



# Securing the Next Generation of Cyber-Physical Systems

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[efrenlopez.org/slides.pdf](http://efrenlopez.org/slides.pdf)



## Improved, Stuxnet-Like PLC **Malware** Aims to **Disrupt** **Critical Infrastructure**

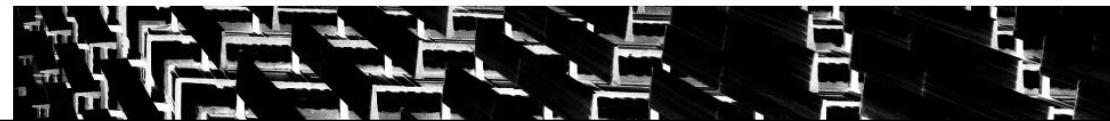
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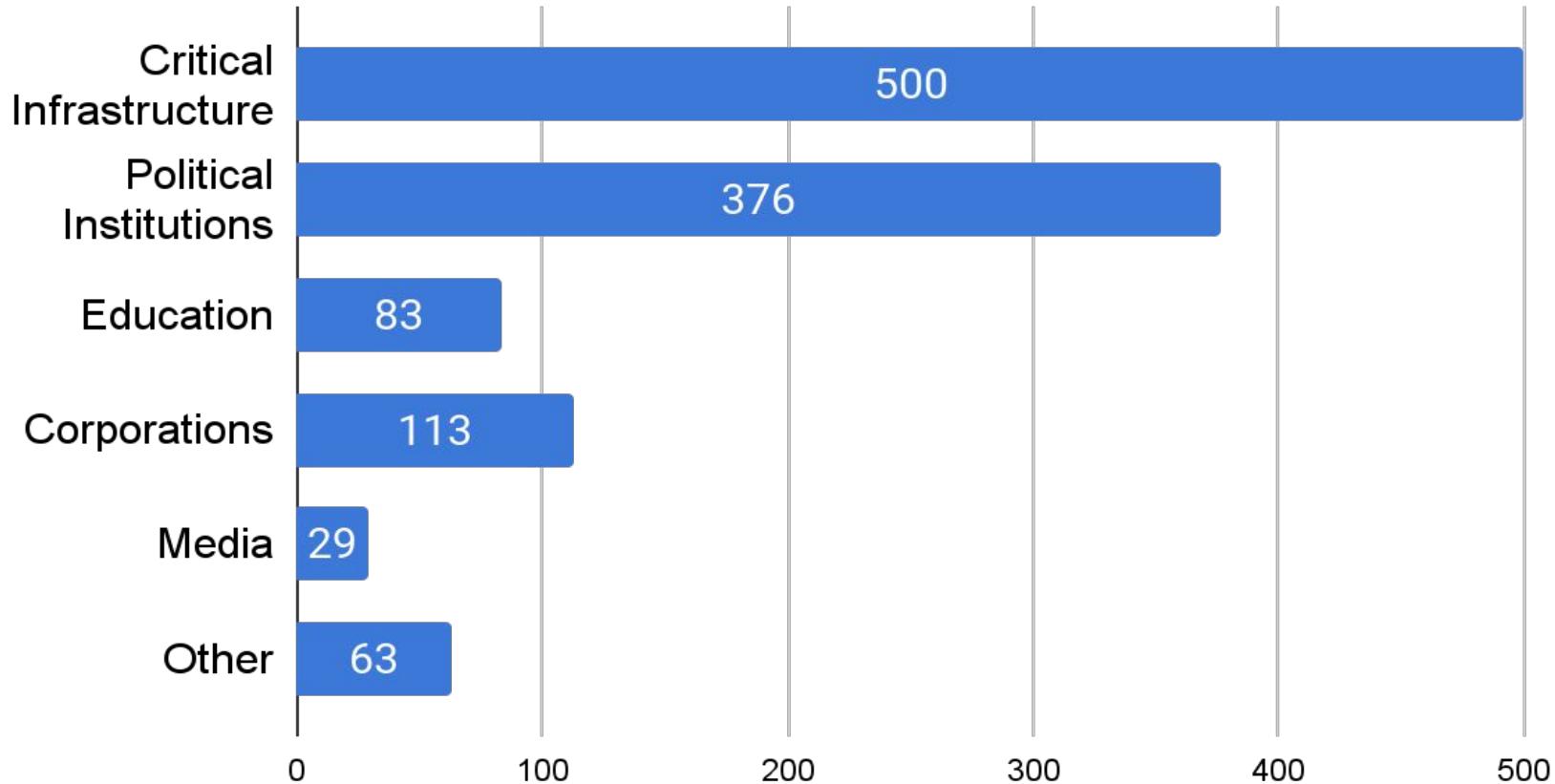
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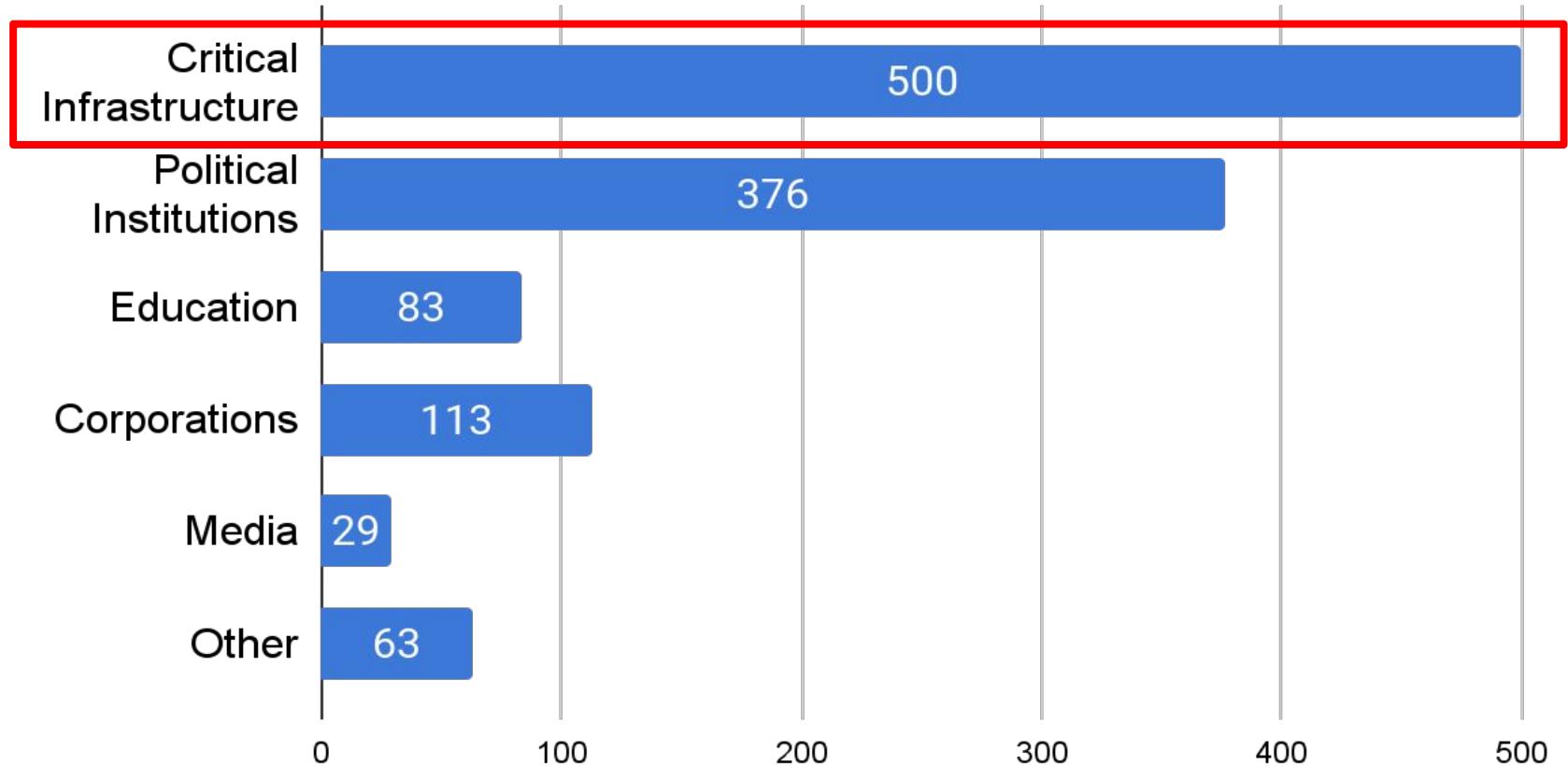
The New York Times

## *Cyberattack Forces a **Shutdown** of a Top **U.S. Pipeline***

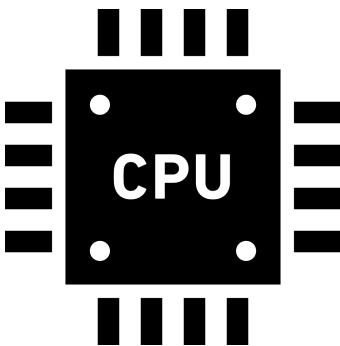
# The sectors most targeted by cybercrime (2023)



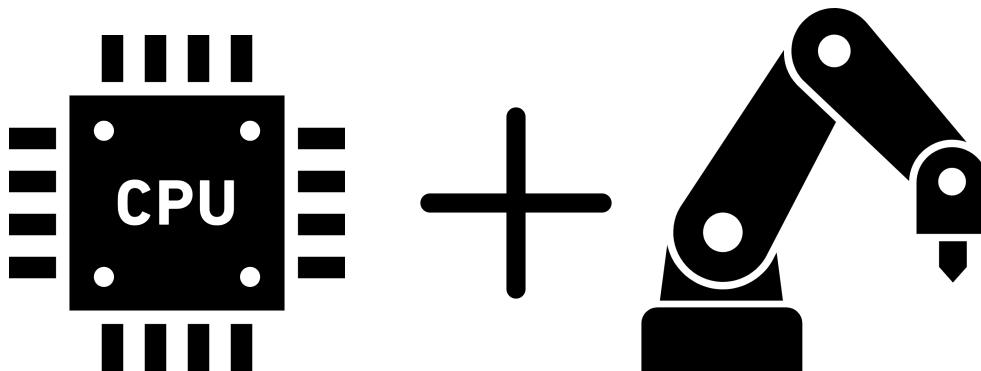
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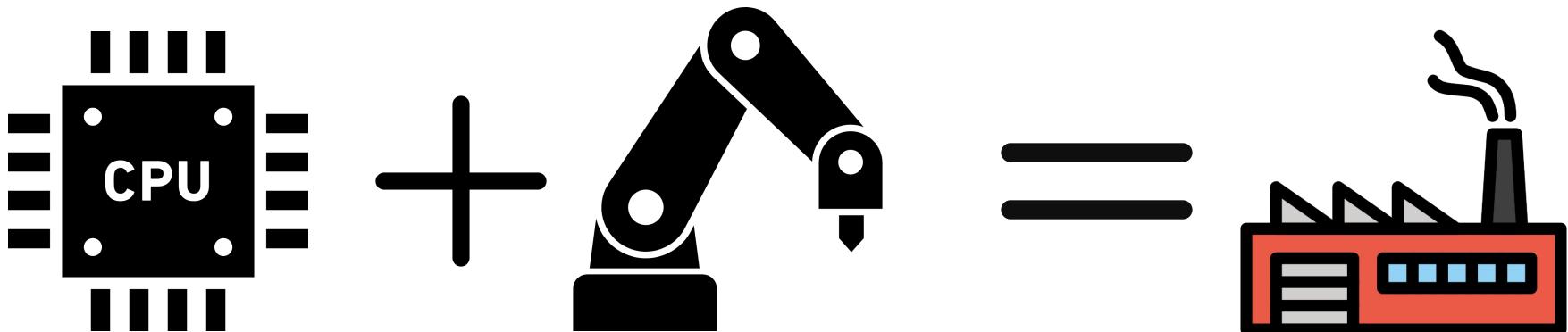
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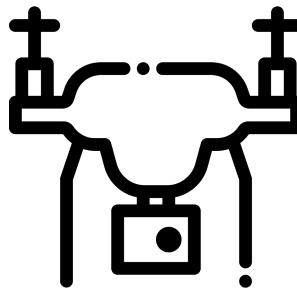
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# What are the types of CPS?



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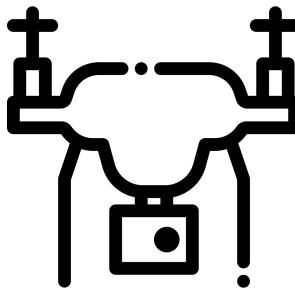


Drones



Healthcare

# What are the types of CPS?



Drones

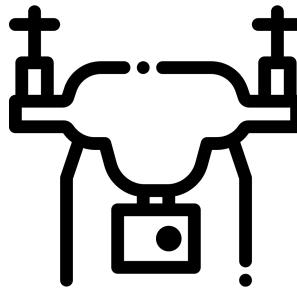


Healthcare



Industrial  
Control  
Systems

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Drones



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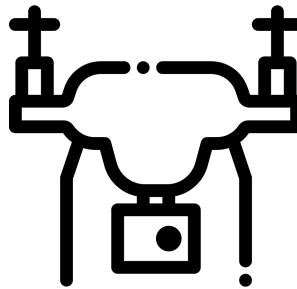


Industrial  
Control  
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Connected  
Vehicles

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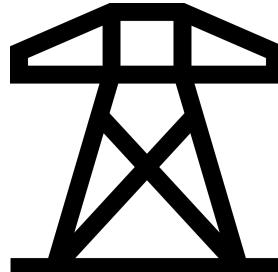
Healthcare



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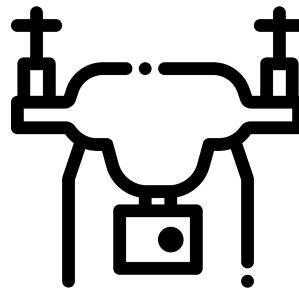


Connected  
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Smart  
Grid

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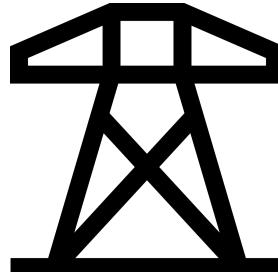
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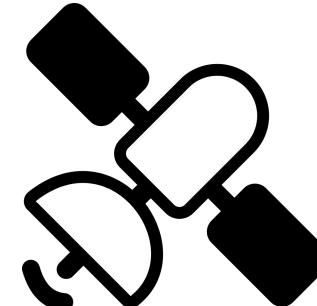
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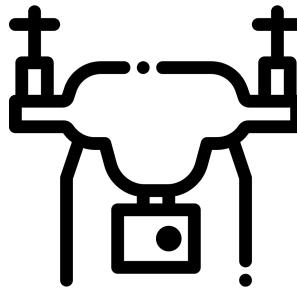


Smart  
Grid



Space  
Systems

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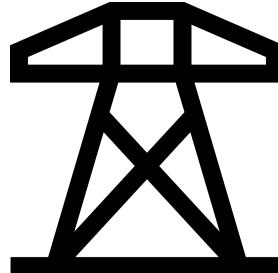
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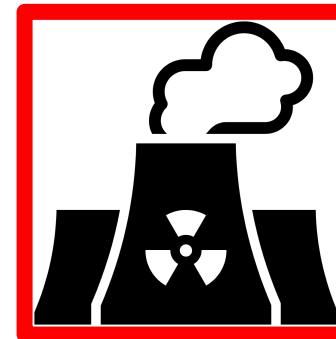
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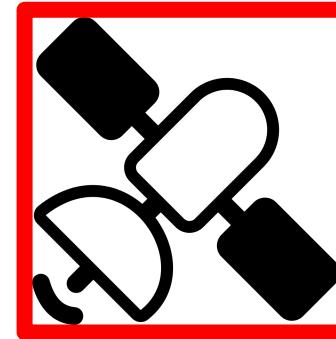
Connected Vehicles



Smart Grid



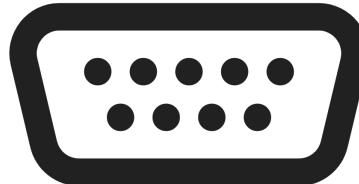
Industrial Control Systems



Space Systems

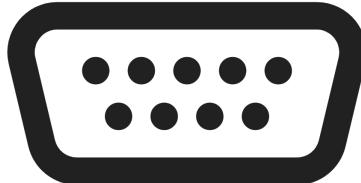
# Legacy Cyber-Physical Systems

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Analog  
Networks

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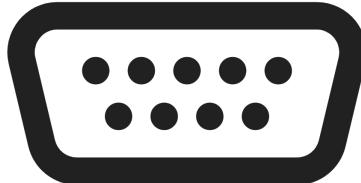


Analog Networks



Limited Connectivity

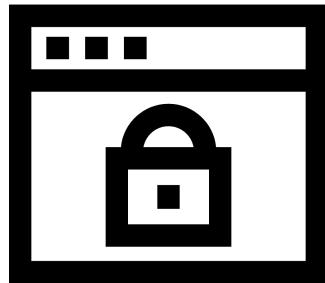
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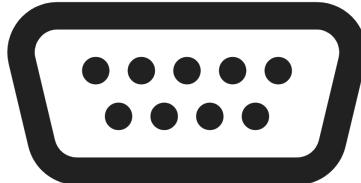


Limited  
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Proprietary  
Software

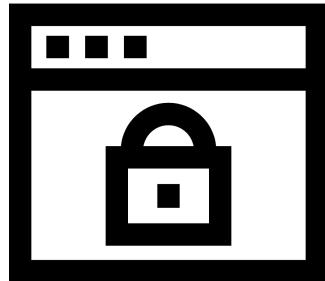
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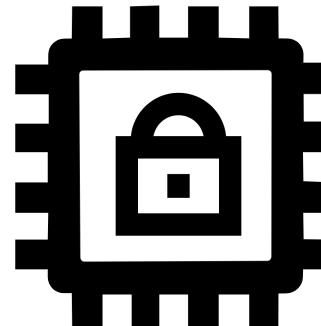
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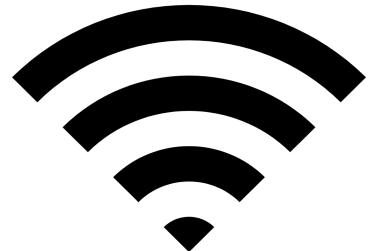
Proprietary  
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Proprietary  
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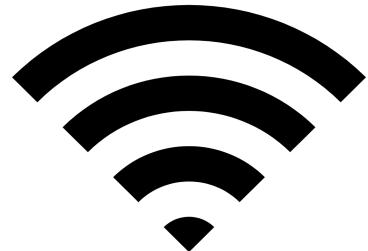
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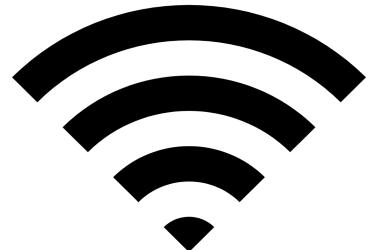


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IoT-Ready

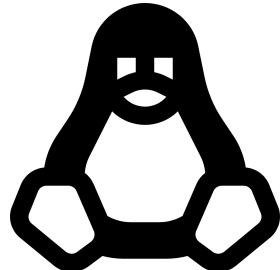
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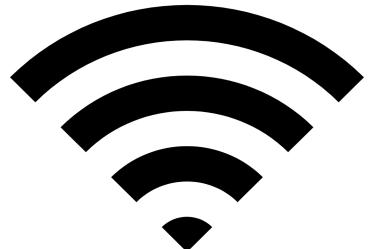


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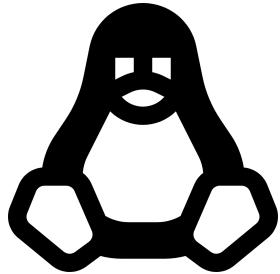


Open Source  
Software

# Next Generation of Cyber-Physical Systems



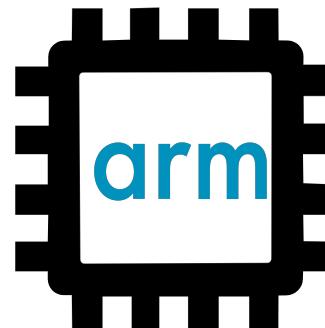
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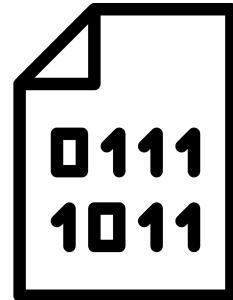
Open Architecture  
Hardware

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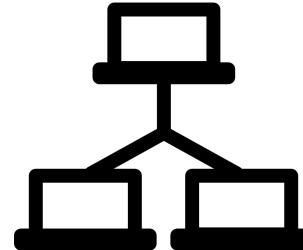
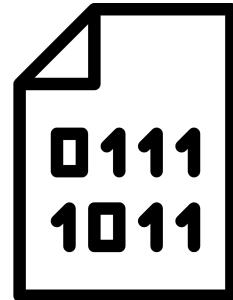
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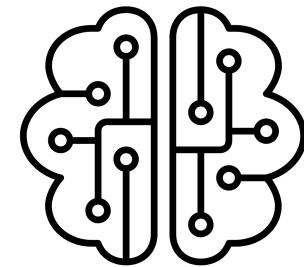
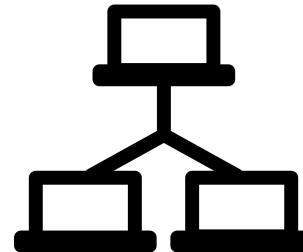
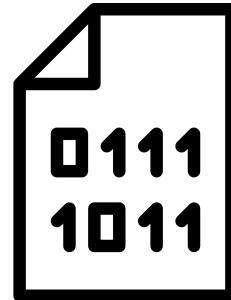
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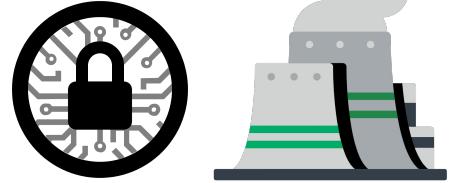
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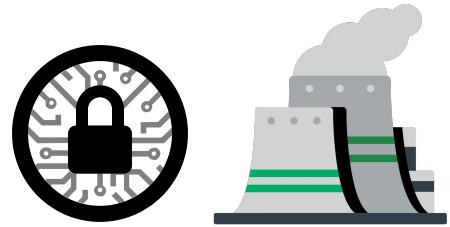


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Develop **novel cybersecurity mechanisms** to address critical security gaps in **next-generation cyber-physical systems**.

