

Zero-knowledge proofs and Blockchains

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Linea[•]



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- Cryptographer — Consensys (New York)
- Co-founder of gnark
- Co-founder of linea

Overview

- 1 Motivation
- 2 Blockchain
- 3 Zero-knowledge proofs
- 4 Applications
- 5 Research

Overview

1 Motivation

2 Blockchain

3 Zero-knowledge proofs

4 Applications

5 Research

The story of Alice and Bob

Physical Transaction



Digital Transaction



(Courtesy of CBINSIGHTS)

The story of Alice and Bob

Digital Transaction: Ledger



Decentralized Ledger



Overview

1 Motivation

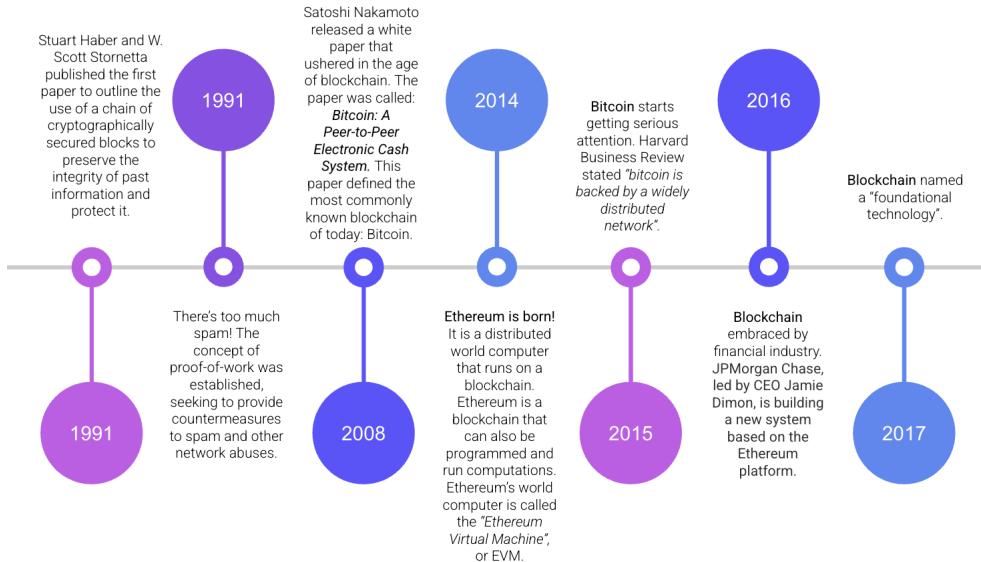
2 Blockchain

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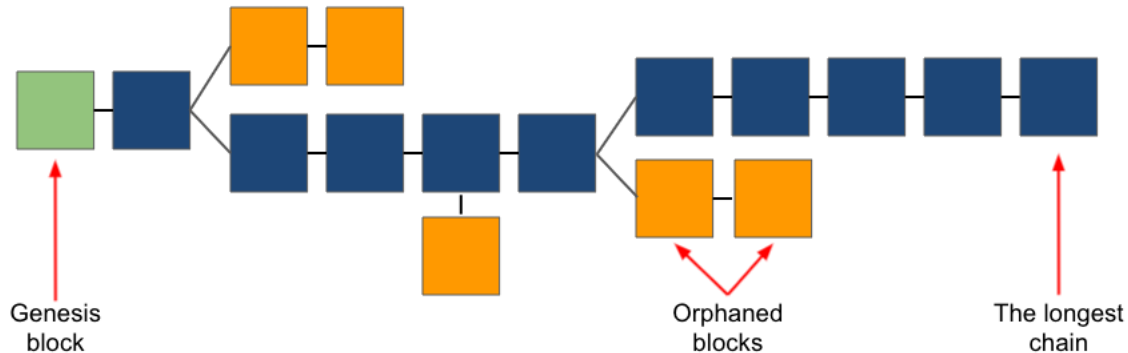
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Blockchains



