

Formal Impact Metric for Cyber-Physical Attacks

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(joint work with Ruggero Lanotte, Andrei Munteanu and Simone Tini)

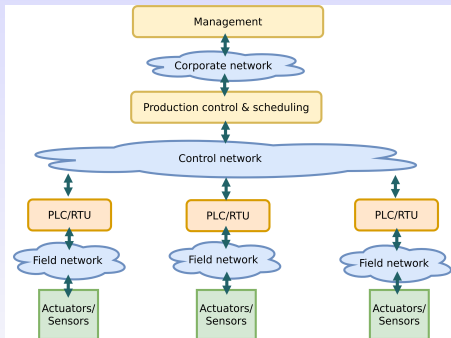
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Cyber-Physical Systems

In Cyber-Physical Systems (CPSs) **embedded computers** and **networks** monitor and control **physical processes**, usually with **feedback loops** where physical processes affect computation and vice versa



Attacking cyber-physical systems



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- 2 **BlackEnergy/CRASHOVERRIDE**: power outages in Ukraine
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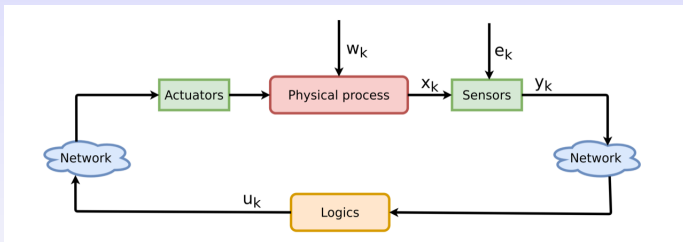
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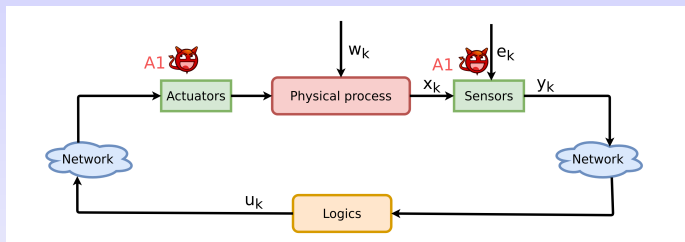
- **disrupts** the **plant** evolution via **cyber attacks** to **control systems**
- brings the plant into a unsafe/incorrect state
- requires expert **knowledge** in the physical domain

CPSs in a nutshell (focus on the field network)

- **Physical process**: often represented as *discrete-time state-space model*
- **Logics**: controllers, IDSs, supervisors, etc. (cyber-components)
- **Network**: to connect plant and logics, forming **feedback loops**

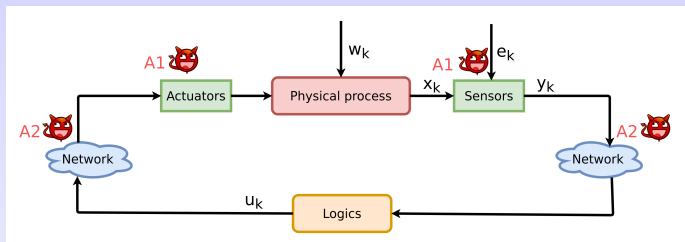


A Threat model for Physics-based attacks



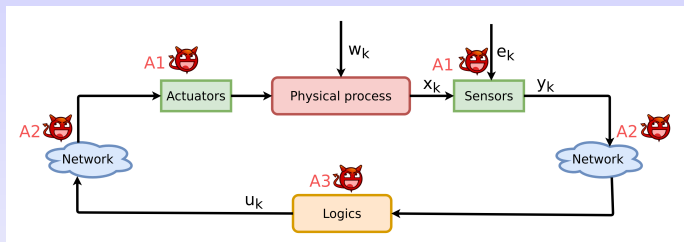
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- **A1** - actuators/sensors (forge/drop measurements and/or commands)
- **A2** - network (DoS, integrity, replay attacks ...)
- **A3** - logics (malware tampering with control sw or register's data)

Claim: physical aspects put **CPS security** apart from **IT security**!

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Question: Can we use formal methodologies for defining impact metrics?

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$\text{FN}_{\mathcal{I}, \mathcal{P}}^n$: average false negatives in the system under attack in n time units

$\text{FP}_{\mathcal{I}, \mathcal{P}}^n$: average false positives in the system under attack in n time units

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A loose detection mechanism may be very precise when it raises an alert but ... scarcely effective!

