



Are Timing Side Channels still alive?



Are Timing Side Channels still alive?

- Modern devices **restrict timers**



Are Timing Side Channels still alive?

- Modern devices **restrict timers**
- Timing side channels **get harder**



Are Timing Side Channels still alive?

- Modern devices **restrict timers**
- Timing side channels **get harder**
- **Fuzzed 160 devices** for alternatives



Are Timing Side Channels still alive?

- Modern devices **restrict timers**
- Timing side channels **get harder**
- **Fuzzed 160 devices** for alternatives
- Found **5 replacement primitives**



Are Timing Side Channels still alive?

- Modern devices **restrict timers**
- Timing side channels **get harder**
- **Fuzzed 160 devices** for alternatives
- Found **5 replacement primitives**
- **Affected devices**: Android phones, Macs, AWS Graviton, GCP Axion



Are Timing Side Channels still alive?

- Modern devices [restrict timers](#)
- Timing side channels [get harder](#)
- [Fuzzed 160 devices](#) for alternatives
- Found [5 replacement primitives](#)
- [Affected devices](#): Android phones, Macs, AWS Graviton, GCP Axion
- [Live demo](#): leaking touch input on Pixel 9

When Timers Fail

*Discovering Hidden Cache-State
Leaks on ARM CPUs*

Fabian Thomas | PhD Student @ CISPA (Germany)



What are Side Channels?

Visual



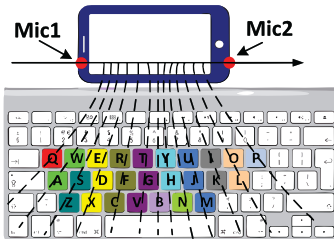


What are Side Channels?

Visual



Acoustic



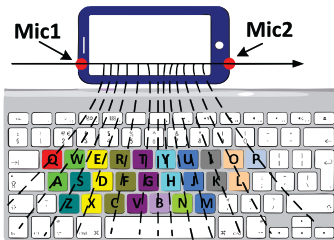


What are Side Channels?

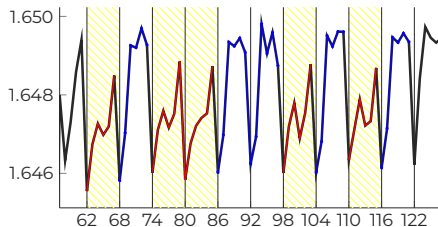
Visual



Acoustic



Power





Timing Side Channels: RSA Square-and-Multiply

```
func exp_mod(C, d, n): /*  $M=C^d \bmod n$  */  
    x = C  
    for bit in d: /* MSB-first */  
        x = x * x /* Square */  
        if bit == 1:  
            x = x * C /* Multiply */  
    return x % n
```



Timing Side Channels: RSA Square-and-Multiply

- **d** is secret

```
func exp_mod(C, d, n): /*  $M = C^d \bmod n$  */  
    x = C  
    for bit in d: /* MSB-first */  
        x = x * x /* Square */  
        if bit == 1:  
            x = x * C /* Multiply */  
    return x % n
```

Timing Side Channels: RSA Square-and-Multiply

- **d** is secret
- Multiplication $\iff$ **bit**=1

```
func exp_mod(C, d, n): /* M=C^d mod n */  
    x = C  
    for bit in d: /* MSB-first */  
        x = x * x /* Square */  
        if bit == 1:  
            x = x * C /* Multiply */  
    return x % n
```

Timing Side Channels: RSA Square-and-Multiply

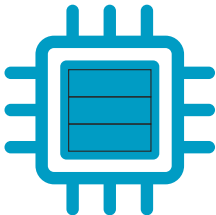
- **d** is secret
- Multiplication $\iff$ **bit**=1
- How to leak?

```
func exp_mod(C, d, n): /* M=C^d mod n */  
    x = C  
    for bit in d: /* MSB-first */  
        x = x * x /* Square */  
        if bit == 1:  
            x = x * C /* Multiply */  
    return x % n
```



CPU Optimization: Cache

```
printf("%d", i);  
printf("%d", i);
```



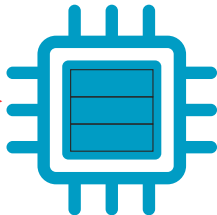


CPU Optimization: Cache

```
printf("%d", i);
```

```
printf("%d", i);
```

Cache miss

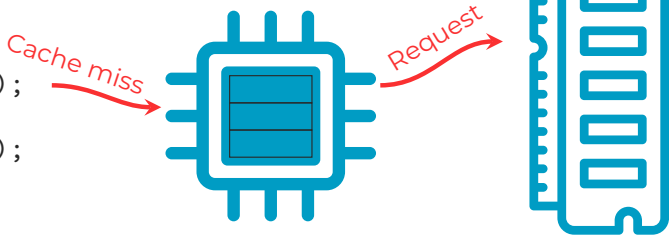




CPU Optimization: Cache

```
printf("%d", i);
```

```
printf("%d", i);
```

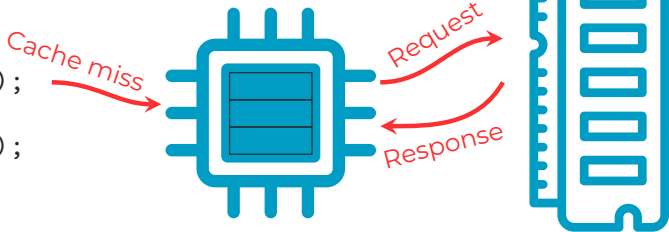




CPU Optimization: Cache

```
printf("%d", i);
```

```
printf("%d", i);
```

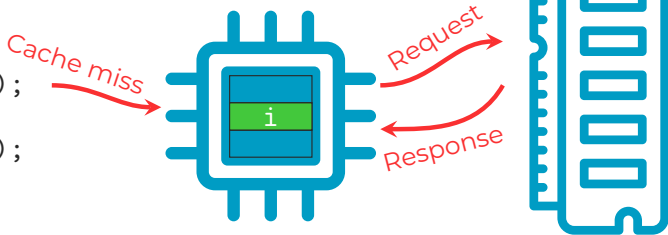




CPU Optimization: Cache

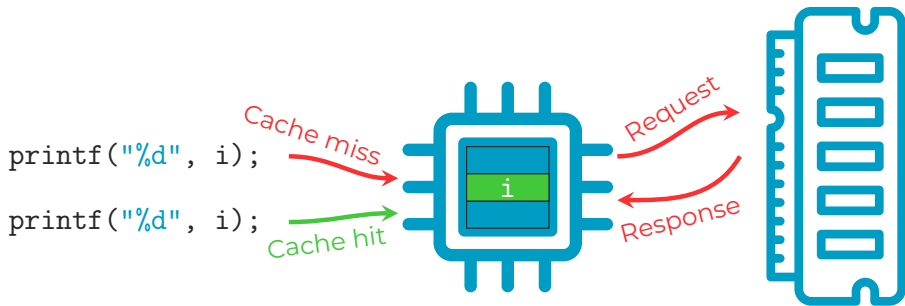
```
printf("%d", i);
```

```
printf("%d", i);
```



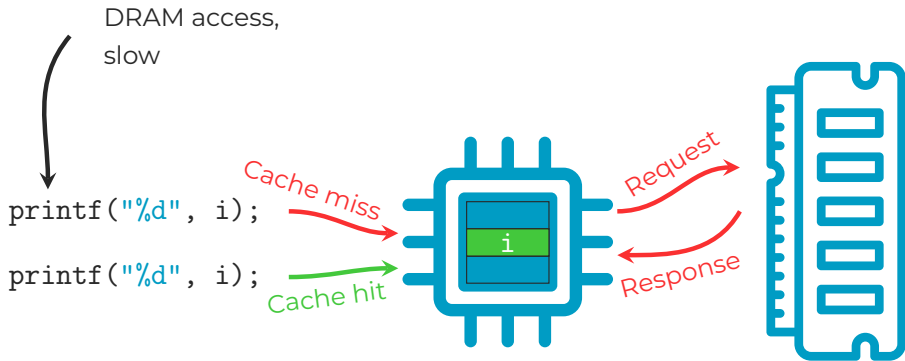


CPU Optimization: Cache



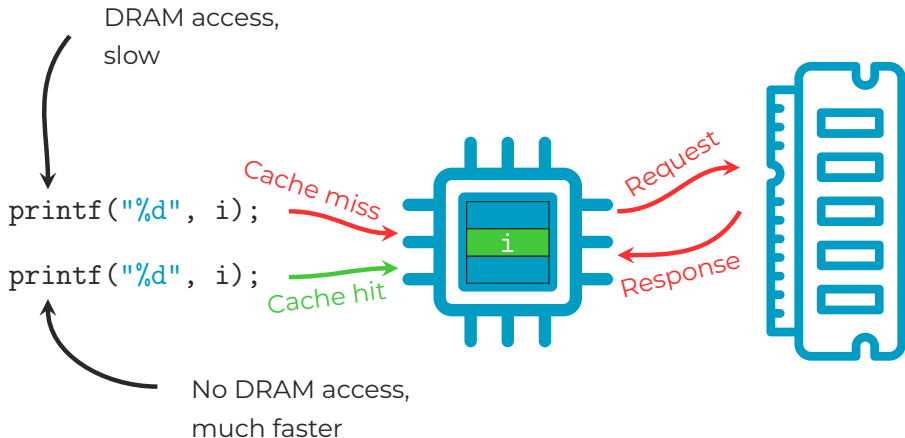


CPU Optimization: Cache



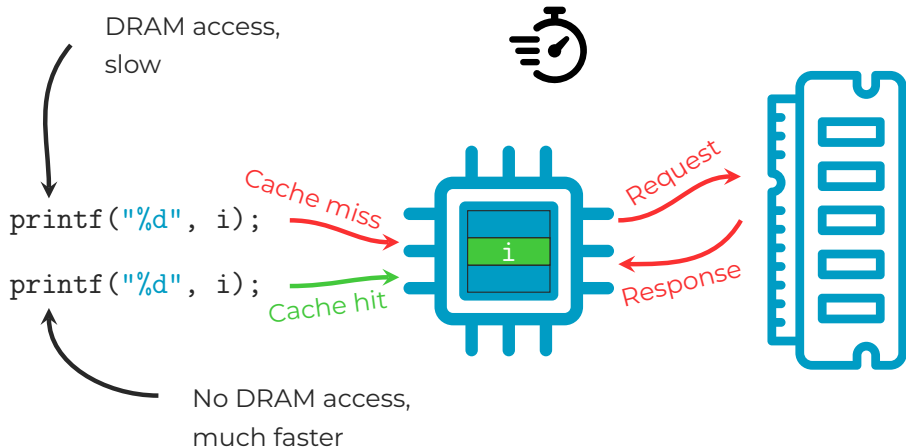


CPU Optimization: Cache



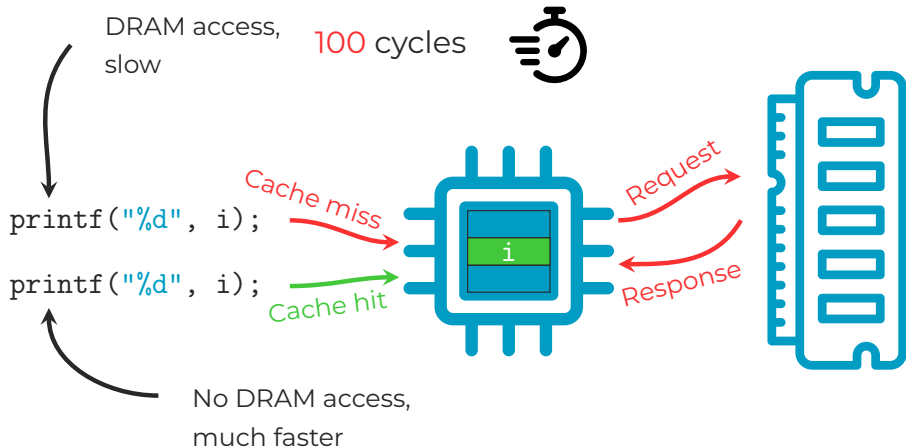


CPU Optimization: Cache



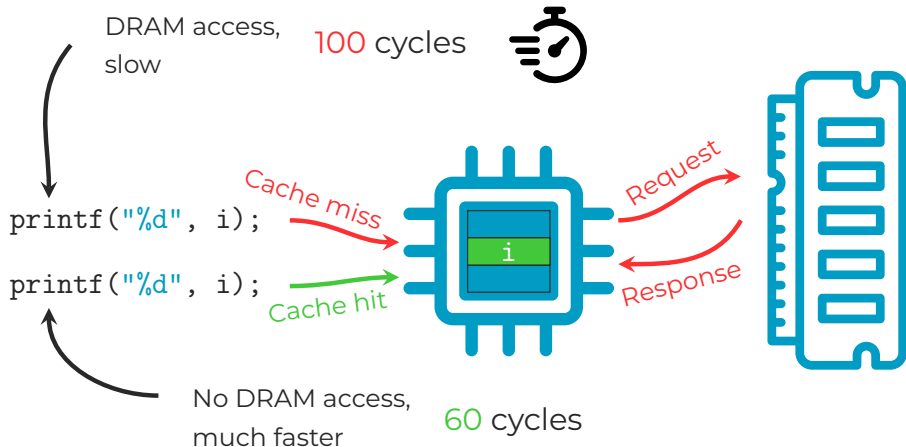


CPU Optimization: Cache





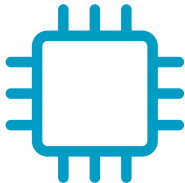
CPU Optimization: Cache





Timing Side Channels: RSA Square-and-Multiply

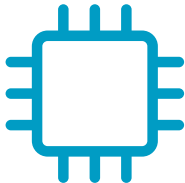
bit=0:



```
func exp_mod(C, d, n): /*  $M = C^d \bmod n$  */  
    x = C  
    for bit in d: /* MSB-first */  
        x = x * x /* Square */  
        if bit == 1:  
            x = x * C /* Multiply */  
    return x % n
```

Timing Side Channels: RSA Square-and-Multiply

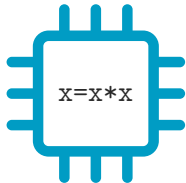
bit=0:



```
func exp_mod(C, d, n): /*  $M = C^d \bmod n$  */  
    x = C  
    for bit in d: /* MSB-first */  
        → x = x * x /* Square */  
        if bit == 1:  
            x = x * C /* Multiply */  
    return x % n
```

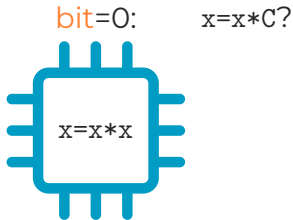
Timing Side Channels: RSA Square-and-Multiply

bit=0:



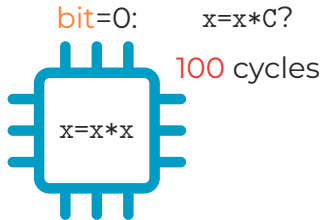
```
func exp_mod(C, d, n): /* M=C^d mod n */  
    x = C  
    for bit in d: /* MSB-first */  
        → x = x * x /* Square */  
        if bit == 1:  
            x = x * C /* Multiply */  
    return x % n
```

Timing Side Channels: RSA Square-and-Multiply



```
func exp_mod(C, d, n): /*  $M = C^d \bmod n$  */  
    x = C  
    for bit in d: /* MSB-first */  
        x = x * x /* Square */  
        if bit == 1:  
            x = x * C /* Multiply */  
    return x % n
```

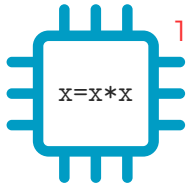
Timing Side Channels: RSA Square-and-Multiply



```
func exp_mod(C, d, n): /*  $M = C^d \bmod n$  */  
    x = C  
    for bit in d: /* MSB-first */  
        x = x * x /* Square */  
        if bit == 1:  
            x = x * C /* Multiply */  
    return x % n
```

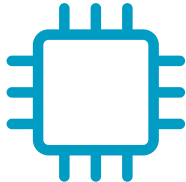
Timing Side Channels: RSA Square-and-Multiply

bit=0: $x = x * C?$



100 cycles

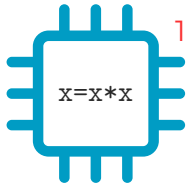
bit=1:



```
func exp_mod(C, d, n): /*  $M = C^d \bmod n$  */  
    x = C  
    for bit in d: /* MSB-first */  
        x = x * x /* Square */  
        if bit == 1:  
            x = x * C /* Multiply */  
    return x % n
```

