

# Next Talk: Fault Attacks

→ on PCs?! →

→ and without root privileges?! →

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**"On Feasibility and Performance of  
RowHammer Attack"**

Nicolas T. Courtois

Varnavas Papaioannou

University College London, UK

Dr. Nicolas T. Courtois [blog.bettercrypto.com](http://blog.bettercrypto.com)

1. cryptologist and codebreaker



UNIVERSITY CIPHER CHAMPION

March 2013



2. payment and smart cards (e.g. bank cards, Oyster cards etc...)



Oyster cracker vows to clone cards

Cloning kit could sell for just £200, says researcher

Robert Blincoe, vnunet.com, 28 Jul 2008

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**5**



 IACR Cryptographers



**1**



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 Code Breakers

Members (712)



 IACR Cryptographers



UCL London:  
4 COMPGA18 Cryptanalysis

## This Talk:

- Fault Attacks on PCs

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- Fault Attacks on PCs
  - [NEW: high performance, avoid root privileges]

boring? technical?

## This Talk:

- Earlier **historical** context: smart cards
- Fault Attacks on PCs

## This Talk:

- Even Earlier: **Cold War** crypto, DC history etc.
- Earlier historical context: smart cards
- Fault Attacks on PCs





# Crypto History

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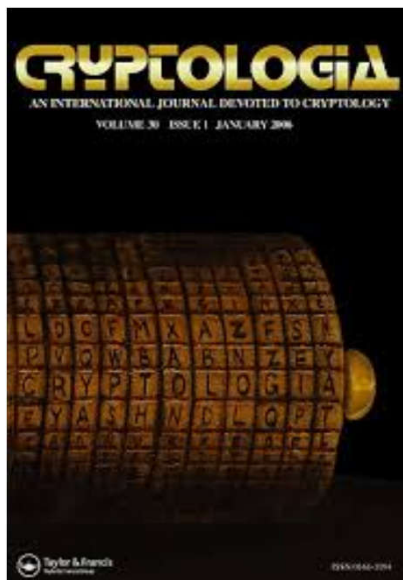
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**Frode Weierud**



## [Crypto] Fault Attacks [in Cybersecurity]

- **Powerful**
- **Difficult** to make [technical difficulty + countermeasures + good security engineering]

## Defense in Depth!

Computer systems have multiple layers, e.g.

- HW components
- Chipset/MB
- Kernel Ring 0
- OS
- UAC
- HTTP sandboxing
- Java script



## Defense in Depth

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**Powerful!**

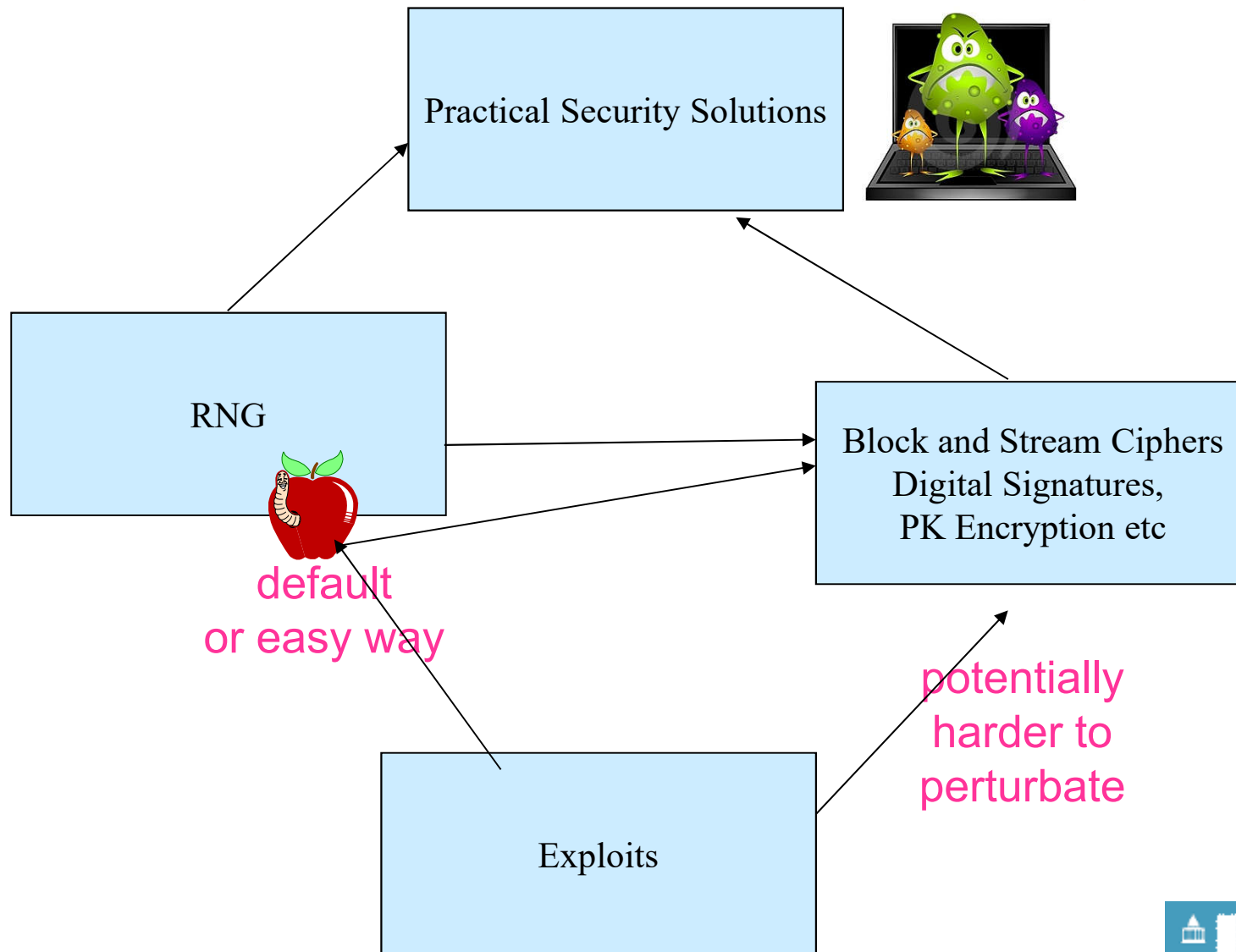
Nicolas T. Courtois, January 2009

## Who Wins?

Attackers or  
Defenders?



# Fault Attacks in Cybersecurity





DFA =

(Differential Fault Analysis)

## DFA Attacks...

(Differential Fault Analysis)

1. Provoke **faults** in the device,
2. Deduce the key by detailed mathematical analysis.



## DFA Requirements

One needs to be able to run the same crypto algorithm many times with the same inputs.

The inputs do NOT need to be known.

- they usually are, but today we will realistic example when they aren't (!) and yet the key is found.

