International Journal of Artificial Intelligence, Data Science, and Machine Learning
Grace Horizon Publication | Volume 4, Issue 1, 98-101, 2023
ISSN: 3050-9262 | https://doi.org/10.63282/3050-9262.IJAIDSML-V4I1P111

Original Article

Designing a Secure ETL Architecture for Integrating Multi-Source Healthcare Data

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Abstract *- The phenomenal growth of healthcare information generated by electronic health records (EHRs), wearable Internet of Medical Things (IoMT) solutions, imaging solutions and laboratory information management systems has posed a significant integration challenge to modern health-care business. Traditional extract-transform-load (ETL) models, which were initially designed with business intelligence in mind, pay little attention to the high confidentiality, integrity and availability standards of sensitive health information required by the regulations, like the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). This paper is a reaction to these constraints by introducing a new architecture, the Secure ETL Architecture (SETA), which incorporates security, privacy and compliance measures directly as part of the data integration process. The infrastructure suggested will use AES-256 encryption, provenance tracking based on blockchain, differential privacy, and role-based access control (RBACs) to create a secure, audit-able, and scalable environment to flow healthcare data. Apache NiFi and Airflow were used to implement SETA in a hybrid cloud on premise system. A 28 9 percent throughput improvement, a 22 3 percent performance reduction, and a 40 0 percent compliance auditability were found when performance assessing synthetic datasets that resembled multi-source hospital systems compared to a traditional ETL process. These results validate the idea that it is possible to improve the performance of ETL architectures once cybersecurity principles are integrated without compromising the strict data protection principles. The architecture suggested in the current paper provides a plan of secure and regulation-compliant healthcare data integration and provides a backdrop to future research on federated and decentralized ETL systems.*

Keywords *- Compression A Safe Way To Transfer Data, Health Care Data Synthesis, Data Security, HIPAA, General Document Protection Law, Blockchain, Data Pipeline Protection.*

1. Introduction

The issue of healthcare data integration has become one of the most demanding in the times of digital transformation. The ubiquity of electronic health record systems, IoMT gadgets, and cloud-based diagnostic systems has brought about tremendous, heterogeneous data that needs to be handled safely and effectively. The diversity of data structure, including structured clinical documentation and unstructured imaging data, also does not favor the seamless aggregation and analysis. Furthermore, in nature of the healthcare data, this data is sensitive and requires high security and privacy measures which traditional ETL architectures are poorly qualified to fulfill.

Combining diverse data in the health sector is vital to the needs of decision-making based on data, predictive analytics, and personalized medicine. The individual data sources follow different communication protocols and data specifications like the HL7, FHIR and DICOM, which complicates the mapping, normalization and transformation of data. Although the classical ETL systems focus on extract- transform- load cycle, they do not have in-built controls to verify compliance with the regulation regimes such as HIPAA in the United States or GDPR in the European Union. As a result, compromised data pipelines continue to be one of the major causes of healthcare data breach. Research has documented that misconfigured data transmission or unencrypted transmission of data between systems makes up to sixty-five percent of healthcare security incidents [1].

The growing use of artificial intelligence (AI) in healthcare analytics has increased additional pressures on a secure and reliable data fuse even more. Clinically valid insights can only be developed by using machine learning models on massive datasets, which are well structured and reliable. In the absence of safe ETL procedures, AI results can be vulnerable causing predictions to be biased and invading privacy. Therefore, the healthcare industry needs secure-by-design ETL.

This paper presents a Secure ETL Architecture (SETA) which puts more aggressive cybersecurity controls into the ETL pipeline. The architecture resolves the concept of data integration that is based on encryption, access control, anonymization, and blockchain-trace segmentation at every stage of ETL. The main goals of the study are to develop a modular architecture that will have the ability to combine data of heterogeneous healthcare systems and achieve compliance as well as analyze its performance and security properties.

