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Public Key Infrastructure Fundamentals

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Thanks to Paul van Oorschot

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Goals

- Understand how public keys can be distributed and revoked on a large scale
- Understand what a CA-based PKI is and what the problems are with their deployment
- Understand how multiple CAs can interoperate depending on their trust relationship

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How to establish public keys?

- point-to-point on a trusted channel
  – *mail business card, phone*
- direct access to a trusted public file (registry or database)
  – *authentication trees*
- on-line trusted server (bottleneck)
  – OCSP*: Online Certificate Status Protocol*
- off-line servers and certificates
  – *PKI: Public Key Infrastructure*
- implicit guarantee of public parameters
  – *identity based and self-certified keys*

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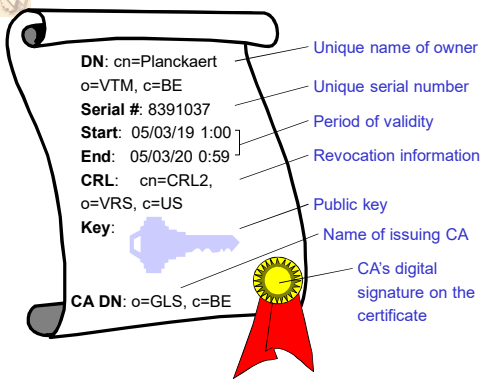
What is a Certificate?



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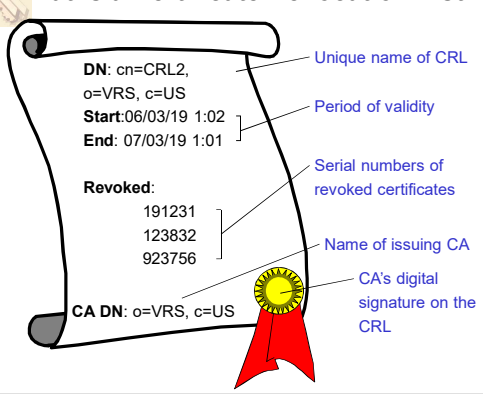
What is a Certificate Revocation List?



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PKI Overview

1. Background:
   Keys and Lifecycle Management
2. PKI components (“puzzle pieces”)
3. Trust Models

Background:

Keys and Lifecycle Management

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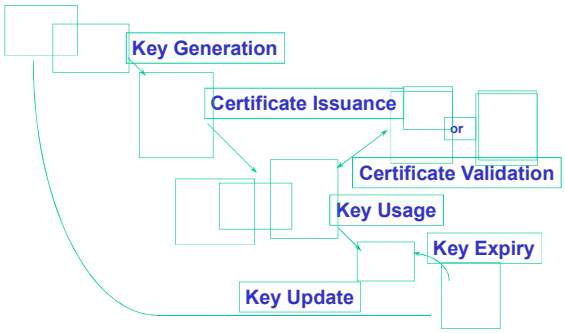
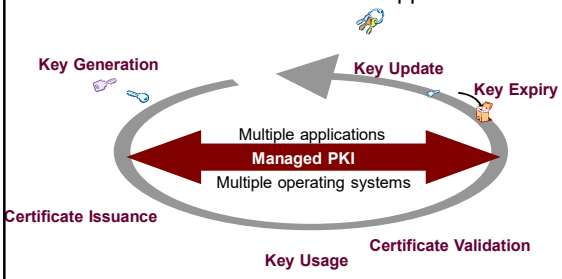
Key Lifecycle Management



Fundamental PKI features

- Automated and transparent key and certificate lifecycle management
- Consistent behavior across applications



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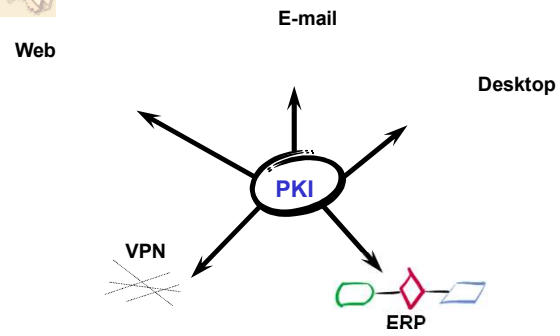
PKI should provide Unified Security



This vision from late 1990s has never materialized!

