



US008396213B2

(12) **United States Patent**
Brown et al.

(10) **Patent No.:** **US 8,396,213 B2**
(45) **Date of Patent:** **Mar. 12, 2013**

(54) **ELLIPTIC CURVE RANDOM NUMBER GENERATION**

(75) Inventors: **Daniel R. L. Brown**, Mississauga (CA);
Scott A. Vanstone, Campbellville (CA)

(73) Assignee: **Certicom Corp.**, Mississauga, Ontario (CA)

(*) Notice: Subject to any disclaimer, the term of this patent is extended or adjusted under 35 U.S.C. 154(b) by 1283 days.

(21) Appl. No.: **11/336,814**

(22) Filed: **Jan. 23, 2006**

(65) **Prior Publication Data**

US 2007/0189527 A1 Aug. 16, 2007

Related U.S. Application Data

(60) Provisional application No. 60/644,982, filed on Jan. 21, 2005.

(51) **Int. Cl.**
H04L 9/00 (2006.01)

(52) **U.S. Cl.** **380/44**; 380/286; 380/28; 380/45; 380/46; 713/157

(58) **Field of Classification Search** 380/20-30, 380/44-47, 277-286; 713/170-171
See application file for complete search history.

(56) **References Cited**

U.S. PATENT DOCUMENTS

5,442,707 A * 8/1995 Miyaji et al. 380/30
6,044,388 A * 3/2000 DeBellis et al. 708/254
6,088,798 A * 7/2000 Shimbo 713/176
6,243,467 B1 * 6/2001 Reiter et al. 380/30
6,263,081 B1 * 7/2001 Miyaji et al. 380/28
6,307,935 B1 * 10/2001 Crandall et al. 380/28

6,424,712 B2 * 7/2002 Vanstone et al. 380/28
6,477,254 B1 * 11/2002 Miyazaki et al. 380/286
6,714,648 B2 * 3/2004 Miyazaki et al. 380/30
6,738,478 B1 * 5/2004 Vanstone et al. 380/28
6,882,958 B2 * 4/2005 Schmidt et al. 702/179
7,013,047 B2 * 3/2006 Schmidt et al. 382/199
7,062,043 B1 * 6/2006 Solinas 380/30
7,062,044 B1 * 6/2006 Solinas 380/30

(Continued)

FOREIGN PATENT DOCUMENTS

CA 2381397 A1 2/2001
JP 2001222220 8/2001

(Continued)

OTHER PUBLICATIONS

Dr RW Lichota, Verifying the correctness of cryptographic protocols using "convince", IEEE, Dec. 13, 1996, pp. 119-122.*

(Continued)

Primary Examiner — Nathan Flynn

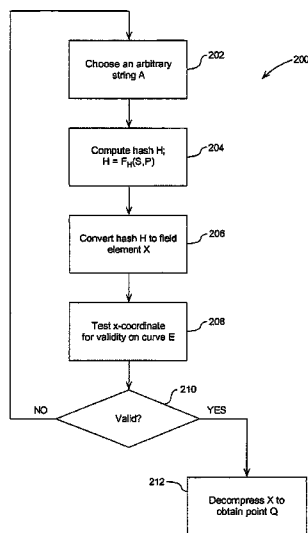
Assistant Examiner — Viral Lakhia

(74) *Attorney, Agent, or Firm* — Fish & Richardson P.C.

(57) **ABSTRACT**

An elliptic curve random number generator avoids escrow keys by choosing a point Q on the elliptic curve as verifiably random. An arbitrary string is chosen and a hash of that string computed. The hash is then converted to a field element of the desired field, the field element regarded as the x-coordinate of a point Q on the elliptic curve and the x-coordinate is tested for validity on the desired elliptic curve. If valid, the x-coordinate is decompressed to the point Q, wherein the choice of which is the two points is also derived from the hash value. Intentional use of escrow keys can provide for back up functionality. The relationship between P and Q is used as an escrow key and stored by for a security domain. The administrator logs the output of the generator to reconstruct the random number with the escrow key.

64 Claims, 6 Drawing Sheets



U.S. PATENT DOCUMENTS

7,092,979	B1 *	8/2006	Shim	708/250
7,171,000	B1 *	1/2007	Toh et al.	380/278
7,197,527	B2 *	3/2007	Naslund et al.	708/492
7,200,225	B1 *	4/2007	Schroepfel	380/28
7,221,758	B2 *	5/2007	Cramer et al.	380/44
7,225,341	B2 *	5/2007	Yoshino et al.	713/193
7,308,096	B2 *	12/2007	Okeya et al.	380/28
7,418,099	B2 *	8/2008	Vanstone et al.	380/28
7,480,795	B2 *	1/2009	Vanstone	713/156
7,542,568	B2 *	6/2009	Ohmori et al.	380/201
7,599,491	B2 *	10/2009	Lambert	380/30
7,639,799	B2 *	12/2009	Lauter et al.	380/30
7,650,507	B2 *	1/2010	Crandall et al.	713/176
7,680,270	B2 *	3/2010	Srungaram	380/30
2002/0044649	A1 *	4/2002	Gallant et al.	380/30
2003/0081785	A1 *	5/2003	Boneh et al.	380/277
2004/0102242	A1	5/2004	Poelmann	
2005/0036609	A1 *	2/2005	Eisentraeger et al.	380/30
2005/0251680	A1 *	11/2005	Brown et al.	713/171
2006/0129800	A1 *	6/2006	Lauter et al.	713/151
2006/0285682	A1 *	12/2006	Sarangarajan et al.	380/28
2007/0248224	A1 *	10/2007	Buskey et al.	380/30
2008/0056499	A1 *	3/2008	Vanstone	380/278

FOREIGN PATENT DOCUMENTS

JP	2003-507761	2/2003
WO	WO 01/13218 A1	2/2001
WO	0135573	5/2001

OTHER PUBLICATIONS

Satoh A, Scalable dual-field elliptical curve cryptographic processor, Apr. 2003, IEEE, vol. 52, pp. 452-456.*

Lee, Kap-piu & Wong, Kwok-wo; "Elliptic Curve Random No. Generation"; *Electrical and Electronic Technology, 2001. Tencon. Proceedings of IEEE Region 10 International Conference*, Aug. 19-22, 2001; pp. 239 to 241.

Kaliski, Burton S., Jr.; "A Pseudo-Random Bit Generator Based on Elliptic Logarithms"; *Advances in Cryptology, Crypto 1986*; pp. 84-103, vol. 263.

Johnson, Don B.; "X9.82 Part 3—Number Theoretic DRBGs"; NIST RNG Workshop; Jul. 20, 2004; Retrieved from <http://csrc.nist.gov/groups/ST/toolkit/documents/rmq/NumberTheoreticDRBG.pdf>.

Prins, Leendert; supplementary European Search Report from corresponding EP Application No. 06704329.9; search completed Oct. 29, 2009.

Office Action received in Japanese Patent Application No. 2007-551522, issued on Aug. 19, 2011, with English translation, 19 pages total.

ANS X9.62/2005; "Public Key Cryptography for the Financial Services Industry—The Elliptic Curve Digital Signature Algorithm (ECDSA)"; Nov. 16, 2005; 163 pages.

