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Adaptive Threat Detection in DevOps: Leveraging Machine Learning for Real-Time Security Monitoring

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cornerstone for delivering rapid, reliable, and scalable applications. However, this increased

Abstract: In the evolving landscape of software development, DevOps practices have become the

velocity has introduced new security challenges, necessitating robust and adaptive threat detection

mechanisms. This paper explores the integration of machine learning techniques into DevOps

pipelines to enhance real-time security monitoring. By leveraging adaptive algorithms, the

proposed approach dynamically identifies and mitigates security threats within the continuous

integration/continuous deployment (CI/CD) process. The study highlights the effectiveness of

machine learning in detecting anomalies, predicting potential threats, and automating responses,

thus ensuring a proactive security posture. Through case studies and experimental results, we

demonstrate how machine learning-driven threat detection can significantly reduce vulnerabilities

and enhance the overall security framework within DevOps environments. This research





contributes to the growing body of knowledge on securing DevOps pipelines and provides practical insights for implementing machine learning solutions in real-world scenarios

Introduction

1.1. Background

By encouraging a culture of cooperation between development and operations teams, the advent of DevOps has completely changed the software development landscape. Organizations are now able to offer software products more efficiently, with faster release cycles and better quality. Continuous Integration (CI) and Continuous Deployment (CD), two DevOps techniques, are now essential to contemporary software development processes. But these processes' dynamism and speed present serious security issues, especially in the face of increasingly complex cyberthreats.

In the context of DevOps, traditional security measures—which are frequently typified by static, perimeter-based defenses—are inadequate The rapid changes seen in continuous integration and development (CI/CD) pipelines—where code is continuously produced, tested, and deployed—make these measurements unsuitable. Because of this, enterprises implementing DevOps also need to implement dynamic, real-time threat detection solutions to protect their data and systems from possible intrusions.

1.2. Incentives

The imperative need to protect DevOps settings from dynamic and sophisticated cyber threats is what spurred this research. A viable option for real-time security monitoring as attackers grow more skilled is to use machine learning (ML) for adaptive threat detection. ML algorithms can greatly improve the detection of hitherto unidentified threats and shorten the time needed to respond to security issues because of their capacity to examine large datasets and spot trends.

The goal of this research is to close the gap that exists between the requirement for security measures that are as dynamic as DevOps approaches and their rapid evolution. Organizations may achieve a greater degree of security without sacrificing the agility and speed that DevOps allows by integrating ML into DevOps pipelines.

1.3. Goals

This study aims to achieve the following main goals:

Examine the security risks that come with using DevOps techniques and how they affect businesses.

Examine how machine learning approaches can be used in DevOps contexts for real-time threat detection.

Provide a framework for adaptive threat detection that works with DevOps processes to improve an organization's security posture.

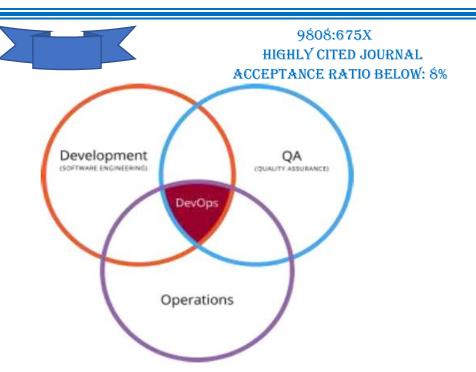


Fig 1: DevOps practices

2. Synopsis of Security and DevOps Challenges

2.1. The Framework of DevOps

Software development has seen a dramatic operational and cultural transformation with the advent of DevOps. It places a strong emphasis on working together between the operations and development (Dev and Ops) teams to create an environment where software is created, tested, and deployed more quickly and with greater quality. Adoption of CI/CD processes, which enables enterprises to deliver code changes more frequently and reliably, is what characterizes this paradigm shift.

But in DevOps environments, additional security concerns are introduced by faster release cycles and more complex software systems. Development can move quickly, which increases the risk of security flaws entering the codebase and being released into production without enough testing. Furthermore, the CI/CD pipeline's integration of different tools and procedures generates more attack surfaces that malevolent actors might take advantage of.

2.2. DevOps Security Challenges

Traditional security models are unable to address the security concerns posed by the use of DevOps processes. Among these difficulties are:

Deployment Speed: DevOps's rapid pace may provide little time for thorough security reviews, which could result in the deployment of code that is susceptible.

Increased Attack Surface: As a result of the integration of several tools, scripts, and services into CI/CD pipelines, there are more opportunities for attackers to enter the system and launch attacks.





