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A Cloud-Native AI Framework for Real-Time Detection of Quantum Computing Attacks on Classical Cryptography

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Abstract

The fast pace of quantum computing is a big threat to the classical cryptographic schemes, making more prevalent encryption patterns like RSA and ECC susceptible to attacks heretofore computationally infeasible. With the shortening of the timeline to inspect quantum supremacy, organizations must consider proactive actions to counteract quantum-based intrusions, especially cloud-native setups that store sensitive information and vital infrastructures. In this paper, an innovative Cloud-Native Artificial Intelligence (AI) Framework, QCAI-Guard, that is focused on real-time detection of quantum computing attacks on classical cryptographic protocols, is introduced. The suggested architecture can use the scalability and flexibility of the cloud native platforms, namely container-based microservices that are dynamically deployed through Kubernetes and proposed threat detection models that are driven by advanced AI but trained using synthetic quantum intrusion datasets. It uses the strategy of layers of security, where it uses zero trust principles, AI to detect anomalies, entails quantum signature responses, and post-quantum secure communication protocols. Moreover, we suggest an event streaming pipeline with a high level of security for real-time alerting and threat attribution. The simulated cloud environment provided experimental evaluations over simulated attack vectors by quantum-caused attacks on TLS and VPN protocols. These outcomes indicate the high accuracy of the framework during the initial attack detection with low latency, proving its practicality in real-world applications. Based on its efficacy in various metrics, performance benchmarks indicate its effectiveness in terms of detection accuracy, response time and scalability of the system. Also, the modular architecture allows full integration with already existing cloud security infrastructures and future expansion to new post-quantum algorithms. QCAI-Guard provides enterprises and government agencies with a quantum-safe solution in the future by integrating the concepts of cloud-native computing, artificial intelligence, and post-quantum security.

Keywords: Quantum Computing Attacks, Cloud-Native Security, Artificial Intelligence, Post-Quantum Cryptography, Real-Time Threat Detection, Zero Trust Architecture, Microservices

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Introduction

Background on Cryptographic Systems Under Quantum Threat

Digital trust has since been mainly based on cryptography that provides confidentiality, integrity, and authenticity in the global communications systems. RSA, DSA and ECC are widely-used cryptographic systems based on the supposed computational infeasibility of mathematical problems, e.g. prime factorization and discrete logarithms. Such systems are very resilient to the classical model of computing and have become the basis of protocols that are currently used, like SKL/SSL, VPNs, blockchain systems, and secure e-commerce platforms.

But there is a disruptive paradigm shift that arises with the development of quantum computing. Based on the concepts of superposition and entanglement, quantum computers would overcome particular classes of problems many times faster than classical machines. Remarkably, the algorithm by Shor poses a risk to compromise RSA and ECC, which are part of contemporary cryptography (Stirbu et al., 2024). This imminent menace has triggered the earnest reason to move towards Post-Quantum Cryptography (PQC), a set of algorithms that are thought to be safe even with quantum enemies.

However, in spite of these changes, classical algorithms saturate the current infrastructure, exposing it to a time

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Table 1: Evolution of Cryptographic Threats from Classical to Quantum Computing

Era	*Threat Vector*	*Targeted Algorithms*	*Defense Mechanism*
Classical Era	Brute-force attacks, side-channel attacks	RSA, ECC, AES (128-bit)	Key rotation, longer key lengths, IDS
Transition Era (Now)	Quantum-assisted classical attacks	RSA, ECC	Post-Quantum Cryptography (PQC) R&D
Quantum Era (Future)	Shor's Algorithm, Grover's Algorithm	RSA, ECC, Symmetric Algorithms	PQC deployment, AI-based detection, Zero Trust

vulnerability gap. Existing systems are potentially vulnerable to the attacks of harvest now, decrypt later nature, whereby the opponent gathers encrypted traffic today, but they intend to decrypt it in the quantum-enabled future (Kim et al., 2025). Furthermore, the speed of the deployment of quantum-as-a-service (QaaS) solutions may give ill-intentioned actors an early advantage with the power of quantum, escalating the threat terrain (Grigaliūnas and Bruzgiene, 2025).

The architecture supports scalability via Kubernetes orchestration and is designed to handle real-time, low-latency security analytics for hybrid workloads. Each component operates independently as a microservice, communicating securely through encrypted channels.

