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# 11 Month PhD Plan

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## 1. PROJECT ABSTRACT

This project is about analyzing vulnerable road users (VRU) in the traffic scene using computer vision methods. The number of personal vehicles in Denmark has raised to 2.391.000 from 2015-2016 [26] which correlated with 9 out of 10 Danes owning a bike [28] unfortunately presents a risk for accidents.

Traffic researchers have a desire to prevent these accidents and conflicts by capturing traffic data at e.g. selected intersections. The occurrence of near-accidents or conflicts are a lot higher than actual accidents [9]. A large amount of data is therefore needed in order to capture sufficient conflicts and accidents at a given site to make a statistically acceptable case. This can easily add up to hundreds of hours of traffic data, which is a very time consuming process for the traffic researchers to examine manually.

Computer vision is an obvious tool to automate parts of this very time consuming process. It can be used to detect and classify various objects in the traffic scene, e.g. vehicles, cyclists, or pedestrians. In order to replace a large part of the task, that is currently being done manually by the traffic researchers, a computer vision tool must be developed which ideally is able to detect and classify in all sorts of weather and lighting condition. This is however not a trivial task, thus making the tool fully automatic and able to replace traffic researchers completely is unrealistic within this project. Instead the tool should be considered a supporting tool for the traffic researcher for doing data reduction in a "human-in-the-loop" manner. The tool must therefore be able to detect a variety of parameters

as interesting traffic studies, e.g. conflict studies, is usually a combination of events such as multiple objects crossing paths or red running.

In order to meet the criteria of doing data reduction in varied traffic data captured continuously throughout several weeks, different capturing modalities are used. The most common image acquisition modality is RGB which is a good descriptor of a vehicle, cyclist, or pedestrian, but relies on proper lighting conditions which cannot be controlled outdoors. Therefore, two RGB streams from different angles at given intersection will be used and will be complemented with one thermal stream. The heat image from the thermal stream complements the RGB streams well during the night and furthermore sidesteps some of the privacy concerns that show up in systems like these.

In short, this project will study the usage of computer vision to do data reduction on traffic data with focus on vulnerable road users using RGB and thermal traffic scene data.

## 2. THE SCIENTIFIC CONTENT OF THE PHD PROJECT

### 2.A. BACKGROUND FOR THE PROJECT PROBLEM

The project is about generating an semi-automatic analysis of the vulnerable road users in the traffic scene. The project can be broken down into five stages:

- 1) Large scaled multi-modal and multi-view data collection in traffic intersections.
- 2) Big data annotation using semi-supervised classifier.
- 3) Vulnerable road users(VRU) classification in the traffic scene using deep learning using multi-modal and multi-view data.
- 4) Semi-automatic VRU traffic analysis.
- 5) Using UAVs to generate traffic usage reports in roundabouts and intersections.

The first stage addresses capturing data with multiple cameras and modalities in traffic intersections. In this stage, equipment must be analysed with the scope of creating a robust capturing platform that can be deployed at intersections and capture data using batteries. A battery-powered recording platform has already been developed in cooperation with the Traffic Research Group at Aalborg University, but needs to be developed further such multiple cameras can be included.

The second stage deals with a major research issue of how to annotate large amount of data in a proper manor. By creating a reinforcement learning framework, one can manually annotate a small part of the dataset, and use this to create an object classifier which are applied yet another small part of the dataset. This workflow are iterated until the entire dataset are annotated, hence semi-automatic annotations using reinforcement learning with a feedback loop.

The third stage will include developing a robust vulnerable road users classification (VRU) framework. The classification module will be based on deep learning methods and the framework must be contain a graphical user interface such traffic researchers can use of it.

The fourth stage deals with developing of a semi-automatic VRU traffic analysis framework for traffic researchers. They will use it for data reduction on their large datasets, the framework must be able to adapt to changing environments by determining and adjusting parameters automatically.

The fifth and final stage will be to use a UAV (Unmanned aerial vehicle), i.e. a drone, to capture data at roundabouts or intersections in both the RGB and thermal domain. This data should be used as

input to an automatic analysis tool, which can generate traffic reports based on the data, e.g. queue length on each roundabout leg, traffic density, entrance, and exit in the traffic scene, etc.

