

AugLy: Data Augmentations for Adversarial Robustness

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Abstract

We introduce AugLy, a data augmentation library with a focus on adversarial robustness. AugLy provides a wide array of augmentations for multiple modalities (audio, image, text, & video). These augmentations were inspired by those that real users perform on social media platforms, some of which were not already supported by existing data augmentation libraries. AugLy can be used for any purpose where data augmentations are useful, but it is particularly well-suited for evaluating robustness and systematically generating adversarial attacks. In this paper we present how AugLy works, benchmark it against existing libraries, and use it to evaluate the robustness of various state-of-the-art models to showcase AugLy’s utility. We found that models trained using a wider variety of augmentations were indeed more robust to AugLy augmentations, which validates the hypothesis that training on augmented data improves robustness against adversarial attacks. The AugLy repository can be found at <https://github.com/facebookresearch/AugLy>.

1. Introduction

Data augmentations are a key component in the computer vision model development life cycle [24], and are also becoming increasingly prevalent in other domains [7]. They are commonly used to increase the size of datasets and prevent overfitting by performing perturbations on the input data. In addition to the classical use cases, data augmentations can also be used to evaluate the robustness of trained models to perturbations not seen at train time [10, 11].

For instance, to preserve a sense of data provenance, being robust to data manipulations is critical. Content online is often manipulated and reshared; for example when users screenshot & share a post, or overlay text or images on top of an image to make a meme. It is therefore non-trivial to be able to detect that two pieces of media are near-duplicates [17]. Additionally, adversaries may try to intentionally pass in obfuscated data to a model to evade detection.

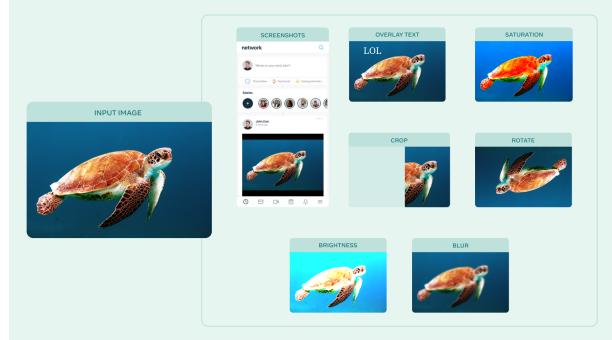


Figure 1. Examples of a few AugLy image augmentations.

The classical set of data augmentations used during model development does not match the way we observe social media users organically perturb the data. Most classical augmentation libraries focus on simple transformations such as mirroring, rotating, cropping, brightness changes, etc [1] [12]. While these kinds of augmentations do naturally occur online, others such as overlaying text and emojis, social media screenshots, etc. are also prevalent. In addition, multimodal data processing and learning is becoming increasingly important as many real-world use cases involve multiple data types, such as text & images or audio & video, and it can be useful to augment data of multiple modalities under one unified library and API.

AugLy is built with robustness and the vast landscape of organic data augmentations seen online in mind, and to our knowledge is the first multimodal data augmentation library. AugLy can be used to synthetically create realistic data augmentations seen online, as a tool for evaluating and increasing robustness and to augment multiple modalities at a time, and thus stands out in comparison to existing libraries. In this paper we introduce AugLy, explain how it works, its architecture, and how it compares in terms of functionality & efficiency to existing data augmentation libraries. We also conduct a robustness evaluation on state-of-the-art image classification models throughout the years. Through this analysis we demonstrate how AugLy can be used to identify robustness gaps in pre-trained models, as well as that

models trained on augmentations are more robust to similar augmentations at test time.

2. Related Work

Most commonly-used augmentation libraries focus on one modality and provide a standard set of augmentations, but lack many of AugLy’s internet user-specific augmentations. A majority of libraries focus on images [1, 14, 19] and text [8, 18, 21], however some audio [15, 20, 29] and video [6, 16, 32] augmentation libraries do exist as well (see Section 4 for in-depth comparisons between AugLy and existing libraries for each modality). Meanwhile, AugLy provides augmentations for audio, images, text and video under a unified API, and is one of few libraries [8] that focus on evaluating robustness rather than augmenting a dataset at train time.

