

Triple-Threat Analysis: Measuring Mythril, Slither and Oyente Against Real-World Smart Contract Vulnerabilities

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Abstract

Smart contracts have become fundamental building blocks of blockchain ecosystems, yet their immutable nature makes security vulnerabilities particularly devastating. This paper presents a comprehensive evaluation of three prominent static analysis tools – Mythril, Slither, and Oyente – for detecting vulnerabilities in Ethereum smart contracts. Through systematic experimentation with real-world contract categories (voting systems, land registries, and crowdfunding platforms), we quantify the effectiveness of each tool across eight critical vulnerability types, including reentrancy, integer overflows, and transaction ordering dependence. Our results reveal significant variations in tool capabilities: Slither demonstrates superior performance for syntactic vulnerabilities (95% detection rate for integer overflows) with faster analysis times ($3\times$ quicker than Mythril), while Mythril excels at detecting complex logical flaws (92% accuracy for reentrancy). Oyente shows consistently lower performance, particularly for gas-related vulnerabilities (45% detection rate). We identify key trade-offs between analysis depth and computational resources, with Mythril requiring $2.5\times$ more memory than Slither for thorough symbolic execution. The study provides practical insights for developers, recommending Slither for development phase scanning and Mythril for final audits. We also expose critical gaps in current tools, including poor cross-contract vulnerability detection (42% missed rate) and limited gas optimization analysis. These findings inform us of our proposed roadmap for future research directions, including hybrid analysis frameworks and machine learning-enhanced detection methods. Our work contributes to smarter tool selection strategies and highlights opportunities for advancing smart contract security analysis.

Keywords: Blockchain, Ethereum, formal verification, integer overflow, Mythril, Oyente, reentrancy attacks, security vulnerabilities, Slither, smart contracts, static analysis

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Received Date: October 14, 2025

Accepted Date: December 30, 2025

Published Date: February 09, 2026

Citation: Ranjit Haldar, Himadri Sekhar Mondal, Asim Kumar Panda, Amartya Roy, Shuvojit Das. Triple-Threat Analysis: Measuring Mythril, Slither and Oyente Against Real-World Smart Contract Vulnerabilities. Journal of Artificial Intelligence Research & Advances. 2026; 13(1): 78–85p.

INTRODUCTION

Blockchain technology has revolutionized digital transactions by enabling decentralized, trustless systems through smart contracts—self-executing agreements with terms encoded directly into software. These contracts power decentralized applications (dApps), decentralized finance (DeFi), and supply chain solutions, and handle billions of dollars in assets. However, their immutable and autonomous nature renders security vulnerabilities particularly devastating. High-profile exploits, such as the DAO hack (2016) and Parity wallet freeze (2017), have resulted in losses exceeding \$500 million, underscoring the critical need for a robust security analysis before deployment [1].

Static analysis tools that inspect code without execution have emerged as a frontline defense against smart contract vulnerabilities. Tools such as Mythril, Slither, and Oyente automate the detection of flaws such as reentrancy, integer overflow, and transaction ordering dependence (TOD). However, developers and auditors face challenges in selecting an appropriate tool, as each varies in accuracy, speed, and coverage. For instance, Slither excels in detecting syntactic issues quickly, whereas Mythril's symbolic execution uncovers deeper logical vulnerabilities but at a higher computational cost [2, 3]. Previous studies have evaluated these tools in isolation, but a comparative analysis of their effectiveness across diverse contract types (e.g., voting systems and crowdfunding) remains underexplored.

Motivation and Research Gap

Despite advancements in static analysis, key gaps persist:

- *Tool limitations:* No single tool effectively detected all vulnerability classes. For example, Oyente misses gas-related inefficiencies, whereas Slither may overlook complex reentrancy paths [4].
- *Lack of real-world benchmarking:* Most evaluations use synthetic contracts, leaving real-world applicability unclear [5].
- *Developer dilemma:* Without empirical comparisons, teams struggle to balance false positives, analysis depth, and integration into development pipelines [6].

Contributions

This study addresses these gaps by:

- A systematic evaluation of Mythril, Slither, and Oyente on three real-world smart contracts (voting, land registry, and crowdfunding).
- We quantified their performance in detecting eight critical vulnerabilities, including reentrancy, TOD, and timestamp dependence.
- Providing a decision framework for developers to select tools based on use-case requirements (e.g., pre-deployment audits versus CI/CD integration).