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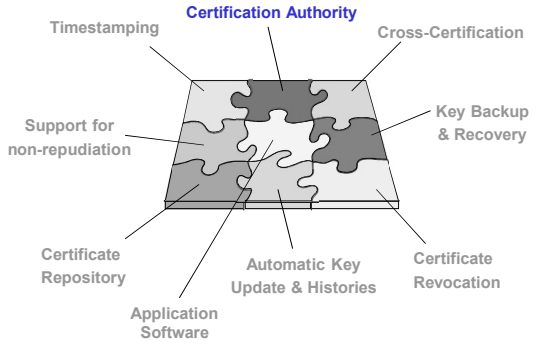
Certification Authority



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Certification Authority

- Issue certificates for all entities / devices (for multiple applications) from a single CA
  - single system saves h/w, s/w, training, personnel
- Flexible certificate policy / security policy
  - tailor to needs of environment, application or entity (e.g. certificate lifetime, crypto algorithms, keylengths, password rules, ...)

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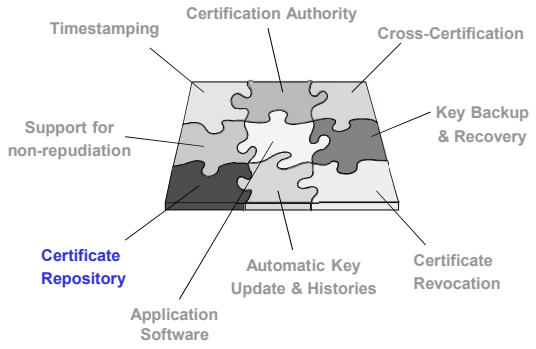
Certificate Repository



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Certificate Repository

- LDAP-compliant directory stores certificates
  - standards-based for interoperability
- Directory products built specifically to address scalability issues
  - X.500 or proprietary schemes to replicate data (scales to millions of users)

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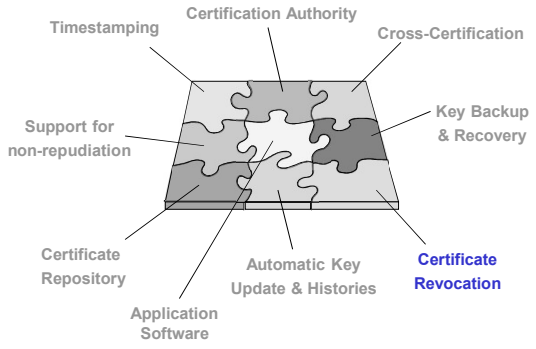
Certificate Revocation System



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Certificate Revocation

- Automated CRL publishing
  - when certificate revoked, CRL can be automatically published to directory providing near-immediate availability
  - automated CRL checking by application
  - want to avoid applications which require manual end-user actions to check CRLs for each application or certificate usage

March 2001: Verisign has issued two certificates to fake Microsoft employees
- Problem: IE did not implement revocation checking

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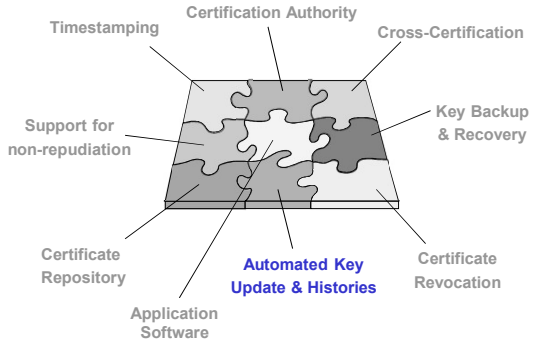
Automated Key Update & History



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Automated Key Update & History

- Users should never even need to know they have their own certificates (password only)
- If key management is not automated or does not provide key history . . .
  - when certificate expires, lose access to all past encrypted data, e-mail, . . .
  - user must request new certificate and repeat entire registration process
- Should replace key, not just new expiry date
- Transparent triggering mechanism

