

MileSan

Detecting Exploitable Microarchitectural Leakage via
Differential Hardware-Software Taint Tracking

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Presented at CCS'25

ETH Zurich, *UC Berkeley



ETH zürich

MileSan



detects arbitrary
exploitable leakage in RTL

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exploitable leakage in RTL

RandOS



generates random
operating systems

andOS

Vulnerability	DUT	Covert Channel	Previously found by	CVE
Spectre-V1	BOOM	DCACHE	[14, 23, 38]	requested
Spectre-V1-TLB	BOOM	TLB	[23]	requested
Spectre-V2	BOOM	DCACHE	[14, 23, 38]	requested
Spectre-V2-TLB	BOOM	TLB	[14, 23]	requested
Spectre-V4	BOOM	DCACHE	[14, 23]	CVE-2025-29343
Spectre-V4-TLB	BOOM	TLB	[14, 23]	requested
Spectre-RSB	BOOM	TLB	[14, 17, 23]	CVE-2025-29340
Spectre-RSB-TLB	BOOM	TLB	[14]	CVE-2025-29340
Meltdown	BOOM	BOOM		CVE-2025-46004
Trans. Meltdown	BOOM	BOOM		CVE-2025-46004
cp. Spectre V2	CVA6	CVA6		
MDS*	CVA6	CVA6		
Spectre-SLS	CVA6	CVA6		
cp. Spectre-SLS	CVA6	CVA6		
MDS	CVA6	CVA6		
Trans. MDS	CVA6	CVA6		
div ⁺	CVA6	CVA6		
divu ⁺	CVA6	CVA6		
divu ⁺	CVA6	CVA6		
rem ⁺	CVA6	CVA6		
remu ⁺	CVA6	CVA6		
remu ⁺	CVA6	CVA6		
Spectre-V1	OpenC910	OpenC910		
Spectre-V1-TLB	OpenC910	OpenC910		
div ⁺	OpenC910	OpenC910		
divu ⁺	OpenC910	OpenC910		
divu ⁺	OpenC910	OpenC910		
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detects arb.
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Problem. Existing pre-silicon microarchitectural fuzzers overfit to known vulnerabilities.

Overfitting in software for triggering leakage



Overfitting in software for triggering leakage



Overfitting in software for triggering leakage



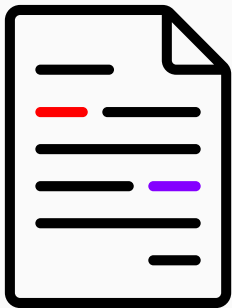
Overfitting in software for triggering leakage



TRAINING_GADGET



Overfitting in software for triggering leakage

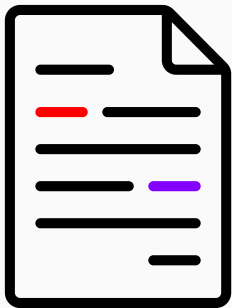


TRAINING_GADGET

LEAKING_GADGET



Overfitting in software for triggering leakage



TRAINING_GADGET

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Overfitting in software for triggering leakage