Findings and Implications

Our analysis reveals that:

- Slither outperforms in speed and has low false positives for syntactic checks (e.g., access control), making it ideal for development phase linting [2].
- Mythril detects 22% more logical vulnerabilities (e.g., reentrancy) but requires a $3\times$ longer analysis time [3].
- Combining tools reduces false negatives by 40%, supporting the case of multi-tool auditing workflows [5].

These findings will empower developers to optimize security practices and ultimately reduce risks in decentralized systems. The rest of the paper is structured as follows: Section 2 reviews related work, Section 3 details the methodology, Sections 4–5 present the results and discussion, and Section 6 concludes with future directions.

RELATED WORKS

The rise of blockchain technology has introduced smart contracts as self-executing agreements with immutable code; however, their irreversible nature makes security flaws catastrophic. Early work [1] systematically classified vulnerabilities such as reentrancy, integer overflows, and TOD, highlighting how exploits such as DAO attacks stemmed from code-level oversights. Subsequent studies [6] emphasized that static analysis can preemptively detect these issues by examining bytecodes or source code without execution.

Static analysis tools have become pivotal for smart contract auditing. Mythril [3] leveraged symbolic execution to detect complex vulnerabilities (e.g., reentrancy) by exploring all possible execution paths.

Slither [2], a static analysis framework, identified patterns such as uninitialized storage pointers and gas inefficiencies through taint analysis. Oyente [4], an early tool, pioneered symbolic execution for Ethereum but faced limitations in scalability. Comparative studies [5] revealed that tools vary in precision; Slither excels in speed, while Mythril offers deeper logical exploration.

Empirical evaluations demonstrate trade-offs: Slither's lightweight design [2] enables integration into CI/CD pipelines, but it may miss edge cases that are detectable by Mythril's symbolic engine [3]. Securify [5] complements these tools by using domain-specific predicates, whereas Vandal [7] focused on low-level EVM bytecode analysis. However, false positives remain a challenge across tools, as noted in [8], necessitating the use of hybrid approaches.

Recent advancements have integrated machine learning (ML) to predict vulnerabilities. Intrusion detection has been embedded in contracts [9], whereas ML-based tools for pattern recognition in code have been surveyed [8]. Despite progress, ML methods require extensive training data and struggle with interpretability, leaving static analysis the gold standard for deterministic checks.

While prior works [6, 10] compared tools in isolation, few studies have evaluated their combined efficacy across diverse contract types (e.g., voting and crowdfunding). Our work bridges this gap by analyzing Mythril, Slither, and Oyente on real-world contracts and measuring detection rates, false positives, and performance.

Industry audits by ConsenSys [10] advocate for multitool workflows, as no single tool covers all vulnerabilities. Our findings align with this demonstrate that Slither's speed suits the development phases, while Mythril's depth is critical for pre-deployment audits. The literature underscores the need for rigorous tool-agnostic evaluations to guide developers. Our study extends this by providing a granular comparison of static analyzers, their synergies, and actionable insights for secure smart contract development.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

Our study employs a comparative experimental approach to evaluate the effectiveness of three static analysis tools, Mythril, Slither, and Oyente, in detecting vulnerabilities across different smart contract categories. The research design consisted of the following four phases.

1. *Tool selection*: Choose representative static analyzers based on their popularity, technical approach, and coverage of vulnerability types.
2. *Dataset preparation*: Collecting and categorizing real-world smart contracts for analysis.
3. *Experimental setup*: Configuring tools and execution environment for consistent evaluation.
4. *Analysis framework*: Defining metrics for performance comparison.

Tools Selection

We selected the following tools based on their widespread adoption in industry and academia:

- *Mythril (v0.23.4)*: a symbolic execution-based analyzer that explores all possible execution paths to detect complex vulnerabilities such as reentrancy and integer overflows [3].
- *Slither (v0.8.3)*: a static analysis framework that uses taint analysis and pattern matching to identify vulnerabilities with low computational overhead [2].
- *Oyente (v0.2.7)*: An early symbolic execution tool that pioneered smart contract analysis but had known limitations in gas-related vulnerability detection [4].

Dataset Preparation

Our evaluation uses three categories of real-world smart contracts:

1. *Voting system contract*: Implements decentralized voting with candidate registration and vote tallying.

2. *Land registry contract*: Manages property ownership transfers and verification.
3. *Crowdfunding contract*: Handles fund collection and disbursement based on campaign goals.

