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Honeypot Implementation

in a

Cloud Environment

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Contents

Acronyms	III
List of Figures	IV
List of Tables	V
1 Introduction	1
1.1 Problem description	1
1.2 Justification, motivation and benefits	1
1.3 Research questions	1
1.4 Limitations	1
2 Background	2
2.1 Virtualization	2
2.1.1 Docker	2
2.2 Cloud Computing	2
2.2.1 Definition of Cloud Computing	3
2.2.2 Service models	3
2.2.3 Deployment models	5
2.2.4 HeiCloud	6
2.3 Honeypots	6
2.3.1 Definition of a Honeypot	7
2.3.2 Level of Interaction	8
2.3.3 Security concepts	9
2.3.4 Value of Honeypots	10
2.3.5 Honeynets	11
2.3.6 Legal Issues	11
2.4 Summary	11
3 Previous Work	12
3.1 Honeypot technologies	12
3.1.1 The Bait'n'Switch Honeypot	12
3.1.2 Intrusion Trap System	12
3.1.3 Honeycomb	12
3.1.4 Honeypots in a cloud environment	12
3.1.5 T-Pot	12
3.2 Summary	12

4	Cloud Security with Honeypots	13
4.1	Summary	13
5	Concept	14
5.1	Introduction	14
5.2	Summary	14
6	Methods Used	15
6.1	Requirements and specification	15
6.2	Proposed Honeypots	15
6.2.1	Cowire	15
6.2.2	Dionaea	15
6.2.3	Honeyd	15
6.3	Frameworks and technologies	15
6.3.1	HoneyTrap	15
7	Data Management	16
8	Data Analysis	17
9	Practical Work	18
9.1	Attack vectors	18
9.1.1	Primer	18
9.2	Concept	18
9.3	Implementation	18
9.4	Summary	18
10	Evaluation	19
10.1	Data Analyzation	19
10.2	Summary	19
11	Conclusion	20
11.1	Future work	20
	Bibliography	VI
	Appendices	VIII
A	Installation and Configuration	IX

Acronyms

CERT Computer Emergency Response Team

DaaS Data-as-a-Service

DTK Deception Toolkit

HaaS Hardware-as-a-Service

HTTP Hypertext Transfer Protocol

IaaS Infrastructure-as-a-Service

IDS Intrusion Detection Systems

NIST National Institute of Standards and Technology

OS Operating System

PaaS Platform-as-a-Service

SaaS Software-as-a-Service

List of Figures

2.1	Cloud functionalities (derived from [WvLY ⁺ 10])	4
2.2	Example of honeypots in a simplified network (derived from [Spi03]) .	7
2.3	Example of honeynets in a simplified network (derived from [Spi03]) .	11

List of Tables

2.1	Examples for cloud service models	5
2.2	Examples for cloud deployment models	5
2.3	Distinction between security concepts based on areas of operations (derived from [NWS ⁺ 16])	10

1 Introduction

1.1 Problem description

1.2 Justification, motivation and benefits

1.3 Research questions

1.4 Limitations

2 Background

This chapter concludes the fundamental knowledge that is needed to comprehend the upcoming practical work. Firstly, an introduction to cloud computing will be held. Next, a thorough understanding of honeypots is given. Lastly, we introduce some concepts of intrusion detection systems.

2.1 Virtualization

2.1.1 Docker

2.2 Cloud Computing

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Nowadays it is one of the well-known keywords and has been used by vary large companies such as Google, or Amazon, however, the term “cloud computing” dates back to the late 1996, when a small group of technology executives of Compaq Computer framed new business ideas around the Internet.[Reg20] Starting from 2007 cloud computing evolved into a serious competitor and outnumbered the keywords “virtualization”, and “grid computing” reported by Google trends [WvLY⁺10]. Shortly, various cloud provider become publicly available, each with their own strengths and weaknesses. For example IBM’s Cloud¹, Amazon Web Services², and Google Cloud³. Why are clouds so attractive in practice?

