ISSN 2319-5991 www.ijerst.com

Peer Reviewed, Referred & Indexed Journal

Research Paper

ACTRA: A PRIVACY-PRESERVING FRAMEWORK FOR AUDITING AND CONTROL OF TIME-RESTRICTED ACCESS IN CLOUD ENVIRONMENTS

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ABSTRACT

Cloud computing has revolutionized data storage and accessibility, but it introduces significant challenges related to security, privacy, and access control. Traditional cloud systems rely on static permission models that often grant long-term access without considering dynamic user requirements, thereby increasing the risk of unauthorized data usage. To address these limitations, this paper proposes ACTRA, a privacy-preserving framework designed for auditing and controlling time-restricted access in cloud environments. The system enables fine-grained authorization where users are assigned specific permissions such as read, write, share, and audit based on predefined roles. A key feature of ACTRA is time-limited access, which allows users to grant permissions for a defined duration, after which access is automatically revoked. Additionally, the framework integrates real-time notification mechanisms to alert users about data access activities, enhancing transparency and trust. ACTRA also maintains comprehensive audit logs capturing user identity, timestamps, device details, and performed actions, which support compliance and forensic analysis. To further strengthen security, the system incorporates dynamic key management techniques such as key rotation and expiration to prevent prolonged exposure. A novel contribution of the framework is its risk-based access control mechanism, which evaluates user behavior patterns and assigns risk scores to determine access decisions. By combining fine-grained control, auditing, and behavioral analysis, ACTRA offers a secure, scalable, and intelligent solution for modern cloud data management.

Keywords: Cloud Security, Access Control, Time-Restricted Access, Audit Logs, Risk-Based Access, Data Privacy

I. INTRODUCTION

Cloud computing has become an essential technology for organizations and individuals by providing scalable storage, flexible computing power, and cost-efficient infrastructure [1]. It enables users to access data from anywhere while reducing dependency on physical storage systems [2]. However, despite these advantages, cloud platforms face serious concerns related to data security and unauthorized access [3]. Traditional access control mechanisms such as Role-Based Access Control (RBAC) grant permissions that are

often static and long-lasting [4]. This approach fails to address dynamic scenarios where access is required only temporarily [5]. As a result, users may retain unnecessary permissions, increasing the risk of data leakage [6]. Additionally, most cloud systems lack transparency, making it difficult for data owners to track who accessed their information and when [7]. This lack of visibility creates challenges in maintaining accountability and trust [8]. Moreover, existing systems rarely incorporate behavioral analysis, making them vulnerable to suspicious activities such as unauthorized logins or abnormal data access patterns [9]. Another limitation is weak key management, where encryption keys are often reused without proper expiration, increasing the risk of compromise [10]. Therefore, there is a growing need for intelligent and adaptive access control mechanisms in cloud environments [11].

To overcome these challenges, this project introduces ACTRA, a privacy-preserving framework designed to provide secure, time-restricted, and well-audited access control in cloud environments [12]. ACTRA ensures that data owners maintain full authority over their data even after uploading it to the cloud [13]. The framework introduces fine-grained authorization, allowing users to assign specific permissions such as read, write, share, and audit based on roles [14]. Unlike traditional models, ACTRA supports time-limited access, where permissions automatically expire after a predefined duration [15]. This significantly reduces the risk of long-term unauthorized access [16]. The system also integrates real-time notification mechanisms that alert users whenever their data is accessed or modified [17]. Furthermore, ACTRA maintains detailed audit logs that record every action performed on the system, ensuring transparency and accountability [18]. To enhance security, the framework incorporates advanced key management techniques such as key rotation and expiration [19]. A unique feature of ACTRA is its risk-based access control mechanism, which evaluates user behavior and assigns risk scores to determine access decisions [20]. This dynamic approach allows the system to adapt to changing user patterns and prevent potential threats [21]. By combining these features, ACTRA provides a comprehensive solution for secure cloud data management [22]. It bridges the gap between usability and security while ensuring compliance and data protection [23]. The framework is designed to be scalable and adaptable for various cloud applications [24]. It also supports multi-cloud environments to improve data availability and reliability [25]. Overall, ACTRA represents a significant advancement in cloud security by integrating access control, auditing, and behavioral analysis into a unified system [26][27][28][29][30].