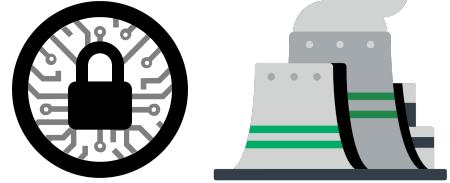
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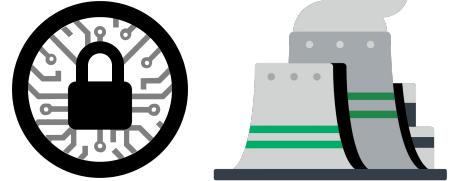
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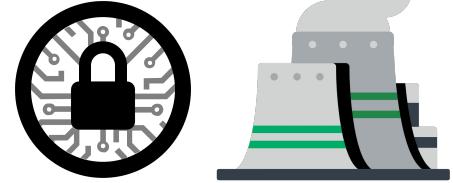
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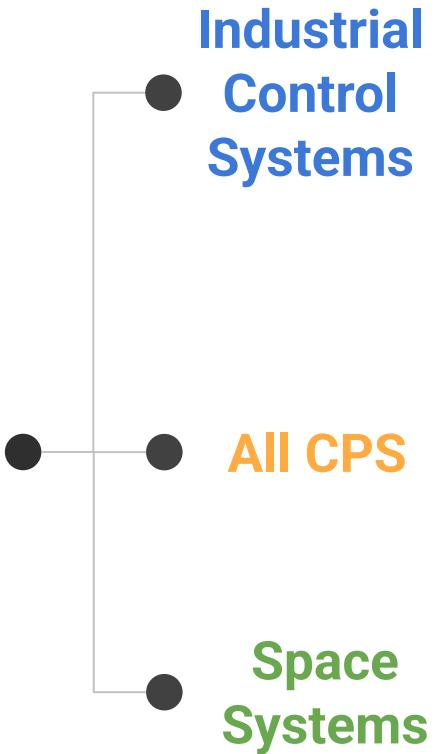
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- Develop **end-to-end software solutions** to protect critical infrastructure
- Design and conduct **experiments involving both systems and human factors**
- Collaborate with **international industry and academia** organizations
- Deliver security solutions **ready for real-world adoption**, and application

# Securing the Next Generation of Cyber-Physical Systems



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Industrial  
Control  
Systems

All CPS

Space  
Systems

Cyber  
Deception

Threat  
Intelligence

Performance  
Evaluation

Binary  
Analysis

Cyber  
Deception

# Securing the Next Generation of Cyber-Physical Systems



Cyber  
Deception

HoneyPLC  
CCS '20

ICSNet  
CPSIoTSec '24

Threat  
Intelligence

ICS<sup>2</sup> Matrix  
USENIX '24

Performance  
Evaluation

PLC Metrics  
RICSS '24

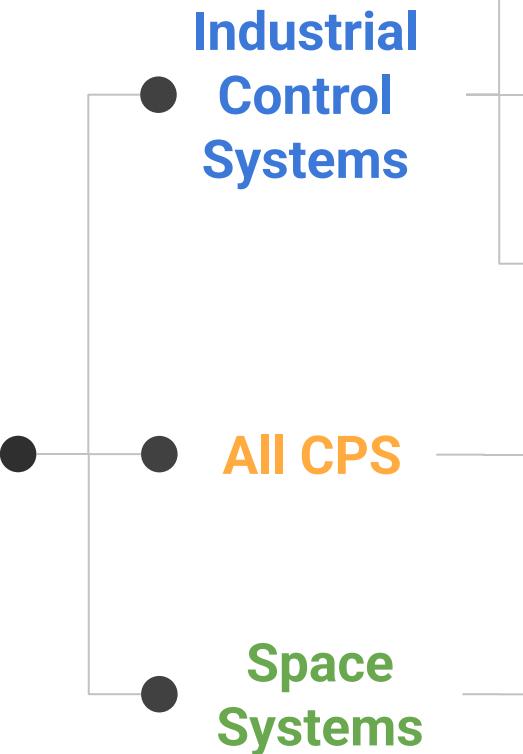
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Taveren  
Under review @ IEEE S&P

Cyber  
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HoneySat  
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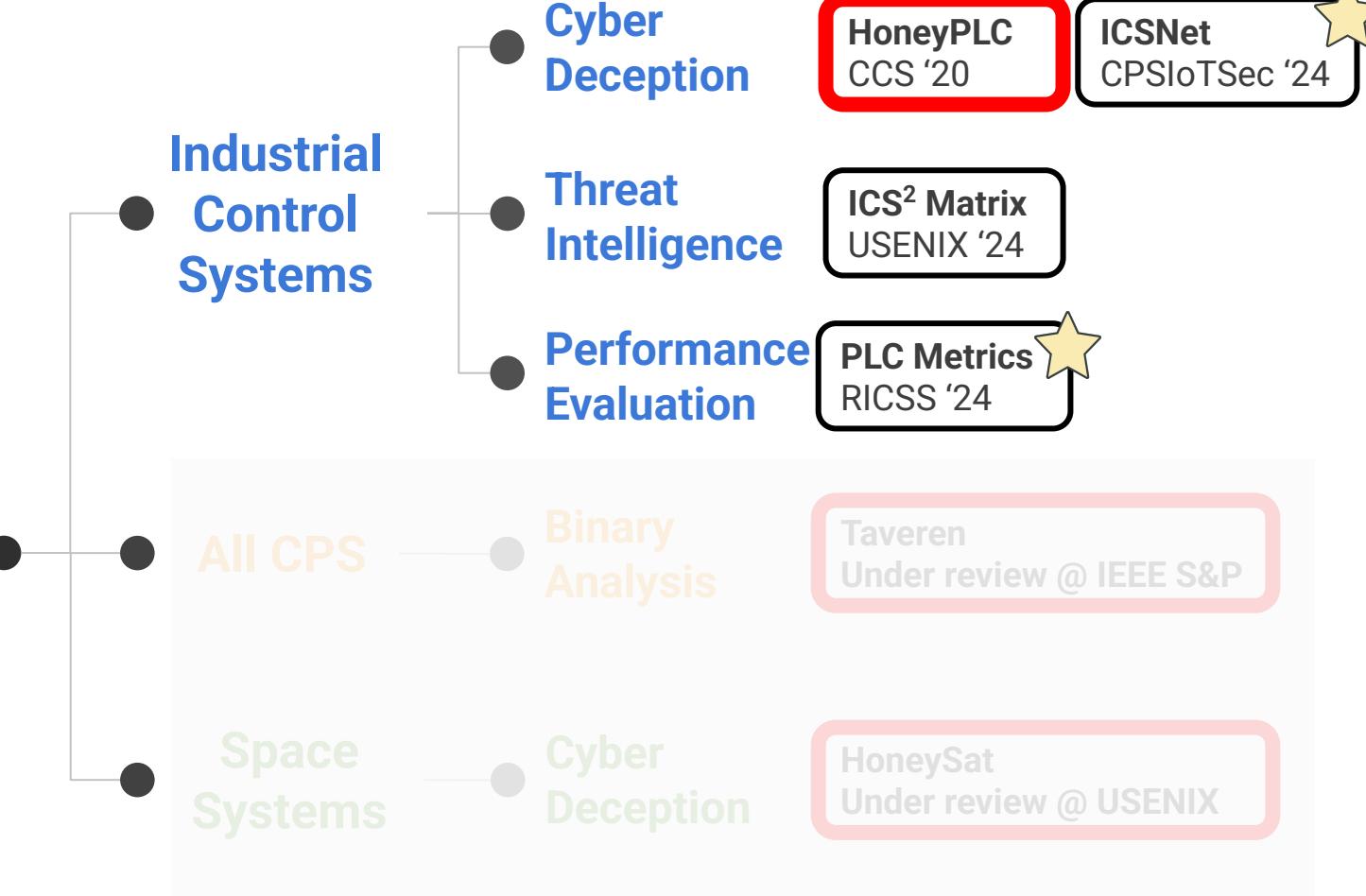
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# Securing the Next Generation of Cyber-Physical Systems







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- Vital device in ICS



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- Multiple brands, models, architectures



# Background: What is a Programmable Logic Controller?

- Vital device in ICS
- Controls physical equipment (nuclear centrifuge)
- Multiple brands, models, architectures
- Implement different network protocols such as HTTP



# Background: What is a honeypot?

- Decoy computer system



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- Attracts malicious actors



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# Background: What is a honeypot?

- Decoy computer system
- Attracts malicious actors
- Record all interaction data
- Analyze data to obtain knowledge
- Multiple ICS honeypots (simulate PLCs)

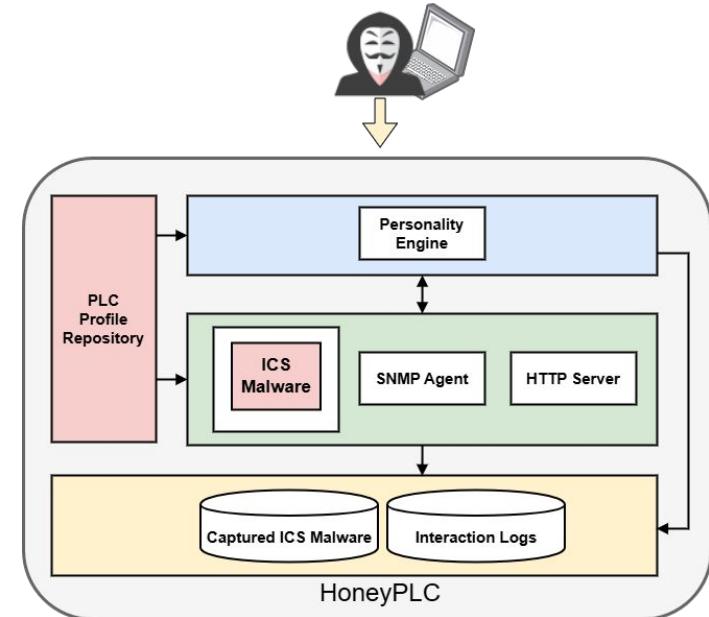


# What is the problem?

Current ICS honeypots are limited by the quality of the data they can gather

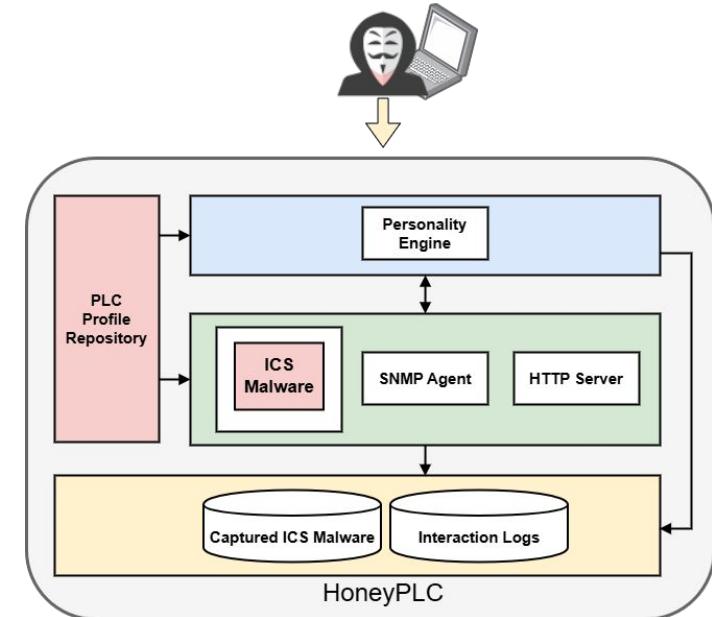
# Our solution: HoneyPLC

- Honeypot that simulates different PLCs



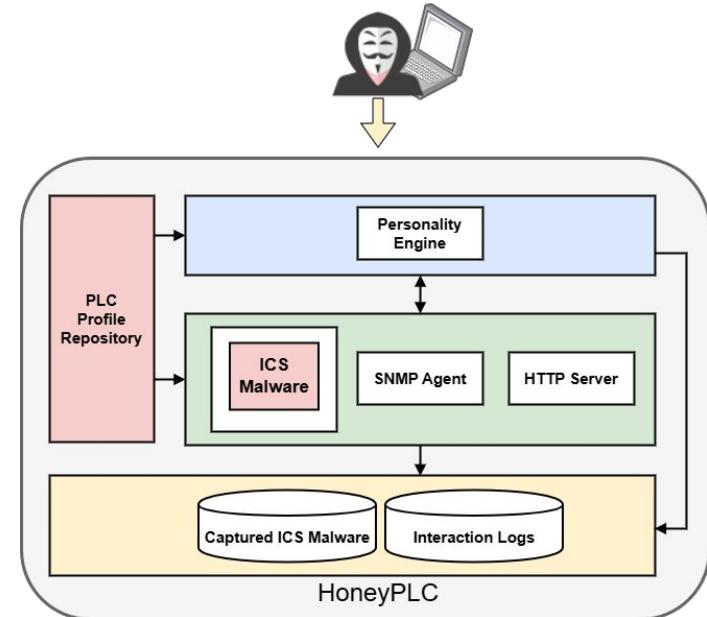
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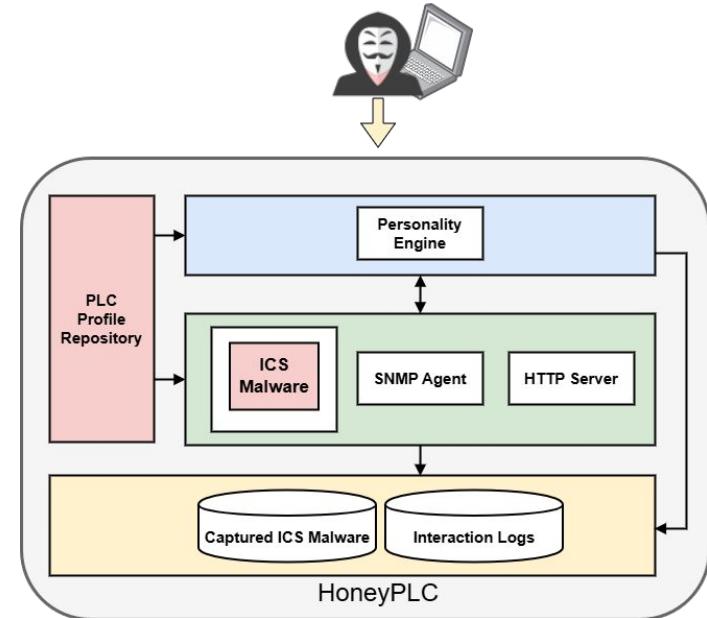
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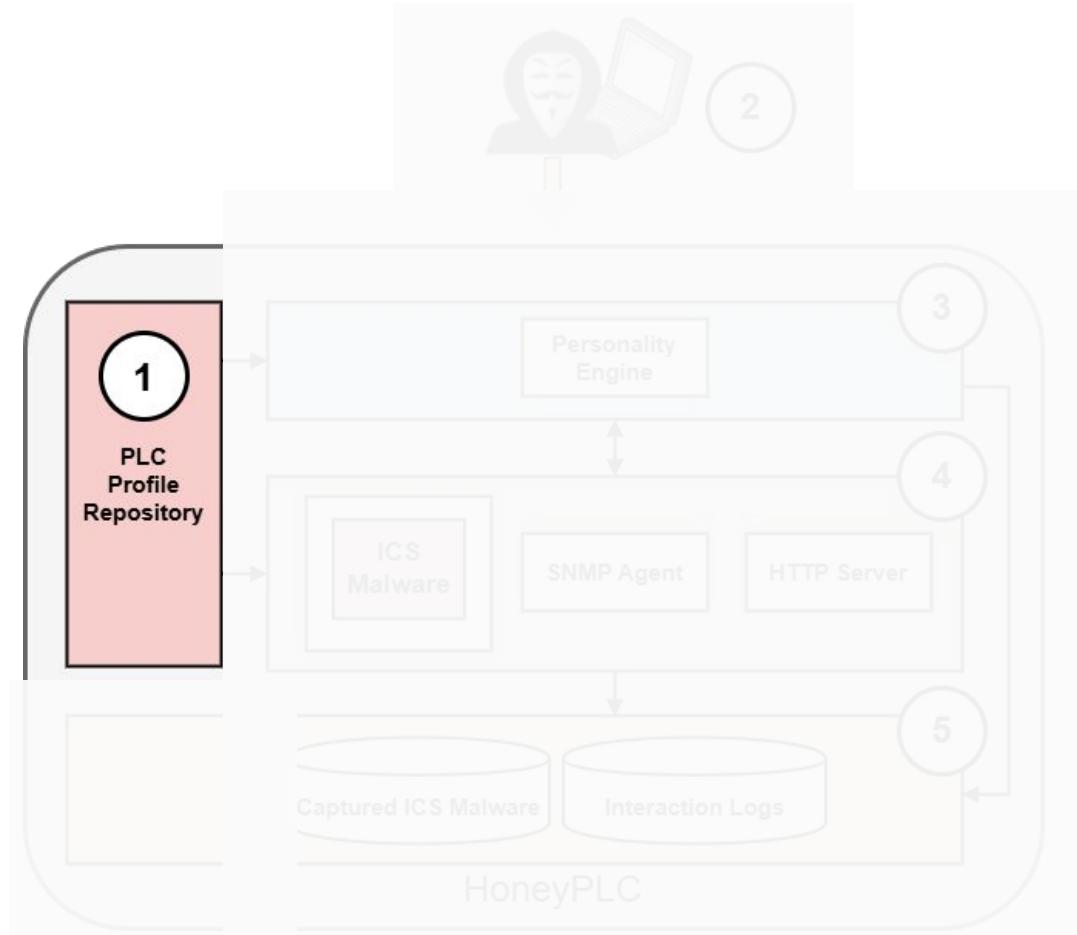
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- Simulates ICS-specific network protocols
- Collects real-world ICS cyberattack data

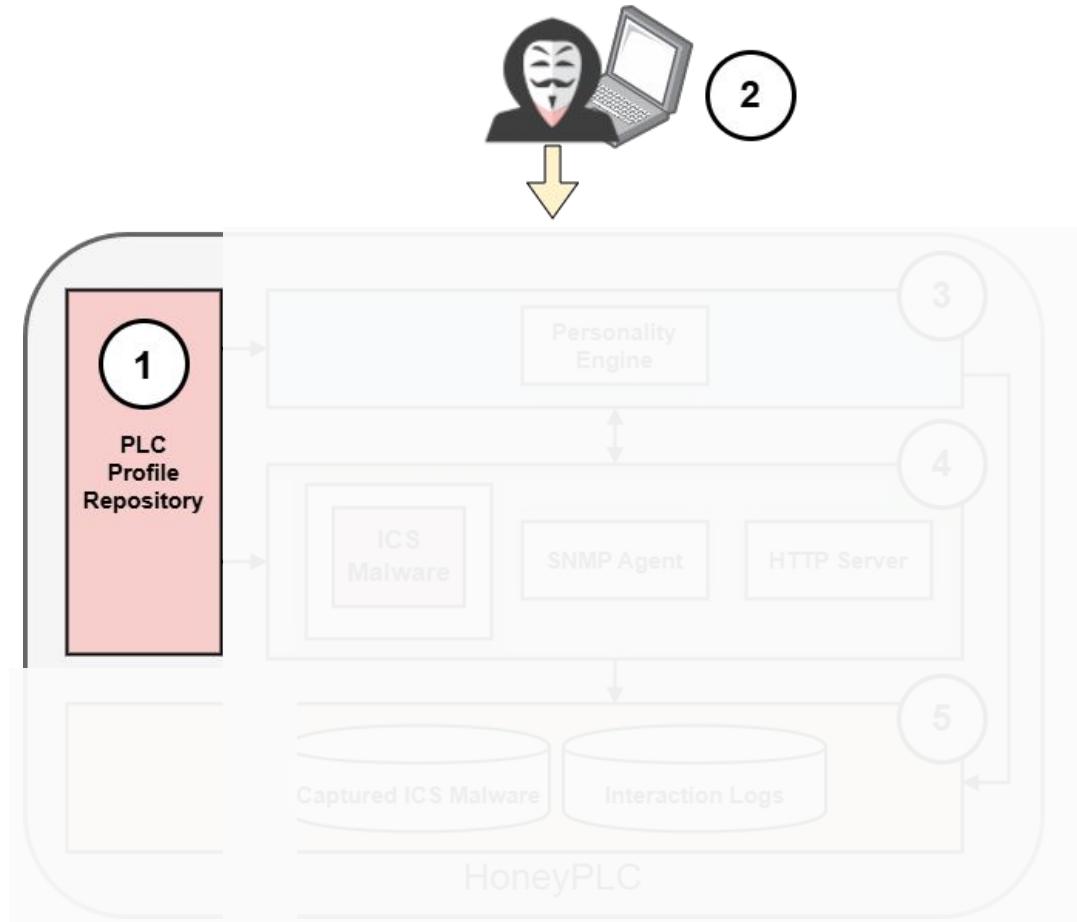


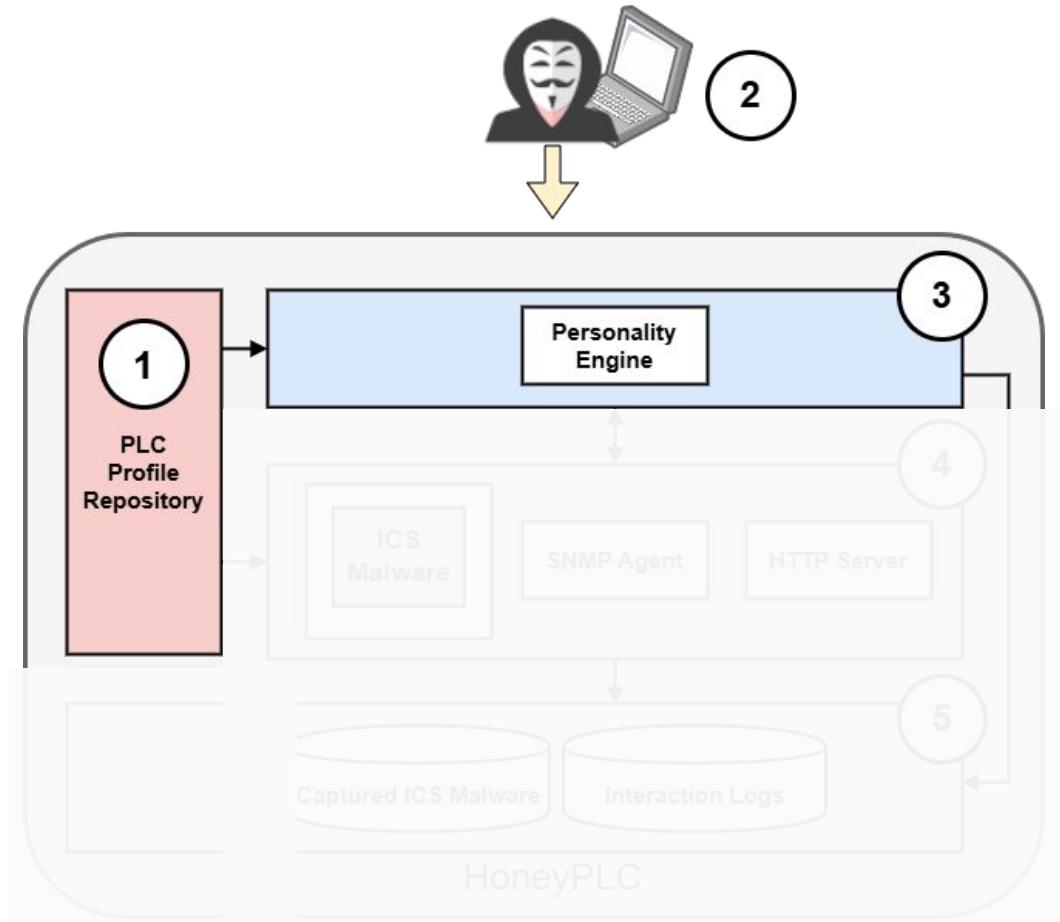
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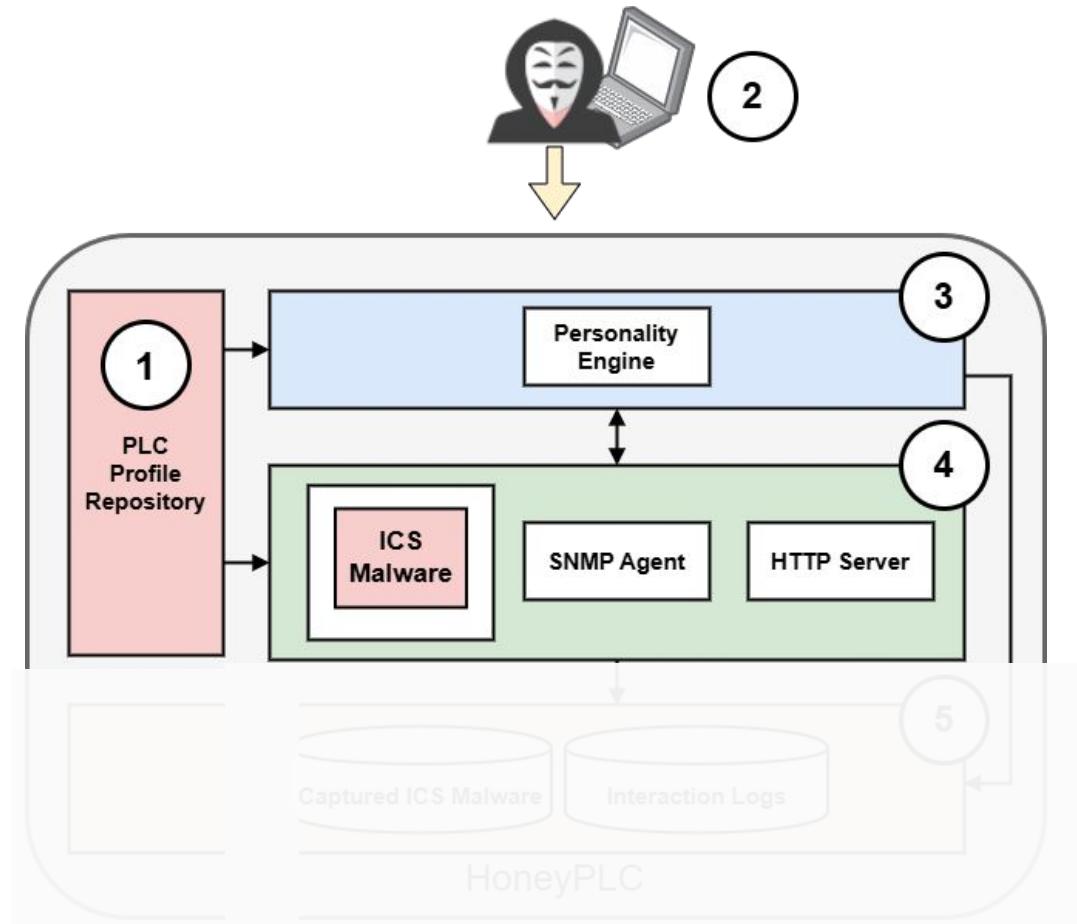
- Honeypot that simulates different PLCs
- Simulates ICS-specific network protocols
- Collects real-world ICS cyberattack data
- Collects ICS-specific malware

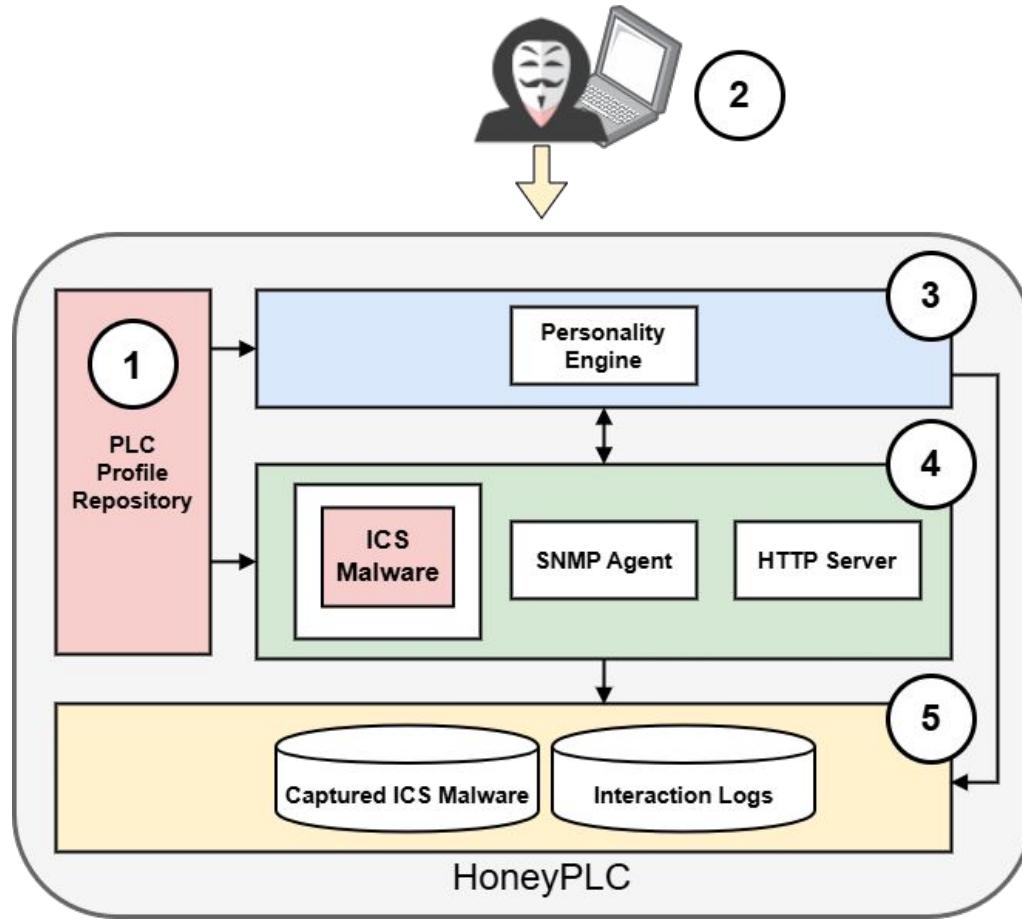












# How did we evaluate HoneyPLC?

1. Well-known cybersecurity tools



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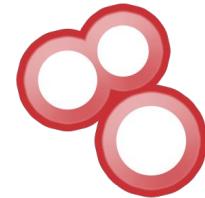
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# What did we find?

