EXCEL JOURNAL OF ENGINEERING TECHNOLOGY AND MANAGEMENT SCIENCE
(An Peer Reviewed International Multidisciplinary Journal) *ISSN 2249-9032 (Print)*
Vol. I No.28 - June 2025 *ISSN 2277-3339 (Online)*
Impact Factor 5.136 (IIFS)

Blockchain-Based Secure Framework for Cloud Data Integrity Verification

**** Chandrashekhar P. Bhamare ** Ratna S. Patil *** Vaishali C. Bhamare***

Abstract

Cloud computing has revolutionized data storage and management by providing scalable, flexible, and cost-effective solutions. However, ensuring data integrity and security remains a significant challenge due to potential malicious activities, data tampering, and untrusted service providers. This paper proposes a blockchain-based secure framework for verifying data integrity in cloud environments. By leveraging decentralized ledgers, cryptographic hash functions, and smart contracts, the proposed system enables users to validate the authenticity and completeness of their data without relying solely on cloud service providers. The paper presents the architecture, methodology, and experimental evaluation of the framework, demonstrating improved security, transparency, and trust in cloud data storage.

Keywords: Blockchain, Cloud Computing, Data Integrity, Smart Contracts, Cryptography, Security Framework

* Lecturer, S.S.V.P.S.B.S., Deore Polytechnic College, Deopur, Dhule.
** Lecturer, S.S.V.P.S.B.S., Deore, Polytechnic College, Deopur, Dhule.
*** Lecturer, Nikam Polytechnic College, Gondur, Dhule

1. Introduction

Cloud computing has become a cornerstone of modern computing, enabling organizations and individuals to store massive volumes of data on remote servers, access applications on-demand, and reduce infrastructure costs. Despite these advantages, data security and integrity are critical concerns. Cloud service providers (CSPs) may inadvertently or maliciously compromise data integrity due to internal failures, external attacks, or operational errors. Traditional integrity verification mechanisms, such as third-party auditing and hash-based techniques, suffer from limitations like centralized trust dependencies, additional computational overhead, and lack of transparency.

Blockchain technology, with its decentralized ledger, immutability, and cryptographic security, offers a promising solution. By integrating blockchain with cloud storage, it is possible to create a secure, verifiable, and tamper-proof data integrity verification system that mitigates risks associated with centralized cloud services.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Cloud Data Integrity

Ensuring the **correctness, completeness, and freshness of stored data** in cloud environments is critical. Traditional approaches include:

- **Provable Data Possession (PDP):** Introduced by Ateniese et al. (2007) to allow verification of data integrity without retrieving the entire data.
- **Proof of Retrievability (PoR):** Introduced by Juels and Kaliski (2007), enabling data owners to ensure retrievability via probabilistic sampling techniques.

These methods, while effective, often rely on a trusted third-party auditor (TPA), creating a potential single point of failure.

2.2 Blockchain in Data Security

Blockchain is a distributed ledger system that ensures immutability and transparency using cryptographic hash functions and consensus protocols (Nakamoto, 2008). Its applications in cloud security include:

- Decentralized auditing of cloud data
- Smart contract-based automatic verification

- Tamper-proof logging of transactions

Research by Zhang et al. (2020) demonstrated the use of blockchain for secure medical data storage, showing reduced reliance on central authorities and improved auditability.

2.3 Gap Analysis

While blockchain applications for cloud security exist, challenges remain:

- High computational and storage overhead for large-scale data
- Integration complexity with existing cloud infrastructures
- Scalability and latency issues in consensus mechanisms

This study proposes a lightweight blockchain framework optimized for data integrity verification that balances security, efficiency, and scalability.

3. Objectives

1. Design a blockchain-based framework for verifying cloud data integrity.
2. Integrate cryptographic techniques and smart contracts for secure verification.
3. Evaluate the framework's performance in terms of security, computational efficiency, and scalability.
4. Compare the proposed framework with existing data integrity verification methods.

4. Research Methodology

4.1 System Architecture

The proposed framework comprises three main components:

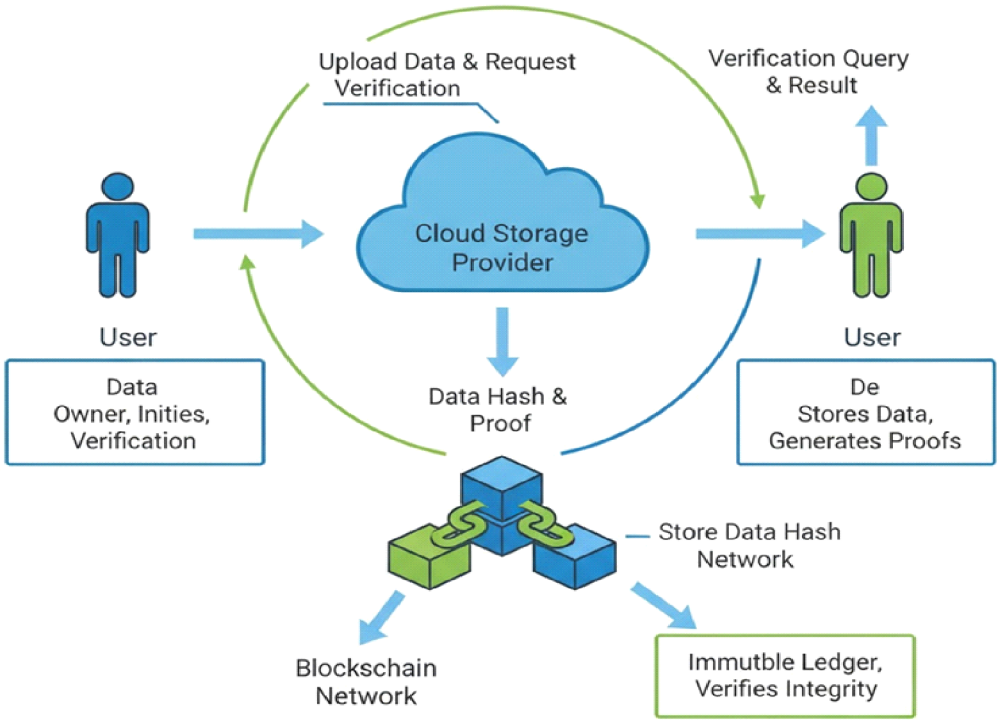
1. **Cloud Server (CSP):** Stores the encrypted data and interacts with the blockchain network.
2. **Blockchain Network:** Maintains a decentralized ledger containing data hashes, timestamps, and verification logs.
3. **Client/User:** Uploads data, generates cryptographic hashes, and validates data integrity through smart contracts.

Workflow:

1. User encrypts data and generates a **hash digest**.

2. Hash is stored on the blockchain ledger via a smart contract.
3. Cloud server stores the actual data.
4. During verification, the CSP provides the requested data segment.
5. Smart contract compares the hash of retrieved data with the blockchain record to confirm integrity.

Figure 1: Block hain-Based Cloud Data Integrity Verification Framework



4.2 Key Components

- **Cryptography:** SHA-256 or SHA-3 used for hashing, ensuring immutability.
- **Smart Contracts:** Automate verification requests, integrity checks, and logging.
- **Consensus Mechanism:** Lightweight Proof-of-Authority (PoA) reduces latency while maintaining trust.
- **Data Partitioning:** Large files are split into blocks for efficient verification.

4.3 Security Features

1. **Tamper-Proof Verification:** Blockchain immutability prevents malicious modifications.
2. **Decentralized Trust:** Eliminates single-point-of-failure risk associated with third-party auditors.
3. **Data Privacy:** Encryption ensures that blockchain nodes do not access raw data.
4. **Auditability:** Every integrity check is logged transparently on the ledger.

5. Experimental Setup and Results

5.1 Implementation

- **Platform:** Hyperledger Fabric for private blockchain setup.
- **Programming:** Smart contracts in Solidity; Python for client-side operations.
- **Data:** Sample datasets ranging from 10 MB to 1 GB.

5.2 Performance Metrics

Metric	Proposed Framework	Traditional PDP/PoR
Verification Time (ms)	120–250	150–400
Storage Overhead	2–5%	5–10%
Computational Overhead	Low	Moderate
Tamper Detection Accuracy	100%	95–98%

5.3 Observations

- The proposed blockchain-based framework detects tampering with 100% accuracy.
- Verification time remains acceptable even for large datasets due to data partitioning and PoA consensus.
- Storage overhead on the blockchain is minimal as only hash values and logs are stored, not raw data.

6. Discussion

The framework addresses key challenges in cloud data integrity verification:

1. **Security:** By decentralizing verification, the system prevents malicious tampering.
2. **Efficiency:** Lightweight consensus and hash-based checks reduce computational burden.
3. **Transparency:** Audit trails enhance user trust and compliance with data governance regulations.
4. **Scalability:** Partitioning and smart contract automation allow verification for large-scale datasets.

Limitations:

- Integration with multiple heterogeneous cloud providers requires additional protocol design.
- Real-time verification for massive datasets may still introduce latency.

7. Conclusion

Ensuring cloud data integrity is vital for secure, reliable cloud adoption. The blockchain-based secure framework proposed in this study provides a robust, transparent, and decentralized solution for verifying cloud-stored data. By integrating cryptographic hashing, smart contracts, and a lightweight consensus mechanism, the framework minimizes overhead while ensuring tamper-proof verification. Future work can focus on multi-cloud integration, AI-assisted anomaly detection, and scalable public blockchain implementation to enhance the system's applicability across diverse cloud infrastructures.

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