Sequoia PGP Rethinking OpenPGP Tooling

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FOSDEM 2024

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Outline

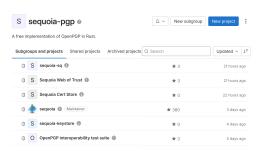
Introduction

• Design and Implementation

Day-to-Day Usage



What is Sequoia PGP?



- An OpenPGP implementation
- Services
- Tooling
- Applications
- Paradigm Shift



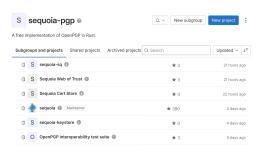
What is OpenPGP?

```
draft-ietf-openpgp-crypto-refresh-13
                                                           P. Wouters, Ed.
Network Working Group
Internet-Draft
                                                                     Aiven
Obsoletes: 4880, 5581, 6637 (if approved)
                                                                D. Huigens
Intended status: Standards Track
                                                                 Proton AG
Expires: 7 July 2024
                                                                 J. Winter
                                                               Sequoia-PGP
                                                                  V Niihe
                                                                      EST I
                                                            4 January 2024
                                 OpenPGP
                  draft-ietf-openpgp-crypto-refresh-13
```

- IETF standard
 - Derived from PGP
 - First version: 1996
 - Next version: 2024

- Interchange format
 - Messages
 - Certificates
- Encryption and Decryption
- Signing and Verification
- Public Key Infrastructure (PKI)

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Sequoia's Technical Goals

- Library-first architecture
- Unopinionated low-level interfaces
- Safe by default
- Gradual, opinionated higher-level interfaces
- Optional services



Motivation: The Negative

- Complaints heard from some GnuPG users:
 - CLI hard to use
 - CLI-first approach is brittle
 - APIs are too opinionated
 - Services shouldn't be mandatory
 - Poor scalability



Motivation: The Positive

• "We use a lot of different encryption technologies, but probably none more important than GPG." – Alex Abdo, ACLU (2017)



Cindy Cohn, EFF













Thenmozhi Soundararajan Equality Labs

Matt Mitchell, CryptoHarlem

Benjamin Ismaïl, Reporters without Borders

Sequoia's Pre-history

- Project started in 2017
- By three former GnuPG developers
 - Justus Winter, Kai Michaelis, Neal H. Walfield
- Worked on gpg, supported application developers, talked to users
- Had ideas on how to change GnuPG



A GnuPG Evolution or Revolution?

- Many technical discussions with Werner Koch
- No significant convergence of visions



Resolving the Conflict

- Continue the established approach?
- Pursue the "Sequoia" vision?

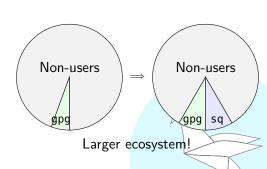


Not One, Both

- Resolution: part ways
- More choice for users
 - Diversity of needs
 - Win over non-users
- Interoperable protocol
 - Network effects help other implementations
- Ecosystem wins!
- Privacy and security win!



Split users?



An Ode to Werner

- Sequoia owes its existance to Werner
- Inspiration to make GnuPG better
- Inspiration to work on cryptography
- Inspiration to defend privacy
- If Justus, Kai, and I are Sequoia's parents, then Werner is Sequoia's spiritual grandfather



Olive Branch, Mislav Marohnić



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Not Both, Many

- GnuPG (C)
- GopenPGP (Go)
- OpenPGP.js (JavaScript)
- PGPainless (Java)
- PGPy (Python)
- RNP (C++)
- rPGP (Rust)
- Sequoia (Rust)



Ensuring Interoperability

- Interoperability is important
 - Prevents vendor lock-in
 - Network effects for all
- A standard is not enough
- OpenPGP Interoperability Test Suite
 - 131 Tests
 - 1510 Test Vectors