Security Tool
Nmap
Siemens PLC Manager
Shodan
PLCInject
PLCScan



**SHODAN**

# What did we find?

Security Tool	Type
Nmap	Industry
Siemens PLC Manager	Industry
Shodan	Industry
PLCInject	Academia
PLCScan	Academia



**SHODAN**

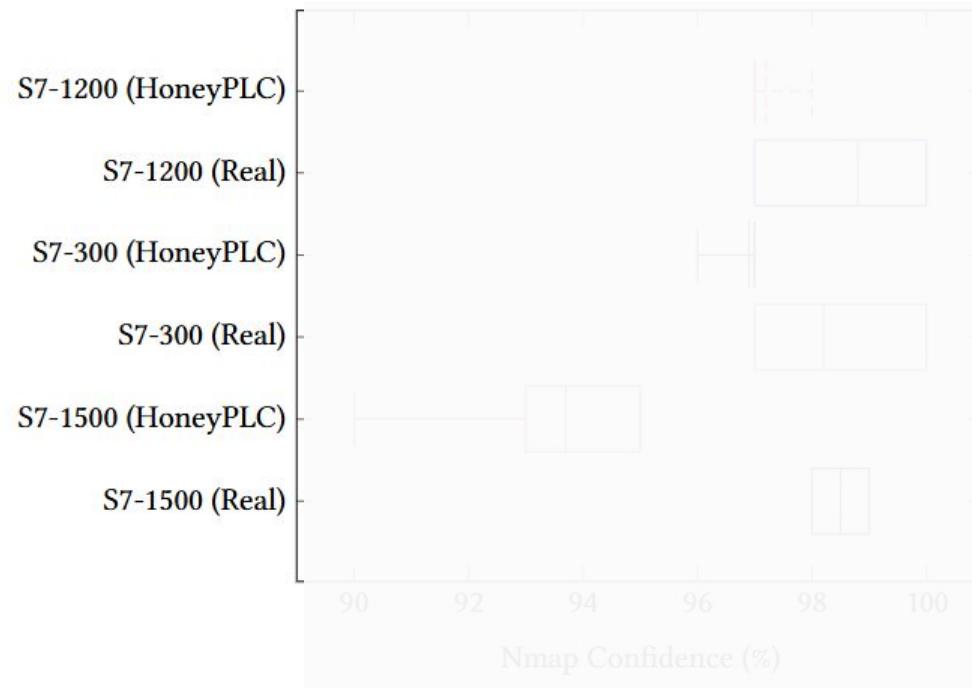
# What did we find?

Security Tool	Type	Result
Nmap	Industry	✓
Siemens PLC Manager	Industry	✓
Shodan	Industry	✓
PLCInject	Academia	✓
PLCScan	Academia	✓

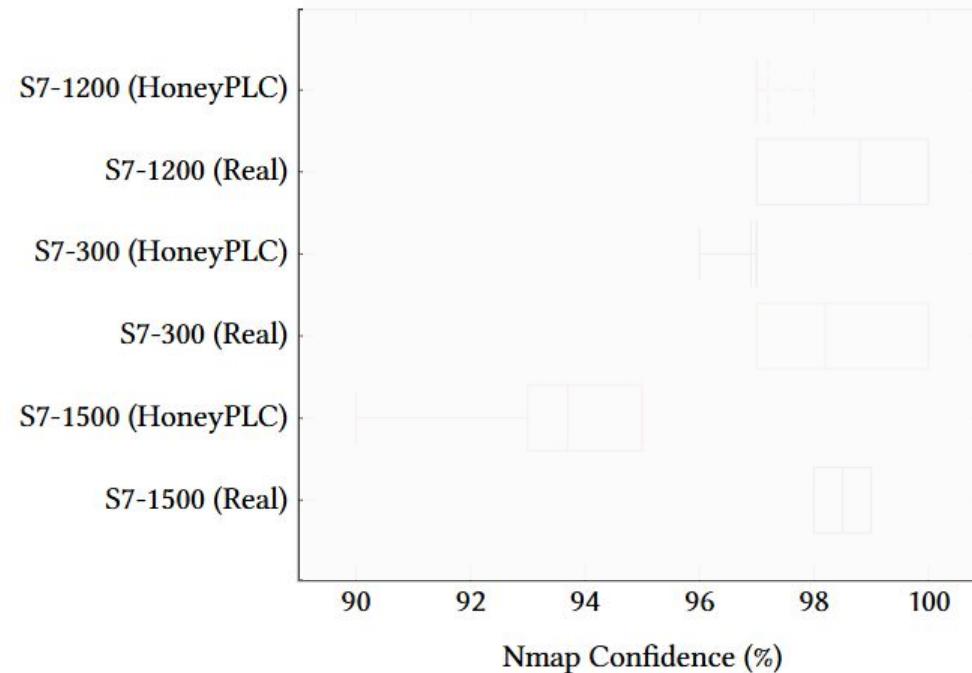


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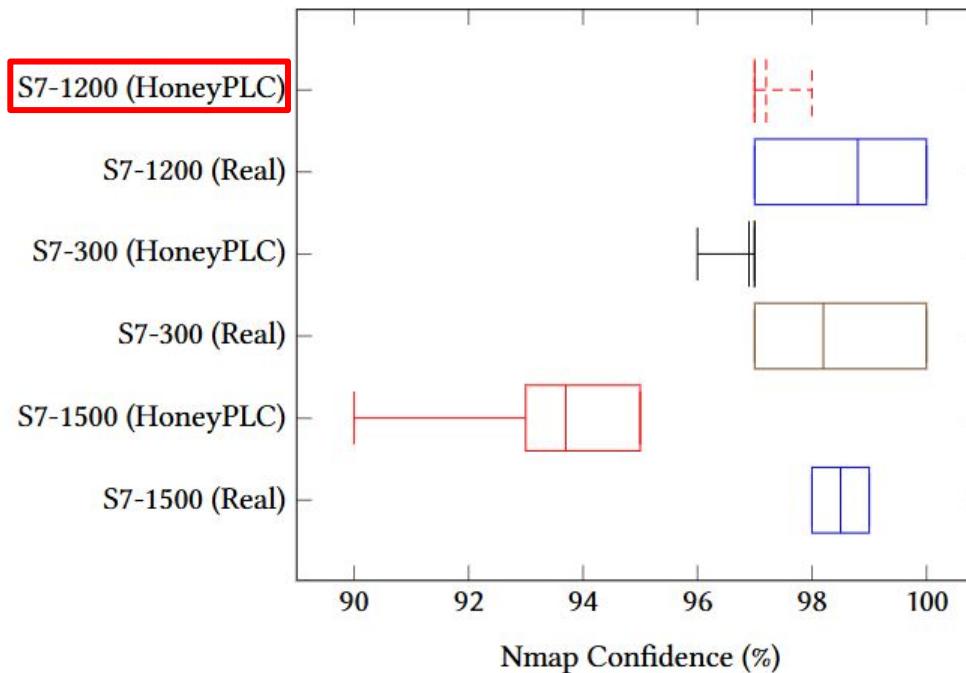
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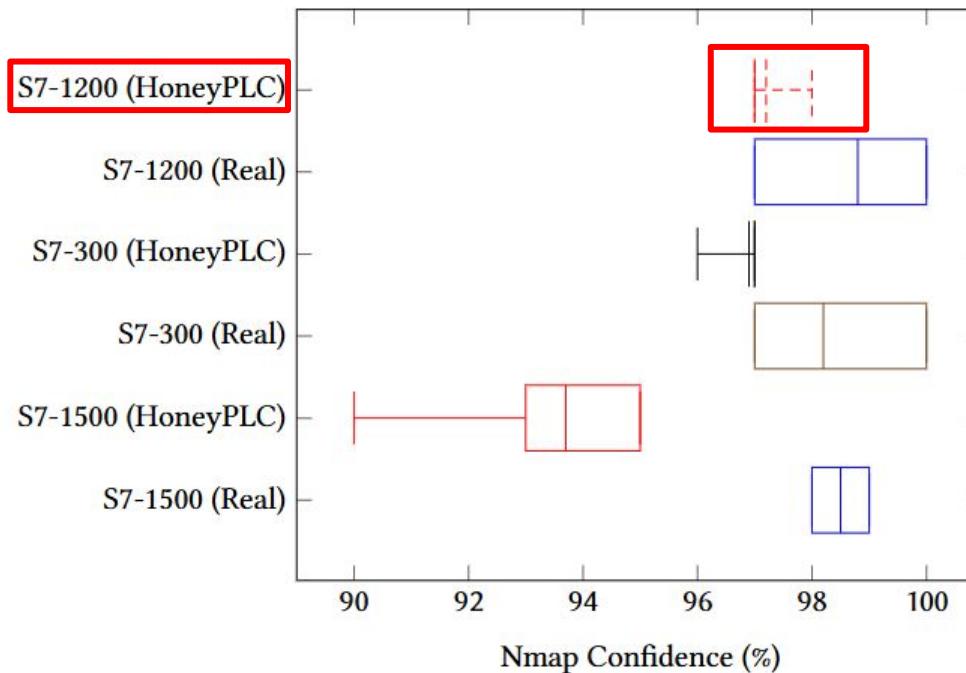
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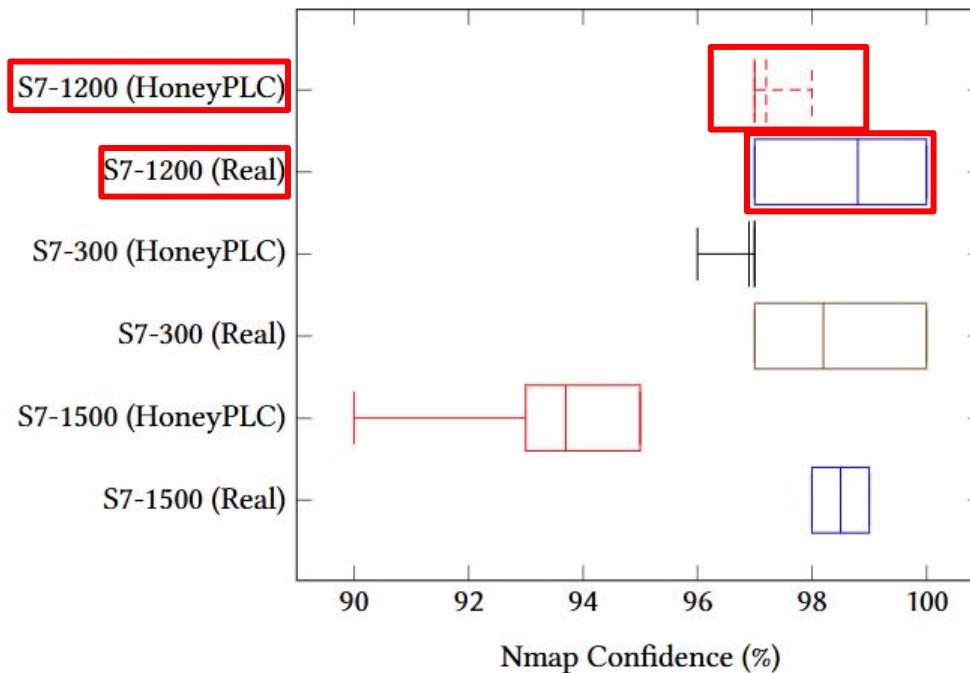
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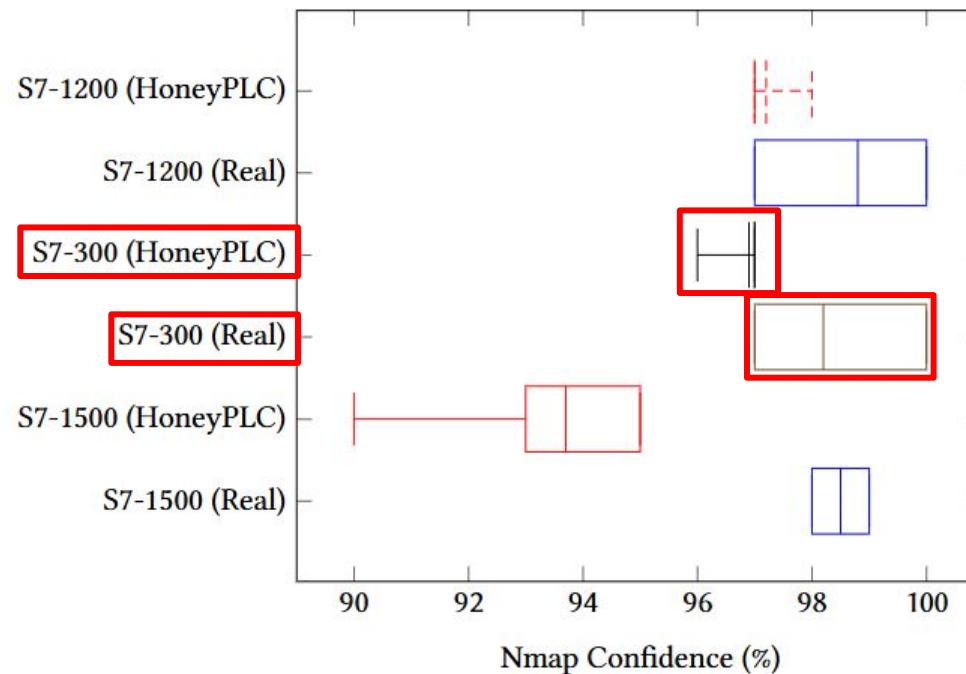
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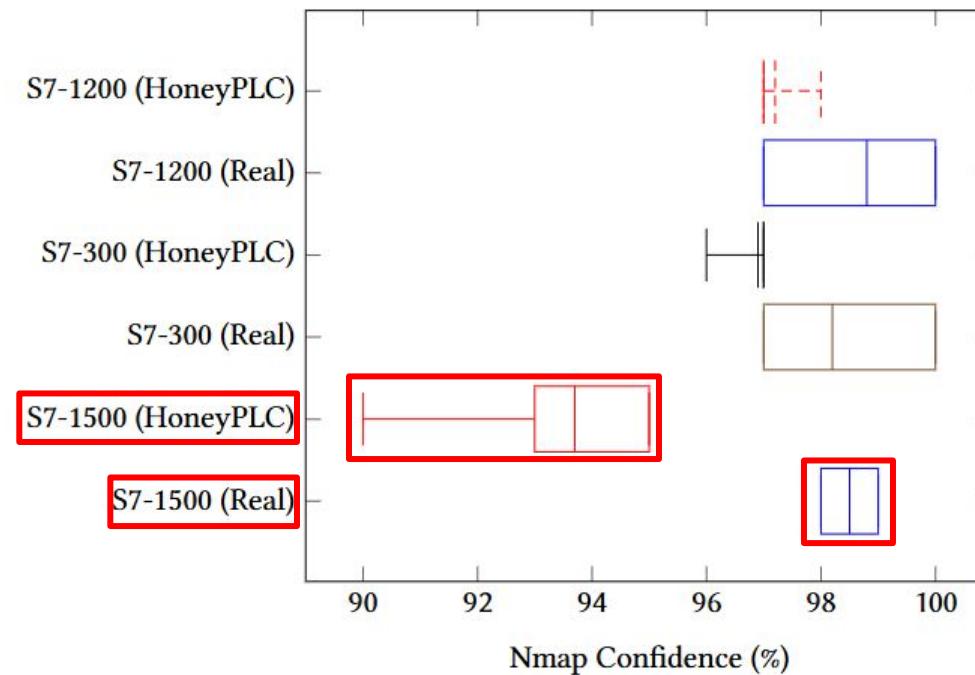
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# What did we find?

PLC Profile
Siemens S7-300
Siemens S7-1200
Siemens S7-1500



# What did we find?

PLC Profile	Connections
Siemens S7-300	600
Siemens S7-1200	202
Siemens S7-1500	292



# What did we find?

PLC Profile	Connections	Read PLC Memory
Siemens S7-300	600	80
Siemens S7-1200	202	0
Siemens S7-1500	292	0



# What did we find?

PLC Profile	Connections	Read PLC Memory	PLC Stop
Siemens S7-300	600	80	4
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# Conclusion: HoneyPLC

- An extensible, realistic honeypot with advanced simulations

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- Deceives well-known security tools and remains covert

# Conclusion: HoneyPLC

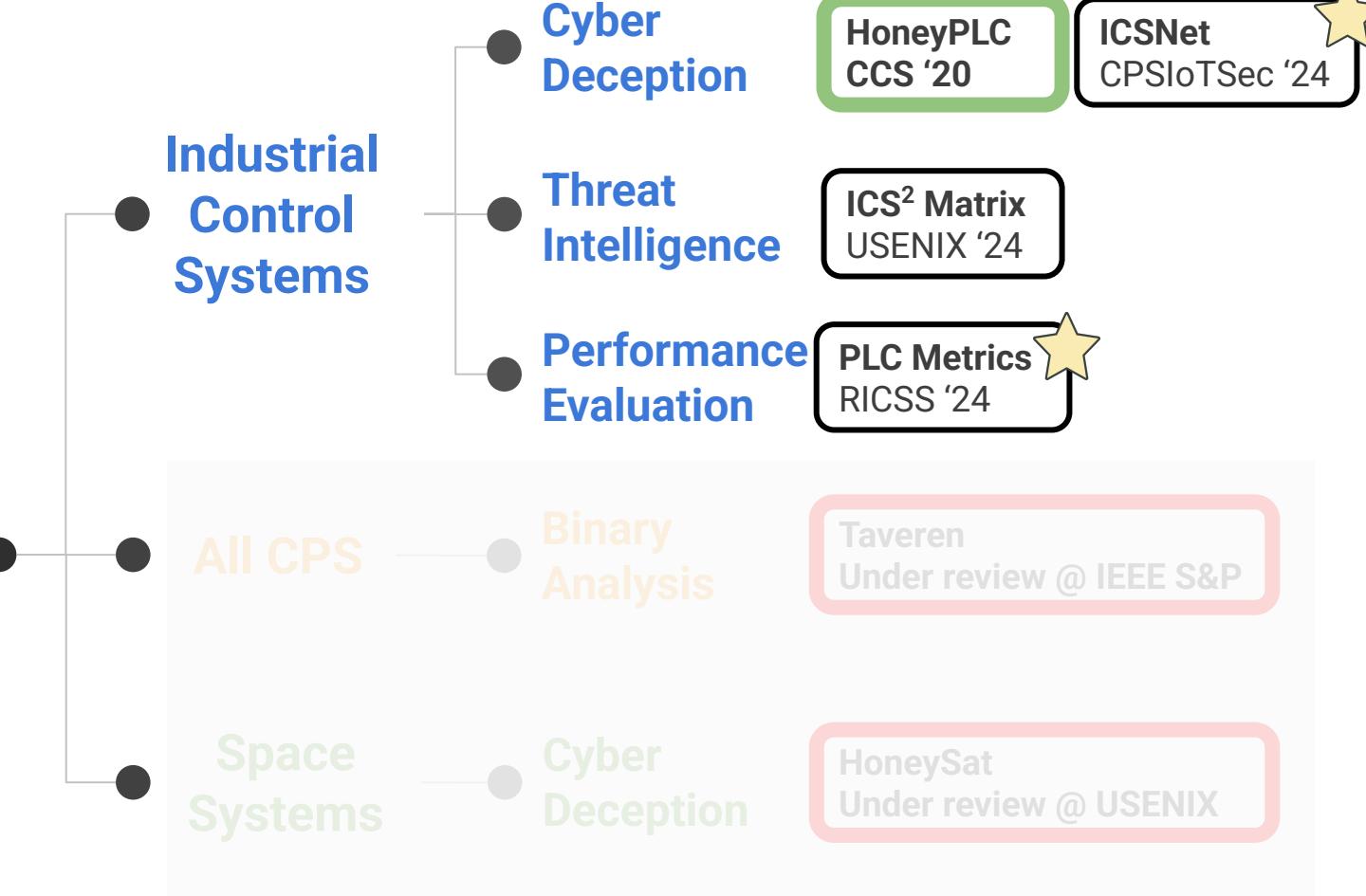
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# Conclusion: HoneyPLC

- An extensible, realistic honeypot with advanced simulations
- Deceives well-known security tools and remains covert
- Captures real-world cyberattack data to protect ICS
- *“HoneyPLC, which to the best of our knowledge, represents the most advanced ICS honeypot available.” [1]*

[1] Conti, Mauro, Francesco Trolese, and Federico Turrin. "Icspot: A high-interaction honeypot for industrial control systems." 2022 International Symposium on Networks, Computers and Communications (ISNCC). IEEE, 2022.

