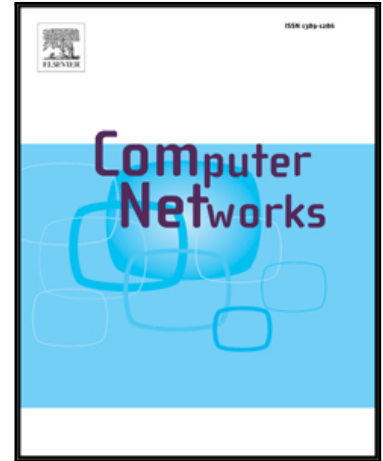


## Accepted Manuscript

Potentials, Trends, and Prospects in Edge Technologies: Fog, Cloudlet, Mobile Edge, and Micro Data Centers

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PII: S1389-1286(17)30377-8  
DOI: [10.1016/j.comnet.2017.10.002](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.comnet.2017.10.002)  
Reference: COMPNW 6317



To appear in: *Computer Networks*

Received date: 21 April 2017  
Revised date: 26 September 2017  
Accepted date: 9 October 2017

Please cite this article as: Kashif Bilal , Osman Khalid , Aiman Erbad , Samee U. Khan , Potentials, Trends, and Prospects in Edge Technologies: Fog, Cloudlet, Mobile Edge, and Micro Data Centers, *Computer Networks* (2017), doi: [10.1016/j.comnet.2017.10.002](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.comnet.2017.10.002)

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# Potentials, Trends, and Prospects in Edge Technologies: Fog, Cloudlet, Mobile Edge, and Micro Data Centers

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## ABSTRACT

Advancements in smart devices, wearable gadgets, sensors, and communication paradigm have enabled the vision of smart cities, pervasive healthcare, augmented reality and interactive multimedia, Internet of Every Thing (IoE), and cognitive assistance, to name a few. All of these visions have one thing in common, i.e., delay sensitivity and instant response. Various new technologies designed to work at the edge of the network, such as fog computing, cloudlets, mobile edge computing, and micro data centers have emerged in the near past. Edge computing is a promising paradigm to offer the required computation and storage resources with minimal delays to the users or terminal devices. Edge computing aims to bring cloud resources and services at the edge of the network, as a middle layer between end user and cloud data centers, to offer prompt service response with minimal delay. Two major aims of edge computing can be denoted as: (a) minimize response delay by servicing the request at the network edge instead of servicing it at far located cloud data centers, and (b) minimize downward and upward traffic volumes in the network core. Minimization of network core traffic inherently brings energy efficiency and data cost reductions. Downward network traffic can be minimized by servicing set of users at network edge (e.g., multimedia and shared data) Content Delivery Networks (CDNs), and upward traffic can be minimized by processing and filtering raw data (e.g., sensors monitored data) and uploading the processed information to cloud. This survey presents a detailed overview of potentials, trends, and challenges of edge computing. The survey illustrates a list of most significant applications and potentials in the area of edge computing. State of the art literature on edge computing domain is included in the survey to guide readers towards the current trends and future opportunities in the area of edge computing.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Cloud computing brought a technological revolution and paradigm shift in the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) sector in the last decade. Cloud computing experienced a massive adoption in almost every domain of human life [1][2][3][4]. Data centers, the backbone and underlying resource architecture of cloud computing are constantly growing in size and number to meet the increasing resource demands [2]. Technological advances in personal gadgets and wearable computing are enabling a new stream of real-time and pervasive applications, such as cognitive assistance, augmented reality, traffic monitoring, vehicular tracking, and interactive video streaming [5]. Such applications demand real-time response, which is one of the major constraints in the cloud paradigm because of the delays from distant cloud data centers. Data has to traverse multiple hops before reaching the cloud servers, thus increasing the response time.

The proliferation of mobile devices, which are predicted to be more than 50 Billion devices by the year 2020, will produce massive amounts of data [6]. Moreover, the ever increasing data rates from the Internet of Things (IoT) devices will impose further challenges on the cloud computing infrastructure. IoT is an emerging technology that extends Internet connection to devices embedded with sensors, actuators, and RFID tags [7]. IoT devices collect sensory data from the surrounding environment with a requirement to provide scalable infrastructure to communicate, process, and store the data [8][9]. The number of such devices will reach billions in the coming years, with a large number of sensors monitoring and flooding the network with dynamic real-time data. According to Cisco Global Cloud Index [10], by the year 2019, 500 zettabytes of data will be produced by people, machines, and things, and 2.3 trillion GBs of data will be produced every day in the year 2020 [11]. IoT platforms demand low latency communication, need support for high degree of mobility, and real-time data analytics. Although cloud computing provides many benefits, the latency sensitive and data intensive IoT applications appear to be a challenge

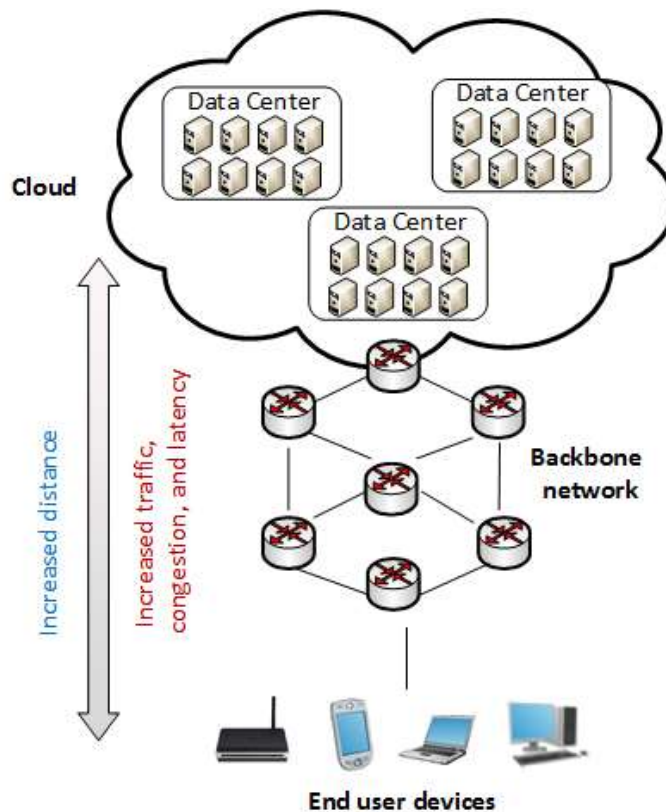


Fig. 1: Multiple hops between end user/devices and cloud data centers result in delayed response.

for current cloud computing system. The needs for real-time response and ever increasing data demands novel solutions. Edge computing (fogs, cloudlets, micro datacenters, and mobile edge computing) is emerging as a viable solution to these challenges, offering real-time response and near to end cloud services. Edge computing augments cloud computing by bringing networking and computational resources on edge devices near to the end user. An edge device can be a router, gateway, switch, or a base station, that provides an edge computing platform to meet real-time and resource intensive demands of end user. Generally, the edge computing platform comprises of a heterogeneous infrastructure of access points, switches, edge routers, servers, and end user devices. Compared to cloud computing, the edge provides low latency and reduced data traffic, as the applications are localized to the region where the edge is deployed.