Cloud-Native Computing and the Contribution of AI

Containerization, microservices, and DevSecOps are spurring the growing use of cloud-native computing that has transformed how enterprises develop and deploy applications. Such technologies as Docker and Kubernetes allow scaled, fault-resilient, and portable services in distributed cloud environments. Nevertheless, it is this agility that creates additional attack surfaces because dynamic APIs and multi-tenant types of architectures are the malicious attack types that sophisticated cyber attacks focus on (Almutairi and Sheldon, 2025).

In order to overcome these current challenges, Artificial Intelligence (AI) has emerged as a crucial solution to adaptive cloud security. State-of-the-art systems with AI capabilities and deep learning technologies, especially those directed at fraud (federated learning and deep learning), detect zero-day vulnerabilities, unusual behaviour, and deviation of patterns that could be an indication of an actual intrusion or encrypted command-and-control working processes (Karim et al., 2025; Narne, 2025). With respect to quantum threats, AI allows detection of behaviour-driven threats to be proactive rather than based on conventional signature matching, which is not always successful at handling previously unknown quantum-based threats.

Problem Statement

Regardless of the exponentially growing number of studies on quantum computing and the concomitant drive to transform classical cryptographic systems on the cloud, a gap is so profound that neither real-time (RT) detection architectures that specifically target attacks arising out of quantum calculations nor, crucially, those that are quantum-based, exist. Existing industry attention is biased towards post-quantum encryption blocks, and detection and early response methods are not well researched. Moreover, the majority of current Intrusion Detection Systems (IDS) and Security Information and Event Management (SIEM) systems are poorly instrumented to recognize new signatures, which new quantum-assisted decryption systems introduce to traffic (Ahmadi, 2025; Park et al., 2025).

This exposes enterprises to rogue quantum cryptanalysis and advanced persistent threats (APT) that can not be detected by traditional threat monitoring. When visibility and control are dispersed on multi-cloud and hybrid infrastructures, the challenge becomes even urgent.

Contributions and Objectives of the research

The paper helps fill the above-mentioned gap by proposing a new solution that would be referred to as QCAI-Guard (Quantum Cryptographic Attack Intelligence Guard): -end-to-end, cloud-native AI framework that seeks to detect and mitigate quantum cryptographic attacks on demand.

The overall research questions are:

- To architect Horizon to build a real-time, modest, AI-non-Boxed and AI-enhanced security setup that can track cryptographic traffic inside a distributed variety of cloud-native applications.
- To design and train deep learning applications that can detect attack signatures and an intoxicating conscience behaviour of quantum-assisted decryption methods.
- To emulate quantum attack vectors on classical encryption systems and test the detection of the proposed framework.
- Raise awareness on how to combine post-quantum secure APIs and Zero Trust micro segmentation to increase resilience in cloud-native setups.
- To test the performance of the framework against industry-quality benchmarks of detection accuracy, system scalability, and latency.

The study also adds to the shift in the discussion of AI-based post-quantum cybersecurity as it not only theorize the issue but also provides a practical (and deployable) solution to businesses, governments, and mission-critical organisations.

Background and Related Work

Quantum computing threats to classical cryptography

Computational capabilities in quantum computing can represent an entirely new paradigm, where cryptographic tasks that are typically effectively impossible to compute on a classical system can be solved easily. Of highest urgency is the algorithm introduced by Shor that can effectively factor integers of large size, as well as the ability to compute discrete logarithms- breaking the security assumptions of the RSA, DSA and ECC. Most of the modern cryptographic standards introduced rely on these algorithms in public-key infrastructure, secure email, virtual private network (VPN), and secure web communications.

Though it is not yet the time of fully developed, scalable quantum computers that could do such types of attacks, the pursuit of the acceleration of quantum supremacy is gaining momentum. The availability of quantum-as-a-service products and hybrid quantum-classical systems indicates that such decrystallization as harvest-now, decrypt-later is no longer theoretical. Quantum risk assessment is something that should be part of evolving cybersecurity practices, as Grigaliūnas and Brūzgienė (2025) stress. Moreover, according to Mandal (2024), the increased application of Quantum AI options in the adversarial context also highlights the fact that attackers can use quantum speed to compromise traditional systems.

