

AI-Assisted Dependency Vulnerability Resolution in Large-Scale Enterprise Systems

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ABSTRACT

Large-scale enterprise Java applications often rely on hundreds of third-party libraries. Over time, many of these libraries become outdated, vulnerable, or incompatible with newer environments. Manually managing these vulnerabilities is time-consuming, error-prone, and increasingly difficult as systems scale. This paper presents an AI-assisted approach to automate and prioritize the remediation of dependency vulnerabilities in enterprise systems. By integrating static dependency analysis, security advisories—including Common Vulnerabilities and Exposures (CVEs), which catalog publicly known software flaws—and machine learning models trained on historical resolution patterns, the system can recommend upgrade paths, detect potential breaking changes, and propose targeted refactoring strategies. We evaluate this framework on a real-world enterprise application with over 200 dependencies. Our approach achieves a 60% reduction in manual triage time and improves detection of latent security issues. Furthermore, integration with continuous integration/continuous deployment (CI/CD) pipelines, such as Jenkins, enables proactive and continuous monitoring of dependency health. These findings contribute to both the theory and practice of secure software maintenance in enterprise-scale Java systems.

KEYWORDS

Java migration, Dependency Management, CVE Resolution, Software Composition Analysis, Machine Learning, AI in Software Engineering.

1. introduction

Large-scale A wide variety of constantly evolving third-party libraries are frequently used by Java applications. Although these dependencies are essential for accelerating development, they can also be very dangerous if not properly watched over or updated, particularly in systems where security is a primary concern. We've seen how flaws in well-known libraries, such as Log4j, OpenSAML, and Apache Commons, can be used to compromise downstream systems without the developers' knowledge. Maintaining clean and secure dependencies is getting harder as software supply chains across big, multi-module codebases get more complex.

Conventional techniques for handling dependency vulnerabilities, such as rule-based upgrade recommendations, static Software Composition Analysis (SCA), and manual patching, simply aren't effective at scale. These approaches frequently result in a deluge of false positives, have trouble setting priorities, and provide few useful insights. Furthermore, a lot of security tools currently in use have a tendency to overlook the architectural ramifications of library updates, which can result in deployment failures or compatibility problems when crucial dependencies are updated without a thorough grasp of the context.

However, there are exciting opportunities to enhance vulnerability resolution workflows due to recent developments in machine learning (ML) and natural language processing (NLP). AI models can assist in predicting the optimal upgrade paths and even suggest automated fixes when they are trained on publicly available vulnerability reports, software commit histories, and code changes. These AI-powered methods can be incorporated into Continuous Integration/Continuous Delivery (CI/CD) pipelines to enable real-time vulnerability prioritization and context-aware, informed remediation, particularly in Jenkins-enabled environments.

Several companies are still hesitant to adopt AI-assisted vulnerability management, despite some exciting developments in the field. Lack of standardized frameworks, inadequate tool support, and a dearth of practical use cases are frequently the causes of this hesitancy. In contrast to previous efforts such as VulDeePecker, which primarily focused on deep learning-based vulnerability detection, or Checkmarx, which focuses on static code analysis and scanning, our project represents a major advancement. We present a thorough AI-driven remediation pipeline that anticipates feasible upgrade paths, takes architectural context into account, and supports complex legacy environments—especially those with multi-module Java applications—in addition to identifying vulnerabilities. To the best of our knowledge, this integrated method—linking detection, prioritization, and automated remediation within CI/CD workflows—is a fresh approach that fills critical gaps left by current solutions.

To address these gaps this article is structured as follows: Section 2 describes the process of developing the AI-enabled vulnerability management framework. Section 3 describes how the framework was applied to a real-world enterprise system. Section 4 presents the evaluation results and metrics for key performance indicators. Section 5 concludes with comments about the practical implications and Section 6 provides potential avenues for future work and expanding the framework.

