Security Considerations and Risk Mitigation Strategies in Multi-Tenant Serverless Computing Environments

*By **Vishal Shahane**,*

Software Engineer, Amazon Web Services, Seattle, WA, United States

Orcid ID - https://orcid.org/0009-0004-4993-5488

Abstract

Multi-tenant serverless computing environments present unique security challenges due to the shared nature of resources among multiple users. This paper examines the specific security considerations and risk mitigation strategies essential for safeguarding data and applications in such environments.

The paper starts by delineating the distinctive characteristics of serverless computing, emphasizing its event-driven, ephemeral nature, and how multi-tenancy exacerbates security concerns by sharing resources across tenants. Traditional security measures like network segmentation and access controls may not suffice in this dynamic context.

Subsequently, it explores common security threats prevalent in multi-tenant serverless environments, including unauthorized access, data breaches, denial-of-service attacks, and privilege escalation. These threats stem from various sources such as misconfigured functions, vulnerabilities in shared components, or malicious activities by other tenants.

To counteract these threats, a comprehensive framework for risk mitigation is proposed. This framework encompasses proactive measures like minimizing attack surfaces, enforcing least privilege access, and implementing secure coding practices. Additionally, it advocates for detective measures such as runtime monitoring and anomaly detection, alongside responsive actions like incident response protocols and data encryption.

Furthermore, the paper delves into specific security controls and best practices tailored for multi-tenant serverless environments. These include function-level isolation, secure dependency management, and encryption for data at rest and in transit. It also explores emerging security technologies like serverless-specific intrusion detection systems and runtime application self-protection solutions.

Real-world case studies and incidents are analyzed to validate the efficacy of the proposed framework and security measures. By learning from these cases, organizations can better understand common vulnerabilities and refine their security strategies accordingly.

In conclusion, proactive security measures and risk mitigation strategies are imperative for ensuring the integrity, confidentiality, and availability of data and applications in multi-tenant serverless computing environments. As the adoption of serverless continues to rise, ongoing research and collaboration are essential to stay abreast of evolving security threats and challenges.

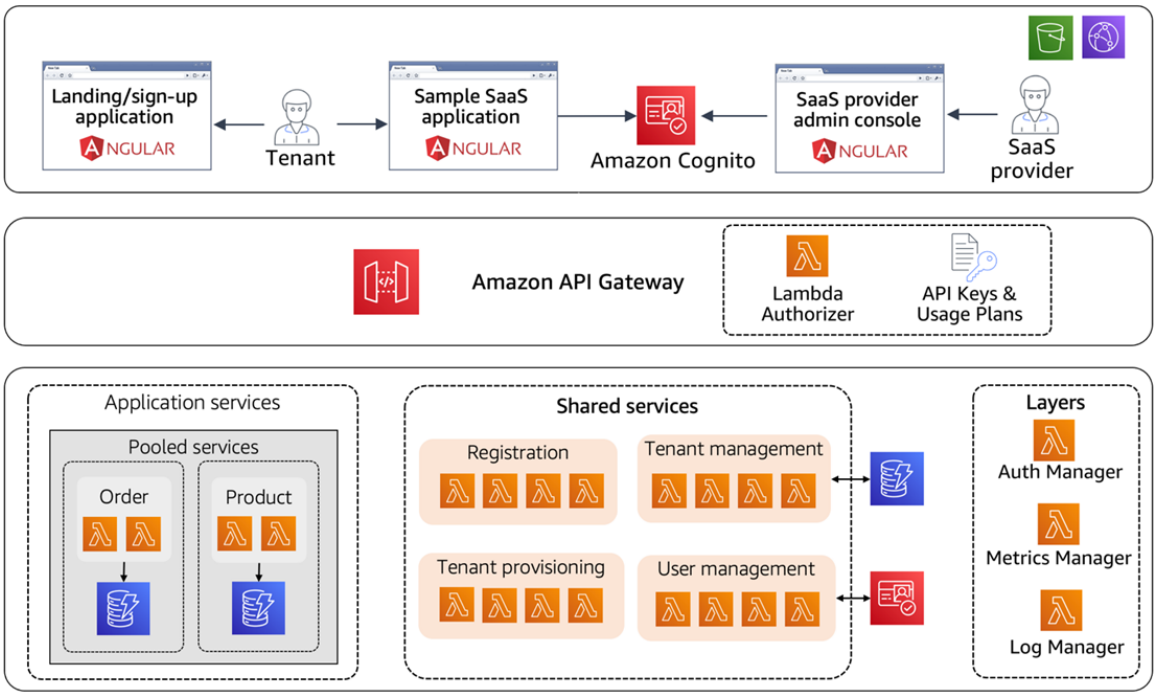
Keywords

multi-tenant, serverless computing, security considerations, risk mitigation, threat analysis, security controls, incident response, encryption, intrusion detection

