

A Tale of BBS Credentials

PRIVCRYPT 2026
Rome, May 2026




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Digital Credentials



= signature on credential with sk_{Iss}

Name: Jane Doe
Address: 1234, 1st Ave
City: Seattle
State: WA
Zip: 98101
DoB: 1/1/2000
User key: pk_U



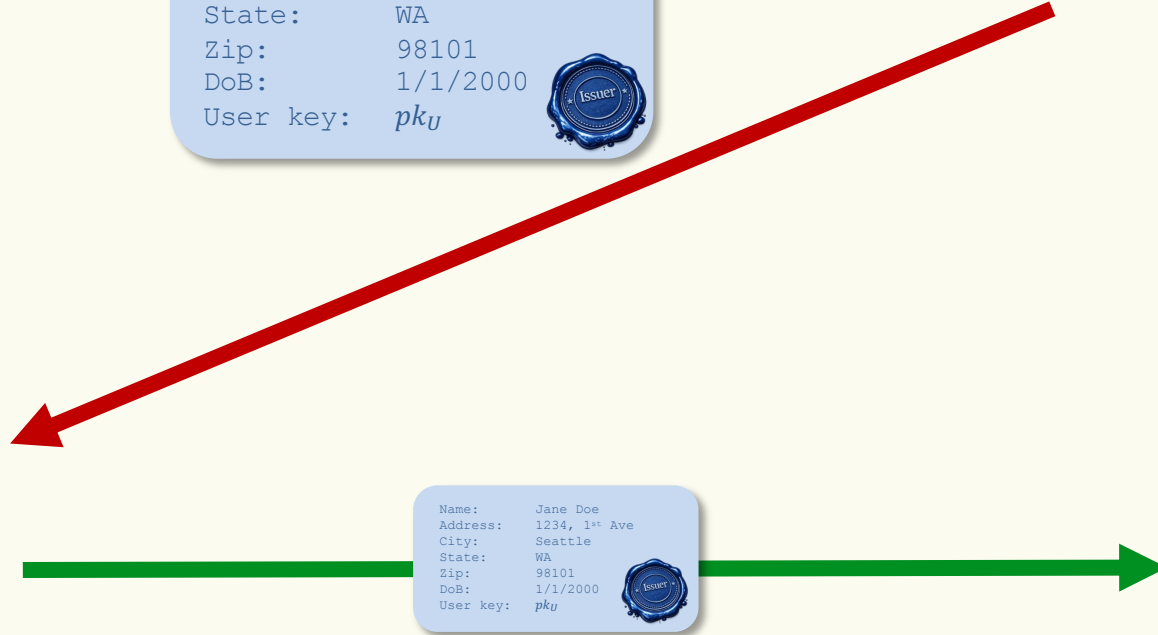
Issuer




sk_{Iss}



User

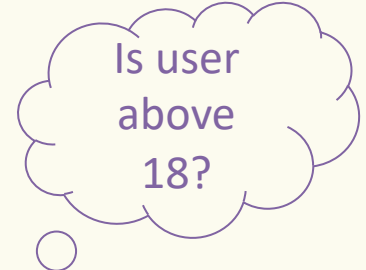


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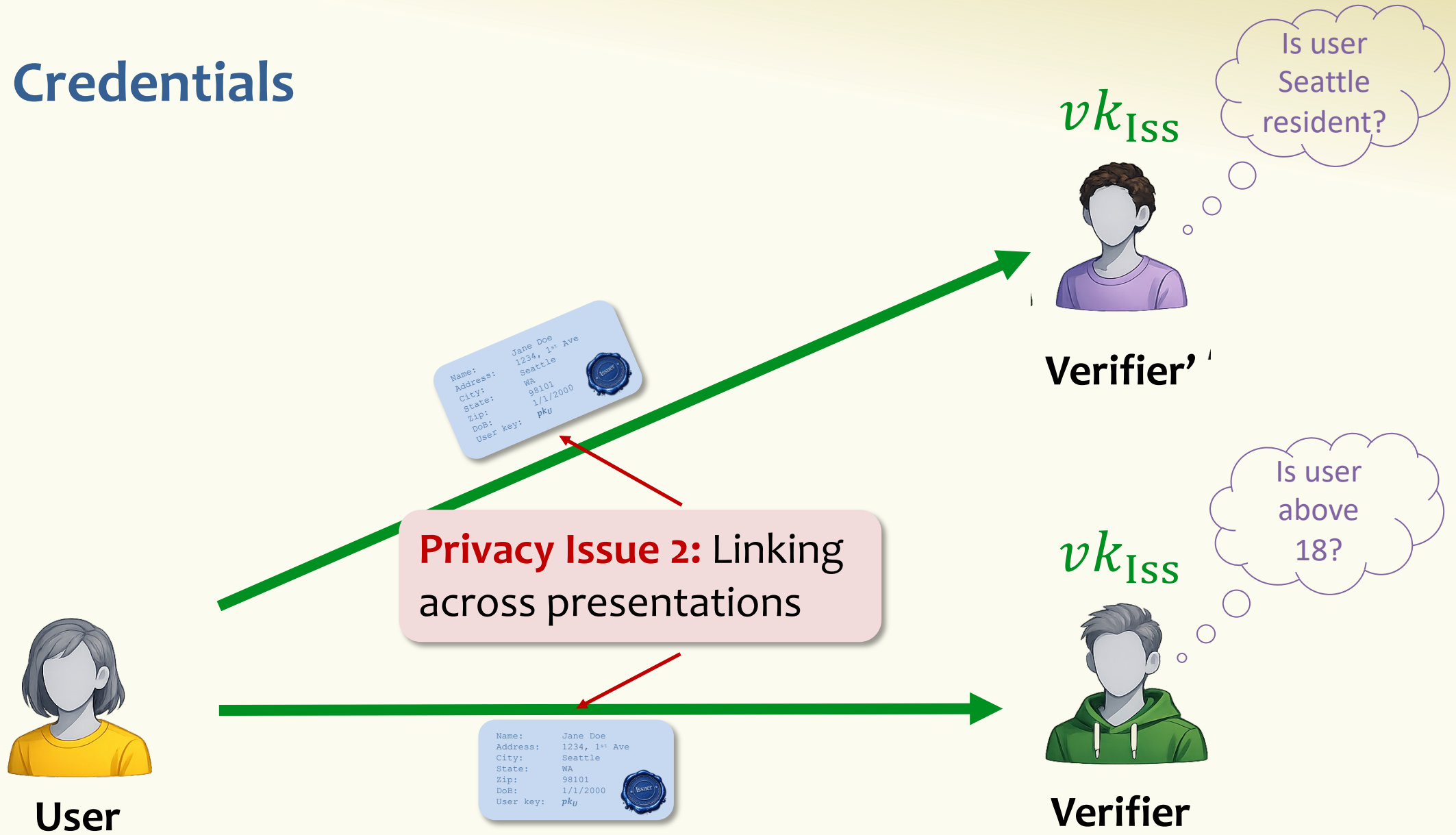
Verifier

vk_{Iss}

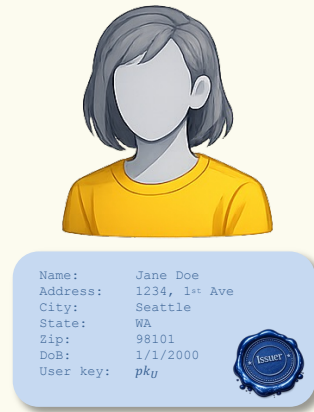


Privacy Issue 1:
Reveals all attributes

Digital Credentials



Anonymous Credentials (ACs) [Chaum '84; Camenisch-Lysyanskaya '01]



$\pi = \text{ZKProof}$ [“I have a valid credential attesting that my age ≥ 18 ”]



Minimal disclosure + unlinkability



Is user above 18?

W3C Verifiable Credentials, Decentralized Identity Foundation (DIF), Hyperledger Indy / Aries (AnonCreds), ISO/IEC 18013-5 mDL, SD-JWT, eIDAS 2.0 / EU Digital Identity Wallet, Idemix (IBM), U-Prove (Microsoft), Google (Longfellow), ...