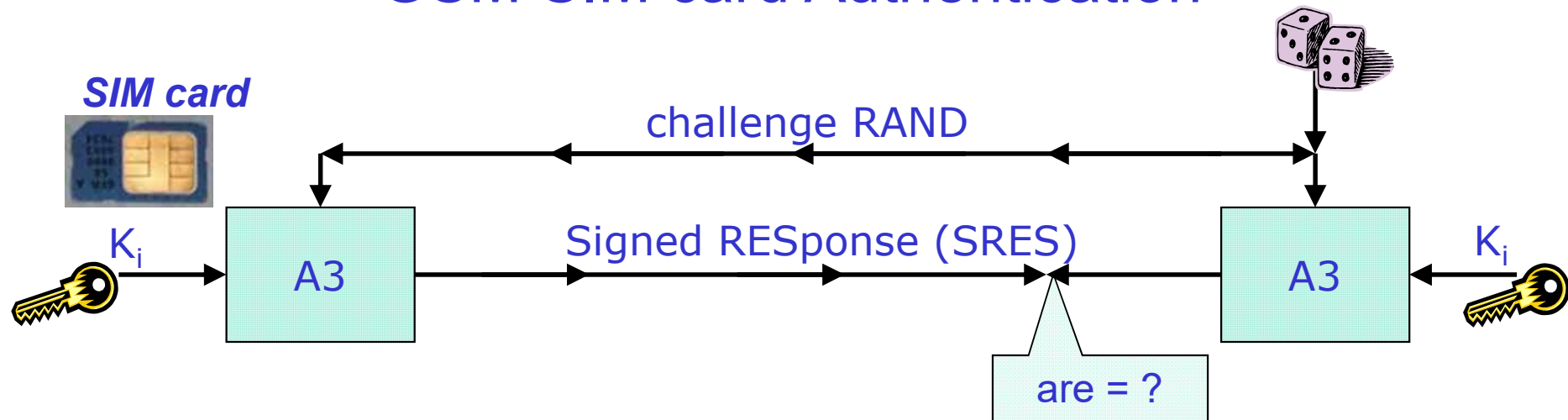
DFA requires

⇒ a **DETERMINISTIC** crypto process with a known output

(from which the attacker wants to extract the secret key)

Examples when this happens:

## GSM SIM card Authentication



- RUN GSM ALGORITHM**

Example:

A0 88 00 00 10 XX .....XX

CLA      INS      both 0      16 bytes random nonce

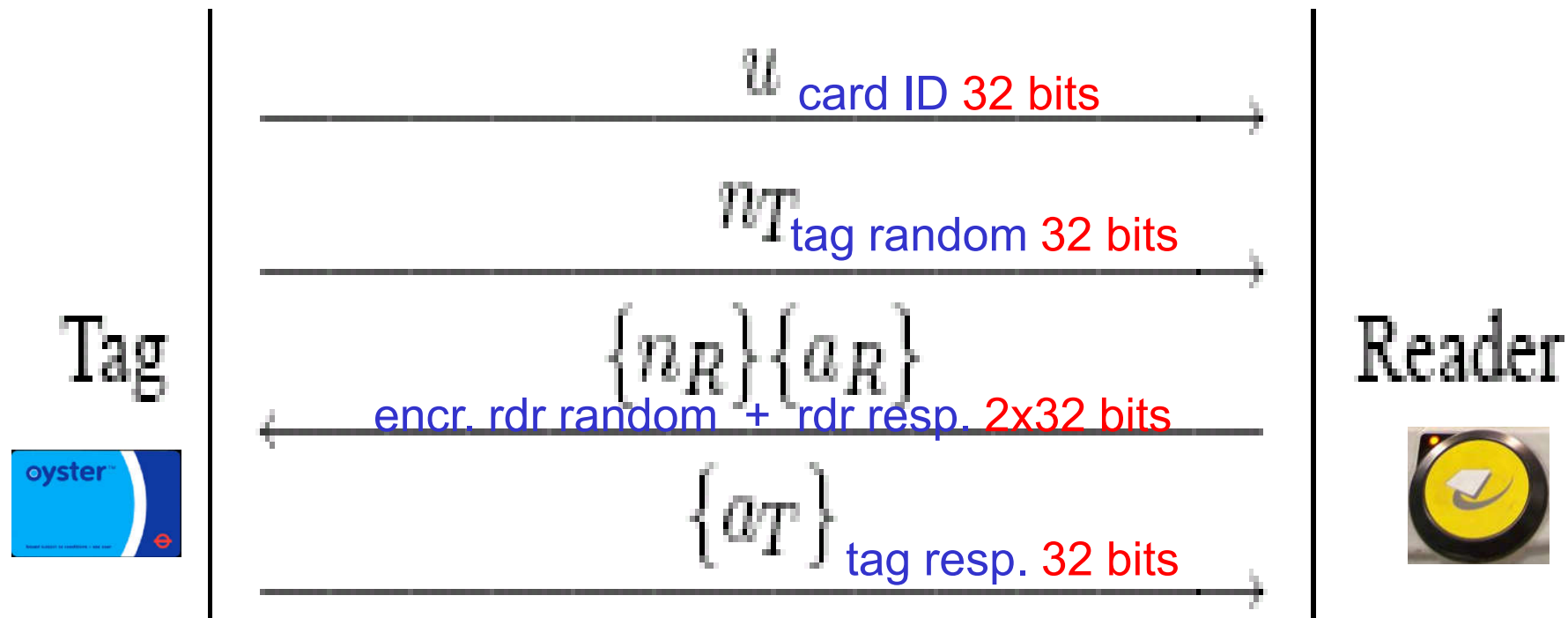
no L\_e, no data in reply expected, result will be visible in the status bytes = 0x9F Le

## In Contrast – 3G USIM Cards

No DFA attack, 2 reasons:

- the base station is authenticated first!
- the SQN should be checked for freshness.
  - so the card should never accept to do the same crypto computation twice

