

CPSTRIDE: A Threat Modeling Framework for Cyber-Physical Systems



Dallas Elleman & John Hale

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Agenda

1. Overview & Contributions
2. Background
 - Additive Manufacturing cyber-physical systems (CPS)
 - The STRIDE framework
3. CPSTRIDE Framework Specification
 - CPFDD: Cyber-Physical Flow Diagram
 - CPSec Properties, Threats, & Susceptibility Matrix
4. LLM-assisted comparative threat modeling for additive manufacturing CPS
5. Discussion
 - Advantages, Limitations, and Challenges
 - Future Work
6. Conclusion





Overview

“Det finns inget dåligt väder, bara dåliga kläder.”

“There are no bad cyber-physical threat models, only bad frameworks.”

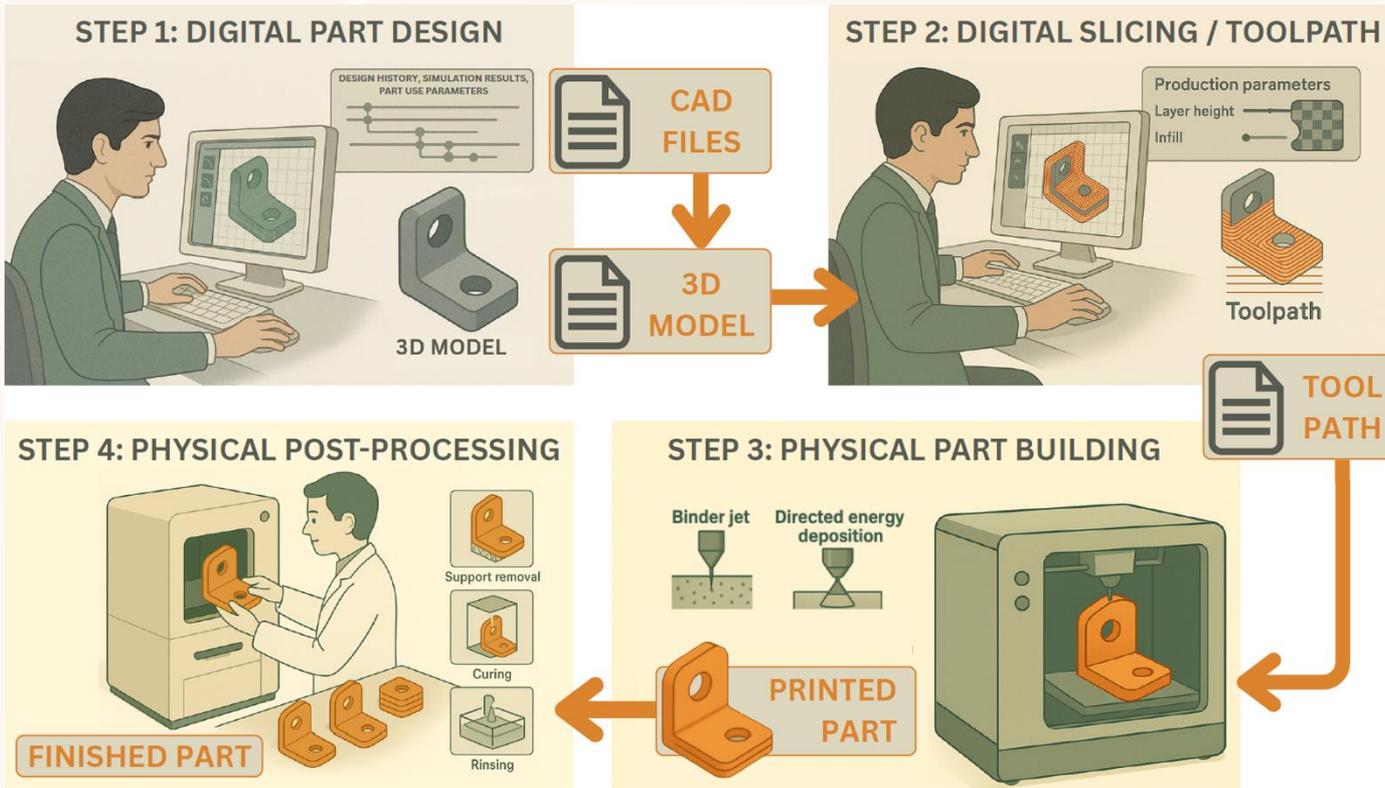
Contributions

1. CPSTRIDE – A better threat modeling framework for CPS
2. Comparative threat modeling: CPSTRIDE vs. STRIDE
3. LLM-assisted threat modeling