1. Introduction to Multi-Tenant Serverless Computing

The upsurge of cloud computing has resulted in an amalgam of software and service delivery models. Cloud computing encompasses infrastructure as a service (IaaS), platform as a service (PaaS), and software as a service (SaaS) as its key service delivery models. Moreover, serverless computing, often referred to as function as a service (FaaS), has emerged as a relative newcomer and gained significant attention from both the academic and industry communities. This specialized PaaS offering stands out as a game-changer in the world of computing. Serverless computing, as a specialized type of microservice-based, event-driven computing, brings forth a new era of innovation. It is characterized by services that abstract the runtime infrastructure, enabling developers to deploy "functions" seamlessly. These functions, which are discrete, short-lived, and stateless executable units of code, play a crucial role in the serverless architecture. They are executed in response to events from well-known event sources, such as message queues, databases, or HTTP requests. The beauty of serverless computing lies in its ability to ensure efficient resource allocation, as developers are only billed by cloud service providers (CSPs) based on the actual execution time of these functions. With serverless computing, developers can navigate the complexities of traditional infrastructure management and focus solely on building and deploying reliable applications. By abstracting the underlying infrastructure, serverless computing empowers developers to truly embrace the notion of "code as a service," transforming the way applications are developed, deployed, and operated in the cloud. This paradigm shift not only enhances developer productivity but also offers cost-efficiency and scalability for businesses of all sizes. The rise of serverless computing has paved the way for a versatile computing

landscape where organizations can leverage the benefits of scalability, agility, and cost-effectiveness. By harnessing the power of serverless functions, businesses can dynamically scale their applications, responding to varying workloads in real-time. Additionally, the event-driven nature of serverless computing enables seamless integration with other cloud services, allowing for innovative application architectures. As the serverless computing ecosystem continues to evolve rapidly, developers and businesses alike are exploring the vast potential it holds. With its ability to abstract the underlying infrastructure, serverless computing offers a promising avenue for continuous innovation and the development of groundbreaking applications. The future of computing is undoubtedly headed towards a serverless horizon, where developers can unleash their creativity without being hindered by the complexities of infrastructure management. The possibilities are immense, and the benefits are boundless in this exciting era of serverless computing.



Serverless computing has emerged to be a compelling paradigm with its core promise being the abstraction of runtime infrastructure and billing based on actual function execution time. This paradigm adds multi-tenancy at the function level to the already present cloud computing multi-tenancy at the virtual machine (VM) and container level. Multi-tenancy is key in serverless computing to ensure its cost-effectiveness. However, adding multi-tenancy makes serverless computing more challenging to secure. The dynamic nature of serverless computing intensifies concerns as customers relinquish even more control over a smaller part of the computing infrastructure stack. This research presents a set of security considerations and risk mitigation strategies that can be used to address these security challenges in a multi-tenant serverless computing environment. Serverless computing enables

developers to build and run applications and services without thinking about servers. With serverless computing, developers can focus on their core product or service instead of managing and operating servers. Serverless computing also allows developers to create and run applications and services without the need for infrastructure management tasks such as server or cluster provisioning, patching, operating system maintenance, and capacity provisioning. Serverless computing allows developers to deploy their code in response to events and automatically manage the compute resources. Serverless computing platforms provide built-in scaling and high availability, allowing applications to seamlessly handle a growing number of users and the processing of large amounts of data. Serverless computing is ideal for applications such as data processing, real-time file processing, Internet of Things (IoT) data ingestion and processing, mobile back-end, and automated systems. Additionally, serverless computing abstracts the infrastructure, enabling developers to focus on writing code while leaving the operational aspects to the cloud provider. Serverless computing encourages a microservices architecture, which is beneficial for developing and deploying complex enterprise systems. Serverless computing can also be used for building event-driven architectures and batch processing, enabling efficient, cost-effective, and scalable solutions for various use cases across different industry sectors. Overall, serverless computing has the potential to revolutionize the way applications are built, deployed, and managed, offering significant advantages in terms of reduced operational overhead, increased agility, and improved cost efficiency.

1.1. Definition and Conceptual Framework

Serverless computing, also referred to as function-as-a-service, is the newest addition to cloud computing. It is a natural extension of platform-as-a-service that abstracts the runtime environment, allowing developers to focus on writing code that response to events. In a serverless model, cloud consumers only need to create a function, specify the event source, and upload their code to the cloud provider. Upon the occurrence of the pre-defined event, the cloud provider runs the function and then deallocates the resources on which that function executes. The pay-as-you-go nature of serverless computing, as well as the lack of upfront cost, makes serverless computing an attractive option for enterprises to utilize cloud resources. Serverless computing also further simplifies cloud development, and allows code deployment at a finer granularity, offering both commercial and non-commercial developers a new way to utilize the cloud. Serverless computing, with its event-driven architecture, enables developers to focus on building specific functionalities without worrying about server management, scaling, or maintenance. Additionally, serverless computing is highly scalable, automatically adjusting resources based on the workload, and promotes a more efficient use of resources by eliminating the need to provision and manage servers. The versatility of serverless computing allows for a wide range of applications, from simple data processing tasks to complex event-driven architectures. This new paradigm in cloud computing has the potential to revolutionize the way

applications are developed, deployed, and scaled, providing a more cost-effective and efficient solution for organizations of all sizes. Serverless computing has the potential to revolutionize the way applications are developed, deployed, and scaled. With the pay-as-you-go nature of serverless computing, as well as the lack of upfront cost, it becomes an attractive option for enterprises to utilize cloud resources. This new paradigm in cloud computing has brought forth an innovative way of utilizing the cloud, promoting a more efficient use of resources by eliminating the need to provision and manage servers. Serverless computing is highly scalable, automatically adjusting resources based on the workload. It allows for a wide range of applications, from simple data processing tasks to complex event-driven architectures. Serverless computing, with its event-driven architecture, enables developers to focus on building specific functionalities without worrying about server management, scaling, or maintenance. Serverless computing is set to offer a cost-effective and efficient solution for organizations of all sizes.