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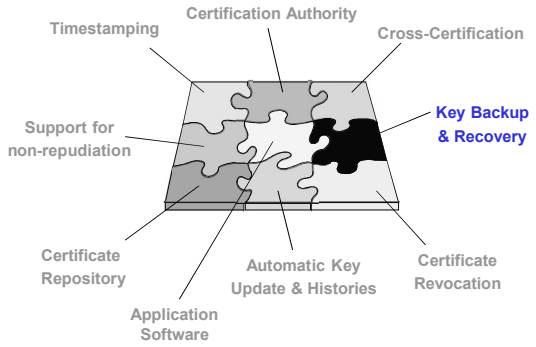
Key Backup & Recovery



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Key Backup & Recovery

- Enterprise will lose valuable (stored) data if keys used to encrypt data are not backed up
  - 20-40% of users forget passwords / year
  - employees leave the organization
- Allows the enterprise to control the backup
  - not reliant on 3rd parties
  - should be configurable to require multiple administrators to authorize access

Key recovery/backup for storage keys should not be confused with **key escrow**; governments have tried to impose this for encryption keys used for communication

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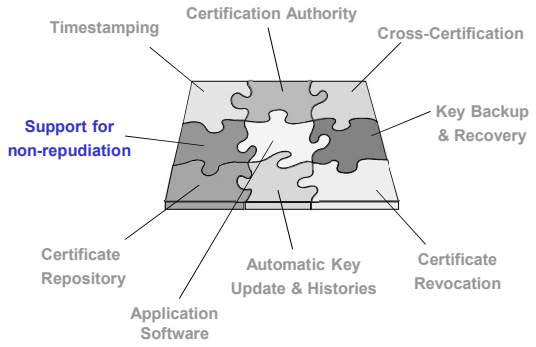
Support for Non-Repudiation



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Support for Non-Repudiation

- Must use separate key pairs for digital signatures and encryption
  - want backup of encryption keys, **do not** want backup of signature private keys
- Separate key pairs allows lifecycles to be managed independently
- Different policy controls for each key pair
  - security requirements per pair may differ, e.g. valid lifetimes

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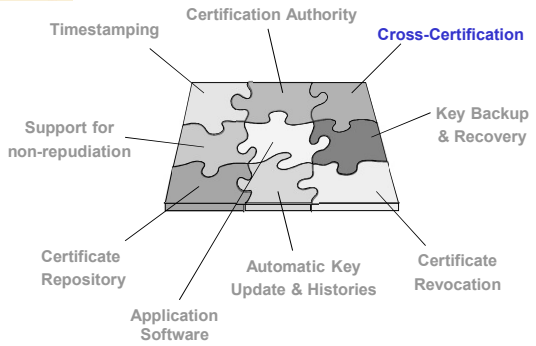
Cross-Certification



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Cross-Certification (cf. Trust models)

- Sufficiently flexible to model existing business relationships
  - includes 1-1 relationships and hierarchies
  - cross-certificate associated with an organization (vs. a service provider)
  - compare to web trust model: trust anyone signed by browser-embedded CAs
- Enterprise manages cross-certification policy & procedures, to reduce business risk
  - cross-certifcates created by authorized administrators, transparent to end-user

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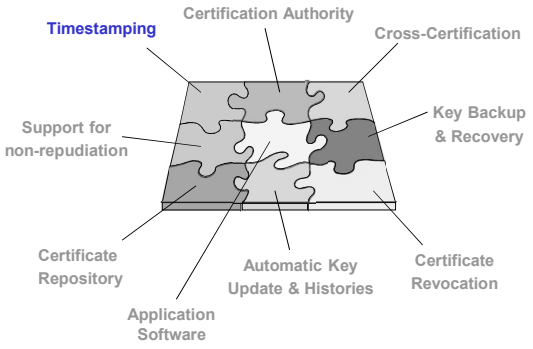
Timestamping



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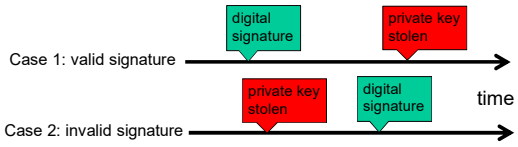
Timestamping

- Legal requirements
- Business requirements related to fixing transactions in time
- Technical requirements related to certificate revocation (non-repudiation)



Question: why is it not sufficient to include a timestamp in the signed text?

