[[1]](#footnote-1)

American Sign Language Image Classification(April 2019)

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*Abstract*—American Sign Language (ASL) image classification suffers from noise and overtraining due to limited labeled data and people not following instructions. In this report, we examine how different features can be extracted from an image to assist in classification of ASL images.

In particular, the abstract must be self-contained, without abbreviations, footnotes, or references. It should be a microcosm of the full article. The abstract must be between 150–250 words. Be sure that you adhere to these limits; otherwise, you will need to edit your abstract accordingly. The abstract must be written as one paragraph, and should not contain displayed mathematical equations or tabular material. The abstract should include three or four different keywords or phrases, as this will help readers to find it. It is important to avoid over-repetition of such phrases as this can result in a page being rejected by search engines. Ensure that your abstract reads well and is grammatically correct.

*Index Terms*—American Sign Language (ASL), random forest, hue, saturation, and value (HSV), convolutional neural network (CNN), Exchangeable Image File (EXIF)

# INTRODUCTION

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ESPITE noise, random shoulders, and other items besides the hand itself appearing in the images. The preprocessing was able to crop out the shoulders using a box blur and an HSV threshold. Outlined in this letter is the implementation of the preprocessing, feature extractions, and random forest classifier. Furthermore, an explanation on why a convolutional neural network (CNN) classification was decided in lieu of a random forest will be provided alongside their results. The results of the CNN on the dataset ranged from:

# Implementation

The following section is separated into 4 parts: Preprocessing, Feature Extractions, Random Forests, and CNN.

To insert images in *Word,* position the cursor at the insertion point and either use Insert | Picture | From File or copy the image to the Windows clipboard and then Edit | Paste Special | Picture (with “float over text” unchecked).

## Preprocessing

The dataset comprised of 100x100 pixeled images. Each image is expected to have only one ASL letter signed in the center with a white opaque background. However, upon further inspection of the dataset, people did not follow instructions when captured their images. There were several issues in the images that includes but are not limited to: 75x100 pixeled images, items appearing in the image other than the hand itself such as a shoulder, non-white backgrounds, reflective backgrounds, noisy backgrounds (i.e. brick walls, pillow case), dark shadows in the images, hand not centered, and some of them were rotated by 90 degrees when they were opened.

All the images in the dataset were resized to 100x100 pixels and the orientation of the images were fixed by examining their Exchangeable Image File (EXIF) data.

Another issue was how to account for different skin tones in the images. Red, green, and blue (RGB) images would have not been viable anymore because the training may not account for enough variation of skin tones. Thus, gray scaling the images was the next step to try to mitigate this issue. However, with the darker images, the gray scaling only made the hand more unrecognizable since we applied a threshold mask to the image in order to extract the hand only. Inspecting the properties of the image revealed that on the hue, saturation, and value (HSV) spectrum, the hand always had a significantly higher saturation than the background even on a background where the color closely matched the hand’s skin tone.

At first, a blob detection was used to try and crop out the hand from the background, however, there was too much noise that was picked up by the detector that the blob cropped in pixels that were not the hand, sometimes even the shoulder which rendered the blob detection useless.

A picture containing clothing

Description automatically generatedA close up of a hand

Description automatically generated

A picture containing monitor, screen, television, object

Description automatically generatedA picture containing monitor, television, screen, object

Description automatically generatedFig. 1. Each row of images is a different step in the preprocess starting with the second row. From top to bottom:

The original RGB images.

Apply a box blur of 2.

Get saturation of images.

Threshold saturated images.

Crop images.

Through some research and reading what previous people have tried on the internet, the following steps outlined in Fig. 1 were made for preprocessing the dataset. In order to crop out the shoulder from images, a box blur was first applied to the original RGB image to get rid of as much noise on the image as possible. Get only the saturation of the image. Take a 10x10 pixel window in the middle of the 100x100 pixeled image. Under the assumption that the hand is in the center on the image, the 10x10 window will be comprised of mostly the hand. By finding the mean of the window and using that as the threshold value, a rough outline of the hand can be found. However, this does not work for all the images, as seen in the 4th and 5th images. There is almost no discernable hand shape in the resulting Boolean image. From the 10x10 pixel window, slowly increase the size of the window until the number of pixels on the edges of the window meet a ratio of false and true pixels, 2.5, to signify that the three other edges of the image are the wall and the fourth edge will have the arm in it so it would have to be true values there.

