



# XML Security

Thomas Roessler, W3C

@roessler / tlr@w3.org

<http://tinyurl.com/xmlssl0sec>

Crypto primitives  
XML Encryption  
XML Signature

What could possibly go wrong?

CARRER  
DEL  
VEGUER

13

ANTIQUARI

He knows she said it:

authenticity

She knows only he heard it:

**confidentiality**

He doesn't know  
from whom she got it.

She doesn't know  
whom he'll tell.

# channel properties

CARRER  
DEL  
VEGUER

13

ANTIQUARI





# classical cryptography:

share a secret,  
exchange messages

# channel transformation in time

confidential now  
→ confidential then

authenticated +  
confidential now  
→ authenticated then

e.g.

Caesar cipher

e.g.

# Advanced Encryption Standard

# primitive: symmetric ciphers



cleartext + key  
→ ciphertext

ciphertext + key  
→ cleartext

no key  
no cleartext

1976  
Diffie & Hellman  
New directions in  
cryptography

# different channel transforms

**confidential now**



**confidential then**



authenticated now



confidential then



# public key cryptography



public key + cleartext  
→ ciphertext

private key + ciphertext  
→ cleartext

public key  $\rightarrow$  private key:  
hard problem

# asymmetric cipher

e.g.,  
Diffie-Hellman  
RSA

...

# hybrid ciphers

fast, symmetric cipher with  
random key  
random key encrypted  
with public key