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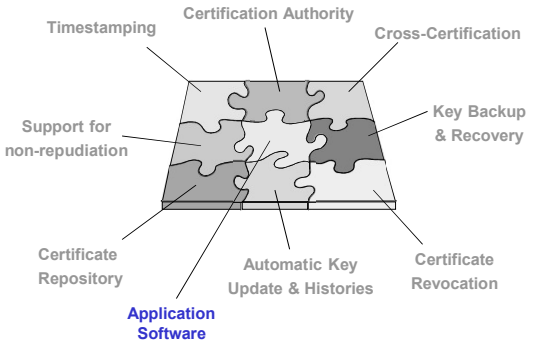
Application Software



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Application Software

- Designed to be enabled to use the PKI ("PKI-ready")

application software
(email, file encryption, VPN, web security/SSL, ...)

PKI: key & certificate lifecycle mgmt (certificate validation, key update, ...); crypto algorithms (symmetric encryption, signature, hash, MAC, key establishment, …)

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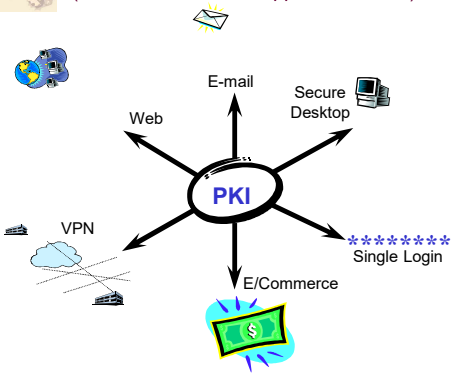
PKI-ready application software completes the picture (but this still has not happened in 2016)



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Summary - Essential PKI Components

Much more than a "certificate server" or set of toolkit calls

- Certification Authority
- Revocation system
- Certificate repository ("directory")
- Key backup and recovery system
- Support for non-repudiation
- Automatic key update
- Management of key histories
- Cross-certification
- PKI-ready application software

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More info: IETF PKIX Working Group

www.ietf.org

- de facto standards for Internet PKI, X.509-based
- Certificate & CRL Profile [PKIX-1]: RFC 2459
- Certificate Mgmt Protocols [PKIX-CMP, PKIX-3]: RFC 2510
- PKIX roadmap: www.ietf.org/internet-drafts/draft-ietf-pkix-roadmap-01.txt

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Key generation: where?

- CA generates key for user
  - absolute trust
  - need transport of private keys
  - easier management for backup/recovery
- user generates his/her key
  - does user have the expertise? (ok if smart card)
  - need to transport of public keys (integrity channel)
- specialised third party generates keys

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Trust Models

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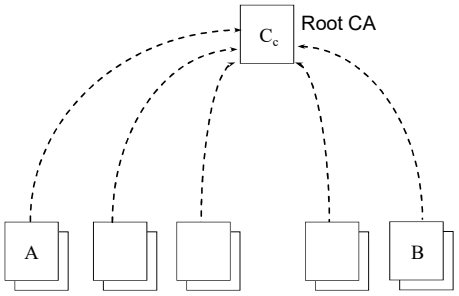
Hierarchical trust model



Relying parties transfer risk to the Root CA

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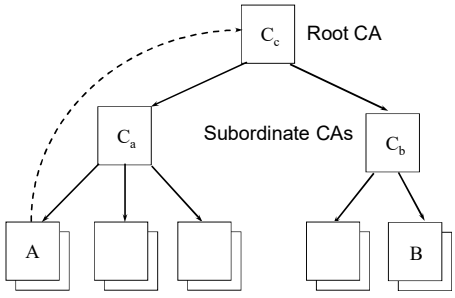
Hierarchical trust model



Root CA "deputizes" subordinate CAs, which issue certificates

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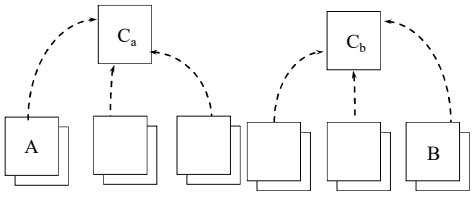
Enterprise trust model