The resulting images are cropped with only the hand in the center and then resized to a 100x100 pixels ready to be trained or tested on. This worked very well in most cases, as shown in Fig. 1. The shoulders are cropped out and the hand makes up most of the image now. This preprocessing step depends on the hand being centered in the image to work correctly, otherwise; the cropping method will give poor results.

## Feature Extractions

An edge histogram was used as a feature. This was a recommendation from the instructor. Using a Gaussian blur to reduce more of the noise in the images. Sobel edge detection was performed in the x and y dimensions to calculate the type (horizontal, diagonal, and vertical) and location of the edges. The resulting image is partitioned into 9 equal sections where the x and y edges are averaged and then placed into an 2x9 array.

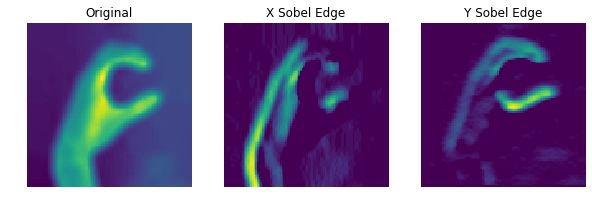


Fig. 2. The three images above illustrate how the edge histogram feature extraction worked. From left to right, that is the original image after preprocessing with an added Gaussian blur to reduce more noise. The following two images are the Sobel edge detection on the x and y dimensions respectively.

## Random Forests

A random forest was decided during the initial development because the team had more experience with it. From the preliminary testing, it was decided that a random forest would be a backup plan if the CNN did not give higher accuracy results.

## Convolutional Neural Network

Use one space after periods and colons. Hyphenate complex modifiers: “zero-field-cooled magnetization.” Avoid dangling participles, such as, “Using (1), the potential was calculated.” [It is not clear who or what used (1).] Write instead, “The potential was calculated by using (1),” or “Using (1), we calculated the potential.”

# Experiments

Beginning with a CNN structure as dictated by a similar problem from a similar project someone has done [1]. This original net does not have weights provided but reached 85.5% accuracy on testing data from the Sign Language MNIST dataset. There are several key differences between this dataset and our dataset, namely number of datapoints, size of the images, and the MNIST dataset is grayscale only. The MNIST dataset has about five times more data, that is four times smaller than our current dataset, additionally, our current dataset has three times the data channels. Iterating through several architecture changes, we found the best results in a slightly deeper net, with larger convolutions at every layer. The goal with these modifications was to better take into account the increased information per image and ignore the increased background noise.

The hyperparameters of learning rate and batch size were also considered with a wide variety tested to find the optimal midpoint between speed and functionality. Learning rates from 0.01 to 0.00001 were tested and 0.0001 was found to be the highest functional value. Batch size was tested between 500 and 64. Smaller batch sizes seem consistently better but going any further would cause the network to train at an unacceptably slow rate. Tests were stopped at 64, which is what is currently used.

The final consideration was for data normalization. Several standard methods were employed, including per pixel mean normalization, min-max normalization, and L2 normalization. All standard methods tested had a strong negative effect on the learning ability of the network and were thus excluded from the final product.

## Equations

Number equations consecutively with equation numbers in parentheses flush with the right margin, as in (1). First use the equation editor to create the equation. Then select the “Equation” markup style. Press the tab key and write the equation number in parentheses. To make your equations more compact, you may use the solidus ( / ), the exp function, or appropriate exponents. Use parentheses to avoid ambiguities in denominators. Punctuate equations when they are part of a sentence, as in

# Units

Use either SI (MKS) or CGS as primary units. (SI units are strongly encouraged.) English units may be used as secondary units (in parentheses). This applies to papers in data storage**.** For example, write “15 Gb/cm2 (100 Gb/in2).” An exception is when English units are used as identifiers in trade, such as “3½-in disk drive.” Avoid combining SI and CGS units, such as current in amperes and magnetic field in oersteds. This often leads to confusion because equations do not balance dimensionally. If you must use mixed units, clearly state the units for each quantity in an equation.