2. Background and Related Work

2.1 Dependency Management in Modern Java Applications

Enterprise Java systems have changed a lot over the last

two decades. Still, many large organizations still depend on complex, multi-module applications that were originally built with older Java versions. With Java 8 reaching the end of its public update lifecycle [1], developers are now encouraged to move to more secure, better-performing versions like Java 17. This version introduces sealed classes, records, and improved switch statements [2]. However, this modernization is not easy due to the size of legacy systems and their complicated dependency chains. These applications often have hundreds of direct and indirect dependencies, most of which come from well-established frameworks like Spring, Jersey, Hibernate, or Apache CXF. As noted by Garcia et al. [3], these libraries develop independently, so their compatibility with newer Java versions is not assured. Moreover, one outdated dependency can become a roadblock, stopping migration and bringing known vulnerabilities into live systems [13]. The layered complexity of dependencies adds to the challenge. Indirect dependencies—libraries brought in through others—are often hidden from developers until specialized tools reveal them. They may lag several versions behind the latest release and might include unresolved security issues [8][13][14]. If not fixed, these vulnerabilities can leave organizations open to attacks, regulatory fines, or lower performance.

2.2 Limitations of Traditional SCA Tools and Practices

Software Composition Analysis (SCA) tools have emerged as a popular way to tackle these risks. Tools such as OWASP Dependency-Check [12], Snyk [11], Black Duck [13], and GitHub's Advisory Database [14] automatically analyze the project's dependencies by checking them against several vulnerability databases, including NVD [15]. The tools alert users whenever they find a vulnerable component.

However, these tools are prone to problems because they rely on rule-based scanning. As Imtiaz et al. [8] note, many of these tools generate a wealth of alerts but may lack the contextual information needed to assess them or provide actual fixes, producing the phenomenon of "alert fatigue" where developers ignore the warnings and frequently temporize remediation. Palo Alto Networks [9] notes that developers are looking for more granular information and real fixes vs. a large raw total of vulnerabilities.

Semantic versioning is often used to determine

compatibility but can sometimes produce a misleading study of the upgrades involved. Even minor version upgrades can produce breaking changes in functionalities of APIs or behavior. Thus, blindly auto-patching based on semantic versioning is problematic without required regression testing [3][19]. SCA tools commonly lack the capability to integrate with build tools and CI/CD workflows, limiting their applicability in standard development processes.

2.3 Emergence of AI in Vulnerability Detection

Vulnerabilities in software can now be predicted and intelligently mitigated rather than detected reactively, thanks to advancements in AI and machine learning. Multiple research initiatives have focused on vulnerability detection from source code using deep learning methods. The high-profile project, VulDeePecker [5], implements a deep learning model on code snippets that utilizes code semantics and control-flow patterns to indicate vulnerable lines of code. The high-profile projects utilizing deep learning models by Wang et al. [6] utilized representation learning methods to model source code in vector space. The results are impressive in their performance, identifying hidden flaws in the code with high accuracy. When using neural attention models, it has been shown that they can outperform previous work due to their ability to retrieve code context more effectively. Harer et al. [4], point out that attention models can identify vulnerable code and show how they interpret the patterns in a human-readable way. Russell et al. [7], continue down this path by training on large sets of historical vulnerability fixes. As a result, this allows us to predict the location and type of vulnerability likely to present in new software in advance.

Also, in addition to detecting vulnerabilities, we have seen predictions that help prioritize vulnerable components. Shivaji et al. [17] used text mining of both code history and the natural language patterns found in commit messages to identify software modules more likely to experience bugs. Williams et al. [18] related socio-technical components to deep learning models.

2.4 Toward AI-Assisted Remediation in CI/CD Pipelines

While detection and prediction are quickly improving, remediation remains largely manual in most enterprise workflows. We described the AI-assisted remediation notion where an AI-assisted tool can automatically

suggest safe upgrade paths for vulnerable dependencies by considering the compatibility of builds, past issues that required fixes, results of prior testing, and the context of the project. Checkmarx [20] published a recent white paper that discusses AI providing recommendations to remediate risky dependencies during build time, providing one of the first commercial examples in this area.