Gained significant momentum due to recent interest from governments (e.g., EUDI Wallet)

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Minimal disclosure + unlinkability



Generic ZK proofs supporting any credential format

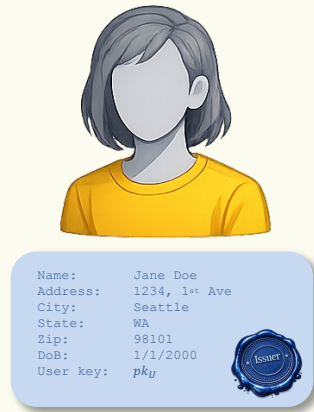
VS

Tailor-made digital signatures with efficient ZKPs

Example: Google Longfellow
Flexible, but slow & complex

Example: CL, BBS, PS, ...
Lightweight, less flexible

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BBS – Standardization



CFRG/IRTF

- BBS-Signatures ([draft-irtf-cfrg-bbs-signatures](#))
- BBS per Verifier Linkability ([draft-irtf-cfrg-bbs-per-verifier-linkability](#))
- Blind BBS Signatures ([draft-irtf-cfrg-bbs-blind-signatures](#))

ISO

- Anonymous Digital Signatures ([ISO/IEC 20008-2:2013](#))
- Attribute-based Credentials ([ISO/IEC 24843](#))

IETF

PrivacyPass

- Anonymous Credit Tokens ([draft-schlesinger-cfrg-act](#), BBS-MAC)

ETSI

- ZKP-EUDI-Wallet (BBS/ECDSA-Variant, [ETSI TS 119 476-2 Work plan](#))

W3C

- Data Integrity BBS Cryptosuites v1.0

(Thanks to Anja Lehmann for pointing out many of these!)

