A Scale Invariant Digital Image Copy-Paste Forgery Detection Approach based on NCC

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ABSTRACT

It is very important to authenticate the digital image for its authenticity. The issue of the authenticity and integrity of digital images is progressively critical. Day by day, it's getting easier to create image forgeries because of the sophisticated image editing software programs. There are various types of digital image manipulation or tampering possible; like image compositing, splicing, copy-paste, etc. And Digital Image Forensics plays a vital role in proving its authenticity and integrity in such cases. The Copy-Paste forgery, also known as Copy-Move Forgery is a most common and popular type of digital image forgery. In this type of forgery, a region from an image copied and pasted afterward to an another location of the same picture. The main intention of the forger to do this is to conceal a vital portion in the scene. In this paper, a passive, scaling robust algorithm for the detection of Copy-Paste forgery is proposed. Sometimes the copied region of an image is scaled before pasting to some other location in the image. In such cases, the normal Copy-Paste detection algorithm fails to detect the forgeries. The approach is based on NCC (Normalized Cross Correlation) For this an improved customized Normalized Cross Correlation has been implemented and used for detecting highly correlated areas from the image and the image blocks, thereby detecting the tampered regions from an image. The experimental results demonstrate that the proposed approach can be effectively used to detect copy-paste forgeries accurately and is scaling robust. The proposed algorithm is also computationally efficient.

General Terms

Digital Image Forensics, Computer Vision, Digital Forensics, Pattern Recognition.

Keywords

Image Forensics, Digital Image Forensics; Image Forgery Detection; Image Tampering; Image Authentication

1. INTRODUCTION

The internet has gifted us cost-effective approach to exchange and trade the data all over the world. Today's world almost entirely relays on internet technologies to communicate, doing businesses and governance. The main features of the technology, like Low cost, speedy access and ease of operation has made human lives easy going. However, all these advantages and the convenience, come at a cost. With increased sophistication of the technologies, Internet crime has also increased tremendously around the world. The Internet has provided a stage for internet criminals to carry out criminal activities and posing a significant threat to Internet users. [1], [2], [3] These criminal activities are broad and diverse, for example, identity theft, a threat to nation's security, child pornography, copyright infringement is, to name a few. These crimes impose threats to individual safety and privacy. In such scenario, if the criminal get access to the confidential data of a person, such as or photos and videos, etc.; criminal can play with it as he wants, to satisfy his malice intents and poor victim, on the other hand, has to face serious consequences. Image forensics investigators need robust and efficient image authentication procedures to apprehend, detect and take legal action against criminals, involved in such acts. [4]

Digital forensics is a vast domain and covers many disciplines. The authors [5] have presented a complete ontology of digital forensics. The images are the rich source of information and are widespread in the cyberspace. The main concern with these digital images is that they are vulnerable to modifications very easily. Due to the availability of the sophisticated image editing software is on PCs, laptops, and mobile devices, one can easily carry out tampering with it. These attacks on images pose a great danger to the whole community, as one can easily change the meaning of the image by simply carrying out some operations on it. Once it becomes viral on the social networking sites can create havoc. Hence, it is imperative to authenticate the images for their originality. The authenticating the digital images for their content i.e. integrity, the source is the field of Digital Image Forensics (DIF). DIF has gained tremendous importance in last one and half decade among the research community. The fundamental problems digital image forensics techniques attempt to solve is the identification of the source and detecting the integrity of a digital image [6]. Identification of source involves determining the means by which the images are created like camera, scanner, and regenerative algorithm. Similarly, integrity can be confirmed by analyzing the images for its modification.