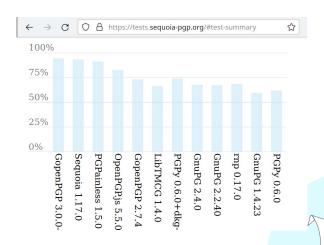


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Interoperability Test Suite



- Most implementations tested
- rPGP support being added by Heiko Schäfer



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Sequoia's Architecture

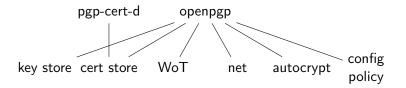
- Library-first approach
 - Applications built on library
 - CLI is less powerful than the library
- High-level components are optional
- Services as daemons or co-located
 - Daemon
 - Process separation: Avoid heartbleed



- Multiplex resources
- Share state
- Co-located
 - Restricted environment
 - Fallback to increase robustness



Components



openpgp: The low-level library

key store: Private key operations

• pgp-cert-d: On-disk certificate store

cert store: In-memory certificate store

WoT: Web of trust engine

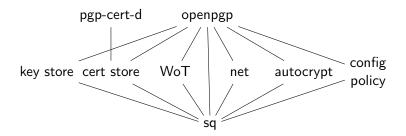
net: Key server, WKD, and DANE support

autocrypt: Autocrypt functionality

config policy: Reads and parses a cryptographic policy



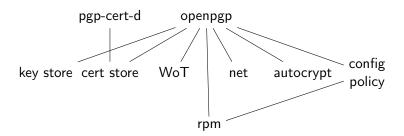
Components



- sq
 - Uses all high-level libraries and services



Components



- RPM Package Manager (rpm)
 - Doesn't use secret key material
 - Has its own certificate store
 - Has its own trust model
 - Uses the common policy configuration



API Design

- Unopinionated low-level APIs, safe by default
- Opinionated high-level APIs, built on low-level APIs



Safe by Default

Serializes a certificate, strips secret key material by default:

```
cert.serialize(&mut output)?;
```

To serializes the secret key material, we have to opt-in:

```
cert.as_tsk().serialize(&mut output)?;
```



Progressive High-Level API

Creates a certificate:

```
let (cert, rev) = CertBuilder::general_purose(None, None)
    .add_userid("Alice <alice@example.org>")
    .generate()?;
```

Creates a certificate with a decentralized social proof:



Progressive High-Level API

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sq's Interface

- sq: Sequoia's primary CLI
- Subcommand-style interface
 \$ sq encrypt --recipient-email neal@sequoia-pgp.org
- Clear separation of options
 \$ sq sign --recipient-email neal@sequoia-pgp.org
 error: unexpected argument '--recipient-email' found
- Consistent usage between subcommands
 - -- email option has same semantics across subcommands



Away from Curated Keyrings

- Local certificates are mostly assumed to be authenticated
- Say yes to get work done:

```
$ gpg -e -r dkg@debian.org
gpg: 0x38024D718ABA3F3B: There is no assurance this key
belongs to the named user
...
Use this key anyway? (y/N)
```

• Certifying user IDs is tiresome



Towards Strong Authentication

- Local certificate store is just a cache
- Self-signed user IDs are just a hint
- Certificates can only be addressed by authenticated IDs
- Embrace the web of trust
- Is this a usability nightmare?
- Let's see...



Towards Strong Authentication

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What is Authentication?

- What certificate should I use for Alice?
- Who does the certificate BB7E9101495E6BF7 belong to?
- Self-signatures are useless for authentication!
- Is this Alice's or Mallory's certificate?

