

SESPHR: A METHODOLOGY FOR SECURE SHARING OF PERSONAL HEALTH RECORDS IN THE CLOUD

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ABSTRACT

The broad use of cloud-based services in the healthcare industry has made it possible for various participating entities of the health system to exchange personal health records (PHRs) at a low cost and with ease. However, putting the private health data on cloud servers leaves it open to theft or disclosure, necessitating the creation of procedures that protect the PHRs' privacy. Consequently, we suggest a technique named SeSPHR for PHR cloud sharing that is secure. The SeSPHR system makes sure that PHRs are controlled from a patient-centric perspective and maintains them maintaining the PHRs' privacy. Patients keep encrypted PHRs on unreliable cloud servers and only give certain people access. On various PHR sections, to distinct categories of users, a setup and re-encryption server, a semi-trusted proxy (SRS) is used to create the re-encryption keys and to create the public/private key pairs. Additionally, the process is safe. It

implements a forward and backward access control and protects against insider risks. Additionally, we officially evaluate and confirm the use of the SeSPHR approach using high-level petrinets (HLPN). Evaluation of performance in relation to time consumption suggests that the SeSPHR approach may be used for safely transferring PHRs to the cloud.

I. INTRODUCTION

In order to provide ubiquitous and on-demand availability of different resources in the form of hardware, software, infrastructure, and storage, CLOUD computing has developed as a significant computing paradigm [1, 2]. As a result, the cloud computing paradigm helps enterprises by relieving them of the time-consuming task of developing infrastructure and encouraging them to rely on outside Information Technology (IT) services [3]. Additionally, the cloud computing architecture has shown tremendous promise for improving coordination among many healthcare stakeholders

and for guaranteeing scalability and ongoing availability of health information [4,5]. Additionally, the cloud computing connects a number of significant healthcare domains, including patients, hospital staff, including physicians and nurses, pharmacists, and clinical laboratory staff, as well as insurance companies and service providers [6]. As a consequence, a collaborative and cost-effective health ecosystem where patients may easily establish and maintain their Personal Health Records (PHRs) develops as a result of the integration of the aforementioned organisations [7]. The PHRs often include data like:

- (a) demographics, (b) medical history, including diagnoses, allergies, surgeries, and treatments,
- (c) laboratory results, (d) information on health insurance claims, and (e) patient-only notes regarding specific significant observed health issues [8].

More technically, PHRs are controlled through Internet-based technologies, allowing individuals to manage their health information as permanent records that can be accessed by those who need it [9]. As a result, PHRs make it possible for people to successfully communicate with medical professionals in order to describe their symptoms, ask for guidance, and maintain their health records for proper diagnosis and treatment.

Despite the benefits of the scalable, adaptable, affordable, and widespread services provided by

the cloud, a number of issues linked to the privacy of health data also come up. The use of the cloud to distribute and store PHRs is a crucial factor in patients' concerns about the confidentiality of such records [10]. Private health information stored on cloud servers run by third parties is vulnerable to intrusion. Particularly jeopardised is the privacy of PHRs kept in public clouds run by for-profit service providers [11]. The PHRs' privacy may be under danger in a number of ways, including theft, loss, and leaking [12]. Because of the malevolent action of other entities, the PHRs in cloud storage, in transit from the patient to the cloud, or from the cloud to any other user, may be vulnerable to unauthorised access. Additionally, there are occasional threats made against the data by real insiders [13]. For instance, due to the nefarious actions of other organisations, the PHRs in cloud storage, in transit from the patient to the cloud, or from the cloud to any other user, may be vulnerable to illegal access [10]. People who work for the cloud service provider may act maliciously. The episode in which a U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs employee took home without authority the private health information of over 26.5 million people is a well-known illustration of that [14].

