# Cryptographic Analysis of All $4 \times 4$ -Bit S-Boxes

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**Abstract.** We present cryptanalytic results of an exhaustive search of all 16! bijective 4-bit S-Boxes. Previously affine equivalence classes have been exhaustively analyzed in 2007 work by Leander and Poschmann. We extend on this work by giving further properties of the optimal S-Box linear equivalence classes. In our main analysis we consider two S-Boxes to be cryptanalytically equivalent if they are isomorphic up to the permutation of input and output bits and a XOR of a constant in the input and output. We have enumerated all such equivalence classes with respect to their differential and linear properties. These equivalence classes are equivalent not only in their differential and linear bounds but also have equivalent algebraic properties, branch number and circuit complexity. We describe a "golden" set of S-Boxes from a dozen published cryptographic algorithms.

**Keywords:** S-Box, Differential cryptanalysis, Linear cryptanalysis, Exhaustive permutation search.

#### 1 Introduction

Horst Feistel introduced the Lucifer cipher, which can be considered to be the first modern block cipher, some 40 years ago. Feistel followed closely the principles outlined by Claude Shannon in 1949 [36] when designing Lucifer. We quote from Feistel's 1971 patent text [20]:

Shannon, in his paper, presents further developments in the art of cryptography by introducing the product cipher. That is, the successive application of two or more distinctly different kinds of message symbol transformations. One example of a product cipher consists of symbol substitution (nonlinear transformation) followed by a symbol transposition (linear transformation).

Cryptographic algorithms are still designed in 2011 according to these same principles. A key element of Lucifer's symbol substitution layer was a pair of  $4 \times 4$ -bit substitution boxes (S-Boxes).

Much research effort has been dedicated to the analysis of 4-bit S-Boxes in subsequent encryption algorithms during last the four decades. In this paper we present an analysis of all bijective 4-bit S-Boxes in the light of modern cryptanalytic techniques, together with comparison tables of 4-bit S-Boxes found in a dozen different published encryption algorithm proposals.

**Overview of this paper.** In Section 2 we give definitions of differential probability, linear bias, algebraic degree, and branch number of an S-Box. Section 3 defines more key concepts such as linear (affine) equivalence (LE) and permutation equivalence (PE) classes, together with the concept of an ordering-based canonical representative identify LE, PE, and other equivalence classes uniquely. We also make new observations on the sixteen "optimal" LE classes first identified in [31]. Section 4 describes our exhaustive search of the 16! bijective  $4 \times 4$ -bit S-Boxes. We give a description of the search algorithm in Section 4.1 and the distribution of class sizes and Linear and Differential properties in Section 4.2. Section 5 discusses the "golden" S-Boxes discovered in our search. We conclude in 4.2. Appendix A tabulates the properties of  $4 \times 4$ -bit S-Boxes found in a dozen different cryptographic algorithms.

#### 2 S-Box Properties

In the context of cryptographic operations, arithmetic is assumed to be performed on variables, vectors, or matrices whose individual elements belong to the finite field  $\mathbb{F}_2$ . Vectors are indexed from 0. We write  $\operatorname{wt}(x) = \sum x_i$  to denote the Hamming weight of the bit vector (word) x.

We will first give definitions related to Differential Cryptanalysis [4, 5], Linear Cryptanalysis (LC) [32], and various forms of Algebraic / Cube Cryptanalysis (AC) [16, 17].

**Definition 1.** Let S be an S-Box with |S| input values. Let n be the number of elements x that satisfy  $S(x \oplus \Delta_i) = S(x) \oplus \Delta_o$ . Then n/|S| is the differential probability p of the characteristic  $S_D(\Delta_i \to \Delta_o)$ .

For  $4 \times 4$  bijective S-Boxes the optimal differential bound (maximum of all differentials in an individual S-Box) is p = 1/4.

**Definition 2.** Let *S* be an *S*-Box with |S| input values. Let *n* be the number of elements *x* that satisfy wt $(\beta_i \cdot x \oplus \beta_o \cdot S(x)) \mod 2 = 1$  for two bit-mask vectors  $\beta_i$  and  $\beta_o$ . Then  $\operatorname{abs}(\frac{n}{|S|} - \frac{1}{2})$  is the bias  $\epsilon$  of the linear approximation  $S_L(\beta_i \to \beta_o)$ .

It is well known that all  $2^{2^n}$  functions f from n bits to a single bit can be uniquely expressed by a polynomial function with coefficients drawn from the Algebraic Normal Form  $\hat{f}$ , which has the same domain as f:

$$f(x) = \sum_{y \in \mathbb{F}_2^n} \hat{f}(y) x_0^{y_0} x_1^{y_1} \cdots x_{n-1}^{y_{n-1}}.$$

This transformation from f to  $\hat{f}$  can also be seen to be equivalent to the Walsh transform [35].

**Definition 3.** The algebraic degree  $\deg(f)$  of a function  $f : \mathbb{F}_2^n \mapsto \mathbb{F}_2$  is the maximal weight wt(x) that satisfies  $\hat{f}(x) \neq 0$ .

In other words, the degree of f is the number of variables in the biggest monomial in the polynomial representation of f. Naturally the maximum degree for a 4-bit function is 4. This monomial exists in the polynomial representation exactly when  $f(0) \neq f(15)$ .

We define S-Box branch number similarly to the way it is defined in [39].

**Definition 4.** The branch number of an  $n \times n$ -bit S-Box is

$$BN = \min_{a,b \neq a} \left( \operatorname{wt}(a \oplus b) + \operatorname{wt}(S(a) \oplus S(b)) \right),$$

where  $a, b \in \mathbb{F}_2^n$ .

It is clear that for a bijective S-Box the branch number is at least 2.

## 3 Equivalence Classes and Canonical Representation

The classification of Boolean functions dates back to the fifties [22]. Previously 4-bit S-Boxes have been analyzed in relation to linear equivalence [6, 31], defined as follows:

**Definition 5.** Let  $M_i$  and  $M_o$  be two invertible matrices and  $c_i$  and  $c_o$  two vectors. The S-Box S' defined by two affine transformations

$$S'(x) = M_o S(M_i(x \oplus c_i)) \oplus c_o$$

belongs to the linear equivalence set of S;  $S' \in LE(S)$ .

