

Penghui Li

Researcher
Zhongguancun Laboratory

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Research Interests

I am broadly interested in **security and privacy**. My research aims to automatically and efficiently detect security threats, and safeguard services and users from attacks. I have found **over three hundred new vulnerabilities**, resulting in urgent updates in foundational systems such as Linux kernel and GitHub.

Education

The Chinese University of Hong Kong

Aug. 2019 – July 2023

Doctor of Philosophy, Computer Science and Engineering
Advisor: Professor Wei Meng
GPA: 3.97/4

University of Chinese Academy of Sciences

Aug. 2015 – July 2019

Bachelor of Engineering, Computer Science and Technology
GPA: 3.87/4

Columbia University

Jan. 2018 – May 2018

Visiting Student, Computer Science and Engineering

Publication

Summary: I have published 10 papers at top-tier conferences in Computer Security (Oakland \times 2, Security \times 2, CCS \times 1), Software Engineering (FSE \times 1, ASE \times 1), Web Systems (WWW \times 2), and Database Systems (VLDB \times 1).

- [1] **SDFuzz: Target States Driven Directed Fuzzing**
Penghui Li, Wei Meng, and Chao Zhang
In Proceedings of the 33rd USENIX Security Symposium (Security). Aug. 2024.
- [2] **Testing Graph Database Systems via Graph-Aware Metamorphic Relations**
Zeyang Zhuang, Penghui Li, Pingchuan Ma, Wei Meng, and Shuai Wang
In Proceedings of the 50th International Conference on Very Large Data Bases (VLDB). Aug. 2024.
- [3] **Holistic Concolic Execution for Dynamic Web Applications via Symbolic Interpreter Analysis**
Penghui Li, Wei Meng, Mingxue Zhang, Chenlin Wang, and Changhua Luo
In Proceedings of the 45th IEEE Symposium on Security and Privacy (Oakland). May 2024.
- [4] **DDRace: Finding Concurrency UAF Vulnerabilities in Linux Drivers with Directed Fuzzing**
Ming Yuan, Bodong Zhao, Penghui Li, Jiashuo Liang, Xinhui Han, Xiapu Luo, and Chao Zhang
In Proceedings of the 32nd USENIX Security Symposium (Security). Aug. 2023.

- [5] **SelectFuzz: Efficient Directed Fuzzing with Selective Path Exploration**
 Changhua Luo, Wei Meng, and Penghui Li
 In Proceedings of the 44th IEEE Symposium on Security and Privacy (Oakland). May 2023.
- [6] **SEDiff: Scope-Aware Differential Fuzzing to Test Internal Function Models in Symbolic Execution**
Penghui Li, Wei Meng, and Kangjie Lu
 In Proceedings of the 30th ACM Joint European Software Engineering Conference and Symposium on the Foundations of Software Engineering (ESEC/FSE). Nov. 2022.
- [7] **TChecker: Precise Static Inter-Procedural Analysis for Detecting Taint-Style Vulnerabilities in PHP Applications**
 Changhua Luo, Penghui Li, and Wei Meng
 In Proceedings of the 29th ACM Conference on Computer and Communications Security (CCS). Nov. 2022.
 ☆ ACM CCS 2022 Best Paper Honorable Mention.
- [8] **Understanding and Detecting Performance Bugs in Markdown Compilers**
Penghui Li, Yinxi Liu, and Wei Meng
 In Proceedings of the 36th IEEE/ACM International Conference on Automated Software Engineering (ASE). Nov. 2021.
 ☆ Top 5 Finalist of Best Software Artifact.
- [9] **LChecker: Detecting Loose Comparison Bugs in PHP**
Penghui Li and Wei Meng
 In Proceedings of the Web Conference (WWW). Apr. 2021.
- [10] **On the Feasibility of Automated Built-in Function Modeling for PHP Symbolic Execution**
Penghui Li, Wei Meng, Kangjie Lu, and Changhua Luo
 In Proceedings of the Web Conference (WWW). Apr. 2021.

Preprint

- [11] **FuzzCache: Optimizing Web Application Fuzzing with Software-Based Data Cache**
Penghui Li and Mingxue Zhang
 Under Review. 2024.
- [12] **Predator: Directed Fuzzing for Web Applications**
 Chenlin Wang, Changhua Luo, Wei Meng, and Penghui Li
 Under Review. 2024.

Theses

- [13] **Detecting Correctness, Security, and Performance Bugs in Software Systems with Automated Analysis and Testing**
Penghui Li
 Ph.D. Thesis, The Chinese University of Hong Kong. July 2023.
- [14] **Detecting CPU Exhaustion Denial-of-Service Vulnerabilities in Web Applications**
Penghui Li
 B.Eng. Thesis, University of Chinese Academy of Sciences. June 2019.

