**The design and development of a sports stadium monitoring and management system to provide early detection and prevention of cyber threats to Internet of Things (IoT) devices**

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# Introduction

The sports industry has become a honeypot for hacktivists, cyber-terrorism and financially motivated attacks. Sports stadiums are firmly in the spotlight, as demonstrated by the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) producing their first ever report into cyber-crime in sport (NCSC, 2020). With the advancement of technology enabling physically-operated and cyber-connected devices, machines are interacting with the real world and the lines between cyber-crime and human safety have been blurred (Benslimane, 2022).

The proliferation and excitement of introducing technology into sports stadiums has led to them containing an exponential numbers of devices aimed at providing better functionality and guest experience, however too often they are failing to sufficiently consider security. Therefore, the safeguarding of these devices, and ensuring the need for their accurate and consistent operation can ultimately be a matter of life and death.

This project aims to draw attention to the lack of IoT security in sport stadiums, by investigating current issues, and mitigation techniques, before creating a monitoring algorithm using a proof of concept model for preventing and detecting threats to the Internet of Things in sports stadiums.

## Research Question

How can the safety and security of Internet of Things systems in sports stadiums be improved through the integration of a centralised management system?

## Aim

To design and develop a prototype sports stadium management system which monitors Internet of Things devices in sports stadiums and provides pre-emptive detection and protection against DoS, Man in the Middle (MITM), sniffing, password cracking, vulnerability exploits, and identity theft cyber-attacks.

## Objectives

* To protect the IoT against DoS attacks and compromise within the sports stadium domain.
* To create a prototype of the model, producing mitigations to the twelve risk examples listed in NCS4 and CISA’s integrated security considerations diagram.
* To create a detailed report on the research findings.

# Literature Review

## Internet of Things

The Internet of Things (IoT) allows real world items to communicate with computing and other IoT devices on public and private networks, with each ‘thing’ being a real world device possessing a network address, and unique ID enabling it to become ‘smart’. The proliferation of IoT is existential, and by 2021 there were 12.2 billion globally active IoT endpoints (Hasan, 2022), surpassing traditional Internet-connected devices such as personal computers and smart phones along the way (Lueth, 2020). IoT continues to grow, and together with Artificial Intelligence (AI) and other technologies, is forming the fourth industrial revolution, better known as Industry 4.0 (Iberdrola, 2016).

Devices classed as IoT divides opinion, however they generally can be classified into one of two categories (Alahmadi et al., 2023):

1. *Consumer IoT (CIoT)* – A connected system of physical and digital objects designed to be beneficial to the consumer’s lifestyle in some way. These smart devices usually include personal and home devices, implemented to improve data gathering, sharing and processing with minimal need for human involvement. Consumer devices can leverage edge or fog computing, and be orchestrated from devices such as laptops, tablets and smart phones.
2. *Industrial IoT (IIoT)* – Have a more organisational, system-centric focus and include devices designed to improve workflows and minimise human error. Temperature, humidity and toxicity can all be monitored automatically. IIoT is often responsible for controlling heavy moving parts known as Cyber-Physical Systems (CPS) which interact with the real world directly, and so high availability is of optimum importance in IIoT, as is greater scalability and transparency. Multiple sectors are now reaping the benefit of IIoT, including energy, agriculture, manufacturing, transportation, and healthcare. Safety considerations are also paramount in IIoT, and so predictive maintenance is also important.

CIoT and IIoT can also overlap depending on use case. For example, wearable technology may be considered CIoT, however when worn by industrial engineers to monitor their location and radiation levels, it is suitably declared IIoT.

## IoT Architecture

There are three fundamental layers of IoT architecture (Alaba et al., 2017; Burhan et al., 2018; Abughazaleh et al., 2020; Mei et al., 2020):

* Perception / Sensing layer: comprising of sensors attached to physical devices that collect data, and actuators that act on it.
* Network / Transportation layer: connecting devices together, and responsible for the data transmissions between themselves, gateways, and data centres. This is most commonly achieved through communications technologies such as Ethernet, Wi-Fi, Bluetooth Low Energy (BLE), Near Field Communications (NFC).
* Application layer: allows humans to interact with the IoT. For example, through a control panel displayed on a mobile phone, an API, or a dashboard on a workstation.

There are also four (Zubaydi et al., 2023; Navarro et al., 2020), and commonly recognised five layer (MongoDB, N.D.) variations, see Figure 1, and even seven layer models for higher IoT design granularity.

In the four-layer model, the Network layer, often called Transport layer, continues to deal with messaging and connectivity. However, a new Processing layer, often called Middleware layer, is introduced and is responsible for processing the data from its raw form, performing data analytics to provide meaningful insights and aid decision making. In the five-layer model, a Business layer is introduced for IoT in organisations where business intelligence is carried out on data, enabling them to build better products and improve processes.

Additional levels are added as many believe the three-layer architecture is not sufficient for some applications, (Burhan et al., 2018). Furthermore, Sethi et al. (2017) add that additional layers allow for IoT specific research to be conducted at a more granular level. Burhan et al. (2018) provide a review of architecture layers, the threats that apply to each of them, and also propose a six-layer architecture addressing security. Various other domain-specific models are discussed by Jamali et al. (2019).

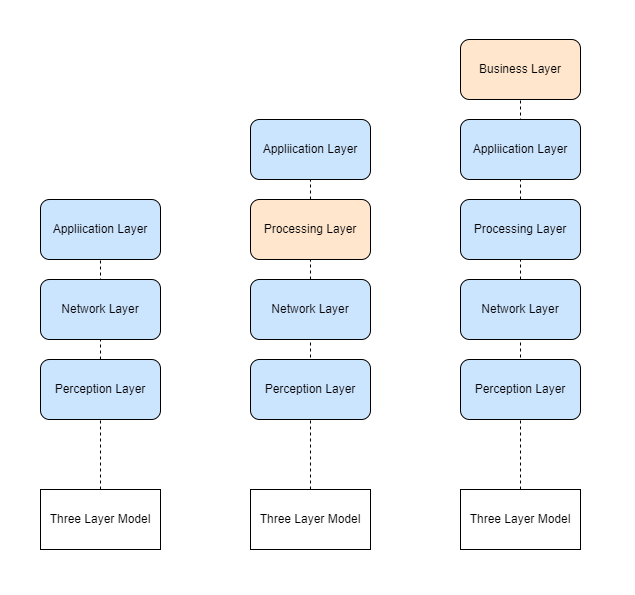


Figure 1: IoT Architectures

IoT architecture is also described as having four stages: Sensors and Actuators, Internet gateways (Data Acquisition), Edge computing, and Data centre / Cloud (MongoDB, N.D.).

This better describes how edge computing is incorporated into IoT. Sensors generate data, and actuators act on it, this can be analogous to the Perception layer. Internet gateways proxy data between the IoT network and the Internet, allowing local the IoT to communicate with the outside world while keeping its own data segregated in a local environment. Data acquisition and aggregation happens at this stage, converting analogue data collected from multiple heterogenic sensors into digital form. Edge computing can be incorporated to pre-process critical data, allowing decisions to be made in real time before data is offloaded in bulk to the cloud, or local data centre for deeper analysis. By processing data on the edge of the network, local network devices receive feedback much quicker than if data were being sent to, and from data centres. Furthermore, security is enhanced due to the limited network exposure available to untrusted actors. Finally, the Data Centre / Cloud stage allows heavy work to be done on the resultant big data, involving analytics to find patterns and obtain meaningful insights, in addition to providing archiving capabilities.

## IoT’s Use in The Modern World

Planet Earth is moving toward becoming a fully connected world with almost 30 billion IoT Internet-connected devices expected by 2030 (Statista, 2023). This is despite the global COVID-19 pandemic, and curtailed forecasts following a recent global chip shortage (Onag, 2021), of which is reflected in IoT Analytics’s trends from Leuth (2020) and Hasan (2022).

IoT is already widespread in multiple sectors. For example, healthcare IoT (H-IoT) is already prevalent, and is another area where human life is clearly paramount. Wearables monitoring heartbeats, blood pressure, and body temperature provide telemetry-based health metrics, IoT can be used to predict or detect diseases which would previously have gone undiscovered and therefore enables potential for them to become treatable or preventable (Qadri, Y.A. et al., 2020). IoT can assist those recovering, the elderly, or those with disabilities, with everyday life, relieving caregiver workload, and can support life inside and outside of a hospital setting (Yin et al., 2016). In agriculture, sensors report on humidity levels, soil quality, temperatures, and crop and livestock health. Remote cameras can be deployed to monitor disease, and actuators can activate sprinklers on schedules, or when specific criteria are met, increasing revenues for the farmer (Farooq et al., 2019).

The energy sector can further benefit from smart meters in the home, making it easier for customers to monitor their usage, while providers simultaneously monitor collective information to efficiently manage energy delivery across smart grids, one of many components in a fully connected smart city. Predicted energy savings for smart cities are to reach $96 billion in 2026 (Juniper Research, 2022), and by moderating power supply usage across the city using intelligent devices, automated street lighting, traffic management, and wireless access points can be integrated to help it become truly connected. Smart cars can benefit from connected electric charging points, whilst their embedded systems pull the latest traffic information and weather, preparing not only the driver for the journey ahead, moreover relaying the information directly to passing cars using Machine to Machine (M2M) communications and receiving real time updates on nearby accidents and road closures.

Smart homes are omnipresent with the CIoT. Families are more connected to the outside world than ever, with more than one in three Americans now owning a smart speaker (Woodall, 2021), and with a multitude of devices including smart televisions, lamps, fridges, and washing machines available, even smart plugs can be leveraged to enable any mains powered device to have its power controlled by an app, turning mains-powered devices into somewhat intelligent ones. Common communication technology for smart homes include WiFi, Bluetooth, Zigbee and Z-Wave (Danbatta & Varol, 2019).

Manufacturing floors are the forerunners to Industry 4.0 and IoT plays a huge part by monitoring production flow to maximise efficiency and minimise waste, introducing predictive maintenance, and maintaining quality assurance and a safe work environment.

Furthermore, sport is also highly affected by IoT. Athletes use wearables to monitor their performance, smart vests containing Global Positioning System (GPS), heartrate and performance monitors, cameras are enabling on-field decisions with systems such as Hawkeye, goal line technology and Video Assistant Referee (VAR) (Harrod Sport, 2018), sensors can be inserted into balls to track spin, speed and trajectory, and fans are actively engaged thanks to in-game updates sent to digital display monitors and advertising boards.

## Smart Stadiums

Sports stadiums are important for the area they are located in, attracting visitors willing to contribute to the local economy in return for entertainment. They are among the top tourist attractions in the most frequently visited cities, forming the concept of venues as a destination (Baroncelli & Ruberti, 2022). Their infrastructures serve as a catalyst for the regeneration of cities or areas, and such projects often include new shops, housing, and restaurants. These concepts bring numerous benefits to the local community and improves the well-being of local residents, showing the importance that sports stadiums have for cities.

Today’s elite stadiums are built with consumer convenience and experience enhancement in mind, as well as safety. Stadium IoT devices include a wide range of devices, from camera recognition technologies, to biometric entry, from automatic turnstiles, to digital advertising boards, big screens, automated lighting, retractable roofs, and Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning (HVAC) systems. By adopting the IoT, sports stadiums can increase their automation, saving money and maximising convenience for the consumer. No longer do visitors solely benefit from viewing the event, moreover spectators can gain entry using ticketless entrance systems, order refreshments directly from their seat, pay with convenience using NFC, and get in-game stats on the live event itself (PWC, N.D.). Smart stadiums in particular are often used as testbeds for developing IoT prior to deployment in smart cities and other real world scenarios (O’Brolcháin et al., 2019; Hutchins & Andrejevic, 2021; Van Heck et al., 2021).

Organisations are also working to introduce new technology, such as with FIFA using cameras secured within stadiums to track players’ limbs, and the ball, to virtually recreate plays on the field for spectators, as well as aiding on-field decisions (FIFA, 2022).

Van Heck et al. (2021) provide a review of various smart devices in the Johan Cruijff Arena in Amsterdam, a forerunning smart-focused stadium with a particular goal of becoming the world’s most innovative stadium, and discusses the problem of combatting the ever-increasing lure of watching sport at home. Nine smart devices in the stadium were discovered, including an innovative smart turf monitoring system, however only four were operational at the time, with the others in various stages of development. Most of the discovered devices were for improving customer service, such as payment systems and ticketing check ins, where interestingly none were there to directly enhance the experience. The study found that further smart enhancements to the stadium would improve fan experience, including stadium guides, and facial recognition technology (FRT) which was subsequently used in magnitude with 15,000 cameras being deployed at the 2022 Qatar football world cup, which itself raises privacy concerns (Seals, 2022).

Automated FRT is such a hotly disputed topic that the British Security Industry Association (BSIA) have published a set of guidelines to navigate the ethical and legal issues that this technology brings (BSIA, 2021). Super Bowl XXXV caused uproar in 2001 after it became known that police had deviously used FRT to scan 100,000 visitor faces looking for known criminals (Brey, 2004), whereas conversely, Norstrom (2021) advocates FRT could have prevented the Euro 2020 final disaster by using it for verification on entry. Brey, discusses the advantages and disadvantages of using facial recognition in public places, noting that security often comes at the cost of privacy. Furthermore, the recording of one’s face by IoT-operated cameras directly contradicts principle 1.6 of the Association of Computer Machinery’s (ACM) Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct (ACM, N.D.), and this opens up more questions as to who owns such data. Moreover, it may be difficult to expect 80,000 spectators to fill out waivers upon entry, and perhaps unrealistic to expect them to read notices advising them of recordings and data gathering. Brey, also highlights other specific issues of using FRT, including errors and function creep which have since been reduced through modern technology and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), respectively.

## Security Challenges in Sports Stadiums

Roberts (2019), discusses example threats present within sports stadiums in parallel with the maritime transport industry, conducting example risk assessment approaches, and comparing them with traditional physical-only attacks. Roberts, highlights that physical security has traditionally been at the forefront of discussions, however indicates an increasing interest on how CPS can cause threat to life when the cyber component either fails, or falls victim to cyber-attack. Either of these scenarios can be used as precursors to launch a physical attack, for example locking smart turnstiles can pen people in one area, or a threatening message displayed on the big screen can cause people to panic and flee, subsequently maximising the effectiveness of a secondary physical attack on an area filled with people, leading to scenes similar to those witnessed at the Stade de France in 2015, or the Arianda Grande concert at the Manchester Arena in 2017 (Roberts, 2019).

IoT devices in stadiums can however, also positively contribute to security efforts. For instance, devices can be deployed to assist with crowd control, surveillance, and logistics (O’Brolcháin et al., 2019).

