

¹ Syed Shameem*² Kalisetty Venkatesh³ Latif Shaik⁴ Medavarapu T N D Sri
Harsha⁵ Bailundo Luis Rablay
Lopes

Estimating Malware Impact on Network Traffic Analysis by Using Wireshark



Abstract: - With the increasing prevalence of advanced cyber threats, there is a growing need for effective cybersecurity measures that can detect and visualize malware attacks. This research introduces an integrated approach that combines malware detection techniques with geospatial visualization methods to enhance the identification and analysis of cyber-attacks. By analyzing packets in the HTTP protocol, we identify suspicious file transfers and compute their hash values for further examination. To assess the threat level of these transferred files, we utilize the Virus Total platform to conduct comprehensive scans for malware. At the same time, by utilizing geolocation data, we map out both the origins and destinations of these attacks, providing valuable spatial context for understanding global patterns in cyber threats. In addition to enabling the identification of potentially harmful files, the proposed approach also provides a comprehensive visualization of how these threats are spread geographically. Our findings contribute to advancing cybersecurity strategies by facilitating proactive threat mitigation and enhancing incident response capabilities. The integration of malware detection, hash analysis, and geospatial visualization emphasizes the importance of adopting a multidimensional approach in strengthening network security infrastructure.

Keywords: Malware Detection, Geospatial Visualization, HTTP Protocol, Virus Total, Network Traffic Analysis, Cybersecurity.

I. INTRODUCTION

The ever-changing landscape of cybersecurity presents a continuous challenge that requires constant innovation and adaptability. Among these challenges, malware attacks have become a significant threat to network security. These attacks combine sophistication with widespread occurrence, compromising the digital defenses organizations implement to safeguard their sensitive data, infrastructure, and digital resources. Malware detection methods [1] have traditionally relied on signature scanning, anomaly detection, and sandboxing. However, due to the constant evolution of malware tactics, there is a need for more comprehensive approaches that consider both technical characteristics and geographical aspects. Understanding the geographic origins and destinations of malware attacks can provide valuable insights into cyber threats worldwide, help identify vulnerabilities in network infrastructures, and enhance overall security measures.

This research unveils a multifaceted approach that combines advanced malware detection with geospatial visualization techniques, providing a comprehensive perspective on the analysis of cyber threats. Our methodology revolves around the thorough examination of packet captures, focusing on HTTP protocol-based file transfers. It involves extracting suspicious files and calculating their hash values to facilitate in-depth scrutiny [2]. Additionally, we leverage the capabilities of the Virus Total platform, which utilizes multiple antivirus engines for rigorous malware scanning. Through this collaborative effort, we accurately assess the threat level associated with these files. The significance of this approach lies in its integration of technology and geospatial awareness. By incorporating geolocation data, we can accurately map the spatial distribution of malware attacks. This provides a comprehensive understanding of the threat landscape beyond technical indicators, revealing the dynamic spatial context where these threats originate.

The importance of our research lies in its holistic approach to combating malware threats. By combining cutting-edge malware detection, comprehensive file analysis, and the invaluable dimension of geospatial visualization, we chart a new course for a proactive and effective cybersecurity strategy. Our approach prioritizes not only the identification of malicious files but also the critical spatial context that shapes their distribution and impact. As this unfolds, we delve into the technical intricacies of our methodology, present

^{1,2,3,4,5,6} Department of ECE, Koneru Lakshmaiah Education Foundation, Vaddeswaram, Green fields, A.P-522302, INDIA

* Corresponding Author Email: shameemsyed@kluniversity.in

empirical findings, and illuminate the ramifications of our work for enhancing network security infrastructure. By combining technology and geography, this study expands the traditional limitations of cybersecurity and introduces a new era of defense that incorporates data and spatial elements to enhance digital security.

II. METHODOLOGY

Within the context of our research, traffic analysis takes center stage as the foundational methodology for malware detection. This methodology relies on an exhaustive examination of network traffic to identify and understand malware behaviors and communication patterns [6]. Our methodology primarily centers on traffic analysis, which involves a meticulous inspection of network packets to discern and document the interactions of malware within the network environment. We capture, dissect, and analyze network traffic to identify the communication patterns, potentially malicious behaviors, and the presence of any command-and-control servers. This approach equips us with a comprehensive understanding of the malware's network-level activities, allowing us to detect, analyze, and respond to malware threats in real-time.