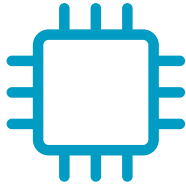
Timing Side Channels: RSA Square-and-Multiply

bit=0: $x = x * C?$



100 cycles

bit=1:

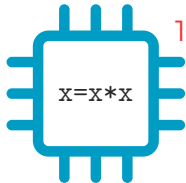


```
func exp_mod(C, d, n): /*  $M = C^d \bmod n$  */  
    x = C  
    for bit in d: /* MSB-first */  
        → x = x * x /* Square */  
        if bit == 1:  
            x = x * C /* Multiply */  
    return x % n
```

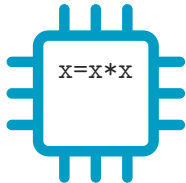
Timing Side Channels: RSA Square-and-Multiply

bit=0: $x = x * C?$

100 cycles



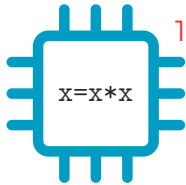
bit=1:



```
func exp_mod(C, d, n): /*  $M = C^d \bmod n$  */  
    x = C  
    for bit in d: /* MSB-first */  
        → x = x * x /* Square */  
        if bit == 1:  
            x = x * C /* Multiply */  
    return x % n
```

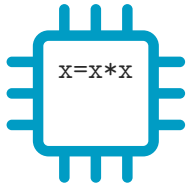
Timing Side Channels: RSA Square-and-Multiply

bit=0: $x = x * C?$



100 cycles

bit=1:

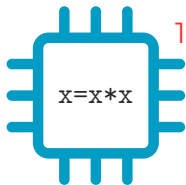


```
func exp_mod(C, d, n): /*  $M = C^d \bmod n$  */  
    x = C  
    for bit in d: /* MSB-first */  
        x = x * x /* Square */  
        if bit == 1:  
            → x = x * C /* Multiply */  
    return x % n
```

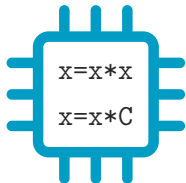
Timing Side Channels: RSA Square-and-Multiply

bit=0: $x = x * C?$

100 cycles



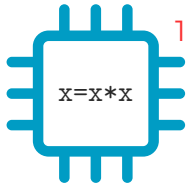
bit=1:



```
func exp_mod(C, d, n): /*  $M = C^d \bmod n$  */  
    x = C  
    for bit in d: /* MSB-first */  
        x = x * x /* Square */  
        if bit == 1:  
            → x = x * C /* Multiply */  
    return x % n
```

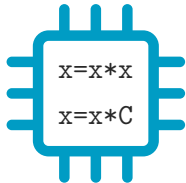
Timing Side Channels: RSA Square-and-Multiply

bit=0: $x=x*C?$



100 cycles

bit=1: $x=x*C?$

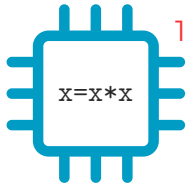


```
func exp_mod(C, d, n): /*  $M=C^d \bmod n$  */  
    x = C  
    for bit in d: /* MSB-first */  
        x = x * x /* Square */  
        if bit == 1:  
            x = x * C /* Multiply */  
    return x % n
```

Timing Side Channels: RSA Square-and-Multiply

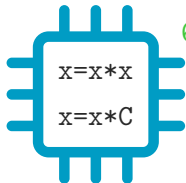
bit=0: $x = x * C?$

100 cycles



bit=1: $x = x * C?$

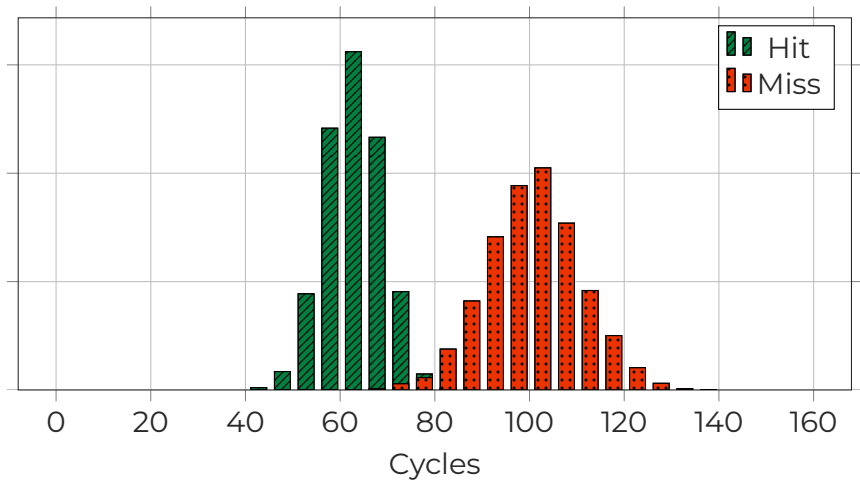
60 cycles



```
func exp_mod(C, d, n): /* M=C^d mod n */  
    x = C  
    for bit in d: /* MSB-first */  
        x = x * x /* Square */  
        if bit == 1:  
            x = x * C /* Multiply */  
    return x % n
```

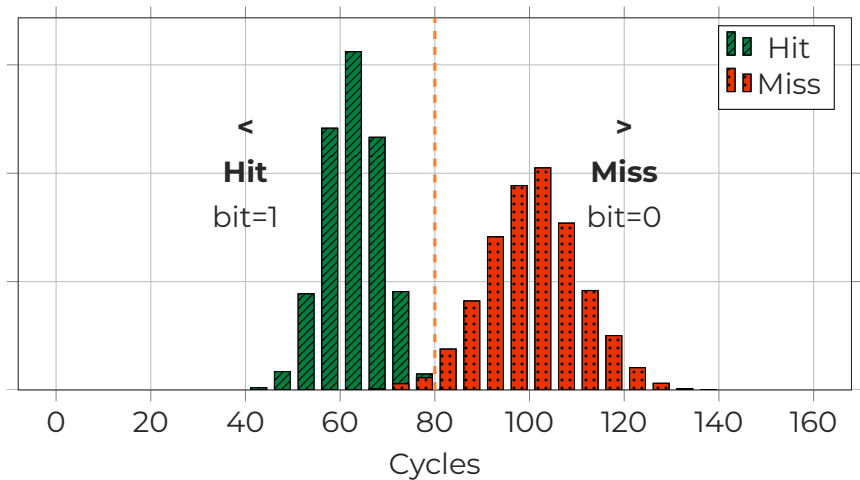


Cache Attacks: Leaking RSA Keys



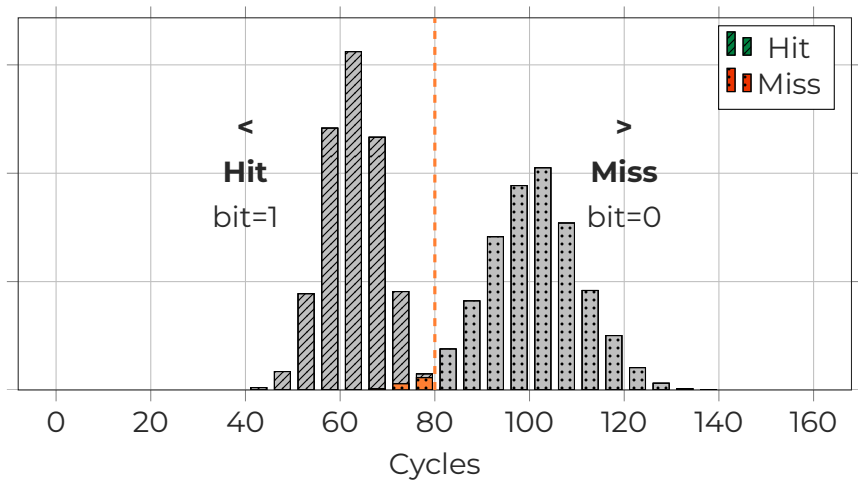


Cache Attacks: Leaking RSA Keys





Cache Attacks: Leaking RSA Keys





Reducing Timer Resolution: A valid mitigation?

To offer protection against timing attacks and [fingerprinting](#), `performance.now()` is coarsened based on whether or not the document is [cross-origin isolated](#).

- Resolution in isolated contexts: 5 microseconds
- Resolution in non-isolated contexts: 100 microseconds

Before version 91, [timer resolutions](#) in Chrome were restricted to 5 microseconds on desktop, where [site-isolation](#) is enabled, and to 100 microseconds on Android, where it's not.

Starting from version 91, following a [specification change](#), Chrome will be restricting the resolution of explicit [timers](#) (`performance.now()`, `performance.timeOrigin`, and other performance APIs that expose `DOMHighResTimestamps`) to 100 microseconds across platforms. By enabling [cross-origin isolation](#), websites can relax the restriction to 5 microseconds regardless of platform.

Commit 25e5753

 rniwa committed on Jan 8, 2018

Reduce the precision of "high" resolution time to 1ms

https://bugs.webkit.org/show_bug.cgi?id=188918
<rdar://problem/36865943>

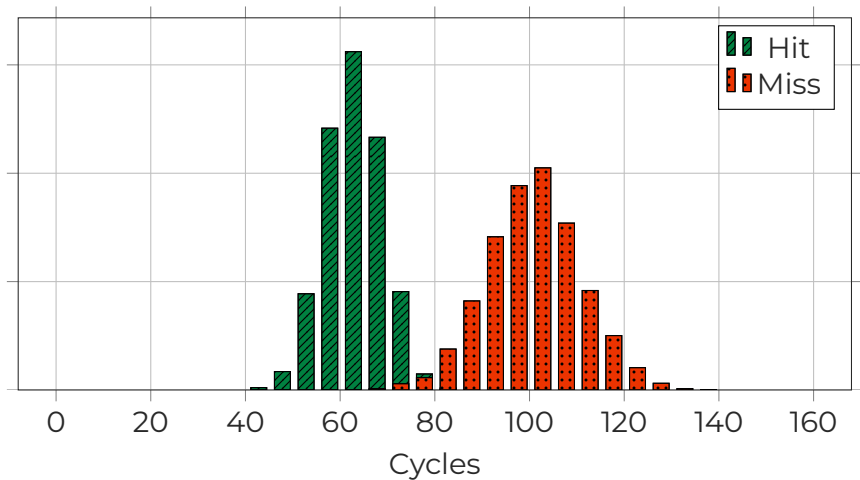
Reviewed by Sam Barati.

Source/WebCore:

Reduced the high precision time's resolution to 1ms, the same precision as `Date.now()`.

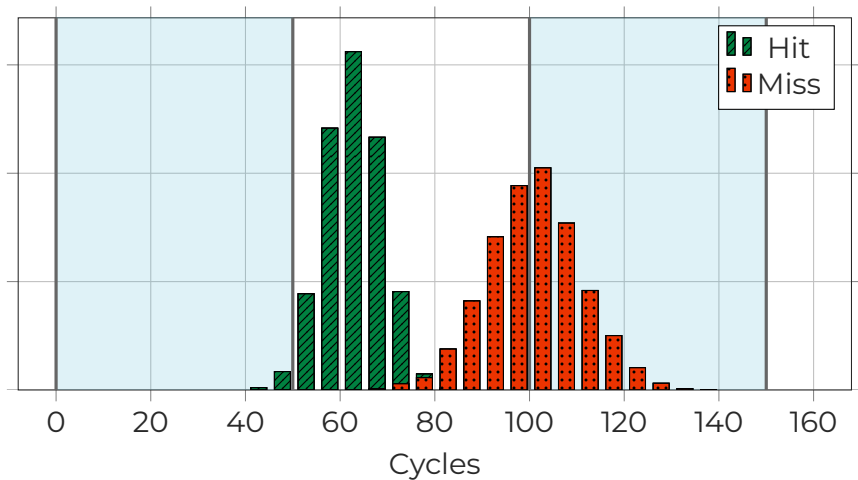


Cache Attacks: Leaking RSA Keys



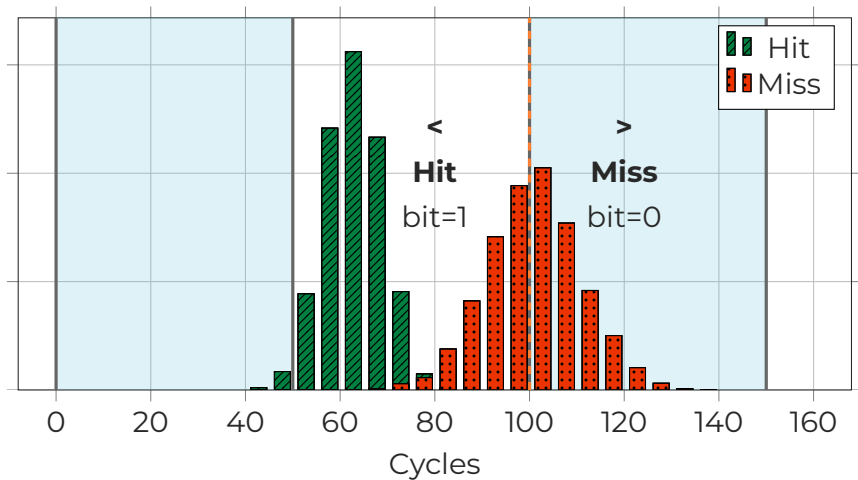


Cache Attacks: Leaking RSA Keys



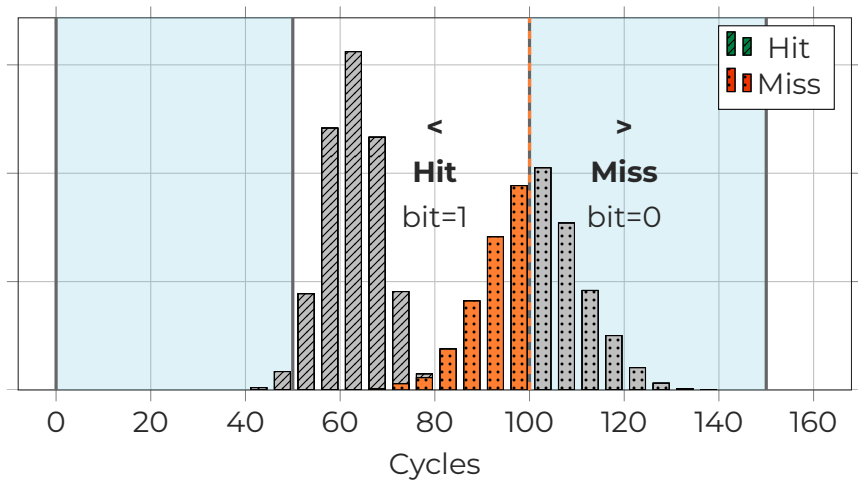


Cache Attacks: Leaking RSA Keys



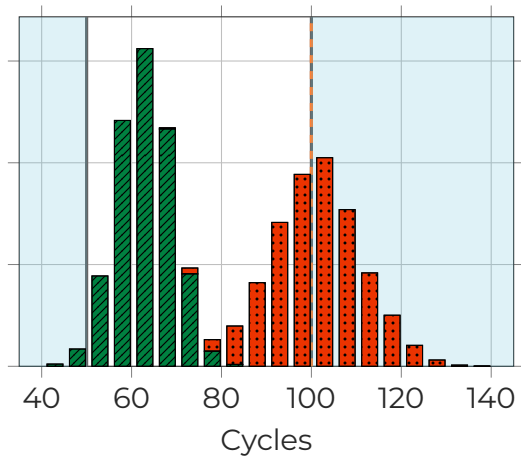


Cache Attacks: Leaking RSA Keys



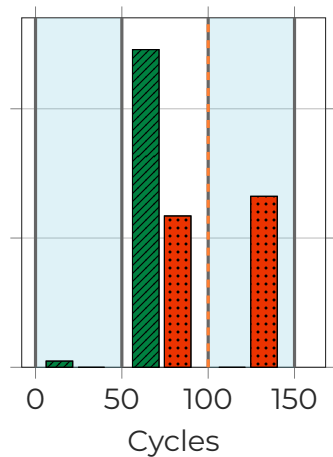
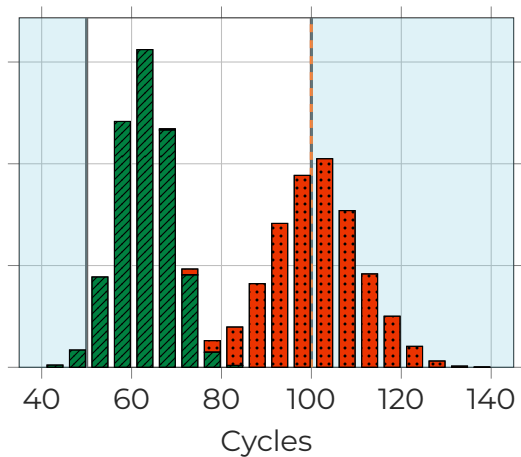


