

# Weak-Unforgeable Tags for Secure Supply Chain Management

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**Abstract.** Given the value of imported counterfeit and pirated goods, the need for secure supply chain management is pertinent. Maleki et al. (HOST 2017) propose a new management scheme based on RFID tags (with 2-3K bits NVM) which, if compared to other schemes, is competitive on several performance and security metrics. Its main idea is to have each RFID tag stores its reader events in its own NVM while moving through the supply chain. In order to bind a tag’s identity to each event such that an adversary is not able to impersonate the tag’s identity on another duplicate tag, a function with a weak form of unforgeability is needed. In this paper, we formally define this security property, present three constructions (MULTIPLY-ADD, ADD-XOR, and S-Box-CBC) having this security property, and show how to bound the probability of successful impersonation in concrete parameter settings. Finally, we compare our constructions with the light-weight hash function PHOTON used by Maleki et al. in terms of security and circuit area needed. We conclude that our ADD-XOR and S-Box-CBC constructions have approximately  $1/4 - 1/3$  of PHOTON’s total circuit area (this also includes the control circuitry besides PHOTON) while maintaining an appropriate security level which takes care of economically motivated adversaries.

**Keywords:** light-weight Cryptography; Unforgeability; One-Time Hash Function; Secure Supply Chain Management

## 1 Introduction

According to a recent report (in 2016) by the OECD and the EUs Intellectual Property Office [1], the value of imported counterfeited and pirated goods is worth nearly half a trillion dollars a year, which is around 2.5% of global imports with many of the proceeds going to organized crime. Close to 5% of goods that are imported into the European Union are fakes. The report analyses about half a million customs seizures around the world during 2011-13 covering all kinds of physical counterfeit goods (that infringe trademarks, intellectual property rights, or copyright) in order to obtain rigorous estimates of the scale of trade in counterfeit and pirated goods (online piracy is not included). These fake products

appear everywhere – the most dangerous ones are auto parts that fail, drugs making people sick, medical instruments delivering false readings, etc.

It is of utmost importance to make supply chains secure in order to detect counterfeit product injection into the supply chain. To this purpose, Radio-Frequency Identification (RFID) tags are used as a low-cost wireless identification method: Each product is equipped with an RFID tag which has a unique identifier and which is initialized at the supply chain back-end server with corresponding product information. In addition the RFID tag is either initialized with digital keys used for future authentication or, if a Physical Unclonable Function (PUF) is embedded, then read-out ‘challenge response pairs’ from the PUF at the back-end server can later be used for authentication. A supply chain moves through different supply chain partners that interact with RFID tags using RFID readers. These interactions are collected/stored and are together analyzed at the back-end server in order to detect whether the product is genuine or fake before the product exits the supply chain.

## 1.1 NVM-Based Scheme

This paper focuses on the most recent state-of-the-art proposal by Maleki et al. [2] for secure supply chain management based on RFID tags. Previous schemes come in two kinds: A first kind [3–7] requires persistent online communication between readers of supply chain partners and the back-end server. This, however, is in practice not always possible; sometimes the online connection does get lost and even an hour communication disruption can delay product transportation leading to financial loss. In order to avoid the need for persistent online communication, a second kind of scheme has been proposed which requires each supply chain partner to implement a local database [8–11]. Local databases are used as temporal storage to keep track of reader events. The local databases are integrated into the back-end server at a suitable time when an online connection with the back-end server is available.

The disadvantage of using local databases is that they need a reliable infrastructure and they must be maintained and secured. This imposes extra costs to partners and makes the supply chain possibly less secure as these local databases become an accessible point of attack. The main contribution of [2] is a new method which does not require any persistent online communication and also does not require local databases. Their idea is to distribute the local databases into the RFID tags themselves by utilizing the 2-3K bit Non-Volatile Memory (NVM) present in current off-the-shelf RFID tags [12]. This memory is sufficient for storing all the reader events the RFID tag engages in. Only when exiting the supply chain, the RFID tag is read out and verified by the back-end server for which online communication is needed (a minimal requirement for any scheme). The NVM-based scheme of Maleki et al. [2] is presented in detail in Appendix A (with discussion of pros and cons).

## 1.2 Software Unclonable Functions

The main take-away of the NVM-based scheme is that in order to bind the identity of an RFID tag to a reader event, the tag consumes one of its secret keys  $k$  stored in its NVM in order to compute  $F_k(x)$  where input  $x$  is received from the reader and cannot be distinguished from a random bit string. The tag overwrites  $k$  with  $F_k(x)$  in its NVM – and in this way the tag authenticates its own reader events stored in its NVM. For completeness, the reader represents the reader event (which includes the identities of the reader and tag, and a time stamp) as a bit string, which the reader MACs using its own key and this results in  $x$ . The back-end server has in its database the key sequence of the tag (which includes  $k$ ) and the reader key; this is sufficient to verify the binding of the event to the reader (through the MAC) and tag (through  $F_k(x)$ ).

Maleki et al. [2] explain that it is sufficient to require that  $F_k(\cdot)$  is a collision resistant hash function – and they propose to use PHOTON 80/20/16, a light-weight hash function costing 865 GE (Gate Equivalent). The complete solution (including control logic etc.) costs 1428 GE. Juels and Weis [13] state (and confirmed by [12]) “A basic RFID tag may have a total of anywhere from 1000-10000 gates, with only 200-2000 budgeted specifically for security.” Also every 1000 gates costs approximately one dollar cent per tag. It is therefore important to further reduce the gate equivalence of the complete solution. It turns out that collision resistance is not required and this allows the design of a much more light-weight  $F_k(\cdot)$ , which is the problem statement of this paper.

In the NVM-based scheme,  $F_k(\cdot)$  is used to protect against an adversary who can only access the tag through its read and write interface in order to gather sufficient information to construct a ‘tag-simulator’ which can be programmed into a fake tag. The read and write interface is such that after initialization only the values that have replaced keys in NVM can be read out. This means that in order to learn about one specific key  $k$ , an adversary can engage in a reader-like interaction with the tag in order to replace  $k$  with  $F_k(x')$  for some value  $x'$  of his choice. Next  $F_k(x')$  can be read out and the pair  $(x', F_k(x'))$  can be used to design a simulator for predicting  $F_k(x)$  for random input bit vectors  $x$ . Modeling this (very) weak attacker leads to the definition of “software unclonable functions” in [2] of which they only give collision resistant hash functions as an instance. We notice that in the discussion above the adversary is only allowed to use an RFID tag’s read and write interface according to its specifications. An adversary who can circumvent the interface circuitry by means of a physical attack is not considered.

## 1.3 Contributions and Organization

In Section 2 we take the definition of software unclonable functions and give an equivalent definition in terms of a “software unclonable response game”. Next we discuss its relation to the standard crypto notion of unforgeability for MACs and we conclude that being software unclonable means “unforgeable for random inputs when given one chosen input-output pair” – hence, the title of our paper.