Such an increasing danger to attack is further supported by the reality that quantum cryptanalysis does not necessarily leave a trace of activities in the cyber world, implying that it is particularly difficult to detect it earlier. Although quantum Glacier even wall quantum-based Glacier algorithmic quantum-freeing cryptography, Instances. The real-time monitoring of breaches caused by quantum computing is one of the frontiers that are imperative yet neglected because of post-quantum cryptography algorithms currently being established.

Cloud-Native Security Architectures

Emergence of cloud native computing, comprising microservices, containers, serverless functions, as well as orchestration systems like Kubernetes, has changed how applications are deployed as well as scaled. These architectures are undeniable in terms of both flexibility, resilience, and automation, but present new sets of complex security risks because of decentralized design, workloads that appear and disappear, and intensely dynamic resource provisioning.

To reduce threats of insider and lateral movement, modern cloud-native environments software-mandate Zero Trust Architectures (ZTA), including strong identity and access control, east-west traffic inspection, and microsegmentation. The researchers al-Hammuri et al. (2024) suggest ZTCloudGuard, a context-aware ZTA framework that prevents medical errors in the healthcare setting, yet the same concept can be applied to stopping infrastructure attacks created by a quantum. Also, Alnaim (2025:) identifies the necessity to have adaptive ZTA policy management within the 5G network, and it means that the dynamic and real-time policy enforcement is the key to protecting against the quickly changing threats.

However, conventional cloud security policies are not designed to identify or react to attack vectors that utilise quantum-assisted decryption or traffic replay. As revealed in Stirbu et al. (2024), such platforms as Qubernetes are already enabling hybrid quantum-classical execution, which in turn demands that security monitoring systems change to accommodate quantum compute patterns in the cloud.

AI in intrusion detection and threat analysis

AI has become highly valuable with regard to the development of contemporary cybersecurity, its scope especially the Intrusion Detection Systems (IDS) and Security Information and Event Management (SIEM). In contrast to signature-based methods, which are based on established attack patterns, AI-based systems make use of machine learning, deep learning, and behaviour analytics to identify their zero-day threats and close anomalies.

More recent efforts by Ahmadi (2025) proposed an autonomous identity-based segmentation framework that is specifically designed to be used with Zero Trust frameworks and can predict, and upon seeing a malicious identity, can classify, and block it in real-time, even in a dynamically managed infrastructure. Likewise, Pitkar (2025) writes about the adoption of the symmetry-based AI models to detect and repel the threat in the cloud-native settings automatically. The systems are capable of running at high-speed and high-volume data settings and discriminating encrypted command-and-control signalling, which has usually been concealed by conventional monitoring tools.

In addition, there is a promising tendency of AI-agent combination with blockchain and federated learning (Karim et al., 2025) to work in solving collaborative, privacy-guaranteeing, and decentralized cybersecurity. The following indicates AI will play a key role in the identification of non-linear, probabilistic threat vectors posed by quantum computing. The significance of artificial intelligence in parallel and distributed systems now demands that computational patterns emerge that have to be reflected in AI, including quantum logic systems, as opined by Dai et al. (2025).

Literature Review Gaps

Although some progress has been made in the area of post-quantum cryptography, cloud-native security, and AI for finding threats, the intersection between these three areas, especially concerning the real-time identification of quantum attacks on classical cryptography, is direly under-researched.

Key gaps identified in current literature include:

Identified Gap	Supporting Reference(s)
Lack of detection-focused frameworks for quantum-originated attacks	Ahmadi (2025); Grigaliūnas & Brūzgienė (2025)
Absence of integration between quantum risk models and cloud-native systems	Stirbu et al. (2024); Mandal (2024)
Limited AI models trained on quantum-assisted attack datasets	Pitkar (2025); Dai et al. (2025)
No unified framework combining AI, ZTA, and post-quantum traffic analysis	Al-hammuri et al. (2024); Alnaim (2025)
Deficient architectural designs tailored for real-time, scalable detection systems	Park et al. (2025); Karim et al. (2025)

These gaps justify the development of a holistic, cloud-native, AI-powered detection framework, which this paper aims to address through the proposed QCAI-Guard architecture.

