Available online www.ejaet.com

European Journal of Advances in Engineering and Technology, 2022,9(2):40-42

Research Article ISSN: 2394-658X

Enhancing Mobile Application Security: LSH-Based SDK Version Identification and Vulnerability Detection

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ABSTRACT

Android mobile applications extensively integrate third-party libraries (SDKs) to enhance functionality and expedite development. However, these SDKs often introduce security vulnerabilities and misuse access rights, posing significant risks to application security and user privacy. Accurate SDK version detection and vulnerability analysis are crucial for mitigating these risks. This paper proposes a novel Locality-Sensitive Hashing (LSH)-based method for SDK version identification. By leveraging class hierarchy and multipartition box LSH for feature extraction, our approach achieves precise SDK version detection and offers vulnerability warnings and recommendations. We validate our method using a comprehensive database of over 70 SDK types and 1100 versions across popular Android apps, demonstrating superior performance compared to existing tools.

Key words: Mobile application security, SDK version detection, Locality-Sensitive Hashing, vulnerability detection, third-party libraries, Android security, class hierarchy, multipartition box LSH, multi-feature fusion

1. INTRODUCTION

The widespread use of third-party SDKs in Android applications brings efficiency benefits but also introduces security challenges. SDKs range from analytics and advertising to authentication and social integrations, each potentially introducing vulnerabilities. Ensuring the use of secure SDK versions is critical for safeguarding user data and maintaining app integrity. This paper presents an innovative approach using Locality-Sensitive Hashing (LSH) to enhance SDK version identification and vulnerability detection, addressing the limitations of traditional detection methods.

2. BACKGROUND

A. Third-Party SDKs in Mobile Applications

Third-party SDKs play a pivotal role in enhancing the functionality of mobile applications by providing ready-made solutions for common tasks. However, their integration introduces security risks such as data leakage, unauthorized access, and even malicious code injection. Developers must carefully manage and monitor SDK versions to mitigate these risks effectively.

B. Existing Challenges

Current SDK detection methods often rely on signature-based approaches or lack granularity in version differentiation, leading to inaccuracies and oversight of potential vulnerabilities. The dynamic nature of SDK updates further complicates detection, requiring robust techniques capable of adapting to rapid changes in SDK versions and features.

3. METHODOLOGY

A. SDK Detection Based on Class Hierarchy

Our method initiates SDK detection by analyzing the class hierarchy within the application. SDKs typically include distinct class structures that differentiate them from core application code. By mapping and analyzing these hierarchies, our approach identifies SDK presence and potential version information.

```
List<Class<?>> classes = getAllClasses(application);
for (Class<?> clazz : classes) {
    if (isSDKClass(clazz)) {
        String sdkName = getSDKName(clazz);
        String sdkVersion = getSDKVersion(clazz);
        // Store detected SDK and version information
        storeSDKInfo(sdkName, sdkVersion);
    }
}
```

B. Fine-Grained Feature Extraction using Multipartition Box LSH

To extract fine-grained features from SDKs, we employ multipartition box Locality-Sensitive Hashing (LSH). This technique hashes feature vectors into multiple partitions, enhancing the detection of subtle variations between SDK versions. Features such as API calls, permissions, and resource usage patterns are hashed and compared to detect version-specific differences.

```
from sklearn.feature_extraction import FeatureHasher

def extract_features_from_sdk(sdk):
    hasher = FeatureHasher(n_features=1000, input_type='s
    feature_vectors = []
    for api_call in sdk.api_calls:
        feature_vectors.append(api_call.to_string())
    hashed_features = hasher.transform(feature_vectors)
    return hashed_features
```

C. Multi-Feature Fusion for SDK Version Detection

By fusing multiple features extracted through LSH, our method enhances the accuracy of SDK version detection. Features such as method signatures, resource usage patterns, and configuration files are combined to create a comprehensive profile of each SDK version. This multi-feature fusion approach improves detection robustness and reduces false positives.

4. VULNERABILITY DETECTION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Building the SDK Information and Vulnerability Databases

A central component of our approach is the SDK information and vulnerability databases. These databases catalog known SDK types, versions, and associated vulnerabilities. Vulnerabilities are classified based on severity, impact, and mitigation strategies, enabling informed decision-making during application development.

B. Vulnerability Warning System

Upon detecting an SDK version, our system cross-references it with the vulnerability database. If vulnerabilities matching the detected version are identified, the system generates warnings and recommends secure alternatives or updates. Developers receive actionable insights to proactively address security issues and safeguard application integrity.

5. EVALUATION

A. Data Collection and Experimental Setup

We conducted extensive experiments using a dataset comprising 453 Android applications spanning diverse categories and functionalities. Real-world applications were analyzed to validate the effectiveness and scalability of our LSH-based SDK detection method.

B. Performance Analysis

Our method demonstrated superior performance compared to existing tools in terms of accuracy and efficiency. The multi-feature fusion approach significantly enhanced SDK version detection precision, while the vulnerability warning system effectively alerted developers to potential security risks. These findings underscore the practical utility of our approach in enhancing mobile application security.

6. CONCLUSION

This paper introduces a novel approach using Locality-Sensitive Hashing (LSH) for SDK version identification and vulnerability detection in Android applications. By leveraging class hierarchy analysis and multipartition box LSH for feature extraction, our method offers robust SDK version detection and proactive vulnerability management. The comprehensive evaluation on real-world applications validates the efficacy and superiority of our approach, providing a valuable tool for developers to enhance mobile application security.

7. FUTURE WORK

Future research directions include expanding the SDK and vulnerability databases, optimizing feature extraction algorithms for enhanced performance, and integrating our tool with development environments to streamline security analysis during app development.

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