Blockchains



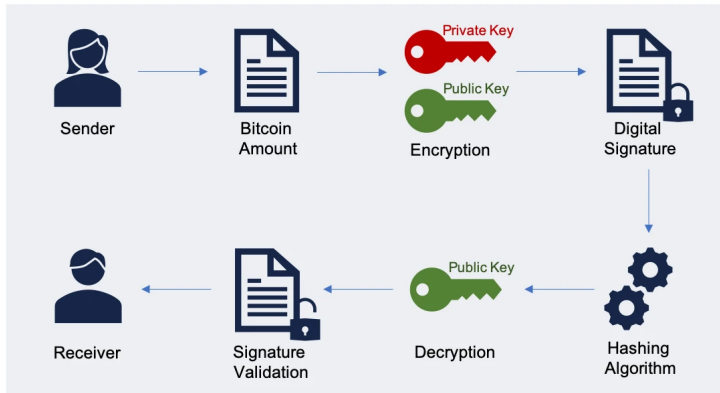
- How is a tx included in a block?
- How is the longest chain is agreed upon?

- How is a tx included in a block?
 - Signatures verification (Bitcoin: ECDSA/Schnorr, Ethereum: ECDSA/BLS)
- How is the longest chain is agreed upon?
 - Consensus (Bitcoin: proof-of-work, Ethereum: proof-of-stake)

Blockchains

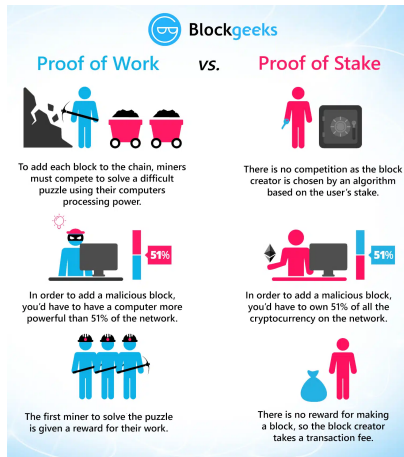
Digital signatures:

- Public-key cryptography: Schnorr but patented until 2020
- ECDSA as a workaround but with caveats
- Ethereum chooses BLS for aggregation and Bitcoin Schnorr for simplicity



Blockchains

Consensus:



Examples: proof-of-work, proof-of-stake, proof-of-space, proof-of-authority, proof-of-burn...

Blockchains

A blockchain is a public peer-to-peer *decentralized*, *transparent*, *immutable*, *paying* ledger.

- *Transparent*: everything is visible to everyone
- *Immutable*: nothing can be removed once written
- *Paying*: everyone should pay a fee to use

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Transparent $\xrightarrow{\text{Problem}}$ confidentiality

Immutable $\xrightarrow{\text{Problem}}$ scalability

Paying $\xrightarrow{\text{Problem}}$ cost

$\xrightarrow{\text{Solution}}$?

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Zero-knowledge proofs (ZKP)

Alice

I know the solution to
this complex equation

Bob

No idea what the solution is
but Alice claims to know it

Challenge



Response



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- **Sound:** **Alice** has a **wrong solution** \implies **Bob** is **not convinced**.

Zero-knowledge proofs (ZKP)

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No idea what the solution is
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- **Sound:** Alice has a wrong solution \implies Bob is not convinced.
- **Complete:** Alice has the solution \implies Bob is convinced.

Zero-knowledge proofs (ZKP)

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I know the solution to
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No idea what the solution is
but Alice claims to know it



- **Sound:** **Alice** has a **wrong solution** \implies **Bob** is **not convinced**.
- **Complete:** **Alice** has the **solution** \implies **Bob** is **convinced**.
- **Zero-knowledge:** **Bob** does NOT learn the solution.

Toy example



?

Example: Sigma protocol

Alice

I know x such that $g^x = y$

Bob

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$$n \xleftarrow{\$} \mathbb{Z}_r$$

$$A = g^n$$

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c

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$$c \xleftarrow{\$} \mathbb{Z}_r$$

