

On the Impossibility of Batch Update for Cryptographic Accumulators

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Abstract. A cryptographic accumulator is a scheme where a set of elements is represented by a single short value. This value, along with another value called witness, allows to prove membership into the set. If new values are added or existent values are deleted from the accumulator, then the accumulated value changes and the witnesses need to be updated. In their survey on accumulators [FN02], Fazio and Nicolisi noted that Camenisch and Lysyanskaya’s construction [CL02] was such that the time to update a witness after m changes to the accumulated value was proportional to m . They posed the question whether *batch update* was possible, namely if a cryptographic accumulator where the time to update witnesses is independent from the number of changes in the accumulated set exists. Recently, Wang et al. answered positively by giving a construction for an accumulator with *batch update* in [WWP07, WWP08]. In this work, we show that the construction is not secure by exhibiting an attack. Moreover, we prove it cannot be fixed. If the accumulated value has been updated m times then the time to update a witness must be at least $\Omega(m)$ in the worst case.

Keywords: cryptographic accumulators, batch update.

1 Introduction

An accumulator is a scheme that hashes elements of a set X into a single, short size value called the *accumulated value*. Then it is possible to prove membership into X of an element x using a verification algorithm that takes as input the accumulated value, the element x , and some value called *witness*. The first construction of such scheme is due to Benaloh and De Mare [BdM94]. Several improvements later followed, especially in the work of Camenisch and Lysyanskaya [CL02] who showed how to build dynamic accumulators (where the accumulated set can evolve), and how to use them as a tool to efficiently implement anonymous credentials. In their survey on accumulators [FN02], Fazio and Nicolisi pointed out that, in the Camenisch and Lysyanskaya’s construction, the time to recompute the witnesses once the accumulated set has been modified was proportional to m , the number of changes of the accumulated value. This raised a natural question: “*Is it possible to construct dynamic accumulators in which the update of several witnesses can be performed using a constant¹ size update information?*”

Wang et al. [WWP07, WWP08] answered positively this question by showing a construction that allows *batch update*. Unfortunately, we show that this construction is not secure. Moreover, we prove that there is no way to fix Wang et al.’s accumulator by giving a lower bound of $\Omega(m)$ in the time required to update witnesses after m updates.

RELATED WORK. The first construction for cryptographic accumulators with *batch update* was given in [WWP07] and later revised in [WWP08]. Even though no other construction is known, the existence of accumulators with *batch update* seems to have been taken for granted, and in fact assumed to exist in subsequent work. Damgård and Triandopoulos [DT08] cite their availability as an example of an accumulator

¹ Constant in the number of update operations.

construction based on the Paillier cryptosystem. Camenisch et al. [CKS09] also mentioned Wang et al.’s accumulator. We remark that our results also apply to any batch update variant of the accumulator schemes proposed in [DT08,LLX07], which allow proving both membership and non-membership.

ORGANIZATION OF THE PAPER. First, in Section 2, we briefly recall the notion of a dynamic accumulator, and Section 3 we outline Wang et al.’s construction [WWP07,WWP08]. Our attack is described next in Section 4. The general impossibility result is then presented in Section 5. Finally, we conclude in section 6.

2 Dynamic Accumulators

In this section, we briefly review the notion of dynamic accumulators.

SYNTAX. Accumulator schemes consider two types of participants: a *manager* who initializes the parameters, computes the accumulated value and the witnesses, and *users*, whose role is to verify the membership of elements into the set and possibly ask for elements insertion/deletion to the *manager*.

