

Notes on Threshold EdDSA/Schnorr Signatures

Luís Brandão *

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Joint work (NIST IR 8214B Draft) with **Michael Davidson**

Slide-deck in progress. Feedback is welcome.

* Strativia (At NIST as a Foreign Guest Researcher, Contractor not employed by NIST). Expressed opinions are from the speaker, not to be construed as official NIST views.

Outline

1. Conventional EdDSA/Schnorr
2. Threshold signatures
3. Considerations

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2. Threshold signatures

3. Considerations

Digital signatures — FIPS Pub 186-5 (Draft)

- ▶ FIPS: Federal Information Processing Standards Publication
- ▶ Digital Signature Standard (DSS)
- ▶ 3 families of signature schemes: RSA, ECDSA, EdDSA
- ▶ EdDSA is the most recent (based on [RFC 8032](#))



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A signature scheme: (Keygen, Sign, Verify), based on public-key cryptography

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A signature scheme: (Keygen, Sign, Verify), based on public-key cryptography

“Digital signatures are used to detect unauthorized modifications to data and to authenticate the identity of the signatory.” ... “non-repudiation since the signatory cannot easily repudiate the signature at a later time.”

For later: “unforgeability” and “binding”

Notation for group operations

Multiplicative notation (traditional for finite fields):

Public key $Q = g^s$, where:

- ▶ g is a generator of order n ; s is the private key in \mathbb{Z}_n
- ▶ Assumption: infeasibility of computing discrete-logs (base g)

Additive notation (usual with elliptic curves):

Public key $Q = s \cdot G$, where:

- ▶ G is a base-point of order n ; s is the private key in \mathbb{Z}_n
- ▶ Assumption: cannot calculate the integer quotient from division with G

Let us proceed with additive notation

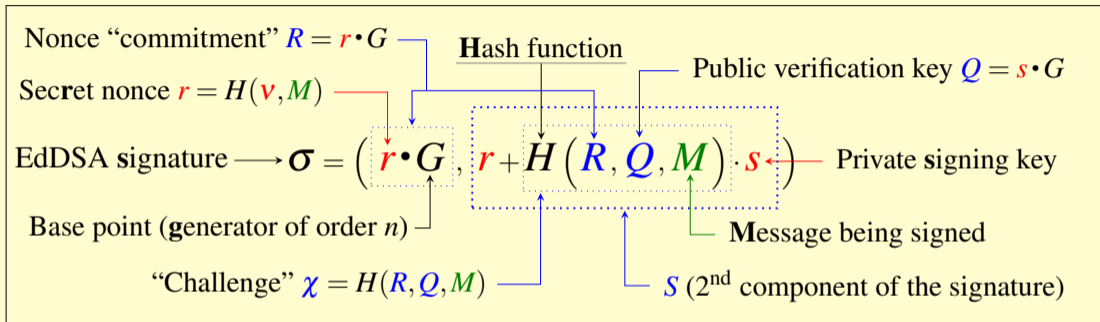
EdDSA-style scheme (simplified)

- $\text{Keygen}[n]: \{ (\text{private key } s \leftarrow^{\$} \mathbb{Z}_n; (\text{public key } Q = s \cdot G; \text{output } (s, Q)) \}.$
- $\text{Sign}[s](M): \{ r \leftarrow \text{GenNonce}(\dots); R = r \cdot G; \chi = H(R, Q, M);$
 $S = r + \chi \cdot s \pmod n; \text{output } \sigma = (R, S) \}.$
- $\text{Verify}[Q](M, \sigma): \{ \chi' = H(R, Q, M); \text{output accept iff } S \cdot G \stackrel{?}{=} R \oplus \chi' \cdot Q \}$

Legend: χ (challenge); G (base point, i.e., generator of \mathbb{G}); $\text{GenNonce}(\dots)$ (procedure used to generate the secret nonce); M (message being signed); n (order of the group generated by G); Q (public key); r (secret nonce); R (nonce commitment; first component of the signature); s (private signing key; in the detailed scheme it is obtained as a digest — `hdigest1` — of a precursor private key d); S (second component of the signature); σ (signature); $\leftarrow^{\$}$ (random sampling); $+$, \cdot (integer sum and multiplication); \oplus , \cdot (sum and multiplication-by-constant in additive group \mathbb{G}).

