Yicheng Zhang

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Education

University of California, Riverside — Riverside, CA
P.h.D in Electrical Engineering, GPA: 4.00/4.00 — 2021.9–Current
- Advisors: Prof. Nael Abu-Ghazaleh

University of California, Irvine — Irvine, CA
M.S. in Computer Engineering, GPA: 3.78/4.00 — 2018.9–2021.6
- Thesis: "Stealing Deep Learning Model Secret through Remote FPGA Side-channel Analysis"

Sichuan University — Chengdu, China
B.S. in Electrical Engineering and Automation, GPA: 3.53/4.00 — 2014.9–2018.6
- Thesis: "Fault detection in power transmission system using Machine Learning"

Professional Experience

University of California, Riverside — Riverside, CA
Research Assistant in Secure and Efficient Architectures and Systems (SEAS) Lab — 2021.9–Current
- AR/VR Security, Computer Architecture Support for Security.
- I worked with my advisor Prof. Nael B. Abu-Ghazaleh on research topics including security in AR/VR systems and side-channel attack & defense on computer architecture

University of California, Irvine — Irvine, CA
Teaching Assistant in Department of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science — 2018.9–2021.6
- Assisted course instructors in course website design, grading, and lecturing

Peer-reviewed Publications

Conference Papers

1. Carter Slocum, **Yicheng Zhang**, Jiasi Chen, Nael B. Abu-Ghazaleh, "Going through the motions: AR/VR typing inference using head motion tracking", *To appear in **USENIX Security Symposium**, Anaheim, CA, USA, August, 2023.*

2. **Yicheng Zhang**, Carter Slocum, Jiasi Chen, Nael B. Abu-Ghazaleh, "It's all in your head(set): side-channel attacks on augmented reality systems", *To appear in **USENIX Security Symposium**, Anaheim, CA, USA, August, 2023.*

3. Wei Junyi*, **Yicheng Zhang***, Zhe Zhou, Zhou Li, and Mohammad Abdullah Al Faruque, "Leaky DNN: Stealing Deep-Learning Model Secret with GPU Context-Switching Side-Channel", *2020 50th Annual IEEE/IFIP International Conference on Dependable Systems and Networks (**DSN**), Valencia, Spain, June, 2020.*
***Junyi Wei and Yicheng Zhang are both first author.**

Journal Articles

1. **Yicheng Zhang**, Rozhin Yasaei, Hao Chen, Zhou Li and Mohammad Abdullah Al Faruque, "Stealing Neural Network Structure through Remote FPGA Side-channel Analysis", *In IEEE Transactions on Information Forensics and Security (**TIFS**), August, 2021.*

Posters

1. **Yicheng Zhang**, Rozhin Yasaei, Hao Chen, Zhou Li and Mohammad Abdullah Al Faruque, "Poster : Stealing Neural Network Structure through Remote FPGA Side-channel Analysis", *In 29th ACM/SIGDA International Symposium on Field-Programmable Gate Arrays (**FPGA**), February, 2021.*

Teaching Experience

Teaching Assistant at University of California, Irvine — Spring 2021
Organization of Digital Computers (EECS112)

Teaching Assistant at University of California, Irvine — Winter 2021
Next Generation Search Systems (CS125)

Teaching Assistant at University of California, Irvine — Fall 2020
Object Oriented System & Programming (EECS40)

Teaching Assistant at University of California, Irvine — Spring 2020
Sytem Software (EECS111)

Teaching Assistant at University of California, Irvine — Winter 2019
Continuous-Time Signals and Systems (EECS150)

Presentations & Talks

1. "Poster: Stealing Neural Network Structure through Remote FPGA Side-channel Analysis" at FPGA'21, virtual, February 2021
2. "Leaky DNN: Stealing Deep-Learning Model Secret with GPU Context-Switching Side-Channel" at DSN'20, virtual, June 2020

Skills

- **Programming:** C/C++, Python, Java, Verilog/System Verilog, TensorFlow, PyTorch, Numpy, Assembly
- **Tools:** Altera Quartus, Xilinx Vivado/ISE, Vivado HLS, Jupyter Notebook
- **Softwares:** Matlab, Arduino, Unity, Unreal Engine

Professional Service

- Reviewer for ICPS' 20, CYBER' 21, CYBER' 22
- Artifact Evaluation for Micro' 22

Projects

AR/VR typing inference using head motion tracking

- Showed that there is a serious security risk of typed text in the foreground being inferred by a background application, without requiring any special permissions.
- Developed a system, **TyPose**, that automatically infers words and characters typed by a user, including a Segmenter to divide a stream of sensor readings into the corresponding words/characters and a Classifier to infer the text corresponding to those segments.
- Collected user traces of AR/VR typing behavior, and evaluated our attack on these traces. The results show that **TyPose** can detect segments and identify words with high accuracy.

Side-channel attacks on Mixed Reality systems via Rendering Performance Counters

- Presented a taxonomy of the potential targets and leakage sources of software-based side-channel attacks on AR/VR devices and applications.
- Demonstrated four end-to-end side-channel attacks that illustrate three types of targets: Inferring (1) user interactions (hand gesture inputs and virtual keyboard inputs); (2) information about concurrent applications (fingerprinting newly launched applications); and (3) information about the environment (detecting and ranging a person in the environment).
- Discussed potential mitigations based on: (a) limiting the access to performance counters, (b) monitoring for abnormal contention, and (c) an explicit permission management system.

Bayesian Memory-Deduplication based Rowhammer Attack on Industrial Control Systems

- Developed a new technique to duplicate the .bss section of the target control DLL file, which requires less memory and time compared to recent works.
- Created a Hardware-in-the-Loop (HIL) testbed with a scaleddown model of a practical engine cooling system of thermo-electric plants as an example of ICS.
- Used the Beremiz softPLC to create the automation platform and connect the softPLC to clouds using industry-standard cloud protocols.

Remote Side-Channel Attack on FPGA to Steal Neural Network Structure

- Developed a novel FPGA power side-channel based attack on a Machine learning models.
- Implementation of VGG16, AlexNet, and MLP models on FPGA accelerator as victim models and a ring oscillator-based circuit to extract power side-channel of victim models.
- Used NearestNeighbors, GradientBoosting, DecisionTree, RandomForest, NeuralNetwork, NaiveBayes, AdaBoost, and XGB classifiers to recover hyper-parameters of victim model from side-channel signals.

Machine Learning Model Stealing Attacks via GPU Context-Switching Side-Channel

- Developed a novel GPU side-channel based on context-switching penalties.
- Implementation of LSTM-based inference model to identify the structural secret.
- Extracted the fine-grained structural secret of VGG16/ZFNET/AlexNet/MLP.

Mentoring Experience

Undergraduate Students

- Cheng Gu — UCR CSE, 2022-
- Xuchang Zhan — UCI EECS, 2019-2020

Selected Honors & Awards

- Student Travel Grant for ACM Conference on Computer and Communications Security — 2021
- Student Travel Grant for USENIX Security Symposium — 2021
- Student Travel Grant for IEEE Symposium on Security and Privacy — 2021,2022
- Dean's Distinguished Fellowship Award (UC Riverside) — 2021

Outreach Activities

- **Mentor** at UCR Graduate Student Mentorship Program — –2022-2023
- **Mentor** domestic and international undergraduate students — –2019-2020
- **Chair** of Practice Department of Sichuan University Cycling Club — 2015-2016
- **Volunteers** at 120th Anniversary of Sichuan University — 2016.9