This talk, in a nutshell



What BBS signatures can and cannot do

History of BBS/BBS+

Analysis of BBS & standardization impact

① Revisiting BBS Signatures

[w/ C. Zhu @ EUROCRYPT '23]

② Server-Aided Anonymous Credentials

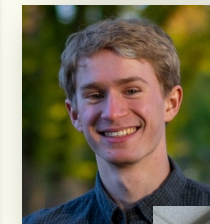
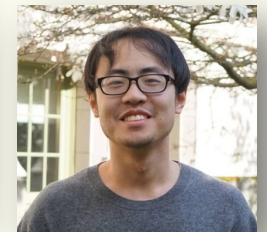
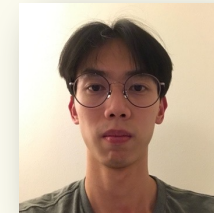
[w/ R. Chairattana-Apirom, F. Harding, and A. Lysyanskaya @ CRYPTO '25]

③ On the Concrete Security of BBS/BBS+ Signatures

[w/ R. Chairattana-Apirom @ ASIACRYPT '25]

④ Tight Security for BBS Signatures

[w/ R. Chairattana-Apirom and D. Hofheinz @ EUROCRYPT '26]



Disclaimers

- **Not post-quantum secure**
 - However: many protocols built on top of BBS achieve unconditional (and thus post-quantum) privacy!
- **Pairing-based**
 - But also: Reasonable deployment scenarios w/o pairings
- **Undesirable features:** Expensive threshold, difficult device binding, no re-randomization, etc.

This talk (and surrounding research): Neutral take, study of object of interest – (my) goal is not to declare a winner!



Part I: Definition & History

BBS Signatures – Selective Disclosure

Statement = VK, i, a^*

“I know a valid $\sigma = (A, e)$ for VK on $\vec{a} = (a_1, \dots, a_\ell)$ s.t. $a_i = a^*$ ”

Randomization: $\bar{A} = rA, \bar{B} = r(G + \sum_i a_i H_i + eA), r \leftarrow \mathbb{Z}_p^*$

$$sk\bar{A} = \bar{B}$$

$$G + a^* H_i = r^{-1} \bar{B} - r^{-1} e \bar{A} - \sum_{j \neq i} a_j H_j$$

Proof = $\bar{A}, \bar{B} + \text{PoK of } \alpha, \beta, (\delta_j)_{j \neq i}$ s.t. $G + a^* H_i = \alpha \bar{B} + \beta \bar{A} + \sum_{j \neq i} \delta_j H_j$

Many alternatives: [Camenisch-Drijvers-Lehmann '16] [T-Zhu '23] [Whitehead '24]

