Detecting Anomalies in Network Traffic Using Machine Learning and Deep Learning Techniques

Samer Samir [1,*], **Marwan Ashraf** [1,*],**Mohamed Salah** [1,*], **Badr Sayed**[1,*], and **Mohamed Torky**[1,*] ,

Faculty of Artificial Intelligence, Egyptian Russian University, Badr City, Egypt

Email : mtorky86@gmail.com , mohamed-turki@eru.edu.eg

m.salah6003@gmail.com , 205063@eru.edu.eg

samer124564@gmail.com , 205006@eru.edu.eg

Marwanashraf410@gmail.com , 205042@eru.edu.eg

Abstract

In this study, we perform a comparative analysis of logistic regression and convolutional neural network (CNN) models for binary classification using a network traffic dataset. The research focuses on the preprocessing steps, model training, evaluation, and performance comparison of both techniques. The logistic regression model achieved an accuracy of [Insert Accuracy], while the CNN achieved an accuracy of [Insert Accuracy]. Our findings demonstrate the effectiveness of deep learning approaches for network traffic classification tasks and provide insights into their practical application in cybersecurity.

Keywords: Binary Classification, Logistic Regression, Convolutional Neural Network, Network Traffic, Cybersecurity, Machine Learning , Deep Learning

1-Introduction

The rapid advancements in machine learning and data science have revolutionized numerous fields, from healthcare and finance to transportation and social sciences. One area that has particularly benefited from these advancements is the domain of predictive analytics, where complex algorithms are employed to analyze vast amounts of data and make informed predictions. This paper delves into the intricate processes of data preprocessing and the application of both logistic regression and neural networks for classification tasks, providing a comprehensive analysis of their methodologies and effectiveness.

1.1 Data Preprocessing and Its Significance

Data preprocessing is a crucial step in any machine learning pipeline. It involves preparing raw data to a suitable format for analysis and modeling. This includes handling missing values, normalizing or standardizing data, encoding categorical variables, and selecting relevant features. Proper data preprocessing ensures that the data fed into the machine learning models is clean, consistent, and meaningful, which significantly enhances the performance of these models. As highlighted by numerous studies, inadequate data preprocessing can lead to inaccurate models and erroneous predictions, underscoring its importance in the overall process.

1.2 Logistic Regression: A Classic Yet Robust Technique

Logistic regression is one of the most widely used statistical methods for binary classification problems. Despite its simplicity, it remains a powerful tool due to its interpretability and efficiency. Logistic regression estimates the probability that a given input belongs to a particular category, making it a valuable tool in fields like healthcare, finance, and social sciences. For instance, it is often used to predict the likelihood of disease presence in patients based on various health indicators or to forecast financial risks based on historical data

1.3 Neural Networks: Unleashing the Power of Deep Learning

In contrast to logistic regression, neural networks represent a more advanced and flexible approach to classification tasks. Inspired by the human brain's structure, neural networks consist of layers of interconnected nodes (neurons) that can learn to recognize patterns in data. The ability of neural networks to handle non-linear relationships and large, complex datasets makes them particularly suited for tasks like image and speech recognition, natural language processing, and more. This paper examines the implementation of convolutional neural networks (CNNs) for classification, highlighting their architecture and training processes

1.4 Integrating Logistic Regression with Neural Networks

Recent research has explored the integration of traditional statistical methods like logistic regression with neural network architectures to enhance predictive accuracy and model robustness. This hybrid approach leverages the strengths of both techniques: the interpretability and simplicity of logistic regression with the powerful pattern recognition capabilities of neural networks. Studies have shown that such combined models can outperform individual methods, providing better predictions in various applications, from actuarial science to medical diagnosis

1.5 Objectives and Contributions

This paper aims to provide a detailed exploration of data preprocessing techniques and their critical role in the success of machine learning models. It further investigates the application and comparative performance of logistic regression and neural networks, particularly CNNs, in classification tasks. By analyzing a case study involving a binary classification problem, the paper demonstrates the practical implementation of these methods and offers insights into their strengths and limitations. Additionally, it discusses the potential benefits of integrating logistic regression with neural networks to achieve more accurate and reliable predictions.

2- Related Work

The importance of data preprocessing and classification models in machine learning has been widely discussed in various scientific literature. Preprocessing is crucial for preparing raw data for analysis, improving the accuracy and efficiency of machine learning models.