While serverless computing is rapidly gaining popularity as a cloud service, there is a lack of attention given to the practicality of implementing this model in multi-tenant environments, which are indispensable for achieving economic scalability. The serverless function, acting as both the code unit and resource allocation, presents unique challenges in terms of multi-tenancy that differ significantly from VM-based or container-based systems. In a serverless computing environment, tenants' functions are dynamically injected and removed, and the platform itself is responsible for selecting the optimal available resources for function execution. Despite the advantages of multi-tenancy for both service providers and consumers, it also introduces a number of security challenges to the serverless model. In this regard, we meticulously examine three main categories of risks, identifying both inherent and derived risks associated with each category. Following this comprehensive examination, we propose effective risk mitigation strategies and hold insightful discussions on the related issues. The serverless environment is heavily reliant on the concept of multi-tenancy for efficient resource allocation, as well as the dynamic injection and removal of tenants' functions. This uniqueness gives rise to a distinctive set of security challenges that go beyond the scope of traditional VM-based or container-based systems. Therefore, it becomes imperative to conduct a focused examination on the risks and explore potential mitigation strategies specifically tailored for this serverless paradigm. Our exploration into the inherent and derived risks within the three major risk categories provides invaluable insights into the intricacies of multi-tenancy in the context of serverless computing. Moreover, our carefully devised risk mitigation strategies, accompanied by in-depth discussions, offer a fresh perspective on the practical and conceptual challenges associated with securing the serverless model in multi-tenant environments. As the demand for serverless computing continues to grow, it is essential to address the challenges and risks that arise in multi-tenant environments. By thoroughly analyzing the different risk categories, we gain a comprehensive understanding of the potential security vulnerabilities in the serverless model.

This knowledge allows us to develop effective mitigation strategies that can safeguard the integrity and confidentiality of tenants' functions. Through insightful discussions, we shed light on the nuances of multi-tenancy and highlight the importance of considering these factors when securing the serverless environment. In conclusion, the implementation of serverless computing in multi-tenant environments requires careful examination and consideration of the unique challenges it presents. By identifying and mitigating the inherent and derived risks, we can ensure the smooth operation and security of the serverless model. It is crucial for service providers and consumers alike to be aware of these risks and actively work towards implementing effective security measures. Through our comprehensive exploration and proposed strategies, we aim to contribute to the ongoing discussions surrounding the practicality and security of serverless computing in multi-tenant environments.

2. Security Threats and Challenges in Multi-Tenant Serverless Environments

The different multi-tenancy levels found in serverless platforms further exacerbate these security challenges. Firstly, at the function level - where multiple versions of a same function from different users execute in the same event-driven platform - function co-residency (or horizontal multi-tenancy) can allow malicious users to capture sensitive information (such as credentials, keys, or tokens) from other functions executing in the same platform. Secondly, at the platform level - where different serverless platforms implement multi-tenancy through hosting user functions on the same set of physical machines - platform co-residency (or vertical multi-tenancy) may lead to a number of new information leakage channels and exposure to additional attack surface, as all user functions executing on the same physical machine share common access control and resource isolation components (such as the hypervisor, the guest operating system, and the hardware CPU, memory, and cache components). To secure multi-tenant serverless platforms, it is necessary to build security mechanisms that address the challenges created by these multi-tenancy levels, and that embrace the rapid, automatic, and transparent nature of serverless computing. Serverless platforms must anticipate and mitigate the security challenges associated with multi-tenancy, including ensuring robust encryption, secure access control, and thorough monitoring for potential vulnerabilities or breaches. Additionally, implementing strict isolation measures between co-resident functions and users and maintaining constant vigilance against potential exploitation will be critical to ensuring the overall security and reliability of multi-tenant serverless platforms in the face of evolving threats and vulnerabilities. Therefore, it is imperative that organizations and cloud service providers prioritize the development and implementation of comprehensive security protocols and mechanisms to fortify multi-tenant serverless platforms and safeguard against the potential risks and impacts of multi-tenancy-related security concerns. As serverless computing continues to gain traction in the technology sector, the importance of addressing these security concerns cannot be overstated. Without robust security measures in place, the adoption and use of serverless platforms and applications could be at risk of

compromising sensitive data, exposing vulnerabilities, and falling victim to increasingly sophisticated cyber threats. Therefore, organizations and service providers must work proactively to develop and implement strategies for securing multi-tenant serverless platforms, including deployment of advanced encryption technologies, access control systems, and comprehensive monitoring and analysis tools. By taking a proactive and vigilant approach to security, organizations can ensure that multi-tenant serverless platforms remain resilient in the face of growing security challenges and threats, providing a secure and reliable foundation for the development and deployment of cloud-based applications and services.