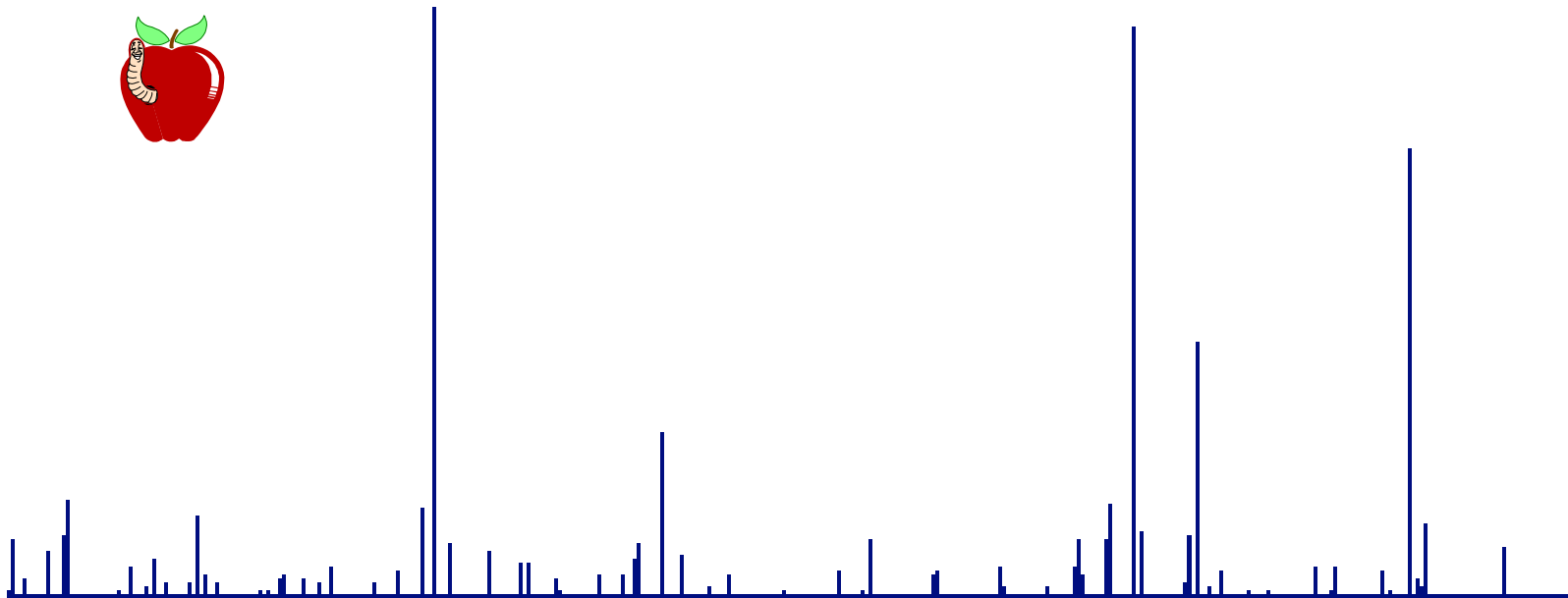
## In Contrast – MiFare Classic



The reader is authenticated first !

No DFA attack unless card random repeats

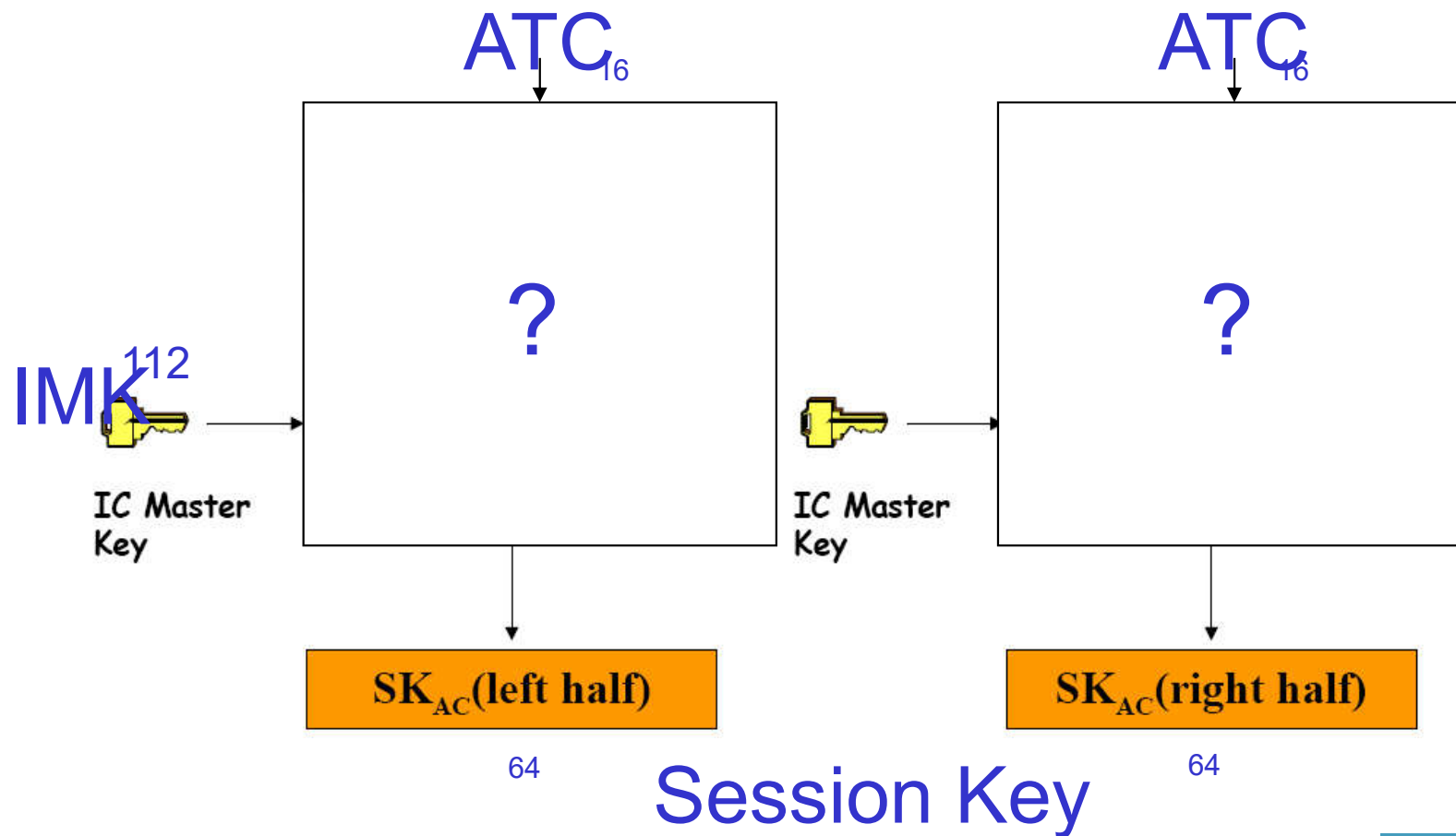
## Example: London Oyster Card From 2006



- Min-entropy = 2.8 bits.
- Courtois Dark Side Attack time  $2^{2.8} \times 10^3 \text{ s} = 3$  minutes per key extracted from the card [theoretical speed].

## In Contrast – Bank Cards

Assuming ATC is always incremented => Session Key depends on ATC =>  
Impossible to get the same cryptogram twice => **DFA is impossible!**



Conjecture/Claim: [Courtois@eSmart 2010]

Fault attacks are feasible in practice

only when

the industry uses

**BAD PROTOCOLS ?**

commercial security=>bad security?

