

# Automated Web Security Analysis Tool

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## ABSTRACT

*Considering the escalating frequency and sophistication of cyber threats targeting web applications, this paper proposes the development of an automated web security analysis tool to address the accessibility gap for non-security professionals. This paper presents the design and implementation of an automated web security analysis tool aimed at enabling individuals with limited security expertise to effectively assess and mitigate vulnerabilities in web applications. Leveraging advanced scanning techniques, the tool identifies common threats such as Cross-Site Scripting (XSS), SQL Injection, and Cross-Site Request Forgery (CSRF), providing detailed reports with actionable insights. By integrating sample payloads and reference study links, the tool facilitates informed decision-making in enhancing the security posture of web applications. Through its user-friendly interface and robust functionality, the tool aims to democratize web security practices, empowering a wider audience to proactively safeguard against cyber threats.*

**Keywords:** Web Security, Automated Analysis, Vulnerability Assessment, Web Scanning, Cross-Site Scripting, SQL Injection, Cross-Site Request Forgery.

## 1. Introduction

In an era marked by the escalating frequency and complexity of cyber threats targeting web applications, the imperative for robust web security measures has never been more pronounced. According to projections, cybercrime is expected to reach a staggering \$10.5 trillion by 2025 [1], with web application attacks comprising 26% of all breaches [2]. Compounding this challenge is the fact that 60% of organizations are operating with understaffed security teams [3], exacerbating the risks associated with potential security breaches. The average cost of a data breach stands at a daunting \$9.48 million [4], underscoring the substantial financial ramifications of inadequate security measures. Against this backdrop, the ubiquitous utilization of web applications, accounting for 66.2% of all web traffic [5], underscores the critical need for accessible and effective web security solutions.

Traditional security tools, while indispensable in fortifying digital defenses, often present a formidable barrier to entry for individuals lacking specialized security expertise. This inherent complexity limits their accessibility, sidelining the active participation of non-security professionals, such as Quality Assurance (QA) specialists and developers, in the security testing process. To address this gap, our paper aims to "shift

left" security by integrating security testing earlier into the software development lifecycle. The paper endeavors to democratize web security by developing an intuitive and user-friendly automated web security analysis tool.

The proposed tool aims to empower non-security professionals to efficiently comprehend and evaluate web application vulnerabilities without necessitating extensive security knowledge. By furnishing detailed reports, sample payloads, and reference study links, the tool equips users with the resources needed to bolster the security posture of their web applications comprehensively. Moreover, the tool's emphasis on usability and contextual reporting ensures that even individuals lacking a strong security background can contribute meaningfully to the protection of online assets.

The implementation of the proposed tool leverages the Selenium web driver on Python to accept the target webpage from the user. Subsequently, the tool traverses through the Document Object Model (DOM) elements, scouring for potential attack vectors such as input elements, forms, and more. Equipped with a preset list of payloads, the tool endeavors to execute common exploits including Cross-Site Scripting (XSS), Cross-Site Request Forgery (CSRF), and others. The tool provides a quick

summary of its findings via the terminal interface, along with a comprehensive report outlining identified vulnerabilities and actionable next steps.

The organization of this paper is structured as follows: Section 2 provides an overview of existing approaches to web security analysis, highlighting their respective limitations. Section 3 introduces the proposed approach, delineating how it addresses the shortcomings of existing methodologies. Section 4 delves into the implementation and testing of the proposed tool, elucidating its architecture, and presenting key results. Section 5 offers a comparative analysis of the proposed tool against prior approaches, showcasing its efficacy in overcoming existing limitations. Finally, Section 6 encapsulates the paper with a summary of findings and concluding remarks, followed by a comprehensive list of references in Section 7.

## 2. Existing Work

### 2.1. Evaluation Criteria

The existing landscape of automated security tools for web applications was thoroughly scrutinized through an exhaustive review of academic literature and online resources. This analysis aimed to identify and forecast the performance of various tools available in the market. A diverse range of tools, including Owasp ZAP, Burp Suite, Invicti, Qualys WAS, AppSpider, Detectify, Skipfish, Nessus, and OpenVAS, were assessed against multiple criteria, including their web application scanning capabilities, ease of use, level of automation, contextual reporting features, resource efficiency, and cost considerations [6].