We present an overview of the security threats and challenges in multi-tenant serverless computing environments, by first detailing the function execution workflow in multi-tenant serverless platforms, and then elaborating the security threats that may arise during this process. Generally, a serverless function is triggered by an event and is passed the necessary input parameters required to carry out its task. Upon initiation, the function runs in response to a received event, and is executed in a newly created and isolated environment, referred to as an execution container. After the function has run to completion, the results are returned and the container is destroyed. Importantly, during the execution of a serverless function, several inherent security and trust issues arise, primarily revolving around the execution environment and the short-lived function lifecycle. These issues can pose significant risks to the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of data and resources within a multi-tenant serverless computing environment. Furthermore, the rapid scalability and flexible resource allocation in serverless platforms introduce additional complexities to security management and enforcement. Therefore, it is crucial to thoroughly understand these security threats and challenges in order to effectively mitigate and address the risks associated with multi-tenant serverless computing environments. This understanding is essential for ensuring the safe and secure operation of serverless computing environments for various organizations and businesses that utilize these platforms for their operations. By effectively identifying and mitigating these security threats and challenges, organizations can ensure the protection of sensitive data, maintain the integrity of their operations, and minimize potential disruptions or unauthorized access to their serverless computing environments. In addition, proactive measures and comprehensive security protocols will also result in increased confidence and trust in the security and reliability of multi-tenant serverless platforms, further promoting their widespread adoption and utilization across various industries and sectors.

2.1. Data Privacy and Confidentiality Risks

An additional security concern that should be taken into account is the execution of code provided by customers on a cloud platform that is under the control of the CSP (Cloud Service Provider). This platform is shared with others, which significantly increases the risk of unauthorized access to customer

data. The risk of unauthorized data exposure is further escalated due to the dynamic creation of function instances and the short duration of these instances. Given these inherent characteristics of serverless functions, they require access to data stores, which makes it a considerable challenge to design secure access mechanisms that can effectively safeguard sensitive information from unauthorized access. Consequently, data access configuration is necessary to ensure that serverless functions cannot access any other data except for what is essential to their specific purpose. The creation of well-defined security-related configurations for these functions is also a formidable challenge, as many serverless functions rely on simple I/O model descriptors that do not provide the flexibility needed for refined data access control lists. As a result, serverless multi-tenant platforms call for additional robust mechanisms that can effectively mitigate the risk of unauthorized data exposure and unauthorized data access from functions. Implementing robust security protocols is paramount in effectively and comprehensively mitigating the risks associated with data access and exposure in serverless environments. The implementation of these protocols requires a thorough understanding and analysis of the potential threats and vulnerabilities specific to the cloud environment, as well as the development of tailored solutions to address these challenges. By doing so, cloud service providers can ensure the integrity and confidentiality of customer data, providing their clients with the peace of mind necessary to confidently leverage the benefits of serverless computing while minimizing the potential security risks.

With sensitive data being processed by the serverless functions, there is a growing concern of possible unauthorized data exposure. Data privacy and confidentiality are considerable problems in a serverless multi-tenant computing environment. Serverless computing is designed to execute single-purpose functions that are initiated in response to cloud events or invoked using specific HTTP requests. Function instances are short-lived and are created dynamically by the cloud platform. It is a challenge to ensure that confidential customer data is not leaked when functions are being executed by the cloud platform. It is a challenge to ensure that confidential customer data is not leaked when functions are being executed by the cloud platform. Functions can be triggered by cloud events, such as the upload of a file to cloud storage. The sharing of cloud infrastructure increases the risk that confidential data may be exposed to unauthorized users or that data integrity may be violated. The risk of unauthorized data exposure is increased due to the dynamic creation of the function instances and the short duration of the instances. As a result, it is crucial for organizations to implement robust security measures, including encryption and access controls, to mitigate the risk of data exposure in a serverless computing environment. Implementing a comprehensive data protection strategy is essential to safeguard sensitive information and maintain the trust of customers and stakeholders. Additionally, ongoing monitoring and auditing of serverless functions can help identify and address potential security vulnerabilities, ensuring that sensitive data remains protected at all times. By proactively addressing

these challenges, organizations can leverage the benefits of serverless computing while effectively managing the associated risks.