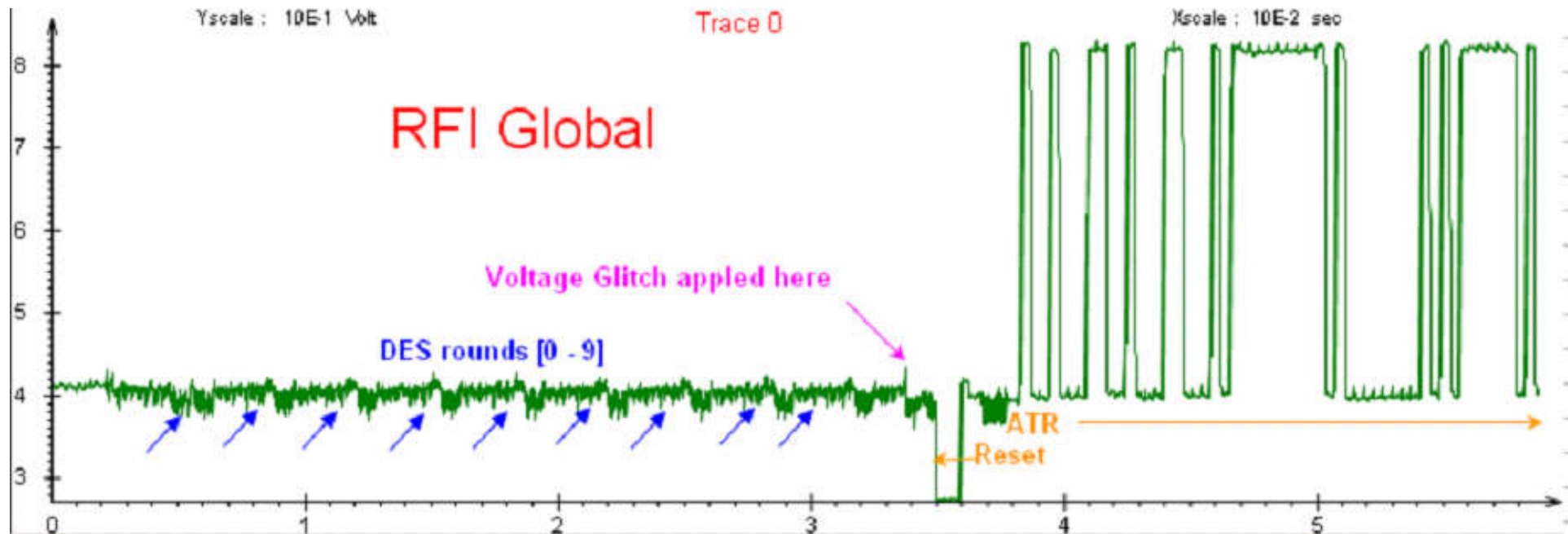
# Fault Attacks in Practice on [Unnamed] Smart Cards

[Courtois Jackson Ware,  
eSmart conference, France, 2010]



## Lab Work

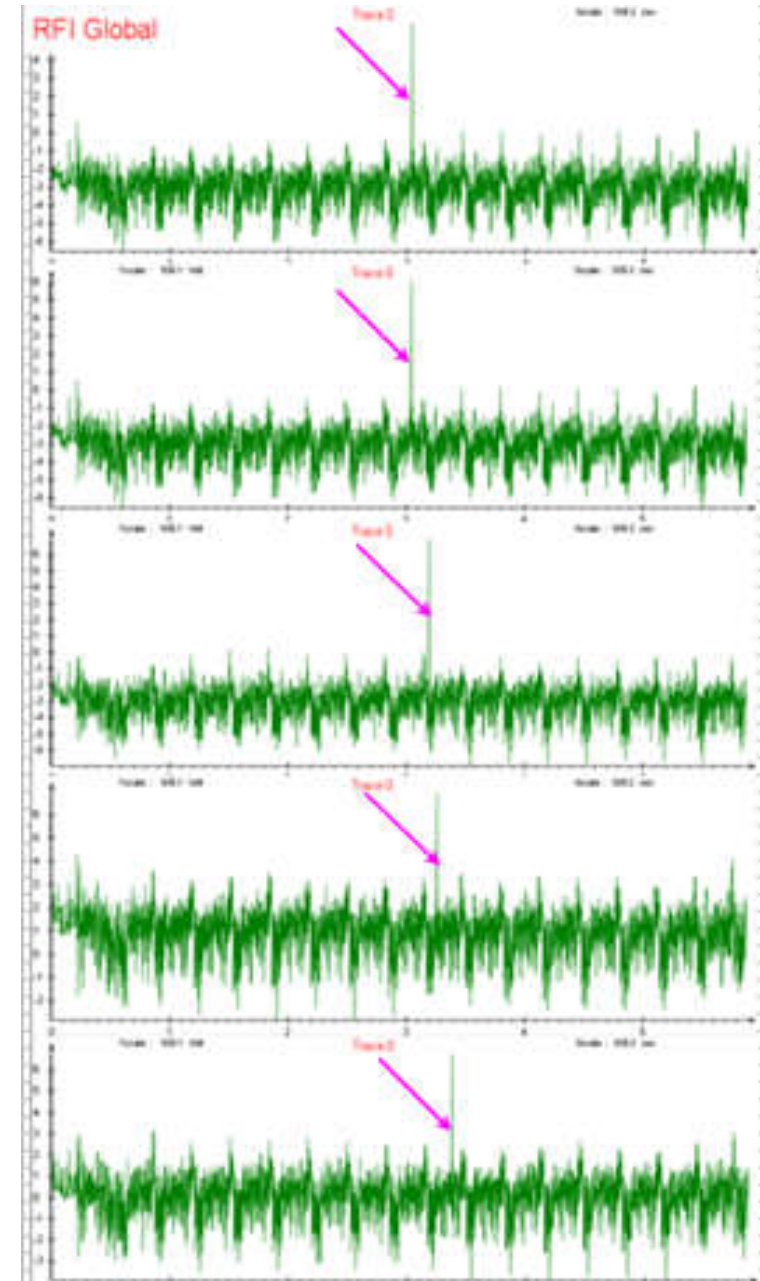
- Voltage glitch applied close to the final round.
- Triggers ATR - defensive behaviour, attack detected.



# Glitches in 8<sup>th</sup> Round

Done 5 consecutive faults  
with precise timing  
and consistent perturbation type:

run	DES input							
0	11	22	33	44	55	66	77	88
1	11	22	33	44	55	66	77	88
2	11	22	33	44	55	66	77	88
3	11	22	33	44	55	66	77	88
4	11	22	33	44	55	66	77	88
Correct output								
	6B	67	6D	80	4A	EF	78	59
DES faulty outputs								
	A8	27	FF	D5	49	44	D3	01
	E6	E8	8F	83	58	61	92	A1
	AC	FE	B9	10	54	57	AC	B7
	CB	94	12	66	FF	94	85	8E
	D0	E7	5E	DE	A5	C1	CE	D7



# Cold War

## Differential Cryptanalysis and Fault Attacks

## Eastern German Block Cipher Class Alpha = c.1970

obscure origins...

