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MODELING NETWORK TRAFFIC DYNAMICS UNDER DDoS ATTACKS USING DIFFERENTIAL EQUATIONS

M.B. Bekiyeva

Oguz han Engineering and Technology University of Turkmenistan, Ashgabat, Turkmenistan,
successbmb@gmail.com

Abstract: In this paper, we develop a set of differential equations to model the network traffic dynamics under DDoS (Distributed Denial of Service) attacks by analyzing active connections and server response times. Focusing on packet loss and degradation of legitimate traffic, our model illustrates the changing behavior over time during DDoS attacks. Numerical simulations implemented using the Runge-Kutta method in Python provide insight into the effectiveness of mitigation strategies. By studying the relationship between attack traffic and legitimate traffic, our findings highlight the impact of DDoS attacks on network performance and the importance of robust security mechanisms to ensure service availability and quality in the face of cyber threats.

Keywords: DDoS Attacks, Network Traffic Modeling, Differential Equations, Server Performance, Active Connections, Numerical Simulations, Cybersecurity, Mathematical Modeling.

I. INTRODUCTION

DDoS attacks pose significant threats to network availability and performance, leading to service interruptions for legitimate users. These attacks overwhelm target servers with excessive traffic from multiple sources, resulting in unacceptable delays or complete service denial. Mathematical modeling is pivotal in understanding and predicting the impact of these attacks on network systems. This research aims to develop a set of differential equations that describe the changing dynamics of network traffic during a DDoS attack, thereby contributing to the understanding of potential mitigation strategies.

II. DIFFERENTIAL EQUATIONS MODEL

a. Definitions

In our modeling framework, we define the following variables:

Where:
N(t) – Number of active connections at time (t);
A(t) – Rate of incoming attack traffic (packets/second);
L(t) – Rate of legitimate traffic, under normal conditions, the server may operate with a traffic rate of β = 100 (packets/second);
R(t) – Server processing rate (requests/second);
C – Server capacity (maximum number of connections);
P(t) – Rate of packet loss (packets/second);
β – Incoming rate of legitimate traffic, a value of β = 100 indicates the average load from legitimate users under normal operating conditions (packets/second);
d – Decay factor representing natural completion or timeout of legitimate connections;
μ – Processing speed (requests/second);
α – Packet loss coefficient, indicating how rapidly packets are lost above capacity.

b. Dynamic Model

The dynamics of active connections in the system can be modeled by the following differential equation:
It looks like you're dealing with a system of differential equations that models the flow of network traffic through a server. Let's break down the given equations and their components:

1. Overall Traffic Dynamics:

$$\frac{dN(t)}{dt} = L(t) + A(t) - R(t) - P(t)$$

Here, N(t) represents the total number of connections or traffic at time t. The rate of change in N(t) depends on four components:

L(t): The rate of incoming legitimate traffic.

A(t): The rate of attack traffic or unwanted traffic.

R(t): The rate at which the server processes traffic.

P(t): The rate of traffic being dropped due to exceeding capacity.

2. Dropping Rate Function:

$$P(t) = \begin{cases} 0 & if\ N(t) \leq C \\ \alpha \cdot (N(t) - C) & if\ N(t) > C \end{cases}$$

This function models how traffic is dropped when the total number of connections exceeds the server's capacity C. If $N(t) \leq C$, no traffic is dropped $(P(t) = 0)$. If $N(t) > C$, the excess traffic is dropped at a rate proportional to $N(t) - C$, with α as the proportionality constant.

3. Legitimate Traffic Rate:

$$\frac{dL(t)}{dt} = \beta - dL(t)$$

The rate of change of legitimate traffic depends on a constant incoming rate β and a decay factor d, which could represent the natural completion or timeout of traffic.

4. Server Processing Rate:

$$R(t) = \mu \cdot min(N(t), C)$$

The server processes traffic at a rate determined by μ, which is the processing speed, and the minimum of the total traffic N(t) and the server's capacity C. This ensures that the server cannot process more than its capacity. These equations describe a traffic model with legitimate traffic growth, attack traffic, server processing, and congestion control through traffic dropping.

