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# Semi-Supervised Deep Neural Network for Network Intrusion Detection

Mutahir Nadeem

Roanoke College, [mnadeem@mail.roanoke.edu](mailto:mnadeem@mail.roanoke.edu)

Ochaun Marshall

University of North Carolina at Greensboro, [oemarsha@uncg.edu](mailto:oemarsha@uncg.edu)

Sarbjit Singh

North Carolina A & T State University, [ssingh@aggies.ncat.edu](mailto:ssingh@aggies.ncat.edu)


Xing Fang

Illinois State University, [xingfang912@gmail.com](mailto:xingfang912@gmail.com)

Xiaohong Yuan

North Carolina A & T State University, [xhyuan@ncat.edu](mailto:xhyuan@ncat.edu)

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Nadeem, Mutahir; Marshall, Ochaun; Singh, Sarbjit; Fang, Xing; and Yuan, Xiaohong, "Semi-Supervised Deep Neural Network for Network Intrusion Detection" (2016). *KSU Proceedings on Cybersecurity Education, Research and Practice*. 2.

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**Abstract**

Network security is of vital importance for corporations and institutions. In order to protect valuable computer systems, network data needs to be analyzed so that possible network intrusions can be detected. Supervised machine learning methods achieve high accuracy at classifying network data as normal or malicious, but they require the availability of fully labeled data. The recently developed ladder network, which combines neural networks with unsupervised learning, shows promise in achieving a high accuracy while only requiring a small number of labeled examples. We applied the ladder network to classifying network data using the Third International Knowledge Discovery and Data Mining Tools Competition dataset (KDD 1999). Our experiments, show the ladder network was able to achieve similar results compared to supervised classifiers while using a limited number of labeled samples.

**Disciplines**

Computer Sciences | Information Security | Management Information Systems | Technology and Innovation

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Network security is essential to corporations as intrusions can result in massive monetary losses. According to a report by the Ponemon Institute, which sampled 252 companies in 7 countries, the U.S. continues to rank highest in its cost of cybercrime at an annual average of \$15.4 million per company (Ponemon Institute, 2015). Current Intrusion Detection Systems (IDS) are either signature based or anomaly based. Signature based detection methods require the attack to be documented beforehand, thus new types of attacks that are not yet documented cannot be detected. Anomaly based detection methods focus on finding unknown or unusual activity patterns in the observed data (Holtsnider & Jaffe, 2010). They allow new attacks to be discovered, however a domain expert is required to analyze the anomalies.

Network data has been classified by a host of machine learning techniques. Among the literature we reviewed included the work of Jadidi et al (2013), who used Support Vector Machines (SVM) and flow based data sets to classify network data as benign or malicious. Salama et al. (2011) have used a hybrid intrusion detection scheme utilizing both Support Vector Machines and Deep Belief Networks. Hasan and his colleagues have developed two IDS models: one that uses SVMs and the other that uses the Random Forest Classifier (Hasan, Nasser, Pal, & Ahmad, 2014). Haweliya and Nigam used a semi-supervised Support Vector Machine (SVM) to classify an optimized version of the KDD 1999 dataset (Haweliya & Nigam, 2014).

Though supervised learning methods achieve high accuracy, they require fully labeled data. Acquiring fully labeled data is a nontrivial task as labeling data requires time and a human expert. Thus, learning from unlabeled data is more desirable. Semi-supervised learning is learning with a small amount of labeled data and a large amount of unlabeled data (Zien, Scholkopf, & Chapelle, 2006). Recently, Rasmus et al. (2015) had shown that Ladder Networks, a semi-supervised neural network scheme, are able to achieve a high classification rate while using only a few labeled samples on the Mixed National Institute of Standards and Technology (MNIST) dataset. In this paper, we use the Ladder Networks to classify the Third International Knowledge Discovery and Data Mining Tools Competition dataset (KDD 1999). Three well studied, supervised classifiers, a Deep Belief Network (DBN), a Support Vector Machine (SVM), and a Random Forest were used to classify KDD 1999. These supervised results serve as a baseline to compare with the Ladder Networks results.