### 2.2. Assessment of Existing Tools

As depicted in Table 1, Owasp ZAP was found to offer robust web application scanning capabilities, albeit lacking in ease of use and contextual reporting features [7]. Similarly, Burp Suite, while renowned for its comprehensive web security testing capabilities, posed challenges in terms of usability and automation [8]. Invicti and Qualys WAS excelled in ease of use but lacked automation and contextual reporting capabilities [9]. AppSpider and Detectify demonstrated commendable automation but fell short in contextual reporting and resource efficiency [10]. Skipfish showcased contextual reporting capabilities but lacked automation and ease of use [11]. Nessus, although user-friendly and highly automated, did not offer contextual reporting features [12]. OpenVAS, despite being open-source and featuring automation and contextual reporting capabilities, was found to be less user-friendly [13].

### 2.3. Proposed Tool Significance

In contrast, our proposed Automated Web Security Analysis Tool (AWSAT) integrates the best features of existing tools while addressing their limitations. AWSAT offers comprehensive web application scanning, user-friendly interface, advanced automation, contextual reporting capabilities, low resource usage, and free accessibility. This holistic approach positions AWSAT as a significant advancement in the field of web security analysis, catering to both technical and non-technical users and facilitating early integration of security testing into the software development lifecycle.

Tool	Web App Scans	Ease of Use	Automation	Context Reporting	Low Resource	Free
OWASP ZAP	✓	✗	✓	✗	✗	✓
Burp Suite	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓
Invicti	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗
Qualys WAS	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗
AppSpider	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗
Detectify	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✗
Skipfish	✓	✗	✗	✓	✗	✓
Nessus	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗
OpenVAS	✗	✗	✓	✓	✗	✓
AWSAT	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Figure 1. Market Comparison Forecast with Existing Tools and Desired Metrics

### 3. Proposed Approach

The proposed approach entails the development of an Automated Web Security Analysis Tool (AWSAT) designed to revolutionize web security testing by providing a fast, robust, comprehensive, and user-friendly solution. AWSAT aims to address the limitations of existing approaches by offering a low resource intensive, intuitive, and automated tool that enables users to efficiently understand and mitigate web application vulnerabilities.

The Figure 2 block diagram illustrates the workflow of AWSAT, showcasing its seamless operation. Initially, the tool acquires the target URL input by the user, serving as the intuitive starting point for the security analysis process. Utilizing a Selenium web driver, AWSAT dynamically crawls through the webpage, meticulously inspecting DOM elements to identify potential threat vectors. Upon detection, the tool launches targeted exploits on these vectors, executing a series of predefined payloads to assess the susceptibility of the web application to common vulnerabilities. Subsequently, AWSAT compiles its findings into a comprehensive report, detailing the identified vectors, exploit details, and severity assessments. Moreover, the report includes step-by-step walkthroughs to reproduce and mitigate the detected vulnerabilities, ensuring clarity and actionable insights for users. By offering such usability and contextual reporting, AWSAT caters to both technical and non-technical users, facilitating informed decision-making and effective security measures.

Unlike traditional security tools that require significant expertise and manual intervention, AWSAT streamlines the scanning process, making it accessible to

individuals with varying levels of security knowledge. By automating vulnerability detection, AWSAT significantly reduces the time and effort required for security testing, allowing users to focus on remediation efforts rather than the intricacies of scanning methodologies.

One key aspect of AWSAT is its emphasis on comprehensive reporting. Traditional security tools often generate complex, technical reports that are challenging for non-security professionals to interpret. In contrast, AWSAT produces clear, actionable reports that provide detailed insights into identified vulnerabilities, including risk severity ratings, affected components, and recommended mitigation steps. By presenting information in a user-friendly format, AWSAT empowers users to understand the nature of security threats and take proactive measures to address them effectively.

Furthermore, AWSAT prioritizes accessibility and inclusivity in web security testing. Many existing tools are designed primarily for security experts, requiring extensive training and expertise to operate effectively. AWSAT, on the other hand, features an intuitive user interface that caters to individuals with limited security backgrounds, democratizing web security testing and enabling a broader audience to contribute to the protection of online assets.

Overall, AWSAT represents a significant advancement in web security testing, offering an automated, user-friendly solution that addresses the limitations of existing approaches. By streamlining the scanning process, providing comprehensive reporting, and prioritizing accessibility, AWSAT empowers users to enhance the security posture of their web applications effectively and efficiently.