Other works have conducted experiments to find sets of augmentations that when trained on improve robustness at test time, such as AugMix [12]. Strategies like AutoAugment, on the other hand, find an “optimal” set of augmentations to train on in a more automated fashion [2].

In AI Fairness, studies assessing the robustness of models to various protected categories are common. In NLP, there are studies that augment text to assess a model’s biases towards gender [3, 31] and ethnicity [26]. AugLy provides “fairness augmentations” since being robust to perturbations in protected classes is an important aspect of robustness that we must evaluate to ensure that models are not amplifying biases.

3. AugLy

AugLy is a novel open-source data augmentation library which provides over 100 data augmentations across four modalities: audio, image, text, and video. The augmentations provided in AugLy are informed by the perturbations that real people on the internet perform on data daily. This includes augmentations such as overlaying text, emojis, and screenshot transforms for image & video and inserting punctuation or similar characters for text.

3.1. Library Structure

AugLy has four sub-libraries (audio, image, text, & video), each corresponding to a different modality. All sub-libraries follow the same interface: we provide transforms in both function-based and class-based formats, and we provide intensity functions that compute a notion of how strong a transformation is based on the given parameters. AugLy

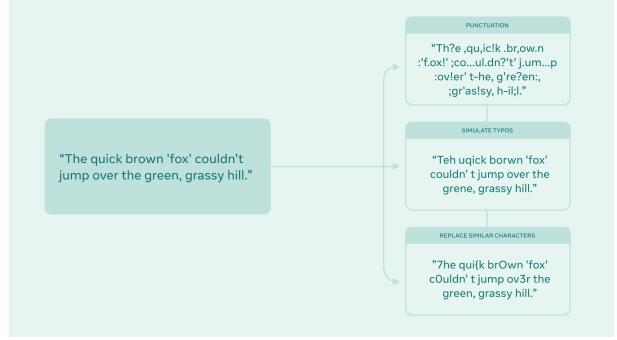


Figure 2. Examples of some AugLy text augmentations.

```
import augly.image as imaugs
```

```
aug_img = imaugs.meme_format(  
    input_img, caption_height=75  
)
```

Figure 3. Calling an image augmentation.

can optionally generate metadata that provides additional context as to how the data was transformed, which is useful during comparisons of model performance based on the augmentation type & intensity.

AugLy also provides operators for composing multiple augmentations together, applying augmentations with a given probability, and applying multimodal augmentations (for example augmenting both the audio & frames in a video).

3.2. Existing Use Cases

AugLy has already been used by several projects. SimSearchNet [27], an image copy detection model, was trained using AugLy augmentations. AugLy was used to evaluate the robustness of deepfake detection models in the 2019 DeepFake Detection Challenge [4], ultimately influencing who were the top five winners. The dataset (DISC21) for the Image Similarity Challenge [5], a NeurIPS 2021 competition on image copy detection, was built using AugLy as well.

4. Benchmarking

In order to show how AugLy fits into the existing ecosystem of data augmentation libraries, we compare each modality’s sub-library within AugLy to a few of the most popular augmentation libraries in that respective modality. Specifically, we compare the overall focus and functionality of each library, and perform runtime benchmarking to evaluate how efficient AugLy’s augmentations are. Note: the augmentations were benchmarked using AugLy v0.2.1,

Library	# augmentations
pydub	10
AugLy	20
audiomentations	25
torchaudio	58

Figure 4. The audio augmentation libraries we chose to compare & the corresponding number of augmentations at the time of writing.

available on PyPI and GitHub. To see the full list of augmentations benchmarked, please review the Appendix.

