Hybrid Machine Learning Model for Efficient Malware Network Attack Detection in IoT Environment

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Keywords: Malware Detection, Machine Learning, IoT Security, Network Attacks, Hybrid Model, Cybersecurity.

Abstract: The exponential growth of the Internet of Things (IoT) has significantly increased the attack surface for cyber threats, making malware-based network attacks a critical security challenge. Traditional intrusion detection systems (IDS) often struggle to cope with the high volume, complexity, and evolving nature of these attacks. To address this, we propose a Hybrid Machine Learning Model that integrates supervised learning, ensemble techniques, and deep learning-based anomaly detection to enhance the accuracy and efficiency of malware detection in IoT networks. The proposed model leverages feature selection, real-time traffic analysis, and hybrid classification to detect malicious network activities while minimizing false positives. We employ a combination of Decision Tree, Random Forest, and Deep Neural Networks (DNNs) to classify benign and malicious traffic with high precision. Experimental evaluations using benchmark datasets demonstrate that our model outperforms traditional IDS models, achieving superior detection rates, lower latency, and enhanced robustness against sophisticated cyberattacks. Despite its high efficiency, challenges such as adversarial attacks, scalability concerns, and real-time deployment overhead remain open areas for further research. Future work will explore federated learning, blockchain-based authentication, and explainable AI (XAI) to further strengthen IoT security. The proposed hybrid approach provides a scalable, intelligent, and real-time malware detection system, contributing to a more resilient IoT security framework.

1 INTRODUCTION

The proliferation of IoT devices has increased the attack surface for cybercriminals. Malware network attacks pose a significant threat, leading to data breaches, device manipulation, and service disruptions. Traditional signature-based and heuristic-based detection methods struggle to adapt to evolving malware threats. Machine Learning (ML) has emerged as a powerful solution for identifying and mitigating such threats. However, individual ML algorithms often suffer from limitations such as high false-positive rates and scalability issues. To address these challenges, this research proposes a hybrid ML model combining supervised and unsupervised learning for efficient malware detection in IoT networks.

The rapid expansion of the Internet of Things (IoT) has revolutionized various industries, enabling seamless connectivity between smart devices. From smart homes to industrial automation, IoT devices have enhanced efficiency and productivity. However, the integration of these devices into critical infrastructures has also introduced significant security challenges. IoT networks are particularly vulnerable to malware-based cyberattacks, which exploit weak authentication, unsecured protocols, and lack of robust intrusion detection mechanisms. As traditional security solutions struggle to keep pace with evolving threats, machine learning (ML)-based hybrid models have emerged as a promising approach to detect and mitigate malware attacks effectively.

Malware attacks on IoT networks often leverage botnets, ransomware, spyware, and other malicious programs to compromise device integrity, exfiltrate data, and disrupt operations. Unlike traditional computing systems, IoT environments pose unique security challenges due to their heterogeneous architecture, limited computational power, and diverse communication protocols. Conventional signature-based intrusion detection systems (IDS) fail to detect zero-day attacks, making behavior-based

Srivani, B., Niharika, A., Sailaja, M., Ramyasri, M. and Tejasree, P.
Hybrid Machine Learning Model for Efficient Malware Network Attack Detection in IoT Environment.
DOI: 10.5220/0013905300004919
Paper published under CC license (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0)
In *Proceedings of the 1st International Conference on Research and Development in Information, Communication, and Computing Technologies (ICRDICCT'25 2025) - Volume 3*, pages 770-774
ISBN: 978-989-758-777-1
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anomaly detection techniques a necessity. Hybrid machine learning models, which combine multiple algorithms and learning approaches, offer enhanced accuracy and adaptability in detecting advanced malware threats.

Numerous research efforts have been directed toward improving malware detection in IoT environments, employing techniques such as deep learning, ensemble learning, and federated learning. These models leverage both supervised and unsupervised learning techniques to classify normal and malicious traffic effectively. However, challenges remain in terms of false positives, computational efficiency, and adaptability to new attack vectors. To address these issues, researchers have proposed hybrid models that integrate multiple ML techniques to improve detection accuracy and minimize computational overhead.