Cache Attacks: Leaking RSA Keys



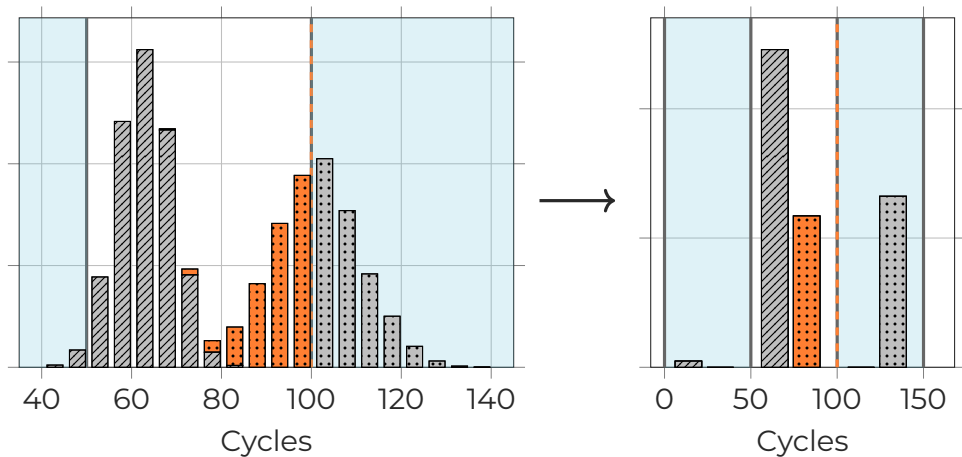


Cache Attacks: Leaking RSA Keys





Cache Attacks: Leaking RSA Keys





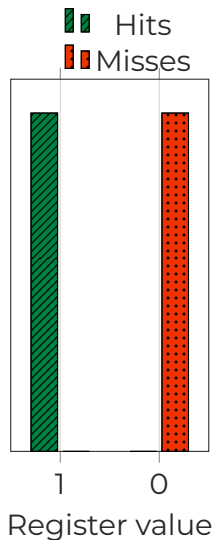
- Goal: Find timerless cache-state leakage oracle



- Goal: Find timerless cache-state leakage oracle
- Architectural leakage (e.g., registers or memory)

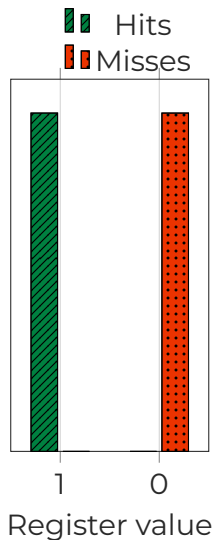


- Goal: Find timerless cache-state leakage oracle
- Architectural leakage (e.g., registers or memory)



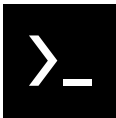


- Goal: Find timerless cache-state leakage oracle
- Architectural leakage (e.g., registers or memory)
- Automated approach

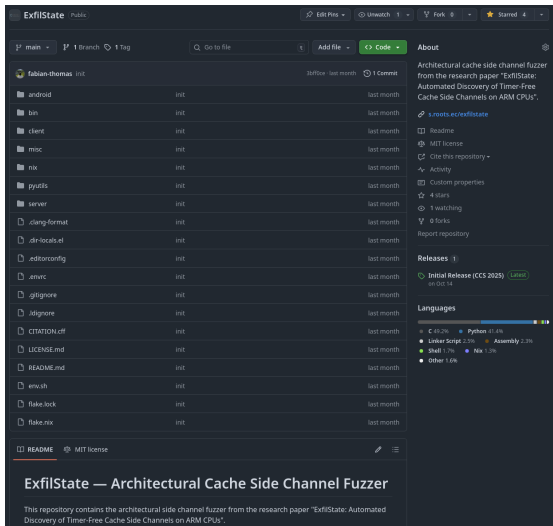




Live Demo: Discovering Side Channels



Termux





EXFILSTATE: Finding a Leak

- Generate random instruction sequence

```
LDXR      x2, [x0]  
STXR x3, x4, [x0]
```



EXFILSTATE: Finding a Leak

cache

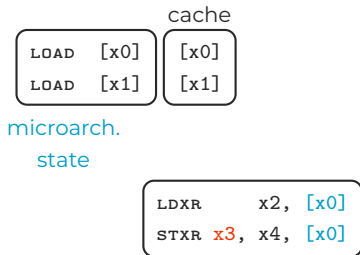


```
LDXR      x2, [x0]
STXR x3, x4, [x0]
```

- Generate random instruction sequence
- Generate cache state



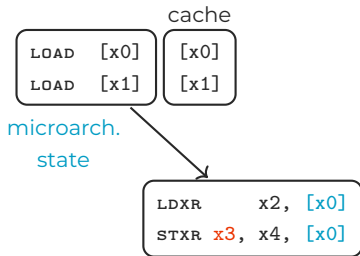
EXFILSTATE: Finding a Leak



- Generate random instruction sequence
- Generate cache state
- Prime **microarchitectural state**



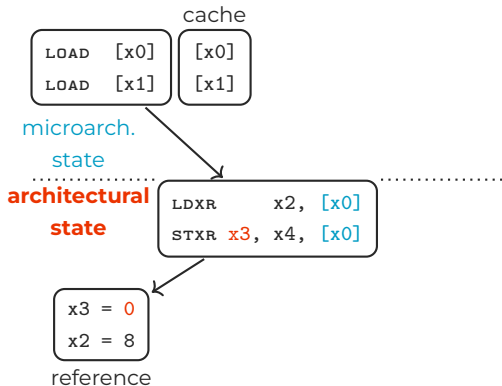
EXFILSTATE: Finding a Leak



- Generate random instruction sequence
- Generate cache state
- Prime **microarchitectural state**
- Run sequence



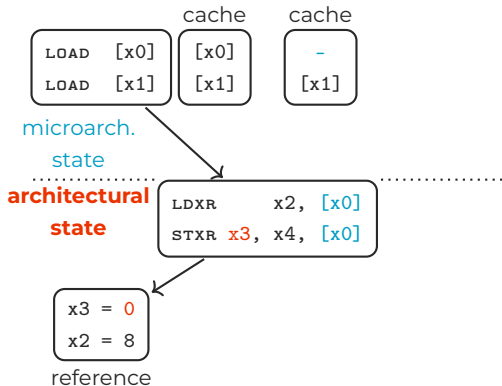
EXFILSTATE: Finding a Leak



- Generate random instruction sequence
- Generate cache state
- Prime **microarchitectural state**
- Run sequence
- Collect **architectural state**



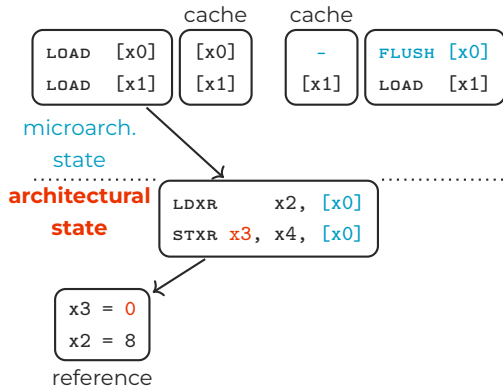
EXFILSTATE: Finding a Leak



- Generate random instruction sequence
- Generate cache state



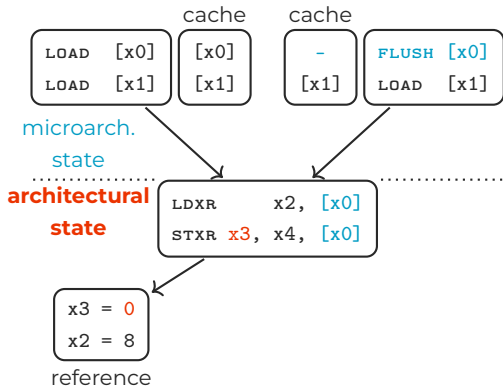
EXFILSTATE: Finding a Leak



- Generate random instruction sequence
- Generate cache state
- Prime **microarchitectural state**



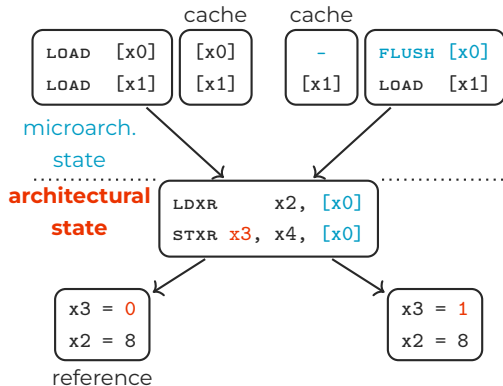
EXFILSTATE: Finding a Leak



- Generate random instruction sequence
- Generate cache state
- Prime **microarchitectural state**
- Run sequence



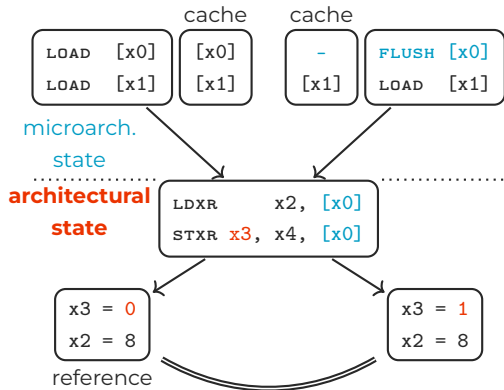
EXFILSTATE: Finding a Leak



- Generate random instruction sequence
- Generate cache state
- Prime **microarchitectural state**
- Run sequence
- Collect **architectural state**



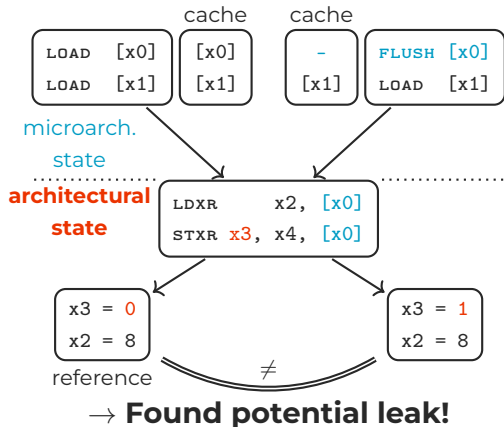
EXFILSTATE: Finding a Leak



- Generate random instruction sequence
- Generate cache state
- Prime **microarchitectural state**
- Run sequence
- Collect **architectural state**
- Compare to reference state



EXFILSTATE: Finding a Leak



- Generate random instruction sequence
- Generate cache state
- Prime **microarchitectural state**
- Run sequence
- Collect **architectural state**
- Compare to reference state



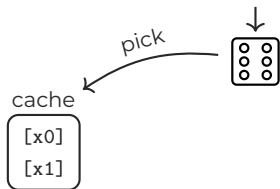
EXFILSTATE: Identifying a Good Leak



- Repeat 5k times:



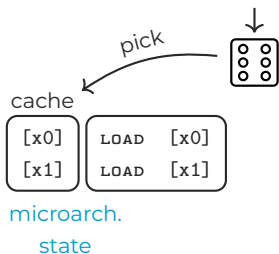
EXFILSTATE: Identifying a Good Leak



- Repeat 5k times:
 - Randomly pick discovered cache state



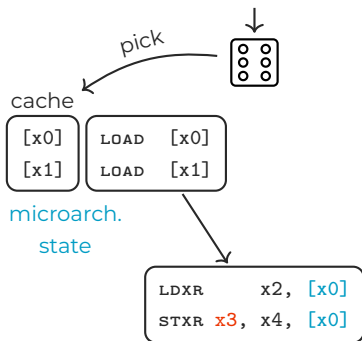
EXFILSTATE: Identifying a Good Leak



- Repeat 5k times:
 - Randomly pick discovered cache state
 - Prime [microarchitectural state](#)



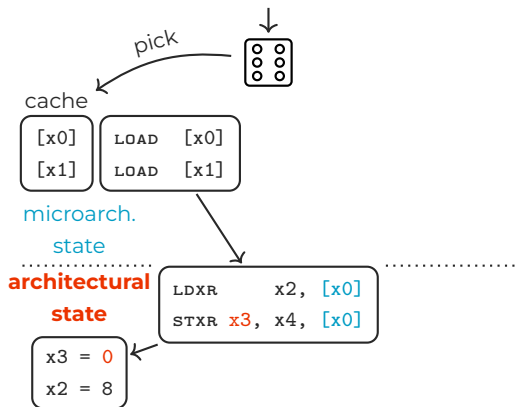
EXFILSTATE: Identifying a Good Leak



- Repeat 5k times:
 - Randomly pick discovered cache state
 - Prime **microarchitectural state**
 - Run sequence



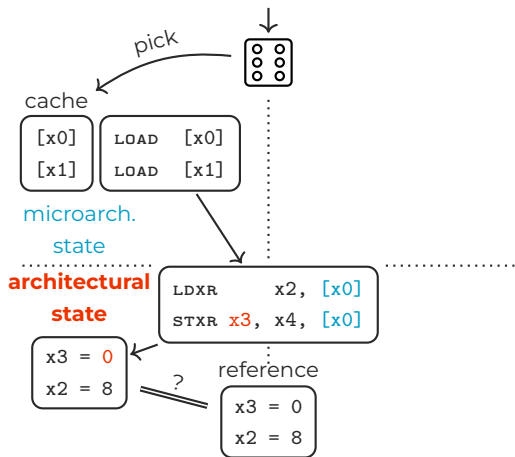
EXFILSTATE: Identifying a Good Leak



- Repeat 5k times:
 - Randomly pick discovered cache state
 - Prime **microarchitectural state**
 - Run sequence
 - Collect **architectural state**



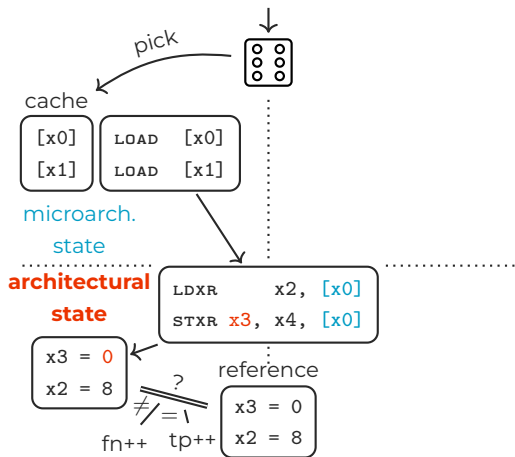
EXFILSTATE: Identifying a Good Leak



- Repeat 5k times:
 - Randomly pick discovered cache state
 - Prime **microarchitectural state**
 - Run sequence
 - Collect **architectural state**
 - Compare to reference state



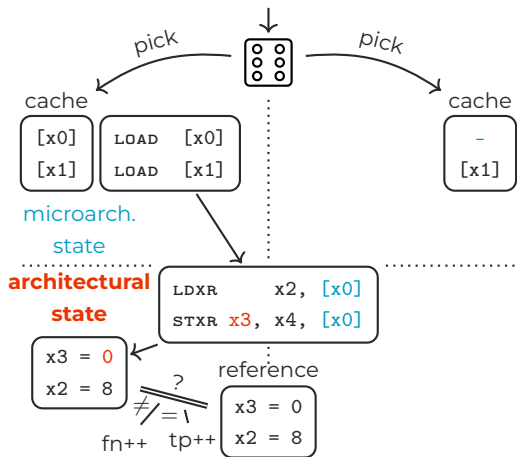
EXFILSTATE: Identifying a Good Leak



- Repeat 5k times:
 - Randomly pick discovered cache state
 - Prime **microarchitectural state**
 - Run sequence
 - Collect **architectural state**
 - Compare to reference state



