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## Network Security Strategies in Big Data Context

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### Abstract

Big data allows organizations to process massive and complex data to extract hidden patterns, draw insights, and also to share data through the network. Data that transit in an organization network is often sensitive and requires an efficient and secure platform. For this reason, network security has been brought to the forefront in the Big data era. In this context, network security platforms have to deal with vast and complex information to predict and prevent potential attacks in real-time. However, these platforms are often based on traditional approaches, which make them unreliable to secure big data. In this paper, we mainly focus on network security and protection strategies of big data. First, we highlight factors affecting network security platforms in the Big data era. Then, we go through different big data strategies that allow ensuring security across networks while surveying recent researches.

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### 1. Introduction

The rapid growth and the extensive use of various emerging technologies, such as IoT, Cloud, 5G, social media,

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co, and smart cities, lead to a vast, heterogeneous, and complex data, called big data. These data bring tremendous processing opportunities to various domains, including healthcare, politic, transport, and banking. It is essential to mention that big data also brings several challenges due to their complex characteristics, namely, Volume, Velocity, Variety, Veracity, Value, Variability, and Visualization, see Figure 1.

Big data technologies play a pivotal role in the process of collecting, analyzing, and visualizing massive and complex data. They help to discover hidden patterns and to extract useful and sensitive information. Big data technologies are continuously supporting powerful network platform aiming to interconnect data entities and share information across them. However, Big data is also an attractive zone for many security attacks that raise many challenges[1]. In fact, along with the high-speed growth of data that flows in networks, the network coverage scale is expanding, and the network environment is more complicated.

Further cyber-attacks are becoming increasingly prevalent and intricate. It is, therefore, imperative to use reliable and robust Network Security Platforms (NSPs) that provides high-performance reports in the real and near real-time. Nonetheless, traditional NSPs (TNSPs), like any conventional tool, are inadequate to detect attacks in large and complex data within a reasonable time. Effectively, Big data characteristics have a significant impact on NSPs, as summarized in Figure 1.

Big data characteristics	Elucidation	Impact on traditional security approaches
Volume	Massive data	Large scale data volumes lead to constantly increasing attacks and hence make networks more vulnerable. Traditional security approaches can be stymied when working with big data that shows massive volume.
Velocity	Real-time analysis	High velocity data demands ultra-fast response times from security approaches. The size of data is growing faster in comparison with the computational power of TNSPs. This leads to big challenges on TNSPs in detecting and blocking an attack as early as possible.
Variety	Various types of data	In the security field, variety means different format of threats. Security platforms must be able to recognize both known and unknown suspicious activities. However, TNSPs generally focus on detecting previously defined threats.
Veracity	Anomalies in data	Cybercriminals can fabricate data and inject it into the data lake. This may completely distort the analysis and cause serious damage. However, TNSPs are not able to detect these types of fraud.
Value	Data analysis value	In order to deliver value, TNSPs should be highly efficient in detecting and blocking attacks. Nevertheless, the above mentioned challenges of TNSPs in a big data context, such as identifying various types of threats in real time, causes substantial questions in TNSPs reliability and robustness.
Variability	Data and network are continuously changing	In big data, networks and data are often dynamic, which make TNSPs inadequate since they are tailored to secure small-scale static data and network.
Visualization	Illustrating massive data in readable manner	Security platforms should provide appropriate dashboard to deliver visibility of network problems in real-time. However, TNSPs are often based on basic visualization techniques that are outdated to present massive data in a relevant and unbiased way.

Fig.1 Network security risks in the Big data era

Considerable efforts have been made to reduce network security risk. However, as shown in the above figure, the complex nature of big data inhibits existing NSPs' performances in several levels, including real-time, accuracy, and reliability. Therefore, NSPs should attach great importance to Big data specificities to align as much as possible with the contexts implementing big data. This paper aims to provide big data strategies that should be considered in NSPs to align with Big data needs.

The rest of the paper is organized as follows: Section 2, 3, and 4 discuss big data strategies that allow NSPs to produce adequate security analytics in terms of managing big data through the network. Furthermore, we highlight recent and exciting contributions that have been proposed in this regard. Finally, Section 5 concludes the paper by giving some future directions.

## 2. Threat detection

Threat detection is a priority security solution that must be integrated even in primary security platforms. It is designed to detect and prevent malicious activities in the network. The idea is to detect threats before they are exploited as attacks, gain unauthorized access to internal systems, and cause damage. It plays a pivotal role in cyber-security, especially in the context of Big data. It allows protecting the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of Big data from advanced and persistent malware attacks in the network environment, see Figure 2.