Alhadad & Abood (2018) discuss the importance of making improvements to stadiums, in a desperate bid to keep alluring spectators back, speculating that organisers are competing amongst themselves off the field, just as their sporting subjects are on it. Interestingly, according to Nate Evans, a lecturer from Argonne National Laboratory, competition may be a useful method of assuring a healthy cybersecurity status amongst peers (Baker, 2020).

Melander (2020), also addresses privacy issues of collecting data from cameras, and remarks on several points of ethical use, and the need for strict regulation, a more extensive ethical study in this respect was conducted by O’Brolcháin et al. (2019).

Any organisation in the UK that collects and stores data from customers, including data acquired by IoT devices, is subject to the Data Protection Act (2018) and GDPR, meaning data must be protected by secure means, stored only for required purposes, and as long as necessary, whilst preserving the data subjects’ rights to their own data (GDPR, 2022).

Melander (2020), also comments on the need for a uniform security protocol standard for all devices to mitigate a large proportion of IoT security threats.

Regulation in the IoT has longed been campaigned for, and until recently UK businesses in the IoT production lifecycle had only voluntary guidelines. The European Telecommunications Standards Institute (ETSI) released EN303 645, the first IoT standard in June 2020 (ETSI, 2020), and follows the UK’s lead with its 13 requirements closely matching the pioneering Code of Practice (HM Government, 2018). This list of security requirements is aimed at providing an assurance baseline for IoT devices, aligning for product certification, and hopes to drive adoption of improved security measures worldwide**.**

Moreover, the Product Security and Telecommunications Infrastructure Act (2022) was recently introduced, enforcing the first three foremost practices from the former Code of Practice and EN 303 645 into UK law. The act carries harsh penalties, synonymous with that of the GDPR (2022). While addressing vulnerabilities such as the use of default credentials, which facilitated the 2016 Mirai attack (Margolis et al., 2017), the act does not cover devices manufactured and deployed before its enactment in December 2022, meaning these devices may be forever insecure in the wild, notwithstanding further important omissions such as secure communications, unnecessary port closure, or input validation. Perhaps most prominently in regards to this paper, it does not cover industrial IoT devices, nor those used by businesses, as those are to be superseded by other regulations (UK Parliament, 2021).

Consequences of Compromise

The proliferation of cyber-attacks is growing due to the development and reliance of technology, especially following the increasing use of wireless communications such as cellular technology and Wi-Fi. The security of sports stadiums is something that cannot be taken lightly, with 70% of sports institutions annually subjected to a cyber-incident (NCSC, 2020).

Compromise of one device, can mean compromise of an entire network, as demonstrated in 2018 where an IoT fish tank was breached, allowing attackers to move laterally to penetrate a casino’s internal network (Wilner, 2018). Furthermore, they can be life threatening. Implantable Medical Devices (IMDs) such as pacemakers come with the possibility of compromise from outside the body, making assassination possible. Reportedly, former US vice-president Dick Cheney was concerned enough about this threat, that he asked for its wireless functions to be disabled as a countermeasure (Pycroft & Aziz, 2018).

Compromise can lead to financial losses, reputational damage, financial penalties, and most importantly in the IoT’s case, loss of life.

The very fact that the IoT comprises of CPSs in today’s world, including those found in sports stadiums extends the threat of cyber-attacks to human life. Advance risk management of sporting events is imperative due to present threats to human life and the potential for financial and reputational damage for the organisation (Wan et al, 2022).

Mowafi et al. (2013) provided a useful framework for tracking the gathering of mass crowds using Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) tags, and enables guidance information for patrons, while providing decision support for crowd managers. Whilst this has obvious benefits to human safety, it does not consider cybersecurity. Older RFID tags can also be read by anyone with an RFID reader, and with many items of Personal Identifiable Information (PII) stored in this example, there are also significant privacy risks. Furthermore, tags are vulnerable to cloning, and readers would be affected by many thousands of people passing by, with high potential for collisions, manipulation, and jamming attacks.

## Examples of Historic Compromise

The Mirai botnet of 2016 showed how inept the world was in detecting and preventing IoT cyber-attacks. Preying on the multitude of smart devices lacking rigidly secure defences, the botnet was able to infect almost sixty-five thousand devices across the world in its first twenty hours (Antonakakis et al., 2017). Mirai, propagated as a worm using each new zombie to scan for further devices with open SSH or Telnet ports, and attempted authentication using a pre-determined list of credentials. Likely evolving from a previous Trojan named Bashlight, Mirai produced multiple variants, and zombies from the resultant botnet comprising of nearly half a million zombies, which were eventually used to target Dyn, a hosting company providing DNS services (Kambourakis et al., 2017), rendering several well-known sites unavailable.

The 2018 Winter Olympics opening ceremony suffered an attack on IT systems causing display monitors to shut down, and paralysed the Wi-Fi and the website leaving attendees unable to print tickets or access information.  The success of the attack was clear to see with many vacant seats during the celebration. This attack was perfectly timed and successfully gained the world’s attention through the media (Kaspersky, 2018). In 2016 an attack on the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) showed how nation states can use sport as a way of showing their political prowess (Datta & Acton, 2022). A Russian state-sponsored cyber hacking group known as Fancy Bears were able to extract details of several athletes taking legitimately approved drugs by using credentials gleaned from a phishing attack, and posted them to their website (Pitsiladis et al., 2017). This according to WADA was in retaliation to banning Russian athletes from the 2016 Summer Paralympic games in Brazil, after they had been accused of submitting doctored samples during the 2014 Winter games testing (Pingue, 2016). The seemingly political act caused embarrassment to WADA and the Olympics, and distrust amongst the public.

In 2021, a further example of hacktivism showed a group that were able to compromise 150,000 cameras, revealing footage of inside of prisons, hospitals, and schools. The attackers exploited insecure configurations, and again leveraged leaked admin credentials (Scroxton, 2021). Hacktivism is a real threat to sporting events, with Just Stop Oil providing a recent example of sport being targeted for protests (BBC, 2023).

## IoT Technology and Cyber Security in Sports

A modern day smart stadium can include a network of generic laptops, desktops and networking equipment, and be connected by wired or wireless means. They are also likely to include connected IoT devices such as sensors, CPS and embedded systems. Embedded systems often include a user interface and are generally software-based, static control systems instilled in a physical platform to perform a specific function. CPSs are hardware cyber-connected devices that incorporate software, and can often include many more capabilities than embedded systems (Wan et al., 2022), to interact with the real world.

With the gradual introduction of 5G, IoT is destined to become Massive IoT, eliminating the need for human interaction, simplifying traditional methods of networking, and making much networking equipment redundant. 5G was developed with IoT in mind with speeds 10 times faster than 4G, less latency, greater capacity, handling multiple device connections simultaneously, and allowing devices to connect directly with each other across geographic locations (Li et al., 2018). This will also eventually benefit those with devices in rural or remote locations previously without access to reliable broadband, however will be beneficial too for sports stadiums whatever the setting (Fang, 2022).

Often in the outside world, it is enough to secure your defences so that attackers will give up to seek easier targets. Unfortunately, when hosting Sports Mega Events (SMEs), where hacktivism and nation states can see an opportunity to make their mark, this is an unrealistic possibility.

This has led to the development of the National Centre for Spectator Sports Safety and Security (NCS4), an academic centre at the University of Southern Mississippi dedicated to furthering spectator sport safety and security (NCS4, N.D). The NCS4 conduct research, and inform sporting organisations on best practices for the safety and security of their operations.

NCS4 have, in partnership with the Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA), provided an example diagram of a typical connected stadium with key vulnerabilities, consequences, and suitable mitigations (CISA, N.D.).

The United Nations (UN) produced a guide for securing SMEs, identifying operational, legal, and reputational risks as three key cyber risk categories for consideration when preparing for cyber-attacks, and highlighting IoT as a particular concern (UN, 2021). The Open Web Application Security Project (OWASP) have also published an IoT top 10 (vulnerabilities) list as of 2018 (OWASP, 2018).

Organisations putting on major sporting events can further benefit from the input of global experts in cyber security, physical security, and sporting legislation by participating in international efforts such as Project Stadia (INTERPOL, N.D.).

Qatar continues the trend for modern cyber intelligence enhancements, learning from previous SMEs. Helped by its close proximity, the eight stadiums used in the 2022 world cup were inter-connected, leveraging edge computing and artificial intelligence to facilitate information gathering at speed, and recreated digital twins to better understand events in real time (Seals, 2022).

Literature on sports stadium IoT security is thin, however many IoT security-based problems have been discussed, as the potential disasters are well-known and feared. Melander (2020) gives an example of a sensor failing to report a fire, with disastrous consequences.

Wan et al. (2022) proposed a cost-effective AI model to determine cyber-attacks to CPS which enhanced prediction and accuracy on abnormal network traffic, with improved latency, delay and packet loss compared to other methods. While this model was successful, an artificial intelligence method alone may not be ideal for making detection decisions when human life is at stake, particularly if a learning dataset is contaminated by attackers (Swinhoe, 2018).

Li et al. (2018) highlighted some security challenges with the introduction of 5G technology, including how to secure communications through cryptographic means and at the device level, provide energy-efficient security for resource-constrained devices, and provide trust assurance through the IoT stack.

Most IoT attacks are also found in traditional cyber-attacks, owing to their dependency on the Internet as a backbone, while IoT devices are less equipped to defend against them due to their limited resources (Deogirikar & Vidhate, 2017). Deogirikar & Vidhate (2017) provide a taxonomy of various attacks on IoT, classifying them into four categories: physical, network, software, and encryption based, while Akram Abdul-Ghani et al. (2018) provide a similar, however somewhat more comprehensive, classification using the following categories: physical, protocol, data (at rest), and software based.

Phanish et al. (2015) provide a solution to assess the structural health of an American Football stadium using wireless sensor networks, however do not focus on the security on the devices themselves.

Vulnerable Internet-connected devices can be easily found using a website such as Shodan (N.D.), which also facilitates authentication attempts. Furthermore, details of devices, such as default credentials or radio frequencies, can be gleaned easily using open source intelligence. This can be a cocktail for disaster, and makes it reasonably easy to exploit insecure devices from afar. Someone with physical access might be able to do much more damage, extracting the firmware using UART or JTAG for reverse engineering, flashing their own firmware (Shepherd et al., 2017), or by simply disconnecting the device.

Security is challenging when IoT devices are constructed from many components, each by manufactures with differing security perspectives and implementations (Li, 2017). This leaves difficulty in securely passing data up and down the IoT stack. Furthermore, components may also be designed and manufactured by other nation states. These countries may be allies upon purchase, however in a setting such as a sports stadium where devices may feasibly not be upgraded for decades, this is a high risk that stadiums take on political security.

Information security is primarily focused on the Confidentiality, Integrity and Availability (CIA) of data, and generally in most commercial organisations, confidentiality is the tenet mainly focused on, closely followed by Integrity. However, within IoT, Availability is usually the most important (Li & Xu, 2017).

# Methodology

This paper employed an experimental study of IoT device threats in the context of sport stadium IoT using the scientific method, as declared in the research proposal. A model-based approach was used to produce a Proof of Concept (PoC) showing how a publisher / subscriber model can prevent and detect them.

Ethnography, or a case study at a specific football stadium would have made for interesting research, however it was not appropriate in this case due to the time constraints limiting the opportunity to gain the required ethical approval.

The study is cross-sectional, due to the results being taken from a state in time. A longitudinal study would not be useful here as the study was not dependent on future or archived results (Dawson, 2015).

A comprehensive literature review of existing secondary research was first undertaken to understand the landscape of the topic in question. This led to finding a research gap on where the safety and security of sports stadium IoT could be improved.

Quantitative research was then performed due the fact that it should be objective in nature. Due to the lack of subjectivity, a positivist philosophy is used, meaning an interpretivist perspective would not be appropriate, and a qualitative approach would ultimately lead to inaccurate results due to its subjective nature.

Primary applied research was therefore conducted in the form of an activity diagram and a detection algorithm as the artefact, with applied deductive reasoning determining the results (McCombes, 2022; Miessler, N.D.).

# Ethical Considerations

Although the secondary research uncovered various ethical matters in IoT in sports stadiums, there were no ethical concerns concerning the primary research as it was based on a PoC and did not involve any human participants or any real organisational data. If the project were to be performed as a case study, or involved ethnography, approval would have been required from the University of Essex Online’s Ethics Committee due to the risk to organisational reputation (social) or exposure to genuine cyber, legal or physical threats following assessment of their security posture and practices. Any identifiable data collected would either need to be anonymous at source, or have confidentiality and pseudonyms applied before submission, to avoid any potential for harm (Bhandari, 2022; Runeson & Höst, 2008). For this reason, the paper also does not include any organisational or personally identifiable images. Furthermore, if real data were being collected on humans as part of the IoT analysis, GDPR and Data Protection Act (DPA) regulations must be abided by, and a notice of consent would need to be sought from affected individuals (O’Connor et al., 2017).

It was also important to provide accurate data in this report so not to mislead readers with inaccurate results caused by an increasing positive bias trend. Misleading results in the context of protecting human life in sports stadiums could have catastrophic consequences, and the omission of negative results leads to wasted time and resources (Mlinaríc et al, 2017).

Furthermore, if this model were to be developed into a prototype, it would need to do so with the GDPR, DPA, and ACM Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct in mind.

# Timeline

# Design

There are several considerations to developing a system that can support IoT devices in a sports stadium. These include which network and communication architecture, and which messaging protocol should be used. The following discusses some options:

## Network Architecture

*Edge Computing*

Edge computing allows the processing of data at the edge of the local network, without sending data to the cloud. This has several benefits, including less latency and bandwidth usage, and added security, privacy, and reliability due to limited exposure over the public Internet (Carvalho et al., 2021).

*IoT Gateways*

IoT gateways collect data from end nodes using various technologies, and allow them to communicate over the IP network. These gateways can also perform multiple additional functions, for example, as edge computing MQTT brokers (Koziolek et al., 2020). IoT edge gateways can accommodate these, and translate to IP for sending to the cloud for backend processing, while making basic decisions regarding the end devices themselves, thus merging the Internet Gateway and Edge Computing stages of IoT architecture/.

Inside a sports stadium, many devices will be mains powered and so can use resource hungry communication methods such as Ethernet or WiFi, and if using smart wearables or smart sports equipment (Abdelrasoul, et al., 2015), it is possible to use a Wireless Personal Area Network (WPAN) technology such as BLE. Due to a stadium’s relatively small size, the use of long range mediums such as Low Power Wide Area Network (LPWAN) technologies, which preserve battery life, are unnecessary (De Carvalho Silva et al., 2017).

## Communication Architecture

*Event-Driven Architecture*

Devices in Event-Driven Architecture (EDA) communicate by publishing messages and commands to each other through notifications. These notifications are either triggered by events that occur on devices (indicating a change in state), or sent on a schedule. Devices transmit notifications to appropriate endpoints on the network, who can then act accordingly, or publish their own reactive notifications in response or to other devices. EDA uses asynchronous communication, meaning once the notification has left the producer, it is forgotten (Richards, 2015).