The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) requires that patients' consent and the terms of use and disclosure be followed in order to maintain the integrity and confidentiality of electronic health information

by healthcare providers [15]. Additionally, the PHRs should be encrypted when being kept on third-party cloud storage so that neither the cloud server providers nor unauthorised parties may access the PHRs. The PHRs should only be accessible to entities or people who have the "right-to-know" privilege. To prevent unauthorised alteration or abuse of data when it is transferred to the other stakeholders in the health cloud environment, the mechanism for granting access to PHRs should be managed by the patients themselves.

The privacy of PHRs kept on cloud servers has been protected in a variety of ways. Confidentiality, integrity, authenticity, accountability, and audit trail are ensured by privacy-preserving methods. While integrity concerns with preserving the originality of the data, whether in transit or in cloud storage, confidentiality guarantees that the health information is completely hidden from unauthorised parties [14].

Accountability refers to the need that data access regulations follow the established protocols, while authenticity ensures that the health data is only accessible by authorised parties. The term "audit trail" refers to the process of observing how health data is used even after access to it has been given [6].

We provide a way for managing the PHR access control system that is controlled by patients

themselves, dubbed Secure Sharing of PHRs in the Cloud (SeSPHR).

The approach limits unauthorised users to protect the PHRs' confidentiality. In the suggested approach, there are typically two categories of PHR users:

(a) patients or PHR owners; and (b) users of PHRs who are not owners, such as patients' family members or friends, physicians, health insurance company representatives, pharmacists, and researchers.

By selectively providing people access to certain PHR sections, patients who are the PHRs' owners are allowed to upload encrypted PHRs to the cloud. Depending on their job, each member of the group of users of the latter kind is given access to the PHRs to a certain degree by the PHR owners. The PHR owner defines the degrees of access given to different user groups in the Access Control List (ACL).

For instance, the owner of the PHRs may provide complete access to the patient's family members or acquaintances. Similar to this, insurance company personnel would only be allowed to see the PHR sections that include information concerning health insurance claims, with access to other personal medical information, such as the patient's medical history, being blocked for these users.

The SeSPHR methodology avoids the overhead by delegating the SRS for setting up the public/private key pairs and producing the decryption keys for the

authorised users only. In contrast to the approach proposed in [10], which suggests that the PHR owners manage multiple keys, this approach avoids overhead by proposing that the PHR owners produce the decryption keys. This ultimately leads to overhead at the PHR owner's end. The Setup and Re-encryption Server (SRS), a semi-trusted server, is used as the proxy since the approach views cloud servers as an untrusted identity. For the SRS to generate the re-encryption keys for safe sharing of PHRs across users, a proxy re-encryption-based technique is utilised. Patients or PHR owners encrypt the PHRs, and only authorised users with keys provided by the SRS may decode the PHRs. Additionally, the users are given access to the PHRs' particular sections that the PHR owner deems to be crucial. The proposed method is secure compared to previous constructs since the PHR data is never sent from the SRS in the proposed framework. Instead, it is the SRS's duty to maintain the keys, with PHR owners handling encryption tasks, and requesting users handling decryption tasks, provided they have access to valid decryption keys.

The forward and backward access controls are likewise enforced by the suggested method. The keys are obtained by the newly joining members of a certain user group from the SRS. Only the owner's keys are used to encrypt the shared data.

After receiving the PHR owner's consent, newly joining members are given access to the data. The corresponding keys for a departing user are also destroyed, and that user is also removed from the ACL. Any unauthorised access attempts made after the user has left are denied access to the PHR due to the deletion of the user keys and removal from the ACL. We also used High Level Petri Nets (HLPN) and the Z language to do a formal examination of the suggested design.

The HLPN is used to both imitate the system and to provide the mathematical characteristics that are later utilised to analyse the behaviour of the system. The Z3 solver and the Satisfiability Modulo Theories Library (SMT-Lib) are used to carry out the verification. To carry out the work of verification using the SMT, the petri net model is first translated into the SMT together with the specified properties, and then the Z3 solver is used to check whether the properties are true or false.