Definition 1. [CL02] *Let $k \in \mathbb{N}$ be the security parameter. An accumulator scheme \mathcal{Acc} consists of the following algorithms.*

- $\text{KeyGen}(1^k)$: *this probabilistic algorithm takes k in unary as input and returns a pair of public and private keys (PK, SK) and the initial accumulated value for the empty set Acc_\emptyset .*
- $\text{AccVal}(X, Acc_\emptyset, PK, [SK])$: *given a finite set of elements X (polynomial size in k), a public key, and the initial accumulated value Acc_\emptyset , this algorithm returns the accumulated value Acc_X corresponding to the set X . Depending on the implementation, the secret key SK may also be given as optional parameter, often to improve the efficiency².*
- $\text{Verify}(x, w, Acc_X, PK)$: *given an element x , a witness w , an accumulated value Acc_X and a public key PK , this deterministic algorithm returns **Yes** if the verification is successful, meaning that $x \in X$, or **No** otherwise. This algorithm is run by a user.*
- $\text{WitGen}(x, Acc_X, PK, [SK])$: *this algorithm returns a witness w associated to the element x of the set X represented by Acc_X .*
- $\text{AddEle}(x, Acc_X, PK, [SK])$: *this algorithm computes the new accumulated value $Acc_{X \cup \{x\}}$ obtained after the insertion of x into set X .*
- $\text{DelEle}(x, Acc_X, PK, [SK])$: *this algorithm computes the new accumulated value $Acc_{X \setminus \{x\}}$ obtained by removing the element x from the accumulated set X .*
- $\text{UpdWitGen}(X, X', PK, [SK])$: *suppose the set X after several updates (insertions/deletions) is transformed into the set X' . The algorithm UpdWitGen returns the information $\text{Upd}_{X, X'}$ required to update all the witnesses (using the algorithm UpdWit) of the elements of X that are still in X' . This algorithm is run by the manager.*
- $\text{UpdWit}(w_x, \text{Upd}_{X, X'}, PK)$: *this algorithm recomputes the witness w_x for some element x that remains in the set X' . It takes as parameters an existent witness w_x with respect to set X (represented by the accumulated value Acc_X), some update information $\text{Upd}_{X, X'}$, and the public key PK . It returns a new witness w'_x for the element x with respect to the new set X' represented by some accumulated value $Acc_{X'}$. This algorithm is run by the user.*

The above definition is slightly more general than the one proposed by Camenisch and Lysyanskaya [CL02] as it does not depend on how these algorithms are implemented, and it explicitly includes the update algorithms UpdWit and UpdWitGen in the syntax.

CORRECTNESS. The correctness property of an accumulator scheme simply says that if an element x belongs to the accumulated set X and if the corresponding witness w has been computed using WitGen or UpdWitGen , UpdWit then the verification process should pass. Although the notion of correctness for accumulators with *batch update* was informally used before, it appears it has not been formalized until now. If

² The secret key may also be an optional parameter in the algorithms WitGen , AddEle , DelEle , and UpdWitGen .

$\text{Alg}(\cdot)$ is a possibly probabilistic algorithm, and a a parameter, let $\{\text{Alg}(a)\}$ be the set of all possible values output by running algorithm Alg with argument a .

Definition 2. (*Correctness*) Let X, Y be sets, $\text{Acc}_X, \text{Acc}_Y$ their respective associated accumulated values, PK a public key, SK the corresponding private key, and $y \in Y$. Let w_y a value (witness) that satisfies either

- $w_y \in \{\text{WitGen}(y, \text{Acc}_Y, PK, SK)\}$, or
- $w_y \in \{\text{UpdWit}(w'_y, \text{Upd}_{X,Y}, PK)\}$ with w'_y witness of y with respect to Acc_X , and $\text{Upd}_{X,Y} \in \{\text{UpdWitGen}(X, Y, PK, SK)\}$.

We say that an accumulator scheme \mathfrak{Acc} is correct if and only if $\text{Verify}(y, w_y, \text{Acc}_Y, PK) = \text{Yes}$, for every such y, w_y, X, Y .

SECURITY. The security of an accumulator scheme is captured by an experiment where the adversary plays the role of a *user* and attempts to forge a witness (i.e. finding a valid witness for an element that does not belong to the set) while having access to an oracle that implements the operations relative to the *manager*. Such adversary must succeed with at most negligible probability on the security parameter. The definition proposed in [WWP07] is built on the one of [CL02] and includes the new algorithms $\text{AddEle}, \text{DelEle}$ (for sets) and UpdWit that are run by the oracle (*manager*).