$\mathbf{FN}_{\mathcal{I},\mathcal{P}}^n$ and $\mathbf{FP}_{\mathcal{I},\mathcal{P}}^n$ can be computed in a compositional way

What kind of compositionality



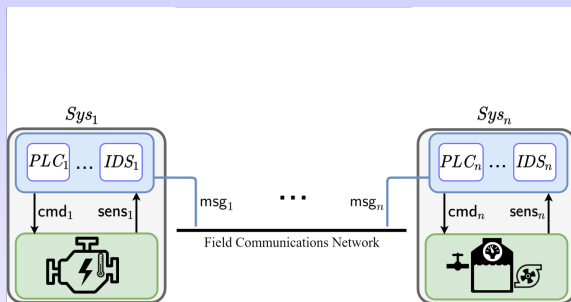
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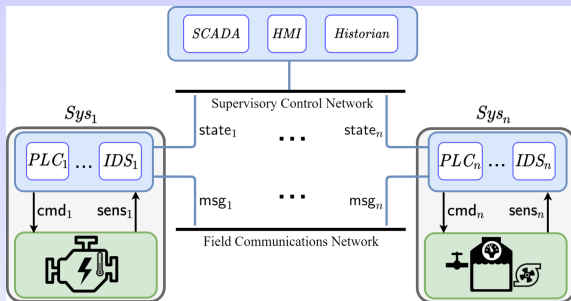
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Theorem (Compositionality on supervised systems)

Let M be a CPS supervised by a process Sup which amplifies the estimates of the attacker's progresses made by M ... omissis... Then,*

- $\mathbf{FN}_{\mathcal{I}, \mathcal{P}'}^n((M \parallel Sup) \setminus \mathcal{A}) \leq \mathbf{FN}_{\mathcal{I}, \mathcal{P}}^n(M)$
- $\mathbf{FP}_{\mathcal{I}, \mathcal{P}'}^n((M \parallel Sup) \setminus \mathcal{A}) \geq \mathbf{FP}_{\mathcal{I}, \mathcal{P}}^n(M)$

The increased aggressiveness of the detection mechanism results in smaller number of false negatives and in greater number of false positives.

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 - 2 asks the controller to slow down the engine (*mitigation*)
 - 3 demand full power from the other engine (*compensation*)
- when the overheating is resolved engines' paces return to half power

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Forge fake actuator commands to turn off the cooling system when the temperature is close to the threshold

Stealthy attack: system remains close to threshold and sends no warnings

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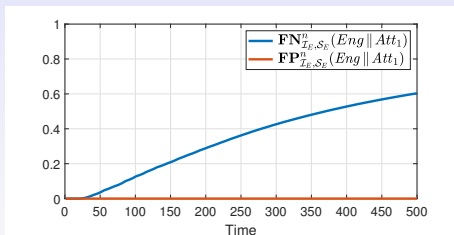
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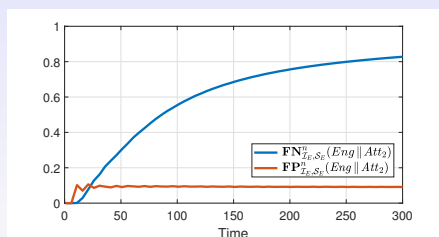
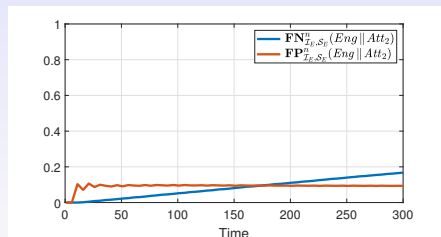
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Impact with and without mitigation (slowing down overheating engines)

- False negatives grow with the size of the attack window (*stress*)
- False positives stabilises to 0.1: 10 false positives in 100 time instants



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- This **is not a stealthy attack** as the IDS of the engine exposed to Attack2 sends warnings
- The metrics $\mathbf{FN}_{\mathcal{I},\mathcal{P}}^n$ and $\mathbf{FP}_{\mathcal{I},\mathcal{P}}^n$ of the whole system exposed to both attacks are given by the weighted sums of the metrics obtained for the single attacks (by compositionality results)

Conclusions and future work

Summary:

- Two probabilistic impact metrics $\mathbf{FN}_{\mathcal{I},\mathcal{P}}^n$ and $\mathbf{FP}_{\mathcal{I},\mathcal{P}}^n$
- Our metrics rely on three general concepts
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Future work:

- to improve computational efficiency select traces via [Monte Carlo simulation methods](#), working up to a certain accuracy
- move to [statistical impact metrics](#) to be used on existing datasets (e.g., the SWaT system)

Thank you!