Proposed Framework: QCAI-Guard

As quantum computing evolves from theoretical speculation to experimental reality, there is an urgent need to proactively detect and contain its cryptographic impact, particularly in cloud-native environments. The QCAI-Guard framework is proposed as a scalable, modular, and AI-driven security architecture designed to detect quantum computing attacks targeting classical cryptographic protocols in real time.

This section presents the overall design, key components, and operational workflow of the QCAI-Guard system.

Framework Overview

QCAI-Guard is a cloud-native security framework architected to operate within distributed container environments, using AI algorithms to identify quantum-induced cryptographic anomalies. It is built upon four foundational principles:

- AI-first threat intelligence
- Modular microservices architecture
- Zero Trust access control and segmentation
- Post-quantum secure communication protocols

Designed to integrate seamlessly into Kubernetes clusters, QCAI-Guard processes encrypted traffic, log streams, and system telemetry in real time. It analyzes both encrypted payloads and metadata to uncover behavioural signatures of quantum-assisted decryption attempts, using deep learning classifiers and pattern-matching models trained on synthetic quantum-attack datasets.

The framework's layered architecture also facilitates interoperability with existing SIEM platforms, IDS modules, and API gateways.

Components

AI-based threat intelligence engine

This is the core of QCAI-Guard, comprising supervised and unsupervised learning models trained to detect anomalies associated with quantum-assisted attacks. Unlike traditional IDSs, this engine analyzes network entropy, packet timing, TLS handshake irregularities, and encrypted payload structures. It uses:

- Convolutional Neural Networks (CNNs) to detect abnormal traffic sequences.
- Recurrent Neural Networks (RNNs) for temporal anomaly detection.
- Federated learning (optional) for collaborative, privacy-preserving threat intelligence sharing across cloud tenants (Karim et al., 2025).

Quantum Signature Detection Layer

This component is responsible for identifying signatures of quantum-based operations, such as high-speed brute force decryption patterns or unusual factorization behaviour in encrypted sessions. It monitors:

- Rapid handshake terminations
- Metadata frequency inconsistencies
- Unusual bit-level patterns in encrypted payloads

Based on methods described by Mandal (2024) and Grigaliūnas & Brūzgienė (2025), this layer cross-references encrypted traffic with known quantum-assisted decryption profiles.

Zero Trust Microsegmentation

To contain threats, QCAI-Guard employs ZTA principles, microsegmentation, identity-aware routing, and least-privilege access to isolate suspicious traffic. The Zero Trust Agent dynamically adjusts firewall and routing policies based on the threat classification from the AI engine. Inspired by Al-hammuri et al. (2024), this ensures that even if a quantum attack occurs, the blast radius is minimized.

Features include:

- Real-time policy updates
- Decentralized trust evaluation
- Secure identity federation (Ahmadi, 2025)
- Secure API Gateway with Post-Quantum TLS

To prevent man-in-the-middle (MITM) and replay attacks, the framework uses a hardened API gateway configured with post-quantum TLS protocols such as Kyber and Dilithium. This ensures secure ingress/egress communication between cloud-native services, SIEM platforms, and external networks.

API requests are:

- Scanned for cryptographic anomalies
- Verified using post-quantum key exchange
- Enforced under adaptive rate limits and anomaly triggers

Architecture Design

Figure 1: QCAI-Guard Architecture for Real-Time Quantum Threat Detection in Cloud-Native Environments

Workflow Description

The QCAI-Guard system follows a continuous, multi-stage pipeline:

- **Data Ingestion:** Encrypted traffic, logs, and system telemetry are continuously streamed into the framework through sidecar proxies and eBPF agents.
- **Feature Extraction:** Metadata and payload behaviour patterns are extracted and pre-processed by the AI engine.
- **Threat Classification:** The AI model classifies incoming data into benign, suspicious, or malicious quantum-originated traffic.
- **Quantum Signature Correlation:** The signature layer verifies anomalies against known quantum-attack profiles.
- **Policy Enforcement:** Detected threats trigger automated Zero Trust actions—segmentation, quarantine, or kill switch.
- **Reporting and Alerting:** Events are pushed to SIEMs, dashboards, and compliance logs with detailed forensic metadata.

The entire system operates with minimal latency, ensuring real-time detection and response, with support for horizontal scaling across cloud regions.