We enrich the definition of software unclonability by adding a security measure for worst-case scenarios in concrete parameter settings.

Sections 3, 4, and 5 provide very light-weight constructions. The first, called MULTIPLY-ADD, is based on a simple multiplication with addition over integers. The second, called ADD-XOR, combines xor with addition-with-carry over binary vectors. The third, called S-Box-CBC, uses the idea of Cipher Block Chaining (CBC) mode with a specially designed S-box. In Section 6 we compare the different solutions and we show ADD-XOR and S-Box-CBC lead to dramatic reductions in total circuit size for reasonable security.

## 2 Software Unclonable Functions

Software unclonable functions are defined as follows:

**Definition 1.** [2] *A keyed function  $F_k(\cdot)$  is called software unclonable if the probability of guessing the output of  $F_k(x)$  for a randomly chosen input  $x$  with knowledge of **one** chosen input-output pair  $(x', F_k(x'))$  (the adversary chooses  $x'$ ) is less than negligible (in the function's key size).*

We notice that Definition 1 requires resistance against adversaries with unbounded computation – the definition formulates software unclonability in terms of information theoretic security. This implies that a symmetric key encryption scheme may not satisfy software unclonability since one chosen plaintext ciphertext pair may reveal significant information about the underlying secret key in the information theoretical setting. For a polynomial time adversary a semantically secure symmetric key encryption scheme will be software unclonable. Therefore, we recast the above definition for adversaries with polynomial computation by using the software unclonable response game given in Algorithm 1, where

- $\lambda$  is a security parameter and  $Gen(1^\lambda)$  is a ppt algorithm which generates a random key  $k$ ,
- $\mathcal{A}_0$  is a ppt adversarial algorithm which allows the adversary to generate exactly one chosen input value  $x'$
- for which the adversary is allowed to learn the output/response of function  $F_k(x')$ ,
- $\mathcal{A}_1$  is a ppt adversarial algorithm which takes just this one input-output pair  $(x', F_k(x'))$  in order to produce a ppt simulator  $\mathcal{S}$ , and
- where  $\mathcal{S}$  successfully predicts  $F_k(x)$  for a random input  $x$  if it outputs  $F_k(x)$ .

This leads to the following definition which we will use in our analysis in next sections:

**Definition 2.** *A function  $F_k(x)$  is software unclonable if for any ppt pair  $(\mathcal{A}_0, \mathcal{A}_1)$ , the probability that  $\text{SOFTWAREUNCLRESPGAME}(\mathcal{A}_0, \mathcal{A}_1)$  (see Algorithm 1 with security parameter  $\lambda$ ) returns 1 is  $\text{negl}(\lambda)$ .*

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**Algorithm 1** Software Unclonable Response Game

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1: function SOFTWAREUNCLRESPGAME( $\mathcal{A}_0, \mathcal{A}_1$ )
2:    $k \leftarrow \text{GEN}(1^\lambda)$ ;
3:    $x' \in \{0, 1\}^\lambda \leftarrow \mathcal{A}_0(1^\lambda)$ ;
4:    $\mathcal{S} \leftarrow \mathcal{A}_1(x', F_k(x'))$ ; /*  $\mathcal{S}$  is a ppt algorithm */
5:   Random  $x \in \{0, 1\}^\lambda$ 
6:   if  $F_k(x) \leftarrow \mathcal{S}(x)$  then  $b = 1$ ; else  $b = 0$ ; end if
7:   Return  $b$ ;
8: end function
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Now, based on standard cryptography there are numerous cryptographic functions which are software unclonable. Given our motivation we are only interested in light-weight solutions in the sense that at most a couple 100 gates should suffice for implementation. This implies that the primitive (as far as the authors know) cannot be based on a computational hardness assumption. And this means that we need to prove information theoretical security for our constructions after all (in Definition 2 algorithms  $\mathcal{A}_0$ ,  $\mathcal{A}_1$ , and  $\mathcal{S}$  do not need to be restricted to ppt). As a consequence, since the adversary can use one  $\lambda$ -bit vector equation representing an input-output pair for construction of a simulator, the key must have size at least  $\lambda + O(\lambda)$  (as opposed to a symmetric key encryption scheme which can have a  $\lambda$ -bit secret key).

## 2.1 Unforgeability

A closer look at Definition 2 shows the relation of a software unclonable function to a Message Authentication Code (MAC): A MAC is a triple  $(Gen, Sign, Ver)$  of ppt algorithms where  $k \leftarrow Gen(1^\lambda)$  with security parameter  $\lambda$ ,  $t \leftarrow Sign(k, x)$  produces a tag  $t$  for input string  $x$  with key  $k$ , and  $Ver$  verifies whether a tag  $t$  fits input  $x$  with key  $k$ . A software unclonable function  $F_k(x)$  plays the role of producing tags as in  $Sign$ . A first small difference is that  $F_k(\cdot)$  is a function and not an algorithm. This implies that verification of the tag is straightforward in that the corresponding  $Ver$  simply verifies whether tag  $t = F_k(x)$  (and this directly implies the correctness property for a MAC).

The security of a MAC is defined as follows: A MAC is unforgeable if for all ppt algorithms  $\mathcal{A}$ ,

$$\text{Prob} \left( \begin{array}{l} k \leftarrow Gen(1^\lambda), \\ (x, t) \leftarrow \mathcal{A}^{Sign(k, \cdot)}(1^\lambda) \text{ where } \mathcal{A} \text{ does not query } Sign(k, x), \\ Ver(k, x, t) = \text{accept} \end{array} \right) < \text{negl}(\lambda),$$

where  $\mathcal{A}^{Sign(k, \cdot)}$  denotes that  $\mathcal{A}$  has access to oracle  $Sign(k, \cdot)$ .

The second difference with software unclonability is that the adversarial algorithm is split into  $\mathcal{A}_0$ , which selects an  $x'$  for querying oracle  $Sign(k, \cdot) = F_k(\cdot)$ , and  $\mathcal{A}_1$  which, based on the output of the queried oracle, produces a simulator  $\mathcal{S}$  whose goal is to produce a valid (verifiable) tag  $Sign(k, x) = F_k(x)$  for

some random input  $x$ . This means that software unclonability does not allow the adversary to adaptively choose an  $x$  for which a tag is constructed, instead unforgeability is for tags of random inputs.

The third difference is that software unclonability does not allow the adversary to have a polynomial number of queries to the oracle, instead only one chosen input-tag pair can be used. We conclude that a software unclonable function produces tags as in a MAC with a much weaker unforgeability property: a tag corresponding to a random input is unforgeable given only one chosen input-tag pair. The motivation presented in the introduction has led to the name “software unclonable”. From a crypto perspective, however, a better terminology would be “unforgeable for random inputs when given one chosen input-output pair” and call the primitive a “one-time MAC for authenticating random (not chosen) inputs.”