We use the term *Edge Computing Technologies* to encompass different emerging technologies situated at the edge of the network to provide computational and storage resources to deliver real-time communication with minimum latency. Examples of such technologies include Fog computing, Mobile Edge Computing (MEC), Micro Data Centers (MDC), Cloudlet, and related technologies. The term edge computing or edge technologies used in this article refers to the set of these emerging technologies. Fog computing represents a platform that brings cloud computing to the proximity of end users [12][13]. The term Fog computing was coined initially by Cisco [13][14]. The main focus of fog computing is to equip the network edge and network devices with virtualized services, in terms of processing and storage along with offering network services. MEC is the edge technology initiated by European Telecommunications Standards Institute (ETSI) [15][16]. The major focus of MEC is Radio Access Networks (RANs) in 4G and 5G cellular networks. MEC offers edge computing by proposing a collocation of computation and processing resources at base stations. MDCs, initiated by Microsoft are small scaled version of data centers to extend the hyperspace cloud data centers [17][18]. MDCs aim to provide small size data centers extending the offered services of the cloud near to the end users. Concept of cloudlet, initiated by Carnegie Mellon University

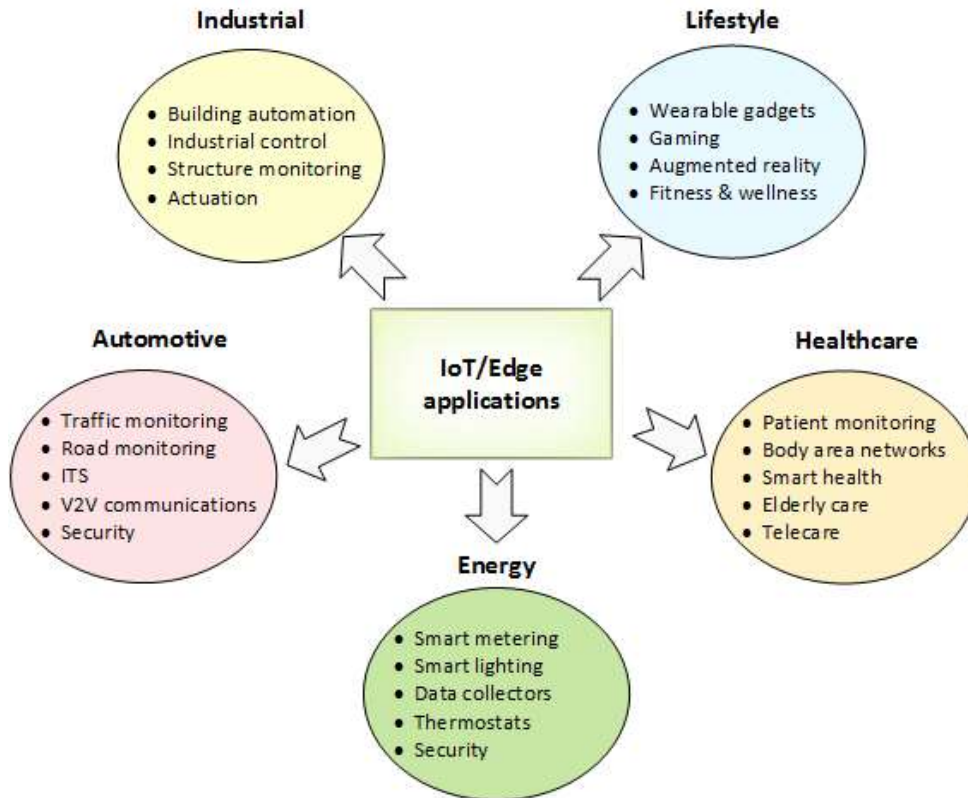


Fig. 2: Potential application areas of edge computing.

(CMU) is similar to MDC, as small scaled virtualized data center to serve users near the edge in a distributed fashion [19][20]. Some similar terms, such as Nano-data centers are also used in literature for similar concepts and objects [21][51].

Different edge technologies are defined independently; however, these technologies can cooperate and work together [12]. Considering the futuristic aspects of the Internet of Everything (IoE) [143] and recent trends in technology cooperation, such as Content Distribution Network Interconnection [22] and Heterogeneous Networks (HetNets) [144], it can be foreseen that various edge technologies will work in cooperation to support the overall vision of the IoE. Edge computing enables a large number of applications including vehicular communications, smart cities, smart grid, wireless sensor networks embedded with actuators, road traffic monitoring, pipe line monitoring, wind farms, smart traffic light system, railway monitoring, industrial control systems, and the applications in oil and gas explorations. IDC reported that by the year 2019, 45% of the data generated by IoT will be processed, stored, and analyzed on the edge [8]. Fig. 2 shows the some of the potential application areas of IoT and edge computing.

Edge computing technologies are in their infancy, with no standardized definitions, architectures, and protocols. Various researchers define edge technologies from their own perspective and models, which is expected for non-standardized technologies. A similar trend was observed in cloud computing as well before standardization of an official definition of cloud computing by National Institute of Science and Technology (NIST) in 2011 [23]. The lack of a standard definition leads to misconceptions in the relation among edge technologies, IoT, and cloud. Examples of such misconception mentioned in the literature, where authors claim that edge computing technologies will  $\delta o q x g \ddot{o} q t \ddot{o} t g r n c e g \ddot{o} e n q u d$  with fog or decentralize the cloud paradigm to edges. For instance, [24] mentions  $v j c v \ddot{o} E n q w f \ddot{k} u \ddot{o} k i t c v k p i \ddot{v} q \ddot{v} j g \ddot{g} f i g \ddot{q} h \ddot{v} j g \ddot{p} g v y q t m \ddot{c} p f \ddot{v} j g \ddot{v} t c f k v k q p c n \ddot{E} n q w f \ddot{E} q \ddot{o} r w w k p i \ddot{r} c t c f k i \ddot{o} \ddot{k} u \ddot{p} q \ddot{v} g p q w i \ddot{j} \ddot{h} o r$  the storage of Big Data produced by IoT  $\ddot{o} \ddot{l} \ddot{k} v \ddot{p} g g f u \ddot{v} q \ddot{d} g \ddot{e} n g c t n \{ \ddot{w} p f g t u v q q f \ddot{v} j c v \ddot{g} f i g \ddot{e} q \ddot{o} r w w k p i \ddot{v} g e j p q n q i k g u \ddot{u} j q w n f \}$  not be considered as a substitute of cloud paradigm, rather, as shown in Fig. 3, these technologies will complement cloud and extend cloud services to the edges, so that the needs of applications with real-time requirements are

satisfied [25]. For the big data analytics, and lengthy, resource intensive batch jobs, the cloud is a must. Similarly, there is also a confusion in understanding and perceiving the architecture of edge technologies, for instance, some authors treat fog computing as micro datacenters [26][27], while others focus mainly on the idea of strengthening and equipping networking components with extra processing and storage capabilities [25].