# another primitive: signatures

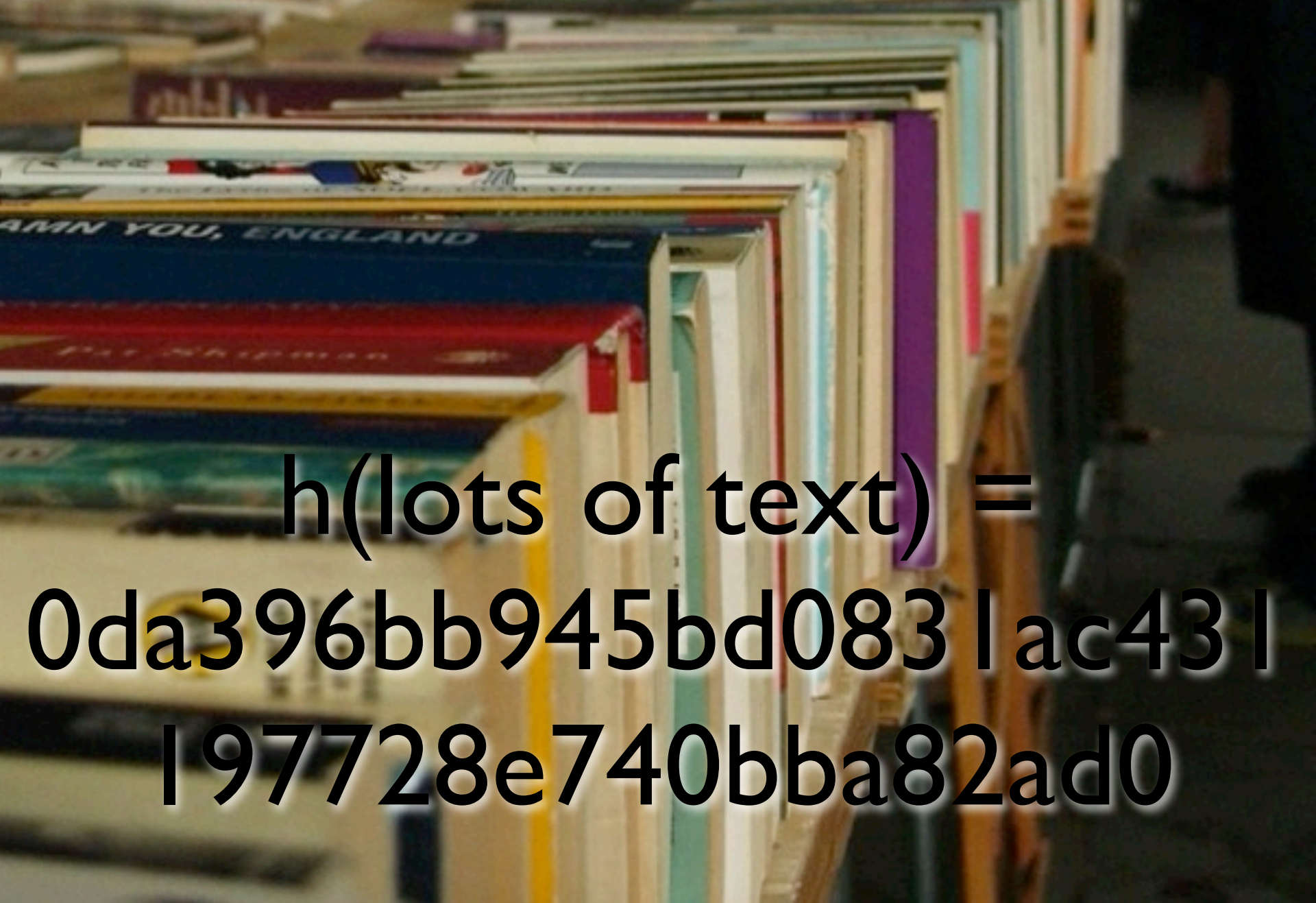
private key + plaintext  
→ signature



signature + plain text +  
public key  
→ ok (or not)

# binding a message to a key

# primitive: hash functions



$h(\text{lots of text}) =$   
`0da396bb945bd083 | ac43 |`  
`197728e740bba82ad0`

variable length input  
fixed length output  
fast

interesting properties:  
pre-image resistance  
2nd pre-image resistance  
collision resistance

pre-image resistance:  
hard to find  
 $x$  with  $h(x) = y$   
( $y$  is given)

2nd pre-image resistance:  
hard to find  
 $x'$  with  $h(x') = h(x)$   
( $x$  is given)



collision resistance:  
hard to find  $x, x'$  with  
 $h(x) = h(x')$

e.g.,  
SHA-256  
RIPEMD-160

...

$\text{sign}(\textit{key}, h(\textit{message}))$   
instead of  
 $\text{sign}(\textit{key}, \textit{message})$

$$\begin{aligned} \text{HMAC}(K, m) &= \\ & H( (K \oplus \text{opad}) \\ & \parallel H((K \oplus \text{ipad}) \parallel m) ) \end{aligned}$$

what have we  
learned so far?

crypto algorithms give us channels

they bind stuff to keys

public key crypto does interesting  
channel transforms

don't brew your own  
algorithms

the keys are key

# Signature Encryption



use XML to  
encapsulate crypto

encrypt and sign  
XML documents

[http://www.w3.org/  
TR/xmlenc-core1/](http://www.w3.org/TR/xmlenc-core1/)

encrypts:  
elements  
character data  
stuff  
keys

```
<PaymentInfo
  xmlns='http://example.org/paymentv2'>
  <Name>John Smith</Name>
  <EncryptedData
    Type='.../2001/04/xmlenc#Element'
    xmlns='.../2001/04/xmlenc#'>
    <CipherData>
      <CipherValue>A23B45C56</CipherValue>
    </CipherData>
  </EncryptedData>
</PaymentInfo>
```

EncryptedData:  
“Replace me after  
you’ve decrypted me.”

```
<EncryptedData
  xmlns='.../2001/04/xmlenc#'
  Type='.../2001/04/xmlenc#Element'>
  <EncryptionMethod
    Algorithm='.../xmlenc#tripleDES-cbc' />
  <ds:KeyInfo
    xmlns:ds='.../2000/09/xmldsig#'>
    <ds:KeyName>John Smith</ds:KeyName>
  </ds:KeyInfo>
  <CipherData>
    <CipherValue>DEADBEEF</CipherValue>
  </CipherData>
</EncryptedData>
```

```
<EncryptionMethod  
  Algorithm='.../xmlenc#  
    tripledес-cbc' />
```

```
<ds:KeyInfo  
  xmlns:ds='.../2000/09/xmlsig#' >  
  <ds:KeyName>...</ds:KeyName>  
</ds:KeyInfo>
```



identifying the key,  
not transmitting it!

variant:

CipherReference

“pull the encrypted data  
from elsewhere”

also:

EncryptedKey

DerivedKey

**caveat:**  
**namespaces**

**xmlns="..."**  
**is your friend**

**caveat:**  
**schema validation**

[http://www.w3.org/  
TR/xmlsig-core1/](http://www.w3.org/TR/xmlsig-core1/)

```
<Signature Id="MyFirstSignature"
  xmlns="http://www.w3.org/2000/09/xmldsig#">
  <SignedInfo>
    <CanonicalizationMethod
      Algorithm="http://www.w3.org/2006/12/xml-c14n11"/>
    <SignatureMethod
      Algorithm="http://www.w3.org/2001/04/xmldsig-more#rsa-sha256"/>
    <Reference
      URI="http://www.w3.org/TR/2000/REC-xhtml1-20000126/">
      <Transforms>
        <Transform
          Algorithm="http://www.w3.org/2006/12/xml-c14n11"/>
        </Transforms>
        <DigestMethod
          Algorithm="http://www.w3.org/2001/04/xmlenc#sha256"/>
        <DigestValue>dGhpcyBpcyBub3QgYSBzaWduYXR1cmUK...</DigestValue>
      </Reference>
    </SignedInfo>
    <SignatureValue>...</SignatureValue>
  </Signature>
```



```
<Signature Id="MyFirstSignature"  
  xmlns="http://www.w3.org/2000/09/xmldsig#">
```

```
<SignedInfo>
```

```
<CanonicalizationMethod
```

```
  Algorithm="http://www.w3.org/2006/12/xml-c14n11"/>
```

```
<SignatureMethod
```

```
  Algorithm="http://www.w3.org/2001/04/xmldsig-more#rsa-sha256"/>
```

```
<Reference ...>
```

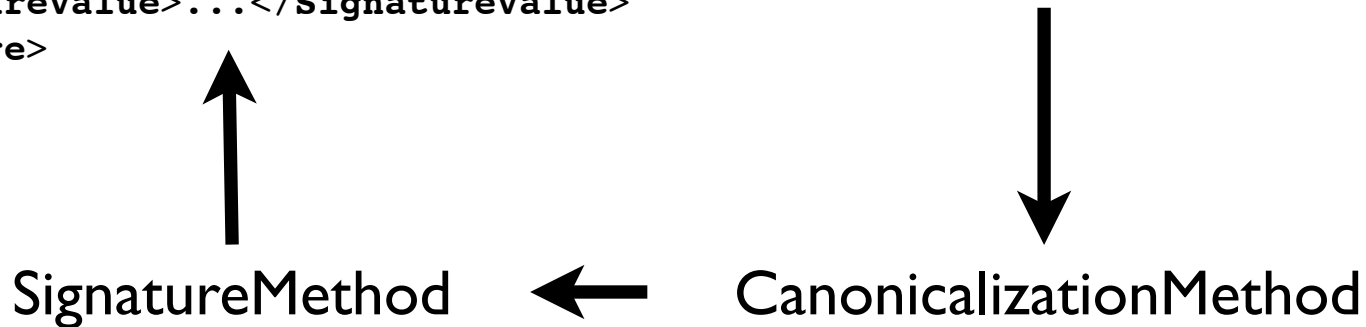
```
...
```

```
</Reference>
```

```
</SignedInfo>
```

```
<SignatureValue>...</SignatureValue>
```

```
</Signature>
```



```
<Signature Id="MyFirstSignature"
  xmlns="http://www.w3.org/2000/09/xmldsig#">
  <SignedInfo>
    <CanonicalizationMethod
      Algorithm="http://www.w3.org/2006/12/xml-c14n11"/>
    <SignatureMethod
      Algorithm="http://www.w3.org/2001/04/xmldsig-more#rsa-sha256"/>
    <Reference
      URI="http://www.w3.org/TR/2000/REC-xhtml1-20000126/">
      <Transforms>
        <Transform
          Algorithm="http://www.w3.org/2006/12/xml-c14n11"/>
        </Transforms>
        <DigestMethod
          Algorithm="http://www.w3.org/2001/04/xmlenc#sha256"/>
        <DigestValue>dGhpcyBpcyBub3QgYSBzaWduYXR1cmUK...</DigestValue>
      </Reference>
    </SignedInfo>
    <SignatureValue>...</SignatureValue>
  </Signature>
```

## **<Reference**

URI="http://www.w3.org/TR/2000/REC-xhtml1-2000126/">

## **<Transforms>**

### **<Transform**

Algorithm="http://www.w3.org/2006/12/xml-c14n11"/>

## **</Transforms>**

## **<DigestMethod**

Algorithm="http://www.w3.org/2001/04/xmlenc#sha256"/>

**<DigestValue>**dGhpcyBpcyBub3QgYSBzaWduYXR1cmUK...**</DigestValue>**

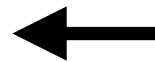
## **</Reference>**



transform chain



(canonicalization)



DigestMethod



**<DigestValue>dGhpcyBpcyBub3QgYSBzaWduYXR1cmUK...</DigestValue>**

**<Reference**

**URI="http://...">**

**external URI references**  
**(http://...)**  
**→ octet stream**

**<Reference**

**URI="#...">**

# same-document reference

(#...)