ANSI X9.82; "Part 3—Draft" Oct. 2003; 175 pages.

ANS X9.82; "Part 3—Draft"; Jun. 2004; 189 pages.

Barker, Elaine and John Kelsey; "Recommendation for Random Number Generation Using Deterministic Random Bit Generators"; NIST Special Publication 800-90; National Institute of Standards and Technology; Dec. 2005; 130 pages.

Barker, Elaine and John Kelsey; "Recommendation for Random Number Generation Using Deterministic Random Bit Generators (Revised)"; NIST Special Publication 800-90; National Institute of Standards and Technology; Mar. 2007; 133 pages.

Blum, Manuel and Silvio Miceli; "How to Generate Cryptographically Strong Sequences of Pseudo-Random Bits"; *SIAM Journal on Computing*; vol. 13, No. 4; Nov. 1984; pp. 850-864.

Brown, Daniel R.L.; "Conjecture Security of the ANSI-NIST Elliptic Curve RNG"; *Cryptology ePrint Archive*; Report 2006/117; Mar. 29, 2006; 14 pages. Retrieved from the internet <<http://eprint.iacr.org>>.

El Mahassni, Edwin and Igor Shparlinksi; "On the Uniformity of Distribution of Congruential Generators over Elliptic Curves"; *Sequences and Their Applications: Proceedings of SETA '01; 2002'* pp. 257-264.

Goldreich, Oded; *Foundations of Cryptography Basic Tools*; Cambridge University Press; 2001; pp. 30-183.

Gjoesteen, Kristian; "Comments on Dual-EC-DRBG/NIST SP 800-90, Draft Dec. 2005"; Mar. 16, 2006; 8 pages.

Guerel, Nicolas; "Extracting Bits from Coordinates of a Point of an Elliptic Curve"; *Cryptology ePrint Archive*; Report 2005/324; 2005; 9 pages. Retrieved from the internet <<http://eprint.iacr.org>>.

Luby, Michael; "Pseudorandomness and Cryptographic Applications"; Princeton University Press; 1996; pp. 70-78.

Communication pursuant to Article 94(3) EPC issued in European Application No. 06704329.9 on Mar. 10, 2010; 4 pages.

Communication pursuant to Article 94(3) EPC issued in European Application No. 06704329.9 on Jul. 22, 2010; 4 pages.

Communication pursuant to Article 94(3) EPC issued in European Application No. 06704329.9 on Jun. 15, 2011; 4 pages.

International Search Report and Written Opinion of the International Searching Authority issued in International Application No. PCT/CA2006/000065 on May 1, 2006; 11 pages.

International Preliminary Report on Patentability issued in International Application No. PCT/CA2006/000065 on Aug. 2, 2007; 8 pages.

Notice of Final Rejection issued in Japanese Application No. 2007-551522 on May 30, 2012; 7 pages (with translation).

Office Action issued in Japanese Application No. 2007-551522 on Jan. 18, 2012; 8 pages (with translation).

Official Action issued in Canadian Application No. 2,594,670 on Aug. 9, 2012; 4 pages.