In a one-time MAC [14] a key is used at most once and can be constructed using a universal hash function which is pairwise independent. An example light-weight pairwise independent hash function is defined by tag  $t = k_0x + k_1 \bmod p$ , where  $p$  is prime. In Section 3 we analyse the “MULTIPLY-ADD” function where a tag is computed as  $k_0x + k_1 \bmod 2^\lambda$  and the “key”  $(k_0, k_1)$  is chosen at random (not necessarily odd).

## 2.2 Average vs. Worst-Case Analysis

Software unclonable functions are meant to be applied in RFID-based secure supply chain management. Rather than just proving asymptotic results in the form of the probability of a successful attack being negligible in  $\lambda$ , we want to know a concrete upper bound on this probability as a function of  $\lambda$ . This will allow us to suggest concrete parameter settings.

As we will explain below, Definition 2 talks about the average over ‘queries  $x' \leftarrow \mathcal{A}_0(1^\lambda)$  to oracle  $F_k(\cdot)$ ’ of the probability of a successful prediction by the simulator computed by  $\mathcal{S} \leftarrow \mathcal{A}_1(x', F_k(x'))$ . In asymptotic terms, if this average is negligible, then it is not possible to have a significant worst-case probability  $\gamma_0$  of selecting an oracle query which leads to a simulator which also has a significant probability  $\geq \gamma_1$  of success, because  $\gamma_0\gamma_1$  is at most average  $p$  which is negligible,

$$\gamma_0\gamma_1 \leq p. \tag{1}$$

In other words, either  $\gamma_0$  or  $\gamma_1$  must be negligible.

In this argument we did not specify the pair  $(\gamma_0, \gamma_1)$  and we note that there are many possibilities. In the concrete non-asymptotic setting, we want an achievable pair  $(\gamma_0, \gamma_1)$  for which both the probability  $\gamma_0$  of having a ‘lucky’ query as well as the probability  $\gamma_1$  of successful prediction by a simulator originating from ‘normal’ queries to be equally small: If we find such a pair, then we know that both the worst-case probability  $\gamma_0$  is small as well as the probability  $\gamma_1$  of success in the normal case is small. This is not captured by studying the concrete asymptotic behavior of the average as a function of  $\lambda$ .

For example, if  $p = 2^{-\lambda}$ , then the minimum  $\alpha$  of  $\max\{\gamma_0, \gamma_1\}$  over all possible/achievable pairs  $(\gamma_0, \gamma_1)$  could be realized by  $\gamma_0 = \gamma_1 = 2^{-\lambda/2}$  which meets

(1) with equality (the argument is in essence the application of the birthday paradox to our problem setting). This leads to a very different concrete parameter setting compared to ‘just’ considering the average case.

So, we are still not entirely satisfied with Definition 2 when considering concrete parameter settings for the following reason: For  $\mathcal{A}_1$  and  $x' \in \{0, 1\}^\lambda$ , let

$$p[\mathcal{A}_1](x') = \text{Prob}_{x \leftarrow \{0, 1\}^\lambda}(F_k(x) \leftarrow \mathcal{S}(x) | \mathcal{S} \leftarrow \mathcal{A}_1(x')). \quad (2)$$

In Definition 2 the probability  $p[\mathcal{A}_0, \mathcal{A}_1]$  that  $\text{SOFTWAREUNCLRESPGAME}(\mathcal{A}_0, \mathcal{A}_1)$  returns 1 (over random  $x$  and coin flips in  $\mathcal{A}_0$ ,  $\mathcal{A}_1$ , and  $\mathcal{S}$ ) is equal to the average

$$p[\mathcal{A}_0, \mathcal{A}_1] = \sum_{x' \in \{0, 1\}^\lambda} \text{Prob}(x' \leftarrow \mathcal{A}_0(1^\lambda)) p[\mathcal{A}_1](x'). \quad (3)$$

In Definition 2 we only require that the average  $p[\mathcal{A}_0, \mathcal{A}_1]$  should be negligible in  $\lambda$ . As explained above, we need to formulate security in terms of a worst-case analysis. We may ask whether the adversary can be lucky (the worst-case) and somehow select in  $\mathcal{A}_0$  a  $x'$  which “fits”  $k$  well in that  $p[\mathcal{A}_1](x')$  is (much) larger than the average  $p[\mathcal{A}_0, \mathcal{A}_1]$ . In order to analyze this we introduce  $\alpha_h[\mathcal{A}_0, \mathcal{A}_1]$  as the probability (over coin flips used in  $\mathcal{A}_0$  and  $\mathcal{A}_1$ ) that game  $\text{SOFTWAREUNCLRESPGAME}(\mathcal{A}_0, \mathcal{A}_1)$  produces a simulator  $\mathcal{S}$  which correctly predicts  $F_k(x) \leftarrow \mathcal{S}(x)$  with probability (over random  $x$  and coin flips in  $\mathcal{S}$ )  $\leq 2^{-h}$ . We note that

$$\alpha_h[\mathcal{A}_0, \mathcal{A}_1] = \sum_{x': p[\mathcal{A}_1](x') \leq 2^{-h}} \text{Prob}(x' \leftarrow \mathcal{A}_0(1^\lambda)). \quad (4)$$

We want both  $2^{-h}$  small and  $\alpha_h[\mathcal{A}_0, \mathcal{A}_1]$  large as this implies that (1) the probability that the adversary is able to construct a “lucky” simulator is equal to  $1 - \alpha_h[\mathcal{A}_0, \mathcal{A}_1]$ , which is small, and (2) when the adversary constructs a “normal” (i.e., “not lucky”) simulator, then the simulator correctly predicts  $F_k(x) \leftarrow \mathcal{S}(x)$  with small probability  $\leq 2^{-h}$ . We can think of  $1 - \alpha_h[\mathcal{A}_0, \mathcal{A}_1]$  as the probability mass of the tail of distribution  $p[\mathcal{A}_1](x')$  that describes the lucky scenarios  $x'$  for the adversary, i.e., the worst-case scenarios from a security point of view.

We want  $1 - \alpha_h[\mathcal{A}_0, \mathcal{A}_1]$  and  $2^{-h}$  to be in balance and this leads to the definition of

$$\alpha[\mathcal{A}_0, \mathcal{A}_1] = \min_h \max\{1 - \alpha_h[\mathcal{A}_0, \mathcal{A}_1], 2^{-h}\}. \quad (5)$$

$\alpha[\mathcal{A}_0, \mathcal{A}_1]$  is the smallest value  $\alpha$  with the property that the probability that game  $\text{SOFTWAREUNCLRESPGAME}(\mathcal{A}_0, \mathcal{A}_1)$  produces a simulator  $\mathcal{S}$  which correctly predicts  $F_k(x) \leftarrow \mathcal{S}(x)$  with probability  $> \alpha$  is at most  $\alpha$ , in formula,

$$\alpha[\mathcal{A}_0, \mathcal{A}_1] = \min \left\{ \alpha : \text{Prob} \left( \begin{array}{l} \mathcal{S} \leftarrow \mathcal{A}_1(x') \text{ such that} \\ \text{Prob}(F_k(x) \leftarrow \mathcal{S}(x)) > \alpha \end{array} \right) \leq \alpha \right\},$$

where the inner probability is over random  $x \leftarrow \{0, 1\}^\lambda$  and the outer probability is over  $x' \leftarrow \mathcal{A}_0(1^\lambda)$ .