BBS Signatures – Pseudonyms

Statement = VK , nonce, nym

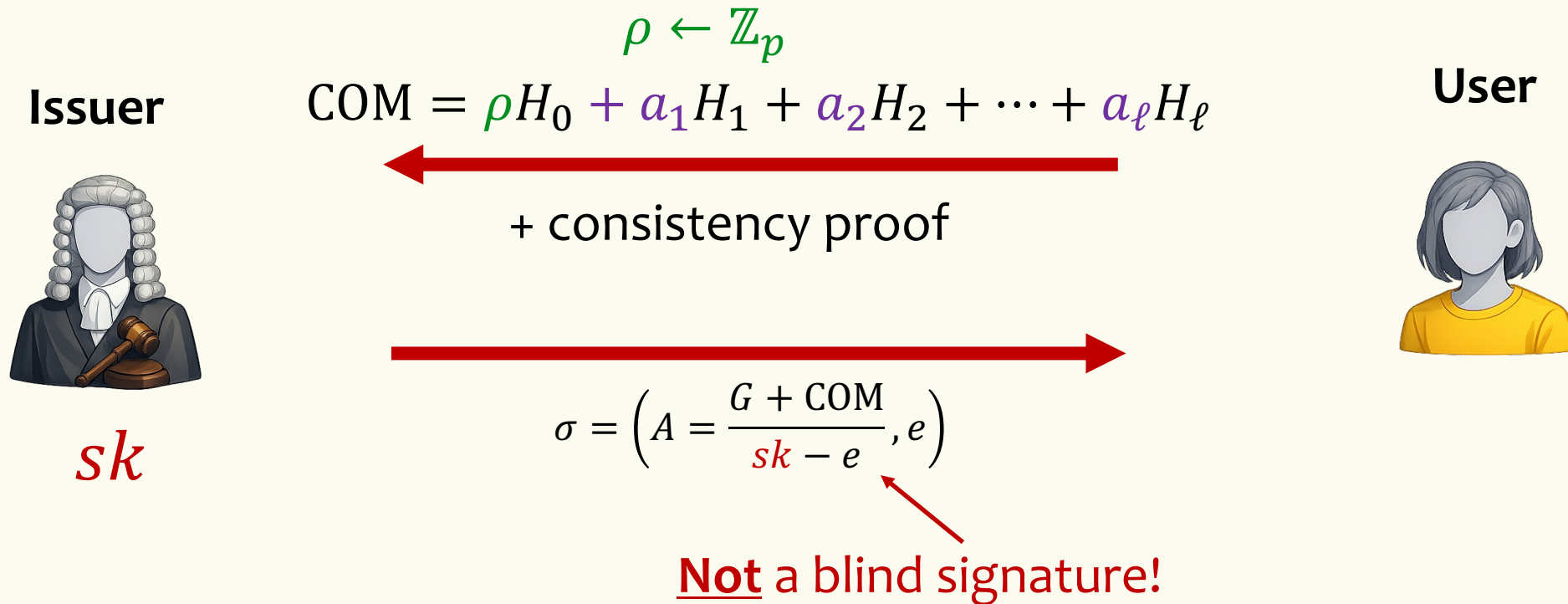
“I know a valid $\sigma = (A, e)$ for VK on $\vec{a} = (a_1, \dots, a_\ell)$ such that $a_1 = k$ and $nym = k \cdot H(\text{nonce})$ ”

DDH-based PRF

Proof = \bar{A}, \bar{B} + PoK of $\alpha, \beta, (\delta_j)_i$ s.t. $G = \alpha\bar{B} + \beta\bar{A} + \sum_i \delta_j H_j$ and
 $nym = \delta_1 \cdot H(\text{nonce})$

Framework easily extends to pretty much everything provable via Schnorr type proofs

BBS Signatures – Blind Issuance



[Orrù CCS '25] multiplicative blinding \Rightarrow more efficient presentation proofs

BBS Signatures: A History Down the Rabbit Hole



- CRYPTO
- EUROCRYPT
- ASIACRYPT
- PKC
- ACNS
- ...

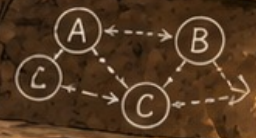
Follow Proofs,
Not Carrots
↓

$$e: G_1 \times G_2 \rightarrow G_T$$
$$e(P^a, Q^b) = e(P, Q)^{ab}$$

BBS
(2004)



BBS+



Anonymous
Credentials

$\pi \leftarrow \text{Prove } x \in R$



Selective
Disclosure
FTW!

Security
Proofs



EUF-CMA?
Random Oracle?
q-SDH?
... and more!

Concrete
Security

Concrete
>
Asymptotic



Bits
Don't
Lie



The
Journey
Continues

[ChatGPT Prompt: "humorously illustrate going down the rabbit hole of BBS history"]

BBS History

No proof of security
in either paper

Look, it's BBS!

Our group signature scheme can be extended to provide strong exculpability using a similar mechanism. Instead of simply giving user i the private key $(g_1^{1/(\gamma+x_i)}, x_i)$, the user and key issuer engage in a JOIN protocol where at the end of the protocol user i has a triple (A_i, x_i, y_i) such that $A_i^{\gamma+x_i} h_1^{y_i} = g_1$ for some public parameter h_1 . The value y_i is chosen by the user and is kept secret from the key issuer. The ZKPK of Section 4 can be modified to prove knowledge of such a triple. The resulting system is a short group signature with strong exculpability.

[Boneh-Boyen-Shacham CRYPTO '04]

Not surprisingly, this signature scheme can be extended to the equivalent of our Schemes B and C using techniques similar to the ones described above. As a result, we can obtain signature schemes with efficient protocols based on the BBS signature. Let us give a sketch for the equivalent for Scheme C. A public key would be $(g_1, g_2, h_0, h_1, \dots, h_\ell)$. A signature on a block of messages (m_0, \dots, m_ℓ) consists of values (A, x) such that $A^{\gamma+x} \prod_{i=0}^{\ell} h_i^{m_i}$. In order to obtain a signature on a committed block of messages, a user will have to supply the signer with the value $Y = \prod_{i=0}^{\ell} h_i^{m_i}$, and prove knowledge of its representation in the bases (h_0, \dots, h_ℓ) . If m_0 is chosen at random, then Y information-theoretically hides (m_1, \dots, m_ℓ) . The signer will then generate the signature. A proof of knowledge of a signature on a committed value can be obtained by appropriate modifications to the BBS group signature protocol.

