Real-time Scalable Video Stream Analysis with Object, Activity and Anomaly Detection.

Joseph Honour

Newcastle University

Author Note

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Abstract

Computer vision has been a large area of research in recent years, devising methodologies to understand and act upon events seen within video streams. A major application of computer vision is to detect anomalies autonomously, and alert users to when they occur. Although industrial technologies exist that can do this to a basic standard, they often rely on expensive and exclusive hardware.

This paper proposes an extendable and scalable framework that can provide an end-to-end video processing pipeline capable of accurate anomaly detection, in real-time, without complex hardware requirements. The framework will show how the adoption of distributed computing and machine learning enable real-time anomaly detections, without requiring specialized hardware. My design approach is to allow extensibility at every opportunity, so the framework can be adapted for a multitude of use cases, some of which I propose within this paper. Furthermore, the framework will allow horizontal scaling enabling it to handle large volumes of data, while keeping its real-time requirements intact. Finally, the public hosting of the framework will allow the exploration of new development avenues by the community, with avenues of exploration suggested within this paper.

Keywords: Computer Vision, Distributed Computing, Machine Learning

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# Introduction and Motivations

In the United Kingdom, an estimated 4.2 million surveillance cameras watch us every day [1]. With CCTV’s deployment to businesses, homes, shops and high streets we have become one of the most watched nations in the world. Fueling the mass deployment of surveillance equipment is its capability to deter criminals coupled with recorded video evidence of any committed crime. This can be seen through CCTV’s 96% availability in homicide investigations [2]. However, in its current use case an individual must manually watch all relevant footage, highlighting points of interest, which is extremely time consuming and inefficient. A more proactive approach to policing could evolve if the real-time detection of these points of interest within video-streams became available through automation.

This is the key problem with current CCTV; it does not provide real-time analysis or understanding of what is happening within the video stream. This means its adoption is currently in a post-event detection capacity, given a large time input from users, when it has the potential to provide real-time insights into events occurring within the video footage. With the development of Smart Cities, video stream analytics must be able to scale to huge volumes, with no current video processing frameworks providing a solution to this problem (Table 1).

To enable the demands of intelligent video stream analysis, the development of a base framework is necessary. The framework should provide common functionality for video processing by default, while allowing easy development extension to cater to the broadest range of use cases. Furthermore, horizontally scaling technologies should provide the framework base to meet the demands of even the largest video stream development projects. This would allow an easy transition to developing smart video stream analysis from existing CCTV systems.

# Related Work

The providing of an end-to-end video processing framework requires the accommodation and support of all stages within video processing. The exploration of theoretical requirements of generic video processing have been documented from industrial case settings (Figure 1), giving a strong grounding of fundamental features of video processing. From this, we must then be aware of common techniques adopted at each stage of video processing, to allow a proposed framework to support the current industrial standards.



Figure 1: Adaptation of video processing within a general framework for automated visual surveillance system [3].

Object Detection is the base of all computer vision applications, providing the ability to accurately identify objects within a frame. Work in this field has relied upon being able to correctly interpret the combinations of pixels correctly to identify an object [4]. In more recent years, with the improvement of Graphics Processing Units (GPU) hardware, advanced detection techniques have been created upon Deep Learning models [5]. Utilizing the foundation of accurate object detection, objects are given identity between frames.

Object Tracking enables the observation of object movement vectors, along with the monitoring of object interaction patterns. Work within the object tracking domain build predictive models with online data, meaning they adapt at runtime to provide improved predictions. Algorithms within this domain often model an objects location as a set of positions that each could contain the objects location based on its previous known location [6], [7], [8]. Given successful employment of objects tracking, we can now observe the behaviors of individual objects through a video stream.

Behavior and Activity Analysis allow the assignment of context to object movements, enabling more advanced processing techniques down-stream in the video processing pipeline, such as anomaly detection. Active work within this field is varied, with successful modelling of behaviors being produced using Markov Models [9], [10], along with the more computationally intense techniques architected with Neural Networks [3]. The understanding of activities within a video stream provides a deep insight into what is transpiring, allowing the modelling of the video context through time.

Anomaly Detection builds upon activity analysis, giving a method for identifying unusual data points within the context of the video stream. Work in this field focuses on building a model to represent the current state of the data, and then compares new data points to the model and calculate how far the point deviates from the existing data set. Multiple models are able to provide this, frequently built around clustering techniques [11]. With the wide adoption of Neural Networks, many methods have emerged built around this core architecture that can provide high accuracy detections, at the cost of requiring high performance hardware [12].