The rest of this paper is organized as follows. Section 2 provides a background on the classifiers: Support Vector Machine, Random Forest, Deep Belief Network and Ladder Network. Section 3 describes our experiments and the results. Related Work is discussed in Section 4 and Section 5 concludes the paper.

## **2. BACKGROUND**

### **2.1 Support Vector Machine**

Support Vector machines are supervised learning models for classifying data. The goal of a SVM is to find the optimum margin that maximizes the distance between two target classes (Bishop, 2006; Schmidhuber, 2015; Hasan et al., 2014). Essentially, a SVM tries to minimize the error of the distance between each point in each class and a dividing line. This is done by finding the shortest distance between two points in both classes. The line orthogonal to the shortest distance line is the dividing line.

### **2.2 Random Forest**

Random forests are an ensemble of classification or regression trees. The random forest classifier works by partitioning the training set of the data into  $k$  subsets and constructing a decision tree out of each subset. All of the subsets are created by randomly selecting samples from the original set. Each decision tree is independent of all other decision trees.

Each decision tree is made by randomly selecting  $m$  variables (features) out of all the variables and finding the best split on the selected variables. The best split is determined by the entropy or unpredictability of the variables. This is done at each node and continued until a node cannot be split further, leading to the leaf nodes. The testing data is then run through each tree and each tree provides a classification. The classifications of all the trees are then taken into account and the final classification of the forest is determined by the majority of the decision trees (Breiman, 2001).

### 2.3 Deep Belief Neural Network

Artificial Neural Networks (ANN) aim to imitate the biological process of a path of neurons being strengthened in the brain when a skill is learned. An ANN is composed of an input layer which represents the features of the data. The input layer is connected to one or more hidden layers where matrices of weighted connections are used to map the input to the output layer, which consists of the classes of the data. Essentially, a Neural Network learns by updating the matrices of weights until it is able to achieve a high accuracy in mapping the input layer to the output layer. A Deep Belief Neural Network (DBN) is a Neural Network with multiple hidden layers. It can be viewed as a stack of restricted Boltzmann machine (Hinton, 2009). Boltzmann machines are networks of neuron units that are symmetrically connected. These neuron units make stochastic decisions whether to be on or off (Hinton, 2007). A Boltzmann machine is restricted in that there are no connections between neural units of the same layer (Hinton, Osindero, & Teh, 2006).

The DBN learns iteratively by updating the weights through the backward propagation algorithm. It works by calculating the net input for each neuron, which is the sum of (inputs \* weights) for each connection leading into that neuron (Hecht-Nielsen, 1989). After that, the current output for each neuron is calculated using a logistic function. Then the error is calculated for all neurons. Finally, the error is fed back through the layers and the weights are updated to get a better accuracy.