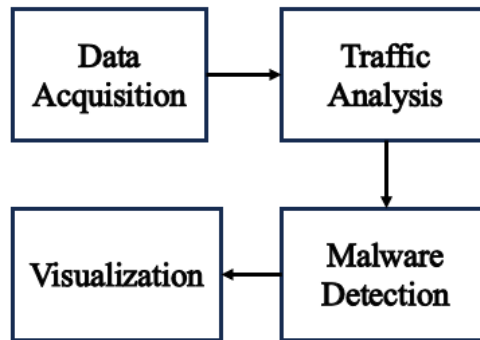


Fig. 1. Proposed Methodology.

By focusing exclusively on traffic analysis, we streamline our methodology as shown in fig. 1 to provide a precise and effective approach to malware detection.

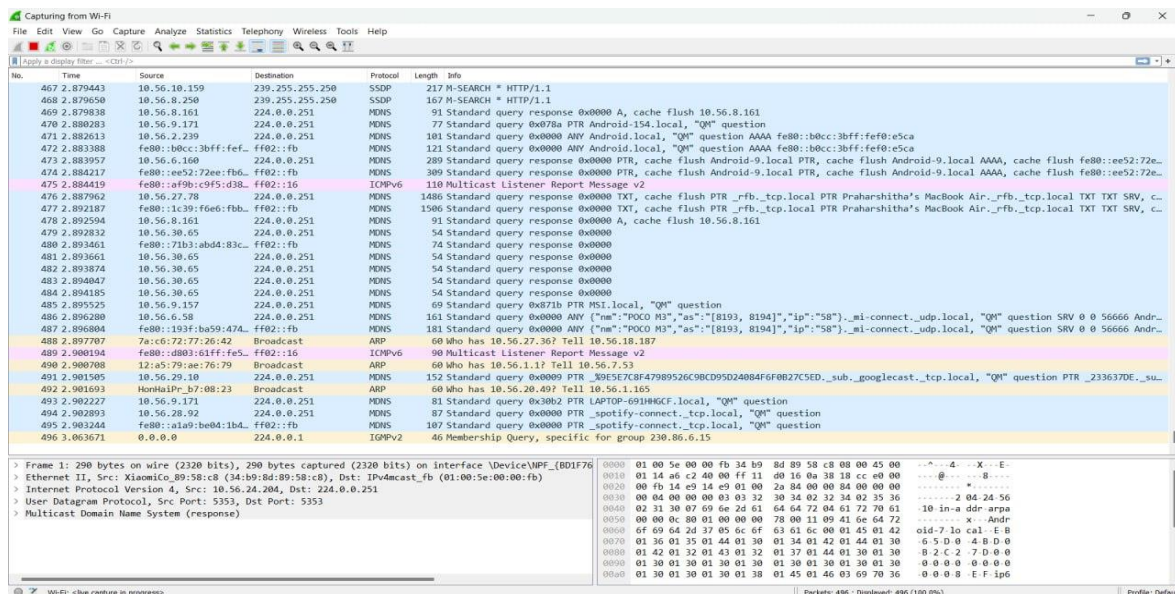


Fig. 2. Data Capture and Packet Analysis Setup.

In the preliminary stage of our investigation, we established a solid data acquisition methodology by carefully collecting and capturing packets. To ensure the thoroughness and precision of our study, we utilized Wireshark [7], a reputable tool for packet analysis as shown in fig. 2. Our capture was configured to target HTTP traffic and carried out in a controlled environment with network traffic mirroring capabilities. This crucial preparatory measure enabled us to intercept and record network packets that primarily encompassed HTTP transactions—a widely used medium for file transfers in contemporary networking practices. To collect data, we employed Wireshark's capture filters and focused on capturing HTTP traffic [8]. This approach enabled us to selectively

isolate packets related to file transfers and other file-related transactions for further analysis. By carefully selecting the network traffic components of interest, we were able to maintain the integrity and efficiency of our dataset.

In order to detect potential threats, we implemented a meticulous approach within our broader methodology. This involved the careful examination of file transfers within captured network traffic. To accomplish this, we utilized Wireshark, a well-known packet analysis tool renowned for its robust capabilities. Specifically, Wireshark was configured to analyze HTTP traffic which is commonly used for file transfers in network communication. Our process focused on identifying and delineating specific HTTP transactions related to both downloads and uploads. By conducting protocol analysis in Wireshark, we were able to identify transactions that displayed characteristics indicative of file transfers such as the presence of binary content within HTTP packets. Additionally, our approach included extracting and preserving relevant data associated with these files for further analysis purposes. To enhance the accuracy and effectiveness of our cybersecurity strategy, we initially focused on isolating specific transactions within the network traffic. This targeted approach allowed us to optimize subsequent malware analysis and geographical visualization efforts, ultimately leading to a more comprehensive examination of potential threats in the network traffic.