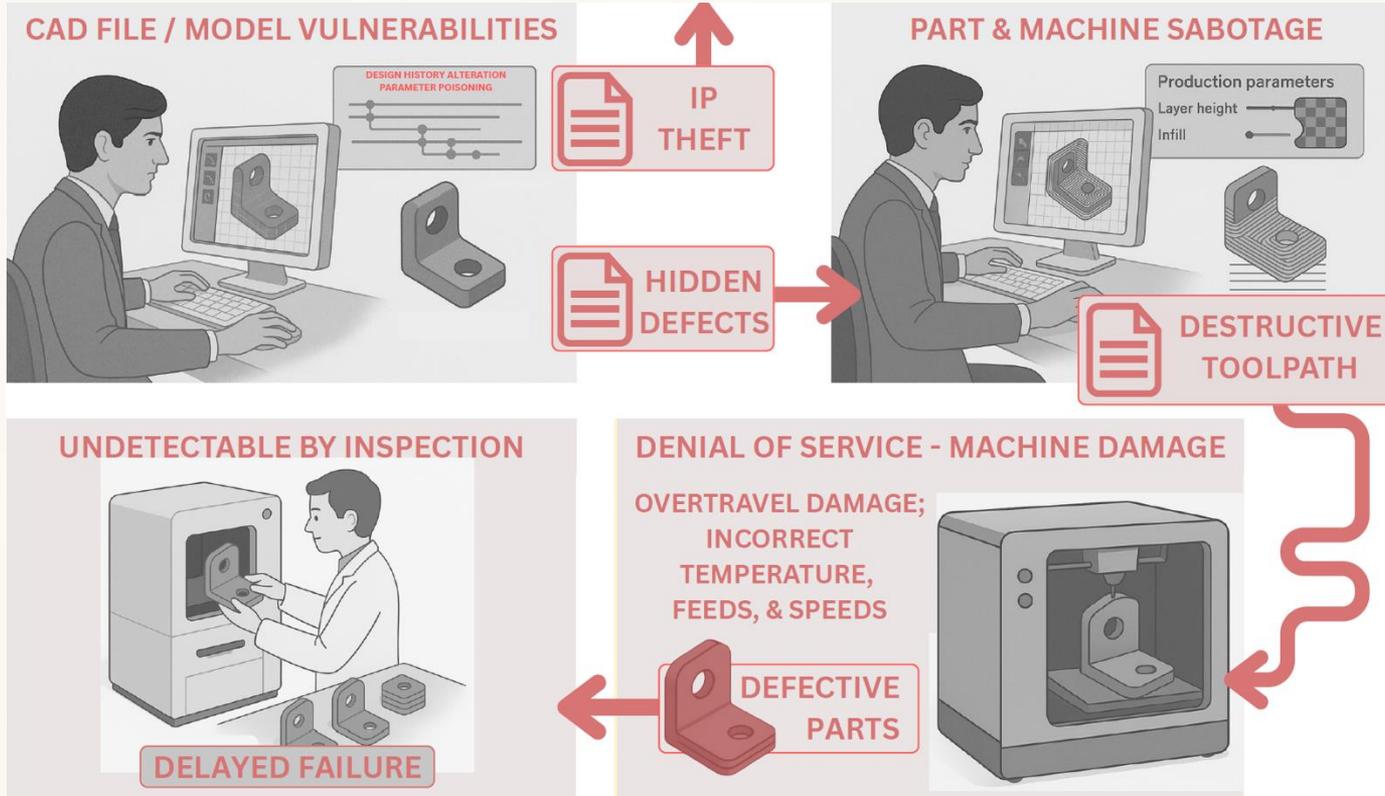


Additive manufacturing cyber-physical process chain



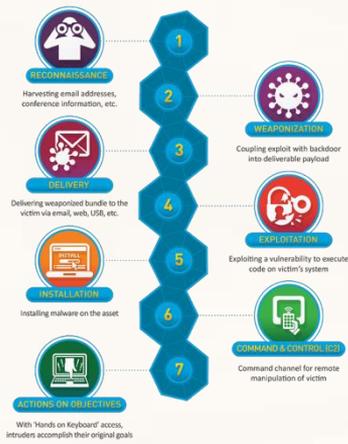


Additive manufacturing cyber-physical threats





Popular threat modeling frameworks



THE CYBER KILL CHAIN®

STRIDE model

To better help you formulate these kinds of pointed questions, Microsoft uses the STRIDE model, which categorizes different types of threats and simplifies the overall security conversations.

[Expand table](#)

Category	Description
Spoofing	Involves illegally accessing and then using another user's authentication information, such as username and password
Tampering	Involves the malicious modification of data. Examples include unauthorized changes made to persistent data, such as that held in a database, and the alteration of data as it flows between two computers over an open network, such as the Internet
Repudiation	Associated with users who deny performing an action without other parties having any way to prove otherwise—for example a user performs an illegal operation in a system that lacks the ability to trace the prohibited operations. Non-Repudiation refers to the ability of a system to counter repudiation threats. For example, a user who purchases an item might have to sign for the item upon receipt. The vendor can then use the signed receipt as evidence that the user did receive the package
Information Disclosure	Involves the exposure of information to individuals who are not supposed to have access to it—for example, the ability of users to read a file that they were not granted access to, or the ability of an intruder to read data in transit between two computers
Denial of Service	Denial of service (DoS) attacks deny service to valid users—for example, by making a Web server temporarily unavailable or unusable. You must protect against certain types of DoS threats simply to improve system availability and reliability
Elevation of Privilege	An unprivileged user gains privileged access and thereby has sufficient access to compromise or destroy the entire system. Elevation of privilege threats include those situations in which an attacker has effectively penetrated all system defenses and become part of the trusted system itself, a dangerous situation indeed