TRAINING_GADGET

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TRAINING_GADGET

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LEAKING_GADGET



Overfitting in software for triggering leakage



WhisperFuzz SEC'24

IntroSpectre ISCA'21



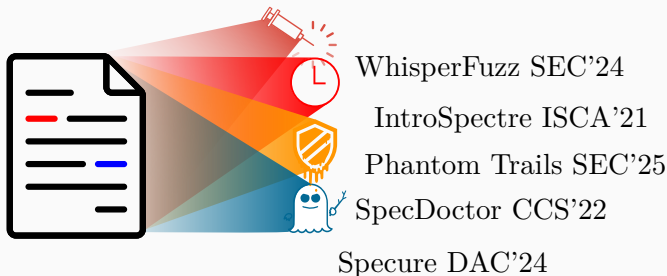
Phantom Trails SEC'25



SpecDoctor CCS'22

Specure DAC'24

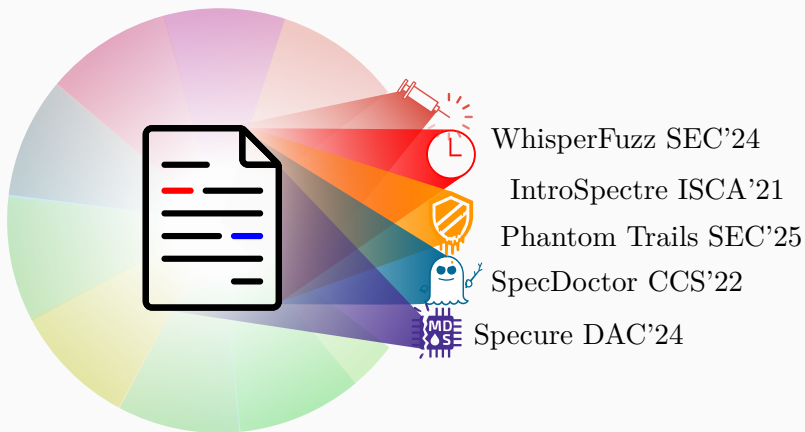
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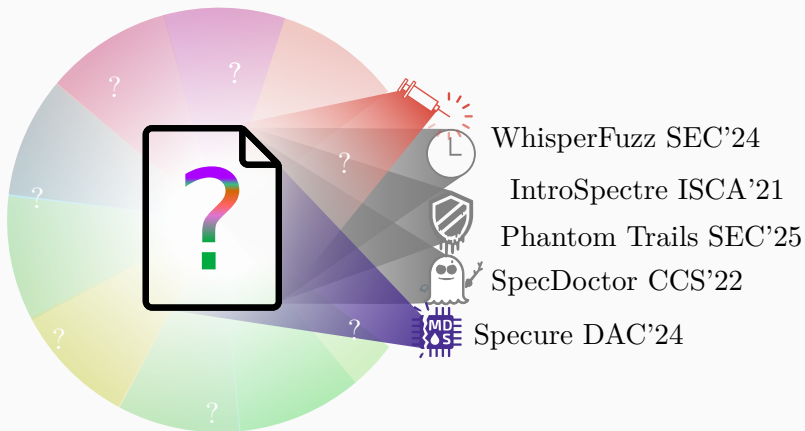
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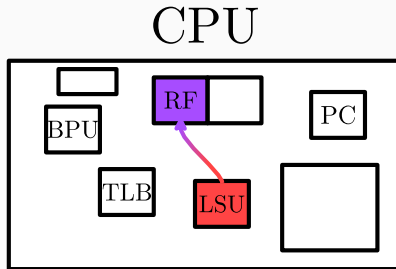


Overfitting in software for triggering leakage

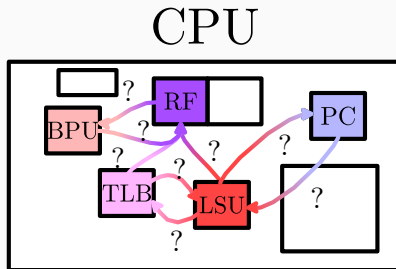


Obs. 1. Test case generation overfits to known vulnerabilities.

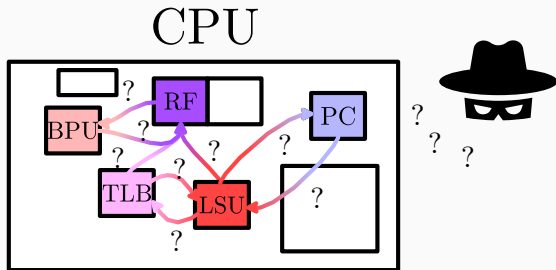
Overfitting in hardware for detecting leakage



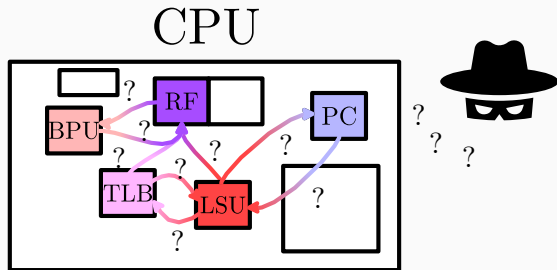
Overfitting in hardware for detecting leakage



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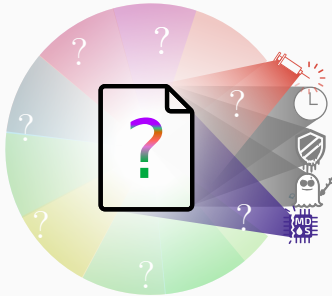
Overfitting in hardware for detecting leakage



Obs. 2. Leakage detection overfits to known vulnerabilities.

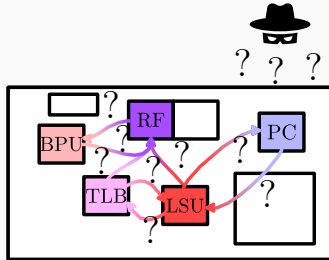
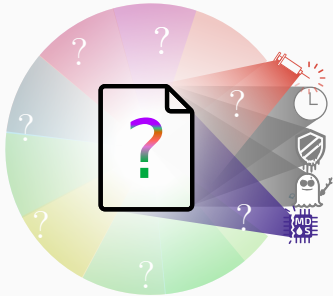
We have mechanisms that **overfit** in

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Software

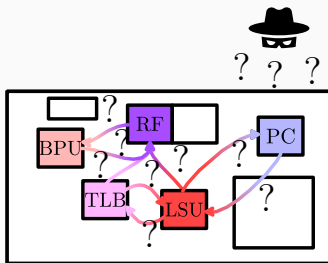
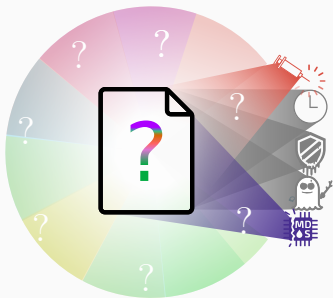


We have mechanisms that **overfit** in

Software and **Hardware**



We have mechanisms that **overfit** in
Software and **Hardware**



to known vulnerabilities.

