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# CA<sub>1</sub>

#### Introduction

Cloud computing refers to the on-demand provision of IT resources, whereby users receive metered services via a network from an IT infrastructure and applications. Salesforce, Dropbox, Facebook, Gmail, and others are a few examples of cloud systems. Cloud computing features include distributed storage, rapid elasticity, automated management, resource pooling, wide network access, measured service, and virtualization technologies.

Here I have deployed a WordPress web application in AWS Academy cloud platform as per our project description [1], [2], [3], [4]. I have used the IAAS & private cloud deployment model, where I have managed the data, interfaces, applications, middleware, OS, VM's & Virtual network. Also used CloudWatch & Net data for monitoring the EC2 Instance. Then a custom theme and many plugins related to security has been installed. Then various web security scans and penetration tests has been done and mitigations for vulnerabilities which are present in the application. Finally recorded those in this report. This project ensures high availability and scalability of applications.

### Approach & Project Planning

The approach I have taken to implement security across the system in this project is ZTA (Zero Trust Architecture) & DID (Defense-in-Depth) and Agile methodology as my project plan for specifying the tasks and dependencies, associated with the implementation of systems & services across the selected cloud assets.

Here in this project, a 3-tier architecture in two availability zones (us-east 1a & us-east 1b) was used as architecture for running a WordPress web application in AWS Academy Learner's Lab, namely, Web Tier, App Tier & Database Tier. This website was created using WordPress in AL2023 instance.

Initially, a VPC has been created. Then an Internet Gateway has been created and attached to the VPC. Then 6 Subnets has been created in the two availability zones, where 2 are public subnets (web tier) & 4 are private subnets (app tier & database tier). Then 2 NAT Gateways has been created and attached with Elastic IP's, on two available zones in the public subnet. Then one Public Route table & two Private Route Tables has been created. Then 5 VPC Security groups has been created, where each security group was allocated for each service. The security groups are, ALBSG accepts Http & Https protocol traffics alone from anywhere. WEBSG accepts Http & Https protocols traffics alone but only from the ALBSG. DBSG accepts MySQL/Aurora traffic alone from WEBSG only. ELBSG (EFS-SG) accepts NFS traffic alone from WEBSG. SSHSG

allows SSH only from my IP Address. In RDS, a database subnet group has been created by selecting the private database subnets in the two availability zones. Then an main and standby RDS MySQL database has been created under RDS DB Subnet group and using DBSG & 2 private subnets (DB Tier). Then an Elastic File System has been created with ELBSG(EFSSG). Then 3 EC2 instances have been created where 1 instance launched on public subnet (Web Tier) in availability zone 1 with an Elastic IP, which is the jump server and 2 instances launched on private subnet (App Tier) in two availability zones each with an Elastic IP, used as load balancing servers. Instance in web tier has been launched with ALBSG, SSHSG & WEBSG. Instances in app tier has been launched with WEBSG alone. Then two target groups (80 & 443) have been created in EC2 for creating a load balancer. Then an Application Load Balancer has been launched with ALBSG. Below diagram is my 3-Tier Architecture.

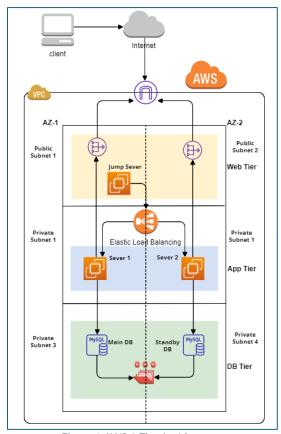


Figure 1 AWS 3 Tier Architecture

The website has been created mainly focused on helping peoples to overcome from poverty. The website has 9 pages which are About us, Registration, My Account, Donor Dashboard, Donation Confirmation, Donation Failed, Terms & Conditions, Disclaimer and Privacy Policy.

Below diagram represents the project planning approach which have been chosen and implemented successfully.



Figure 2 Planning

## Selection of Tools Methodologies, Frameworks & Benchmarking

AWS Cloud platform has been chosen in this project. It has been chosen because of having previous experience with AWS Cloud services. In AWS Cloud, the services which are used in this project are VPC, EC2, RDS, CloudWatch & EFS. VPC has been chosen to create a private cloud infrastructure in AWS. EC2 has been chosen to create instances to act as a server and an elastic load balancer also created. RDS has been chosen to run a MySQL Database, where WordPress data like configurations, users, passwords, etc, are stored. EFS has been chosen, so that the webservers can pull application data from EFS. CloudWatch has been chosen to monitor the EC2 instances. Netdata, an online cloud monitoring tool, also used as a monitoring tool. STRIDE tool used for threat modelling. Nmap is used for identifying open ports and running services & its version. Wireshark is used for packet capturing and analysing the web traffic from client to server. Burp suite is used for penetration testing the application. Automated scanning tools are used to scan the web application, namely Acunetix, Burp Scan, Nikto, whatweb, Vooki & wpscan-cli.

The approach I have taken to develop and implement security across the system in this project is ZTA (Zero Trust Architecture) & DID (Defense-in-Depth) and Agile methodology as my

project plan for specifying the tasks and dependencies, associated with the implementation of systems & services across the selected cloud assets.

