Recent Trends in Cybersecurity : Introducing Sniffer.AI

Zaid Rakhange[1], Mohammad Aqdus Farooqui[2]
[1,2] Zaid – Aqdus Department of Computer Engineering
A.R. Kalsekar Polytechnic, India
[1] engineering.zaidrakhange@gmail.com
[2] aqdusfarooqui5 @gmail.com
[3]hod.co@aiarkp.ac.in
[4]principle@aiarkp.ac.in

***Abstract*—In today's digital age, the rise of cyber threats and crimes has become a significant concern for individuals, organizations, and governments worldwide. With the growing adoption of cloud computing, artificial intelligence (AI), and the Internet of Things (IoT), the attack surface for cybercriminals has expanded, leading to more complex and frequent cyberattacks. This paper explores current trends in cybersecurity, focusing on the growing threat landscape, the rise of deepfake technology, and emerging defense strategies like the Zero Trust Security model. Additionally, it highlights the challenges posed by social engineering, ransomware, and deepfakes, which can be weaponized to undermine trust in digital ecosystems. To address these evolving risks, the paper proposes a novel solution called Sniffer, a blockchain-based tool for detecting deepfake content. By analyzing current trends and introducing innovative defense mechanisms, this research underscores the critical need for continuous adaptation and vigilance to safeguard digital environments.*

Keywords*—Cybersecurity, Deepfake, Zero Trust, Cyber Threats, Blockchain

I. Introduction to Cyber-Security

In the In the rapidly evolving landscape of computer and information technology, cybersecurity has emerged as a critical area of focus. With the exponential growth of digital connectivity, the volume and sophistication of cyber threats have surged, making cybersecurity an indispensable element of modern technology infrastructure. Cybersecurity involves protecting digital systems, networks, and sensitive data from malicious attacks, unauthorized access, and potential exploitation by cybercriminals.

As technology continues to advance, the digital world has become an integral part of daily life. Individuals, businesses, and governments rely on digital services for communication, financial transactions, healthcare, education, and commerce. However, this dependence on digital platforms has also made cybersecurity threats more prevalent, exposing users to risks such as data breaches, identity theft, and financial fraud. The increased connectivity brought by IoT devices, cloud computing, and artificial intelligence has introduced new vulnerabilities, making it imperative to adopt comprehensive security measures.

1.1. Cyber Attack:

A cyberattack is a deliberate attempt to steal, alter, disable, or destroy data by gaining unauthorized access to digital systems. Threat actors, such as hackers, cybercriminals, and nation-states, use tactics like malware, ransomware, phishing, and password theft to exploit system vulnerabilities. Their motives range from financial gain and espionage to sabotage and political agendas. Cyberattacks can severely disrupt businesses, with the average data breach costing approximately USD 4.35 million, accounting for detection, response, downtime, and reputational damage. These attacks target individuals, businesses, and governments, seeking to access sensitive information, such as intellectual property, customer data, and financial details, causing long-term harm to the victim's operations and brand.

1.2. Types of Cyber Attacks:

Cyber attacks come in various forms, targeting individuals, organizations, and even governments. They are often carried out to steal sensitive data, disrupt services, or compromise systems. Below are some of the most common types of cyber-attacks:

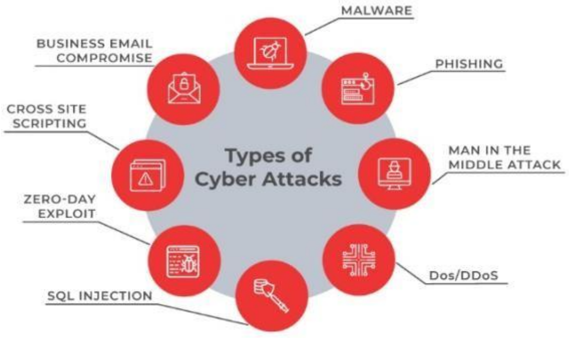


Fig 1.1 Types of Cyber Attacks

1.3.Common Attacking Techniques:

i. **Brute-forcing:** Attackers systematically try all possible passwords or encryption keys using automated tools to gain unauthorized access. This method is time-consuming and resource-intensive, especially against complex passwords.