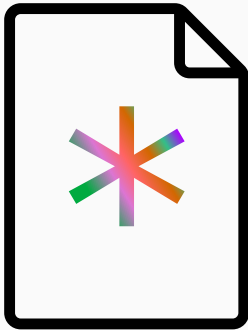
We *need* mechanisms that **generalize** in

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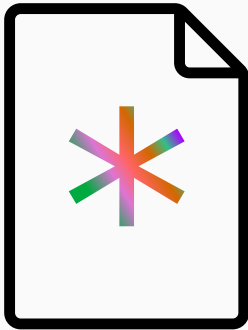
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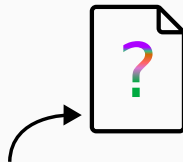
We *need* mechanisms that **generalize** in

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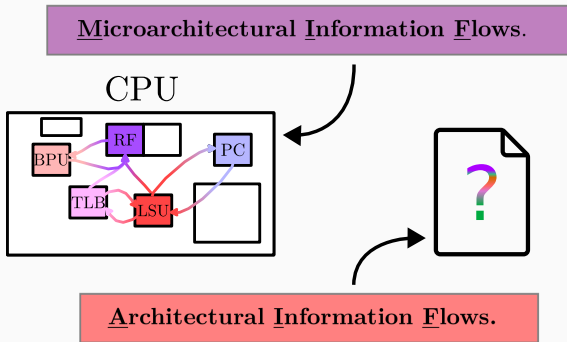
to arbitrary vulnerabilities.

The Microarchitectural leakage Sanitizer

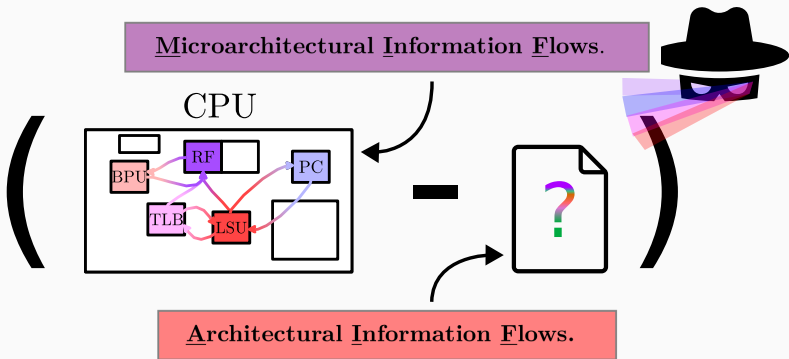


Architectural Information Flows.

The Microarchitectural leakage Sanitizer



The Microarchitectural leakage Sanitizer



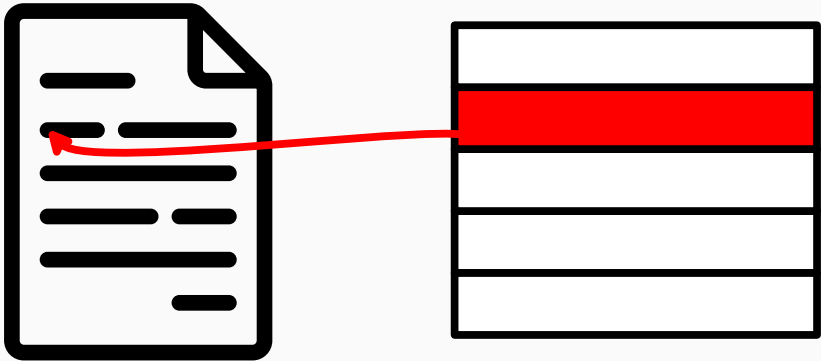
The Microarchitectural leakage Sanitizer

RQ. 1. How can we compute the architectural information flows in hardware?