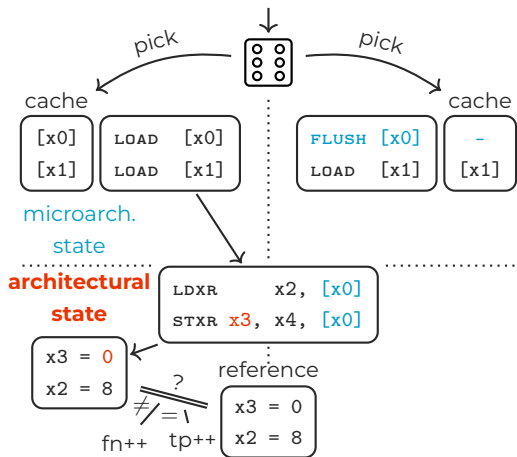
EXFILSTATE: Identifying a Good Leak



- Repeat 5k times:
 - Randomly pick discovered cache state



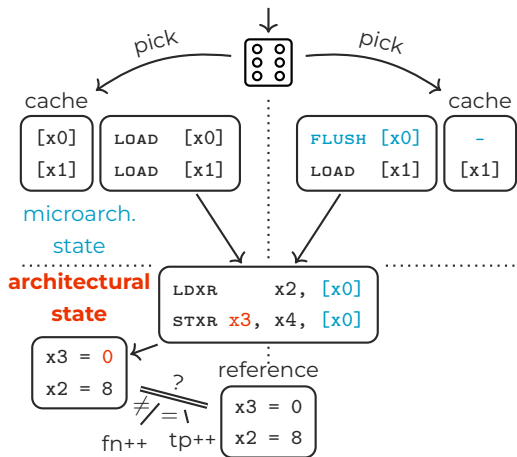
EXFILSTATE: Identifying a Good Leak



- Repeat 5k times:
 - Randomly pick discovered cache state
 - Prime **microarchitectural state**



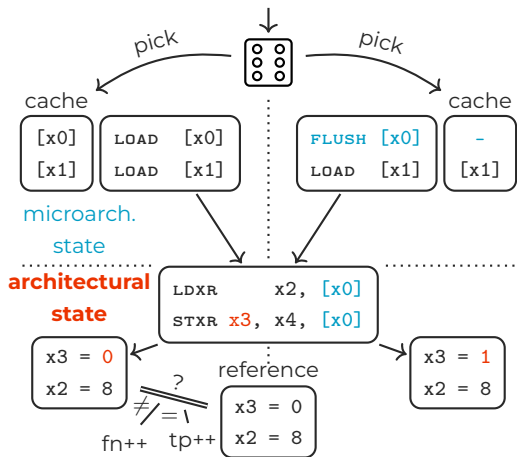
EXFILSTATE: Identifying a Good Leak



- Repeat 5k times:
 - Randomly pick discovered cache state
 - Prime **microarchitectural state**
 - Run sequence



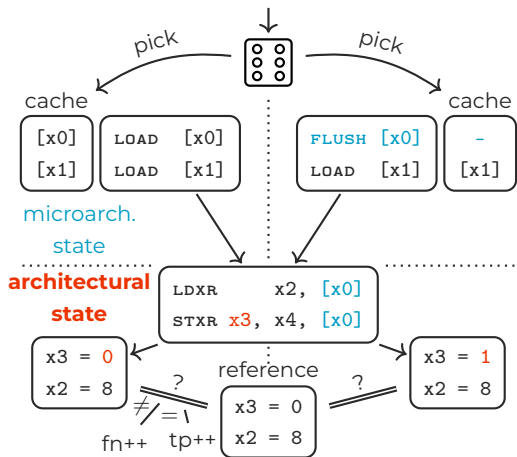
EXFILSTATE: Identifying a Good Leak



- Repeat 5k times:
 - Randomly pick discovered cache state
 - Prime **microarchitectural state**
 - Run sequence
 - Collect **architectural state**



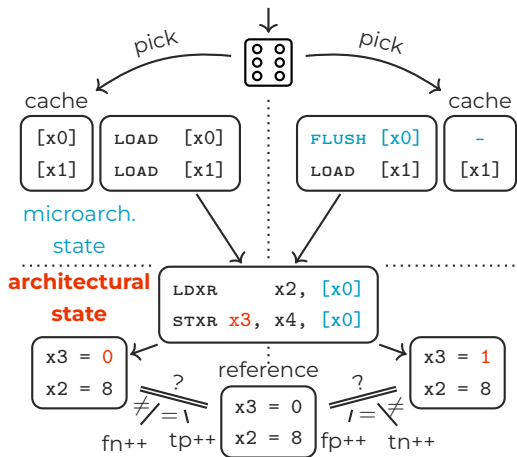
EXFILSTATE: Identifying a Good Leak



- Repeat 5k times:
 - Randomly pick discovered cache state
 - Prime **microarchitectural state**
 - Run sequence
 - Collect **architectural state**
 - Compare to reference state



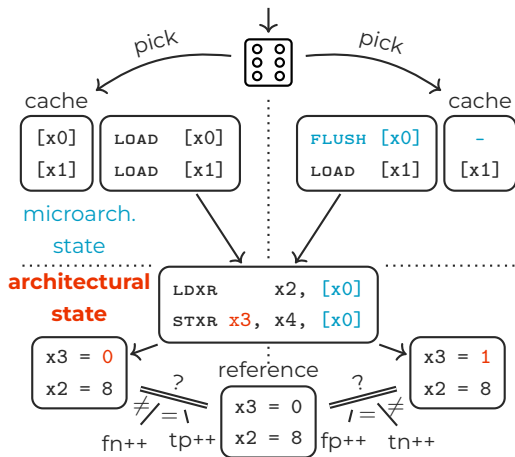
EXFILSTATE: Identifying a Good Leak



- Repeat 5k times:
 - Randomly pick discovered cache state
 - Prime **microarchitectural state**
 - Run sequence
 - Collect **architectural state**
 - Compare to reference state



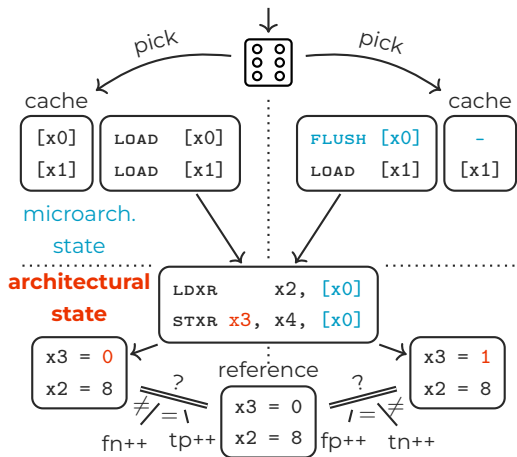
EXFILSTATE: Identifying a Good Leak



- Repeat 5k times:
 - Randomly pick discovered cache state
 - Prime **microarchitectural state**
 - Run sequence
 - Collect **architectural state**
 - Compare to reference state
- Compute F-score



EXFILSTATE: Identifying a Good Leak



- Repeat 5k times:
 - Randomly pick discovered cache state
 - Prime **microarchitectural state**
 - Run sequence
 - Collect **architectural state**
 - Compare to reference state
- Compute F-score
- If > 0.8 : **Found Leaking Sequence!**



EXFILSTATE: Covert Channel Verification

1 0 1 1 0 1 0 0 1

```
LDXR      x2, [x0]  
STXR x3, x4, [x0]
```



EXFILSTATE: Covert Channel Verification

1 0 1 1 0 1 0 0 1



encode

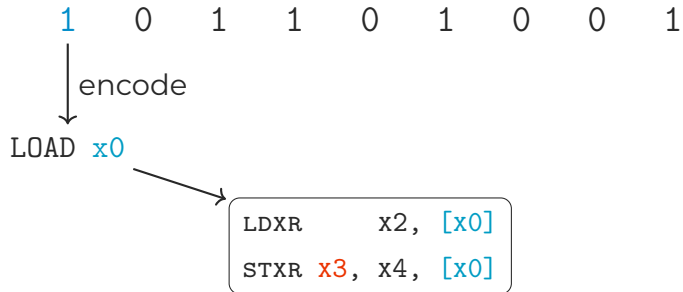
LOAD x0

```
LDXR      x2, [x0]
```

```
STXR  x3, x4, [x0]
```

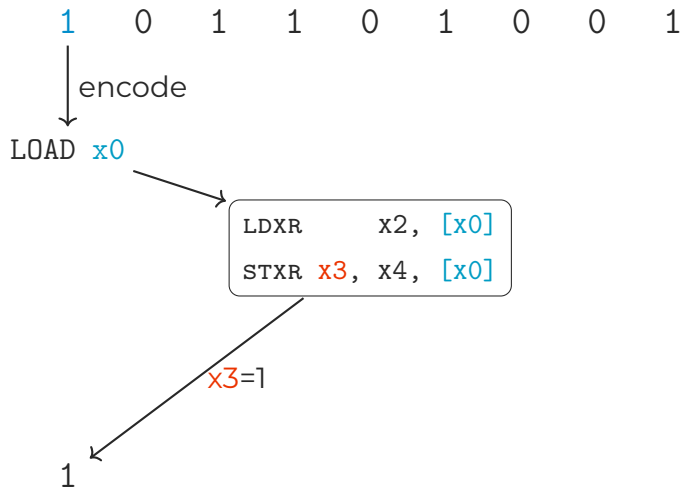


EXFILSTATE: Covert Channel Verification





EXFILSTATE: Covert Channel Verification





EXFILSTATE: Covert Channel Verification

1 0 1 1 0 1 0 0 1

```
LDXR      x2, [x0]  
STXR x3, x4, [x0]
```

1



EXFILSTATE: Covert Channel Verification

1 0 1 1 0 1 0 0 1



encode

FLUSH x0

LDXR x2, [x0]

STXR x3, x4, [x0]

1



EXFILSTATE: Covert Channel Verification

1 0 1 1 0 1 0 0 1

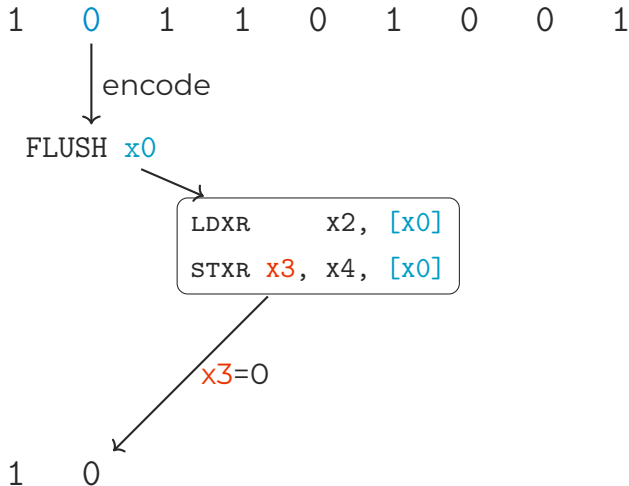
↓ encode
FLUSH x0

LDXR x2, [x0]
STXR x3, x4, [x0]

1

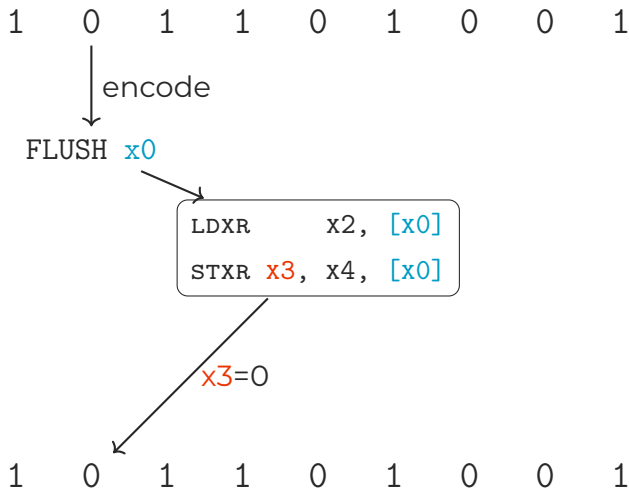


EXFILSTATE: Covert Channel Verification



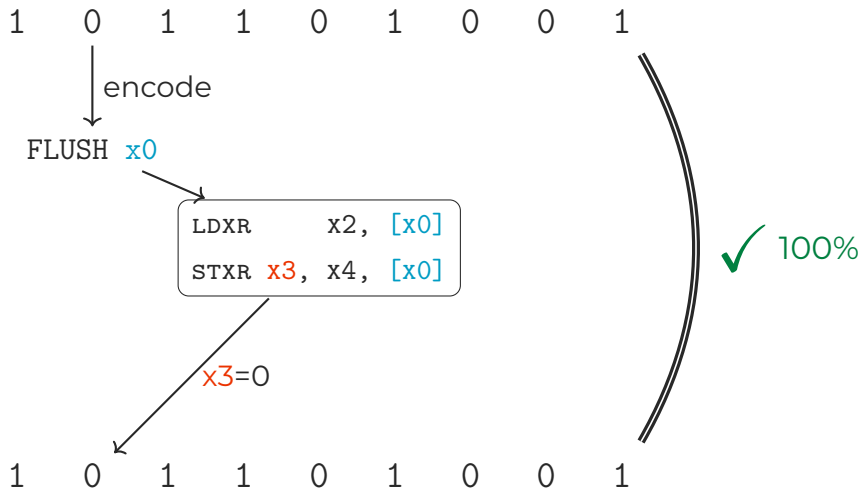


EXFILSTATE: Covert Channel Verification



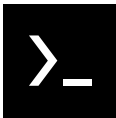


EXFILSTATE: Covert Channel Verification

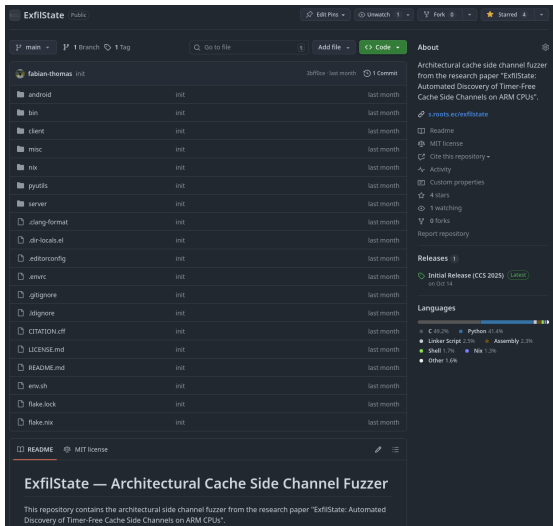




Live Demo: Checking in on the Results



Termux





EXFILSTATE: Fuzzing Campaign

- Collaboration with Google





EXFILSTATE: Fuzzing Campaign

- Collaboration with Google
- Android phone farm run by Google





EXFILSTATE: Fuzzing Campaign

- Collaboration with Google
- Android phone farm run by Google
- Google and AWS cloud





EXFILSTATE: Fuzzing Campaign

- Collaboration with Google
- Android phone farm run by Google
- Google and AWS cloud
- Laptops, SBCs, and Macs





EXFILSTATE: Fuzzing Campaign

- Collaboration with Google
- Android phone farm run by Google
- Google and AWS cloud
- Laptops, SBCs, and Macs
- **160** ARM devices





EXFILSTATE: Fuzzing Campaign

- Collaboration with Google
- Android phone farm run by Google
- Google and AWS cloud
- Laptops, SBCs, and Macs
- **160** ARM devices