MITRE ATT&CK®

ICS Matrix

Below are the tactics and techniques representing the MITRE ATT&CK® Matrix for ICS

[View on the ATT&CK® Navigator v2](#)
Version: Permalinks

Initial Access	Execution	Persistence	Privilege Escalation	Evasion	Discovery	Lateral Movement	Collection	Command and Control	Impact	
10 techniques	10 techniques	6 techniques	2 techniques	2 techniques	5 techniques	11 techniques	3 techniques	14 techniques	13 techniques	
Drive-by-Compromise External Remote Services Public Facing System Supply Chain Valid Accounts	Automated Image Change Command-Line Interface Cryptand Line Event Log External Remote Services Hidden Services Internal Remote Services Local Admin Remote Services Service Discovery System Binary Tasking Valid Accounts	Hardcoded Credentials Invalid Program Local Admin Mandatory Credentials Program File System Firmware Valid Accounts	Exploitation for Privilege Escalation Invalid Program Misconfiguring Process Injection System Firmware Valid Accounts	Change Operating Mode Hijacking Indicator Removal Misconfiguring Process Injection Rootkit System Binary Valid Accounts	Network Connection Enumeration Registry Service Discovery Unauthorized System Access Valid Accounts	Default Credentials Internal Connections Remote System Discovery Valid Accounts	Adversary-Run Module Automated Collection Data from Internal System Data from Local System Default Operating Mode Remote Services Valid Accounts	Command and Control Data from Internal System Data from Local System Default Operating Mode Valid Accounts	Activate Enterprise System Module Malicious File Misconfiguring Process Injection Remote Reporting Message Unauthorized Message Valid Accounts	Brute Force (UI) Denial of Control Denial of View Loss of Availability Loss of Confidentiality Loss of Integrity Loss of Production Loss of Safety Loss of View Manipulation of Information Manipulation of System Service Stop System Firmware

None of these frameworks explicitly consider physical entities / processes. Cyber-physical systems need first-class tickets.