## 2.B. INTRODUCTION TO THE STATE-OF-THE-ART FOR THE PHD PROJECT

Detection and classification of traffic scene objects have been a research topic for a long period of time, but remains an active research area [24, 23]. The research area involves the topic of detecting and classifying objects, e.g. vehicles, both as a driving assistance system(DAS) and driving analysis study point of view. Methods from both topics are considered useful when surveying the state-of-the-art.

Detection is usually split into two broad approaches: appearances- and motion-based methods. Where some DAS motion-based applications make use of optical flow [10] to detect moving objects and Kalman filter for tracking them [1].

The appearance-based methods make use of appearance features such as edges[15], Histogram-of-Oriented-Gradients (HOG)[27, 10], Gabor[27], Haar-like[2, 22], or SURF[15]. The features are mostly used with Adaboost classification[2, 22] and Support Vector Machines (SVM)[27, 10] for detecting and classifying vehicles and other objects in the traffic scene. The HOG-SVM combination have in particular been very popular from a broad array of object detections, but other methods such as integral channel features(ICF) and subsequently the aggregated channel features(ACF) have been applied to detecting large variation of traffic scene objects, such as traffic signs[17], traffic signals[11], and pedestrians[6].

The above approaches have however for the past years been challenged and outperformed in most benchmarks by convolutional neural networks (CNN), e.g. PASCAL VOC 2012 [8]. The very prominent CNNs have been applied in a broad array of application, but mostly detection, classification, and semantic segmentation, where they outperform most hand-crafted features. In [3] semantic segmentation is also done using DCNN and fully connected conditional random fields (CRF). The best performing methods on semantics classes: bicycles, bus, car, motor bike, and persons, in the PASCAL VOC 2012 utilizes deep convolutional neural networks (DCNN) and conditional random fields (CRF), which is implemented as a Recurrent Neural Network (RNN), [30]. CRFs have been very popular to combine with DCNNs, but other methods such as markov random fields (MRF)[16] has also seen been applied. The MRFs have in general been outperformed by the publications using CRFs in most of the semantic classes, but the current best performing on cyclists segmentation are using MRF[16] with 61.6 %.

The use of multi-modal deep learning for object recognition is a relatively new research area, where the two most common modalities are RGB camera and hardware acquiring depth, e.g. stereo or lidar, such as in [7, 29] for object recognition. In [18] both RGB, depth, and thermal are used for face recognition, which outperforms their previously published results.

But in general, the use of multi-modalities for traffic scene object classification has seen limited use compared to using solely RGB. In addition, the multi-view RGB settings has seen very limited use when fused together with thermal and compared to UAV data [13].

## 2.C. PROJECT'S OBJECTIVES

To investigate methods using multi-view RGB and thermal data, as well as data capturing from UAV and 360°cameras to classify traffic scene objects, such as cars, trucks, cyclists, and pedestrians. The final goal is to implement the investigated state-of-the-art methods into vulnerable road users classification (VRU) framework, such the latest computer vision state-of-the-art methods are made available

for traffic researchers. The foundation of this work will rely on comprehensive data collection and experiments with different modalities and view angles.

The concrete research questions are:

- How can large amount of data be annotated in a semi-supervised manner?
- How can classification of traffic scene objects be improved using multi-modal and multi-view data to classify?
- How do object classification on UAV data perform compared to single-view and multi-modal and multi-view data?

## 2.D. KEY METHODS

The project will include state-of-the-art methods for traffic scene object classification such as CNNs and CRFs [30]. Multiple CNNs will be used based on multiple modalities, i.e. RGB and thermal, and view angles. The capturing setup will consist of two recordings platforms with 1 RGB and 1 Thermal cameras, and 1 RGB Camera, which will be mounted on existing infrastructure in intersection selected based on high conflict and accidents statistics. The results of using multiple CNN streams will be investigated based on both early feature fusion and late decision fusion [25].

