Extended Information Hiding Procedure in Cloud Computing Environment using Random Security Codes

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Abstract – Growth in the cloud computing evidenced in the recent past has accentuated the need for higher levels of security for obvious reasons. Various algorithms and techniques have been developed by the researchers to provide the security at multiple ends in multiple locations of the cloud data. The researchers have attempted to provide the security using various methodologies developed over time. However, there are frequent breaches of security in the recent times observed globally. Though the use of finger reference key in the security of data over the cryptography algorithm has enhanced the level of security, yet there are still loopholes in the framework providing opportunity for hackers for unauthorized access. In this paper, we propose a methodology to enhance the security by introducing the random security codes on the existing security framework. We establish that this procedure is more robust as compared to only using the finger reference key suggested by previous researchers and analysts.

Keywords - Cloud Computing, Random Security Code, Data Hiding

I. INTRODUCTION

Cloud Computing is an emerging technology that blends infrastructure, platforms, or applications that can be arranged and used through the internet. The infrastructure upon which cloud is built upon a large scaled distributed infrastructure in which shared pool of resources are generally virtualized, and services which are offered are distributed to clients in terms of virtual machines, deployment environment, or software. Based on the requirements and workloads, the services of cloud could be scaled dynamically. The payment mechanism for cloud services is based on the consumption and measurement of the resources utilized. Since cloud computing inherently involves a large number of users who store their personal data, the security of data is required on the storage media.

Data storage at cloud server has attracted an incredible amount of consideration or spotlight from different communities. In the year 2019, cloud revenue may touch 278.3 Billion US dollars according to Gartner Consulting. According to IDC estimates, public cloud revenue proportion of the total cloud revenue is expected to be around 66.3% and it may reach a level of 552 Billion US dollars in 2027. This massive growth of cloud services is coupled with a huge risk of a security according to the industry professionals and researchers.

The benefits brought by cloud storage – from scalability and accessibility to decreased IT overhead - are driving rapid adoption at enterprises around the world, and there are steps that companies should take to improve cloud storage security and keep sensitive data safe and secure in the cloud. It's a very convenient to tech user to store and access their data from any remote location or anytime (flexible availability of data) on any latest gadget which is capable cloud data access. Security is the major concern on cloud data storage at any IT related organization or concern security department. Today, all organizations and businesses use cloud services because it provides optimized cost, accessibility and customized services at local system. But running business on the trust of cloud storage base is critical on cloud means to compromise the confidential data files and sensitive information are coming into the new risks, as cloud-stored data residual outside of the range of many firewalls used to prevent sensitive data to be compromised held on-premise. As such, service providers must offer some add on measures to protect data at cloud storage beyond the fundamental protections given by providers. It is a fact that security and data protection are the main concerns for security professionals in moving to the cloud. In a recent study it has been established that the top concerns of the security professionals are-(a) protection against data loss, (b) threats to data privacy and (c) breaches of confidentiality.

In the recent past, we find a host of data breaches globally. Flaherty [1] has enumerated five major data breaches in 2018 viz. Facebook - leakage of a user's profile, Marriott massive data breach affecting the records of up to 500 million customers, Quora - hacking of 100 million user's personal details, British Airways - cyber-attack on customer details, Ticketmaster - personal data of 40,000 customers was stolen by hackers. According to the recent report of PWC, India is vulnerable to security breaches in spite of the fact that businesses are keenly looking at innovative tools to protect themselves from cyber-attacks and threats. Siddhartha [2] envisages that cyber security trends in the Indian market would inter-alia include the use of machine learning, block chain algorithms and whether it is a business or individual or government, large investments and focus on security shall take place.

Cloud computing security needs, consider both technology and strategy, including: audit, compliance and risk assessment. According to Mudassir et al. [3], both the service providers and the clients must work together to ensure safety and security of cloud and data on clouds with a mutual understanding. Researchers have identified various issues concerning the security of cloud data. Of these issues we find a consensus on the issues like - (a) Trust between the entities - machine to machine, human to machine or machine to human like use of Gmail and Yahoo for securing important and confidential data, (b) Fear of Anonymous (cryptanalyst) user - authenticated person live the web who strikes on clouds data, (c) Interceptor Intrusion -hitting the traffic of the data over the cloud and forwarding on the cloud, (d) Opportunism - zeal to get restricted data, (e) Malicious Action of cloud service providers. In addition, data security in the cloud is the primary concern of the provider as well as used. Privacy measure to prevent the digitized data to protect from unauthorized access to nod sees associated with the data stores and many web based data storage. It also provides back up of data which help in recovery of the same data in case of failure.

