Opinion
Volume 16:04, 2025

Global Journal of Technology and Optimization

ISSN: 2229-8711

Open Access

Edge Computing: Impact, Challenges, and Solutions

Fatima Zahra Idrissi*

Department of Energy Systems, Smart Grids and Thermo-Fluid Sciences, Mohammed V University, 10100 Rabat, Morocco

Introduction

Edge computing represents a paradigm shift in data processing, fundamentally altering how applications are designed and deployed, particularly for real-time services. By pushing computational resources closer to the source of data generation, it effectively minimizes latency and significantly alleviates network congestion. Extensive surveys meticulously explore its foundational architectures, pinpointing crucial technical challenges such as intricate resource management and robust security protocols. These foundational studies also carefully outline potential future research directions, emphasizing the transformative impact of distributed computational power [1].

A broad overview of edge computing thoroughly details its core concepts, underlying motivations, and the diverse array of technologies it skillfully leverages. This perspective not only illuminates the substantial benefits it extends to a wide range of applications, including sophisticated Internet of Things (IoT) deployments and time-sensitive real-time analytics, but also forthrightly addresses significant hurdles that demand focused attention. These include the complexities of standardization across varied platforms and ensuring seamless interoperability among disparate systems [2].

Here's the thing: while edge computing offers tremendous operational advantages, it also undeniably introduces a new landscape of security and privacy vulnerabilities that require careful consideration. Comprehensive surveys in this domain meticulously examine these critical issues, categorizing specific threats and vulnerabilities inherent to the decentralized edge environment. Furthermore, this research actively explores various proactive defense mechanisms and thoughtfully suggests future research directions aimed at constructing demonstrably more secure and resilient edge systems [3].

Innovative frameworks are steadily emerging for sophisticated resource management within complex edge computing environments. A notable approach seamlessly integrates Software-Defined Networking (SDN) with cutting-edge blockchain technology. What this really means is leveraging SDN for highly flexible and agile network control, while simultaneously utilizing blockchain for secure, decentralized, and transparent resource allocation. Together, these technologies significantly enhance the overall efficiency, reliability, and trustworthiness of edge systems [4].

Mobile Edge Computing (MEC) stands out as a crucial and highly specialized branch within the broader realm of edge computing. Comprehensive analyses of MEC provide a detailed look at its current state, highlighting the significant opportunities it presents for enhancing mobile applications and services with improved performance and responsiveness. These studies also deeply delve into the complex technical and practical challenges that absolutely need to be overcome for MEC to truly reach its full transformative potential [5].

Let's break it down: smart cities are inherently data-intensive environments, generating vast amounts of information from numerous sensors and devices. Edge computing is recognized as a pivotal enabler for processing this voluminous data with exceptional efficiency and minimal delay. Surveys specifically review the latest advancements in applying edge computing to these complex smart city environments. This covers diverse applications, ranging from sophisticated intelligent transportation systems to critical public safety initiatives, concurrently discussing the unique operational challenges inherent in this dynamic domain [6].

Edge intelligence represents a powerful and innovative fusion, effectively combining the decentralized processing capabilities of edge computing with the advanced analytical power of Artificial Intelligence (AI). This integration thoughtfully explores how bringing AI closer to the actual data sources at the edge can profoundly improve critical response times and significantly bolster data privacy. This pioneering approach is actively paving the way for next-generation AI applications across a multitude of platforms, including the Internet of Things (IoT), various smart devices, and numerous other emerging domains [7].

Efficient resource allocation is absolutely critical for optimizing both performance and cost-effectiveness within dynamic edge computing environments. Extensive surveys meticulously delve into a variety of sophisticated strategies and advanced techniques for expertly managing computational, storage, and network resources across widely distributed edge nodes. Such vital work systematically evaluates different methodological approaches and highlights existing open challenges inherent in developing truly dynamic, highly adaptive, and robust resource management systems for the edge [8].

Federated Learning is rapidly gaining considerable traction as an inherently privacy-preserving Machine Learning paradigm, and its strategic integration with edge computing is proving to be a true game-changer in distributed AI. Comprehensive surveys in this specialized area meticulously explore precisely how federated learning can be effectively deployed at the edge. These discussions encompass its distinct architectural designs, its inherent operational benefits, and the unique, complex challenges that inevitably arise from dealing with inherently distributed data sets and often constrained edge resources [9].

The Internet of Things (IoT) when combined with edge computing frequently encounters significant security and privacy hurdles that demand robust solutions. Here, blockchain technology offers a highly promising and innovative solution to these persistent challenges. Surveys thoroughly review how blockchain can profoundly enhance the security and privacy dimensions of edge computing environments, specifically tailored for IoT devices. This examination scrutinizes various blockchain-based approaches and their far-reaching implications for creating more secure and trustworthy distributed systems [10].