From a traffic researcher point of view, most interesting conflicts and accidents occurs when multiple events are triggered in a specific time order. The above methods will therefore be applied to related traffic scene problems such as traffic light detection where recent work has relied on ACF[12]. Other related areas include cyclists, motor bike detection, and pedestrian detection, where a comparison between above methods will be compared to the HOG-SVM [4] and ACF [5] approaches.

The expected amount of data collected during this PhD project is enormous, which requires the development of an automatic image annotation (AIA) framework, which will be developed during this PhD project based on above the investigated methods e.g. CRFs[14], DCNN[19] and YOLO [20, 21]. The AIA framework must be used for pixel-level annotation across modalities and views, such it can be used directly for training CNNs and CRFs for traffic scene object classification and semantic image segmentation.

Finally for all of the above methods, possible tracking methods, e.g. hidden markov models and Kalman filters, are expected to be used for reducing false positives as well as helping predicting and interpolating in the semi-supervised annotating framework.

## 2.E. POTENTIAL SIGNIFICANCE AND APPLICATION(S)

As mentioned in section 2.b, a lot of work have already been done in using a single RGB stream for vehicle classification. Few have however combined multiple RGB and thermal streams from different viewpoints in an intersection. Furthermore, acquiring traffic data from UAVs and comparing the results with traditional stationary image acquisition methods are an unexplored area.

Finally, a VRU toolbox will be developed throughout this thesis. This application will become open-source and is expected to have high significance as it provides an automatic traffic analysis tool for traffic researchers, which is a very limited application area. Thus, many sub-problems are expected to show up, giving plenty of opportunity for future research.

## 2.F. WORK AND TIME PLANS

The time plan for this PhD Project is divided into 6-months sections with associated milestones. Each period is described with a small introduction and bullets presenting the specific milestones.

**MAY 2016 - OCTOBER 2016** Data collection, preliminary analysis for VRU classification, and finally prototype of traffic flow tool for roundabouts based on 360° recordings.

- Data collection for VRU classification.
- Perform interview with traffic researchers to determine possible future parameters.
- Preliminary analysis and experiment in cooperation with ATKI regarding traffic usage reports in roundabouts.
- Develop traffic flow analysis tool for ATKI regarding traffic usage reports in roundabouts.

**NOVEMBER 2016 - APRIL 2017** Comparison of UAV data and stationary data as well as traffic light detection.

- Preliminary UAV data collection.
- Perform occlusion analysis of data collected from UAV and stationary.
- Automate heuristic parameters for VRU traffic analysis tool.
- Deep learning detector for traffic light detection.

**MAY 2017 - OCTOBER 2017** Automatic image annotation and automation of Road User Behaviour Analysis tool.

- Creation of annotated multi-viewed traffic intersection dataset.
- Automate current heuristic parameters in Road User Behaviour Analysis tool.
- Deep learning for traffic scene object classification.

**NOVEMBER 2017 - APRIL 2018** Detecting and classifying using one camera.

- Creation of annotated multi-viewed traffic intersection dataset.
- Perform annotation variance analysis.
- Develop traffic scene object classifier for big data.

**MAY 2018 - OCTOBER 2018** Detecting and classifying using multiple modalities and views.

- Perform analysis and develop of cyclists segmentation.
- Develop traffic scene object classifier using multi-modal and multi-view streams.

**NOVEMBER 2018 - MARCH 2019** Detect and high level queue analysis based on UAV recordings.

- Final UAV data collection.
- Develop automatic traffic usage report tool for UAV recordings.
- PhD Thesis writing.

APRIL 2019 PhD Thesis done.

For each of the milestones, 1-2 papers will be written and submitted to computer vision conferences or journals.

## 2.G. THESIS OUTLINE

This thesis will consist of articles written during the PhD period.

Possible outline:

- Introduction.
- Traffic Light Detection
- Capturing large-scale RGB and thermal traffic data.
- Understanding Vulnerable Road Users: A Computer Vision Study.
- Annotating big data using semi-supervised classifier.
- Segmentation and classification of traffic scene objects using multi-view and multi-modal data.
- Using UAV data to automatically determine traffic flow.