* cited by examiner

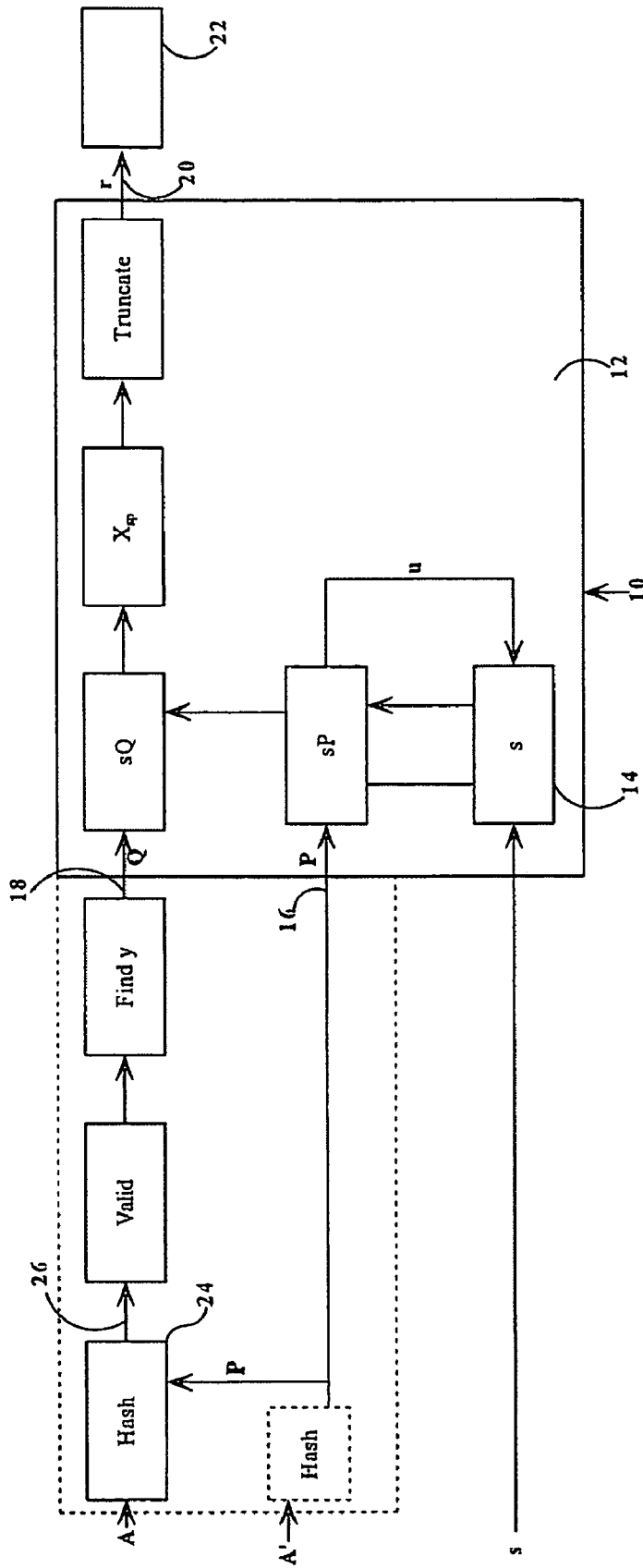


FIGURE 1

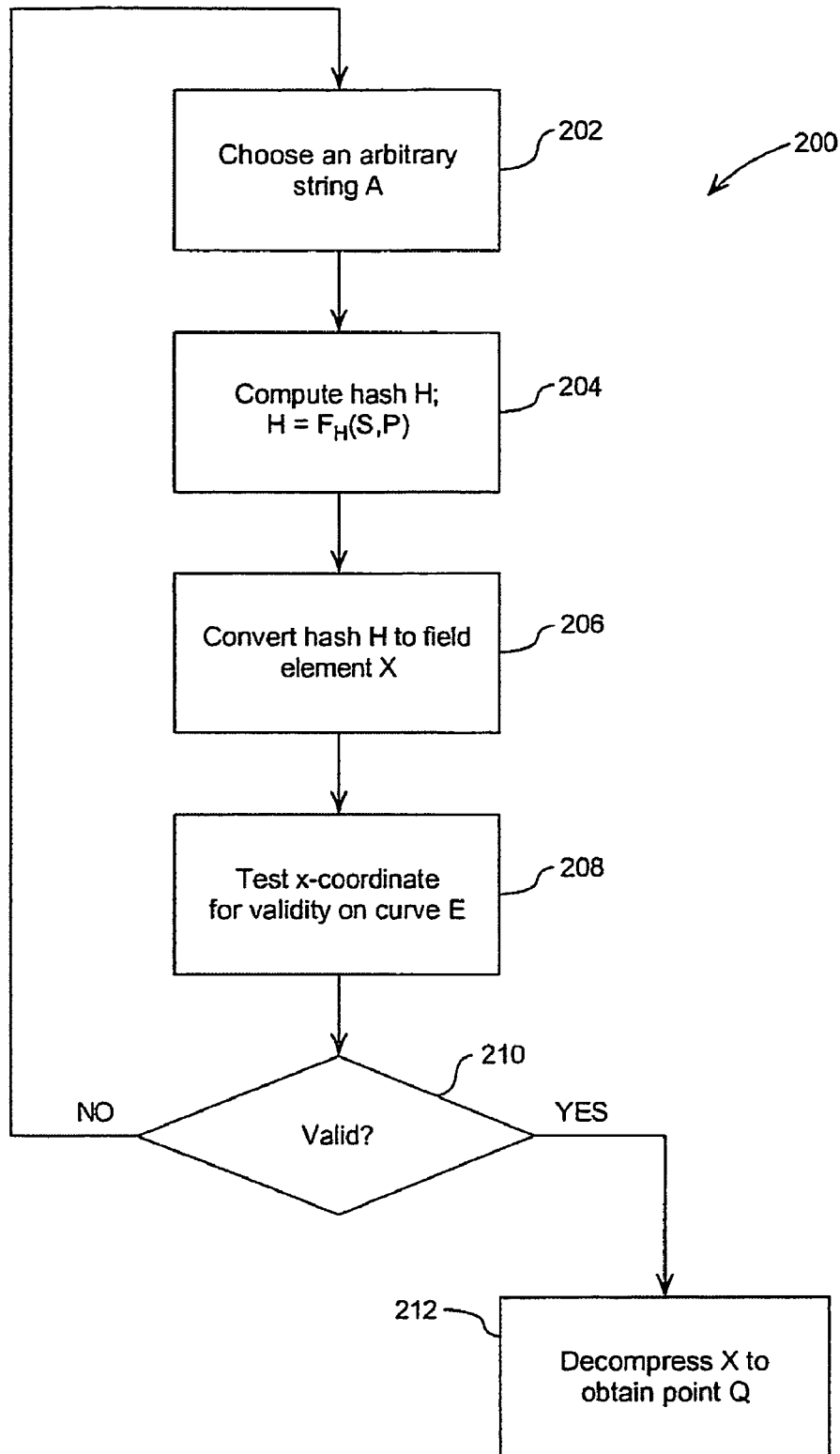


Figure 2

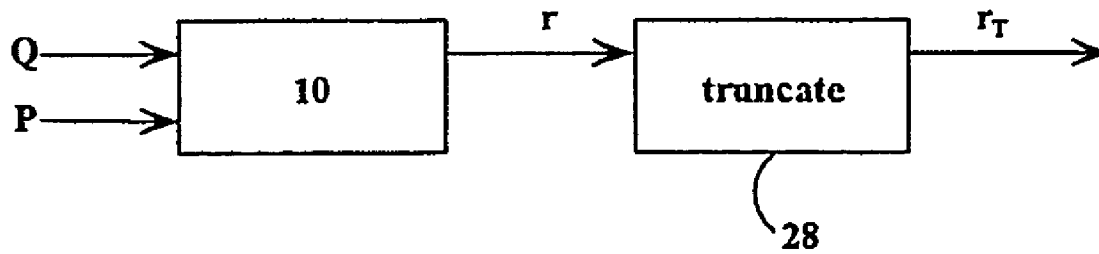


FIGURE 3

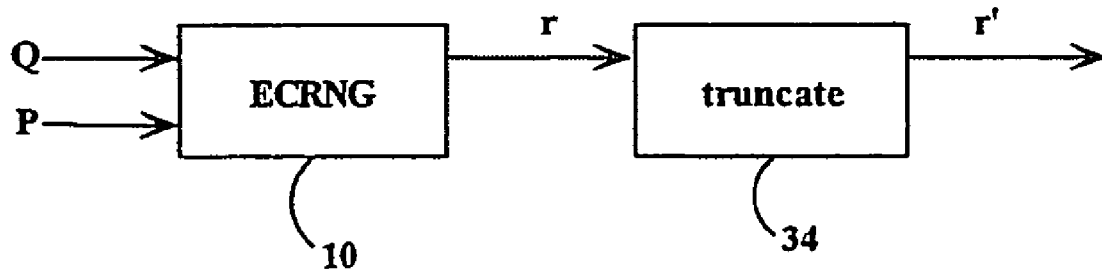


FIGURE 5

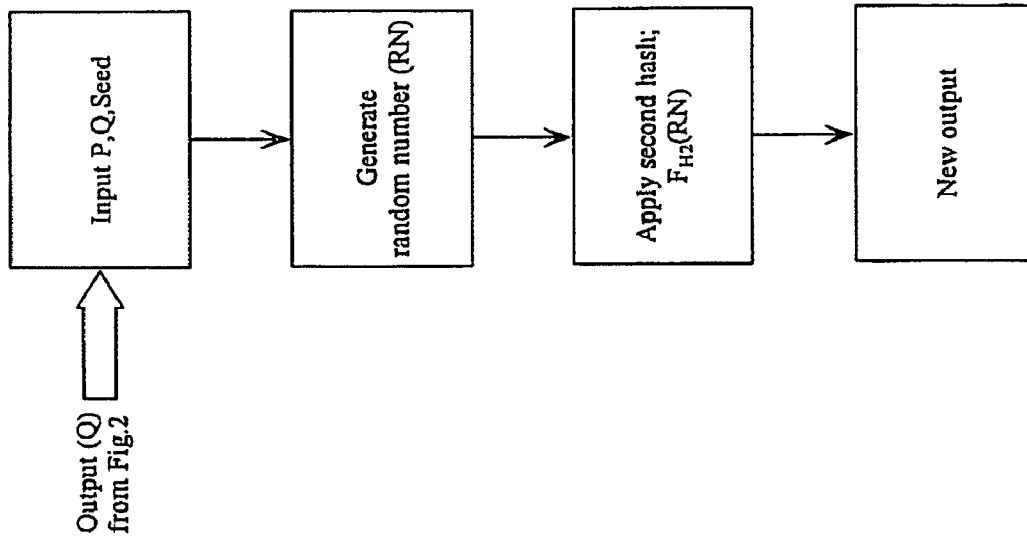


Figure 6

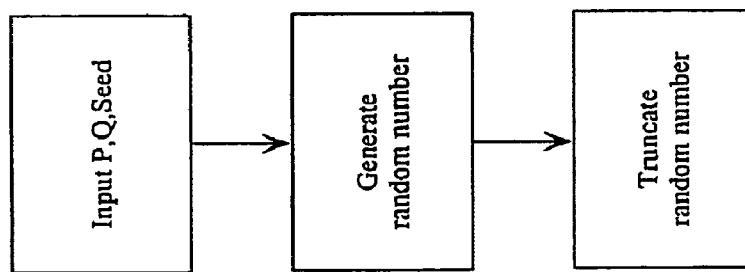