Digital image forensics can be classified broadly under two heads, as active forensics and passive forensics. Active forensics involves authenticating images by extracting the digital signature or watermark embedded in it. The digital watermarks are inserted into the images by the special cameras at the time of taking pictures. Any tampering operations done on the image can deteriorate the embedded watermark. This detected deterioration can be taken as an indication of the possible image tampering. However, the main limitation of the active forensics is that it need both original and the tampered image to authenticate and confirm tampering. Also, the need for special devices, such as special cameras, for example, makes it a costlier affair. Passive forensics, on the other hand, neither require special devices nor needs to have the original content available to prove tampering of the image. Passive forensics is also termed as blind forensics. It relies on the simple principle that the original natural image always owns some inherent pattern and statistics that are consistent. When some tampering operation

occurs on the image, this change in the statistics of the image guarantees image tampering. [7]

Image Forensics or image tampering detection can be classified into different categories, like pixel base, a format based, camera based, etc. [8]. Copy-paste tampering detection comes under pixel based forensic detection tool. It is a most common type of tampering, in which forger copies some region from one place of an image and pastes it at some other location. Though copied and pasted regions in this class are identical; these tampering operations are so smartly done, that it leaves no obvious traces of tampering. It is sometimes easier to detect the pasted regions if it did not undergo any postprocessing operation. It becomes difficult if the copied part undergoes some sort of transformation such as scaling, rotation or both. In this paper, a scaling robust copy-paste detection scheme is introduced which uses Normalized cross correlation.

2. PREVIOUS WORK

Copy-Paste tampering is also called as copy-move forgery. Copy-paste tampering detection can be carried out by two main approaches; either block based or by key-point detection [9], [10]. As proposed technique uses the block based approach in this section, the review of some of the copy-paste tampering detectiontechniquesis reviewed.

Fridrich et al. [11] have made the first attempt for copy-paste tampering detection. Popescu and Farid [12] have further improved the algorithm and presented a method using principal component analysis (PCA). Myna et al. [13] developed a method for detecting and localizing copy-move forgery using a log-polar coordinates and wavelet transforms. Bayram et al. [14] use the Fourier-Mellin Transform (FMT), which involves a log-polar mapping, to represent image blocks. Li and Yu [15] extended the work performed by Bayram et al. [14], which is based on FMT. The authors [16] have proposed a method in which the detection tampering depends on the correlation coefficient of the feature vectors of the blocks.

Most of the algorithms in Copy-Paste detections uses lexicographic sorting method to sort the feature vectors, but due to its computationally intensive nature, many authors [17], [18], [19] have used KD-tree as an alternative to it. The time complexity of lexicographical sorting was further improved by Lin et al. [20] which uses radix sort algorithm to sort row-wise feature vectors. Though the time complexity was reduced, but the main limitation of radix sorting that it works only for integer type features; remains. The authors [21] have suggested using Krawtchouk moments to detect tampering with high accuracy. In [22], authors, propose a method in which texture of the segmented image blocks ascertains the tampering. Another approach in [23], the author uses Discrete Cosine transformer (DCT) as an effective way to reduce the computational cost of copy-move forgery detection. By comparing the developed method with the previous approaches, it is more efficient than the other.

The authors [24], uses Discrete Wavelet Transform (DWT) and Fast Walsh-Hadamard Transform. In [25], the dimension of an image is first reduced by applying DWT, and then spatial offset between copied portions are estimated by computing the phase correlation and detects forged regions. Li et al. [26] used DWT and SVD for feature vector reduction. The features are calculated using the approximation sub-band coefficients for block based DWT. In [27], dyadic wavelet transform, and statistical measures are used to detect the similar image segments from an image. In an another

approach [28], the author uses the sub-blocking method. In an article [29], authors proposed the Zernike moments based Copy-Paste detection, the detection of the forged regions is found to be accurate.

Recently, Cozzolino et al. [30] proposed a fast copy-move forgery detection based on modified PatchMatch algorithm [31] with Zernike moments. To avoid feature matching a block clustering approach was proposed by an author [32]. Zandi et al. [33], proposed the use of an adaptive similarity threshold in the block-based feature matching stage. The author [34], the author, proposed a scheme based on dense nearest neighbor fields (NNF) and fast PatchMatch search algorithm. Cao et al. [35] proposed a technique for both global and local contrast detection in digital images using histogram peak/gap artifacts analysis. The author's [36] proposed an efficient algorithm for image inpainting detection.

The authors [37] applied histogram of orientated gradients to each block and lexicographic sorting to detect tampering. It is robust to distort by translation in small amount but not completely transformation invariant. Authors, [38] proposes a DCT based algorithm. It uses low frequency four and six coefficients of DCT of 8×8 pixel blocks. The author [39], [40] uses three-step search algorithm of the motion estimation and subsampling in spatial domain method to reduce the size of the image and computational complexity. However, it is not robust to scaling and rotation.

