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DISSERTATION

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THEME

Detecting SQL injections using BERT

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In front of the jury composed of:

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Dedication

To our parents,

To our grandparents,

To our brothers and sisters,

To our entire family,

To all our friends.

Athmani Rami,

Bouhezila Nassim.

Abstract

Deep learning techniques have improved various domains by using their ability to learn complex patterns from large datasets. In this dissertation, we employed the power of Deep Learning, specifically BERT language model (**Bi**directional **E**ncoder **R**epresentations from **T**ransformers), to resolve the issue of SQL injection attacks on web applications.

The goal of our study is to develop a Deep Learning model using BERT that can accurately identify SQL injections.

Based on the results, our model demonstrated excellent performance; it also indicated that BERT outperforms the compared machine learning models across different evaluation metrics. These results affirm the effectiveness of BERT in detecting SQL injection attacks, underscoring its superior performance in our study.

Résumé

Les techniques d'apprentissage profond ont amélioré divers domaines en utilisant leur capacité à apprendre des complexes patterns à partir de grands ensembles de données. Dans ce mémoire, nous avons utilisé la puissance de l'apprentissage profond, en particulier le modèle de langage BERT (**B**idirectional **E**ncoder **R**epresentations from **T**ransformers), pour résolu le problème des attaques par injection SQL sur les applications web.

L'objectif de notre étude est de développer un modèle d'apprentissage profond en utilisant BERT qui identifier les injections SQL avec précision.

D'après les résultats, notre modèle a démontré d'excellentes performances ; ils ont également indiqués que BERT a surpassé les autres modèles d'apprentissage automatique comparés à travers différents métriques d'évaluation. Ces résultats confirment l'efficacité de BERT dans la détection des attaques par injection SQL, confirmer sa performance supérieure dans notre étude.

ملخص

حسنت تقنيات التعلم العميق مجالات مختلفة باستخدام قدرتها على تعلم الأنماط المعقدة من مجموعات البيانات الكبيرة. في هذه الأطروحة، استخدمنا قوة التعلم العميق، وتحديداً نموذج اللغة "BERT" (**B**idirectional **E**ncoder **R**epresentations from **T**ransformers) ، لحل مشكلة هجمات حقن SQL على تطبيقات الويب.

الهدف من دراستنا هو تطوير نموذج التعلم العميق باستخدام BERT الذي يمكنه تحديد هجمات حقن SQL بدقة.

بناءً على النتائج المتحصل عليها، أظهر نموذجنا أداءً ممتازًا؛ كما أشار إلى أن BERT يتفوق في الأداء على نماذج التعلم الآلي التي تم المقارنَة بها عبر مقاييس التقييم المختلفة. تؤكد هذه النتائج فعالية BERT في اكتشاف هجمات حقن SQL ، مما يؤكد أدائها المتفوق في دراستنا.

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General Introduction

The rapid growth of web applications has revolutionized the way we interact and conduct various activities online. From e-commerce platforms and social networks to financial systems and government portals, web applications have become an integral part of our daily lives. However, with greater dependence on online applications comes an increased danger of cyber attacks with SQL injections being one of the most common and dangerous vulnerabilities.

To mitigate the growing threat of SQL injections, traditional approaches such as input validation and query parameterization have been widely adopted. While these methods provide some level of protection, they often struggle to keep pace with the evolving attack techniques employed by adversaries. Thus, there is a pressing need for more advanced and proactive defense mechanisms to detect and prevent SQL injection attacks.

In recent years, deep learning approaches have emerged as a promising solution in various domains, leveraging their ability to automatically learn complex patterns from large datasets. One such powerful deep learning model is BERT (Bidirectional Encoder Representations from Transformers), originally developed for natural language processing tasks. BERT has proven to be highly effective in capturing the semantic and contextual understanding of text, leading to remarkable performance in tasks such as text classification.

In this research, we propose using the power of BERT-based deep learning models to address the critical issue of SQL injection attacks. Our objective is to develop a reliable and efficient detection model capable of accurately identifying SQL injection attempts in real-time. By using BERT's contextual understanding and semantic representation capabilities, we aim to create a model that can effectively distinguish between normal and SQL malicious queries.

Our thesis is organized as follows:

In Chapter 1, we explore SQL injection attacks, their definitions, types and their detecting techniques, then we head on machine learning and Deep Learning, we present popular

algorithmic approaches in machine learning and explore deep learning architectures in Chapter 2. Chapter 3 is dedicated to the general conception of our work and the materials used, including the dataset and the type of deep learning architecture employed. Furthermore, we cover the preprocessing steps taken to ensure the accuracy and efficiency of our system. In Chapter 4, we discuss the test and evaluation of our model for detecting SQL injection attacks. We use a variety of evaluation metrics, including accuracy, precision, recall, and F1 score. We also compare the performance of our model to other machine learning algorithms and related works.