Relying parties transfer risk to their local CA

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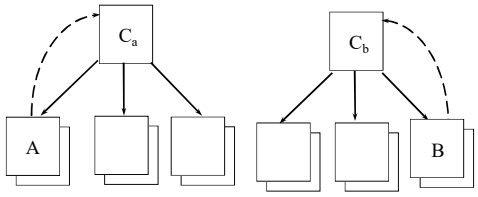
Enterprise trust model



The same local CA issues certificates to these parties

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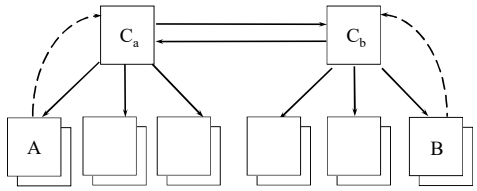
Enterprise trust model



Qualified relationships between CAs are established

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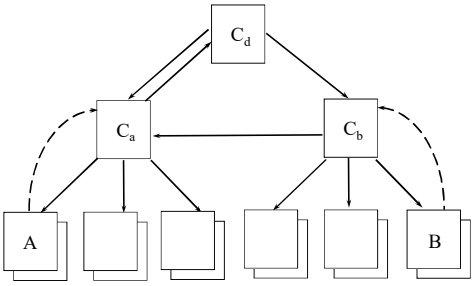
Enterprise trust model



Hierarchical relationships are a special case

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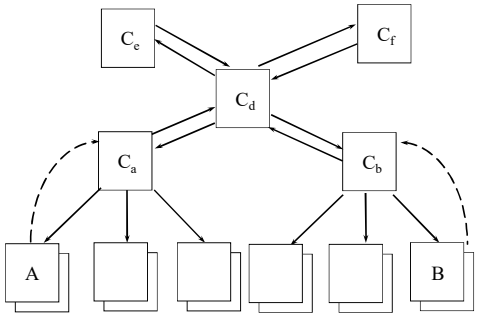
Enterprise trust model



Spoke-and-hub model is another special case

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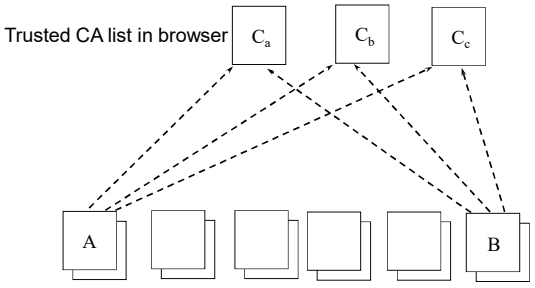
Browser trust model



All relying parties rely on public keys of same set of CAs

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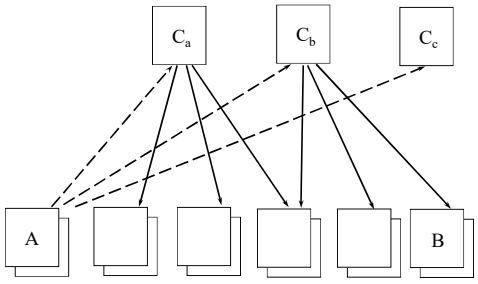
Browser trust model



Each of these CAs defines its own community of trust

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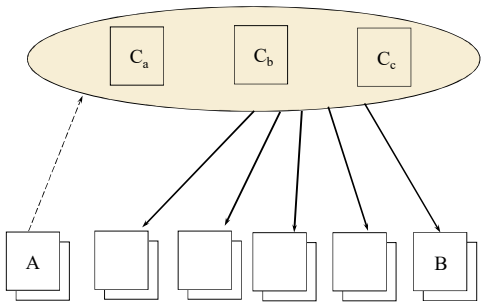
Browser trust model



A relying party trusts the union of these communities

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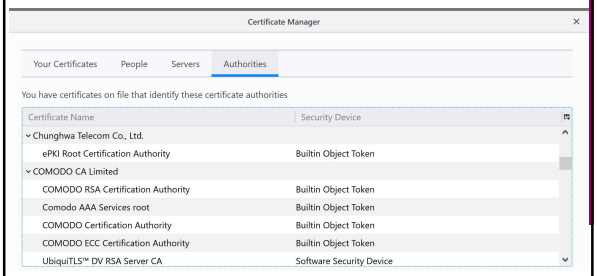
Browsers include about 650 self-signed CA certificates