Architectural info flows in software

SOFTWARE

MEMORY



Architectural info flows in software

SOFTWARE



MEMORY



Architectural info flows in software

SOFTWARE



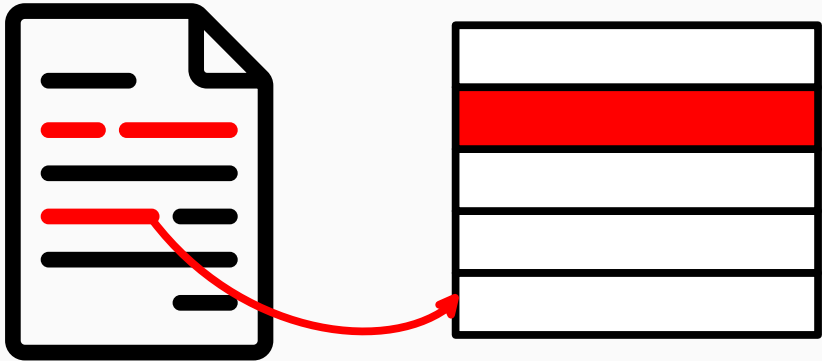
MEMORY



Architectural info flows in software

SOFTWARE

MEMORY



Architectural info flows in software

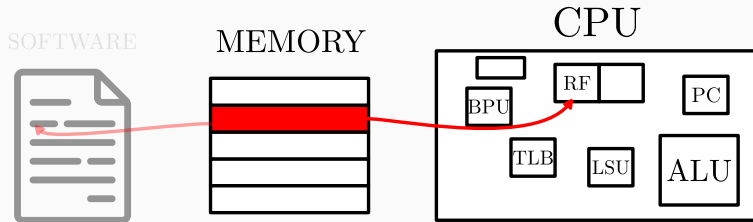
SOFTWARE



MEMORY



Architectural information flows in *hardware*



Architectural information flows in *hardware*

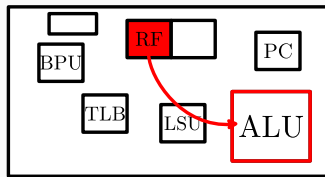
SOFTWARE



MEMORY



CPU



Architectural information flows in *hardware*

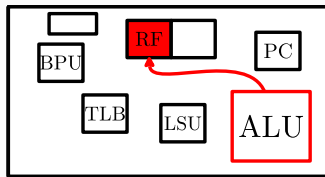
SOFTWARE



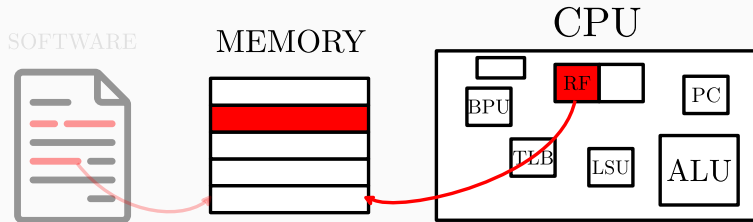
MEMORY



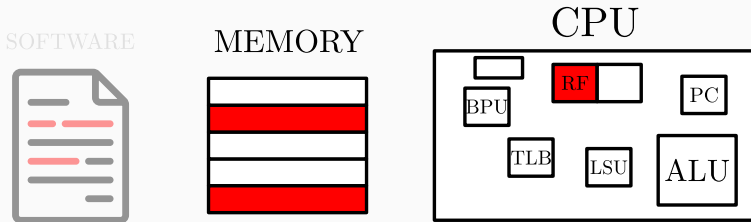
CPU



Architectural information flows in *hardware*



Architectural information flows in *hardware*



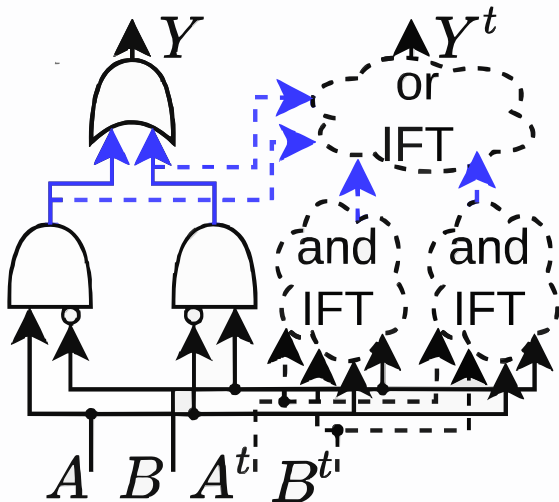
Insight 1. We can compute **architectural** information flows in *hardware* using *software* IFT.

The Microarchitectural leakage Sanitizer

RQ. 2. How can we compute **microarchitectural** information flows in hardware?