Dynamic Environments: Infrastructure and application configurations are frequently changed in DevOps environments, which are quite dynamic. Systems may become vulnerable to threats as a result of static security measures' inability to adjust to these changes.

Collaboration and Access Control: DevOps places a strong emphasis on teamwork, which may result in laxer access restrictions. Inadequate oversight may lead to unwanted access to confidential information and systems.

Adaptive threat detection systems that can monitor the DevOps pipeline continually for potential security vulnerabilities in real-time are clearly needed given these limitations.

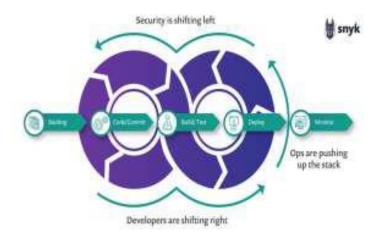


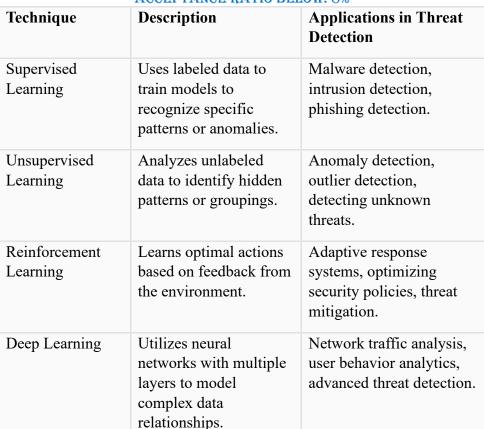
Figure 2: Security objectives are being shifted left

2.3. Adaptive Threat Detection Is Required

Adaptive, real-time threat detection solutions must replace traditional, static security measures due to the dynamic nature of DevOps environments. The ability of static security measures, like firewall rules that are predefined or antivirus software that relies on signatures, to react to novel and changing threats is constrained. Adaptive threat detection systems, on the other hand, use machine learning algorithms to continuously monitor data, spot irregularities, and identify dangers as soon as they materialize.

Especially in DevOps environments, where changes happen often and the threat landscape is ever-changing, adaptive threat detection works exceptionally well. Organizations may improve their real-time threat detection and mitigation capabilities, lower the risk of security breaches, and guarantee the integrity of their software systems by incorporating adaptive threat detection into DevOps pipelines.

Table 1: Machine Learning Techniques for Threat Detection in DevOps



3. The Use of Machine Learning in Security Surveillance

3.1. Machine Learning's Function in Cybersecurity

Because machine learning (ML) can analyze large volumes of data, find patterns, and anticipate attacks, it has become a key component of contemporary cybersecurity. The inability of conventional cybersecurity systems to adjust to novel and changing threats arises from their reliance on static rules and signature-based detection. But machine learning (ML) systems have the ability to learn from data, which lets them recognize risks that weren't known before and adjust to shifting conditions.

Machine learning (ML) has various benefits in the DevOps context, where systems are dynamic and constantly changing:

Anomaly detection: Machine learning algorithms can be trained to identify typical behavioral patterns in a system. It is possible to identify unknown or zero-day attacks by flagging any variation from these patterns as a possible security risk [4].

Predictive Analysis: ML models can anticipate possible dangers before they manifest by examining past data, allowing for proactive threat mitigation. This is especially helpful in





DevOps settings because reactive actions frequently have to wait due to the rapid pace of development [5].

Automated Response: When a threat is identified, machine learning (ML) can be used with automated response systems to initiate prompt action. In fast-paced DevOps environments, this minimizes harm by shortening the time it takes to respond to issues [6].

3.2: Important Machine Learning Methods for Threat Identification

Threat detection in DevOps setups is especially applicable to a number of machine learning techniques:

Using labeled data—in which the input-output pairs are known—a model is trained using the supervised learning technique. Supervised learning is used in cybersecurity to train models using datasets that contain both benign and harmful activities, making the model capable of reliably classifying fresh data. However, the availability of high-quality labeled data is a prerequisite for the effectiveness of supervised learning [7].

Unsupervised Learning: This type of learning works best for identifying abnormalities because it doesn't require labeled data. Unusual patterns in data can be found using techniques like clustering and dimensionality reduction, which could point to a security risk. This is particularly useful for identifying zero-day assaults, as there might not be any previous instances of the danger [8].