II. LITERATURE SURVEY

Cloud security has been widely studied due to the increasing reliance on cloud platforms for storing sensitive data [1]. Early research focused on Role-Based Access Control (RBAC), which assigns permissions based on predefined roles [2]. While RBAC simplifies access management, it lacks flexibility in dynamic environments [3]. Researchers later introduced Attribute-Based Access Control (ABAC), which considers user attributes and environmental conditions for decision-making [4]. Although ABAC improves granularity, it introduces complexity in policy management [5]. Several studies highlight the limitations of both RBAC and ABAC in handling temporary access scenarios [6]. Time-restricted access control has been proposed as a solution to address this issue [7]. It allows users to grant permissions for a limited duration, reducing the risk of misuse [8]. However, most implementations lack

integration with auditing mechanisms [9]. Auditing is essential for ensuring accountability and detecting unauthorized activities [10]. Research shows that real-time notification systems significantly improve user awareness and trust [11]. Yet, many cloud platforms provide only basic logging features [12]. Another critical area of research is key management, where studies emphasize the importance of key rotation and expiration [13]. Without proper key management, encryption keys remain vulnerable to attacks [14]. Researchers have also explored behavior-based access control, which analyzes user activities to detect anomalies [15]. This approach enhances security by identifying suspicious patterns [16].

Recent advancements focus on integrating multiple security features into a unified framework [17]. Risk-Based Access Control (R-BAC) has gained attention for its ability to adapt access decisions based on user behavior [18]. It assigns risk scores to users and dynamically adjusts permissions [19]. Studies show that R-BAC improves security without compromising usability [20]. Additionally, multi-cloud architectures have been proposed to enhance data availability and reliability [21]. These systems replicate data across multiple cloud providers to prevent data loss [22]. However, ensuring consistency across clouds remains a challenge [23]. Researchers also emphasize the need for user-centric auditing systems that provide detailed logs and transparency [24]. Combining auditing with real-time alerts helps in early detection of threats [25]. Furthermore, integrating machine learning techniques into access control systems has shown promising results [26]. These models can predict user behavior and identify potential risks [27]. Despite these advancements, existing systems often lack a comprehensive solution that integrates fine-grained control, auditing, and risk analysis [28]. This gap highlights the need for frameworks like ACTRA [29]. By combining multiple security mechanisms into a single system, ACTRA addresses the limitations identified in previous research [30].

III. PROPOSED SYSTEM

The proposed system, ACTRA, is designed to provide a secure and intelligent framework for managing access control in cloud environments. Unlike traditional systems that rely on static permissions, ACTRA introduces fine-grained authorization, allowing data owners to assign specific permissions such as read, write, share, and audit based on user roles. This ensures that users receive only the required level of access, minimizing the risk of data misuse. A key feature of the system is time-restricted access, where permissions are granted for a predefined duration and automatically revoked once the time expires. This eliminates the need for manual intervention and prevents long-term unauthorized access.

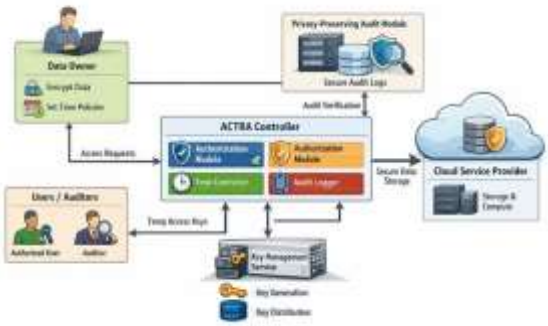


Fig.1 System Architecture

ACTRA also incorporates a real-time notification system that alerts users whenever their data is accessed or modified. This enhances transparency and allows users to respond quickly to potential threats. The system maintains detailed audit logs that record all user activities, including access time, operations performed, and device details. Additionally, ACTRA implements advanced key

management techniques such as key rotation and expiration to ensure data confidentiality. The integration of risk-based access control further strengthens security by analyzing user behavior and assigning risk scores to determine access decisions. By combining these features, ACTRA provides a comprehensive solution for secure and efficient cloud data management.

IV. SYSTEM DESIGN

The ACTRA system follows a layered architecture to ensure modularity, scalability, and security. The architecture consists of four main layers: User Interaction Layer, Access Control Layer, Security & Risk Engine, and Cloud Storage Layer. The User Interaction Layer provides interfaces such as dashboards, login pages, and notification panels for users to interact with the system. The Access Control Layer handles authorization by verifying user roles, permissions, and time constraints before granting access. This layer ensures that only authorized users can perform specific operations within the allowed time frame.