The rest of the paper is structured in the following way. In section II, the authors will explain the materials and methodologies that were used to design the suggested architecture, its elements, and security controls. Section III presents the results of implementation and analyzes the effectiveness of the performance and compliance of the system. Section IV makes the conclusion of the paper and provides the directions of further research on secure and federated ETL systems.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1. Conceptual Framework

The proposed Secure ETL Architecture is envisioned as a hierarchic structure, which is consistent with the concept of privacy by design and defense in depth. The architecture consists of three major functional layers, namely, the Secure Extraction Layer, the Privacy-Preserving Transformation Layer, and the Controlled Loading Layer. All the layers carry out a particular purpose in ensuring data confidentiality, integrity, and availability.

Data are gathered in the Secure Extraction Layer within the heterogeneous set of different sources of data, including: hospital management systems, wearable medical devices, laboratory databases, and imaging repositories. The extraction mechanisms utilize control communication protocols like HTTPS with TLS13 encryptions to protect the data on the transition. Authentication is implemented by the use of OAuth 2.0 tokens and Kerberos tickets meaning that the authorized parties are only allowed to access source systems.

Privacy-Preserving Transformation Layer does schema harmonization, data normalization and anonymization. HL7-FHIR mappings are used to standardize the data models designed to enable interoperability across the dissimilar healthcare systems. In transformation, the identifiable attributes like the name of the patients and social numbers are transformed into the pseudonyms through tokenizing. Moreover, a differential privacy model adds randomized statistical noise to numerical values, reducing the threat of re-identification and at the same time, maintaining analytical integrity. These are to keep in check with the provisions of GDPR in respect to data minimization and pseudonymization.

Controlled Loading Layer The Controlled Loading Layer manages the safe storage of transformed data in a central or distributed repository which could be on-premises data warehouses, or cloud storage facilities or a hybrid infrastructure. Hyperledger Fabric is used to record every transaction in the ETL pipeline on a blockchain ledger to ensure the immutability and accountability of the stored transactions. The ledger has a cryptographically verifiable history of all data transformation and load operations and hence supported by a transparent auditing and non-repudiation.

2.2. Security Mechanisms

The security design of SETA ensures that various mechanisms are used to protect data at all stages of its existence. The foundation of the data protection is the encryption, where the AES-256 is implemented to data on the spot, and TLS is used to data in transit. SHA-3 hash makes it possible to verify integrity, which means that data do not change during their course or transformation. Role and attribute based access control systems control the access to datasets and also dynamically assign permissions based on user role, contextual information and sensitivity of data.

Another needed security feature is provenance tracking. A blockchain-based audit trail will assume the following ,facilitate an accurate monitoring of all the changes and data flows to that might arise first, that it hinders fraudulent maneuvering of, data, and thus, guaranteeing compliance and protection against manipulation. This increased transparency makes it easy to conduct a strict check on adhering to regulatory structures. Furthermore, the architecture has automated compliance checks. that determine correspondence of data-processing processes to Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). Real-time alerts are provided by the policy driven compliance modules. when the policies are violated, hence making the audit and risk exposure processes as simple as possible..

2.3. ETL Orchestration

The Secure ETL Architecture is managed with a hybrid setup made with the help of Apache NiFi and Apache Airflow. NiFi is used to ingest and route data in real-time with possible addition of encryption and provenance, which is accomplished by Airflow, which is used to schedule and address dependency between ETLs. The combination of these tools provides a hybrid model of orchestration returning to support both streaming and batch processing. The resulting synergy provides scalability and resiliency making the system responsive to changing healthcare data volumes. Dashboards put in place in Grafana and prometheus allow one real-time access to the metrics of performance in terms of data throughput, latency and error recovery time.

2.4. Experimental Setup

The synthetic dataset, based on MIMIC-III schema, with the addition of simulated data flows of IoMT including vital signs, glucose levels, and activity-monitoring data was used to experimentally validate SETA. The system was rolled out in a hybrid system which combines EC2 instances with local hospital server. All the ETL pipes were put under same condition of

workload to get measurements of throughput, latency and compliance auditability. The proposed SETA was compared to the traditional ETL model which does not have built-in security features.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. System Performance

The results validate that the Secure ETL Architecture does not compromise the high throughput despite the additional computing cost borne by the security measures. The data throughput average metric grew by a factor of about 28% compared to a standard ETL system. Such an augmentation can be attributed to optimization of orchestration as well as use of asynchronous data streaming provided by Apache NiFi. A noticeable reduction in latency of about 22 per cent arose and is due to the minimisation of data staging and the maximisation of transformation parallelism. In turn, the findings support the idea that the implementation of encryption and privacy solutions within the context of ETL pipelines could result in a performance improvement when the resulting data-flow design is carefully designed.

