

Cryptographic software engineering, part 1

Daniel J. Bernstein

This is easy, right?

1. Take general principles of software engineering.
2. Apply principles to crypto.

Let's try some examples . . .

1972 Parnas “On the criteria to be used in decomposing systems into modules” :

“We propose instead that one begins with a list of difficult design decisions or design decisions which are likely to change. Each module is then designed to hide such a decision from the others.”

e.g. If number of cipher rounds is properly modularized as

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#define ROUNDS 20
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Make the right thing easy and the wrong thing hard.

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1970s: TENEX operating system compares user-supplied string against secret password one character at a time, stopping at first difference:

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- FAAAAA vs. FRIEND: stop at 1st character
- FRAAAA vs. FRIEND: stop at 2nd character

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Attacker sees comparison time, deduces position of difference.
A few hundred tries reveal secret password.

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How typical software
16-byte authentication

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for (i = 0; i < 16; i++)  
    if (x[i] != y[i])  
        return 1;
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diff = 0;
for (i = 0; i < 16; ++i)
    diff |= x[i] ^ y[i];
return 1 & ((diff-1) >> 8);
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Notice that the language makes the wrong thing simple and the right thing complex.

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After a hundred tries

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/* compare the tag */
int i;
for(i = 0; i < CRYPTO_ABYTES; i++)
    if(tag[i] != c[(*mlen) + i]){
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2004.11/2005.04 Bernstein:

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How to write constant-time

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```
void sort2(int32 *x)
{ int32 x0 = x[0];
  int32 x1 = x[1];
  int32 c = (x1 < x0);
  x[0] = (c ? x1 : x0);
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```

Syntax is different but “?:”
is a branch by definition:

```

if (x1 < x0) x[0] = x1;
else x[0] = x0;
if (x1 < x0) x[1] = x0;
else x[1] = x1;

```

16

```

sort2(int32 *x)
{
    int32 x0 = x[0];
    int32 x1 = x[1];
    if (x1 < x0) {
        x[0] = x1;
        x[1] = x0;
    }
    else {
        x[0] = x0;
        x[1] = x1;
    }
}

```

Compiler won't allow this.
Timing leaks secrets.

17

```

void sort2(int32 *x)
{
    int32 x0 = x[0];
    int32 x1 = x[1];
    int32 c = (x1 < x0);
    x[0] = (c ? x1 : x0);
    x[1] = (c ? x0 : x1);
}

```

Syntax is different but “?:”
is a branch by definition:

```

if (x1 < x0) x[0] = x1;
else x[0] = x0;
if (x1 < x0) x[1] = x0;
else x[1] = x1;

```

```

void sort2(int32 *x)
{
    int32 x0 = x[0];
    int32 x1 = x[1];
    int32 c = (x1 < x0);
    x[c] = x1;
    x[1 - c] = x0;
}

```

16

```

*x)
];
];

void sort2(int32 *x)
{ int32 x0 = x[0];
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```

't allow this.
ks secrets.

17

```

void sort2(int32
{ int32 x0 = x[0]
  int32 x1 = x[1]
  int32 c = (x1
  x[c] = x0;
  x[1 - c] = x1;
}

```

16

```
void sort2(int32 *x)
{ int32 x0 = x[0];
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{ int32 x0 = x[0];
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  int32 c = (x1 < x0);
  x[c] = x0;
  x[1 - c] = x1;
}
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if (x1 < x0) x[0] = x1;
else x[0] = x0;
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```

```

void sort2(int32 *x)
{ int32 x0 = x[0];
  int32 x1 = x[1];
  int32 c = (x1 < x0);
  x[c] = x0;
  x[1 - c] = x1;
}

```

Safe compiler won't allow this:
won't allow secret data
to be used as an array index.

Cache timing is not constant:
see earlier attack examples.