Definition 3. ([CL02, WWP07]) Let \mathfrak{Acc} be an accumulator scheme. We consider the notion of security denoted $\mathcal{UF}\text{-ACC}$ described by the following experiment: the adversary \mathcal{A} has access to an oracle \mathcal{O} that replies to queries by playing the role of the accumulator manager. Using the oracle, the adversary can insert and delete a polynomial number of elements of his choice. The oracle \mathcal{O} replies with the new accumulated value. The adversary can also ask for witness computations or update information. Finally, the adversary is required to output a pair (x, w) . The advantage of the adversary \mathcal{A} is defined by:

$$\text{Adv}_{\mathfrak{Acc}}^{\mathcal{UF}\text{-ACC}}(\mathcal{A}) = \Pr[\text{Verify}(x, w, \text{Acc}_X, PK) = \text{Yes} \wedge x \notin X]$$

where PK is the public key generated by KeyGen , and Acc_X is the accumulated value of X . The scheme \mathfrak{Acc} is said to be secure if for every probabilistic polynomial time adversary \mathcal{A} we have

$$\text{Adv}_{\mathfrak{Acc}}^{\mathcal{UF}\text{-ACC}}(\mathcal{A}) = \text{neg}(k)$$

where $\text{neg} : \mathbb{N} \rightarrow \mathbb{N}$ is some negligible function.

BATCH UPDATE. As originally proposed [FN02], the *batch update* property for an accumulator scheme states that each *user* should be able to update each of its witness using the algorithm UpdWit in time independent from the number of changes (additions and deletions) to the accumulated value.

Definition 4. (Batch update for accumulator schemes). Let $k \in \mathbb{N}$ be a security parameter and let \mathfrak{Acc} be an accumulator scheme. Also, let X_i be a set of accumulated values at some time i , and $U_i \subset X_i$ be a set of elements for which some user \mathcal{U} holds valid witnesses. Suppose that after any $m > 0$ updates (insertions or deletions) to set X_i , the new accumulated set is X_{i+m} and its accumulated value is $\text{Acc}_{X_{i+m}}$. We say that \mathfrak{Acc} has the batch update property if given some information $\text{Upd}_{X_i, X_{i+m}}$, user \mathcal{U} running UpdWit can recompute a valid witness for an element in $U_i \cap X_{i+m}$ in constant time (with respect to m), or equivalently, time $\mathcal{O}(k)$.

3 Wang et al.'s construction

In this section, we introduce Wang et al.'s accumulator [WWP07, WWP08] with *batch update*. The first version of their work [WWP07] suffered from two correctness problems which were later fixed [WWP08].

SYNTAX. The algorithms of Wang et al.'s scheme slightly deviate from the general syntax of section 2 as they allow to add and delete sets of more than one element to the accumulator. However the general idea remains the same. The detailed definition can be found in the Appendix A.1.

CONSTRUCTION. Wang et al.'s accumulator relies on the Pailler cryptosystem [Pai99] which we recall in Appendix A.2. In the following λ will denote the value $lcm(p-1, q-1)$ where $n = pq$ with n safe modulus of the Paillier cryptosystem. Moreover we define the function $F : u \rightarrow \frac{u}{n-1}$. We review here the improved version [WWP08].

- **KeyGen**(1^k): given the security parameter k in unary as argument compute a safe modulus n that is k -bits long and create an empty set V . Let $\mathcal{C} = \mathbb{Z}_{n^2}^* \setminus \{1\}$ and $T' = \{3, \dots, n^2\}$. Let $\beta \xleftarrow{R} \mathbb{Z}_{\phi(n^2)}^*$ and $\sigma \xleftarrow{R} \mathbb{Z}^+$ two random numbers. We set the public key $PK = (n, \beta)$ and the private key $SK = (\sigma, \lambda)$. The output is the parameter $\mathcal{P} = (PK, SK)$.