→ **37 unique ARM
microarchitectures**





EXFILSTATE: Results

Side Channel	Cortex-A53	Cortex-A55	Cortex-A510	Cortex-A520	Cortex-A72	Cortex-A73	Cortex-A75	Cortex-A76	Cortex-A77	Cortex-A78	Cortex-A710	Cortex-A715	Cortex-A720	Cortex-A725	Cortex-X1	Cortex-X2	Cortex-X3	Cortex-X4	Kryo	Falkor-V1/Kryo	Kryo-V2	Kryo-3XX-Gold	Kryo-3XX-Silver	Kryo-4XX-Gold	Kryo-4XX-Silver	Carmel	Kunpeng Pro	Oryon	Oryon V2 P-L	Oryon V2 P-M	Exynos M3	Neoverse-N1	Neoverse-V2	Firestorm-M1	Icestorm-M1	Avalanche-M2	Blizzard-M2
LX+Sx	✓ ²	✓ ⁴	✓ ⁴	✓ ⁵	✓ ²	✓ ²	✓ ³	✓ ³				✓ ³	✓ ³	✓ ³						✓ ²	✓ ³	✓ ⁴	~ ⁴		✓ ⁴		✓ ³	✓ ³	✓ ³	✓ ⁴			✓ ⁴	✓ ⁵	✓ ⁴	~ ⁸	
STORE+RET	✓ ²	✓ ³	✓ ³	✓ ³		~ ²		✓ ²	✓ ³	✓ ²	✓ ³	✓ ³	✓ ³	✓ ²	✓ ³	✓ ³	✓ ³	✓ ³			✓ ²	~ ²	✓ ³	✓ ²	✓ ³	✓ ³	✓ ²	✓ ⁴	✓ ²	✓ ³	✓ ³	✓ ²	✓ ²	✓ ²	✓ ⁴	✓ ²	✓ ³
SPLIT-STORE						✓ ²	✓ ²													✓ ²		✓ ²															
TRANSLATION-RACE						✓ ²	✓ ²													✓ ²		✓ ²															
POINTER-CHASE	✓ ³				✓ ²																																
Affected	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓



EXFILSTATE: Results

Side Channel	Cortex-A53	Cortex-A55	Cortex-A510	Cortex-A520	Cortex-A72	Cortex-A73	Cortex-A75	Cortex-A76	Cortex-A77	Cortex-A78	Cortex-A710	Cortex-A715	Cortex-A720	Cortex-A725	Cortex-X1	Cortex-X2	Cortex-X3	Cortex-X4	Kryo	Falkor-V1/Kryo	Kryo-V2	Kryo-3XX-Gold	Kryo-3XX-Silver	Kryo-4XX-Gold	Kryo-4XX-Silver	Carmel	Kunpeng Pro	Oryon	Oryon V2 P-L	Oryon V2 P-M	Exynos M3	Neoverse-N1	Neoverse-V2	Firestorm-M1	Icestorm-M1	Avalanche-M2	Blizzard-M2	
Lx+Sx	✓ ²	✓ ⁴	✓ ⁴	✓ ⁵	✓ ²	✓ ²	✓ ³	✓ ³				✓ ³	✓ ³	✓ ³						✓ ²	✓ ³	✓ ⁴	~ ⁴		✓ ⁴		✓ ³	✓ ³	✓ ³	✓ ⁴			✓ ⁴	✓ ⁵	✓ ⁴	~ ⁸		
STORE+RET	✓ ²	✓ ³	✓ ³	✓ ³		~ ²		✓ ²	✓ ³	✓ ²	✓ ³	✓ ³	✓ ³	✓ ²	✓ ³	✓ ³	✓ ³	✓ ³			✓ ²	~ ²	✓ ³	✓ ²	✓ ³	✓ ³	✓ ²	✓ ⁴	✓ ²	✓ ³	✓ ³	✓ ²	✓ ²	✓ ²	✓ ⁴	✓ ²	✓ ³	
SPLIT-STORE						✓ ²	✓ ²													✓ ²		✓ ²																
TRANSLATION-RACE						✓ ²	✓ ²													✓ ²		✓ ²																
POINTER-CHASE	✓ ³				✓ ²																																	
Affected	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓



How do such sequences look like? — $Lx+Sx$

```
LDXR      x2, [victim]
```

```
STXR x3, x4, [victim]
```



How do such sequences look like? — Lx+Sx

```
LDXR      x2, [victim]  
STXR x3, x4, [victim]
```

- Load **victim**
- Mark as **exclusive access**



How do such sequences look like? — Lx+Sx

```
LDXR      x2, [victim]
```

```
STXR x3, x4, [victim]
```

- Load **victim**
- Mark as **exclusive access**
- Store to **victim**
- Check **exclusive access**
- **x3**=0: Success
- **x3**=1: Failure



How do such sequences look like? — Lx+Sx

```
LDXR      x2, [victim]
```

```
STXR x3, x4, [victim]
```

- Load **victim**
- Mark as **exclusive access**
- Store to **victim**
- Check **exclusive access**
- **x3**=0: Success
- **x3**=1: Failure

→ Used to implement locks



How do such sequences look like? — Lx+Sx

- EXFILSTATE uncovers:

victim in cache $\iff$ **x3**=0

```
LDXR    x2, [victim]
```

```
STXR x3, x4, [victim]
```



How do such sequences look like? — Lx+Sx

```
LDXR    x2, [victim]  
STXR    x3, x4, [victim]
```

- EXFILSTATE uncovers:
 victim in cache $\iff$ x3=0
- x3 architecturally leaks cache state



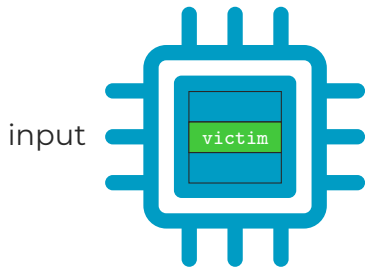
How do such sequences look like? — Lx+Sx

```
LDXR    x2, [victim]  
STXR    x3, x4, [victim]
```

- EXFILSTATE uncovers:
 victim in cache $\iff$ x3=0
- x3 architecturally leaks cache state
- **Problem:** victim needs to be writable

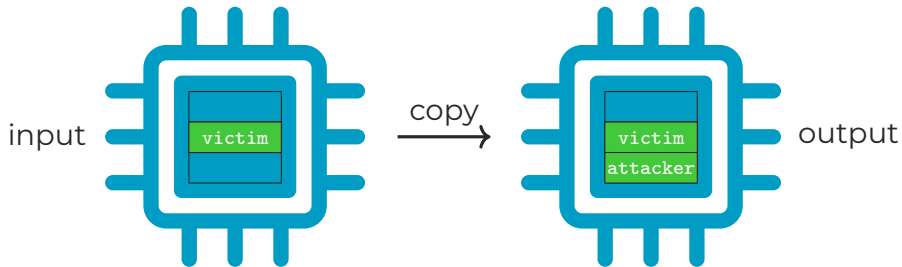


How to exploit? — Cache-State Copier



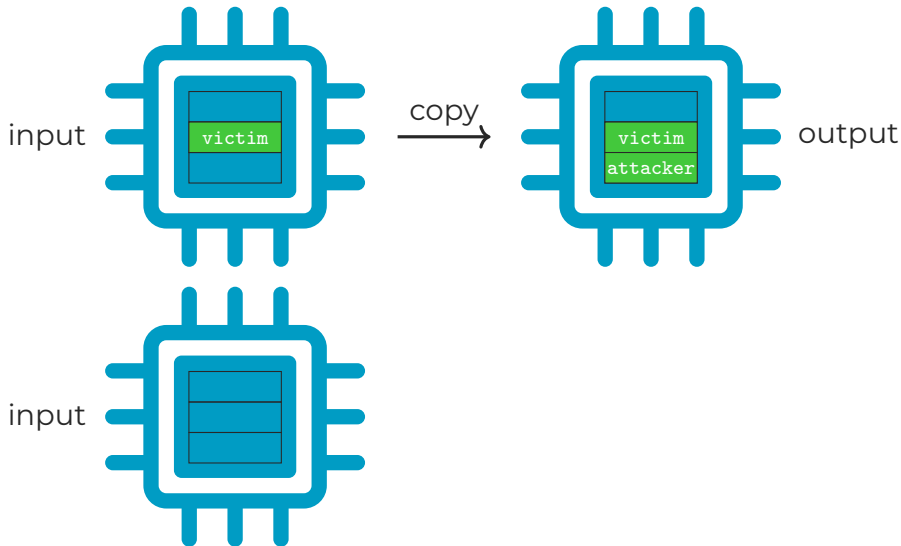


How to exploit? — Cache-State Copier



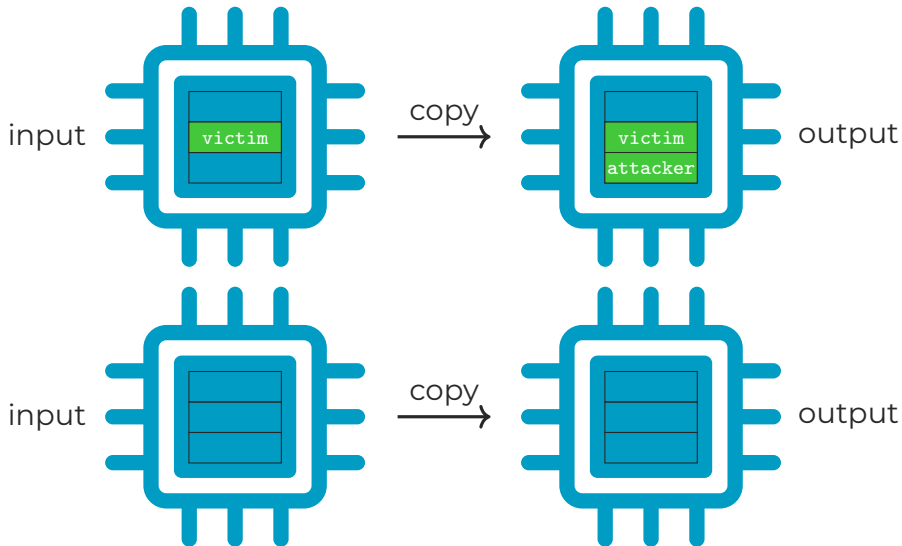


How to exploit? — Cache-State Copier





How to exploit? — Cache-State Copier





How to exploit? — Cache-State Copier

LOAD x1, [x2]

BRANCH x1

MUL x4, x5, x5

ADD x2, x2, x3

LOAD x4, [x5]





How to exploit? — Cache-State Copier

LOAD x1, [x2]

BRANCH x1 ↵

MUL x4, x5, x5

ADD x2, x2, x3

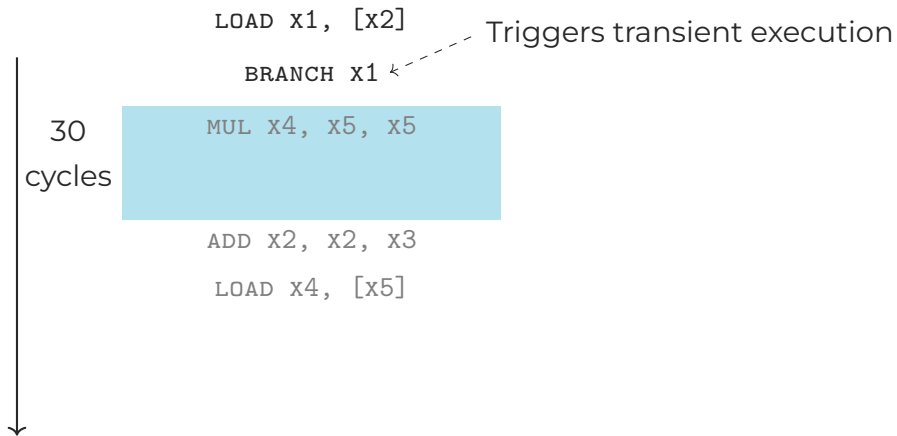
LOAD x4, [x5]

Triggers transient execution



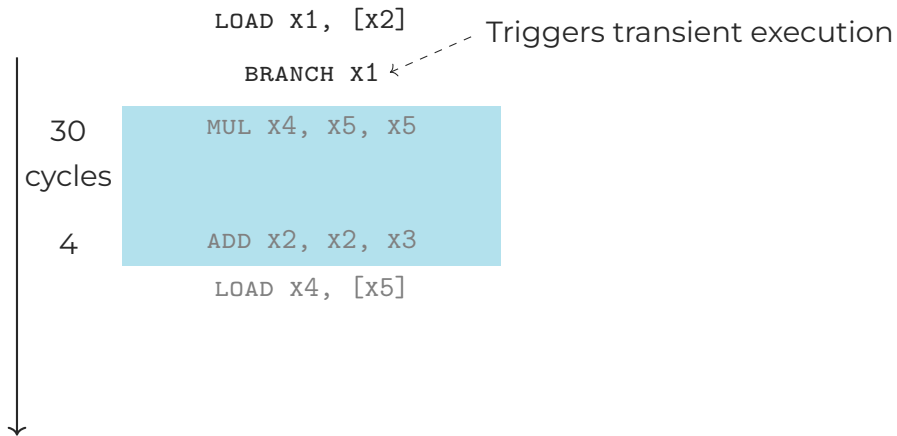


How to exploit? — Cache-State Copier



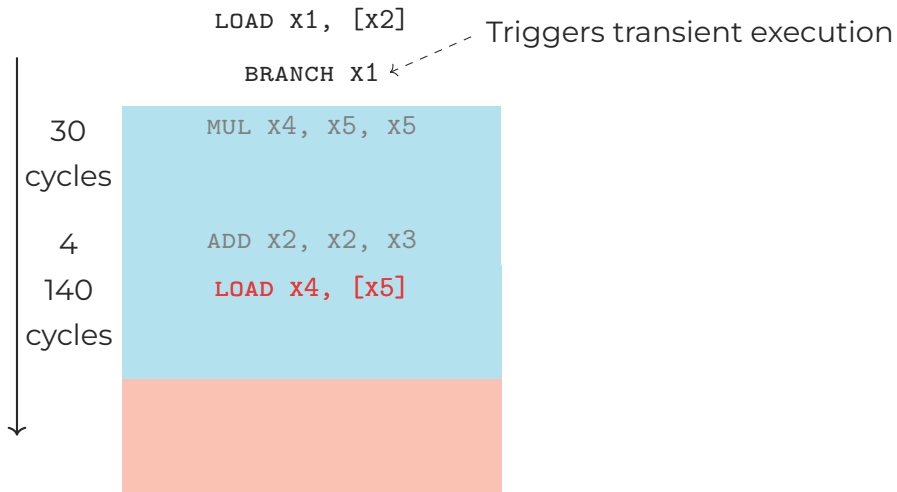


How to exploit? — Cache-State Copier





How to exploit? — Cache-State Copier





How to exploit? — Cache-State Copier

LOAD x1, [x2]

BRANCH x1 ↙

LOAD x2, VICTIM

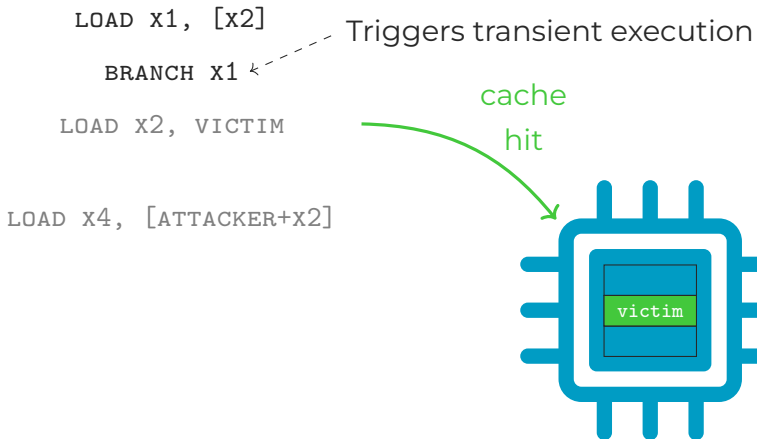
LOAD x4, [ATTACKER+x2]