Figure 4

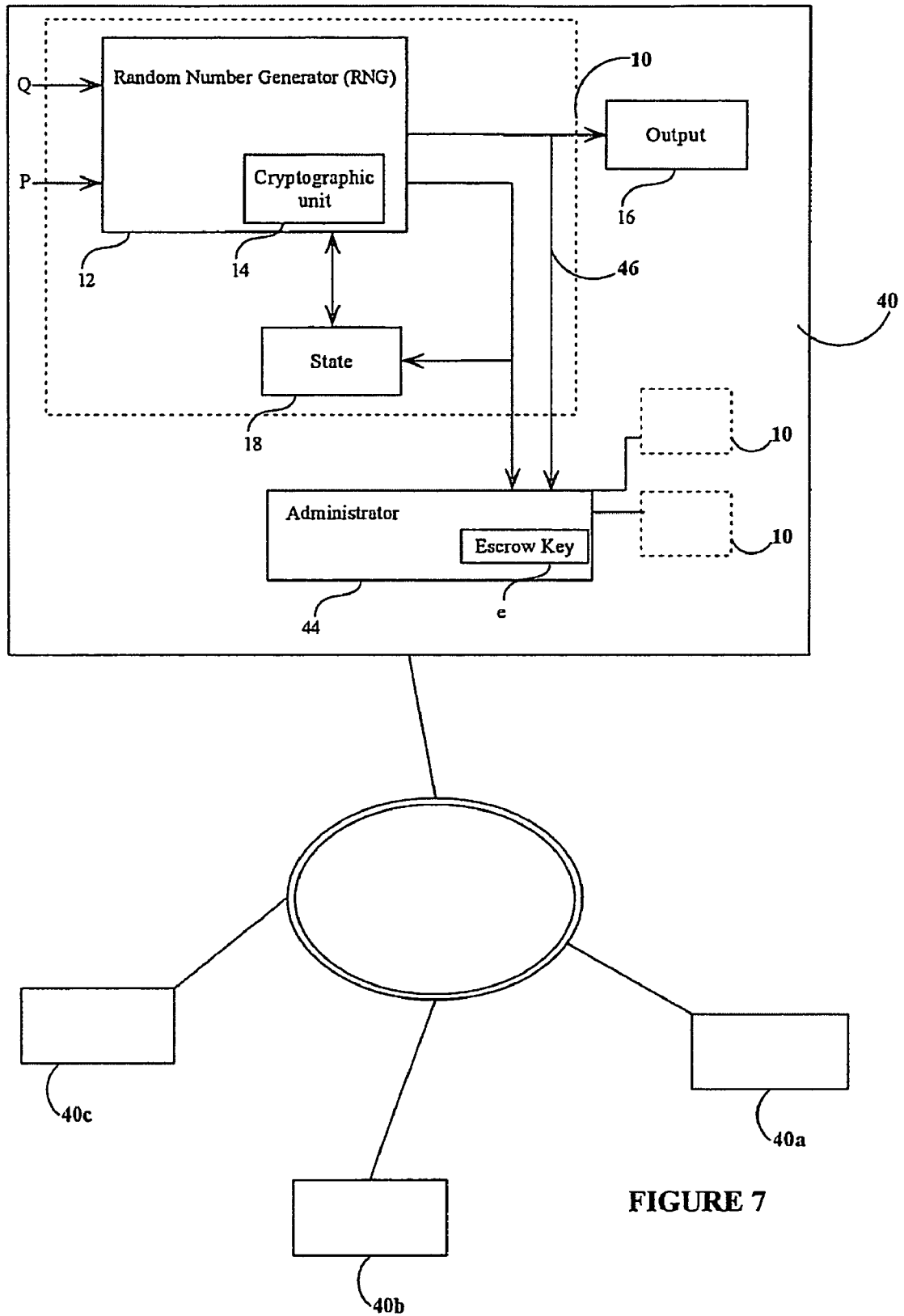


FIGURE 7

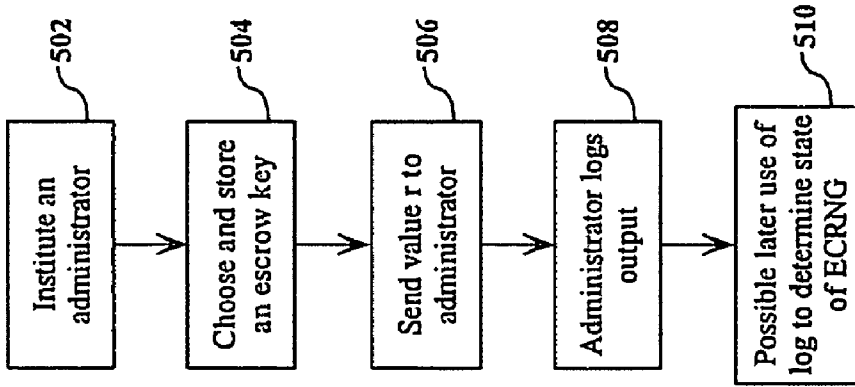


Figure 9

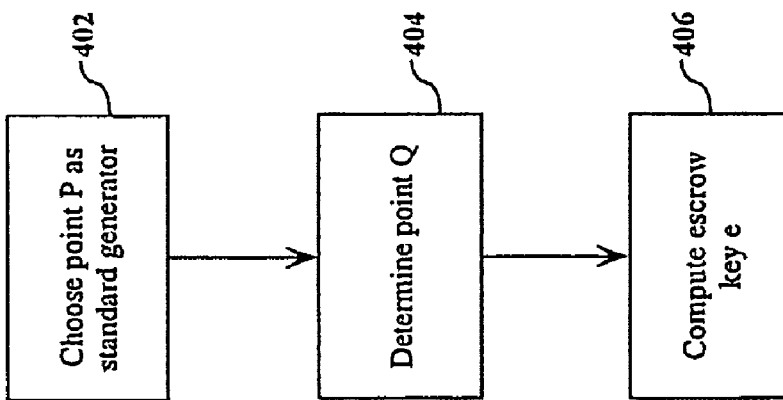


Figure 8

500

400

ELLIPTIC CURVE RANDOM NUMBER GENERATION

This application claims priority from U.S. Provisional Patent Application No. 60/644,982 filed on Jan. 21, 2005.