- It offers major advantages in terms of cost and reliability. When demand is needed, consumers do not have to invest in hardware when launching new services. Pay-as-you-go allows flexibility.
- Consumer can easily scale with demand. When more computational resources are required due to more requests, scaling up instances in conjunction with a suited price model are straightforward.
- Geographically distributed capabilities supply the need for world-wide scattered services.

In this section, we want to give basic understandings of cloud computing. First, we exhibit the history and draw some motivation. Following, we look at some the definitions, and point out characteristics. Lastly, we give an short introduction to HeiCloud, a cloud service that is offered by Heidelberg University.

¹<https://www.ibm.com/cloud>

²<https://aws.amazon.com/>

³<https://cloud.google.com/>

2.2.1 Definition of Cloud Computing

Considering the definition of Brian Hayes, cloud computing is “a shift in the geography of computation” [Hay08]. Thus, computational workload is moved away from local instances towards services and datacenters that provide the need of users [AFG⁺10].

Considering the definition of the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), cloud computing “is a model for enabling ubiquitous, convenient, on-demand network access to a shared pool of configurable computing resources (e.g., networks, servers, storage, applications, and services) that can be rapidly provisioned and released with minimal management effort or service provider interaction” [MG11]. NIST not only reflects the geographical shift of resources such as datacenters, but also mentions on-demand usage that contributes to a flexible resource management. Moreover, NIST composes the term in five essential characteristics, three service models (see subsection 2.2.2), and four deployment models (see subsection 2.2.3) [MG11]:

On-demand-self-service refers to the unilaterally provision computing capabilities. Consumers can acquire server time and network storage on demand without a human interaction.

Broad network access characterizes the access of capabilities of the network through standard protocols such as Hypertext Transfer Protocol (HTTP). Heterogeneous thin and thick client platforms should be supported.

Resource pooling allows the provider’s computing resources to be pooled across several consumers. A multi-tenant model with different physical and virtual resources are assigned on demand. Other aspects such as location are independent and cannot be controlled on a low-level by consumers. Moreover, high-level access to specify continent, state, or datacenter can be available.

Rapid elasticity offers consumers to extend and release capabilities easily. Further automization to quickly increase resources when demand skyrockets significantly can be supported regardless limit and quantity at any time.

Measured service handles resources in an automated and optimized manner. It uses additional metering capabilities to trace storage, processing, bandwidth, and active user accounts. This helps to monitor, and control resource usage. Thus, contributing to transparency between provider and consumer.

2.2.2 Service models

Service models are categorized by NIST into three basic models based on usage and abstraction level. Figure 2.1 shows the connection between each model whereas cloud resource are defined in subsection 2.2.3. Due to vast range of functionalities,

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Infrastructure-as-a-Service (IaaS) builds the foundation of service models. Each model on top represents a user-friendly abstraction with derated capabilities. Table 2.1 shows examples of such service models.

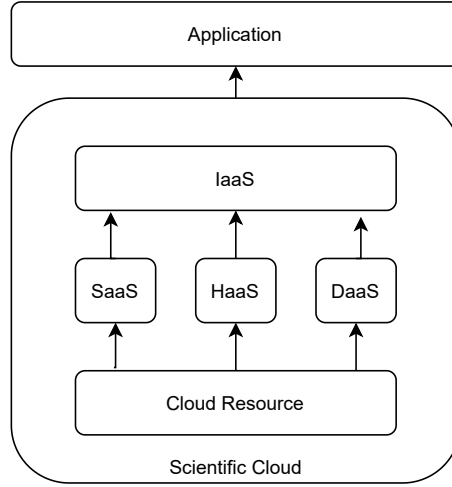


Figure 2.1: Cloud functionalities (derived from [WvLY⁺10])

Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) is a high-level abstraction to consumers. Controlling the underlying infrastructure is not supported. Often provider uses a multi-tenancy system architecture to organize each consumer’s application in a separate environment. It helps to employ scaling with respect to speed, security availability, disaster recovery, and maintenance. Main objective of SaaS is to host consumer’s software or application that can be accessed over the Internet using either a thin or rich client.[DWC10] “Limited user-specific application configuration settings” can be made [MG11].