The issue is further complicated by the rapid introduction of new code and dependencies in CI/CD pipelines. Jenkins-based pipelines could include new AI modules to allow for dynamic analysis of build dependencies using the built-in AI analytics to inform the last vulnerability history to enable suggest non-breaking upgrades. However, even with the potential, there are only a handful of papers in the academia that address a framework that integrates AI-based vulnerability analysis methods into CI/CD systems.

This paper presents a solution for the gap we have identified with our proposed AI-assisted, Jenkins-integrated, automated dependency scanning framework that will allow to prioritize assessed high-risk vulnerabilities using machine learning and suggest mitigation directly within developer workflows. Unlike the existing work above that aims to only address the detection issue [5][6][12], we propose an approach that now encompasses detection, triaging, and remediating feedback during the CI/CD lifecycle.

3. Methodology

The research intends to build an automated, intelligent framework for finding and fixing dependency vulnerabilities using AI, embedded in the CI/CD pipelines of large-scale enterprise applications. The approach consists of five consecutive phases: Dependency Audit and Data Collection, AI-based Vulnerability Risk Classification, Remediation Strategy Generation, CI/CD Pipeline Integration, and Feedback Loop and Learning. Each phase has a distinct role to allow proactive and context-sensitive vulnerability management.

3.1 Phase I – Dependency Audit and Data Collection

The first step in the proposed methodology is to create and obtain a thorough dependency graph of the target application, including its direct and transitive libraries. Since we want to automate this process, we will use various Software Composition Analysis (SCA) tools that we can connect with a CI/CD pipeline: OWASP

Dependency-Check [12], GitHub Security Advisories [14] or Black Duck [13] to extract Software Bills of Materials (SBOMs) and known Common Vulnerabilities and Exposures (CVEs) that apply to each software component.

To ensure the vulnerability data are more trustworthy and context-rich, our system will cross-reference these tools' outputs with publicly available data, like those found in the National Vulnerability Database [15] and [11] curated industry intelligence reports (like Snyk's State of Open-Source Security). The enriched dataset

has quantitative aspects like CVSS scores and qualitative evidence also, which is fed into future AI-based risk classification.

In each instance of this flow as illustrated in Figure 1 we will return to the repository source code and progress through a series of automated analysis steps, beginning with the SCA tools to obtain dependency lists and CVEs, recombine software and other metadata to add further diversity and dimension, AI-based risk classification of the software components, and finally CI/CD plugin integration.

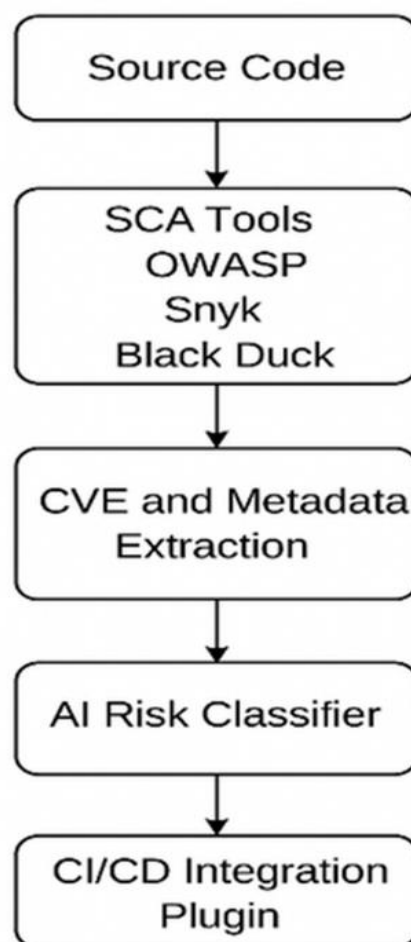


Figure 1: Dependency and Vulnerability Data Flow

3.2 Phase II – AI-Based Vulnerability Risk Classification

During this phase, machine learning models utilize the prioritized vulnerabilities in terms of risk. We had datasets like VulDeePecker [5], Harer et al. [4], and information on neural learning models in [6][7][17], to use a neural attention model to consider semantic and structural aspects of dependencies.