We find that owing to several security issues, many organizations have ceased cloud computing fully. Various algorithms to protect the cloud data are in vogue and evolving continually. In spite of this fact, there is a dire need to evolve protection mechanisms for cloud data given the frequent cases of security breaches. Conventionally, a fair number of algorithms that have developed that primarily use combination of cryptography and steganography а techniques by the professionals and researchers. In an improved form, referenced figure key is merged with the crypto algorithm, but has proved to be inefficient because of data breaches as evidenced recently. In this paper, we are motivated to explore a further advancement of the security algorithm using the random security codes. The paper is organized as follows. In the introduction part (Section I) cloud computing and its related security risk have been described. Section II shows the major researches that have been conducted in the area of data security over the cloud and a gist of algorithms that have been used till recently are indicated. Section III shows the proposed procedure and results obtained followed by conclusion in Section IV.

II. RELATED WORK

Security of data at rest in severs is the common topic of discussion among researchers. There are different mechanisms reported till date to ensure the security of data at rest and selection of any one of these for any particular system depends on various parameters like architecture of a system where security is to be enabled, the level of security required, amount of loss that may occur on loss of data and much more.

A review of various perspectives of cloud computing can be found in the literature like architecture and entities according to Nazir [4], cloud computing technologies Ashik *et al.* [5], data auditing and security in distributed computing as Geeta [6] defined. Kiran and Sharma [7] review of various data security techniques shows that none of the individual techniques are efficient, thus implying the need for a combination of different data security algorithms. The authors also express that the data classification is a futuristic approach that can reduce the user efforts in recognizing the category of data. Ibaida and Khalil [8] allows the ECG signal to hide its corresponding patient confidential data and other physiological information, thus guaranteeing the integration between ECG and the rest.

Ahmed and Hossain [9] present a sociological and a technological viewpoint of data security and establish that the technological inconsistency that results in security breach in cloud computing might lead to significant sociological impacts. Service oriented architecture and other characteristics of cloud computing suggests that the concept of cloud computing would require to analyze the practicality in line with social, business, technical and legal perspectives – all these facets will incorporate security issues either in technical or strategic form.

Mudasir *et al.* [10] establish that simulation results of Apriori and Predictive Apriori algorithm are robust to secure data. Chang *et al.* [11] have constructed a recursive code that hides data over a special ternary cover suitable for any transform domain, such as DCT domain and density function of the transformed coefficients. According to Deepika [12] uses a technique in which randomly generated index values corresponds to the pixel values of picked image is sent on the cloud instead of actual data therefore it becomes very difficult to restore actual data without recognizing that what these bits and bytes actually point to. The control of the owner on the placement of data is a security challenge Hamlen *et al.* [13].Wid and Hashim[14] have proposed a new approach to secure data storage on cloud computing by hide secret English text file in cover English text file by generating a matrix of location. Lubacz [15], researcher discusses basic principles of network Steganography, which is a comparatively new research subject in the area of information hiding, followed by a concise overview and classification of network Steganography methods and techniques.

Vasilakos et al. [16] have proposed data-sharing scheme with edge servers that generate 256-bit secret keys for both data sharing and searching purposes. They used the key generation method in constant time of each secret key is 1.4 milliseconds. Aroraet al. [17] have focused on the need of providing security by having a public key infrastructure (PKI) on each layer especially the security holes associated with Iaas implementation. Conventionally private and public key has been used to secure the cloud data according to Sugumar [18]. Wang learning based steganalysis/detection method to attack spatial domain least significant bit (LSB) matching Steganography in grey scale images, which is the antitype of many sophisticated Steganography methods according to Baowei [19]. Douglas et al. [20], Steganography techniques applied in the protection of biometric data in fingerprints. It is novel in that we also discuss the strengths and weaknesses of targeted and blind steganalysis strategies for breaking Steganography techniques.

