

In-Network Aggregation in Wireless Sensor Networks

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Abstract—Wireless Sensor Networks (WSNs) is a collection of nodes organized into a cooperative network. In-network aggregation is usually required in many sensor applications to obtain the temporal variation information of aggregates. However, in a hostile environment, the adversary could fabricate false temporal variation patterns of the aggregates by manipulating a series of aggregation results through compromised nodes. In this paper, we identify distinct design issues for secure in-network aggregation in WSNs. An efficient verification scheme is proposed to protect the authenticity of the temporal variation patterns in the aggregation results. Compared with the existing secure aggregation schemes, our scheme only need to check a small portion of aggregation results in a time window and, thus, greatly reduces the verification cost. We define representative points and propose corresponding algorithms for representative point selection. By exploiting the spatial correlation among the sensor readings in close proximity, a series of security mechanisms are also proposed to protect the sampling procedure.

Keywords—Wireless Sensor Networks; Continuous aggregation; authenticity; temporal variation patterns; spatial correlation;

I. INTRODUCTION

A wireless sensor network is a collection of nodes organized into a cooperative network [10]. Each node consists of processing capability (one or more microcontrollers, CPUs or DSP chips), may contain multiple types of memory (program, data and flash memories), have a RF transceiver, have a power source (e.g., batteries and solar cells), and accommodate various sensors and actuators. Wireless sensor networks (WSNs) are commonly used in pervasive and ubiquitous applications. WSNs are developed using both static (motes) and mobile (e.g. smart phone) sensor nodes for various applications such as smart homes, telehealth, surveillance, metering, and industry automation.

Data Aggregators can be called as organizers involved in compiling information from detailed database on individuals and selling information to others. For online purpose where dynamic data is of prime importance, data aggregators can gather the information from designated websites and providing the data to the user. The process of extracting raw statistical information from the database or data repository, putting it all together to produce statistical output that can be used by the user and has relevance to statistical query it seeks to satisfy. Absolute difference in the value of data item at the data source and the value known to the client.

In applications of wireless sensor networks (WSNs), the aggregations of sensed data, such as sum, average, and predicate count, is very important for the users to get summarization information about the monitored area. Instead of collecting all sensor data and computing aggregation results at the base station (BS), in-network aggregation allows sensor readings to be aggregated by intermediate nodes, which efficiently reduces the communication overhead. Many in-network aggregation schemes have been proposed. However, since WSNs are often deployed in an open and unattended environment, an adversary could undetectably take control of one or more sensor nodes and subvert correct in-network aggregations by manipulating the partial aggregation results or reporting arbitrary readings through compromised nodes.

In this we consider the security of in-network aggregation in WSNs. In many WSN applications for environment monitoring, the users often need the temporal variation information in a series of aggregation results rather than an individual aggregation result. Thus, in-network aggregation of sensed data is usually desired. For in-network aggregation query, a time interval, called epoch, is specified and the aggregation is evaluated in every epoch. The duration of every epoch specifies the amount of time sensor nodes wait before acquiring and transmitting each successive sample. In-network aggregation is not merely for one-shot responses to sporadic queries. It helps the users to understand how the environment changes over time and track real-time measurements for trend analysis.

A number of secure aggregation schemes have been proposed [8], [9], [11]. SIA [8] addresses secure aggregation within the single aggregator network topology. A number of hierarchical secure aggregation schemes [9], [11] are proposed for aggregation in tree network topology in which each node computes an intermediate aggregation result accounting for all sensing data of nodes in the sub-tree rooted at it. All these schemes aim to protect a single aggregation computation. Directly using these schemes in in-network aggregation results in individual verification for every aggregation result in every epoch, which will incur a great communication cost especially for in-network aggregation having a long period or high frequency (i.e., small epoch). The additional communication caused by interactive procedures between the base station and sensor nodes for verification in every epoch also has a negative impact on the efficiency of transmission scheduling for in-network data aggregation [12]. Besides, these schemes [8], [9] also are tightly coupled with the

tree topology and, thus, unable to work with various other in-network aggregation protocols [6], [7].

A number of hierarchical secure schemes [9], [11], [14], [16] have been proposed for in-network aggregation on tree topology, where each node computes an intermediate aggregation result accounting for the sensor readings of nodes in the subtree rooted at it. Hu and Evans [14] propose a secure aggregation scheme against one single malicious node in the network, in which each node checks the inconsistency of MACs from their children and grandchildren. Garofalakis et al. [16] propose to combine cryptographic signatures and Flajolet-Martin sketch [18] to achieve verifiable count aggregation.