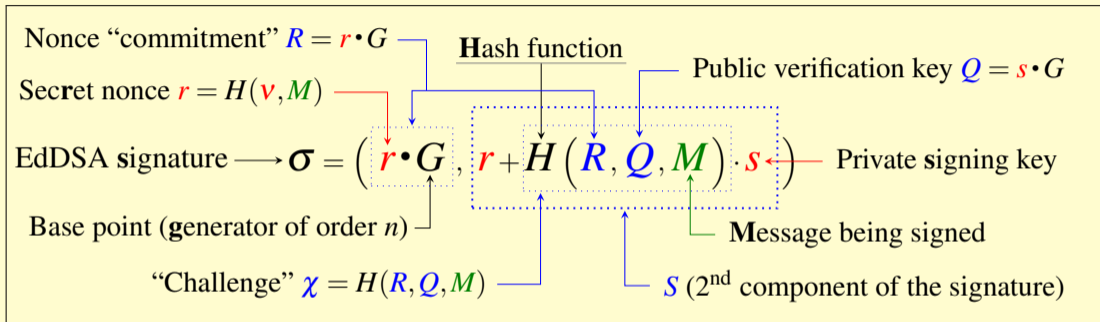
Schnorr-style [Sch90; BDL SY11]: simple, efficient, some variations (but rationale is similar)

The EdDSA signature formula $\sigma = (R, S)$



Note: The HashEdDSA mode pre-hashes the message

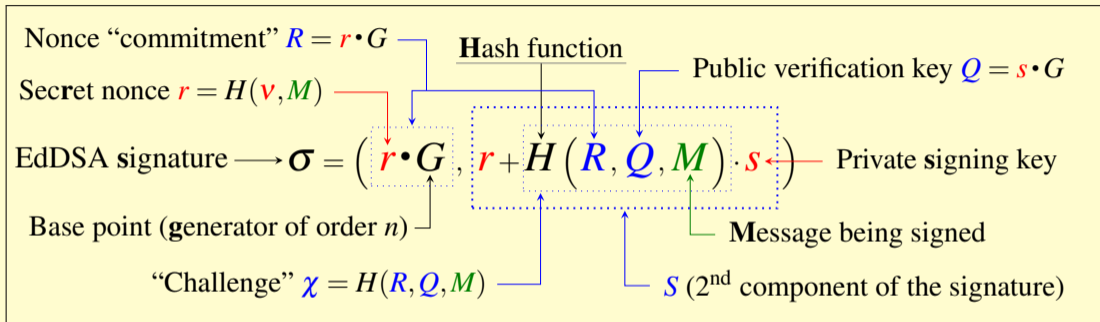
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$$\text{Verification: } 0 \leq S \leq n \quad \wedge \quad S' \cdot G \stackrel{?}{=} R' + \chi' \cdot Q \quad (\text{note that } = r \cdot G + \chi \cdot (s \cdot G))$$

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Where $S' = 2^c \cdot S$, $R' = 2^c \cdot R$, $\chi' = 2^c \cdot \chi$ (a.k.a. cofactored verification)

Unforgeability

Unforgeability (UF): Malicious client cannot win the following game:

- ▶ Client (with access to signing oracle) gets q message–signature pairs (M_i, σ_i)
- ▶ Client (without oracle) produces a valid sig σ^* for a new message M^*

EUF-CMA: existential unforgeability against chosen message attack [GMR88]

Strong UF (SUF): cannot find new pair (σ^*, M^*) (even if msg was already signed) [CD95]

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Technical note (feel free to ignore):

- ▶ A signature is like a ZKP of knowledge of the signing key (e.g., discrete-log).
- ▶ Usually provable with rewinding, when interactive (random challenge each time).
- ▶ Non-interactive case: random oracle model / forking lemma.