**Definition 3.** For a software unclonable function  $F_k(x)$  we define the ‘average exponential growth factor’

$$\mathbf{p} = \limsup_{\lambda \rightarrow \infty} -(\log \sup_{(\mathcal{A}_0, \mathcal{A}_1)} p[\mathcal{A}_0, \mathcal{A}_1]) / \lambda$$

and we define the ‘worst-case exponential growth factor’

$$\mathbf{a} = \limsup_{\lambda \rightarrow \infty} -(\log \sup_{(\mathcal{A}_0, \mathcal{A}_1)} \alpha[\mathcal{A}_0, \mathcal{A}_1]) / \lambda,$$

where  $p[\mathcal{A}_0, \mathcal{A}_1]$  is a function of  $\lambda$  given by (2,3) and  $\alpha[\mathcal{A}_0, \mathcal{A}_1]$  is a function of  $\lambda$  given by (2,4,5).

A software unclonable function  $F_k(x)$  has better security if  $\mathbf{a}$  is larger, and is more light-weight if the gate equivalence of its circuit implementation is smaller. In this paper we propose three constructions and compare them along these metrics.

Notice that by (3, 4),  $p[\mathcal{A}_0, \mathcal{A}_1] \geq (1 - \alpha_h[\mathcal{A}_0, \mathcal{A}_1])2^{-h}$ . Combined with (5), this implies

$$\alpha[\mathcal{A}_0, \mathcal{A}_1] \leq \min_h \max\{p[\mathcal{A}_0, \mathcal{A}_1]/2^{-h}, 2^{-h}\} = \sqrt{p[\mathcal{A}_0, \mathcal{A}_1]}$$

(since  $h$  can be any real number; in the analysis of our constructions we consider only integers  $h$ ). This proves that the exponential growth factors  $\mathbf{p}$  and  $\mathbf{a}$  satisfy  $\mathbf{a} \geq \mathbf{p}/2$ . This argument is in essence the birthday paradox.

In the next sections we analyze for several candidate software unclonable functions both  $p[\mathcal{A}_0, \mathcal{A}_1]$  as well as  $\alpha[\mathcal{A}_0, \mathcal{A}_1]$  together with their exponential growth factors. It turns out that for these functions the probability mass of the tail of distribution  $p[\mathcal{A}_0](x')$  is large so that  $\mathbf{a} \approx \mathbf{p}/2$ .

### 3 MULTIPLY-ADD

Below we prove that the “MULTIPLY-ADD” function

$$F_{(k_0, k_1)}(x) = k_0x + k_1 \bmod 2^\lambda, \text{ for } k_0, k_1, x \in \{0, 1\}^\lambda, \quad (6)$$

where  $k_0$  and  $x$  are multiplied modulo  $2^\lambda$  and  $+$  modulo  $2^\lambda$  is binary addition with carry truncated after  $\lambda$  bits, is a software unclonable function. In what follows when we write  $+$  we mean addition modulo  $2^\lambda$ .

**Theorem 1.** For the MULTIPLY-ADD function defined in (6),

$$p[\mathcal{A}_0, \mathcal{A}_1] \leq (\lambda + 2)2^{-\lambda-1} \text{ and } \alpha[\mathcal{A}_0, \mathcal{A}_1] \leq 2^{-\lfloor(\lambda-1)/2\rfloor}$$

for all algorithm pairs  $(\mathcal{A}_0, \mathcal{A}_1)$  (unrestricted, the theorem does not require  $(\mathcal{A}_0, \mathcal{A}_1)$ , and produced simulators to be ppt). These upper bounds can be met with equality, this implies average and worst-case exponential growth factors

$$\mathbf{p} = 1 \text{ and } \mathbf{a} = 1/2.$$

*Proof.* We will first translate the problem of creating a simulator with maximum possible successful prediction probability to an equivalent problem which we are able to analyze precisely:

Suppose the adversary knows the pair  $(x', F_{(k_0, k_1)}(x'))$  and wants to build a simulator which predicts  $F_{(k_0, k_1)}(x)$  for random  $x$ . We notice that for

$$\begin{aligned} z &= F_{(k_0, k_1)}(x) - F_{(k_0, k_1)}(x'), \quad v = k_0, \text{ and } w = x - x', \\ z &= vw \pmod{2^\lambda}. \end{aligned} \quad (7)$$

Also, notice that given  $x'$ , since  $x$  is random,  $w$  is random; and since  $k_0$  is random,  $v$  is random. These observations can be used to show that predicting  $F_{(k_0, k_1)}(x)$  for a randomly selected input  $x$  based on  $(x', F_{(k_0, k_1)}(x'))$  where  $F$  is defined by (6) is equivalent to (notice that  $k_1$  is unknown and random) predicting  $z$  in (7) for a randomly selected input  $w$  and unknown/random  $v$ . This implies that the probability of  $\text{SOFTWAREUNCLRESPGAME}(\mathcal{A}_0, \mathcal{A}_1)$  returning 1 is equal to the probability of  $\text{ZWGAMEMA}(\mathcal{A})$ , see Algorithm 2, returning 1. This probability is maximized for  $\mathcal{A}$  outputting a simulator  $\mathcal{S}$  which on input  $w$  outputs a  $z$  that maximizes  $|\{v : z = vw\}|$ . In other words,  $z$  maximizes the number of collisions  $v$  that yield the same  $z = vw$ . In formula,  $p[\mathcal{A}_0, \mathcal{A}_1]$  (where  $\mathcal{A}_0$  and  $\mathcal{A}_1$  are derived from  $\mathcal{A}$  according to the transformation described above) is equal to

$$2^{-\lambda} \sum_w \max_z \text{Prob}_{v \leftarrow \{0,1\}^\lambda} [z = vw] = 2^{-\lambda} \sum_w \max_z \frac{|\{v : z = vw\}|}{2^\lambda}. \quad (8)$$

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**Algorithm 2** Finding  $z$  based on  $w$

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1: function ZWGAMEMA( $\mathcal{A}$ )
2:    $v \in \{0, 1\}^\lambda$  is a random input;
3:    $\mathcal{S} \leftarrow \mathcal{A}(1^\lambda)$ ;
4:    $w \in \{0, 1\}^\lambda$  is a random input;
5:   if  $\mathcal{S}(w) = vw$  then
6:      $b = 1$ ;
7:   else
8:      $b = 0$ ;
9:   end if
10:  Return  $b$ ;
11: end function
12: /*On input  $w$ , an optimal  $\mathcal{S}$  outputs a  $z$  which maximizes  $|\{v : z = vw\}|$ .*/

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We will now analyze (8) by distinguishing the cases  $w \neq 0$  and  $w = 0$ .