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I know x such that $g^x = y$

$$n \xleftarrow{\$} \mathbb{Z}_r$$

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c

$$s = n + c \cdot x$$

s

Bob

$$c \xleftarrow{\$} \mathbb{Z}_r$$

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I know x such that $g^x = y$

$$n \xleftarrow{\$} \mathbb{Z}_r$$

$$s = n + c \cdot x$$

$$A = g^n$$

c

s

Bob

$$c \xleftarrow{\$} \mathbb{Z}_r$$

$$g^s \stackrel{?}{=} A \cdot y^c$$

with $A \cdot y^c = g^n \cdot g^{x \cdot c}$

then $g^n \cdot g^{x \cdot c} = g^{n+x \cdot c}$

Non-Interactive Zero-Knowledge (NIZK) Sigma protocol

Alice

I know x such that $g^x = y$

$$n \xleftarrow{\$} \mathbb{Z}_r$$

$$A = g^n$$

$$c = H(A, y)$$

$$s = n + c \cdot x$$

$$\pi = (A, c, s)$$



Bob

$$g^s \stackrel{?}{=} A \cdot y^c$$

$$c \stackrel{?}{=} H(A, y)$$

Non-Interactive Zero-Knowledge (NIZK) Sigma protocol

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I know x such that $g^x = y$

$$\begin{array}{l} \textcolor{red}{n} \xleftarrow{\$} \mathbb{Z}_r \\ \underbrace{g^{\textcolor{red}{n}}}_{\text{Setup}}; A = g^{\textcolor{red}{n}} \\ c = H(A, y) \\ \underbrace{s = \textcolor{red}{n} + c \cdot \textcolor{red}{x}}_{\text{Prove}} \end{array}$$

$$\underbrace{\pi = (A, c, s)}_{\text{proof}}$$



Bob

$$\begin{array}{l} g^s \stackrel{?}{=} A \cdot y^c \\ \underbrace{c \stackrel{?}{=} H(A, y)}_{\text{Verify}} \end{array}$$

ZKP families

Expressivity

- *specific* statement vs. *general* statement

ZKP families

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Deployability

- *interactive* vs. *non – interactive* protocol
- *trapdoored* setup vs. *transparent* setup
- *Designated* verifier vs. *any* verifier

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Complexity

- prover complexity (Alice)
- verifier complexity (Bob)
- communication complexity (size of the proof and the setup)

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Security

- Cryptographic assumptions
- Cryptographic primitives

Blockchains and ZKP

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$\xrightarrow{\text{Solution}}$ ZKP

setup, prover?, verifier?

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Communication complexity

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Verifier complexity, prover?

ZKP literature landmarks

- First ZKP work [GMR85]
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- “SNARK” terminology and characterization of existence [BCCT12]
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- Pairing-based SNARK with shortest proof and verifier time [Gro16]

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- Pairing-based SNARK with shortest proof and verifier time [Gro16]
- SNARK with universal and updatable setup [GKM⁺18, MBKM19, GWC19, CHM⁺20]

What is a zero-knowledge proof?

"I have a *sound*, *complete* and *zero-knowledge* proof that a statement is true" [GMR85].

Sound

False statement \implies cheating prover cannot convince honest verifier.

Complete

True statement \implies honest prover convinces honest verifier.

Zero-knowledge

True statement \implies verifier learns nothing other than statement is true.

zk-SNARK: Zero-Knowledge Succinct Non-interactive ARgument of Knowledge

"I have a *computationally sound, complete, zero-knowledge*, **succinct**, **non-interactive** proof that a statement is true and that I know a related secret".

Succinct

A proof is very "short" and "easy" to verify.

Non-interactive

No interaction between the prover and verifier for proof generation and verification (except the proof message).

ARgument of Knowledge

Honest verifier is convinced that a computationally bounded prover knows a secret information.

Preprocessing zk-SNARK for NP language

F : public NP program, x , z : public inputs, w : private input
 $z := F(x, w)$

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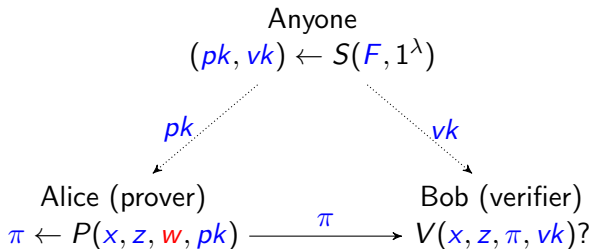
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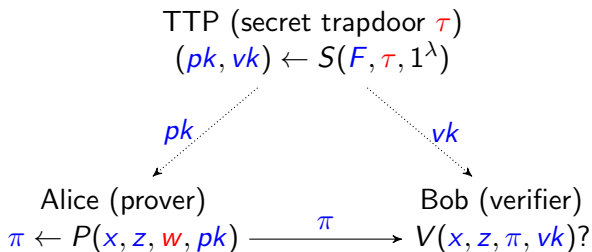