In a malicious environment, the private key can be generated for each Steganographed image that can be obtained from the auditor by only authorized users according to Balaji and Newcastle [21]. Garg and Kaur [22] have proposed steganography of the text data into the image data obtained in the form of 2-D of 3-D images. The random embedding method has been utilized to embed the secret text data into the image data using MATLAB tool. The work of Babu et al. [23] shows an alternative to security improvement using steganography and machine learning through a morphing technique. To secure data on cloud environment, authors have used hybridized techniques that inter-alia includes DST, RSA and Blowfish cryptographic algorithms Shelly and Bawa [24]; Gowthami et al., [25] and encryption using steganography and cryptography Gupta and Kumar [26]. Pawar and Korde [27] find that the cloud security is a fantastic enabler, but suffers from the inherent weakness of the tools that operate across that data in aggregate and lay emphasis on digital image steganography especially for cloud service providers. Various authors have proposed steganography to enhance the data storage security on cloud computing by hiding secret English text file in cover English text file via generating a matrix of location. Rahman et al. [28] have proposed a combination of the Blowfish encryption algorithm for encrypting the secret message and E-LSB for steganographic imaging. RSA can be used for digital signatures and steganography for data hiding in an image Abdulkarim [29]. In an interesting work of Porwal [30], three layers of security can be used for cloud data - stenography to hide data, cryptography to encrypt data and using biometric authentic key generation for data access. Wendzel [31] says that network Steganography and highlights its potential application for harmful purposes. Various security tools have also been suggested by authors like Dhivyaprabha *et al.* [32], Mishra *et al.* [33]. Yadav and Aggarwal [34] proposed a methodology whereby a file is placed on the single server, encrypted shares of the file are stored on different servers, and key used for encryption and decryption is the fingerprint's key of the sender. Because of the fact that fingerprints have zero collision property, data security is ensured.

We find that in the previous studies, the focus is on security of data only at the cloud end by applying of a variety of techniques that may not be sufficient to make the data secure at clouds.

III. PROPOSED PROCEDURE AND RESULTS

After a careful examination of the previous researches and opinions of users and cloud service providers, we propose the use of security code generated by an algorithm. The steps followed in the proposed algorithm are as follows:

- In the *first step*, the data in required format that needs to be stored on the cloud is prepared.
- In the *second step*, processing of data takes place for ensuring data security on cloud storage by generating the finger reference key (finger print) of a user and then embedding fingerprint reference key with data.
- In the *third step*, we apply a random security code generated by specific logic to the fingerprint referenced data.

In our proposed procedure, the user of the data is required to follow the reverse process identical to the generation of secured data as enumerated in the above steps. This multi layering of data is difficult to the hacker or unauthorized person. Illustratively, if the any one of the reference key or random security code is wrong in the decoding procedure, it becomes impossible to access the data by anyone.

Using this methodology, we can secure our data on physical device as well as on clouds. The data can be multi-layered in secure manner available over the clouds which we can ensure by using the reverse process of storing the data over the cloud. In 99.99% of the cases it is the same because of the nearly zero collisions, property of finger reference key (Fingerprint) with irreducible random security code. We show the flowchart to explain our proposed procedure (Figure 1).