Look, it's BBS! (but forgot " $= g_1$ ")

[Camenisch-Lysyanskaya CRYPTO '04]

BBS+

$$\sigma(sk, (a_1 \dots a_\ell)) = \left(\frac{G + sH_0 + a_1H_1 + a_2H_2 + \dots + a_\ell H_\ell}{sk - e}, s, e \right), s, e \leftarrow \mathbb{Z}_p$$

Constant-Size Dynamic k -TAA* **

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University of Wollongong, Wollongong 2522, Australia
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$$\text{Adv}_{\text{BBS}^+}^{\text{suf-cma}}(t, q) \leq q \cdot \text{Adv}_{\mathbb{G}_1, \mathbb{G}_2, \mathbb{G}_T}^{q\text{-sdh}}(t')$$

$q = \#$ issued signatures

[Au-Susilo-Mu SCN '06] [Au-Susilo-Mu-Chow IEEE Syst. J '13]

Extended to Type III pairings [Camenisch-Drijvers-Lehmann TRUST '16]

q -SDH: $G, xG, x^2G, \dots, x^qG, G_2, xG_2 \Rightarrow? \left(e, \frac{1}{x+e}G \right)$ [Boneh-Boyen '04+'08]

[Okamoto TCC '06] Special case $\ell = 1$

More relevant works

- **Non-tight** security proof for BBS with **bit** attributes under q -SDH

[Hofheinz-Kiltz CRYPTO '08]

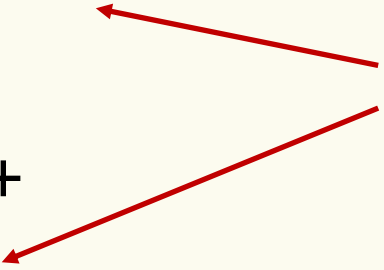
- **Tight** reduction from q -SDH for BBS+

[Schäge EUROCRYPT '11]

- Incorrect proof of security for BBS

[Chen Inscrypt '09] [Brickell-Li TRUST '10]

Did not know about
BBS line of work



Most of this work was on DAA (aka ACs
in disguise)



Part II: Our work

2022: Standardization efforts for BBS+ underway

CFRG
Internet-Draft
Intended status: Informational
Expires: 31 March 2023

T. Looker
V. Kalos
MATTR
A. Whitehead
Portage
M. Lodder
CryptID
27 September 2022

The BBS Signature Scheme
draft-irtf-cfrg-bbs-signatures-00

Abstract

BBS is a digital signature scheme categorized as a form of short group signature that supports several unique properties. Notably, the scheme supports signing multiple messages whilst producing a

Confusingly, they meant BBS+!

Major Seattle-area tech company asks us a few questions about BBS+ security proofs.

Us: Do we need BBS+? Can we prove BBS also secure?

Do we need BBS+? Can we prove BBS also secure?

$$\text{Adv}_{\text{BBS}}^{\text{suf-cma}}(t, q) \leq q \cdot \text{Adv}_{\mathbb{G}_1, \mathbb{G}_2, \mathbb{G}_T}^{q\text{-sdh}}(t')$$

Standard model

Think: $t' \approx t$

$$\text{Adv}_{\text{BBS}}^{\text{suf-cma}}(t, q) \leq \text{Adv}_{\mathbb{G}_1, \mathbb{G}_2, \mathbb{G}_T}^{q\text{-sdh}}(t')$$

AGM

[T-Zhu EUROCRYPT '23]

Immediate reaction: RFC standardization turned from BBS+ to BBS



Issue 1: Tightness

$$\text{Adv}_{\text{BBS}}^{\text{suf-cma}}(t, q) \leq q \cdot \text{Adv}_{\mathbb{G}_1, \mathbb{G}_2, \mathbb{G}_T}^{q\text{-sdh}}(t)$$

(GGM bound) $\leq q \cdot \frac{qt^2}{p} = \frac{(qt)^2}{p}$

Tight by Cheon's attack [Cheon '06]:
 Break q -DL/ q -SDH using $\sqrt{p/q}$ scalar multiplications and recovers secret key (for $q|(p-1)$)

BLS12-381: $p \approx 2^{256}$, $q = 2^{48}$ → **80-bit security** 😞

For BLS12-381: $p - 1 = 2^{32} \cdot 3 \cdot 11 \cdot 19 \cdot 10177 \cdot 125527 \cdot 859267 \cdot 906349^2 \cdot 2508409 \cdot 2529403 \cdot 52437899 \cdot 254760293^2$.

$$\text{Adv}_{\text{BBS}}^{\text{suf-cma}}(t, q) \leq \text{Adv}_{\mathbb{G}_1, \mathbb{G}_2, \mathbb{G}_T}^{q\text{-sdh}}(t) \leq \frac{qt^2}{p}$$

BLS12-381: $p \approx 2^{256}$, $q = 2^{48}$ → **104-bit security** 🎉

[Note: Best-possible security is 120-bit due to DL in \mathbb{G}_T]

Issue 1: Tightness

Initially, lack of tight reduction was not an issue because only known reduction for BBS+ was equally not tight ...