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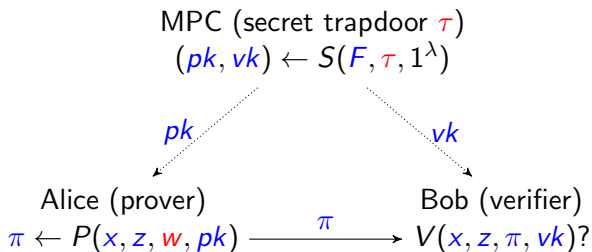


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Succinctness: A proof is very "short" and "easy" to verify.

Definition [BCTV14b]

A succinct proof π has size $O_\lambda(1)$ and can be verified in time $O_\lambda(|F| + |x| + |z|)$, where $O_\lambda(\cdot)$ is some polynomial in the security parameter λ .

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- ① Reduce a "general statement" satisfiability to a polynomial equation satisfiability.
- ② Use Schwartz-Zippel lemma to succinctly verify the polynomial equation with high probability.
- ③ Use homomorphic hiding cryptography to blindly verify the polynomial equation.
- ④ Make the protocol non-interactive.

Arithmetization

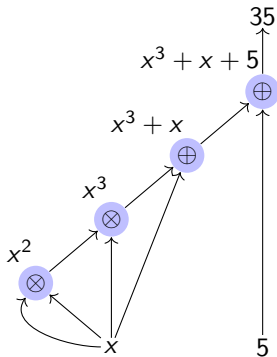
Statement \rightarrow **Arithmetic circuit** \rightarrow Intermediate representation \rightarrow Polynomial identities \rightarrow zk-SNARK proof

$$x^3 + x + 5 = 35 \quad (x = 3)$$

Arithmetization

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Arithmetization

e.g. R1CS

Statement \rightarrow Arithmetic circuit \rightarrow **Intermediate representation** \rightarrow Polynomial identities \rightarrow zk-SNARK proof

$$L = \begin{pmatrix} 0 & 1 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 1 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 1 & 0 & 0 & 1 & 0 \\ 5 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 1 \end{pmatrix}$$

$$R = \begin{pmatrix} 0 & 1 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 1 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 1 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 1 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \end{pmatrix}$$

$$O = \begin{pmatrix} 0 & 0 & 0 & 1 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 1 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 1 \\ 0 & 0 & 1 & 0 & 0 & 0 \end{pmatrix}$$

witness:

$$\begin{aligned} \vec{w} &= (\text{one} \quad x \quad d \quad a \quad b \quad c) \\ &= (1 \quad 3 \quad 35 \quad 9 \quad 27 \quad 30) \end{aligned}$$

$$O \bullet \vec{w} = L \bullet \vec{w} \cdot R \bullet \vec{w}$$

Arithmetization

e.g. Quadratic Arithmetic Program

Statement \rightarrow Arithmetic circuit \rightarrow Intermediate representation \rightarrow **Polynomial identities** \rightarrow zk-SNARK proof

$$L(X)R(X) - O(X) = H(X)T(X) \quad (QAP \in \mathbb{F}[X])$$

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$$L(\tau)R(\tau) - O(\tau) = H(\tau)T(\tau) \quad (\text{trapdoor } \tau \overset{\$}{\leftarrow} \mathbb{F})$$

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$$L(X)R(X) - O(X) = H(X)T(X) \quad (QAP \in \mathbb{F}[X])$$

$$L(\tau)R(\tau) - O(\tau) = H(\tau)T(\tau) \quad (\text{trapdoor } \tau \xleftarrow{\$} \mathbb{F})$$

$$C(L(\tau)R(\tau) - O(\tau)) = C(H(\tau)T(\tau)) \quad (\text{Homomorphic commitment})$$

Succinct evaluation of polynomials

Instead of verifying the QAP on the whole domain $\mathbb{F} \rightarrow$ verify it in a single random point $\tau \in \mathbb{F}$.