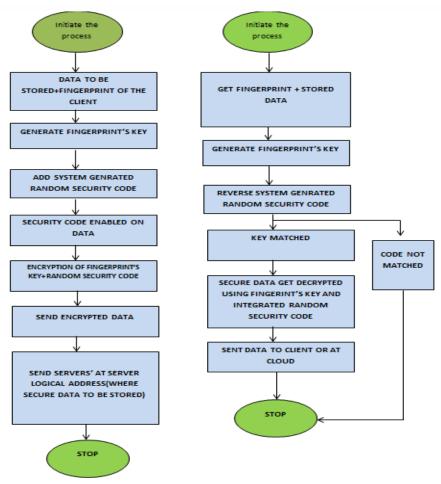


Figure 1: Flowchart of the procedure

The proposed algorithm for embedding the security code is as follows (Figure 2).

```
for(i=0; i<=7; i++)//0-7
{
    if(1%2==0)
    {randno = 65 + ( std::rand() % ( 90 - 65 + 1 ) );
    a[i]=randno;
    else
        {randno = 97 + ( std::rand() % ( 122 - 97 + 1 ) );
        a[i]=randno;
    }
    for(i=8; i<=9; i++)//
    randno = 65 + ( std::rand() % ( 90 - 65 + 1 ) );
    a[i]=randno;
    for(i=10; i<=11; i++)
    randno = 97 + ( std::rand() % ( 122 - 97 + 1 ) );
    a[i]=randno;
    for(i=12; i<=13; i++)
    randno = 65 + ( std::rand() % ( 90 - 65 + 1 ) );
    a[i]=randno;
    for(i=12; i<=13; i++)
    randno = 65 + ( std::rand() % ( 90 - 65 + 1 ) );
    a[i]=randno;
    for(i=14; i<=15; i++)
    randno = 65 + ( std::rand() % ( 90 - 65 + 1 ) );
    a[i]=randno;
    for(i=14; i<=15; i++)
    randno = 97 + ( std::rand() % ( 122 - 97 + 1 ) );
    a[i]=randno;
    for(i=0; i<16; i++)
    encrypt[i]=char(a[i]);
    cout<<"Random Securi
    Random Securi
    Rando
```

Random Security Code: XoWnHuYyKGdsILugg Random Security Code: RfOcTxLwSIooWXzii Random Security Code: NcNuThEdQXnqKPpll Random Security Code: IeFdSyMmSUceZDqzz Random Security Code: LhDjOtNyQHsrTLexx Random Security Code: JtAvBcYkUDigBNttt Random Security Code: FdTaQtXuGWbxULzll Random Security Code: AqTsLvNaTIpwDTayy Random Security Code: EqJcWaUrTIdcUVqee Random Security Code: QrInKoDmGWqxSZchh Random Security Code: EqFeSeXiILhfGRcqq Random Security Code: KwVwQoRyJGroMDopp Random Security Code: XlAkDeQfYVveTVoii Random Security Code: QkQeKrHbOSomJZott Random Security Code: RoIbQoXqEFxoLPehh Random Security Code: JkBoJkBtOJtiCTwoo Random Security Code: BlAtDyFqGLdtITiuu Random Security Code: EkIvWlYbFOywGMmcc Random Security Code: TxEfXcKkUMvpXYhxx

Figure 2: Proposed Algorithm

The schemata of the security embedding random code procedure are shown in Figure 3.

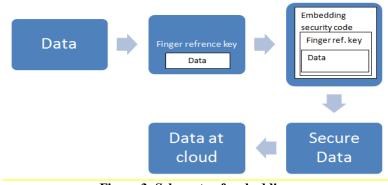


Figure 3: Schemata of embedding

The above figure presents the sequence of activities that are required to be performed to get the expected outcome as desired to be saved on cloud which can be accessed anywhere and anytime. The random security code on the data and finger reference key as combined in the manner - (((data)+finger reference key)) +random unique security code).

We establish that this procedure is robust as compared to only using the finger reference key as suggested by previous researchers and analysts. We illustrate the advantages of this procedure using an example of one of the world largest data storage–database of Unique Identification Authority of India popularly known "Aadhar Card". In 2018, there was a breach of UIDAI database known to be largest in the world. This breach reflects that the exclusive use of the finger reference key is vulnerable, thus pointing out the need for a more robust security framework. Use of a randomly generated security code as per proposed procedure can be more secure compared to the existing frameworks.

IV. CONCLUSION

Our proposed methodology is implemented in two folds – Data embedding with finger reference key and then the same data are embedded with random security which is generated by the programming or by logical code which every time generate the new combination of alphabetical letters. It is used like checksum value for both sender side and receiver side. This methodology helps in maintaining confidentiality and integrity of data at clouds. The property of proposed algorithm that makes it different from existing data storage techniques on clouds. This property may help in gaining more trust on the storage of data on clouds. There is scope for further enhancing the complexity of the algorithm to make the model more robust.

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