3. Security Best Practices and Risk Mitigation Strategies

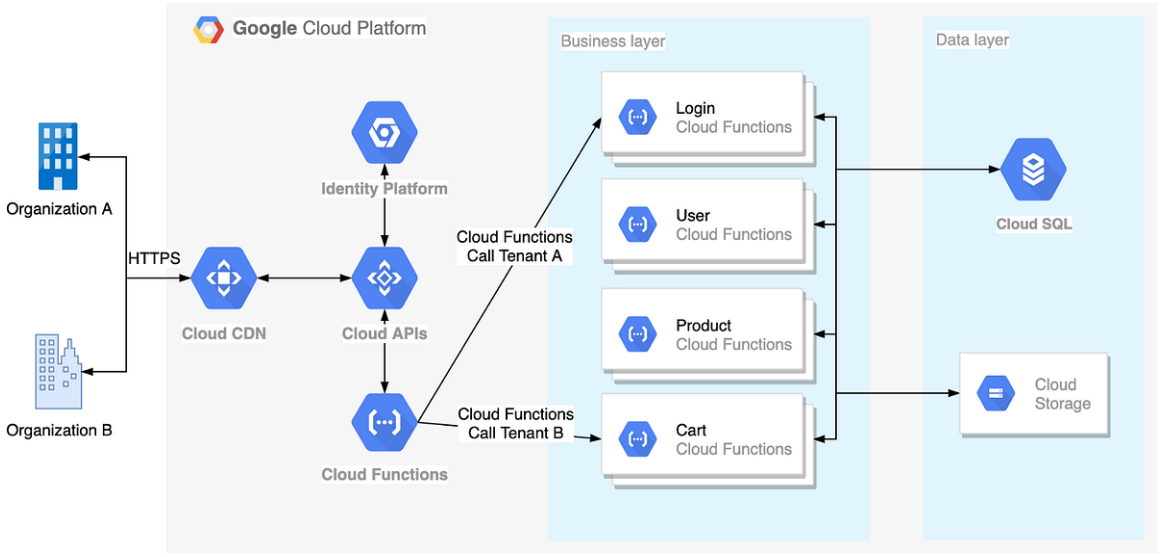
The ever growing and expanding list of cloud native serverless frameworks has also brought forth an extensive and diverse assortment for cloud consumers to choose from. While the well-established proprietary cloud functions have gained recognition, there are also emerging open and free functions platforms that revolve around the foundations of cloud native constructs. It is worth noting that there exists a wide array of options when it comes to both proprietary and free functions platforms, such as the commercial Amazon Web Service Lambda, Google Cloud Functions, Microsoft Azure Functions, IBM OpenWhisk, Oracle Functions, Kubeless, OpenFaaS, and Apache Openwhisk, which interestingly enough is both a proprietary and open-source project. These multifaceted alternatives appeal to cloud users in a manner similar to their underlying cloud infrastructure platforms, including the likes of IaaS and PaaS, as they present differing service level agreements (SLA), pricing models, support for programming languages, event source compatibility, and extensibility. It is quite a challenge to fathom the necessity of SLA or pricing, especially when learning costs come into play alongside notifications, ultimately leading to a significant consideration regarding the vulnerability of language-specific security measures. When exploring the realm of cloud native serverless frameworks, it becomes evident that the options available for cloud consumers are continuously growing and expanding. The selection process is no longer limited to a few well-known proprietary cloud functions, as there are now also emerging open and free functions platforms that are built upon the fundamental principles of cloud native constructs. The range of choices in both proprietary and free functions platforms is vast and diverse, offering cloud users numerous alternatives to consider. Among these options are popular commercial offerings like Amazon Web Service Lambda, Google Cloud Functions, Microsoft Azure Functions, IBM OpenWhisk, Oracle Functions, Kubeless, OpenFaaS, and Apache Openwhisk, which is an intriguing case as it is both a proprietary and open-source project. These platforms, with their multifaceted nature, attract cloud users in a similar manner to the underlying cloud infrastructure platforms such as IaaS and PaaS. They provide varying service level agreements (SLA), pricing models, support for different programming languages, compatibility with various event sources, and the ability to extend their functionality. The presence of SLAs and pricing can be quite challenging to comprehend, particularly when considering factors like learning costs and notifications. Ultimately, this leads to a significant consideration regarding the vulnerability of security measures specific to different programming languages.

As a definition, serverless provides a computing model where the cloud provider is responsible for executing piece of code by dynamically allocating the necessary resources. The highlights of serverless

are event-driven programming, zero administration, automatic-scaling, fine-grained billing. In more practical terms, developers write these short functions and deploy them on a platform like AWS Lambda, and don't necessarily have to think about the rest of the infrastructure. This results in a sub-field of cloud computing and it is modernizing how people use the cloud, despite many open security challenges. Today, many applications can be entirely serverless or benefit from serverless components for tasks like media encoding, search indexing, and messaging.

3.1. Isolation and Segregation Techniques

Isolate invasive or long-running functions to a separate execution environment: In the process of executing a function, if a tenant is determined to be causing an impact or hindering the performance of other tenants, the function can be relocated to a distinct sandboxed execution environment. This is particularly useful when dealing with functions that consume a significant amount of CPU, memory, I/O, or network resources, as they can be classified as disruptive and executed in a separate environment. This segregation ensures that other functions are not affected by or required to share resources with these disruptive functions. By doing so, the overall system performance remains uncompromised and unaffected. Additionally, it allows for better management and allocation of resources. Resources can be dedicated specifically to these disruptive functions without any negative impact on other functions. Moreover, this isolation mechanism serves to prevent any adverse effects on the user experience and the overall system performance. It creates a more efficient and reliable environment for all tenants and their respective functions to operate in. This approach not only enhances the performance of the system but also ensures that each tenant can execute their functions without hindering others. Consequently, tenants can enjoy an optimized and seamless user experience while benefiting from the extensive capabilities of the system.