ii. **Phishing:** Attackers deceive individuals into revealing sensitive information like usernames and passwords by creating fake emails or websites that mimic legitimate ones. It exploits human trust and is a common attack vector.

iii. **Ransomware:** Malware that encrypts a victim’s data and demands a ransom for decryption. It disrupts individuals and organizations, and payment doesn’t guarantee data recovery. Examples include WannaCry and Ryuk.

iv. **Social Engineering:** Manipulates people into disclosing confidential informationby exploiting psychological tricks, such as impersonating trusted sources.

v. **Deepfake:** Uses AI to create realistic but fake audio, video, or images for malicious purposes like identity theft and disinformation, presenting a growing cybersecurity threat.

II. Recent Trends in CyberSecurity

1. The Growing CyberThreat landscape As technology advances, cybercriminals have developed increasingly sophisticated tactics, leading to a rise in cyberattacks. Ransomware attacks, in particular, have surged, with malicious actors encrypting victims’ files and demanding ransom payments for decryption keys. These attacks target organizations of all sizes, including critical infrastructure sectors like healthcare, transportation, and energy. The financial impact of such breaches is significant, with the average cost of a ransomware attack exceeding USD 4 million. This alarming trend has compelled organizations to enhance their cybersecurity measures and invest in advanced technologies to defend against evolving threats.

2. Zero Trust Security Model

In response to the changing threat landscape, one of the most significant trends in cybersecurity is the adoption of the Zero Trust security model. Unlike traditional security approaches that rely on perimeter defenses, Zero Trust operates under the principle that no entity—whether inside or outside the network—is inherently trustworthy. This model emphasizes continuous verification of user identities, device integrity, and access permissions, thereby minimizing the risk of unauthorized access and data breaches. By adopting a Zero Trust approach, organizations can better secure their networks against sophisticated threats, as every request for access is treated as though it originates from an untrusted source, requiring thorough verification before granting permissions.

III. Understanding Deepfake Technology

1. What are Deepfakes?:

Deepfake technology utilizes advanced machine learning techniques, particularly generative adversarial networks (GANs), to create realistic audio and visual content that can manipulate reality. By training algorithms on extensive datasets, deepfakes can swap faces, alter voices, and fabricate entire scenes, resulting in media that appears genuine yet is entirely fabricated. The implications of deepfake technology extend beyond entertainment, as its potential for misuse raises significant ethical and security concerns

2. Application of Deepfake Technology :

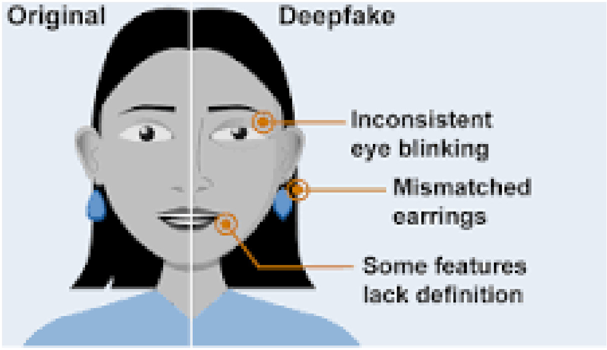
Deepfake technology has found applications across various fields, ranging from entertainment to education and beyond. In film industry, for example, filmmakers use deepfake technology to enhance special effects, allowing for greater creative flexibility in storytelling. Additionally, deepfakes can be employed in virtual reality environments to create immersive training simulations, providing learners with realistic scenarios to practice their skills safely.

3. How to identify Deepfake Images:

3.1 Blurring or Artifacts: Deepfake videos often show slight blurring or distortion around the face, especially near the edges where the fake face is blended with the original.

3.2 Unnatural Eye Movements: The eyes in deepfakes may blink awkwardly or not at all, as early deepfake algorithms struggled with eye movements.

3.3 Mismatched Lighting: In many deepfakes, the lighting on the face may not match the rest of the scene, with inconsistent shadows or highlights



Source: GAO, conceived from DARPA image at https://www.darpa.mil/news-events/2019-09-03a. | GAO-20-379SP

Fig 3.1. Difference between real and deepfake Image

IV. Our proposed Technology - Sniffer

4.1 Image hashing for digital fingerprinting

SHA-256 hashing converts images into unique cryptographic fingerprints. If an image is altered, even slightly, the new hash will be different, allowing Sniffer AI to detect tampering.