4.1. Audio

We chose to compare AugLy’s audio augmentations to three existing and popular libraries: pydub [23], torchaudio [29], and audiomentations [13]. See Figure 4 to compare the number of distinct augmentations provided.

Each library has a slightly different focus: torchaudio and audiomentations integrate easily with pytorch (torchaudio’s can also be GPU-accelerated) and are clearly intended to be used at train time to improve generalization of audio machine learning models. Pydub provides more general-purpose audio processing functionality without much emphasis on either integrating with ML training or evaluation pipelines; the number of transformation functions in Pydub is also much lower than the other three.

We benchmark each audio augmentation in AugLy, as well as some analogues that exist in the other libraries. See Figure 5 for the runtime in seconds of each augmentation in (1) AugLy, (2) pydub, (3) torchaudio, & (4) audiomentations.

Augmentation	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
PitchShift	1.238		0.372	0.651
TimeStretch	0.415		0.053	0.121
Reverb	0.271		0.267	
AddBackgroundNoise	0.048			0.019
ChangeVolume	0.035	3e-5	0.034	0.004
HighPassFilter	0.017	3e-4	0.017	0.413
ToMono	0.016		0.022	
Normalize	0.015	4e-5	0.043	0.004
LowPassFilter	0.014	5e-4	0.013	0.163
Clip	0.002			0.003
Speed	0.002	6e-5		

Figure 5. The runtime (in seconds) of audio augmentations in (1) AugLy, (2) pydub, (3) torchaudio, & (4) audiomentations.

4.2. Image

We compare AugLy’s image augmentations to three well-established libraries: imgaug [14], torchvision [19],

Library	# augmentations
torchvision	28
AugLy	34
Albumentations	54
imgaug	179

Figure 6. The image augmentation libraries we chose to compare & the corresponding number of augmentations at the time of writing.

and Albumentations [1]. See Figure 6 for a comparison of the four libraries in terms of the number of distinct augmentations provided.

Whereas imgaug, torchvision, and Albumentations are all geared toward providing general image augmentations to be used in computer vision training pipelines for regularization purposes, AugLy is more focused on replicating image transformations that users perform online. For example, none of the other three libraries contain overlay augmentations (e.g. “OverlayText”, “OverlayEmoji”, or “OverlayOntoScreenshot”), despite these being extremely common image manipulations.

This indicates a gap in existing image augmentation libraries: models are not being trained to be invariant to data manipulations that they will see in the real world. For instance, a model that detects violent or harmful content in images on any online platform needs to be invariant to the augmentations provided in AugLy; otherwise a user can bypass that model by overlaying an emoji onto the harmful image or overlaying the image onto a background.

We benchmark each AugLy image augmentation, as well as any analogues that exist in the other libraries. See Figure 7 for the runtime in seconds of each augmentation in (1) AugLy, (2) imgaug, (3) torchvision, & (4) Albumentations.

4.3. Text

We compare AugLy’s text augmentations to three existing text libraries: nlpauge [18], TextAttack [21], & textflint [8]. See Figure 8 for a comparison of the four libraries in terms of the number of distinct augmentations provided.

One significant difference between AugLy and the other text augmentation libraries is the prevalence of syntactic versus semantic (i.e. character-level vs word-level) augmentations. Most augmentations in nlpauge and TextAttack are semantic (e.g. words being swapped for synonyms or antonyms), or a few simple syntactic ones (e.g. deleting/adding characters, replacing characters with nearby ones on the keyboard). AugLy provides many syntactic augmentations that are often used online in an attempt to evade detection, such as inserting punctuation, zero-width, or bidirectional characters and changing fonts.