- 3 -

GVS-ZCO-198/77

8STU  
0166

Введение

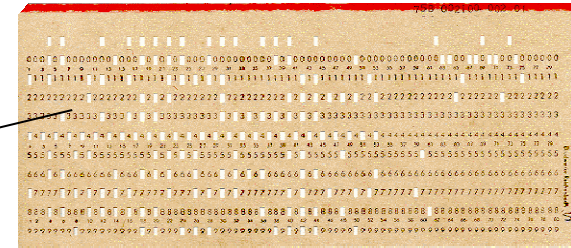
[full document not avail.]



Класс АЛЬФА определён в /I/. Там же имеется ряд определений и обозначений, которые в настоящем документе не объясняются.

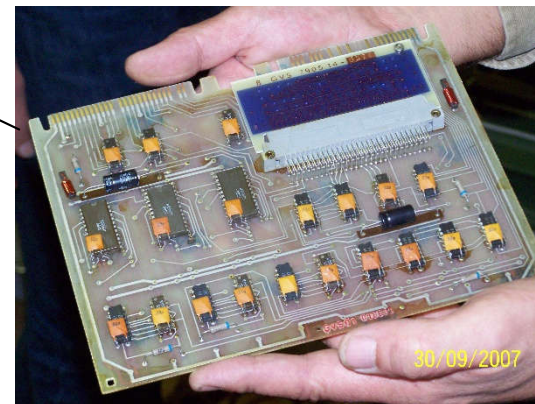


# East German SKS V/1 and T-310



240 bits

“quasi-absolute security”  
[1973-1990]



long-term secret  
90 bits only!

# T-310 is SECURE against Fault Attacks

On two accounts:

- ⇒ has a physical RNG=>IV =>cannot do encryption twice
- ⇒ everything is **DUPLICATED**

=> obligatory in Eastern Bloc Cryptography in 1973!



$w_1$  PCH - Prüfwartenzwischenwartezeit mit  
den Elementen  $w_{i,k}$  PCH ( $k=1$  bis  $104$ )  
(Fg Überwachung).

# Differential Cryptanalysis = DC

Wikipedia DC entry says:

In 1994 [...] IBM [...] Coppersmith published a paper stating that DC was known to IBM as early as 1974.

Coppersmith explains: "After discussions with NSA... it was decided that **disclosure** of the design considerations would reveal the technique of DC, a **powerful technique** [...] would weaken the **competitive advantage** the U. S. enjoyed over other countries in the field of cryptography.



## “Official” History

- Differential Cryptanalysis :  
Biham-Shamir [1991]

# DC was studied in Eastern Germany in 1973!

Geheime Verschlusssache

MIS -323-Nr.: 747 / 73/BL 45

BSTU  
000053

Durch die Festlegung von  $Z$  wird die kryptologische Qualität des Chiffriersators beeinflusst. Es wurde davon ausgegangen, daß eine Funktion  $Z$  kryptologisch geeignet ist, wenn sie folgende Forderungen erfüllt:

$$(1) |\{x = (x_1, x_2, \dots, x_6) \in \{0, 1\}^6 \mid z(x) = 0\}| = 2^5$$

$$(2) |\{x = (x_1, x_2, \dots, x_6) \in \{0, 1\}^6 \mid z(x) = 0, \sum_{i=1}^6 x_i = r\}| \approx \binom{6}{r} \cdot \frac{1}{2}$$

( $r = 0, 1, \dots, 6$ )

$$(3) |\{x = (x_1, \dots, x_6) \in \{0, 1\}^6 \mid z(x_1, x_2, \dots, x_i, \dots, x_6) = z(x_1, \dots, x_i \oplus 1, \dots, x_6)\}| \approx 2^5$$

( $i = 1, 2, \dots, 6$ )

# Fault Attacks on PCs [this paper]

## Rule Nb. 1

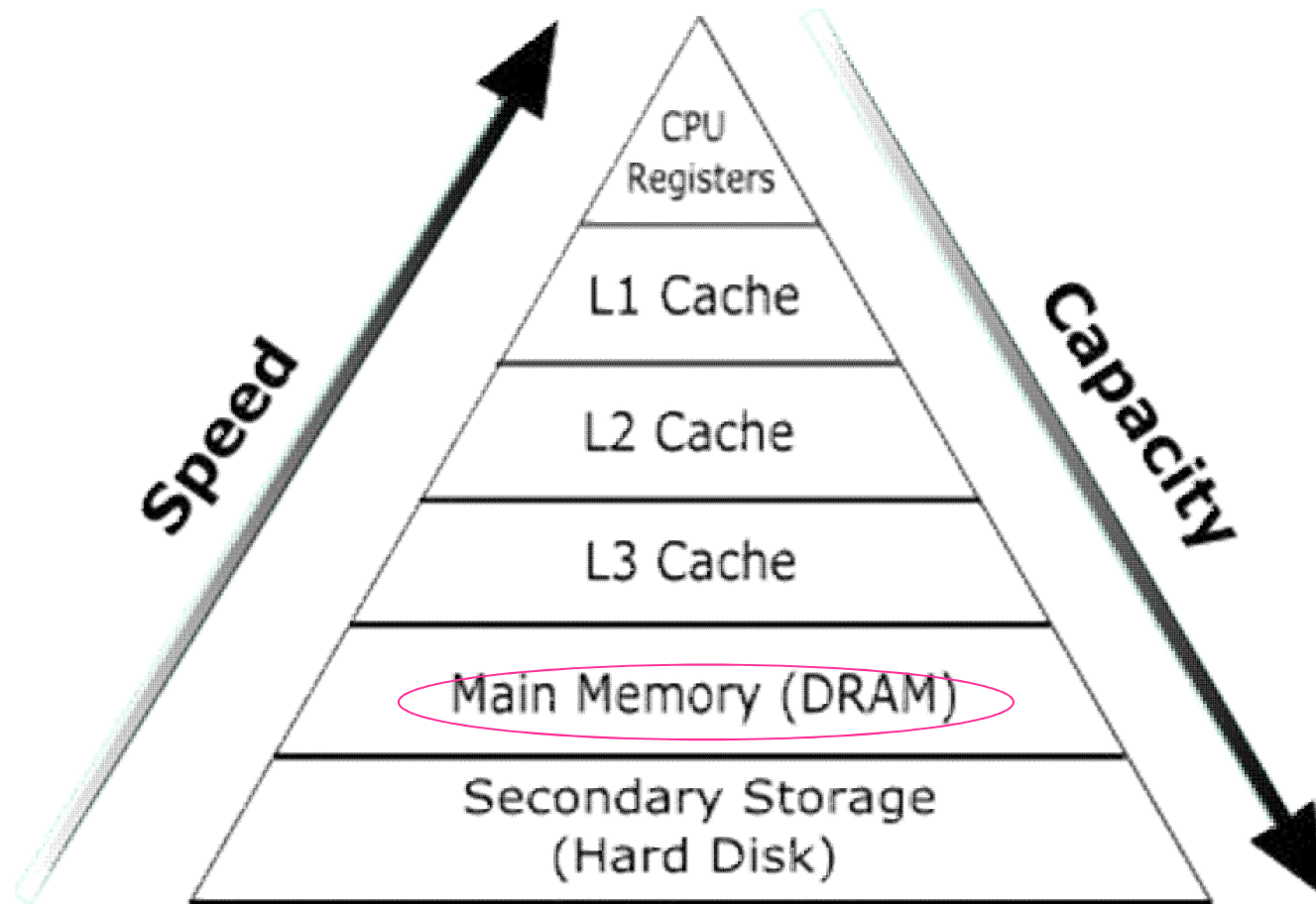
Never believe what hackers claim.