The SI unit for magnetic field strength *H* is A/m. However, if you wish to use units of T, either refer to magnetic flux density *B* or magnetic field strength symbolized as µ0*H*. Use the center dot to separate compound units, e.g., “A·m2.”

# Some Common Mistakes

The word “data” is plural, not singular. The subscript for the permeability of vacuum µ0 is zero, not a lowercase letter “o.” The term for residual magnetization is “remanence”; the adjective is “remanent”; do not write “remnance” or “remnant.” Use the word “micrometer” instead of “micron.” A graph within a graph is an “inset,” not an “insert.” The word “alternatively” is preferred to the word “alternately” (unless you really mean something that alternates). Use the word “whereas” instead of “while” (unless you are referring to simultaneous events). Do not use the word “essentially” to mean “approximately” or “effectively.” Do not use the word “issue” as a euphemism for “problem.” When compositions are not specified, separate chemical symbols by en-dashes; for example, “NiMn” indicates the intermetallic compound Ni0.5Mn0.5 whereas “Ni–Mn” indicates an alloy of some composition NixMn1-x.

Be aware of the different meanings of the homophones “affect” (usually a verb) and “effect” (usually a noun), “complement” and “compliment,” “discreet” and “discrete,” “principal” (e.g., “principal investigator”) and “principle” (e.g., “principle of measurement”). Do not confuse “imply” and “infer.”

Prefixes such as “non,” “sub,” “micro,” “multi,” and “ultra” are not independent words; they should be joined to the words they modify, usually without a hyphen. There is no period after the “et” in the Latin abbreviation “*et al.*” (it is also italicized). The abbreviation “i.e.,” means “that is,” and the abbreviation “e.g.,” means “for example” (these abbreviations are not italicized).

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Fig. 1. Magnetization as a function of applied field. Note that “Fig.” is abbreviated. There is a period after the figure number, followed by two spaces. It is good practice to explain the significance of the figure in the caption.

TABLE I

Units for Magnetic Properties

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Symbol | Quantity | Conversion from Gaussian and  CGS EMU to SI a |
| Φ | magnetic flux | 1 Mx → 10−8 Wb = 10−8 V·s |
| *B* | magnetic flux density,  magnetic induction | 1 G → 10−4 T = 10−4 Wb/m2 |
| *H* | magnetic field strength | 1 Oe → 103/(4π) A/m |
| *m* | magnetic moment | 1 erg/G = 1 emu  → 10−3 A·m2 = 10−3 J/T |
| *M* | magnetization | 1 erg/(G·cm3) = 1 emu/cm3  → 103 A/m |
| 4π*M* | magnetization | 1 G → 103/(4π) A/m |
| σ | specific magnetization | 1 erg/(G·g) = 1 emu/g → 1 A·m2/kg |
| *j* | magnetic dipole  moment | 1 erg/G = 1 emu  → 4π × 10−10 Wb·m |
| *J* | magnetic polarization | 1 erg/(G·cm3) = 1 emu/cm3  → 4π × 10−4 T |
| χ*,* κ | susceptibility | 1 → 4π |
| χρ | mass susceptibility | 1 cm3/g → 4π × 10−3 m3/kg |
| μ | permeability | 1 → 4π × 10−7 H/m  = 4π × 10−7 Wb/(A·m) |
| μr | relative permeability | μ → μr |
| *w, W* | energy density | 1 erg/cm3 → 10−1 J/m3 |
| *N, D* | demagnetizing factor | 1 → 1/(4π) |

Vertical lines are optional in tables. Statements that serve as captions for the entire table do not need footnote letters.

aGaussian units are the same as cg emu for magnetostatics; Mx = maxwell, G = gauss, Oe = oersted; Wb = weber, V = volt, s = second, T = tesla, m = meter, A = ampere, J = joule, kg = kilogram, H = henry.

# Guidelines for Graphics Preparation and Submission

## Types of Graphics

The following list outlines the different types of graphics published in IEEE journals. They are categorized based on their construction, and use of color / shades of gray:

### *Color/Grayscale figures*

### Figures that are meant to appear in color, or shades of black/gray. Such figures may include photographs, illustrations, multicolor graphs, and flowcharts.