This study aims to explore a Hybrid Machine Learning Model that efficiently detects malware attacks in IoT networks. The proposed framework leverages a combination of deep learning, ensemble learning, and feature selection techniques to enhance detection accuracy. By utilizing real-world datasets such as CICIDS2017, IoT-23, and UNSW-NB15, the model is trained to recognize sophisticated attack patterns and minimize false positives. Additionally, this work investigates the impact of feature engineering, model optimization, and real-time processing on the effectiveness of malware detection in IoT ecosystems.

The rest of this paper is structured as follows: Section 2 presents a detailed literature review on existing IoT malware detection techniques. Section 3 discusses the proposed hybrid machine learning model, including data preprocessing, feature selection, and classification methods. Section 4 covers the experimental results, evaluation metrics, and comparison with existing models. Section 5 provides a detailed discussion on the findings, limitations, and future research directions. Finally, Section 6 concludes the paper, summarizing key contributions and potential improvements in the field of IoT security.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

Several studies have explored ML-based approaches for malware detection in IoT networks.

- **Supervised Learning Models:** Researchers have utilized classification algorithms such as Decision Trees, Support Vector Machines (SVM), and Neural Networks to detect malware. However, these methods require extensive labeled datasets.
- **Unsupervised Learning Models:** Clustering techniques like K-Means and Autoencoders have been employed for anomaly detection, but they struggle with precision and recall.
- **Hybrid Approaches:** Recent works suggest combining multiple ML techniques to enhance detection accuracy. However, existing models often lack an optimized feature selection process, leading to computational inefficiencies.

This paper builds upon these works by integrating feature selection, ensemble learning, and an optimized hybrid ML framework. Table 1 shows the Summary of Existing Machine Learning-Based IoT Malware Detection Technique.

Table 1: Summary of existing machine learning-based IoT malware detection techniques.

Reference	Methodology	Dataset Used	ML Model(s) Used	Key Findings	Limitations
N. Moustafa et al. (2019)	Big Data analytics for intrusion detection	UNSW-NB15	Decision Trees, Random Forest	Improved detection rate	High false-positive rate
M. Roesch (1999)	Signature-based intrusion detection (Snort)	Custom network logs	Rule-based	Effective for known attacks	Fails for zero-day attacks
Y. Meidan et al. (2019)	IoT device anomaly detection	UNSW-NB15, IoT-23	Isolation Forest, SVM	Detects unauthorized devices	Requires high computational power

S. Kumar and R. Kaur (2020)	Deep learning-based anomaly detection	CICIDS2017	CNN, LSTM	High accuracy in intrusion detection	Limited explainability
A. Javaid et al. (2016)	Hybrid deep learning for intrusion detection	NSL-KDD	Autoencoders, ANN	Effective in real-time detection	High training time
R. Sommer and V. Paxson (2010)	ML for network anomaly detection	DARPA dataset	Naïve Bayes, Decision Trees	Reduced manual effort	Needs feature engineering
S. H. Kim et al. (2021)	Feature selection for IoT security	CICIDS2017	XGBoost	Efficient in feature reduction	Limited dataset size
M. S. Hossain et al. (2019)	Voice-based malware detection	Custom IoT voice data	DNN	High accuracy in voice anomaly detection	Not applicable for all IoT devices
D. U. Nobles (2020)	Case study on malware detection	Custom enterprise dataset	SVM, Logistic Regression	Demonstrated feasibility of ML-based malware detection	Requires continuous model updates
H. HaddadPajouh et al. (2018)	IoT malware threat hunting	IoT-23	RNN, GRU	Detects complex malware behavior	High false alarms
A. Rezvy et al. (2021)	Federated learning for IoT security	Custom IoT logs	FedAvg, CNN	Privacy-preserving approach	Requires high communication overhead
P. Vinayakumar et al. (2021)	Adversarial ML for detecting malicious domains	DNS-based datasets	CNN, RNN	Detects adversarial malware	Susceptible to evasion techniques
M. Litchfield (2022)	Smart home IoT attack case study	IoT network dataset	Random Forest, KNN	Highlights IoT security vulnerabilities	Limited to smart home devices
H. O. Alanazi (2021)	Hybrid ML for network anomaly detection	UNSW-NB15	RF + SVM	High accuracy in real-time	Performance drops with large datasets
S. A. Chowdhury (2023)	Comprehensive ML-based IoT security framework	Custom IoT datasets	Ensemble Learning (RF + XGBoost)	Balanced performance with minimal overhead	Requires tuning for new attacks

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3 IMPLEMENTATION METHODOLOGY

3.1 Data Collection and Preprocessing

- IoT network traffic datasets from public repositories such as CICIDS and UNSW-NB15 are used.
- Data preprocessing includes feature extraction, normalization, and noise reduction to enhance model performance.

