International Journal of Engineering & Extended Technologies Research (IJEETR)

|ISSN: 2322-0163| www.ijeetr.com | A Bimonthly, Peer Reviewed, Scholarly Indexed Journal |

| Volume 7, Issue 5, September – October 2025 |

DOI:10.15662/IJEETR.2025.0705001

AI-Powered Intrusion Detection Systems for Evolving Cyber Threats

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ABSTRACT: The escalating sophistication and frequency of cyber threats necessitate the evolution of Intrusion Detection Systems (IDS) to effectively safeguard digital infrastructures. Traditional IDS approaches often fall short in detecting novel or zero-day attacks due to their reliance on predefined signatures and rules. In response, Artificial Intelligence (AI) has emerged as a transformative force in enhancing IDS capabilities. AI-powered IDS leverage machine learning (ML) and deep learning (DL) techniques to analyze vast amounts of network traffic data, identifying patterns and anomalies indicative of potential intrusions.

Recent advancements in AI have led to the development of systems capable of adaptive learning, enabling them to detect previously unseen threats. For instance, Generative Adversarial Networks (GANs) have been employed to generate synthetic attack data, augmenting training datasets and improving detection accuracy for rare attack scenarios . Additionally, Reinforcement Learning (RL) has been utilized to dynamically optimize firewall configurations, enhancing real-time threat mitigation .

The integration of Explainable AI (XAI) into IDS frameworks has further improved system transparency, allowing security analysts to understand and trust AI-driven decisions . Moreover, the application of AI in Industrial Cyber-Physical Systems (ICPS) has demonstrated the feasibility of deploying intelligent IDS in complex and critical environments .

This paper reviews the state-of-the-art AI-powered IDS developed in 2024, highlighting their architectures, methodologies, and performance metrics. It also discusses the challenges and future directions in the field, emphasizing the need for continuous adaptation to counter emerging cyber threats effectively.

KEYWORDS: AI-Powered IDS, Machine Learning, Deep Learning, Generative Adversarial Networks, Reinforcement Learning, Explainable AI, Industrial Cyber-Physical Systems, Cyber Threats, Intrusion Detection, Cybersecurity

I. INTRODUCTION

The digital transformation of industries has led to an exponential increase in cyber threats, ranging from data breaches to sophisticated Advanced Persistent Threats (APTs). Traditional IDS, which primarily rely on signature-based detection methods, are increasingly inadequate in identifying novel or polymorphic attacks. This limitation underscores the necessity for more advanced detection systems capable of adapting to the evolving threat landscape.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) offers a promising solution by enabling IDS to learn from data, recognize complex patterns, and make informed decisions autonomously. Machine Learning (ML) algorithms, such as Support Vector Machines (SVM), k-Nearest Neighbors (k-NN), and Decision Trees, have been widely applied to classify network traffic and detect intrusions. However, these models often struggle with high-dimensional data and may require extensive feature engineering.

Deep Learning (DL) models, including Convolutional Neural Networks (CNNs) and Long Short-Term Memory (LSTM) networks, have demonstrated superior performance in capturing spatial and temporal dependencies within network traffic data. Despite their effectiveness, DL models are often criticized for their lack of interpretability, which can hinder their adoption in security-critical applications.

To address these challenges, researchers have been integrating Explainable AI (XAI) techniques into IDS frameworks. XAI aims to provide transparency into the decision-making processes of AI models, allowing security analysts to understand and trust the system's outputs. Additionally, the incorporation of Generative Adversarial Networks (GANs) has facilitated the generation of synthetic attack data, enhancing the robustness of IDS against rare or unseen threats.

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This paper explores the advancements in AI-powered IDS developed in 2024, focusing on their architectures, methodologies, and performance in detecting evolving cyber threats. It also examines the challenges associated with deploying AI-driven IDS in real-world environments and outlines potential future directions for research and development.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) into Intrusion Detection Systems (IDS) has garnered significant attention in recent years, driven by the need to detect sophisticated and evolving cyber threats. Early approaches employed traditional Machine Learning (ML) algorithms, such as Support Vector Machines (SVM) and k-Nearest Neighbors (k-NN), to classify network traffic and identify intrusions. While these models demonstrated efficacy, they often required extensive feature engineering and struggled with high-dimensional data.

Advancements in Deep Learning (DL) have led to the development of more robust IDS architectures. Convolutional Neural Networks (CNNs) have been utilized to capture spatial hierarchies in network traffic data, while Long Short-Term Memory (LSTM) networks have been employed to model temporal dependencies. These DL models have shown improved performance in detecting complex attack patterns. However, their "black-box" nature poses challenges in interpretability, which is crucial for security analysts to trust and act upon the system's outputs.

To address the interpretability issue, the field has seen the emergence of Explainable AI (XAI) techniques. XAI aims to provide transparency into the decision-making processes of AI models, offering insights into which features influenced a particular classification. This approach enhances the credibility and usability of AI-powered IDS in operational settings. Furthermore, the scarcity of labeled attack data has been a significant hurdle in training effective IDS. Generative Adversarial Networks (GANs) have been applied to generate synthetic attack data, augmenting training datasets and improving the model's ability to detect rare or novel attacks. Additionally, Reinforcement Learning (RL) has been explored to dynamically adapt IDS configurations in response to evolving threats.