Triggers transient execution



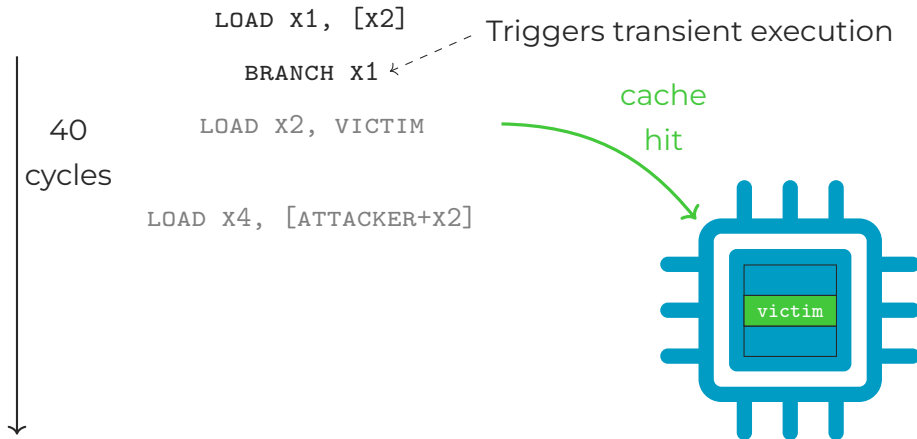


How to exploit? — Cache-State Copier



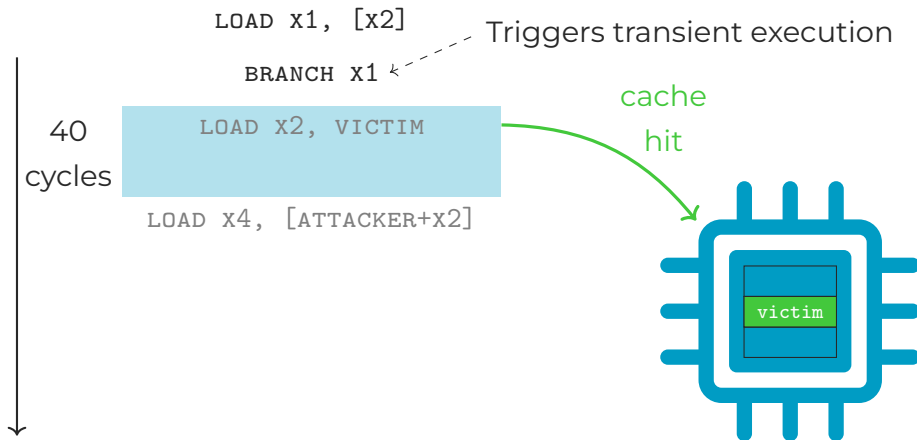


How to exploit? — Cache-State Copier



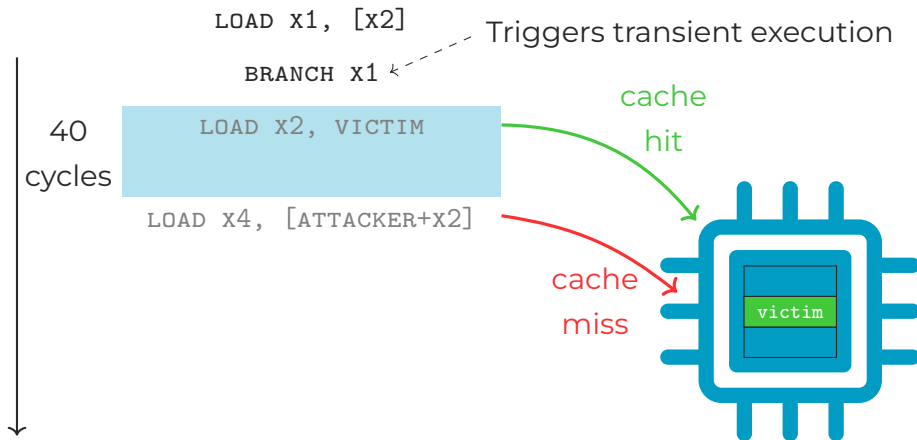


How to exploit? — Cache-State Copier



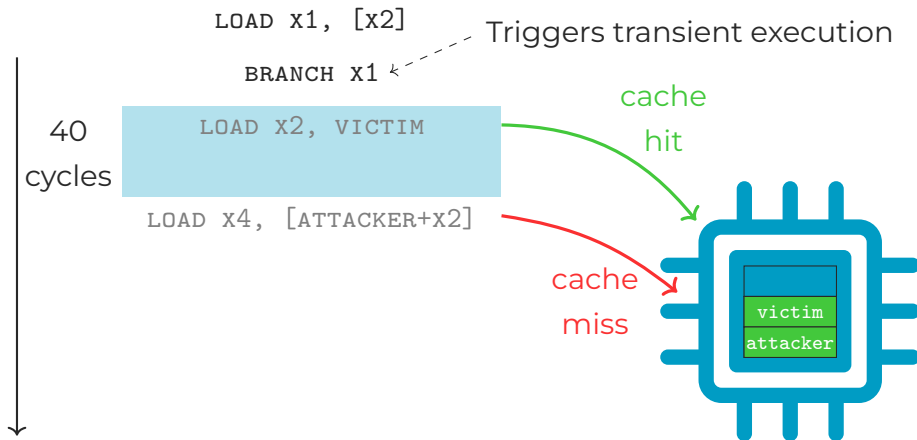


How to exploit? — Cache-State Copier



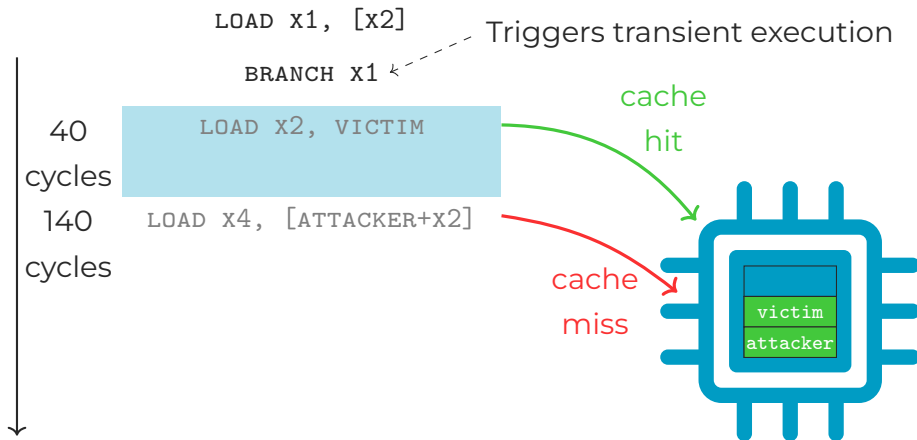


How to exploit? — Cache-State Copier



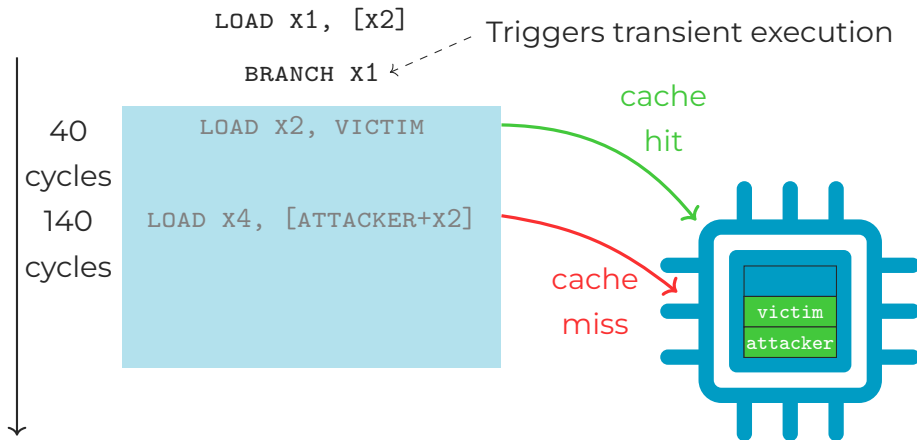


How to exploit? — Cache-State Copier





How to exploit? — Cache-State Copier





How to exploit? — Cache-State Copier

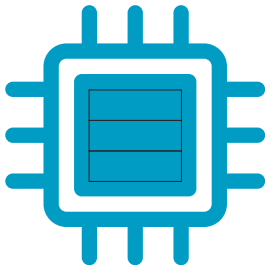
LOAD x1, [x2]

BRANCH x1 ↙

LOAD x2, VICTIM

Triggers transient execution

LOAD x4, [ATTACKER+x2]





How to exploit? — Cache-State Copier

LOAD x1, [x2]

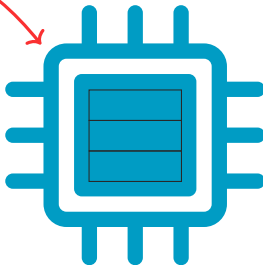
BRANCH x1 ↙

LOAD x2, VICTIM

LOAD x4, [ATTACKER+x2]

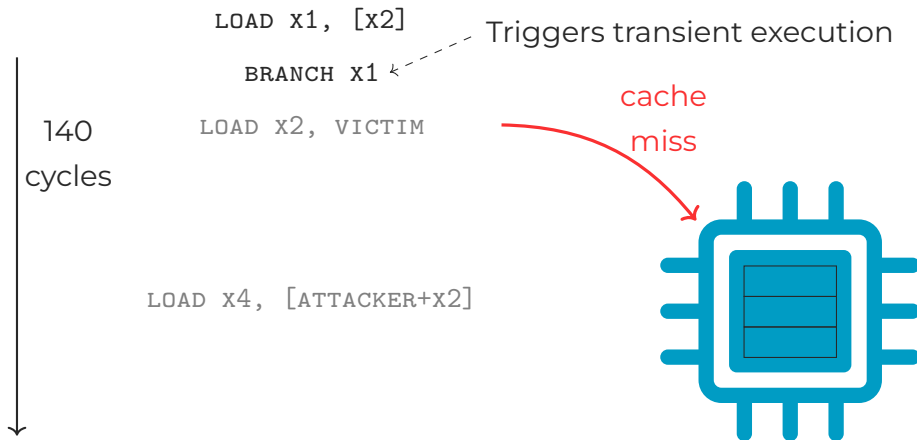
Triggers transient execution

cache
miss



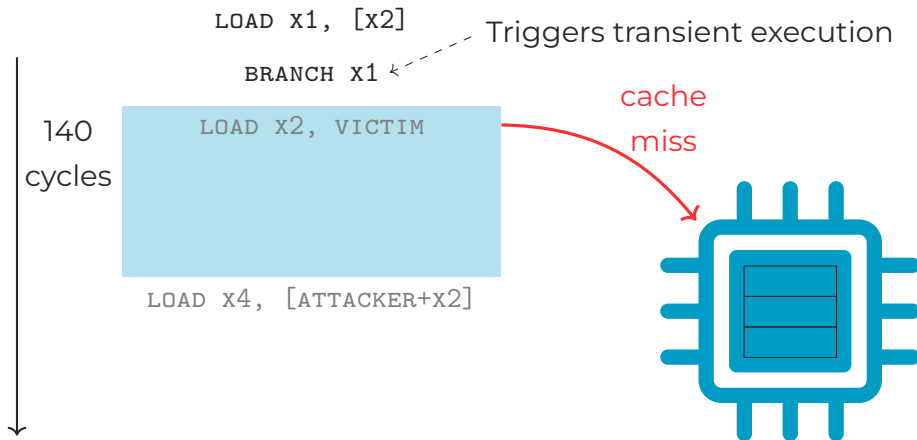


How to exploit? — Cache-State Copier



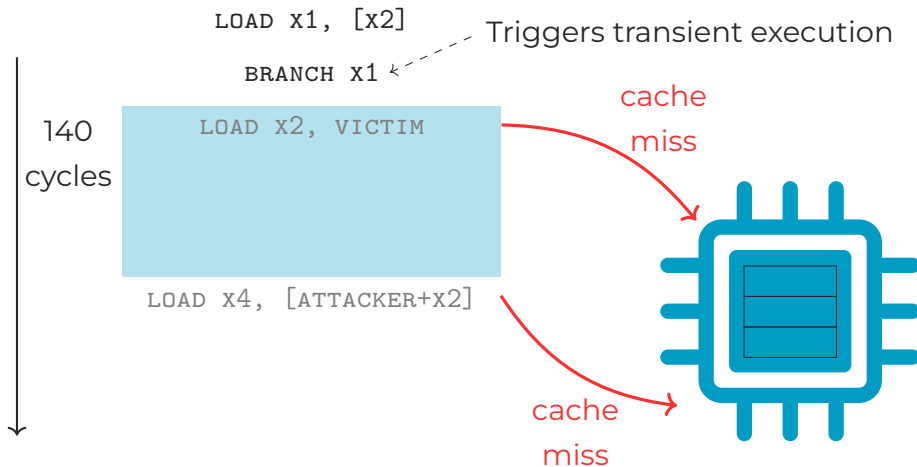


How to exploit? — Cache-State Copier



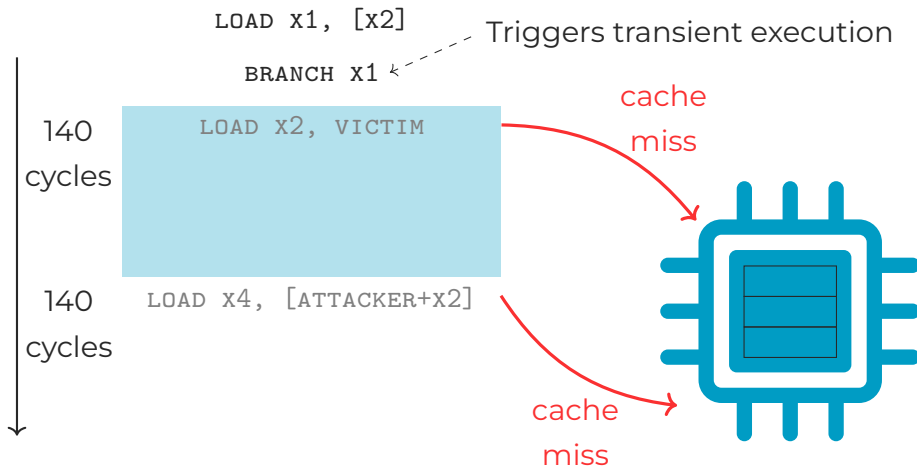


How to exploit? — Cache-State Copier



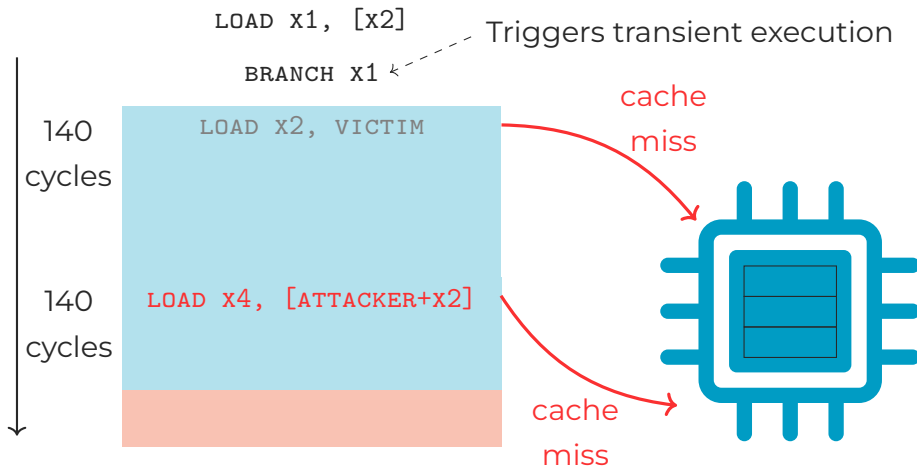


How to exploit? — Cache-State Copier



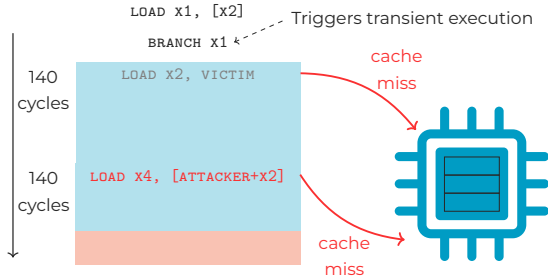
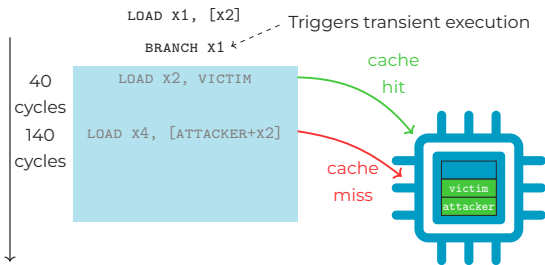


How to exploit? — Cache-State Copier



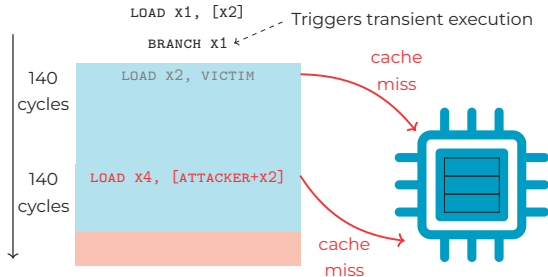
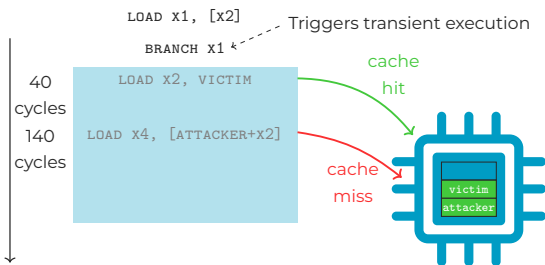