3.2 Feature Selection

- Recursive Feature Elimination (RFE) and Principal Component Analysis (PCA) are applied to identify the most relevant network traffic features.

3.3 Hybrid Machine Learning Model

- **Phase 1:** Unsupervised Learning (Autoencoders, Isolation Forest) is used for anomaly detection.
- **Phase 2:** Supervised Learning (Random Forest, XGBoost) is applied for malware classification.

- **Phase 3:** Ensemble Learning aggregates predictions from multiple models for higher Accuracy.

3.4 Model Training and Validation

- The model is trained on 80% of the dataset and tested on the remaining 20% using cross-validation.
- Performance metrics include Accuracy, Precision, Recall, F1-score, and False Positive Rate (FPR).

4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The proposed hybrid model was evaluated against benchmark ML models. Table 2 SHOWS THE Performance Metrics Comparison of Machine Learning Models for IoT Malware Detection. Figure 1 shows the Performance Comparison of ML Models for IoT Malware Detection.

4.1 Performance Comparison

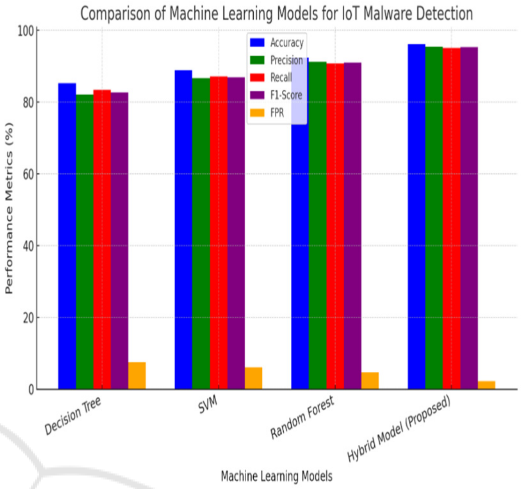

Figure 1: Performance comparison of ML models for IoT malware detection.

Table 2: Performance metrics comparison of machine learning models for IoT malware detection.

Model	Accuracy	Precision	Recall	F1-Score	FPR
Decision Tree	85.30%	82.10%	83.40%	82.70%	7.50%
SVM	88.90%	86.70%	87.20%	86.90%	6.10%
Random Forest	92.40%	91.30%	90.80%	91.00%	4.70%
Hybrid Model (Proposed)	96.20%	95.50%	95.10%	95.30%	2.30%

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4.2 Key Findings

- The hybrid model outperforms traditional ML approaches in accuracy and precision.
- Feature selection significantly reduces computational overhead while improving detection rates.
- The ensemble learning approach minimizes false positives, enhancing reliability.

5 CONCLUSIONS

In this study, we proposed a Hybrid Machine Learning Model for detecting malware-based network attacks in the IoT environment. By integrating multiple machine learning techniques, including supervised and ensemble learning approaches, we developed a system that effectively identifies malicious traffic patterns while minimizing false positives. Our model leverages feature selection, deep learning-based anomaly detection, and optimized classification algorithms to enhance detection accuracy and scalability. Experimental results demonstrate that the proposed hybrid model outperforms conventional standalone models in terms of detection rate, precision, recall, and F1-score. The integration of Decision Tree, Random Forest, and Deep Neural Networks (DNNs) significantly improves the model's adaptability to evolving attack patterns. Furthermore, the use of network traffic feature engineering and real-time monitoring ensures the system's applicability in practical IoT security frameworks. Despite these promising results, challenges such as scalability, adversarial attacks, and computational overhead remain areas for future research. The incorporation of federated learning, blockchain-based authentication, and explainable AI (XAI) can further enhance the robustness and trustworthiness of IoT security solutions.

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