# Securing the Next Generation of Cyber-Physical Systems



# Securing the Next Generation of Cyber-Physical Systems



All CPS

Industrial  
Control  
Systems

Space  
Systems



Binary  
Analysis



Cyber  
Deception



Threat  
Intelligence



Performance  
Evaluation

PLC Metrics  
RICSS '24

Taveren  
Under review @ IEEE S&P

HoneySat  
Under review @ USENIX

HoneyPLC  
CCS '20

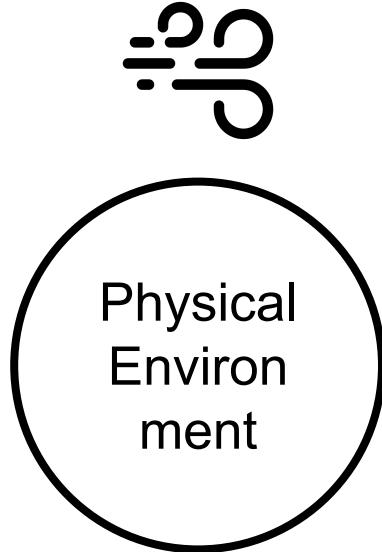
ICSNet  
CPSIoTSec '24



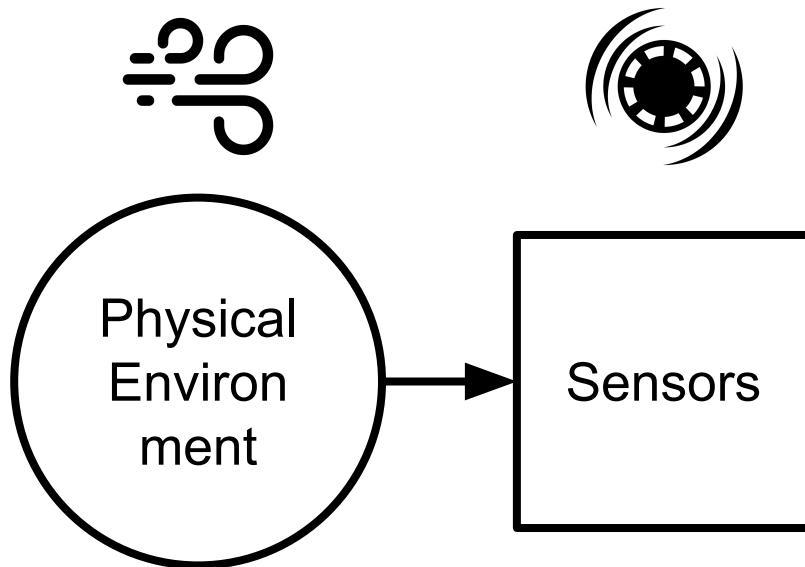




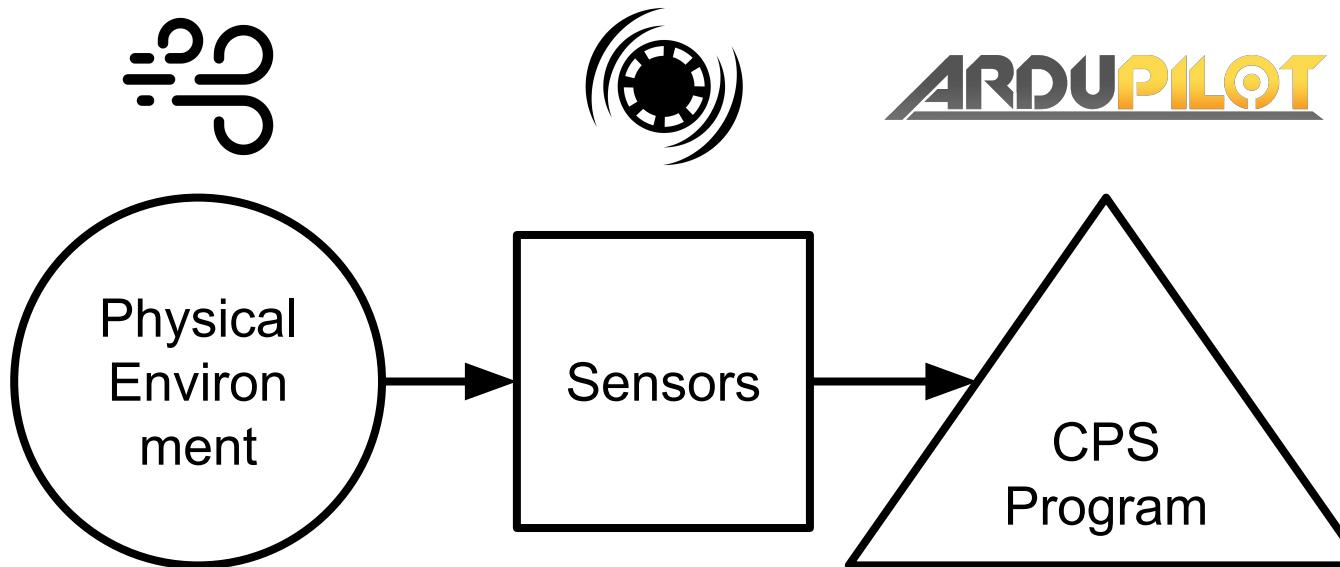
# Background: Cyber-Physical Systems' Programs



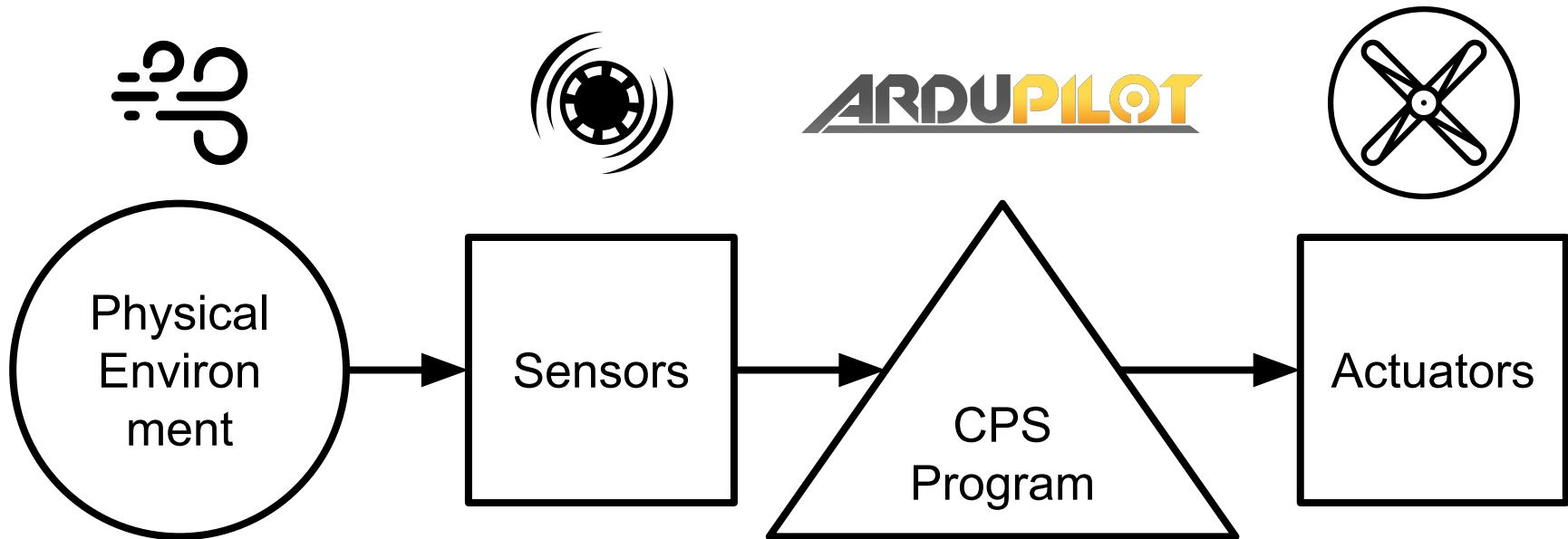
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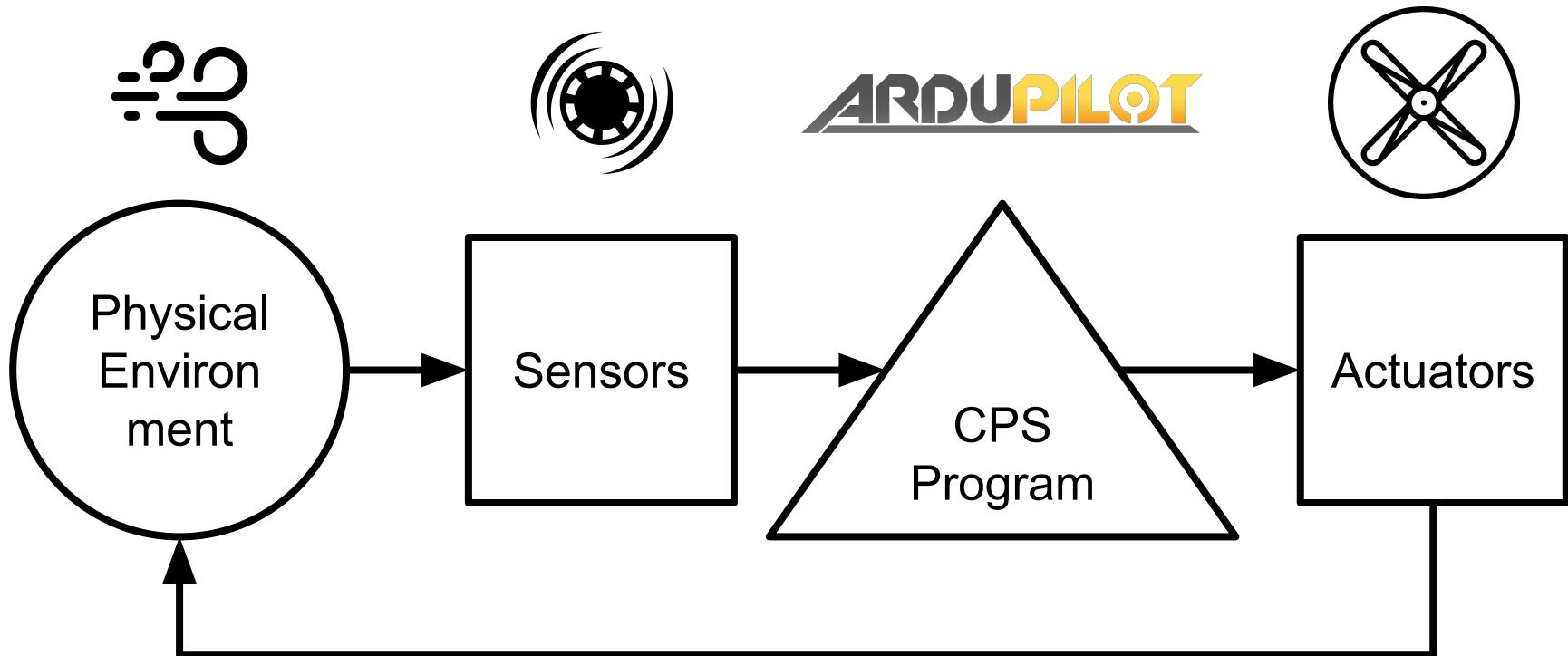
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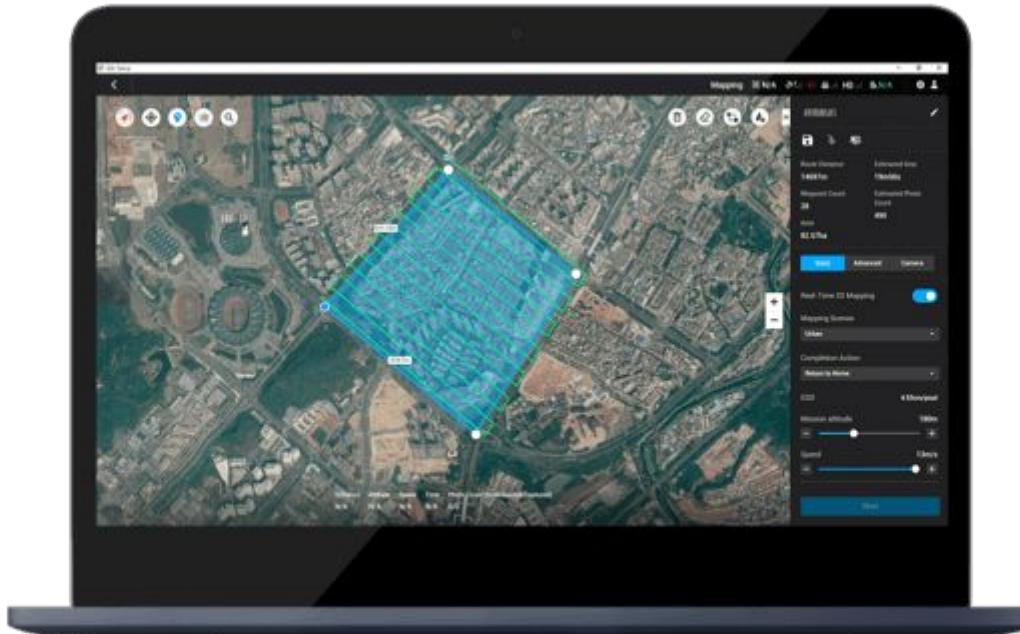
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# Background: CPS Proprietary Programs



# Background: What is binary analysis?

- Technique used to **analyze and review binary code**

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- Technique used to analyze and review binary code
- Allows us to find vulnerabilities
- Necessary to analyze software when we do not have the source code

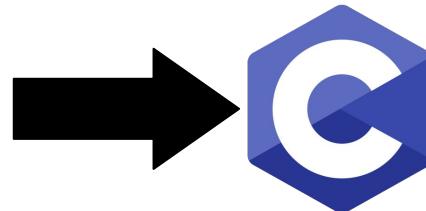
# Background: What is binary analysis?

```
int main() {  
  
    printf("Hello, World!\n");  
  
    return 0;  
}
```

Human-readable  
source code

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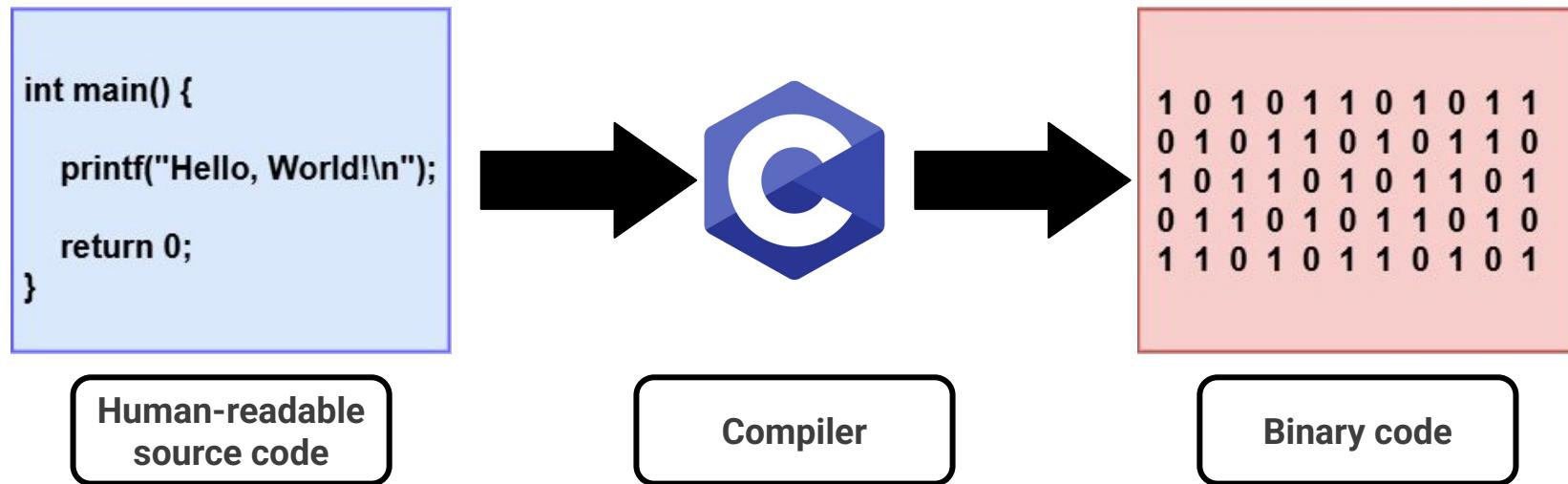
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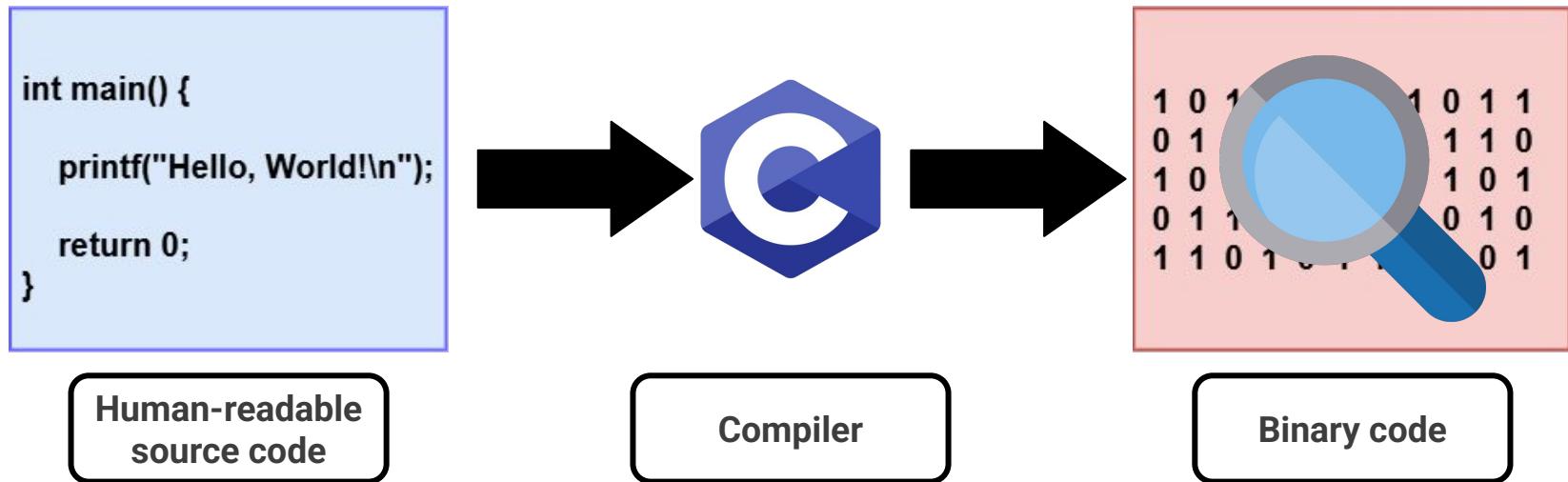
Human-readable  
source code