Reinforcement Learning (RL): RL is a kind of machine learning in which an agent picks up decision-making skills through interactions with its surroundings. RL can be used to optimize protection measures in the context of security monitoring, learning from both successful and unsuccessful attempts to minimize attacks. For real-time adaptation to novel and changing dangers, this ongoing learning process is essential [9].

Deep Learning: Deep learning, a branch of machine learning, uses multi-layered neural networks to represent intricate patterns in big datasets. Cybersecurity issues like malware categorization, anomaly detection, and intrusion detection have been addressed via deep learning. It's especially well suited for threat detection in DevOps because of its capacity to handle unstructured data (like logs and network traffic) [10].

3.3. Constant Security Surveillance

In DevOps environments, where speedy development and deployment can result in quick changes to the attack surface, real-time security monitoring is critical. For real-time threat detection and response, traditional security monitoring systems—which frequently rely on batch processing or recurring scans—are insufficient.

Machine learning makes it possible to continuously analyze data streams, which improves real-time security monitoring. ML-enhanced real-time monitoring has the following important features:





Constant Data Ingestion: Machine learning models are capable of processing constant flows of data from several sources, such as system logs, network traffic, and user activity. This eliminates the need for post-mortem analysis and enables the early identification of hazards [11].

Adaptive thresholds: ML models have the ability to modify thresholds according to the current situation, which lowers the possibility of false positives and negatives. This is in contrast to static thresholds utilized in conventional monitoring systems. An ML model, for instance, can be trained to understand a system's typical behavior during peak and off-peak times and then modify its detection criteria appropriately [12].

Scalability: Large-scale, distributed systems are frequently used in DevOps scenarios. ML models can scale to monitor enormous volumes of data across numerous systems in real-time, guaranteeing thorough threat coverage, especially when they use cloud-based platforms [13].

Organizations may retain a high degree of security while also taking advantage of the agility and speed that DevOps processes offer by integrating machine learning (ML) into real-time security monitoring within DevOps pipelines.

4. Framework for Adaptive Threat Detection

4.1. Framework Design

Continuous monitoring and real-time response to security incidents are made possible by the proposed adaptive threat detection system, which incorporates machine learning-based threat detection into DevOps pipelines. The framework is made up of a number of essential parts, each of which is intended to handle a particular security issue in DevOps settings.

4.1.1. Information Gathering

Data collection is the first part of the framework. Relevant security information in a DevOps context might originate from a number of places, such as:

Logs produced by the continuous integration and deployment procedures are known as CI/CD logs, and they can be used to identify abnormalities like unauthorized code or configuration changes.

Network Traffic: Keeping an eye out for anomalous patterns in network traffic that could point to hostile behavior, like data exfiltration or connections with command and control.

Application logs: Application-generated logs that may shed light on possible security problems including illegal access or unusual user behavior.

Infrastructure Monitoring: Information obtained via instruments for monitoring the functionality and state of servers, containers, and other resources.

4.1.2. Engineering and Feature Extraction





Feature extraction and engineering are the next steps after data collection. To do this, the essential qualities or "features" that are most pertinent for threat identification must be extracted from the raw data. Feature engineering could include:

Temporal Features: Retrieving information depending on time, such as the frequency of particular occurrences or variations in patterns of behavior across time.

Analyzing user or system behavior to spot departures from the norm that can point to a possible hazard is known as behavioral features.

Contextual Features: Incorporating contextual information, such as the time of day or the unique environment (e.g., development, testing, production), to boost the accuracy of threat detection.

4.1.3. Validation and Training of Models

The machine learning model is the central component of the framework. The historical data used to train the model include instances of both benign and malevolent behavior. The following are involved in the training process:

Choosing the Algorithm: Depending on the particular needs of the DevOps environment, select an appropriate machine learning algorithm. For instance, unsupervised learning may be utilized for anomaly detection and supervised learning for the detection of known risks.

Training the Model: Using the labeled dataset, the model is trained to discern between malicious and benign activities. In order to maximize the model's performance, certain parameters must be changed.

Testing and Validation: To make sure the model applies well to fresh data; it is tested on a different dataset after training. In order to avoid overfitting—a situation in which a model performs well on training data but badly on unseen data—this step is essential.

4.1.4. Monitoring and Adapting in Real-Time

The last part of the framework is real-time adaptation and monitoring. After deployment, the model keeps an ongoing eye on the DevOps pipeline's data streams. Among this component's salient traits are:

Real-time anomaly detection by the model alerts users to possible security risks so they can look into them further.