=> Most attacks described in current literature do NOT work as claimed or it is hard to make them work

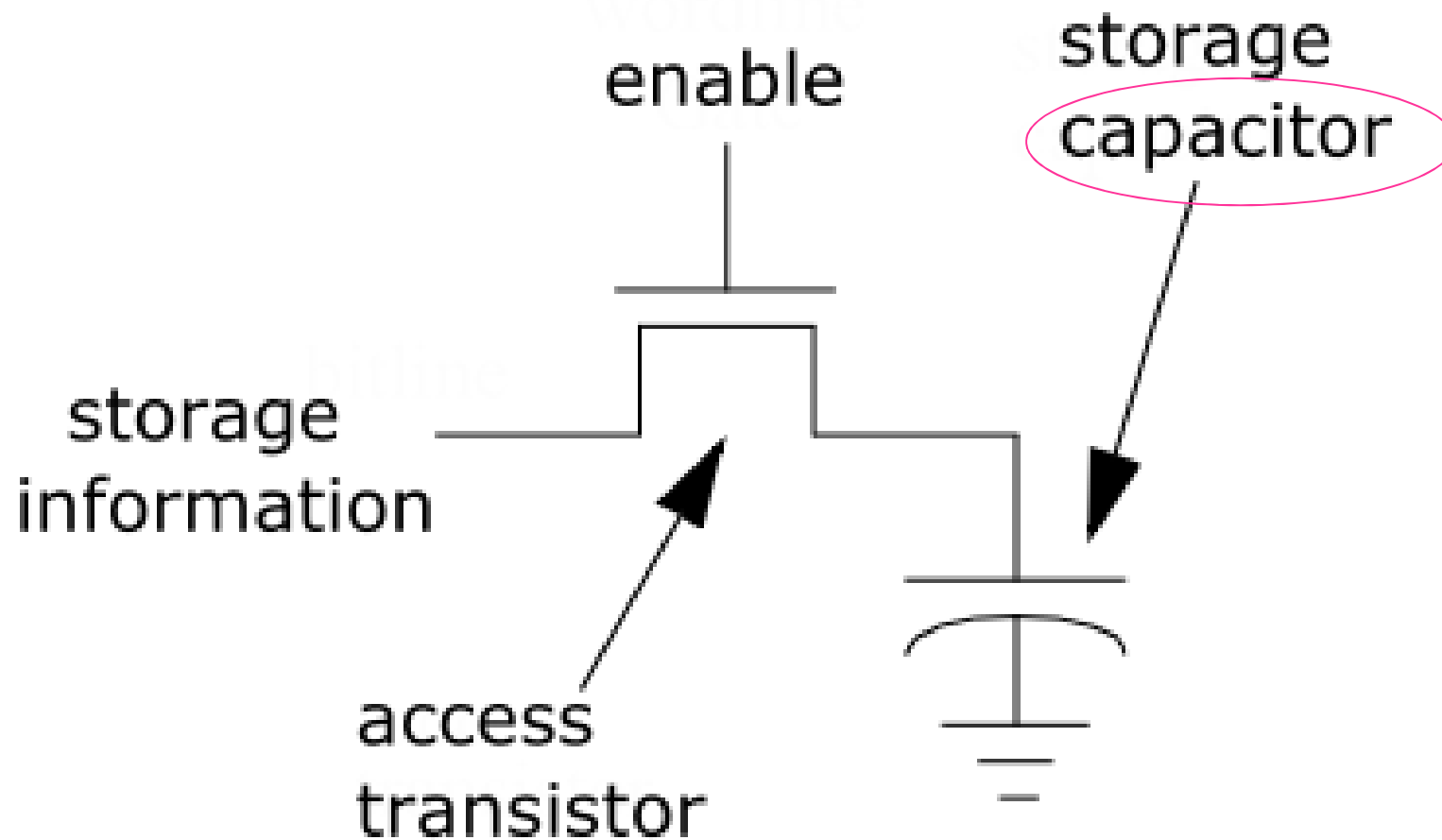
=> Many other require root access. However.  
if attacker is root => lots of things he can do....

Our work: practical attacks without root privileges, also work in VM, and some of the highest speeds EVER achieved.