How to exploit? — Cache-State Copier





How to exploit? — Cache-State Copier



attacker in cache $\iff$ **victim in cache**



Leaking User Input on Android

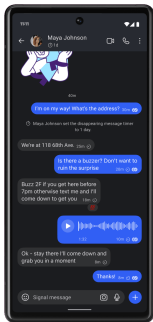


shared library
libinput.so





Leaking User Input on Android



shared library
libinput.so





Leaking User Input on Android



shared library
libinput.so



interrupt





Leaking User Input on Android



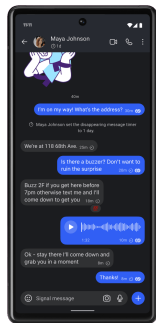
shared library
libinput.so

←
schedule





Leaking User Input on Android



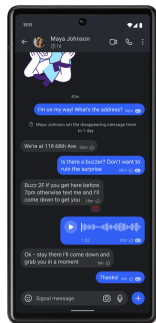
query

shared library
libinput.so





Leaking User Input on Android



query

shared library
libinput.so





Leaking User Input on Android

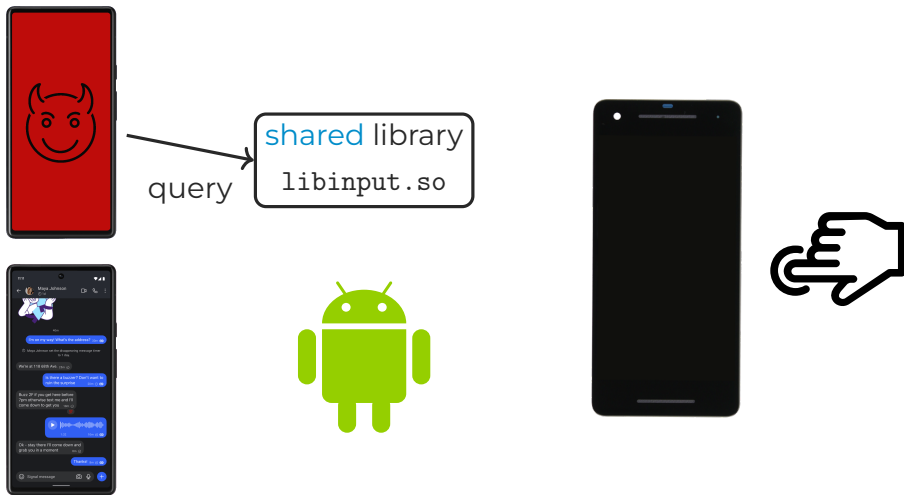


shared library
libinput.so



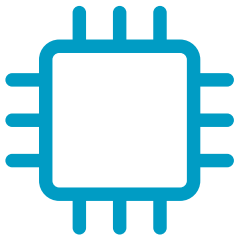
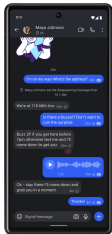


Leaking User Input on Android



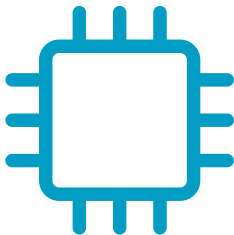
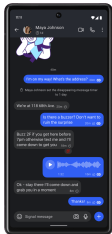


Leaking User Input on Android



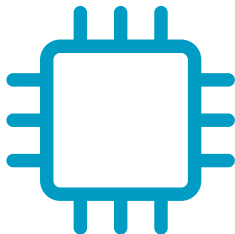
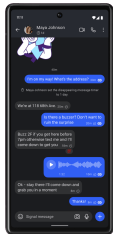


Leaking User Input on Android





Leaking User Input on Android

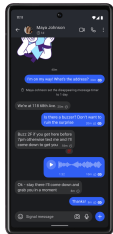
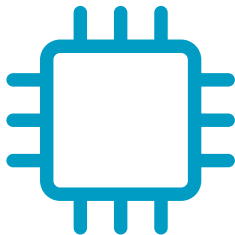


interrupt





Leaking User Input on Android

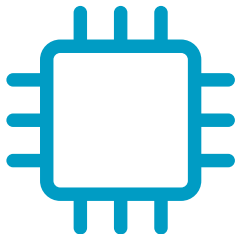
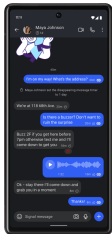


← schedule





Leaking User Input on Android

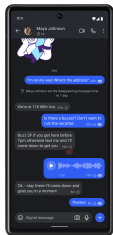


What happened?

→ libinput.so

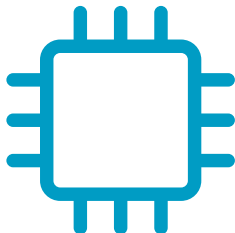


Leaking User Input on Android



What happened?

→ `libinput.so`

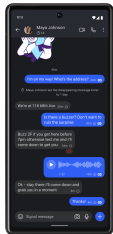


fetch
↓



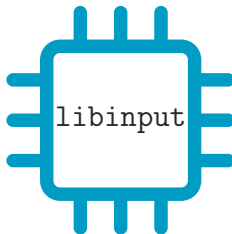


Leaking User Input on Android



What happened?

→ `libinput.so`

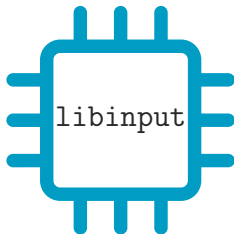
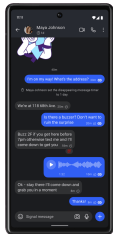


fetch





Leaking User Input on Android



fetch



What happened?

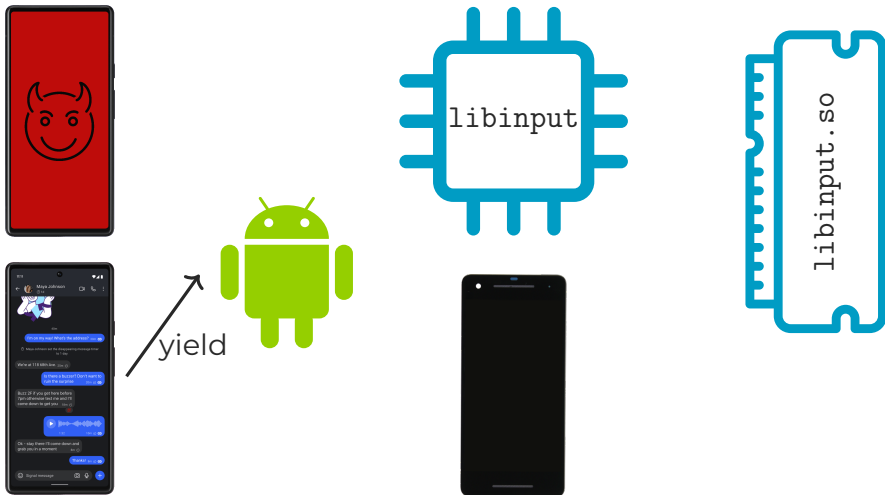
→ libinput.so

Ok, a tap



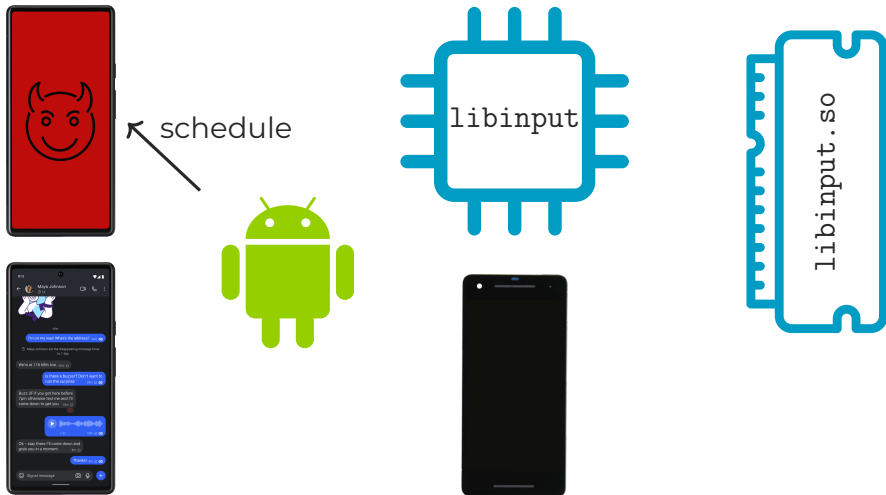


Leaking User Input on Android



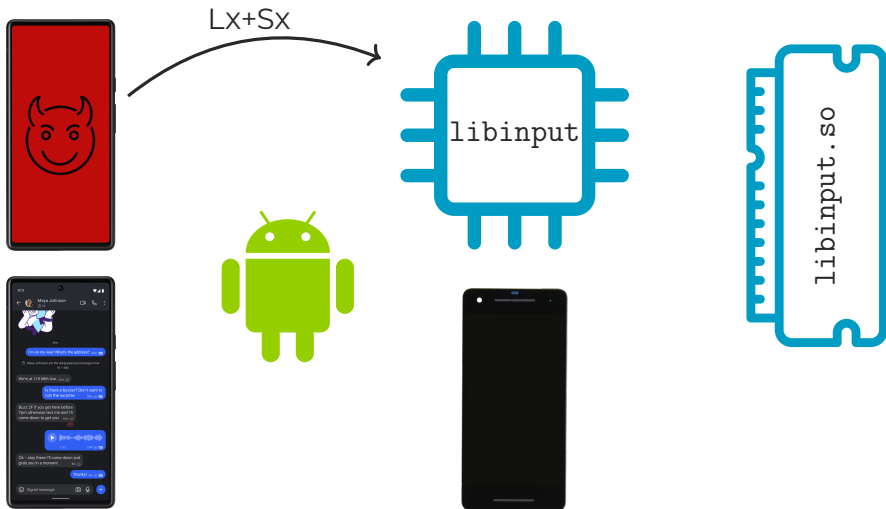


Leaking User Input on Android



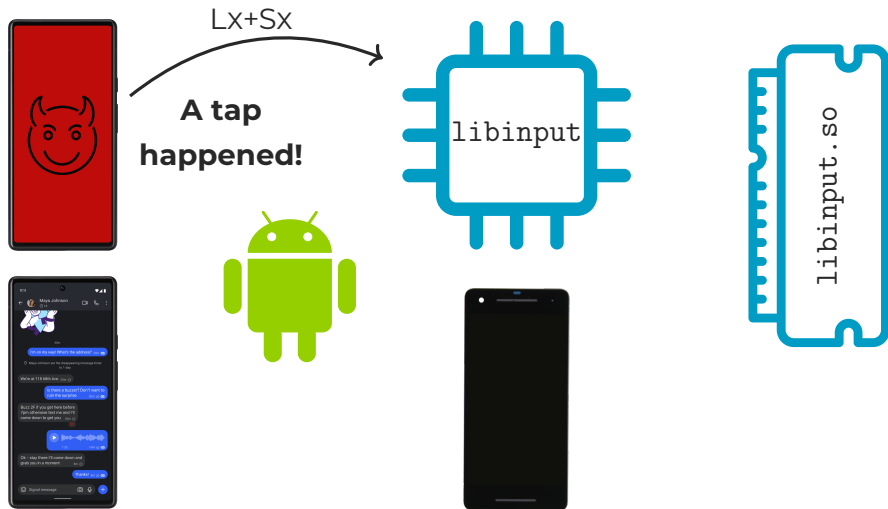


Leaking User Input on Android



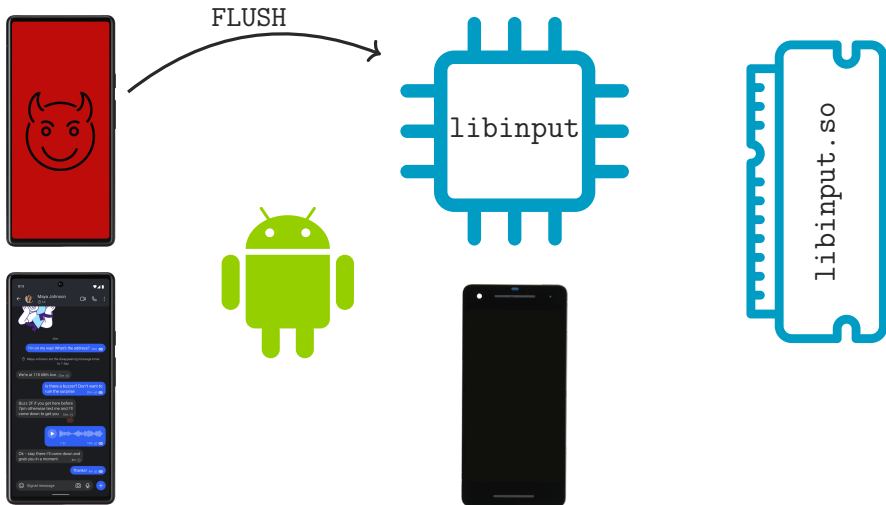


Leaking User Input on Android



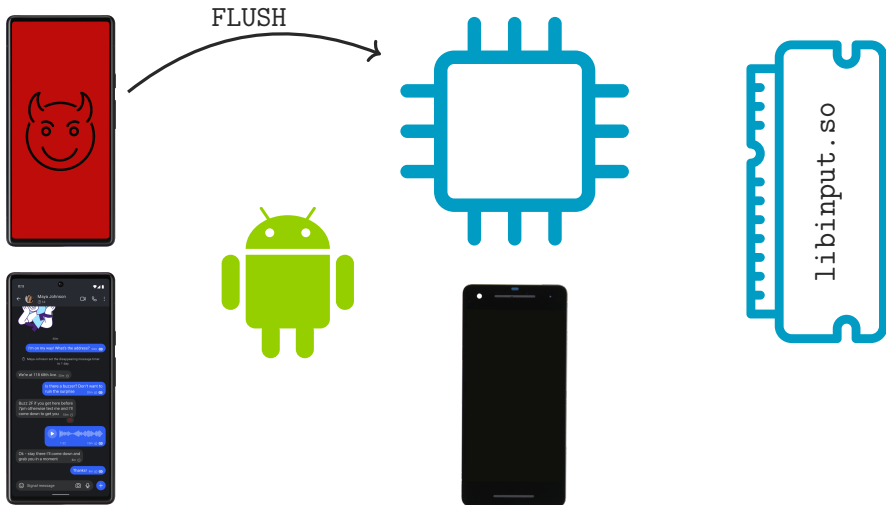


Leaking User Input on Android



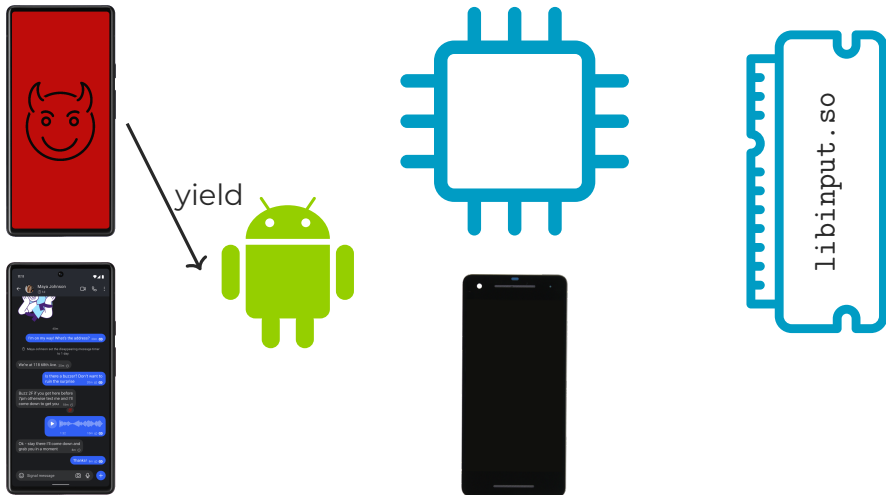


Leaking User Input on Android



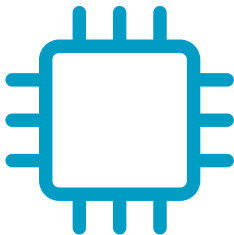
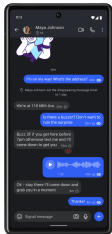