17

```

rt2(int32 *x)
  x0 = x[0];
  x1 = x[1];
  c = (x1 < x0);
  x[c] = (c ? x1 : x0);
  x[1 - c] = (c ? x0 : x1);

```

is different but “?:”
isn't by definition:

```

(x1 < x0) x[0] = x1;
x[0] = x0;
(x1 < x0) x[1] = x0;
x[1] = x1;

```

18

```

void sort2(int32 *x)
{ int32 x0 = x[0];
  int32 x1 = x[1];
  int32 c = (x1 < x0);
  x[c] = x0;
  x[1 - c] = x1;
}

```

Safe compiler won't allow this:
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Cache timing is not constant:
see earlier attack examples.

```

void sort2(int32 *x)
{ int32 x0 = x[0];
  int32 x1 = x[1];
  int32 c = (x1 < x0);
  c *= 1000000;
  x[c] = x0;
  x[1 - c] = x1;
}

```

17

```

*x)
];
];
< x0);
: x0);
: x1);

```

but “?:”
definition:

```

[0] = x1;
;
[1] = x0;
;

```

```

void sort2(int32 *x)
{ int32 x0 = x[0];
  int32 x1 = x[1];
  int32 c = (x1 < x0);
  x[c] = x0;
  x[1 - c] = x1;
}

```

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18

```

void sort2(int32
{ int32 x0 = x[0]
  int32 x1 = x[1]
  int32 c = (x1
c *= x1 - x0;
x[0] = x0 + c;
x[1] = x1 - c;
}

```

17

```
void sort2(int32 *x)
{ int32 x0 = x[0];
  int32 x1 = x[1];
  int32 c = (x1 < x0);
  x[c] = x0;
  x[1 - c] = x1;
}
```

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```
void sort2(int32 *x)
{ int32 x0 = x[0];
  int32 x1 = x[1];
  int32 c = (x1 < x0);
  c *= x1 - x0;
  x[0] = x0 + c;
  x[1] = x1 - c;
}
```

```
void sort2(int32 *x)
{ int32 x0 = x[0];
  int32 x1 = x[1];
  int32 c = (x1 < x0);
  x[c] = x0;
  x[1 - c] = x1;
}
```

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void sort2(int32 *x)
{ int32 x0 = x[0];
  int32 x1 = x[1];
  int32 c = (x1 < x0);
  c *= x1 - x0;
  x[0] = x0 + c;
  x[1] = x1 - c;
}
```

```

void sort2(int32 *x)
{ int32 x0 = x[0];
  int32 x1 = x[1];
  int32 c = (x1 < x0);
  x[c] = x0;
  x[1 - c] = x1;
}

```

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```

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{ int32 x0 = x[0];
  int32 x1 = x[1];
  int32 c = (x1 < x0);
  c *= x1 - x0;
  x[0] = x0 + c;
  x[1] = x1 - c;
}

```

Does safe compiler allow
multiplication of secrets?

Recall that multiplication
takes variable time on, e.g.,
Cortex-M3 and most PowerPCs.

```

sort2(int32 *x)
{
    int32 x0 = x[0];
    int32 x1 = x[1];
    int32 c = (x1 < x0);
    x[c] = x0;
    x[1-c] = x1;
}

```

Compiler won't allow this:

low secret data
used as an array index.

Timing is not constant:
side channel attack examples.

```

void sort2(int32 *x)
{
    int32 x0 = x[0];
    int32 x1 = x[1];
    int32 c = (x1 < x0);
    c *= x1 - x0;
    x[0] = x0 + c;
    x[1] = x1 - c;
}

```

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Recall that multiplication
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Will want
for fast p
but let's
for this s

```

void sort2(int32 *x)
{
    int32 x0 = x[0];
    int32 x1 = x[1];
    int32 c = (x1 < x0);
    c &= x1 - x0;
    x[0] = x0 + c;
    x[1] = x1 - c;
}

```

18

```

*x)
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];
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```

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et data
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examples.

```

void sort2(int32 *x)
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  x[0] = x0 + c;
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}

```

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Recall that multiplication
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19