A major advantage of EDA is that all producers and consumers are decoupled, meaning all nodes are independent of each other and are not required to be available at the same time. EDA is scalable, and does not necessarily require a central node to move notifications along (Richards, 2015). Furthermore, notifications are deemed immutable and persistent, meaning they cannot be altered and can be used again after they have been used (A Dev’ Story, 2021).

Depending on its implementation, EDA presents challenges, including the guarantee of notification delivery, ordering, and the concept of idempotency (Microsoft, N.D.). Guaranteed delivery may not be required in non-critical systems, however it requires careful consideration when used for critical system communication over unreliable networks (Jiang et al., 2011).

Furthermore, as devices may be dependent on notifications from others, reliability is often important, and is exacerbated when multiple devices are sending simultaneous notifications needing to be processed in the correct order. Ordering is a well-known issue in EDA, and often requires mitigation by either appending identification numbers, versions, or timestamps to notifications to properly keep track (CockroachDB, 2021).

Idempotency is the guarantee that if any event is processed more than once, it will not affect the end result (Macero García, 2020). This is an additional consideration in EDA, as receiving the same notification twice in a non-idempotent system can result in the system crashing, or producing inconsistent results (Sun et al., 2019). Inconsistencies would spell disaster in a sports stadium, and can occur when there’s a failure on the event channel, broker or consumer and the notifications are sent again. Here, a medium such as a database can be used to store events, with application logic applied to check against those previously received (Sen, 2018).

EDA lends itself to processing high amounts of data such as those produced by multiple IoT devices, and as brokers push notifications to, they can act as soon as they arrive (Jansen & Saladas, 2020).

*Publish / Subscribe*

The publish / subscribe model is a sub-type of EDA which uses the broker topology. Brokers proxy information sent from the producer (publisher) to the consumer (subscriber), and notifications are broadcast to consumers using event channels known as topics (Gorton, 2022).

The main disadvantage of this architecture, in addition to those suffered by EDA in general, is that while it can survive devices going offline, the broker is typically a single point of failure (SPoF), leaving Denial of Service (DoS) attacks possible.

There are further considerations with ensuring reliability, including how to manage idempotency and lost messages, at the expense of performance (Gorton, 2022).

However, the publish / subscribe model has numerous upsides. Including scalability, and the option to store notifications for disconnected consumers until they come back online (Gorton, 2022).

*Request-Driven Architecture*

Request Driven Architecture (RDA), is a one-to-one model architecture following the request-response model, and uses one-way communication, with the client querying a server. Devices connect to each other synchronously without the use of a broker, meaning it is tightly coupled. When a client queries a server, it sends a request and gets an immediate response, meaning other devices cannot be contacted until completion. It is easier to implement, and troubleshoot than EDA, however due to its tight coupling, it is less resilient and less scalable (Ihuman, N.D.; Tammadge, 2021).

*Polling*

Polling is similar to RDA, as it also follows the request-response model. However, the client makes requests to the server at intervals for data that need processing (Raj et al., 2017). If the server does not have any data to transmit, it closes the connection and waits for before polling again. In reverse, the server may have information but cannot push the data to the client until it initiates a request (Stratmann et al., 2011).

Therefore, polling is suitable for environments where long delays between network calls are tolerated. For example, it can be ineffective in systems sending regular data as client resources are wasted creating needless handshakes and teardowns, it may not be practicable, and if more regular requests are required, intervals need to be reduced, which adds to network load and also the potential for lost events (Kannan et al., 2014; Stratmann, 2011).

Polling also means potentially long execution times, and relatively large messaging overheads, especially when transmitting small-sized messages. Because of this, and the fact that clients must repetitively poll the resource, polling results in increased network load and latency, and therefore is inappropriate for real time applications (Westerholt & Bernd Resch, 2015).

A sub-type of polling, known as long-polling, enables the client to open a connection with the server and wait until data is available. This can save resources compared with short-polling, however is still synchronous, meaning nodes are tightly coupled (Stratmann, 2011). This, is preferred in scenarios containing small numbers of devices, as keeping the connection open ties up resources. Long-polling can be more efficient than short polling, as servers can push data to the client whenever it becomes available, resulting in less handshakes and teardowns, however it requires nodes to be tied up for longer periods (Stratmann, 2011).

Polling architecture therefore, may not be suitable in situations where notifications are waiting to be processed, especially when there are large numbers of systems involved.

## Messaging Protocols

Constrained Application Protocol (CoAP) and Message Queuing Telemetry Transport (MQTT) are two application layer messaging protocols designed for use with constrained devices, and they are both supported over various communication technologies. Larmo et al. (2018) compare their performances over BLE and WiFi, and Thangaval et al. (2014) compared their performances over varying network conditions.

*MQTT*

MQTT transmits notifications between IoT devices using publish / subscribe architecture, and works over TCP to ensure reliable transmissions (Thangavel et al., 2014). MQTT can also leverage Transport Layer Security (TLS) to provide security if devices have sufficient resources (Karagiannis et al., 2015). MQTT pushes notifications, rather than requiring clients to poll servers (Soni & Makwana, 2017), and clients can leverage unique MQTT properties such as Last Will and Testament (LWT) to identify device failure in near real time, while brokers can retain notifications to store last known good data following a client outage (Wagle, 2016).

*CoAP*

CoAP is an HTTP-like communications protocol using RESTful standards, and was introduced to support constrained devices by reducing overheads (Khattak et al., 2014). CoAP leverages UDP, meaning improved performance compared with TCP (Khattak et al., 2014). However, while CoAP has properties which improve communications reliability, UDP is connectionless, and is therefore considered unreliable as packets may be lost or arrive in the incorrect order (Bansal & Priya, 2020; Naik, 2017). UDP leverages DTLS in a similar way to TLS to provide authenticity, integrity and confidentiality (Naik, 2017).

**Threat Modelling**

Threat modelling allows detailed analysis to take place with the aim of detecting system threats. This paper performed threat modelling in the form of an attack-defence tree to determine both abuse cases, and corresponding mitigations. The attack-defence tree can be found in Appendix A, with the identified threats listed in Table 1:

Table 1: Threats

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Threat** | **Description** | **Layer** |
| Tamper | Malicious actor physically manipulates IoT devices or connections. This may be by accessing hardware components, modifying or accessing details through local ports, or simply disconnecting the device’s power (Varga et al, 2017). | Perception |
| Unauthorised Firmware | Malicious actors look to replace known good firmware, with intentions of exploiting known vulnerabilities in the new malicious software (Bettayeb et al., 2019). Kvarda et al (2016) noted an increase in recent IoT firmware attacks due to the difficulty of detection at a sub-operating system level. Barcena & Wueest (2015) conducted tests on multiple smart home devices which showed most were not using cryptographic techniques to sign firmware updates, leaving unauthorised firmware installation possible. | Perception |
| Jamming | Specifically related to Wireless Sensor Nodes (WSNs), attackers send signals to interfere with wireless transmissions on the same frequency leaving legitimate data collection impossible. Jamming can be categorised as a network layer attack, however here it is classed as a perception layer threat to illustrate that sensor nodes using open wireless technologies to glean data, such as HVAC or RFID sensors, are vulnerable (Akram Abdul-Ghani et al., 2018; Deogirikar & Vidhate, 2017; Uke et al, 2013). | Perception |
| Eavesdrop | Attacker reads plain text communications in transit across the wire, or more commonly, over air. This is made possible due to physical exposure, vulnerabilities in equipment or applications, or in the absence of encrypted communication channels (Stone, N.D.). | Network |
| MITM | Occur when attackers position themselves between two or more communicating network nodes. By falsifying identity, legitimates node are fooled into believing they are still communicating with each other. However, the MITM intercepts or alters each packet, before forwarding to the intended destination (Conti et al., 2016). | Network |
| Lateral Movement | If an attacker successfully penetrates a device, they establish a foothold to search for further devices on the same network (SentinelOne, N.D.). | Network |
| DoS | Seeks to overwhelm devices until they are unable to respond to legitimate requests. This attack violates the availability tenet of the CIA, and can be exacerbated by introducing multiple sources of malicious requests resulting in Distributed Denial of Service (DDoS) (Jazzar & Hamad, 2022). | Network |
| Rogue Device | Unauthorised devices, operating under the guise of legitimate devices (Javaid et al, 2020). Rogue devices may also be used to subscribe to MQTT topics (Arseni et al., 2021). Rogue devices could be classified as a perception layer threat, however is included here in the Network layer due to its threat of picking up transmissions. | Network |
| Malicious Access | An unauthorised actor gains access to a device through one of its interfaces, leading to further threats such as information being stolen, and services and devices being deactivated (Firdous et al., 2017). | Application |
| Code Exploit | Software in devices often have vulnerabilities which can go unnoticed unless there is a comprehensive vulnerability disclosure and management program in place (UL, 2019). Furthermore, if the device model is known, exploitation details can be easily found online (Rytel et al., 2020). Therefore, preventative controls, and detection of both known and zero day threats are required. Code exploits allow attackers to enter malicious commands to manipulate device behaviour (Gupta, 2019; Msgna, 2022; UL, 2019). | Application |
| Fake Data Injection | A compromise allows manipulated data to be sent from the device. These attacks can create dangerous situations, e.g. force open doors, raise unnecessary alarms, or crash devices. Swinhoe (2018) discusses several consequences. | Application |

# Prevention and Detection Model

As sports stadiums require system threat prevention and detection in near real time to ensure human safety, the artefact uses the MQTT publish / subscribe for the communication protocol due to its unique capabilities and higher reliability. The communication architecture employs a master-slave pattern (Figure 2) which delegates data collection work to the end devices, known as slaves, to return data to the master to perform calculations (Raj et al., 2017). This architecture pattern has been used in IoT designs in other sectors, and is employed in this design for a sports stadium.

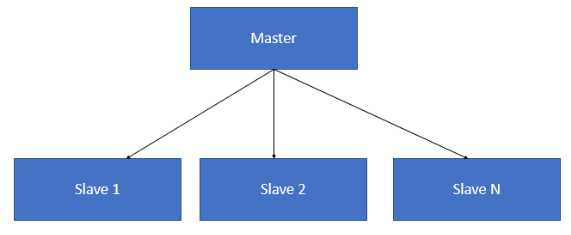


Figure 2: Master-Slave Pattern

Lee et al. (2022) proposed a power saving automatic IoT LED lighting system based on a master-slave architecture. The master LED node detects a signal, and subsequently triggers other slave LEDs in the same zone to increase their brightness to the same level, thus saving power and cost in implementation wired infrastructure. Jan et al. (2021) designed a novel routing protocol for optimising energy consumption for underwater WSNs, based on master-slave architecture.

The architecture design is presented in Figure 3:

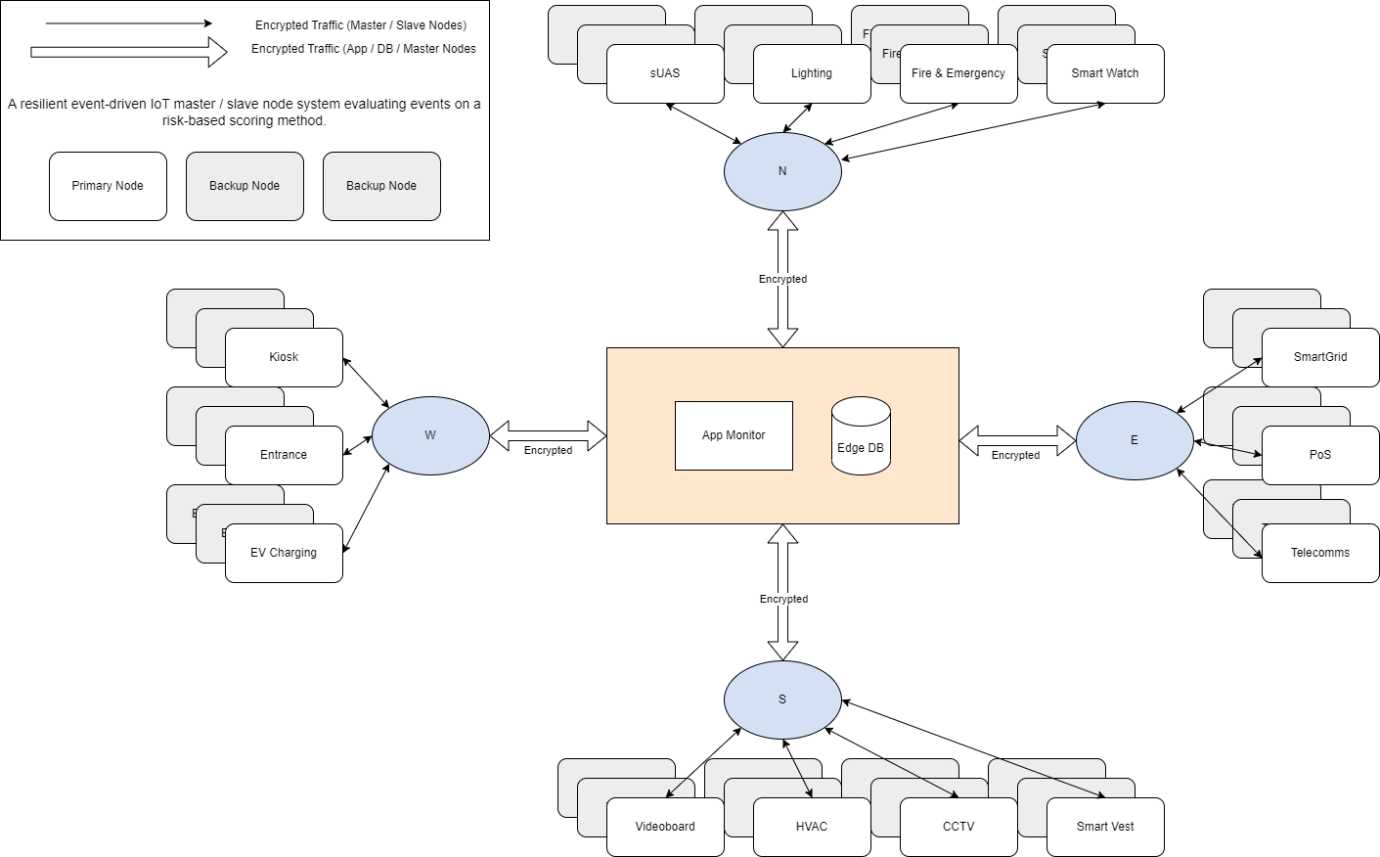


Figure 3: Stadium IoT Architecture

Each side of the stadium is divided into four, with one master node being responsible for multiple slave nodes (IoT endpoint devices) in each side. Slave nodes communicate with their respective master nodes through their various communication protocols (e.g. Ethernet, WiFi, BLE), and edge master nodes combine MQTT broker and IoT gateway capabilities. This enables them to subscribe to notifications from multiple slave nodes, and make appropriate decisions without needing to communicate to the cloud.