One of the essential and critical steps involved in the process of constructing a highly secure and foolproof multi-tenant serverless environment is to meticulously and effectively ensure the absolute and unequivocal isolation and segregation of the various tenants. This uncompromising and rigorous approach is absolutely imperative to guarantee that the execution environments and the entire corpus of data pertaining to a particular tenant remain completely and utterly inaccessible and impervious to any unauthorized entities or individuals, thereby impeccably maintaining the integrity and privacy of these highly confidential and sensitive components. The significance and gravity of these security mechanisms cannot be overstated in the realm of serverless computing, where the very nature and essence of the computing instances allocated to each tenant are inherently transient, ephemeral, and relatively fleeting in their lifespan. These computing instances are continuously and recurrently recycled, thereby facilitating the seamless execution and operationalization of diverse functions emanating from an array of disparate tenants. It is precisely due to this dynamic and fluid nature of serverless computing that the meticulous and strategic implementation of robust and fortified isolation techniques becomes absolutely mandatory and indispensable, evidently across various tiers and strata of the serverless environment. Consequently, we unequivocally and firmly propose a comprehensive and integrated suite of isolation and segregation techniques that comprehensively and substantively ensure and guarantee the establishment of a supremely secure, invulnerable, and impenetrable multi-tenant serverless computing environment. The success, efficacy, and viability of these cutting-edge and avant-garde techniques are indubitably premised on their meticulous and painstaking implementation at multiple distinct and intermeshed layers and facets of the overarching serverless environment. Specifically, these techniques must be seamlessly and synergistically imbued and ingrained within the very core and essence of the function execution environment, while also discreetly permeating within the individual and distinct function types, and last but not least, ought to be meticulously integrated and applied at the granular and microscopic level of the data infrastructure itself.

4. Case Studies and Real-World Examples

Seven detailed case studies with multiple variants are presented in this comprehensive report. The problems faced by the serverless tenants are meticulously identified, along with the employed risk mitigation solutions. Explicit threat actors for the described security threats are then thoroughly identified, along with a detailed discussion of their potential motivation to launch attacks. The possible gain and loss scenario, as perceived by the threat actor model, are carefully characterized, along with detailed information about their security concerns. Finally, a comprehensive set of general and specific recommendations are provided as the best practices to address these and additional similar security issues in the serverless multi-tenant environment. Following the identification of specific threat actors, the case studies delve into the intricate details of how they could potentially exploit vulnerabilities within the serverless multi-tenant environment. This includes a comprehensive analysis of their

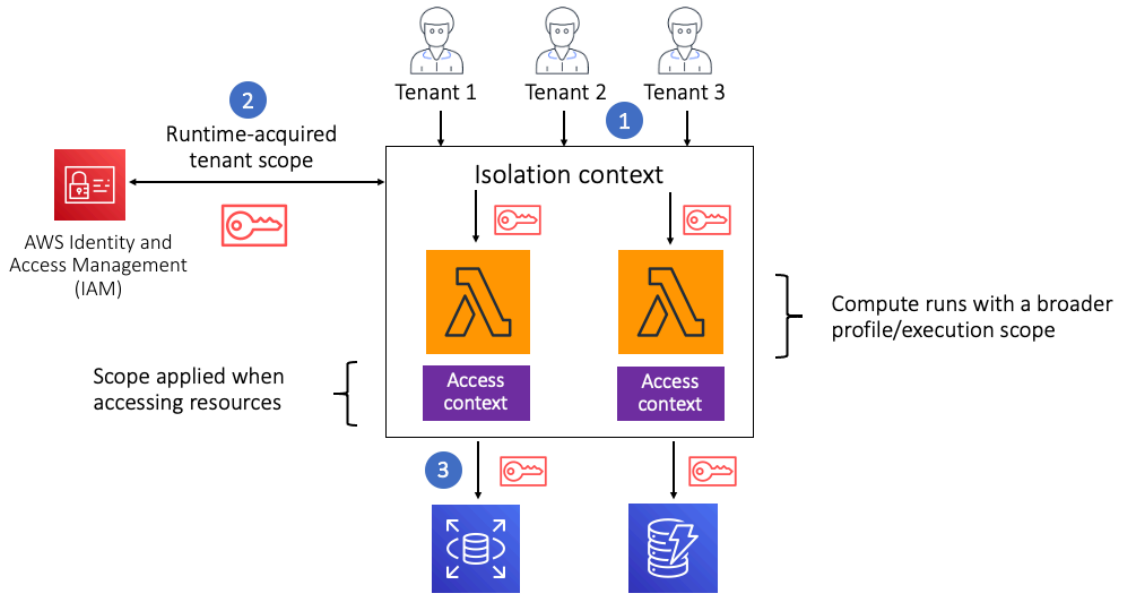
methodologies and tactics, as well as the potential avenues for gaining unauthorized access to sensitive data. Furthermore, the case studies explore the potential impact of a successful attack, including the financial and reputational damage that could be inflicted on affected tenants. Through a detailed exploration of these scenarios, the case studies aim to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the potential risks and vulnerabilities present within the serverless multi-tenant environment. In addition to the specific case studies, the report also includes a comprehensive overview of the current state of multi-tenant security within serverless environments. This includes an analysis of the existing security measures and the potential areas for improvement, as well as an exploration of emerging threats and challenges. The report also includes a detailed examination of the potential impact of regulatory requirements and compliance standards on multi-tenant security within serverless environments, as well as the implications for tenant organizations. Additionally, the report provides a comprehensive discussion of the current best practices and emerging trends in multi-tenant security within serverless environments, along with recommendations for future research and development in this critical area of cybersecurity. Overall, this report offers a thorough and in-depth analysis of the challenges, risks, and potential solutions in the serverless multi-tenant environment. By providing detailed case studies, analysis, and recommendations, it equips organizations with the knowledge and tools necessary to enhance their security posture and protect their sensitive data in a serverless environment.