We benchmark each AugLy text augmentation, as well

Augmentation	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
PerspectiveTransform	0.333	0.032	0.076	0.013
Sharpen	0.159	0.021	0.141	0.005
ColorJitter	0.108	0.038	0.107	0.015
Blur	0.097	0.013	0.143	0.005
Saturation	0.091	1.301	0.057	0.015
Pixelization	0.081	0.034		
Brightness	0.078		0.056	0.005
Resize	0.056	0.014	0.050	0.006
EncodingQuality	0.041	0.050		0.002
Contrast	0.031	0.007	0.074	
Rotate	0.024	0.019	0.011	0.028
Pad	0.010	0.018	0.005	0.008
ApplyLambda	0.008			2e-5
Grayscale	0.005	0.030	0.002	0.001
HFlip	0.005	0.002	0.003	0.001
VFlip	0.003	0.001	0.002	0.001
Crop	0.001	0.008	6e-4	2e-5

Figure 7. The runtime (in seconds) of image augmentations in (1) AugLy, (2) imgaug, (3) torchvision, & (4) Albumentations. Albumentations consistently outperforms any other library, likely due to the fact that it uses NumPy arrays as opposed to PIL. We continue to use PIL because it allows for (a) an easy integration with torchvision’s `Compose()` and (b) better code readability.

Library	# augmentations
TextAttack	13
AugLy	16
nlpauge	16
textflint	55

Figure 8. The text augmentation libraries we chose to compare & the corresponding number of augmentations at the time of writing.

as any analogues that exist in the other libraries. See Figure 9 for the runtime in seconds of each augmentation in (1) AugLy, (2) nlpauge, (3) TextAttack, & (4) textflint.

4.4. Video

We compare AugLy’s video augmentations to three existing libraries: moviepy [32], pytorchvideo [6], and viddaug [16]. See Figure 10 for a comparison of the four libraries in terms of the number of distinct augmentations provided.

Most existing video augmentations either focus on manipulating the spatial dimension *or* the temporal dimension, as opposed to both. For instance, many individuals apply spatial image augmentations frame by frame onto videos; pytorchvideo provides one such API to do this using the torchvision transforms. Although spatial augmentations are effective, applying temporal augmentations in tandem has been shown to improve performance [30].

Augmentation	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
SimulateTypos	0.276	0.101	0.006	4e-4
SwapGendered Words	0.102			0.003
Replace SimilarChars	0.102	0.101	0.006	0.001
SplitWords	0.101	0.101		
Contractions	0.001			1e-4
ChangeCase	4e-4			3e-4
Insert Punctuation Chars	1e-4		0.002	6e-4

Figure 9. The runtime (in seconds) of text augmentations in (1) AugLy, (2) nlpauge, (3) TextAttack, & (4) textflint.

Library	# augmentations
pytorchvideo	19
moviepy	30
vidaug	40
AugLy	43

Figure 10. The video augmentation libraries we chose to compare & the corresponding number of augmentations at the time of writing.

Moviepy is more of a general video processing and editing library, but it provides both spatial and temporal manipulations such as changing the speed of the video, trimming, and spatial cropping. Vidaug provides similar spatial and temporal augmentations. However, none of these existing libraries provide the option to augment the audio or to perform overlay augmentations which AugLy does provide. AugLy provides a wide array of spatiotemporal augmentations which are common online such as temporally splicing one video into another, simulating a screenshot reshare, and overlaying one video onto another. AugLy is also unique in its multimodal integration, meaning a video’s audio can be transformed then recombined with the video in conjunction with other augmentations).

We benchmark each AugLy video augmentation, as well as the analogues that exist in the other libraries. See Figure 11 for the runtime in seconds of each augmentation in (1) AugLy, (2) moviepy, (3) pytorchvideo, & (4) viddaug.