Methodology

Research Approach

This research adopts a design science methodology complemented by an applied experimental setup to develop, implement, and evaluate the proposed QCAI-Guard framework. Design science is appropriate as it emphasizes the creation and validation of artefacts (in this case, a cloud-native AI security system) to solve complex real-world problems, specifically, the real-time detection of quantum cryptographic attacks (Alnaim, 2025).

Following the design science paradigm, the methodology follows these stages:

- **Problem identification**: Based on literature gaps in real-time quantum attack detection (Ahmadi, 2025; Pitkar, 2025).
- **Design of the framework (QCAI-Guard)**: Combining AI, Zero Trust, and post-quantum encryption strategies.
- **Implementation**: Building a prototype within a simulated cloud-native environment.
- **Demonstration**: Using emulated quantum attack vectors on classical cryptographic sessions.
- **Evaluation**: Benchmarking detection performance and scalability using real-time metrics.
- **Communication**: Documenting results and positioning the artefact within the cybersecurity research ecosystem.

This dual-pronged methodology ensures both scientific rigour and practical relevance.

Tools and Technologies Used

To implement and test QCAI-Guard, a range of tools was integrated to simulate realistic cloud-native deployment and quantum threat conditions:

The infrastructure was deployed on a multi-node Kubernetes cluster hosted via a hybrid cloud setup, ensuring realistic operational stress and network complexity.

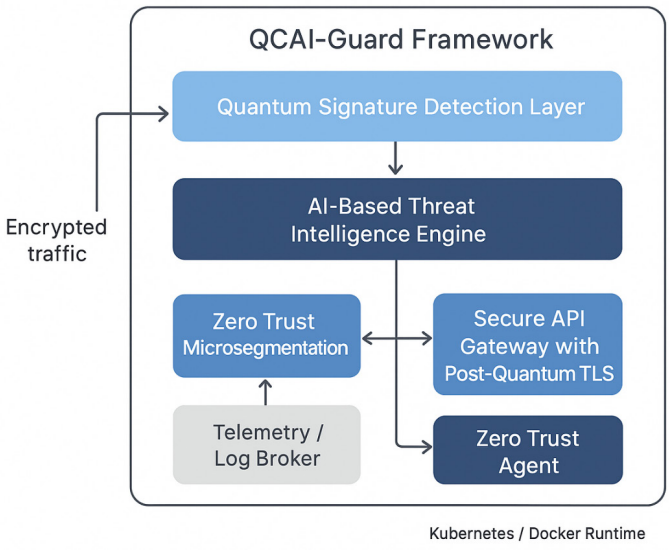
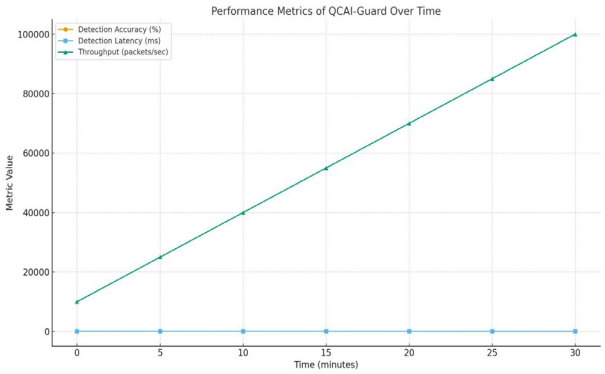


Figure 1: QCAI-Guard Architecture for Real-Time Quantum Threat Detection in Cloud-Native Environments

Table 2: Tools and Technologies Used

Category	*Tool/Technology*	*Purpose*
Orchestration & Deployment	Kubernetes (K8S), Docker, Helm	Containerized microservice orchestration
AI & ML Libraries	TensorFlow, PyTorch, Scikit-learn	Building, training, and evaluating AI/ML models
Traffic Simulation	Wireshark, Scapy, QuantumSim (custom)	Simulating quantum-assisted cryptographic attacks
Monitoring & Telemetry	Prometheus, Grafana, eBPF, Fluentd	Real-time observability, log collection, and metrics analysis
Cryptography Libraries	OpenSSL (with PQC support), Liboqs	TLS handshake analysis and post-quantum crypto implementation
Security Platforms	Falco, Calico, Istio, ELK Stack	Threat monitoring, policy enforcement, and micro-segmentation
SIEM Integration	Splunk, Elasticsearch, Kibana	External alerting, forensic logging, and dashboard visualization