A number of case studies and real-world examples are used to illustrate the various types of problems faced by the tenants who are hosting their serverless applications in a multi-tenant environment. Explicit risk factors related to these problems are also highlighted so that the risk mitigation strategies can further image and deploy the serverless services system at any cloud service. These case studies are also ideal for the educators who are teaching cybersecurity concepts as well as for the researchers who are working on cloud and serverless security. These examples provide valuable insights into the challenges and potential solutions for ensuring the security and reliability of serverless applications in a multi-tenant environment. Such insights are crucial for understanding the complex dynamics of cloud and serverless security, and can inform the development of more effective security measures for these environments. Overall, these case studies and real-world examples serve as a valuable resource for individuals and organizations navigating the complexities of serverless application hosting in a multi-tenant environment, offering practical guidance for mitigating risks and enhancing security measures. Moreover, the insights gained from these studies contribute to a deeper understanding of the ever-evolving landscape of cloud and serverless security, providing a foundation for continued innovation and advancement in this critical area. These in-depth case studies and practical examples provide an invaluable resource for understanding the challenges encountered when hosting serverless applications in a multi-tenant environment. By highlighting the explicit risk factors involved,

organizations can develop and implement effective risk mitigation strategies when deploying serverless services in a cloud environment. Educators will find these case studies beneficial for teaching cybersecurity concepts, while researchers working in cloud and serverless security will gain valuable insights. The examples offer practical solutions and valuable learnings for ensuring the security and reliability of serverless applications in a multi-tenant environment. These insights are essential for understanding the complex dynamics of cloud and serverless security and can guide the development of more robust security measures. Overall, these in-depth case studies and real-world examples are an essential resource for individuals and organizations seeking to navigate the challenges of hosting serverless applications in multi-tenant environments and enhancing security measures. The knowledge gained from these studies also contributes to a deeper understanding of the continuously evolving landscape of cloud and serverless security, laying the groundwork for ongoing innovation and progress in this critical area.

4.1. Security Incidents in Multi-Tenant Serverless Environments

Risks associated with security weaknesses in cloud computing have been accentuated. Using a public cloud, or a service model of that cloud, means that cloud users have little, if any, influence on the physical components of the environment, the logical components of the virtualized environment, or the security mechanisms around how components are interconnected. The configuration and security settings for these components are hidden from the cloud customer since they are managed by the cloud service provider. This lack of visibility means that cloud users are reliant upon the cloud service provider to apply sufficient security measures to prevent security incidents from occurring. However, cloud service providers may not invest in security measures appropriate to prevent attacks. Although cloud service providers advertise the security of their datacenters, they often lack the necessary security controls and processes to mitigate potential security breaches that could compromise customer data. Inadequate security measures and a lack of visibility into the security protocols being implemented may expose organizations to data breaches, data loss, and other security vulnerabilities that can have far-reaching consequences. Furthermore, the complexity of the cloud environment and the multitude of interconnected systems increases the potential attack surface and makes it difficult to identify and defend against potential security threats. As a result, organizations must carefully assess and monitor the security controls and practices of their cloud service provider to mitigate the risks associated with security weaknesses in cloud computing.



Incidents that occur in cloud computing environments can be costly due to resulting damage to data, application downtime, and cloud consumer loss. Financial loss, legal repercussions, and damage to the cloud service provider's reputation are also commonplace after such incidents. Research has identified that security incidents, such as denial of service, information disclosure, privilege misuse, and intellectual property theft can severely harm cloud service providers as well as the cloud consumers. In addition to the prospect of incurring serious financial burdens through illegal cyber activities, law enforcement currently faces challenges in the investigation of cyber incidents, especially if the involvement of more than one nation is required.

Serverless computing has significantly changed the way in which individuals, corporations, and developers access and use cloud computing environments. It offers a variety of advantages and benefits, but using serverless computing does not come without risks. This research focuses on a subset of those risks — the risks associated with a multi-tenant serverless computing environment.