Primary Key (Fingerprint)

Encryption Key

Binding Signature

Signing Key

Binding Signature

Alice <alice@example.org>

Binding Signature

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Primary Key (Fingerprint)
Encryption Key
Binding Signature
Signing Key
Binding Signature
Alice <alice@example.org></alice@example.org>
Binding Signature
Alice <alice@other.org></alice@other.org>
Binding Signature

Authentication Today



Chrome's Plan to Distrust Symantec Certificates

September 11, 2017

Posted by Devon O'Brien, Ryan Sleevi, Andrew Whalley, Chrome Security

At the end of July, the Chrome team and the PKI community converged upon a plan to

reduce, and ultimately remove, trust in Symantec's infrastructure in order to uphold

- Centralized: easy, but unsafe
 - X.509: Hundreds of centralized CAs
 - Any one can trick you
 - Certificate transparency helps
 - Signal
 - One key server
 - On same infrastructure as the message transport
 - But, can trust Signal Foundation
- Peer to peer: safe, but high upfront overhead
 - Check fingerprints or safety numbers
- Consistency: easy until you have a problem
 - Trust on First Use (TOFU)



Good Enough for Most?

The test of a civilization is the way that it cares for its helpless members.

Pearl Buck, My Several Worlds



Good Enough for Most?

- Goal: a progressive system that serves a range of needs
- Approach
 - Provide a range of tools to increase confidence
 - Support user
 - Have a knob to set a threshold based on the threat model



Web of Trust: A Powerful, Flexible PKI

- Everyone can act like a certification authority
- Users have their own personal trust roots
- Can use weak evidence
- Can combine evidence
- Modes of operation
 - ✓ Centralized
 - √ Federated
 - ✓ Peer to peer



Web of Trust

- If the web of trust is so good, why has it not succeeded yet?
- Missing tools to:
 - Automatically incorporate evidence into a web of trust
 - Easily manage a web of trust
- Until now...



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Example: Encrypting a Message

• Task: encrypt a message to Daniel Kahn Gilmor <dkg@debian.org>



Let's Just Try It

```
$ sq encrypt --recipient-email dkg@debian.org
Error: --recipient-email
```

Caused by:

No certificates are associated with "dkg@debian.org"



Getting Daniel's Certificate

\$ sq network fetch dkg@debian.org Importing 4 certificates into the certificate store:

- 1. 0EE5BE979282D80B9F7540F1CCD2ED94D21739E9 Daniel Kahn Gillmor <dkg@fifthhorseman.net>
 - 2. C29F8A0C01F35E34D816AA5CE092EB3A5CA10DBA Daniel Kahn Gillmor
- 3. C4BC2DDB38CCE96485EBE9C2F20691179038E5C6 Daniel Kahn Gillmor <dkg@debian.org>
 - 4. D477040C70C2156A5C298549BB7E9101495E6BF7 Daniel Kahn Gillmor

Imported 4 new certificates, updated 0 certificates, 0 certificates unchanged, 0 errors.

After checking that a certificate really belongs to the stated owner, you can mark the certificate as authenticated using:

sq pki link add FINGERPRINT



Getting Daniel's Certificate

```
$ sq network fetch dkg@debian.org
Importing 4 certificates into the certificate store:
...
```

- sq network fetch found 4 certificates
- Which one is the right one?
- Did sq network fetch even find the right one?
- Best: Ask Daniel
- Good: Ask someone who knows Daniel's certificate
- Better: Ask multiple entities, combine evidence
 - Weigh evidence according to entity's reliability
 - Amount of needed evidence depends on the threat mode

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Rudimentary Evidence

- Public directories
 - Key servers
 - keys.openpgp.org: Validating key server
 - keys.mailvelope.com: Validating key server
 - proton.me: Validating key server for proton users
 - SKS: Free for all
 - WKD: Entry set by user / admin
 - DANE: Entry set by user / admin
- sq network fetch queries all of them!
- ... and records the evidence!



Rudimentary Evidence

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Leveraging Evidence

- Evidence stored as web of trust data structures
 - Creates a *Shadow CA* for entities with > 0 reliability
 - keys.openpgp.org: Yes, it validates user IDs.
 - SKS: No, anyone any upload a certificate for dkg@debian.org
 - Shadow CA certifies the returned user IDs and certificate pairs.
- Evidence is automatically combined by web of trust engine



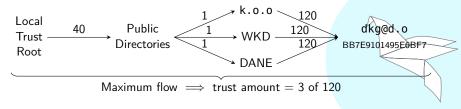
Shadow CAs

- Trust root and shadow CAs created automatically
- Shadow CAs trusted minimally by default
- Trust root, shadow CAs, and certificates are marked as unexportable
 - Protect user's privacy

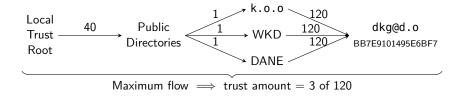


Examining the Evidence

Could not authenticate any paths.