Though, all the proposed methods in the literature work well in detecting copy-paste tampering. Almost all of them have two common problems: first is the computational cost and second is the low accuracy. Also, most of them fail to detect if the forged region had been rotated and scaled. The proposed algorithm in this paper is scale invariant. It is also rotation invariant to some extent of +3 to -3 degrees and do not need any feature vectors to be sorted. Hence, it is not necessary to perform lexicographic sorting, radix sorting or KD-tree; and NCC alone can be used for feature detection and matching. Hence, it is computationally efficient.

3. METHODOLOGY
3.1 Normalized Cross-Correlation

In this proposed method, the Normalized Cross Correlation [41] (NCC) is used as a fundamental tool for feature matching. Matching two images of the similar scene is one of the fundamental problems in computer vision. Image matching plays a significant role in many applications such as image registration, motion analysis, stereo vision and mosaicking. In the last few decades, the image matching issue has been studied extensively, and several matching algorithms have been proposed [42], [43] in computer vision.

The NCC is one of the basic and popular statistical approach used for image registration. It is widely used for template matching and pattern recognition. NCC is utilized as a metric to assess the level of dissimilarity or similarity between two signals or digital images. It is also advantageous to the simple cross-correlation because it is robust to linear changes in the illumination amplitudes in the two compared images. Furthermore, the NCC is confined in the range between 1 and -1. The setting of detection threshold value is much simpler than the cross-correlation. Mathematically the NCC is given as:

$$C(x,y) = \frac{\sum_{y'=0}^{h-1}\sum_{x'=0}^{w-1} T(x',y')I(x+x',y+y')}{\sqrt{\sum_{y'=0}^{h-1}\sum_{x'=0}^{w-1} T(x',y')^2 \sum_{y'=0}^{h-1}\sum_{x'=0}^{w-1} I(x+x',y+y')^2}} \quad (1)$$

Where (x',y') are the template, T, coordinates, (x, y) are the Image, I, coordinates, and h and w are the height and width of the template. This metric computes pixel-wise cross-correlation and normalizes it by the square root of the auto-correlation of the images. The Normalized Cross-Correlation is implemented using Matlab.

The idea is to divide the image into large sized blocks and find the correlation between the image and these blocks. The threshold τ_s, τ_c, and τ_f are set for detecting the scaling, coarse tampering and fine-tuned tampering respectively. Correlation between image and the image block is calculated. In case, if a strong correlation exists, then the correlation coefficient's value will be 1 or tends to be 1. The choice of the threshold parameter to be set is critical and important. Threshold with a very small value, i.e., nearer to zero and very high value as one may lead to wrong results. The threshold can take values between 0.85 to o.98. Once the values of τ_s, τ_c, and τ_f are set, it works for most of the cases without fail.

4. PROPOSED METHOD
The proposed Copy-Paste tampering detection method is based on block matching approach and uses NCC. As it can detect simple and scaled regions.The CSP, i.e., Copy-Scale-Paste Forgery detection is consisting of three main steps.

1) Percentage of Scaling Detection

2) Coarse Scale Forgery Detection

3) Fine-Tuned Scale Forgery detection

Let *'I'* be the Image of size $W \times H$, where W=width of the width of the image and H=height of the image.

Let *'B'* be the block of size $M \times N$ where M=width of block and N=height of the block.

Let S_h and S_v are the horizontal and vertical step size respectively. If step size in horizontal and vertical is same, then the common step size will be *'S'*, i.e., $S=S_h=S_v$; and for the non-overlapping blocks $S_h=M$ and $S_v=N$. The total number of blocks can be formulated as:

$$NOB = \left[\left(\frac{W-M}{S_h}\right)+1\right] \times \left[\left(\frac{H-N}{S_v}\right)+1\right] \quad (2)$$

Divide the image into the overlapping blocks of size $M \times N$ and with a step size of $\underline{S_h}$ and S_v; if S_h and S_v same then, say $S_h=S_v=S$. Let τ_s is the threshold set for finding the scaling percentage.