Each slave node each has two backup nodes in an active-passive setup in case of malfunction or attack on the primary node. These backup nodes are located on separate virtual networks (VLANs) to ensure any incidents are contained. Should a problem with the slave node be detected by the master node, the problem node is deactivated and a backup node takes its place.

The application layer is in the centre of the diagram and contains a monitor, and database to store data and event notifications send from the slave nodes.

The artefact created for this project is a Proof of Concept (PoC) in the form of an attack-defence tree, UML activity diagram, see Appendix B, and spreadsheet created in Microsoft Excel. The activity diagram shows the movement of data and event codes via notifications sent between slave and master nodes.

The spreadsheet represents the detecting algorithm, and contains four tabs. Shepherd et al. (2017) identified IoT risks using a risk matrix calculated from asset value, threat and vulnerability combinations. Risk matrices are commonplace in assessing risk, however a threat matrix leverages IoCs to help determine threats, and can be applied automatically in real time. Therefore, the proposed model prevents threats using preventative controls, and is supplemented by the scoring algorithm, to detect threats based on weighted IoCs.

**Threats**: This tab (Figure 4) is informational and lists each of the threats discovered following the threat modelling stage. Threats are grouped by the IoT architecture layer it endangers. Each row lists a Threat, its countermeasure Control Type (family of controls applicable to mitigate them: I.e.: Detect / Prevent), and how it is mitigated by the model.

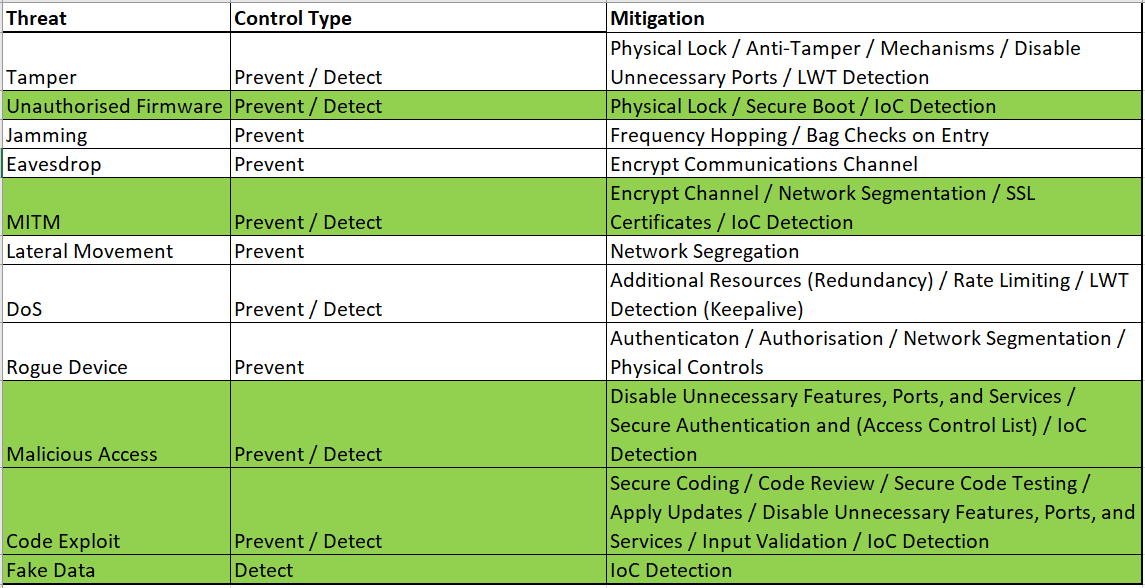


Figure 4: Threats

**IoCs**: Lists Indicators of Compromises (IoCs) that are typically found to contribute to each threat being realised. IoCs are used by the detection algorithm and are listed by Event Code, together with the Event Name (Figure 5).

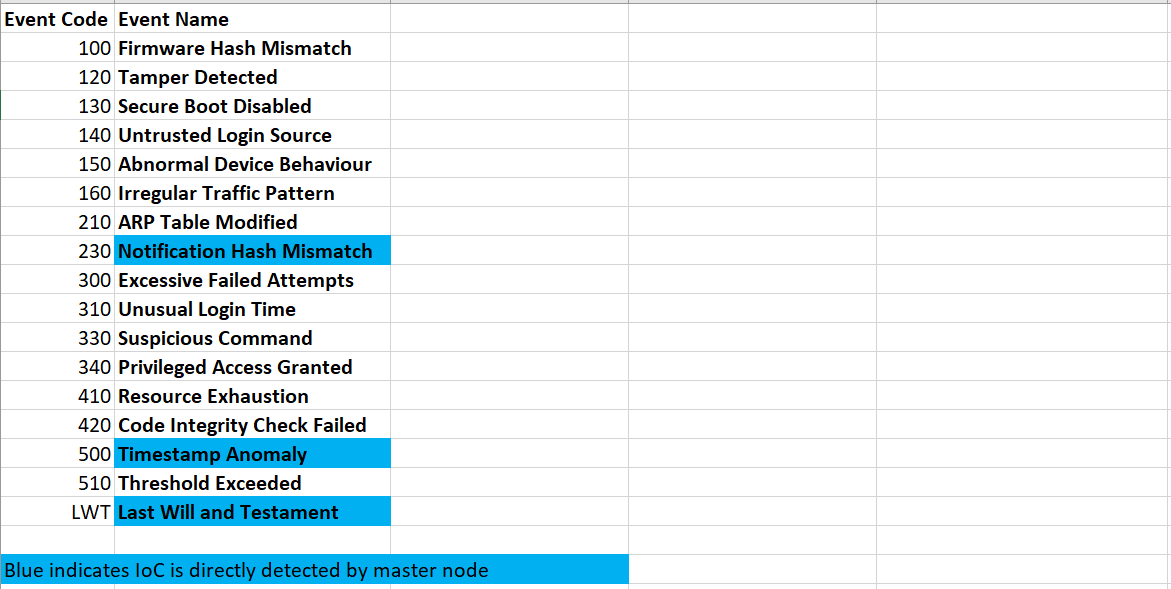


Figure 5: IoCs

**Weightings**: Some threats cannot be prevented alone, and require supplementary detective measures to mitigate threats. Therefore, the Weightings (Figure 6) and Score (Figure 7) tabs use a scoring method to enable the system to detect threats using IoCs. Grouped by Threat, IoCs are listed with a Description, and Weight. The weight for each IoC depends on the likelihood a threat is typically present on a device when a notification of that event is received by the master node. IoCs may be present in multiple threats, with varying scores depending on how applicable they are to that threat’s calculation.

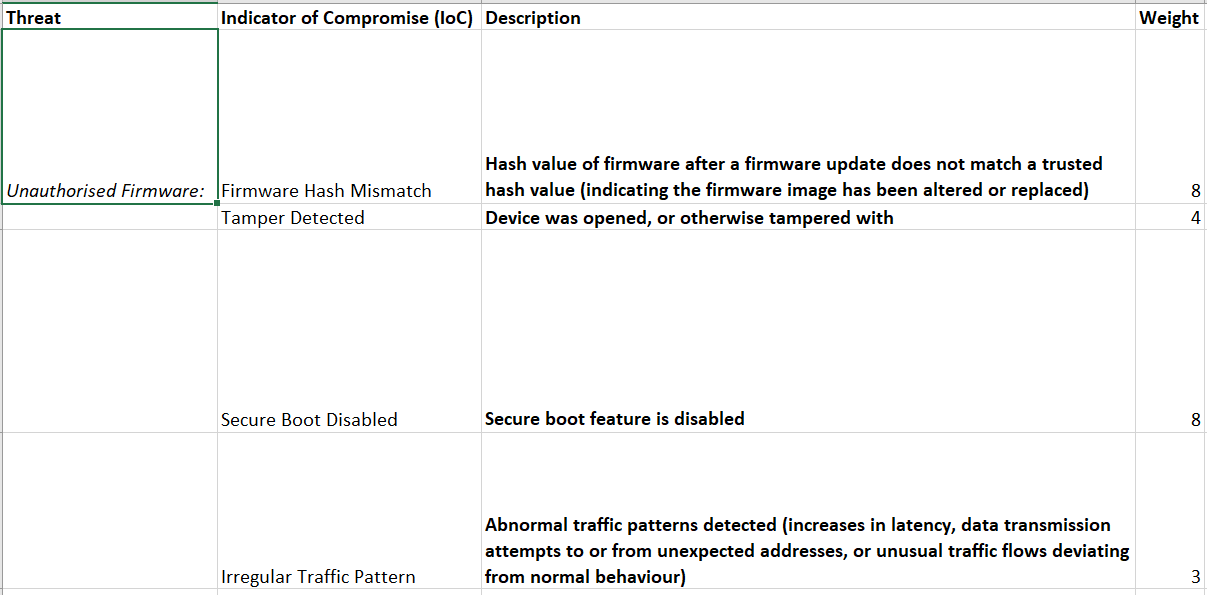


Figure 6: Weightings

**Score**: This interactive tab uses formulas to simulate events occurring in real time. As this is a PoC, the user enters IoC codes in the Code column. The Event Description field then automatically populates with the corresponding Event Name. If the combined IoC weighted scores for a particular threat exceed a total of ten, an alarm will be displayed in red. This simulates the master node detecting a threat in the real world sports stadium scenario and raising the alarm. This alarm automatically triggers a response to deactivate the compromised node, fail over to the backup slave node, and send an alert to a monitor for human response to attend to the problem device.

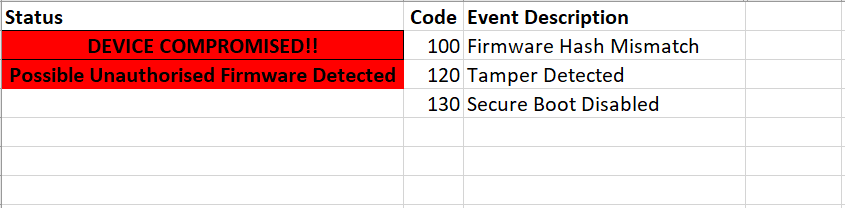


Figure 7: Score

*Quality of Service*

MQTT uses a unique implementation of reliability, offering three levels of quality of service (QoS): QoS 0 - At most once, QoS 1 - At least once, and QoS 2 - Exactly once (Safaei et al., 2017).

In sports stadiums, there may no need to expose IoT devices to the public Internet, and therefore, security is improved by employing edge devices. By the devices’ relatively close proximity, enhanced by the use of the master nodes, the reliability of communications is already improved due to short range communication protocols such as WiFi, Ethernet, and BLE. However, because of the need to protect human life, the reliability of notifications is of paramount importance. MQTT uses TCP which is a reliable transport protocol, and QoS 2 provides additional reliability at the application level (Safaei et al., 2017). As human life is at stake, it is important to ensure every notification reaches its destination, as well as ensuring notifications do not arrive multiple times, and so QoS 2 inherently guarantees idempotence (Cheong, 2022). MQTT clients register a keepalive period of four seconds upon connecting with the broker. If a device should either fail or not report back for more than six seconds, determined by one and a half times the keepalive period, the keepalive is exceeded, and an LWT event notification is triggered by the broker. The broker then deactivates the problem device, and again fails over to a corresponding backup device.

Four seconds was deemed optimal, as longer durations increase the risk to human life due to problems going undetected, and shorter durations increase false positive rates following increased sensitivity to minor network issues or device malfunctions. QoS 2 increases notification delivery times due to a four step process needed to guarantee delivery exactly once. Additionally, using QoS 2 increases the potential for DoS attacks if the publishing devices are send excessive data to the broker (Chifor et al., 2017). However, this is mitigated in the model using rate limiting, by taking a sample of data, and sending data and event notifications exactly once per second. By throttling the publishing rate, the chances of overloading the broker are minimised, and thus the notifications flow is constant. Considering there are backup devices, one second would likely not have a huge effect on the risk to human life, say if the temperature was getting too high in a HVAC facility, or the entrance gates were stuck shut.

Similarly, an interface lockout method has been implemented to restrict brute force attacks overwhelming the system with excessive authentication attempts (Barcena & Wueest, 2015). If credentials are entered incorrectly three times, the interface is locked for forty-five seconds before returning to the log in screen. The failover mechanism explained earlier, additionally provides redundancy in case of attack on, or malfunction of the slave devices. Backup device sets are isolated on separate VLANs, meaning they are less likely to be affected by an attack that compromised the primary node.

To prevent rogue devices intercepting, or sending notifications sent to broadcasting topics, authentication and authentication is required. Authentication to the broker must be enforced in the form of SSL certificates, which additionally provides integrity and confidentiality.

Constrained nodes may not have the required resources to compute and leverage cryptographic algorithms used by asymmetric cryptography (Iqbal et al., 2016). Therefore, they must authenticate by sending encrypted credentials in the MQTT CONNECT packet. Hashes are computed for messages, and appended to the notification in the form of Hash-Based Message Authentication Codes (HMACs). Data is sent encrypted using a symmetric encryption method such as Advanced Encryption Standard (AES). Therefore, authentication, confidentiality

and integrity of notifications is enforced. Devices are authorised to publish at a topic level, and any device that is unauthorised, or unable to authenticate, therefore is denied the ability publish or subscribe to topics.

Topic subscriptions may expire after a number of days of inactivity, this can be troublesome in sports stadiums during periods of inactivity, such as the close season. Stadiums may need to begin running operations early to keep this issue at bay, and perform running tests to ensure the data is flowing correctly in preparation of the returning masses.

In an event-driven architecture, there is potential that more notifications will be sent than received. In a real world scenario, if the master node gets overwhelmed or goes offline, then additional consumers can either be introduced, or a broker cluster can be implemented.

The database location is of lesser importance, as the master node makes decisions autonomously, and ordering is taken care of due to serial event channels, and MQTT brokers processing notifications on a First In First Out (FIFO) basis (Bauer & Aschenbruck, 2017). If kept centrally, threats could compromise the network connection between the master node and the central database. Alternatively, each of the master nodes keep its own cache database with transactions needing to be reliably synchronised back to the central database.

Additionally, the fact that master nodes are implemented in the architecture, addresses network segmentation further. Any compromised device is contained within a stadium section, easing incident response and containing attacks. This could be segregated further if required to contain possible attacks more granularly.

Each slave node transmits data on its own topic. Due to its decoupled nature, publish-subscribe models have difficulties maintaining consistency, however as this model has only one producer sending data per topic at any one time, and uses QoS 2 for reliability, this problem is alleviated. Each set of slave nodes is configured with a client ID, with the backup nodes as replicas using the same client ID. Therefore, if a backup is initiated, it connects to the broker using the same ID, with the cleansession flag set to true, enabling subscriptions to continue seamlessly.

Each swimlane of the activity diagram is individually shown below in Figures 8 – 10.