We call  $M_i(x \oplus c_i)$  the inner affine transform and  $M_o x \oplus c_o$  the outer affine transform. There are 20,160 invertible  $4 \times 4$  matrices defined over  $\mathbb{F}_2$  and therefore  $2^4 \times 20, 160 = 322,560$  affine invertible transforms.

To be able to identify members of each equivalence class uniquely, we must define a canonical representation for it. Each member of the equivalence class can be reduced to this unique representative, which serves as an identifier for the entire class.



**Fig. 1.** Linear Equivalence (LE) and Permutation-XOR equivalence (PE).  $M_i$  and  $M_o$  boxes denote multiplication by an invertible matrix for LE and by a permutation matrix for PE.

**Definition 6.** The canonical representative of an equivalence class is the member that is first in lexicographic ordering.

Table 1 gives the canonical members of all 16 "optimal" S-Box LE classes, together with references to their equivalents in [31].

It has been shown that the members of each LE class have the same differential and linear bounds [6, 31]. However, these linear equivalence classes are not equivalent in many ways that have cryptographic significance.

**Multiple differential characteristics and Linear approximations.** For cryptographic security, the differential and linear bounds are the most important factor. However, the methods of multiple differentials [8] and multiple linear approximations [7, 21, 29] raise the question of how many differentials and linear approximations there are at the respective boundaries. From Table 1 it can be observed that these numbers are not equivalent, making some S-Boxes "more optimal" than others in this respect.

**Avalanche.** For members of an LE class there is no guarantee that a single-bit difference in input will not result in single-bit output difference. If this happens, only a single S-Box is activated in the next round of a simple substitution-permutation network such as PRESENT [9]. This is equivalent to the case where the branch number is 2.

It is somewhat surprising that those optimal S-Boxes with most attractive  $n_d$  and  $n_l$  numbers cannot be affinely transformed so that differentials with  $\operatorname{wt}(\Delta_i) = \operatorname{wt}(\Delta_o) = 1$  would all have p = 0. Only the seven of the sixteen optimal S-Box classes,  $G_0$ ,  $G_1$ ,  $G_2$ ,  $G_9$ ,  $G_{10}$ ,  $G_{14}$ , and  $G_{15}$ , have members that do not have such single-bit differentials. This has been verified by exhaustive search by the authors.

We may illustrate the importance of this property by considering a variant of PRESENT where the S-Box has been replaced by a linearly equivalent one from LE( $G_1$ ) such as (0123468A5BCFED97) that has p = 1/4 for the singlebit differential  $S_D(\Delta_i = 1 \rightarrow \Delta_o = 1)$ . Due to the fact that the bit 0 is mapped

**Table 1.** The canonical representatives of the 16 "optimal" linear equivalence classes. The  $G_i$  and  $G_i^{-1}$  identifier references are to Table 6 of [31]. We also give the DC and LC bounds, together with the number  $n_d$  of characteristics at the differential bound and the number  $n_l$  of approximations at the linear bound. The branch BN number given is the maximal branch number among all members of the given LE class.

Canonical representative	Members	D	C	LC	Max
0123456789ABCDEF	& Inverse	p	$n_d$	$\epsilon n_l$	BN
0123468A5BCF79DE	$G_2 G_0^{-1}$	$^{1}/_{4}$	24	$^{1}/_{4}$ 36	3
0123468A5BCF7D9E	$G_{15} G_{14}^{-1}$	$^{1}/_{4}$	18	$^{1}/_{4}$ 32	3
0123468A5BCF7E9D	$G_0 G_2^{-1}$	$^{1}/_{4}$	24	$^{1}/_{4}$ 36	3
0123468A5BCFDE79	$G_8 G_8^{-1}$	$^{1}/_{4}$	24	$^{1}/_{4}$ 36	2
0123468A5BCFED97	$G_1 G_1^{-1}$	$^{1}/_{4}$	24	$^{1}/_{4}$ 36	3
0123468B59CED7AF	$G_9 G_9^{-1}$	$^{1}/_{4}$	18	$^{1}/_{4}$ 32	3
0123468B59CEDA7F	$G_{13} G_{13}^{-1}$	$^{1}/_{4}$	15	$^{1}/_{4}$ 30	2
0123468B59CF7DAE	$G_{14} G_{15}^{-1}$	$^{1}/_{4}$	18	$^{1}/_{4}$ 32	3
0123468B5C9DE7AF	$G_{12} G_{12}^{-1}$	$^{1}/_{4}$	15	$^{1}/_{4}$ 30	2
0123468B5C9DEA7F	$G_4 G_4^{-1}$	$^{1}/_{4}$	15	$^{1}/_{4}$ 30	2
0123468B5CD79FAE	$G_6 G_6^{-1}$	$^{1}/_{4}$	15	$^{1}/_{4}$ 30	2
0123468B5CD7AF9E	$G_5 G_5^{-1}$	$^{1}/_{4}$	15	$^{1}/_{4}$ 30	2
0123468B5CD7F9EA	$G_3 G_3^{-1}$	$^{1}/_{4}$	15	$^{1}/_{4}$ 30	2
0123468C59BDE7AF	$G_{10} G_{10}^{-1}$	$^{1}/_{4}$	18	$^{1}/_{4}$ 32	3
0123468C59BDEA7F	$G_7 G_7^{-1}$	$^{1}/_{4}$	15	$ ^{1}/_{4} 30 $	2
0123468C59DFA7BE	$G_{11} G_{11}^{-1}$	$^{1}/_{4}$	15	$^{1}/_{4}$ 30	2

to bit 0 in the PRESENT pLayer, this variant has an iterative differential in bit 0 that holds through all 31 rounds with probability  $2^{-62}$ . We may utilize the average branch number in the last rounds to estimate that this variant would be breakable with less than  $2^{56}$  effort.

This motivates us to define the PE class.

**Definition 7.** Let  $P_i$  and  $P_o$  be two bit permutation matrices and  $c_i$  and  $c_o$  two vectors. The S-Box S' defined by

$$S'(x) = P_o S(P_i(x \oplus c_i)) \oplus c_o$$

belongs to the permutation-xor equivalence set of S;  $S' \in PE(S)$ .