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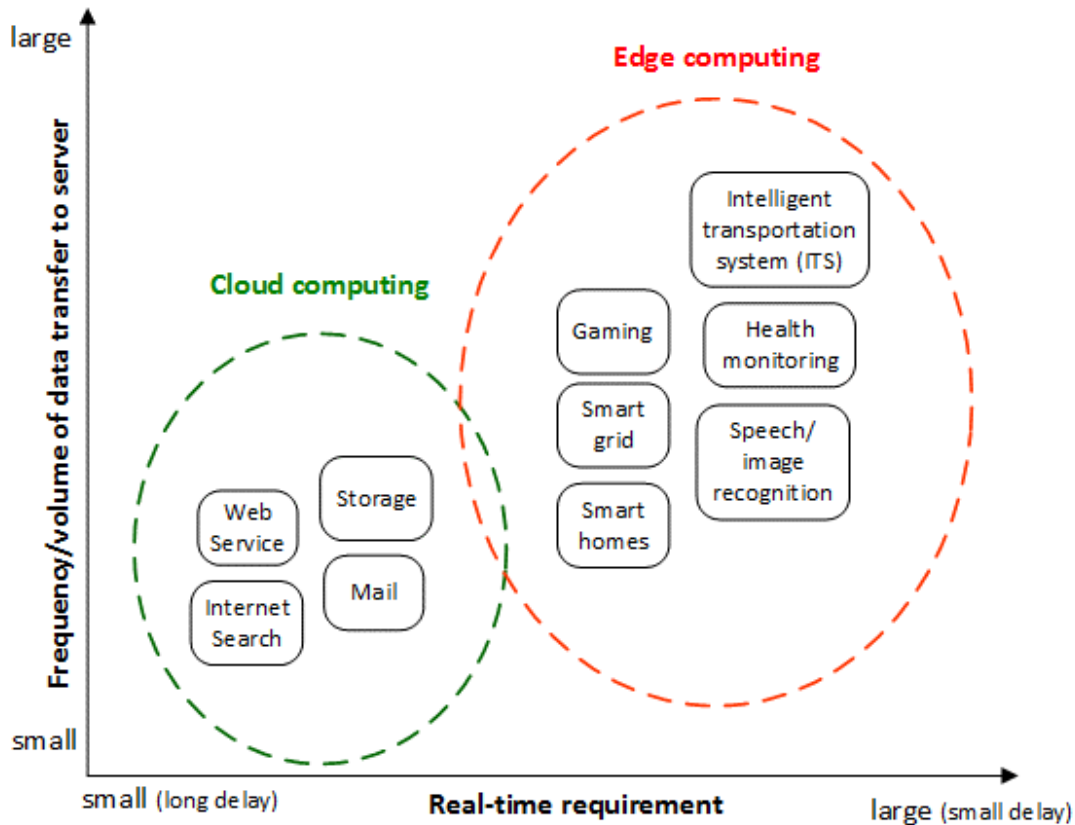


Fig. 3: The applications designed for traditional cloud computing have usually less frequent data transfer to cloud and can afford some slow response. However, the edge specific applications have more frequent interactions with edge servers and require a quicker response.

In this survey, we discuss various edge computing technologies, their potentials, applications, and challenges. Specifically, we provide a list of some potential areas in the field of edge computing (please see Fig. 4 for the taxonomy and topics discussed in this survey). The state of the art in various edge computing technologies are also discussed in the article. Some of the authors have presented various aspects of edge computing in the literature. Luan *et al.* [28] highlighted main features of fog computing including its concept, architecture, and design goals. However, the other edge technologies are not covered. In a similar study, Bonomi *et al.* [13] outlined key characteristics of fog computing and discussed the role of fog computing in the IoT. Some basic applications are also discussed in the survey. A report on edge technologies [16] discussed and briefly compared the three technologies of edge computing: mobile edge, cloudlets, and fog computing, with no discussion on potential areas

and applications. Stojmenovic *et al.* [29] discussed motivation and advantages of fog computing, and considered only these application areas: smart grid, smart traffic lights, and software defined networks. The authors in [30] discussed basic definition of fog computing and similar concepts and discussed various application scenarios. However, in [30] the discussion on existing techniques on edge computing is missing. Bonomi *et al.* [13] presented a discussion on fog computing in the context of IoT. Ahmed *et al.* [31] and Beck *et al.* [15] discussed the taxonomy and key attributes of mobile edge computing. Azam *et al.* presented an article focusing on IoT and Cloud of Things (CoTs) [32]. The authors presented some of the potentials of the fog computing specifically considering the CoTs, i.e., amalgamation of IoTs and cloud computing. The authors presented various aspects of fog in consideration of edge computing as middleware to cloud, without presenting in-depth details. Dastderji and Buyya highlighted the

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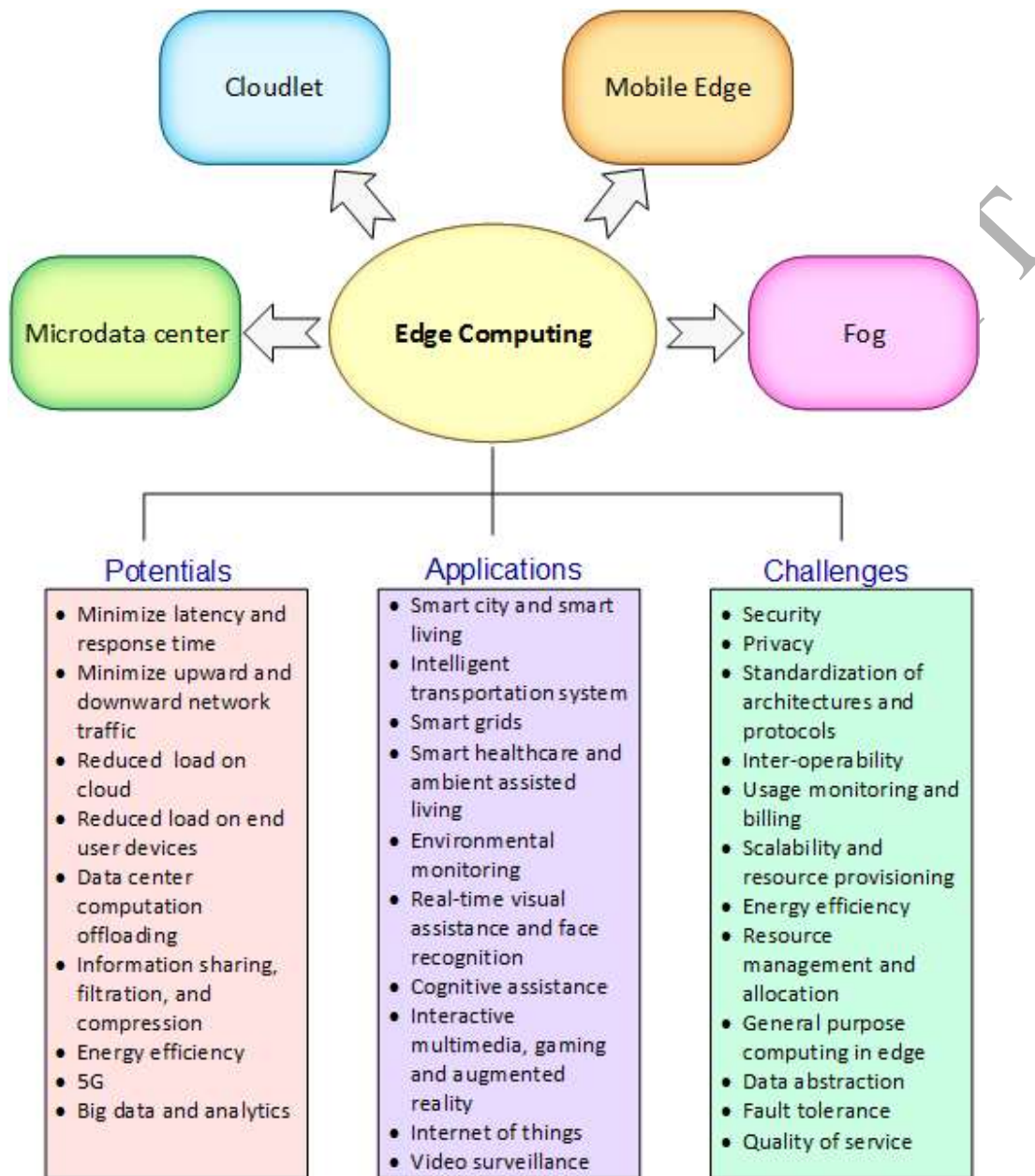


Fig. 4: Edge computing potentials, applications, and challenges

potentials of fog computing for IoTs [33]. The authors briefly presented how fog computing may impact IoT systems to work better in a real-time environment and how it can save unnecessary transit traffic. The authors presented generic fog computing architecture and fog based distributed data processing models, and discussed various components involved in the model. Yi *et al.* presented an overview of various concepts, applications, and issues in fog computing [30]. The authors in [34] discussed motivational scenarios of fog computing and provided some simulation results. Shi *et al.* [7] have discussed a few case studies of edge computing along with challenges and opportunities. The authors in [35] presented a limited discussion on motivation, challenges, and opportunities of edge computing, without discussing the other edge technologies.



