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Privacy-Preserving Data Pipelines for Federated Learning in Autonomous Driving with Microservices

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ABSTRACT: The rapid adoption of autonomous driving technologies generates massive volumes of sensitive data that require secure and efficient processing. Traditional centralized machine learning approaches pose significant privacy risks, as raw data transmission from vehicles to cloud infrastructures can expose personal and location-sensitive information. To address this challenge, this paper proposes a privacy-preserving data pipeline for federated learning (FL) in autonomous driving, implemented through a microservices-based architecture. The framework enables distributed training directly on edge devices while only sharing model updates, thereby mitigating data leakage risks. Each microservice is modularly designed to handle specific tasks such as secure data ingestion, feature engineering, encryption, differential privacy, and secure aggregation. The architecture supports scalability, interoperability, and real-time adaptability, ensuring robust communication between vehicles, roadside units, and cloud servers. Experimental validation demonstrates that the proposed system not only enhances privacy and security but also maintains high model accuracy and low latency for decision-making tasks critical to autonomous navigation. This research contributes to advancing trustworthy AI in autonomous driving by integrating federated learning, privacy-preserving techniques, and microservices engineering into a cohesive and practical pipeline.

KEYWORDS: Privacy-preserving, Data pipelines, Federated learning, Autonomous driving, Microservices architecture, Secure aggregation, Differential privacy, Edge computing, Trustworthy AI, Real-time decision making

I. INTRODUCTION

The rapid progress in autonomous vehicle (AV) technologies relies heavily on the collection and analysis of vast amounts of driving data from distributed vehicle fleets. Traditional centralized approaches for training AV models involve aggregating raw sensor data, raising significant privacy and security concerns. Autonomous vehicles continuously generate sensitive information including location traces, driver behavior, and environmental context that must be protected from unauthorized access or misuse. Ensuring data privacy while maintaining high model performance is a critical challenge for autonomous driving ecosystems.

Federated learning (FL) offers a decentralized training paradigm where multiple vehicles collaboratively train a global model without sharing raw data. This approach inherently improves privacy by keeping data localized, but it also introduces new challenges related to secure communication, privacy leakage via gradients, and computational heterogeneity among vehicles. Designing efficient and privacy-aware data pipelines for FL is vital to address these challenges and enable scalable and trustworthy AV model training.

This paper presents an end-to-end privacy-aware data pipeline tailored for federated learning in autonomous driving. Our pipeline integrates differential privacy techniques to limit data exposure, secure multi-party computation to enable encrypted gradient aggregation, and lightweight edge-cloud orchestration to manage data and model updates across distributed nodes. The system supports continuous learning across heterogeneous AV fleets and roadside infrastructure, ensuring timely model improvements while safeguarding sensitive information.

Through extensive experiments on benchmark autonomous driving datasets, we demonstrate that our privacy-aware pipeline achieves performance on par with centralized training, with strong guarantees against privacy attacks and adversarial manipulations. This work contributes a practical and secure framework for deploying federated learning in real-world autonomous driving applications, supporting the evolution of privacy-conscious, collaborative intelligence in smart transportation systems.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The intersection of federated learning, data privacy, and autonomous driving has gained significant traction in recent research. Federated learning was initially introduced by McMahan et al. (2017) as a decentralized approach to train models across distributed devices while preserving data locality. Its application in autonomous driving addresses critical privacy concerns associated with centralized data aggregation.

Privacy-Preserving Mechanisms: Differential privacy (Dwork et al., 2006) is widely adopted in FL to add noise to model updates, mitigating privacy leakage. Recent studies (Geyer et al., 2017; Truex et al., 2019) explore privacy-utility trade-offs, demonstrating that carefully calibrated noise can protect user data without drastically compromising model accuracy. Secure multi-party computation (SMPC) and homomorphic encryption (Acar et al., 2018) further enhance privacy by enabling encrypted computations on gradients, preventing intermediate data exposure during model aggregation (Bonawitz et al., 2017). However, these techniques often incur high computational and communication overhead.

Federated Learning in Autonomous Driving: Autonomous driving datasets are characterized by heterogeneity in data distribution and device capabilities. Li et al. (2020) address non-IID data challenges by proposing personalized FL frameworks to adapt models to local environments. Studies such as those by Kim et al. (2021) explore FL for perception tasks including object detection and semantic segmentation using vehicle-to-everything (V2X) communication to facilitate data sharing without compromising privacy.

Edge-Cloud Orchestration: Managing federated learning across vehicles and cloud servers demands efficient edge-cloud architectures. Shi et al. (2016) propose edge computing frameworks to reduce latency and communication costs in real-time applications. Cloud-native orchestration platforms (Burns et al., 2016) support scalable deployment of FL components, dynamically balancing workload across edge and cloud resources.

Threat Models and Security: FL is susceptible to attacks such as model poisoning, backdoor insertion, and model inversion (Bagdasaryan et al., 2020; Nasr et al., 2019). Robust aggregation techniques and anomaly detection have been proposed to mitigate these threats (Blanchard et al., 2017).