Compiler

# Background: What is binary analysis?



# Background: What is binary analysis?



# Background: Security versus Safety

# Background: Security versus Safety

```
#include <string.h>

void foo (char *bar)
{
    char c[12];
    strcpy(c, bar); // no bounds
}

int main (int argc, char **argv)
{
    foo(argv[1]);
}
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# Background: Security versus Safety

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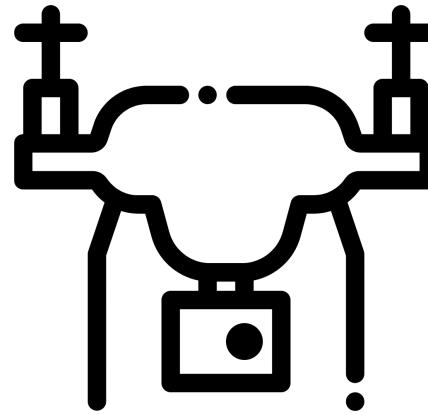
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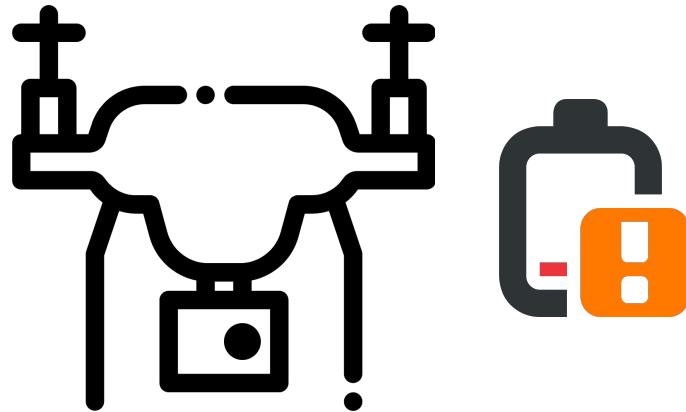
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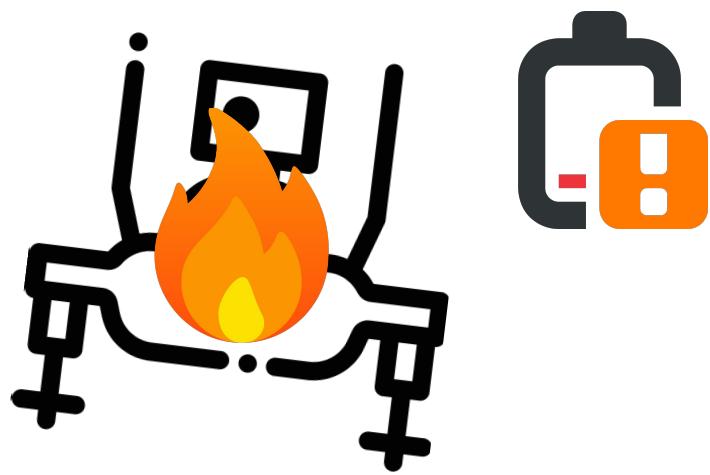
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# What is the problem?

Current binary analysis methods to analyze CPS programs focus on *security* and cannot find and remove *safety* vulnerabilities.

# Our Solution: Taveren

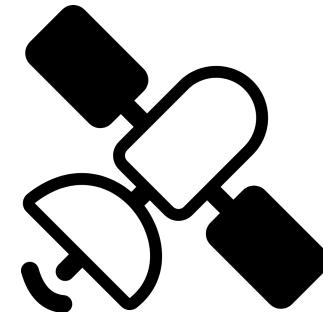
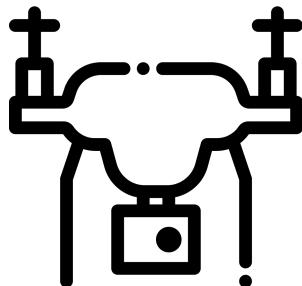
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- Enforces **user-generated safety policies**

# Our Solution: Taveren

- **Binary analysis tool** for CPS Programs
- Enforces **user-generated safety policies**
- Works for **multiple CPS programs and architectures**



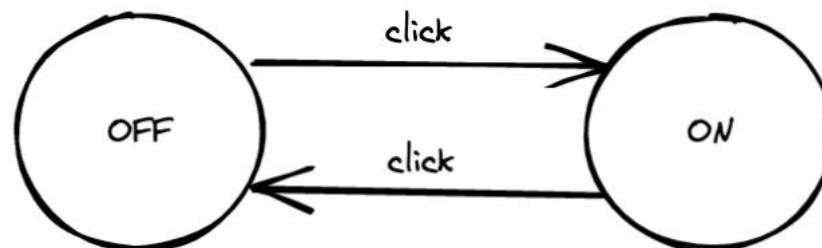
# How does Taveren work?

- Built on top of **angr** (open-source binary analysis platform)



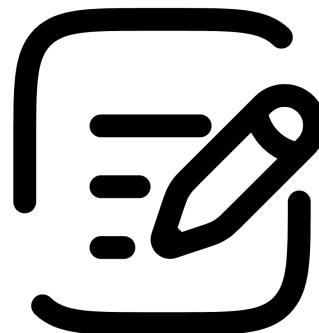
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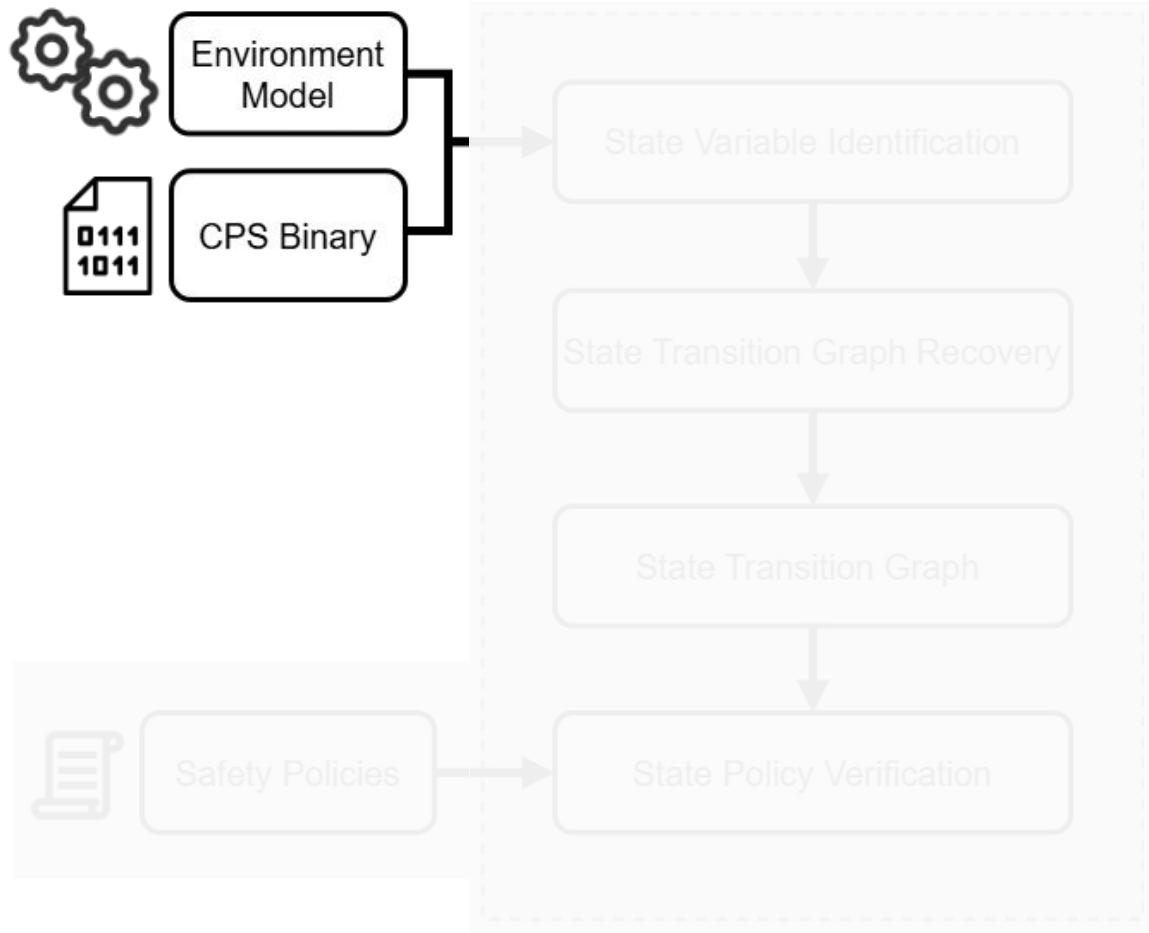
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- Uses **finite-state machines** to model CPS' complexity

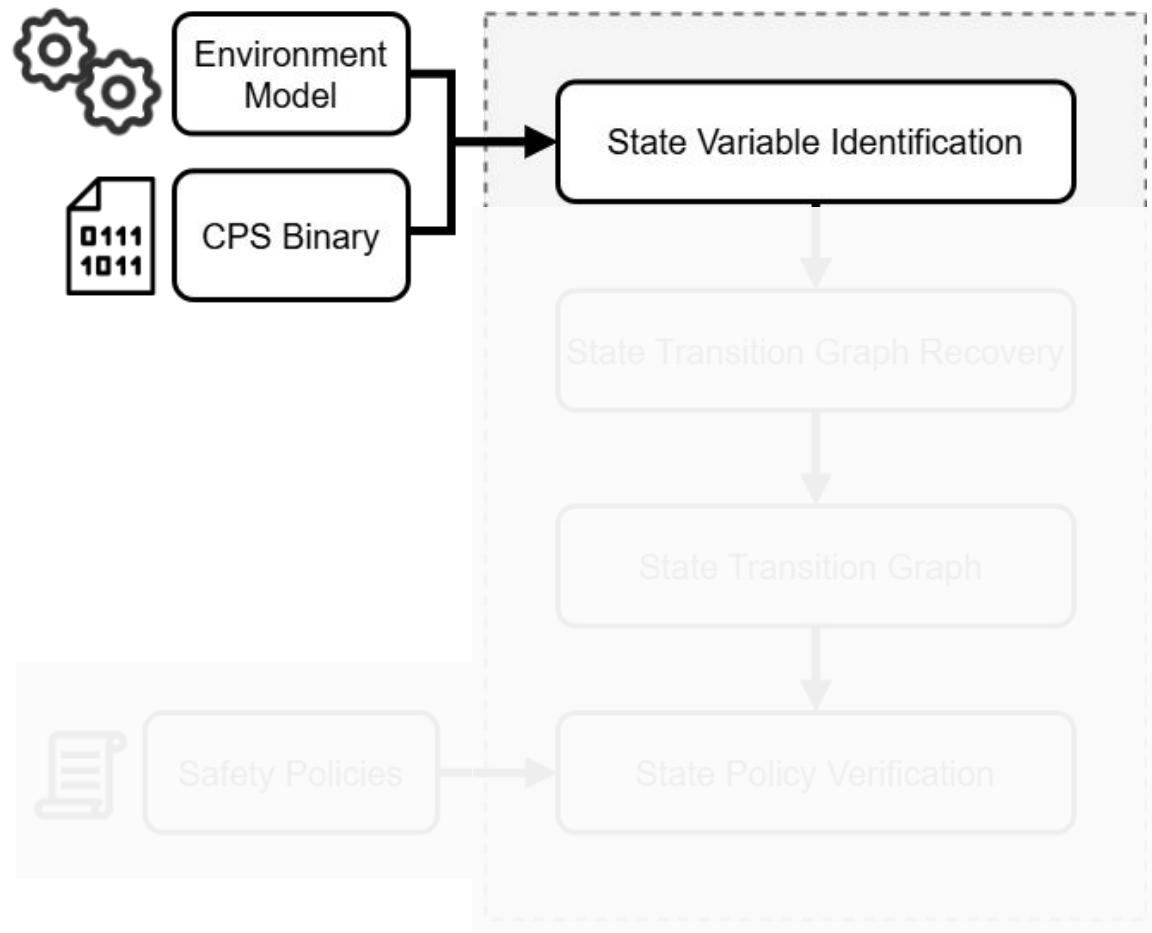


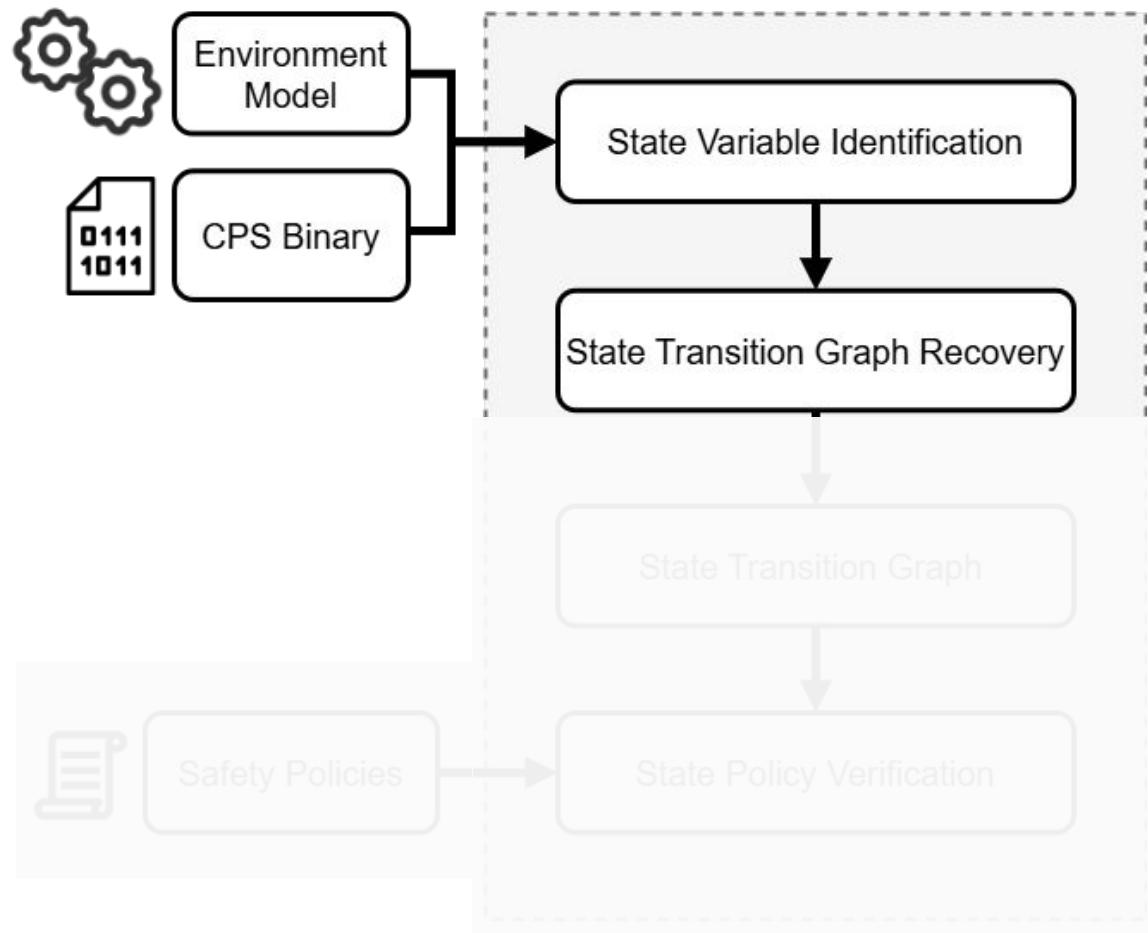
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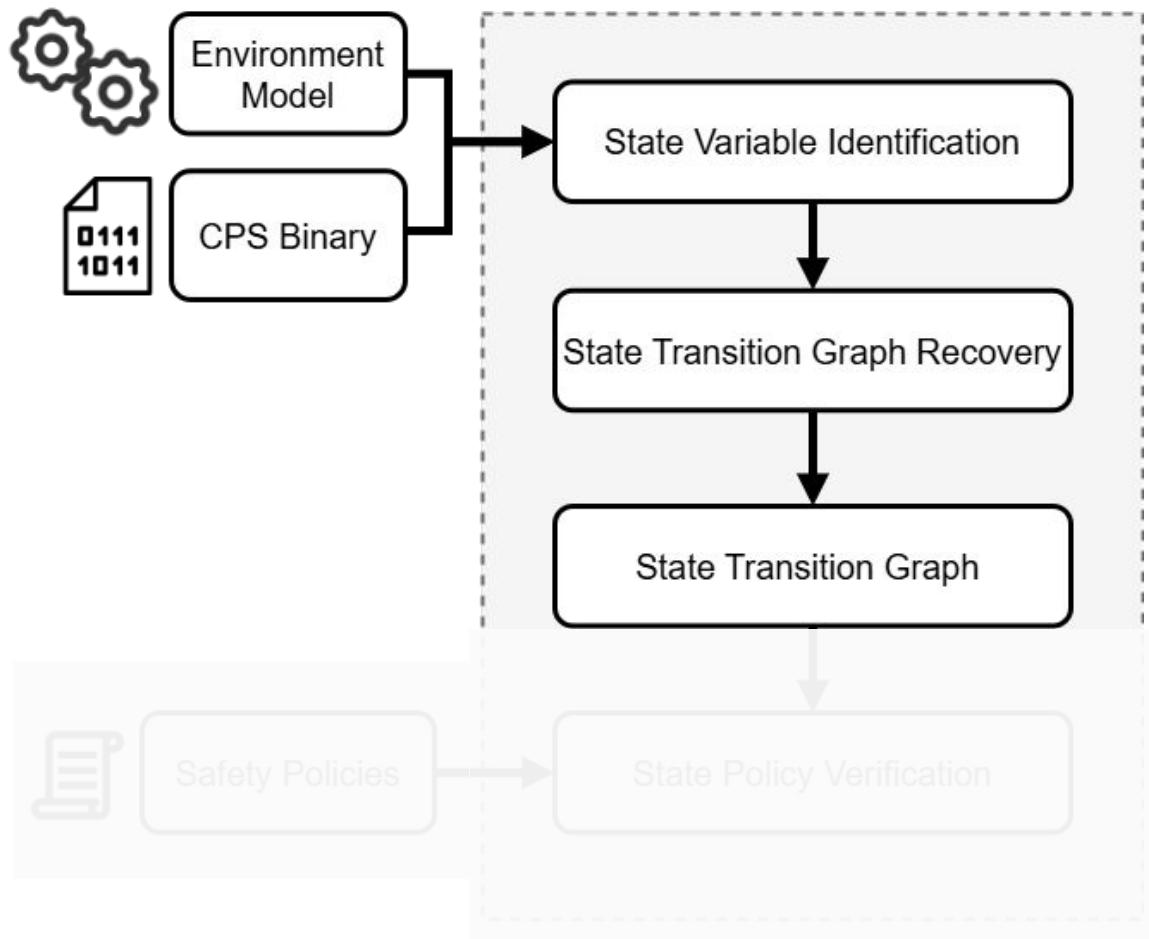
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- Requires **CPS program**, **safety policies**, and **environment model**

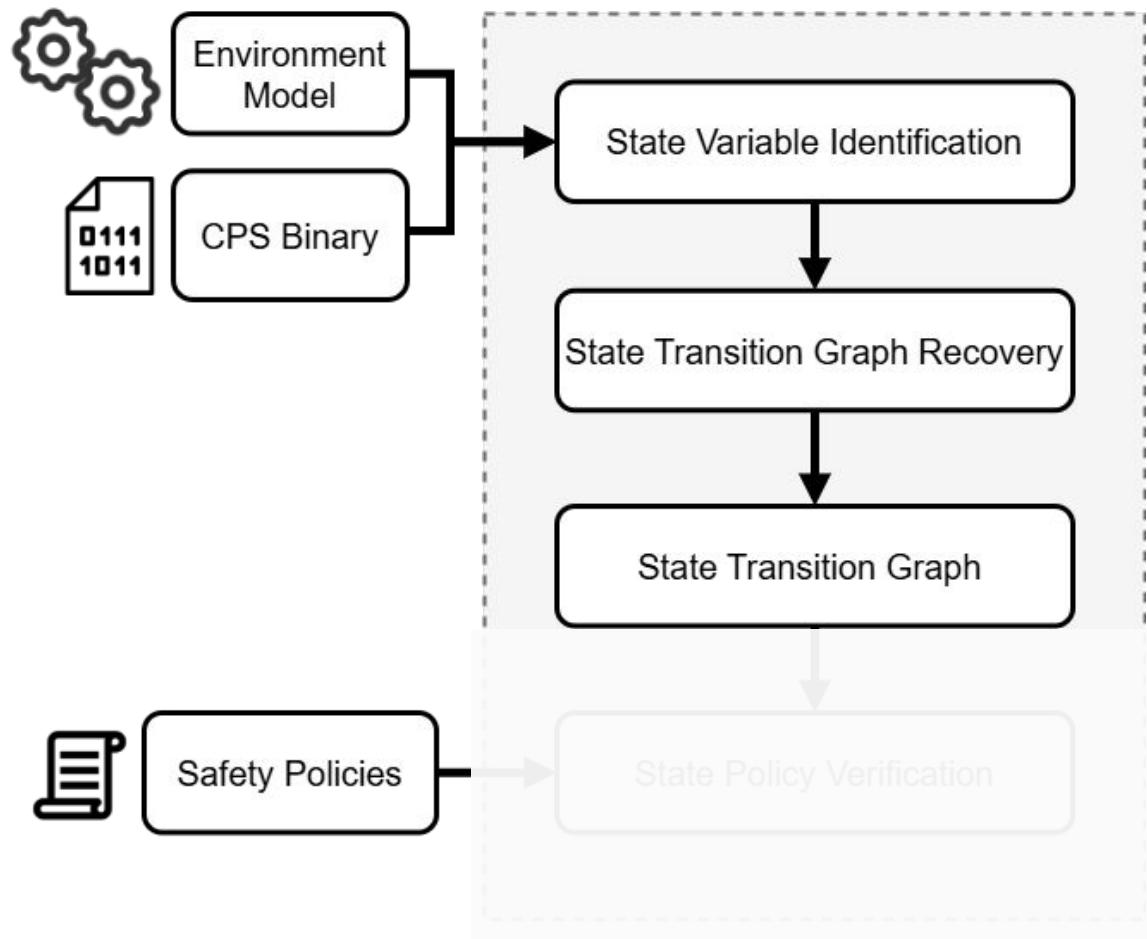


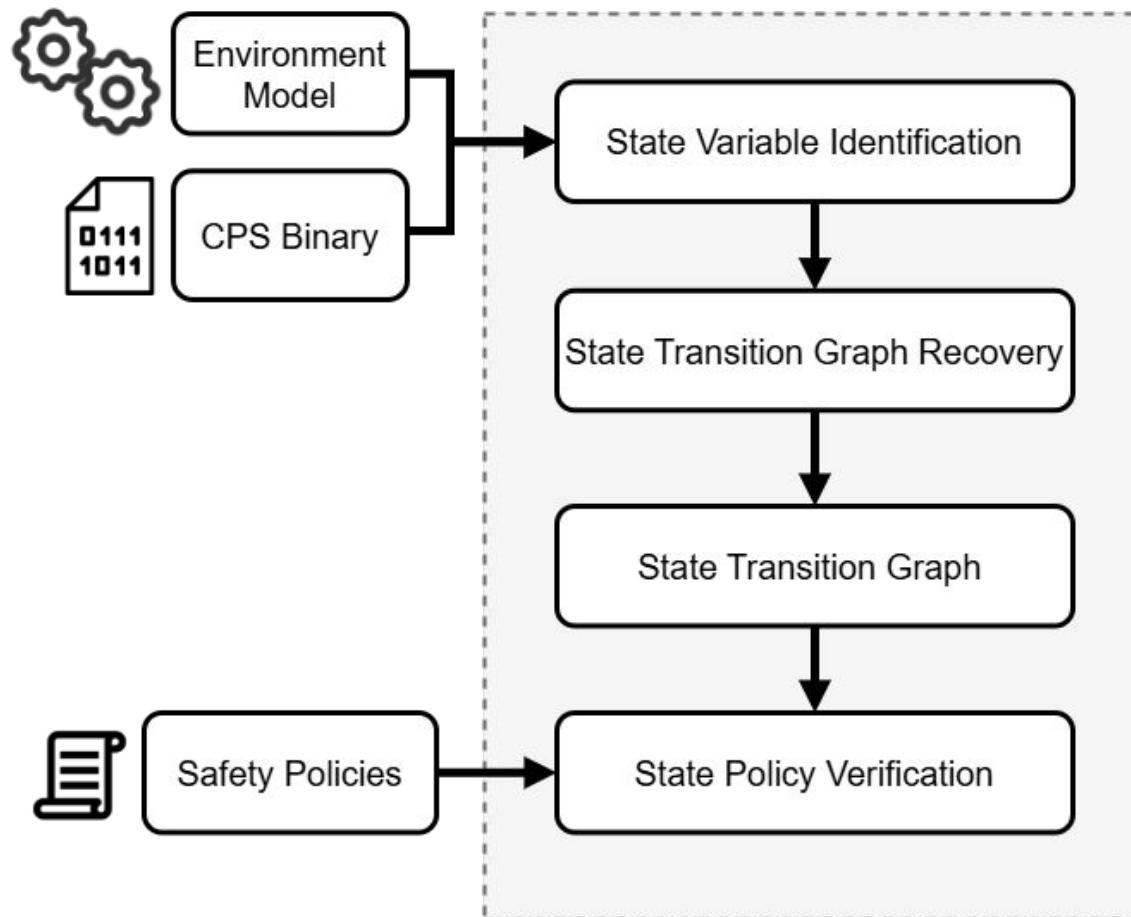






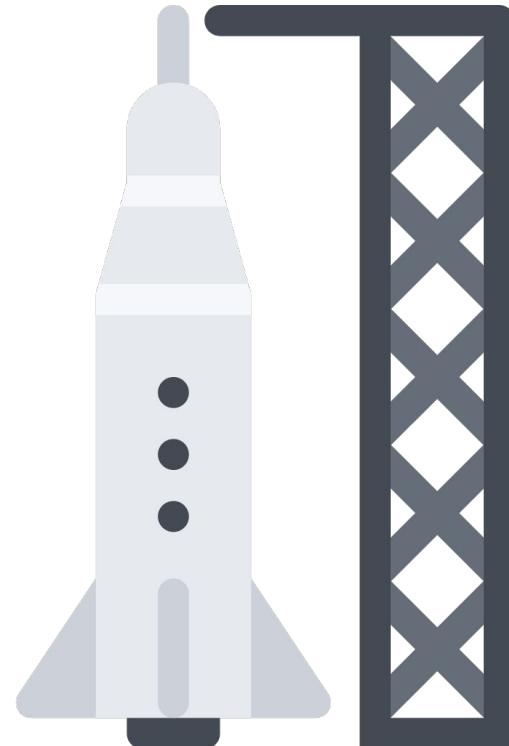






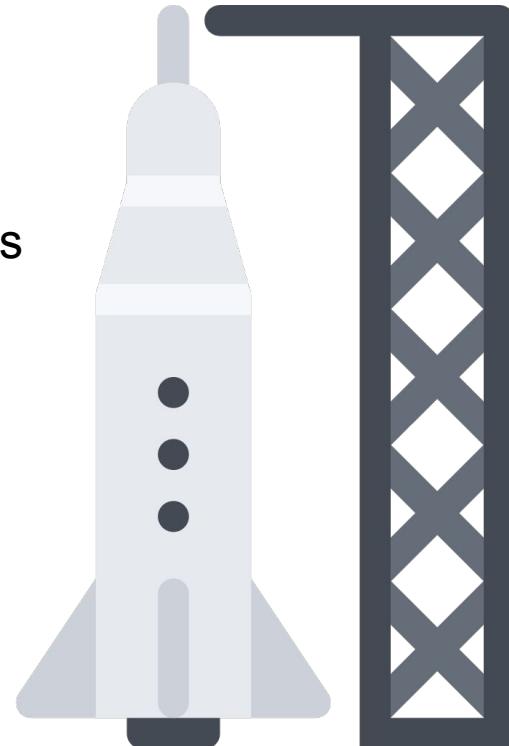
# How did we evaluate Taveren?

- Dataset with 19 CPS Program Binaries



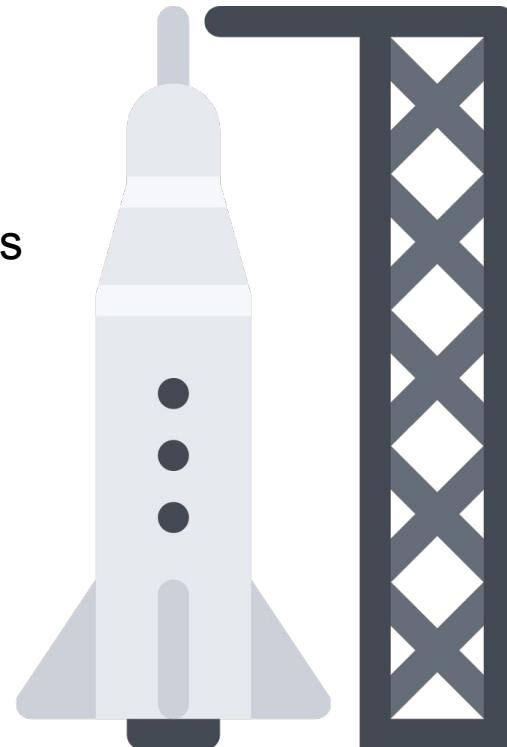
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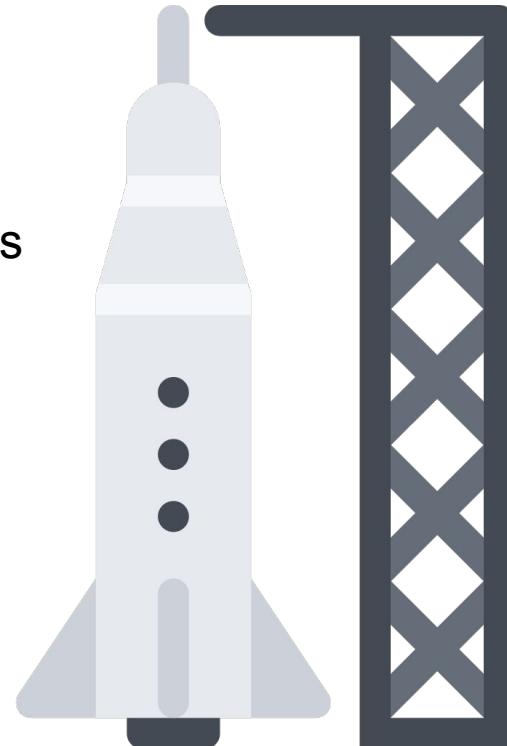
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- 21 safety policies



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- Ground-truth reference graphs manually derived from source code

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- Taveren recovered all **19 CPS programs' transition graphs**
- Ground-truth reference graphs manually derived from source code
- Taveren has a **95% accuracy** enforcing safety policy verification

# Safety Policy Enforcement Accuracy Results

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#	P.Copter.1	P.Copter.2	Correct?
Copter.1	T	T	Y
Copter.2	T	T	Y
#	P.Rover.1		Correct?
Rover.1	F		Unknown
#	P.Lift.1	P.Lift.2	Correct?
Lift.1	T	F	N
#	P.WT.1	P.WT.2	Correct?
WT.1	F	F	Y
WT.2	T	T	Y
WT.3	F	F	Y
#	P.Pack.1	P.Pack.2	Correct?
Pack.1	T	F	Y

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#	P.TL.1	P.TL.2	P.TL.3	Correct?
TL.4	T	F	T	Y
TL.5	T	F	T	Y
TL.6	T	F	T	Y
TL.7	T	F	F	Y
TL.8	F	F	T	Y
TL.9	T	T	T	Y
TL.10	T	F	F	Y
TL.11	T	T	T	Y
#	P.Abort.1		P.Abort.2	Correct?
Abort.3	F		T	Y
#	P.Oven.1	P.Oven.2	P.Oven.3	Correct?
Oven.1	T	T		Y
#	P.Vend.1			Correct?
Vend.1	F			Y
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Elev.1	T	T	T	Y

# Safety Policy Enforcement Accuracy Results

CPS Binary

ArduCopter 1

ArduCopter 2

# Safety Policy Enforcement Accuracy Results

CPS Binary	Policy 1: Do not apply throttle when in unknown position
ArduCopter 1	Patch Applied
ArduCopter 2	Patch Applied

# Safety Policy Enforcement Accuracy Results

CPS Binary	Policy 1: Do not apply throttle when in unknown position	Policy 2: Flip maneuvers cannot last more than 2.5 seconds
ArduCopter 1	Patch Applied	Patch Applied
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# Safety Policy Enforcement Accuracy Results