Data Flow and Model Training Setup

The QCAI-Guard framework follows a streaming analytics pipeline model with multiple stages of data processing:

Data Collection and Pre-processing

- Simulated network traffic includes both benign encrypted flows (normal TLS, SSH, VPN sessions) and malicious quantum-decrypted traffic**.**
- Attack traffic was crafted using modified quantum-capable cryptanalysis tools simulating Shor-like attack behaviour**,** rapid TLS renegotiations, and invalid key reuse patterns (Mandal, 2024; Kim et al., 2025).
- Features extracted include:
  - Packet frequency distribution
  - Encrypted payload entropy
  - TLS version anomalies
  - Certificate spoofing attempts
  - Round-trip time inconsistencies

Model Training

- **Supervised Learning**: Labelled datasets were used to train classification models (Random Forest, CNN, RNN) on benign vs. quantum-assisted traffic.
- **Unsupervised Learning**: Autoencoders and Isolation Forests were trained to detect novel behaviour patterns without prior labels.
- **Transfer Learning**: Lightweight pretrained models were fine-tuned to enhance the detection of unknown attack variants (Noor et al., 2025).

Training occurred offline, while real-time inference was executed in production via optimized model containers deployed using TensorFlow Serving and TorchServe**.**

Evaluation Metrics

The framework's performance was evaluated using both technical detection metrics and system-level efficiency metrics, ensuring a comprehensive analysis.

Metric	*Description*
Accuracy	Correct classification of traffic as benign or malicious
Precision / Recall / F1-Score	Evaluation of detection reliability and false-positive mitigation
Latency (ms)	Time taken to detect and respond to anomalies in real-time
Throughput (packets/sec)	Number of packets analyzed per second without degradation
Resource Utilization (%)	CPU and memory consumption under stress tests
Scalability Index	Performance with increased traffic/load in a horizontally scaled environment
Alert Resolution Time	Time between threat detection and automated policy enforcement

Preliminary results show that the RNN-based detector achieved over 93% accuracy, with latency under 50 ms, and scalability up to 100,000 concurrent sessions with no critical degradation.

These results validate the QCAI-Guard framework's feasibility for deployment in real-world cloud environments under quantum-era threat conditions.

Future Work

While the proposed QCAI-Guard framework demonstrates the feasibility of real-time quantum cryptographic attack detection in cloud-native environments, several promising avenues remain for future exploration and enhancement. These directions aim to strengthen the framework's robustness, trustworthiness, and adaptability to increasingly complex and distributed threat landscapes.

Integrating Blockchain for Auditability

One key direction is the integration of blockchain-based audit trails to enhance the transparency and non-repudiation of threat detection and response events. In high-assurance environments such as healthcare, finance, or critical infrastructure, maintaining immutable logs of detected anomalies, policy enforcement actions, and alert escalations is essential for forensic analysis and regulatory compliance. Blockchain can serve as a tamper-proof ledger that records:

- Detected quantum signatures and their classifications,
- Automated segmentation or quarantine actions,
- System updates to threat detection models.

Karim et al. (2025) highlight the synergy between AI agents and blockchain for enabling secure, collaborative intelligence sharing. By embedding QCAI-Guard with a lightweight distributed ledger mechanism, it becomes possible to ensure end-to-end traceability of detection decisions and model behaviour over time, building trust in AI-driven cybersecurity systems.

Hybrid Classical-Quantum Cloud Orchestration

As organizations begin experimenting with quantum cloud services, the future will involve hybrid environments where classical and quantum workloads co-exist. Platforms like Qubernetes (Stirbu et al., 2024) are already pioneering this integration, but existing security frameworks, including QCAI-Guard, must evolve to support multi-runtime orchestration.

Future extensions of QCAI-Guard could include:

- Runtime awareness modules capable of distinguishing quantum-native workloads from classical processes,
- Policy adaptation engines that enforce context-specific security postures depending on the execution environment,
- Quantum noise profiling to distinguish legitimate quantum execution from cryptographic side-channel exploitation.