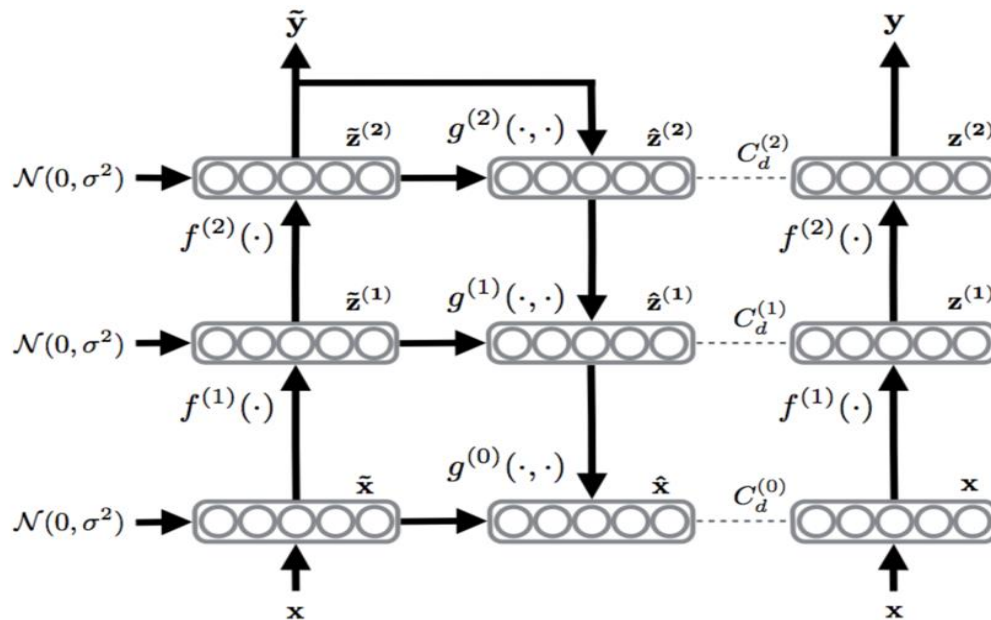


Figure 1. Ladder Network Architecture

## 2.4 Ladder Networks

Ladder Networks can be seen as nested denoising Auto-Encoders (dAE) that share lateral connections between the encoder and decoder at each layer. An auto-encoder tries to learn a classifying function by mapping an input  $x$  to an output  $y$ . This is prone to over-fitting, which is the classifier having learned the training examples well, but cannot generalize to new data. To avoid over-fitting, noise is introduced, specifically a corrupted version of  $x$  is created and the auto-encoder tries to map it to the same  $y$ . With Ladder Networks, this happens at each layer, latent variables (variables inferred from observed variables) are used in layers beyond the input layer. Learning is based on minimizing the cost  $\|(\hat{z} - z)\|^2$  where  $z$  is the original latent variable and  $\hat{z}$  is the reconstruction of the corrupted version of it. Each layer adds to a cost function for decoder  $d$ ,  $C_d^{(l)} = \|z^{(l)} - \hat{z}^{(l)}\|^2$  which trains the layers to learn the denoising function  $\hat{z}^{(l)} = g^{(l)}(\tilde{z}^{(l)}, \hat{z}^{(l+1)})$  which maps the corrupted  $\tilde{z}^{(l)}$  onto the estimate without noise,  $\hat{z}^{(l)}$ . One of the parts differentiating Ladder Networks from dAEs are skip connections between the encoder and decoder at each layer that allow some of the details to be represented by the lower layers and the higher ones. An illustration of the architecture of a 3 layer Ladder Network is shown in Figure 1.

In Figure 1,  $L=3$ .  $x \rightarrow z^{(1)} \rightarrow z^{(2)} \rightarrow z^{(3)} \rightarrow y$  is the clean feedforward path,  $x \rightarrow \tilde{z}^{(1)} \rightarrow \tilde{z}^{(2)} \rightarrow \tilde{z}^{(3)} \rightarrow \tilde{y}$  is the corrupted feedforward path, and  $\hat{z}^{(3)} \rightarrow \hat{z}^{(2)} \rightarrow \hat{z}^{(1)} \rightarrow \hat{x}$  is the decoder. The decoder has denoising functions,  $g^{(i)}$ , and cost functions,  $C_d^{(l)}$ , that try to minimize the difference between  $\hat{z}^{(l)}$  and  $z^{(l)}$ . See Rasmus et al., (2015) for more information on Ladder Networks.

## 3. EXPERIMENTS & RESULTS

We analyzed the dataset used in the Third International Knowledge Discovery and Data Mining Tools Competition (KDD 1999), held in conjunction with the Fifth International Conference on Knowledge Discovery and Data Mining. The raw training data contains about 4GB of compressed packet capture data from seven weeks of network traffic. This data has been processed into approximately 4.9 million connection records, with a set of 41 features. These features describe various aspects of a particular connection record, such as the service used, protocol, source bytes, and destination bytes (Fiore, Palmieri, Castiglione, & De Santis, 2013). Each sample is labeled as a normal or an abnormal connection. The abnormal connections fall into four main categories with subcategories based on the popular nomenclature of the specific attack at the time (e.g. Ping of Death) (Tavallae, Bagheri, Lu, & Ghorbani, 2009). Table 1 describes both the categories and subcategories of malicious connections found in the KDD 1999 dataset.