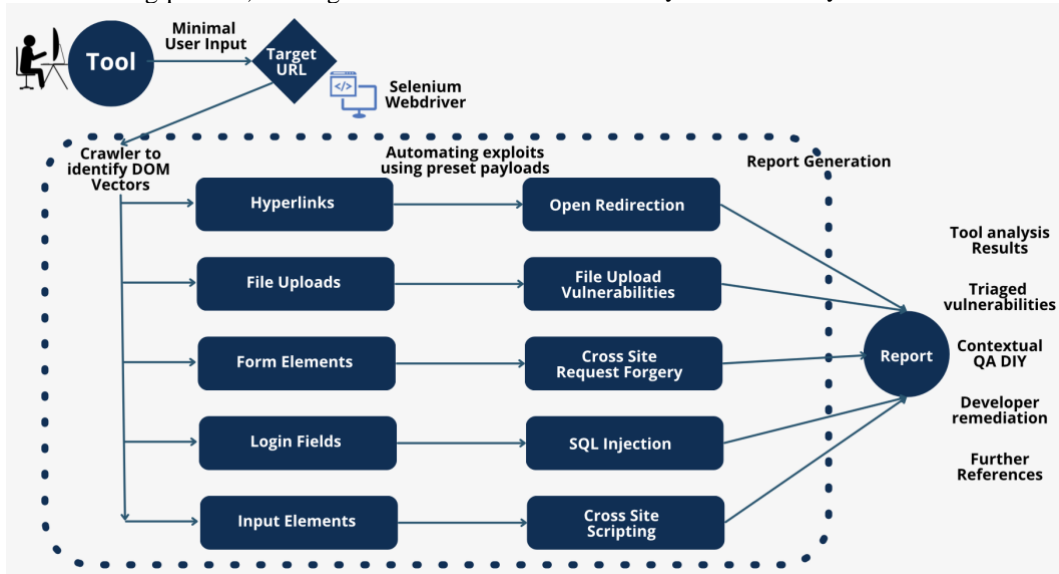


Figure 2. Block Diagram of the Proposed Solution



**VI. Cross-Site Scripting (XSS):**

**Objective:**  
XSS vulnerabilities enable attackers to inject malicious scripts into web pages, which are then executed by users' browsers. This can lead to the theft of sensitive information, session hijacking, or defacement of websites.

**Steps Taken:**

**Detection:**  
The tool scans webpages for input fields and text elements susceptible to XSS attacks.

**Payloads:**  
Utilizes predefined XSS payloads to assess and simulate XSS attacks.  
Sample Payload: Injecting `<script>alert('XSS')</script>` in an input field.

**Findings:**  
Number of Attack Vectors Identified: 3  
Attack Execution: !!ATTACK SUCCEEDED!!

**CVSS Score:**  
Severity: High

Figure 5. Details of Tool actions on each Vulnerability

Figure 6 depicts the step-by-step process for reproducing each vulnerability. It offers a comprehensive guide on configuring the environment to craft the exploit and subsequently exploit the identified vulnerability. This guide is designed to be highly inclusive, employing straightforward language to ensure readability and execution accessibility for individuals, regardless of their familiarity with security concepts.

**Do It Yourself!**

**Analyze Form Submissions:**  
Identify forms within the application that perform actions with side effects and those that lack anti-CSRF mechanisms like tokens or same-site cookie attributes.

**Craft a Malicious Page:**  
Create a malicious HTML page that includes a hidden form with the target action and parameters.  
Ensure that the form mimics the structure of the legitimate forms in the application.

**Host the Malicious Page:**  
Host the malicious HTML page on an external server accessible by the victim.  
The page should contain JavaScript to automatically submit the form.

**Trick the Victim:**  
Convince the victim to visit the malicious page, often through social engineering tactics like phishing emails or disguised links.  
Monitor the server logs to see if the forged request was processed successfully.

Figure 6. Steps to reproduce the Attack

In Figure 7, the report presents mitigation recommendations in easily understandable terms, catering to individuals with varying levels of security expertise. The recommendations offer multiple avenues for mitigation, allowing organizations to tailor their security measures according to their specific use case and desired level of protection.

**Prevention:**

**Parameterized Queries or Prepared Statements:**  
Instead of directly embedding user input into SQL queries, use parameterized queries or prepared statements provided by the programming language or database library. These mechanisms separate user input from the SQL query structure.

**Avoid Dynamic SQL Construction:**  
Avoid dynamically constructing SQL queries by concatenating strings with user input. Dynamic SQL is prone to injection attacks.