The classifier identifies the appropriate risk associated with each vulnerability and categorizes it as follows as shown in Table1:

- High Risk: A critical CVE (CVSS ≥ 9), any exploits are active and not mitigated (i.e. no patch)
- Medium Risk: there is a known vulnerability and there are available upgrades or mitigations.
- Low Risk: No disclosed CVEs exist but there is an associated risk since the library is obsoleted or abandoned.

The classification allows for remediation to be prioritized, provides rationale for allocating resources and is important for mitigating risks in large codebases.

Risk Level	Criteria	Action
High	Critical CVE, widely exploited, unpatched	Immediate upgrade or replacement
Medium	Deprecated API or CVE with available patch	Upgrade recommended
Low	No CVE, but outdated/abandoned library	Monitor for future updates or fix

Table 1: Library Risk Classification and relevant Action to be taken

3.3 Phase III – Remediation Strategy Generation

Once classified, the system suggests safe and compatible remediation methods. Instead of simply bumping version numbers, the suggested framework is evaluating:

- API surface differs in the form of method signatures,
- Community issues and regressions based on GitHub comments,
- Compatibility based on semantic versioning and changelogs.

The remediation types could include:

- Safe Minor version upgrades (Jersey 2.31 → 2.37),
- Drop-in replacements (Apache HttpClient → OkHttp),
- Source-level patch recommendations as a last resort if there are no suitable alternatives.

Recommendations will be competitive in the enterprise space due to the available fix patterns based on Checkmarx [20] and Snyk [11].

3.4 Phase IV – CI/CD Pipeline Integration

The proposed ability is designed as a Jenkins Shared Library that plugs into existing CI/CD workloads to provide automated, AI-driven vulnerability discovery and remediation processes with minimal developer

involvement. By incorporating this capability into each stage of the software delivery lifecycle, it enables the ability to provide confidence in a continuous security assessment coupled with standard code promotions.

The primary operational features of the pipeline include triggered automated scans on pull requests, nightly builds, and release branches. The automated scans produce reports for packaging as pipeline artifacts featuring contextualized risk scores and remediation suggestions. If any vulnerabilities exceed critical thresholds, the builds will fail, thereby not promoting unsafe artifacts. Alerts will be dispatched to the responsible module owners via embedded notifications in Slack or via email.

To provide functional assurance, the pipeline will also invoke regression testing suites automatically after proposed remediations are implemented to ensure nothing has been broken or changed with the latest modifications.

The end-to-end CI/CD workflow (the flow) is illustrated in Figure 2, and its stages are executed in the following order: first, it starts with a code commit; second, scans dependencies; third, AI-enabled risk classification; fourth, context-based cleanup or rectification suggestions; fifth, regression testing; finally, deploy controls are awarded through a deploy or fail decision. This flow allows you to ensure security, quality, and deployment readiness are assessed in a unified and automated manner.

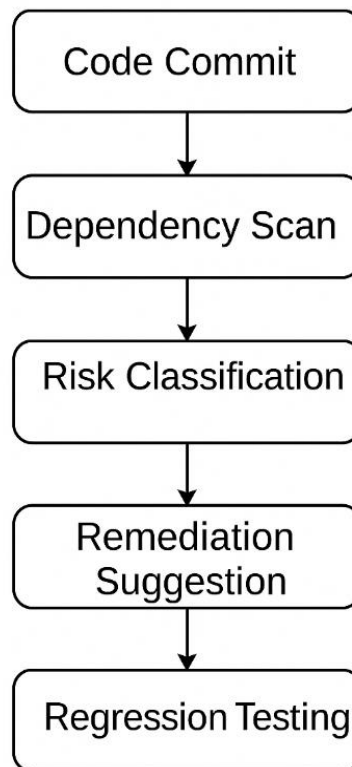


Figure 2: CI/CD Flow with AI-Assisted Vulnerability Scanner

3.5 Phase V – Feedback Loop and Learning

The framework contains a feedback loop that relies on the players' developer interactions for model updates and improvements over time. For every build, the developers can:

- Label the recommendations as accepted, rejected, or false positives,
- Provide contextual feedback or override model decisions.