→ node-set



you can't hash a nodeset  
→ canonicalization  
generates octet-stream

# Canonical XML 1.0

## Exclusive Canonicalization

**Canonical XML 1.0**  
**all namespaces that are**  
**in force**  
**assorted attributes**

1.0 inherited

**xml:id**

fixed in  
Canonical XML 1.1

subset issues:  
Exclusive CI4N 1.0  
namespaces that are  
*actually* used

**<Reference**

URI="http://www.w3.org/TR/2000/REC-xhtml1-2000126/">

**<Transforms>**

**<Transform**

Algorithm="http://www.w3.org/2006/12/xml-c14n11"/>

**</Transforms>**

**<DigestMethod**

Algorithm="http://www.w3.org/2001/04/xmlenc#sha256"/>

**<DigestValue>dGhpcyBpcyBub3QgYSBzaWduYXR1cmUK...</DigestValue>**

**</Reference>**



transform chain



(canonicalization)



DigestMethod



**<DigestValue>dGhpcyBpcyBub3QgYSBzaWduYXR1cmUK...</DigestValue>**



transforms can do  
anything

XSLT  
XPath filter v.N  
xproc  
*your own*

identified  
by URI

**A signature binds  
data to a key.**

**XML Signature  
binds SignedInfo  
to a key.**

**A Reference element binds  
the result of some  
transform chain into a  
signature.**



transform chain



(canonicalization)



DigestMethod



**<DigestValue>dGhpcyBpcyBub3QgYSBzaWduYXR1cmUK...</DigestValue>**

# the result of a transform chain



use case:  
*enveloped signature*

“remove <Signature> from  
parent before computing hash”

**<Reference**

URI="http://www.w3.org/TR/2000/REC-xhtml1-2000126/">

**<Transforms>**

**<Transform**

Algorithm="http://www.w3.org/2006/12/xml-c14n11"/>

**</Transforms>**

**<DigestMethod**

Algorithm="http://www.w3.org/2001/04/xmlenc#sha256"/>

**<DigestValue>dGhpcyBpcyBub3QgYSBzaWduYXR1cmUK...</DigestValue>**

**</Reference>**

to understand the  
signature, you **MUST**  
understand the transforms

# XSLT is Turing-complete

## <Transform

```
Algorithm="http://www.w3.org/TR/1999/REC-xslt-19991116">  
<xsl:stylesheet version="1.0"  
  xmlns:xsl="http://www.w3.org/1999/XSL/Transform">  
  <xsl:template match="/">  
    <xsl:for-each select="//. | //@*">  
      <xsl:for-each select="//. | //@*">  
        <xsl:for-each select="//. | //@*">  
          <foo/>  
        <xsl:for-each>  
      <xsl:for-each>  
    <xsl:for-each>  
  </xsl:stylesheet>  
</Transform>
```

**XSLT transform with inline  
stylesheet:  
flexible, but dangerous.**

**Consider minting your  
own URIs!**

**XML Signature  
binds SignedInfo  
to a key.**



What does  
a signature *mean*?

“approved”

“noted”

“under penalty of perjury”

“vetoed”

**semantics need to be part  
of the signature**

```

<Signature xmlns="http://www.w3.org/2000/09/xmldsig#"
  Id="DistributorSignature">
  <SignedInfo>
    <CanonicalizationMethod
      Algorithm="http://www.w3.org/2006/12/xml-c14n11"/>
    <SignatureMethod
      Algorithm="http://www.w3.org/2001/04/xmldsig-more#rsa-sha256"/>
    ...
    <Reference URI="#prop">
      <Transforms>
        <Transform Algorithm="http://www.w3.org/2006/12/xml-c14n11"/>
      </Transforms>
      <DigestMethod
        Algorithm="http://www.w3.org/2001/04/xmlenc#sha256"/>
      <DigestValue>...</DigestValue>
    </Reference>
  </SignedInfo>
  <SignatureValue>...</SignatureValue>
  ...
  <Object Id="prop">
    <SignatureProperties
      xmlns:dsp="http://www.w3.org/2009/xmldsig-properties">
      <SignatureProperty Id="profile" Target="#DistributorASignature">
        <dsp:Profile URI="http://www.w3.org/ns/widgets-digsig#profile"/>
      </SignatureProperty>
      <SignatureProperty Id="role" Target="#DistributorASignature">
        <dsp:Role
          URI="http://www.w3.org/ns/widgets-digsig#role-distributor"/>
        </SignatureProperty>
      <SignatureProperty Id="identifier" Target="#DistributorASignature">
        <dsp:Identifier>07425f59c544b9cebff04ab367e8854a</dsp:Identifier>
      </SignatureProperty>
    </SignatureProperties>
  </Object>
</Signature>