Several secure hierarchical aggregation schemes [9], [11] follow an aggregation-commitment-attest framework. During the in-network aggregation, each node computes the hash as commitment over the input of its aggregation computation, intermediate results, and data commitments from its children, and then sends the hash to its parent. Based on the commitments, interactive attest is performed between the base station and sensor nodes when aggregation completes. Yang et al. [9] propose a secure hop-by-hop data aggregation protocol SDAP. The tree topology is partitioned into multiple logical sub-tree groups, and sensor data are aggregated in every sub-tree separately to reduce the trust on high-level nodes. The groups returning outlier results are attested by checking the aggregation correctness along a random path.

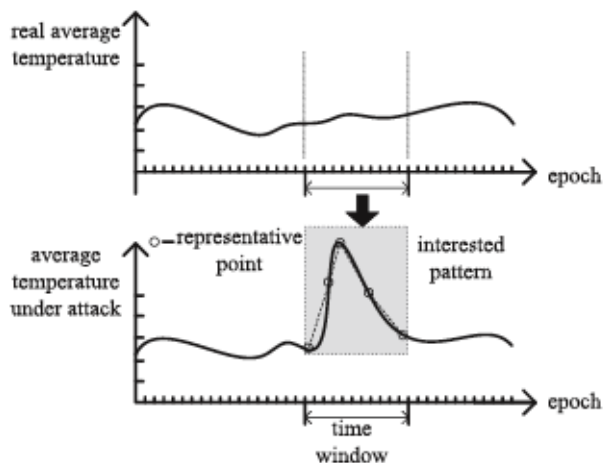


Fig. 1: The fabrication of the temporal variation pattern in in-network aggregation.

Roy et al. [17] propose a scheme to verify the histogram computation to securely estimate the median. All these previous works address secure in-network aggregation within a snapshot query, so their approaches conduct verification for each single aggregation result. Unlike them, our work focuses on in-network aggregation and aims to protect the temporal variation patterns of aggregation results. To protect in-network aggregation, previous approaches would conduct individual verification in every epoch and, thus, can incur a significant communication cost. In contrast, our approach only selectively verifies a small part of aggregation results in a time window.

In this paper, we present an efficient scheme to detect false temporal variation patterns in in-network aggregation. Our scheme verifies the correctness of the observed temporal

variation pattern in a time window by checking only a small part of aggregation results termed representative points. The representative points are selected to capture the temporal variation pattern of the aggregate.