The image is first divided into the *NOB*. Step size S_h and S_v decides the degree of block overlapping. To achieve efficiency and precision in the tampering detection, the 3-stage algorithm is developed. The first stage is to detect the percentage of scaling. This is the main critical stage in the proposed method. Once the scaling factor is detected successfully, the Coarse Scale Tampering detection is done and the output of the second stage is i.e. Coarse Scaled Forgery Detection is used to Fine-tune Scale Forgery detection.

4.1 Percentage of Scaling Detection
This is the most important step as rest of the procedure will rely on the percent scaling returned by this algorithm. Here, there reference image *I* is divided into *NOB*, the number of blocks. Rescale each block into different scales from 1% to 200%. Set the matching threshold for correlation. Calculate the correlation of the scaled block with the image. If the correlation is greater or equal to the set threshold, then stop the further processing and return the scaling percentage. Else continue processing till all the blocks of the image with different scaling ends. The algorithm is summarized in the following steps.

// C_B is the collection of overlapping blocks; τ_s threshold to detect percentage of scaling; ϕ is the scale factor
Get_Scale_Factor(I, C_B, NOB)
For each block B_i of C_B, where i=1, 2, 3,……, NOB
      For each Scale factor ϕ = 0.01 to 2 in step of 0.01
      B_{ir}=Scale b_i by ϕ
      C_{oc}=Get the NCC of B_{ir} and image I
      If $C_{oc}>= \tau_s$
      Return the ϕ
      End
      End
End

4.2 Coarse Scaled Forgery Detection
This is the second step and detects initial tampering. This step detects rough tampered areas. In this step, the block size chosen is very large. The choice made about the horizontal and vertical step size for dividing the image into blocks directly affects the results. Hence, choosing the step size for dividing an image is crucial. If the step size is large, then the processing will be fast but the tamper detection gets affected drastically, and method may fail to detect tampering, on the contrary, if the step size chosen is small then the block processing will take more time, but it increases the precision of tamper detection. The same is true for the block size also. Coarse regions of the tampering are detected based on the computation of the correlation matrix. Each coarse block is scaled by an amount of the detected scaling factor, and the correlation is calculated using equation 1. The decision on the matched blocks is taken based on the set τ_s. The locations of these detected blocks are recorded for further use. The steps of the algorithm is as follows.

Coarse_Scaled_Forgery_Detection(B, ϕ)
      For each block B_i where i=1, 2, 3,……, NOB
      B_{is}=Scale b_i by ϕ
      C_{oc} =Get the NCC of B_{is}
      If $C_{oc}>= \tau_s$
      Save the coordinates of the block B_i and scaled block B_{is}
      Mark the coarse tampering
      End
      End
End

4.3 Fine-Tuned Scaled Forgery Detection
As discussed earlier this step detects the tampered regions precisely. Each detected coarse blocks are divided into the small size blocks, and the NCC is carried out on the corresponding coarse block. If the threshold set for fine tuning stage is met, the match is considered, and final shape of the tampering is detected. The same procedure is repeated for all

other blocks as well. The pseudo-code of the procedure is given below.

```
FineTuned_Scaled_Tamper_Detection(B, Bs)
  For each B and Bs
          Divide B and Bs into small blocks of size m×n,
  with a step size of s;
          Coc=Get the NCC of each small block of B and
  Bssub-images
          If Coc>τf
          Then highlight the Fine-tuned area.
          Else
          Skip the block and continue
          End
  End
```

5. EXPERIMENTAL RESULTS

Several images from the CoMoFoD [44] database are tested to evaluate the performance of the proposed algorithm.

The experiments were carried out on a computer with a configuration of CPU Intel® Core i-5-4200M CPU @ 2.50GHz with 4.00GB Installed Random Access Memory on 64-bit Windows Operating System. The well-known CoMoFoD (Image Database for Copy-Move Forgery Detection for image forensics) is used to test the algorithms. The dataset consists of 260 forged image sets in two categories (small 512×512, and large 3000×2000). Images are grouped into five groups according to applied manipulations: rotation, translation, scaling, combination, and distortion. Various types of postprocessing methods, such as JPEG compression, blurring, noise adding, color reduction, etc., are applied to all forged and original images.For experimentation, small 512×512 images are used for carrying out the tests. Tests are performedwith different parameter settings, like threshold, coarse block size, the degree of overlapping,etc. The Coarse block size chosen was 24×24, and the step size chosen is 4. The threshold set for detecting the scaling, finding the correlation of the coarse blocks and fine-tuning is 0.8, 0.9, 0.94 respectively. The following results show that the proposed algorithm detects the copied and the pasted regions successfully. The proposed algorithm was implemented using Matlab.