Schwartz–Zippel lemma

Any two distinct polynomials of degree d over a field \mathbb{F} can agree on at most a $d/|\mathbb{F}|$ fraction of the points in \mathbb{F} .

Blind evaluation of polynomials

Statement \rightarrow Arithmetic circuit \rightarrow Intermediate representation \rightarrow Polynomial identities \rightarrow **zk-SNARK proof**

Let's take the example of polynomial L :

Blind evaluation of polynomials

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Let's take the example of polynomial L :

- Alice can send L to Bob and he computes $L(\tau) \rightarrow$ breaks the zero-knowledge.

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Let's take the example of polynomial L :

- Alice can send L to Bob and he computes $L(\tau) \rightarrow$ breaks the zero-knowledge.
- Bob can send τ to Alice and she computes $L(\tau) \rightarrow$ breaks the soundness.

Blind evaluation of polynomials

Statement \rightarrow Arithmetic circuit \rightarrow Intermediate representation \rightarrow Polynomial identities \rightarrow **zk-SNARK proof**

Let's take the example of polynomial L :

- Alice can send L to Bob and he computes $L(\tau) \rightarrow$ breaks the zero-knowledge.
- Bob can send τ to Alice and she computes $L(\tau) \rightarrow$ breaks the soundness.

\Rightarrow homomorphic cryptography to evaluate $L(X)$ at τ without Bob learning L nor Alice learning τ .

Blind evaluation of polynomials

$$L(\tau) = l_0 + l_1\tau + l_2\tau^2 + \cdots + l_d\tau^d \in \mathbb{F}$$

$$C(L(\tau)) = l_0C(1) + l_1C(\tau) + l_2C(\tau^2) + \cdots + l_dC(\tau^d)$$

Somewhat homomorphic commitment w.r.t.:

- depth- d **additions** (arbitrary d)
- depth-1 **multiplications** (for $L(\tau) \cdot R(\tau)$ and $H(\tau) \cdot T(\tau)$).

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Blind evaluation of polynomials

Somewhat homomorphic commitment w.r.t.:

- depth- d **additions** (arbitrary d)

$$C(\tau) = \tau G \quad (DL)$$

$$L(\tau)G = l_0 G + l_1 \tau G + l_2 \tau^2 G + \cdots + l_d \tau^d G$$

Blind evaluation of polynomials

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- depth-1 **multiplications** (for $L(\tau) \cdot R(\tau)$ and $H(\tau) \cdot T(\tau)$).

$$C(\tau_1) = \tau_1 G; \quad C(\tau_2) = \tau_2 G$$

$$C(\tau_1) \cdot C(\tau_2) = C(\tau_1 \cdot \tau_2) \quad (?)$$

Blind evaluation of polynomials

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$$C(\tau_1) \cdot C(\tau_2) = C(\tau_1 \cdot \tau_2) \quad (?)$$

$$\underbrace{e(C(\tau_1), C(\tau_2))}_{\text{product of commitments}} = \underbrace{Z^{\tau_1 \cdot \tau_2}}_{\substack{\text{new commitment to } \tau_1 \cdot \tau_2 \\ \text{(where } Z = e(G, G) \neq 1)}} \quad (\text{bilinear pairing})$$

Blind evaluation of QAP

Blind evaluation can be achieved with *black-box* pairings:

$$e(\mathcal{C}(H(\tau)), \mathcal{C}(T(\tau)) \cdot e(\mathcal{C}(O(\tau)), \mathcal{C}(1)) = e(\mathcal{C}(L(\tau)), \mathcal{C}(R(\tau)))$$

$$e(H(\tau)G, T(\tau)G) \cdot e(O(\tau)G, G) = e(L(\tau)G, R(\tau)G)$$

$$e(G, G)^{H(\tau)T(\tau)} \cdot e(G, G)^{O(\tau)} = e(G, G)^{L(\tau)R(\tau)}$$

$$Z^{H(\tau)T(\tau)+O(\tau)} = Z^{L(\tau)R(\tau)}$$

Somewhat homomorphic commitment

Elliptic curves (DL):