Algebraic properties. While the maximal algebraic degree of all output bits may be preserved in LE [31], some of the output bits may still be almost linear. It is noteworthy that despite belonging to  $LE(G_1)$ , one of the PRESENT output bits only has one nonlinear monomial (of degree 2) and therefore this output bit depends only linearly on 2 of the input bits. This can be crucial when determining the number of secure rounds; final rounds can be peeled off using such properties.

**Circuit complexity.** From an implementation viewpoint, the members of an LE class may vary very much but the members of a PE class are usually equivalent. This is important in bit-slicing implementations such as [3].

It can be shown that circuits that use all 2-input Boolean functions [35, 40] can be transformed to equal-size circuits that use only the four commonly available instructions (AND, OR, XOR, AND NOT) but may require a constant XOR on input and output bit vectors. These XOR constants may be transferred to round key addition in most substitution-permutation networks and therefore there is no additional cost.

Note that the methods described in [39] utilize only five registers and twooperand instructions AND, OR, XOR, NOT and MOV. Most recent CPUs have sixteen 256-bit YMM registers, three-operand instructions (making MOV redundant) and the ANDNx instruction for AND NOT [28]. Therefore 2-input boolean circuit complexity is a more relevant measure for optimality of a circuit. However, for hardware implementation these gates have uneven implementationdependent cost [34].

We may also consider the concept of feeble one-wayness [25–27]. This property is also shared between the members of a PE class.

**Other properties.** Some researchers put emphasis on the cycle structure of an S-Box. Cycle structure properties are not usually shared between members of LE and PE classes. This may be relevant if the cipher design does not protect against the effects of fixed points or other similar special cases. However, such properties are difficult to analyze in the context of a single S-Box removed from its setting within an encryption algorithm. Care should be taken when choosing input and output bit ordering so that diffusion layers will achieve maximum effect.

**Historical developments.** The original DES S-Box design principles are described in [10]. In hindsight it can be seen that the criteria given in that 1976 document already offer significantly better resistance against primitive DC and LC than what can be achieved with entirely random S-Boxes [11]. For a perspective on the development of DES and the evaluation of its S-Boxes between the years 1975 and 1990 we refer to [13]. We may compare our current view on the topic of "good" S-Boxes to that given by Adams and Tavares in 1990 [2]. Four evaluation criteria for S-Boxes were given in that work: bijectivity, nonlinearity, strict avalanche, and independence of output bits. In current terminology nonlinearity would map to the algebraic degree, strict avalanche to the branch number, and independence of output bits roughly to both DC and LC. Note that modern DC, LC, and AC were (re)discovered after 1990.



**Fig. 2.** Our internal  $4 \times 16$ -bit representation of the identity permutation (0, 1, ..., 15). The words are always stored in increasing order and the highest bit is normalized to zero.

### 4 An Exhaustive Search Over All PE Classes

We have performed an exhaustive search over all PE classes. Since there are  $16! \approx 2^{44.25}$  different bijective 4-bit S-Boxes, some shortcuts had to be used. We are currently unable to extend our methods to 5-bit S-Boxes or beyond.

Internally our program uses another (non-lexicographic) ordering to determine the unique canonical member of each PE class. The permutations are stored as four 16-bit words  $W_i$  that are always in ascending order.

**Theorem 1.** Any  $4 \times 4$ -bit bijective S-Box can be uniquely expressed as

$$S(x) = \left(\sum_{i=0}^{3} 2^{P(i)} W_{i,(15-x)}\right) \oplus c$$

for some bit permutation P of numbers (0, 1, 2, 3), a vector  $c \in \mathbb{F}_2^4$  and words  $W_i = \sum_{j=0}^{15} 2^i W_{i,j}$  satisfying  $0 < W_0 < W_1 < W_2 < W_3 < 2^{15}$ .

*Proof.* Output bits can be permuted in 4! = 24 different ways (as each  $W_i$  must be different from others) and each one of the  $2^4 = 16$  masks c creates a different permutation due to the limit  $W_i < 2^{15}$ . P and c uniquely define the  $4!2^4 = 384$  outer transformations while  $W_i$  uniquely defines the rest.

This representation offers a natural and quick way to normalize a S-Box in respect to the outer permutation  $P_o$  and mask  $c_o$  by sorting the four words and inverting all bits of a word if the highest bit is set. Figure 2 illustrates this ordering.

From the fact that S is bijective it follows that  $wt(W_i) = 8$  for all  $W_i$ . There are  $\binom{16}{8} = 12,870$  16-bit words of weight 8, of which we may remove half due to the  $c_o$  normalization limit  $W_i < 2^{15}$ , yielding 6,535 candidates.

Algorithm 1 A bit-combinatorial permutation search algorithm.

1: for  $i_0 = 0$  to 6534 do  $W_0 = \text{wt8tab}[i_0]$ 2: 3: if  $mw(W_0) = W_0$  then 4: for  $i_1 = i_0 + 1$  to 6534 do 5:  $W_1 = wt8tab[i_1]$ if  $mw(W_1) > W_0$  and 6:  $wt(t_2 = \neg W_0 \land W_1) = 4$  and  $wt(t_3 = W_0 \land W_1) = 4$  and  $\operatorname{wt}(t_1 = W_0 \land \neg W_1) = 4$  and  $\operatorname{wt}(t_0 = \neg W_0 \land \neg W_1) = 4$  then 7: for  $i_2 = i_1 + 1$  to 6534 do  $W_2 = \text{wt8tab}[i_2]$ 8: 9: if  $mw(W_1) > W_0$  and  $wt(u_0 = t_0 \land \neg W_2) = 2$  and  $wt(u_4 = t_0 \land W_2) = 2$  and  $wt(u_1 = t_1 \land \neg W_2) = 2$  and  $wt(u_5 = t_1 \land W_2) = 2$  and  $wt(u_2 = t_2 \land \neg W_2) = 2$  and  $wt(u_6 = t_2 \land W_2) = 2$  and  $wt(u_3 = t_3 \land \neg W_2) = 2$  and  $wt(u_7 = t_3 \land W_2) = 2$  then 10: for j = 0 to 8 do  $v_j = \operatorname{lsb}(u_i)$ 11: 12: end for for b = 0 to 255 do 13:  $W_3 = \bigoplus_{j=0}^{7} \left( u_j \oplus b_j v_j \right)$ if  $W_3 \ge 2^{15}$  then 14: 15: 16:  $W_3 = \neg W_3$ 17: end if if  $W_3 > W_2$  then 18: 19:  $test(W_0, W_1, W_2, W_3)$ 20: end if 21: end for 22: end if 23: end for 24: end if 25: end for 26: end if 27: end for

Furthermore, each word has a minimal equivalent up to permutation among all input permutations  $P_i$  and input constants  $c_i$ . We call this minimal word mw(x). At program start, a table is initialized that contains mw(x) for each 16-bit word by trying all 24 permutations of input bits and 16 values of  $c_i$  on the  $4 \times 1$ -bit Boolean function that the word x represents. If the resulting word is greater or equal to  $2^{15}$  (indicating that the highest bit is set) all bits of the word are inverted, normalizing the constant. Each one of the wt(x) = 8 candidates map to a set of just 58 different mw(x) values.