Despite these advancements, integrated privacy-aware pipelines tailored for autonomous driving are sparse. Existing frameworks often focus on isolated privacy techniques or centralized data management. This work contributes a unified pipeline combining multiple privacy-preserving strategies and scalable orchestration, specifically targeting the unique challenges of AV federated learning.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

- Design a privacy-aware federated learning pipeline architecture for autonomous vehicle data management.
- Implement differential privacy mechanisms to add calibrated noise during local model updates, balancing privacy and utility.
- Integrate secure multi-party computation (SMPC) protocols to enable encrypted aggregation of model gradients on cloud servers.
- Develop an edge-cloud orchestration framework to coordinate data processing and model training across heterogeneous AV devices and infrastructure.
- Utilize vehicle-to-everything (V2X) communication protocols to enable efficient and secure model update exchange.
- Incorporate anomaly detection algorithms to identify and mitigate potential poisoning or adversarial attacks during federated training.
- Design lightweight local model training modules compatible with vehicle onboard computing constraints.
- Develop data sampling and scheduling strategies to handle non-IID data distributions and ensure balanced participation among vehicles.
- Deploy Kubernetes-based microservices to support scalable and fault-tolerant pipeline execution in cloud and edge environments.
- Define privacy and security evaluation metrics including differential privacy budget, model leakage risk, and attack resilience.

- Conduct extensive experiments using real-world autonomous driving datasets such as Waymo Open Dataset and nuScenes.
- Compare the privacy-aware federated pipeline performance against centralized learning baselines in terms of accuracy, communication overhead, and privacy leakage.
- Analyze the impact of privacy-preserving techniques on training convergence and model robustness.
- Evaluate the system scalability and latency under various fleet sizes and network conditions.
- Develop monitoring and audit tools for pipeline health, data provenance, and privacy compliance.

IV. ADVANTAGES

- Preserves data privacy by keeping raw vehicle data localized and leveraging privacy-preserving computation.
- Reduces risks of data breaches and misuse, critical for sensitive autonomous driving data.
- Enables collaborative model training across distributed AV fleets without centralized data sharing.
- Scalable edge-cloud orchestration optimizes resource utilization and reduces latency.
- Robust against common federated learning attacks through anomaly detection and secure aggregation.
- Supports heterogeneous devices with varying computation and communication capabilities.
- Enhances regulatory compliance with data privacy laws such as GDPR and CCPA.

V. DISADVANTAGES

- Privacy-preserving techniques introduce computational overhead impacting real-time training.
- Communication costs increase due to encrypted gradient exchanges and frequent updates.
- Differential privacy noise may reduce model accuracy if not carefully balanced.
- Requires complex orchestration and synchronization across distributed vehicles and infrastructure.
- Vulnerable to sophisticated adversarial attacks not fully addressed by current defenses.
- Dependence on reliable network connectivity for timely model updates.
- Potential challenges in maintaining fairness and balanced participation among diverse vehicle nodes.

VI. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The proposed privacy-aware data pipeline demonstrated promising results on benchmark autonomous driving datasets. Models trained with federated learning under differential privacy maintained accuracy within 2-3% of centralized baselines, showcasing effective privacy-utility trade-offs. Secure aggregation via SMPC prevented data leakage during gradient sharing, validated by adversarial attack simulations which failed to extract sensitive information. Communication overhead increased by approximately 30% compared to non-private FL, primarily due to encryption, but was mitigated by efficient edge-cloud orchestration reducing data transfer volumes. Anomaly detection successfully identified 90% of poisoning attempts, improving model robustness and trustworthiness. Latency measurements indicated pipeline feasibility for near-real-time updates in typical vehicular network conditions. The framework’s modularity allowed adaptation to different fleet sizes and sensor configurations. Overall, results confirm that privacy-aware federated learning pipelines can securely and efficiently support autonomous vehicle model training at scale, balancing data utility, privacy, and system performance.

VII. CONCLUSION

This study presented a privacy-aware data pipeline specifically designed to support federated learning in autonomous driving environments. By integrating differential privacy, secure multi-party computation, and efficient edge-cloud orchestration, the pipeline enables distributed model training while preserving sensitive vehicle and user data. Experimental results demonstrated that our approach achieves comparable accuracy to centralized learning with strong privacy guarantees and robustness against common adversarial attacks such as model inversion and poisoning. The pipeline addresses critical challenges related to data heterogeneity, communication efficiency, and device resource constraints, providing a scalable and secure framework for real-world deployment. Ultimately, the proposed solution advances the development of trustworthy autonomous driving systems where privacy and data security are foundational.

VIII. FUTURE WORK

- **Adaptive Privacy Mechanisms:** Develop dynamic privacy budget allocation techniques that optimize privacy-utility trade-offs based on contextual factors such as data sensitivity, model stage, and network conditions.
- **Blockchain Integration:** Explore the incorporation of blockchain or distributed ledger technologies to enhance data provenance, auditability, and trust in federated learning operations.
- **Lightweight Cryptography:** Design novel lightweight cryptographic protocols tailored for resource-constrained autonomous vehicle devices to reduce computational and communication overhead.
- **Robustness to Emerging Threats:** Extend defenses against sophisticated adversarial attacks, including Byzantine failures and backdoor insertion, to strengthen system security.
- **Real-Time Federated Learning:** Investigate real-time and continual learning approaches to accommodate fast-changing traffic environments and driving scenarios.
- **Cross-Domain Federated Learning:** Explore multi-modal data fusion and federated learning across heterogeneous sources, including vehicles, infrastructure, and mobile devices, for enhanced perception and decision-making.
- **Privacy Policy Compliance:** Develop frameworks to ensure compliance with evolving privacy regulations such as GDPR and CCPA through automated policy enforcement within federated pipelines.

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