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates to systems and methods for cryptographic random number generation.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PRIOR ART

Random numbers are utilised in many cryptographic operations to provide underlying security. In public key infrastructures, for example, the private key of a key pair is generated by a random number generator and the corresponding public key mathematically derived therefrom. A new key pair may be generated for each session and the randomness of the generator therefore is critical to the security of the cryptographic system.

To provide a secure source of random numbers, cryptographically secure pseudorandom bit generators have been developed in which the security of each generator relies on a presumed intractability of the underlying number-theoretical problem. The American National Standards Institute (ANSI) has set up an Accredited Standards Committee (ASC) X9 for the financial services industry, which is preparing a American National Standard (ANS) X9.82 for cryptographic random number generation (RNG). One of the RNG methods in the draft of X9.82, called Dual_EC_DRBG, uses elliptic curve cryptography (ECC) for its security. Dual_EC_DRBG will hereinafter be referred to as elliptic curve random number generation (ECRNG).

Elliptic curve cryptography relies on the intractability of the discrete log problem in cyclic subgroups of elliptic curve groups. An elliptic curve E is the set of points (x, y) that satisfy the defining equation of the elliptic curve. The defining equation is a cubic equation, and is non-singular. The coordinates x and y are elements of a field, which is a set of elements that can be added, subtracted and divided, with the exception of zero. Examples of fields include rational numbers and real numbers. There are also finite fields, which are the fields most often used in cryptography. An example of a finite field is the set of integers modulo a prime q .

Without the loss of generality, the defining equation of the elliptic curve can be in the Weierstrass form, which depends on the field of the coordinates. When the field F is integers modulo a prime $q > 3$, then the Weierstrass equation takes the form $y^2 = x^3 + ax + b$, where a and b are elements of the field F .

The elliptic curve E includes the points (x, y) and one further point, namely the point O at infinity. The elliptic curve E also has a group structure, which means that the two points P and Q on the curve can be added to form a third point $P+Q$. The point O is the identity of the group, meaning $P+O=O+P=P$, for all points P . Addition is associative, so that $P+(Q+R)=(P+Q)+R$, and commutative, so that $P+Q=Q+R$, for all points P, Q and R . Each point P has a negative point $-P$, such that $P+(-P)=O$. When the curve equation is the Weierstrass equation of the form $y^2 = x^3 + ax + b$, the negative of $P=(x, y)$ is determined easily as $-P=(x, -y)$. The formula for adding points P and Q in terms of their coordinates is only moderately complicated involving just a handful of field operations.

The ECRNG uses as input two elliptic curve points P and Q that are fixed. These points are not assumed to be secret. Typically, P is the standard generator of the elliptic curve

domain parameters, and Q is some other point. In addition a secret seed is inserted into the ECRNG.

The ECRNG has a state, which may be considered to be an integer s . The state s is updated every time the ECRNG produces an output. The updated state is computed as $u=z(sP)$, where $z(\)$ is a function that converts an elliptic curve point to an integer. Generally, z consists of taking the x -coordinate of the point, and then converting the resulting field element to an integer. Thus u will typically be an integer derived from the x -coordinate of the point s .

The output of the ECRNG is computed as follows: $r=t(z(sQ))$, where t is a truncation function. Generally the truncation function removes the leftmost bits of its input. In the ECRNG, the number of bits truncated depends on the choice of elliptic curve, and typically may be in the range of 6 to 19 bits.

Although P and Q are known, it is believed that the output r is random and cannot be predicted. Therefore successive values will have no relationship that can be exploited to obtain private keys and break the cryptographic functions. The applicant has recognised that anybody who knows an integer d such that $Q=dP$, can deduce an integer e such that $ed=1 \pmod n$, where n is the order of G , and thereby have an integer e such that $P=eQ$. Suppose $U=sP$ and $R=sQ$, which are the precursors to the updated state and the ECRNG output. With the integer e , one can compute U from R as $U=eR$. Therefore, the output $r=t(z(R))$, and possible values of R can be determined from r . The truncation function means that the truncated bits of R would have to be guessed. The z function means that only the x -coordinate is available, so that decompression would have to be applied to obtain the full point R . In the case of the ECRNG, there would be somewhere between about $2^6=64$ and 2^{19} (i.e. about half a million) possible points R which correspond to r , with the exact number depending on the curve and the specific value of r .

The full set of R values is easy to determine from r , and as noted above, determination of the correct value for R determines $U=eR$, if one knows e . The updated state is $u=z(U)$, so it can be determined from the correct value of R . Therefore knowledge of r and e allows one to determine the next state to within a number of possibilities somewhere between 2^6 and 2^{19} . This uncertainty will invariably be eliminated once another output is observed, whether directly or indirectly through a one-way function.

Once the next state is determined, all future states of ECRNG can be determined because the ECRNG is a deterministic function. (at least unless additional random entropy is fed into the ECRNG state) All outputs of the ECRNG are determined from the determined states of the ECRNG. Therefore knowledge of r and e , allows one to determine all future outputs of the ECRNG.

It has therefore been identified by the applicant that this method potentially possesses a trapdoor, whereby standardizers or implementers of the algorithm may possess a piece of information with which they can use a single output and an instantiation of the RNG to determine all future states and output of the RNG, thereby completely compromising its security. It is therefore an object of the present invention to obviate or mitigate the above mentioned disadvantages.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

In one aspect, the present invention provides a method for computing a verifiably random point Q for use with another point P in an elliptic curve random number generator comprising computing a hash including the point P as an input, and deriving the point Q from the hash.

In another aspect, the present invention provides a method for producing an elliptic curve random number comprising generating an output using an elliptic curve random number generator, and truncating the output to generate the random number.

In yet another aspect, the present invention provides a method for producing an elliptic curve random number comprising generating an output using an elliptic curve random number generator, and applying the output to a one-way function to generate the random number.

In yet another aspect, the present invention provides a method of backup functionality for an elliptic curve random number generator, the method comprising the steps of computing an escrow key e upon determination of a point Q of the elliptic curve, whereby $P=eQ$, P being another point of the elliptic curve; instituting an administrator, and having the administrator store the escrow key e ; having members with an elliptic curve random number generator send to the administrator, an output r generated before an output value of the generator; the administrator logging the output r for future determination of the state of the generator.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

An embodiment of the invention will now be described by way of example only with reference to the appended drawings wherein:

FIG. 1 is a schematic representation of a cryptographic random number generation scheme.

FIG. 2 is a flow chart illustrating a selection process for choosing elliptic curve points.

FIG. 3 is a block diagram, similar to FIG. 1 showing a further embodiment

FIG. 4 is flow chart illustrating the process implemented by the apparatus of FIG. 3.

FIG. 5 is a block diagram showing a further embodiment.

FIG. 6 is a flow chart illustrating yet another embodiment of the process of FIG. 2.

FIG. 7 is schematic representation of an administrated cryptographic random number generation scheme.

FIG. 8 is a flow chart illustrating an escrow key selection process.

FIG. 9 is a flow chart illustrating a method for securely utilizing an escrow key.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

Referring therefore to FIG. 1, a cryptographic random number generator (ECRNG) 10 includes an arithmetic unit 12 for performing elliptic curve computations. The ECRNG also includes a secure register 14 to retain a state value s and has a pair of inputs 16, 18 to receive a pair of initialisation points P , Q . The points P , Q are elliptic curve points that are assumed to be known. An output 20 is provided for communication of the random integer to a cryptographic module 22. The initial contents of the register 14 are provided by a seed input S .