Unfortunately: Community missed tight BBS+ proof [Schäge EUROCRYPT '11] – could BBS+ actually be more secure? 😬

**Can we give a tight
standard model
reduction for BBS?**

Issue 2: Cryptanalysis

① Sign a multiple times:

$$\frac{C}{x - e_1}, \frac{C}{x - e_2}, \dots, \frac{C}{x - e_q}$$

$$C = G + aH$$

② Efficiently compute $x^i \hat{G}$ for $i = 0, 1, \dots, q$, for $\hat{G} = \frac{C}{\prod_{i=1}^q (x - e_i)}$

[Jao-Yoshida Pairing '09]

③ Compute q -DL to base \hat{G}

Cheon's attack [Cheon '06]: Break q -DL using $\sqrt{p/q}$ scalar multiplications and recovers secret key (for $q | (p - 1)$)

However: Does not work with BBS+ and **deterministic BBS**

Can it be that deterministic BBS/BBS+ are more secure than q -DL / q -SDH?

Concrete Security – Two questions

Can we give a tight standard model reduction for BBS?

Yes, for deterministic BBS
No, for general plain BBS

[ChairattanaApirom-Hofheinz-T EUROCRYPT '26]

Can it be that deterministic BBS/BBS+ are more secure than q -DL / q -SDH?

No

[ChairattanaApirom-T ASIACRYPT '25]

Our Results – Attacks

Theorem. Let $d|(p - 1)$. Then, $\exists \mathcal{A}_1$ making $q = 2d + 2$ distinct signing queries and $\sqrt{p/q}$ scalar multiplications such that

$$\text{Adv}_{\text{BBS}}^{\text{suf-cma}}(\mathcal{A}_1) \geq 1 - \frac{1}{p}$$

Extensions:

- Similar attack applies to BBS+
- Can actually show: BBS/BBS+ security \implies hardness of q -SDH/ q -DL

Our Results – Tightness

Theorem. For every time t adversary \mathcal{A} making q distinct signing queries, there exists time t' adversary \mathcal{B} such that

$$\text{Adv}_{\text{BBS}}^{\text{suf-cma}}(t, q) \leq \Theta(1) \cdot \text{Adv}_{\mathbb{G}_1, \mathbb{G}_2, \mathbb{G}_T}^{d\text{-sdh}}(t') + \text{negl}(\lambda)$$

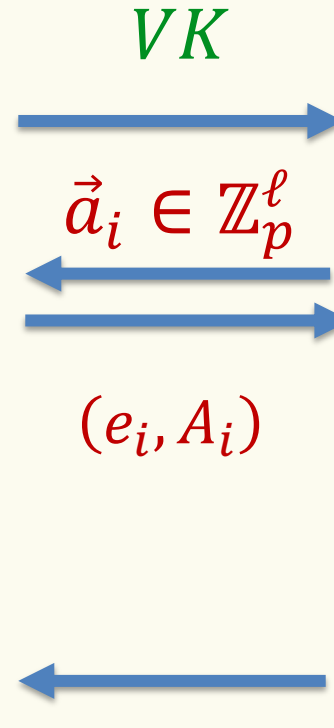
$$d \approx 10q \quad t' = t + O(q^2) \cdot \text{poly}(\lambda)$$

Theorem. There exists (inefficient) SUF adversary \mathcal{A} making q identical signing queries such that for any algebraic reduction \mathcal{B} breaking d -SDH,

$$\text{Adv}_{\mathbb{G}_1, \mathbb{G}_2, \mathbb{G}_T}^{d\text{-sdh}}(\mathcal{B}^{\mathcal{A}}) \leq \Theta(q^{-1}) \cdot \text{Adv}_{\text{BBS}}^{\text{suf-cma}}(\mathcal{A}) + \text{negl}(\lambda)$$

Strong Unforgeability of BBS

Case 1: $e^* \notin \{e_i\}_i$.
Case 2: $\exists i^* \in [q]: e^* = e_{i^*}$.