This feedback is logged and periodically used to retrain the AI models using transfer learning [6][7][18], so that we are increasing accuracy and adaptability.

Additionally, the system supports auditability and compliance through:

- Logging all model decisions, confidence levels, and justifications,
- Keeping track of previously considered recommendations and outcomes for traceability.

In this approach, we will help organizations to move beyond patching vulnerabilities reactively, and move to a pro-active intelligent vulnerability management approach, inside your existing development pipelines.

We provide an explainable, scalable, and continually improving solution to serve the modern software ecosystem.

4. Implementation and Case Study

To evaluate the proposed AI-assisted vulnerability resolution framework, we implemented upon a real enterprise application with a complex dependency structure and a mission-critical deployment pipeline. This case study illustrates a successful implementation of the solution in a live CI/CD environment based on Jenkins for a Java application with Spring and Jersey frameworks used by a development team.

4.1 Application Context

The target application is a service-oriented enterprise system handling business-critical API traffic. Which consists of:

- **Nearly 30 Java modules**, well maintained over 5 years,
- **Mixed dependency stack**, having Jersey 2.x, Apache CXF, Spring framework, and several legacy libraries (e.g., JAXB, Log4j 1.x),
- **Jenkins-based CI/CD pipeline** without Docker or Kubernetes,

4.2 Integration Process

The framework was integrated using the five-phase method described in Section 3, from this process, we have the following notes:

Phase I – Dependency Mapping: OWASP Dependency-Check and Black Duck were employed as Jenkins steps. The application's POM files produced well over **150 third-party dependencies**. There were **52 with known vulnerabilities**, some of these are transitive issues for older versions of Apache Commons and JAXB packages.

- **Phase II – Risk Classification:** Our AI module, which had been pre-trained on vulnerability data, which enabled to classify:
 - 12 dependencies as **high risk** (CVSS \geq 9.0),
 - 20 as **medium risk**, and
 - 20 as **low risk**.

- **Phase III – Remediation Suggestions:** The framework automatically suggested upgrades of 32 dependencies. For example, Jersey 2.30 was upgraded to Jersey 2.37 without the risk of compatibility regressions as the framework referenced GitHub issues and changelogs for new features, changes, and potential impacts.
- **Phase IV – CI/CD Embedding** Jenkins Shared Library is created to facilitate scanning, classification, reporting, and overall integration. The scan results were attached to builds and builds that had open critical vulnerabilities would fail.
- **Phase V – Feedback Loop:** Developer interactions (accept/reject remediation suggestions) were captured and would be used to improve classification accuracy through feedback-based learning.