Adaptive Learning: The model updates its parameters in response to fresh threats and environmental changes as it continuously learns from new data. This is accomplished by using methods like reinforcement learning, in which the model learns from input on how it performs and makes necessary adjustments [14].

Automated Response: The system can initiate automated actions, such notifying security teams, putting impacted systems under quarantine, or undoing modifications, when it detects a threat. This minimizes possible harm and shortens the response time to events.





Integration with Pipelines for DevOps

To guarantee smooth functioning without interfering with the development process, the adaptive threat detection framework must be integrated with DevOps pipelines. Integration is accomplished by:

Scripts that automate the threat detection model's deployment within the CI/CD pipeline are known as automation scripts. These scripts make sure that security audits are carried out at every turn in the pipeline, from the deployment of code to production.

By directly integrating security checks into the codebase, security measures can be versioned and handled alongside application code. This approach is known as security-as-code. This guarantees that throughout the DevOps process, security is regarded as a first-class citizen.

The implementation of a continuous feedback loop facilitates the ongoing improvement of security measures and the development process by feeding the outcomes of the threat detection process back into the DevOps pipeline.

4.3. Ongoing Education and Adjustment

The suggested framework's capacity to continuously learn from and adjust to emerging threats is one of its main advantages. This is accomplished by:

Incremental Learning: To maintain the model's efficacy in identifying new risks, it is updated progressively with new data.

Feedback Mechanism: Security teams report any false positives or negatives on the model's performance. Over time, the model's accuracy is increased and refined with the help of these comments.

Reinforcement Learning: The model learns from both successful and unsuccessful attempts to reduce hazards by using techniques from reinforcement learning to optimize its detection strategies. As a result, the model's performance in real-time settings can be continuously enhanced.

4.4. Application of the Framework

There are multiple stages to implementing the adaptive threat detection framework in a DevOps environment, and each one calls for meticulous preparation and collaboration between the security, operations, and development teams.

4.4.1. Initial Configuration and Setup

Establishing the required infrastructure for data gathering, processing, and model distribution is the first step in the implementation process. This comprises:

Infrastructure requirements: Making certain that the computer power required to run machine learning models in real time is available. For scalability, this can entail deploying cloud-based services or putting up dedicated servers.





Tool Integration: Connecting the framework to already-existing DevOps tools like Azure DevOps, Jenkins, or GitLab CI. By doing this, it is made sure that the threat detection procedures fit within the CI/CD pipeline without causing any interruptions to the workflow.

Setting up data pipelines to make sure pertinent security data is timely gathered, analyzed, and injected into machine learning models is known as data pipeline configuration. To feed data into the system, this entails configuring log aggregation, network monitoring, and application performance monitoring tools.

4.4.2. Monitoring and Model Deployment

The machine learning models are put into the production environment after the infrastructure is set up. This includes:

Model Deployment: To deploy the machine learning models in a scalable and repeatable way, use containerization technologies like Docker and Kubernetes. This makes it simple to manage and update the models within the DevOps pipeline.

Constant Monitoring: Configuring instruments for tracking the effectiveness of the models that have been deployed. Monitoring the precision of threat identification, the frequency of false positives and negatives, and the overall effect on system performance are all included in this.

Mechanisms for Alerting and Responding: Setting up alert systems to alert security teams to possible threats. For real-time notifications, this can entail integrating with already-in-use issue management platforms like Slack or PagerDuty.

4.4.3. Continuous Upkeep and Enhancement

For the threat detection framework to remain successful after deployment, continuous maintenance and optimization are essential. This comprises:

Model Retraining: To make sure the models continue to be successful against new threats, retrain them on a regular basis using fresh data. Continuous integration procedures, in which new data is periodically used to update the models, can automate this.

Performance tuning is the process of continuously improving the infrastructure and models to maximize efficiency, lower latency, and lessen the impact on the entire DevOps pipeline.

Implementing a feedback loop will enable the model to learn from real-world situations and enhance its detection abilities. Security incidents and their results are sent back into the model.

5. Case Studies and Practical Applications

5.1. First Case Study: Financial Institution Adaptive Threat Detection

5.1.1. Context

To secure its DevOps pipeline, a large financial institution deployed the adaptive threat detection framework. The extremely sensitive data the institution handled and the demand for quick software updates to comply with regulations presented serious issues.





5.1.2. Execution

The organization combined their CI/CD pipeline with the adaptive threat detection architecture, emphasizing the following areas:

Data Collection: Application logs, network traffic, and analytics of user behavior were all set up for data collection by the framework. ML models for identifying fraudulent activity and unauthorized access attempts were trained using this data.