Binding

Now suppose the signer is the malicious party (adv)

Binding (to message): Can adv repudiate having signed a msg M ?

- ▶ If UF, and bound to public key Q , then it cannot
- ▶ Unless it finds a hash collision $\chi = H(R, Q, M) = H(R, Q, M')$

Strong binding (to message/pubkey): What if adv can lie about the public key Q ?

- ▶ Can it find two pairs (M, Q) and (M^*, Q^*) and a signature σ valid for both?
- ▶ It can (details omitted here), if one key is *invalid* (but there's no check for it)

EdDSA would be strong binding (resistant to key-substitution attack):

- ▶ if additionally checking $|Q| > 2^c$ [BCJZ21; CGN20]

Nonce implementation issues

Nonce reuse: Suppose the nonce r is reused when EdDSA-signing different messages.

- ▶ $\sigma = (R, S)$, where $S = r + \chi \cdot s$ and $\chi = H(\dots M)$
- ▶ $\sigma^* = (R, S^*)$, where $S^* = r + \chi^* \cdot s$ and $\chi^* = H(\dots M')$

Then the private key s follows from solving a pair of linear equations with two unknowns

- ▶ $S^* - S = (\chi^* - \chi) \cdot s \pmod{n}$,
- ▶ $s = (S^* - S) \cdot (\chi^* - \chi)^{-1} \pmod{n}$

It gets worst:

- ▶ Even a small nonce-bias (partial knowledge) allows key recovery
- ▶ Nonce reuse/bias is also catastrophic for ECDSA

Comparing types of nonce generation

EdDSA specifies pseudorandom nonce generation $r = H(\nu, M)$, which:

- ▶ avoids nonce-bias, but is more susceptible to some side-channel attacks

If recovering ν , then from a message-signature pair can compute the signing key s :

- ▶ $s = \chi^{-1} \cdot (S - r) \pmod{n}$, where $r = H(\nu, M)$

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Nonce generation type	Bias attacks	Side-channel and fault injection attacks
Deterministic: Pseudorandom, based on a secret key	Safe	<u>More</u> vulnerable
Purely random: Entropy independent of secret key	Vulnerable	Less vulnerable
Combined use: Randomness and pseudo-randomness	Safe	Less vulnerable

On non-verifiable determinism

Signature scheme	Is the signature algorithm deterministic?	Is the output signature verifiably deterministic?
RSASSA-PKCS	Yes	Yes
EdDSA	Yes	No
Deterministic ECDSA	Yes	No
RSA-PSS	No	No
(Probabilistic) ECDSA	No	No

Summary of conventional setting

- ▶ Schnorr-style signatures are well-known and been around for a while
- ▶ EdDSA Unforgeable?: **SUF** (the verification details matter)
- ▶ EdDSA Binding?: (the verification details matter)
 - ▶ if assumed pub-key bound \Rightarrow message binding
 - ▶ Otherwise no (missing check)
- ▶ EdDSA Deterministic?: non-verifiably
- ▶ Nonce implementation issues?:
 - ▶ Pseudorandom EdDSA: no bias, some susceptibility to side-channel attack
 - ▶ Purely random variant: inadvertent bias is catastrophic
 - ▶ Hybrid variant: best of both worlds

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Threshold approach — intuition

A linear secret-sharing of x is denoted as $[x] = \langle x_1, x_2, \dots, x_n \rangle$. $x = \text{Reconst}([x])$

(Simplification: Lagrange coefficients were omitted above. The above actually holds for Additive SS.)

Threshold approach — intuition

A linear secret-sharing of x is denoted as $[x] = \langle x_1, x_2, \dots, x_n \rangle$. $x = \text{Reconst}([x])$

The threshold signing follows trivially once having:

- ▶ Linear secret-sharing $[s]$ of the private signing key s .
- ▶ Linear secret-sharing $[r]$ of a random secret nonce r .