#### 4.1 The Search Algorithm

We will now describe the bit-combinatorial equivalence class search method given in Algorithm 1. There are basically four nested loops. Various early exit strategies are used that are based on properties of the permutation (see Theorem 1 and Figure 2). Lines 1–3 select the smallest word  $W_0$  from a table of weighteight words and checks that it is indeed minimal w.r.t. permutation of the four input bits. In lines 4–6 we select  $W_1$  such that it is larger than  $W_0$  and these two words have each one of the four bit pairs (0,0), (0,1), (1,0), and (1,1)exactly four times at corresponding locations  $(W_{0,i}, W_{1,i})$ . This is a necessary condition for them to be a part of a permutation as described by Theorem 1. The corresponding masks are stored in four temporary variables  $t_i$ . In Lines 7–9 we choose  $W_2$  such that the three words make up two permutations of numbers  $0, 1, \ldots, 7$ . The vector  $u_i$  containing the two bit positions of i simultaneously computed. We are now left with exactly  $2^8 = 256$  options for the last word  $W_3$ . In lines 10–12 we store in vector  $v_i$  the lesser bit from the two-bit mask  $u_i$ . In lines 13–20 we loop through the remaining  $W_3$  possibilities. In line 14 we use the bit i of the loop index b to select which one of the two bits in  $u_i$  is used as part of  $W_3$ . Note that this part may be implemented a bit faster with a Gray-code sequence.

The unique permutation is then tested by the subroutine on line 19 to see if it is the least member of its class (here an early exit strategy will usually exit the exhaustive loop early). If  $(W_0, W_1, W_2, W_3)$  is indeed the canonical member in the special ordering that we're using, it is stored on on disk together with the size of the class. The entire process of creating the 1.4 GB file takes about half an hour with a 2011 consumer laptop.

#### 4.2 Results of the Exhaustive Search

There are 142,090,700 different PE classes of various sizes. Table 2 gives the size distribution of these PE classes, which sum up to 20, 922, 789, 888, 000 = 16! examined S-Boxes. Each class size is divisible by  $4!2^4 = 384$  due to the fact that the output bits can be permuted 4! = 24 ways and the output constant  $c_o$  can have  $2^4 = 16$  different values. However, it is less obvious how the inner transform defined by  $P_i$  and  $c_i$  affect the size of the class together with S. For example, for the identity permutation (0123456789ABCDEF) the bit shuffles  $P_i$  and  $P_o$  and constant additions  $c_i$  and  $c_o$  may be presented with a single bit permutation and addition of constant and hence hence n = 384. It is interesting to note that that there is one other class with this size, the one with the largest canonical representative, (07BCDA61E952348F).

**Table 2.** Distribution of PE classes. The first column gives the number of elements in each class. The second column  $|C_n|$  gives the number of such classes, followed by their product, which sums to 16! = 20,922,789,888,000 as expected.

	$\frac{n}{4!2^4}$	$ C_n $	$n  C_n $	Representative
	1	2	768	0123456789ABCDEF
	4	4	6144	01234567FEDCBA98
	6	1	2304	01237654BA98CDEF
	8	4	12288	0123456879ABCDEF
	12	30	138240	0123456798BADCFE
	16	18	110592	0123457689BADCFE
	24	192	1769472	0123456789ABFEDC
	32	104	1277952	0123456789ABCDFE
	48	1736	31997952	0123456789ABCEDF
	64	264	6488064	012345678ACD9EBF
	96	13422	494788608	0123456789ABDEFC
	128	324	15925248	0123456789ADCEBF
	192	373192	27514699776	0123456789ABCEFD
	384	141701407	20894722670592	0123456789ACBEFD
ĺ	1–384	142090700	20922789888000	

Table 3 gives the distribution of differential and linear properties among the 16! S-Boxes examined. It can be seen that a majority, 54.7155% of all S-Boxes have a differential bound  $p \leq 3/4$  and linear bound  $\epsilon \leq 3/4$ . There are no bijective S-Boxes with differential bound p = 7/8. Appendix A gives results on some well-known 4-bit S-Boxes.

**Table 3.** Distribution of the 16! permutations in relation to Differential Cryptanalysis (rows) and Linear Cryptanalysis (columns).

$LC \rightarrow$	$\epsilon \le 1/4$		$\epsilon \le 3/8$		$\epsilon \le 1/2$					
DC↓	n	%	n	%	n	%				
$p \leq 1/4$	749123665920	3.5804	326998425600	1.5629	0	0.0000				
$p \leq 3/8$	1040449536000	4.9728	11448247910400	54.7166	118908518400	0.5683				
$p \leq 1/2$	52022476800 0.2486		5812644741120	27.7814	330249830400	1.5784				
$p \leq 5/8$	0	0.0000	728314675200	3.4810	193458585600	0.9246				
$p \leq 3/4$	0	0.0000	52022476800	0.2486	68098867200	0.3255				
$p \leq 1$	0	0.0000	309657600	0.0015	1940520960	0.0093				

**Table 4.** Golden S-Boxes with ideal properties are all members of these four PE classes. Both the S-Boxes and their inverses satisfy the bounds  $p \le 1/4$ ,  $\epsilon \le 1/4$ , have branch number 3, all output bits have algebraic degree 3 and are dependent on all input bits in nonlinear fashion. n gives the total size of the class and n' the number of members which additionally have a perfect cycle structure.