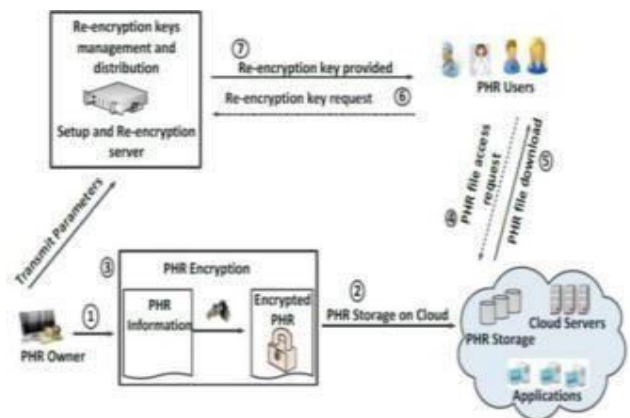


Fig- 1: Architecture of the proposed SeSPHR methodology

The following are the main contributions of the suggested work:

1. SeSPHR, a technique we offer, enables patients to control the sharing of their own PHRs in the cloud.
2. To maintain PHR secrecy, the SeSPHR approach uses proxy re-encryption and El-Gamal encryption.
3. Based on the access level established in the ACL for various user groups, the approach enables PHR owners to selectively provide users access to users over the sections of PHRs.
4. To provide access control and to produce the re-encryption keys for various user groups, a semi-trusted proxy named SRS is implemented, removing the burden of key management from the PHR owner's side.
5. The suggested technique also uses forward and backward access control.
6. The suggested approach is formally analysed and verified to ensure that it operates in accordance with the requirements.

II. RELATED WORK

The existing works that are related to the proposed work are presented in this section. By sending the Personally Identifiable Information individually, the authors in [28] developed a public key encryption-based technique to maintain the anonymity and unlinkability of health information

in a semitrusted cloud (PII). The Cloud Service Provider (CSP) saves the health record and the location of the file (index), and later encrypts them using symmetric key encryption. The patient encrypts the PHRs by the patient using the public key of the CSP, and the CSP decrypts the record using the private key. By associating the location and the master key, the administrative control of the patient on the PHRs is kept in place. The approach's drawback is that it enables the CSP to decrypt PHRs, which may then be used maliciously. The SRS, on the other hand, is a semi-trusted authority that decrypts the ciphertext created by the PHR owner and provides keys to the users that request access to the PHRs.

In a multi-user cloud setting, Chen et al. technique [12] uses the SKE and the Lagrange Multiplier to dynamically exercise access control on PHRs. The approach's primary characteristics include automatic user revocation. A partial order link between the users is kept in order to get around the challenges of other key management. However, the system requires the PHR owners' online presence in order to give or cancel access. Our suggested technique does not need the PHR owners to be online in order to offer the access over PHRs, in contrast to the plan described in [12]. Instead, the semi-trusted authority chooses the users' access rights and, upon successful authorisation, decides

the re-encryption keys for the users making therequest.

To provide patient-centric access control, the authors in [29] developed a Digital Right Management (DRM)-based solution. The writers used Content Key Encryption (CKE) to encrypt the data, and only users with valid licenses are allowed access. The first proxy re-encryption technique was put out in [33]. Unlike our policy, which is based on keys and has no effect on the size of the ciphertext, the policy in [33] is based on ciphertext, and the size of the ciphertext rises linearly with multi-use usage. This is because the [33] needs a step that is missing from our methodology—re-encryption. Li et al. [14] offer a method for sharing PHRs in multi-owners setting that are separated into several domains that uses attribute-based encryption (ABE).

The technique initially presented in [33] serves as the foundation for the suggested methodology. After a given user's access has been revoked, the method re-encrypts the PHRs using the proxy re-encryption mechanism(s). The methods successfully reduce the complexity and expense of key management while also improving the phenomena of on-demand user revocation. Despite being scalable, the method is unable to handle situations when granting access permissions based on users' identities is necessary.