CPS Binary	Policy 1: Do not apply throttle when in unknown position	Policy 2: Flip maneuvers cannot last more than 2.5 seconds	Taveren Result
ArduCopter 1	Patch Applied	Patch Applied	Correct
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- First binary analysis tool to find safety vulnerabilities in CPS programs
- Works with multiple types of CPS
- Evaluated using real-world CPS programs
- Improves the cybersecurity of CPS by finding previously unknown safety vulnerabilities

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All CPS

Industrial  
Control  
Systems

Space  
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Cyber  
Deception

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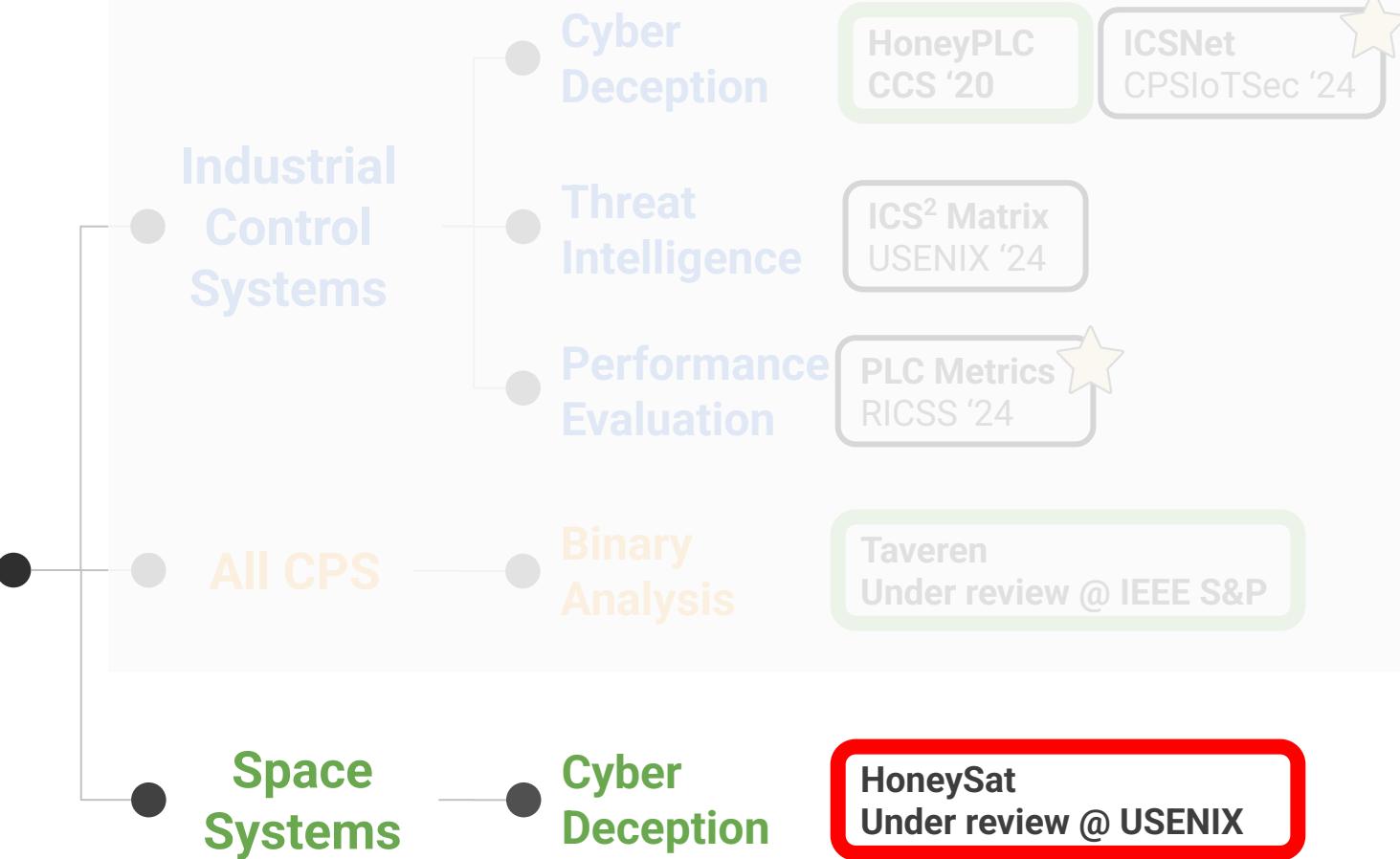
ICS<sup>2</sup> Matrix  
USENIX '24

PLC Metrics  
RICSS '24

Taveren  
Under review @ IEEE S&P

HoneySat  
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News

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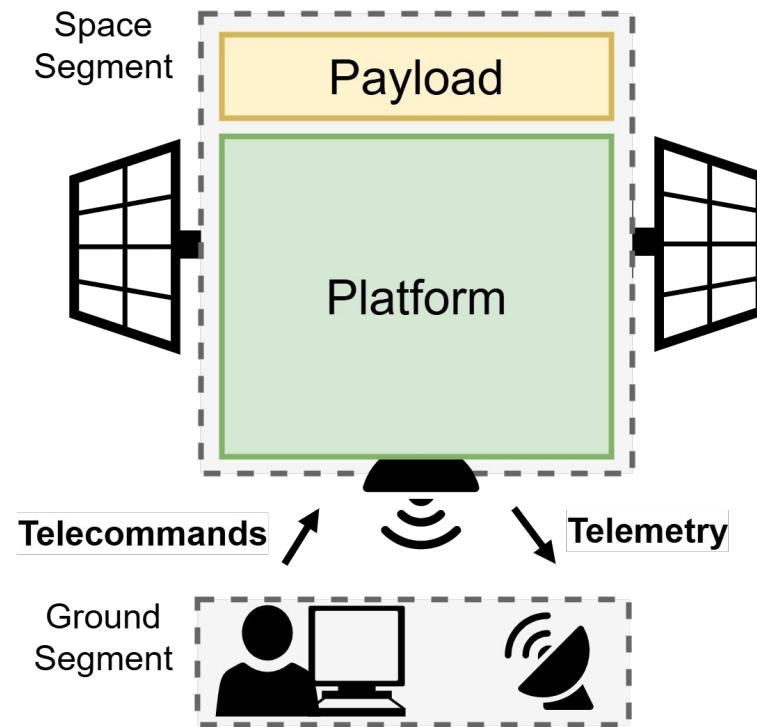
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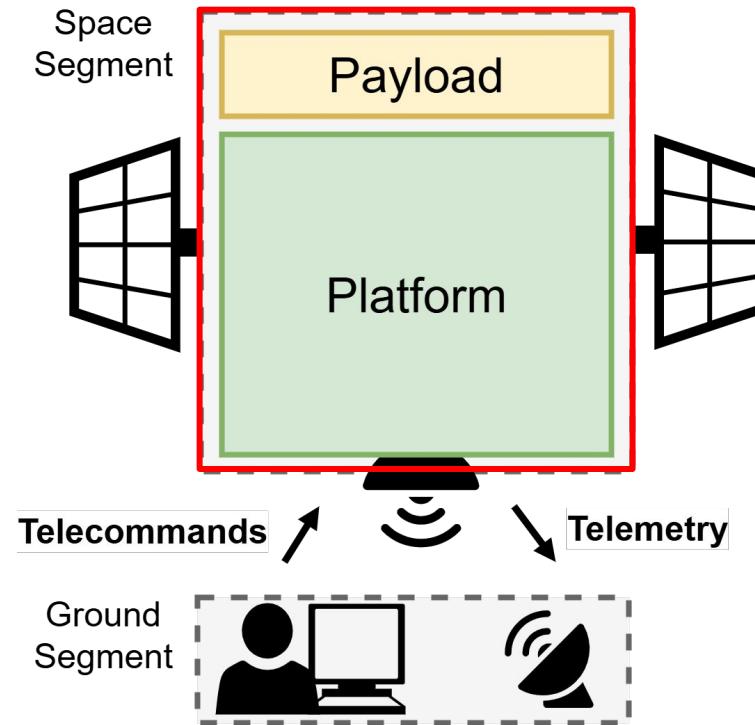
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### *New Star Wars Plan: Pentagon Rushes to Counter Threats in Orbit*

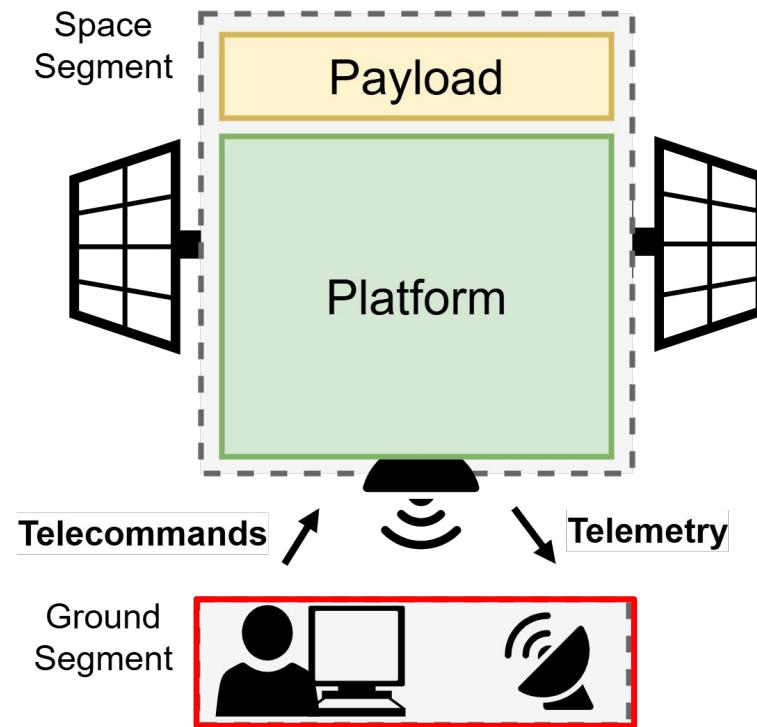
# Background: Anatomy of a Satellite Mission



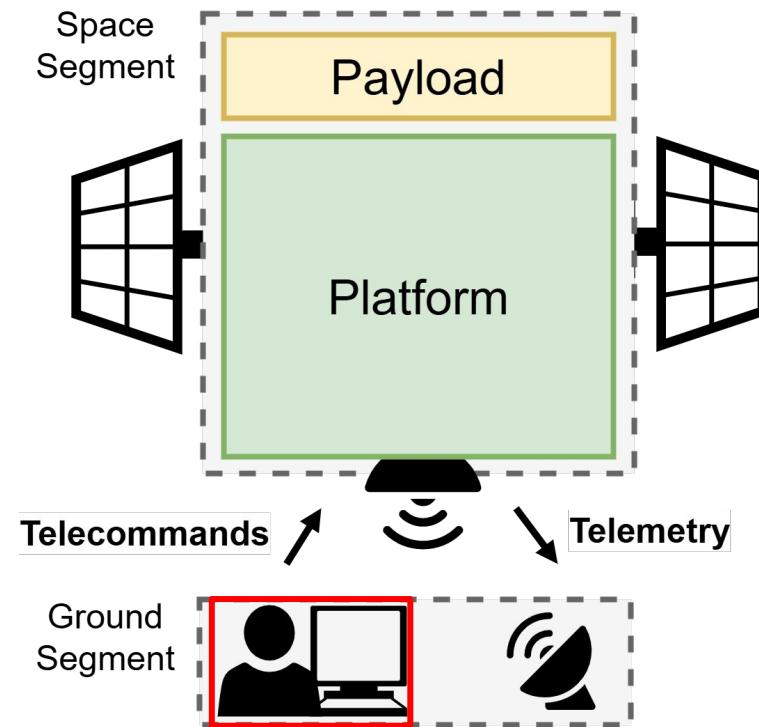
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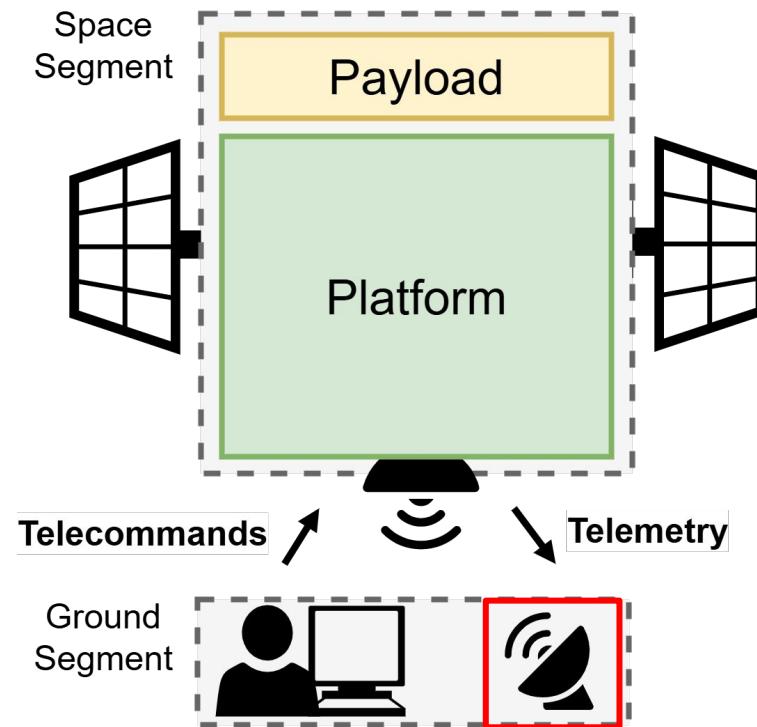
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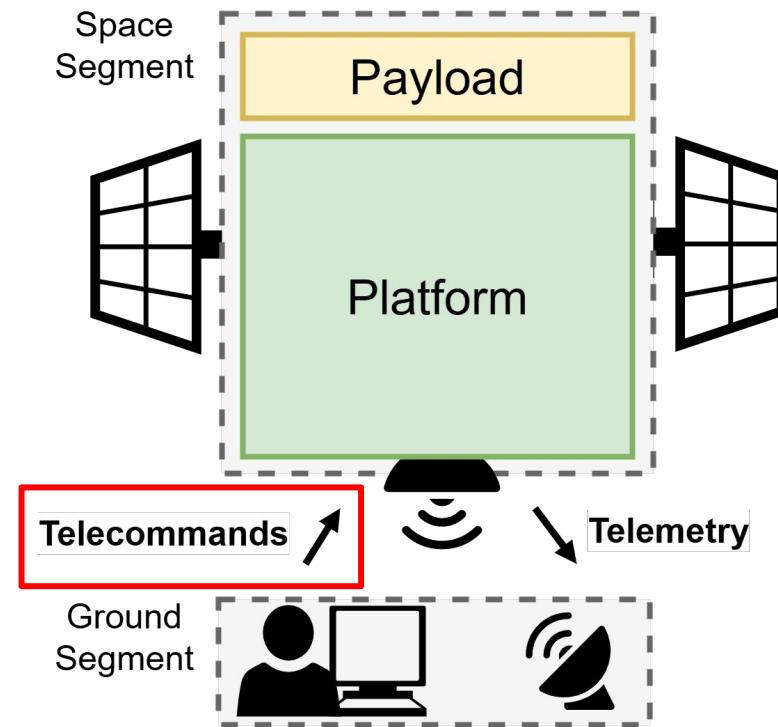
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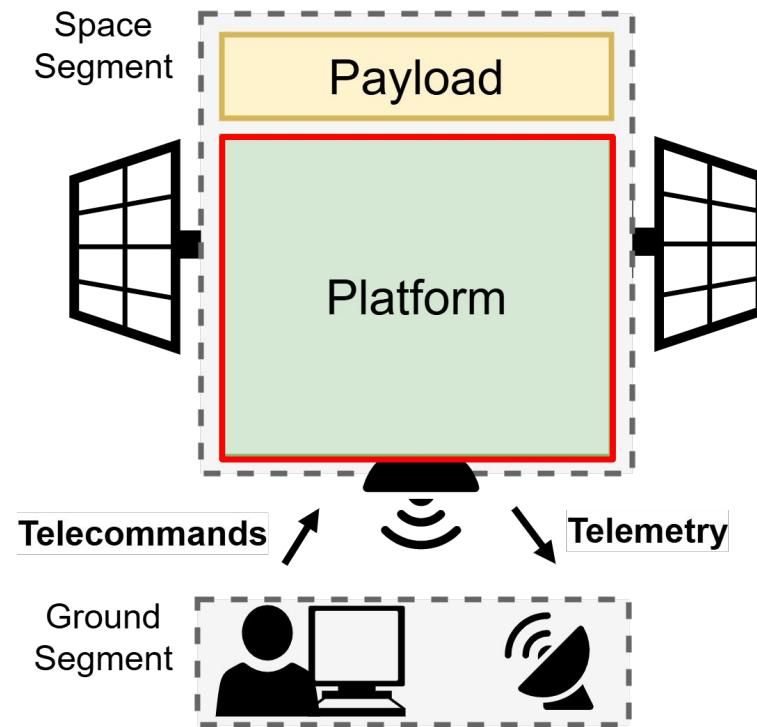
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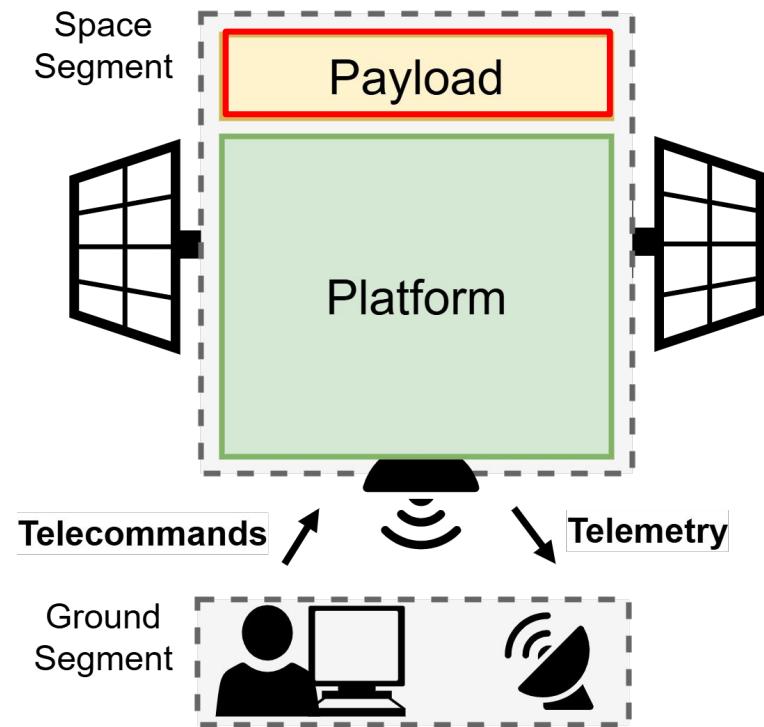
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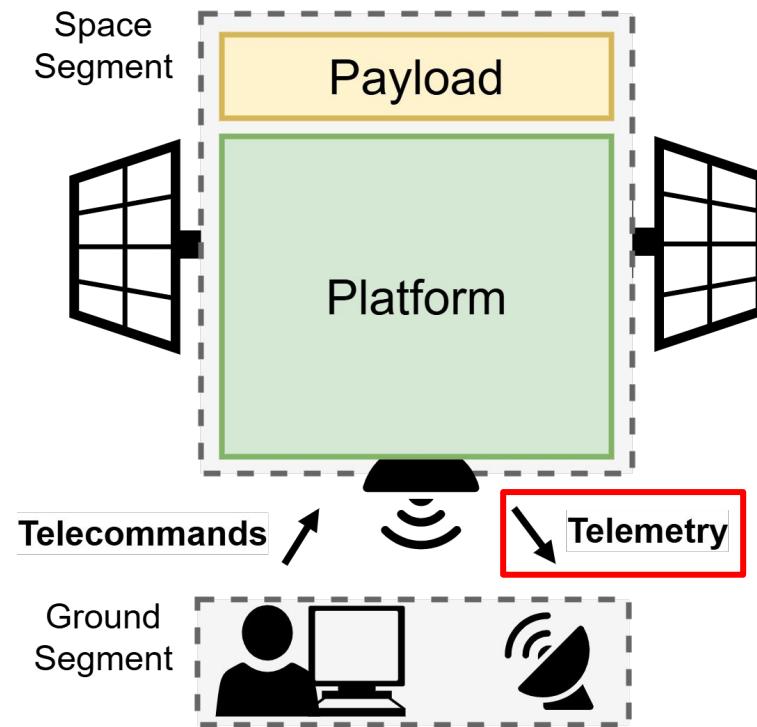
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# Background: Anatomy of a Satellite Mission



# Background: Refresher on Honeypots

- Decoy computer system



# Background: Refresher on Honeypots

- Decoy computer system
- Attracts malicious actors



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- Record all interaction data



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# Background: Refresher on Honeypots

- Decoy computer system
- Attracts malicious actors
- Record all interaction data
- Analyze data to obtain knowledge
- There is no satellite honeypot!

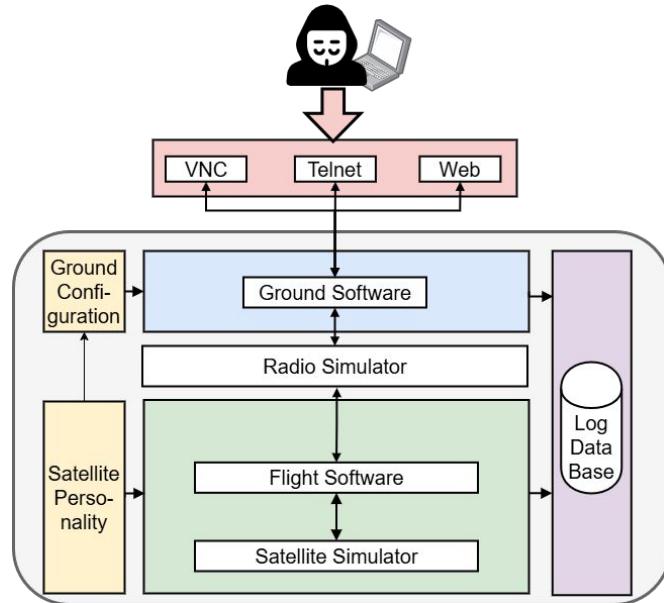


# What is the problem?

There is no way to collect data regarding cyberattacks that target satellites.

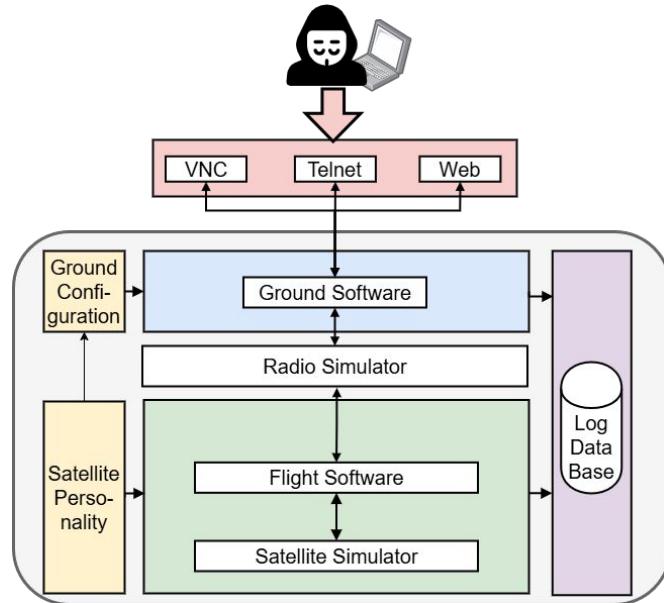
# Our solution: HoneySat

- Simulates multiple **real satellite missions**



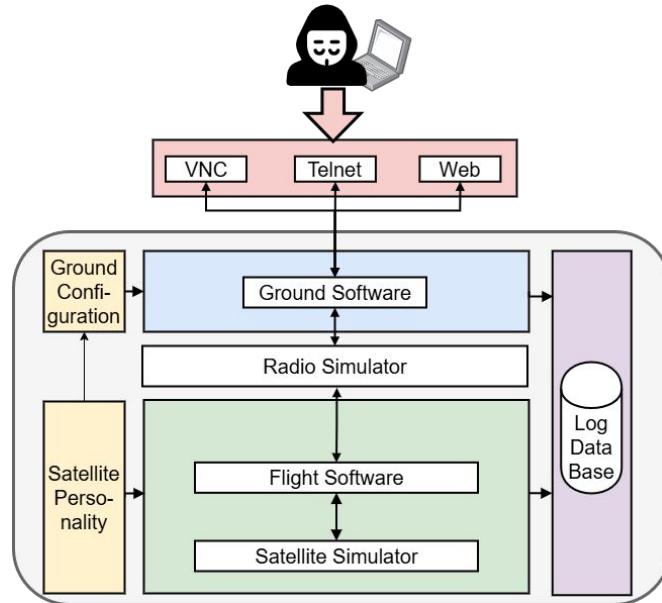
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- Simulates multiple **real satellite missions**
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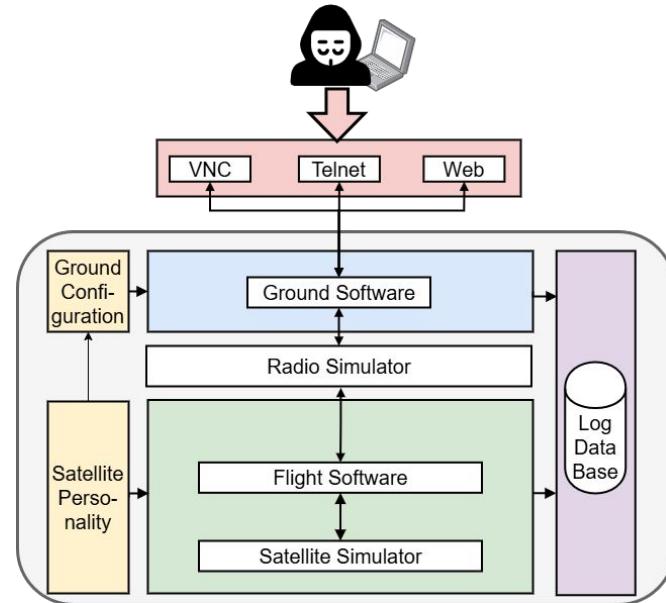
# Our solution: HoneySat

- Simulates multiple **real satellite missions**
- Accessible via the Internet
- Uses **real satellite software**



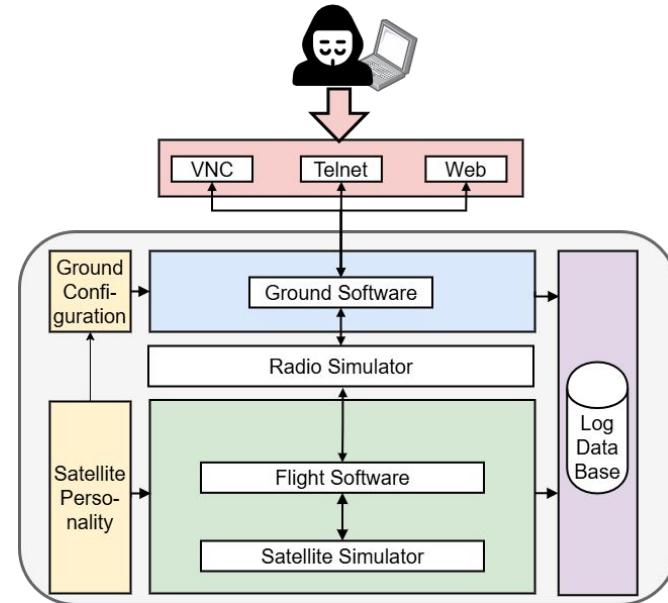
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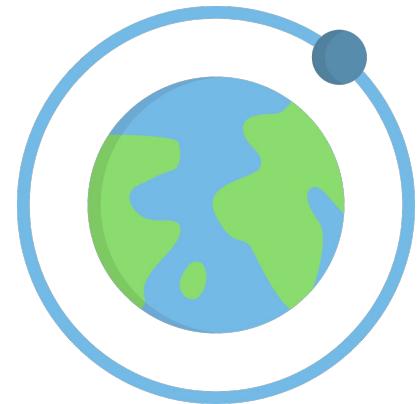
# Our solution: HoneySat

- Simulates multiple **real satellite missions**
- Accessible via the Internet
- Uses **real satellite software**
- Simulates **space physics** (orbital mechanics)
- Collects **real-world satellite cyberattack data**



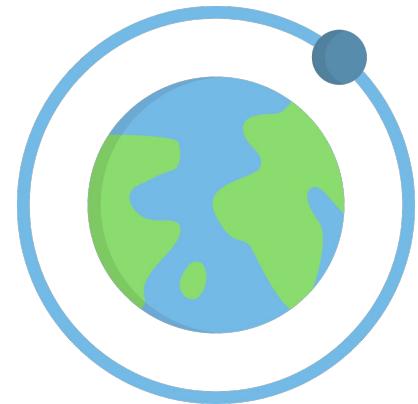
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- We developed a Python library: **Satellite Simulator**



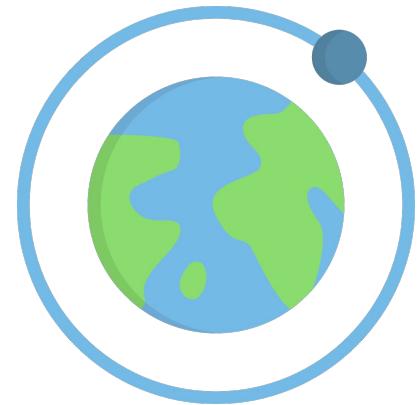
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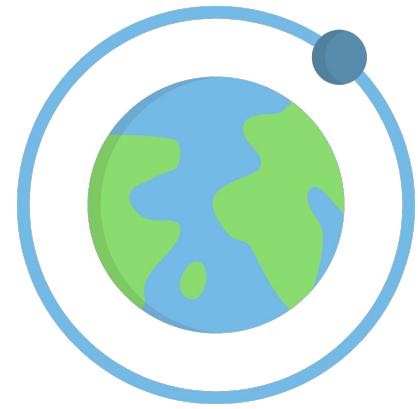
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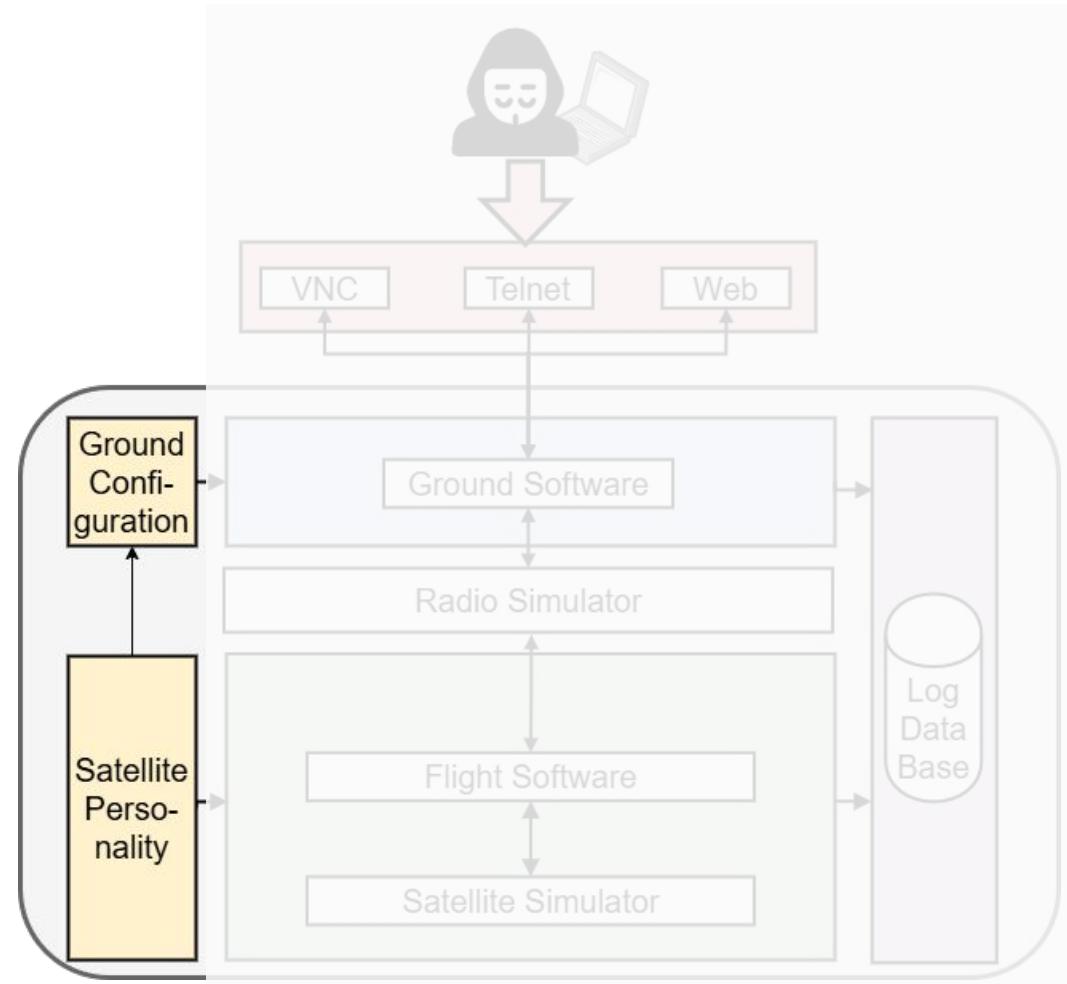
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- We use existing data on **real satellites' orbital mechanics**
- We simulate **6 physical processes**:

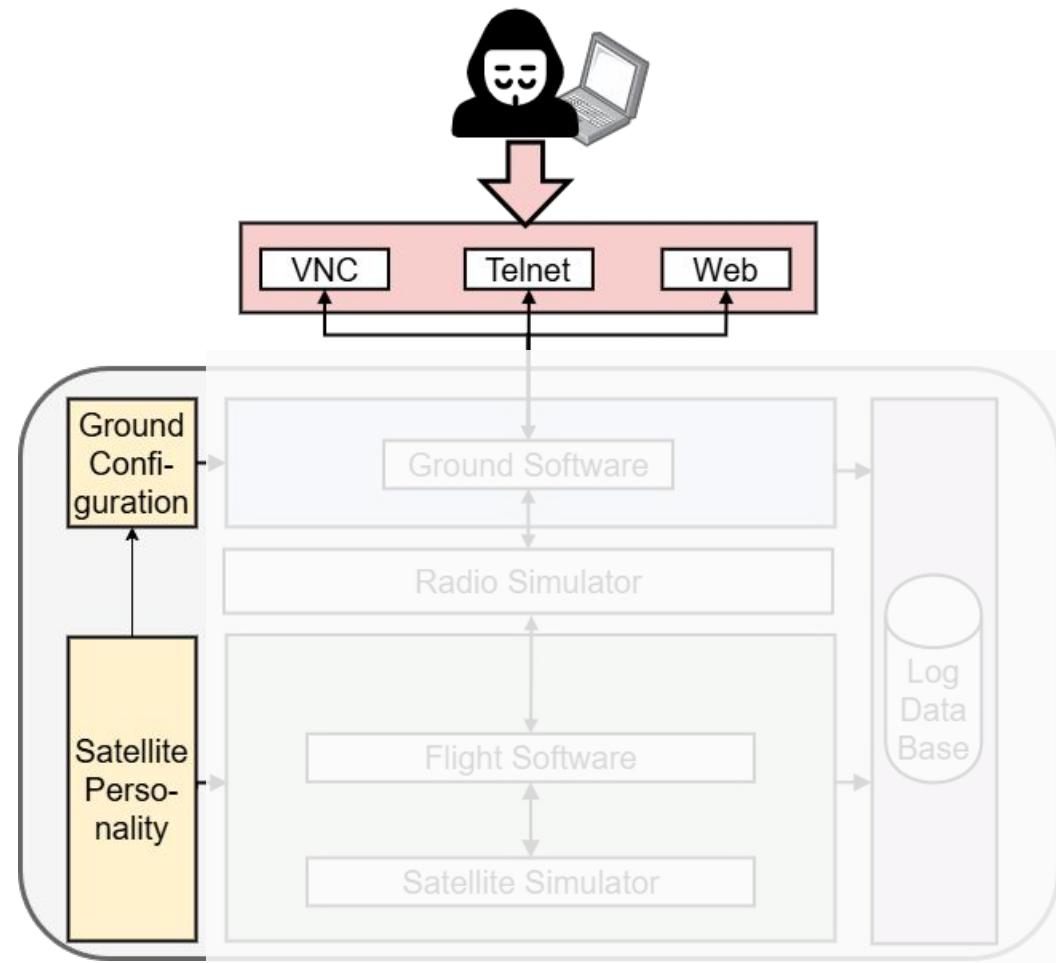


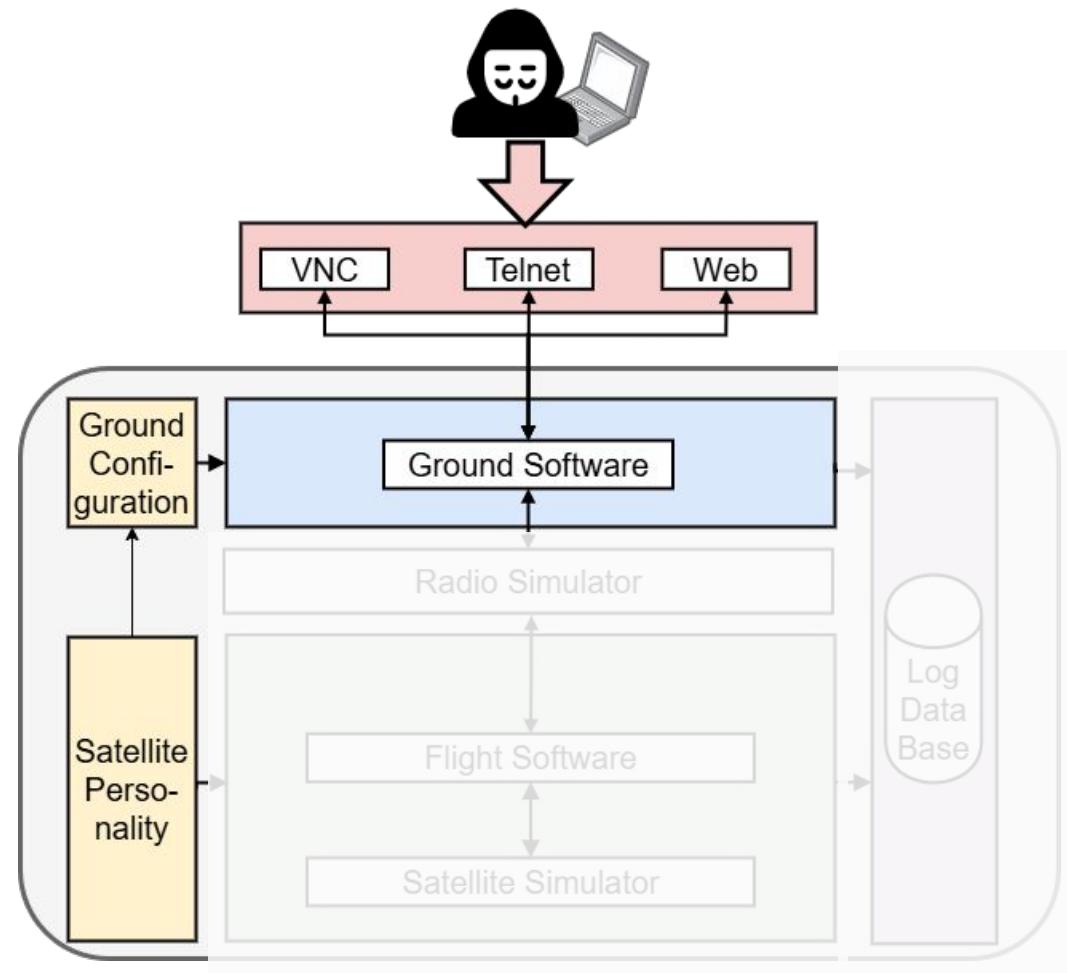
# How did we simulate space conditions?

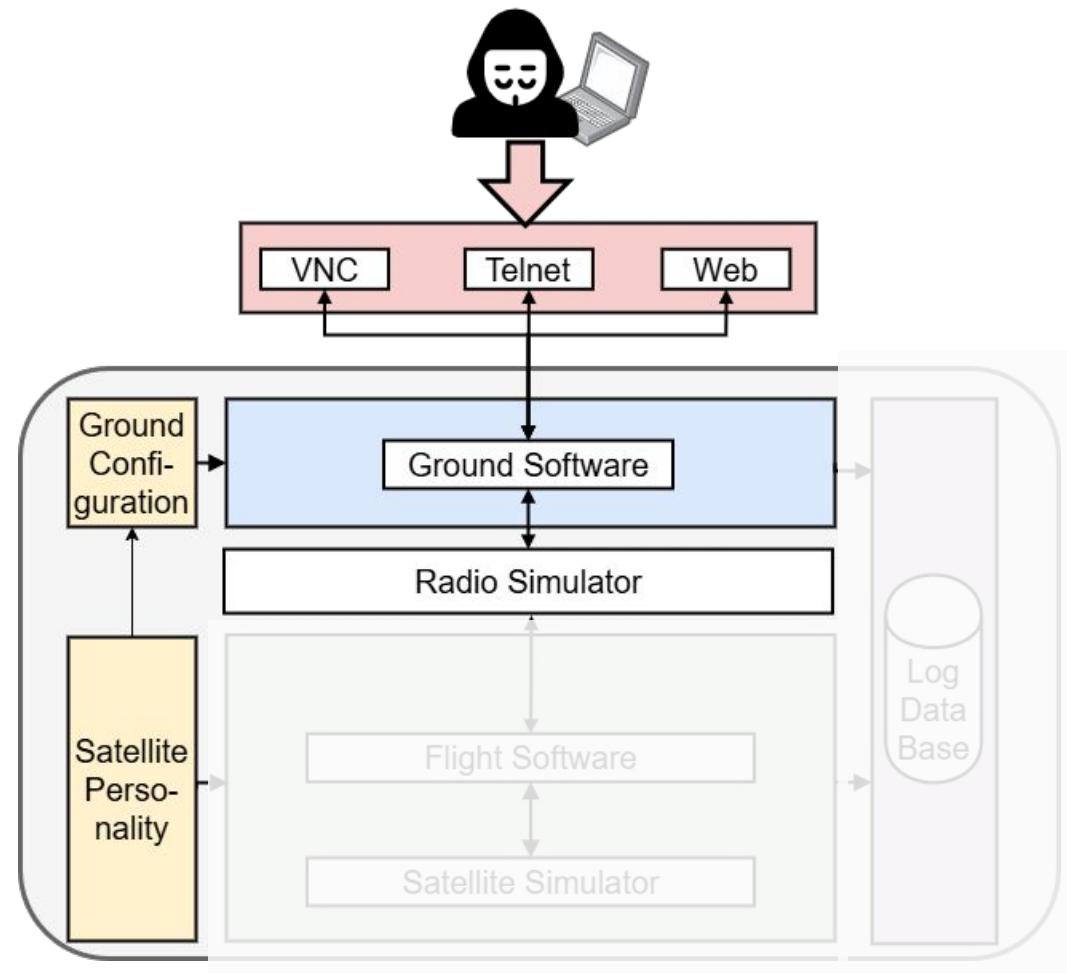
- We developed a Python library: **Satellite Simulator**
- We use existing data on **real satellites' orbital mechanics**