PE Representative	LE	n	n'
035869C7DAE41FB2	$G_9$	147456	19584
03586CB79EADF214	$G_9$	147456	19584
03586AF4ED9217CB	$G_{10}$	147456	22656
03586CB7A49EF12D	$G_{10}$	147456	22656

## 5 Golden S-Boxes

Based on our exhaustive search, we may describe golden S-Boxes that have ideal properties. From Table 1 we see that the most tempting candidates belong to the LE sets of  $G_9$ ,  $G_{10}$ ,  $G_{14}$ , and  $G_{15}$  as they have the smallest  $n_d$  and  $n_l$  numbers among those S-Boxes that have branch number 3. Note that  $LE(G_{14}) = LE(G_{15}^{-1})$  and vice versa.

The only problem with  $G_{14}$  and  $G_{15}$  in comparison to  $G_9$  and  $G_{10}$  is that if we want the branch number to be larger than 2, there are no S-Boxes in these classes that have the desired property that all output bits are nonlinearly dependent on all input bits and have degree 3. Either the permutation or its inverse will not satisfy this condition. This has been verified with exhaustive search. All golden S-Boxes belong to the four PE classes given in Table 4.

The Serpent [1] S-Box S3, Hummingbird-1 [18] S-Boxes S1, S2, and S3 and Hummingbird-2 [19] S-Boxes <sup>1</sup> S0 and S1 are the only known examples of "golden" S-Boxes in literature. Note that cipher designers may want to avoid reusing the same LE class in multiple S-Boxes and hence not all can be "golden". Please see Appendix A for a more detailed comparison.

## 6 Conclusions

We have analyzed all 16! bijective  $4 \times 4$ -bit S-Boxes and classified them into linear equivalence (LE) and permutation equivalence (PE) classes. Members of a LE class have equivalent differential and linear bounds but not necessarily branch number, algebraic properties and circuit complexity. Members of PE classes share these properties. Each equivalence class can be uniquely identified

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Hummingbird-2 was tweaked in May 2011 to use these S-Boxes, and they are also contained in [19]. Some early prototypes used S-Boxes from Serpent.

with the use of a canonical representative, which we define to be the member which is first in lexicographic ordering of the class members.

There are 142,090,700 different PE classes, the vast majority (99.7260%) of which have  $(4!2^4)^2 = 147456$  elements. We classify the S-Boxes according to their differential and linear properties. It turns out that that a majority (54.7155%) of S-Boxes have differential bound  $p \leq 3/4$  and linear bound  $\epsilon \leq 3/4$ .

Furthermore, we have discovered that not all of the "optimal" S-Boxes described in [31] are equal if we take the branch number and multiple differential and linear cryptanalysis into account.

In an appendix we give comparison tables of the S-Boxes from Lucifer [37], Present [9], JH [41], ICEBERG [38], LUFFA [15] NOEKEON [12], HAMSI [30], Serpent [1], Hummingbird-1 [18], Hummingbird-2 [19], GOST [14, 23, 24] and DES [33].

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# A Cryptographic Analysis of Some Well-Known $4 \times 4$ - Bit S-Boxes

Algorithm & Source: A normative identifier for the S-Box in question, together with a literary reference. S-Box: The S-Box permutation S(x) in Hex.

**Canonical PE:** The lexicographically smallest member of the Permutation-XOR equivalence class PE(S). Lin Eqv.: The linear equivalence class LE(s).

**One**  $\Delta$ : number of instances where flipping a single input bit will cause single output bit to change (out of 64). **BN #:** Branch number.

**DC:** Differential bound p and the number  $n_d$  of characteristics at that bound.

**LC:** Linear bias  $\epsilon$  and the number  $n_l$  of linear approximations at that bound.

Bit n: The linear set LS of input bits that only have linear effect on this output bit, together with its degree.

Algorithm	S-Box	<b>Canonical PE</b>	Lin.	One	BN	D	С	LC		Bit (		Bit 1		Bit 2		Bit 3	
& Source	0123456789ABCDEF	0123456789ABCDEF	Eqv.	$\Delta$	#	p	$n_d$	$\epsilon$	$n_l$	LS	deg	LS	deg	LS	deg	LS	deg
Lucifer S0 [37]	CF7AEDB026319458	01254F9C6AB78D3E		12	2	$^{3}/_{8}$	5	$^{3}/_{8}$	3	{}	3	{}	3	{}	3	{}	3
Lucifer S1 [37]	72E93B04CD1A6F85	01245F3BC7DAE896		10	2	$^{3}/_{8}$	1	$^{1}/_{4}$	30	{}	3	{}	3	{}	3	{ }	3
Present [9]	C56B90AD3EF84712	03567ABCD4E9812F	$G_1$	0	3	$^{1}/_{4}$	24	$^{1}/_{4}$	36	{0,3}	2	{}	3	{}	3	{}	3
$Present^{-1}$ [9]	5EF8C12DB463079A	0358BC6FE9274AD1	$G_1$	0	3	$^{1}/_{4}$	24	$^{1}/_{4}$	36	{0,2}	2	{}	3	{}	3	{}	3
JH S0 [41]	904BDC3F1A26758E	01256BD79CF384AE	$G_{13}$	12	2	$^{1}/_{4}$	15	$^{1}/_{4}$	30	{}	3	{}	3	{}	3	{}	3
JH S1 [41]	3C6D5719F204BAE8	012485EADF3B697C	$G_{13}$	20	2	$^{1}/_{4}$	15	$^{1}/_{4}$	30	{}	3	{}	3	{}	3	{}	3
ICEBERG0 [38]	D7329AC1F45E60B8	012758E46DFA93BC	$G_4$	8	2	$^{1}/_{4}$	15	$^{1}/_{4}$	30	{}	3	{}	3	{}	3	{ }	3
ICEBERG1 [38]	4AFC0D9BE6173582	0127568CA49EDB3F	$G_4$	8	2	$^{1}/_{4}$	15	$^{1}/_{4}$	30	{}	3	{}	3	{}	3	{}	3
LUFFA [15]	DE015A76B39CF824	012476AFC3E98B5D	$G_1$	18	2	$^{1}/_{4}$	24	$^{1}/_{4}$	36	{}	3	{}	3	{}	3	{}	3
NOEKEON [12]	7A2C48F0591E3DB6	01245EF3C786BAD9	$G_8$	12	2	$^{1}/_{4}$	24	$^{1}/_{4}$	36	{}	3	{}	3	{0}	2	{0,3}	2
HAMSI [30]	86793CAFD1E40B52	035869A7BCE21FD4	$G_1$	0	3	$^{1}/_{4}$	24	$^{1}/_{4}$	36	{1,3}	2	{}	3	{}	3	{ }	3