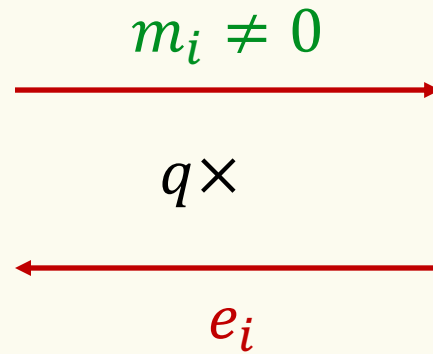
Adversary \mathcal{A}



Hard part of the proof is **Case 2**

Main challenge captured by “game” involving polynomials

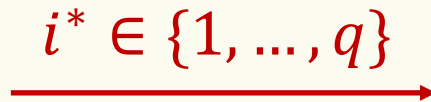
Polynomial Game



Pick degree- d $f(X), g(X) \bmod p$

① e_i uniform and independent of everything so far

② $f(e_i) + m_i g(e_i) = 0$



Alice wins if $g(e_{i^*}) \neq 0$

Goal: $\min \Pr[\text{win}] \approx \text{const.} \ \& \ d = O(q)$

Polynomial Game

“Good” bad idea : $f(X) = g(X) = \prod_{i=1}^q (X - \delta_i)$ for $\delta_1, \dots, \delta_q \leftarrow \mathbb{Z}_p$

$e_i = \delta_i$ uniform 👍 $f(e_i) + m_i g(e_i) = 0$ for every m_i 👍

$g(e_{i^*}) = 0$ for every $i^* \in \{1, \dots, q\}$ 🙅

$$f(X) + mg(X) = f(X)(mX - m\delta_k + 1)$$

q roots: $\{\delta_i\}_{i \neq k} + \left(\delta_k - \frac{1}{m}\right)$

[T-Zhu '23] Pick $k \leftarrow [q], \delta_1, \dots, \delta_q \leftarrow \mathbb{Z}_p$

$$\Pr[\text{win}] = 1/q$$

$$f(X) = \prod_{i \neq k} (X - \delta_i)$$

$$g(X) = (X - \delta_k)f(X)$$

If $i^* = k$, then $e_{i^*} = \delta_k - \frac{1}{m_k}$ not a root of $g(X)$

$$e_i = \begin{cases} \delta_i, & i \neq k \\ \delta_k - \frac{1}{m_k}, & i = k \end{cases} \text{ uniform } \text{👍}$$

Polynomial Game – Our strategy



Idea: Let

$$f(X) = \varphi(X) \prod_{i=1}^q (X - \delta_i) \qquad g(X) = -\beta \prod_{i=1}^q (X - \delta_i)$$

where $\delta_1, \dots, \delta_q, \beta \leftarrow \mathbb{Z}_p$ and $\varphi(X)$ random polynomial of degree $d = O(q)$

If $\varphi(X) - m_i\beta$ has a single zero e , set $e_i = e$, else $e_i = \delta_i$

Alice wins if $e_{i^*} \notin \{\delta_1, \dots, \delta_q\}$

We show: $\Pr[\text{win}] = \Omega(1)$

Our Analysis

Alice wins if $i^* \in S = \{i \in [q]: \exists! e \in \mathbb{Z}_p: \varphi(e) = m_i \beta\}$.

Core argument: Study joint distribution $\left((e_i)_{i \in [q]}, S \right)$

- **Lemma 1.** $(e_i)_{i \in [q]}$ are close to uniform and independent of S .
- **Lemma 2.** For any i^* , $\Pr[i^* \in S] \geq \frac{1}{e}$.

Tools: H-coefficient technique [Patarin'08] & $\Theta(q)$ -wise independence of φ

Deterministic BBS

$$\sigma(sk, (a_1 \dots a_\ell)) = \left(\frac{G + a_1 H_1 + a_2 H_2 + \dots + a_\ell H_\ell}{sk - e}, e \right)$$

Signing each message at most once = derandomized BBS

Option A: $e = \text{PRF}(sk', (a_1, \dots, a_\ell))$

BBS RFC draft

Not compatible with
Blind Issuance RFC

Option B: $e = \text{PRF}(sk', G + a_1 H_1 + a_2 H_2 + \dots + a_\ell H_\ell)$

Compatible with
additive Blind
Issuance

Part III: Challenges & Alternatives

Challenges with BBS – Threshold, Aggregation, Re-randomization

Sad truth: $\frac{1}{sk_1 - e_1} + \frac{1}{sk_2 - e_2} \neq \frac{1}{sk_1 + sk_2 - e}$ for some $e = e(e_1, e_2)$

Still: **Several threshold protocols for BBS/BBS+** [caveat: #rounds ≥ 2]

[Doerner-Kondi-Lee-Shelat-Tyner IEEE S&P '23]

[Faust-Hazay-Kretzler-Rometsch-Schlosser CT-RSA '25]

[Tang-Qiu-Jiang-Xue-Yang-Au-Deng-Lam IEEE S&P '26]

[Wu-Qiu-Tang-Niu-Jiang-Zhou-Xue-Yang ESORICS '26] [Heng-Liu-Lu-Xue-Bao-Au PKC '26] ...