### *Line Art figures*

### Figures that are composed of only black lines and shapes. These figures should have no shades or half-tones of gray, only black and white.

### *Author photos*

### Head and shoulders shots of authors that appear at the end of our papers.

### *Tables* Data charts which are typically black and white, but sometimes include color.

## Multipart figures

Figures compiled of more than one sub-figure presented side-by-side, or stacked. If a multipart figure is made up of multiple figure types (one part is lineart, and another is grayscale or color) the figure should meet the stricter guidelines.

## File Formats For Graphics

Format and save your graphics using a suitable graphics processing program that will allow you to create the images as PostScript (PS), Encapsulated PostScript (.EPS), Tagged Image File Format (.TIFF), Portable Document Format (.PDF), or Portable Network Graphics (.PNG) sizes them, and adjusts the resolution settings. If you created your source files in one of the following programs you will be able to submit the graphics without converting to a PS, EPS, TIFF, PDF, or PNG file: Microsoft Word, Microsoft PowerPoint, or Microsoft Excel. Though it is not required, it is strongly recommended that these files be saved in PDF format rather than DOC, XLS, or PPT. Doing so will protect your figures from common font and arrow stroke issues that occur when working on the files across multiple platforms. When submitting your final paper, your graphics should all be submitted individually in one of these formats along with the manuscript.

## Sizing of Graphics

Most charts, graphs, and tables are one column wide (3.5 inches / 88 millimeters / 21 picas) or page wide (7.16 inches / 181 millimeters / 43 picas). The maximum depth a graphic can be is 8.5 inches (216 millimeters / 54 picas). When choosing the depth of a graphic, please allow space for a caption. Figures can be sized between column and page widths if the author chooses, however it is recommended that figures are not sized less than column width unless when necessary.

There is currently one publication with column measurements that do not coincide with those listed above. Proceedings of the IEEE has a column measurement of 3.25 inches (82.5 millimeters / 19.5 picas).

The final printed size of author photographs is exactly   
1 inch wide by 1.25 inches tall (25.4 millimeters x 31.75 millimeters / 6 picas x 7.5 picas). Author photos printed in editorials measure 1.59 inches wide by 2 inches tall (40 millimeters x 50 millimeters / 9.5 picas x 12 picas).

## Resolution

The proper resolution of your figures will depend on the type of figure it is as defined in the “Types of Figures” section. Author photographs, color, and grayscale figures should be at least 300dpi. Line art, including tables should be a minimum of 600dpi.

## Vector Art

In order to preserve the figures’ integrity across multiple computer platforms, we accept files in the following formats: .EPS/.PDF/.PS. All fonts must be embedded or text converted to outlines in order to achieve the best-quality results.

## Color Space

The term color space refers to the entire sum of colors that can be represented within the said medium. For our purposes, the three main color spaces are Grayscale, RGB (red/green/blue) and CMYK (cyan/magenta/yellow/black). RGB is generally used with on-screen graphics, whereas CMYK is used for printing purposes.

All color figures should be generated in RGB or CMYK color space. Grayscale images should be submitted in Grayscale color space. Line art may be provided in grayscale OR bitmap colorspace. Note that “bitmap colorspace” and “bitmap file format” are not the same thing. When bitmap color space is selected, .TIF/.TIFF/.PNG are the recommended file formats.

## Using Labels Within Figures

### Figure Axis labels

Figure axis labels are often a source of confusion. Use words rather than symbols. As an example, write the quantity “Magnetization,” or “Magnetization *M*,” not just “*M*.” Put units in parentheses. Do not label axes only with units. As in Fig. 1, for example, write “Magnetization (A/m)” or “Magnetization (Am−1),” not just “A/m.” Do not label axes with a ratio of quantities and units. For example, write “Temperature (K),” not “Temperature/K.”

Multipliers can be especially confusing. Write “Magnetization (kA/m)” or “Magnetization (103 A/m).” Do not write “Magnetization (A/m) × 1000” because the reader would not know whether the top axis label in Fig. 1 meant 16000 A/m or 0.016 A/m. Figure labels should be legible, approximately 8 to 10 point type.