5. Conclusion and Future Directions

Our proposed framework, if thoroughly validated and successfully implemented, can pave the way for standard security toolchains for serverless Function validation. Security, without a doubt, is one of the primary impediments to the widespread adoption of the serverless model. Once these security concerns are effectively addressed and resolved, serverless has the immense potential to become the dominant computing model of the present era, essentially regenerating and revolutionizing the entire cloud computing market. As we move forward, our future work will encompass the development of specific and targeted security enhancement techniques for the various other risk sources that have been

identified. Subsequently, we will meticulously evaluate and propose the optimal engineering tradeoff to implement, ensuring that the chosen approach strikes the perfect balance between functionality, performance, and security. Furthermore, it is our intention to actively seek out and ascertain the most promising runtime security mechanisms designed specifically for serverless environments. Drawing from these findings, we will strive to develop a fully functional prototype of a comprehensive security toolchain, which will play a crucial role in the validation and verification of Functions within a serverless architecture. Our ultimate goal is to establish a framework that not only addresses the current security challenges but also anticipates and mitigates future threats, providing a robust and resilient security foundation for serverless computing. By collaborating with industry experts and engaging with the broader research community, we aim to foster a collaborative environment where knowledge and expertise are shared, leading to the continuous evolution and improvement of serverless security practices. We firmly believe that by investing in research and development, and by promoting knowledge dissemination, we can accelerate the adoption of secure serverless architectures, ensuring the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of critical applications and data. We understand that this is a complex and multifaceted challenge that requires an interdisciplinary approach. Therefore, our team comprises experts in computer science, cybersecurity, software engineering, and cloud computing. This diverse skill set enables us to effectively address the various dimensions of serverless security, considering aspects such as secure coding practices, secure deployment strategies, runtime monitoring, and continuous vulnerability assessment. We are committed to exploring novel solutions and innovative techniques to overcome the security limitations inherent in serverless computing. In conclusion, our ambitious vision is to establish serverless computing as a secure and reliable paradigm, unlocking its full potential and enabling organizations to embrace this revolutionary model with confidence. We are dedicated to pushing the boundaries of serverless security, driving advancements that will shape the future of cloud computing and pave the way for a new era of secure, scalable, and cost-effective application development.

Security Considerations and Risk Mitigation Strategies in Multi-Tenant Serverless Computing Environments. In this paper, we have discussed security issues related to serverless computing with an emphasis on the multi-tenant scenario. A brief overview of the serverless model followed by identification of risk was presented. Risk sources specific to the multi-tenant environment were then highlighted. One of the key issues in the multi-tenant serverless environment is the lack of user-level isolation. A possible solution is to combine containers with Functions to achieve a higher level of isolation. However, there is a tradeoff between performance and isolation and more research in understanding this tradeoff is needed. As a Function may call other Functions in an event-driven system, it is of utmost importance that these be validated to mitigate possible attacks. A discussion on validation techniques is presented with the argument that static validation is the preferred option in a

serverless environment. We finish with a proposal for a security enhancement framework that can be applied to Functions before they are deployed.

5.1. Summary of Key Findings

Risk mitigation strategies were meticulously developed based on the identified security considerations to greatly enhance security in the context of multi-tenant serverless computing. It is crucial to address the fact that when deployed, functions of different tenants can execute within the same environment, perform cross-communication, and share data and resources within the environment, which inherently possesses the risk of potential security breaches. Through a specifically constructed experimental environment, consisting of a simulated IBM Cloud Functions platform, this comprehensive study carried out a meticulous assessment by thoroughly analyzing traffic data related to the HTTP requests exchanged between client-server and server-server when invoking functions coded with a multitude of popular programming languages. In order to effectively identify vulnerabilities and attempt breaches, ethical hacking tools and techniques were utilized. Subsequently, the identified security considerations were exhaustively validated, and the precise level of threats was determined through a systematic approach. The culmination of this study resulted in the development of a meticulously crafted set of risk mitigation strategies to effectively address the security considerations in the context of multi-tenant serverless computing. The proposed strategies are poised to serve as crucial guidance for developers and users in the seamless implementation of security within the deployment environment.

Security Considerations and Risk Mitigation Strategies in Multi-Tenant Serverless Computing Environments is the study of the graduate paper. The goal of this research is to assess security in multi-tenant serverless computing and develop risk mitigation strategies based on the identified security considerations. It was observed that existing research work on serverless computing focus on productivity, performance, cost, and quality of service, while ignoring security, thereby making security solutions deployed in the architecture less effective. When deployed, functions of different tenants can execute within the same environment, perform cross communication, and share data and resources within the environment, which can lead to security breaches. An assessment was carried out in a constructed experimental environment by simulating the IBM Cloud Functions and analyzing traffic data related to the HTTP requests exchanged between client-server and server-server when invoking functions coded with various popular programming languages. Ethical hacking tools and techniques were used to identify vulnerabilities and attempt breaches. The identified security considerations were validated and the level of threats was precisely determined. Based on the research findings, this study develops a set of risk mitigation strategies to enhance security in multi-tenant

serverless computing. The strategies can help developers and users effectively implement security in the deployment environment.

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