To maintain the security of the network in the context of Big data, many researchers have provided efficient techniques based on Big data analytics and Artificial Intelligence (AI). For instance, Camacho et al. [2] have come up

with a Multivariate Big data Analysis, an intrusion detection approach that allows handling massive amounts of heterogeneous data sources. The proposed method is based on Multivariate Statistical Network Monitoring (MSNM) technique proposed in [3]. It allows not only to detect anomaly but also gives logs details about information corresponding to this anomaly. The experimental results have shown that this system identifies the raw information of the attack with high specificity, more than 99%.

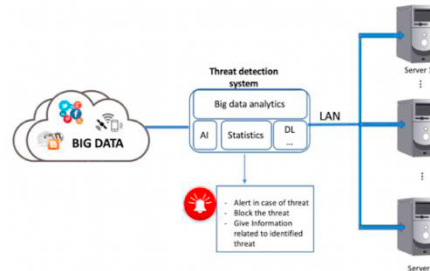


Fig.2 Threat detection

In [4], Yang et al. have designed a Big data analytics platform that not only detects anomalies that represent the performance degradation of a cellular network in wireless mobile networks but also perform a root cause analysis. First, the anomaly detection module is delivered by preprocessing data, applying a statistical model called Univariate Anomaly Detection, and finally, a post-processing filtering to remove false alarms. Then, the root cause analysis module is performed using an unusual association rule learning approach to quarry association between crucial quality indicators and critical performance indicators anomalies that occur infrequently.

Li and Min have proposed in [5] a marking method to improve network attack detection basing on Big data fusion tracking recognition. This technique allows classifying the data types of the network attack node. The simulation results have shown that the proposed method can effectively locate network attack nodes with an accuracy of 94%.

As mentioned above, it is challenging to express massive data accurately. It is also important to say that Deep Learning brings a new way to deal with Big data by automatically learning features[6]. Furthermore, DL allows getting more profound information than traditional methods. More and more researches put forward DL-based frameworks to ensure network security. In [7], Faker and Dogdu have combined Big data, Deep Feed-Forward Neural Network, and two ensemble techniques (RF and GBT) to enhance the performance of intrusion detection systems. The two ensemble techniques are implemented on Apache Spark, while the deep learning model is implemented using Keras. The experimentation results show that the proposed method achieves high performance, up to 99.99%. Another intrusion detection system using deep learning and Big data processing capabilities is introduced in [8]. Flume, Flink, and a deep learning algorithm called Auto-Encoder are used. The proposed approach has shown high performances, about 94.32% of accuracy. Other contributions have also offered attractive and efficient strategies to secure networks basing on different DL algorithms, such as LSTM [9].

### 3. Network security assessment

All the mentioned above contributions allow us to detect threats efficiently and comprehensively solve the security problem and do not consider the specificities of the used network. New approaches must, therefore, be proposed to ensure security basing on the security gaps of the studied system. The leading solution that allows bridging this gap is the network security assessment. It consists of auditing and evaluating the security quality and show where the fundamental weaknesses are. Network security assessment plays an essential role in network security due to its capability to increase system protection in depth. Effectively, such a risk assessment allows to identify vulnerabilities in different environment, measure the size of potential impacts of successful attacks, test the robustness of security defenders to detect and respond to attacks. Also, it locates any external or internal entry points in the network. Moreover, it prescribes the steps that should be taken to protect the possible attacks, basing on the identified weakness.

Several contributions have been proposed to evaluate the network security assessment based on Big data. Huang [10] has combined Big data modeling and statistical analysis to assess security and detect anomaly for campus network management. The statistical analysis, namely the fuzzy algorithm, is used to identify abnormal activities in the campus network. In contrast, Big data fusion is used to secure a quantitative assessment of network management security. The conducted experimentation shows that the proposed approach achieves good accuracy, up to 99,6%.

Always in the same context, Kim et al. [11] have proposed a Big data framework to strengthen network security in the context of SMEs (Small and Medium-sized enterprises). The proposed framework allows visualizing the security capability of SMEs via mobile devices. For this, several statistical analysis methods, such as linear regression and partial least squares, were used to diagnosis the security capability. Then, a solution is developed to improve the security capability basing on the diagnostic.

In [12], Lin and Chen have proposed a Network Security Situation Assessment System in Big data environment. The system protects the core information infrastructure in a large-scale network. First, the proposed model divides a massive network into multiple modules using the BGLL algorithm and preprocess data on Hadoop. Then, it evaluates the security of the nodes in each module basing on the SimHash algorithm. The module security situation is obtained according to the security situation of its related nodes, and finally, the network security situation is quantified using the combination of the weight and the security situation of the modules

Ye [13] has designed a new algorithm that assesses network intrusion risk under substantial intrusion interference. This algorithm is based on Big data association rule mining to judge the behavior characteristics of network intrusion association data. Then a stochastic linear fitting model is used to adjust the result to enhance the algorithm performances under substantial intrusion interference. The experimentation shows that the proposed algorithm achieves good accuracy (between 92% and 100%) in evaluating the regular data on network intrusion.

