

Extending the Salsa20 nonce

D. J. Bernstein

University of Illinois at Chicago

DES had 64-bit block.

Highly troublesome by 1990s.

AES has 128-bit block.

Becoming troublesome now . . .

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Why do they say this?

Answer: Their security proof
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So what *should* users do?

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Common user response: Rekey

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First session key: $\text{AES}_k(1)$.

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etc.

Each session key k' is used
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Typical use of session key:
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for at most (e.g.) 2^{40} blocks

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In other words:

128-bit AES key k

$AES_{AES_k(1)}(1)$, $AES_{AES_k(2)}(1)$, $AES_{AES_k(3)}(1)$, $AES_{AES_k(4)}(1)$, and so on.

This is really a new

$(m, n) \mapsto AES_{AES_k(i)}(m)$

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Alert: User-designed cipher!

Is this cipher secure?

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Collect $AES_{AES_k(n)}$
for 2^{40} inputs (n ,

Build 2^{40} tiny search
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iterates of $k' \mapsto A$

Good chance of collision

$k' = AES_k(n)$ for

Find via distinguisher

Then trivially compute

$AES_{AES_k(n)}(1)$ etc

Current chip technology

< 1 year, $< 10^{10}$ U

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Is this cipher secure?

Not really. Feasible attack:

Collect $\text{AES}_{\text{AES}_k(n)}(0)$
for 2^{40} inputs $(n, 0)$.

Build 2^{40} tiny search units,
each computing 2^{48}
iterates of $k' \mapsto \text{AES}_{k'}(0)$.

Good chance of collision

$k' = \text{AES}_k(n)$ for some n, k

Find via distinguished points

Then trivially compute

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Master key produces
256-bit output block,
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We have good 256-bit ciphers!

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But AES isn't a great cipher:

- Small block, so distinguishable.
- Not much security margin.
- Uninspiring key schedule.
- Invites cache-timing attacks.
- Slow on most CPUs.
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How about Salsa20

- Large block; aimed at
- 150% security margin
- Key at top, not bottom
- Naturally constant-time
- Fast across CPUs
- Better than AES
- No key expansion

Can generate 256-bit
first 256 bits of Salsa20
using 64-bit nonce
Use k' as Salsa20

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How about Salsa20?

- Large block; aims to be PRF.
- 150% security margin.
- Key at top, not on side.
- Naturally constant time.
- Fast across CPUs.
- Better than AES in hardware.
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Can generate 256-bit k' as
first 256 bits of Salsa20 stream
using 64-bit nonce n , key k .

Use k' as Salsa20 session key.

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