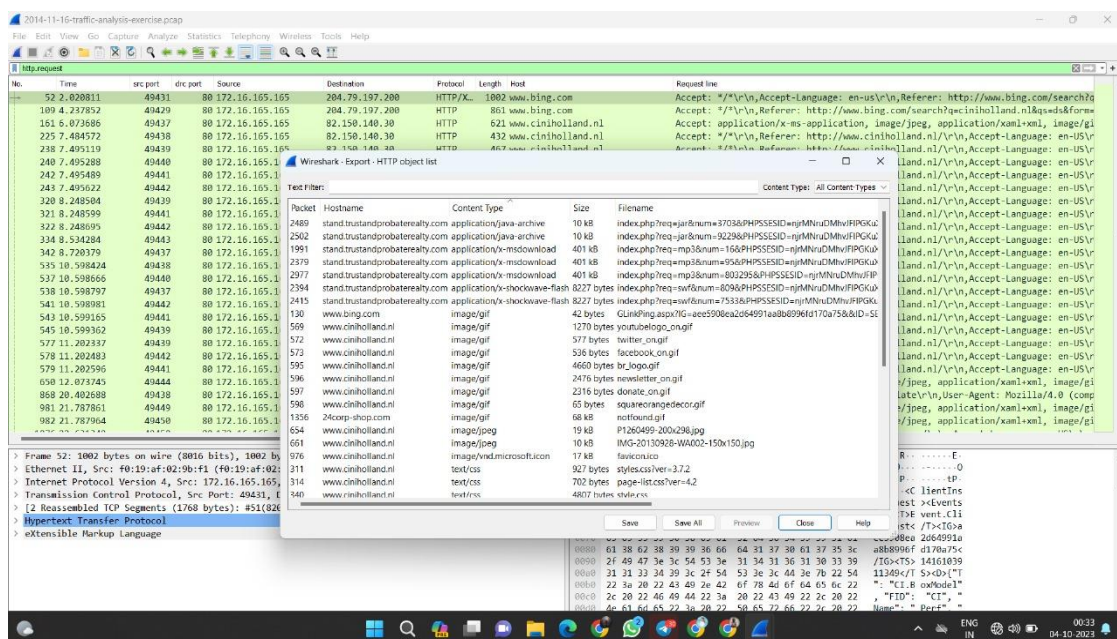


Fig. 3. Precise File Data Extraction.

In the process of extracting file data, we delved into the packet captures obtained through the Wireshark packet analysis tool as shown in fig. 3. The focus of this phase was on isolating and preserving the content of file transfers within the HTTP traffic. As HTTP transactions inherently encapsulate data payloads in their response packets, we meticulously identified and extracted these packets to unveil the content of the transmitted files. The approach ensured that no data was left behind, maintaining the integrity of the files as they were initially transferred over the network. A precise packet analysis was conducted to ensure the accurate extraction of file data. This involved a comprehensive examination of the HTTP response packets to pinpoint the exact boundaries of the file content. By inspecting the packet payload and content-type headers, we were able to differentiate between various file types, such as executables, images, documents, and compressed archives. Once the file data was accurately isolated, it was saved in a binary format that preserved the original structure and content, ensuring that it could be subjected to further analysis, including hashing and malware scans. Throughout the extraction process, a fundamental consideration was the preservation of data integrity. The file content was captured without any alteration, ensuring that the extracted files were true replicas of their original counterparts. This attention to data integrity was essential not only for accurate hashing but also for conducting reliable malware scans. By upholding the authenticity and completeness of the file data, our methodology laid the groundwork for comprehensive security analysis and geospatial visualization, providing a robust foundation for evaluating the global distribution of malware attacks.