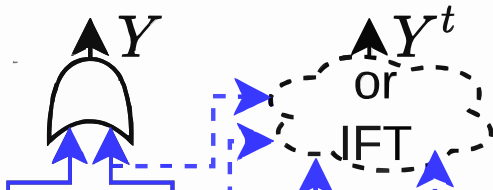
The Microarchitectural leakage Sanitizer

CellIFT SEC'22

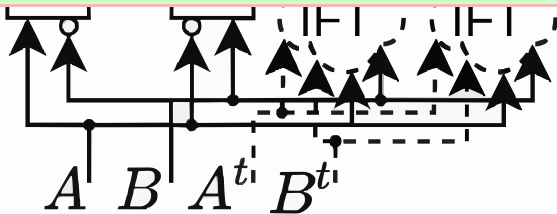


The Microarchitectural leakage Sanitizer

CellIFT SEC'22



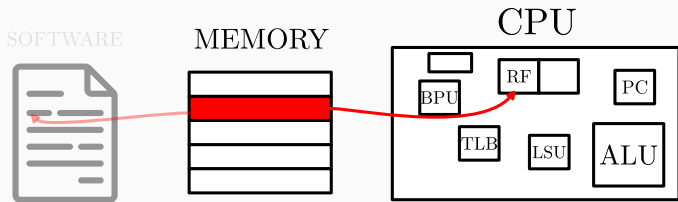
Insight 2. We can use existing methods for RTL taint tracking.



The Microarchitectural leakage Sanitizer

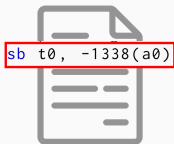
RQ. 3. How can we detect leakage?

Arch. and Microarch. Info Flows in hardware

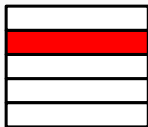


Arch. and Microarch. Info Flows in hardware

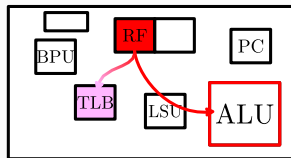
SOFTWARE



MEMORY

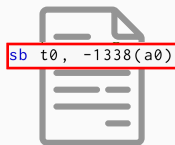


CPU

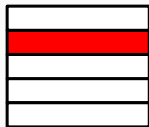


Arch. and Microarch. Info Flows in hardware

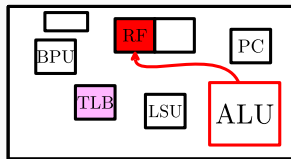
SOFTWARE



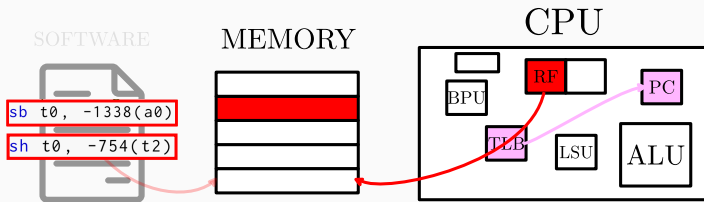
MEMORY



CPU



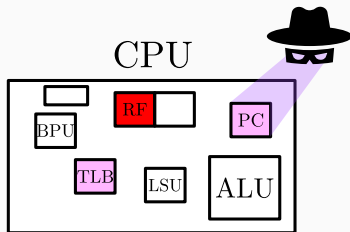
Arch. and Microarch. Info Flows in hardware



Arch. and Microarch. Info Flows in hardware

CVE-2025-29340 MEMORY

```
# Load some privileged data from S-mode.  
0xa244c: lw s2, 456(ra)  
...  
# SPP=1, so we remain in S-mode.  
0xa2dd8: sret  
...  
# The store executes transiently  
# and leaks privileged data to the TLB.  
0xa2ddc: sb t0, -1338(a0)  
...  
# SPP=0, so we go to U-mode.  
0xbdf50: sret  
...  
# A store now leaks from the TLB.  
0xb7b50: sb t0, -754(t2)
```

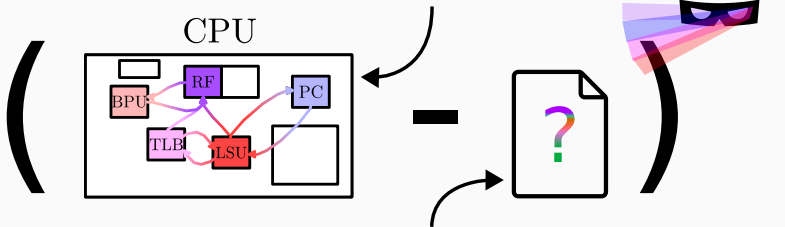


Insight 3. Exploitable leakage is a microarchitectural information flow to the PC!

MileSan and RandOS

Microarchitectural Information Flows

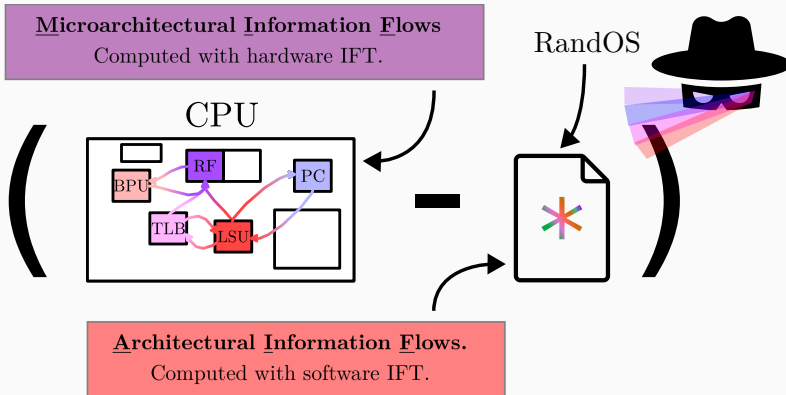
Computed with hardware IFT.