III. METHODOLOGY

In this section, we provide a detailed description of the methodology employed to simulate the dynamics of network traffic under DDoS attacks using differential equations. The approach consists of several key steps, including the formulation of the mathematical model, selection of numerical methods, parameterization, implementation, and evaluation of results. Each of these steps is critical to ensuring that the simulation accurately reflects the complexities of network behavior during such attacks.

a. Mathematical Modeling

Mathematical modeling forms the foundation of our approach. The first step involved defining the system components and establishing the relationships between them. We identified essential variables, such as active connections, legitimate and attack traffic, server processing rate, capacity, and packet loss. Guided by these variables, we formulated a system of differential equations representing how these factors evolve over time during a DDoS attack:

b. Numerical Methods

Given that our model consists of ordinary differential equations that cannot easily be solved analytically, we employed numerical methods for simulation. The **Runge-Kutta method**, specifically the fourth-order Runge-Kutta method (RK4), was chosen for its robustness and accuracy in estimating solutions of differential equations.

The RK4 method is particularly effective because it approximates the value of the next step based on the current value and the slope (derivative) calculated at multiple points within the interval. For each time step (t):

1. Calculate the slopes (derivatives) (k_1), (k_2), (k_3), and (k_4) based on the current state and intermediate values
2. Update the state variable (N(t)) using a weighted average of these slopes to achieve the next value.

c. Parameter Settings

Parameters must be carefully selected to ensure that the model accurately reflects realistic network conditions. Several parameters were set for the simulation based on typical network performance characteristics.

- **Attack Traffic Rate ((A(t)))**: A constant of 200 packets/second was chosen, representing a sustained and aggressive DDoS attack on the server.
- **Legitimate Traffic Rate ((\beta))**: Set at 100 packets/second, this reflects a typical level of legitimate incoming traffic under normal operating conditions.
- **Server Capacity ((C))**: The server's capacity was defined as 300 connections. This value is a point where the system experiences significant degradation in service quality due to limited processing capability.
- **Processing Rate ((\mu))**: A processing efficiency of (0.9) requests per second indicates the server's capability to handle incoming connections effectively without delay under ideal circumstances.

- **Packet Loss Coefficient ((\alpha))**: We set (\alpha) at (0.5) to model the rate of packet loss as a function of the overflow connections. This parameter is crucial for understanding how aggressively the system responds to congestion.

d. Implementation

The model was implemented using Python, leveraging libraries such as NumPy and Matplotlib for numerical operations and data visualization, respectively. The implementation includes:

- **Time Discretization**: The continuous time range from (0) to (60) seconds was discretized into 1000 intervals to maintain high resolution during simulation.
- **Initialization**: Active connections ((N_{active})) were initialized to zero, reflecting a clear system before the attack.
- **Time Loop**: A loop was created to simulate time progression, where active connections were calculated based on the previous state and the parameters set. Conditions checked if connections exceeded capacity, applying the appropriate packet loss function.
- **Data Collection**: As the simulation progressed, active connections and packet loss data were collected to visualize and analyze the impact of the DDoS attack on network performance.

e. Evaluation of Results

After running the simulation, a range of analyses was conducted to evaluate the model's behavior:

- **Plotting Results**: Graphical visualizations were created to present the changes in active connections and packet loss over time, particularly highlighting the effects of the DDoS attack initiated at the 10-second mark.
- **Interpretation**: Each plot was analyzed to identify trends in the data, specifically looking for increases in active connections and corresponding packet loss during the attack period.
- **Insights on Mitigation**: The results were further analyzed to derive insights into how various parameters affect the robustness of networks under DDoS attacks, facilitating discussions on effective mitigation strategies based on observed trends.