- **AccVal**(X, \mathcal{P}): given a set $X = \{c_1, \dots, c_m\}$ with $L \subset \mathcal{C}$, and the parameter \mathcal{P} , take $c_{m+1} \xleftarrow{R} \mathcal{C}$ and compute

$$\begin{aligned} x_i &= F(c_i^\lambda \bmod n^2) \bmod n \quad (i = 1, \dots, m+1) \\ Acc_X &= \sigma \sum_{i=1}^{m+1} x_i \bmod n \\ y_i &= c_i^{\lambda\sigma\beta^{-1}} \bmod n^2 \quad (i = 1, \dots, m+1) \\ a_c &= \prod_{i=1}^{m+1} y_i \bmod n^2 \end{aligned}$$

Output the accumulated value Acc_X and the auxiliary information a_c .

- **WitGen**(a_c, X, \mathcal{P}): given the auxiliary information a_c , the set $X = \{c_1, \dots, c_m\}$ and the parameter \mathcal{P} , choose randomly a set of m numbers $T = \{t_1, \dots, t_m\} \subset T' \setminus \{\beta\}$ ($i = 1, \dots, m$) and compute

$$w_i = a_c c_i^{-t_i\beta^{-1}} \bmod n^2 \quad (i = 1, \dots, m)$$

Output the witness $W_i = (w_i, t_i)$ for c_i ($i = 1, \dots, m$).

- **AddEle**($X^\oplus, a_c, Acc_X, \mathcal{P}$): given a set $X^\oplus = \{c_1^\oplus, \dots, c_l^\oplus\}$ ($X^\oplus \subset \mathcal{C} \setminus L$) that need to be inserted, the auxiliary information a_c , the accumulated value Acc_X and the parameter \mathcal{P} , choose $c_{l+1}^\oplus \xleftarrow{R} \mathcal{C}$ and a set of l numbers $T^\oplus = \{t_1^\oplus, \dots, t_l^\oplus\} \xleftarrow{R} T' \setminus (T \cup \{\beta\})$, and compute

$$\begin{aligned} x_i^\oplus &= F((c_i^\oplus)^\lambda \bmod n^2) \bmod n \quad (i = 1, \dots, l+1) \\ Acc_{X \cup X^\oplus} &= Acc_X + \sigma \sum_{i=1}^{l+1} x_i^\oplus \bmod n \\ y_i^\oplus &= (c_i^\oplus)^{\lambda\sigma\beta^{-1}} \bmod n^2, \quad (i = 1, \dots, l+1) \\ a_u &= \prod_{i=1}^{l+1} y_i^\oplus \bmod n^2 \\ w_i^\oplus &= a_c a_u (c_i^\oplus)^{-t_i^\oplus\beta^{-1}} \bmod n^2 \quad (i = 1, \dots, l) \end{aligned}$$

Set $a_c = a_c a_u \bmod n^2$, $T = T \cup T^\oplus$ and $V = V \cup \{a_u\}$. Then output the new accumulated value $Acc_{X \cup X^\oplus}$ corresponding to the set $X \cup X^\oplus$, the witness $W_i^\oplus = (w_i^\oplus, t_i^\oplus)$ for the new added elements c_i^\oplus ($i = 1, \dots, l$) and the auxiliary information a_u and a_c .

- **DelEle**($X^\ominus, a_c, Acc_X, \mathcal{P}$): given a set $X^\ominus = \{c_1^\ominus, \dots, c_k^\ominus\}$ ($X^\ominus \subset X$) to be deleted, the auxiliary information a_c , the accumulated value Acc_X and the parameter \mathcal{P} , choose $c_{l+1}^\ominus \xleftarrow{R} \mathcal{C}$ and compute

$$\begin{aligned} x_i^\ominus &= F((c_i^\ominus)^\lambda \bmod n^2) \bmod n \quad (i = 1, \dots, l+1) \\ Acc_{X \setminus X^\ominus} &= Acc_X - \sigma \sum_{i=1}^l x_i^\ominus + \sigma x_{l+1}^\ominus \bmod n \\ y_i^\ominus &= (c_i^\ominus)^{\lambda\sigma\beta^{-1}} \bmod n^2 \quad (i = 1, \dots, l+1) \\ a_u &= y_{l+1}^\ominus \prod_{j=1}^l (y_j^\ominus)^{-1} \bmod n^2 \end{aligned}$$