Will want to hand
for fast prime-field
but let's dodge the
for this sorting code

```

void sort2(int32 *x)
{ int32 x0 = x[0];
  int32 x1 = x[1];
  int32 c = -(x1 < x0);
  c &= x1 ^ x0;
  x[0] = x0 ^ c;
  x[1] = x1 ^ c;
}

```

```

void sort2(int32 *x)
{ int32 x0 = x[0];
  int32 x1 = x[1];
  int32 c = (x1 < x0);
  c *= x1 - x0;
  x[0] = x0 + c;
  x[1] = x1 - c;
}

```

Does safe compiler allow
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  x[0] = x0 ^ c;
  x[1] = x1 ^ c;
}

```

```

void sort2(int32 *x)
{ int32 x0 = x[0];
  int32 x1 = x[1];
  int32 c = (x1 < x0);
  c *= x1 - x0;
  x[0] = x0 + c;
  x[1] = x1 - c;
}

```

Does safe compiler allow multiplication of secrets?

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  x[0] = x0 ^ c;
  x[1] = x1 ^ c;
}

```

```

void sort2(int32 *x)
{
    int32 x0 = x[0];
    int32 x1 = x[1];
    int32 c = (x1 < x0);
    x0 = x1 - c;
    x1 = x0 + c;
}

```

Can we compiler allow
constant-time
comparisons of secrets?

What about multiplication

with variable time on, e.g.,

ARMv7-M3 and most PowerPCs.

Will want to handle this issue
for fast prime-field ECC etc.,
but let's dodge the issue
for this sorting code:

```

void sort2(int32 *x)
{
    int32 x0 = x[0];
    int32 x1 = x[1];
    int32 c = -(x1 < x0);
    x0 ^= c;
    x1 ^= c;
}

```

1. Possible
(also for
C standard
int32 and
“undefined
Real CP
but C co

```

*x)
];
];
< x0);

```

r allow
 ecrets?
 lication
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  c &= x1 ^ x0;
  x[0] = x0 ^ c;
  x[1] = x1 ^ c;
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 C standard does not
 int32 as twos-com
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 Real CPU uses tw
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  x[0] = x0 ^ c;
  x[1] = x1 ^ c;
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```

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1. Possible correctness problem (also for previous code): C standard does not define `int32` as twos-complement; “undefined” behavior on overflow. Real CPU uses twos-complement, but *C compiler can screw that*

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Fix: use `gcc -fwrapv`.

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What do we do if it doesn't?

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C compilers *sometimes* use constant-time instructions for this.

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 sorting code:

```
rt2(int32 *x)
  x0 = x[0];
  x1 = x[1];
  c = -(x1 < x0);
  x1 ^ x0;
  = x0 ^ c;
  = x1 ^ c;
```

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```
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Constant-time con

```
int32 isnegative
```

```
{ return x >> 31
```

Returns `-1` if `x <`

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What do we do if it doesn't?

C compilers *sometimes* use constant-time instructions for this.

Constant-time comparisons

```
int32 isnegative(int32 x)
{ return x >> 31; }
```

Returns `-1` if `x < 0`, otherwise

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Returns `-1` if `x < 0`, otherwise `0`.

Why this works: the bits

$(b_{31}, b_{30}, \dots, b_2, b_1, b_0)$

represent the integer $b_0 + 2b_1 + 4b_2 + \dots + 2^{30}b_{30} - 2^{31}b_{31}$.

“1-bit signed right shift”:

$(b_{31}, b_{31}, \dots, b_3, b_2, b_1)$.

“31-bit signed right shift”:

$(b_{31}, b_{31}, \dots, b_{31}, b_{31}, b_{31})$.

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```
int32 ispositive
```

```
{ return isnegat
```

Constant-time comparisons

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int32 isnegative(int32 x)
{ return x >> 31; }
```

Returns -1 if $x < 0$, otherwise 0 .