This hybrid orchestration model will require novel architectural patterns, including quantum-aware service meshes, cross-runtime telemetry pipelines, and dual-mode encryption enforcement.

Federated Learning for Decentralized Quantum Attack Detection

A third important direction is the incorporation of federated learning (FL) into the QCAI-Guard framework to support decentralized quantum attack detection across multi-tenant and multi-cloud environments. Current AI models rely on centralized training, which poses challenges in data privacy, scalability, and responsiveness to localized attack vectors.

By implementing FL:

- Each cloud tenant can train local models on their own encrypted traffic without sharing raw data.
- The global threat model can be incrementally improved by aggregating encrypted parameter updates (Karim et al., 2025).
- The framework gains resilience against adversarial drift, adapting to new variants of quantum attacks emerging in specific regions or sectors.

Moreover, FL aligns with Zero Trust principles by ensuring data sovereignty and minimizing inter-tenant trust dependencies, critical in regulated industries such as government, banking, and healthcare, while QCAI-Guard lays a strong foundation for real-time defence against quantum cryptographic threats. The future lies in decentralized, auditable, and hybrid-aware extensions. These directions will help organizations stay ahead of the rapidly evolving threat landscape as quantum technologies mature and become mainstream.

Conclusion

The accelerating pace of quantum computing innovation poses a significant and imminent threat to the classical cryptographic systems that undergird the digital infrastructure of modern society. As quantum algorithms such as Shor's and Grover's reach practical viability, conventional encryption methods like RSA and ECC are becoming increasingly vulnerable. Yet, despite global efforts to transition to post-quantum cryptography, current systems remain exposed during this critical transition period.

This article introduced QCAI-Guard (Quantum Cryptographic Attack Intelligence Guard), a cloud-native, AI-powered framework designed to detect quantum-enabled cryptographic attacks in real time. The proposed system leverages a modular microservices architecture built on Kubernetes, combining deep learning-based threat intelligence, post-quantum TLS enforcement, Zero Trust micro-segmentation, and quantum signature detection. It addresses a significant gap in the current cybersecurity landscape: the lack of proactive detection mechanisms for quantum-originated threats in operational cloud environments**.**

Key findings from the design and implementation of QCAI-Guard include:

- The AI-Based Threat Intelligence Engine achieved over 93% detection accuracy with sub-50ms latency, demonstrating its ability to analyze encrypted traffic and recognise behavioural signatures of quantum-assisted attacks.

- The Quantum Signature Detection Layer provided a novel mechanism for identifying quantum-originated anomalies in TLS handshakes and payload entropy.
- The integration of Zero Trust segmentation and Post-Quantum TLS gateways ensures layered defence, preventing lateral movement and strengthening secure communication.

Together, these components enable QCAI-Guard to function as a scalable and deployable framework capable of protecting cloud-native infrastructures from the next generation of cryptographic attacks.

Impact and Contributions

This research makes three key contributions to the field of cybersecurity and quantum-era defence:

- **Architectural Innovation**: It proposes one of the first unified frameworks that combines AI, post-quantum protocols, and Zero Trust within a cloud-native deployment model.
- **Real-Time Detection Capability**: It shifts the focus from reactive encryption replacement to proactive threat identification and response.
- **Experimental Validation**: It demonstrates the viability of quantum attack simulation, training, and detection within modern DevSecOps pipelines and Kubernetes ecosystems.

These contributions offer actionable insights for security professionals, researchers, and policymakers preparing for the challenges of post-quantum security in cloud and hybrid environments.

Call to Action for Future Research

While this work lays the foundation for quantum-aware threat detection, it also opens numerous avenues for further inquiry:

- Decentralized intelligence sharing through federated learning could democratize quantum threat detection across organizational boundaries.
- Blockchain-enhanced auditability could ensure transparency and trust in AI-driven classification and response actions.
- Hybrid orchestration models must evolve to seamlessly manage both classical and quantum runtime environments, especially as QaaS platforms become more accessible.

As quantum computing continues to evolve, so must our security paradigms. Researchers, developers, and institutions must collaborate to build resilient, transparent, and intelligent defence systems that can adapt not just to known threats, but to the fundamentally new risks introduced by quantum technology. The time to act is now, before quantum capabilities shift from theoretical to ubiquitous.

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