5. Robustness Evaluation

To demonstrate how AugLy can be used to evaluate robustness, we evaluated a few ImageNet models throughout the years on AugLy augmentations. We were interested to see how robustness has evolved as models’ accuracy has improved, as well as understand which augmentations the models were particularly vulnerable to. We chose

Augmentation	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Loop	2.015	2e-4		
Shift	0.773			0.016
Pixelization	0.662			1.996
AugmentAudio	0.625	0.001		
Pad	0.400	0.018		
TimeCrop	0.395			1e-5
Crop	0.352	9e-5		2e-5
Rotate	0.336	1e-4	0.202	0.275
Blur	0.307		0.140	0.179
VFlip	0.297	9e-5	0.151	2e-5
AddNoise	0.297			0.036
Resize	0.289	0.015		
ChangeVideo				
Speed	0.269	1e-4		1e-4
HFlip	0.269	1e-4	0.152	2e-5
Grayscale	0.266	0.047	0.081	
ColorJitter	0.262	0.035	0.077	
Brightness	0.258			0.050

Figure 11. The runtime (in seconds) of video augmentations in (1) AugLy, (2) moviepy, (3) pytorchvideo, & (4) vidaug. Although other libraries are faster, we continue to use the FFmpeg CLI to process large videos effectively and conserve memory, instead of storing and passing videos in memory as (3) and (4) do.

three models to evaluate: VGG16 [25], Resnet152 [9], and Efficientnet-L2 (Noisy Student) [28].

We evaluated the aforementioned models on the ImageNet validation set, which is commonly used since the test set is not available for download. However, to avoid any potential bias due to overfitting, we evaluated on an additional dataset, ‘‘ImageNet V2’’. ImageNet V2 [22] was created by researchers with the intention to be a held-out test set for ImageNet that can be evaluated on with no risk of overfitting.

We evaluated the robustness of each model across many different AugLy image augmentations by sampling 250 images from each dataset, computing the top-5 accuracy on those images, and computing the top-5 accuracy when the images are augmented using each augmentation. The change in top-5 accuracy from the baseline (i.e. when the images are not augmented) to the augmented images gives us a measure of how vulnerable the model is to that augmentation. We chose a diverse set of augmentations and set the parameters such that the augmentations were very noticeable but the content of the image was still recognizable to the human eye. The notebook used to perform this robustness evaluation can be found in the AugLy repo [here](#).

In Figure 12, VGG and ResNet are pretty vulnerable to AugLy augmentations across the board. EfficientNet, on the other hand, is much more robust to most aug-

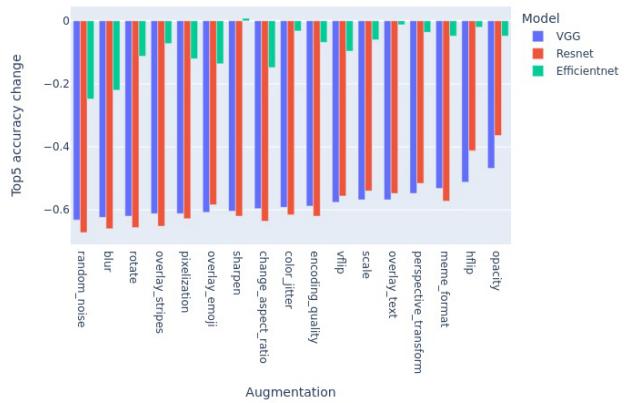


Figure 12. The change in top-5 accuracy caused by each augmentation on each model, computed on a sample of 250 images from the ImageNet validation set. *Accessibility note: the models are differentiated in the bar plot above not only by color, but also by order; the three bars left to right for each augmentation are VGG, Resnet, & Efficientnet.*

mentations except for blur and random_noise which cause a larger drop in accuracy. This makes sense considering the augmentations each model was trained on: VGG was trained on augmentations equivalent to AugLy’s crop, hflip, & color_jitter; ResNet was trained on crop, hflip, scale, & color changes similar to color_jitter. EfficientNet was trained using AutoAugment [2], which includes a much wider range of augmentations such as shear_x/y, translate_x/y, rotate, contrast, invert, solarize, posterize, color, brightness, sharpness, and cutout.