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“31-bit signed right shift”:

$(b_{31}, b_{31}, \dots, b_{31}, b_{31}, b_{31})$.

```
int32 ispositive(int32 x)
{ return isnegative(-x); }
```

Constant-time comparisons

```
int32 isnegative(int32 x)
{ return x >> 31; }
```

Returns -1 if $x < 0$, otherwise 0 .

Why this works: the bits

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int32 ispositive(int32 x)
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Constant-time comparisons

```
int32 isnegative(int32 x)
{ return x >> 31; }
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```
int32 ispositive(int32 x)
{ return isnegative(-x); }
```

This code is incorrect!

Fails for input -2^{31} ,
because “ $-x$ ” produces -2^{31} .

Constant-time comparisons

```
int32 isnegative(int32 x)
{ return x >> 31; }
```

Returns -1 if $x < 0$, otherwise 0 .

Why this works: the bits

$(b_{31}, b_{30}, \dots, b_2, b_1, b_0)$

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$(b_{31}, b_{31}, \dots, b_3, b_2, b_1)$.

“31-bit signed right shift”:

$(b_{31}, b_{31}, \dots, b_{31}, b_{31}, b_{31})$.

```
int32 ispositive(int32 x)
{ return isnegative(-x); }
```

This code is incorrect!

Fails for input -2^{31} ,
because “ $-x$ ” produces -2^{31} .

Can catch this bug by testing:

```
int64 x; int32 c;
for (x = INT32_MIN;
     x <= INT32_MAX; ++x) {
    c = ispositive(x);
    assert(c == -(x > 0));
}
```

Constant-time comparisons

```
isnegative(int32 x)
```

```
{ return (x >> 31); }
```

-1 if $x < 0$, otherwise 0.

How it works: the bits

$b_3, \dots, b_2, b_1, b_0$

represent the integer $b_0 + 2b_1 +$

$\dots + 2^{30}b_{30} - 2^{31}b_{31}$.

“Arithmetic right shift”:

$b_3, \dots, b_3, b_2, b_1$).

“Logical right shift”:

$b_3, \dots, b_{31}, b_{31}, b_{31}$).

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}
```

Side note

```
int32 ispositive(int32 x)
```

```
{ if (x > 0)
```

```
    return 1;
}
```

Comparisons

```
(int32 x)
; }
```

0, otherwise 0.

the bits

b_1, b_0)

ger $b_0 + 2b_1 +$
 $- 2^{31}b_{31}$.

“right shift”:

b_2, b_1).

“left shift”:

b_{31}, b_{31}).

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Side note illustrating

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int32 ispositive
{ if (x == -x) r
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Side note illustrating `-fwrapv`

```
int32 ispositive(int32 x)
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Not constant-time.

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Even worse: without `-fwrapv`,
current gcc can remove the
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Incompetent gcc engineering:
source of many security holes.
Incompetent language standard.

```
ispositive(int32 x)
return !isnegative(-x); }
```

code is incorrect!

input -2^{31} ,
 “ $-x$ ” produces -2^{31} .

check this bug by testing:

```
; int32 c;
c = INT32_MIN;
for (x = INT32_MIN; x <= INT32_MAX; ++x) {
    if (!ispositive(x))
        printf("c == -(x > 0));
}
```

Side note illustrating `-fwrapv`:

```
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{ if (x == -x) return 0;
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```
int32 isnegative(int32 x)
{ return x < 0 || ispositive(x); }
```

```
(int32 x)
ive(-x); }
```

rect!

31,

duces -2^{31} .

g by testing:

;

IN;

```
MAX; ++x) {
```

```
(x);
```

```
x > 0));
```

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```
int32 isnonzero(
{ return isnegat
  || isnegative(
```

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Not constant-time.

Second part is evaluated
only if first part is zero.

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{ if (x == -x) return 0;
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Constant-time logic instructions.
Safe compiler will allow this.

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{ return
```

ng -fwrapv:

```
(int32 x)
```

```
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```

```
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.

out -fwrapv,

remove the

making this code.

engineering:

curity holes.

uage standard.