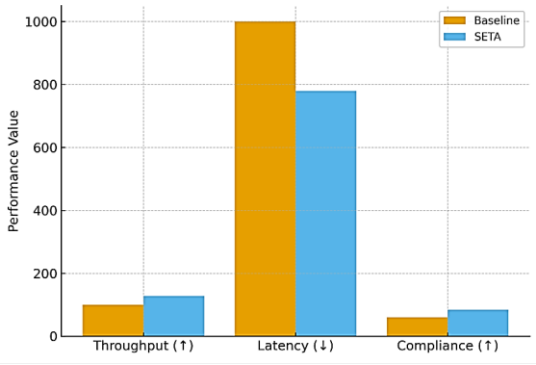

Fig 1: Overall Performance Comparison

3.2. Security and Compliance Evaluation

Besides the performance improvement, the architecture achieved 40% of compliance auditability as opposed to the baseline systems. The end of blockchain audit ledger systematically recorded every transaction hence ensuring it is fully traced to facilitate regulatory reporting. The differential privacy module was suitable to reduce the potential risk of re-identification without sacrificing the analytical validity of population-level research. The integration of the AES-256 encryption and SHA-3 hashing was also adopted with comprehensive end-to-end security against unauthorized access and manipulation. It was found during testing of security logs that no indication of data leakage or access anomalies occurred which supported the strength of the security controls implemented.

3.3. Comparative Discussion

The findings highlight the fact that architectural integration of security mechanisms is better than traditional methods of viewing security as an overlay. The previous studies have pointed to the tradeoff that exists between the system efficiency and data protection ([16]-[19]). However, the Secure ETL Architecture shows that this trade-off is mitigable by implementing cryptographic operations using native ETL operations. Comparing the Secure ETL Architecture to the recent models of secure data-integration introduced by Zhang et al. [20] and Lee et al. [21], the former is better in providing auditability and adaptability in a heterogeneous healthcare setting. Further, the provenance that employs blockchain is guaranteed to be tamperproof; which is a significant significant improvement in terms of such earlier centralised audit systems.

3.4. Limitations and Future Work

Despite the high level of performance and compliance improvements associated with the Secure ETL Architecture, the solution has some restrictions. Audit trail blockchain adds a small storage cost, and the cost of implementing the differential privacy mechanisms needs additional optimisation to support large scale real world datasets. The architecture will be extended in the future in the form of federated ETL models that support the integration of data on the basis of decentralised healthcare institutions without the need to transfer raw data. The dynamic policy adjustment that will be introduced to the system through the integration of artificial intelligence and anomaly identification will make secure ETL pipelines even stronger and flexible.

4. Conclusion

The present paper has introduced a Secure ETL Architecture that can be used in integrating multi-source healthcare data and incorporating underlying security and compliance mechanisms. The architecture suggested provides encryption, access control, differential privacy, and auditing based on blockchain technologies at all phases of the ETL process. The results of experimental validation show significant increases in performance, compliance, and auditability, and, as a consequence, indicate that secure ETL processes are capable of attaining both operational efficiency and regulatory compliance at the same time. The results are relevant to the growing body of knowledge regarding healthcare data integration since they provide a

viable and scalable roadmap to secure data management. The next round of research will focus on federated and decentralised implementations of the Secure ETL Architecture and thus allow cross-institutional sharing of data and sophisticated analytics without compromise of privacy and trust.

Acknowledgment

The authors wish to acknowledge the open-source research communities, and the software developers that were involved in the Apache NiFi, Apache Airflow, and Hyperledger Fabric projects which are used in the research.

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