- <https://www.lockheedmartin.com/en-us/capabilities/cyber/cyber-kill-chain.html>
- <https://learn.microsoft.com/en-us/azure/security/develop/threat-modeling-tool-threats>
- <https://attack.mitre.org/matrices/ics/>



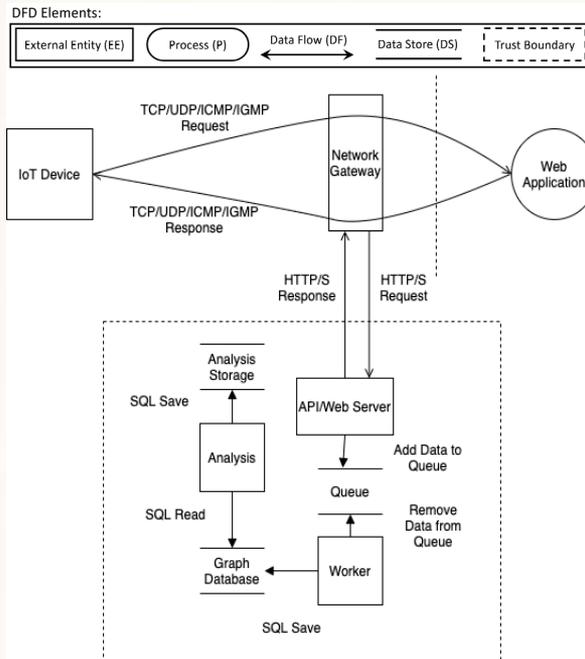


The STRIDE framework

Mature, well-known and widely-used framework for cyber threats.

Threat modeling process:

1. Create Data Flow Diagram
2. Identify threats to DFD elements
3. Investigate & prioritize threats
4. Mitigate vulnerabilities



Step 1: Create DFD



SUSCEPTIBILITY OF DFD ELEMENTS TO STRIDE THREATS.

DFD Element	S	T	R	I	D	E
Entity	✓		✓			
Data Flow		✓		✓	✓	
Data Store		✓	✓	✓	✓	
Process	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Step 2: Identify Threats

DFD Example: O'Reilly, Jonathon & Nagappan, Ramesh. (2019). Passive Data Collection and Threat Identification through use of a Graph Database in IoT Devices. STRIDE threats diagram: <https://medium.com/@arielhacking/examples-of-stride-threats-for-payment-applications-87a0ad0c3a21>





CPSTRIDE framework specification

What parts of STRIDE need to be expanded to be a better cyber-physical security framework?

1. Data Flow Diagram
2. Security Properties
3. Security Threats
4. Susceptibility Matrix





CPSTRIDE Cyber-physical Flow Diagram (CPFD)

Definitions and Guidance.

In the context of CPFDs, the word *Cyber* indicates information, data, control signal, etc.; *Physical* indicates material, energy, force, etc.; *Cyber-physical* indicates the integration or combination of the two. Each element in a CPFD instance will be categorized as either cyber, physical, or cyber-physical; in ambiguous cases, rely on heuristic consideration of whether the element can reasonably be considered vulnerable to cyber and/or physical attack.