Whereas VGG & ResNet were trained on a very limited set of spatial and color-based augmentations, EfficientNet was trained on a larger number of both spatial and color-based augmentations, as well as cutout which is similar to the overlay augmentations in AugLy (but instead of overlaying content over the image, black rectangles are overlaid). However, none of the three models were trained on pixel-level augmentations such as blur, random_noise, or pixelization, which likely explains why all three models are vulnerable to those augmentations. Figure 13 illustrates a few examples from AugLy of the four categories: spatial, color, overlay, and pixel-level augmentations.

We validated that these results are comparable on the ImageNet V2 dataset, shown in Figure 14. Similar to evaluation on the ImageNet validation dataset, VGG and ResNet are quite vulnerable to all augmentations at varying degrees, and EfficientNet is significantly less so with the exception of blur & random_noise.

Figure 15 shows the drop in accuracy on EfficientNet for each augmentation with respect to the original ImageNet validation set and ImageNet V2. The drop in accuracy is overall comparable on both datasets for all augmentations,

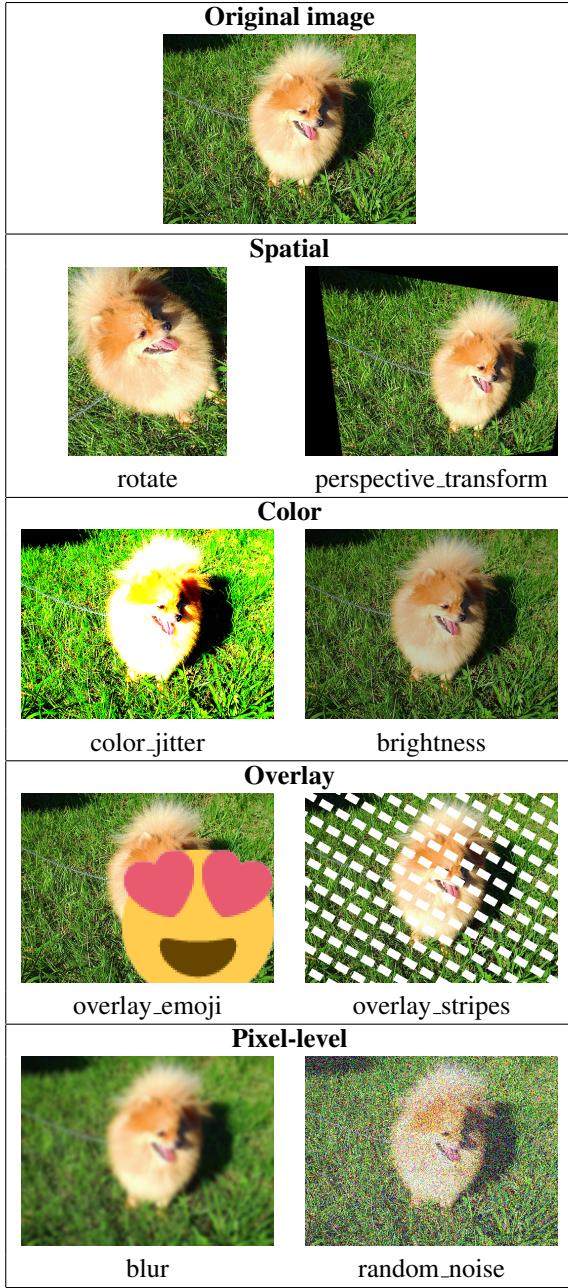


Figure 13. Examples of each different category of image augmentation, as shown on an image from the ImageNet validation set class 259 (Pomeranian).

so there is no indication of overfitting on the validation set.