Agile methodology prioritizes tasks and adjusts to changing requirements throughout the project. It focuses on iterative development and continuous improvement and calls for close monitoring for useful feedback and course correction. The project is divided into smaller, more manageable tasks within brief development cycles. Its advantages include flexibility in the face of change, ongoing development, and improved communication. Its disadvantages include the need for more preparation and work up front, which can be problematic for big projects [5].

Although ZTA (Zero Trust Architecture) and Defense-in-Depth are security techniques, they take distinct approaches to security. Below is a summary of their main distinctions. ZTA stands for "Verify first, trust later." This entails constantly confirming, whether on-site or off-site, the legitimacy and authorization of any person or device attempting to access a resource. focuses entirely on defending systems and data against internal and external attacks. Uses least privilege access constraints, micro-segmentation, and multi-factor authentication (MFA). DID refers to building several tiers of security measures to impede and even halt intruders. primarily concerned with protecting the network perimeter from outside attacks. putting it into practice by making use of network segmentation, firewalls, intrusion detection/prevention systems (IDS/IPS), and access control lists (ACLs) [6], [7].

Here, I've used the high-level Cyber Security Framework (NIST CSF) from the National Institute of Standards & Technology, which offers a procedure for recognizing, safeguarding against, identifying, responding to, and recovering from cyberattacks. In order to strengthen the configuration, I have also implemented Center of Internet Security Controls to the AWS infrastructure (EC2 instances & RDS Databases). The web application has been hardened to protect it from security flaws and attacks based on OWASP Top 10 2023.

### Technical Testing approach

Initially I have made many security implementations in AWS IAAS environment as well as in the Web Application. After these security Implementations, I conducted manual penetration testing as well as automated scans for finding vulnerability in my application.

Below table represents the security implementation done in IAAS environment,

Services	Purpose
VPC	It offers our cloud resources a private network
	environment that is isolated from other users'
	resources in the public cloud. This isolation
	limits illegal access to our data and
	applications, which contributes to increased
	security.
Subnets	An IP address range is divided into VPC
	subnets inside of bigger Virtual Private

Table 1 Security Implementations made in IAAS environment

Г	
	Clouds (VPCs). It facilitates the logical grouping of our AWS resources into VPCs according to their purposes or security needs. Within a VPC, we can build numerous subnets, each with a unique range of IP addresses.
Internet Gateway	It serves as a controlled entry point or exit point for internet traffic. It permits connections between our VPC's resources and the outside internet, and the other way around.
NAT Gateway	It gives our resources inside private subnets in our VPC to access the outside world. In our project, it provides the two load-balancing servers in the public subnet of the two availability zones (App Tier) with outgoing internet connectivity.
Route Table	It functions as a route map for our VPC, which needs to be set up with IGW or NATGW depending on what we require. This will send traffic to the routes that we have set up.
Security Groups	It controls incoming and outgoing traffic to protect your resources, functioning as virtual firewalls.
RDS Database Subnets	It's a group of subnets in our VPC that we use especially for our RDS database instances. It guarantees dependable and safe database connectivity within your AWS setup.
RDS MySQL Database	AWS provides a managed database that we can construct, utilize, and scale up or down based on our needs.
Elastic File System	Our web application data is kept in this scalable and centralized storage facility, which is accessible by numerous web servers.
Load Balancing Target Groups	It serves as a reservoir of possible locations for incoming traffic that is dispersed by an ELB.
Load balancer	To guarantee high availability and scalability, it serves as a traffic cop, automatically distributing incoming web traffic among our ELB target groups.
EC2 Instances	It functions as a virtual server and uses the necessary system resources in accordance with our configuration. Three t2medium instances were employed in this project to provide high availability and scalability in

	both public and private subnet (Stage). One of
	the instances served as a jump server in the
	public subnet on availability zone one (Web
	Tier), while the other two served as load
	balancers in the private subnet (App Tier).
Elastic IP	An internet connection is made possible for us
	by a static public IPV4 address that is
	assigned to us in a particular region.
Snapshots	This is used to capture the entire state of
	volumes attached to instances. Here we have
	taken one snapshots of each instance for
	backup as well as safety purpose.
CloudWatch	This is how the complete state of volumes
	connected to instances is captured. Here, we
	have a snapshot of every instance for safety
	and backup purposes.
Netdata	An online tool for cloud monitoring that
	assists us in gathering data, logs, and events
	related to our AWS resources and notifies us
	via email when certain criteria are met [8].
MobaXterm_Personal_24.0	A SSH Client tool, which is used in this
	project to securely ssh into the EC2 Instances.

Below are the Security Implementations done in WordPress Web Application,

Table 2 Security Implementations made in WordPress site

Services/Plugins	Purpose
. TECH DOMAINS	A platform built on the GitHub student
	developer bundle that offers a free domain for
	a year.
Cloudflare	Content Delivery Network (CDN), DDoS
	prevention, Internet Security, SSL
	Certificates, DNS security, website
	optimization tools, analytics, and other
	services are among the many services it offers
	connected to internet security and
	performance. Since we have linked
	Cloudflare's name servers to .Tech domains,
	all traffic will go via Cloudflare, which is a
	safe and difficult to evade system.
SSL Certificates	This is supplied by Cloudflare, which is used
	to give privacy and data integrity to visitors of
	our website.