Description

Edge computing fundamentally transforms data processing by bringing computation closer to its source, which inherently reduces latency and network congestion [1]. This paradigm shift not only changes how applications are designed and deployed, especially for real-time services, but also offers substantial benefits to diverse applications like the Internet of Things (IoT) and real-time analytics. Nevertheless, this shift introduces significant challenges related to standardization and interoperability that require careful consideration [2].

A critical aspect of implementing edge computing effectively involves addressing security and privacy concerns. Here's the thing: while it offers numerous advantages, the decentralized nature of edge environments also introduces new vulnerabilities. Comprehensive research meticulously examines these threats, categorizing specific issues within edge systems and exploring various defense mechanisms to build more secure architectures [3]. For instance, blockchain technology has emerged as a promising solution to bolster security and privacy within edge computing, particularly for IoT devices. Investigations into blockchain-based approaches highlight their potential implications for creating more trustworthy distributed systems [10].

Efficient resource allocation is paramount for optimizing performance and cost in any edge computing setup. Researchers are actively developing innovative frameworks to manage these resources effectively. One such framework integrates Software-Defined Networking (SDN) for flexible network control with blockchain technology for secure and decentralized resource allocation, thereby enhancing the overall efficiency and trustworthiness of edge systems [4]. These strategies for managing computational, storage, and network resources across distributed edge nodes are crucial. Surveys in this area evaluate different techniques and pinpoint open challenges in developing dynamic, adaptive resource management systems [8].

Edge computing also branches into specialized domains, each with its own set of opportunities and challenges. Mobile Edge Computing (MEC), for example, offers significant potential for enhancing mobile applications and services. A thorough understanding of MEC's current state is vital for overcoming the technical and practical hurdles preventing it from reaching its full capabilities [5]. Moreover, let's break it down: edge computing is a key enabler for smart cities, where immense data generation demands efficient local processing. Surveys highlight recent advancements in applying edge computing to smart city environments, covering applications from intelligent transportation to public safety, and discussing the unique challenges specific to this complex domain [6].

Beyond foundational aspects, the integration of advanced technologies like Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning (ML) is pushing the boundaries of edge computing. Edge intelligence, a fusion of edge computing's decentralized processing with AI's analytical power, significantly improves response times and data privacy, paving the way for next-generation AI applications in IoT and smart devices [7]. Another game-changer is Federated Learning at the Edge, a privacy-preserving ML paradigm. Comprehensive surveys explore its architectures, benefits, and the unique challenges posed by distributed data and limited resources, emphasizing its potential for secure, collaborative learning in edge environments [9].

Conclusion

Edge computing is fundamentally changing how applications are designed and deployed by bringing data processing closer to the source, which drastically cuts down on latency and network congestion. Surveys on the subject explore its core architectures, concepts, and the motivations behind this shift, detailing how it benefits diverse applications, including the Internet of Things (IoT) and real-time analytics. However, moving computational power to the edge also introduces significant hurdles.

Key technical challenges involve effective resource management, ensuring robust security, and safeguarding user privacy. There's also the ongoing need for better standardization and interoperability across different edge environments. Specialized areas like Mobile Edge Computing (MEC) present their own set of opportunities for mobile applications, alongside unique technical and practical challenges. Researchers are actively developing innovative solutions, such as frameworks that integrate Software-Defined Networking (SDN) with blockchain technology to improve resource allocation, efficiency, and overall trustworthiness in edge systems.

Edge computing is proving to be a critical enabler for smart cities, efficiently processing the immense data generated to support everything from intelligent transportation to public safety initiatives. The integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) with edge computing, known as edge intelligence, brings AI closer to data sources, enhancing response times and data privacy for next-generation applications. Furthermore, efficient resource allocation remains paramount for optimizing performance and cost across distributed edge nodes, leading to ongoing research into dynamic and adaptive management systems. Federated Learning at the Edge is emerging as a privacy-preserving Machine Learning paradigm, exploring how to effectively deploy distributed learning with limited edge resources. Blockchain technology also stands out as a promising avenue for bolstering the security and privacy aspects of IoT within edge computing environments.

Acknowledgement

None.

Conflict of Interest

None.

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How to cite this article: Idrissi, Fatima Zahra. ”Edge Computing: Impact, Challenges, and Solutions.” *Global J Technol Optim* 16 (2025):461.

Address for Correspondence: Fatima, Zahra Idrissi, Department of Energy Systems, Smart Grids and Thermo-Fluid Sciences, Mohammed V University, 10100 Rabat, Morocco, E-mail: f.idrissi@um5.ac.ma

Received: 31-Jul-2025,ManuscriptNo.gjto-25-176011; **Editor assigned:** 04-Aug-2025,PreQCNo.P-176011; **Reviewed:** 14-Aug-2025,QCNo.Q-176011; **Revised:** 21-Aug-2025,ManuscriptNo.R-176011; **Published:** 28-Aug-2025, DOI: 10.37421/2229-8711.2025.16.461