Platform-as-a-Service (PaaS) pivots on the full “Software Lifecycle” of an application whereas SaaS distincts on hosting complete applications. PaaS offers ongoing development and includes programming environment, tools, configuration management, and other services. In addition, the underlying infrastructure is not managed by the consumer.

Infrastructure-as-a-Service (IaaS) offers a low-level abstraction to consumers with the ability to run arbitrary software regardless of operating system or application. In contrast to SaaS, IT infrastructures capabilities (such as storage, networks) can be used. It strongly depends on virtualization due to integration, or decomposition of physical resources.

Data-as-a-Service (DaaS) serves as a virtualized data storage service on demand. Motivations behind such services could be upfront costs of on-premise enterprise database systems.[DWC10] Mostly they require “dedicated server, software license,

post-delivery services, and in-house IT maintenance” [DWC10]. Whereas DaaS costs solely what consumer’s need. When dealing with a tremendous amount of data, file systems and RDBMS often lack in performance. DaaS outruns such weak links by employing a table-style abstraction that can be scaled.[DWC10]

Hardware-as-a-Service (HaaS) offers IT hardware, or datacenters to buy as a pay-as-you-go subscription service. The term dates back to 2006 during a time when hardware virtualization became more powerful. It is flexible, scalable and manageable.[WvLY⁺10]

Table 2.1: Examples for cloud service models

SaaS	PaaS	IaaS	Daas	HaaS
Google Mail	Google App Engine	HeiCloud	Adobe Buzzword	Amazon EC2
Google Docs	Windows Azure	Amazon EC2	ElasticDrive	Nimbus
Microsoft Drive	AWS Elastic Beanstalk		Google Big Table	Enomalism
			Amazon S3	Eucalyptus
			Apache HBase	

2.2.3 Deployment models

Deployment models are categorized by NIST into four basic models. Each differs in data privacy, location, and manageability [MG11]. Table 2.2 shows examples of such deployment models.

Table 2.2: Examples for cloud deployment models

Private Cloud	Community Cloud	Hybrid Cloud	Public Cloud
	Seafile		Amazon EC2
	Nextcloud		Google AppEngine

Private clouds offer the highest level of control in regard of data privacy, and utilization. Mostly, such clouds are deployed within in a single organization, either managed by in-house teams or third party suppliers. In addition, it can be on or off premise. Within private clouds consumers have full control of their data. Especially for European data privacy laws, it is not negligible when data is stored abroad and thus under law of foreign countries. However, the popularity has not been withdrawn due to immense costs when moving towards public clouds. [DWC10] [MG11]

Community clouds can be seen as a conglomerate of multiple organizations that merge their infrastructure with respect to a commonly defined policy, terms, and condition beforehand.

Public clouds represents the most used deployment models. In contradiction to private one, public clouds are fully owned by the service provider such as business, academics, or government organization. Consumers do not know where their data is distributed. In addition, contracts underlie custom policies.

Hybrid cloud is a mixture of two or more cloud infrastructures, such as private and public cloud. However, each entity keeps its core element. However, hybrid clouds defines “standardized or proprietary technology to enables data and application portability”[MG11].

2.2.4 HeiCloud

IaaS

Get information or paper about that

2.3 Honeypots

The term “honeypot” exists since more than a decade. 1997 was the first time that a free honeypot solution became public. Deception Toolkit (DTK), developed by Fred Cohen, released the first honeypot solution. However, the earliest drafts of honeypots are from 1990/91, and built the foundation for Fred Cohen’s DTK. Clifford Stoll’s book “The Cuckoo’s Egg”[Sto00], and Bill Cheswick’s whitepaper “An Evening With Berferd”[Che92] describe concepts that are consider nowadays as honeypots.[Spi03] A honeypot itself is a security instrument that collects information on buzzing attacks. It disguises itself as a system, or application with weaklinks, so that it gets exploited and gathers knowledge about the adversary. In 2002 a Solaris honeypot helped to detect an unknown dtspcd exploit. Interestingly, a year before in 2001 the Coordination Center of Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT), “an expert group that handles computer security incidents”, shared their concerns regarding the dtspcd. Communities were aware that the service could be exploited to get access and remotely compromise any Unix system. However, during this time such an exploit was not known, and experts did not expect any in the near future. Gladly, early instances based on honeypot technologies could detect new exploits and avoid further incidents. Such events lay emphasis on the importance of honeypots.