CPFD element, abbreviation & description	Graphical Symbol	Examples CX: Cyber Only PX: Physical Only CPX: Cyber-physical
Interactor (I) An entity that exchanges data, energy, or material with the CPS but remains outside its design scope and/or control boundary.		CI: External APIs, the Internet and other networks. PI: Raw material sources; water, gas or electric mains. CPI: Humans (e.g., employees, contractors), external orgs (e.g., supply chain providers, partners, customers), technological entities (e.g., autonomous delivery and service robots).
Trust Boundary (TB) A virtual and/or physical zone of privileged access.		CTB: Password-protected systems, encrypted files, or trusted computing environments. PTB: Physically secured areas with controlled access, e.g. locked rooms, fenced perimeters, analog safes, motor housings, machine casings. CPTB: Secured areas with both physical barriers (locks, fences) and cyber controls (authentication, surveillance monitoring).
Store (S) Data, energy, or material at rest, distinct from its storage medium or container. Nesting is allowed.		CS: Files, databases, registry keys. PS: Raw materials, simple manufactured objects, physical keys. CPS: Smart materials, physical keycards, 3D-printed objects. <i>Note: 3D-printed objects represent a special case where a cyber entity (design) has been transformed into a physical entity, but carries the cyber vulnerabilities of its creation process. May be applicable to other examples.</i>
Flow (F) Data, energy, or material in motion, distinct from its enabling path, channel or medium.		CF: Function calls, network communications, data transfers, digital process I/Os. PF: Material flows, energy transfers, mechanical forces, physical process I/Os. CPF: Sensor data streams, HVAC / IoT communications, transport of smart materials or devices, cyber-physical process I/Os.
Link (L) A logical and/or physical path, channel, or medium that connects and enables Flows between CPFD elements.		CL: File formats / schema, data structures; communication ports, channels, & protocols. PL: Geographic routes, power lines, fluid pipes. CPL: RF spectrum, air (visible light / IR / acoustic transmission).
Process (P) Activity that transforms inputs into outputs.		CP: Only digital inputs and outputs, e.g. any running code . PP: Only physical inputs and outputs, e.g. manual manufacturing, simple raw material mixing / refining. CPP: Cyber-physical inputs and/or outputs, e.g. OT processes, smart manufacturing, automated logistics, robotic assembly, adaptive environmental control, etc.
Device (D) An instantiation of computational capability and/or physical functionality for Processes and Stores; a virtually-and/or physically-embodied enabler of Processes and/or Storage in a cyber-physical system.		CD: Abstracted virtual / digital resources, e.g. virtual sensors and machines, Docker containers, digital twins, cloud compute instances, remote database servers, content delivery networks (CDN), cloud storage instances, distributed blockchain ledgers. PD: Mechanical actuators, manual valves, analog gauges, hydraulic motors, physical key storage lockboxes, material storage tanks, pressure vessels, chemical reagent containers. CPD: Embedded systems, smart thermostats, autonomous vehicles, IoT-enabled medical implants, OT actuators, desktop computers, 3D printers, smart inventory management systems, RFID-enabled storage cabinets, IoT-connected storage tanks with sensors.



CPSTRIDE Cyber-Physical Security Properties

Property	Definition
Authenticity (subsumes Authentication)	System elements (such as users, processes, devices, materials, and energy sources) are genuine and can be verified as what they claim to be. Authenticity subsumes the traditional Authentication property for data systems while extending to the verification of physical components, materials, and energy signatures in cyber-physical contexts.
Integrity	System elements (such as data, software, firmware, hardware, materials, and energy parameters) remain unaltered and uncorrupted by unauthorized means throughout their lifecycle. This preserves the traditional data Integrity concept while expanding to include physical properties such as material composition, structural integrity, and energy calibration.
Non-Repudiation	Actions performed within the system cannot be denied by their initiator, through providing sufficient evidence of activities across cyber and physical domains. This extends beyond digital audit trails to include physical evidence trails, sensor data, surveillance records, and material verification techniques that establish accountability.
Containment (subsumes Confidentiality)	System elements (such as data, energy, and material resources) remain within their authorized boundaries and are accessible only to entities with appropriate privileges. Containment subsumes traditional data Confidentiality while encompassing physical confinement of materials and energy to prevent unauthorized extraction, leakage, or diversion.
Availability / Reliability	System functions, services, and resources are accessible and operational when needed, at expected performance levels. This maintains the traditional concept of digital Availability while extending to the physical reliability of components, consistent energy supply, material accessibility, and operational continuity across the cyber-physical spectrum.
Authorization	Specific entities are explicitly granted or denied permission to access, control, or modify certain system elements. This extends traditional digital access controls to include physical access rights, operational authority over equipment, material handling permissions, and energy distribution controls throughout the cyber-physical system.