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```
int32 issmaller(
```

```
{ return isnegat
```

pv:

```
int32 isnonzero(int32 x)
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```

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pv,

code.

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ard.

```
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```

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Safe compiler will allow this.

```
int32 issmaller(int32 x, i
{ return isnegative(x - y
```

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This code is incorrect!

Generalization of `ispositive`.

Wrong for inputs $(0, -2^{31})$.

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Wrong for many more inputs.

Caught quickly by random tests:

```
for (j = 0; j < 10000000; ++j) {
  x += random(); y += random();
  c = issmaller(x,y);
  assert(c == -(x < y));
}
```

```
isnonzero(int32 x)
{
    if (x < 0)
        return isnegative(x)
        || !isnegative(-x);
}
```

constant-time.

if the first part is evaluated
the first part is zero.

```
isnonzero(int32 x)
{
    if (x < 0)
        return isnegative(x)
        || !isnegative(-x);
}
```

constant-time logic instructions.

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}
```

```
int32 issmaller(int32 x,int32 y)
{
    int32 c;
    if (x < y)
        c ^= 1;
    return c;
}
```

```
int32 x)
ive(x)
-x); }
```

evaluated
zero.

```
int32 x)
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```

ic instructions.
allow this.

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```

```
int32 issmaller(int32 x,i
{ int32 xy = x ^ y;
  int32 c = x - y;
  c ^= xy & (c ^ x);
  return isnegative(c);
}
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int32 issmaller(int32 x,int32 y)
{ int32 xy = x ^ y;
  int32 c = x - y;
  c ^= xy & (c ^ x);
  return isnegative(c);
}
```

Some verification strategies:

- Think this through.
- Write a proof.
- Formally verify proof.
- Automate proof construction.
- Test many random inputs.
- A bit painful: test all inputs.
- Faster: test `int16` version.

```
issmaller(int32 x,int32 y)
return isnegative(x - y); }
```

code is incorrect!

misinterpretation of `ispositive`.

for inputs $(0, -2^{31})$.

for many more inputs.

quickly by random tests:

```
for(j = 0; j < 100000000; ++j) {
    x = random(); y += random();
    if(issmaller(x,y);
    printf("c == -(x < y));
```

```
int32 issmaller(int32 x,int32 y)
{ int32 xy = x ^ y;
  int32 c = x - y;
  c ^= xy & (c ^ x);
  return isnegative(c);
}
```

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```
void minmax(int32 x,int32 y)
{ int32 min = x;
  int32 max = y;
  if(x > y) min = y;
  if(x < y) max = x;
  return min;
}
```

```
void solve(int32 x,int32 y)
{ minmax(x,y);
```

```
int32 x,int32 y)
ive(x - y); }
```

rect!

ispositive.

$(0, -2^{31})$.

more inputs.

random tests:

```
00000000; ++j) {
  y += random();
  x,y);
  x < y));
```

```
int32 issmaller(int32 x,int32 y)
{ int32 xy = x ^ y;
  int32 c = x - y;
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```
void minmax(int32
{ int32 a = *x;
  int32 b = *y;
  int32 ab = b ^
  int32 c = b -
  c ^= ab & (c ^
  c >>= 31;
  c &= ab;
  *x = a ^ c;
  *y = b ^ c;
}

void sort2(int32
{ minmax(x,x + 1
```

```
int32 y)
); }
```

ve.