citation

2.3.1 Definition of a Honeypot

Dozen of definitions for honeypots circulate through the web that causes confusion, and misunderstandings. In general, the objective of a honeypot is to gather information about attacks, or attack patterns [NWS⁺16]. Thus, contributing as an additional source of security measure. See subsection 2.3.3 for a detailed view regarding honeypots in the security concept. As Spitzner et al. [Spi03] has listed, most misleading definitions are: honeypot is a tool for deception, it is a weapon to lure adversaries, or a part of an intrusion detection system. In order to get a basic understanding, we want to exhibit some of the key definitions. Spitzner et al. [Spi03] defines honeypots as a “security resource whose value lies in being probed, attacked, or compromised”. Independent of its source (e.g. server, application, or router), we expect that our instance is getting probed, attacked, and eventually exploited. If a honeypot does not match this behaviour, it will not provide any value. It is important to mention that honeypots do not have any production value, thus, any communication that is acquired is suspicious by nature [Spi03]. In addition, Spitzner et al. points out that honeypots are not bounded to solve a single problem, hence, they function as a generic perimeter, and fit into different situation. Such functions are attack detection, capturing automated attacks, or alert/warning generator. An example

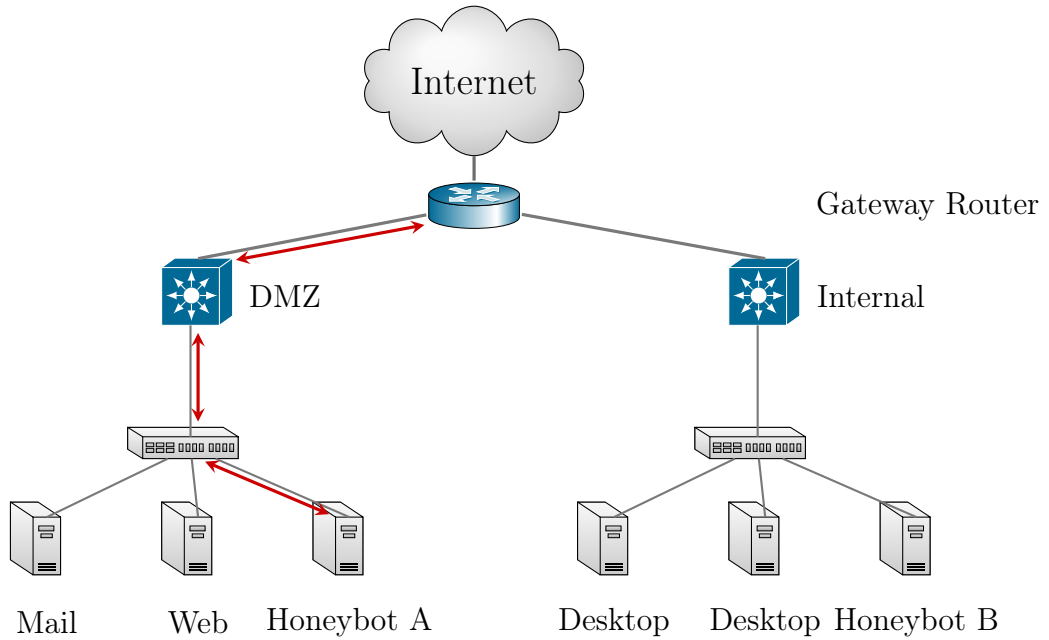


Figure 2.2: Example of honeypots in a simplified network (derived from [Spi03])

In general, we differentiate two types of honeypots (i) Production honeypots (ii) Research honeypots. This categorization has their origin from Mark Rosch

developer of Snort during his work at GTE Internetworking.