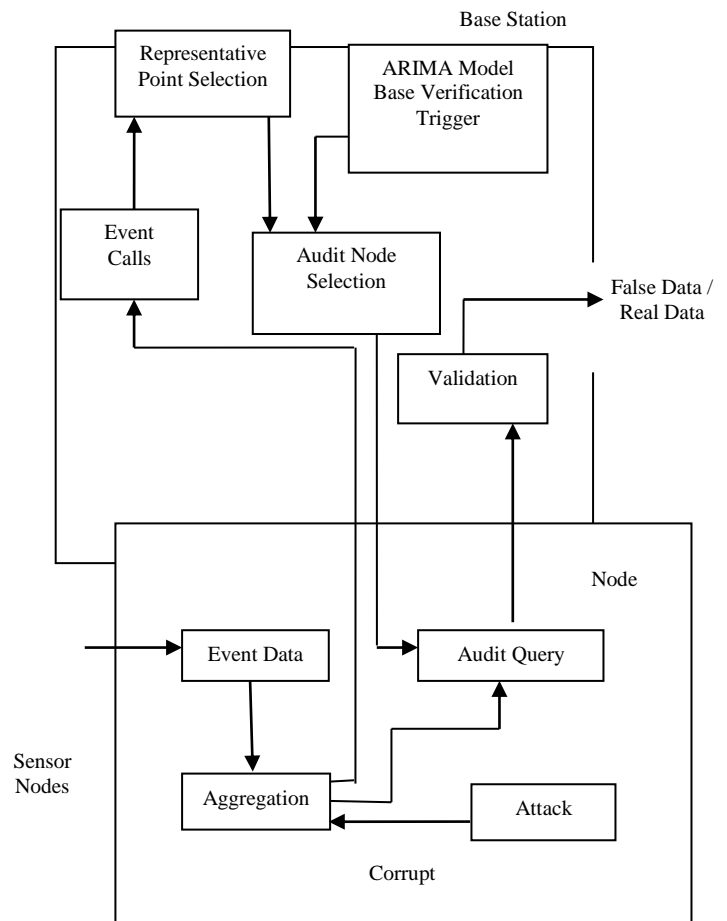


Fig 2: The system architecture

In our scheme, the correctness of representative points is checked by hypothesis testing techniques with samples from the WSN. While providing nice security properties, the sampling-based approach only requires a part of nodes to be involved in the verification, and enables verification not to rely on any particular in-network aggregation protocol. To protect the sampling procedure, verifiable random sampling is proposed to protect the legitimacy of sampled nodes, and local authentication based on spatial correlation among sensor readings is proposed to protect the validity of sample readings. As a result, our scheme can effectively verify the temporal variation patterns for in-network aggregation, while being able to achieve low additional energy cost and work with various in-network aggregation protocols.

II. PROPOSED ARCHITECTURE

The system architecture is shown in Fig 2. The modules in the architecture are shown below:

A. RPS

RPS requirement is to capture the temporal pattern of the whole aggregation result series with the help of sensor node input.

B. Aggregation

The sensor nodes were collected in a network.

C. Validation

BS verifies the legitimacy of sampled nodes; and, how to detect false samples provided by the malicious nodes.

D. Attack

The importance of temporal variation information of aggregation results, we focus on the attack against in-network aggregation that the adversaries attempt to distort the real temporal variation pattern of the aggregate by disrupting a series of successive aggregation results.

Notations: We list below notations used in this paper:

- 1) u, v, w (in lower case) are sensor nodes.
- 2) N is the total number of sensor nodes.
- 3) N_u is the set of u 's neighbors in u 's communication range including itself.
- 4) N_u^2 is the set of u 's two-hop neighbors outside its communication range.
- 5) R_c is the communication radius of sensor nodes.
- 6) K_u is u 's individual key shared between u and the BS.
- 7) $MAC(k, m)$ is the message authentication code of message m generated with a symmetric key K .
- 8) $r_{u,t}$ is the sensor reading of u in epoch t .

III. IN-NETWORK AGGREGATION

During the period of in-network aggregation query, each sensor node caches l_{\max} number of sensor readings that contribute to the aggregations in the latest l_{\max} epochs. l_{\max} determines the maximum length of the time window in which the temporal variation pattern of the aggregation results can be verified.

Once the users observe an interesting temporal variation pattern of the aggregate, they can verify its authenticity on-demand. However, in the circumstance that the adversary is interested in suppressing the real appearance of an interesting temporal variation pattern, the users cannot decide when to conduct verification because they do not know when the interesting pattern really appears. Thus, periodic verification is required. To this end, the period of the aggregation query is divided into successive time windows. Each time window consists of several successive epochs. At the end of each time window, the temporal variation pattern in this time window is verified.

Either in the on-demand verification or in the periodic verification, the BS selects some points from the series of aggregation results in the time window to be verified, and checks their correctness to detect any fabrication of temporal variation patterns. Considering that the adversary can manipulate only a small number of aggregation results such as extreme points to tamper with the temporal variation pattern, it may be ineffective to check a set of randomly selected points to detect forged patterns because the selected points may not cover these manipulated points, which causes that the attack is not detected. Thus, to guarantee effective attack detection, the selected points should be able to capture the temporal variation pattern in the time window like extreme points. We refer to these points as

representative points and the epoch of a representative point as representative epoch hereinafter. After the selection of representative points, the BS broadcasts a verification request, which includes the representative epochs, the sampling ratio q , and a nonce number $nonce_v$, to the WSN. Once receiving the verification request, each node decides whether to act as a sampled node. Before the sampled nodes send to the BS their sensor readings of every representative epoch, their neighbouring nodes verify the correctness of sample data and authenticate the sample messages.

With the sensor reading samples, the BS checks the correctness of the aggregation results of each representative epoch by hypothesis testing. The general form of the hypothesis tests is

$$H_0: A(t) = A_g(t) \text{ versus } H_a: A(t) \neq A_g(t).$$

If the aggregation results in all representative epochs are verified as correct, the temporal variation pattern in the time window is assumed to be authentic.

IV. REPRESENTATIVE POINT SELECTION (RPS)

The definition of representative point to formally characterize the requirement that is to capture the temporal pattern of the whole aggregation result series. Fig. 3 shows an example.