Most of the above mentioned surveys discussed various characteristics and applications of edge computing technologies in limited and isolated way. However, detailed study on various edge computing technologies, their potentials, applications, challenges, and the state of art, still needs to be addressed. Our survey attempts to address deficiencies in the existing surveys and provides a focused study on various edge computing technologies, their challenges, potentials and applications. To the best of our knowledge this is the first survey that provides in-depth details pertaining to edge computing and its various trends and potential areas. Moreover, this survey also presents state of the art in edge computing, which is missing in most of the existing surveys. Specifically, our contributions in this survey are as follows. In Section 2, we present an introduction of edge computing technologies and some motivational scenarios, followed by details of various edge computing technologies, i.e., Fog, Cloudlets, MDCs, and MECs. Section 3 presents a detailed study on the edge computing potential and most recent works in those areas and applications. Moreover, a detailed explanation on edge computing architectures, implementations, and evaluation mechanisms is provided. Section 4 highlights the open research challenges in the edge computing technologies, followed by conclusions in Section 5.

## 2. EDGE COMPUTING TECHNOLOGIES

The edge computing is based on the idea of placing small servers called edge servers or resource rich networking devices in the vicinity of end users/devices (see Fig. 5). In this way, some of the computational and data storage load ku" vtcphugttgf"htq o" enqwf" rncvhtq o" vq" vjg" gf ig" ugtxgtu0" Vjg" gpf" wugtu0" fgxkegu" wuwcm{ " eqpukuv" qh" yktnguu" ugpuqt" networks, smart phones, wearable gadgets, and various IoT devices that require real-time response. Deploying computation and storage resources at the edge of the network can enable a large number of applications that require real-time response. A few examples of such applications include, but not limited to: (a) traffic monitoring and navigation, that involves traffic reporting and computation of routes for a specific region near to the edge, (b) data filtering and aggregation, that performs pre-filtering of content and data at edge before sending it to cloud to reduce the data volume, and (c) augmented reality, real-time interactive video streaming, and health monitoring systems that can produce fast responses using edge nodes, thereby improving user experience for time-sensitive applications. In this section, first we discuss some motivational use cases and scenarios indicating why we should use edge computing in addition to cloud. Later, we explain various technologies within the domain of the edge computing.

### 2.1. Edge computing motivation

#### 2.1.1. Reduced traffic load

The traditional User-Internet interaction model involves short requests from user to Internet services and receiving response. Some of the requested services, e.g., file downloading and specifically, Video on Demand (VoD) or live video streaming are comprised of very small data requests from user to the Service Provider (SP), and large volume of data flowing from SP to users. Considering the gigantic amount of data flowing from Internet to users, various solutions have been employed, such as CDN and caching to minimize the data and delay from SP to user [145]. For instance, cacheable contents are cached at ISP caches or CDN networks to minimize transit network data flow and delay [146][147][148]. However, the advent of new technologies, gadget proliferations, smart environments, and IoE are changing the data flow paradigm and patterns. Futuristic vision of smart and pervasive environments is foreseen to transmit massive volumes of data to the Internet. Consider live streaming, specifically crowd-sourced live streaming as an example, significant amount of data per second now flows from the users to SP and then disseminated globally from various SPs, such as Twitch (a crowd-sourced live gaming system) [149], YouTube Live [150], Periscope [151], and YouNow [152]. Netflix hosts a huge collection of entertainment video content. If 10% of 8 million people in New York want to stream movies from Netflix at the same time, it would require an infrastructure capacity of 1.6 Tera bits per second (Tbps) to handle all requests in parallel [36]. Despite remarkable improvements in bandwidth and server- side processing, the networks may still suffer in performance with huge viewership spikes. For instance, in a recent boxing match held in Las Vegas, USA, the live video streaming pay-per-view servers crashed and network got congested due to sudden rise in viewership [156]. If CDNs are not deployed within the networks, then the centrally hosted content must travel through many networks to reach the end users. In the futuristic scenario, current CDN based content delivery model is expensive, because, data still has to travel many jqr u" dg v y ggp" E F P" cpf" kpvgtpgv" Ugtxkeg" Rtqxkfgt" \*KUR+." dghqtg" tgcejkpi" vq" xkg ygtu00" For instance, consider the scenario of European football tournament final match, where the Akamai network served 3.3 million video streams concurrently to viewers, experiencing a peak load of 7.3 Tbps [142]. If multicast is not enabled, which is the general case because of configuration and security issues, then 5.7 Tbps data passing through multiple hops between CDN and ISP results in significant energy consumptions and network cost and management. Moreover, CDNs are passive

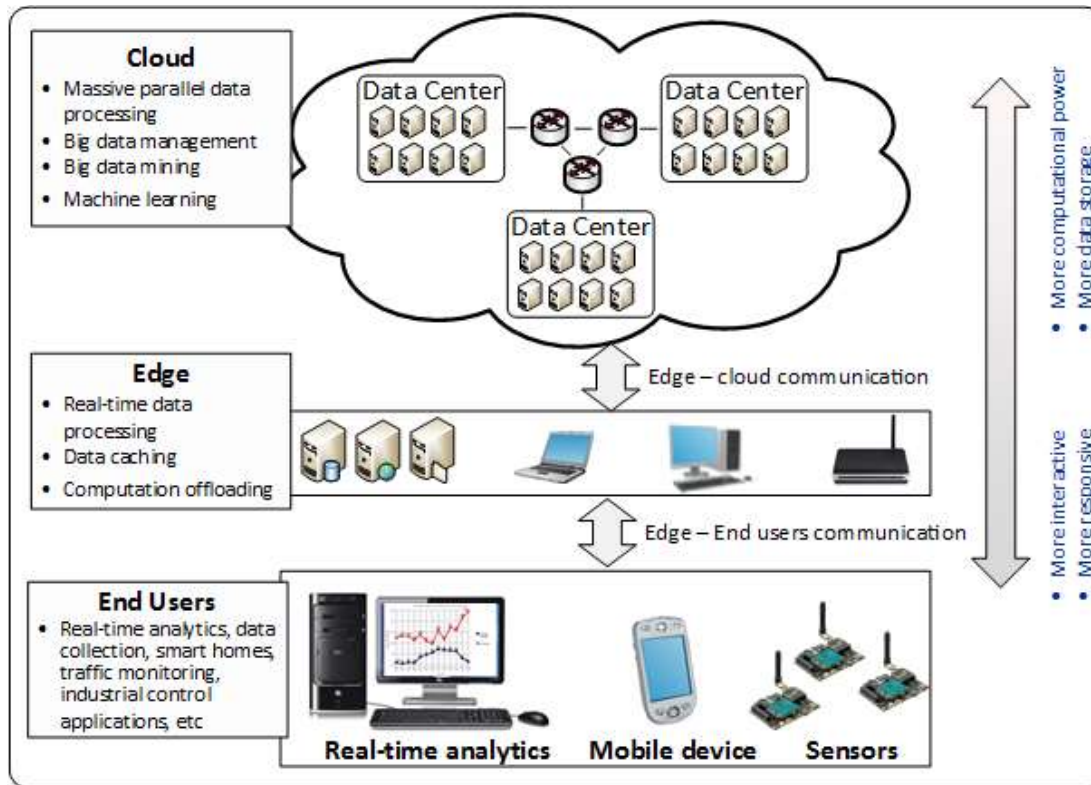


Fig. 5: Edge computing architecture.

