On the hardness of monomial prediction and zero-sum distinguishers for Ascon

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Monomial Prediction Problem

Introduction

Monomail prediction problem

Given a composition of **quadratic** functions $f := f_r \circ f_{r-1} \circ \ldots f_0$, and a monomial m, where each $f_i : \mathbb{F}_2^n \longrightarrow \mathbb{F}_2^n$, decide the **coefficient** of m in $f^{(1)}$.

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- E.g. KECCAK, Trivium, Ascon, TinyJAMBU, etc. In-fact, in these systems, all f_i's are the same.
- Knowing the **coefficients** may lead to an attack.
- **Cube attacks** can detect non-randomness if there are monomials missing.

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- Cube testers can be used to decide existence of a monomial, but too expensive.
- [Hu et al., 2020] presented **monomial trail** concept which decides when a monomial exists in such composition of functions.

Hardness result

Theorem

Language L

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$$\text{and } g_i : \mathbb{F}_2^{n_i} \longrightarrow \mathbb{F}_2^{n_{i+1}}\,, n_i \in \mathbb{N}\ \forall\, i \in [r+1], \text{with } n_0 = n,$$
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Theorem: Hardness of monomial prediction

Given a composition of **quadratic** functions f and a monomial m, deciding whether $(f, m) \in L$ is $\oplus$**P**-hard.

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We will show `Odd Hamiltonian Cycle` $\leq_p L$.

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Lemma:Composition lemma

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Claim 1

For any $\ell \geq 1$,

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For $\ell > 1$, observe that g_ℓ is an identity map in the last n^2 coordinates.

Proof sketch

Claim 2

For any $\ell \geq 2$ and $k \in [n^2]$,

$$(g_\ell(\ldots(g_0(\boldsymbol{x}, \boldsymbol{y}, \boldsymbol{z})\ldots))_k$$
$$= y_i z_j \cdot \sum_{1 \leq m_1, \ldots, m_{\ell-1} \leq n} x_{i,m_1} x_{m_1,m_2} \cdots x_{m_{\ell-2},m_{\ell-1}} x_{m_{\ell-1},j} \cdot \left(\prod_{s=1}^{\ell-1} y_{m_s} z_{m_s} \right) .$$

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&(g_n(\ldots(g_0(\boldsymbol{x},\boldsymbol{y},\boldsymbol{z})\ldots)_1 \\
&= y_1 z_1 \cdot \sum_{1 \leq m_1,\ldots,m_{n-1} \leq n} x_{1,m_1} x_{m_1,m_2} \cdots x_{m_{n-2},m_{n-1}} x_{m_{n-1},1} \cdot \left(\prod_{s=1}^{n-1} y_{m_s} z_{m_s} \right) \\
&= \left(\prod_{s=1}^{n} y_{m_s} z_{m_s} \right) \cdot \sum_{1 \leq m_1,\ldots,m_{n-1} \leq n} x_{1,m_1} x_{m_1,m_2} \cdots x_{m_{n-2},m_{n-1}} x_{m_{n-1},1} .
\end{aligned}
$$

Proof sketch

Claim 2

For any $\ell \geq 2$ and $k \in [n^2]$,

$$
\begin{aligned}
&(g_\ell(\ldots(g_0(\boldsymbol{x},\boldsymbol{y},\boldsymbol{z})\ldots))_k \\
&= y_i z_j \cdot \sum_{1 \leq m_1,\ldots,m_{\ell-1} \leq n} x_{i,m_1} x_{m_1,m_2} \cdots x_{m_{\ell-2},m_{\ell-1}} x_{m_{\ell-1},j} \cdot \left(\prod_{s=1}^{\ell-1} y_{m_s} z_{m_s}\right) .
\end{aligned}
$$

Claim 2 with $k = 1$ (i.e. $i = j = 1$) and $\ell = n$, gives the following identity:

$$
\begin{aligned}
&(g_n(\ldots(g_0(\boldsymbol{x},\boldsymbol{y},\boldsymbol{z})\ldots)_1 \\
&= y_1 z_1 \cdot \sum_{1 \leq m_1,\ldots,m_{n-1} \leq n} x_{1,m_1} x_{m_1,m_2} \cdots x_{m_{n-2},m_{n-1}} x_{m_{n-1},1} \cdot \left(\prod_{s=1}^{n-1} y_{m_s} z_{m_s}\right) \\
&= \left(\prod_{s=1}^{n} y_{m_s} z_{m_s}\right) \cdot \sum_{1 \leq m_1,\ldots,m_{n-1} \leq n} x_{1,m_1} x_{m_1,m_2} \cdots x_{m_{n-2},m_{n-1}} x_{m_{n-1},1} .
\end{aligned}
$$

Ascon and new zero sum distinguishers

Ascon specification

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Ascon specification

- Ascon ia a permutation-based family of authenticated encryption with associated data algorithms (AEAD).
- It is one among the 10 finalists in the NIST lightweight cryptography standardization.
- The core permutation p of Ascon is based on substitution permutation network (SPN) design paradigm.
- It operates on a 320-bit state arranged into five 64-bit words and is defined as $p : p_L \circ p_S \circ p_C$.

p_C function

Addition of constants (p_C). We add an 8-bit constant to the bits $56, \cdots, 63$ of word X_2 at each round.

p_S function

Substitution layer (p_S). We apply a 5-bit Sbox on each of the 64 columns. Let $(x_0, x_1, x_2, x_3, x_4)$ and $(y_0, y_1, y_2, y_3, y_4)$ denote the input and output of the Sbox, respectively.

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$$\begin{cases} y_0 = x_4x_1 + x_3 + x_2x_1 + x_2 + x_1x_0 + x_1 + x_0 \\ y_1 = x_4 + x_3x_2 + x_3x_1 + x_3 + x_2x_1 + x_2 + x_1 + x_0 \\ y_2 = x_4x_3 + x_4 + x_2 + x_1 + 1 \\ y_3 = x_4x_0 + x_4 + x_3x_0 + x_3 + x_2 + x_1 + x_0 \\ y_4 = x_4x_1 + x_4 + x_3 + x_1x_0 + x_1 \end{cases} \tag{1}$$

p_L function

Linear diffusion layer (p_L). Each 64-bit word is updated by a linear operation Σ_i which is defined below.

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$$\begin{cases} X_0 \leftarrow \Sigma_0(Y_0) = Y_0 + (Y_0 \ggg 19) + (Y_0 \ggg 28) \\ X_1 \leftarrow \Sigma_1(Y_1) = Y_1 + (Y_1 \ggg 61) + (Y_1 \ggg 39) \\ X_2 \leftarrow \Sigma_2(Y_2) = Y_2 + (Y_2 \ggg 1) + (Y_2 \ggg 6) \\ X_3 \leftarrow \Sigma_3(Y_3) = Y_3 + (Y_3 \ggg 10) + (Y_3 \ggg 17) \\ X_4 \leftarrow \Sigma_4(Y_4) = Y_4 + (Y_4 \ggg 7) + (Y_4 \ggg 41) \end{cases} \tag{2}$$

New zero sum distinguishers

The state at the input of r-th round is denoted by $X_0^r \| X_1^r \| X_2^r \| X_3^r \| X_4^r$.

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Rounds	Cube size	Cube indices ($X_3^0 = X_4^0$)	Output indices (X_0^5)
5	13	0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 16	4
		0, 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 16	4
		0, 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 16	4
5	14	0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14	1, 4
		0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 16	4, 15, 24, 36
		0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 18	4

Table 1: List of cubes for 5-round Ascon-128

Conclusion

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Thank you. Questions?