Similar: No aggregation, no re-randomization, ...

Challenges with BBS – Pairings

Use of pairings can be problematic

- **Device binding** (e.g., EUDI)
 - secure element issues signature in pairing-free curve, hard binding with credentials (see Anja's talk)
- **Lack of proper standardization**

BBS/BBS+ without pairings is an algebraic MAC

Pairing-free BBS – Use cases

- **Keyed-Verification Anonymous Credentials (KVAC)**

[Barki-Brunet-Desmoulins-Traoré SCN '16] [Orrù CCS '25]

– Issuer = verifier

- **Server-Aided Anonymous Credentials (SAAC)**

[Desmoulins-Dumanois-Kane-Traoré ePrint '25 BBS#] [ChairattanaApirom-Harding-Lysyanskaya-T CRYPTO '26]

– Public-verifiability with helper

Proof = $\bar{A}, \bar{B} + \text{PoK}$

$sk\bar{A} = \bar{B}$

Can be verified directly (KVAC)

Can be verified with help of additional DLEQ proof (SAAC)

SAACs

[Desmoulin-Dumanois-Kane-Traoré ePrint '25 BBS#]
[ChairattanaApirom-Harding-Lysyanskaya-T CRYPTO '26]

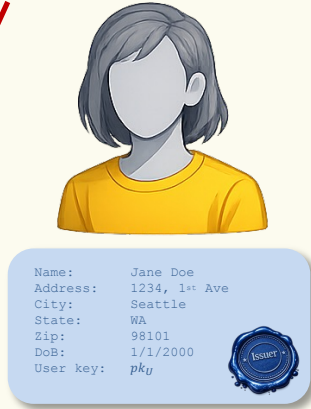
$\sigma = (A, e) = \text{credential}$

$VK = skG$

Is user
above
18?

③ $\pi = \bar{A}, \bar{B} + \pi_{DLEQ} + \text{PoK}$

① \bar{A}, \bar{B}



② Generate DLEQ proof π_{DLEQ} **obliviously**
[Orrù-T-Zaverucha-Zhu CRYPTO '24]



Issuer

sk



Possible Alternatives

Common take: *Why are they even using BBS?! There is a much better solution!!!*

My take: **No clear winner!** (And can see why BBS is preferred)

Possible Alternatives

Pairing-based signatures with efficient protocols

Scheme	Assumption	Concrete security	Key size	Sig size	Threshold / aggreg / rerand.
BBS	q -SDH	$\sqrt{p/q}$	$1 \mathbb{Z}_p$ (sk) $1 \mathbb{G}_2$ (vk)	$1 \mathbb{G}_1 + 1 \mathbb{Z}_p$	Not easy
PS	Ad-hoc q -type	\sqrt{p}	$\ell + 1 \mathbb{Z}_p$ (sk) $\ell + 1 \mathbb{G}_2$ (vk)	$2 \mathbb{G}_1$	Easy
FRW	(2,1)-DL (AGM)	\sqrt{p}	$1 \mathbb{G}_1 + 1 \mathbb{Z}_p$ (sk) $2\ell + 2 \mathbb{G}_1 + \ell + 2 \mathbb{G}_2 + 1 \mathbb{G}_T$ (vk)	$2 \mathbb{G}_1$	Easy
SPS-EQ	GGM	$\sqrt{p/q}$	$\ell \mathbb{Z}_p$ (sk) $\ell \mathbb{G}_2$ (vk)	$2 \mathbb{G}_1 + 1 \mathbb{G}_2$	Easy

+ constant-size presentation proofs

PS = Pointcheval, Sanders. [Short Randomizable Signatures](#). CT-RSA 2016

FRW = Fuchsbauer, Regen, Wee. [Round-Optimal Threshold Blind Signatures without Random Oracles](#). CRYPTO 2026

SPS-EQ = Fuchsbauer, Hanser, Slamanig. [Structure-Preserving Signatures on Equivalence Classes and Constant-Size Anonymous Credentials](#). JoC 2019

Conclusions

- **BBS has attracted substantial interest**
 - Covered by multiple standards
 - Good object of study
- **We understand its concrete security pretty well**
 - Tightly connected to q -DL / q -SDH
 - No clear reason to use BBS+ over BBS (except for confusion)
- **No other solution strictly dominates BBS**



Thank you!