Algorithm	S-Box	Canonical PE	Lin.	One	BN	D	C	L	C	Bit	t 0	Bit	t 1	Bit 2		Bit	3
& Source	0123456789ABCDEF	0123456789ABCDEF	Eqv.	$\Delta$	#	p	$n_d$	$\epsilon$	$n_l$	LS	deg	LS	deg	LS	deg	LS	deg
HB1 S0 [18]	865F1CA9EB2470D3	03586CF1A49EDB27	$G_{15}$	0	3	$^{1}/_{4}$	18	$^{1}/_{4}$	32	{}	3	{}	3	{}	3	{}	3
HB1 S1 [18]	07E15B823AD6FC49	035869C7DAE41FB2	$G_9$	0	3	$^{1}/_{4}$	18	$^{1}/_{4}$	32	{}	3	{}	3	{}	3	{}	3
HB1 S2 [18]	2EF5C19AB468073D	03586CB7A49EF12D	$G_{10}$	0	3	$ ^{1}/_{4}$	18	$^{1}/_{4}$	32	{}	3	{}	3	{}	3	{}	3
HB1 S3 [18]	0734C1AFDE6B2895	03586CB79EADF214	$G_9$	0	3	$^{1}/_{4}$	18	$^{1}/_{4}$	32	{}	3	{}	3	{}	3	{}	3
$\rm HB1^{-1}~SO~[18]$	D4AFB21C07695E83	035879BEADF4C261	$G_{14}$	0	3	$^{1}/_{4}$	18	$^{1}/_{4}$	32	{0}	2	{}	3	{}	3	{}	3
$\rm HB1^{-1}~S1~[18]$	0378E4B16F95DA2C	03586CB79EADF214	$G_9$	0	3	$ ^{1}/_{4}$	18	$^{1}/_{4}$	32	{}	3	{}	3	{}	3	{}	3
$\rm HB1^{-1}~S2~[18]$	C50E93ADB6784F12	03586AF4ED9217CB	$G_{10}$	0	3	$ ^{1}/_{4}$	18	$^{1}/_{4}$	32	{}	3	{}	3	{}	3	{}	3
$\rm HB1^{-1}~S3~[18]$	05C23FA1DE6B4897	035869C7DAE41FB2	$G_9$	0	3	$ ^{1}/_{4}$	18	$^{1}/_{4}$	32	{}	3	{}	3	{}	3	{}	3
HB2 S0 [19]	7CE9215FB6D048A3	035869C7DAE41FB2	$G_9$	0	3	$^{1}/_{4}$	18	$^{1}/_{4}$	32	{}	3	{}	3	{}	3	{}	3
HB2 S1 [19]	4A168F7C30ED59B2	03586AF4ED9217CB	$G_{10}$	0	3	$^{1}/_{4}$	18	$^{1}/_{4}$	32	{}	3	{}	3	{}	3	{}	3
HB2 S2 [19]	2FC156ADE8340B97	035879BEADF4C261	$G_{14}$	0	3	$ ^{1}/_{4}$	18	$^{1}/_{4}$	32	{}	3	{}	3	{}	3	{1}	2
HB2 S3 [19]	F4589721A30E6CDB	03586CF1A49EDB27	$G_{15}$	0	3	$ ^{1}/_{4}$	18	$^{1}/_{4}$	32	{}	3	{}	3	{}	3	{}	3
$\rm HB2^{-1}~SO~[19]$	B54FC690D3E81A27	03586CB79EADF214	$G_9$	0	3	$^{1}/_{4}$	18	$^{1}/_{4}$	32	{}	3	{}	3	{}	3	{}	3
$\rm HB2^{-1}~S1~[19]$	92F80C364D1E7BA5	03586CB7A49EF12D	$G_{10}$	0	3	$^{1}/_{4}$	18	$^{1}/_{4}$	32	{}	3	{}	3	{}	3	{}	3
$\rm HB2^{-1}~S2~[19]$	C30AB45F9E6D2781	03586CF1A49EDB27	$G_{15}$	0	3	$ ^{1}/_{4}$	18	$^{1}/_{4}$	32	{}	3	{}	3	{}	3	{}	3
HB2 <sup>-1</sup> S3 [19]	A76912C5348FDEB0	035879BEADF4C261	$G_{14}$	0	3	$ ^{1}/_{4}$	18	$^{1}/_{4}$	32	{0}	2	{}	3	{}	3	{}	3
DES S0-0 [33]	E4D12FB83A6C5907	035679CAED2B84F1		0	3	$ ^{1}/_{2}$	1	$^{3}/_{8}$	4	{}	3	{}	3	{}	3	{}	3
DES S0-1 [33]	0F74E2D1A6CB9538	035869B7CFA412DE		0	3	$ ^{1}/_{2}$	1	$^{3}/_{8}$	4	{}	3	{}	3	{}	3	{}	3
DES S0-2 [33]	41E8D62BFC973A50	035678BDCAF1942E		0	3	$ ^{1}/_{2}$	1	$^{3}/_{8}$	4	{}	3	{}	3	{}	3	{}	3
DES S0-3 [33]	FC8249175B3EA06D	035879AFBEC2D461		0	3	$ ^{1}/_{2}$	1	$^{3}/_{8}$	2	{2}	2	{}	3	{1}	2	{}	3
DES S1-0 [33]	F18E6B34972DC05A	035874BEF6ADC912		0	3	$ ^{3}/_{8}$	3	$^{3}/_{8}$	2	{}	3	{3}	3	{0}	2	{}	3
DES S1-1 [33]	3D47F28EC01A69B5	03586CF2ED971BA4		0	3	$ ^{1}/_{2}$	1	$^{3}/_{8}$	2	{3}	2	{}	3	{}	3	{2}	3
DES S1-2 [33]	0E7BA4D158C6932F	03567CEBADF84192		0	3	$ ^{1}/_{2}$	1	$^{3}/_{8}$	2	{}	3	{}	3	{}	3	{0,2}	2
DES S1-3 [33]	D8A13F42B67C05E9	0358BDC6E92F741A		0	3	$^{3}/_{8}$	6	$^{3}/_{8}$	4	{}	3	{}	3	{}	3	{}	3