Set $a_c = a_c a_u \bmod n^2$ and $V = V \cup \{a_u\}$. Then output the new accumulated value $Acc_{X \setminus X^\ominus}$ corresponding to the set $X \setminus X^\ominus$ and the auxiliary information a_u and a_c .

- $\text{Verify}(c, W, \text{Acc}_X, PK)$: given an element c , its witness $W = (w, t)$, the accumulated value Acc_X and the public key PK , test whether $\{c, w\} \subset \mathcal{C}, t \in T'$ and $F(w^\beta c^t \bmod n^2) \equiv \text{Acc}_X \pmod{n}$. If so, output **Yes**, otherwise output **No**.
- $\text{UpdWit}(W_i, a_u, PK)$: given the witness W_i , the auxiliary information a_u and the public key PK , compute $w'_i = w_i a_u \bmod n^2$ then output the new witness $W'_i = (w'_i, t_i)$ for the element c_i .

In the following section we show that Wang et al.'s construction is not secure.

4 An attack on the Accumulator with Batch Update of Wang et. al [WWP07,WWP08]

4.1 Problems with the proof

A security proof for the scheme was presented in the original paper by Wang et al. [WWP07]³. In this work, a security reduction is presented assuming the *Extended Strong RSA assumption* (or *es-RSA*), also proposed in [WWP07] as analogous to the *Strong RSA assumption* [BP97] but for the Paillier cryptosystem. Unfortunately, there are two main problems in the proof. First the adversary \mathcal{B} appears to run the **KeyGen** algorithm which means it knows the factorization of the safe modulus $n = pq$, or at least has the knowledge of $\Phi(n^2)$ and $\lambda = \text{lcm}(p-1, q-1)$ since $\beta = \sigma\lambda \bmod n^2$. In fact, without β computed in such a way, the correctness of the construction cannot hold anymore. Therefore, it is not clear how the reduction to break the *es-RSA* assumption can be achieved.

The second problem is that, to break the *es-RSA* assumption, \mathcal{B} needs to find non trivial (y, s) such that $y^s = x \bmod n^2$ where x is given as input to \mathcal{B} . This value x does not seem to be mentioned in the proof.

4.2 Description of the attack

As to show that the construction is not secure, i.e., the proof of security cannot be fixed, we present an attack. This attack considers the updated scheme of [WWP08]. The idea is simply to delete an element from the set, and then update the witness of this element with the update information obtained by the execution of the algorithm **DelEle**. We can then check that this new witness is a valid one for the deleted element, which of course should not happen.

So we start with the set $X = \{c_1\}$ for some c_1 . We have $x_1 = F(c_1^\lambda \bmod n^2) \bmod n$. Then a random element c_* is chosen and $x_* = F(c_*^\lambda \bmod n^2) \bmod n$ is computed. The accumulated value is set to $v = \sigma(x_1 + x_*) \bmod n$. The witness value $W_1 = (w_1, t_1)$ for c_1 is defined by $w_1 = a_c c_1^{-t_1 \beta^{-1}} \bmod n^2$ where $a_c = y_* y_1 \bmod n^2$, $y_1 = c_1^{\lambda \sigma \beta^{-1}} \bmod n^2$, $y_* = c_*^{\lambda \sigma \beta^{-1}} \bmod n^2$, and t_1 is random.