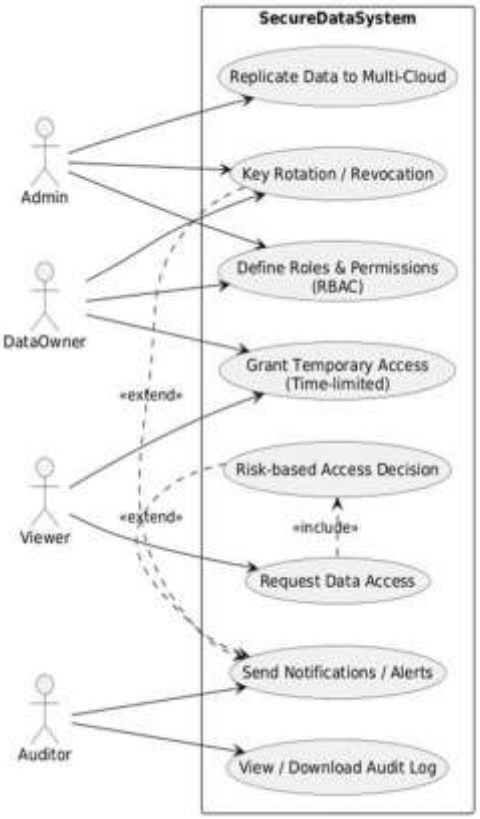


Fig.2 use case diagram

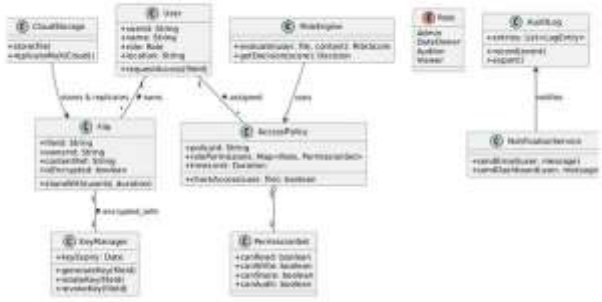


Fig.3 Activity diagram

The Security & Risk Engine is the core component responsible for analyzing user behavior and calculating risk scores. It monitors activities such as login patterns, device usage, and access requests to detect anomalies. Based on the risk level, the system decides whether to allow, verify, or deny access. The Audit & Monitoring Module records all activities and generates real-time alerts to enhance transparency. The Cloud Storage Layer stores

encrypted data across multiple cloud providers to ensure reliability and availability. All data is encrypted before storage, and decryption occurs only after authorization. This architecture ensures secure, efficient, and scalable cloud data management.

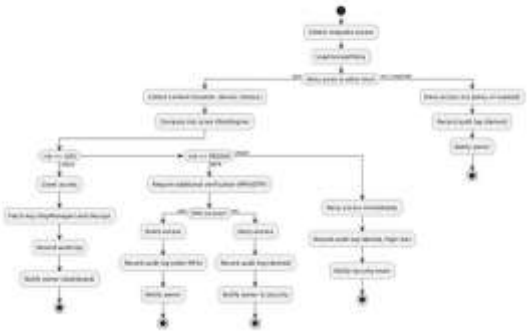
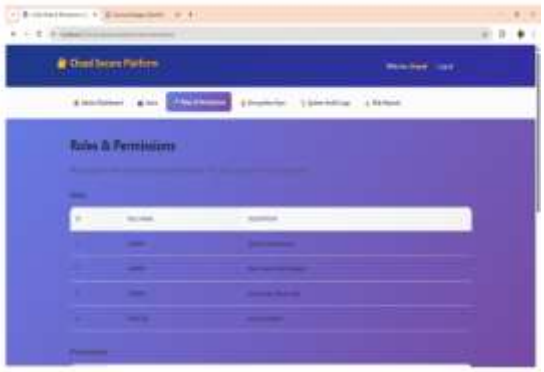
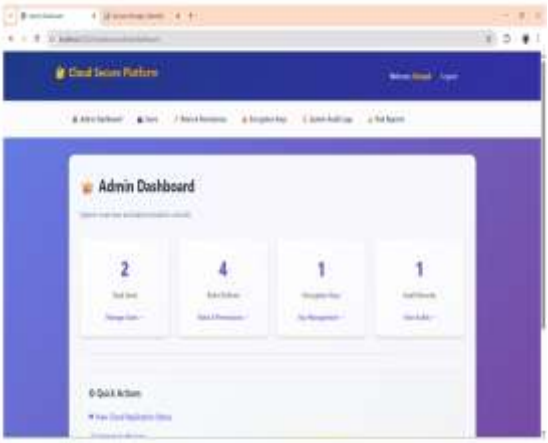
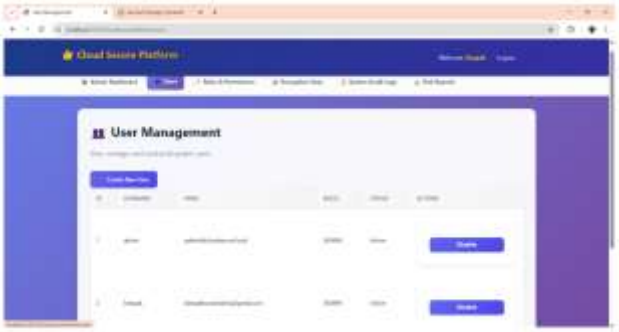


