

# BLS signatures, hashing to curves, and more: Dispatches from the IETF

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Stanford

August 18<sup>th</sup>, 2019

## People

- BLS signatures authors:

Sergey Gorbunov, Hoeteck Wee, Zhenfei Zhang

- Hash-to-curve authors:

Armando Faz-Hernández, Sam Scott, Nick Sullivan, Chris Wood

- Folks whose feedback has been crucial:

Björn Haase, Dan Harkins, Leo Reyzin,

Michael Scott, Shoko Yonezawa

Why standardize? +philosophy<sup>€</sup>

The obvious one: interoperability

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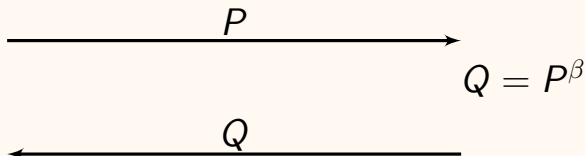
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Invalid curve attack [BMM00]

**Mallory**

$P$  of order  $\ell$   
(on the *wrong curve!*)

**Bob**  
secret  $\beta \in \mathbb{Z}_q$



Extract  $\beta \bmod \ell$

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Practice “polite crypto” [EWD1300]

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A forcing function for pragmatism

- Users will ignore bad or confusing standards. . .  
... so make choices (**but only the good ones**)

1. Standardizing advanced crypto with the IETF
2. BLS signatures, hash-to-curve, and more



# Standardizing advanced crypto with the IETF: the CFRG

## Internet Engineering Task Force

“We believe in rough consensus and running code.”

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- can be incorporated by “Standards Track” RFCs, e.g., TLS 1.3 incorporates the [curve25519 RFC](#)

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CFRG has an active mailing list, too!

→ <https://irtf.org/cfrg>

## CFRG standardization process—theory

Per [\[RFC5743\]](#):

1. CFRG prepares a new “internet draft”
2. IRTF reviews it
3. IESG reviews it
4. RFC Editor prepares and publishes it

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fine-toothed combing

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6. hand off document to IRTF, etc.

## CFRG standardization process—how long does it take?

Examples (from <https://datatracker.ietf.org>):

- [curve25519/curve448 \[RFC7748\]](#): about 1 year
  - 12 drafts in total
  - IRTF, IESG reviews took a few days each
  - RFC Editor queue took 3 months



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- [curve25519/curve448 \[RFC7748\]](#): about 1 year  
12 drafts in total  
IRTF, IESG reviews took a few days each  
RFC Editor queue took 3 months
- BLS signatures (WIP): 6 months so far  
2 drafts so far
- Hash-to-curve (WIP): 17 months so far  
5 drafts so far

## What about patents?

There's an RFC for that! [\[RFC8179\]](#)