```

```
<Signature xmlns=".../2000/09/xmlsig#"
  Id="DistributorSignature">
```

```
<Reference URI="#prop">
  <Transforms>
    <Transform Algorithm=".../2006/12/xml-c14n11"/>
  </Transforms>
  <DigestMethod
    Algorithm=".../2001/04/xmlenc#sha256"/>
  <DigestValue>...</DigestValue>
</Reference>
```

```
<Object Id="prop">
  <SignatureProperties
    xmlns:dsp="http://www.w3.org/2009/xmlsig-properties">
    <SignatureProperty Id="profile"
      Target="#DistributorASignature">
      <dsp:Profile
        URI="http://www.w3.org/ns/widgets-digsig#profile"/>
    </SignatureProperty>
    ...
    <SignatureProperty Id="identifier"
      Target="#DistributorASignature">
    <dsp:Identifier>07425f59c544b9cebff04ab367e8854a</dsp:Identifier>
    </SignatureProperty>
  </SignatureProperties>
</Object>
```

e.g.,

W3C Widget Signatures  
XADES



“it’s signed” – what’s  
wrong with this sentence?

“it’s signed *by XYZ*”

remember:  
the key is key

<Signature>  
can include  
<KeyInfo>

key material  
pointer at key  
identifier for key

...

Just because the key is in  
the signature, it isn't the  
right one!

You need to know **why**  
you think the signature key  
is associated with the entity  
you think you talk to.

certificates  
previous key exchange

...



What could possibly  
go wrong?

**“it’s signed”**

**“it”?**

**by what key?**

**who controls that key?**

powerful  
complex  
complicated

use as few features  
as you can

**don't need arbitrary  
transforms?  
don't support them!**

signatures can be  
attack vectors, too

```
<Transforms xmlns:ds="http://www.w3.org/2000/09/xmlsig#">
  <Transform
    Algorithm="http://www.w3.org/TR/1999/REC-xslt-19991116">
    <xsl:stylesheet version="1.0"
      xmlns:xsl="http://www.w3.org/1999/XSL/Transform"
      xmlns:java="java">
      <xsl:template match="/" xmlns:os="java:lang.Runtime" >
        <xsl:variable name="runtime"
          select="java:lang.Runtime.getRuntime()" />
        <xsl:value-of select="os:exec($runtime, 'shutdown -i')" />
      </xsl:template>
    </xsl:stylesheet>
  </Transform>
</Transforms>
```

e.g.,

**XSLT extensions to  
execute arbitrary  
commands**



## <Transform

```
Algorithm="http://www.w3.org/TR/1999/REC-xslt-19991116">  
<xsl:stylesheet version="1.0"  
  xmlns:xsl="http://www.w3.org/1999/XSL/Transform">  
  <xsl:template match="/">  
    <xsl:for-each select="//. | //@*">  
      <xsl:for-each select="//. | //@*">  
        <xsl:for-each select="//. | //@*">  
          <foo/>  
        <xsl:for-each>  
          <xsl:for-each>  
            <xsl:for-each>  
          </xsl:for-each>  
        </xsl:for-each>  
      </xsl:for-each>  
    </xsl:template>  
  </xsl:stylesheet>  
</Transform>
```

**don't execute transforms  
that you don't know**

if you don't need the  
flexibility, don't use it

mint URIs instead!

verification order:

1. reference validation

2. SignedInfo

3. check if it's the right key

**DON'T DO  
THAT!**

verification order:

1. Acceptable signature  
key?

2. Does SignatureValue  
work out with SignedInfo?

3. reference validation

```
<Signature Id="MyFirstSignature"
  xmlns="http://www.w3.org/2000/09/xmldsig#">
  <SignedInfo>
    <CanonicalizationMethod
      Algorithm="http://www.w3.org/2006/12/xml-c14n11"/>
    <SignatureMethod
      Algorithm="http://www.w3.org/2001/04/xmldsig-more#rsa-sha256"/>
    <Reference
      URI="http://www.w3.org/TR/2000/REC-xhtml1-20000126/">
      <Transforms>
        <Transform
          Algorithm="http://www.w3.org/2006/12/xml-c14n11"/>
      </Transforms>
      <DigestMethod
        Algorithm="http://www.w3.org/2001/04/xmlenc#sha256"/>
      <DigestValue>dGhpcyBpcyBub3QgYSBzaWduYXR1cmUK...</DigestValue>
    </Reference>
  </SignedInfo>
  <SignatureValue>...</SignatureValue>
</Signature>
```

know what information  
you trust



The [HMAC](#) algorithm (RFC2104 [[HMAC](#)]) takes the truncation length in bits as a parameter; if the parameter is not specified then all the bits of the hash are output. An example of an HMAC `SignatureMethod` element:

```
<SignatureMethod
  Algorithm=
    "http://www.w3.org/2000/09/xmlsig#hmac-sha1">
  <HMACOutputLength>128</HMACOutputLength>
</SignatureMethod>
```

The output of the HMAC algorithm is ultimately the output (possibly truncated) of the chosen digest algorithm. This value shall be base64 encoded in the same straightforward fashion as the output of the digest algorithms.

**<SignatureMethod**

Algorithm=".../2000/09/xmlsig#hmac-sha1">

**<HMACOutputLength>64</HMACOutputLength>**

**</SignatureMethod>**

**<SignatureMethod**

Algorithm=".../2000/09/xmlsig#hmac-sha1">

**<HMACOutputLength>1</HMACOutputLength>**

**</SignatureMethod>**

1 bit

know what  
you reference

URI="#foo"

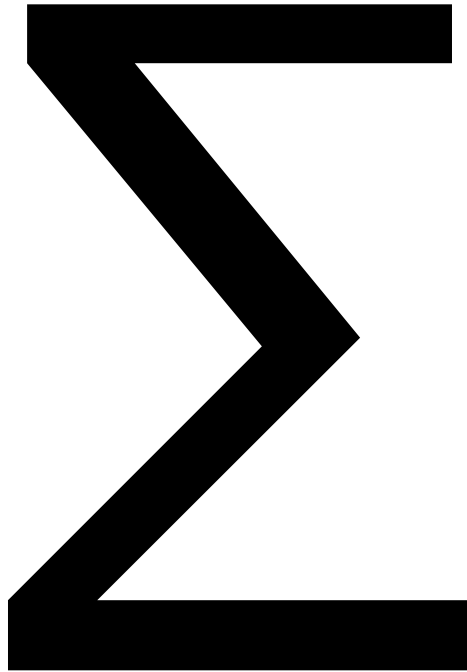
```
<Doc>
  <Approval xml:id="...">...</Approval>
  <Signature>
    ...
    <Reference URI="..." />
    ...
  </Signature>
</Doc>
```

```
<Doc>
  <Approval xml:id="ap">...</Approval>
  <Signature>
    ...
    <Reference URI="#ap2" />
    ...
  <Object>
    <Approval xml:id="ap2">...</Approval>
  </Object>
</Signature>
</Doc>
```



Where in the SOAP  
message is #foo?

“wrapping attacks”



cryptographic primitives  
give you channels and  
channel transforms

they give you certain  
guarantees,  
bind data to keys

what keys?  
who owns them?  
why?

A large, light gray, stylized XML tag (<XML>) serves as a background for the central text. The letters are thick and blocky, with the tag symbols being simple chevrons.

# Signature Encryption

**powerful building blocks  
use with care**



Don't bake your own  
unless you absolutely  
have to.

Avoid complexity  
wherever you can.

If you need transforms,  
name them instead of  
transmitting them.

**“it’s signed”**

**“it”?**

**by what key?**

**who controls that key?**

# References

XML Signature Syntax and Processing  
<http://www.w3.org/TR/xmlsig-core1/>

XML Encryption Syntax and Processing  
<http://www.w3.org/TR/xmlenc-core1/>

XML Signature Best Practices  
<http://www.w3.org/TR/xmlsig-bestpractices/>