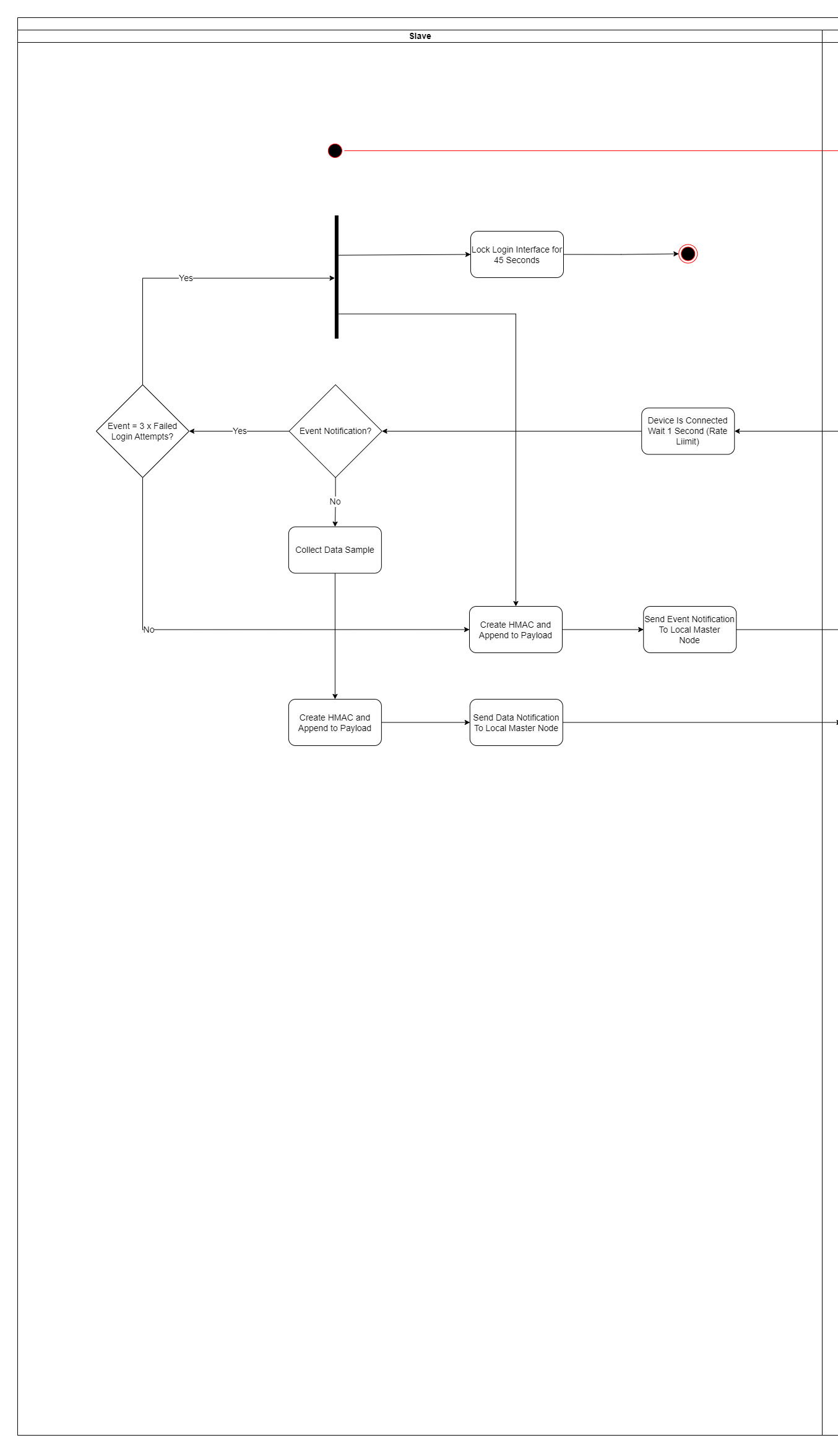


Figure 8: Slave Node Swimlane

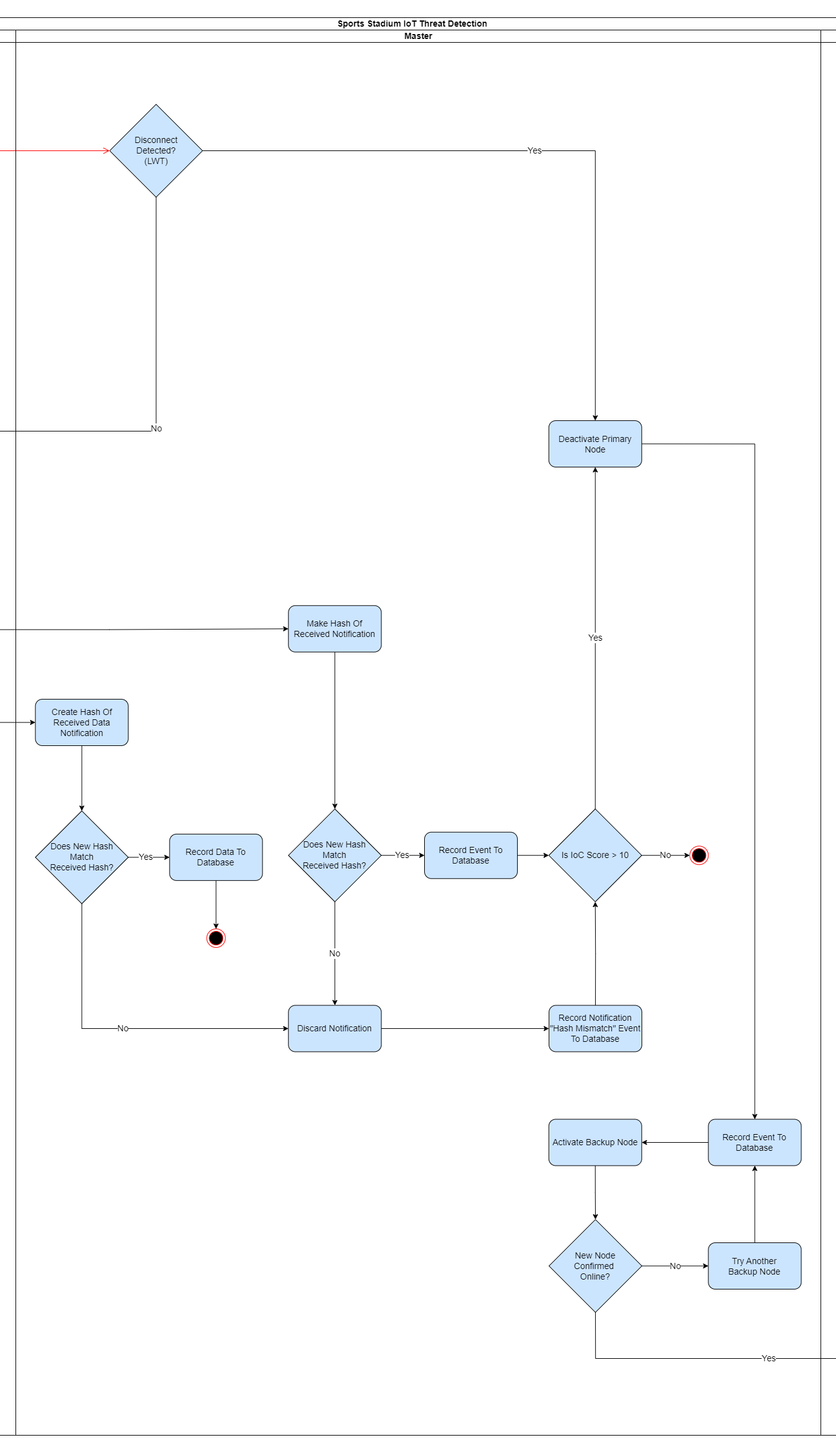


Figure 9: Master Node Swimlane



Figure 10: Application Node Swimlane

# Mitigating The Discovered Threats

* **Tampering:** Physical protections such as locks and tamper-resistant packaging (Varga, 2017). Brokers send LWT notifications when clients disconnect or are unable to communicate within a specified keepalive period. Following receipt of this notification, the system can detect both purposeful tamper attacks and disruptive network issues (HiveMQ, 2015a). Unnecessary local connections may be disabled, such as JTAG and UART, and tamper detection mechanisms can be employed (Msgna, 2022).
* **Unauthorised Firmware**: Preventative controls begin by disabling Over The Air (OTA) updates for compromised devices (Makhdoom et al., 2019), as malicious actors may still be present and can intercept the firmware. Unnecessary local connections disabled such as JTAG and UART (Martinez, N.D.). Furthermore, it may also be possible detect:
  + **Firmware Hash Mismatch:** Can be an indicator of firmware manipulation by attacks such as MITM (He et al., 2019).
  + **Tamper Detected:** Anti-tamper techniques can detect physical device tampering, and excessive power surges and temperatures (STMicroelectronics, 2023).
  + **Secure Boot Disabled:** Secure boot guarantees the integrity and authenticity of firmware, and is able to detect modifications (Srihith et al., 2023).
  + **Irregular Traffic Pattern:** Irregular traffic patterns can be a sign of compromised firmware (Srihith et al., 2023).
* **Jamming:** The best anti-jamming solutions are to make it difficult for attackers to find the frequency in which the data is sent. Therefore, the following can be used:
  + Physical bag checks for patrons upon stadium entry can enable detection and confiscation of wireless jamming devices, such as the one designed by Yunan et al. (2021), at source.
  + Spread Spectrum, e.g. Frequency Hopping or Direct Sequence (Akram Abdul-Ghani et al., 2018; Varga et al., 2017) is a common technique to make it difficult for jammers to find the correct frequency.
* **Eavesdrop:** Preventative controls are the most effective in mitigating eavesdropping, as detecting this kind of attack can be difficult (Stone, N.D.).
  + Network segmentation and firewalls prevent attackers gaining access to the network to sniff packets, and strong authentication is enforced (Akram Abdul-Ghani et al., 2018; Islam & Aktheruzzaman, 2020).
  + Most of all, encrypting data in transit can ensure that even if the attacker gains access to the packets, it would be unlikely to decrypt to read the plain text (Akram Abdul-Ghani et al., 2018; Islam & Aktheruzzaman, 2020).
* **MITM:** Preventative controls include usingSecure Sockets Layer (SSL) certificates to mutually authenticate clients and servers on the network, while TLS protects data in transit Gayathri et al., 2022. However, in constrained devices, this is not always possible and the following should be used by other means (i.e. symmetric encryption):
  + Symmetric encryption can be used to protect payload data in transit (Akram Abdul-Ghani et al., 2018).
  + Strong authentication should accompany encryption techniques where certificates cannot be used (Gayathri et al., 2022).

Furthermore, it may also be possible detect modifications:

* + **Irregular Traffic Pattern**: MITM attacks can be indicated by unusual network activity (Lahmadi et al., 2020).
  + **Firmware Hash Mismatch**: Firmware modifications are indicators of a precursor to, or result of, MITM attacks (Li et al., 2017; He et al., 2019).
  + **ARP Table Modified**: Address Resolution Protocol (ARP) poisoning alters the mapping between Media Access Control (MAC) addresses to IP addresses, allowing attackers to redirect traffic (Petrović et al., 2021).
  + **Notification Hash Mismatch**: Appending a Hashed Message Authentication Code (HMAC) to notifications, prevents data from being modified in transit. If these do not match, the packet may have been modified by a MITM attack (Salem, 2022).
* **Lateral Movement:** Attackers need to first compromise a device to then move around the network. To prevent this, as a defence in depth technique, network segregation is used to limit damage if an attack is successful (Arifeen et al., 2021). Each end of the stadium has its own master node and slave nodes and is segregated from others using a VLAN (Tomar, 2020). In addition to this, the backup slave nodes are on different network VLANs.
* **DoS:** DoS attacks can be mitigated in numerous ways: The use of QoS 2 level reliability increases network load, and therefore rate limiting is applied to control data flows publishing once per second, preventing flooding attacks (Bhunia & Gurusamy, 2017). In the event a slave node is detected as compromised or faulty, it is deactivated, and replaced with a backup in a controlled client takeover, therefore allowing redundancy for continuous operations (Atlam & Wills, 2019; Samaila et al., 2018). For wireless devices, the protections against jamming attacks also apply (Deogirikar & Vidhate, 2017).
* **Rogue Device**: Firewalls and VLANs restrict data between nodes to inside the stadium network, and edge devices respond to client notifications, reducing the need to send data across the public Internet. This ensures defence in depth as, attackers would need to join the internal network to send data, however they also need to subscribe to topics to read the packets being sent by clients. Strict authentication and authorisation requirements enforced by the broker ensures only those with a valid need to know are able to subscribe to topics (Arseni et al., 2021).
* **Malicious Access:** Preventative measures include the changing of default credentials, following guidance in the Product Security and Telecommunications Infrastructure Act (2022). Strong local authentication mechanisms should apply, and features, services and ports not necessary for its function, such as telnet, should be disabled or uninstalled (Vignau et al., 2019). These weaknesses are common attack vectors, and enabled the Mirai botnet to be so effective. Furthermore, it may also be possible detect:
  + **Excessive Failed Attempts**: This can be an indicator of malicious user attempting to gain unauthorised access (Asiri et al., 2023).
  + **Unusual Login Time**:Unusual login times can be an indicator of malicious authentication attempts (Exameam, N.D.).
  + **Untrusted Login Source**: Unusual access attempts can be an indicator of malicious access (Asiri et al., 2023; Exabeam, N.D.).
  + **Abnormal Device Behaviour**:Abnormal behaviour can indicate malicious access, as seen in the Mirai botnet (Antonakakis, 2017).
  + **Privileged Access Granted**: Stadium organisations should always be alert when privilege escalation is detected, as attackers will swiftly look to upgrade their access (Jullian et al., 2023; Rizvi et al., 2020).
* **Code Exploit**: Devices should be purchased from known and trusted manufacturers, who adhere to the standards in the EN 303 645. The same due diligence should be taken for any distributors and installers, as vulnerabilities could be introduced along the supply chain (Omitola & Wills, 2018). Post install, security updates should be applied regularly and promptly (UL, 2019). Features, services and ports unnecessary for its function, such as telnet, should be disabled or uninstalled (Vignau et al., 2019). Input validation must be applied to prevent scripting attacks (Song & García-Valls, 2022). Furthermore, it may be possible to detect:
  + **Abnormal Device Behaviour:** IoT devices generally exhibit relatively predictable behaviour, with abnormal activity a possible indication of a code exploit (Wang & Lu, 2020).
  + **Privileged Access Granted:** A device running in privileged access mode may be an indicator of injected malicious code (Noman, H.A. & Abu-Sharkh, 2023).
  + **Resource Exhaustion:** This can be caused by injection attacks, or exploits of other vulnerabilities in code, and can lead to excessive use of device resources (Roohi et al., 2019; Masood & Java, 2015; Rauf et al., 2021).
  + **Suspicious Command:** Malicious or suspicious commands can indicate a code exploit (Ding et al., 2020).
* **Fake Data:** In addition to the measures preventing rogue devices which can publish their own fake data, legitimate devices employ encryption, timestamps and hashing methods to data in transit (Swinhoe, 2018). Furthermore, fabricated data may need to be detected upon using IoCs:
  + Change in data transmission rate can be an indication of a false data (Song et al., 2017).
  + Falsified data can manifest itself as data values exceeding thresholds (Song et al., 2017).
  + Fake data injection attacks can result in power depletion, especially relevant for battery powered devices (Ye et al., 2005).
  + Fake data is usually due to an already compromised device (Ye et al., 2005). Therefore, a device exhibiting other abnormal behaviour can be evidence of a false data injection attack.