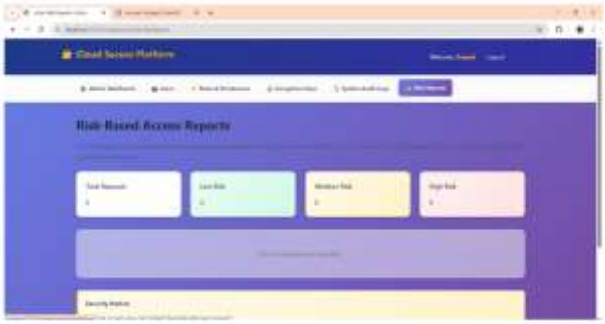
Fig.4 Sequence diagram

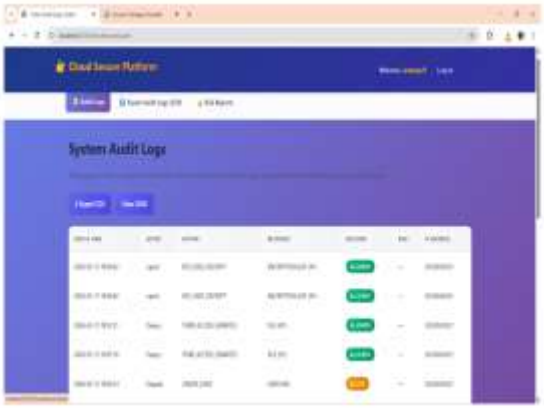
V. RESULTS



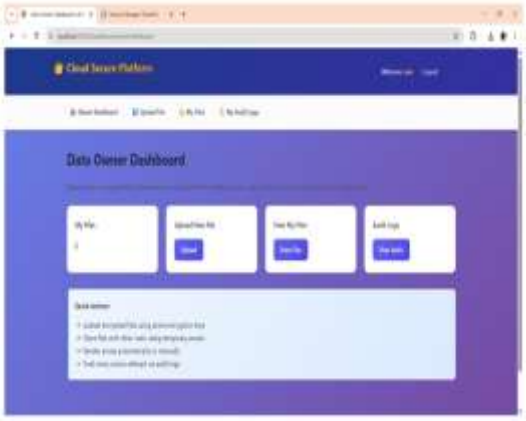


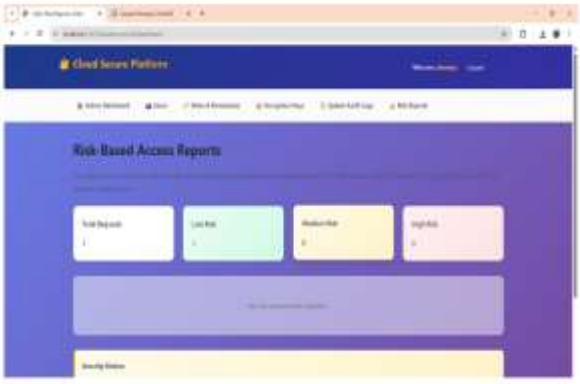





System Audit Logs


Risk-Based Access Reports


Data Owner Dashboard


Risk-Based Access Reports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VI. CONCLUSION

The ACTRA framework presents an advanced solution for addressing critical challenges in cloud security, including unauthorized access, lack of transparency, and weak key management. By integrating fine-grained authorization, time-restricted access, real-time notifications, audit logging, and risk-based access control, the system provides a comprehensive approach to secure data management. Unlike traditional models, ACTRA ensures that permissions are dynamic and adaptable, reducing the risk of long-term data exposure. The inclusion of detailed audit logs and real-time alerts enhances accountability and allows users to monitor data activities effectively. Furthermore, the implementation of key rotation and expiration strengthens data confidentiality by minimizing the risk of key compromise. The risk-based access control mechanism adds an intelligent layer of security by analyzing user behavior and detecting anomalies. This dynamic approach enables the system to respond proactively to potential threats. Additionally, the support for multi-cloud environments ensures data availability and reliability. Overall, ACTRA successfully bridges the gap between usability and security in cloud systems. It offers a scalable, efficient, and user-centric solution for modern cloud environments, making it a valuable contribution to the field of cloud security.

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