### Subfigure Labels in Multipart Figures and Tables

Multipart figures should be combined and labeled before final submission. Labels should appear centered below each subfigure in 8 point Times New Roman font in the format of (a) (b) (c).

## File Naming

Figures (line artwork or photographs) should be named starting with the first 5 letters of the author’s last name. The next characters in the filename should be the number that represents the sequential location of this image in your article. For example, in author “Anderson’s” paper, the first three figures would be named ander1.tif, ander2.tif, and ander3.ps.

Tables should contain only the body of the table (not the caption) and should be named similarly to figures, except that ‘.t’ is inserted in-between the author’s name and the table number. For example, author Anderson’s first three tables would be named ander.t1.tif, ander.t2.ps, ander.t3.eps.

Author photographs should be named using the first five characters of the pictured author’s last name. For example, four author photographs for a paper may be named: oppen.ps, moshc.tif, chen.eps, and duran.pdf.

If two authors or more have the same last name, their first initial(s) can be substituted for the fifth, fourth, third... letters of their surname until the degree where there is differentiation. For example, two authors Michael and Monica Oppenheimer’s photos would be named oppmi.tif, and oppmo.eps.

## Referencing a Figure or Table Within Your Paper

When referencing your figures and tables within your paper, use the abbreviation “Fig.” even at the beginning of a sentence. Do not abbreviate “Table.” Tables should be numbered with Roman Numerals.

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The IEEE Graphics Analyzer enables authors to pre-screen their graphics for compliance with IEEE Transactions and Journals standards before submission. The online tool, located at <http://graphicsqc.ieee.org/>, allows authors to upload their graphics in order to check that each file is the correct file format, resolution, size and colorspace; that no fonts are missing or corrupt; that figures are not compiled in layers or have transparency, and that they are named according to the IEEE Transactions and Journals naming convention. At the end of this automated process, authors are provided with a detailed report on each graphic within the web applet, as well as by email.

For more information on using the Graphics Analyzer   
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Because IEEE will do the final formatting of your paper,   
you do not need to position figures and tables at the top and bottom of each column. In fact, all figures, figure captions, and tables can be placed at the end of your paper. In addition to, or even in lieu of submitting figures within your final manuscript, figures should be submitted individually, separate from the manuscript in one of the file formats listed above in section VI-J. Place figure captions below the figures; place table titles above the tables. Please do not include captions as part of the figures, or put them in “text boxes” linked to the figures. Also, do not place borders around the outside of your figures.

# Conclusion

## A conclusion section is not required. Although a conclusion may review the main points of the paper, do not replicate the abstract as the conclusion. A conclusion might elaborate on the importance of the work or suggest applications and extensions.

Acknowledgment

The preferred spelling of the word “acknowledgment” in American English is without an “e” after the “g.” Use the singular heading even if you have many acknowledgments. Avoid expressions such as “One of us (S.B.A.) would like to thank ... .” Instead, write “F. A. Author thanks ... .” In most cases, sponsor and financial support acknowledgments are placed in the unnumbered footnote on the first page, not here.

References

1. Jain, R. (2019). *Deep learning using sign langugage | Kaggle*. [online] kaggle.com. Available at: https://www.kaggle.com/ranjeetjain3/deep-learning-using-sign-langugage [Accessed 20 Apr. 2019].

*Basic format for journals (when available online):*

J. K. Author, “Name of paper,” *Abbrev. Title of Periodical*, vol. *x*, no. *x*, pp. *xxx-xxx*, Abbrev. Month, year. Accessed on: Month, Day, year, DOI: 10.1109.*XXX*.123456, [Online].

*Examples:*

1. J. S. Turner, “New directions in communications,” *IEEE J. Sel. Areas Commun*., vol. 13, no. 1, pp. 11-23, Jan. 1995.
2. W. P. Risk, G. S. Kino, and H. J. Shaw, “Fiber-optic frequency shifter using a surface acoustic wave incident at an oblique angle,” *Opt. Lett.*, vol. 11, no. 2, pp. 115–117, Feb. 1986.
3. P. Kopyt *et al., “*Electric properties of graphene-based conductive layers from DC up to terahertz range,” *IEEE THz Sci. Technol.,* to be published. DOI: 10.1109/TTHZ.2016.2544142.