This input 16 representing the point P is in a first embodiment, selected from a known value published as suitable for such use.

The input 18 is obtained from the output of a one way function in the form of a hash function 24 typically a cryptographically secure hash function such as SHA1 or SHA2 that receives as inputs the point P . The function 24 operates upon an arbitrary bit string A to produce a hashed output 26. The output 26 is applied to arithmetic unit 12 for further processing to provide the input Q .

In operation, the ECRNG receives a bit string as a seed, which is stored in the register 14. The seed is maintained secret and is selected to meet pre-established cryptographic criteria, such as randomness and Hamming weight, the criteria being chosen to suit the particular application.

In order to ensure that d is not likely to be known (e.g. such that $P=dQ$, and $ed=1 \pmod{n}$); one or both of the inputs 16, 18 is chosen so as to be verifiably random. In the embodiment of FIG. 1, Q is chosen in a way that is verifiably random by deriving it from the output of a hash-function 24 (preferably one-way) whose input includes the point P . As shown in FIG. 2 an arbitrary string A is selected at step 202, a hash H of A is computed at step 204 with P and optionally S as inputs to a hash-based function $F_H()$, and the hash H is then converted by the arithmetic unit 12 to a field element X of a desired field F at step 206. P may be pre-computed or fixed, or may also be chosen to be a verifiably random chosen value. The field element X is regarded as the x -coordinate of Q (thus a "compressed" representation of Q). The x -coordinate is then tested for validity on the desired elliptic curve E at step 208, and whether or not X is valid, is determined at step 210. If valid, the x -coordinate provided by element X is decompressed to provide point Q at step 212. The choice of which of two possible values of the y co-ordinate is generally derived from the hash value.

The points P and Q are applied at respective inputs 16, 18 and the arithmetic unit 12 computes the point sQ where s is the current value stored in the register 14. The arithmetic unit 12 converts the x -coordinate of the point (in this example point sQ) to an integer and truncates the value to obtain $r=(z(sQ))$. The truncated value r is provided to the output 20.

The arithmetic unit 12 similarly computes a value to update the register 14 by computing sP , where s is the value of the register 14, and converting the x -coordinate of the point sP to an integer u . The integer u is stored in the register to replace s for the next iteration. {ditto above}

As noted above, the point P may also be verifiably random, but may also be an established or fixed value. Therefore, the embodiment of FIG. 1 may be applied or retrofitted to systems where certain base points (e.g. P) are already implemented in hardware. Typically, the base point P will be some already existing base point, such as those recommended in Federal Information Processing Standard (FIPS) 186-2. In such cases, P is not chosen to be verifiably random.

In general, inclusion of the point P in the input to the hash function ensures that P was determined before Q is determined, by virtue of the one-way property of the hash function and since Q is derived from an already determined P . Because P was determined before Q , it is clearly understood that P could not have been chosen as a multiple of Q (e.g. where $P=eQ$), and therefore finding d is generally as hard as solving a random case of the discrete logarithm problem.

Thus, having a seed value S provided and a hash-based function $F()$ provided, a verifier can determine that $Q=F(S, P)$, where P may or may not be verifiably random. Similarly, one could compute $P=F(S, Q)$ with the same effect, though it is presumed that this is not necessary given that the value of P in the early drafts of X9.82 were identical to the base points specified in FIPS 186-2.

The generation of Q from a bit string as outlined above may be performed externally of the ECRNG 10, or, preferably, internally using the arithmetic unit 12. Where both P and Q are required to be verifiably random, a second hash function 24 shown in ghosted outline in FIG. 1 is incorporated to generate the coordinate of point P from the bit string A . By providing a hash function for at least one of the inputs, a verifiably random input is obtained.

It will also be noted that the output generated is derived from the x coordinate of the point sP. Accordingly, the inputs **16**, **18** may be the x coordinates of P and Q and the corresponding values of sP and sQ obtained by using Montgomery multiplication techniques thereby obviating the need for recovery of the y coordinates.

An alternative method for choosing Q is to choose Q in some canonical form, such that its bit representation contains some string that would be difficult to produce by generating $Q=dP$ for some known d and P for example a representation of a name. It will be appreciated that intermediate forms between this method and the preferred method may also exist, where Q is partly canonical and partly derived verifiably at random. Such selection of Q, whether verifiably random, canonical, or some intermediate, can be called verifiable.

Another alternative method for preventing a key escrow attack on the output of an ECRNG, shown in FIGS. **3** and **4** is to add a truncation function **28** to ECRNG **10** to truncate the ECRNG output to approximately half the length of a compressed elliptic curve point. Preferably, this operation is done in addition to the preferred method of FIGS. **1** and **2**, however, it will be appreciated that it may be performed as a primary measure for preventing a key escrow attack. The benefit of truncation is that the list of R values associated with a single ECRNG output—is typically infeasible to search. For example, for a 160-bit elliptic curve group, the number of potential points R in the list is about 2^{80} , and searching the list would be about as hard as solving the discrete logarithm problem. The cost of this method is that the ECRNG is made half as efficient, because the output length is effectively halved.

Yet another alternative method shown in FIGS. **5** and **6** comprises filtering the output of the ECRNG through another one-way function F_{H2} , identified as **34**, such as a hash function to generate a new output. Again, preferably, this operation is performed in addition to the preferred method shown in FIG. **2**, however may be performed as a primary measure to prevent key escrow attacks. The extra hash is relatively cheap compared to the elliptic curve operations performed in the arithmetic unit **12**, and does not significantly diminish the security of the ECRNG.

As discussed above, to effectively prevent the existence of escrow keys, a verifiably random Q should be accompanied with either a verifiably random P or a pre-established P. A pre-established P may be a point P that has been widely publicized and accepted to have been selected before the notion of the ECRNG **12**, which consequently means that P could not have been chosen as $P=eQ$ because Q was not created at the time when P was established.

Whilst the above techniques ensure the security of the system using the ECRNG by “closing” the trap door, it is also possible to take advantage of the possible interdependence of P and Q, namely where $P=eQ$, through careful use of the existence of e.

In such a scenario, the value e may be regarded as an escrow key. If P and Q are established in a security domain controlled by an administrator, and the entity who generates Q for the domain does so with knowledge of e (or indirectly via knowledge of d). The administrator will have an escrow key for every ECRNG that follows that standard.

Escrow keys are known to have advantages in some contexts. They can provide a backup functionality. If a cryptographic key is lost, then data encrypted under that key is also lost. However, encryption keys are generally the output of random number generators. Therefore, if the ECRNG is used to generate the encryption key K, then it may be possible that the escrow key e can be used to recover the encryption key K.

Escrow keys can provide other functionality, such as for use in a wiretap. In this case, trusted law enforcement agents may need to decrypt encrypted traffic of criminals, and to do this they may want to be able to use an escrow key to recover an encryption key.

