

QIFAN ZHANG

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EDUCATION

University of California, Irvine

Sept 2020 - Jul 2025 (expected)

Ph.D. candidate in Computer Engineering

Advisor: Prof. Zhou Li

Department of EECS, the Henry Samueli School of Engineering

ShanghaiTech University

Aug 2016 - Jul 2020

B.Eng. in Computer Science and Technology

Minor in Innovation and Entrepreneurship

University of California, Berkeley

2017

Summer Session

RESEARCH INTERESTS

Domain Name System (DNS). I'm interested in security, privacy and reliability of DNS. In particular, I'm interested in automated vulnerability detection with fuzzing techniques [Security'24]. Based on my automated tool, ResolverFuzz, several vital vulnerabilities have been discovered, including Pheonix Domain [NDSS'23] and MaginotDNS [Security'23]. I have also surveyed DNS operational issues by mining, labelling and classifying main-stream public DNS forums [IEEE Access'22].

Machine Learning Security and Privacy. I'm also interested in security and privacy topics related to machine learning. My past research demonstrated model extraction on Autonomous Vehicle using Gradient-Descent based methods [ACSAC'22]. Recently, I participated in FedMLSecurity [KDD'24], a benchmark to simulate attacks and defenses on Federated Learning and Large Language Models (LLMs), and a zero-knowledge proof-based anomaly detection method on Federated Learning.

PUBLICATIONS

Conference Papers

- **Zhang, Q.**, Bai, X., Li, X., Duan, H., Li, Q. and Li, Z. *ResolverFuzz: Automated Discovery of DNS Resolver Vulnerabilities with Query-Response Fuzzing*. Accepted by the 33rd USENIX Security (**Security**), 2024. Extended version available on ArXiv. Artifacts available on GitHub.
 - **12** types of vulnerabilities, **23** bugs detected and **15** CVEs assigned among 6 popular DNS software.
 - Presented in DNS-OARC'42 and NDSS 2024 poster session.
 - **Skills involved:** CVE reading and summary, Grammar-based fuzzing, Network environment settings on Docker, Code analysis on DNS software, Cloudflare API, concurrent programming.
- **Zhang, Q.**, Shen, J., Tan, M., Zhou, Z., Li, Z., Chen, Q.A. and Zhang, H. *Play the Imitation Game: Model Extraction Attack against Autonomous Driving Localization*. Accepted by the 38th Annual Computer Security Applications Conference (**ACSAC**), 2022.
 - Achieve cm-level precision with 40-second driving data.
 - **Skills involved:** model establishment and training on PyTorch, Optimization, Baidu Apollo, Autonomous Driving controller algorithms.
- Han, S., Buyukates, B., Hu, Z., Jin, H., Jin, W., Sun, L., Wang, X., Xie, C., Zhang, K., **Zhang, Q.**, Zhang, Y., Avestimehr, S. and He, C. *FedMLSecurity: A Benchmark for Attacks and Defenses in Federated Learning and LLMs*. Accepted by ACM Knowledge Discovery and Data Mining Conference (**KDD**), 2024. Preprint available on arXiv. Artifacts available on GitHub.

- Li, X., Lu, C., Liu, B., **Zhang, Q.**, Li, Z., Duan, H. and Li, Q. *The Maginot Line: Attacking the Boundary of DNS Caching Protection*. Accepted by the 32nd USENIX Security (**Security**), 2023.
 - **Vulnerability acknowledged** by CVE-2021-25220 (BIND 9), CVE-2021-43105 (Technitium), CVE-2022-32983 (Knot Resolver).
 - Awarded \$1,000 by Microsoft Security Response Center.
 - **Skills involved:** *Network environment settings on Virtual Machine, debugging via GDB and CLion, Python Scapy, Code analysis on DNS software.*
- Li, X., Liu, B., Bai, X., Zhang, M., **Zhang, Q.**, Li, Z., Duan, H. and Li, Q. *Ghost Domain Reloaded: Vulnerable Links in Domain Name Delegation and Revocation*. Accepted by the 30th Annual Network and Distributed System Security Symposium (**NDSS**), 2023.
 - **Vulnerability acknowledged** by CVE-2022-30250, CVE-2022-30251 (Knot Resolver), CVE-2022-30252 (PowerDNS Recursor), CVE-2022-30254 (Simple DNS Plus), CVE-2022-30256 (MaraDNS), CVE-2022-30257, CVE-2022-30258 (Technitium), CVE-2022-30698, CVE-2022-30699 (Unbound)
 - **Skills involved:** *Network scanning and measurement, Network environment settings on Docker, Python Scapy, Code analysis on DNS software.*