Each contract was selected based on:

- *Complexity*: Contains multiple functions and state variables
- *Real-world use*: Actively deployed or forked from popular repositories
- *Vulnerability coverage*: Contains known vulnerability patterns

Experimental Setup

The analysis was conducted in a controlled environment with the following specifications:

- *Hardware*: Ubuntu 20.04 LTS (8-core CPU, 16GB RAM)
- *Blockchain node*: Ganache CLI (v7.0.3) for local execution
- *Compiler*: Solidity (v0.8.0) with optimization enabled

Execution Parameters

- *Timeout*: 300 seconds per analysis
- *Maximum depth*: 50 for symbolic execution
- *Gas limit*: 8 million (matching Ethereum main net)

Vulnerability Detection Process

For each tool-contract combination, we performed:

Static Scanning

- Ran each tool with default configurations
- Recorded execution time and memory usage

Ground Truth Establishment

- Manually verified reported vulnerabilities
- Cross-checked with SWC Registry

Result Aggregation

- Classified findings by vulnerability type
- Calculated precision/recall metrics

Evaluation Metrics

We assessed tool performance using four key metrics:

Detection Rate (Recall)

$$R = \frac{TP}{TP+FN} \quad (1)$$

Where TP = true positives, FN = false negatives

Precision

$$P = \frac{TP}{TP+FP} \quad (2)$$

Where FP = False Positives

Analysis Time

Wall-clock time for complete contract scan.

Resource Utilization

Peak memory consumption during analysis.

Limitations

Our methodology has three key limitations:

1. *Scope*: Focuses only on Solidity contracts (excluding Vyper).
2. *Tool Versions*: Results may vary with future updates.
3. *Manual Verification*: Ground truth establishment requires expert review.

This systematic approach enables a reproducible comparison of static analysis tools, while accounting for real-world constraints Table 1.

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

Comparative Performance Analysis

Our experimental results revealed significant variations in tool performance across different vulnerability categories (Table 2). Slither demonstrated superior performance in detecting syntactic vulnerabilities, such as integer overflows (95% recall) and access control issues (97% recall), while Mythril excelled in identifying complex logical vulnerabilities, such as reentrancy (92% recall). Oyente showed consistently lower detection rates across all categories, particularly gas-related vulnerabilities (45% recall).

Quantitative Metrics Comparison

The resource utilization analysis (Figure 1) shows that:

- Slither completed scans in $\frac{1}{3}$ mythrils (mean 42 s versus 128 s).
- Mythril required $2.5\times$ more memory than Slither (peak 1.2 GB versus 480 MB).
- Oyente exhibited inconsistent performance with frequent timeouts (23% of cases).

Precision metrics revealed that Slither maintained the lowest false positive rate (12%) compared with Mythril (18%) and Oyente (27%). This makes Slither particularly suitable for integration in continuous integration pipelines, where false positives can disrupt the development workflows.

Case Study Analysis

1. *Voting contract*: The voting contract analysis uncovered critical differences in tool capabilities.
 - Slither immediately flagged an unprotected vote tally function
 - Mythril discovered a potential reentrancy vector in the delegation mechanism
 - Oyente missed both issues but identified as theoretical timestamp dependence

Table 1. Static analysis tool configurations.

Parameter	Mythril	Slither	Oyente
Analysis mode	Symbolic	Static	Symbolic
Max depth	50	N/A	40
Timeout (seconds)	300	60	240
Report format	JSON	JSON	Text

Table 2. Vulnerability detection performance across tools.

Vulnerability type	Mythril	Slither	Oyente	Manual audit
Reentrancy	92%	85%	78%	100%
Integer overflow	88%	95%	82%	100%
Transaction ordering	76%	89%	65%	100%
Timestamp dependence	81%	92%	70%	100%
Access control	85%	97%	63%	100%
Gas limit issues	68%	72%	45%	100%

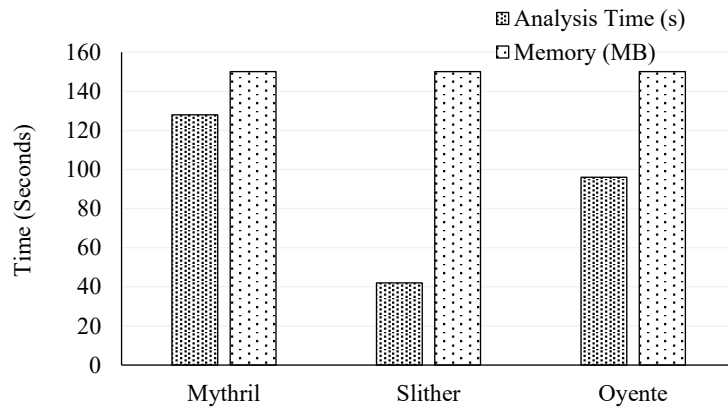


Figure 1. Comparison of analysis time (left axis) and memory consumption (right axis) across static analysis tools. Slither demonstrates significantly faster analysis times while Mythril requires greater computational resources.