Leaking User Input on Android



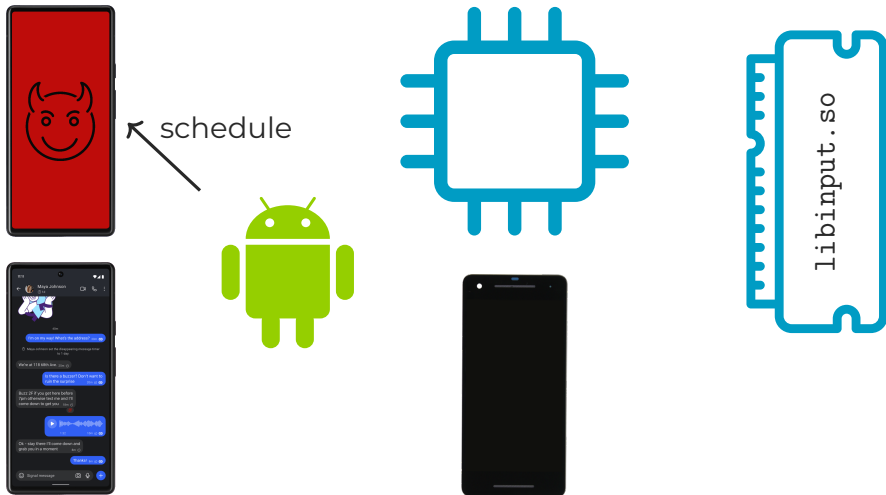


Leaking User Input on Android



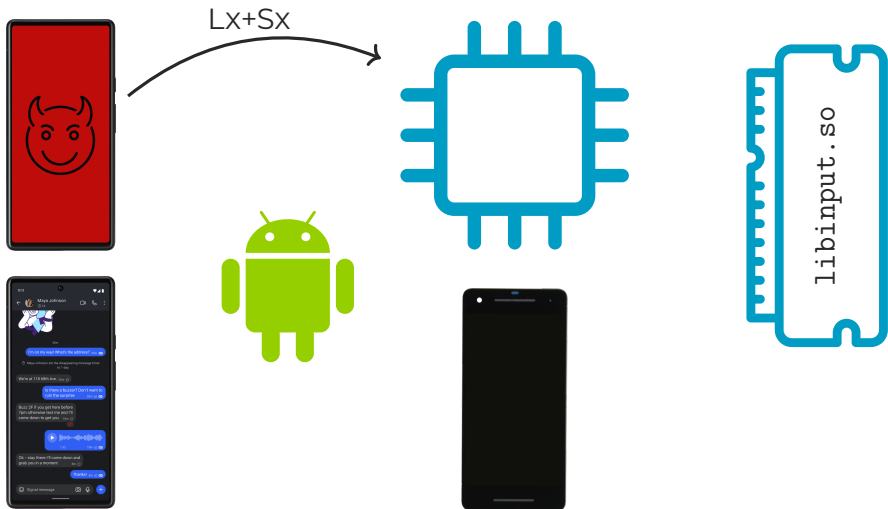


Leaking User Input on Android



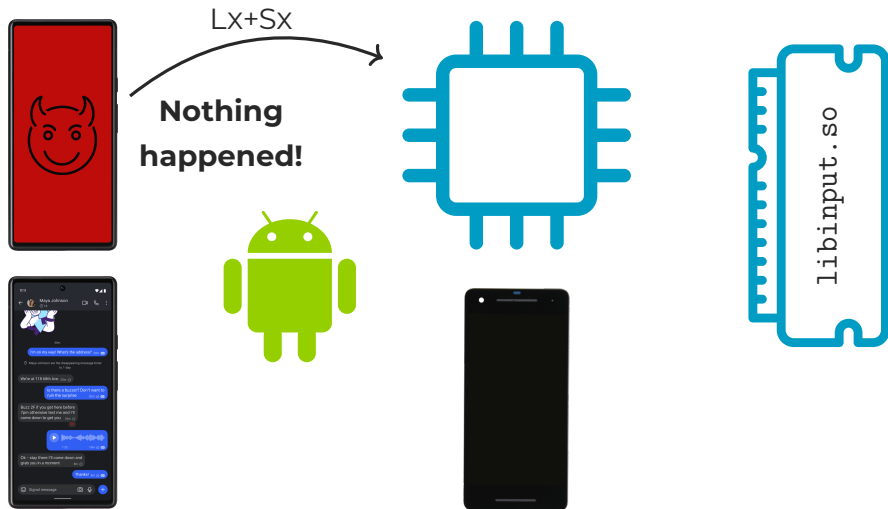


Leaking User Input on Android





Leaking User Input on Android



Live Demo: Leaking Touch Input on Pixel 9





Reducing Timer Resolution: A valid mitigation?

To offer protection against timing attacks and [fingerprinting](#), `performance.now()` is coarsened based on whether or not the document is [cross-origin isolated](#).

- Resolution in isolated contexts: 5 microseconds
- Resolution in non-isolated contexts: 100 microseconds

Before version 91, [timer resolutions](#) in Chrome were restricted to 5 microseconds on desktop, where [site-isolation](#) is enabled, and to 100 microseconds on Android, where it's not.

Starting from version 91, following a [specification change](#), Chrome will be restricting the resolution of explicit [timers](#) (`performance.now()`, `performance.timeOrigin`, and other performance APIs that expose `DOMHighResTimestamps`) to 100 microseconds across platforms. By enabling [cross-origin isolation](#), websites can relax the restriction to 5 microseconds regardless of platform.

Commit 25e5753

 rniwa committed on Jan 8, 2018

Reduce the precision of "high" resolution time to 1ms

https://bugs.webkit.org/show_bug.cgi?id=188918
<rdar://problem/36865943>

Reviewed by Sam Barati.

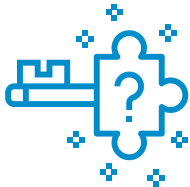
Source/WebCore:

Reduced the high precision time's resolution to 1ms, the same precision as `Date.now()`.

Not sufficient!



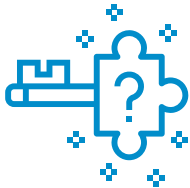
Mitigations: Software



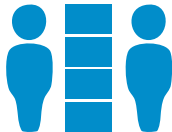
Data-Oblivious
(Constant-Time)
Programming



Mitigations: Software



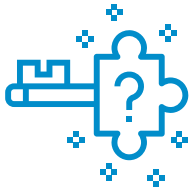
Data-Oblivious
(Constant-Time)
Programming



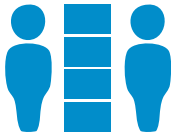
No shared resources
(`libinput.so`)



Mitigations: Software



Data-Oblivious
(Constant-Time)
Programming



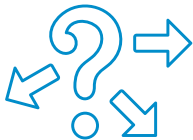
No shared resources
(`libinput.so`)



Active side-channel
detection



Mitigations: Hardware

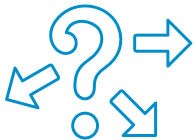


Precise ISA:

No “constrained
unpredictable”
behavior



Mitigations: Hardware



Precise ISA:

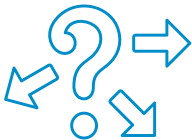
No “constrained
unpredictable”
behavior



Fully deterministic
implementation



Mitigations: Hardware

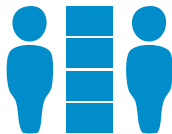


Precise ISA:

No “constrained
unpredictable”
behavior



Fully deterministic
implementation



Best: No shared
resources
**Very hard in
practice!**

- Timing Side Channels are alive!

`fabianthomas.de`



`github.com/cispa/exfilstate`



Summary

- Timing Side Channels are alive!
- EXFILSTATE automatically discovers **timerless cache-state leakage oracles**

fabianthomas.de



github.com/cispa/exfilstate



Summary

- Timing Side Channels are alive!
- EXFILSTATE automatically discovers **timerless cache-state leakage oracles**
- **5 side channels** on 160 ARM devices

fabianthomas.de



github.com/cispa/exfilstate



Summary

- Timing Side Channels are alive!
- EXFILSTATE automatically discovers **timerless cache-state leakage oracles**
- **5 side channels** on 160 ARM devices
- Allows for **leaking user input** on Pixel 9

fabianthomas.de



github.com/cispa/exfilstate



Summary

- Timing Side Channels are alive!
- EXFILSTATE automatically discovers **timerless cache-state leakage oracles**
- **5 side channels** on 160 ARM devices
- Allows for **leaking user input** on Pixel 9
- **Try now** on your phone or Raspberry Pi!

fabianthomas.de



github.com/cispa/exfilstate

When Timers Fail

*Discovering Hidden Cache-State
Leaks on ARM CPUs*

Fabian Thomas | PhD Student @ CISPA (Germany)



AES T-table

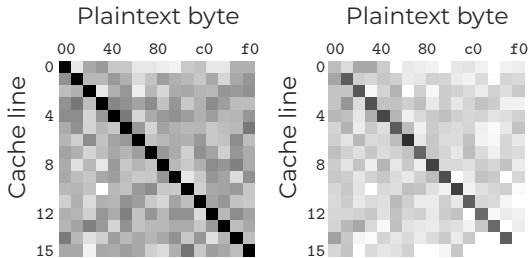


Figure 1: AES T-table cache-access pattern on an ARM64 Cortex-A72 with Lx+Sx (left) and Flush+Reload (right).

```
1      STTRH      w1, [x2]
2      LDAXRH     w2, [x1]
3      LDRSB      x0, [x3]
4      STLXRB     x0, w3, [x1]
```

Figure 2: Lx+Sx on Apple Avalanche. x1 is the victim cache line. x2 and x3 are unrelated cache lines. Instructions 1 and 3 are not needed on Cortex-A73.

Manufacturer	Models
Apple	Mac Mini (M1), Mac Mini (M2)
ASUS	ZenFone Max M1, ZenFone Max M2
AWS	EC2 M8g Graviton4
FriendlyELEC	NanoPi R6S
Fujitsu	Arrows Be3
Globalscale	MOCHABin
Google	Pixel Watch, Pixel Watch 2, Pixel, Pixel 2, Pixel 2 XL, Pixel 3, Pixel 4a, Pixel 5, Pixel 5a, Pixel 6, Pixel 6 Pro, Pixel 6a, Pixel 7, Pixel 7 Pro, Pixel 7a, Pixel 8, Pixel 8 Pro, Pixel 8a, Pixel 9, Pixel 9 Pro, Pixel 9 Pro Fold, Pixel 9 Pro XL, Pixel Fold, Pixel Tablet
Google Cloud	C4A Axion, T2A Ampere
Hardkernel	ODROID-N2+, Odroid-C4
HUAWEI	P20 Lite, Mate 9
Lenovo	Tab P11, Tab P12
LG	Velvet
Motorola	Moto G31, Moto G54 5G, Moto G30, Moto G 5G (2022), Moto G Play (2024), Razr 5G, Razr+ (2024), Moto Z Force
Nokia	C31
Nothing	Phone (1)
NVIDIA	Jetson Orin Nano
OnePlus	10T, 11, Nord CE 3 Lite, 7 Pro (US Version), 6T, Nord 2T, Nord 3, Ace 2V, 9 Pro
OPPO	A53, A79 5G, Find X3 Lite, Reno10 Pro+ 5G
OrangePi	Kunpeng Pro
Poco	X6 Pro, M6 Pro 5G, F3
Qualcomm	Dell XPS 13
Radxa	ROCK 3A, ROCK 5C
Raspberry Pi	4 Model B, 5
Realme	GT Neo 3T, GT Master Edition
Samsung	Galaxy S7 edge (Verizon), Galaxy Note 5 (Verizon), Galaxy Tab S3 (Verizon), Galaxy A02s, Galaxy A8, Galaxy A10, Galaxy A12, Galaxy A14 5G, Galaxy A14 5G, Galaxy A15, Galaxy A25 5G, Galaxy A35 5G, Galaxy A51, Galaxy A52s 5G, Galaxy A54 5G, Galaxy Z Flip 3 5G, Galaxy Z Flip 4, Galaxy Z Flip 5, Galaxy Z Fold 2 5G, Galaxy Z Fold 4, Galaxy Z Fold 5, Galaxy J7 Prime, Galaxy A51 5G, Galaxy S8, Galaxy S8+, Galaxy S9, Galaxy S9, Galaxy S9+, Galaxy S20 5G, Galaxy S21 5G, Galaxy S21+ 5G, Galaxy S21 Ultra 5G, Galaxy M11, Galaxy Note 9, Galaxy Note 9, Galaxy S23 FE, Galaxy S22 5G, Galaxy S22+ 5G, Galaxy S22 Ultra 5G, Galaxy S23+, Galaxy S23 Ultra, Galaxy S23 Ultra, Galaxy S24, Galaxy S24 Ultra, Galaxy S24 Ultra, Galaxy Tab A7 Lite LTE, Galaxy Tab A 10.1 (2016) Wi-Fi, Galaxy Tab S7 FE 5G, Galaxy Tab A8 Wi-Fi, Galaxy Tab A9 Wi-Fi, Galaxy Tab S9 FE+, Galaxy Tab S7 Wi-Fi, Galaxy Tab S8 Ultra Wi-Fi
Sharp	AQUOS sense2
Sony	Xperia XZ1 Compact, Xperia 10 V, Xperia 1 V, Xperia XZ, Xperia 10 II
Vivo	Y20s [C], Y31 (2021), Y73, X60, Y02s, Y95, Y12, Y15, U3x, Y17
Xiaomi	Mi 11i, Mi A2 Lite, Redmi Note 13 Pro+ 5G, Redmi Note 11 5G, Redmi Note 11 Pro, Redmi Note 12, Redmi Note 12 Pro+
Zebra	TC77



EXFILSTATE: 5 Side Channels Discovered

```
1 LDXR x1, [victim]
2 STXR w0, x2, [victim]
```

Figure 3: Lx+Sx: STXR (store exclusive) succeeds (status in w0) only if victim cached.

```
1 ; w0 enc 'MOV x3,#0', w1 'MOV x3,#1'
2 ; w2 enc 'BR =come_back_here'
3 STR w1, [victim]
4 STR w2, [victim, #4]
5 IC IVAC victim
6 STR w0, [victim]
7 RET victim
8 come_back_here:
```

Figure 4: STORE+RET: If victim cached, runs old code (x3=1), else runs new (x3=0).

```
1 LDRB x0, [victim]
2 STR x1, [victim]
```

Figure 5: SPLIT-STORE: First partial store completes, second faults → bytes stored left if cached.

```
1 LDR x0, [victim]
2 STR x0, [page-boundary-ptr]
```

Figure 6: TRANSLATION-RACE: Partial store succeeds before fault when victim cached.

```
1 LDR x0, [victim] ; [victim]=0x3fff
2 LDR x1, [x0]
```

Figure 7: POINTER-CHASE: Faults at 0x3fff (victim cached) vs. 0x4000 (victim uncached).



EXFILSTATE: 5 Side Channels Discovered

```
1 LDXR x1, [victim]
2 STXR w0, x2, [victim]
```

Figure 3: Lx+Sx: STXR (store exclusive) succeeds (status in w0) only if victim cached.

```
1 ; w0 enc 'MOV x3,#0', w1 'MOV x3,#1'
2 ; w2 enc 'BR =come_back_here'
3 STR w1, [victim]
4 STR w2, [victim, #4]
5 IC IVAC victim
6 STR w0, [victim]
7 RET victim
8 come_back_here:
```

Figure 4: STORE+RET: If victim cached, runs old code (x3=1), else runs new (x3=0).

```
1 LDRB x0, [victim]
2 STR x1, [victim]
```

Figure 5: SPLIT-STORE: First partial store completes, second faults → bytes stored left if cached.

```
1 LDR x0, [victim]
2 STR x0, [page-boundary-ptr]
```

Figure 6: TRANSLATION-RACE: Partial store succeeds before fault when victim cached.

```
1 LDR x0, [victim] ; [victim]=0x3fff
2 LDR x1, [x0]
```

Figure 7: POINTER-CHASE: Faults at 0x3fff (victim cached) vs. 0x4000 (victim uncached).