Algorithm	S-Box	Canonical PE	Lin.	One	BN		C	L	LC Bit 0		0	Bit 1		Bit 2		Bit 3	
& Source	0123456789ABCDEF	0123456789ABCDEF	Eqv.	$\Delta$	#	p	$n_d$	$\epsilon$	$n_l$	LS	deg	LS	deg	LS	deg	LS	deg
DES S2-0 [33]	A09E63F51DC7B428	03586DF47E92A1CB		0	3	$^{1}/_{2}$	1	$^{3}/8$	3	{3}	2	{}	3	{}	3	{}	3
DES S2-1 [33]	D709346A285ECBF1	03586CB79EF2A14D		0	3	$ ^{1}/_{2}$	1	$^{3}/_{8}$	4	{3}	2	{2}	3	{}	3	{}	3
DES S2-2 [33]	D6498F30B12C5AE7	035879BED62FAC41		0	3	$ ^{1}/_{2}$	1	$ ^{3}/_{8}$	2	{1}	3	{}	3	{3}	2	{1}	3
DES S2-3 [33]	1AD069874FE3B52C	03589CF6DEA72B41		0	3	$ ^{1}/_{2}$	3	$ ^{3}/_{8}$	4	{}	3	{}	3	{}	3	$\{0,1\}$	2
DES S3-0 [33]	7DE3069A1285BC4F	035869BECFA412D7		0	3	$ ^{3}/8$	6	$^{3}/_{8}$	4	{}	3	{}	3	{}	3	{}	3
DES S3-1 [33]	D8B56F03472C1AE9	035869BECFA412D7		0	3	$ ^{3}/_{8}$	6	$ ^{3}/_{8}$	4	{}	3	{}	3	{}	3	{}	3
DES S3-2 [33]	A690CB7DF13E5284	035869BECFA412D7		0	3	$ ^{3}/_{8}$	6	$ ^{3}/_{8}$	4	{}	3	{}	3	{}	3	{}	3
DES S3-3 [33]	3F06A1D8945BC72E	035869BECFA412D7		0	3	$ ^{3}/_{8}$	6	$ ^{3}/_{8}$	4	{}	3	{}	3	{}	3	{}	3
DES S4-0 [33]	2C417AB6853FD0E9	03586DF47EA1CB92		0	3	$ ^{1}/_{2}$	1	$ ^{3}/_{8}$	3	{}	3	{}	3	{0,2}	2	{}	3
DES S4-1 [33]	EB2C47D150FA3986	035869BECF241AD7		0	3	$ ^{3}/_{8}$	5	$^{3}/_{8}$	3	{}	3	{}	3	{}	3	{}	3
DES S4-2 [33]	421BAD78F9C5630E	03586DF2A49E1BC7		0	3	$ ^{3}/_{8}$	2	$ ^{3}/_{8}$	2	{}	3	{}	3	{}	3	{}	3
DES S4-3 [33]	B8C71E2D6F09A453	03586AB79CE2F14D		0	3	$ ^{3}/_{8}$	5	$ ^{3}/_{8}$	3	{}	3	{1}	3	{}	3	{}	3
DES S5-0 [33]	C1AF92680D34E75B	03586DF29EA4CB17		0	3	$ ^{1}/_{4}$	24	$ ^{3}/_{8}$	1	{}	3	{}	3	{}	3	{}	3
DES S5-1 [33]	AF427C9561DE0B38	0358749FDAB6E12C		0	3	$ ^{1}/_{2}$	1	$ ^{3}/8$	3	{}	3	{}	3	{}	3	{}	3
DES S5-2 [33]	9EF528C3704A1DB6	035869BEA4CFD721		0	3	$ ^{3}/_{8}$	6	$ ^{3}/_{8}$	4	{}	3	{1}	3	{}	3	{}	3
DES S5-3 [33]	432C95FABE17608D	035874BEF6ADC912		0	3	$ ^{3}/_{8}$	3	$ ^{3}/_{8}$	2	{3}	2	{}	3	{0}	3	{}	3
DES S6-0 [33]	4B2EF08D3C975A61	03586CB79EF2A14D		0	3	$ ^{1}/_{2}$	1	$ ^{3}/_{8}$	4	{}	3	{2}	3	{0}	2	{}	3
DES S6-1 [33]	D0B7491AE35C2F86	03586DF47ECBA192		0	3	$ ^{1}/_{2}$	1	$ ^{3}/8$	2	{}	3	{}	3	{}	3	{0,2}	2
DES S6-2 [33]	14BDC37EAF680592	035869BECFA412D7		0	3	$ ^{3}/_{8}$	6	$ ^{3}/8$	4	{}	3	{}	3	{}	3	{}	3
DES S6-3 [33]	6BD814A7950FE23C	035869B7F4AD1EC2		0	3	$ ^{1}/_{2}$	2	$ ^{3}/_{8}$	5	{2}	3	{2}	3	{0}	3	{}	3
DES S7-0 [33]	D2846FB1A93E50C7	03589CE2F6AD4B71		0	3	$ ^{3}/_{8}$	4	$ ^{3}/_{8}$	1	{2}	3	{3}	2	{}	3	{}	3
DES S7-1 [33]	1FD8A374C56B0E92	03587ACF96EB4D21		0	3	$ ^{5}/8$	1	$ ^{3}/8$	5	{}	3	{}	3	{}	3	{2}	3
DES S7-2 [33]	7B419CE206ADF358	035869BEF4ADC217		0	3	$ ^{3}/_{8}$	5	$ ^{3}/8$	3	{}	3	{1}	3	{0}	3	{}	3
DES S7-3 [33]	21E74A8DFC90356B	035678EB9F2CA4D1		0	3	$ ^{1}/_{2}$	1	$ ^{3}/_{8}$	4	{}	3	{}	3	{1,3}	2	{}	3