Research Experience

Zhongguancun Laboratory

Researcher

Sep. 2023 – Present

Tsinghua University

Visiting Student

Host: Professor Chao Zhang

Feb. 2022 – Sep. 2022

Institute of Information Engineering, Chinese Academy of Sciences

Research Intern

Host: Professor Kai Chen

Oct. 2018 – June 2019

Grant Experience

Project Title: Detecting Memory-Safety Vulnerabilities in Multilingual Software

- No. 14209323, General Research Fund from Hong Kong Research Grants Council, 2023
- Principal investigator: Prof. Wei Meng
- Awarded amount: 1,352,729 HKD
- My role: planned the project and wrote the initial proposal draft under the guidance of the PI

Teaching and Mentoring

Teaching Assistant

Introduction to Database Systems

Fall 2021

Building Web Applications

Spring 2021

Introduction to Cyber Security

Fall 2019, Fall 2020

Linear Algebra for Engineers

Spring 2020

Research Mentor

Chenlin Wang

Aug. 2023 – Dec. 2024

- Ph.D. student at CUHK
- My role: worked as a collaborator and provided high-level suggestions for his PHP fuzzing project

Zeyang Zhuang

Jan. 2023 – July 2023

- Ph.D. student at CUHK
- My role: brainstormed the initial idea of graph database system testing project, worked as a collaborator in the publication of Gamera [2]; guided his practice of the RGC proposal in multilingual software security

Changhua Luo

Nov. 2019 – July 2022

- Ph.D. student at CUHK

- My role: mentored the award-winning static analysis project [7]

Yanting Chi

Oct. 2021 – May 2022

- Undergraduate student from SJTU
- My role: guided his bachelor's degree thesis on symbolic execution
- Next position: Ph.D. student at University of Minnesota, Twin Cities

Chiho Cheng

Oct. 2018 – Apr. 2019

- Undergraduate student from CUHK
- My role: guided the final-year project on PHP static analysis, especially taint analysis

Hoihim Chan

Oct. 2018 – Apr. 2019

- Undergraduate student from CUHK
- My role: guided the final-year project on PHP static analysis, especially taint analysis

Awards and Honors

ACM CCS 2022 Best Paper Honorable Mention

Nov. 2022

HKSAR Reaching Out Award

Apr. 2022

IEEE/ACM ASE 2021 Top 5 Finalist of Best Software Artifact

Nov. 2021

PCCW-HKT Scholarship Nomination

Aug. 2021

GitLab Bug Bounty

May 2021

The Web Conference Student Scholarship

Mar. 2021

GitLab Bug Bounty

Jan. 2021

CUHK Postgraduate Student Scholarship

Aug. 2019 – July 2023

UCAS Merit Student

July 2018

UCAS Merit Student

July 2017

UCAS Outstanding Individual in Research Practice

July 2016

Professional Services

Program Committee Member

European Conference on Computer Systems (EuroSys), Shadow PC

2024

Workshop on Measurements, Attacks, and Defenses for the Web (MADWeb)

2024

USENIX Security (Security), Artifact Evaluation Committee

2024

The ACM Conference on Computer and Communications Security (CCS), Artifact Evaluation Committee

2023

Reviewer

IEEE Transactions on Dependable and Secure Computing (TDSC)

2023 – 2024

External Reviewer

ACM SIGSOFT International Symposium on Software Testing and Analysis (ISSTA)	2024
IEEE Symposium on Security and Privacy (Oakland)	2023 – 2024
The Annual Computer Security Applications Conference (ACSAC)	2023
The ACM Conference on Computer and Communications Security (CCS)	2021 – 2022
The Web Conference (WWW)	2020 – 2022
The ACM ASIA Conference on Computer and Communications Security (ASIACCS)	2021 – 2022

Open-Source Contributions

TChecker: a static analysis tool with precise inter-procedural support for identifying taint-style vulnerabilities

- <https://github.com/cuhk-seclab/tchecker>

SEDiff: a differential fuzzing framework for testing symbolic execution engines

- <https://zenodo.org/record/6665380>

MdPerfFuzz: an extensible performance bug fuzzer for language compilers

- <https://github.com/cuhk-seclab/MdPerfFuzz>

XSym: a holistic cross-language symbolic execution engine for PHP-based web applications

- <https://github.com/cuhk-seclab/XSym>

LChecker: a static detector for PHP loose comparison bugs

- <https://github.com/cuhk-seclab/LChecker>

Selected Vulnerability Findings

CPU-Exhaustion DoS vulnerabilities

- CVE-2021-22217, CVE-2021-39877

Access Control Vulnerabilities

- CVE-2020-23352, CVE-2020-23353, CVE-2020-23355, CVE-2020-23356, CVE-2020-23357, CVE-2020-23358, CVE-2020-23359, CVE-2020-23360, CVE-2020-23361