**Investigation of what you’ve done**

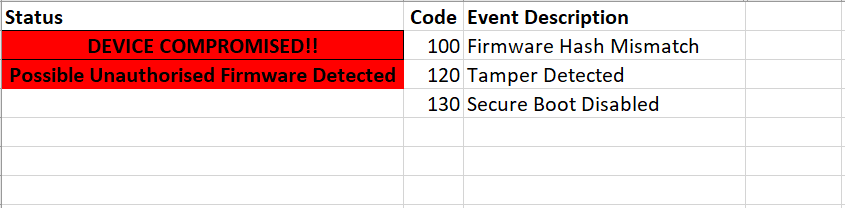


Figure 11: Successful Trigger

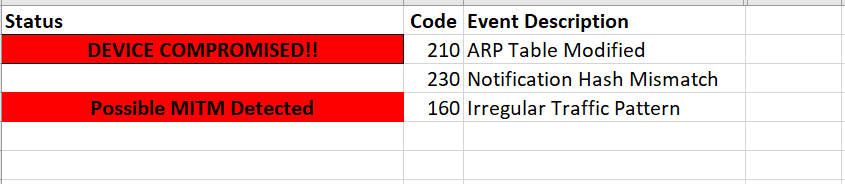


Figure 12: Successful Trigger

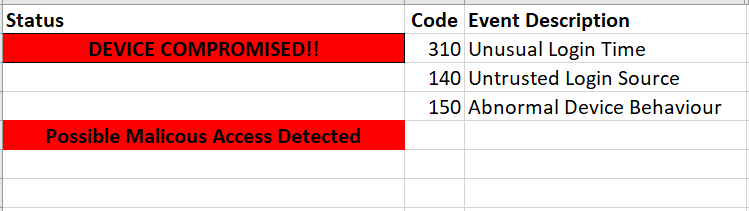


Figure 13: Successful Trigger

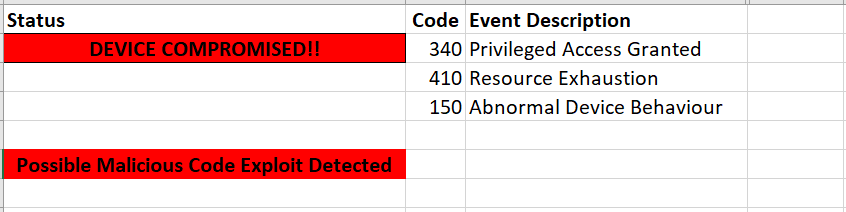


Figure 14: Successful Trigger

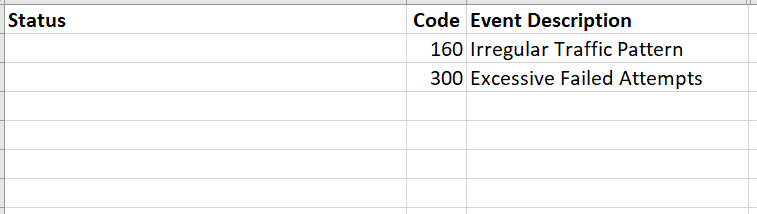


Figure 15: Not Triggered (Score < 10)

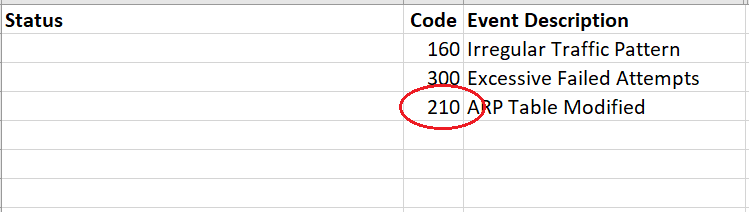


Figure 16: Event Code 210 not an IoC for Fake Data

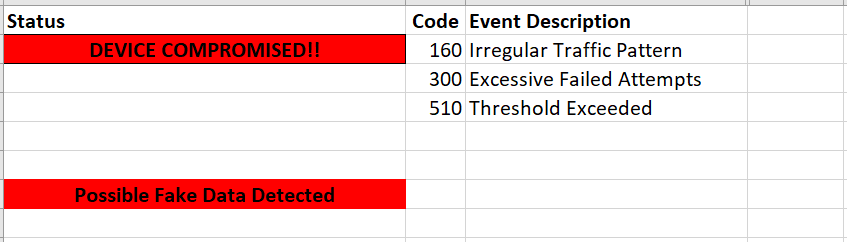


Figure 17: Successful Trigger

# Discussion and Evaluation

Detection Scoring Algorithm:

Indicators of Compromise:

MITM: In order to prevent MITM attacks, it is preferable that SSL certificates are used which provide both authentication as well as confidentiality and integrity protection. This, however is sometimes impossible in constrained devices, and so payload encryption would be used in conjunction with authentication on topics. Authorisation can also be enforced on the broker here to ensure clients are restricted to publishing, and cannot subscribe. As symmetric encryption cannot prove the sender identity, MITM attacks are not prevented when not also using authentication.

As payload encryption works on the application layer, it can work in conjunction with TLS providing an additional layer of security, although this does come at the cost of performance (HiveMQ, 2015b).

As added protection, hashes are configured to ensure the notifications has been unaltered in transit. In constrained devices, HMAC may be used, as symmetric encryption is not as computationally expensive as digital signatures, to calculate a stamp proving that the payload has remained unchanged, and that only someone who knows the secret key was able to send it (HiveMQ, 2015b).

ARP: Changes in ARP tables are a clear indicator or MITM attacks. Modifications on ARP tables map MAC addresses to IP addresses, making it possible for attackers to redirect packets to themselves without legitimate nodes suspecting.

Need to discuss results more here…

# Research Limitations

Limitations to the study included time constraints, exacerbated by an initial lack of understanding of requirements and technologies that might be used or needed to be understood. This pushed back the project milestones considerably. Additionally, working remotely proved very challenging, felt isolating and was amplified by a limited allowance of video call time with supervisors, and asymmetric email responses resulting in periods of frustration.

More thorough IoCs could have been included in the model for testing, with more granular weightings if more time was available. However, this was a proof of concept model, and if time was not a restriction, other methods could have been pursued to create the threat matrix.

Firstly, there was limited secondary research into the cybersecurity of IoT devices in sports stadiums.

The main one being the time period allowed for completion. Additional time would have permitted further investigation into IoCs, threats, additional technologies, culminating in an improved complex threat matrix. Furthermore, ethical approval could have been sought to apply such a matrix to a real sports stadium which would have dual benefits for academia, and the stadium owners themselves in the everlong pursuit of improved security.

The research itself was limited by the research question, and objective for the artefact was too broad. This meant that the research focus was difficult to dive deep into, leading to trouble finding a significant research gap. Once a path forward was found, must ground was covered in the final few weeks.

Data collection was limited to secondary research, and rudimentary primary research based on an arithmetic algorithm was necessary. To use and understand datasets used by AI models would have been very challenging to finish the project in time.

Therefore, the number of IoCs, and threats, limited research to a PoC rather than a full threat matrix algorithm implementation. More extensive research into these would have likely resulted in more accurate results.

One major limitation of the model is that it does not take into account Advanced Persistent Threats (APTs). APTs are threats that infiltrate the system long before the attack takes place, and so would not be detected by a real time IoCs algorithm.

# Lessons Learned

This research contributes to the Infrastructure Security CyBOK Category and the associated Cyber-Physical Systems Security Knowledge Area (NCSC, 2019), and extends on a topic in the previous module.

Similar to that module, the overall project proved extremely challenging. During the process, vast amounts of time was spent determining and pinpointing the particular research problem, and project design. Although the topic remained the same throughout, there was increasing pressure to find research gaps in order to find a path forward. This led to incessant reading at a broad level throughout the project, in a bid to find a novel problem.

The project also resulted in deep research to understand the technology holistically relating to the focus area, and examining various strategies to implement a suitable artefact. This led to attending multiple online boot-camps, followed by regular prototype creations to ensure the relevant skills were acquired, and ready to put into practice. Part of this problem was the attention given to the artefact, instead of determining an answer to the research problem at hand. The necessary inclusion of an artefact proved hugely distracting from focusing on understanding the original problem, and led to several unsuccessful plans, including the building of a containerised solution which can be found in Appendix C. If such a project was to be revisited, it is clear that early diagnosis of the problem space is of paramount importance, leading to strong foundations for the project and a clear path forward. This could be eased by understanding project requirements in advance, and understanding that dedicated thinking during earlier modules may help in sculpting ideas for the ultimate deliverable.

However, this particular downfall did have some positives, namely the acquisition of several new skills from prototypes that were not pursued. Among these included new insight into containerisation technologies such as Docker, with further knowledge acquisition of Docker Swarm, and insight into tools such as Snyk to ensure container security. Further Linux skills were also acquired, in particular how packages are updated, implementing iptables, using Secure Copy (SCP), creating users, and establishing Secure Shell (SSH) tunnels. There were all skills very relevant to the workplace, and would have been very useful in former placements. Malware detection APIs were investigated, as well as various new Python modules were also discovered, including Beautiful Soup, Requests, Colorama, Fabric, Pythonping, all of which were not used, however may prove useful for future work.

Knowledge from previous course modules proved helpful as a base in creating the artefact. This manifested as an attack-defence tree, UML diagrams, and new MQTT techniques, such as the use of LWT notifications, QoS levels, cleansession flags, and keepalive intervals, an in depth understanding of CoAP, and communication architectures were explored.

Naturally, as part of research for a capstone project around the subject of IoT, much content was digested regarding the different wireless sensor network (WSN) communication technologies, how they work, the various types of physical IoT devices available, how they are composed, and their various IoT attack vectors and techniques, and how to defend against them. This proved challenging due to minimal existing knowledge of these technologies.

Many ethical concerns regarding the usage of IoT devices in sports stadiums were discovered, including the use of CCTV to record supporters and staff, as was regulation as to ensure responsible IoT design, implementation, and usage. The particular use of SMEs to make political points by hacktivist or nation states make them a particular target.

In terms of soft skills, much time was wasted reading entire research papers. In future, this could be streamlined by scanning papers paying particular attention to abstracts, and perhaps conclusions, before deciding whether it is worth delving in to the full content.

Advice was offered on this, however there was always temptation to cover all ground ensuring nothing was missed.

The project focus changed somewhat from the original research proposal. Initially, the proposal was to find twelve solutions to twelve vulnerabilities identified by CISA (N.D.), see Appendix D. However, after discussions with supervisors, it was clear the plan did not meet the project requirements and was quickly abandoned. This was difficult to concede due to an artefact already having been created, caused much panic, and caused significant delays to the project, see Figure 11.

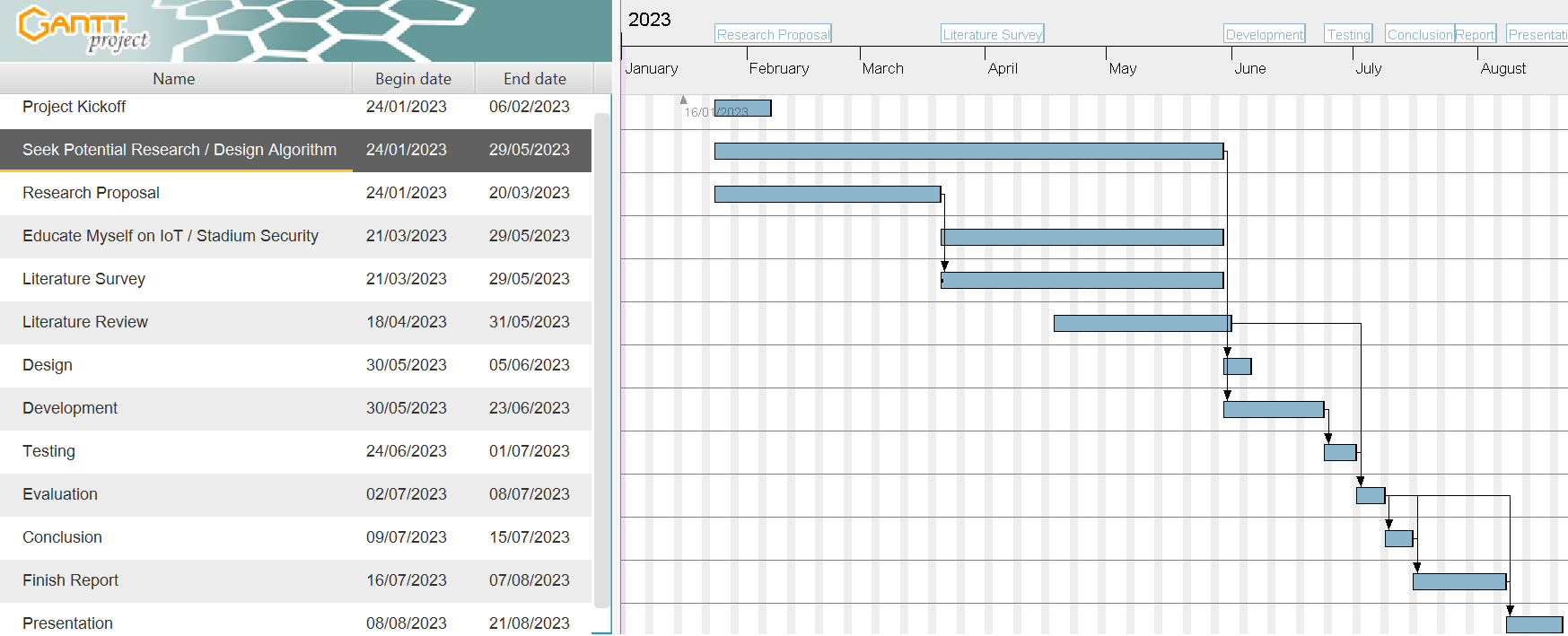


Figure 18: Updated Project Timeline

Several subsequent project idea iterations were proposed, before an algorithm was finally agreed upon. This was a huge relief.