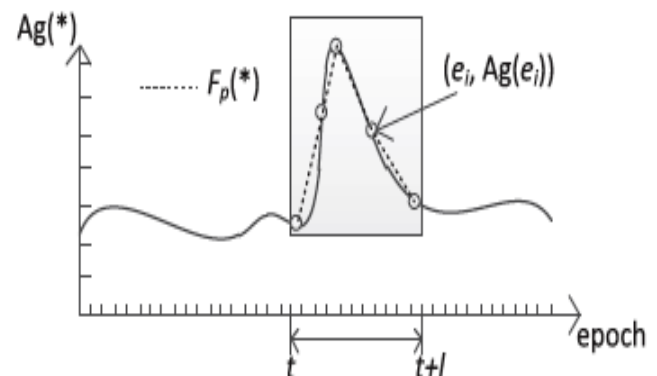


Fig 3: Definition of representative points.

Let $P = \{(e_i, Ag(e_i)) \mid 1 \leq i \leq p, e_1 = t < e_2 < \dots < e_{p-1} < e_p = t + l\}$ be a set of points in the time window $[t, t+l]$, where $Ag(e_i)$ is the aggregation result in epoch e_i . Let $F_p(*)$ be the piecewise linear function consisting of connected line segments, each of which is between point $(e_i, Ag(e_i))$ and $(e_{i+1}, Ag(e_{i+1}))$ for $1 \leq i \leq p - 1$. If F_p is a best approximation of the series of aggregation results $Ag(*)$ within $[t, t+l]$ among all possible $F_{p'}$, where $P' = \{(e'_i, Ag(e'_i)) \mid 1 \leq i \leq p, e'_1 = t < e'_2 < \dots < e'_{p-1} < e'_p = t + l\}$, we say P captures the temporal pattern of aggregation results and the points in P are representative points in the time window $[t, t+l]$. Here, the goodness of approximation is assessed by the approximation error between $F_p(*)$ and $Ag(*)$, which is measured by their Euclidean distance

$$E(t, t + l) = \sqrt{\sum_{k=t}^{t+l} \{Ag(k) - F_p(k)\}^2}$$

A. Representative Point Selection

The RPS problem can be described as follows: Given an integer $p \geq 2$, find a set of points $P = \{(e_i, Ag(e_i)) \mid 1 \leq i \leq p, e_1 = t < e_2 < \dots < e_{p-1} < e_p = t + 1\}$ such that the error of approximation of $Ag(*)$ by $F_p(*)$ in the time window $[t, t+1]$ is minimized and $|P| = p$.

B. RPS with Prespecified Points (RPS-P)

With the knowledge of RPS algorithm and the ability of predicting the real temporal variation pattern of the aggregate, the adversary may try to forge a series of aggregation results of which the selected representative points have aggregation values equal or close to the real ones. If such attempt is successful, the check of representative points will not detect the fabrication of the temporal variation. Fig. 3 shows an example of fabricated series of aggregation results and the representative points selected by RPS algorithm over the fabricated series. The aggregation values of representative points are the same as the real aggregation results, which causes that the false pattern between epoch 0 and 9 cannot be detected. Considering such possibility, the randomness is introduced to make the output of the selection algorithm unpredictable. To this end, each data point in $(t, t+1)$ is prespecified as a representative point with a probability of q in our scheme. Then, the remaining number of representative points including the ones at two boundary epochs t and $t+1$ are selected to minimize the approximation error. On the other hand, some points such as the maximum and minimum aggregation results, which describe the significant characteristics of the temporal variation pattern, should be always prespecified as representative points.

C. The Number of Representative Points

Selecting more representative points can further enhance the capability of our scheme to detect forged temporal variation pattern because a larger number of representative points can better capture the variation pattern of aggregation results and have a higher probability to cover the manipulated period. However, since each representative point needs to be verified by collecting sensor reading samples in the corresponding representative epoch from the WSN, more representative points mean higher communication cost. Therefore, there is a trade-off between detecting capability and communication cost. Actually address the optimal representative point selection to minimize the approximation error with a given budget on communication cost, i.e., a given number of representative points. On the other hand, the users would need to decide at least how many representative points are required to achieve the desired detecting capability of the scheme. Thus, here we consider the problem of minimizing the number of representative points given a certain degree of the approximation error that the users can tolerate.