storage designs, hosting large volumes of data, with generally no or very limited processing capabilities. On the fly transcoding of the videos are not available in the current CDN designs. Edge computing technologies offer a feasible solution in terms of very small delay and data filtration to fulfill the futuristic IoT, IoE, and smart world visions. If edge locations are used as data delivery and sharing points, huge volumes of transit data between CDNs and network edge can be saved [169]. Caching at the mobile edge (base stations/eNodeBs) may save considerable amount of backhaul network traffic. It has been shown that caching at the edge of the network considerably reduce access latency and network traffic [170]. Edge locations can perform on the fly video transcoding to create required video representation versions, minimizing the storage requirements, minimizing access delays, and maximizing xkgytuø QoE. Moreover, edge technologies may host dedicated services at edge to provide real-time response and data filtration. For instance, Akamai network have deployed edge computing networks to provide distributed execution of Java applications [37].

### 2.1.2. Minimizing the latency

The inherent cloud computing delays are challenging for applications that require real-time response, e.g., intelligent transportation systems, games, live streaming applications, and other safety critical applications, where such delays are intolerable. It is studied in [41] that for real-time visual guiding services, the preferred response time is between 47 o u"vq"72 oul" Oqtgqxgt." jki j" rtqeguukpi"nqcf"k o rqugf"qp"enqwfø"egpvten"ugtxgtu" o c{"ecwug"uecnckkv{" rtdng o u" for the compute intensive applications and increase network overhead, resulting in slow response time and excessive utilization of the Internet bandwidth [42]. Inter-network data transfer leads to increased latency and congestion. Generally, Internet comprises of thousands of interlinked networks, with each network providing access to a small percentage of end users. Even largest networks are usually accessed by only about 5% users [37]. As per statistics collected by Akamai, over 650 networks participate in reaching 90% of all access traffic [37]. A request to/from cloud may take several milliseconds to seconds to travel from client to cloud service provider [38]. Even a slight fgnc{"kp"c"wugtøu"tgs wguv" o c{"ngcf"vq"vjg"nquu"qh"uwduetkdgtu"cpf"tgxgpwgl"Hqt"kpucpeg."kv"ycu"tgrqtvgf"d{"Dkpi"vjcv"c" reduction of -1.8% in queries per user and -4.3% in revenue per user was observed due to queries slowing down by an interval of just 2 seconds [39]. A survey conducted by Forrester concluded that majority of the online shoppers

Table 1: Effect of distance on round trip time (RTT), packet loss, throughput, and down time [37]

Distance (Server to User)	Network Round Trip Time	Packet Loss	Throughput	4GB download time
Local: <100 miles	1.6 ms	0.6%	44 Mbps	12 min
Regional: 500 ó 100 miles	16 ms	0.7%	4 Mbps	2.2 hrs
Cross-continent ~ 3000 miles	48 ms	1.0%	1 Mbps	8.2 hrs
Multi-continent ~ 6000 miles	96 ms	1.4%	0.4 Mbps	20 hrs

have suggested the website response time as a primary factor in giving their customer satisfaction feedback [37]. The survey also found out that more than 40% of the customers can only wait for 3 seconds for a page to load before leaving the website [37]. In another survey conducted by IDC, it was reported that improvement in performance and  $tnkcdknkv\{"qh" Cmc o ckou" gpygtr tkug" cr rnkcevkqp" ceegngtcvkqp" ugtxkegu" \{kgn fgf" cp" cppwcn" kpetgcug" htq o "204" o knnkqp" vq" 5"$  million dollars [40]. Therefore, content deployment at local ISPs (network edge) is critical for areas with low connectivity and high response time [37]. Recently, increasing number of ISPs have opened their edge services to other providers and subscribers, and offer various edge-based solutions, such as cloudlets, network functions virtualizations, and mobile edge computing. Table 1 shows that edge provides low latency and reduced data traffic, as the applications are localized to the region where the edge is deployed.

### 2.1.3. Reduced load on cloud

With the increase in location aware services, huge volumes of data is generated by end user devices on daily basis. For instance, the location-based service Foursquare has 60 million registered users [43] and it receives on the average, >5 million check-ins per day [44]. Similarly, several sports activity logging applications, such as Nike+ [45], Runtastic [46], Runkeeper [47], and Endomondo [48] are becoming popular. These applications run on smartphones and log daily activities of users with the help of various sensors, e.g., accelerometers, GPS, gyroscope, and temperature sensors, typically installed on smartphones. Mostly, the data recorded by the applications is sent to the cloud in the form of tuples, where each tuple contain several pieces of information, such as user id, longitude, latitude, time, distance, speed, duration, calories, weather, and other related items. For instance, a recent study on Endomondo revealed that a single workout on the average generates 170 GPS tuples, and average number of tuples generated per month is between 2.8 and 6.3 billion [49]. With 30 million users, the number of tuples generated per second could reach 25,000 tuples/sec [49]. Considering the IoT enabled smart cities, with thousands of sensors deployed, the numbers of tuples generated per second would be many times higher. When such high velocity real-time data streams will be sent to the centralized cloud servers, the backbone network will get congested and the cloud servers may get overburdened. Moreover, not all of the sensed data is useful. For instance, sensors deployed in Large Hadron Collider (LHC) project generate around 500 Exabyte data per day. However, 99.999% data is filtered out [49]. Edge computing can be leveraged by the application providers to locally process the data to filter unnecessary data, and generate real-time response for the users in the vicinity of the deployed edge. Moreover, data can be trimmed/filtered before sending to the cloud, thereby reducing the network traffic and processing burden from cloud servers.

### 2.1.4. Reduced load on end user devices

As discussed earlier, the end user devices and IoT generate huge volumes of data on which some form of analytics needs to be performed to generate useful information. However, if end devices, such as smartphone are subjected to such complex tasks, they may sooner run out of resources, e.g., battery drainage. Moreover, the devices may not be compatible due to heterogeneity of technologies. Therefore, the end devices can offload some of their high processing tasks to the nearby edge to reduce their load. Moreover, not all the data generated from the end device may contribute in the computation of useful information. For example, the study conducted on Endomondo sports  $cevkxkv\{"vtcemkpi" cr rnkcevkqp" tggcngf" vjcv" gxgp" kh" c" lqi i gt" uvqr u" vq" vcmg" tguv. " jku" ugpuqtuø" uvqtgu" vjg" uc o g" xcawgu" cv"$  regular intervals [49]. Therefore, some form of data filtering can be employed on the edge to discard the redundant

data and only filtered data is sent to the cloud. Similarly, in interactive multimedia applications, such as free-view video, client's device is generally used to perform complex tasks like virtual view generation, which are resource intensive and results in battery depletion [87]. Performing such resource intensive jobs at the edge of the network, and delivering synthesized virtual view may result in significant bandwidth and energy savings at end user device.