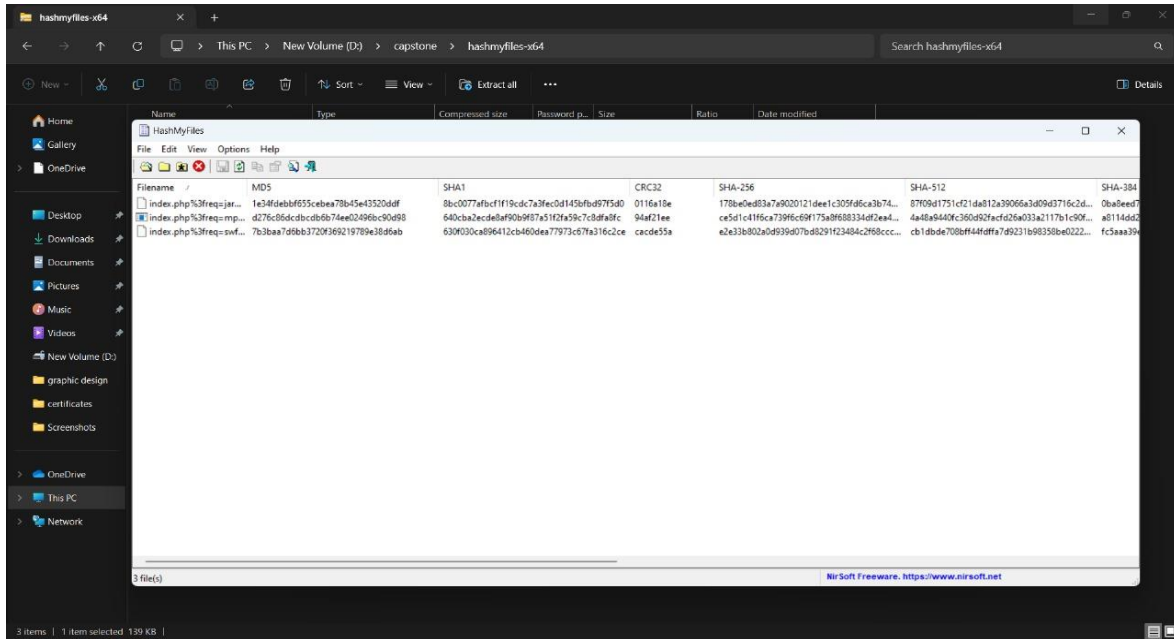


Fig. 4. Hash File Generation.

Utilizing standard hashing algorithms, including MD5, SHA-1, and SHA-256 [9], unique hash values were generated for each of the extracted files as shown in fig. 4. These hash values, calculated in a robust and consistent manner, served the dual purpose of verifying the integrity of the files and facilitating subsequent analytical procedures. The resulting hash values were retained for reference throughout the study, allowing for the precise identification and evaluation of individual files within the context of malware analysis and geospatial visualization.

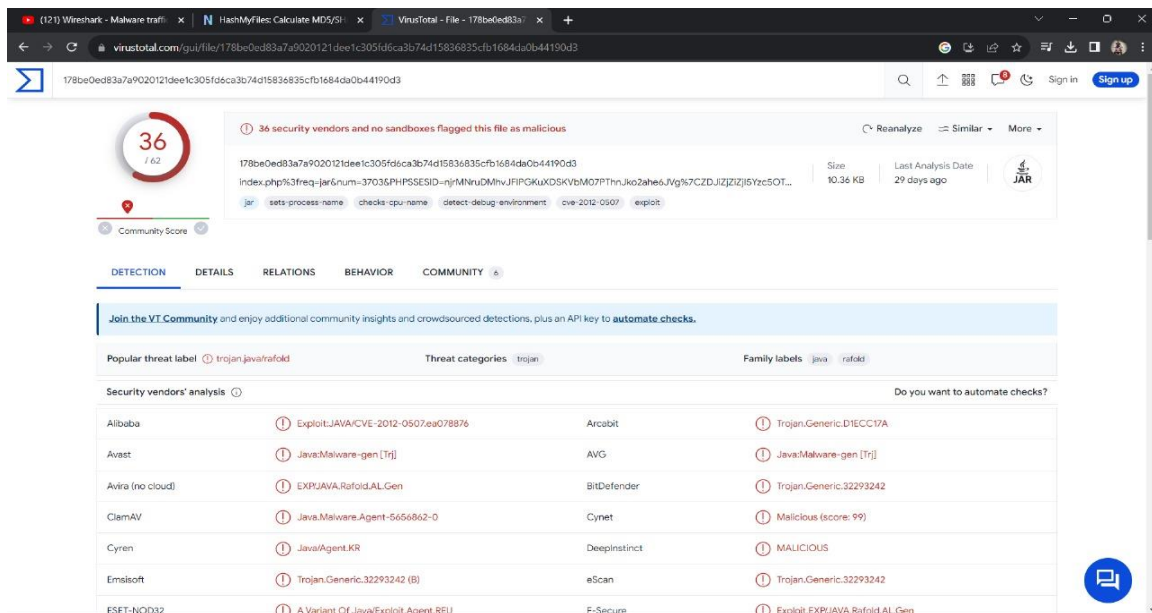


Fig. 5. virus detection from hash files

VirusTotal plays a pivotal role in assessing the potential threat level of the extracted files [10]. VirusTotal, a widely recognized online service, offers a robust platform for malware analysis by subjecting files to scrutiny by multiple antivirus engines. The platform leverages a comprehensive and continuously updated database of malware signatures and characteristics, making it a potent tool for identifying potentially malicious files. Upon extracting the files from network traffic, each file is individually uploaded to the VirusTotal platform for analysis. The platform initiates an array of antivirus scans, checking the file against the signature databases of numerous antivirus engines, ranging from well-known security vendors to open-source solutions. Each engine evaluates the file for known malware attributes, employing a diverse set of detection techniques, including