CPSTRIDE Cyber-Physical Threats

Definitions and Guidance.

Each Threat potentially violates a corresponding Security Property. In the context of CPSTRIDE, the word *Cyber* indicates information, data, control signal, etc.; *Physical* indicates material, energy, force, etc.; *Cyber-physical* indicates the integration or combination of the two.

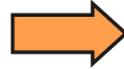
Threat (Security Property)	Definition	Examples	C: Cyber Only	P: Physical Only	CP: Cyber-physical
Spoofing (Authenticity)	Falsification of identity, source, or authenticity of system elements, including users, processes, signals, or physical/cyber-physical stores, undermining trust mechanisms and authentication controls within the CPS.	C: Phishing, smishing, social engineering, malicious broadcast of trusted WiFi network SSID, typosquatting, deepfaking. P: Faking physical credentials, passing off counterfeit parts and materials as genuine, forging signatures on physical documents. CP: Broadcasting fake GPS to misguide autonomous vehicles or drones, injection of counterfeit sensor readings over OT network.			
Tampering (Integrity)	Unauthorized modification, corruption, or alteration of legitimate cyber-physical entities including data, structures, energy flows, material compositions, or control signals, that compromises system integrity.	C: Modifying control logic in industrial automation software. P: Physically adjusting valve settings or equipment calibration screws. CP: Altering sensor readings through electromagnetic interference, causing the system to respond to fabricated conditions.			
Repudiation (Non-Repudiation)	Denial of responsibility for actions within the system, either through passive rejection of accountability or active measures to destroy, corrupt, or disable auditing mechanisms or evidence trails that would establish proof of activities, whether legitimate or malicious.	C: Disabling logging mechanisms to hide evidence of digital access. P: Destroying physical access records or tampering with surveillance footage. CP: Cross-domain log corruption.			
Interception (Containment)	Unauthorized acquisition or monitoring of system resources, including data, energy flows, or physical materials, violating containment. Subsumes Information Disclosure.	C: Capturing sensitive control data through network sniffing. P: Physically extracting / diverting material from manufacturing processes. CP: Harvesting energy from wireless power transmission systems through unauthorized coupling.			
Denial of Service (Availability / Reliability)	Impairment or prevention of system availability through any means that renders services, functions, or resources inaccessible or unreliable for legitimate users.	C: Network flooding, resource exhaustion, communication jamming. P: Blockage of moving parts; permanent damage by physical destruction, component sabotage, or irreversible physical alterations; energy disruption through power supply manipulation or battery depletion; environmental manipulation to introduce adverse conditions. CP: Creating electromagnetic interference to disrupt wireless communications and/or electronic sensors, physical obstruction of sensors/actuators.			
Elevation of Privilege (Authorization)	Exploitation of system vulnerabilities to gain unauthorized higher-level access rights beyond assigned permissions.	C: Traditional privilege elevation cyber-techniques such as exploiting software vulnerabilities to gain administrative access to control systems. P: Obtaining master keys or accessing restricted physical areas without authorization. CP: Using physical access to maintenance ports to install privileged software that bypasses normal authorization controls.			