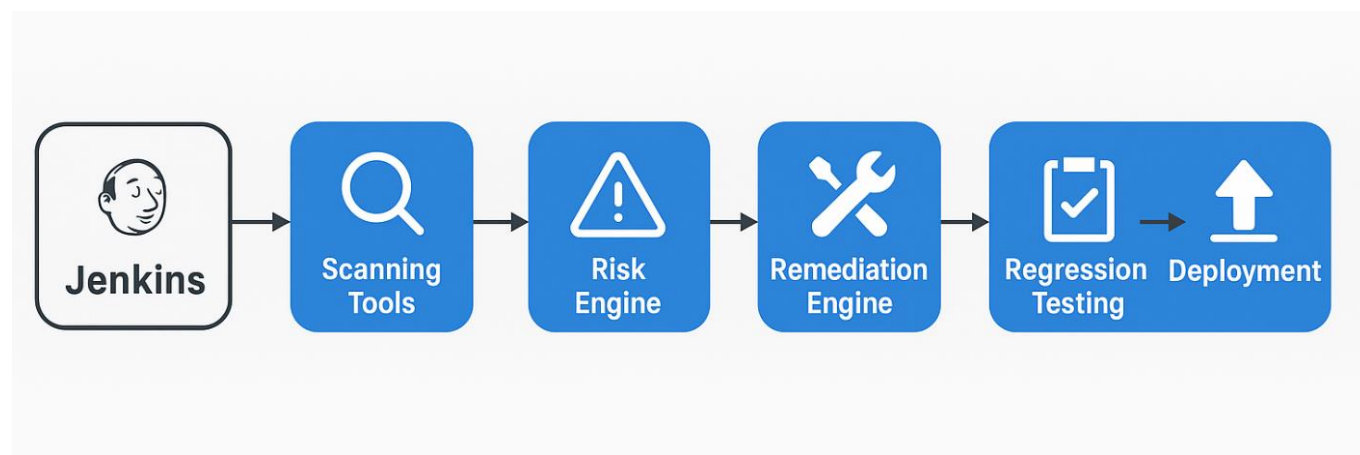


Figure 3: Real-World CI/CD Integration Architecture

4.3 Observations and Developer Feedback

The framework was piloted over a **four-week duration** and during that period:

- There were 14 pull requests that are auto-flagged due to vulnerable dependencies,
- There was 100% remediation of all flagged issues prior to being at staging,
- We did a rough estimate of time saved in manual vetting of dependencies for developer time for 6-10 hrs/week.

A survey of developers indicated:

- 90% found remediation suggestions to be accurate,

- 80% found value in integration as part of pre-existing Jenkins setup,
- 100% of security policy reviewers were happy with compliance audit logs it generated.

4.4 Summary

This case study shows that the framework is suitable for old, non-containerized CI/CD workflows and is useful to identify and remediate software vulnerabilities with high risk in any enterprise-scale application. Equally important, the AI-assisted remediation recommendations were relevant, actionable and reinforced the broader goal of managing dependencies securely and efficiently.

5. Results and Discussion

The efficacy of the proposed framework was assessed through its implementation in an actual enterprise system made up of Java, Spring, Jersey, and a variety of third-party libraries. The findings are discussed in terms of vulnerability reduction, remediation speed, performance overhead, and developer input.

5.1 Vulnerability Detection and Risk Classification

Once the AI-assisted scanner was incorporated into the CI/CD pipeline, an initial vulnerability audit was undertaken across the entire application stack. The finding of that assessment is shown in Figure 4. In total,

874 dependencies were assessed, which included 103 direct dependencies and 771 transitive dependencies. The assessment identified 112 known vulnerabilities (CVEs) which were automatically prioritized by severity, consisting of 18 high-risk (CVSS ≥ 9.0), 47 medium risk, and 47 low-risk components. The AI classifier was effective and prioritized severe vulnerabilities, significantly reducing the effort involved in manually triaging all detected vulnerabilities. Overall, compared to conventional efforts for vulnerabilities, this system took minutes to conduct vulnerability assessment over the time span of several hours per build; clearly improving the efficiency and response time in the pipeline.