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1. R. J. Hijmans and J. van Etten, “Raster: Geographic analysis and modeling with raster data,” R Package Version 2.0-12, Jan. 12, 2012. [Online]. Available: http://CRAN.R-project.org/package=raster
2. Teralyzer. Lytera UG, Kirchhain, Germany [Online]. Available: http://www.lytera.de/Terahertz\_THz\_Spectroscopy.php?id=home, Accessed on: Jun. 5, 2014

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Legislative body. Number of Congress, Session. (year, month day). *Number of bill or resolution*, *Title*. [Type of medium]. Available: site/path/file

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*Example:*

1. U.S. House. 102nd Congress, 1st Session. (1991, Jan. 11). *H. Con. Res. 1, Sense of the Congress on Approval of Military Action*. [Online]. Available: LEXIS Library: GENFED File: BILLS

*Basic format for the most common types of unpublished references:*

a) J. K. Author, private communication, Abbrev. Month, year.

b) J. K. Author, “Title of paper,” unpublished.

c) J. K. Author, “Title of paper,” to be published.

*Examples:*

1. A. Harrison, private communication, May 1995.
2. B. Smith, “An approach to graphs of linear forms,” unpublished.
3. A. Brahms, “Representation error for real numbers in binary computer arithmetic,” IEEE Computer Group Repository, Paper R-67-85.

*Article number in reference examples:*

1. R. Fardel, M. Nagel, F. Nuesch, T. Lippert, and A. Wokaun, “Fabrication of organic light emitting diode pixels by laser-assisted forward transfer,” *Appl. Phys. Lett.*, vol. 91, no. 6, Aug. 2007, Art. no. 061103.
2. J. Zhang and N. Tansu, “Optical gain and laser characteristics of InGaN quantum wells on ternary InGaN substrates,” *IEEE Photon. J.*, vol. 5, no. 2, Apr. 2013, Art. no. 2600111

*Example when using et al.:*

1. S. Azodolmolky *et al.*, Experimental demonstration of an impairment aware network planning and operation tool for transparent/translucent optical networks,” *J. Lightw. Technol.*, vol. 29, no. 4, pp. 439–448, Sep. 2011.

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The second paragraph uses the pronoun of the person (he or she) and not the author’s last name. It lists military and work experience, including summer and fellowship jobs. Job titles are capitalized. The current job must have a location; previous positions may be listed without one. Information concerning previous publications may be included. Try not to list more than three books or published articles. The format for listing publishers of a book within the biography is: title of book (publisher name, year) similar to a reference. Current and previous research interests end the paragraph.

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**Second B. Author** was born in Greenwich Village, New York, NY, USA in 1977. He received the B.S. and M.S. degrees in aerospace engineering from the University of Virginia, Charlottesville, in 2001 and the Ph.D. degree in mechanical engineering from Drexel University, Philadelphia, PA, in 2008.

From 2001 to 2004, he was a Research Assistant with the Princeton Plasma Physics Laboratory. Since 2009, he has been an Assistant Professor with the Mechanical Engineering Department, Texas A&M University, College Station. He is the author of three books, more than 150 articles, and more than 70 inventions. His research interests include high-pressure and high-density nonthermal plasma discharge processes and applications, microscale plasma discharges, discharges in liquids, spectroscopic diagnostics, plasma propulsion, and innovation plasma applications. He is an Associate Editor of the journal *Earth*, *Moon*, *Planets*, and holds two patents.

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From 2008 to 2009, he was a Research Assistant with the Institute of Physics, Academia Sinica, Tapei, Taiwan. His research interest includes the development of surface processing and biological/medical treatment techniques using nonthermal atmospheric pressure plasmas, fundamental study of plasma sources, and fabrication of micro- or nanostructured surfaces.

Mr. Author’s awards and honors include the Frew Fellowship (Australian Academy of Science), the I. I. Rabi Prize (APS), the European Frequency and Time Forum Award, the Carl Zeiss Research Award, the William F. Meggers Award and the Adolph Lomb Medal (OSA).

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