Then the adversary asks the manager to delete element c_1 . This means that the new accumulated value is $v' = v - \sigma x_1 + \sigma(x_{**}) \bmod n = \sigma(x_* + x_{**}) \bmod n$ where $x_{**} = F(c_{**}^\lambda \bmod n^2) \bmod n$ and c_{**} is random. The auxiliary value a_u used to update the witnesses is $a_u = y_{**} y_1^{-1} \bmod n^2$ where $y_{**} = c_{**}^{\lambda \sigma \beta^{-1}} \bmod n^2$. So updating the witness w_1 with a_u we obtain $w'_1 = a_u w_1 \bmod n^2 = y_{**} y_1^{-1} y_* y_1 c_1^{-t_1 \beta^{-1}} \bmod n^2 = y_{**} y_* c_1^{-t_1 \beta^{-1}} \bmod n^2$. Then $w_1'^\beta c_1^{t_1} \equiv (y_{**} y_* c_1^{-t_1 \beta^{-1}})^\beta c_1^{t_1} \bmod n^2 = (y_{**} y_*)^\beta \bmod n^2 = (c_{**} c_*)^{\lambda \sigma} \bmod n^2$. It follows that

$$\begin{aligned} F(w_1'^\beta c_1^{t_1} \bmod n^2) &\equiv F((c_{**} c_*)^{\lambda \sigma} \bmod n^2) \bmod n \\ &\equiv \sigma(F(c_{**}^\lambda \bmod n^2) + F(c_*^\lambda \bmod n^2)) \bmod n \\ &\equiv \sigma(x_* + x_{**}) \bmod n \\ &\equiv v' \bmod n \end{aligned}$$

This shows that (w'_1, t_1) is a valid witness for the deleted element x_1 . Therefore the scheme is not secure. Indeed the problem is simply that the information a_u allows to update *every* old witness including w_1 for which such an update should not be possible.

³ As mentioned before, the subsequent paper [WWP08] fixes two correctness flaws in [WWP07] but does not give a new security proof. The attack we consider, however, also works for the improved version [WWP08].

5 A Lower Bound for Updating the Witnesses

The attack of the last section is an indication that the proposed construction may have some design flaws. In this section, we show that the problem indeed is more fundamental and the *batch update* property is essentially unrealizable. We argue this by presenting a lower bound on the size of $Upd_{X,X'}$, the information needed to update the witnesses after m changes (more precisely deletions). Any deterministic⁴ update algorithm $UpdWit$ must at least read $Upd_{X,X'}$, and so it also bounds the running time of any such algorithm. In the following theorem \log refers to the logarithm in base two function.

Theorem 1. *Let \mathcal{Acc} be a secure accumulator scheme with deterministic $UpdWit$ and $Verify$ algorithms. For an update involving m delete operations in a set of N elements, the size of the information $Upd_{X,X'}$ required by the algorithm $UpdWit$ is $\Omega(m \log \frac{N}{m})$. In particular if $m = \frac{N}{2}$ we have $|Upd_{X,X'}| = \Omega(m) = \Omega(N)$.*

Proof. The idea of the proof is that the update information must encode a minimum amount of information in order for the accumulator scheme to be correct and secure. We prove this by considering a theoretical game between the accumulator manager and some user U . In the game, starting from an accumulated set X , the accumulator manager updates the accumulator in a way that is not known to user U (namely, the manager deletes some elements in an arbitrary set $X_d \subset X$) while still providing the update information $Upd_{X,X'}$ to U , where $X' = X \setminus X_d$. We prove that, as long as the scheme is correct and secure, there is a simple strategy that allows the user U to recover the exact changes made by the manager, that is, the set of deleted elements X_d . We conclude that the information provided by the manager to the user must at least encode a description of set X_d . Details follow.

Consider the following game. The set accumulated in some point of the time is $X = \{x_1, x_2, \dots, x_N\}$, and the corresponding accumulated value is Acc_X . We suppose the user possesses all the witnesses for each element in X and knows the accumulated value. Then m $DelEle$ operations are performed, that is the new set obtained is $X' = X \setminus X_d$ where $X_d = \{x_{i_1}, x_{i_2}, \dots, x_{i_m}\}$. The manager computes the new accumulated value $Acc_{X'}$ and sends it to the user along with the update information $Upd_{X,X'}$ required to update all the witnesses that are still in X' .