V. AGGREGATION VERIFICATION

Selecting more representative points can further enhance the capability of our scheme to detect forged temporal variation pattern because a larger number of representative points can better capture the variation pattern of aggregation results and have a higher probability to cover the manipulated period. However, since each representative point needs to be verified by collecting sensor reading samples in the

corresponding representative epoch from the WSN, more representative points mean higher communication cost. Therefore, there is a trade-off between detecting capability and communication cost.

Once broadcasting the verification request, the BS waits for some time t_w to ensure the arrivals of all samples. Considering the network delivery time of the verification requests and sample messages, t_w should be at least twice of the message delivery time from the network boundary to the BS plus the time for the local sample authentication. According to the procedure of local sample authentication, the time required to complete it consists of the time of two-hop broadcast from a sample node and two-hop broadcast from each of its neighbour nodes, and also the time for each neighbour to collect sensor readings in its two-hop neighbourhood and for the sampled node to collect MACs from its one-hop neighbour's. These times can be easily estimated and accordingly the time for the local sample authentication can be estimated. When time expires, the BS first checks the validity of every arrived sample and the sample size, and then verifies the aggregation results in representative epochs.

A. Sample Message Verification

For every sample message, say S_v claimed from node v , the BS verifies its validity in two steps. First, the BS verifies the legitimacy of the claimed sampled node v by checking whether Inequality holds because the BS knows h , nonce, nonce $_v$, and K_v . Then, the BS verifies XMAC in the sample message. Since the BS holds the seed key K_u^s of any node u , it can generate u 's authentication key $K_{u,v}^a$. The BS generates $K_{u,v}^a$ for each node u_i in the ID list (u_1, \dots, u_T) in S_v , recomputed XMAC, and compare it with the one in S_v for equality. If the verification in any step above fails, the BS drops S_v and raises an alarm. Otherwise, the BS accepts S_v . In this way, all invalid sample messages are dropped.

During the local sample authentication, a false sample may pass the local verification and be successfully authenticated by c neighbour's due to sufficient number of compromised nodes in the same neighbourhood. However, it is expensive for the adversary to provide a large portion of false samples because of the verifiable random sampling and local sample authentication. Thus, we assume the number of false samples is relatively small to the total sample size and we can use Rosner's test to detect outlying sensor readings in each representative epoch. The sampled nodes from which outlying sensor readings are detected are labelled as outlying nodes and the hypothesis testing is conducted over the samples excluding those from outlying nodes.

VI. EXPERIMENTAL EVALUATION

In this section, the representative epochs are uniformly chosen from a time window with an interval of 10 epochs. The performance of the local sample authentication is evaluated by the following two metrics:

Approval rate of real samples

The ratio of the number of nodes whose data can be successfully authenticated by at least c neighbors to the total number of nodes in the benign environment. Even in benign environment, not all samples would be successfully

authenticated in practice. The samples that cannot be authenticated will not be accepted by the BS. This metric indicates the degree of influence of the local sample authentication on the availability of real samples.

Disapproval rate of false samples

The ratio of the number of false samples that cannot be successfully authenticated by up to c neighbours to the total number of compromised sampled nodes in the hostile environment. It indicates the degree of the prevention of the false samples by the local sample authentication.

Fig. 4 illustrates the approval rate of real samples in each time window under different security threshold c . As we can see, the approval rate in each time window decreases as c increases. This is because the number of nodes having up to c neighbours decreases as c increases. When $c = 1$ and $c = 2$, the approval rate is higher than 90 and 85 percent, respectively. However, the approval rate is lower than 80 percent when $c = 3$, which is because that the simulated network is sparse (the average degree of the nodes is 5). It indicates that with a reasonable value of c , here say 2, our local sample authentication approach have a small effect on the availability of real samples.