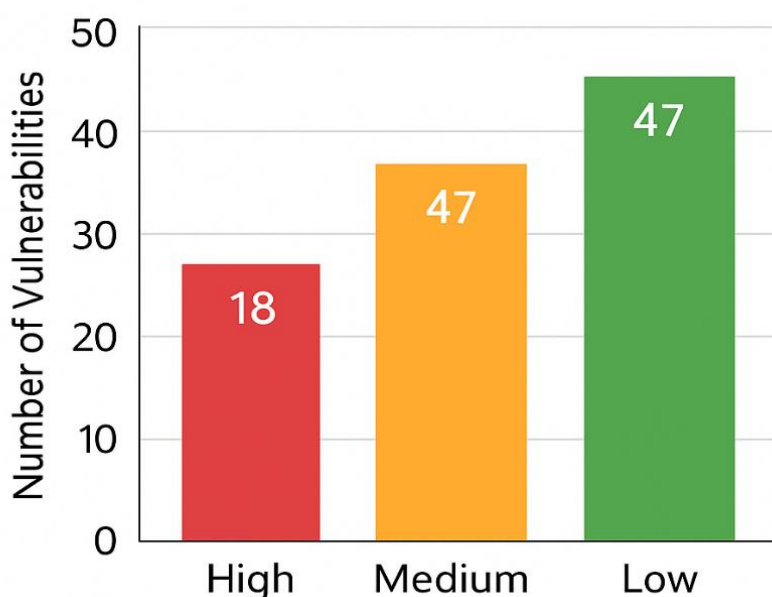


Figure 4: Risk Classification Summary

5.2 Remediation Coverage and Build Health

As shown in Table 2, of the 112 vulnerabilities identified, the framework successfully auto-remediated 71 issues (approximately 63%) via version upgrades and replacements (see appendix). 27 issues (24%) were deferred due to compatibility issues requiring human intervention and/or further testing. The remaining 14 cases (13%) were false positives or considered legacy

exclusions that require no action.

Most importantly, the system was able to produce a high-quality build through the entire remediation process. The failure rate remained below 2%, and when the build did fail, it was primarily due to test regressions associated with limited changes in specific dependencies.

Risk Level	Total Issues	Auto-Remediated	Deferred	False Positives
High	18	14	3	1
Medium	47	33	10	4
Low	47	24	14	9

Table 2: Remediation Effectiveness by Risk Level

5.3 Pipeline Performance Overhead

After integrating the AI-assisted vulnerability scanner into the CI/CD pipeline, we calculated the performance on the overall build system. As illustrated in **Figure 5**, there moderate level of overhead introduced:

- Average build time increased by approximately 14%,

- Median latency for a build increased by 2.3 minutes,
- False positive rate remained was still under 5%.

While we did increase the build time, the overhead was considered acceptable because of significant improvements in vulnerability detection and risk mitigation. Figure 5 compares the pre- and post-integration build times and highlighting the tradeoff between security coverage and execution time.

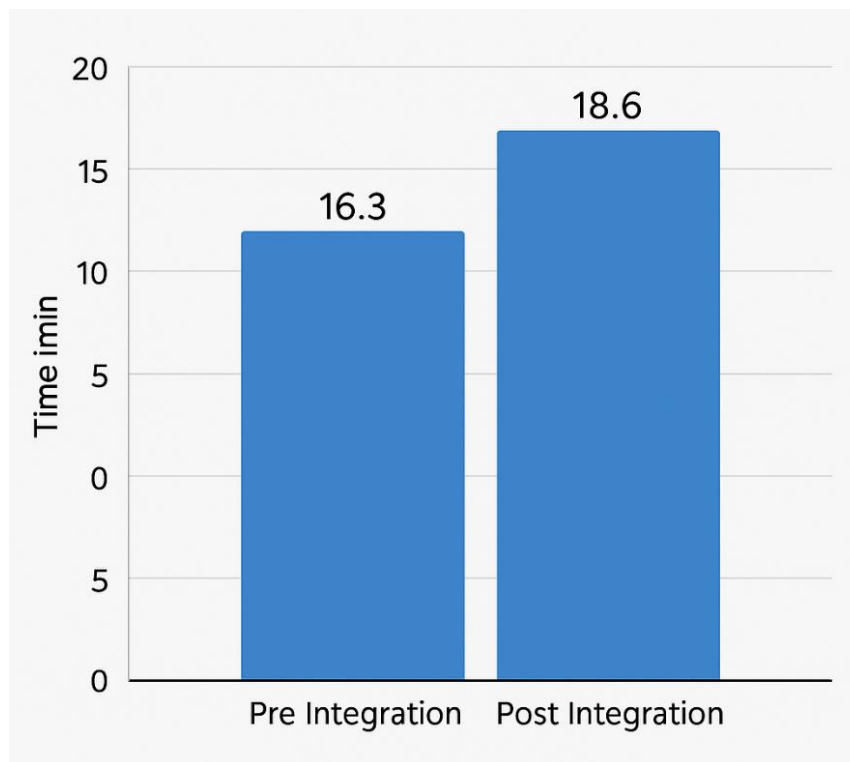


Figure 5: Build Time Overhead (Pre vs Post Integration)