Architectural Information Flows.

Computed with software IFT.

MileSan and RandOS



RQ. 4. How should test cases behave?

RandOS: Generating programs



RandOS: Generating programs



RandOS: Generating programs



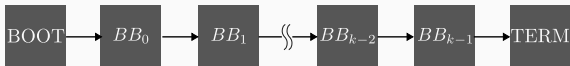
RandOS: Generating programs



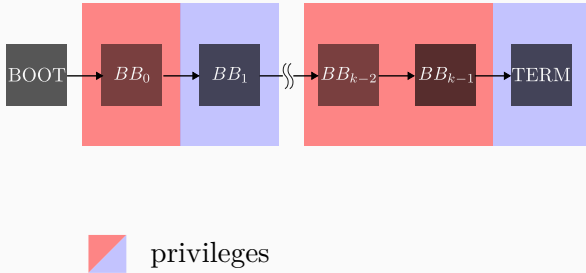
RandOS: Generating programs



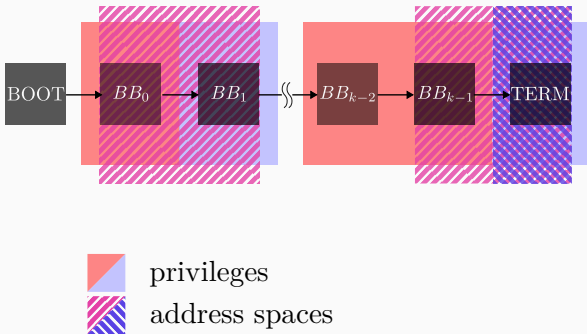
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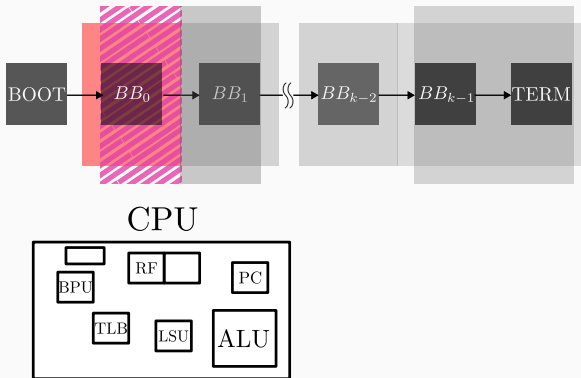
RandOS: Generating programs