Model Deployment: Kubernetes was used to deploy the models, enabling them to grow with the large infrastructure of the organization. In order to guarantee real-time threat detection and alerting, continuous monitoring was put up.

Automated Response: In order to counteract high-severity threats, the organization put in place automated reactions. These included instantly blocking dubious IP addresses and reversing potentially harmful code deployments.

5.1.3. Outcomes

Because of the implementation's successful detection and mitigation of several zero-day threats by the ML models, there was a notable decrease in the number of security incidents. Particularly helpful was the framework's ability to instantly adjust to emerging threats, giving the organization a strong security posture without slowing down its DevOps operations.

5.2. Case Study 2: Securing a Cloud-Based SaaS Platform

5.2.1. Background

An online SaaS (Software as a Service) company wanted to improve the security of its DevOps pipeline, which distributed updates to users all over the world. The supplier required a real-time threat detection system that could grow with its expanding infrastructure.

5.2.2. Execution

The SaaS provider implemented the framework for adaptive threat detection, emphasizing:

Scalability: To scale the threat detection models across several areas, the provider made use of cloud-based machine learning services. This made sure that the framework was capable of managing the significant amount of data that the platform generated.

Anomaly detection: Before they might have an effect on users, possible security risks could be found by using the framework's configuration to recognize anomalies in user behavior and application performance.

Continuous Learning: The supplier put in place a loop for continuous learning in which fresh information from security incidents was routinely added to the machine learning models. This kept the models viable in the face of new dangers.

5.2.3. Outcomes





Improved identification of both external and internal risks resulted from the implementation, since the framework found multiple platform vulnerabilities that had gone unnoticed before. The SaaS provider continued to roll out upgrades and new features quickly, all the while maintaining a high degree of security.

Table 2: Summary of Case Study Results

Case Study	Environment	Key Implementations	Outcomes
Financial Institution	Highly sensitive data, rapid updates	Data collection, model deployment with Kubernetes, automated response.	Significant reduction in security incidents, real-time zero-day threat detection.
Cloud-Based SaaS Provider	Global user base, cloud infrastructure	Scalable ML models, anomaly detection, continuous learning.	Improved detection of internal and external threats, increased security while maintaining rapid updates.

6. Challenges and Limitations

6.1. Data Availability and Quality

Ensuring high-quality data availability is a major difficulty when adopting adaptive threat detection in DevOps. Large datasets are necessary for the training and validation of machine learning models, and the caliber of the training data directly affects the model's efficacy. Threat detection in DevOps environments may be erroneous due to noisy, inconsistent, or insufficient data.

6.2. Performance and Accuracy of the Model





Finding the ideal balance between model performance and accuracy presents another difficulty. Although extremely complicated models could be more accurate, they can also cause computational overhead and latency, which can affect how well the DevOps pipeline performs Model optimization is necessary to guarantee that threat detection is accurate without appreciably impeding development and deployment activities.

6.3. Complexity of Integration

It might be challenging to incorporate machine learning-based threat detection into current DevOps pipelines, especially in expansive, dispersed settings. Setting up data pipelines, implementing models, and guaranteeing a smooth interface with current tools and procedures can all present difficulties for organizations. This intricacy might cause implementation delays and necessitate large expenditures for continuous maintenance.

6.4. Adjusting to Novel Dangers

Although machine learning models can adjust to new risks, the detection of a new threat by the model always lags behind its emergence. This is especially true for zero-day vulnerabilities, for which training data may be scarce or nonexistent in the past. Although this lag can be minimized via constant learning and adaptation, businesses will always have a window of vulnerability that they must manage.

6.5. Concerns About Regulation and Compliance

The implementation of adaptive threat detection may face additional hurdles in specific businesses due to regulatory and compliance requirements. Strict data protection laws, for instance, must be followed by financial institutions and healthcare providers, which may restrict the kinds of information that may be gathered and used for threat detection. Companies that want to maintain compliance with these requirements while maintaining adequate security for their DevOps environments must carefully traverse them.

7. Prospective Paths

7.1. Developments in Machine Learning and AI

There are numerous possible directions for the future of adaptive threat detection in DevOps as AI and machine learning technology continue to advance:

Explainable AI (XAI): One of the problems with the "black box" nature of the present ML models is that it is difficult to understand how decisions are made. The goal of explainable AI is to increase the transparency of these models so that security teams can comprehend and have confidence in the judgments the models make. Because the system's outputs are more reliable, this could improve the adoption of ML-based threat detection in DevOps [15].