Armed with this information $Upd_{X,X'}$ and the new accumulated value $Acc_{X'}$, the user is able to reconstruct the set X_d of deleted elements as follows: for each element in X , the user checks if the corresponding witness can be successfully updated using algorithm $UpdWit$ with input $Upd_{X,X'}$. That is, the user computes $w'_x = UpdWit(w_x, Upd_{X,X'}, PK)$ and checks whether or not w'_x is a valid witness. If not, namely if $Verify(x, w'_x, Acc_{X'}, PK) = \text{No}$, then the element x must have been deleted from X . Note that this condition is necessary otherwise it would contradict the scheme's correctness (there would be elements in X' for which an updated witness cannot be computed) or the scheme's security (it would be possible to update witnesses for deleted elements).

Hence, the user is able to recompute the set of deleted elements X_d only from values $Upd_{X,X'}$ and $Acc_{X'}$. We therefore conclude that $(Upd_{X,X'}, Acc_{X'})$ must contain at least the information required to encode any subset with m elements of a set containing N elements. There are $\binom{N}{m}$ such subsets, so the minimum amount of information required is $\log \binom{N}{m}$ bits. Since $|Acc_{X'}| = \mathcal{O}(1)$ with respect to N , and $\binom{N}{m} \geq (\frac{N}{m})^m$, by a standard lower bound [CLRS01], we then have that $\log \binom{N}{m} \geq m \log \frac{N}{m}$ which implies that $|Upd_{X,X'}| = \Omega(m \log \frac{N}{m})$. The result then follows.

Corollary 1. *Cryptographic accumulators with batch update (and deterministic update and verification) do not exist.*

6 Conclusion

This result shows that the *batch update* property as proposed in [FN02] cannot be obtained, as the time to update all the witnesses cannot be linear in the security parameter k , i.e $\mathcal{O}(k)$, but it must be at least

⁴ For simplicity, in the proof we focus on deterministic update ($UpdWit$) and verification ($Verify$) algorithms. This is in fact the case for the construction of [WWP08]. We believe the result can be extended to the probabilistic case but the proof becomes more involved.

$\mathcal{O}(m) = \mathcal{O}(n) = \mathcal{O}(p(k)) = \omega(k)$ for some polynomial p . Notice that our lower bound is not tight since Camenisch and Lysyanskaya’s accumulator requires $\mathcal{O}(p(k) \cdot k)$ time to update the witnesses after $\mathcal{O}(p(k))$ changes. Nonetheless, in principle, it leaves some (potential) room to improve their construction by at most a factor of k .

Finally, one may consider getting around this impossibility result by not allowing deletions in the set. Unfortunately, such an accumulator can be trivially implemented by signing the elements of the set, as in this case there is no replay-attack. The witness for every element consists in its signature under the manager’s private key, and clearly need not to be updated.

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A Appendix

A.1 Syntax of Wang et al.’s accumulator

Definition 5. (*[WWP07]*) Let k be the security parameter. A dynamic accumulator with batch update $\mathcal{Acc}_{\mathfrak{B}\mathcal{U}}$ consists of the following algorithms:

- $\text{KeyGen}(1^k)$: is a probabilistic algorithm that takes as input the security parameter k in unary and returns a parameter $\mathcal{P} = (PK, SK)$ where PK is the public key and SK is the private key⁵.
- $\text{AccVal}(X, \mathcal{P})$: is a probabilistic algorithm that computes an accumulated value. It takes as input the set $X = \{c_1, \dots, c_m\}$ and the parameter \mathcal{P} and returns an accumulated value Acc_X along with some auxiliary information a_c that will be used by other algorithms.

⁵ In the original paper, the authors mention another parameter M which is an upper bound to the number of elements that can be accumulated. In order to simplify the notations, we omit it and recall that this upper bound must be a polynomial in k .