- We simulate **6 physical processes**:
  - Satellite's orbit
  - Battery
  - 3D-space orientation
  - Temperature
  - Magnetic field
  - Payload

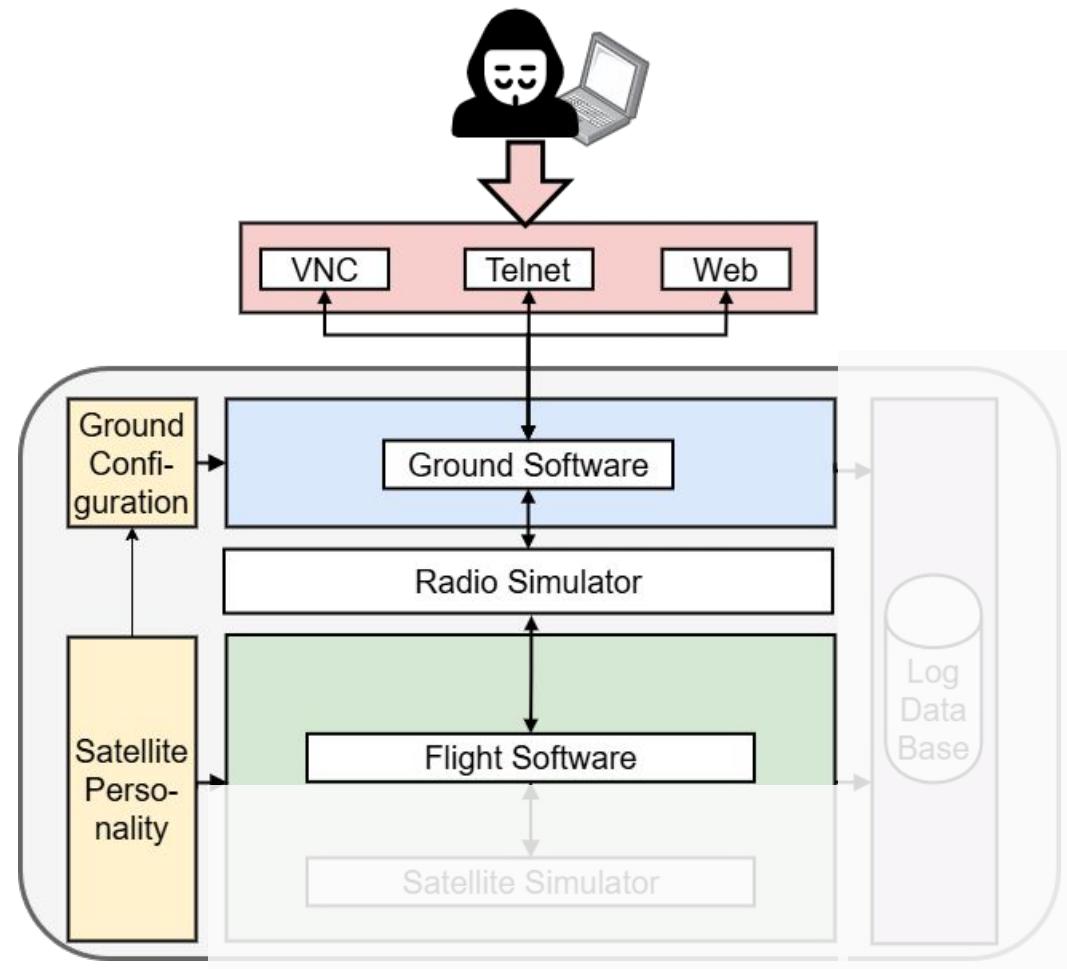


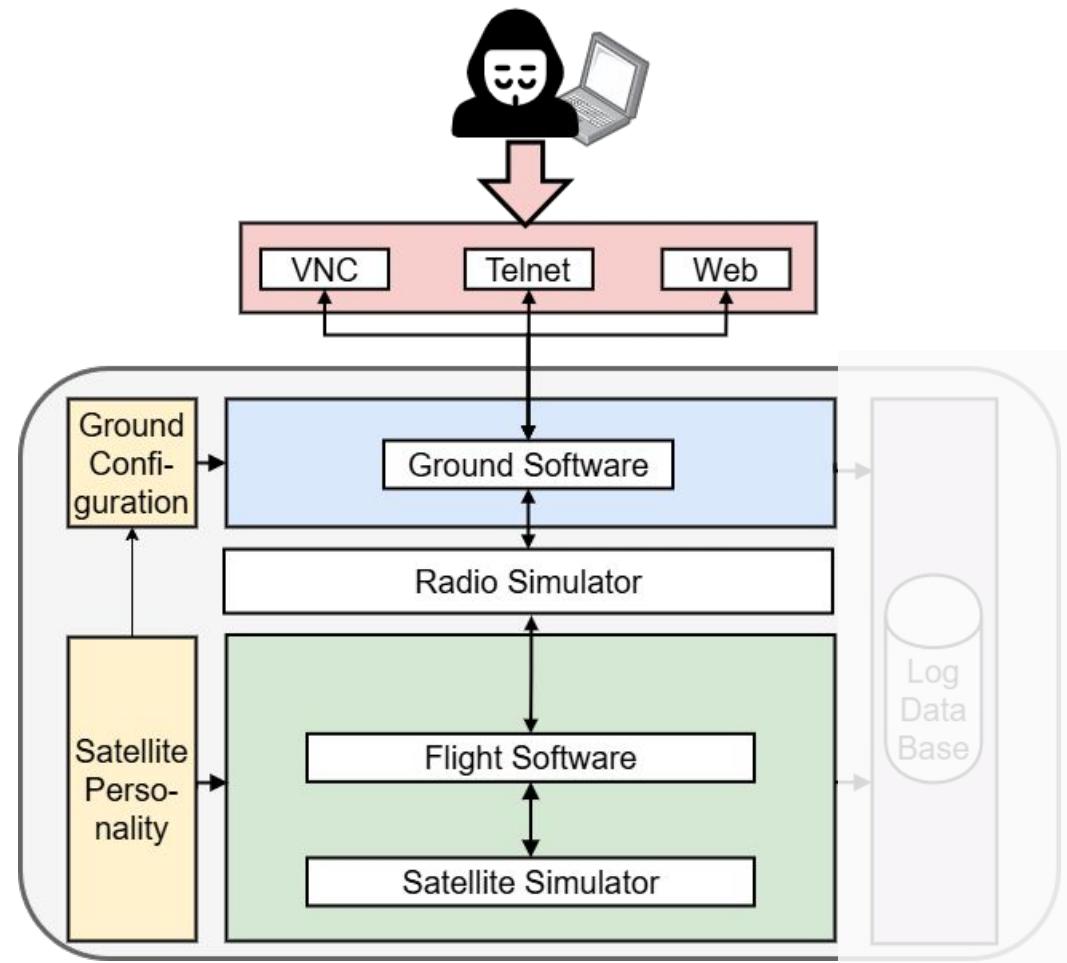


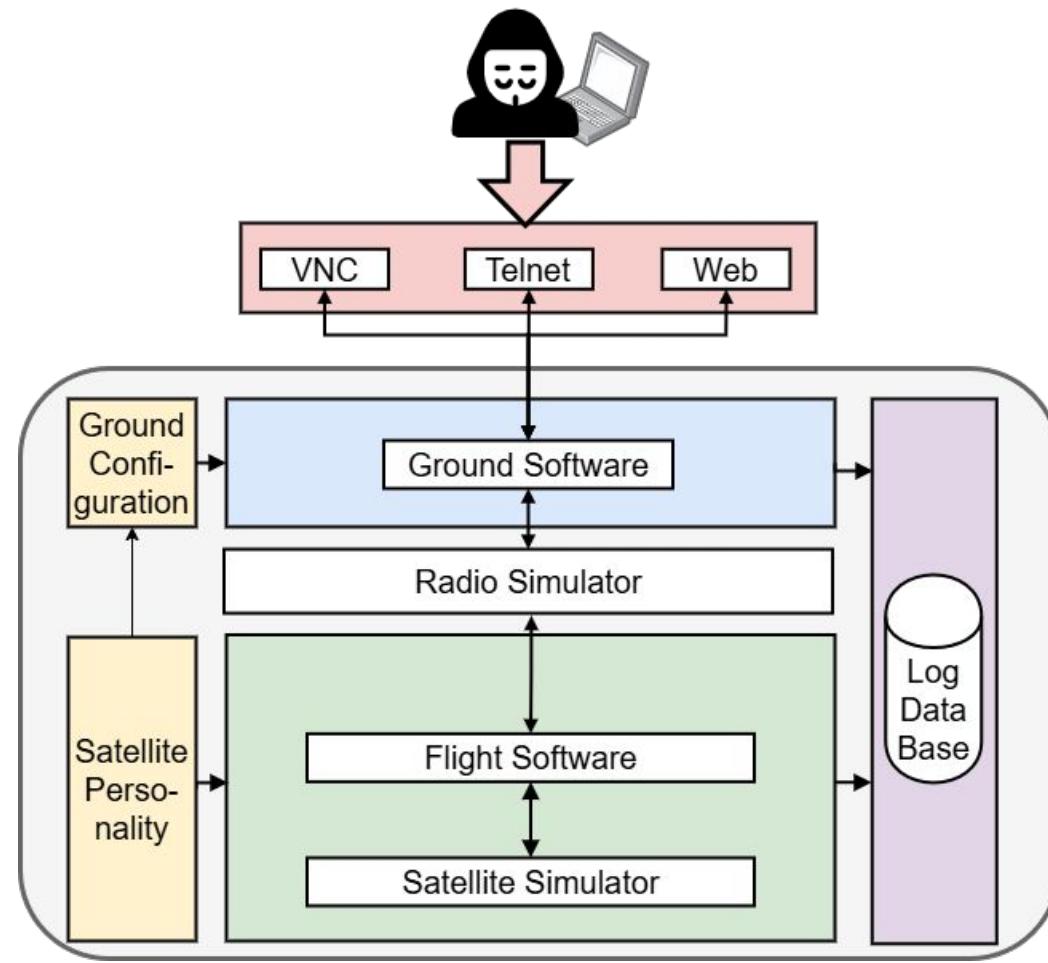


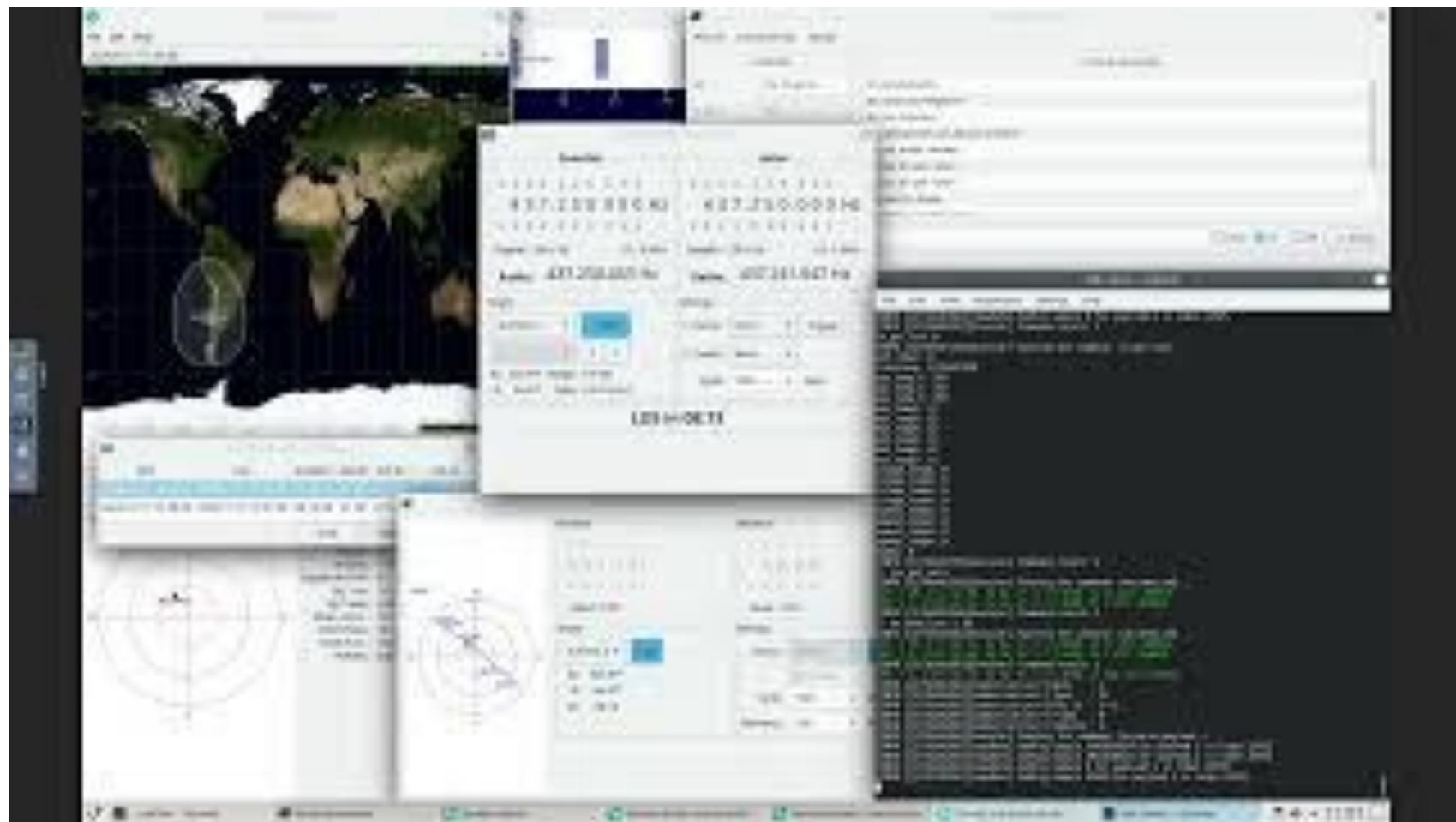












[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jMJmdO3n\\_aM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jMJmdO3n_aM)

# How did we evaluate HoneySat?

1. Surveyed real-world satellite operators



# How did we evaluate HoneySat?

1. Surveyed real-world satellite operators
2. Deployment over the Internet to get real-world interactions



# How did we evaluate HoneySat?

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2. Deployment over the Internet to get real-world interactions
3. Tested simulating multiple satellites



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# What did we find?

- We surveyed **14 experienced satellite operators** and ask them if our honeypot was realistic



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- 57.1% said that HoneySat's telemetry is realistic



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- 57.1% said that HoneySat's telemetry is realistic
- 64.2% said that HoneySat's communication simulation is realistic
- 71.4% said that HoneySat's overall simulation is realistic and deceiving



# What did we find?

- We deployed HoneySat over the Internet to attract adversaries



# What did we find?

- We deployed HoneySat over the Internet to attract adversaries
- Deployment lasted 8 months



# What did we find?

- We deployed HoneySat over the Internet to attract adversaries
- Deployment lasted 8 months
- HoneySat captured 10 real-world telecommands



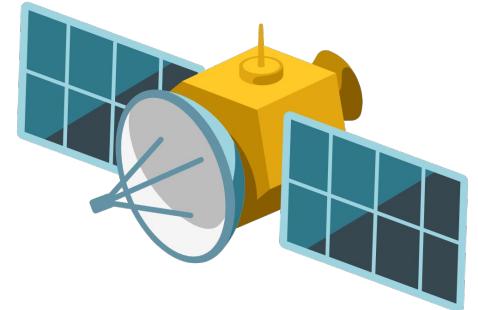
# What did we find?

- We deployed HoneySat over the Internet to attract adversaries
- Deployment lasted 8 months
- HoneySat captured 10 real-world telecommands
- One adversary interacted with HoneySat for 2 hours



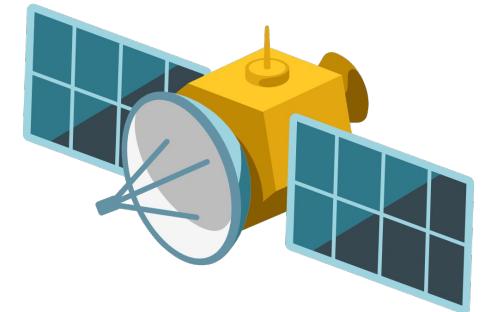
# Conclusion: HoneySat

- First satellite honeypot ever



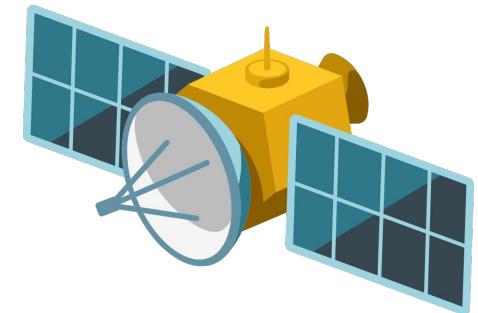
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- First satellite honeypot ever
- Simulates multiple types of satellites (e.g. NASA)



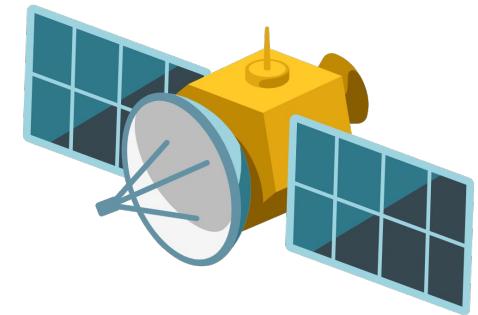
# Conclusion: HoneySat

- First satellite honeypot ever
- Simulates multiple types of satellites (e.g. NASA)
- Satellite operators said the simulation is highly realistic



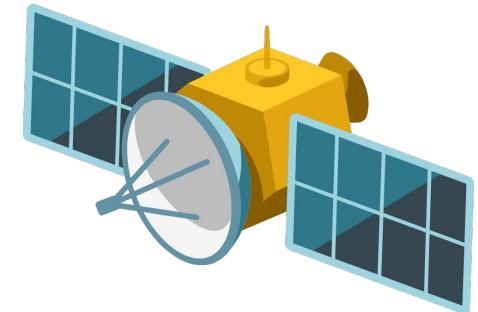
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- First satellite honeypot ever
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- Captured one of the first-ever data on satellite security



# Conclusion: HoneySat

- First satellite honeypot ever
- Simulates multiple types of satellites (e.g. NASA)
- Satellite operators said the simulation is highly realistic
- Captured one of the first-ever data on satellite security
- Deployed by the European Space Agency

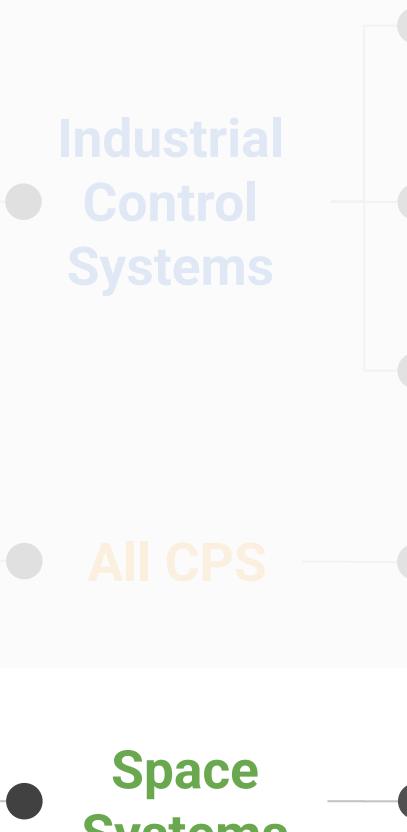


# Securing the Next Generation of Cyber-Physical Systems



All CPS

Industrial  
Control  
Systems



Cyber  
Deception

HoneyPLC  
CCS '20

ICSNet  
CPSIoTSec '24

Threat  
Intelligence

ICS<sup>2</sup> Matrix  
USENIX '24

Performance  
Evaluation

PLC Metrics  
RICSS '24

Binary  
Analysis

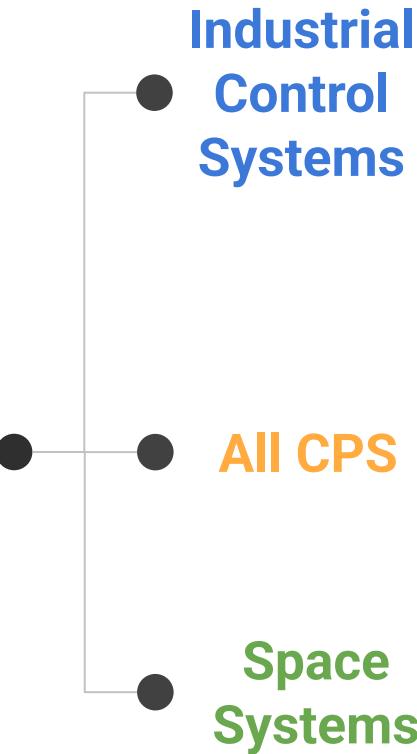
Taveren  
Under review @ IEEE S&P

Space  
Systems

Cyber  
Deception

HoneySat  
Under review @ USENIX

# Securing the Next Generation of Cyber-Physical Systems



**Cyber  
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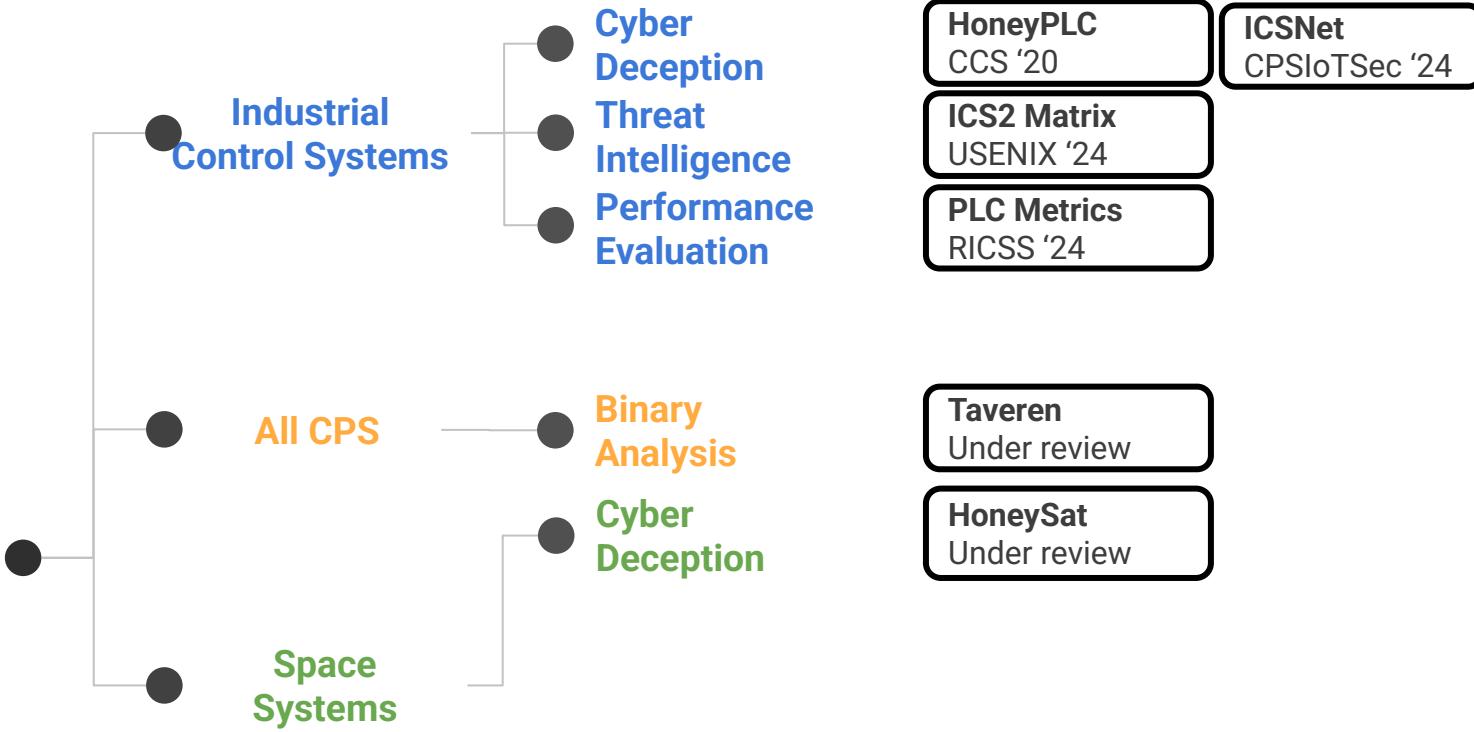
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**Cyber  
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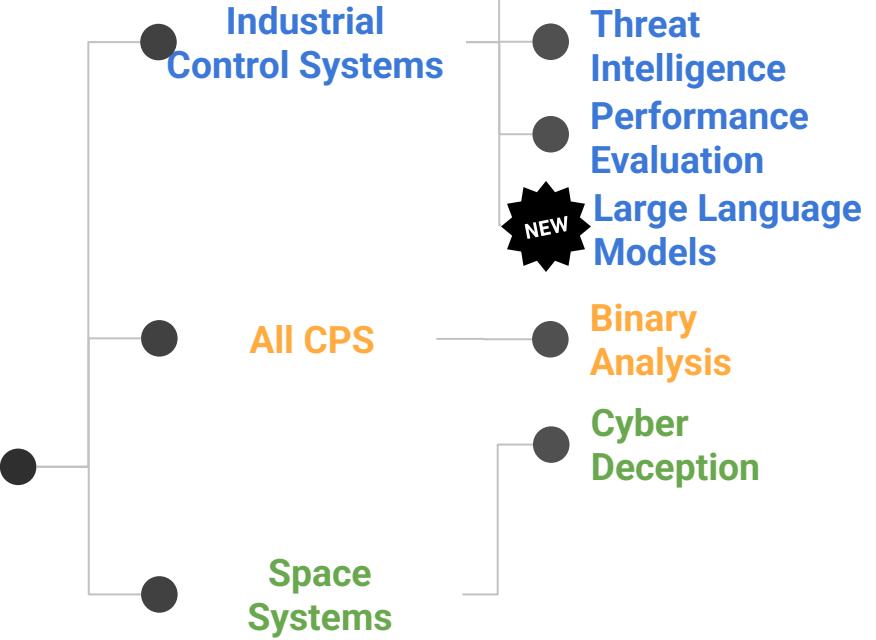
HoneySat  
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# Future Research

# Securing the Next Generation of Cyber-Physical Systems



# Securing the Next Generation of Cyber-Physical Systems



HoneyPLC  
CCS '20

ICSNet  
CPSIoTSec '24

ICS2 Matrix  
USENIX '24

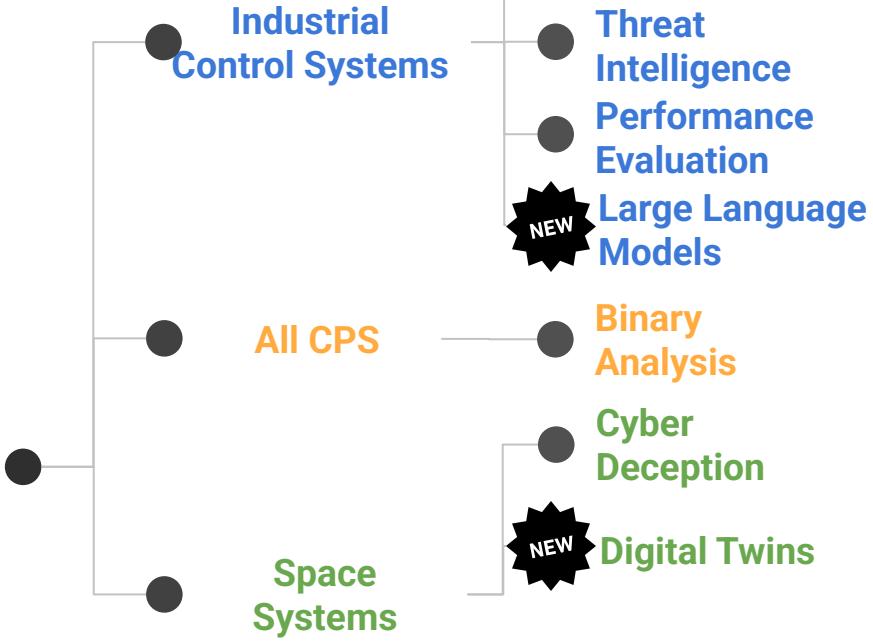