The Random Forest and SVM classifiers were implemented using sci-kit learn (Pedregosa et al., 2011). For both classifiers data was cross-validated using K-fold cross validation (Refaeilzadeh, Tang, & Liu, 2009). Ten folds were used with the test evaluation at the final fold. The DBN was implemented using Theano and Blocks (Theano Development Team, 2016; van Merrënboer et al., 2015). The Ladder Network was implemented using Theano, Blocks and Fuel. Theano is a Python library used in creating and solving mathematical expressions; Blocks allows neural networks to be built on top of Theano; and Fuel provides the datasets to be used in machine learning methods. In order to use the KDD 1999 dataset, the Fuel package for the Ladder Network had to be modified to allow for pre-processing.

Major Categories	Sub-Categories
<b>Denial of Service (DoS)</b>	Ping of Death, LAND, Neptune, Backscatter, Smurf, Teardrop
<b>User to Root (U2R)</b>	Buffer Overflow, Loadmodule, Perl, Rootkit
<b>Remote to Local (R2L)</b>	FTP write, password guessing, IMAP attacks, Multi-hop, PHF, Spy, Warezclient, Warezmaster
<b>Probing</b>	Ipsweeping, Nmap, Portsweeping, Satan

*Table 1. Categories of Malicious Behavior*

### 3.1 Supervised Classification

A DBN, a Random Forest classifier, and a SVM classifier were used to analyze the KDD dataset. For each classifier, four tests were run varying the number of examples for each class. The tests were run requiring 10, 1000, 3000, and 5000 examples per class. They correspond to 16, 9, 6, and 6 classes respectively. These classes include one normal class and the rest of the classes belong to subcategories of attacks. Our experiments differ from Salama et al. (2011) in that they used the four main categories for the abnormal classes. We decided to use the subcategories in order to classify specific types of attacks. Two-thirds of the data was randomly selected for training and the rest for testing. The classification accuracy results are shown in Table 2. The time required for training and testing combined is shown in Table 3.

Examples		Accuracy %		
# per class	# of classes	SVM	Random Forest	DBN
<b>10</b>	16	42%	87%	90%
<b>1000</b>	9	76%	99%	95%
<b>3000</b>	6	98%	99%	98%
<b>5000</b>	6	97%	99%	98%

Table 2. Accuracy of SVM, Random Forest, and DBN classifiers on KDD 1999 data.

Execution Time (sec.)			
Examples per class	SVM	Random Forest	DBN
<b>10</b>	.014	1.832	13.2
<b>1000</b>	8.488	5.745	205.2
<b>3000</b>	14.01	8.717	399.6
<b>5000</b>	30.784	14.47	639.0

Table 3. Time needed for runs of supervised classifiers (in seconds)

The Random Forest classifier achieves a high accuracy on the second to fourth tests and does so in the shortest time. The DBN has fairly high accuracy for each test, when it is run for 1000 epochs with two hidden layers of 150 nodes each. However, compared with the other two methods, the DBN takes the longest time.

### 3.2 Semi-Supervised Classification

Two experiments were performed using Ladder Networks to classify the KDD 1999 dataset. In the first experiment, four tests varying the number of examples required for each class, i.e. 10, 1000, 2000, and 5000 were run. The training data set includes both labeled and unlabeled examples. The ratio of labeled data is 50%. The classification accuracy, training and testing time are given in Table 4.



Examples per class	Accuracy	Training Time	Testing Time
<b>10</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>1000</b>	92.18%	12.4	0.3
<b>3000</b>	98.13%	21.5	0.3
<b>5000</b>	99.03%	21.8	0.4

Table 4. Accuracy, testing, and training time (minutes) required for Ladder Network

For the second experiment we used the dataset requiring 3000 examples in each class and changed the number of labeled examples in different tests from 60, 600, 2400, 9600, and 12000. We keep the total number of data examples constant at 18000, among which 12000 were used for training and the rest for testing. The results are shown in Table 5.