Let  $w \neq 0$ . If  $2^{\lambda-h}$  is the largest power of 2 dividing  $w$ , then  $z = vw \pmod{2^\lambda}$  is equivalent to  $z = v(w/2^{\lambda-h}) \pmod{2^h}$ . Since  $w/2^{\lambda-h}$  is an odd integer, it has an inverse modulo  $2^h$ . This implies that there is exactly one  $v = z(w/2^{\lambda-h})^{-1} \pmod{2^h}$  for which  $z = v(w/2^{\lambda-h}) \pmod{2^h}$ . Therefore there are  $2^{\lambda-h}$  possible  $v$  for

which  $z = vw \bmod 2^\lambda$  (these  $v$  are equal to  $z(w/2^{\lambda-h})^{-1} \bmod 2^h$  plus some multiple of  $2^h$ ).

If  $w = 0$ , then only for  $z = 0$  there exists a  $v$  such that  $z = vw$ ; in this case all  $2^\lambda$  possible  $v$  satisfy  $z = vw$ .

Let  $W_h$ ,  $1 < h \leq \lambda$ , be the number of integers  $w$ ,  $0 < w < 2^\lambda$ , for which  $2^{\lambda-h}$  is the largest power of 2 dividing  $w$ . Define  $W_0 = 1$ . Then (8) is equal to

$$2^{-\lambda} \sum_{h=0}^{\lambda} W_h 2^{-h}.$$

We notice that  $W_h = 2^{h-1}$  for  $1 \leq h \leq \lambda$ . Hence, (8) is equal to

$$2^{-\lambda} (1 + \sum_{h=1}^{\lambda} 2^{-1}) = (\lambda + 2) 2^{-\lambda-1}.$$

This proves  $p[\mathcal{A}_0, \mathcal{A}_1] = (\lambda + 2) 2^{-\lambda-1}$  and  $\mathbf{p} = 1$ .

The above derivation also proves that the number of  $w$  for which  $\max_z \text{Prob}_{v \leftarrow \{0,1\}^\lambda} [z = vw] \leq 2^{-h}$  is equal to  $\sum_{i=h}^{\lambda} W_i = 2^\lambda - \sum_{i=0}^{h-1} W_i = 2^\lambda - (1 + \sum_{i=1}^{h-1} 2^{i-1})$  for  $h \geq 2$ . The probability that such a  $w$  is selected is equal to  $\sum_{i=h}^{\lambda} W_i / 2^\lambda$ . This can be interpreted as

$$\alpha_h[\mathcal{A}_0, \mathcal{A}_1] = \sum_{i=h}^{\lambda} W_i / 2^\lambda = 1 - (1 + \sum_{i=1}^{h-1} 2^{i-1}) / 2^\lambda = 1 - 2^{-(\lambda+1-h)},$$

which in turn proves

$$\alpha[\mathcal{A}_0, \mathcal{A}_1] = \min_h \max\{2^{-(\lambda+1-h)}, 2^{-h}\} = 2^{-\lfloor(\lambda-1)/2\rfloor} \text{ and } \mathbf{a} = 1/2.$$

## 4 ADD-XOR

Below we prove that the ‘‘ADD-XOR’’ function

$$F_{(k_0, k_1)}(x) = (k_0 + x \bmod 2^\lambda) \oplus k_1, \text{ for } k_0, k_1, x \in \{0, 1\}^\lambda, \quad (9)$$

where  $+$  modulo  $2^\lambda$  is binary addition with carry truncated after  $\lambda$  bits and where  $\oplus$  represents XOR, is a software unclonable function.

In appendix B of the full version [15], we prove the following theorem:

**Theorem 2.** *For the ADD-XOR function as defined in (9),*

$$p[\mathcal{A}_0, \mathcal{A}_1] \leq 2^{-0.234 \cdot \lambda} \text{ and } \alpha[\mathcal{A}_0, \mathcal{A}_1] \leq 2 \cdot 2^{-0.141 \cdot \lambda}$$

for all algorithm pairs  $(\mathcal{A}_0, \mathcal{A}_1)$  (unrestricted, the theorem does not require  $(\mathcal{A}_0, \mathcal{A}_1)$ , and produced simulators to be ppt). This implies average and worst-case exponential growth factors

$$\mathbf{p} \geq 0.234 \text{ and } \mathbf{a} \geq 0.141.$$

Simulations with the optimal simulator constructed in [15] show that the bounds for  $\mathbf{p}$  and  $\mathbf{a}$  are very tight. (Notice that for ADD-XOR,  $\mathbf{a} > \mathbf{p}/2$ .)

## 5 S-Box-CBC

In this section we introduce a construction which uses the idea of S-boxes in block-cipher design together with CBC mode [16].

Suppose we have a non-linear mapping

$$S \in \{0, 1\}^m \rightarrow \{0, 1\}^m,$$

where  $m$  is generally very small (we will propose small powers of two,  $m = 4$  or  $m = 8$ ). Mapping  $S$  is called an S-Box. Since we use a software unclonable function for authentication in the NVM-based supply chain management scheme, this means that the software unclonable function does not necessarily need to be invertible given knowledge of the keys. It turns out that ADD-XOR and MULTIPLY-ADD are invertible; in this section, however, we will construct a non-invertible software unclonable function based on a non-invertible S-box mapping  $S$ .

Our construction is iterative following the design principle used in CBC mode for symmetric key encryption (where we replace encryption by our S-box): For  $n$  with  $nm = \lambda$ , we use the vector notation  $x = (x_1, \dots, x_n) \in \{0, 1\}^\lambda$  with  $x_i \in \{0, 1\}^m$ . For keys  $k_0 = (k_1^0, k_2^0, \dots, k_n^0)$  and  $k_1 = (k_1^1, k_2^1, \dots, k_n^1)$  and input  $x$ , we recursively compute

$$y_{i+1} = S(y_i \oplus x_{i+1} \oplus k_{i+1}^0) \oplus k_{i+1}^1 \quad (10)$$

for  $0 \leq i \leq n - 1$  with  $y_0 = 0$ . We define

$$F_{(k_0, k_1)}(x) = y. \quad (11)$$

In the construction we mask input  $x_i$  with  $k_i^0$  and we mask the output of the S-box with  $k_i^1$ . The S-box is a kind of non-linear obfuscation mapping. Forwarding  $y_i$  into the computation of  $y_{i+1}$  corresponds to the main design principle used in CBC mode for symmetric key encryption. Below we will prove (in a couple of steps) that the S-box construction leads to a software unclonable function.