Existing Technologies that aim to provide a basis for computer vision applications are often only designed for a single use case or are closed for development and therefore cannot be built upon. Table 1, shows an overview of recent video analysis frameworks and their limitations.

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| Product | Overview | Functionality | Limitations |
| Nest [13] | Alerts users in real-time, via an app, to event and motion detection events seen on camera. | Provides event and anomaly detection and real-time alerts when these occur. | Requires specialized hardware, is not extendable for development. |
| A Video Analysis Framework for Surveillance System [14] | Gives a novel framework approach to online video analysis using .NET 2.0. | Provides object detection, event detection with extensibility to insert new functionality within the application. | Does not make use of distributed computing so will be unable to scale to all user requirements. Further to this, the product is developer in .NET, requiring a Microsoft workstation to run. |
| DiVA [15] | Gives a distributed video processing framework that uses a database as a message source allowing components to communicate agnostic of technologies adopted. | Provides object detection with the goal of detecting object abandonment and removal. Extensibility is provided through the communication of modules/algorithms occurring at a database level. | Uses a singular database to communicate, rather than a distributed messaging system. It also requires fixed hardware meaning it currently does not make use of Cloud Computing. |

Table 1: Current technologies in the market that aim to provide computer vision applications.

# Architecture

We propose a scalable framework, that can support common video processing techniques by default, while being open for extension to enable domain specific modifications (Figure 2). It adopts a streaming architecture to provide real-time analytics on data generated from the raw video input. This enables decisions to be made as video footage is processed, while still supporting traditional batch processing applications.

Figure 2: The proposed video processing framework architecture.

The framework implements Edge Computing [16], in order to reduce latency when processing each video feed, adopted in the pre-processing phase. This is due to pre-processing working on the raw video footage, which can become more computationally expensive as the processing gets further from the data source.

The sub systems of the framework communicate through a distributed messaging layer, decoupling systems and maintaining a flexible and extensible application. Further to this, the decoupled nature of the sub systems means they can be deployed independently, allowing the most appropriate tool to be used for each area of processing, with individual resource allocations for different parts of the system. This enables users to deploy infrastructure based on individual services, giving a fine-grained level of control to avoid over or under allocation of resources to a task.

The framework is intended to be deployed to a Cloud environment, as this gives a flexible way of managing infrastructure depending on specific performance requirements. However, the deployment can be made to a local environment, and considerations can be made as to the most appropriate production infrastructure on a per use case basis [17]. Once deployed, the framework makes use of distributed technologies to manage throughput and latency during processing.

# Implementation

The proposed framework architecture is implemented as shown in Figure 3. The pre-processing stage (Figure 2) is intended to happen as close to the camera as possible, with support for directly connected cameras. The data produced from the pre-processing stages is then sent to Apache Kafka, the distributed messaging broker.



Figure 3: The proposed video processing framework implementation.

Apache Kafka [18] is chosen due to its ability to scale to support millions of messages per second, along with its low latency [19]. This enables projects of any size to adopt the framework and allows the framework room to scale as demand increases (Figure 4, Figure 5).

Figure 4: Apache Kafka throughput in messages per second [20].

Figure 5: Apache Kafka latency in milliseconds [20].

With Apache Kafka at the heart of the video processing framework, the individual video processing components can now communicate.

Enabling the activity analysis phase of the framework is Apache Flink [21], a real-time stream processing framework. Apache Flink is able to process messages with low latency, meaning that identifying activities can be done without falling behind the high frequency of raw video data being produced.

Finally, Apache Spark [22] is used for running the anomaly detection, machine learning models. Apache Spark streams data by processing it in incremental batches which, although give it a high latency, enable it to process with high throughput [23]. This means, when attempting to build a model from numerous records, we are able to build detections at a much faster rate. The base framework uses both Apache Flink and Apache Spark to show its versatility and how different technologies can be adopted to provide the best final product.

The framework can then store data in any database the user wishes, and currently Neo4J [24] is used. This allows quick querying and interfacing the data, enabling easy exploration and understanding of event causality.

Within the implemented framework there are one click deployment scripts that allow each individual sub system to be deployed to an Amazon Web Services (AWS) Cloud environment. This, by default, deploys a minimal number of machines to run each service, but can be adapted to deploy a range of multi-node clusters with little modification.

# Use Case Evaluation

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# Conclusions

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