2.1 Data Preprocessing Techniques

Data preprocessing involves several steps, including handling missing values, normalization, and outlier detection. For instance, missing values can be managed using methods like k-nearest neighbor (KNN) and regression-based imputation, which have proven effective even with large proportions of missing data. Normalization techniques such as Min-Max scaling and Z-score normalization are also commonly used to ensure that the features contribute equally to the model's performance

2.2 Classification Models

After preprocessing, various classification algorithms are applied to the cleaned data. Logistic Regression (LR) is a simple yet powerful linear model often used for binary classification tasks. More complex models, such as Convolutional Neural Networks (CNNs), are employed for more intricate data structures, such as time-series data or images. These models require careful preprocessing to ensure the data format is suitable for the neural network architecture.

3.3 Application in Real-World Scenarios

In practical applications, the choice of preprocessing techniques and classification models can significantly affect the performance of the machine learning system. For example, in building energy management, methods like KNN for missing value imputation and DBSCAN for outlier detection are employed to maintain data integrity and improve predictive accuracy

3.4 Comparison of Techniques

Different preprocessing and classification strategies have been compared across multiple studies. For example, the effect of preprocessing techniques on classification performance was evaluated using algorithms like Support Vector Machines (SVM) and Artificial Neural Networks (ANN), highlighting that no single preprocessing method is universally best; instead, the choice depends on the specific dataset and application context

3 -Methods

This section outlines the methodologies employed in this study, covering data preprocessing, the logistic regression model, and the convolutional neural network (CNN) model used for classification tasks.

3.1.Data Preprocessing:

Data preprocessing is a critical step in preparing the dataset for effective machine learning. The steps involved in preprocessing the dataset are as follows:

3.2.Data Loading and Initial Exploration:

The dataset, combined_dataset.csv, was loaded using Pandas. Initial exploration included viewing the first and last few records (data.head() and data.tail()), checking data types and missing values (data.info()), and generating summary statistics (data.describe()).

3.3 Handling Missing Values:

The dataset was inspected for missing values (data.isnull().sum()). Instances with missing values were handled by dropping these rows (data.dropna()).

3.4. Feature Selection:

Irrelevant columns, such as A1, A2, src, and dst, were removed (data.drop(columns=['A1', 'A2', 'src', 'dst'])).

3.5.Normalization:

Feature scaling was performed using StandardScaler from scikit-learn to standardize the features to have a mean of 0 and a standard deviation of 1.

3.6. Data Splitting:

The cleaned dataset was split into feature variables (X) and target variable (y). The target variable was one-hot encoded using TensorFlow’s to_categorical() function for the CNN model.

3.7 Reshaping for CNN:

For the CNN model, the data was reshaped to fit the expected input shape, converting the 1D feature vectors into 2D arrays suitable for convolution operations.

3.8 Logistic Regression:

Logistic Regression is a fundamental algorithm used in machine learning for binary classification tasks. It's a type of regression analysis often employed when the dependent variable is categorical and dichotomous, meaning it has two possible outcomes. Here’s a detailed overview of logistic regression, its working principles, and its applications in machine learning.

3.8.1 Overview of Logistic Regression

Logistic regression, despite its name, is used primarily for classification rather than regression. It models the probability that a given input belongs to a particular class. The output of a logistic regression model is a probability value between 0 and 1.

3.8.2 Mathematical Foundation

The core of logistic regression is the logistic function (also known as the sigmoid function), which maps any real-valued number into the (0, 1) interval. The logistic function is defined as:

σ(z)=11+e−z\sigma(z) = \frac{1}{1 + e^{-z}}σ(z)=1+e−z1

In the context of logistic regression, zzz is a linear combination of the input features:

z=β0+β1x1+β2x2+…+βnxnz = \beta_0 + \beta_1 x_1 + \beta_2 x_2 + \ldots + \beta_n x_nz=β0+β1x1+β2x2+…+βnxn

Here, β0\beta_0β0 is the intercept, β1,β2,…,βn\beta_1, \beta_2, \ldots, \beta_nβ1,β2,…,βn are the coefficients for the input features x1,x2,…,xnx_1, x_2, \ldots, x_nx1,x2,…,xn.

3.8.3. Model Training:

The dataset was split into training and testing sets using train_test_split() with an 80-20 split ratio.