The risks stated in the research proposal however, did not change, and each risk was realised. In order to complete the project to a suitable standard, incessant reading to understand relevant technologies was required, and also to find a research gap. This in turn led to the next risk being realised, with time quickly evaporating, the project became very top heavy and stalled at the literature review stage. There was often difficulty understanding the requirements, which was likely due to having a non-academic background and miscommunication with supervisor’s. It was interesting on reflection, to see similarities in difficulties experienced with this and the previous module, in comparison with the rest of the course.

Time was therefore taken at a critical point to take stock and re-evaluate. This proved pivotal, and was one aspect in which remote study was beneficial due to the ability to reconstruct previous emails looking for patterns to find a way forward. Finally, laptop malfunctions on two occasions meant that the data loss risk occurred twice in the project. The advance consideration of these risks therefore proved beneficial, as each predicted countermeasure paid dividends. Continuous research was practiced throughout, the project plan kept focus and aware of what was still required, and a work / study / life balance maintained stability. This was not helped by starting a new demanding job, but a continuous routine kept things balanced. Prior to this, during a time of unemployment, it was crucial to be proactive in conducting research during slack time, and this contributed to a good base understanding of IoT technologies. The project resources and supervisors kept things heading in the right direction, and these were invaluable to the project’s success. Finally, restoring from data backups was required on two occasions. Would these not have been created in advance, the project would almost certainly have failed.

# Conclusion and Future Work

In this paper, an algorithm was designed to prevent and detect cyber-related threats to a sports stadium. The algorithm was based on a master-slave architecture, using the MQTT publish-subscribe communication protocol.

Need to write more here…

General cybersecurity best practices should be followed to supplement the preventative and detective algorithm and controls mentioned in this report. All equipment, including non-IoT devices should be purchased and maintained by reputable manufacturers and installers. The stadium should run a regularly updated and comprehensive employee security awareness program. Policies and procedures should be followed at all times. Firmware and application updates should be applied promptly as part of an update cycle program, with non-critical pilot groups for testing. This includes network equipment and the local area network hosting typical IT devices.

A vulnerability assessment program should also be enforced, with external penetration testing included to proactively seek vulnerabilities in the network. Supplementing these controls, with those described in this paper leads to a comprehensive defence in depth approach to keeping humans safe from existential threats, allowing them to continue to enjoy the experience of live sport that only sports stadiums can provide.

With more time, further analysis into the available technologies might have been explored, such as those mentioned by Naik (2017). Moreover, a greater catalogue of IoCs and threats would have been sought. Thorough testing and refinement would have been performed to ensure improved weighting accuracy, and improved detection sensitivity.

It may be beneficial to adapt the model to use Artificial Intelligence (AI-based) detection algorithms such as the Naïve Bayes classifier to classify IoCs using a pre-existing datasets. This may have produced more accurate results due to the engine being fed historical data. This PoC may also be expanded to support more complex stadium systems, whereby an EDA orchestration topology model may be beneficial, rather than the simpler broker topology.

Any future work should be mindful of ethical issues involved in applying this to a real stadium. Another step in threat scoring may be used, while still avoiding triggering false positives, to incorporate indicators of lurking APTs.

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# Appendices

**APPENDIX A: Detection Algorithm**

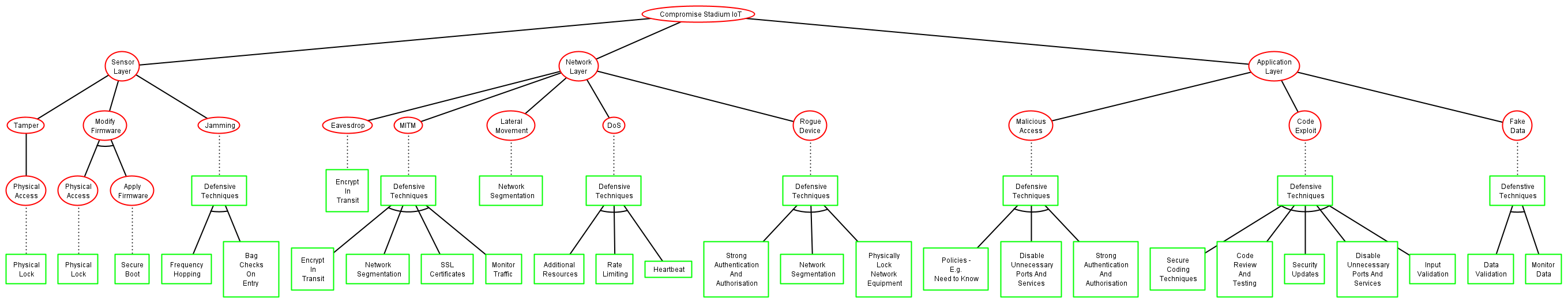
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Figure 19: Attack-Defence Tree using ADTool (Université Du Luxembourg, N.D.)