signature matching, behavioral analysis, and heuristics. VirusTotal aggregates the results of these scans into a report that includes the number of engines that flagged the file as potentially malicious, along with additional metadata about the file. The report serves as a critical determinant of the file's threat level. Based on this analysis, our research establishes an informed classification of the files, distinguishing those potentially harboring malware from those that exhibit no such characteristics. VirusTotal's extensive coverage and multifaceted scanning approach add depth and reliability to the malware analysis component of our methodology, enabling a comprehensive assessment of the files' potential threat and facilitating a more nuanced understanding of the risks involved in the network traffic under scrutiny. Incorporating geospatial visualization into our methodology forms a pivotal aspect of our research. Geospatial visualization serves as the means through which we add a critical layer of context to our analysis. This component enables us to transcend conventional data inspection by harnessing the power of geography, an invaluable dimension that sheds light on the spatial distribution of cyber threats. Through the mapping of the geographical locations associated with both the source and destination IP [11] addresses found within our network traffic data, we unlock the potential to visually represent the global scope of malicious file transfers. This spatial context provides security professionals with a unique vantage point, allowing them to observe the dispersal of threats in real-world terms. Such insight proves instrumental in identifying localized vulnerabilities, tracing the origins of attacks, and making informed decisions in incident response and threat mitigation strategies. The synergy between malware detection and geospatial visualization forms the bedrock of our integrated approach, offering a multifaceted perspective on the analysis of cyber threats.

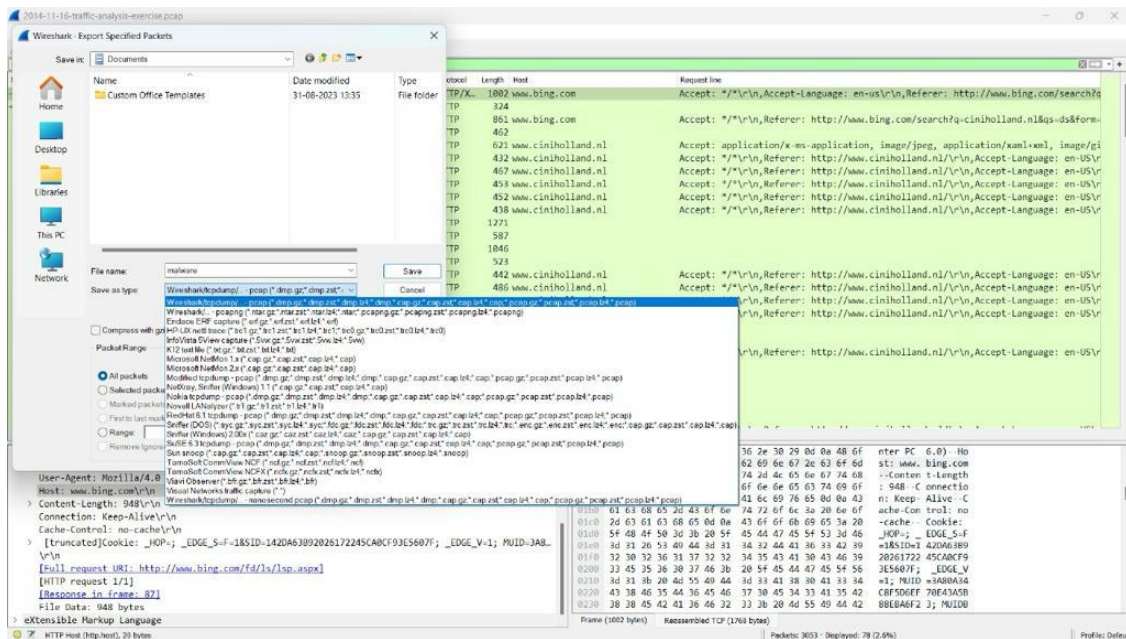


Fig. 6. Saving packets into pcap file

In our geospatial analysis, we have a crucial step where we turn pcap files (which contain data packets in HTML format) into a format called Keyhole Markup Language (KML). This process is handled by a special Python script. It's a bit complex but very important because it helps us connect raw network data to a map view. Here's how it works: The Python script carefully looks inside the pcap files, figuring out things like IP addresses and where they are located on Earth (latitude and longitude). It does this using libraries like pygeoip and dpkt. This creates a detailed dataset that shows where the malware has been. The KML file that comes out of this process is like a dynamic map, showing us the path the malware has taken. Each point on the map represents where the malware was at a certain time, adding a time aspect to our analysis. But this isn't just about technical stuff; it's also about telling a story. Each point on the map is a part of the malware's journey, helping us understand how it spread and who it might have targeted. After we get the KML file, we carefully inspect it using a text editor like Notepad++. This lets us understand its structure and extract important information. Notepad++ is helpful because it has features that make it easy to work with this kind of data. By going through this process, we make sure we have all the right geographical information for our analysis. This