### 2.1.5. Reducing energy consumption

Generally, the end user mobile devices and IoT are constrained by computing capabilities, battery life, and heat dissipation. Edge computing enables the offloading of energy consuming application from resource constrained end user devices to the edge servers. The majority of algorithms aim to minimize the energy consumption at the mobile device while subject to the execution delay acceptable by the offloaded application, or to find an optimal tradeoff between these two metrics. The energy consumption in using a cloud service usually depends on the following factors [51]: (a) energy consumption of end user device accessing the service, (b) energy consumption of data center, including energy consumed by internal network, storage, and servers, (c) the volume of traffic exchanged between the user and cloud, (d) the computational complexity of the task to be performed, (e) factors such as the number of users sharing a compute resource, and (f) the energy consumption of the transport network (aggregation, edge, and core networks). Costenaro *et al.* studied energy consumption due to data transportation on the internet. The authors found out that 14% of the energy consumption in the Internet is due to the data transportation [50]. Jalali *et al.* performed a detailed analysis of energy consumption by certain cloud-based applications, when those applications are run directly on cloud and on locally deployed fog based nano data centers [51]. The authors showed that online interactive applications generate a substantial amount of traffic and consume more energy due to overheads arise from real-time interaction with the Cloud. The authors used various network analyzing tools to acquire traffic logs that showed the large traffic overhead is associated with establishing/tearing down TCP sessions very frequently and the volume of data transported to and from the user per session (measured in tens to hundreds of Kilobytes). The authors recommended that the fog based nano servers can complement the cloud for certain applications that can lead to energy savings, if the application or its components can be offloaded from centralized data centers and run on nano servers. Moreover, energy can be saved by employing intelligent client-side caching techniques, and optimizing the synchronization frequency of contents between edge and cloud [51]. Furthermore, data caching at edge locations reduce burden on the core network, which enable to reduce link rates using green technologies like Adaptive Link Rate (ALR) to make links energy proportional [4].

### 2.1.6. Data center computation offloading

Edge computing can also be exploited to offload computation from data centers that require limited resources to the edge nodes. For example, the live streaming applications, like Facebook Live, YouTube Live, and Livestream [153] allow users to perform live broadcast. It is reported that during a period of one minute, YouTube users upload 72 hours of new video, Facebook users share 2,460,000 pieces of content, WhatsApp users share 347,222 photos, Instagram users post 216,000 new photos, and Vine users share 8,333 videos [52][7]. Usually, when a video or photo is uploaded, e.g., to Facebook or YouTube, it is subjected to lossy compressions to reduce the media size. Uploading the high resolution photos and videos from user devices to the cloud occupy lots of bandwidth and may take lot of time in areas where internet connectivity is poor. Similar issues arise in live health monitoring applications, or smart city applications where live streams of data from surveillance cameras and other sensors needs to be uploaded to cloud. Edge computing can be utilized to transfer some of the compression related tasks to the edge devices near to the end users, before uploading to the cloud. Moreover, edge can also be used to encrypt the user data instead of uploading the raw data to the cloud, thereby ensuring security and privacy of user data in the intermediate hops.

In the next subsection, we discuss various technologies that we covered under the domain of edge computing. We discuss characteristics, similarities, and dissimilarities of these technologies, along with some practical examples.

## 2.2. Edge computing technologies

### 2.2.1. Fog

















































boxes to improve the website experience. The users connect with the internet via edge servers (fog boxes) using HTTP. The fog boxes perform various optimizations to reduce latency.

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Table 3: Summary of edge computing architectures, resource management, evaluations, and simulations

Area/Application	Reference	Idea presented
Edge Computing Architectures	[120]	Zhang et al. presented a multi-tiered architecture for delay sensitive cloud Data Service Subscribers (DSS). Three considered tiers are DSS, Massive Data Centers (MDCs), and Fog instances.
	[121]	Eui-Nam et al. presented an architecture of a smart gateway with fog computing. The proposed architecture had several layers, such as physical and virtualization layer, monitoring layer, preprocessing layer, transport layer
	[126]	Zeng et al. proposed a fog computing supported software-defined embedded system (FC-SDES). Task scheduling problem is investigated in FC-SDES. The system consists of edge devices equipped with computation and storage resources and embedded client systems are general purpose hardware.
	[129]	Proposed an architecture of Fog nodes as an IoT hub using CoAP protocol. Fog node can be placed at the edge of the network to interact with multiple physical IoT networks.
	[25]	Sarkar and Misra presented theoretical modeling and mathematical formulation of fog computing architecture considering its various components. The authors carried out a comparative analysis of fog model with cloud computing considering service latency and energy consumption.
Edge Computing Resource Management	[120]	Resource management is achieved using Game programming. Multi-leader, multi-follower Stakelberg games are used for interaction between fog and MDCs, and single-leader single-follower Stakelberg game between DSS and MDCs are implemented.
	[122]	Yin et al. proposed Tentacle, a dynamic and on the fly resource provisioning algorithm to procure edge proximity and service requirements considering the Network Coordinate (NC) system based ranking.
	[26]	Azam and Hu presented a service oriented strategy to effectively and efficiently manage resources in fog computing. The authors considered a customer based resource estimation model considering various traits of customers. In their model, Cloud Service Customer (CSC) and fog negotiate for resource requirements to provide specific services and SLA.
	[27]	The authors categorized resource allocation. A detailed pricing model was also discussed
	[123]	Do et al. proposed a resource allocation algorithm to optimize the traffic distribution between fog and data center for video streaming applications
	[26]	A service oriented model for resource management within IoT devices is proposed that utilized fog computing for fair management of resources and addresses issues related to resource management, such as resource prediction, resource estimation, advance reservation, and pricing.

	[122]	Dynamic edge service provisioning and its prospects are discussed in this proposal.
Edge Computing Evaluation	[121]	Eui-Nam et al. used a testbed to evaluate the performance of their architecture by analyzing the communication between gateway and the cloud. The performance parameters were upload delay, bulk-data upload delay, synchronization delay, and bulk-data synchronization delay.
	[128]	Dwwgthkgnf" gxcnwcvgf" Iqqingou" Iq"ncpiwc ie for IoT and fog scenario. The results depicted that Go language can be used to implement fog architecture for IoT solutions. The authors used RPi for prototype implementation and detailed simulation.
Edge Computing Implementation	[124]	Nippon Telegraph and Telephone Corporation (NTTC) developed an edge accelerated web platform (EAWP). Vjg" GCYR" gpcdngu" gfi g" uwr rqt" hqt" ygd" cr rnkckvkqpu" Vjg" wugtou" fgxteg" ku" tgnkxgf" qh" processing the whole application, as the loads are distributed close to the user on the edge servers.
	[26]	A service oriented model for resource management within IoT devices is proposed by Aazam et al. The implementation of the proposed work is performed in java, whereas the model was evaluated with CloudSim simulator.
	[129]	The authors implemented the Fog node using Californium, which is a java based CoAP implementation. Fog node implements various protocols and act as CoAP server to perform various functions, CoAP and HTTP gateway for inter-communication, and caching.
	[132]	The authors proposed a MEC based programming framework CloudAware that allowed the users to offload their compute-intensive tasks from smartphones to the edge servers. This facilitates the users to speed-up the execution and develop scalable and elastic mobile applications for mobile edge.
	[133]	Elueqou" RctUvtgc o" ku" o" rncvht o" vjcv" cmqyu" jcpfnkpi" qh" o cuukxg" xqno o gu" qh" jki j-velocity data to provide real-time analytics at the edge.
	[134]	Vortex fog computing provides platform independent interoperable solutions for embedded, mobile, and enterprise environments, thereby targeting areas such as healthcare, energy, transportation, and industrial automation.
	[53]	Cisco Data in Motion (DMo) technology allows data management and analysis of large volumes of data coming through IoT at the edge. The DMo is based on extensible, scalable, and modular architecture and is designed to capture real-time data and control flows, translating data into information for use by higher order applications within the system.
	[135]	Cisco IOx is an application environment that is a combination of Cisco IOS, a network operating system, and Linux. The IOx allows hosting capabilities for fog applications, and allows management of network components, such as routers, switches, and compute modules.
	[124]	Nippon Telegraph and Telephone Corporation (NTTC) developed an edge accelerated web platform (EAWP) Vjg" GCYR" gpcdngu" gfi g" uwr rqt" hqt" ygd" cr rnkckvkqpu" Vjg" wugtous device is relieved of