User of browser de facto trusts all these CAs

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The CA Mess on the web

[Eckersley10] "An observatory for the SSLiverse"

- 10.8M servers start SSL handshake
- 4.3M use valid certificate chains
- 650 CA certs trustable by Windows or Firefox (industry: only 65 main)
- 1.4M unique valid leaf certs
  - 300K signed by one GoDaddy cert
- 80 distinct keys used in multiple CA certs
- several CAs sign the IP address 192.168.1.2 (reserved by RFC 1918)
- 2 leaf certs have 508-bit keys
- Debian OpenSSL bug (2006-2008)
  - resulted in 28K vulnerable certs
  - fortunately only 530 validate
  - only 73 revoked

How can we fix this mess?

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CA incidents

- March 2011 – Comodo: 9 fraudulent certs
  - via RA GlobalTrust.it/InstantSSL.it
- Summer 2011 – DigiNotar: 500+ fraudulent certs
  - meet-in-the-middle attack against Google users in Iran (300K unique IPs, 99% from Iran)
  - filed for bankruptcy 20 September 2011
- January 2013 – Turktrust CA incident
- February 2013 – Bit9 lost signing key
- Recent incidents: CCA (India), CCNC and Lenovo (China), ANSSI (France), Symantec
- Products adding trusted roots in trust store
  - Lenovo incident
  - Interception of social media usage by employers

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Mobile CA

- O/S trust store
  - many Android phones run old versions and have old Trust Store
  - Android Pre-2.3 does not support SHA-256
  - still certs with MD5 and SHA-1
- Mobile Apps
  - ALLOW_ALL_HOSTNAME: 35% of apps; e.g., Facebook, Baidu
  - Custom Trust Store: not always better

https://bluebox.com/technical/trust-managers

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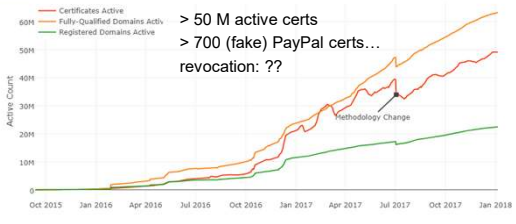
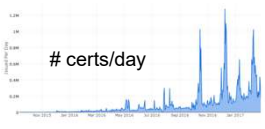
Let's Encrypt

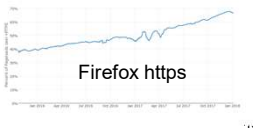
live since November 2015
https://letsencrypt.org/isrg/



> 50 M active certs
> 700 (fake) PayPal certs…
revocation: ??



certs/day



Firefox https

Improvements to CA ecosystem

- DANE – based on DNSSEC – specify restrictions for a given SSL/TLS server
  - would need hard fail
- CA Authorization (RFC 6844): tell CA - if you are not one of the CAs on this list, don't issue certs for this domain (competition issue?) (2019: 4.4% of sites)
- Pinning: tell clients - cert for this site look like this; if you detect something else, this may be a breach (more likely a misconfiguration)
  - not for "smal" sites? (need bootstrap)
  - seems to work for Google/Chrome ecosystem
- Cert Transparency: certs public in authenticated tree
  - suitable for audits after attack detection

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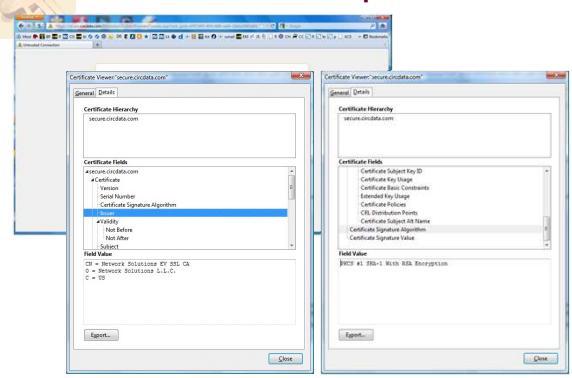
CA common problem