information then gets used in our visualization tools to create detailed maps showing how the malware moved around. This careful inspection ensures that our analysis is accurate and reliable.

```

16 eth = dpkt.ethernet.Ethernet(buf)
17 ip = eth.data
18 src = socket.inet_ntoa(ip.src)
19 dst = socket.inet_ntoa(ip.dst)
20 KML = netKML(dst, src)
21 kmLPts = kmLPts + KML
22
23 except:
24     pass
25
26 return kmLPts
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60
61
62
63
64
65
66
67
68
69
70
71
72
73
74
75
76
77
78
79
80
81
82
83
84
85
86
87
88
89
90
91
92
93
94
95
96
97
98
99
100

```

```

1 usage
2 def main():
3     f = open('malware.pcap', 'rb')
4     pcap = dpkt.pcap.Reader(f)
5     kmheaders = '<?xml version="1.0" encoding="UTF-8"?>\n<kml xmlns="http://www.opengis.net/kml/2.2">\n
6     \n
7     \n
8     \n
9     \n
10    \n
11    \n
12    \n
13    \n
14    \n
15    \n
16    \n
17    \n
18    \n
19    \n
20    \n
21    \n
22    \n
23    \n
24    \n
25    \n
26    \n
27    \n
28    \n
29    \n
30    \n
31    \n
32    \n
33    \n
34    \n
35    \n
36    \n
37    \n
38    \n
39    \n
40    \n
41    \n
42    \n
43    \n
44    \n
45    \n
46    \n
47    \n
48    \n
49    \n
50    \n
51    \n
52    \n
53    \n
54    \n
55    \n
56    \n
57    \n
58    \n
59    \n
60    \n
61    \n
62    \n
63    \n
64    \n
65    \n
66    \n
67    \n
68    \n
69    \n
70    \n
71    \n
72    \n
73    \n
74    \n
75    \n
76    \n
77    \n
78    \n
79    \n
80    \n
81    \n
82    \n
83    \n
84    \n
85    \n
86    \n
87    \n
88    \n
89    \n
90    \n
91    \n
92    \n
93    \n
94    \n
95    \n
96    \n
97    \n
98    \n
99    \n
100   \n

```

Fig. 7. covering pcap file into kml using python script

```

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60
61
62
63
64
65
66
67
68
69
70
71
72
73
74
75
76
77
78
79
80
81
82
83
84
85
86
87
88
89
90
91
92
93
94
95
96
97
98
99
100

```

```

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60
61
62
63
64
65
66
67
68
69
70
71
72
73
74
75
76
77
78
79
80
81
82
83
84
85
86
87
88
89
90
91
92
93
94
95
96
97
98
99
100

```

Fig. 8. KML Inspection and Notepad++ Extraction.

The data transformed from Python into Keyhole Markup Language (KML) represents a crucial juncture in our research, capturing the geographical trajectory of malware propagation. As a visual representation of our analysis, the KML file encapsulates the intricate journey undertaken by the malware, with each coordinate marking a significant point in its path. This spatial narrative not only provides insights into the spread of malware but also adds a temporal dimension to our understanding. Upon generating the KML data, we meticulously transferred it into Notepad++, a versatile text editor chosen for its feature-rich environment and suitability for handling KML documents. Within Notepad++, we performed a careful inspection of the KML document structure, navigating through its components to ensure accuracy and integrity. This phase of scrutiny involved parsing and organizing the essential elements extracted from the KML file. Once the inspection and organization were complete, we saved the curated KML file within Notepad++, preserving the enriched geographical insights crucial for our analysis. This file serves as a treasure trove of spatial data, laying the groundwork for our dynamic geospatial visualization and further exploration of malware propagation patterns. In summary, the transformation of Python data into KML format, followed by meticulous scrutiny and extraction

within Notepad++, culminated in the creation of a comprehensive KML file. This document not only captures the geographical nuances of malware propagation but also represents a critical component of our research workflow, enabling us to unravel the spatial tale of cyber threats.