Phase	Conventional	Semi-honest threshold baseline
Key-Gen	$Q = s \cdot G$	$[Q] = [s] \cdot G$;
Commit nonce	$R = r \cdot G$	$[R] = [r] \cdot G$; then $R = \text{Reconst}([R])$
Compute challenge	$\chi = H(R, Q, M)$	<i>Same as in conventional</i>
Produce signature	$S = r + \chi \cdot s \pmod n$	$[S] = [r] + \chi \cdot [s] \pmod n$; then $S = \text{Reconst}([S])$
Verify signature	$S \cdot G \stackrel{?}{=} R + \chi \cdot Q$	<i>Same as in conventional</i>

(Simplification: Lagrange coefficients were omitted above. The above actually holds for Additive SS.)

Distributed key-generation (DKG)

Intuition: DKG with verifiable secret sharing [GJKR99]

Verifiable SS of some x : besides each private share x_j for party j , everyone sees “commitments” $X_i = x_i \cdot G$ of everyone’s shares, i.e., $[x] \cdot G$

Approach (with a caveat):

- ▶ Each party P_i picks a random value x_i and secret-shares it with everyone ($[x_i]$)
- ▶ Each party decides their final share as the sum of all received shares
- ▶ Each party verifies everything (using the VSS verifiability)

More technicalities needed:

- ▶ Prevent anyone from manipulating (bias) the final public key Q
- ▶ Ensure termination (prevent bias by abort)

Threshold Schnorr signing using a DKG-based approach

DKG = distributed key-generation.

Used by [SS01] for threshold Schnorr.

- ▶ **Phase 0:** The keygen phase has verifiably secret-shared a signing key s .
 - ▶ And everyone learns $[Q] = [s] \cdot G$, which determines Q .
- ▶ **Phase 1:** Use DKG to get a random nonce verifiable secret-sharing $[r]$
 - ▶ And everyone learns $[R] = [r] \cdot G$
- ▶ **Phase 2:** Signature-shares and reconstruction:
 - ▶ Each party communicates their signature share: $S_i = r_i + \chi \cdot s_i$
 - ▶ Someone combines the shares $\sigma = (\text{Recons}([R]), \text{Recons}([S]))$

An attempt at threshold Deterministic

Naive solution:

- ▶ Every party P_i uses a deterministic nonce contribution $r_i = H(\nu, M)$.
- ▶ Final nonce commitment is $R = \text{Reconst}([r] \cdot G)$

Problem:

- ▶ Malicious P_j varies their nonce contribution r_j , to affect R and thus $\chi = H(R, Q, M)$

Key recovery pitfall — After just two signings of the same message M :

- ▶ Honest signature-share 1st time: $S_i = r_i + \chi \cdot s_i$
- ▶ Honest signature-share 2nd time: $S_i^* = r_i + \chi^* \cdot s_i$
- ▶ Adversary recovers $s_i = (\chi - \chi^*) \cdot (S_i - S_i^*)$

Threshold Deterministic Signatures

- ▶ **MPC-based nonce computation**
 - ▶ Generic MPC for distributed computation of SHA512-based nonce
 - ▶ Distributed hashing using an MPC-friendly hash
- ▶ **Local deterministic contributions (per party), ZK-proven correct**
 - ▶ PRF based on AES (less ZKP-unfriendly than SHA512)
 - ▶ ZKP friendly PRF

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Reference	Functionally equivalent?	EdDSA Inter-changeable?	Fixed public key?	Deterministic?		Some gadgets
				Per subset of signatories	Across resharings	
[BST21, §5]	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	MPC gadgets
[BST21, §6]	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	MPC-friendly hash
[GKMN21]	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	ZKGC, COT
[NRSW20]	No	Yes	No	Yes	N/A	ZKP-friendly PRF

Threshold Probabilistic Signatures

Classical approaches (more rounds): DKG-based

Recent efforts (lower number of rounds):