We start with analyzing the average case:

**Theorem 3.** *Let  $F_{(k_0, k_1)}(x)$  be defined by the S-Box-CBC construction in (10,11) for  $\lambda = nm$ . For the S-box mapping  $S$  used in  $F$ , we define*

$$\begin{aligned} \rho[S](w) &= \max_{z \in \{0, 1\}^m} |\{v : z = S(v) \oplus S(v \oplus w)\}|/2^m, \text{ and} \\ \rho[S] &= \sum_{w \in \{0, 1\}^m} \rho[S](w)/2^m. \end{aligned}$$

*Then, for all algorithm pairs  $(\mathcal{A}_0, \mathcal{A}_1)$  (unrestricted, the theorem does not require  $(\mathcal{A}_0, \mathcal{A}_1)$ , and produced simulators to be ppt),*

$$p[\mathcal{A}_0, \mathcal{A}_1] \leq \rho[S]^n \text{ with } \mathbf{p} = -(\log \rho[S])/m.$$

*Proof.* We will first translate the problem of creating a simulator with maximum possible successful prediction probability to an equivalent problem which we are able to analyze precisely:

Suppose the adversary knows the pair  $(x', y' = F_{(k_0, k_1)}(x'))$  and wants to build a simulator which predicts  $F_{(k_0, k_1)}(x)$  for random  $x$ . We notice that for  $z = F_{(k_0, k_1)}(x') \oplus F_{(k_0, k_1)}(x)$  the recursive definition of  $F$  in (10,11) implies  $z_{i+1} = y'_{i+1} \oplus y_{i+1} = S(y'_i \oplus x'_{i+1} \oplus k_{i+1}^0) \oplus S(y_i \oplus x_{i+1} \oplus k_{i+1}^0)$ . If we define  $v_{i+1} = y'_i \oplus x'_{i+1} \oplus k_{i+1}^0$ , and  $w_{i+1} = (y'_i \oplus y_i) \oplus (x'_{i+1} \oplus x_{i+1}) = z_i \oplus (x'_{i+1} \oplus x_{i+1})$ , then

$$z_{i+1} = S(v_{i+1}) \oplus S(v_{i+1} \oplus w_{i+1}). \quad (12)$$

Notice that given  $x'_{i+1}$  and  $y'_i$ , since  $k_{i+1}^0$  is random and  $y'_i$  only depends on  $k_j^0$  for  $j \leq i$ ,  $v_{i+1}$  is random. Therefore, by induction on  $i$ , given  $x'$ ,  $v$  is random. We also notice that given  $x'_{i+1}$  and  $z_i$ , since  $x_{i+1}$  is random and  $z_i$  only depends on  $x_j$  for  $j \leq i$ ,  $w_{i+1}$  is random. Therefore, by induction on  $i$ , given  $x'$ ,  $w$  is random.

The above observations can be used to show that predicting  $F_{(k_0, k_1)}(x)$  for a randomly selected input  $x$  based on  $(x', F_{(k_0, k_1)}(x'))$  where  $F$  is defined by (10,11) is equivalent to (notice that  $k_1$  is unknown and random) predicting  $z$  in (12) for a randomly selected input  $w$  and unknown/random  $v$ . This implies that the probability of  $\text{SOFTWAREUNCLRESPGAME}(\mathcal{A}_0, \mathcal{A}_1)$  returning 1 is equal to the probability of  $\text{ZWGAMESB}(\mathcal{A})$ , see Algorithm 3, returning 1. This probability is maximized over  $\mathcal{A}$  outputting a simulator  $\mathcal{S}$  which on input  $w$  outputs a  $z$  that maximizes  $|\{v : \forall_i z_{i+1} = S(v_{i+1}) \oplus S(v_{i+1} \oplus w_{i+1})\}|$ . In other words,  $z$  maximizes the number of collisions  $v$  that satisfy the same set of equations  $z_{i+1} = S(v_{i+1}) \oplus S(v_{i+1} \oplus w_{i+1})$ . In formula,  $p[\mathcal{A}_0, \mathcal{A}_1]$  (where  $\mathcal{A}_0$  and  $\mathcal{A}_1$  are derived from  $\mathcal{A}$  according to the transformation described above) is equal to

$$\begin{aligned} & 2^{-\lambda} \sum_w \max_z \text{Prob}_{v \leftarrow \{0,1\}^\lambda} [\forall_i z_{i+1} = S(v_{i+1}) \oplus S(v_{i+1} \oplus w_{i+1})] \\ &= 2^{-\lambda} \sum_w \max_z \frac{|\{v : \forall_i z_{i+1} = S(v_{i+1}) \oplus S(v_{i+1} \oplus w_{i+1})\}|}{2^\lambda} \\ &= 2^{-\lambda} \sum_w \prod_{i=0}^{n-1} \rho[S](w_{i+1}) = \prod_{i=0}^{n-1} \sum_{w_{i+1}} \rho[S](w_{i+1})/2^m = \rho[S]^n. \end{aligned} \quad (13)$$

This concludes the proof of Theorem 3.

According to Theorem 3, the smaller  $\rho[S]$ , the larger the average exponential growth factor  $\mathbf{p}$ . The next lemma shows a lower bound on  $\rho[S]$  and describes an S-box  $\mathcal{S}$  which meets this lower bound leading to the largest possible  $\mathbf{p}$  for the S-Box-CBC construction:

**Lemma 1.** (i) For any S-box  $S$ ,  $\rho[S](w) \geq 2/2^m$  for  $w \neq 0$ . If  $w = 0$ , then  $\rho[S](w) = 1$ . As a consequence  $\rho[S] \geq (3 - 1/2^{m-1})2^{-m}$ . This lower bound can be met with equality: (ii) Let  $m \geq 3$ . If we represent elements in  $\{0, 1\}^m$  as finite field elements in  $GF(2^m)$  and define  $S(x) = x^3$  in  $GF(2^m)$ , then  $\rho[S](w) = 2/2^m$  for  $w \neq 0$  and  $\rho[S] = (3 - 1/2^{m-1})2^{-m}$ .

---

**Algorithm 3** Finding  $z$  based on  $w$ 

---

```
1: function ZWGAMESB( $\mathcal{A}$ )
2:    $v \in \{0, 1\}^\lambda$  is a random input;
3:    $\mathcal{S} \leftarrow \mathcal{A}(1^\lambda)$ ;
4:    $w \in \{0, 1\}^\lambda$  is a random input;
5:   if  $\forall_i z_{i+1} = S(v_{i+1}) \oplus S(v_{i+1} \oplus w_{i+1})$  then
6:      $b = 1$ ;
7:   else
8:      $b = 0$ ;
9:   end if
10:  Return  $b$ ;
11: end function
12: /*On input  $w$ , an optimal  $\mathcal{S}$  outputs a  $z$  which maximizes  $|\{v : \forall_i z_{i+1} = S(v_{i+1}) \oplus S(v_{i+1} \oplus w_{i+1})\}|$ .*/
```

---

*Proof.* Let  $z, v, w \in \{0, 1\}^m$  (in the proof of the previous theorem  $z, v, w \in \{0, 1\}^\lambda$ ). The first part of the lemma follows immediately from the observation that if  $z = S(v) \oplus S(v \oplus w)$  then  $v' = v \oplus w$  also satisfies this equation. If  $w \neq 0$ , then  $v \neq v'$  and this shows that if a solution  $v$  for  $z = S(v) \oplus S(v \oplus w)$  exists, then there also exists a second different solution, hence,  $\rho[S](w) \geq 2/2^m$ . If  $w = 0$ , then  $S(v) \oplus S(v \oplus w) = S(v) \oplus S(v) = 0$  for all  $v$ . As a consequence  $\rho[S](0) = 2^m/2^m = 1$  and  $\rho[S] \geq 1/2^m + (1 - 1/2^m)2/2^m = (3 - 1/2^{m-1})2^{-m}$ .