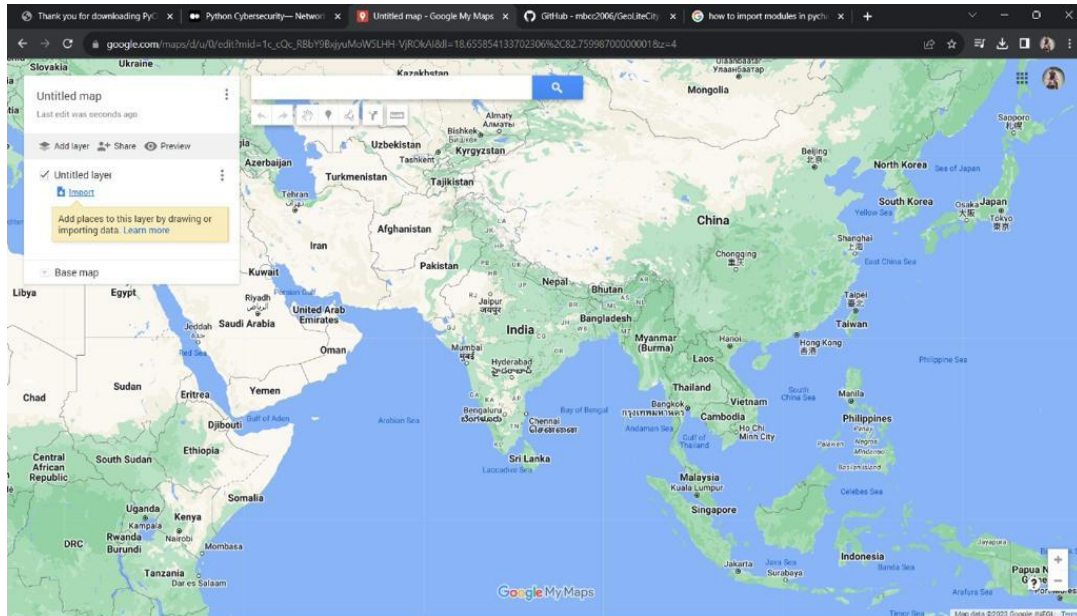


Fig. 9. Adding data to google maps

Upon completion of the KML file generation using Python and GeoliteCity, the data was seamlessly integrated into Google Maps for enhanced visualization and analysis. Leveraging GeoliteCity's database, the Python script meticulously decoded pcap files, extracting vital information such as IP addresses and their corresponding geographical coordinates. This enriched dataset formed the foundation for the creation of the KML file, which encapsulated the spatial trajectory of malware propagation. Importing the KML file into Google Maps facilitated dynamic mapping of the malware's journey, offering a comprehensive spatial representation of its propagation patterns. By overlaying the KML data onto the Google Maps interface, users gained valuable insights into the geographical distribution and movement of the malware. The integration of KML data with Google Maps' versatile features allowed for interactive exploration, enabling users to zoom in on specific locations, toggle visibility of layers, and customize the visualization to suit their analytical needs. This integration of Python-generated KML data with Google Maps not only provided a visually compelling representation of malware propagation but also empowered users with actionable insights for cybersecurity analysis and strategic decision-making.

III. RESULT

Our combined efforts in visualizing geographical data and analysing malware using Virus Total have uncovered valuable insights into how malware spreads. By mapping out the paths taken by malware on a map, we not only see where it has been but also understand which areas face higher risks. This helps us identify patterns in how attacks are targeted, spot where they might be coming from, and pinpoint regions with more cybersecurity threats. The information we get from Virus Total adds another layer of detail to our understanding. It tells us more about how malware behaves over time and who it might be targeting. By putting together the geographical data and malware analysis, we're not just looking at pretty maps; we're gaining practical knowledge that helps us strengthen our defences, react to new threats quickly, and actively protect our networks. In essence, our approach isn't just about seeing data visually; it's about using that insight to make smarter decisions and keep our systems safe from cyber threats.