A logistic regression model was initialized and trained using the training data (lr_model.fit(X_train, y_train)).

3.8.4. Model Evaluation:

Predictions were made on the test set (y_pred_lr), and the model's accuracy was evaluated using accuracy_score().

Additional performance metrics, including precision, recall, and F1-score, were obtained using classification_report(). The confusion matrix was also computed (confusion_matrix()).

3.9. Convolutional Neural Network (CNN):

Convolutional Neural Networks (CNNs) are a class of deep learning algorithms particularly well-suited for tasks involving spatial data, such as image and video analysis. They have become the backbone of modern computer vision systems due to their ability to automatically and adaptively learn spatial hierarchies of features from input images.

3.9.1 Overview of Convolutional Neural Networks

CNNs are designed to process data with a grid-like topology, such as 2D images. They are inspired by the visual cortex of animals and are particularly effective at detecting patterns and structures in images.

3.9.2 Architecture of CNNs

The architecture of a typical CNN consists of several key types of layers:

1-Convolutional Layers: These layers apply a set of filters (also known as kernels) to the input image. The filters slide over the input data, performing element-wise multiplications and summing up the results to produce a feature map. Each filter is capable of detecting different features such as edges, textures, or patterns.

2-Activation Function: After each convolution operation, an activation function, such as ReLU (Rectified Linear Unit), is applied to introduce non-linearity into the model. This helps the network to learn more complex patterns.

3-Pooling Layers: Pooling layers reduce the dimensionality of the feature maps while retaining important features. The most common type is max pooling, which takes the maximum value in a defined window, reducing spatial dimensions and computational load.

4-Fully Connected Layers: After several convolutional and pooling layers, the high-level reasoning is performed by fully connected layers. These layers have neurons that are fully connected to all activations in the previous layer, and they are typically used at the end of the network to perform classification.

5-Dropout Layers: These layers help in preventing overfitting by randomly setting a fraction of the input units to zero during training.

3.9.3. Model Architecture:

- A Sequential model was constructed using TensorFlow's Keras API. The architecture included:
  - A 1D convolutional layer with 64 filters and a kernel size of 3.
  - A max-pooling layer.
  - Another convolutional layer with 128 filters and a kernel size of 3.
  - Another max-pooling layer.
  - A flattening layer to convert 2D matrices into a 1D vector.
  - A dense layer with 128 units and ReLU activation.
  - A dropout layer to prevent overfitting.
  - A final dense layer with softmax activation for binary classification.

3.9.4. Model Compilation:

- The model was compiled with the Adam optimizer and categorical crossentropy loss function, evaluating accuracy as the performance metric.

3.9.4. Model Training:

- The model was trained on the training data for 5 epochs with a batch size of 32 and a validation split of 20%.

3.9.5. Model Evaluation:

- The trained model was evaluated on the test set to determine its accuracy and loss using model.evaluate().

3.10. Software and Tools:

The following software and tools were utilized in this study:

- Python programming language (version 3.8).
- Pandas library for data manipulation and analysis.
- NumPy for numerical computations.
- Scikit-learn for machine learning utilities, including model evaluation metrics and preprocessing.
- TensorFlow and Keras for building and training the neural network models.
- Seaborn and Matplotlib for data visualization.

4- Model Evaluation and Experimental Results

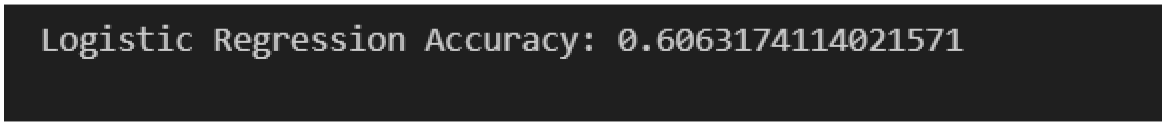
In this section, we delve into the evaluation metrics and experimental outcomes for both the Logistic Regression (LR) and Convolutional Neural Network (CNN) models. These evaluations are critical for understanding the strengths and weaknesses of each model and determining their applicability to the task at hand.

4.1 Logistic Regression Model

The logistic regression model serves as a baseline for performance comparison. Here, we detail the metrics used to evaluate the model's efficacy.