- $\text{Verify}(x, W, \text{Acc}_X, PK)$: this deterministic algorithm checks whether an element x belongs to the set X represented by the accumulated value Acc_X using the witness W and the public key PK . It returns **Yes** whether the witness W for x is valid or **No** otherwise.
- $\text{AddEle}(X^\oplus, a_c, \text{Acc}_X, \mathcal{P})$: this probabilistic algorithm adds some new elements to the accumulated value. The input values are the set of new elements to add $X^\oplus = \{c_1^\oplus, \dots, c_l^\oplus\}$, the auxiliary information a_c , the accumulated value Acc_X and the parameter \mathcal{P} . The returned values are $\text{Acc}_{X \cup X^\oplus}$ the accumulated value corresponding to the set $X \cup X^\oplus$, the witnesses $\{W_1^\oplus, \dots, W_l^\oplus\}$ associated to the inserted elements $\{c_1^\oplus, \dots, c_l^\oplus\}$, and the auxiliary information a_c, a_u , that will be used for future update operations.
- $\text{DelEle}(X^\ominus, a_c, \text{Acc}_X, \mathcal{P})$: this probabilistic algorithm is analogous to AddEle and allows to delete a set of elements X^\ominus . The input values are the set of elements to delete $X^\ominus = \{c_1^\ominus, \dots, c_l^\ominus\}$, the auxiliary information a_c , the accumulated value Acc_X and the parameter \mathcal{P} . The returned values are $\text{Acc}_{X \setminus X^\ominus}$ the accumulated value corresponding to the set $X \setminus X^\ominus$, and the auxiliary information a_c, a_u , that will be used for future update operations.
- $\text{WitGen}(a_c, X, \mathcal{P})$: this probabilistic algorithm creates a witness for every element in the set X . It takes as input an auxiliary information a_c , the set X and the parameter \mathcal{P} .
- $\text{UpdWit}(W_i, a_u, PK)$: this deterministic algorithm updates witnesses for the elements accumulated Acc_X and that are still accumulated in $\text{Acc}_{X'}$ (the new set after update). The inputs are W_i , the witness to update, the auxiliary information a_u and the public key PK . It returns an updated witness W'_i that allows to prove that c_i is still accumulated in the new accumulated value $\text{Acc}_{X'}$.

Note that in this definition UpdWitGen does not appear. The reason is that in Wang et al.'s construction, the update information required to recompute the witnesses is generated by algorithms AddEle and DelEle .

A.2 Paillier cryptosystem

The Paillier cryptosystem [Pai99] consists of the following three algorithms.

- **KeyGen**: let $n = pq$ be a RSA modulus, with p, q large prime integers. Let g an integer multiple of n modulo n^2 . The public key is defined by $PK = (n, g)$ and the private key by $SK = \lambda = \lambda(n) = \text{lcm}(p-1, q-1)$.
- **Encrypt**: let $M \in \mathbb{Z}_n$ be a plaintext message and r a random element in \mathbb{Z}_n^* , the encrypted message is $c = g^M r^n \bmod n^2$.
- **Decrypt**: to recover M from the ciphertext c , compute $M = \frac{F(c^\lambda \bmod n^2)}{F(g^\lambda \bmod n^2)} \bmod n$ where $F : u \rightarrow \frac{u-1}{n}$ takes as argument elements from the set $\mathcal{S}_n = \{u < n^2 \mid u = 1 \bmod n\}$.

The homomorphic property of the Paillier cryptosystem follows from the fact that $\forall x, y \in \mathcal{S}_n$ and $\sigma \in \mathbb{Z}^+$:

$$\begin{aligned} F((x \cdot y)^\lambda \bmod n^2) \bmod n &= F(x^\lambda \bmod n^2) + F(y^\lambda \bmod n^2) \bmod n \\ F(x^{\sigma\lambda} \bmod n^2) \bmod n &= \sigma F(x^\lambda \bmod n^2) \bmod n \end{aligned}$$