## 2.H. TENTATIVE TITLES

Table 2.1: Overview of tentative titles with belonging abstract, responsible author(s) and title type. Titles marked with green are titles that are already published.

Title	Type	Author(s)	Abstract
Night-time drive analysis using stereo vision for data reduction in naturalistic driving studies	Paper	<b>Morten B. Jensen,</b> Mark P. Philipsen	In order to understand dangerous situations in the driving environment, naturalistic driving studies (NDS) are conducted by collecting and analyzing data from sensors looking inside and outside of the car. Manually processing the overwhelming amounts of data that are generated in such studies is very comprehensive. We propose a method for automatic data reduction for NDS based on stereo vision vehicle detection and tracking during day- and nighttime.
Vision for Looking at Traffic Lights: Issues, Survey, and Perspectives	Journal	<b>Morten B. Jensen,</b> Mark P. Philipsen	This paper presents the challenges that researchers must overcome in traffic light recognition (TLR) research and provides an overview of ongoing work. The aim is to elucidate which areas have been thoroughly researched and which have not, thereby uncovering opportunities for further improvement. An overview of the applied methods and noteworthy contributions from a wide range of recent papers is presented, along with the corresponding evaluation results. The evaluation of TLR systems is studied and discussed in depth, and we propose a common evaluation procedure, which will strengthen evaluation and ease comparison.
<i>Comprehensive Parameter Sweep for Learning-Based Detector on Traffic Lights</i>	Paper	<b>Morten B. Jensen</b>	We have used the ACF detector in most of previous published work, but without tweaking all parameters individually. We wish to generate a heatmap with the optimum ACF parameters on the nighttime data from LISA Traffic Light Dataset.
<i>Regional Convolutional Neural Networks and Conditional Random Fields on Traffic Light and signs during day- and nighttime</i>	Paper	<b>Morten B. Jensen</b>	We have used the ACF detector in most of previous published work. In this paper we introduce the use of CNN and CRF for detection on both the LISA Traffic Light and Sign dataset.
<i>A Comparative Detection Study: Regional Convolutional Neural Networks and Aggregated Channel Features on Traffic Light and signs during day- and nighttime</i>	Journal	<b>Morten B. Jensen</b>	We have used the ACF detector in most of previous published work. This is a more extended study compared to <i>Aggregated Channel Feature Parameter Depletion on Traffic Lights during Nighttime</i> . We introduce and compare ACF with CNN on both the LISA Traffic Light and Sign dataset.
<i>Using Deep Learning in Applications: Traffic Scene Object Classification in the Road User Behavior Analysis Tool</i>	Paper	<b>Morten B. Jensen</b>	Trafik og veje application paper

<i>Multimodal Deep learning for Robust RGB-T Object Recognition in the Traffic Scene</i>	Paper	<b>Morten B. Jensen</b>	Technical paper on using deep learning for classification on traffic scene objects using both RGB and thermal data. The classification is done by two separate CNN streams, one for each modality, which are combined in a late fusion step. A comparison of the individual CNN streams and the late fused classifier is done.
<i>A Large-scale Multi-view RGB-T Traffic Scene Object Dataset</i>	Paper	<b>Morten B. Jensen</b>	Introduce a new dataset in a paper. Could be combined with a survey and published as a journal.
<i>Ongoing Work on Multimodal Deep Learning for Object Recognition in the Traffic Scene</i>	Paper	<b>Morten B. Jensen</b>	A small survey paper gathering important work done in using 2 or more modalities in deep learning for object recognition in the traffic scene.
<i>Object Recognition in the Traffic Scene using Multi-view RGB and Thermal data</i>	Journal	<b>Morten B. Jensen</b>	Using 1 thermal CNN stream and 2 RGB CNN streams from different positions in a traffic scene to do object recognition.
<i>Multimodal Deep Learning in Applications: Object recognition using Multi-view RGB and Thermal data</i>	Paper	<b>Morten B. Jensen</b>	Trafik og veje application paper
<i>UAV Versus Stationary Traffic Recordings: A Comparative Study</i>	Paper	<b>Morten B. Jensen</b>	By collecting data captured from different viewpoints in an traffic intersection at the same time, one can make a comparative study of the detection and tracking performance. An interesting analysis is done based on adjusting the degrees of occlusion.
<i>UAV Versus Stationary Traffic Recordings: A Comparative Study</i>	Paper	<b>Morten B. Jensen</b>	Trafik og veje application paper

RELEVANT CONFERENCES: ICCV, CVPR, ECCV, AVSS, IV, ITSC, WACV, MVA, Trafik og veje.