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→ **Don't patent crypto.**

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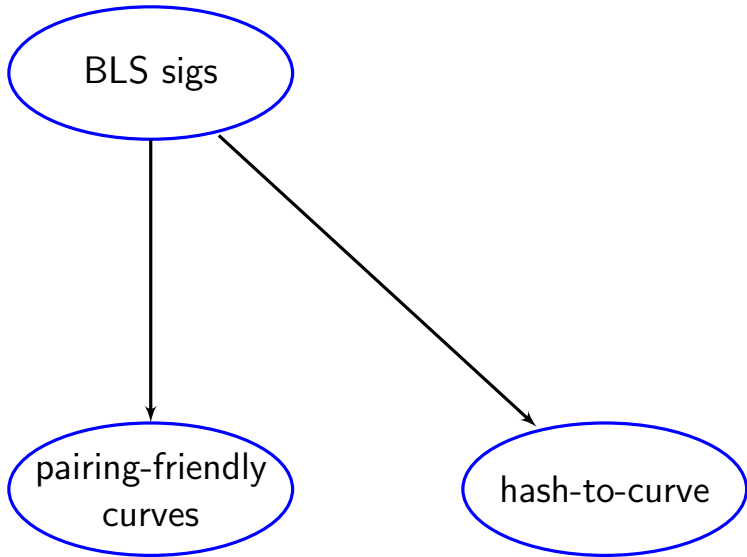
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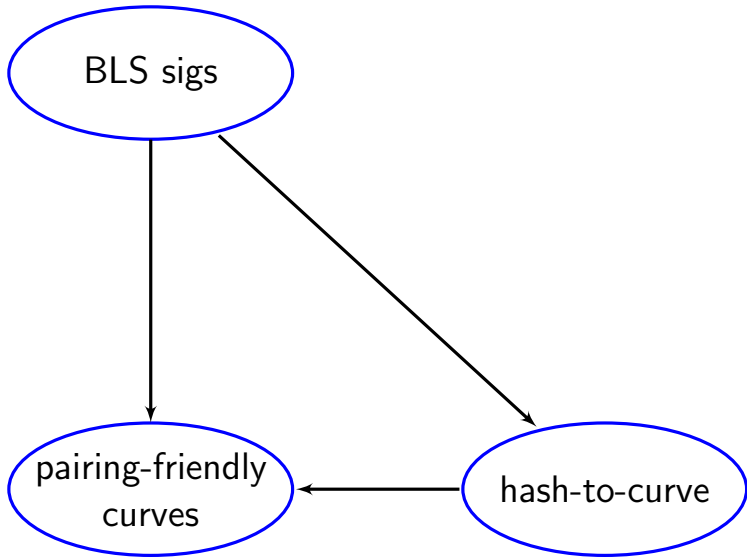


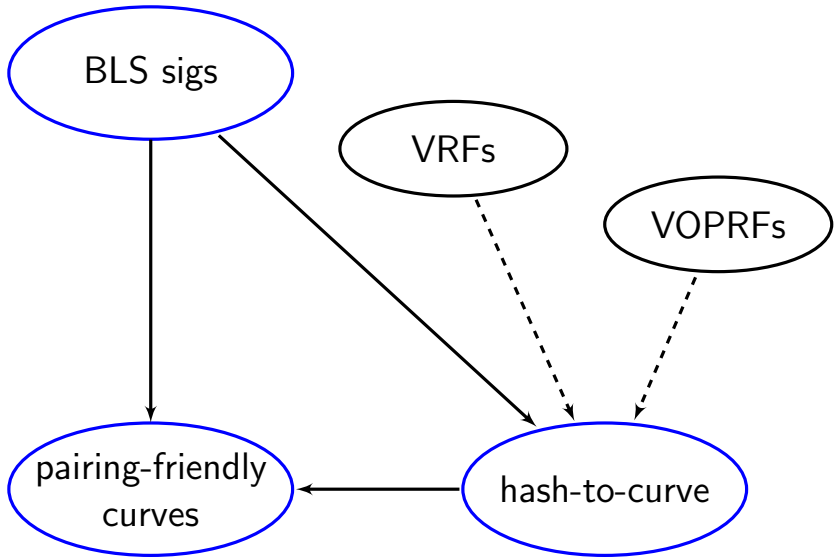
```
graph TD; A([BLS sigs]) --> B([pairing-friendly curves]);
```

BLS sigs

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## Pairing-friendly elliptic curves

A pairing-friendly elliptic curve defines:

- $\mathbb{G}_1 \subseteq E_1(\mathbb{F}_1)$  and  $\mathbb{G}_2 \subseteq E_2(\mathbb{F}_2)$  of prime order  $q$  generated by  $P_1$  and  $P_2$ , respectively
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- test vectors

## Hashing to elliptic curves (in constant time)

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$$H(\text{msg}) \rightarrow \mathbb{G} \quad [\text{BCIMRT10,FFSTV13}]$$

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## Rogue key attack

Let's say Alice has  $pk_a$  and Bob has  $pk_b$ .

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Since  $\prod pk_i = P_2^x$ , Mallory can forge a multi-signature for any msg:

$$e(H(\text{msg}), \prod pk_i) = e(H(\text{msg})^x, P_2)$$

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<https://github.com/cfrg/draft-irtf-cfrg-bls-signature>

<https://github.com/cfrg/draft-irtf-cfrg-hash-to-curve>

<https://bls-hash.crypto.fyi>