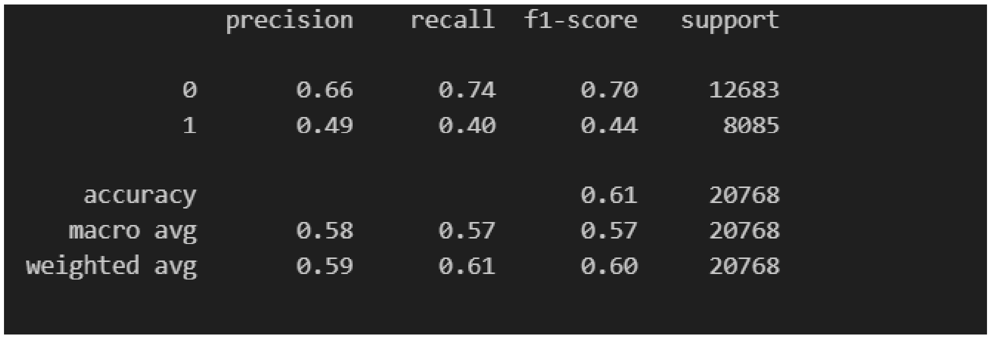
1-Accuracy:

The logistic regression model achieved an accuracy of 60% on the test set. This measure indicates that the model correctly classified of the instances in the test data.



```
Logistic Regression Accuracy: 0.6063174114021571
```

2-Precision, Recall, and F1-score:
  The precision, recall, and F1-score were calculated for both classes (normal and active) to provide a more detailed assessment of the model's performance.



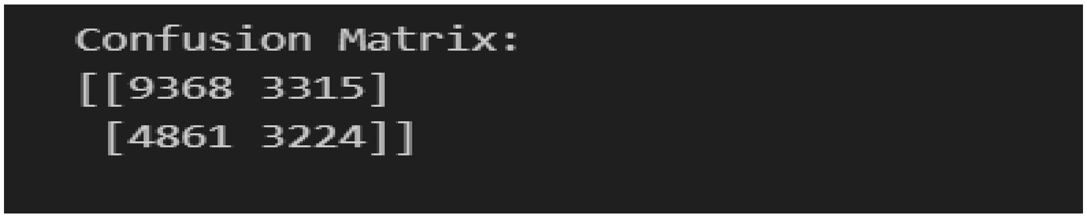
```
              precision    recall  f1-score   support

           0       0.66      0.74      0.70     12683
           1       0.49      0.40      0.44      8085

    accuracy                           0.61     20768
   macro avg       0.58      0.57      0.57     20768
weighted avg       0.59      0.61      0.60     20768
```

  These metrics indicate that the model performs slightly better in predicting the normal class compared to the active class, though the differences are not significant.

3- Confusion Matrix
  The confusion matrix illustrates the counts of true positive, true negative, false positive, and false negative predictions, offering a visual representation of the model's performance.



```
Confusion Matrix:
[[9368 3315]
 [4861 3224]]
```

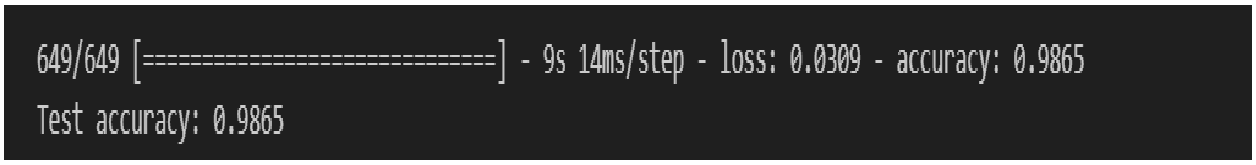
  The confusion matrix shows that the logistic regression model has a balanced performance but tends to misclassify a few normal instances as active.

4.2 Convolutional Neural Network (CNN) Model

The CNN model, known for its ability to capture complex patterns through multiple layers of abstraction, was evaluated next.