PhpMyAdmin	An open-source administration tool specifically designed to manage MySQL and MariaDB databases.
Akismet Anti-spam: Spam Protection	To protect my website from spam.
All In One WP Security	Provides MFA, file backup options, Import/Export functionalities.
GuardGiant Brute Force Protection	Prevents brute force attacks, provides Captcha, reverse proxy, whitelists IP addresses.
HTTP Headers	Provides every HTTP Headers, where we can customize as our security need.
LoginWP (Formerly Peter's Login Redirect)	Provides a secure Login as well as New User Registration page for WordPress website.
Members	Provides flexibility for admin to restrict the permissions of users, more than default permissions given by WordPress.
Security Optimizer	All-in-one security solution for WordPress website, which secure website and prevents several threats such as brute-force attacks, compromised login, data leaks and more.
Stop User Enumeration	Helps securing WordPress site against hacking attacks through detecting User Enumeration
Super Page Cache for Cloudflare	Speed up your website by enabling page caching on a Cloudflare free plans.
User Registration	Drag and Drop user registration form and login form builder. Used to create a secure login and registration page for donors.
w3v-xml-rpc-security	This disables XML-RPC, by removing some methods and make more secure your WordPress site.
WP 2FA - Two-factor authentication for WordPress	Provides an additional layer of security to WordPress login pages. Enables Two-Factor Authentication for all users in my WordPress website.
WP Anti-Clickjack	This prevents website from being clickjacked, by adding OWASP's legacy browser frame breaking script & X-Frame-Options.

Also, I have done manual penetration testing and many automated scans over this website. Before starting the testing process, I have taken backups of files & snapshots of all the three instances for safety purposes. So, even if I lose any data's while testing, I can recover those from the snapshot and backups. Manual testing has been done like XSS, URL redirection, parameter tampering, etc, by using Burp suite, which acted as a proxy, where I have intercepted the requests & modified the requests. Also used Intruder tool in burp suite, which helped in performing

automated attacks like password brute force attacks. Also used repeater tool in burp suite, which helped me to resend any captured packets and analyse the response of modified requests. Also used the burp scanner, for running automated scans. I have used Acunetix, Vooki, Nikto & WP-Scan CLI for automated scans. I have used Nmap for identifying open ports and its services, also used Wireshark to capture packets and check if the traffic is encrypted or not [9], [10], [11], [12], [13], [14], [15], [16].

## Findings & Risk Ratings

Table 3 Findings, Risk Ratings & Mitigations

Vulnerability	Risk	Mitigations
Directory Listing	Medium	Mitigated by removing "-
		Indexes" in Apache server
		config file.
Admin login page detection	Medium	I have enforced MFA, so this
		is not applicable.
XML_RPC Authentication	Medium	Mitigated by disabling XML-
brute force		RPC Authentication by "w3v-
		xml-rpc-security" plugin.
Missing Security Headers –	Low	All the traffics are secured
Cache-Control		and encrypted as I used
		Cloudflare, so this is not
	_	applicable.
Missing Security Headers –	Low	All the traffics are secured
X-Frame Options		and encrypted as I used
		Cloudflare, so this is not
15: 1	<b>-</b>	applicable.
Missing Security Headers –	Low	All the traffics are secured
Referrer-Policy		and encrypted as I used
		Cloudflare, so this is not
M C . H 1	т	applicable.
Missing Security Headers –	Low	All the traffics are secured
Content Security Policy		and encrypted as I used
		Cloudflare, so this is not
Missing Security Headers –	Low	applicable.  All the traffics are secured
X-XSS Protection	LUW	and encrypted as I used
A-ASS Howellon		Cloudflare, so this is not
		applicable.
Missing Security Headers –	Low	All the traffics are secured
Permissions Policy		and encrypted as I used
		Cloudflare, so this is not
		applicable.
HSTS not implemented	Low	All the traffics are secured
_		and encrypted as I used

		Cloudflare, so this is not applicable.
User registration page detection	Info	This page helps donors to register & donate funds to
detection		overcome poverty.

As per the scan results and my manual testing, my AWS environment is completely safe, which also ensures high availability and scalability of applications. The Web Application has some vulnerabilities, which are mitigated later. Now my website is completely safe after implementing Two Factor Authentication, Security Plugins, making few changes in server configurations, restricting file permissions, etc.