CPSTRIDE Susceptibility Matrix

DFD Element	S	T	R	I	D	E
Interactor	✓		✓			
Data Flow		✓		✓	✓	
Data Store		✓	✓	✓	✓	
Process	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

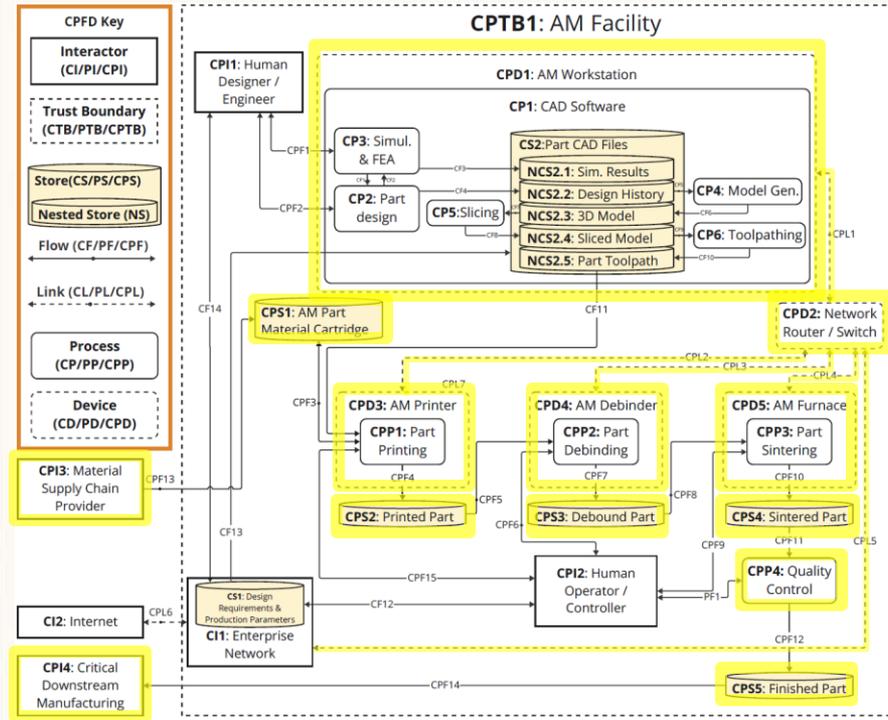


CPFD Element	S	T	R	I	D	E
Interactor	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Trust Boundary	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Store	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Flow	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Process	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Link	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Device	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

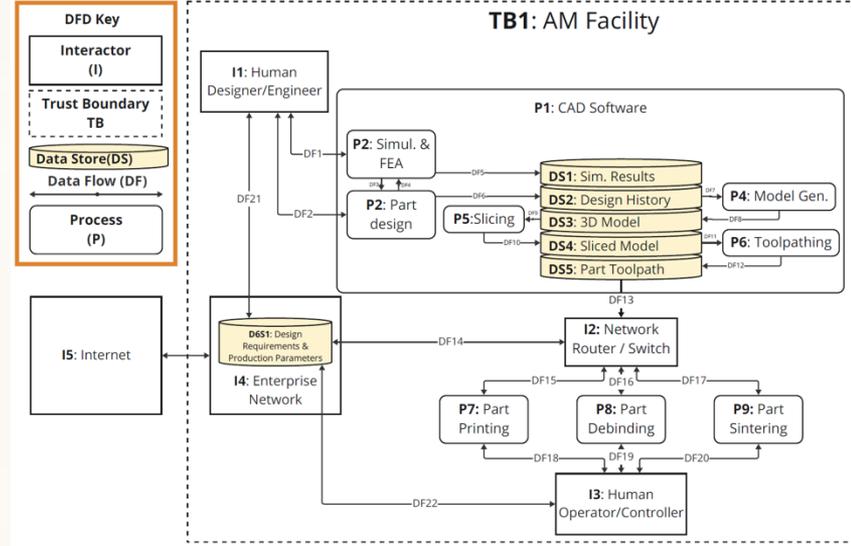


Comparative threat modeling for AM CPS

CPSTRIDE CPFD



STRIDE DFD





LLM-assisted comparative threat modeling for AM CPS

- Claude 3.7 Sonnet assumes role of subject matter expert.
- Orange Highlights: Physical & cyber-physical threats