Examining the Evidence



- Obervations:
 - Shadow CAs are partially trusted
 - Public directories intermediary acts as a resistor
 - Three pieces of evidence
 - Binding not fully authenticated
 - No evidence for other certificates



What now?

- If we are not sufficiently convinced, get more evidence
- Once convinced, two options:
 - Create a public certification
 - Create a private link (permanent or temporary)



Creating a Private Link

```
$ sq pki link add D477040C70C2156A5C298549BB7E9101495E6BF7 "<dkg@debian.org>"
Linking D477040C70C2156A5C298549BB7E9101495E6BF7 and "<dkg@debian.org>".

$ sq pki list dkg@debian.org
[ \[ ] D477040C70C2156A5C298549BB7E9101495E6BF7 <dkg@debian.org>:
```

```
fully authenticated (100%)
    788B10EF1FF13B3D07C66740F202C5759961E844 ("Local Trust Root")
    certified the following binding on 2024-02-01
    D477040C70C2156A5C298549BB7E9101495E6BF7 "<dkg@debian.org>"
```



Success!

```
$ sq encrypt --recipient-email dkg@debian.org
-----BEGIN PGP MESSAGE-----
...
```



Fully Trust keys.openpgp.org

```
Linking 1CB68A1218567FB18DB97176A41F17E9C1439134 and
"Downloaded from keys.openpgp.org".

$ sq pki list dkg@fifthhorseman.net

[✓] D477040C70C2156A5C298549BB7E9101495E6BF7 <dkg@fifthhorseman.net>:
    fully authenticated (100%)

○ 788B10EF1FF13B3D07C66740F202C5759961E844 ("Local Trust Root")
    certified the following certificate

- 1CB68A1218567FB18DB97176A41F17E9C1439134 ("Downloaded from keys.openpgp.org")
    certified the following binding on 2024-02-01

D477040C70C2156A5C298549BB7E9101495E6BF7 "<dkg@fifthhorseman.net>"
```

\$ sq pki link add --ca '*' 1CB68A1218567FB18DB97176A41F17E9C1439134 --all

More Information

- Usage Information (TOFU)
- Monitor a URL
- Autocrypt header
- Autocrypt gossip
- Organizational CAs



Organizational CAs

- Members of an organization delegate to a trusted internal entity
 - Already done in companies: IT department
 - Often done in organizations: The "Nerd"
- Bootstrap trust into an organization
 - Check one certificate, authenticate many



Organizational CAs

- We run a CA for sequoia-pgp.org
- You could use it as an authority for sequoia-pgp.org email addresses
- This is supported by the web of trust!
 - Trust amount: 1 to 120
 - Scope to a domain: sequoia-pgp.org



Organizational CAs

- We run a CA for sequoia-pgp.org
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(Partially) Trusting a CA

```
> 34F9E4B6A0A70BFEC5AE45198356989DF1977575 --all
Linking 34F9E4B6A0A70BFEC5AE45198356989DF1977575 and
"OpenPGP CA <openpgp-ca@seguoia-pgp.org>".
```

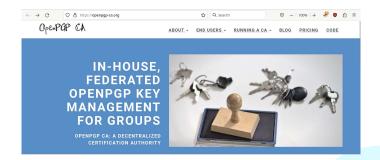
\$ sq pki list justus@sequoia-pgp.org

\$ sq pki link add --ca sequoia-pqp.org \

- [√] CBCD8F030588653EEDD7E2659B7DD433F254904A Justus Winter <justus@sequoia-pgp.or fully authenticated (100%)
 - O 788B10EF1FF13B3D07C66740F202C5759961E844 Local Trust Root certified the following certificate ...
 - certified the following binding on 2022-02-09