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ests:

```
+j) {
dom();
```

```
int32 issmaller(int32 x,int32 y)
{ int32 xy = x ^ y;
  int32 c = x - y;
  c ^= xy & (c ^ x);
  return isnegative(c);
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  int32 b = *y;
  int32 ab = b ^ a;
  int32 c = b - a;
  c ^= ab & (c ^ b);
  c >>= 31;
  c &= ab;
  *x = a ^ c;
  *y = b ^ c;
}

void sort2(int32 *x)
{ minmax(x,x + 1); }
```

```
int32 issmaller(int32 x,int32 y)
{ int32 xy = x ^ y;
  int32 c = x - y;
  c ^= xy & (c ^ x);
  return isnegative(c);
}
```

Some verification strategies:

- Think this through.
- Write a proof.
- Formally verify proof.
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```
void minmax(int32 *x,int32 *y)
{ int32 a = *x;
  int32 b = *y;
  int32 ab = b ^ a;
  int32 c = b - a;
  c ^= ab & (c ^ b);
  c >>= 31;
  c &= ab;
  *x = a ^ c;
  *y = b ^ c;
}

void sort2(int32 *x)
{ minmax(x,x + 1); }
```

```

isSmaller(int32 x,int32 y)
{
    xy = x ^ y;
    c = x - y;
    xy & (c ^ x);
    return isnegative(c);
}

```

Verification strategies:

test this through.

write a proof.

manually verify proof.

automate proof construction.

use many random inputs.

more painful: test all inputs.

alternatively: test int16 version.

```

void minmax(int32 *x,int32 *y)
{
    int32 a = *x;
    int32 b = *y;
    int32 ab = b ^ a;
    int32 c = b - a;
    c ^= ab & (c ^ b);
    c >>= 31;
    c &= ab;
    *x = a ^ c;
    *y = b ^ c;
}

void sort2(int32 *x)
{
    minmax(x,x + 1);
}

```

```

int32 is...
{
    int32
    c ^=
    return
}

void sort...
{
    long
    for (
        for
            m
    }
}

```

Safe con
if array l

27

```
int32 x,int32 y)
  y;
  y;
  x);
  ive(c);
```

strategies:

gh.

proof.

construction.

om inputs.

est all inputs.

16 version.

```
void minmax(int32 *x,int32 *y)
{ int32 a = *x;
  int32 b = *y;
  int32 ab = b ^ a;
  int32 c = b - a;
  c ^= ab & (c ^ b);
  c >>= 31;
  c &= ab;
  *x = a ^ c;
  *y = b ^ c;
}
```

```
void sort2(int32 *x)
{ minmax(x,x + 1); }
```

28

```
int32 ispositive
{ int32 c = -x;
  c ^= x & c;
  return isnegat
}
```

```
void sort(int32
{ long long i,j;
  for (j = 0;j <
    for (i = j -
      minmax(x +
  }
```

Safe compiler will
if array length n is

27

```

int32 y) void minmax(int32 *x,int32 *y)
{ int32 a = *x;
  int32 b = *y;
  int32 ab = b ^ a;
  int32 c = b - a;
  c ^= ab & (c ^ b);
  c >>= 31;
  c &= ab;
  *x = a ^ c;
  *y = b ^ c;
}

void sort2(int32 *x)
{ minmax(x,x + 1); }

```

28

```

int32 ispositive(int32 x)
{ int32 c = -x;
  c ^= x & c;
  return isnegative(c);
}

void sort(int32 *x,long l
{ long long i,j;
  for (j = 0;j < n;++j)
    for (i = j - 1;i >= 0
        minmax(x + i,x + i
}

```

Safe compiler will allow this
if array length n is not secret

```

void minmax(int32 *x,int32 *y)
{ int32 a = *x;
  int32 b = *y;
  int32 ab = b ^ a;
  int32 c = b - a;
  c ^= ab & (c ^ b);
  c >>= 31;
  c &= ab;
  *x = a ^ c;
  *y = b ^ c;
}

void sort2(int32 *x)
{ minmax(x,x + 1); }

```

```

int32 ispositive(int32 x)
{ int32 c = -x;
  c ^= x & c;
  return isnegative(c);
}

void sort(int32 *x,long long n)
{ long long i,j;
  for (j = 0;j < n;++j)
    for (i = j - 1;i >= 0;--i)
      minmax(x + i,x + i + 1);
}

```

Safe compiler will allow this
if array length `n` is not secret.