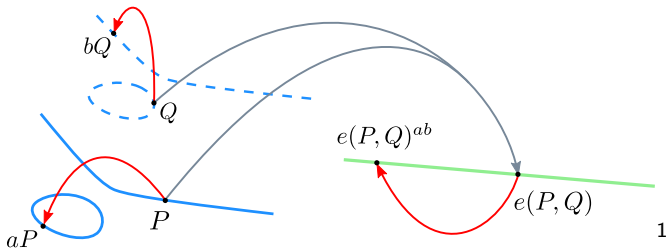
- $E: y^2 = x^3 + ax + b$ elliptic curve defined over \mathbb{F}_q , q a prime power.
- r prime divisor of $\#E(\mathbb{F}_q) = q + 1 - t$, t Frobenius trace.

A non-degenerate bilinear pairing $e : \mathbb{G}_1 \times \mathbb{G}_2 \rightarrow \mathbb{G}_T$

non-degenerate: $\forall P \in \mathbb{G}_1, P \neq \mathcal{O}, \exists Q \in \mathbb{G}_2, e(P, Q) \neq 1_{\mathbb{G}_T}$

$$\forall Q \in \mathbb{G}_2, Q \neq \mathcal{O}, \exists P \in \mathbb{G}_1, e(P, Q) \neq 1_{\mathbb{G}_T}$$

bilinear: $e([a]P, [b]Q) = e(P, [b]Q)^a = e([a]P, Q)^b = e(P, Q)^{ab}$



A pairing-based SNARK

Example: Groth16 [Gro16]

Given an instance $\Phi = (a_0, \dots, a_\ell) \in \mathbb{F}_r^\ell$ of a public NP program F

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- Setup: $(pk, vk) \leftarrow S(F, \tau, 1^\lambda)$ where

$$vk = (vk_{\alpha, \beta}, \{vk_{\pi_i}\}_{i=0}^\ell, vk_\gamma, vk_\delta) \in \mathbb{G}_T \times \mathbb{G}_1^{\ell+1} \times \mathbb{G}_2 \times \mathbb{G}_2$$

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- Prove: $\pi \leftarrow P(\Phi, w, pk)$ where

$$\pi = (A, B, C) \in \mathbb{G}_1 \times \mathbb{G}_2 \times \mathbb{G}_1 \quad (O_\lambda(1))$$

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- Verify: $0/1 \leftarrow V(\Phi, \pi, vk)$ where V is

$$e(A, B) = vk_{\alpha,\beta} \cdot e(vk_x, vk_\gamma) \cdot e(C, vk_\delta) \quad (O_\lambda(|\Phi|)) \quad (1)$$

and $vk_x = \sum_{i=0}^\ell [a_i] vk_{\pi_i}$ depends only on the instance Φ and $vk_{\alpha,\beta} = e(vk_\alpha, vk_\beta)$ can be computed in the trusted setup for $(vk_\alpha, vk_\beta) \in \mathbb{G}_1 \times \mathbb{G}_2$.

Overview

- 1 Motivation
- 2 Blockchain
- 3 Zero-knowledge proofs
- 4 Applications**
- 5 Research

Applications

- Privacy: Monero, zcash, Aleo... or Tornado cash...
- Scalability: Mina... or Linea, Aztec...



MINA

Linea'

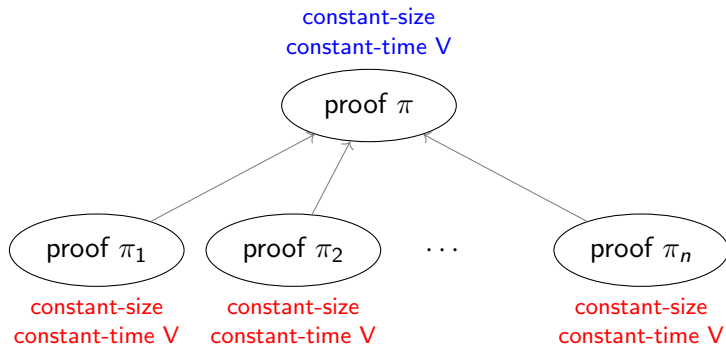


Overview

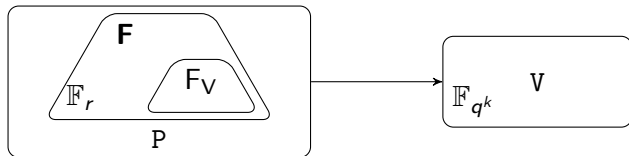
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Proof composition: why?