6. Conclusion

We presented AugLy, a new multimodal augmentation library with a focus on robustness. We compared each sub-library (audio, image, text, and video) to other similar augmentation libraries, assessing the number of augmentations

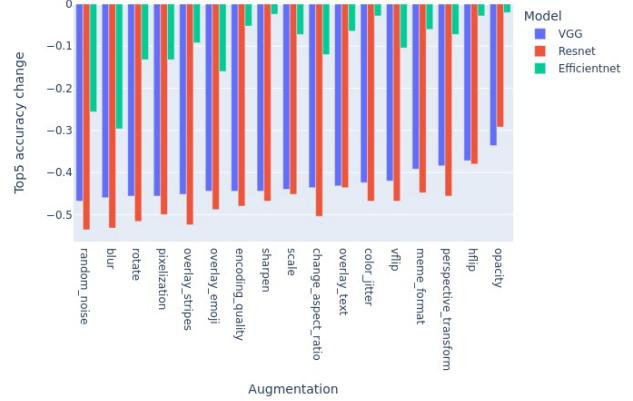


Figure 14. The change in top-5 accuracy caused by each augmentation on each model, computed on a sample of 250 images from the ImageNet V2 “matched frequency” dataset. *Accessibility note: the models are differentiated in the bar plot above not only by color, but also by order; the three bars left to right for each augmentation are VGG, Resnet, & Efficientnet.*

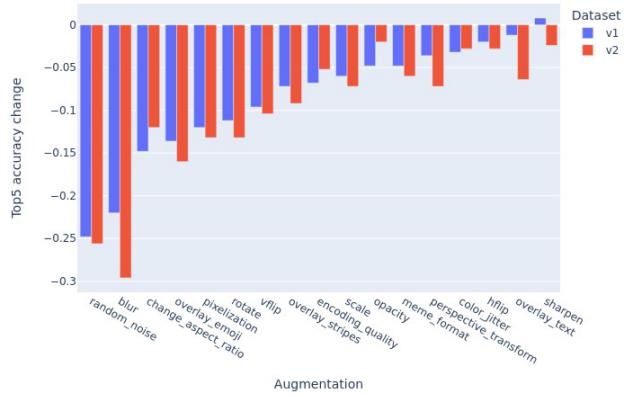


Figure 15. The change in top-5 accuracy caused by each augmentation on the EfficientNet-L2 (Noisy Student) model, computed on both the ImageNet validation set & the ImageNet V2 set. *Accessibility note: the models are differentiated in the bar plot above not only by color, but also by order; the two bars left to right for each augmentation are v1 & v2.*

offered, the kinds of augmentations available, and benchmarking analogous functions to observe their performance. While other libraries may be more performant time-wise, AugLy provides a wide range of unique augmentations that replicate real modifications seen online. Additionally, we evaluated our augmentations on three state-of-the-art image classification models over time, showing that training on augmented data is an effective method for building defenses against various attack types.

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Appendix

Augmentation	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Harmonic	2.897			
Percussive	2.897			
PitchShift	1.238		0.372	0.651
TimeStretch	0.415		0.053	0.121
Reverb	0.271		0.267	
Tempo	0.195			
AddBackgroundNoise	0.048			0.019
PeakingEqualizer	0.048			
InsertInBackground	0.044			
ChangeVolume	0.035	3e-5	0.034	0.004
HighPassFilter	0.017	3e-4	0.017	0.413
ToMono	0.016		0.022	
Normalize	0.015	4e-5	0.043	0.004
LowPassFilter	0.014	5e-4	0.013	0.163
Clicks	0.009			
Loop	0.006			
InvertChannels	0.003			
ApplyLambda	0.003			
Speed	0.002	6e-5		
Clip	0.002			0.003

Figure 16. The runtime (in seconds) of audio augmentations in (1) AugLy, (2) pydub, (3) torchaudio, & (4) audiomentations.