#### Challenges & Limitations

As I have used AWS Academy Learner's lab for this project, I faced many restrictions. My project plan is to create the setup which I have done in AWS Academy learners lab as mentioned previously and create a DR in Microsoft Azure environment. After creating the setup in two different cloud environments, I would have connected these two environments by using AWS Direct Connect and Azure Express Route or I would have connected these two environments by using VPN Connections, AWS Transit Gateway in AWS environment and Azure VPN Gateway in Azure environment. Also, I wanted to use AWS WAF as firewall, AWS Certificate Manager for SSL Certificate management, AWS Route 53 for domain registration, IAM permissions for creating users, roles, groups, custom policies as per plan. As I have restrictions in AWS Academy Learner's lab, I was not able to use many resources. Below is my actual project plan,

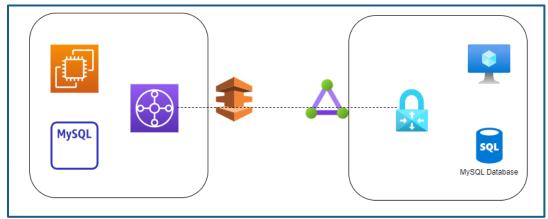


Figure 3 Actual Architecture Plan

## Conclusion & Findings

This project's main goal is to setup a secure cloud environment on AWS, instantiate a cloud VM instance, configure LAMP Stack & WordPress assets on the IAAS. Then secure both VM instance & WordPress web application and provide a comprehensive security report which shows our efforts in securing the Cloud environment as well as WordPress web application.

As per the project requirements, I have secured the cloud VM instance by following steps.

- Designed a 3-Tier architecture (Web-Tier, App-Tier & Database-Tier).
- Created a VPC
- Created an Internet Gateway and attached it to VPC
- Created 3 subnets in Availability zone 1 (us-east 1a) and 3 subnets in Availability zone 2 (us-east 1b). (1 Public subnet & 2 Private Subnet)
- Launched a t2medium AL2023 instance in Public Subnet (Web Tier) with an Elastic IP, configured LAMP Stack, MySQL, PhpMyAdmin, WordPress & mounted EFS on /var/www/html folder.
- Created 2 NAT gateways with one Elastic IP for each in two availability zones in public subnet (Web-Tier).
- Created 4 private subnets, 2 in App-Tier, 2 in Database-Tier.
- Created 2 t2medium instances in public subnet of 2 availability zones in App-Tier, with some user data, to install PHP and MySQL, mounted EFS on /var/www/html folder and start those two services by default upon every time when instance starts.
- Created a RDS Subnet group and then created one RDS MySQL Instance in Availability zone 1 and another one standby database in Availability zone 2 in the Database Tier.
- Then connected the server and DB with WordPress.
- Made customizations as well as security implementations in WordPress.
- Undergone manual as well as automated penetration testing on the WordPress website.
- Finally mitigated all vulnerabilities and documented.

### Critical insights on UN Sustainability Goals

This website has been created based on the first goal of UN Sustainability goals, "POVERTY". This website has been created to mainly focus on helping peoples to overcome from poverty, by the donations which are provided by the donors. This website acts as a helping hand for peoples who need education, food, dresses, etc. This website has a registration page, where you can register yourself and donate the funds as much as possible for their welfare.

### Individual Grading Score / Team Member Score

This entire project has been done and documented by me alone.

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# Appendix

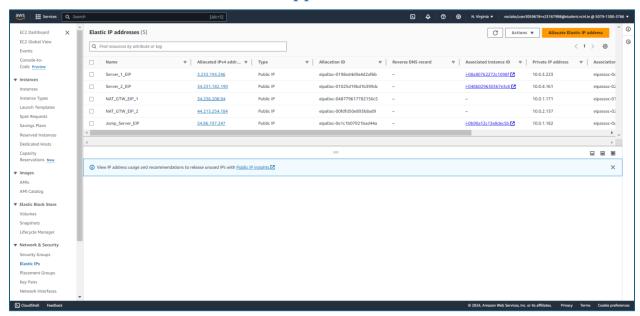


Figure 4 Elastic IP's

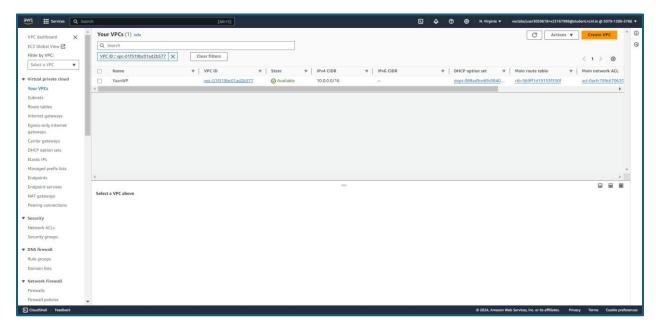


Figure 5 VPC:

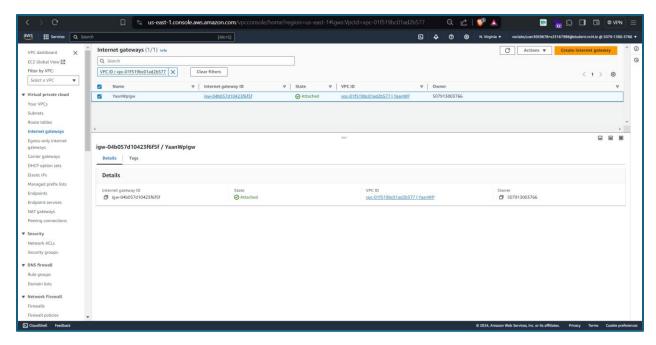


Figure 6 VPC Internet Gateway:

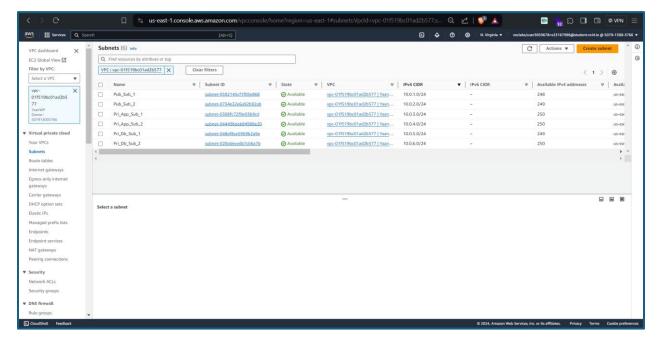


Figure 7 VPC Subnets:

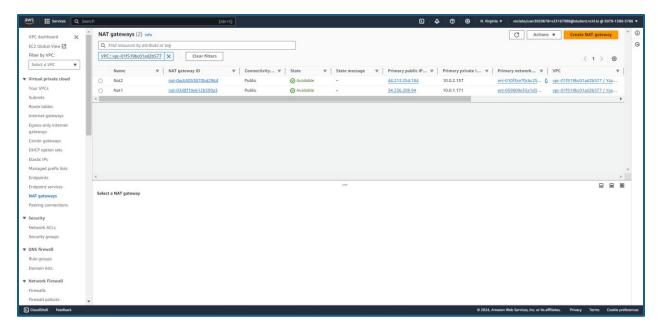


Figure 8 VPC NAT Gateway:

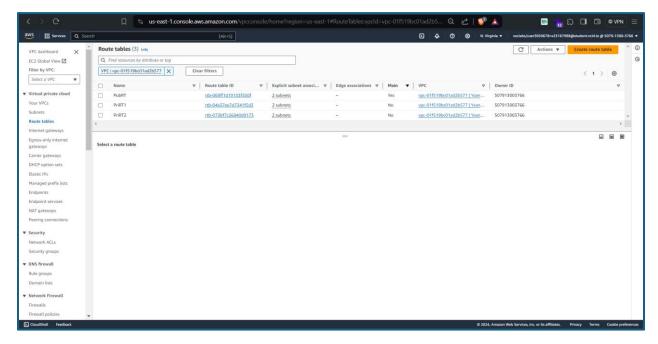


Figure 9 VPC Route Tables:

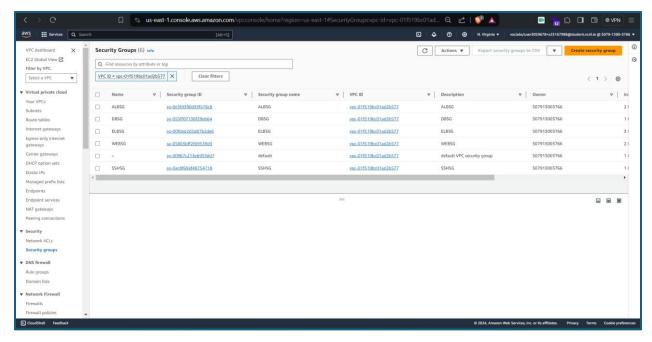


Figure 10 VPC Security Groups:

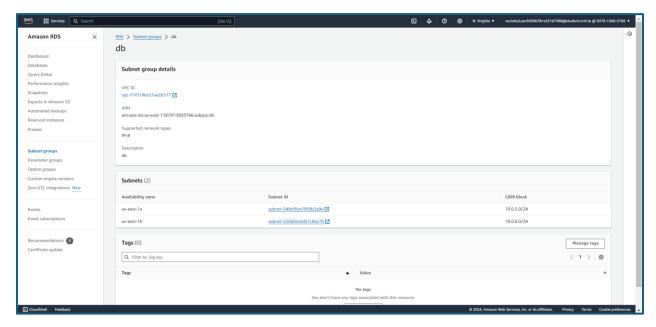


Figure 11 Database Security Groups:

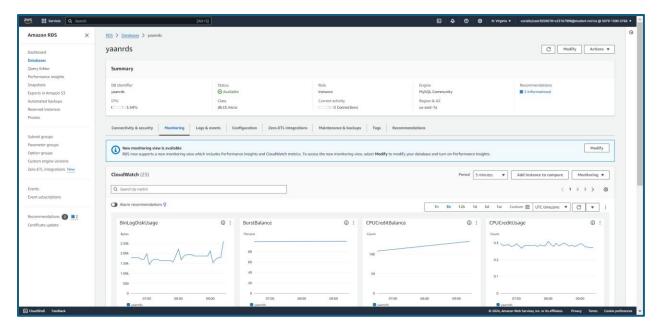


Figure 12 RDS Database:

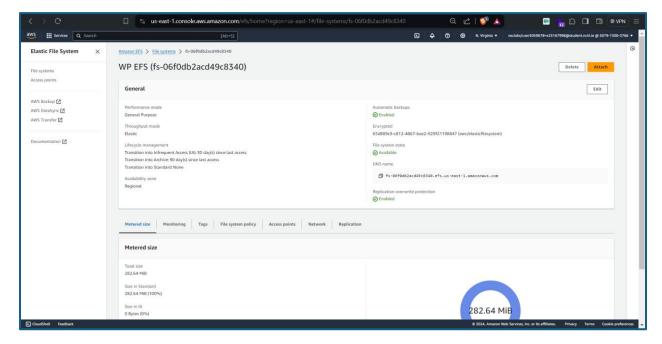


Figure 13 Elastic File System:

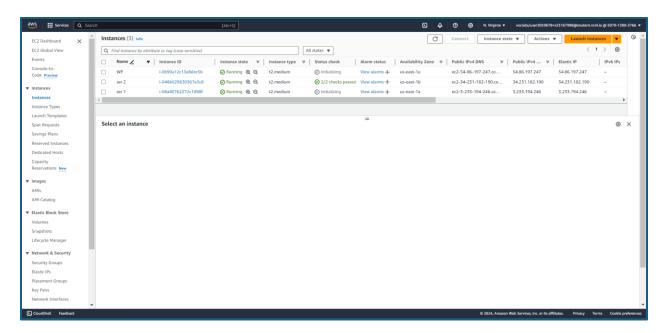


Figure 14 EC2 Instances:

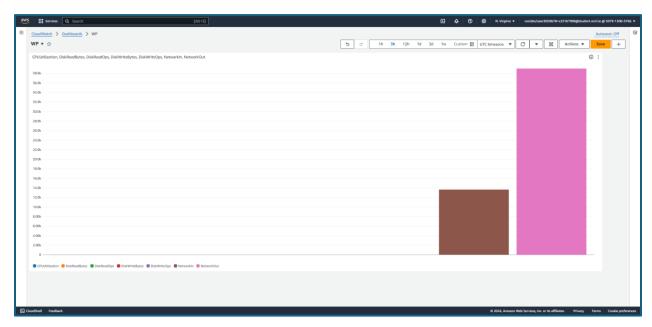


Figure 15 CloudWSatch Monitoring for AWS EC2:

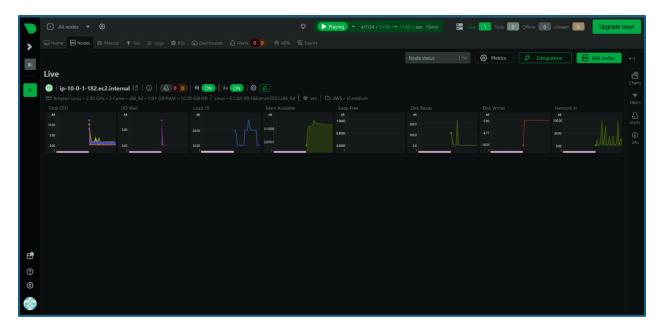


Figure 16 Netdata Monitoring

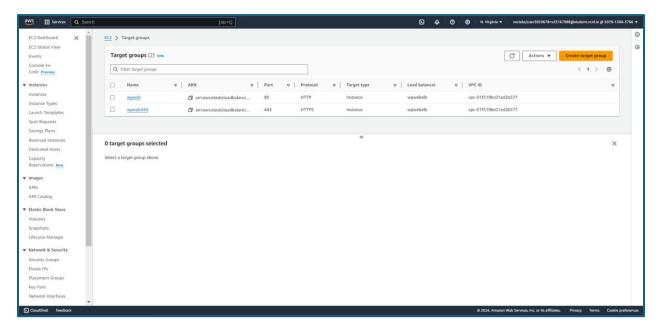


Figure 17 Application Load Balancer Target Groups:

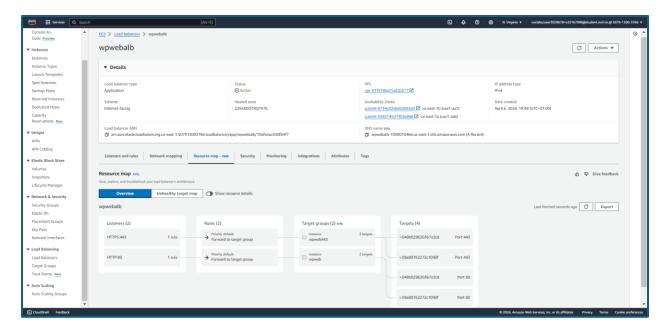


Figure 18 Application Load Balancer:

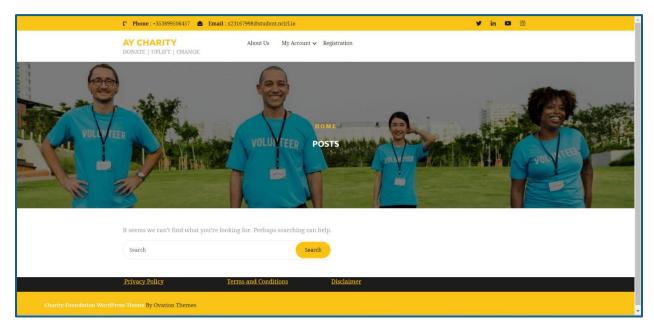


Figure 19 Website Home Page

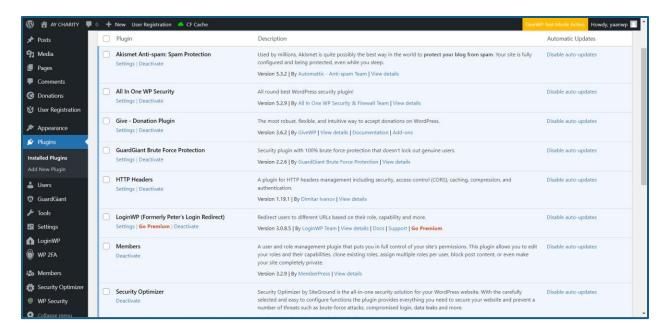


Figure 20 Website Plugins - 1

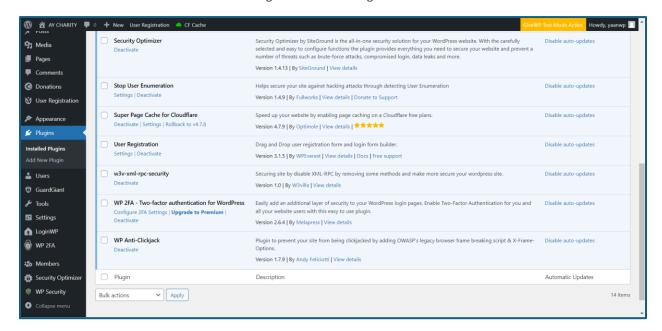


Figure 21Website Plugins -2

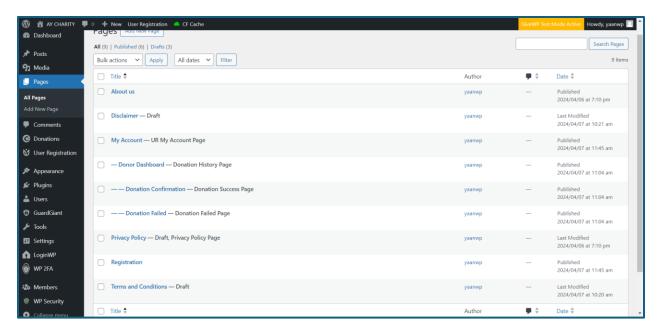


Figure 22 Website Pages

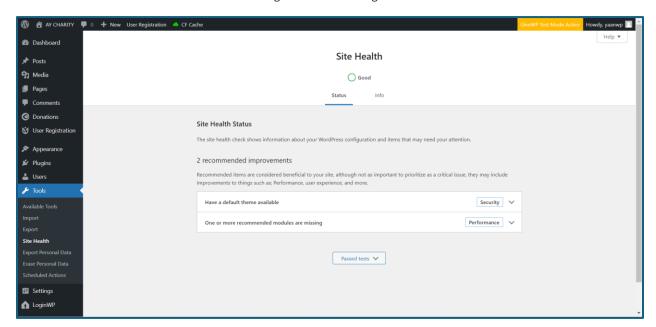


Figure 23 WP Site Health

```
root⊛kali)-[/home/kali]
    # nmap -sV -p- aycharity.tech
-# mmap -sV -p- aycharity.tech
Starting Nmap 7.94SVN (https://nmap.org) at 2024-04-07 14:59 IST
Stats: 0:59:03 elapsed; 0 hosts completed (1 up), 1 undergoing SYN Stealth Scan
SYN Stealth Scan Timing: About 83.92% done; ETC: 16:09 (0:11:19 remaining)
Stats: 1:10:29 elapsed; 0 hosts completed (1 up), 1 undergoing SYN Stealth Scan
SYN Stealth Scan Timing: About 83.43% done; ETC: 16:23 (0:14:00 remaining)
Stats: 1:21:10 elapsed; 0 hosts completed (1 up), 1 undergoing SYN Stealth Scan
SYN Stealth Scan Timing: About 88.97% done; ETC: 16:30 (0:10:03 remaining)
Nmap scan report for aycharity.tech (104.21.80.184)
Host is up (0 0012s latency)
 Host is up (0.0012s latency).
Other addresses for aycharity.tech (not scanned): 172.67.153.29 2606:4700:3035::6815:50b8 2606:4700:3034::ac43:991d
 Not shown: 65523 filtered tcp ports (no-response)
              STATE SERVICE VERSION
80/tcp open http Cloudflare http proxy
443/tcp open ssl/http Cloudflare http proxy
 2052/tcp open http
                                         Cloudflare http proxy
 2082/tcp open http
                                         Cloudflare http proxy
 2083/tcp open ssl/http nginx
                                        Cloudflare http proxy
 2086/tcp open http
2086/tcp open incop
2087/tcp open ssl/http nginx
2085/tcp open http Cloudflare http proxy
 2096/tcp open ssl/http nginx
                                        Cloudflare http proxy
 8080/tcp open http
 8443/tcp open ssl/http Cloudflare http proxy
 8880/tcp open http
                                         Cloudflare http proxy
Service detection performed. Please report any incorrect results at https://nmap.org/submit/ .
 Nmap done: 1 IP address (1 host up) scanned in 6178.94 seconds
        root⊛kali)-[/home/kali]
```

