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MALWARE DETECTION

Application for IoT Devices

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Springboard DSCT Bootcamp

"Your device has been infected": words we never want to read…

Summary

In this project, we intake network flow log files from 20 different malware attacks perpetuated in IoT devices in a project developed at the Stratosphere Lab, AIC Group, FEL, CTU University Czech Republic. The log files were written by a network flow analyzer and labeled by the laboratory according to the test made on each device and labeled at the lab according to the network flow and type of bot used for attacking the device.

First, we got all this data well processed since it was taken from text files wrote by separate machines, so we had to concatenate each malware attack log file, resulting in a raw data set of about **1.2M observations and 17 features.** After this step we did an extensive feature processing; exploratory, analytical, and categorical data analysis to determine which features were relevant for classifying a network flow as malicious (1) or benign (0) and the ones with proper distribution for a data science project. Afterwards, we did other (fundamental) data processing steps like dropping more non-relevant features, one-hot encoding, and dropping duplicate records. These steps allowed us to get a final data set to work with about **380K observations and 67 features.**

The features that were picked in the first data processing stage were:

ts: time stamp of capture in UNIX format
id.orig_p: attacker computer port of origin
id.resp_p: host port used for the response
proto: network communication protocol
service: application communication protocol
duration: time traded between attacker - host
orig_bytes: number of bytes sent to the host
orig_pkts: number of packets sent to the host
resp_bytes: number of response bytes
resp_pkts: number of response packets
conn_state: connection state during attack
orig_ip_bytes: bytes sent to host under IP
resp_ip_bytes: response bytes under IP.

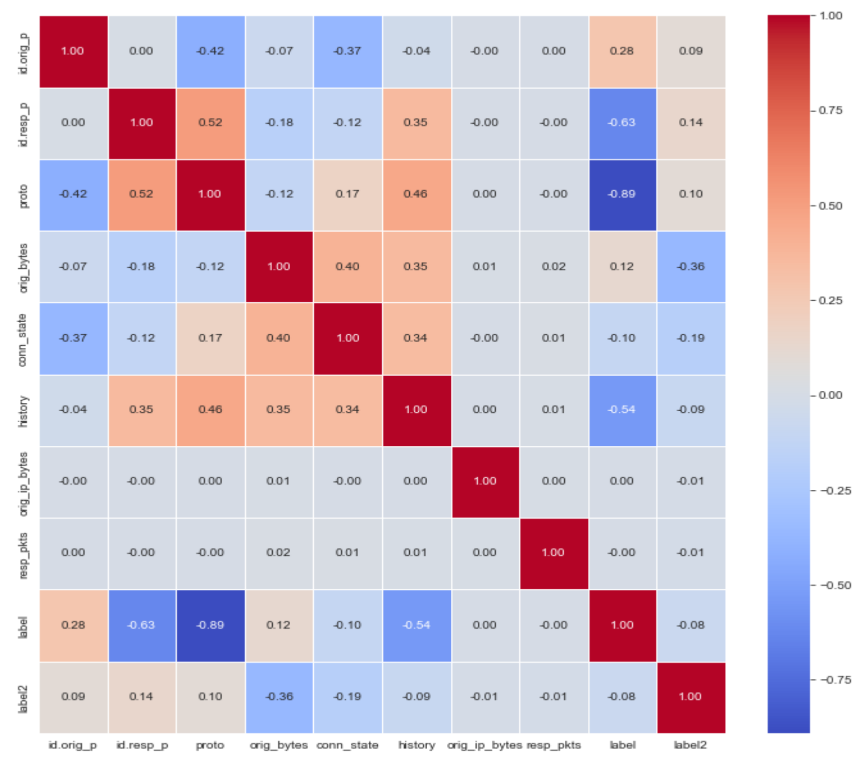

Image 1 – Correlation Matrix to check collinearity between the selected features

During the exploratory data analysis, we plotted the correlation matrix to see which feature was correlated the most with the label and to get a glance at the **collinearity in the features.**

In this step, we found that duration, orig_pkts, resp_bytes, service and orig_bytes were highly linearly correlated. The initial approach was to drop all of them and keep orig_bytes since is the one that correlated the most with the other four.

Another collinearity we found was between resp_ip_bytes and resp_ip_pkts, where we decided to keep the first one since the range of its distribution was less sparse. Then we plotted the matrix, as shown next (Image 1).

Further Feature Processing

Saving different datasets and Feature Engineering

As we can see in the image above, there is a fair level of collinearity found in the selected features, not too bad. Following this step, we decided to explore some dimensionality reduction techniques (PCA), encoding categorical features to pass it all to int/float so we prepare different datasets for inputting to the model. Among them, we included a raw dataset keeping the categorical variables as they were, a second one with the categorical variables encoded and keeping only 8 PCA component and a last one including the encoding and feature engineering steps taken without including the PCA components.

It is important to mention that we found a time stamp at the header of each log file that represents the starting time of the record and was used to decode ts feature from its UNIX format and we named it as:

starting_point: separate time stamp written on each log to indicate the starting point of each record and used for passing ts from UNIX to date-time.

Additionally, by reading the names of the log files, we could eventually retrieve the name of each bot type. This was a feature engineered and included in the dataset as

label2: consisted of 8 types of bot attacks Unfortunately, the class imbalance on this label was extremely high and this didn't allow us to use it for a multi-classification problem since we need far more data than that. However, our main label, balance, did allow us to work on a binary classification problem (malicious and benign network flows).

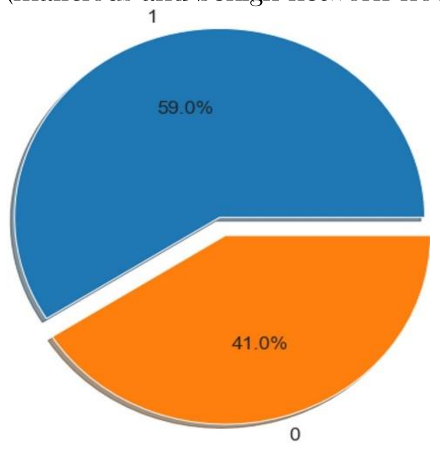

Image 2 – Label class balance:

Class 1: 59% (Malicious)

Class 0: 41% (Benign)

Initial Feature Selection

Criteria Used

The initial feature selection was based mainly on their distribution (most of features were found to be unique values or all null values). Other factors considered included relevancy for the use case, for instance

Initial Feature Engineering

Time Related Features

As an initial approach, there were some features engineered mostly related to time to see if there was any useful information on them that we could use for the prediction.

Label to Use in This Project

Binary Classification

This was selected to be a binary classification problem due to the properties of the data set and the class imbalance found for the multi-class project.