PLC Metrics  
RICSS '24

ICS Programs  
Analysis

Taveren  
Under review

HoneySat  
Under review

# Securing the Next Generation of Cyber-Physical Systems



Cyber  
Deception  
Threat  
Intelligence  
Performance  
Evaluation  
**Large Language  
Models**  
**NEW**

Binary  
Analysis

Cyber  
Deception

Digital Twins  
**NEW**

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CCS '20

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HoneySat  
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Space Protocol  
Framework

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CPSIoTSec '24

# Securing the Next Generation of Cyber-Physical Systems



Cyber Deception

Threat Intelligence

Performance Evaluation

**Large Language Models**

Binary Analysis

Cyber Deception

Digital Twins

Network Security

Cybersecurity Education

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## Securing the Next Generation of Cyber-Physical Systems

### Industrial Control Systems

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**Network Security**

**Cybersecurity  
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All CPS

Space  
Systems

**Connected  
Vehicles**

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NEW

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Space Protocol  
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Vehicle Malware  
Sandbox

All CPS

Space  
Systems

Connected  
Vehicles

NEW

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CPSIoTSec '24

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NEW

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NEW

Malware Analysis

# Space Protocol Security Framework

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# Collaboration Opportunities

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*Not an exhaustive list 😊*

# Collaboration with UTSA's Institutes

- Center for Space Technology and Operations Research (CSTOR) (**Cyber/Space Nexus**)

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Dec 10, 2024 **Research**

## UTSA announces new research center to advance space technology and operations

UTSA's Office of Research today announced the launch of the Center for Space Technology and Operations Research (CSTOR), a new research center dedicated to advancing engineer...

[Learn More >](#)

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- Center for Space Technology and Operations Research (CSTOR) (**Cyber/Space Nexus**)
- Cyber Center for Security and Analytics (**Critical Infrastructure Security**)



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# Funding

- Cyber-Physical Systems (**CPS**)



# Funding

- Cyber-Physical Systems (**CPS**)
- Security, Privacy, and Trust in Cyberspace (**SaTC 2.0**)



# Funding

- Cyber-Physical Systems (**CPS**)
- Security, Privacy, and Trust in Cyberspace (**SaTC 2.0**)
- Computer and Information Science and Engineering

Research Expansion Program (**CISE MSI**)\*



\* Funding opportunities may be affected due to recent executive orders

# Funding

- Cyber-Physical Systems (**CPS**)
- Security, Privacy, and Trust in Cyberspace (**SaTC 2.0**)
- Computer and Information Science and Engineering Research Expansion Program (**CISE MSI**)\*
- Faculty Early Career Development Program (**CAREER**)



\* Funding opportunities may be affected due to recent executive orders

# My Research's Broader Impact

# Academic Collaborations



UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA  
**SANTA CRUZ**

**ASU** Arizona State  
University



**CISPA**  
HELMHOLTZ-ZENTRUM FÜR  
INFORMATIONSSICHERHEIT



UNIVERSIDAD  
DE CHILE

# Industry Collaborations



DLR

Deutsches Zentrum  
für Luft- und Raumfahrt  
German Aerospace Center

MITRE



European Space Agency  
Agence spatiale européenne

P PayPal

# Open Source Projects



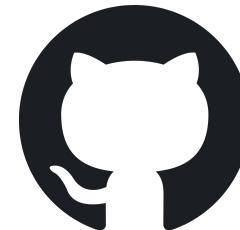
**HoneyPLC**



**HoneySat**



**ICS<sup>2</sup> Matrix**



**angr + Taveren**



# Thank you for listening!

Thank you to all my collaborators and sponsors



Efrén López-Morales

[elopezmorales@islander.tamucc.edu](mailto:elopezmorales@islander.tamucc.edu)

<https://efrenlopez.org>