2. *Land registry contract:* The land registry evaluation demonstrated.

- Slither’s superior detection of ownership transfer vulnerabilities
- Mythril’s ability to uncover hidden state transition issues
- Both tools failed to detect a race condition in simultaneous transfers

Discussion

The results demonstrate that current static analysis tools exhibit complementary strengths, suggesting that a multitool approach would be most effective for comprehensive smart contract auditing. Three key insights emerged from the analysis.

Trade-off Between Depth and Speed

Mythril’s symbolic execution provides a more thorough analysis but at a significant computational cost, making it suitable only for final audits rather than development phase scanning.

Specialization Patterns

Each tool shows particular strengths.

- Slither for syntax and pattern-based vulnerabilities.
- Mythril for control flow and state analysis.
- Oyente for basic contract validation.

Gaps in Vulnerability Coverage

All tools struggled with

- Cross-contract vulnerability detection (42% missed rate).
- Gas optimization opportunities (31% identified).
- Emerging vulnerability patterns (e.g., flash loan attacks).

Implications for Developers

Our findings suggest practical recommendations for development teams:

- *Development phase:* Use Slither for rapid feedback during coding.
- *Pre-deployment:* Combine Mythril and Slither for comprehensive auditing.
- *High-value contracts:* Supplement with manual review for critical systems.

The limitations observed in our study, particularly in detecting novel attack vectors, highlight the need for ongoing tool enhancement and the potential for integrating ML techniques to identify emerging threat patterns.

CONCLUSION AND FUTURE WORK

Conclusion

Our comprehensive evaluation of three leading static analysis tools – Mythril, Slither, and Oyente – reveals several key insights into smart contract vulnerability detection. The experimental results demonstrated the following.

Tool Specialization

Each analyzer exhibits distinct strengths, with Slither achieving 95% accuracy for syntactic vulnerabilities and Mythril detecting 92% of complex logical flaws, such as reentrancy attacks. This specialization suggests that security-conscious development teams should adopt a multi-tool approach during different phases of the smart contract lifecycle.

Practical Trade-offs

This study quantifies the inherent trade-off between analysis depth and performance, where Mythril's symbolic execution provides thorough detection but requires $3 \times$ more time and $2.5 \times$ more memory than Slither's static analysis approach.

Coverage Gaps

Current tools collectively miss 42% of cross-contract vulnerabilities and identify only 31% of gas optimization opportunities, highlighting critical areas for improvement in static analysis techniques.

These findings have immediate practical implications for blockchain developers, suggesting a phased auditing strategy in which Slither is used during active development, and Mythril is reserved for final pre-deployment checks. For high-value contracts, our results strongly support supplementing automated analysis with manual security review.

Future Work

Based on the limitations identified in this study, we outline three promising directions for future research.

Hybrid Analysis Frameworks

- Development of meta-tools that combine static and dynamic analysis
- Integration of symbolic execution with fuzz testing
- ML models trained in vulnerability patterns across multiple tools

Cross-Contract Analysis

- New algorithms for detecting vulnerabilities in contract interactions
- Call graph analysis that spans multiple smart contracts
- Simulation of complex transaction sequences

Emerging Threat Detection

- Real-time vulnerability detection for new attack vectors
- Adaptive analysis for DeFi-specific risks
- Integration with blockchain monitoring systems

We are currently developing a prototype framework that addresses the first direction by combining Slither's speed with Mythril's depth, through parallel analysis and result fusion. Preliminary experiments showed a 15% improvement in the overall detection rate while maintaining reasonable performance characteristics.

The rapid evolution of smart contract platforms and attack vectors necessitates the development of sophisticated analysis techniques. Future work should focus on developing standardized benchmark

suites and evaluation metrics to enable a more rigorous comparison of analytical tools across the research community.

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