#### 4. Scalability

With the increasing amount of large-scale data, the higher requirement regarding the speed of data analysis has been raised. It must be pointed out that traditional architecture, even a high-end one, is unable to process this large-scale data and provide a secure network. For this reason, new processing capabilities, called Big data tools, have emerged to help us cope with the scalability challenges of Big data[14]. These tools rest on distributed architecture to allow analysis, storage, and manipulation of large amounts of data in a reasonable time.

There are several potential benefits of the "scale-up" approaches, especially in network security. Security platforms should provide efficient access to information, high performance, and real-time queries. Hence, there is a growing need for scalable network security systems in the context of Big data, see Figure 3. In what follows, we discuss scalable analytics platforms designed for network security in the background on Big data.

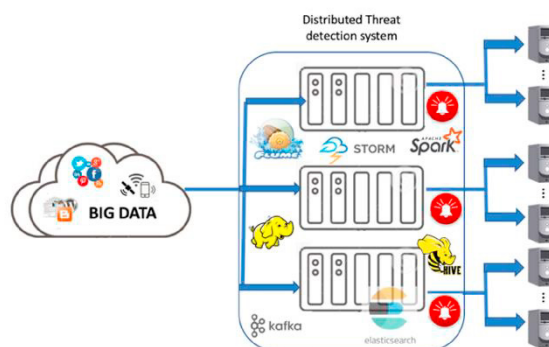


Fig.3 Scalable threat detection system

Sarlis et al. [15] have proposed a fast and scalable system for network monitoring and management, called Datix. This system is based on Big data technologies such as Hadoop, Hive, and Shark. Its main contribution is to realize efficiently distributed joins algorithms and filtering queries within a few minutes. For this aim, authors have introduced a pre-partitioning schema that accelerates the execution time by combining static and dynamic approaches. The static partitioning consists of using a uniform partition scheme in the join fields of the log dataset. In contrast, the proactive approach use K-dimensional Tree, a dynamic data structure to partition the dataset. The experimentation has shown that the proposed scheme reduces query execution time by 70% compared to the basic Hive and Shark.

Lv et al. [16] have designed a novel network monitoring system using Big data technologies, mainly ElasticSearch and Kibana. The system consists of four primary functions: collecting Netflow in real-time, transferring data reliably basing on Logstash, storing data in ElasticSearch, and finally, analyzing and displaying data in real-time with Kabana.

It has been experimentally demonstrated that the proposed system provides real-time control for large-scale network security.

Traditional scaled-out application is composed of several instances and a load balancer that dispatches incoming traffic between them often based on round-robin. Unlike these conventional methods, Frishman et al. [17] have proposed an exciting load balancing approach for security appliance using clustering. K-means is used to distribute groups of similar networks across the instances of network security platforms basing on several features such as destination, service, and domain expert. The experimentation has demonstrated that the proposed approach can be used to improve network intrusion detection systems.

Zhang et al.[18] have designed a security architecture that includes a scalable network anomaly detection module and security data platform. Basing on LSTM, the proposed HTTP anomaly detection module allows detecting network anomalies efficiently, with an accuracy of 97.4% and a detection rate of 98.1%. It is also important to point out that real-time detection is provided by the proposed architecture by using a Restful API approach, Elasticsearch, and RabbitMQ.

To detect intrusion in networks efficiently, Sahi and Mohapatra [19] have compared several machine learning methods on a scalable architecture. This architecture is based on several Big data tools, namely, Hadoop, Hive, Spark, and Mahout. The experimental results have shown that the highest accuracy is achieved by the KNN approach (up to 99.9%).

## 5. Dynamicity

In the context of Big data, networks are not only much larger but also become more complex and dynamic. However, the security network platforms mentioned above usually deal with a simple static network environment only and consider a restricted set of events and devices such as log management, intrusion, denial of service, and topology. Hence, they have limited capability to detect complex and dynamic attacks, especially in Big data, where networks' environments and configurations are continuously changing due to the add/on/off patterns of network connectivity. It is difficult to distinguish between a regular topology change and malicious behavior in a dynamic network environment. Furthermore, security platforms have varying posture changes concerning changes in the network. Conclusively, Yusuf et al. [20] have proved the effects of network changes on security metrics, such as risk and cost on attack paths, mode of attack path lengths, and shortest attack path, by analyzing simulations. The experimental analysis consists of observing security metrics in dynamic networks with several changes such as the emergence of new vulnerabilities without patching, the addition and removal of hosts, and the shift in firewall rules.