RELEVANT JOURNALS: ITS, ISPRS, PAMI, CVIU, MVA.

### 3. SUPERVISOR/STUDENT CO-OPERATION AGREEMENTS

The main supervisor is Professor Thomas B. Moeslund.

The supervisor and the student will meet at the office when necessary during the daily work. At least once a month, a scheduled meeting will be held where the status of the project will be discussed. If the supervisor is out of office for more than a few days, the student will be informed, and likewise if the student is out of office.

The supervisor will suggest appropriate journals and conferences for publications of results, and will provide supervision and comments on papers.

## 4. PLAN FOR PHD COURSES

Table 4.1: Overview of PhD Courses

Course	Place	ECTS	Type	Status
Introduction to the PhD Study	AAU	1	General	Completed
Writing and Reviewing Scientific Papers	AAU	3.75	General	Planned
Management of Research and Development	AAU	2.5	General	Planned
Scientific Computing Using Python - 1. Python + Scientific Computing	AAU	2.5	General	Completed
Scientific Computing Using Python - 2. High Performance Computing in Python	AAU	2	General	Completed
Machine Learning	AAU	3	Project	Planned
Bayesian Statistics Simulation and Software	AAU	4	Project	Completed
Deep Learning Summer School	Montreal	5	Project	Planned
Reinforcement Learning Summer School	Montreal	3	Project	Planned
Internal VAP study group	AAU	3	Project	In progress
Workshops and conferences		3	Project	In progress
<b>Total:</b>		32.75		

Further information on the Deep Learning Summer School and Reinforcement Learning Summer School can be found at:

<https://mila.umontreal.ca/en/cours/deep-learning-summer-school-2017/>

The internal VAP study group is a biweekly study group in the Visual Analysis of People Laboratory coordinated by Professor Thomas B. Moeslund, where members of the lab presents state-of-the-art papers, their current work, and other relevant topics.

## 5. PLAN FOR FULFILMENT OF KNOWLEDGE DISSEMINATION

Project supervision, first as a co-supervisor, later as main supervisor. Supervision will take place in the early Medialogy semesters, Information Processing Systems (6th semester) or Vision, Graphics and Interactive Systems (Master's), and finally 4th semester Robotics. Furthermore TA on relevant courses (computer vision, image processing, programming), and finally presentations at various conferences. The results of this project is also to be reported in lay-man terms to the involved traffic analysts as well in reports to the European Commission.

## 6. AGREEMENTS ON IMMATERIAL RIGHTS TO PATENTS

IPR is handled via the standard university rules.

## 7. EXTERNAL CO-OPERATION

As 2/3 of this PhD project is founded through an European project, cooperation with several external partners are necessary throughout the PhD project. This leads to the possibility of multiple stays abroad with the other European partners. Currently the most promising stays involves a short stay of a few weeks with our European partner TNO in Netherlands and a 4-months stay with *one* of the following in Spring 2018:

- Associate Professor Raquel Urtasun at University of Toronto, Canada.
- Associate Professor Antonio M. López at Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Spain.
- Assistant Professor Brendan Morris at University of Nevada, Las Vegas, USA.
- Professor Mohan M. Trivedi at UC San Diego, USA.

## 8. FINANCING BUDGET

The PhD project is founded 2/3 by the In-Depth understanding of accident causation for Vulnerable road users(InDeV) project and 1/3 internally by the AD:MT department. The InDeV project is funded by the EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation, HORIZON 2020, in grant agreement number 635895.

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