# labeled	Percentage	Accuracy	Training	Testing
<b>60</b>	0.5%	97.35	26.1	0.3
<b>600</b>	5.0%	99.06	26.6	0.3
<b>2400</b>	20.%	98.78	26.6	0.3
<b>9600</b>	80.0%	99.2	27.0	0.3
<b>12000</b>	100%	99.18	27.0	0.3

Table 5. Results of Ladder Network with 3000 samples per class and varying the number of labeled samples use, Training and Testing times in minutes. Percentage is from training set.

The accuracy of the Ladder Networks increases as more examples are given per class. However, it achieves a fairly high accuracy (97.35%) even with just 60 (0.5%) labeled examples, or 10 labeled examples per class. This is encouraging since it is good accuracy with few labeled examples, which is desirable for real world use. When using just 10 examples per class, a different architecture of the Ladder Network is required. Therefore, the test with 10 examples per class was not run.

The iterative DBN and Ladder Network take the longest to achieve their results. The Ladder Network was run for 50 epochs and it took 12.4 minutes for 1000 examples per class. The other Ladder Network tests took over 20 minutes. Since retraining may take significant time, Ladder Networks may not be good for real-time intrusion detection, but for forensic analysis, they may still be practical.

## **4. RELATED WORK**

All of the supervised classifiers we have used have their own semi-supervised versions. They have been used not for just intrusion detection, but also for image classification. There is also another hybrid classifier with SVM and DBN (Salama et al., 2011). In addition to different classifiers and different implementations of those classifiers, there is also an alternative to the KDD 1999 dataset available: the NSL-KDD dataset (Tavallae et al., 2009).

Haweliya & Nigam (2014) used a semi-supervised SVM to classify the NSL-KDD dataset. Their semi-supervised method consisted of self-training where the SVM is trained on labeled data and then is used to classify unlabeled data which is then used to further train the classifier as new labeled data. They also used multiple training methods to compare and achieved 91.9% accuracy at their highest. The problem with self-training is that incorrect classifications can reinforce themselves. Our semi-supervised Ladder Network method does not use questionable labels to train so the problem of self-training is prevented.

Jadidi et al. (2013) use S4VM to classify network data. S4VM improves upon S3VM (the semi-supervised version of SVM) by creating diverse separators with large margins and low densities. They use 10% labeled examples and achieve an accuracy as high as 93.76% on one of their datasets.

Our method achieved accuracy as high as 99% with a smaller percentage of labeled data. However, for direct comparison, we need to run the Ladder Network on their packet based datasets with the same percentage of labeled examples.

Tian & Gao (2009) used a Genetic Algorithm to optimize a Neural Network and help the neural network avoid finding local minimums and help converge faster. They used a small training set (100 examples) and achieved a low error rate. Their dataset was similar to the KDD 1999 dataset. This work is related to ours as it also achieves a low error while using a Neural Network to classify intrusions.

## 5. CONCLUSION

In this paper, Ladder Networks, a semi-supervised approach, was used in analyzing network data. To establish benchmarks, we used well-known, existing supervised learning methods for Network intrusion detection to classify the KDD 1999 dataset: the Deep Belief Network, Support Vector Machine and Random Forest. Two experiments using the Ladder Network were conducted. In the first experiment, where the number of classes and examples per class were changed, the semi-supervised Ladder Network was able to perform well at network data classification in comparison to the supervised classifiers. In the second experiment, where the number of labeled examples was changed, the Ladder Network was able to maintain results above 90% with varying ratios of labeled and unlabeled examples. In the near future, we would like to use the Ladder Network on the NSL-KDD dataset and other, newer datasets. Other future work includes exploring what other feed-forward neural network architectures could be integrated with the Ladder Network structure to improve classification performance.

## 6. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We would like to thank Dr. Kaushik Roy, Dr. Albert Esterline, and Mr. William Nick for their guidance and discussion.

This work is partially supported by the National Science Foundation under the grant CNS-1460864. Any opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the National Science Foundation.

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