Augmentation	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
ShufflePixels	1.600			
PerspectiveTransform	0.333	0.032	0.076	0.013
Sharpen	0.159	0.021	0.141	0.005
ApplyPILFilter	0.117			
ColorJitter	0.108	0.038	0.107	0.015
Blur	0.097	0.013	0.143	0.005
Saturation	0.091	1.301	0.057	0.015
ChangeAspectRatio	0.091			
Skew	0.084			
OverlayStripes	0.083			
Pixelization	0.081	0.034		
Brightness	0.078		0.056	0.005
OverlayOnto				
Screenshot	0.064			
Scale	0.059			
Resize	0.056	0.014	0.050	0.006
OverlayOnto				
BackgroundColor	0.049			
EncodingQuality	0.041	0.050		0.002
ConvertColor	0.039			
MaskedComposite	0.038			
Contrast	0.031	0.007	0.074	
Opacity	0.029			
OverlayText	0.027			
MemeFormat	0.025			
Rotate	0.024	0.019	0.011	0.028
OverlayImage	0.023			
Pad	0.010	0.018	0.005	0.008
ApplyLambda	0.008			2e-5
PadSquare	0.008			
OverlayEmoji	0.006			
Grayscale	0.005	0.030	0.002	0.001
HFlip	0.005	0.002	0.003	0.001
VFlip	0.003	0.001	0.002	0.001
ClipImageSize	0.002			
Crop	0.001	0.008	6e-4	2e-5

Figure 17. The runtime (in seconds) of image augmentations in (1) AugLy, (2) imgaug, (3) torchvision, & (4) Albumentations.

Augmentation	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
SimulateTypos	0.276	0.101	0.006	4e-4
SwapGendered Words	0.102			0.003
Replace FunFonts	0.102			
ReplaceSimilar UnicodeChars	0.102			
Replace UpsideDown	0.102			
MergeWords	0.102			
Replace SimilarChars	0.102	0.101	0.006	0.001
SplitWords	0.101	0.101		
ReplaceWords	0.101			
GetBaseline	0.101			
Contractions	0.001		1e-4	2e-4
ChangeCase	4e-4			3e-4
Insert PunctuationChars	1e-4		0.002	6e-4
Insert WhitespaceChars	7e-5			
Replace Bidirectional	7e-5			
InsertZero WidthChars	6e-5			
ApplyLambda	6e-5			

Figure 18. The runtime (in seconds) of text augmentations in (1) AugLy, (2) nlpAug, (3) TextAttack, & (4) textflint.

Augmentation	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
ReplaceWith ColorFrames	2.241			
Loop	2.015	2e-4		
Perspective Transform AndShake	2.015			
BlendVideos	1.905			
ReplaceWith Background	1.746			
OverlayText	1.677			
OverlayShapes	1.659			
TimeDecimate	1.636			
OverlayOnto Screenshot	1.632			
OverlayDots	1.631			
MemeFormat	1.610			
InsertIn Background	1.605			
OverlayOnto BackgroundVideo	0.781			
Shift	0.773			0.016
Pixelization	0.662			1.996
AugmentAudio	0.625	0.001		
OverlayEmoji	0.501			
Concat	0.467			
AudioSwap	0.445			
VStack	0.435			
Overlay	0.406			
HStack	0.400			
Pad	0.400	0.018		
TimeCrop	0.395			1e-5
Trim	0.386			
Change AspectRatio	0.368			
Crop	0.352	9e-5		2e-5
Rotate	0.336	1e-4	0.202	0.275
Blur	0.307		0.140	0.179
VFlip	0.297	9e-5	0.151	2e-5
AddNoise	0.297			0.036
Resize	0.289	0.015		
Scale	0.284			
FPS	0.271			
ChangeVideo Speed	0.269	1e-4		1e-4
HFlip	0.269	1e-4	0.152	2e-5
Grayscale	0.266	0.047	0.081	
Contrast	0.264			
Encoding Quality	0.262			
ColorJitter	0.262	0.035	0.077	
Brightness	0.258		0.050	
RemoveAudio	0.255			
ApplyLambda	5e-4			

Figure 19. The runtime (in seconds) of video augmentations in (1) AugLy, (2) moviepy, (3) pytorchvideo, & (4) vdaug.