Apart from the CoMoFoD Dataset the custom dataset has been developed. In this database, 30 images are taken from the YU Yureka AO5510 mobile phone camera. The images taken are of two resolutions: 320×240 and 640×480, with 100% image quality. The images are then manipulated with scaled forgery. The different portions of images are subjected to varied scaling and then pasted in the same image. The images are also subjected to the different postprocessing operations such and adding Gaussian noise and saving the images at different compression levels. It has been found that the proposed algorithm successfully detects the forged regions of varied scale. The experimental results on few images from the developed custom dataset and the CoMoFoD database are shown in Fig. 1 and Fig. 2 respectively.
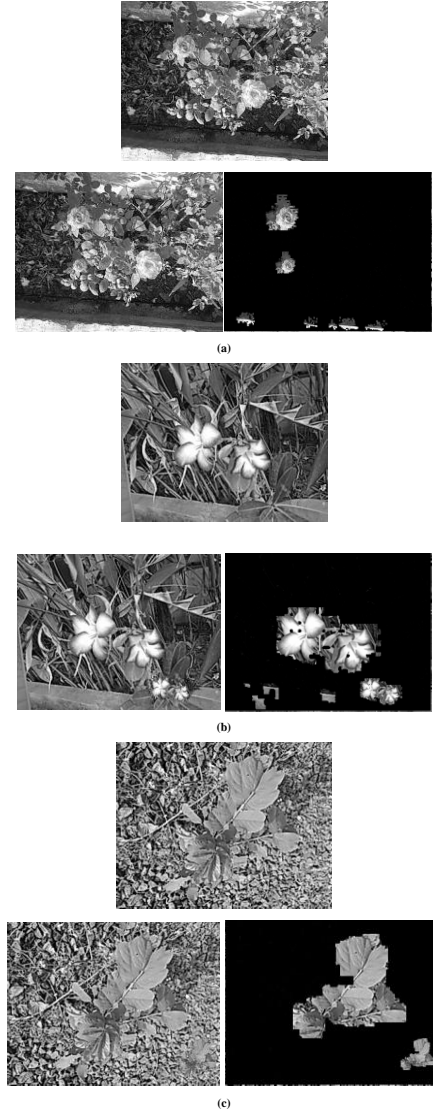

Fig 1: (a), (b) and (c) shows the original image, forged and detected forgery from the developed custom dataset. The forged versions of (a), (b) and (c) are scaled with 0.6, 0.4, and 0.3 scaling factor respectively.

5.1 Performance Evaluation Parameters

It is important to evaluate the performance of the results obtained from the proposed method. The main focus of the performance evaluation is to calculate the two basic parameters, namely, precision and recall. Precision denotes the probability that a detected forgery is truly a forgery; while Recall shows the probability that a forged image is detected. The recall is often also called true positive ratescore as a measure which combines precision and recall in a single value. It is significant in establishing the degree of accuracy of the implementation. [9]

The number of correctly detected forged images,T_p, the number of images that have been erroneously detected as forged, F_p, and the falsely missed forged images F_n. From these, the measures Precision, p, and Recall, r is computed. They are defined as [9]:

$$p = \frac{T_p}{T_p + F_p} \text{ and } r = \frac{T_p}{T_p + F_n} \qquad (3)$$

In order tocalculate precision and recall, the T_p, F_p, T_n and $F_n$are approximately estimated by using available ground truth. The precision and recall for the images shown in Figure 1 which are from the developed custom dataset and the images from the CoMoFoD dataset as shown in Figure 2 are given in Table 1. The average precision and recall of the all six images come out to be 96.18% and 96.67% respectively.

The precision and recall on the custom dataset of 30 images are found to be 89.69% and 86.67% respectively. It has been found that the proposed scaling detection algorithm detects the scaling factor accurately most of the times but in some cases an error of +0.05 to -0.05 is detected in detected scaling factor.