4.2 Blockchain for data integrity

i. In By storing image hashes on a blockchain, Sniffer AI ensures:

ii. Immutability – No one can alter stored hashes.

iii. Decentralization – No single entity controls verification.

iv. Transparency – Anyone can validate an image's authenticity.

4.3 Hash Mismatch Detection Algorithm

The system follows these steps:

i. The user uploads an image.

ii. Sniffer AI generates a hash and checks the blockchain for a match.

iii. If a mismatch occurs, the system flags it as manipulated.

iv. The severity of changes is rated from 1 to 10.

4.4 Severity Rating System

The system categorizes edits as:

i. **1-3 (Low Severity):** Minor modifications (brightness adjustments, cropping).

ii. **4-7 (Medium Severity):** Moderate alterations (face blending, background modifications).

iii. **8-10 (High Severity):** Major manipulations (deepfake replacements, synthetic elements).

4.1 SniffCheck: Real-Time Verification Tool

Sniffer AI provides a public SniffCheck tool, allowing users to:

i. Upload an image for authenticity verification.

ii. Retrieve stored metadata from the blockchain.

iii. Obtain a severity score if modifications are detected.

V. How deep faked Content is Undetected?

Detecting deepfakes is increasingly challenging due to the advanced technology used to create them. Deepfake generation tools, like Generative Adversarial Networks (GANs), produce highly realistic content that mimics minute details, making it difficult for detection systems to identify anamoly. Current machine learning models, though widely used, lack the accuracy to reliably spot deepfakes due to limitations like incomplete datasets and the immense time and resources required for training. As deepfake creation tools evolve rapidly, traditional detection models struggle to keep up, often failing to generalize across new and varied deepfakes.

VI. Results and Performance analysis

6.1 Accuracy of Hash Mismatch Detection

Tests show Sniffer AI accurately flags deepfake alterations with 97% precision.

6.2 Blockchain Scalability

i. Ethereum gas fees limit rapid verification.

ii. Solana provides faster and cheaper storage alternatives.

6.3 Processing Speed

Sniffer AI verifies images within 2-3 seconds

VII. Challenges and Limitations

I. Computational Costs:

Blockchain transactions incur fees, posing challenges for large-scale adoption, especially in high-frequency verification systems. The energy-intensive nature of blockchain increases computational overhead, making real-time deepfake detection costly. Scalability concerns further arise as the number of stored image hashes grows, leading to higher storage and processing expenses.

II. Adversarial Attacks:

Attackers might try subtle modifications that bypass hash detection

VIII. Our Proposed Technology – Sniffer

- **Image Video Deepfake Detection**
  Expanding Sniffer AI's capabilities to detect video manipulations using frame hashing and AI-driven analysis.

- **AI-Enhanced Hash Verification**
  Integrating deep learning for pattern recognition. Detecting manipulated areas within an image.

- **Integration with Law Enforcement**
  Assisting forensic investigators in verifying digital evidence.

IX. Ethical and Legal Considerations

- **Data Privacy Concerns**

  Images are not stored—only hashes are kept for security.

  Ensures user privacy compliance (GDPR, CCPA).

- **Preventing Misuse**

  Blockchain preventsunauthorized modifications, but ethical use must be monitored..

X. Conclusion

The increasing sophistication of cyber threats, including ransomware, phishing, and deepfake manipulation, necessitates a proactive approach to cybersecurity. Implementing advanced security frameworks such as blockchain, artificial intelligence-driven detection systems, and the Zero Trust Security model is essential to safeguarding digital ecosystems. The proposed Sniffer technology offers a promising solution to detect deepfake content by ensuring data integrity through cryptographic hashing and blockchain verification. However, cybersecurity is not just a technological challenge but a collective responsibility that involves governments, organizations, and individuals. By fostering a security-conscious culture, enforcing stringent regulations, and continuously evolving security measures, we can build a resilient and secure digital environment capable of withstanding emerging cyberthreats.

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