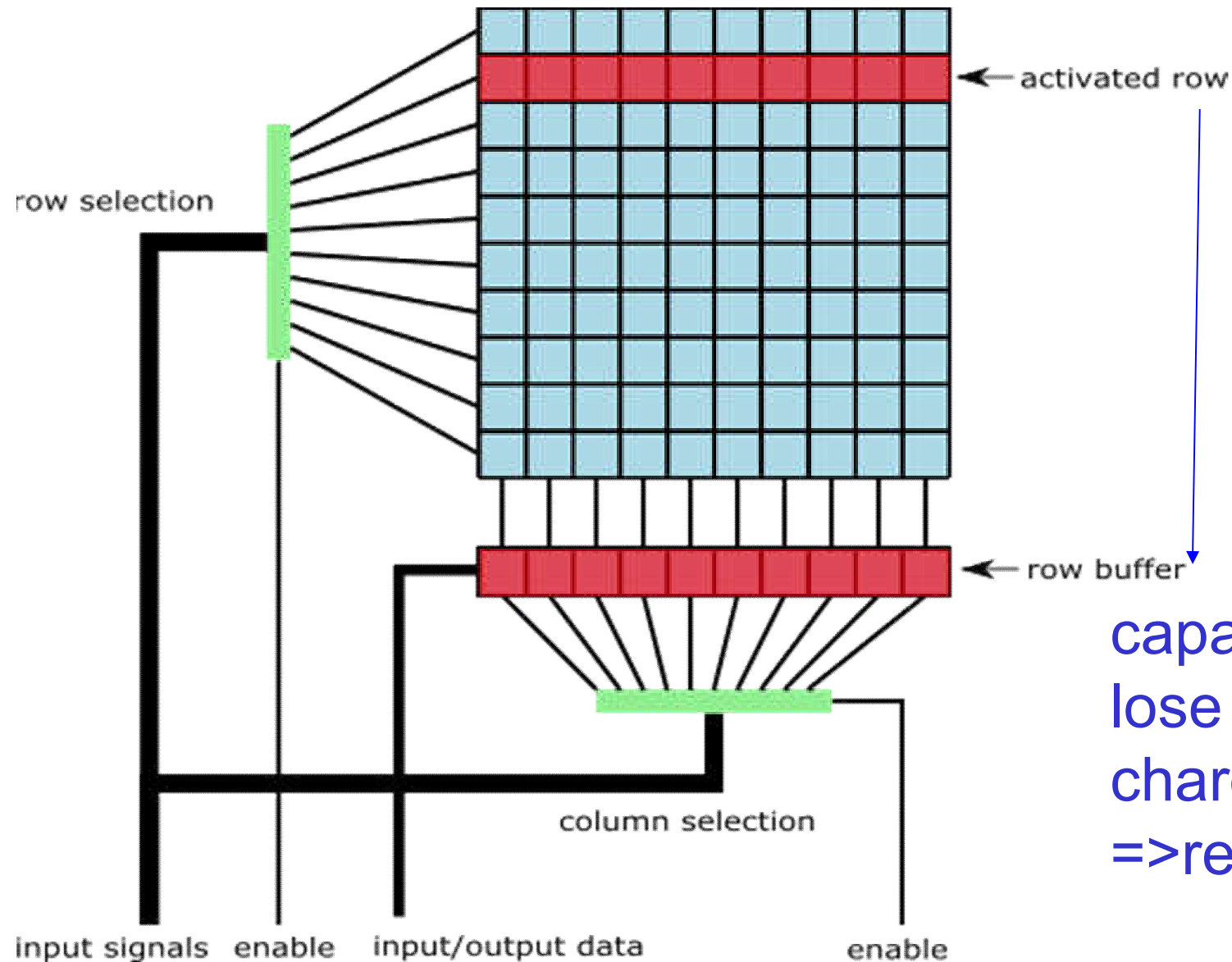
# Our Goal: Introduce **Faults** in RAM



# RAM cell

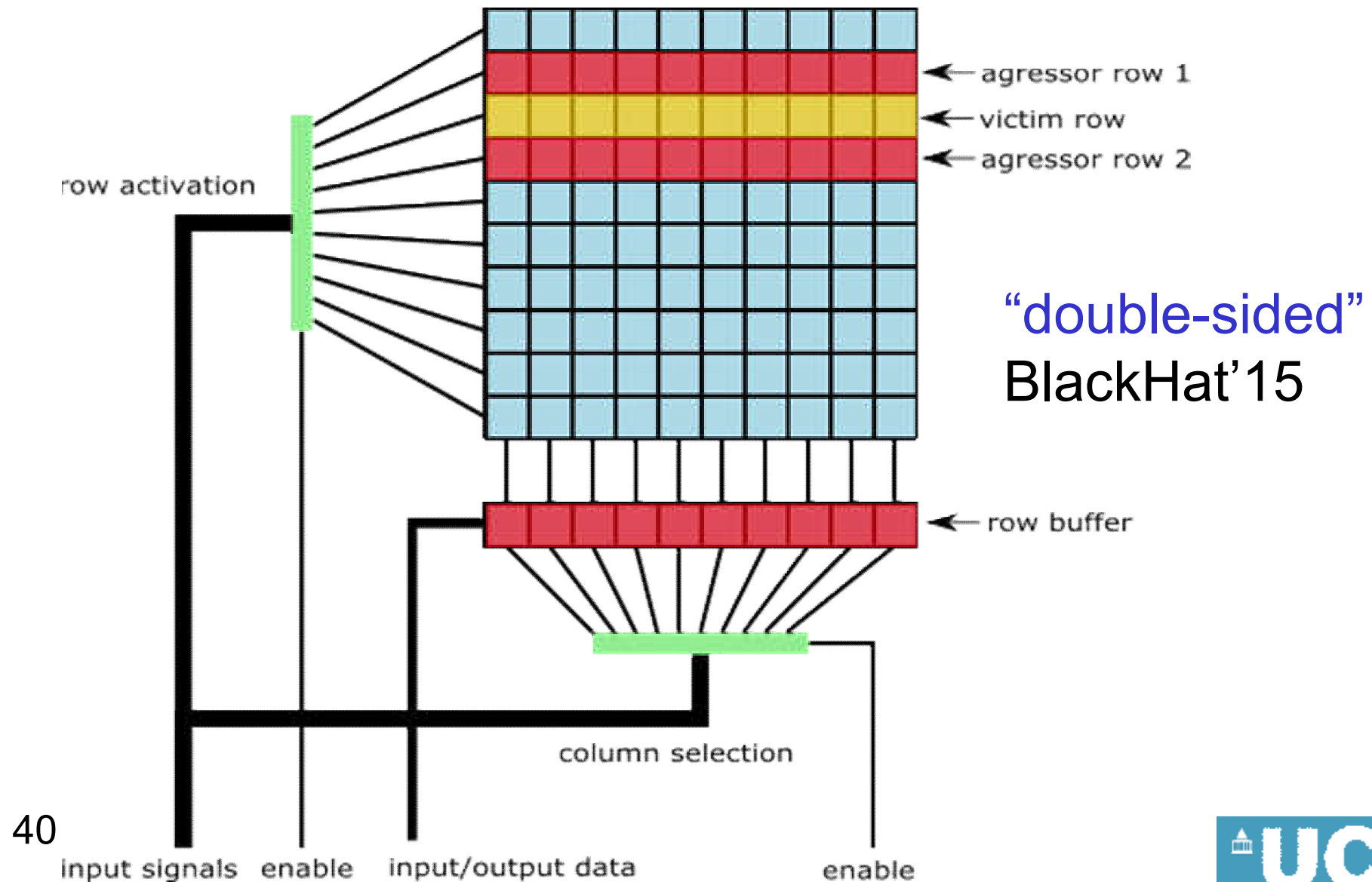


# Arrays of Capacitors – normal R operation



capacitors  
lose their  
charge  
=>refresh

# RowHammer Attack





## Difficulties

- How to bypass the cache???

=>otherwise the data is not read from RAM

- Avoid the row buffer of the target row

=>otherwise the data is not read from RAM either!

## SBDR – goal to achieve

- Same Bank Different Rows

[Dullien Seaborn 2015]

⇒ Considered a minimum requirement to launch a RowHammer attack...

⇒ just this leads to quite poor attacks...

⇒ like 5 bit flips in 10 minutes

⇒ of course just ONE bit flipped could achieve sth spectacular

⇒ recover a valuable Bitcoin private key worth M\$...