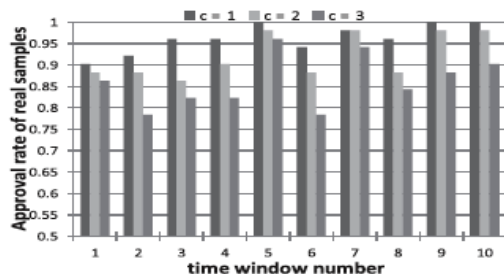
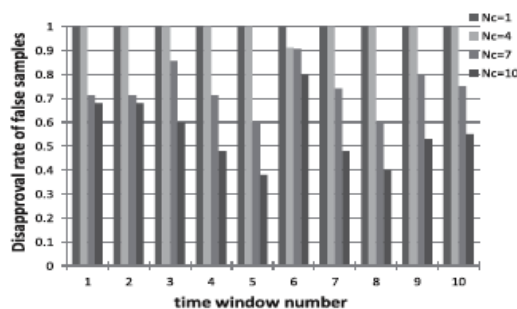
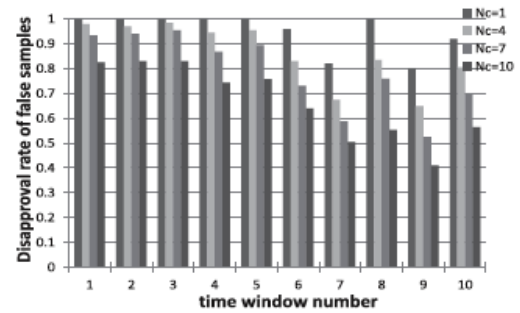


Fig 4: Approval rate of real samples in every time window.

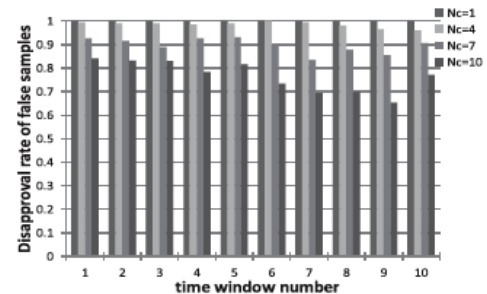
Figs. 5a, 5b, and 5c show the disapproval rate of false samples, respectively, generated by the above three manners under different N_c . The results are averaged over 50 runs. In each run, N_c nodes are randomly selected as compromised nodes. In each figure, we can see that the disapproval rate of false samples decreases as N_c increases in every time window. This is because that more compromised nodes would incur a higher probability for that a compromised node providing false samples has c compromised neighbour nodes to launch the collusion attack. When $N_c = 1$ and $N_c = 4$, the disapproval rate is higher than 80 percent in all three figures. Since the network size is small (51 nodes), 10 compromised nodes make up a significant fraction of the network and cause the worst results.



(a)



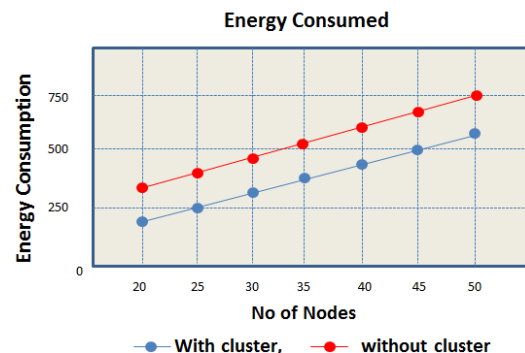
(b)



(c)

Fig 5: Disapproval rate under three manners of forging false samples: (a) Disapproval rate of false samples generated by the first manner. (b) Disapproval rate of false samples generated by the second manner. (c) Disapproval rate of false samples generated by the third manner.

Fig 7 shows the graph performance in which energy consumed verses number of nodes.



A. Fig 6: The performance of energy consumed.

VII. CONCLUSION

In this paper, we identify distinct design issues for secure in-network aggregation in WSNs. An efficient verification scheme is proposed to protect the authenticity of the temporal variation patterns in the aggregation results. Our scheme only need to check a small portion of aggregation results in a time window and, thus, greatly reduces the verification cost. We define representative points and propose corresponding algorithms for representative point selection. By exploiting the spatial correlation among the sensor readings in close proximity, a series of security mechanisms are also proposed to protect the sampling procedure. The correctness of representative points is checked by hypothesis testing techniques with samples from the WSN. While providing nice security properties, the sampling-based approach only

requires a part of nodes to be involved in the verification, and enables verification not to rely on any particular in-network aggregation protocol. To protect the sampling procedure, verifiable random sampling is proposed to protect the legitimacy of sampled nodes, and local authentication based on spatial correlation among sensor readings is proposed to protect the validity of sample readings. As a result, our scheme can effectively verify the temporal variation patterns for in-network aggregation, while being able to achieve low additional energy cost and work with various in-network aggregation protocols. Although a conclusion may review the main points of the paper, do not replicate the abstract as the conclusion. A conclusion might elaborate on the importance of the work or suggest applications and extensions. Authors are strongly encouraged not to call out multiple figures or tables in the conclusion—these should be referenced in the body of the paper.

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