Table 1. Detected Scale Factor, Precision and Recall estimation for the Images from the custom dataset (Fig. 1) and CoMoFoD dataset (Fig. 2)

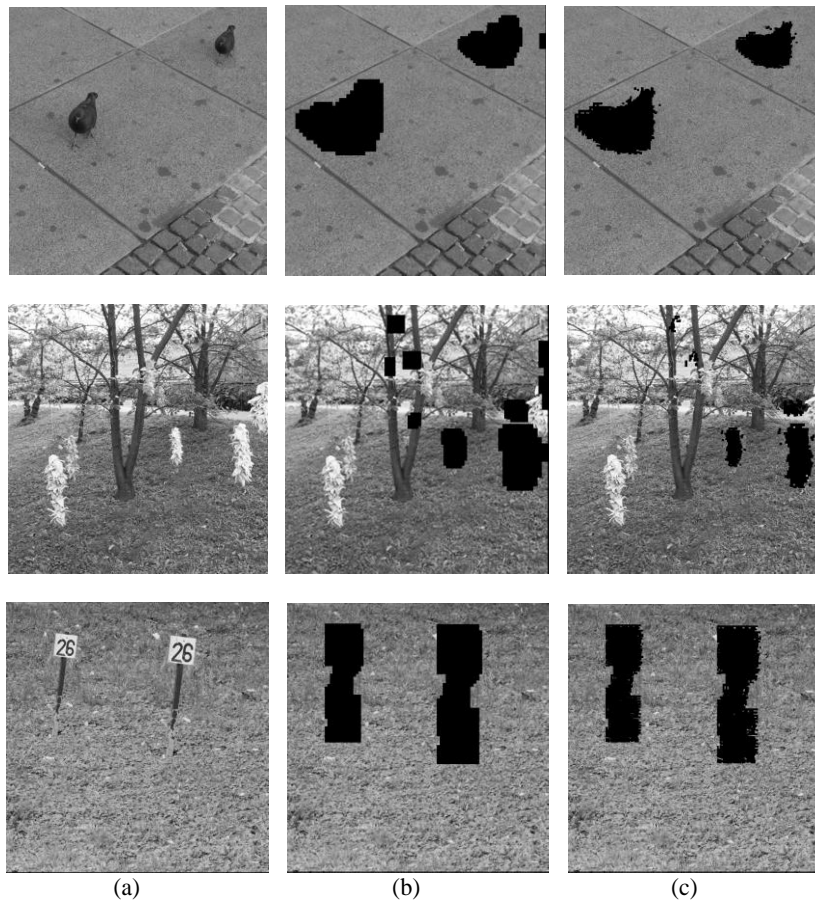| Forged Images with Scale Factor (SF)	Detected SF	Precision	Recall
Image Fig. 1 (a) with SF 0.6	0.6	92.3	96
Image Fig. 1 (b) with SF 0.4	0.4	94.17	97
Image Fig. 1 (c) with SF 0.3	0.3	100	98
Image Fig. 2 (a) with SF 0.7	0.7	100	99
Image Fig. 2 (b) with SF 0.6	0.6	90.65	97
Image Fig. 2 (c) with SF 0.85	0.85	100	93

| (a) | (b) | (c) |

Fig 2: (a) Original images from CoMoFoD database with scaled Tampering; (b) Coarse Scale Forgery Detection results; (c) Fine-tuned Scale Forgery detection results.

6. CONCLUSION

In this paper, the detection of copy-paste forgery in digital images is addressed. It is a popular image forgery technique among the forgers. In this research work,a robust method is developed for detectingforgery in images efficiently and automatically. From the experimental conducted and the results obtained thereof, it has been observed that the NCC alone can perform well in detecting the tampering in images, even after transformation such as scaling. Moreover, no matter how much the size of the tampering area is, the forensics scheme can roughly detect those areas. The proposed method does not need dimensionality reduction and any sorting scheme to sort feature vectors and hence becomes computationally efficient as compared to some of the other block-based approaches in the literature. The proposed method is robust to the rotation to some extent but is not fool-proof to a rotation that needs to be addressed in future work.

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