Journal Papers

- Liao, X., Xu, J., **Zhang, Q.** and Li, Z. *A Comprehensive Study of DNS Operational Issues by Mining DNS Forums*. Accepted by IEEE Access, 2022.
 - **Skills involved:** *Data mining on DNS forums, DNS ticket labelling and classification.*

Preprints/In Submission

- Han, S., Wu, W., Buyukates, B., Jin, W., Yao, Y., **Zhang, Q.**, Avestimehr, S. and He, C. *Kick Bad Guys Out! Zero-Knowledge-Proof-Based Anomaly Detection in Federated Learning, with Application to Federated LLMs*. Preprint available on arXiv.

PROJECTS

Find DNSSEC Vulnerabilities via Fuzzing

Feb 2023 - now

Based on ResolverFuzz, we are now trying to fuzz DNS Security Extension (DNSSEC). We first summarized *Common Vulnerabilities and Exposures* (CVEs) of popular DNS software, such as BIND, Unbound, Knot, etc. Based on our observation from the CVE study, we first implemented a DNS fuzzer using *Probabilistic Context-Free Grammar* (PCFG) and byte-level mutation. We also built up a Docker-based DNS nameserver system, which supports DNSSEC validation chain. Then, we performed constrained stateful fuzzing by focusing on the query-response sequence. This project is still ongoing.

Skills involved: *applied cryptography, OpenSSL, Grammar-based fuzzing, Network environment settings on Docker, Python Scapy, Code analysis on DNS software, concurrent programming.*

SERVICES

Program Committee

- EAI ICECI: 2024

Artifact Evaluation Committee

- CCS: 2023, 2024
- USENIX Security: 2024
- NDSS: 2024

External Reviewers

- NDSS: 2025, 2023, 2022, 2021
- AsiaCCS: 2022, 2021
- SecureComm: 2023

- PeerJ Computer Science
- IEEE Internet of Things (IoT)
- IEEE Trans on Wireless Communications (TWC)
- High-Confidence Computing

TECHNICAL SKILLS

Programming Language	Python, Java, C/C++, Rust
Software & Tools	Matlab/Simulink, VMware Workstation Player, Docker, Cloudflare API, OpenCV, CLion, GDB

TEACHING

Teaching Assistant University of California, Irvine

- EECS 40 (F23, F22): Objected Oriented System and Programming (#students: 90/95)

Teaching Assistant ShanghaiTech University

- SI 100C (F17): Intro. to Computer Science and Technology (#students: 127)
- CS 100 (F18): Programming (#students: 243)
- CS 277 (F19): Intro. to Data Science and FinTech (#students: 23)
- (core TA) SI 100B (S18, S19, S20): Intro. to Info. Science and Technology (#students: 203/174/410)

HONORS

University of California, Irvine

- 2024 UCI Concerto Competition Winner
- 2023 ANRW Travel Grant
- Associated Graduate Students Conference Stipend (Winter 2022)
- ACSAC Student Conferenceship (Winter 2024, Fall 2022)
- Student travel grant for NDSS (2021)
- Student travel grant for USENIX Security (2021)
- Student travel grant for IEEE Symposium on Security and Privacy (2021)

ShanghaiTech University

- 2020 ShanghaiTech Outstanding Graduate
- SIST Outstanding Teaching Assistant (2020, 2019, 2018)
- Merit Student (2018-2019, 2017-2018, 2016-2017)
- Outstanding Personnel in 2017 Summer Camp