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Personal trust model (and related: "web-of-trust")

- all entities are end-users (CAs do not exist)
- keys are essentially self-guaranteed
- some end-users may also be *introducers*
- end-user imports public keys of others

CHARACTERISTICS

- suits individuals, not enterprise/corporations
- user-centric
- requires security-aware end-users
- poor scalability

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PGP/GPG Key Servers

- Centralized support for web of trust: servers that hold huge public key rings
  - update to each other, accept and send updates from/to everyone
  - better than everyone keeping a huge key ring
  - server addresses included with PGP/GPG software
  - concerns: privacy, user registration/verification (are you Bill Gates?) and key revocation

Example: PGP Global Directory

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Trust models & Revocation

- public-key systems are commonly engineered with long-life certificates
- certificates bind a key-pair to identity (and potentially privilege information)
- circumstances change over certificate life
  - keys may become compromised
  - identifying information may change
  - privilege may be withdrawn
- need ability to terminate the binding expressed in the certificate
- revocation: most difficult issue in practice

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Revocation options

mechanisms indicating valid certificates

- short-lifetime certificates

mechanisms indicating invalid certificates

- certificate revocation lists - CRLs (v1 X.509)
- CRL fragments (v2 X.509), including ...
  - segmented CRLs (CRL distribution points)
  - delta CRLs
  - indirect CRLs

mechanisms providing a proof of status

- status-checking protocols (OCSP, ValiCert)
- iterated hash schemes (Micali)
- certificate revocation trees

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CRL: properties

- basic CRL
  - simplicity
  - high communication cost from directory to user
- improved CRL
  - very flexible
  - more complex
  - reduced communication and storage

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Online Certificate Status Protocol (OCSP) [RFC 2560]

- on-line query to
  - CA
  - or Trusted Responder
  - or CA designated responder
- containing
  - hash of public key CA
  - hash of public key in certificate
  - certificate serial number

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OCSP: signed answer

- status
  - good: not revoked
  - revoked
  - unknown
- time
  - thisUpdate
  - nextUpdate
  - producedAt

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OCSP: evaluation

- [+] positive and negative information
- [-] need to be on-line
  - risk for denial of service
  - not always possible
- ! OCSP may send you freshly signed but old information

If a browser gets **no answer** to an OCSP request, it just goes on as if nothing happened (usability is more important than security)
http://blog.spiderlabs.com/2011/04/certificate-revocation-behavior-in-modern-browsers.html

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Revocation summary

- established standards for basic revocation
  - ITU-T X.509: 1997, ISO/IEC 9594-8: 1997
  - v2 CRLs
- more sophisticated solutions may be needed for specific applications
- revocation of higher level public keys is very hard (if not impossible)
  - e.g. requires browser patch
- even after 20 years of PKI history, revocation is problematic in practice

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Characterizing questions for trust models

- what are the types/roles of entities involved
- who certifies public keys
- are trust relationships easily created, maintained, updated
- granularity of trust relationships
- ability of particular technology to support existing business models of trust
- how is revocation handled?
  - . . . of end-users . . . of certification authorities

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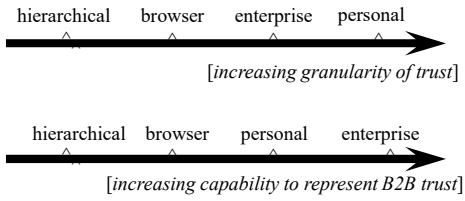
Trust model continuums



Many other continuums can be formulated

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Trust model summary

Key idea: manageability of trust relationships

Each model has its place --

- personal trust model: okay for security-aware individuals working in small communities
- browser model: simple, large communities, everyone trusts all CAs defined by s/w vendor
- hierarchical model: best given an *obvious* global root and a *grand design* methodology
- enterprise trust model: best between peer organizations, where trust flexibility is required
- global PKI will include variety of trust models

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PKI

- Public key cryptography and public keys are essential for large scale secure systems
- PKI as we know today is designed for an off-line world in 1978
- Global PKI is very hard
  - who is authoritative for a given namespace?
  - liability challenge
- Revocation is always hard
- Things are much easier if relying party is the same as issuing party: no certificates are needed

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