Production honeypots are the common type of honeypots everyone would think of it. The objective is to protect production environments, and to mitigate the risk of attacks. Normally, production honeypots are easy to deploy within an organization. Mostly, low-interaction honeypots are chosen due to a significant reduce in risk. Thus, adversaries might not be able to exploit honeypots to attack other systems. Downside is a lack of information. Standard information like the origin of attacks, or what exploits are used can be collected, whereas insides about communication of attackers, or deployment of such attacks are unlikely to obtain. In contrast, research honeypots do fulfill this objective.[Spi03]

Research honeypots are used to learn more in detail about attacks. The objective is to collect information about the clandestine organizations, new tools for attacks, or the origin of attacks. Research honeypots are unlikely for production environments due to a higher increase of risk. Facing an increase in deployment complexity, and maintenance does not attract a production usage.[Spi03]

It is worth to mention that there is no exact line between research or production honeypots. A possible cases are honeypots that could function as either an production or an research honeypot. Due to their dynamic range in which they are applicable it makes it hard to distinguish.

Provos et al. adds an additional differentiation for the virtual honeypot framework [Pro03] and splits it into the following types:

- Physical honeypots are “real machines on the network with its own IP address” [Pro03]
- Virtual honeypots are “simulated by another machine that responds to network traffix sent to the virtual honeypot” [Pro03]

2.3.2 Level of Interaction

When building and deploying a honeypot, the depth of information has to be defined beforehand. Should it gather unauthorized activities, such as an NMAP scan? Do you want to learn about buzzing tools and tactics? Each depth brings a different level of interaction because some information depends on more actions of adversaries. Therefore, honeypots differ in level of interaction.

Low-interaction honeypots provide the lowest level of interaction between an attacker and a system. Only a small set of services like SSH, Telnet, or FTP are supported which contributes to the deployment time. In terms of risk, a low-interaction honeypot does not give access to the underlying Operating System (OS) which makes

it safe to use in a production environment. For example using an SSH honeypot, such services are emulated, thus, attackers can attempt to login by brute force or by guessing, and execute commands. However, the adversary will never gain more access because it is not a real OS. However, safety comes with the downside of less information. Collected is limited for statistical purpose such as (i) Time and data of attack (ii) Source IP address and source port of the attack (iii) Destination IP address and destination port of the attack. Transactional information can not be collected. [Spi03]

A medium-interaction honeypot offers more sophisticated services with higher level of interaction. It is capable to respond to certain activities. For example a Microsoft IIS Web server honeypot could be able to respond in a way that a worm is expecting it. The worm would get emulated answers, and could be able to interact with it more in detail. Thus, gathering more severe information about the attack, including privilege assessment, toolkit capturing, and command execution. In contrast, medium-interaction honeypots allocate more time to install and configure. In addition, more security checks have to be performed due to a higher interaction level than low-interaction honeypots. [Spi03]

High-interaction honeypots are the highest level interaction. Mostly, they represent a real OS to provide a full set of interactions to attackers. They are so powerful because other production servers do not differ much to high-interaction honeypots. They represent real systems in a controlled environment. Obviously, the amount of information is tremendous. It helps to learn about (i) new tools (ii) finding new bugs in the OS (iii) the blackhat community. However, the risk of such a honeypot is extremely high. It needs severe deployment and maintenance processes. Therefore, it is time consuming.

2.3.3 Security concepts

Security concepts are classified by Schneider et al. [Sch04] in prevention, detection, and reaction. Prevention includes any process that (i) discourages intruders and (ii) hardens systems to avoid any kind of breaches. Detection scrutinizes the identification of attacks that threatens the systems (i) confidentiality (ii) integrity and (iii) availability. Reaction treats the active part of the security concept. When attacks are detected, it conducts reactive measures to remove the threat. Each part is designed to be sophisticated so that all of them contribute to a secure environment. [NWS⁺16]

Honeypots contribute to the security concept like firewalls, or Intrusion Detection Systems (IDS). Regarding prevention, honeypots add only a small value because security breaches cannot be identified. Moreover, attackers would avoid wasting time on honeypots and go straight for production systems instead.