Figure 24 Nmap scan

Figure 25 Whatweb scan

```
^ //i i_) i' (_
                                  WordPress Security Scanner by the WPScan Team
                         Version 3.8.25
       Sponsored by Automattic - https://automattic.com/
       @_WPScan_, @ethicalhack3r, @erwan_lr, @firefart
[+] URL: https://aycharity.tech/ [104.21.80.184]
[+] Started: Sun Apr 7 14:21:52 2024
Interesting Finding(s):
[+] Headers
 | Interesting Entries:
    - x-wp-cf-super-cache: cache
   - x-wp-cf-super-cache-active: 1
    - x-wp-cf-super-cache-cache-control: s-maxage=31536000, max-age=60
    - x-wp-cf-super-cache-cookies-bypass: swfpc-feature-not-enabled
   - cf-cache-status: HIT
   - report-to: {"endpoints":[{"url":"https:\/\/a.nel.cloudflare.com\/report\/y4?
s=YsbiWwBosfDK%2Fzem4KAgaRRrzHiCJBy4TvNnKKiaqj3xr4o%2FC23Jlnc8fozUr5V3gYtMv5IWAMZqHkm%2FFbIHSNz0hNqah88v36PJbMlEev0u%2Bot4L7ln8%2B1j1T19MbF6u0%3D%3D"}]],"group":"cf-
nel","max_age":604800}
| - nel: {"success_fraction":0,"report_to":"cf-nel","max_age":604800}
    - server: cloudflare
   - cf-ray: 870a4e20688c1b75-DUB
- alt-svc: h3=":443"; ma=86400
   Found By: Headers (Passive Detection)
 | Confidence: 100%
```

Figure 26 WPScan result

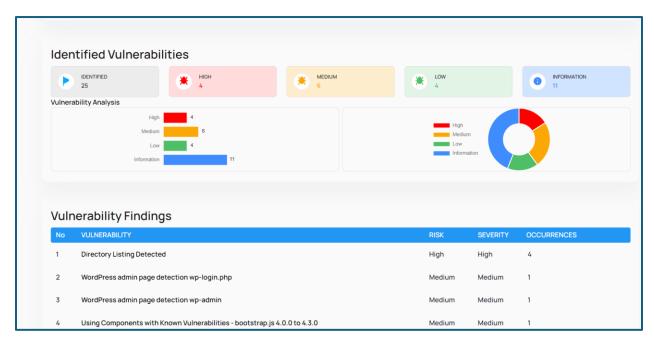


Figure 27 Vooki Web Application Scanner Results

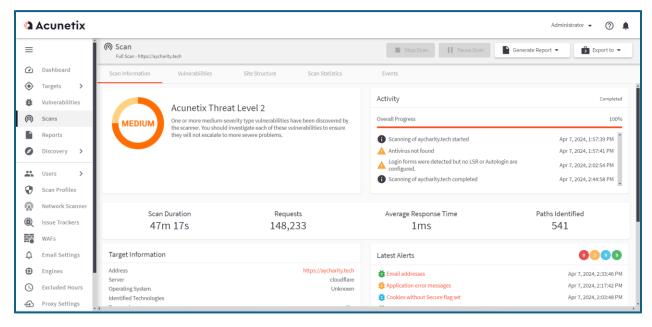


Figure 28 Acunetix Web Application Scanner Results

Figure 29 Nikto scan results

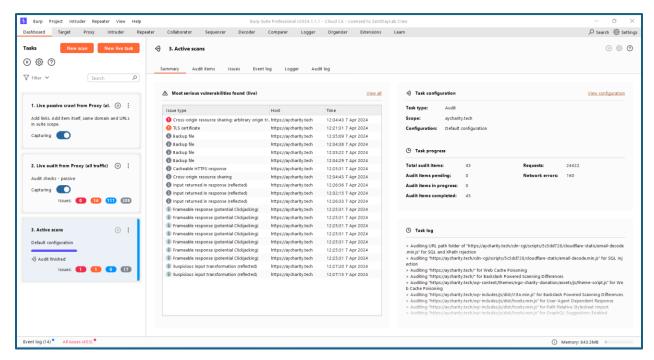


Figure 30 Burp Scan results

Figure 31 Wireshark Packet Captured - Encrypted traffic

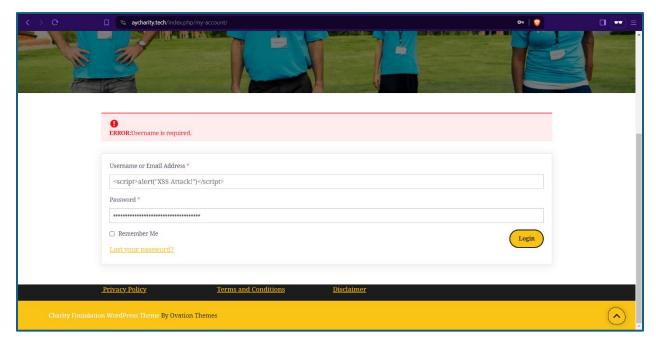


Figure 32Cross Site Scripting Failed