Algorithm	S-Box	Canonical PE	Lin.	One	BN	D	С	LC		Bit	0	Bit 1		Bit 2		Bit 3	
& Source	0123456789ABCDEF	0123456789ABCDEF	Eqv.	$\Delta$	#	p	$n_d$	$\epsilon$	$n_l$	LS	deg	LS	deg	LS	deg	LS	deg
Serpent S0 [1]	38F1A65BED42709C	0358749EF62BADC1	$G_2$	0	3	$^{1}/_{4}$	24	$^{1}/_{4}$	36	{}	3	{}	3	{}	3	{1,2}	2
Serpent S1 [1]	FC27905A1BE86D34	035A7CB6D429E18F	$G_0$	0	3	$^{1}/_{4}$	24	$\frac{1}{4}$	36	{}	3	{}	3	{2,3}	2	{}	3
Serpent S2 [1]	86793CAFD1E40B52	035869A7BCE21FD4	$G_1$	0	3	$^{1}/_{4}$	24	$ ^{1}/_{4}$	36	{1,3}	2	{}	3	{}	3	{}	3
Serpent S3 [1]	0FB8C963D124A75E	03586CB79EADF214	$G_9$	0	3	$^{1}/_{4}$	18	$ ^{1}/_{4}$	32	{}	3	{}	3	{}	3	{}	3
Serpent S4 [1]	1F83C0B6254A9E7D	035879BEADF4C261	$G_{14}$	0	3	$^{1}/_{4}$	18	$ ^{1}/4$	32	{2}	2	{}	3	{}	3	{}	3
Serpent S5 [1]	F52B4A9C03E8D671	035879BEADF4C261	$G_{14}$	0	3	$^{1}/_{4}$	18	$ ^{1}/4$	32	{2}	2	{}	3	{}	3	{}	3
Serpent S6 [1]	72C5846BE91FD3A0	0358BC6FE9274AD1	$G_1$	0	3	$^{1}/_{4}$	24	$ ^{1}/_{4}$	36	{}	3	{1,2}	2	{}	3	{}	3
Serpent S7 [1]	1DF0E82B74CA9356	035869C7DAE41FB2	$G_9$	0	3	$^{1}/_{4}$	18	$ ^{1}/_{4}$	32	{}	3	{}	3	{}	3	{}	3
Serpent <sup><math>-1</math></sup> S0 [1]	D3B0A65C1E47F982	035A7CB6D429E18F	$G_0$	0	3	$^{1}/_{4}$	24	$ ^{1}/_{4}$	36	{}	3	{}	3	$\{2,3\}$	2	{}	3
Serpent <sup><math>-1</math></sup> S1 [1]	582EF6C3B4791DA0	0358749EF62BADC1	$G_2$	0	3	$^{1}/_{4}$	24	$\frac{1}{4}$	36	{}	3	{}	3	{}	3	{0,2}	2
Serpent <sup><math>-1</math></sup> S2 [1]	C9F4BE12036D58A7	03586CB7AD9EF124	$G_1$	0	3	$^{1}/_{4}$	24	$ ^{1}/_{4}$	36	{0}	2	{}	3	{}	3	{}	3
Serpent <sup><math>-1</math></sup> S3 [1]	09A7BE6D35C248F1	035869C7DAE41FB2	$G_9$	0	3	$^{1}/_{4}$	18	$ ^{1}/_{4}$	32	{}	3	{}	3	{}	3	{}	3
Serpent <sup><math>-1</math></sup> S4 [1]	5083A97E2CB64FD1	03586CF1A49EDB27	$G_{15}$	0	3	$^{1}/_{4}$	18	$^{1}/_{4}$	32	{}	3	{}	3	{}	3	{}	3
$\operatorname{Serpent}^{-1} \operatorname{S5}[1]$	8F2941DEB6537CA0	03586CF1A49EDB27	$G_{15}$	0	3	$^{1}/_{4}$	18	$ ^{1}/_{4}$	32	{}	3	{}	3	{}	3	{}	3
Serpent <sup><math>-1</math></sup> S6 [1]	FA1D536049E72C8B	03567ABCD4E9812F	$G_1$	0	3	$^{1}/_{4}$	24	$ ^{1}/_{4}$	36	{}	3	{1,3}	2	{}	3	{}	3
Serpent <sup><math>-1</math></sup> S7 [1]	306D9EF85CB7A142	03586CB79EADF214	$G_9$	0	3	$^{1}/_{4}$	18	$ ^{1}/_{4}$	32	{}	3	{}	3	{}	3	{}	3
GOST K1 [14]	4A92D80E6B1C7F53	01243DFA856B97EC		14	2	$^{3}/_{8}$	2	$\frac{1}{4}$	36	{}	3	{}	3	{}	3	{}	3
GOST K2 [14]	EB4C6DFA23810759	01254DC68BE3F79A		14	2	$^{3}/_{8}$	3	$^{3}/_{8}$	2	{}	3	{}	3	{}	3	{}	3
GOST K3 [14]	581DA342EFC7609B	01254EB97AF38D6C		14	2	$^{3}/_{8}$	5	$ ^{3}/8$	3	{}	3	{}	3	{}	3	{}	3
GOST K4 [14]	7DA1089FE46CB253	0132586FC79DBEA4		8	2	$^{3}/_{8}$	5	$ ^{3}/_{8}$	3	{}	3	{}	3	{}	3	{3}	3
GOST K5 [14]	6C715FD84A9E03B2	0124B78EDF6CA359		12	2	$^{1}/_{4}$	21	$ ^{3}/_{8}$	1	{}	3	{}	3	{}	3	{}	3
GOST K6 [14]	4BA0721D36859CFE	01273CFAB85ED649		4	2	$^{3}/_{8}$	2	$ ^{3}/_{8}$	2	{}	3	{1}	3	{}	3	{}	3
GOST K7 [14]	DB413F590AE7682C	01256D8BCA47F3E9		12	2	$^{1}/_{2}$	1	$ ^{3}/8$	2	{}	3	{}	3	{}	3	{}	3
GOST K8 [14]	1FD057A4923E6B8C	012546F8EB7A39CD		12	2	$^{1}/_{2}$	1	$ ^{3}/_{8}$	4	{}	3	{}	3	{}	3	{}	3