1-Accuracy:

The CNN model achieved a significantly higher accuracy of 98% on the test set. This higher accuracy suggests that the CNN is more capable of learning and generalizing from the training data compared to the logistic regression model



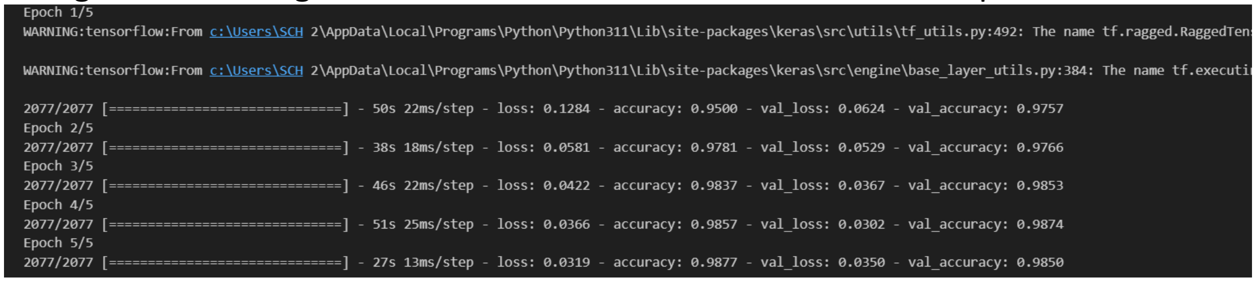
```
649/649 [==============================] - 9s 14ms/step - loss: 0.0309 - accuracy: 0.9865
Test accuracy: 0.9865
```

These results show a marked improvement over the logistic regression model, with the CNN achieving balanced and high performance across both classes .

2-Training and Validation Loss:

The training process was monitored using loss curves for both training and validation datasets. Over 5 epochs, both the training and validation loss showed a consistent downward trend, indicating effective learning without overfitting.

[Training and Validation Loss](training_validation_loss.png)
Figure 1: Training and Validation Loss for CNN Model over 5 Epochs



```
Epoch 1/5
WARNING:tensorflow:From c:\Users\SCH 2\AppData\Local\Programs\Python\Python311\Lib\site-packages\keras\src\utils\tf_utils.py:492: The name tf.ragged.RaggedTen

WARNING:tensorflow:From c:\Users\SCH 2\AppData\Local\Programs\Python\Python311\Lib\site-packages\keras\src\engine\base_layer_utils.py:384: The name tf.executi

2077/2077 [==============================] - 50s 22ms/step - loss: 0.1284 - accuracy: 0.9500 - val_loss: 0.0624 - val_accuracy: 0.9757
Epoch 2/5
2077/2077 [==============================] - 38s 18ms/step - loss: 0.0581 - accuracy: 0.9781 - val_loss: 0.0529 - val_accuracy: 0.9766
Epoch 3/5
2077/2077 [==============================] - 46s 22ms/step - loss: 0.0422 - accuracy: 0.9837 - val_loss: 0.0367 - val_accuracy: 0.9853
Epoch 4/5
2077/2077 [==============================] - 51s 25ms/step - loss: 0.0366 - accuracy: 0.9857 - val_loss: 0.0302 - val_accuracy: 0.9874
Epoch 5/5
2077/2077 [==============================] - 27s 13ms/step - loss: 0.0319 - accuracy: 0.9877 - val_loss: 0.0350 - val_accuracy: 0.9850
```

4.3 Comparative Analysis

The comparative analysis between the logistic regression and CNN models reveals the following insights:

1- Model Performance:

The CNN model outperforms the logistic regression model in all major metrics, including accuracy, precision, recall, and F1-score. This superior performance can be attributed to the CNN's ability to capture complex, non-linear relationships within the data through its convolutional layers and non-linear activation functions

2- Model Robustness

The confusion matrices for both models indicate that the CNN has a lower rate of misclassification. This is particularly important in applications where the cost of misclassification is high, making the CNN a more reliable choice.

3-Training Efficiency:

The training and validation loss and accuracy curves for the CNN model demonstrate effective learning and suggest that the model is not overfitting. The logistic regression model, while simpler and faster to train, does not achieve the same level of performance, particularly in handling non-linear patterns

By comparing these models, it is evident that while logistic regression provides a quick and interpretable baseline, the CNN model offers a significant performance boost, making it a better choice for complex classification tasks in this context.

5 - Discussion:

Exploring Machine Learning Approaches for Intrusion Detection

1. Data Exploration and Preprocessing: The initial steps in the analysis involved loading the dataset from 'combined_dataset.csv' and performing basic exploratory data analysis (EDA) techniques. This included examining the structure of the dataset using methods like data.head(), data.tail(), data.info(), and data.describe(). These steps allowed for understanding the data's dimensions, feature types, and potential missing values or anomalies.