In the second part of the lemma we take  $S(x) = x^3$  where we consider binary vectors  $x \in \{0, 1\}^m$  to represent elements in  $GF(2^m)$ . Notice that  $\oplus$  becomes addition in  $GF(2^m)$ . This means that the equation  $z = S(v) \oplus S(v \oplus w)$  translates to  $z = v^3 + (v + w)^3 = v^2w + vw^2 + w^3$  in  $GF(2^m)$ . This is equivalent to

$$wv^2 + w^2v + (w^3 + z) = 0,$$

a quadratic equation in  $v$  for  $w \neq 0$  (notice that  $w^2$  does not reduce to a linear expression in  $w$  since the irreducible polynomial defining  $GF(2^m)$  has degree  $\geq 3$  for  $m \geq 3$ ). If  $w \neq 0$ , then the equation becomes  $v^2 + wv + (w^2 + zw^{-1}) = 0$  which has at most 2 solutions, hence,  $\rho[S](w) = 2/2^m$ .

**Corollary 1.** For the *S-Box-CBC* construction in (10,11) for  $\lambda = nm$  and the *S-box* specified in Lemma 1(ii),

$$p[\mathcal{A}_0, \mathcal{A}_1] \leq (3 - 1/2^{m-1})^{\lambda/m} 2^{-\lambda} \text{ and } \mathbf{p} = 1 - \frac{\log(3 - 1/2^{m-1})}{m}$$

for all algorithms pairs  $(\mathcal{A}_0, \mathcal{A}_1)$  (unrestricted, the theorem does not require  $(\mathcal{A}_0, \mathcal{A}_1)$ , and produced simulators to be ppt). There exist algorithm pairs for which the upper bound holds with equality.

We prove our result for the worst-case scenario in Appendix C in the full version [15].

**Theorem 4.** For the S-Box-CBC construction in (10,11) for  $\lambda = nm$  and S-box  $S$  specified in Lemma 1(ii),

$$\alpha[\mathcal{A}_0, \mathcal{A}_1] \leq \frac{\lambda(m-1)}{m(2m-1)} 2^{-\frac{(m-1)^2}{m(2m-1)}\lambda} \text{ with } \mathbf{a} = \frac{(m-1)^2}{m(2m-1)},$$

for all algorithms pairs  $(\mathcal{A}_0, \mathcal{A}_1)$  (unrestricted, the theorem does not require  $(\mathcal{A}_0, \mathcal{A}_1)$ , and produced simulators to be ppt). There exist algorithm pairs for which the upper bound is almost tight. Notice that  $\mathbf{a}$  is only slightly larger than  $\mathbf{p}/2$ .

## 6 Comparison

Our theorems state for unbounded adversaries (we prove information theoretical security as opposed to PHOTON which assumes computational hardness)

$$\begin{aligned} \alpha[\mathcal{A}_0, \mathcal{A}_1] &\leq 2^{-\lfloor(\lambda-1)/2\rfloor} \text{ for MULTIPLY-ADD,} \\ \alpha[\mathcal{A}_0, \mathcal{A}_1] &\leq 2 \cdot 2^{-0.141 \cdot \lambda} \text{ for ADD-XOR, and} \\ \alpha[\mathcal{A}_0, \mathcal{A}_1] &\leq \frac{\lambda(m-1)}{m(2m-1)} 2^{-\frac{(m-1)^2}{m(2m-1)}\lambda} \text{ for S-Box-CBC.} \end{aligned}$$

Table 1 lists for which  $\lambda$  the different constructions give rise to upper bounds approximately equal to  $2^{-16}$ ,  $2^{-32}$ ,  $2^{-40}$ , and  $2^{-64}$ .

$\alpha[\mathcal{A}_0, \mathcal{A}_1]$	MULT.-ADD	ADD-XOR	S-Box-CBC $m = 4$	S-Box-CBC $m = 8$	PHOTON
$\leq 2^{-16}$	$\lambda = 33$ 1200b NVM $\geq 726$ GE	$\lambda = 121$ 2960b NVM 372 GE (308+64)	$\lambda = 60$ 1680b NVM 440 GE (277+163)	$\lambda = 48$ 1360b NVM 726 GE (261+465)	N/A
$\leq 2^{-32}$	$\lambda = 65$ 1840b NVM $\geq 1430$ GE	$\lambda = 243$ <b>5360b</b> NVM	$\lambda = 112$ 2640b NVM 478 GE (315+163)	$\lambda = 88$ 2160b NVM 748 GE (283+465)	N/A
$\leq 2^{-40}$	$\lambda = 81$ 2160b NVM $\geq 1782$ GE	$\lambda = 291$ <b>6320b</b> NVM	$\lambda = 140$ <b>3280b</b> NVM	$\lambda = 112$ 2640b NVM 764 GE (299+465)	$\lambda = 80$ 1200b NVM 1428 GE [2] (563+865)
$\leq 2^{-64}$	$\lambda = 129$ <b>3120b</b> NVM	$\lambda = 461$ <b>9680b</b> NVM	$\lambda = 216$ <b>4720b</b> NVM	$\lambda = 168$ <b>3760b</b> NVM	$\lambda = 128$ 1680b NVM 1795 GE (673+1122)

**Table 1.** Comparison light-weight constructions.

Since we want to prevent an adversary from successfully cloning an RFID tag in order to tag and insert a counterfeit product into the supply chain, we

are actually fine with very small unconditional collision resistance. Even  $2^{-16}$  is acceptable for the following reason: Our constructions are unconditional secure in that even an adversary with unbounded computational resources cannot create a cloned RFID tag which can do better than answering future reader queries with probability  $> 2^{-16}$ . This implies that only one out of 64K inserted counterfeit products makes it successfully through the supply chain. This is an economical impractical proposition for the adversary.

One reason to have a higher collision resistance like  $2^{-32}$  is if fake trapdoored products are very cheap and the adversary wants to disrupt consumers of these products, e.g., the military. In this case the adversary is not economically motivated, he simply wants to be able to get a hardware footprint in order to be able to launch future attacks. In this case a collision resistance of  $2^{-32}$  would imply an enormous number (4 billion) fake products needed by the adversary making such an attack quite impractical. When we put our crypto-hat on, we may even want the psychological safe collision resistance of  $2^{-64}$ .