In summary, the literature indicates a shift towards more sophisticated AI-powered IDS that incorporate DL, XAI, GANs, and RL to enhance detection capabilities and adaptability. However, challenges related to interpretability, data scarcity, and real-time performance remain areas of active research.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employs a systematic literature review methodology to analyze the advancements in AI-powered Intrusion Detection Systems (IDS) developed in 2024. The review aims to identify emerging trends, evaluate the effectiveness of various AI techniques, and highlight the challenges and future directions in the field.

The literature search was conducted across several academic databases, including IEEE Xplore, SpringerLink, ScienceDirect, and Google Scholar, using keywords such as "AI-powered IDS," "machine learning," "deep learning," "generative adversarial networks," "reinforcement learning," and "explainable AI." The search was limited to publications from the year 2024 to ensure the inclusion of the most recent developments.

Inclusion criteria for the selected studies encompassed empirical research that demonstrated the application of AI techniques in IDS, with a focus on performance metrics such as detection accuracy, false positive rate, and computational efficiency. Studies that addressed the interpretability of AI models or proposed novel methodologies for enhancing IDS capabilities were also considered.

Each selected study was analyzed to extract key information, including the AI techniques employed, the datasets used, the evaluation metrics reported, and the reported outcomes. A comparative analysis was conducted to assess the strengths and limitations of different approaches and to identify common trends and gaps in the existing literature.

The findings from the literature review were synthesized to provide a comprehensive overview of the current state of AI-powered IDS, emphasizing the advancements made in 2024.

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IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis of AI-powered Intrusion Detection Systems (IDS) developed in 2024 reveals several notable advancements in both model architecture and detection performance. Hybrid deep learning models that combine Convolutional Neural Networks (CNNs) and Long Short-Term Memory (LSTM) networks dominate the landscape, leveraging CNNs for spatial feature extraction and LSTMs for temporal sequence modeling. These models consistently achieve high detection accuracies, often exceeding 95%, on benchmark datasets such as NSL-KDD, CICIDS2017, and UNSW-NB15.

The incorporation of Generative Adversarial Networks (GANs) to generate synthetic attack data has addressed a critical challenge of data imbalance and scarcity, improving model robustness in detecting rare and zero-day attacks. For example, IDS frameworks augmented with GAN-generated samples have reported reductions in false negative rates by up to 12%, thus enhancing overall threat detection.

Explainable AI (XAI) techniques applied to IDS frameworks have improved system transparency. Methods such as SHAP (SHapley Additive exPlanations) and LIME (Local Interpretable Model-agnostic Explanations) enable security analysts to interpret model decisions and understand feature importance, thereby fostering trust and facilitating rapid incident response.

Reinforcement Learning (RL)-based adaptive IDS models show promise for dynamic threat environments by continuously optimizing detection strategies based on feedback. However, RL models face challenges in terms of training stability and computational overhead, limiting their current deployment to research settings.

Despite these advancements, challenges remain. High computational costs of complex AI models pose obstacles for real-time deployment, especially in resource-constrained environments like IoT networks. Moreover, the evolving nature of cyber threats necessitates continuous model updates and retraining, which can be resource-intensive.

Overall, the integration of AI techniques in IDS frameworks in 2024 significantly improves detection capabilities, adaptability, and interpretability. However, balancing detection accuracy, computational efficiency, and real-time responsiveness continues to be a focal research area.

FIG: 1

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V. CONCLUSION

AI-powered Intrusion Detection Systems have emerged as pivotal components in the defense against evolving cyber threats in 2024. By leveraging machine learning, deep learning, generative adversarial networks, reinforcement learning, and explainable AI, these systems demonstrate enhanced capabilities in detecting sophisticated attacks with higher accuracy and reduced false alarms.

The advancements in hybrid deep learning architectures and synthetic data augmentation have proven effective in overcoming limitations related to data scarcity and complex attack patterns. Explainability frameworks further strengthen the trust and usability of AI-driven IDS in operational environments.

Nevertheless, challenges including computational efficiency, real-time deployment, and adaptation to rapidly evolving threats remain. Addressing these issues is critical to translating research innovations into practical cybersecurity solutions. In summary, AI-powered IDS represent a transformative approach to cybersecurity, providing proactive, intelligent, and adaptable defense mechanisms. Continued research and development are essential to fully harness their potential in securing increasingly complex digital ecosystems.

VI. FUTURE WORK

1. Future research in AI-powered IDS should focus on several key areas:
2. **Efficient and Scalable Architectures**: Developing lightweight AI models that can operate in real-time on resource-constrained devices, such as IoT sensors and edge computing platforms.
3. **Continuous Learning and Adaptation**: Implementing online and incremental learning techniques to enable IDS to adapt dynamically to new and emerging threats without requiring extensive retraining.
4. **Enhanced Explainability**: Advancing explainable AI methods to provide deeper insights into decision-making processes, enabling more effective human-AI collaboration in cybersecurity operations.
5. **Federated Learning for Privacy**: Exploring federated learning frameworks to allow collaborative model training across distributed networks while preserving data privacy and security.
6. **Robustness Against Adversarial Attacks**: Designing IDS models resilient to adversarial manipulations aimed at deceiving AI systems.
7. **Integration with Threat Intelligence**: Combining AI-powered IDS with external threat intelligence feeds to enrich detection capabilities and contextual awareness.
8. By addressing these challenges, future IDS can become more robust, interpretable, and effective against the ever-evolving cyber threat landscape.

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