		processing the whole application, as the loads are distributed close to the user on the edge servers.
	[125]	Zhu et al. [125] proposed the concept of fog boxes to improve the website experience. The users connect with the internet via edge servers (fog boxes) using HTTP. The fog boxes perform various optimizations to reduce latency.
Edge Computing Simulation	[130]	Gupta et al. presented iFogSim, a simulation environment focusing on evaluation of resource management strategies for fog computing. The simulator evaluates the impact of resource allocation on energy consumption, latency, operational cost, and network congestions.

For instance, the fog boxes perform caching of the content and reduce the size of HTML objects in case the network acceptable response times for end users.

To summarize, we presented numerous state of the art architectures, implementations, and simulation models/platforms for edge computing. It can be observed from the above discussion that because of a relatively new technology and in its evolutionary phase, the edge computing lacks any standard architecture and simulation platform. Most of the above discussed architectures and implementations are specialized, i.e., they target specific application scenarios and with aims to optimize various parameters, such as latency, response time, and energy consumption, etc. Moreover, there is yet to exist a complete simulation platform for edge computing that can be configured with numerous architectures and edge based pricing models. In Table 3, we present a summary of various state of the art edge-based architectures, implementations, and simulations. Next section presents the various challenges faced in adoption of edge computing technologies.

## 4. EDGE COMPUTING CHALLENGES

Being a new technology, edge computing faces numerous challenges, in addition to the challenges it inherits from cloud computing. Most of the challenges faced by edge computing is due to the non-standardization of edge technologies. In this section, we highlight some of the important challenges of edge computing that pave the path for future research in the edge technologies. Table 4 presents a summary of research works in the areas selected.

### 4.1. Resource Management and Allocation

Some generic edge architectures and resource allocation and management mechanisms have been proposed in the literature. However, in-depth and detailed analysis and testing is still missing. In [117], a comparison of computation and communication latency is presented. It has been observed that computational latency may increase based on the current load of the fog server. Therefore, appropriate resource management and allocation is a key. For time critical and real-time system, priority-aware computation is required in Fog instances. Delay sensitive tasks may be marked as high priority, and fog node needs to handle such requests immediately. Appropriate cost model also needs to be formulated and designed, where extra charges may be received from priority jobs in case of high load. Cloud providers already depict such cost model, where the cost incurred during peak hours is different from off-peak hours. For instance, Amazon costs different for scheduled Reserved Instances in peak and off-peak hours [136]. No standard, detailed, and realistic design is available to standardize edge computing architecture, resource management, cost models, and interaction with cloud [65]. Some of the initial and simple architectures have been proposed, however, they lack practical implementation and resource management aspects [65]. One of the challenges is to identify the edge provisioning site based on the dynamic number of users and application demands. Edge site provisioning mandate two basic requirements: (a) good proximity between users and edge servers and (b) sufficient capacity to serve user demands [122]. Workload allocation is another challenge because of the complex real-time decision making involved about putting how much workload on each edge layer. If too many edge layers are involved, the latency may even greater. The workload allocation strategy needs to balance various conflicting objectives, such as latency, bandwidth, energy, and cost. Some metrics need to be prioritized over others, and optimization must be performed dynamically making the task challenging.

### 4.2. General Purpose Computing in Edge

An important consideration is to enable General Purpose Computing (GPC) in edge technologies. For instance, base stations are equipped with customized Digital Signal Processors (DSPs) for specific tasks and workloads, which are unsuitable for GPC [35]. Moreover, base stations are not considered suitable because of cost and architectural concerns to be used for GPC [64]. Furthermore, existing edge computing software solutions, such as Cisco IOx [135] and Nokia software solution [137] are specialized solutions designed from specific hardware and are unsuitable in heterogeneous edge environments. Considering general purpose processors to be used in base stations or routers or other edge devices require heavy investments and may pose performance concerns [35]. Being in its infancy, there are very limited insights in edge to cloud interaction models. Edge resources or services may act as instances also cache data, therefore, appropriate models for synchronization and updates is also required. The programming models for edge will require task and data level parallelism to support real-time applications. The programming languages involved in programming models will need to take into account the diversity and heterogeneity of devices. These requirements are different from traditional cloud computing where the use cases are well defined and most hardware and software frameworks are compatible.

### 4.3. Security and Privacy

One of the major challenges in deployment and adoption of edge computing paradigm is privacy and security. Edge computing implementations in terms of size and investments are way smaller than cloud infrastructure and way more in terms of number and granularity. The organizations offering small edge computing solutions belonging to small businesses are less interested in investing in security and privacy infrastructure [138]. Moreover, at the core of the edge computing are the enabling technologies, such as peer-to-peer systems, wireless networks, distributed systems, IoT, and virtualization platforms. To secure edge, all the aforementioned technologies must be secured while keeping in consideration that the interoperability and integration of devices should not be compromised. Addressing the security of cloud is comparatively easier than edge because of the centralized nature and a single controlling authority of cloud paradigm. In edge, the services migrating from one device to other, or from one edge to another edge deployed by different vendors can create vulnerabilities, and security provisions in this regard are not widely studied. All the privacy concerns related data transfer from user to edge and from edge to cloud must be taken into account. The user devices may not be resourceful enough to run complex cryptography algorithms to encrypt the data. Similarly, the edge devices may consist of micro servers (e.g., fog made of raspberry pi computers), which may take longer to encrypt data, thus increasing the latency. More importantly, most of the end users usually are not aware of privacy and security, so there must be some automatic mechanisms ensuring run-time privacy of user data. For instance, in a survey, it was revealed that 80% of Wi-Fi users have their wireless routers set on default password out of 439 million subscribers, and 49% user networks are unsecured [7]. Moreover, 89% of public Wi-Fi hotspots are unsecured [7]. It is reported in [9] that by year 2020, 10% of all the attacks will target IoT systems. *Kv"ku"cuuq"etkvece"vq"kuqncvg"c"uugtøu"rtkxcvg"fcvc"htqo"qvjgt"fcvc"eqmgevgf"d{"vjkf"rctv{"cr rnkcecvkppu0"Hqt* instance, an activity tracking application should not be able to access the electricity usage data of a user [7]. The specific data control access mechanisms should be implemented on edge frameworks to ensure data privacy.