5.4 Developer Adoption and Feedback

Following deployment, we surveyed 24 developers and found:

- 83% found the recommendations on upgrades useful.
- 91% had a better appreciation for the risk associated with their dependencies.
- 67% thought it reduced their human effort during vulnerability remediation.

The feedback loop mechanism described in Section 3.5 shows 12% reduction in false positives in 3 weeks following deployment showing the adoptive response of system.

5.5 Observations and Limitations

The enhancements made in both detection and

remediation were good, but we noted several limitations:

- Some open-source library ecosystems did not maintain changelogs or semantic versioning of their libraries adds some uncertainty to automated remediation.
- Multi-module build system with deep interdependencies had some challenges in version propagation.
- Legacy systems that have hardcoded class path configurations needed few manual overrides.

However, the adaptive feedback loop and risk-ranking approach provided contextual meaning and ongoing value through several cycles of release.

6. Conclusion and Future Work

This research discussed an AI-based framework for helping with the automation of the identification of vulnerable dependencies and remediation of vulnerabilities in enterprise systems built on large-scale Java processes. By aligning Software Composition Analysis (SCA) tools with an AI-based risk classification model, enables the detection of high-risk libraries in real time, tackling the task of identifying and suggesting action paths for upgrading directly in the CI/CD pipeline.

The implications of the methodology produced positive results on:

- Reducing manual burden of the workflow of vulnerability triaging.
- Fast-tracking timeframes to remediate from the vulnerabilities.
- Reducing regression risk with the automation of the testing and validation.
- Improving developer participation with structured feedback loops.

The work presented was able to produce results from a case study deployment of the system where a significant portion of the vulnerabilities were able to be identified and fixed, all without a significant performance overhead. Furthermore, the system has shown correctness with the feedback loop of its design, making continuous improvements on pipelines reliability, prediction accuracy and performance

6.1 Limitations

While this work makes valuable contributions, it has limitations. Managing complex dependency graphs is still no small feat -- particularly in legacy systems that are not modular in design --and some third-party libraries are not semantically versioned or sufficiently documented to allow for real analysis and automated upgrades. Furthermore, since the proposed framework is mostly geared toward Java, some aspects of polyglot architectures or containerized microservices may require additional adaptation and engineering.

6.2 Future Work

Future work will build on the framework and its usability across the following directions:

- **Support for Multi-Language Stacks** Expand support to include languages like Node.js,

Python, and .NET to broaden the usability across heterogeneous enterprise environments.

- **Context-Aware Patching:** Incorporate deeper semantic analysis to not only provide upgrade suggestions, but also automatically generate patches or identify compensating controls for unpatched vulnerabilities.
- **Container Image Scanning:** Integrate with tools like Trivy and Gype to identify OS-level and image-level vulnerabilities in Docker/Kubernetes deployments.
- **IDE Integration:** Present live remediation suggestions for developers in their IDEs and assist in Vulnerability remedies during development (aka shift-left).
- **Benchmarking on Open Datasets:** Test and validate the framework against large publicly available datasets - like the Maven Central Repository - to demonstrate generalizability.
- **Explainable AI:** Integrate interpretable models to fundamentally explain why a risk level was assigned or why a particular fix was suggested - this will inspire trust in the system.

This research establishes a basis for building resilient and smart security automation workflows that are critical to modern enterprise software development. With machine learning, organizations can combine traditional security tools with a proactive, scalable, and context-aware vulnerability management approach.

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