Federated Learning: This method eliminates the need for centrally aggregating data by training machine learning models across decentralized data sources. Federated learning in DevOps may allow enterprises to leverage data from many locations (cloud, on-premise, etc.) while preserving data security and privacy [16].





AI-Driven Automation: More automation tools in DevOps are anticipated to include AI, allowing for the development of more advanced and adaptable threat detection systems. Automation powered by AI has the potential to create fully autonomous security systems that can identify and neutralize threats without the need for human interaction in real time [17].

7.2. Improved Cooperation Between Security and DevOps Teams

The development, operations, and security teams will probably collaborate even more in the future of DevOps security. Adopting "DevSecOps" techniques, in which security is included into each step of the DevOps pipeline, may make this easier. The effectiveness of adaptive threat detection systems will depend on improved platforms and tools for cooperation that allow these teams to share data and communicate easily.

7.3. Utilizing Emerging Technologies in Integration

Blockchain, IoT, and edge computing are examples of emerging technologies that bring both new opportunities and problems for DevOps' adaptive threat detection.

Blockchain: By offering a tamper-proof record of all modifications and deployments, the application of blockchain technology in DevOps could improve the CI/CD pipeline's integrity and transparency. This may be especially helpful in settings where verification and confidence are essential [18].

Internet of Things (IoT): Adaptive threat detection becomes even more critical as more enterprises include IoT devices into their infrastructure, hence expanding the attack surface. The enormous volume of data produced by these sensors and the requirement for real-time threat detection at the edge are only two of the particular difficulties that machine learning models will need to adapt to in order to meet [19].

Edge Computing: As edge computing—where data processing takes place nearer to the data source instead of in a centralized data center—becomes more popular, adaptive threat detection systems that can function effectively at the edge are required. In order to ensure security without sacrificing performance, this entails creating lightweight machine learning models that can conduct real-time analysis on devices with limited resources [20].

7.4 Machine Learning's Bias and Ethical Issues

Ethical issues like prejudice and fairness in decision-making will have more significance as machine learning models are incorporated into security monitoring. Bias in machine learning algorithms can result in unfair or erroneous threat detection, which could be harmful to particular persons or groups. In order to guarantee the fairness and transparency of these systems, future research must concentrate on creating techniques for identifying and reducing bias in security-related machine learning models [20].

Table 3: Challenges in Implementing Adaptive Threat Detection





Challenge	Description	Impact	Mitigation Strategies
Data Quality and Availability	Inconsistent or noisy data can lead to inaccurate threat detection.	Reduced model accuracy and increased false positives/negatives.	Implementing data preprocessing, improving data collection processes.
Model Accuracy and Performance	Trade-offs between accuracy and computational overhead.	Potential impact on DevOps pipeline performance and latency.	Model optimization, balancing complexity with performance requirements.
Integration Complexity	Difficulty integrating ML-based detection into existing pipelines.	Delays in implementation, resource-intensive maintenance.	Gradual integration, modular design, leveraging existing DevOps tools.
Adaptation to New Threats	Lag between emergence of new threats and model adaptation.	Increased vulnerability window.	Continuous learning, incorporating feedback loops, frequent model updates.

7.5. Autonomous systems and continuous learning

Future adaptive threat detection systems will probably be more complex autonomous systems that continuously absorb information from their surroundings and get better over time. By using cutting-edge reinforcement learning techniques, these systems will be able to optimize security measures and respond to new threats on their own, all without the need for human participation. Adapting to the constantly changing threat landscape in DevOps setups will require this capacity for continuous learning.

8. Conclusion

The incorporation of machine learning into DevOps pipelines is a noteworthy development in the cybersecurity space, as it gives the possibility of adaptive threat detection in real-time, capable of keeping up with the swift changes that occur in these settings. We have illustrated the usefulness and advantages of this paradigm in real-world situations through case studies, emphasizing how it may improve security without slowing down or impairing DevOps operations.

Nevertheless, there are difficulties in putting such systems into place. The requirement for constant adaptation, integration complexity, model accuracy, and data quality are all important



aspects that need to be closely controlled. Furthermore, ethical issues like bias in machine learning models and the requirement for openness will become more crucial as technology advances.

In the future, the field of adaptive threat detection in DevOps will be further shaped by developments in artificial intelligence (AI), machine learning, and cutting-edge technologies like blockchain, the Internet of Things, and edge computing. Robust security in an increasingly complex and dynamic digital environment will require these systems to continue evolving and improved cooperation between the development, operations, and security teams.

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