FIG. **7** shows a domain **40** having a number of ECRNG's **10** each associated with a respective member of the domain **40**. The domain **40** communicates with other domains **40a**, **40b**, **40c** through a network **42**, such as the internet. Each ECRNG of a domain has a pair of identical inputs P,Q. The domain **40** includes an administrator **44** who maintains in a secure manner an escrow key e.

The administrator **44** chooses the values of P and Q such that he knows an escrow key e such that $Q=eP$. Other members of the domain **40** use the values of P and Q, thereby giving the administrator **44** an escrow key e that works for all the members of the organization.

This is most useful in its backup functionality for protecting against the loss of encryption keys. Escrow keys e could also be made member-specific so that each member has its own escrow e' from points selected by the administrator **44**.

As generally denoted as numeral **400** in FIG. **8**, the administrator initially selects a point P which will generally be chosen as the standard generator P for the desired elliptic curve **402**. The administrator then selects a value d and the point Q will be determined as $Q=dP$ **404**, for some random integer d of appropriate size. The escrow key e is computed as $e=d^{-1} \bmod n$ **406**, where n is the order of the generator P and stored by the administrator.

The secure use of such an escrow key **34e** is generally denoted by numeral **500** and illustrated in FIG. **9**. The administrator **44** is first instituted **502** and an escrow keys e would be chosen and stored **504** by the administrator **44**.

In order for the escrow key to function with full effectiveness, the escrow administrator **44** needs direct access to an ECRNG output value r that was generated before the ECRNG output value k (i.e. 16) which is to be recovered. It is not sufficient to have indirect access to r via a one-way function or an encryption algorithm. A formalized way to achieve this is to have each member with an ECRNG **12** communicate with the administrator **44** as indicated at **46** in FIG. **7**. and step **506** in FIG. **9**. This may be most useful for encrypted file storage systems or encrypted email accounts. A more seamless method may be applied for cryptographic applications. For example, in the SSL and TLS protocols, which are used for securing web (HTTP) traffic, a client and server perform a handshake in which their first actions are to exchange random values sent in the clear.

Many other protocols exchange such random values, often called nonces. If the escrow administrator observes these nonces, and keeps a log of them **508**, then later it may be able to determine the necessary r value. This allows the administrator to determine the subsequent state of the ECRNG **12** of the client or server **510** (whoever is a member of the domain), and thereby recover the subsequent ECRNG **12** values. In particular, for the client who generally generates a random pre-master secret from which is derived the encryption key for the SSL or TLS session, the escrow key may allow recovery of the session key. Recovery of the session key allows recovery of the whole SSL or TLS session.

If the session was logged, then it may be recovered. This does not compromise long-term private keys, just session keys obtained from the output of the ECRNG, which should alleviate any concern regarding general suspicions related to escrows.

Whilst escrow keys are also known to have disadvantages in other contexts, their control within specific security

domains may alleviate some of those concerns. For example, with digital signatures for non-repudiation, it is crucial that nobody but the signer has the signing key, otherwise the signer may legitimately argue the repudiation of signatures. The existence of escrow keys means the some other entity has access to the signing key, which enables signers to argue that the escrow key was used to obtain their signing key and subsequently generate their signatures. However, where the domain is limited to a particular organisation or part of an organisation it may be sufficient that the organisation cannot repudiate the signature. Lost signing keys do not imply lost data, unlike encryption keys, so there is little need to backup signing keys.

Although the invention has been described with reference to certain specific embodiments, various modifications thereof will be apparent to those skilled in the art without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention as outlined in the claims appended hereto.

What is claimed is:

1. A computer-implemented method comprising:
 - obtaining a first input value that represents a first elliptic curve point;
 - evaluating a hash function based on said first input value, wherein evaluating said hash function generates a hash value;
 - deriving from said hash value a second input value that represents a second elliptic curve point;
 - accessing an initial secret value stored in a register of an arithmetic unit;
 - generating, by a processor, an output value based on a scalar multiple of said second elliptic curve point, the scalar multiple of said second elliptic curve point obtained by combining said secret value with said second input value;
 - using said output value as a random number to achieve a specified level of security in a cryptographic operation;
 - generating, by the processor, an updated secret value based on a scalar multiple of said first elliptic curve point, the scalar multiple of said first elliptic curve point obtained by combining said initial secret value with said first input value; and
 - storing said updated secret value in said register.
2. The method of claim 1, wherein said first input value and said second input value represent two different elliptic curve points on the same elliptic curve.
3. The method of claim 1, wherein deriving said second input value includes verifying that said hash value corresponds to a valid coordinate on an elliptic curve, wherein said second elliptic curve point includes said valid coordinate.
4. The method of claim 3, wherein deriving said second input value further includes obtaining a second coordinate for said second elliptic curve point.
5. The method of claim 1, wherein generating said output value includes:
 - selecting a coordinate from said scalar multiple of said second elliptic curve point; and
 - truncating said coordinate to a bit string.
6. The method of claim 5, wherein truncating said coordinate comprises truncating said coordinate to one half of a length of an elliptic curve point representation.
7. The method of claim 1, wherein generating said output value includes:
 - selecting a coordinate from said scalar multiple of said second elliptic curve point; and
 - hashing said coordinate to a bit string.

8. The method of claim 1, wherein generating said updated secret value includes deriving said updated secret value from a coordinate of said scalar multiple of said first elliptic curve point.

9. The method of claim 8, wherein said coordinate of said scalar multiple of said first elliptic curve point comprises an x coordinate.

10. The method of claim 1, wherein obtaining said first input value comprises deriving said first input value from an initial hash value.

11. The method of claim 1, wherein said first input value represents an x coordinate of said first elliptic curve point.

12. The method of claim 1, wherein said second input value represents an x coordinate of said second elliptic curve point.

13. The method of claim 1, wherein said first input represents two coordinates of said first elliptic curve point.

14. The method of claim 1, wherein the first input value comprises a verifiably random first input value.

15. The method of claim 14, wherein the second input value comprises a verifiably random second input value.

16. The method of claim 1, wherein said second input represents two coordinates of said second elliptic curve point.

17. A computer-implemented method comprising:

- obtaining a verifiably random first input value that represents a first elliptic curve point;
- obtaining a second input value that represents a second elliptic curve point;
- generating, by a processor, a scalar multiple of said second elliptic curve point based on a secret value and said second input value;
- generating, by the processor, an output value by evaluating a one-way function based on said scalar multiple of said second elliptic curve point;
- using said output value as a random number to achieve a specified level of security in a cryptographic operation;
- generating, by the processor, a scalar multiple of said first elliptic curve point based on said secret value and said first input value;
- generating, by the processor, an updated secret value based on said scalar multiple of said first elliptic curve point; and
- storing said updated secret value.

18. The method of claim 17, wherein said one-way function includes a hash function.

19. The method of claim 17, wherein the second input value comprises a verifiably random second input value.

20. A random number generator system comprising:

an input module operable to:

obtain a first input value that represents a first elliptic curve point;

generate a hash value based on said first input value; and derive from said hash value a second input value that represents a second elliptic curve point;

a register operable to store a secret value; and

an arithmetic unit operable to:

access said first input value, said second input value, and said secret value;

generate an output value based on said secret value and said second input value;

provide, to a cryptographic module, said output value as a random number in accordance with a specified level of security;

generate an updated secret value based on said secret value and said first input value; and

store said updated secret value in said register.