In this context of dynamicity, Lin and Chen [21] have proposed a dynamic Network Security Situation Prediction Method that not only quantifies the network security situation but also predict attack behavior in a dynamically changing network environment. This method is based on Big data technology and the Bayesian attack graph. Big data technology is used to fuse and preprocess, deduplication as well as useless data removing, network security situation factors. Then, a vulnerability prediction algorithm is used to predict the number of vulnerabilities in real-time. Finally, the new vulnerability is combined with the Bayesian attack graph to predict the attack path and its probability and assess the network security situation. The proposed model can accurately predict the attack behavior and quantify the network security situation, as shown in their experimentation.

Researchers in [22] have come up with a dynamic network anomaly detection system using deep learning. LSTM is used to classify anomalies in networks. An Attention Mechanism (AM) have been added to improve the performance of the model. The authors have also solved the class-imbalance problem in the CSE-CIC-2018 dataset by using an over-sampling algorithm called SMOTE. This algorithm allows for getting more samples for the small size classes to optimize the training process. To further optimize the model, they have also used Adam gradient descent method that calculates the gradient of the loss function and updates the model parameters to reach convergence. The overall performance of the proposed system reaches 96.2%, while the traditional LSTM achieves 93.33% in the conducted experimentation.

In [23], Liao et al. have proposed DNAV, anomaly analysis, and visualization tools for dynamic networks through spatiotemporal graph segmentation (e.g., time and locations of connectivity). In the conducted experimentation, authors have demonstrated the efficiency of the proposed tool in analyzing anomalies (identifying time and place of anomalous events) in nodes and edges in a dynamic network.

Other contributions, such as [24][25][26] have also designed security risk assessment systems for dynamic networks. However, there are still some limitations to these contributions in the context of Big data. They cannot deal with data streams with large-volume and velocity in real-time. This needs to be improved in the future to fit Big data requirements adequately.

## 6. Encryption

Data encryption is the process of transforming data from a readable format into the encoded form and can only be accessed by users with the correct decryption key. It could be an excellent complementary strategy in network security. It would allow assuring the preservation, confidentiality, and integrity of sensitive data that transit in the network (transmission and reception ends). In other words, data encryption could prevent attackers that access illegally to the system, from intercepting and stealing confidential information (Figure 4).

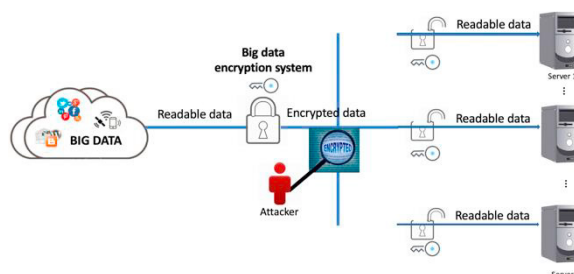


Fig.4 Network security basing on encryption

Many researchers are interested in this topic and provide interesting techniques to encrypt transited Big data. Wang [27] has proposed an iterative data encryption method to improve the security of transmission data anti-tampering in a supercomputer network, basing on elliptical, hyperbolic iterative coding. The tampering proof iteration is obtained using random quantitative coding fusion. Then, the logistics chaotic mapping system is used to realize the anti-tampering encryption, secure storage, and transmission in the network. The conducted experimentation has shown that the proposed scheme achieves excellent performance in terms of anti-attack and secure transfer of encrypted data.

To ensure end-to-end security and maintain confidentiality as well as the integrity for Big sensing data streams, Puthal et al. [28] have designed SEEN, a Selective Encryption method. It is based on a Data Stream Manager that allows us to perform intrusion detection and shared vital management. Moreover, SEEN allows adopting different keys, based on the data sensitivity levels, for three standards of data confidentiality, namely no confidentiality, partial confidentiality, and strong confidentiality. Theoretical analysis and experimental results have shown the efficiency of the proposed method in terms of processing time and assuring data confidentiality and integrity.

Hui and Zesong [29] have proposed not only an encryption method that improves the data transmission security, but also a prototype cluster that performs real-time analysis of log and network attack data. First, the model deduplicate and standardize data to clean it. Then, the encryption method combines both ECC encryption and block encryption algorithms to ensure security and use a hybrid key generator based on semiconductor noise and chaotic sequence. This key generator is an efficient manner to build random keys that are hardly predictable, which enhances system security.

Other interesting encryption approaches have been proposed in [30][31][32]. They also allow effective content and structure protection against untrusted access and attacks.

## 7. Conclusion

Big data analytics is a burning topic that allows us to process and analyze large and complex data to discover hidden patterns. With the progress of big data analytics, network security became a relevant research field in the era of big data. It allows securing sensitive information that transits in the network. However, with the emergence of a large, heterogeneous, and complex data, existing security techniques become unable to process and identify threats in the network in a reasonable time. Furthermore, it often fails to provide adequate security analytics performance. In this

paper, we first show the impact of Big data specificities on network security. Then, we show some strategies that should be considered to build a reliable platform that deals with Big data issues.

As future work, we aim to design a network security system that fulfills all Big data requirements and considers the proposed strategies.

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