To guarantee user responsibility, Xhafa et al. [30] also applied Ciphertext Policy ABE (CPABE). In addition to preserving user privacy, the suggested method has the ability to track down users whomis behave and illegitimately share their decryption keys with other users.

It presents a method for ensuring both the secrecy and fine-grained access to the healthcare data that has been contracted out to cloud servers. By using proxy re-encryption, Key Policy ABE (KP-ABE), and lazy re-encryption, the expensive duties of re-encrypting data files, updating secret keys, and preventing users whose access has been revoked from learning the contents of the data are handled. There-encryption of data files and subsequent storage in the cloud environment are responsibilities assigned to the cloud servers. However, the data owner is also expected in the proposed framework to be a reliable authority who controls the keys for several owners and users.

Therefore, managing several keys for various attributes for many owners would be inefficient at the PHR owners' end. Because the functions of key creation and key distribution to various user types are carried out by the semi-trusted authority, our technique eliminates overhead. In order to provide fine-grained access control, the authors in [31] and [32] also employed proxy re-encryption-

ownerstoencryptPHRsbeforeputtingtheminthecloud

and adds a semi-trusted authority that re-encrypts the ciphertext without knowing what's within the PHRs. The PHRs can only be decrypted by authorized users who possess decryption keys issued by the semi-trusted authority.

III. PROPOSED METHODOLOGY

The recommended method makes use of proxy re-encryption to provide PHR confidentiality and exchange security across public clouds. The architecture of the suggested SeSPHR technique is shown in Fig. 1.

Persons the recommended method for exchanging PHRs in a cloud environment involves the Setup and Re-encryption Server (SRS), the cloud, and the users. An overview of each of the entities is provided below.

The cloud strategy advises PHR owners to save their data in the cloud so they may subsequently safely share it with other users. Users assume that the cloud is an unreliable source when they upload or download PHRs to or from cloud servers. No change to the cloud are necessary since both types of users are the only ones that upload and download PHRs in the way stated.

Setting up and installing the SRS: Every system user's public/private key pair must be generated by the SRS, a semi-trusted server. The SRS further generates the re-encryption keys in order to safely transfer PHR among several user groups. The SRS

is regarded as a semi-trusted entity in the recommended method. In light of this, we draw the conclusion that it is honest and generally follows the law, but odd. The SRS monitors the keys, but it never gets PHR information. Operations for encryption and decryption are completed at the endpoints of the users. The SRS offers key management in addition to access control for the shared data.

Due to the public cloud's unreliability, the SRS is a stand-alone server that cannot be installed there. The SRS may be managed by a group of institutions or by a respectable third-party organisation for the benefit of the patients. It could also be maintained by a group of connected patients. However, SRS maintained by hospitals or a group of patients might inspire higher trust due to the involvement of medical specialists and/or the patients' self-control over SRS.

Users: Patients (owners of PHRs who wish to securely share their PHRs with others) and patients' family members or friends, doctors, representatives of health insurance companies, pharmacists, and researchers are the two main groups of users of the system. Friends and relatives are classed as private domain users under the SeSPHR methodology, whereas all other users are categorised as public domain users.

PHR owners may provide users access to PHRs in the public and private domains to varying degrees.

Users who come under the private domain, for example, may have complete access to the PHR, but those who fall under the public domain, such as physicians, scientists, and pharmacists, would only have access to a limited number of PHR parts. The aforementioned users may also be granted full access to the PHRs if the PHR owner determines it is required. In other words, the SeSPHR approach allows patients to impose precise access control over PHRs.

Every system user must register with the SRS in order to access the SRS's services. As a doctor, researcher, or pharmacist, for example, the registration procedure is dependent on the user's responsibilities.