For each solution, it is important to verify whether it fits the 2-3K bit NVM requirement. A reader event is 40 bits [2] with a  $\lambda$ -bit output of the software unclonable function, which will replace one 40-bit key for a one time pad in the NVM based scheme and two  $\lambda$ -bit keys for our software unclonable constructions – while PHOTON only needs one  $\lambda$ -bit key. Since the RFID NVM is assumed to be read out per byte, we will round  $\lambda$  bits up to a multiple of bytes. Hence, for each reader event, a total of  $5 + 2\lceil\lambda/8\rceil$  bytes in NVM are needed. Following [2], we expect at most 10 reader events per path through the supply chain. This gives a total of  $10 \cdot 8 \cdot (5 + 2\lceil\lambda/8\rceil)$  required NVM bits. In bold are indicated which entries violate the 2-3K bit requirement.

Table 1 also compares constructions (that do not violate the 2-3K bit NVM requirement) with respect to the Gate Equivalence (GE) – measured in number of 2-input NAND gates – of their circuit implementations<sup>1</sup>. In the table “261+465” under e.g. the S-Box-CBC entry for  $m = 8$  and  $\lambda = 48$  indicates that 465 GE is spend on the software unclonable function with its own control logic and another 261 GE is spend on general control logic for a full NVM-based supply chain management scheme implementation; 261 + 465 GE makes a total of 726 GE. Appendix D in [15] lists and explains the optimal implementations of each construction – we list the implemented results for ADD-XOR and S-Box-CBC, and the estimated lower bound  $\geq 22 \cdot \lambda$  GE for the MULTIPLY-ADD construction.

PHOTON [17] has two light-weight variations: [2] uses PHOTON 80/20/16 as software unclonable function. It takes 80 bits input and generates 80 bits output with 40 bits collision resistance considering state-of-the-art attacks<sup>2</sup>. Table 1 also shows PHOTON 128/16/16 with 64 bits collision resistance.

The shaded entries in Table 1 minimize the circuit area given a 2-3K bit NVM constraint.

<sup>1</sup> GE is a metric for comparing the size of hardware implementation regardless of the manufacturing technology.

<sup>2</sup> [2] states 64 bits collision resistance, but this is incorrect.

## 7 Conclusion

We introduced a formal definition of software unclonable functions and constructed several light-weight options with a rigorous security analysis. Our ADD-XOR and S-Box-CBC ( $m = 4$ ) constructions significantly reduce the circuit size of the implementation of the NVM-based supply chain management scheme of Maleki et al. [2] to 372 GE for  $\alpha \leq 2^{-16}$  and 478 GE for  $\alpha \leq 2^{-32}$ . When compared to PHOTON, S-Box-CBC ( $m = 8$ ) gives the smaller area size of 764 GE for  $\alpha \leq 2^{-40}$ , while PHOTON 128/16/16 with 1795 GE is the preferred choice for very small  $\alpha \leq 2^{-64}$ . For an economically motivated adversary, it turns out that  $\alpha \leq 2^{-16}$  offers sufficient protection.

## A NVM-Based RFID Scheme

The NVM-based scheme of Maleki et al. [2] implements the following steps:

**Initialization RFID tag** The NVM of the RFID tag is initialized with a sequence of keys  $(k^1, k^2, \dots, k^u)$  and a pointer  $p = 1$ . The back-end server stores the RFID identity  $ID$  together with the sequence of keys.

**Initialization Reader** Each RFID tag reader is initialized with its own key  $K$ . The back-end server stores the reader identity together with  $K$ .

**Reader Event** The RFID tag is read out by a reader of a supply chain partner:

1. The RFID tag transmits its  $ID$  to the reader.
2. The reader creates a message  $m$  which has the reader identity and time stamp of the event.
3. The reader computes  $x = MAC_K(m, ID)$ . This binds the reader to the event.
4. The reader transmits  $(m, x)$  to the RFID tag.
5. The RFID tag receives  $(m, x)$ . This triggers the RFID tag to read a next key  $k^p$  from its NVM and to increment pointer  $p$  by 1. Key  $k^p$  is large enough in order to be split up into a first part  $k^{p,0}$  and a second part  $k^{p,1}$ . The tag computes the pair  $y^p = (m \oplus k^{p,0}, F_{k^{p,1}}(x))$ , where  $F$  is a software unclonable function. Since  $k^p$  is unique to the RFID tag, the use of function  $F$  binds the RFID tag to the event. The key part  $k^{p,0}$  serves as a one time pad which prevents traceability.
6. The RFID tag stores  $y^p$  at the spot where  $k^p$  was stored in NVM.

**Exit** When the tag exits the supply chain, its NVM is read out and communicated to the back-end server. I.e., the internal logic only allows NVM to be read out up to but not including the address pointed at by pointer  $p$ . This means that the back-end server receives  $ID$  together with  $(y^1, \dots, y^{p-1})$ . The  $ID$  is used to look up the sequence of keys corresponding to the tag. For each  $y$ , this allows the server to first reconstruct the messages  $m$ , second to extract the corresponding reader identity with key  $K$  from its database, third to compute the mac value  $x = MAC_K(m, ID)$ , fourth to evaluate  $F$  on  $x$  with the appropriate key, and finally verify that this is part of  $y$ . If all checks pass, then the recorded reader events were not impersonated and

they can be verified to correspond to a legitimate path through the supply chain. The server will invalidate the tag for future use in its database.

A detailed explanation, security analysis, and discussion around how to make the scheme reliable with respect to miss reads and miss writes can be found in [2].

A comparison of state-of-the-art schemes over a range of metrics can be found in [18]. Besides being unique in that, unlike any other scheme, the need for persistent online communication or local databases is avoided, the NVM-based scheme also compares well with most competitive other schemes. The only dimension on which the NVM-based scheme scores negatively is its lack of being able to resist physical attack (where a strong adversary attempts to circumvent the read and write interface in order to clone all the keys stored in NVM). We notice that even though the trace based scheme [8] can withstand physical attacks, the scheme cannot distinguish between a fake and legitimate tag which possibly results in significant financial loss. Current PUF based schemes [19–21] are not secure against physical attack because of recent machine learning modeling attacks [22–24] – however, as soon as improved PUF designs will resist these modeling attacks, PUF based schemes will resist physical attacks as opposed to the NVM-based scheme. Inherent to current PUF-based schemes, they do need persistent online communication. Also an improved PUF design will likely lead to a higher gate count than the 500-1000 GE for current PUF-based schemes – and this is where the NVM based scheme performs better as well.

As a final note, Section 6 discusses several upper bounds on the collision resistance. Obviously, if the resistance is set to  $2^{-32}$  or  $2^{-64}$ , then creating a cloned or fake RFID tag which successfully passes the supply chain becomes very unlikely. In fact too many counterfeit products labelled with fake RFID tags are needed in order to be successful and this makes such an attack economically infeasible. In the introduction we state “An adversary who can circumvent the interface circuitry by means of a physical attack is not considered.” Clearly, the weak link in the NVM-based scheme for high collision resistance will now be its lack of resistance against physical attack.

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