**Input Validation:**  
Validate and sanitize user inputs before using them in SQL queries. Input validation ensures that the input adheres to expected patterns, reducing the risk of SQLi.

**Use Stored Procedures:**  
Employ stored procedures to encapsulate and execute database logic. Stored procedures help mitigate SQL injection by predefining the SQL operations that can be performed.

**Escaping Special Characters:**  
Escape or sanitize special characters in user input to neutralize their potential impact on SQL queries.

Figure 7. Mitigation recommendations

In Figure 8, the references section is depicted, which is present under each vulnerability entry. This section provides users with additional resources for delving deeper into the intricacies of the vulnerability. Additionally, a comprehensive conclusion section is included at the end of the report to summarize key findings and insights gleaned from the analysis.

**Additional references for SQL Injection Vulnerability:**

[https://owasp.org/www-community/attacks/SQL\\_injection](https://owasp.org/www-community/attacks/SQL_injection)  
<https://portswigger.net/web-security/sql-injection>  
[https://portswigger.net/kb/issues/00100200\\_sql-injection](https://portswigger.net/kb/issues/00100200_sql-injection)  
[https://owasp.org/www-project-web-security-testing-guide/latest/4-Web\\_Application\\_Security\\_Testing/07-Input\\_Validation\\_Testing/7.1-SQL\\_Injection.html](https://owasp.org/www-project-web-security-testing-guide/latest/4-Web_Application_Security_Testing/07-Input_Validation_Testing/7.1-SQL_Injection.html)  
<https://capec.mitre.org/data/definitions/66.html>  
<https://www.cisa.gov/sites/default/files/publications/Practical-SQLi-Identification.pdf>

**VIII. Conclusion:**

The Automated Web Security Analysis Tool serves as a crucial asset in identifying and addressing common web application vulnerabilities. As the project evolves, further enhancements will be made to maximize the tool's effectiveness and usability, ensuring its reliability across diverse web development environments.

*Note: CVSS scores will need to be determined based on the specific findings and impact of each vulnerability. Consult the Common Vulnerability Scoring System (CVSS) for accurate scoring.*

Figure 8. References and Conclusion

Thus, during the implementation and testing phase, significant progress was made in enhancing the functionality and reliability of the Automated Web Security Analysis Tool. Despite encountering challenges related to the scarcity of suitable testing environments, the tool was successfully tested on diverse websites. These tests yielded valuable feedback, enabling iterative improvements to the tool's efficiency and effectiveness in identifying and mitigating vulnerabilities in real-world web applications.



## 5. Comparison with Prior Work

During the evaluation phase, the focus was on comparing the performance of existing market tools against the Automated Web Security Analysis Tool (AWSAT) on the same set of websites used in testing. OpenVAS, primarily designed as a system and network scanner, struggled to address web security vulnerabilities effectively. Its setup was challenging, requiring users to navigate through complex configurations, and the generated reports lacked actionable insights for users. Despite offering manual penetration testing options, OpenVAS lacked automated web security analysis capabilities, which limited its effectiveness in identifying and mitigating web-based threats.



Figure 9. Output from BurpSuite

Similarly, while the free version of BurpSuite demonstrated robustness in web security testing, its complexity and lack of automated scanning in the free version posed usability challenges. Setting up BurpSuite proved to be notably more complex due to its various components like the proxy, target, intruder, and repeater. The free version's limitations hindered its usability, particularly for users without extensive security knowledge.



Figure 10. Output from OWASP ZAP

ZAP, another widely used tool, exhibited promising results during evaluation but had notable limitations compared to AWSAT. Although relatively easy to set up and use, ZAP was slower in identifying vulnerabilities compared to AWSAT and lacked contextual report generation. Additionally, ZAP consumed considerable resources during operation, leading to performance issues, particularly on more vulnerable sites. AWSAT's streamlined architecture and efficient resource utilization mitigate these issues, ensuring faster scanning speeds and smoother operation across various web applications.

