{s^i} \leftarrow \mathfrak{c}(s^i, T_k)$;
- 15 finalize the signature Σ :

$$\Sigma \leftarrow P + \% + H_{S^i} + E_{S^i} \qquad (5)$$

16 return Σ ;

The *pub()* function is where the alteration happens and therefore where lies the irreversibility of the signature and its public imprints. But it can be proven that it is highly unlikely that this alteration, albeit coarse, might lead to false positive when matching signa-

tures, all the more so if the imprints are numerous in the initial corpus O^8 .

2.6 Output

As you might have noticed, there are two different output we can get from the *Empreinte Sociométrique* algorithms:

- The full corpus χ which allows for further processing (like computing its signature) or enhancement (by adding new data to it);
- The signature Σ which is an altered version of the corpus for safe public sharing.

Indeed, each person should build its own *Empreinte Sociométrique* step-by-step with his own secret token. Then, he may rebuild specific ones with others he wished to share contact information. For this last situation, he should probably only share the signature. That way, each person has his personal database of contact data secured, and can interact with others safely, both parties being able to ensure the other's identity.

References

[1] Cyril Dever. Système de traitement d'une base de données personnelle par un opérateur extérieur, patent pending FR1905778, 2019.

⁷For example, for a hash value of ab12, you strip off the heading a to get b12 and recover the latter as its integer value 2834: shortenHash(ab12) = 2834

 $^{^{8}}$ and you shouldn't be using too small corpuses when relying on signatures

Appendix

 Table 1: Input data types

Code	Description	Examples	
gender	Title or gender	M, Mr., 1,	
firstname	First name or given name	John	
middle	Middle initials or other names	J., John	
birthname	Birth name	Kennedy	
lastname	Last name or married name	Kennedy	
suffix	Suffix	Jr.	
birthdate	Date of birth		
birthplace Place of birth			
addresses	List of postal address	(see Table 2)	
aliases	List of aliases	(see Table 3)	
emails	List of e-mail addresses	(see Table 4)	
ids	List of official IDs	(see Table 5)	
mobiles	List of mobile phones	(see Table 6)	
phones	List of telephone numbers	(see Table 7)	
socials	List of social media	(see Table 8)	
updated Unix timestamp of collect		1544529071	

 Table 2: Address data type

Field	Definition Possible values (or examples)	
type	Address type	"birth" \rangle "home" \rangle "work"
address2	Additional name	c/o Mme Dupont
address3	Additional address	Apt. 123
address4	Street number and name	1600 Pennsylvania Ave NW
address5	PO Box or locality	BP 987
address6	City and ZIP code	Washington, DC 20500
address7	International destination	U.S.A.
city	City	Washington
country	Country	United States of America
fullAddress	Full address	1600 Pennsylvania Ave NW, Washington, DC 20500
streetName	Street name	Pennsylvania Ave NW
streetNumber	Street number	1600
zip	ZIP code	DC 20500
updated	Time of collect	1544529071

 Table 3: Alias data type

Field	Definition	Possible values (or examples)	
type	Alias type		
value	Alias value	John John	
updated	Time of collect	1544529071	

Table 4: *E-mail data type*

Field	Definition	Possible values (or examples)	
type	E-mail type	"business"∨"personal"	
value	E-mail address	john@john.com	
isHash	If is already hashed	true∨false	
engine	Hashing algorithm	"blake2"∨"md5"	
updated	Time of collect	1544529071	

 Table 5: ID data type

Field	Definition	Possible values (or examples)
type	ID type	
value	ID value	1234567890abcdef
isHash	If is already hashed	true \lor false
engine	Hashing algorithm	"blake2" ∨ "md5"
updated	Time of collect	1544529071

 Table 6: Mobile phone data type

Field	Definition	Possible values (or examples)	
type	Mobile phone type	"business"∨"personal"	
value	Mobile phone number	+33 (0) 623 456 789	
isHash	If is already hashed	true V false	
engine	Hashing algorithm	"blake2"∨"md5"	
format Format		"+dd (d) ddd ddd"	
updated	Time of collect	1544529071	

 Table 7: Telephone data type

Field	Definition	Possible values (or examples)	
type	Telephone type	"business"∨"personal"	
value	Phone number	+33 (0) 123 456 789	
isHash	If is already hashed	true V false	
engine	Hashing algorithm	"blake2"∨"md5"	
format	Format	"+dd (d) ddd ddd"	
updated	Time of collect	1544529071	

 Table 8: Social media data type

Field Definition		Possible values (or examples)
type Alias type		"facebook" \lor "linkedin" \lor "twitter" \lor "youtube"
value	Alias value	@john
updated	Time of collect	1544529071

 Table 9: List of base output codes

Code	Description
adresse2	Postal address line 2
adresse3	Postal address line 3
adresse4	Postal address line 4
adresse5	Postal address line 5
adresse	Full postal address
civ	Title
ср	Postal (or ZIP) code
ddn	Date of birth
dpt	Department, eg.75
dv	Department and city, eg. 75 PARIS
email	E-mail address
facebook	Facebook ID
instagram	Instagram ID
linkedin	LinkedIn ID
pinterest	Pinterest ID
snapchat	Snapchat ID
twitter	Twitter ID or screen name
youtube	Youtube ID
in	Initials and last name
ini	Initials
middle_ini	Middle initial(s)
mob	Mobile phone number
ni	Last name and initials
nom	Last (or birth) name
np	Last and first names
no	Street number
pays	Country
pn	First and last names
prenom	First (or given) name
middle	Middle names
raisonsociale	Corporate name
tel	Telephone / landline number
tin	Title + Initials + Last name
tn	Title and last name
tni	Title + Last name + Initials
tnp	Title + Last name + First name
tpn	Title + First name + Last name
ville	City
voie	Street name

 Table 10: List of imprint type codes

Туре	Code
Address	ad
Alias	al
Birth date	4d
Birth name	2n
Birth place	5p
Country	8c
E-mail	ml
Facebook	fb
First name	3n
Gender	1x
Instagram	ig
LinkedIn	li
Marital name	mn
Middle names	7m
Mobile phone	mb
Pinterest	pi
Registration	rg
Snapchat	sn
Social security number	6s
Telephone number	tl
Twitter	tw
Youtube	уt