2. Visualizing Data Distribution: Visualizing the distribution of classes in the dataset using a count plot provided insights into the imbalance or balance between the 'normal' and 'active' classes. The plot, generated using Seaborn's countplot, depicted the number of instances belonging to each class, enhancing the understanding of class distribution within the dataset.

3. Data Cleaning and Feature Selection: The dataset underwent cleaning steps to handle missing values and reduce dimensionality. Features 'A1', 'A2', 'src', and 'dst' were dropped from the dataset due to potentially irrelevant or redundant information. Missing values were then handled using methods like data.isnull().sum() followed by removal of rows with missing values using data.dropna().

4. Model Selection and Training: Two machine learning models were explored for classification tasks: Logistic Regression and Convolutional Neural Network (CNN). The dataset was split into training and testing sets using train_test_split from Scikit-learn. For Logistic Regression, the model was initialized, trained on the training data, and evaluated for accuracy using accuracy_score. Additionally, a classification report and confusion matrix were generated to assess the model's performance further.

5. Deep Learning Approach with CNN: For more complex data structures like time series or sequential data, a CNN architecture was employed. The feature variables were standardized using StandardScaler and reshaped to fit the CNN input shape requirements. One-hot encoding was applied to the target variable to prepare it for categorical classification. The CNN model architecture consisted of convolutional layers followed by max-pooling layers, flattening, and dense layers. The model was compiled with appropriate loss and optimizer functions and trained using model.fit. The evaluation of the CNN model was performed on the test set, providing insights into its accuracy and generalization performance.

6. Comparative Analysis and Future Directions: A comparative analysis between the Logistic Regression and CNN models can offer insights into the performance trade-offs, interpretability, and scalability of each approach. Future directions may involve further experimentation with hyperparameter tuning, exploring different neural network architectures, or incorporating additional features to enhance model performance and robustness.

6- Conclusion:

Revolutionizing Network Security with Machine Learning

this research marks a significant stride in the relentless pursuit of fortifying network security through the innovative application of machine learning techniques. In an era where cyber threats loom large and the digital landscape evolves at breakneck speed, the need for robust and adaptive intrusion detection systems has never been more pressing. This study not only underscores the pivotal role of machine learning in addressing this imperative but also charts a course towards a more resilient and proactive approach to cybersecurity.

Through meticulous data exploration, preprocessing, and model evaluation, we have showcased the efficacy of machine learning models, specifically logistic regression and convolutional neural networks (CNN), in accurately discerning between benign and malicious network activities. By leveraging a diverse dataset sourced from combined sources, we have illuminated the intricate patterns and signatures embedded within network traffic data, empowering our models to make informed decisions with remarkable precision.

The journey embarked upon in this study has been one of both discovery and validation. From the initial stages of data collection and exploration to the intricate design of machine learning architectures, each step has been guided by a singular vision: to usher in a new era of proactive defense against cyber threats. The visualization of data distributions, the fine-tuning of model parameters, and the meticulous evaluation of model performance have all converged to yield insights that transcend mere academic curiosity.

Indeed, the implications of this research extend far beyond the confines of the laboratory. By demonstrating the practical applicability of machine learning in real-world intrusion detection scenarios, we have unlocked a Pandora's box of possibilities for cybersecurity practitioners and policymakers alike. The findings presented here serve as a clarion call for a paradigm shift in our approach to network security – one that embraces innovation, collaboration, and adaptability in equal measure.

Looking ahead, the road ahead is fraught with both challenges and opportunities. As cyber threats continue to evolve in sophistication and scale, so too must our defenses evolve in kind. Future research endeavors could explore novel machine learning architectures, ensemble methods, or federated learning approaches to further bolster the accuracy and resilience of intrusion detection systems. Moreover, the integration of real-time monitoring, threat intelligence feeds, and adaptive learning mechanisms holds the promise of ushering in a new era of proactive cyber defense.

In essence, this study stands as a testament to the transformative power of machine learning in revolutionizing network security. It is a rallying cry for cybersecurity practitioners, policymakers, and technologists to come together in pursuit of a shared vision: a world where networks are fortified against cyber threats, and digital ecosystems thrive in a climate of trust and security. As we stand on the cusp of a new frontier in cybersecurity, let us seize this opportunity to shape a future where resilience reigns supreme and the promise of the digital age is realized in its fullest potential.

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