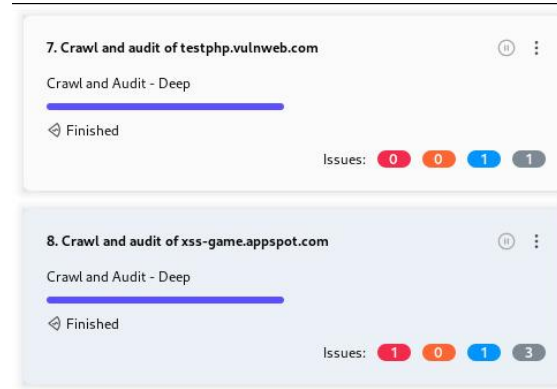


Figure 11. Output from BurpSuite Premium

Notably, testing on the paid version of Burp Suite's automated scanning tool revealed slower speeds and occasional missed exploits, indicating AWSAT's superiority in terms of speed, accessibility, and contextual reporting. By leveraging Selenium over Python, AWSAT streamlines the web scanning process, making it faster and more accessible to users with limited security backgrounds. These comparative analyses underscore AWSAT's advancements in efficiency and usability over existing market tools, positioning it as a valuable asset in enhancing organizations' security posture and resilience against cyber threats.

Site	OWASP ZAP (in sec)	Burp Suite (in sec)	AWSAT (in sec)
<a href="#">xss-guiz.jp</a>	181	3600	0.49
<a href="#">sudo.co.il</a>	52	720	0.43
<a href="#">xssgame.com</a>	38	300	0.73
<a href="#">demo.testfire.net</a>	19	7200	0.5
<a href="#">vulnweb.com</a>	46	1800	0.6
<a href="#">xss-game.com</a>	78	480	0.9

Figure 12. Speed Comparison

The speed comparison table in figure 12 reveals AWSAT's remarkable efficiency compared to industry-leading tools like OWASP ZAP and BurpSuite, both in the free and paid segments. While the latter tools may excel in identifying a higher number of low-severity issues, AWSAT outshines them in detecting high-severity vulnerabilities at a remarkable pace, often surpassing them by a factor of 100. Additionally, AWSAT demonstrates superior reporting capabilities, providing users with comprehensive insights and actionable recommendations.

Tool	Web App Scans	Ease of Use	Automation	Context Reporting	Low Resource	Free
OWASP ZAP	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓
Burp Suite	✓	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓
OpenVAS	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✓
Burp Suite (Premium)	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗
AWSAT	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Figure 13. Market Comparison with Existing Tools and Desired Metrics Practically

## 6. Summary and Conclusions

The development of the Automated Web Security Analysis Tool (AWSAT) represents a significant milestone in the realm of web application security. The journey from inception to implementation has been guided by a meticulous approach encompassing thorough market analysis, inclusive design, efficient implementation, iterative testing, and comparative evaluation against existing tools.

The market analysis phase served as the foundation for AWSAT's development, offering deep insights into the landscape of automated security tools. This comprehensive examination involved scrutinizing various tools available in the market, identifying their strengths, weaknesses, and areas for improvement. By leveraging this detailed understanding, AWSAT was conceptualized to address the inherent limitations of existing solutions while anticipating the evolving needs of web security.

The design phase of AWSAT was characterized by a commitment to accessibility and inclusivity. The user centered design approach ensured that the tool caters to a diverse audience, including individuals with limited security expertise. Through intuitive interfaces and contextual reporting features, AWSAT aims to empower users of all backgrounds to conduct effective web security analysis.

Efficient implementation using Selenium with Python was instrumental in ensuring that AWSAT remains lightweight and resource-efficient while delivering robust security analysis capabilities. The choice of technology not only streamlines the scanning process but also enhances the tool's scalability and compatibility across different web environments.

The iterative testing phase of AWSAT involved meticulous evaluation on a diverse set of websites closely resembling real-world scenarios. This rigorous testing approach enabled the refinement of AWSAT's capabilities, ensuring its effectiveness in identifying and

mitigating vulnerabilities across various web applications.

Comparative evaluation against existing market tools provided valuable insights into AWSAT's competitive edge. By benchmarking performance against established metrics, AWSAT demonstrated superior efficiency, usability, and effectiveness in web security analysis. This comparative analysis underscored AWSAT's potential to set a new standard for automated web security tools.

In conclusion, AWSAT represents a culmination of meticulous market analysis, inclusive design, efficient implementation, iterative testing, and comparative evaluation. With its comprehensive feature set, intuitive interface, and robust security analysis capabilities, AWSAT is poised to empower a broader range of users in enhancing the security posture of their web applications. The journey doesn't end here; continuous refinement and enhancement will ensure that AWSAT remains at the forefront of web application security. For those interested in exploring further, the AWSAT repository is available on GitHub: [AWSAT GitHub Repository](#)

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