

# LeanIMT: An optimized Incremental Merkle Tree

Privacy & Scaling Explorations

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## **1 Abstract**

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## 2 Introduction

### 2.1 Motivation

## 3 Merkle Tree

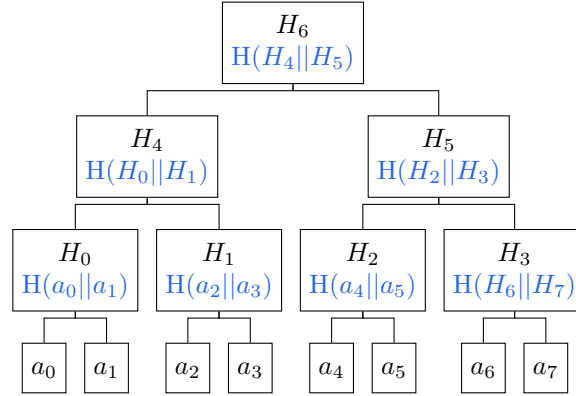
### 3.1 Incremental Merkle Tree

An Incremental Merkle Tree (IMT) is a Merkle Tree (MT) designed to be updated efficiently.

### 3.2 Binary Tree

A Binary Tree is a tree data structure in which each node has at most two children, referred to as the left child and the right child.

TODO: Explain what is a Merkle tree and an Incremental Merkle Tree.



## 4 LeanIMT

### 4.1 Definition

The **LeanIMT** (Lean Incremental Merkle Tree) is a Binary IMT.

The LeanIMT has two properties:

1. Every node with two children is the hash of its two child nodes.
2. Every node with one child has the same value as its child node.

Example of a LeanIMT

$T$  - Tree

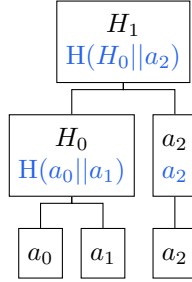
$V$  - Vertices (Nodes)

$E$  - Edges (Lines connecting Nodes)

$$T = (V, E)$$

$$V = \{a_0, a_1, a_2, H_0, H_1, H_2\}$$

$$E = \{(a_0, H_0), (a_1, H_0), (a_2, a_2), (H_0, H_1), (a_2, a_2)\}$$



## 4.2 Insertion

There are two cases:

1. When the new node is a left node.
2. When the new node is a right node.

We will always see one of these cases in each level when we are inserting a node. It is like, when you insert a node, if that node is left node, the parent node which is in the next level, will be the same node. If it is a right node the parent node, will be the hash of this node with the node in its left. This algorithm will be the same in each level, not only in level 0.

### Case 1: The new node is a left node

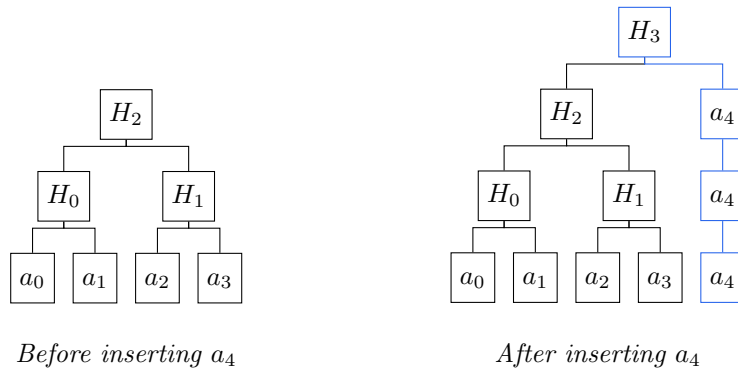
It will not be hashed, it's value will be sent to the next level.

If we add  $a_4$ .

$$T = (V, E)$$

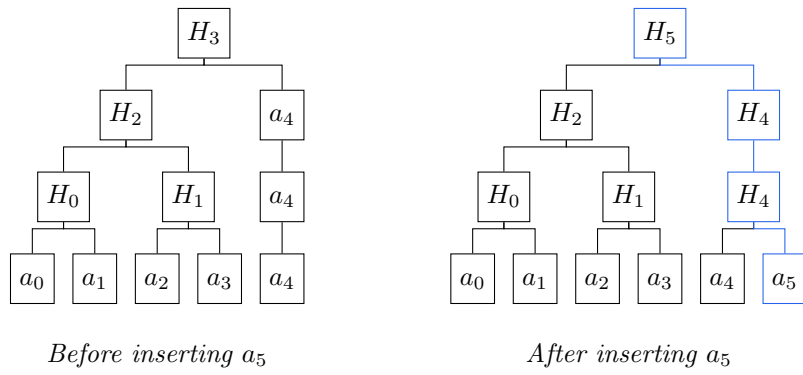
$$V = \{a_0, a_1, a_2, a_3, H_0, H_1, H_2\}$$

$$E = \{(a_0, H_0), (a_1, H_0), (a_2, H_1), (a_3, H_1), (H_0, H_2), (H_1, H_2)\}$$



**Case 2: The new node is a right node**

If we add  $a_5$ .



