

Deep Learning-Based Approach for Detecting Botnets in Internet-of-Things Networks

Problem Statement:

The Internet of Things (IoT) has transformed the way we live and work, connecting billions of devices across industries and households. From smart homes to industrial automation, IoT networks have made our lives more convenient and efficient. However, this rapid growth has brought significant security challenges. Botnets—networks of compromised devices—pose a major threat by exploiting IoT vulnerabilities for malicious activities like launching Distributed Denial-of-Service (DDoS) attacks, stealing sensitive data, and disrupting essential services.

What makes securing IoT networks particularly difficult is the diverse nature of devices, their limited computational power, and the sheer scale of their deployment. Traditional security measures, like intrusion detection systems (IDS), often fail to keep up with these unique challenges. They struggle to adapt to evolving threats, lack the ability to handle attacks designed to bypass detection, and often cannot operate efficiently in real-time scenarios.

The impact of these vulnerabilities is growing, with IoT-based attacks threatening critical infrastructures, breaching user privacy, and causing billions in financial losses worldwide. While various machine learning and deep learning methods—such as ensemble models, generative adversarial networks (GANs), and recurrent neural networks—have been explored to tackle these issues, they come with their own challenges. These include high computational demands, dependence on imbalanced datasets, and limited validation in real-world environments.

To safeguard IoT networks, there is an urgent need for a solution that goes beyond the limitations of existing methods. The goal is to develop a botnet detection system that is not only accurate but also robust against evolving threats, efficient enough for resource-limited IoT devices, and scalable for real-world applications.

Research Objectives:

1. To Understanding Existing Methods:

- Explore the strengths and weaknesses of current systems for detecting botnets in IoT networks.
- Identify gaps in scalability, real-time performance, and resilience to adversarial attacks that need to be addressed.

2. To Build a Better Detection Model:

- Develop a deep learning framework that can handle the unique characteristics of IoT data, especially imbalances in attack versus normal traffic.
- Enhance the system's ability to withstand manipulation or attacks aimed at bypassing detection.

3. To Make the System Suitable for IoT Devices:

- Ensure the model is lightweight and efficient enough to run smoothly on IoT devices with limited computing power.

- Minimize the system's impact on energy consumption, memory usage, and communication bandwidth.
4. **To Test and Validating in Real Scenarios:**
 - Use diverse and realistic datasets to assess the system's accuracy and reliability.
 - Simulate dynamic and varied IoT environments to confirm that the solution works effectively across different use cases.
 5. **To Provide Practical Solutions for the Future:**
 - Offer actionable recommendations to help deploy the system in real-world IoT setups.
 - Suggest improvements for adapting the system to new and evolving threats in IoT networks.

Literature Review:

Botnet attacks have emerged as a significant threat to IoT networks, necessitating the development of efficient detection mechanisms. The reviewed studies highlight various approaches and methodologies to tackle this problem:

- Def-IDS (Wang et al., 2021): Utilizes GANs and adversarial retraining to enhance IDS robustness against adversarial attacks. While effective, its high resource demands limit real-time applicability.
- SMOTE-DRNN (Popoola et al., 2021): Combines data augmentation with deep recurrent neural networks to address imbalanced datasets. Although achieving high detection accuracy, it relies heavily on controlled datasets, reducing generalizability.
- Ensemble Learning Models (Rezaei, 2021; Abu Al-Haija & Al-Dala'ien, 2022): Employ techniques such as decision trees and AdaBoost to enhance detection efficiency. These methods are lightweight and suitable for IoT devices but often lack robustness against diverse attack scenarios.
- DNN-based Systems (Jithu et al., 2021): Focus on high detection precision for specific attack types like DDoS. However, their limited scope and reliance on lab-generated datasets restrict real-world relevance.
- Collaborative Approaches (Nguyen et al., 2022): Leverage diverse feature sets for early detection. These models excel in accuracy and detection speed but require further testing in dynamic IoT environments.

References:

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