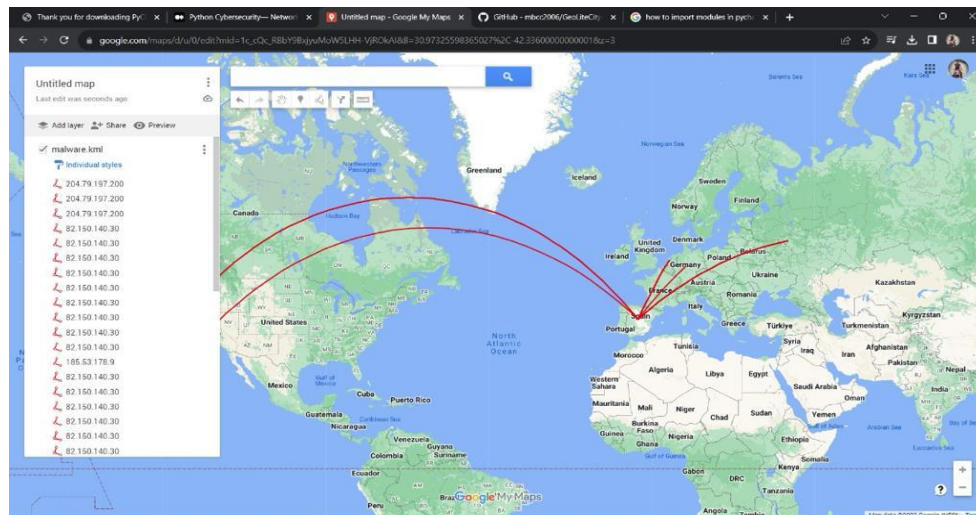


Fig. 10. Dynamic Geospatial Visualization on Google Maps.

IV. CONCLUSION

In the fast-paced world of cybersecurity, our unique approach combines advanced techniques in malware detection, thorough file analysis, and visual mapping to give us a deep understanding of how malware spreads. We don't just look at data; we turn it into detailed maps that show us where malware is going and how it behaves. Our process starts by converting HTML packet data into detailed maps, which isn't just about making things look pretty—it's about gaining valuable insights. We carefully follow a step-by-step process, moving from one format to another until we have detailed maps that show us the path of malware across different locations. But we don't stop there. We also analyze the malware using VirusTotal, a powerful tool that helps us understand more about its behavior and potential risks. By combining the data from VirusTotal with our maps, we get a complete picture of the threat landscape. We can see where malware is most active, where it might be coming from, and how it's evolving over time. Our maps aren't just static images; they tell a story. They highlight areas with high levels of threat, point out where attacks might be originating, and show us how cyber threats are changing. This helps cybersecurity professionals make informed decisions, strengthen their defenses, and stay ahead of emerging threats. In a constantly shifting cybersecurity landscape, our approach isn't just about looking back at what happened; it's about being ready for what might come next. By integrating different techniques and staying one step ahead, we're equipped to tackle the complex challenges posed by modern cyber threats.

REFERENCES

- [1] Vinod, P., Jaipur, R., Laxmi, V. and Gaur, M., 2009, March. Survey on malware detection methods. In Proceedings of the 3rd Hackers' Workshop on computer and internet security (IITKHACK'09) (pp. 74-79).
- [2] Jusas, V., Birvinskas, D. and Gahramanov, E., 2017. Methods and tools of digital triage in forensic context: Survey and future directions. *Symmetry*, 9(4), p.49.
- [3] W.M. Shbair, T. Cholez, J. Francois, I. Chrisment, "Improving SNI-based HTTPs security monitoring", IEEE International Conference on Distributed Computing Systems Workshops, pp.72-77, 2016.
- [4] Tomas Komarek and Petr Somol "End-node Fingerprinting for Malware Detection on HTTPS Data" In Proceedings of ARES '17, Reggio Calabria, Italy pp. 1-7, 2017.
- [5] Anderson, B., McGrew, D., "Identifying Encrypted Malware Traffic with Contextual Flow Data". In ACM Workshop on Artificial Intelligence and Security, pp: 35-46, 2016.
- [6] Kohout, J., Komárek, T., Čech, P., Bodnár, J. and Lokoč, J., 2018. Learning communication patterns for malware discovery in HTTPs data. *Expert Systems with Applications*, 101, pp.129-142.
- [7] Beale, J., Orebaugh, A. and Ramirez, G., 2006. *Wireshark & Ethereal network protocol analyzer toolkit*. Elsevier.
- [8] Saxena, P. and Sharma, S.K., 2017. Analysis of network traffic by using packet sniffing tool: Wireshark. *Int. J. Adv. Res. Ideas Innov. Technol*, 3(6), pp.804-808.
- [9] Roshdy, R., Fouad, M. and Aboul-Dahab, M., 2013. Design and Implementation a new Security Hash Algorithm based on MD5 and SHA-256. *International Journal of Engineering Sciences & Emerging Technologies*, 6(1), pp.29-36.
- [10] Choo, E., Nabeel, M., De Silva, R., Yu, T. and Khalil, I., 2022. A large scale study and classification of virustotal reports on phishing and malware urls. *arXiv preprint arXiv:2205.13155*.
- [11] Padmanabhan, V.N. and Subramanian, L., 2001, August. An investigation of geographic mapping techniques for Internet hosts. In Proceedings of the 2001 conference on Applications, technologies, architectures, and protocols for computer communications (pp. 173-185).