### 4.2.1 Pseudocode

---

**Algorithm 1** LeanIMT Insert algorithm

---

```

1: procedure INSERT(leaf)
2:   if depth < newDepth then    ▷ newDepth is the new depth of the tree
   after inserting the new node
3:     add a new empty array to nodes    ▷ Add a new tree level
4:   end if
5:   node ← leaf
6:   index ← size    ▷ The index of the new leaf equals the number of leaves
   in the tree.
7:   for level from 0 to depth - 1 do
8:     nodes[level][index] ← node
9:     if index is odd then    ▷ It's a right node
10:      sibling ← nodes[level][index - 1]
11:      node ← hash(sibling, node)
12:     end if
13:     index ←  $\lfloor \textit{index}/2 \rfloor$     ▷ Divides the index by 2 and discards the
   remainder.
14:   end for
15:   nodes[depth] ← [node]    ▷ Store the new root at the top level
16: end procedure

```

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### 4.3 Batch Insertion

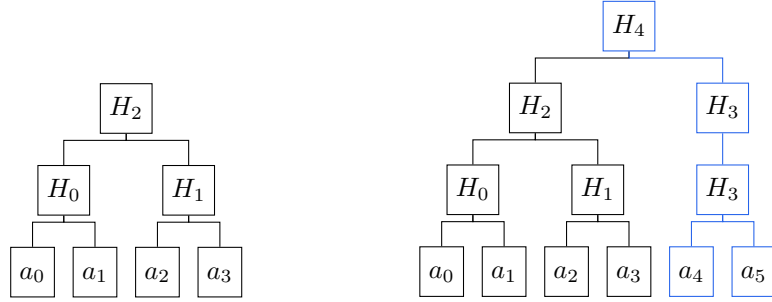
Performing the insertion in bulk rather than individually using a loop can lead to significant performance improvements. This optimization stems from the reduced number of hashing operations required. By inserting many elements at once, the algorithm can minimize redundant computations and manage memory more efficiently, resulting in faster execution and better overall performance.

When inserting  $n$  members, all levels will be updated  $n$  times if the batch insertion function is not being used.

The core idea behind the batch insertion algorithm is to update each level only once even if there are many members to be inserted.

The algorithm will go through the nodes that are necessary to update the next level of the tree. The other nodes in the tree won't be used or changed.

Insert  $a_4$  and  $a_5$ .



Before inserting  $a_4$  and  $a_5$

After inserting  $a_4$  and  $a_5$

#### 4.3.1 Pseudocode

---

**Algorithm 2** LeanIMT InsertMany algorithm

---

```

1: procedure INSERTMANY(leaves: List of nodes)
2:   if leaves length = 0 then
3:     THROW ERROR "There are no leaves to add"
4:   end if
5:   startIndex  $\leftarrow \lfloor \text{size}/2 \rfloor$   $\triangleright$  Divides the size of the tree by 2 and discards
   the remainder.
6:   Add leaves to the tree leaves
7:   for level from 0 to depth - 1 do
8:     numberOfNodes  $\leftarrow \lceil \text{nodes}[\text{level}].\text{length}/2 \rceil$   $\triangleright$  Calculate
   the number of nodes of the next level. numberOfNodes will be the smallest
   integer which is greater than or equal to the result of dividing the number
   of nodes of the level by 2.
9:     for index from startIndex to numberOfNodes - 1 do
10:      rightNode  $\leftarrow \text{nodes}[\text{level}][\text{index} * 2 + 1]$   $\triangleright$  Get the right node if
   exists.
11:      leftNode  $\leftarrow \text{nodes}[\text{level}][\text{index} * 2]$   $\triangleright$  Get the left node if exists.
12:      if rightNode exists then
13:        parentNode  $\leftarrow \text{hash}(\text{leftNode}, \text{rightNode})$ 
14:      else
15:        parentNode  $\leftarrow \text{leftNode}$ 
16:      end if
17:      nodes[level + 1][index]  $\leftarrow \text{parentNode}$   $\triangleright$  Add the parent node to
   the tree.
18:     end for
19:     startIndex  $\leftarrow \lfloor \text{startIndex}/2 \rfloor$   $\triangleright$  Divide startIndex by 2 and discards
   the remainder.
20:   end for
21: end procedure

```

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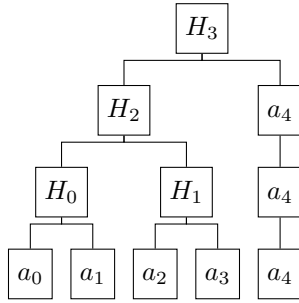
## 4.4 Update

There are two cases:

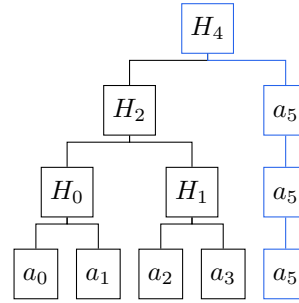
1. When there is no right sibling.
2. When there is right sibling.