S T R I D E

Element	Interception	Denial of Service
CPD3: AM Printer	Object: Physical damage to printer through sabotage or improper maintenance. Object: Overheating through disabling cooling systems. Object: Jamming of moving parts with foreign materials.	Object: Side-channel emissions (acoustic/electromagnetic) could be intercepted to reverse-engineer part designs or manufacturing parameters. Object: Physical observation of printer operation could reveal proprietary manufacturing techniques.
CPD4: AM Debinder	Object: Unauthorized collection of process parameters through physical monitoring or tapping of control signals. Object: Contamination or degradation of material properties. Object: Software damage to feed mechanisms.	Object: Physical blockage of ventilation systems. Object: Contamination of chemical baths or catalysts. Object: Damage to heating elements.
CPD5: AM Furnace	Object: Monitoring of thermal profiles could reveal proprietary sintering parameters. Object: Sabotage of gas supply lines. Object: Damage to heating elements or thermal barriers to induce part stress.	Object: Physical tapping of network lines. Object: Installation of hardware keyloggers or packet sniffers.
CPD2: Network Router/Switch	Object: Physical eavesdropping on network cables through electromagnetic monitoring. Object: Physical taps on communication lines.	Object: Physical cutting or disconnection of network cables. Object: Signal jamming using physical proximity devices.
CP11-CP16: Physical Network Connections	Object: Physical tapping on communication lines. Object: Physical taps on communication lines.	Object: Physical cutting or disconnection of network cables. Object: Electromagnetic interference/jamming of communication channels.
CP7: RF/Acoustic Side Channel	Object: Passive interception of unintentional electromagnetic or acoustic emissions to extract operational data or designs.	Object: Deliberate RF/acoustic jamming to disrupt environmental sensors or wireless communications.

Element	Interception	Denial of Service
CPD3: AM Printer	Object: Side-channel emissions (acoustic/electromagnetic) could be intercepted to reverse-engineer part designs or manufacturing parameters. Object: Physical observation of printer operation could reveal proprietary manufacturing techniques.	Object: Physical damage to printer through sabotage or improper maintenance. Object: Overheating through disabling cooling systems. Object: Jamming of moving parts with foreign materials.
CPD4: AM Debinder	Object: Unauthorized collection of process parameters through physical monitoring or tapping of control signals. Object: Contamination or degradation of material properties. Object: Software damage to feed mechanisms.	Object: Physical blockage of ventilation systems. Object: Contamination of chemical baths or catalysts. Object: Damage to heating elements.
CPD5: AM Furnace	Object: Monitoring of thermal profiles could reveal proprietary sintering parameters. Object: Sabotage of gas supply lines. Object: Damage to heating elements or thermal barriers to induce part stress.	Object: Physical tapping of network lines. Object: Installation of hardware keyloggers or packet sniffers.
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CP7: RF/Acoustic Side Channel	Object: Passive interception of unintentional electromagnetic or acoustic emissions to extract operational data or designs.	Object: Deliberate RF/acoustic jamming to disrupt environmental sensors or wireless communications.





Discussion: CPSTRIDE Advantages

- Allows explicit modeling of physical & cyber-physical entities, e.g., material and energy flows, hybrid security measures, geographic proximity, humans
- Allows differentiation of Links from Flows, Processes from Devices
- Facilitates modeling the physical effects of cyber-attacks
- Invites the use of LLMs to augment human expertise



Discussion: CPSTRIDE Limitations & Challenges

- More complex & time-intensive than STRIDE
- Ambiguity of broadened threat susceptibility for elements
- Abstract conceptual threats vs. cyber-physical databases
- Technological costs of physical vs. digital threat scanning
- Dangers of overreliance on AI / LLMs



Discussion: Future Work

- Application of CPSTRIDE to other CPS domains.
In development: CPSTRIDE for Water CI and UAS threats
- Development of automated tools leveraging AI & LLMs
- Integration with existing security frameworks & standards
 - NIST Cybersecurity Framework
 - IEC62443
 - ISO/IEC 27001



Slutsats (Conclusion)

Q&A



Contact

dallas-elleman@utulsa.edu

QR: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/dallas-elleman>





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