HR Partitioning

The four sections listed below are logical divisions of the PHR:

Personal information, health-related information, insurance information, and information on prescription drugs;

It is crucial to note that the aforementioned division is flexible. The PHR may be divided into fewer or more divisions at the user's discretion. The PHRs are represented in a number of formats, including XML, and may be simply separated into pieces. The PHR owner also has the option of giving many partitions the same level of access control. Some PHR partitions may include user restrictions,

meaning that a particular user may not have full access to the health data.

For instance, a pharmacist may not have access to personal or medical information, but they may be given prescription and insurance-related information. Full access to the PHR may also be given to family members and friends. A researcher could only need access to the patient's medical records once the personal data has been deleted. The PHR owner grants the SRS access rights to each of the various PHR partitions when data is uploaded to the cloud.

The Proposed Methodology's Approach Functions

The suggested SeSPHR technique consists of the following steps: setup, key creation, encryption, and decryption. The parts that follow go through each action:

SETUP

The offered approaches work well with the G_1 and G_2 groups with the prime order q . G_1 , G_1G_1 , and G_2 are bilinearly mapped to form G_2 . A random number generator where $g \in G_1$ has a parameter Z . Z is used as a second random number generator using the formula $Z = e(g, g) \in G_2$.

Key Generation

Public/private key pairs are created by the SRS for the set of authorized users.

ENCRYPTION

Imagine that patient P is required to upload their PHR to the cloud. The PHR partitions that the user has allocated to the different access level groups are represented by a random number or numbers that are generated by the patient client application. In our case, we take into consideration that the access levels for each of the four partitions specified in Section 3.2 vary. As a consequence, four random variables are created in our example: r_1 , r_2 , r_3 , and r_4 (Z_q). The variable r_i is used to encrypt the i -th partition of the PHR. Each partition is encrypted separately by the client programme. Thanks to the XML structure, the application can quickly perform encryption and decryption on the PHR's logical partitions. The partitions stated above in the PHR are encrypted as seen below.

The quantity of PHR partitions; the titles of each partition, such as "Personal Health Record" (PHR), "Medical Record," "Insurance Information," and "Prescription Information; (any role may be granted access to more than one partition, such as doctors may be granted access to medical information).

- The first close relative or acquaintance to provide access
- If there is any default access for new members

DECRYPTION

Let's assume user U requests access to the patient P's provided encrypted PHR (C). User U downloads the C directly from the cloud after completing the cloud authentication process. The user U requests

the SRS to determine and deliver the correct R parameters required for decryption at that point. By looking at the asking user's ACL, the SRS determines if the PHR owner has granted access to the partition for which the user has requested R. Based on the access rights specified in the ACL, the SRS will create and provide the necessary parameters to the requesting user. We shall show how R is produced for each division in the text that follows in order to provide a comprehensive explanation of the procedure. Therefore, we assume that user U has complete access to all partitions. The SRS computes R and sends it to the user U together with the re-encryption key.

VI. CONCLUSION

We suggested a mechanism for transmitting and storing PHRs in the cloud securely to authorized parties. The technique upholds a patient-centric access control to various PHR subsystems based on the access granted by the patients, while maintaining the privacy of the PHRs.

We put in place a form of offline-grained access restriction so that not even authorized users of the system could access restricted areas of the PHR. Only authorized users with legitimate re-encryption keys supplied by a semi-trusted proxy are able to decrypt PHRs, which are stored encrypted by PHR owners in the cloud. The tractor trailer proxy's job is to create and maintain public and private key pairs for the system's users.

The methodology also manages forward and backward identity management for leaving and newly joining users, correspondingly, in addition to maintaining confidentiality and guaranteeing patient-centric access control for PHRs. Additionally, we officially assessed and validated the SeSPHR methodology's operation using the HLPN, SMT-Lib, and Z3 solver. The time it took to generate keys, the activities involved in both encryption and decryption including timely delivery was all taken into account when evaluating performance. The outcomes of the experiment show that the SeSPHR approach may be used to safely exchange PHRs in a cloud context.

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