Edge computing can also act as a middleware to secure the data at edge before sending it out to the Internet and cloud [65]. IoT devices being lightweight with limited battery, processing, and storage, are not suitable to perform security related tasks, such as encryption. However, security and privacy being one of the utmost concerns in Cloud of Things (CoT) paradigm, edge computing inherently can offer a middle tier to secure the data before sending to cloud, offering a convenient solution to resource constrained devices. Stojmenovic *et al.* [139] discussed the security and privacy issues of fog computing. The authors studied the effects of man-in-the-middle attack on fog computing, and discussed the consequences of this attack on CPU and memory consumption of fog devices. Rodrigo *et al.* [140] presented a detailed survey on security threats and challenges on mobile edge, and fog computing. Local I tkføu fog computing platform provides standardizations and secured end-to-end data communications from edge devices to cloud [141].

### 4.4. Scalability

Cloud computing utilizes resource from multiple data centers with tens to hundreds of thousands of servers. However, edge technologies are very high in number, and possess small number of computation and storage resources. Resource overprovisioning is infeasible because of the cost and energy concerns. Therefore, scalability and rapid resource provisioning is of significant importance. Considering the limited resources and delay sensitive services in edge computing domain, timely provisioning of resource to service the request is vital. In case of non-availability of resources, time critical applications, specifically services related to healthcare and emergency evacuation may have catastrophic impact. Similarly, user interactive and multimedia related applications cannot tolerate extra delay for waiting or request forwarding to nearest edge service. Therefore, necessary resource provisioning strategies, and priority based provisioning are required to be discussed by research community.

### 4.5. Data abstraction

One of the important challenges of edge computing is data abstraction. Data abstraction is the preprocessing and trimming of data at edge before sending the data to cloud. The IoT devices produce huge volumes of data. Sending such large datasets to cloud will lead to the congestion of both the backbone network and overburdening of datacenters.

Table 4: Summary of edge computing work in various areas as presented in Section 4.

Area/Application	Ref	Idea presented
Resource Management	[117]	A comparison of computation and communication latency is presented. It has been observed that computational latency may increase based on the current load of the fog server. Therefore, appropriate resource management and allocation is a key.
	[157]	A cost efficient resource management scheme is presented for fog computing supported medical cyber physical systems (FC-MCPS). The base station association, task distribution, and virtual machine placement is investigated jointly. Problem is formulated into a mixed-integer non-linear programming and linearized to mixed integer linear programming.
	[158]	A hierarchical game framework for resource management in fog computing is proposed. A three-layer hierarchical game framework to solve challenges in fog computing is designed. Stackelberg sub-game is used for interaction between data server operators and fog networks. Matching sub-game is used for the interaction between fog networks and authorized data service subscribers.
	[159]	A fog computing structure presented along with crowd-funding algorithm to integrate spare resources in the network. Incentives mechanisms are implemented to encourage owners to share their resources.
General Purpose Computing	[160]	Designed SONM'S secure and cost efficient fog supercomputer for general purpose computing, from mobile app hosting to video rendering and DNA analysis. Users all over the world can leverage their idle computer power to become part of SONM network.
Security	[161]	Proposed a security technique called Encrypted Data Flow Mechanism (EDFM) based on the concept of Fog computing to secure cloud storage from unauthorized/illegal access. The simulated environment utilizes a fog data center called Broker to hide the actual cloud storage underneath it.
	[162]	Proposed various potential threats to IoT fog, and existing security measures to mitigate those threats.
Scalability	[163]	The paper proposed a fog computing paradigm that utilizes buses network for service offloading. The bus based fog servers provide fog services to passengers, as well as perform computation offloading to road side cloudlets. Allocations are performed using genetic algorithm (GA).
Data abstraction	[121]	Azam et al. proposed a smart gateway architecture for cloud computing. The gateway performs data collection, preprocessing, filtering, and reconstruction of data into useful form, and uploads only necessary data to the cloud.



The data should be preprocessed and filtered at edge device to remove noise, low quality data, and for privacy protection (by truncating the unauthorized data). However, the data abstraction impose several challenges. If too much trimming of data is performed, this may result in the loss of some useful information, thereby reducing the precision/accuracy of data. If data is subjected to less trimming, unwanted data may also be sent towards cloud causing extra burden on resources. Azam *et al.* [121] proposed a smart gateway architecture for cloud computing. The smart gateway can either be directly connected with the IoT devices using single-hop link, or multiple IoT devices are connected with base stations and sink nodes, which in turn are connected with gateway. The gateway performs data collection, preprocessing, filtering, and reconstruction of data into useful form, and uploads only necessary data to the cloud.

#### 4.6. Fault Tolerance and Quality of Service

Maintaining acceptable levels of QoS and fault tolerance is an important issue in edge computing. Due to distributed nature of edge, the existing methods of fault tolerance in cloud will not be applicable to edge computing. The edge is primarily designed for real-time applications, so the fault tolerance should be proactive and there must be automatic recovery from faults. The edge devices should not be overburdened so that the minimum level of QoS must be maintained. Therefore, a proper monitoring mechanism should be deployed that inspect the peak hour usage of edge nodes, thereby facilitating the task partitioning and scheduling in flexible manner. Another challenge in maintaining QoS in edge computing is when multiple edges are involved in collaboration, also known as collaborative edge [7]. For instance, such scenario may occur when a user moves from the area of coverage of one edge to another edge. In this case, the user data must be available on the other edge node. A solution to this issue is to cache user data on multiple edges in collaboration. However, this will raise the issue of increased traffic among participating edges. Therefore, optimal data placement and replication strategies needs to be designed that reduce the latency and traffic, within minimum acceptable thresholds of QoS.

### 5. CONCLUSIONS

This survey discussed in detail the emerging technologies and the state-of-the-art in edge computing and its various applications. With the multifold increase in IoT enabled devices and their applications, especially those that require near real-time response, the traditional cloud computing paradigm faces numerous challenges in terms of latency, scalability, and computation. The cloud data centers are deployed at far places due to which response time could be a few milliseconds to few seconds. Moreover, the user application may be generating large volumes of data to be sent to cloud that may cause significant overhead on backbone network. Edge computing is solution to the aforementioned problems, as it brings the computational and storage resources closer to the end user devices, and reduce burden on cloud. The edge computing technologies discussed in the survey are: fog, cloudlets, micro datacenters, and mobile edge. The aforementioned technologies have some basic differences, but they are all based on the same idea having similar objectives, i.e., to bring the computation and storage resources at the edge of the network near the end users. As a key contribution, a comprehensive list of the potentials, applications, architectures, and evaluations are also presented in the survey, along with the state of the art in the aforementioned. In the end, some of current challenges of edge computing are discussed.

As a future work, we aim to develop a simulator for edge computing that will allow users to model the three layers: (a) IoT layer, consisting of heterogeneous IoT devices, (b) edge layer, consisting of networked edge servers, and (c) cloud layer, connected with edge and backbone network. The users will be able to model response time, energy consumption, latency, and computational resources usage. We also aim to design and integrate a billing model with the simulator that will allow researchers to design and test their applications that meet the QoS parameters and given set of constraints.

#### Acknowledgement

This publication was made possible by NPRP grant # [8-519-1-108] from the Qatar National Research Fund (a member of Qatar Foundation). Samee U. Khan's work was supported by (while serving at) the National Science Foundation. The findings achieved herein are solely the responsibility of the author[s].

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