### Case 1: There is no right sibling

Update  $a_4$  to  $a_5$



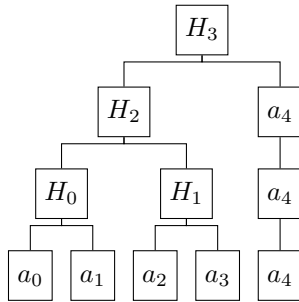
*Before updating  $a_4$*



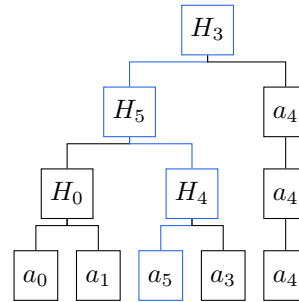
*After updating  $a_4$*

### Case 2: There is right sibling

Update  $a_2$  to  $a_5$



*Before updating  $a_2$  for  $a_5$*



*After updating  $a_2$  for  $a_5$*



#### 4.4.1 Pseudocode

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**Algorithm 3** LeanIMT Update algorithm

---

```

1: procedure UPDATE(index, newLeaf)
2:   node  $\leftarrow$  newLeaf
3:   for level from 0 to depth - 1 do
4:     nodes[level][index]  $\leftarrow$  node
5:     if index is odd then ▷ It's a right node
6:       sibling  $\leftarrow$  nodes[level][index - 1]
7:       node  $\leftarrow$  hash(sibling, node)
8:     else ▷ It's a left node
9:       sibling  $\leftarrow$  nodes[level][index + 1]
10:      if sibling exists then ▷ It's a left node with a right sibling
11:        node  $\leftarrow$  hash(node, sibling)
12:      end if
13:    end if
14:    index  $\leftarrow$   $\lfloor \text{index} / 2 \rfloor$  ▷ Divides the index by 2 and discards the
    remainder.
15:  end for
16:  nodes[depth]  $\leftarrow$  [node] ▷ Store the new root at the top level
17: end procedure

```

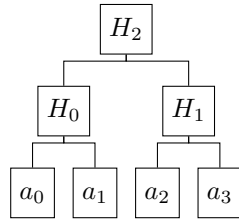
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#### 4.5 Remove

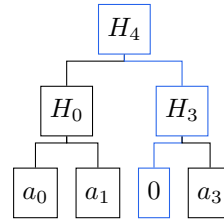
The *remove* function is the same as the *update* function but the value used to update is 0.

You can use a value other than 0, the idea is to use a value that is not a possible value for a correct member in the list.

Remove  $a_2$



Before removing  $a_2$



After removing  $a_2$

#### 4.5.1 Pseudocode

---

**Algorithm 4** LeanIMT Remove algorithm

---

```
1: procedure REMOVE(index)
2:   update(index, 0)
3: end procedure
```

---

#### 4.6 Generate Merkle Proof

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**Algorithm 5** LeanIMT generateProof algorithm

---

```
1: procedure GENERATEPROOF(index)
2:   siblings  $\leftarrow$  empty list
3:   path  $\leftarrow$  empty list
4:   for level from 0 to depth - 1 do
5:     isRightNode  $\leftarrow$  index is odd
6:     if isRightNode is true then                                      $\triangleright$  It's a right node
7:       siblingIndex  $\leftarrow$  index - 1
8:     else                                                            $\triangleright$  It's a left node
9:       siblingIndex  $\leftarrow$  index + 1
10:    end if
11:    sibling  $\leftarrow$  nodes[level][siblingIndex]
12:    if sibling exists then
13:      add isRightNode to path
14:      add sibling to siblings
15:    end if
16:    index  $\leftarrow \lfloor \text{index}/2 \rfloor$                                       $\triangleright$  Divides the index by 2 and discards the
    remainder.
17:  end for
18:  leaf  $\leftarrow$  leaves[index]
19:  index  $\leftarrow$  reverse path and use the list as a binary number and get the
    decimal representation
20:  siblings  $\leftarrow$  leaves[index]
21:  proof  $\leftarrow \{root, leaf, index, siblings\}$ 
22:  return proof
23: end procedure
```

---

#### 4.7 Verify Merkle Proof

---

**Algorithm 6** LeanIMT verifyProof algorithm

---

```
1: procedure VERIFYPROOF(index)
2:   { root, leaf, siblings, index }  $\leftarrow$  proof            $\triangleright$  Deconstruct the proof
3:   node  $\leftarrow$  leaf
4:   for i from 0 to siblings.length - 1 do
5:     isOdd  $\leftarrow$  devide index by 2 i times and check if the result is odd
6:     if isOdd is true then                                    $\triangleright$  node is a right child
7:       node  $\leftarrow$  hash(siblings[i], node)
8:     else                                                      $\triangleright$  It's a left node
9:       node  $\leftarrow$  hash(node, siblings[i])
10:    end if
11:  end for
12:  if root is equal node then
13:    return true
14:  else
15:    return false
16:  end if
17: end procedure
```

---

## 5 Implementations

### 5.1 TypeScript

### 5.2 Solidity

## 6 Benchmarks

## 7 Conslusions

This document is based on the work of [1].

## References

- [1] Barry Whitehat Kobi Gurkan Koh Wei Jie. “Semaphore: Zero-Knowledge Signaling on Ethereum”. In: (2020). URL: <https://semaphore.pse.dev/whitepaper-v1.pdf>.