# Cache Avoidance / Data Eviction

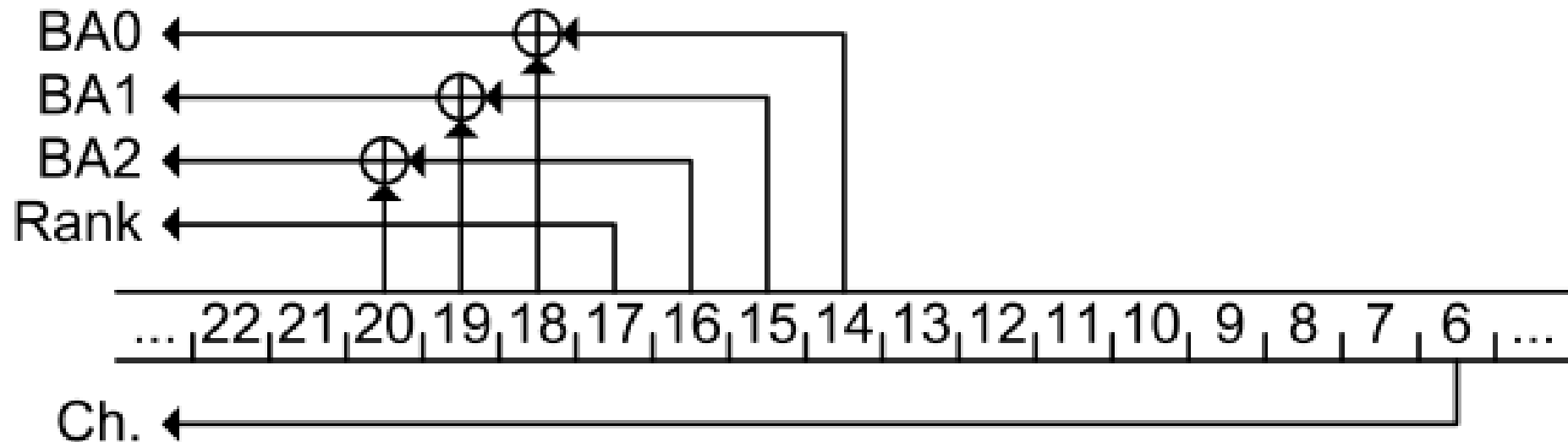
⇒ Fill the cache with lots of data.

⇒ CLFlush instruction, all attacks in our paper need/use it

⇒ In user space on Intel processors

⇒ ARM in mobile phones are MORE secure!!!!

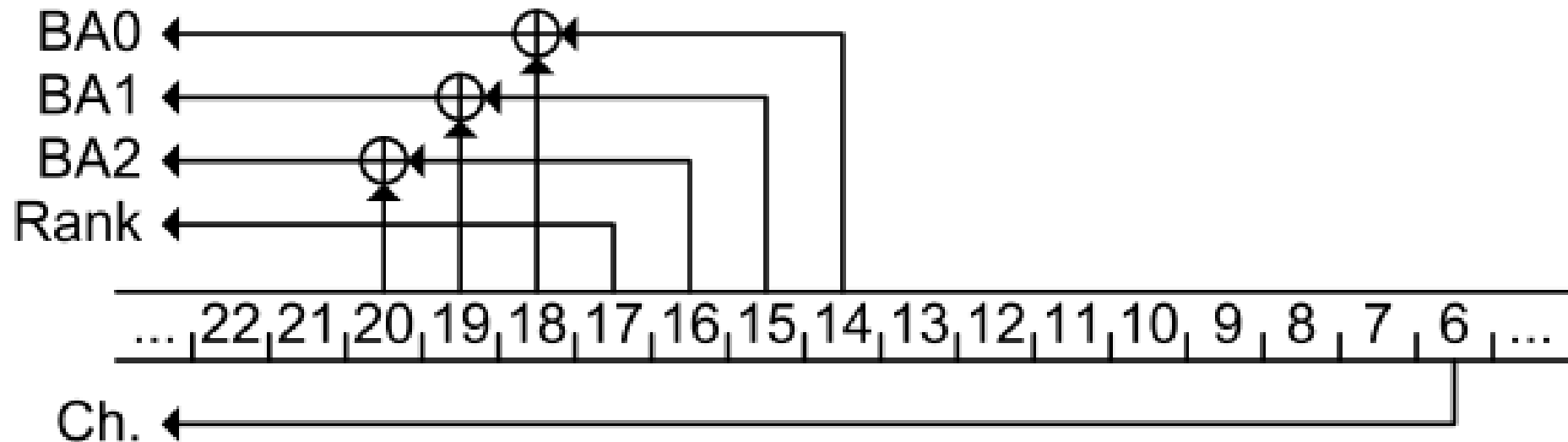
## Obfuscation!



S&P'13 => security by obscurity!

- documented by AMD,
- secrecy by Intel...
- cf. new processors, DDR4, etc.

# Beware!



Attacker CAN reverse engineer  $\pm$ EASILY:  
cf. our [tcrh](#) tool [and S+P'13 and Usenix 2007]

[github.com/vp777/Rowhammer](https://github.com/vp777/Rowhammer)

## another trick we use:

⇒ increase **page** size

⇒ the mapping is “more” transparent to the user...

⇒ the offset is the **same as the physical offset**

[github.com/vp777/Rowhammer](https://github.com/vp777/Rowhammer)

cf. our **hprh** tool

⇒ pages can be up to 1G on Intel!

⇒ we use the **THP** feature or Linux **4K⇒2M**

# THP => incredible boost

⇒ We also provide patches to 2 third party rowhammer attack which add the THP ability!

rowhammer-test	0	0	8
hammertime	0	0	25983
Based on THP			
			256MB
			Native
rowhammer-ext			6016
hammertime-ext			25965

NEW!

**NEW!**

## Comparison of Attack Tools

	DRAM Mapping			Cache Eviction	
	pagemap	THP	TC	CLFLUSH	CES
rowhammer-test[4]	✓	+✓	-	✓	✓
rowhammerjs[8]	☹️ ✓	-	-	✓	✓ ☹️
hammertime[2]	✓	+✓	-	✓	-
hprh[13]*	-	✓	-	✓	-
tcrh[13]*	-	-	✓	✓	-

[4]=Dullien-Seaborn 2015

[8]=Gruss-Maurice 2016-17

[2]=Tatar, 2016

[13]=our two **new** software tools:

[github.com/vp777/Rowhammer](https://github.com/vp777/Rowhammer)



## new tools we developed

our **hprh** tool =

**H**uge **P**age **R**ow**H**ammer

our **tcrh** tool =

**T**iming **C**hannel **R**ow**H**ammer

[github.com/vp777/Rowhammer](https://github.com/vp777/Rowhammer)

Results:  
 #Bits Flipped  
 / 10 minutes

<i>Based on pagemap</i>				
root ☹️	2MB_1MIN		256MB_10MIN	
	Native	VM	Native	VM
rowhammer-test	0	0	8	0
rowhammer-js	0	0	1322	66
hammertime	0	0	25983	1177

<i>Based on THP</i>				
	2MB_1MIN		256MB_10MIN	
	Native	VM	Native	VM
rowhammer-ext	932	0	6016	5
hammertime-ext	1911	0	25965	46
hprh	2301	0	25003	63

=> [github.com/vp777/Rowhammer](https://github.com/vp777/Rowhammer)

<i>Based on the Timing Channel</i>				
	2MB_1MIN		256MB_10MIN	
	Native	VM	Native	VM
tcrh	62	0	832	169

MODIFIED!

NEW!