IV. RESULTS

a. Active Connections Over Time

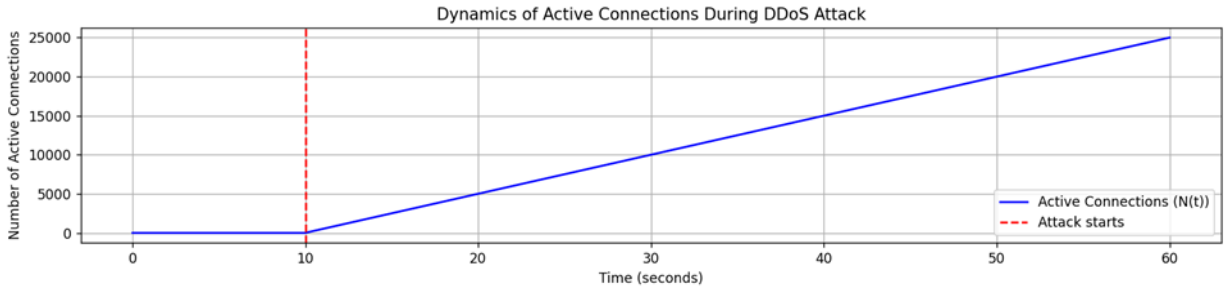

Figure 1. illustrates the dynamics of active connections in the network during a DDoS attack

b. Packet Loss

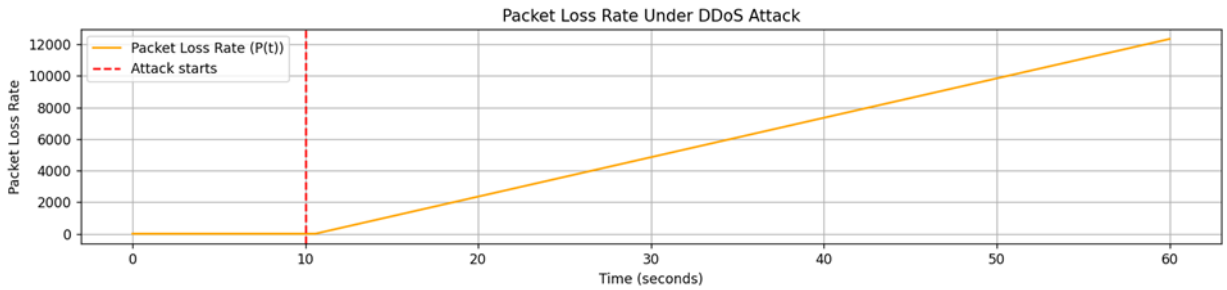

Figure 2. Shows the relationship between packet loss and the number of active connections

V. CONCLUSIONS

The mathematical model developed in this study illustrates the intricate dynamics of network traffic during DDoS attacks through differential equations. The simulation results reveal how rapidly increasing attack traffic can lead to severe congestion, resulting in high packet loss and degradation of legitimate traffic. These findings underscore the importance of proactive measures and robust security systems to mitigate the effects of DDoS attacks and ensure network performance and availability. Future work will focus on exploring various mitigation strategies and their effectiveness in reducing the impact of such attacks on network traffic dynamics. By utilizing advanced modeling techniques, network administrators and cybersecurity professionals can better understand, predict, and respond to the challenges posed by DDoS attacks.

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МОДЕЛИРОВАНИЕ ДИНАМИКИ СЕТЕВОГО ТРАФИКА ПРИ DDoS АТАКАХ С ИСПОЛЬЗОВАНИЕМ ДИФФЕРЕНЦИАЛЬНЫХ УРАВНЕНИЙ

Бекиева М.Б.

Инженерно-технологический университет Туркменистана имени Огуз хана,
Ашхабад, Туркменистан, successbmb@gmail.com

Аннотация: В этой статье мы разрабатываем набор дифференциальных уравнений для моделирования динамики сетевого трафика при атаках DDoS (Distributed Denial of Service) путем анализа активных соединений и времени отклика сервера. Наша модель, фокусирующаяся на потере пакетов и ухудшении легитимного трафика, иллюстрирует изменение поведения с течением времени во время DDoS атак. Численное моделирование, реализованное с использованием метода Рунге-Кутты в Python, дает представление об эффективности стратегий смягчения последствий. Изучая взаимосвязь между атакующим и легитимным трафиком, наши результаты подчеркивают влияние DDoS атак на производительность сети и важность надежных механизмов безопасности для обеспечения доступности и качества услуг перед лицом киберугроз.

Ключевые слова: DDoS атаки, моделирование сетевого трафика, дифференциальные уравнения, производительность сервера, активные соединения, численное моделирование, кибербезопасность, математическое моделирование.