Aggregation:

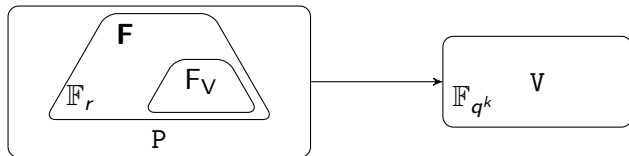


Proof composition: how?



- F any program is expressed in \mathbb{F}_r
- P proving is performed over \mathbb{G}_1 (and \mathbb{G}_2) (of order r)
- V verification (eq. 1) is done in $\mathbb{F}_{q^k}^*$
- F_V program of V is natively expressed in $\mathbb{F}_{q^k}^*$ not \mathbb{F}_r

Proof composition: how?



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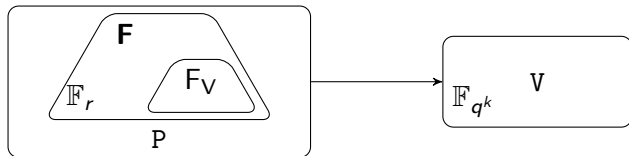
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Proof composition: how?



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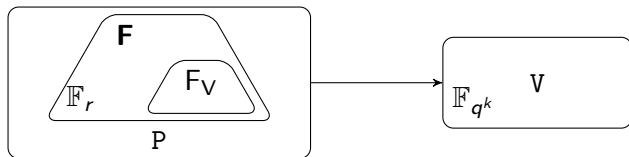
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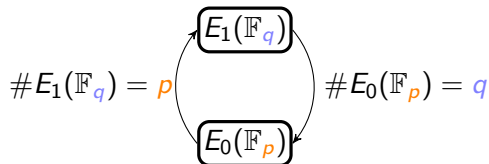
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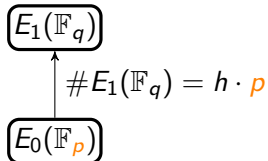
- 1st attempt: choose a curve for which $q = r$ (impossible)
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- 3rd attempt: use a cycle/chain of pairing-friendly elliptic curves [CFH⁺15, BCTV14a, BCG⁺20, EG20, EG22, AEG23]

2-cycles and 2-chains

A 2-cycle of elliptic curves:



A 2-chain of elliptic curves:



Some contributions

- Blockchain limitations: **confidentiality** and **scalability**
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- **Implementations**: **gnark, linea, arkworks, sonobe, ...**

gnark playground



The gnark playground



Groth16



PlonK



```
1 package main
2
3 import (
4     "github.com/consensys/gnark/frontend"
5     "github.com/consensys/gnark/std/hash/mimc"
6 )
7
8 type Circuit struct {
9     Secret frontend.Variable // pre-image of the hash secret known to the prover only
10    Hash  frontend.Variable `gnark:"public"` // hash of the secret known to all
11 }
12
13 func (circuit *Circuit) Define(api frontend.API) error {
14     mimc, _ := mimc.NewMiMC(api)
15     mimc.Write(circuit.Secret)
16     api.AssertIsEqual(circuit.Hash, mimc.Sum())
17
18     return nil
19 }
20
21 -- witness.json --
22 {
23     "Secret": "0xdeadf00d",
24     "Hash": "1037254799353855871006189384309576393135431139055333626960622147300727796413"
25 }
26
```

► Proof is valid ✓

▼ 331 constraints ⬇

$L \cdot R == 0$

#	L	R	0
0	227063593160049201514509818732644766896230235191445544141110657236065169432 + Secret	227063593160049201514509818732644766896230235191445544141110657236065169432 + Secret	v
1	v0	v0	v

Thank you

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- telegram: @ElMarroqui
- x: @YoussefElHoun3
- github: @yelhousni

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