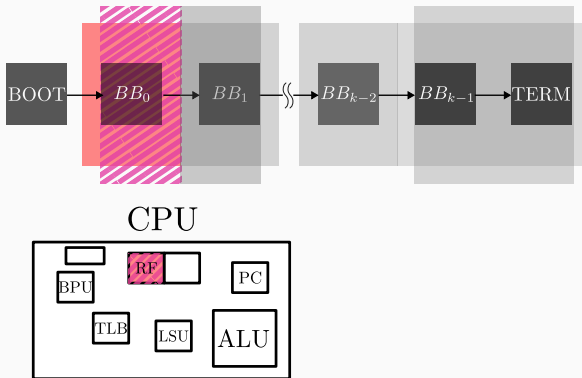
RandOS: Generating programs



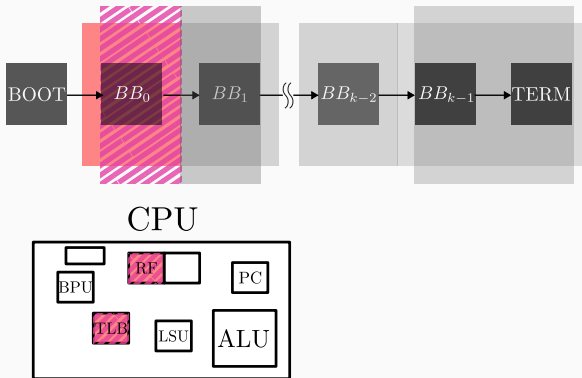
RandOS: Traversing isolation boundaries



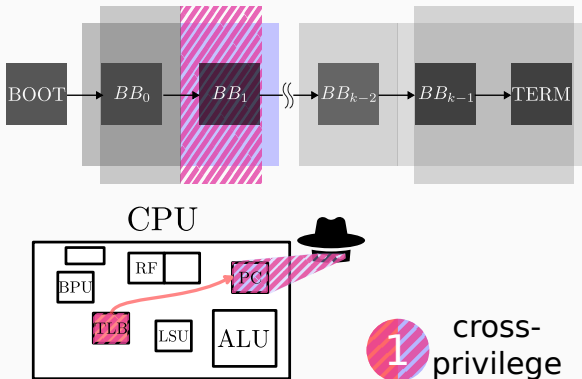
RandOS: Traversing isolation boundaries



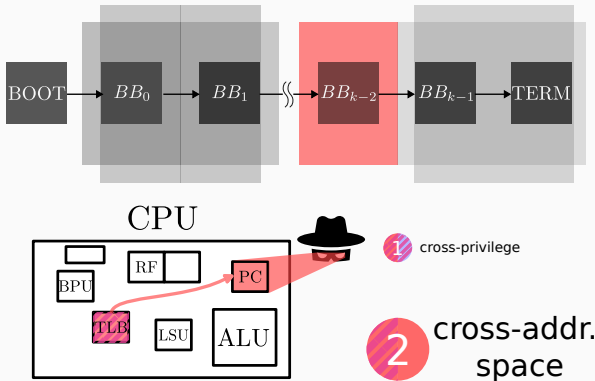
RandOS: Traversing isolation boundaries



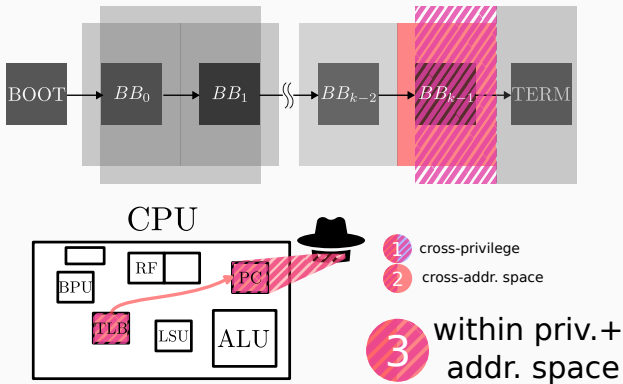
RandOS: Traversing isolation boundaries



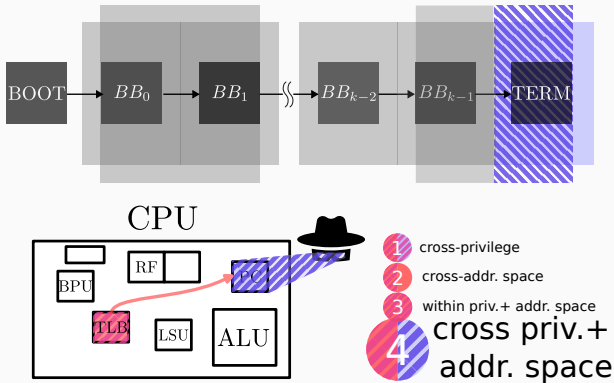
RandOS: Traversing isolation boundaries



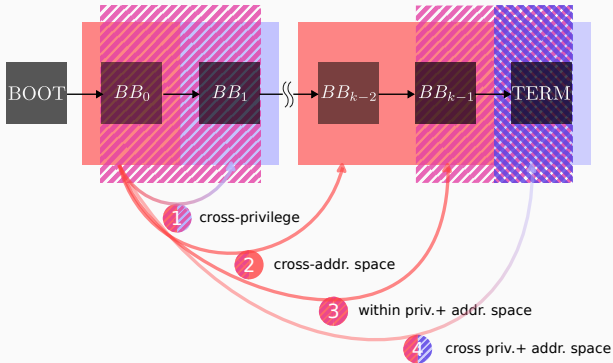
RandOS: Traversing isolation boundaries



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Implementation

MileSan. Hardware IFT: Using CellIFT and HybridIFT. Software IFT: Approx. 15k LoC Python.



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RandOS. Approx. 20k LoC Python.

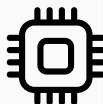


Implementation

MileSan. Hardware IFT: Using CellIFT and HybridIFT. Software IFT: Approx. 15k LoC Python.

RandOS. Approx. 20k LoC Python.

Tested CPUs. Kronos, Rocket, BOOM, CVA6, OpenC910.



Q1. How fast can MileSan and RandOS find known vulnerabilities?

Evaluation

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Q2. Can MileSan verify PoCs from prior work?

Evaluation

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Q2. Can MileSan verify PoCs from prior work?

Q3. Can MileSan and RandOS find new vulnerabilities?

Evaluation

Q1. How fast can MileSan and RandOS find known vulnerabilities? $4.5\times$ faster.

Q2. Can MileSan verify PoCs from prior work?
Prior work reports false positives!

Q3. Can MileSan and RandOS find new vulnerabilities?

Can MileSan and Randos find new vulns.?