- ▶ **k -sum attack** [DEFKLN19] broke older 2-round protocols (concurrent setting)
 - Malicious P_i in execution k is last to contribute R_i^k , affecting R^k and $\chi^k = H(R^k, Q, M^k)$ to achieve $R^* = \sum_k R^k$ such that $\chi^* = \sum_k \chi^k$ (k -sum problem)
- ▶ **2 rounds game-based UF**: prevent k -sum by using multiple nonce-contributions and nonce-binding to message [KG21; NRS21; AB21; CKM21]
- ▶ **3 rounds simulatable**: directly prevents manipulation of nonce-commitment R (with extra commitment round) [Lin22]

Threshold comparison (informal)

Signature mode	Nonce generation	Attack of Concern	Informal assessment	
			Conventional	Threshold
Deterministic	Pseudorandom	Bias	Safe	Safe
		Side channel	More vulnerable	Safer
Probabilistic	Randomized	Bias	Vulnerable	Safer
		Side channel	Less vulnerable	Safer
	Hybrid	Bias	Safe	Safe
		Side channel	Less vulnerable	Safer

(Other aspects to consider: efficiency, assumptions, threshold parameters, ...)

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Draft IR 8214B

- ▶ Analyzes the properties of conventional EdDSA
- ▶ Distinguishes various approaches for threshold interchangeable schemes w.r.t. EdDSA verification. Compares probabilistic vs. deterministic.
- ▶ Identifies aspects that would benefit from more attention (security formulation, WBBR parties, interfaces, adaptive corruptions, ...)
- ▶ Some considerations are generic to other schemes
- ▶ We expect to receive technical feedback



Developments

An attack and various followup threshold protocols have appeared in the past few years

What would be good to learn with the community:

- ▶ Detailed security formulations, technical descriptions, reference implementations
- ▶ More emphasis on SUF (some works have only looked at UF)
- ▶ More explicit addressing of well behaved parties with bad randomness (WBBR)
- ▶ Concerns with manipulation of nonce commitment?
- ▶ Actual implementations of broadcast and agreement

Aim: Enable develop recom./guidelines about threshold schemes (not concrete standards)

Thank you for your attention!

Questions?

Notes on Threshold EdDSA/Schnorr Signatures
Upcoming Draft NIST IR 8214B

(This slide-deck is still a work in progress)

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EdDSA modes (and variants)

Table 6. EdDSA variants

Type	Standard	Mode μ	κ	$b = d $	$s v$	GenNonce r	Challenge χ
Det.	EdDSA	Ed25519	128	256	$H_0(d)$	$H_0(v M)$	$H_0(R Q M)$
		Ed448	224	456	$H_1(d)$	$H_1(E_{4,0}(ctx) v M)$	$H_1(E_{4,0}(ctx) R Q M)$
	HashEdDSA	Ed25519ph	128	256	$H_0(d)$	$H_0(E_{2,1}(ctx) v H_0(M))$	$H_0(E_{2,1}(ctx) R Q H_0(M))$
		Ed448ph	224	456	$H_1(d)$	$H_1(E_{4,1}(ctx) v H_2(M))$	$H_1(E_{4,1}(ctx) R Q H_2(M))$
Type	Variation	Mode μ	κ	$b = d $	$s v$	GenNonce r	Challenge χ
Prob.	Random	—	—	—	—	$\leftarrow^S \mathbb{Z}_q$	—
	Hybrid	—	—	—	—	$H(v, rand, f(M))$	—

Legend: See code Some symbols are better contextualized in Fig. 3. Det. (deterministic). Prob. (probabilistic). s, v (first and second halves, respectively, of $\text{Hash}(d)$, also denoted as 1st and 2nd digests of d). $E_{i,j}(\dots)$ (encoding function, defined in FIPS 186 as $\text{domi}(j, \dots)$, where i is 2 or 4, corresponding to the Ed25519 or Ed448 curves, and j is 1 or 0, corresponding to whether or not it is a “pre-hash” mode). H (some cryptographic hash function or extendable output function); H_0 (SHA-512); H_1 (SHAKE256-length-912); H_2 (SHAKE256-length-512); $rand$ (secret randomness or any other secret material). The four deterministic modes (Det.) are based on Draft FIPS 186-5. The two probabilistic variants (Prob.) produce signatures interchangeable w.r.t. EdDSA verification.