However, detection is one of the strengths of honeypots. Attacks often vanish in the sheer quantity of production activities. If any connection is obtained to a honeypot it is suspicious by nature. In conjunction with an alerting tool, attacks can be detected.

Honeypots strongly supply reaction tools due to their clear data. In production environments, finding attacks for further data analysis are not easy to grasp. Often data submerge with other activities which complicates the process of reaction. [NWS⁺16] Nawrocki, Wählisch, Schmidt, Keil, and Schönfelder et al. [NWS⁺16] distinct honeypots from other objectives such as firewall, or log-monitoring.

Table 2.3: Distinction between security concepts based on areas of operations (derived from [NWS⁺16])

Objective	Prevention	Detection	Reaction
Honeypot	+	++	+++
Firewall	+++	++	+
Intrusion Detection Sys.	+	+++	+
Intrusion Prevention Sys.	++	+++	++
Anti-Virus	++	++	++
Log-Monitoring	+	++	+
Cyber Security Standard	+++	+	+

2.3.4 Value of Honeypots

To assess the value of honeypots we want to take a closer look to their advantages and disadvantages.[?] [?] [Spi03]

Advantages

- Data Value: Collected data is often immaculate and does not contain noise from other activities. Thus, reducing the total size of data, and
- Resources
- Simplicity
- Return on Investment

In addition, Nawrocki, Wählisch, Schmidt, Keil, and Schönfelder et al. [NWS⁺16] listed four more advantages of honeypots:

- Independent from Workload
- Zero-Day-Exploit Detection
- Flexibility
- Reduced False Positives and Negatives

Disadvantages

- Narrow Field of View
- Being Fingerprinted
- Risk to the Environment

2.3.5 Honeynets

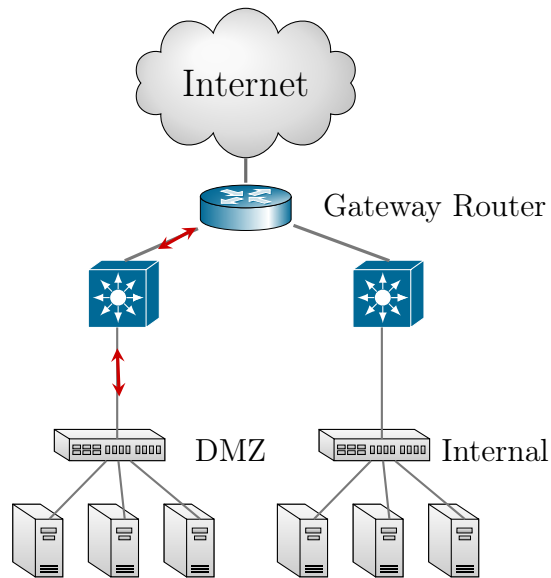


Figure 2.3: Example of honeynets in a simplified network (derived from [Spi03])

[Spi03]

2.3.6 Legal Issues

[Spi03]

2.4 Summary

3 Previous Work

3.1 Honeypot technologies

3.1.1 The Bait'n'Switch Honeypot

[PD05]

3.1.2 Intrusion Trap System

[PD05]

3.1.3 Honeycomb

[PD05]

3.1.4 Honeypots in a cloud environment

[KPM⁺21]

3.1.5 T-Pot

3.2 Summary

4 Cloud Security with Honeypots

[NCM12]
[KPM⁺21]

4.1 Summary

5 Concept

5.1 Introduction

5.2 Summary

6 Methods Used

6.1 Requirements and specification

6.2 Proposed Honeypots

6.2.1 Cowire

6.2.2 Dionaea

6.2.3 Honeyd

6.3 Frameworks and technologies

6.3.1 HoneyTrap

7 Data Management

8 Data Analysis

9 Practical Work

9.1 Attack vectors

9.1.1 Primer

9.2 Concept

9.3 Implementation

9.4 Summary

10 Evaluation

10.1 Data Analyzation

10.2 Summary

11 Conclusion

11.1 Future work

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Appendices

A Installation and Configuration