Vulnerability	DUT	Covert Channel
Spectre-V2-TLB	BOOM	TLB
Spectre-V4-TLB	BOOM	TLB
Spectre-RSB-TLB	BOOM	TLB
Trans. Meltdown	BOOM	TLB
cp-Spectre V2	BOOM	TLB
Spectre-SLS	CVA6	TLB
cp-Spectre-SLS	CVA6	TLB
MDS	CVA6	TLB
Trans. MDS	CVA6	TLB
Spectre-V1	OpenC910	DCACHE
Spectre-V1-TLB	OpenC910	TLB
div [†]	OpenC910	DIV
divu [†]	OpenC910	DIV
divw [†]	OpenC910	DIV
divuw [†]	OpenC910	DIV
rem [†]	OpenC910	DIV
remu [†]	OpenC910	DIV
remw [†]	OpenC910	DIV
remuw [†]	OpenC910	DIV



cross-
privilege

Can MileSan and Randos find new vulns.?

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MDS	CVA6	TLB
Trans. MDS	CVA6	TLB
Spectre-V1	OpenC910	DCACHE
Spectre-V1-TLB	OpenC910	TLB
div [†]	OpenC910	DIV
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divw [†]	OpenC910	DIV
divuw [†]	OpenC910	DIV
rem [†]	OpenC910	DIV
remu [†]	OpenC910	DIV
remw [†]	OpenC910	DIV
remuw [†]	OpenC910	DIV



cross-
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Spectre-SLS	CVA6	TLB
cp-Spectre-SLS	CVA6	TLB
MDS	CVA6	TLB
Trans. MDS	CVA6	TLB
Spectre-V1	OpenC910	DCACHE
Spectre-V1-TLB	OpenC910	TLB
div [†]	OpenC910	DIV
divu [†]	OpenC910	DIV
divw [†]	OpenC910	DIV
divuw [†]	OpenC910	DIV
rem [†]	OpenC910	DIV
remu [†]	OpenC910	DIV
remw [†]	OpenC910	DIV
remuw [†]	OpenC910	DIV



cross-
privilege

Can MileSan and Randos find new vulns.?

Leaking 1Mbps from kernel to user at 2GHz on BOOM

CVE-2025-29343

End-to-end exploit

```
...
0x28778: remu a2,s0,gp
0x28780: rem a2,a2,tp
0x287c8: divw ra,gp,a2
# Branch below mispredicted taken.
0x287d0: blt gp,ra,0x28e00
...
# Meltdown gadget executed transiently.
0x28e00: lb sp,-1587(t1)
0x28e04: lh s1,-1010(sp)
```

```
0 la ra, secret
1 la a2, buffer
...
... # Evict the TLB, delay t0 results.
6 beqz t0, correct_target
7 ld a0, 0(ra) # Access secret.
8 andi a0, a0, 1 # Mask out a single bit.
9 slli a0, a0, 12 # Shift secret bit by page offset.
10 add a2, a2, a0 # Add secret bit to buffer.
11 ld a2, 0(a2) # Encode the secret bit in the TLB.
12 correct_target:
... # Resume at correct path.
```

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Vulnerability	DUT	Covert Channel
Spectre-V2-TLB	BOOM	TLB
Spectre-V4-TLB	BOOM	TLB
Spectre-RSB-TLB	BOOM	TLB
Trans. Meltdown	BOOM	TLB
cp-Spectre V2	BOOM	TLB
Spectre-SLS	CVA6	TLB
cp-Spectre-SLS	CVA6	TLB
MDS	CVA6	TLB
Trans. MDS	CVA6	TLB
Spectre-V1	OpenC910	DCACHE
Spectre-V1-TLB	OpenC910	TLB
div [†]	OpenC910	DIV
divu [†]	OpenC910	DIV
divw [†]	OpenC910	DIV
divuw [†]	OpenC910	DIV
rem [†]	OpenC910	DIV
remu [†]	OpenC910	DIV
remw [†]	OpenC910	DIV
remuw [†]	OpenC910	DIV



2

1

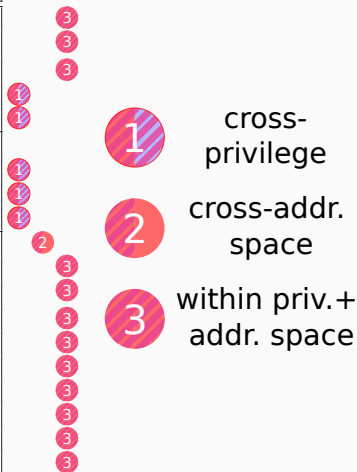
cross-
privilege

2

cross-addr.
space

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remw [†]	OpenC910	DIV
remuw [†]	OpenC910	DIV



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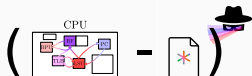


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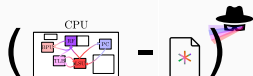


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more info + source code