CBCD8F030588653EEDD7E2659B7DD433F254904A Justus Winter <justus@sequoia-pgp.org:

OpenPGP CA



- Manage your own CA
- OpenPGP CA
- Written by Heiko Schäfer

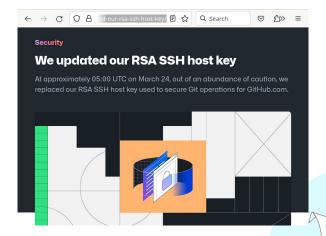


OpenSSH's PKI

- Authentication keys are identity keys
- If an authentication key is compromised, users have to update



Case Study: GitHub



- In 2023, GitHub's ssh private key was exposed
 - Good: Key rotated
 - Bad: All users had to update their known_hosts file

Better PKI for OpenSSH



Improving OpenSSH's Authentication and PKI

Improving SSH Authentication with OpenPGP transitive trust

- Better approach
 - Offline identity key
 - Rotate subkey
- Project by Wiktor Kwapisiewicz and David Runge
 - ssh-openpgp-auth



Sequoia git



- Signing commits means we can authenticate them
- To authenticate something, we need a policy
- sq-git defines a policy language
- sq-git checks a policy
 - Policy stored in repository: openpgp-policy.toml
 - Can check when pushing, when pulling, when auditting



Using Sequoia Today

- sq packaged for Debian, Fedora, Arch, etc.
- gpg Chameleon
 - Implementation of gpg's interface
 \$ gpg --version
 gpg (GnuPG-compatible Sequoia Chameleon) 2.2.40
 - ...
 - Uses both gpg's state and sq's
 - gpg-agent support
- Thunderbird Octopus
 - Seguoia backend for Thunderbird
 - Restores web of trust support
 - gpg-agent support





Integrating OpenPGP

- Notes on OpenPGP: Friendly documentation
- By Heiko Schäfer, Paul Schaub, Ms. Uppity, Wiktor Kwapisiewicz and David Runge
- https://openpgp.dev/



Funding

• 2017–2023: p≡p Foundation

• 2021-now: NLNet

• 2023-2024: Sovereign Tech Fund

• Post 2024: Open Question 😃



Summary

- Different users have different needs
- Sequoia
 - Different architecture
 - Different paradigms
- A diverse ecosystem is a strength
- Winning is improving privacy and security for all!

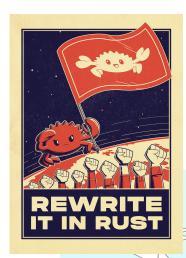
 Aside: Implement your own PKI, is the new implement your own crypto library. Don't do it.

Extra Slides



Integrating Sequoia

- Two easy ways to integrate Sequoia:
 - cargo add sequoia-openpgp
 - Rewrite It In Rust



https://fission.codes/rewrite-in-rust/

Integrating Sequoia

- Two easy ways to integrate Sequoia:
 - cargo add sequoia-openpgp
 - Rewrite It In Rust Just kidding 🤣



https://fission.codes/rewrite-in-rust/

Generic Bindings 👎

- Large, low-level API to wrap
- Hard to do in a policy-free manner
- Experience writing a C wrapper was a disaster 😱



Point Solution 👍

- Small Rust library that exports only the needed functionality
- Minimizes impedence mismatches
- Reduces language boundary crossings
- Examples:

p≡p Engine	C	3727 LOC
rpm	C	2443 LOC
SecureDrop	Python	411 LOC
Anon.io	PHP	347 LOC



A Few Users of Sequoia

- p≡p Engine (Key management library)
- RPM Package Manager
- SecureDrop (Whistleblower submissions)
- Anon.io
 (Anonymous Email Forwarding)
- Sett (Swiss platform for exchanging medical data)
- Ripasso (Password manager)
- Qubes
- Proxmox
- Amazon
- Fortanix
- Greenbone