**APPENDIX B: Detection Algorithm**

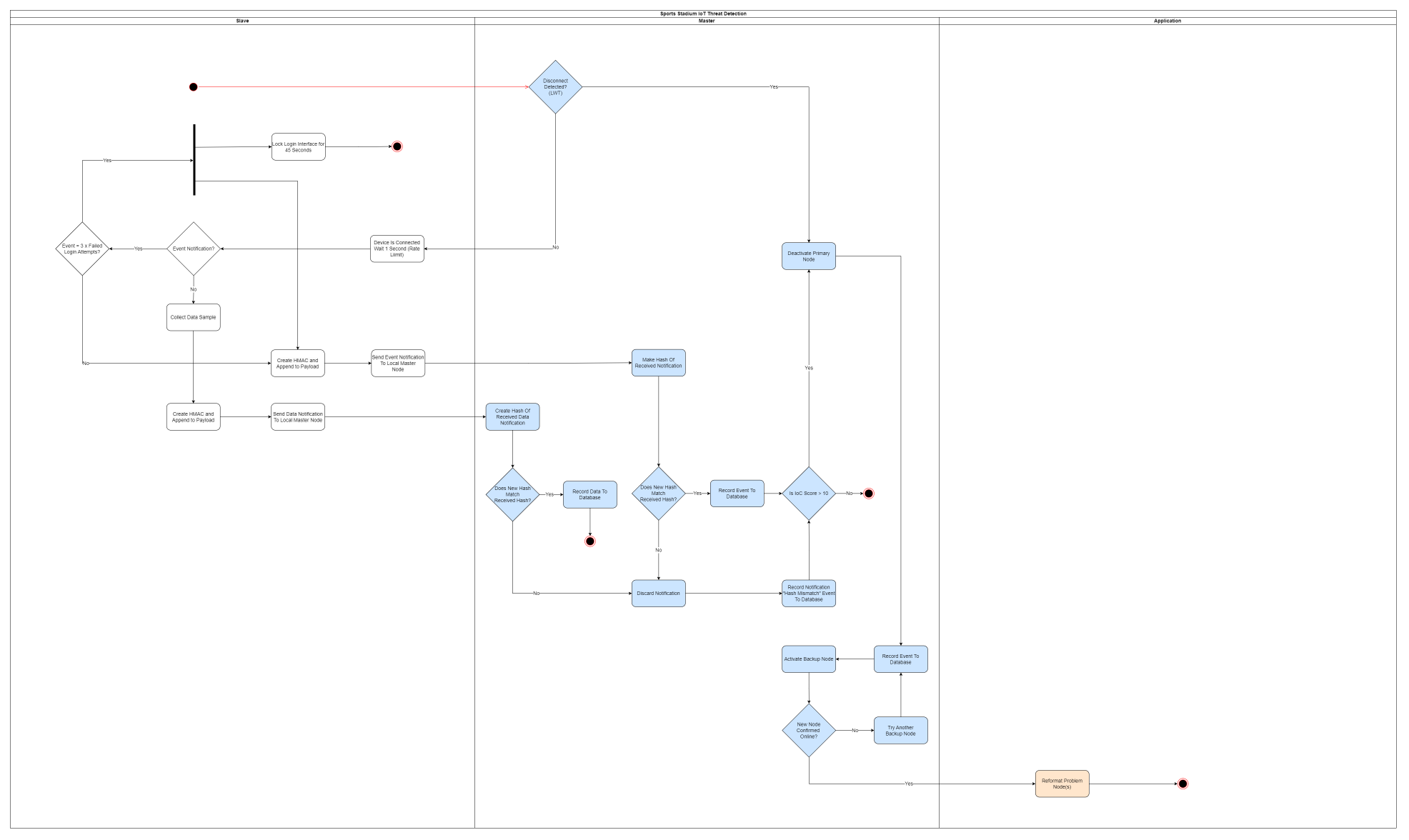


Figure 20: Algorithm Activity Diagram

**APPENDIX C: Abandoned Plans**

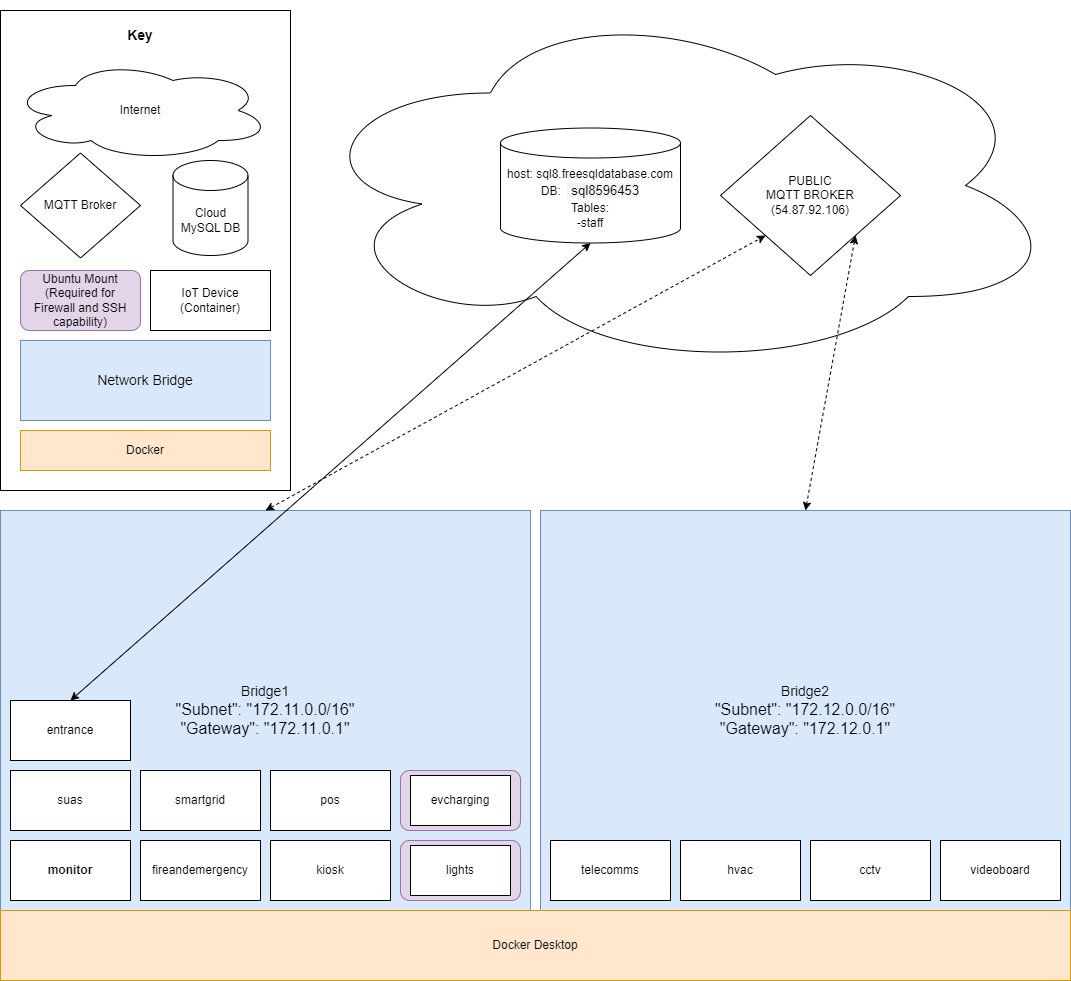


Figure 21: Original Artefact

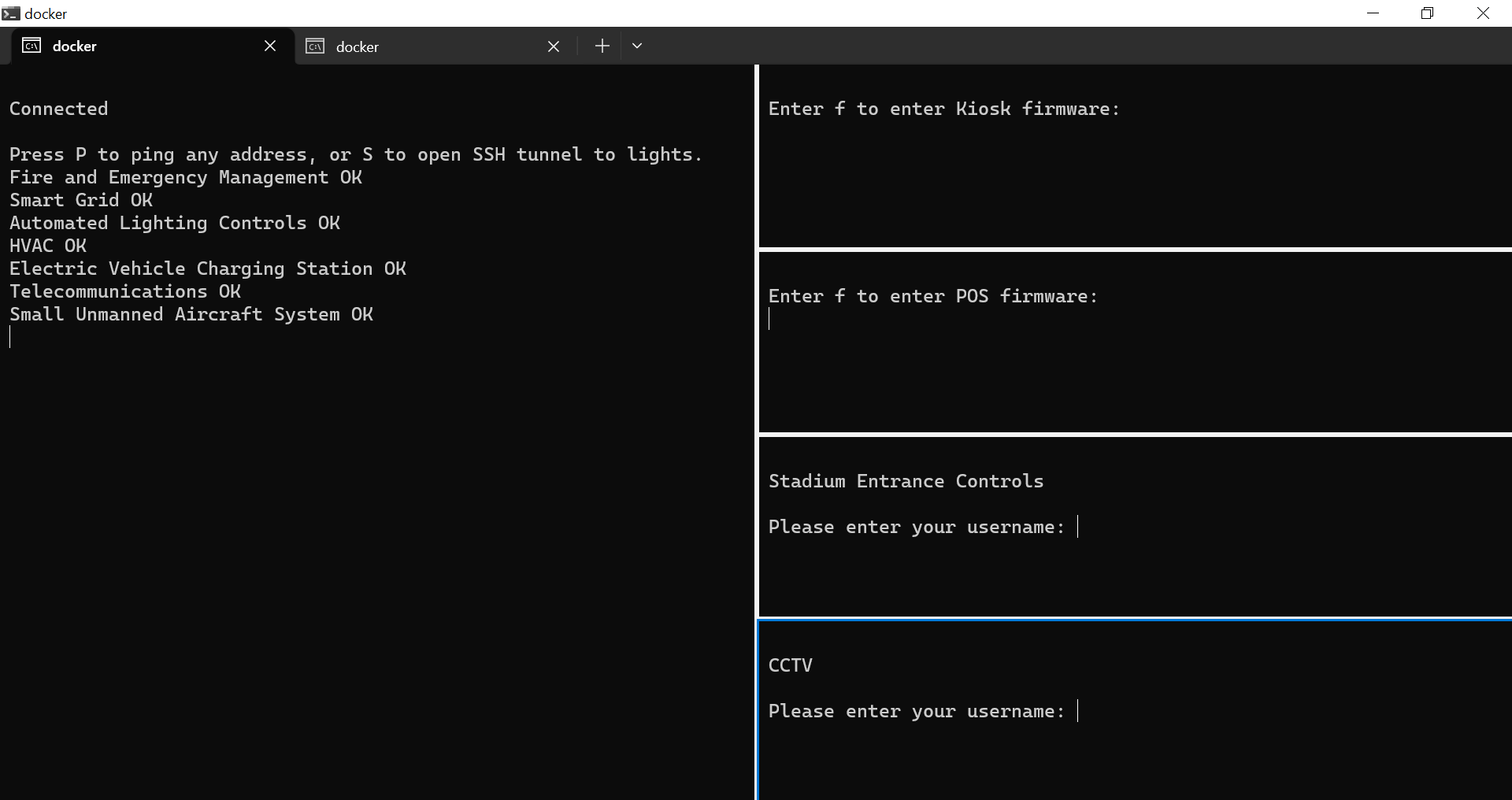


Figure 22: Original Artefact Screen A

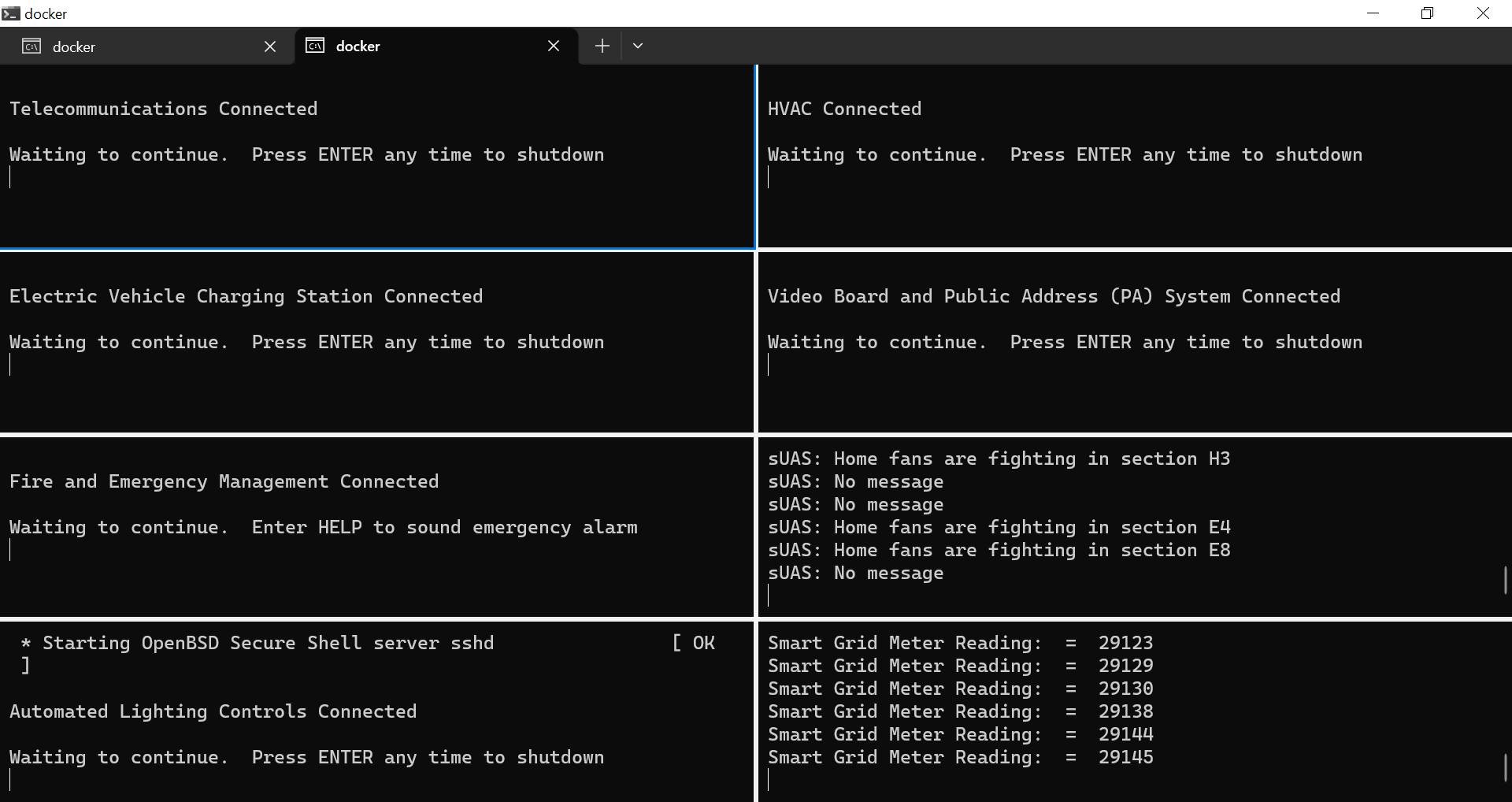


Figure 23: Original Artefact Screen B

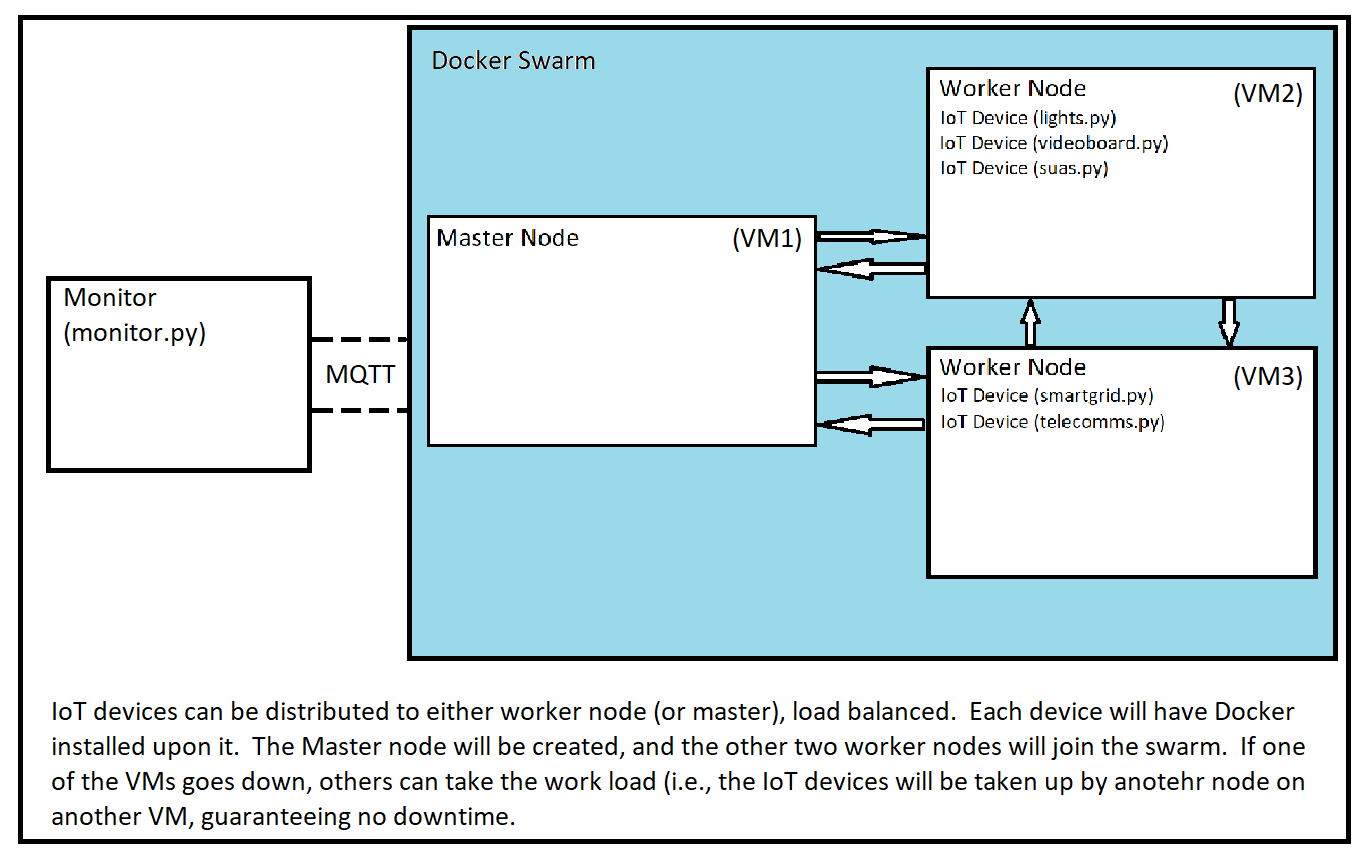
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Figure 24: Docker Swarm Proposal

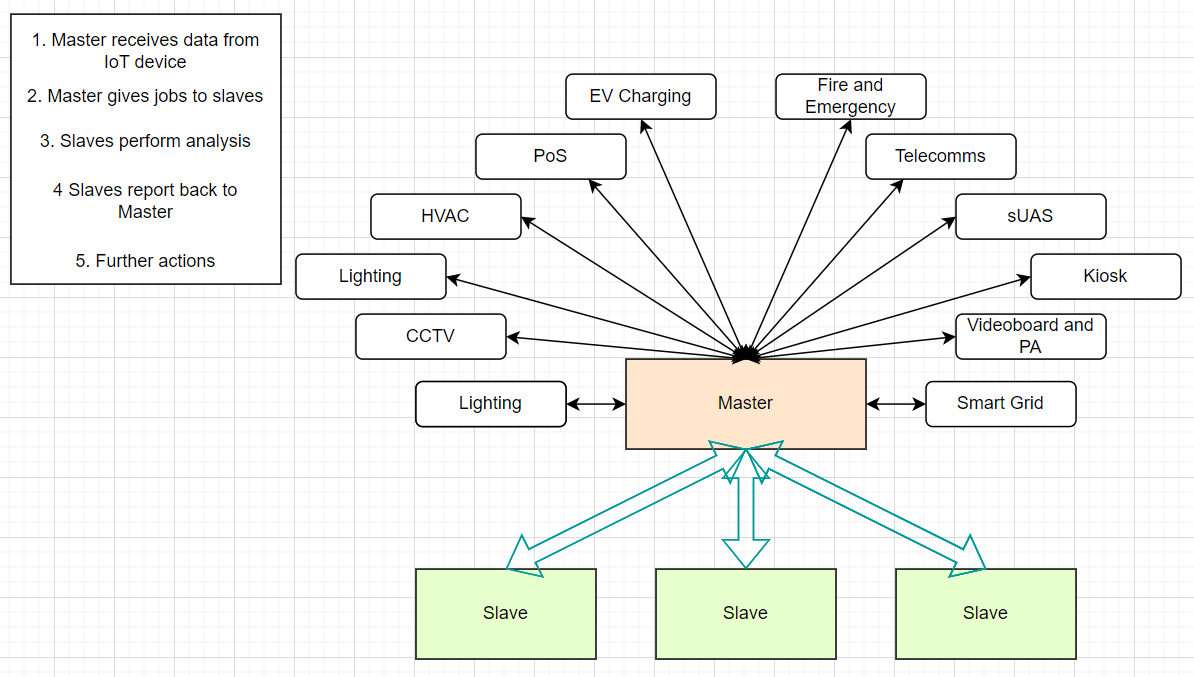
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Figure 25: Master-Slave Architecture First Attempt

**APPENDIX D: Original Research Proposal Idea**

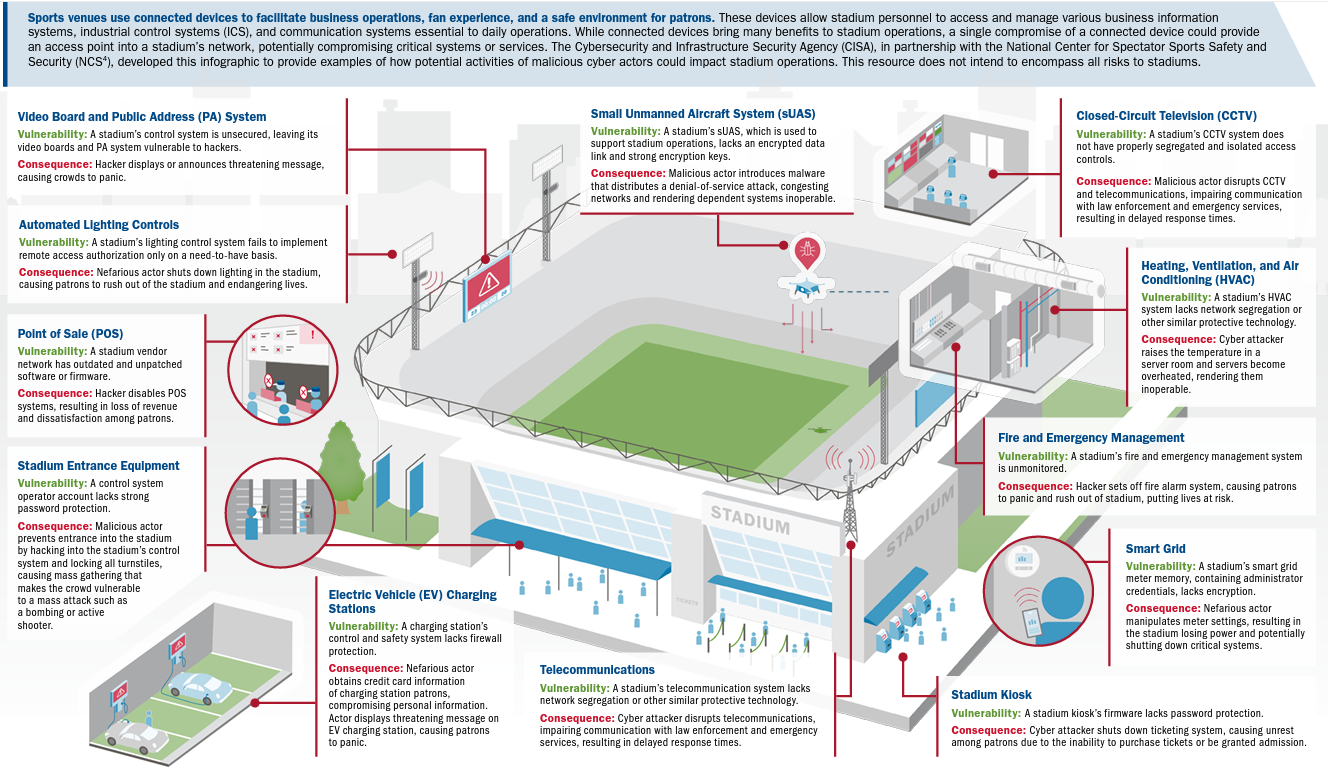


Figure 26: Twelve Mitigations To Twelve Vulnerabilities In Sports Stadium IoT (CISA, N.D.)