Report Lab1

1. Theoretical understanding
   1. Convolution

Mathematical operation that consists of a weighted sum of the intensities of pixels in the surrounding area of the original image . The weights are stored in a filter kernel , which has entries , where and being the height and the width (on pixels) of the image. This is convolving with the filter , where two-dimensional convolution is defined as where is the new value for the pixel at our output image.

It is important to notice that is flipped in both directions, this is done to meet the commutative mathematical property of convolution, ensuring that the order of functions does not affect the outcome. This is needed due to the kernel being moved over the image, aligning with a specific set of image pixels at each position. This led us to the need of ensuring that the positions of the elements in the kernel match the corresponding positions in the image; the flipping compensates for the shifting effect and aligns the kernel’s elements properly with the image’s pixel values. It will also allow us to apply efficient computational methods, such as Fast Fourier Transform.

When applying the kernel without further modification we will run into problems at the borders of the images since we would be trying to access points that are outside the image. To deal with this we could apply different types of padding, including rows above and below and columns at both sides of our images with standard values allowing us to increase to fully process the image. Padding could be achieved using one of the most common padding techniques:

* Zero padding: including or assuming the values of is 0 outside the defined image region.
* Constant padding: including or assuming the values of is outside the defined image region, where is a constant.
* Reflective padding: mirroring the pixels along the borders of the image, replicating them in a mirrored fashion.

Finally, for achieving a clean computational implementation of convolution, we usually consider odd-sized kernels to have a center where we can centralize our operation. However, it is possible to apply convolution with even-sized or not-squared kernels.

* 1. Linear Filtering

Linear filtering is the result of applying different kernels to an image using convolution operation. Doing linear filtering we want to remove unwanted sources of variation and keep the information relevant for whatever task we need to solve, therefore, the kernel used will entirely depend on the expected result we want to obtain from the process. Some of the most used kernels in linear filtering are:

* Blur
  + Average box: Low-pass filter that smooths the image by making each output pixel the average of the surrounding ones, removing details, noise and edges from images.
  + Gaussian: By convolving an image with a 2D Gaussian defined as each pixel in the resulting image is a weighted sum of the surrounding pixels, where the weights depend on the Gaussian profile: nearer pixels contribute relatively more to the final output. This process blurs the image, where the degree of blurring is dependent on the standard deviation of the Gaussian filter.
* Edges
  + Laplacian: discrete two-dimensional approximation to the Laplacian operator given by . This will result in a response of high magnitude where the image is changing, regardless of the direction of that change: the response is zero in regions that are flat and significant where edges occur in the image. It is hence invariant to constant additive changes in luminance and useful for identifying interesting regions of the image.
  + Prewitt: Searching for places in the image where the intensity changes abruptly we try taking the first derivative of the image along the rows or the columns. This will give us a flat result when there are no changes across a direction in our image, negative when the image values are increasing and positive if they are decreasing. The kernels for each direction (horizontal and vertical) will have the shape and
  + Sobel: The same intuition than Prewitt filters case, Sobel filters use the first derivative identifying abrupt changes on the image intensities but increasing more (when compared to Prewitt’s) the final intensity of the edge, leading to shapes and horizontal and vertical respectively.

It is important to remark that any of these kernels could be increased in size following specific relations between the values contained on it; however, it will not be always a useful approach in some of those, especially the edges detection ones.

* 1. Template Matching

Different from convolution, cross-correlation do not flip the kernel, apart from that, the process is the same. Then, we use Normalized Cross-Correlation (NCC) to find in an image the given template by searching for the maximum values (representing the best matches of the template across the image) given by the NCC formula. The NCC formula recalls on the existing difference between and the current region of the , this is , since the squared difference give us two constant terms, we don’t care about them only considering the variable one resulting as . Since we are searching for a maximum value, to obtain a result that will not be affected by the difference of intensities at different regions on the image when applying sliding window process, we will normalize (as the name of the formula says) constraining the obtained values to vary between -1 and 1, this normalization results in the NCC formula . Our algorithm should calculate for every point in storing and coordinates from the maximum values finding the best matches of our template on .

* 1. Fourier Transform

The Fourier transform is a powerful tool in image processing and many other fields. It allows for the decomposition of an image into its frequency components, which can be useful for various tasks, including noise reduction and image quality improvement. To understand the theoretical concepts of Fourier transformations applied to image processing, we will explore the basic concepts.

The Fourier transform is a mathematical technique that allows one to move from one domain representation of information to another. In the context of image processing, two main domains are involved: the spatial domain and the frequency domain.

- Spatial Domain: This is the original domain of the image, where each pixel has a value corresponding to its brightness. The image is represented in two dimensions (2D), with x and y coordinates.

- Frequency Domain: This is the domain after the application of the Fourier transform. Instead of representing the image in terms of brightness intensities, it represents the image in terms of spatial frequencies. This means that the image is decomposed into different frequencies, including low frequencies (representing smooth patterns like homogeneous areas) and high frequencies (representing fine details like edges and textures).

The Fourier transform is useful in image processing for several reasons:

- Detection of Frequency Components: It allows for the detection of the frequency components of the image, which is essential for understanding its structure and content.

- Filtering Undesirable Frequencies: You can filter out undesirable frequencies, such as noise, by removing high frequencies. This improves image quality. This was the focus of our interest in the last part of Lab1.

- Compression Enhancement: In image compression, the Fourier transform is used to reduce the amount of information needed to store or transmit an image by focusing on important frequencies.

The key steps of the code that perform filtering of undesirable frequencies in the frequency domain are as follows:

- Fourier Transform: The Fourier Transform is applied to an altered image using the fft2 function, converting the image from the spatial domain to the frequency domain. This means that we are now analyzing the image in terms of frequencies rather than pixels, which is crucial for understanding and manipulating its spectral characteristics.

-Frequency Reorganization: The fftshift function is used to rearrange the frequency components calculated from the Fourier transform of the image. It translates the frequency components to place the zero frequency component (DC) at the center of the image in the frequency domain. The DC component represents the average values of the image, and placing it at the center makes it easier to analyze positive and negative frequency components with respect to this central point.

-Magnitude and Phase: After applying the Fourier transform, the image is represented in terms of magnitude (module) and phase. The magnitude contains information about the amplitude of different frequencies, while the phase contains information about the position of these frequencies.

-Filtering Aberrant Frequencies: In the code, we filter frequencies whose magnitude is above a certain threshold, which was visually determined by displaying the magnitude graphically. In our case, these aberrant frequencies were intentionally added for the exercise. However, in everyday situations, these aberrant frequencies are often due to noise or unwanted artifacts.

-Reconstruction of the Filtered Image: Once undesirable frequencies are filtered, we reconstruct the image in the spatial domain using the inverse Fourier transform (after also applying the inverse transformation of frequency reorganization). This yields an improved image, free of undesirable frequencies.

To assess the image improvement after filtering, two main metrics are used: PSNR (Peak Signal-to-Noise Ratio) and SSIM (Structural Similarity Index). These metrics help quantify how much better the filtered image is compared to the original image in terms of quality.

- PSNR: PSNR measures the fidelity of the filtered image compared to the original image in terms of noise. A higher PSNR indicates better image quality.

- SSIM: SSIM evaluates the structural similarity between the filtered image and the original image, taking into account not only noise but also the structure and details of the image.

1. Results & Discussion

A collage of images

Description automatically generated

A screenshot of a computer

Description automatically generatedA purple and yellow rectangular shapes with white text

Description automatically generated with medium confidence

Une image contenant violette, Lilas, violet, ciel

Description générée automatiquement