21. The random number generator system of claim 20, wherein generating said hash value comprises evaluating a hash function based on said first input value.

22. The random number generator system of claim 21, wherein said input module includes a hash function module operable to generate the hash value.

23. The random number generator system of claim 20, wherein said arithmetic unit is operable to generate said output value by generating a coordinate of a scalar multiple of said second elliptic curve point.

24. The random number generator system of claim 23, wherein said arithmetic unit is operable to generate said coordinate of said scalar multiple of said second elliptic curve point based on said secret value and said second input value.

25. The random number generator system of claim 24, wherein said arithmetic unit is operable to generate said updated secret value by generating a coordinate of a scalar multiple of said first elliptic curve point.

26. The random number generator system of claim 25, wherein said arithmetic unit is operable to generate said coordinate of said scalar multiple of said first elliptic curve point based on said secret value and said first input value.

27. The random number generator system of claim 26, wherein said arithmetic unit is operable to generate said updated secret value by converting said coordinate of said scalar multiple of said first elliptic curve point to an integer.

28. The random number generator system of claim 26, wherein said arithmetic unit is operable to generate said output value by:

converting said coordinate of said scalar multiple of said second elliptic curve point to an integer; and
truncating said integer.

29. The random number generator system of claim 28, wherein converting said coordinate includes converting an x coordinate.

30. The random number generator system of claim 23, wherein said arithmetic unit is operable to generate said output value by applying a one-way function to said coordinate of said scalar multiple of said second elliptic curve point.

31. The random number generator system of claim 30, wherein said arithmetic unit is operable to generate said output value by truncating said coordinate of said scalar multiple of said second elliptic curve point prior to applying said one-way function.

32. The random number generator system of claim 20, wherein said first input value represents an x coordinate of said first elliptic curve point.

33. The random number generator system of claim 20, wherein said second input value represents an x coordinate of said second elliptic curve point.

34. The random number generator system of claim 20, wherein said first input value represents two coordinates of said first elliptic curve point.

35. The random number generator system of claim 20, wherein said second input value represents two coordinates of said second elliptic curve point.

36. The random number generator system of claim 20, wherein said first input value and said second input value represent elliptic curve points on the same elliptic curve.

37. The random number generator system of claim 20, wherein the first input value comprises a verifiably random first input value.

38. The random number generator system of claim 37, wherein the second input value comprises a verifiably random second input value.

39. A random number generator system comprising:
an input module operable to:

obtain a verifiably random first input value that represents a first elliptic curve point;

obtain a second input value that represents a second elliptic curve point;

a register operable to store a secret value; and
an arithmetic unit operable to:

access said first input value, said second input value, and said secret value;

generate a scalar multiple of said second elliptic curve point based on said secret value and said second input value;

generate an output value by evaluating a one-way function based on said scalar multiple of said second elliptic curve point;

provide, to a cryptographic module, said output value as a random number in accordance with a specified level of security;

generate a scalar multiple of said first elliptic curve point based on said secret value and said first input value;

generate an updated secret value based on said scalar multiple of said first elliptic curve point; and
store said updated secret value in said register.

40. The random number generator system of claim 39, wherein said first input value and said second input value represent two different elliptic curve points on the same elliptic curve.

41. The random number generator system of claim 39, wherein the second input value comprises a verifiably random second input value.

42. The method of claim 17, wherein the first input value is generated based on an output of a hash function.

43. The method of claim 42, wherein the second input value is generated based on an output of a second hash function.

44. The method of claim 43, wherein the second hash function is the hash function.

45. The method of claim 44, wherein the first input value and the second input value are generated based on different inputs provided to the hash function.

46. The method of claim 17, wherein said one-way function includes a truncation function.

47. The method of claim 17, wherein said one-way function is applied to a coordinate of an elliptic curve point obtained from said scalar multiple of said second elliptic curve point.

48. The method of claim 42, wherein the first input value is generated by providing the second input value as an input to the hash function.

49. The method of claim 17, wherein said verifiably random first input value is validated as a coordinate of a point on an elliptic curve prior to generating the scalar multiple based on said first input value and said secret value.

50. The method of claim 49 wherein another coordinate of said point is obtained based on said verifiably random first input value.

51. The random number generator system of claim 39, wherein the first input value is generated based on an output of a hash function.

52. The random number generator system of claim 51, wherein the second input value is generated based on an output of a second hash function.

53. The random number generator system of claim 52, wherein the second hash function is the hash function.

54. The random number generator system of claim 52, wherein the first input value and the second input value are generated based on different inputs provided to the hash function.

11

55. The random number generator system of claim 39, wherein said one-way function includes a truncation function.

56. The random number generator system of claim 39, wherein said one-way function is applied to a coordinate of an elliptic curve point obtained from said scalar multiple of said second elliptic curve point.

57. A non-transitory computer-readable medium comprising instructions that are operable when executed by one or more processors to perform operations, the operations comprising:

obtaining a verifiably random first input value that represents a first elliptic curve point;

obtaining a second input value that represents a second elliptic curve point;

generating a scalar multiple of said second elliptic curve point based on a secret value and said second input value;

generating an output value by evaluating a one-way function based on said scalar multiple of said second elliptic curve point;

using said output value as a random number to achieve a specified level of security in a cryptographic operation;

generating a scalar multiple of said first elliptic curve point based on said secret value and said first input value;

12

generating an updated secret value based on said scalar multiple of said first elliptic curve point; and storing said updated secret value.

58. The computer-readable medium of claim 57, wherein the second input value comprises a verifiably random second input value.

59. The computer-readable medium of claim 57, wherein the first input value is generated based on an output of a hash function.

60. The computer-readable medium of claim 57, wherein the second input value is generated based on an output of a second hash function.

61. The computer-readable medium of claim 60, wherein the second hash function is the hash function.

62. The computer-readable medium of claim 61, wherein the first input value and the second input value are generated based on different inputs provided to the hash function.

63. The computer-readable medium of claim 57, wherein said one-way function includes a truncation function.

64. The computer-readable medium of claim 57, wherein said one-way function is applied to a coordinate of an elliptic curve point obtained from said scalar multiple of said second elliptic curve point.

* * * * *

UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE
CERTIFICATE OF CORRECTION

PATENT NO. : 8,396,213 B2
APPLICATION NO. : 11/336814
DATED : March 12, 2013
INVENTOR(S) : Scott Alexander Vanstone

Page 1 of 1

It is certified that error appears in the above-identified patent and that said Letters Patent is hereby corrected as shown below:

Title Page, Column 2 (Other Publications), Line 1: Delete “correctnes” and insert
-- correctness --, therefor.

In the Claims:

Column 10, Line 43, Claim 47: Delete “ellptic” and insert -- elliptic --, therefor.

Signed and Sealed this
Fourth Day of June, 2013



Teresa Stanek Rea
Acting Director of the United States Patent and Trademark Office